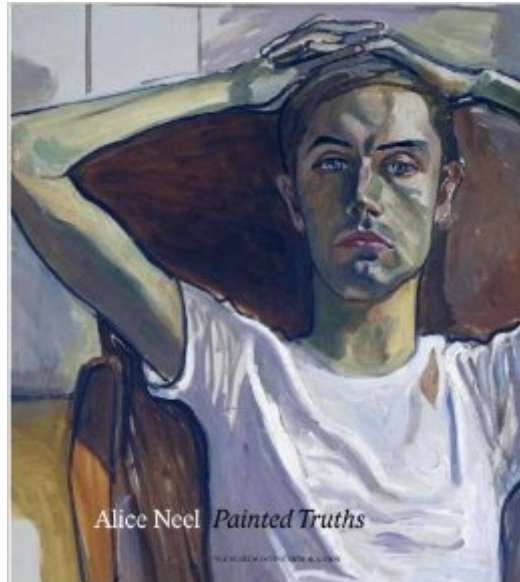


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# Alice Neel: Painted Truths (Museum Of Fine Arts, Houston)



## Synopsis

Widely regarded as one of the most important American painters of the 20th century, Alice Neel is internationally recognized for her contributions to Abstract Expressionism, especially her perceptive portraiture. Neel (1900–1984) was a portrait painter at a time when this was traditionally the role of a male artist. After ascending to prominence in the 1960s as the feminist movement gained momentum, she has remained an iconic figure in the history of American painting. A self-proclaimed “collector of souls,” Neel often painted friends and family, as well as the celebrated artists and writers of her day, such as Andy Warhol, Frank O’Hara, and Meyer Shapiro, delving into personalities and idiosyncrasies with a rare frankness. *Alice Neel: Painted Truths* brings together paintings that demonstrate Neel’s range and ability, along with insightful commentary from four leading art historians. Although the book focuses on her portraits, it also covers the artist’s early social realist paintings and cityscapes, tracing the evolution of Neel’s style and examining themes that she revisited throughout her career.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Alice Neel, for many art lovers, is an artist primarily known for her rise to importance with the Feminist movement. Prior to that she had been admired for her courage to paint in the genre of portraiture usually carefully guarded by male artists. This book goes a long way in dismissing the myth that Alice Neel was just an interesting outsider and instead places her where she belongs - in the mainstream of American art. Born in 1900 and died in 1984 her paintings have ranged from

observations of nature and cityscapes and landscapes, but her primary importance is centered in her vivid portraits of well known people as well as artist models her 'collection of souls'. Some Neel's most famous paintings are her depictions of nudes one would never expect to be attractive enough to paint, children, strange appearing people with considerable personality in their body stance and facial expression, as well as her portraits of public figures, such as Frank O'Hara, Meyer Shapiro, Annie Sprinkle, Andy Warhol (both Andy with Friends and the very famous 'Andy Warhol, 1970' that shows the surgical wounds from his near fatal gunshots from the 1968 attempted assassination by Valerie Solanas) and the controversial painting of Joe Gould (more a study in male genitalia than a portrait of Gould). In addition to a fine sampling of Neel's paintings this book contains excellent essays by Barry Walker, curator of modern and contemporary art and prints and drawings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Jeremy Lewison who is a curator and advisor to the Estate of Alice Neel, Robert Storr, the dean of the Yale School of Art, and Tamar Garb, Professor in the History of Art at University College London. It is a scholarly study and at the moment the definitive work on this amazing artist. Grady Harp, December 10

The visibility of figurative painter Alice Neel has increased lately, with a record price paid at auction last year by the Cleveland Museum of Art for one of her paintings and with this retrospective, currently held at the Houston Museum of Art, which will then travel to England and Sweden and which is accompanied by this catalogue. The book is a high-quality publication, with many very good reproductions of the 68 paintings in the show (from the 1920s to the 1980s), that traces the artist's career chronologically and studies such themes as the psychological portrait, the portrait from memory, the nude, the cityscapes, the relationship between parents and children, the old age, in short presents her work as a sort of chronicle of her time. It also dwells on her stylistic qualities, especially on her mastery of line and color, through numerous portraits of friends and celebrities (Andy Warhol...) and also some interesting landscapes in the tradition of Edward Hopper. The artist, herself influenced by various masters (Beckmann for example,) has in turn influenced many of today's figurative painters (Elizabeth Peyton comes to mind) and this is well shown here, even though one may question her real place among America's greatest artists of the XXth century...

a magnificent collection of Neel's works....unfortunately I did not learn about her art until after her death--and ignoring her life and work was a huge disservice to western culture and Americans specifically. this collection is a standout publication....thank to Barry Walker AND the MFA Houston

OMG, this book is great! I haven't even read a little of this book, but it's already not leaving me until I finish it all...over and over. This book is printed magnificently, the pages each a treasure.

I love Alice Neel and this book is a nice addition to my library. Wonderfully written insights placed beside each of her paintings. One gets a nice perspective on her works and subjects. Ideal book for any Alice Neel fan!

I attended this exhibit in 2010 at the MFAH and really enjoyed her work, This summer I went to Washington DC and Boston and saw more of her work and knew I had to have the MFAH exhibit book. Now I can enjoy her work anytime.

if you love alice neel, you will love this book. she is a trip. you can say that again. she is a trip

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