

## *At Home: Alice Neel in the Queer World*

Curated by Hilton Als

September 7–November 2, 2024  
606 N Western Avenue, Los Angeles



Alice Neel, *Jackie Curtis as a Boy, No. 2*, 1972  
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David Zwirner is pleased to announce *At Home: Alice Neel in the Queer World*, curated by Hilton Als. On view at the gallery's 606 N Western Avenue location in Los Angeles, the exhibition continues the gallery's history of presenting curated exhibitions that focus on different facets of Neel's ever-relevant work, and follows Als's critically acclaimed *Alice Neel, Uptown*, which was on view at David Zwirner New York in 2017.

Alice Neel (1900–1984) is one of the foremost artists of the twentieth century. She is known for her daringly honest and humanist approach to the figure that not only captures the truth of the individual, but also reflects the era in which she lived. *At Home: Alice Neel in the Queer World* highlights the artist's career-long commitment to depicting the human condition and her practice of painting people from many walks of life. This presentation focuses on her paintings of individuals from queer communities and those who were a part of their circle. The works on view will include paintings of politicians, philanthropists, writers, performers, and artists, as well as friends and neighbors—together forming a collective portrait that both embodies and complicates an understanding of the queer world of Neel's moment and the artist's place within it. As Als notes, this exhibition "will include not just portraits of gay people but those of theorists, activists, politicians, and so on who would qualify as queer by virtue of their different take in their given field and thus the world. So doing, they reflect Alice's own interest in and commitment to difference."

Drawn from museum and private collections, and including rarely seen works from The Estate of Alice Neel, the paintings in *Alice Neel: At Home in the Queer World* feature figures both notable and unknown, from cultural and political personalities to intimate acquaintances and friends. Works on view

will include paintings of individuals such as congresswoman *Bella Abzug* (1976; Rowan University Art Gallery, Glassboro, New Jersey); gregarious champion of contemporary art *Henry Geldzahler* (1967; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); and New York City Mayor Ed Koch, painted by Neel in 1981. Other subjects include Frank O'Hara (1960)—one of two paintings of the poet and curator completed by Neel in the same year—and an atmospherically embellished painting of the provocative Beat poet *Allen Ginsberg* (1966), which she painted from memory after seeing him at a performance. Also on view will be works depicting individuals such as concert pianist *Robert Avedis Hagopian* (1971; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco); performance artist and sexual icon *Annie Sprinkle* (1982); and *Andy Warhol* (c. 1970), in a drawing inscribed to performers Jackie Curtis and Ritta Redd—further reflecting Neel's interest in various creative and avant-garde communities. Also exhibited will be related archival material and films that illuminate the lives and accomplishments of the individuals depicted by Neel and their surrounding historical and cultural contexts. These subjects, united here through a connecting thread of difference, demonstrate the breadth of Neel's work and the unfettered scope of her humanist vision.

As Als writes in his catalogue essay:

*When she died in 1984, Neel had a great number of masterpieces to her credit, a galaxy of masterpieces, I would say, that bear witness to the terror we usually turn away from, having no language for it, namely alienation, disconnect, love. [...]*

*As an artist, Neel gave so many people their name—the right to their name. So doing, she told us that no person is fixed; we have as many names as the lies we tell, the truths we live. In my dreams of a glittering gay world, as exemplified by Geldzahler, Warhol, and the like, it never occurred to me that that universe wasn't about inclusion; my imagination already included me. But Neel's paintings offered something definitive and real, something larger than "identity." She seemed to be saying in canvas after canvas that there was no word or image that could equal those fleeting moments of joy—of connectedness—that bound her not only to her subjects, but to painting itself, that solitary act that she performed in front of other people.*

This exhibition will be accompanied by an expansive catalogue, published by David Zwirner Books. Edited and with a text by Als, the volume includes newly commissioned scholarship on the artist by Alex Fialho, Evan Garza, and Wayne Koestenbaum.

An iteration of the exhibition, also curated by Als, will travel to Victoria Miro, London from January 30–March 8, 2025.

Alice Neel was born in 1900 in Merion Square, Pennsylvania, and died in 1984 in New York. Although she exhibited sporadically early in her career, her work has been shown widely from the 1960s onwards. In 1971, a comprehensive solo exhibition of Neel's paintings was held at her alma mater Moore College of Art & Design, Philadelphia, and in 1974, she had her first retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. It was followed by a large-scale presentation of eighty-three paintings in 1975 at the Georgia Museum of Art, The University of Georgia, Athens. In 1978, the Graham Gallery, New York, organized the first retrospective dedicated to the artist's works on paper, and in 1979, a survey of her paintings was co-hosted by the University of Bridgeport and The Silvermine Guild of Artists in Connecticut.

To celebrate the centenary of the artist's birth, the Philadelphia Museum of Art organized a solo exhibition of Neel's work, which debuted in 2000 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, before traveling to the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, among other venues. In 2010, the survey exhibition *Alice Neel: Painted Truths* opened at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and traveled to the Whitechapel Gallery, London, and Moderna Museet Malmö, Sweden. In 2013, a major presentation of the artist's watercolors and drawings, *Alice Neel: Intimate Relations*, was on view at Nordiska Akvarellmuseet in Skärhamn, Sweden. In 2016, the Ateneum Art Museum, Helsinki organized *Alice Neel: Painter of Modern Life*, which traveled to the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, and the Fondation Vincent van Gogh in Arles, France, before concluding at the Deichtorhallen Hamburg in 2018. Other solo presentations include those held at National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC (2005); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2008); The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2011); and the Talbot Rice Gallery, The University of Edinburgh (2016).

The major retrospective, *Alice Neel: People Come First*, was first on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 2021, before traveling to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain, and the de Young Museum, San Francisco, in 2022. *Alice Neel: Un regard engagé* debuted at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, in 2022 before traveling to the Barbican Centre, London, and the Munch Museum, Oslo, both in 2023. Also on view in 2023 was a solo presentation at the Orange County Museum of Art, Costa Mesa, California.

The artist's work is included in numerous museum collections internationally. David Zwirner has represented The Estate of Alice Neel since 2008, and the present exhibition marks the eighth solo exhibition of the artist's work at the gallery.

Hilton Als is an award-winning journalist, critic, and curator. He has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1994. Prior to *The New Yorker*, Als was a staff writer for *The Village Voice* and an editor-at-large at *Vibe*. He has received numerous awards for his work, including the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism (2017), Yale's Windham-Campbell Literature Prize (2016), the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism (2002-03), and a Guggenheim Fellowship (2000). His first book, *The Women*, was published in 1996. His next book, *White Girls*, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the winner of the Lambda Literary Award in 2014. His most recent book, *My Pinup*, was published in November 2022. In 2017, he curated the critically lauded exhibition *Alice Neel, Uptown*, which traveled from David Zwirner, New York, to Victoria Miro, London and Venice. In 2019, Als presented *God Made My Face: A Collective Portrait of James Baldwin* at David Zwirner, New York, followed by *Frank Moore* at David Zwirner, New York (2021) and *Toni Morrison's Black Book*, at David Zwirner, New York (2022). He curated a series of three successive exhibitions for the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, of the work of Celia Paul (2018), Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (2019), and Njideka Akunyili Crosby (2022). In 2022, he curated *Joan Didion: What She Means* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, which is now on view at the Pérez Art Museum Miami. He is currently a teaching professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and has also taught at Columbia University's School of the Arts, Princeton University, Wesleyan University, and the Yale School of Drama.

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