

On Vessels

November 20 – December 20, 2025

Opening reception: Thursday, November 20, 2025
From 6 to 8pm

Bienvenu Steinberg & C is pleased to present *On Vessels*, an exhibition featuring Koo Bohnchang (b. 1953, Seoul), Jane Yang D'Haene (b. Seoul), and Peter Kim (b. 1967, Seoul). The exhibition will be on view from November 20 through December 20, 2025, with an opening reception on Thursday, November 20, from 6 to 8 PM. Through photography, ceramic and painting, the three Korean artists approach the vessel as both a physical object and conceptual metaphor. Both a literal and spiritual archive, the vessel is a testament to continuity, identity and transformation.

A pioneer of Korean photography, Koo Bohnchang has reinterpreted traditional aesthetics through a contemporary lens. After encountering, in 1989, a photograph of the Anglo-Austrian potter Lucie Rie posing with a Korean moon jar, he became interested in ceramics as conduits of history: "The vessel seemed to me as if it was waiting to be rescued and yearning for its hometown... I still remember its imposing and stoic presence—standing next to Rie not like an ornament but her lifelong partner." Koo began to seek out and photograph vessels displaced from Korea in museum collections in Japan, Europe, and the United States. Koo captures the quiet perfection of these vessels as meditations on displacement, memory, and care, magnifying the modest and elevating the everyday. His frontal, shadowless compositions monumentalize the delicate forms. "In photographing the white porcelain series, I approached each pot in the museum display and in the archival collection cautiously, as if to discretely unveil a demure model in portraiture." Vividly charged, the photographs lean toward abstraction with the presence of a Constantin Brancusi sculpture, and the softness of a Giorgio Morandi painting.

Jane Yang D'Haene began her practice through the examination of the moon jar, traditionally associated with purity, balance, and generosity of spirit. She has deconstructed the form over time, to develop a deeply personal language. Working in clay has become for her an act of acceptance—a translation of lived experience into tactile expression. Her recent works challenge traditional notions of refinement, their ruptured surfaces conveying both strength and vulnerability. "In Korea, people are often described as vessels. A generous and open-hearted person is said to be a big vessel (큰그릇), while someone shallow or narrow in spirit is called a small vessel (작은그릇). When I was growing up, my parents always told me to become a big vessel. Through this body of work, I wanted to explore what that really means. To me, being a big vessel is about the capacity to embrace others... even the smallest vessels can hold compassion." In her hands, clay becomes both container and mirror—recording her own gestures and imperfections as evidence of endurance and humanity.

In Peter Kim's paintings and drawings, vessels float and drift across ethereal grounds, embodying his ongoing fascination with the sea as a site of passage and transformation. Each painting becomes a vessel in its own right, a container of meaning and a craft of transit. His white brushstrokes repeat rhythmically, alternately veiling and revealing the ground beneath. These marks, at once tender and austere, form a poetics of space built on abundance and restraint. Kim's world is otherworldly and mineral, suspended between quiet and disquiet, solitude and longing for community—a landscape of vessels adrift on the incorporeal river of time. "It is above all relevant to make explicit reference to the traditional Korean adage that each person's life is akin to a bowl: some will be larger and some smaller, some will be fuller and some less full. (...) This adage points to what may be the fundamental and most enduring symbolic significance of vessels: that of the human body as a vessel for the soul. For any painting, any drawing, is a kind of vessel, a container or receptacle, and at the same time a kind of craft that bears its cargo to safe haven." (George Stolz)

For more information, please email contact@bsandcgallery.com