

Koak Joins Jessica Silverman



Portrait of Koak. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (March X, 2026) – Jessica Silverman is delighted to announce the representation of **Koak**, a Californian artist whose paintings, drawings, and sculptures explore the psychology of life, death, and desire. Koak is a Neo-Pop artist who refuses the genre's traditional ironic distance — treating popular culture not as lowbrow citation but as a serious vehicle for excavating interior lives. A virtuoso of vivid line work, Koak draws inspiration from sources as varied as European Expressionism and Japanese animation to create works filled with emotional honesty, figurative clarity, and eloquent abstraction.

Koak has been an exhibiting artist since she was 15 years old. A shy teenager with obsessive-compulsive disorder, Koak was excited to discover she was adept at communicating through pictures. "It was the first time I felt like I had a voice," she explains. "It was a cathartic act." Koak's voice, or her "signature style," is unmistakable – tender but strong, introverted yet social, highly deliberate and, true to her OCD past, never slapdash.

For Koak, a painter is like a dancer committed to rehearsal. First, she creates ten variations of the same drawing before starting a painting. Then, in front of the canvas, she practices a paint stroke in order to perfect the physical feat. "When I paint a line, I think of music and warm up my body," she explains. "I draw and re-draw the line as if building a path into the painting, and my body rehearses the gesture. I use my arm like a compass, and my hand becomes accustomed to making the mark."



(Left): Koak, *Everything Touches Everything Else*, 2026. (Right): *The First Dream*, 2026.
Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Photo: Phillip Maisel.

Koak pulls, pushes, and amplifies every shape, making it come alive with double entendre. Hands transform into paws. Breasts turn into pecs. Hair is styled into buttock-like contours. Windows serve as both prison cages and oxygenated escape routes. Diamond patterns represent clothing but also embed into the skin. Koak reminds us that beneath the seemingly simple surface lie complex, often conflicting realities. As the artist explains, "I am keen for my viewers to have an intimate experience with my paintings that cannot be put into words."

Everything Touches Everything Else (2026) is a richly patterned pink painting depicting the embrace of two women—or perhaps one woman and her alter ego—in a space that is both flat and voluptuously three-dimensional. Using high-pigmented matte “flashe” paint with other mediums, Koak creates an impeccable composition in which every inch of the canvas bears witness to specific intent. It offers a lesson in art history, staging an encounter between Mary Cassatt and a hand-drawn Disney feature from the 1940s, or an impossible conversation between intense Käthe Kollwitz and nonchalant Tom Wesselmann. Either way, Koak’s characters are neither sacrificial lambs nor sex objects; her curious gaze asserts their agency and complexity.



(Left): Koak, *Great Expectations*, 2026. (Right): Koak, *Open Book / Pressed Flowers*, 2026.
 Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Photo: Phillip Maisel.

In *Open Book / Pressed Flowers* (2026), Koak presents a vividly colored still life. A black cat paws at a wordless book, surrounded by erotically charged flowers. At the center is a yonic vase featuring a voyeuristic drawing of a woman who might be towel-drying herself or painting her nails in the buff. The “still life” is anything but still; it rolls, surges, and licks. Moreover, it is drolly oxymoronic: a personal moment is depicted on a decorative object in a private space within a public painting. The *mise-en-abyme* is funny and ineffable.

Koak is a virtuoso painter whose technical skill narrows the gap between the self we show the world and the one we keep hidden. In a cultural moment saturated with fast images, Koak’s work insists on slowness, intimacy, and the healing act of looking. Her paintings do not simply depict the inner life of the artist – they invite us into our own.

Jessica Silverman will show a small selection of Koak works at Expo Chicago, April 9–12, 2026.

ABOUT KOAK

Koak (b. 1981, Lansing, MI) earned her BFA and MFA from California College of the Arts. Recently, she had a solo exhibition in Charleston, the home and studio of painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, located in Lewes, UK. Koak has participated in many institutional group shows: the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, WA; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, MO; de Young Museum in San Francisco, CA; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, CA; Musées d'Angers in France; Xiao Museum of Contemporary Art in Rizhao; and Rudolph Tegn timers Museum and Statue Park in Dronningmølle, Denmark, among others. In 2020, she received a Eureka Fellowship from the Fleishhacker Foundation and completed residencies at the Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque, NM, and at Minnesota Street Project in San Francisco, through the Liquitex Residency program. Koak's work is part of the permanent collections of the de Young Museum, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, and Musées d'Angers. She lives and works in San Francisco and is represented by Perrotin, Union Pacific, and Jessica Silverman. Her first solo show with Jessica Silverman is scheduled for March 2027.

ABOUT JESSICA SILVERMAN

Jessica Silverman is an international art gallery known for building artists' careers, collaborating with collectors keen on positive provenance, and partnering with museums on innovative exhibitions. Established in 2008, the gallery has operated in several locations in San Francisco and now resides on Grant Avenue on the border of Chinatown and the Financial District.

The gallery participates in all four prestigious Art Basel fairs –Miami Beach, Paris, Hong Kong, and the original Basel, Switzerland. The gallery also exhibits at Frieze LA and Frieze Seoul, as well as San Francisco's own FOG DESIGN + ART.

Jessica Silverman, the founder and CEO of the gallery, has an MA in Curatorial Practice and a BFA in Studio Art. She is a Board member of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA). She was a member of the San Francisco Arts Commission for nine years from 2009 to 2018 and is happy to consult on public projects.

For press inquiries–

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