

Shawn Kuruneru

Chords

June 21 – August 16, 2025

Eleven years ago and a day, Shawn Kuruneru opened his first solo exhibition with David Petersen Gallery. Entitled *Landscapes*, the exhibition included two components, both borne from the artist's drawing practice. On the walls hung eight paintings of ink poured, brushed and tossed on raw canvas; and on the floor, an installation of tiny stones, inked in black and arranged in a large rectangle on the site of which two of the paintings were created. Six of the paintings, uniformly 48 inches tall by 36 wide, were installed side by side a mere three inches apart, creating a small panorama of blacks, reds and greys variously saturated and undulating across the natural cotton. On the opposite wall hung two larger works as if a diptych standing above the floor drawing. A deeply saturated darkness on the left, with hints of navy blue standing on the canvas's edges, while on the right a nearly blank canvas with ink applied so lightly you could imagine it came from the artist's own breath. Two walls of the gallery were left blank.

Eleven years and a day later, Kuruneru opens *Chords*, an exhibition of six paintings that evince his continued commune with color, material, repetition, and movement as well as his long-standing dialogues with NY Abstract Expressionism, traditional Chinese landscape painting and his own formative comic drawings. Additionally, Kuruneru's undertaking is further articulated by a relationship with his own body, the length of his arm and the space between him and the canvas, the rotating and twisting of his wrist, and the control maintained by his hand. As if playing an instrument, each Kuruneru canvas is made with an economy of notes - color and shape - that still contain an infinite number of possibilities amongst them. Beginning with a chromatic palette of varying hue, tint, and value, Kuruneru applies aqueous acrylic paint that is absorbed by and embedded in the threads of the raw canvas. The shapes created by the artist share several characteristics - organic and elemental, yet delineated and intentional - as if from the same genus. The all-over compositions of these shapes reacting to one another by abutting, layering, interlocking, and generating new shapes and spaces between them are orchestral vibrations of tempo and tenor. Harmonic leitmotifs of synchronizing flats and sharps suggest a planned and plotted design, yet these arrangements are freely improvised, leaving open the chance for color to escape its border with a flourish.

Just as paint and canvas become one in Kuruneru's work, the imagery bears an auditory presence, inseparable and indistinguishable from its visual source. Furthering the retinal hum, the paintings are installed evenly throughout the gallery. Despite no empty walls, an abundance of white remains, leaving room, as they say, for space between the notes. The installation of *Chords* as both a visual and harmonic progression, ebbing and flowing in intensity, with undulating depths and rhythms can embrace the viewer and their attention, or provide a meditative space to simply and freely be.

Shawn Kuruneru lives and works in Montreal, Canada. Kuruneru's work is in the collections of the Portland Museum of Art (Portland, OR), The National Gallery of Canada Library Collection (Toronto), CELINE (Paris), and the Alex Katz Foundation (New York). Recent solo exhibitions include JDJ (New York) Cooper Cole (Toronto), KOKI ARTS (Tokyo), Sunny NY (New York), Bozidar Brazda/GALLERY (Woodstock) and group exhibitions include Skarstedt Gallery curated by David Salle (New York), Mother Gallery (Beacon), Night Gallery (Los Angeles), Ribordy Thetaz (Geneva), Rachel Uffner (New York). His work has been featured in Artforum, The New York Times, Mousse Magazine, The Guardian and NY Arts Magazine, among others. Shawn is currently included in the year long exhibition, *Graphic Worlds*, at The Montréal Contemporary Art Museum, curated by Mojeanne Behzadi.

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