

ANAT SHIFTAN

Artist Statement

LOOKING AT NATURE is a springboard for artistic expression; an effort to awaken a sense of wonder in nature; in the magic of looking at reality; the beauty and the ambivalence enfolded in nature; and the political aspect of “packaging” nature in the art object.

In her essay *On Flowers In Contemporary Art* (1), curator Edna Moshenson writes that “the flower motif, re-legitimized in art, has an economic aspect today - evidence of a flourishing art market”, and that “the addiction to beauty, to the decorative, to pleasure, is a privilege of an affluent society, mainly of the commercial art world”. She argues that the flower is also a highly critical and subversive image, and says that the flower image depicted in art today is rather than a metaphor for the natural cycle of life, a metaphor for the life cycle of art.

In the “Still Life” series, I refer to botanical drawings and historic Still Life paintings. The process of creating impacts the form and meaning of the final object. I use traditional ceramic techniques to create a volumetric ceramic still life rendering that is a response to the history of two-dimensional renderings of that subject in drawing and painting.

The “Tile Series,” introduce the subject of the fragment as part of a larger whole. The tile incorporates Islamic patterns and patterns made using the computer. A floral image is rendered top of the pattern using a variety of techniques: printing, slip trailing, and techniques inspired by the Armenian tile making tradition.

The works on paper are prepared and printed digitally. I appropriate historic images: Durer's Rabbit and already processed historic floral images of nature. Using color in high “volume,” both in quantity and intensity-a response to the extreme stimulation of the world.

The goal of the process of LOOKING AT NATURE is to awaken wonder and show the fine line between beauty and corruption and the alluring magic of and in nature.

1. Edna Moshenson, *Rose c'est la vie*, *On Flowers in Contemporary Art*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, cat 7/2004. P19.