

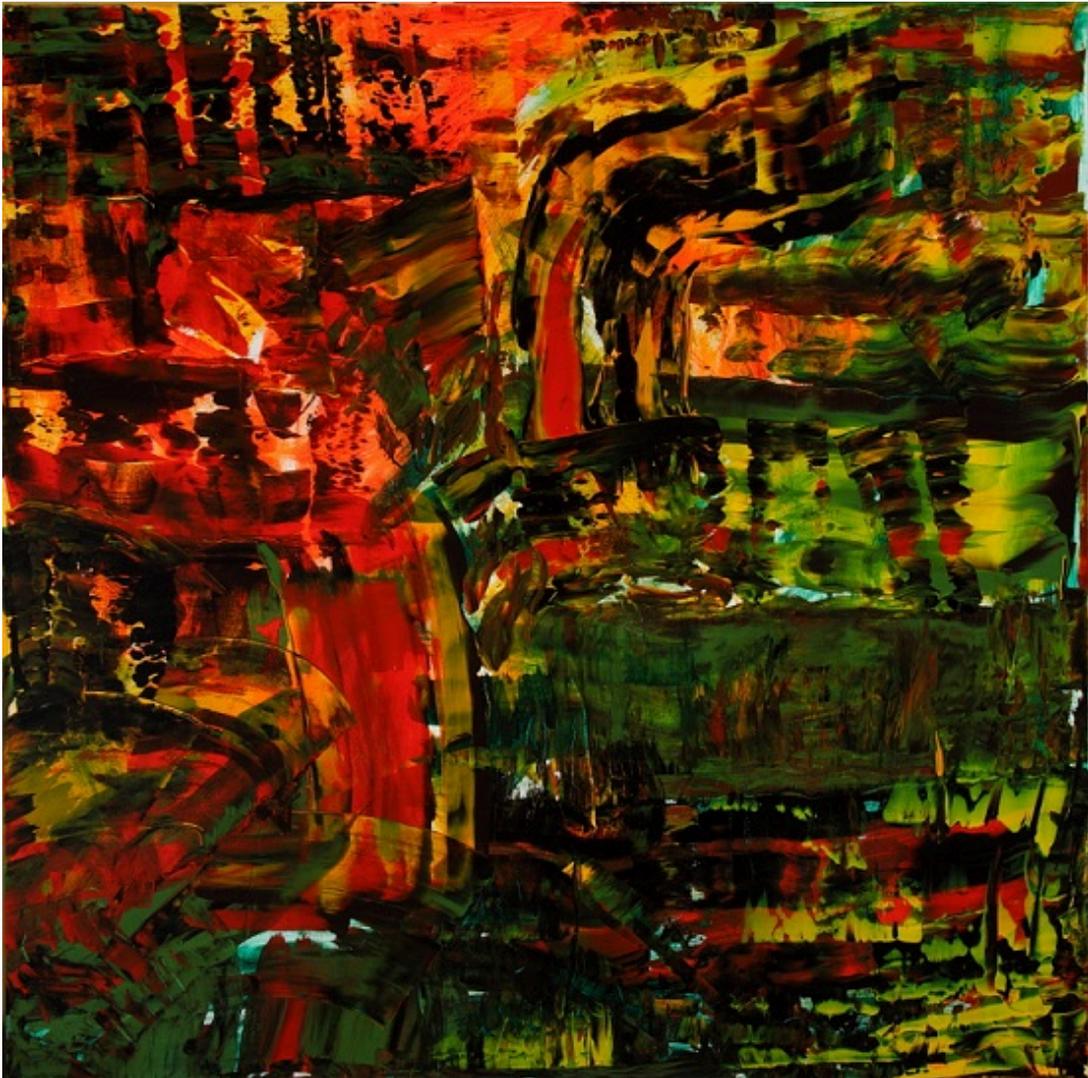
Leila Pinto Taps Financial Market & Brexit News for her Contemporary Abstract Paintings

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by Julia Halsey

Leila Pinto takes her inspiration from unexpected sources: finance and international politics. Working as the Managing Director of a major investment firm in New York, Pinto's abstract paintings draw visual cues from technology that track the national and international markets. Brexit is another source of inspiration for her abstract paintings and launched a new series inspired by the unfolding news from the U.K.

Pinto's "Wall Street" series reflect the pace, energy and volatility of the financial markets as inspired by trades and market movements flashing across trading screens, Pinto said. Making use of vibrant, mostly multi-color abstractions, the paintings demonstrate the high-energy and anxiety of markets that are constantly changing, mirroring their movements, trends and all this represents.



"Market Velocity" by Leila Pinto. Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Paintings in the "Wall Street" series not only attract the eyes of abstract art enthusiasts, but also those who work in finance themselves, Pinto said.

