

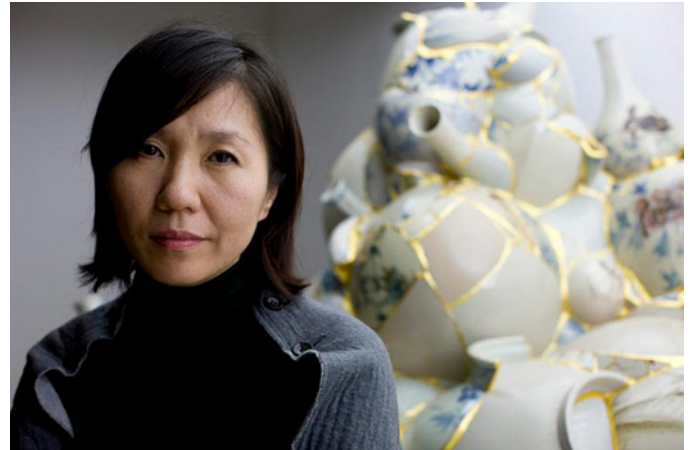
VANCOUVER BIENNALE LEARNING FROM ART

Ceramic Forms

Yee Soo Kyung (Seoul, Korea)

WHO MADE THIS SCULPTURE? Yee Soo Kyung was born in 1963 in Seoul, Korea, where she still lives and works today. As an artist, she has created a wide variety of conceptual works, based on her country's cultural memories and the common sense of modern-day people. Her areas of expertise include sculpture, video, painting, and drawing.

Her artworks have been exhibited at the Gwangju Biennale in 2006, (Gwangju, South Korea), the Liverpool Biennale in 2008 (Liverpool, England), the IFEMA ARCO Collection in Madrid (Spain), and Echigo- Tsumari City in Japan. They have also been collected by the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Korea.



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WHAT IDEAS ARE BEING EXPLORED IN THIS SCULPTURE? Like many young emerging Korean artists, Yee Soo-Kyung's work employs a variety of disciplines to realize her goal of transforming traditional Korean objects and concepts into new contemporary forms. The familiar ceramic designs and surfaces, the fragility of the material and vessel forms are deeply embedded in the Korean consciousness; they are also recognized internationally as a central component of the Korean cultural identity. In the process of assembling fragments of Korean ceramics into entirely new sculptures, the traditional form is transformed and translated. The artist forces the curved fragments of ceramics together in ways that are both new and yet also retain much of the aesthetic of the original forms. How to be modern and yet retain an appreciation for traditional forms and values is addressed in both the process and visual presence of the work, which also suggests a nostalgia for traditional forms and design.

HOW WAS THIS SCULPTURE MADE? This piece is part of the recent *Translated Vase Series* in which Yee Soo Kyung uses hundreds of discarded porcelain fragments and shards made by master Korean ceramicists to create her own “recycled” creative work. Playing on the double meaning of the Korean term “Geum”, which can mean “gold” or “split”, the artist chooses the gold material traditionally used in the repair of porcelain to put the pieces together.



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HOW DOES THIS WORK CONNECT WITH THIS ARTIST'S OTHER WORKS? Yee Soo Kyung started working with sculptures assembled from broken porcelain pieces in 2001 when she was invited to exhibit at the Ceramic in Contemporary Art Biennale held in Albisola, Italy. She was inspired by a poem, *White Ceramic Lady* (1946), in which porcelain china was described as a perfect and refined object. In collaboration with an Italian ceramicist, Yee created twelve white porcelain pieces characteristic of the Joseon Dynasty (1392 – 1910) which introduced white ceramics production in Korea and which also saw the emergence of Confucian culture there. The development of the porcelain became an important part of the new dynasty's efforts to lay down a firm societal foundation. Its simple and austere white ceramics were matched with the ideals of a Confucian lifestyle. The *Translated Vase Series* is about reconstructing pieces of broken ceramics disposed of by traditional Korean ceramic studios. Each fragmented piece is no longer an image of the purity of beauty usually associated with Korean porcelain. Yee treats each piece as an individual entity and reconstructs unexpected pieces into one.

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