

The Artist

Intro: Jasper Johns

Jasper Johns was born in Georgia in 1930 and raised in South Carolina. Johns attended college at the University of South Carolina and moved to New York in 1948, where he studied at Parsons School of Design. He later served in the military during the Korean War and was stationed in South Carolina and Japan. When he returned to New York in 1953, he met Robert Rauschenberg, a fellow Southerner and artist, and they began an artist and romantic relationship that last until 1961.

Johns and Rauschenberg are known for breaking down the lines separating mass culture and fine art and paving the way for Pop Art. Their work from the 1950s inspired future art movements such as Minimal and Conceptual Art as well. Johns is best known for paintings that incorporate text, numbers, and symbols, and push the viewer to interpret and explore the relationship between art, symbol, and language. Johns is also known for using flags and maps as frequent subjects in his work.

Since 1955, the American flag has been featured in over 100 of Johns' artworks. Some say that Johns was influenced by Sergeant William Jasper, for whom he was named, known for raising the flag during the Revolutionary War. At his first exhibition in 1958, Johns textured surfaces and recognizable images established him as new voice in American Art.

Although he is best known for his paintings, Johns began making prints in 1960 and printmaking has been an essential element in his six-decade long career. Since 1960, Johns has created several hundred prints and explored numerous techniques including printmaking, lithography, intaglio, and screen-printing.