

Michael Wingo
SQUEEZE SERIES

May 7th - June 4th
Opening Reception: May 7th 5-8pm



Michael Wingo
Galoot
oil on canvas
12 by 108 inches

Gallery KM is very pleased to present SQUEEZE SERIES, our first solo show of paintings by Los Angeles based artist Michael Wingo. A reception for the artist will be held at the gallery on Saturday, May 7, from 5 – 8pm, and an Artist Talk will take place on Saturday May 21, at 2pm.

In a group of primarily one foot by nine feet oil paintings on canvas and linen, Michael Wingo takes our presuppositions about the horizontal pictorial plane and torques them, offering geometrical abstractions in which space expands and contracts with a kind of significant irreverence.

On first viewing, the paintings are deceptively clean, seemingly straightforward in intent, with clear, deep color and crisp line pervading much of the work. Then the disorientation begins, as the oddness staged by the extreme horizontal length of the canvas is reflected in the movement of the shapes within. Colors expand in their delineated lines and shapes exactly as Wingo intends them to, just a bit farther than seems reasonable, or with a touch more personality than one might expect from clear geometry. Subtle, meticulously formed tones and textures fill the planar field until cut off by a competing or supporting form or pigment, and faint pencil lines imply a completion of the geometrical relationships in another dimension—one of many surface details requiring a proximity to the paintings that is unsettling given their dimensions. As the play of intuitive balance and disorienting rotations of space take hold, all of these elements combine to create an unlikely marriage between awkwardness and elegance.

Wingo has often professed an interest in visual dichotomy. In SQUEEZE SERIES, he has managed to access emotional dichotomy, as well. The paintings are both anxiety-producing and grounding, perfectly balanced yet vertiginous. Sitting solidly in their disarming space, Wingo's paintings call to mind our inescapable attraction to the horizon line, the way in which we grasp for an intellectual referent in the absence of a visual one, and hint at the idea that even meticulous attention to detail and narrative control are often mocked by the very forms we try to make sense of, or try to contain.

Here, subtle humor sits alongside a very significant argument for painting as a form that retains its relevance in a contemporary dialogue often dominated by media more overtly connected to digital culture's faster modes of seeing/being. Standing in front of one of Wingo's paintings, through sensate physical movement and emotional response, we find ourselves complicit in the challenging, optimistic space he has created.

Michael Wingo graduated with an MFA from Otis Art Institute in 1967. He has been awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Painting, as well as an Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation Grant in Painting. Solo exhibitions have included the Resende Center in Porto, Portugal, the Newport Harbor Art Museum, The Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Terry DeLapp Gallery in Los Angeles, Turnbull Lutjeans Kogan Gallery in Costa Mesa, and Janet Steinberg Gallery in San Francisco. His paintings are in the permanent collections of the Oakland Museum, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, IBM, Bank of America, and Otis College of Art and Design. His work has been written about in ArtWeek and Art in America, and he is included in L.A. Rising —SoCal Artists to 1980, The Archives of American Art, Who's Who in American Art, Dictionary of International Biography, and California Painters: New Work by Henry Hopkins. He has taught at Otis/Parsons, Occidental College, and was a Visiting Artist at the San Francisco Art Institute, and a Visiting Lecturer at the Royal Academy of Art in London.