

# SHEILA BOCCHINE

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## Multiple Exposure



Sheila Bocchine, Flamingo (pinhole), 2006

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Two years ago I moved to South Korea with two handmade teak wood pinhole cameras, 20 rolls of medium format film and a mini tripod. Though enthusiastic to document the rich colors of the Far East, I had no idea of the obstacles that awaited me there, nor the ongoing revelations of what I considered "photography" to be.

I often daydream—of camera contact lenses, of the shutter release between my index finger and thumb—and I am no longer navigated by my feet, but rather by my eyes; portals for pursuing luminosity like road signs, bursting from a pillow fight of feathers, chasing after each pure white narrative. I snap back to reality, out of paradoxical conversations with my eyes, and come to terms with an inescapable imperative to celebrate and share what I see.

The dreamy quality of the photographs is the reason I shoot pinhole. I love it. I feel like each pinhole photograph is a marvelous dream ... a surreal and fanciful moment in time swirling through my mind before coming out as a perfect pinhole photograph. I spend most of my days with my head in the clouds thinking about unicorns and rainbows, so pinhole photography feels really natural to me. And if I don't wear my glasses, well, the whole world looks like a pinhole photograph!



Sheila Bocchine, Gyeongbok Palace (Hiptamatic), 2010

One afternoon the rain held off just long enough for me to entertain my family with a visit to Gyeongbok Palace in Seoul. I sneaked behind a building and found (perfectly silhouetted against a moody sky) gargoylesque decorations which adorn many of Korea's palaces. I chose Float film for its temperamental undertones.



Sheila Bocchine, Mummies (pinhole), 2007

On a windy autumn day in Phoenix, Arizona, I ventured to Fear Farm haunted house. Alone, I slipped inside and followed the blood-splattered walls into the twisted delusions of a psycho killer's mind. This room of hanging mummies was the perfect pinhole, its subtle hints of movement making it come alive during its 15-second exposure.

I spent my first summer in Korea pinholing pungent fish markets, ancient fortresses and temples, random street festivals and even a solar eclipse. When the time came to process the season's rolls of film, I found my way to a recommended print shop down a side street in the camera district of Seoul. To my dismay, they could only develop the film—not scan it to the caliber of my liking. My love/hate relationship with the photo lab had blossomed.

Twice I went to pick up film, only to find that it hadn't been developed or my contact sheets hadn't been printed. A third time, they were out of the medium format Kodak film I prefer (I would never be able to purchase Kodak there again). After a trip to Jeju Island I dropped off ten rolls of film, but picked up only four; a precious six of my rolls had been ruined during processing. I was devastated. Eventually, I found another photography store with medium format Kodak film in stock. Delighted by my find and its unusually discounted price, I bought it, despite the fact that it was expired. In the face of these obstacles, which seemed to be trying to stop me from using my pinhole cameras, I eventually wrapped them in colorful floral scarves and put them away, taking them out only occasionally or when traveling abroad.



Sheila Bocchine, Dandelions (pinhole), 2008

In an empty lot, on a bustling city street in Santa Barbara, grew a patch of dandelions. Seeing them sway in the gentle breeze while on a bike ride, I stopped to capture their summer dance. Pinhole cameras are notorious for producing dazzling oddities such as this electric streak of sunshine, which is something I've always loved about this image.



Sheila Bocchine, Python (Hiptamatic), 2011

This gorgeous python tickled me as a slithery scarf while on Bohol Island, Philippines. Stunning and mischievous, he paused only long enough for two portraits. I didn't have time to ponder over which lens and film were best suited to my subject, so by default he was photographed with Roboto Glitter.

Pinhole images look so dreamy because of the rudimentary construction of the photographic device—no lens, just an the aperture the size of a pinhole. If you look at a standard camera's aperture and then you look at a small needle, well, the difference is obvious. Your regular camera is programmed to know how long to leave the shutter open. This exposure time is usually quite quick; faster than the blink of an eye. In a pinhole camera, however, the same amount of light has to travel through just a tiny pinhole, all of which could take anywhere from a couple seconds to eight hours. Since the world rarely stands still, this technique captures all the beautiful motion and energy of everyday life, resulting in the final images' surrealistic and sensuous qualities.

When I look at straight digital photographs, I often think, "That's not how it looked ... Where's the sparkle? Where are the rainbows and the glitter falling from the clouds that made that moment unforgettable?" I often snubbed digital photography because to me, photography is all about film. Taking the time to create a piece of uncropped art was far more romantic to me than shooting dozens of frames a minute, and relying on Photoshop for a quick fix in post-production. Yet, newly bereft of my go-to cameras, I needed to find a new creative outlet in a hurry, and the universe karmically answered my request in the form of the most gadgety digital option thinkable: an iPhone app called Hipstamatic.



