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SHUNSAKU HAYASHI
Hovers

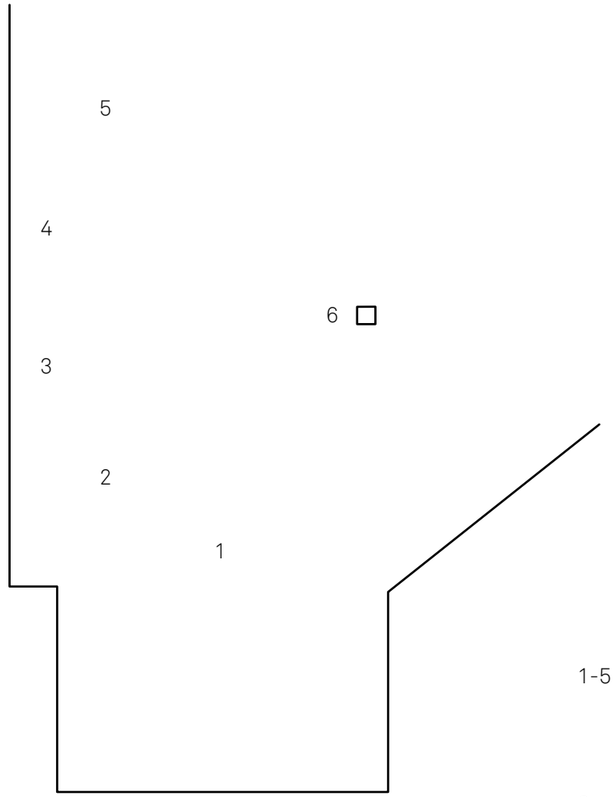
Shunsaku Hayashi has conceptualized the leap-frog as an icon of the rebellious spirit of our age. Inspired by a football video game, it is presented in his film *hovers* (2026) in the form of a stop-motion animation consisting of original paintings. The leap-frog manifests itself as a playful ritual to celebrate the scoring of a goal. The heroic gesture of leaping goes along with an immediate change of roles into a humiliating crouched position. Both bodies are interlocked in an autopoietic loop, a mechanism that involves increasing numbers of participants at an unreal tempo and interval. The finely modulated acceleration draws us into a hypnotic, hovering state. An oscillating, rotating mix of electronic noise and human voice sets a rhythm and accompanies the disobedient departure of the team from the stadium. The institution of rule and arbitration breaks down behind them.

The painted bodies embedded in the animation lend the digitally generated scenes an organic carnality. Exhaustion and injury have accumulated in the participants' anatomies. Later a series of original paintings of the leap-froggers will appear in a field, shot in quick succession to bring about the hallucination of a frenzied horserace. A cutback to the abandoned, darkened stadium provides a pause for breath before a crossfade to the leapers overexerting their muscles, extending their necks gratingly. In the middle of this ecstatic metamorphosis the ecstatic vision disappears.

Five large-format original paintings (2026) depicting the individual phases of a leap-frog from right to left stand in the real-world exhibition space. They look historicized, like ancient frescoes or freshly created hypermodern wall paintings that will only be excavated after hundreds of years. Shunsaku Hayashi grounds and overpaints his canvases in elaborate, many-layered detail. Then he searches for attractive concealed or coincidentally occurring formations. Illusions of digital artefacts blend in a complex system of brushstrokes. Glowing colors scatter and diffuse against the dark background. The tactile membranes of imaginary time periods encase a vacuum through which passes an energetic and athletic flow. The voluminous temporality crystalizes the splendidly anarchic hovering moment in which the protagonists want to free themselves from any prevalent algorithm.

In Shunsaku Hayashi's work, the media of painting and film interact closely, just like the two parts of the leap-frog. We are invited to realize within us a cinematic process of biological transformation of the figures in the paintings. In gathering strength for their attempt, the sportsmen seem worn out and indistinct. The lower participant is armored with beetle shells. When one leaper clutches the back of the other, fish scales grow on his chest. Shock waves lead to fractures in the arms of the one in the inferior position, while his legs multiply. Gullets open up in his thigh. The hero swirls upwards, as if he could fly. His head doubles as he leaps. His bare chest melts in the momentum. Kangaroo feet form in his belly. But he lands as lightly as a feather. The evolutionary spectrum fans out. Before us lies the magnificent revelry of an inexhaustibly vital cosmos.

Text: Kayo Adachi-Rabe



1-5 *hovers*
2026
Acrylic, oil and paper on canvas
270 × 190 cm (each)

6 *hovers*
2026
Video
6''' (Loop)

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www.shunsakuhayashi.com