

Gay tropic-tinted warblers carol clear  
 Tall trees beneath embracing vines are grow'd,  
 Destroyed 'mid smothering sweets and masters proud,  
 The graceful cane-groves answer to the seas  
 The bright cucullo\* kindles evenings srou'd  
 While careless, 'neath some favor'd pine  
 The hardy Montere enjoys his slou't retreat

But thou, deep dweller in the ceaseless urn,  
 Couldst touch, with pencil strong, a different scene,  
 And show in shades that chill, in tints that burn,  
 The...  
 To...  
 In speech...  
 While, rashly blind to fate, with smile serene  
 He grasp'd in simple trust the gaudy toy,  
 And heap'd his chosen fruits with hoar'd store

Ah! thou couldst tell of...  
 Staining...  
 At which the stars did hide their vestal flame  
 In pity and in awe. Methinks I hear  
 The blood-hound baying... a stark... hear,



Robert Kushner

Robert Kushner

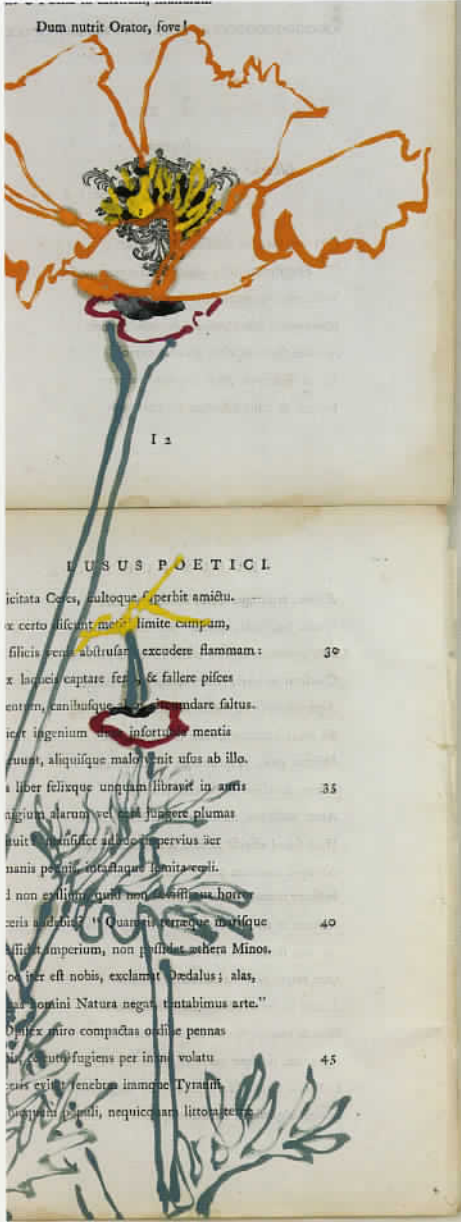
*Scriptorium: Devout Exercises of the Heart*, 2010

Excerpted from the exhibition catalog *Wild Things*. The exhibition *Wild Things* is on view at the Kunsthallen Brandts, Odense, Denmark from June 24 to September 19, 2010.



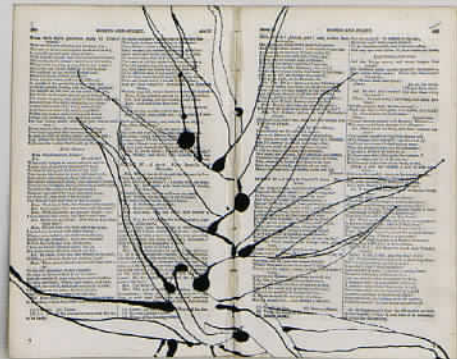
Robert Kushner. *Scriptorium*, 2010





المستأنم لتمام النسبة اما الكنع فلان معنا الكلام ومعناه ان كيدى العموم وهو  
تمام الانواع والمجردة فوجدت المناسبة بينهما واما الموضع فلان معناه اى وهو  
كسب المذ على وجه التام ونسب التاكيدى العموم وهو تمام الافراد والاجزاء  
فالتناسب بينهما لتمامهما ابدا فلان معناه السيلان والاجتماع لما عرفت  
ومعناه التاكيدى العموم والسيلان ايضا فمستأنم اما اشع فلان معناه  
الطول مع التاكيدى العموم ان كيدى ايضا فهو عام وهو طويل ووجدت المناسبة  
بينهما ولما فرغ من تعما التاكيدى العموم اريد ان يصورها فقل مصدرا  
بالع (الاولان) على سبيل التعريف جمعها في فصل واحد لانهما متحدان  
في المعنى لان معنى العين المنفى والنفس ايضا كذلك والاستعمال معنى في الافراد  
والثنية والجمع والتذكير ولما عرفت ان اختلفت لفظا (اي النفس والعين  
يعمان) (اي يعمان على الواحد والثني والجمع والتذكير والمؤنث) يعني يؤكدها  
كل واحد من هذه الامور الخمسة بصيغة واحدة وضميرها باختلاف صيغتها  
اي صيغة النفس والعين افرادا) قبرا وجملا (وثنية وجمعا) (اي الاختلاف)  
(ضميرها) (العائد الى المتبوع المؤنث) بفتح الهمزة (تقول) جاءني زيد (نفسه)  
او عينه (في المذكور الواحد) يعني اذا كان متبوعه من كيدا واحدا وقول جاءني  
هذه (نفسها) باختلاف الضمير وحده (في المؤنث الواحدة) يعني اذا كان  
متبوعه مؤنثا واحدا وقول جاءني الزيدان او الهندان (نفسها) باختلاف  
الصيغة والضمير معا (باراد صيغة الجمع في ثنية المذكور المؤنث) وهذا اصل  
في كل ما يضاف الى ضمير الثنية للاتصال التام بين المضاف والمضاف اليه  
لكراهة اجتماع التثنيين المتحدتين معنى فوجب ان يكون المضاف جمع التعابير  
لفظهما وان كان معناه متحدا ايضا مثل قوله تعالى فقد صفت قلوبكما  
في موضع قلبا كما فلا يجوز نفسا هما (و) حكى ابن كيسان (عن بعض العرب  
نفسا هما وعياهما) موضع انفسهما (نفسهما) استار التباين المضاف والمضاف  
اليه لفظا وان اتحدا معنى وجاءني القوم (انفسهم) باختلاف الضمير وحده  
(في المذكور العاقل) يعني اذا كان المتبوع جمعا مذكرا عاقلا وما تني النساء  
(انفسهن) (في جمع المؤنث) يعني اذا كان المتبوع جمعا مؤنثا عاقلا كان او ضمير  
عاقلا (غير العاقل من المذكر) يعني اذا كان المتبوع مؤنثا كدجها مذكرا  
عاقلا (و) كدباننا كيدا الجارى في اجمع المؤنث العاقل فقولنا قربت الافراس انفسهن  
لان غير العاقل من المذكر جار مجرى المؤنث لقصوره مثله (والثاني) (الماضي)  
المصنف (النفس واليهن اولين تغليا) في الذكر في الاول لاني (الاولان ضمير  
المسبوق يقال له الازل والمسبوق بواحد الثاني وبالاثنين الثلث فغلب ما هو  
المذكور اوله على ما هو المذكور ثانيا الشرفه لتقدمه قبل الاولان وكن يعتبر





