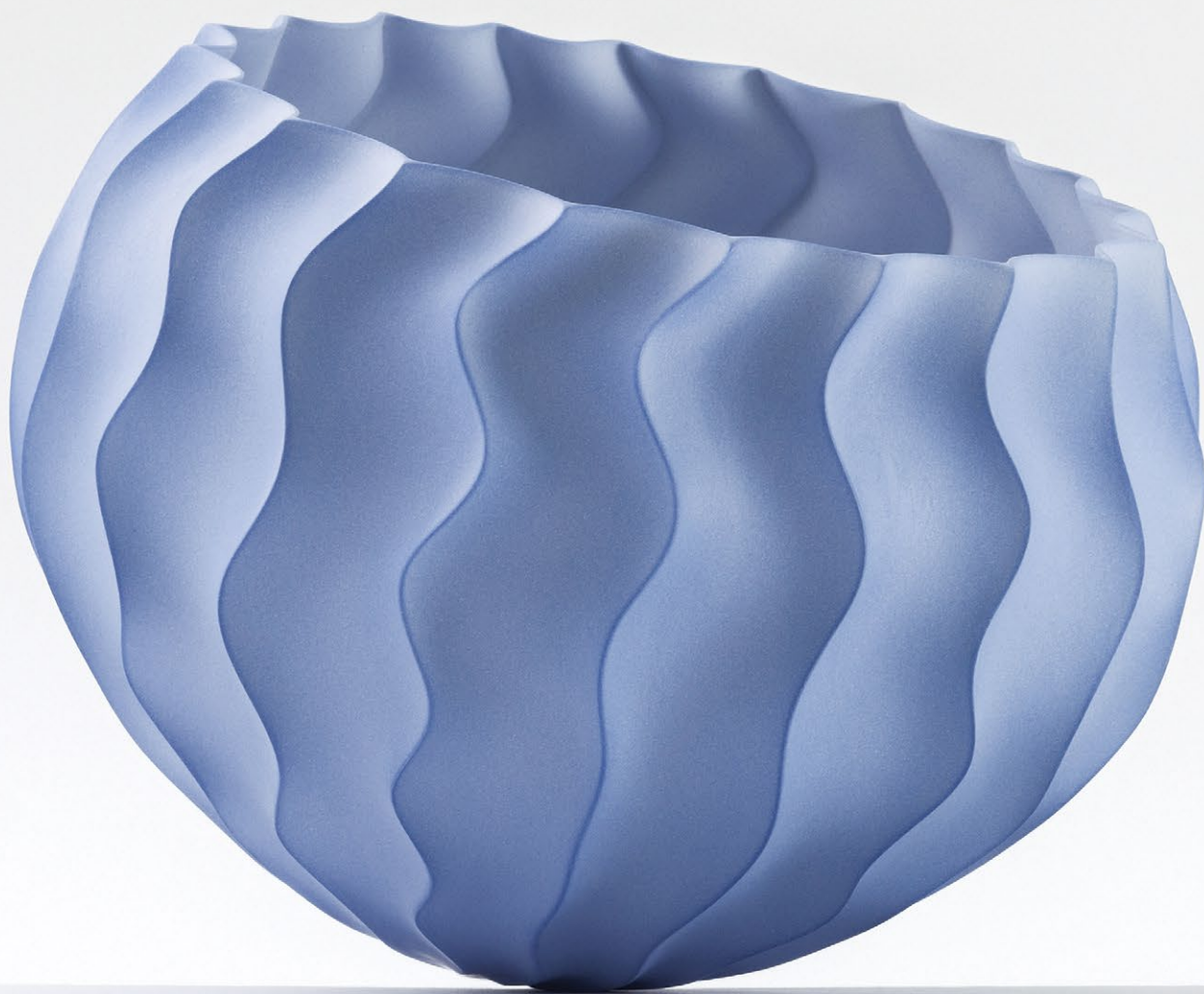


# A Pure Visual Beauty Born From Logic

by Ting Ju SHAO





2

1 *Waveform Series Object* (#1234), 9½ in. (24 cm) in diameter, slip-cast unglazed porcelain, soluble metal salts (cobalt), fired to 2167°F (1186°C) in oxidation, wet sanded, 2021. 2 *Origami Closed-form Series Objects* (#1334, #1345, #1351), to 13 in. (33 cm) in length, slip-cast unglazed porcelain, fired to 2167°F (1186°C) in oxidation, wet sanded, 2022.

