

Artist Statement

Most of my work is about search and survival. It revolves around and delves into the themes of faith, spirituality, and the universal nature of religiosity. My work is spiritual, but the notion of religiosity is universal rather than specific. In the last few years, I contemplated the fragility of life after my husband was terminally ill. This experience prompted a realization about the elusive nature of faith and the need to find spiritual healing and happiness in life's fleeting moments. I decided that I must get over this grief in my life and find serenity. Creating these sculptures helped me to deal with the situation.

Maybe life is a cosmic illusion (or Maya), which says the world itself is ultimately unreal. I wonder what is real? By doing these multimedia, multilayered sculptures I try to find pure consciousness or awareness, ananda which means pure bliss. Sculptures became a medium for existential contemplations such as the nature of reality, the death of loved ones, and the pervasive suffering caused by events like the COVID-19 pandemic, famines, wars, exploitation, and the paradoxes of existence. At times, the world looks so beautiful, but at the same time, there is so much ugliness.

My sculptures are not only about asking questions but searching for answers. These works have layers of meaning, for instance, my sculpture "Gloom in the Glory" sheds light on the exploitation of humans behind the doors of religious institutions. The pieces are multifaceted, with symbolic elements like burning representing transformation, chains symbolizing attachments, and beads serving as a reminder of the material world.

My work seeks to convey empathy and a sense of oneness with others who also experience the ebb and flow of pleasure and pain, ultimately aiming to find bliss. The sculptures carry a universal message of empathy, unity, and the search for spiritual fulfillment. The viewers are invited to reflect on existence's complexities and their own quest for inner peace.

I am searching myself through art to find Bliss!

Ela Shah

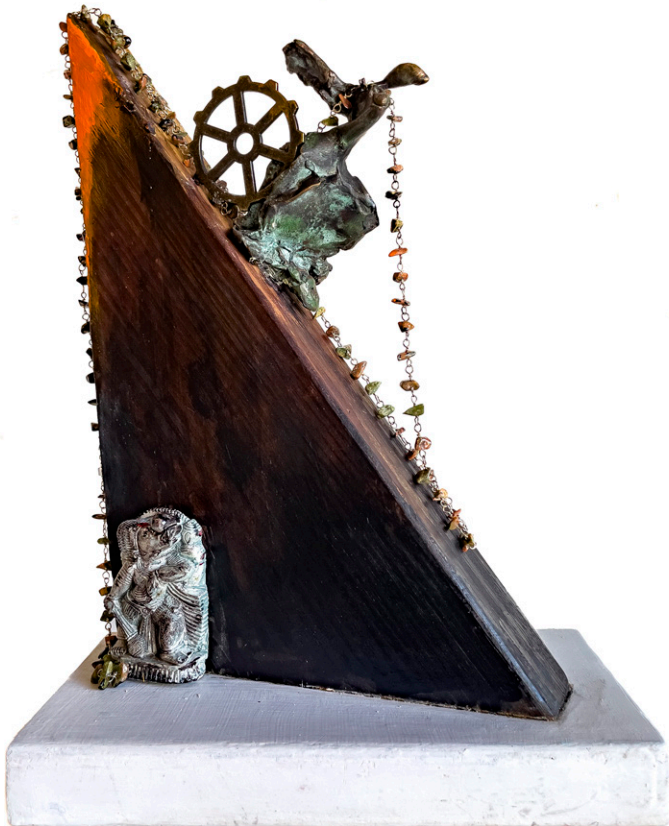
www.elashah.com



Hari Kno Marg (The Ultimate Journey), 2024
Bronze, beads, stone idol and mix media on burnt wood
16" x 12" x 6" with base, Artist Collection
Ultimate journey seems like a lost unsolved puzzle piece.
<https://vimeo.com/925554637>



Moh (Attachment), 2023
Bronze, brass statue, beads and burnt painted wood
13" x 6" x 4" with the base
Conflicts between attachments, material world and
spiritual world.
<https://vimeo.com/920051727>



Going Against the Grains, 2024
Bronze, beads, stone warrior idol and mix media on
burnt wood
12" x 18" x 4½"
Going to find ultimate is like going against the grains
while tied up with worldly possessions. It also
comments on how women's path to succeed in life is
against the grain and dangerous.
<https://vimeo.com/925568556>



Even in The Land of Plenty
 Bronze, beads idol and mix media on burnt wood
 19" x 16" x 18 with the base, Artist Collection
 Homeless people are sleeping under the rich mansions just like 3rd
 world countries with hopes of better life.
<https://vimeo.com/920036410>



Candle of Hope, 2024
 Bronze, found object, burnt wood, beads
 7" x 5" x 5"
 Touches issues of immigration.
<https://vimeo.com/925398460>



Tower of Fate with good luck God Ganesha, 2024
 Bronze, burnt wood
 9" x 8" x 8"
 Tied up and waiting for legal entries for relying on faith in Fate.
<https://vimeo.com/925395240>



Thirsty Mermaid
Bronze and found object
8" x 5½" x 4"

Why are we thirsty if we are in the water? Why are we not happy?
Even we live in the best part of the world?



