

OPEN MIND ART SPACE

OPEN CRAFT

ARIEL BRICE
IPEK KOTAN
FARZAN SABET
PAWENA THIMAPORN
SHOSHI WATANABE

NOVEMBER 13 - DECEMBER 11, 2021

OPENING RECEPTION:
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 5-9 PM

OPEN MIND ART SPACE

11631 SANTA MONICA BLVD.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90025

GALLERY HOURS:
THUR - SAT, 11AM - 5PM
OR BY APPOINTMENT



Clockwise from top left: Works by Shoshi Watanabe, Ariel Brice, Farnaz Sabet, Pawena Thimaporn and Ipek Kotan

Open Mind Art Space is pleased to present *Open Craft*, featuring functional ceramic objects by local Los Angeles artists **Ariel Brice**, **Farzan Sabet**, **Pawena Thimaporn**, and **Shoshi Watanabe**, and Netherlands-based artist **Ipek Kotan**. An opening reception will be held for the artists on **Saturday, November 13th from 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM**. *Open Craft* will be on view from **November 13 - December 11, 2021**. Gallery hours are Thursdays - Saturdays, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM, or by appointment. Per the latest LA City ordinance, proof of COVID-19 vaccination will be required to enter the gallery. Please note, the gallery will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday, November 25th and Friday, November 26th, and will resume regular business hours on Saturday, November 27th.

"The great thing about clay is that you can just squeeze it and have a beautiful thing.

The problem with clay is that you can just squeeze it and have a beautiful thing."

— Thomas Müller

The five artists of *Open Craft*, curated by **Thomas Müller**, are unified in their willingness to frame technical mastery as a point to begin from rather than something to arrive at. Conceptually rich, process intensive, and experimental, these artists use clay in a way that encourages us to move on from tired categorizations and value judgements surrounding what's 'Art' and what's 'Craft'. Instead, they provide a refreshing contrast by way of a rigorous and nuanced relationship to their chosen material in ways that can be as functional as they are poetic.

Ariel Brice (b. 1980, Pittsburgh, PA) is an artist, designer, craftsman and educator. He makes objects to explore the gaps between what he sees and what he perceives. "I am obsessed with the difference between the way that we look at things and the way that we handle, touch, and access things," Brice reflects. As his artwork is produced and consumed by his consistently faulty human eye, the contentious relationship between optical and physical experience remains central to his studio inquiry. These frictions echo the slippage that occurs between the ideal and the actual states of being in which we live.

Ariel Brice is passionate about all things ceramics – having studied and practiced the art and craft for more than two decades. He earned his MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, MI. Before moving to Los Angeles, Brice taught at UW-Madison in Wisconsin and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA and held residencies at the Pottery Workshop in Jingdezhen, China and *sundaymorning@ekwc* in the Netherlands, and more recently was a designer-in-residence at *Studiomake* in Bangkok, Thailand. In Los Angeles, Brice has taught at ArtCenter College of Design, USC and Fahrenheit Ceramics. His works are exhibited locally and internationally. Recent exhibitions include "House Museum" (group) curated by Alex Reed and "Transform, Transmit" (solo) at Open Mind Art Space - both in Los Angeles, CA. He currently lives and works in Glendale, CA.

Ipek Kotan's (b. 1977, Istanbul, Turkey) work stems from a visceral need to create with her hands using natural materials and a love of the vessel form. This ubiquitous form, still one of the most essential in daily life even after 30,000 years since its invention, is for her, the embodiment of timelessness, endurance and the universality of the human experience. Generosity, openness, sharing and offering are the core of a vessel's DNA, weaving it tightly into the better parts of the story of humankind. Kotan is interested in what the vessel symbolizes historically and metaphysically rather than its potential as a functional object and uses it as a canvas and frame in which she explores sculptural, modern and minimalist expressions. Even the slightest adjustment to the angle or sharpness of a rim, the thickness or the contour of a wall, the relationship of textures and colors between the interior and the exterior can make a world of difference in the character of her pieces. This exploration of nuances is the essence of her work.

Ipek Kotan studied media arts with an emphasis on photography at Emerson College in Boston, USA. She later attended Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in Providence, USA and completed her foundation studies in which she explored drawing, painting, ceramics, and metal smithing. In 2008 she moved to England and received her master's degree in ceramics from Staffordshire University in Stoke-on-Trent in 2010. Public collections representing Kotan's works include the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in the Netherlands, and Staatliche Kunstmuseen Dresden and Museen der Stadt Landshut in Germany. Kotan received commissions from Cartier and Barneys New York, and her works are represented in over 250 private and public collections and museums worldwide. She completed a year-long residency at the European Ceramic Work Centre, now also known as *sundaymorning@ekwc*, a residency whose past artists included Anish Kapoor, Antony Gormley and Betty Woodman. Kotan has previously had solo shows in Freiburg, Berlin, Bath, Brussels and New York. Her next solo show will be in Boston at Pucker Gallery in 2023. Her work has been reviewed by renowned ceramic art critic Walter Lokau, former Christie's senior director, interior designer Richard Rabel, published in art publications such as *Ceramic Review*, *New Ceramics*, *Art Aurea* and popular magazines such as *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Maison Francaise* and *Elle Decor*. Kotan has previously lived in Turkey, the United States, Indonesia, England, Austria, and Switzerland and currently resides in Leiden, the Netherlands.

