

PAUL KOLKER collection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAUL KOLKER:
ON BECOMING A TURKEY!

Opening Reception
Thursday, 6-8 PM
November 16, 2017
511 West 25th Street



Paul Kolker: I am a turkey, too!, 2017
inkjet and acrylic on canvas
132 x 264 inches in thirty-two panels

[New York, NY, October 24, 2017] Paul Kolker is pleased to present, *On Becoming a Turkey!*... an exhibition of paintings and light sculptures based on the artist's perception, including his understanding and feelings, derived from reading the chassidic tale, *The Turkey Prince*. The exhibition is on view from November 16, 2017 through January 19, 2018 at the PAUL KOLKER collection.

Kolker's exhibition incorporates mystical concepts and imagery which are formatted into a conformity experiment of a simple two-step perceptual task; first reading a translation from the Yiddish text of Reb Nachman of Bratslav's turn of the eighteenth century's tale of *The Turkey Prince*; thereafter, viewing the exhibition, *On Becoming a Turkey!*

Eliezer Steinman's translation of Reb Nachman's *Tale of The Turkey Prince* follows:

"A prince lost his mind and began to think of himself as a turkey. He sat naked under the table, refraining from all food except for raw oatmeal, which he would place in his mouth and eat.... The king, his father, summoned all the physicians in the kingdom to heal his son but none of them was able to come up with a cure. One day a wise man appeared before the king and said to him, "I will cure your son".

The wise man immediately undressed and, sitting down under the table beside the prince, began to gather grains of oatmeal, which he put into his mouth. The prince asked him, "Who are you and what are you doing here?" The wise man replied with a question: "And who are you and what are you doing here?" "I am a turkey," said the prince. "And so am I," rejoined

the wise man. The two turkeys sat under the table side by side until they became accustomed to one another.

Seeing that the prince had become accustomed to his presence, the wise man motioned that he be given a robe. Putting on the robe, he turned to the prince, saying, "Do you think that a turkey is not entitled to wear a robe? It is entitled to do so and that does not mean that it stops being a turkey." After pondering the wise man's words for a while, the prince also agreed to wear a robe. A few days later, the wise man asked for a pair of pants and, after putting them on, he asked the prince, "Do you think that a turkey is not entitled to wear pants?" The prince admitted that a turkey could wear pants and he also put on a pair of pants. Eventually, both the wise man and the prince were fully dressed.

Then the wise man requested human food and asked the prince whether a turkey had to sit under the table. They both concluded that a turkey could go wherever it wanted and that this was perfectly acceptable. The prince then began to walk about, to eat, and to act like an ordinary human being. "

This parable is inspired by the Kabbalist notion called tzimtzum, founded in self contraction or concealment in order to make room for others. The Zohar, the Kabbalah's Book of Splendor, uses tzimtzum metaphysically to illuminate the theological quandaries of creation; that God contracted, or concealed, His infinite light into a vacant conceptual space without diminishing Himself in order to create the universe.

As depicted above, the large scale painting, *Paul Kolker: I am a turkey, too!*, 2017, casts light on Reb Nachman's wise man's amalgamation of self and other to cure the prince who believed he was a turkey. Mordechai Rotenberg designed his psychotherapeutic treatment protocols based on tzimtzum to metaphorically 'get down under the table' with the patient. Also echoed in the show are the 'self and other' philosophies of Martin Buber, Joseph Ber Soloveitchik, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Luther King, Jr. All of the foregoing are portrayed as exemplars of the tzimtzum nexus of self to others. Since there are no discoverable pictures of Nachman of Bratslav, his countenance remains mystically contracted and hidden in the exhibition; but empathically we are acutely aware of his presence in our understanding of tzimtzum through his tale, *The Turkey Prince*.

Paul Kolker (b. 1935) is a New York based artist with doctorate degrees in medicine and law. He is Fellow American College of Surgeons, Fellow American College of Legal Medicine and Emeritus Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Northwell Glen Cove Hospital, having practiced cardiothoracic surgery on Long Island from 1969 to 2013. In October 2001 Kolker moved his Long Island studio to his current address in the Chelsea art district so that he could produce his works and curate his exhibitions as an experiment in perception. His studio and gallery have together become his laboratory in which the viewer is the measuring instrument for Kolker's art as a perceptual experiment. *On Becoming a Turkey!* is Kolker's sixty-first solo exhibition.

Paul Kolker: On Becoming a Turkey! is on view from November 16, 2017 through January 19, 2018 at the PAUL KOLKER collection, 511 West 25th Street in Chelsea adjacent to the HighLine between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. Also on view is *Paul Kolker: Abstract Decalcomania... An Experiment in Perception* at 600 Third Avenue, NYC.

For further information please call 212.367.7300
email info@paulkolker.com or visit www.paulkolker.com

We shall be pleased to email a press packet upon request

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