Sheila Bocchine, Sedona Rouge (pinhole), 2006

This image, taken in the Sedona Rouge Hotel in Arizona, comes from an ongoing series documenting the places I sleep. I leave the shutter on my pinhole camera open for the duration of my slumber; sometimes I'm in focus and others I'm a blur of restless movement. Come morning, I write down what I can remember from my dreams. Here: mystical auras, dangling crystals and swirling vortexes.



Sheila Bocchine, Bunny and Bird (pinhole), 2006

I often imagine that lawn ornaments come alive at night, have parties and nibble on scrumptious greens. Crawling around amongst the ants, I pinhole them in gardens whenever I get the chance. This garden duo was found in my grandmother's yard in Missouri. I love the depth of field pinhole photographs have.

Despite my disinclinations for technology in my photography, the Hipstamatic app was "love at first use," and has since supplanted my beloved pinhole cameras as my primary picture-taker. It allows me to photograph the stunning beauty that surrounds me in a whimsical style, which is how I see view life. It is slow, it allows me to change films and lenses depending on what vintage camera I want to mimic and its viewfinder is erratic. Post-production cropping is not an option since each image has a distinctive border or unique detail, forcing Hipstamatic photographers to make the effort to frame and compose each every shot. These particulars are what I love and what allow me to use a digital camera and not feel guilty for all my past thoughts on digital photography.

Something I've especially enjoyed has been getting acquainted with the different personalities of each lens and film. Some have light leaks, others dust. Some are monochromatic or have a black or white border. Some remind me of afternoon cloud watching or fancy parties with elbow length gloves, while others make me dizzy. One even conveys the harsh realities of life using heavy black distortion as visual pollution in the image. When I choose each lens and film, I'm setting the tone for how I want to remember the moment. I'm guiding my viewers to feel certain emotions based on my choices. traveling abroad.



Sheila Bocchine, Buddha (Hipstamatic), 2010

This gorgeous Buddha rests on Seorak Mountain in Korea. So poised and perfect, I immediately became infatuated with the headpiece. I shot at least 20 images before I was happy with the framing. For glittery goodness, I chose Roboto Glitter lens; for added hippie love, Ina's 1969 film.



Sheila Bocchine, Jeju Tea Fields (Hipstamatic), 2010

These were the days when I was obsessed with Hipstamatic's Roboto Glitter lens option and wore shades made with robot love. While wandering the grounds of the O'Sulloc Tea Museum and tea fields on Jeju Island, a lonely tree cradled in lazy clouds lulled me from a misty trance, beckoning me to take a photograph.

I'm also becoming aware that I use pinhole and Hipstamatic in similar ways. Both are slow. Both capture the vitality of organic movement, not freeze it. Both depict the ethereal aesthetic quality I love. Both are revolutionary for the photography industry. I find that pinhole is more suited for ongoing series and beautiful portraits, especially on gorgeous sunny days. Shooting into the sun with my pinhole camera creates the most spectacular sunbursts which add an element to my photographs that I've never seen with other cameras.

They are both magical. Pinhole photography is and will always be my one true love, but my affair with Hipstamatic is refreshing and has visible long-term potential. I often wonder if others see the world from such an whimsical standpoint—if the edges are blurred and fuzzy, and if light and color defy sharp bold lines—where imagination is reality.



Sheila Bocchine, Streamers (pinhole), 2008

When the used car lot in Phoenix was closed one Sunday, I climbed into the bed of a truck and extended my tripod as far as it would go. I got exactly what I wanted with this pinhole, a sunburst with streamers.



Sheila Bocchine, Korean Countryside (Hipstamatic), 2010

I was invited to Samcheok for a Korean beach (camping) weekend. In order to keep my sanity (I'm not much of a camper), I spent hours walking around the quiet countryside, photographing bugs and lush green scenes. For this image, I chose the John S lens with Float film hoping for a perfect vignette, an effort which I deem successful.



Sheila Bocchine, Su-ni (Hipstamatic), 2010

Su-ni, my yoga instructor, is always smiling and as eager to learn as she is to teach. I snapped this beautiful portrait of her and a birthday cake amidst a bilingual chorus of "Happy Birthday," sung in English and Korean. I had no idea how well my iPhone's little camera could fair in low light conditions to illuminate Su-ni's gorgeous smile.