

Philip Martin Gallery

**TOP HEAVY:**

**Jennifer Boysen, Katy Cowan, Michael Rey**

November 5, 2016 – January 7, 2017

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

*(Cherry and Martin archive - Cherry and Martin is now Philip Martin Gallery.)*

**Cherry and Martin is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Jennifer Boysen, Katy Cowan and Michael Rey. In their respective bodies of work, Boysen, Cowan and Rey explore shape and surface, mass and materiality as both metaphor and fact.**

“Top-Heavy” describes a condition in which an entity or object has more weight on the top than the bottom. Organizationally, this could mean collapse; physically, it means that something could quite literally topple. For visual artists, a top-heavy condition produces an ideal situation to contemplate how things relate to one another both literally and conceptually. Too much of one thing means too little of something else; a desire for balance sometimes falls apart in the face of competing internal goals.

**Jennifer Boysen**

Often starting with a found object and covering it with stretched canvas, Jennifer Boysen’s paintings offer the viewer a moment where painting becomes structure and structure becomes painting. In works like the new triptych “Untitled” (2016), she builds shaped and textured canvases like a sculptor. These forms and materials are drawn from a variety of everyday objects and visual observations. Boysen typically uses egg tempera paint made using a variety of traditional and non-traditional pigments. The richness inherent in tempera as a medium and its obsessive application combined with her use of sculptural form, creates works that have a meditative quality, thus giving these objects or forms an alternate function or power.

Boysen received her MFA from Hunter College, CUNY, New York. She has participated in recent exhibitions at Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, CA); White Flag Projects (St. Louis, MO); Los Angeles Nomadic Division (Los Angeles, CA); TORRI gallery (Paris, France); Kate Werble Gallery (New York, NY); Frank Elbaz Gallery (Paris, France); and Night Gallery (Los Angeles, CA)

**Katy Cowan**

Katy Cowan uses alteration, repetition and a conceptual emphasis on material choice in her work to move easily between the terms of painting, ceramics, textiles and sculpture. One of the works in the Cherry and Martin exhibition, “Ropes, Days, Nights, Handles, Netting, and Poem Variation” (2016) combines slip-cast ceramic elements, rope and wood. Hanging from the

ceiling, “Ropes, Days, Nights, Handles, Netting, and Poem Variation” matches “a viewer’s bodily dimensions” and works to, as Cowan writes, “reflect all my concerns: the labor of the female artist: the clashing of the studio, day job, and the person at home; the transition of time from day to night; the complete and the in-progress; and the meeting of both gendered materials and processes.”

Katy Cowan’s slip cast ceramics repeat object, idea and meaning through multiple castings. Pages from a ‘calendar’ written in wet clay, or parts of studio tools — the handle of a saw, for example — are cast over and over again. Often incorporated into larger installations with other craft oriented media such as hand braided and dyed ropes, these ceramic objects index her own physical approach to making work in her studio.

Katy Cowan (b. 1982 in Lake Geneva, WI) received her MFA at Otis College of Art and Design (Los Angeles, CA). In 2017, she will have a solo exhibition at Lyden Sculpture Garden (Milwaukee, WI). Recent group exhibitions include Wisconsin Triennial 2016; Los Angeles Nomadic Division (Los Angeles, CA); The Torrance Art Museum (Torrance, CA); Green Gallery South (Oak Park, IL); Dan Devening (Chicago, IL); Green Gallery (Milwaukee, WI).

### **Michael Rey**

Referring to the scraped layers of Plasticine clay that cover his wall-based works, Rey comments that he wants his artworks to be as fragile as we are: solid yet ephemeral; immediate yet ultimately unknowable. Writing about a piece like, “Tutsy-Dfe” (2016), at least one critic has said that Rey’s works “operate poetically, rather than pictorially.” A counter-argument might be made that works like “Tutsy-Dfe” open the door to poetry precisely because they operate pictorially. Rey’s use of shape and color has evolved toward a non-hierarchical relationship within his compositions; his attentiveness to surface insists on the ‘objectness’ of the wood panels on which he layers Plasticine and oil paint.

In insisting on these basic pictorial terms, Rey’s art in many ways actually deflects the direct response it solicits. Its ‘simplicity’ turns viewers upon themselves. We feel this both intellectually and bodily: Rey’s work asserts the viewing order of an earlier age, an age dominated by art’s power to evoke mystery, wonder, creativity, and the communicative possibilities of human expression.

Michael Rey received his MFA from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena. Recent group and solo exhibitions include Fredrick R. Weisman Museum of Art (Malibu, CA); Swiss Institute (New York, NY); Zero (Milan, Italy); Jack Hanley Gallery (New York, NY); Lisson Gallery (London, UK); Ratio Three (San Francisco, CA); and Office Baroque (Brussels, Belgium).

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](mailto:info@philipmartingallery.com).

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