



MATERIAL WORLD

New Works by: Rachel Foulton
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Mamiko Otsubo

Mamiko Otsubo



AMIKO OTSUBO'S TRIO of untitled sculptures introduces the "great outdoors" into the lobby of Metrotech One in a manner that playfully exaggerates the spare artificiality of the corporate environment. In her sculptures, which she makes using various synthetic materials and fabrication methods, Otsubo depicts nature through the filters of design and industry. She distills trees, rocks, mountains and other visual elements of landscape down to a few essential colors, shapes, and formal relationships, leaving it to the viewer to make the associative leap from abstraction to pictorial representation. Her idealized, streamlined scenarios suggest that a landscape is perhaps nothing so much as nature experienced at a remove: from behind the wheel of a car or through a camera lens, or in a painting or even a corporate logo. Her works occupy the space between imagination and reality.

A two-part sculpture made of clear green plastic cones sits on both ends of the lobby reception desk, exactly where one might expect to find a pair of large floral arrangements. The grouped objects are three-dimensional, but they function like a flat logo, succinctly suggesting a mountain range. A closer look gives the viewer a vivid sense of the material nature of the object—what it is made of and how it is constructed—but does not reveal additional unique characteristics, like snow or trees. In another work, Otsubo uses an existing strip of silver on the lobby's window as a horizon line for a series of window-box landscapes. Affixed to the inside of the window, the lacquered boxes contain abstract interpretations of undulating landmasses, clouds, and a sun. The largest of Otsubo's sculptures is an elegant steel-and-Plexiglas terrarium, filled with acrylic plant life. With notched, intricately connected leaves and bent plywood stems, the wild tangle of vegetation looks like some sort of futuristic, modular riff on a prickly pear cactus. Ensconced safely inside its reflective modernist box, it offers an extremely, almost humorously, mediated encounter with nature. A round, plastic Kartell lamp—hanging low amidst the plants and illuminating the sculpture from within—is Otsubo's homage to the bright night moon that hung just over the treetops in the canvases of 19th-century romantic master Henri Rousseau, who, fittingly, worked from his imagination, painting his exotic, stylized landscapes without ever stepping foot in the jungle or even leaving his native France.

RIGHT:

Mamiko Otsubo
Untitled, 2005
(Mountain Peaks)
Cast polyurethane

FOLLOWING PAGES

TOP LEFT:

Untitled, 2005
(Windowboxes)
Stainless steel,
MDF, plastic,
paint, foam, and
vinyl juggling ball

BOTTOM LEFT

AND RIGHT:

Untitled, 2005
(Greenhouse)
Wood, steel,
Plexiglas, cast
plastic, and
Kartell Icon lamp





