

In Conversation with: **Jooyun Lim**



M

You are initially from Seoul in South Korea. Could you tell us about your creative journey?

As an art lover since I was little, pen and paper were my favourite tools to play with. I was always drawing and colouring something. I wanted to be a painter or designer early on, but I didn't get to study drawing like I wanted.

Early in my life, I considered a photography practice. I studied this for 3 years in high school, but I abandoned that idea after graduating as I'm short and tiny; carrying the camera bags would be hard for me!

My mother inspired me to take up pottery.

I got the right feeling when I touched the clay and liked the idea of making something from nothing.

As a university graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramic Art and working in rarefied ceramics, I didn't believe pursuing ceramics was a 'real' job. I enrolled in an interior design course and detailed hand-drawn plans of ideal apartments and restaurants. I was terrible at technology and left the course a year after. I then worked as an after-school art tutor in a private academy for 5 years before coming to Australia. During these years, I've had multiple group exhibitions, never a solo show, so here I am!

Image: courtesy of the artist

In Conversation with: Jooyun Lim



What draws you to working with clay and the ceramic processes?

It is like transforming something from A to Z. The medium itself can be in any form, such as shape and size, texture, colour, you name it. You can be a painter or a sculptor and put it into the clay however you like. It also takes you to a different place you've never experienced, encountering something that has never existed before, bringing you somewhere unknown. From nothing to something. It is such a way to express yourself; whatever you are thinking comes out of your work. I like that it can be very abstract, 3D or as straightforward as a bowl, a jar, a vase, or a teacup which can be an art form with function.

I am a dreamer, so I can zone out during the process when I make something.

I even need to remember to go to the toilet!

The biggest reason is it's a healing process for me to forget about all the complexities and focus on the moment. This might be why I can't give up.



Jooyun Lim, 'Functional Geometry- Language' porcelain, mixed dimensions

In Conversation with: Jooyun Lim



What are the themes within your work?

I am interested in patterns of nature and natural phenomena; this can be seen through the colour of my work or a shape.

My personal taste in some writings also brings ideas, such as a quote and poetry. I capture the abstract images in the lyrics of the songs and music I like, also from movies and documentaries.

I often put my pure feeling of the moment in my work. I walk into a place I have never been.

I'm calm and quiet; I travel to my past and tomorrow,

I'm free and relieved and feeling beautiful.

I have many windows in my mind, the tool I use to relate to something and someone I've never known. I open it and see the world I have never met, hoping that I see things that no one else sees. I have many windows in my mind; some are wide open, some are not, and I barely see things. I wanted to deliver these things in my head from the series of work 'Windows (Octagon & Hexagon)'.

I don't have a clear answer, so I prefer abstractly doing work. It gives you more space to breathe and think.

Some of my work delivers a very clear message; for example, in 'Functional Geometry- Language' (Finalist Gosford Art Prize 2022), I've carved patterns that can be seen as symbols or geometry lines, however once you are informed about the Korean alphabet, you will see them as language.

In Conversation
with:
Jooyun Lim



Your exhibition takes inspiration from the poem *'The Road Not Taken'* by Robert Frost in 1916. Could you tell us about this?

“The Road Not Taken” is so famous that we have translated books in Korea, which we learnt from schoolbooks. I totally forgot about this, but 5 years ago, I found a piece of newspaper in one of my dad’s drawers, cut very neatly, which he had put under the other things I almost missed. It was the poem.

I was in Korea then, tidying up his stuff after his funeral. It got tough. I burst into tears and couldn’t stop for a long time. Since then, the poem has stayed in my head. I couldn’t forget it. It is all about the choices that we make. That is what my father taught me until the very last moment. This was a huge influence when I got back into my pottery again in Australia. I hadn’t been doing ceramics when I first came to Australia. I faced daily life, paying bills and trying to fit in my new environment. I now look back; it wasn’t the happiest time in my life. So, I decided to do something about it and finally made a piece in 2022. The work became a finalist in sculpture at the Bluethumb Art Prize 2022.

What was one of your biggest lessons learned since starting your practice?

Giving it a go! There is no reason to be hesitant to try new things, new forms you’ve never tried, new clay, glaze, or anything. Even if you fail from trying new things, you will only learn from that experience, and eventually, you will find something that is just for you. Cliché, but so true.

In Conversation
with:
Jooyun Lim



Looking back, what is one thing you are proudest of?

I’m proud that I tried to keep making things even when I was not in a good place mentally or physically. Even just sitting in my little garage studio drawing, I dream about the next piece I want to make.

I am proud that I try to look at things differently through my pottery. This helped me realise there is nothing to be sad about. In the end, I am privileged to be able to do what I like.

I’m proud of not giving up on my dream, and I came this far waiting for 20 years to have my first solo exhibition (it could be my last too, who knows-that would be very dramatic) that I really wanted for so long.

It didn’t come easy, so I appreciate the journey more.

The Road Not Taken | Jooyun Lim
The Resident’s Gallery
until Sunday 21st May 2023

The exhibition can be viewed during Montsalvat opening hours:
Thursday - Sunday 10:00am - 4:00pm