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Reviews

In Your Mind's Eye Sundaram Tagore Gallery

If there's one potential upside to the global financial crisis it's that it may take some of the froth out of an increasingly commercialised art scene and prompt a fresh look at art's non-mercantile functions. If so, this refreshingly grown-up group exhibition of seven Asian artists seems timely.

The meditative calm of the abstract expressionist works gets to the parts of the viewer's being that clever conceptualism and chi-chi Chinese contemporary just can't reach. Half of the artists are Indian-born and the spiritualism of the subcontinent looms large, but all the pieces have a contemplative quality.

Nowhere is this more so than in the works by Sohan Qadri, who meditates before producing – with vivid inks and dyes – trance-like pieces that seem to come from the deepest levels of the subconscious.

Less-colour-saturated but no less intuitive are the pieces by Natvar Bhavsar, who sprinkles pigment delicately on his canvases in an echo

of Jackson Pollock, although the works' understated quality reflects a gentle Asian sensibility that's the opposite of the American painter's frenetic, ego-driven style.

Fashioned from steel plates, Nathan Slate Joseph's wall pieces are solid yet subtle, their three-dimensionality vanishing into a tapestry of shades and textures created by welds, pigment and acid.

Hosook Kang and Hiroshi Senju's offerings are explicitly concerned with nature, with subtle representations of cranes and clouds in the former and waterfalls in the latter, and Anil Revri's only piece is the show's most formal, its geometric precision repeated across the canvas like a mantra.

Trio, by Robert Masao Yasuda, is a plain, pearly triptych whose hue changes with the light and aspect from which it's viewed – perhaps just as an overheated art world may be about to do.

Padraic Convery

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