

Philip Martin Gallery

Katy Cowan
The Studio, The Sketch

November 4 – December 19, 2015

Opening reception: Thursday, November 5, 6-8pm

Cherry and Martin is pleased to present its second solo exhibition with gallery artist Katy Cowan. In this exhibition titled *The Studio, The Sketch*, Cowan's objects reveal her physicality towards a studio practice that investigates the intersections of fine art, craft, and labor.

Cowan is able to seamlessly shift between media from painting to ceramics to textile to sculpture, and back again; each of these transitions rely on a larger systematic way of thinking within Cowan's practice through alteration, repetition, and a conceptual emphasis on material choice. In her most recent body of work, Cowan experiments with a new sense of visual language through sculpture and painting. For instance, Cowan's wood sculpture *Portraits*, presents viewers with fragmented slices of a seemingly female, seemingly male, seemingly animal portrait in profile view. She paints the plywood surfaces with washes of watercolor and floral imprints and reconfigures those wood slices to further abstract *Portraits*' legibility as a figure, thusly drawing more attention to the materiality of the object itself. Cowan's deliberate confusion of representation asks viewers to stumble when recognizing subject matter, and her material choice of wood proposes to elevate this material to that of a more traditional sculptural medium. Cowan's sun prints are in direct dialogue with the sculptures, fusing multiple sections of dyed (both natural and artificial) cotton together, dissecting her painterly approach to two-dimensional work with an abrupt gridded intersection of stitched fabric. Cowan's rope and ceramic wall-bound works, humorously dangle ceramic casts of wrenches and tube socks on boldly braided lines, colliding craft processes with imagery of work and the home.

For Cowan, the serial repetition that occurs in the sculptures and the alterations made on the sun-printed paintings encourages a new way of considering each object, how they are physically handled, and their universal functionality. This body of work in particular looks further inward, investigating Cowan's daily activities, physical movements and her most fundamental decisions in her studio practice. The objectivity and diversity of Cowan's practice brings to mind post-minimalist artists like Alan Shields and Nancy Graves, who were quite comfortable working with a host of materials, while at the same time looking further back to the Dada movement with artists like Jean Arp. With each form of Cowan's artistic output, dichotomy is at play. Her works are both simple and complex; raw



Katy Cowan
Brick (Wait)
2015
Sun-sensitive paint on
cotton, turmeric dyed
addition
57 x 24 x 2 inches,
144.78 x 60.96 x 5.08
cm

and seemingly incomplete; decorative and functional; benevolent and sexual; child-like and sophisticated.

Katy Cowan (b. 1982 in Lake Geneva, WI) received her BFA at the University of Puget Sound (Tacoma, WA) and MFA at Otis College of Art and Design (Los Angeles, CA). Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include Green Gallery South (Oak Park, IL); Dan Devening (Chicago, IL); Green Gallery (Milwaukee, WI); Cherry and Martin (Los Angeles, CA); and LTD (Los Angeles, CA). Her work has also been included in group exhibitions at Cherry and Martin (Los Angeles, CA); The Poor Farm (Manawa, WI); The Torrance Art Museum (Torrance, CA) and Los Angeles Nomadic Division (Los Angeles, CA). Cowan is the recent recipient of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Suitcase Export Fund. Cowan lives and works in Los Angeles, CA and Milwaukee, WI.

Philip Martin Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11am-6pm and by appointment. For further information and images please contact the gallery at +310-559-0100 or info@philipmartingallery.com.

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