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Provincetown Art Association and Museum

# Jack Tworkov Retrospective

Important information about the upcoming Jack Tworkov retrospective at PAAM, published exclusively for members of the working press.

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JACK TWORKOV

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Jack Tworokov, c.1960  
photo: Marvin P.  
Lazarus Courtesy of  
the Estate of Jack  
Tworokov

**"Tworokov, it appears, is ripe for a new generation of admirers."**

-Lilly Wei, ARTnews, 2010

**"In the course of his long life as a painter, Jack Tworokov became an important figure in the maturation of abstract art in America."**

-Richard Armstrong  
Jack Tworokov: Paintings  
1928-1982, Philadelphia  
Academy of Art, 1987

**"His was a subtle and extremely refined art."**

-Barbara Rose, art historian

**"He's a painter who has always had my respect."**

- Clement Greenberg

## PAAM

### GALLERY HOURS

#### October-May:

Noon to 5 pm, Thursday through Sunday, and by appointment

#### Memorial Day -

#### September

11 am - 8 pm Monday - Thursday

11 am - 10 pm Friday

11 am - 5 pm Saturday and Sunday

### OFFICE HOURS

9 am to 5 pm, Tues. through Sat.

(9 am to 4 pm, Tues.-Sat., November through March)



Jack Tworokov, ACD#3, 1962, charcoal on paper, 26" x 20" Permanent  
Collection of Provincetown Art Association and Museum

# Jack Tworokov

## Against Extremes / Five Decades of Painting

On view July 9 - August 22, 2010  
Opening reception July 9, 8-10pm

### IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 14, 2010

### MEDIA CONTACT

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508.487.1750 x16

### PAAM Presents a Major Retrospective of Works by Renowned American Painter, Jack Tworokov

(Organized by Jason Andrew in association with the Estate of Jack Tworokov)

**Provincetown, MA:** [Provincetown Art Association and Museum](http://www.paam.org) (PAAM) is pleased to present a major retrospective exhibition of works by renowned American painter, Jack Tworokov (1900-1982). *Jack Tworokov: Against Extremes / Five Decades of Painting* will be on view July 9 to August 22, 2010. The public is invited to attend an opening reception Friday, July 9, from 8-

## ADMISSION

\$7 general admission  
Free for members  
Free for kids under 12  
Free Fridays after 5pm

## PAAM

460 Commercial Street  
Provincetown, MA 02657  
508.487.1750  
[www.paam.org](http://www.paam.org)  
[info@paam.org](mailto:info@paam.org)



press room



10pm in the PAAM galleries. PAAM is located at 460 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA 02657. 508.487.1750. [www.paam.org](http://www.paam.org).

*Jack Tworokov: Against Extremes / Five Decades of Painting* is curated by Jason Andrew and presented in association with the [Estate of Jack Tworokov](#). This major retrospective offers an extraordinary opportunity to experience many of the artist's most celebrated canvases. The exhibition includes important loans from private and public collections including [The Cleveland Museum of Art](#) and the [Walker Art Center](#) (Minneapolis, MN). The show also features rarely exhibited works from the artist's estate, as well as works from Provincetown Art Association and Museum's own permanent collection.

A founding member of the New York School, Jack Tworokov is regarded as one of the defining figures -- along with Willem de Kooning, Philip Guston, Franz Kline and Jackson Pollock -- whose gestural paintings and dramatic strokes defined the Abstract Expressionist movement in America.

"Many of Tworokov's great masterpieces were inspired by the solace and solitude he found in Provincetown. The summers Tworokov spent in Provincetown were often the most productive and so it is exciting to see many of the artists' most important works returning for exhibition at the Provincetown Association and Museum this summer," says curator Jason Andrew. *Jack Tworokov: Against Extremes / Five Decades of Painting* is accompanied by an illustrative catalogue that includes an essay by David Anfam, the noted historian and Mark Rothko scholar. Highlights of the exhibition range from the artist's early Provincetown period, to Social Realist paintings of the 1930s, to figurative abstractions of the 1940s, to major Abstract Expressionist canvases of the 1950s and early 1960s, and finally to the geometrically inspired late paintings of the 1970s and early 1980s. Challenging himself throughout his five decade career, Tworokov said he was interested in "the extreme of the middle - the creative middle," struggling to surpass external pressures to conform to a particular style, while also fighting an internal battle of self-definition.

### JACK TWOROKOV IN PROVINCETOWN

Jack Tworokov was a fixture in the Provincetown art scene beginning in the early 1920s when he and his sister, the painter Janice Biala, first hitchhiked their way to the Cape to study with Charles Hawthorne. Seeking a more modern instructional approach, Tworokov sought out and befriended artists Ross Moffett and Karl Knaths. Edwin Dickinson would also become a close ally and life-long friend.

