

Yuki Nakamura

Born Kagawa, Shikoku Island, Japan

Member since 1998

Yuki Nakamura is an anomaly in an art world enamored with visual trickery and conceptual summersaults. She, in contrast, achieves depth by scaling back and embracing the subtle and the quietly sensual. Nakamura operates between and overlapping several traditions; her clear forms and design sensibility seems decidedly Japanese, yet she is also firmly entrenched in the northwest ceramic tradition—she takes from both but commits to neither. Although ceramics comes with an array of craft connotations, Nakamura comfortably moves beyond the medium's history and expectations, creating sculptures that are both minimal in form yet emotionally charged, and lately, incorporating video and animation.

Nakamura's objects are metaphors for the impossible, and the metaphorical overcoming of that impossibility. Over the years, she has mapped tree bark, reinvented cities, and made architectural clothing. Islands and maps recur again and again as richly layered markers of both home and isolation, but Nakamura moves from the personal to the universal as she expands her own connection to the island as geography and emotional metaphor, towards its formal and aesthetic implications; the island as positive and negative space, the map as line and color.

Profile by Sara Callahan

Dream Suspended featured 36 soccer balls hanging from the ceiling as a memorial to her soccer coach brother. Bruised and partly deflated, the balls are frozen in cool hard porcelain; their function drastically divorced from their mnemonic potential. In her most recent work, Nakamura cast hundreds of antique and contemporary light bulbs; an intensely sensual reflection on electricity, the wonder of human invention, and our relationship to light. The porcelain bulbs are solid and opaque, and seen together they are stunning mass of impossible objects. *Filament*, a commission for Seattle City Light, consists of hundreds of these bulbs on which an animation of drawn filament shapes are projected, electricity reflecting on electricity in a richly evocative juxtaposition of three-dimensionality and line, both philosophical and moving.

In Nakamura's hands, even the most beautiful object can conjure up the rawest of emotions; a light bulb becomes deeply erotic and a collection of soccer balls become a tender meditation on death and the fragile materiality of the human body.

Sara Callahan has spent most of her adult life traveling and working around the world; since arriving in Seattle in 2005, she has worked at various galleries and is currently associate director at Howard House Contemporary Art.



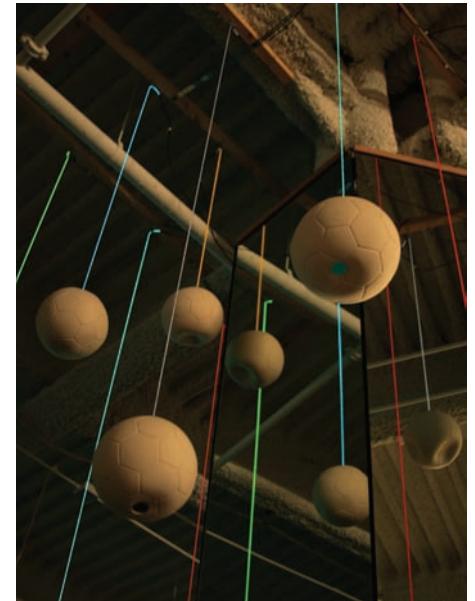
Illuminant

2008

Porcelain, light box

H 10 in. x W 9 in. x D 12 in.

Courtesy of the artist and Howard House Contemporary Art



Dream Suspended—reflection

2008

Porcelain, electroluminescent wire, mirror

H 13 ft. x W 8 ft. x D 8 ft.

Installation project with All Nations Cup 2008, Seattle, Washington

Courtesy of the artist and Howard House Contemporary Art

Photo: Alda Tchochiev