

MERETE RASMUSSEN
UNDULATIONS

PANGOLIN LONDON



Orange Folded
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique

UNDULATIONS

MERETE RASMUSSEN IN CONVERSATION WITH ROSE GLEADELL, MAY 2024

Your sculptures appear so precise and complicated that they look like they could be 3D printed – it is hard to believe that they are rendered in clay! Could you tell us about your process of making – perhaps, what tools you use to work with the clay and the pace at which you work. Take *Arise* as an example of a new sculpture which is particularly large in scale.

I build my ceramic work in a heavily grogged stoneware clay, using the coil technique. I build the whole shape over a number of days because the clay needs to harden before continuing so as not to collapse. I also support the piece with foam and wood during the build. I often work on more than one form at the same time.

When the whole form has been built, I let it dry to leather hard and then start to scrape back the surface with serrated kidney tools and grating tools, the kind usually used for wood and plaster. When the surface is even, I smooth it out using old credit cards and similar. This way the clay particles also get pressed together to form a firm surface. I then make clay supports that will be used in the following multiple firings. Often I can't see a sculpture without supports until after the first firing so it is always exciting to get the sculpture out of the kiln and move it around to see it from different angles. After the first firing (bisque), I sand the sculpture all over with sandpaper, then spray with coloured slip. If it is fired with supports, it is sprayed again if needed, sometimes multiple times.

A sculpture like *Arise* took me several months. I built the whole shape but as it is too narrow in places to get my tools in, I cut it in sections and assembled it back together after working on the surface.

There must be meticulous planning involved. What is the starting point for your work? Are there, for example, preliminary drawings, or do the forms take shape in a process that is more instinctive?

I usually have quite a clear idea of the form before I start. I mainly sketch in clay, making small rough maquettes where I work out the form. I also draw a lot. Of course, the shape evolves in the making and sometimes it changes completely.

There is usually a lot of planning involved, which I enjoy too. The larger and more complicated the piece, the more I need to figure out a way to turn them around to work on the surface underneath. I move them in and out of the kiln, mainly in their most fragile dry state.

It is hard not to be struck by the colours of your works, which certainly add ‘strength to form’, to use your own words. At what point in the making process do you settle upon a colour for each sculpture? In this new body of work, the shade sometimes varies across the surface of a work. Could you also tell us a bit more about your decision to use colour in this way?

The point at which I decide the colour varies. Sometimes I know from the start, other times I change my mind a few times during the process. Most of the time the decision is made because it ‘feels right’, so it is very intuitive. Using more than one colour is a continuation of my exploration of what colour can do for the form, and my love for colours. Sometimes I think it can further define the form as in *Emergent Orange* and *Radiance*.

You have said that your finished forms should have ‘energy, enthusiasm, and a sense of purpose’. Does their purpose include to bring to mind specific forms or ideas? Could you tell us if there are any specific references which inspired this new body of work? For me, it brings to mind images of the sea and of botanical forms in the wind.

I am glad to hear you get these associations, but I don't wish a sculpture to represent a specific idea. I look at shapes in nature; corals, bones, fungi, molluscs, parts of flowers and seedpods, as well as the movement of water and of wind.

I am lucky to live where I can be close to nature - it means a lot to me. I spend a lot of time thinking about the environment and how we humans should live with nature and share this planet with the wild world, instead of how we are treating it now. Though it is not a direct influence, I think my appreciation of the natural world plays an important part in my work.

Where do you find inspiration for your work? Mathematical structures seem to abound. Is, for example, the work of D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson, author of ‘On Growth and Form’, an influence?

D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson’s book certainly appeals to me. I have looked at models of mathematical three dimensional surfaces for a long time. I couldn’t tell you much about mathematics but these are really interesting and logical to me, as well as the mathematical forms found in nature: spirals, symmetry, repetition, fractals... The idea of a surface expanding and positive versus negative space are important in my recent work.

There is a bronze work in the exhibition which is composed of thinner ribbons than those which comprise the ceramic sculptures. Does working with the foundry enable you to materialise forms which would be too delicate as ceramic?

Yes, definitely. I make the models for the bronzes in wax, using some of the same techniques

I use when working in clay, although wax is light, strong and brittle at the same time which brings completely different qualities to the finished work.

The idea for *Morphology*, with a repeated construction connecting the form, is something I started with while making *Seriate* and *Ensuing Orange*, but I wanted to go thinner. I like the contrasting thin ribbons and the wider part which connects them, and the loose repetition of the structure, but here the clay is limited whereas the strength of the bronze can hold the form. The bronze also enables me to go both much larger in size, as well as smaller, as with the silver pieces - miniature wearable sculptures.



