

SUSANNE KESSLER

Gritty and elegant, cerebral and intuitive, the art of Susanne Kessler is about dualities. Visually, Kessler's works incorporate non-traditional materials that are both hard and soft, such as metal and fabric or paper and wire. Formally, each drawing, each sculpture evokes inner and outer universes. Her incarnations of the workings of the human brain, for example, suggest the neurons and axons of the cerebral cortex while, at the same time, invoking a sense of cosmic consciousness and universality—microcosm and macrocosm at once. With regard to form, the artist fuses organic and geometric structures. Hemp rope and other fibers, densely interlaced like so many briar patches, are poised on polished metal table tops, like a Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie home ensconced in a wooded environment. Frenetic gestural drawings on paper reify Kessler's sculptures and installations, proffering void and substance as integral to one another.

In this Post- postmodern era, with its return to the object, the non-objective nature of Kessler's work is its most compelling quality. By eschewing observable narrative, Kessler's art allows for infinite viewer reactions and interpretations. In 1912, Gleizes and Metzinger wrote in the manifesto *Du Cubisme*: "There is nothing real outside ourselves." Kessler's works embody this momentous concept—that perception is the only reality; and that what is real exists within our thinking and feeling spaces rather than outside of us. Her art draws viewers in and invites them to sense meaning rather than read it. When Kessler exhibited an installation on the subject of the brain at the City University of New York, students responded with multiple interpretations. One saw the ebb and flow of thoughts; another imagined the web of life; and still another was impressed by the haunting beauty of Kessler's altered space.

By centering her attention on the relationships between inner and outer, self and other; and by dedicating much of her recent *oeuvre* to the workings of the brain, Kessler acknowledges the centrality of mental perception to the quality of human existence. Simultaneously, she fosters and elicits cognitive responses from viewers by drawing them into the labyrinths of her drawings, sculptures, spaces, and very fine, creative mind. Beautiful, evocative, and both personally and universally significant, Kessler's art is an example of creative expression at its best.

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