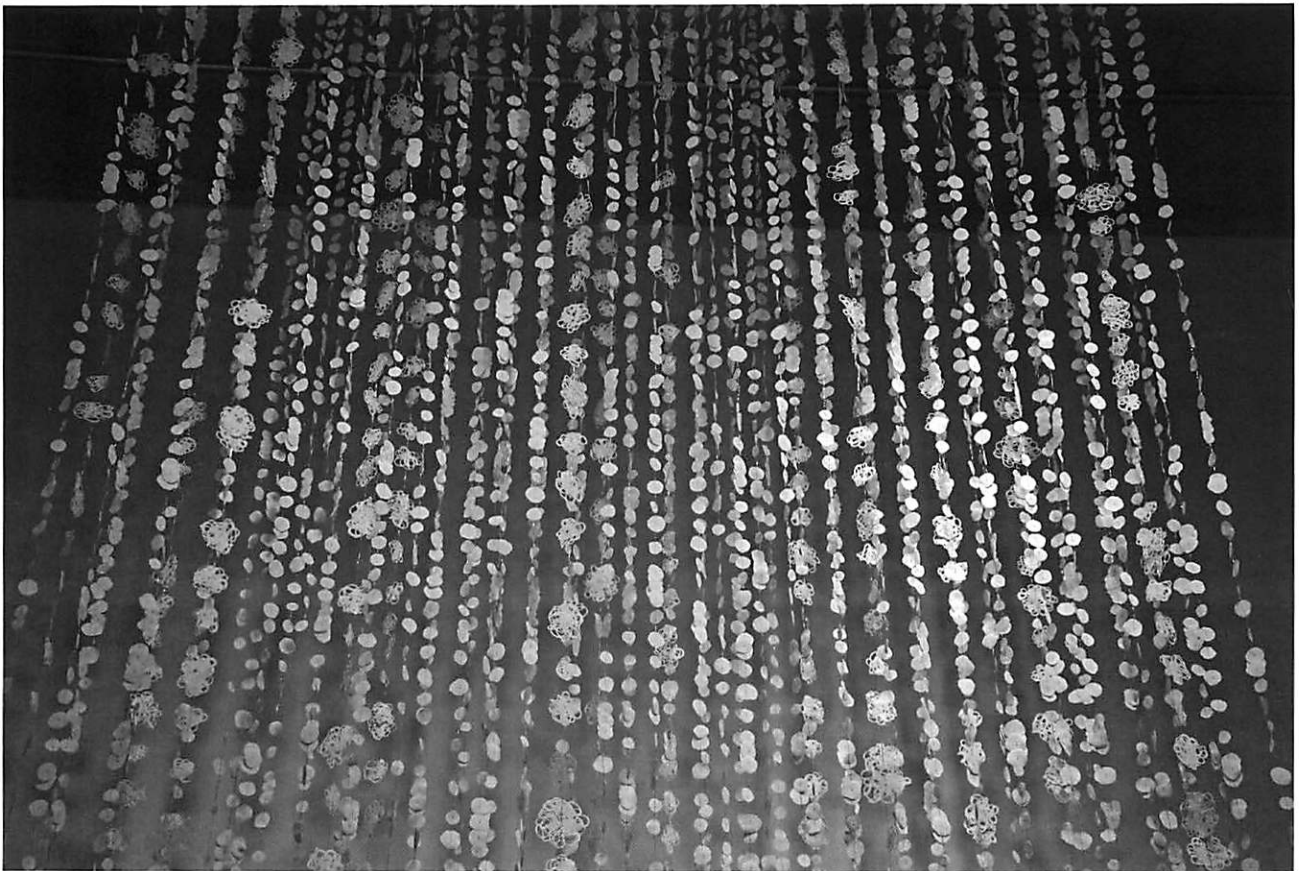


VOICE OF PORCELAIN



SOON BAE KIM

Voice of Porcelain

by

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B.F.A. at Seoul Women's University, 1983

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A Report Submitted to the Lamar Dodd School of Art  
of the University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

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Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Athens, Georgia

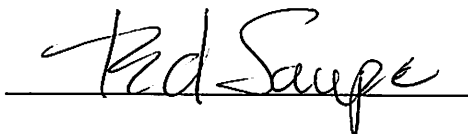
2009

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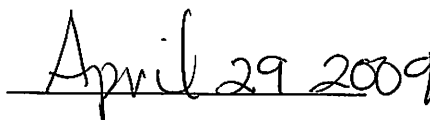
Soon Bae Kim

Approved:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ted Saupe", is written over a horizontal line.

