

Alex Katz

Alex Katz (born July 24, 1927) is an American figural artist associated with the Pop art movement. In particular, he is known for his paintings, sculptures, and prints.

Alex Katz was born in Brooklyn, New York. In 1928 the family moved to St. Albans, Queens. From 1946 to 1949 he studied at The Cooper Union in New York, and from 1949 to 1950 he studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Skowhegan, Maine. His first one-person show came in 1954: an exhibition of paintings at the Roko Gallery in New York. In 1974 The Whitney Museum of American Art showed Alex Katz Prints, followed by a traveling retrospective exhibition Alex Katz in 1986. During his first ten years as a painter, Katz admitted to destroying a thousand paintings. Since the 1950s, he worked to create art more freely in the sense that he tried to paint faster than [he] can think. His works seem simple, but according to Katz they are more reductive, which is fitting to his personality.

In 1994 Cooper Union Art School created the Alex Katz Visiting Chair in Painting with the endowment provided by the sale of ten paintings donated by the artist.

Phaidon Press (2005) published an illustrated survey, Alex Katz by Carter Ratcliff, Robert Storr and Iwona Blazwick. Also in 2005, Katz made 25 etchings for the Arion Press edition of Gloria with 28 poems by Bill Berkson.

It was only during the last decade that his art gained world wide acceptance, as it is now considered influential on much younger generations of artists. In 2007, Katz had a major solo show at the New York State Museum.

At the age of 80, Katz broke out of his minimal fame in small art circles, and is currently seen as a major American painter.

In 2007, Katz is represented by Richard Gray Gallery in Chicago and Robert Miller Gallery and Pace Wildenstein in New York. In 2008 he was the subject of a documentary directed by Heinz Peter Schwerfel, titled What About Style? Alex Katz: a Painter's Painter.

A summer resident of Lincolnville, Maine since 1954, he has developed a close relationship with local Colby College. The college presented him with an honorary doctorate in 1984. In October 1996, the Colby College Museum of Art opened a wing dedicated to Katz that features more than 400 oil paintings, collages, and prints donated by the artist.

In 1973, one of Katz' earlier works, Poppy, sold for only \$1000, but recently, his works sell more in the 6 digit range, such as Red Tulips, which sold for \$690,600.

His works are held in the collections of Tate Modern and the Museum of Modern Art.

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