

Marguerite Van Cook

About our / their show

James Romberger / Marguerite Van Cook / ClockWork Cros

This show presents both individual and collaborative works from a family of New York-based artists. It offers a complex interaction in which elements from the artists' private lives flow between their works. The discourse is domestic in that it resides within their common home and also informs issues from the greater social and national/international spheres. The show explores the meaning of history, memory and personal experiences that move between a larger past and a more intimate present. What is revealed through this celebration of individual and collective expression is a subtle flow of familial dialogues, unspoken conversations and collective taste. Elements of each artist's practice can be found in the work of the others.

While each artist's works are unique, there are happy agreements, affordances and mutual pleasures in their work. All the same, their life is never free from artistic anxieties. In part, this show explores what it means to be "happy" and how we exist within and without society. It looks at concepts of pleasure, luxury and the construction of comfort. The constitution after all guarantees the pursuit of happiness, but perhaps not for artists who choose to comment on society.

"At times we choose to collaborate, at other times we work alone, but we always work, and we are always a family."

James Romberger's masterfully drawn, closely-observed pastels of cityscapes and remembered travels tell the extraordinary story of his interest in place and people. While Romberger is known for his critical gaze, alternately, in certain recent works he discovers sublimity in the shadows. His stunning use of light speaks to a romantic impulse that aggravates the realism of his depictions. In his still life drawings, one sees the strong traces of his familial relationships and a clever commentary on the social influences that inform home life.

Marguerite Van Cook's new work connects memory, love and anxiety as it revisits her interest in the tensions and conflicts between men and women and the complicated roles of mother and artist. She utilizes elements from home life—fabrics, wallpapers and objects that embody the domestic—to test the boundaries of motherhood and personhood, particularly addressing the maternal figure as revolutionary force: a historical understanding that has often been forgotten. She explores the philosophies of comfort and discomfort, of pleasure and anxiety through her paintings, prints and multimedia installations.

ClockWork Cros is a Surrealist clockmaker whose work with the dimensions of time and personality raises complex questions about celebrity, achievement and the face as modern totem. His work is elegant, modern and contemporary. His clocks challenge ideas about disposability, longevity and reputation. The clocks problematize the consumption of celebrity, even as the artist also includes inspirational figures such as scientist and artists—a move that reframes the question of human worth. His work for this exhibition positions itself in the space of discontent and revolution; it is both historical and current. His work is post-postmodern and flawlessly sails across media platforms and technology, while looking back to a time of the handmade, or perhaps one could say towards a future.

The show affords an unusual opportunity to see a family at work.