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会议记录及图册

Conference Proceedings and Art Catalog

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and

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Competition and Exhibition



**Feyza  
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## Catching Shadows by Clay: A Critical Self-reading in Ceramic Art

### 用陶泥捕捉影子：陶瓷艺术中的重要阅读

#### Abstract

The shadow image has a layered meaning structure in the visual memory, thinking and belief systems of the Far East and the Middle East. The shadow play as a traditional performance art is a narrative technique in which particular shapes are reflected on a curtain utilizing a source of light. The figures, places, the life we call real like those in fictions seen on the curtain on which concrete reality is reflected are in fact considered as a dimension of reflection in various eastern beliefs – just like in shadow play. In a holistic sense, everything is, in fact, shadows which are a reference to the presence of a single source of light. Another perspective points to the fact that mere light or darkness means privation for our visual world and bases its explanations on this insight. In view of this, what enable us to perceive space and to describe what we see are the shadows...

The relation of ceramic work with light is to be understood as something that can reveal the relations in its structure, the pattern and the color for our eyes in a meaningful and pronounced way. The element the artist, forming his construction, and the spectator, watching the work of art, is the correct shadow. The opaqueness that translucent porcelains form within themselves indicates another use of shadows. The shadow dimension that ceramic shapes form by reflecting on their surfaces or by absorbing within a section enriches the work by making up provisional values.

In my pursuit of catching shadows, I see that shadows, which can offer different compositions in my visual interactions with the structures in city life at any moment, extend from building surfaces to the streets I

walk, to a garden and to another building, find meaning in ceramic buildings I created. The shadows that reflect on my works through the window of my workshop get fixated on ceramic surfaces. The shadow diaries I kept with passion through photographs or sketches for a long time have taken their place in porcelain structures I have built in recent years. I catch the shadows I borrowed on ceramic surfaces and give them life on my own curtain like a shadow play master.

In this article, I will demonstrate how the concept of shadow found its place in modern artistic mentality, and a self-reading will be done as to how empirical applications affect my artistic production. In this sense, I will explain how I interpreted the shadow images in my works through composition, relief and color tones.



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which makes use of light source to reflect certain forms on a curtain to narrate a motion story. "We can imagine Stone Age people, living in caves during the last Ice Age, sitting around open campfires fires that make fascinating shadows dance on the wall. Soon they would have discovered out how to use their bodies, hands or simple figures made from sticks, feather and animal skins, to help tell the old stories of their family and clan. The earliest forms of shadow puppet theatre are thought to have originated in Asia. Both India and China have extremely ancient shadow puppet tradition that still flourishes today...From out of India and China, the form spread across the globe, following trade routes to Turkey and Northern Africa, and even later to Europe and America" (1).

In some eastern beliefs, just like the figures and objects seen on the curtain reflecting physical reality, life is indeed no more than a mere reflection as a replica of shadow play. In holistic approach everything is actually composed of shadows that are references to the existence of one single light. According to a different point of view, pure light or darkness indicates nonexistence for our visual world hence they structure their interpretations on top of this approach. Accordingly, the existence of shadows enables us to define what we see and perceive the space. "We orientate ourselves by means of shadows and their nuances of black and white. As vestiges of the contact between light and objects they give us information about the characteristics of objects by betraying spatial dimensions and structures through their very existence. The superficiality of any material comes into being first of all by means of the smallest shadow. This is as valid for objects in our immediate environment - which are dependent on our immediate recognition of them as shadows - as for planets and stars. There are shadows in every dimension... Shadows are witnesses of the encounter between the material world and a world in which material things play only a minor role. They are the sole visible but yet immaterial substances, a passageway, a door between two worlds" (2).

Shadow itself is not physical but it is associated with physical object. This reflection could be dynamic too depending on the source of light or curtain. This dynamic condition allows us to reconsider the concept of temporariness by rethinking about the time dimension we are in. Together with all those meaning layers it possesses, the shadow presents a different dimension of reality in artistic expression and appears before us in a variety of uses in modern art. Kumi Yamashita's shadows

are figures which emerge silently on walls and which go beyond the reality of physical object that shapes it. Aluminum plate mold mounted on wall and source of light all call out through walls. Regarding the existence of distinct perspectives and judgments in his works,

Yamashita comments that: "Through my work I wish to remind ourselves of how we preconceive what is around and inside us. It is easy to passively turn to prepared information. Knowledge, ideas, and values are too often accepted without questioning" (3).

In expressions of modern performance,

as the subject itself the shadow calls us out from a dimension dissimilar to physical references. Performance shows of Director Larry Reed are brilliant artistic samples on this field. Theatre artist, filmmaker and shadow master, Larry Reed founded ShadowLight Productions in 1972 by to nurture indigenous shadow theater traditions and to explore and expand the possibilities of the shadow theatre medium by creating innovative interdisciplinary, multicultural works.

