

# MICHELLE TOBIA

Artist Statement

“It is not so much what we perceive but how we feel about what we perceive that is crucial to an understanding of our behavior and ourselves.”

J.K. Wright, *Terrae Incognitae*

From a utilitarian aspect with pottery to a sculptural perspective with the vessel, the idea of containment has always been an interest of mine. Challenging traditional ceramic formats to this idea, I continue to question how it is addressed and defined by accessing ideas of place, memory, beauty and perceptions of identity. My research is not always bound to the permanence of static objects but occasionally embraces the temporary and vulnerable aspects of materials, processes and experiences, which are important to the realization of my work.

The objects and installations I make oscillate between the representational and the abstract. Most recently I am considering the role of architecture and its transitional elements as vehicles for “holding” as I make associations of interior/exterior and manmade/nature that reference the seemingly mundane as well as address my interests in water, light, and air. Interpretations of walls, corners, floors, windows, fences, and screens further investigate ideas of psychological escape, privacy and protection.

My palette is consciously limited. Reflections, shadows, glossy and matte surfaces are of specific intent. Relating to loss and absence, white and the gray scale are predominantly used to remove the familiar context of color that makes the images, forms, and spaces most easily recognizable. They remain somewhat incomplete, allowing room for each person to relate and enter on a level where the object, experience and memories intersect.

I seek to evoke a greater sense of place and an awareness of self with the viewer.

