



REBECCA
HOSSACK

ART GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE

Filia

Avital Sheffer

8 - 29 July 2023

The Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery presents *Filia*, the second solo exhibition at the gallery of work by Israeli ceramicist Avital Sheffer. *Filia* celebrates Sheffer's life-long engagement with the multi-faceted strands of Middle-Eastern iconography, history, language and mythology as deep sources for the forms and surfaces of her exquisite sculptural vessels.



Avital Sheffer, *Neuma VIII*, 2022, hand-built, glazed and stencilled earthenware

Born in Israel, Sheffer now lives in New South Wales, Australia, where the intensity of the light and the surrounding landscape infuses her work with a resonant warmth and quiet energy. Imbued with a sense of the divine, Sheffer's vessels hold myriad stories and interweave historic filaments of Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern cultures. As portals between past and present, Sheffer's works challenge the linearity of time, and speak with an ancient voice of the fundamental human concerns of materiality and spirituality.

The works in *Filia* display the evolution of Sheffer's work with the medium of clay. Taking its title from the Spanish word for sympathy or affiliation, (and with etymological roots in the Greek word for friendship), the show brings together works that draw subtly on the cultural legacies of Spanish art from the Al-Andalus and Mudéjar eras with their rich combinations of Islamic and Christian iconographic traditions.

Disciplined by the requirements of working with clay, Sheffer seeks to find balance between intention and chance, gravity and lift, and stillness and movement in her new work. Hand-coiling her sculptural vessels, Sheffer employs age-old techniques alongside an innovative printing approach that allows her to inscribe the surface of her work with ancient Arabic and Hebrew manuscript text. Around the necks of certain pieces, she dots tiny jewelled beads of gold lustre. The results of this elaborate process are magnificent vessels that stand as guardians between realms past and future, temporal and transcendental.

Sheffer has exhibited extensively in Australia, the USA and the UK. Her work is held in numerous public collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney; Atelier d'Art de France, Paris; Museu del Càntir, Barcelona, and the Jewish Museum of Australia, Melbourne. Her work features in many publications, including Edmund de Waal's *The Pot Book* (PHAIDON, 2011); Avital Sheffer is a member of the International Academy of Ceramics.

About the Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery:

The Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery is a contemporary art gallery challenging trends. Over the course of three decades the gallery has built an international reputation for innovation, individuality, energy and excellence. Rebecca Hossack has been a great champion of non-Western artistic traditions, and hers was the first art gallery in Europe to exhibit Australian Aboriginal painting, which it continues to promote.



Left: Avital Sheffer, *Kulmus III* , 2022, hand-built, glazed and stencilled earthenware, 50 x 22 x 14 cm
Right: Avital Sheffer, *Frasco IV* , 2022, hand-built, glazed and stencilled earthenware, 51 x 29 x 15 cm

Listings information:

Filia

8 July - 29 July 2023

Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery,
2a Conway Street, Fitzroy Square,
London, W1T 6BA
Free admission

For press enquiries:

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Gallery opening times:

Monday - Saturday: 10 am - 6 pm
Closed Sunday