



Urban Poetry

Urban Poetry

4 - 17 October 2018

OPERA GALLERY

PREFACE

The oldest known drawing, produced by the human hand, was made about forty thousand years ago. It's the depiction of an animal painted on the walls inside a cave. As far as we are aware, this could arguably be the very first work of art.

It seems like the desire to embellish the walls of our surroundings is deeply embedded within our genetic heritage and perhaps even our soul, this compulsion has never left us.

The 1980s was the decade that established street art, particularly in New York City. A young generation of artists found that the best way to get their voices heard was to take their message to the streets or the subway. The emblazoned emblem of 'SAMO' started to appear on walls in the East Village, later revealed to be the signature of a young Jean-Michel Basquiat. Keith Haring established his identifiable stick figures and engaged messages, over and underground ensuring that their exposure would be maximized. At the very core, the goal of these artists was to express freedom and reject constraint by creating something that would provoke a reaction from as many people as possible, rather than what is often wrongfully perceived as a desire to degrade or appropriate a public location. The public noticed, alongside a small selection of forward thinking galleries. Before long, pioneers of the movement were being exhibited on gallery walls, balancing work made on the street with work made in the studio. This became a pivotal moment, as the non conformist essence of street art, described as 'unsanctioned artwork executed outside of the context of traditional art venues', started to appear in the form of works on canvas, which could be cherished and managed by established collectors and institutions alike.

Fast-forward to the present day where street art is recognized as a significant category within the pantheon, supported by mega collectors, galleries and numerous institutions worldwide. It is not uncommon to see works from Keith Haring rubbing shoulders with Pablo Picasso paintings during major auctions.

Dubai ranks amongst the top cities in the world when it comes to sanctioning street art. As such we continue to see tremendous growth in the region, with works from Blek le Rat, The London Police and Ron English to name a few, appearing on the walls of City Walk and Satwa, garnering positive attention.

We are delighted to invite you to discover the artworks of established and upcoming street artists for our first exhibition of the fall season.

Gilles Dyan | Founder and Chairman, Opera Gallery Group

Sylvain Gaillard | Director, Opera Gallery Dubai

Street Artists

Blek le Rat

C215

D Face

Daze

Ron English

FAILE

Gully

Keith Haring

Logan Hicks

Taher Jaoui

The London Police

George Morton-Clark

Os Gemeos

Kenny Scharf

Speedy Graphito

Stink Fish

Swoon

Taki 183

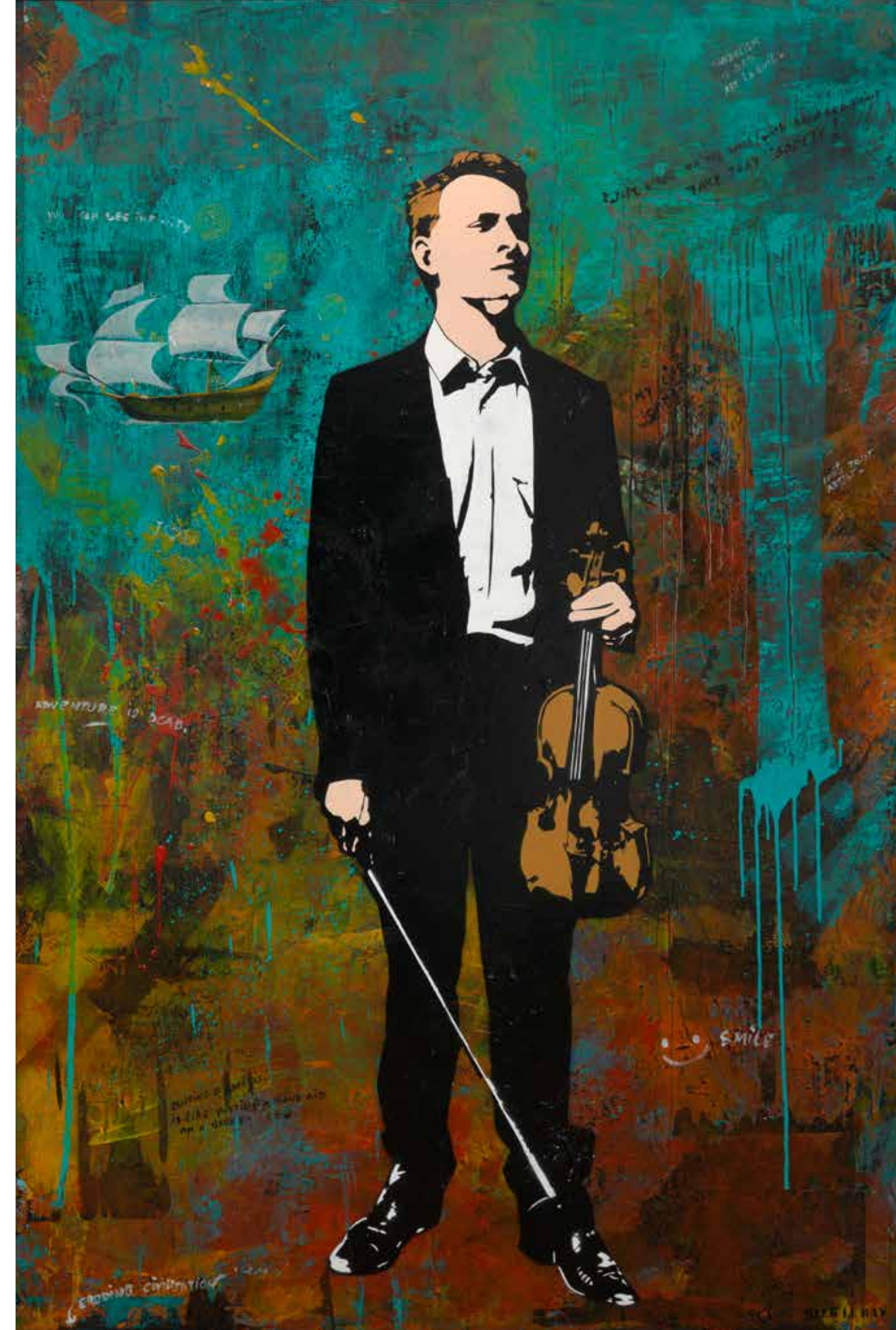
Nick Walker

Blek le Rat

Blek le Rat was born Xavier Prou in Paris in 1952. He graduated from Paris' Beaux-Arts in 1982 after studying Fine Arts and Architecture. He creates stencils for his graffiti works and is considered the pioneer of life-size human stencils. The artist inspired many others such as Banksy, Shepard Fairey, and Tavar Zawacki.

Blek le Rat is known internationally and has exhibited at the Leonard Street Gallery in London, the Metro Gallery in Melbourne, and participated in the Cans Festival in Waterloo. He also created lithographs for the New York Academy of Art.

Blek le Rat
Violoniste
Stencil, spray paint and acrylic on canvas
210 x 140 cm | 82.7 x 55.1 in





Blek le Rat
Ultimate Illusion
Stencil and spray paint on canvas
195 x 130 cm | 76.8 x 51.2 in



Blek le Rat
Beggar in Paris, 2006
Acrylic and enamel spray on canvas
162 x 130 cm | 63.8 x 51.2 in



C 215

C215 is the moniker of Christian Guémy, a French street artist born in Paris in 1975. C215 is one of the key proponents working on the street art scene.

In addition to his street work, he also produces artwork for galleries. His elaborate stencils appear on the streets of various cities all over the globe, including New Delhi, London, Istanbul, Fez, Rome, Barcelona and Paris, invigorating the urban spaces that they decorate. Every stencil is conceptually considered and often site specific, "I try to interact with the context, so I place in the streets elements and characters that belong especially to the streets. I like to show things and people that society aims at keeping hidden: homeless people, smokers, street kids for example". His striking portraits are always portrayed as proud and dignified, communicating on a universal level and drawing attention to those that our contemporary capitalist society has forgotten.

C 215
Homeless
Stencil on wood
114 x 97 cm | 44.9 x 38.2 in



C 215
Futura
Stencil on wood
115 x 50 cm | 45.3 x 19.7 in



C 215
Caravaggio
Stencil, spray paint and acrylic on mailbox
63 x 50 x 25 cm | 24.8 x 19.7 x 9.8 in

D*Face

Dean Stockton a.k.a D*Face, born in 1978 in London, is a multimedia street artist who uses spray paint, stickers, posters and stencils. He draws his inspiration from Roy Lichtenstein's work.

He has exhibited at the Urban Funke - Finders Keepers group in Barcelona, Spain, the Osnabrück Museum in Germany, Nu Art in Stavanger, Norway, the Metro Gallery in Melbourne, Australia, and the Goss-Michael Foundation Gallery in Dallas, USA.

