

**SHEILA ELIAS**

CONTEMPORARY ARTIST

Originally as an undergraduate from the Art Institute of Chicago, Sheila moved to LA, where she received her Masters of Fine Art (MFA) as a painter, photographer, and sculptor from Cal State North Ridge. Known for her installation art, and collages made by combining paint and photographs the evolution of technology has always paralleled her work throughout its development. From the original copy machine to today's iPad, and the influence of electronics permeates her process. Sheila's work has been shown widely in museums and galleries throughout the United States and abroad over the past three decades, including the New York Public Library, Bass Museum in Miami Beach, and the Musee des Arts Decoratifs at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

Sheila's art has been featured in exhibitions and galleries coast to coast as well and accorded international acclaim as well. Her paintings hang in such disparate places as Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, FL; Frost Art Museum, Miami, FL; The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach, FL; Kunsan Contemporary Museum, Korea; Nova Scotia Museum, Nova Scotia, Canada., as well as many private collector's homes. In addition, because of her love of art, she has always been involved with LACMA in LA., The Whitney and the MOMA in New York, The Bass, The Frost, The Lowe, ICA Miami, PAMM, and The New World Symphony in Miami.

Graduating from the city's renowned Art Institute of Chicago she has since managed to establish herself as one of the most important and original artists of the decade. She was surrounded by the strong architecture of Mies Van de Rohe and as a very small child was struck by Matisse's colorful artwork. Throughout her life Sheila has been presented with awards such as: Metro Art International Medal, New York, NY, Jurors: Ivan Karp, Lisa Dennison; Woman of the Year, 1986, presented by Tarzana Chamber of Commerce, Tarzana, CA;

Bronze Award, Art of California Magazine Discovery Awards and Women of Vision Award, Weitzman Institute.

Though Sheila has experimented with painting, photography, sculpture, and mixed media, she has seen a transformation in her art through the digital age. Bringing an awareness of new directions and individual inventiveness through life experience, she incorporates visual, emotional, and psychological impressions and feeds them into her art. With a career spanning over forty years, all corners of the country, a continually evolving and knowingly eclectic style, and an international exhibition record, Sheila has remained consistently true to her calling, vision, and spirit.

Sheila's work is about the layers of life and art history, seeking in it a connection between art aesthetics and social consciousness portraying a perception of urban tension, raw emotions and harsh realities tempered with gentle optimism and beauty, countering an American dream that has gone a bit astray. Bringing an awareness of new directions and individual inventiveness through life experience, she incorporates visual, emotional, and psychological impressions and feed them into her art. Sheila's art, whether it is photography, sculpture, or paintings, has always been a visual interpretation of her internal landscape, which is significantly influenced by external landscapes.

## Art Systems West

Created in 1982 Art Systems West, was an installation that Sheila built on the outside of the gallery where there was a lecture and installation series. Both of these works featured pieces of the LA. free way and she was featured on Good Day LA., Channel 11 KITV Television, Los Angeles, CA June 14 and June 18, interviewed along with Bob Braun.



Coming up, 1982  
Installation



Art Systems West, 1982  
Installation

## Rescue Mission, Los Angeles, 1981

The work titled "Homage to the Street People" was a huge (6 square feet) of shopping bags splashed with black X's and glitter dust. It was strung across an 84 foot chasm between two San Pedro Street buildings. Having her studio across the street, she could not help but getting involved. In her homage, she used X's as her symbol for the Pompidou Museum in Paris, bringing the museum to street people. She did not include color into the work because there is no color on the streets and can be too threatening. The glitter was to add a bit of excitement. The shopping bags are of course what street people carry all of their worldly goods with them so she handed bags out to them.





## Totems

A totem is described as a person or thing regarded as being symbolic or representative of a particular quality or concept. When Sheila was living in LA. She was doing installations reflecting her studio's neighborhood since the 1980's and received recognition for the unique vision in blending social consciousness with the aesthetic of art. At this time, the series of sculptures that she created were called totems and they were created with images specific to the cityscape of LA. They were built and painted in the wild and

vivid colors of the graffiti that were on the walls in the neighborhood; fire engine images were superimposed on them because they were always heard throughout the day as part of the background noise that was a part of everyday life. Created in all different heights and sizes, they recreated the city's landscape of buildings and structures. They represented LA with all of the city's colors, noises, bustling life and busy streets. One of the largest totems that was built was almost 7 ft., the shortest being about 4ft.