Ted Saupe,

Major Professor

A handwritten date "April 29 2009" is written in cursive script over a horizontal line.

Date

Being a ceramist was not necessarily what I was seeking to be. But I always loved to make things, not only with hands, but also with my head and heart to solve challenges. I was happy to enjoy this method of working in ceramics both in undergraduate and graduate programs in Korea.

Although Korea had a long-standing, rich ceramic culture that continues to thrive to this day, I was fascinated by the Western ceramic art. My long cherished desire to study abroad remained a wish, until I finished ten years of teaching at college in Yeojoo. I finally ended up in Athens at the University of Georgia and I felt overjoyed to study at Larmer Dodd School of Art.

I began my graduate study with colored clay. I had a little experience, but I was never seriously engaged in working with it. Colored clay was more stable than colored glaze, but it was more labor intensive. Elaborate work fit me and I also loved colors. Thomas Hoadley, Curtis and Suzanne Benzell, Dorothy Fiebleman, Chris Campbell, and Miyashita Jenzy are some of the colored clay artists that I liked. It was also a pleasure to look at polymer clay artists' intricate work.

Since this type of work required special materials and technique, I researched the basic method abundantly. I chose "Helios" and "Southern Ice" porcelain for my base clay body because they had excellent whiteness and translucency. For colorants, I used Mason stains which were commercial fritted stains. They were stable and available in a wide range of colors. My mixing method was wedging stain paste into the soft clay. Clay and stains are measured by weight. As the rule of thumb, 1,000 grams of wet clay is equivalent to 800 grams of bone dried clay. Below is the chart of the colored clay I used most frequently and the percentage of the stain to make intense colors.

Color	# Stain	%
Pink Aluminum	6020	20
Margarine	6300	10
Turquoise	6390	20
Prasedymium Yellow	6450	20
French Green	6219	10

Mediterranean Blue	6343	10
Chrome Tin Violet	6304	10
Tangerine	6027	20
Coral Red	6025	10
Black	6650	10

Gradations in colors, rather than solid, appeared frequently in my works. Gradations were achieved by lightening or darkening a color by mixing it with gradually higher proportions of white clay or another colored clay. Hybrid colors can be made between two or more colors. Though commercial stains were relatively stable and predictable, colored clay work required a lot of tests. Fired results can vary, and even the arrangements make them look different.

Colored clays were cut into thin slices and combined to make various patterns. The final designs are shown on the cross section. The results that came out looked like “Millefiori,” the Venetian glass technique. It was interesting that this idea is shared with some food techniques like sushi, rice cakes, or candies. Finished pieces were wrapped in many layers of plastic and checked daily for signs of cracks, for up to six or seven weeks. It was a big issue to dry them evenly because each colorant used in different ratios had different shrinkage.

After the basic working method was set up, I tried to explore every possibility of using colored clay. While I was working on a piece, next ideas arose spontaneously. I felt like there was no limit to this technique, but at the same time I was struggling to overcome the severe limitations of the material such as its frailty. The biggest feature of my work was patchworks done by assembling different quilt-like patterns.

