

Leon Belsky



MONUMENTAL



Front Cover: Twilight Dance 61 x 152cm Oil on Canvas

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Monumental

April 2017

CATTO GALLERY

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There is a school of thought that, for virtuoso musicians, an instrument is almost unnecessary. They have already developed musical ideas in their minds. The violin or piano is just a medium through which to share them.

It's a pretty 'out there' thesis. But Leon Belsky would understand it.

The Russian-Canadian painter – back for another Catto show – is a celebrated artist whose work is loved by private collectors and exhibited by public galleries all over the world. He is known for his monumental studies of flowers and fruit. But after a life spent painting, he has concluded that what matters above all else in art is the fundamental idea.

"The challenge is to see things differently," he says. "It has nothing to do with subject matter. Subject is secondary to me. I get an idea or a theme clear in my mind before I begin to make a picture. The image is first constructed internally, then sketched and ultimately painted. I always chose my subjects so that they suit my ideas, not vice versa."

Happily for us, Leon expresses his internal themes with supreme taste. We can see the ideas bubbling inside these vast photorealistic canvases, but we can also enjoy their surface too. The paintings are just lovely to look at.

Take 'Ascension'. This image of pink tulips rising from the horizontal subtly expresses life and growth. It almost has the character of a stop-motion study, as if the flowers were arching towards the sun as the day progresses. There's definitely a cosmic dimension to the image. But, in addition to the thematic richness, it's also an opulent work of beauty.

As are all the new works. Much of this is to do with the way Leon handles light. 'Glowing', for example, puts a row of pears in a dramatic spotlight. 'In love' appears to bath them in early evening sunshine.

Leon works hard to achieve these effects, He says: "I enjoy working with light and I favour unusual perspectives, which emphasise the rhythm of the structure, the abstract geometry of the composition and the dynamics of various shapes, strokes, lines and colours."

Clearly the artist is expert at this. He's been doing it for half a century. Leon is now in his 70th year. He was born in the Ukraine in 1947 and came to Moscow at the age of 17 to study and eventually settled down there. He won a place at the Moscow School of Painting and later completed an MFA at the renowned Surikov Academy for Fine Art. There, he added technical rigour to his natural talent and went on to be accepted into the prestigious Union of Russian Artists. Though Leon won acclaim and prizes in his native country, he left in 1990 to pursue the artistic freedom available in the West.

He lived and worked in Israel, and achieved almost instant acclaim when he took part in a wildly successful group show at the Museum of Contemporary Israeli Art in Tel Aviv in 1993.

Eventually Leon settled in Canada, where he still lives. Indeed, he has become a venerated Canadian national: he was elected to the Ontario Society of Artists, and the Government of Ontario has several of his works in its permanent collection.