2009 dated play "Ghosts of the River" written by Octavio Solis and directed by Larry Reed is a multidisciplinary show composed of specially designed shadow puppets, actor-actress performances and music. Ghosts of the River features ShadowLight's hallmark shadow casting method, which combines the Balinese Traditional shadow theatre technique, the scale of film, and the immediacy of live performance. Performed behind and in front of a large (30' x 15') screen, Ghosts of the River tells the tales of extraordinary journeys utilizing silhouettes of puppets, masked-actors, and cutout sets, as well as projections and live music. This show, in addition to a great number of its fiction details,



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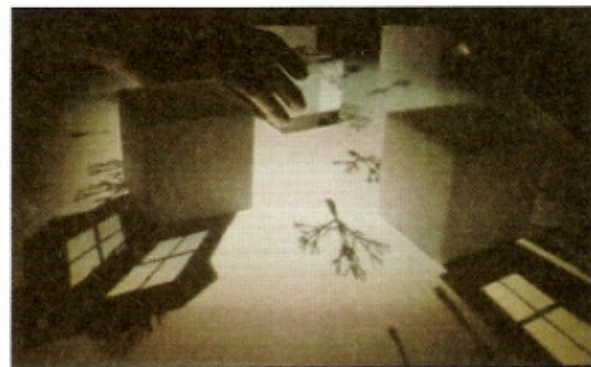
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the shadow itself as a visual element, the attitude of exclusive reality it embodies, is a perspective that should not be overlooked in this performance (4).

Such language of reflection stands before us commonly in a great number of modern art projects with digital artistic practices. Joon Y. Moon's work "Augmented Shadow" can be given as a sample. "Augmented Shadow" is a design experiment producing an artificial shadow effect through the use of tangible objects, blocks, on a displayable tabletop interface. Its goal is to offer a new type of user-experience. The project plays on the fact that shadows present distorted silhouettes depending on the light. Augmented Shadows take the distortion effect into the realm of fantasy. Shadows display below the objects according to the physics of the real world. However, the shadows themselves transform the objects into houses, occupied by shadow creatures. By moving the blocks around the table the user sets off series of reactions within this new fantasy ecosystem (5).



The final example I would like to render on digital shadow projects is Cynthia Pachikara's 2005 dated "Taking Place" which I deem to be parallel to my ceramic works on account of its way of thinking. This piece is part of a larger project entitled, "Shadow Catching." The

process employs a screen mounted to a 16 foot moving truck to isolate and record shadows from the urban environment. Like the impressions of the landscape framed through a windshield, images glide by at cruising speed to tell an abstract story of a city. At her installation titled "Shadow catching" (2006) two distant landscapes slide by each other on a bent screen. Shadows taken in the early morning light in Ann Arbor come along with silhouettes of coconut groves in Kerala, India, registering the 14-hour time difference between the two places (6).

The fact that light adds a different reality of meaning on the surface it falls on is an aesthetical value on its own in three-dimensional pieces of art like sculpture and ceramics. The amount of light fallen over ceramics creates dramatic changes in the perception of main structure. We are aware of a number of samples in which this quality affects the audience as a separate plastic element. The works where color white in particular is preferred or the porcelain is white to prefer the accentuated size effect of the main mass particularly are: The first name that comes to my mind is always Ruth Duckworth. The works of this artist are like plain and yet striking poems.

For those artists who work on light transparent porcelain, it is a real adventure to create shadows by controllably using the light. Margaret O'Rorke is among those artists having experienced this adventure. According to me, just to say "Margaret's porcelains" is simply ignoring another noteworthy element in her works. She is making her light shows by the help of her porcelains.

The connection of ceramic work with light requires that it exhibits the relationships in its composition, the texture and color in a comprehensible and accentuated way for our sight. The element that artist employs while composing size pattern and audience makes use of whilst watching the work is the accurately calculated amount and angle of light, the quality of shadow itself. Opacity formed by semi transparent porcelains within their own structure points to a different use of shadow. In semi transparent porcelains, the see the formation of





temporary values created by shadow dimension which emerge as the light is reflected on outer surface or absorbed inside the cut-off-wall.

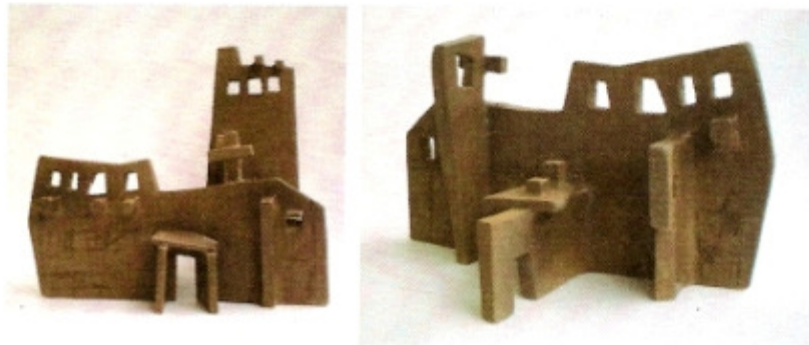
I have already mentioned earlier as I was mentioning the geography I live in that the deepest feeling people of this land possess is rapid changes and temporariness. That is why I acquired a personal intuition and awareness that there should be many traces on walls and earthenware in particular. This subjective sensitivity drove me to perceptual selectivity and eventually to an artistic point of view. As I glance over my shadow-catch adventure, I can see that those shadows that can present a different composition in urban life and fly from the surfaces of buildings to the streets I walk in, to a garden or another building find a meaning in the ceramic buildings I create. Parallel to Cynthia Pachikara's approach, I too try to fix the shadows reflected from the window of my studio to my works on ceramic surfaces. In the end, my shadow diaries that I have been long keeping with passion on photographs or sketches are finally settling in my recent porcelain structures. I catch the shadows I have borrowed on ceramic surfaces and start to vitalize them on my own curtain just like a shadow play director.

