

PAUL KOLKER collection

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PAUL KOLKER:
THE DROSTE EFFECT

April 23 - July 3, 2015



Paul Kolker: media room, 1978 (installation view 2015)

[April 23, 2015] Paul Kolker presents The Droste Effect at the PAUL KOLKER collection from April 23 through July 3, 2015. This exhibition of paintings, prints and sculpture is an experiment in perception based on the artist's first use of iterative processes generated by a television screen's moving image repeatedly reflected in a mirrored room, as depicted above in the 2015 installation view of Paul Kolker: media room, 1978.

That same year, in 1978, Kolker added to his collection a work by the late Nineteenth Century British painter, Rowland Holyoake, *La Belle Chocolatiere*, which was based on the famous pastel of the same title by the Eighteenth Century Swiss painter, Jean Etienne Liotard, depicting a pretty waitress serving hot chocolate. Serendipi-

tously, Liotard's work became the 1881 trademark image for the Walter Baker Chocolate Company, and which in 1900 had become the inspiration for the nurse on the tin of Droste Cocoa holding a tray with a small tin of Droste Cocoa with the almost forever recursive picture of the same nurse holding smaller, then smaller and smaller tins. This Droste Effect, as Kolker discovered in 1978, is founded in recursive images, each smaller than the former, like the nearly infinite reflections of himself and his television which he experienced while standing between two parallel mirrors in his media room; while evolving into the artist's larger bodies of works of light sculptures, paintings and prints. Kolker discovered that Benoit Mandelbrot's fractal geometry also explained iterative processes; and that dating back to medieval art history, a formal painting technique called *mise en abyme* employs an image with smaller and smaller repeating copies of itself.

The simultaneity of Kolker's acquisition of the Holyoake painting and Kolker's creation of the mirrored media room in 1978 was of the providential coincidence called *bashert*; it was meant to be! Subliminally, Kolker's works that he made and which he and his wife, Susan, collected were influenced by both the real and illusory; like the painterly-figurative almost photorealistic Holyoake's *La Belle Chocolatiere* and the recursive illusions experienced in media room. This, no doubt, influenced Kolker's methods of treatment of his works as an experiment testing perception based in part on that which Dr. Shinobu Ishihara had done with his hand painted color blindness test charts. Moreover, Kolker's works acquired a fractal-geometric expansiveness by incorporating the real, or fractal, with the illusion of a multitude of fractals and the extrasensory perception of feelings which Kolker explains as *vibes* (for vibrations) which evoke feelings described by Kolker as 'the WOW effect;' based on *Wonder of Wonders*, from the Broadway musical's lyrics of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

In *The Droste Effect*, Kolker presents his newest works as an illusion of reading between the lines... or dots as a logical segue from his current exhibition, *Flatland Reimagined* in which his painting *Parochet...* a romance of the line and the dot serves as a trailer for the upcoming show. Based upon a digitally imagined universe of particles, dots and pixels, the latter of which we see on our two dimensional display screens and printed pages, Kolker asks several questions: "How do we perceive that which we cannot see when veiled by painted lines?" And, "How do we perceive that which we know is a recursive illusion, of reflections within mirrors, and not real?" And Also, "What is the difference between our perception of the veiled space we can only imagine but do not see and our perception of the real reflection which is an illusion which we can see?" Finally, "Is seeing, believing?"

Paul Kolker (b. 1935) is a New York based artist with doctorate degrees in medicine and law. He is Emeritus Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery at North Shore/ LIJ Glen Cove Hospital, having practiced cardiothoracic surgery on Long Island from 1969 to 2013. In October 2001 Kolker moved his Long Island studio to Studio 601, now at the PAUL KOLKER collection, in the Chelsea art district so that he could work with other artists who assist him in his art production, much like his physician assistants, residents and fellows have assisted him as a heart surgeon; and also develop his curatorial skills in orchestrating and directing his exhibitions in his own gallery spaces. *The Droste Effect* is Kolker's forty-seventh solo exhibition.

In *Paul Kolker: The Droste Effect*, twenty paintings and sculptures are on view at the PAUL KOLKER collection from April 23 through July 3, 2015 at 511 West 25th Street in Chelsea adjacent to the High Line between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. For further information please call 212.367.7300, email info@paulkolker.com or visit www.paulkolker.com