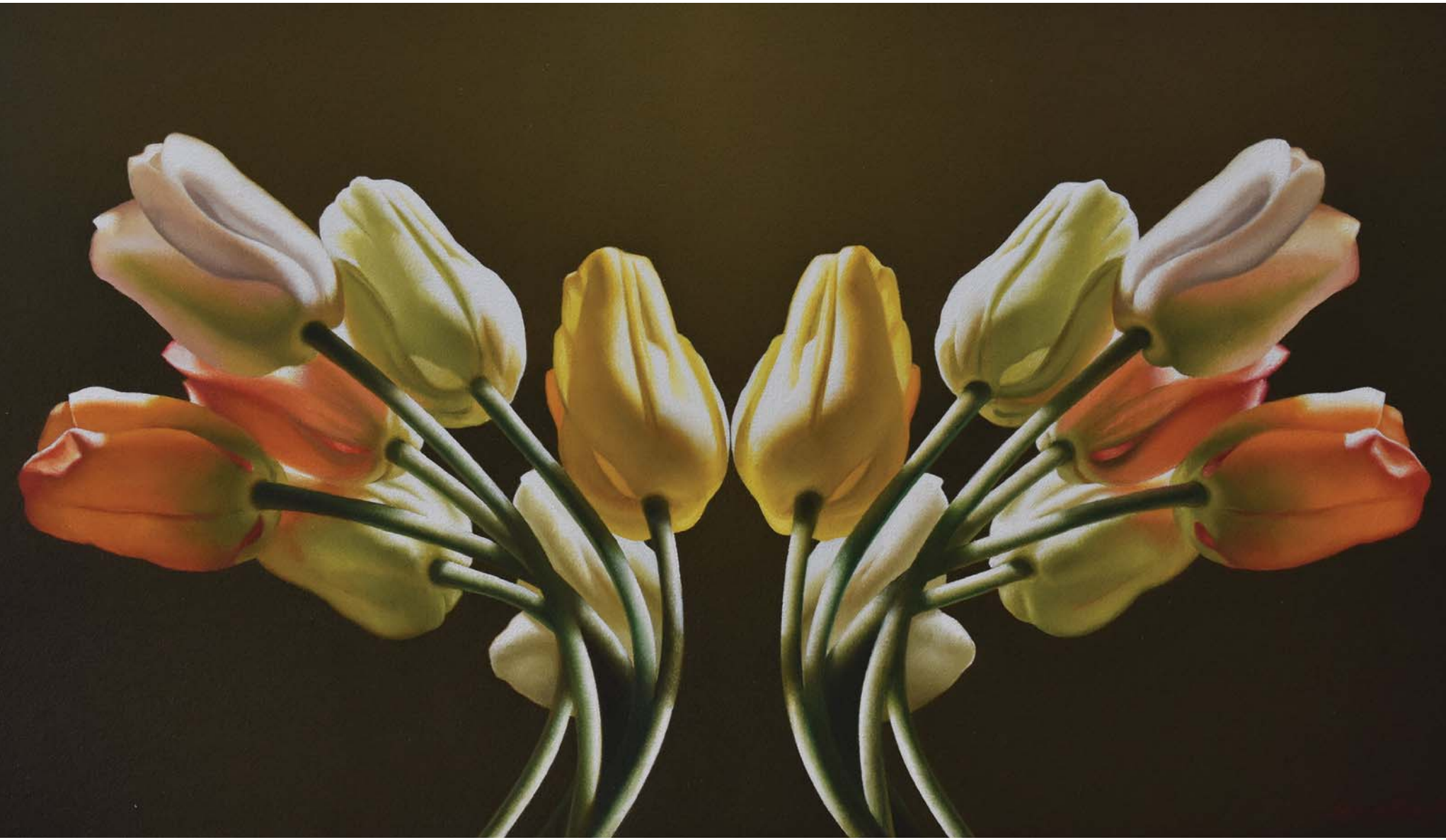


Fertility 91 x 142cm Oil on Canvas

Ascension
112 x 178cm Oil on Canvas



Fireworks
36 x 66cm Oil on Canvas



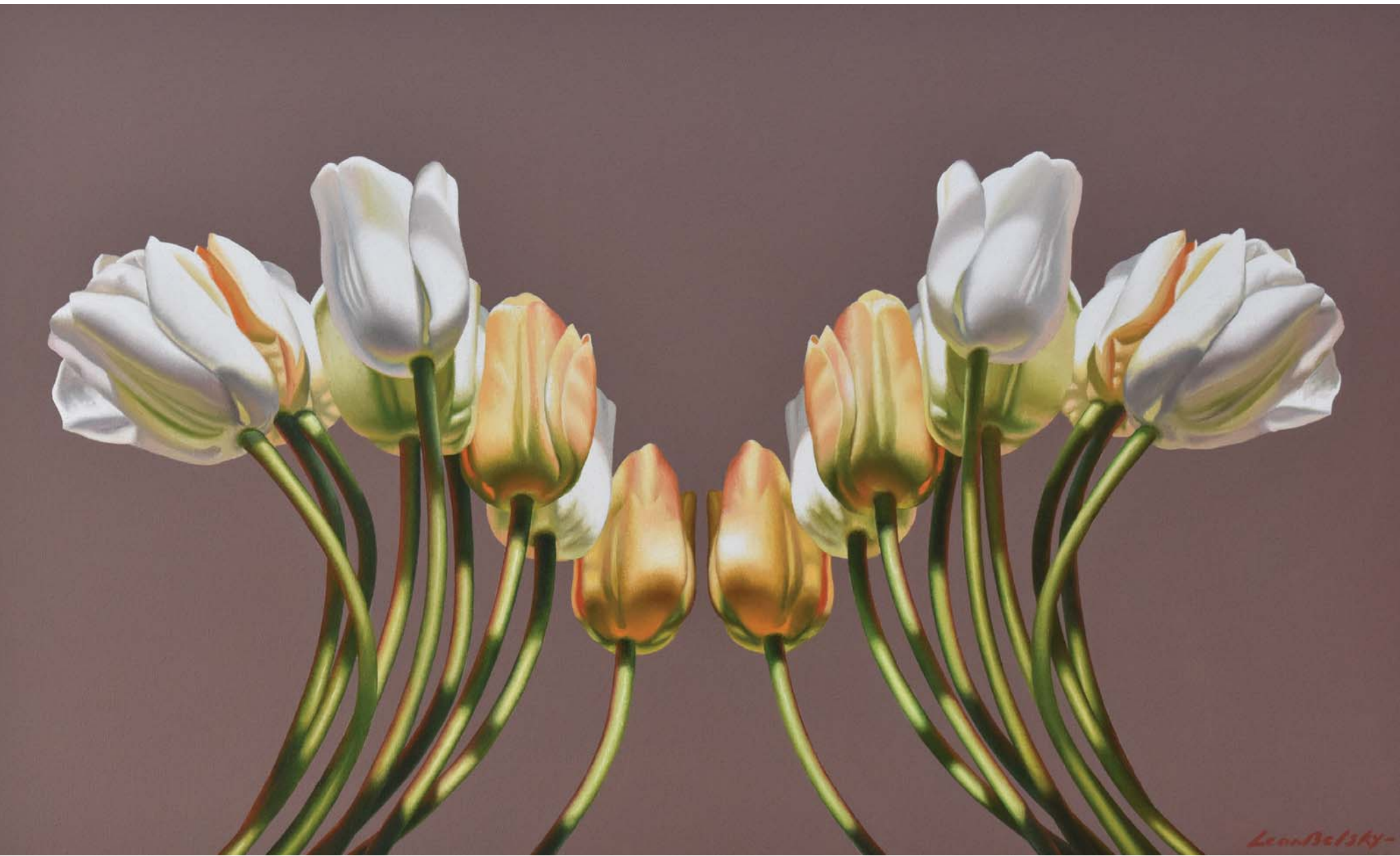
In Love
91 x 137cm Oil on Canvas



Lily Lace
114 x 114cm Oil on Canvas



Tulip Nike Of Samotrace
48 x 78cm Oil on Canvas



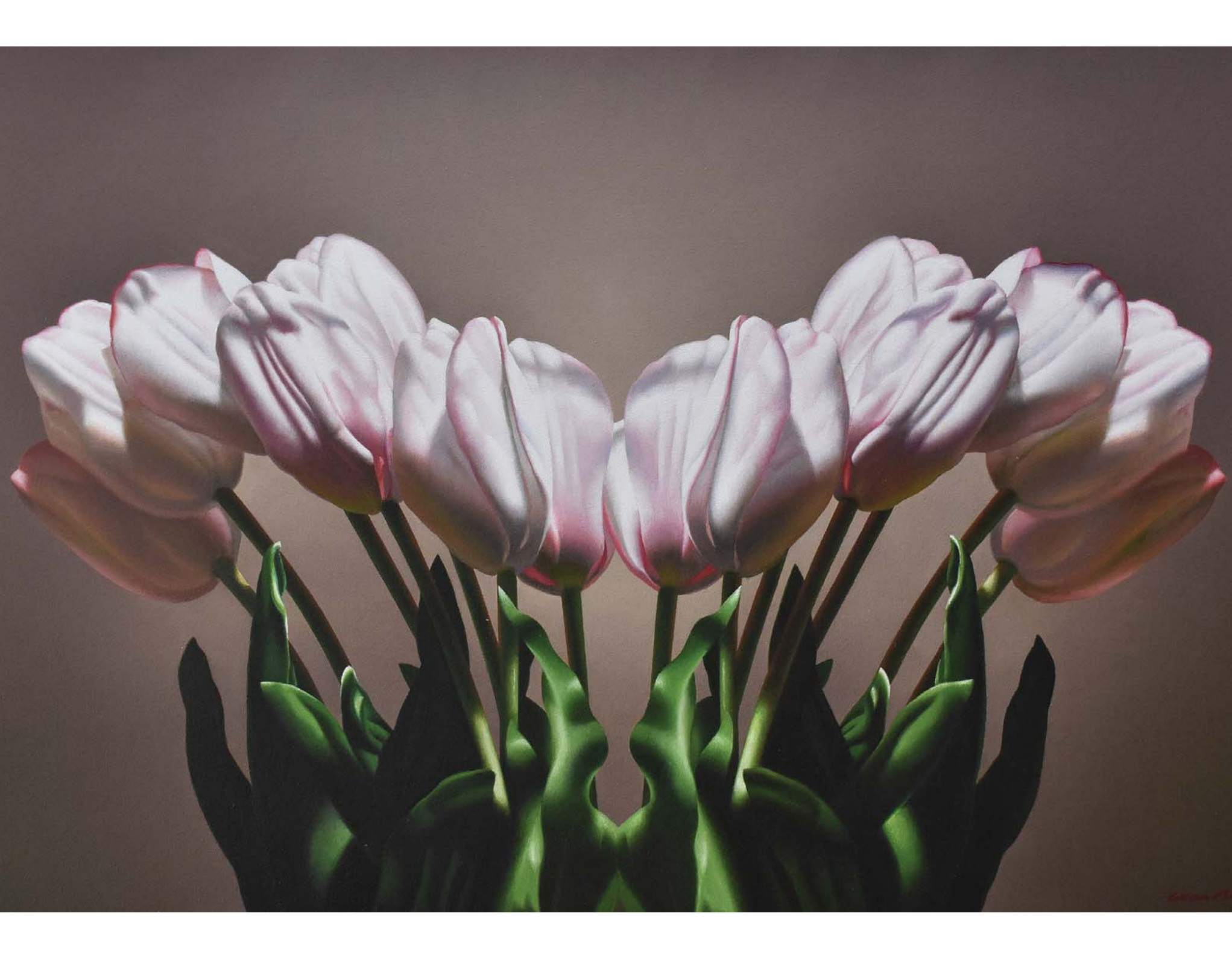
Purple Heart
107 x 178cm Oil on Canvas



Glowing
46 x 102cm Oil on Canvas



Tender is the Night
51 x 86cm Oil on Canvas



CV

Born: USSR, 1947

Citizenship: Canadian

Education:

Master Of Fine Art Moscow Surikov State Academy For Fine Arts 1969-1975

Bachelor Of Fine Art Moscow College Of Fine Art 1964-1968 - Honours Degree

Awards - Grants - Commissions - Elected Memberships:

Paintings Acquisition By Government Of Ontario

