

FROM:

Naoko Haruta and Contemporary

Abstract Painterly Modernity

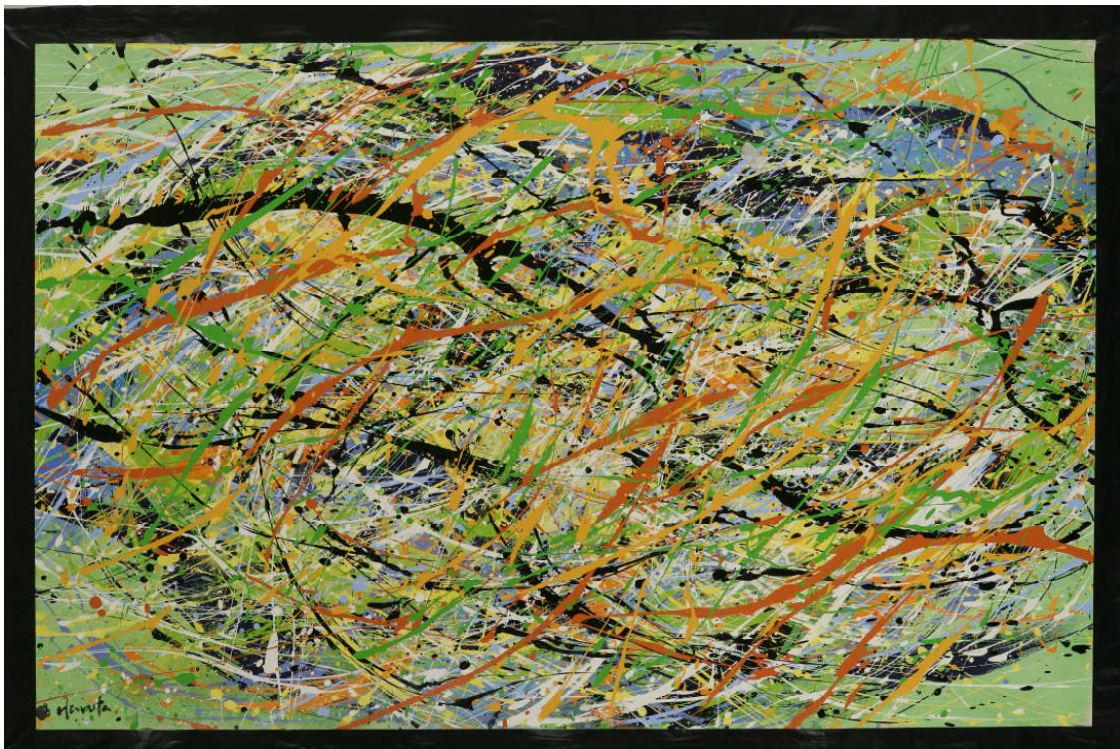
--Steve Light--

*...It is only with the contemporary, U.S.-based Japanese painter, Naoko Haruta, that the language of advanced and contemporary painterly abstraction, propelled forward by Pollock, but immediately abandoned, has found someone capable not only of developing and transforming this painterly language (understanding of course the ways in which painting and music too are at once language and not-language) into an ever increasing vocabulary and into an ever increasing affective and emphatic power, but also of sustaining the intensity, the adventure--and the intelligence and exultations!-- of painting and abstract painting over and against the massive fear and abdications that took hold of painting and visual art tout court (and their attendant, parasitic and delusive discourses) in the post-WW II period and continue in ever increasing and abject ways down to the present day.*

