

Cheselyn Amato – Artist’s Vision Statement
May 24, 2020

This vision statement is offered as an introduction to my 40+ year visual practice that has been my primary tool for exploring and presenting the inquiry that has driven my existence from the moment of coming into this world. My mother told me that I spoke an incredibly detailed and extensive personal language of sounds that was not comprehensive to anyone else until, at three years old, I suddenly started speaking in full comprehensive sentences. My work is first and foremost a form for my investigation that arises out of my experience, and I acknowledge that the shape of my experience is shaped by the world that I have been borne into and, I feel sure, that my experience is also shaped by a factor that is always unique to each and every one of us that is with us always as we go along and without a name. It is our mirror without a past or a future and yet it was and will always be. I am myself and the mirror of I am. I would say that I have been engaged in creating an understanding of everything that was, is and always will be, a theory of everything that serves as tool for me to create myself as someone I love and respect. That mission is one and the same with creating myself as someone who can love and respect you and them and us. And everything not human too, and equally.

Everything I make is designed as a trigger or context for the experience of enchantment, wonderment, awe, and delight in the face of ever-present uncertainty. And, to contend with the fearsome, heinous, and harrowing, and the worst of the worst. I work across dimensions with whatever media – including drawing, painting, collage, montage, photographic and digital media, sculpture, installation, sound, performance, video and other visual effects – that most strongly hold and carry my intentions as I go along.

My work reflects my lifelong spiritual, aesthetic and humanitarian journey in celebration of the power of positive thinking and feeling to create the change we seek as individuals and as global citizens. At the moment, humanity is experiencing a very specific uncertainty, COVID 19, that has invited everyone at the same time into direct connection with one another. Our planet has been calling out to us for some time now and it seems that we have now been, in effect, mandated, to take pause, listen, and hear how we can and must partner with each other, our planet and the whole cosmos to discern the balance we need and recalibrate to actualize that balance. I taught art students for decades and have recently added spiritual care and bereavement counseling to my toolkit accompanying people at end-of-life, supporting their loved ones through the journey of loss and grief, and serving as light worker for the personal and global triumph of justice, love, beauty and abundance.

Currently, I am deeply appreciating the ideas and images of quantum physics – including quantum entanglement, superposition, tunneling and energy medicine – as applied to human evolution and healing, and justice and social transformation. And, I am adding this quantum vision to the poetics of what has been my evolving and expanding theory of everything. As awareness that a pandemic was emerging and as it has been unfolding, I have been creating light and color works that I call effluxes, meaning pouring forth/outpouring. The light works made since mid-March 2020 are gathered under the working title, *Healing Lessons from the Quantum Realm for the Ordinary World as We Know It*.

These works are made as embodiments of the brilliant, radiant light of greatest good, truth and beauty; of courage, resilience and persistence; of love, compassion, humility and healing. These qualities have fueled my 40+ year visual practice from the outset. There are times when I have been struggling to see the forest through the trees and when I also see others and/or conditions in the world struggling and suffering too. At those times, I seek to overcome those conditions with love, light and whatever effort necessary to overwhelm those forces that draw us into an inconsolable and irreconcilable broken-heartedness. When there is rupture/disruption/eruption, then open broken-heartedness is a path that can re-awaken the

memory and image of goodness and justice; it becomes a portal to taking action and striving for positive transformation. Via the humility of making space for transformation and by inviting exquisite radiant light to flood us, we can assist in the triumph of beauty and goodness. Healing light is always ignited, always with us, always available; we have to discern it and say yes.

Chutzah – mindful audacity – courage and confidence expressed with oomph and humility wrapped up in one – is another major theme or substrata that has been continuously fueling me in the production of my work and has been one of the invitations embedded in the work. I am a wild one and also tamed. I am moved by wisdom traditions around the world over time and affirm and adhere to aspects of my inherited tradition Judaism, particularly in its Kabbalistic mystical dimension. I understand myself as practicing what I call a pan-spiritual or inter-spiritual humanism with an eye to that within which we are yet encompassed and ensconced at my core with a range of identity factors in the next ring out, also ever so close to my heart. I “do” being and being in the world in an intensely poetical way in concert with action for justice and social transformation, both of image and word. My very first solo exhibition in 1980, *Word into Image*, part of graduation requirement for college, is still true of my practice today; and now I understand that through images I have also arrived at words. I live in concert with the marvelous Zoharic notion, As Above, So Below, by which we are called to participate in positive creative intention and action. Synchronously resonant with shared spiritual principles of human being and being being, I am also simply independent and receptive in an utterly present way, engaging in the acts of paying attention and noticing, in a modality whose first priority is not allegiance to what has already been defined, categorized and named, but, in the effort to allow something from nothing, for possibilities not yet noticed, not yet imagined, allowing for unexpected apperception, perception, conception, inception. This is about the freedom to choose freedom of experience while caring about and contributing to the Wellbeing of this Great Mystery that is both apparent and not apparent to us at any given instant.

I have noticed that somehow I curbed my chutzpah, at its best. I get it – it has to do with reacting by withdrawing to vicissitude and shock in my life by withdrawing and becoming quiet. In that becoming quiet, I ended up on a journey over the course of this last decade to discerning that these two questions are core to how I am with myself and the everyone and everything else, what is important and what is important to me. And most recently, I am engaging with the question, how do I want to feel, and how answering that seems to have the power to lead me to most consistent means to balance what is important and what is important to me each and every day.

For many years, in my biography and artist vision statements, I described myself as an individual, a Vietnam-era/civil rights movement American, a fruits-of-feminism woman, a Post-Holocaust Jewess, a mother, daughter, sister, friend, artist, poet, teacher, celebrant, spiritual care provider and global citizen and light worker. What is a way of being to fulfill all these callings? To find specific identity, to cultivate full consciousness, to fulfill obligations and to enjoy the delights and endure the toils of the everyday every day is the substance of being and becoming, the beginning and end of desire. I am committed in this life 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.

I am forwarding this statement of introduction along with a brief biography, comprehensive CV, and several thematic PowerPoint shows saved as PDFs for email attachment including one of current work and one that reveals the full breadth of what “chutzpah” means to me as I have exercised it, combining my wild and my tame to honor and fulfil the calling that is mine to meet.

May we re-shape ourselves so that we may persist and thrive in humility and harmony with all that is!