

Sotheby's

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Sotheby's to Present

DEAR KEITH

An Online Auction of Works from the Personal Collection of
Artist & Activist Keith Haring,
On Offer from the Keith Haring Foundation



© Keith Haring Foundation. Polaroids, The Keith Haring Foundation Archives

Dedicated Sale to Feature 140+ Works
Gifted to, Purchased by and Traded with Haring from
Iconic Friends and Artists Including:

Andy Warhol | Jean-Michel Basquiat | Kenny Scharf
George Condo | Roy Lichtenstein | Jenny Holzer

Together Bringing to Life the Celebrated Arts Scene of
1970s & 80s New York, of Which Haring Was a Defining Voice

All Works Appearing at Auction for the First Time,
With Estimates Starting at \$100

100% of the Foundation's Proceeds to Benefit The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &
Transgender Community Center of New York (The Center),
for Which Haring Created A Large-Scale Mural in 1989

Coinciding with the 30th Anniversary Year of Haring's Death in 1990 from
HIV/AIDS-Related Causes

Open for Bidding from 24 September – 1 October

&

On Exhibition in New York Beginning 26 September

"An artist is a spokesman for a society at any given point in history. His language is determined by his perception of the world we all live in. He is a medium between 'what is' and 'what could be'." – Keith Haring

NEW YORK, 28 August 2020 – Sotheby's is honored to present [Dear Keith: Works from the Personal Collection of Keith Haring](#) in a dedicated online auction open for bidding from 24 September – 1 October 2020.

Dear Keith will present 140+ works of art and objects from Haring's personal collection, all on offer from the Keith Haring Foundation – an organization established by the artist shortly before his death in 1990 from HIV/AIDS-related causes. Haring's collection features works gifted to, purchased by and traded with Haring among friends and artists in his community, including Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Kenny Scharf, and many more.

All of the works will appear at auction this fall for the first time, together revealing never-before-told stories about Haring's community and bringing to life the celebrated art scene of 1970s and 80s New York – from the School of Visual Arts (SVA) and Club 57 to street art and beyond.

In keeping with the Keith Haring Foundation's mission to sustain and expand the artist's legacy of philanthropy, full proceeds from the auction will benefit The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center of New

York (also known as The Center) – an organization that empowers the queer community of New York to lead healthy, successful lives; celebrates the community’s diversity and advocates for justice and opportunity.

During his 10+ years living and working in downtown Manhattan, Haring was engaged in the queer / downtown art and activism scene. He executed one of his final large-scale murals, *Once Upon a Time*, in the second-floor men’s bathroom at The Center in May 1989 for *The Center Show* – a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots that featured works by LGBTQ artists commissioned by The Center. That mural stands to this day. Haring was devoted to all of his communities, from his family and friends to collaborators both in art and activism, and the Foundation is pleased to celebrate the enduring connection he had with The Center through this gift.

Dear Keith: Works from the Personal Collection of Keith Haring will be on view in Sotheby’s York Avenue galleries from 26 – 30 September. Works carry estimates starting at \$100, and works with low estimates under \$10,000 will be offered without reserve, presenting collecting opportunities at all levels.

Harrison Tenzer, Head of Sotheby's Contemporary Art Online Sales in New York, said: “Dear Keith spotlights the diverse community of artists whose unique visions inspired Keith throughout his life. The collection is remarkably autobiographical, just as any great collector’s estate is a window into their individual perspective. We see the progression of Keith’s life captured in these works, from those of his childhood friend Kermit Oswald, to SVA peers John Sex and Kenny Scharf, to fellow upstart Jean-Michel Basquiat, to graffiti writers Futura 2000 and Lee Quiñones, to his heroes Andy Warhol, Pierre Alechinsky and William Burroughs, who he collaborated with during his meteoric rise to fame. Together they illuminate a culturally fertile era in which artists and activists worked closely together to create a world that was more inclusive than the one they were born into. I am deeply honored that the Keith Haring Foundation has entrusted Sotheby’s with this momentous opportunity to celebrate Keith’s continuing legacy, and I am proud that the sale will benefit The Center’s important work.”

