



Left and previous page; Phenomenal Nature: Mrinalini Mukherjee, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Met Breuer, Floor 3, June 4 - September 29, 2019

Mukherjee sought inspiration by travelling across India to visit temples and shrines, where she was particularly interested in the erotic temple carvings. Her work *Woman and Peacock* (1991) demonstrates the influence of these traditional sculptures on her imagination. A superb sculpture of open and close gestures, it represents the rhythms of an orgasm.

Generally though, Mukherjee was reluctant to reveal the references that inspired her, feeling that each work should speak for itself. Yet she admitted that she started with an idea and then let it grow. 'I think they all have a relationship with the human form,' she said in 1993. 'I think the earlier works maybe started with the idea of a plant or some form of nature, but they sort of took on a human scale and gradually became more human.'

By the mid-1990s the organic rope she had always used was now being intermixed with synthetic fibres. Furthermore, her preferred dyes were banned, restricting the colours she could use, and the physical demands of using textiles to create sculpture were becoming onerous; sometimes it could take over a year to produce a sculpture. So Mukherjee stopped working with fibre and turned to clay, which provided her with new possibilities to express herself, and to continue to contribute to the global conversation about femininity, masculinity and art.*** **Tim Saunders. Mrinalini Mukherjee's work is on display as part of Materials and Objects at Tate Modern until 5 July 2020.**

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