



la BEAST gallery is pleased to present SYZYGY, an intimate installation of monumental ceramics and live plants by Henry Kim, founder and designer of HYUNUKO. Edified by science fiction, nature, fantasy, and eternity, the debut solo exhibition is comprised of 10 celestial vessels poised atop stacked towers of "Toobiture." Overflowing with exotic greenery, Kim's structures conjure visions of the hanging gardens of Babylon— or perhaps bear evidence of another world altogether. The term SYZYGY describes a conjunction of opposing forces, such as when the moon passes between the sun and Earth to form a complete solar eclipse. The exhibition is named for these fleeting moments of harmonic convergence that expand our understanding of the universe, yet emphasize humanity's infinitesimal presence on a galactic scale. Torn between earthly origin and heavenly aspiration, these paradoxical artifacts exude their own mystifying gravitas.

The opening reception of SYZYGY will be held at la BEAST gallery's exhibition space in Cypress Park, Los Angeles on Saturday, November 12th from 7-10p. The solo exhibition will be on view through December 17th, 2022.

About the Exhibition + Artist

The most comprehensive presentation of his works to date, SYZYGY is Henry Kim's labor-intensive homage to a daydream of cosmic gardens. From a distance, delicately gilded vases glow from an abyss, resembling planetary bodies in orbit. Upon closer inspection, each highly tactile container is adorned with golden symbols evocative of a full moon or distant sun. Reminiscent of geologic patterns, the variegated textures of Kim's works recall the ancient, deep-earth origins of pottery and make evident the arduous methodology behind their creation. Within the installation, viewers are transported to a strange oasis teeming with plant life.

A lover of stories, Henry Kim spends his days envisioning distant, fantastical lands and considering the relics that might exist among these unseen worlds. His mind wanders, leaving traces of his meditations as he molds mountains of clay. Kim is known for his opulent objects that blur the line between art and utility as well as past and future. Through relentless experimentation, the artist has cultivated a practice that fuses Onggi, a traditional Korean ceramic technique combining coil building and throwing, with contemporary marbling, which is the art of hand-mixing porcelain bodies with pigment. Embracing dualistic tension on all fronts, Kim renders timeless visions of luxury and necessity, exploiting the gravitational pull of natural opposites to sustain a conceptual voyage through the cosmos. This unlikely axis manifests as an ephemeral portal into botanical dimensions.

Considering history on a universal and individual level, Kim draws on personal experience to inform his visions of the future. The artist was born in 1991 and raised by his mother in Northeast Los Angeles. Kim holds a bachelor's degree in Literature from the University of Redlands and had intentions of going to law school, but a chance encounter with an



introductory ceramics course sparked his devotion to the artform. Upon graduation, Kim began working with the Haas Brothers, eventually becoming Head of Ceramics at the renowned LA-based art and design studio. In 2021, Kim launched his personal practice under the name HYUNUKO, which is a combination of Kim's Korean name, Hyun-Woo, and his mother's maiden name, Ko. Kim describes his mother as his biggest supporter and source of inspiration.

The exhibition is informed by Kim's fascination with the utilitarian basis of ceramics and their gradual evolution as art objects. This fusion of past and future appears throughout the multifaceted planes of SYZYGY. Coupled with an understanding of clay as a crucial element in the development of electronics, Kim's continuation of time-honored ceramic traditions express humanity's most revolutionary and enduring achievement. Through SYZYGY, Kim investigates clay as integral to our relationship with the eternal, both in its ability to withstand millennia when fortified by flame, as well as its role as shepherd in humanity's new digital age.