

# NATHALIE DOMINGO

*On The Road, 2011*

Nathalie Domingo is a ceramic artist who works slip cast porcelain in an uninhibited way. She does not hesitate to push the clay around, layering fine trails of liquid porcelain which are sprinkled with sand or alumina beads for her vegetal sculptures, as well as including intense texture and substance in her wall panels. She fires and re-fires porcelain to its limit, until it tears apart. Her techniques enable her to express texture, colour, and delicacy in unique and sensuous ways.

Domingo mainly draws her inspiration from nature: notably the textures of barks, mosses and lichens, colors of old stones. In her studio, she also works to build bridges between the worlds of ceramics and cooking, and does not hesitate to incorporate food ingredients in porcelain. Today, four artists influence

her creative process: Pierre Soulages for its black and large paintings; Peter Lane for his monumental ceramic creations; Claude Champy for his unconventional approach to ceramics; and Land Art artist Andy Goldsworthy, for his relationship with nature.

Although it is extremely challenging to master, the slip cast porcelain is a medium of choice for Domingo as it generously offers infinite creative possibilities. What makes her work unique is the way she uses a slip-trailer. She changes it from its primary use to develop a work of extreme delicacy. Guided by the dance between her hand and the flow of the slip, she begins to layer one porcelain filament over another, until the relief appears. Repeating the gesture is a key feature of her work. It leads her to an almost hypnotic state, through which the introspection can take place: the created piece then appears as a reflection of the artist's state of mind at the time of its completion.

*L'instrus detail 2009*

*L'instrus, 2009*

The knowledge of the filament technique, combined with the repeated gestures, progressively allow Domingo to exonerate herself from technical constraints. She observes the various possibilities offered by the clay, tries to capture them and make them her own. The process is both soothing and demanding. It requires a constant concentration, as the filament breaks easily. Moisture, room temperature, air, hand pressure on the slip-trailer and arm position must be considered. Through multiple experiments, the artist refines her knowledge of the material, and is able to freely create surprising pieces. In a perpetual search for textures, Domingo tries to push the boundaries of her works, transcend the clay, but also extend the field of creative possibilities.



The *Echo* sculptures were created for the Kapfenberg 4th International Biennial, in Austria (2005). The pieces are at the root of the filament work developed by Domingo. Inspired by the painting of Nicolas Poussin, *Echo and Narcissus*, she made three big sculptures in porcelain filaments and was awarded the Biennial Prize for these three works. She also adds minerals to vary the texture and color that will mark the different stages of Echo's body fossilization. Other works on the same topic followed: tinted porcelain, sprinkled with sand and alumina beads. The interpretations are always varied: submarine lifeforms, corals and algae.

The *Dream Catchers* wall panels are discs made of porcelain filaments. These works bear homage to Native American ritual objects that protect sleep from evil spirits. They hang on the walls in the manner of a tondo. Working on the relationship between surface and volume. Domingo is particularly interested in wall panels, which she considers to have limitless possibilities combining architecture and art.



*A Taste of Chaos*, 2010

As in the work *A Taste of Chaos* (190 x 200 cm), exhibited in 2010 at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, which consists of thousands of black porcelain filaments patiently drawn one by one. After this long and meticulous process, the artist's gesture is freed up, and she can start working on the texture, with a knife, a brush, a finger, or wide gestures, to create intense cracked effects. Finally, Domingo does not hesitate to increase the relief by breaking, layering, firing again and again the porcelain panels to their limits, in order to get a unique work.

In autumn 2015, a new body of work appeared, with new shapes and the use of glaze. *On The Road* - small tubes, all unique, are covered with dots of porcelain, and gathered together as a moving crowd.

*On The Road*, 2016



*On The Road*, 2016

'Inquisitive speculations and reasoned explorations have fed Nathalie Domingo's mysterious and delicate artwork. Her affinity for and complicity with raw material have relentlessly been at the core of her artistic expression. And then, not long ago, the ceramist discovered by chance a Darko Bantic photograph. The low-level aerial shot unveils fields, farmland, an electricity pylon and a long road followed by thousands of men, women and children. The photograph taken in the autumn 2015 captures the endless stream of migrants diverted from the Austrian-Hungarian border. A striking still picture that bears witness to the tragedy. Art is never foreign to reality. Deeply moved, Nathalie Domingo now dedicates herself to a completely new era in her ceramic art. Frail forms delicately shaped, fine tiny porcelain pieces, all distinct, become a movement, a wave and a strange, unreal path.

Troubling, paradoxical, *On The Road* doesn't depict the world. It enigmatically renders the artist's emotion. It expresses intangible feelings yet allows us to project our own, leaving us free to contemplate. Thanks to her singularity as a ceramist, her formal discipline, an impressive technique and her attention to the fragility of things, Nathalie Domingo shares with great sensitivity her way of absorbing the world.'

Amélie Vidgrain, Head of the Douai School of Art

Photography: Grégory Copitet - *On The Road*.

Isabelle Bonnet - *A Taste of Chaos*, *L'instrus*.