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IN BETWEEN

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IN BETWEEN

by

Wansoo Kim

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the supervision of Professor Margaret Bohls

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IN BETWEEN

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University of Nebraska, 2018

Advisor: Margaret E. Bohls

In my eyes, the world is composed of both revealed things and hidden things. I interpret my surroundings based on this idea, seeking to realize my ignorance and awareness. With this in mind, I create objects in which dichotomous ideas are present, and use their physically revealed and hidden aspects in order to represent the greater human struggle to see and understand what is hidden from us.

The notion of inside and outside is one of my particular subjects. Upon observing an object or a structure, we see only its external reality. I aim to present the unobservable, often presenting the inner reality of things at the same time as I present the apparent outer reality. In this respect, my works can become a gate leading viewers to an invisible space, counteracting the conception that what we see is everything.

I also question what sustains our daily lives. An individual's beliefs and perceptions are created not only by personal history, memory and experience, but also by society's tradition and culture, accumulated throughout human history. I interpret this invisible background as a spiritual support for individuals by materializing it as physical supports. Thus the idea of verticality and horizontality is another fundamental in my works. I see great value in the physicality of human beings and all structures under the force of the gravity. The ground is horizontal and is our base. We always stand vertically on the ground. On top of legs or columns is the ceiling or the roof, sandwiching us

between two horizontal lines. Vertical structures are a symbol representing human beings. I am aware of their struggle to overcome gravity. In this respect I focus on developing and expressing an imagery of verticality, which is a form compiled of vertical structures that I have observed such as a column, the legs of humans and animals, and ordinary table legs.

These ideas become more tangible when they are articulated in formal qualities in the works. Physical dichotomy exists in the works as a natural phenomenon. Masses and spaces, regardless of the shapes and dimensions, are always composed of visible and invisible parts, defined by where we stand and what we perceive. I scrutinize and bridge this with the idea of inside and out, top and bottom, front and back, and vertical and horizontal structures. As I build a three-dimensional form, it naturally generates interior and exterior surfaces as well as vertical and horizontal structures. I am fully aware of these natural occurrences and apply my awareness of these physical dichotomies to my understanding of culture, society and human behavior, correlating ignorance/awareness with hidden/visible.

Within these natural occurrences, I manifest and exaggerate physical dichotomies through my formal decision-making with regard to the shape, structure, texture and color in my works. The idea of inside and out is present through both the entire gallery space and physical objects. Translucent screens, intended to emphasize my understanding of the space within this concept, divide the gallery into a navigation hallway and an interior viewing space. In my piece titled *Here and There*, the gesture of repeated objects as well as its contrasted color aid in clearly separating the two spaces in the work. In the piece titled *Compiled from History and Mundane Objects*, the interior of the jar, as opposed to

its exterior, is highlighted by its texture, color and the symbolic messages within it.

The idea of horizontality and verticality appears in the form of glaze, texture and the structures of the works in the closed space. The movement of the glazes is evidence of the force of gravity, accentuating hidden vertical structures in the abstract forms and amplifying the verticality in the other forms. On top of that, apparent functionality of vertical forms such as the cable, the table legs and the clay objects as supports augments the idea of verticality in the works. In contrast, snow-like rugged texture on some glaze surfaces, and the horizontal space of the tables, the ceiling tile and the lifted floor represent the idea of horizontality. Moreover, complementary colors are added to intensify the notion of dichotomy.

The works are an assemblage of recognizable and unidentifiable elements, intended to evoke an environment where realism and surrealism coexist. Through both distant interaction with the works and personal closer examination, the viewer's accessibility to the space and experience is restricted. The viewer's perception constantly shifts while navigating the gallery space and facing hidden details. By creating this experience for the viewer, I propose to question our perceptions, our beliefs, our ignorance and our awareness.

















