

ALEX KATZ *Once in a Lifetime*

We open this exhibition space with a retrospective of Alex Katz (b. New York, 1927), one of the great names in painting in the second half of the twentieth century. The spacious proportions of the gallery, designed by the architectural partnership Vicens + Ramos, make it possible to appreciate a selection of historic large-scale works by this American creative genius for the first time in Spain in a private gallery.

In *Once in a Lifetime* the artist lays out a journey through the different genres of his work, from monumental group portraits to the distinctive landscapes, by way of figurative representations in a variety of formats. There are also small studies, created with a lighter and more fluid technique than that used in the final canvases, and these sketches from life take us into his laborious creative process. The formal motifs that recur in his compositions - female characters, male figures, alone or in company, against neutral backgrounds or in everyday settings, as well as elements of nature - are treated with a poetic intensity that is sometimes full of life and at other times somewhat more melancholy.

Alex Katz has been considered by some critics as a precursor of Pop Art for his personal interpretation of objective figuration in the early sixties. He shares with the artists of this movement the influence of mass media (the iconic transformation of its images, repetition and fragmentation of motifs, modes of representation drawn from cinema and advertising); the use of flat, bright colors; and also a preference for scenes of daily life, seemingly inconsequential, ephemeral moments that he raises to the level of art with freshness and elegance. But his interest in exploring how light modulates the surface of the painting, in contrast to the graphic style of Pop Art, differentiates him from this movement. At the same time, he is a contemporary of the Abstract Expressionist painters, from whom he adopted the use of large - scale formats and emphasis on the surface qualities of the painting, although his style is a long way from 'action painting'- despite his acknowledged admiration for Pollock.

Throughout his career, Alex Katz's work has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions and is included in the most important public and private collections in the United States, Europe and Asia. In Spain, major exhibitions were dedicated to his work at the IVAM in Valencia in 1996 and the CAC in Malaga in 2005. In 2010 he exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in London, and the Albertina Museum in Vienna showed a significant group of his prints, which were donated by the artist in 2009.

For further information or for images, please contact us.