(LEFT)
Merete Rasmussen
with *Arise*, 2024

(RIGHT)
Momentum
Bronze
Edition of 3
39 x 64 x 50 cm

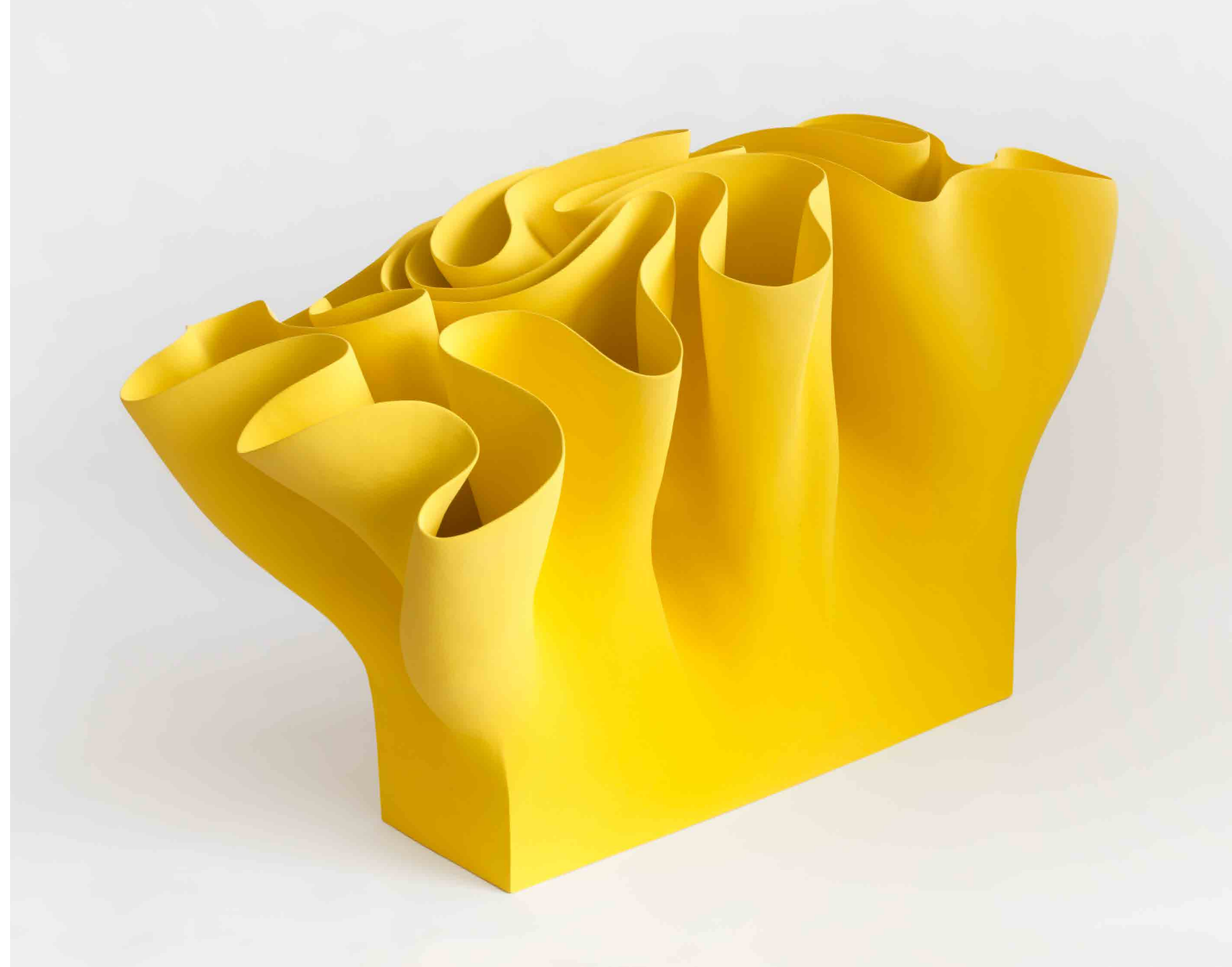




CATALOGUE



Arise
2023, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
67 x 95 x 60 cm





Vivacity
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
