

Upon the Exhibition, "Broken Whole"

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Yee Sookyung, born in 1963 in Korea, lives in one of the largest and most modern major cities of Asia, in Seoul, the capital of Korea. Here she studied painting from 1987-89, at the College of Fine Arts of National University.

International contemporary art has long arrived in Korea. Also the cultural activities with galleries, museums and manifold biennials have reached the globalized standard of western forms of distribution. Her studio is located in a quarter of Seoul where one can still feel the traditional Korea, with houses of simple construction clinging together densely crowded. It consists of a few wooden buildings in light-weight manner, covered by simple roofing, and has an inner courtyard, sheltering a storage with innumerable pottery fragments.

The shards have been collected in the numerous ceramics villages of Korea by the artist herself, from Icheon, Yeosu, Gwangju, Danyang, Mungyeong, Hadong, Gangjin and Buan. Among those, the ceramics village Icheon is the largest, with manufactories of over eighty companies. Some of the special pieces were dug out by the artist from their old dumpsites. Every two years, there is even held a "World Ceramics Biennial".

The Korean ceramic techniques that were introduced more than a thousand years ago from China and then developed further are highly regarded all over Asia. Japanese traditional ceramics are influenced as well by Korean craftspeople whose knowledge reached Japan in 16th century, when the country was first invaded. The Jade green tint of Seladon ceramic objects of the Goryeo Dynasty, also known as the Golden Age of ceramics, is of an incomparable beauty. The glazing techniques that were developed in this time are applied until this day. Also, the white porcelain of Joseon Dynasty has been praised widely. It seems likely for younger artists to refer to ceramics, but only few dare to go beyond traditional techniques. Yee Sookyung is rightfully counted among the important and independent younger artists of Korea and is about, as her exhibitions and participations in group shows state, to be acknowledged outside of her home country's borders. Her art has the unshackled

freedom of current inventions, devoid of any academic traditionalism, and yet her work is, and that makes it so interesting, closely connected to the long standing culture of Korea. From the shards mentioned above, mostly painted blue and white glazed ceramics, which she assembles around a core structure, she develops strange sculptures of abstract beauty. The seems are endued with gold in an antique manner, so that the impression of an assemblage disappears completely. The viewer means to see ceramic figures which were burned in the oven in this shape given by the artist.

Although ceramic material undoubtedly defines the sculptures, we are not confronted with ceramics in the usual sense but with a montage technique that avails itself from broken material, discarded as worthless, like classic montage techniques in the West who, since Dadaism, turned towards 'poor' materials.

Grand was her impression in one of the so far biggest and first Museum exhibitions in Germany, summer 2009 in a baroque palace Oranienburg, near Dessau. In the hall of leather tapestries and the chinoise rooms of the palace not only her sculptures were at display, but also her wonderful drawings, large format sheets with finest lineages. Also her 'Buddhist Para Vent Screen', an object with religious paintings, manufactured in traditional manner of old models by a traditional painter on behalf of Yee Sookyung, shows her deep involvement with Korean culture to the point of religious topics. The Buddha figure that is painted on each part of the screen turns his back on the viewer.

In the small prayer- and meditation room that can be swiftly assembled with its movable wings, wisdom and enlightenment that is primarily reflected in his face are inaccessible for the eye. Just like in her ceramic sculptures, here too Yee Sookyung's critical concern with the cultural past of her country in intelligent inventions is evident. Exactly this embrace gives her art the depth that goes far beyond the present.

Eugen Blume