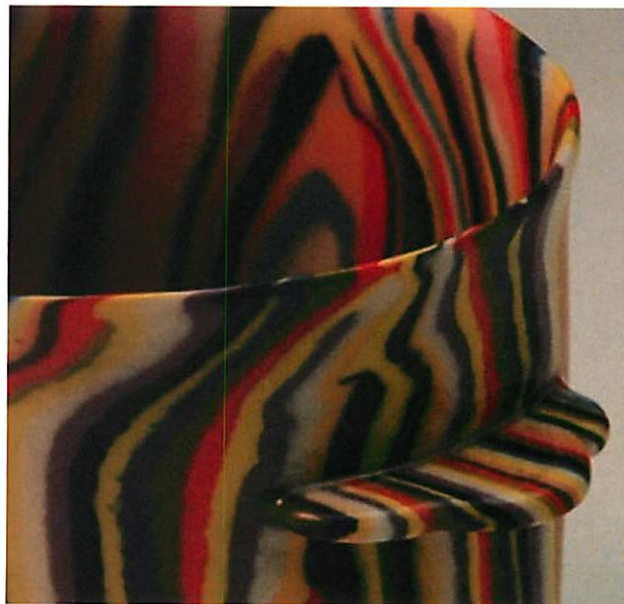
After two years of concentrating on colored clay work, I started hanging pieces with colored clay because I wanted to see how the colors and light interact in the space. As I kept working on them, I naturally moved in the direction of using more white and less color. My final works consist of pure white

round discs weaved with wire. I tried to make each strand have rhythmical consistency. Later on, I added strands of “snow flakes,” which were made of tiny extrusions from a clay gun, to give them an airy feeling. The entire installation had three layers of curtains of these hanging pieces. Due to the fragility of thin porcelain pieces, the process of assembling, moving, and handling was quite nerve-wrecking. In some way, this work emphasizes two contradicting characters of working with porcelain: at times meditative and other times chaotic.

