

WILDING CRAN GALLERY



Full Circle

Chris Cran and Michael Wilding

May 6 - June 17, 2023

Wilding Cran Gallery is pleased to present *Full Circle*, an exhibition uniting the abstract explorations of painter Chris Cran and sculptor Michael Wilding. The show's title references a return to the source—a loving nod to Cran and Wilding's familial connection as the respective fathers of the gallery's founders.

With a career of stylistic forays into pop art, portraiture, social realism, and various graphic arts, Chris Cran returns to abstraction to capture the essence of play inherent to his practice. Across his body of work, Cran emphasizes the importance of engaging the viewer to feel the impact of his paintings, rather than seek to analyze or define their meaning. In addition to a base of flat black gesso, Cran often mixes silver oil paint into each of his pigments, creating new depths and textures by scratching, dabbing, dragging, and pulling the surface of his paint. Utilizing foam core, plastic, x-acto blades, and even Kleenex to experiment, each painting throughout *Full Circle* reveals the effect of luminescence

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and texture – with individual components shifting from light to dark, depending on the angle. In a constant search to explore the uninhibited intelligence of his own hand, Cran’s tactile brushstrokes beget a geometric swirl of fragments that toy with depth and perception.

In a similar regard for explorative process, Michael Wilding’s smooth marble sculptures communicate the artist’s raw reverence for the ancient medium. Viewing his carving technique as an improvisational conversation with stone, Wilding’s practice works to excavate the elegance held within a single slab -- formed over the course of millions of years. In a journey to unearth unknown forms by subtracting extraneous material, Wilding fully immerses himself in responding to the emotional impact of each chisel. While his technical process is quite labor intensive and time consuming, the graceful purity of the works can make one feel otherwise; soft sloping curves meet crests of hard line, accentuating dimension through light and shadow. In addition to his carved stone works, placed throughout the gallery space, Wilding has included a selection of bronze casts, molded and patinated to varying effect. By putting marble and bronze in dialogue with one another, the artist emphasizes the significance of material in communicating the impact of a particular form, as well as the capabilities imbued within each approach.

From metallic oil paints and foam core to marble and bronze, the dynamism of artistic forms grants tactility to the ineffable experience of beauty. Throughout *Full Circle*, Chris Cran and Michael Wilding play with depth and perception to create works imbued with a sense of fluidity and motion. Despite distinct differences, the two bodies of work celebrate the synchronous relationship between artists and their media – exhibiting a dynamic synthesis of labor, technique, curiosity, and intuition.

About Chris Cran

Chris Cran RCA (b. 1949) is a visual artist living in Calgary, Alberta. He graduated in 1979 from the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary. He has exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently at the Nickle Art Galleries at the University of Calgary, AB; Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB, and Mylona Gallery, Zurich, CH. In addition his work has been shown at 49th Parallel Gallery, New York, NY (1992), Taejŏn Expo 93, South Korea (1993), and the Fourth International Painting Biennial, Cuenca, Ecuador (1994). In 2016 the National Gallery of Canada exhibited *Sincerely Yours*, a survey of more than 130 of Cran’s works from 1984 to 2016. Cran received the ACAD Alumni Award of Excellence in 2011; the Doug and Lois Mitchell Outstanding Calgary Artist Award in 2014; he was awarded the Royal Canadian Geographical Society’s Lawrence J. Burpee Medal in 2018; in 2021 he received an Honorary Master of Fine Art from the Alberta University of the Art, and in 2022 he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee Medal. Cran’s work is in numerous public and private collections. He is represented by Trépanier Baer Gallery, Calgary, AB; Clint Roenisch Gallery, Toronto, ON, and Wilding Cran Gallery in Los Angeles.

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About Michael Wilding

Michael Wilding (b.1953) pursued a career as an actor and musician until he moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1991, where he set into motion his career as a stone sculptor, focusing mainly on abstracted form. His interest in carving stone began with a fascination of it's different approach to achieving a result. He was intrigued with the idea of finding something in the stone by extracting material, "building something by removing what might be extraneous." Inspired by the landscape of the high desert in his home of New Mexico, Wilding is "moved by the shapes that occur when earth, wind and water have their way with the environment. These are collaborations which sometimes result in great elegance and grace. I'm also interested in conveying a sense of fluidity and movement in the work. For me, sculpting is a collaboration, a kind of improvisational journey, a conversation with stone." Wilding has shown at Tambaran Gallery, New York, NY; Ernesto Mayans Gallery, Santa Fe, NM; Glenn Green Gallery, Santa Fe, NM; Santa Fe Armory Show, Santa Fe, NM, and at GF Contemporary, Santa Fe, NM. Michael Wilding is currently represented by G2 Gallery in Santa Fe and Wilding Cran Gallery in Los Angeles.