

HOLLIS TAGGART

**Hollis Taggart Downtown
to Present New Works by Los Angeles-based Artist John Knuth**

***John Knuth: The Hot Garden*
On View June 26 – August 16, 2025
Opening Reception, Thursday, June 26, 6–8 PM**

Hollis Taggart Downtown is pleased to present *John Knuth: The Hot Garden*, a solo exhibition of new paintings and a sculptural installation by the Los Angeles-based artist John Knuth. The presentation marks Knuth's fourth solo exhibition with Hollis Taggart, and his first major body of work following the devastating Eaton Fire in January 2025, which destroyed the artist's home and archive. The exhibition will feature a selection of new "fly paintings" as well as a sculptural installation -- including fragments of artworks recovered from Knuth's home -- that the flies will "paint" in the gallery during the first week of the exhibition. *The Hot Garden* will be on view at Hollis Taggart Downtown, 109 Norfolk Street, New York, from June 26 through August 16, 2025, with an opening reception on Thursday, June 26, 6–8 PM.

Anchored by the powerful words of Octavia Butler, writer and once Altadena resident, - "All that you touch, you change. All that you change, changes you" - *The Hot Garden* is both a reckoning and a renewal. It transforms catastrophic loss into a vivid artistic mediation on change, regeneration, and resilience.

At the center of *The Hot Garden* are Knuth's renowned "fly paintings," ethereal abstractions produced through an unconventional method in which he feeds over a million homegrown household flies a mixture of acrylic paint and sugar water. Over the course of several weeks, the flies regurgitate the mixture onto the canvases producing shimmering and pointillist surfaces that push the boundaries of nature, beauty, and process. These works, while born from organic chaos, have always conjured the sprawl of metropolitan landscapes such as New York City and Los Angeles, but now they also take on the transformation of Altadena by blending the floral color palette of Claude Monet's Giverny with the searing hues of wildfire and ash. Also featured in the exhibition is "The Sculpture Garden," a new sculptural installation composed of remnants and replicas of works lost in the fire- both by friends of Knuth and historical artists such as Auguste Rodin and Rene Magritte. This haunting and evocative work becomes a tribute to artistic community, cultural memory, and the enduring spirit of creation amidst devastation.

The exhibition's title evokes both the physical aftermath of the fire and a psychological space of rebirth. Knuth and his family abruptly evacuated their home in Altadena in the early morning hours. By sunrise, their neighborhood was reduced to ash-one of nearly 16,000 homes lost across Altadena and the Pacific Palisades. *The Hot Garden* will feature several works that incorporate newspapers from this period -- such as *The New York Times*

HOLLIS TAGGART

and *The Washington Post* articles about artists impacted by the LA fires which included Knuth -- creating a dialogue between past and present and suggesting the possibility that beauty can overcome destruction.

Knuth, a veteran of the Los Angeles art community, has long used fire, smoke, and emergency materials such as mylar blankets and flares in his work to comment on ecological fragility. Additionally, he has used globes, in the exhibition *The Origin of the New World* (Summer 2019), and ostrich eggs, in the exhibition *The Dawn* (Summer 2021) as sculptural bases for his flies to convey rebirth. With *The Hot Garden*, Knuth conveys the perilous and unforeseen natural destruction with glimpses of hope for a renaissance.

"The fly paintings have always been metaphors for the density and sprawl of Los Angeles," Knuth notes. "As our lives changed so did the imagery and meaning of these paintings." As Los Angeles faces an increasingly precarious climate future, *The Hot Garden* stands as a powerful artistic response to personal and environmental catastrophe.

About John Knuth

John Knuth was born in 1978 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and lives and works in Los Angeles, California. He received an MFA from the University of Southern California, and a BFA from the University of Minnesota. His work is in multiple museum collections including the Perez Art Museum in Miami and the Asheville Art Museum. He has had solo exhibitions most recently at Hollis Taggart, NYC; Andrew Reface Gallery, Chicago; The Carnegie, Covington, KY; Marie Kierkegaard Gallery, Copenhagen; and Five Car Garage, Santa Monica. His work has been shown at LACMA, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and the Speed Art Museum, among others.

About Hollis Taggart Downtown

109 Norfolk Street, New York, NY

Hollis Taggart Downtown represents the new secondary location for Hollis Taggart realized through a partnership between Hollis Taggart, Paul Efstathiou, and Eleanor de Ropp Flatow. The downtown expansion builds upon the gallery's presence and commitment to emerging and mid-career artists.

###

For press inquiries, please contact Aga Sablinska at aga.sablinska@gmail.com or 862-216-6485.