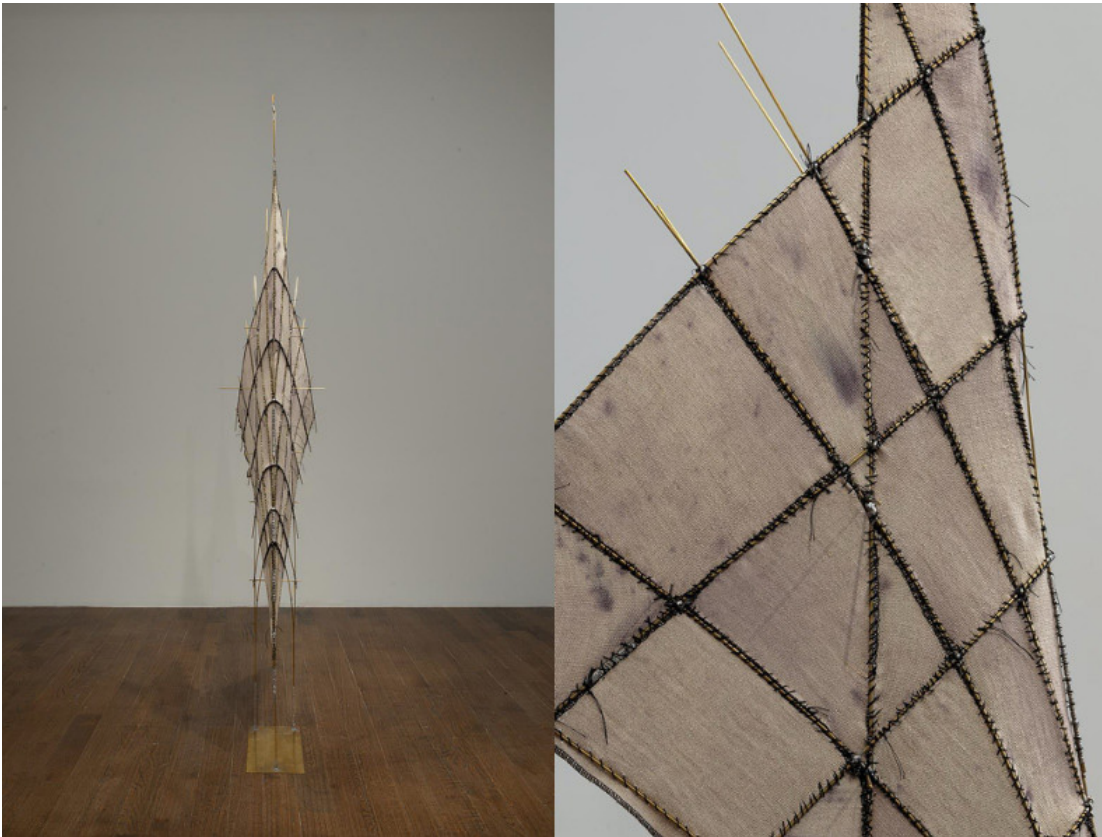


Derosia

Max Heaton, Artefuse, September 23, 2023

ARTEFUSE

Covey Gong: Intercontinental at Derosia, New York



Featured work: W253; 2023; Brass, copper, dyed linen; 73.5" x 11.5" x 26" – This sculpture reassembles pieces of dyed linen, quilted together around a brass and copper framing.

Covey Gong's opening at Derosia (197 Grand St, 2W, New York, NY 10013) is a show of sculpture, including small bronzes and a new series of metamorphosed garment-sculptures. Paramount to the consciousness of the work is Covey's personal philosophy on the contemporary garment. In the press release, Gong states a case for why the garment, as a "synthetic extension," possesses transformational value.

Transcending its function as a basic need, a garment:

- expands the presence of the body
- anchors the body, like an architectural structure
- evokes the body of a person
- entangles the body with the objects that frame it, conjuring the image of a landscape
- drives the inner self to the surface

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Installation view, Covey Gong: Intercontinental at Derosia, New York, 2023.

Given Covey's analysis of the garment, let us consider a standout piece from the show, *W253*. This garment-object evokes the imagery of a sailing ship; the ship – a structure anchored to the sea. A sail harnesses the power of the wind and water; it indicates a return to nature. The sailing vessel itself symbolizes a journey. Nature and travel, considered together, can come to represent the forward movement of the healing process. If it is the garment that evokes the presence of a sailing ship, then it is Covey who becomes entangled as its archetypal captain.

In maritime folklore, the captain often relates the ship to the great mother, who metaphysically watches over, protecting the ship and crew. As viewers, we are inspired by the elemental associations of a sailing vessel. Over many thousands of years, humans have been drawn to the beauty and power of the sea. *W253* offers the viewer a means to wonder and reflect on the interaction between the sail and the wind, the ship and water, captain and crew.

The sail, as a symbol of ancient Egypt, has been used as a derivative for words related to air, breath, sailors, and wind – words that relate to movement and life. The making of these garment-sculptures is a metaphor for revival, and anticipation of challenges ahead. On the works, Covey states that these sculptures were, “deconstructed and reassembled .. suggesting a disruption that happens before a reform.” Using art and garment as a transformative experience for self and geographic reality, *W253* framed as a sailing ship, sets the stage for Gong to seek continued psychological exploration.