



The Paintings of

BOB KANE

People and Places

Essay by Richard J. Boyle

RIZZOLI
NEW YORK

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In the letters I received from Audrey Hepburn she often used the word happy, even closing a letter “with happy Thanks.” I feel she put a high value on happiness like Matisse and Renoir, who suffered physically but painted happy subjects. Her good friend Connie Wald once said to me, “I love flowers because they are beautiful, noble, innocent, and happy.” And like a flower herself, Audrey gave us these qualities in her life and films.

This book is dedicated to her with happy thanks.

BOB KANE

Marincanto II

Positano, Italy, 2001

60 x 50"

Harmon-Meek Gallery

THE PAINTINGS OF BOB KANE: PEOPLE and PLACES

In my work I try to catch that moment of high spirits, that exhilaration when one is wildly in love with life. . . . My goal as an artist is to add to those moments of Joy.

—Bob Kane

In February of 2000, Bob Kane had his twelfth one-man exhibition at the Harmon-Meek Gallery in Naples, Florida. The show was titled *New Paintings of Italy* and included *Portofino Dawn*, done in 2000, a brilliant evocation in bright yellow, green, and pink of that hillside village and its romantic harbor. His fountain series, painted in 2000, was also featured, including *Piazza Navona, Fountain of the Four Rivers*, and *Tritone Fountain, Rome* in which he captures crowds of young people in tones of white, cerulean blue, yellow ochre, and a modified burnt sienna derived from the color of ancient Roman buildings. These paintings seem to capture and almost sum up the underlying themes of this book: Kane's sense of place, his feeling for people and his command of an expressive, poetic, and colorful palette by which his vivid images are conveyed, and which barely contain that sense of jubilation which is the benchmark of his painting.¹



Fig. 23 left to right **Robbie Wald, Audrey Hepburn, and Andrew Wald**
Cannes, France, 1986



Fig. 24 **Audrey Hepburn's Home** photographed by Kathleen Davis
La Paisible, Switzerland



Fig. 25 **Audrey Hepburn's Living Room** with painting *Flowers by the Sea* photographed by Kathleen Davis
La Paisible, Switzerland

Bob Kane is a *jongleur*, a poet, and his painting is permanently enriched by a generous imagination. His drawing is often a charming arabesque that, like his color, sometimes lives its own life. In his exuberant gestures of line and color, he has created a pictorial language all his own with which he transcribes the passing world, the world of his travels. He paints that world with an unparalleled wealth of observation and fancy, full of humor, and passion for life. Yet, he sometimes despairs of getting it all. "One can only hope to grasp just a little of it," he once said about Paris. He quotes Stendahl, one of his favorite French writers: "I am always afraid of only having put down a sigh when I imagine myself to have recorded a truth."¹⁸ However, Stendahl also said, "The beautiful is the promise of happiness."¹⁹ And that is what Bob Kane's paintings are all about.

Richard J. Boyle



Fig. 32

Room by the Sea

New York City, 1988
60 x 50"

Collection of Patrizia Spadafora and Paolo Berloffia
Bolzano, Italy

An abstract painting featuring a vibrant and chaotic composition of colors and textures. The palette includes bright reds, oranges, yellows, greens, blues, and purples, all applied with thick, expressive brushstrokes. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and visual complexity. The word "PLATES" is superimposed in the center in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

PLATES



Pl. 1 **Spring**
New York City, 1986
48 x 36"



Pl. 6

Untitled

Amalfi Coast, Italy, 2001
50 x 40"



Pl. 31 **Tritone Fountain**
Rome, Italy, 2000
50 x 40"



A Time to Give Back

Proceeds from the sale of this book go to the charity that continues the work Audrey Hepburn began with U.N.I.C.E.F.

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The Audrey Hepburn Children's Fund

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The first monograph to examine the work of this important contemporary American artist, *The Paintings of Bob Kane: People and Places* explores the life and work of a man whose bold colors and gestural style are as gorgeous as the people and places they describe. Travel to the south of France, Italy, Morocco, and Greece through the extraordinarily evocative work of this American master.

U.S. \$35.00

ISBN 0-8478-2486-1



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