

the village
VOICE
Art

The photographs of Latin American funerals in Bastienne Schmidt's 1996 book *Vivir la Muerte*—her artistic debut—don't immediately suggest a connection to her latest efforts: spare, exquisite paintings of amphora-like containers. But both projects, separated by more than two decades, reflect the loss of her father, who died when Schmidt was only 25. Back in 1988, shooting bereavement rituals in Peru and Colombia let her deal with her own immediate grief. Here, the meditative series of mandala-like forms is a gesture, in part, of remembrance—in her youth, Schmidt often accompanied her archeologist father on digs in Greece for ancient pottery. Drawn on thick paper, the vessels (oval, circular, triangular) are filled with Mediterranean colors. Schmidt gently mixes thinned-out acrylics with actual espresso, making evanescent stains of rich blues and sandy browns—a shifting, hazy, memory-like wash.

The rounded, minimalist shapes suggest, too, a feminist symbology—a more abstract instance of the artist's recent explorations of female identity. Empathy, mothering, and the womb all appear to one degree or another, rendered with soft integrity. Ricco/Maresca Gallery, 529 West 20th Street, 212-627-4819, riccomaresca.com. Through June 16.

Robert Shuster

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