

Philip Martin Gallery

Krug, Simone. "Katy Cowan at Cherry and Martin," *Contemporary Art Review.LA*, July 27, 2017.

Contemporary
Art Review
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Katy Cowan, *On Ropes and Bronze* (2017) (installation view).
Image courtesy of the artist and Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles. Photo: Jeff McLane

Loops and swathes of rope coil around walls and suspend from the ceiling. If rope is characterized as a twisted tensile object used for binding or connection, Katy Cowan imbues it with a more playful purpose, fixating on and reveling in its supple, versatile structure. The artist's lighthearted sculptures consider the braided cord as malleable form, casting it in bronze or affixing unusual trinkets to it. The six sculptural works in this exhibition can be seen as a celebration of Cowan's affinity for the material—draped, knotted, and bronze-cast throughout the gallery, one perceives the various ways that she regards this ordinary material as uncanny.

The elaborate *Prints and Color and Rope Variation* (2017) dangles bronze and ceramic pieces from strips of white rope—an ornamental mobile ministered in vertical lines. The rope bears the weight of these odd clay fragments, which recreate not the saw as a whole, but only the twisted curve of its handle. What good is a saw handle devoid of a blade? Hanging from a rope, Cowan romanticizes its utility, clearly more enticed by its contours than its function. In this work and others, she establishes a tension between soft and hard, loosened and taut, a teasing and cacophonous give-and-take. These works are graceful in their deliberate clunkiness.

In her bronze casts of rope, Cowan seems less enthralled by the object itself than by the spillage of oozing bronze that remains after the overpour in the casting process. The artist retains these

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bubbles and imperfections, documenting both the form of the rope and the negative space around it. As such, the artist calls attention to these crude imperfections, alluding to the process of creating by accentuating the material that spills outside the lines and is so often smoothed over or chipped away. Cowan lingers on the shapes that surface, depicting a record of her beloved object's aura.

Katy Cowan: *On Ropes and Bronze* runs June 24-August 19, 2017 at Cherry & Martin (2732 S La Cienega Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90034)