

# KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

**GARETH LONG**

***HE KNEW MANY THINGS, BUT HE KNEW THEM ALL BADLY.***

**SEPTEMBER 16 - OCTOBER 22, 2016**

**OPENING FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 FROM 6-8 PM**

## PRESS RELEASE

...my I.Q. is one of the highest - and you all know it! Please don't feel so stupid or insecure, it's not your fault

- Donald Trump, tweet on May 8, 2013

Stupidity does not sit on one side and Intelligence on the other, they're like Vice and Virtue—it takes an awfully shrewd mind to tell them apart.

- Gustave Flaubert, letter to Louis Bouilhet, 1855

In the age of the smartphone, what does it mean to be stupid? This is one of the questions that Gareth Long addresses in his new exhibition, *He knew many things, but he knew them all badly*. Despite increased access to information and widespread knowledge, stupidity is here celebrated as a virtue, a generative means of production, and an alternative model of thought.

A central work in this exhibition is *He knew many things, but he knew them all badly (counting waves)*. A monument to stupidity and remedial learning, this 24-foot wave-like curtain draws on a lost comedic epic written by Homer about a man called Margites. An exceedingly simple man, Margites went down to the sea to count the waves, an impossible task for anybody, but even more so for Margites, who couldn't count past five. In this work, the edges of Margites' numerical universe are paired with geometric shapes resembling children's educational toys.

The motif of learning tools is continued in other pieces in the exhibition. Long has created new sculptural objects that repurpose designer butterfly chairs into semi-functional children's bead mazes, a wood-block wall sculpture that imitates the shape of one of the fragments of Homer's epic, text drawings, and an animation that attempts endlessly to fit a square peg into a round hole.

For Long, such futile acts are recouped into a moment of tranquillity, in which the ephemeral and the inoperative exceeds the functional and the prosaic.

The gods taught him neither to dig nor to plough, nor any other skill; he failed in every craft.

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.7

*Gareth Long (b. 1979 in Toronto, Canada) received his BA from the University of Toronto and his MFA from Yale University. Long has held solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle, Vienna ; Kate Werble Gallery, New York; Galerie Bernhard, Zürich; Michael Benevento, Los Angeles; TORRI, Paris; SpazioA, Pistoia; Oakville Galleries, Oakville; the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge; The Apartment, Vancouver; Leo Kamen Gallery, Toronto. His work has been included in exhibitions at MoMA PS1, Long Island City; Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Denver; The Power Plant, Toronto; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal; Artists Space, New York; Flat Time House, London; Drawing Room, London; Spike Island, Bristol; Wiels, Brussels; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg; Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe; and Witte de With, Rotterdam. Long's work will be shown this fall at CCS Bard Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-On-Hudson.*