



Myers

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20TH CENTURY DECORATIVE ARTS AUCTION

St. Petersburg, Florida

Sunday, February 17, 2019 at 11 a.m. EST

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Nu lid worden

SCHUNCK opens exhibition of the early work and life of Jean-Michel Basquiat



Dutch Queen Maxima attends the opening of the exhibition Basquiat, The Artist and His New York Scene at the Schunk museum in Heerlen, on January 31, 2019. Patrick van Katwijk / ANP / AFP.

The exhibition presents the work he made during these years of development: from the poetic graffiti texts to the almost immediately coveted canvasses of which an early selection can be seen in the exhibition. Visitors will meet his NY scene through the exhibition that ensured Basquiat's breakthrough; the big and legendary Times Square Show (1980). In this co-created Times Square Show Basquiat exhibited together with others like Keith Haring, Nan Goldin and Jenny Holzer. SCHUNCK shows 50 original works from the exhibition. Finally, the SCHUCNK exhibition highlights a special piece of Dutch art history by addressing the very fast Dutch reception of Basquiat and his scene.

Basquiat Before Basquiat

SCHUNCK shows in its entirety the exhibition Basquiat Before Basquiat: East 12th Street, 1979-1980 from the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. The exhibition features early works, objects and documentation of Jean-Michel Basquiat's formative years before he made his breakthrough onto the New York art scene. It was during this period that he shared a small apartment on East 12 Street with his friend Alexis Adler. Through paintings, sculpture, works on paper, a notebook, and other ephemera, as well as Adler's numerous photographs from this period, the exhibition explores how life in New York informed and formed Basquiat's artistic practice. Basquiat Before Basquiat is curated by Nora Burnett Abrams, curator at MCA Denver.

SAMO

From the late seventies to the beginning of 1980, the street is the source of inspiration and canvas of Basquiat. New York was flooded with graffiti at the time, but the tone of street art from Basquiat and his childhood friend Al Diaz stood out. Together they formed the duo SAMO®, an abbreviation of 'same old shit'. They distinguished themselves from the other graffiti artists with their enigmatic texts.

The exhibition shows texts by SAMO® photographed by the legendary street photographer Martha Cooper, as well as a comprehensive series of 57 photographs by philosopher and avant-garde composer Henry Flynt. The photographs show the texts of SAMO® in colorful New York as part of their urban environment.

Times Square Show

Basquiat showed his work for the first time in the scene-defining Times Square Show in 1980. The show marked the emergence of a cross-over culture and the 'urban culture'. It brought together art, graffiti, music, fashion, performance, poetry and dance in a cultural mix. The exhibition, with more than 100 artists, opened under the artistic vision of New York City artists' group Colab, in an abandoned building on Seventh Avenue and 41st Street which used to be a massage parlor. One of Basquiat's pieces was the event's outside sign board. On it he had scrawled in big letters SEX, scandalizing some contemporaries. Participating artists included: Keith Haring, Fab Five Freddy, Kenny Scharf, Jenny Holzer, John Ahearn, Coleen Fitzgibbon, Christy Rupp, Jane Dickson, and Tom Otterness. The special events during the Times Square Show included films and performances by Nan Goldin, Jim Jarmusch and others.

Basquiat on Canvas

Finally, the exhibition presents a selection of early paintings and drawings by Basquiat from the period 1981-1984.

Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960–1988), born in Brooklyn to a Haitian father and Puerto Rican mother, emerged from the hiphop, post-punk and graffiti & street performance scene in New York. With no formal art training, the high-school dropout used the city's walls as his canvas. Basquiat first achieved fame as part of SAMO, an informal graffiti duo who wrote enigmatic phrases in the Lower East Side of Manhattan during the late 1970s. He astonished the New York scene by making the transition from graffiti artist to internationally acclaimed Neo-Expressionist in just a couple of years. Decades after his drug-related death at the age of 27, his works and his artistic language continue to fascinate the public all over the world. Basquiat remains one of the most important and influential artists of the modern and contemporary art period.

