

KEITH HARING | JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT CROSSING LINES

ARTWORK LABELS

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Keith Haring | Jean-Michel Basquiat: Crossing Lines

This exhibition is dedicated to two highly significant American artists of the late twentieth century: Keith Haring (1958–90) and Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960–88). This is the first major museum exhibition to bring together the work of these celebrated artists, who were also friends and contemporaries.

Through more than 200 artworks, the short and intense careers of Haring and Basquiat are revealed in dialogue, offering new insights into each artist's unique visual language and helping to communicate their important social, political and artistic ideas.

Haring was an openly gay man who lived in the era of increased agitation for gay rights and during the emerging AIDS crisis. Basquiat was a black man of Haitian and Puerto Rican descent who grew up in the racially divided United States of the 1960s and 1970s. Both artists were humanists. Indifference was not their style. Their work speaks of struggles against exploitation, discrimination, consumer society, repression, racism and genocide. With their emotionally charged artworks rich with complex symbolic meaning, Haring and Basquiat changed the art world and cultural production in the 1980s – first in New York and Europe, then Japan and the rest of the world.

From entrance

Vijya Kern

Switzerland born 1945

SAMO© 4.U

1980

inkjet print from original colour transparency

SAMO© is Dead – private parking

1980

inkjet print from original colour transparency

SAMO© do I have 2 spell it out

1980

inkjet print from original colour transparency

SAMO© as an end – Rara

1980

inkjet print from original colour transparency

Courtesy Artstübli Gallery, Basel

Downtown 81

filmed 1980–81, released 2000

film, transferred to digital video,

72 min, excerpt

directed by Edo Bertoglio; produced by Glenn O'Brien and Maripol; screenplay by Glenn O'Brien; cinematography by John McNulty

Courtesy Art + Commerce New York

Keith Haring on CBS Evening News, 20 October 1982

colour video, sound, 3 min 21 sec, excerpt

Courtesy CBS Corporation New York

The subway and the street

Haring and Basquiat first caught the attention of New Yorkers through their bold gestures in public spaces. For Haring, it was his subway drawings, made around 1980, that propelled him to notoriety. With daring speed, he would enter the subway, identify vacant advertising hoarding, and begin drawing. He made somewhere between 5000 and 10,000 of these chalk drawings, each of differing complexity and subject matter, but all bearing Haring's trademark fluid gesture and unhesitating line. As graffiti was an illegal activity, Haring was arrested and fined on several occasions.

For Basquiat, the street played an important role in his early life and work, both as an idea and an artistic subject. When asked by curator Henry Geldzahler to describe his 'subject matter', Basquiat mentioned 'royalty, heroism and the streets'. With his school friend Al Diaz, Basquiat would write cryptic, poetic graffiti on the streets of Brooklyn and SoHo, in Lower Manhattan, and tag it 'SAMO©'. The legend of SAMO© grew, until a falling out between Basquiat and Diaz led to 'SAMO© is dead' appearing around town in 1980. From then on, Basquiat developed his own signature.

Early works

Haring and Basquiat first met in the halls of Manhattan's School for Visual Arts, where Haring was a student in 1979, and quickly became friends. They were part of a community of artists, some of whom were more comfortable making art in public spaces while others developed their visual repertoire in studios at art school.

In various collaborative works in this first gallery, the language of graffiti tagging merges with artistic signature. Key symbols belonging to each artist – Basquiat's crown and Haring's barking dog and crawling baby – can be found among the tags of a range of the artists' contemporaries, including Fab 5 Freddy, Poet and Futura 2000.

Haring's first drawings consisted of abstract forms, but he quickly developed a distinct artistic vocabulary consisting of characteristic symbols, including the baby, the human being and the dog. He 'activated' the silhouettes of these subjects by drawing radiant auras around them. Evident from the very beginning of his artistic practice was a fluidly executed technique that has been likened to that of Pablo Picasso: Haring's work was often drawn in one continuous process, without taking breaks or stepping back until the composition was complete.

Kenny Scharf

United States born 1958

Fred Brathwaite

United States born 1959

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

LA II

United States born 1967

Other artists

Art is the Word

1981

spray-paint and fibre-tipped pen on composition board

Noirmontartproduction collection

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Other artists

Untitled (Symphony No. 1)

c. 1980–83

mixed media, spray-paint and paper on plywood

Collection of Larry Warsh

Although the streets and subways of New York City played an important role in the early work of both Haring and Basquiat, they were not graffiti artists. Their early public works are thematically and stylistically different from that of their friends who dedicated themselves to graffiti, such as Lee Quiñones and Charlie Ahearn, who would often cover entire subway cars with their monumental and visually explosive tags. Basquiat and Haring used vacant walls, advertising space and street signs to develop their respective symbols. Here, by chance, Haring's crawling baby and dog meet Basquiat's three-pointed crown, car and the name 'AARON'. The symbols have not been tagged over – a mark of respect in the world of street art.

For Kids

Keith and Jean-Michel both decided to become artists when they were teenagers. They started to make art in the streets and subway (train) stations of New York City. In the late 1970s, lots of buildings and trains in New York were covered in graffiti.

This piece of plywood used to be part of a wall in a subway. Keith and Jean-Michel painted their own symbols, called 'tags' by graffiti artists, alongside pasted-up posters and advertisements.

Can you find Jean-Michel's crown, and Keith's crawling baby and dog? Jean-Michel also drew a car and wrote the name 'AARON' – probably a reference to Hank Aaron, a great American baseball player.

For Kids

Jean-Michel made many of his earliest artworks on objects he found on the street or took from soon-to-be demolished buildings. These objects were cheap and interesting. This discarded door has been painted and covered with words, letters and scribbles. The markings were all made by Jean-Michel, although it looks like they might have been made by lots of people.

Some of the symbols and words come from objects he would have seen at home. For example, Jean-Michel's mother came from Puerto Rico, where people speak Spanish. In the bottom-right corner, he has written the Spanish words '*Peso Neto*', which mean 'net weight'. These words appear on tins of food in Spanish-speaking countries.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Other artists

Untitled

c. 1982

mixed media on composition board

Collection of Larry Warsh

This work, and the one opposite, record the tags of Haring, Basquiat and many graffiti artists who were tagging the streets and subways of Downtown New York in the early 1980s. This collective mark making is representative of the way the artists worked, layering their signatures and imagery over time. *Untitled* was made in Haring's Broome Street home and studio, which he shared with his boyfriend Juan Dubose and friend Samantha McEwen, and where he and graffiti artist Angel Ortiz (also known as LA II) would make their collaborative works for their 1982 exhibition at Tony Shafrazi Gallery.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Pestus)

1982

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on paper

Private collection, courtesy Tobias Mueller Modern Art, Zurich

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1980

enamel, spray-paint and oilstick on enameled metal

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Gift of an anonymous donor

(97.95)

In February 1981, a landmark exhibition featuring early works by Haring and Basquiat, *New York/New Wave*, opened at the P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center (now MoMA PS1) in Long Island City. Curated by Diego Cortez, the exhibition included works by more than one hundred emerging and established artists, musicians and writers active in New York's downtown scene, including Andy Warhol and Nan Goldin. Cortez invited Basquiat to contribute and asked him to create this work to display at the entrance.

For Kids

Jean-Michel preferred making art in his studio rather than on the streets of New York, but the city continued to be a subject in his paintings and drawings. This is a painting on a piece of metal, which was created for the entrance of an exhibition called *New York/New Wave*.

Jean-Michel has recorded his impressions of the hustle and bustle of the city, including the cars on the streets and the airplanes overhead. He has also added the letters 'PG', like the letters stamped on movie posters. Jean-Michel often included symbols and signs he saw around him all the time in his art.

If you were asked to paint your city, what kind of sights and sounds would you represent in your painting?

Left to right

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1987

ink on paper and box of chalk

Untitled

1985

chalk on paper

Untitled

1982

chalk on paper

...continued overleaf

Untitled

1984

chalk on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

From 1980 to 1985, Haring obsessively executed between 5000 and 10,000 drawings throughout the New York City subway system. Using white chalk, he covered the pieces of black paper that were applied to temporarily unused advertising billboards with his drawings.

Haring reflected on this monumental project in a 1990 *Artforum* interview with Jason Rubell: 'Drawing with chalk on this soft black paper was like nothing else I had ever drawn on. It was a continuous line, you didn't have to stop and dip it in anything. It was a constant line, it was a really graphically strong line and you had a time limit. You had to do these things as fast as you could. And you couldn't erase. So it was like there were no mistakes'.

For Kids

In 1980, Keith began to make lots of drawings in subway stations. Using white chalk, he drew on the black pieces of paper that covered advertising spaces when they weren't in use. Keith drew simple figures and scenes that everyone could understand. In this drawing there are two dancing figures, including one with a 'boom box' for a head. It was important to have your own music with you if you hung out a lot on the streets.

You can tell the figures are dancing, because Keith has added lines around their arms and legs to show motion. This drawing was probably influenced by Keith's time spent watching people dance and DJ in New York nightclubs.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Masque

1981

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on canvas

Collection of Ben and Debra Ashkenazy, New York

Basquiat's use of the French word 'masque' for 'mask' in the title of this work invokes his father's Haitian origin and the interest in African art among early twentieth-century Parisian avant-garde artists. The long face and nose in the work recalls the *Ngil* masks of the Fang people of Gabon, which artists such as Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque had viewed at the Trocadéro Museum in Paris. A fascination with *l'art primitif* (as it was called) led many artists to acquire such masks for their own collections.

Basquiat encountered similar masks at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which had received a large gift of art and objects from Africa, Oceania and the Americas from Nelson A. Rockefeller in 1979. With *Masque*, Basquiat brings his own direct experience of racism to bear on this complex art historical legacy.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Pork

1981

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on wood and glass door

Private collection

In the years following his SAMO© collaboration with high-school classmate Al Diaz on the streets of New York, Basquiat painted and drew on almost everything around him, from refrigerators, to televisions, to clothing. Here he has covered the surface of a discarded door with words and symbols drawn from a range of sources.

The masked head wearing a halo of thorns may find its source in religion, or Basquiat's own biography (the motif has been described as a precursor to his later self-portraits). The word 'PORK' appears above the head in thick black letters. Basquiat's use of the word has been linked to his interest in the distribution of food products and the broader world of commerce. Other markings woven into the work's complex composition include the crown symbol and the Spanish phrase '*PESO NETO*' (meaning 'net weight').

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Number 4

1981

synthetic polymer paint, oilstick and paper collage on canvas

Collection of Andre Sakhai

This early painting prominently features the crown motif, one of Basquiat's most repeated icons. Basquiat frequently paid tribute to his heroes – black athletes, writers and musicians – by adorning them with a crown. This gesture elevates Basquiat's protagonists to the status of kings and saints.

The crown appears twice beside the main figure, who is in a wheelchair. The identity of the figure is unclear. Basquiat often depicted himself wearing, or appearing alongside, the crown and could be referencing the time he spent in hospital after being hit by a car when he was seven years old. He may also be commenting on the atrocities of war by depicting an injured soldier. The figure's shirt features the word 'ARMY' and the numbers '40019', reminiscent of the regimental numbers assigned to soldiers serving in the military.

Left to right

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1981

fibre-tipped pen and spray-paint on paper

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

Untitled

1981

fibre-tipped pen and spray-paint on paper

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

Untitled

1982

ink on rubber printing blanket

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

...continued overleaf

Untitled

1980

fibre-tipped pen on paper

Private collection

Haring and Basquiat created several works together, including the four displayed here. In the earliest collaboration, *Untitled*, 1980, three figures drawn by Haring run up flights of stairs to meet each other at a cross, mounted on the apex of a church roof. Words by Basquiat ('OK: SO WE DID SUPPRESS THIER [sic] TAR ROOF / TAR ROOF / TARROOF') and a sacred heart appear above and below the scene constructed by Haring. The meaning of Basquiat's phrase is opaque and complex: the word 'TARROOF' plays on the way particular American accents draw out the word 'truth' and has Biblical associations, while 'TAR ROOF' suggests the social and racial complexity of an inner-city context.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Portrait of A-One A.K.A. King

1982

synthetic polymer paint on canvas
and wood

Private collection

Portrait / self-portrait

Few of Haring's self-portraits depict his true likeness. Instead, he often used his characteristic symbols, such as the 'radiant' baby or dog, to signify his identity by association. He referred to these symbols as his 'tags', a term borrowed from graffiti that describes a stylised personal signature, usually the nickname of the writer.

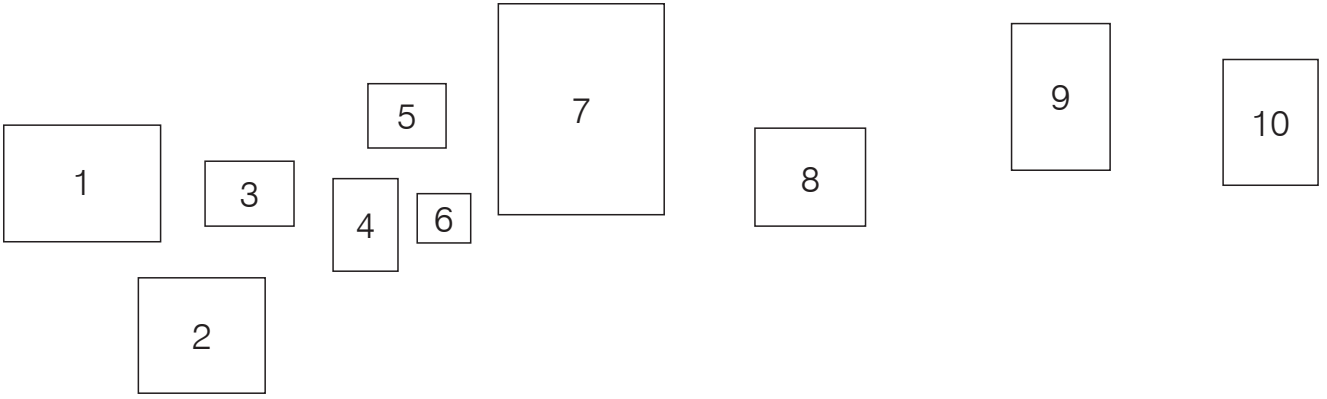
Basquiat's self-portraiture is characterised by alternating or simultaneous displays of self-confidence, deep vulnerability and aggression. In most of his self-portraits, Basquiat did not attempt to represent his physical appearance in detail. Instead, he used mask-like stereotypes or symbols, reducing himself to a few brushstrokes of eyes, nose, mouth and dreadlocks. He took the same approach in his portraits of others, as seen in his 1980–81 depiction of Haring, *Untitled (Keith Haring)*. Portraits of black men were largely missing in the European and American art Basquiat saw represented in museums or in books; in many cases, Basquiat saw his own portrait as standing for the portrait of all black men.

