

## Left, Right, Left, Left

Katy Cowan & Scott Cowan

January 3<sup>rd</sup> – February 22<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Green Gallery 1500 N Farwell Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53202

We (Katy and Scott) enjoyed making this exhibition. We think there are many ways that the work can be looked at, and we doubt that there are any single or systematic tendencies holding all the pieces together (though, if you find any, let us know!). While putting the show together, we enjoyed encountering all of the gaps and false starts, and stumbling into the undoings, that occur in the face of projects and of projections on projects. But that's not to say there are *no* discernable trajectories here. There are at least a few (which you can take or leave as you please)...

One of them is the pull between movement and shadow. – It might sound simple, but light itself contains the idea of motion. Light has a speed. Its speed is constant and calculable; it is speed that is used to measure the immensity of space that we can know but will never cross. As movement, light is abstract and always outstrips us. There is the joke: “So what is the speed of dark?” But there is more than just irony here. Shadows do seem to involve a difference in speed. There's is a movement we familiarize ourselves with—a shade is presupposed in all the light we come into real contact with. So it is, too, with movement and stasis. The static does not stand apart from the traversal of space. Stillness is, in some imaginable sense (or so *we* think), simply the coming-to-itself of motion. What stays still does so only as a presupposition of how it is that movement makes it way through whatever it is that movement makes it way through. We've tried to look at mobiles in this way, and the same goes for how we've looked at, e.g., the darting of cast aluminum on a wall, scrawls of clay on windows, and layers of objects resting within, upon, and above a cement surface.

Another way we think the works make sense is through ideas of formation and deformation. When Blanchot was mourning the death of Bataille, he observed that death does not amplify a separation between people. Rather, it is the total erasure of separation itself. The trauma that underlies death, for him, is the transformation of form into formlessness—not the widening of a caesura, “but its levelling out.” As we see it, a similar shock occurs in the other direction as well: beginnings are the doing-away-with of something formless. ...*But formless to whom? Who said there wasn't something already going on?* Perhaps the possibility of something's coming-to-form is, just as death, something forced and unwanted. Metal ropes, painted, only look clean thanks to the heat that warped the material's being; the apparently effortless balance of a mobile comes to formation by coercing a scatter into something readable as poised and ordered; faces emerge only after mud has been dominated. Thought's profound grief is the site it carves between the formal and the formless, a point of indifference where nothing is desired, but something happens anyway.

Or, finally, you can read this poem, which may (or may not) be of help in some way, when considering the broader compositional elements at hand...

*The clump of mud does not move. It is shadow  
that moves, disappearing. A pillar of sand, a pillar  
of salt, turning around. To see the moment when  
the earth takes over, deciding for us.*

*A rage of water, a wisp of leaf, clear blue  
and pale yellow. Running behind the whatever  
else is left, evading the stagger, evading  
the lurch, the fly-catcher darts down.*

*Tasting oneself, like salt on one's lip, the salt  
as mineral, internal of what is. Restless repulsion,  
now again turning around – the head, the neck  
the breast, the empty navel.*

*Out of season, the purple martin darts down,  
in an orbit, through the empty orange  
shadow. The old and brittle clod of sand  
flits away, like a shadow finding its slumber.*

*How clean it is, to find the morning in the evening,  
a daymoon at night tastes like a clump  
of mud on the eve of, of, of*

– Scott Cowan, 2019

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Katy Cowan (b. 1982) received her BFA from University of Puget Sound (2004) and her MFA from Otis College of Art and Design (2014). She has been featured in solo and group exhibitions at University of Puget Sound (Tacoma, WA), Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (Madison, WI), Synchrotron Radiation Center: Home of Aladdin (Stoughton, WI), Poor Farm (Manawa, WI), Philip Martin Gallery (Los Angeles, CA), Green Gallery (Milwaukee, WI), Kate Werble Gallery (New York, NY), and Fourteen30 Contemporary (Portland, OR). Cowan's work is in public and private collections such as the Milwaukee Art Museum (Milwaukee, WI), Minneapolis Museum of Art (Minneapolis, MN), Lynden Sculpture Garden (Milwaukee, WI). Art in Embassies (Maputo, Mozambique) and Northwestern Mutual Insurance (Milwaukee, WI). Cowan lives and works in Berkeley, CA.

