

Garth Greenan Gallery 545 West 20th Street New York New York 10011 212 929 1351 www.garthgreenan.com

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Contact: Garth Greenan
(212) 929-1351
garth@garthgreenan.com
www.garthgreenan.com

Nicholas Krushenick: Collage



Icarus, 1965

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to announce *Nicholas Krushenick: Collage*, an exhibition of works on paper at **545 West 20th Street**. Opening Thursday, December 12, 2019, the exhibition is the artist's fourth with the gallery. The exhibition will survey Krushenick's collage works made from 1959 to 1981.

A formative medium for the artist, collage enabled Krushenick to establish a visual vocabulary that formed the basis for his most iconic works. The bright processed colors, broad black lines, and overlapping, quasi-organic forms that define his later works first appear in these bold, layered, and loosely stapled abstract collages. It was through a selection of collages like these—initially shown at Brata Gallery in 1960—that Krushenick's contemporaries were first introduced to what would become his mature style.

Untitled (Triptych) (1959) subtly anticipates Krushenick's iconic "pop abstraction" while demonstrating his playful art historical curiosity. The work's triptych format and cruciforms recall Christian art of previous centuries. Gestural strokes of earthy green acrylic evoke Abstract Expressionism, but stray drips of paint below the forms reveal the more humorous constituents of that serious green: a mustard yellow, a rusty red, and a dark teal. The three-part collage also reads from left to right as an abstract but slapstick comic strip sequence. In the works that followed, the artist's resolutely personal stylistic lexicon crystallized.

In *Icarus* (1965), white, ovoid forms overlap like tail feathers against the collage's red and blue background. The composition is framed by what resemble sun-yellow cartoon stomach villi. The sharp black contours define each form and seem to intensify each individual color. As before, his work confounded ordinary classification, straddling the lines between Op, Pop, Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism, and Color Field painting. "They don't know where to place me," said Krushenick in an interview. "I'm out in left field all by myself. And that's just where I want to stay."

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 work by many of the foremost artists of the day, including Ronald Bladen, Ed Clark, Al Held, Yayoi Kusama, and George Sugarman.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Krushenick had solo exhibitions at a number of influential 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 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. In 2015, he had a retrospective at the Tang Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York, entitled *Nicholas Krushenick: Electric Soup*.

Krushenick's work is featured in the collections of more than sixty major museums, including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Empire State Plaza Art Collection, Albany, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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

Nicholas Krushenick: Collage will be on view at **Garth Greenan Gallery, 545 West 20th Street** (between Tenth and Eleventh avenues), through **Saturday, January 25, 2020**. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For more information, **please contact Garth Greenan at (212) 929-1351, or email info@garthgreenan.com**.

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