"There were some finance guys who saw the work and said, 'Oh, my god, Leila, we really got what you were trying to say,'" Pinto said and laughed warmly. "It's interesting that the financial crew who have been dealing with this world say that my paintings really look like a computer trading screen and that I've captured this movement of what goes on in a given trading day in paint."



"High Volatility" by Lena Pinto, Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Reported Earnings is one of the rare works in the "Wall Street" series that was rendered in shades of black and white. Inspired by the time period directly after a company reports its earnings and its financial status becomes fixed in time, this moment is one where there is no longer uncertainty, regardless of whether the company beat or missed earnings, Pinto explained. There is no longer a "grey area" for interpretation and her paintings reflect this in her choice of colors.



“Reported Earnings” by Leila Pinto. Acrylic on canvas. Courtesy of the artist.

Pinto’s use of black, white and grey to convey the transition from uncertainty to certainty (or vice versa) can be seen again in her “Brexit” series. The series touched off in the initial aftermath following the United Kingdom’s vote to withdrawal from the European Union in 2016. The abstract paintings in this series depict the whirlwind of emotions she experienced following the controversial referendum, Pinto explained.

Pinto considers the “Brexit” series a subset of her “Wall Street” series as they both are inspired by news that reberberates into the financial markets, she said.

“I think [[the Brexit vote](#)] totally caught the people of Britain by surprise, and it also took the financial market by surprise,” she said. “It created a sense of market uncertainty and turbulence.”



"Brexit II" by Leila Pinto. Acrylic on canvas, 40 x 40 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Pinto's choice to use black, white and grey in these paintings was a literal response to the nature of the Brexit vote. While the "Brexit" series works don't display the adrenaline-fueled energy found in the "Wall Street" paintings, a similar feeling of chaos and frenzy underlies both series. The abstract acrylic on canvas paintings are raw and gestural, capturing the sense of unease, chaos and uncertainty Pinto said she felt toward the Brexit decision from both a personal and economic standpoint.

"Initially, Brexit was meant to be a much more clear-cut and black and white decision," she explained. "Over the years, it turned out to become a much more grey area and much more complicated. It certainly was not a binary outcome, and this uncertainty and upheaval is what I was trying to capture."



"Brexit III" by Leila Pinto. Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 36 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

While the four paintings sprung from the Brexit news, Pinto made a different painting in response to unfolding news to channel her emotional reaction as the story unfolded. There are notable differences created through process. For instance, there appears to be a more calculated and chaotic nature in the layers of grey in *Brexit I* and *Brexit II* compared to *Brexit III* and *Brexit IV*, which appear unmediated and involve more black, free form brushstrokes and white space.

"As I was reading about the different outcomes and trying to make sense of this, I was painting," she said. "Some of the paintings were very immediate, much more intuitive and were a faster, more raw and gestural response. The other ones that are more nuanced and have more layers, I would keep coming back to and reworking as I heard the news and was trying to make sense of it all."



"Brexit IV" by Leila Pinto. Acrylic on canvas, 20 x 16 inches.
Courtesy of the artist.

Brexit I has been making waves as it received call outs in juried shows include an Honorable Mention at Guild Hall's 2019 Artists Members Show and [Hamptons Art Hub's Winter 2018 Online Art Competition](#) and was named a "FAV 15%" in BoldBrush's painting competition in March 2018. *Brexit I* will be on view at 2019 Market Art + Design exhibited with George Billis Gallery.



"Brexit I" by Leila Pinto. Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 24 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Pinto didn't start out to be an abstract painter but found her way there after making realism paintings for nearly 10 years after training at the Art Students League of New York, the National Academy Museum School, the New York Academy of Art and the Grand Central Atelier.

"I take my skill set that I received from figurative and realist painting and also try to tie in my intellectual understanding and economic background," she explained. "It's all so complex trying to put it all together in these paintings. It is a challenge to me."

Leila Pinto's art has been exhibited in New York City at Leonard Tourne Gallery, George Billis Gallery and The Armory Show and in The Hamptons at Guild Hall, Water Mill Museum, Ashawagh Hall, the 2016 Hamptons Designer Showhouse and more. Pinto divides her time between New York City and The Hamptons. Leila Pinto's art can be viewed at www.leilapinto.com.



“Azure 3” by Leila Pinto from the “Abstract Series.” Acrylic on canvas, 20 x 20 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

BASIC FACTS: Selections from both the “Wall Street” and “Brexit” Series are currently on view in New York from June 25 to July 31, 2019 in “NYC Summer Invitational” at George Billis Gallery, 521 West 26th Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10001. Selections from both series as well as the “Abstract” series will be presented at Market Art + Design by George Billis Gallery.

The Hamptons art fair is held July 5 - 7, 2019 on the grounds of The Bridgehampton Museum. [Click here](#) to read a preview.

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