



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Alex Katz, *Crowd On Subway*; Alex Katz, *Man With Hat Leaning On Balcony*; Alex in his New York studio

WORK IN PROGRESS

Prolific New York artist Alex Katz is 90 years old and showing no signs of slowing down. Lorna Davies catches his new show



Standing in Timothy Taylor's smart gallery on Carlos Place, New York artist Alex Katz and I are staring up at his 11-foot gleaming slither of a sculpture *Ada*, 2017. "I haven't seen you make anything like this before," I tell the nonagenarian, known for his expansive representational portrait and landscape paintings. "Nor have I!" Katz says with a wide grin.

At 90, Katz is still surprising us.

"It's stainless steel. They did a fantastic polishing job on it, which I love because it completely de-materialises it. There's no volume, no mass," he says in his captivating New Yorker tones.

In a world where many are trying to emotionalise, Katz's work is refreshing in its stark flatness. He has previously said: "I'm not interested in a person's inner feelings." He is known worldwide for his unique approach to contemporary representational painting, which he developed in reaction to the dominance of abstract expressionism, prior to the emergence of pop art in the US.

But Taylor is presenting a new, intimate view. Much of the exhibition is filled with small sketches that Katz did on the subways of New York in the 1940s and 50s. "It started in '46. I was in art school and I couldn't draw from life at all and so I said, if I don't learn quickly I'll be thrown out of this art school. So I started to draw around the clock, you know. When I wasn't eating, I guess I was drawing. I was drawing on subways, at night, I went to jazz clubs and drew people in the bars. I did that for almost three years, and then I said, well, I think I can do this now."