

Winter 2026

Vol 007



# INTERLUNAR

UMBRA UMBRA UMBRA UMBRA UMBRA UMBRA UMBRA

# Foreword

Hello, reader!

Welcome to the 7th volume of the INTERLUNAR zine. For this iteration, we wanted to be more intentional about the content that we put out into the world. As with the 5th volume, no AI was used for the article you'll find here. Here, we talk about the loneliness epidemic, companionship-as-a-service, and being imperfect in the face of AI's perfection.

Even though we at INTERLUNAR do use AI assistants in our workflows, we know about their environmental impact as well as the mind-numbing homogeneity of AI content. Where we can, we do our best to produce straight from the mushy folds of our imperfect brains.

And we encourage you to do the same. Poke around in there. It's not as empty as it feels these days.

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Warm regards,

Abby Cabildo

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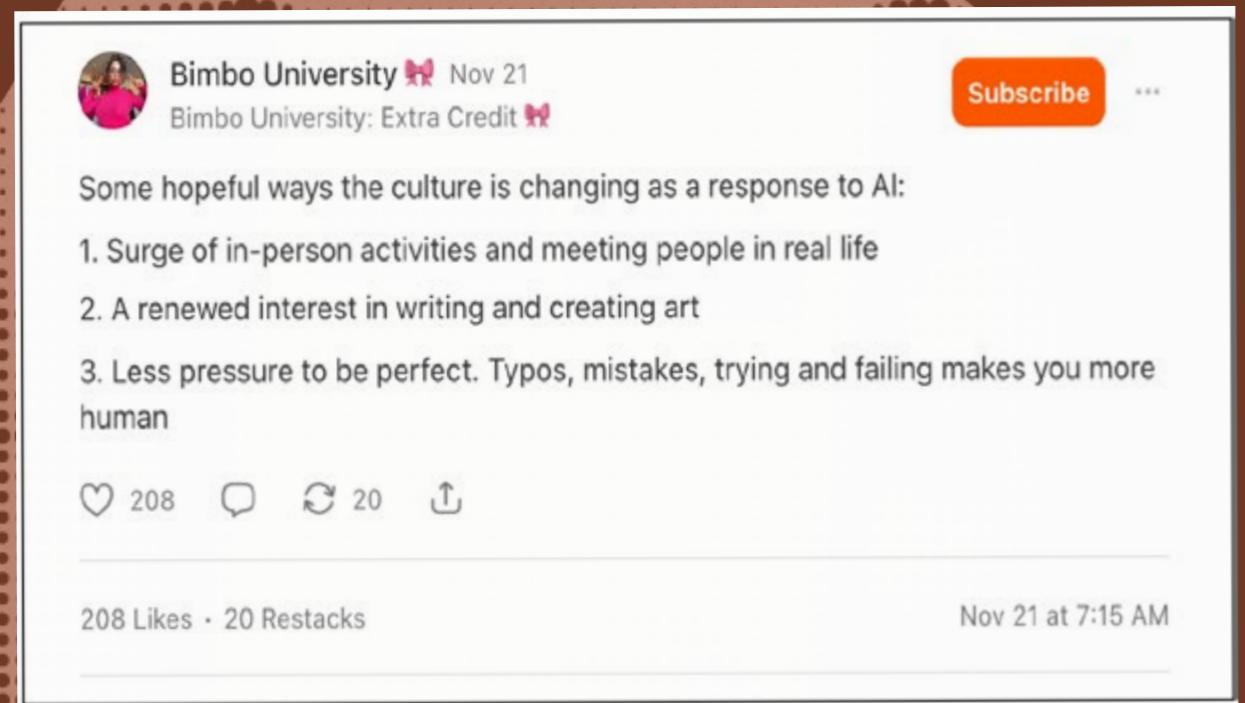
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CAAS, DIGITAL GARDENS, AND WABI\_SABI





Bimbo University Nov 21  
Bimbo University: Extra Credit

Some hopeful ways the culture is changing as a response to AI:

1. Surge of in-person activities and meeting people in real life
2. A renewed interest in writing and creating art
3. Less pressure to be perfect. Typos, mistakes, trying and failing makes you more human

208 Likes · 20 Restacks

Nov 21 at 7:15 AM

*'What have you been up to lately?' my friend yelled in my ear. We were at a gig, two or three beers in. Right behind us, cars and intercity buses lumbered past, sometimes missing us by just a couple of feet. The venue was a small shawarma place with a patio out front; makeshift tables dotted the shop's parking space, and the rest of the crowd had to make do with standing room, i.e., the dimly lit street in front of the shop.*

*'My cats,' I yelled back. Because it was true: cleaning up after three cats and making sure they had fulfilling lives indoors take up more time and headspace than you'd expect. (Not that I'm complaining. I love them like they're my biological offspring.)*

*I also wanted to talk about the other stuff—the three books I'm reading, the web development course I'm taking, the shows I'm watching, the walks I go on—but they've all been swallowed up by the Scroll.*

*This isn't anything new.*

*For years now, people have been grieving the slow death of their brain cells at the hands of the infinite scroll. That endless brain rot that feels simultaneously toxic and euphoric.*

*Nothing compares to the flow state you achieve when you've spent 2.5 hours just watching reels on Instagram or TikTok. Video is indeed king. Even Padishah Emperor of the Known Universe!*

*Aza Raskin, [inventor of the infinite scroll](#), says he just wanted to help internet users focus their attention on a page. By removing the next-page button, Raskin hoped to give us more control over our content consumption. He never intended for tech giants to pair his invention with the AI-powered [algorithmic curation](#) of content optimised for the mindless enjoyment of smartphone-havers everywhere.*

*I can still remember an earlier version of the infinite scroll. On early 2010s Tumblr, you had the option of turning off pagination on your dashboard, which was essentially your feed, so you could keep scrolling down. The thing with the Tumblr dashboard in its heyday is that it employed no algorithms. What you saw was the result of the efforts of the people you followed; as long as they put up original posts and/or 'reblogged' or shared posts recently, you had content to consume. Eventually, you would scroll all the way to the end (yes, there was such a thing back then).*

*And god, how we did our best to make the scroll last as long as possible. If you were lucky, many of the people you followed were active, so you could refresh and see new content in real time. This was especially fun if someone was 'liveblogging' a movie or a new episode of a TV show. If you were even luckier, the people you followed maintained a 'queue', or scheduled content to go out while they were afk; you could tell a post or reblog was queued because it had the hashtag #queue or some punny variation of it, usually a movie or TV show reference. (Hashtags were a whole nother thing too; people would write ENTIRE dissertations in that section. But that's a story for another time.)*

*Amidst all that content, I never felt alone. I lost many nights of sleep over my dashboard because I was interacting with the content, reading people's analyses of music, books, movies, and TV shows, conversing in the comments, and discovering new music, books, movies, and TV shows. I'd make my own content too; whenever they'd hit a follower count milestone, some bloggers would post a 'resource pack', a long-ass post with a download link to a cracked version of Adobe Photoshop CS 6.0, tutorials, textures, fonts, et cetera so you too could be an absolute nerd over the nicest of niches.*

In post-pandemic parlance (or, more accurately, in late 80s American sociological parlance that gained traction after people developed cabin fever during the COVID-19 lockdowns), Tumblr was a 'third place'. Not home, not work, but a third place where you could find community.

And it's not like there's no creativity online anymore. There's still a lot of creativity to go around. But maybe somewhere along the way, we got tired of being online.

