

Botanica

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FROM THE PEONY OF ANCIENT EASTERN ART, TO VAN GOGH'S *SUNFLOWERS* AND MONET'S *WATERLILIES*, TO JEFF KOONS' 43 FOOT TALL BLOOMING TOPIARY *PUPPY*, THE FLOWER IS A CONSTANT INSPIRATION FOR ARTISTS AND ART ENTHUSIASTS ALIKE.

BOTANICA IS COMPRISED OF TWENTY-TWO ARTWORKS THAT RANGE FROM DIRECT DEPICTIONS OF FLOWERS TO OBJECTS AND IMAGES EVOKING FLORAL FORMS. ON ONE END OF THE SPECTRUM ARE THE INTIMATE PAINTINGS OF IRIS BLOSSOMS BY MARTIN KOTLER. THESE *PREMIER COUP* OR *FIRST STRIKE* PAINTINGS ARE COMPLETED "IN ONE SITTING," CAPTURING THE FLEETING DELICACY OF SUMMER'S GARDENS. CONVERSELY, DEAN KESSMANN'S PHOTOGRAPHS CONVEY THE SHAPE AND COLOR OF PANSIES, YET DO NOT PRESENT FLOWERS AT ALL. RATHER, THEY ARE IMAGES OF PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS COLLECTED AS LITTER AND PHOTOGRAPHED WITH DRAMATIC BACKLIGHTING. THE TITLES - *TARGET*, *SAFEWAY*, AND *HAVE A NICE DAY* - IDENTIFY THEIR SOURCE AND OFFER A STINGING REMINDER OF OUR PRECARIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION.

BOTANICA IS THE INAUGURAL EXHIBITION OF THE CARROLL SQUARE GALLERY, A DYNAMIC VENUE THAT STRIVES TO EXPAND THE D.C. ARTS COMMUNITY.

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