

"Untitled," gelatin silver print, by Alexey Titarenko, is on view at the Candace Perich Gallery.



ART REVIEWS/D. DOMINICK LOMBARDI

Photos That Grip And Send A Message

Alexey Titarenko: St. Petersburg

Candace Perich Gallery, 27 Katonah Avenue, Katonah, (914) 232-3966. Through Nov. 5.

Alexey Titarenko lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia. His show at the Candace Perich Gallery features a large body of black and white photographs taken from 1992 to 2000 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Three distinct periods intended to personify various degrees of economic devastation and recovery are represented here. One of the few overlying technical factors in each of the photographs is the extended exposure time that produces faint images of things that are moving: a car, a bus, a passer-by.

The first period is collectively titled "City of Shadows" (1992-94). Works including "Untitled (Babylou/Aeroflot)" (1992) and "Untitled (Crowd No.4)" (1992-93) depict a cold and dark-toned cityscape overflowing with seemingly single-minded commuters. The architectural elements, especially the kiosk in "Untitled (Babylou/Aeroflot)," punctuate these scenes beautifully.

The second group of photographs is called "Black and White Magic of St. Petersburg" (1995-97). These works show a city that has come alive. Hope is expressed here, and some works, like the magnetic "Untitled (Woman With Umbrella)" (1995), reminded me

very much of fashion photography in the United States in the 1950's: those striped dresses of summer, and the reflective, dark, wet streets.

The third and darkest installment is called "Time Standing Still" (1998-2000), showing devastation and frustration. In "Untitled (Old Woman Sitting on Sidewalk)" (1999), the viewer comes face to face with a chilling reality in the form of a defeated soul. A woman sits, a note in her hand, looking quite still as a dark and looming sea of humanity passes her by. Time does seem to stand still, when one is faced with great loss or adversity, and this photograph captures this moment in a truly timeless fashion.

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