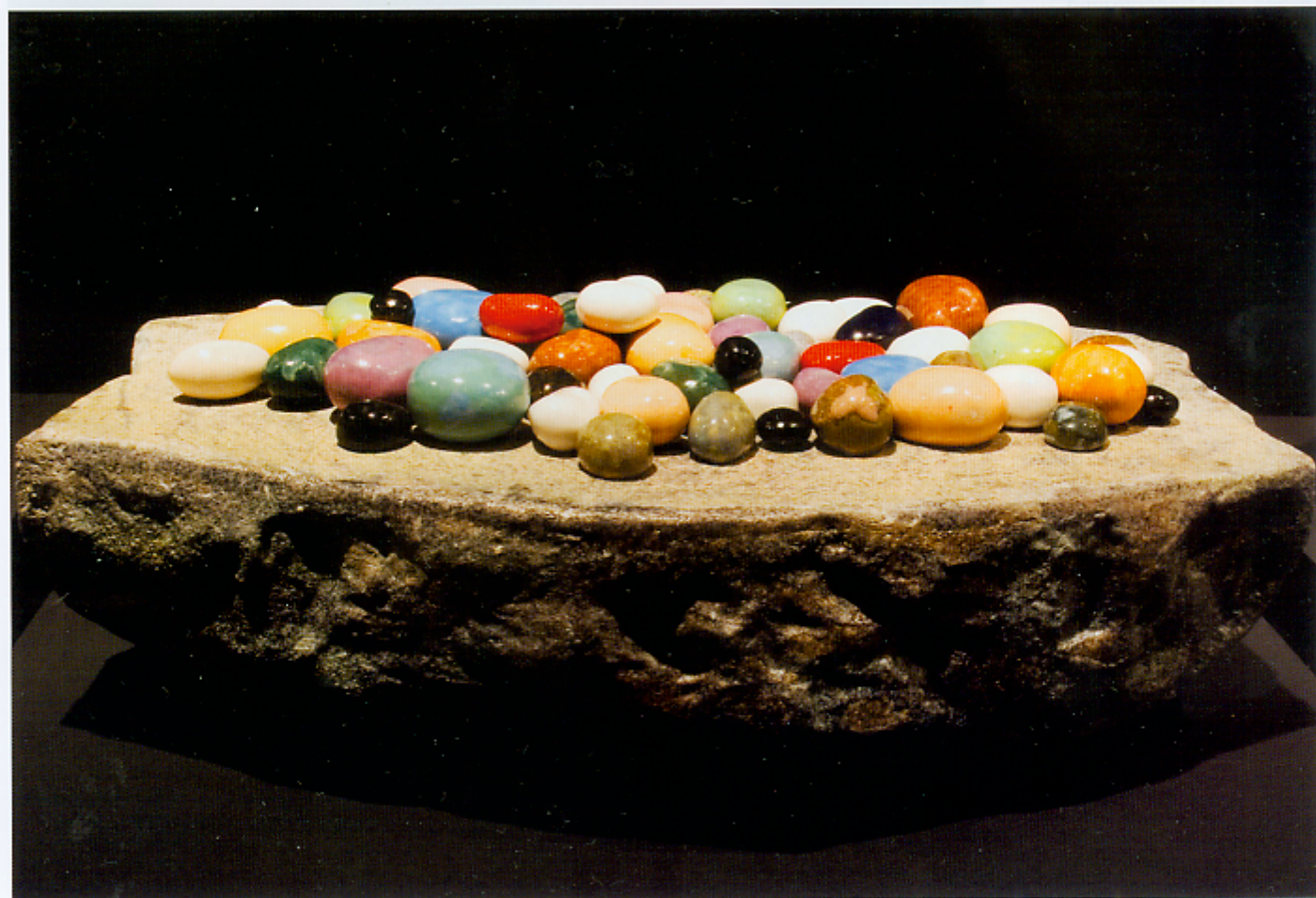


Out of the Fire

A new exhibit blazes into the Jordan Schnitzer Museum showcasing Korean ceramics



ABOVE: Incorporating his Christian beliefs, Moo Keen Lim's creation "Letter to Paul to Colossians, Chapter 3 Paragraph 2," symbolizes Jesus and his followers.

Picture ceramic art: a bowl overstuffed with a warm meal, a petite cup serving a refreshing liquid or perhaps a vase filled with colorful beads waiting to be strung across an elegant, Eastern-styled necklace. But for 5,000 years, Korean ceramic art hasn't been holding just the tangible; they hold years of tradition as well. These pieces can carry history, employing the responsibility of Buddhist ceremonial

purposes, the Neo-Confucian state of pure mind, and even the proof of a potter's higher education.

