

Kim Wiggins

Legacy Gallery, November 9-17

“I BELIEVE THAT the artist is the soul of a society, and that means my job is to reach the next generation,” says Kim Wiggins, who is a leading exponent of the New West movement that seeks to engage younger audiences through fresh modes of visual expression. “I don’t believe we’re going to reach them using the same methods and voice they’ve seen in the past. I want to create something that makes them stop and look and take it in.”

The son of celebrated photojournalist Walt Wiggins, the painter grew up meeting artists such as Georgia O’Keeffe and Henrietta Wyeth through his parents. His wildlife sculptures sold in Scottsdale during his teenage years, and after switching to oils during a military stint in Europe, he became the youngest-ever member of the Society of American Impressionists. A quest to find his own voice in the 1980s led Wiggins back to his roots, which include exposure to Hispanic and Native American art. The result was a distinctive blend of swirling shapes, bold colors and symbolic meaning that has landed his work in museums across the U.S.

Wiggins’s signature style will be on full display this November as he debuts 25 new works in *The Unexpected West* at Legacy Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona. The solo exhibition will highlight lesser-known aspects of the American West, with subjects ranging from a Spanish mission in California to a spiritualist in the Mississippi Delta region. “The passion and excitement that [Legacy owners] Brad and Jinger Richardson bring to these shows is unique in the Western art world,” says Wiggins. “I’m incredibly honored to be the first modernist to do a show like this with them, and I’m bringing my best work.”

Headlining the show is Wiggins’s massive CHISHOLM TRAIL, a 72-by-96-inch composition in which a daring group of cowboys moves cattle along a



Spring Along the Llano Quemado, oil, 48 x 72.

historic trail during a thunderstorm in the 1870s. “A stampede is so symbolic of the ways our lives can feel totally out of control,” says Wiggins, adding that the piece arose from a challenge to create the definitive image of the American West. “This scene has every type of cowboy that was common during that day, whether Caucasian or Black or Hispanic. There’s a little bit of everything in our American culture, and you have a beautiful cross section of that in the cowboys.”

Another work that is close to Wiggins’ heart is MUSTANG FALLS, in which wild horses graze serenely in a mountain paradise. “Wild horses are a disappearing breed,” he says, noting how a band of horses near his studio in Ruidoso, New Mexico, was recently removed over complaints of flowers being eaten. “Fortunately, people came

together and said, ‘That’s not going to work. Turn them loose.’ These horses are a part of Western heritage that I want my children and their children to experience.”

Wiggins will share these and other stories during an artist talk and Q&A session at the show’s opening on November 9. “I know this is not something I’ve done on my own,” he says, adding that he would like to thank his wife and five children for their support. “I’m grateful for the gifting God has placed in my life, and I just want to share the beauty of this world with other people.” —Brandon Rosas

contact information

(480) 945-1113
legacygallery.com



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Mustang Falls, oil, 60 x 48.

Land of Buck Dunton, oil, 60 x 48.

Chisholm Trail, oil, 72 x 96.