## Pompidou Series

The paintings from this period, sometimes reaching dimensions upwards of 10 by 16 feet, centered around a very simple image: the X. This elemental form had impressed itself upon Sheila when she visited the newly built Centre Georges Pompidou in the center of Paris. The modern museum's exposed, aggressively, industrial design displays on its exterior the intersecting patterns of its diagonal support beams, contrasting in scale and rhythm with the old world grace of the surrounding Marais, one of Paris' oldest neighborhoods. The vitality of that contrast came to symbolize both the problems and promises of urban life as a continuously evolving phenomenon- especially as the Pompidou structure, designed by Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano, contains, and reflects, not modern industry but modern art.



Pompidou Trois, 1981  
Mixed media on canvas, 120 x 192 inches



Pompidou Blue, 1981  
Mixed media on canvas, 120 x 96 inches



"Two French Girls" 1984  
Acrylic, oil and collage on canvas, 66 x 99"

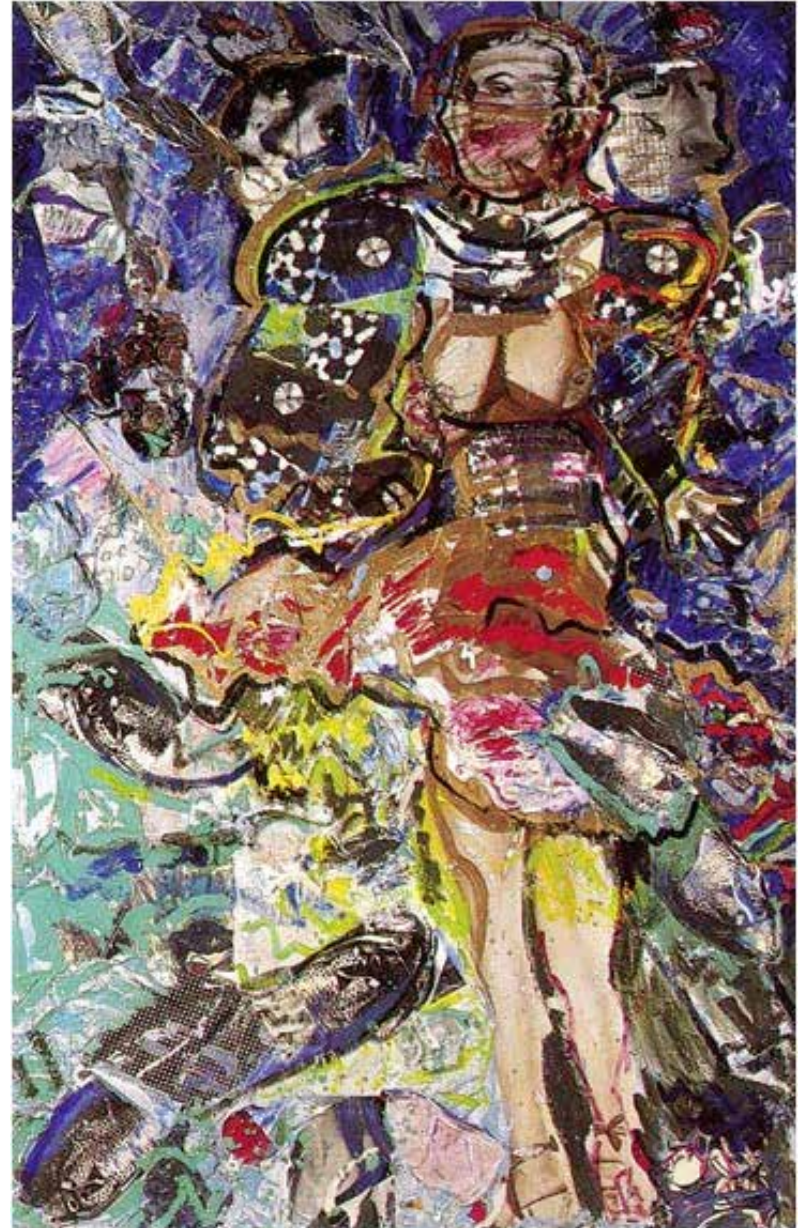
## Two French Girls

Sheila was picked by the The Franco-American Committee, a group of French and United States citizens, organized the show to commemorate the Statue of Liberty's 100th anniversary as one of the two contemporary American painters whose work was chosen to be included in this

exhibit of art and memorabilia depicting Lady Liberty at The Louvre. Alex Rosenberg, who represented Sheila at the time called her and said, 'You've got a painting going to The Louvre,'" So she hung up, and called him back, and said, "What did you say?" Sheila wanted to hear it again!

