

Artist's Statement

I choose to work functionally because clay has an inherent characteristic that fosters utility. Moreover, I want to create work that is tangible for the viewer. I feel that functional objects signify the everyday and everyone has constant contact with these objects within the context of their own lives, homes, and worlds. I feel that function creates a viable entry point for most viewers to move beyond the threshold, and into the world of the arts.

Currently, as I make my own work, I reference the everyday objects of Asian culture. Imagery embroidered on clothing is encoded with auspicious meaning, enchanting the everyday lives of the wearer by allowing the richness and significance of the world to emerge. Our lives should constantly be touched by the beauty and significance of what we at first glance, consider the mundane.

I have taken patterns from the stylized linear landscapes of Korean screen paintings, colors from Japanese lacquer-ware, and compositional arrangements from various Asian textiles. I have gleaned cloud-like masses and undulating geometric lines to create abstract patterns that compliment my vessels. I borrow from the dense symbolic language that has been cultivated throughout Asia for centuries, and I imbue my pottery with auspicious imagery to bring good luck to the user. I am infatuated with the layering of patterns and textures, creating visual rhythm and energy, defining space, and alluding to the evidence of the passage of time.

I aim to forge a subtle balance of dualities in the work that I create. I juxtapose the eloquent and the satirical, the organic and the geometric, and the sublime and the mundane. As objects, my work embodies the passive, and as functional vessels, my work signifies the active.

Heeseung Lee, Statement