

Robert Kushner
Portraits & Perennials

February 9 – March 11, 2017

Opening Reception
Thursday, February 9, 6-8 pm



Nasturtiums - Hot Season, 2016. Oil, acrylic, and gold leaf on canvas, 72 x 72 inches.

DC Moore Gallery is pleased to present *Robert Kushner: Portraits & Perennials*. In this exhibition of new paintings and works on paper, Kushner extends the boundaries of his compositions, infusing his iconic, organic imagery with vibrant color and increased geometric precision in a lyrical synthesis of styles and techniques.

Underscoring the evocative title of the catalogue's essay, "Do REAL Men Paint Flowers?," the exhibition seeks to disrupt the narrative surrounding the decorative while exploring the importance of beauty in contemporary art. In paintings such as *Bossa Nova* (2015), *Ahavah* (2016), and *Nasturtiums–Hot Season* (2016), Kushner's defining grid-like backgrounds have grown increasingly pronounced, as he employs a bold, energized palette of brilliant pinks, purples, and yellows that imbue this body of work with new vigor. "...I began to consider how I could introduce a more raucous color sense, and increase of scale

of the individual floral and foliate elements so that they might go spilling off the confines of the canvas,” the artist explains.

These tensions between the figurative and the abstract, achieved through interplays of organic movement and geometric configurations, are in full evidence in works such as *Spring Rain* (2016) and the artist’s monumental *Tenderness* (2015). At times the work’s imagery, created with oil and acrylic paint with gold leaf, evokes Matisse’s botanical cutouts, while their bright, vertical bands of color uncannily call to mind the works of Barnett Newman and Ellsworth Kelly. Reflecting on these fluid interchanges, Kushner wittily muses in the exhibition’s catalogue: “So, are geometry and botany at peace? In dialogue? At each other’s throats? I would like to think that when I am done after working on it for weeks and sometimes months, there is an interesting and intentionally confusing juxtaposition between pure abstraction and linear form—that they each balance one another and create their own tightrope act.”

The accompanying catalogue to the exhibition highlights these new developments through a series of thought-provoking questions posed to the artist by notable individuals in fields ranging from the art historical and creative to the spiritual and culinary realms. These included curators and art critics, two museum directors, a poet, a rabbi, a restaurateur, and a diplomat. Their inquiries covered a wide spectrum of Kushner’s artistic concerns and brought new critical insights into the artist’s ongoing body of work.

Robert Kushner has exhibited extensively in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Brooklyn Museum, in New York, and the Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art. His work is featured in public collections such as The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Tate Modern, London, England; and the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy. Publications on Kushner’s work include the monograph *Gardens of Earthly Delight* (Hudson Hills Press, 1997) with essays by Alexandra Anderson and Holland Cotter, and *Wild Gardens* by Michael Duncan (Pomegranate, 2006). In 2012, Kushner was the editor of an important volume of art criticism by Amy Goldin (1926-1978) titled *Amy Goldin: Art in a Hairshirt* (Hudson Hills).



Tenderness, 2015. Oil, acrylic, and palladium leaf on canvas, 90 x 252 inches.

DC MOORE GALLERY specializes in contemporary and twentieth-century art. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm. For more information, for photographs, or to arrange a viewing, please call 212-247-2111 or email Rachel Johnson at rjohnson@dcmooregallery.com.