

Artist Statement

My artwork encompasses a broad, interdisciplinary range from environmental sculpture and performance to video art. I often work in the natural environment making site-specific works with wood and other local materials in wild, public and rural locations. My work within the landscape comes from a desire to connect with the raw forces of nature and its cycles of generation, decay and renewal. I seek to 're-member' through my art a primal link between human life, culture and nature, being aware of all aspects of an environment from sensory and elemental to historical. It is evident that my body and hands are present in the creation and articulation of forms and spaces. At the same time, my constructions reflect the natural or rural surroundings as if intrinsically a part of or having emerged spontaneously from these places. Indigenous wood has been a primary medium as it signifies the spirit of a place for me. 'Interiorizing' my body in and around the sculptural spaces in live and video-performances often follows the constructive phase of the work. My ritualistic performance is characterized by an extremely slow and deliberate pace in an embodiment of the imperceptible movement of seasonal time and change in nature.

I have made these works in environments from Lake Superior shores to isolated mires in northern Europe. In making ephemeral sculptures and performance works in nature, photography, digital imaging and video is an essential part of the process. The documentation serves an archival purpose but also becomes another incarnation of the work itself. Working in raw and minimal natural places with wood, clay and peat, then returning to my computer to process media, gives me a comprehensive sense of the tactile and physical spectrum of art-making to its immaterial realities in the digital realm where the body and nature do not exist. I am interested in the abstraction of the body - its relationships and contrasts formally and symbolically to the environment. Recurring symbols include winding pathways, enclosures, portals, ladders, the 'world tree' and the spiritual and physical architecture of the human form and nature.

Cherie Sampson