Mark Goudy's ceramics career began in 2009, when he was making handbuilt low-fire earthenware vessels painted with metallic salts, and took its first turn in 2011 when he learned how to make plaster slip-casting molds. In 2018, he switched media and made a series of thin, translucent, kiln-formed glass works. In 2019, he returned to ceramics, working solely in paper-thin translucent porcelain. Starting in 2020, he began designing his current series of works, gently bringing viewers from their noisy cityscapes into a face-to-face encounter with nature and pure silence.

### Finding a Voice

Every shift of Goudy's career path is a response to an epitome of his life experiences and the times he lives in. He studied biology in college, while also playing drums in the local music scene. In the early 1980s, he worked as a chemistry lab technician before pursuing a master's degree in electrical engineering. Starting in 1986, he began a 20-year career designing 3D-graphics hardware for companies such as Pixar, Silicon Graphics, and Nvidia.

The artist's journey from engineering to ceramics began in 2004 with a raku class, an homage to his mother, a lifelong potter, shortly after she passed away. After taking classes at local schools for a few years, he started to find his voice. Influenced by his technical background, he began making minimal, rounded triangular forms decorated with abstract dot-field patterns created using

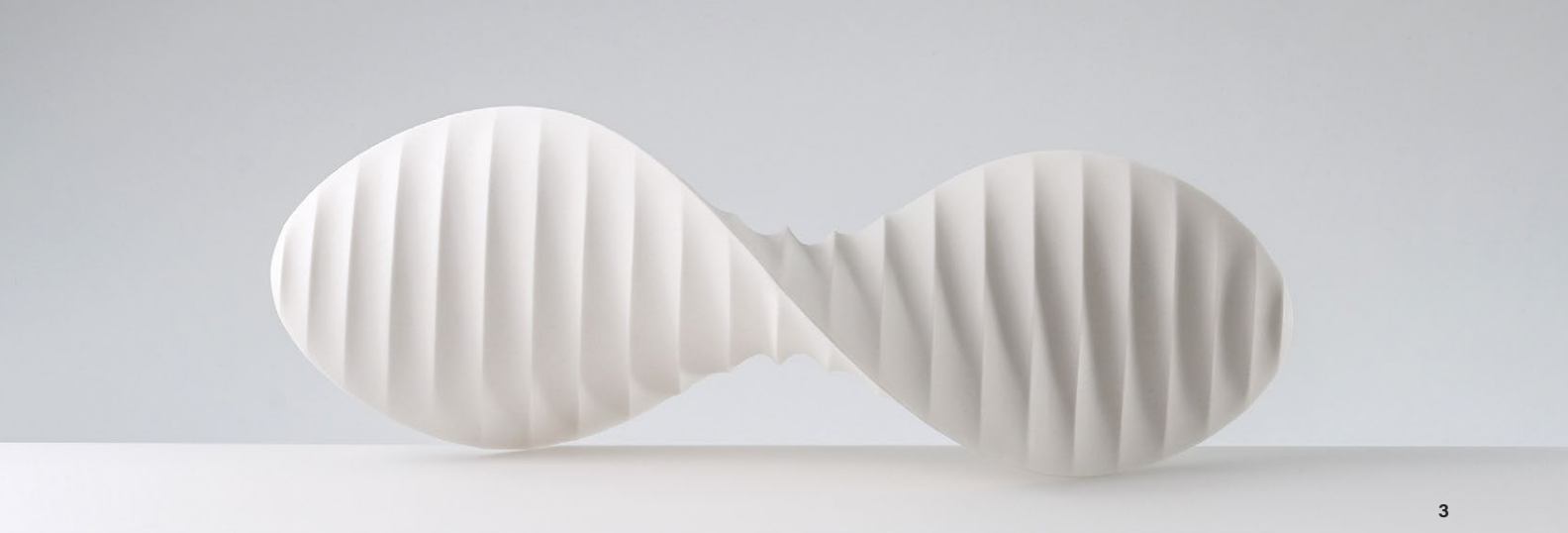
metallic salts. He continued in this vein for a decade, making a series of vessel-centric works.

And then, during the pandemic lockdown, he took an in-depth, online 3D-printing masterclass offered by the European Ceramic Work Centre (EKWC) in The Netherlands. "This class led me to think in new ways about my creative process and along the way gave me the tools to design and build forms that I had envisioned, but were impossible to construct directly by hand," Goudy explains. "This new approach unleashed my imagination and allowed me to take off in new and interesting directions."

