

Kathy Levine - Artist Statement

The artificial environment dominates the natural one in New York City. However, human and other forms of life are flourishing in what seems like a hostile concrete, metal and asphalt setting filled with acrid air and contaminated soil. My primary interest is to explore this uneasy, complex relationship between nature and the urban/industrial environment.

Even though the natural environment is disappearing, getting pushed into smaller and smaller spaces, it is still there underneath what we construct, waiting for a time when it can once again be viable. In the "Cell" pieces, there is a natural form in relief that can be seen below the surface of a photo-transferred image of the urban environment. The rectangular shape of the pieces is that of the living cell as well as the city block.

The human figure combined with other natural elements in my work convey the idea that we all share similar qualities. Even a small, insignificant leaf, tree or plant, like a person, is important in that it has the ability to grow, reach out and affect an area greater than itself.

Natural and urban environments have been integrated in many of my pieces in an attempt to create a new synthesis and understanding of the spaces I inhabit. I want my work to raise questions about our relationship and connection to the natural world as well as what we can do to restore it to a more balanced and important place in our lives.

Process and Materials:

My pieces are made from recycled paper, paint, photo-transfers (using a water-based medium), pastels, graphite, wood, branches and other materials. The paper becomes three-dimensional after it is cast over a natural or artificially constructed mold. Using recycled paper conveys the regenerative, cyclical quality of life in addition to saving trees.

I have also worked with color as well as black and white prints, combining them with non-traditional photographic techniques such as photo-grams, montage and two or more layers of photographs. Some of these pieces are in three-dimensional relief.