

Family Dough, Rolling Semi-Finalist

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Image location: Fine Art Building Gallery,
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Image Description

My creative research explores ideas around culture and its significance from a culinary perspective. During creating my installations, I work closely with my family members, research our family diet routine and regional heritage, and depict the transmission of cultures through lineage. As a family from northern China, wheat staples are essential to our diet. This piece shown in the image, Rolling, is the fourth piece out of a series of installation works named Family Dough. I created this series based on the documentation video of my mother teaching me to make wheat-based food. The other pieces in the series are Kneading, Pulling and Shaping, which describe the fundamental hand gestures during the food-making process.

The pancakes in this piece are made with ceramic, and the text on ceramics are adjectives describing our family relationship. On the wood pastry board, I laser engraved the image of me and my mother's hands while making our staple food. In addition, I hand carved a wood rolling pin to replicate the one we have been using for over 35 years at home for making pancakes; the repetitive Chinese character on the rolling pin is "gan," which means rolling. I reflect on the process of passing down knowledge to the next generations and the impacts my mother has on me of her positive working spirit.