53 x 53 x 42 cm

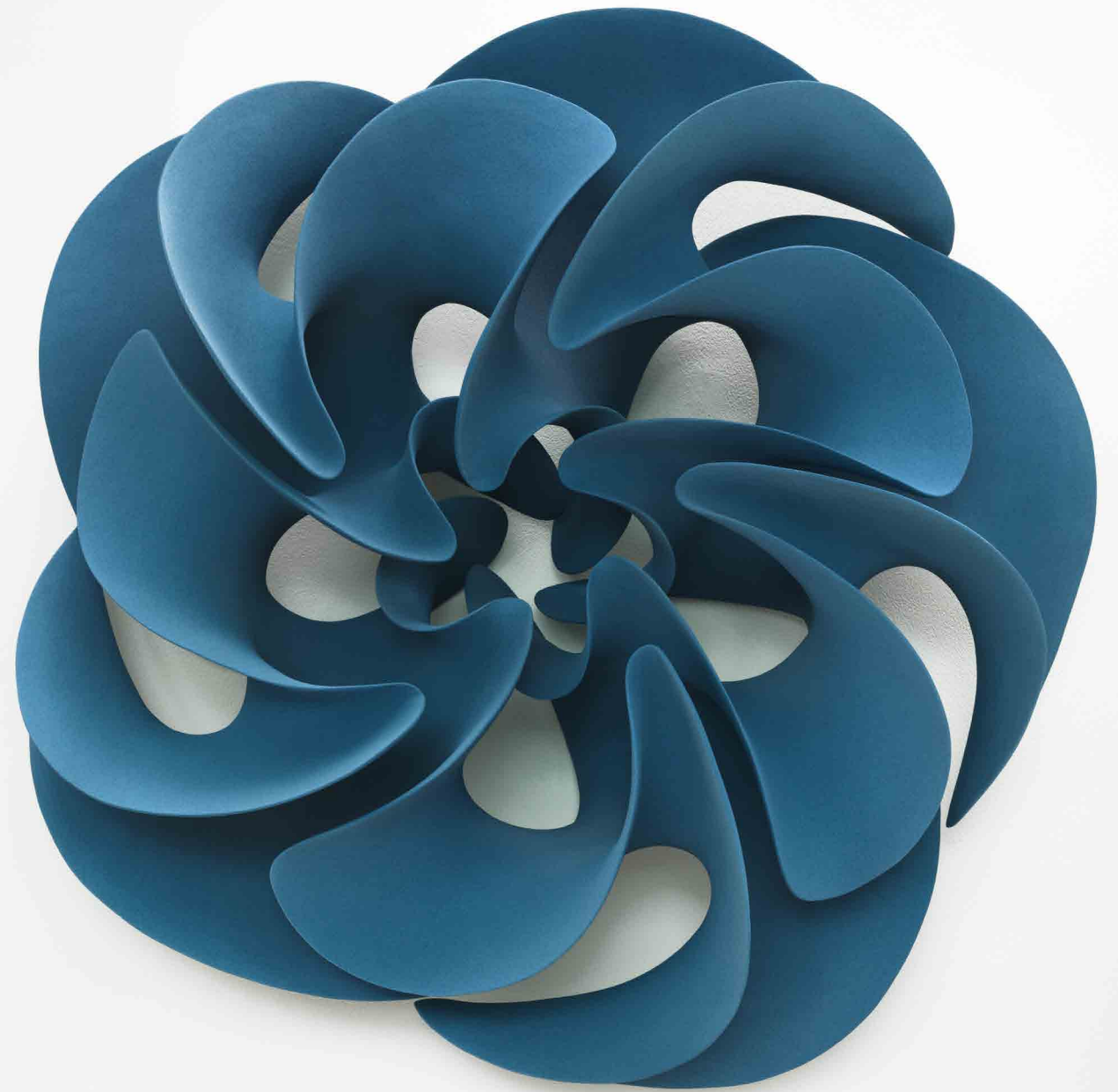




Radiance
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
43 x 56 x 44 cm



Vortex
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
84 x 84 x 28 cm



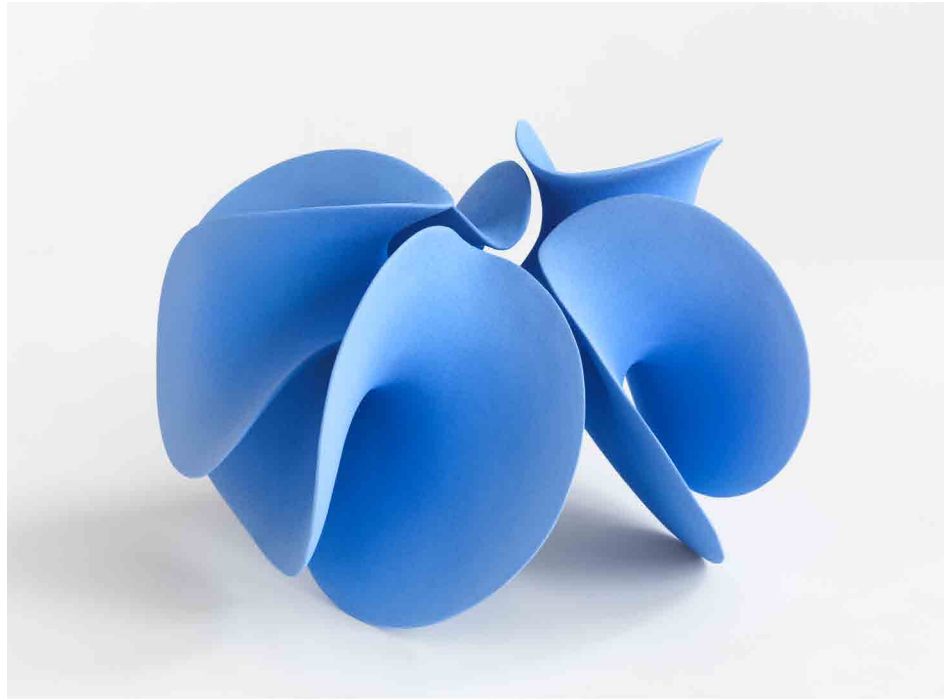


Limitless Black
 2024, Bronze
 Edition of 3
