

An abstract painting featuring a rich palette of colors including deep blues, vibrant reds, fiery oranges, and lush greens. The brushstrokes are thick and expressive, creating a sense of movement and depth. The composition is layered, with various colors overlapping and blending into each other. A dark grey horizontal band is superimposed over the center of the painting, containing the title text in white.

From Wall Street into the Artist Studio

During her journey from working in the financial industry to becoming an abstract painter, [Leila Pinto](#) incorporated her experience on Wall Street and world events into her art.



"Market Velocity" acrylic, 48" x 48"

In a recent conversation, Leila Pinto offered a glimpse into events that inspired her art, and what she is working towards now.

AS: You've created several series of paintings about international events, including the financial market collapse of 2009 and Brexit. What compelled you to document these events through your art?

LP: My Wall Street Series of paintings were a visceral response to events that dominated the headlines. By exploring those and other events through the lens of a painter, I try to make sense of that moment in time to create narratives and meaning. The financial crisis led to a failure of confidence in the U.S. stock market and the economy. It exposed the deep fault lines of our society and economy. Investors bore the emotional scars from the crash for the next four years.

By telling stories through my art, I try to express my understanding of the events and to document and record that moment in time. While my financial career involves left brain thinking, my artistic influence is very right brain feeling and intuition-oriented.



"High Volatility" acrylic, 48" x 48"



"Brexit III" acrylic, 36" x 36"

In the case of world events, I contribute to the historical narrative through my response to those events, so it is a very personal form of expression. In the case of Brexit, for example, emotions have been very polarized – for or against. Through the black, white and shades of grey in my paintings I attempted to convey the anger, fear, sadness, apprehension and uncertainty about the future.

In everything I do, I engage with full passion and energy. What is unique, however, is the path that brought me to create my art. It is the particular combination of my life experiences. As an immigrant to the U.S. and as a woman finance professional, my deep passion and my approach to art that makes me unique.



"A Brighter Future" mixed media on canvas 36" x 48"

AS: What response have you received from people in the business world who have viewed your paintings?

LP: I have been told by my collectors and gallery owners that my work resonates with them on a couple of different levels. First and foremost, they say that the pieces speak to them. They love art and value the enrichment that art brings into their lives.

On another level, they identify with the themes. The financial world is highly quantitative. People have enthusiastically responded to the qualitative aspects of my art as they love the colors and energy in my work. My abstract landscapes on the other hand they say, evoke a feeling of peace and serenity.

AS: Your latest body of work was created during the COVID pandemic. How does this current work contrast with the previous series?

LP: My paintings created during the pandemic were different because they were captured during a moment in time when there was considerable fear and uncertainty. The process of creating art and viewing art allows us to process and connect to a universal experience. When I retreat into my studio, I immerse myself in a very intuitive way. The act of turning inward to quiet my mind and reflect on the pulse of the external world is very nourishing and inspiring. Painting provides a feeling of calm and serenity during a time of chaos in the outside world.

Making art is a soulful process and brings me joy. Through sharing my art, I am grateful to tell my story. For every person who is inspired by my work, it brings me great joy. From ancient times, music art and other creative endeavors have been a powerful way to create community and to celebrate and heal. This is why it's such a powerful medium for connecting us with each other.



"Sea and Sky" Oil on Canvas, 36" x 36"

I feel that art can be healing and can help to process emotions. Art forges the mind body connection.

What I really try to create is something that resonates with life as I see it and speaks to our shared experiences as humans. The people of the world have endured major upheavals—from a health and economic crisis wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, to social ferment in the fight to end systemic racism. I wanted to use my multicultural artistic expression to spark connection, reflection, and dialogue around pressing issues of our day.



Artist Leila Pinto with several of her paintings at an exhibit.

AS: Give us a preview into future work. What is inspiring you now?

LP: Going forward I will continue to create work that I find inspiring and that is in keeping with my passion and that feeds my soul. The inspiration for the pieces I am working on now come from the beauty of nature, the events taking place around the world and other artists I have the privilege of knowing. Since art is an experience, I hope to inspire and empower others through my work to develop personal connections to art and in so doing, strive to make the world a better place.

I also believe that since art came to me later in life, there is a reason for being given this gift, and this motivates me to not keep it to myself but to share it and to continue to give back through my art. Over the years I have donated paintings to charities and fundraisers for causes that I believe in.



"Quiet Moments" acrylic, 36" x 48"

My art journey has allowed me to meet people I wouldn't ordinarily meet, travel to places I wouldn't normally go to, and learn about subjects that I didn't know I would be interested in, and sometimes help people in ways that make me feel good. I like to say that what I'm after is to have an interesting and deeply meaningful life and doing the work that I do as an artist helps me achieve that. It gives me balance and deep perspective.

I love the fact that when I am contemplating my next body of work, I sometimes disconnect from the world and become more introspective, and then go back out and reconnect with the world and draw that in. So, it is this continual process of introspection, reflection, and then creation that is my core process and I try to honor that process of renewal.