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MICHI MEKO – Dark was the Night, Cold was the Ground

If an indelible image from your childhood is the Weekly Reader featuring Matthew Henson setting foot on the Artic, perhaps it's a given that your art practice will explore the vastness of nature. **Michi Meko,** the Alabama born, Atlanta based, multi-disciplinary artist, is a fisherman who makes his own lures; a camping aficionado; and survivor of a near death drowning experience.

Meko was in conversation with **Key Jo Lee,** associate curator of American art at the Cleveland Museum of Art, at **Kavi Gupta Gallery** where his current exhibition **Michi Meko: *Dark was the Night, Cold was the Ground*** was on display. He was also signing his new catalogue published by Kavi Gupta editions. The works were created during the COVID-19 pandemic when the artist literally headed to the hills and this work reflects on his time in isolation.

Meko speaks reverentially about stepping out into the desert night at 3 am in the morning, seeing the 'Milky Way right above your tent' and, at that moment, realizing how tiny and insignificant you are in the vastness of the universe. That he says, "does something to you". His irreverence peeks through when he opines that the Milky Way must be where Black people come from because is the only cluster of stars 'blinging' for no reason. That, he says "triggers cosmic thoughts".

He says his work is about finding the 'calm or transcendent moment where one can hear their own voice'. Meko concurred with an audience members characterization of the works as 'ominous'. And indeed, his seeming hodgepodge of materials - acrylic, aerosol oil, pastel, gold leaf, aerosol hologram glitter, white colored pencils, India ink, gouache and fish scales - contributes to the otherworldly feel of the pieces. Name your favorite futuristic movie and Meko's work could likely be adapted for the landscape.

The works are on display until July 30th.