



Finding

the

balance

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Finding the balance

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts in Ceramics in the Department of Ceramics of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island.

by

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Abstract

From dust to dust.

Soil nourishes life.

Every inch of soil contains the memory that once existed here.

Animism.

From art to nothingness.

What is its value?

What is the memory it carries?

The harmony between the internal and external.

Alternation of old and new.

Where is the balance?

Translating different invisible emotions, feelings and symbiotic relationships. Explore the traditional Chinese humanistic philosophy of 'Tian Ren He Yi'.

The interwoven relationship between human, nature and machine is complicated yet beautiful. I explore how visceral emotion, feeling, language and communication all play an important part of how our bodies react, to visualize this invisible feeling. I attempt to visualize the mystery of the human body and society through various ceramic and glass techniques, such as hand-building, blowing and ceramic 3D printing. Using different methods of combining and stressing the material, capturing that resistance and embracing the outcome through a series of making and remaking of a specific object. I also explore the symbiotic relationship between human, nature and technology through combining 3D printing technique and hand building technique together. Creating a tranquil meditation space that evokes deep contemplation.

Background

The balance of the individual human physical and mental world

In modern society, people face many challenges to their physical and mental health, such as long hours of work stress, the influence of social media, environmental pollution, unhealthy habits, and so on. These factors can lead to an imbalance of physical and mental health, which can negatively affect people's quality of life and happiness. Traditional Chinese philosophy believes that humans should pursue inner harmony, including personal, family, social, and world peace. It is not only the harmony between humans and nature but also the inner harmony of humans themselves.

Especially after the pandemic, I have felt a lot of anxiety, insecurity, and loss from myself and the people around me. I hope to visualize these visceral emotions and explore the healing power of ceramic art to regain a balance of physical and mental health.

The balance between traditional craft technique and new technology technique

I come from China, where there is a long history of ceramics. I learned most of the traditional techniques during my undergrad. There is a fierce controversy in the Chinese ceramic field on how to balance traditional handicraft and contemporary ceramic art. I want to find the balance point between them and apply them to my work. My work interprets the balance point between traditional handicraft and contemporary ceramic art as well as the new technology techniques.

Traditional handcraft techniques such as coil building, throwing, slab building have been refined over centuries, and they are valued for their craftsmanship, uniqueness, and cultural heritage. In recent years, new technology techniques such as clay 3D printing have emerged that allow for greater precision, efficiency, and automation in creating ceramic art. While these techniques offer new possibilities for creativity and experimentation, they can also raise questions about the value of traditional craft techniques and the impact of technology on the art-making process.

Therefore, from my perspective, achieving a balance between traditional craft techniques and new technology techniques to create innovative and hybrid forms of ceramic art is an important challenge for contemporary ceramic artists.

The coexistence of the three to achieve a balance of sustainable development

The relationship between humans, nature, and technology is complex and interdependent. The relationship between humans and nature is long-term, interactive, and interdependent. Nature provides humans with many resources such as food, water, and air, and humans have been relying on and utilizing natural resources to sustain their existence and development.

Human activities can also have negative impacts on the natural environment, such as pollution, climate change, and environmental destruction. Technology, as a product of human wisdom and creativity, can provide humans with more convenience and opportunities for development. However, technological development can also have negative impacts on the environment and nature, such as air pollution and climate change caused by the use of fossil fuels. Therefore, to establish a healthy and sustainable relationship between humans, nature, and technology, we need to consider and balance the needs and impacts of these three aspects.

I think ceramic art can provide a unique lens through which to explore the relationship between art and technology. The process of working with natural materials, such as clay and water, and the process of transforming natural materials through technology reflects the relationship between art and technology.

ore the relationship between humans, nature, and technology. Because it transforming them through the application of fire and heat. This process relationship between humans, nature, and technology.

Human

The balance of the individual human physical and mental world

I can feel it.
Growing and expanding.
In my brain, in my blood, converging in the thyroid.
Come and find it.
Between this black and white boundary.
Misunderstanding, confusion, aphasia.
It is the fate of the expressor.
Anxiety, sadness, anger, grievance.
I can clearly feel the dull pain in my neck when they come.
Take them out of my body.
Just through art.
In a warm, sensitive, fragile and timeless way.
White gives them a pure and slightly vulnerable
appearance.
It is easy to miss the secrets lurking in their rich surface.
But if you spend a little time with them.
They will open up a whole new microcosm for you.

Emotions are an inseparable part of human beings, they exist in our bodies and affect our lives all the time. I became very interested in the expression of emotions in art three years ago. I once did an experimental work, which asked people around me to express themselves in polymer clay under the four emotions of "happiness", "sadness", "anxiety" and "anger". I was surprised to find that in the process of making "Sad", "Anxiety", and "Anger", the producer's mood changed to varying degrees, gradually turning to peace, and the negative emotions were relieved. And it occurred to me that art has healing power, so I began to learn about art therapy and therapeutic art.