Scott Cowan (b. 1986) is currently working towards a PhD in Philosophy, with an emphasis in Critical Theory from UC Berkeley. Previously, he received a BFA from Columbia College Chicago (2010), an MA in theology from Fuller Seminary (2014), and an MA in philosophy from UW-Milwaukee (2016). His most recent publication is an essay titled *Ticklish Truths: Poetry, Chance, and Laughter in The Gay Science*, found in the volume *Understanding Nietzsche, Understanding Modernism* (Bloomsbury, 2019). The most recent presentations of his academic work were at *Society for Phenomenology and Existentialist Philosophy* (Memphis, 2017; Pittsburgh, 2019), at *Wittgenstein in the 21st Century* (Institute of European Studies, UC Berkeley, 2019), and the *Society for German Idealism and Romanticism* (University of Chicago, 2017). He has exhibited art work at Document Gallery (Chicago, IL), Young Art (Los Angeles, CA), Important Projects (Oakland, CA), Roots and Culture (Chicago, IL) and Hyde Park Arts Center (Chicago, IL). Cowan lives and works in Berkeley, CA.









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Katy and Scott Cowan  
*Extra Sticks*, 2019  
Aluminum  
33 1/2h x 30 1/2w x 3d in  
85.09h x 77.47w x 7.62d cm  
\$ 750.00

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Scott Cowan

*Salt*, 2019

Glazed stoneware, oil paint, and nails

18h x 12w x 1 1/2d in

45.72h x 30.48w x 3.81d cm

\$ 2,000.00

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Katy Cowan  
*(itself; as far) Position, 2019*  
Oil and enamel paint, graphite on cast aluminum  
36h x 170w x 2d in  
91.44h x 431.80w x 5.08d cm  
\$ 16,000.00

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Katy and Scott Cowan  
*Paradiddle*, 2019

Cast aluminum, oil paint, wood, ceramics, raw clay, plaster, marbles, shoe, long shoelace, pencils (and assorted things, like a highlighter and floss), candle, beads, clothe, wire, embroidery thread, twine, and a wooden tulip, brush cleaner, and lavender

129h x 60w x 54d in

327.66h x 152.40w x 137.16d cm

\$ 14,000.00

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Scott Cowan

*Table Sculpture A*, 2019

Concrete, raw clay, glass shards, seashell, shoelace, sea glass, hair, plaster, spray paint, lavender, bottle, button, sheet of glass, coins, water, unknown/special rock, stolen decorative spores, paper clips, and a pin

11 1/4h x 30w x 20d in

28.58h x 76.20w x 50.80d cm

\$ 4,500.00

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Katy Cowan

*night, hole, pallet*, 2019

Oil and enamel paint, graphite on cast aluminum

18h x 11 1/4w x 1 1/2d in

45.72h x 28.58w x 3.81d cm

\$ 4,500.00

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Katy and Scott Cowan  
*Shadow Slip*, 2020  
Raw clay painted on window  
Dimensions variable  
\$ 3,000.00

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Katy and Scott Cowan  
*Walking*, 2019  
Oil and acrylic paint on boards  
Dimensions variable

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Scott Cowan  
*Tumbling Heads*, 2019  
Glazed stoneware, wooden boards, acrylic paint, and nails  
Heads: 18 x 12 x 1.5 in  
Board: 21.5 x 16 in  
\$ 7,500.00

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Katy and Scott Cowan

*Darts down*, 2019

Cast aluminum, oil paint, wood, ceramics, raw clay, shoe, long shoelace, beads, a jump rope, lavender, concrete, hair, glass shards, \$10-dollar bill, whistle, twist ties, brushes, a pencil, a fork, embroidery thread, a pulley, and a sea shell

