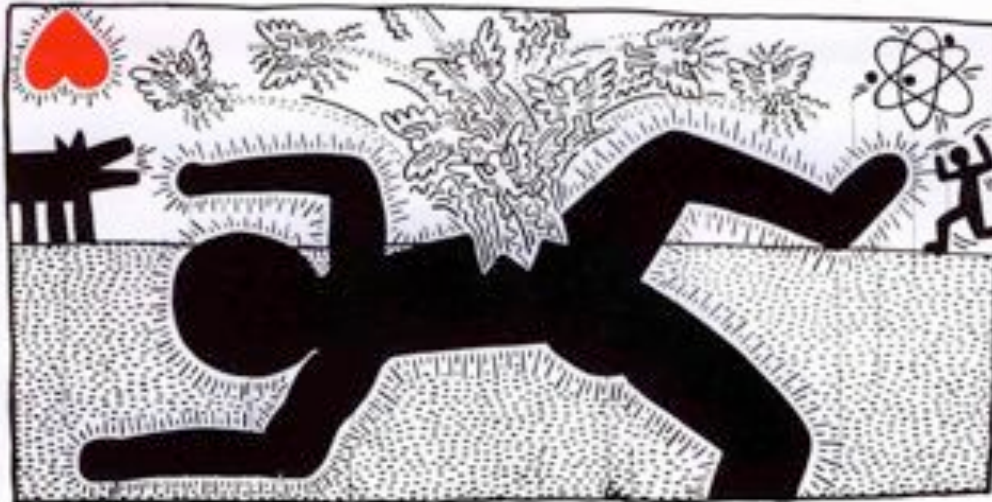




ARTHOUSE  
FILMS

Presents

## THE UNIVERSE OF KEITH HARING



Untitled, 1982

An Italian French Co-Production by Overcom and French Connection  
in Association with Absolute Media

A film by Christina Clausen

**RELEASE DATE:** October 24, 2008 at Cinema Village in NYC and October 31, 2008 at  
Laemmle Music Hall in LA

**RUNNING TIME:** 90 minutes

**RATING:** Unrated

**OFFICIAL WEBSITE:** [www.arthousefilmsonline.com](http://www.arthousefilmsonline.com)

**\*\*Art is Available at [www.arthousefilmsonline.com](http://www.arthousefilmsonline.com)\*\***

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## **FILMMAKERS**

Directed by **CHRISTINA CLAUSEN**  
Produced by **PAOLO BRUNO (Italy)**  
**ERIC ELLENA (France)**  
**IAN AYRES (France)**  
Cinematography by **JOHN C. KELLERAN**  
Editing by **SILVIA GIULIETTI**  
Original Soundtrack by **ANGELO TALOCCI**  
Theme Song "The Artist Speaks" by **JUNIOR VASQUEZ**

## **FEATURING**

Fred Brathwaite a.k.a. Fab 5 Freddy  
Jeffrey Deitch  
Julian Gruen  
Kim Hastreiter  
Bill T. Jones  
David LaChapelle  
Hans Mayer  
Samantha McEwen  
Carlo McCormick  
Roger Nellens  
Yoko Ono  
Kermit Oswald  
Kenny Scharf  
Bruno Schmidt  
Tony Shafrazi  
Drew Straub  
Junior Vasquez  
Gil Vasquez  
And with  
Joan, Allen, Kay, Karen, and Kristen Haring

## SYNOPSIS

THE UNIVERSE OF KEITH HARING, directed by Christina Clausen, is an intimate portrait of the world-renowned artist Keith Haring whose mantra was "Art is for everyone!" The film is an intimate exploration of his background and career of one of the most popular and significant artists of the 20th century. The film features interviews and archival footage of Fab 5 Freddy, Jeffrey Deitch, Kim Hastreiter, Grace Jones, Madonna, Yoko Ono, David LaChapelle, Kenny Scharf, Carlo McCormick, Andy Warhol, Ann Magnuson, Tony Shafrazi, and Junior Vasquez, among many others. Audio excerpts from original interviews with Keith Haring, were conducted by Haring's biographer John Gruen (*Keith Haring: the Authorized Biography*, Simon and Schuster 1991). The film's theme song is by the famed DJ and record producer, Junior Vasquez, with an original soundtrack by Angelo Talocci.