My personal focus is narrowed on anxiety, which is the emotion I feel the most. I think the relief effect of artistic creation on anxiety is mainly reflected in the three key words of "release", "forgetting" and "satisfaction". "Release" is to apply the backlog of emotions to the creative materials, to release and vent the negative emotions, so that the emotions can be relieved. "Forgetting" refers to the fact that it is easy for people to immerse themselves in artistic creation, so that people's mentality becomes gradually calm and they forget the events that cause negative emotions. After calming down to review the events that cause their anxiety, they can conduct a relatively rational analysis of the causes of anxiety, come up with solutions or a calmly optimistic face, and then achieve the effect of relieving anxiety. In my opinion, the advantage of art creation for the public is that it is easy to get started. Moreover, compared with other ways of relief, artistic creation is more direct and simple. Even people who cannot read or write can release and transfer their emotions and stress smoothly through artistic techniques. "Satisfaction" means that most people will feel a sense of achievement and spiritual satisfaction in the face of their created works after the completion of production, and eliminate the negative emotions caused by anxiety by obtaining the happiness brought by the achievement and satisfaction.

My inspiration came from the thyroid nodules in the human body to convey how we respond to our surroundings, nature and inner emotion creating a symbiotic relationship between our inner and outer feeling.

A few years ago, I was diagnosed with a nodule in my thyroid gland, and I began to learn about it. The doctor told me that the rate of thyroid nodules is on the rise in modern society due to greater stress, more negative emotions and irregular sleep patterns. One way to alleviate this is to stay in a good mood. I find this to be a good example of how our bodies visualize things that we can't see, like emotions that are invisible but always present, through their own changes.





Untitled





Perfectionism

6:30





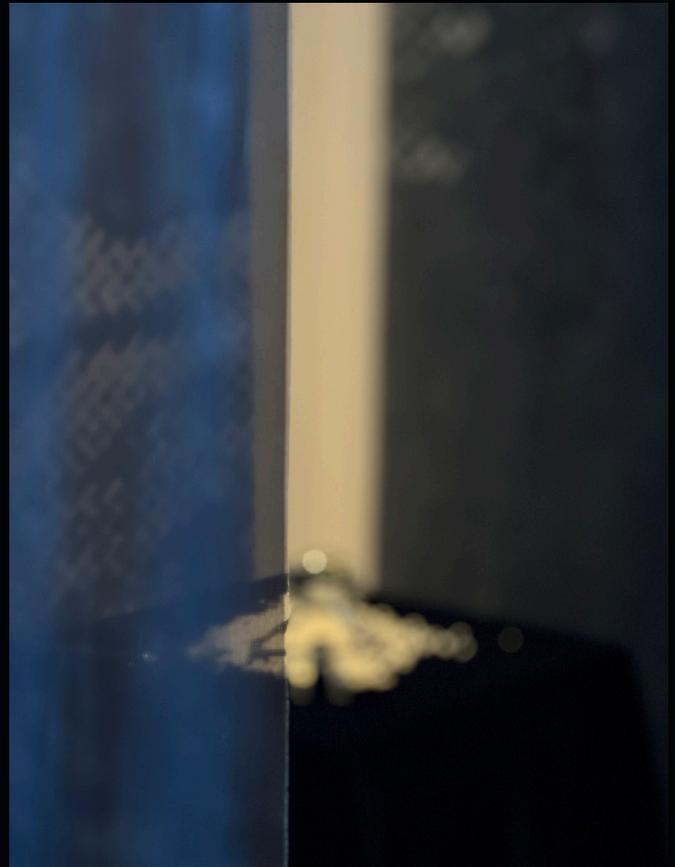


Untitled-2





In my body, it seems like all of the negative emotions, once generated, converge on the thyroid gland and over time form little nodules. I think it's very interesting, it's a visualization of intangible emotions, but also a visualization of time. I started to make little balls and dig holes in them when I feel not good since last winter, they really like nodules. I find that every time I concentrate and quietly finish the perforated balls by myself, our mood improves a lot. So I think it's a great way to calm down, to record the mood changes over a particular period of time, and these little balls are like containers for storing emotions. It's not just a way of self-expression, it also has a function. One of the interesting things for me is that the process of making this work is like taking these emotions out of my body and the nodules that they are coming together to form. I see a lot of people who need surgery to remove nodules from their bodies, and I can't help but wonder if, like what I do, if the "nodules" are taken out of the body in advance, they don't coalesce into the body to form a real nodule.