113 1/2h x 120w x 19d in

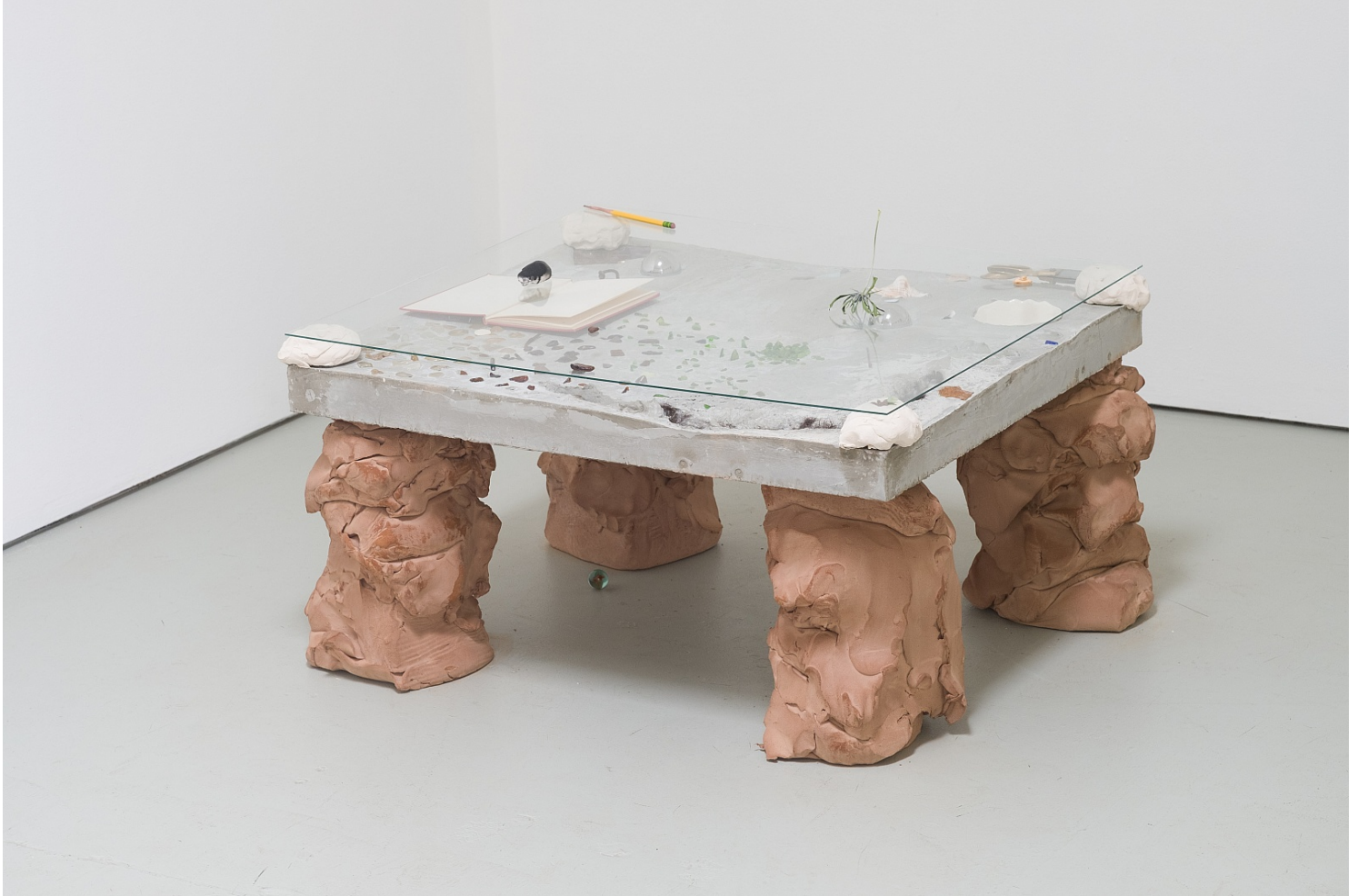
288.29h x 304.80w x 48.26d cm

\$ 12,000.00

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Scott Cowan

*Table Sculpture B*, 2019

Concrete, raw clay, glass shards, seashell, geode, steel balls, scissors, marble, hair, fingernails and toenails, sea glass, book, plaster, shoelace, a thistle, mint, sheet of glass, and star anise

16 3/4h x 26w x 30d in

42.55h x 66.04w x 76.20d cm

\$ 4,500.00