

ARTFORUM

Kenneth Josephson

GITTERMAN GALLERY
41 East 57 Street, Suite 1103
April 6–June 11



Kenneth Josephson, *Chicago*, 1960, vintage gelatin silver print, 6 x 9".

“Life is not a dream / Beware! Beware! Beware!” So wrote Federico García Lorca after a night of fitful walking through Manhattan. But life is a dream, especially for Chicago-based photographer Kenneth Josephson, and a lovely one at that.

Multiple exposures, collages, time lapses, and doctored colors: Since he began working in the late 1950s—early '60s, Josephson has used just about every available technique to question our accepted notions of reality. Which is to say that in his best work—much of which is on display at this greatest hits—style exhibition—formal experiments are really metaphysical provocations.

In *Chicago*, 1960, for example, pedestrians walk down a sun-drenched sidewalk, followed by a tangle of eerie, diaphanous humanoid shapes. Josephson exposed the photograph more than once, certainly, and somewhere along the line, shifted the frame. What we're actually seeing, then, is the same group of people in different places. In another artist's hands, this could be a pedantic effect. But by combining it with an exquisite gossamer texture, and conjuring a mood of ethereal solitude, Josephson persuades us that spirits are floating past the street. Similar otherworldly beings appear throughout his work.

Josephson often includes photographs within his photographs. Held in a free hand, lying in the grass, tacked on the frame as in a montage—their self-reflexive presence unsettles us like an LSD revelation. A revelation of what? Of the fact that our world, so intimate and heavy, might well be little more than a greater someone's photo album.

— Ratik Asokan