*"The internet stopped feeling like a third place.*

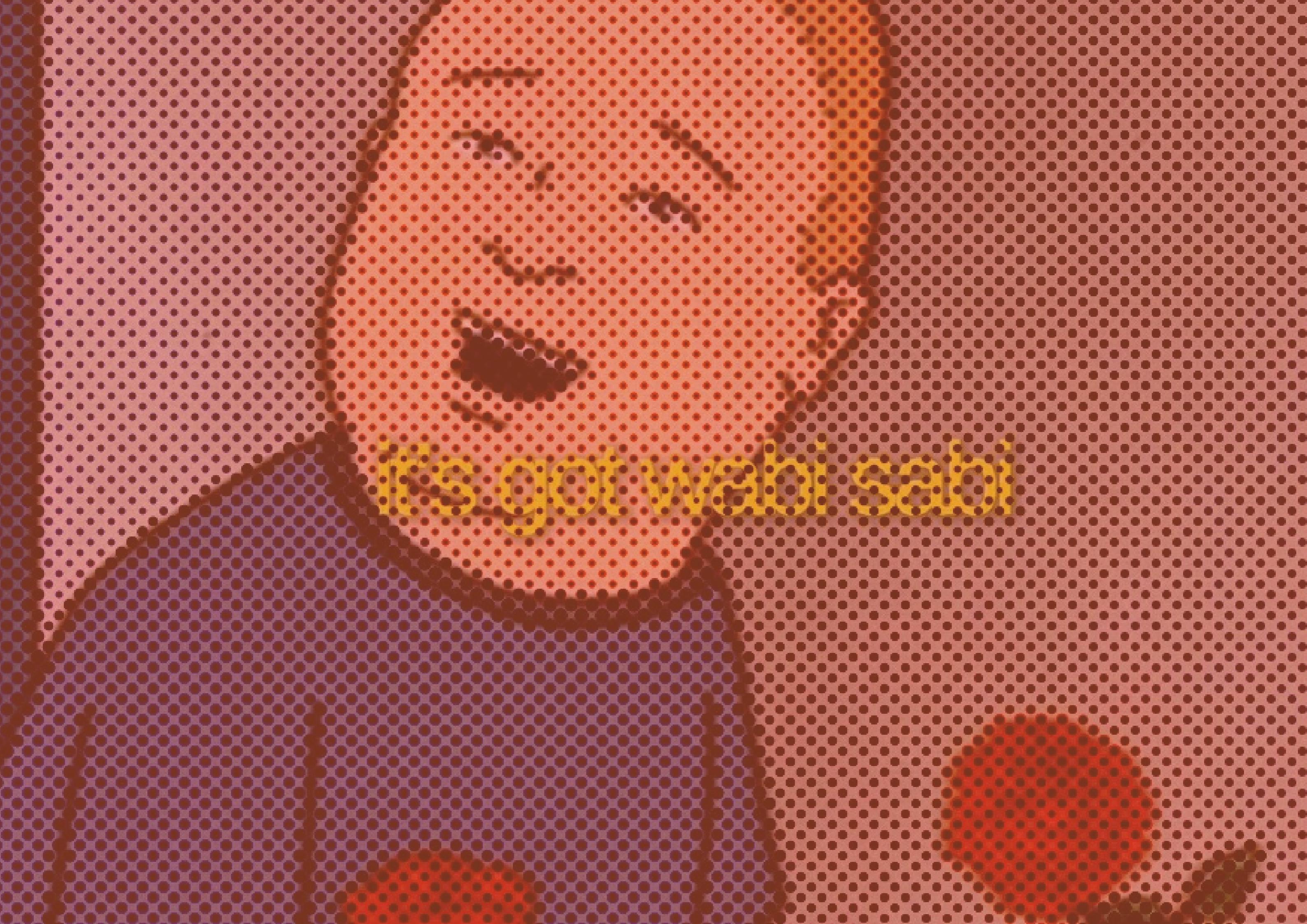
*It's more of a TV screen now, for you to turn off your mind to."*



So, people have been touching grass. One old New Yorker put up fliers for [a five-minute event](#). There's [lists of questions](#) you could ask your friends; [it's an art](#). Asking is an art now, because somewhere along the way, we forgot how to talk to people. So much so that humanity has come up with CaaS—companionship-as-a-service. The website [rentafriend.com](#) has been around since 2009 and briefly made its rounds on the internet in [2010](#) and [2019](#), and in the year of our Lord 2025, it's [back again with a vengeance](#). People are paying for dance partners, school reunion companions, hiking companions, museum companions, and even just regular coffee shop companions.

And when they get home, there's still the infinite scroll to contend with. Plus, images made with Google's Nano Banana Pro are [now harder to clock as AI-generated](#).

So, people are posting resource packs again. There's a [curriculum for how to use the internet](#), and the [concept](#) of creating a digital garden to end your doomscrolling. None of it should be perfect. It should be messy. You shouldn't aim for aimlessness, per se, but you should allow for failures. Let hobbies die and new ones take their place. Let your roses be off-centre. That's apparently how we can win against AI. I wish us all luck.



is



# Pei Qin

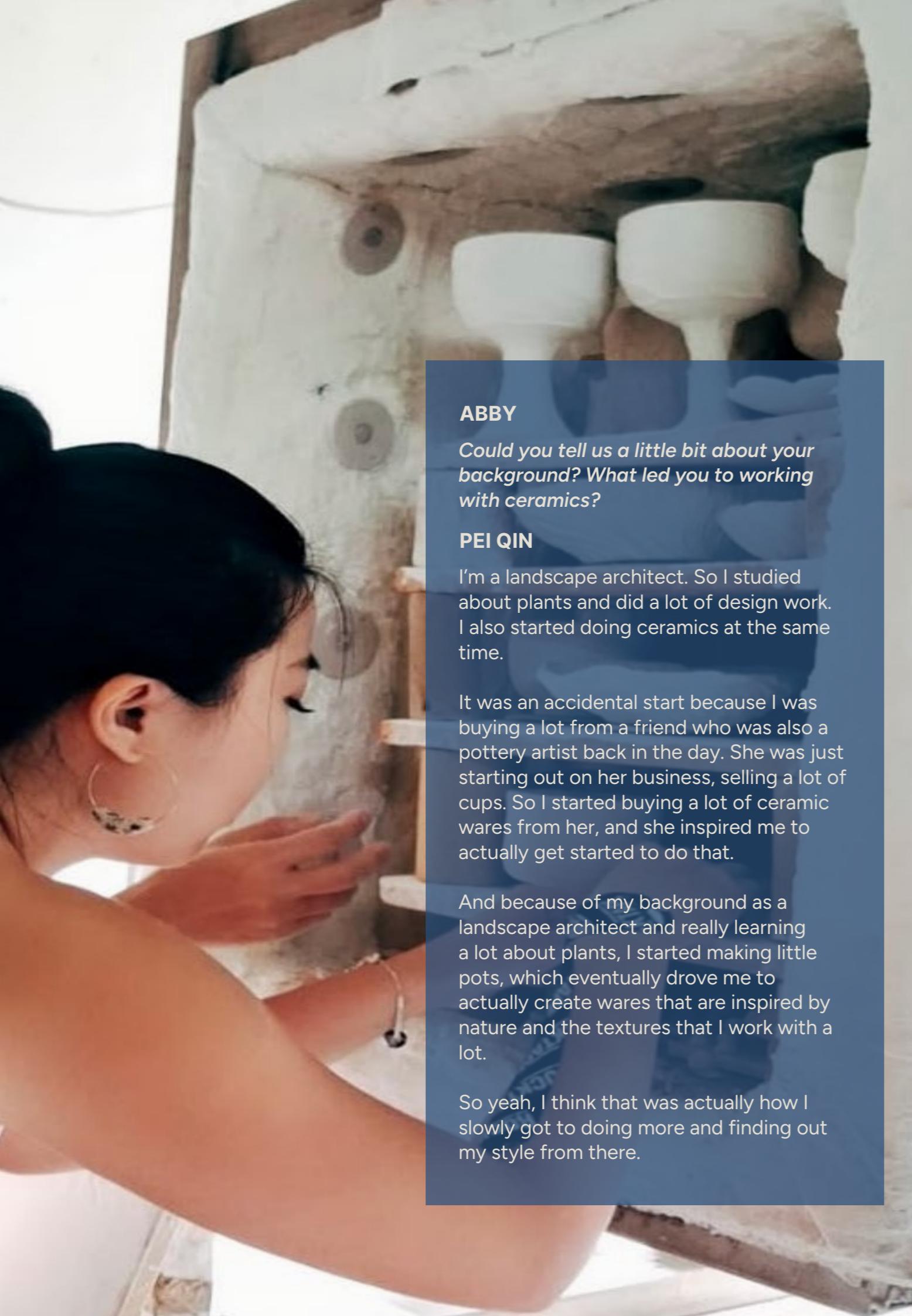


## {Pillow Pottery}



Pillow Pottery was born out of a genuine necessity for rest, emerging as a creative sanctuary from the sleepless, high-octane demands of the design industry. What began as an accidental journey, sparked by supporting a friend's small business, has blossomed into a profound exploration of texture, nature, and the human need for tactile comfort.

Qin's professional background heavily influences her ceramic voice. Her pieces are organic and alive, drawing direct inspiration from seed pods, flowers, and the intricate textures of the natural world. In her work, she consciously rejects the efficiency of mass production and the severity of straight lines. Instead, she embraces quirky forms and intuitive carving, creating wares that reflect the idea that while we appear fine on the exterior, we all harbor a unique, textured interior.