## American Icons

By combining industrial materials, such as scraps of aluminum and plastic, with thick draped cloth and a wide range of found objects –toys, fake fish and flowers – Sheila created “painting-relief,” works that fall somewhere between painting and sculpture. The three-dimensional elements are wed to a loose expressionist brush stroke applied in oil and acrylic. In some works, she used spray paint in the manner of graffiti artists. Her art reflects the fast pace and noise of downtown Los Angeles, where she had a studio, as well as the influence of the variety ethnic groups nearby. In this series, the collages incorporate images such as the Statue of Liberty, Shirley Temple and Howdy Doody. The theme of the work is established through the inclusion of Chinese tickets stubs, newspapers bits and images of the Statue of Liberty, which represent the hope of freedoms for generations of immigrants. Pasted across the surface are cut-outs of cartoons, printed fish, and numerous other synthetic materials of modern daily life.



March Morn I, 1986  
Mixed media on canvas, 96 x 60"





B Vase, 1989  
Mixed media on foam, 19 x 24 x 9 inches



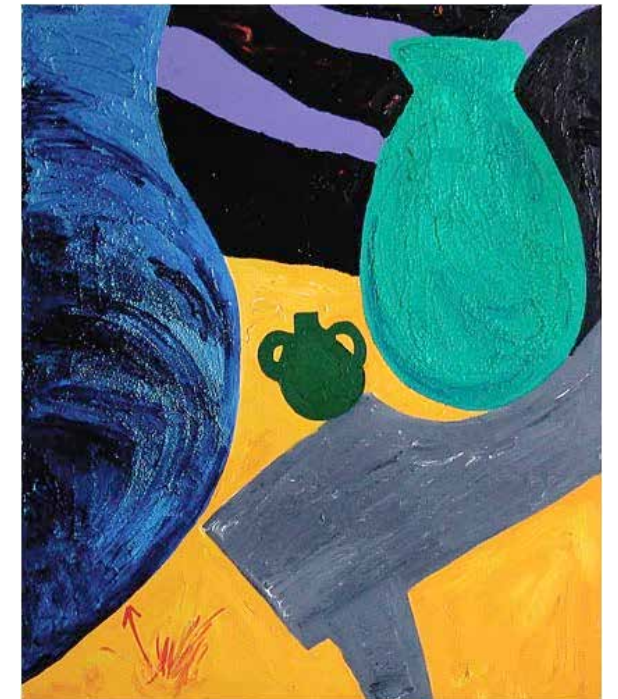
Ethereal Man, 1989  
Mixed media on foam, 64 x 24 x 10"

## Reliefs

Dealing with iconic figures and generally representational references into my creations set Sheila off on a quest for mythological resonance. She moved on from the gods and goddesses of the contemporary world and moved onto the gods and goddesses of ancient civilization, who prefigured our own. As embodiments of human nature and as the focus of art making, these early historic deities lent themselves particularly well to her immediate fantasy.



Three Visions, 1993  
Mixed media on canvas, 48 x 70"



Three Calabash, 1992  
Mixed media on canvas, 72 x 60"

## Myths and Offerings

The paintings in this series are based on a previous idea concerning archaeological vessels. They are based on both mythical and real art historical concepts. The vessels have become almost amorphic in being and are misshapen on the canvas. The picture plane is flattened and proportions are unusual. Large forms are balances on small ones and some solid objects appear to be totally transparent. Colors are selected with both intuitive and calculated choices. Some are chosen to recede and others to pop out in eye-catching brilliance. Occasionally the vessels have been turned upside down and in some cases resemble umbrellas. Other paintings look almost as if they are heads from some primitive culture. There are a mysterious group of symbols in many of the works. One might wonder why the arrows etc. are pointed one way or another. What is their meaning? The sense of mystery of where the mind is attempting to decipher this unusual cryptic code and finds it both intriguing and a barrier to entering the artist's mind is fascinating.

## Secret Gardens

In December of 2019 Sheila had a show called "Secret Gardens Revisited" reminiscing the brash bursts of flowers and busily textured passages of collage crowding her paintings and drawings in her original show called "Secret Gardens" 20 years ago.