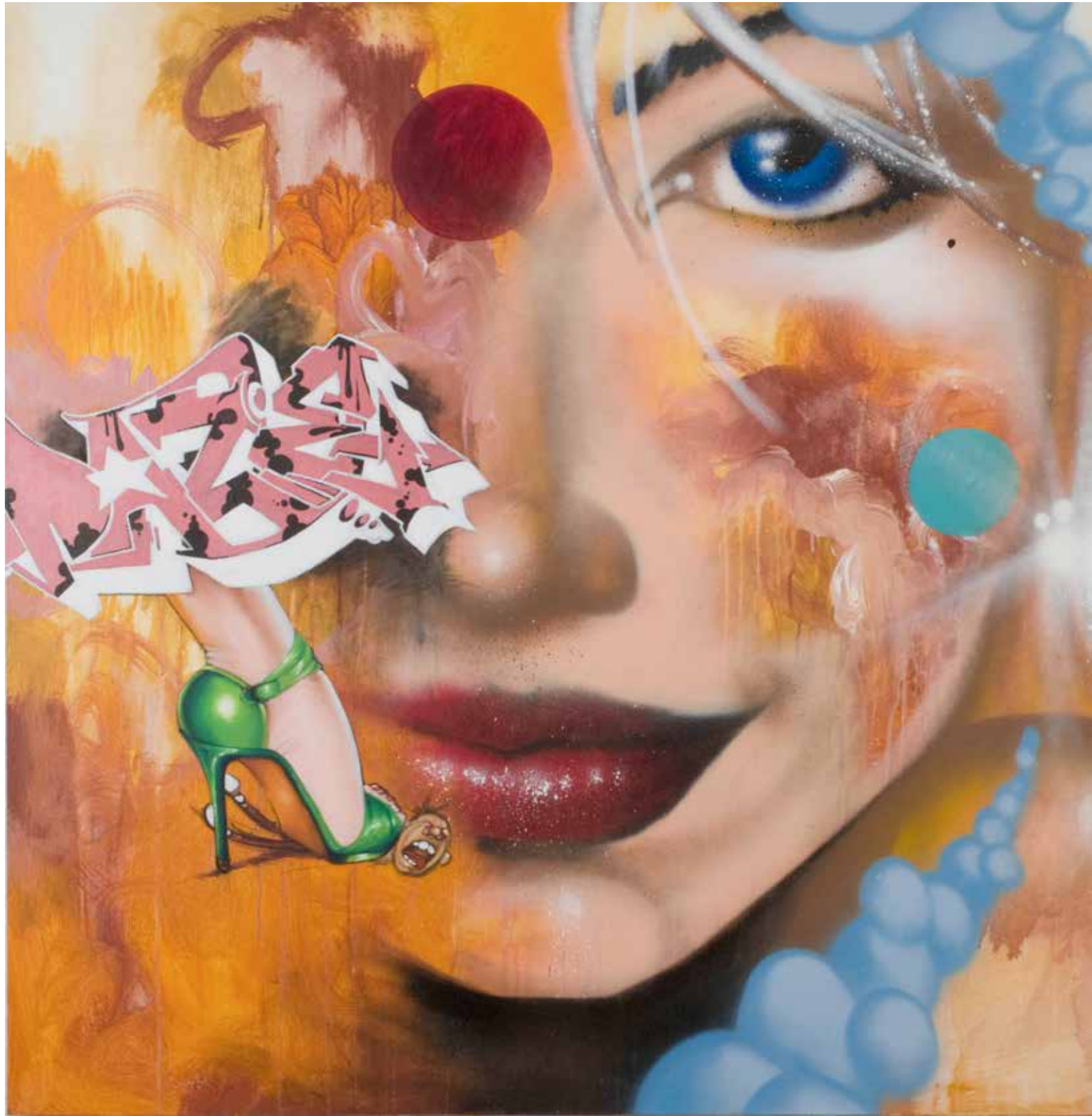
He opened his own gallery in 2005 in London, the StolenSpace.

D*Face
The Monster
Acrylic on wood
120 x 80 cm | 47.2 x 31.5 in





D*Face
Death Trap
Acrylic on wood
120 x 80 cm | 47.2 x 31.5 in



DAZE

A pivotal figure in the history of graffiti art from 1977 to 1983, Daze's work was almost exclusively displayed on the shells of subway trains. In the early 1980s he was one of the first artists to enter the gallery system. Since then, his works have been acquired and collected by prestigious public institutions including MoMA New York and the Brooklyn Museum in New York, USA and the Groninger Museum in The Netherlands.

DAZE
Heartless
Oil on canvas
120 x 117 cm | 47.2 x 46.1 in

Ron English

Ron English was born in 1959 in Dallas, Texas. His signature is a mashup of high and low cultural touchstones, mythology and totems of art history. We find in his work popular subjects such as Mickey Mouse or the comic superheroes which the artist places in an environment that does not match their own nor the values they stand for. He started a new movement called Popaganda.

His work is exhibited all over the world, at Skin Deep: Post-Instinctual Afterthoughts On Psychological Portraiture in London, UK, at Galerie Matthew Namour, at CONTEXT Art in Miami, USA, at Olympiapark and Magic City: The Art of the Street in Munich, Germany.

Ron English
Mac Boy at Big Ben, 2008
Oil on canvas
91 x 61 cm | 35.8 x 24 in

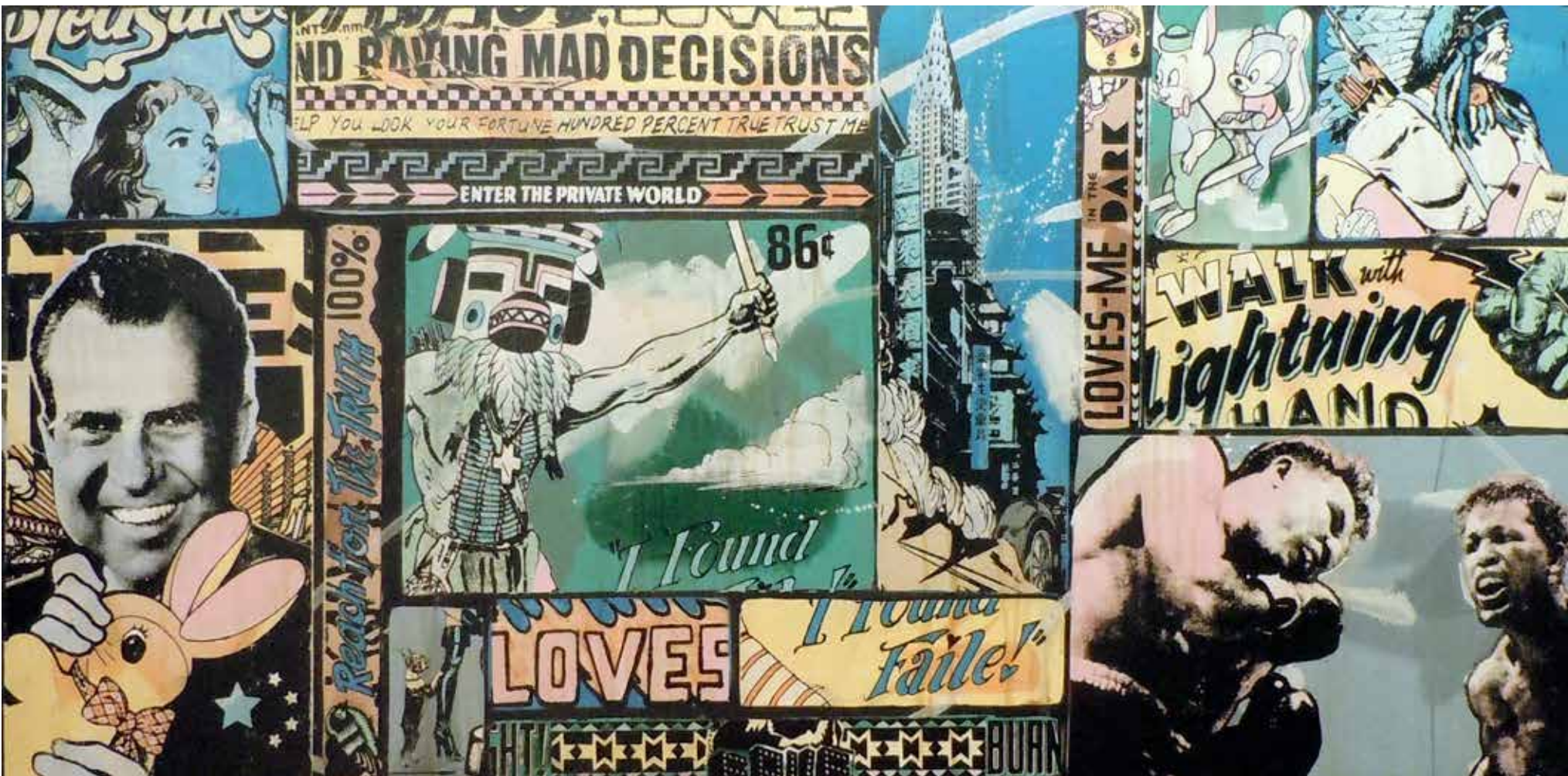




Ron English
Gas Mask Mickey
Fiberglass, edition of 10
H: 122 cm | 48 in



Ron English
MC Supersized
Silkscreen and acrylic paint on canvas
61 x 51 cm | 24 x 20 in

