

R H O D E S

CONTEMPORARY ART

PRESENTS

# ICON

## KEITH HARING

Private View: Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June, 6pm – 9pm

Exhibition Dates: 7<sup>th</sup> June - 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019

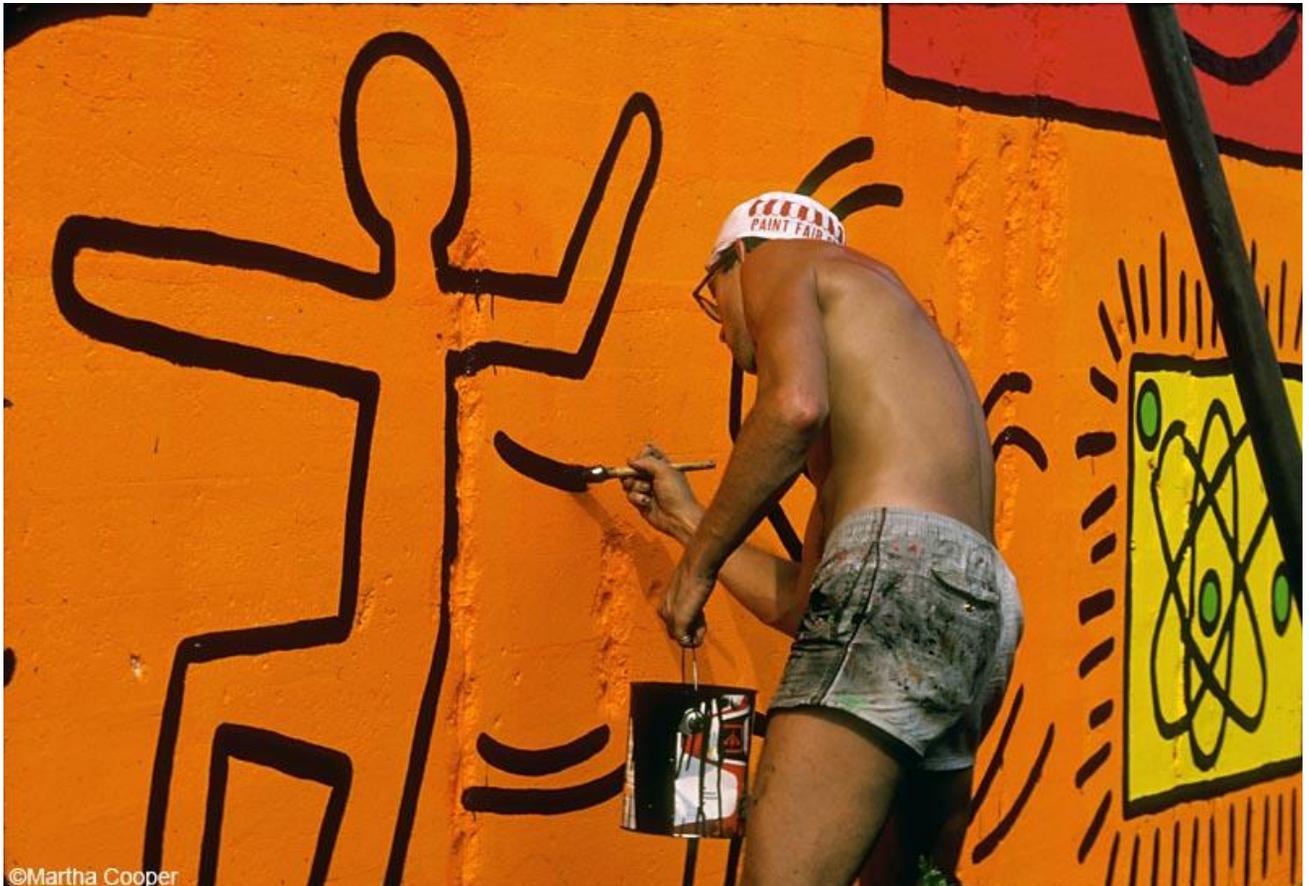


RHODES Contemporary Art are proud to present 'ICON', a collection of works, artefacts and photos of legendary artist, Keith Haring.

The show, coinciding with his retrospective at Tate Liverpool, will be a collection of paintings, posters and prints by Keith Haring, as well as a selection of artefacts such as a doodled pair of trainers and an NYPD report on Haring's graffiti. The show will also feature the photography of Martha Cooper, who knew Haring, documenting his historic painting of the Bowery wall, NYC. 'ICON' is a portrait of Haring; his timeless imagery, message and character.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1958, Haring developed an early love for drawing, partly taught by his father and taking inspiration from popular culture around him. Despite a brief spell training to be a commercial graphic artist, Haring truly honed his skill upon moving to New York and becoming a core part of the alternative art community of the era. He was often found organising events at Club 57 and hanging out with such idols of the era as Jean-Michel Basquiat and Madonna.

He began to develop his ideas of the independent artist, pushing his own youthful impulses toward a singular kind of graphic expression based on the primacy of the line. His politics had a heavy influence on his work, and he became focused on spreading a message through the power of public art.



Upon discovering the disused black advertising panels in the subway stations of the city, Haring began to draw his images in white chalk. Between 1980 and 1985, Haring produced hundreds of these public drawings in rapid rhythmic lines, sometimes creating as many as forty 'subway drawings' in one day. This is where he developed his unique style, having to work quickly, he developed a language of symbols and repeated characters, many of which he continued to use throughout his career.

*"I was learning, watching people's reactions and interactions with the drawings and with me and looking at it as a phenomenon. Having this incredible feedback from people, which is one of the main things that kept me going so long, was the participation of the people that were watching me and the kinds of comments and questions and observations that were coming from every range of person you could imagine, from little kids to old ladies to art historians."*

In April 1986, Haring opened the 'Pop Shop' selling T Shirts, prints and posters. The shop received criticism from many in the art world, however Haring remained committed to his belief that art should be accessible to all; he considered the shop to be an extension of his work, and it received support from many of his contemporaries such as Warhol.

By this time, his work had caught the attention of art collectors, and through the 1980s his work was featured in hundreds of international exhibitions. He became incredibly sought after, collaborating with such iconic brands and people as Absolute Vodka and Yoko Ono.



In 1989, Haring was diagnosed with AIDS and set up the Keith Haring foundation, providing funding and imagery to AIDS organisations. His own work in the last years of his life was highly focused on his own illness, hoping to generate activism and awareness about AIDS.

Keith Haring died of AIDS related complications at the age of 31 on February 16, 1990. Since his death, Haring has been the subject of several international retrospectives. The work of Keith Haring can be seen today in the exhibitions and collections of major museums around the world.

His imagery and beliefs live on. He is truly an ICON.

For more information on the show, including sales catalogue and additional images, please contact below:

RHODES Contemporary Art  
42 New Compton Street, WC2H 8DA  
[info@rhodescontemporaryart.com](mailto:info@rhodescontemporaryart.com)  
+44 (0)20 7240 7909

**R H O D E S**  
C O N T E M P O R A R Y A R T