

JJ Miyaoka-Pakola Matthew J. Stone

January 10 – February 16, 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday, January 10, 6 – 8

Morgan Lehman Gallery is very pleased to present an exhibition of two Brooklyn-based artists, painter JJ Miyaoka-Pakola and sculptor Matthew J. Stone.

Miyaoka-Pakola's paintings present us with complex color networks, intricately organized by linear structures. These swirling, hard-edge geometries are, interestingly, derived from language. In each work, Miyaoka-Pakola begins with a phrase taken from our lexicon of tech-speak, (FYEO: "For Your Eyes Only", e.g.) and renders the words in free-wheeling, often barely discernible script on the canvas. Using this drawing framework as a jumping-off point, the artist then laboriously applies acrylic and urethane paint in opaque swaths and sweeping, pointillist fields that seem to float forward, recede, and shimmer before our eyes. Looking at these paintings asks us to simultaneously ascribe meaning to what we see and to question the nature of meaning-making itself.

Stone is also interested in using systems to create visual experience and the delivery of color via structure, but eschews the pictorial for the dimensional. Deploying computer-generated forms and direct burn-out bronze casting techniques, Stone brings a handmade, materially-diverse touch to what is ostensibly high-tech sculpture. These works offer a panoply of textures and surfaces to enjoy, and come to life through the interplay of repeated forms and the inherent (perhaps pre-programmed) breakdown of those systems of organization. The results feel both alien and human, mechanical and almost anachronistically analog, and resemble artifacts of another stage (future or past) of humankind's development.

In this sense, both artists engage in direct dialogue with notions of the technological and symbolic, endowing their works with a sense of possibility and wonder about how we communicate and where we are as people. And yet, there's also a more foreboding strain of self-examination, even critique, at play: are the tools we rely on in this world moving us in the right direction?

JJ Miyaoka-Pakola received his BFA from Tyler School of Art in 1999 and his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2009. His 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 Visiting Artist Fellowship at the Montana Artist Refuge in 2011. Solo exhibitions include Tiger Strikes Asteroid (PA) and Lloyd Dobler Gallery (IL). He has shown at the De Young Museum, (CA), Harbor Gallery (NY), and the Roger Brown Study Collection, (IL), among others. Miyaoka-Pakola lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Matthew J. Stone completed his BFA in sculpture at the Massachusetts College of Art in 2003 and his MFA at the School of the Visual Arts in Manhattan 2010. He had a solo exhibition of his sculpture curated by Kathy Grayson at The Hole (NY) in 2011, and has participated in group exhibitions at Left Field Gallery (CA), New Release Gallery (NY), Cindy Rucker Gallery (NY), and Nudashank Gallery (MD), among others. Stone lives and works in Brooklyn NY.