

# Alexander and Bonin

EXHIBITION: Paul Thek: *cityscapes and other ideas*  
Peter Hujar: *Thek's studio 1967*

DATES: October 16 – November 27, 2010

LOCATION: 132 Tenth Avenue between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>

HOURS: Tuesday–Saturday, 10am – 6pm

Alexander and Bonin is pleased to announce exhibitions of work by Paul Thek and Peter Hujar on view at the gallery from October 16 through November 27<sup>th</sup>. The ground floor exhibition, *Paul Thek: cityscapes and other ideas*, will present two rarely exhibited bodies of work – his *cityscape* paintings and his drawings for public monuments. The second floor will contain a selection of newly discovered photographs taken by Peter Hujar in Thek's studio in 1967.

Thek moved between New York and various European cities in the 1970s. In addition to the sculptures and installations for which he is best known, he made paintings and drawings based on observation in Ponza (Italy), Fire Island and Manhattan. They punctuate a profoundly disparate practice and suggest a continued engagement with his place in the world. Living in New York for much of the 1980s he made chromatically similar 'bad' paintings and numerous cityscapes viewed from the windows and rooftop of his East 3<sup>rd</sup> street apartment. Thek's cityscapes depict the metropolis in which he lived and worked, situated in the midst of the city amongst towering obelisks and alongside its many inhabitants.

The drawings for public monuments, while related to the cityscapes in their urban focus, tend toward more political subject-matter. Perhaps the most well known of this series – drawings of Richard Serra's ill-fated *Tilted Arc* re-imagined as a petting zoo – show Thek as a playful ironist skewering a project which would eventually change the face of public art. While this gesture might be read as overly populist, it also seems to suggest that a public *use* of the contested artwork could, in a sense, save it.

The images Peter Hujar took in his close friend's studio in 1967 lovingly probe its ephemera, Thek's process and his public persona. Originally taken for potential use in association with Thek's solo exhibition at Stable Gallery, many images in this series providentially document the making of his infamous sculpture *The Tomb/Death of a Hippie*. Now widely considered to be the masterwork of his 1960s sculpture, *The Tomb* was destroyed after languishing in storage, with Thek reportedly having refused delivery of the piece in 1981. Aside from the one used for the Stable gallery announcement, these images have never been published or exhibited. Photographs from this studio session were uncovered during the research for *Paul Thek: Diver*, a retrospective curated by Elisabeth Sussman and Lynn Zelevansky. *Diver* opens at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York on October 21<sup>st</sup> and travels to the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.