

the Ceramic & Crafts Association of Israel is proud to present:

The 'Mila' winning exhibition

The exhibition "White Noise" was made possible thanks to the generous donation of the Mila Foundation to the Ceramic & Crafts Association of Israel and the B.Y5 gallery. The Mila Foundation was established with the aim of supporting ceramicists in the first steps of their professional career and giving them the opportunity to present their solo exhibition with close curatorial support. The first prize was awarded to artist Edna Oliver.

White Noise

Edna Oliver

Curator: Tali Kayam

June 8 - July 1, 2023

B.Y5 Gallery, Tel Aviv



White Noise

“Looking at many trees we find some that have structural features in common and form a genus or a species. This species manifests itself in every individual tree as far as resistant matter allows, and though individual trees may therefore differ, their differences are merely ‘accidental’ compared to the essence they share”.¹

The BY5 Gallery has never looked so quiet. At first glance, the space may seem shockingly or amazingly minimalistic. It is a matter of taste. The whiteness of the walls is blended with a warmer tone: The walls are wrapped and filled with pore-like porcelain sculptures made of delicate fragments that form a layered surface inviting us to look deeper.

A further look reveals that each wall contains a system of organs whose function is not familiar and unclear to us. Is there an active leading part and a passive one between them? In what way are they inviting us to experience them? The opening quote of this text, by art historian Ernst Gombrich, signals how, despite the large assortment of species and types, the forms found on the walls of the gallery share a common essence.

In previous exhibitions in which she participated, Edna Oliver chose to refer to these elements as “mechanical hinges and connectors, but also biological, such as the joints of the skeleton in animals or window hinges and connectors of electric pole structures”, but admitted that additional secret messages are encoded in them, and that they share a motif of concealment.²

In her first solo exhibition, as the winner of the Mila prize awarded for the first time by the Ceramic & Crafts Association of Israel, Oliver chooses to combine the natural and inanimate worlds that have been reflected in her works so far, with an inner, intimate and

personal world. In an entirely symbolic coincidence with the name of the prize (“Mila” in Hebrew means “word”), the artist surrounds us with “words”, objects that speak her unique sculptural language. The works function as a sculptural vocabulary, as will become clear in this catalog (see the exhibition’s glossary).

On the west wall of the gallery, white material reliefs from parts of Oliver’s actual body are displayed alongside imagined body images of anonymous figures, which include some of the porcelain sculptures that surround us. This exposed body of work reveals to us a symbiosis between the artist and her creations. An unbreakable connection.

In his book *The Poetics of Space*, French philosopher Gaston Bachelard quotes an 18th century scholar who saw fossils as early drafts or sketches for the forms from which the human body was created, nature’s initial attempts to create a person. In symbolism from the days of Christian folklore, he says, the shell was seen as a symbol of the human body, and inside it, they believed, the soul resided.³

Given such an interpretation, it becomes clear that the other walls of the gallery also present to us Edna Oliver’s body and soul. Many of them form shells for each other and reside part within part. The entire space wraps around us. We are actually inside, looking out, inside that space that awakens, like a shell, through our existence within it. With our visit, we revitalize the works of art. In the center of the space, Oliver left us several samples to experiment with freely. These objects function as probes. Like research vehicles that are sent into space to produce communication and deliver data, the porcelain castings bring us and the artist together.

1. Ernest Gombrich, *Norm & Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, New York: Phaidon Publishers, 1971, p.87
2. From Edna Oliver’s artist statement, 2021
3. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, New York: Pinguine Books, 2014, p. 135

The practice of wrapping has characterized Oliver's works since her studies in the department of ceramics and glass design at Bezalel Academy, where her initial creations were intended for wear. Later she sought to create an interaction between the work and the viewer through touch, movement and sound. Moving the parts of the sculptures in our hands breathes life into them and creates a unique range of sounds for each one. Every one of us has a specific touch that creates a unique dialogue with the sculptural object.

In George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, the sound pronunciation of the language is described as defining statuses and determining destinies in society. The main protagonist of the play, Eliza Doolittle, is "designed" by phonetics expert Prof. Henry Higgins as an upper class socialite. However, unlike Galatea, the perfectly sculpted figure that the mythological sculptor Pygmalion falls in love with, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Doolittle stands up to her "maker" and demands to choose her own destiny. What is the identity that Oliver hides in her sculptures? And, despite careful calculations, do they indeed undeniably obey her?

The message in the bottle that the sounds of the sculptures carry with them is not clear to us. We do not speak their language and a one-time wandering in the space of the gallery is not enough to learn this language, nor to accumulate a preliminary vocabulary. But similar to the trees mentioned by Gombrich, the sounds share a common element, as they are produced by bodies that have formal similarity and repetition.

This patterning is reflected in the "lace" created by Edna Oliver's unique method of connecting objects with ceramic joints. You can see an example of this technique in the chains hanging near the front

door. These consist of dozens of sculpted parts that are inextricably connected in a calculated and meticulous firing process that takes into account the contraction of the material thanks to the temperature difference between the heat inside the kiln and the cold studio space. Edna Oliver reveals to us the design of this process in detailed pencil drawings hanging from paper scrolls that seem to have been taken from the studio of a Renaissance artist. It is a studio practice that is now brought out into the open and brings us even closer to Edna Oliver's creative inner world.

