**Cover image – *The Messenger***

by Ofra Sivilya

She was born after a lengthy gestation. Her name was given to her while as she was becoming. One day, she fell and was broken to pieces. For a while, I let her be there broken, to internalise her condition and assess her damage. I suspended the act of mending her fractures until I decided whether it was right to fix her, or give her up, or take it one step further and shatter her completely. The material she is made of is characterised by endless capacity of deconstruction and reconstruction, until the final piece receives the desired shape. So, technically, there were no obstacles to mending her. Furthermore, I could have used the fall as an opportunity for change, for improvement. Nonetheless, I oscillated between my faith that all that is broken could be (and should be) mended, and my wish to let go, to give up, to allow things to remain as they were: broken, unhinged, helpless.

My decision was made once I noticed that each of the fractures and cracks created in *The Messenger* reflected and clearly pointed at injuries I could feel in my body in particular, but also generally in my life.

I elected to rehabilitate her until she reached full recovery, also as a declaration that I shall not give up on myself.

Mending fractures is a type of gentle attentive art, requiring surrender and great patience. As she was gradually rebuilt under my hands, I was also fortunate to be blessed in a new movement en-route to change, to moderating my criticism, particularly when my pace was concerned. I could connect to my woundedness but also recalled my healthy, intact parts. I seemed to myself as an archaeologist who, while working with an object, was also gathering information about my prehistoric self. It was a professional and emotional challenge. My skills and resources were tested. There were some difficult moments, some resistance arising, triggering the pains of those injuries, and at times it felt like my resources were running thin, threated to disappear altogether.

My clear decision to revive *The Messenger* served as a compass, a symbol of my determination and resolve, and I can now see the fruits of this decision: *The Messenger* lives fully and completely, and I too shall remember my strength in the future.

*The Messenger*

By Ofra Silvilya

Technique: Polymer clay