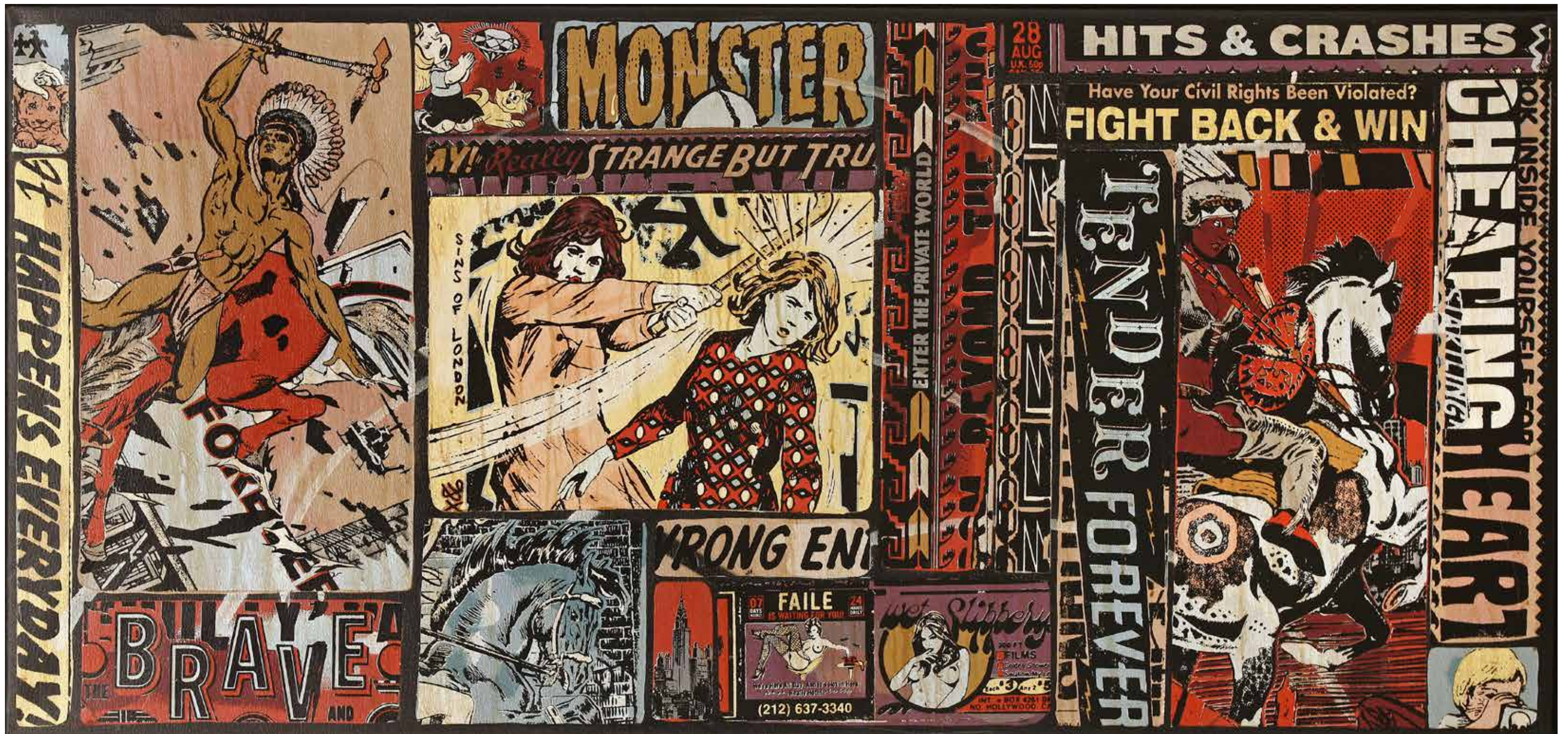


FAILE

FAILE is a street art duo formed by Patrick McNeil (b. 1975, Edmonton, Alberta) and Patrick Mille (b. 1976, Minneapolis, Minnesota) in 1999. They are based in Brooklyn, New York City. Aiko Nakagawa joined the group between 2000 and 2006, the collective was renamed 'A Life'. The materials and techniques they use vary between murals, sculptures, canvases, and stencils to collages, installations and wooden boxes. In 2010, they worked on a project with Bast called Deluxx Fluxx where they customised an entire arcade shop in Brooklyn.

They have exhibited at the Rocket Gallery in Tokyo, Les Complices in Zurich, the Urbis Artium Gallery in San Francisco, the Shanghai Sculpture Space in Shanghai, and the Me Collectors Room in Berlin. FAILE opened its own studio in New York in 2005.

FAILE
Nixon Title Fight
Acrylic, silkscreen and spray paint on canvas
66 x 140 cm | 26 x 55.1 in



FAILE

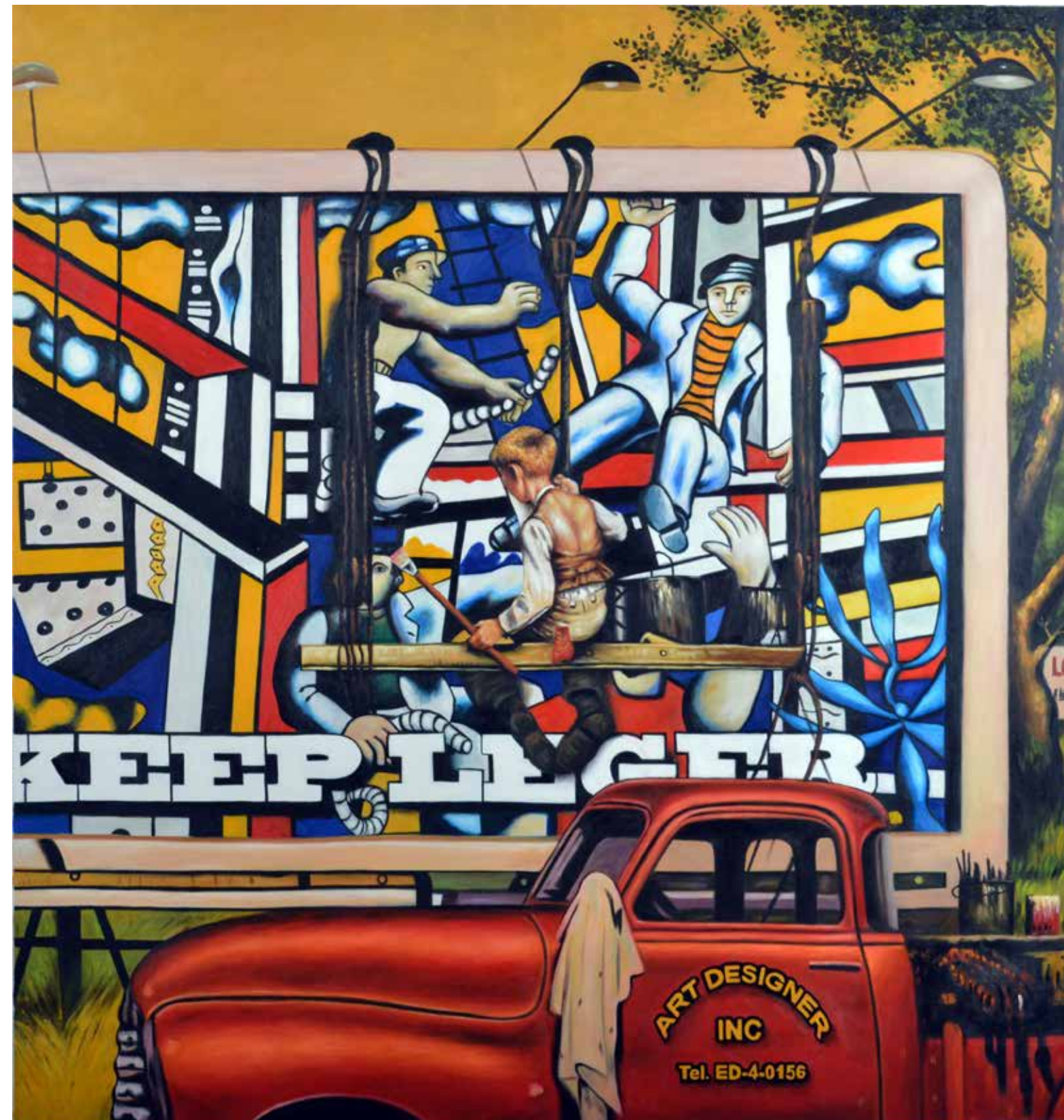
Fight Back and Win

Acrylic, silkscreen and spray paint on canvas

65 x 140 cm | 25.6 x 55.1 in

Gully

Gully is a French artist born in 1979. Hailing from the world of graffiti and street art, he transitioned to canvas after discovering the Appropriation movement. His unique compositions combine diverse genres, icons and movements throughout art history, diving deep into the original contexts of his source imagery and resituating them within a biting contemporary discourse. Appropriating paintings by Edward Hopper, Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Jeff Koons, as well as recent images made famous by street art masters Banksy and Shepard Fairey, Gully ingeniously recontextualizes the familiar in order to provoke the viewer to rethink the power of an image.



