Lee Ko

Multidisciplinary Artist, Charlotte, North Carolina
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Experience

Multidisciplinary Artist, 2000 to present
Studio practice in metal, clay, wood, textiles, and found materials, built from small handmade units repeated into larger sculptures and installations.

Founder and Director, Hands On Well, 501(c)(3) nonprofit, 2023 to present
Uses art and culture to fund clean water wells and bring people together. Leads The Well Project, a clean water initiative supporting communities in need since 2012.

Founder and Project Director, The Hands Project, 2023 to present
Participatory installation of 106 hand castings of people nominated for their work in the Charlotte community. Touring galleries, arts centers, and public libraries in North and South Carolina through 2027.

Founder and Director, Korea in the Queen City, 2024 to present
Korean arts and culture program in Charlotte. First season in 2025 with eight programs and sixteen artists and educators. 2026 season presented with the Arts Council of York County and the UNC Charlotte Department of Music.

Jeweler, Richard & West, Rochester, NY, 2004 to 2005

Artist Assistant, Leonard Urso Studio, Rochester, NY, 2003 to 2004

Member Artist, Gallery ARTINUS, Seoul, South Korea, 2000 to 2002

Sample Designer and Maker, stage jewelry for fashion shows, Jewelry NEED, Seoul, South Korea, 1999 to 2002

Member Artist, Gallery Jong-No, Seoul, South Korea, 1999 to 2000

Awards and Recognition

Best Sculptor, Best in the Nest, Queen City Nerve, 2024

Artist Cohort, ArtPop Street Gallery Class of 2023, 2023

Solo Exhibitions

2026 to 2027

The Hands Project, touring exhibition

- thehallway @ 701 Whaley, Columbia, SC, September 2 to November 2, 2027 (upcoming)
- Dalton Gallery, Arts Council of York County, Rock Hill, SC, January 8 to February 13, 2027 (upcoming)
- Richland Library Main, Columbia, SC, November 6, 2026 to January 1, 2027
- LoSo Studios, Charlotte, NC, September 24 to October 21, 2026

2026

Eggcellent SculpTOON, 100 Egg Stories, South Piedmont Art Gallery, South Piedmont Community College, Monroe, NC

Moving Silence, Gorelick Gallery, Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, NC

2025

Eggcellent SculpTOON, NEN Gallery, Charlotte, NC

2024

re:Bloom, Metal Figure Study, NEN Gallery, Charlotte, NC

re:Bloom, Ceramic Installation with Reclaimed Metal and Glass, The Artisan's Palate, Charlotte, NC

2004

Coexisting, Bevier Gallery, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY

2001

Dancing People, GANA Art Space, Seoul, South Korea

Selected Group Exhibitions, 2019 to Present

2026

NEW & NOW, LoSo Studios, Charlotte, NC

NC Artists Exhibition 2026, Historic Rotunda Building, Meredith College, Raleigh, NC

WHISPERer, London Craft Week 2026, SPIRA9 Art, London, UK

Community Threads, an ArtPop exhibit, Connect Labs at The Pearl, Charlotte, NC

2025

Falling Into Place, NEN Gallery, Charlotte, NC

The Journey Exhibit, Charlotte International Art Festival, Knight Theater, Charlotte, NC

Guilding the Mint, Guild of Charlotte Artists, Mint Museum Uptown, Charlotte, NC

Sovereign: Honoring Bodily Autonomy, McColl Center, Charlotte, NC

NC Artist Winter Show, GreenHill Center for NC Arts, Greensboro, NC

Global Art Project, Crossing Borders, NEN Gallery, Charlotte, NC

2024

The Journey Exhibit, Charlotte International Art Festival, Knight Theater and SouthPark Brewing, Charlotte, NC

ArtFields 2024, The R.O.B., Lake City, SC

Atrium Health Art Show, Carolinas Medical Center Art Gallery, Charlotte, NC

International Art Show, Union County Community Arts Council, Monroe, NC

Expression of Hope, The Center of Hope, Charlotte, NC

Hope Is Here, MPUMC Art Gallery, Charlotte, NC

Free for All, Hart Witzen Gallery, Charlotte, NC, 2023 to 2024

2023

ArtPop Street Gallery: 10th Anniversary Exhibition, Cain Center for the Arts, Cornelius, NC

ArtPop Street Gallery: 2023 Artists Exhibit, The Fanjoy Labrenz Studio, Hickory, NC

The Journey Exhibit, Charlotte International Art Festival, Founders Hall, Charlotte, NC

