

## Cheselyn Amato

California-based multimedia artist Cheselyn Amato orchestrates an array of visual props, colored light phenomena, video projections, and choreographies of movement to foster spiritually-imbued circumstances, creating environments for experiencing sublimity, awe, wonder, and delight. She spent nearly 20 years teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago before moving to Northern California, where, in addition to her art-making practice, she currently serves as a hospice chaplain and visual art doula.

During her FSA residency, Amato has created new iterations of her “efflux” light sculptures, installed in her studio. Referring to “a divine outpouring from each reverberating soul,” these “effluxes” are made from radiant film, a mirror-like flexible material with iridescent hues activated by light. Sculpting the diaphanous material into forms resembling gestured movement, Amato applies the Fibonacci number sequence (where each number is the sum of the two preceding numbers) to determine the shapes of the radiant film. The phosphorescent color combination of each sculpture’s visible frequencies is contingent upon light direction. The surface that receives the light directly produces free-form phenomena and certain colors. The light that goes through produces in-focus, hard-edged shapes, all dancing as cinematic projections on the gallery walls.

Amato incorporates aspects of mysticism, sacred texts, and Judaic spirituality that reciprocally flow into her work as an artist and chaplain. Drawing upon mystical Kabbalah texts, such as the Tree of Life (a diagram mapping the flow of creativity to manifestation), Amato envisions her work articulating a collective journey towards spiritual wholeness. Internalizing these overlapping realms – divine and human, spiritual and material – Amato directs us to in-between spaces, where thresholds and boundaries undergo radical transformation. Accompanying hospice patients in critical and transitional states, Amato perceives the liminal space where spirituality in art subsists.

Amato explains: “The spiritual in art is that dimension of the experience of the work that invites awareness of intangible, immaterial, ineffable Presence that we do not see per se but whose Being with us – Shekinah, Indwelling Presence – is revealed through all kinds of form and action. Spiritually-imbued works of art are acts of creation, reverent invoking acts to reflect, mirror, resonate, make present and felt, the radiance and resplendence of that from which all issues, by which all unfolds, in and through which all was, is and will be.”