Daily Removal Surgery





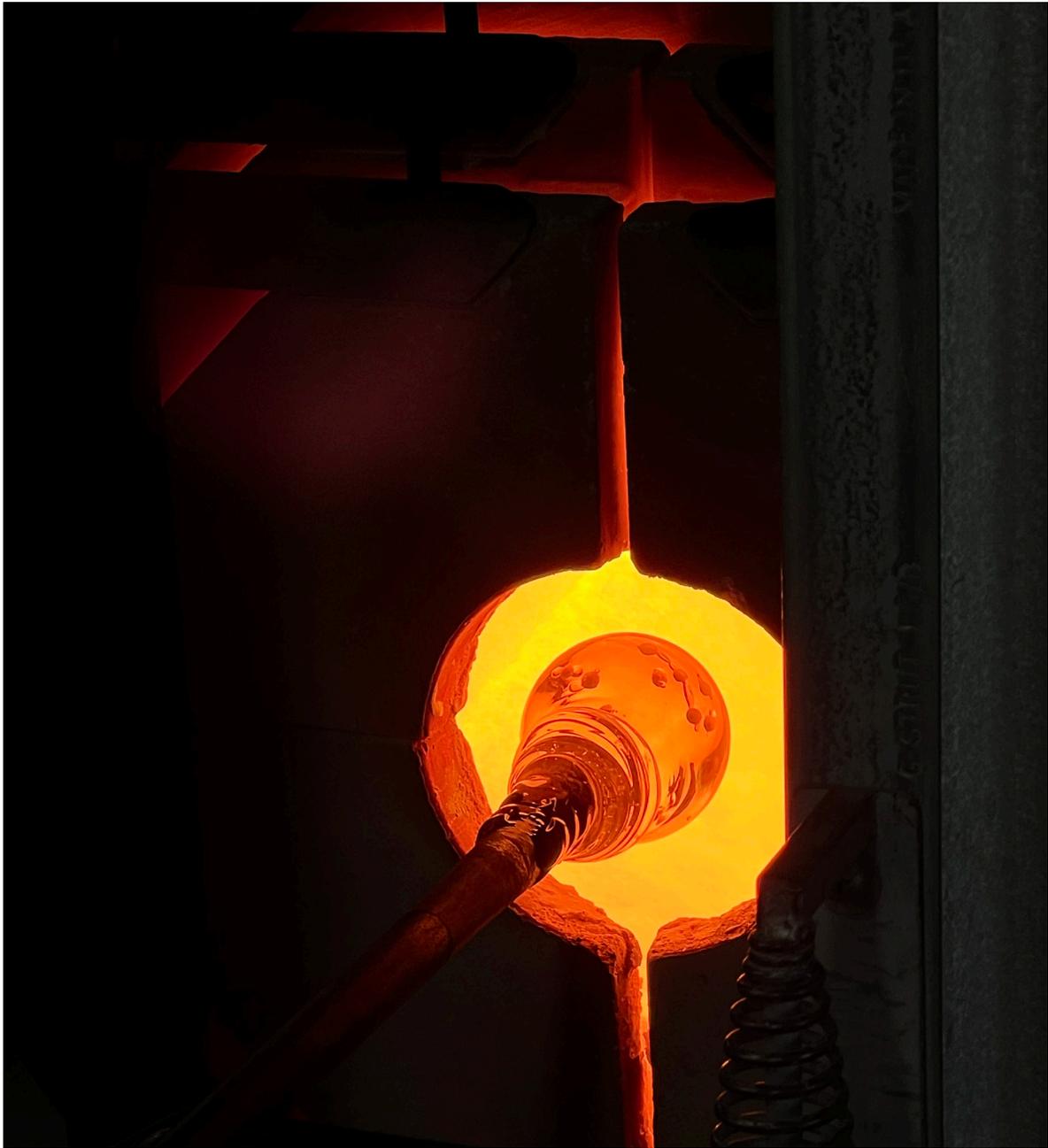
Secret Dialogue



In the Mirror

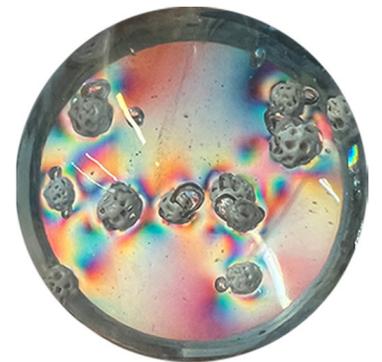


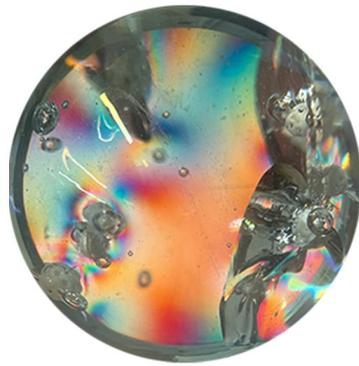




The Unseen Strength

To portray use of materiality to convey affects of forced stress, I combined nodule like porcelain little balls which have been fired under different temperature into glass marbles. The ceramics objects stresses the glass and in some instances makes it shatter - or look like it is about to shatter - to visualize how the stress we feel breaks our body when it wants to be released.