Gully
Dohanos Meets Léger 2, 2014
Mixed media on canvas
148 x 139 cm | 58.3 x 54.7 in



Gully
Gully Meets Murakami 1, 2016
Mixed media on canvas
105 x 100 cm | 41.3 x 39.4 in



Gully
Gully Meets Mondrian, 2016
Mixed media on canvas
131 x 175 cm | 51.6 x 68.9 in



Keith Haring

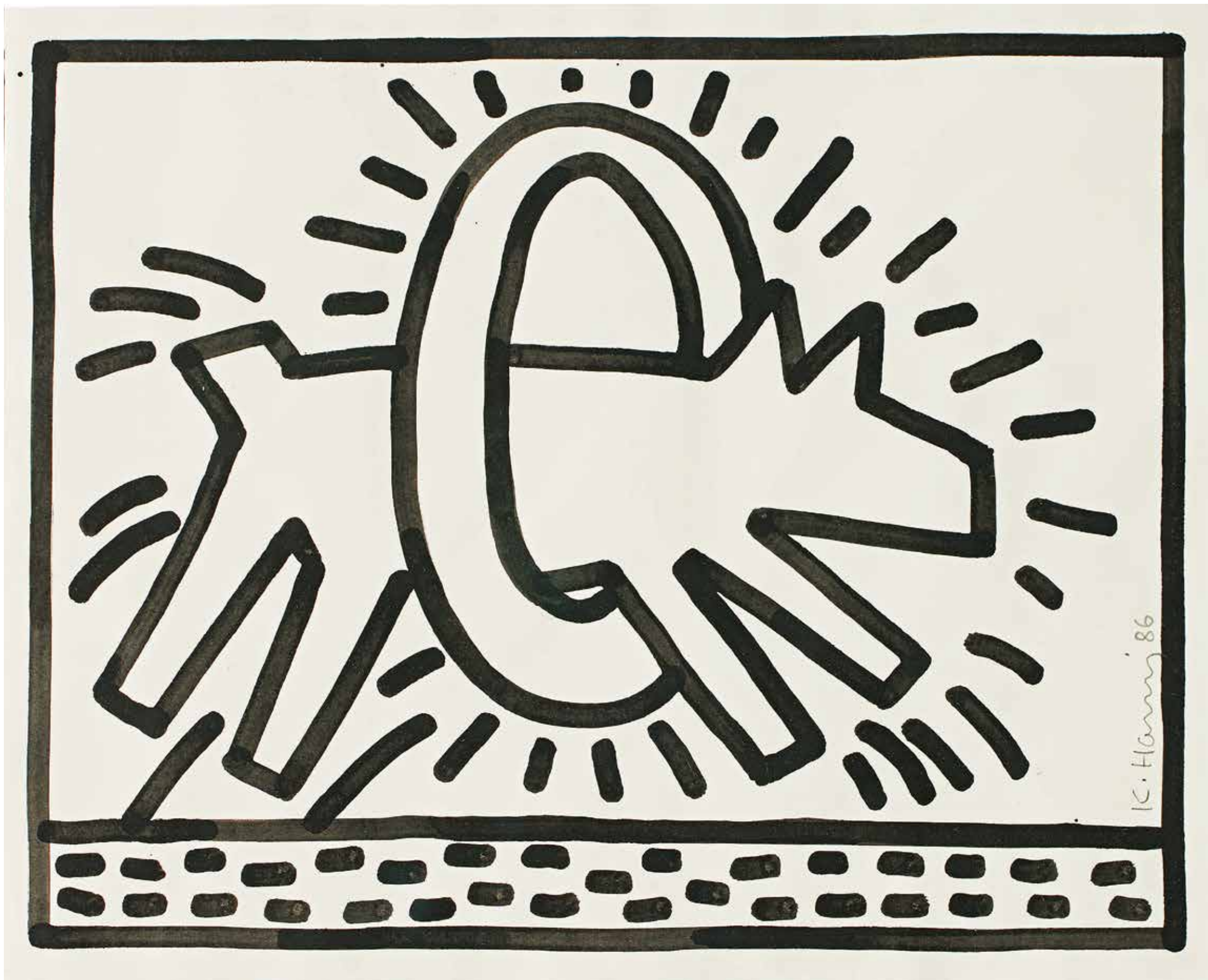
Keith Haring (1958, Reading, Pennsylvania - 1990 New York City, New York) is an American artist. He studied at the Ivy School of Professional Art in Pittsburgh, but quickly dropped out to move to New York. His success was imminent. Haring was helped by influential figures such as Andy Warhol, Madonna, and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Keith Haring was inspired by the work of Jean Dubuffet, Pierre Alechinsky, Williams Burroughs, the drawings of Walt Disney and Dr. Seuss, Brion Gysin and Robert Henri's manifesto *The Art Spirit*. His work reflects the social and political conflicts of our time. Sexuality, war and death are central themes of his work.

His works still live through the many galleries and museums that exhibit them, such as the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany, Amsterdam Museum, The Netherlands, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome, Italy, and Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris, France.

Keith Haring
Untitled, 1988
Signed and dated on the reverse
Acrylic on canvas
122 x 91.5 cm | 48 x 36 in
Provenance
Skarstedt Gallery, New York
R. Smith Collection
Vedovi Gallery, Brussels
Private collection

Exhibited
Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Keith Haring, the Political Line, 2013, p. 313, no. 195, ill. in colour, p. 286

Literature
Germano Celant ed., Keith Haring, Presel-Verlag, Munich, 1992, p. 198, no. 120, ill. in colour p. 149



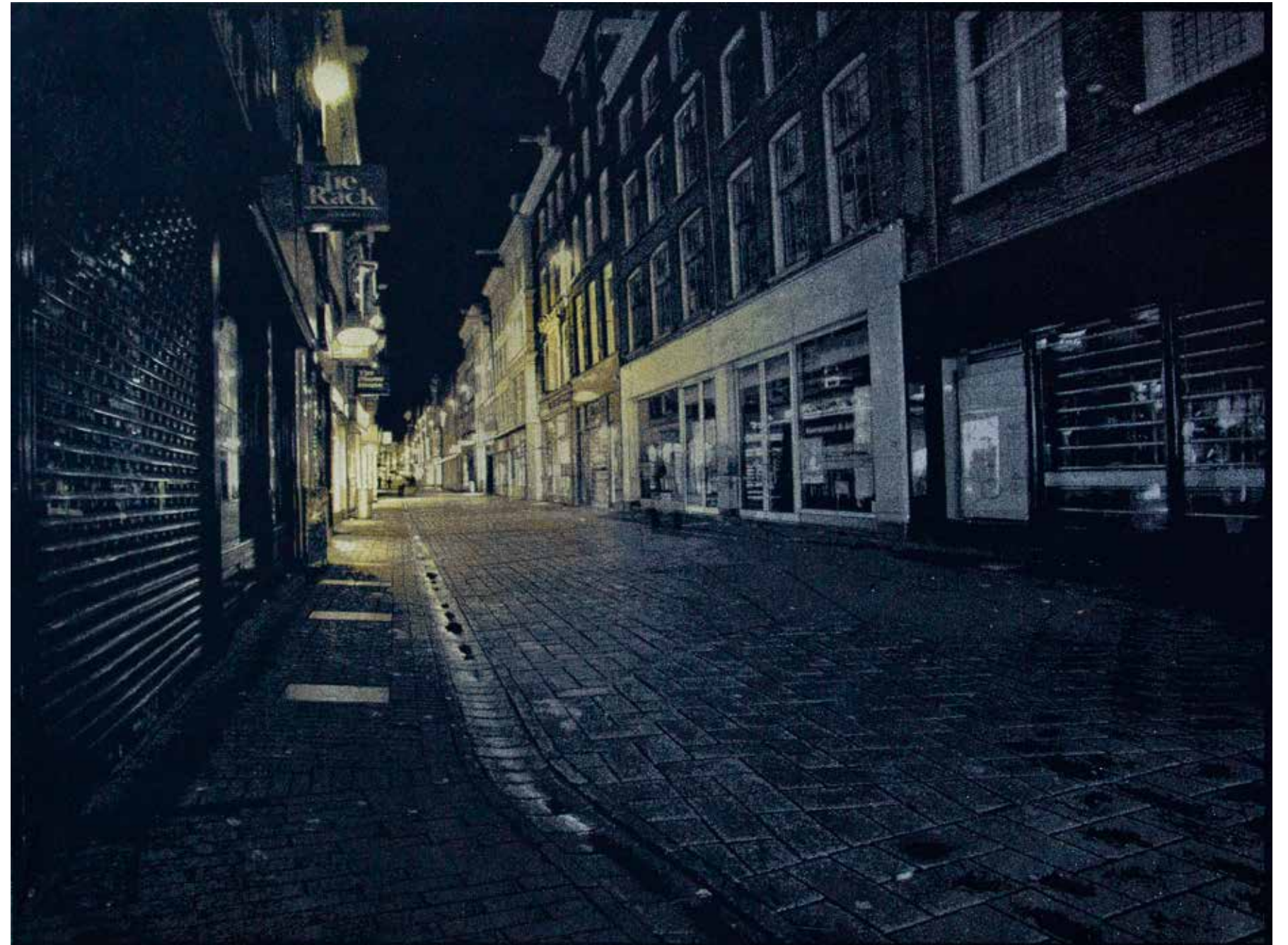
Keith Haring
Untitled, 1986
Signed and dated on the right side
Sumi ink on paper
32.4 x 40.2 cm | 12.8 x 15.8 in

Provenance
Private collection, Sweden
Private collection, Europe

Certificate
The Foundation Keith Haring has confirmed the
authenticity of this work

Logan Hicks

Born in Baltimore, USA in 1971, Logan Hicks is a stencil artist, based in New York. His artwork explores the dynamics of the urban environment. With his photorealistic technique, Hicks draws a parallel between the cold, harsh city and a warm vibrant organism. Originally a screenprinter, he moved onto using stencils, a medium through which he manages to capture, with his sprays, the cycle of city life.