Friends and objects

In the Downtown New York art scene of the 1980s, Haring and Basquiat shared a common urge to work outside of conventional art spaces and across a variety of media. Both artists made different, but distinct, use of the streets of New York in their work.

Haring's work was influenced by the graffiti scene insofar as he drew and painted on almost any surface he came across, adapting his signature visual alphabet to fit unconventional surfaces. He gave his work to many friends and lovers throughout his career, often with handwritten dedications that demonstrate the generosity, exchange and interconnectedness between artists of the time.

Basquiat engaged with the subject of the street in a multilayered way. He painted and drew on everyday surfaces in his friends' apartments (walls, refrigerators, radiators, pieces of clothing) but even more enthusiastically on objects he found on the street, such as discarded windows and doors, mirrors, cigar boxes, foam rubber and old boards. The artist placed his mark on everything that surrounded him: things he encountered by chance and things that literally stood in the way.



...continued overleaf

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (World Famous)

1983

crayon on paper

The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat, New York

In his distinctive scrawled text, Basquiat has plotted out his plan to become 'WORLD FAMOUS'. Adapting the structure of a certificate or a decree, he proudly announces his 'THESIS' in 'VARIOUS STUDIES OF HUMAN ANATOMY AND WORLD HISTORY'. In the years that followed, this would be realised through the creation of more than 1000 paintings and sculptures, and more than 3000 works on paper. To make the proclamation official, he has included a crown, symbolic of his ambition to become number one. Basquiat has also signed his name with the copyright symbol, marking intellectual and artistic ownership of his work.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1984

synthetic polymer paint on wood and metal

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

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Resources, Victoria, 2017

2016.138

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Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Money Magazine Andy Mouse Bill

1986

fibre-tipped pen on paper

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

...continued overleaf

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Keith Haring)

1980-81

oilstick and fibre-tipped pen on paper

Private collection, courtesy Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York

Haring and Basquiat had a great deal of respect for each other both personally and professionally. Basquiat expressed his admiration for Haring in several portraits, including this early drawing. Haring, easily identifiable by his signature round spectacles, is rendered in Basquiat's gestural line against a white background. He appears alongside a dog, which he is apparently drawing using the black pen in his hand. The dog was an important symbol in Haring's visual vocabulary.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (E)

1985

ink, oilstick and watercolour on paper

The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat, New York

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1983

enamel on routed wood panel

Collection of Misha and
Anna Moeremans d'Emaus

The crawling baby, made radiant through the addition of strokes, or rays, around its body is central to Haring's visual imagery. 'Babies represent the possibility of the future,' Haring said, 'the understanding of perfection, how perfect we could be. There is nothing negative about a baby, ever. The reason that the baby has become my logo or signature is that it is the purest and most positive experience of human existence'.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Self Portrait

1984

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on paper on canvas

Collection of Yoav Harlap, Israel

When asked in an interview about the different figures that appear in his paintings and drawings, Basquiat stated that 'a lot of them are self-portraits', though some are more direct than others. Rather than seeking a photographic likeness, in this painting Basquiat has filled in some basic markers – the colour of his skin and his distinctive short, dreadlocked hair. Several rows of teeth are drawn in, giving the image a childlike quality. He has reduced himself to two dimensions by rendering his body as a flat frontal plane, not unlike a mugshot.

Tseng Kwong Chi

Hong Kong 1950 – United States 1990, United States
from 1978

Futura 2000

United States born 1955

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Kenny Scharf

United States born 1958

Fred Brathwaite

United States born 1959

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Eric Haze

United States born 1961

LA II

United States born 1967

Other artists

Untitled

1982

mixed media, synthetic polymer paint, spray-paint and fibre-tipped pen on fibreglass vase

Collection of Larry Warsh

One of the contributing artists to this 1982 vase is Kenny Scharf, who became close friends with Haring while they were both students at the School of Visual Arts in New York, in 1978–79. Haring and Scharf also met Basquiat during this time, and the three remained friends throughout their lives.

This vase bears imagery by the three artists, among tags and marks by other artists of the time, and demonstrates the way they applied the language of graffiti tagging to other objects in a form of collaborative mark making and shared authorship.

For Kids

This vase is covered in symbols and words written by Keith, Jean-Michel and many of their friends who were also artists. Lots of the artists have drawn their 'tag'. This is the word street artists use to describe their signatures, which also become their most recognisable images. Some use a version of a nickname, others use only a symbol, or combine the two. In this artwork, there are two tags by Keith – his cartoon-like crawling baby and smiling face.

Is there street art near where you live? Next time you walk past some, look to see what tags you can identify.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1985

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Collection of Larry Warsh

Haring was a dedicated social activist: he took a strong position against the apartheid system in South Africa and joined the international anti-apartheid movement campaigning against the misuse of power demonstrated by the South African government, which sanctioned racial segregation. Based on the design of his 1984 painting *Apartheid* (in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam), Haring developed a poster, *Free South Africa*, and distributed an estimated 20,000 copies throughout New York City to garner public support.

This 1985 painting references similar motifs to *Apartheid*. The oversized foot of a black figure crushes his white oppressor in a gesture of liberation. Haring's concern about racism and injustice finds its expression in the violent demise of the oppressor.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1985

paint on polystyrene

Collection of Larry Warsh

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Old Tin

1981

paint on wood panel

Collection of Larry Warsh

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

fibre-tipped pen on wood panel

Collection Hal Bromm and Doneley Meris,
Courtesy Hal Bromm Gallery New York

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1986

fibre-tipped pen on leather

Private collection

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

c. 1984

paint on wood panel

Collection of Larry Warsh

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

c. 1985

fibre-tipped pen on helmet

Collection of Larry Warsh

10

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

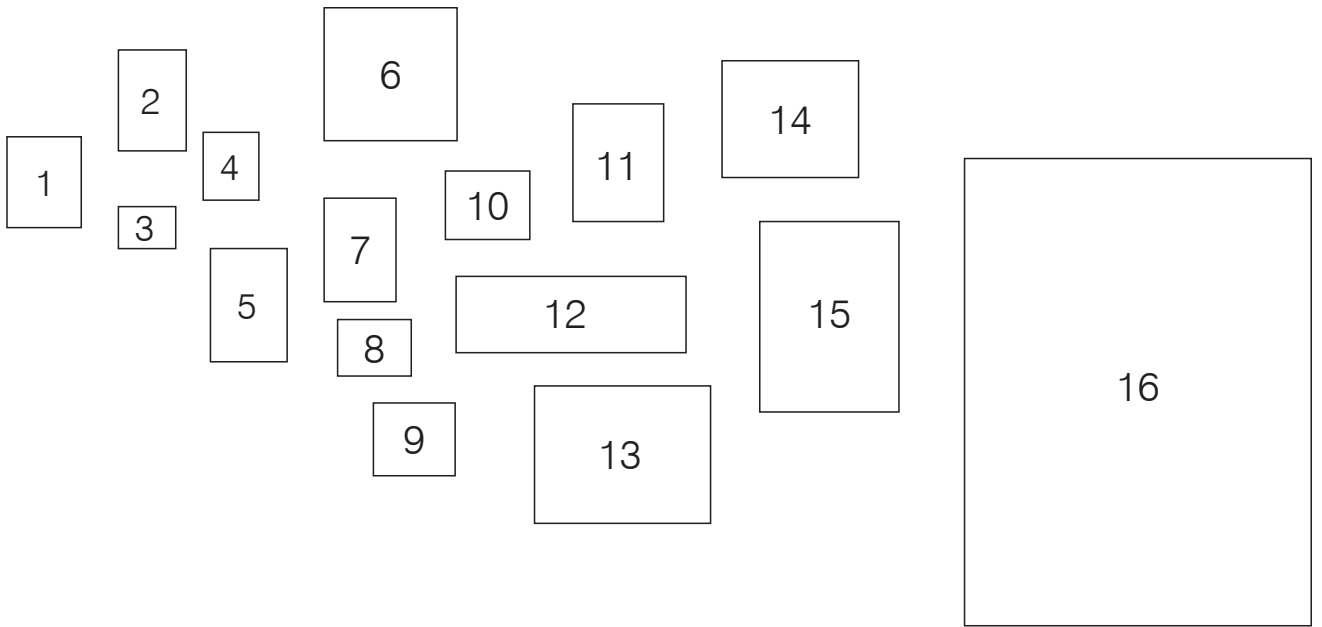
Untitled

1982

fibre-tipped pen on composition board

Private collection

...continued overleaf



...continued overleaf

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1986

ink on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

Throughout his life, Haring collaborated with or represented individuals and organisations battling major social and political injustices, particularly issues of loss and discrimination associated with the AIDS epidemic. Haring designed this invitation for an event thrown at New York's Pyramid nightclub to raise money for medical treatment for Martin Burgoyne, an artist who died from an AIDS-related illness later that year. Burgoyne was Madonna's close friend and first tour manager.

2

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1990

ink on paper

Private collection

3

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

fibre-tipped pen on panel

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

4

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

fibre-tipped pen on paper

Collection Hal Bromm and Doneley Meris,
Courtesy Hal Bromm Gallery New York

5

Rene Ricard

United States 1946–2014

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

ink on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

6

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled (For John Sex)

1982

synthetic polymer paint and day-glo paint on board

Collection of Larry Warsh

7

Rene Ricard

United States 1946–2014

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

ink on manila envelope

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

8

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Map)

1980

mixed media collage

Collection of Larry Warsh

9

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1989

ink on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

10

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1987

ink on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

11

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Chesterfield)

1981

mixed media collage on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

12

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1983

paint on canvas

Private collection

13

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

fibre-tipped pen on panel

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Train)

1981

mixed media on canvas

Private collection

Roy Lichtenstein

United States 1923–97

Andy Warhol

United States 1928–87

Yoko Ono

Japan born 1933, United States from 1953

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Rain Dance

1985

colour screenprint, ed. 100

Collection of Larry Warsh

This poster was made by Haring in collaboration with Basquiat, Andy Warhol, Yoko Ono and Roy Lichtenstein for a fundraising auction at Paradise Garage nightclub, hosted by Haring and legendary DJ Larry Levan for the benefit of UNICEF's African Emergency Relief Fund.

16

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

paint on wood panels

Collection of Larry Warsh

For Kids

Keith and Jean-Michel both drew on all the surfaces and objects around them. Look for the motorcycle helmet covered in drawings of moving figures and a flying angel; the wrestling belt with drawings of muscled arms and dancing figures; and the collage made from coupons for luxury goods. These are examples of how Keith and Jean-Michel transformed everyday items into artworks.

If you were asked to create an artwork from the materials that surround you, what would you choose, and what would you make?

Emerging stars

By the early 1980s, Haring and Basquiat had both found a distinct style and created some of their most iconic works. They shared their path to success at the beginning of their careers and were both included in a number of important early exhibitions: the *Times Square Show* (1980), *New York/New Wave* (1981), *documenta 7* (1982) and the *Whitney Biennial* (1983).

By the time Haring had his first solo exhibition, at Tony Shafrazi Gallery in 1982, his alphabet of symbols was already fully developed. For this seminal exhibition, he created works on different materials ranging from paper and canvas to metal and large vinyl tarpaulins. Covering the walls of the gallery almost completely, these works demonstrated the artist's keen awareness of how pictures can function just like words, as carriers of meaning.

The defiant hero features prominently in Basquiat's work, whether embodied in the figures of athletes and musicians or the allegorical representations of saints, warriors or the condemned. The portrayal of the singular black male reaches its pinnacle in Basquiat's work from 1982, the year he began to depict his protagonists with considerable power and complexity. *Untitled*, 1982, demonstrates the dynamism and assertive nature of Basquiat's free-form line, which he used to construct a standing male figure wearing a crown, his right arm raised.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Pollo Frito)

1982

synthetic polymer paint, oilstick and enamel on canvas

Private European collection, courtesy of
John Sayegh-Belchatowski

This work exemplifies Basquiat's celebrated mark making and poetic use of text. The Spanish words '*POLLO FRITO*' translate to 'fried chicken'. This was one of Basquiat's favourite meals, but the phrase also invokes one of the many racist stereotypes black Americans are often subjected to. Also included are the letters 'TAR', a term associated with American slavery that Basquiat used many times in his work. The word 'ASBESTOS' may recall public interest in the 1982 bankruptcy of Manville Corporation following decades of asbestos injury claims against the company.

Basquiat's layering of disparate words and imagery, often obscuring each other, resists tidy political interpretation and instead invokes an urgent and chaotic cadence that reflects Basquiat's wish to 'paint like the Lower East Side and what it was like to live there'.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Versus Medici

1982

synthetic polymer paint and oil wax crayon on canvas

Private collection

Basquiat claimed to 'always need source material around me to work off'. A reference he consulted throughout his career was the medical textbook *Gray's Anatomy*, which was given to him at the age of seven by his mother, Matilde, while he was recovering in hospital after a traffic accident.

The lasting influence of *Gray's Anatomy* on Basquiat's artistic practice can be seen in this early painting, which depicts a skeleton-like figure whose torso is exposed and filled with anatomical drawings of the spine and internal organs.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

vinyl ink on vinyl tarpaulin

Private collection

In January 1981, Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as President of the United States. His campaign slogan had been 'Let's make America great again'. Many young Americans, including Haring and his friends, felt it was surreal that a 'has-been' Hollywood actor and political conservative was now their president.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

vinyl paint and vinyl ink on vinyl tarpaulin

Private collection

Haring began painting on tarpaulins, or 'tarps', in 1981 to break down the formality of painting on traditional canvas. These large tarps were sourced from those used to cover the truckloads of building rubble being excavated and hauled out of Lower Manhattan in the early 1980s. Construction in the city was on the rise after several years of financial crisis, crime, rioting and political instability.

