



# MATERIAL CULTURE

Ed Bing Lee and Ryan Sarah Murphy

January 12 - April 28, 2024

Opening Event: February 2, 2024 | 5-9pm



Ryan Sarah Murphy, *Rooms*, 2023  
Found (unpainted) cardboard, cut book covers, foam core  
21 x 19 x 8 inches

Materials are a main indicator used to define an artistic practice, denoting it within larger contexts and techniques. Immersed with history and theory, materials have been used to create boundaries between what is commonly perceived as fine art, and that as craft. Although these distinctions are becoming less clear as time progresses, there is still pressure for artists to use certain mediums as an artistic license into the fine art world. Forgoing this license altogether, both **Ryan Sarah Murphy** and **Ed Bing Lee** utilize materials largely associated with functionality, or even practical purpose, as the driving force behind their work.

**Ed Bing Lee** is a long-time practitioner of knotting. A core tenet of the method requires its artists to utilize a consistent material in order to maintain a fluid aesthetic. Lee has spent his career rejecting this doctrine, and instead has considered his practice to be one of exploring knotting without material limitations. Materials suit his subject matter and compositions. This direction has led him to use anything from embroidery floss and curling ribbon to shoe laces, resulting in riveting textures. Lee further investigates texture through a variety of knots, some standard, while others he has invented himself. Lee has carved a career that is based in craft-originated principles, but through his experimentation has expanded the possibilities of the tradition itself.

As a multimedia artist, **Ryan Sarah Murphy** explores color and composition through salvaged cardboard sourced from New York City's streets. These cardboard constructions originate through selected color, and then cut to remove any graphic design to be finally adhered in layered effect. Murphy also employs used book covers, another fiber-based panel material, to further her compositional direction. Minimal, yet bright, the work imbues a color-block methodology while departing from its usual material suspects – namely paint. With her process-based practice, Murphy allows the naturally occurring shapes of the found cardboard to frame the overall design. The final works are striking in their structure and color, a surprising beauty forged from discarded waste that is barely reminiscent of what it once was.

#### Constance S. & Robert J. Hennessy Project Space



Ryan Sarah Murphy is a visual artist living and working in New York City. Her studio practice is process-driven and incorporates a multi-disciplinary approach through the use of found and repurposed materials. Ryan is the recipient of a NYFA Fellowship Grant (2014), a Working Artist Grant (2018), and she has held residencies at 77 Arts (VT), I-Park Foundation (CT), The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (NY) and PS122 Studios (NY). Her work has been featured and reviewed in several print & online publications including the *New York Times*, *ARTnews*, *Maake Magazine* and *Interlocutor Magazine*. Her work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions across the United States and internationally. Ryan is represented by C24 Gallery in New York.

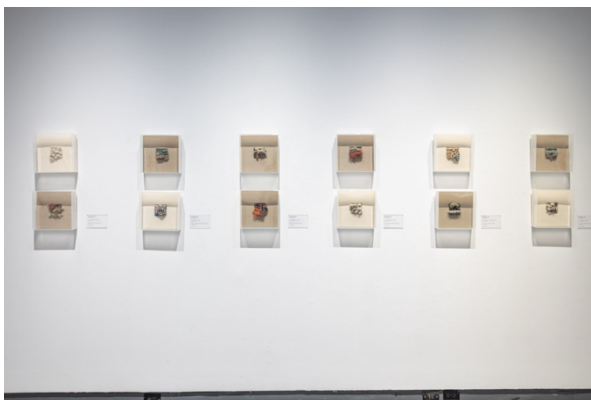
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Ed Bing Lee, born in 1933, has been perfecting his knotting artistry for over 40 years. He started as a commercial fabric designer in New York and Philadelphia and then became an instructor, teaching at Moore College of Art and Design, The University of the Arts, and the Art Institute of Philadelphia. Working with colored thread and thousands upon thousands of knots, Lee transforms a simple material and a common technique into a unique form of contemporary fiber art. Lee will tell you that his attraction to the work of George Seurat and the technical aspects of pointillism - the placement of individual and differing dots of hues, values, and intensity to create a field of color and imagery - became the fountainhead for his knotting process.

## VIRTUAL GALLERY TOUR

Photo Credit: Daniel Jackson Photography



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<https://www.decontemporary.org/material-culture>

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