**ABBY**

*Could you tell us a little bit about your background? What led you to working with ceramics?*

**PEI QIN**

I'm a landscape architect. So I studied about plants and did a lot of design work. I also started doing ceramics at the same time.

It was an accidental start because I was buying a lot from a friend who was also a pottery artist back in the day. She was just starting out on her business, selling a lot of cups. So I started buying a lot of ceramic wares from her, and she inspired me to actually get started to do that.

And because of my background as a landscape architect and really learning a lot about plants, I started making little pots, which eventually drove me to actually create wares that are inspired by nature and the textures that I work with a lot.

So yeah, I think that was actually how I slowly got to doing more and finding out my style from there.

**ABBY**

*The name 'Pillow Pottery' is so unique. What's the story behind that?*

**PEI QIN**

It was something that was pretty simple, because in the design industry, it was always known that you don't get a lot of sleep and rest. It felt like my hobby and my work were driving me to do more things and to explore more about myself.

So, ceramics and pottery kind of became my rest and respite. Something that I sought when I felt uninspired, or was maybe going through some downtime when I was doing designs for landscapes and gardens.

**ABBY**

*And you were always skilled with pottery, right?*

**PEI QIN**

Yeah, it was always a hobby. I didn't actually think that I would sell some of my works. I didn't expect to do that so much until I went through a career break where I was transitioning from my previous job to my current job.

That was when I went into doing pottery a lot more, during those three months. And I felt liberated after that.

**ABBY**

*Your pieces have a distinctly soft, gentle aesthetic. How did you develop this style?*

**PEI QIN**

It was a lot of experimentation with textures, because I see a lot of seed pods and I work with natural textures.

Then for the colours, I felt like because my pieces were kind of edgy and distinct, I wanted them to also embody softness, as well as the way nature blends in seamlessly with our lives. Whether it's the greenery itself or whether it's through the symbolic ties that they have with us. Yeah, I believe we're all innately connected to nature.

It does have an impact, whether we're surrounded by it or not. So I think the colours were something that I was pretty particular about. How can I create this intricate piece with the idea of softness but also distinct textures?



## ABBY

*I love them because they're so reminiscent of corals. Just sandy, calm colours. It's really very beautiful and calming. Can you walk us through your creative process?*

## PEI QIN

Whenever I want to create the pieces themselves, I'm inspired by flowers and leaves. When I started carving, it was more of a soft intuition to just keep carving them, because I was doing a lot of free-form stuff.

I did the classic pieces where there were straight cuts and edges, but I always felt like they were too rigid. They were functional, but that's not really how I envision a piece of my work would be. I want my work to help people understand that everything seems fine on the exterior but all of us do have that weird and quirky side to us.

Instead of creating straight, rigid pieces, I do have those quirky ones more and more. Some people see them as shells. Some people feel like they're a little bit more reminiscent of seed pots. And people do tell me that it's very comforting to touch them.

I kind of felt that comfort when I was carving as well. It was more of like a continuous movement and just an intuitive feature in how I want to do my pieces these days.



## ABBY

*It's like tactile therapy, not just for you but also for the people who collect your pieces. How do you source your clay and your glazes? Are there any specific materials you're drawn to?*

## PEI QIN

The glazes and the clay are just the usual that I get from the studios in Singapore. I don't usually do special glazes, but I find that using a gas kiln for firing the pieces does make them more to my liking. Slightly shinier and more refined.

I've also tried using some of the local clay to make these pieces and to actually keep the natural textures of the natural ingredients of this clay. The iron inside makes it look a little more rugged.

I've also tried black raku clay for nonfunctional pieces, but with that clay, I don't do textures or carvings. I try to preserve the texture of black raku and let it become a centerpiece on its own. So that's the other side of Pillow Pottery. Something that's more untouched and unrefined.

## ABBY

*What does your workspace or your studio look like? And what's the atmosphere like when you're creating?*

## PEI QIN

I like to work in a studio in a community club in Singapore. It's actually a work studio by my teacher who also runs the studio. It's been six or seven years now that I've been under her guidance. I am still attending her classes so I do make some of my works there and fire it at commercial kilns.

I don't really have a studio of my own, but I'm able to do handbuilt pieces at home. It's a pretty basic space. I just use my balcony and just do pinching and crafting from there.

It's a very humble and plain space with just me and my little table and chairs.

## ABBY

*Very chill, just like your work.*

## PEI QIN

Yeah.



## ABBY

*This passion of yours came about because you seek comfort, but what other feelings or emotions do you hope to bring out in people who interact with your pottery?*

## PEI QIN

I guess when I started doing this, it was a lot of trying to slow down, because I feel that in the current pace of work and life, there is often an emphasis on efficiency and perfection. Just getting things done well and quick.

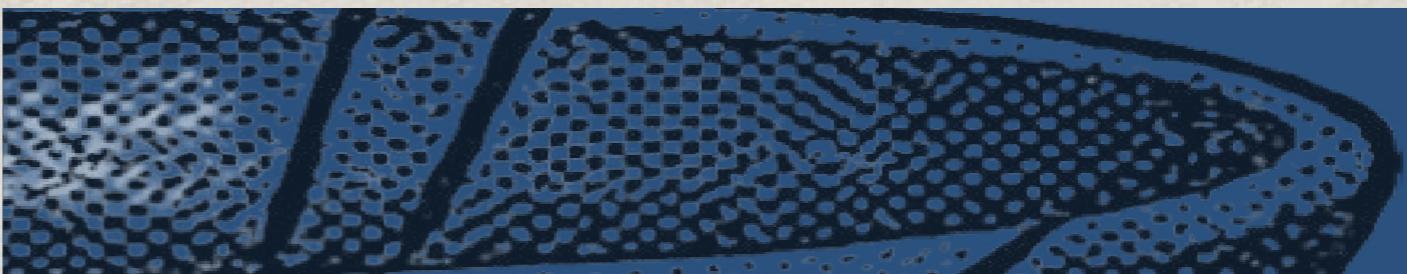
And it's a mass-production way of life, even with how we actually look at things these days. Everything seems to be replicable, everything seems to be easy and fast.

But when I was doing these carvings, it was different for each piece. I met a lot of challenges when I first started doing it, and that led me to explore different tools. I actually gained that way of making myself slow down.

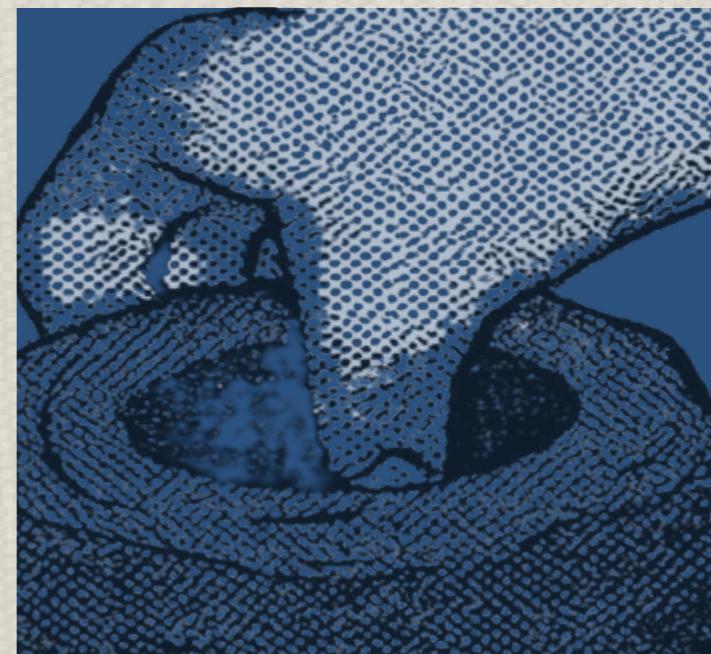
So when people touch a piece and appreciate it, that gives me a lot of comfort. To know that having to spend some time and having to spend a little bit more on creating these pieces did help people feel comforted.



"SOME PEOPLE SEE  
THEM AS SHELLS.



SOME PEOPLE FEEL LIKE  
THEY'RE A LITTLE BIT  
MORE REMINISCENT OF  
SEED PODS.



AND PEOPLE DO TELL ME  
THAT IT'S VERY COMFORT-  
ING TO TOUCH THEM."

## ABBY

*What are your dreams for this practice of yours?*

## PEI QIN

I would probably want to see how this can become a continuous hobby of mine. Not really looking into being a full-blown business, because this is still kind of like a side hustle for me.

