

GLADSTONE

Michael Klein, "Alex Katz at Gladstone Gallery," *White Hot Magazine*, December 13, 2025



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"THE BEST ART IN THE WORLD"

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At 98, Alex Katz is still innovating. Even after a retrospective at the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum surveying seven prolific decades of work. In 2023, he has new ambitions and fresh ideas to explore. This new series of bold monochromatic canvases, the most "abstract" of his career, is not a departure from his representational subjects but an expansion on the extremes of such painting when form outweighs narrative.

Most recently, Katz has focused on floral themes, flowers, trees - all patterns in nature. Here too, non-narrative but pure representation in flat colorful arrangements, akin one might think of Matisse cut-outs with the all-over feel of a Pollock. But here is the clue, because in a recent interview Katz talks about the influence of Matisse, *The Red Studio*, 1911, an important Matisse work that was the subject of a Museum of Modern Art exhibition in 2022.

The studio is saturated in red, everything in the studio awash in red, connected by this single color, sensual improvisation, one might say. Similarly, Katz's vision incorporates a single color, a bright orange, and his world is defined by that single hue; it counterbalances realism with abstraction.

Like Matisse, Katz unifies his field of vision by this color interwoven with white "empty" space. Katz's theme is the outdoors, actually, Maine, where he works in the summer, and each canvas is monumental in scale, dramatic in appearance. The series of eleven works includes roadways and paths, images of nature: the light between trees in the woods, or a distant landscape of hills and clouds, all defined by and articulated by one powerful color.

One must admire the artist who keeps looking to other artists and the past as part of a continued dialogue and growth of his own work and painting in general. He proves once again that painting isn't dead but very much alive and productive.