Following his election in 1978, Mayor Ed Koch oversaw a period of renewed optimism and an upswing in the financial markets around 1981, which led to a building boom. The Downtown area, however, remained economically depressed and underpopulated for several years, with large warehouse spaces and controlled rents making it an attractive place for artists to live and work.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

synthetic polymer paint on vinyl tarpaulin

J W Power Collection, The University of Sydney, managed by Museum of Contemporary Art, purchased with funds from the J W Power Bequest, 1982

This work was exhibited in Haring's first major solo exhibition, at Tony Shafrazi Gallery in New York, for which Haring covered the gallery walls with a dense display of paintings, some on metal and others on tarpaulin. It was acquired before the exhibition for the University of Sydney's J. W. Power Art Collection by its curator Elwyn Lynn, who visited Haring in his studio the day after it was painted (14 September 1982). It remains the only major work by Haring in an Australian public collection.

For Kids

Keith wanted to create art that everyone could understand and enjoy. He made up his own language of images, or pictograms. A pictogram is a symbol with a message that is communicated through an image instead of words. This large painting contains one of Keith's earliest and most repeated pictograms, the dancing dog figure.

Keith's use of pictograms was influenced by a semiotics course he studied at university. Semiotics is the study of signs and their meaning.

Clockwise from top right

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

baked enamel on metal

Private collection

Untitled

1982

baked enamel on metal

Collection of Larry Warsh

Untitled

1982

baked enamel on metal

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

Untitled

1982

baked enamel on metal

Museum MACAN, Jakarta, Indonesia

These works were included in a large series produced by Haring in 1982 and exhibited in his first solo show, at Tony Shafrazi Gallery in New York, the same year. In the exhibition, Haring covered the walls and floor with drawings, paintings and sculptures bearing his various pictograms, including the spaceship, dog, crucifix and dolphin.

The dolphin represents Yemanjá, a water deity from the Yoruba religion. Fishermen in Brazil are known to worship Yemanjá in the hope she will protect them at sea and provide a bounty of fish to catch. Haring visited Brazil many times in the 1980s. Describing the development of the dolphin symbol in this work, he said, 'What happened, really, was that the drawing grew out of an evolution of other images, of the dolphins, of the angels, and sort of combined and turned into this sort of dolphin-mermaid-angel'.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1982

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on wood panel

Private collection

The black hero is a prominent figure in Basquiat's work. Basquiat explained his repeated use of the motif in a 1985 interview for the *New York Times*: 'The black person is the protagonist in most of my paintings. I realised that I didn't see many paintings with black people in them'.

In this 1982 painting, the figure wears a three-pointed crown – another prominent symbol in Basquiat's visual lexicon. The figure stands defiantly with one arm raised. Basquiat's crown has many potential meanings, but here may be read as a symbol of majesty, endurance and triumph.

For Kids

The three-pointed crown features in many of Jean-Michel's works. He often paid tribute to his favourite athletes, musicians and writers by painting them with crowns, as if they were kings. The symbol has many possible meanings, but is often used as a sign of respect.

In this painting, a person wearing a crown has their right arm – which looks like a bone – raised. A raised right arm can be a salute, and was a gesture of defiance representing the Black Power and Civil Rights movements in the United States – when African Americans were fighting to have the same rights as white people.

Performance and dance

Haring and Basquiat, along with many of their local contemporaries in the 1980s, sought to collaborate and overcome traditional barriers between artistic disciplines and cultural scenes. An important role model was Andy Warhol, who, since the 1950s, had been constantly expanding his artistic practice to encompass painting, prints, drawings, photography, sculpture, film, fashion, television, performance, theatre, music and literature.

Haring adopted a similarly multidisciplinary approach to his practice, creating paintings, sculptures, prints, text-based works, videos and photographs. He also 'performed' his drawings in public spaces, often in front of an audience. Basquiat, too, was active as a draughtsman, painter, performer, actor, poet, musician, fashion model and DJ.

Both artists were regular participants in the Downtown New York club scene, a place where creative experimentation with fashion, music, performance and art thrived. At nightclubs, including Paradise Garage and Club 57, people could be themselves, regardless of race, sexuality or gender. It was in these spaces that Haring and Basquiat met, shared ideas and collaborated with other creatives such as Warhol, fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, and performers Madonna and Grace Jones. For both artists, oscillating between different artistic disciplines came naturally and anticipated the interdisciplinary practices of many artists in the 1990s, as well as the diversity in creative careers that is commonplace today.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Andy Mouse

1985

fibre-tipped pen on plexiglass

Courtesy Laurent Strouk

Andy Warhol was an important role model to both Haring and Basquiat. Haring's admiration for Warhol culminated in his creation of 'Andy Mouse' in the mid 1980s. The cartoon-like character fuses Warhol's signature glasses and distinct hairstyle with the ears and outfit worn by Disney's Mickey Mouse. Here 'Andy Mouse' is surrounded by dollar signs, which may symbolise Warhol's ambivalence towards the art market and towards capitalism more broadly. According to Haring, Warhol simultaneously embraced and critiqued consumerism and capitalist methods of production, effectively 'beating [the art world] with its own weapons'.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1984

synthetic polymer paint on muslin

Private collection, Europe, courtesy Martos Gallery, New York

Andy Warhol

United States 1928–87

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled (Madonna, I'm Not Ashamed)

1985

synthetic polymer paint, day-glo paint and silkscreen ink on canvas

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

This collaborative work by Haring and Andy Warhol adapts the front page of a 1985 issue of the *New York Post* bearing a headline about their friend Madonna. The artists added colour and imagery to the newspaper in celebration of Madonna's refusal to be shamed by the leaking of nude photographs. Madonna's pose in the accompanying front-page photograph is mirrored by a figure on the right that appears to dance or shrug. The figure features a black cross, perhaps a reference to the media's 'marking' of Madonna as a 'shamed woman'. Haring and Warhol gave a version of this work to Madonna as a gift when she married actor Sean Penn in 1985.

Left to right

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Marilyn Monroe

1981

ink and tempera on offset lithograph

Elvis Presley

1981

ink and tempera on offset lithograph

Collection of Larry Warsh

Haring's use of commercially produced posters as a support for his drawn lines, along with imagery of celebrity figures such as Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley, was a nod to the work of Andy Warhol, who also depicted Monroe and Presley in his screenprinted portraits of the 1960s. Warhol's works have an airbrushed quality, emphasising the flat, repetitious and impersonal nature of celebrity representation. Haring extends this emphasis by outlining the contours of each star's face, suggesting that Monroe and Presley have become so well-recognised that their images now serve as icons – literally signs for celebrity – rather than portraits of individual people.

Charlie Ahearn

United States born 1951

Wild Style

1983

colour film, sound, 82 min, excerpts

Courtesy of the artist

Robert Alcock director

Australia born 1961

Babies, Snakes and Barking Dogs: Keith Haring in Australia

1984

colour film, sound, 40 min, excerpts

Courtesy Australian Film Television and Radio School

During Keith Haring's 1984 visit to Australia (on the invitation of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art) he was filmed by students of the Australian Film Television and Radio School. This video excerpt shows Haring's contribution to a fashion parade at Moomba Festival in Melbourne. The parade, titled *The X-hibitionists*, was

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curated by the Melbourne-based Fashion Design Council, which operated from 1983 to 1993. Haring painted a model he met at the Hardware Club, a Melbourne nightclub, for the parade. The model performed with several other dancers while carrying a boom box painted by Haring's friend, New York artist Kenny Scharf.

Salomon Emquies

United States born 1956

Rodeo

1982

colour video, sound, 5 min 19 sec, excerpts

Courtesy Salomon Emquies

During his visit to Los Angeles in 1982 Basquiat participated in a performance with artist and MC Rammellzee and hip-hop musician and DJ Toxic at the Rhythm Lounge, a hip-hop venue owned by filmmaker Salomon Emquies, who filmed the performance. Basquiat subsequently overlaid graphics to the video. Matt Dike, Basquiat's artist assistant in Los Angeles and later founder of hip-hop label Delicious Vinyl, recalls driving the trio to Tower Records on Sunset Boulevard, where they bought two of each record for the performance that evening.

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During their time in California the three called themselves the 'Hollywood Africans'. Basquiat made a painting, *Hollywood Africans in Front of the Chinese Theater with Footprints of Movie Stars*, 1983 (on display nearby), which prominently features the nickname and can be read as a critique of the racism experienced by black actors in the film industry.

Grace Jones director, singer, songwriter, producer

Jamaica born 1948, lives Jamaica and United States

Keith Haring artist

United States 1958–90

I'm Not Perfect (But I'm Perfect For You)

1986

music video clip, sound,
3 min 22 sec, excerpt

© Grace Jones, Capitol Records and
The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

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MTV Art Breaks: Jean-Michel Basquiat

1985

colour video, sound, 23 sec

Courtesy MTV

Keith Haring dancing beneath his mural at Paradise Garage closing party

1987

colour video, sound, 42 sec, excerpt

Courtesy Josell Ramos

Commes des Garçons Homme Plus

spring–summer, 1987

colour video, sound,
20 min 45 sec, excerpts

Courtesy Commes des Garçons

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Nicholas Taylor

United States born 1953

Basquiat Dancing at the Mudd Club

1979

photograph

Courtesy the artist

Nicholas Taylor

United States born 1953

Gray, Hurrahs Club, New York, Fall 1979

1979

photograph

Courtesy the artist

...continued overleaf

Courtney Harmel

United States born 1948

Keith Haring's *Party Of Life*, Paradise Garage, New York City

1984

colour video, sound,
7 min 45 sec, excerpts

Courtesy Courtney Harmel

Keith Haring held a birthday party each year from 1984 to 1986 called 'Party of Life'. Filmmaker Courtney Harmel captured the inaugural event, which was held on 16 May at the Paradise Garage nightclub on King Street, New York. The party was co-hosted by Larry Levan, resident DJ at the club from 1976 to 1987. Levan developed a cult following and is credited with introducing dub into dance music. The party featured performances by Madonna and performance artist John Sex. Madonna, wearing a pink suit covered in an elaborate web of black lines painted by Haring and LA II, sang 'Dress You Up' and 'Like a Virgin', which she released later that year.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1987

enamel on metal

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

This work is from a series of eight masks Haring made in 1987 that reference the artistic interest taken by modernist artists, including Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Constantin Brancusi, in African masks. Haring even titled one of the eight masks *Untitled (Egg Head for Picasso)*.

Throughout his career, Haring studied the art of non-Western cultures and sought to educate himself about imagery and techniques outside of Western visual traditions. To create this work, he has reduced an image of an African mask down to its key forms. His reference to non-Western imagery, as with other cultural objects, including those of Ancient Greece, Egypt and Mesopotamia, seen also in Basquiat's sampling technique, reflects the postmodern practice of appropriation that was a prevalent method in 1980s art practices.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Plastic Sax

1984

synthetic polymer paint, colour oilstick, xerox paper and collage on canvas

agnès b. collection

Jazz was one of Basquiat's greatest inspirations. Several iconic black jazz musicians appear frequently in his work as representations of black power, excellence and innovation. This work pays tribute to trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and saxophonist Charlie Parker, also known as Bird. It includes a depiction of Parker's childhood home and references Crispus Attucks High School, the alma mater of many celebrated jazz musicians. The title refers to the plastic saxophone Parker occasionally played. The composition of the work, separated out by large areas over-painted in blue, achieves a visual syncopation that captures the improvisation and energy of jazz.

For Kids

Like Keith, Jean-Michel was very interested in music and performance, particularly jazz. Growing up, Jean-Michel listened to his father's jazz records, and eventually developed his own collection – he owned over 3000 records! In this painting, Jean-Michel has painted Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, two famous jazz musicians who were involved in the development of a type of jazz called Bebop.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled #27 (Lee Harvey Oswald)

c. 1982

oilstick on paper

Private collection

This work recalls the SAMO© graffiti seen on the TV monitor nearby, in which Basquiat points out the ubiquity of certain famous figures and pop-culture icons. In both pieces he refers to Lee Harvey Oswald, the man accused of assassinating President John F. Kennedy on 22 November 1963, and who was himself shot by Jack Ruby two days later, before he could be tried. Oswald, who has always been at the centre of conspiracy theories surrounding Kennedy's death, appeared in numerous works by Basquiat, who was fascinated with the way the criminal figure had been assimilated into America's collective consciousness.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Cold Blooded Killer)

1983

wax crayon on paper

Private collection

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Hollywood Africans in Front of the Chinese Theater with Footprints of Movie Stars

1983

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on canvas on wood panel

The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat, New York

In 1982, Basquiat had an extended stay in Los Angeles while preparing for a solo exhibition at Gagosian Gallery. He was joined by artist Rammellzee and hip-hop musician Toxic, and the three jokingly described themselves as the 'Hollywood Africans'. This was a comment on the racial homogeneity of Hollywood and the relative absence of people of colour in the entertainment industry in the United States at the time.

Basquiat has drawn Toxic (left), Rammellzee (centre) and himself (right), surrounding the phrase (and title of the work), 'HOLLYWOOD AFRICANS IN FRONT OF THE CHINESE THEATER WITH FOOTPRINTS OF MOVIE STARS'. Some filmed documentation of a performance by the three at the Rhythm Lounge in Los Angeles is playing on the video wall nearby.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1984

metallic and enamel paint on composition board

Untitled

1984

metallic and enamel paint on composition board

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Jason Yeap OAM and Min Lee Wong
through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program, 2015

2015.285 and 2015.286

In February 1984, Haring made his first and only visit to Australia. During his time in Melbourne, Haring produced works on various surfaces, including the NGV's Waterwall; an external wall of the Collingwood Technical School; a human body for the annual Moomba Festival; and a DJ booth at a former queer venue called the Hardware Club, located in Hardware Lane in Melbourne's CBD. These spray-painted drawings were executed by Haring on one of several trips he made to the Hardware Club during his visit, and depict some of his most characteristic figures: a dancing person with a television for a head, and a barking dog.

Tseng Kwong Chi

Hong Kong 1950 – United States 1990,
United States from 1978

Grace Jones performance, Paradise Garage, New York

1985

inkjet print

Courtesy Muna Tseng Dance Projects, Inc.

For Kids

Many of Keith's friends were musicians and performers, and sometimes they asked him to create their costumes and stage sets. In 1984, Keith's good friend and artist Andy Warhol asked Keith to create a costume for the performer Grace Jones to wear. Keith worked with a jeweller, David Spada, to create a headdress and skirt decorations for Grace to wear during a photoshoot, and for a performance at a nightclub a year later. On both occasions, Keith also painted Grace's entire body with white lines.

If you could dress up in this costume, what kind of dance would you do?

