

**Cheselyn Amato - General Statement**  
**January 31, 2010**

I am interested in the sacred, in sanctity, in the presence of divinity in the everyday, in life lived every day. I make work as a tool to encourage and generate thoughts, feelings and actions that honor the most expansive in human being, our capacity for love, generosity, and humility.

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, and citizen. What is a way of being to fulfil all these callings? To find specific cultural identity, to cultivate full consciousness, to fulfil obligations and to enjoy the delights of house holding and community service is a tall order and a natural drive. Both the want and the need, the necessity and desire, to answer to all these qualities remain equally commanding and demanding.

The goal is to achieve an authenticity of being, one in which love governs. This authenticity means constructive balance between striving and accepting, between desire and satisfaction, between labor and leisure, between opportunity, maintenance, compromise and sacrifice.

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 my own understanding and fulfillment of my opportunity as a human being. When I arrive at the height that I may, then the work has also arrived. The processes are derived to allow me as one individual to find pace, like breathing, like the surf. I have found that through labor and repetition I arrive at love which becomes the basis of all activity.

I make paper balls as prayer. Prayer is both method and content, means and end, at once. I use paper ball making as a way to pray; it is also the prayer itself; it is acceptance and rejuvenation. The work has always been about discovering, inventing and reinventing the significance of both being alive and of dying -- of the nature of mortality. Life is labor is love is sublimity is awe is delight is divinity is desire is necessity is death is human.

I am essentially interested in creating circumstances or occasions for the acknowledgment, celebration and fullest exercising of human being - an opportunity to stand in awe with dignity and grace. As much as I build these circumstances, I also use them, both the process and the place. More recently, I recognize myself, fundamentally, as a temple builder. Out of the need to reconstruct myself in this universe comes the desire to stand in a temple in which I feel truly comfortable while honoring all that I inherit.

