

FLAUNT

"Hayal Pozanti | New Exhibit 'Lingering' at Jessica Silverman"

By Constanza Falco Raez

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Hayal Pozanti, *A River Moving In You A Joy*, 2021. Oil and oil stick on linen. 60 x 80 inches, 152.4 x 203.2 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Photo credit: John Polak

Jessica Silverman presents [Hayal Pozanti: Lingering](#), the fourth exhibition by the artist with the gallery, on view from January 15 to February 26, 2022. This new series of paintings forms a visual poetry, connecting the subconscious, the thought, and the action. Influenced by, but not mirroring our existing natural world, [Pozanti](#) offers a new paradise. "A hopeful future," as she describes.

The works continue to implement her invented visual language *Instant Paradise*—31 glyphs developed by the artist that correspond to numbers and letters from the English alphabet. However, this time the action is more present, more intuitive. Pozanti connects her body to her

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subconscious as hand and mind become one to unfold a plane of psychological and spiritual exploration across the canvas. She proposes a time for reflection and deceleration, embracing the beauty of the artwork without finality or neat resolution, asking us to linger for a while longer.

Flaunt talked to the artist about *Lingering*, *Instant Paradise*, and the creative process behind both.



Hayal Pozanti, *Daughters Of Soma*, 2021. Oil and oil stick on linen. 80 x 60 inches, 203.2 x 152.4 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Photo credit: John Polak

What can you tell us about your new exhibit with Jessica Silverman, *Hayal Pozanti: Lingering*?

It's going to be my fourth show with the gallery. The show is very much about painting, and the meaning and value that we can find in looking at paintings, and making paintings, for me personally. The show is called *Lingering*, so I really wanted the paintings themselves to be stand-out objects so that the viewer was encouraged and wanted to linger in the gallery, so to speak. To

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linger in time, and allow for a slowing of time, which is what my experience of making the paintings has been.

How has it been working with the gallery?

It's been great. I mean we've been working together for 10 years now. That's a very long time. She is the first gallery that ever 'discovered' me, right out of college, when I graduated from Yale. So it's been amazing working with her. And she is in a new space now so it's going to be a completely different experience. This is the third space that I've shown in with her, so each time it's getting bigger and better. Right now it's a huge gallery space and so I am very excited to experience that and see how the works feel in a bigger environment.



Hayal Pozanti, *Shelter Of Daydreams*, 2021. Oil and oil stick on linen. 80 x 60 inches, 203.2 x 152.4 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Photo credit: John Polak

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Your art is described as a new approach to painting and mystical abstraction, can you expand on that? What new approach are you implementing?

I work with a shape system. There are 31 of them, and all of them have a letter and a numerical value added to them, so there are numbers and words encrypted in each painting. So for these works in particular I wanted to make the numbers more intuitively. I am still combining numbers, but it is more intuitive and spiritual. For example, Sanskrit is a language that is thought of as a medium between the spirit and human beings, so the way that you speak it and the way that you write it creates a shape and a meaning onto itself. So for this particular body of work that's what I've been wanting to do. Just sitting and meditating, coming up with some numbers and shapes, almost like trying to channel a feeling or an energy, while I am in the studio, through the act of meditating, and then combining those with shapes and colors.

The colors are very much informed by these new paints that I've been using. They are called paint sticks, and are all organic and made out of natural pigments. So I don't use any brushes at all. I make the paintings by hand. There is a lot of language of drawing in there too. The whole process is very much about connecting the subconscious, the mind, and the hand, without thinking about what I am making, which is very, very difficult. To not over-rationalize, over-analyze what I am making or doing.

My older works are very, very rigid in the way they were made. For the first eight years that I've been using this language to make art with, it was a very rational, very methodical way of making it. Very conceptual. I was taking numbers and statistics and combining them to make a shape, so there was very little room for an intuitive side to come out. And what I was more interested in, when I was making the work, was to question our relationship to technology and how it's affecting the way that we create, the way that we exist.



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How did you come up with the idea for this visual language, *Instant Paradise*? Can you explain the intent behind the language?

