

# ARTnews

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**reviews:** new york

## Kenneth Josephson

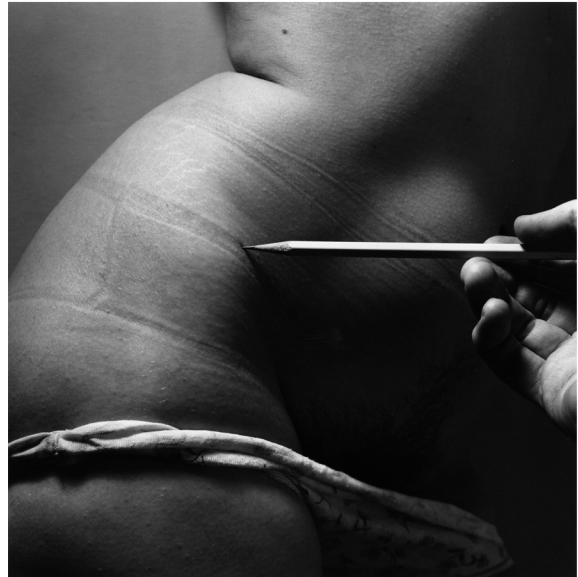
### Gitterman

This smartly organized exhibition of 45 striking black-and-white photographs from the 1960s and '70s, grouped according to subject—Chicago street scenes, tree branches and grass, close-ups of rough walls—showed the evolution of Kenneth Josephson's conceptual approach to photography. His subjects are reminiscent of those of his teachers and contemporaries, such as Aaron Siskind, Harry Callahan, and Minor White. But what distinguishes this artist's work is his focus on photography's particular ability to communicate illusion and his interest in the medium's limitations. By including in his images marks made by invisible forces and sometimes other photographs, Josephson slyly comments on what his medium can and cannot reveal.

In *Chicago* (1961), one of several dark street scenes, tiny patches of light strike four figures in murky shadow. Each spot exposes a telling detail—a hand, a section of striped shirt—of an otherwise hidden person. This inky, high-contrast view of urban life is purely photographic. *Stockholm* (1967) shows a black car and a matching white shape—the car's shadow in frost on the ground—offering a neat riff on the idea of a negative.

Some works refer to events that took place outside the frame. One image shows the loopy black marks left by tires skidding on asphalt; another reveals the sweeping residue on a wall of close-growing bushes. Sometimes interventions are unexpected, appearing as if they were contrived. In *Chicago* (1976), a hand holds a sharpened pencil to the indentation left on a woman's bare hip by tight clothing, claiming the mark as the artist's own. Elsewhere a hand holds a ruler up to a mountain range. Whether he records constructed or found images, Josephson challenges his medium and our perceptions with curiosity and wit.

—**Rebecca Robertson**



Kenneth Josephson, *Chicago*, 1976, vintage gelatin silver print, 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" x 9".  
Gitterman.