Tworokov left Provincetown in the mid 1930s finding the town over-run by tourists, but returned in the mid 1950s to discover that, "what I came for was still here." In 1958, Tworokov purchased a house in Provincetown's West End and built a studio. He and his wife, Wally, divided their time between New York and Cape Cod, spending at least five months of the year in Provincetown and often hosting an annual Christmas or New Year's party. In 1968, he was a founding member of Provincetown's Fine Arts Work Center along with Fritz Bultman, Stanley Kunitz, Philip Malicoat, Robert Motherwell and Myron Stout. Tworokov died at his home in Provincetown in 1982. In 1983, Provincetown Art Association and Museum held a memorial exhibition in his honor, featuring a selection of the artist's late paintings.

### ABOUT JACK TWOROKOV

Jack Tworokov was born in Biala, Poland in 1900 and emigrated with his family to New York in 1913. Growing up in a tenement on the Lower East Side, Tworokov originally intended to become a writer and studied at Columbia University. His plans changed when he encountered the paintings of Cézanne in an exhibition of French Painting at the Brooklyn Museum in 1921. After some initial training at the National Academy of Design and the Art Students League, Tworokov immersed himself in the early Provincetown art scene, studying with artists Ross Moffett and Karl Knaths. The exhibition begins with an early self portrait of the artist. *Self Portrait (1925)*, from the PAAM Collection, is the earliest drawing by the artist of the artist. It's delicate line drawing is both sensitive and self-assured. One of the earliest paintings on view is *Fisherman's Family (1931)*, a seemingly realist work in oil of a Portuguese family fishing scene. Painted in Provincetown the work reveals a dreamlike merging of the indoors and outdoors, the narrative and abstract.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Tworkov started a family, worked for the WPA Federal Art Project and briefly stopped painting to contribute to the war effort as a draftsman. When he resumed painting after World War II, Tworkov experimented with an academic approach to abstraction through the study of traditional forms of still life and the posed figure. *Untitled (Seated Figure at a Table, 1949)* encapsulates the artist's experimental shift from figuration to abstraction, and also shows the influence of artistic discussions between Tworkov and Willem de Kooning, a close friend and studio neighbor.

Tworkov defined his mature Abstract Expressionist style in the 1950s and early 1960s, with grand canvases highlighting his signature flame-like brushstrokes and energetic gestures. *The Sirens (1951)*, on loan from the Walker Art Center, is a stunning example of the artist's maturing gestural style and also assimilates the artist's interest in myth and legend. It was also during this time that Tworkov became a much sought after teacher, lecturer, writer, and educator. Important paintings on view from this period feature strong color and dramatic gestures as illustrated in *Crest (1957-58)*, on loan from the Cleveland Museum of Art, and *Five Spot (1960)*, which is titled after the hip jazz club the artist routinely frequented.

Tworkov's notoriety as both a painter and intellectual reached a climax in the late 1950s. A founding member of The Eighth Street Club, Tworkov exhibited regularly at the Charles Egan Gallery, Stable Gallery and Leo Castelli Gallery. Tworkov was featured in many historic exhibitions that defined the period including "New American Painting" organized by The Museum of Modern Art, which introduced the world to Abstract Expressionism and toured Europe in 1958. The artist was honored with two solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The first, in 1964, featured a survey of the artist's work to date and toured nationally. The second, in 1971, was curated by Marcia Tucker and featured new paintings. In 1964, Tworkov became the Chairman of the Art Department at Yale University. Tworkov is credited with rejuvenating the visiting artist program, facilitating interdisciplinary studies and establishing Yale University with one of the nation's most prominent art departments.

By the late 1960s, Tworkov entered a more serene and contemplative period, moving towards structure and geometry yet always retaining the gesture of the brushwork. *Crossfield I (1968)* and *Idling II (1970)*, hint at the final phase of Tworkov's career with its subdued color, grid-like structure, and layered lines. Tworkov's late paintings of the 1970s and early 1980s demonstrate a compositional framework based in mathematics, providing an underlying system in which his brushwork quietly generates strength and power. Paintings such as *Indian Red (1979)* and *The Exes (1980)* feature Tworkov's gestures confined to complex shapes guided by mathematical lines or grids. The exhibition features the last work painted by the artist titled *Compression and Expansion of the Square (1982)*. The late paintings of Jack Tworkov were exhibited at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in Spring of 1982. Tworkov remained active and continued to paint and teach until the final months of his life. The artist died at his home in Provincetown in the Fall of 1982. In 1987, Richard Armstrong, now Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, organized the first retrospective exhibition of Tworkov's work at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. In 1994, Alston Conley curated a survey of the artist's work for the Boston College Museum of Art. *Jack Tworkov: Against Extremes / Five Decades of Painting* is the first major retrospective of the artist's work in sixteen years. An exhibition catalog as well as a book of the artist's writings recently published by Yale University Press titled *The Extreme of the Middle: Writings of Jack Tworkov* are available for purchase through the Museum Store at PAAM.

