

Sandeep Mukherjee – Molting the Fractured**Opening:**

Saturday, 9 September, 6–9pm

Duration:

9 September– 4 November 2017

Location:

68projects, Fasanenstraße 68, 10719 Berlin



Sandeep Mukherjee, Melting the Fractured, Work in progress

The concept for the “Molting the Fractured” exhibition acts on a multitude of ideas and thoughts that have occupied **Sandeep Mukherjee** for over ten years. After preparatory work in his studio in Los Angeles, the artist will finalise the exhibition in the summer of 2017 as part of a Berlin-based residency lasting several weeks, which has been initiated and financed by 68projects. The works, which will extend through all three of 68projects’ rooms, will then celebrate its world premiere in Berlin.

For more than ten years, the works of Sandeep Mukherjee have revolved around the concept of abstraction as a means to artistically design volatile processes. In his paintings, drawings and installations, the artist always remains faithful to the processual aspect, which is also expressed in his fondness for improvisational methods. The transformation of the acting body, the removal of the material body and the convolution of the architectural body are part of his artistic explorations, which always focus on the relationship of process, affect and image.

The primary material of the works, which is at the heart of Mukherjee’s Berlin exhibition, is the artist’s private car, a 2006 BMW Mini Cooper. The vehicle served the artist for more than six years as a means of transportation in his adopted city of Los Angeles, the city of cars par excellence, with its interlaced, intersecting highways, fastways and freeways that cover the city like a network, enriched with the echo of countless Hollywood films, in which the automobile is celebrated as an inextricable part of the American Way of Life.

Not least in view of the many hours that Sandeep Mukherjee spent in this vehicle, the BMW Mini Cooper became a type of extended second skin for the artist: “The Mini Cooper acts like a magnified casing for my body, which became my reference framework with its extended possibilities for speed, mobility and movement within space. The vehicle allows me space to imagine distance and topography in a way that remains closed to my own body.”

Through his father, who worked at Siemens in Germany for many years, Sandeep Mukherjee learned German and became familiar with the idea of the car as the Germans’ favourite child. And before he decided to become an artist, he studied engineering, meaning his project for Berlin is in many respects an interaction with his roots.

The works, in which sculpture, painting and installation combine, marks a significant step in Mukherjee’s artistic creation and is the result of complex preparations. The BMW Mini Copper is used as a mould: a total of eighteen thin, nearly square 100 x 120 cm aluminium sheets encase the car completely. Similar to a frottage, the individual layers are then pressed by hand or pushed into

the less accessible areas using tools. In this way, each of the aluminium sheets is embossed with the copy of a part of the car's surface. They become a second skin, which preserves the copy of the underlying car.

The moulded sheets are then individually and manually coloured with acrylic paint. The focus was less on accurate painting technique and more about the moment of spraying with all its eventualities. The gravitational force, the direction of the spray can and also any breezes play an important role in spreading the paint on the surfaces. Eventualities are therefore deliberately allowed and encouraged.

On the outer sides of the aluminium skin, the artist works with black and white. However, the insides, which are normally hidden from our view, are designed with flesh-coloured shades of red. The idea that the aluminium sheets are skin is therefore enhanced: while the outer sides appear in neutral colours, the colouring of the inner sides is reminiscent of raw meat. In this way, the aluminium undergoes a transformation. It seems to have an organic element.

The eighteen coloured aluminium sheets will then be hung closely together from the ceiling in the room using transparent ropes. Close enough to achieve the impression of a whole body, but always accessible too. The fact that the individual sheets move due to the breeze or the visitors wandering between them is as much a part of the installation's concept as the individual adjustment to the exhibition room. The noises that arise when the parts move and come into contact adds another level to the artwork. The multitude of sensory impressions, sight, touch and hearing, address the senses during a car journey.

The works of Sandeep Mukherjee have been on display in the USA, in Asia and in Europe as part of countless individual and group exhibitions as well as at the Broad Center, Pitzer College and the Pomona College Museum of Art, both located in Claremont (USA). He was recently awarded the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, a significant step in his artistic career.

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