

Critic's Picks

By Alexandra Guglielminett | June 10, 2016

‘Between Structure and Matter: Other Minimal Futures’

Curated by Murtaza Vali and Prajit Dutta, this exhibition features artists hailing from or affiliated with South Asia and the broader Middle East. It focuses on Minimalism as a capacious philosophical concept that draws together non-Western practitioners from different generations. The works end up defying this aesthetic categorization, however, as there is a subtle emotional tactility throughout the show that enables content—personal, political—that, of course, runs counter to chilly, textbook Minimalism.



Rasheed Araeen’s and Somnath Hore’s large bodies of work provide a historical anchor to this display. Araeen, who holds a degree in civil engineering, first began experimenting with Minimalist sculpture during the 1960s, after moving to London from Karachi. His simple yet dynamic structures, painted in bright colors, call to mind Sol LeWitt’s gridded sculptures but are more eccentric, playful. Hore’s cast paper series “UNTITLED (WOUNDS),” 1970–72, indeed, look like mortified flesh—they resonate quite palpably with horror and trauma.

Joël Andrianomearisoa’s sculpture of denim fragments hanging on a single nail, OKMARCLAURENT77MONDAY BOY, 2016, and Nadia Kaabi-Linke’s barely-there cityscape, Perspectives, Bank Junction, London, 2014, are quietly intense objects—traces or remnants of gestures and materials, carefully conceived, that make us question the veracity of sight as well as the conceptual definition and physical manifestation of “weight.” Abdullah M. I. Syed’s Tears II: 4 Midnight Blue and Black Squares, 2016, actually use the artist’s tears as a medium—it feels like a tenderer, more intimate version of Ad Reinhardt’s famous black monochromes. The artists in this show demonstrate rather beautifully that the making of “reductive” art functions most resoundingly when it carries a human touch.