 43 x 61.5 x 58 cm

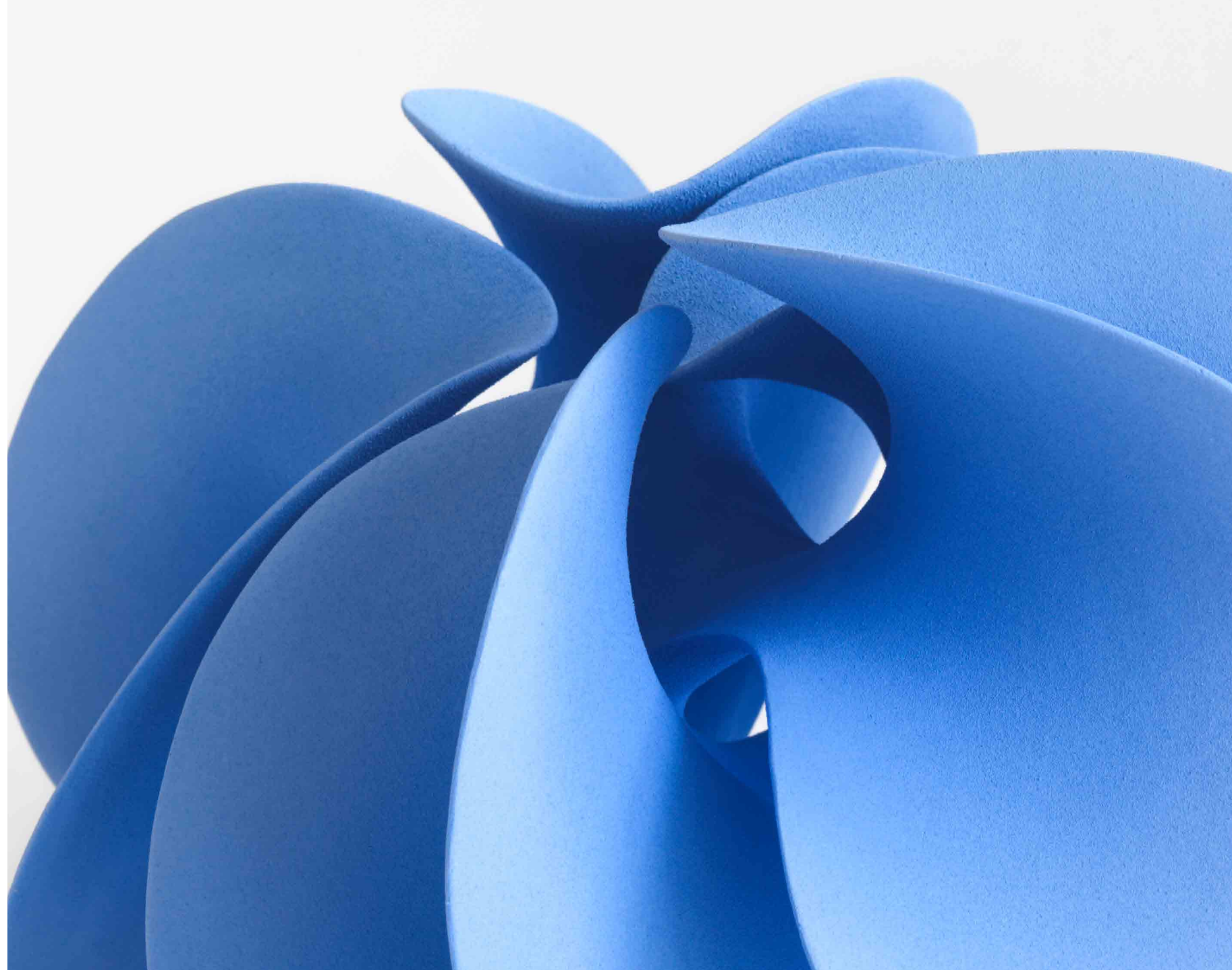




Merete Rasmussen
checking *Limitless Black*
at Pangolin Editions,
2024



Cascade
2023, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
30 x 42 x 45 cm



Ensuing Orange
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
35 x 56 x 49 cm





