

PAUL THIEBAUD GALLERY

Contemporary Asian American Abstraction

June 15 – August 17, 2024

Opening reception: Saturday, June 15th, 3 – 5pm

Artist talk led by BAMPFA Curator Matthew Villar Miranda 3:30pm

Paul Thiebaud Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Contemporary Asian American Abstraction*, a group exhibition featuring Ekta Aggarwal, Mary Ijichi, Joshua Moreno, Sandeep Mukherjee, Grace Munakata, and Sono Osato, on Saturday, June 15, 2024, with a reception from 3-5pm and an artist talk led by BAMPFA Curatorial Associate Matthew Villar Miranda at 3:30pm. The works on view encompass a variety of materials – including oil on panel, ink on mylar, graphite on paper, acrylic on board, and sewn Khadi fabric – and range from minimalist geometric fields of color, to gestural abstractions, to obsessive mark making. Full of expressive power, each work reveals the diversity of expression found among artists with heritages from across Asia. The exhibition will be on view through August 17, 2024.

Abstraction in the West has been used by successive generations of artists since the 19th century and it continues to evolve today. The artists in the exhibition each chart their own territory with the genre through both their material choices and aesthetic outlooks. Ekta Aggarwal's irregular grid paintings are made from sewn together scrap pieces of Khadi fabric, a hand woven and dyed cotton fabric made in India. Aggarwal collected the scraps left over from a bag design project she started with a group of craftswomen in India in 2014. The pieces are then stitched together into a complex textile that filters the forms of crazy quilts and checkerboard mosaics through the vivid colors of India. Mary Ijichi's *Assemblage* drawings also employ a grid structure as part of their composition, but in an entirely different way. Ijichi first creates a rubbing drawing in colored pencil on frosted, translucent mylar, which is then layered on top of an architectural grid she has painted and embellished with a layer of beads. The resulting works are unique hybrids between drawing and sculpture that give viewers a perceptual experience bridging minimalist and light and space sensibilities with the beautiful space of traditional Japanese aesthetics.

Joshua Moreno's *CirclesSquaredSwipe* drawings are studies in intense, obsessive mark making. In each work, Moreno has filled four large squares with numerous minute circles grouped together into areas with differing shades of graphite, which in turn impart a sense of amorphous movement to the composition. After filling the squares, Moreno masks off sections and begins removing the graphite by swiping an eraser across the paper's surface, imparting each work with the feeling of dematerialization and ethereality. Sandeep Mukherjee's acrylic ink paintings on dura-lene combine organic imagery with symbolic geometries. Composed by adding different colors of splattered ink over one another, Mukherjee's works recall the brilliant hues found throughout Indian culture, while his compositions draw from the stylized forms of the spiritual and transcendentalist traditions.

Grace Munakata's paintings sit in the territory between representation and full abstraction. Drawing from her childhood experiences, fables, and her concern for nature, Munakata collages passages of recognizable imagery and areas of abstract strokes of color into complex, layered arrangements. Munakata takes inspiration for this technique from the Japanese tradition of 'boro' patchwork found on old garments from rural areas of Japan. Through continual mending to clothing used for work and other purposes, a single garment can contain the story of an entire family over many generations, embodying the expression of 'mottainai' or a shame to waste and great appreciation. Sono Osato's paintings combine language, technology, and archaeology into works that manifest the undulation of the time through the medium of tinted rabbit-skin glue, oil paint, and found objects. Derived

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from the silhouettes of mechanical parts Osato has mined from typewriters, adding machines, and other antiquated technologies, these layered works recall the strata of artifacts found in archeological digs. In Osato's words, "Throughout the evolution of my work, I've repeatedly returned to trying to feel, envision, and interact with a sense of time that is utterly indifferent to me in which it's possible for the past, present, and future to collapse into a single breath, and it's credible to say that we are all each other in our reckoning with a gestalt far greater than ourselves."

Each of the artists in the exhibition infuses their works with their own unique sensibility that is informed by their individual heritages and life experiences. The resulting works each display a hybridic nature, one that connects to both eastern and western cultural traditions while also fusing them together make something new.

Ekta Aggarwal holds a BA in Economics from Hindu College, University of Delhi; an MA in Fine Art from The Chelsea College of Art, University of Arts, London; and an MFA in Art from The California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California. She has taught at Universities across the United States, including Virginia Commonwealth University, California State University, Northridge, and the California Institute of the Arts. In 2023 she was a finalist for The Hopper Prize and in 2024 she received a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant. Her works can be found in numerous private collections across the United States, India, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mary Ijichi was born in Oakland, California, and attended UC Berkeley and UC San Francisco, where she received a Bachelor of Science. Her works have been exhibited across the United States and in Japan. She was the recipient of a Ragdale Foundation Residency in 1996, a Vermont Studio Center Residency in 1998, a 2001 The MacDowell Colony Residency, and a 2022 Visiting Artist Residency at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Mary Ijichi's works can be found in the collections of the Berkeley Art Museum, CA; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; University of Massachusetts, Amherst; and the Oakland Museum of California, among others.

Born in Watsonville, California, **Joshua Moreno** earned his BFA in Art Practice from the University of California, San Diego in 2011 and his MFA in Studio Art from Stanford University in 2022. He is currently a professor of Art at Stanford University. In 2022 he received a Headlands Center for the Arts Residency and in 2023 a Cité Internationale des Arts Residency in Paris, France. In 2020, he co-founded the art collective *All Of Us* with fellow artists Brett Amory, Karla Centeno, Gabriella Grill, and Miguel Monroy. His works have been exhibited across California and in France, and can be found in numerous private collections.

Sandeep Mukherjee was born in Pune, India, and holds a Bachelor of Sciences from Manipal Institute of Technology in Mangalore, India, (1986), a Master of Sciences from the University of California, Berkeley (1988), a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles (1996), and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of California, Los Angeles (1999). From 2006 – 2023 he was a Professor of Art at Pomona College in Claremont, CA. He was the recipient of the Berlin Fellowship from Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House e.V. in 2017 and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship the same year. His works have been exhibited extensively across the United States, Europe, and India, and can be found in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Jumex Collection, Mexico City, Mexico; Orange County Museum of Art, CA; Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA; San Jose Museum of Art, CA; Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro,

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NC; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS; and the Portland Museum of Art, OR, among others.

Grace Munakata earned both her Bachelors in Art in 1980 and her MFA in Art in 1985 from the University of California, Davis. After a distinguished career of teaching, she is currently Professor Emerita from California State University, East Bay. She has been a recipient of numerous awards and residencies, including a 1984 Regents Fellowship at UC Davis, a 1984 Andy Warhol Scholarship, a 2017 Lucid Art Residency, a 2018 Skaffell Artist Residency in Seyðisfjörður, Iceland, and a 2022 Morris Graves Foundation Residency. Her works have been included in exhibitions across the United States and shown in the Bay Area by Braunstein/Quay Gallery, Paul Thiebaud Gallery, and currently at Anglim/Trimble Gallery. Her works can be found in numerous private and corporate collections, as well as in public collections, including the Crocker Art Museum and the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis.

Born in Baden-Baden, Germany, **Sono Osato** earned her BFA from Arizona State University, Tempe, and her MFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, (now California College of the Arts, San Francisco). Osato's works have been exhibited extensively in the San Francisco Bay Area, New York, and Austin, TX, where she currently lives and works. She has been the recipient of Pollock-Krasner Foundation grants in 1989, 1999, and 2008. Her works can be found in the collections of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; Oakland Museum of California; di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, Napa; Stanford Law School, Stanford University; and the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH, as well as many private collections.