

Alexander Brodsky

RONALD FELDMAN FINE ARTS

31 Mercer Street**April 5–May 10**

Fourteen clay heads stare at miniature television sets embedded in one another's occiputs. A man holds an umbrella against a shaft of rain that falls only on his umbrella. A dim scene of rained-on pedestrians—a painting that seems to have been drawn by a finger in clay slip—is backlit by a light box. A vitrine presents neat rows of used teabags. Another glass box holds a working fan, scraps of paper, and bottlenecked weights that keep the fluttering paper put. In the manner of Greek math problems, Alexander Brodsky's pictures and installations—all hermetically called *Untitled*—illustrate concepts of balance and counterbalance by way of unlikely vignettes.

Brodsky is an art-friendly architect whose projects include diorama-like models of urban decay and a Moscow gallery complex in a prerevolutionary wine-bottling plant. In the 1980s, he was one of several young Soviet "paper architects" who used fantasy and narrative in their drawings to imbue structural design with human weaknesses, thus undermining the modernist project of devising machinelike buildings from ideal forms. Brodsky's new series is constructed around characters and artifacts that would have appeared as eccentric details in earlier sketches for a bridge or a house. The image of the little man struggling in the rain, for instance, has been multiplied in the light-box paintings, in which Brodsky explores the formal possibilities of the curvature of his hunched back and umbrella. The same could be said of the pseudoprimitive busts. The translations of personified awkwardness into semiabstract pattern—realized in humble substances vulnerable to heat and moisture—is a new wrinkle in Brodsky's ongoing effort to find room for flux in structure.

—Brian Droitscow



View of "Alexander Brodsky." From foreground: *Untitled (heads)*, 2008; *Untitled (tea bags)*, 2008; *Untitled (street)*, 2008.