It is possible, then, that we do not need to decipher the language in front of us, because by surrendering to the sensory experience we will discover that it is actually familiar. Linguist Noam Chomsky believes that there is a "universal grammar" that all humans are born with. He notices that there is a deep structure in language, which expresses thought, as well as a surface structure - the physical-phonetic configuration. The deep structures, just like our individual touch of each of the sculptures, are not the same. However, we are all partners at this moment in observing a surface structure: the organization and arrangement of the elements of a sentence that is usually relevant to its interpretation, and this time is not revealed by the actual arrangement in space.⁴

The innocent white walls that surround us might feel stormier in the face of these ideas. The enveloping silence seems like an active conversation that takes place on a different frequency. Can you hear it?

Tali Kayam,
curator

4. Noam Chomsky, *Cartezian Linguistics: A Chapter in the History of Rationalist Thought*, New York and London: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966 PP. 42-43

Installation view. 2023.
Photo: Daniel Hanoch





Installation view. 2023.
Photo: Daniel Hanoch



Installation view, east wall. 2023.
Porcelain. Photo: Liraz Siani Lopez

Glossary

For wandering Edna Oliver's exhibition *White Noise*

Concept and writing: Tali Galsky

Tali Galsky is a poet and science communicator

The glossary is designed to complement and enhance the experience of viewing Edna Oliver's exhibition 'White Noise'.

The terms, which describe actions and states of existence, were born from the examination of the works and correspond with the world that the artist creates.

These words speak of the world where these forms exist and offer a unique language that accompanies the navigation in it.

Afomosimia

The meeting point between folding and splitting

Alveolin

The alveoli that fill sounds that have not been heard yet

Brim

The sound that comes from the pores of the skin when parting with an unwanted thought

Colodiadrum

The vestibule through which the intervals pass

Compoglin

The intensity of the glare emitted by a vertebral object that is directly proportional to the speed at which the vertebrae are organized into one body

Duabilism

The ability to be round and square at the same time

Echtochron

The touch of vacuum on the skin when one steps out of the flow of time for a moment

Epinor

The pale contour line that remains in space after the disappearance of a form

Gleophanella

The texture that forms on the inside of a vessel when it is filled with laughter

Graspsing

A grasping action that combines caressing

Icosahedron. 2022. Porcelain, diameter 27 cm.
Photo: Daniel Hanoch



Luda, detail. 2022.
Porcelain and stoneware,
14.5 x 14.5 x 5.5 cm.
Photo: Liraz Siani Lopez



Tapestry of Connections,
detail. 2023. Porcelain,
40 x 50 cm.
Photo: Daniel Hanoch



Dumez. 2023. Porcelain,
14.5 x 14.5 x 14 cm.
Photo: Liraz Siani Lopez



Insum

A quality of an object that makes observers recognize a part of themselves in it

Inum

The murmur that is created by movement that tightens around the absence

Isticum

Stability that occurs after continuous rattling in a vacuum

Leakid

The course of the movement of flow into the solid state

Miloformus

The set of images that you get when you look at an object and see at once the stages of its future development

Nimmish

The interval between the layers that will accumulate on a certain object

Nullformism

A biological phenomenon that manifests itself in the loss of the ability to sense form

Nurzil

The dark side of a surface whose other side is bathed in light

Nutz

Inner pocket where childhood sounds are kept

Osimorphism

Spontaneous change of the mass of the object according to the heart rate of those holding it



Installation view with a performing artist. 2023.
Photo: Daniel Hanoch

Holding hand relief, 2023.

Stoneware, 40 x 22.5 cm.

Photo: Daniel Hanoch



Inwardly. 2023. Porcelain,
diameter 8.5 cm.
Photo: Liraz Siani Lopez



Bimtuck. 2023. Porcelain,
diameter 14 cm.
Photo: Daniel Hanoch



Plaulum

A substance that is able to overcome gravity as a result of exposure to light

Rushle

The rustling of the wind in the cavity created by the retrieval of a hidden object

Salgadonium

The appearance of horizontal stripes in the outer texture of a cylinder as a result of fogging

Sicanotro

The connecting frequency between cone vertices

Triflax

A body that consists of hollows, spikes and silence

Zaphirax

A shape that at first glance looks like a pentagon, yet from up close one can see that its edges move like ripples

Tulilim, detail. 2023.
Porcelain, 25 x 25 x 50 cm,
Photo: Daniel Hanoch



Winged Gathering. 2023.
Porcelain, 26 x 26 x 20 cm.
Photo: Daniel Hanoch



Piled Winged Gathering.

2023. Porcelain.

Photo: Daniel Hanoch



White Noise: Edna Oliver
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Curator: Tali Kayam

June 8 - July 1, 2023

B.Y5 Gallery, 5 Bar Yohai st., Tel Aviv

Chairperson: Sigal Zuz

General Director and gallery manager: Adi Shabtai Pepo

Assistant Director: Noa Vainstein

Writer of Glossary: Tali Galsky

Performer artist: Avigail Kochavy

Photo: Daniel Hanoch and Liraz Siani Lopez

Graphic design of the Hebrew catalog : Studio Roniveroni

Translation from Hebrew: Lila Veissid

Page 2: Warp and weft, detail. 2023. Porcelain, 90 x 127 cm. Photo: Daniel Hanoch

B.Y5 Gallery, 5 Bar Yohai st., Tel Aviv
Opening hours: mon-wed 10:00-16:00,
thu 11:00-18:00, fri-sat 10:00-14:00