Logan Hicks
Amsterdam Maze, 2012
Graphite and spray paint onboard
92 x 122 cm | 36.2 x 48 in



Taher Jaoui

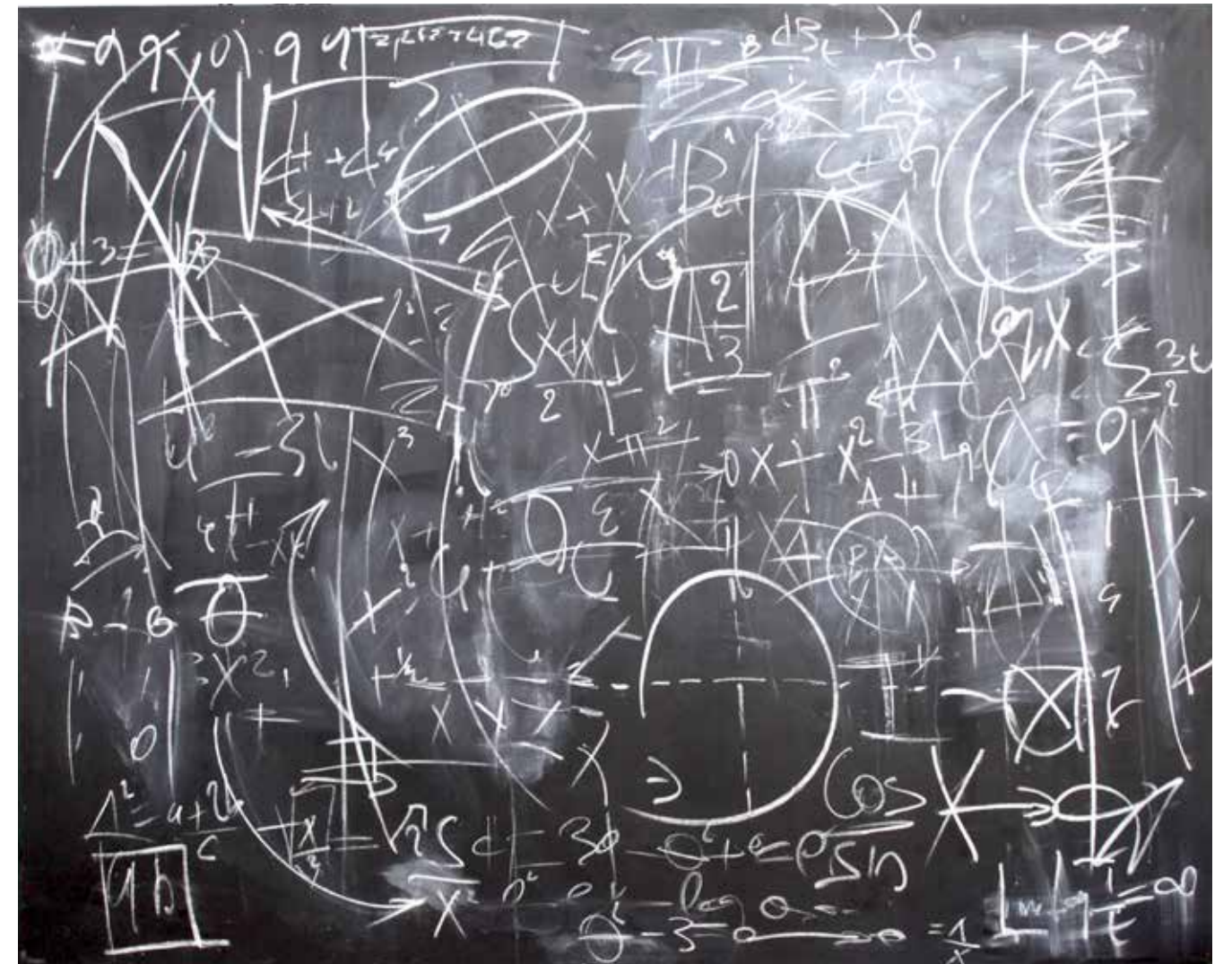
Taher Jaoui was born in 1978 in Tunis, Tunisia and currently lives and works between Paris and Berlin. His work has already been exhibited in various group and solo exhibitions across Europe, Africa and the USA.

Jaoui's compositions are built on an intuitive and an unconscious process. He uses different sources of inspiration, spanning from cartoon and graffiti-like drawings to the Abstract Expressionism and Primitivism movements. Jaoui's work joins together painting and drawing, abstraction and representation. Through a personal language present in his compositions, he aims to stimulate the viewer's feelings and imagination and let him build his own interpretation of the picture. He often composes with semi-figurative elements, such as heads, legs, eyes or hands which he combines with an aggressive use of colour and texture with various combinations of oil, enamel, spray paint and charcoal on canvas.

Taher Jaoui
Duel sur la coline, 2018
Oil, acrylic and spray paint on canvas
160 x 200 cm | 63 x 78.7 in



Taher Jaoui
Give Me Back My Lips, 2018
Oil, acrylic and spray paint on canvas
110 x 150 cm | 43.3 x 59.1 in



Taher Jaoui
Monkeys Spot, 2018
Oil, acrylic and spray paint on canvas
160 x 200 cm | 63 x 78.7 in

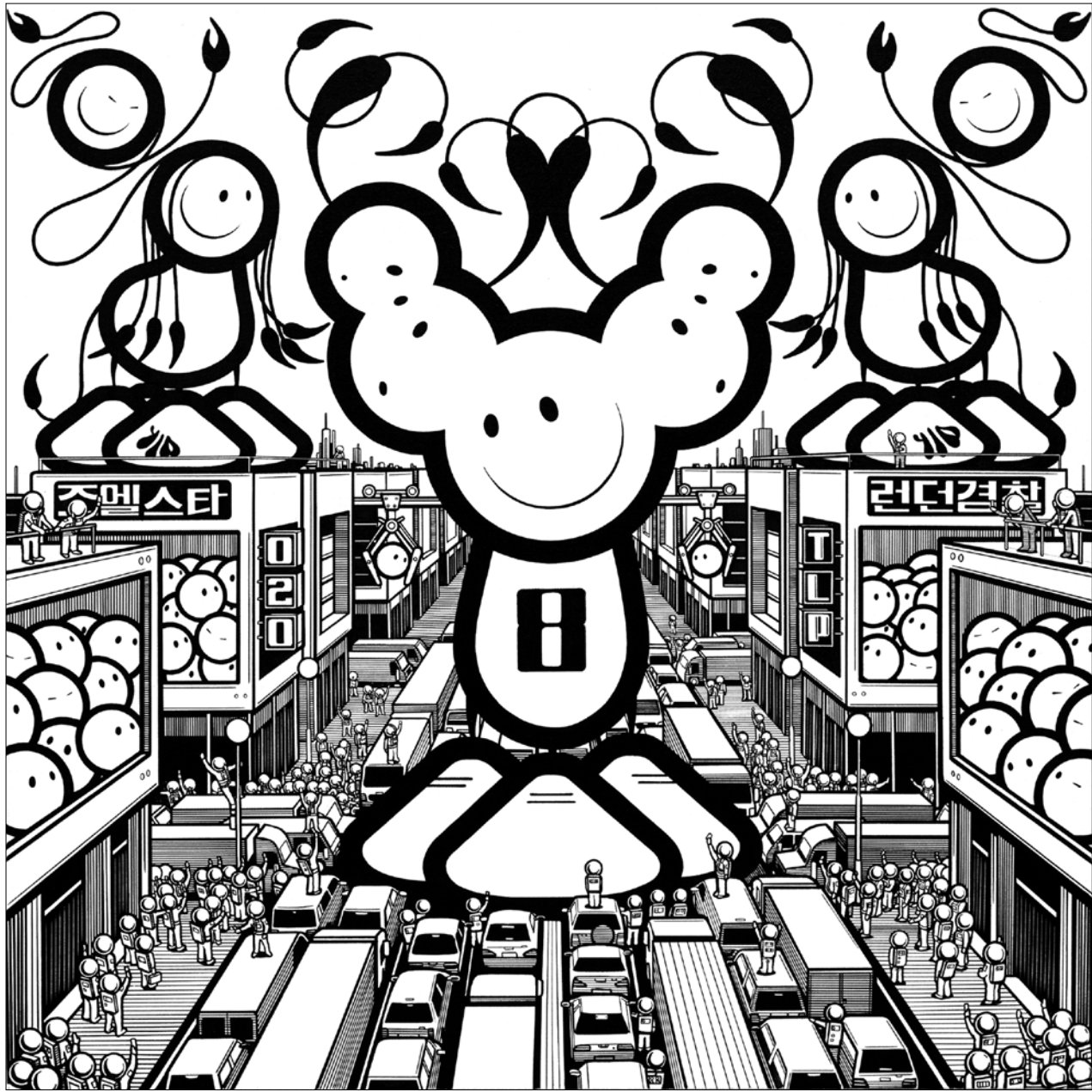
The London Police

The London Police consists of two people: Bob Gibson and Chaz Barrison. The group originated in England in the 1970s in Chelmsford. In 1998, they headed to Amsterdam to rejuvenate the visually disappointing streets of the drug capital of the world. Their motivation was to combine travelling and making art.