Ontario Society Of Artists Elected Membership

Ledsham Award Of Excellence, O.S.A., Art Gallery Of Mississauga

Councillor Of O.S.A.

Ministry Of Culture Grant, Israel

Ministry Of Culture Commission, Israel

Painters & Sculptors Association Of Israel

Painting Acquisition By Russian Academy Of Fine Art

Ministry Of Culture Grant, Russia

Moscow Olympic Games Award Of Excellence

Moscow Exhibition Place Competition, Silver Medal

Moscow Artist Union Award Of Excellence

Union Of Russian Artists

Juried & Public Exhibitions:

Juried Show Of O.S.A. For Permanent Art Collection Of Government Of Ontario - Two Paintings Granted Acquisition, 2006

Robert Kidd Gallery, Usa "new Realism" Invitational Show, 2004

Lieutenant-Governor's Office, Ontario Legislative Building O.S.A. - Members Juried Exhibition, 2000

Arts 2000 - Royal Canadian Academy Of Arts - National Juried Exhibition, 2000

Aim For Arts 2000 - Federation Of Canadian Artists - International Juried Exhibition, 2000

John B. Aird Gallery - Image 98, O.S.A. - Open Juried Exhibition, 1998

- ummingbird Center - O.S.A. Members' Exhibition, 1998

Art Gallery Of Peel - Open Juried Exhibition, 1998

Art Gallery Of Mississauga - Image 97 O.S.A., Open Juried Exhibition - Ledsham Award Of Excellence, 1997

Gallery Stratford - O.S.A. Juried Anniversary Members Exhibition, 1997

Thunder Bay Art Gallery - O.S.A. Juried Anniversary Members Exhibition, 1997

Art Gallery Of Algoma - O.S.A. Juried Anniversary Members Exhibition, 1997

Rodman Hall Art Centre - O.S.A. Juried Anniversary Members Exhibition, 1997

Frederick Horsman Varley Gallery - O.S.A. Juried Anniversary Members Exhibition, 1997

