

*Excerpts/Images FROM: Naoko Haruta and Contemporary Abstract Painterly*

*Modernity Part 4*

*--Steve Light--*

*There are dreams that enter into and then arise so thoroughly from our diurnal experience that when we awaken these dreams do not cease their labor, rather they transform themselves into the very fabric of our burgeoning day such that the dream has become not a wish of fulfillment, but the diurnal fabric, the fabric of fulfillment itself. Abstraction was from the very start the dream of our artistic modernity and we can say that in the work of Naoko Haruta our painterly modernity has finally awakened from the dogmatic slumber into which it had been plunged by all the constrictions placed upon this dream and its realities by the possible-necessary.*

*Naoko Haruta has become the great lyricist of our tumult and turbulence, but also the great lyricist of our exultation and delight. Music! She has understood that discourses of art theoreticians, curators, critics, etc. long ago became nothing other than authoritarian unilateralisms founded upon a profound historical and aesthetic hypostatization and misunderstanding of the changing function of the avant-garde. Naoko Haruta has responded--and it is precisely here that is to be found the remaining moment of any possible meaning of the existence of the avant-garde impulse-- with that kind of*

*aesthetic and historiosophical wisdom that alone can harbor the vitality of advanced creation. She has understood and has demonstrated in virtuoso fashion that paint--like ideas, concepts, the body, life!--must move, must find its rhythm, its music, its dance! Naoko Haruta's works carry out a multiplicitous labor, because they have emphatically established the only possible site of an aesthetic judgment of modernist and late-modernist abstraction and abstract figuration. What kind of music does the painter create? What kind of dance? Only within the immanence of the forms of modernity can there be any kind of discourse which retains a certain possibility of differentiation as opposed to the indifferenciation that Duchamp's initiative established. The same is true in poetry and other realms. There is no substantial differentiation within the letterist initiative nor in language poetry and precisely because the poetic "limit" established by Isou seeks to undo the poetic practice entirely, but it can only undo this practice as a limiting idea and not as a concrete instantiation. Cesaire, Ginsberg, and Pasolini are proof of that.*

*...In series such as her Trees (where each among over 120 paintings becomes a variation on the ways one can utilize the languages, vocabularies, and registers of abstraction, figurative abstraction, and abstract figuration), as well as in series such as her Summer Songs, Preludes to the Seasons, and Instant and Duration she gave us instantiations of that dialectic of undecidability and freedom at the heart of all representational orders, whether sign, symbol, icon, or ideogram on the one hand or of sense and somatic and natural incarnation on the other hand. She sought out these unprecedented moments in which the spell of the eternal muteness of all things seems ready to break; she strove to show us how things (and in this exact sense[!], signs) look on the verge, in this one brief moment of penultimity which is--ultimity itself!--given to us.*



{Trees #40, acrylic on canvas, "48" x 38"}



*{Trees #60, acrylic on canvas, 54"x93"}*



Trees #61, acrylic on canvas, 106"x54"



