

SIKHING



In the State of Flux Gallery: Sikhing by Mia Sandhu 18 September – 23 October, 2010 Reception: Saturday 25 September 2010 @7pm

Mia Sandhu (Toronto, ON) presents new work that stems from her fascination with religion, culture, and life experience, and adds a measured dose of humour and surrealism. Since graduating from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University in Halifax, her work has had an emphasis on portraiture and a focus on issues regarding identity and belonging in Canada.

Sikhing Photos

Artist's Statement

A portrait is a personal depiction, with nuances and details that form a story of that person's history and character. I have chosen it as a means to express the internal struggle for identity growing up as the daughter of two ethnic worlds; my father a Punjabi Sikh, and my mother a proud Canadian. My father's family who came to Canada from Punjab, India, made personal sacrifices to leave their country and integrate into the cultural mosaic of Canada. Through time they forfeited their culture, their faith, and native dress, but nothing could disguise them as an ethnic minority. Like many other newcomers in Canada, they faced many uncertainties about their place, their future and how their sons and daughters would fit in this new home. Initially, I attempted to focus on the story of my grand parents. However, a change of direction came in my work came when I realized that their struggle was their narrative, their story. As a person who experienced the dichotomy of my background, I felt that for this body of work to be authentic, it had to reflect my narrative, my own story. I then had to face the question of what form it would take. Studying the backgrounds of my parents, the aspect of spirituality and religion came to the forefront. To many people religion represents a form of truth, comfort, divinity and reflection. I have chosen to create a body of work that takes cues from the aesthetic of religious experience. I have chosen to enshrine the elements of my experience and perspective that concern the questions of belonging, identity, legacy and perception that affect me as a creation of mixed heritage. Through the attention paid to the intricacies of my work, I have allowed myself time to contemplate and experience my own revelations on my identity and self, not necessarily that which a larger society, Canadian or

Sikh, would dictate. It is with this personal reflection that I hope elements of my work will allow the viewer to consider their own identity, place and narrative, and take time to assess their position in the unique multicultural idea that we call Canada.