Untitled, 1982

## **ABOUT THE FILM**

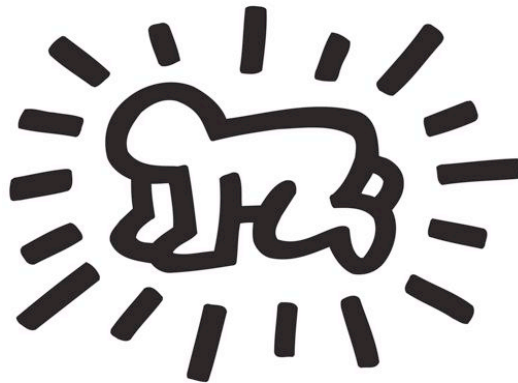
Keith Haring's legacy is all around us. His images are everywhere: on walls, posters, T-shirts, watches, and always, in our memories. "Art is for Everyone!" is the phrase Keith used to summarize the meaning of his stylized silhouettes that decorated streets all over the world. A veritable social phenomenon, Keith Haring revolutionized the contemporary art over the space of a single decade (1980 – 1990).

Perhaps the most celebrated personality in the decade of personalities, he built his reputation – as a painter, a graffiti artist, a designer – outside the closed world of the art establishment, amidst the vitality of street culture.

A casualty of the AIDS epidemic at only 31, Haring had already blazed a trail far beyond his American birthplace, from Amsterdam to Australia, from Rio de Janeiro to Tokyo.

One year before his death, Keith Haring asked noted cultural journalist and biographer John Gruen to write his life story, *Keith Haring: The Authorized Biography*. Excerpts of the original audio from these interviews are included in the film, including Keith's vivid accounts of his involvement in New York's underground art world and gay subculture. Haring is brought back to life in this documentary's multifaceted reconstruction of his rise, starting from his childhood. THE UNIVERSE OF KEITH HARING is a thorough exploration of the background and the career of one of the most popular and significant artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

THE UNIVERSE OF KEITH HARING has played the Rome Film Festival, FIC Brasilia International Film Festival (Receiving the Special Jury Prize), the Tribeca Film Festival, and OUTFest in Los Angeles, and the International Festival of Film on Art (FIFA).



**Untitled (Radiant Baby), 1990**

## BIOGRAPHIES

**KEITH HARING** - Keith Haring was born on May 4, 1958 in Reading, Pennsylvania, and was raised in nearby Kutztown, 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. Upon graduation from high school in 1976, Haring enrolled in the Ivy School of Professional Art in Pittsburgh, a commercial arts school. He soon realized that he had little interest in becoming a commercial graphic artist and soon left the school. While in Pittsburgh, Haring continued to study and work on his own and in 1978 had a solo exhibition of his work at the Pittsburgh Arts and Crafts Center.

Haring moved to New York City later in 1978 and enrolled in the School of Visual Arts (SVA) where he experimented with performance, video, installation and collage. In New York he found a thriving alternative art community that was developing outside the gallery and museum system, in the downtown streets, the subways, clubs, and former dance halls. He became friends with fellow artists Kenny Scharf and Jean-Michel Basquiat as well as with the musicians, performance artists and graffiti writers of the period. Haring began to organize and participate in exhibitions and performances at Club 57 and other alternative venues.

Haring was inspired by the work of Jean Dubuffet, Pierre Alechinsky, William Burroughs, Brion Gysin and Robert Henri's manifesto *The Art Spirit*, which asserted the fundamental independence of the artist. Drawn to the public and participatory nature of Christo's work, in particular *Running Fence*, and by Andy Warhol's unique fusion of art and life, Haring was determined to devote his career to creating a truly public art.