Endless
2024, Bronze
Edition of 6
13.5 x 6 x 4 cm

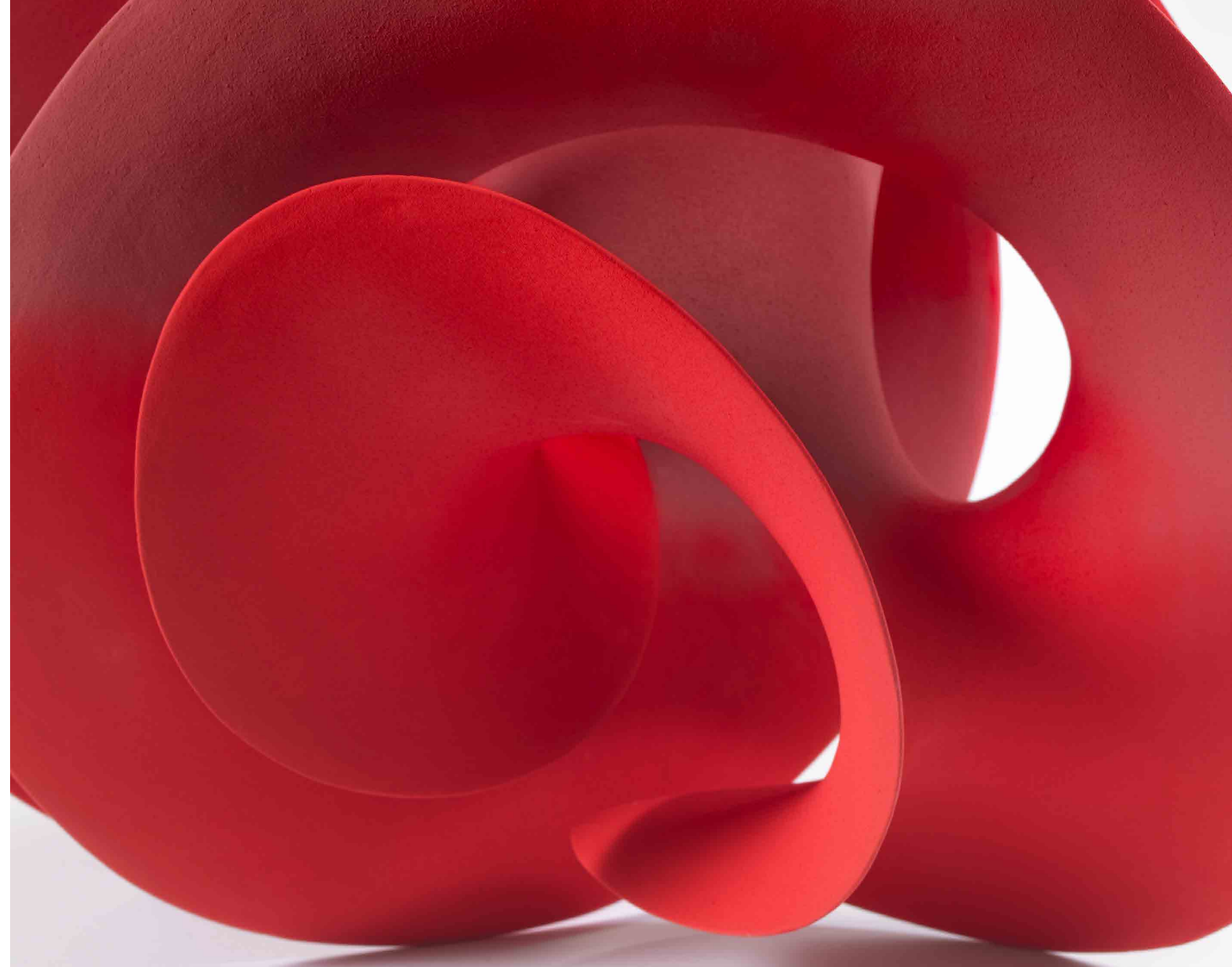


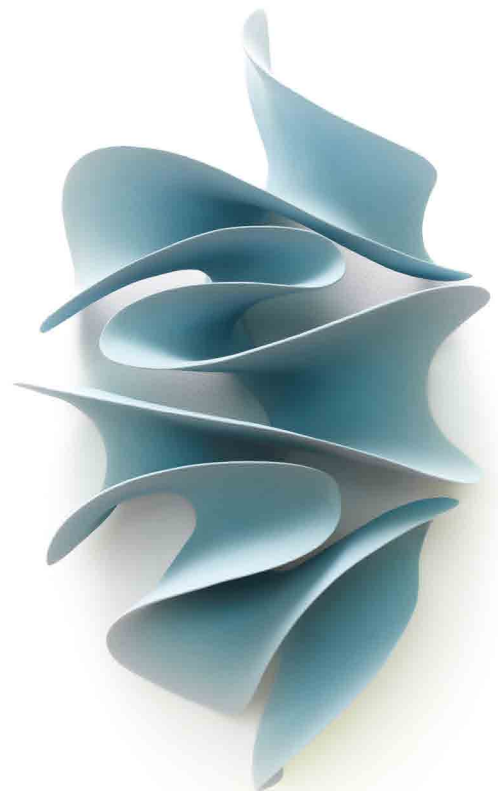
Twirling Red
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
60 x 48 x 41 cm



