



**ALEX KATZ (b. 1927)**

**Ukulele Player**

oil on canvas

54 x 48 in. (54 7/8 x 48 7/8 x 2 in.)

1981

28612

**PROVENANCE:**

Marlborough Gallery, New York

Private Collection, North Carolina

Leland Little Auctions, Ltd., "The Winter Quarterly Auction", Lot 177, 2 December, 2017

Private Collection, Puerto Rico

Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1927, Alex Katz is an American figural artist associated with the Pop art movement. He studied at The Cooper Union Art School in New York and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. In 1994, The Cooper Union endowed the Alex Katz Visiting Chair in Painting, and in 2000, honored the artist with its "Artist of the City" award. The Cooper Union endowment was funded through the sale of ten of his paintings, donated by the artist.

Katz's work has been the subject of nearly 200 solo exhibitions internationally since 1954. In 1974 The Whitney Museum of American Art showed Alex Katz Prints, followed by a traveling retrospective exhibition Alex Katz in 1986. Known, in particular, for his paintings, sculptures and prints, his works seem simple, but according to Katz they are more reductive, which is fitting to his personality. During his first ten years as a painter he admitted to destroying a thousand paintings, but since the 1950's he has worked to create art more "freely", trying to paint "faster than he can think."

His paintings are full of exquisite, painterly passages and are not as manicured as they appear at first glance. Inspired by the American Impressionists and the Pop artists of the 1950's, such as Pollock and Close, he later distinguished himself from his avant-garde contemporaries by focusing purely on representational art, rendering figures in vibrant planes of flat color. In subject and style his worked has changed little over the years having arrived early at his signature blending of figure, landscape and abstraction.

Although being shown numerous times across America and Internationally, it has only been in the last decade that Alex Katz's art has gained world wide acceptance and it is now considered influential on much younger generations of artists with his iconic figurative work. At the age of 80, Katz broke out of his minimal frame in small art circles and is currently seen as a major American painter.

Best known for his emotionally ambivalent and psychologically complex portraits of cosmopolitan friends in New York, he is also revered for his bold, transcendent landscape paintings and his coolly intimate portrait of friends and family – oftentimes painted in Maine, where Katz summered. The Maine paintings capture relaxing, off

moments and changes in light.

His works are held in the collections of the Tate Modern and the Museum of Modern Art.

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