

# Between the Moon and the Sun

Helen Gory



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## In Good Company

19 Morey St Armadale Melbourne Victoria

Tuesday to Friday 10am - 5pm

Saturday 10am - 4pm

Helen Gory

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# Between the Moon and the Sun

Aliza Levi

There is something both primitive and poetic about working with clay. A meeting of earth and human hand. The vessel is considered one of the first cultural inventions. Traditional gatherers transformed mud into containers in order to carry, store, cook and stay alive. Pots were primarily made and used by women, whose own bodies were the containers, carriers and bearers of life. The divergence, from the traditional vessel, was when objects became a form of expression, beyond utility. Pots became equally about art and ritual expression as they were about function.

Such is the work of artist Helen Gory, who shifts the vessel away from both the delicately decorative and the functional, transporting us with her rich expressive objects. Inspired by the likes of Cy Twombly, Anselm Kiefer and Joseph Beuys, she works with imagination, inspiration and intuition, turning the vessel into a site of self-reflection. Here, the vessel is at once a sculpture and a canvas.

Yet Gory nods her head to the grand history of pottery, citing the influence of ancient Amphora vessels that hold the ashes of loved ones and the traditional Korean onggi jars, large and small, made to ferment and store food. She has studied under the disciple of Korean onggi Master Lee Kang-hyo, and has met the master himself in Korea.

Gory embraces tradition while breaking away from it. The works are made from stoneware clay, the unique glazes mixed by herself. She deliberately makes her vessels asymmetrical and lopsided, an allegory for life's journey. The shapes oppose the perfection of machinery and remind us of the complex beauty of being human in what she calls 'the flawed and wonderful absurdity of life.'

The surface of Gory's pots are a portal to her inner world. Using the Italian technique of sgraffito, meaning 'to scratch,' she carves into the surface with a sharp tool, revealing layer upon layer of oxide, slip and glaze.

Gestural lines, tactile and scarred with energetic marks, become a parable for psychological reach. Surfaces reflect the rawness of time and the exposure of life—its challenges and its joys. In her own words, ‘I find my way, between the moon and the sun, doubt and fear, light and hope.’

Within her gestural mark making, Gory includes phrases and texts from her daily intellectual explorations. Words from novels, poems, essays, songs and film are carved into the dried glaze. At times these are deliberately obscured and at times they are made visible, surfacing in the same way that a dream, thought or emotion comes to consciousness. Phrases such as Bob Dylan’s “Don’t look back” and Leonard Cohen’s “Who by fire” appear and disappear through the glaze. “Beyond the last thought,” a line from poet Wallace Stevens, reflects the very matter of clay and earth on which it is carved. Words from poet Paul Celan have also made a significant impact on Gory, and float beneath the surfaces.

Gory’s vessels constantly tread a fine balance between form and surface. While the bodies of her pots present strength and resilience, the asymmetry, mark making and scratching suggest vulnerability, uncertainty and ambivalence. All of which hold together as one, as life itself. Her vessels do not carry goods, they transport spirit.



