

Artist Statement

Medium. Materials. Process. Participation. I work across a variety of media, finding a multi-disciplinary practice to be the most fitting approach for the execution of my ideas. While I will find an affinity for particular materials (such as feathers or satin fabric) and use them from one work to the next, the idea often subordinates the medium. Therefore, I choose the medium and materials which are most apropos to the concept, often combining different media within an installation format (usually 3-dimensional objects and video), providing a multi-layered realization of the idea.

Many factors contribute to my work. For many years, a hallmark of my work has been engagement with my local environment. Dating back to collecting natural materials from the landscape while living in Colorado many years ago, to collecting found objects from the urban environment of New York City, this engagement eventually transformed into active community participation as evidenced in my ongoing series of projects entitled, *St. Agnieszka, Patroness of the Waterfront*. Interviews with local artist/activists led to a sound/radio piece where I guide listeners on a riverside journey through North Brooklyn. Here, a strange apparition (my fictitious creation, *St. Agnieszka*, the patron saint of the North Brooklyn Waterfront) makes appearances at various toxic hot spots. These sightings call attention to local environmental concerns and highlight resident activists working on these issues, while over time the story of the mysterious specter is revealed. Since then, this work spawned a series of site specific sculptures marking the aforementioned toxic sites where *Agnieszka* has appeared. Other long-term creative interests of mine come to fruition in this body of work, namely hagiography (the study of saints' lives) and antiquity. "*Agnieszka*" – Polish for "Agnes" – in deference to the local Polish immigrant population, is inspired by the stories of innumerable virgin-martyrs throughout Church history, and named for a Roman saint. Here my choice of visceral materials, such as decaying antique lace and dripping wax, along with *Agnieszka's* role as a martyr who dies a violent death, signify my desire to convey a sense of the body, another enduring feature of my work.

Process is tantamount to my work, but happenstance plays a role as well. Even though I may know from the beginning that I will construct a particular object, much exploration and investigation occurs along the path to final construction. Due to the resistant materials I often use, much trial and error takes place. For instance, oyster shells are not as supple and yielding as fabric for constructing a dress. Happenstance comes into play not only in the exploration of materials, but in obtaining materials as well. I have long used found objects for the inherent history they bring to my work. Additionally, I am drawn to found objects for ecological reasons, as a means to give new life to articles cast-off by our disposable society. The challenge lies in altering an object's original context, so that a transformation takes place within the art-making process.

I feel that my role as an artist is to call the viewer's attention to overlooked details, be they in the viewer's everyday surroundings or in the constructed world of a work of art. I aim to act as some sort of alchemist: to use what may be dubbed "non-traditional" – yet often mundane – materials in order to create an uncanny object that in the end is greater than the sum of its parts.