

## Artist statement- Liat Livni

Incheon art platform July-August 2013

The works I have created during my two months stay at Incheon Art Platform, were influenced by visual and cultural research and found objects gathered while wandering South Korea for the first time.

When I arrived in Korea I was fascinated to learn of the ancient Silla Tombs, and soon traveled to Gyeongju to see them in person.



The thought about burying the dead back in the womb of "mother earth", led me to create the works ***The Secret Within***, thinking about a pregnant woman who is carrying an unseen secret for at least for 9 months.



*The Secret Within* / 2013 / synthetic turf ,polyurethane foam board and PVC / 38 x 28 x 11 cm



Pouring 5 tombs / 2013 / Squash ,Enamel ,synthetic turf ,polyurethane foam board and PVC / 48 x 80 x 48 cm

The idea for the **Pouring Tombs** works series emerged after a visit to the folk flea market, where I came across dried squashes scoops, which were used to in old times for pouring Makgeolli (Korean rice wine). The pouring of Makgeolli was replaced in my works with the pouring of tombs by an invisible hand that creates nature, like the magic of our creation.

The sculpture **Pouring 5 Tombs** also refers to the 5 mountains that represent the 5 elements in the Irworobongdo (일월오봉도 / 日月五峯圖), a painting of the sun, moon and the five peaks, which during the Joseon Dynasty was set behind the king's royal phoenix throne, which one can see in Korea visiting the different palaces.



Irworobongdo folding screen in National Museum of Korea.

The use of black color on the squash is borrowed from Najeon, the traditional Korean Nacre Lacquerware. The red color, also a common combination, is used to create a contrast with the green turf.

Amazed by Najeon, I set my mind on going to study this craft with Choi Jong-Kwan, a Najeon Master in Seoul. In the short time that I had (and definitely not enough), I learned this craft and experimented with it, trying to apply it on plastic bowls and plates, and not only on the customary wood, making the shift from a traditional craft to my contemporary art.



Pouring a tomb / 2013 / Lacquerware inlaid with mother-of-pearl on plastic / 35 x 24 cm

Looking back at this last year I realize the theme of death accompanied me. I stayed at two artist residencies before coming to Korea: In the Taitung Art Museum (Taiwan) which was built over a cemetery and at the Totenhause (The House of the Dead) in Hanover (Germany), which was part of a Jewish hospital to which bodies were brought before their burial.

While I was making these works in Korea, my beloved grandfather passed away, which made me feel even stronger about the ideas of creating tombs and being pregnant, burying the dead underground and growing life in a womb, my wish for the future.

From the beginning, Korea felt to me like a mysterious place and I think and hope that the works I have made here captured a little of the essence of that mystery.