

# GUGGENHEIM

## NEWS RELEASE

### **Guggenheim Museum Presents *Alex Katz: Gathering***

**Alex Katz's eight-decade retrospective will feature portraits, social scenes, and landscapes that capture the immediacy of visual perception in paint.**

**Exhibition:** *Alex Katz: Gathering*

**Venue:** Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York

**Location:** Rotunda and Tower Level 7

**Date:** October 21, 2022–February 20, 2023

(NEW YORK, NY—October 21, 2022) The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum presents *Alex Katz: Gathering*, a career retrospective staged in the city where Katz has lived and worked his entire life, and prepared with the close collaboration of the artist. On view from October 21, 2022, through February 20, 2023, the exhibition fills the museum's Frank Lloyd Wright–designed rotunda and an adjacent Tower Gallery. Encompassing paintings, oil sketches, collages, prints, and freestanding “cutout” works, the show opens with the artist's intimate sketches of riders on the New York City subway from his student days in the 1940s and culminates in the rapturous and immersive landscapes that have dominated his output in recent years.

Across eight decades of intense creative production, Alex Katz (b. 1927, Brooklyn, New York) has sought to capture visual experience in the present tense. Writing in 1961, Katz noted that “Eternity exists in minutes of absolute awareness. Painting, when successful, seems to be a synthetic reflection of this condition.” Whether evoking a glancing exchange between friends or a shaft of light filtered through trees, he has aimed to create a record of “quick things passing,” compressing the flux of everyday life into a vivid burst of optical perception.

Emerging as an artist in the mid-20th century, Katz forged a mode of figurative painting that fused the energy and distillation of Abstract Expressionist canvases with the American vernaculars of the magazine, billboard, and movie screen. He has turned to his direct surroundings in downtown New York City and coastal Maine as his primary subject matter throughout his career, engaging the traditional painterly subjects of portraiture, genre scenes of everyday life, and landscape.

The exhibition's title, *Gathering*, references the study of the visible world evoked in the 1951 poem “Salute” by Katz's admired friend James Schuyler. Equally, it summons the notion of a lifetime of work

assembled within the structure of a retrospective, and the gathering of Katz's sitters within the uniquely open space of the rotunda. Whether depicting individuals or social groups, Katz's portraits document an evolving community of poets, artists, dancers, musicians, and critics who have animated a downtown avant-garde since the midcentury, including Frank O'Hara, Robert Rauschenberg, Paul Taylor, LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka), Joe Brainard, Kynaston McShine, Anne Waldman, John Ashbery, Meredith Monk, Allen Ginsberg, Mariko Mori, Bill T. Jones, and Joan Jonas. A number of portrait subjects recur in the course of the loosely chronological installation, most notably Ada Katz, the accomplished research biologist and Fulbright scholar whom the artist married in 1958 and has depicted over a thousand times since. Described by the poet Frank O'Hara as "a presence and at the same time a pictorial conceit of style," Ada functions as the iconographic heart of Katz's work, a physiognomy and a subjectivity studied across the arc of both the subject's individual life and the artist's creative development.

The exhibition is accompanied by a scholarly catalogue, featuring eleven newly commissioned essays by David Breslin, Katherine Brinson, Jennifer Y. Chuong, David Max Horowitz, Arthur Jafa, Katie Kitamura, Wayne Koestenbaum, Ewa Lajer-Burchard, Kevin Lotery, Prudence Peiffer, and Levi Prombaum. In addition to an extensive plates section and comprehensive exhibition and publication histories, the book contains a Sourcebook of 36 reviews, texts, and poems from an eminent group of writers who have responded to Katz's work at different points in his career, cohering into an illuminating document of the artist's rich and mutable critical reception from the 1950s to the present day.

A series of digital productions will complement the retrospective, including a newly captured and intimate video portrait of the artist at work and an audio guide highlighting observations by Guggenheim curators and notable sitters who appear in Katz's paintings, including choreographer Bill T. Jones, poet Vincent Katz, composer Meredith Monk, and poet Anne Waldman.

"[Katz is] such an honest person," shares Monk for the audio guide. "And I think his art has an honesty. And I think his work has a lot of love in it, but it doesn't have to be explicit. The love is implicit, because he chooses what he loves to paint. *[Laughs]* You know, that's the key. His love is in his choice of his subject matter, but he doesn't have to do anything more than just have it be what it is. And then the love comes through."

The guide also features the Guggenheim's collaboration with the music house West Channel, with original compositions inspired by Katz's paintings by Rena Anakwe, Peter Bayne, Oli Chang, Elori Saxl, Michael Sempert, and Hoshiko Yamane. Visitors can enjoy a 40-minute version of these pieces while moving through the show.

Furthermore, Works & Process will present the Paul Taylor Dance Company in the Guggenheim on October 25–26 for three special performances of *Polaris*, a 1976 collaboration choreographed by Paul

Taylor and set and costumes designs by Alex Katz. Selected for the museum's rotunda by Michael Novak, Paul Taylor Dance Company Artistic Director, these performances of *Polaris* will offer audiences a unique and unprecedented opportunity to see Taylor and Katz's sculptural collaboration—normally performed on a proscenium stage—in the round. On October 27, a public program exploring three decades of their collaboration will take place at the New York Library for the Performing Arts, hosted by Works & Process and the Library's Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

*Alex Katz: Gathering* is organized by Katherine Brinson, Daskalopoulos Curator, Contemporary Art, with Terra Warren, Curatorial Assistant, and with additional support from Andrea Zambrano, Curatorial Assistant.

## Funders

Major support for *Alex Katz: Gathering* is provided by Bank of America.

The Leadership Committee for this exhibition is gratefully acknowledged for its generosity, with special thanks to Charles and Valerie Diker; the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation; Barbara and Andrew Gundlach; Gladstone Gallery; Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London/Paris/Salzburg/Seoul; Richard Gray Gallery; Mrs. Hye Ryung Ahn; Tae-won Chey and Chloe H. Kim; Dr. Dohyun Jung and Mrs. Yea Jeong Sohn; Judy and Leonard Lauder; Jungmin Leomina Park; Byoung Ho Son; Sang Mo Son and Kyung Soon Lee; Nancy and Steve Crown; Jeffrey and Penny Hecktman; Marguerite Steed Hoffman; Myrna and Spencer Partrich; Ellen and Michael Ringier; Jonghee Shon; Timothy Taylor Gallery; The Lunder Foundation-Peter and Paula Lunder Family; Monica De Cardenas, Milano/Zuoz/Lugano; Lisa and John Miller; Lisa Roumell and Mark Rosenthal; Mr. and Mrs. John L. Townsend III; and a private collection.

Support is also generously provided by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, the David Berg Foundation, the Kate Cassidy Foundation, and Christie's. In-kind exhibition support has been generously provided by Knoll.

Additional funding is provided by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's International Director's Council.

## About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation was established in 1937 and is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. The international constellation of museums includes the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; the

Guggenheim Museum Bilbao; and the future Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. An architectural icon and “temple of spirit” where radical art and architecture meet, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is now among a group of eight Frank Lloyd Wright structures in the United States recently designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. To learn more about the museum and the Guggenheim’s activities around the world, visit [guggenheim.org](https://guggenheim.org).

### **Sustainability**

The Guggenheim Museum is committed to the sustainable stewardship of our collections and facilities, preserving them for future generations, and minimizing environmental impact.

#AlexKatzGathering

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October 21, 2022

### **For additional information**

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## Exhibition Checklist

### **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Crowd on Subway*

ca. 1946 – 1949

Pen on paper

4 7/8 × 7 7/8 inches (12.4 × 20 cm)

frame: 10 × 15 × 1 inches (25.4 × 38.1 × 2.5 cm)

Collection of Robert Lococo

X.2022.100



Alex Katz

*Untitled, from Subway Series*

ca. 1946-1949

Pen on paper

4 7/8 × 7 7/8 inches (12.4 × 20 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1995

X.2022.118



Alex Katz

*Untitled, from Subway Series*

ca. 1946-1949

Pen on paper

4 7/8 × 7 7/8 inches (12.4 × 20 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1995

X.2022.120



Alex Katz

*Untitled, from Subway Series*

ca. 1946-1949

Pen on paper

4 7/8 × 7 7/8 inches (12.4 × 20 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1995

X.2022.122



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Subway 2*

ca. 1946-1949

Pen on paper

4 15/16 × 8 inches (12.5 × 20.3 cm)

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

X.2022.137



Alex Katz

*Ella Marion in Red Sweater*

1946

Oil and ink on linen

20 1/8 × 16 inches (51.1 × 40.6 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.29



Alex Katz

*Man with Hat and Glasses*

ca. 1946 - 1949

Pen on paper

4 7/8 × 8 inches (12.4 × 20.3 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.105



Alex Katz

*Man with Newspaper on the Subway*

ca. 1946 - 1949

Pen on paper

4 7/8 × 7 7/8 inches (12.4 × 20 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.106



Alex Katz

*Untitled, from Subway Series*

ca. 1946-1949

Pen on paper

4 7/8 × 7 7/8 inches (12.4 × 20 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1995

X.2022.114



## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Three Figures on a Subway*

c. 1948

Oil on board

13 1/2 × 29 inches (34.3 × 73.7 cm)

frame: 18 3/4 × 29 3/4 × 1 1/8 inches (47.6 × 75.6 × 2.9 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1995

X.2022.30



Alex Katz

*Five People Seated At Table*

1950

Oil on board

32 × 48 inches (81.3 × 121.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2020.166



Alex Katz

*Untitled*

1951

Oil on board

24 × 35 7/8 inches (61 × 91.1 cm)

frame: 27 1/2 × 39 1/2 × 2 5/16 inches (69.9 × 100.3 × 5.9 cm)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of the artist

X.2021.227



Alex Katz

*Family Album*

ca. 1953

Oil on board

36 × 33 inches (91.4 × 83.8 cm)

Private collection, Dallas

X.2021.404



Alex Katz

*Apple Trees*

1954

Oil on board

26 × 32 inches (66 × 81.3 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2020.160





## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Edwin and Ada on a Beach*

ca. 1959

Watercolor and colored paper collage

8 1/2 × 11 inches (21.6 × 27.9 cm)

frame: 15 3/4 × 18 3/16 × 1 3/8 inches (40 × 46.2 × 3.5 cm)

Courtesy Peter Blum Gallery, New York

X.2021.891



Alex Katz

*Pink Sky*

1955

Oil on board

24 × 48 inches (61 × 121.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2020.161



Alex Katz

*Lake Time*

1955

Oil on board

36 × 24 inches (91.4 × 61 cm)

Milwaukee Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 1993

X.2020.162



Alex Katz

*Untitled*

c. 1955

Watercolor and colored paper collage

5 1/4 × 8 inches (13.3 × 20.3 cm)

Collection of the artist, promised gift to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

X.2021.894



Alex Katz

*Two Figures*

1955

Watercolor and colored paper collage

4 × 6 inches (10.2 × 15.2 cm)

frame: 7 1/4 × 9 3/8 inches (18.4 × 23.8 cm)

Collection of the artist, promised gift to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

X.2021.901





## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Roadmaster*

1955 - 1956

Watercolor and colored paper collage

4 3/4 × 7 inches (12.1 × 17.8 cm)

frame: 7 1/8 × 9 1/2 × 7/8 inches (18.1 × 24.1 × 2.2 cm)

Collection of the artist, promised gift to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

X.2021.902



Alex Katz

*Landscape with Car*

1955

Watercolor and colored paper collage

5 × 7 1/16 inches (12.7 × 17.9 cm)

frame: 6 3/4 × 8 3/4 × 3/4 inches (17.1 × 22.2 × 1.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.43



Alex Katz

*Track Jacket*

1956

Oil on board

24 × 18 inches (61 × 45.7 cm)

frame: 24 3/16 × 18 5/8 × 1 1/16 inches (61.4 × 47.3 × 2.7 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1995

X.2021.257



Alex Katz

*Two Figures at Lincolnville Beach*

1956 - 1957

Watercolor and colored paper collage

5 × 8 inches (12.7 × 20.3 cm)

frame: 7 3/8 × 10 1/4 × 7/8 inches (18.7 × 26 × 2.2 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.497



Alex Katz

*Ada in Black Sweater*

1957

Oil on board

24 × 18 inches (61 × 45.7 cm)

frame: 24 5/8 × 18 7/16 × 1 3/8 inches (62.5 × 46.8 × 3.5 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1995

X.2021.253



## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Rudy and Edith*

1957

Oil on linen

36 × 59 5/8 inches (91.4 × 151.4 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.256



Alex Katz

*Lois*

1957

Oil on board

48 × 32 inches (121.9 × 81.3 cm)

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Donated by

Marlborough Gallery, New York, 1997

X.2021.409



Alex Katz

*Three People*

1957

Watercolor and colored paper collage

5 1/8 × 6 1/8 inches (13 × 15.6 cm)

frame: 7 1/2 × 9 3/8 × 7/8 inches (19.1 × 23.8 × 2.2 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.896



