

Lynda Draper- Interview with John Natsoulas June 2011  
[www.natsoulas.com/](http://www.natsoulas.com/)

What are the sources of your information?

My work has evolved from an interest in the metaphysical aspects of the domestic souvenir. Sources of my information come from collecting domestic artifacts that evoke personal memory or an emotional response. Many the objects are to be found in junk shops, flea markets and garage sales.

Describe your creative process?

The work grows from my experience of an artifact, evolving from somewhere between the conscious mind and the subconscious imagination. The encounter then becomes a visual idea expressed and interpreted through the medium of clay.

I have employed traditional ceramic technologies to create the works incorporating a variety of techniques including hand modeling using coiling and pinching techniques; press-molding clay forms from plaster cast and multiple glaze firings using stoneware and earthenware glazes to achieve desired surfaces

What are you currently exploring?

My ceramic sculptures have evolved in reply to the evocative nature of a group of souvenirs collected in response to the loss of my childhood home. These works explore the connections between the act of remembering, nostalgia and the phenomena of the uncanny in relation to involuntary memories connected to these souvenirs. Each sculpture functions as a mnemonic device, a personal memorial offering a place for remembering and a reflection of a narrative of the past. They are associated with the comfort but also the discomfort of

domestic life and rituals of the past. On reflection it is not so much about the past but an unconscious reaction to the insecurity and unease in the present, to a sense of alienation and to an uncanny awareness of death.

### Why is clay your medium of choice?

While the works are based around evocative found objects, I have chosen the clay medium as my primary source of communication to depart from the prescriptive nature of these domestic souvenirs and to convey a sense of mystery. The aim was to transform the objects from the house into ghostlike, spirit images - which possess a seductive beauty as well as a sense of unease. Clay enables me to create works with the visual fragility of icing, confectionary, or wax whose surfaces are muted and ethereal but structure is marble like, permanent, and immanent. Drained of color these clay memorials may evoke a ghostly funerary quality, projecting other worldliness, to create a mysterious dreamlike quality.