CERAMICS NOW

MAGAZINE

15-Year Anniversary Edition

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December 2025

Introduction

This 15-year anniversary edition of Ceramics Now feels a little unreal. When I started Ceramics Now in December 2010, I didn't imagine it would travel this far or introduce me to so many artists, ideas, and ways of seeing, but I was secretly hoping it would. What I did know, even back then, was that ceramics had already become a long-term companion in my life.

The past fifteen years in the ceramics world have been extraordinary. The field has evolved, reinvented itself, bent and broken a few rules, and made entirely new ones. Watching ceramics evolve this way has been one of the great joys of my work. I sometimes feel I grew into adulthood through ceramics, through seeing art that challenged me, humbled me, or simply revealed the complexity and unexpected wonder of the world. Ceramics has broadened my knowledge and taught me to slow down, pay attention, and welcome joy in many forms.

I love ceramics — not in a theoretical way, but in a very real, everyday way. I love the possibilities it holds, the things it teaches us about ourselves and the world, and the hope it offers for the future. Clay is grounded, ancient, stubborn, funny, emotional, unpredictable, and alive — a perfect mirror for being human. Notice the word alive — also the title of a major contemporary ceramics exhibition (Alive & Unfolding) that I curated in Namur, Belgium.

This anniversary issue began with an open call designed to bring artists together, to welcome new voices, spark new connections, and carry forward the community-minded work we've been doing for fifteen years. Choosing only 24 artists from over 950 applications was... let's just say, a test of my emotional stability. I spent more than three weeks reviewing everything, and it was genuinely inspiring to see ceramics as diverse, bold, and imaginative as it has ever been. I discovered artists I had never heard of (wished I could select at least 70), and was reminded again why open calls matter: they make participation accessible, without shipping work across oceans or managing logistics that complicate everything.

As part of preparing this anniversary issue, I asked the selected artists a simple question: Why ceramics?

Some of their replies stayed with me, and I would like to share a few here. Their answers were thoughtful, funny, moving, and sometimes beautifully strange — exactly what you'd hope for. I'll include a few of them here, but every response helped shape this publication.

Ahrong Kim wrote about the physical closeness of the material: "There is a rawness to clay, an honesty in the material itself, that allows me to express fragility and strength simultaneously. Clay holds memory. It remembers every gesture, every pressure point, every moment of hesitation or certainty. That shift from softness to permanence is what keeps me returning to the material."

Amber Rane Sibley described ceramics as something that arrived unexpectedly and changed her life: "Ceramics came into my life the way all good romances do, unexpectedly and while I wasn't looking. Working with clay finally gave me space to reflect… it helped me slow down and relinquish control. The moment my figures cease to be clay and become their own being looking back at me is as baffling to me as the mystery of consciousness and just as magical."

Renqian Yang spoke candidly about learning through failure: "A bit like an arranged marriage, at first clay and I had a toxic situationship. Pieces cracked, collapsed, shattered. I cried. Clay did not. Somewhere in all that, I realized you can't control everything. Clay was basically giving me free life coaching… After years away from it, I understood how much I loved this material."

Heidi Bjørgan emphasized the value of unpredictability: "Clay can never be fully tamed. It follows its own logic. Sometimes it gives exactly what I hope for, other times it refuses. The results can have cracks or glazes that crawl, and it is precisely this unpredictability that makes the work exciting. For me, these marks are not mistakes."

Chiao-Chih Lu discovered clay at a moment of frustration in art school: "Clay behaved differently from every other material I had worked with. It responded. It resisted. It asked me to collaborate with its personality instead of imposing my will. That sense of dialogue captivated me instantly… Clay offered the most unexpected, alive challenge of all."

Linda Nguyen Lopez reflected on the quiet act of preserving what usually disappears: "What I love about clay is taking an ephemeral material and making it permanent through the firing process. You're archiving a moment, a touch, a feeling, an idea... taking the most temporary and dismissed accumulations of daily life and giving them lasting form and presence."

Nick Ervinck wrote about clay as both primal and immediate: "Clay is one of the most primal materials an artist can touch. It responds directly to the hand… it records movement in a way that no digital tool can. Working with clay is a balance between control and letting go. Ceramics embody a paradox: fragile and eternal, soft and then suddenly stone."

These answers are different in experience, but they share something simple: clay is complex. For each of them, it is a place of discovery, difficulty, and connection.

