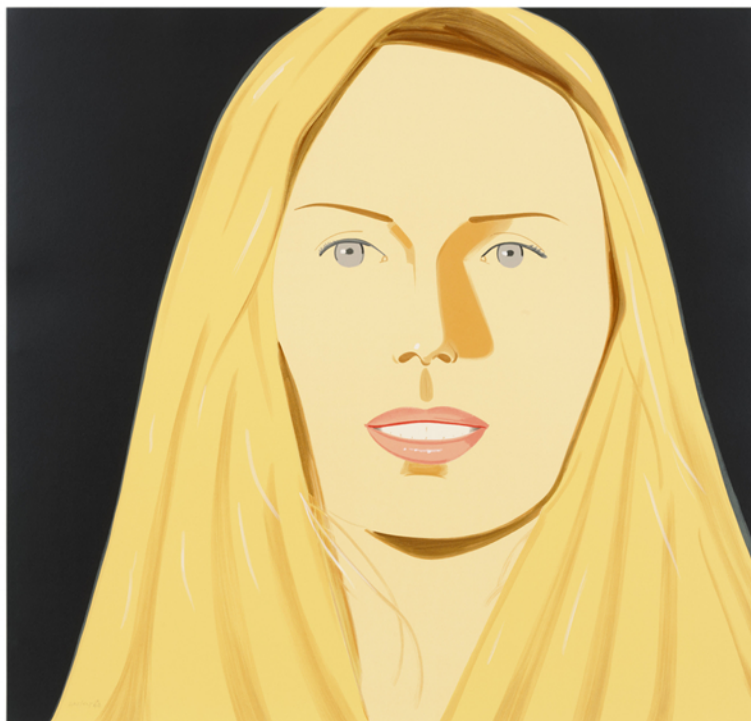


ALEX KATZ 2012



"Sarah," 2012, Thirty-two-color screenprint on museum board, Edition 11/60, 39" x 41"

BARBARA

Alex Katz is certainly having a moment in Boston. With complementary solo shows at the Museum of Fine Arts and at the Barbara Krakow Gallery, his bold, figurative prints are taking the city by storm. Where the MFA celebrates summer with a wide-ranging love letter to Katz's landscapes and portraits, the Krakow Gallery highlights a tightly-curated selection of Katz's female subjects who have played a defining role in his work for decades.

At one-time visionary, now simply iconic, Katz mesmerizes with minimal detail. It's enough to get the point across and abstracted enough to force your imagination to kick in. It's real life, but with all of the boring bits glossed over. It might be, perhaps, high class and high concept airbrushing at its best.

Katz's women exist in elegant, dreamy states of reflection. They often look past you, considering something further afield. They're quiet, observant, serene even - but they're all of these

things without being meek. Their portraits radiate steadfastness and resolve.

A series of women in sunglasses steal the spotlight, their white skin creamy against a sunflower yellow background. Oversized, glossy shades cover surely playful eyes; their hats are big and striking. The lines outlining shapes undulate over the surface, but where they define color they are razor sharp. The color is bright, focused and cheerful, but the plane that emerges is delightfully flat. The result continues to be refreshing and fun - and the style that Katz continued to cultivate over his long career remains as germane as ever.

Al Miner, assistant curator of contemporary art at the MFA, connects with this relevance. "At a time when his contemporaries received acclaims for their abstract expressionism, Katz dared to ask an unfashionable question: is figurative art still viable? He did not let the critics dissuade him from making the work he continues to make today. Katz's cool

graphic, and instantly iconic portraits are still fresh." So in Katz's case the resounding answer is yes, and his work is still as viable, and enjoyable, as ever. You don't have to think too deeply to appreciate the sophistication in Katz's simplicity, and Katz seems to let you know that that is quite all right with him.

By Catherine Laferriere

Alex Katz
35 Years of Portraits

At: Barbara Krakow Gallery,
10 Newbury St.,
through June 16.
617-262-4490,
barbarakrakowgallery.com

KRAKOW GALLERY