



BARBARA

The great painter Alex Katz has his second Boston gallery show within the past year up at Barbara Krakow Gallery. Katz is best known for his large-scale portraits: planar, simply drawn, evocative of elegance and youth. He's not as well known for his landscapes, and particularly his small-scale landscapes, which make up most of this show. Landscapes give Katz ground to dance on with his paintbrush.

He has the same brightly matter-of-fact palette as in the portraits. In one larger painting, "Black-Eyed Susan," you see three pert, frank flowers blooming against a spring-green ground, fuzzed with white blots and streaked with coral and white to suggest long, reedy grass blowing in a breeze. The jazzy background makes the yellow flowers solid and still; they have the clarity of one of his portraits.

Most of the landscapes eschew a horizon line, immersing the viewer in grass or leaves, dallying with a dizzy

abstraction. "Trees With Sky," at 9 by 12 inches one of the smaller works, grounds us in the deep green shadows of the forest, flecked with pale green leaves and occasionally revealing an armature of dark branches. At the top glint little spots of pale blue sky; with the pale green, they make a confetti over the shadowed forest ceiling that keeps the viewer's eye right at the picture plane rather than retreating into a perceived distant sky. The landscapes are delightful; they're also somehow more free than the portraits.

By Cate McQuaid
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**Alex Katz: Portrait and
Landscape Paintings**

At: Barbara Krakow Gallery,
10 Newbury St.,
through February 3rd.
617-262-4490,
barbarakrakowgallery.com

KRAKOW GALLERY