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From Subways to the Pop Shop: Display Space in the Work of Keith Haring

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FROM SUBWAYS TO THE POP SHOP: DISPLAY SPACE IN THE WORK OF
KEITH HARING

by

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SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

PROFESSOR BILL ANTHES
PROFESSOR KATHLEEN HOWE

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Introduction: Just a Small Town Boy

Despite his atypical later life, Keith Haring enjoyed a typical childhood. Born on May 4, 1958, in rural Pennsylvania, and the oldest of four children, he was encouraged to explore all of his creative desires. His father, Allen Haring, would spend hours drawing cartoons with his son, an activity Keith later shared with his three younger sisters. When he graduated from high school, Keith was encouraged to further his artistic career, and enrolled in The Ivy School of Professional Art in Pittsburgh. After being steered toward exploring art only in a commercial sense, with emphasis on design and drawing for production, Haring decided to move to New York to pursue more creative works. Upon his arrival, he enrolled in The School for Visual Art. There, he made connections and developed his signature style. In 1979, feeling he was ready to start his career, Haring dropped out of the school and began creating art all over New York City. Starting on downtown streets and in underground subways, he eventually moved into galleries and museums, and finally created his own display space in The Pop Shop. As a result, Haring's work was seen all over the world by the time of his death in February 1990.

After Haring's commercial success and exhibitions in many different types of venues, his works continued to express their roots. While exploring different forms of art throughout his career, he maintained his simple, two-dimensional, often monochromatic style. This style clearly references his early art on the street. While the work maintained aesthetic continuity, the differing locations in which the work was presented changed the ways in which audiences understood them. By using non-traditional locations for his earliest works, Haring invited viewers to interact with it as part of their daily lived

experiences. When these works moved to the more traditional gallery and museum spaces, the interactions, reactions and relations changed. In these more traditional fine art locations, people were unable to perceive the work in the same way as in their original contexts.

There are certain exceptions to this claim. Some of Haring's works did not, and often could not, be displayed in their original form outside of their original location; in these instances he often adapted the work for subsequent display in traditional settings. For example, in 1983, Haring created a work of art on a human form. The artist, quite familiar with representing the male nude in his drawings, painted onto his friend Bill T. Jones' naked body (Figure 1). Showing his classical art training through his knowledge of the nude body, Haring combined round and linear lines to accentuate the contours of Jones' body. The room in which Haring painted Jones was almost empty. Haring, Jones, a few friends, and photographer Tseng Kwong Chi were present, but it was important to both Haring and Jones that the creation was intimate. Because of this, the photographs are the only lasting record of the work of art; the original piece cannot be displayed. Because the photographs' goal is to transport the viewer from a different location into the photographic space, the viewer's reaction is less influenced by seeing the work outside of its original context.

In other instances, Haring documented the creation of a work, and displayed it for a short time before destroying it. In these cases, the video is the only lasting evidence of the work, and videos can be shown regardless of location or context. Toward the end of his career, Haring began creating outdoor sculptures and murals. In these cases, the works could not be moved from their original locations. They maintain the same context

because of their fixed location. The scope of this project limits the number of pieces that can be discussed. There are thousands of Haring's individual pieces, and whole series, that are not addressed here. However, the selection included provides a broad view of the differing types of the artist's works and can thus be used to make claims regarding his whole career.

That viewer reactions to Haring's work are influenced by the location in which it is encountered can be shown through an investigation of multiple stages of the artist's short career. This thesis will show the importance of display space in the viewer's experience through an examination of various periods in Haring's career and the display locations thereof. By transitioning through these locations, viewers' and critics' reactions to the works changed. The first chapter will focus on Haring's early career, when he was working on the streets and in the subway. The second chapter will focus on Haring's inclusion in gallery and museum shows, both prior to and after his death. Finally, the third chapter will look at Haring's creation of The Pop Shop, a store in which he sold small commodities with his designs. These three stages provide a succinct view of the ways in which differing modes of display of the artist's work changed the impact the work has on a viewer. Further, the conclusion will show that an analysis of this relationship in Haring's work can provide insight into the display and direction of the later Street Art Movement. While Haring did not personally identify with the movement, his work has striking similarities to it, and thus in recent years he has been named a predecessor. Therefore, these arguments can be applied more broadly to the whole Street Art Movement.

Arguments regarding relocation often attempt to touch upon authenticity, making claims regarding whether works hold true to the artist's original intent for them if they are relocated. Such claims are difficult to prove, especially when concerning Haring. The artist died at age 31 after enjoying a career of just over a decade. Because of his rising fame at the end of his life, when he died each work he created was considered as important as every other. He did not have the opportunity to provide a retrospective view of his early work from the perspective of a later career. He was never able to express his own point of view about which group, series, or era of his plethora of works should be seen as the most important and authentic. Further, Haring's work and estate are managed by an eponymous foundation that attempts to maintain the authenticity of displays of the artist's work. However, because Haring placed his work in so many different settings during his lifetime it is impossible for the foundation to determine how Haring would have made decisions regarding contemporary display. Thus, the only claim to be made is that the viewer's interpretation of the work changes based on its display, not that any display or resulting interpretation is more correct than any other.

Chapter 1: Notes from the Underground

When Haring first moved to New York in 1979, he was fascinated by the abundance of marketing and advertisements throughout the subway system. On Christmas 1980, upon seeing an empty advertisement frame, he decided to place the first of his many drawings in the subway.¹ He happened to have chalk with him and drew a simple linear design on black paper. Over time, these drawings remained formally simple, with no color or real-world references. However, as Haring's style developed, the drawings evolved to interact more deeply with their surroundings, eventually becoming completely integrated with and dependent upon their environments.

In an untitled photograph from his *Art in Transit* collection, Tseng Kwong Chi captures Keith Haring as he draws on a blank advertising space in the New York Subway in the early 1980s (Figure 2). Crouching in the lower left corner, Haring appears fully engrossed in his drawing. The artist holds his simple medium, a piece of chalk. In the photograph, Haring has nearly completed the drawing. He depicts a small barking dog as a finishing touch. The dog served as a visual *nom de plume* in his early public art, something that would immediately signal that Haring created the work. The specific location of the work seen in the picture was likely unplanned. Instead, he merely planned to place a drawing on any blank advertising panel within the subway system. Further, Haring would often base the subject of his drawing on the surrounding advertisements. He would often include similar themes, while occasionally mocking the capitalistic intentions of the posters.

¹ Keith Haring et al., *Keith Haring Journals*. (New York: Viking, 1996), 20.

Haring's earliest experimentations with unsolicited public art were not seen in the subway. Instead, the works were found stapled to telephone poles, strewn throughout streets, and plastered to scaffolding around the city. While still in school and new to New York, Haring began experimenting with a Xerox machine to create images that looked like newspaper front pages. Influenced by William Burroughs's "cut-up" technique, Haring manipulated the text to create shocking headlines². Created in late 1979 and early 1980 in the wake of Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign, the works make a political statement. As seen in Figure 3, a montage of these works, the posters were in newspaper typeface, but were clearly not real headlines. Printed on plain white or colored paper and with no accompanying stories, the works were meant to shock, but not to trick. With headlines like "Ronald Reagan Accused of TV Star Sex Death" and "Pope Killed for Freed Hostage," they were noticeable, but not believable. The Xerox works had a remarkably large audience. Placed throughout the entire city, they were seen by anyone who happened to be walking the streets of New York City. The works were unsigned, so while visible to this large audience, they did not expressly promote the artist.

These works provide a clear introduction to Haring's early use of different spaces to different effects. While the subway pieces are more recognizable and have become more valuable, the Xerox pieces allowed Haring to experiment with certain ideas and issues, such as location and shock value, which he would later confront with the subway works. Like these later works, the Xerox pieces were randomly placed throughout the city. Their locations were dependent on Haring's travels through New York. This display mechanism provided an up to the moment map of where Haring had been. However,

² Keith Haring, "Cut-Up Street Works: 1980," in *Keith Haring*, ed. Jeffery Deitch et al. (New York: Rizzoli Publications, 2008), 52

because they were produced prior to their placement, they could not interact with their environments in the same way as many of Haring's later installations. While the later subway works would begin to have a dialogue with their surroundings, because the complete creative process of the Xerox works happened prior to their display, the works themselves embodied no interaction with the specific location where they were seen. Instead, Haring created the works before hanging them up and walked throughout the city with the already fabricated papers. While he clearly carefully selected the specific sites in an effort to reach his target audience, from an aesthetic view, they could not blend into the surroundings as well. The use of image and text, as seen in Figure 3, provides an early example of the shocking nature of much of Haring's work. These works drew attention through outrageous, explicit headlines in a similar way that his drawings commanded attention from their explicit and superhuman subject matter.

