

Cheselyn Amato
THE TREE OF LIFE: BEHOLD THE SABBATH BRIDE
Descriptive Statement

The Tree of Life: Behold The Sabbath Bride is a place, a circumstance, an occasion for the experience of presence and awe via an orchestration of elements as spectacle designed to edify through delight, poetics and intellect. This spectacle is engendered both in small-scale model format and as a large-scale interdisciplinary installation. The work incorporates sculptural elements - columns, paper balls, fabric, metal, plastic, kinetic/motorized components - as well as sound and light. A performance element is emergent at this time including costume, movement and live vocalization. The image exists somewhere between operatic stage design, interior architectural space and nomadic tent in the desert. *Behold* is designed to facilitate the presentment of presence. It is constructed as the instigator of delight, delight as performer/messenger/carrier/angel entering our domain/sphere/universe on behalf of awe, of sublimity. The work is a recipe for being and becoming, for ascending and descending, and hovering.

The installation is comprised of the following elements:

Labor of Love - a sixteen-foot mountain of paper balls, manna, food from heaven - rises up elevated about one foot off the ground on a brilliantly bright pink florescent tarp that is suspended from six points around the space. This macrocosmic pile is comprised of paper manna as prayer. Prayer is both method and content; means and end, at once. The building of the pile piece by piece is about discovering, inventing and reinventing the significance of both being alive and of dying - of the nature of mortality. The mountain is the reclamation/transformation/equalization of all stuff; a reduction of the myriad of words. A pile is a vestige, a witness, endurance, patience, attention, humility, grandeur, remembrance, monolithic gravity and grace. Finally, *Labor of Love* is a celebration of labor, labor as love as prayer as humility as empowerment as satiation as life. Labor is beginning and end, desire and satiation. Through repetition there is gradual accrual which leads to monolithic assertion. Labor is like breathing; breathing is pace; pace is continuity and a way of moving through the time and space of everyday life every day. Life is labor is love is divinity is desire is necessity is death is human.

The Spark Machine whirls. One within the other, transparent and reflective cylinders spin and spew colored light and letters in azo and chartreuse. *The Spark Machine* emits the construction blocks for the creation of humankind, the universe and consciousness - a whirring/whirling conjurer spewing the elements of life - vitality. *The Spark Machine* represents the source from which both knowledge and delight, intuitive and cognizant experience, originate.

Labor of Love and *The Spark Machine* are ensconced by swags, swoons, panels, tapestries, billows, clouds, twists and spirals of intensely eclectic and contrasting fabrics, metal, mesh and plastic materials as a flamboyant, voluptuous, gesturing chorus. In this swaggering and swooning, all nature and all artifice are embodied at once through ultimate juxtapositions of pattern, color and gesture (movement). The two aspects of intellect - intuitive and cultivated - meet and conflate into one. These flamboyant, voluptuous, geometric forms which honor the

Double Helix, DNA, sine waves, Fibonacci sequence, creeping vines, spiral staircases, barber shop poles, springs, screws, augers, slinkies, fusilli pasta, fractals and other spiraling phenomena amplify ineffability.

Pilgrimage, Exodus and Return, a layered vocal work, permeates the space. A rhythm/prayer of juxtaposed voices evokes the text(ures) of the aural expression of the sublime both in the everyday/quotidian/ordinary moments and in the heightened ones.

Light phenomena further animate the space and enhance the sensation of presence through movement, color and shape.

Costumes are based on the Ten Sefirot or Emanations which comprise the Kabbalistic (Jewish mystical) Tree of Life. The designs are based fundamentally on relationships between gesture and geometry, between form found in nature and constructed through human invention or artifice. Textiles are combined to spark a chorus of voices reflecting all possibility, ultimate differentiation and integration.

In its deepest substratum and intention, *The Tree of Life: Behold the Sabbath Bride* is both an embodiment of and witness to the divine. Jewish imagery and ideas, particularly from Kabbalah, are embedded in and woven into the work including gematria, Jewish mystical numerology, the Sefirotic Tree of Life (comprised of ten aspects) and the Tetragrammaton (four Hebrew letters that compose the name of G-d) as well as many other concepts and visions.