

Cheselyn Amato - Artist's Statement
March 2, 2004

I am interested in the presence of sanctity in the everyday, in life lived every day. I make work to encourage and generate thoughts, feelings and actions that honor the most expansive in us, our capacity for love, generosity, and humility. I love spectacle, and the experiences of awe and sublimity.

I am an individual, a Vietnam-era/civil rights movement American, a fruits-of-feminism woman, a Post-Holocaust Jew, a wife, a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend, artist, professor, citizen. What is a way of being to fulfil all these callings? To find specific identity, to cultivate full consciousness, to fulfil obligations, and to enjoy the delights and endure toils and tribulations is the substance of being and becoming, the beginning and end of desire.

I am committed as a person in the world and in my vision as artist to the notion of authenticity of being in which love governs. This authenticity means constructive balance between striving and accepting, between desire and satisfaction, and between labor and rest.

My work is both process and product. I must work, labor my way toward the values I hold each and every time. The work is a means to understanding and to fulfilling the opportunity we receive as human beings. The processes of making emerge out of the need and desire to find pace, like breathing, like the surf. The combination of effort, labor, repetition, idea, image and passion seem to lead to the experiences of liberation, freedom, beauty, love, compassion, recognition, revelation and action.

Big questions and every tiny sensation are of equal interest to me. I love pondering what we, human beings, are, and I love experiencing infinitesimally subtle shifts. I am committed to beauty that is revealing, that both transports and grounds at the same time.

I am interested in the exacerbation of the sense of living forces. Having an interdisciplinary sensibility, I use materials, methods and forms – currently installation, collage and inkjet printed montage – as tools to explore and amplify the qualities of immediacy and authenticity. Any material, gesture, action or appearance can become imbued with grace. The kind of beauty that interests me is that which honors experience itself with emphasis on sensation, vitality, inheritance, invention, re-invention and awe.