When the drawings appeared in the subway in 1980, they did not initially register with the established art world. However, as seen in Figure 4, subway travelers embraced the new addition to their environment. The image shows a young man posing in front of a black and white drawing of two figures, one flying and one dancing, with clocks as their heads, positioned next to a subway map. The young man gestures toward the drawing and appears to be moving. The snapshot, one of many of similar scenes, perfectly captures Haring's intentions for the works. The photograph was not planned and happened instantaneously, matching Haring's own creative process and intention for the work. It was not a lasting piece, but rather a temporary intervention in the space.

The simple form and content of the drawings drew curiosity from the public. While no two drawings were identical, their similar style created a sense of unity among

the works, so that once a traveler heard Haring's name associated with one of the drawings, he would recognize the others as the artist's work. With only chalk, the works were always composed with a black background, white outline, and white subjects. Haring created this linear design to be accessible within the brief space of a typical encounter. One did not need to study a drawing in order to understand it; rather, the simple, tribal-like designs were easy to read quickly. With simple compositions and no foreground or background to speak of, in order to understand one of these early drawings, a viewer needed only to recognize the figures in their simple depiction and then move along. Using simplified iconography, Haring created drawings that could be appreciated at the glance of a hurrying commuter. Haring was conscious of the limitations the location placed on content, not just on form.

Not only did Haring have to adjust his style to work within the subway, he also had to change the way in which he thought about the content of his work. When working in spaces within his school or posting things throughout the city, the artist did not have to consider whether he would offend an audience with his works. He was encouraged to experiment and push the limits while in the confines of his school and peer group. However, the artist was conscious of the vast audience present for his subway works. Haring was acutely aware that people of all ages, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and religions travel through the subways and therefore limited his works to what would be suitable for all audiences. For example, he would not create anything inappropriate for children.³

³ John Gruen. *Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography*. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991) 63.

Raphaella Platow explains that by illegally drawing on preexisting advertisements, Haring “highlighted the point that a corporation can plaster public spaces with desire- and consumption-driven messages while the general public itself has no freedom to offer alternative voices”⁴. The artist saw no conceptual difference between an advertiser placing a solicited message about consumption on the walls of the subway and his placement of simple drawings in the same space⁵. In these instances, Haring collaborated with both audience and space to state his message. Both through his presence and the public location of his works, the subway drawings forced people to acknowledge the works in their daily lives. The drawings were initially shocking. Because audiences were not used to seeing such images in the subway, they were forced to question non-visual aspects of the work, such as how, when, and by whom they were created and what Haring was trying to say.

By 1980, when Haring first began creating his unsolicited subway drawings, the New York Subway System trains had already been a canvas for over 20 years worth of graffiti. However Haring’s additions were different. With great respect for the earlier graffiti writers, who created their own language and text to essentially mark their territory, Haring attempted to create a similar discourse through a different visual language. He never thought of himself as a graffiti writer, and never attempted to tag in a traditional sense. While his drawings preserve meaning out of their original contexts and visually represent Haring as an artist, stylistically they are so different that a true graffiti artist would not classify the drawings as tags. However, Haring saw social parallels

⁴ Raphaella Platow, “Holding Up a Frame,” in *Keith Haring: 1978-1982* ed. Gerald Matt et al. (Vienna: Moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2011), 90.

⁵ Ibid. 82

between what he was doing and what graffiti artists did. Because of the similar societal circumstances, theories of graffiti can be helpful in understanding the theoretical and situational aspects of Haring's subway creations.

The New York City public's preexisting opinions on graffiti influenced initial reception of Haring's subway works. While graffiti has existed since the ancient Romans, an increased attention to all public graffiti on city streets in the 1960s and 1970s brought a new level of attention to the practice. When Haring began using the subway space for his art, any sort of graffiti was seen as vandalism, and since vandalism was often associated with violence and degradation of society, laws were passed in an attempt to curb it.

When creating in the subway, Haring had to begin thinking about the legality of his works. When working on walls inside his school, friend's apartments, or on Xerox machine, Haring did not have to consider any rules. In fact, he was encouraged to experiment with revolutionary placements as soon as his mentors saw his desire to create art in all areas of his life⁶. However, in creating his drawings on the walls of the New York subway system, Haring was breaking the law. He recalls experiences with law enforcement in his diary saying that he formed relationships with many of the subway police officers, and would receive numerous warnings instead of actual citations.⁷

Haring had already developed his quick, improvisational style by the time he started his work on the subway, however this setting supported a continuation of this type of creation. The illegality of his process forced Haring to work quickly. Had he spent

⁶ Gruen, *Keith Haring*, 39.

⁷ Keith Haring, "Arrested in the Subway", in *Keith Haring*, ed. Jeffery Deitch et al. (New York: Rizzoli Publications, 2008), 115

hours on each individual drawing, it would be more likely that law enforcement would catch him. By maintaining a quick process, Haring was rarely in one place for an extended amount of time. However, the artist was forced to come up with designs and compositions on the spot. The aesthetic and content relationships between Haring's drawings and the surrounding advertisements show that the artist took the surrounding items into account when conceptualizing the drawings, however his process shows that he did not have much time to come up with these unique designs.

Writing specifically about graffiti writers in Toronto, Janice Rahn provides a succinct view of the relevance of public audience in the creation of graffiti. She discusses the participatory feeling of the audience as a crucial element of not only the creation of the work, but the work as a whole⁸. The presence of an audience during Haring's creative process gives the viewers a sense of intimacy and ownership towards the work. Further, the subway traveler who had seen Haring create would likely alert their peers to what they had seen, thus widening the viewership and appreciation of the work. Viewers related to the work because they were there with the artist. Further, their presence created a sense of urgency in Haring, which is obvious when looking at the aesthetics of the work. As previously discussed, Haring created in a hurried frantic way. The public aspect of his early creation may have influenced this creative style. In an atmosphere filled with people rushing, Haring knew he had to move quickly to both attract, and maintain, the attention of his audience.

⁸ Janice Rahn. "Performance in a Public Space: Place and Change." In *Painting without Permission: Hip-Hop Graffiti Subculture*, 165-181. (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 2002),173.

The location also influenced the public reception of the work. Subway travelers enjoyed stopping and watching Haring. His process became just as recognizable and enjoyable as the art itself. With a dancer-like style, Haring would become completely engrossed in his drawings, and often not turn away from a composition until it was complete. Pablo Picasso's son, Claude Picasso⁹, described how watching Haring create reminded him of his father. They would both work on a piece from start to finish without stepping back and viewing it as a whole. It was a frantic sort of production, with each artist working on the canvas, or in Haring's case surface, as a whole, covering every inch sporadically. Seemingly miraculously, the artist would step away upon completion to display a coherent composition¹⁰. Because early exposure to Haring's work came alongside the artist's own presence, this process became almost as famous as the works themselves. Almost as a sort of performance art, Haring gathered a following that enjoyed watching him create. This exposure enhanced his rising fame and recognition; because he started by creating in public, Haring's fans gained a personal connection to the work.

When Haring moved beyond the public scenes of the street and subway, to create and exhibit works in other venues, his work had to change. Quick, impromptu drawings intended to hang next to advertisements did not hold their significance when placed on the bare white walls of the New York galleries that by the early 1980s were actively bidding to represent Haring. Haring acknowledged this fact and, admittedly, was ready to move beyond the limitations of the subway. Further, he saw his drawings disappearing

⁹ Gruen, *Keith Haring* 172.: Claude, Pablo's first son with his third wife, Françoise, and his wife, Sydney, got to know Haring through the artist's connections in the Paris art world.

¹⁰ Ibid.

from the walls of the subway. As his work gained recognition, people would steal the drawings from their public subway location, correctly assuming that they would gain value over time. While holding with him the experience of his public, illegal creation in the ever-changing environment of the subway, Haring began experimenting with ways to continue his career elsewhere, although he still remained in the subway to some degree until 1985.

Chapter 2: Pictures at an Exhibition

Haring's earliest experience displaying his work in a space resembling an art institution came in the non-traditional space of downtown New York clubs. While not established institutions themselves, Haring set them up as galleries, and thus created a similar sort of atmosphere that could function outside of the control of established gallerists. This afforded the artist more control of both the exhibition and the scene. Haring was able to completely control the entire space and experience of the viewer. Haring had become a resident curator of one of these spaces, The Mudd Club, and organized shows for other artists and groups¹¹. Thus, for his own shows he was able to not only hang the show, but also create the guest list and make decisions regarding music, performance, dance and atmospheric concerns. However, as Haring grew less involved in the curation of his shows with the increased public attention to his work, and especially after his death, the works were displayed in a wide array of ways. The changing displays of the works in turn changed their effect on the audience.

