



FLORA EPHEMERA



Contributors: Rachael Kiang, Ruth Ju-Shih Li, Brenda May, Dr Jia-Haur Liang
Design: Jennifer Brady
ISBN:

*We acknowledge the Cameraygal people as traditional owners and sovereign custodians of the land on which Gallery Lane Cove is situated.
We extend our respects to all First Nations People.*



FLORA EPHEMERA

Ruth Ju-Shih Li

4 March - 3 April

This exhibition is sponsored by the Taiwanese Economic and Cultural Office in Sydney and the Australian Taiwanese Friendship Association.

Flora Ephemera is part of Gallery Lane Cove's Art Month Sydney 2021 curated program.

Ruth Ju-Shih Li is an artist-in-residence at Gallery Lane Cove + Creative Studios and is represented by MAY SPACE.



**Art
Month**
Sydney
4-28 March
2021

Cover Image: Ruth Ju-Shih Li, *A Still Life From a Distant Memory* (detail), 2021, raw clay, acrylic, light bulbs, soundscape. Dimensions variable. Photography by Jennifer Brady.

Inside Cover: Ruth Ju-Shih Li, *Bamboo Study 2*, 2021, raw clay, acrylic, bamboo. Dimensions variable. Photography by Jennifer Brady.

Left: Ruth Ju-Shih Li, *A Still Life From a Distant Memory* (detail), 2021, raw clay, acrylic, light bulbs, soundscape. Dimensions variable. Photography by Jennifer Brady.



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CURATORS STATEMENT

My ephemeral series are autobiographical. They are abstract self-portraits not for narcissistic reasons but as an act of reflection for myself as the idea started as a meditation. In fact, they were personal meditative works that I never thought I would show in public. I take local raw clay and build, on site, elaborate floral-inspired organic forms that mirror the human figure. The pieces then slowly disintegrate throughout the duration of the exhibition; breaking down, melting, eroding and returning back to the earth. The clay is then collected, recycled and transformed into new reiterations of this ongoing work.

A few years ago, a close friend of mine passed away from leukemia and both my father and brother were also battling cancer. These events prompted a deep contemplation on the idea of life, death and the concept of time. For me these impermanent sculptures are, in my own way, an exploration of the ephemeral nature of the human condition. However, the purpose is to convey my personal narrative. Through exploring my own vulnerability and spirituality, I hope to connect with others so, in turn, they can see themselves in my work.

Reflecting on certain social and cultural dilemmas surrounding the Chinese diaspora across three generations of my family has also inspired my search for a universal language, not necessarily as a system of sounds or syntax of words but a deeper, more primal methodology of communication - one that engages the senses and borders on the spiritual.

The long and rich history of ceramics is one of the many reasons why I choose to use this medium. It is humble, mundane and organic. From Chinese imperial porcelain, to your everyday IKEA cup, to the terracotta chai vessels on the streets of India, ceramics is everywhere. It is very accessible and most people can easily associate with it. Clay is also the most common material for the creation of humans in various creation stories across different cultures and mythologies. This familiarity is what I am looking for in my search for a common language, one that is not limited to a particular culture, class or religion.

RACHAEL KIANG
CURATOR



Ruth Ju-Shih Li, *Bamboo Study 2*, 2021, raw clay, acrylic, bamboo. Dimensions variable. Photography by Jennifer Brady.



Ruth Ju-Shih Li, *A Still Life from a Distant Memory* (detail), 2021, raw clay, acrylic, light bulbs, soundscape.
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ARTIST STATEMENT

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RUTH JU-SHIH LI
ARTIST

MAY SPACE

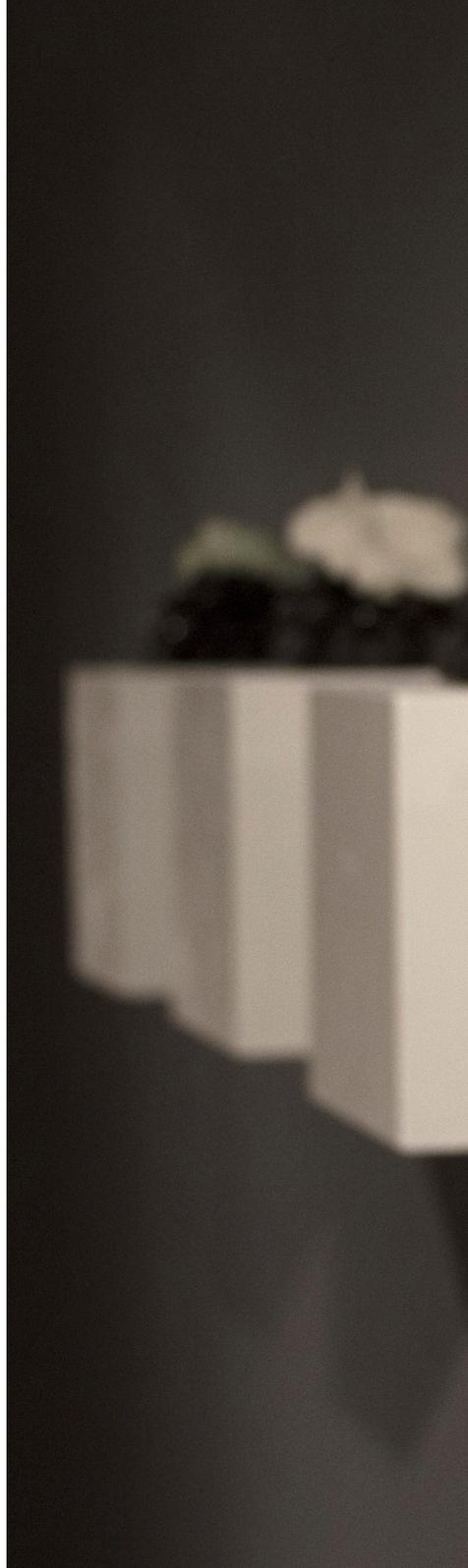
I knew nothing about Ruth Ju-Shih Li when I first saw her work, but I was drawn to it immediately. I was looking for new ceramic artists to add to the MAY SPACE exhibition, *Ceramic Revisions*. A series of shows held every few years offering exceptional artists a platform to show their work.