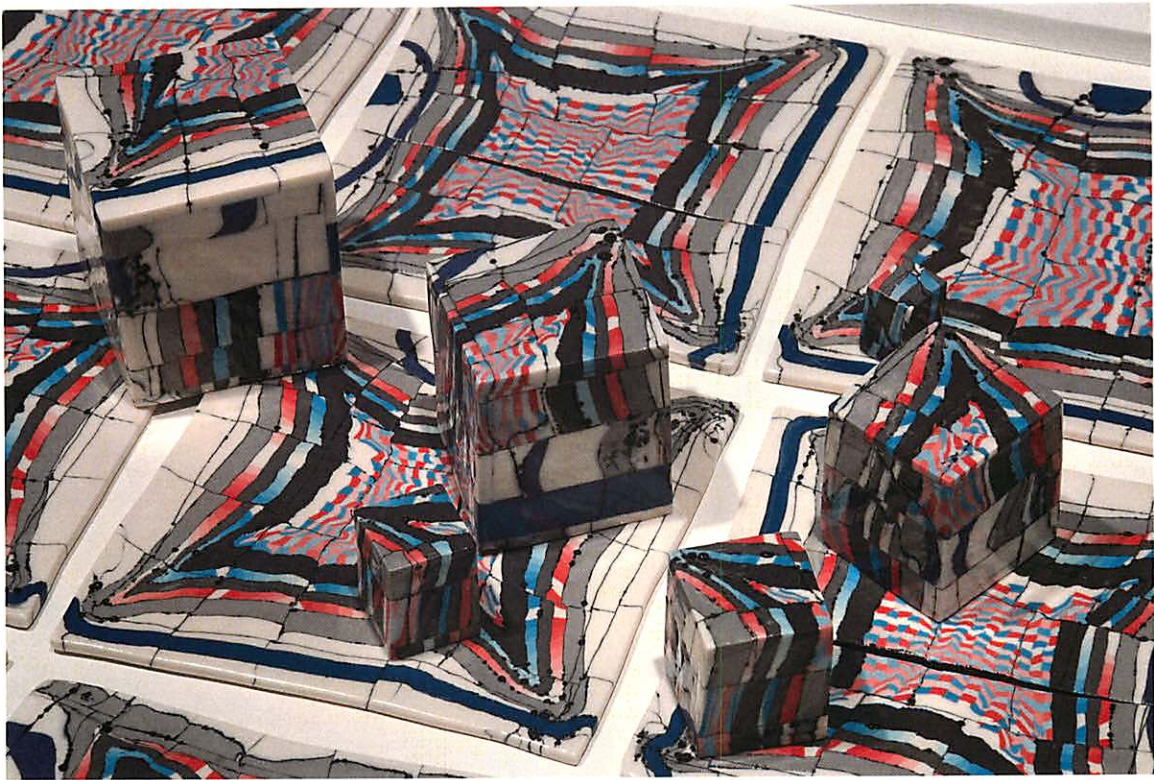
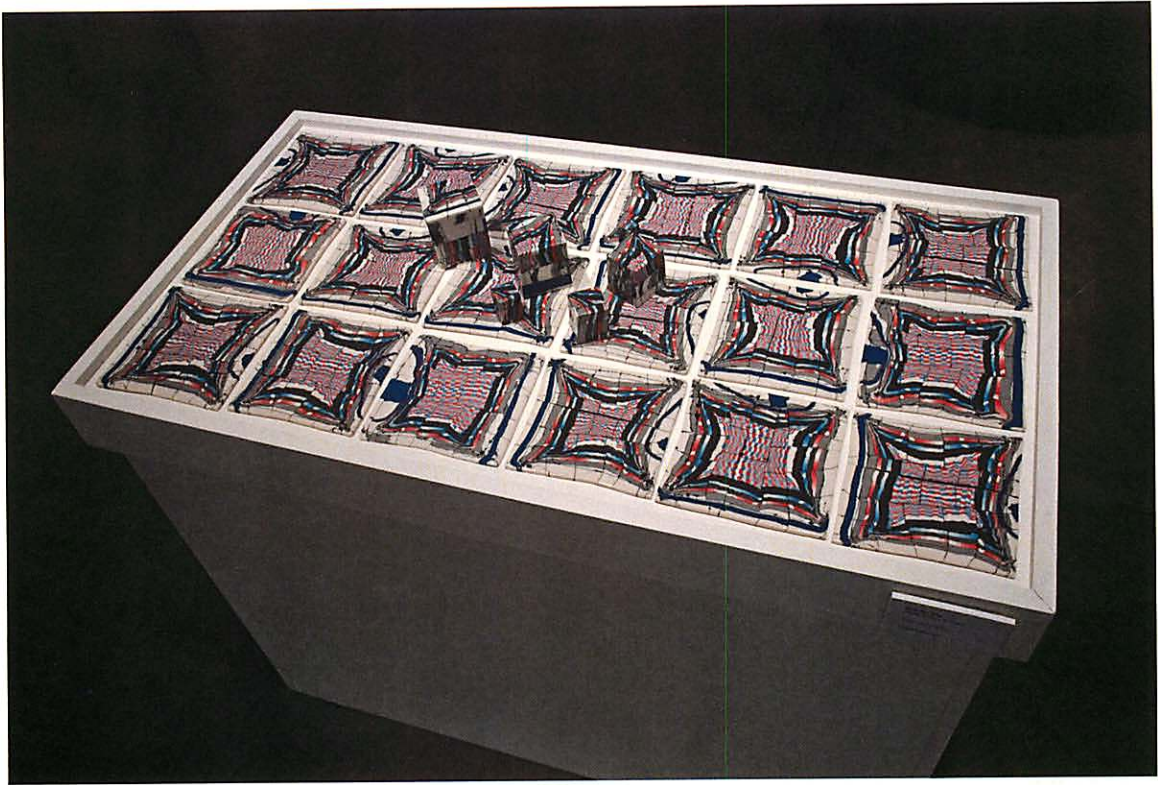
Because I thought the effect of overlapping parts was worth studying further, I started another series of the installations. Indentations and holes were made on each porcelain disc so the patterns appear as the light shined through. Then the discs were assembled in tightly clustered circular forms. At this time, I displayed them on the light table instead of hanging in the space. Though I knew every object in the world looks different in various lighting, playing with thin white translucent porcelain pieces gave me a truly good chance to observe the relationships among shapes, texture, and light.



