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Exhibition

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PEINTURE. ALEX KATZ & FÉLIX VALLOTTON

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This is the catalogue of the exhibition held at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, in Lausanne, and juxtaposes the work of two painters which at first sight have nothing in common: one was Franco-Swiss and died in 1925; the other is American, was born in 1927, and is still active.

Alex Katz is an important figure in late twentieth-century American painting. His resolutely figurative work concentrates on classic subjects, such as individual or group portraits, natural or urban landscapes and still lifes with flowers. He was linked to pop art in the early 1960s on account of his extremely neutral technique which resembled that found in advertising and in film shots. Preferring a smooth, textureless painting technique, often working on a monumental scale and building the composition by simplifying forms and picture planes and relying on a restricted palette, Katz has unconsciously taken over where Vallotton left off, extending the latter's work to the borders of abstraction. Indeed, Félix Vallotton never "inspired" Alex Katz since the American painter is actually not very familiar with Vallotton's work. Even so, it is not hard to find some surprising similarities between the two artists, both having the same aim: to exalt through painting.

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