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Pure Clay: Young Sook Park and Lee Ufan

June 29 – August 20, 2011

NEW YORK - RH Gallery is pleased to present *Pure Clay: Young Sook Park and Lee Ufan*. This exhibition will include collaborative works by Lee Ufan and Young Sook Park: a large earthenware plate and several porcelain plates painted by Lee Ufan, terracotta wall reliefs and a porcelain collection conceived by both artists. *Pure Clay* will also include individual works by Young Sook Park from her *buncheon* and *Moon Jar* series as well as paintings by Lee Ufan.

Young Sook Park and Lee Ufan first met in 1979 at Park's gallery in Insadong, Seoul. United by a shared aesthetic rooted in the belief that there is great complexity in simplicity, their initial collaboration produced a minimalist cobalt blue brushstroke that was applied to a series of porcelain dinnerware including plates, bowls, tea pots, tea cups and platters. Their collaboration led to terracotta reliefs and large painted plates among other objects.

Young Sook Park was born in 1947 in Kyungju, South Korea; she currently lives in Seoul. Her life-long commitment to the careful study and practice of ceramics has led to the creation of an incredible oeuvre. Her versatility and precision reflect long-lost artistic traditions from the Chosun Dynasty infused with a contemporary sensibility. Park's work is represented in prestigious collections around the world including the British Museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum and Her Royal Highness, the Queen of England.

Young Sook Park's commitment to understanding the "lost" methods and styles of Korea's fabled Chosun Dynasty led to the establishment of Young Sook Park Ceramic Studio in 1979. Since then, Park has been constantly experimenting with materials, forms, scale, and firing techniques in order to forge a new tradition within Korean ceramic arts. Her clays produced by the artist, for example, take from 6 to 10 years to mature.

Park's *Moon Jars* are the result of twenty years of dedication and practice. Renowned for the exquisite harmony shared between mouth, body, and base, the "Moon Jar," conceived during the Chosun Dynasty, represents the epitome of perfection for many ceramic artists. Balancing precariously on a rather high base, and featuring an upper section fuller than the lower section, both sections must be put together seamlessly and stress points must hold together to prevent collapse during firing. According to Park, "A perfect union happens when the top and the bottom surrender their individual selves and reach a compromise to exist together as 'one.' The Moon Jar is reborn as a complete 'one' by generously accepting the other amid trials and tribulations. I see this as a metaphor for life since it is surprisingly similar to our own lives of meeting, understanding and embracing our other halves."

Lee Ufan was born in 1936 in Gyeongsangnam-do, Korea. He currently lives in Kamakura, Japan. Lee's current retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum, *Lee Ufan: Making Infinity*, recognizes Lee as "a historical figure and contemporary master." Lee came to prominence in the late 1960s as one of the leaders of the avant-garde Mono-ha group (Object School). Their philosophy commanded that art should reveal the essence and purity of raw physical materials. The idea was to uncover the essence of the object in its purest form by creating what Lee calls *Re-Presentations*. His work is constantly approaching the limit of a void.

Pure Clay will include an important painting from Lee's *With Winds* series among other works. "Unpainted areas appeared vividly here and there, adding a sense of rawness to the uneven structure. The problem of expression changed into a problem of space. This is how the series *With Winds* began, with the self-initiated rebellion of the hand and awareness of the unpainted ground as externality... An infinite unknown spread out within the painting."

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RH Gallery: 137 Duane Street New York, NY 10013. Tuesday – Saturday: 11am-7pm

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