

ARTIST STATEMENT

Urushi is a fluid that comes from the sap of a tree. Once it is hardened and polished, its surface becomes transparent and brilliant. I have made this a primary material in my work, as I am fascinated by the depth and allure of the transparency that can be perceived from its 'glossiness' which lies within the membrane of the *urushi* covering the entirety of the work. I have tried to give befitting forms to this material in order to create works that, by their own nature possess this gloss.

I made the works in this exhibition by wrapping styrene foam balls in an elastic fabric, creating three-dimensional curved surfaces that were then finished with *urushi* lacquer using the *kanshitsu-technique*. With the *kanshitsu-technique*, linen is bonded to the foundation and hardened with *urushi* to form the base that is then lacquered over. This is a sculptural technique that originated between the 7th and 8th centuries in Japan for the purpose of creating Buddhist statues. I was inspired to make these works when I saw oranges being sold in mesh bags at the supermarket. The oranges and the netting created a single form by way of the relationship between its interior and exterior, and I wanted to incorporate this relationship into my work. By incorporating a heteronomous agency into the formation of the work, I believed it would bring forth an inevitable expression of the *urushi*.

Because *urushi* is a fluid, it cannot hold its form alone. It requires a foundational form called *tai*.¹ The coating applied to the work's surface has only the slightest thickness, so the *tai* and this membrane are formed through a reciprocal relationship. This relationship, with technique and process, creates a connection from the interior to the exterior, influencing the appearance of the material on the surface. The work, which I polish for a long time by hand, connotes a sense of physicality, leading to an organic, intimate association between material, artist and artwork.

How does the tactility of the *urushi* react to an environment once it leaves the hands of the artist? Within the relative relationship between the viewer, artwork and space, I work to seek out the most befitting presence for the work.

¹ The Chinese character “胎” (*tai*) can also mean “origin” or “womb; an unborn child.”

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION TITLE, "MEMBRANE"

I believe 'membrane' is a word that is connected to my production method and the sense of containment given by applying the *urushi*, in the way it covers the whole work like a skin. This word that is used with animals, plants and other organisms also has an affinity with the organic material of *urushi*, and can mean a kind of skin, expressing physicality.

The 'gloss' of the membrane is achieved by applying and polishing the *urushi* which wholly covers the work. The membrane has a quality of depth that is the exact opposite of its thinness, and performs its role as the borderline between interior and exterior, object and space, image and embodiment.

I want to create a space where the membrane, with its 'gloss', creates a boundary that fosters the exchange of perceptions.