



JESSICA SCHLEIF

I don't know what it was about growing up on a dairy goat farm, but I've always felt the need to collect and create things. Years of printmaking, 3D work and thrift shopping have culminated in my mixed media painting process.

I usually work on wood that I have found, either at the river or the beach. I enjoy the challenge of the random shapes in the pieces that I find, and the imperfect surfaces, which create interesting textual nuances to work with. I employ a layering process of different water based paints (gauche, acrylic and watercolor) often over a single 'floating' image, disjointed from its surroundings.

This work was inspired by going abroad, as I noticed how differently animals were treated in other cultures. In India dogs and cats, our pampered domestic companions, are treated as vermin. The cow, our drugged up dairy and hamburger crop, is a sacred wild animal. Many Indian gods take animal form.

In England I learned about B.S.E. and the feeding practices of the meat industry; which created the indestructible prions that were killing cows and being passed through the food chain. Just when this began to seem like the plot of some crazy Sci Fi novel that couldn't get any weirder, I came back to America and realized that here the subject was taboo.

I began to hear more and more about genetically modified foods and the more I looked at it the less I liked it.

It is horrifying and fascinating to me that these practices can occur.

The purpose of my work is to explore the relationship between science and nature, and its effect on the animal kingdom.

Jessica Schleif lives in Astoria and is a supporting artist of Astoria Visual Arts, which displays its work at the Common Grounds Gallery.



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