

Ought: The Journal of Autistic Culture

Volume 3
Issue 2 *Family*

Article 15

May 2022

The Notion of the Beautifully Discarded

Alison Lam



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/ought>

Recommended Citation

Lam, Alison (2022) "The Notion of the Beautifully Discarded," *Ought: The Journal of Autistic Culture*: Vol. 3: Iss. 2, Article 15.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/ought/vol3/iss2/15>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Ought: The Journal of Autistic Culture* by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.

Alison Lam identifies as a neurodivergent, interdisciplinary, socially engaged artist using differing materials such as porcelain, metals, glass and paper. Alison explores the idea of grief, discardment and ostracization, through exploring and investigating process led investigations. She often refers to this process as “drawing with her hands.”

The needs of her sons required her to take time out of professional work; having entered a challenging time of home schooling and tackling the local authority to ensure the right education provision for her two boys with autism and complex needs. Consequently, Alison is conversant in the legislation around SEN support, despite being challenging, this period has been instrumental in informing and inspiring her work and is the reason she then went on to study a MA in Fine Art and Social Practice.

The film *The Notion of the Beautifully Discarded* was the beginning of her family’s journey and research of what makes us look again and take time to process, much like that of many autistic families.



Still from *The Notion of the Beautifully Discarded* (2019) by Alison Lam.

Artist's statement: My film *The Notion of the Beautifully Discarded* is about my dialogue and communications between myself and my boys. It is also about raising awareness of hidden disabilities (in both my boys cases ASD/ Autism with complex needs) to not judge or act on what we do not see. To look beyond what's on the outside. To take a second look and not too discard so quickly what we do not always understand. Beauty can make us stop to reflect and take a "second look" but sometimes we need a bit of encouragement when it is not so obvious. I reach out beyond the myriad of clinical and social labels, which define and influence how we view people, objects, and how in turn we are viewed by society. The film was shown at Social Art Summit in Sheffield on November 1-2, 2018.