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Dubai

Seher Shah

GREEN ART GALLERY

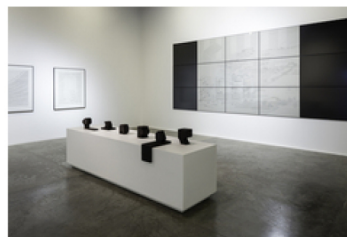
Al Quoz 1, Street 8, Al Serkal Avenue, Unit 28

March 14–May 9

If you had spoken to Pakistan-born, Delhi-based artist [Seher Shah](#) about her work two years ago, she would have summoned a host of architectural references: Le Corbusier's Unité d'habitation in Marseille, the city Chandigarh in India, gridded facades, ribbon windows. On the same subject today, she is likely to discuss her feelings. While Shah has always reveled in injecting slippages into the rational realm of architectural drawing—undoing sections, upending elevation—now she delights in more visceral pursuits of erasure, abstraction, and fathoming materiality.

In her exhibition "The Lightness of Mass," drawing is no longer strictly representational but rather the site of a different breed of mark-making. Line functions almost as a material. In the series "Brutalist Traces," 2015, domineering Brutalist structures—the Barbican Centre in London or Delhi's Akbar Bhawan—appear as ghostly after-images where softly modulating hand-drawn graphite lines elusively render the weighty behemoths, seemingly hovering between presence and absence. Similarly, the multipanel ink-on-paper series "Flatlands (Scrim)," 2015, is a scrim-shifting space in which the architectural stage is invaded by unexpectedly playful marks, ushering in a boisterous fluidity more akin to music than precision draftsmanship.

The etchings in "Unit Object," 2014, distort the grid by depicting Unité's facade, outwardly skimmed off the building, bowing and bending in perspective-defying poses, capturing a moment when the plank-like lines cave in, all rendered in viscous black on muted gray. The materiality of this inky black deposit is echoed in Shah's untitled cast-iron sculptures from 2015, whose untreated surfaces will rust and weather over time—a fitting echo of a maturing process that has taken Shah to this ripe moment in her career.



View of "Seher Shah: The Lightness of Mass," 2016. From left: "Brutalist Traces," 2015; "Untitled," 2015; "Flatlands (Scrim)," 2015.

— Kevin Jones

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