

Chaos Magazine : 'Yee Soo-Kyung : Picking Up the Pieces', by Lauren Hostetter, December 13th, 2012

Yee Soo-Kyung: Picking Up the Pieces

As we're in the 21st century, we can hardly afford to be perfectionists. Our plates are piled far too high with deadlines, and as a result, quantity often trumps quality as our top priority. For artists, writers, chefs, and anyone else in the business of developing concepts and seeing them through to the finish line, it can be nearly impossible to come to terms with this reality. Once a piece of art, literature, or cuisine is released to the world, it becomes synonymous with its creator, and an indicator of his or her artistic integrity and craftsmanship. Therefore, it's easy to understand why the perfectionist attitude is so difficult for some creative people to shake.

Korean artist Yee Soo-Kyung simultaneously honors and defies the drive for perfection with her massive, seething sculptures that are crafted from rejected porcelain pieces made by contemporary Korean pottery master Lim Hang-Taek, who is the epitome of artistic perfectionism. Taek discards any piece that doesn't meet his staggering standards, tossing nearly 80 percent of his work into a growing pile of shards. In a series of works entitled "Translated Vase," Yee Soo-Kyung breathes new life into Taek's rejected pottery, building pieces upon pieces to create forms that defy the traditional notion of pottery as something that ought to complement – rather than compete with – its surroundings.



Yee Soo-Kyung's sculptures command attention even amid the baroque decor of Germany's Oranienbaum Palace, where her solo show, "Broken Whole," was held in 2009. The sculptures' looming and vaguely anthropomorphic forms imply an almost threatening sort of movement, as they are like teatime bogeymen that have come to raid the cupboards for more pottery. However, they also conjure up more pleasant imagery, like the bubble bath sculptures mothers sometimes build on top of children's heads mid-shampoo. To join the fragments to one another, Kyung employs a technique similar to Japanese *kintsugi*, in which cracks are mended with gold-lacquer resin and effectively made into decorative elements in their own right. She uses epoxy and gold leaf to the same effect, emphasizing cracks and imperfections to lend embellishment to her already voluptuous sculptures.

Yee Soo-Kyung is represented by Almine Rech Gallery, in Europe and Ota Fine Arts, in Japan, and she was recently nominated for the 2012 Korea Artist Prize by the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul, South Korea. To view more of her work, visit her website at www.yeesookyung.com.