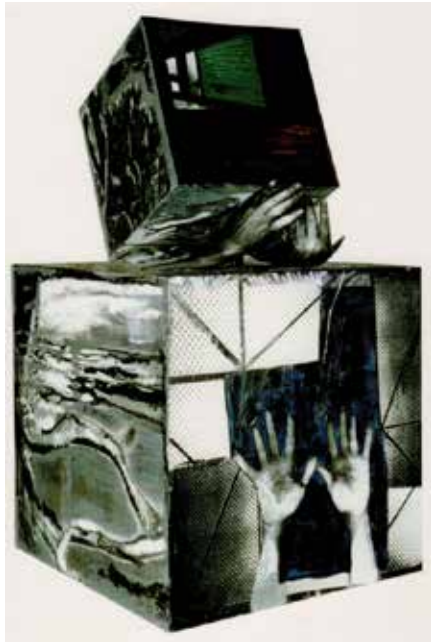
In 1997, she had three exhibitions in Florida, at the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, the Hollywood Art and Culture Center, and the Jeanine Cox Gallery of Miami. In 1998, her traveling exhibition, became part of the program of the New England Museum of Contemporary Art in Brooklyn, CT, the Public Art Program of Orlando FL, and the Edison College of Fort Myers, FL. This previous exhibit was a visual challenge by the power of its enormous sunflowers, almost at a burning point, the balancing labyrinths of her rose petals, and the green of the climbing vines. An exuberant world infiltrated then emerged from the surface of her canvas and also from the papers she executed using collages to achieve the most elaborate backgrounds. The show at the Botanical Gardens was a celebration of the joy of creativity and the splendor of nature.



Flying Blossoms, 1996  
Acrylic, en caustic on canvas, 48 x 48"



Gray Flourish, 1996  
Acrylic, en caustic on canvas, 36 x 60"



Green Window, 1997  
Photo, acrylic on wood, 37 x 20 x 20"



Spring Mists, 1997  
Collage/Acrylic/Wood, 42 x 29 x 27"

## Wood Sculptures

The sculptures in this series portray hands which show the artist' involvement in the creation of these works. The visuals were done on a copier machine.



Miami Mall, 1998  
Acrylic, en caustic on canvas, 28 x 36"

## The Sun Series

With their intimations of narcissism, crass consumerism and casual violence- fun with the sun and the gun- the "Sun" paintings are the most truly expressionist pictures in my oeuvre to date, brought on by the harsh realities of life. The reasons for this new- found coarseness and darkness are manifold, ranging from heightened political awareness, global warming to personal tragedy. Even when inflected with fear and sadness though, the art brims with a resilient energy; the film-noir quality of this series cannot fully mask its maker's enduring hopefulness.



A Day in the Sun, 1998  
Acrylic, en caustic on canvas, 34 x 48"



Saturnian Age, 2001  
Mixed media on lightweight industrial board  
24 x 24 x 24"

## Sculptures

The three-dimensional works in which the elements were projected along architectural lines. Saturnian Age also includes the viewer looking inside the interior mirrors that reflect at the viewer and includes them in the artwork.



Night runners, 2005  
Mixed media on wood  
82 x 30"

## Sculptures

Night runners was a project for an exhibition at the Northern Trust Bank in Miami where each artist was given a door to create an endeavor on it.



Dream I Had While Awake, 2004  
Mixed media on canvas, 86 x 133"

## Dream I Had While Awake

"In 'Dream I Had While Awake', her shapes are influenced by Matisse, but the movement is pure Elias. The artist draws you to the painting and then holds you there before you fall into it. It makes you walk back to view it at a safer distance and begin to see the dance of the positive shapes of people.

"The negative shapes become bold, making one well aware of the difference between the two. The snakes are there, juxtaposed to the shapes of the ropes. Elias uses these as symbols of life struggle. In Dream I Had While Awake, a

collection of ten figures floats like a Robert Longo jumper into a surreal space filled with hoops and loops, where the images appear to dance around the perimeter of the canvas. In this ambitious work, the anonymous folks are having a field day with the freedom of space and movement that add a poetic dimension to the composition."

-Bruce Helander, critic, arts writer, curator"

This painting was part of a retrospective in a museum show in Coral Springs Museum.





Saars Man, 2004  
Ultraviolet cured print on vinyl, 60 x 84"

## Sonic Silence

SARS appeared in 2002 in China. It spread worldwide within a few months, though it was quickly contained. SARS was contagious and sometimes fatal respiratory illness caused by a type of coronavirus. Eighteen years later we are dealing with a much stronger strain, one that has not been contained.