In his club shows, the artist created an environment filled with music, performance, and wall-to-wall art and decoration, and filled the space with people from all over the city. He invited his classmates, friends, and uptown collectors¹². Essentially, the artist created a replica of the subway. Although there were no trains or advertisements, the plethora of external stimuli from the variety of art forms displayed in the space made the viewer travel the space as though she was a subway traveler, not sure whether to focus on the advertisements, busking musicians or fellow travelers. An

¹¹ Gruen, *Keith Haring*, 39.

¹² *Ibid.*, 62.

example of this is the show Haring hung in PS122, an experimental gallery¹³. As seen in Figure 5, the show looked more like a bedroom than a gallery space. With sketch-like drawings plastering every surface of the room, a viewer was not expected to focus on each individual work's formal content as she would in a traditional gallery space. This sort of atmosphere fit the simple aesthetics of the works. With repetitive patterns, both throughout the individual works and aspects apparent in the complete collection, the viewer was able to act as more of a surveyor, not spending much time on each individual work, but focusing on the atmosphere as a whole. For example, the black and red compositions seen in Figure 5 were not meant to be studied at length by a visitor in the space. Instead, a viewer could glance at an individual work and see, for example, a sheep-like animal glowing on a pedestal in front of a large gathering of figures. There is little detail in the depiction, allowing a viewer to move quickly through the exhibit but still take in the content of the drawings. Rather than closely studying each individual work, the display encouraged a more cursory view, making the exhibition more about the experience of encountering a space with many works than about the particular characteristics of the works themselves.

Ten years prior to Haring's foray into the club and gallery, a revolution of sorts took place in New York display spaces. Galleries in SoHo, similar to those at which Haring would eventually display his art, began opening up spaces for artists to produce installations. These galleries were attempting to capitalize on the 1960s trend of total

¹³ PS122 was established in 1978 by a group of artists who took over space in an old school building in The East Village. Renting the space from the city, the artists opened a gallery space in room 406 and used other spaces as studios and storage. The space, still open today, houses contemporary art installations and experiments. For more information, see: Karen Eubel, *PS122 Gallery: History*. <http://www.ps122gallery.org/history.php>.

environments, however their business-like approach to selling imposed constraints on the ability of artists to truly take over the space. As Haring, along with other artists, had a greater ambition for the work that required bigger spaces and longer production time with more flexibility about what he could create, he sought new spaces in which to create and display. However, the economically driven structure of a gallery was unsatisfactory. Thus, multiple alternative spaces opened throughout downtown New York City in the early 1970s. Thriving into the 1980s, centers like The Dia¹⁴ opened specifically for installations and large-scale site-specific work¹⁵. An openness to this more experimental exhibition of works allowed Haring to ease into moving his works into galleries and museums in a way that seemed familiar to his fans from the subway, but allowed him to branch out of the confines of his previous display space.

After an initial reluctance to accept gallery affiliation, Haring started showing his work with Tony Shafrazi in 1982. The gallery was well established, and Shafrazi was a key figure in the modern art world. Shafrazi gained notice as a rebellious young artist when, in 1974, he spray-painted the words ‘Kill Lies All’ onto the surface of Pablo Picasso’s *Guernica*, as it hung in The Museum of Modern Art in New York. Despite his

¹⁴ Established in 1974 by Philippa and Heiner Friedrich, patrons of contemporary art, The Dia worked to fund experimental projects by contemporary artists. With an original gallery space north of New York City, in 1977, the foundation opened an exhibition space in Chelsea. While Haring never worked directly with The Dia, their influence in the art world provided a dialogue on installation art that Haring joined with his own displays. For more information see: Grace Glueck, “Dia Foundation, Back From Brink, Opens New Center”. *New York Times*, October 7, 1987. And *Dia Art Foundation*, <http://www.diacenter.org>.

¹⁵ Julie H. Reiss, *From Margin to Center: The Spaces of Installation Art*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001) 112.

rebellious reputation, by 1980, Shafrazi was respected as an important figure in the contemporary art movement¹⁶.

Haring had previously worked at the gallery as an assistant after leaving school. Because of his close relationship with Shafrazi, as well as the gallerist's willingness to experiment, Haring's first gallery show was modeled after his club shows in a way that emulated the subway experience. Although he was showing in the more elite environment of a New York gallery, Haring made sure his downtown, counterculture influences and friends were present. Like the club shows, the opening of this show functioned as a party with performances, food, drinks and dancing.

In a similar fashion to the PS 122 show, the October, 1982, Shafrazi show emphasized the quantity of the works. As seen in Figures 6 and 7, hundreds of drawings lined the walls of the downtown gallery. People mingled throughout the space, looking at the art, interacting with each other, smoking, eating, and dancing. Balloons marked with a Haring drawing of a square smiley face floated to the ceiling, as high as the highest pieces of art. Stacked atop one another in a style reminiscent of the French *Salon*, the works formed one massive collage, as opposed to individual pieces. Figure 6 shows a white wall covered in drawings, stacked two or three high. Between the images, Haring drew small dancing figures and crawling babies directly onto the wall. In a separate room, as seen in Figure 7, Haring painted the walls with thick red and yellow vertical stripes, limited the lighting and placed large sculptures throughout the room. The drawings and paintings on the walls, while still composed in only two colors, are bright and visually jump off the wall. For someone standing in the middle of the show, the area

¹⁶ Felix Gmelin, *Art Vandals: Lies Kill All*, 1996.
<http://www.temporaryart.org/artvandals/03.html>

seemed like a strange neon world of its own, not like the inside of an acclaimed New York gallery.

The gallery put together an exhibition catalogue, the first ever dedicated to Haring. It featured essays by art dealer and friend Jeffery Dietch and art historian Robert Pincus-Witten, as well as a list of hypothetical questions posed by poet David Shapiro¹⁷. Upon receiving the book, Haring did not approve of the Pincus-Witten essay, and prevented it from ever being published again. Thus, while Dietch's essay and Shapiro's questions have been reprinted in other arenas, after the initial publication of the catalogue, the Pincus-Witten essay was never reprinted. While this could be interpreted as a typical example of a petulant young artist simply trying to suppress critical perceptions of his work with which he did not agree, such an interpretation misses the larger point: by choosing people to represent him who would support his decisions and by controlling his publications extremely carefully, Haring was able to maintain an unusual amount of control over the representation of his work. To this day, only the 2000 original copies of the scorned 1982 catalogue exist.

Although Haring moved out of his familiar location, the way in which he displayed the work and curated shows created an atmosphere so closely mirroring the subway that the work maintained the same effect on the viewer as when it was placed in advertisement frames. Thus by controlling gallery space, Haring was able to maintain the aspects of his work that depended upon being tied to a broader experience. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the works' meaning in the subway was intrinsically tied to the reactions of subway travelers and their interactions with the space. By creating such a similar display

¹⁷ Jeffery Deitch, Robert Pincus-Witten, David Shapiro and Keith Haring, *Keith Haring*. (New York: Tony Shafrazi Gallery, 1982).

space in these more traditional arenas, Haring was able to maintain the original experience of viewing his art. The spaces clearly could not be identical. Because of the differences between subway travelers, club kids, and Chelsea gallery attendants, the audience prevented him from completely copying the experience, but nonetheless, Haring attempted to maintain as many aspects as possible. However, as his art began to leave the subway and enter the more mainstream art world, museums became interested in Haring, and gradually, the differing contexts began to change the experience and interpretations of the works.

In an attempt to maintain control of the ways in which his work was displayed when he started showing in museums, Haring's role morphed into an almost curatorial position. As Charlotte Klonk discussed in her *Spaces of Experience*, with the trend of constant rearrangement in the modern art museum, starting in the mid-twentieth century, the role of the curator grew immensely¹⁸. With the emergence of thematic shows and emphasis on dialogue among works, the job of the curator morphed into one equally as important as that of the artist. Curation began to dictate the entire experience of a show. Haring's control over his gallery and club shows displays his acknowledgement of this new power struggle in the art world. In order for him to maintain some control over the presentation, and thus interpretations, of the work, he had to enter a more curatorial role. He created this role for himself by experimenting with installation-type work. When museums began to express interest in displaying Haring's works, he used these total installations to maintain a certain level of control.

¹⁸ Charlotte Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: art gallery interiors from 1800 to 2000*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 184.