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1985

fibre-tipped pen on fibreglass

Collection of Larry Warsh

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Painting myself into a corner

1978

black-and-white video, sound,
59 min 58 sec

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

Haring made this work in his studio at the School of Visual Arts in New York, where he studied in 1978 and 1979. Haring films himself, to a soundtrack of 'Shrivel Up' by Devo, as he quickly and continuously paints a tessellation of intersecting black lines on the floor until he is trapped in the corner of the room.

This early work helped Haring develop his understanding of drawing as a performative act. He wrote in his diary on 10 October 1978: 'After the completion of my first video piece – me painting myself into a corner – I am becoming much more aware of movement. The importance of movement is intensified when a painting becomes a performance. The performance (the act of painting) becomes as important as the resulting painting. Movement as painting. Painting as movement'.

Tribute to Gloria Vanderbilt (Take Two)

1980

colour video, sound, 3 min 19 sec

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

Footage of the Canal Zone Party, New York, April 1979

1979

video, sound, 30 sec

Courtesy Stan Peskett

The Canal Zone Party was hosted by English artist Stan Peskett at his New York loft, along with artists Fred Brathwaite (Fab 5 Freddy) and Michael Holman. It was here that Basquiat, interviewed by Holman, revealed his identity as the person behind the infamous SAMO© text that had been appearing on the walls of Downtown New York in 1978–79. Stan Peskett recalls that Basquiat approached him and asked if he could do a graffiti performance, as others were doing on camera, and on the wall he wrote with a red spray can:

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS OMNIPRZNT?

- LEE HARVEY OSWALD
- COCA-COLA LOGO
- GENERAL MELONRY
- SAMO©

With the act he demonstrated the performative nature of both graffiti and his SAMO© project, which was always conducted in public space and before a passing audience.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

David Spada

United States 1961–96

Ornaments for Grace Jones's costume

1984

ink on metal

Collection of Larry Warsh

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

David Spada

United States 1961–96

Grace Jones's Hat

1984

ink on metal

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

Haring worked with performers like Madonna and Grace Jones, and choreographer and dancer Bill T. Jones. In these projects, he transferred the visual language of his objects and two-dimensional drawing into three-dimensional installations or onto the human body.

Body painting soon became part of Haring's art practice, and, in 1985, Andy Warhol arranged for him to paint Grace Jones, who Haring called the 'ultimate body to paint'. When using the human body as his medium, Haring's works became durational and performative. In 1985, Grace Jones performed at the New York nightclub Paradise Garage, covered in Haring's drawings. A photograph of the performance by Tseng Kwong Chi is on display nearby. She also wore this totem-like headpiece and wire costume adorned with small tin figures painted by Haring (displayed nearby).

World's End, London manufacturer

English 1979–84

Vivienne Westwood designer

England born 1941

Malcolm McLaren designer

England 1946–2010

Keith Haring designer

United States 1958–90

Outfit from the *Witches* collection

autumn–winter, 1983–84

cotton, Velcro

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation of

Victoria with the assistance of

Just Jeans Pty Ltd, Member, 1999

1999.366.a–d

Both Haring and Basquiat were interested in contemporary fashion, and it formed part of their hybrid practice between performance and art. Basquiat was once a runway model for Comme des Garçons, while Haring participated more informally by painting his distinctive imagery on friends' clothing.

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For what would be their final collaboration for the World's End label, Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren invited Haring to contribute to the autumn–winter 1983–84 *Witches* collection. Westwood was inspired to collaborate with Haring after she saw his work in New York and was moved by his 'magical, esoteric sign language'.

The *Witches* collection included this ensemble, consisting of a skirt, shirt, jacket and scarf. Each item features designs by Haring printed or woven in fluorescent pink on a dark background. The shirt depicts a particularly complex image, consisting of many of Haring's most well-known symbols, including the smiling face with three eyes, crawling baby, barking dog and snake.

Keith Haring
United States 1958–90

Untitled

1989
paint on cotton jacket

Collection of Larry Warsh

Marina D.

Switzerland born 1958

**Gray band members Vincent Gallo,
Wayne Clifford, Nick Taylor, Michael
Holman, Basquiat**

1980

inkjet print

Courtesy the artist

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Monkey)

1986

oil on denim jacket

Private collection

Haring and Basquiat frequently engaged in political issues of their time by participating in awareness-raising campaigns, donating works to benefit causes, and including political commentary in their works. Basquiat painted this jacket for Decorated Denim: The Aids Benefit Auction, held by the New York department store Barney's in 1986.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1986

mixed media and paint on television

Collection of Larry Warsh

In 1986, portrait photographer Annie Leibovitz was commissioned by an American magazine to photograph Haring. Leibovitz constructed a living room for the set across which Haring painted animated symbols and continuous lines in black and white. The set included this television, which prominently features one of Haring's most iconic symbols – a cartoon-like smiling face with three eyes.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Album cover for Ramm:ell:zee vs. K.Rob, Beat Bop

1983

vinyl record and album cover

Collection of Jennifer von Holstein

Jennifer Muller choreographer

United States born 1949

Yoko Ono composer

Japan born 1933, United States from 1953

Keith Haring designer

United States 1958–90

Interrupted River

1987

video of performance, 33 min, excerpt

Courtesy Kevin Harkins and Jennifer Muller

Haring collaborated with several choreographers to create sets and costumes for dance performances. In 1987 he designed the set and costumes for Jennifer Muller's choreographic work *Interrupted River*, which was performed at The Joyce Theatre on Eighth Avenue in Chelsea, New York. Yoko Ono composed the music. Videographer Kevin Harkins captured the performance.

Similar to his early newspaper collage works, Haring referenced news headlines of the day to create concrete poetry on the costumes of the dancers who moved among pages of the *New York Post*, which were strewn on the stage. The backdrop, only partially visible in sections of the performance, was a vast painting by Haring featuring pictograms from his distinct visual language, including animals, dollar signs and figures.

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Bill T. Jones

United States born 1952

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Long Distance

1982

colour video, sound, 8 min 48 sec

Courtesy Bill T. Jones and Electronic Arts Intemix New York

Choreographer Bill T. Jones came to prominence in New York in the early 1980s, when he founded the Bill T. Jones/ Arnie Zane Dance Company with his long-term partner Arnie Zane. The 'new wave' choreography of Jones and Zane often featured video, text and autobiographical references, with costumes and sets designed by artists. In *Long Distance*, performed at The Kitchen in New York in 1982, Jones dances while Keith Haring paints the wall behind him. Jones performs in silence, accompanied only by the strokes of Haring's brush.

Drawings and early exhibitions

Basquiat created more than 3000 drawings in less than a decade, generating a body of work full of intensity and independence. Drawing was the foundation: with his inimitable line, Basquiat combined new figurative and expressive elements and symbols. He often worked with oilsticks (tubes of oil paint solidified into a stick form resembling a crayon). Depending on the pressure he applied and the resulting friction, some oilstick would remain on the support. Basquiat's scrawled strokes and lines were then contrasted with dynamic crosshatching or fraying sections of colour.

In contrast to Basquiat's sometimes abrupt drawing rhythm, Haring let the pen or brush glide quickly across the picture support. The speed with which he drew his lines was honed during his subway drawing project. This rapid speed of execution was also instrumental to Haring's seminal Fun Gallery exhibition in February 1983, for which he and a friend, artist LA II (Angel Ortiz), spray-painted the gallery walls with colourful pictures and tags. Haring then mounted works executed on leather and synthetic 'skins' over this dynamic surface, emphasising the immersive nature of his work.

Basquiat also had a formative exhibition at the Fun Gallery. In November 1982 he filled the gallery with works executed on unconventional supports. One of these works was *A Panel of Experts*, 1982, the canvas of which is stretched over wooden 'crossbar' supports bound together by twine. Swiss gallerist Bruno Bischofberger, who represented Basquiat from September 1982, noted, 'I liked that show the best. The work was very rough, not easy, but likeable. It was subtle and not too chic'.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1982

crayon and oilstick on paper

agnès b. collection

Basquiat's early drawings are marked by the same immediacy and speed with which he wrote his concrete poetry and SAMO© tag (with Al Diaz) on walls and signs throughout New York City.

This work from 1982 demonstrates how Basquiat developed his own unique style using oilstick. He also challenged classical drawing techniques by adopting a scrawled, abrupt approach, as described by hip-hop pioneer and contemporary Fab 5 Freddy (Fred Brathwaite):

'He would stick [the pencil] through the fourth finger ... so that when he drew, the pencil would just kind of slip out of his hand. He'd let it go that way, then grab it and bring it down, then let it drift. It was amazing, this whole dance he did with the pencil'.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1981

crayon on paper

Collection of Kyoko Tamura

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Warrior

1982

oilstick on paper

Collection of Kyoko Tamura

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Peso Neto)

1981

oilstick on paper

Collection of Kyoko Tamura

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1982

crayon on notebook paper

Untitled

1982

crayon on notebook paper

Untitled

1982

crayon on notebook paper

Collection of Kyoko Tamura

Basquiat said that when he was a child he wanted to be a cartoonist. The influence of the graphic style of cartoons and comics is evident in these three drawings. Rendered in strong crayon lines with large round eyes and emphatic gestures, they recall the cartoon characters that reappear throughout Basquiat's work, including in the large painting displayed on the opposite wall, *A Panel of Experts* (also made in 1982), which features cartoon characters alongside the words 'SATURDAY MORNING CARTOON©'.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1980

sumi ink, spray enamel and synthetic
polymer paint on poster board

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

ink and watercolour on paper

Museum MACAN, Jakarta, Indonesia

Haring rejected fundamentalism and the church's role in what he understood to be the oppression of the population. The chaotic scene depicted in this early drawing, with figures tumbling downward near a church spire, is emphasised by a frenzied red line. The downward trajectory of the figures, which is conveyed by the movement lines that surround them, suggests a fallen society or failed ideologies.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

c. 1980

spray-paint and ink on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Totem

1982

synthetic polymer paint, oilstick and paper collage on
canvas on wood panel

Collection of Yoav Harlap, Israel

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Jack Johnson

1982

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on canvas

Private collection

In this work Basquiat pays homage to Jack Johnson, the first African-American heavyweight boxing champion. Basquiat, in a roughly composed canvas, depicts Johnson raising his arm in victory, a gesture that also recalls the Black Power salute. At the height of the Jim Crow era of racial segregation, Johnson was a lightning rod for racial politics in America: he was world-famous, ran a successful 'black and tan' (desegregated) bar and restaurant, and was married to a white woman. Basquiat painted several black boxers, perhaps identifying with the battles, tenacity and triumph of these figures.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

A Panel of Experts

1982

synthetic polymer paint and oil pastel on paper on canvas and wood

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Gift of Ira Young

1990.28

This work includes words and images that reference cartoons shown on morning television, including *Road Runner*, which Basquiat watched avidly growing up. The word 'CARTOON' appears prominently in the top-right corner of the painting and, on the left side, Basquiat has drawn two characters fist fighting. These fighting figures may be linked to his admiration of black boxers, including Jack Johnson and Muhammad Ali.

The words 'SUGAR', 'CORN' and 'DEXTROSE' (a sweetener used in corn syrup) are also scattered across the surface of the work. While these words evoke highly refined breakfast cereals, they can also be understood to reference the legacy of slave labour in the sugar industry.

For kids

Jean-Michel loved cartoons and comic books, and often drew superheroes and other characters on his paintings. He was particularly interested in cartoon images of two characters boxing. If you look closely at the left side of this painting, you'll see he has drawn an image of one stick-figure boxer punching another in the face. He has also drawn cartoon images of a volcano and a duck, and he has even written the word 'CARTOON'. See if you can spot it.

This painting does not have a regular frame. The canvas has been stretched over what Jean-Michel called a 'crossbar' structure consisting of pieces of wood that have been bound with string

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

LA II

United States born 1967

Untitled

1984, printed 2019

inkjet prints of spraypaint on linen panels

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

These panels, reproduced here as a wallpaper, were originally created for Keith Haring's first annual 'Party of Life' celebration on 16 May 1984, which attracted around 3000 attendees. Haring described the 'Party of Life' as a 'grand sort of party that was done for the occasion of my birthday, but not on my birthday'.

Haring's love of Paradise Garage made it an obvious choice of venue. Haring found dancing at the club to be a positive collective experience: 'Dancing [at Paradise Garage] was really dancing in a way to reach another state of mind, to transcend being here and getting communally to another place'.

For Kids

In 1984, Keith held a huge birthday party at a nightclub called the Paradise Garage. He called it his annual 'Party of Life', and he asked his friend Madonna – who was about to become a huge pop star – to perform.

Keith worked with his friend Angel Ortiz (a graffiti artist whose tag is 'LA II') to decorate large banners that hung around the club. The wallpaper you can see here comes from photographs of their day-glo spray-painted patterns. Around 3000 people came to the party.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1983

synthetic polymer paint on leather

Private collection

In 1983 Haring had a solo exhibition at the Fun Gallery, a venue founded in 1981 in the East Village, Manhattan, by Patti Astor and Bill Stelling. Together with graffiti artist Angel Ortiz (known as 'Little Angel', or LA II), Haring used fluorescent spray-paint to decorate the walls with tags and images of dancing dogs and crawling babies. Haring and LA II created an immersive installation in which Haring installed a number of paintings executed on leather or vinyl 'skins'. This vibrant painting, shaped like a map of the United States, depicts interlocking figures and creatures moving through a complex composition of colourful lines and forms.

The wallpaper on which the painting hangs reproduces a series of fabric panels spray-painted by Haring and LA II for Haring's 'Party of Life' birthday celebration at the Paradise Garage in 1984. The panels were installed throughout the space, and on the stage, where various acts, including John Sex and Madonna, performed.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

fibre-tipped pen and enamel on child's cot

Collection of Hal Bromm and Doneley Meris,
courtesy of Hal Bromm Gallery

In late 1981, Haring had a solo exhibition, which featured many drawings, at Hal Bromm Gallery in New York. Some of these drawings were on paper, but many were on less conventional materials, such as this child's cot, which Haring found abandoned on the street. He covered every part of the cot with his distinct line and characteristic imagery, including the radiant baby, dancing figure and barking dog. This work also includes multiple dedications to Juan Dubose, Haring's first boyfriend.

Notebooks

Haring's and Basquiat's notebooks are important tools for understanding what each artist sought to convey through their work.

