

Evolution
Lee Johnson

Evolution is conceptually based on cancer and its ability to metastasize (the transference of malignant cells from one area of the body to another). Veins are added to the malignant areas to make them appear alive and growing just as cancer grows by the means of angiogenesis (the formation of new blood vessels to supply nourishment to a cancerous mass). The cracked texture gives the vessel an appearance of dermal tissue, yet alive with a feeling of disintegration and internal shattering. Despite the apparent turmoil on the exterior surfaces the interior is vibrant and the piece as a whole remains sturdy. As humans experience cancer and death their bodies appear bleak and ravaged, but despite these superficial changes the essence of their humanity is still capable of a beautiful and unique presence. I strive to elicit the viewer to sense this duality of destruction and potential within each piece I create.

I am choosing to create utilitarian art currently because I want the pieces to be touched, examined and cared for like a human in need. Often when handling and analyzing any of the *Evolution* art I have created, a person initially experiences a feeling of anxiety due to the textures and intricacies added. The viewer knows the piece of art is ceramic, but with each handling a certain level of delicacy is used because the viewer's perception is altered based on the exterior appearance.

This concept of usage is important to me because of the direct correlation to the human condition, which I have drawn from personal experience. People living with cancer and a plethora of other health problems must be cared for in every way possible. This can be an extremely wearisome task, but it must occur to give them any chance of survival. All the while, family and medical personnel feel that at any moment they could break their loved one; viewers often feel the same sense of caution with my art. If people avoid interaction with the ailing person, the essence of their being would decay, unrealized and unexperienced. The experience of genuine interaction can not be erased by death. My art needs to be touched, used, and analyzed to understand its full potential. I often add flaws, inconsistencies, and intricacies which can only be appreciated through contemplation - the same kind of appreciation that can be unlocked within any person if the time is spent doing so.