MARK GOUDY

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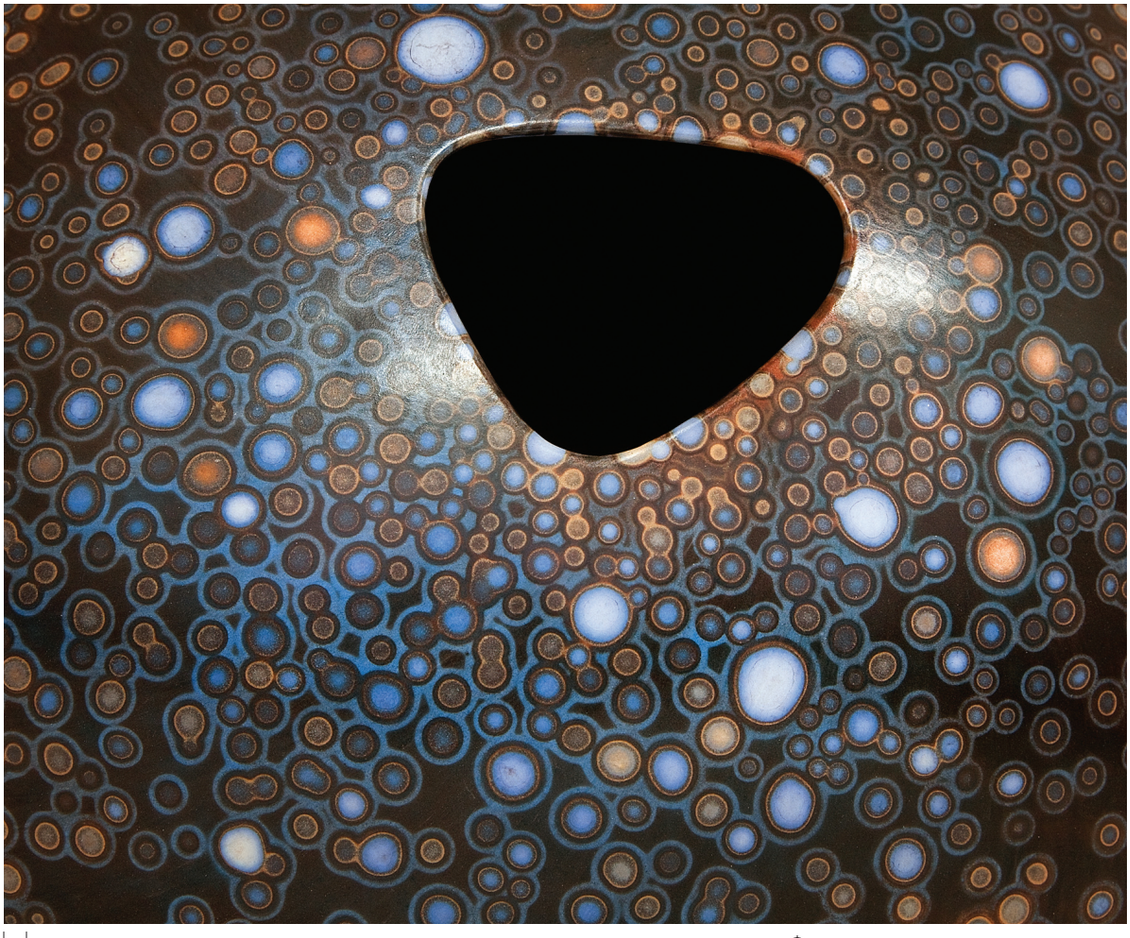
My mother was a potter, and after she passed away in 2004, I was inspired to take a raku class at a local adult school, an homage to her creative spirit. After a twenty-year engineering career, working in the virtual world of computer chip design, I found the process of clay work to be a catharsis. The physical nature of handbuilding unique pieces from this plastic medium was immediately satisfying. Soon I was applying my analytical and problem-solving skills to the multivariate issues that surfaced in the clay studio, and exercising my right brain to construct shapes in a totally intuitive way.

I entered the world of clay in the low-fire arena, exploring alternative firing methods such as raku, pit, saggar, and sawdust firing. Wanting more control over the surface markings than I was getting with pit and saggar firing, I became interested in the use of water soluble metal salts. (My early work experience as a chemistry lab technician gave me the right background to experiment with these hazardous chemicals.) Painting "watercolors" directly on the bisque-fired clay, which permeate the surface and become part of the clay body during the firing, has opened up new avenues for my creative expression. In separate firings, I often combine color from metal salts with carbon from slip-resist raku.



Vessel (m14), 12 in. (30 cm) in length, hand-built burnished earthenware, soluble metal salts.