I Want to be a Flying Mermaid, 2024

Bronze and burnt wood
11" x 9" x 9" with base

Mermaids symbolize awareness and insight: Mermaids are seen as wise.
<https://vimeo.com/919680238>



Flying Mermaid ,2024

Bronze, wood
8" x 8" x 5"

<https://vimeo.com/925399747>



Am I Going to be Roasted?, 2023
Bronze, canvas burnt wood
9½" x 8½" x 8½"
Always afraid of cremation.



Flight of the Soul, 2024
Painted aluminum, bronze, canvas and burnt wood
9" x 8½" x 8 1/2"
It seems death is a journey to nowhere land.



Please Wait, 2024
Bronze, canvas, plastic and burnt wood
9" x 8½" x 8½"
There is never a best time to leave the world. Some hand
always wants you to stay longer.
<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/918558778>



Existing Reality, 2024
Painted bronze, found object, burnt wood
7½" x 6" x 6"
We all are trapped in worldly life and the material world, which is called (Moh). The human condition is such that will all have to leave this world.
<https://vimeo.com/925560890>



Maya (Cosmic Illusion), 2024
Bronze, toy burnt wood.
9" x 9" x 9"
<https://vimeo.com/925564030>



Grapes are Sour, 2024
 Bronze, beads found object and burnt wood
 9" x 7" x 5" with the base.
<https://vimeo.com/925573199>



Reverse Role, 2022
 Bronze, beads, gold leaf and paint on burnt wood
 9" x 6" x 4" (Wall work)
 Coming out of a door reflects women's roles that are changing analogous to a sculpture coming out of a picture frame.



Evening of Life, 2022
 Bronze, mirror, burnt wood
 9" x 7" x 4" (wall work).

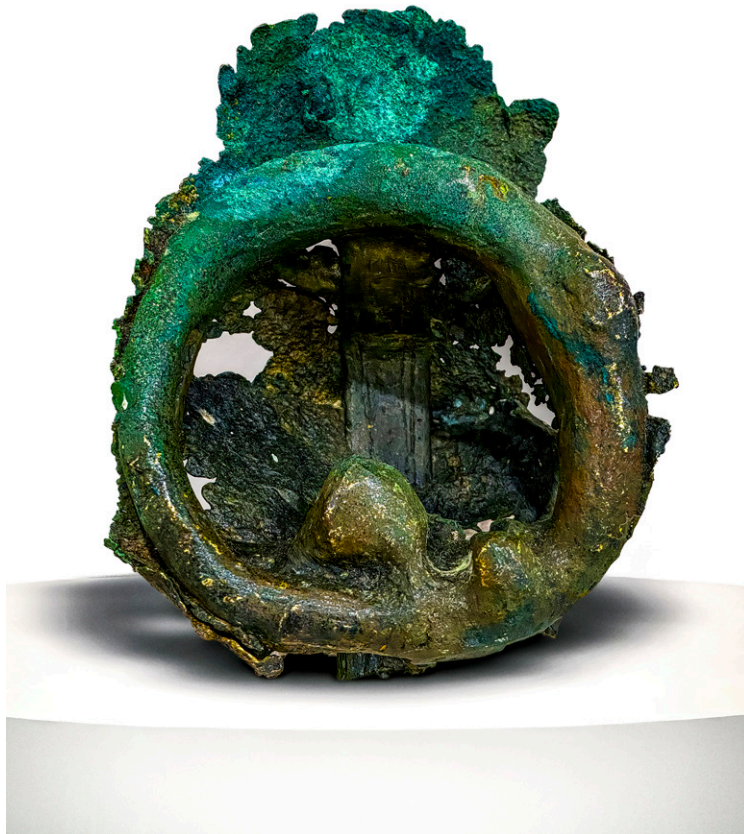


Gloom In the Glory, 2024
Bronze, oil lamp from temple, beads
9" x 8" x 6" Size varies (mobile hanging work)

Glorious, religious places have gloomy stories of
abductions, rapes, etc.
<https://vimeo.com/925566113>



Shivoham (Bliss), 2024
Bronze, found object, beads and
paint on burnt wood
9" x 7" x 7"
Time is clicking.
<https://vimeo.com/920033155>



Womb, 2023
Bronze
7" x 7" x 4"