In 1985, The Contemporary Art Museum in Bordeaux, France, presented the first Keith Haring solo museum show¹⁹. In the initial planning process, the curators asked for a collection of drawings and paintings, but also wanted to incorporate Haring's large scale, installation works, in an effort to display his trademark aesthetic interaction with display space, repetitive aesthetics, and thematically serial works. He saw pictures of the space and decided to hang large paintings, front to back in the five arched entrances to the main gallery space. This original display strategy allowed the ten canvases to function as a series, rather than as ten individual works. Designed to hang in identical architectural frames, no work was favored above any other. The arches opened from the entryway into the main gallery of the museum. A viewer would see one side of the arches, and thus five of the canvases before entering the interior space of the gallery. Once inside this space, they would see the remaining five canvases, on the opposite side of the same five arches. Each canvas was given equal standing in the display and worked collectively to create one complete work. Much like the earlier subway works, no one work would stand as well on its own. They were created with aesthetic unity in color and form as well as cohesion through their content and context.

Before his arrival, Haring had canvases stretched to fit these spaces, so that when he got there a few days before the opening, he could begin his work. Not knowing what he would paint until days before his arrival in France, Haring began thinking about the relevance of the number ten. He wanted the works to be related in content and form, not just in shape and location. Perhaps influenced by his youth as a self proclaimed "Jesus

¹⁹ Gruen, *Keith Haring*, 136.

Freak,”^{20,21} Haring chose to depict The Ten Commandments (Figure 8). With three days to create ten large paintings, he started working as soon as the rest of the show was hung.

The paintings reflect this nervous, hurried energy that had become routine for Haring. In a similar fashion to the presentation of his subway drawings, the formal elements of these works match the setting and audience. With a strong sense of motion communicated through parenthetical lines and dance-inspired figures, the images are more dynamic than many of Haring’s simple chalk drawings. The combined use of bright yellow, red, blue and green contrasts with Haring’s typical two-tonal works of red and black or black and white. These formal attributes used to depict figures, so different from Haring’s normal cast of round, monochromatic, faceless characters, convey the rushed, stressful, and drug-induced environment in which they were created. While stylistically more complex, and created up against a strict deadline, Haring brought his rapid style of working to new levels, shocking his audience of curators and museum directors. Further, the location and physicality of the works within the arches shows Haring’s consideration of, and interaction with, the gallery space.

When the Bordeaux Contemporary Museum show closed, the works were sent to The Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam for a spring 1986 monographic show.²² For this second show, Haring decided to incorporate site specificity into the show once again; this

²⁰ Ibid. 7.

²¹ Certain scholars have emphasized this aspect of Haring’s upbringing in an attempt to find meaning in the subjects of many of his works. This line of thinking centers on the idea that Haring’s use of the Radiant Baby as his tag is an illusion to The Christ Child. Haring himself rarely mentioned religion in his later life, but based on the aforementioned theories that his drawing was a subconscious act, there may be some validity to this theory. For more information see: Natalie E. Phillips, "The Radiant (Christ) Child: Keith Haring and the Jesus Movement." *American Art* 21, no. 3 (Fall, 2007): 54-73.

²² Gruen, *Keith Haring*, 146.

time creating two onsite works. First, he had a loosely woven cheesecloth blind created to cover a large skylight in the display space (Figure 9). This served as both a work of art and a way to protect the materials he used from damaging light exposure. He spray-painted the cheesecloth with a light, bright motif of rounded figures prior to hanging it. A retrospective view of the work positions it as a foreshadowing to the coming commodification of Haring's work. As discussed further in Chapter 3, later in his career Haring began producing and selling smaller objects covered in his designs. Many of these objects served a specific purpose, such as a watch, pillow, or water bottle. While not a commodity itself, the skylight cover shows a point of transition in Haring's career. The work was created with a specific purpose in mind: to protect the other works in the show. The functionality of the skylight cover can be seen as a stepping-stone to the commoditized works Haring created in the mid and late 1980s.

The work can also be seen as a continuation of features from his earlier displays. Its location on the ceiling recalls the previously discussed abundance of works in his early gallery shows. Its placement creates the same environment as these early exhibits. While the surrounding drawings were placed on the whitewashed walls of one of the most esteemed contemporary art museums in the world, the inclusion of a work on the ceiling integrated Haring's own vision of the display of his works.

Haring also created a 60-foot long drawing (Figure 10) to cover the entire circumference of a circular gallery space. Much as he did by placing a work on the ceiling, Haring created an environment that forced the viewer to be completely enclosed by the work. The sheer massiveness of the work would make it shocking on its own, but its original placement experimented with installation. When the viewer entered the room,

he would be completely surrounded by the drawing, except for the small doorway. With a 20-foot diameter, the space was small to begin with, but covered completely in black paper with white drawings, it visually shrank. As in the club and early gallery shows, Haring's involvement in the creation, curation, and installation of both of these museum shows allowed the work to be seen in a way similar to its original street context. The work evolved visually, and the purposefulness of the museumgoers created a different experience. However, given these circumstances, the work maintains as much of the original context as possible.

Although *The Ten Commandments* and the skylight cover Haring created in Amsterdam were not exhibited again, the 60-foot drawing has since been hung in a different context. Most recently, the Museum of Modern Art in New York included the drawing in its "1980-Now" show, ongoing from November, 2011. In its display at MOMA, the work covers part of the wall of a room (Figure 11). In the center of the room is a case holding Jeff Koons' "Three Ball 50/50 Tank." Because of its central location, the Koons work commands attention, while Haring's drawing appears, essentially, as an afterthought; it is perceived more as a mere decorative object, rather than an important piece of art. Clearly, the fact that the work is given 60 feet of museum wall space awards it significant status, however visually the Koons piece is the central work in the room. As the only Haring piece in the exhibit, the decorative display is the only point of reference for a short, but varied career.

Despite its changed context, the drawing's presence in the MOMA show does promote Haring's goal of increased audience. One of his key ambitions was to make art more available to the public. While the museum charges admission, museumgoers who

stumbled upon the work without any background knowledge of Haring would become aware of his work. This concept is clearly exemplified by both the public placements of work throughout his career, and by the opening of The Pop Shop, where he sold affordable art pieces and commodities (See Chapter 3). The drawing's placement in a periodical survey increases its public exposure, thus acts in accordance to Haring's goal of increasing the audience for his work. He saw that people enjoyed his works, and thus wanted to spread the joy and appreciation. Were a museum visitor to enter the room looking for the Koons piece, unaware of Haring's work or career, the artist's goal of increased exposure would be satisfied. However, the complicating factor is how fundamentally different the two displays of the same drawing are. Once displayed to create a unique, complete environment, the work has morphed into a wallpaper-like background. Regardless of any opinion on authenticity, the context of and intended reactions to the work has vastly changed with different displays. In one, the viewer is literally surrounded by the work, with nothing else to focus on; in the other, the viewer must concentrate on other visual stimuli.

A second example of the contemporary display of Haring's work is seen in The New York Historical Society Museum. The subject of much press, in November, 2011, the Society took pieces of the original Pop Shop ceiling and hung them over the information desk (Figure 12). The work has been fragmented and restored. In its original location, it was both functional and decorative; in a similar fashion to the skylight cover from the Amsterdam show, the work helped create an all-around environment. Further, its placement on the ceiling over the information desk rids it of any artistic appreciation; it is merely a decorative, archival piece in this new context. As with the untitled 60-foot

drawing now on display in MOMA, the work has left this context, and no longer creates the sense of enclosure within a space purely focused on Haring's work. Thus, the aforementioned debate focusing on the MOMA display applies to the repurposing of this work as well.

Moreover, the press surrounding the installation of The Pop Shop ceiling focused almost exclusively on the relocation of the work, as opposed to the work itself. Mainly discussed in announcements of the show's opening and on blogs, writers wrote of the importance of The Pop Shop itself, and only discussed the work as a historical relic from the now closed store. The work went from being a piece of art to a piece of history. Even though the work could not maintain the same meaning outside of the shop, where it was part of a greater experience, placing the objects inside glass cases rid the work of any original context that could remain. While Haring would likely have appreciated the increased access to the work, its new placement does not allow it to maintain the same impact on a viewer. Further, the only other Haring works on display are other items from The Pop Shop, displayed in this relic-like fashion. With no attention to the aesthetic qualities of the works, the show neglects the expansion of visual appreciation and enjoyment of the work, which was so important to the artist, in favor of a purely art-historical role. In the previously discussed club shows, the work was featured so abundantly that it was impossible to focus on all aesthetic characteristics of the works, and instead the viewer was encouraged to focus on the shared qualities of all the works. This show, on the other hand, emphasizes only the historical relevance of the works as artifacts, instead of the visual and cultural importance they held in their original display.