Alex Katz

*Irving and Lucy*

1958

Oil on linen

61 1/4 × 60 inches (155.6 × 152.4 cm)

Courtesy of Lucy Freeman Sandler

X.2021.255



Alex Katz

*Untitled (At the Seashore)*

1958

Watercolor and colored paper collage

4 1/8 × 6 inches (10.5 × 15.2 cm)

frame: 10 3/4 × 12 3/4 × 1/2 inches (27.3 × 32.4 × 1.3 cm)

Collection of the artist, promised gift to the Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
New York

X.2021.500



## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Eli at Ducktrap*

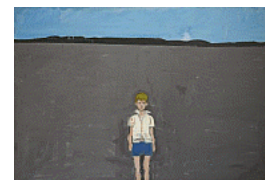
1958

Oil on linen

49 3/4 × 71 1/2 inches (126.4 × 181.6 cm)

Mugrabi Collection

X.2021.595



Alex Katz

*Oval Ada*

1958

Oil on board

24 3/4 × 18 3/4 inches (62.9 × 47.6 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1995

X.2021.613



Alex Katz

*House with Two Cows*

1958

Watercolor and colored paper collage

10 × 13 7/8 inches (25.4 × 35.2 cm)

frame: 11 5/8 inches × 15 1/2 inches × 1 inches (29.5 × 39.4 × 2.5 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.46



Alex Katz

*Untitled*

1958

Watercolor and colored paper collage

4 × 6 inches (10.2 × 15.2 cm)

frame: 8 1/2 × 10 1/2 inches (21.6 × 26.7 cm)

Collection of John and Lyn Fischbach

X.2022.49



Alex Katz

*Untitled*

1958

Watercolor and colored paper on paper

5 × 8 inches (12.7 × 20.3 cm)

frame: 9 1/2 × 12 1/2 inches (24.1 × 31.8 cm)

Collection of John and Lyn Fischbach

X.2022.51



## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Seascape (Green Shore)*

1958

Watercolor and colored paper collage

5 × 8 inches (12.7 × 20.3 cm)

frame: 9 1/2 × 12 1/2 inches (24.1 × 31.8 cm)

Collection of John and Lyn Fischbach

X.2022.52



Alex Katz

*Ada Ada*

1959

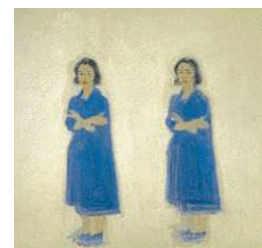
Oil on linen

49 1/2 × 50 inches (125.7 × 127 cm)

frame: 51 1/8 × 51 1/2 × 2 1/2 inches (129.9 × 130.8 × 6.4 cm)

Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Golden, 1963

X.2021.226



Alex Katz

*Double Portrait of Robert Rauschenberg*

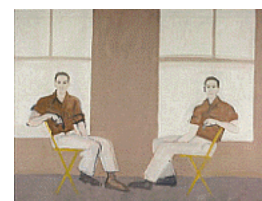
1959

Oil on linen

66 × 85 1/2 inches (167.6 × 217.2 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Museum purchase made possible by the Alex Katz Foundation, Peter and Paula Lunder through the Lunder Foundation, Michael Gordon '66, Barbara and Theodore Alfond through the Acorn Foundation, and the Jere Abbott Acquisitions Fund, 2016

X.2021.252



Alex Katz

*Paul Taylor*

1959

Oil on linen

65 3/4 × 73 1/4 inches (167 × 186 cm)

frame: 66 15/16 × 73 3/4 inches (170 × 187.3 cm)

Udo and Anette Brandhorst Collection

X.2021.258



## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*4 PM*

1959

Oil on linen

57 1/2 × 50 inches (146.1 × 127 cm)

frame: 58 1/8 × 51 1/8 inches (147.6 × 129.9 cm)

Private Collection

X.2021.407



Alex Katz

*Frank O'Hara*

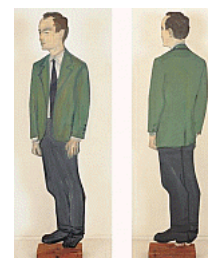
1959 - 1960

Oil on wood panel

60 × 15 1/2 inches (152.4 × 39.4 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the Alex Katz Foundation, 2016

X.2021.581



Alex Katz

*Sea, Land, Sky*

1959

Colored paper collage

8 5/8 × 11 inches (21.9 × 27.9 cm)

frame: 9 3/8 inches × 12 3/4 inches × 1 inches (23.8 × 32.4 × 2.5 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.899



Alex Katz

*Norman Bluhm*

1959

Oil on linen

48 × 48 inches (121.9 × 121.9 cm)

Private collection

X.2021.1099



Alex Katz

*Twilight*

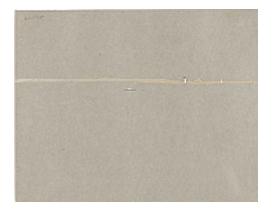
1960

Watercolor and colored paper collage

8 5/8 × 11 1/8 inches (21.9 × 28.3 cm)

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of the International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, New York

X.2021.242



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*The Black Dress*

1960

Oil on linen

71 5/8 × 83 3/4 inches (182 × 212.7 cm)

frame: 72 1/4 × 84 7/16 × 2 3/16 inches (183.5 × 214.5 × 5.5 cm)

Udo and Anette Brandhorst Collection

X.2021.264



Alex Katz

*Luna Park*

1960

Oil on board

40 × 30 inches (101.6 × 76.2 cm)

The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of the artist

X.2021.266



Alex Katz

*Self Portrait*

1960

Oil on linen

30 × 24 inches (76.2 × 61 cm)

Equitable Art Collection

X.2021.283



Alex Katz

*Picnic at the Beach*

1960

Watercolor and colored paper collage

4 5/8 × 5 1/4 inches (11.7 × 13.3 cm)

frame: 6 1/2 × 6 7/8 × 1 1/8 inches (16.5 × 17.5 × 2.9 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1996

X.2021.903



Alex Katz

*Greenwood Lake, New Jersey*

1960

Watercolor and colored paper collage

8 3/8 × 11 inches (21.3 × 27.9 cm)

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of the International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, New York

X.2022.134





## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Passing*

1962 - 1963

Oil on linen

71 3/4 × 79 5/8 inches (182.2 × 202.2 cm)

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Louis and Bessie Adler Foundation, Inc., Seymour M. Klein, President, 1978

X.2021.236



Alex Katz

*October 2*

1962

Oil on linen

71 × 49 3/4 inches (180.3 × 126.4 cm)

Courtesy Peter Blum Gallery, New York

X.2021.267



Alex Katz

*The Red Smile*

1963

Oil on linen

78 7/8 × 115 inches (200.3 × 292.1 cm)

frame: 79 7/16 inches × 115 3/4 inches × 2 inches (201.8 × 294 × 5.1 cm)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York Purchase, with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee

X.2021.230



Alex Katz

*Paul Taylor Dance Company*

1963 - 1964

Oil on linen

84 × 96 inches (213.4 × 243.8 cm)

Udo and Anette Brandhorst Collection

X.2021.265



Alex Katz

*Kynaston*

1963

Oil on linen

35 × 48 inches (88.9 × 121.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.282





## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*LeRoi Jones*

1963

Oil on linen

48 × 71 inches (121.9 × 180.3 cm)

Collection of Sheldon and Carol Appel

X.2022.124



Alex Katz

*Upside Down Ada*

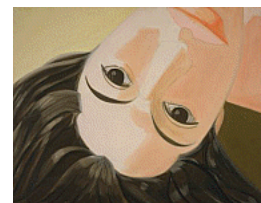
1965

Oil on linen

51 3/8 × 64 inches (130.5 × 162.6 cm)

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Agnes Gund, 1998

X.2021.238



Alex Katz

*The Cocktail Party*

1965

Oil on linen

78 × 96 inches (198.1 × 243.8 cm)

Private collection

X.2021.246



Alex Katz

*Study for Yvonne*

1965

Oil on board

11 × 12 inches (27.9 × 30.5 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.842



Alex Katz

*Yvonne*

1965

Oil on linen

48 × 48 inches (121.9 × 121.9 cm)

Private collection

X.2022.55



## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz  
*Scott and John*  
 1966  
 Oil on linen  
 72 × 48 inches (182.9 × 121.9 cm)  
 frame: 72 1/4 × 48 3/4 × 1 3/4 inches (183.5 × 123.8 × 4.4 cm)  
 Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany  
 X.2021.275



Alex Katz  
*Joe 1*  
 1966  
 Oil on aluminum  
 10 × 29 1/2 inches (25.4 × 74.9 cm)  
 Abrams Family Collection  
 X.2022.14



Alex Katz  
*Joe Brainard*  
 1966  
 Oil on aluminum  
 46 1/4 × 13 1/2 inches (117.5 × 34.3 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2022.32



Alex Katz  
*Blue Flag 4*  
 1967  
 Oil on linen  
 67 × 80 inches (170.2 × 203.2 cm)  
 Private collection  
 X.2021.268



Alex Katz  
*Rose Bud*  
 1967  
 Oil on linen  
 96 × 72 inches (243.8 × 182.9 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.270



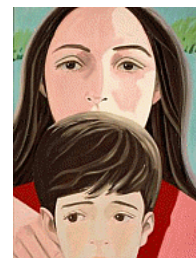
## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz  
*Ted Berrigan*  
 1967  
 Oil on linen  
 48 × 48 inches (121.9 × 121.9 cm)  
 Private collection, Japan. Courtesy of Edward Tyler Nahem, New York  
 X.2021.453



Alex Katz  
*Ada and Vincent*  
 1967  
 Oil on linen  
 94 1/2 × 71 1/2 inches (240 × 181.6 cm)  
 frame: 95 inches × 72 inches × 2 1/2 inches (241.3 × 182.9 × 6.4 cm)  
 Private collection  
 X.2021.570



Alex Katz  
*Study for Ted Berrigan*  
 1967  
 Oil on board  
 12 3/4 × 18 inches (32.4 × 45.7 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.841



Alex Katz  
*Edwin and Rudy*  
 1968  
 Oil on aluminum  
 48 × 43 1/4 inches (121.9 × 109.9 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.455



Alex Katz  
*Jack and D. D. Ryan*  
 1968  
 Oil on aluminum  
 68 × 48 inches (172.7 × 121.9 cm)  
 Guggenheim Abu Dhabi  
 X.2021.495



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Vincent and Tony*

1969

Oil on linen

72 × 120 inches (182.9 × 304.8 cm)

The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Society for Contemporary Art

X.2021.263



Alex Katz

*Ada with Mirror*

1969

Oil on linen

32 5/8 × 48 5/8 inches (82.9 × 123.5 cm)

Collection of Masamitsu Ono

X.2021.649



Alex Katz

*Ada with Nose*

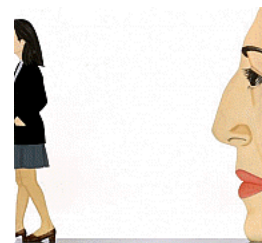
1969-1970

Oil on aluminum

71 1/2 × 72 inches (181.6 × 182.9 cm)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York Gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundation, Inc., Leonard A. Lauder, President

X.2022.2



Alex Katz

*Mr. and Mrs. R. Padgett, Mr. and Mrs. D. Gallup*

1971

Oil on linen

72 × 120 inches (182.9 × 304.8 cm)

Commerce Bancshares Fine Art Collection

X.2021.301



Alex Katz

*Blue Umbrella 2*

1972

Oil on linen

96 × 144 inches (243.8 × 365.8 cm)

Private collection, New York

X.2021.287



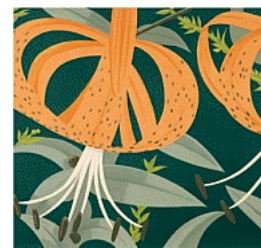
## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz  
*Edwin*  
 1972  
 Oil on linen  
 96 1/4 × 72 1/2 inches (244.5 × 184.2 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.288



Alex Katz  
*Superb Lilies*  
 1972  
 Lithograph, edition of 90  
 19 1/8 × 20 1/8 inches (48.6 × 51.1 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2022.70



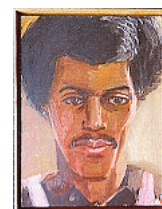
Alex Katz  
*Anne*  
 1972  
 Oil on board  
 14 × 18 inches (35.6 × 45.7 cm)  
 Private Collection, New York  
 X.2022.233



Alex Katz  
*August Late Afternoon*  
 1973  
 Oil on linen  
 96 5/8 × 72 1/2 inches (245.4 × 184.2 cm)  
 Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution,  
 Washington, DC, Gift of Larry Rivers, New York, 1979  
 X.2021.295



Alex Katz  
*Study for Stanley*  
 1973  
 Oil on board  
 9 × 12 inches (22.9 × 30.5 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.857



## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Five Women (Study for Times Square Mural)*

