

# JESSICA SILVERMAN GALLERY

For immediate release

**Ian Wallace – Meta Masculin/Féminin**

**April 24 – May 30, 2015**

Opening reception: Friday, April 24, 6-8pm

Jessica Silverman Gallery is pleased to present “Meta Masculin/Féminin,” a solo exhibition by Ian Wallace. Over the past forty-years, Wallace has made paintings and photographs, imbued with narrative tension, which are in dialogue with cinema, performance art and feminism. This exhibition, Wallace’s first in California, presents work from several series that explore gender conflict and the metaphysical clash between figurative photography and abstract painting.

Wallace’s “Masculin/Féminin” series (1996–present) combines cropped stills from French and Italian New Wave films with monochromatic plains of acrylic paint. The appropriated images depict the films’ male and female protagonists as disconnected, existentially alone characters, whose gazes may search for one another but never meet. Beyond this gendered metaphor of estrangement and longing, the series investigates the fundamental role of pictures in the desire for cultural knowledge, asserting that meaning derives from framing as well as the act of comparing and contrasting.

In his “Event Structure” works (2007–present), Wallace has staged pictures of a couple on the streets of Paris. Accompanied by multicolored rectangular painted fields, these cinematic images are sometimes displayed in before-and-after combinations, suggestive of more complex narratives. The couple tends to share the same frame or move in the same direction; they are close in all senses of the word. Through formal means, Wallace orchestrates a more immediate and intimate picture.

The exhibition also includes artworks that offer a meta-commentary on the aforementioned paintings. Wallace’s “Work in Progress” photographs are studio shots that depict the process of making some of the other works in the show. And his “Hotel” series documents the artist’s research materials and sketches on the desks or makeshift studios he creates in hotel rooms while on the road. As it happens, the sketches that appear in these “Hotel” works are studies for a new series called “Cutaway” (2015), which premieres in this exhibition. Like the “Masculin/Féminin” and “Event Structure” works, the “Cutaway” pieces contrast photography with painting while referring to the classic opposition between male and female, physical and emotional, moving and still.

Presenting further commentary on the “Meta Masculin/Féminin” exhibition is one of Wallace’s “Text-sculptures,” a table vitrine that houses historical material such as his own writing, film stills, studies for this exhibition as well as negatives and images from earlier kindred works. This vitrine retrospective is the quiet cornerstone of a show that explores Wallace’s longstanding mediation on the tension between the sexes from social, psychological, cinematic, formalist and conceptual perspectives.

**Ian Wallace** (b.1943) lives and works in Vancouver, BC. He received an MA in Art History from The University of British Columbia in 1968. Wallace is a pioneer of photoconceptualism, playing an essential part in elevation of photography to the status of painting. Wallace has exhibited internationally and his work can be found in many prominent public collections including MOCA (Los Angeles), Reina Sophia (Madrid), National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), and the Centre Pompidou (Paris). In 2012, the Vancouver Art Gallery held a major retrospective of his work. He was recently awarded the *Chevalier de L'ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French Ministry of Culture. Upcoming exhibitions include a solo exhibition at Canada House, London and participation in a group exhibition at Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Berlin.