Farzan Sabet (b. 1981, Tehran, Iran) work focuses on the relationships between art objects and their function, and the artist and user. He reflects, "We wake up in the morning and grab our favorite coffee cup. We fill it with our favorite morning drink and we sit to enjoy it. The connection between the artist who created the coffee cup and the person who uses it, is what makes me enjoy making pottery. The perfection and the imperfection of the cup while being held by the hand of the person who uses it, compliment each other. The past and the present are in the same moment and it will last indefinitely."

Farzan Sabet was born and raised in Tehran, Iran, where he was exposed to both political and social unrest. Farzan moved to the United States to pursue a college degree at the age of 21. He attended Pierce College in Woodland Hills, California, with the intention of graduating with a degree in graphic design. However, after taking a beginning ceramic class, he changed his major to Ceramics and Illustration, and after obtaining his Associate's degree he transferred to California State University, Northridge, where he finished his Master of Arts degree, finding an elusive balance between form and surface. Farzan received his Master Of Fine Arts from Claremont Graduate University. He currently works at the University of Southern California as Ceramic lab technician and he is an adjunct professor teaching Ceramics at Glendale Community College, California. He has exhibited at several venues including Antelope Valley College, the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, Brainworks Gallery, and Torrance Art Museum.

Pawena Thimaporn's (b. 1970, Choonburee, Thailand) work is explorative and led by instinct. Her process begins with spontaneous ideas that play in her head. From sketches to clay to wheel to hand built techniques, her ceramic work transforms into a blend of organic and geometric shapes. The results lead to graphic and modernistic pottery both in shape and form. "Clay allows me to experiment with various textures and colors that speak to who I am, from simple, pure forms to more expressive graphic patterns," she explains. "Ceramics is my window back home and a chance to play with natural elements using my hands. Ultimately, it all begins and ends with hands, from the hands of the maker to the hands of the end user." Her recent series of functional ceramics is inspired by California's endangered native plants.

Pawena Thimaporn was born in the countryside of Thailand surrounded by nature. Her usual day when not in school was playing with the materials she found in nature around her: wooden sticks, clay and mud. Pawena began her career studying Industrial Design with a major in Ceramics at KMITL in Bangkok, Thailand. She then moved to the United States and completed an additional undergraduate degree in Graphic Design at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA. Since graduating 15 years ago, Pawena has been working full time in the design industry, but has always made sure to find time to make things by hand outside of work to keep her true passion alive. She had the opportunity to return to her first love of ceramic design with the founding of Pawena Studio in 2015. She lives and works in Los Angeles with her husband, also a graphic designer, and her two boys.

Shoshi Watanabe (b.1986, Tokyo, Japan) primarily works in the ceramics medium. His interest and practice ranges widely from functional utilitarian ware for restaurants, interior design objects, sculptural objects, and water filtration ceramic components. He explores the balance between function, art, and material in his work. He believes that clay in itself can lead to imaginations at the universal scale. Shoshi reflects, "I find ceramics to be a very interesting medium. As a practice, it is heavily dependent on material. Ultimately, ceramics is limited to what can be mined and mines do not last forever. At the same

time there is also a lot of room for experimentation, as things we use in daily life and our surrounding environment can be added to clay and glazes to give various effects. Ceramics has been used as an artistic medium, ritualistic device, in utilitarian tableware, and in industry for electronics and technology, including space shuttles. Limiting the term 'functional' to purely utilitarian dish ware excludes the other potentials for function. So I wonder - Can space shuttle panels be made by artists and still be functional? Will heavy sculptural tableware still be appreciated and received by chefs as functional, or will they become more sculptural?"

Shoshi Watanabe was born in Tokyo, Japan and spent 5 years of his childhood in the Soviet Union, which changed to Russia during his time there. He currently teaches at USC, and works as a ceramics lab technician at UCLA. Since 2019, he has run an experimental space called Zakka Bakka that operates as a gallery, workshop, and stage. Hosting events for musicians, chefs, wine makers, flower arrangers, and others (@zakkabakka.shop). Shoshi also performs the shakuhachi, a Japanese traditional instrument for festivals, cultural events, private performances, and soundtrack recordings. He currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

Thomas Müller (b. 1971, Cape Town, South Africa) is an Associate Professor of Ceramics and Chair of 3D Art at the Roski School of Art and Design at USC. He spent his childhood moving around the globe, his family following his father's career as a world class Chef. He earned his BFA at the University of Washington in Seattle and his MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, MI. He maintains an active studio practice from his home studio in Los Angeles, with recent solo shows in Riverside, Denver, Portland, and Los Angeles. While his own practice is firmly rooted in Sculpture, he has a deep love and respect for functional Ceramics and is thrilled for the opportunity to curate Open Craft, featuring some of the most exquisite functional Ceramics in Los Angeles and beyond.

Open Mind Art Space is a contemporary art gallery and alternative art space located in West Los Angeles. It features contemporary art from a diverse blend of talented emerging artists and it is dedicated to facilitating a curatorial process that allows its artists to create impactful work. Its mission is to inspire and challenge the local Los Angeles community by providing a comfortable, engaging space for reflection and dialogue.