# Scriptorium

## Devout Exercises of the Heart

Scriptorium consists of 500 small drawings and paintings executed directly on pages of old books and manuscript. They will be exhibited pinned to the wall with simple dressmaker's pins. The arrangement is variable as to dimensions and number of images. The pages have been removed from discarded and damaged books from America, England, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Russia, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Tibet and Japan. They date from ca. 1500-1920. Each page supports a drawing or painting of a flower, leaf, or plant drawn from life. Scriptorium has been executed over the year of 2009 both in my studio and during travels to Rochester, Colorado, Long Island, and Panama. Consequently, there is a wide range of seasonal flowers. They have been drawn on the page using many different techniques and conventions of depiction – from faintest outlines that nearly disappear in the blocks of text, to strongly rendered forms that nearly obliterate the text underneath them. The ink lines or the areas of color react with the absorbency of the paper and the density of the text in an infinitely varying manner. I am intrigued by the resultant layers of visual connection from one finished page to the next, and also by the fact that this information is for the most part dispensable knowledge: an old logarithm table, the text of a Noh play, an old hand written property deed. But then, some of them are very potent texts: Shakespeare, Homer, Virgil, and religious treatises. All of these pages miraculously survived in one way or another and all of them came into my possession either by gift or purchase of distressed books.

A scriptorium is the room in a medieval monastery where old books were copied by hand. Devout Exercises of the Heart is the title of one of the books whose pages I have used, and is also a metaphor for my sustained activity on this project.

I would like to think that these superimposed flowers in Scriptorium bring the pages back to life, make us wonder who owned and read these books, and through their foxing, notations and even burned areas allow us to ponder their varied histories.

Robert Kushner, New York







Robert Kushner. *Scriptorium*, 2010

Robert Kushner: *Scriptorium*, 2010



THE YOUNG ANGLES

Engraved for the Society of the Friends of the Arts by G. Lane



# Why Desire?

- One of my favorite modern composers is Maurice Ravel. In listening to his music, it always seems to me that his mind was steeped in the elegance of the 18th century but inconveniently he found himself trapped somewhere in 20th century Paris, admittedly a very pleasant place to be trapped, but still not the dix-huitieme of our cultural fantasies.

With disturbing frequency, these days, I have begun to feel trapped that way about myself. Consequently, one of the desires, one of the underpinnings of Scriptorium is the yearning for spatial and temporal relocation. In drawing, I always leave my mundane concerns behind anyway. It has always been like that for me. It is the one great escape of my life, being totally attentive to the object of my scrutiny and the technical reactions of my materials and the ground I am drawing upon, going somewhere else for a few hours. But there has been another sort of pleasurable dislocation in Scriptorium. Often while working with the old papers, I began to wonder what it was like in Istanbul printing an Arabic grammar in 1860? What did the room look like? What were the smells? Who was the bookbinder in Hartford binding double volumes of Shakespeare and to whom did he give it over for stamping gold on the edges of the covers? And just what was Hartford like in 1830? Probably a lot nicer than it seems to be now. Or just who wrote that Italian manuscript that I have rendered unreadable through my "art"? And what was it about anyway? Or I can picture the woodblock carver in Japan producing pages of text incorporating the most elegant curling script with no errors whatsoever. Often during my drawing sessions, I have felt that I was in their workshops, or at least their milieu. These flights of mind are the desires that are the basis of this work. With our ultra sophisticated, and plugged-in contemporary world seeming to be dissolving or at least devolving slowly before our eyes, there is some comfort in these desires for what feels (and of course this is blatantly nostalgic) like simpler times. Nostalgic reverie or not, I desire them.

Robert Kushner, New York

*Robert Kushner is a visual artist who has worked in performance and was a leading figure in the so-called Pattern & Decoration Movement in the 1970s. He is known for his opulent flower paintings and participates in Wild Things with more than 500 small paintings and drawings presented in a large installation.*