

## Topic Page: [Ashbery, John, 1927-2017](#)

Summary Article: **Ashbery, John**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1927–2017, American poet, b. Rochester, N.Y., grad. Harvard (B.A., 1949), Columbia (M.A., 1951). Among the most acclaimed and influential American poets of his era, he was (1960s–70s) one of the so-called New York school of poets, which also included Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, and James Schuyler. Influenced early in his career by the method and music of John Cage, Ashbery called his writing technique “managed chance.” He was averse to the personal revelations of the contemporary, so-called confessional poets. His poems are experimental and idiosyncratic in style and syntax, strongly visual, and narrative, but typically complex, elusive, ambiguous, and somewhat obscure. His more than 20 collections include *Some Trees* (1956), *The Tennis Court Oath* (1962), *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, his most celebrated work (1975; Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, National Book Critics Circle prize), *Shadow Train* (1981), *A Wave* (1984), *April Galleons* (1987), *And the Stars Were Shining* (1994), *Chinese Whispers* (2002), *Where Shall I Wander* (2005), *Planisphere* (2009), and *Breezeway* (2015). He also wrote two book-length poems, *Flow Chart* (1991) and *Girls on the Run* (1999); and three plays, *The Compromise* (1960), *The Heroes* (1960), and *The Philosopher* (1964); and coauthored a novel, *A Nest of Ninnies* (1969). On a Fulbright scholarship to Paris in the 1950s, Ashbery began to write art criticism and continued to do so after his return to New York, writing for various journals and editing the quarterly *Art and Literature*. Many of his art reviews and essays were collected in *Reported Sightings* (1989). He also translated works by such French writers as Pierre Reverdy, Raymond Roussel, Max Jacob, and Arthur Rimbaud. Ashbery taught at Brooklyn College, Harvard, and Bard College.

See Ford, M. , ed., *John Ashbery: Collected Poems, 1956-1987* (2008) and *John Ashbery: Collected Poems 1991-2000* (2017);

Richie, E. , ed., *Selected Prose* (2004);

Roffman, K. , *The Songs We Know Best: John Ashbery's Early Life* (2017);

studies by D. Shapiro (1979), D. Lehman, ed. (1980) and as author (1999), H. Bloom, ed. (1985 and 2004), J. Shoptaw (1994), S. M. Schultz, ed. (1995), D. Herd (2000), G. Ward (2d ed. 2001), K. Bartczak (2006), A. DuBois (2006), and J. E. Vincent (2007).

### APA

### Chicago

### Harvard

### MLA

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Ashbery, John. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/ashbery\\_john\\_lawrence\\_1927](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/ashbery_john_lawrence_1927)

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## APA

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## Chicago

"Ashbery, John." In *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, by Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University. 8th ed. Columbia University Press, 2018. [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/ashbery\\_john\\_lawrence\\_1927](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/ashbery_john_lawrence_1927)

## Harvard

Ashbery, John. (2018). In P. Lagasse & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia*. (8th ed.). [Online]. New York: Columbia University Press. Available from: [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/ashbery\\_john\\_lawrence\\_1927](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/ashbery_john_lawrence_1927) [Accessed 19 October 2019].

## MLA

"Ashbery, John." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, Columbia University Press, 8th edition, 2018. *Credo Reference*, [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/ashbery\\_john\\_lawrence\\_1927](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/ashbery_john_lawrence_1927). Accessed 19 Oct. 2019.