

CULTURED

Love and Art Are Intertwined for These Four Artist Couples

February 14, 2023



Anthony Cudahy and Ian Lewandowski. Photography by Roeg Cohen.

Ian Lewandowski and Anthony Cudahy

[Ian Lewandowski](#) and [Anthony Cudahy](#) once shared a studio for work, but their practices—the former photography, and the latter, a [CULTURED Young Artist alum](#), painting—now typically only intersect in discussions of concept which, for the Brooklyn husbands, come in an endless number.

CULTURED: What is your partner’s work *really* about?

Ian Lewandowski: The cacophony of images of the human body that pervade our sight daily. Anthony is interested in how a figure can be the catalyst—the container for a singular story—but also the connective tissue to a larger network of stories. He pays keen attention to those around him—how they move through the world and their role in a particular social strata—but also how their image might be reminiscent of that of a Bruegel farmer, or how it might be read 100 years from now in cloud storage.

Anthony Cudahy: This is a specifically difficult question, as Ian and I spend a lot of time trying to pin down what about our practices is beyond words, and thereby what the work may actually be “about.” So I can point—but not definitively say—to photography and its history, the precariousness of lineage, gesture, and pose and their transmutation from person to person across time and artifice. The reason for this work is the hyper-present state Ian finds himself in when he and the camera are one entity; he focuses the camera and moves around knobs and adjusts the lighting without conscious thought. And then there’s the other odd sympathy forms between him and the model(s)—a crazy high you spend the rest of your life hoping to step back into.

CULTURED: The best part about having an artist for a partner is?

Lewandowski: You are inevitably with someone with the same irrational, borderline unhealthy obsession with something that you have.

Cudahy: I don't have to worry about explaining why I need to stay at the studio into the early hours of the morning. A terrible studio mood, or the occasional inverse emotional peaks, are understood. We both end up being each other's de facto assistant, which likely allows us to do more than we ever could solo.



CULTURED: What do you bond over and disagree about?

Lewandowski: We only disagree on music really. We've had numerous fights about Lana Del Rey and how intentional or unintentional her affect is from year to year. It took me a while to warm up to her and Jenny Lewis. He doesn't like Ethel Cain. I abhor Bill Callahan.

Cudahy: We talk through how an artist can relay themes and ideas across an album or a novel, and how that pushes up against what's possible in visual mediums. There are occasionally artists that either of us don't 100 percent get. Although we try to understand and appreciate the histories of each other's mediums, there are some artists we simply have to toss up to being "painter's painters" or "photographer's photographers."

CULTURED: How has your partner affected your own practice?

Lewandowski: Watching Anthony's work evolve has revealed to me how there are choices I make that feel more akin to painting than photography in my own practice. I work on one picture, one "idea" at a time. I make tests and iterations and revisit ideas over and over. I think Anthony insists on such a persistence.

Cudahy: When I met Ian, I was already using a lot of photographic source material, mostly found images. He changed the depth of my understanding of photography as a medium and not simply a material to transform. We both make work that references previous works, gestures, and poses, so having him close all these years has helped me to develop and create language around that. The past several years, I've painted Ian many many times. He's been "himself" in some of the paintings and characters or figures in others. Overall, it's a large, hopefully decades-long project of rendering one person across time.