

499parkavenue

THE LOBBY GALLERY AT 499 PARK AVENUE



Tina Barney, *The Drawing*, 1993



Tina Barney, *The Antique Store*, 2003

Acknowledgements

499 Park Avenue and Hines, through their exhibition program, actively contributes to the cultural community as an expression of ongoing commitment to excellence in the visual arts and architecture.

Contributors

Doug Hall, courtesy of Kinz, Tillou + Feigen

Chuck Close and Alex Katz, courtesy of John Szoke Editions

Tina Barney, courtesy of Janet Borden Inc.

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THEM. YOU. US.

FOUR AMERICAN FIGURATIVE ARTISTS

Portraits reveal a subject's likeness while providing insight into the cultural surround. From advertisements, to formal portraits, to photojournalism, the manner in which the human image is delineated reflects the social and political climate of the moment. Celebratory pictures can bring people together and strengthen a sense of community, while provocative images hope to spark debate, even stimulate change, and may be thought of as "political."

OCTOBER 7, 2008 – JANUARY 7, 2009

Alex Katz, *Pas de Deux III*, 1995



Alex Katz, *Pas de Deux V*, 1995



Chuck Close, *Lorna*, 2002



Doug Hall, *Glacier Point, Yosemite*, 2004



Them. You. Us. brings together the work of five well-known American artists, Tina Barney, Doug Hall, Chuck Close, and Alex Katz.

Tina Barney is best known for photographs documenting the lifestyles and relationships of her family and close friends, many of whom belong to the social elite of New York and New England. Barney's style is part candid, part tableau; her subject matter raises in equal measure issues of privilege and the interaction of family members. While striving for the candidness of a snapshot, Barney became one of the first artists working in the 1980s to explore a "directorial" mode of making pictures. Her direction ranges from posing her subjects to asking them to repeat a spontaneous gesture, and her style of working often includes careful lighting and the help of an assistant. The effect is an unexpectedly intimate access to her subjects.¹

Doug Hall's recent large-format photos move beyond the one-point perspective of the vacant architectural interiors, or images of

highways in the American west for which he first became well known. Shot around the world, in the United States, Asia, South America, and Europe, Hall's pictures show the global village of cityscapes and people in public places, contrasted at times by simpler and more tranquil environments. His seductive photographs continue to address how pictorial strategies can affect the way we see and perceive ourselves in the world.

His work was featured in the 2002 Bienal de São Paulo, and is in the collections of numerous museums including: the Pompidou Center, Paris; Kunsthaus, Zürich; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Vienna; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He lives and works in San Francisco.

A prolific and celebrated artist, **Chuck Close** has worked for nearly 40 years as a portrait artist. Stark, monumental self-portraits and portraits of his friends gained recognition in the early 1970s. Art critics align Close with

the Photorealists; however, his work is actually developed by transposing increments of marks through the use of a Renaissance grid system. By manipulating the system for making these marks, Close is able to alter the viewer's perception of reality. The images become, therefore, as much about abstraction as they are systems for decoding information about the photographs and the subjects.

Syntax is an issue of paramount importance to Close. As he has stated, "How an artist chooses to do something is often as important as what the artist chooses to do." For Close, the processes that are chosen, whether mezzotint, oil, airbrush, or pulp collage are often the most arduous and time-consuming imaginable.

His work is included in over 60 major public collections worldwide. He lives and works in New York City.

Alex Katz, among the most influential American artists of the past 50 years, is known for painting portraits and landscapes

that have been said to define the unquantifiable quality of "cool"². By combining the insouciance of a primitive with the stylistic hijinks of a decadent, he juggles conceptual oppositions to form the essence of his paint personality, merging portraiture with abstraction. On the one hand, there is a high octane bravura technique; at the same time, his lean surfaces seem to breeze by with nonchalant finesse. He is an artist with a fully-rounded, personal vision, and yet his style is insistently cool, classical, impersonal. You can tell an Alex Katz from across a room, and yet there's diversity within his oeuvre, a willingness to take risks, to push acceptance levels³.

His work has been the subject of nearly 200 solo exhibitions internationally since 1954, and can be found in numerous public collections worldwide. He lives and works in both New York City and Maine.

Rebecca Shea, Lenore Goldberg

1. Kendra Greene, Museum of Contemporary Photography, 2005
2. Robert Storr
3. David Cohen, *The New York Sun*, 10.3.03