Haring was a prolific journal writer. His notebooks document both highly personal entries as well as his musings on politics, art and his experiences living as an openly gay man. Many of the entries feature sketches and drawings in which Haring explores different approaches to artistic questions. In the tradition of the concrete poets, he also experimented with text and even performed and documented some of his poetic forays.

The use of language was also a prominent part of Basquiat's artistic practice. His notebooks reveal a voracious mind and include drawings, pictograms and symbols, as well as letters, poetry, lists and everyday jottings. In a sense, Basquiat's entire oeuvre can be seen as an extended notebook.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Journal entries

1978–89

digital materials

The Keith Haring Foundation Archives, New York

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Lick Fat Boys

1980

black and white video, sound, 3 min

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

The importance of language in Haring's work and the influence of concrete poets, particularly William S. Burroughs, is evident in this video. Haring's development of the poem which is the source for this work can be seen in written pages displayed nearby.

Haring has used the visual and aural qualities of words in this adaptation of a concrete poem into a physical performance. Using a simple format of three words at a time, repeated and reordered, Haring explores the many meanings that can be drawn from a few words. Like Burroughs often did, Haring demonstrates the libidinal possibilities of language in this word play.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Notebook 1

1980–87

cover: mixed media on board

pages: fibre-tipped pen, wax crayon and ink on ruled notebook paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Notebook 5

1980–87

cover: mixed media on board

pages: fibre-tipped pen, wax crayon and ink on ruled notebook paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

**Ephemera from The Keith Haring
Foundation, New York**

mixed media on paper and cardboard

The Keith Haring Foundation Archives, New York

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Art Boy As If

1979

fibre-tipped pen on paper

The Keith Haring Foundation Archives, New York

These pages of word play are the source material for the video work *Lick Fat Boys* displayed nearby. They record Haring's experiment with words and how he uses them for their material, aesthetic and aural qualities. Repetition, syncopation and symmetry are poetic devices he uses in this work, which is then developed into the physical poetry of the video work. The poem draws on the traditions of concrete poetry, in which the look of the words on the page is as important as their meaning, and of conceptual text art, a strategy of art making associated primarily with the 1960s and 1970s, a period in which artists often used words as a medium for making art.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Coming Soon in Person Jesus Christ

c. 1978–79

mixed media on paper

The Keith Haring Foundation Archives, New York

This collage of stickers on notepaper is the earliest work by Keith Haring in this exhibition. It evokes the religious faith he developed as a young man growing up in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, in the 1960s and 1970s. Haring said of his upbringing, 'We were in a little, conservative town. You grew up there, went to high school there, had kids there, and your kids stayed, too. I had been a good little kid. My parents had taken us to church and things like that, but I became this little Jesus freak, and my parents were appalled. I had fallen in the movement out of a lack of any other thing to believe in and out of wanting to be part of something'. Haring's subsequent rejection of organised religion in his adult life can be seen in later works in which the motif of a figure bearing a crucifix is often portrayed as an oppressor.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

The End of SAMO©

1979

pencil on paper

The Keith Haring Foundation Archives, New York

Haring's early admiration for Basquiat and Al Diaz's street art project SAMO© is recorded here on graph paper. Haring has repeated the words 'SAMO' and 'NO' in various configurations, creating a concrete poem in tribute to the works that appeared on the walls of Downtown New York in 1978–79. Haring met Basquiat around this time but was already familiar with his street art and had great admiration for his friend's witty and political word play.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1979–80

ink on paper

Private collection

Copy and paste

In the late 1970s, using the new medium of the Xerox machine (colour photocopier), both artists experimented liberally with collaged and copied elements. Their use of collage was strongly influenced by the beat generation writer and artist William S. Burroughs, in particular his 'cut-up' technique of recomposing pre-existing text and images.

The influence of Burroughs on Haring's early text and collage works is direct, with Haring using Burroughs's cut-up technique to manipulate headlines from newspapers, rearranging them to take a clear position against authority, racism and discrimination. Haring was also inspired by the artist Jenny Holzer, whose *Truisms* project of 1977–87 – for which she printed a range of aphorisms or widely held 'truths' and pasted them up on bus shelters, in subway stations and in other public places – transformed the public domain during Haring's first years in New York City.

Basquiat's approach to collage was both sculptural and poetic. He drew his material from a vast range of sources and everyday objects around him, such as logos and slogans that dominated shopfronts and grocery store products, or the materials of his environment, such as fence posts, doors and cast-off metal fixings. It is the appropriation of these coincidental and seemingly insignificant words and objects that gives his art its particular character. Basquiat copied and transformed found materials in works that pre-empt the copy-and-paste sampling of the internet and post-internet generations.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Picasso)

1984

graphite on paper

Collection of Kyoko Tamura

For Kids

Some of Jean-Michel's drawings look more like lists than artworks. For example, on the right side of this drawing, he has listed famous names (like the artist Pablo Picasso), random names (like 'MRS. R.G.' and 'MISS S.')

and other phrases (like 'WHITE KID GLOVES' and 'PEARL BUTTONS'). Jean-Michel would create lists from the information around him. Everything he read, watched and listened to went straight onto the surface of his canvas or piece of paper.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Magic Worms)

1984

graphite and oilstick on paper

Collection of Andy Song

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Armstrong)

1985

mixed media on paper

Collection of Kyoko Tamura

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Izod

1984

oilstick and ballpoint pen on paper

Collection of Kyoko Tamura

This drawing demonstrates Basquiat's practice of collecting words from the world around him: street signs, books, songs, shop signs and advertisements. Here the words 'RUBBER' and 'CARBON' are given emphasis through repetition and symmetry. The history of natural rubber production on slave plantations is intertwined with colonialism, revealing the politicised relationship between society and natural resources; similarly carbon, in the form of diamonds, has been mined extensively in Africa. Basquiat creates concrete poetry in this work and in doing so, scrutinises the monopolisation of resources, which have become objects of manipulation, power and wealth.

Crocodile heads appear frequently in Basquiat's works. In a similar drawing (*Untitled*, 1986), he writes the word 'sebek', indicating his direct referencing of the Ancient Egyptian god of fertility and military prowess. This work is titled *Izod*, possibly a reference to the men's clothing brand Izod Lacoste, which produced tennis shirts with a crocodile logo embroidered on the chest. The merging of pop-culture and Classical references is typical of Basquiat's synthesising mind.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1987

wax crayon, coloured crayon and
pencil on paper

Collection of Kyoko Tamura

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1985

xerox collage on wood box

Private collection

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

**Ephemera from The Keith Haring
Foundation, New York**

mixed media on paper and cardboard

The Keith Haring Foundation Archives, New York

Jennifer Stein

United States born 1957

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

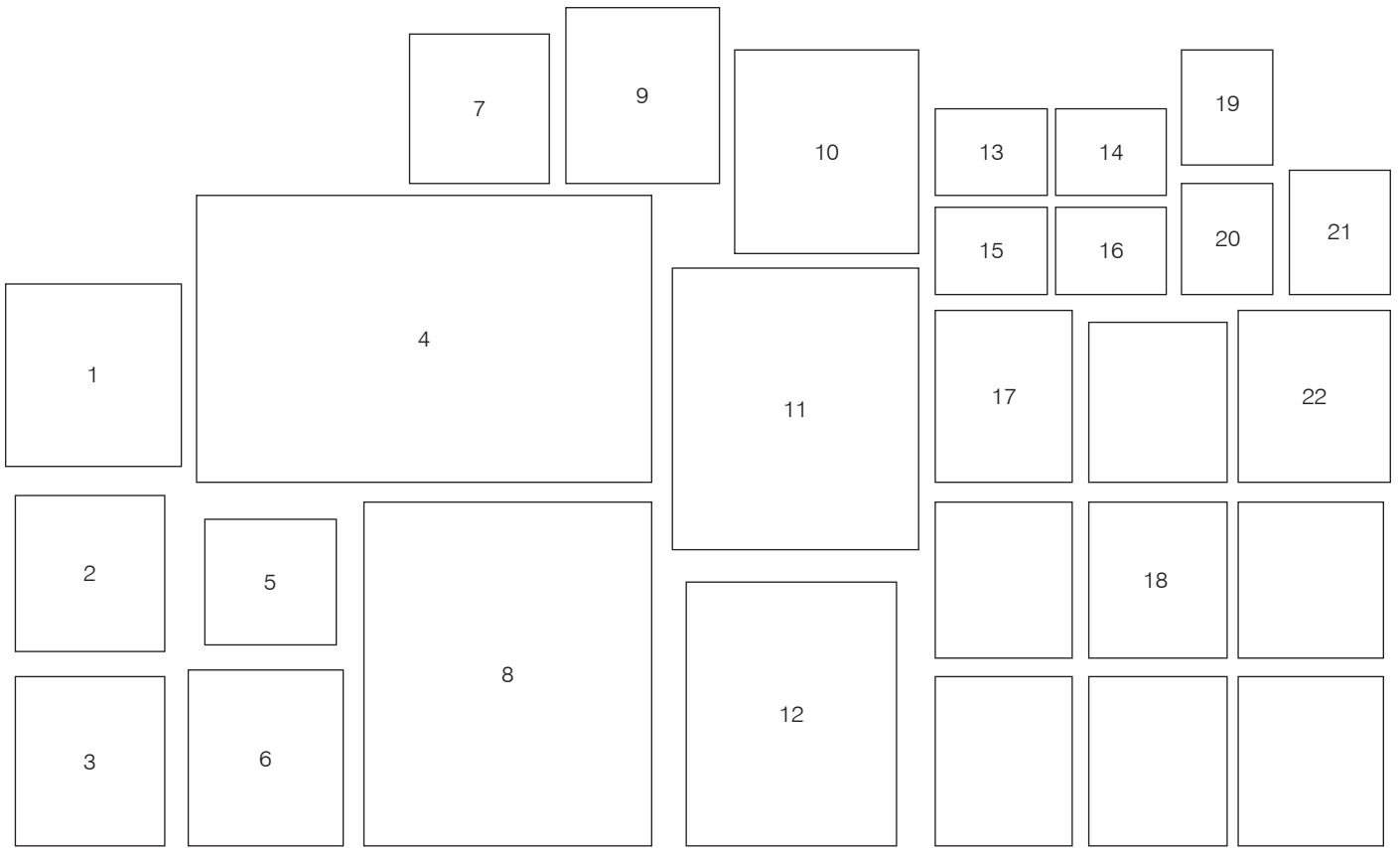
Postcards

1979

mixed media on cardboard

Collection of Jennifer von Holstein

Basquiat made some of his earliest collages in 1979 with artist Jennifer Stein. The two created this series of works using everyday materials, including newspaper clippings, cigarette butts and photo-booth portraits. They divided standard pieces of paper into four sections and created a unique composition in each quarter. Using a Xerox colour photocopier – new technology at the time – they copied each piece of paper and sold each composition as postcards on the streets of New York City, including outside of The Museum of Modern Art. The cut-and-paste technique used to make these works was heavily influenced by jazz music and the experimental poetry of beat generation figures such as William S. Burroughs.



1

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Tar)

1981

fibre-tipped pen on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

2

Untitled (TKO)

1982

sumi ink on paper

Private collection

3

Untitled (Legs)

1982

mixed media on paper

Private collection

...continued overleaf

4

Untitled (Train, Car, Boat)

1981

ink on paper

Private collection

5

Untitled (Text)

1981

ink on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

Stoned on Samo

1978

ink on paper

Collection of Emmanuelle and Jérôme de Noirmont

SAMO© was created by Basquiat and his friend Al Diaz and began with a comic Basquiat drew for his high school newspaper, *Basement Blue Press* in 1978. Diaz and Basquiat continued writing politically motivated and poetic text as SAMO© on New York walls throughout the year until 11 December. These ink drawings show another side to the project in which Basquiat experiments with SAMO as a character. Rendered in a wandering line, the faces in both works are smoking and seem to disintegrate like puffs of smoke that recalls Basquiat's esoteric words on SAMO in *Basement Blue Press*: 'SAMO IS ALL, ALL IS SAMO. IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT, YOU ARE ONLY BULLSHITTING, ASK NO QUESTIONS, YOU ARE IN GOOD HANDS. SAMO THE GUILT-FREE RELIGION ... AND BEYOND'.

...continued overleaf

7

Non-Toxic

1987

pencil and oilstick on paper

Private collection

8

Just as a Shot Cracked Out

1981

pencil and oilstick on paper

Collection of Diego de Noirmont

9

Samo

1978

ink on paper

Collection of Emmanuelle and Jérôme de Noirmont

...continued overleaf

Untitled

1979

ink stamp, coloured pencil and xerox collage on paper

Private collection

The suited figure in this collage is Jim Leavelle, the Dallas homicide detective who gained world-wide recognition from his role escorting Lee Harvey Oswald (who had just been charged with the assassination of President John F Kennedy), through Dallas Police headquarters at the moment he was shot by Jack Ruby on 24 November 1963. Basquiat has drawn on the widely distributed photograph that captured the moment of the shooting.

Basquiat's question 'WHO IS THIS MAN?' may refer to the iconic nature of the photograph, its status as one of the first historical events to be broadcast internationally, or how conspiracy theories surrounding the event loomed large in the American collective conscious. The year before Basquiat made this work, Leavelle had re-entered public imagination when he appeared as himself in a television movie titled *Ruby and Oswald* (1978).

...continued overleaf

11

Untitled (EGO)

1983

oilstick and coffee on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

12

Untitled (Crown and Car)

1981

oilstick on paper

Private collection

13

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Ready to Kill

1980

newspaper collage

...continued overleaf

14

Reagan Son \$50G Sex

1980

newspaper collage

15

Ronald Reagan Accused of TV Star Sex Death

1980

newspaper collage

...continued overleaf

Mob Flees at Pope Rally

1980

newspaper collage

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

One of Haring's first public works was a series of newspaper collages featuring fake headlines that he assembled using words cut out from newspapers, such as the *New York Post*. Haring made hundreds of copies from master collages, such as those displayed here, and applied them to walls, lampposts and newsstands throughout New York City.

Haring described his collages as detailing 'completely absurd statements', and spoke of the purpose and impact of displaying these radical early works in public spaces: 'because they looked so real, people were forced to confront them. They were completely confused – and the posters really made a mark, because they got into people's consciousness'.

