

SHEILA ELIAS:

Sonic Silence 11

By Irene Sperber



Artist Sheila Elias at her studio, 1510 NE 130th St. North Miami 33161. All images are courtesy of the artist.

Sheila Elias self-describes as an American contemporary artist, her trajectory is multi-directional in a long and productive career.

On December 5, Elias will open her studio to the public, presenting a continuum of a 2004 “*Sonic Silence*” project of erupting landscapes and imploding iconic architecture depicted on large-scale photographic murals in this urban installation.

Movement is the first element that grabs the viewer. Form and color follow the path through Elias’ thoughts of social consciousness and history as she interprets and transposes inner rumination into the physical realm. Whether employing paint, sculptural elements, photography or technology, Elias has traversed the decades, raising consciousness as the modern world morphs wildly before her on this rocket ship into new planes. The artist is not mired in time past, but maintains awareness of ever-changing universal truths.

I visited with Sheila Elias in her spacious, well run Miami studio to forage about in her world.

Irene Sperber - Why this exhibition? Why now?

Sheila Elias - “*Sonic Silence*” curator Roberta Gonella saw my pieces and exclaimed, “The way the world is you have to show these pieces again.” Gonella is a gallerist and curator of visionary art from Zurich. Then, the Art Institute of Chicago wanted to do a brunch here (during Art Basel 2014) for institute alumnae, trustees, curators and collectors.

Immediately after the December 5 brunch, Sheila Elias’ studio will be available for “*Sonic Silence 11*” public viewing; from 1 to 5 p.m.



Sheila Elias, *Trees*, 2004, ultraviolet cured durst print on vinyl, 42" x 129."

I.S. - *And origin of the work?*

S.E. - I have always been a collage artist. The original pieces came about because I had an opportunity to visit implosion sites. I stood on top of a building across from the St Regis (Bal Harbour) when it blew up. I knew Harbour House was being blown up also. I had to have a mask on while photographing. I took the photos and proceeded to layer with other images.

Elias will have smoke emanating from machines creating an ambience of what hangs before us. Masks embellished with the exhibition name will recreate her original experience of the smoke filled atmosphere.

S.E. - All the images are manipulated. I use the same images, like the notes on a piano.

Viewing the murky wreckage in *Harbour Blast*, *Trees* and *Smoke Dancer*, it is difficult not to recall scenes of 9/11 that flickered across our television screens. Though Elias says she is not referring to that event, oddly, the artist did possess a studio two blocks away. In August 2001, she lost the studio lease, causing her to move all pieces to Miami.

Without a working NYC studio, Elias picked up the newly minted iPad, instantly bonding with painterly aspects. Her work drew fascinated onlookers in the Apple store where she sought technical aide.

S.E. - I ended up showing at the Hong Kong Apple store, Art

Basel Hong Kong, and at seven other Apple stores.

Her iPad work has a sculptural quality possessing strong lines of dark and light components creating undulating depths, folds and shaded areas, causing us to stop and ponder the conversion of thought.

I.S. - *When did you become consciously aware of the art world?*

S.E. - Seeing Matisse. I was 8 years old at the Art Institute of Chicago...my heart stopped. I'm always on visual overload.

I.S. - *The work of which you are most proud?*

S.E. - *Two French Girls* went to the Louvre, and is my favorite piece. I'm most proud of going to the Louvre.

"Sonic Silence" is a confluence of her work to date, a thoughtful visual prose to parse in their natural habitat.

S.E. - I have layers and layers of art history and ideas. It's all about layers.

The thought is true both in her work and in life. ■

"Sonic Silence 11, 2004-2014" will be exhibited 1 p.m to 5 p.m. December 5, at Sheila Elias Studio, 1510 NE 130th Street North Miami 33161 / Phone: 305 892 9198 / www.sheilaelias.com / sheila@sheilaelias.com