

[Johns at Gagosian Gallery](#)

[Johns at Matthew Marks Gallery](#)

Artist Resources – Jasper Johns (American, b. 1930)

“I think one has to work with everything and accept the kind of statement which results as unavoidable, or as a helpless situation. I think that most art which begins to make a statement fails to make a statement because the methods used are too schematic or too artificial. I think that one wants from painting a sense of life,” Johns told art critic David Sylvester in a [1965 interview](#) that was [broadcast on the BBC](#). “The final suggestion, the final statement...has to be what you can’t avoid saying, not what you set out to say.”

Johns also spoke [with Artforum in 1965](#), about the early years of his career in New York and the repetition of patterns and motifs in his work. “The early things to me were very strongly objects. Then it occurs that, well, any painting is an object...But I thought how then to make an object which is not so easily defined as an object, and how to add space and still keep it an object painting.”

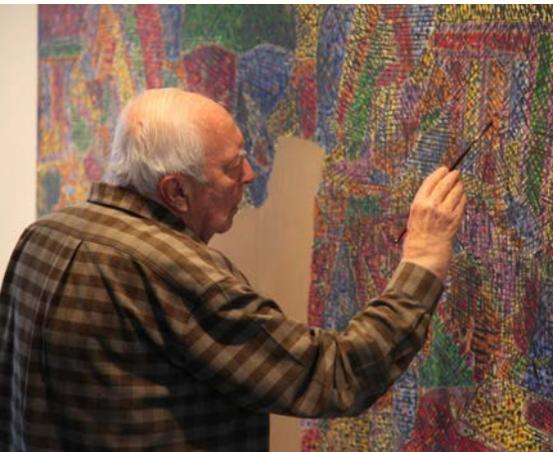
In a 1977 conversation with [Interview Magazine](#), a playfully combative Johns hesitantly answered questions about the importance of work and art.

“Much of my work develops from rules of some sort. The rules are usually broken as the work progresses...I work to have [colors] look less schematic, to have the rules not jump out at you,” reflected Johns in 1995 with [BOMB Magazine](#), discussing process, challenge, and experimentation.

[The Brooklyn Rail](#) spoke with Johns in a rambling 2007 interview about the inspiration he draws from poetry, music, literature, other artists, in conjunction with [The National Gallery’s survey](#) of the first ten years of Johns’ career through over 80 prints, paintings, and drawings.



Johns in New York studio, 1958
Photography: Robert Rauschenberg



Johns in his Connecticut studio, 2013
Photography: John Lund

Over 120 paintings, prints, sculptures, and drawings graced the galleries of [The Broad in Los Angeles](#) in 2018. Organized in partnership with the [Royal Academy of Art in London](#), *Jasper Johns: Something Resembling Truth* traced Johns’ trajectory through six decades of work.

In 2019, the [Museum of Fine Arts Houston](#) brought together a suite of 100 prints made by Johns over the course of 10 days in 2015.

The Walker Art Center’s 2020-21 exhibition [An Art of Changes](#) celebrated Johns as one of the most significant printmakers of the twentieth century through over 90 works from the Walker’s collection. Intaglio, lithographs, woodcuts, linoleum, screenprints, and lead reliefs made between 1960 and 2018 show Johns as an inventive mind unafraid of trying, and re-trying, techniques, styles, and themes. The exhibition toured [the Carnegie Museum of Art](#) in Pittsburg and will visit museums in Florida, Michigan, and New York through 2022.

In September 2021, the most comprehensive retrospective of Johns’ career will open simultaneously at both [the Whitney](#) in New York and the [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#). Five years of study and will provide new perspectives on 500 works between the two venues, structured chronologically around themes of mirroring that flow throughout the artist’s practice.

Jasper Johns (American, b. 1930)
Between the Clock and the Bed, 1983
 Encaustic and oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2021:6.1

Pattern is key in this painting by Jasper Johns, who still ranks as one of the most significant and innovative painters and printmakers of the twentieth century. Johns began experimenting with hatching as an aesthetic motif beginning in the 1970s as he concentrated on a restrained repertoire of processes and moved seamlessly between a variety of conceptual and stylistic interests. In multiple works, he elevated the supportive texturizing technique into a pictorial solo act through engaged attention with



patchwork compositions. **Between the Clock and the Bed**—from an intimate series of early 1980s encaustics and oils—derives from a focused inspirational source: the Norwegian Expressionist, Edvard Munch. Johns' vertical triptych of abstract hatchings duplicates the pattern on the bedspread in Munch's 1940-43 *Self-Portrait: Between the Clock and the Bed*. In addition to the dedicated references to the linear, diagonal, and diamond-shaped forms on Munch's bedspread, Johns also seems to pay homage to the elder artist's celebrated expressive dexterity with color. Subtle shifts in hue move across each canvas, shimmering with life against segments of monochrome, celebrating the simplicity of line and pattern.

Munch, *Self-Portrait: Between the Clock and the Bed*, 1940-43, oil on canvas

On view February 17 – May 23, 2021

Extra Resources:

Jasper Johns and Edvard Munch exhibition at the [Virginia Museum of Fine Arts](https://www.vmfinearts.org/) .

