

PAUL KOLKER collection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAUL KOLKER:
PAINTINGS WHICH SPEAK TO ME... GRANDPA MURRAY AND HIS
AMAZING 'FIRE ENGINE RED' SUPER PUMPER

Opening Reception
Thursday, 6-8 PM
April 2, 2019
511 West 25th Street



*Paul Kolker: do the deed shall breed the thought; the 9/17/65 super pumper experiment synthèse, 2020
acrylic, inkjet and polyurethane on canvas
99 x 165 inches in fifteen parts*

Paul Kolker is pleased to present his seventy fourth solo exhibition which he has curated and produced. *Paintings Which Speak to Me... Grandpa Murray and His Amazing 'Fire Engine Red' Super Pumper*, is on view at the PAUL KOLKER collection from April 2 through May 30, 2020 at 511 West 25th Street in the Chelsea art district. In his exhibition, Kolker uses painting over prints of photographs of Grandpa Murray and FDNY's 1965 Super Pumper. Sandwiched to the figural paintings are multiple layers of colorful, gestural and abstract dot decalcomania paintings which abstractify the figural image as holiday lights tend to do; cheering-up the spectator's affect.

Paul Kolker's essay about this show follows:

*Paintings Which Speak to Me...
Grandpa Murray and His Amazing
'Fire Engine Red' Super Pumper
Paul Kolker, February 2020*

Should you read essays by the nineteenth-century art critic, John Ruskin, you may learn that paintings speak to us in an emotion-laden language of aesthetics which he describes as 'pathetic fallacy;' like crying clouds raining tears. The clouds and rain are inanimate; yet they evoke our feelings. The tears are ours because rainy days bring us the pathos of sadness. Some one hundred years later, through my perception of Martin Buber's dialogue and his hyphenation tool attaching us to others as in I-Thou or I-It, I derived my new theory of dialogical perception. Please visit: https://youtu.be/Ez-D_x-le6w

Inanimate objects become capable of evoking our emotions. In that manner, when we behold... or insinuate ourselves into a work of art, that work 'speaks to us' by igniting our minds through our senses by propagating our thoughts which have become perceptions... a dialogue of understandings and feelings. When we look at a painting or photograph and smile, laugh or cry, through dialogical process we have become part of the narrative and the memories and the moods evoked within us. We simultaneously engage in a dialogue with our perceptions of the real, imaginary, figural and abstract, whether evidence-based or based on our beliefs all at once. In dialogical perception I becomes hyphenated or attached to my perception of Thou.

*Grandpa Murray and His Amazing 'Fire Engine Red' Super Pumper is an exhibition which I unknowingly curated in my mind almost fifty years ago as bedtime stories for my children; which regretfully I missed telling them then and thankfully I can tell them today. I rediscovered those memories in January 2020 having opened an envelope filled with black and white photographs from the 1950s and 1960s; something you intuitively and gladly do when you are in your mid-eighties. Of the thousands of black and white photos I have taken during those decades when color prints were too costly, hundreds I have painted-over as I have those works which I prepared for this exhibition. In addition, layers of abstract color halftones or ishidots cover the figural painting in a process called *synthèse* wherein a photographic sparkle of glow-lights or out-of-focus bokeh dots pixelate the painting like a starry-night... reminiscent of my bedtime story about Grandpa Murray's "Amazing 'Fire Engine Red' Super Pumper" covered by happy clouds of twinkling dots of colored light, even black and white; and so many... as the stars in the heavens.*

Murray Ratner, Deputy Chief of the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) and member of the Society of Fire Prevention Engineers, shared in the development of the Super Pumper along with other FDNY engineers and naval architect William F. Gibbs and automotive designers for Mack Trucks. The super pumper went into service in October 1965, several months before my marriage to Grandpa Chief Ratner's daughter, Susan and while I was a Harvard research fellow in Transplantation Surgery at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston. The 1965 rendition of the Super Pumper imitated Gibbs' 1938 FDNY fireboat which drafted enormous volumes of river water and pumped 20,000 gallons per minute; still to this day these fireboats are amazing water throwing machines!

*As depicted above, Paul Kolker: do the deed shall breed the thought; the 9/17/65 super pumper experiment *synthèse*, 2020 memorializes the final in-the-field tests of the brand new fireboat on the wheels of a Mack Truck with an eighteen cylinder 2,400 horse power diesel engine powering a six-stage hydraulic fire-pump rated at 8,800 gallons per minute which casts a parabolic stream of water nearly 600 feet and has pumped on different occasions between five to ten thousand gallons of*

water a minute on that Friday, September 17, 1965.

On the back of the black and white photo taken during the Super Pumper's so-called preclinical testing was the following note:

Maurice,

If you notice the dark area at the end of the stream, I burned this in to show the area where I believe the stream starts to break up.

Russ

RTC

Friday 9/17/65

It is important for the artist to title her works. Otherwise the canvas or sculpture is merely a distorted perception of visual stimuli if even a hint of the artist's story is hidden or untold. I also propose that perception may be dialogical; that others, both persons, animals, art and other things, such as beliefs, bind and embrace us in relationships with each other; including my exhibition and those paintings which speak to me; and hopefully to you, too.

My paintings seek an I-Thou relationship with you and others who do the deed of beholding them. My paintings certainly speak to me, in some sort of pathetic fallacy way. I have learned that today we do not stand as Arthur Schopenhauer stood before a painting as we stand before a prince, and approach it not... lest it speaks to us. When Russ' photograph of the 1965 Super Pumper became my paint-over with dots filled with the painterly gestures of decalcomania, it had no voice until I titled the painting referencing Shelley's poem

"But art, wherein man speaks in no wise to man,

Only to mankind___ art may tell a truth

Obliquely, do the deed shall breed the thought."

Art is experimenting, like Murray and Russ did in 1965 on the dark area of the stream of their avant garde Super Pumper. As for us artists, curators, critics, collectors, humanists and scientists... we began our visual perception experiments in utero, infancy and early childhood; and we continue on to do the deed to breed the thought... and feelings, too!

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. *Paintings Which Speak to Me... Grandpa Murray and His Amazing 'Fire Engine Red' Super Pumper* is Kolker's seventy-fourth solo exhibition.

In *Paul Kolker: Paintings Which Speak to Me... Grandpa Murray and His Amazing 'Fire Engine Red' Super Pumper*, twenty works are on view from April 2 through May 30, 2020 at the PAUL KOLKER collection, 511 West 25th Street adjacent to the High Line between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues

Paul Kolker: Dialogical Perception... Art As Experiment eighteen works are on view through March 27, 2020 at the PAUL KOLER collection

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