

appearance, show no trace of the wet sloppy mess from whence they evolved; they reveal nothing of the physically engaging, hands-on, emotionally wrought process of their production.

Nakamura's process is important. She painstakingly removes the earth and body from ceramics, making the mess invisible and fashioning smooth objects that are coolly aloof. Ironically, she then turns around and infuses them anew with emotion-laden data, adorns them with icons that give intimate glimpses into her own personal or cultural history, and on occasion even slyly implies that these inanimate objects might have emotions of their own. The spare decorations on the fronts of her sculptural forms often depict the outlines of islands, starting with Shikoku, the small Japanese island where Nakamura grew up. A cityscape of "incomplete joints" refers to Nakamura's memory of the wooden forms her grandfather worked with as a carpenter building temples. Laid out on the floor, like many of her installations are, the joints take on new life—micro becomes macro—the smallest parts of buildings morphing into representations of the buildings themselves.

Intentionally anthropomorphized, groups of Nakamura's box-shaped "islands" stand together like strangers milling around at a party, huge gulfs of empty space isolating one from another. This is a purposeful investigation of the tenuous relationship between two worlds: the internal world of one's self and the external world of cultural facades. Again, micro and macro worlds are constantly shifting, scale and context slipping in and out of touch with the real: humans are islands, small objects are buildings, boxes are humans, islands are boxes, clay is plastic, chaos is order. This shifting of scale and context and this intense interaction of the parts leave a physical impact on those that tread amongst them.

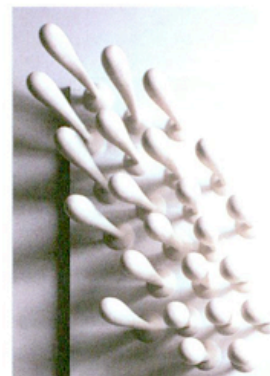
White Vanishing, 2000

Porcelain, latex paint, wood

48 x 29 x 11 in.

Private collection

Photo: Richard Nicol



Islands, 2002

Porcelain, reflective glass beads

6 x 84 x 72 in.

Courtesy of the artist

Photo: Richard Nicol

