**Press Release**

**Vivian Suter – Vivian Suter**

**13 June - 17 July 2015**

**Opening Friday 12 June 2015**

Vivian Suter was born in 1949 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, as the child of a Swiss father and an Austrian mother who fled after WWII. Years later the family returned to Basel where Suter studied painting at the Kunstgewerbeschule. In 1981, Jean Christophe Ammann included her in his show “6 Künstler aus Basel” at the Kunsthalle Basel. Her paintings were exhibited in an accrochage-like manner, creating a unique environment by placing more emphasis on the spatial installation rather than the individual work.

During a trip to Guatemala in 1983, Suter fell in love, got married and decided to stay in Central America. She built a home outside of Panajachel, in the midst of a former coffee plantation that is encircled by dense vegetation. Her studios are open-air wooden structures located in the midst of the lush rainforest. Here, the backdrop of prolific trees, vibrant flowers, and sounds of chirping tropical birds serves as inspiration for Suter’s abstract paintings. The colors, motifs, and movement of her brushstrokes are influenced by organic shapes, with a palette that ranges from various shades of green to dominant reds and yellows. Occasionally, remnants of the surrounding landscape can be found in her paintings – leaves or twigs congealed onto batches of thick paint, or random imprints of her dog’s paws. Her canvases, which are often raw and unframed, bear an anthropomorphic spirit. Often overlapping on the wall or draped onto the floor, they seem to have a life of their own, as if influenced by the fauna surrounding them.

A pivotal moment in Suter’s career occurred in 2005: a tropical storm destroyed large parts of Panajachel and flooded one of Suter's studios. Most of her paintings were completely or partially washed out by the rain, some even left coated with thick layers of mud and dirt. Instead of seeing the works as ruined, Suter decided to embrace this force of nature. Presently, Suter experiments with the influence of the tropical climate and intentionally exposes her canvases to these forces. Furthermore, she developed a process that includes applying fish glue on canvas, a technique which when left susceptible to rain would produce an organic pattern. Suter allows nature to manifest itself in her art by having paintings naturally evolve and create a personal narrative.

Even though Suter purposely chose an isolated lifestyle, her fate has catapulted her back to her Swiss roots and into the contemporary art scene. When Adam Szymczyk, the former director of Kunsthalle Basel, reinterpreted Ammann’s show, he tracked Suter down and asked her to participate in the re-enactment of the legendary exhibition. Then, in 2014, Szymczyk invited Suter for a solo show. These exhibitions, along with a group show at the Museo Tamayo in Mexico City, led to a new global interest in Suter’s work and to further international recognition with solo shows at the 2014 São Paulo Biennial and The Mistake Room in Los Angeles in 2015. Karma International is proud to present the artist’s first exhibition in Zürich, which includes works from over the course of 30 years. The paintings shown are deliberately left untitled and dateless, thus further retaining a sense of timelessness and non-hierarchy.