beyond the last

MIRRO

this part of the edge



The Palm at the Edge of the Mind  
42 × 31.5 × 31.5 cm

Hug Me  
50 × 25.5 × 25.5 cm

Grey with Mark  
50 × 34 × 34 cm

In the Mirror it's Sunday  
43 × 24 × 24 cm



\*Artworks are detailed  
left to right top to bottom



**Moon Lady**  
47 × 27 × 27 cm



**Sand From the...**  
34 × 18 × 18 cm

**Don't Look Back**  
39 × 25 × 25 cm

**Beyond the Last Thought**  
31 × 28 × 28 cm





**Double**  
47 × 29 × 29 cm

**White Lantern**  
35 × 24 × 24 cm

**High Ordeal**  
22 × 17 × 17 cm

**Intimate**  
29 × 15.5 × 15.5 cm







Angel

18 × 19 × 19 cm



Who By Fire

22 × 19 × 19 cm

New Skin with Marks

30 × 19 × 19 cm



Stella

19 × 27 × 27 cm





Between the Moon and the Sun

22 × 32 × 32 cm



Earth

152 × 30 × 30 cm



Magic

15 × 25 × 25 cm



Rosie

12 × 22.5 × 22.5 cm



**Tall Yellow**  
31 × 23 × 23 cm



**Round Yellow**  
12 × 30 × 30 cm

**Little Moon**  
9 × 28 × 28 cm

**White with Marks**  
10 × 33 × 33 cm







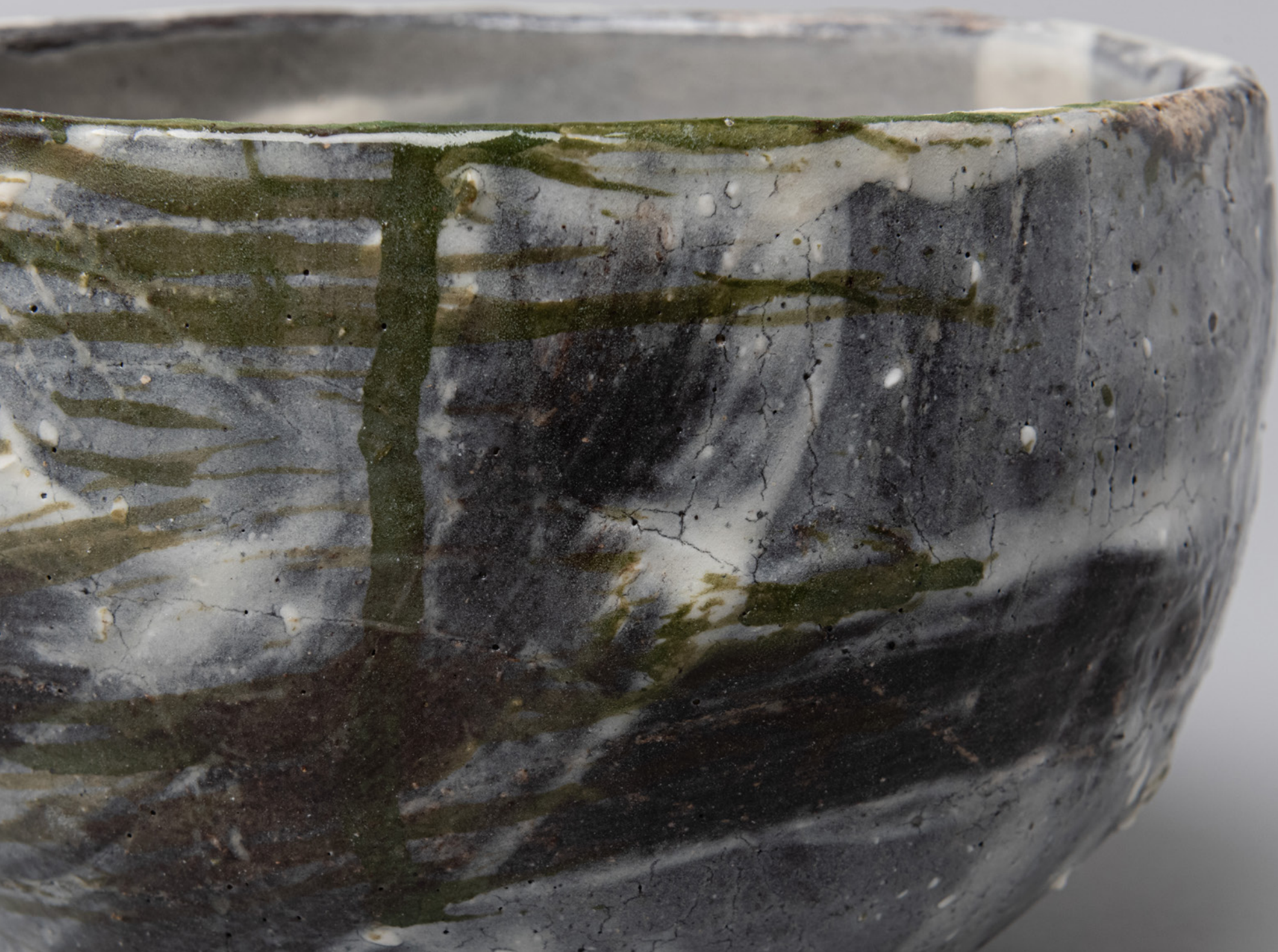
**Chalice**

11 × 18.5 × 18.5 cm



**Bowl with Green**

11 × 16.5 × 16.5 cm



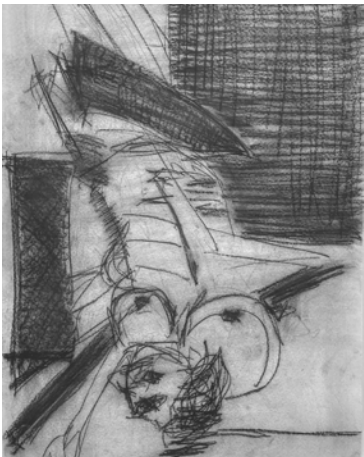
## Artist Statement

As an artist, my interest lies in the relationship between form and expression. Over the years, this has resulted in experiments across different media—collage, painting and now ceramics—that I see as existing on a spectrum, all informing the scale and scope of my practice.

Beginning with collage, over the years I added drawing and mixed media paintings. Embracing this fluidity of form has enabled me to construct an artistic language of recurring symbols and marks that find expression in the material itself. Ceramics, then, was a natural progression.

As with the rest of my practice, my approach to ceramics is a combination of the intuitive and the learned. After experimenting with sculptural vessels at home in my studio, I came up against technical limitations. And so, in 2022 I travelled to South Korea to study the onggi method with Master Kwak Kyung-tae. In a ceramic village three hours outside of Seoul, I spent several weeks slowly developing my skills, learning how to work in symbiosis with the material, to coax form out of matter. During that time I was also able to meet Master Lee Kang-hyo, Korea's foremost onggi potter and artist. His energy was electric, and has stayed with me.

