

Leonovich Gallery

520 W 24th St, New York, NY 10011

'Hiragana Split' Haruka Papashi and Jake Micheal Singer

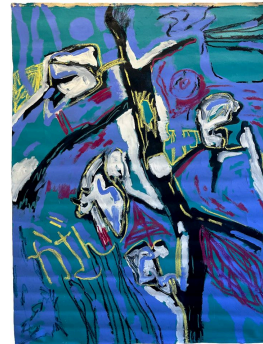
1

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
72" x 33"



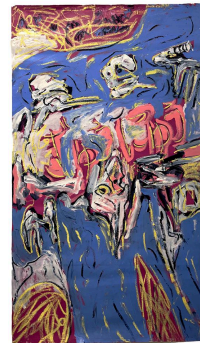
2

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
71" x 47"



3

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
71" x 38.5"



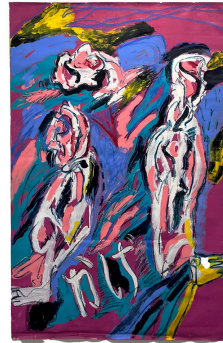
4

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
72" x 39"



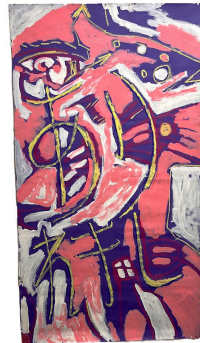
5

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
71" x 42.5"



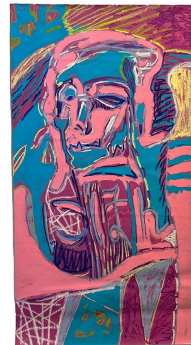
6

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
72" x 46"



7

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
71.5" x 38.5"



8

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
71.5" x 35.5"



9

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
71" x 43"



10

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
61" x 45.5"



11

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
71.5" x 47"



12

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
72" x 42"



13

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
72" x 62"



14

Haruka Papashi
Oil and acrylic on canvas
72" x 41.5"



Heart Murmur

Jake Micheal Singer, 2021
Stainless steel
33.5" x 27.5" x 35"



Fresh Murmur

Jake Micheal Singer, 2021
Stainless steel
37" x 27.5" x 27.5"





Haruka Papashi lived and died in her village of Onomichi, Japan, never sharing her work with the public during her lifetime. Her vivid, language-bending pieces came to the Leonovich Gallery through a personal connection to the artist. Katya Leonovich's godmother had lived in the same village as Papashi, and the two became close friends, leading to the discovery of her work after Papashi's death.

Papashi's art abstracts what is most essential to human connection: language. She removes the intended meaning of her native tongue, both creating and destroying it in the process. Her work transforms sounds and words into pure abstraction; the lines on the canvas are no longer meant to be read but to be felt as form and texture. Many of her characters dissolve so deeply into abstraction that they blend and twist into the surrounding patterns. Like a visual I-Spy, deciphering the characters and isolating them from the artwork itself becomes an engaging challenge.

Adding another layer of complexity, Papashi's work first makes its public debut in predominantly English-speaking New York. While characters from languages like Hiragana (a form of Japanese writing) are a staple in traditional Asian art, Papashi's approach to them departs from tradition. The term *shodō*, originating from China, traces word art back to the Tang dynasty, where Chinese and Japanese calligraphy developed as an expressive, linear art form: bold, wavy characters drawn in flowing brush strokes across a white field of paper.

Though Papashi's pieces were created decades ago, they are now being unveiled to the public in a manner akin to the posthumous release of Hilma af Klint's work. The abstraction of Japanese words speaks to the contemporary eye, offering a fresh perspective on language. In a world where words carry power but understanding often seems elusive, her work is more relevant than ever. In our multilingual, multi-ideological, and multi-identity culture, words are reduced to shapes if we fail to invest them with meaning.

-Akari Takano, curator



Jake Michael Singer



Jake Michael Singer (b. 1991) experiments with a broad range of disciplines from photography to works on paper, and commands an exquisite mastery of sculpture. Drawing inspiration from the emergent behavior of flocking birds, where the individual is subsumed in the whole, and meditating on the timeless monumentality of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, his Murmurations series speaks to our time. Meticulously constructed, using up to sixteen thousand meters of marine grade stainless steel for a single sculpture, the Murmurations series establishes his position as one of the leading young sculptors from Africa.

Singer completed his bachelor's at Michaelis School of Fine Art in 2013, after deepening his learning over the course of 2012 at Central Saint Martins in London. He was recognized by the Eduardo Villa Foundation Grant both in 2016 and 2017, the youngest sculptor yet awarded this. His work features in private collections in South Africa, Germany, Greece, Canada, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. He has further completed two large-scale public sculptures in Johannesburg: Dawn Chorus, part of the RMB Collection in the Think Precinct, and Roarke's Evacuation Plan, a landmark on the Jo'burg skyline. In 2020. His work has been exhibited at Zeitz MOCAA, and his large installation, all the Birds Flew with a Harsh Scream (Marmara), 2020, was featured in Iziko Museum's most recent exhibition Matereality. It is now currently on exhibition at the Norval Foundation. In October 2021, Singer completed Bennu Stassis, a site-specific installation in a former Hamman in Istanbul dating from 1477.