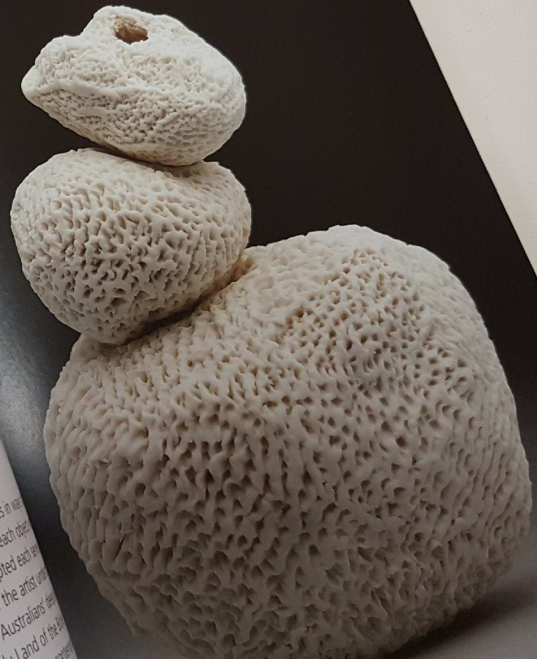
The background of the cover is a large, abstract ceramic artwork. It features a complex interplay of colors including deep blues, bright yellows, fiery oranges, and earthy reds, all set against a lighter, off-white base. The surface is highly textured, with visible brushstrokes, splatters, and areas that appear to be glazed or fired differently, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall composition is non-representational, focusing on color and form.

The Journal of  
**AUSTRALIAN  
CERAMICS**

VOL 57 NO 3 | NOVEMBER 2018 | \$16

EXPLORING SURFACE | JACKIE MASTERS | NIKKI DOWDELL  
AVI AMESBURY | NERIKOMI | CERAMICS ELDERS

[illegible]

## PEOPLE & PLACES

particular characteristics and aspects of places that concern her. Her search results in expressions of her wonder of discovery, of the initial emotional impact that prompts her philosophical, imaginative and aesthetic responses. While elements of real topographies are present in her work it is the elision of the real with the imaginative and creative couched in an intelligent and poetic aesthetic language that is instilled in her finished objects.

The following discussions examine works from each of the series. While individual series explore specific and geographically different places, the highly refined and articulate language of the artist overlays the entirety of the exhibition and in this asserts the aesthetic maturity and authority of her vision.

In the work, *Bogong High Plains to the Coast*, three elements (a cube, a flower and a sponge) are placed together. Each is fashioned from porcelain with Bogong wood ash, the sponge is cast from the actual object. The cube is a container but a container that cannot be opened. Its surface is enlivened with marks, impressions and an intricate mesh-like veil. On one face, a sea creature is placed with a single antenna pointing to the accompanying elements. The enclosed status of the cube is a metaphorical inclusion referencing the undisclosed memories held by the artist. Also present are the possibilities for the activation of memory that comes from making connections to the land as travelled. There is a quietly insistent acknowledgement of the original indigenous inhabitants. The notion of artist as pilgrim sits comfortably with this and other of Amesbury's work. There is an (assumed) dialogue between the three objects established by the artist through their physical arrangement, in the unifying palette and in the intimate scale adopted by the artist. The latter invites an ability to hold the work and further reinforces notions of memories contained. The dialogue is aesthetic and conceptual. The use of clay (porcelain) is especially notable. Its transformative qualities bring exceptional thematic and aesthetic relevance. The transformation of material imbues the transference of experience and meaning from the artist to the viewer and establishes a dialogue between artist, place, materials and beyond.

In the series *Monaro to the Coast*, Amesbury employs a darker palette than in the preceding. The cube appears most effectively in *Ancient Highland*. Here the marks, impressions, etcetera, are clothed in rich browns and ochres and surrounded by a white ground embellished with multiple tiny black dots. These also appear on the exotic vegetation that straddles the cube with its extended tendrils. Notions of contained memory continue. The aesthetic tension imbued through the contrast of the strict geometries of the cube with the organic twists of the tendrils is particularly effective. In a series within a series – *East to West* – Amesbury uses an open vessel form to great effect. The six objects are scaled to fit into a hand. Each is constructed of

All work by **Avi Amesbury**

porcelain, clay from Monaro Plains, NSW

1 *Monaro to the Coast – East to West II*, series, h.9.5cm

2 *Monaro to the Coast – East to West III*, series, h.11cm

3 *Monaro to the Coast – East to West IV*, series, h.6.5cm

4 *Monaro to the Coast – East to West VI*, series, h.5.5cm

Photos: Andrew Sikorski, Art Atelier





In late 2017, Ameriye spent six weeks in Israel at the Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Centre in Tel Aviv. During that time she "travell[ed] extensively collecting soils and clays". The results as exemplified in the *Makhtesh and Negev Desert* series attest to the impact of this experience on the artist's creative imagination. The colours and textures of the desert along with the exotic vegetation provoked new forms and surface decoration. In *Mtze Ramon 1*, rectangular, brick-like forms in porcelain and local clay from the Negev Desert are cut, joined and given additions referencing local vegetation. The walls are activated with various motifs and grainy, sand-like textures. The motifs are not so much delicately intimated – a process that is informed by the artist's encounter with the exotic, with the apprehension of absorbing a new (yet simultaneously ancient) land. The cube reappears in *Drima maritana* from the *Negev*. Again the notion of memories contained asserts itself. The inclusion of a large wall-based piece (*From the Negev*) creates an "expanded universe" in that individual objects comprise the totality of the installation. This imposes a physical record of the journeys and experiences associated with those undertaken by the artist during her sojourn in Israel. The wall installation is a compendium of memories, a visual diary of cues and clues to Ameriye's art as reconnection, art as affirmation of place.

*Country – Ancient Lands* is a beautiful and highly individual exhibition. The artist's connection with place as exemplified in the objects displayed is a powerful aspect of her life. Traces of memory, memories felt and experienced, and possibilities for memories to come, coexist within single objects and within the totality of the exhibition. That these are articulated through Avi Amesbury's exquisitely nuanced aesthetic and plastic senses and finely-tuned visual language, result in an invitation for viewers to participate and be absorbed by the artist's motivations and to find their own connections with place.

[www.aviamesbury.com](http://www.aviamesbury.com)

Opposite above:  
**Avi Amesbury**, Bogong  
High Plains to the Coast  
2018, porcelain, Bogong  
wood-ash, slab, slipcast  
handbuilt cube, h.10.5cm  
w.10.5cm, d.10.5cm

Opposite below:  
**Avi Amesbury**  
Makhtesh Series –  
Mitzpe Ramon, 2018  
porcelain, clay from  
Mitzpe Ramon, Israel  
slab, slipcast, handbuilt  
h.4cm, w.9cm, d.3.2cm  
  
Photos: Andrew Sikorski  
Art Atelier