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For Immediate Release:

Pierre Knop: *Idylle und Verderben*
Artist's Reception: Thursday, October 26, 6-8 PM
October 26 – November 25, 2023

Yossi Milo is pleased to announce *Idylle und Verderben*, a solo exhibition of new work by French-German painter Pierre Knop. Opening on Thursday, October 26 and on view through Saturday, November 25, the artist's second exhibition at the gallery will feature new paintings of dreamy seaside landscapes and whimsical boxing matches from eras past.

Guided by his painterly intuition, Knop spins painted tales of enchanted realms filled with surreal bodies, otherworldly forms, and spellbinding color. The artist gives way to the pull of his various mediums—allowing his hand to lead him as he coaxes compositions from his subconscious. Much of Knop's imagery comes from the recent histories of his native countries, Germany and France, and the decades of turbulence and shifting paradigms that came to define them. Inspired by the impressionists and expressionists that emerged during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Knop puts forth a contemporary romanticism in his paintings, epitomizing the grandeur of nature and humanity's place within it.

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Blending techniques and styles from across recent histories, Knop delivers his own distinct approach to painterly representation. Many of the new paintings in *Idylle und Verderben* depict the astounding magnitude of nature, set to scale by miniscule human figures that journey among soaring mountains and vast coastlines. Knop paints his landscapes with the reverence of a romanticist, yet imbues the scenery with a twinge of something darker. Applying thick layers of paint, the artist renders spindly trees and billowing skies from impasto, and lacquers mountainsides and ocean surfaces with shocks of deep oranges, blues, pinks, and purples. Individually, Knop's painted forms can take on a garish quality, but taken as a whole, they constitute the colorful musings of an interior world projected outwards. Like the European expressionists who came before him, such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and James Ensor, Knop is enamored by the bounties of nature and the opportunities for formal innovations they offer.

Featured alongside the artist's landscape works is a new series of boxing paintings, which depict cartoonish figures in the throes of lighthearted brawls. Knop draws upon the writings of German writer Heinrich Mann, whose 1918 novel *Der Untertan* famously satirized Imperial German society, specifically its premiums placed on hypermasculinity and brute force. Knop locates this history in the traditions of the German *Burschenschaft*, a system of fraternities that young men join during their university studies. Known for promoting nationalistic and patriarchal values, these fraternities often require their members to partake in fencing or boxing matches. Restaging these scenes in his paintings, Knop highlights the absurdity of these rituals, rendering them in fantasias of exaggerated color, amorphous forms, and tactile textures. In this work, the artist reimagines the restrictive conventions of masculine aggression and domination, recontextualizing them in a gentler, dreamier realm. Juxtaposing the harsh with the soft, the sinister with the saccharine, Knop's paintings skirt familiarity while inviting viewers into a world of pillowy forms and sumptuous color.

Pierre Knop has presented solo exhibitions across the globe, including at Gether Contemporary, Copenhagen, Denmark; Choi&Choi Gallery, Seoul, Korea and Cologne, Germany; and Lyles and King, New York, NY. Work by the artist has been included in group exhibitions at Barbara Seiler Gallery, Zürich, Switzerland; Spazio Amanita, New York, NY; Meyer Riegger, Berlin, Germany; Jack Siebert Projects, Los Angeles, CA; Rutkowski68 Gallery, Cologne, Germany, and Anat Ebgi Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, among others. Pierre Knop recently completed the CCA Adratx residency in Mallorca, Spain. The artist currently lives and works in Cologne, Germany.

For more information, please contact Jack Cassou at 212.414.0370 or jack@yossimilo.com, or visit the gallery's website at www.yossimilo.com

Image: Pierre Knop, *Untitled*, 2023, Ink, Acrylic, Crayon, Oil Pastels and Oil on Canvas, 78 3/4" x 59 1/16"