...continued overleaf

17

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Two Trucks)

1981

oilstick and mixed media on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

18

Untitled

1981

seven ink works on paper

Private collection

19

Untitled (Red Face)

1982

mixed media on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

20

Untitled (BAR, BAR, BAR)

1981

mixed media, ink and wax crayon on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

21

Untitled (Duchamp)

1980

collage on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

The importance of the influential French conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp in Basquiat's work is underscored by this work in which Basquiat collages an image of Duchamp's face below the words, 'I've got you under my skin', from Cole Porter's 1936 song of the same name. Annina Nosei, Basquiat's first art dealer, recalled how at the age of 19, Basquiat gave her a book on Marcel Duchamp as a birthday present. Duchamp revolutionised

...continued overleaf

modern art in the early twentieth century and is considered to be the founder of conceptual art. Basquiat studied Duchamp's legacy, and attended the classes of Joseph Kosuth, an American pioneer of conceptual art, at the School of Visual Art New York, cementing the conceptual underpinning of Basquiat's work.

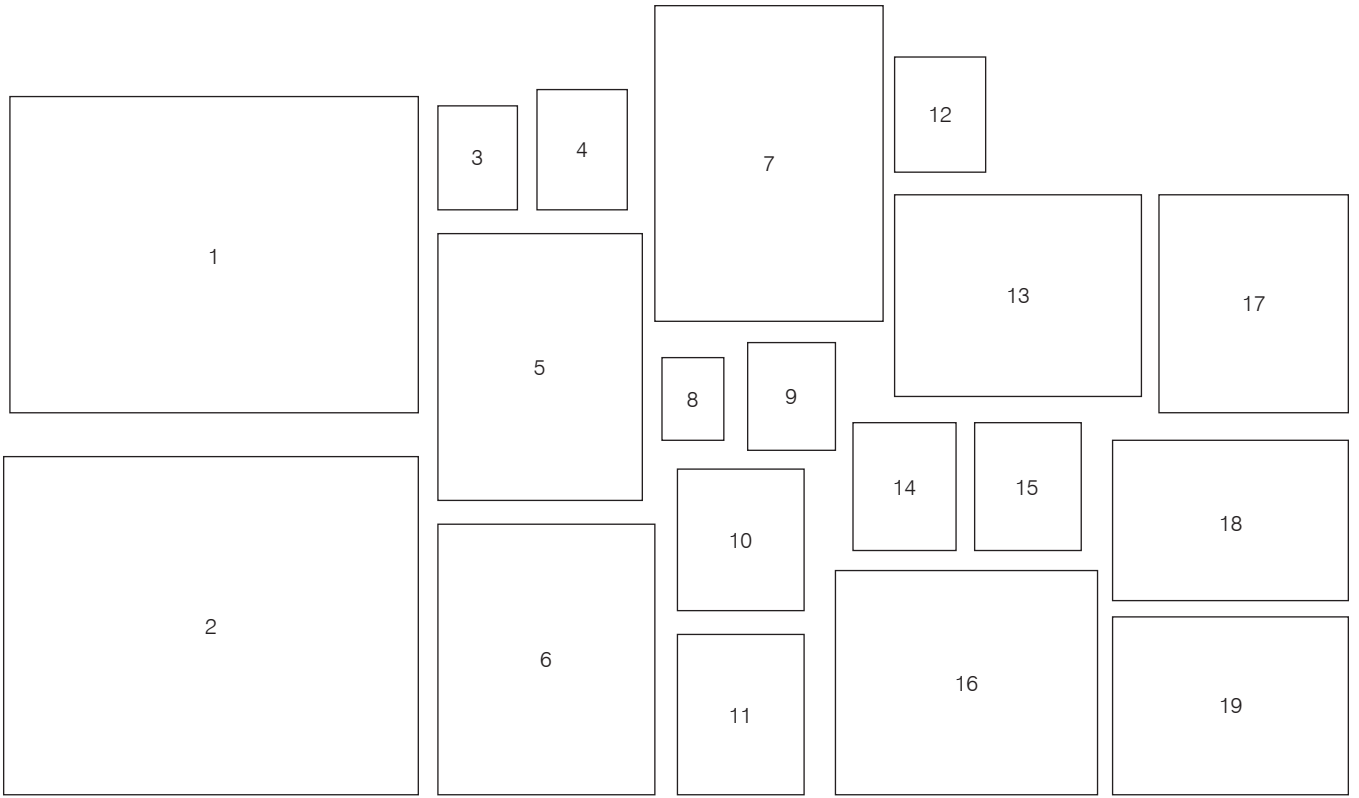
22

Untitled (Heart)

1981

mixed media on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh



...continued overleaf

1

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

ink on paper

Collection of KAWS

2

Untitled

1982

tempera on paper

Private collection, Europe

3

Untitled

1982

fibre-tipped pen on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

4

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Ron)

1982

ink on paper

Private collection

5

Untitled (1/2 Black, 1/2 White)

1982

oilstick and gouache on paper

Private collection

6

Untitled (JIMMY BEST ON HIS BACK)

1980

mixed media on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

7

Black Soap

1981

mixed media on paper

Private collection

The words black soap, which appear frequently in Basquiat's works, may carry racial connotations in reference to the 'white washing' of black culture by the media and the art market. Basquiat is quoted voicing his experience of being a black man in a white art world: 'They're just racist, most of those people. So they have this image of me: wild man running – you know, wild monkey man...'.

8

Untitled (Fool©)

c. 1985

xerox paper on wood panel

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

9

Antidote

1981

fibre-tipped pen on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

10

Untitled (2 Panels of Plywood)

1982

pencil on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

11

Untitled (Man Needs Milk)

1981

mixed media on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (I Swear to God)

c. 1985

ink on postcard

Collection of Larry Warsh

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1983

sumi ink on paper

Courtesy Laurent Strouk

For this ink drawing Haring repeats an image that appeared frequently within his repertoire: a figure, brandishing a radiant crucifix in one hand and a stick behind its back in the other, impales another figure with the stick. The presence of the cross implies a hypocritical relationship between the beliefs of those who proclaim Christian faith, and their actions.

The inclusion of 'USA' suggests that Haring perceived a distance between the United States' presentation as a Christian nation (Ronald Reagan's election as President in 1980 had been assisted by support from the evangelical New Right), and its actions on the world stage at the time. These included the United States' involvement in the Iran–Iraq War (1980–88) and Reagan's escalation of Cold War military activity in 1982.

...continued overleaf

14

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Lawyer)

1982

ink on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh.

15

Untitled (JIMMY BEST ON HIS BACK)

1980

ink on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

Word play and concrete poetry featured often in Basquiat's work. He repeated the same text on paper and in a large work on metal in 1981, illustrating how he refined and repeated statements across different works. Though its meaning is contested, in 2005 the art critic Roberta Smith interpreted this text as 'referring to a man laid low by his record as a juvenile offender'.

...continued overleaf

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

ink on paper

Private collection

This drawing features two of Haring's earliest pictograms: the UFO and the barking dog. The UFO has several meanings in Haring's work – it can represent space and space travel, or denote 'otherness' and groups which exist at the margins of society. Haring believed that outsiders held a unique strength, symbolised here by the beams emanating from the UFO, which have 'activated' one of the dogs. These lines are also a pictorial device used by Haring to draw attention to a target object.

The dog was generally used by Haring to symbolise fear. Historian and writer Robert Farris Thompson described its origin and significance: 'Haring was constantly worried about the proliferation of nuclear weapons at the end of the Cold War. Drawing the family dog barking at televised nuclear explosions, was a way of both expressing and dealing with his fears'.

...continued overleaf

17

Untitled

c. 1982

ink on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

18

Untitled

1980

sumi ink and spray-paint on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

Untitled

1982

ink on paper

Collection of Larry Warsh

The border Haring drew around this work is a device he used frequently throughout his career. The line helps to frame the image as a standalone symbol and pictogram. It also evokes the sequential frames of comic strips, particularly in this work, which features the face of animated Disney character Mickey Mouse. Haring depicts Mickey without his ears, creating a circular sun-like form with radiating lines. The figures below Mickey raise their arms in celebration or worship of the cartoon icon. The inclusion of 'USA' reinforces the importance of pop culture in American society.

...continued overleaf

For Kids

Like Jean-Michel, Keith was influenced by cartoons and comic books. Many of his drawings and paintings, when displayed together, look like a comic strip, with a different part of a larger story depicted in each artwork. Keith also incorporated cartoon characters into his artworks. In this drawing, he has drawn one of the most famous comic-book characters – Mickey Mouse.

As a child, Keith had a stencil that divided Mickey Mouse into different parts (for example, his head, ears and body). This gave Keith the option of leaving parts of Mickey Mouse uncoloured, as he has done here. Mickey's signature round ears are missing.

Image-language, line and symbol

Haring and Basquiat each quoted from a vast repository of sources when creating their powerful compositions. Both found inspiration in everyday life and popular culture, such as children's drawings and advertising as well as Aztec, African, Ancient Greek, and Roman art. They transformed virtually everything they watched, heard and read into a distinct visual language consisting of symbols, lines and words.

Basquiat's motifs are quoted directly from his surroundings: the medical textbook *Gray's Anatomy*, slogans and logos used in merchandising, or the cartoons and comic books he adored as a child. Repetition is used as a strategy for conveying meaning, with certain words and images frequently recurring in his notebooks and paintings. Haring once said Basquiat 'wield[ed] his brush as a weapon', struggling against exploitation, consumer society, repression, racism and genocide. He engaged with issues of identity in symbol-laden paintings that addressed political issues and criticised racism, social injustice and consumer capitalism.

Haring, on the other hand, created a new visual lexicon, essentially inventing his own alphabet to express his unique vision. His audiences – whether in the galleries or on the streets – learned to recognise key signifiers in his work: the crawling baby, the mushroom cloud, the dancing dog, the crucifix-wielding oppressor. Through these symbols, they understood his message, whether it was promoting gay rights, anti-nuclear protest or anti-authoritarianism. The rise of communication via emoticons and emoji has been profoundly influenced by Haring's visual alphabet.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Cantasso

1982

synthetic polymer paint on canvas and wood

Collection of Georges Saier

Basquiat regularly experimented with different painting supports, often building them from found materials. In October 1982 he began to stretch his canvases over rudimentary wooden frames, the crossed corners of which he lashed together with twine or nailed together. His then studio assistant Stephen Torton helped with the construction of many of these unique structures.

Cantasso was Basquiat's first 'crossbar' painting. The intersecting pieces of wood supporting the canvas – which depicts a figure with a mask-like head, empty torso and outstretched arms – have been painted black, making them particularly pronounced. The supports add a sculptural element to the work and defy the traditional method of concealing the frame beneath the stretched canvas.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1983

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on paper on canvas
and wood

The George Economou Collection

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Seascape

1983

synthetic polymer paint and oil pastel on paper on canvas
and wood

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Gift of Ira Young

1990.29

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Ishtar

1983

synthetic polymer paint, wax crayon and photocopy
collage on canvas and wood

Ludwig Forum for International Art Aachen
Donation of Peter and Irene Ludwig

In 1982, Basquiat began to make much larger paintings. His use of the three-panel structure was partially determined by the size of the lift up to his Great Jones Street studio. In 1983, with an expanded surface to work on, Basquiat produced his most complex works in terms of both subject matter and technique. This evolution in Basquiat's practice is demonstrated in this dense, all-over composition consisting of words, symbols, lines and forms drawn from a vast range of source material, including anatomy, popular culture, fine art and ancient history.

bell hooks, an academic, author and activist, claims that by filling his works with encyclopedic references, Basquiat encouraged a close reading of his works: 'Like a secret chamber that can only be opened and entered by those who can decipher hidden codes, Basquiat's painting challenges folks who think that by merely looking they can "see"'. .

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1984

ink on terracotta vase

Collection of Larry Warsh

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1990

acrylic and black felt-tip pen on terracotta

Collection of KAWS

The collection of Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (The Met) had an enormous influence on Haring's iconography and symbolism: 'I immediately became interested in the idea of the vase and the whole connection to Egypt. I would still periodically take trips to The Met on Sunday mornings to get lost in those rooms full of Greek vases'.

Haring's study of The Met's Egyptian collection was a starting point for the creation of his own symbolic language, which draws not only on the formal qualities of Egyptian art but on the concept of the hieroglyph as an 'image-language'. Here we see him translate the technique of black-figure painting – common to Ancient Greek pottery of the seventh and fifth centuries BCE – into a strategy for exploring contemporary concerns and themes. Haring's iconic barking dogs and dolphins are represented alongside space-age machines and figures with TV heads.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1983

sumi ink on paper screen

Collection of KAWS

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

synthetic polymer paint on vinyl tarpaulin

Private collection

The mushroom cloud at the centre of this work reflects the societal fear that accompanied the Cold War in the 1980s. During this period, tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union were fuelled by the expansion of each side's nuclear armament program. Nuclear accidents like the partial meltdown in 1979 at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant, in Haring's home state of Pennsylvania, and later the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986 kept fears of a nuclear apocalypse at the forefront of popular imagination throughout the decade.

Within and around the explosion are signs of life marked with red crosses as though to indicate the total destruction of Earth. The scene is overseen by two angels. Haring was a vocal opponent of nuclear proliferation. In the same year of this work he also made and distributed free posters at an anti-nuclear rally in New York.

For Kids

This painting has been created on a tarpaulin, or 'tarp'. You might have a tarp at home if you go camping – they go underneath tents. They also are used to cover trucks or trailers full of rubble. Keith liked to use tarps because they didn't cost much to buy, and allowed him to work across very large surfaces. The metal holes, or 'grommets', around the edges of the tarp also made the paintings very easy to hang in his studio.

Keith would make large, perfectly balanced paintings, like this one, without ever stepping back to take what he thought were 'unnecessary breaks' to see how the work was coming together.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Farina

1984

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick
on canvas

Collection of Sabina and Robert Franklin

The title of this work, *Farina*, refers to a type of milled wheat eaten in North and Central America as a hot breakfast cereal. In this painting, Basquiat appropriates an historical advertisement for the brand Cream of Wheat that depicted a smiling African-American chef called Rastus wearing a chef's hat and holding a steaming bowl of cereal. In Basquiat's depiction, the bowl of cereal is replaced with the silhouette of a shoe with the words 'REPAIRS' on the side and 'REBUILDING©' underneath. The painting includes two copyright marks, a symbol Basquiat employed in many works to explore authorship, ownership, monetisation and branding.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1983

vinyl paint on vinyl tarpaulin

Collection of KAWS

In this monumental painting, Haring reflects on the perceived dangers of new technologies from the early 1980s, such as the IBM personal computer. A large caterpillar with a computer for a head fills the majority of the composition. Beneath this hybrid creature, three figures have been crushed and their heads removed. Each figure bears a red 'X' on its torso, a visual device used by Haring to mark people and animals as targets of injustice. While Haring appreciated the potential benefits of new technologies, here he suggests that the computer – a murderous monster – is a major threat to humanity.