#### RELATED EVENTS & CALENDAR LISTINGS

##### **Jack Tworkov Retrospective Opens at PAAM**

**Friday July 9, 2010 at 8-10pm**

##### **Provincetown Art Association and Museum**

PAAM presents a major retrospective of American painter, Jack Tworkov. *Jack Tworkov: Against Extremes / Five Decades of Painting* is on view July 9 - August 22, 2010. The show includes rarely seen exemplary works from private collections and celebrated pieces on loan from The Cleveland Museum of Art and the Walker Art Center. A free public reception takes place Friday, July 9, 2010, 8-10pm in the PAAM galleries. PAAM will also offer a free public

lecture with curator Jason Andrew Tuesday, July 13, 2010 at 7pm as part of the Fredi Schiff Levin Lecture Series. Provincetown Art Association and Museum is located at 460 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA 02657. 508.487.1750. [www.paam.org](http://www.paam.org)

**Jack Tworkov Lecture with Jason Andrew  
Tuesday, July 13, 2010 at 7pm  
Provincetown Art Association and Museum**

PAAM presents a free public lecture with Jason Andrew, curator of *Jack Tworkov: Against Extremes / Five Decades of Painting*, on view at Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM) July 9 - August 22, 2010. Andrew comes to Provincetown from the Estate of Jack Tworkov in New York. This lecture is part of PAAM's Fredi Schiff Levin Lecture Series -- presenting informative gallery talks, panel discussions and lectures in conjunction with current exhibitions. FSL lectures occur throughout the summer and fall, and are always free and open to the public. No reservations necessary. PAAM is located at 460 Commercial Street in Provincetown, MA 02657. For more information, or to obtain a full schedule of upcoming events, please visit [www.paam.org](http://www.paam.org) or call 508.487.1750.

**Schor on Tworkov  
Saturday, August 7, 2010 at 8pm  
The Fine Arts Work Center**

FAWC presents the first public reading in Provincetown from *The Extreme of the Middle: Writings of Jack Tworkov*, recently published by Yale University Press. The editor of this book, painter and writer Mira Schor, will read and discuss Tworkov's work, including selections from the noted American artist's writings about painting, teaching art, Abstract Expressionism, and about the rhythms of life in Provincetown. Schor will also discuss her editorial role and her own writings about Tworkov's paintings from this period in her new book, *A Decade of Negative Thinking: Essays on Art, Politics, and Daily Life*.

"Reading Tworkov is rewarding in multiple ways. His take on older painters, especially Cézanne and Soutine, is full of insight and passion; his musing on art's mission are idealistic and perhaps more pertinent than ever; his sense of ethics is strong; and his pedagogical thoughts and technical prescriptions are of real value. But what holds the reader's attention most is the man himself, his fundamental decency and kindness" -Richard Kalina, "Book Reviews: Thinking Things Through," *Art in America*, December 2009

"Schor's labor of love-the task in collecting and assembling these papers into a coherent whole must have been monumental-brings to life an artist once referred to as a "quiet giant" of American art, and thanks to her effort, his intelligent, inquisitive voice is given full throat in these pages." -John Skoyles, "Bookshelf: Review, *The Extreme of the Middle*," *Ploughshares*, Winter 2009-10

Mira Schor is a painter and writer. She is the author of *Wet: On Painting, Feminism and Art Culture*. She recently received a Creative Capital/Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant for a blog on art and culture, *A Year of Positive Thinking*. Schor teaches in the MFA Program in Fine Arts at Parsons the New School for Design. This event is free and open to the public. FAWC is located at 24 Pearl Street in Provincetown, MA 02657. For more information or details, please visit [www.fawc.org](http://www.fawc.org) or call 508.487.9960.

**ABOUT PAAM**

*Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM) was established in 1914 by a group of artists and townspeople to build a permanent collection of works by artists of outer Cape Cod, and to exhibit art that would allow for unification within the community. Through a comprehensive schedule of exhibitions of local and national significance and educational outreach, PAAM provides the public access to art, artists, and the creative process. PAAM, located at 460 Commercial Street, is open (October - May) noon to 5pm, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, also open by appointment; (Memorial Day - September) 11 am - 8pm Monday - Thursday, 11am - 10pm Friday, 11am - 5pm Saturday and Sunday. General admission \$7. Free to members and children 12 and under. For more information, please call 508.487.1750 or visit [www.paam.org](http://www.paam.org).*



Jack Tworkov, Knight Series #1 (1975) 90 x 75"  
Collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art  
(c) Estate of Jack Tworkov, New York

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