On delving deeper into her practice and her ephemeral work in particular, I remember thinking who would create such beautiful work that only had such a short life - then I spent some time with her and it all fell into place.

Dedicated and serious about her profession, Ruth has chosen clay to make a personal statement about 'the fleetingness of life'. She moulds, twirls and kneads the clay and porcelain into impossibly fragile pieces that exemplify the concept of Memento mori, all things must die. That does not mean the exquisite works are in any way morbid, just the opposite, they are full of life and spirit, just like their maker.

Although working and exhibiting extensively internationally until last year, I do not doubt that Ruth will continue to make her mark here and overseas despite the temporary setback caused by the pandemic, and I look forward to watching her practice continue to flourish.

BRENDA MAY
DIRECTOR
MAY SPACE





Ruth Ju-Shih Li, *Bubble Series I-V*, 2021, Australian black clay, porcelain. Dimensions variable. Photography by Jennifer Brady.



Ruth Ju-Shin Li, *Dusk & Dawn*, 2020, Australian black clay, porcelain. Dimensions variable. Photography by Jennifer Brady.

FLORA EPHEMERA

Ruth Ju-shih Li was born in Taipei, Taiwan in 1992 and currently lives in Sydney, Australia. She is a young artist full of passion and vitality. Since she graduated from the National Art School (Ceramics) in 2013, she has actively participated in international exhibitions and competitions, and has been active in the international art residency, such as Jingdezhen, Taipei and Thailand. She constantly absorbs various nutrients from all over the world to become the driving force for her art practice today.

Ruth studied Ceramic Art as her major, starting from ceramic utensils to ceramic objects, now she has gradually transformed into conceptual art. Recently, she created a series of ephemeral works. In 2019, she showed this series of works in her solo exhibition at the Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taipei. This is an important milestone for her art career, especially in her hometown. Her work Florilegium was also awarded Special Prize in 2020 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale. This is also her very important achievement.

Ruth's ceramic work is innovative in approach. Her ephemeral works reveal a contradictory feeling, both huge and fragile, meticulous but short-lived, to think about the meaning of time and the impermanence of life. Her works not only subvert the definition of ceramics, but also open up new possibilities for ceramics. There is no doubt that as her career moves forward Ruth will continue to challenge the boundaries of ceramics and art.

JIA-HAUR LIANG PHD USYD
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN CERAMICS
CRAFTS AND DESIGN DEPARTMENT
NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY OF ARTS

李如詩 (Ruth Ju-shih Li) 1992年出生於台灣台北，自幼便隨家人移民到澳大利亞定居於雪梨，她是一位充滿熱情與活力的青年陶藝家。2013年她從國立藝術學院National Art School畢業後，便努力積極參加國際間的展覽活動和競賽，並活躍於許多國際藝術駐村機構，例如：中國景德鎮，新北市鶯歌和泰國等。她憑藉著吸收來自世界各地的養份，成為她藝術創作上源源不絕的動力。

李如詩在大學時主修陶瓷藝術，學習的範疇從工藝器物的製作到抽象造形的創作表現，如今她的創作又逐漸朝觀念藝術發展。近幾年她開啟了一系列名為「短暫性」的觀念創作，頗具實驗性，透過未燒成的瓷土去呈現黏土材質本身的潔白與脆弱，作品揭示了一種強烈的矛盾感受，巨大但脆弱，細緻卻短暫，引發觀者思考時間的意義和生命旅程的無常。2019年時，她在新北市立鶯歌陶瓷博物館舉辦個展，正式發表了這一系列的作品，此展覽是她藝術生涯的一個重要里程碑，尤其是在她的家鄉舉辦別具意義。此外，這一系列的作品《Florilegium》獲得了2020台灣陶藝雙年展的優選獎，相信這也是她很重要的成就。

簡言之，觀看李如詩的創作，有別於一般陶藝強調土與火的詮釋表現，她的作品不僅顛覆了陶瓷的定義，也為陶藝創作開拓了新的可能性。隨著她的藝術生涯邁進，期待她繼續挑戰與創新，使當代陶藝的樣貌更加多元與豐富。

梁家豪PHD USYD
國立臺灣藝術大學
工藝設計學系副教授
陶瓷工作室主持人



Ruth Ju-Shih Li, *A Still Life from a Distant Memory*, 2021, raw clay, acrylic, light bulbs, soundscape.
Dimensions variable. Photography by Jennifer Brady.

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