For Kids

Jean-Michel once said he 'wanted to copy the whole [of] history down'. It looks like this is what he was trying to achieve in this enormous and complex painting. If you look closely, you can see many layers. Each layer contains information Jean-Michel had learned by constantly reading, watching television and listening to music. For example, there are drawings of superheroes (Captain America and The Flash) from Jean-Michel's favourite comic books and cartoons in the background of the painting.

Spend some time with this painting. It takes a while to take in all the information Jean-Michel has recorded. Look for other symbols and words he has weaved into the surface – think about where they may have come from and why he may have chosen to include them here.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Private collection, New York

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1985

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Collection of Ms Alona Kagan, USA

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

ten baked enamel works on metal

Collection of Larry Warsh

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1982

baked enamel on metal

Courtesy Laurent Strouk

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

ink on metal

Collection of Larry Warsh

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

sumi ink on vellum

Untitled

1981

sumi ink on vellum

Collection of Ms Alona Kagan, USA

Semiotics refers to the study of signs and symbols, and their use for communication and interpretation. During his time at New York's School of Visual Arts, Haring enrolled in several semiotics courses, which had a profound influence on the 'image-language' he developed to communicate his ideas to the largest possible audience.

Haring used combinations of different pictograms, including spaceships and moving figures, often with signs embedded within these larger symbols. Dots represent 'otherness' and minority groups in Haring's imagery, and are often combined with different icons or pictograms to construct specific narratives.

In many of his works produced after 1985, the meaning of the dots shifted to represent individuals who had been diagnosed with HIV or AIDS. This evolution represents Haring's ability to transform his visual language in response to the social and political developments of his time.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1984

tempera on paper

Private collection, New York, courtesy
Martos Gallery, New York

Clockwise from left

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1988

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Courtesy Laurent Strouk

In the latter part of the 1980s, Haring devoted himself to promoting HIV/AIDS prevention, and produced paintings, drawings and T-shirts depicting animated, smiling figures emerging from or dancing beside cartoon-like condoms. Beyond educating about safe sex, Haring aimed to eradicate the stigma attached to homosexuality by creating and distributing positive, often playful, imagery.

According to arts writer Giorgio Verzotti, Haring ‘invented a new type of speech, and above all lent another framework to cultural relationships in accordance with which pleasure and free sensuality are the means to knowledge, not suffering and guilt’.

...continued overleaf

Untitled

1982

oil on wood panel

Private collection

Untitled

1981

enamel and ink on wood panel

Private collection

Untitled

1982

day-glo on wood panel

BvB collection, Geneva

Untitled

1984

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Private collection

...continued overleaf

Untitled

1983

sumi ink on paper

BvB collection, Geneva

Untitled

1984

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Private collection

Several of the paintings displayed here depict seemingly genderless figures embracing and supporting each other. The use of this symbol in Haring's work stands for human connections, togetherness and love, regardless of race, sexuality or gender. The figures in the black-and-white drawing on paper have been made radiant, elevating them in Haring's visual style as important, and worthy of giving and receiving love and support.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1982

oilstick and graphite on paper

Private collection

The standing, heroic, lone figure – usually representing an athlete, warrior or king – is a recurring motif in Basquiat's work. Here, a figure dressed as a cowboy is juxtaposed against an urban background, represented by the windows of high-rise buildings. In another work, a figure, perhaps a gladiator in a stadium, shows the splayed fingers and urgent lines characteristic of Basquiat's figurative depictions. The alert, standing pose of both figures reflects Basquiat's consistent representation of the black protagonist as a figure of power, action and autonomy.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1983

synthetic polymer paint and
oilstick on paper

Private collection

In 1981, Basquiat began to fill the surface of many of his paintings and drawings with oversized heads, which were expressive rather than realistic in their depiction. This drawing (and others nearby) illustrates Basquiat's embrace of the motif. In each drawing, a head has been constructed from a complex web of intersecting lines and blocks of colour.

The meaning of these heads extends well beyond their physical form. Curator and art historian Fred Hoffman claims that by depicting intangible aspects of the head, such as what appear to be neural pathways, Basquiat has captured 'the fluidity between external and internal – the complex, living processes connecting seeing, hearing, smelling and knowing'.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1983

oilstick and ink on paper

Private collection

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1982

oilstick on paper

Private collection

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Self-Portrait)

1982

oilstick and ink on paper

Private European Collection, Courtesy of
John Sayegh-Belchatowski

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1982

oilstick and ink on paper

Private collection

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Donut Revenge

1982

synthetic polymer paint, oilstick and paper collage on canvas

Private collection

The figure at the centre of this work has wide and unfocused eyes, a hairstyle reminiscent of Basquiat's and a mouth full of clenched teeth. A crown of thorns hovers above its head and indecipherable words appear in a speech bubble near the mouth. The work has a playful quality, evident in the rounded form of the figure, pastel palette and comical title, all of which are balanced by the urgency and ferocity of Basquiat's mark making.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Pecho/Oreja)

1982–83

synthetic polymer paint, oilstick and paper collage on canvas

Onyx Art Collection

Basquiat's interest in anatomy is apparent in the X-ray style of the jaw and face in this work. The Spanish words 'PECHO' (chest) and 'OREJA' (ear) make a connection between his Puerto Rican mother's first language and her gift of the medical textbook *Gray's Anatomy* to Basquiat when he was a child.

Basquiat's focus on the head as the site of both identity and cerebral activity intersects with his frequent references to Western and non-Western visual traditions. In European painting of the seventeenth century, for example, the skull frequently appears among still-life arrangements as a *memento mori*, a Latin term meaning 'remember you will die'. Similarly, the skull is a key motif in spiritual and folkloric traditions of the Caribbean and Latin America.

For Kids

Jean-Michel once said, 'I like to have information, rather than just a brushstroke'. He filled his canvases with images and words from many different sources. The large head on the left side of this painting has detailed drawings of eyes, the nose and teeth – which Jean-Michel may have copied from his copy of the medical textbook *Gray's Anatomy*.

Jean-Michel was given a copy of *Gray's Anatomy* at the age of seven by his mother during a stay in hospital after he had been hit by a car.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1985

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Private collection, Europe, courtesy Martos Gallery, New York

This monumental painting expresses Haring's belief in community and global fellowship. A celebratory atmosphere is conveyed by the figures dancing beneath the world, which is encased in a heart. The bodies appear to make a 'wave', a breakdancing move in which a dancer passes a flow of energy from one arm to the other and on to the next dancer. The sense of unity created by the cultural movements of hip-hop and breakdancing, which were then still emerging in New York City, is captured in the cooperative energy of the spiralling hands holding the heart.

Haring found dance a positive collective experience: 'Dancing [at the Paradise Garage] was really dancing in a way to reach another state of mind, to transcend being here and getting communally to another place'.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled (Word on Wood)

1985

oilstick and pencil on wood

Private collection

From a young age, Basquiat engaged with the art and history of non-Western cultures. When he was six years old, his mother enrolled him as a Junior Member of the Brooklyn Museum, which holds the largest collection of African art in the United States, including significant holdings of West African masks.

Basquiat's interest in the African material culture he encountered at institutions like the Brooklyn Museum is clear in *Untitled (Word on Wood)*. A large head occupies the centre of the composition, which appears to reference various structural elements of masks from African traditions, which are often worn during ceremonies, celebrations and in other performance contexts as symbols of identity, transformation and empowerment.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

LA II

United States born 1967

Sarcophagus

1983

synthetic polymer paint and fibre-tipped pen on fibreglass

Private collection

In 1978, after looking at Egyptian drawings at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Haring wrote in his journal: 'I saw beautiful Egyptian drawings today. There is a lot to be learned from Egyptian design concepts and their use of symbols ... There is within all forms a basic structure, an indication of the entire object with a minimum of lines, that becomes a symbol. This is common to all languages, all people, all times. Possibly that is why I am so inclined to use calligraphic images, hieroglyphic forms, basic structures that are common to all people of all times and therefore, interesting to us as well'.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1981

fibre-tipped pen, ink and enamel on fibreglass vase

Collection of Larry Warsh

The collection of Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York had an enormous influence on Haring's iconography and symbolism: 'I immediately became interested in the idea of the vase and the whole connection to Egypt. I would still periodically take trips to The Met on Sunday mornings to get lost in those rooms full of Greek vases'.

Haring's study of The Met's Egyptian collection was a starting point for the creation of his own symbolic language, which draws not only on the formal qualities of Egyptian art but on the concept of the hieroglyph as an 'image-language'. The strong influence of the erotic art of Ancient Greece on Haring's practice is also evidenced here through his inclusion of sexual motifs.

For Kids

Keith and Jean-Michel were influenced by ancient cultures, including of Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. Keith often visited the Egyptian, Greek and Roman collections at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and often got lost in the displays. He was fascinated by these cultures' use of symbols to communicate, and integrated much of what he saw during these visits into his artworks, like he has here.

Take a closer look at the surface of this vase. Can you recognise any shapes or objects that Keith might have borrowed from Ancient Egyptian art?

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1984

synthetic polymer paint, oilstick and xerox collage on wood

Private collection

The figure in this work directly references the silhouette of a queen depicted in an ancient rock painting found near Rusape in modern-day Zimbabwe. Basquiat probably saw a reproduction of the painting in Burchard Brentjes's book *African Rock Art*, published in New York in 1970.

The breadth of Basquiat's source material is further evidenced in the top-right corner of the painting, where Basquiat quotes Leonardo da Vinci at length on his experiments using a hole in paper to view the stars with the naked eye. Basquiat admired da Vinci's research on anatomy and frequently referenced not only his writing but his sketches of the human form.

Black light

Haring and Basquiat sought to bring their reality – the vibrancy and dynamism of the street and the club culture of Downtown New York – into the gallery space. Haring created a series of works on wood and fibreglass using day-glo paint, which was commonly used to decorate nightclubs due to the way it becomes fluorescent under UV light, and also created ‘black light’ rooms for exhibitions at Tony Shafrazi Gallery.

For his 1983 exhibition *Into 1984*, Haring created an immersive black light display in the gallery’s basement, where a DJ and breakdancers performed at the opening event. The strong influence of hip-hop and breakdance can also be seen in the imagery of many of the day-glo works on display here, in which figures execute moves inspired by breakdancing.

Clockwise

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1983

day-glo paint on routed wood panel

Collection of Larry Warsh

Untitled

1982

day-glo paint on composition board

Collection of Larry Warsh

Untitled

1983

day-glo paint on routed wood panel

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

Untitled

1982

day-glo paint on wood panel

Collection of Larry Warsh

Untitled

1982

fibre-tipped pen and day-glo paint on wood panel

Courtesy Laurent Strouk

Untitled

1983

day-glo paint and enamel on routed wood panel

Collection of Larry Warsh

...continued overleaf

Untitled

1983

day-glo paint on ten routed wood panels

Collection of Larry Warsh

Haring created a number of paintings, drawings and sculptures using fluorescent day-glo paint, including these carved wood works, most of which were given to friends. Messages are inscribed on the back of each piece of wood. For example, 'Merry Christmas Linda' and 'For Adolfo – Happy Halloween'.

Haring described the process of making these 'new wood drawings': 'Kermit [Oswald] ... introduces me to a carpentry tool called a router ... You can push it around and glide it through pieces of wood ... I practice with this tool until I'm comfortable with it, and then I proceed to make drawings on these pieces of raw wood, which Kermit has prepared. We then paint the inside of the grooves, usually with fluorescent day-glo paints'.

...continued overleaf

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

LA II

United States born 1967

Untitled

1983

ink and day-glo paint on fibreglass

Private collection

For Kids

The artworks in this room were painted using 'day-glo', or fluorescent, paints. This means that when displayed under ultraviolet light, as they are here, they glow in the dark.

The inspiration for many of these artworks was the people dancing in New York nightclubs. There are figures bending over backwards, performing a dance move in hip-hop known as 'the bridge'. Another figure is about to flip on its head to execute a move called 'the spin'.

What is your favourite dance move? How might you represent that move in an artwork?

The Downtown scene

Maripol is an artist, fashion designer and film producer who moved to New York from France in the late 1970s and became an art director for Fiorucci, and later a stylist for Madonna in the mid 1980s. She was a producer on *Downtown 81*, a film starring Jean-Michel Basquiat, written by Glenn O'Brien and directed by Edo Bertoglio (the film was shot in 1980–81 but not released until 2000), and recently directed *The Message*, a 2013 documentary about Keith Haring.

These seventy-six prints reproduce a selection of the polaroids Maripol took while part of the underground club, music, art and fashion scenes of Downtown New York in the 1980s. The photographs, taken at nightclubs and events, record the unique energy of the era. A selection of Maripol's polaroids were exhibited in the 1981 *New York/New Wave* exhibition at the P.S 1 Contemporary Art Center (now MoMA PS1) in New York. This exhibition also included the work of Haring and Basquiat, who were both part of Maripol's scene and were often captured in her photographs.

American writer Glenn O'Brien said of Maripol's work: 'Everyone [Maripol photographed] is a star. Some are global superstars. Some are the forgotten shooting stars of a gone skyline. But each in his time, her time, burned bright ... There are no negatives here. Just positives. Let them wash over you. Feel the fun, the silliness, the fantastic leisure. There was something marvellous going on here. This is the proof. Let it in. It's catching'.

Maripol

France born 1954, lives France and United States

Polaroids 1978–88

1980–88, printed 2019

inkjet prints scanned from original polaroids

Courtesy the artist

Political thoughts

Many of the works in this section explore the political issue of racism, which both Haring and Basquiat were devoted to addressing in their art.

Haring's paintings, drawings, sculptures and public works are filled with powerful messages of social justice and change. He was an activist and leading voice who fought for the individual and against its suppression by dictatorships, racism and capitalism. Several of the works by Haring in this room specifically address the subjects of the American civil rights movement and South African apartheid. Beyond the subjects of racism and corporate greed and the works included here, Haring engaged with a number of other political issues in his work, most prominently the AIDS epidemic and gay rights, to which he made an enduring contribution. Haring also addressed the threat of nuclear warfare, the impact of crack cocaine and social welfare. Although Haring never saw art as propaganda, he did use the mechanisms of propaganda and public space to distribute his art and ideas, insisting that art was for everybody.

