

Synthesis

Chiho Harazaki
Kaoru Mansour

July 29 – August 26, 2023

Opening Reception, Saturday, July 29th, 5 -8pm

LAUNCH Gallery

170 S. La Brea Ave.

Los Angeles, CA 90036

LAUNCH Gallery is proud to present *Synthesis*, featuring the mixed media creations of Japanese American artists Chiho Harazaki and Kaoru Mansour. Both artists' work display the profound use of multiple mediums that combine clever storytelling and alluring imagery to provide the viewer with a look into both their personal histories and rich imaginations.

Chiho Harazaki is fascinated by the use of adhesive washi tape made from natural fibers commonly found in Japan. She hand cuts tiny pieces of tape with a knife and scissors to create unique lines, patterns and textures. Masterful drawing using charcoal, sumi ink, graphite and watercolor paint complements the clean, precise tape-work. Through her depiction of the figure, Chiho expresses her own uncertainty, insecurity, and confusion attempting to harmonize her values ingrained from traditional Japanese culture along with Western culture she has embraced here in Los Angeles.

My work often contains traditional patterns from my home country that evoke within me a melancholy feeling like an unbreakable cage or (permanent) tattoos on my body. I seek my own identity through my art, synthesizing elements of Eastern and Western, traditional and modern culture.

Kaoru Mansour is a master storyteller and fearless artist synthesizing materials and styles to share her personal history and rich background with a curious, expanding audience. In this new series of figurative paintings, Kaoru deftly incorporates abstract markings into her personal and playful reflections.

These works always begin with no plans, and while I work on them, I start to see the story unfold. It is quite exciting especially when I see the connections between the figure painting and the abstract.

Chiho Harazaki was born and raised in the countryside of Japan. Spending time at the studio of her uncle, a renowned rock sculptor, Harazaki's interest in art was stimulated at an early age. After moving to Los Angeles, she began using

adhesive tape as her art medium while developing her practice in drawing, painting, and installation. Her use of precisely cut adhesive tape gives her work the feel of modern graphic design while also lending itself to works reminiscent of traditional Japanese arts like woodcut and papercutting. Perceiving life as a first-generation immigrant, Harazaki explores her own identity through her art.

Growing up in a small village in Hyogo prefecture, Japan, Kaoru Mansour was always interested in creating things from scratch. Her earliest memory of making art is gluing heart-shaped cutouts to the walls of her parents' house at the age of seven. She studied sciences in college but dropped out after two years and began working in graphic design while singing at local nightclubs in Kobe, eventually earning herself a contract with RCA records in Japan. Once her contract ended in 1986, she moved to Southern California where she soon became a part of the experimental music scene. Despite her musical endeavors, she maintained a passion for creating visual art and enrolled in extracurricular classes at the Otis Art Institute. She has been working as full-time visual artist since 1994.