1976

Oil on aluminum

19 × 46 inches (48.3 × 116.8 cm)

Collection of Bonnie Bernstein Dockter and Peter Dockter

X.2021.289



Alex Katz

*Black and Brown Blouse*

1976

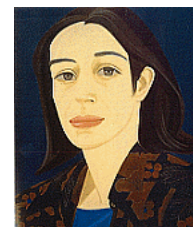
Oil on linen

72 × 60 inches (182.9 × 152.4 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, George A. Hearn Fund,

1978

X.2021.293



Alex Katz

*Round Hill*

1977

Oil on linen

71 × 96 inches (180.3 × 243.8 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Barry and Julie Smooke

X.2021.244



Alex Katz

*Rudy and Yvonne*

1977

Oil on linen

72 1/8 × 96 inches (183.2 × 243.8 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1985

X.2021.285



Alex Katz

*David and John*

1977

Oil on linen

72 × 96 inches (182.9 × 243.8 cm)

frame: 72 1/2 × 96 inches (184.2 × 243.8 cm)

Private collection, Germany, courtesy Edward Tyler Nahem, New York

X.2021.286





## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Rudy*

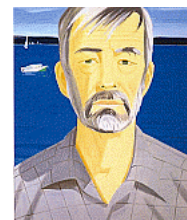
1980

Oil on linen

72 × 60 inches (182.9 × 152.4 cm)

Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine, Museum purchase with support from the Friends of the Farnsworth Collection, 2003

X.2021.306



Alex Katz

*Song*

1980

Oil on linen

72 × 96 inches (182.9 × 243.8 cm)

Collection of Dr. George and Vivian Dean

X.2021.310



Alex Katz

*Study for Vincent with a Ukulele*

1980

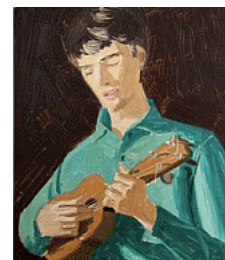
Oil on board

14 × 12 inches (35.6 × 30.5 cm)

frame: 20 × 17 3/4 inches (50.8 × 45.1 cm)

Collection of John and Lyn Fischbach

X.2021.790



Alex Katz

*Hiroshi*

1981

Oil on linen

69 × 72 inches (175.3 × 182.9 cm)

Private collection

X.2021.588



Alex Katz

*Hiroshi*

1981

Graphite on paper

15 × 22 inches (38.1 × 55.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.614





## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Night: William Dunas Dance 1 (Pamela)*

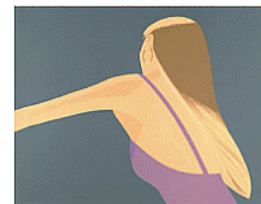
1983

Lithograph, edition of 100, A.P. of 42

25 × 31 1/4 inches (63.5 × 79.4 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.1094



Alex Katz

*Night: William Dunas Dance 2 (Pamela)*

1983

Lithograph, edition of 100, A.P. of 42

25 × 31 1/4 inches (63.5 × 79.4 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.1095



Alex Katz

*Night: William Dunas Dance 3 (Pamela)*

1983

Lithograph, edition of 100, A.P. of 42

25 × 31 1/4 inches (63.5 × 79.4 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.1096



Alex Katz

*Allen Ginsberg*

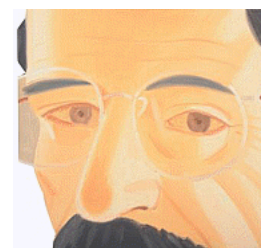
1985

Oil on aluminum, six parts

dimensions variable

Collection of the artist

X.2021.456



Alex Katz

*Study for Wet Evening*

1986

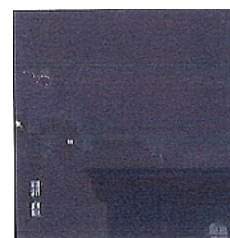
Oil on board

15 7/8 × 15 3/8 inches (40.3 × 39.1 cm)

frame: 16 15/16 × 16 7/16 × 1 5/8 inches (43 × 41.8 × 4.1 cm)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of the artist

X.2021.861



## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Ada's Black Sandals*

1987

Oil on linen

48 × 60 1/8 inches (121.9 × 152.7 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1995

X.2021.309



Alex Katz

*Samantha*

1987

Silkscreen

66 1/8 × 28 5/8 inches (168 × 72.7 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.130



Alex Katz

*Varick*

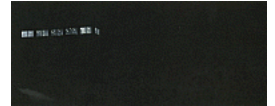
1988

Oil on linen

60 1/4 × 144 3/4 inches (153 × 365.8 cm)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of the American Contemporary Art Foundation, Inc. Leonard A. Lauder, President

X.2021.663



Alex Katz

*Rain*

1989

Oil on linen

54 1/2 × 72 5/8 inches (138.5 × 184.5 cm)

The Albertina Museum, Vienna, The Batliner Collection

X.2021.315



Alex Katz

*Muna*

1990

Oil on linen

40 × 130 inches (101.6 × 330.2 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.326



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz  
*Ada Ada*  
 1991  
 Oil on linen  
 59 7/8 × 120 1/2 inches (152.1 × 306 cm)  
 Private Collection  
 X.2021.616



Alex Katz  
*Lake Light*  
 1992  
 Oil on linen  
 66 1/4 × 78 1/4 inches (168.3 × 198.8 cm)  
 Sammlung Stiftung Kunst und Natur, Bad Heilbrunn, Germany  
 X.2021.324



Alex Katz  
*Francesco*  
 1992  
 Oil on aluminum  
 70 3/4 × 45 inches (179.7 × 114.3 cm)  
 The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of Michael A. Caddell and  
 Cynthia Chapman  
 X.2022.8



Alex Katz  
*Gold and Black 2*  
 1993  
 Oil on linen  
 80 × 166 inches (203.2 × 421.6 cm)  
 Courtesy Peter Blum Gallery, New York  
 X.2021.320



Alex Katz  
*Black Scarf*  
 1996  
 Oil on board  
 12 1/16 × 9 1/16 inches (30.6 × 23 cm)  
 frame: 12 15/16 × 9 15/16 × 1 11/16 inches (32.9 × 25.2 × 4.3 cm)  
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of the artist  
 X.2022.53



## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Cornice*

1997

Oil on linen

96 × 126 inches (243.8 × 320 cm)

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of the Alex Katz Foundation, 2011

X.2022.23



Alex Katz

*West 2*

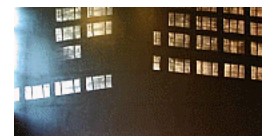
1998

Oil on linen

126 × 240 inches (320 × 609.6 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Promised gift of the artist

X.2021.584



Alex Katz

*Night Cityscape*

1998

Oil on board

12 × 9 inches (30.5 × 22.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.797



Alex Katz

*Study for Washington Square*

1998

Oil on board

9 × 11 7/8 inches (22.9 × 30.2 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.800



Alex Katz

*Piers 10*

1998

Oil on linen

60 × 84 inches (152.4 × 213.4 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.41



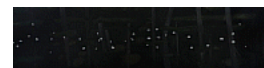
## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz  
*Piers 8*  
 1998  
 Oil on linen  
 60 × 84 inches (152.4 × 213.4 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2022.42



Alex Katz  
*Black Brook 16*  
 2001  
 Oil on linen  
 96 × 360 inches (243.8 × 914.4 cm)  
 The Albertina Museum, Vienna  
 X.2021.631



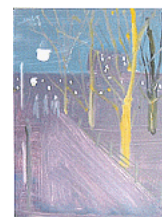
Alex Katz  
*Study for Trees and Windows*  
 2001  
 Oil on board  
 5 1/4 × 12 inches (13.3 × 30.5 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.872



Alex Katz  
*Mariko*  
 2004  
 Oil on linen  
 96 × 33 1/2 inches (243.8 × 85.1 cm)  
 Private collection  
 X.2021.340



Alex Katz  
*Study for Washington Square 4*  
 2007  
 Oil on board  
 12 × 9 inches (30.5 × 22.9 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.874



## Alex Katz: Gathering

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Ada*

2009

Oil on linen

60 × 84 inches (152.4 × 213.4 cm)

Private collection, Toronto

X.2021.345



Alex Katz

*Sharon and Vivien*

2009

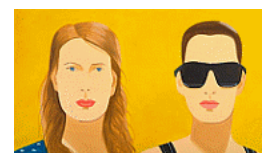
Oil on linen

84 × 144 inches (213.4 × 365.8 cm)

A.M.A., Agrupacion Mutual Aseguradora, Mutua de Seguros a Prima

Fija

X.2021.347



Alex Katz

*Study for Black Hat 1*

2009

Oil on board

12 × 16 inches (30.5 × 40.6 cm)

frame: 13 × 16 3/4 inches (33 × 42.5 cm)

Private Collection, Harrison, New York

X.2021.803



Alex Katz

*White Impatiens 1*

2012

Oil on linen

48 × 66 inches (121.9 × 167.6 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.602



Alex Katz

*Elizabeth*

2012

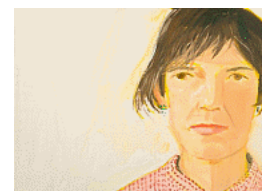
Oil on board

12 × 16 inches (30.5 × 40.6 cm)

frame: 13 × 17 inches (33 × 43.2 cm)

Kohler/Mah Collection

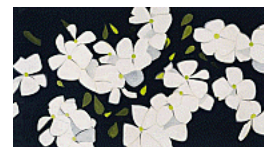
X.2022.28



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

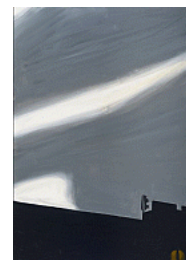
Alex Katz  
*Dogwood*  
 2013  
 Oil on linen  
 79 × 140 inches (200.7 × 355.6 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.603



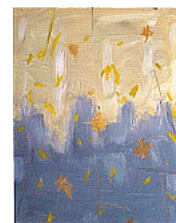
Alex Katz  
*Study for Harsh*  
 2013  
 Oil on board  
 12 × 16 inches (30.5 × 40.6 cm)  
 Collection of Young Hee Chung, Seoul  
 X.2021.806



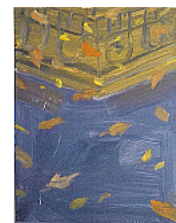
Alex Katz  
*Untitled Cityscape 4*  
 2014  
 Oil on linen  
 84 × 60 inches (213.4 × 152.4 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.667



Alex Katz  
*Study for Washington Square*  
 2014  
 Oil on board  
 12 × 9 inches (30.5 × 22.9 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.812



Alex Katz  
*Study for Washington Square*  
 2014  
 Oil on board  
 12 × 9 inches (30.5 × 22.9 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.815





## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Study for Washington Square*

2014

Oil on board

12 × 9 inches (30.5 × 22.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.819



Alex Katz

*Study for Washington Square*

2014

Oil on board

12 × 9 inches (30.5 × 22.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.820



Alex Katz

*Study for Washington Square*

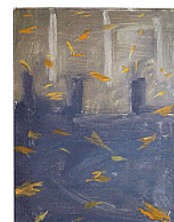
2014

Oil on board

12 × 9 inches (30.5 × 22.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.824



Alex Katz

*Snow Scene 2*

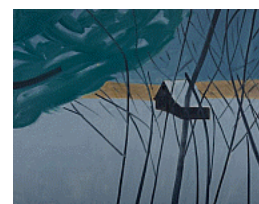
2014

Oil on linen

84 × 108 inches (213.4 × 274.3 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.37



Alex Katz

*Fog*

2015

Oil on linen

108 × 216 inches (274.3 × 548.6 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.700



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Departure (Ada)*

2016

Oil on linen

72 × 144 inches (182.9 × 365.8 cm)

Collection of Marguerite Steed Hoffman

X.2021.348



Alex Katz

*Bill 3*

2017

Oil on linen

96 × 96 inches (243.8 × 243.8 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.446



Alex Katz

*Golden Image*

2017

Oil on linen

144 × 108 inches (365.8 × 274.3 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.454



Alex Katz

*Field 1*

2017

Oil on linen

84 × 168 inches (213.4 × 426.7 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.624



Alex Katz

*Twilight 2*

2018

Oil on linen

96 × 216 inches (243.8 × 548.6 cm)

Private collection, courtesy Gladstone Gallery

X.2021.355



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Blue Night*

2018

Oil on linen

120 × 174 inches (304.8 × 442 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.368



Alex Katz

*Study for Field 1*

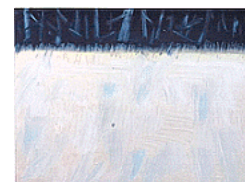
2018

Oil on board

9 × 12 inches (22.9 × 30.5 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.830



Alex Katz

*Study for Crosslight 3*

2018

Oil on board

12 × 9 inches (30.5 × 22.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.832



Alex Katz

*Study for Crosslight*

2018

Oil on board

12 × 9 inches (30.5 × 22.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.834



