

GANDY BRODIE



TEN TENEMENTS



FRONT COVER:

Untitled (tenement yard)

c. 1973, pastel on paper, 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

BACK COVER:

"every sidewalk has a smiling side"
(from *The Happy Tenement*)

c. 1962, ink on paper, 9 x 12 in.

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TEN TENEMENTS

may 31 – july 1, 2012

"If I want to feel haunted, there's the Lower East Side."

Ten Tenements realizes an exhibition envisioned by Gandy Brodie and his wife Jocelyn before his death at the age of 50 in 1975. After his death his widow proposed variations of this exhibiton to two institutions (after bringing a "mini-exhibit up to Meyer and Lillian Schapiro in Vermont for their input"). Gandy Brodie was born in a "house on Henry Street." Jocelyn once described him as a "delinquent Hebrew student." In bringing their idea to life we pay homage both to the artist and his wife, one of his most articulate critics. The exhibition includes paintings and works on paper of tenement facades, city trees and related imagery from the urban landscape of Brodie's youth.

Although their original intention was to pair Brodie's paintings of tenements with documentary photographs of the Lower East Side, this exhibition instead situates the paintings directly within the neighborhood that inspired them.

Essentially a self-taught artist, Brodie studied the work of Van Gogh, Picasso, Klee, Soutine, Mondrian and Cézanne

ABOVE:

Robert Frank

Gandy Brodie from 10th St. Painters

1950-1960/1985 (detail)

(used by permission of the artist)

LEFT:

POST NO BILLS (detail)

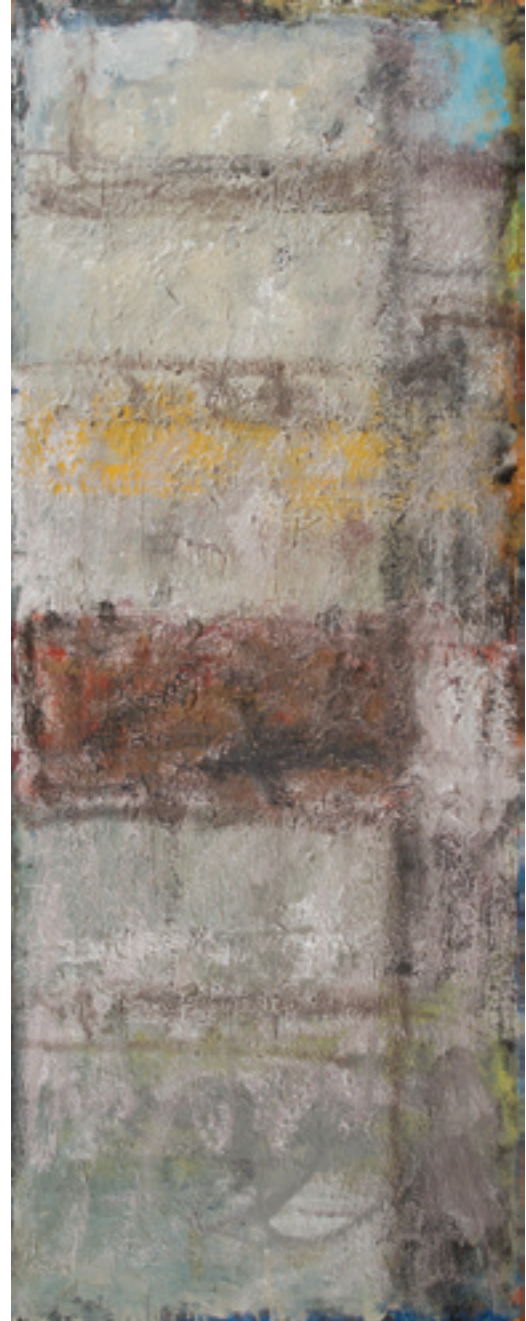
1966, oil on canvas, 72 x 97 in.

(not included in exhibition)

at The Museum of Modern Art. All of their work had an influence on his singular “expressionist” style. Brodie chose not to participate in the shifting trends that dominated the New York art scene, carving an independent path. He focused intensely on what was directly before him, striving to convey the world as he observed it, “like a dream sequence,” as he once put it. Although Brodie eventually moved from New York City to settle in Vermont, the succession of ever-changing buildings and solitary figures that constitute the city’s landscape made an enduring impression on his work. Regarding the Lower East Side, he notes, “it’s very much part of my observations in the world and the kind of thing I try to articulate in my painting. So in a sense everything changes, but everything remains the same.” Brodie’s individual treatment of his tenements is whimsically presented in his unpublished illustrated children’s book *The Happy Tenement* (c. 1962).