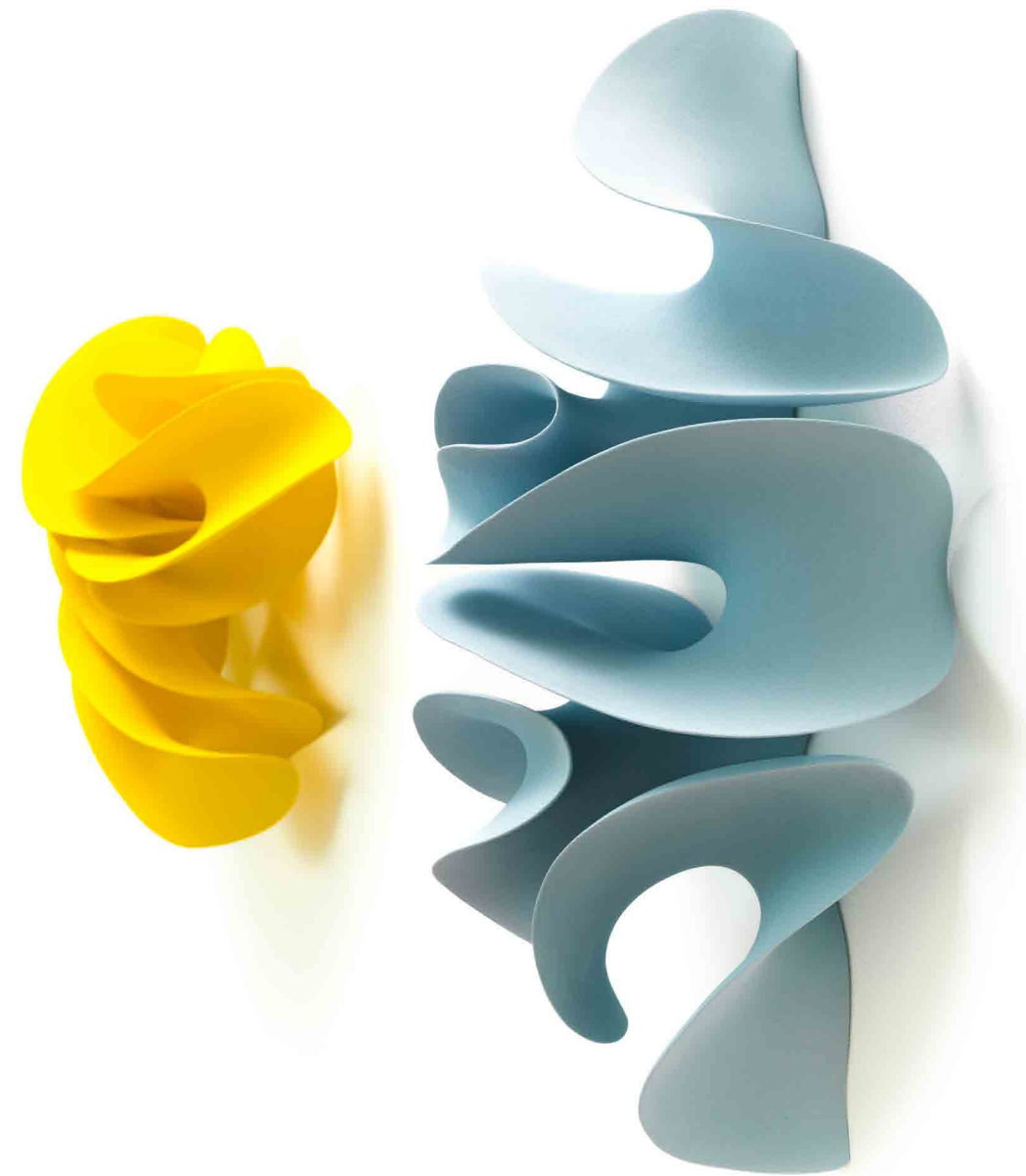


Twirling Red
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
60 x 48 x 41 cm





Pale Blue Undulation
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
74 x 44 x 25 cm





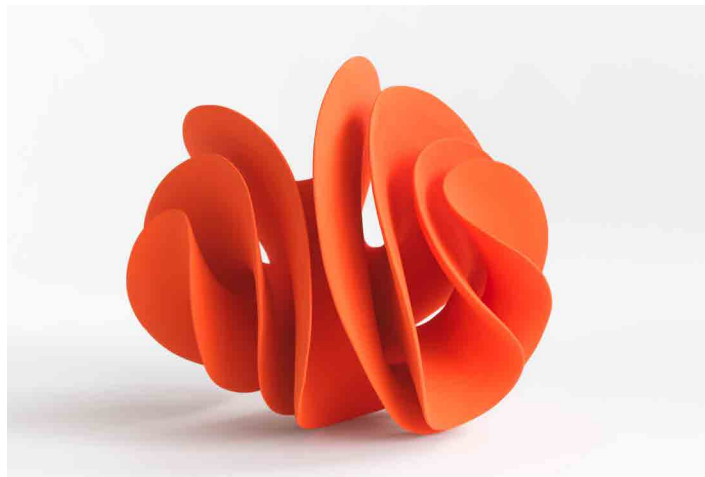
Undulating Yellow
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
50 x 50 x 25 cm





Seriate
2023, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
37 x 56 x 53 cm





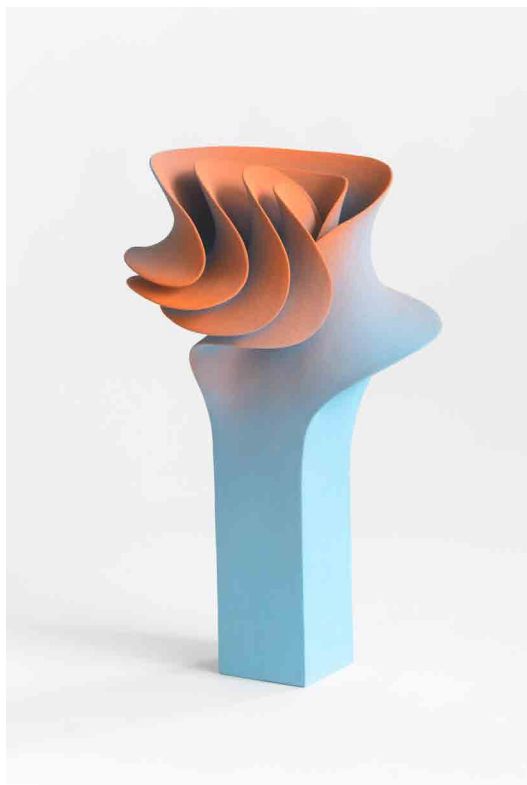
Dark Orange Folded
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
35 x 33 x 29 cm





Morphology
2024, Bronze
Edition of 3
39 x 64 x 50 cm





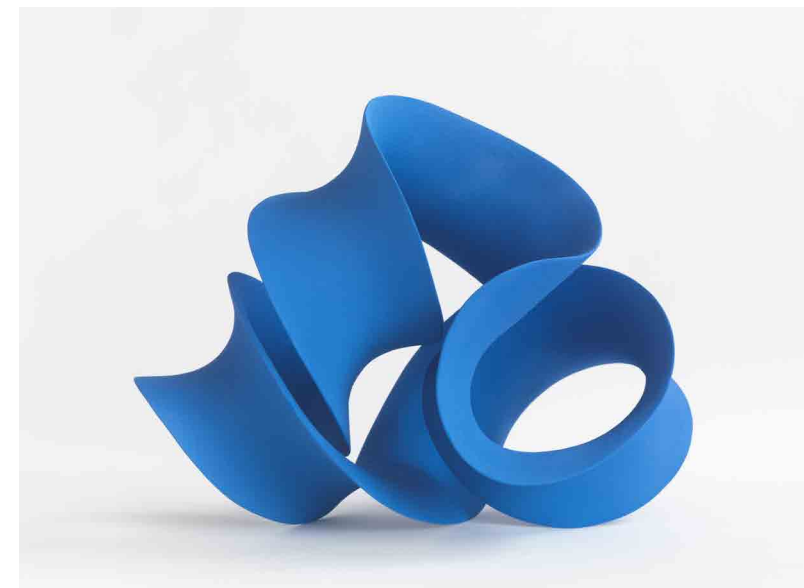
Emergent Orange
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
42 x 26 x 22 cm



Ridge
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
39 x 38 x 9.5 cm



Flowing Blue
2023, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
28 x 37 x 44 cm