Probably getting to do more collaborations with other artists and gaining more knowledge from the industry. Probably looking into how pottery can actually be developed. I guess there's a lot of people nowadays coming out with shows and exhibitions, with the pottery scene becoming much more popular. I think it's a very good climate for young artists to explore this medium.

I think I still want to explore a little bit more, give more people some comfort in their lives, or just meet more people who love my work. That's something that I enjoy a lot.

## ABBY

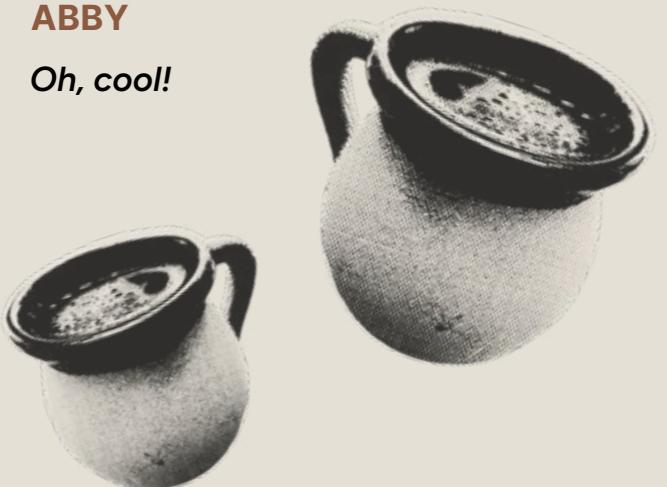
*That's great. I did notice that pottery is a popular passion there in Singapore. We've had another guest on a previous volume of our zine who was also a potter. I don't know if you've met Ocio Ceramics.*

## PEI QIN

Yeah, I've met her before.

## ABBY

*Oh, cool!*



## PEI QIN

There was this clay fest that I was at last year. I remember alighting with a lot of my pieces, and then I think I dropped a box, and I was just totally shocked. Some of my pieces broke. And Regina just came over to help me pick them out. She was like, 'It's okay, everything's fine.' And it was just us setting up the store, and I was thoroughly comforted and just got back my peace from there.

## ABBY

*I did think that you guys would really vibe with each other.*

## PEI QIN

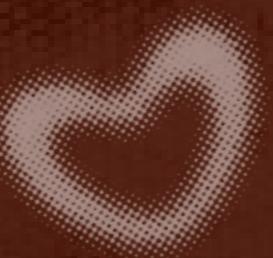
I saw her interview on your zine, so I was like, 'Oh, that's cool.'







# Mark Heng



{Maroon  
Clothing}

A clever portmanteau of Mark and his co-founder Nicholas Hoon, Maroon Clothing has grown from hand-painting individual jeans to manufacturing full-scale collections that define the look of Singapore's youth.

Maroon Clothing is built on a philosophy of disruption. In a society where dressing conservatively is often the default, Mark wants his customers to wear their confidence on their sleeves—literally. Drawing eclectic inspiration from the emotive, messy brushstrokes of Impressionist masters like Monet and the rich symbolism of Asian heritage, the brand creates statement pieces that refuse to blend in. Whether it is a jersey reimagining dragon and phoenix motifs or a cut inspired by Japanese street fashion, every drop is designed to be a conversation starter.

## ABBY

Could you tell us a little bit about your background and how Maroon Clothing started?

## MARK

So, I'm the founder of Maroon Clothing. We started this in 2021, during COVID. My passion has always been towards the arts. I always loved drawing, painting, and digital art. I took art as a subject in secondary school, but I stopped when I entered junior college.

During COVID, I was getting really bored, and I started seeing a lot of cool jeans ideas on Instagram, and I wanted to emulate this by trying to create a handpainted version of these designs that I saw. That's when a lot of our ideas came about and when I first really got into this medium of using clothes and fashion as an expression of my art.

From there we kind of developed into a co-curricular activity during junior college, and we went forward carrying out the same ideas and the same passion into our business which we are doing currently.

## ABBY

We've interviewed so many people whose passions or businesses or art practices started during the pandemic. It's cool that we still keep finding folks like you who turned a pandemic hobby into a long-term thing.

Do you have a community around your brand?



## MARK

I would say that our community and our target audience will mainly be youths and teenagers, young adults in Singapore who are interested in fashion. Or not. You don't have to be really invested in it. It could even be a starting phase, seeing a higher interest and intrigue in dressing yourself up, having a more put together look.

I think that is something that we have identified with for quite a while now. We've been seeing the trend that most of our audiences float around this space of creatives as well. We collaborate a lot with dancers and fellow artists. I would say our relationship with them is not so much like a consumer and business. It's more of a collective community.

We often incorporate ideas from our consumer base in the drops that we do, by doing consistent feedback forms and also listening to opinions that they have to say or certain trends they look forward to. We view ourselves as a larger community where we just interact and we bond over our shared passion for fashion and art.

This really materialised during our recent popup that we did about two weeks ago, and it was great because we were able to see our customers beyond just faces or names on our screens. We actually got to interact with them, see what they're like in person, see what kind of interests they have.

It was great, and we're excited to continue building this community that we have and we're very grateful that we have built such a community within this space.

## MARK

Each of our drops do come from a specific theme. I would say sometimes it isn't really inspired by anything super in-depth, but one theme that we like to go off of is culture. So we really like to embody our Singaporean culture, our heritage in the clothes that we make.

I think one example would be our jerseys that we dropped about a year ago. They're called the Long and Feng jerseys. They are based around the Chinese heritage of the dragon and the phoenix being repetitive motifs in our history and our culture.

So we wanted to use that history and that culture and transform it into something trendy and new, such that we don't just wear something that we can't represent. We wear something that we want our customers to resonate with and that represents them as a person as well.



## ABBY

*How do you want people to feel when they wear your clothes?*

## MARK

Our brand mission is mostly centered around creating statement pieces that represent us as people, represent our community rather than something mass-produced and something that can be found in some fast fashion store, right? We want our customers to feel proud and -

**"WE WANT THEM TO BE UN-AFRAID TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES WITH THE CLOTHES THAT THEY WEAR."**

Because I feel like in Singapore, as a community, a lot of times we are afraid of others' judgment, right? And that reflects in the way that we dress as well. Sometimes we choose to dress more conservatively because we are afraid of how others will perceive us.

With Maroon Clothing, we really want to make unique statement pieces that can be incorporated into your everyday wardrobe. Something that is somewhat out of your comfort zone, but at the same time it gives you confidence as you wear it, and it makes you feel better about yourself and the way that you look.



## ABBY

*The name 'Maroon Clothing', is there a story or a particular meaning behind the name?*

## MARK

My name is Mark and I created this brand with another friend whose name is Nicholas Hoon. So naturally, our names Mark and Hoon just combined into 'Maroon'.

## ABBY

*Haha, I see. How has your brand evolved since you first started? Have there been any pivotal moments or challenges...*



## MARK

Yeah, for sure. We started out customising and handpainting our items instead of mass-producing them like we do now.

So that's why to us, having something unique, something that you can't find elsewhere, is so important to us, because that is truly where we grew from. We wanted to make things that are personal to our customers as well, which is why we don't want to make something too plain. We aren't afraid of going beyond our comfort zones and the conventions of our space.

Maybe a turning point would be when we transitioned into a higher quantity and scale of manufacturing. I think it was quite daunting at the time because like I said, we started off purely just handpainting on each one of our products. Venturing into this space was a bit difficult. I feel like it took us a while before we really got the hang of it.

But I think we've come to a point where we've had experience in this field for a while now, and we are more comfortable and confident to create new designs and be proud of them, such that we know our customer base will resonate with them too.

**ABBY**

*When you create, are there any particular artists or designers or movements that influence your work?*

**MARK**

Personally, as an artist, I really liked Impressionism from the start. Yeah, this is something that, even when I was studying art in secondary school, I found a lot of my art style gravitating towards. I really like how they're able to create an image that accurately represents something rather than just lines and forms.

It contains emotion. A lot of the brush strokes aren't very precise. A lot of times they can be harsh and they can be messy, but when zoomed out and seen from a further scale, it represents a complete and beautiful image that you otherwise wouldn't be able to interpret if you only take a singular section of that painting. So I feel like my art style borrows a lot of inspiration from Impressionism.

**ABBY**

*Who's your favorite Impressionist?*

**MARK**

I would definitely say Monet. Yeah, the most famous one.

