

Sandeep Mukherjee

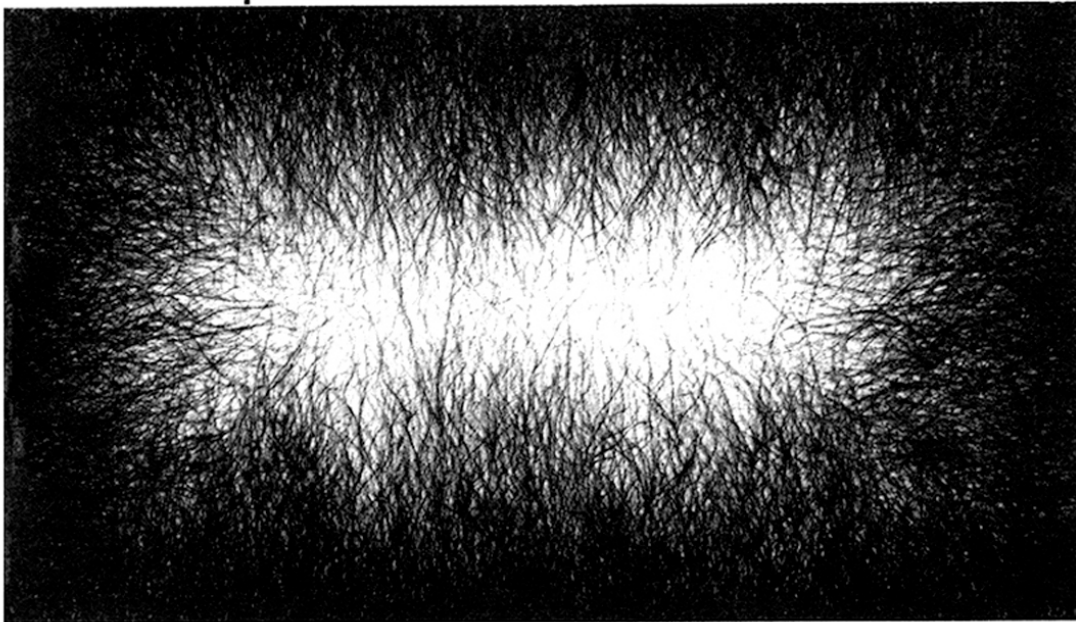
Sister, 437 Gin Ling Way, Los Angeles

Cottage Home, 410 Cottage Home Road, Los Angeles

Sandeep Mukherjee's paintings are elegant yet visceral, with a whiff of the existential. Mukherjee paints with acrylic ink on Duralene, a translucent paper more and more artists are employing — the Mylar of the twenty-first century. Three variations comprised this dual Chinatown exhibition. The most prominent, expansive, and emblematic of the artist's work featured layered, emanating circular bands that evoke fingerprints, the cosmos, and (one imagines unintentionally) Aboriginal art. Other paintings have striations etched into both sides of the Duralene, leaving carved geometries of abstracted peaks and valleys. Then there are what could be called "gravity paintings," in which the viscous flow of ink is transformed into weed-like flora, process and product merging seamlessly. This coalescing of effects reached a climactic level in what was arguably the star of the show(s), *Untitled (Vines)*, a dense forest of thin-slivered, carefully controlled ink runs that exploded Minimalism into body hair and beyond.

It's quite a paradox that Mukherjee's work can be so physical — whether etched, smeared, scraped, or bled — and yet remain so cool. Its quiet complexity is tough, its footholds slippery. Even its most organic, menstrual drips somehow dry quickly as we take them in. Mukherjee's formal innovations are numerous; his palette betrays a mastery of earthy colors. If dazzle is often over-rated, there are rare occasions when it's missed. The austerity of Mukherjee's work almost cries out for some self-indulgent relief. His art may leave us feeling as if we've just finished a mostly-protein meal: we're alert and healthy, but lacking the lingering buzz provided by something not as good for us. 🍷

— Michael Shaw



Sandeep Mukherjee, *Untitled (Vines)*, acrylic ink on duralene, 5' x 8', 2008