

Artist Resources – Alex Katz (American, b. 1927)

[Alex Katz website: biography, artwork, project archive, press, interviews, and writing.](#)

Katz at [Timothy Taylor Gallery, New York](#)

Katz at [Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac](#)

Katz reflected on his life, education, and becoming an artist in New York in a 1969 [oral history](#) with the Smithsonian Archives of American Art.

[The Brooklyn Museum](#) organized an exhibition of Katz's often overlooked printmaking oeuvre in 1988. The show included screen prints, lithographs, etchings, and woodcuts from the 1950s to the present, with a focus on his black and white works and second wave of printmaking beginning in 1965.

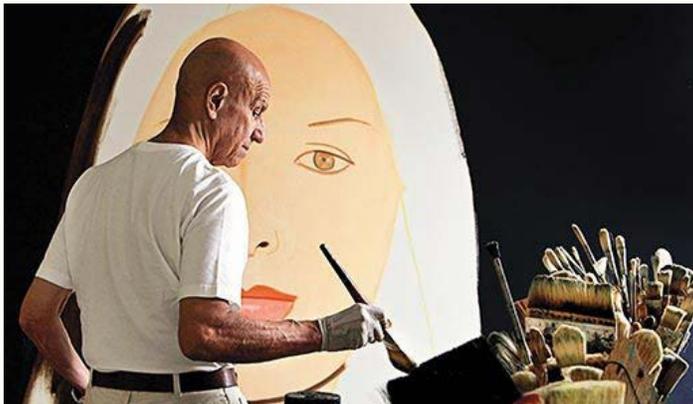
"I think they're all images of common experiences people have had...I try to eliminate narrative from the painting. I think narrative goes in past tense, and I was trying to get the paintings into the immediate present." Katz remarked in a [2014 video interview](#) at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, in association with his exhibition, [45 Years of Portraits 1969-2014](#).

Katz discussed his life and work in a [conversation in Maine](#) in 2015, filmed in conjunction with an exhibition at the [Colby Museum of Art](#) showcasing his earliest work from the 1950s. The program includes a [film of Katz completing a painting](#), captured by his son and daughter-in-law in 1992.

[Phaidon](#) spoke with Katz in 2016 about his process and inspiration. "Sometimes it comes from other paintings, sometimes comes from real life. But it's immediate," Katz explained. "If I'm not thinking about it, it just comes. I'll be doing sit-ups, look at the window, and there's a big pop."



Katz, 2016



Katz in his SoHo studio, 2009
Photograph: Stephanie Sinclair

In 2016 the New York City Transit Authority commissioned Katz to paint the interior of the [F train's Fifty-seventh Street Station](#). He transformed the concrete tunnel with nineteen five-foot tall paintings, transferred to glass and embedded into the walls.

In a comprehensive 2018 profile, [The New Yorker](#) talked with Katz about his prolific career, art history, his legacy, and recognition. About his first experience painting outdoors, directly in front of his subject with no preliminary sketches, Katz remarked: "It was like feeling lust for the first time...you're working from the inside of your head. Not thinking, just doing."

[Watch Katz talk](#) with senior curator of modern art about his life and work at the National Gallery of Art in 2019.

The Guggenheim has plans to mount [a major career retrospective](#) for Katz in 2022, a first in his home state of New York, and a follow up the Guggenheim Bilbao's critically acclaimed [2015 exhibition of Katz's landscapes](#).

Katz published a memoir in 2012, [Invented Symbols](#), in which he shares previously unpublished notes about his life.

Alex Katz (American, b. 1927)

Vincent in the Afternoon, 1973

Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2020:30.4

Raised by artistic Russian émigré parents in Depression-era Queens, Alex Katz studied painting at the Cooper Union Art School in Manhattan and rose to prominence in the 1950s amongst the second generation of Abstract Expressionists and fellow figurative painters such as Fairfield Porter (also on display). Though known for his vivid close-up portraits and enigmatic landscapes, Katz is also a prolific printmaker and was a long-time collaborator with modern dance choreographer Paul Taylor, for whom he designed costumes and sets. Simplified forms, clean lines, flat surfaces, and bright, matte palettes constitute the essential elements of Katz's paintings, which frequently feature intimate depictions of family and friends. He captures visual truth without dependence on realistic detail, creating an aesthetic experience of the fleeting moment, which he refers to as "the quick things passing." **Vincent in the Afternoon** depicts Katz thirteen-year-old son, a frequent subject for the artist and now, as an adult and successful poet and art critic, a collaborative partner.



On view May 13 – August 16, 2020