

JJ Miyaoka-Pakola*iykyk*

February 3 – March 19, 2022



Morgan Lehman Gallery is pleased to present *iykyk*, an exhibition of new paintings by JJ Miyaoka-Pakola. This marks the artist's second solo show with the gallery.

Miyaoka-Pakola's latest works are the most purposefully quiet, meditative, and subtle of his recent oeuvre, reflecting the artist's determination to find meaning and healing during the ongoing pandemic. Each painting presents highly articulated color systems that are often both somber and beautiful. The various solid or gradated hues bump up against one another through boundaries defined by dynamic linework. As in past work, the artist derives these hard-edge geometries from language, often turning to short phrases based on his encounters out in the world or online, and renders them in a churning script on each painting. Miyaoka-Pakola then paints within and around this drawing structure, deploying his signature pointillism (laboriously applied using small brushes), to move planes of color forward or backward in pictorial space.

Reproductions of course do not capture the range of physicality and surfaces present the paintings in the exhibition. The works' close-valued color environments invite viewers to slow down and let their eyes adjust in order to make out the complex formal strategies that Miyaoka-Pakola deploys. Using a variety of acrylic mediums, the artist is able to imbue the paint with everything from velvety matte to plasticky translucency to high-gloss sheen. The effect is that each painting takes on almost sculptural characteristics and appears differently when viewed from certain angles or distances. These are works that both require time to make and time to see.

Born of and evidencing the uncertainty of the past couple of years, this exhibition explores the malleability of our sense of time, the slippages of meaning in our everyday lives, and the tension between knowing and not knowing. In the paintings, language referencing the artist's experiences during the pandemic (awkward interactions in grocery aisles, social media trends, the need for intimacy, dark thoughts, and escapism), become mostly illegible. The words are there but cannot be read. By breaking the linguistic connection, Miyaoka-Pakola hopes to open the experience of viewing the artworks to something broader and phenomenological, something beyond language: the moods, insights, or sense of stillness brought about by the transformation from the easily understood to something harder to put into words.

JJ Miyaoka-Pakola received his BFA from Tyler School of Art in 1999 and his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2009. Miyaoka-Pakola's work has been written about in the Philadelphia Inquirer, Artfile Magazine, and the San Francisco Arts Quarterly. He was awarded a Chashama Exhibition Grant in 2014, and a Visiting Artist Fellowship to be an artist in residence at the Montana Artist Refuge in 2011. Solo exhibition venues include Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York, Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Philadelphia, and Lloyd Dobler Gallery, Chicago. His work has been exhibited in institutions such as the De Young Museum, San Francisco, Roger Brown Study Collection, Chicago, and the Rhode Island School of Art and Design, Providence. Miyaoka-Pakola lives and works in New York City.