Alex Katz

*Vivien X 5*

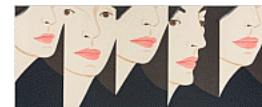
2018

Silkscreen, edition of 60, A.P. of 20

40 × 96 inches (101.6 × 243.8 cm)

Collection of the artist

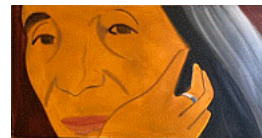
X.2022.84



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz  
*Ada Evening*  
 2019  
 Oil on linen  
 36 × 68 inches (91.4 × 172.7 cm)  
 Private collection  
 X.2021.349



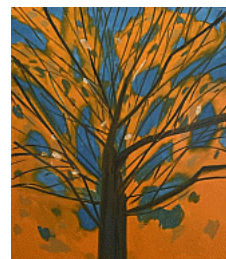
Alex Katz  
*Crosslight*  
 2019  
 Oil on linen  
 126 × 96 inches (320 × 243.8 cm)  
 Dallas Museum of Art, TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art Fund  
 X.2021.353



Alex Katz  
*Sunrise*  
 2019  
 Oil on linen  
 126 × 96 inches (320 × 243.8 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.356



Alex Katz  
*Tree*  
 2019  
 Oil on linen  
 96 × 84 inches (243.8 × 213.4 cm)  
 Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Chang K. Choi  
 X.2021.626



Alex Katz  
*Study for Sunrise 3*  
 2019  
 Oil on board  
 16 × 12 inches (40.6 × 30.5 cm)  
 Collection of the artist  
 X.2021.808



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Study for White House 3*

2019

Oil on board

9 × 12 inches (22.9 × 30.5 cm)

frame: 9 7/8 inches × 12 7/8 inches × 1 inches (25.1 × 32.7 × 2.5 cm)

Collection of Jeffrey Seller and Josh Lehrer

X.2021.1044



Alex Katz

*Grey Landscape*

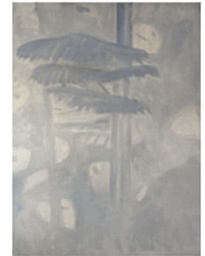
2019

Oil on linen

144 × 108 inches (365.8 × 274.3 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.133



Alex Katz

*Twilight Trees Study 2*

2019

Oil on board

16 × 12 inches (40.6 × 30.5 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.294



Alex Katz

*Blue Tree 2*

2020

Oil on linen

96 × 72 inches (243.8 × 182.9 cm)

Collection of Benan and Thomas Ellis

X.2021.358



Alex Katz

*White Reflection*

2020

Oil on linen

96 × 120 inches (243.8 × 304.8 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.362



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Joan 2*

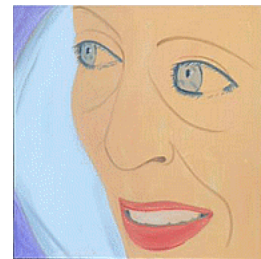
2020

Oil on linen

48 × 48 inches (121.9 × 121.9 cm)

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 2021

X.2021.364



Alex Katz

*Yellow Tree 1*

2020

Oil on linen

72 × 72 inches (182.9 × 182.9 cm)

Private collection, Republic of Korea

X.2021.445



Alex Katz

*Study for Moon*

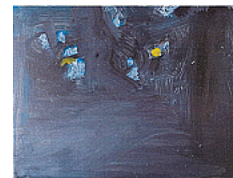
2020

Oil on board

9 × 12 inches (22.9 × 30.5 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.809



Alex Katz

*Ada's Back 2*

2021

Oil on linen

84 × 60 inches (213.4 × 152.4 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.567



Alex Katz

*Isaac (Blue)*

2021

Oil on linen

72 × 48 inches (182.9 × 121.9 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.678



## **Alex Katz: Gathering**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, October 21, 2022 – Monday, February 20, 2023)

Alex Katz

*Ocean 9*

2022

Oil on linen

108 × 12 feet (274.3 × 365.8 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2022.295



154 artworks



Across eight decades of intense artistic production, Alex Katz (b. 1927, Brooklyn, New York) has sought to capture visual experience in the present tense. “Eternity exists in minutes of absolute awareness,” Katz stated in 1961. “Painting, when successful, seems to be a synthetic reflection of this condition.” Whether evoking a glancing exchange between friends or a shaft of light filtered through trees, he has explored the capacity of the medium to distill what he terms “quick things passing.”

Katz established himself as an artist in mid-century New York, at a time when the emotive abstract canvases of painters such as Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko had placed the city at the center of the avant-garde. Katz, however, rejected the introspection of Abstract Expressionism in favor of rendering the perceptual encounters with people and places that structure daily life. Working within the traditional genres of portraiture, landscape, and still life, he forged an utterly contemporary approach to figuration that merged the experimental energy of abstract painting with an American vernacular shaped by Hollywood movies, billboard ads, and fashion magazines.

Poetry has been a generative source for Katz throughout his life. This exhibition draws its title from the 1951 poem “Salute” by his friend James Schuyler, which recalls the desire to gather a handful of meadow flowers before they wilt, grasping the visible world in a moment of rapt attention before it slips away. This retrospective is also a gathering of sorts, not only of a body of work produced over the course of a long and still highly active career, but also of the family members, friends, and collaborators who have served as the artist’s subjects and creative community. Extending from 1946 to 2022, the largely chronological installation traces the unfolding of a lifetime devoted to the possibilities of painting as a means of seeing the world anew.

*Alex Katz: Gathering* is organized by Katherine Brinson, Daskalopoulos Curator, Contemporary Art, with Terra Warren, Curatorial Assistant, and with additional support from Andrea Zambrano, Curatorial Assistant.

Learn about Alex Katz and his work through interviews with his friends, family, and those inspired by his work, on the Guggenheim Digital Guide, available for free on the Bloomberg Connects app. Content about this exhibition is available in English, Español, and 普通话.

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#AlexKatzGathering

Alex Katz was born in Brooklyn in 1927 and raised in St. Albans—a suburb of Queens that was home to a diverse population of largely immigrant workers. His parents encouraged their elder son's interest in art and poetry from a young age. After a stint serving in the navy in his late teens, Katz enrolled at the Cooper Union school in downtown Manhattan, where he received a rigorous training in fine and applied arts. He embarked on an equally formative self-education through a voracious practice of drawing his immediate surroundings. For the duration of his studies, between 1946 and 1949, he kept a spiral-bound notebook constantly at hand in which to scribble down what he called “compositions of people” in the city's parks, restaurants, and other public places.

Katz found a favorite observational subject on his daily commute from St. Albans to his school in the East Village. Just as it does today, the subway brought together a broad cross-section of society, and he was fascinated by the theater of the transient crowd. The animated sketches he created during his rides inspired the 1948 painting *Three Figures on a Subway*, shown here, in which the benches, poles, and advertisements of the car are transmuted into geometric planes of color, prefiguring an emblematic aspect of the artist's mature style.



As a teenager, Katz had a summer job working as a night watchman for the Long Island Railroad in Jamaica Bay, Queens. During his dawn vigils, he became captivated by the effect of light on the water. “The most spectacular event was daybreak,” he recalls, “when sludgy Jamaica Bay turned into Viennese porcelain with dark blues, reds, and yellows. Every morning was a different event. I remember looking at the light hitting oil-soaked water at night and thinking it was impossible to paint the water’s motion and light.” Ever since, Katz has been driven by the desire to collapse the distance between sensory experience and its visual record, and, in particular, by the “impossible” pursuit of harnessing light within a painting.

The works in this gallery evoke the two places where the artist has lived his entire adult life: New York City and coastal Maine. Depicting sunset, twilight, and nighttime, they take light—and its absence—as their central subject. Loosely based on small oil sketches made while immersed in the atmospheric conditions of a specific time and place, these paintings radiate from an instant of heightened perception—the state of “absolute awareness” that the artist prizes. Katz has in turn attributed the origins of these sketches to “an idea of the landscape, a conception,” which he searches for in his environment. He has also described how the memory of a sensation informs his process as much as his preparatory studies do. These different temporalities are layered into the final work, summoning a vision that was sought, a moment that has passed, and an image that is now suspended forever on the painted surface.

In 1949 and 1950, Katz was awarded scholarships to spend his summers at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. During these residencies, he was encouraged to paint the lush, wooded landscape from life, rather than working from sets of careful drawings as he had been taught at Cooper Union. Making rapid, improvisatory oil sketches in the open air engendered an obsession with capturing the vitality of the natural world, which Katz most commonly formulates as the embodied perception of natural light.

After the revelation that he wanted to paint what he called “empirical sensations,” Katz returned to New York City and plunged into the downtown artistic community at a time when radical contemporary practice was synonymous with Abstract Expressionism. Despite his deeply held—and distinctly unfashionable—commitment to pursuing figurative painting, he absorbed profound lessons from the abstract work of his peers and was determined to transpose the same ambition and intensity into a representational practice.

In the second half of the 1950s, Katz embraced portraiture as his primary focus, infusing a genre considered minor by the critical establishment of the time with a new formal dynamism. He painted his immediate social circle: the constellation of artists, poets, and dancers who had made their homes and studios in the industrial lofts of downtown New York City and were forging what would become one of the most mythologized creative scenes of the twentieth century. In 1957, Katz met his most significant sitter: the accomplished research biologist Ada Del Moro, who has been the subject of over a thousand of his works in different mediums during their sixty-five years of marriage to date.

Although Katz rendered his subjects in this period with spirited brushwork and a tender immediacy, he was more interested in how they outwardly presented themselves at a specific moment than in psychological excavation: “Because that is what I want to paint, not who the person is or what they mean to me, just how they appear.” He began to suspend his figures in white negative space or monochrome color, at times depicting them within geometric shapes or multiplied within a single composition. These are works that foreground the materiality of their painted surface rather than aspiring to an illusionistic realism, introducing an ongoing tension in Katz’s practice between the inevitable emotional resonances of his human subjects and their function as compositional elements.

Ramp 2 freight wall



In 1961, Katz wrote about his desire to make a “brand-new and terrific” style for painting that would merge the traditions embedded in the medium with a “magical state” of newness. Katz’s portraits of the 1960s pair the powerful formal strategies of abstract painting with an equally electrifying visual language of mass culture, immersing the viewer in a burst of optical intensity. “People see my paintings with eyes trained by seeing movies and photographs in magazines,” Katz has stated. “A painting reflects the time of its making.”

During this period, Katz’s subjects become larger than life in both scale and visual glamour, their faces smoothed into flat planes of color and often abruptly cropped. Mimicking the way attention is unevenly focused in the flux of an interpersonal encounter, or amplified by the zoom of a camera, these works rigorously edit their compositions to focus on an expression, a gesture, or a sartorial flourish.

Ramp 3 freight wall:

Katz has never seen a need to separate the stuff of everyday life from the realm of art, and in the 1970s and early 1980s, he devoted himself to a series of domestic and social scenes. This focus on his immediate surroundings aligns with the unpretentious, conversational tone and quotidian subject matter championed by the poets of the New York School, many of whom are represented in the exhibition. In this period, the artist largely returned his figures to a recognizable spatial context. The works depict friends and family in relationship to each other, in their homes or in vividly realized natural settings, although they characteristically display a frieze-like quality in which individual sitters retain a sense of isolation within the group. While these paintings might convey a convivial effervescence or an expectant tension, Katz is more interested in their effect as arresting images than as events in a narrative. As he explains, “I developed an attitude that a painting could deal with specific information about the external world, and that it, in itself, could be the subject matter rather than a social or philosophical illustration.”

Ramp 4 freight wall:



Never part of a movement or wider artistic style, Katz's work has swung in and out of critical favor over the decades. Looking back on his career, he identifies a watershed in his 1986 survey exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, which took place as he was about to turn sixty. At this point, rather than comfortably continue in the mode of figuration that had finally brought him wide public recognition, he pledged to pivot toward "a place in art that was unstable and terrifying." From the late 1980s through the subsequent two decades, he found this experimental dynamic in images of unpeopled landscapes, which became a new focus in his practice.

These works reduce the unruliness of nature and the city to a piercing formal lucidity, wherein light becomes an overt compositional presence. Paradoxically, this stylization of the environment mimics a naturalistic sense of the way we receive and interpret the world from moment to moment. "When you first see something, it's like a blast, and things don't focus," Katz explains. "You want to get that initial blast, that's what it's about. There is no realistic painting, to me, that can do the whole thing; if you get the light you can't get all the details, if you get the details you don't get the light. Realism is a variable."

Ramp 5 freight wall:

Within the past decade, Katz has created a series of landscapes that unravel the refined visual economy of his earlier work in the genre. In these immersive paintings, he evokes an almost rapturous absorption in the union of light and nature. Rendered in loose, unbound gestures, the compositions at times approach full abstraction, importing the improvisatory tenor of the artist's small oil sketches to his large-scale canvases. In parallel, Katz's recent portraits have attained an increased emotional clarity and sense of formal invention, as they conjure the faces of loved ones and admired acquaintances in close crops or plural versions, with just a handful of assured brushstrokes.

