

# Seattle Post-Intelligencer

[http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/visualart/397070\\_visual23.html](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/visualart/397070_visual23.html)

## It takes two galleries to capture the colorful career of Michael Dailey

Last updated January 22, 2009 10:48 a.m. PT

By **REGINA HACKETT**  
P-I ART CRITIC

On the West Coast, from Northern California to Seattle, a gestural kind of painterly landscape abstraction took root in the 1950s and 1960s, sometimes but not always with figures in it.

Prime movers included David Park, Joan Brown, Elmer Bishop, Manuel Neri, Nathan Oliveira, Jay DeFeo, Richard Diebenkorn and, in Seattle, William Ivey, Boyer Gonzales, Margaret Tompkins, Robert C. Jones and Michael Dailey.

Dailey is one of the youngest and most steadfastly abstract. Once he found his style he didn't change it until forced by health reasons.

In the 1960s, using oil paint, he began to make colors float. His canvases were full of ripe colors only loosely contained within their frames. I always had the feeling if I put a finger under one of his buoyant passages, I could flip it into the air.

That was enough for him, and he'd undoubtedly be doing it still had oil paint not become more than his balance and lungs could bear. Dailey has lived with multiple sclerosis since his 30s. While he loved the depth and illusion of oxygen he got from oil, he was ready to make the change when change was inevitable.

Acrylics took away his bounce, but what developed as a replacement has become as intriguing. Dailey paints flat smears of color that drag themselves across space and fight with their frames, which are constantly realigning their positions.

Seattle art museums being what they are, none has seen fit to provide one of the Northwest's most singular colorists a retrospective, which is why the Greg Kucera Gallery joined forces with Dailey's gallery, Francine Seders, to provide one. At Kucera are early works, from 1965 to 1999. At Seders, the paintings are of more recent vintage.

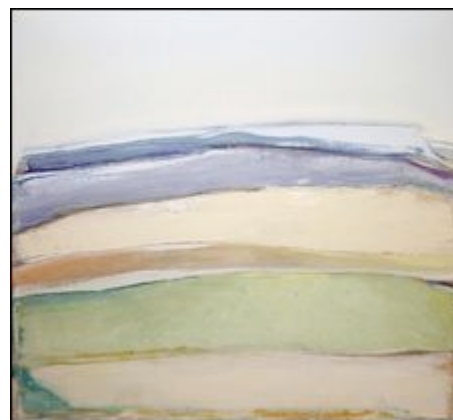
"Columbia Crossing" from 1967 (67 inches high by 69 1/2

### ART REVIEW

#### MICHAEL DAILEY: COLOR, LIGHT, TIME AND PLACE

*WHERE:* Greg Kucera Gallery, 212 Third Ave. S.; Francine Seders Gallery, 6701 Greenwood Ave. N.

*WHEN:* Through Feb. 14 at Greg Kucera and Feb. 8 at Francine Seders Gallery. Kucera closed Sunday-Monday, Seders closed Monday



[zoom](#)

Michael Dailey's "New Morning Landscape," from 1968, when he was still painting with oil.

inches wide), is geological. Subtly calibrated colors turn in earthlike strata: rock behaving like fog. In "New Morning Landscape" from 1968 (40 1/2 inches high by 43 1/2 inches wide), the fogs have begun to lift. In "Yellow Coast #2" from 1973 (62 inches high by 69 inches wide), jade green at the canvas bottom pushes up into salmon, teal and mint blue, as if the roots of growing things find sky more appealing than dirt.

By the early 1970s, he severed his ties to the earth.

In "Meadow Series #1" from 1977 (62 1/2 inches high by 66 3/4 inches wide), green is molecular, as if the artist sprayed his colors into the air.

At the Francine Seders Galley, acrylic color is porous and flat. Nothing floats. His passages of teal, green, rose and deep, foamy blue sit on the canvas. In "Strange Blue Sea" from 2007 (9 inches high by 12 inches wide), a horizon line has reasserted itself, and lilac dusts itself like lipstick stains into blue.

I love "Yellow Gateway" from 2008 (32 inches high by 42 inches wide), because the gold in the center looks burnished with age, and the various diagonals and verticals around it, in alabaster, blue and ripe wheat, do not try to contain it.

---

[reginahackett@seattlepi.com](mailto:reginahackett@seattlepi.com), 206-448-8332, [blog.seattlepi.com/art](http://blog.seattlepi.com/art)

◆ **1998-2009 Seattle Post-Intelligencer**