

ROBERT JAKOB *Garden Notes*

September 15 – October 31, 2011



Garden Notes, blossom #2, 2010
acrylic and oil crayon on paper, 30 x 22 1/4 in



Garden Notes, poppy #2, 2010
acrylic and oil crayon on paper, 30 x 22 1/4 in

From September 16th through October 31st The Drawing Room in East Hampton is pleased to present **Robert Jakob: Garden Notes**, an exhibition of paintings on paper of flowers he has planted over the last thirty years in his extraordinary garden in the hamlet of Springs. Jakob's intuitive brushwork follows the lines and expressive gestures of poppies, salvia, fennel and daylilies as they peak and wilt. This body of work introduces an important new voice to the history of expressionist artists inspired by the beauty of nature on the East End of Long Island.

Born and raised in Wiesbaden, Germany, Jakob studied painting at the Werkkunstschule with Vincent Weber and other Bauhaus trained artists. After living in Greece and North Africa he arrived in New York in 1964 and began his career in graphic design with Will Burtin. He then spent 24 years working with Arnold Saks, where his projects included exhibition plans for the Metropolitan Museum and graphic design for the Jewish Museum. In 1990 he retired and moved to the Springs, turning full time to painting and his passion for planting the garden which became his exclusive subject.

Jakob began drawing plants from life as a boy in Germany, inspired by his garden designer uncle who loved to paint watercolors of his flower beds. At art school he was exposed to natural history drawings and became fascinated by the illustrated journals and herbaria of the German naturalist

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explorer Alexander Von Humboldt (1769-1859), and the botanical studies of Georg Flegel (1566-1638), Georg Dionysius Ehret (1710-1770), Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717) and Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759-1840). Emulating the graphic notations and placement of botanical specimens on the page in various 19th century herbaria, Jakob has developed his own recording of plant life over the years in many media and on special papers. As an artist in New York in the 60s and 70s he was influenced by the plant drawings of Ellsworth Kelly, Cy Twombly and Gerhard Richter. Jakob's friendships with Kelly and Twombly inspired his sensitivity to the negative spaces around his plants on the page as well as the play of flatness and volume conveyed by the tools – sticks or brushes – with which he paints.

While some works in this exhibition are portraits of a single flower, others are paintings of several lilies or poppies offering many blossoms in a single composition. Delivered with loose, observant gestures, Jakob captures the lean and fall of proud stems supporting miraculous petal structures in the air. Painting from life and memory his loaded brush traces the horticultural contours with a palette that shares the potency of the flower petals themselves. These striking series are reminiscent of Momoyama iris screens and also bring to mind the watercolors of Emil Nolde.

Jakob imbues each flower he honors with a lively presence in a lush composite of time-lapse poses, capturing subtle life stages unfolding and often overlapping on the page. In his monumental rendering of one unnamed blossom, the pungent yellow and deep lilac petals roll and crumple around the stamen. One imagines the flow of the 20-day lifecycle of a poppy – from pod to fading bloom, or the 24-hour cycle of a daylily from open to closed trumpet. His watery, abstracted painting of an anemone is remarkable for the thrust of the blossom from its long sensuous leaves.

Like Monet at Giverny and Jennifer Bartlett in her studio gardens in New York, Robert Jakob cultivates a never ending subject from seed in acres of geometric beds in the Springs. Entrancing to a painter's eye, scarlet poppies, grape hyacinths, yellow lilies and blue salvias lure him to observe the slow opening and closing of the buds that stretch across his garden and onto his page.

Also on view from September 15 through October 10, Selected Pastels by Jennifer Bartlett.

Please note the gallery's fall hours

Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Monday 10–5, Sunday 11-4

For further information and reproduction quality images contact Lindsay Reichart at 631.324.5016 or info@drawingroom-gallery.com.