

Jack Tworkov

ALEXANDER GRAY ASSOCIATES

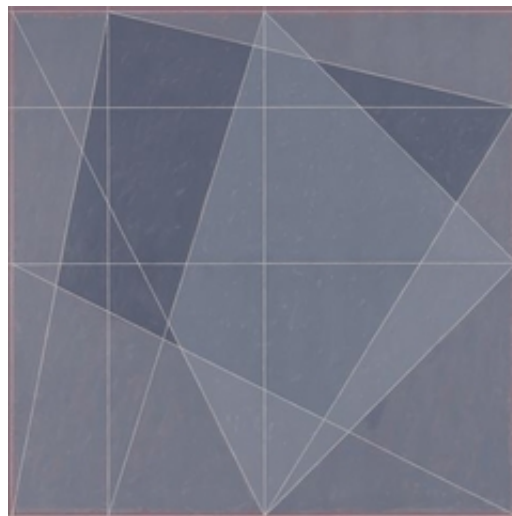
510 West 26th Street

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For Polish-born painter Jack Tworkov, the 1960s were a cul-de-sac for the autographic gesture. AbEx had tipped from an earnest style into a mode of stylization, and the question was how to continue painting, if at all. Spanning five decades, Tworkov's latest hang cleaves to the contours of this now familiar narrative. De Kooning's influence looms large—the ligament-like impasto of *Departure*, 1952–53, is an obvious homage—as does Cézanne's. *Note*, 1968, presents as a field of stubby, separative marks, sloped in the manner of cursive script or the latter's "constructive stroke." Spaced in quivering horizontals, they achieve a hazy grisaille.

The 1970s and '80s reveal a Tworkov of late style and less anxious mien. The canvas now figures not as a void to be confronted but as a constraint with which to contend. Ruled lines define forms that vector from the perimeter in, yielding works that beat between drawing and painting. In *Alternative IX (OC-Q1-78 #5)*, 1978, the tousled diagonals of *Note* unspiggle into a straightedge algebra. Organized by the Fibonacci sequence, the canvas is a study in dynamic symmetry, its interior shapes—triangles, rhomboids, and irregular pentagons—syllogized with its frame.

Tworkov's final work, *Compression and Expansion of a Square (Q3-82 #2)*, 1982, takes the rectangle as its subject. Likewise established in a scheme of 3:5:8, its iterated forms progressively dilate and dilute in hue, as if literalizing the distortions produced by an angled view. Brushstrokes build in wilted green and yolky yellow, tempering the canvas's otherwise rigorous plan. The result, for all its stringency, feels vaguely organic: a sense reinforced by the Fibonacci sequence's relay to patterns in nature. Tworkov's oeuvre softens in spite of itself, an archaeology of life animating his abstractions, a vestige of gesture loosening his geometries.



Jack Tworkov, *Alternative IX (OC-Q1-78 #5)*, 1978, oil on canvas, 72 x 72".

— Courtney Fiske