

Camden Art Centre
Arkwright Road
London NW3

Allison Katz, Artery 14 Jan/25 Mar

Introduction

Artery is the first institutional solo exhibition in London by Allison Katz (b. 1980 Montreal, Canada). Comprising 24 paintings, most made over the last 18 months, and a new group of posters, it explores Katz's long standing relationship to questions of identity and expression, selfhood and voice; themes she has addressed in her work for more than a decade.

Attending to the idiosyncratic and eccentric, to personal mythologies and embodied experience, Katz treats her own biography as source material, as well as drawing from dream objects, art historical references, and the texture of everyday life. Her exhibition unfolds through a series of biographical anecdotes and moments of synchronicity, opening the world up to a game of allusions, double entendre, slips and wordplay.

In Katz's work, the viewer is compelled to seek out connecting lines running through the apparently disparate subject matter; associations, and conversations that must be imagined and elaborated in order to complete the circuit. The world the artist seeks to give form to is one where chance gives access to poetic order inside life's apparent chaos; where one's own subjectivity and experience collides with the universality of the world, to be read as a route into that which cannot be seen. A painting of the elevator at Camden Art Centre is installed on the other side of the building's real lift-shaft, a trompe-l'oeil aperture into a hidden space; a painting of a cock crossing the road literally crosses two freestanding walls; a crowd of open mouths stare outwards, an allusion perhaps to painting from the position of language, or the gut; while a series of still-life 'portraits' of humble cabbages – an ongoing series since 2013 - are displayed as a group together here for the first time, their 'head' and 'heart' and 'arteries' analogous to the features of the shadowy, absent sitter.

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Elsewhere Katz's exploration of the artist's 'signature' touch is playfully re-evaluated through self-portraits both literal and metaphysical. Shifting combinations of her own name are threaded throughout her work as a slogan ('All Is On'), an alias ('AKA') and a 'MASK' (Ms. Allison Sarah Katz); and the sense of touch (and its prohibition) is heightened by her use of applied textures such as sand, rice, and iridescent pigments including copper and crushed steel. For Katz, surface is depth. The posters in the Central Space announce the exhibition and its duration, presenting it in its temporal totality as another kind of object or event. Posters are an important and long-standing part of the artist's practice. For Katz, to make art is to become an artery. The title of the exhibition refers to the arteries of the body, which circulate through the heart, as well as alluding to roads, rivers, systems of transportation and more tangential networks of communication, meaning, and connection, as well as our inner drives and psyches. The architecture and choreography of the exhibition design itself is an integral part of her work. Staged encounters, bespoke walls, inner rooms and long views: all are central to the experience and meaning that Katz builds across the discrete and varied works in the show.

Artery extends to a satellite exhibition at Canada House, London, from 17 January - 26 March 2022. Artery is a collaboration with Nottingham Contemporary where an earlier iteration of the exhibition was presented from 22 May - 31 October, 2021.

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List of Works

01 Elevator III (Camden Art Centre), 2021. Acrylic, iridescent and metal pigments on linen. Courtesy the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York

02 Akgraph (Tobias + Angel), 2021. Oil on linen. Courtesy the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York

03 2020 (Ephemeral), 2021. Acrylic and sand on canvas Courtesy the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York

04 2020 (Femoral), 2021. Oil, acrylic and sand on canvas. Private Collection

05 To Be Continued Unnoticed, 2019. Hand carved and glazed ceramic. Courtesy the artist

06 The Cockfather, 2021. Oil, acrylic and rice on linen. Ovitz Family Collection, Los Angeles

07 Nottingham Canal, 11th March 2020, 2021. Oil on linen. Private Collection

08 The Other Side, 2021. Oil and rice on canvas. Courtesy the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York

09 Reflexivity, 2019. Hand carved and glazed ceramic. Courtesy the artist

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10 CCTV, 2020. Oil on canvas. Courtesy the artist

11 Inhibition, 2015. Oil on linen. Courtesy the artist

12 Someone else's dream, 2021. Oil, acrylic and sand on linen. Courtesy the artist

13 Posterchild, 2021. Oil, acrylic on linen. Courtesy the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York

14 Blondie, 2013 – 2021. Oil, acrylic on canvas and acrylic on linen (two parts).
Courtesy the artist

15 Stage Cock, 2021. Acrylic and rice on linen. Private Collection

16 M.A.S.K., 2021. Oil and acrylic on linen. Collection of Alexander V. Petalas

17 Ssik, 2020. Oil on silkscreened canvas. Sandra and Giancarlo Bonollo Collection, Italy

18 Interior View II, "William N. Copley", Milan, 2016–17. Oil on linen. Private Collection

19 Alley Cat, 2020. Oil on silkscreened canvas. Courtesy Danjuma Collection

20 Cabbage (and Philip), No. 22, 2020. Oil on linen. Courtesy Philip Coulter

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21 Cabbage (and Philip), No. 21, 2020. Oil on linen. Private Collection

22 Cabbage (and Philip), No. 5, 2013. Oil on canvas. Collection of Alexander V. Petalas

23 Cabbage (and Philip), No. 7, 2014. Oil on linen. Courtesy Philip Coulter

24 Cabbage (and Philip), No. 24, 2020. Oil on linen, sand and wax. Courtesy the artist

25 Artery (Cat Cave, Camden), 2021. Digital Print. Courtesy the artist

26 Artery (Stage Cock), 2021. Digital Print. Courtesy the artist

27 Artery (Finchley Road), 2021. Digital Print. Courtesy the artist

28 Artery (Elevator/All Sites), 2021. Digital Print. Courtesy the artist

29 Artery (Tobias + Angel, Canada House), 2021/ Digital Print. Courtesy the artist

30 Artery (Why...the road), 2021. Digital Print. Courtesy the artist

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