

# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



Young-Jae Lee, 3 *Spinach Bowls*, 2010, vitrified clay with manganese, ash feldspar glaze, photo: Denis Bury, Essen

## YOUNG-JAE LEE *Spinach Bowls*

June 19 – August 29, 2020

Opening: Friday, June 19, 2020, 12 – 7 pm

Galerie Karsten Greve is pleased to present a second solo exhibition featuring ceramics by Korean artist Young-Jae Lee in Cologne. On display are one hundred and sixty *Spinach Bowls* – dining and drinking bowls created over a period of almost twenty years. The small, bulbous jars have their special aesthetic appeal due to their diverse glazes.

Born in Seoul in 1951, Young-Jae Lee moved to Germany in 1972. Following her studies of ceramics and design at Wiesbaden University of Applied Sciences from 1973 to 1978, she ran her own workshop in Sandhausen near Heidelberg. Since 1987, Young-Jae Lee has been head of the long-established Margaretenhöhe Ceramics Workshop in Essen. With Bauhaus principles serving as a guide, the ceramic artist is striving for perfection in the formal idiom and color range as used by her workshop in Essen: "I'm not at all interested in reinventing form," says Young-Jae Lee, "but in having absolute command of the existing repertoire." Featured in extensive museum exhibitions, Young-Jae Lee's ceramic pieces have attracted considerable attention: taking as her starting point the simple form of a bowl, a vase, or a mug, widely scattered over the floor in numerous variants, the artist placed 1,111 bowls in the rotunda of Munich's Pinakothek der Moderne in 2006, for instance. In 2008, Young-Jae Lee reenacted such uniqueness in sequence by arranging her so-called spindle vases in the same space. The artist first presented her *Spinach Bowls* – a series of works that originated from her delving into the history of the tea bowl – at Essen's Museum Folkwang in 2019.

Trends in Korean ceramics influenced the development of Japanese ceramics and porcelain. Examples of classical Korean ceramic wares include the Celadon ceramics from the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392) as well as the white ceramics from the Joseon dynasty (1392-1897). During the Joseon dynasty, Korean ceramic wares were considered to represent the highest quality of achievement from royal, city, and provincial kilns. These

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products were export articles. In the 16th century, the golden age of Korean ceramics, Korean ceramists produced their own drinking and dining bowls exclusively as tea bowls for the Japanese market, thus supporting the development of an excellent new ceramics culture. Inspired by the masters of the Joseon dynasty, Young-Jae Lee created her own aesthetically pleasing and simple pieces. She adopted the shape of the traditional Korean ceramic bowls and redefined it for her own drinking and dining bowl – the *Spinach Bowl*.

Young-Jae Lee loves to throw the same vessel type a hundred times over, because repetition creates manifold possibilities. Most *Spinach Bowls* have a simple, barely visible base ring. The bowl itself bulges upwards. It is about two thirds wider than it is high. This gives the impression that the bowls are aligned horizontally rather than vertically. The *Spinach Bowls* have an almost uniform height between 7 and 8.5 centimeters (between 2.75 and 3.35 inches) and a diameter of 11 to 12 centimeters (4.3 to 4.7 inches). The transition from the round-bellied shape of the bowl to its rim is relatively straight or slightly curved. The inside of the base shows snail-like or concentric traces of rotation. Despite their uniformity, each *Spinach Bowl* has its own distinctive character. What gives them their individual peculiarity is their ceramic glazes; some bowls have earthy and reddish-brown glazes, others have whitish to light brown ones. White, gray, or bluish glazes, known from the artist's early bowls, are rarely found now.

Presented by Galerie Karsten Greve in Cologne, Young-Jae Lee comes across as an artist who is a mediator between Korean and Japanese, Asian and European culture, whose works merge the ancient tradition of Korean ceramics with modern art specifically European in character.

Accompanying the exhibition, two publications will be available at Galerie Karsten Greve in Cologne:

*Young-Jae Lee. Das Grün in den Schalen*, with introduction by Peter Gorschlüter, ed. by Gisela Jahn, Nadine Engel, Museum Folkwang Essen, (to be published in late June 2020). Approx. 30.00 euros.

*Young-Jae Lee. Arbeiten in Keramik*, Galerie Karsten Greve, with texts (G | E | F) by Mario von Lüttichau, Thomas Wagner, 2018. 20.00 euros.

## ABOUT GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

Karsten Greve has been a successful art dealer for fifty years. He opened his first gallery in 1973 with a solo exhibition of Yves Klein and Cy Twombly in Cologne. He then opened additional premises, one in Paris (Rue Debelleyme) in 1989 and one in St. Moritz (Via Maistra) in 1999. Galerie Karsten Greve ranked from the beginning as a leading gallery worldwide and is regularly represented at international art fairs such as the Art Basel shows, FIAC and TEFAF. The gallery organises important individual exhibitions of renowned international artists such as Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Joseph Cornell, Willem De Kooning, and WOLS. Its program is determined by the owner's personal contact to artists of the international post-1945 avant-garde, such as Cy Twombly, Louise Bourgeois, Jannis Kounellis, John Chamberlain, and Pierre Soulages. Karsten Greve's long-standing collaboration with artists such as Gotthard Graubner, Pierre Bloch and Leiko Ikemura has contributed significantly to them achieving worldwide recognition. The gallery, which is representing about thirty artists, is constantly being expanded to include rising young artists like Georgia Russell, Claire Morgan, Gideon Rubin, and Raúl Illarramendi. Galerie Karsten Greve is equally well known for its solo exhibitions and its highly ambitious accompanying catalogue productions.

## PRESS CONTACT

Dr Cornelia Manegold  
Tel. +49 (0)221 257 10 12  
c.manegold@galerie-karsten-greve.de

We are happy to provide you with images of the works shown in the exhibition.