*...Music is the dream, the envy, the oasis, the paradise, the utopia of poetry and of painting too. Even more of painting! If, as Jankelevitch wrote in his exquisite book, Le Nocturne, Chopin brought night into music[1], we can easily say that Naoko Haruta more than any other modern and contemporary painter has brought music into painting. In her canvass, Life #105: "Chopin: Nocturne #20 in C-Sharp Minor (Opus Posthumous)", one of the canvasses in a series entitled, Nocturnes, itself a subset of her extraordinary series-in-progress, Life, a series now numbering over 150 paintings, she has answered the question about what it was that Chopin like no-one else before or after was able to hear and transcribe, i.e. that extreme fine point of the soul and its innermost affections. What is it that Chopin heard and made possible for us to hear? What Naoko Haruta has painted! But from the nocturnal she always advances to noontide. And how could she not?! Because she is the privileged composer not only of nocturnes and mazurkas, but of Aubades too, the Aubades that neither Chopin nor Faure nor Debussy nor Ravel, de Falla, Albeniz, Mompou were ever able to fully compose! Jankelevitch also speaks of Satie and the wonders of morning, of an ever-renewed 'without precedence'... of dawn and its matinee, of Rimsky-Korsakov and the glissandos and fortissimos of the noonday sun.[2] "So that the nocturne of our hope can*

*become the certitude of dawn”[3] was the epigrammatic--and epigraphic!-- truth of Jankelevitch’s book, published clandestinely by his comrades in the French Resistance. And it is one more of the epigraphic truths we find in the painting of Naoko Haruta.*

*Anew! Because she propels forward not only the initiative of Pollock but also the initiative of the modernist and advanced calligraphic and lyrical abstraction that in certain respects takes on with her the dynamism of a first initiative.*



*{Life #139, acrylic on canvas, 43” x 67”}*

... The drip line in her paintings is at once constituting agent and yet the painting's total effect enhances and integrates the drip line more than in any other paintings of this nature. Her drip lines build up in different forms, sustained, discrete, staccato. Lines, brush strokes, stains, splotches, come from the everywhere--and nowhere!--of commencement. Sometimes she allows each layer of the painting to dry before applying the next layer of color, strokes, and lines so that there is an ever increasing intensity of counterpoint and punctuality to the chromatic and morphological aspects of the painting's integration. In more recent paintings in her Life series she adds successive layers of paint before a previous layer has completely dried so that seen up close so many new adventures begin everywhere upon the surface of the canvass. Filaments of paint and droplets break apart and open against one another which gives the greater effect to the larger propulsions of paint and tableau, of contingency and fortuity. The paintings' thinnest drip lines take on an increased speed and movement so that the contingencies and effects gather still greater energy. Brush strokes break open and drip lines break apart and the colors seep as if into the ineffable itself just as the ineffable seeps through to the surface of the colors and their blendings. The variation of lighter and darker colors at every moment tips the chromatic scale as if the penultimate moment had abandoned all its jealousy in relation to ultimity in a union that has wedded charm to its own je-ne-sais-quoi. Often her use of