Katz's style is often associated with the use of bright color and crisply delineated forms. However, the works in this gallery, which date from the past two decades, largely disregard chromatic effect. Instead, they favor an orchestration of light and darkness achieved through nuanced painterly gestures that have been honed over a lifetime of daily practice. Drawn from the artist's here and now—from summer days watching the light change in a patch of rural Maine, or time spent with Ada in a simple studio space that is also their home—these redolent images attempt to elicit what is both revealed and obscured as the present quickly passes. They exemplify a tendency in Katz's recent work to evoke an optical experience so visceral that it barely retains a representational form. "Now in some of the things I paint, I leave out the thing and just paint the sensation," Katz recently commented. "The now."

*Blue Umbrella 2*, 1972

Oil on linen

Private collection, New York

In *Blue Umbrella 2*, Alex Katz depicts Ada Katz, his wife and most iconic subject. Over the course of a collaboration between artist and sitter that stretches from the late 1950s to today, Katz has portrayed Ada in countless guises, from radiant ingénue to preoccupied young mother to reflective nonagenarian. In this painting, she assumes the remote glamour of a mid-century film star. Protectively encircled by both the umbrella and a silk headscarf, as rain spills around her in stylized tear-drop forms, she projects a riveting charisma yet retains an inscrutable reserve. Rendered in Katz's luminous style of "wet-on-wet" painting, in which different colors are applied in a single session while the canvas remains wet, the work conjures the intensity of the cinematic close-up while calling attention to a composition of bravura brushwork.



*Ella Marion in Red Sweater*, 1946

Oil and ink on linen

Collection of the artist

Works on loan from the artist's collection are courtesy Gladstone Gallery and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London/Paris/Salzburg/Seoul.

This tender portrait depicts the artist's mother, Sima Katz, who was born to a Jewish family in an area of present-day Poland that was then part of Russia. Sima studied acting in Odessa before immigrating to New York City in 1918. There, she became a star of the Yiddish theater on the Lower East Side, assuming the stage name Ella Marion. Though she gave up performing when she settled down with fellow Russian émigré Isaac Katz and had two sons, she continued to nurture a creative temperament, teaching herself English through her study of poetry and painting the walls of the family's unassuming home in shades of violet, rose, and yellow. This painting with delicate ink overdrawing was made just after Sima had returned from working as a translator in Europe in the aftermath of World War II. Already in this early work, Katz surrounds his subject in flattened expanses of color, infusing an everyday scene—his mother nursing a cup of coffee at the kitchen table—with a new visual magnetism.

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Learn more about this portrait from curator Katherine Brinson, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*Golden Image*, 2017

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

Over the past few decades, Katz has begun to work at a scale that allows for an environmental immersion in his paintings. Again and again, he has rendered the towering pine groves that surround the small cottage in Maine where he has lived during every summer since 1954. In this enveloping work, the setting sun suffuses the wooded landscape with golden light, to the point where the image is almost subsumed into a wash of pure color. *Golden Image* is an exception to Katz's projection of a present-tense immediacy in his paintings. "I never did anything like it," he has said of this work. "It was sunset in Maine. I usually paint the sensation of what I'm seeing. Here, I'm actually painting the analysis of it, all memory."

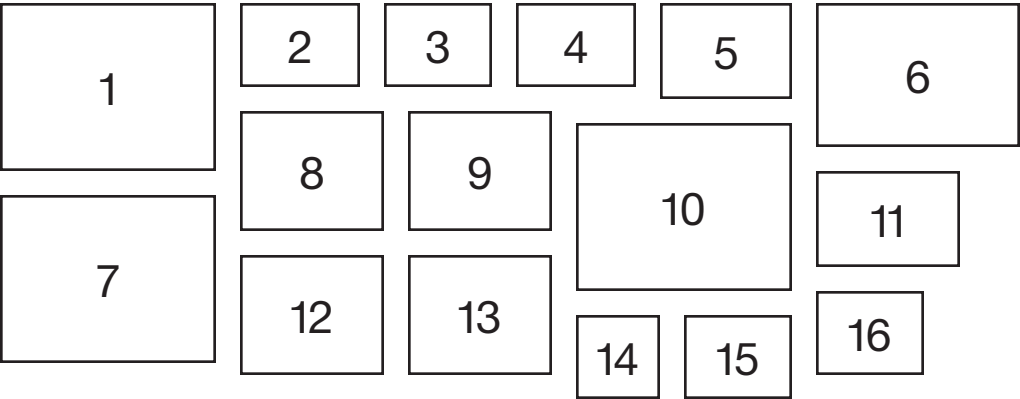


*West 2*, 1998

Oil on linen

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine,  
Promised gift of the artist

In the late 1980s, Katz began to paint the city at night—most commonly the view from the west-facing windows of the fifth-floor loft in Soho where he has lived since 1968. In *West 2*, an uninflected black void is interrupted by a sequence of brusque strokes of white paint. From a distance the work telegraphs a scene of office windows lit by mournful fluorescent strips, while on closer viewing it dissolves into an abstract composition of marks on a monochrome surface. Noting the coexistence of an instantaneous illusion with an invitation to consider the work as a painted object, Katz's close friend, the critic and poet Edwin Denby, once described his work as being "extremely real. Not real at all."



1 *Greenwood Lake, New Jersey*, 1960  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of the International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, New York

2 *Two Figures*, 1955  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of the artist, promised gift to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

3 *Three People*, 1957  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of the artist

4 *Two Figures at Lincolnville Beach*, 1956–57  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of the artist

5 *Untitled*, 1958  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of John and Lyn Fischbach

6 *House with Two Cows*, 1958  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of the artist

7 *Twilight*, 1960  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of the International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, New York

8 *Untitled (At the Seashore)*, 1958  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of the artist, promised gift to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

9 *Untitled*, ca. 1955  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of the artist, promised gift to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

10 *Edwin and Ada on a Beach*, ca. 1959  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Courtesy Peter Blum Gallery, New York

11 *Sea, Land, Sky*, 1959  
Colored paper collage  
Collection of the artist

12 *Seascape (Green Shore)*, 1958  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of John and Lyn Fischbach

13 *Untitled*, 1958  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of John and Lyn Fischbach

14 *Picnic at the Beach*, 1960  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, Gift of the artist, 1996

15 *Roadmaster*, 1955–56  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of the artist, promised gift to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

16 *Landscape with Car*, 1955  
Watercolor and colored paper collage  
Collection of the artist

Throughout the second half of the 1950s, Katz worked steadily on a series of small collages that he created by cutting forms from hand-colored paper with a razor. Ranging from austere arrangements of three strips that evoke the land, sea, and sky to exquisitely detailed renderings of lively picnics, these collages largely evoke the register of a carefree pastoral interlude. Despite their diminutive scale, they at times improbably summon the sublime vistas of the American landscape tradition, as fields and oceans stretch toward a distant horizon. Katz recalls that the collages marked “the first time I knew I was making art,” and in their inherent embrace of flatness and clean lines, they forged a critical bridge to the precise delineation of form that would define his style in the coming decades.

*Untitled*, 1951

Oil on board

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York,  
Gift of the artist

Katz has repeatedly singled out Jackson Pollock as exemplary of the radical openness—what he termed the “sensation, energy and light”—that he coveted as a young artist. Pollock said in 1951, “My paintings do not have a center but depend on the same amount of interest throughout,” an idea that was particularly influential in Katz’s development of an “allover” approach to composition in the early 1950s. Here, Katz takes an urban crowd and reduces the figures to rhythmic marks in a pictorial field without a traditional focal point. As is typical of the artist’s work in this period, the faces of the figures are left blank. This anonymity emphasizes their role as compositional elements rather than as individuals, in an early attempt to remove a sense of narrative from his paintings.


*Lake Time*, 1955

Oil on board

Milwaukee Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 1993

In the mid-1950s, Katz began a series of loosely sketched landscapes, influenced in part by the semi-abstracted forms and distinctive palette of the modern American painter Milton Avery.

An early example of Katz's attraction to depicting scenes of social leisure, *Lake Time* renders a languid afternoon in the town of Lakewood, close to the Skowhegan residency program where Katz first fell in love with the rich light of coastal Maine. The landscape is drenched in rosy hues, which Katz achieved by mixing red pigment directly into the ground with which he prepared his canvases, endowing the tableau with the soft radiance of a dream or a memory.

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Learn more about Katz's transformative time in Maine from curator Katherine Brinson, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*Track Jacket*, 1956

Oil on board

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine,  
Gift of the artist, 1995

This roughly sketched work, with underdrawing vibrating at the edges of the figure, is a self-portrait. The title, however, calls the viewer's attention to an emblematic item of clothing rather than the identity of the sitter, in an early reflection of Katz's abiding interest in the power of fashion to shape a perceptual encounter. Here he depicts himself not in the traditional guise of the tortured or cultivated artist but rather as what he terms "a social image" of a young man decked out in the new genre of casual sportswear as a style statement.

*Ada in Black Sweater, 1957*

Oil on board

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine,  
Gift of the artist, 1995

Katz met Ada Del Moro at a party in late 1957, and three months later, they were married. Born in 1928 in the Bronx to first-generation Italian immigrants, Ada received her master's degree in biology from New York University in 1955, followed by a Fulbright scholarship to the University of Milan. Upon her return, she began working at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York as one of the only female scientists conducting laboratory research. After setting aside her academic work to devote herself to raising a child, she became an active participant in the lively interdisciplinary cultural scene of downtown New York, and in 1979 co-founded the Eye and Ear Theater, which encouraged collaboration between poets and artists.

Here, in one of the earliest of Katz's myriad portraits of her, Ada is rendered with thickly applied brushstrokes, in a cross-armed pose that is serene but protective. Katz's intimate connection with Ada paradoxically allowed him the freedom to untether her image from personal biography. The artist has said that at this time he was attempting to paint his immediate reality while maintaining a detached sense of formal experimentation. Ada's collaboration allowed for a breakthrough. "I wanted my painting to be more concrete," Katz recalls, "so I tried to paint a likeness of someone I was involved with . . . it could be a certain person and a generalized woman."



*Rudy and Edith*, 1957

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

*Rudy and Edith* depicts Rudy Burckhardt and Edith Schloss, prominent members of a bohemian artistic circle in New York City, who were married at the time. The German-born artist and writer Schloss showed her work at a number of influential cooperative spaces—including the artist-run Tanager Gallery, where Katz also staged important early exhibitions—and was one of the foremost chroniclers of the creative milieu she christened “the loft generation.” Katz’s friendship with Burckhardt was one of the most significant of his life. The Swiss filmmaker and photographer exerted a profound influence on Katz’s creative trajectory and was a frequent sitter over many decades. With its assertive brushwork and the insistently shallow frontal perspective, this work indicates a new mode of figuration for Katz.

*Lois*, 1957

Oil on board

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía,  
Madrid, Donated by Marlborough Gallery,  
New York, 1997

Katz met his lifelong friend, the artist Lois Dodd, when they attended Cooper Union together in the 1940s. In the subsequent decade, Dodd co-founded the Tanager Gallery on East 10th Street in Manhattan, where she and Katz would hold a joint show of their work in 1953. The two painters share a number of artistic concerns, including their exploration of light, their attention to nature and the mundane, and their depictions of Maine's Penobscot Bay.

Dodd exposed Katz to the work of American Civil War photographer Mathew B. Brady, whose richly dimensional images captured through early photography's long exposure rates aligned with Katz's desire to distill an instant within a durational process. In this striking painting, details are elided in favor of simplified passages of rich color that nonetheless communicate a vivid sense of Dodd's charismatic presence.

*Irving and Lucy*, 1958

Oil on linen

Courtesy Lucy Freeman Sandler

This painting commemorates the marriage between two of Katz's friends, the art historian Lucy Freeman and the critic Irving Sandler, who would become a keenly insightful commentator on the artist's work. Posed in a creamy monochromatic ground that removes any indicator of space or scale, the young couple are anchored only by each other. In the mid-1950s, inspired in part by his work with paper collages, Katz had developed what would be a lifelong technique of placing his subjects within a monochromatic field, allowing the paint itself to act as the sitters' atmosphere.

*4 PM*, 1959

Oil on linen

Private collection

In *4 PM*, light floods the artist's living space, creating a delicate arrangement of golds, creams, beiges, and yellows. Katz's paintings often distill an atmospheric event in a daily or seasonal cycle, the temporal specificity of their titles reflecting the artist's aspiration to conjure an alchemy of time and place. The notion of a specific moment in time enshrined within a painting is caught up with the artist's central creative ambition to communicate such a palpable sense of immediacy in his work that it paradoxically achieves a timelessness.