And now, I invite you to discover the 24 artists who make up this issue: Amber Rane Sibley, Renata Cassiano Alvarez, Andile Dyalvane, Linda Nguyen Lopez, Jovan Matić, Erin Berry, Tim Fluck, Céline Arnould, Heidi Bjørgan, Ahrong Kim, Yinchen Li, Toni De Jesus, Chiao-Chih Lu, Mark Goudy, Andréa Keys Connell, Yuka Nishihisamatsu, Théo Ouaki, Nick Ervinck, Tümay Erman, Ariana Heinzman, Barbara Léon Leclercq, Yaerin Pyun, Ana Buitrago, and Renqian Yang.

2 Amber Rane Sibley's ceramic sculptures probe the blurred line between victim and villain in our personal narratives. She creates toddler-sized or animal-sized figures that appear vulnerable and injured, inviting empathy toward the uncomfortable or ugly parts of ourselves. Stripped of clear identifiers, her beings become mirrors for projection, using surface, glaze, and veiling devices like masks and shrouds to reveal how limited our understanding of one another—and ourselves—can be.

8 Renata Cassiano Alvarez works with clay in ways that frame objects as sites of memory, tension, vulnerability, and endurance. Guided by archaeology and a Latin American context, she creates dense, opaque artifacts that resist easy reading, opening ways to engage with questions of time, identity, and transformation rather than fixed meanings. Her material decisions turn glaze into structure and surface into weight, using form as a way to hold both what is fleeting and what persists.

14 Andile Dyalvane's ceramic works are grounded in his Xhosa heritage and a deep spiritual connection to his ancestors and the land. His sculptural vessels and forms function as metaphoric and literal sites for honoring language, ritual, and communal memory, often drawing on patterns related to scarification and grain storage. Across several projects, he uses clay as a vessel for healing, gratitude, and the preservation of cultural knowledge.

20 Linda Nguyen Lopez reimagines overlooked domestic dust and detritus as lively ceramic "dust furries" that sit between the recognizable and the fantastical. Through meticulous handbuilding and dense, textural surfaces, she turns what is usually swept away into objects of attention, care, and curiosity. Her sculptures ask what we choose to notice or ignore in everyday life, suggesting that tenderness, humor, and meaning can be found in the quietest corners of the home.

26 Jovan Matić uses ceramics and sculpture to examine how people are shaped by—and reduced to—roles as consumers and commodities. He slows the pace of digital culture by remaking emojis and interface icons in clay, placing them alongside old technological objects as if building altars to a digital age. Bright, appealing surfaces mask more uneasy questions about value, isolation, and how economic and technological systems script intimacy and desire.

32 Erin Berry combines ceramics, metal, plastics, and digital processes to explore how materials transform across geological, technological, and historical time. Using 3D scans and mesh modeling, she reconfigures forms before translating them into modular sculptures. Her work considers how digital tools extend craft traditions and how layers of data, material, and time compress into physical structures that act as archives, passages, and speculative relics.

38 Tim Fluck combines porcelain with resin, acrylic, and light to create sculptural arrangements that feel both architectural and tactile. His forms draw from Brutalism as well as playful, sensorial shapes, using contrasts (hard and soft, rigid and fluid) to heighten physical and emotional response. By assembling modular elements into precarious configurations, he explores how shape, color, and surface trigger desire, pleasure, and curiosity.

44 Céline Arnould's practice centers on the encounter between porcelain and human hair, a material she felts, arranges, and then burns out in the kiln, leaving ghostly traces and textures. Rather than focusing on fixed forms, she emphasizes process and material behavior, allowing compression, suspension, and minimal shaping to reveal the potential of this unusual combination. Her work engages with the cultural and emotional charge of hair—identity, intimacy, loss—against the "white gold" purity of porcelain.

50 Heidi Bjørgan's ceramic practice revolves around risk, chance, and the value of so-called mistakes. She often mixes incompatible clays and glazes, reuses found objects as molds, and allows pieces to slump, melt, or implode in the kiln, questioning conventional ideas of perfection and skill. Her works and installations navigate the beautiful and the ugly, the constructed and the ruined, encouraging viewers to find meaning in irregularity, excess, and theatrical staging.

56 Ahrong Kim creates ceramic figurative sculptures that act as a diary of her emotional life, translating shifting psychological states into layered forms and vivid surfaces. Reflecting on close observation of internal "voices," she abstracts the figure into colorful, patterned compositions that hold complex feelings at once. For her, clay is a material that carries endurance and transformation, allowing emotion to be fixed in time through the firing process.

62 Yinchen Li works at the intersection of painting and ceramics, translating spontaneous drawings into fragile, semi-translucent clay surfaces. During firing, the original substrate disappears, leaving only what the material can hold: brushstrokes turned into relief, color turned into matter. She embraces cracks, thinning, and material shifts as part of the work's language, allowing instability to shape the final form.