Human

Technology

We are leading technology

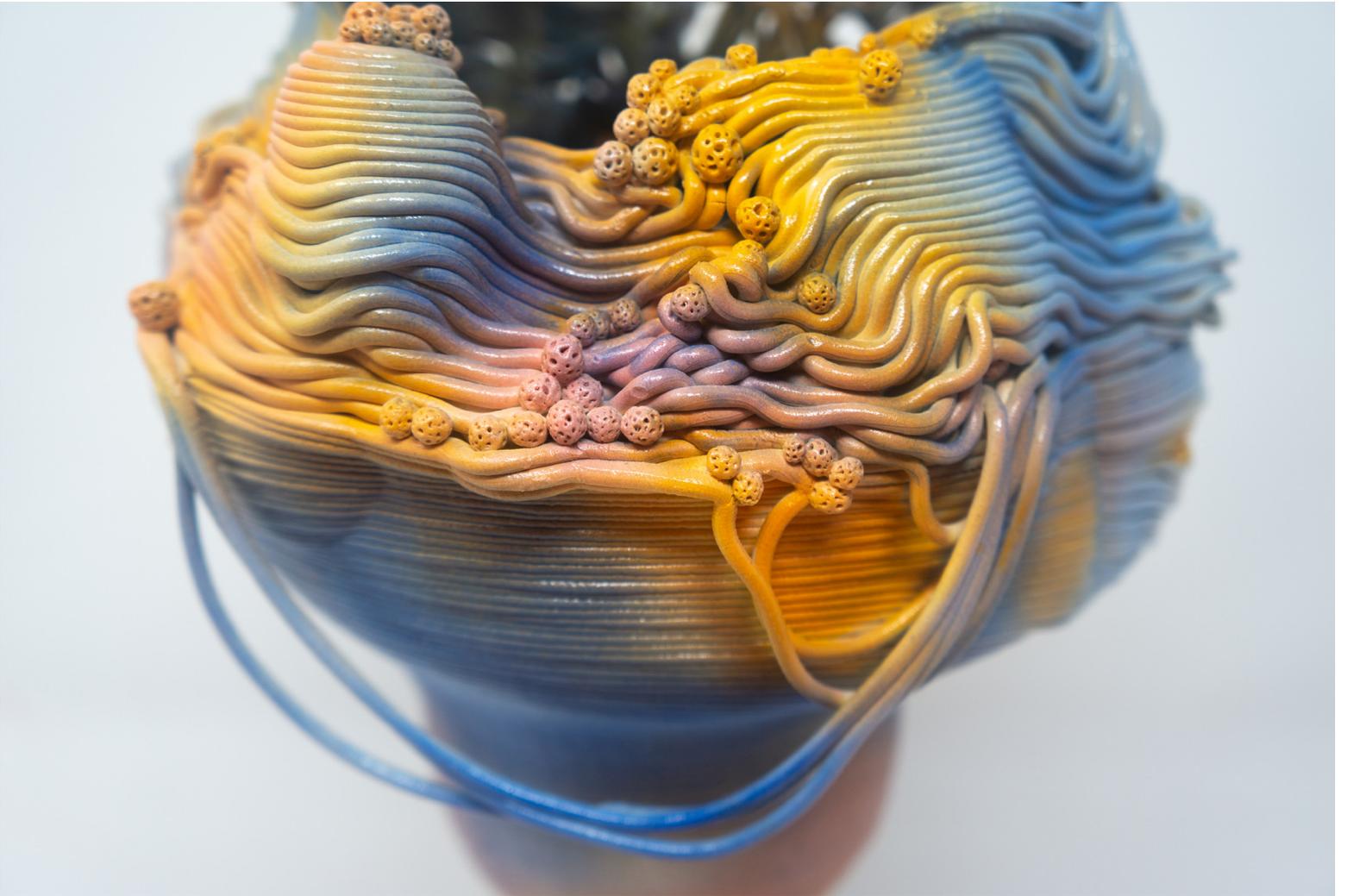
or

Technology is leading us





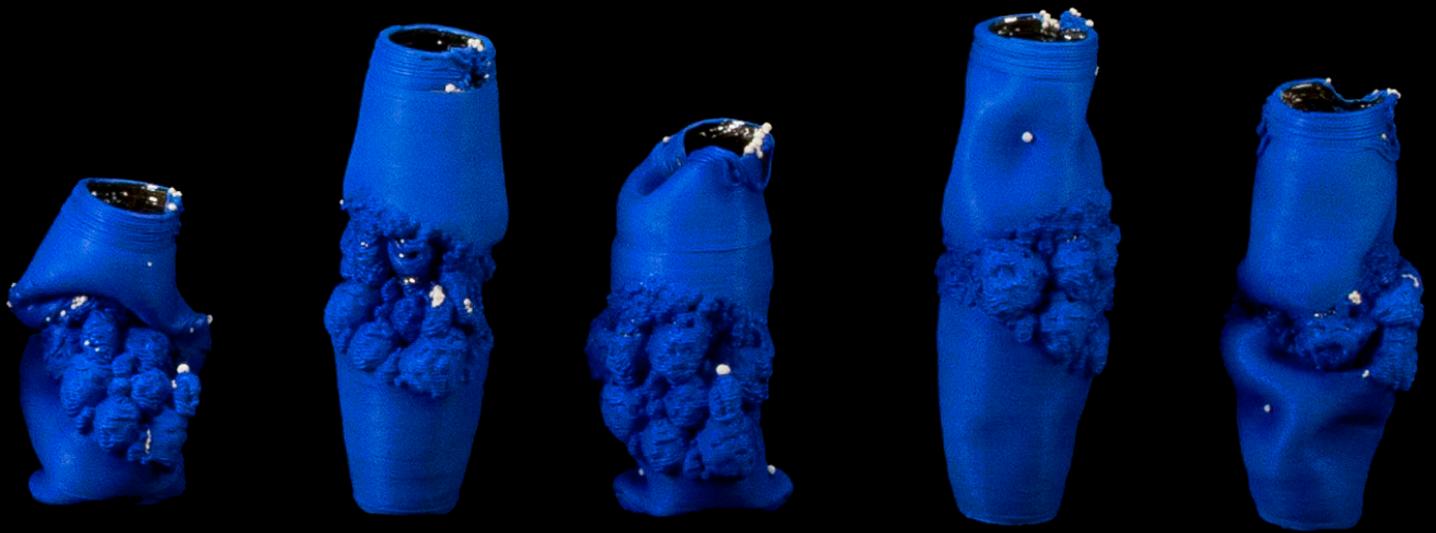
Bittersweet



The ceramic 3D printer cannot completely stop the extrusion of clay and the clay itself cannot print all forms because of its softness, resulting in random errors and unexpected things in the printing of some models. But it's the uncertainty and the texture of machine error that fascinates me a lot. The phenomenon that the machine has problems when printing, I feel it is just like our body has some small problems and changes. I play with it, I collaborate with it, I destroy it then I rebuild it. I combine 3D print and hand-made methods together, where there is a typo error, there are nodules. The addition of a 3D printer makes my ceramic art creation more interesting, and also brings some conflicts into the works. The conflict between new technology and old hand craft methods, also the conflict between error and perfection.









Shadow Cave

To visualize the shape of emotion and pressure, I make nodules like little balls every time when I feel negative emotion inside my body or I get stressed by the environment. To visualize the effects of emotion, I made a vessel like object that resembles growing nodules and scans this visceral object to create a 3D scan of it and then 3D print it again. After printing them I put pressure on them to make them collapsed. This is a direct reference to ones inner feelings, how they affect the body, the surroundings and the environment.







Wrapped in the Tech Valley



I was born in an era of rapid development of science and technology. Science and technology bring people a lot of convenience, but at the same time, it makes people wonder whether there are hidden dangers in such development. Where does the idolatry of technology lead us?







Spiritual alchemy
enlightenment. It in
forms of conscious

Ceramic art can al
beautiful and mean
spiritual alchemy, c
lead to self-discover

Furthermore, both
art, earth is the ray
earth represents the
elevate the soul.

A Drop of Positivity

is a branch of alchemy that focuses on the transformation of the soul and the pursuit of spiritual growth. It involves the transmutation of base elements of the human psyche, such as negative emotions, into higher qualities, such as spiritual insight and wisdom.

Ceramic art can also be viewed as a form of spiritual alchemy, as it involves the transformation of raw materials into a meaningful object that has the potential to evoke deep emotions and inspire spiritual contemplation. Like spiritual alchemy, ceramic art is a creative process that involves discipline, skill, and patience, and has the potential to bring about inner peace and personal transformation.

