

ARTIST STATEMENT

My works are narrative in nature, telling stories and creating connections through symbols and sometimes jarring combinations of images. The work combines plant forms and other forms from nature, architectural references, objects both real and imaginary, objects traditionally associated with women through history, and most currently, the hand, to weave a narrative that is oblique, often personal, and sometimes political or issue-oriented.

My most current work, the works in the "Tikkun Olam" (Hebrew for 'heal the world') series, investigates the image and symbolism of the hand in its many gestures and roles, most especially as it is used in cultures to express healing; healing is reflected as both personal and worldly. While the hand has been a symbol throughout my work for many years, more recently, I have been using these works to create prayers for world healing. The hand, as image in my work, has appeared symbolically in the past several years, as a reference to the artist/creator, giver, taker, trickster, healer, and as a gateway to the soul of the female artist. The hand at times gestures towards other symbols, or becomes an entity itself with its own meaning and implications.

Many cultures have used the female hand as a source for protection, prayer, unity, or have used the reference to the hand to symbolize human existence. I have been looking at multicultural references and uses for the symbol of the hand, and have included these in my work, such as the 'hamsa,' a hand-shaped amulet worn to ward off the 'Evil Eye.' The hand has been used in my work to explore my own Jewish heritage, looking at myth and superstition, or merely as a symbol of luck, protection and karma. My newest work also includes much calligraphy, language and poetry written on the hand, inspired by the henna used in India to decorate the bride's hand before a wedding. Some of the works actually use poetry from a collaboration I have undertaken with a contemporary feminist poet, Lois Roma-Deeley, inspired by our time meeting at the Ragdale Foundation.

My works are created in mixed media on paper, using saturated color and intricately detailed natural forms of plants, birds, decorative patterns, and symbols, all swirled in an abstracted space, only to enter back into the space of the viewer. My work has often been marginalized as "women's" paintings, because I work with watercolor, and use color, pattern, and beauty as integral to the paintings. As the symbols used are also feminine in nature, at times the works are trivialized as 'traditional women's work.' In "Tikkun Olam," I wish to look at conflict through a feminist lens, in the feminist tradition of collaboration, weaving together meanings with a feminine eye. In my public artwork, I work as a community mural artist, doing participatory murals, so that this holistic way of understanding and blending images for their impact is natural for me.

