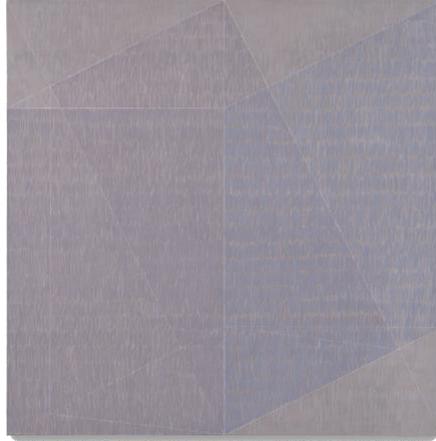


VAN DOREN  
WAXTER

**Jack Tworkov**

*TWORKOV: Towards Nirvana / Works from the 70s*

January 14 – March 20, 2021  
2nd Floor Gallery



Jack Tworkov, *Q3-72 #4*, 1972, Oil on canvas, 72 x 72 inches (182.9 x 182.9 cm)  
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“The abstract painting is more nearly the true icon of our time even if it’s only at times the icon of despair, or nothingness...abstract art is perhaps the nirvana towards which I reach.”

—**JACK TWORKOV**

Van Doren Waxter is delighted to announce *Tworkov: Towards Nirvana / Works from the 70s*, an exhibition of striking, structured geometric works to go on view at the gallery’s 1907 townhouse at 23 East 73rd Street from January 14 to March 20, 2021. This is the gallery’s first one-person exhibition of the artist since announcing exclusive representation of the Estate of Jack Tworkov and includes material produced by the artist in the 1970s that has never been shown or reproduced. The exhibition arrives during a renewal of interest in the artist noted for his moral purpose, intellect, and discipline. A fully illustrated 76 page catalogue accompanies the exhibition with an incisive, revelatory essay by Jason Andrew, a reprint of Tworkov’s *On My Outlook as a Painter: A Memoir*, published in *Leonardo, International Journal of the Contemporary Artist* (Spring 1974), and a rare series of photographs by Norma Holt of the artist in his studio.

The eight paintings and seven drawings to go on view were made during a significant decade for the artist that saw a solo show at The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York (1971) curated by Marcia Tucker, the prestigious Skowhegan Medal for Painting (1974) presented to the artist by artist and dealer Betty Parsons, and career survey at Third Eye Centre, Glasgow (1978) which toured the UK. He served as chair of the art department at the School of Art and Architecture at Yale University, where he was a beloved teacher from 1963 to 1969 by artists such as Chuck Close, Jennifer Bartlett, Judith Bernstein, Nancy Graves, Brice Marden, Howardena Pindell, Richard Serra, and William T. Williams. Striking out on a new beginning after his prominence as a leading Abstract Expressionist, his paintings evolved—defined by a monolithic clarity and a reductive and structured process and are today among his most important yet rarely seen works.

An artist at the forefront of American painting for seven decades, Tworkov (1900-1982) forged a disciplined and celebrated aesthetic and artistic career—the one constant being Tworkov’s gestural “mark.” His was a long search

for an abstract, painterly “mark” that grew more meditative and analytic by the 1970s and defined by variation, volume, and viscosity. American art historian and curator April Kingsley, writing in 1974, attributed Tworokov’s “ability to evolve logically out of Abstract Expressionism with a viable, honest new style” to a structure or grid that had always operated in his work “as a foundation and foil for his vigorous brushwork.”

“Embracing both the spontaneous and the procedural, choice and chance,” asserts Andrew in his essay, “these paintings represent a cessation of trial and error. A blowing out of the flames of self-delusion...grid and mark fuse in a haze of edge and ambivalence. So subtle and so specifically present, it’s a defining moment—a tipping point for Tworokov in his quest...untethered from the bankrupt tenets of Abex.”

To that end, the subtly mauve hued 1972 *Q3-72 #5* is a signature canvas evincing Tworokov’s deployment of mathematical systems in which an infinite number of compositional possibilities could be tried. This commanding, highly activated acrylic painting invokes Kingsley’s assertion that Tworokov’s color, stroke, and spatial illusion are akin to “overlapping screen-like rectangles” that “fold and unfold across the canvas.” The structured but improvisational *SR-PT-70 #1* is a 1970 oil of layered lines governed by strict rules with a clean stroke bisecting the center.

The exhibition includes a selection of bright, luminous works on paper made in Provincetown, where the artist remained active artistically, intellectually, and professionally until the last months of his life in 1982. Although Tworokov famously remarked that he doesn’t “try for an image” and if “nature comes in, it comes in unintentionally,” *Q4 Watercolor #1* (1971) suggests a rippling wind over water ignited by the Cape’s mercurial and beguiling light.

A concurrent exhibition of the artist’s geometric and rule-based drawings made in the same decade will be on view at MINUS SPACE, 16 Main Street in Brooklyn, on view from February 6 — May 1, 2021.

#### **About the artist**

Jack Tworokov was born in Biala, Poland. He emigrated with his mother and sister, the artist Janice Biala, to the United States in 1913. He graduated from Columbia University in New York in 1923. He studied studio art at the National Academy of Design from 1923 to 1924 and at The Art Students League from 1925 to 1926. In 1929, he began painting year-round in Provincetown, Massachusetts. He taught at Black Mountain College in 1952 in Asheville, North Carolina. He served as chair of the Art Department at the School of Art and Architecture at Yale University, where he taught from 1963 to 1969, received his Master of Fine Arts in Privatum in 1963, and retired as Professor of Painting, Emeritus in 1969. He remained active artistically, intellectually, and professionally until the last months of his life and died in his home in Provincetown in 1982.

Recently, the artist has been included in such significant exhibitions as *Epic Abstraction* (2019-2020) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Artistic License* (2019) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and *Pollock e la Scuola di New York* (2018) at the Complesso del Vittoriano in Rome, Italy.

The artist is represented exclusively by Van Doren Waxter.

#### **Gallery Information**

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