

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release  
July 1987

## PROJECTS: MICHAEL YOUNG

July 23 - September 7, 1987

The Museum of Modern Art continues its PROJECTS series with an installation of abstract geometric paintings by Michael Young from July 23 to September 7, 1987. Organized by Robert McDaniel, assistant curator in the Department of Drawings, the exhibition consists of a series of small, square paintings that interact with a large wall painting, created specially for the Museum's Garden Hall Gallery.

In Young's individual paintings, elemental forms of crosses or circles fill the canvas; the rationality of their design and the intimacy of their scale allow them to be perceived as perfect geometric units. In the brochure accompanying the exhibition, Mr. McDaniel writes, "In this work, the picture plane does not contain the shapes; if anything, the shapes seem to generate the picture plane."

In both the circle and cross paintings, there is an overall impression of regularity and flatness. In the circle paintings, however, an unsettling perception is created by the optical illusion of the concentric circles and the fact that they are not visually anchored to the sides of the square canvas. In contrast, the cross paintings create a more comfortable effect, partly because the forms correspond more to the canvas shape.

Young uses color to enhance and dramatize the optical tension of his strong geometric shapes. Neutral earth tones predominate in each painting; sand and baked soil are actually applied to a resin-coated canvas. In several

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of the paintings, the artist adds bright fluorescent color to certain elements. The combination of these extremes, which have very different associations and are optically at odds, is jarring.

Mr. McDaniel writes, "When these paintings succeed as aesthetic objects, however, the fragments of rational detail--the symmetry and geometry, the earth colors, and the allusions to perspective--move our attention across the objects, allowing us to enjoy the sensual beauty of this art, avoiding extended intellectual involvement."

Born in 1952 in Houston, Texas, Michael Young received his B.F.A. degree in 1975 from the University of Texas, Austin, and his M.F.A. in 1977 from Yale University. In 1975, he participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program. Since 1982, he has had several individual exhibitions in New York and Boston. Recent group shows include Artists Against Aids at the Lorence-Monk Gallery, New York, and Generations of Geometry: Abstract Painting in America Since 1930 at the Whitney Museum of American Art at Equitable Center, both of this year.

PROJECTS, a series of exhibitions devoted to the work of contemporary artists, is made possible by generous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lannan Foundation, and J.P. Morgan & Co. Incorporated. Also on view is PROJECTS: TOM OTTERNESS in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, through October 13, 1987. Future exhibitions in the series include PROJECTS: LOUISE LAWLER (September 19 - November 10, 1987) and PROJECTS: ALLISON WILDING (November 21, 1987 - February 2, 1988).

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