68 Toni De Jesus uses ceramics to navigate questions of identity, belonging, and personal history. His sculptures often balance function and non-function, tradition and innovation, reflecting a sense of cultural and emotional flux formed through migration and lived experience. Some works explore symbolic flowers and personal narratives, while others respond to broader social and political pressures, allowing clay to become a space where instability, vulnerability, and meaning take sculptural form.

74 Chiao-Chih Lu works with black clay and white porcelain to reflect on cycles of destruction and renewal, treating clay as a condensed universe that holds both memory and possibility. Cracks, carbonized surfaces, and luminous porcelain become metaphors for endings that turn into beginnings, and for the resilience that emerges from rupture. She approaches clay as an active companion whose transformations mirror the fragile balance of the world we inhabit.

80 Mark Goudy designs slipcast porcelain forms using algorithmic modeling, creating thin, folded vessels that gently rock or balance on their edges. Influenced by natural geometries and minimalist form, he uses asymmetric curves and translucent porcelain colored with soluble metal salts to make objects that act as containers for light and atmosphere. His work grows from an interest in balance, light, and the geometries of nature, turning subtle structures into quiet, perceptual experiences.

86 Andréa Keys Connell's figurative sculptures center on the emotional landscape of motherhood, holding love, grief, humor, and longing in the same form. Working quickly with a rough, gritty clay body, she builds figures that look both protective and on the verge of collapse, reflecting the complicated labor of caring for others. Her practice treats caregiving as a formative force, asking how the ways we support one another leave marks on our lives.

92 Yuka Nishihisamatsu reinterprets cultural and ritual motifs through forms that combine bold shapes with detailed surface decoration. Shaped by natural cycles, symbolic imagery, and ideas of Umwelt, her sculptures imagine how different beings perceive and inhabit their own worlds. Through a meticulous process of forming, assembling, and repeated firing, she builds layers of material and color that allow meaning to accumulate gradually, turning familiar motifs into quietly resonant objects.

98 Théo Ouaki builds intuitive ceramic sculptures that shift from playful to uncanny, often taking the form of stacked, character-like figures. Influenced by folk traditions, comics, and pop culture, he embraces distortion, awkwardness, and exaggeration as a way to reveal energy and presence in clay. Bright color and visible handwork amplify this immediacy, allowing his hybrid forms to feel both humorous and strangely mythic.

104 Nick Ervinck moves between digital modeling and hand-built clay to create hybrid ceramic forms that feel both organic and engineered. Starting with 3D design tools and then returning to physical material, he builds "man-made fossils" that echo flowers, flesh, stones, or mutated food, suggesting nature reshaped by human intervention and technology. His brightly colored, complex sculptures navigate motion and stillness, beauty and unease, raising questions about how imagination and science together transform the material world.

110 Tümay Erman's practice is anchored in glaze chemistry and years of research into crystalline glazes. Her sculptures draw parallels between geological change and the social pressures experienced by women in patriarchal contexts, using glaze reactions as a metaphor for forces that fracture, reinforce, or reshape. By combining porcelain, stoneware, and complex glaze formations, she creates forms that register both vulnerability and strength.

116 Ariana Heinzman uses ceramics and drawing to blur the line between daydream and reality, letting characters from her inner world emerge through coiled clay and loose, doodle-like forms. Influenced by 1960s children's book illustration, historical ceramics, and vivid encounters with nature, she embraces absurdity and wonder as tools for revealing hidden truths. Her sculptures feel playful and surreal, as if pulled from an intuitive narrative.

122 Barbara Léon Leclercq works with ceramics and drawing to construct speculative narratives set in shifting, ruin-like landscapes. Her installations operate in a space that balances foundation and collapse, where chimeric forms—part organism, part architecture—are constantly rearranged and recomposed. Through this process, she imagines alternate versions of the world, inviting viewers into layered, fragmentary stories where roles, bodies, and structures are always in flux.

128 Yaerin Pyun's work reflects a close attention to natural textures and the overlooked details of everyday life. Informed by memories of Korean landscapes, she transforms porcelain, glaze, and melted stones into surfaces that feel both familiar and slightly altered. Her sculptures highlight how small, ordinary elements—like moss, stones, or snow—can hold emotional resonance and speak to broader rhythms of change.

134 Ana Buitrago's work reimagines the architectural structures that quietly shape daily life—fences, windows, built forms—by softening and transforming them into intimate ceramic objects. Rooted in her Colombian heritage, she weaves family archives and personal narratives into these structures, treating home as a site of memory, identity, and grounding. Through clay, she explores what it means to live with objects, turning functional or familiar shapes into carriers of nostalgia, place, and cultural continuity.