I realize that one of my inspirations for the shadows I try to catch via clay is the adobe structures of Central Anatolia. Finding out that historical roots of those clay structures are far too distant and witnessing their archeological traces allow me to visualize the forms I design as an architectural structure. In addition to my earthenware sculptures which reflect clay constructions, in my casted stoneware works too these constructions turn into pure prismatic structures.

Cast stoneware

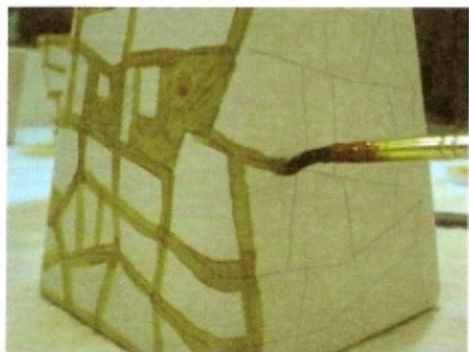


and porcelain surfaces enable me to employ the right technique for the illusion I want to create with shadows and compositions. Smooth surface and simple texture I possess with the right amount of light and light angle can offer me the dramatic contrast I need. I would rather prefer these forms make a finer preparation with a scene and light exclusive for them than establish a



communication between my works and audience in any given time, setting or light. That is exactly why the walls of my ceramic structures fall silent when not exhibited. Just like the curtain of a silent shadow play...They do not expose the shadows I attribute to them. When the right light for shadows is caught however, the stories appear on curtain.

I create each composition in my structures by consulting to my visual shadow diaries I took notes in sometime somewhere. I draw these notes on the surface

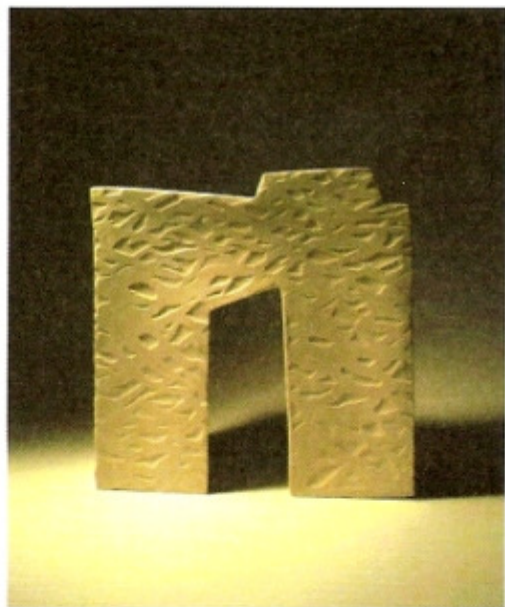


while they are unfired then via shellac resist technique I help them to become visible.

The stories I saw through the window of my studio in Kecskemet or Beijing or on the patio in Avanos or the ceiling in my house that shone at night with street lamps can all unite in the very same work. I pick the memories I like from the walls then bury them again in my own walls. I expect the audience as well to hear those voices and find those stories just like an archeologist...and eventually stories of the earth are being written on clay by help of the great and the unique light's presence.

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#### 摘要

阴影在远东和中东地区的视觉记忆，思维和信仰结构中有其一定的意义。皮影戏是传统表演的一种叙述形式，通过对光的利用，能够在表演中突出某个特定的形状。我们在银幕上看到的人物，场景和生活在东方观念中被看作是一种反射——正如皮影戏中的形象。综合来看，世间万物都是某个光源下的影子。换个角度来看，光明和黑暗，对于我们的感官来说，都可以被看作一种视觉世界的贫乏。这样来看，正是由于阴影的存在，才使我们能够感知并描述世间万物……

光就像是陶瓷作品的一种充满意义而明确的表达方式，为我们的双眼揭示了作品的结构，样式和色彩之间的关系。只有恰当的运用阴影，艺术家才能构思他的创作，观赏者才能欣赏艺术作品。阴影也能让通透的陶器内部呈现出一种半透明的状态。陶器表面或是局部反射形成的阴影面为作品添加了瞬时的意义，极大的丰富了作品的内涵。

在我捕捉阴影的过程中，我随时随地都能发现阴影，从建筑物的外观到行走的街道，从小花园到另一座楼房，我都会发现和城市之间的视觉互动，找到构建陶瓷世界的新意义。阴影会通过我工作室的窗子，映在我的作品上，在瓷器表面定格。我用照片和素描记录我的影子日记，而这些记录都被应用在了我近些年来的陶瓷结构中。我从瓷器的表面捕捉到了影子，并赋予了它们生命，就好像一名皮影戏大师一样。

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