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- MOVEMENTS
- ARTISTS
- TIMELINES
- IDEAS & CRITICS
- CURRENT EVENTS

Franz Kline
 Born: March 23, 1910, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
 Died: May 13, 1962, New York City, New York

1880 '90 '00 '10 '20 '30 '40 '50 '60 '70 '80 '90 '00 2010

■ Years Worked
 ■ Abstract Expressionist Period

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"The final test of a painting, theirs, mine, any other, is: does the painter's emotion come across?"

FRANZ KLINE

FRANZ KLINE SYNOPSIS

American Abstract Expressionist Franz Kline is best known for large black and white paintings bearing abstract motifs set down with strident confidence. He started out as a realist with a fluent style that he perfected during an academic training that encouraged him to admire Old Masters such as **Rembrandt**. But after settling in New York and meeting **Willem de Kooning**, he began to evolve his signature abstract approach. By the end of his life he had achieved immense international recognition, and his unusual approach to gestural abstraction was beginning to influence the ideas of many Minimalists.

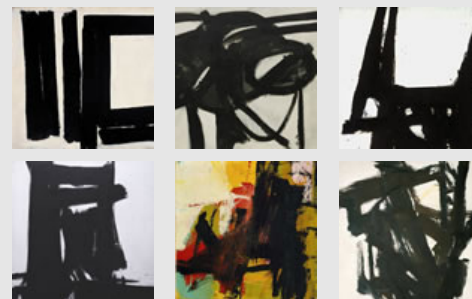
FRANZ KLINE KEY IDEAS

- Franz Kline is most famous for his black and white abstractions, which have been likened variously to New York's cityscape, the landscape of his childhood home in rural Pennsylvania, and Japanese calligraphy.
- The poet and curator **Frank O'Hara** saw Kline as the quintessential 'action painter', and Kline's black and white paintings certainly helped establish gestural abstraction as an important tendency within **Abstract Expressionism**. Yet Kline saw his method less as a means to express himself than as a way to create a physical engagement with the viewer.
- The powerful forms of his motifs, and their impression of velocity, were intended to translate into an experience of structure and presence which the viewer could almost palpably feel.
- Kline's reluctance to attribute hidden meanings to his pictures was important in recommending his work to a later generation of Minimalist sculptors such as **Donald Judd** and **Richard Serra**.

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FRANZ KLINE BIOGRAPHY

ANALYSIS OF FRANZ KLINE'S ART WORKS:



ADDITIONAL ARTWORK

FEATURED BOOKS: ? Recommended



- ★ **Franz Kline**
By Harry F. Gaugh
- ★ **An Emotional Memoir of Franz Kline**
By Fielding Dawson



- ▶ **Franz Kline (1910-1962)**
By David Anfam
- ▶ **Franz Kline**
By Frank O'Hara

WEB RESOURCES: Recommended



- ▶ **Franz Kline.org**
Monograph and Comprehensive Catalogue Initiative



- ★ ▶ **Energy in Black and White**
By Robert Hughes
TIME
February, 10 1986
- ▶ **The Man Who Painted IMPACT**
By Robert Hughes
TIME
January, 23 1995

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- ▶ **Kerouac and Franz Kline**
- ▶ **Strokes of Genius: Franz Kline**

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Childhood

Franz Kline was born and raised in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, a small coal-mining community that offered few opportunities for artistic development. His childhood was marred by a complicated relationship with his parents. His father, a saloon keeper, committed suicide in 1917, when Kline was only seven years old. His mother later remarried and sent her son to an institution for fatherless boys, which the artist referred to as "the orphanage."

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FRANZ KLINE LEGACY

Although Kline's death received much attention in the press, his fame declined in subsequent years and his work was not seriously revisited until the art market boom of the late 1980s. However, a new generation of Minimalists found much of interest in his work. They rejected the heroics of his gestures, and their aura of lofty nobility, but they were attracted by the way the viewer could feel energized by the architectonic forms of his motifs. What to some critics seemed like references to architecture then became almost real built surfaces in the work of artists like Donald Judd and Richard Serra.

Original content written by Ivan Sayvine

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FRANZ KLINE QUOTES

- "If you're a painter, you're not alone. There's no way to be alone."
- "The nature of anguish is translated into different forms."
- "You instinctively like what you can't do."
- "It's a wonderful thing to be in love with The Square."
- "You paint the way you have to in order to give. That's life itself, and someone will look and say it is the product of knowing, but it has nothing to do with knowing, it has to do with giving."
- "I paint the white as well as the black, and the white is just as important."



Franz Kline Influences
Interactive chart with Franz Kline's main influencers, and the people and ideas that the artist influenced in turn.
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26

96

58

47

78
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41

95

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James Abell · Edinburgh College of Art

Kline is an inspiration to me.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · October 14 at 3:49pm



Heidi Schlossberg · ★ Top Commenter


Hi Meriem,

I am more a representational impressionist, but my Dr. loves Kline, so I offered to do his favorite one in oil so he can put it on his wall. Of course it is NOT a Kline, it is my impression of his painting, but I am hoping My doc will like it. It is interesting to copy another artists work: It does make me think about what he was thinking.....

Jean: I am not always impressed with "artist speak" so I understand what you are saying. However, as an artist I understand where it all comes from : The desire to be accepted and loved..... I see past it.

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