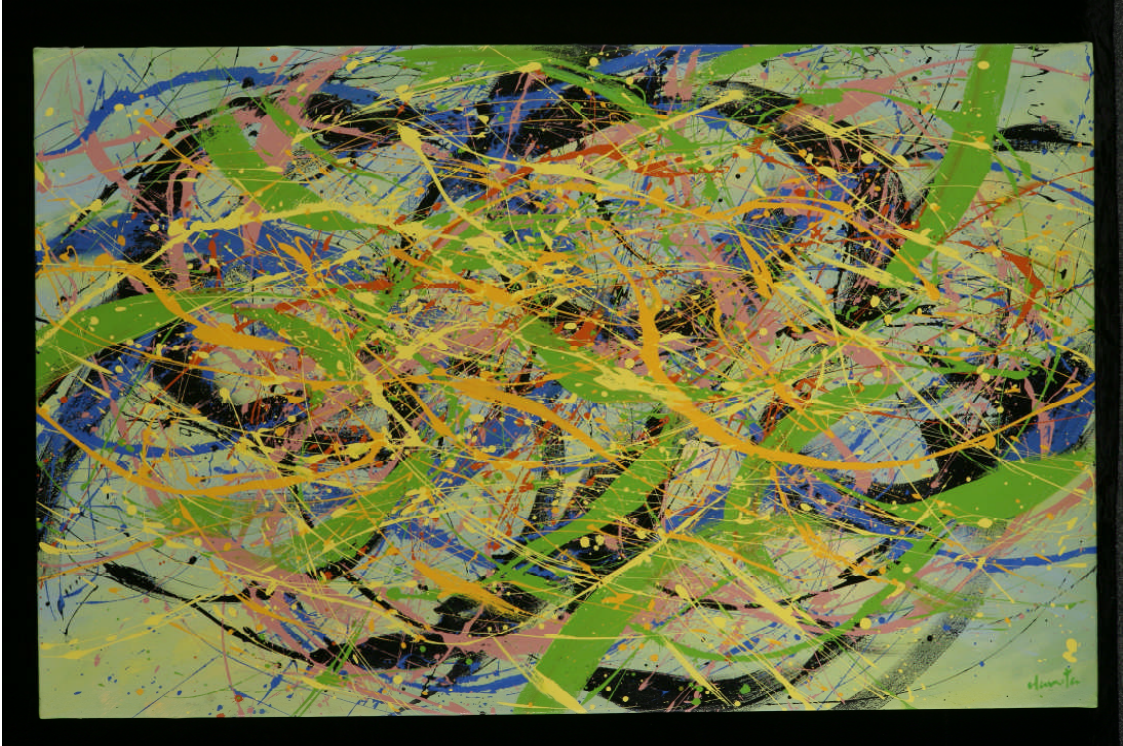
*colors of similar value can make the drip lines become at once noetic and kinetic in their interlacing of so many concatenating unities, of ever the more affective effectivities! Kinetic color, kinetic delight! Like the interior of stars exuded, the elements cooked inside stars--born and borne--paint here is always in motion up close and from afar, in its macrological and micrological durations and simultaneities! It is not even that here painting is eventuality and actuality over and against the coagulation of idea and idol, all the more multiversality prevails over and against every kind of aesthetic unilateralism.*

*This! Naoko Haruta insists on the viability of painting within our contemporaneity and within our contemporary modernity. She insists on the viability of painting as a form and a practice and not as a submission to second-order and meta-practices which are only the outcome of fear, conformity, and complicity, practices that are immediately consumable, functioning as supersymmetries of the most abject aspects of the economies of planned obsolescence and consumption, practices that can sustain neither signification nor even perception. There is in Naoko Haruta's work a vehemence of painting, a vehemence of paint, a vehemence of color. Her paintings refuse to submit to being used by any idea. The "idea" of her paintings, life! is to be and to beckon--not as any coagulated (un)truth can be (but never beckon), but rather as existence--and happiness too--*

*are true! Her paintings refuse the authoritarian suppression of the connection of sight and joy. Naoko Haruta doesn't paint as if existence and the existence and experience of abstraction were still meaningful, because this would mean that she had already surrendered to that aestheticosophical fallacy in which existence and abstraction are rendered immobile, suspect even, since they would be seen as needing some kind of justification. Rather she paints existences that are so immediate that meaning has already from the start become an exultation not just within ourselves--though it is that too--but above all an exultation of and within that which is seen! The nakedness, the nudity of life, love, desire beneath the light, the color, the sun, the suns! of summer.*



*{Life #96: "Africa #11", acrylic on canvas, 43" x 67"}*



{ Life #133, "Africa #14", acrylic on canvas, 43" x 67" }



*(Life #158: "Africa #16", acrylic on canvas, 43" x 67")*

*Nocturne? Poetry and painting are weighted beneath their longing--and their longing for music too! ...I am weighted beneath my longing, like the sun beneath its light....Yet, in this canvass, Life #105:"Chopin: Nocturne #20", we could say that the painting's richness has overtaken, overwhelmed the music*

itself!