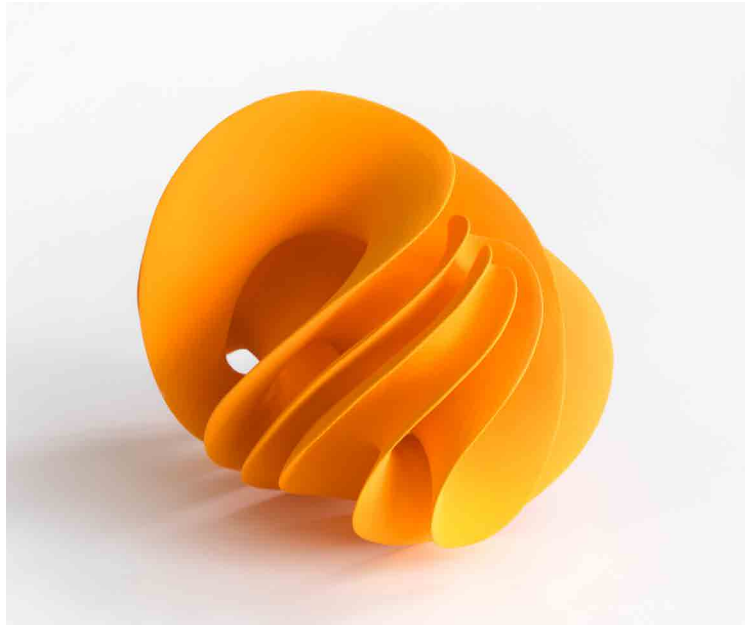


Impetus
2023, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
37 x 43 x 36 cm



Blue Momentum
2024, Bronze
Unique
17 x 28 x 20 cm





Orange Folded
2024, Ceramic
with coloured slip
Unique
33 x 37 x 30 cm





Clockwise from top left:
Ring/ Pendant I, II, III & IV
 2024
 Polished sterling silver
 Unique
 4.5 - 5.2 cm high

From top:
Ring/ Pendant V, VI & VII
 2024
 Satin sterling silver
 Unique
 5 - 5.5 cm high



MERETE RASMUSSEN

BIOGRAPHY

1974	Born in Copenhagen, Denmark
1974	Moves to Sweden with her family
1997-1999	Oestra Grevie Folkhoegskola, estetiska linjen - keramik, Sweden
2000-2005	Returns to Denmark to study Ceramics MA at Designskolen Kolding
2004	Glasgow School of Art, Student Exchange, Scotland
2004	TERRA, International Sculpture Symposium, Serbia and Montenegro
2005	Network, The International Ceramic Research Centre, Denmark
2005	Moves to Camberwell, London
2007	Awarded the Crafts Council Development Award
2008	Ceramic Symposium Tel Hai, Israel
2017	Moves to Sussex

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022	Merete Rasmussen: Expansion, Pangolin London
2019	Merete Rasmussen: New Work, Pangolin London
2016	J. Lohmann Gallery, New York
2015	Merete Rasmussen: Bronze and Ceramics, Pangolin London
2014	Equilibre & Couleur, Mouvements Modernes, Paris
2013	Merete Rasmussen, The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh Sculptural Ceramics: Focus Artist, Sculptural Showcase, Pangolin London
2011	Sculpture in the Workspace, Public Art at Canary Wharf, London Merete Rasmussen, Bluecoat Display Centre, Liverpool
2010	Merete Rasmussen, The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
2009	15a Galerie & Beedentuin, Lochem, The Netherlands

GROUP EXHIBITIONS & FAIRS

2024	Fowart Gallery, Antwerp Belgium
2023	Scott Richards Contemporary, San Francisco, USA
2022	Curve and Form, Pangolin London

2021	Eye of the Collector, London
2015-22	Masterpiece Art Fair, London represented by Pangolin London
2015-18	Collective Design Fair, represented by J. Lohmann Gallery, NY
2017	Himalayan Gardens exhibition, Yorkshire, curated by Pangolin London Home from Home, Contemporary Applied Arts, London
2016	Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London
2015	Future Heritage, Decorex International Design Fair, London
2014	Sculptor's Jewellery, Pangolin London The Salon, Art+Design Fair, represented by J. Lohmann Gallery, NY Sculpture Showcase, Pangolin London
2013	Sculptural Ceramics, Pangolin London Puls Gallery, Brussels Collect 2013 - represented by Sarah Myerscough Fine Arts, London
2012	SOFA New York 2012, represented by J. Lohmann Gallery, NY Collect 2012, The Saatchi Gallery, London - represented by CAA With Love from Denmark, Puls Gallery, Brussels
2011	British Ceramics Biennial 2011, AWARD exhibition, Stoke-on-Trent Collect 2011, The Saatchi Gallery, London - represented by The Scottish Gallery SOFA New York 2011, represented by CAA
2010	Fables Contemporaines, Mouvements Modernes/ Dutko Gallery, Paris Puls Gallery, Brussels Summer Pavilion, Gallery Lilly Zeligman, Laren, The Netherlands Collect 2010, Saatchi Gallery, London - represented by The Scottish Gallery SOFA New York 2010, represented by CAA Contemporary Ceramics, Galerie Besson, London Focus, CAA, Contemporary Applied Arts, London Ceramic Art London 2010, Royal College of Art, London
2009	Origin, London Made it, Contemporary Ceramics, London Design Festival Ceramic Art London, Royal College of Art, UK
2008	Mouvements Modernes Gallery at FIAC, Paris Form and Texture, Contemporary Ceramics, London