In 1980 Haring began to create drawings in the New York subway. Between 1980 and 1985, Haring produced hundreds of public drawings in the subway.

Between 1980 and 1989, Haring achieved international recognition and participated in numerous group and solo exhibitions.

In 1982, he made his Soho gallery debut with a highly acclaimed one-man exhibition at the Tony Shafrazi Gallery. During this period, he also participated in renowned international survey exhibitions such as Documenta 7 in Kassel, the Sao Paulo Biennial, and the Whitney Biennial.

Haring completed numerous public projects in the first half of the 80's, ranging from an animation for the Spectacular billboard in Times Square, designing sets and backdrops for Swatch and an advertising campaign for Absolut vodka, and of course, creating murals worldwide.

Haring also held drawing workshops for children in schools and museums in New York, Amsterdam, London, Tokyo and Bordeaux, and produced imagery for many literacy programs and other public service campaigns.

He was highly sought after to participate in collaborative projects and worked with artists and performers as diverse as Madonna, Grace Jones, Bill T. Jones, William Burroughs, Timothy Leary, Jenny Holzer, Yoko Ono, and Andy Warhol.

In April 1986, Haring opened the Pop Shop, a retail store in Soho selling T-shirts, toys, posters, buttons and magnets bearing his images. The shop was intended to allow people greater access to his work, which was now readily available on products at a low cost. Haring remained committed to his desire to make his artwork available to as wide an audience as possible, and received strong support for his project from friends, fans and mentors including Andy Warhol. Haring was diagnosed with AIDS in 1988. In 1989, he established the Keith Haring Foundation, its mandate being to provide funding and imagery to AIDS organizations and children's programs, and to expand the audience for Haring's work through exhibitions, publications, and the licensing of his images. Haring enlisted his imagery during the last years of his life to speak about his own illness and generate activism and awareness about AIDS.

During a brief but intense career, Haring's work was featured in over 100 solo and group exhibitions.

Keith Haring died of AIDS-related complications at the age of 31 on February 16, 1990.

**CHRISTINA CLAUSEN, DIRECTOR** - Christina was born in Denmark but lives and works for the most part in Rome. Since 1991 she has worked for RAI television. In 1998 she debuted as a director with "Tedeschi in Italia 1943-1945." (Germans in Italy 1943-1945). She has also worked in Austrian television (ORF) and Swiss television (RTL). Since 1994, she has curated several audiovisual projects for exhibitions of contemporary art at Italian museums.

## **PRODUCTION TEAM**

**ARTHOUSE FILMS** - Arthouse Films is an independent production and distribution label based in NY and LA. They acquire, produce and co-produce 15 to 20 titles per year. Current and upcoming projects include: Black White + Gray: a Portrait of Sam Wagstaff and Robert Mapplethorpe, A Walk Into the Sea: Danny Williams and the Warhol Factory, Obscene: a Portrait of Barney Rosset and Grove Press, The Cool School: The Story of the Ferus Art Gallery, Painters Painting: New York School 1940-1970, Henri Cartier Bresson Boxed Set, among others.

**OVERCOM** - Overcom was recently founded in Rome by Paolo Bruno, with the intent to produce documentaries exploring social, environmental and cultural theme, with particular attention to different forms of artistic expression. Overcom brings together the expertise of a team specializing in different areas of TV production. Each documentary project is conceived and developed to reach a large audience on international basis.

**FRENCH CONNECTION FILMS** - French Connection Films is a Paris based group with activities in TV and film production, music and book publishing. Yade French Connection has created and produced films, videos, music, and publication in collaboration with channels and companies around the globe. Out film label, French Connection Films, has produced documentaries that have been broadcast on France 3, France 5, Canal Plus, Arte, National Geographic Channel, RAI, TSR, SVT, TVE, SABC, AVRO, YLE, TV5 Monde, RFO, SAT2000, Planete, Voyage, Odyssee, Seasons, Equidia, and KTO.



**Untitled, 1982**

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