Keeping Charlotte Beautiful, Charlotte Art League, Charlotte, NC

45th Annual SpringFest, Mooresville Arts Gallery, Mooresville, NC

The Welcome Table, The Gallery at Morning Star, Matthews, NC

2022

ArtFields 2022, TRAX Visual Art Center, Lake City, SC

2021

Unlearning, Studio229, Charlotte, NC

Intersection, Gallery C3 Alchemy, Charlotte, NC, 2019 to 2021

Selected Group Exhibitions, 1998 to 2011

2011

Green Earth, Gallery Bing, Seoul, South Korea

1999 to 2011

The 3rd Group of Metalsmiths, multiple venues, South Korea and Japan

2006

Dance+Metal, Artists' Tool Story, Gallery I, Seoul, South Korea

2005

The Korean Metalsmiths, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan

Cheongju International Craft Biennale: Adventure of Craft in the 21st Century, Cheongju, South Korea

2004

Inspired by Light, Gallery r, Rochester, NY

Emerging Artists, Society for Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh, PA

2000

The Art of Giving Exhibition, COEX, Seoul, South Korea

Thanks+Giving Show, Insa Art Center, Seoul, South Korea

1999 to 2001

Korea Contemporary Jewelry Show, GANA Art Space and Ilmin Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea

1998 to 1999

Korea Modern Art Show, KIDP, Seoul, South Korea

Public Art

Easter Egg Parade, public art for Charlotte SHOUT!, The Green, Charlotte, NC, 2024

ArtPop Street Gallery, public billboard and digital display exhibition in cities across the United States, including Times Square, New York, and in Myeongdong and Jamsil, Seoul, South Korea, 2023

Permanent and Public Collections

Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center (Main), Charlotte, NC, *A Blue Way Coming Back*, ceramic and reclaimed glass wall installation, 2026

Atrium Health Lake Norman, Cornelius, NC, ceramic and reclaimed glass wall installation

Haynes and Boone, LLP, Charlotte, NC, ceramic, reclaimed glass, and reclaimed wire wall installation

The Artisan's Palate, Charlotte, NC, ceramic wall sculpture

Priority Care, Charlotte, NC, drawings

Publications

The Hands Project: Celebrating the Creativity That Shapes Our Community, by Lee Ko, Hands On Well, 2026. Archive book, 240 pages, full color hardcover.

Lectures and Presentations

Nakhlah, featured speaker, CreativeMornings Charlotte, 2026

Life is Like a Quilt, artist talk, South Piedmont Community College, 2026

Teaching

Jogakbo (Korean patchwork) adult workshop, Korea in the Queen City, with the Arts Council of York County, Rock Hill, SC, 2026

Korean culture workshops and talks, Korea in the Queen City, NEN Gallery, Charlotte, NC, 2025: jogakbo hand sewing to make tea mats, Korean culture through chopsticks, and bojagi gift wrapping

Teaching Assistant, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY, 2003

Teaching Assistant, Konkuk University, Seoul, South Korea, 1999 to 2001

Education

Master of Fine Arts, Metalcrafts and Jewelry, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY, 2005

Master of Fine Arts, Metal Crafts and Jewelry, Konkuk University, Seoul, South Korea, 2001

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Arts and Crafts, Konkuk University, Seoul, South Korea, 1999

Gemological Institute of America (GIA), G.G., A.J.P., G.P., 2008 to 2010

Thesis

Coexisting, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY, 2005

People: Study of Sculptural Expression of the Human Form, Konkuk University, Seoul, South Korea, 2001

Press

New South Finds, *Latest Finds: Lee Ko*, by Linda Jerkins, April 1, 2026

Art in the QC, *Sculpting Memories with Lee Ko*, by Alexandra Smith, March 2, 2025

WBTV QC Life, *Celebrating Charlotte's Creativity Through Art*, January 24, 2025

The Mill Magazine, *ArtPop Street Gallery Class of 2023*, by Candace Mattingly, Issue 14, 2023

Buffalo News, *The Art of Craft*, by Richard Huntington, October 15, 2005

Buffalo State College News, *Western New York Collection*, 2004

Skills

Metalsmithing, metal fabrication, and hammering

Ceramic sculpture, tableware, and installation

Korean hand sewing and jogakbo

Jewelry making with pearls, gemstones, and precious metals

Exhibition design, curating, and event production

Teaching studio art in three dimensional form

Language

Korean (native), English (proficient)