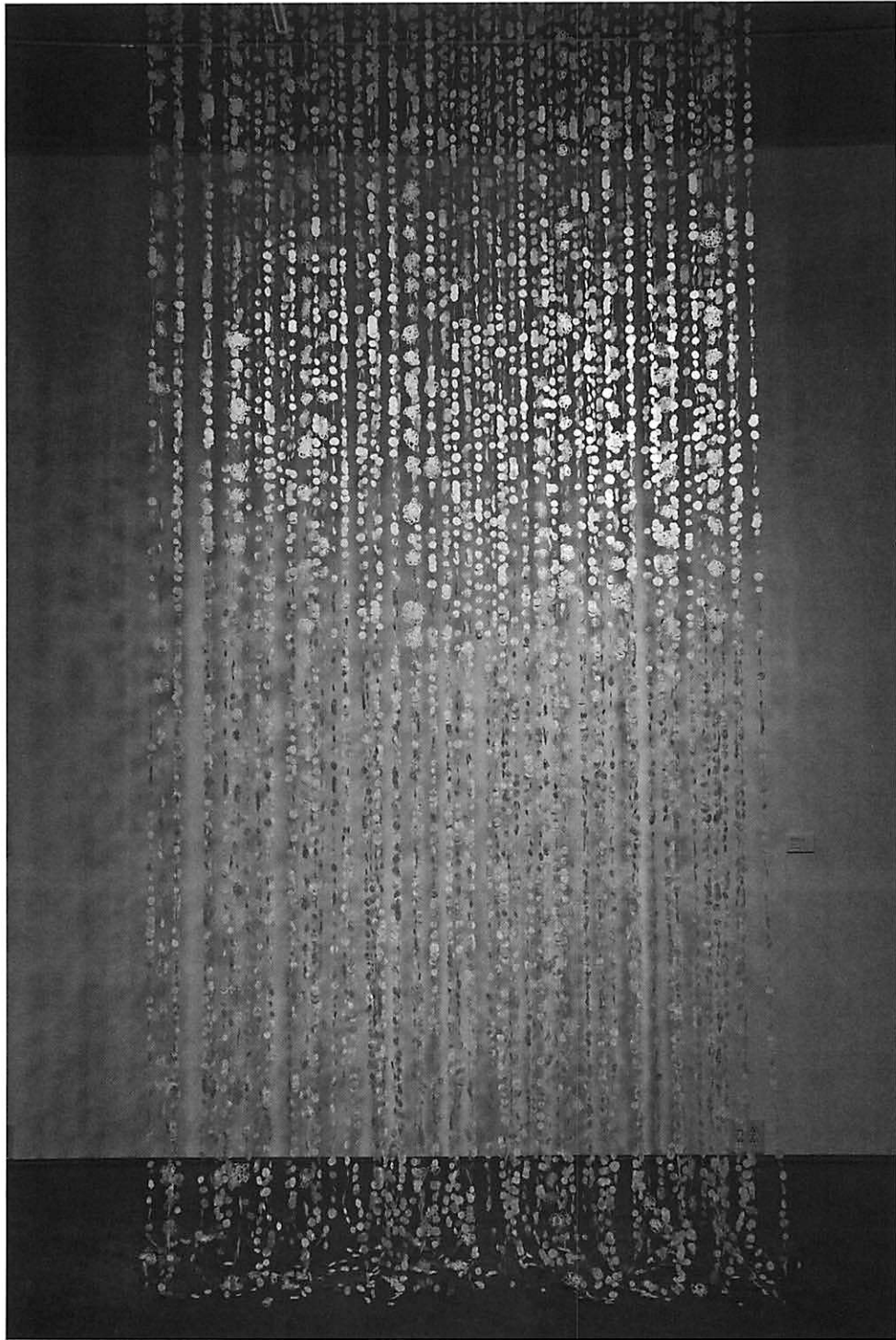




