

NEWS RELEASE

Exhibition: *Sheila Pinkel: Early Works, 1974-1977*
Dates: April 22 - June 13, 2026
Address: 45 Main Street #723, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Higher Pictures presents *Sheila Pinkel: Early Works, 1974–1977*, the artist's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. This is the first time these bodies of work have been shown. The exhibition features twelve cyanotypes spanning body prints, abstracted compositions, and early incorporations of computer-generated imagery. Together, they reveal the experimental foundations from which Pinkel's decades-long investigation of light, form, and materiality grew.

In the *Body Cyanotypes*, the body becomes a site of transformation. Working with the sun as her light source, exposing at midday for maximum contrast, the results are unmistakably surrealist: the figure floats and contorts, limbs multiply, the body grows unfixed—a record of light moving across and through form. As Pinkel recalls, "this (medium) allowed me the latitude to evolve new images using many different approaches as they occurred to me."

The same logic of accumulation and transformation carries throughout the show. Working with a carbon-arc lamp and vacuum frame exposing unit rather than the sun, Pinkel approached the cyanotype emulsion as a painter approaches pigment, layering objects and photographic images directly onto the paper's surface. In some works, she dimensionalized the paper itself, pressing sheets through a litho press so the surface retained the contours of what lay beneath, then exposing them at an angle so each surface received a different degree of light. The result—once developed and flattened—bears the trace of what was once there.

Pinkel's surrealist sensibilities found their most unexpected terrain in technology. Long drawn to surrealism's capacity to destabilize reality and reveal what lies beneath the surface, she recognized in early computing an analogous strangeness—a new system of representation that could transform the visible world into something unfamiliar. It was a characteristic already embedded in the cyanotype: born out of nineteenth-century scientific inquiry, it had always occupied the threshold between technology and image, fact and apparition—and for Pinkel, computing was a natural extension. Introducing computer-generated imagery into her exposures—an early and largely uncharted move at the time—she wove digital forms alongside negatives, objects, and hand-applied color. And then there is Marilyn. "For some reason I was haunted by her image," Pinkel writes of Monroe—and so she materializes within the work, spectral and digitized.

The friction between these elements—analogue and emergent-digital, body and object, light and its aftermath—holds the exhibition together. Across twelve cyanotypes, Pinkel presses, layers, exposes, and accumulates: figures contort and multiply, objects leave their impressions, and in one work, Monroe surfaces unbidden. The works feel, all at once, archaeological and witty.

Sheila Pinkel (b. 1941) earned her MFA in 1977 from UCLA and was Professor of Art at Pomona College from 1986 to 2010. Her work is held in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and the Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou, Paris. Pinkel lives and works in Los Angeles.

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