

# Jannie Regnerus

## *Tokyo Encore*

### 30.5—6.7.2024

After playing a piano concert in Tokyo in 1976, Keith Jarrett gave an encore. On the spot, he improvised a piece that lasts no longer than nine minutes, and within this condensed, intuitively driven piece the musician gropes for emotions as pure joy, tenderness to grief and love.

In the past ten years Jannie Regnerus has had no exhibitions, as she was expressing her artistic work in the literary field by writing six novels. Recently she turned back to painting again, the medium she started her practice as a young artist, and *Tokyo Encore* is her first solo show after a decade-long hiatus in the visual arts.

In her new series of paintings, Regnerus evokes the atmosphere and light of the landscape she grew up with in the north of the Netherlands, a place so vast that there is 'no end to the eye'. Her abstract minimalistic paintings appear as condensed carriers of this vastness and light, in a wide variety of time of day and season. Glowing colour fields, fading tones, reminiscent of the melancholic darkness of late evening, a cool morning light in winter, the warm glow light of summer afternoon. Even when the painting is finished, its colours remain in dialogue to daylight, changing subtly throughout the day.

After living in cities for more than thirty years, the artist seeks to infuse her work, both painterly and literary, with a stillness and infinitude that she both reminisces and longs for. In her paintings, she strives for clarity. As she argues: "some of my paintings appear to be immaterial, as if they have no weight at all, as if a "breeze of wind" has blown over the canvas. But when one looks more close, you see the "skin " consisting out of many thin layers of paint', you will recognise the movement of the hand and brush, and probably some imperfections as drips of paint, hairs of the brush." These traces reveal the presence of the human hand, as well as the concentration and efforts that were needed in order to achieve clarity.

Having lived in Japan and fascinated by its traditional aesthetics, Regnerus' paintings have a Japanese feel in their emphasis in brightness, colour, and space. One of her inspirations are *shoji*, sliding paper doors used in traditional Japanese architecture consisting of translucent white *washi* paper on a wooden frame. *Shoji* mediate light between the domestic space and the outside, creating a matte brightness that delicately drapes the interior. Similar to *shoji*, some of Regnerus' paintings can be seen as windows between her inner and outer landscapes. As Agnes Martin once said: "the painting grows on you, it is a map to your inner emotional states, abstract emotions as calm and innocence".

As a writer, Jannie Regnerus is also a minimalist, and very precise in her vocabulary. In both literature and painting, Regnerus works with the concentration and precision of a Japanese calligrapher, whose brushstrokes are to be placed at the right spot on the paper. Likewise, her paintings possess an instinctive accuracy that display a meticulous artistic process directed to the

representation of personal evocations. Nevertheless, there is not a desire to represent a landscape in its objective exactitude, but rather to conjure it through colour and light. In them we also find a sense of rhythm, a pulsation of the brush to keep their infinitude, their horizon ongoing. A quote from Agnes Martin that resonates with the Regnerus epitomises it: “From music people expect an emotion, but from art people expect an explanation. An artwork that is completely abstract is like music and can be responded to in the same way. Our response to tone, line and colour is the same as our response to rhythm, silence and sounds. It holds meaning for us, beyond expression in words.”

**Jannie Regnerus** is a writer and a visual artist. She was born in Oudebildtzijl, the Netherlands, and lives and works in Haarlem. She studied at the Kunstacademie in Maastricht and participated at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten between 1995-96. Between 2000 and 2001 she did a residency at the CCA Kitakyushu, Japan. Her novels *De ent*, *Het lam* and *Nachtschrijver* have been critically acclaimed. *Het lam* was on the longlist of the Libris Literatuur Prijs. Her latest publication is *Het wolkenpaviljoen* (2020) was also long-listed. As a painter and photographer she has participated in many group exhibitions in Europe and Japan.