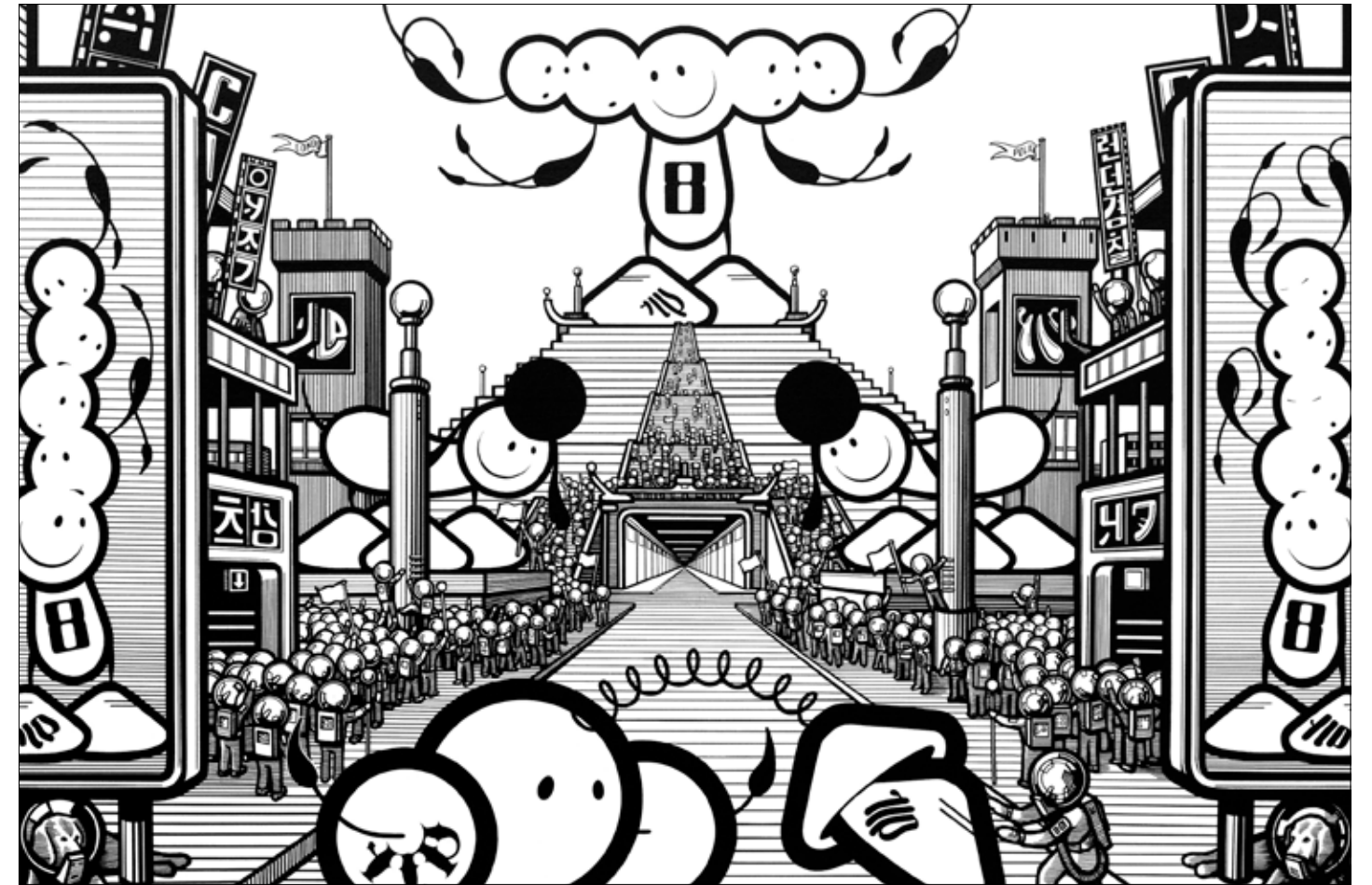
Their work is shown all over the world: at the Go Gallery for the exhibition *Bigger, Bolder, Better* in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, at the Corey Helford Gallery in Los Angeles, USA, and the StolenSpace Gallery in Berlin, Germany.



The London Police
Youths swooping uponst Baris
Indelible ink on canvas
200 x 300 cm | 78.7 x118.1 in



The London Police
 The Kessler Run
 Indelible ink on canvas
 80 x 80 cm | 31.5 x 31.5 in



The London Police
 The Arrival of Gary 8 in the City of Ancient Paul
 Indelible ink on canvas
 80 x 120 cm | 31.5 x 47.2 in



George Morton-Clark

George Morton-Clark was born in 1982 and raised in Tooting, South London. He is now based in East London. His large and bold works make use of oil, acrylic, and ink to create a unique contemporary abstract form. He considers George Condo and Basquiat to be among his influences. George Condo's dark and disturbing style corresponds to Morton-Clark's world view, whereas Basquiat's random approach reminds him to always create freely. Indeed, when he makes mistakes with his strokes or dashes, instead of correcting them, he incorporates them into his work, allowing creative flow and taking the piece to new directions.

He exhibits internationally, such as at the Artual Gallery in Beirut, Lebanon, Virtue of Fools at Galerie Flash in Munich, Germany and the Artual Gallery in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

George Morton-Clark
The True Colour of Carrots, 2018
Oil, acrylic, ink and charcoal on canvas
170 x 140 cm | 66.9 x 55.1 in

George Morton-Clark
Better to be Paranoid on Your Own
Oil, acrylic, ink and charcoal on canvas
170 x 140 cm | 66.9 x 55.1 in

