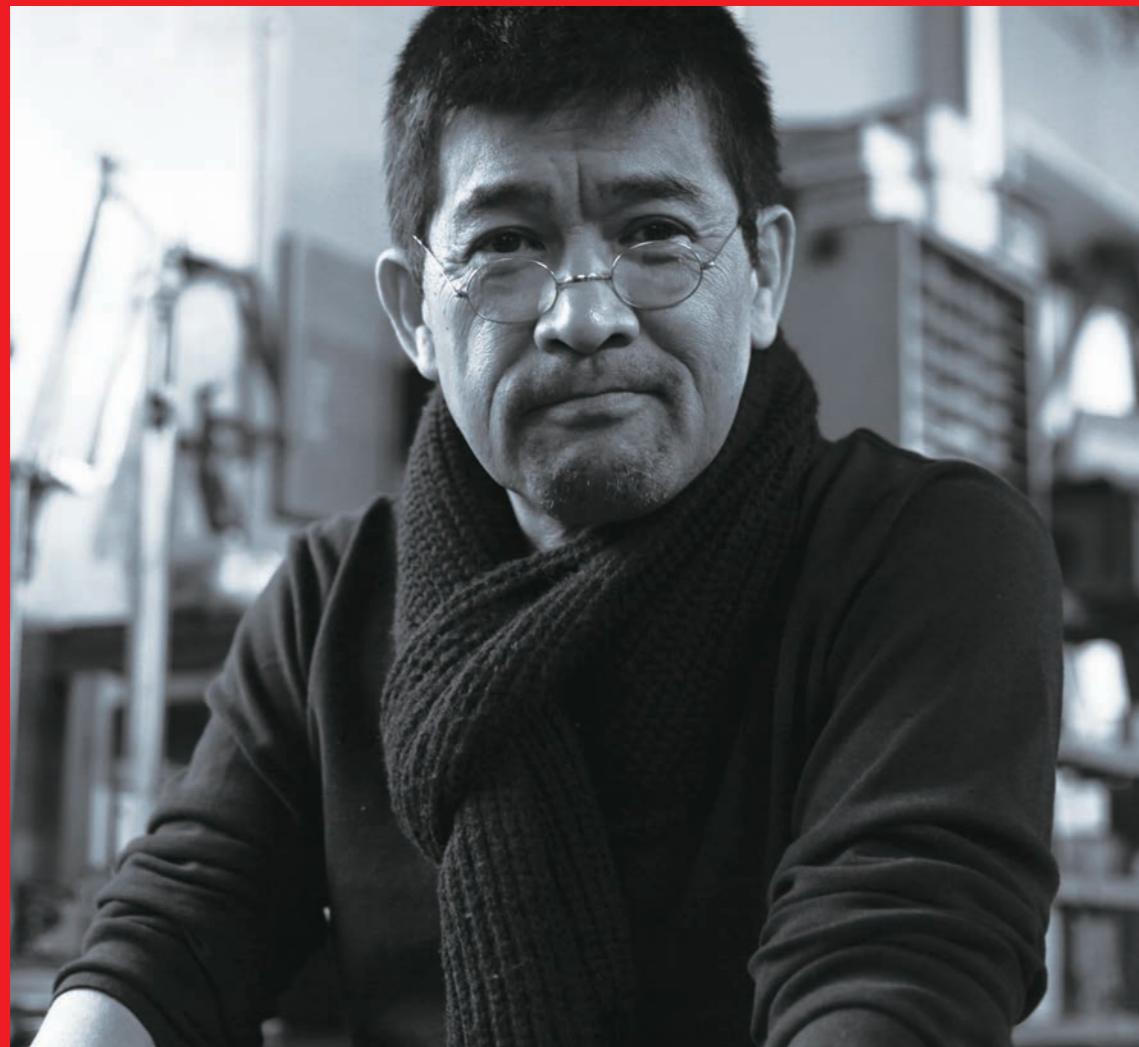


“I want to give form to something important that the eye cannot see”
—The unique world of a workshop craftsman

