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Elaine de Kooning

Born: 1918 Brooklyn, PA

Died: 1989 Southampton, NY

1918

Born March 12, in Brooklyn, New York, first child of Marie and Charles Frank Fried. Grows up in Sheepshead Bay, attends Erasmus Hall High School and graduates in 1935.

1936

Enrolls at Hunter College, drops out following year.

1937

Begins to attend classes at Leonardo da Vinci Art School. Studies with Conrad Marca-Relli and meets Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, and Milton Resnick. Transfers to American Artists School and studies with Milton Hebard, Ben Wilson, and Nauhum Tchachbasov. Begins posing to cover tuition costs.

1938

Introduced to ballet critic Edwin Denby and photographer Rudy Burckhardt by Willem de Kooning. Begins attending the ballet and writing (mostly unpublished) reviews. Shares studios with Milton Resnick and Ernestine Blumberg. Begins cityscape series of drawings and watercolors. Sells first work (a watercolor) to Bennington College professor Stephan Hirsh for \$10. Begins to study with Willem de Kooning.

1939

Moves into de Kooning's studio at 156 W. 22nd Street.

1940

Meets John Graham and Franz Kline.

1942

Takes job at Liquidometer painting dials for airplane dashboards. Meets Jackson Pollock.

1943

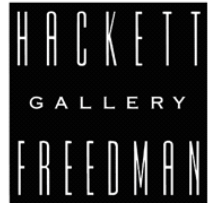
Willem de Kooning spends year refurbishing 22nd Street loft prior to their marriage on December 9 at City Hall, New York. Bart Vanderschelling is best man, her father, sister Marjorie, and brother Peter are also there. Her mother, who thought Elaine too young to marry, refused to attend the ceremony.

1944

22nd Street building is sold and the de Koonings move into cold-water flat at 63 Carmine Street. Willem de Kooning takes loft at 88 Fourth Avenue to paint in, Elaine paints at Carmine Street.

1948

Spends summer at Black Mountain College. That summer, Buckminster Fuller constructs his first geodesic dome and John Cage and Merce Cunningham produce Eric Satie's *The Ruse of Medusa*. Elaine plays Frisette and Fuller plays the title role. Elaine also designs the sets for the production. Paints seventeen *Black Mountain Abstractions* that she rolls up and puts away until 1985. Appointed Editorial Associate for *Art News* and begins to write reviews and articles. Articles about Joseph Albers, Edwin Dickenson, Archille Gorky, Hans Hofmann, Franz Kline, Mark Rothko, and David Smith are among the first written about these



artists. Begins making sports pictures from newspaper photographs of basketball and baseball games. In 1953-54 travels with New York Yankees and Baltimore Orioles.

1949

Elaine and Willem de Kooning included in *Artists: Man and Wife* at Sidney Janis Gallery. Other artist couples include Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner, Jean Arp and Sophie Tauber-Arp, and Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth. The Club established at 39 E. Eighth Street—members include Franz Kline, Mercedes Matter, Phillip Pavia, Conrad Marca-Relli, Milton Resnick, Elaine and Willem de Kooning. Other regulars include Helen Frankenthaler, Grace Hartigan, Lee Krasner, Larry Rivers, Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottlieb, and Ibram Lassaw. Plays role in *The Dogwood Maiden*, a film by Rudy Burkhardt. Spends part of summer at Provincetown, MA.

1951

Elaine and Willem spend first of three summers at East Hampton as guests of Leo and Ileana Castelli.

1954

Spends summer at "Red House" in Bridgehampton, MA. Shares house with Franz Kline and Nancy Ward. Has first one-person exhibition at Stable Gallery. Begins to paint series of abstractions in response to current events.

1957

Included in group exhibitions: *Pittsburgh International* and *Young American Painters*, a traveling exhibition organized by MOMA. One-person exhibition at Stable Gallery included in "Ten Best" list for 1956 by *Art News*. Amicably separates from Willem de Kooning.

1958

Receives teaching appointment as visiting Professor at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Travels to the Western United States for the first time. Is impressed by color and space of Western landscape. Taken to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, by the poet Margaret Randall to see bullfights. Paints first horizontal canvases - palette changes to bolder and brighter colors.

1960

Visiting professor, Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

1961

Included in Whitney Annual.

1962-1963

Accepts commission to paint portrait of President John F. Kennedy; travels to West Palm Beach to make sketches. Spends much of 1963 working on presidential portrait.

1964

Stops painting for a year following the assassination of President Kennedy. Visiting Professor at University of California, Davis. Makes sculpture, completing fourteen works in bronze. Awarded honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, Western College, Oxford, Ohio.

1967-1968

Continues to teach: Yale University Graduate School, New Haven; Pratt Institute, Brooklyn; Mellon Chair, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh; Wagner College, Staten Island; University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

1972

Awarded Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, Moore College of Art, Philadelphia.

1973

Returns to New Mexico during summer to make prints at Tamarind Lithography Workshop, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

1974

Begins two-year professorship at Parsons School of Design, New York. Travels to Europe for first time when Mercedes Matter invites her to teach summer session in Paris for the New York Studio School.

1975

Artist-in-residence, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts. Summer in Paris for the New York Studio School. Reconciles with Willem de Kooning and purchases house on Alewife Brook Road in East Hampton.

1976

Holds Mellon Chair at Cooper Union, New York in Spring, and returns to Paris in the summer. Begins *Bacchus* series after seeing a statue in the Jardin du Luxembourg. Returns to vertical format and adopts a palette that is less dark. Begins to use acrylic for the first time. In the Fall, begins two-year appointment as the first Lamar Dodd Visiting Professor of Art, University of Georgia, Athens.

1977

Spends summer in Cortona, Italy, with University of Georgia Studies Abroad program.

1978

Adds studio to Alewife Brook Road house.

1982

Holds Milton and Sally Avery Chair, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

1983

Visits paleolithic caves at Lascaux, France. Begins *Cave Paintings* series.

1984

Travels to Spain to visit paleolithic caves at Altamira and then joins group lead by Xavier Fourcade in Egypt. In early 1985 she continues on to Kenya. Awarded Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, Adelphi University, Garden City, New York.

1985

Awarded Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, The Maryland Institute, College of Art, Baltimore.

1986

Travels to China and Japan. Buys sumi ink and brushes in Japan and begins to make ink wash drawings. *Cave Paintings* exhibited in Germany.

1987

Goes to Crown Point Press, San Francisco, and makes etchings for first time.

1988

Awarded Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, Long Island University, Southampton. Attends opening of *Recent Paintings* at Fishbach Gallery on November 5. Enters hospital the next day.

1989

Dies of lung cancer, Southampton, February 1.

1991

Untitled # 15 (Black Mountain) purchased by Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from exhibition at Washburn Gallery.