

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Lynn Pattison, "Dark Reactive"

The human eye has evolved to detect more variations of green than of any other color. This is no surprise. Green means breath, life. Humans instinctively knew that green was "good" long before we came to understand the function of chloroplast and eukaryotic cell, rubisco and the photosynthesis cycle. The details are complicated. But the big picture is simple. "The light of the sun becomes the stuff of the earth" (Oliver Morten). Plants and trees do that work.

In making this representation of roots, I wanted to capture the power and magic of their role in the process of photosynthesis. Roots absorb moisture and minerals from soil, they store starches and sugars as well as anchor the tree. Roots change the ground around them, and thus the topography and the lives of creatures in the area. I am most taken, though, with how trees can nurse each other by exchanges through roots, and communicate, sending messages through fungal networks around their tips. Their networks can extend over miles. With the help of fungi they are able to filter out heavy metals and ward off dangerous bacteria. Roots produce a crackling sound that other roots register and orient toward. Roots insure that trees are as much of a community as herd, pride, or pack. A tree standing by itself has been compared to a lone deaf-mute, isolated and at risk.