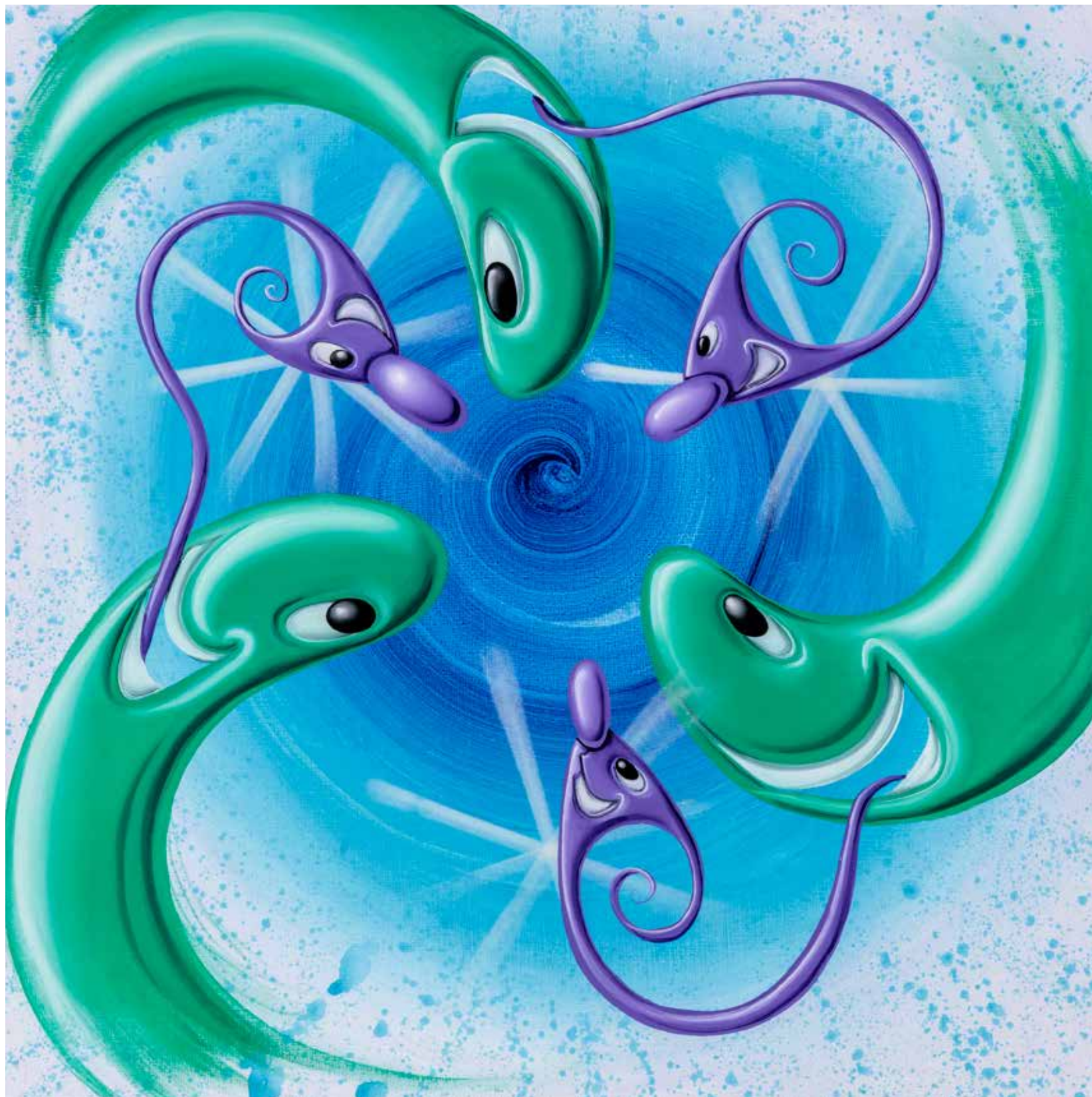


OS GEMEOS

Os Gemeos are twin brothers and graffiti artists born in São Paulo, Brazil in 1974. They began painting graffiti locally in 1987 and soon became a major influence in Brazil's burgeoning street art scene. Inspired by hip hop and street culture in the 1980s, the twins started out as break-dancers before becoming immersed in graffiti culture. Their work often features yellow skinned characters ranging from family portraits to commentary on Brazilian folklore and politics. Their work has come to epitomize Brazilian graffiti culture and is often commissioned for international art fairs and museums, including Art Basel Miami Beach and the façade of Tate Modern, London.



Os Gemeos
O dia em que a primavera virou autono, 2014
Mixed media on wood
204 x 164 x 14 cm | 78.7 x 63 x 5.5 in



Kenny Scharf

Kenny Scharf has remained a key and prolific figure in the art world since his early participation as a key proponent in the NYC East Village Art scene in the early 1980s, where he worked alongside artist peers such as Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat. His works have been exhibited widely ever since.

When we look at a work by Kenny Scharf, we see a dynamic and joyous burst of colour, form and energy radiating from the canvas. However, these saturated, seemingly playful shapes have sharp teeth that lurk beneath, reflecting the dual nature of our modern society.

Kenny Scharf's paintings are always reflective of the artist's unique, self-generated, visual universe, drawing from ideas and experiences extracted from the surrounding world. He successfully conjoins fine art with popular culture feeding from the traditions of Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism, Surrealism, comic books and Street Art.

Kenny Scharf
WHIRLIFIC, 2017
Oil and acrylic on linen
91.5 x 91.5 cm | 36 x 36 in

Speedy Graphito

Olivier Rizzo, known as Speedy Graphito, is a French painter and graffiti artist born in 1961. He uses different methods such as painting, sculpture, installation, video and photography to create his art. He is inspired by artists such as Van Gogh, Mondrian, Dalí, and Miró.

His works have been exhibited at the Fabien Castanier Gallery in Miami, USA, the Home Street Home and Galerie Huberty Breyne in Brussels, Belgium, the Galerie Polaris in Paris, France, and the Fusion and Kolly Gallery in Zurich, Switzerland.

Speedy Graphito
All You Need is Love, 2013
Acrylic and spray paint on canvas
150 x 120 cm | 59.1 x 47.2 in





Speedy Graphito
Urban Power, 2016
Acrylic and spray paint on canvas
150 x 100 cm | 59.1 x 39.4 in



Stink Fish

Stink Fish is an artist from Colombia. His practice incorporates multiple approaches from rollers to posters, stickers to tagging, but he is renowned for vibrant portraiture. He is a member of the street art crew Animal Power Culture. He says of his approach to image making "I don't think I have only one style. I like to create images in different ways, with the tools I have available in the place where I am. I do not like being tied to one way of doing things."

Stink Fish
Xucun Woman
Spray paint on found door
Diptych: 122 x 210 cm | 48 x 82.7 in



Stink Fish
Monterey Girl
Spray paint on found door
61 x 182 cm | 24 x 71.7 in

Swoon

Swoon is a notable American street artist, who has contributed to the Pop Art movement. She was born in New London, Connecticut, in 1977, and raised in Daytona Beach, Florida. In 1997, Swoon moved to New York, where she obtained a BA in Fine Arts from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York.

Swoon's signature works include life-size human forms that she creates from recycled newsprint paper. It takes her weeks to paint and cut out each figure in her studio, and once the forms are complete, she takes them to the streets of New York and glues them to the side of buildings using wheat paste. When Swoon first began creating street art, she focused her energy on things that were meant to disappear and her ability to let them go. The creations are not as permanent as spray paint, but they stay around for a long time. The artworks eventually either flake or rot away. In order to find a spot to hang her works of art, Swoon rides around the streets of New York looking for appropriate places. Once she locates a space that is large enough and that receives a lot of visibility, she hangs the art alone. You can find her creations on trash cans, light poles, walls, doors, rooftops, and sidewalks within the city of New York. The figures have gained critical acclaim.



Swoon
Neenee, Braddock
Linoleum print with hand painting
230 x 223.5 cm | 90.6 x 88 in



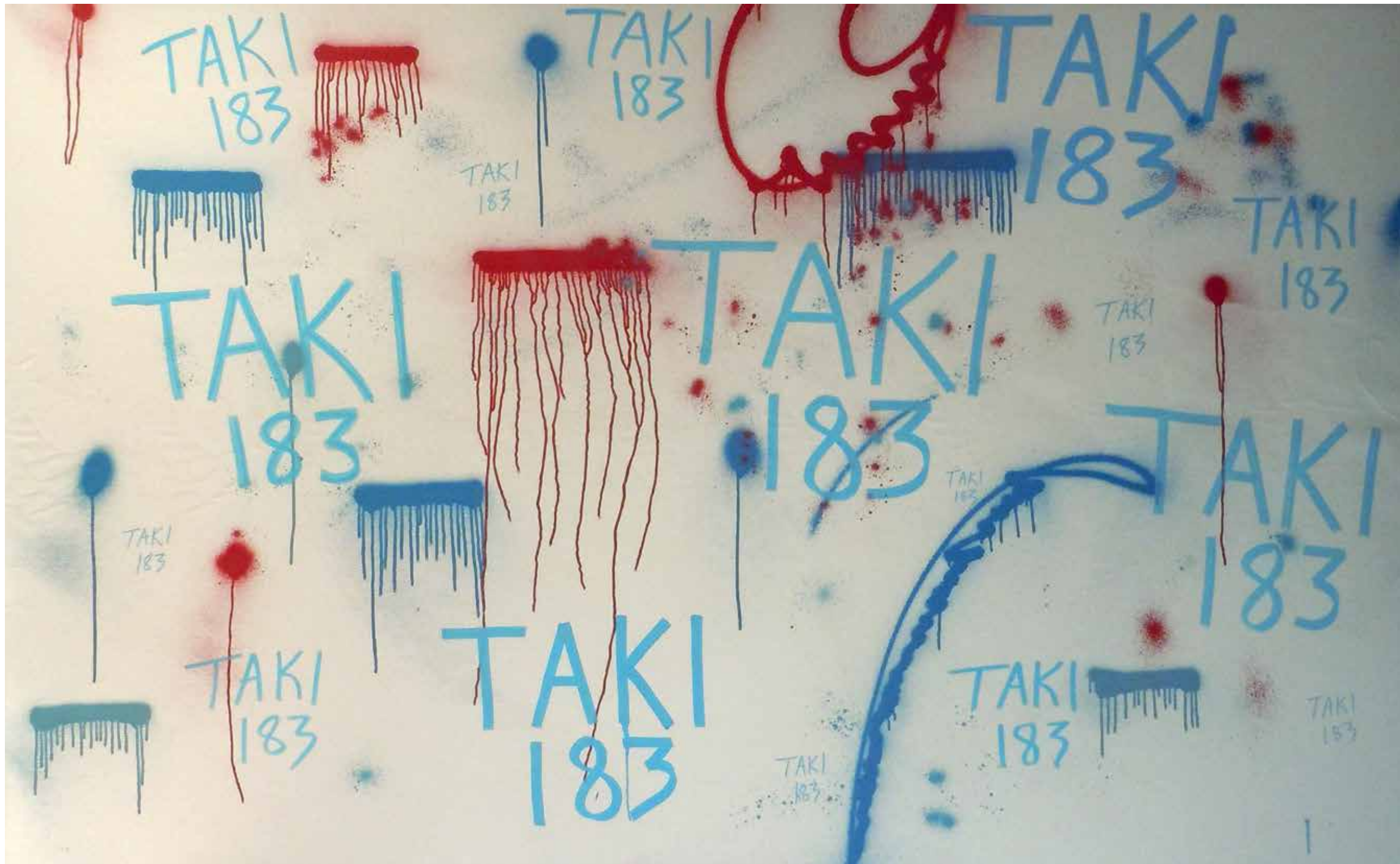
TAKI 183

TAKI 183 was active during the late 1960s and early 1970s in New York City. His tag was short for 'Dimitraki', an alternative for his Greek birth-name Dimitrios, and the number 183 came from his address on 183rd Street in Washington Heights, Manhattan. He worked as a foot messenger in New York City and would write his nickname around the streets that he frequented.