The display of Haring's work in art institutions has already outlived the artist by over twenty years. Thus, it is unreasonable to expect the work to be displayed exactly as it was when the artist himself designed and installed his own shows. Further, it is impossible to make claims regarding contemporary allegiance to Haring's vision for the display of his works, as no one can know what he would want for the works in the contemporary world, nor how they would be perceived through the lens of his current fame. However, through an investigation of the display of Haring's work in galleries and museums, both before and after his death and recent fame, it is clear that the way institutions show the work changes their overall impact and meaning.

Chapter 3: Exit Through The Pop Shop

In 1985, Haring was traveling through Tokyo, setting up a museum show and preparing for an opening. While exploring the city, he began to see his designs in unexpected places: on t-shirts, accessories and personal items throughout the city. He had not commissioned these items and was initially surprised to see them. However, after thinking about what he had seen, the artist realized that the items were indicative of the acceptance his art had found. After the initial exposure to Haring's work, drawings of radiant babies, dancing figures, dogs, and space ships had become commonplace on everyday items in the foreign city. He had been accepted into a global visual vernacular, leading the artist to think about the next stages of his art.

The experience of seeing his designs in this uncommissioned, unauthorized form led to a realization that would provide a catalyst for Haring's later career. In his journals, Haring wrote that he realized that his art had a life of its own. He saw the work as a gift to the public and did not want to play "exclusivity games" just to drive up the price of his works. He stated, "my work had to go its own course and I had to go with it and let it become what it was going to become"²³. After seeing that one possible course for the work to take was in the form of these everyday commodities he had seen on the street, Haring decided to produce similar items and offer them for sale at low prices. When he returned to New York, Haring bought a studio space in the SoHo neighborhood and turned it into a full time store. With all the walls covered in black and white line drawings, The Pop Shop, as it would come to be called, opened in April 1986.

²³ Gruen, *Keith Haring*, 202

The Pop Shop was not Haring's first foray into producing small tokens featuring his designs. While creating works on the subway five years earlier, the artist began distributing pins featuring the radiant baby and the barking dog, images present in many of the subway drawings. The pins, as seen in Figure 13, were offered for free to passersby in the subway. Haring claimed that they were not intended as any sort of marketing device, but rather created so that his audience could further enjoy his work²⁴. However, intentional or not, they ignited more interest in the artist's work. Nonetheless, in a similar fashion to the subway drawings themselves, the pins were intended for enjoyment. They were not for sale; Haring was not looking to make money with the items. Similarly, when he opened The Pop Shop, Haring was already featured in prominent private and museum collections; he was not interested in economic gain. Rather, he sought solely to widen the ownership and access to his art.

Haring clearly drew influence from earlier artist-owned stores, most notably, that of Claes Oldenburg. First opened as an experiment in a group show in 1961²⁵, Oldenburg's Store eventually took over the artist's storefront studio space. Oldenburg's goals for his own place of commerce were unlike Haring's in many ways. Selling craft-like sculptures of abstract forms and everyday items, such as a loaf of bread, at high prices, Oldenburg recognized that his Store would not easily attract customers. Most pieces were sold for ninety-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents, or similar arbitrary prices²⁶. In a conversation with Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, Oldenburg stated, "...realistically speaking, it was stacked against that because people in that neighborhood

²⁴ Elisabeth Sussman. *Keith Haring*. (New York: Bulfinch Press, 1997) 58.

²⁵ Barbara Haskell. "Oldenburg, Claes." In *Grove Art Online*. *Oxford Art Online*.

²⁶ Adam Weinberg, *Audio Guide Stop for Claes Oldenburg, The Store, 1961*. Whitney Museum

just aren't going to come in when they see something as strange as this. If people come in from the street, it was kids or just curious people. I would see them at the window—they'd look in, but nobody would come in". He further claimed that "...it never was—and I think it would have been naive in a way to have made it—a real store"²⁷. He argues that by intending for the primary function of the Store to be for profit, the artistic intentions of Oldenburg's stance would become obsolete. While Haring's shop was widely popular and successful, Oldenburg spent hours alone working in the Store, watching passersby.

Further, the items in the Store served considerably different purposes. Oldenburg's objects were not created with the consumer in mind. Rather, he was making a statement about the buying and selling of art and the idea of production and consumption within the art market. By creating random objects with the sole intent of sale, whether real or imagined, Oldenburg made the viewer, or customer, of The Store aware of these processes in art. Unlike much of his more conceptual works, the individual works themselves were not intended to be thought provoking, but rather their existence as non-art commercial objects within the artist's space provided a commentary on trends in modern art.

Figure 14 shows a photograph of a recent reproduction with original items from The Store. The simple vitrine holds nine craft-like sculptures. These particular pieces are all of food items: pie, cake, ice cream, and a slab of meat. The works look childish and, despite being in Oldenburg's style at the time, do not seem to be created by one of the

²⁷ Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Three Conversations in 1985: Claes Oldenburg, Andy Warhol, Robert Morris Claes Oldenburg, Andy Warhol, Robert Morris and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh" *October* (1994): 36.

most acclaimed modern artists. However, this proves Oldenburg's point. The works are not exceptional examples of the artist's talent, but nonetheless he offers them for sale. Oldenburg created the craft-like items to prove a point about the consumer culture in the art market. Through these items, he argues people will purchase anything if the art world claims that it is great or valuable. The fact that the items were not widely sold is negligible. What is important is the critical acclaim that The Store received. Through his creation of The Store, his message to the art world was received.

Haring's products from The Pop Shop served an opposite purpose. These items, as seen in Figure 15, celebrated the consumer culture in Modern Art. Attempting only to increase access to his art, Haring's shop created a population of fans obsessed with purchasing from the artist. While Oldenburg was criticizing the existence of this type of art appreciator, Haring was completely embracing it. However, a secondary analysis of The Pop Shop shows it as an interactive artist space, much like Oldenburg's space. While the commercial purpose of the two stores varied greatly, they are in dialogue as successful artist spaces that commented on the consumer culture of the art world.

A secondary goal of The Store, as stated by Oldenburg in the same conversation with Buchloh, was to create an "antimuseum" or "antipedestal" space²⁸. He attempted to rid his work of the societal implications of the museum, and allow it to interact with the world at large. Haring sought to accomplish a similar goal with his shop. As his work gained recognition and became valuable to collectors, the original audience could no longer afford works, nor always be able to see the pieces. From the time of his earliest creations, Haring despised this exclusivity. While Oldenburg was attempting only to

²⁸ Ibid.

make a statement regarding the modern consumption of art, Haring saw his store more pragmatically. In The store, people's interactions with the space and the items within the space were part of a statement Oldenburg was making for an elite audience about the art world. In The Pop Shop, people's interactions with the space and the items were solely about allowing people to interact with the space and the objects, and by extension, with the artist. He wanted people to be able to see, touch, and even own his work, regardless of their social or economical status.

Haring argued this point by stating, "I wanted to continue the same sort of communication as with the subway drawings. I wanted it to be a place where, yes, not only collectors could come, but kids from the Bronx"²⁹. However, initial critique of the shop claimed the opposite: that Haring's sole goal was to capitalize on his success. In his April 22, 1986, weekly New York Times column, "Notes on Fashion," Michael Gross stated, "Mr. Haring... used to offer his art free on subway walls. Now he sells it for five-figure sums. Mr. Haring also used to give away his pins, jigsaw puzzles and comic books, which are now for sale at the shop. That may be why someone spray-painted its threshold with words like 'Capitalist' and others too rude to mention"³⁰. This initial reception neglected to state the true economic arrangement of the shop. By 1986, Haring was happily economically stable and admittedly wealthier than anyone needed to be. Rather than personally collecting revenue from the store, he arranged for money from all sales to go to organizations that helped struggling children and those suffering from HIV/AIDS. Thus, Haring was not at all interested in receiving any financial gain from the store;

²⁹ Haring as quoted in Jack Bankowsky, Alison Gingeras and Catherine Wood, *Pop Life: Art in a Material World*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), 68.

³⁰ Gross, Michael. "Notes on Fashion," *New York Times* April 22, 1986.

rather he was interested in providing art to those who wanted it and money to those who needed it.

Aesthetically, The Pop Shop was similar to Haring's early club shows discussed in Chapter 2. As seen in Figure 15, the store was covered from floor to ceiling with drawings, and the combination of each individual object into one experience was greater than any one object itself. Haring's own conception of The Pop Shop incorporated this emphasis on the experience. He claimed that the store was part of an extended performance. Like his club shows, each short-term and fully encompassing of a space, the artistic elements of The Pop Shop came in the shopper's experience, as opposed to the individual items for sale. Haring was interested how the public would react to the existence of a gallery-like environment set up as a store.

