

## SALLY HELLER | ARTIST STATEMENT

I'm a multimedia artist whose practice not only spans generations, but genres, materials and mediums: it belongs to Modern, Pop and Abstract Art, includes commonplace and obscure consumer items like acrylic plexiglass, rub-off letters, conveyor belts, buttons and on, and presents as sculpture, installation and wall-based works. With this conceptual and tangible matter at the fore, I observe what I call The Residual; I look at phenomena that was once generative in one respect and how it became hollowing in another.

Emojis, for example, have become cultural residue. The fast-food of communication, they create an enormous channel of exchange while reducing language to oft-misinterpreted, inadequate attempts of expressions. I use flat, lasercut, colorful wall works with emojis' goofy, loopy and dumb expressions to poke fun at the bloated belly of a culture stuffed with toxic detritus. These pieces' translucency and hyper saturation present satisfying, rich communication in the latter contrasted with the empty yet claustrophobic waterfall that can be iMessaging in the former.

This fascination with consumerism and communication likely stems from my growing up in a family of four girls, all born during the Boomer era. I've maintained a fascination with feminist visualizations, which is to say, perceptions of the female mind and body. Through a process that involves researching porn sites, printing images of select scenes, tracing women and turning them into stencils, and then using the stencil and applying gold leaf and rub off letters to the surface, I create BABES. They're contemporary pinup girls layered with emojis and letters that sometimes form texting or sexting colloquialisms, or slang for female body parts. This collection of work—the over 60 BABES that I've now done—convey a certain ease in the transaction. I enjoy making them so much that I perhaps over-indulge in it, and thus the BABES are both exploited and celebrated.

Adjacent to the above-defined bodies of work—*of which there are many more*—sits my responsive and site-specific installation practice. Ever-dependent on low-end goods like pipe cleaners, wiffle balls, plastic ware, buttons and string, I build environments that, perhaps unknowingly to the viewer, immerse them in mass market items. In this sense, these installations are the umbrella of my practice, or the aggregate that subsumes and distills my aforementioned interest: The Residual—our literal and figurative, psychological residue. Echoing the world we live in, my installations depict unresolved spaces where complex shifts can occur and unexpected events happen.

Despite the cultural criticism vested in the work, there is also bright optimism. While I may mock or warp the emojis, use slang with the BABES or create potentially unsettling moments

within the installations, my practice is laced with the kind of humor that helps us get through what's uncomfortable.