*{Life#105: “Chopin: Nocturne #20 in C-sharp minor(Opus Posthumous)}*

*...One cannot visually represent music because music itself is always a beyond-representation and because music is the beyond of all affective blending, is the realization of the blending of affectivity and that which affectivity feels(!) is always beyond its reach. Yet, this ineluctable truth has become permeable. The depth of music's emotional touch, seemingly beyond the reach of all the other arts, here is reached, realized! in a painting that never brings to a halt its being in its own coming-to-be. Bergsonian elan transmuted into the most intense subtleties of affective life bursts forth in these drip lines and drops, brush strokes and splashes that instantiate the energies and*

*movements of all the clinamen of epicurean and lucretian freedom. The yellow splashes work as if accents on words, as if the ineffable were now both syntax and accentuation and no longer just the beckoning beyond of appearance. There is a blending of painterly elements that establishes an extraordinary vibrato of unity-in-difference and difference-in-unity. Contingency and the marvelous aleatory tumult--and harmonics!--of intentionality and of the intentionality of color compliment the painter's intentionality itself. There is an unprecedented balance of color and the temporality of color, brushstroke, and drip lines, a balance of foreground and background, of affect and effect. We hear the colors, we hear the painting! "Silence allows a kind of 'second hearing' to develop, aural finesse, which allows human beings to perceive the least murmur of wind and night," writes Vladimir Jankelevitch in Music and the Ineffable.<sup>[4]</sup> And here in this Nocturne of Naoko Haruta we find a transposition where 'second hearing' is heard once again, where aural finesse entwines with the extreme fine point of visible finesse, where abstract painting reaches the height of its abilities, its faculties, "the most beautiful language of our century".*



*{DETAIL from Life #105: "Chopin: Nocturne #20 in C-sharp minor"}*

*If Pollock, mutatis mutandis, can be said to be a kind of painterly Schoenberg, then we can say that Naoko Haruta has in paintings like this Nocturne injected an impressionist spirit into expressionism without adopting the rigidity of any kind of seriality or pointillism. Schoenberg's initiative, alas, ended in the aging of the new music in hypostatizations of seriality whereas Pollock's initiative finds in the vehemence of Naoko Haruta's*

*intentionalities not its continuation as such but its first emphatic commencement. their own exuberance.*

