

NINO MIER GALLERY

NEW YORK | BRUSSELS

Ethan Cook
Free Hand
New York | Tribeca
April 4 – May 9, 2025

Nino Mier Gallery is pleased to present *Free Hand*, our sixth solo exhibition with New York-based artist Ethan Cook. On view from April 4th through May 9th, *Free Hand* presents a new series of hand-woven paintings alongside never-before exhibited steel sculptures.

At the forefront of Cook's distinctive approach to his work is the weaving of color as an entryway to making a painting. He begins with dyed cotton which becomes woven into form on a four-harness loom, then gets cut, sewn, stretched, and joined in a frame fabricated by the artist. By working around the conventional process of painting through a more technical and manual set of rules, the work becomes engaged in a conceptual conversation with the medium by building paintings from their often unacknowledged yet foundational constituents.

Cook has purposely strayed away from preconceived notions of how the finished paintings present themselves in *Free Hand*, leaving their ideation primarily in the hands of pure abstraction, the laws of chance, and the discretion of the body and mind. Organically shaped blocks of color introduce themselves freely as lyrical and fragmented abstract forms, dancing boldly yet carefully in step with the confines of their frame. This approach to the more explosive compositional structure of his painting is a new development within his practice, resulting in a dynamic interplay of the power dynamics between foreground and background. Several of the painting's titles borrow from ballet movements, including *Jeté*, *Sauter*, and *Battement*, furthering this notion of unifying a variety of movements. With dance in mind, the composition of the works on view bear resemblance to the expressive and randomized Dadaist collages of French artist Jean Arp, the warp, weft, and myriad of bold and subdued colored cotton panels in *Tone Poem* embrace and depart from one another spontaneously. A common use of grey and alabaster cotton wedges throughout each painting in the exhibition make themselves as prominent as the manually cut vibrant sections, providing a leveled homeostasis to the performance they both act in.

Four steel sculptures situate themselves throughout the gallery, with their visual appearance seemingly cut and sewn from negative spaces and color fragments within the paintings they face. Working subtractively from their original industrial form, Cook paves way for a more reflexive and instinctive mode of sculpture in a field that has historically been highly methodical and calculated. Unlike the woven cotton paintings, the bent, rigid, and animate qualities in sculptures *Lariat Glisser* and *Broken Circle* seem to envision how the compositional actions portrayed by the former would feel if they were to grow out of their skeletal frame.

Free Hand presents two modes of output by Cook that respectively express their acknowledgement of one another. The allusion to the physical body and the forged world they inhabit is emulated in the architecturally referential painting *Seeland* and the sculpture *Beam Bathing Broken Circle*; each is bound to their form while dreaming of the possibility of their form being boundless. Whether they be truncated from metal or woven together by fiber, Cook allows the works in *Free Hand* to engage with the subjective and energizing potentiality of the mind in an objectively fabricated world.

Ethan Cook (b. 1983, Texas; lives and works in New York, NY) has had solo exhibitions at Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, Brussels, Marfa and New York; Megan Mulrooney Gallery, Los Angeles; Half Gallery, New York; Andersen's Contemporary, Copenhagen; Galerie Philipp Zollinger, Zurich; T293, Rome; Loyal Gallery, Stockholm; Anat Ebgı, Los Angeles; Noire Chapel, Torino; Bill Brady, Miami; Sunday-S Gallery, Copenhagen; American Contemporary, New York; Galerie Jeanroch Dard, Paris; Rod Barton, London; Patrick de Brock Gallery, Knokke; and Gana Art Hannam, Seoul. Public collections

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include The Art Institute of Chicago, Museum Voorlinden, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Fondation CAB, and Juan Carlos Maldonado Art Collection. His work has been covered in the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, the Brooklyn Rail, Interview Magazine, Architectural Digest, among other publications.