

AH HA VAH YAH: Boruch Hoo Boruch Hee
Cheselyn Amato, Witness, Servant and Ritual Enactor
Afikomen Judaica, Berkeley, CA - June 6, 2010, 3 pm



Cheselyn Amato will be enacting reinvented Jewish ritual and creating an interdisciplinary aesthetic experience in conjunction with her visual installation, *Liberation Garden: Healing & Redemption After Slavery*, on view in the windows of Afikomen Judaica. Through designed and improvised actions, events, occurrences, sounds, sung and spoken words/text, visual effects, and ritual wear, Cheselyn will incant/invoke/call/beckon/invite Indwelling Presence - Shekinah – to descend amongst us. She will use personal and borrowed text – prayer, lyrics, word strings, and tones - primarily in English and Hebrew - along with “unaffiliated” sound that she believes issues from a primal, primordial, and a-priori source. She is sure that all experience is the result of an active dynamic between memory/remembrance and immediate unmediated sensation.

Cheselyn uses visual and aural effects as cues, props and instigators to summon and to embody Shekinah, the presence of awe, sublimity and delight in our midst. She is delighted by all the presentments, embodiments and signs of wonder apparent anytime anywhere. She believes that any material, any sound, any image, any sensory experience is imbued, resonant and resplendent with numinous energy – all phenomena is an outpouring, a pouring forth, an efflux of this wondrous and mysterious life! She will manipulate materials, make utterance, effect actions and change her garb in the enactment of new manifestations of ancient Jewish rituals. Ritual actions like fire, wave and peace offerings that are no longer practiced per se in our times become new gestures in her repertory in which printed matter becomes manna (food from heaven), colored effects from the manipulation of radiant film become the ceremony in the Holy of Holies, and more.

So, in the beginning there was creating.
All began as null and void,
Darkness and light were yet to be separated...
After all was done, and the first rest happened on the first 7th day,
Then all the designing for how to live every day – ordinary and sacred - began.