The connection between ceramic art and spiritual alchemy are often associated with the elements of earth and fire. In ceramic art, clay is the raw material, and fire is the transformative agent that turns clay into ceramic art. In spiritual alchemy, the human body is the raw material, and fire represents the transformative power of spiritual practice that can purify and





Innerself





Nature

Human

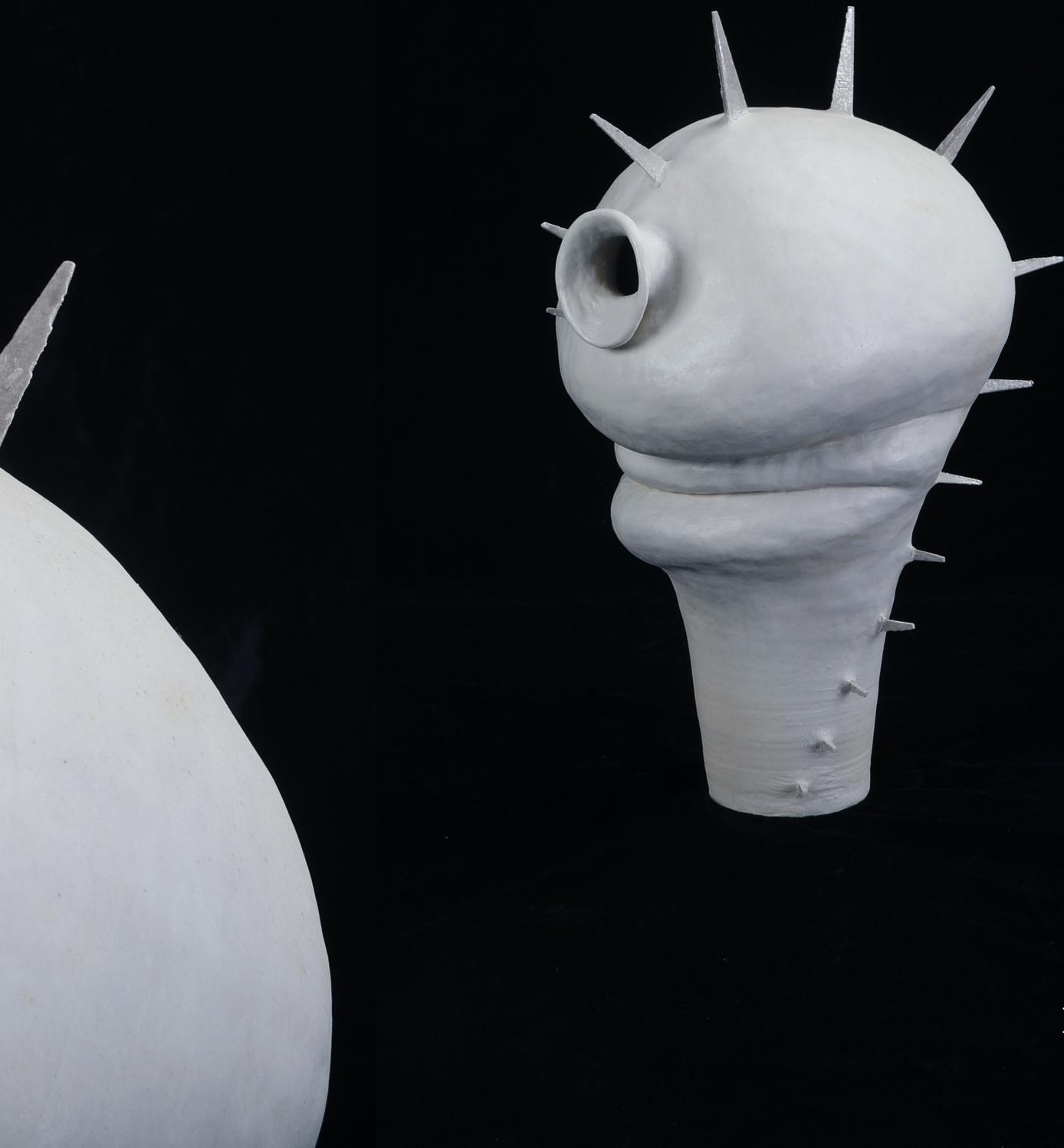
Technology

The coexistence of the three to achieve a balance of sustainable development.









Exchange



Symb



iosis



Handwritten text, possibly a name or brand, written vertically on the side of the cylinder.

Simbiyoz

Handwritten text, possibly a name or brand, written vertically on the side of the cylinder.

Handwritten text, possibly a name or brand, written vertically on the side of the cylinder.

Handwritten text, possibly a name or brand, written vertically on the side of the cylinder.