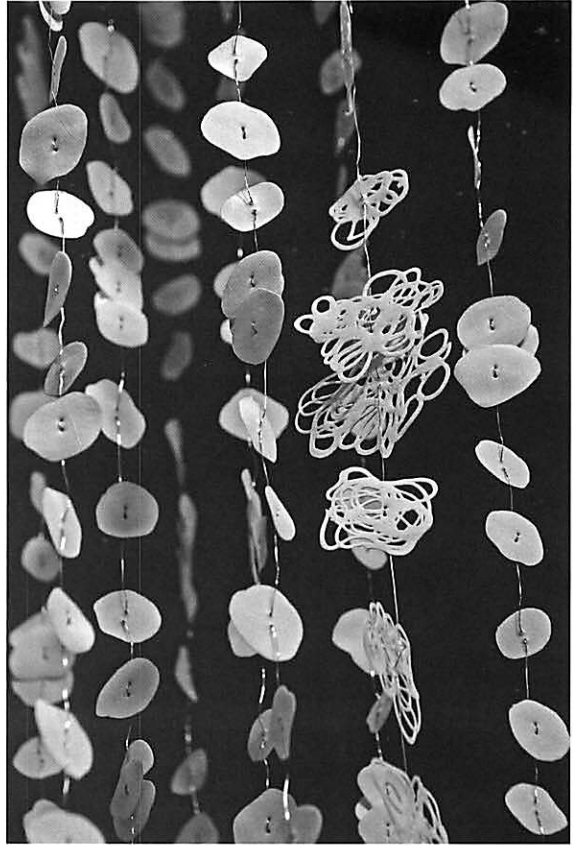
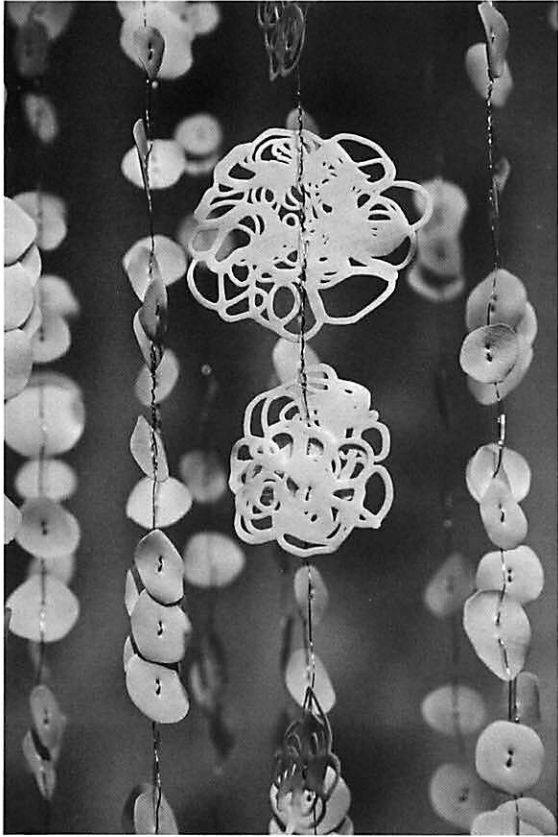


