

KEITH HARING  
"APOCALYPSE" with text by William Burroughs  
1988  
G380

*"The public has a right to art. Art is for everybody" -Keith Haring*

"Apocalypse" is a series of ~22 silkscreen pieces, half of which are Haring's images, and the other half is text written by the beat generation's William S. Burroughs. I was unable to find much more on this piece, other than it was created by Haring after being devastated by the death of his friend Andy Warhol.

I wanted to share it with you, because of Haring's status ranking among the most iconic, influential and popular artists in the world.

Keith Haring, much like his artistic idol Andy Warhol, used bright colors, bold lines and simple subject matters. He used his much-adored artwork to speak his mind about racism, gay rights and other political subjects. Haring has left an impact on the pop art culture world, and his messages are still clear in his artwork.

Keith Haring (1958-1990) was born in Pennsylvania. He developed a love for drawing at a very early age, learning basic cartooning skills from his father and from the popular culture around him, such as Dr. Seuss and Walt Disney. During Haring's wayward adolescence, art became a primary interest in his life. After graduating high school, he attended the Ivy School of Professional Art. There, the classes focused on illustration and graphic design, something that didn't quench his artistic yearning. He felt that his art could not live to its possibilities with these restrictions. He then moved to New York, Mecca to the art world, to attend the School of Visual Arts.

Once in New York, Haring took particular curiosity in street graffiti, and he used this form of art to portray his own messages and feelings. Subway stations became his studio, using the black ad boards as his canvas. He made it a point to keep the chalk drawing simple and fast so people riding on the subway could catch a glimpse of it and understand it. His infamous radiant baby was followed by drawings of dogs barking, dancing figures and flying saucers with lightning bolts. His chalk drawings soon progressed into multipurpose sculpture placed in various public parks. The reactions and questions Haring got from observers kept his determination going.

Haring's political drawings were most admired due to the ease of understanding the story or message through his simple, bold and bright figures. He encouraged drug awareness through his 'Crack is Wack' murals, promoted freeing South Africa with the over 20,000 posters he designed and gave out and spoke about the dangers of nuclear warfare in his drawings. Even though Haring's works were in high demand, he did not use his political activism to elevate his earnings. Haring enjoyed his political influence because it was also a way to showcase that a successful artist can care about political decisions.