

Tang Teaching Museum Presents Major Survey of Genre-Defying Artist Nicholas Krushenick

***Nicholas Krushenick: Electric Soup* explores artist's influential legacy and features paintings, collages, and drawings spanning artist's 50-year career**

Saratoga Springs, N.Y. – January 8, 2015 – The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College will present a survey of genre-defying artist Nicholas Krushenick, February 7 – August 16, 2015. *Nicholas Krushenick: Electric Soup* features over 20 of the artist's eye-popping paintings, along with collages, drawings, and prints from the 1950s through the 1990s, an under-appreciated body of work that has had a profound influence on generations of artists working in a variety of styles and media.

Electric Soup features Krushenick's dynamic paintings that juxtapose bold forms with hard-edged abstraction, revealing a body of work that exists independent of and simultaneously connected to Op art, Pop, Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism, and Color Field painting. The exhibition includes well-known works created in New York in the 1960s and 1970s as Krushenick rose to prominence, as well as works created in Baltimore during the 1980s and 1990s, when art market tastes shifted away from Krushenick's unclassifiable style. The survey also includes rarely seen drawings and prints influenced by Abstract Expressionist Hans Hoffman's theory of "push-pull," in which bright contrasting colors activate the space—a practice Krushenick continued to use throughout his career.

Krushenick's boldly independent vocabulary and style helped him become a prominent figure on the New York art scene in the 1960s. His vibrant paintings hinge on a tension between figure and ground; flatness and spatiality; edge and interior; geometry and disorder; with influences as varied as Henri Matisse, Edward Hicks, and Henri Rousseau. While Krushenick's graphic forms and bright colors are akin to Pop art, he remained interested in abstraction, distancing his work from the representational forms of Pop art. While not as widely recognized as other artists of the period, Krushenick's work has been influential to many contemporary artists including Kathy Butterly, Peter Halley, Mary Heilmann, and Thomas Nozkowski.

"As a museum dedicated to interdisciplinary teaching and learning, it's important to us that our exhibitions are valuable tools to inform study across a range of disciplines, and provide engaging experiences for all our visitors," said Ian Berry, Dayton Director of the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Gallery. "We are thrilled to bring together this impressive group of Nicholas Krushenick's bold and inspiring paintings, and to introduce a new audience to his significant body of work."

The Tang Teaching Museum develops exhibitions and programming dedicated to interdisciplinary thinking and presents the works of influential and emerging contemporary artists. Through its multidisciplinary approach, the Tang Teaching Museum integrates the arts into academic life on campus at Skidmore College—providing a space for critical thought and inviting collaborative learning through

active engagement with artworks and exhibitions. The Tang Teaching Museum was founded in 2000, and in 2015 will celebrate its 15th anniversary with a series of exhibitions and programs to be announced in the coming months.

Nicholas Krushenick: Electric Soup is the latest in a series of exhibitions at the Tang that present in-depth surveys of underappreciated modern and contemporary artists, including *Someday is Now: The Art of Corita Kent* (2013); *Nancy Grossman: Tough Life Diary* (2012); *Tim Rollins and K.O.S.: A History* (2009); *Joachim Schmid Photoworks 1982–2007* (2007); *Richard Pettibone: A Retrospective* (2005); and *America Starts Here: Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler* (2005); among others. Each exhibition has been accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue, re-introducing important bodies of work to new audiences.

An extensive catalogue will accompany the exhibition, chronicling the history of Krushenick's work through images, scholarly essays, and excerpts from interviews with the artist. The exhibition includes loans from the Museum of Modern Art, Dallas Museum of Art, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Walker Art Center, Johnson Museum at Cornell University, and several private collections along with key works from the artist's estate. Many of the works have not been seen publicly in decades and have never before been brought together in the same exhibition.

About Nicholas Krushenick

Nicholas Krushenick was born in the Bronx in 1929. He studied painting at the Art Students League and the Hans Hoffman School of Fine Arts from 1950 to 1951. In the mid-1950s, Krushenick designed window displays and worked as the Assistant Master Framer at New York's Museum of Modern Art. In 1957, he established a framing shop with his brother John on 10th Street that soon evolved into the successful Brata Gallery, one of several cooperative, artist-run galleries in Manhattan's East Village during the 1950s and 1960s. Brata hosted the first poetry and jazz performances of David Amram and Jack Kerouac and exhibited the work of many of the foremost artists of the day, including Ed Clarke, Al Held, Yayoi Kusama, Robert Ryman, and George Sugarman, among others.

During this period, inspired by Henri Matisse's cut gouaches, Krushenick began experimenting with paper collages, providing a springboard for his painting. Experimenting with overlapping forms and colors, Krushenick developed his signature vocabulary of flat, brightly colored, simple, abstract forms delineated by thick black lines. "I have a series of forms and shapes that I am in love with," Krushenick noted in 1969. "They have a certain kind of dynamic element and a certain kind of mystery so that you can't identify them but they suggest many forms."

In 1962, Krushenick left the management of Brata Gallery to his brother and focused solely on his painting. That year he had his first uptown solo exhibition at Graham Gallery and by 1967 he was showing with Pace Gallery in New York, Sonnabend in Paris, and Muller in Stuttgart. Throughout the mid-1960s and 1970s, Krushenick's work was featured in several major group exhibitions, including Clement Greenberg's *Post Painterly Abstraction* (1964) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Lawrence Alloway's *Systemic Painting* (1966) at the Guggenheim Museum, as well as *New Shapes of Color* (1966) at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, *Ornamental Tendencies in Contemporary Painting* (1968) at the Haus am Waldsee in Berlin, Documenta IV (1968) in Kassel, and the Whitney Biennial (1973), among others. In 1968, the Walker Art Center mounted a major retrospective of his work and, in 1972, the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hannover, Germany, presented his first European retrospective.

In the late 1970s, Krushenick left Pace Gallery and, after holding various teaching positions, he took an Associate Professor position at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he worked until 1991. Krushenick continued to paint, print, and draw until his death in 1999.

Visiting the Tang Teaching Museum

The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., is open noon – 5 p.m., Tuesday – Sunday, with extended hours through 9 p.m. on Thursdays during the academic year, and is closed on Mondays and major holidays. The Tang hosts some 40,000 visitors annually, ranging from local students who visit through school programs to museum-goers from around the globe. For more information call 518-580-8080 or visit www.skidmore.edu/tang.

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