But The Pop Shop was no gallery at all. Instead, as argued by Nicholas Culliman, The Pop Shop robbed the third-party gallery of all significance in Haring's living career³¹. While the shop was open, no other New York gallery was necessary. Haring displayed and sold work on the walls of The Pop Shop, and used the space to experiment with installations and experimental pieces. During this time period, Haring continued to gain significant international recognition. As The Pop Shop forced galleries like The Tony Shafrazi Gallery to loosen their monopoly on the representation of Haring in New York, galleries outside of The Pop Shop's market still sought relationships with the artist. Haring's journal entries from these years chronicle trips to Japan, France, Germany, and

³¹ Nicholas Culliman, "Dreams that Money can Buy" in Jack Bankowsky, Alison Gingeras and Catherine Wood, *Pop Life: Art in a Material World*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2010), 68.

The Netherlands, where he would be entertained by various gallerist friends³². Since Haring was in full control of The Pop Shop in New York, he could not open these shops in all of these locations³³, meaning that galleries outside of New York still served a purpose.

When Haring died at the age of 31 on February 16, 1990, those close to him decided to maintain the shop. As the artist's final days were marked by illness, the store was already running with little of his direct management. With outsourced production and an already established staff, The Keith Haring Foundation continued to run the store until 2005. Many have reminisced that this continuation, in a way, kept the artist alive.

When the closure of the shop was finally announced, those closest to the artist mused about what Haring would think of not only the fact that the store's run was coming to an end, but also that it lasted for 15 years after his death and almost 20 years after its opening. Haring's official biographer, John Gruen, said at the time, "I'm almost positive he would not have kept it open as long as it was. He would have wanted to move on to something even bigger in scope"³⁴. The dynamic and ever-changing nature of Haring's other works was at odds with the static and unchanged Pop Shop that stayed open for fifteen years after his death.

However, despite the closing following the natural course of events for Haring's work, when news of the closing broke, many went through a secondary mourning phase.

³² Keith Haring and Robert Farris Thompson. *Keith Haring Journals*. (New York: Viking, 1996.)

³³ The artist did open a Pop Shop in Tokyo in 1986, however due to the difficulty in maintaining the operations at the foreign store, Haring closed the Tokyo location in 1988.

³⁴ John Gruen as quoted in Milzoff, Rebecca, "Haring's Pop Shop Fizzles Out", *New York Magazine*, August 21, 2005.

The public Internet forum maintained by The Keith Haring Foundation filled with comments from people worldwide who could not believe the shop was closing. A guest named Rachel wrote, “I am crushed by the news of the store's closing. And the thought of the shop's ceiling being dismantled and stuck in a storage closet somewhere literally makes me sick. I cannot stop crying”³⁵. Her comment is not even the most dramatic. While her emotions seem exaggerated, Rachel represents a group of people who never met Haring, but for whom the artwork was incredibly important. These fans visited the store as a shrine and memorial to the artist’s short-lived career.

Ironically, the store’s eventual closure was due to financial issues. While Haring was financially secure enough to open the store as a not-for-profit entity, the rising costs of rent in the up and coming SoHo neighborhood forced the foundation to compromise the funding for other projects, such as grants to children’s shelters and AIDS organizations. While the success and longevity of the shop might have surprised the artist, it is likely that he would have supported the decision to close it. Thus, while many felt that the closing deprived the world of its last living remnant of the artist, the decision was made with respect for Haring’s original desires and, in that way, kept him alive more than the shop could.

However, August 28, 2005, was not the last time the world saw The Pop Shop. As discussed in Chapter 2, The New York Historical Society recently put the ceiling on display, and other shows have attempted to recreate the shop itself by opening an operating store inside an exhibition. Most notably, The Tate Modern Art Museum opened a fully functioning Pop Shop as part of their 2009 show, *Pop Life: Art in A Material*

³⁵ Keith Haring: Keith Haring Forum—Pop Shop. http://haring.com/cgi-bin/simpleforum_pro.cgi?fid=01&topic_id=1122405921

World. The museum paid close attention to the original aesthetics and intentions of the store, even recreating exact replicas of the murals that so famously hung throughout the store.

The show received significant press and the museum published a sizable catalogue upon its opening. A revolutionary idea, to recreate an area that acted almost as a piece of performance art during its time, the show attempted to stay as close to the original store as possible. In the exhibition catalogue published by The Tate Modern, assistant curator Nicholas Cullinan stated that with the reconstruction, the museum sought to create “a living, breathing entity”³⁶. This sentiment held true to Haring’s intent for the original space. By working closely with the foundation, the museum created a successful reinterpretation of Haring’s famous space. However, without Haring, it would be impossible to literally recreate the space, as it existed prior to February of 1990.

The existence of The Pop Shop after Haring’s death, both prior to its closing and in later incarnations, does not provide the same experience to the viewer that the store did between its opening and Haring’s death. Instead, it has been converted into a monument to Haring’s life. When the artist was alive, it was both a gallery and living piece of art. When Haring died, the murals on the walls became stagnant; there were no more new deals with companies like Swatch; instead, The Pop Shop became stuck in time. In the outcries of posts in the previously mentioned foundation forums, this timelessness was treasured. Fans cited it as the one place in New York City that would never change. It was a reminder of a past time.

³⁶ Nicholas Cullinan as quoted in Elizabeth Day, “Is It Art, or Is It a Store? Keith Haring’s Iconic Pop Shop Is Now Reborn As Both”, *The Observer*, September 26, 2009, 2

In its original incarnation, Haring intended much more. The area was meant for displays that would change and shelves filled with new and updated products. His conception of the store as a performance relied on new creativity, not outdated recreations of products from the 1980s. Haring saw the space as operating in the present: as an ever-changing, living space. After his death and without him as curator and creative force, it became a piece of the past, an attempt to preserve a singular moment, one of many during his life. This is not to say that the foundation failed in its attempt to continue Haring's legacy. With attention to every detail and a desire to hold true to Haring's intentions, the foundation's attempt at preserving, and later recreating, The Pop Shop created a space of remembrance, where the values Haring held close were present. But, like a monument, the space was no longer a living art form, and can never be again.

Conclusion: State of the Art

Haring never considered himself a “Street Artist.” The term did not exist during his lifetime, and he modestly shied away from grouping himself with any movement or with other artists. However, the posthumous discussion of his works centers almost completely around this movement. Featured in popular culture, fashion, entertainment, and news, the so-called Street Art Movement has recognized as its patriarchs Banksy, Shepard Fairey, and Keith Haring. Haring’s art, along with that of his also deceased friend and colleague Basquiat, and the still-producing Fairey and Banksy, is now recognized as an early and important instigator of the movement.

The movement has gained significant popularity with the adoption of the artists into popular culture. Shepard Fairey brought significant attention to himself, and, in turn, the movement, by creating an official campaign image for President Obama’s 2008 campaign (Figure 16). The simple image of the candidate, cast in red, white, and blue, looking up into the distance above the word “Hope” in block letters was seen plastered on buildings, shirts, and bumper stickers for the year leading up to the election. With his street-art roots reflected in the simple poster-like composition and integration of text and image, Fairey’s work transformed from an underground, illegal state to one encouraged by the political sphere.

While only Fairey gained immediate recognition as a result of the image, his acceptance into the popular culture cannon paved the way for the rest of the movement to rise to that level. The 2010 movie directed by Banksy, titled “Exit Through the Gift

Shop,” provides a rare insider’s view of Street Art³⁷. Marketed as a documentary on Banksy, the film follows the career of Thierry Guetta as he enters the world of Street Art and opens a show in 2008 called “Life is Beautiful”. Many viewers and critics saw the film as a hoax, an example of the hype surrounding the commercialization of Street Art in the art market. Jeanette Catsoulis of *The New York Times* described the event as “a display of blatant knockoffs and cut-and-paste pop trash that’s nevertheless fawned over by gullible collectors.” She continues to describe a scene in the movie in which “street interviews with ecstatic attendees give way to a sniggering Banksy, who seems both gratified and embarrassed by his Frankensteinian role”³⁸. She explicitly points out that Banksy’s role was to create Guetta’s career. In an effort to expose his secretive life to the public while staying masked in his anonymity, Banksy essentially fabricated a satire of himself in the earnestly eager Guetta.

The hype of “Life is Beautiful” was recreated in the 2011 “Art in the Streets” show at Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles (MOCA). The show provided a retrospective of the movement, from the 1970s until present day. Works included early tagging in the 1940s, the founding of graffiti in 1971, Basquiat, a recreation of the subway to house a group of Haring drawings, and present day works by the popular Fairey and Banksy.

In the center of the expansive front room of the gallery space, surrounded by walls filled with tags and installations and next to a small indoor skateboard structure, sat a white Buick sedan (Figure 17). Haring had covered the car with red and blue paint,

³⁷ Banksy, *Exit Through The Gift Shop*. DVD. (West Hollywood: Revolver Entertainment, 2010).