2007 Paysages en Fusain, Galerie Fusion, Toulouse, France
 Sommerspiele, craft2eu, Hamburg, Germany
 Hoestsamling, Galleri Pictor, Aengelholm, Sweden
 Showcase V&A Shop, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK
 Hannah Peschar Sculpture Garden, Ockley, UK
 Showcase, Contemporary Ceramics, London, UK
 Esperanto, Brick, Vienna, Austria
 Showcase, The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh, UK
 Showcase, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, UK
 Keramik i Kolding, Koldinghus, Kolding, Denmark
 Ceramic Art London 2007, London, UK

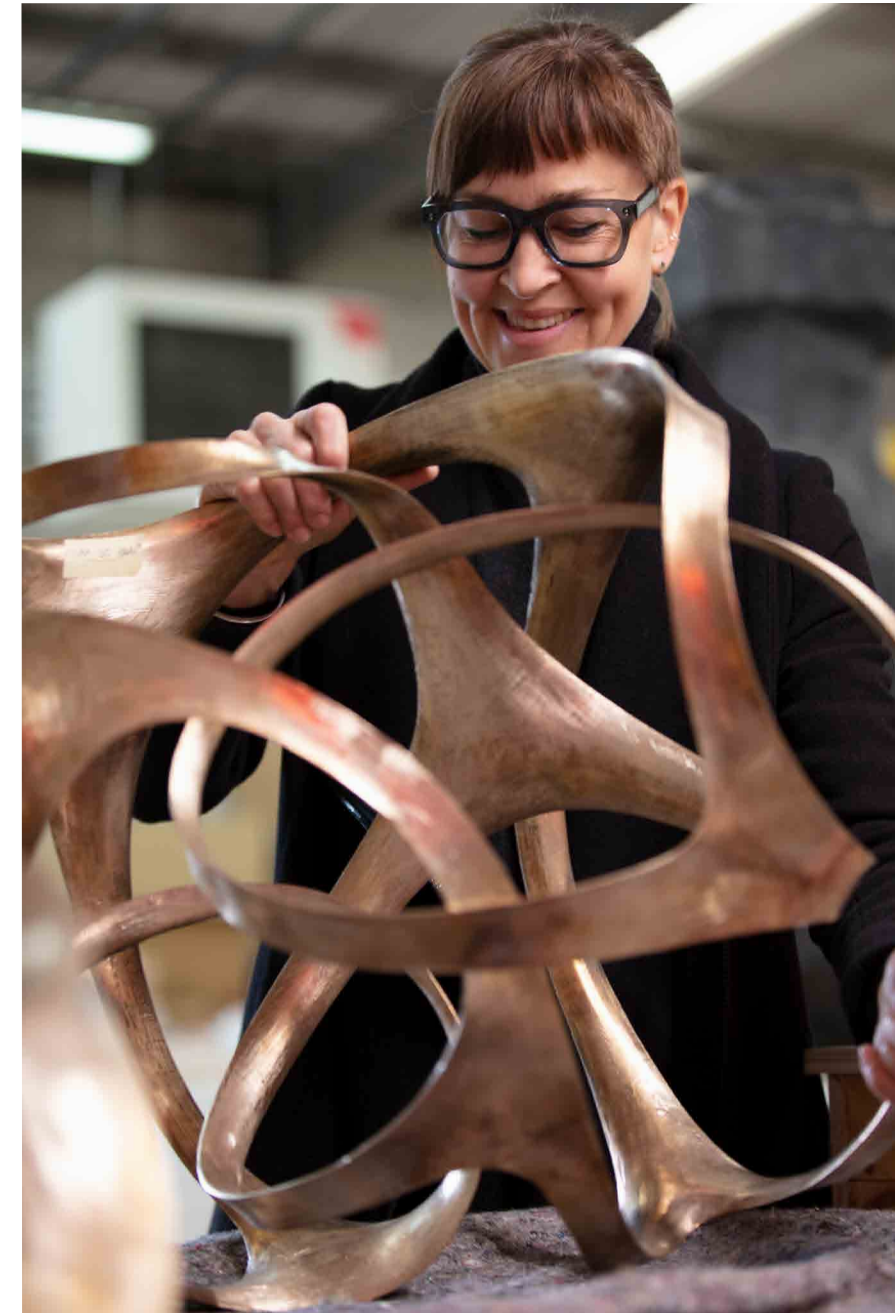
2006 Public Art at Canary Wharf, London, UK
 The Danish Museum for Arts and Crafts, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Ceramic Art London 2006, London, UK

2005 The International Ceramic Research Centre, Denmark
 Designer Zoo, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Contemporary Art Gallery, Kikinda, Serbia and Montenegro

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Victoria & Albert Museum, UK
 Museum of Arts and Design, New York, USA
 The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
 National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, UK
 Crafts Council Collection, UK
 York Art Gallery, UK
 Aberdeen Art Gallery, UK
 Oldham Gallery, Manchester, UK
 Crafts Council Collection, UK
 FNAC National Fund of Contemporary Arts, France
 TERRA, International Sculpture Symposium, Serbia and Montenegro
 Guldagergaard, The International Ceramic Research Centre, Denmark

(RIGHT)
 Merete Rasmussen at
 Pangolin Editions, 2024,
 with *Momentum*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition would not have been possible without Merete's commitment to creating this dazzling body of new work. We would also like to thank Pangolin Editions for their skill in realising the bronzes and silver jewellery, and Steve Russell Studios for their photography.

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Merete Rasmussen: Undulations

14 June - 20 July 2024

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