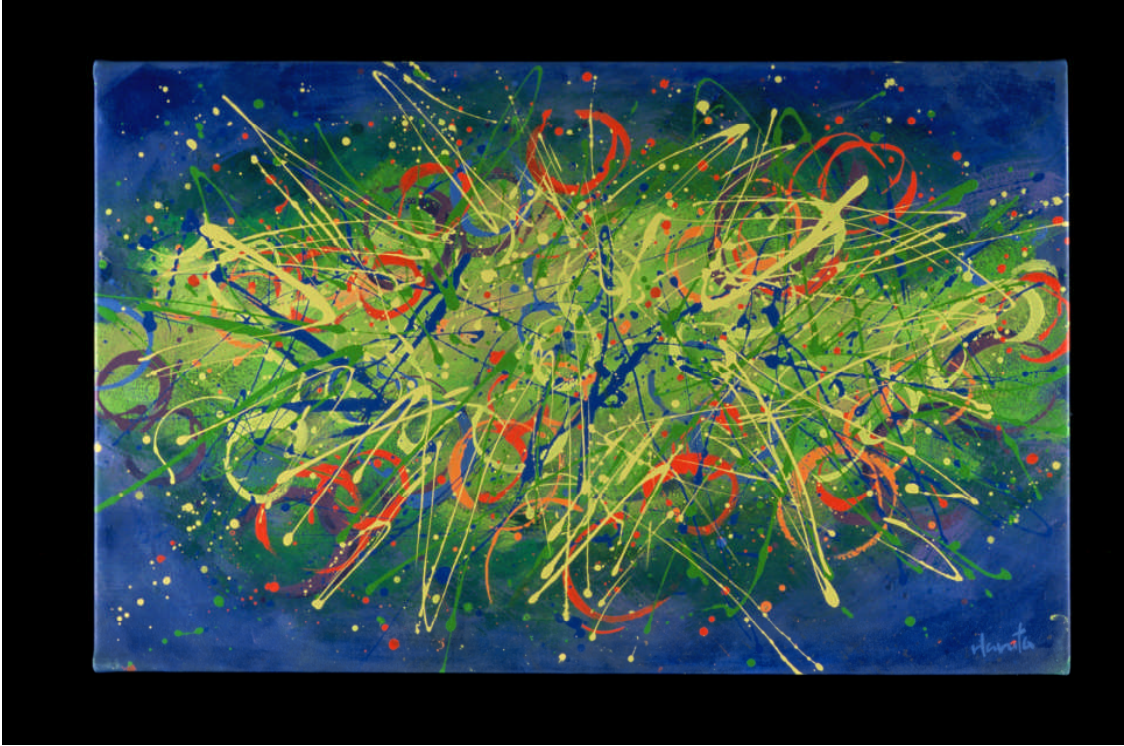
*(Detail #1 from Trees #61, acrylic on canvas, 106" x 54")*



*{Light and Matter #1, acrylic on canvas, 42" x 53"}*



*{Light and Matter #3, acrylic on canvas, 47" x 65"}*



*{Light and Matter #24, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 55"}*



*{Light and Matter #22, acrylic on canvas, 33.5" x 55"}*

*Of her series, Light and Matter, Naoko Haruta has said: "I want to set in motion a carefree aesthetic, naïve in the sense of unencumbered-- but not simple--, or maybe simple in the sense of Henri Bergson: 'there is something simple, infinitely simple, so infinitely simple that [we will find ourselves] trying again and again to speak about it.' I want to find the spontaneity of immediacy, even of naive immediacy, the spontaneity of lines and forms. I do*

*not want rendered forms. I want lines that are free to become circles, circles free to become lines. I want the spirit of the instantaneous. I want the gaiety of child's play which in many ways is the gaiety of the natural world in all its forms both microscopic and macroscopic. I want the play of light and the play of matter, whether in quantum, string, supersymmetric, astrophysical, quantum gravitational, or natural form. Am I painting the origins of the universe, the uncertainty and capriciousness of the sub-atomic world, or the marvelous play of motes lit up by morning sunlight?!"*

\* \* \* .

*Life! In an article on the French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, the Italian philosopher, Giorgio Agamben, writes: "...the concept of 'life', as the legacy of the thought of both Foucault and Deleuze, must constitute the subject of the coming philosophy." [6] Doubtless, we can say that with her series of canvasses Naoko Haruta has not simply given us the subject of a future or "coming painting", but rather has given us life as the already instantiated vitality and actuality of a fully present and profound painting, Now!, as Walter Benjamin (from whom Agamben borrows the figure of a "coming philosophy") surely would have exclaimed with us, yes! here and now. In fact, we could easily apply to Naoko Haruta's Life series what Benjamin himself said of his own Paris Arcades project, i.e. "I believe that its conception and execution,*

*however personal in origin, addresses our generation's most decisive historical interests."*

*Kenneth Rexroth in his deeply abiding comprehension of and affection for the tradition of the Chinese Classical Novel said that the central and paramount feature of these literary works was their embodiment of magnanimity. The grand and enveloping aspect of Naoko Haruta's paintings, the ever intensifying humanity and maturity of her work, can only find summation in a pointing to this most expansive of virtues. No works in the history of abstract painting, in the history of modern painting tout court, possess in such a profound and magnificent manner this insurpassably resonant virtue, this insurpassable character and vivacity.*