Before coming up with this system, my practice was based off of collecting images on the internet, so I would deep-dive and try to find the most grotesque, strange things. I am talking about 12 years ago, and these things that I am talking about would be in the deep web right now, but there was no deep web back then, everything was everywhere. It was also very inspiring but also was very frightening at the same time, because you would have access to all of these things. I would take these images and collage them and try and take them out of their context, and repurpose them into new images. But after a while, sitting in front of a computer for so many hours, I started to get image fatigue, which wasn't a thing 10 years ago, there was nothing called image-overload or something. Back then, I started feeling this anxiety of processing all of this information, and decided that I don't want to spend my life with that anxiety, looking at so much information and trying to process all of that information. That I am going to try and liberate myself from this. And at the same time I was also thinking that I can't really get away from it, because I have to put my images back to this cascade of information. I have to be a part of the attention economy basically. But then how do I get away from the computer but also make something meaningful that will then be recycled back into the attention economy, but maybe encourage people to slow down a little bit, because it's so different from everything that they see. And so the idea that I came up with was to make something that is completely abstract that doesn't refer to things that are absolutely of this world. Like a fictional world of its own. And to be able to do that I realized I had to create shapes that didn't exist before.

Then I started looking into techniques of how human beings made shapes. I looked into Ancient Samarian writing, who were the first primitive attempts at writing, let's say. And then I found this system of shape-creating, which is putting a circle inside of a square and making indents in it, and so after I discovered that I was like 'okay, I can put away trying to find images now, or be bothered, or have anxiety about images. I can just sort of sit down and make up shapes.' And so I started making them. I hadn't thought about it as an alphabet. I was just filling up notebooks of shapes. And after I started making them I was like 'okay I kind of want to make paintings with them,' and I started playing around. After that I decided that I had an affinity for some of them, and so I mapped out which ones I liked the most, I just wanted to see it. And then came the 31 shapes. Once I did that there was a huge feeling of relief, and, at the time, it felt like an instant paradise. I felt liberated from the machine, the computer, or whatever. I can use it for my own purposes but I am not absolutely beholden to it. I can do things that are outside of it now. But then I realized that our world is so constructed around numbers and collecting information, and analyzing and understanding the world of numbers, so I started collecting numbers, and the assigned numbers to the shapes, and then, because of my interest in languages, I knew that Hebrew and Arabic and some other languages have letters assigned to numbers too, so I figured the shapes could also be an alphabet. And I started encrypting information to paintings, and trying to keep a record of fleeting information.

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Hayal Pozanti, *Loving Horizon*, 2021. Oil and oil stick on linen. 60 x 80 inches, 152.4 x 203.2 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Photo credit: John Polak

Going back to what you were saying about humans' relationship to technology, this new show is a response to your concerns around digital media and artificial intelligence. Can you expand on those concerns and what the message of the show ultimately is?

I am definitely not a luddite. I am not trying to be like don't do it. But I think at the end of the day what I am trying to point out is that there is value in slowing down. There is value in making an effort to slow down. There is value in the hand. There is value in not knowing what you are doing and now being able to explain what it is that you are making. That not everything has to be a mathematical equation. And it's inevitable that we are going to be merging, and already have merged with machines, in some capacity, but when we do end up doing it, and we are thinking about what it means to create an intelligence that is artificial, and what it means to coexist in a world with that intelligence, what is it that us, humans, can bring to the table that is positive?

And the slowing down goes into "lingering," which is the name of the show.

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Yes, and concerns of also slowing down our lives in a way to also make way to other beings to coexist with us. Because at the speed that we are going at, I am very much concerned about the destruction that we are causing the planet. I think slowing down also encourages noticing everything that is around you, fungus or birds or just nature. To be in contact with the natural environment, if you allow yourself to slow down. I think during the pandemic, for example, a lot of people were able to do this. People started becoming amateur bird watchers from their windows, you know. It is a concerted effort that we have to make, but we have to make it, if we don't want to barrel down and destroy our species. If we want to keep on existing in a beautiful planet we have to slow down.

There are a lot of themes of nature in your paintings, would you say you are influenced or inspired by that the most?

Absolutely. 100%. One of my friends came into the studio and was like 'oh it looks like a nymph forest in here.' I wanted to be parallel to our world but also something that you cannot identify exactly where you are. You can see the horizon perhaps, or different kinds of plant formation that you haven't seen before. So there is a, I don't want to say science fiction quality, but I love science fiction so I wouldn't mind that association, but a magical aura. There is a surreal element to it, I hope. Yeah, definitely taking inspiration from, but not exactly replicating nature. A hopeful future, maybe.



Hayal Pozanti, *Riding On A Moonbeam*, 2021. Oil and oil stick on linen. 60 x 80 inches, 152.4 x 203.2 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Photo credit: John Polak

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