*Eli at Ducktrap*, 1958

Oil on linen

Mugrabi Collection

Architect and teacher Eli King, who is the son of artist Lois Dodd, grew up spending summers in Maine with the Katz family. Here, he is shown standing in the rigid frontal stance of ancient Greek kouros sculptures, diminutive against an expanse of ocean. While nominally a landscape, this composition of stacked hues rendered in textural brushwork recalls the abstract canvases of Color Field painters such as Marc Rothko and Barnett Newman.

*Frank O'Hara, 1959–60*

Oil on wood panel

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine,  
Gift of the Alex Katz Foundation, 2016

The visionary poet, critic, and curator Frank O'Hara was a unifying force of friendship and creativity at the center of the poets and artists who made up the so-called New York School in the 1950s and '60s. "I prefer Frank [to other poets], because of the emotional extension," Katz has stated. "There's nothing contained. I could never do that. I don't have the courage to do what Frank did. He's the poet of my time."

One of the artist's earliest "cutouts," this portrait of O'Hara marks a watershed in Katz's practice. In 1959, unsatisfied with the way that a figure in a painting was interacting with its background, Katz cut it from the canvas and fastened it to a section of wood, which he then shaped to the contours of the painted form. In these cutouts, pictorial space is stripped away and replaced by the direct environment. As the viewer circles the work, it transforms from a two-dimensional representation to a sculptural object, creating a novel relationship between the body and the painted image.

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Learn more about Katz's cutout works from curator David Horowitz, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*Ada Ada*, 1959

Oil on linen

Grey Art Gallery, New York University Art Collection,  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Golden, 1963

Studied across the arc of both her individual life and the artist's creative development, Ada's image is a constant echo through Katz's body of work. In this 1959 canvas, with its palindromic title, she is doubled within the picture plane itself. This marks the earliest example of what the critic Edwin Denby referred to as Katz's "reduplicative" works, in which multiple versions of the same sitter coexist simultaneously. Katz recalls setting out to make a painting that was "non-psychological," with the doubling intended to undercut the sense of a narrative event or a revelation of personality. But, to his surprise, "the thing ended up being a psychological thriller." In contrast to the serial imagery developed by Pop artists such as Andy Warhol in the subsequent decade, each likeness in *Ada Ada* was painted from life and is therefore subtly unique. As the viewer's gaze tracks back and forth between the figures, the subject and the composition become unstable and irreducible, evoking a plural identity that is both abundantly available to the viewer and ultimately unknowable.



*Paul Taylor, 1959*

Oil on linen

Udo and Anette Brandhorst Collection

Paul Taylor was an influential choreographer and dancer, whose notable collaborators included Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, and George Balanchine. Taylor founded his own company in 1955, and five years later began what would become a decades-long, intensely generative partnership with Katz on sets and costumes for some of his most innovative stage works. Katz has described how “his choreography was one of the most surprising things I had seen as an artist. Paul’s dancing seemed to be a real break from that of the previous generation: no expression, no content, no form . . . with great technique and intelligence.”

In this canvas, Katz portrays Taylor not in the midst of kinetic movement, but at rest against a featureless background. His pose is derived from the eighteenth-century painter Jean-Antoine Watteau’s work *Pierrot*. The 1718–19 work depicts the mournful clown of the commedia dell’arte tradition, who was known for communicating primarily through an expressive physicality rather than words. Like Pierrot, Taylor is dressed all in white and stands impassively, hands by his side with his feet slightly splayed, an absorbing presence in his static solitude.

*Double Portrait of Robert Rauschenberg, 1959*

Oil on linen

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine,  
Museum purchase made possible by the Alex  
Katz Foundation, Peter and Paula Lunder through  
the Lunder Foundation, Michael Gordon '66,  
Barbara and Theodore Alfond through the Acorn  
Foundation, and the Jere Abbott Acquisitions  
Fund, 2016

In 1959, Katz proposed a joint portrait of the artists Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg—who were romantic partners at the time—that would mimic the facing male heads depicted on the packaging for the Smith Brothers brand of cough drops. When Johns declined to sit, Katz reconceived the work as a mirrored double of Rauschenberg. In doing so, he invoked his peer's own use of doubling as a conceptual act, most pointedly in the paintings *Factum I* and *Factum II* (both 1957). In these two almost indistinguishable works, both of which feature a double portrait of President Eisenhower, Rauschenberg duplicated his painterly gestures, puncturing the supposed authenticity of spontaneous mark-making.

*The Black Dress*, 1960

Oil on linen

Udo and Anette Brandhorst Collection

Writing about Katz's work, Frank O'Hara identified Ada's complex role in her husband's iconography: "The heads and figures of his wife Ada give this beautiful woman, through his interest in schema, a role as abstract as that of Helen of Troy; she is a presence and at the same time a pictorial conceit of style." *The Black Dress* presents a social gathering of a single individual. Dressed in an impeccable black cocktail dress that is a marker of urbane sophistication, Ada is multiplied six times across the canvas. In one of her poses, she gazes at a 1959 portrait by Katz of the poet James Schuyler, which is itself doubled in its reproduction within this new painting. Unlike the deconstructions of Cubism, in which a static object is represented through multiple viewpoints, Ada assumes varied poses, as if different moments are being captured simultaneously. *The Black Dress* foregrounds Ada's performative agency within her husband's artistic practice. "Ada has always been fascinated by cinematic gestures," Katz has said with regards to this painting. "All of these gestures are Ada's decisions, not mine."

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Learn more about *The Black Dress* from curator Katherine Brinson, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*Luna Park, 1960*

Oil on board

The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of the artist

Katz painted very few landscapes during the 1960s and '70s. This small rendering of the shoreline at night is an exception, as well as an early example of the artist's exploration of the theme of light on water that would burgeon in his later work. It depicts two spindly trees on the water's edge, through which a full moon beams its elongated reflection onto the ocean. In line with Katz's adherence to flatness, the lunar shimmer is reduced to a brusque strip of white against a dark ground, yet is still effortlessly resolved by the eye as the familiar, transporting experience of regarding light on dynamic liquid.

## *The Red Smile*, 1963

Oil on linen

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York,  
Purchase, with funds from the Painting and  
Sculpture Committee

In the 1960s, Katz began playing with exaggerated scale in his work, simultaneously distilling and amplifying his subjects. This was inspired in part by his fascination with the visual strategies used in advertising billboards: “I love the scale of billboards, the romance of billboards, and the bluntness of them,” he declared in 1963. In this painting of the same year, Ada’s profile is rendered against an insistently flat field of bright red. Her dazzling smile demands our attention as her face fills the frame, drawing the public language of commercial seduction into the courtly and domestic tradition of portraiture. Katz’s work of this period has often been discussed in relationship to the glossy uniformity and mass-media imagery of Pop art, but even as he absorbed the language of popular culture, he retained a fierce devotion to the painterly rendition of the world as he saw it, rather than as it was mediated by existing images. “My paintings are inspired by mechanical pictures,” he has stated. “They determine the way we look at the world. But my paintings are also in opposition to mechanical pictures.”

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Learn more about how pop culture of the 1960s influenced Katz’s practice from curator Katherine Brinson, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*October 2, 1962*

Oil on linen

Courtesy Peter Blum Gallery, New York

The mundane scene shown in *October 2*—a rumpled single bed in front of a window in the artist's home—becomes the premise for a composition of intersecting gray planes and a painterly analysis of the way soft morning light suffuses a space. For a year spanning 1962 to 1963, Katz painted the shifting light and weather viewed from his windows in the city and the country, each titled after the day's date.

*Passing*, 1962–63

Oil on linen

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift  
of the Louis and Bessie Adler Foundation, Inc.,  
Seymour M. Klein, President, 1978

In this self-portrait, Katz coolly returns the viewer's gaze, dressed in a trilby and sharply tailored suit. The early 1960s was a time of accelerated cultural change, and having been raised by immigrants attempting to assimilate to U.S. culture, Katz had long been interested in the instability of identity. The work's title might evoke a brief exchange of looks with a stranger in the urban crowd, or hold a more freighted meaning around an act of social mobility, as the artist performs the role of bourgeois respectability.



*Kynaston*, 1963

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

Kynaston McShine was an eminent curator of twentieth-century art, who did much to shape the collection and program at the Museum of Modern Art during his tenure there between 1968 and 2008. In this portrait, Katz uses decisive brushwork to render a young McShine bathed in raking light. The sitter's pose of pensive contemplation evokes Albrecht Dürer's famous engraving *Melancholia I* (1514), which depicts a personification of melancholy, the humor that was linked to creative genius in Renaissance thought.

 308  525

Learn more about Katz's documentation of New York City's creative community from Guggenheim Director Richard Armstrong, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*Paul Taylor Dance Company, 1963–64*

Oil on linen

Udo and Anette Brandhorst Collection

This work documents the 1963 performance *Scudorama* by the Paul Taylor Dance Company. Taylor intended the dance to have a bleak, disordered quality, and Katz reflected this by designing sets and costumes that were, in his words, “very unpleasant, with garish colors.” In the painting, eight figures contort their bodies against a void of deep purple, depicted in the midst of movement yet strangely arrested in their statuesque poses. Taylor and Katz engaged in a productive creative dialogue for many decades, resulting in sixteen collaborative works. This immersion in choreographic movement became a notable influence on the orchestration of grouped figures in Katz’s painting practice.

 309  526

Learn more about Katz’s dance paintings from artistic director Michael Novak, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*LeRoi Jones*, 1963

Oil on linen

Collection of Sheldon and Carol Appel

This work portrays Amiri Baraka (then known as LeRoi Jones)—a poet, critic, playwright, and political activist of sweeping influence, and a leading figure in the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and '70s. At the time of this portrait, he was closely involved with the downtown circle of Frank O'Hara, who introduced him to Katz. This work is painted with lively strokes that recall the muted colors and animated paint application that characterized Katz's portraits of the late 1950s.

*Joe Brainard*, 1966  
Oil on aluminum  
Collection of the artist

*Joe 1*, 1966  
Oil on aluminum  
Abrams Family Collection

Joe Brainard was a visual artist, writer, and integral member of the second generation of New York School poets, which included such figures as Ron Padgett, Anne Waldman, and Ted Berrigan. In a practice that ranged exuberantly across mediums, Brainard forged an influential body of work that found revelation in the ordinary. In *Joe Brainard*, the reduced scale of the figure makes it appear distant regardless of proximity, while cropping on each side suggests a glimpse through an invisible doorway. In a related tabletop cutout featuring six versions of Brainard's face, the likeness is multiplied into varied sizes and angles, conveying a sense of the sitter's dynamism.

## *The Cocktail Party*, 1965

Oil on linen

Private collection

In the mid-1960s, Katz's wish to paint the reality of modern life led him to create a series of social scenes. He was fascinated by what he called "the gestures of the time" through which members of a group deliberately or instinctively shape their interactions. To create *The Cocktail Party*, the Katzes invited friends—including Frank Lima, Sheyla Baykal, Yvonne Jacquette, Joe Fiore, Donald Droll, Bill Berkson, Al Held, Rudy Burckhardt, and Edwin Denby—to their loft near Madison Square Park for a party, during which the artist produced drawings. He then cut up and reorganized them into the composition seen here. The smooth hair, thick-rimmed glasses, clinking cocktails, and suavely dangled cigarettes signal a fashionable gathering, played out against a heightened tableau of Manhattan's neon signs and towering apartment buildings.

*Blue Flag 4*, 1967

Oil on linen

Private collection

Flowers have long played a role in the still-life tradition as symbols of both beauty and mortality, giving them a special resonance within Katz's exploration of the ephemeral moment. When Katz turned his attention to a series of flower paintings in the mid-1960s, he extracted his floral subjects from any suggestion of a landscape or domestic scene. Instead, he depicted them in feverish close-ups, filling the viewer's field of vision with forms that are unfamiliar and at times almost abstract. Rendered at a monumental scale, Katz's flowers are endowed with a dazzling formal agency that is every bit as assertive as that of his portrait subjects.

*Study for Yvonne*, 1965

Oil on board

Collection of the artist

*Yvonne*, 1965

Oil on linen

Private collection

In the 1960s, Katz perfected a “wet-on-wet” technique wherein expanses of paint are swiftly applied without waiting for individual layers to dry, meaning the work must be completed within a single session. To enable this mode of execution at a large scale while maintaining the visceral sensation of an encounter in the world, the artist developed a layered process by which an originating oil sketch is refined through drawings and scale cartoons before the act of painting the final canvas. This oil sketch depicts Yvonne Jacquette, an artist known for her intricate paintings of New York City from aerial or panoramic perspectives, who married Katz’s close friend Rudy Burckhardt in 1964. The intimate spontaneity of this preparatory sketch, which captures Jacquette bundled into a fur hood on a wintry day, presents a distinct contrast to the larger finished work of the same subject. The thick, impressionistic brushstrokes of the study are converted to a smooth refinement, with Jacquette assuming the poise of a fashion model or movie actress. The element that unifies these varied registers is the abundant light, which imparts a radiant vitality to the figure in both works.



