

Anne Seelbach Art Statement

The tidal waters and shoreline of eastern Long Island, NY have inspired my paintings of the last few years. The question "What is happening?" interests me far more than what a scene looks like. What are the unseen physical laws of nature that create each visual element at a particular moment? Changing tides and the rich colors of each season are effects of the earth's gradual rotation around the sun. Water, plants, birds and sea life all follow the dictates of this planetary shift.

My current work, paintings, cut and pasted works-on-paper and assemblages, began when I saw a very unnatural-looking fish in the nearby Upper Sag Harbor. It brought to mind national news stories about mutations in nature caused by toxins in the environment. Pollution is currently being documented in many of Long Island's water systems: streams, lakes, bays and ocean. My artworks imagine the stress to marine life as chemical and industrial elements seep into the water. Conflict grows between the laws of nature and our artificial attempts to control, or ignore, the environment.

Angular forms, gaskets and other mechanical shapes are incorporated into the paintings, representing man-made substances contaminating the water: toxic chemicals, herbicides, pesticides, rain-water runoff, waste water, factory discharges and other pollutants. Debris crowds the waters. Fish mutate into imaginary forms. Each artwork is expressive of this new underwater reality.

The work hangs on the wall without a frame. Without a constricting edge to confine them, the shapes and spaces expand physically and conceptually, creating an immediate experience for the viewer. I use industrial and geometric shapes, atmospheric color fields and in recent pieces additional textures such as plastic grid, plastic meshes, plastic woven "cloth", wood and objects found along the tideline. The work is exposed and vulnerable as is the environment it portrays.