

LUBOV

Covey Gong & Eli Ping

November 5–January 8, 2023

Since becoming friends with Eli, we've cooked together a lot, and I've gotten to know his family at the dinner table sharing the food we made. The first time Eli and I had a serious discussion about this show was in the kitchen at his family's summer home.

However grand and majestic, ethereal and cosmic Eli's work appear to be, they are domestic and intimate to me. I first noticed the connection between Eli's work and domesticity through his pewter sculptures. They were made in a household cast iron wok and heated in the oven. The various forms of these sculptures inherited the shapes of different pots and pans he used. Eli mentioned the coloration that happened through oxidation had captured the energy of the sunset on Lake Michigan, which the window in the dining room looks out to. The canvases were sewn and stretched at the same dinner table, ceramic plates from the pantry were used as tracing guides for the shapes that he later painted onto these canvases.

Artworks correlate to the tools that make them as well as the setting. Willingly or inevitably, Eli's studio practice coincides with his life as a dad and a husband. Studio can happen in the kitchen, the dining room, and the living room. Household material such as trash bags and plates may inform the process of artmaking at any moment.

While space can conceive objects, objects have the potential of revealing it.

My studio is inside a fashion studio that's sectioned out from a larger sculpture studio. Many friends have suggested I should find my own space that's bigger and more private. But I feel dependent on the studio's current ecosystem— having access to industrial sewing machines, overstocked yarns, and fabric scraps in the trash can. Though fashion comprises extensive gestures and expressions, wearing and dressing are not merely for the human body in my regard. A window can wear a curtain; a chair can be dressed in leather; these works suggest multitudes of interactions between two separate entities—structure and material, body and system.

As materials can conform to a body, a body may adapt to the systems it lives in.

—Covey Gong, October 2022.

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