**ABBY**

*I also read that you give back to the community. What sort of donation drives and outreach have you run?*

But I would also say that with our recent collection, a lot of the fashion inspirations come from Japanese fashion. They use a lot of traditional prints and materials that we don't really see elsewhere. I can't put a name to the brand from which we've borrowed ideas because it's so widespread in Japan.

You can see them in thrift stores, you can see them on the street, people wearing them, and we just wanted to really borrow that element from Japanese fashion and see how we can twist it to become something personal to us.

A lot of these things I've actually participated in myself. I've gone down to these flats to really help them carry out acts of kindness and contribute back to society, which is why it was so important to me to collaborate with them. I also wanted to try using our platform to raise awareness on these issues and help the beneficiaries at the same time.

Originally, when we did our merchandise for school, we also donated our profits to the charity of Canossaville, which mainly helps children with learning disabilities and hearing disabilities.

**ABBY**

*I feel like you have a really good handle on sustainability or ethical production, and that really matters right now in this world of fast fashion. What can you say about fast fashion? What do you think it means for us right now and in the near future?*

**MARK**

It's not a mystery that the fashion industry is one of the biggest contributors to wastage in water and a lot of other resources, which does lead to climate change and global warming. It is disheartening to see that there are many fast fashion companies that not only disregard these environmental implications but also exploit unethical means of producing their clothing. I guess the hope is that collectively our community is able to shift towards something that is more ethical and benefits our society as well as our planet and our environment.

I do receive some encouragement in the way that I see our youth tackle these problems. I think there's a greater awareness

now because of social media, and I think that the youth are also cognisant of the impact that these fashion pieces have towards the environment. Because of that, they do gravitate towards more sustainable alternatives such as thrifting, recycling, and upcycling your clothing. I think this is a trend that we've been seeing amongst youths, and I think it's great. I think it's something that we should continue as a collective.

**ABBY**

*What's a typical day like for you behind the scenes? What's your workspace like?*

**MARK**

In terms of a physical space, we don't really find the need to meet up all the time to collaborate. Most of our work is done remotely. It's just that we have meetings maybe once a week or every two weeks to consolidate ideas and work on behind-the-scenes stuff like shipping, fulfilling our deliveries, ideating for the next drop, and accounting for logistics and financing.





### ABBY

*It adds to the whole eco-friendly workspace. Of course, it's mostly for convenience. But inadvertently it also saves up on office space.*

*What are your plans for Maroon Clothing?*

### MARK

Our team is really encouraged and motivated by the growth that we've had in our recent drops and products, and we just want to keep seeing our community grow. We want to keep making stuff that people love and resonate with.

I think the best feeling is walking on the streets and seeing someone wear your clothing. Or even on Instagram, seeing strangers wearing our clothes. It's really encouraging because it shows us that there are people who really love what we're doing at Maroon Clothing and want to continue representing us and representing the designs that we have, and they feel that they connect with the clothes.

I think that is the biggest thing to us and the best feeling that we can chase. We really just want to keep amplifying that, seeing different ways to innovate and disrupt whatever is being done right now to create a unique product that we can continue to thrive towards.



# Jerome & Sarah Choo



*{J.choo Pottery}*



For Jerome and Sarah Choo, life and art have always been intertwined, evolving alongside their personal journeys. Sarah, a former florist with a client list boasting names like Chanel and Jo Malone, has spent years curating beauty, while Jerome, once an investment consultant, returned to his artistic roots to find grounding in clay. Together, they have merged their crafts—floristry and pottery—into a practice that is as much about mindfulness as it is about making.

Their collaborative spirit has led to impressive feats, from creating over 200 bespoke ceramic pieces for a high-end Krug Champagne dinner to crafting functional wares for a floral retreat in Bali.

## DAVID

*Tell us a bit about your backgrounds.*

## SARAH

I started my career in advertising, and that's where I met him. We were colleagues. After a few years, I decided that I wanted to do my own business, so I opened a florist shop. I'm taking a backseat on this journey now because I got kind of tired running a business. But I'm not tired of flowers or art or creative stuff. I just am a person who can't sit still. I need to reinvent myself all the time. I get a little bored when I do something too routine. And running a business actually is very routine and very lonely.

So I decided for this year, I'm going to just take a sabbatical from my flower business. I'm not taking orders, but I have clients who I work with for a major period of my time, like big brands like Chanel and Jo Malone. So when they come to me, I will still do my part. It's more of a private contract. And then I continue doing my art and helping my husband with his pottery. He is someone who doesn't really focus much on social media. So after the fair, we decided maybe I should take up this role and help him. But I still dabble here and there. I've been gifted—I thank God for that—with the talent to do flowers and have an eye for aesthetics and art. So I'm very grateful for that and I still practice it. Not on a very commercialised basis, but if there are commissions or contracts that want me to put my part in, I will still do it. That's where I am currently.

## DAVID

*Thanks for sharing. And Jerome?*

## JEROME

My journey of being a potter probably started when I was young. My parents knew that I would go in a wrong direction when I was a young boy.

## SARAH

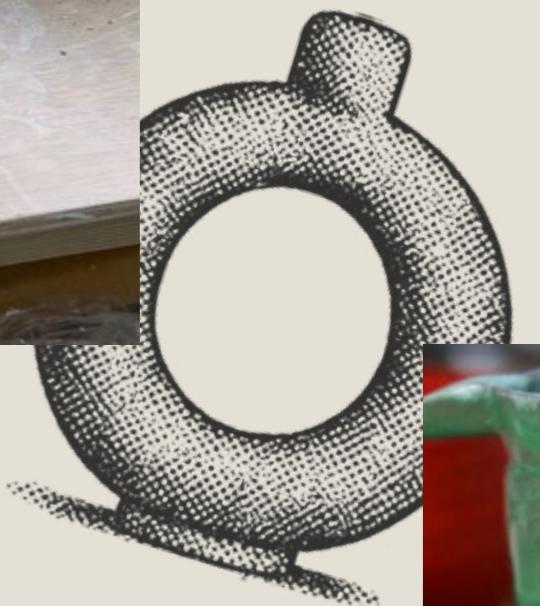
Bad guy.

## JEROME

So my parents put me into learning how to draw, into art. That's where I was able to develop an interest. During my school days, my art actually did pretty well rather than any other subject.

## SARAH

Not academically.





### **JEROME**

Yeah. So when I first worked in my life, I started as a graphic designer. That's where I met my wife, Sarah. From there on, my journey was more into art. Up until probably the age of 40 where I switched to become an investment consultant. I worked there for 13, 15 years until I started to call it off to focus more on my art direction. Before that, I already learned about pottery. I find that after I retire, I also need to help my wife so that we work hand in hand. So that's where I restart all over to continue with my journey.

### **SARAH**

So basically we kind of merged. Because I think our craft complements each other.

### **JEROME**

I find that art actually can really calm a person down. And in pottery work, you can create the object to what you want to speak. It can showcase or represent what you really want to do. It can relate my emotion, my expression, and what I want to tell through the shape. That is something that I find very grounding.

### **SARAH**

Mindfulness practice.

### **JEROME**

Yeah, it kind of really made me feel peaceful. I'm glad that my parents brought me to this journey in the line of art.

### **DAVID**

*Amazing. So, how many years has it been since you left your full-time practice in investment?*

### **JEROME**

No, even during my working years, I was doing pottery work but not in full force. It was only on my own leisure time.

### **SARAH**

Just for interest. Practice.



### **JEROME**

But I was still in touch with art because my wife is really into the flower industry. But during that period, I focused more on my career in my investment portfolio. Not onto art until I started to call it off and that's where I kickstarted all over again in full force on pottery. So all in all, I think I've been doing pottery for probably eight years.

### **DAVID**

*It's really interesting because with the floral arrangements and the pottery, I imagine at times there were great opportunities to merge and collaborate, right?*

### **SARAH**

Yes. I have a client, Krug Champagne. They are very high-end champagne. They wanted to launch a series with a dinner, with a group of chefs from France. So they wanted me to dress up the whole place with flowers. They wanted everything very special and exclusive. They actually showed me some vases that the French people like, but there's no way you can

actually buy identical ones. Maybe one kind of design will just have one piece. You cannot buy 10, 20 pieces.

So that's where I brought my husband in and recommended him to them. With my flowers, we can actually get my husband to customise the vase that they want, and then we'll present it together. They liked what we proposed and we presented that during the dinner. It was very nice. Every piece is unique and handmade, although they have a specific mandated shape.

### **JEROME**

It's a square form.

### **SARAH**

So there's a big one, tall one, short one, fat one, and long one.

