

Keith Haring 1978-1982

February 26 through September 05, 2011

ARTIST(S) Keith Haring

"The public has a right to art. Art is for everybody."

-Keith Haring

Keith Haring ranks among the most iconic, influential and popular artists in the world. Twenty years after his death, this is a rare and in-depth look at the prolific early years that established Haring's language as an artist, his politics and social conscience, and his open homosexuality. This historic exhibition of rarely exhibited early work chronicles Haring's arrival in New York City (from his native Pennsylvania) and his immersion in New York's dynamic downtown culture. It explores the vibrant and experimental years when Haring first enrolled in the School of Visual Arts, started a diligent and vigorous studio practice, began making public and political art on the city streets and subway stations, and enjoyed a frenetic social life. Joining an art community outside the institutionalized art system, Haring quickly befriended fellow artists Jean-Michel Basquiat and Kenny Scharf, as well as many of the most innovative musicians, performance artists and graffiti writers of the period.

The exhibition delves into aspects of the artist's life and production that have received insufficient attention to date: Haring as a thinker and facilitator, and his work as highly experimental and performative. It includes drawings and sketchbooks, videos, flyers, posters, photographs and subway drawings, as well as word collages, texts, and diaries. The exhibition offers an impression of Haring's manifold maturation process, traces the development of his visual vocabulary and influences, and shows the artist as a philosopher and untiring initiator of artistic and political activities.