In a 1959 review of a Brodie exhibition the poet James Schuyler described *City Anguish*, 1958, a monumental canvas related to the Williamsburg Bridge as “non-figurative and true, like endless skyscraper structures limply and soundlessly collapsing.” Brodie himself described *City Anguish* as a kind of deliberate scratching out of Cubism...that relies heavily on the imagery at the Williamsburg Bridge which has those cross girders...” Brodie said, “I use the crosses to cross out all the memories of sorrow that the city is bound to create.”

Brodie builds up the surface of his paintings yet his images remain touchingly ephemeral and light as they struggle to rise from the thick surfaces of the canvas. Brodie continuously reestablishes his connection to his environment – almost as though in the very act of capturing the faces of his tenements they elude him.





Classic Tenement
c. 1971, oil on panel, 9 x 8 ½ in.

Torn Tenement
1973, oil on wood, 38 ½ x 14 ¾ in.

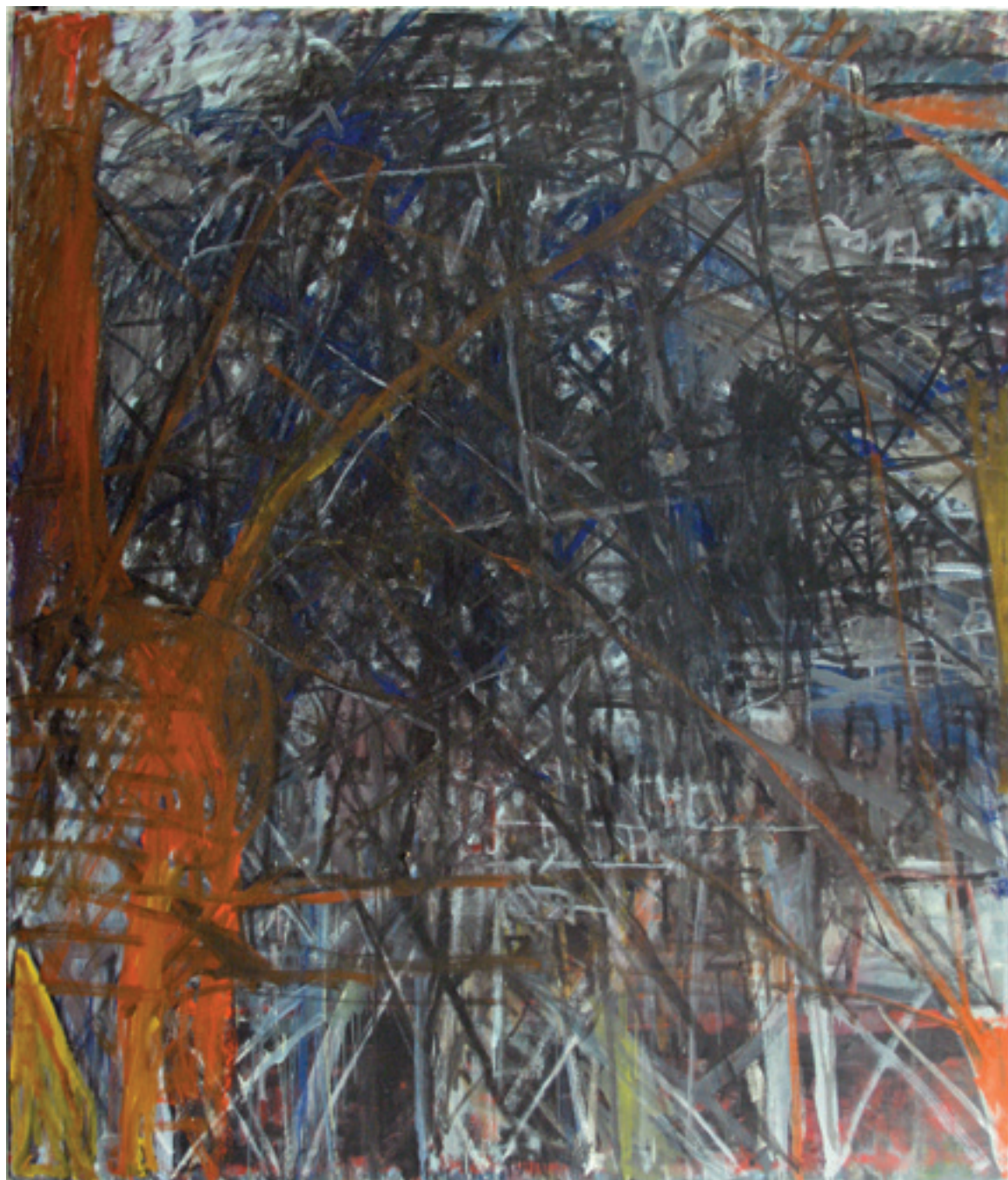


*Figures with Manhattan
Bridge and Tenements*
c. 1960, pencil on paper
17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



Untitled (Tenement)
c. 1960, charcoal on paper
23 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

City Anguish
1958, oil on canvas
84 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 72 in.

