

Biography

Ela Shah

Ela Shah is an Indian-American artist whose work seamlessly blends Indian and Western influences. Born in Bombay, India, she began painting at a young age and later pursued a formal education in fine arts. After moving to the United States, she earned an M.A. in sculpture.

Shah's artistic journey has been marked by numerous exhibitions in both India and the United States. Her work has been featured in prestigious galleries and museums, and she has held positions as a chairperson for the National Association of Women Artists.

Shah's art often incorporates elements of satire and addresses deeper issues of religion, politics, and culture. While she primarily works in sculptures and sculpture-embedded videos, painting remains an integral part of her practice.

<https://www.elashah.com/>

[Resume](#)

[Book](#)

Artist Statement - Free Standing Sculptures

Structures of Faith

I call them Structures of Faith.

It fascinates me how millions of people around the world have deep faith in the unknown and celebrates their faith by building big monuments in public places or little shrines in their homes or on the the streets.

These Architectural structures are structures of spiritual faith for me; faith in oneself, humankind and divine power. The painted arches and patterns echo Islamic architecture, Indian temples and they are tall like churches also .

Within myself, I am in constant need to burn and resurrect fragments of my past and identity. These burnt images are symbolic of purification and transformation. At times Indian gods and goddesses go hand in hand with American pop culture icons such as Big Bird or Spider Man, because they all symbolise hope and justice.

My artworks have layers of personal as well as societal meanings. They deal with various political, religious, social, or cultural issues created by multiculturalism in our globalised society. "I search myself through art and it helps me survive, have faith and hope in this world which is often confusing, contradictory, violent, and unfair.



Power of Myth,

Black and orange beans, paint on burnt wood,

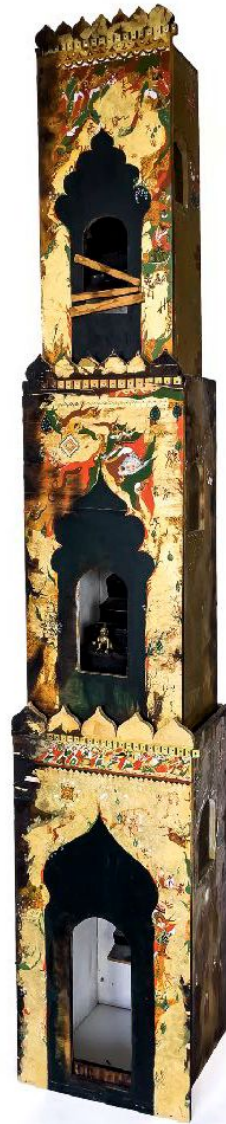
68"x 38"x 48"



Survival,

Paint on Burnt Wood, Bronze,
Chain

109" x 21" x 13"



Destination,

Mixed media and Gold Leaf on
Burnt Wood

109" x 21" x 13",

<https://vimeo.com/831073324>



Swan Rescue Van,
2022, 90'X40"X30"

Gold leaf and paint on burnt wood

<https://vimeo.com/762096006>



Sailing on Sand,

Paint on burnt wood, gold leaf, toys

69" x 40" x 30"...size varies



Power of Myth,
Mix media and Paint on Burnt Wood,
84" x 32" x 10"

<https://vimeo.com/854219882>



Playing with Fate,
Silkscreen on Wood
109" x 21" x 19"

<https://vimeo.com/764001898>



Isolation

(Change from survival after postal van sculpture)

2021

Paint on wood, Ceramics, Wire mesh

<https://vimeo.com/762095660>



Power of Faith

1998

Wood and Paper Mache Idols
19" x 20" x 8"

Curious Cow

2000

Wood, Clay and Rope
20" x 18" x 8"





Desi's Delight

2001, Wood and Found Objects

18" x 8" x 9"



Passage

2002, Mixed Media and Paint on
Burnt Wood

84" x 32" x 10"



Marriages are Made in Heaven

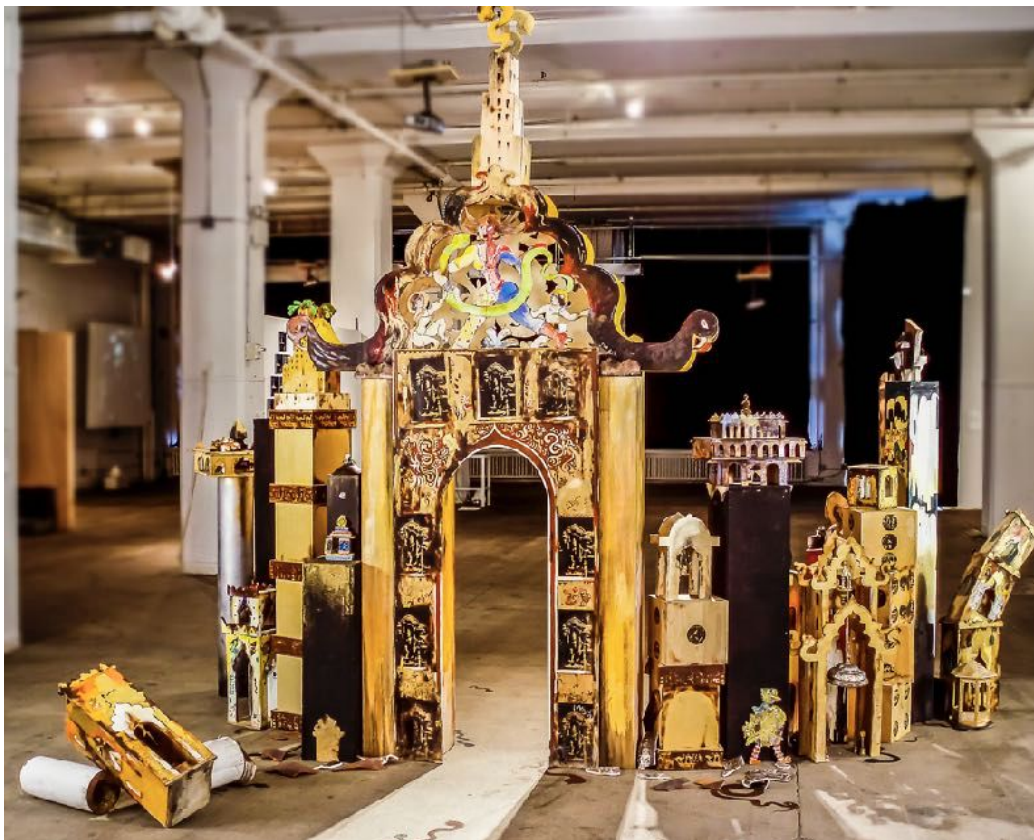
Mix media on burnt wood, toys

18"x 28"x 12"



Pilgrimage Installation,

(Front view)mix media and Gold Leaf on Burnt Wood 120" x 150" x 200" (varies)



Pilgrimage Installation,

(Back View)mix media and Gold Leaf on Burnt Wood 120" x 150" x 200" (varies)



Untitled

2000

Aluminum, (installation view)

65" x 20" x 20", Clifton Art Center, NJ



The Chair

2012

Aluminum, (installation view)

(collaboration with Michico Rupnow,
NJ)

20' x 8' x 6', Clifton Art Center, NJ



Leaning Tower of Faith

Mixed Media, (Installation view)

12' x 12' x 18', Montclair Museum, NJ