Wonder, 2005  
Metal print with clear gloss, 20 x 57"

## Elements

These works get to the very core of the human condition. Everything appears in a nexus of indeterminate fluctuation. We are rendered gliding, gilded specimens of humanity struggling to experience encounters that enable us to live as creative beings in a highly politicized world. These large scale digital prints challenge the very core of human reality and reinterpret ones thinking about global trends into something beyond predictable. In each case beauty combines with deep irony.



Plane Dancer, 2006  
Lambda Print on plexi glass with SINTRA® backing  
45 x 60"



Sky Painter  
Print on plexi glass with SINTRA® backing  
18 x 24"



Shattered, 2007  
Ultraviolet cured print on canvas  
52 x 60"

## New Visions

Among these are digital photographic/paintings, assessing the urban dilemma facing global culture with harrowing images. There is no retreat from these representations. A feeling of utter displacement emerges as one scans the surface of the photographs for clues that may signify a human presence. The semiotic opposition is impossible to reconcile.



Wrestling with Two Angels, 2007  
Digital photo collage on canvas  
44" Round



Courage of an Angel, 2008  
Digital photo collage on canvas,  
46" Round

## Cosmic Struggle

Sheila had never seen an implosion before and she had the opportunity to photograph one. This started a new series using photography and installations where she used smoke machines during the exhibition. She always envisions a light coming through the end of a tunnel.



Shanghai Surprise V, 2010  
Mixed media on canvas, 44" round



Shanghai Surprise I, 2010  
Mixed media on canvas, 44" round

## Shanghai Surprise Series

The Asian influence permeated Sheila's art after going on a trip to China. There, she took a considerable number of photographs of the architecture and the art. They both had a tremendous influence on her; particularly Shanghai. There was a depth of visual exquisiteness of the Chinese character that was visible in both their landscape and architecture.



Material Possessions V, 2012  
Photograph on archival paper  
40 x 30"



Material Possessions VIII, 2012  
Photograph on archival paper  
40 x 30"

## Material Possessions

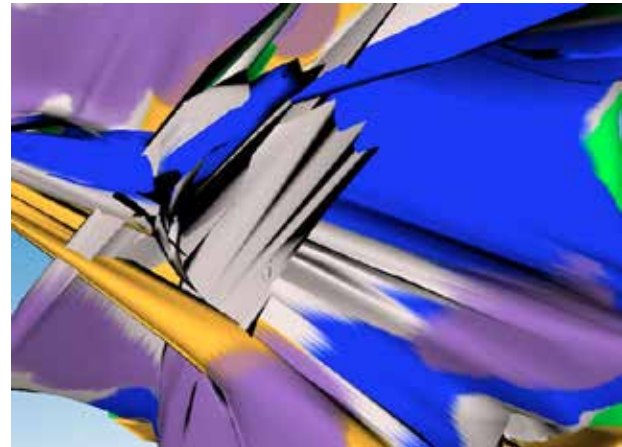
Material Possessions was inspired while Sheila was photographing windows in New York. She noticed that the people on the street were reflected behind the actual window installation depicting street life, mirrored in the everyday consumer materialistic society, while juxtaposing the hustle and bustle of the city behind the static mannequins, indicating a relationship between art and

artifice. Issues of voyeurism and consumerism inform the richly layered realities of Material Possessions, worlds of glamour, fashion, style, and the glittery, that promise personal transformation. Transparent glass, behind which the objects of desire lurk, creates an intimate visual aesthetic based on the interaction between fantasy and reality.

