

Exhibit presents artist's immersion in her work

TIM LLOYD

PERTH-BASED ceramic sculptor Amanda Shelsher brings her first exhibition to Adelaide this month, a body of intuitive works that celebrate her passage through life.

Shelsher, 38, has been making clay figures since she was 10 and the figures have evolved as she has gone from child to student - staging her first exhibition at age 16 - and from arts school to years of overseas travel. Finally, or at least recently, the birth and rearing of two children and the aspirations of a suburban mum have dominated her work.

"Yeah, instinct is very important to my work," she says. "I don't plan it. I just sit down and start working. I really leave it up to the clay and the way it works."

The plain-speaking, no-nonsense mum with dreams of a bigger home, preferably in a rural setting outside

Perth, belies the kind of skills that nearly 30 years of sculpting have given her.

She works mostly in white paper clays and fires them to stoneware or sometimes porcelain quality.

In recent years the plain white torsos have gained sgraffiti, a kind of tattoo work in clay that depicts her concerns.

In her pregnancies the sgraffito started on her belly, and from babies and birthing it spread out to take in the natural world of native plants and life, like a kind of poem of instruction to her children.

It never crossed her mind that most viewers would think the sculptures were of male figures until her friends pointed out the large hands and flat chests and broad shoulders.

She says she realised she emphasised her hands, because she worked with them, and the broad, flat torsos made it possible to work

LIFE'S WORK: Amanda Shelsher with her work "Nesting", at Greenhill Galleries.



the sgraffiti, such as images of the houses in her suburb.

Working in her living room, with a kiln in her shed, Shelsher has moved from exhibitions in Perth to across Australia, coming to Adel-

aide for the first time in her latest exhibition. She attributes her extraordinary productivity to her complete immersion in her work, once the children are in bed, at day care, or in the care of her husband.

What: Amanda Shelsher, ceramic sculpture

When: Until November 3

Where: Greenhill Galleries

Cost: Sculptures from \$1300-\$3500