

# GLADSTONE

## Gladstone Debuts Career Defining Paintings and Works on Paper by Keith Haring

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Keith Haring; all created between 1987 and 1989. These exquisite and surprising compositions, some of which are being exhibited for the first time, capture Haring's invented version of reality that defined his artistic career. Astutely employing popular culture, sexual imagery, and religious iconography, the collages and large-scale paintings on view offer a deeply personal and critically important narrative, while simultaneously providing rare examples of works created during the last years of Haring's life.

Haring first rose to prominence in New York for his spontaneous, graffiti-inspired drawings that began appearing throughout the city's subway stations during the early 1980s. The artist's motive for the subway drawings was not self-promotion or property defacement, but rather his passion for democratic accessibility to his work outside of conventional art spaces. Though many of his creations appeared celebratory and playful, he was a politically active and socially conscious artist, interested in reflecting and responding to the cultural climate in which he was living. As a result, Haring's works frequently explore complex themes of sexuality, religion, racial inequality, economics, technology, and the AIDS virus. Haring's canvas, *Malcolm X* (1988), visually summarizes these overarching themes, with the careful inclusion of imagery and motifs inherent to the artist's practice. This late work, a commentary on discrimination against African Americans, reinterprets Haring's familiar iconography while interjecting elements of popular culture, art history, and religion in a collage-like manner, and articulate his urgency to visually narrate injustices throughout history using various methods of creation.

During the last years of his life, Haring continued to experiment with collage in both his paintings and drawings, a practice he had explored in his early career. These works were created on flat surfaces and include delicately rendered figures and symbols made with gouache and ink. Embedded in each work are different pieces of ephemera, such as magazine covers, newspaper clippings, reproductions of famous paintings like Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, and homoerotic advertisements, gathered contemporaneously with each work's creation, that weave their way into these post-apocalyptic and ambiguous landscapes. Much like the free-flowing way in which Haring conceived of his earliest public drawings, often depicting his subjects with one continuous line, these collages mimic the artist's automatic approach to artmaking and incorporate cerebral and investigative elements of artistic production. These collages, like Haring's late paintings, bridge dissimilar subjects from contemporary culture and history, providing new dialogues surrounding important social issues during his lifetime that still resonate today. On these collages, art historian Alexandra Anderson-Spivy notes, "His urge to experiment, while ever present, intensified as he came to acknowledge his time as limited. He seems to have felt unremitting pressure to explore

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new kinds of gesture, new mediums.” These visual experiments, some of Haring’s last works, demonstrate his never-ending curiosity with various media, as well as his career-long interest in artwork accessibility as means to enact social change.

As 2018 marks what would have been Haring’s sixtieth year of life, this exhibition serves as a memorial to and celebration of his artistic career and profound impact on society through his support of marginalized youth, and individuals fighting AIDS, which continues today through the efforts of the Keith Haring Foundation.

## **About Keith Haring:**

Keith Haring was born on May 4, 1958 in Reading, Pennsylvania and died at the age of thirty-one of AIDS-related illnesses in New York City. Since his death, his work has been the subject of major solo exhibitions around the world, most recently at the Albertina Museum, Vienna. From 2013 through 2015, Haring was the subject of an international touring exhibition, “Keith Haring: The Political Line,” which traveled to the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; the de Young Museum, San Francisco; and the Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, Munich. In 1994, the Castello di Rivoli premiered Haring’s first major institutional solo exhibition. In 2012, “Keith Haring: 1978-1982”, co-organized in 2010 by the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati and the Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, traveled to the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Haring’s work is in major private and public collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; The Bass Museum, Miami; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Ludwig Museum, Cologne; and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Michael Williams. For this exhibition, Williams presents a series of large-scale inkjet paintings that continue his exploration of the possibilities and complications inherent to making and understanding a painting in the digital age. The works on view are composed entirely in Photoshop with the use of a digital drawing pad. By rendering these works in the format of flattened inkjet prints, Williams questions the action of painting as a physical extension of the body. Utilizing the full potential of these new processes, Williams makes paintings that can also function formally and move the conversation beyond what defines the analog versus the digital. Through a series of compositions that incorporate both familiar and new subjects, Williams demonstrates his singular approach to artmaking.

## **Exhibition Details:**

Keith Haring

November 3 – December 21, 2018

Reception: November 3, 4–6pm

515 West 24th Street

New York, New York 10011

## **About Gladstone Gallery:**

Gladstone Gallery is known for its commitment to artists whose prescient approaches

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and experimental practices have defined the contours of contemporary art. The gallery has long been an active partner in the cultivation of iconoclastic careers, fostering a roster of artists recognized for their ground-breaking contributions. Headquartered in New York and including outposts in both Brussels and Seoul, Gladstone's impact extends globally, enabling both the presentation of new bodies of work, and an amplification of the international reach of its artists. Alongside its work with contemporary artists, the gallery is steward to the legacies of pivotal historical artists and serves as an advocate for the enduring power of art. Gladstone is led by a team of partners who spearhead its long-term vision and program, building on the values of its founder Barbara Gladstone.

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