

**DETROIT:  
JACK TWORKOV AT GERTRUDE KASLE**

Jack Tworkov's fifth one-man exhibit at the Gertrude Kasle Gallery in Detroit drew a large audience of young artists tuned in to the quiet intensity of the seventy-three-year-old painter's work. When Tworkov has a show in Detroit, he attends the openings and usually accepts a speaking engagement at one of the local universities. He is well known and highly respected by a new generation of artists who believe in paint again and in a gestural way of working.

The Kasle collection included ten large oils on canvas and eight acrylic works on paper all dated 1972 and 1973 and selected to reveal the artist's recent emphasis on geometry. While the geometric canvases from the 1970s may appear very different from the earlier gestural abstractions, the Tworkov constants are there—containment coupled with openness, emphasis on brushwork, adherence to painterly tradition, and an intellectual refinement that eliminates any extraneous matter or idea. Consistency rather than change is fundamental to the new work.

Since the mid 1960s Tworkov has been playing around with elementary geometry and number systems. He said he finds a certain magic in relationships that would seem simplistic to a mathematician. He bases his paintings on a system of measurements implicit in the rectangle. Tworkov works out careful drawings in which each section of a painting has the same proportions as the whole. He tunes and adjusts his images to give them a somewhat illusionistic cast.

The distinctive brushstroke, which served him so well as an Abstract Expressionist painter, has become a smaller, more rhythmic gesture. Rather than being assertive, it throbs gently on the picture plane to enhance the clarity of the geometric structure and give the paintings their vitality, functioning like the beat in music.

Tworkov has muted his color until it has an almost latent quality. The silvery grays, faint blues, and shimmering golds contain a suppressed energy which implies that they might spring suddenly into action and take on an entirely different quality. This note of suspense in such seemingly serene canvases alerts and involves the viewer.

Like the man himself, Tworkov's paintings are disciplined and coherent. But they are not without a sense of spontaneity. The artist plans a structure to contain forms to some degree and he leaves other decisions open. Both instinct and conceptualization are always present in his art. He likes to compare his way of working to using a net, which captures some things and lets others flow through.

One strong factor in Tworkov's appeal to young people is the sense of moral purpose so evident in the man and his work. He is convinced that art should feed values rather than simply providing fun. Tworkov has dedicated himself to the tradition of painting, which to him means brush, pigment, and canvas. He believes that each element of the medium involves a vital decision and that any substitution or distortion violates the nature of painting.

The former chairman of Yale University's art department regards it as a healthy sign that young painters are far enough away from the dead-end that Abstract Expressionism hit during the late 1950s to be able to think creatively again. However, he is concerned that obsessive experimentation with ideas has destroyed any cohesive body of thinking and expelled art from the critical centers of concern.

Jack Tworkov denies that he carries a load of moral purpose into his studio. He has always believed that painting has one very simple purpose—to be looked at. The measure of his new work is in how it fills the eye with wonder and a sense of completeness.

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