



Is there a moment or work in particular you think of as your creative breakthrough?

People say it's when I started to do figures on flat ground. Willem de Kooning liked them. Philip Guston called me up. Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns called me up. I was in shock. Poets liked my work too. They were all superbright people, so it made me feel I was okay, the world would follow. But I also got a ton of bad reviews. Bob Hughes [Robert Hughes, then the art critic of Time] really pissed me off—he called me the Norman Rockwell of the intelligentsia. But the worst one was Hilton Kramer, the art critic of The New York Times, telling me how I had lost my way, how I used to be a good painter, and how it was a moral decline. I called my mother up and she said, “Oh, you finally got someone interested in you.”

Read the rest of the interview at: [The Originals: Alex Katz | W Magazine](#)

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