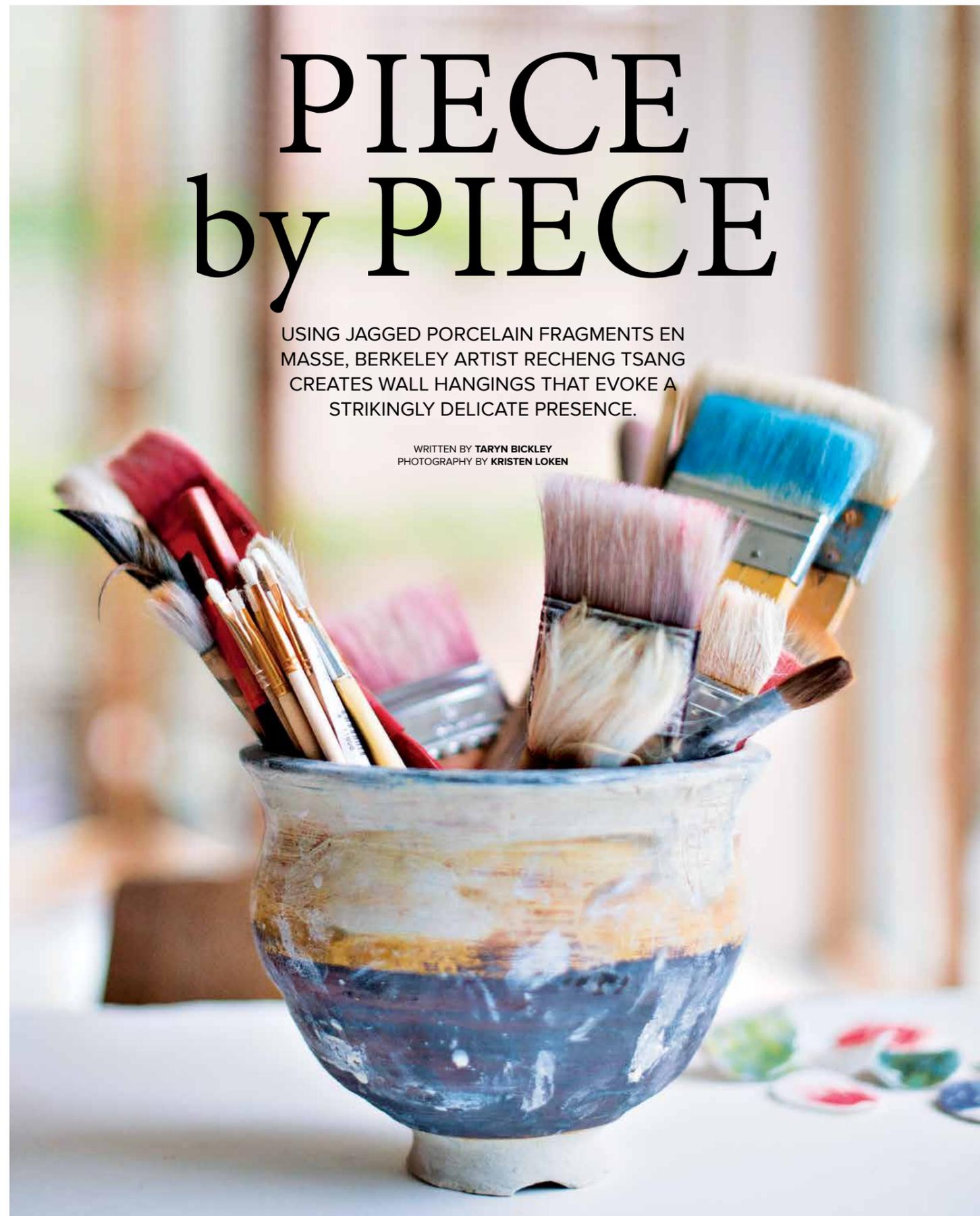


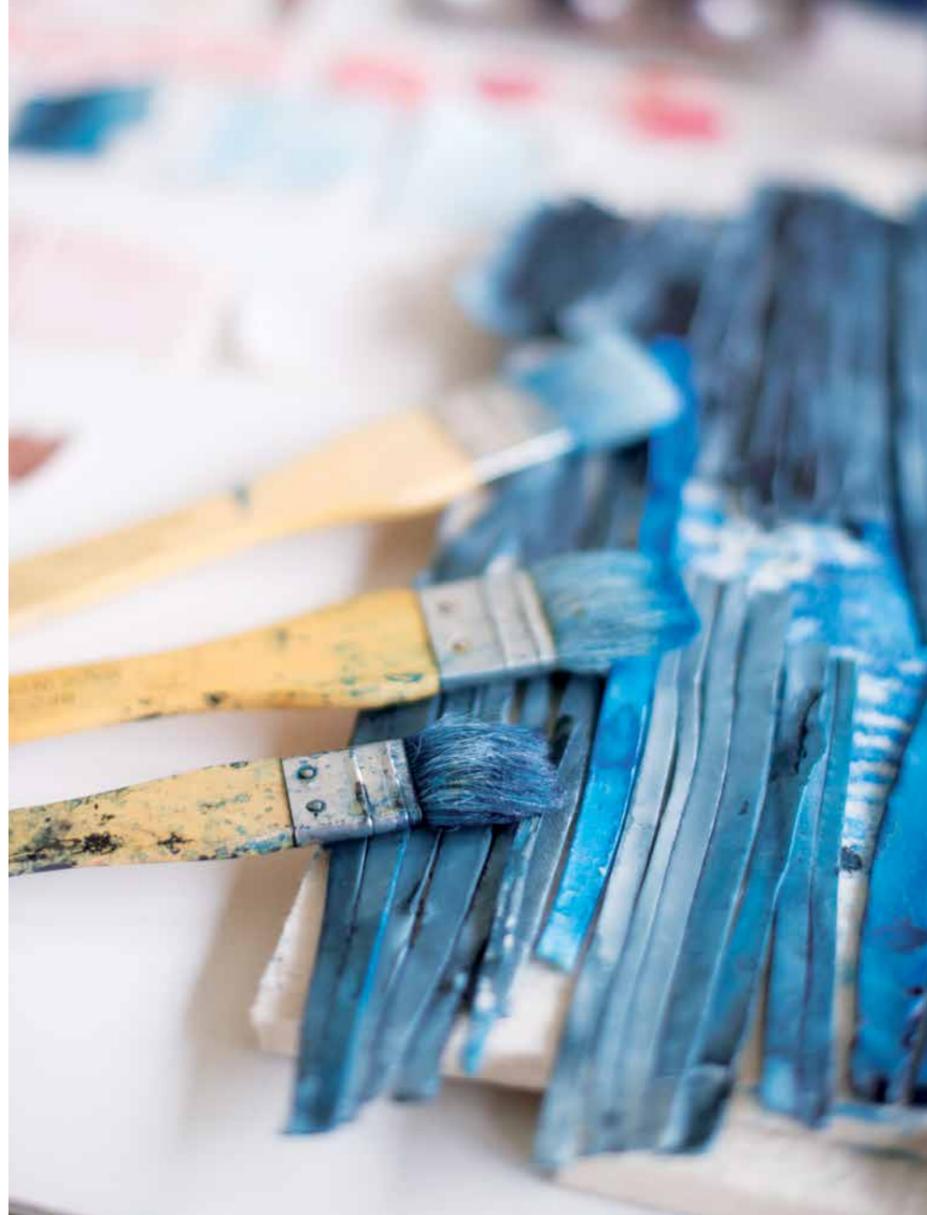


# PIECE by PIECE

USING JAGGED PORCELAIN FRAGMENTS EN MASSE, BERKELEY ARTIST RECHENG TSANG CREATES WALL HANGINGS THAT EVOKE A STRIKINGLY DELICATE PRESENCE.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRISTEN LOKEN





I am not surprised that I'm an artist," says ReCheng Tsang. "I'm surprised that it took me as long as it did to recognize that I wanted to pursue an artistic life." Tsang—who grew up in the Berkeley area after her family emigrated from Taiwan—was brought up amid a colorful array of tie-dye, weavings and ceramics thanks to her mom, a textile designer, who holds art and creativity in high esteem. "Even when we were very young, my mom taught us to look for beauty in common, everyday objects," explains Tsang.

