

Katy Cowan

Tape Drifts and Figures Reach May 2 - June 13, 2026



Katy Cowan
trauben, thick with moss, 2026
Oil, acrylic and enamel paint, graphite on cast aluminum
26 3/8 x 28 x 4 in
67 x 71 x 10 cm

Philip Martin Gallery is proud to present, "Tape Drifts and Figures Reach," a solo exhibition of new cast, wall-mounted, hand-painted sculptures by Katy Cowan. Katy Cowan makes her works with existing studio objects, altering the forms of these objects expressively in the casting process.

In the spring of 2025, Berlin-based artist Katy Cowan was invited to work at renowned German art foundry Skulpturengießerei Knaak, which has collaborated with such figures as Katharina Grosse, Jonathan Meese and David Zink Yi. To the foundry Cowan brought a variety of everyday objects, such as masking tape, cardboard sheets, and paint palettes. Cowan's palettes were complete with paint squeezes, scrapes and blobs - the result of days working in the studio. All the objects were cast via the lost wax technique. In their transformation, a range of information - from the grain of the cardboard to the lines of the tape - became visible. Cowan hand-painted the results, working expressively to bring out the textures and volumes via a dynamic application of oil and enamel suitable for both indoor and outdoor installation.

In some sense, Cowan's work relates to that of Jasper Johns, who also worked with the objects in his studio, sculpting and painting them in a kind of diary of ordinariness. "Take an object / Do something to it / Do something else to it," Johns wrote in a sketchbook in 1964. Katy Cowan embraces a similar open attitude towards studio practice, noting, "I love incorporating accidents into my work and learning to react to them, to build off of them." For her artworks, Cowan's body, studio tools and the events in her immediate environment serve as generative subject-matter. Her works investigate human experience; they suggest objects can be both physical and metaphorical; that an impression can take forms both indexically literal - like a metal cast - and expressively iconic - as much about image as form.

Katy Cowan moves easily between media, inviting us to think carefully about the ways in which the materials of art and life figure externally our interior experience. She writes, "Rather than presenting images as fixed or complete, I focus on the moments where form hesitates, gestures falter, and materials resist. These are the points where meaning begins to take shape, where surfaces record their own histories, and where time is made visible, tangible, and even contested." Katy Cowan's work engages both visually and intellectually, investigating the things around us, how we look at and think about them.

Katy COWAN (b. 1982, Lake Geneva, WI) received her BFA from University of Puget Sound (Puget Sound, WA) in 2004; and her MFA from Otis College of Art and Design (Los Angeles, CA) in 2014. Katy Cowan's recent Philip Martin Gallery (Los Angeles, CA); Green Gallery (Milwaukee, WI); Miles McEnery Gallery (New York, NY); Haverkamp Leistenschneider (Berlin, Germany); and Meyer Riegger (Berlin Germany). Additional museum and gallery exhibitions include "Lines of Thought: Gestural Abstraction," Berkeley Museum of Art and Pacific Film Archive (Berkeley, CA); "Selections from the Permanent Collection," Milwaukee Art Museum (Milwaukee, WI); "From the Collection of Anonymous," North Dakota Museum of Art (Grand Fork, ND); and "as the sun chases the unfurling fray," Philip Martin Gallery (Los Angeles, CA). Cowan's work has been the subject of solo and group institutional exhibitions at Otis College of Art and Design (Los Angeles, CA); University of Puget Sound (Tacoma, WA); Lynden Sculpture Garden (Milwaukee, WI); Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (Madison, WI); Synchrotron Radiation Center (Stoughton, WI); Poor Farm (Manawa, WI). She has had solo gallery exhibitions at The Green Gallery (Milwaukee, WI); Document (Chicago, IL); Kate Werble Gallery (New York, NY); Fourteen30 Contemporary (Portland, OR). Cowan's work is in public and private collections such as Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara, CA); (Milwaukee Museum of Art (Milwaukee, WI); Minneapolis Museum of Art (Minneapolis, MN); North Dakota Museum of Art (Grand Fork, ND); Lynden Sculpture Garden (Milwaukee, WI); Art in Embassies (Maputo, Mozambique); and Northwestern Mutual Insurance (Milwaukee, WI). Her work has been reviewed in Artforum, Los Angeles Times, Architectural Digest, Wallpaper*, Contemporary Art Review LA, Artnet and other publications. Cowan lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Katy Cowan's exhibition, "Tape Drifts and Figures Reach," runs May 2 - June 13, 2026. There will be an opening for the exhibition Saturday, May 2 from 3-6pm.

Philip Martin Gallery is open Wednesday - Saturday from 11-5. For additional images, or information please email info@philipmartingallery.com, or call 323-507-2037. Philip Martin Gallery is located at 3342 Verdugo Road, Los Angeles, CA 90065.

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