Gil Vazquez, Acting Director of the Keith Haring Foundation, said: “Dear Keith is an especially meaningful event in what is the 30th anniversary of Keith’s passing. It feels as if Keith himself rallied his friends to make art for this specific purpose. It is rare that we as a foundation are able to address so many of the concerns that our founder deeply cared about in a single gift. The Center embodies so much of what Keith was about: community, empowerment, and the support of our future, the youth. We feel confident that this gift during this time for this purpose is the right thing.”

*Glenda Testone, Executive Director of The Center, said: "Keith Haring fostered hope and resilience during difficult times. He painted his 1989 mural, *Once Upon a Time*, on our walls to celebrate sexual liberation and envision a world without AIDS, in direct opposition to the fear and stigma that fueled that pandemic. It is this strong love for community, art and activism that we have always been proud to uphold. Once again, our work is urgently needed as LGBTQ people are fighting through the current COVID-19 pandemic, and demand for our services has been increasing. The Keith Haring Foundation has always honored Keith's legacy with their enduring generosity – and we are incredibly grateful for their latest gift. Their decision to auction many of Keith's precious pieces, with the help of Sotheby's, strengthens our ability to continue serving thousands of LGBTQ people regardless of what the future brings."*

KEITH HARING

Fascinated by cartoons from an early age, Keith Haring was best known for striking graffiti-inspired drawings that took him from New York City's streets and clubs to museums and public spaces around the world. While attending the School of Visual Arts in New York in 1978, Haring discovered a thriving art community of fellow emerging artists such as Kenny Scharf and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Haring created a singular graphic style based on the primacy of the line, peopling his compositions with such signature images as dancing figures, "radiant babies," barking dogs and flying saucers, and infusing them with uncommon energy.

Between 1980 and 1989, Keith Haring achieved international recognition, participating in numerous group and solo shows and producing more than 50 public artworks from New York to Paris. By expressing universal concepts of birth, death, love, sex and war, Haring created a lasting imagery that has been embraced around the world. Haring's works can be found in the collections of many museums including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Albertina, in Vienna, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and many more.

Shortly before his death in 1990, Haring established the Keith Haring Foundation. The mission of the Foundation continues to be threefold: the support of organizations committed to enriching the lives of children, promoting care and education surrounding issues of HIV/AIDS, and furthering the legacy of his artwork.

THE COLLECTION

Haring was greatly influenced by Andy Warhol, who was both a friend and artistic collaborator. In 1989 he told *Rolling Stone*: "Before I knew [Warhol], he had been an image to me. He was totally unapproachable. I met him finally through Christopher Makos, who brought me to the Factory. At first Andy was very distant. It was difficult for him to be comfortable with people if he didn't know them. Then he came to another exhibition at the Fun Gallery, which was soon after the show at Shafrazi. He was more friendly. We started talking, going out. We traded a lot of works at that time."

The auction includes a number of such works, including an *Untitled* portrait of Haring with Juan DuBose – a DJ as well as Haring's partner and lover, who passed away due to HIV/AIDS in 1988 (pictured right, estimate \$200/250,000). Haring and DuBose had a passionate on-and-off relationship for five years that was predominantly driven by physical attraction.

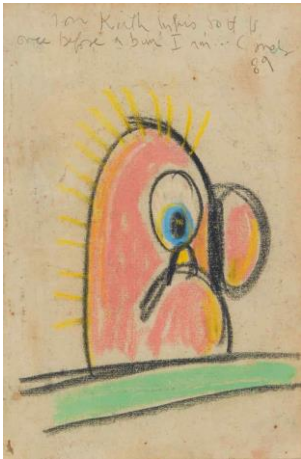


The sale features a significant group of works by artists associated with Club 57 – the night club located in a church basement in New York's East Village that quickly became one of the most influential centers of the city's countercultural movement when it opened its doors in 1978. Works by Jean-Michel Basquiat (pictured left: Basquiat, 'Untitled', estimate \$100/150,000), Stefano Castronovo, Samantha McEwen, Kermit Oswald, Kenny Scharf, Bruno Schmidt and John Sex bear witness to a definitive downtown scene fueled by low rents, opposition to the Reagan administration, and the desire to experiment with new modes of art, performance, fashion, music, and exhibition.