*Ada with Mirror*, 1969

Oil on linen

Collection of Masamitsu Ono

*Ada with Nose*, 1969–70

Oil on aluminum

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York,  
Gift of The American Contemporary Art  
Foundation, Inc., Leonard A. Lauder, President

In both works displayed here, Ada Katz, who has so frequently been the subject of the artist's scrutiny, regards herself. *Ada with Mirror* presents a contemporary update to the art-historical tradition of depicting Venus with a mirror, as both a celebration of feminine beauty and a critique of vanity. Here, Ada's grave expression betrays neither admiration nor judgment, the viewer becoming acutely aware of their gaze as Ada exerts her own.

In *Ada with Nose*, this dynamic of self-examination takes a turn to the surreal, as a five-foot-tall sliver of Ada's distinctive aquiline profile serenely watches the rest of her body depart, only to be cropped by an implied pictorial frame. Here, the figure is at once doubled and divided, then made all but invisible when viewed from the side, at which point it disappears into a slender sheet of aluminum.

*Scott and John*, 1966

Oil on linen

Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany

In *Scott and John*, the doubling that Katz at times applies to a single sitter is achieved with two different individuals. It depicts a couple who lived near Katz's loft: the realist painter John Button and the sculptor and critic Scott Burton. Framed in close proximity to the viewer, their faces are cast with dramatic overhead sunlight that transmutes them into chiseled serial forms. The scale and glamour of the figures is heightened by an impossibly crisp rendition of commercial signage in the background, transforming an everyday scene of meeting friends in the street into a composition of intense visual lucidity.

*Study for Ted Berrigan, 1967*

Oil on board

Collection of the artist

*Ted Berrigan, 1967*

Oil on linen

Private collection, Japan, courtesy

Edward Tyler Nahem, New York

This vivid painting depicts the poet Ted Berrigan, a central figure of the creative milieu in which Katz moved in the 1960s. “One of my principal desires is to make my poems be like my life,” Berrigan once mused—an aspiration that cleaves closely to Katz’s approach to art-making, in which the people and places of his immediate orbit provide an endlessly engaging subject matter. It is a sentiment echoed in a poem that Berrigan wrote in collaboration with Ada Katz titled “Upside Down”—a reference to the work *Upside Down Ada* hanging nearby—which includes the lines:

You don’t have to be Marie Curie  
or even Simone de Beauvoir already  
to write your memoirs, you know? after  
all, we *all* have a polymorphous perverse  
first person singular, don’t we? . . . .

While the oil sketch study for this work transmits a sense of anxious energy, in the final canvas Berrigan’s face is smoothly enigmatic, his glasses and raised hand deflecting the viewer’s gaze. Here, the monochrome background characteristic of Katz’s portraits is almost subsumed by the poet’s form, which has become both the subject and the overall surface of the painting.

*Ada and Vincent*, 1967

Oil on linen

Private collection

In 1960, Alex and Ada welcomed their only child, Vincent. Pictured as a seven-year-old in this painting, Vincent conveys a sense of solemn interiority that is characteristic of his childhood depictions by Katz. Today, Vincent is a poet and translator, who has been a frequent collaborator with his father on poetry projects and artist's books.

This painting of Katz's wife and son might naturally be viewed through the lens of familial tenderness. Equally, it might invoke the art-historical themes of the Madonna and Child or the frontal icons of Byzantine and Russian Orthodox traditions. Katz, however, tends to emphasize the totality of a work's formal effect rather than its specific subject matter, stressing the general over the personal. "I may have a nostalgia for the time, for what my life was," he has remarked in relation to *Ada and Vincent*, "but I have no nostalgia for the paintings. . . . They are symbols. A symbol might be a different thing for a different person. I think that art should belong to all people."

*Edwin and Rudy, 1968*

Oil on aluminum

Collection of the artist

Katz's creative approach was deeply inflected by his friendships with the photographer and filmmaker Rudy Burckhardt and the poet and dance critic Edwin Denby. Burckhardt's and Denby's lives were closely intertwined. They met in 1934 in Switzerland, and the following year moved to New York, where they lived together until Burckhardt's marriage to the painter Edith Schloss in 1946. The two men remained in intimate dialogue until Denby's death in 1983. In this reverberant cutout work, the connection between the figures is manifested in their mirrored postures and mutual gaze. Katz often deploys subtle distortions of perspective in his work to achieve a desired effect, and here the heads are notably the same size despite the variations in their depth of field. This image of his friends engaged in a continual conversation has stood for many decades in the central living area of Katz's otherwise sparsely furnished loft.

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Learn more about Katz's engagement with his surroundings from artist Juan Eduardo Gomez, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

## *Vincent and Tony*, 1969

Oil on linen

The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Society for Contemporary Art

In this painting, Vincent and his close childhood friend Antony Seebrooks are seated on the shores of the beach at Ducktrap River Park in Maine. The two boys are depicted with a solemn intensity, against a hazy landscape inspired by the backgrounds of Italian Renaissance paintings. Tony gazes outward, connecting with the world, while Vincent appears to turn inward. Characteristically for Katz, the grandeur of the scale and gravity of the mood are tempered by the abrupt cropping of the figures, which brings them closer to the front of the picture plane than is conventional for portraiture.

 311  528

Learn more about Katz's work from his son, the poet Vincent Katz, and access a slow-looking exercise of this painting.

*Mr. and Mrs. R. Padgett, Mr. and Mrs. D. Gallup*, 1971  
Oil on linen  
Commerce Bancshares Fine Art Collection

In this work, Katz depicts a relaxed evening of drinking and energetic conversation in his Soho loft. Poet Ron Padgett and his wife, Patricia, are seated alongside poet Dick Gallup and his wife, Carol. Padgett and Gallup, who grew up together in Tulsa, Oklahoma, along with poet and painter Joe Brainard, were jokingly christened the Tulsa School of Poetry by poet John Ashbery.

In this composition, Katz updates the tradition of genre painting popularized in seventeenth-century Dutch painting, in which ordinary, unidentified people engage in common activities. As famously defined by the art historian Max Friedlander: “The historical picture says: *that* happened once; the genre picture says: *this* happened often.” Katz deliberately embraces an everyday casualness in the scene, but also grants it a sense of theater, rendering the fleeting interaction in dazzling colors at a grand, almost mural-like scale.

 312  529

Learn more about Katz’s unique approach to portraiture from art historian Levi Prombaum, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*August Late Afternoon*, 1973

Oil on linen

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.,  
Gift of Larry Rivers, New York, 1979

Since 1954, Katz has spent his summers at a small rustic cottage known as “the yellow house” in Lincolnville, Maine. *August Late Afternoon* shows Edwin Denby and Rudy Burckhardt, who shared a summer home nearby in the town of Searsmont, walking in the shadow of the yellow house, framed by an intricately rendered backdrop of a flowerbed and lawn bathed in sunlight. Despite the apparent psychological charge between the figures, the artist ultimately deflects a narrative interpretation of the scene through the painting’s title, which focuses on the atmospheric conditions rather than the individuals depicted.



*Edwin*, 1972

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

Katz has referred to his friendship with Edwin Denby as “my graduate school.” A poet of the first generation of the New York School and a deeply influential dance critic known for his transporting descriptions of performances, Denby was Katz’s conduit to the world of modern dance. “I was coming from the street and he was coming from the sky,” the artist recalls. In this engulfing portrait, he has attempted to capture the essence of the otherwise-serious sitter’s rare laugh—“a hysterical laugh,” as Katz has described it, that reminded him of the scene in which Greta Garbo’s solemn character breaks into raucous laughter in the 1939 film *Ninotchka*.

*Superb Lilies*, 1972

Lithograph

Edition of 90

Collection of the artist

Printmaking has been an important aspect of Katz's practice throughout his career. He began making etchings and woodcuts in the 1940s and '50s, and by the late 1960s was devoting significant energy to creating lithographs, aquatints, and screenprints. He based this lithograph, which was produced by Paul Narkiewicz, on a flower painting made in 1966. While the elimination of brush strokes and the narrower band of chromatic tones in the prints produce a distinct viewing experience, Katz doesn't consider these works to have less artistic value than his paintings. "My idea of a print was to reproduce my images as an original artwork," he has said. "It was also, in a sense, a fresh, lively surrogate painting."

*Anne*, 1972

Oil on board

Private collection, New York

An important poet working in the lineage of the Beat and New York School movements, Anne Waldman is also a curator, editor, and professor, and a co-founder of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado. Katz's lifelong interest in fashion is evident in this painting of Waldman. He had noted the poet's colorful floral scarf during a social encounter and asked her to wear it for a portrait sitting. This engaging sketch generated a number of works by Katz, including a large reduplicative painting and an edition of lithographs.

 313  530

Learn more about this portrait from poet Anne Waldman, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*David and John*, 1977

Oil on linen

Private collection, Germany, courtesy

Edward Tyler Nahem, New York

This painting depicts John Ashbery—one of the most influential poets of the postwar United States—and his partner (later husband) David Kermani. Katz and Ashbery created two collaborative publications, in 1969 and 2005, in which poems by Ashbery were paired with images by Katz. In a statement that makes clear their creative alignment, the artist once noted of Ashbery's poems that they have “lots of visual images that just flash, and there's no narration to them.”

Katz once remarked to his fellow figurative painter Jane Freilicher, “Style is a very complicated business of being ‘now’ inside a tradition.” Here, Katz plays with the rich tradition of the “conversation piece” in eighteenth-century painting, in which sitters are depicted at leisure in their homes or in the landscape. The couple are pictured in the light-dappled living room of their Chelsea home. While studies for the work capture a more relaxed and jovial scene, in the final canvas the figures are mirrored in their aristocratic reserve, surrounded by elements of the space that are gridded and slightly distorted in their flatness.

🔊 314 🔍 531

Hear John Ashbery read from his collaborative book with Katz, *Coma Berenices*, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*Five Women (Study for Times Square Mural)*, 1976  
Oil on aluminum  
Collection of Bonnie Bernstein Dockter and  
Peter Dockter

In 1976, Katz was given the chance to compete directly with the commercial billboards he had long admired when he was commissioned to create a 247-foot mural that would stretch around two sides of the RKO General Building in the heart of Times Square. The frieze, titled *Nine Women*, pictured nine stylish, self-possessed women looking to their left, with each face repeated two or three times to bring the total to twenty-three. It was executed by a group of professional sign painters led by Jerry Johnson, under Katz's supervision. To produce a work on such a vast scale, Katz completed numerous studies, including this maquette showing five of the nine women placed in overlapping sequence. The mural remained in place from 1976 to 1982, and was seen by thousands of New Yorkers bustling through Times Square every day.

*Hiroshi*, 1981

Oil on linen

Private collection

Katz frequently collaborated with the printmaker Hiroshi Kawanishi, whose work was recommended to him by the artist Jasper Johns. Katz admired Kawanishi's use of overlapping transparencies to achieve a luminous effect, even within the inherently flat surface of a print. He also respected his impeccable production standards. Once, when shown a 23-color print that had a small dust mark, Katz mentioned he thought it was "good enough," to which Kawanishi replied, "It's not good enough for me," ultimately remaking the print. In this portrait, Katz conjures Manhattan's nocturnal skyline with minimal dashes of paint representing lit windows, and the reflection of a lamp hovering in the window glass.

In the 1970s and '80s, Katz became increasingly dependent on refined pencil drawings to hone his compositions, as demonstrated in the ethereal study made in preparation for this painting. Typically, such drawings were enlarged into charcoal cartoons on brown paper, then used to guide the final painting process.

*Song*, 1980

Oil on linen

Collection of Dr. George and Vivian Dean

While many portraits of this period have a static quality, *Song* brims with action. Depicted are the original members of Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble; the composer, singer, director, and choreographer Meredith Monk plays the piano alongside vocalists Andrea Goodman and Monica Solem. The trio is performing Monk's work "Tablet," a percussive, hypnotic song inspired by archaeology that builds to a crescendo over its 23-minute duration.

 315  532

Learn more about Meredith Monk's experience sitting for this portrait, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*Night: William Dunas Dance 1 (Pamela), 1983*

Lithograph

Edition of 100

Collection of the artist

*Night: William Dunas Dance 2 (Pamela), 1983*

Lithograph

Edition of 100

Collection of the artist

*Night: William Dunas Dance 3 (Pamela), 1983*

Lithograph

Edition of 100

Collection of the artist

Katz has always been drawn to the controlled physicality of dancers, and has painted them throughout his career. “There are some people who understand how they appear,” he once commented. “Ada, Paul Taylor, dancers, actors.” This suite of prints depicts a dancer performing a work by the avant-garde choreographer William Dunas, whose work has been described as brutal but mesmerizing, and whose collaborators include Meredith Monk and Vincent Katz.

Katz often returns to earlier paintings as the basis for editioned works, sometimes more than once. Trained in typography and graphic design while at Cooper Union, he has designed posters throughout his career, and had already based a poster advertising the 1979 American Dance Festival on the original paintings. Katz has attributed his sustained focus on prints to a wish to allow greater access to his work. “With the prints I would like to be more like Shakespeare and less like [James] Joyce,” he once commented.



