

Hannah Subotnick — Artist Statement

My work crosses many disciplines, but, at its core is a love of the transformative potential of the lens and its ability to abstract, reveal, and transport. Direct physical expression is also essential to my making process. I make artwork with my entire body. For me, observation itself is physical and the lens allows me to communicate that.

With the lens, I search for connection with an individual viewer—a direct kinesthetic relationship. I aim to give my viewer an experience of poetry and mystery and convey the multifaceted nature of experience. To me that means that the surreal is equally as true as quantifiable perceptions.

I explore dynamic tensions. I blur the boundary between inanimate and animate. I explore the dance between sexual expression and celibacy. I reveal bodies described by their absence, and the ambiguous boundary between life and death.

Questions of compound states of being have shaped many artistic traditions from which I draw. Poetry, folksongs, and folktales are full of transformations—metaphors, metonyms, and prismatic identities. In poetic experience, simultaneous and multifaceted identities coexist without question. One can be both a woman and a tree, a beast and a human—so too in dance. I studied ballet, modern dance, and folk dance for many years inhabiting swans, mice, dolls, ghostly-women, and the ephemerality of music. I have woven this experience into my work. In these ways poetry, folktales, and dance have long ignited my artistic energy.

I make artwork with my entire body—whether I am dancing or stitching, moving quickly through space or holding still—I imbue all of my work with physical energy. I communicate this physicality to an individual viewer with my lens.