Basquiat, too, took an uncompromising position as an artist, innovator and humanist. In his works he represents the power of the black male in his fight against oppression, throughout history and in 1980s contemporary culture. He also took a stand against police violence and racial persecution, issues that remain highly relevant today. Basquiat's victorious figures are representations of strength and resistance, and often allude to African-American sporting heroes, such as Jack Johnson (the first black heavyweight boxing world champion), Muhammad Ali and baseball player Hank Aaron.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Yellow Door

1985–86

oilstick, colour xerox paper, metal and collaged elements on painted door

Private collection

The inscription of '1960', Basquiat's birth year, above a crudely drawn head in the top-right of *Yellow Door* suggests that this is a self-portrait. Below, the Spanish word '*MILAGRO*' (miracle) is written six times. A lit candle is suggested in rough brushstrokes, suggesting a kind of votive offering.

Basquiat used a door as the support for this work and assembled various elements on its surface, including timber slats, fragments of pegboard and metal joinery. It is reminiscent of both the hybrid 'painting-sculptures' pioneered by American artist Robert Rauschenberg in the 1950s and the assemblage aesthetic found in 'outlier' art and folk traditions of the United States.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Because it Hurts the Lungs

1986

synthetic polymer paint and collage on wood

Museum MACAN, Jakarta, Indonesia

Because it Hurts the Lungs, like many of Basquiat's works (including *Yellow Door*, on display nearby), incorporates unconventional materials that give this 'painting' a hybrid, sculptural quality. Basquiat has attached two box-like structures, each covered in complex webs of words and symbols, to the surface of the painting. The box in the top-right corner prominently features a drawing of an eyeless figure wearing a mitre, a headdress customarily worn by bishops. Directly above the box, Basquiat has listed words and phrases relating to the body and its functions, including the work's title, 'BECAUSE IT HURTS THE LUNGS'.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Irony of a Negro Policeman

1981

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on wood

AMA Art Collection

This painting was included in the 1981 exhibition *Public Address*, in which Basquiat's first gallerist Annina Nosei showed the work of Haring, Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, Basquiat and others. Nosei dedicated the entire rear space of her eponymous gallery to Basquiat's standing black male power figures.

Irony of a Negro Policeman expresses Basquiat's view that the police, as the law enforcement of the state, are a means by which black people are dominated by white control. He perceives a black person in the role of policeman as a form of self-enslavement and hypocrisy, a position reinforced by the inclusion of the word 'PAWN' and the cage-like rendering of the policeman's cap.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Boone

1983

paper collage, fibre-tipped pen and oil wax crayon on composition board

Private collection

In this work, Basquiat emblazoned a reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's famed painting *Mona Lisa* with the word 'BOONE', seemingly recasting Mona Lisa as the New York gallerist Mary Boone, who presented an exhibition of Basquiat's work in 1984. The art-historical reference draws parallels between hierarchies and power structures of Renaissance Europe and the contemporary art industry. Mass-produced posters of *Mona Lisa* are also referenced in Haring's 1988 work *Malcolm X*, also seen in this gallery.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Malcolm X

1988

synthetic polymer paint, enamel and collage on canvas

Private collection, New York

Haring made a series of collage works in the last years of his life. This work, named after the black leader and civil-rights activist Malcolm X, appropriates diverse imagery, including Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (also pictured in Basquiat's *Boone*, on display nearby), figures of African antiquity, a mounted Black Power fist, and a clipping about Malcolm X's 1965 assassination. By juxtaposing Western and African cultural imagery in a violent clash, Haring expresses his frustration with historical and contemporary racism in American society.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

South African Nazism

1985

synthetic polymer paint on enamelled metal

Private collection

In *South African Nazism*, Basquiat addresses the system of institutionalised racial discrimination and segregation known as apartheid, which existed in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. Basquiat has combined text and symbols connected to this period of extreme racism, including the word 'PRETORIA', South Africa's executive capital, which administered the implementation of laws that led to complete segregation.

Following Basquiat's death, Haring made a tribute to him (on display in the final section of this exhibition). He described the many social and political injustices that drove Basquiat to create his art. According to Haring, Basquiat 'wield[ed] his brush like a weapon', using it to communicate his strong position against oppression and racism.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Untitled

1984

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on canvas

Collection of Andre Sakhai

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1984

enamel paint on sheet metal

Private collection

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1984

enamel paint on sheet metal

Private collection

The motif in this painting was repeated by Haring in several works, including *Apartheid* 1985. In that work, and in posters Haring made to protest the racial segregation of South African apartheid, the foot of a black figure crushes his white oppressor in a gesture of liberation. Here the foot similarly stamps on a crowd of people, this time accompanied by a dollar sign possibly referencing the oppressive power of capital.

An inscription by Haring on the reverse of this work and the one beside it show that they were completed on the same date, 31 January 1984. In the accompanying work a central figure is flanked by a totem made from people standing on each other's shoulders, and on the other side by a hand and some tentacles reaching out of two holes; motifs we see in numerous Haring works from this period.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–1988

363 B of iron

1984

synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen on canvas

Private collection

363 B of iron reflects Basquiat's encyclopaedic mind. Here, he has brought together images and text from disparate sources, including anthropological and historical texts, creating a patchwork of cultural references. A mask-like head dominates the centre of the canvas and is surrounded by Basquiat's characteristic areas of rough brushwork, patches of colour and silkscreened images and text.

The source of the phrase 'THE KANGAROO WOMAN THAT MAKES THE RAIN' is not clear, but it recalls early twentieth-century anthropological interpretations of Indigenous Australian spiritual beliefs. The phrase 'MANY MYTHOLOGIES TELL OF A VOYAGE TO A LAND OF THE DEAD IN THE WEST' suggests Basquiat's interest in the comparative study of cultures. These phrases were repeated in several paintings Basquiat made in 1984. His sketches of a herdsman, indigenous architecture and figures copied from rock art provide visibility to a variety of First Nation cultures, which were rarely included in contemporary art or art-historical narratives in 1980s New York.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Prophets of Rage

1988

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

Haring actively campaigned against racism in America and apartheid in South Africa. In this work his deep sense of outrage finds its expression in a violent end for the oppressor. The dice thrown, the oppressed black figure tosses off his chains, hangs the white oppressor from his feet and decapitates him, then claims the crown. The clarity of the symbolism is characteristic of Haring's direct political expression, and the title suggests an inevitable reckoning for the white oppressor.

Haring's strong stance against racism is reflected in an impassioned journal entry from 28 March 1987: 'Control is evil. All stories of white men's "expansion" and "colonization" and "domination" are filled with horrific details of the abuse of power and the misuse of people'.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1985

oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas tarpaulin

Museum MACAN, Jakarta, Indonesia

In 1985, when Haring painted this monumental tarp, the Live Aid fundraising concerts in London and Philadelphia shone a global spotlight on the Ethiopian famine. Awareness of the disparity between the desperate situation in Africa, and the corporate greed and excess on Wall Street (about three kilometres from Haring's studio), might have influenced his choice of imagery.

Haring said in 1987: 'The whole concept of "business" is evil ... The white man has always used religion as a tool to fulfil his greed and power-hungry aggression. Business is only another name for control. Control of mind, body and spirit. Control is evil'.

For kids

This large painting shows several hands pulling open a body to reveal a lot of green dollar bills. The body is pinkish-white, while the arms are brown. Each dollar bill is marked \$0 – so they are worth nothing.

Keith was very aware of the great differences in wealth in the world in 1985. Some countries, like Ethiopia, were experiencing terrible famine, while in the United States, record sums of money were being made in the financial markets.

Keith believed that money should be used fairly, and that wealth 'doesn't make you any better or any more useful than any other person'.

Last works

In their last works, Haring and Basquiat meet again in their approach to a sense of finitude, emptiness and death. Both artists can be understood as having experienced *horror vacui*, a Latin expression meaning 'fear of emptiness'. The paintings Basquiat made in the two years before his death in 1988 demonstrate a new style and an expanded repertoire of sources and symbols. He alternates between emptiness and an overwhelming density in these works. Haring, in his last years of creating, likewise extended his visual alphabet and created many canvases that teem with figures and images.

With A Pile of Crowns for Jean-Michel Basquiat, 1988, Haring paid a final tribute to Basquiat after his friend's death on 12 August 1988.

The subject matter in Haring's works shifted markedly in 1985, when he began to rapidly lose many close friends and acquaintances to AIDS. In 1988, Haring learned of his own HIV diagnosis, and his battle with AIDS ended on 16 February 1990. In his last painting, Haring depicted a jubilant crowd ready to fight against oppression, suffering, death and downfall.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Walking in the Rain

1989

synthetic polymer and enamel paint on canvas

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

The subject matter in Haring's works shifted markedly in 1985, when he began to rapidly lose many close friends and acquaintances to AIDS. In 1988, Haring learned of his own HIV diagnosis.

In response to the devastating impact of the virus, Haring introduced a new complexity into his works. Like Basquiat, Haring began to fill his canvases with great detail. The energetic and optimistic scenes typical of his early works were replaced with existential and post-apocalyptic imagery, including demons, mythical beings, flying skulls and corpses. In *Walking in the Rain*, Haring has imagined a dystopian scene, where a large, insect-like creature appears to be roaming the ruins of a destroyed civilisation.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Self Portrait

1985

synthetic polymer paint, coloured pencil and bottle caps
on wood panel

Private collection

For Kids

In this painting, Jean-Michel has used everyday objects, including bottle caps and pieces of wood, to construct a portrait of himself. On the left side of the work, he has painted his head and shoulders against a white background. It looks quite a lot like a mask, although we can recognise his dreadlocked hair. Jean-Michel believed that there weren't enough pictures of people with different skin colours in the art world.

Look for other pictures in the exhibition that might also be self-portraits of Jean-Michel.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

A Pile of Crowns for Jean-Michel Basquiat

1988


synthetic polymer paint on canvas

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

Following Basquiat's death, Haring painted this work as an homage to the friend he described as 'the M of art'. Here, Basquiat's signature, the crown, is made radiant and given a copyright sign, bringing together the unique visual language of both Haring and Basquiat.

Historian and writer Robert Farris Thompson described the significance of this tribute: '[Haring] takes the signs of coronation seriously and transmutes them into an epitaph. The crowns are built up, like a mound of stones upon a sepulcher, as if honouring every painting Basquiat ever signed with this seal of assertion. Some of the crowns have fallen, however. The artist is gone, unable to tend his reputation. Haring causes the mound to shine with inner spirit, intuiting a lasting contribution to American painting'.

For Kids

Jean-Michel passed away unexpectedly in 1988, when he was only 27 years old. Keith made this large painting as a tribute to his friend. In the centre, there is a pile of crowns so high that some have toppled to the ground. By making the  the subject of this painting, Keith is expressing his respect for Jean-Michel.

On the other side of this wall, there is a tribute to Jean-Michel that Keith wrote for a magazine. He describes his friend as a genius, teacher and true hero.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Exu

1988

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on canvas

Private collection

In many of his late works, Basquiat filled the entire canvas with visual marks. In this painting he has created a complex, layered composition by covering the canvas with signs, symbols and words. The main figure, with horns and a pitchfork, dominates the centre of the work. A multitude of eyes and flames surround the creature, and the word 'EXU' appears above its head. In Yoruba religion, the *Exú*, or 'black devil-god', is a spirit associated with trickery, misfortune, chaos and death.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1989

synthetic polymer paint and enamel on canvas

The Keith Haring Foundation, New York

Haring's struggle with AIDS ended on 16 February 1990, following his diagnosis in 1988. In his last complete painting, he created an optimistic scene despite the loss of many friends to the AIDS virus in the 1980s. He depicts a celebrating mass of humanity, raising their arms in a hopeful and proactive gesture. The figures are formed by Haring's characteristic lines, which suggest movement and vibration of energy.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Glassnose

1987

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on canvas

Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York

Jean-Michel Basquiat

United States 1960–88

Item

1987

synthetic polymer paint and oilstick on canvas

Private collection

Late in his career, Basquiat began to reduce the amount of imagery and marks in his works. This emptying out of pictorial space using areas of monochrome colour contrasts with his densely layered works, such as *Exu*, on display nearby. The composition of *Item* is reminiscent of Basquiat's notebook pages and the concrete poetry he created in them and on walls in his earlier street-art practice.

Basquiat has painted over text in several places on this canvas. On the left, the words 'FLESH SPIRIT' can still be deciphered despite being crossed out and concealed beneath a layer of paint. Basquiat used these gestures of erasure to draw attention to the text: 'I scratch out and erase but never so much that they don't know what was there. My version of pentimento'.

For Kids

This painting is different to many of the other paintings by Jean-Michel you've seen so far. Instead of layers and layers of words and images, there are only two words and symbols against a plain yellow background. Towards the end of his career, Jean-Michel began to paint much less detail on his canvases.

What do the symbols painted here remind you of?

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Remembering Jean Michel Basquiat

1988

ballpoint pen on paper

The Keith Haring Foundation Archives, New York

Invitation to Memorial Service for Jean Michel Basquiat

1988

black-and-white photocopy

The Keith Haring Foundation Archives, New York

Jean Basquiat, 27, An Artist of Words and Angular Images

obituary by Constance L. Hays, page 11 of
The New York Times, 15 August 1988
fibre-tipped pen on newspaper

The Keith Haring Foundation Archives, New York

Three months after Basquiat's untimely death, *American Vogue* compiled a series of tributes to the artist under the title 'Remembering Basquiat'. Contributions were made by many of Basquiat's close friends and contemporaries, including Keith Haring. This display case contains Haring's final handwritten draft for the article. Penned over eleven pages, Haring details his deep admiration for Basquiat as both a friend and an artist, and describes him as the 'supreme poet' and a 'true hero'. This tribute is accompanied by Haring's invitation to Basquiat's memorial service, as well as a news clipping Haring collected about Basquiat's death.

Keith Haring

United States 1958–90

Untitled

1988

ink on paper

Collection of Kermit and Lisa Oswald

Haring made this drawing in 1988 following the death of Basquiat in tribute to his friend and sometimes collaborator. In a pictorial reification, he quotes Basquiat's most iconic tag and, in turn, crowns Basquiat as King with a sparkling crown of his own design.