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Karen Silve: *Beijing Trees*
Wisdom, Strength and Renewal

On View: May 5 - June 3, 2017
Opening Reception: May 5, 6-8pm
Artist Talk: May 6, 4-5pm

"While drawing in my accordion sketchbooks in Beijing, I realized it was the structured balance I was after; a sense of renewal built on strength and wisdom." –Karen Silve

Silve's intuitive and deliberate acrylic paintings unfold through layers of lush colors, aggressive brushwork, and drips pushing and pulling off the sides of her canvases. Her paintings are based on momentary synaesthetic impressions of interactions with nature; a synergy of the amorphous profusion of Silve's surroundings. She focuses on experiences, discovering life's little moments of energy and inspiration. Rather than zero in on notable landmarks, she pauses and considers the special aha! moments of appreciation of life in culture and nature. She records in her mind the immersive intimacy of being a part of an experience. Observing with no agenda, she attunes her senses focusing on the smells that bring back memories, the friction of people or wind passing her skin, the calmness of birds chirping or the chatter of people muttering, and the adjacent colors filling her visual field. These experiences last for moments or hours. Only after the experience does she start to visualize a painting.

Silve recently traveled to Beijing where she noted the ancient traditions of the Chinese, and the wisdom of thinking in terms of centuries, rather than years, was apparent in the way they nurtured their trees. Each branch was thoughtfully pruned every year, keeping them healthy. The trunk, or strength of the tree, had everything to do with its foundation. The top of the trees had new life every year. Depending on the structure due to the consistent pruning, the more blossoms there would be. All of this resonated with Silve. A state of renewal built on strength and wisdom became the direction of her new body of work.

Silve has exhibited throughout the world. In 2015, her work was collected by the new U.S. Consulate in Monterrey, Mexico for their permanent collection. In addition, Silve has exhibited her work extensively in solo exhibitions including at the Portland Performing Arts Center, the Forsyth Center Gallery at Texas A&M University, the Visual Art Center of Northwest Florida, the Tuscaloosa Performing Arts Center and the West Linn Public Library in Oregon. Group exhibitions include those at the Embassy in Doha, Qatar as part of the Art in Embassies Program, The Institute for American Universities, Aix-in-Provence, France, the Jemison-Carnegie Heritage Hall Museum, Talladeega, AL, and she was a Resident Artist at Texas A&M University in 2011. Silve's work is held by hundreds of private collections as well as in numerous corporate collections. She maintains two studios, one in Portland, Oregon, and the other in Provence, France.