Returning to the studio, I've continued my experimentations, incorporating the onggi method into my own way of working and adapting it to suit my own limitations and expectations. Creating larger and larger vessels, my work emphasises tactility and rawness over a polished finish—indeed, many of my vessels have been described as huggable. Continuing my learning journey at SoCA in Brunswick has allowed me to also play with glazes, drawing on knowledge from Chinese, Korean and Japanese master potters alongside my contemporaries, with whom I share cups of tea and studio space. Glazing requires an embrace of the unknown, a relinquishing of control that is generative and exciting. An apt metaphor for my art making more broadly!



# Helen Gory

b. 1955, (Melbourne, Australia)

## Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2025 Between the Moon and the Sun, Melbourne
- 2024 Of Mere Being, KuLe Gallery, Berlin
- 2022 Define, Backwoods Gallery Melbourne
- 2022 Entwine, M16 Artspace, Canberra
- 2020 Stepping Stones, Backwoods Gallery Melbourne
- 2019 Walking North Out of The Shadow, Printmaker Gallery, Melbourne
- 2019 In my Room, Backwoods Gallery, Melbourne
- 2017 Golden Repair, Chapman and Bailey Gallery, Melbourne
- 2014 Helen Gory Collage, Greenwich Village, New York City
- 2014 Through These Paper Walls, JCP Studios, Melbourne

## Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2014 Cut Paste Create, Walker Street Gallery, Melbourne

## Collaborative Projects

- 2022 Square of Sunlight, A Group Exhibition, Curated by Helen Gory, Backwoods Gallery, Melbourne
- 2019 Orli, performance with Aarti Jadu, White Night Ballarat
- 2018 Losing It, video performance with Moira Burke
- 2017 The Room, video performance with David Danzinger

## Media

- 2022 Variety and Diversity in Three Spaces, The Canberra Times, Peter Haynes
- 2018 'In My Room', The Finkelstein Files
- 2017 'Golden Repair', The Finkelstein Files
- 2016 'Australian Homes: Helen Gory', The Design File Glue, documentary by Valentin Mayer-Eichberger
- 2014 'Profile: Helen Gory', Artists Profile Magazine: Issue 26  
'The Guts and The Gory', The Finkelstein Files  
'Through These Paper Walls', Art Almanac
- 2013 "A Weekend with Helen Gory", Inside Out Magazine
- 2004 The Gory Brand', Art Collector Magazine

## Collections

Private Collections Australia and Internationally

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