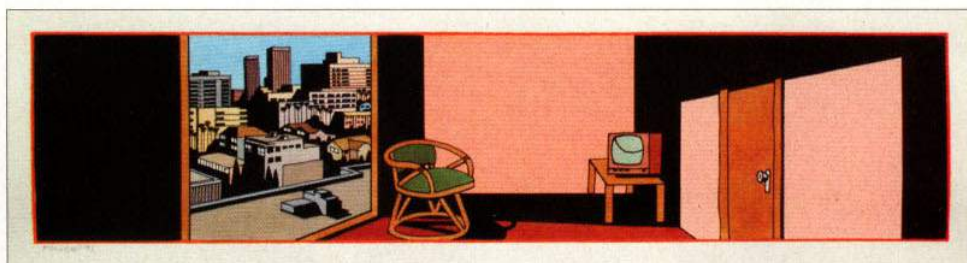


# ARTnews

reviews: new york



Josef Albers, *Variant*, 1956, oil on Masonite, 15" x 30 1/4". Brooke Alexander.



Ken Price, *Untitled (Pink Interior)*, 1991, watercolor on paper, 5" x 22 1/4". Brooke Alexander.

## UP NOW

### Josef Albers/ Ken Price

Brooke Alexander  
Through June 26

It was a refreshing and inventive idea—New England via Europe meets Los Angeles via the Southwest and Mexico. Highish and lowish inspiration meet in the very different but sometimes similar-seeming works of Josef Albers and Ken Price. You'd think they'd have little in common, but that's not quite true. In the works of both, color reigns supreme, to the point where it, even more than composition or subject, is at the core.

Primary colors are often at play, as are geometry, modernism, and a fascination with Mexico and the Southwest. So is nature on a large scale, as in rock formations and ancient structures like the pyramids. Albers photographed the Grand Pyramid in Tenayuca, Mexico, in 1935, and Price made graphite drawings of

rocks, such as *Nonquitt Rocks* (1981), that seem to mimic Albers's image.

Price pursues a spontaneous and intuitive approach to color, and he uses it successfully in his wide range of forms. He explained in an interview with gallerist Brooke Alexander that he employs 14 colors in his sculptures, painting over grainy surfaces and then sanding them down until he's satisfied with the color that appears. He can vary the tone by sanding more, and, in so doing, let the colors make the decisions.

Albers's approach to color was intentional and more theoretical. He put colors through their paces, endlessly demonstrating how their contexts and their relationships to one another affect how they are perceived. It's a rather thrilling game, as is evident in his "Homages to the Square," especially *Homage to the Square: Ten Works by Josef Albers* (1962). These color prints show the potential for infinite permutations.

The suggestive sensuality of Price's sculptural forms contrasts with Albers's apparently nonsexually oriented geome-

tries, but further consideration reveals something suggestive in Albers's compositional divisions, with central cores.

Where some of the comparisons here may have seemed too easy or obvious, others were unexpected. Among the most striking was between Albers's *Variant* (1956) and Price's *Untitled (Pink Interior)*, 1991. Albers's purely abstract, slightly asymmetrical composition in Southwestern tones of clay, rusty pink, brown, and pea green has the look of an interior, while Price's modernist/Pop interior in similar flat shades, with a cityscape through the window and a wall with a door that approximates Albers's rectangles, is downright illuminating.

Shows like this remind us that artists don't work in a vacuum, that they share influences, and that their absorption of those influences is often subliminal but nonetheless powerful.

—Barbara A. MacAdam

## UP NOW

### Alexey Titarenko

Nailya Alexander  
Through April 24

Saint Petersburg is a city populated by ghosts, as photographer Alexey Titarenko shows us in these pictures taken during the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Titarenko presents the city as mystical and eerie, a reflection of the many tragedies that occurred there throughout much of the 20th century. He uses long exposures and shoots in available light; his subjects disappear as they move before his lens, blurring into snow-covered streets and dramatic architecture.