### Developing a Process and New Works

His new works take rich and diverse forms, some monochromatic, simply white or black. "In the end, it is the personal experience that these physical objects project into the world that I find so rewarding. My mission as an artist is to create a coherent visual language, and then learn to speak with that language. My core inspiration is a love of minimalist archetypal forms that reflect the geometries of nature. I feel my current works represent a watershed moment for my ceramic practice. They are an amalgam of my various life experiences: echoes of my previous career as a 3D-graphics hardware designer, combined with ten years making ceramic vessels."

Goudy designs his works with software and uses a Prusa 3D printer to make his mother molds, but the remaining process







8

**3** *Origami Closed-form Series Object* (#1301), 14½ in. (37 cm) in length, slip-cast unglazed porcelain, fired to 2167°F (1186°C) in oxidation, wet sanded, 2022. **4** *Origami Open-form Series Objects* (#1338 and #1337), to 12 in. (30 cm) in height, slip-cast unglazed porcelain, soluble metal salts (gold + cobalt), fired to 2167°F (1186°C) in oxidation, wet sanded, 2022. **5** *Waveform Series Object* (#1291), 9½ in. (24 cm) in diameter, slip-cast unglazed porcelain, soluble metal salts (cobalt), fired to 2167°F (1186°C) in oxidation, wet sanded, 2021. **6** *Waveform Series Objects* (#1261 and #1265), to 17 in. (43 cm) in height, slip-cast unglazed porcelain, soluble metal salts (cobalt), fired to 2167°F (1186°C) in oxidation, wet sanded, 2021. **7** *Origami Open-form Series Objects* (#1227 and #1239), to 9 in. (23 cm) in diameter, slip-cast unglazed porcelain, soluble metal salts (cobalt), fired to 2167°F (1186°C) in oxidation, wet sanded, 2021. **8** *Waveform Series Objects* (#1311 and #1295), to 9 in. (23 cm) in diameter, slip-cast unglazed black porcelain, unglazed porcelain, soluble metal salts (cobalt), fired to 2167°F (1186°C) in oxidation, wet sanded, 2022.

(smoothing the 3D print, creating plaster slip-casting molds, mixing and pouring slip, meticulously sanding the bisque-fired forms, and kiln firing) is a series of handwork. The computer enables Goudy to design shapes close to his vision—the results reveal the subtle and sensitive aesthetics of the artist, with his sense and sensibility, his proficient hand skills and techniques. In his consistent quest for minimalism, the details of his works display a smooth dialog with nature. As he describes a work in his *Wave Form* series, “It is all about capturing the light and projecting gentle shadows across the surface, analogous to sand dunes lit by a low-angle afternoon light.” Goudy designs his forms with an algorithmic 3D visual programming language (Grasshopper), a tool often used by architects. In essence, he uses a framework to anchor 3D surfaces, which are then joined together to create either open or closed forms. “It’s like stretching a flexible fabric over a wire frame to create subtle curving surfaces, reminiscent of waves in water, or dune patterns,” he explains. This approach allows him to create intricate abstract shapes based on mathematical constructs found in nature.

#### Born from Logic

A blue-edged work in Goudy’s *Wave Form* series can be simply regarded as a vessel or object, but on a closer view, suddenly presents a snowcapped mountain before the eye, with blue streams ceaselessly flowing down with some melting snow. His *Origami* series brings one into the snowy winter, as the origami-like white

lantern reflects the candlelight. These geometric forms designed with software unexpectedly weave scenes with fantastic shapes, demonstrating his sensibility; a pure visual beauty born from logic.

Goudy and his wife, Liza Riddle, who is also a ceramic artist, love nature and often travel into the wilderness. Surrounded by nature, Goudy says, “There are so many inspirations: the way granite tends to break along its hidden crystalline structure into wonderful rectilinear shapes; the way flowing water erodes sandstone into the most unexpectedly beautiful, curved surfaces; the way random boulders are shaped and rounded in the river to produce some of the most pleasing forms I have ever seen.” For Goudy, every stone and every wave in nature is a breathtaking creation.

Compared to his earlier works, it is as if the new works Goudy began making in 2020 have overcome the noises and vanity of youthful days, and what is left is a peaceful dialog with heaven and earth—the small stars scattering in the night sky, the starfish lying quietly in the deep blue ocean, or the streams murmuring down from the snowy mountain. He knows how marvelous the universe is. Behind every heartwarming or breathtaking image is a wonderfully perfect scientific logic. Goudy has transformed the codes of cosmic mysteries and wonders into his new creations.

**the author** *Ting Ju SHAO* is a clay artist and writer. She was also the curator of the 2018 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale. To learn more, visit [www.tingjushao.com](http://www.tingjushao.com).