

PAUL KOLKER collection

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

PAUL KOLKER:  
THE ESSAYS OF MY PERCEPTION... PAINTINGS WHICH SPEAK TO ME

Opening Reception  
Thursday, 6-8 PM  
May 17, 2018  
511 West 25th Street



*Paul Kolker: canvas dances, op.1, 2018 (detail)*  
acrylic on canvas  
55 x 55 inches

[New York, NY, April 20, 2018] Paul Kolker presents *The Essays of My Perception... Paintings Which Speak to Me* from May 17 through July 13, 2018 in the gallery of the PAUL KOLKER collection at 511 West 25th Street in Chelsea. The exhibition is an experiment in perception testing whether having read essays written by the artist and curator influence the beholder's perception of the exhibition and the works in it, whether abstract or figural.

In Kolker's essay, *Is it Abstract or a Pile of Logs?*, the artist discusses the psychology of perception by means of the projective feelings and associative illusions experienced by beholders of paintings, whether figural or abstract. "I called Jeff at the studio around eleven this morning as I drove my car to the shop for its scheduled brakes' servicing. I asked Jeff about the canvases he was masking. ... Jeff aptly described the canvases he was masking as the ones that look like 'a pile of... logs.' I asked, 'A pile of ... what?' Jeff said, 'A pile of logs.'"

Kolker's works and his curating them into an exhibition invite the asking of critical questions as to the beholder's perception of the exhibition as viewed collectively; and what becomes of that perception when the beholder views each of the works as they stand alone. Is the tree perceived differently when it is out of the forest? Does having read Kolker's essays alter how we perceive the exhibition as a collective work of art; and how do we perceive each work standing alone?

In two companion essays, Kolker articulates how art stirs up emotions or pathos. Empathetic describes feeling the emotions of others; while pathetic, a somewhat more pitiful and critical feeling. More than a century and a half ago the concept of the *pathetic fallacy* was described by John Ruskin in *Modern Painters, c. 1850*. Ruskin points out that the pathetic emotions of William Wordsworth's poem, "*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*" were real to the poet although the pathos, in truth was fallacious, because inanimate clouds lack a brain and emotion. Clouds and paintings do not emote; but their beholders, such as poets, artists and viewers, emote. Abstract clouds, abstract paintings and the writings about them enable their beholders to project feelings and thoughts of Wordsworth's wandering loneliness or Jeff's cozy pile of logs by the hearth, perhaps. It is the beholder who is empathetically affected by that which she perceives: and not the cloud, painting or written words.

Kolker's *canvas dances op. 1, 2018*, depicted in the detail above, is a derivative of several paintings using the processes of decalcomania and color field painting. First painted are dots of different sizes serving as a relief layer for the operant embossed effect of the canvas. Next a layer of acrylic colors and their base medium, as well as black and white are sandwiched between canvas and sheet plastic. Using the palms of the artist's hands and a cardboard tube, the paint is dispersed to cover the canvas. The plastic is lifted and pulled, while the paint's surface tension to canvas and plastic create the fractal geometric patterning. When completed and dry, macroscopic photographs of the painting, which define the fractal transformations of the paint showing striations, branchings, fractured smooth shapes that look rough like bark and rocks, are next converted from color to either two, three or four layers of anachromatic grayscale; next made into vector files; and thereafter sent to a plotter/scanner vinyl cutter to create colorfield stencils. A new canvas is painted, covered with a vinyl stencil and circles, fractal transformations of striations, branchings and other rough shapes are weeded to accept another layer of paint. Finally the decalcomania process is repeated in color and white; superimposed with a jagged, bark-like and rough shaped vinyl stencil painted in black, thereby creating a second derivative of the painting. Through this very labor intensive and recursive process of Kolker's surgical intentionality and gesture, the resultant derivative painting, detailed above, remains perceptually unique as an abstraction; or as a pile of logs.

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. *The Essays of My Perception... Paintings Which Speak To Me* is Kolker's sixty-fourth solo exhibition.

In Paul Kolker: *The Essays of My Perception... Paintings Which Speak To Me*, twenty-two works are on view from May 17 through July 13, 2018 at the Paul Kolker collection, 511 West 25th Street in Chelsea, adjacent to the HighLine between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues.

Paul Kolker: *The Poetry of My Perception... Paintings Which Speak to Me* is on view through May 11, 2018.

Paul Kolker: *Abstract Decalcomania... An Experiment in Perception* is ongoing at 600 Third Avenue.

For further information please call 212.367.7300  
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We shall be pleased to email a press packet upon request