

Time and Space - Harry Kiyooka

By Greg Pyra

Senior Alberta artist Harry Kiyooka's solo show is an elegant and understated exploration of the dimensions of time and space. During a trip to India in 1997, the artist was taken with Hindu visions of the universe and the role of Brahma, the god of creation. He explains that the life or presence of the gods is on a galactic scale, with a single day in the life of Brahma spanning more than four billion years. The challenge that Kiyooka created was to visualize the immensity of time and space, however one measures these dimensions.

The sharply designated spots and spatters of paint in "The Kalpa Series - Slab Paintings" are strongly reminiscent of the infinitude of stars emerging from black night skies. Focus on one spot and you are drawn to a multitude of tiny dots - events really - layered in every other direction. An object made by hand takes on a scale which is cosmic in scope, and the thin, incised cuts which run through panel emphasize the nature of the works as part of some larger whole.

The triptychs including "Kalpa Series #5" and "Kalpa Series #13" are most successful in the show for two reasons. First, the muted, light grey colouration suggests a softness and fragility which compliments the understated quality of the works. Second, the horizontal cuts which carry onto adjacent panels reinforce the artist's vision of time and space as part of a continuum without a defined beginning or end.

As a senior Canadian artist, Kiyooka continues to create serious works based on a lifetime's exploration of philosophy and conceptual practice in art. The creative spirit takes unexpected turns and for this reason Kiyooka's latest work is a departure from previous efforts. I expect that the artist has only begun his explorations of time and space through painting, and that the conceptual underpinning of his work will strengthen further.