

ALEX KATZ

White Lotus



GRAY Chicago
Jul 11 - Sep 20, 2025

GRAY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alex Katz: White Lotus
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Though titled after the hit television show about a resort hotel and the psychosocial relations of its guests and employees, *White Lotus* by Alex Katz bears no – or perhaps a mysterious – relation to HBO’s dark comedy. Opening at GRAY’s Chicago gallery on July 11, 2025, two weeks before the artist turns 98 years old, *White Lotus* is a testament not only to Katz’s nonstop creative output, but also his status as one of the most groundbreaking American artists of both the 20th and 21st centuries.

Throughout his many years of relentless production, Katz has propelled American painting through his cool, flat depictions of figures and landscapes, and yet, he has also managed to avoid the pigeonholings of Pop, Realism, and Minimalism. As Calvin Tomkins noted in his 2018 profile of Katz for *The New Yorker*, “He has always had his own direction, which has not been the direction of mainstream art in any of the last seven decades.” This path has always been guided, in part, by the tools of cinema, through his use of monumental canvas, dramatic lighting, and repeating figures.

Painted in 2023, the year of the artist’s celebrated Guggenheim retrospective, the paintings in this exhibition do not depict characters or scenes from *The White Lotus* television show – in fact, Katz has only watched part of a single episode. Known for painting people close to him – most notably his wife Ada, son Vincent, and daughter-in-law Vivien – the figures painted by Katz in this suite are strangers by comparison. They are based on photographs he took while on a beach in Maine, where Katz has kept a summer home since 1954. Each of the eleven paintings in *White Lotus* portray two beach-going figures, a man and a woman, with three different pairs depicted.

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Closely cropped onto the figures' faces and torsos – a technique partly inspired by Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni – the paintings contain enigmatic atmospheres, alternating between tension and sensuality, delivered in Katz's signature brushstroke: broad and dispassionate, a seamless marriage of representation and abstraction. As curator and writer Dieter Roelstraete notes in his essay for the forthcoming exhibition catalogue, the figures "aren't really meant to be 'people,' but symbols instead – though symbols of what, exactly, remains eerily, satisfyingly unresolved, frozen in the blinding glare of New England's summer light."

Alex Katz: White Lotus opens at GRAY Chicago (2044 West Carroll Avenue) with a public reception on Friday, July 11, from 5-7 PM, and will be on view through September 20, 2025.

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION

Alex Katz: White Lotus is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by Dieter Roelstraete, Curator at the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society at University of Chicago.

ABOUT ALEX KATZ

Alex Katz (American, b.1927) is one of the most recognized and widely exhibited artists of his generation. Coming of age between Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art, Katz began exhibiting his work in 1954, and since that time he has produced a celebrated body of work that includes paintings, drawings, sculpture, and prints. His earliest work took inspiration from various aspects of mid-century American culture and society, including television, film, and advertising, and over the past five and a half decades he has established himself as a preeminent painter of modern life, whose distinctive portraits and lyrical landscapes bear a flattened surface and consistent economy of line. Utilizing characteristically wide brushstrokes, large swathes of color, and refined compositions, Katz created what art historian Robert

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Storr called “a new and distinctive type of realism in American art which combines aspects of both abstraction and representation.”

Since the 1950s, Katz’s work has been the subject of more than 200 solo exhibitions and nearly 500 group exhibitions around the world. His work can be found in nearly 100 public collections worldwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; The Tate Gallery, London; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among many others. In 2024, Katz received a National Medal of Arts.

ABOUT GRAY

GRAY is a globally recognized team of art professionals devoted to fostering the development of historically important artists’ careers and to building outstanding art collections. Founded in 1963, GRAY has established its reputation as a resource for Modern, Postwar, and Contemporary art with prominent private and institutional clients worldwide. Known for producing critically acclaimed exhibitions and programming from its galleries in Chicago and New York, GRAY represents a roster of internationally recognized artists such as McArthur Binion, Torkwase Dyson, Theaster Gates, David Hockney, Rashid Johnson, Alex Katz, Ellen Lanyon, Jaume Plensa, Leon Polk Smith, and Evelyn Statsinger.

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