On July 21st, 1971, The New York Times ran an article about him on the front page of its inside section, titled *Spawns Pen Pals*. TAKI 183 spurred competitive tagging in New York City as his tag was mimicked by hundreds of youths across the five boroughs. Those who got their names up the most and who developed signature tags became known in their communities. Graffiti became a way for many young people to try to get attention and the attention TAKI 183 received spurred this on.

TAKI 183 has exhibited in several galleries and museums, including the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver.

TAKI 183
Untitled VI (medium)
Aerosol on canvas
100 x 130 cm | 39.4 x 51.2 in

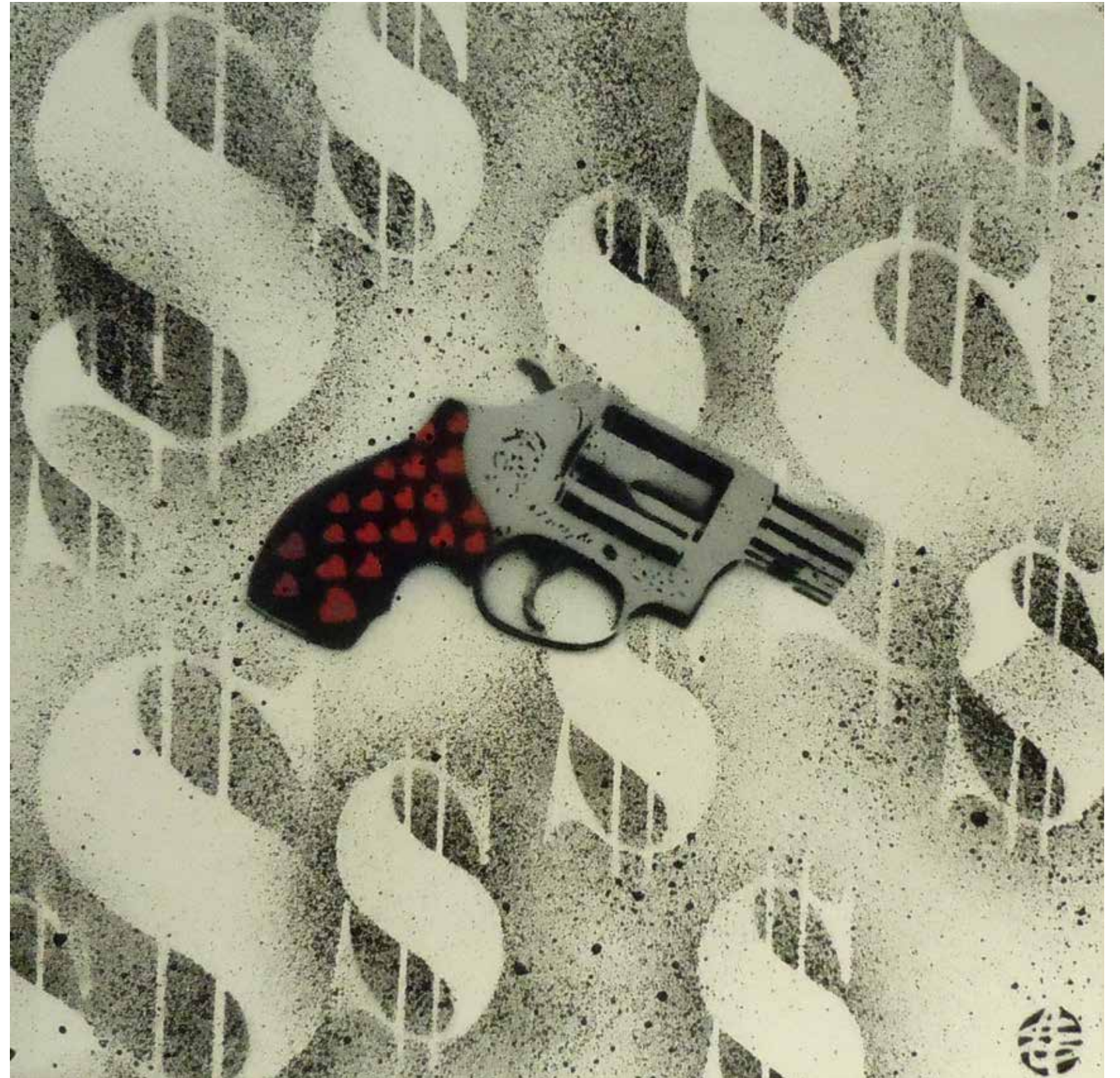


TAKI 183
Untitled IV (large)
Aerosol on canvas
130 x 210 cm | 51.2 x 82.7 in

Nick Walker

Born in 1969, Nick Walker emerged from the infamous and ground-breaking Bristol graffiti scene of the early 1980s. His work is constantly evolving and remains innovative, thought provoking and contemporary. Walker draws on the energy and established imagery of graffiti but succeeds in combining the freedom of spray cans bring, with very controlled and intricate stencilling. The results are highly sophisticated. Nick Walker's instantly recognisable style and humour have gained him a worldwide following and widespread recognition. In 2008 Walker had sellout exhibitions in L.A. and London and his iconic *Moona Lisa* sold for over ten times its estimated value at auction. His work has also been embraced by the music, fashion and film industries. He was commissioned by Stanley Kubrick to recreate the heavily hit graffiti'd areas of New York City for his movie *Eyes Wide Shut*.

Nick Walker
38 Dollars, 2007
Acrylic and aerosol paint on canvas
30 x 30 cm | 11.8 x 11.8 in



Street Calligraphy Artists

Pokras Lampas

eL Seed

Pokras Lampas

Pokras Lampas was born in Korolyo, Russia in 1981. Lampas is identified as one of the most distinguished contemporary 'Calligrafitti' artists in the world. Eight years ago he started creating graffiti, drawing inspiration from the global concept of moving calligraphy away from its traditional form. During this process he developed his own distinctive style, utilising a gothic blackletter base mixed with his self-developed letter constructions. Although he mainly utilises Cyrillic and Latin letters, through a process of self-development and research, Lampas came across Korean calligraphy alongside Japanese, Chinese, Greek and Arabic letters. This enhanced knowledge has led to a continuing hybridisation of form, which reflects a broader hope for harmony. Aiming to cultivate his knowledge, Lampas constantly travels around the globe exchanging ideas and learning, from old masters and new contemporaries, in his ongoing pursuit to transmit a positive, cross cultural connection.

Lampas thrives on creative freedom which is startlingly apparent in his monumental mural works. A recent development has seen Lampas develop a 'performance' method of working. This has led to collaboration with well known international fashion brands and experimentation with new technologies including Virtual Reality. These live performance works draw on all Lampas' skills and training, requiring perfect harmony between mind and body alongside close synchronicity with his specialist team. Utilising these qualities Lampas was able to create the world's largest piece of calligraphy in 2015.

Pokras Lampas
Creator of the New Culture, 2017
Acrylic paint, glossy black and gold paint on canvas
Diptych: 200 x 240 cm | 78.7 x 94.5 in





Pokras Lampas
Eye of Mystery, 2017
Acrylic paint, glossy black and three kinds of silver ink on canvas
Ø 150 cm | 59.1 in



eL Seed

eL Seed is a French-Tunisian artist born in Paris, France in 1981. His 'Calligraffiti' artworks blend the historic art of Arabic calligraphy with graffiti to portray messages of beauty, poetry and peace across the continents.

eL Seed installs his works in public spaces, galleries and institutions across the globe. From the streets of Paris and New York, to the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and the slums of Cape Town, his contemporary approach aims to bring people, cultures and generations together.

In 2017, eL Seed won the UNESCO Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture and was named a Global Thinker in 2016 by Foreign Policy for his project 'Perception' in Cairo. In 2015 he was made a TED fellow and in 2013, Condé Nast Traveler recognized him as one of the years 'Visionaries' for advocating peaceful expression and social progress through his work. He has also collaborated with Louis Vuitton on their famous 'Foulard d'artiste'. The celebrated curator Jeffrey Deitch wrote the preface of his first book and MoMa Director Glenn D. Lowry wrote the preface of his latest ouvrage titled *Perception* launching at MoMa, New York in 2018.

eL Seed
My Wish, 2017
Acrylic on canvas
150 x 150 cm | 59.1 x 59.1 in



eL Seed
Le petit Paris, 2017
Acrylic on canvas
134 x 146 cm | 52.8 x 57.5 in



eL Seed
Beyle VI, 2017
Acrylic on canvas
150 x 150 cm | 59.1 x 59.1 in

Published by Opera Gallery to coincide with the exhibition *Urban Poetry*, 4 - 17 October 2018 in Dubai.

All rights reserved. Except for the purposes of review, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

OPERA GALLERY

Gate Village Building 3, Dubai International Financial Center
+ 971 4 323 0909 | dubai@operagallery.com

operagallery.com