### **JEROME**

The total is about 200 pieces.



**SARAH**

Yeah, and it was a very tight deadline. But it was really nice. The group of chefs was happy, the client was happy. They even took everything back. Usually, we will collect the pieces back after the event. But they bought it off and wanted to keep them and give some to their VIPs. It was a really good experience.

**DAVID**

*Was it stressful for you?*

**JEROME / SARAH**

# YES!

**JEROME**

We needed to do some prototypes. Probably the last leg, I think we were working almost every night till 1, 2 AM.

**JEROME**

Just to make sure they go through prototypes of the shape and the size and the color.

**SARAH**

Yeah. Got to be complete by the deadline that they gave. Quite tight actually, the timeline. And everything is all handmade.

**SARAH**

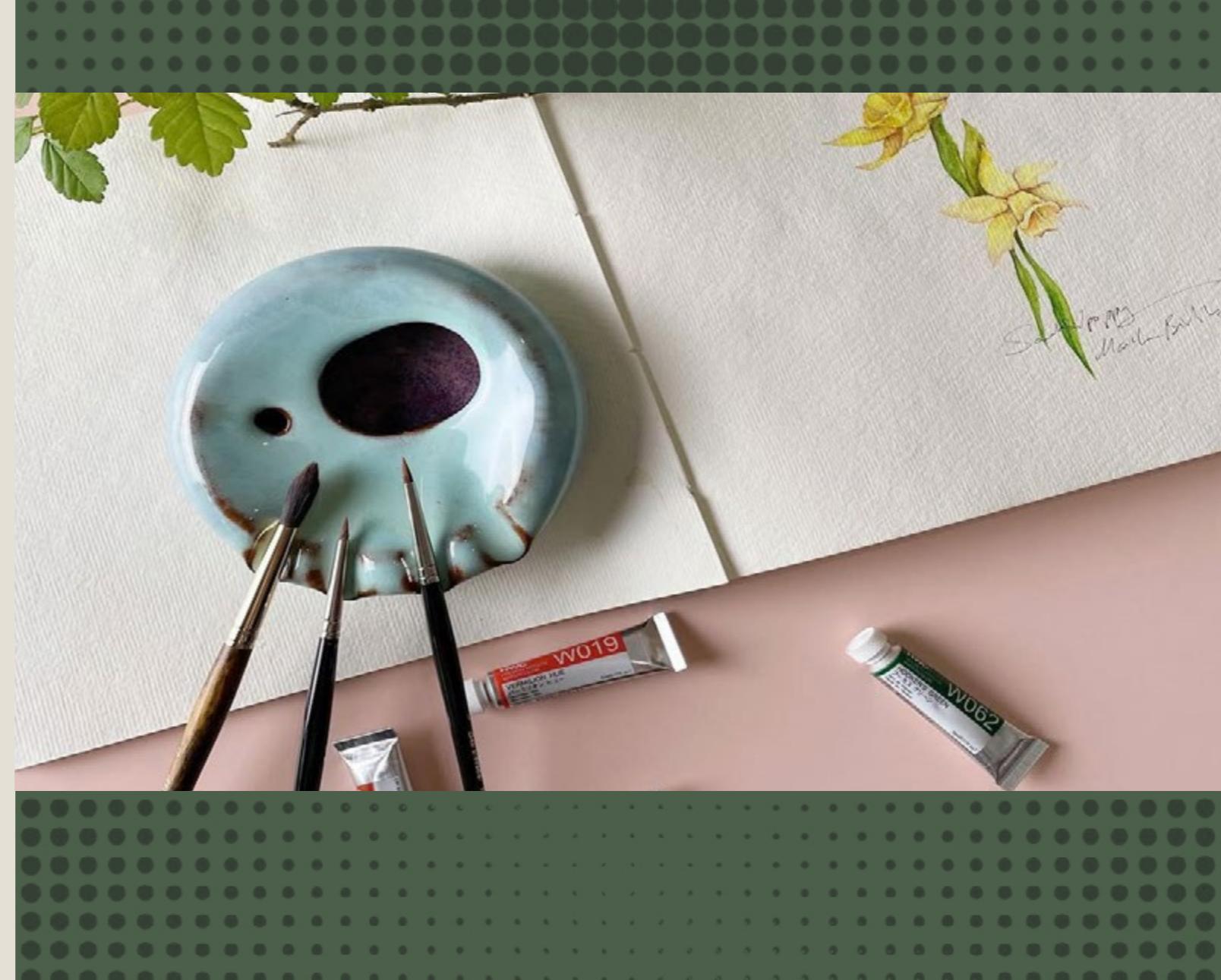
Every single one is all handmade.

**DAVID**

And that was like 200 pieces.

**JEROME**

200 plus. All different sizes.

**DAVID**

Oh my goodness.

**JEROME**

Yeah, because some are very big, some smaller on the table, some on the floor. You have to make sure all don't have cracks and don't leak. Because once you fill it up with water, if it leaks, there is an issue already.

**DAVID**

Right. So it was also like a functional piece because it has to hold water.

**SARAH**

Yes, a functional piece. There was another time we collaborated. I did a Bali retreat for a group of my flower students. I brought them to Bali and we did foraging, and my husband supported us with his pots. He made various pots so that the students can use them in their arrangement practice. They were all very happy. Recently we were at the Clay Fest, we met one of the students and she said, 'Oh, I still keep the pot that you made for us during the Bali retreat.'

**DAVID**

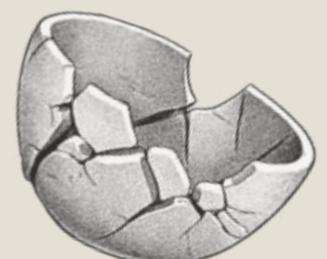
*Wow. How long ago was this retreat?*

**SARAH**

Probably 2014?

**JEROME**

6, 7 years ago. Before COVID.

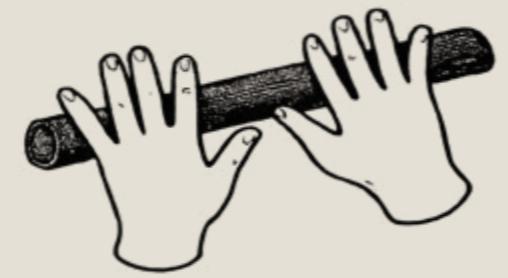


## DAVID

*And can you share a bit more about your process in terms of ceramics and pottery? Do your pieces mostly come from a specific reference or do you get briefs from clients?*

## JEROME

No, I don't have really specific references because I think every individual piece of your work speaks for itself. It always relates to the individual. I can customise for you, but at the end of the day, I wouldn't customise one. Actually, I would customise two to three, and you select one. That's my call. Because I feel that every piece of my work has a soul. Whether you can relate to it or not. Just like during the fair, I also wonder how come people specifically go to that particular spot and buy that particular unit. It must have a certain reason. It could be that piece is not one of the best among the fair itself, but why must he pick that piece? Just like why people come to my stall. I'm grateful they come and they like it. Some even go and walk one big round...



## SARAH

Then come back.

## JEROME

...and then they come back and they buy.

## SARAH

Wow, there was this lady, she bought nine pieces off the shelf. She was like, 'Oh I love these pieces.'

## JEROME

She went for one big round and then she came back and she bought nine pieces. So sometimes I also wonder why people will want that particular piece. So it must be something that relates to him or her. Clay is a living thing.

## SARAH

It's nature.

## JEROME

So everything actually has soul and life. So even when I do my work, sometimes they will speak to me what kind of shape that they want. Maybe through my hand then they form out.

## SARAH

Having said that, of course if the client has a brief, then there is a mandate to go accordingly. But then of course there is a certain style that the artist will have. Even if he produces a bowl and another artist produces a bowl, even though I give you the same brief, the bowl will turn out differently because two different hands will have two different feelings. It's all about the style of this person and experience.

## JEROME

Of course, my journey is not smooth sailing. There's a lot of trial and error. Actually, I learned through a lot of hardship. Because during my learning days, the guidance is not there. They just teach you one time, then you go and do it on your own. How you fail is your own issue already. So I have to go through a lot of errors.

## SARAH

Self-examination

## JEROME

A lot of errors and a lot of work. Then I can rectify where it goes wrong. Unlike now... even if I teach, I get to tell them what's the problem. I will pinpoint the problem.

## SARAH

You spoon-feed the student, right?

