

Timothy Taylor Gallery

Alex Katz

Black Paintings

28 February – 2 April 2015

Timothy Taylor Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Alex Katz. The subject of over 200 solo exhibitions and nearly 500 group shows internationally since 1951, Katz has been honoured with numerous retrospectives including The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA; Tate St. Ives, UK; Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK; and The Guggenheim, Bilbao, Spain. This is the artist's seventh exhibition with the gallery.

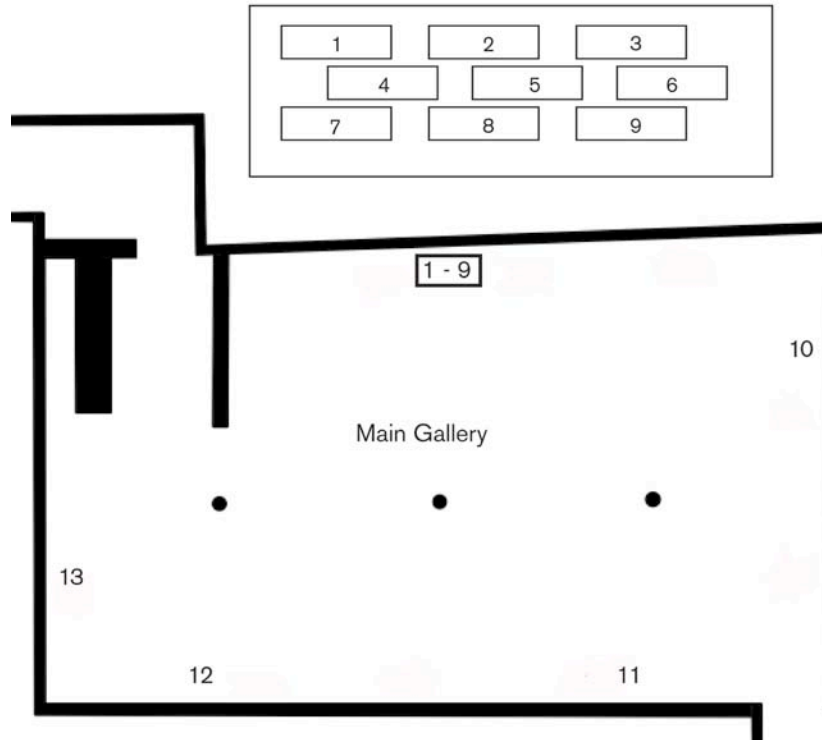
Katz's paintings are at once figurative and abstract – his larger-than-life portraits and landscapes often looming large over their observers. However, in these new works, rather than filling each frame, the subjects are assigned to the margins with black space occupying most of each canvas. What is striking about these new portraits is both the depth and diversity of the black paint contrasted against the dramatically studio-lit figures. Presented within a 'widescreen' format, the figures become both cinematic and theatrical, resembling performers caught mid-motion by a spotlight. Yet even within this framework, each painting still maintains Katz's signature cool sensibility.

In 2000, Katz created the large-format painting *Ada's Garden*, comprised of a group of people against a black background. While composed using the same technique – where Katz first 'sketches' subjects on his 16-inch boards (studies) before developing large images on canvas – these new portraits are instead captured moments or fragments, less staged and more dynamic. Even where two figures occupy the same frame, there is the distinct sense that the subjects were never present in the same room at the same time. They are lost in their own thoughts, their own contemplation. There is no background, no narrative, other than what the viewer brings to each work. This is essential for Katz's tension – whereby the lack of a specific story enables the viewer to complete the picture. It also allows Katz to create very contemporary images, as he states: "I'm trying to paint the now. And narrative is a story, and once you get into the story it's no longer in the real present tense."

The art critic Barry Schwabsky recently noted that Katz's choice of subject also contributes to the openness of his work; his subjects verge on celebrity but remain for the most part unidentifiable, except in the social group to which they belong. While this borderline recognisability makes Katz's subjects and subsequently his pictures so desirable, certain familiar subjects do reappear, most significantly his wife Ada, whom Katz has been painting for almost 60 years.

Alex Katz was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1927. After graduating from the Cooper Union Art School in Manhattan in 1949, he was awarded a scholarship by the Skowhegan School for Painting and Sculpture in Maine. In 1968, Katz moved into an artists' cooperative building in SoHo, New York, where he has lived and worked ever since, spending his summers in Lincolnton, Maine.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, including a conversation between Alex Katz and Iwona Blazwick, Director, Whitechapel Gallery, London.



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|---|--|---|
| <p>1.
Don, 2014
Oil on linen
48 x 108 in. / 121.9 x 274.3 cm
T009744</p> | <p>6.
Eve, 2014
Oil on linen
48 x 108 in. / 121.9 x 274.3 cm
T009853</p> | <p>11.
Samantha and Jessica, 2014
Oil on linen
60 x 84 in. / 152.4 x 213.4 cm
T009746</p> |
| <p>2.
Ariel, 2014
Oil on linen
48 x 108 in. / 121.9 x 274.3 cm
T009742</p> | <p>7.
Jarrett, 2014
Oil on linen
48 x 108 in. / 121.9 x 274.3 cm
T009745</p> | <p>12.
Elizabeth, 2014
Oil on linen
84 x 60 in. / 213.4 x 152.4 cm
T009852</p> |
| <p>3.
Eleanore, 2014
Oil on linen
48 x 108 in. / 121.9 x 274.3 cm
T009740</p> | <p>8.
Rachael and Tarajia, 2014
Oil on linen
48 x 108 in. / 121.9 x 274.3 cm
T009741</p> | <p>13.
Thor and Elizabeth, 2014
Oil on linen
84 x 60 in. / 213.4 x 152.4 cm
T009747</p> |
| <p>4.
Nicole, 2014
Oil on linen
48 x 108 in. / 121.9 x 274.3 cm
T009760</p> | <p>9.
Dagmar, 2014
Oil on linen
48 x 108 in. / 121.9 x 274.3 cm
T009743</p> | |
| <p>5.
Ada and Vivien, 2014
Oil on linen
48 x 108 in. / 121.9 x 274.3 cm
T009759</p> | <p>10.
Vincent, 2014
Oil on linen
48 x 108 in. / 121.9 x 274.3 cm
T009761</p> | |