Steve Pantazis

**Johns, Jasper (1930 – ) 209 Words**

One of the most influential American artists of the late twentieth century, Jasper Johns was born in Augusta, Georgia, in 1930 and grew up in South Carolina. He studied at the University of South Carolina and attended art school in New York City for a short period. In 1958 Johns had his first solo show at Leo Castelli Gallery where he exhibited his encaustic paintings of simple objects and symbols such as *Flag* (1954-55); it was at this show that the Museum of Modern Art acquired three of his works. Strengthened by his close friendship with Robert Rauschenberg, the composer and artist John Cage and dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham, Johns became a key forerunner of Pop, Minimal and Conceptual art of the 1960s. In the 1970s Johns created virtually abstract paintings, focusing on painterly technique and leaving behind the depiction of everyday objects. In the 1980s his painterly and sculptural pieces made references to the work of other artists such as Edvard Munch. He has returned to the depiction of simple objects and symbols in his most recent works.

**References and further reading**

Hallevoet, C. and Varnedoe, K., eds. (1996), *Jasper Johns: Writings, Sketchbook Notes, Interviews.* New York: Museum of Modern Art.

Orton, F. (1994) *Figuring Jasper Johns.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.