Kenny Scharf was particularly close with Haring – having become fast friends at the School of the Visual Arts, the two were roommates and collaborated often. The sale features works on paper by the artist, highlighted by his watercolor on paper in hand-painted frame **Untitled** (pictured right, estimate \$18/25,000), as well as a number of hand-painted objects.



The street art scene in which Haring worked in the 1970s and 80s is well represented, including pieces by John "Crash" Matos, Lady Pink, Lee Quiñones, Rammellzee and Basquiat, whose work he greatly admired. In his essay "Remembering Basquiat" published in *Vogue*, Haring wrote: "His work



had a kind of power which was unmistakably 'real'. The intensity and directness of his vision was intimidating. Jean-Michel was maybe a little too real for us. He was uncompromising, disobedient, and rude if the situation required it. Not malicious, but honest.”

Another close friend of the artist was George Condo, who often worked from Haring’s East Village studio. The sale includes an excellent grouping of early drawings and paintings done by the artist in the 1980s, including an **Untitled** work on paper featuring the inscription: *For Keith in Paris, so it is once before a bum I am...* (pictured left,

estimate \$12/18,000).

Haring also owned a number of works by established artists whom he greatly admired, including Pierre Alechinsky, Jean Cocteau, Alberto Giacometti, Roy Lichtenstein and Pablo Picasso. The sale includes two Lichtenstein prints, including *Forms in Space* from 1985 which took pride of place above the fireplace in his home (pictured right, estimate \$50/70,000). Lichtenstein attended Keith's first major exhibition in New York, as did Robert Rauschenberg and Sol Le Witt.



Credit: Nancy Elizabeth Hill

About the Keith Haring Foundation

Keith Haring (1958-1990) generously contributed his talents and resources to numerous causes. He conducted art workshops with children, created logos and posters for public service agencies, and produced murals, sculptures, and paintings to benefit health centers and disadvantaged communities. In 1989, Haring established a foundation to ensure that his philanthropic legacy would continue indefinitely.

The Keith Haring Foundation makes grants to not-for-profit entities that engage in charitable and educational activities. In accordance with Keith’s wishes, the Foundation concentrates its giving in two areas: The support of organizations which enrich the lives of young people and the support of organizations which engage in education, prevention and care with respect to AIDS and HIV infection.

Keith Haring additionally charged the Foundation with maintaining and protecting his artistic legacy after his death. The Foundation maintains a collection of art along with archives that facilitate historical research about the artist and the times and places in which he lived and worked. The Foundation supports arts and educational institutions by funding exhibitions, programming, and publications that serve to contextualize and illuminate the artist’s work and philosophy. www.haring.com

About The Center

Established in 1983 as a result of the AIDS crisis, New York City’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center has grown and evolved over the last four decades, creating and delivering services that empower people to lead healthy, successful lives. The Center continues to serve the LGBTQ community through virtual support services, launched almost immediately after our building closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We offer a wide range of services including virtual one-on-one counseling; substance use treatment and support groups; virtual youth drop-in space; online arts and culture programming; health insurance navigation and a virtual “front desk” open seven days a week to respond to community inquiries. To learn more about how The Center is serving the community during this time, please visit gaycenter.org.

About Sotheby’s

Sotheby’s has been uniting collectors with world-class works of art since 1744. Sotheby’s became the first international auction house when it expanded from London to New York (1955), the first to conduct sales in Hong Kong (1973), India (1992) and France (2001), and the first international fine art auction house in China (2012). Today, Sotheby’s has a global network of 80 offices in 40 countries and presents auctions in 10 different salesrooms, including New York, London, Hong Kong and Paris. Sotheby’s offers collectors the resources of Sotheby’s Financial Services, the world’s only full-service art financing company, as well as Advisory services for collectors, museums, corporations, artists, estates and foundations. Sotheby’s presents private sale opportunities in more than 70 categories, including three retail businesses: Sotheby’s Wine, Sotheby’s Diamonds, and Sotheby’s Home, the online marketplace for interior design.

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** Estimates do not include buyer's premium or overhead premium. Prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium and overhead premium and are net of any fees paid to the purchaser where the purchaser provided an irrevocable bid.*

Images are available upon request

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