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Domestic Blues in Lee Kit's Latest Work



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Towels, t-shirts, tea cloths, a cup of espresso, Vaseline, and knockoff Johnson's products—these are the unglamorous items of the everyday, so ubiquitous as to resonate in households from Toronto to Thailand. They are also the stuff that make up the installations, wall pieces, and readymades of the hot young artist Lee Kit, Hong Kong's representative at the 55th Venice Biennale. However you slice it, Kit is fascinated by the ordinary: the mundane daily rituals and domestic scenes of our lives. Past works, which span installation, paintings, video, and audio recordings, have included the sounds of utensils clattering, a video display of sausages slowly being grilled, and wall works composed of soft fabrics and painted tea cloth.

Fast on the heels of his Venice presentation "*You (you)*" and its follow-up, shown in Hong Kong last year, "*You*," Kit brings us "*How are things on the West Coast?*" at New York's Lombard Freid. Among the items on display are a stack of towels and other quotidian objects, and immersive sounds that easily conjure domestic life, recalling a quieter, minimalist stand-in for the Chinese artist Song Dong's cluttered accumulations of household matter. Kit's exhibition title suggests the banal platitudes and conversations that might belie the more charged undercurrents beneath the surface of familial and, even political, relations (the artist once described that slowly grilled sausage as manifesting a sense of rising anger, and he used his painted cloths as public calls for democracy in Hong Kong in 2005). In a benign palette of pastels, Kit's pieces, like Tracey Emin's quilts, are bittersweet, ameliorating the more melancholic, painful, and political elements that our personal narratives are deeply charged with.

"*How are things on the West Coast?*" is on view at Lombard Freid April 24–June 7, 2014.

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Lee Kit
1, 2014
Lombard Freid Gallery



Lee Kit
2, 2014
Lombard Freid Gallery