

# THE DRAWING ROOM 16R Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937 T 631.324.5016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From October 30 through December 31, 2004, The Drawing Room will present the first show on the East Coast devoted to the enamel paintings on paper of self-taught artist Peter Paul Drgac (1883-1976). A reception will be held on Saturday November 6, from 5 to 7 pm.

Born in 1883 to immigrant parents in a Czech community in central Texas, Drgac spent his early years working on his family's farm. He began painting during the last decade of his life, years after retiring from the grocery business he and his wife founded in 1916. His foray into painting started with a decorative impulse to embellish a whitewashed window box - influenced in part by Czech Folk Art traditions. For a time Drgac, known to friends and neighbors as Uncle Pete, immersed himself in ornamentation, using glossy enamel house paints to decorate household objects such as tables, benches, bottles, egg cartons and light bulbs. Soon Drgac shifted his attention to the creation of enamel paintings on paper - the subject of this exhibition. Between 1969 and his death in 1976, Drgac executed more than 200 paintings that covered the walls of his house, turned gallery, where he welcomed interested visitors.

Drgac's naive paintings are characterized by eccentric juxtapositions of colorful barnyard animals, flowers, household objects, and furniture silhouetted against backgrounds washed with a thin coat of white paint. While he sometimes painted his stylized imagery directly on the whitewashed paper, more often Drgac first made drawings on drafting paper and then traced the forms with pencil onto the surface he intended to paint.

In one series currently on view, Drgac painted the names of friends in bold, black, freehand letters above groupings of chairs, candelabras, etageres and other furniture. These striking compositions, apparent portraits of acquaintances through the representation of their living room furniture, are rendered in primitive line with a palette dominated by bright, milky hues of teal, blue, green and grey. Other examples of Drgac's fanciful and quirky sensibility include a painting of six colorful beds presented in pairs stacked on a vertical sheet of paper; an aqua and grey composition juxtaposing women's shoes, jewelry and rocking chairs; and an arrangement complete with lampshade, chairs and household tools.

A series depicting birds and flowers and other plant forms in red, black and blue is punctuated by teal foliage and multi-colored dot patterns. While the graphic imagery and bold palette of these and other paintings reveal the influence of Czech folk art traditions, a unique aesthetic sensibility emerges in Drgac's work - one that isolates American icons such as the rocking chair, high heels and the rooster - and sheds light on the experience of the self-taught folk artist.

Drgac's work has been exhibited in numerous museums and galleries nationwide, including the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore, MD, the Archer M. Huntington Gallery in Austin, TX, Phyllis Kind Gallery and Edward Thorp Gallery in New York, and Leslie Muth Gallery in Santa Fe, NM.

For further information or reproductions, please contact Susan Papa at 631.324.5016 or [info@drawingroom-gallery.com](mailto:info@drawingroom-gallery.com).

