

artillery

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Misato Suzuki at Sam Lee Gallery
Elizabeth Anderson-Kempe

In her first solo show, "Unknown Quantities," LA-based artist Misato Suzuki explores a theme inspired by life in Japan. On seven canvases, she invents a way of evoking tension among limited space, abundant human life and supporting infrastructure. The media mix – charcoal, acrylic, coffee stains – is a good alchemical basis for her experiment.

The large-scale paintings have a muted color palette. Viewed as a group, they emit a serene, decorative vibe. The presence of the strong structural element created with charcoal and repeated in varying patterns on each canvas supplies energy and uniqueness. In one painting, this element resembles a chain, in another, a DNA strand, elsewhere, hair. Placed against representational and abstract shapes and large swaths of negative space, clusters of chains pulsate with movement and life. In *Transistor*, both tightly woven and loose clusters push against stone-like objects settled at the bottom; the coffee-stained upper half provides relief. In *Dwelling*, an intricate network of chains is pulled down by the weight of five blue lemons it cradles. Gravity softens the chains, and their hold on the lemons is more protective than vice-like. Suzuki's series asks that we experience the tides of multiple life forces.