

Frances Stark

Because I'm so promiscuous with the muses in my own work, I'm curious to know the distinction between muse and wife, or muse and lover, or muse and mother?

AK

Ada embraces different roles because she is very malleable. She can be anything. She can be around people almost like an actress. You have an idea for something, and you cast a person in that role. It was all to do with having different ideas while you are working, and you need to cast the person. You need to establish what person fits with what idea.

MH

When you make paintings of family members, does that proximity or intimacy make for a different kind of portrait?

AK

Not too much. With certain people, you just seem get better paintings out of them. I know there are some women that I've painted where I get winners every time. Others not so much. So the model clearly has something to do with it; it's not exactly a collaboration, but something like that.

Mary Heilmann

Do you remember being the visiting critic when Richard Serra and Chuck Close were students at Yale, and if so, what they were like?

AK

Chuck never studied with me. Bob Mangold was fabulous. There were other fabulous people there. Almost three-quarters of the class became interesting artists. Richard Serra was making Morandi-like paintings at the time, bottles and stuff, I guess they were trying to show him how to use paint. Brice Marden studied with me, and he was painting like Franz Kline, which I thought was a great idea, because in order to paint like Kline, you really had to learn how to paint, because Kline was such a great painter, although I don't think the other teachers necessarily thought it was such a great idea. But I said to Brice, 'You won't be painting like him three years from now.' Rackstraw Downes was there too. He came there with a scholarship in English and dumped it to start painting. He was painting half-abstract and half-realistic. I told him to take a look at Al Held's work, which he did and then went abstract for a couple of years.

MH

Did you enjoy teaching?

AK

Yes, I really enjoyed it because during the three years when I was a visiting critic at Yale – circa 1960 to 1963 – everyone was really bright, and they also knew what was going on. I had a great time.