

Kevin Wingate, *Jungle On My Wrist*
Acuna Hansen Gallery, Los Angeles
November 15 - December 20, 2008

In moments of art historical weakness it is easy to believe that there is a Hegelian dialectic at work and that we are holding fast to the bob, on another far swing of the pendulum living in a time where painting has gone pretty ugly. Against all better judgment, it may be the hour is nigh to embrace the hype of a bankrupt historiographical philosophy and see that once again, the beautiful, abstract painting is back (with its own story to tell). Los Angeles based artist Kevin Wingate has brought it back and in full effect in his second solo exhibition at Acuna-Hansen Gallery, *Jungle On My Wrist*.



Kevin Wingate's mixed media paintings are the literal plastic embodiment of the low and the high. His conceptual penchant for making that which is, not what it seems, is a sweet and satisfying material deception calculated from the visual equations of an alternate geometry. In this latest body of highly conceptual abstractions, he co-mingles in illicit unions of traditional and upstart materials thrown down on wood panels and aluminum sheets; areas of gritty, glittery asphalt impasto meet the rich shimmer of pearlescent automotive pigments and are laid bare and flat by candy-colored washes and spots of spray paint. The effect is magical - creating alien surfaces of undeniable familiarity that shift depending on the viewer's angle of vision. There is nothing awkward about Wingate's abstract paintings, just the opposite shows through. A master of formal chaos, the eye is guided deeper, to darker suggestions of a quotidian narrative of heroic proportions based on the rock-and-rap mythos of letting it bleed meeting the majestic symbolism of the mountain—a place of cosmic intersection, much like the city of Los Angeles, where the sky meets the earth that in turn, extends down into the murky deep.

With a self-professed obsession with "...customized geometry, sad songs, and rap music..." Kevin Wingate's paintings play for the viewer over and over again like the aggressively delicious roar of a minor chord, tearing at the heartstrings and invoking some long lost savage night of promises remembered as you cry happily into your drink, presenting charred shadows of objects that don't exist, whose white edges bleed seamlessly onto the gallery walls. These abstract, highly formal paintings wear a secret narrative on their sleeve...like so many jungles on a wrist. But despite any narrative urge, Wingate's true subject matter would be paintings about the process of looking at paintings.

Rae Anne Robinett