Titarenko's key inspiration is not contemporary photographic practice, but rather music, and particularly that of Shostakovich. That is why he organized



## reviews: new york

this show into four “movements”: “The City of Shadows,” “The Anonymous,” “The Light of Saint Petersburg,” and “Unfinished Time.” In *Untitled (Crowd 1)*, 1992, and *Untitled (Zigzag Crowd)*, 1994, a cloud of humanity rushes up and down subway-station stairs; only the steps and railings remain fixed. In *Untitled (Stranger)*, 1996, a man hurrying down a bleak winter street is just a smudge of black against the white piles of snow on the sidewalk.

The best of these black-and-white pictures allow for details that situate the scene in time and place. One of the strongest images is *Untitled (Three Women Selling Cigarettes)*, 1992, depicting a trio of elderly ladies, wearing scarves and shapeless coats, as they tromp onto the street to offer their wares. In *Untitled (Sennaya Square)*, 1998, an aerial view of an outdoor Russian market, the sellers are distinctly visible standing by their stalls, while the buyers dissolve into a river of white streaks. Many photographers in recent



Alexey Titarenko, *Untitled (Three Women Selling Cigarettes)*, 1992, gelatin silver print, 16" x 16". Nailya Alexander.

years have employed “blur,” but Titarenko applies it to street photography, transforming straight reportage into haunting poetry.

—Barbara Pollack

## Jack Tworokov

Mitchell-Innes & Nash

The ten extraordinary paintings in this show, dating from 1961 to 1973, summed up the later work of Jack Tworokov, a

highly regarded founding member of the New York School, who died in 1982, at the age of 82. Tworokov’s version of Abstract Expressionism was certainly less exuberant than, for example, de Kooning’s or Kline’s, but it was no less compelling, as this intelligent, elegantly installed, astonishingly fresh show attested.

A refined, analytical, European-inflected sensibility (Tworokov was born in Poland and immigrated to the United States when he was 13) distinguished the canvases here. Over his career the artist increasingly focused on line and geometric forms, his mark making becoming more and more intense, incisive, and inexorable in a brilliant reconciliation of painting and drawing. The progression was evident in the vivid gestural compositions *Nightfall* (1961) and *Barrier Series #5* (1963)—though the gesture in them is controlled, appearing to be as much thought as emotion—as well as in the two works here from the

“Variables” series (1963 and 1964–65). In these, the field is divided between the gestural and the geometric. *Rime* (1966) followed, with its grayish dabbed areas and its scalloped edges, girdled by pink (a subliminal suggestion of ladies’ underwear?). That same year came the all-over black scribbles of *Trace*, a standout in the show.

Two other excellent works were *Idling II (WNY-70 #1)*, 1970, and *P73 #7*

(1973), with their finely inscribed, hide-and-seek geometric figures. Painted in what might be called gray, but actually



Jack Tworokov, *P73 #7*, oil on canvas, 90" x 127". Mitchell-Innes & Nash.

more indeterminately hued, the small, repeated bulletlike strokes that covered the surfaces of these canvases broke the light across them, energizing their ground by a quantum leap. Tworokov, it appears, is ripe for a new generation of admirers.

—Lilly Wei

## Lee Friedlander

Janet Borden

This photographer’s inimitable sense of composition, his fascination with the ways the camera transforms what we think we see, and his keenly satiric eye were in ample evidence in this show, “Still Life 2,” the second of two that together displayed close to 100 of Friedlander’s recent photographs.

*Nyack, 2002* shows an image of Jesus set above a U.S. flag in a tailor-shop window. A sign reading “Yes, we’re OPEN” is nestled in the photo’s lower left corner. *Tucson, 2009* looks through another window, at a mannequin dressed in lingerie with a fuzzy halo over its head. Along with cars, buildings, and traffic lights, there are clouds reflected in the glass, positioned in such a way that the halo-wearing mannequin appears to simultaneously float in the sky and partake of the pedestrian world of the street. In both pictures, Friedlander slyly negotiates between the worlds of patriotism and religion and the mundane reality that surrounds them.

But many of the images described more