



SUSIE CHOI

New South Wales

Susie Choi is an artist working across ceramics, sculpture and installation on Gadigal and Wangal land. Born in Auburn to South Korean migrant parents, Choi's latest body of work continues her exploration of materiality and perception. The interplay between hard and soft playfully dissects tensions around identity experienced by people of colour and children of migrants. The inflated life preserver form, an icon of the Australian Summer, has been rendered hard yet fragile and decorated with silk cord in the colours of children's traditional Korean hanbok clothing. Spheres and cubes reference aspects of material culture the artist grew up with, such as Korean vessels and cabinetry, while also speaking to memories of childhood learning and play.

Previous work by Choi incorporated the use of silk cord as a vehicle for creating cohesion across installations and as a tool for suggesting childhood memories. In East of Auburn this idea is extended to the artist's Korean heritage. The process of learning the craft of maedeup, Korean decorative knotting, allows the artist to draw a connection to her ancestors and provides a physical expression of her family's labour in relocating to Australia to pursue familial aspirations.

By forming literal ties across disparate forms and childhood memories, the work's processes, shapes and colours navigate feelings of cultural disconnection. The work in this exhibition was developed around the same time the artist was reading and contemplating John Steinbeck's East of Eden. While the stories of a Californian community set in the late 1800s and early 1900s might not on the face of it seem to have much bearing on the work by a Korean Australian artist, themes of class, labour, family and race are echoed in Choi's art practice and Steinbeck's novel.