

Nicholas Krushenick: Inventing Pop Abstraction

For the 2017 edition of Frieze Masters, Spotlight, Garth Greenan Gallery will present *Inventing Pop Abstraction*, a solo exhibition of works by Nicholas Krushenick. The three paintings included provide an overview of Krushenick's work from 1965 to 1967, a time of intense formal as well as technical innovation for the artist. During this period, Krushenick developed a distinctive style that straddled Op, Pop, Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism, and Color Field Painting. Juxtaposing broad black lines with flat Liquitex colors, the artist created bold, energetic compositions that combine the graphic clarity of Pop with nonfigurative shapes and forms. Works like *Flying Circus* (1965) demonstrate Krushenick's deliberate caricature of painterly "drips" or "skeins" into what more closely resemble details from cartoons—"like close-ups of Superman's hair follicles," as critic Robert Rosenblum once wrote. Krushenick relished his equivocal status: "They don't know where to place me. Like I'm out in left field all by myself. And that's just where I want to stay."

The presentation will also include a custom vitrine featuring a selection of rare preparatory drawings. Throughout his career, Krushenick was secretive about his work as a draftsman, in part because of the unfinished quality and "lack of precision" in much of the work. Regardless, the drawings provide a unique opportunity for viewers to understand another aspect of the artist's process.

In 2015, the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, hosted a full-career retrospective of the artist's work. Frieze Masters will be the first time, however, that Krushenick's paintings have been displayed in the United Kingdom. They were last shown in Europe in 1973.

Born in The Bronx, New York, Nicholas Krushenick (1929–1999) studied painting at the Art Students League and the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts. After completing his training, Krushenick designed window displays and worked in the Framing Department of the Museum of Modern Art. From 1957 to 1962, the artist, along with his brother John, operated the now legendary Brata Gallery in Manhattan's East Village. Brata displayed the works of many of the foremost artists of the day, including, among others: Ronald Bladen, Ed Clark, Al Held, Yayoi Kusama, and George Sugarman.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Krushenick had solo exhibitions at many of the most influential and prestigious galleries, including: Graham Gallery (1958, 1962, 1964, New York), Fischbach Gallery (1965, New York), Galerie Sonnabend (1967, Paris), Galerie Ziegler (1969, Zürich), Galerie Beyeler (1971, Basel), and The Pace Gallery (1967, 1969, 1972, New York). His work also figured prominently in many landmark museum exhibitions, such as *Post Painterly Abstraction* (1964, Los Angeles County Museum of Art), *Vormen van de Kleur* (1964, Stedelijk Museum), *Systemic Painting* (1965, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum), and *Documenta 4* (1968, Fridericianum), among others. In 1968, the Walker Art Center mounted a retrospective exhibition of Krushenick's work. His first European retrospective came four years later, in 1972, at the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hannover, Germany.

Krushenick's work is featured in the collections of over sixty major museums, including: the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Empire State Art Collection, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Museum of Modern Art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Stedelijk Museum, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Walker Art Center, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent the Estate of Nicholas Krushenick.



Flying Circus, 1965