It puzzles me why certain forms and some particular types of material, would always possess more visceral power over me than others. Similarly, I am curious how people of different origins and backgrounds respond to forms and materials in an identical way. Is that an evidence of homogeneity of mankind as a collective species? It seems to me that those shared experiences of emotional and spiritual impacts created by forms and materials have been articulated by our bodies even before they could be understood by our minds. It is a collective sense of déjà vu for mankind, repressed by consciousness but persistent in our veins. Drawing was the primary method of communication before the invention of languages. Wasn’t drawing initially based on observations of the nature? What was the process, then, in which the nature was transformed into shapes and lines?

I am driven by these related questions, and cannot help trying different angles when approaching those natural creations. I attempt to locate the essence of forms, as a whole or as configurations of fragments. Those fragmented, unfinished forms are stored in my head, waiting to spring up from the entity called “I” after a series of conflicts, contradictions and convergence among themselves, until they emerge as a new form of completeness.

My work from the past few years demonstrates this creative process. Instead of making any statement through my work, I have played a faithful recorder, using only my sensitivity to materials and undisguised techniques, just to catch the forms that might have been otherwise left in oblivion.

I use primarily ceramic and wood for my work because human beings have used these two materials for thousands of years regardless of cultural or racial differences. They are so close to us in many ways and become the best material for me to convey my ideas.

Shida Kuo is a sculptor. He has taught in the Department of Art and Art Professions at New York University since 1993. His sculptures and paintings have been in numerous national and international exhibitions, most recently at Eslite Gallery in Taipei, Taiwan. He holds a B.F.A. in painting and M.A. in Studio Art.