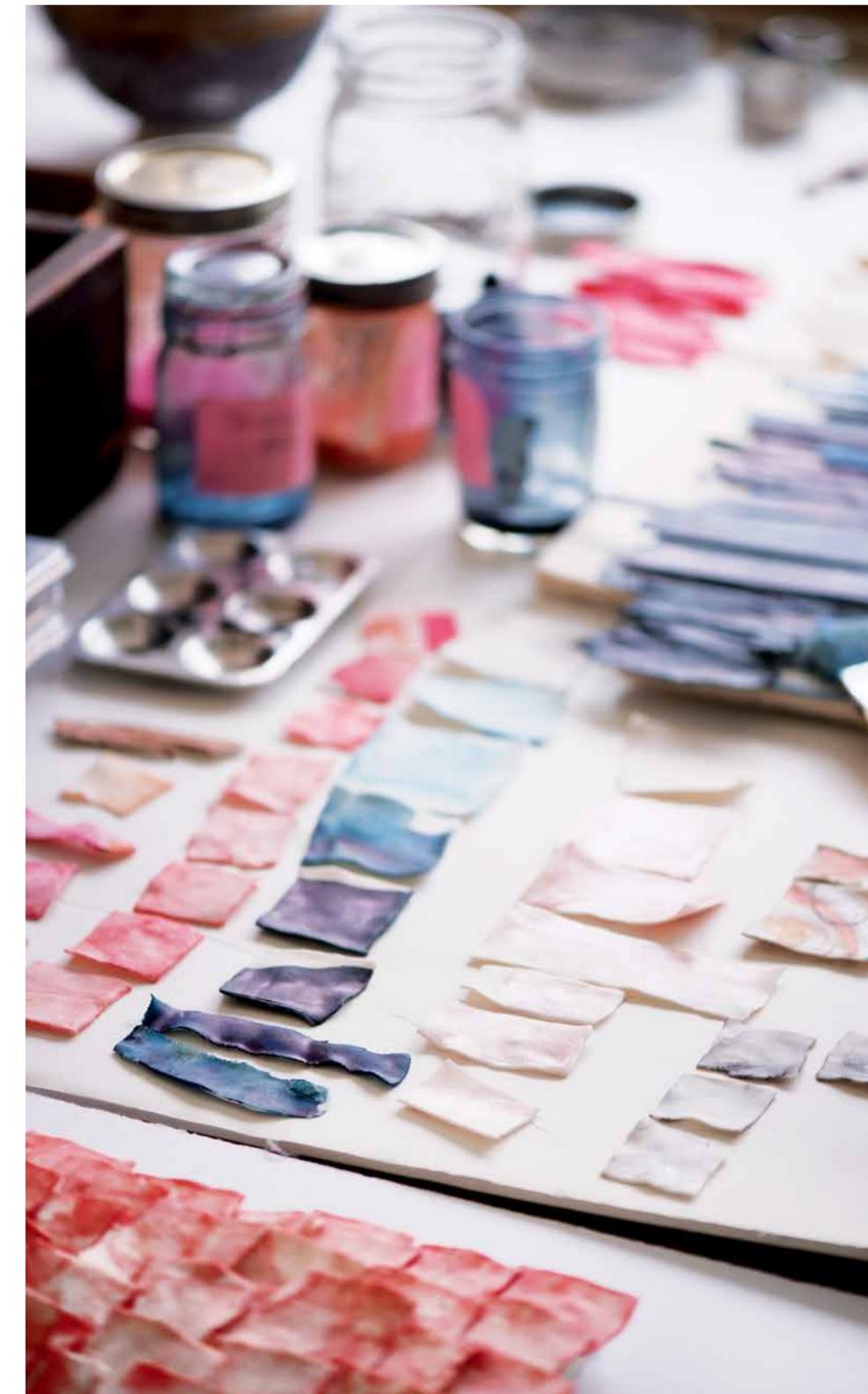
That creative spark eventually caught up with Tsang, who ventured out in her early 20s to live in Japan. During that time, looking for a creative outlet, she apprenticed at a pottery studio in Kanazawa. "Almost as soon as I sat down in front of the wheel," she says, "I fell in love with the silky feeling of clay in my hands." Although she became adept at throwing, her interests lied more with form than function. Back in Berkeley, she continued to

experiment with clay and eventually developed her first wall hangings marked by her signature monochromatic expanse of small bits of porcelain affixed to felt. "I don't treat the porcelain as precious, perfect objects," explains Tsang. "Rather, the porcelain I create is beautifully flawed with jagged, fragile edges. Each individual piece bears the marks of my hand."

This arduous process means Tsang can spend upwards of 30 hours on one work. "Each piece is rolled, pinched, pulled, torn or otherwise manipulated by hand, then composed within a predefined grid," she says. Up until now, her creations—represented through Gallery Lulo in Healdsburg—have come together within a muted palette. But Tsang has recently begun exploring with hand-painting the porcelain. "This is my first serious foray into working with brighter palettes," she admits. "I am naturally drawn to softer tones, but I also love candy colors. I am slowly allowing that side of me to come out through my work." ■



*"THE PORCELAIN I CREATE IS BEAUTIFULLY FLAWED WITH JAGGED, FRAGILE EDGES."*



Berkeley artist ReCheng Tsang (opposite, left) paints strips of porcelain to make up her meticulously assembled wall hangings, such as *Sky View Topo Red II* (previous pages, left). Her process involves slicing and manipulating the clay by hand (above) and running color test samples (right), all before firing the pieces and affixing them to a felt backing.