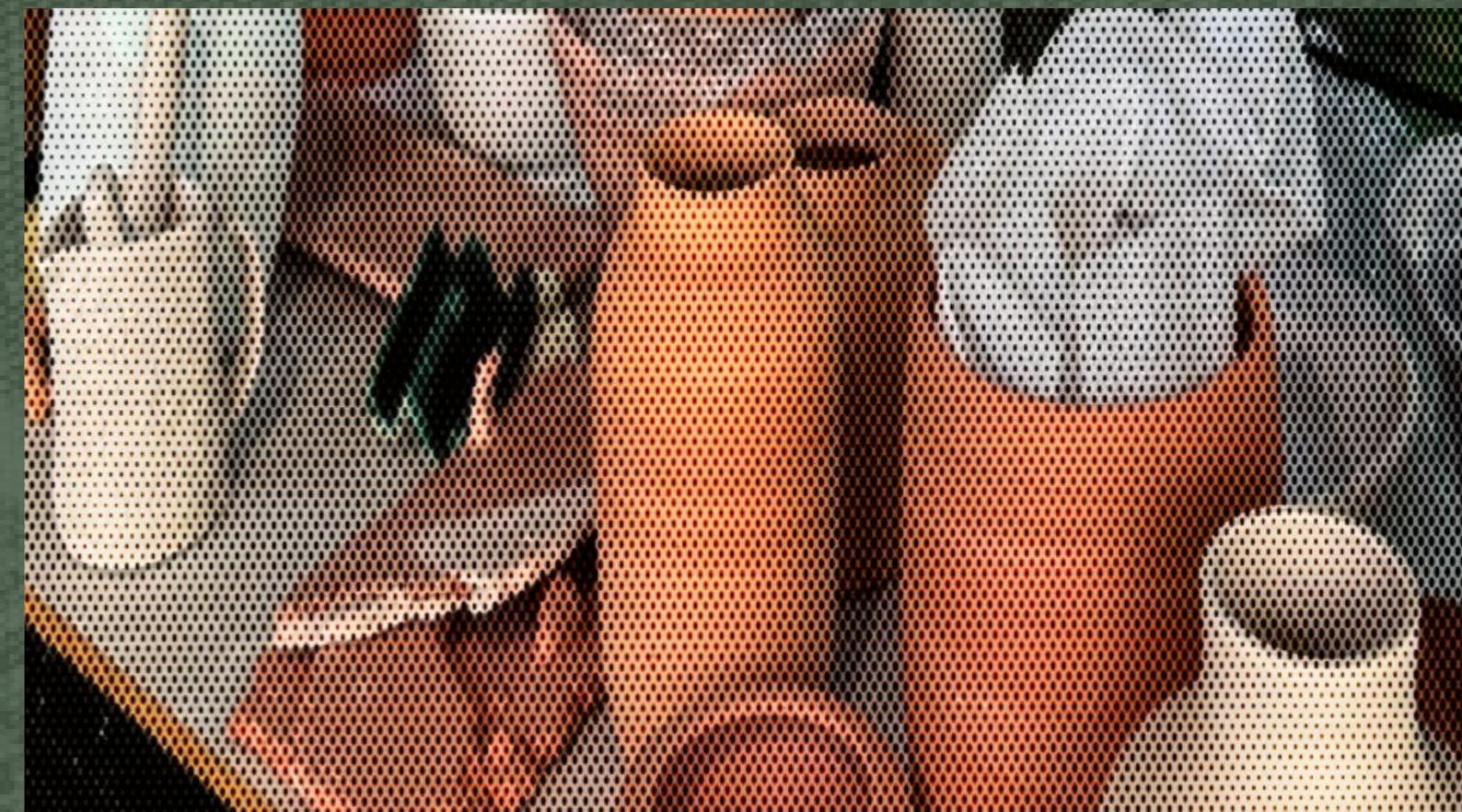
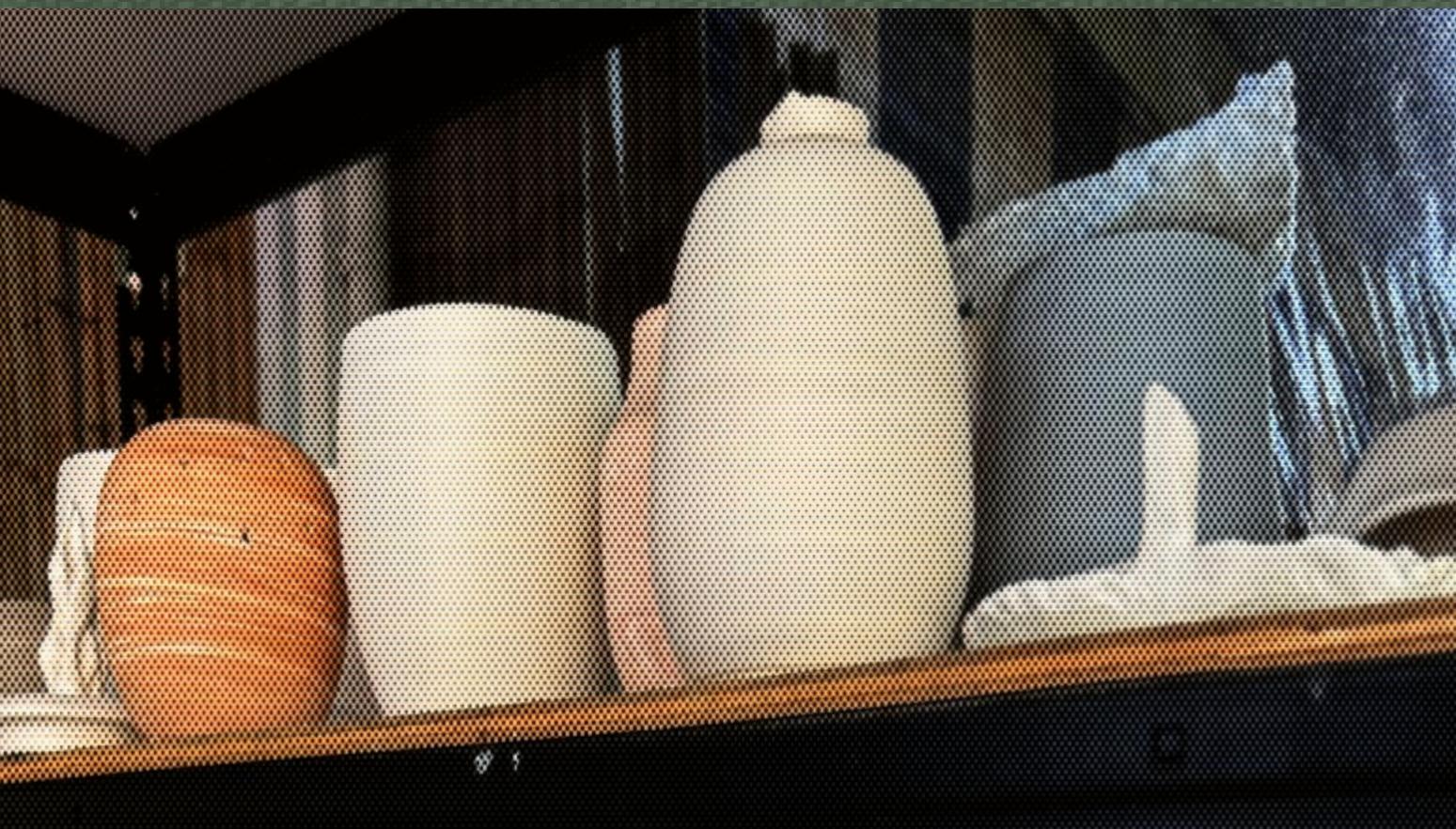
## SARAH

It's very different from my day. So yeah, I learned a lot. It's not easy at all actually.



-I FEEL THAT EVERY  
PIECE OF MY WORK -

-HAS A SOUL-



## SARAH

I think my husband went through a lot of self-teaching.

## JEROME

I self-taught a lot. I practised a lot along the way.

## DAVID

*In the early days of your ceramics journey, did you have a mentor?*

## JEROME

I went to Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. I also went to Sam Mui Kuang. Sam Mui Kuang is one of the oldest pottery schools in Singapore.

## SARAH

Generation of potters.

## JEROME

But their style is...

## SARAH

Their classes are very basic. Whether you pick it up or not is up to you...

## JEROME

If you make a mistake, they will say, 'Oh, this a mistake right?' Then you have to rectify it on your own. They won't spoon-feed you. They will want you to learn. They are more of the old school.

