

Arts & Entertainment

Sculpture chosen for South Korean exhibit

Will be part of international craft exhibition in the fall

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**

The Champion

Angelika Koeth has a new man in her life. His name is Jack. Jack Works.

As she puts an arm on his shoulder, her smile widens and the twinkle in his eye seems to beam brighter. It's clear Jack's full of the qualities Ms Koeth values in people. He has a certain "je ne sais quoi" attitude and doesn't take things too seriously. In fact, he seems to mirror many of Ms Koeth's own personality traits.

Jack Works is a sculpture. But it's surprisingly easy to forget that fact listening to his creator, Ms Koeth, talk about him — he's never an "it," always a "him."

"I could marry a guy like this. He's got character," Ms Koeth, a local chiropractor, said with a laugh.

Alas, Jack will soon be leaving the only woman he's known when he takes a trip to South Korea where he'll have many women — and men — fawning over him.

Ms Koeth was recently informed that Jack was chosen to be displayed in the upcoming Cheongju International Craft Competition from September 30 to October 23. He'll be joining 80 pieces from Korea and 40 from other countries.

Ms Koeth has an opportunity to win up to \$20,000 US in prize money at the international invitational exhibition.

The theme of the competition is 'Hide and Reveal,' a concept that seems perfect for Jack, given the ever-present twinkle in his eye. "He leaves and lives revealed and unrevealed years of dynamic fun," Ms Koeth explained, looking fondly at Jack.

It took Ms Koeth about 10 weeks to create him, spending three or four hours at a time sculpting. His body is clay, and he sports a cotton t-shirt covered in a casting slip that was carefully applied and fired on.

From his ripped t-shirt to his unkempt moustache and scraggly chest hairs, Ms Koeth made sure Jack was lifelike. She didn't want a clay version of an unnaturally perfect man. She wanted him to look like someone who could be walking down the street, she said. Even his name reflects his everyman appeal.

"I like the idea of whiskers that are wild — they're not perfect. I like the fact that he's ordinary. He even has a big nose. His character lines say that he's laughed and had fun," Ms Koeth said.

When she looks at Jack, Ms Koeth said she sees someone she's drawn to. "Part of us wants to be like him. You see that he's a bit of a rebel, but you see that he's soft, too."

Since this is her public 'debut,' Ms Koeth said the competition is incredibly exciting and that Jack holds an extra special place in her heart. Although Ms Koeth said she's been creative for as long as she can remember, it was just seven years ago that she began working with clay.



Angelika Koeth proudly displays her recent creation, Jack Works.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

As a chiropractor, Ms Koeth said clay figures quickly became her primary interest, after she experimented with everything from watercolours to creative sewing.

"Clay is a very sensuous thing to work with. And because I'm a chiropractor, the anatomy comes easy."

She sculpted Jack with life-sized proportions, although he's slightly smaller now since clay shrinks about 16 per cent in the kiln, she said. "Because I know the anatomy and deal with the spine so well, it comes natural to do things on an anatomical basis."

As she began to sculpt, Ms Koeth said Jack quickly took on a personality of his own. She envisioned wrinkles that she knew he needed and the slightly crooked teeth she now couldn't imagine him without.

As for Jack's impending journey, he'll be packed in a Styrofoam mould and his current 35 to 50-pound self will weigh 150 pounds

by the time he's crated and boxed.

He'll be put on a plane, which will cost Ms Koeth \$1,200, since Jack will have a special safe place.

"A plane ticket was \$3,500," Ms Koeth said, laughing. "I checked out every option."

One regret Ms Koeth has is she won't be able to see Jack as all the exhibit-goers will. She won't be able to hear their comments as they look at him or watch their expressions — which, inevitably, will vary greatly, she said.

"Everybody sees something different."

Her next endeavour? Ms Koeth said Jack needs a companion... probably a lady with a ponytail and tattoo, wearing a t-shirt with just a little bit of lace at the collar.

"She's going to be fun too," Ms Koeth said with a grin.

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