140 Renqian Yang's work explores the uncertainties that emerge from opposing states—structure and spontaneity, memory and change—shaped by her experience of moving between cultures. Emerging from Daoist ideas of balance, she uses hand-building, slip casting, and paper clay to create forms that hold both restraint and release. Layered surfaces, blurred lines, and fractured marks reveal how emotions, memories, and transitions settle into form.

Thank you to everyone who applied to this special edition! More than a hundred artists stayed in my mind long after I closed the submissions folder. And thank you to everyone who reads, contributes, or simply cares about ceramics. I'm grateful every day to work in this field and to meet people who understand the value of clay. Here's to many more years together!

Vasi Hîrdo

Founding Editor of Ceramics Now

Mark Goudy

Mark Goudy is a ceramic artist based in Berkeley, California. His work grows from an interest in the geometries of nature and the quiet presence of minimalist form. Using algorithmic design tools and slipcast porcelain, he creates paper-thin objects shaped from asymmetric curves and folded structures. Many of these pieces balance on their edges or gently rock when placed on a flat surface, reflecting his focus on equilibrium, perception, and the subtle movement of light across a surface.

Goudy often works with unglazed translucent porcelain colored with soluble metal salts—cobalt, gold, and other metals that permeate the clay body during firing. The resulting surfaces are delicate and atmospheric, revealing color as part of the material rather than an applied layer.

He has exhibited widely in the United States, Europe, and Asia, including at the Faenza Prize (Italy), the Scripps Ceramic Annual (California), the International Ceramics Competition in Mino (Japan), the Jingdezhen Biennale (China), and A Conversation in Porcelain at Les Franciscaines in Deauville, France. His work has also appeared in exhibitions at Plinth Gallery, Keramikmuseum Westerwald, The Clay Studio (Philadelphia), the American Museum of Ceramic Art, and numerous international biennials and invitational shows.

Goudy has received honors from the Blanc de Chine International Ceramic Art Award, the Korean International Ceramic Biennale, the Taiwan Ceramics Biennale, and the Focus: Vessel exhibition at Keramikmuseum Westerwald. His work is held in public collections including the Jingdezhen Contemporary Ceramic Art Museum, KOCEF in South Korea, the Mark Rothko Art Center in Latvia, Keramikmuseum Westerwald in Germany, the Yingge Ceramics Museum in Taiwan, and several university and private collections.

He holds a BS in Biology from the University of Oregon and an MS in Electrical Engineering from San Jose State University. Goudy shares a Berkeley studio with his partner, ceramic artist Liza Riddle.

Visit **Mark Goudy**'s website and Instagram page.