John B. Aird Gallery - O.S.A. Members Juried Exhibition - Annual Show, 1997

Glenhyrst Art Gallery Of Brant - Juried Exhibition, 1997

John B. Aird Gallery - Mistletoe Magic Art Juried Exhibition, 1997

Arts & Events Gallery, First Canadian Place - O.S.A. Members Juried Exhibition, Annual Show, 1997

John B. Aird Gallery - Mistletoe Magic Art Juried Exhibition, 1996

Society Of Canadian Artists - Open Juried Exhibition, 1995

Arts & Events Gallery, First Canadian Place - O.S.A. Members Juried Exhibition, Annual Show, 1995

Museum Of Contemporary Art Of Israel (Tel-Aviv) - Levafan Group Catalogue, 1993 - Cnn Annual Review: Cultural Event Of The Year

18 National & International Exhibitions In Russia And Eastern Europe (Was Awarded Numerous Prized & Diplomas), 1974 - 1990

The Red Square Manege Gallery - Juried Exhibition Of Moscow Artists Union

The Central Hall Of Union Of Russian Artists - Juried Exhibition Of Union Of Russian Artists

Russian Academy Of Fine Art - Juried Exhibition

Solo & Group Shows:

Loch Gallery, Canada, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016 (Art Dealers Association Of Canada)

Catto Gallery, Uk, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2014

Arcadia Contemporary Gallery, Usa, 2009, 2010, 2011

Galerie Paulette Bos, Haag, Holand, 2009, 2010

Robert Kidd Gallery, USA, 2004

Peterson Fine Art, Canada, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003

Teodora Art Gallery, Canada, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 - Member Of A.D.A.C. (Art Dealers Association Of Canada)

Art Fairs:

Toronto International Art Fair

London Art Fair

Ireland Art Fair

Art Expo New York

Art Expo Miami

Selected Press / Bibliography:

'The Oceania Cruises Art Collection', Book P:24-25, 2012

"American Art Collector", Introductions, 2009

"Realism Outdoes Mere Photographs", Detroit Free Press, By Kerry Guten Cohen, 2004

"The Artist's Magazine", 2001

"International Artist", 1998-1999

Rodman Hall Art Centre, Press Release, 1997

Cnn Coverage Of Exhibition At Museum Of Contemporary - Israeli Art, Tel Aviv, 1993

Catalogue Of Exhibition At The Museum Of Contemporary Israeli Art, 1993

"Russian Artists", Book, Aurora Publishing House, 1988

Related Activities:

10 Book Covers, Novels By European Writers - Foreign Literature Publishing House, Moscow

Numerous Art Posters, Moscow

Logo For The Cultural Centre For Newcomers - Ministry Of Culture, Commission, Israel

Political Newspaper Drawings, Israel

Numerous Commissions Of Russian Ministry Of Culture

Numerous Commissions Of Union Of Russian Artists & Russian Art Bank

Selected Collections:

Permanent Art Collection Of The Government Of Ontario

Art Collection Of Oceania Cruises Corp, Book Pp. 24-25

Eugene Levy (American Comedian)

Harry Enfield (British Comedian)

The Reichmann Family

Amon Ereb Limited (Bermuda)

Burman & Associates (Canada)

Quest Construction (Usa)

Bohn Media (Canada)

Hon Ltd (Hong Kong)

Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation (Toronto, On Canada)

Green & Spigel Collection (Toronto, On Canada)

Russian Academy Of Fine Art (Moscow, Russia)

Russian Ministry Of Culture (Moscow, Russia)

Moscow Institute Of Physical Culture

Moscow Central Public Gallery For Arts

Moscow Artist Union Gallery

Magnotta Winery Ltd. (Toronto, On Canada)

F.G. Lister Ltd. (Toronto, On Canada)

Hot House Ltd. (Toronto, On Canada)

F-K-Peterson Tool Mfg. Co.



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Opening times: 10am - 6pm Mon - Sat • 12.30pm - 6pm Sunday • and by appointment

Exhibition dates: 20th April – 8th May 2017