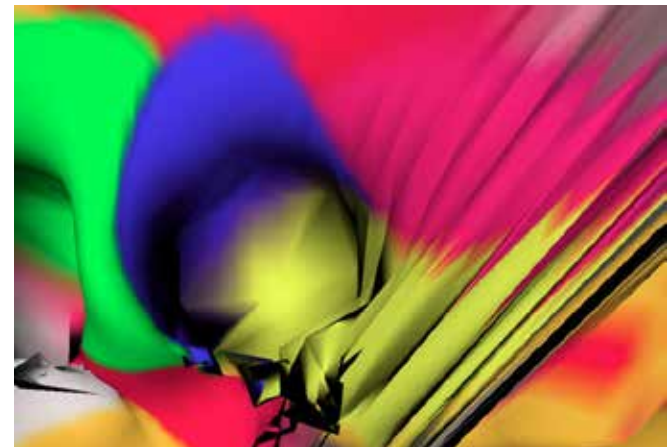
## iPaint on my iPad

Although she is primarily known for her multimedia paintings, Sheila decided to venture into the realm of technology, by creating a new vision on her iPad. With the use of her finger she began to discover a new way of painting: through pixels. Sheila's studio has grown to include digital work. Becoming a name in the Apple community has only strengthened her conviction to continue exploring in this new medium. The iPad differs from traditional media with its immediate, experimental effects. Her belief is that it also stretches one's mental capacity because the apps have limitations, and one has to work within those perimeters. Recently Sheila had a 5 month exhibition at the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami where she showcased 30 of her interactive iPad paintings. Her works in Painted Pixels come in and out of focus, buoyed by waves of colors, as one engages with them. Created on the iPad and printed canvas and on aluminum, whose luster and reflective qualities echo the effect of an illuminated screen.

She held exhibitions across a myriad amounts of Apple Stores around the World: Santa Monica, California, Lincoln Center, New York, Aventura Mall, Miami, and IFC apple store in Hong Kong. The iPad series has been exhibited at the Art Basel in Hong Kong, the California Heritage Museum, Rosenthal Fine Arts in Chicago, and the Mayson Gallery in New York. Visionary Art Trends compared her to David Hockney, one of Britain's most innovative and famous artists and Departures magazine has called her series, "iPainting the Future".



Implosion, 2016  
Done on the iPad,  
Sublimated print on metal with gloss  
13 x 19"



Mythical World, 2016  
Done on the iPad,  
Sublimated print on metal with gloss  
16 x 20"



Osiris's Heart, 2012  
Done on the iPad and printed on canvas  
60 x 48"



Horned Deity, 2012  
Done on the iPad and printed on canvas  
60 x 48"





Osk-08-01, 2012  
Done on the iPad, Print on Archival Paper  
19 x 13"



Ask-C, 2012  
Done on the iPad, Print on Archival Paper (framed)  
19 x 13"



African Surprise Totems, 2015  
Mixed media on canvas, 26 x 72"

## African Surprise Series

Sheila's travels impacted many of her ideas when creating and so she named this series as such. African Surprise is based on a journey she took to Africa. Interweaving past and present cultures in a marriage of visuals, using a vast array of personal photographs that she took on her journey. Travels around the world have influenced her art in dramatic ways.



## **Surveillance and Eye-Pad Show Silvana Facchini Gallery Wynwood, Miami, FL**

This installation was made up of Sheila's iPad paintings printed on glossy paper that adhered to the wall. Mono filaments hung from the ceiling suspended a character based created on the iPad named Dudu, who was inspired by a trip to Africa. Repeated to create a dense room environment. These pieces have been noted for portraying originality and new ideas on the iPad. The wall installation is called Surveillance and Dudu's image was replicated throughout the wall allowing the participant to be completely immersed in a total iPad experience. She fabricated a neon sign called "eye-pad" which titled the series as well.



Reverie E, 2018  
Mixed media on foam core, 24 x 19"

## Reverie

"Reverie" is a new collection paralleling her current direction in technology. She created this art hearkening back to Victorian times where the ornate frames that were used to frame paintings. Taking inspiration from the salons of the 19th century where dozens of artworks were exhibited together salon style onto the walls as part of academic competitions. She chose to show these pieces in the same way.

## Interference

Sheila's work is considered very forward thinking, although technology helps her create and expand in techniques. Our lives are full of mail notifications, posting our lives on social media and using our computers hours on end for everything in our lives.

Last year she was invited to be in a show in Lake Como, Italy where she was the only woman and the only American. The show was about technology and the relationship that we have with it. The show's title was called "Interference" and it was put together by Swiss curator Roberta Gonella. The show was held in an old desecrated church turned art gallery Ex Chiesa San Pietro in Atrio. 10,000 people come to see the show and it got covered by 40 newspapers in Europe.



Vigilance "Fake", 2019  
Mixed media, 25 x 33"



Vigilance I, 2019  
Mixed media  
Complete size 6ft wide and 7ft tall



Man, 2020  
Mixed media, 48 x 36"



Woman  
Mixed media, 46 x 46"

## Masks

These paintings "Man", "Woman", "Person", "Camera/TV", four large canvases were pre-cognizant of the corona virus that was soon to invade us. The figures are all masked and there are a lot of caution images that appear so appropriate for this time in our world.

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