

REGEN PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Silke Otto-Knapp

September 16–October 24, 2026

Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 10 am–6 pm

Regen Projects is pleased to present a focused presentation of small paintings and studies on canvas by **Silke Otto-Knapp** (1970-2022). Concurrent with Elliott Hundley's exhibition *Book of Sand*, Otto-Knapp's show will be presented in the viewing rooms. Highlighting Otto-Knapp's singular use of watercolor on canvas and her development of this technique, many of these works will be shown for the first time.

Otto-Knapp's method creates a productive tension between control and unpredictability, simultaneously regulated and experimental. Early inquiries into this tension are seen in works such as the colorful *Portrait (Doll)* (2007), where the stiff posture of a rouged performer is juxtaposed with a swirling, floral background reminiscent of Natalia Goncharova's set designs for the Ballets Russes. Later works in grayscale further mine, and complicate, understandings of positive and negative space, as well as figure and ground. As Otto-Knapp's method evolved into a "process of erasure," she would apply layers of black watercolor to a canvas, spray the surface with water, turn the canvas (scaled to her body), and scrub and scrape the black paint to reveal the white primer underneath, allowing figures and shapes to emerge.



Silke Otto-Knapp. *Portrait (Doll)*, 2007.

The exhibition also touches on her wide ranging and polymath subject matter—a repertoire including her appreciation of Marie Laurencin and Georgia O'Keeffe; her admiration for the work of Ingmar Bergman and Rainer Werner Fassbinder; her inspiration found in the choreography of Bronislava Nijinska, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown and Michael Clark; her fondness for the Bauhaus and ancient Chinese scrolls; the genius of Yves Saint Laurent and a general love for fashion; as well as her love for nature and particularly the romantic seascape surrounding Fogo Island, and much, much more. Describing the throughline connecting Otto-Knapp's Modernist dancers to her multipaneled landscapes that evoke the qualities of scenography, Catherine Wood wrote in a 2009 essay, "At a conceptual level, also, Otto-Knapp's paintings yoke together two kinds of artifice": the artifice inherent to the act of painting as well as the 'theatricality' appearing across Otto-Knapp's extensive source imagery.

Certain paintings in the exhibition are preparatory studies for larger works and provide insight into Otto-Knapp's process as the intimate beginnings of compositions that would later be rendered monumental. All of the paintings, whether drafts or completed works, contain the singular, transcendent nature of the artist's hand. Later in her essay, Wood describes the distinct nature of Otto-Knapp's paintings as "neither objective representations of a shared reality, nor purely concerned with an inner 'world' of her own invention. Rather, her work registers as repeated attempt to find some common ground between forms with an eternal quality, reaching far back to ancient cultures of painting that are pre-photographic, and her private obsessions with the found images that have colonised her imagination." (Catherine Wood, "Lipstick, powder and paint" in *Silke Otto-Knapp: Present time exercise*, 2009)

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Silke Otto-Knapp (1970–2022) was born in Osnabrück, Germany. She earned an MA in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, in 1996, and a degree in Cultural Studies at the University of Hildesheim, Germany, in 1997. Otto-Knapp moved from Vienna to Los Angeles in 2015, where she served as Professor of Painting and Drawing at the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture.

Selected solo exhibitions include *Silke Otto-Knapp, Fliedergarten*, Heidelberger Kunstverein, Heidelberg, Germany (2026); *Silke Otto-Knapp, Bühnenbilder*, Kunstverein, Hamburg, Germany (2024); *Silke Otto-Knapp*, Casa Mutina Milano, Italy (2022–2023); *Silke Otto-Knapp: In the waiting room*, The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2020); *Bühnenbilder*, Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (2017–2018); *Land lies in water*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2015); *Monday or Tuesday*, Camden Art Centre, London (2014), and *Geography and Plays*, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2013).

Otto-Knapp's work is held in prominent museum collections including Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; The Art Institute of Chicago; Belvedere Museum, Vienna; Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, France; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Kunsthalle und Kunstmuseum, Bremerhaven, Germany; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg (Mudam); Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Serralves Foundation, Porto; Tate Modern, London; and Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; among others.

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