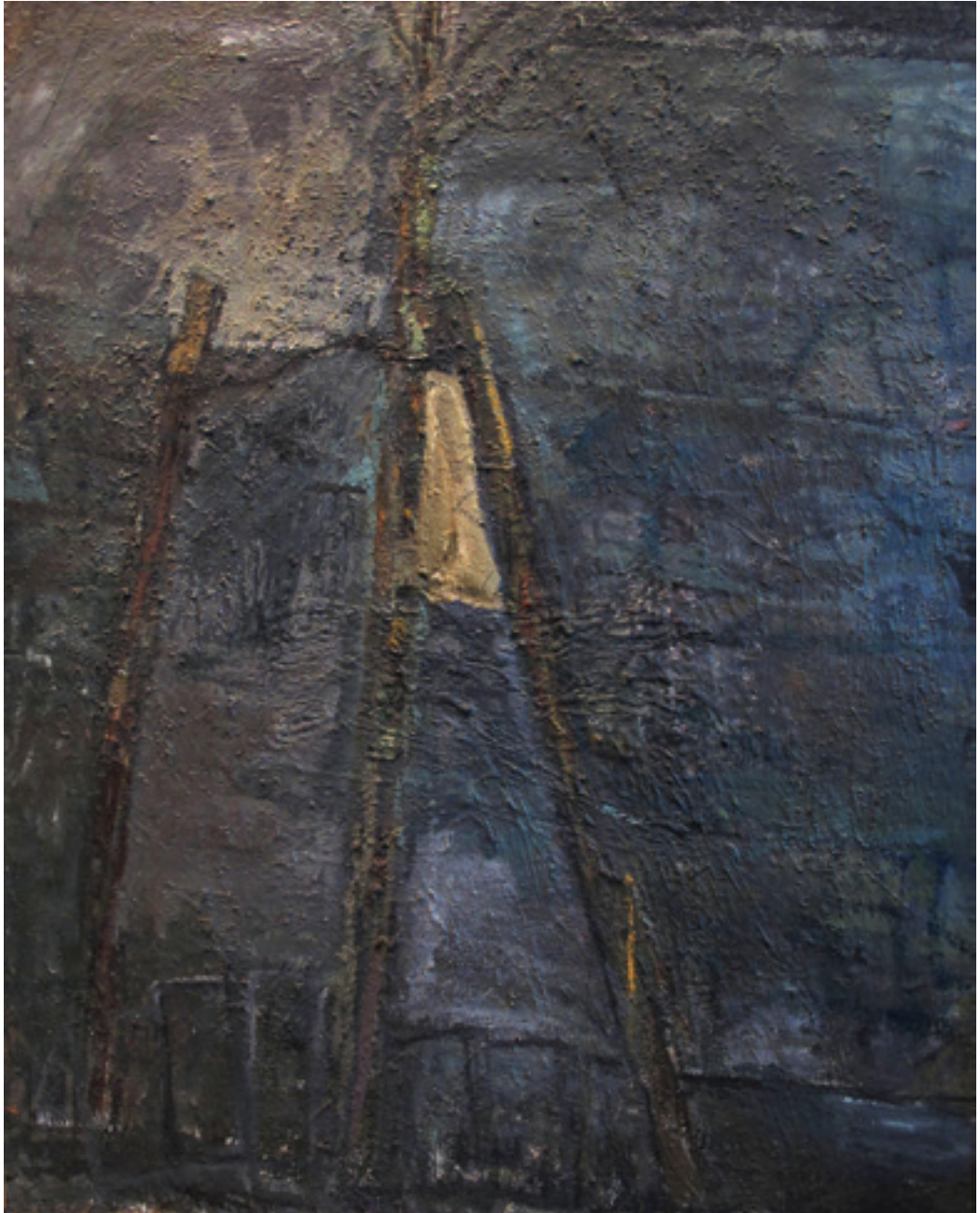




Tenement
1975, oil on metal
18 ¼ x 5 ¼ in.



Tenement
1975, oil on wood block
16 ¼ x 3 ½ in.



Tree in the City
1963, oil on canvas, 25 ½ x 19 ¾ in.



RIGHT:
Tree in the City
c. 1965, watercolor, ink, pencil,
crayon and gouache on paper
25 ½ x 19 ¾ in.

Untitled (Tenement)
c. 1975, pastel and watercolor on paper
23 ¼ x 17 ¾ in.



Untitled (Tenement)
c. 1973, pastel and ink on paper
24 ¾ x 18 ⅞ in.