³⁸ Catsoulis, Jeanette, “On the Street, At the Corner of Art and Trash.” *New York Times*. April 16, 2010, p C14

depicting figures and a snake wrapped around the side. The inclusion of this work not only displays Haring's posthumous acceptance into the Street Art community, but also the acceptance of this nontraditional artwork into museum culture. Even years after his death, Haring's work can still be shocking in a more formal setting.

As with any show of its sort, it struggled with issues of relocation, reproduction, and legality. The majority of the works were commissioned specifically for the show. Alex Stapleton's film "Outside In: The Story of Art in the Streets" shows many of the featured artists installing their works as they discuss the show. The common thread throughout the artists' narratives is a desire to recreate aspects of the street in the museum. With many whole rooms devoted to single artists, like the Haring Subway room, the show attempted to mimic the experience of walking through streets. Critic William Poundstone explains that while the show is not as accessible as one may think, with "sculptures and performances; surrealist objects and concrete poetry (or whatever the street art terms for such things are). The show has three cars, an ice cream truck, and a steamroller — all pivotal"³⁹. He does, however, commend the show for being educational. The recreation in a museum setting did not reduce its authenticity, but rather widened its appreciators.

With increased attention to Street Art comes increased attention to Keith Haring. As mentioned in Chapter 2, his work continues to be shown throughout the world. His recognition as a member of the growing Street Art movement has made his work even more relevant. Not only has this association created a larger audience for Haring, but the issues and analyses prompted by Haring's work can now be applied to the work of other

³⁹ William Poundstone, "Art in the Streets at MOCA", Bouin Art Info.

Street Artists. With works confronting and in dialogue with similar challenges, such as legality, permanence, and acceptance into art institutions, these younger artists can learn from an analysis of Haring's career. Further, as many of these artists have already had longer careers than Haring, their own late-career works and exhibitions may one day be able to provide the retrospective understanding of their art and the movement in general that Haring never could. This may someday allow for a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the challenges of exhibition and interpretation of Street art and Street Artists.

Figure Gallery

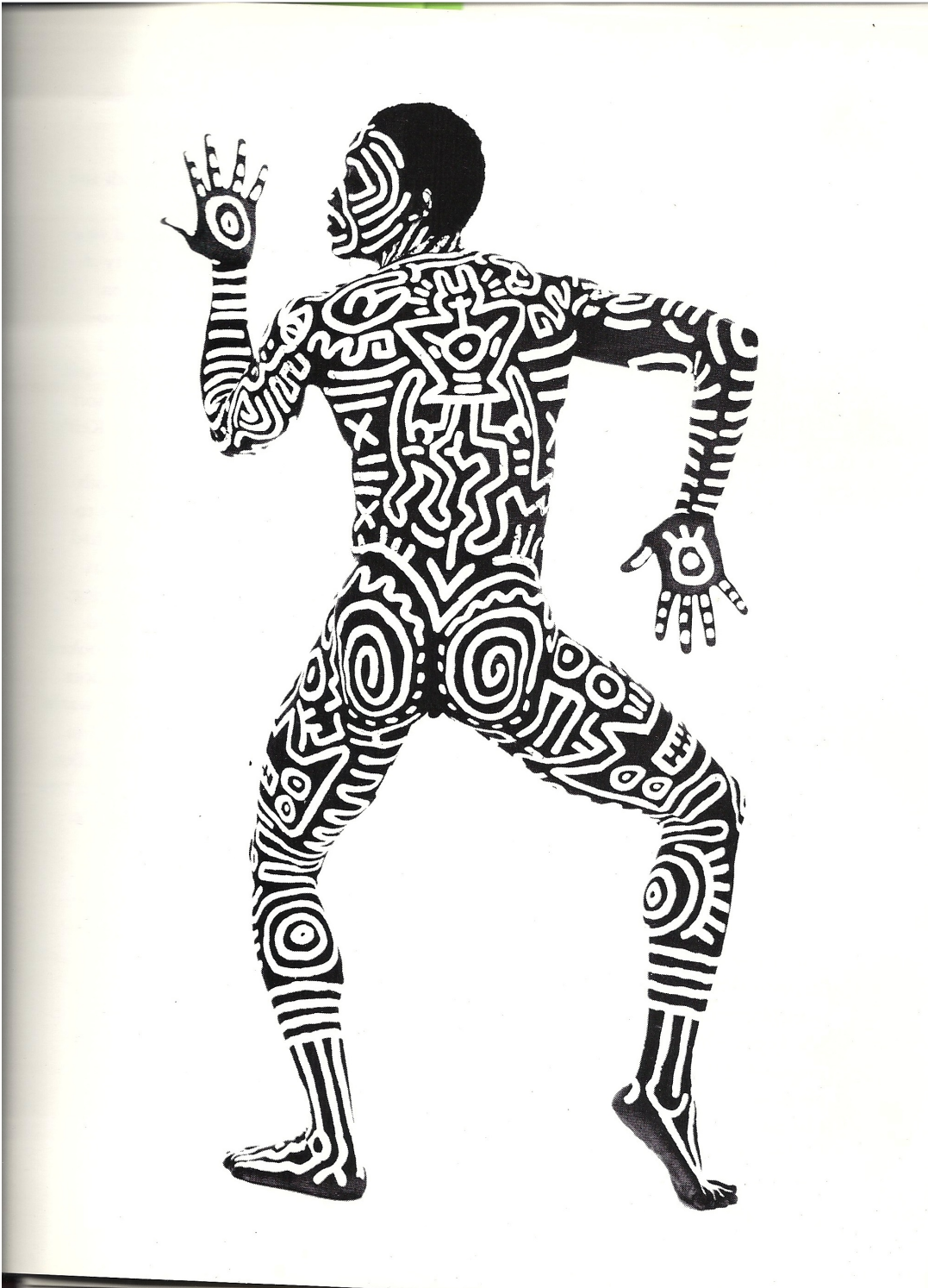


Figure 1: *Bill T. Jones as Painted by Keith Haring*, Photograph by Tseng Kwong Chi, 1983.

John Gruen. *Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography*. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991) 94.



Figure 2: *Untitled*, by Tseng Kwong Chi, 1984 From *Art in Transit*, Tseng Kwong Chi, Henry Geldzahler and Keith Haring. *Art in Transit: Subway Drawings*. (New York: Harmony Books, 1984) 14.