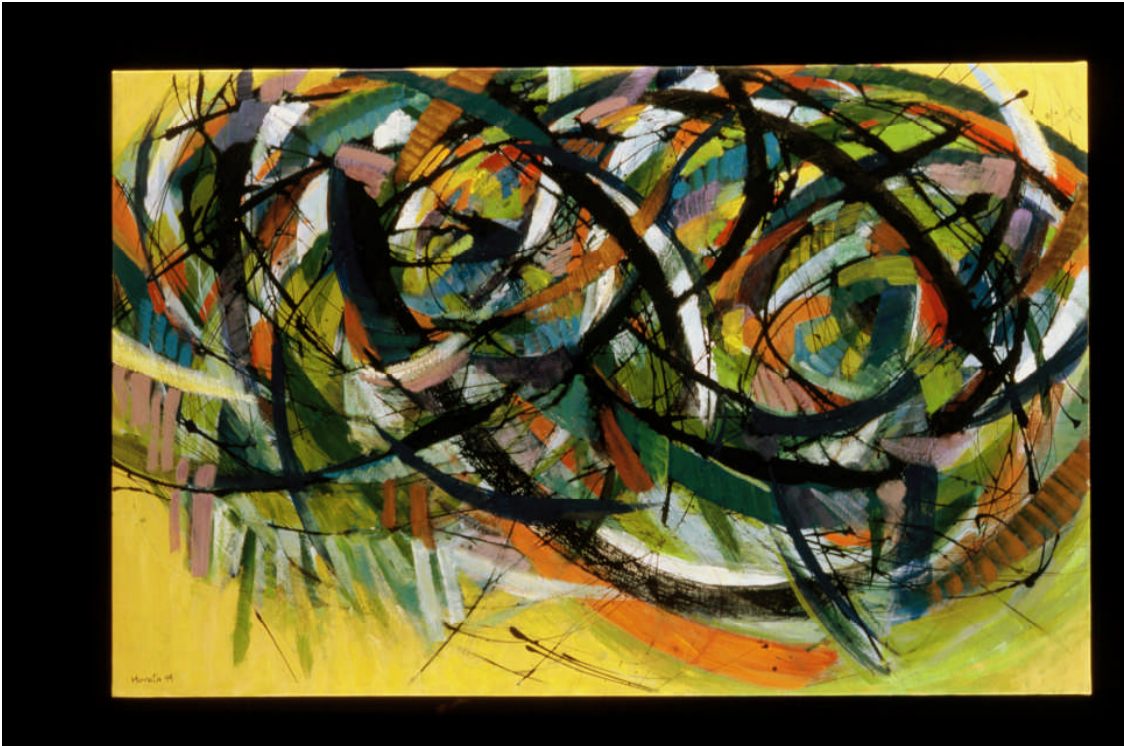


*{Life #126: "April in Paris", acrylic on canvas, 43" x 67"}*

*...After Malevich and Rodchenko one could either take the path of logical unfolding as did Newman, Rothko, and almost the entire school of which they were a part and as did even more (seized as they were by the ultimate panic), Stella, Noland, Louis, Olitski, etc. and as did in a final abdication Judd and minimalism--or one could, following upon Pollock, take the much more courageous path of vernacular invention and adventure. The paradoxology and historico-paradoxology of abstract painting is that it comes to exist in a renewed realm of substantiality not after the establishment by Malevich and Rodchenko of its limit, but after its suppression by the victory of the skein from neo-dada to conceptualism and installationism. And this site of substantiality, this existential site which has everywhere been avoided, it is this site that Naoko Haruta has come to occupy more resolutely than any other.*



*{Life #95, acrylic on canvas, 43" x 67"}*



*{Life #15, acrylic on canvas, 43" x 67"}*



*{Life #22, acrylic on canvas, 43" x 56"}*



*{Life #137: "Venice #2", acrylic on canvas, 43" x 67"}*

*It is the singular courage of Naoko Haruta to have taken up the abandoned project and pushed it further than Pollock ever could have, possessing as she does a far greater versatility and a far greater range than Pollock, because she has given voice to a painterly and lyrical register that one could liken to the register--across jazz, blues, pop, and rhythm and blues--that one found in Sarah Vaughn or that one could liken to the virtuoso multi-instrumentality of Eric Dolphy--"on flute, alto saxophone, bass clarinet, oboe, basson--did I*

*forget anything?!” (Charlie Mingus introducing Eric Dolphy). She has taken the dripped line and everywhere increased its intensity, its multiplication, its lyrical and its dynamic functions and flights. And she has integrated this dripped line and the brush stroke in ever more intricate and intensifying unions which is in keeping with her integration of the grace and subtleties of the Japanese brush painting tradition in which she studied profoundly on the one hand with the dynamics and spontaneities of actionist and modal abstraction which she has mastered more than any other painter. She has sought out the contingency and freedom of the line and of chromatic and calligraphic accretion and vitality at the same time that she has sought to compose choreographies of line, of dripped line, of compositional and exponential form and function, stain and fertilization. Painting, abstract painting is not given over to the unfreedom of dictation or to the coagulations of an insistent score nor is it given over to the contemporary paradigmatic order of the obedience of hypostasized demonstrations meant to signal the approbation of interchangeable discourses. In that place where poetry, literature, dance, even cinema and architecture, aspire to the privileges of music’s proximities, immediacies, and affections, Naoko Haruta has not abandoned the music of painting!*