

## **The subversive Moon Jar: Embracing risk as a conceptual tool.**

Embracing risk is not for the faint-hearted as outcomes are unpredictable and negative judgment placed upon creative endeavors is somewhat inevitable. These tenets and more are central to Kim's work and formed the core of her doctoral research based upon an exploration and neoteric execution of the Korean Moon Jar.

Kim's work engages risk from both a practical and theoretical position, challenging both aesthetic values and cultural norms. At a prima facie level the element of risk is purposefully visible, however, its understanding and meaning is far reaching with regards to an interpretation of the Moon Jar within ceramic practice and more so from a cultural perspective.

Process and technique form a central part of ceramic discourse including both practical and theoretical applications. Knowledge of ceramic demonstrates a connection to process and technique experienced through practical application and, as a consequence, through theoretical and critical evaluation. The origin of clay as a formless material requires that the engagement of process is fundamental in the transformation of clay to ceramic where definition administers the alteration of clay, by heat, to a permanent substance ceramic. As a consequence of process, the element of technique becomes highly relevant in the construction and evaluation of works within the discipline of ceramics. This formal approach and language is both acquired (through education) and consequentially practiced, however, within the works we see here in this exhibition, Kim's approach is to subvert her meticulous training and the formal language of ceramics through the adoption of risk within the processes and techniques of ceramic practice.

Experience of process has connections to quality and finish that are a central focus of evaluation within the ceramic arena. The alteration of clay to ceramic requires that a fundamental knowledge is necessary to allow the transition to occur. The complexity of numerous processes and techniques within ceramic discourse, as a result of historical development, introduces the questioning as to the placement and significance of these elements within contemporary contexts. These observations with regards to Kim's work are poignant as through a subversive approach, critical evaluation shifts between technical mastery and aesthetic judgment. This positioning is intentional, the creation of an anti-aesthetic that to a purist sensibility might be considered controversial.

Within historical applications Philip Rawson alludes to the view that clay has been transformed into ceramics namely by two methods representing a direct method and an indirect method. Although this observation is still certainly relevant to contemporary ceramic practice additional elements of process and technique have been introduced into the canon that question what can be construed as authentic process. It is this, which in turn, influences the application of traditional aesthetic evaluation. The work we see here

demonstrates additional elements that have been employed by Kim through making and firing processes to expand upon a traditional reading of the Moon Jar.

The ceramic artist's constant search for the unfamiliar results in a re-grounding of the characteristics that define the canon, whether that be art, craft or design. The ceramic artist's approach to unfamiliarity and expanding the field of ceramic practice, rightly, will include numerous formats where individuals negotiate certain elements of familiarity. The individual may explore several areas of investigation to include material, object, process, function and history. Kim has explored all of these in her neoteric articulation of the Moon Jar. Her modern interpretation creates a dualistic reading of the Moon Jar as simultaneously the viewer engages both a practical and theoretical position, drawing on both technical and historical sensibilities. Underpinning this evaluation is the notion of risk as a conceptual tool.

Contemporary ceramic discourse based upon the term conceptual, constructs a critique that acknowledges material and object as integral to the construction of both practical and theoretical application. In this case, the object has become located in a fundamental position where the notion of conceptualism is not focused on the evanescence of the object but on the symbiosis with idea. This is central to the body of work created by Kim, whereby risk is not only employed as a practical spectacle, but also as a conceptual tool with regards to historical and cultural subversion.

The controversial element within Kim's work is refreshing, as too often and particularly within a cultural context, ceramists rarely challenge historical tradition. What Kim has achieved with this work is a re-reading of the Moon Jar for the twenty first century, where the object has transcended pure form to achieve sculptural status.

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