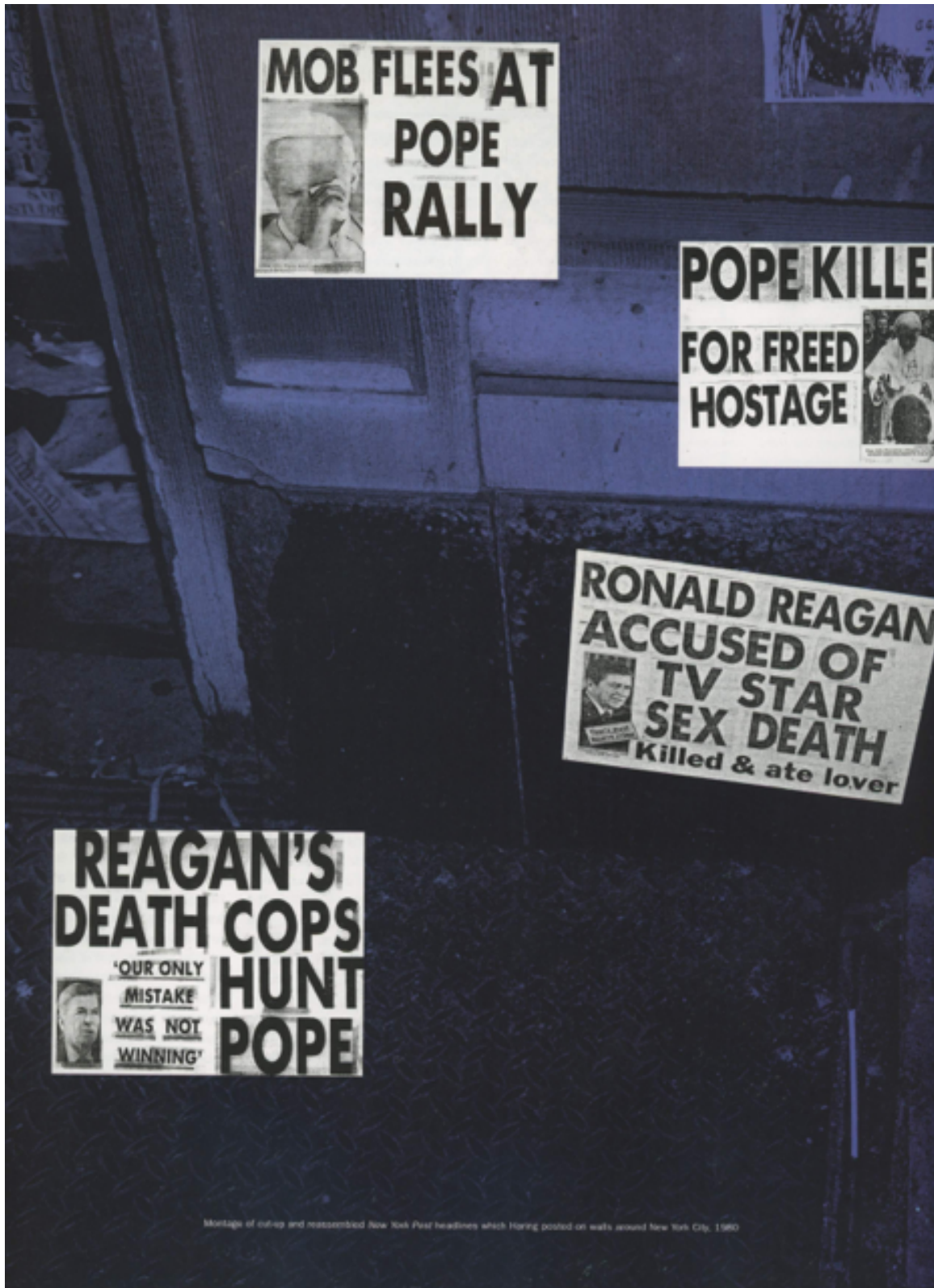


Figure 3: *Montage of Xerox Works*, Keith Haring, 1980
Elisabeth Sussman. *Keith Haring*. (New York: Bulfinch Press, 1997) 19.



Figure 4: *Untitled* by Tseng Kwon Chi, 1984, From *Art in Transit*
Tseng Kwong Chi, Henry Geldzahler and Keith Haring. *Art in Transit: Subway Drawings*. (New York: Harmony Books, 1984) 22.

Figure 5: *Installation Views at PS 122, October 1980*
Raphaela Platow. *Keith Haring: 1978-1982* edited by Gerald
Matt and Raphaela Platow. (Vienna: Moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2011) 161.



Figure 6: *Untitled Installation View of Tony Shafrazi Gallery, Works by Keith Haring, 1982*

Elisabeth Sussman. *Keith Haring*. (New York: Skarstedt Fine Art, 2008) 213.

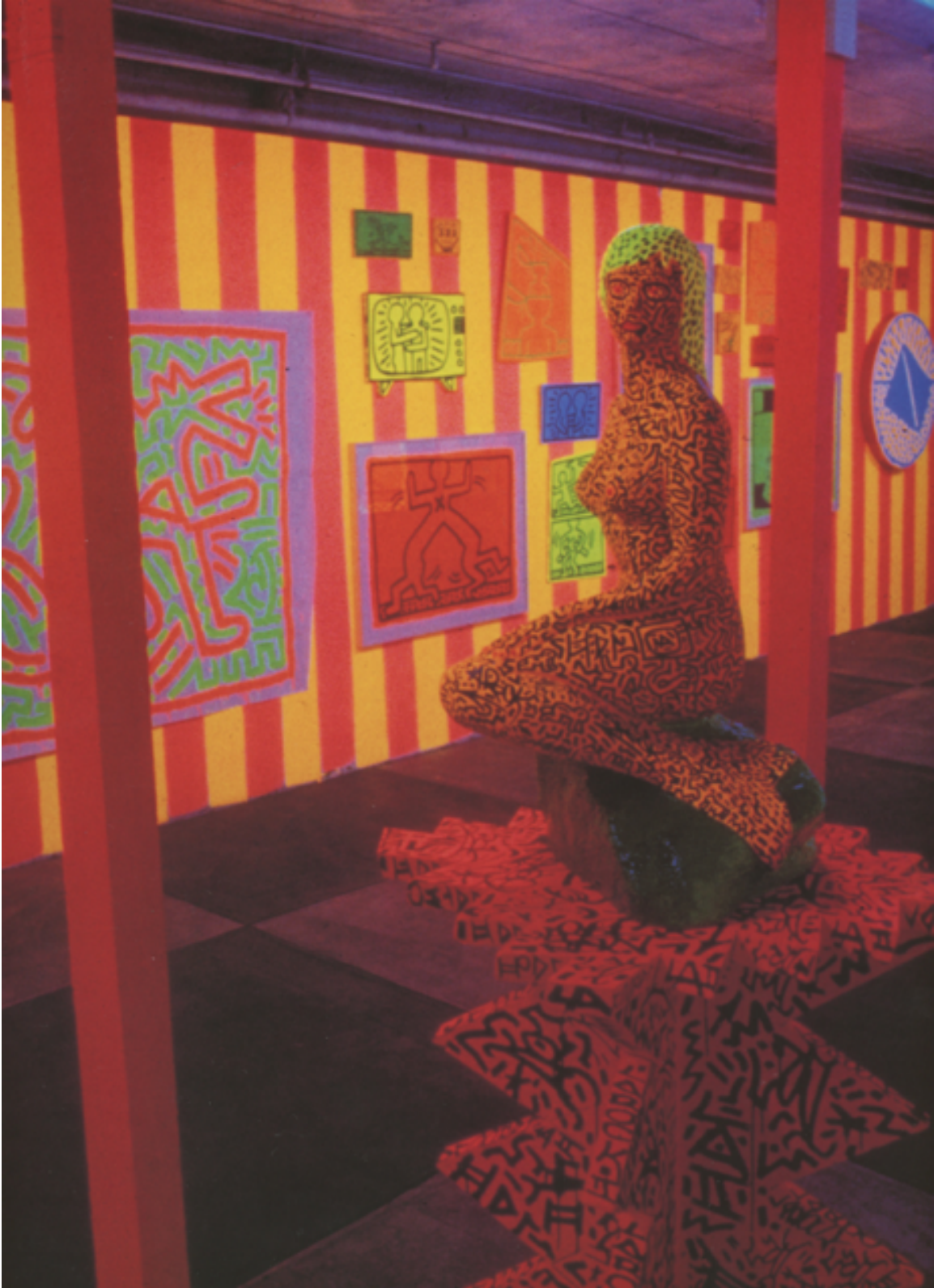


Figure 6: *Untitled Installation View of Tony Shafrazi Gallery, Works by Keith Haring, 1982*

Elisabeth Sussman. *Keith Haring*. (New York: Skarstedt Fine Art, 2008) 223.



Figure 8: *The 10 Commandments [Two Views]*, by Keith Haring, 1985, Installation at Contemporary Art Museum, Bordeaux.
 John Gruen. *Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography*. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991) 136-137.



Figure 9: *Untitled*, by Keith Haring, 1986, Installation at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. John Gruen. *Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography*. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991) 152.



Figure 10: *Untitled 1986*, by Keith Haring, 1986, 72" x 671".
Keith Haring, Museum of Modern art
http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=37162



Figure 11: Photograph of 2011 exhibition *Contemporary Art: 198-Now*, on display at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY. Depicts *Untitled 1986*, by Keith Haring, 1986 and *Three Ball: 50/50 Tank*, by Jeff Koons, 1985.
Haring Drawing at MoMA, Keith Haring Foundation, November 10, 2011,
<http://keithharingfoundationarchives.wordpress.com/2011/11/10/60-ft-haring-drawing-at-moma/>



Figure 12: *Untitled Photo of Pop Shop Ceiling at The New York Historical Society Museum, 2011*

“Keith Haring Doodle Ceiling Revived at New York Historical Society”, The Village Voice Blog, November 11, 2011.

http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2011/11/keith_haring_do.php



Figure 13: *Untitled Pin*, Keith Haring, c. 1981.
Elisabeth Sussman. *Keith Haring*. (New York: Bulfinch Press, 1997) 58.



Figure 14: Modern photograph of items from *The Store*, Claes Oldenburg, 1963, "Claes Oldenburg's Store, 1961". *Plaza London*.
<http://plazalondon.wordpress.com/2011/01/19/claes-oldenburgs-store-1961/>



Figure 15: *Untitled Photograph of Keith Haring in The Pop Shop* Tseng Kwong Chi, 1986.

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Figure 16: *Hope*, Shepard Fairey, 2008.
Carmichael Gallery,
<http://www.carmichaelgallery.com/available/shepardfaireyavailable.shtml>



Figure 17: *Installation View of Art in the Streets*, LA MOCA, 2011,
“Keith Haring at MOCA ‘Art in the Streets’”. *Hypebeat*, April 17, 2011.
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