Thanks to International Arts and Artists, University of Oregon's Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art will be rewarded with an elaborate survey of Korean ceramics glowing with 54 contemporary ceramic artists' own flair. *From The Fire*, which takes place February third through April 22nd, divides 108 eloquently

crafted pieces into three separate categories: Tradition Transformed, Ceramic Sculpture and Individual Direction.

The Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Asian art curator and University of Oregon Professor Charles Lachman will aide in helping deliver the show to Eugene. Lachman feels this show will change the way visitors look at ceramics. "Often when people think of ceramics, they think of utilitarian kinds of things, but this show

is more of using clay as a form of expression," he says.

The opening night for the exhibition on Friday, February second immediately awed its fans. The setting felt more like an elegant cozy dinner party than an art exhibit. Classical music floated from a grand piano as Marketing Coordinator Debbie Tyson and other enthusiastic Schnitzer employees engaged in friendly conversation with art lovers. Art connoisseurs nibbled

on catered sushi and sipped wine as Lachman, smartly fitted in an ash jacket, smiled proudly and gave his well-humored opening remarks to the crowd. Gazing out at the zealous audience over his artsy glasses, he jokes, "This is our first all 3-D showcase, so you can only imagine the installation problems!" After his remarks, the crowd ventured upstairs to begin the ceramic experience. Tranquility overcame the guests, calm embracing them in a hushed atmosphere of scarlet walls and softened lighting.

Despite a few gasps, the visitors were speechless as they lingered about the room, eyeing each piece with admiration. *Autumn Mountain* is a piece by Hyang Lim that looks as though a rugged chunk of rock was stolen from a far cliff and kissed with a smear of vibrant color to look like a work of art and not a piece of nature. In a far corner stands an almost melancholy clay torso, its bowed head pointing to a torn open hole in its stomach. The hole reveals a set of elegant white wings that capture a true sense of purity. Artist Young Sil Han gave life to this sculpture, *Place of Heart*, and its twin of a frostier color scheme, *Frozen Wings*.

In the Tradition Transformed section of the show, a long outstretched table holds an array of classic enlarged pots. In the line, Soon Hyung Kwon's *Pulsation* called for attention with its energetic indigo coloring. But not every ceramic in the showcase is as elaborate in its first impression. "One of my favorites is just a plain, white porcelain piece that is made of very thin eggshell material. I like it because it seems so simple, but the more you look at it, and because there is no decoration, it forces you to focus on their subtleties," Lachman says of his preferred piece, Sung Min An's *Origins of Life*.

Among these creations is the ceramic art done by the show's curator and potter herself, Chung Hyun Cho. Cho is a professor and former Dean in the Department of Ceramics, at the Ewha Women's University's College of Art in Seoul. Her works have traveled far across the world, landing everywhere from the Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena, California all the way to the Musée Royal de Mariemont in Morlanwelz, Belgium.

Her choices for this tour unite a cultural bond between older Korean ceramic tradition and contemporary work. These choices have the ability to please fans of original ceramic techniques in addition to those who favor modern pieces. Her work certainly pleased Lachman. "When I received the proposal for this exhibition, I was very excited because it fit so well with what we were trying to do, that is on one hand, keeping the Asian connection to the museum, but also to find something contemporary that would engage the larger community because there is a large interest in this field, especially in ceramic art."

The tour will be traveling to multiple museums on the West Coast including the Honolulu Academy and the infamous Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. The University of Oregon, thanks to

"For a lot of people who work in ceramic art, there is something almost magical about what happens in the kiln."

multiple grants, is the only university that will house the showcase.

In addition to several Wednesday lectures offered, professor and featured artist Heh Ja You, who specializes in Celadon ceramics, will be giving a demonstration of the



ABOVE: Many of Young Sil Han's pieces concentrate on the hidden spirit and its search for liberation.

complexities of ceramics in the museum's art studio. Curator Lachman feels that this particular form of ceramics takes prime concentration. "It

happens inside: keeping the temperature even, adjusting the amount of oxygen and everything." This meticulous craft will be demonstrated will on April seventh from one to four in the afternoon.

The art of ceramics brings forth a mystical quality that sparks an element of mystery for its makers. Each piece placed in the fiery kiln is an unknown path that might lead to disappointment, or if its maker is lucky, to greatness. Lachman feels that the show's title, *From The Fire*, captures this idea: "At some level, there still is that element of surprise. It is based on taking earth and heating it and just seeing what happens." -Katherine Vetrano

really explores the chemical side of pottery. For a lot of people who work in ceramic art, there is something almost magical about what happens in the kiln. There is so much in the development of kiln technology that is based on trying to control what