Paul Zika is a singular artist in the complex ecosystem that is Tasmanian art. He is probably better known to Hobart's artists than he is to others, partly because he's taught a tremendous amount of people at the School of Creative Arts at Hobart's waterfront. But there's also a more complex and subtle reason. Zika's art is a mosaic of ideas and investigations that don't present themselves immediately. Zika is playing a much longer game with his artwork. The artist works in series. His latest exhibition, Above and Below, features two: Treme, and his most recent, Stellar.

His career has been lengthy and examining his output from the earliest days of his art practice in the 1970s, when he began working with screen prints, reveals the arc his work has moved through.

In the 1980s, his output gradually became more three-dimensional with his works taking on elements of sculpture. Since then, his art has evolved through decades of his own research and investigation of patterns and global traditions of decoration.

His pursuits have taken him to Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, Spain and Bolivia. Over nearly 50 years, Zika has closely observed some old traditions of architectural decoration, and asked: Why do we make these repetitious images that can be abstract and yet filled with complex, often religious symbolism?

From the ostentatious gilded decoration of the Baroque to the complex weaving traditions of South America, patterns-making is a common and very human practice. Zika's art has celebrated and been influenced by such traditions, but he has been on his own voyage, arriving at where he is with this show of simply constructed and presented work.

The construction of the patterns is less elaborate, with more empty space, it is as if Zika is framing space and allowing that blankness to breath. There is less variation in colour and everything feels more relaxed but no less thoughtfulness.

In contrast to his work is a spectacular collaboration with Jacob Leary, which is also on display in this show. Leary's art is tough and explosive. Working with Zika has brought Leary's work a sense of control and a grammar, but this collaboration also echoes the larger studio of Zika's output. It's a terrific work to see in contrast with everything else in this show. I thought at first that Zika's work had come full circle, but this is not the case. Rather, he is probing a new space.