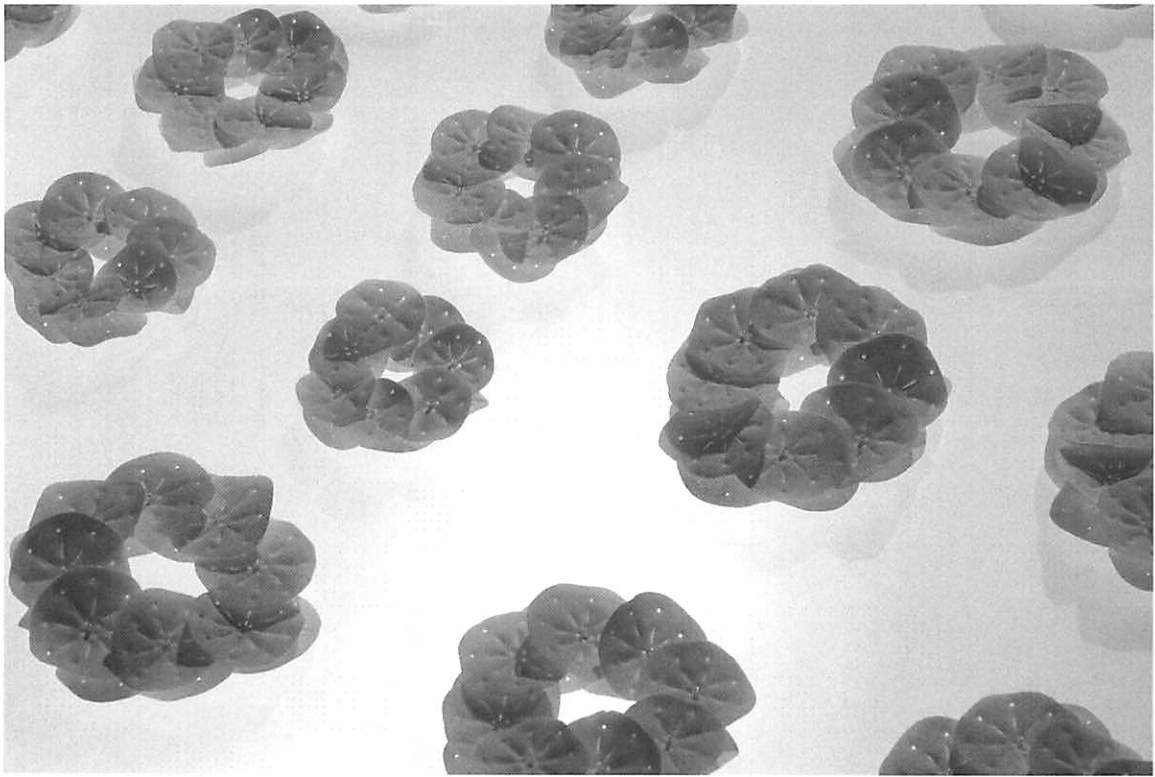
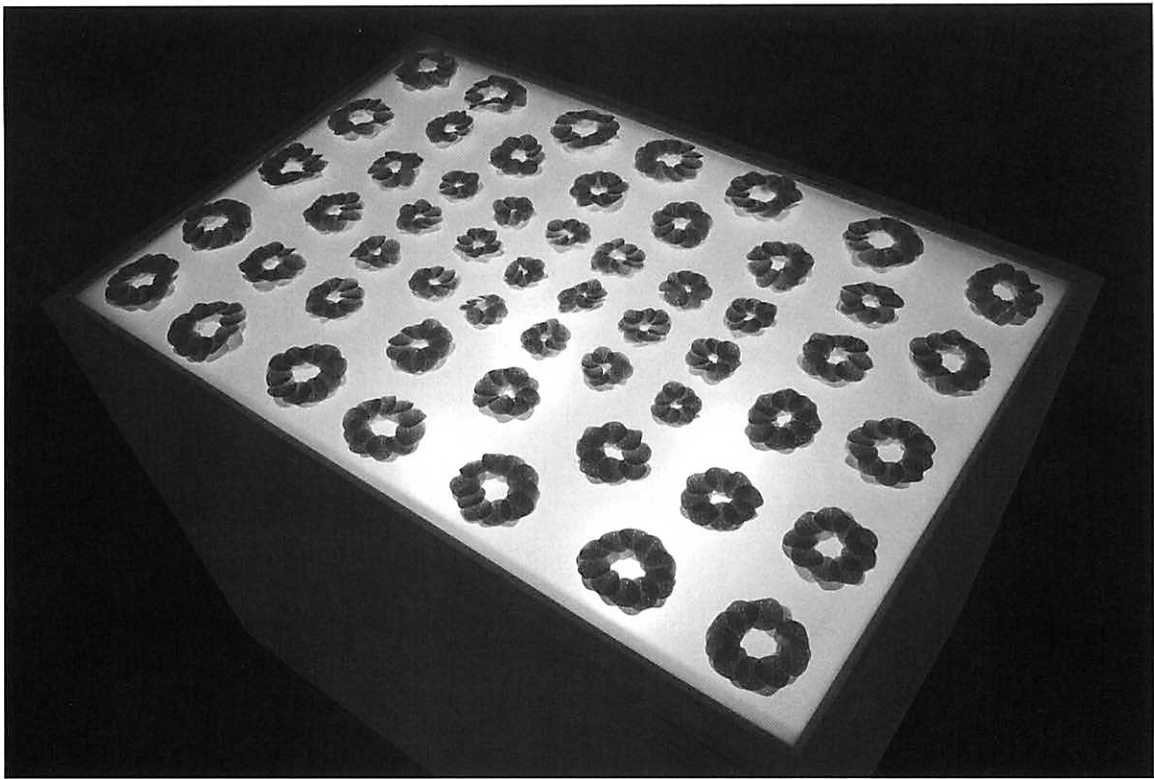












Porcelain responds to my every slightest movement and hears my voice when I work on it.

Its translucency and clear sound always fascinate me.