To visualize the symbiotic relationship between humans, nature, and technology, I created 3D-printed ceramic objects combined with pyrometric cones. This expresses my thoughts on the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature in the post-epidemic era. The symbiotic relationship between humans and nature is similar to the relationship between ceramic works and pyrometric cones, modern technology and traditional tools, which exist in contradiction but coexist at the same time. In traditional Chinese philosophy, the symbiosis and balance of the five elements - gold, wood, water, fire, and earth - constitute our world. I believe that ceramics are the product of the combination of these five elements. The use of 3D ceramic printing technology, the display of Morse Code, the symbiosis of 81 languages engraved on the work, and the replacement of a pyrometric cone with a cherished object on a pedestal in this work serve as reminders to contemplate what we are doing to nature, and the contradiction and unity between humans and nature.









Floating





Finding the Balance

Finding the Balance is an installation made up by 7 ceramic sculptures. The inspiration comes from Chinese traditional humanistic philosophy of "Tian Ren He Yi". Referring the shape of scholar stone, design of Chinese traditional wood furniture and display of Chinese traditional architecture. I combined wheel throwing, hand building and 3D printing technique all together as a metaphor to explore the symbiotic relationship between nature, human and technology.

Scholar stone is a natural stone with unique forms and textures, often used in Chinese garden landscapes and interior decoration. The formation process of scholar stone takes hundreds of millions of years and has undergone geological changes, climate changes, and other natural forces, thus possessing natural uniqueness and historical cultural value. In Chinese culture, scholar stone is endowed with many symbolic meanings, including the concept of harmony and symbiosis with nature.

In garden landscapes, scholar stone is often used to express the beauty of rocks and the spirituality of mountains and water. By cleverly integrating scholar stone into the garden, landscape designers can create a sense of unity between man and nature, emphasizing the close relationship between humans and nature. The form and texture of scholar stone echo the surrounding natural environment, enabling people to feel the harmonious fusion of natural beauty and humanistic beauty. At the same time, scholar stone is also regarded as a work of art, and its natural uniqueness and historical cultural value bring people more aesthetic enjoyment and cultural experiences.

In interior decoration, the use of scholar stone can also reflect the relationship between man and nature. The form and texture of scholar stone carry the beauty of nature, and its application in interior decoration can make people feel the breath and vitality of nature. In addition, scholar stone is often used in conjunction with other natural materials such as wood and bamboo, creating a natural, comfortable, and pleasant atmosphere for the entire indoor environment.

