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*Poetry in Space*

Moko Khachatryan and Vahan Rumelyan's

March 17, 2021 – April 23, 2021

Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

### Revealing Their Abstraction: Moko Khachatryan and Vahan Rumelyan

By: Nare Garibyan

As I entered the gallery at Tufenkian Fine Arts, in Glendale, CA and began to view Moko's and Vahan's art, I appreciated the juxtaposition of their artwork adjacent to one another. Meanwhile, in another corner of the gallery, I was transported to the individual spaces of Moko and Vahan. They both create works of abstract expressionism, and at first glance, their work might seem similar, yet at a closer look, their style and sensibilities vary.

Vahan's paint strokes are raw and orbital, containing tangible, almost edible, clumps of bold colored paint, chaotic, yet, reflective. The circularity found in his work, has also manifested onto an actual circular canvas, which gives his art multidimensionality.

Moko's canvases have a meditative, confident, and strong quality, bright and dark paint expands and drapes along the canvas with a sense of verticality. Her placement of color on the canvas speaks to her visionary dexterousness.

In both instances, the viewer is enthralled and a dialogue is roused between the viewer, the artists and the viewer's own sense of abstraction, which stems from an unconscious, authentic place.

When Vahan begins his process of creation, he says, " I become part of my painting; I become that line, that gesture; I disappear, detached from my ego; I disappear from my being and become part of my painting, as if I find myself in a cosmic world, where I have been given the sole purpose to become what I must expose to my viewer." Vahan's work aligns with Arshile Gorky, Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, and Franz Kline; "I am continuing their unfinished work," Vahan affirms. His description of abstract art appears on the canvas, "it is really a psychological, transcendental reality, it is meditative."

Moko roots abstract art in the unconscious, unworldly, and spiritual realms. She asserts that "abstract art is not drawing or painting, it is a mentality, a lifestyle, and it is a thought process that is deep and philosophical." She thinks of Mark Rothko, Joan Mitchell and Helen Frankenthaler as she connects authenticity to abstract art. She comments that "in

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other art forms you can hide your feelings and disguise your inner world, but in abstract art you cannot lie to the viewer." This is also evident in Moko's description of her process; she works on a painting all day and decides to continue her work the next day. But the next day, "the painting completely changes because yesterday and today no longer coincide; I am the same person, but my essence for that new day does not coincide [with the work from the previous day], it is not repetitive because there can't be repetition from yesterday and today."

Thus it is not surprising that this mind and body connection, found in both Vahan's and Moko's art alludes to the influence of the aesthetics of Japanese art. Vahan says that the foundation of his art is based on Japanese calligraphy. He further describes that, "Japanese calligraphy is created with haste and speed, if it is created in a slower pace, it will not work. If I paint in a slower pace, it becomes fake and inauthentic. " Moko appreciates the Japanese aesthetic that aligns with restraint and simplicity, which is visible in her work.

After the untimely death of Moko's father, the internationally, renowned artist, Rudolf Khachatryan, she shares that "something happened to me...I have created so much work in the past 13 years since my father's passing; I was working morning to night, everyday, it was all unbelievable what was happening to me." Moko is proud to be an established artist. She started her abstract explorations at a much later time; "I started out as a figurative artist and slowly my style cleansed itself into abstraction." She regrets that her father did not live to see her full developmental arc as an artist.

Both Vahan and Moko have exhibited extensively; solo or group shows, spanning various countries between them, from France, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Lebanon, Kuwait, Armenia, and the US. Moko and Vahan are such prolific and active artists because they have found harmony between each other. Moko states, "we disturb and help each other, sometimes we live apart, and come back together as it is difficult to live as two serious artists under one roof." But somehow it works for them. Moko and Vahan look forward to one day, performing together, creating live art, as the viewers watch in anticipation, waiting to decipher their abstraction.

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