Keiichi Sugano

President of Aero Concept Inc.
Precision sheet-metal craftsman



Text by Tamio TAKAKU

Keiichi Sugano's Medium of Expression: Aero Concept

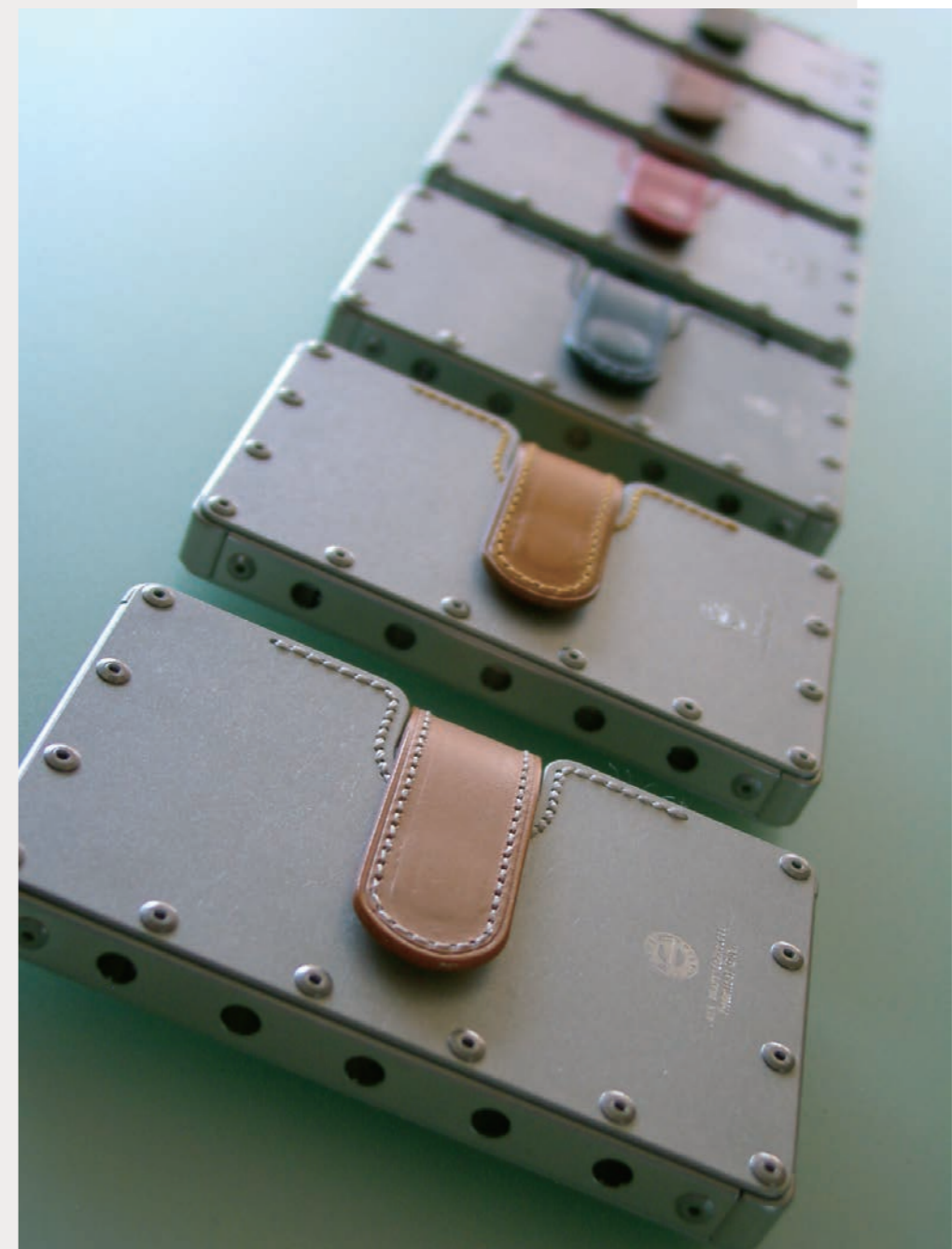
What kind of person is Keiichi Sugano, the man who catapulted from being a craftsman in a town workshop to being a name that reverberates around the world? I think the essence of Sugano is summarized in an experience he described.

“Sometimes I go into the mountains for a few days of trout fishing. All I bring is a plastic sheet. The rocks store the day's heat, so all I need to do is find the right rock, secure a place to sleep, and I can sleep anywhere with just one layer covering me. During the daytime, I imagine the universe stretching out beyond the blue sky, but when I am wrapped in the pitch-black darkness of the mountains, I can feel the universe right to my skin. It's a sense that the universe and I have become one, or that I am a part of the universe. It's a strong feeling. Once you have experienced that, you understand that there are limits to what is visible to the eye.”

People who have read this far can be divided into two types. At this point, some will ask, what is the point? But some will intuitively understand: Ah, that is the reason for the existence of Aero Concept.

During this interview, he receives an e-mail from Okinawa. The sender has seen a product on the website and would like to buy it, but wants to know how to order it.

“Just because an order came in, I don't want to say, okay, I will send it to you right away. I want them to see the actual product, actually feel it, and then buy it. That is what an encounter with things is about. If it gets to the point where you cannot see the real thing, I feel like saying, ‘Shall I bring it to you in Okinawa?’” He chuckles, with the innocent expression of a child.



Sugano's lexicon has no word for rationalization, efficiency, or convenience. What you will find there is the desire to create an interaction between the thing he has created and the person who comes to own it. Only that. So there also is no word for compromise.

“When the company in the family since my grandfather's generation went bankrupt and every day I was thinking about dying, that's when I realized what was important. Even if I had a lot of money, I could not bring it with me. Encounters with people are more important. How many heart-warming moments have I been able to live in life? I realized that things like that have much more meaning.”

Aero Concept is not a brand that was built on the typical marketing theory. In fact, one could say that the approach was the complete opposite.

Aero Concept is something born as a result of Sugano pursuing the idea, “What I would absolutely want to have for myself.” The individual concepts of Aero Concept are therefore an embodiment of Sugano himself. His disposition and thoughts have taken physical form—that's probably a good way to look at it. So holding something made by Aero Concept is like convening with Sugano's thoughts. One could perhaps paraphrase this to say it is like having the chance to communicate with Sugano's passion, through the medium of an Aero Concept product.