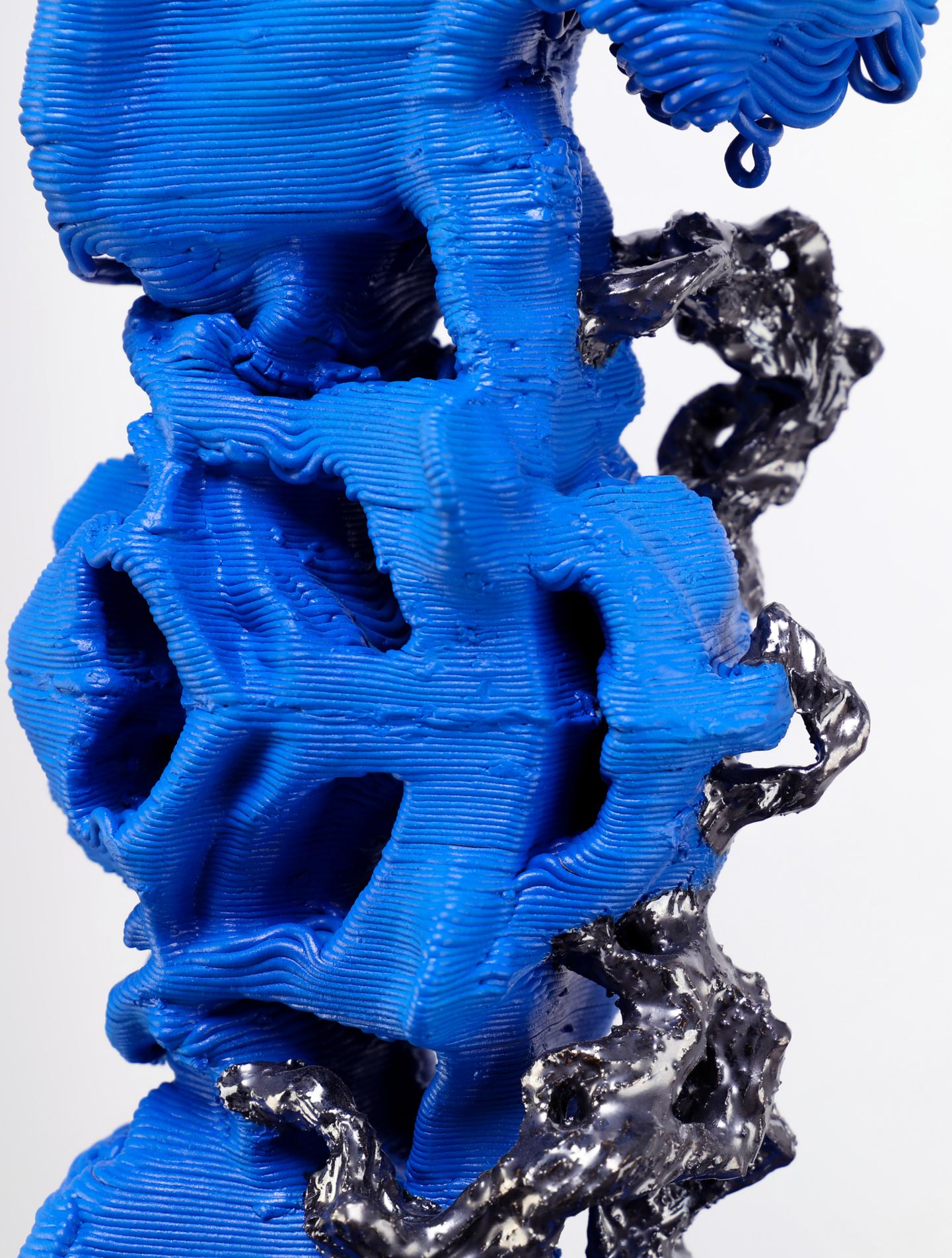




































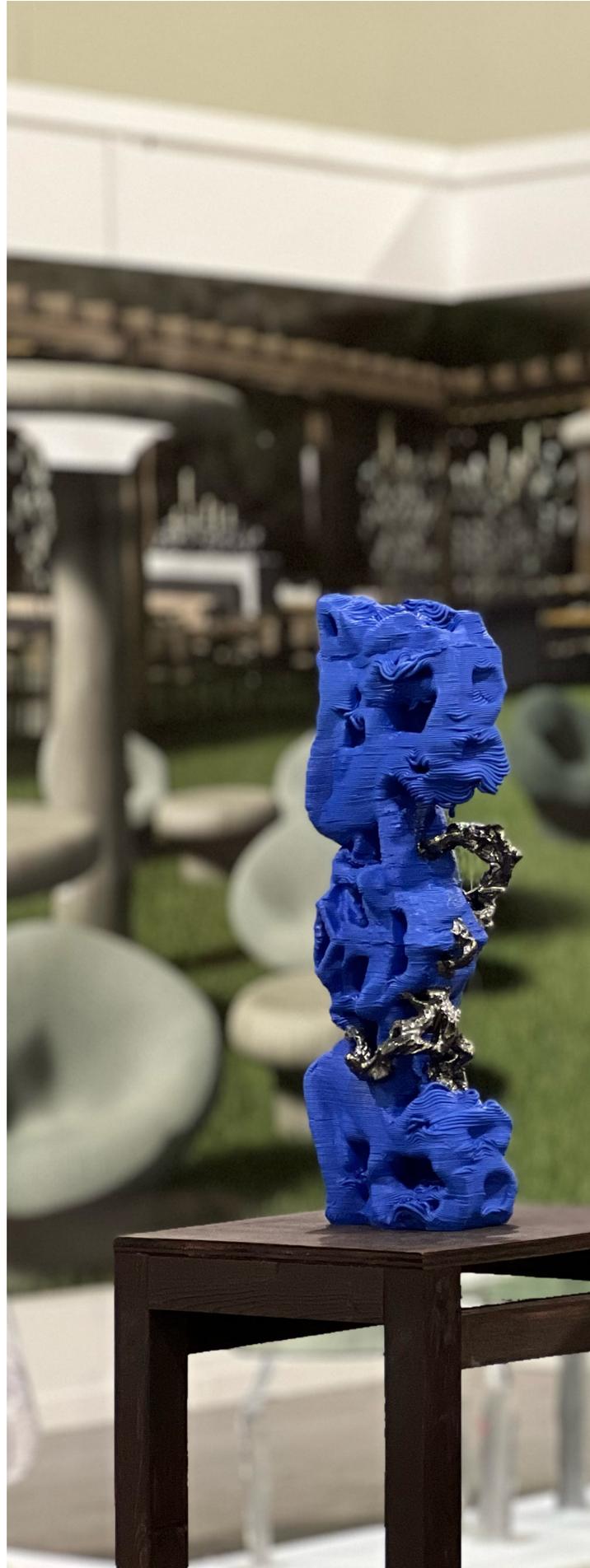




ROOT

EXIT
←











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