



WAVE HILL SUNROOMPROJECTSPACE

April 22 - June 4, 2023

JAE HI AHN

The Condolence Message

JAE HI AHN

Born 1975, Seoul, South Korea
Lives in Queens, NY

The Condolence Message, 2023
Microcentrifuge tubes, wire, glue, wood,
watercolor on paper, paper cutout,
stoneware clay, porcelain clay, glaze
Courtesy of the artist

Jae Hi Ahn's work centers on community well-being and human relationships to nature, racism and sexism through installation, sculpture, drawing and photography. Her site-specific installation *The Condolence Message* incorporates porcelain pieces, a sculpture of microcentrifuge tubes and cutouts of floral watercolors that bind the past to the present. Based in part on a sympathy letter that a 16th-century ancestor wrote to his late wife—who passed due to postpartum-related complications—and on a condolence-message project that circulated during the Covid-19 pandemic, the artist has created a space dedicated to communities who are suffering physical, emotional, mental and spiritual trauma because of social inequity.

Ahn's teacups and plates are inspired by *Baekja Myeonggi*, white porcelain ceramics found inside the coffin of Mrs. Kwak, the late wife of Ahn's ancestor Minhak Ahn. Also informing the work is *Jesa*, the Korean memorial service that honors ancestors on the day of their death with offerings such as rice, dried fish and fruit. Plastic microcentrifuge tubes typically used for processing biological samples, metamorphose grief into hope. Cutouts of fantastical watercolors of flowers found in Wave Hill's gardens, loosely based on letters of the Korean alphabet and incorporating images of traditional Korean accessories, weave history, culture and the quotidian into a web of care. Flowers such as the boat orchid (native to India, Southeast Asia, Australia) and the jade vine (indigenous to the tropical rain forests of the Philippines and endangered due to deforestation), carry symbolisms ranging from love to resilience across cultures.

Jae Hi Ahn's work has been presented widely in New York at venues that include Chashama, NYC; Steinhardt Conservatory Gallery at Brooklyn Botanic Garden; Broadway Windows at New York University; The Field Sculpture Park at Art Omi, Ghent; Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, NYC; LMCC's Arts Center at Governors Island; and Nathan Cummings Foundation, NYC. She has been awarded grants from the Puffin Foundation, Brooklyn Arts Council Community Arts Regrant (NYCDCA), LMCC Swing Space Grant, and has participated in residencies at Stone Quarry Hill Art Park, Cazenovia, NY; Ragdale Foundation Residency, Lake Forest, IL; Urban Artist Initiative Fellowship, New York, NY; and Sculpture Space Residency, Utica, NY. Ahn earned a BFA in sculpture from Chungnam National University, South Korea, and an MFA from Long Island University Post, Brookville, NY.

PUBLIC PROGRAM: SAT, JUN 3, 2 PM, *Meet the Artist*

Organized by Curator of Visual Arts Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger, the Sunroom Project Space provides an opportunity for New York-area emerging artists to develop and exhibit a site-specific project as a solo show. The 2023 season features, consecutively, Jae Hi Ahn, Jacq Groves, Grace Troxell, Jill Cohen-Nuñez, Max Sarmiento and Bel Falleiros.

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