

HOLLIS TAGGART

Hollis Taggart Now Represents Justine Otto, Expanding Its Program of International Contemporary Artists

New York—July 25, 2022—Hollis Taggart is pleased to announce its representation of Hamburg- and Berlin-based artist Justine Otto, who joins the gallery's growing contemporary program. Otto's expressive body of work leverages the freedom of abstraction to explore the aura and symbolism of heroic and iconic figures, from military generals to the cowboys of the Wild West to musicians and performers. Inspired by films, vintage photographs, and other representational references, Otto translates and transforms these figures through her own distinct lens, inviting viewers to look anew at these recognizable archetypes. Hollis Taggart will serve as the sole representative for Otto in the United States. The gallery will soon announce a date for Otto's first solo exhibition.

Otto began her painting career working largely in figuration, engaging initially with representations of women and girls. Over the years, her paintings have become increasingly abstract, providing Otto a new sense of freedom and openness to explore and experiment. With the transition to abstraction, the artist also began more actively referencing images of the heroic male, approaching the figures from an outsider's perspective and allowing herself to interpret these well-recognized and traditional symbols of power, bravado, and swagger through brilliant color and gestural brushwork. While Otto's paintings are not critiques of these figures—or what they mean within our cultures and societies—they do offer a new way of experiencing and considering the imagery.

Otto's most recent works are inspired by musicians like Roy Rogers and Gene Autry, as an extension of her ongoing *Cowboy* series. In these paintings, as is true of her prior series, the contours of the figures and related objects and emblems remain, but the details are dissolved into bright swaths and fields of color. Otto mixes her own paints, often adding fluorescent pigments that imbue her canvases with a shimmering, reflective quality. As she has honed her approach, Otto has incorporated a wide range of techniques, including wet-on-wet painting, taping, scraping, leveling out, dissolving all, and stamping. She often uses multiple of these techniques in a single canvas, which results in a vivid sense of depth and energy.

While Otto is best known for her paintings, which can range in scale from the monumental to the intimate, she is also an active sculptor, producing three-dimensional works from a broad spectrum of found objects. Made from materials as versatile as epoxy resin and soap, these sculptures are an extension of her paintings. Her interest in sculptural forms is in part the result of her prior work in theater, and she considers the connection between her paintings and sculptures as one might consider a stage set with objects moving in and out space to create a holistic image. For Otto this relationship is part of her ongoing experimentations and explorations of the intersections between figuration and abstraction, the whole and the fragment, and the known image and a new space of transformation.

“We are delighted to bring Justine into our program and to amplify the visibility of her practice in the United States. She has a distinct perspective and approach that is certainly deserving of more significant attention and study,” said Hollis Taggart. “We are also excited by the ways in which her engagement with abstraction connects to the historic artists in our program, such as Michael Corinne West, Dusti Bongé, and Knox Martin, as well as other international contemporary artists that have recently joined us, like the French artist Thomas Agrinier and Greek artist Alexandros Vasmoulakis.”

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Born in Poland, Otto moved to Germany at the age of nine. In 1996, she studied at the State Academy of Fine Arts (Städelschule) in Frankfurt am Main, with Peter Angermann and Michael Krebber. Between 1997 and 2000, she worked as a stage designer at the Municipal Theatre Frankfurt and won the Volker-Hinniger Prize in 2005. Otto's works are featured in the permanent collection of the Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, and in numerous private collections in the U.S. and Europe. In 2014, Otto was the recipient of the Phillips Collection Emerging Artist Prize. She has had solo exhibitions in many museums and public venues including: Kunsthalle der Sparkassenstiftung Lüneburg, Lüneburg, Germany; Kunstverein Duisburg, Duisburg, Germany; Städtische Galerie Neunkirchen, Neunkirchen, Germany; Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, Switzerland; Städtische Galerie Eichenmüllerhaus, Lemgo, Germany; Städtische Galerie Fürth, Fürth, Germany; Kunstverein Aurich, Aurich, Germany; and Museum Schloss Gifhorn, Gifhorn, Germany. Otto lives in Hamburg and Berlin.

About Hollis Taggart

Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and the Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for the American Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider, and Michael (Corinne) West. In the summer of 2019, the gallery announced the formal expansion of its primary market business and focus on the presentation of contemporary work. It continues to expand its roster of contemporary artists, focusing on emerging and mid-career talents. With more than 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, and market trends and opportunities. The gallery's flagship location is in Chelsea, and it also operates a space in Southport, Connecticut.

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