https://markgoudy.com/

@mark_goudy

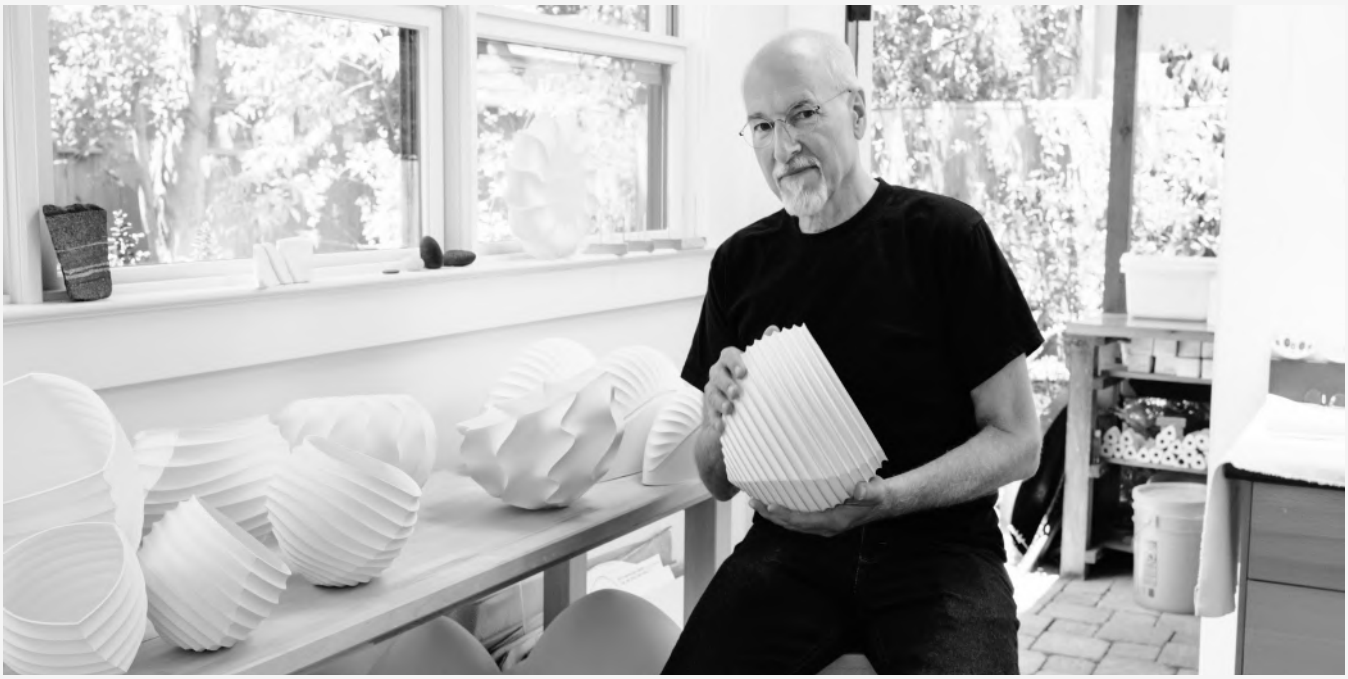


Photo credit: Ekatarina Izmestieva.

Waveform Object (#1466), *2025, unglazed porcelain, soluble metals (gold, cobalt, chromium).*

Origami Objects (#1442, 1441), *2024, unglazed porcelain, soluble metals (gold, cobalt, chromium).*

Origami Objects (#1429, 1435, 1434), *2024, unglazed porcelain, soluble metals (gold, cobalt, chromium).*

Waveform Object (#1463), *2025, unglazed porcelain.*

Flux Objects (#1459, 1456), *2025, unglazed porcelain, soluble metals (silver).*

Origami Pod Object (#1404), *2024, unglazed porcelain.*

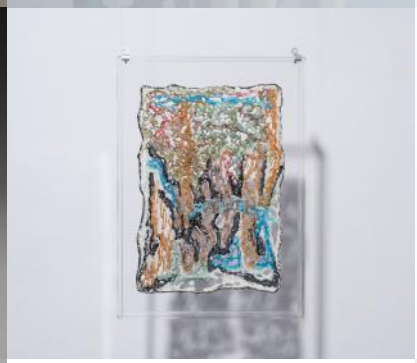
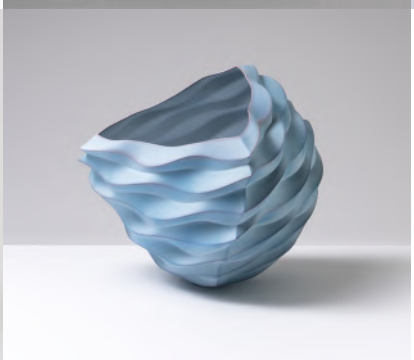
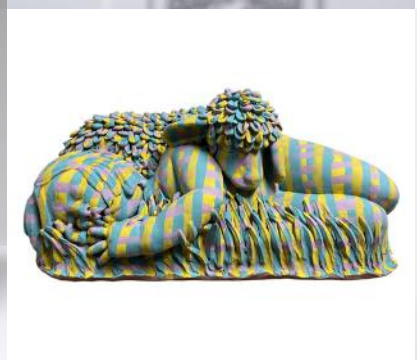
Laminar Flow Objects (#1371, 1368), *2023, unglazed porcelain.*

The Memory of Water, *2024, unglazed black and white porcelain.*

My work explores the intersection of light, form, and algorithmic design. Rooted in minimalist, archetypal shapes that echo the geometries of nature, I seek to develop a visual language through an inquiry into the principles that give form coherence, balance, and expressive power.

Inspired by folded paper, sand dunes, flow patterns in water, and weathered stones sculpted by time, I aim to reveal an unspoken geometry that underlies our perception of space and presence. I'm drawn to the way shadows create form, how certain curves flow naturally, how balanced objects find equilibrium, and why some objects resonate with both stillness and motion.

My practice weaves together two life paths: more than a decade of hand-building ceramic vessels and an earlier career in 3D graphics hardware design. Using algorithmic modeling software, I create porcelain works that gently rock on their folds, settling into their own natural balance point.

Each piece is slipcast in paper-thin, translucent porcelain—some in pure white or black, others tinted with metallic watercolors. I am especially drawn to cobalt, evoking the blue of deep water and the distant horizon.

I think of my vessel forms as quiet containers of light and atmosphere—visual poems shaped by code, clay, and intuition.