Maia Toteva

de Kooning, Elaine (1918-1989) Word Count: 224

Elaine de Kooning was an artist, critic, writer, and educator associated with the Abstract Expressionist movement. A central figure in New York’s art scene in the 1950s and 1960s, she was married to one of the leading Abstract Expressionists, Willem de Kooning. Her long and versatile career as a painter encompassed a range of styles, from abstract, gestural paintings to figural works and portraits. Her celebrated portraits of important figures, such as President John F. Kennedy, gained especially high recognition. A dedicated educator, she taught at various institutions such as the Pratt Institute and Yale University. Becoming an editorial associate of *Art News* in 1948, Elaine de Kooning was one of the first critics to recognize and promote the work of avant-garde artists such as Arshile Gorky, Franz Kline, and Mark Rothko. Granted access to their studios, she wrote insightful firsthand observations on their personalities and techniques and became “the voice of the Abstract Expressionist movement.” Her late works were inspired by excursions in France and Spain and included series of prints and paintings that alluded to the prehistoric images of Paleolithic caves.

**References and further reading**

De Kooning, E., & Slivka, R. (1994). *The Spirit of Abstract Expressionism: Selected Writings.* New York: George Braziller.

De Kooning, E., Bledsoe, J., Campbell, L., Harrison, H., & Slivka, R. (1992). *Elaine De Kooning.* Athens, Ga.: Georgia Museum of Art.