*Samantha*, 1987

Screenprint

Edition of 80

Collection of the artist

In this screenprint, the artist Samantha McEwen—a notable member of the New York art scene during the 1980s—gazes outward with an unaffected stare, her face abbreviated by a tight vertical crop. Created in collaboration with Hiroshi Kawanishi, who worked closely with Katz and is the subject of a 1981 portrait installed nearby, this work is exemplary of Katz's ability to evoke natural light—one of his most integral artistic preoccupations—within the restricted technical parameters of the print medium.

*Allen Ginsberg, 1985*

Oil on aluminum, six parts

Collection of the artist

This fragmentary portrait of poet Allen Ginsberg features six separate cutouts of various segments and angles of the sitter's face. Inspired by cinematic camerawork, the work's radical cropping reflects the shifts in intensity experienced in a personal encounter. Along with Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs, Ginsberg was a key figure in the Beat movement, who was known for his use of vernacular language in his poetry and a counter-cultural stance that championed freedom of expression and sexual orientation.

*Varick*, 1988

Oil on linen

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundation, Inc., Leonard A. Lauder, President

In 1986, Katz made a small oil sketch—*Study for Wet Evening*, installed nearby—of the view from his studio window at 9 pm. It initiated a new body of work in which he explores the presence of light within darkness. These paintings trace a lineage to the nineteenth-century painter James Abbott McNiell Whistler, whose “nocturnes” illustrate scenes of the city at night in shimmering tonal harmonies. Katz’s nocturnes, however, also counter this tradition, stripping the built environment of all identifying features beyond stark points of light against a dark void.

In *Varick*, the angle of a series of white dashes of paint provides the merest suggestion of architectural dimension, while small flicks in the paint suggest strips of fluorescent lights within, bringing the painting to the brink of abstraction while maintaining a representational thread. Katz recalls that in making this series, he was asking, “Could you make a painting with so little in it and still have it seem like a concrete landscape?”

*Francesco*, 1992

Oil on aluminum

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of  
Michael A. Caddell and Cynthia Chapman

This life-size cutout work depicts two intersecting, almost identical portraits of the figurative painter Francesco Clemente, who first established himself as a major figure in the Italian *Transavanguardia* movement of the 1970s and '80s. Katz at times introduces disorientating visual manipulations to his cutouts. Here, what appears from the front to be the extension of Clemente's left arm as he strides forward, looks from behind to be an extension of his right.

*Ada Ada*, 1991

Oil on linen

Private collection

By the 1990s, Katz's reduplicative strategy applied not only to his figures but also to the pictorial space in which they are located. As exemplified in this canvas, he began to institute what he terms "splits," wherein part of the subject's face is cut off from the viewer's perception by an implied edge. Though his paintings are sometimes read in relationship to Pop art and Minimalism, Katz does not deploy seriality to draw attention to the ubiquity of mass media imagery or processes of industrial production. Rather, the presence of two Adas here increases the visual potency of the composition, inviting closer scrutiny of slight shifts in facial expression and bodily gesture, as well as in their painterly execution.

*Lake Light*, 1992

Oil on linen

Sammlung Stiftung Kunst und Natur,  
Bad Heilbrunn, Germany

The interaction between light and water has long held Katz's creative attention. In this 1992 work, a glare of reflected light on a lake is represented as a shimmering white mass. In the foreground, the artist disregards perspectival space, depicting a silhouetted pier on a grassy bank that is startlingly out of scale with the blinding body of sunlight, which seems to rear to the surface of the picture plane. This sort of compositional license is in deference to Katz's wish to communicate the "initial blast" of the here and now, adjusting the world's objective appearance to register fluctuations in perception.

From left to right:

*Study for Trees and Windows*, 2001

Oil on board

Collection of the artist

*Night Cityscape*, 1998

Oil on board

Collection of the artist

*Study for Washington Square 4*, 2007

Oil on board

Collection of the artist

*Study for Washington Square*, 1998

Oil on board

Collection of the artist

In order to create highly controlled, large-scale paintings that retain a sense of what he terms “quick light” and optical freshness, Katz initiates a work by making the sort of small, rapid oil sketches on board that he first embraced in his time at Skowhegan. These visceral records, made within minutes of absolute immersion in the subject, are then transposed in the studio through a stepped process that might involve drawings, further painted studies, and full-scale paper cartoons. Merged with the artist’s recalled vision of the original experience, this method strives to preserve the heightened awareness captured in the first sketch within the process of realizing a large canvas.

*Gold and Black 2*, 1993

Oil on linen

Courtesy Peter Blum Gallery, New York

In *Gold and Black 2*, Katz renders four slender trees with a rigorous economy of means. The trunks are delineated with long swipes of paint, leaves and grass are indicated by a handful of green dashes and flicks, and the background appears as a uniform field of golden light. Katz often uses the word “lyric” to define his aspiration for his landscapes to present a poetic image of the world. It is a description not intended to signify an emotive beauty but rather used in reference to a poem’s ability to distill experience to its essence.



*Cornice*, 1997

Oil on linen

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of the Alex Katz Foundation, 2011

In *Cornice*, Katz takes as his subject an intimately familiar view: the building across the street from the loft that has been his studio and home since 1968. His paintings of New York City in this period are influenced by the photographs of his close friend Rudy Burckhardt, whose images of urban life isolate moments of quietude within the city's tumult. In this meditative composition, minimal painterly gestures capture a hazy, dense light and an air of stillness above the busy streets below.

*Mariko*, 2004  
Oil on linen  
Private collection

While Katz's fascination with the transformative effect of light on a surface is most viscerally present in his landscape paintings, it is equally at play in his portraits. In this elongated image of the artist Mariko Mori, the figure is modeled with a limited palette and flat segments of form, but still communicates a vital luminosity. Mori is a Japanese multimedia artist who has frequently deployed her own image in various guises in her conceptual films and photographs.

*Dogwood, 2013*

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

Over the past two decades, Katz has revived the singular approach to painting flowers that he first developed in the 1960s. While walking in Washington Square Park in 2013, he encountered a mass of blossoming dogwood trees, and promptly retrieved his painting materials from his studio in order to sketch the encounter from life. In the final work, the magnified white blooms and green leaves dance across the canvas as if suspended in midair, detached from the tree and enclosed in the painted field. “This is about trying to get that innocent perception when you look at something,” Katz has said. “That immediate sensation.”

*Vivien X 5*, 2018

Screenprint

Edition of 60

Collection of the artist

This print pictures Katz's daughter-in-law, the Brazilian filmmaker and photographer Vivien Bittencourt. Although reminiscent of the structure of a filmstrip, it does not show the unraveling of sequential movement, but rather a simultaneous view of different fragments of the sitter's appearance and gestures. Over the past decade, Katz's portraits have played with increasingly complex internal repetitions and crops, in a pictorial device he refers to as "splits."

*Departure (Ada)*, 2016

Oil on linen

Collection of Marguerite Steed Hoffman

In this painting, six diminutive Adas retreat into the distance, the figures dappled in sunlight falling through unseen trees. Her feet are entirely submerged in green, as she walks through the painted field in the sense of both a meadow and a monochrome. Seen here in her late eighties and the subject of innumerable paintings, cutouts, drawings, and prints over the decades, Ada is recognizable even with her back turned toward the viewer. Discussing her iconicity in Katz's work, the artist Matt Saunders writes: "As in the movies, where the recognition of well-known performers, their previous roles trailing behind them like shadows, imparts a richness or texture that extends well beyond the frame, Ada's (non)presence amounts to something more psychologically complex than simple representation."

*Bill 3, 2017*

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

The politically charged work of renowned choreographer, dancer, writer, and director Bill T. Jones has been a beacon in the field of contemporary dance since the 1970s. Here, two versions of Jones peer with a penetrating gaze, interrupted by a central dislocation of the picture plane. More than just a recessive foil, the yellow paint that envelopes the figure assumes a formal agency that is central to the impact of the work.

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Learn more about director and choreographer Bill T. Jones's experience sitting for this portrait, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*Blue Night*, 2018

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

In *Blue Night*, an amorphous black mass looms against inky blue. Other than the reference to the visible world in the title, the work appears fully abstract. After devoting many decades to creating a figurative language of piercing clarity, in this painting Katz seems to undo or erase his own imagery. In its overwhelming scale, the canvas elicits the experience of the sublime, in the classical definition of a transporting awe and terror.

*Crosslight*, 2019

Oil on linen

Dallas Museum of Art, TWO x TWO for AIDS and Art Fund

From folklore to psychoanalysis, the forest has played a primal role in the collective imagination. It is a site of mystery and transformation, and is often metaphoric of the subconscious. Katz has long painted the thick woods that surround his home in Maine, and in recent works they have become one of his chief subjects. In contrast to the shallow depth of field of the artist's earlier works, *Crosslight* beckons the viewer into a shadowy unknown, with the dense undergrowth morphing into a field of spectral presences.



*Sunrise*, 2019

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

As he entered his nineties, Katz's painting assumed an increasingly gestural quality. In *Sunrise*, his characteristic subject of light filtering through branches yields a dense interplay of feverish brushstrokes, conveying a highly physical encounter between the artist and the canvas. Shafts of morning light spring to the foreground, transfigured into incandescent, modeled forms. This expressive latitude in Katz's style aligns his late works with his earliest landscapes, when he first sought to bring figurative painting into a "wide open" register that had the vigor and magnetism he perceived in the work of Jackson Pollock.

*Yellow Tree 1, 2020*

Oil on linen

Private collection, Republic of Korea

In 2019 and 2020, Katz painted a series of single trees that achieve an elemental legibility of form. These works foreground Katz's characteristic attention to atmospheric shifts, as the trees, which are depicted frontally against bright, monochromatic skies, enact a turning of the seasons that is traditionally metaphoric of the human life cycle. While paintings installed nearby portray the bare branches of winter, this work communicates an ecstatic vitality. The dancing passages of brown foliage against a blazing mass of yellow seem to radiate outward from the canvas, fulfilling Katz's painterly ambition to "compress everything into a single burst of energy."

*Black Brook 16*, 2001

Oil on linen

The Albertina Museum, Vienna

In 1988, Katz began to paint an unremarkable stream overhung with trees and foliage, located across the road from his home in Maine, and has since regularly returned to the subject. At times he has focused on enlarged details of rocks or leaves. In other versions, he depicts the hazy, dreamlike reflections on its surface, which, as an apparition of the visible world, echo the painter's own act of representation. In *Black Brook 16*, which stretches almost 30 feet, Katz renders a murky reflection of trees in the water at almost life scale. The artist has offered that his extended involvement with the black brook grew from a wish to create images that were impossible to absorb fully from a single vantage.

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Learn more about Katz's *Black Brook* series from curator Katherine Brinson, and access a slow-looking exercise of this work.

*White Reflection*, 2020

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

The fugitive image of light on water has long fascinated Katz. Here, the dazzling reflection of sunlight on a lake's surface is pictured as a field of stark white. In a rare exception to his characteristic use of thin veils of color, Katz applies passages of thick, textured paint that mimic flickering spots of brightness. While the monochrome canvas has a rich conceptual role in the history of modernist abstraction, *White Reflection* retains its origin point in the natural world, using what Katz has called “the grammar of abstraction” to communicate a visceral optical sensation.

*Joan 2*, 2020

Oil on linen

Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine,  
Gift of the artist, 2021

In order to achieve a ground on which his paint remains suspended on the surface rather than sinking into the weave of the linen, Katz prepares his canvases with a series of priming layers.

This results in a smooth surface for the artist's wet-on-wet technique—a physical feat during which he completes the image while all paint remains wet, as exemplified in this work,

*Joan 2*. Here, Katz returns to his recurring subject of the fleeting smile, using minimal lines to convey expression and modeled form. The sitter is the artist Joan Jonas, a pioneer of performance and video art since the 1960s.

*Isaac (Blue)*, 2021

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

As with Katz's wife, son, and daughter-in-law, the artist's twin grandsons, Isaac and Oliver Katz, have frequently served as sitters for portraits. Isaac is shown here, his face flooding the entirety of the painting and tinted a watery blue, as though he has fused with one of Katz's monochromatic backgrounds. While blue is a color traditionally associated with sorrow and has an art-historical association with Pablo Picasso's anguished Blue period paintings, Isaac's expression is opaque. As is typical of his approach to portraiture, Katz foregrounds formal imperatives over his own state of mind or emotional relationship to the subject.

*Ocean 9*, 2022

Oil on linen

Collection of the artist

In this recent work, Katz returns to the challenge of painting a body of water, a subject he has pursued for many decades. “Water is light and weight in motion,” Katz has said. “Like a smile, it’s difficult to construct the perception artificially.” This painting is based on a section of swirling waters that the artist observed from the shore at Coney Island, which he remembers visiting as a child. Whereas in *White Reflection* (2020), hanging nearby, light is thrown entirely outward from the surface, *Ocean 9* conjures a kinetic sense of a swirling current that hints at the depths below.