## DAVID

*Do you think there's a better approach? Like the traditional approach where it's a little bit more like self-examination is better?*

## JEROME

That is better. But nowadays students don't take it that way.

## SARAH

Yeah. Nowadays students don't have the patience to learn.

## JEROME

They want to learn as fast as possible. So nowadays people are like that. They will say, 'You are not teaching me at all. I'm not learning anything from you.' But you should do all these things and you should know where it goes wrong. Then you learn faster and easier. But they don't. That's why you have to know the mentality of the people nowadays. But I can't blame them because probably the world is moving too fast.

## SARAH

It's all instant. Instant standard.

## JEROME

The world is moving too fast for them. So they need to learn as fast as possible.

## SARAH

Actually, we had a customer during the Singapore Clay Festival. She bought some pieces from us and then she went around to other stalls. She bought a cup from one of our students as well. After buying everything, she sent me all the pictures. She said, 'I can see the different stages of things.' Everybody has a stall at the Clay Festival, but every person's standard is different. The place that she bought the little cups and plate from actually didn't have a very refined feel. It's just like hand pinching. And actually not cheap also. But she told us she bought from her because she feels that this person has got the tenacity to go further. So she supported her. Then she bought the cup from our student. She said this one looks very gentle, can reflect her personality. But it's not very complete because the color doesn't crack nicely. But she has sincerity, so she bought the cup. And then she bought my husband's one where she said, 'Oh this is the more refined one.' So every stage—I think similar for students—they will go through all these phases. If you choose to remain at this first stage, you will always be that first stage. So it's up to the person. As teachers ourselves, I think what we put forth is the best we offer. Be generous in our sharing. We preempt you. If we see you making a mistake, I can tell you. Or I can see the mistake coming and let her make the mistake and then after that she will realise. 'How do you solve this?' Then I will say, 'Yeah, if this happens, you should do this.' So if they are receptive, they will learn. It all depends on the individual. And of course the exchange of the teacher and the student is also very important. The chemistry between them.

## SARAH

It's all energy exchange. So I think all these will put forth whether the person will determine this is a good class, a good teacher, or are you a good student... It doesn't have a fixed answer, I feel.

## DAVID

*And in your progression as a potter, have you noticed different styles or phases that you've gone through?*

## JEROME

Of course. Even though I say that every piece speaks for itself, you look at the market and how it moves. It evolves. It evolves in our lives. It evolves in our thoughts, in our thinking.

## SARAH

In our emotion.

## JEROME

In our emotion. So in every piece, actually, there is a change. Probably next time, I'll do something more refined. But nowadays people in the market don't really look into refined. So I do a little bit more rustic. So there's a little bit of a shift and a change.



## SARAH

But then it's also because the potter is growing in his own rights. And the environment and the pattern of things that change in our surrounding will also affect what we're going to put forth. Like adding more texture because probably he's more exposed to different textures or people's opinion or the trend. So I think there's always an evolution somehow.



## JEROME

Just like a vase. You can look at those old-school kind of vases. Now people will not want to appreciate that kind. So probably I will tweak it a little bit. Make it more interesting but still classic in a way, but 40% more advanced. So you can combine both into one. That's the evolution. I feel that in our line being an artist, we need to change. We need to move forward and to change even in our concept, in our way of doing. That's how I feel. Not only for myself, I think it's all the artists. You can look at the fair. Those who stick by the rules and go by the old way won't move at all.

## DAVID

*Do you guys feel like there's a current trend when it comes to ceramics and people's purchasing habits?*

## JEROME

I don't think there's a specific trend but I think more people now are going bolder.

## SARAH

They can accept things that look like handmade. It doesn't have to be like 100%...



**JEROME**

Yeah, if it looks too clean, too refined, they feel that it's made by machine.

**SARAH**

They like a bit of a handmade feel, handcrafted.

**JEROME**

They have that kind of tendency to say, 'Oh this one might not be handmade.'

**SARAH**

And they like the kind that is one of a kind. That means if I buy this piece, my friend can buy a similar piece but it doesn't have to be 100% the same.

**DAVID**

Yeah. That's exclusive.

**JEROME**

Yeah. More exclusive.

**DAVID**

*Does this kind of tie into the wabi-sabi kind of energy?*

**JEROME**

Ah correct. Yes. Imperfection is perfection.

**DAVID**

Exactly.

**JEROME**

Yeah, correct. So now the trend is going back that way.

**DAVID**

*Can you share a little bit more about your current workspace setup? How's your flow in the structure back there?*

**JEROME**

When we moved in here, it was kind of a headache because it's very squarish. How the flow runs is a little bit tricky. And I used to have a lot of fish tanks.

**SARAH**

His second hobby.

**JEROME**

Yeah. I used to have probably four fish tanks. Only left with two now. I cleared up two because I don't have space. So the flow is: every day when I step into my studio, I will go to the table, check all my work. If it's complete, then I will go to my back table where I will start off my work doing the clay. You need to knead it.

**SARAH**

Hard work. Equivalent to the gym.

**JEROME**

So after I knead the clay, I will turn around to where my wheel is, then I'll just start the throwing. So the flow is quite simple.

**SARAH**

I think he also has that big thing there, the roller.

**JEROME**

Oh, the roller. Yeah.

**SARAH**

So there's a roller there to make slabs so that the slab can be made evenly.

**JEROME**

I intend to buy a kiln, but I haven't had the time yet.

**DAVID**

*And where do you source your clay from?*

**JEROME**

I source from Sam Mui Kuang.

**SARAH**

They have some and then

**JEROME**

Their source is from Australia and the UK. There are a few types. sometimes...

**SARAH**

We also try other clays. Like from China.

**JEROME**

From Taiwan.

**SARAH**

So having experimented with certain ones, certain clays suit certain items. That's how you start to maybe mix your own as well.

**DAVID**

*We've spoken to other ceramists before, and there's this certain idea or surrender in a way when you close the kiln door and you give up control of your piece. How do you deal with that loss of control?*

**JEROME**

Initially yes, I will be anxious. But there are two stages. One is the bisque. The other one is glazing. Actually the glazing is the one that will cause more anxiety. You want to know the result of the glaze.

**SARAH**

It's the final piece already.

**JEROME**

Because the bisque is the complete work. The shape is there. Whether it will crack or not is based on the work that you need to do before you put it into the kiln. So the chances of cracking will be very minimised. But you can control glazing. Because whatever you apply onto that work, the kind of glaze that you want to put, you choose it.



**SARAH**

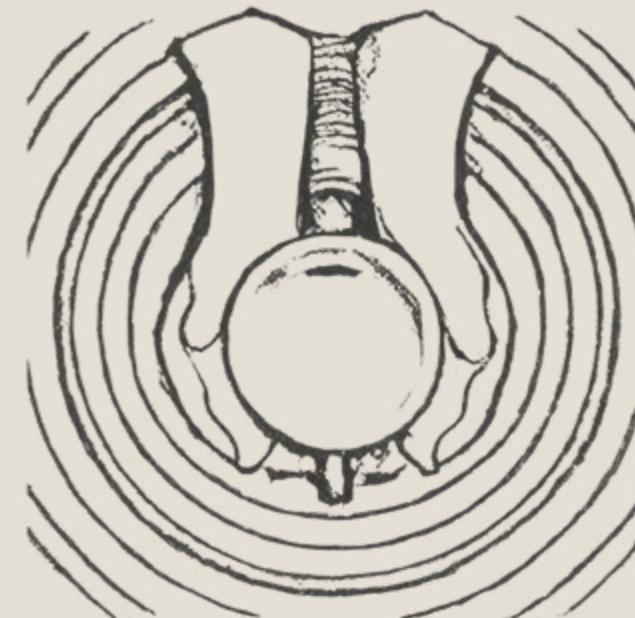
I think before you surrender it, you must have already done all your groundwork very well. You must be at peace with your work. You must be at peace and not feel like, 'Actually there's something wrong with this one, but never mind, I'll just put it in.' Then the result will definitely come out with a disappointment. So if you have done your groundwork and your homework properly before you go into the fire, then it will come out well.

**DAVID**

*Do you see yourself maybe doing collabs and partnerships with people within the community?*

**JEROME**

With other potters? Don't mind to explore.

**SARAH**

I mean if there are interesting projects or events and there's no conflict of interest, of course we always welcome collaboration. Having said that, we are actually planning a solo exhibition for our friend here on January 18 or 19.

**JEROME**

In Commune Kitchen.

**SARAH**

This exhibition will be in the name of charity.

**JEROME**

Then we can invite you there.

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