

Press release

Museum Folkwang

“I wanted intensity for my life”. Starting in May 2020, Museum Folkwang to present a retrospective on American artist Keith Haring

Essen, 7 October 2019 – Beginning 29 May 2020, Museum Folkwang will present a major retrospective on American artist Keith Haring (1958–1990). Keith Haring’s artworks and themes have enjoyed worldwide popularity that continues to this today. The exhibition considers Haring’s oeuvre against the backdrop of global interconnectedness and contemporary social changes. These are themes that the artist began to tackle early on in his career and which he promoted through both artistic and commercial strategies.

The exhibition *Keith Haring* brings together early drawings, experiments with video and performance art, and large-format paintings on paper, canvas and vinyl, including many of his most iconic images such as the *Radiant Baby* and the *Barking Dog*, as well as numerous examples of Haring’s social engagement and his work in product design (posters, record covers, etc.). Rare archival material, leaflets, manuscripts, film recordings and photographs, some of which have never been exhibited before, revive the creative spirit of the time, while the re-staging of a 1982 immersive black light installation accompanied by hip-hop allows audiences to experience an example of Haring’s interest in new ways of presenting art.

Haring is one of the key artistic personalities of the 1980s. While his work is inspired by US popular culture, at a very early stage he developed his own artistic strategy, one that made use of traditional visual media such as drawing and painting, along with photography, video and performance. In his consistent attention to the phenomena of the post-modern metropolis and its diverse social and cultural milieus, Haring radicalised art’s exodus from the museum that had begun in the 1960s. Haring’s career lasted only a short while; on 16 February 1990, at the age of 31, he died of an AIDS-related illness. As an artist, he lent unique expression to universal concepts such as birth, death, love, war and compassion, creating an oeuvre that remains as relevant today as it was at the time of its production.

Haring’s art achieved great popularity in the context of graffiti art and the graffiti subculture, but the term ‘street art’ only describes one aspect of his artistic intentions. Haring himself said that he aimed to create an accessible form of art, i.e. one that is visible and comprehensible to all: “The decision is basically, is art for an educated few, or is art for all people of the time?” In his drawings, paintings, objects and works in public space, Haring therefore combines matters originally of interest to art with aesthetic phenomena that derive from globalization and digitalization (graffiti, logos, computers, robotics, networks, icons), discovering images for a society in transformation. It’s

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for this reason that the author Timothy Leary describes Haring as an “archetypal artist of the 21st century”.

The show also illustrates the performative aspect of Haring’s work, from his chalk drawings in the New York subway to his collaboration with artist and photographer Tseng Kwong Chi, who documented Haring’s approach. Haring also collaborated with Madonna, Grace Jones, Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren, developing sets and designs for videos and performances.

The exhibition is being presented in collaboration with the Keith Haring Foundation, the Tate Liverpool, and BOZAR, Centre for Fine Arts Brussels.

The major sponsor of the exhibition in Museum Folkwang is E.ON.

Information

Keith Haring

29 May – 20 September 2020

Opening hours

Daily 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Thursday and Friday 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Closed on Mondays

Ticket prices

Standard: €10 / Concession: €6

Advanced-purchase tickets can be acquired from the Museum Folkwang ticket counter and via the website from 15 January 2020

Visitor information / Tour bookings

T +49 201 88 45 444, info@museum-folkwang.essen.de



Keith Haring
Untitled, 1983

Keith Haring artwork
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