

LÉVY GORVY

LÉVY GORVY RETURNS TO MIAMI WITH AN HOMAGE TO THE
RADICAL SPIRIT OF NEW YORK IN THE 1980s

RADIANT NEW

Booth E6
December 6–9, 2018

Art Basel Miami Beach
Miami Beach Convention Center
Miami Beach, FL



Keith Haring. *Silence = Death*, 1988. Acrylic on canvas. Each side: 120 inches (304.8 cm); Height: 103 15/16 inches (264 cm). © 2018 The Keith Haring Foundation. Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein.

New York, NY—Lévy Gorvy is pleased to announce its return to Art Basel Miami Beach with **RADIANT NEW**, a curated booth (E6) that pays homage to the radical spirit of the artists who defined New York's cultural landscape during the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the era of the so-called Culture Wars, rising postmodernism and identity politics clashed with political conservatism, rampant consumerism, and the geopolitical tensions of the waning days of the Cold War. Further fueling this

tension was an increasingly complicated relationship between the media and American reality (a theme that has once again come to the fore in the United States): as popular culture was flooded with lush images stoking desire and fantasy, the AIDS epidemic ravaged communities and social inequality mounted.

New York City was the crucible where all of these forces came together—and sometimes boiled over. In the midst of the chaos and excess, a handful of prodigiously talented artists created a potent visual language that is as gripping today as it was when it first appeared.

Lévy Gorvy's **RADIANT NEW** revisits this pivotal moment, bringing together works by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, Jeff Koons, Andy Warhol, Tom Wesselmann, and Christopher Wool. The gallery's installation celebrates the radical spirit that unites the artists' works and captures the urgency and vitality that imbues them with a powerful, enduring relevance.

An homage to **Keith Haring's** legendary Pop Shop (1986–2005) will anchor Booth E6 with sculptures, paintings, and drawings, made by Haring and members of his circle. These will be installed against the backdrop of a reproduction of the iconic store's wall murals. Haring's art became integral to the visual language of activism that developed in the 1980s in response to the AIDS crisis. An iconic symbol of that crisis and a testament to Haring's remarkable legacy, *Silence = Death* (1988) will be a focal point in a booth that includes four other seminal works by Haring. Painted in the same year the artist was diagnosed with HIV, this work is an adaptation of the pink triangle featured in a 1987 poster produced by the Silence=Death collective. Overlaid with figures enacting the maxim "See no evil, Hear no evil, Speak no evil"—an allusion to the Reagan administration's refusal to acknowledge the AIDS crisis—the canvas takes the inverted form of the pink triangle that served as a symbol for the organization ACT UP, the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power.

Other highlights of **RADIANT NEW** include **Andy Warhol's** ten-part silkscreen *Skulls* (1976)—a *memento mori* in an electrifying palette that forms a jarring contrast to its macabre content. Warhol's assistant Ronnie Cutrone once commented that to paint a skull is "to paint the portrait of everybody in the world."¹ **Jean-Michel Basquiat's** found-object assemblage *Untitled (Football Helmet)*, (c. 1981–84) comprises a football helmet covered in human and acrylic hair, a fetishistic work that toys with the stereotype of African American athleticism while simultaneously evoking the vulnerable status of the African American male in society.

Jeff Koons's *New Shelton Wet/Drys 10 Gallon, New Shelton Wet/Drys 5 Gallon Doubledecker* (1981–86) belongs to the series *The New* that launched the artist's career: pristine vacuum cleaners mounted in Perspex boxes, were first exhibited at the New Museum in 1980. Their contribution to art history, in the words of Jeffrey Deitch, was "synthesizing Pop, Minimal, and Conceptual art while initiating a fresh chapter in the history of the readymade." Readymades also figure in **Christopher Wool's** *Untitled* (1997), for which paint rollers incised with floral, and geometric symbols became readymade mark-making tools. Applied in black enamel, the symbols were overpainted in some parts of the paper and replaced in others, creating an uncanny intersection of original and double. This work embodies Wool's investigation into additive and subtractive processes in painting. Its gestural lines and patterns are selectively erased into hazy washes, creating an effect reminiscent of graffiti. This work represents a transition away from the themes of the 1980s while retaining formal and psychological echoes of that decade.

Tom Wesselmann's *Bedroom Painting No. 44* (1981) zeroes in on the explicit eroticism prevalent in the mass media imagery that saturated America in that decade. Combining the cropping techniques of advertising with a distinctive use of color, line, and shape, that draws heavily from the innovations of Matisse, Wesselmann takes American Pop to the borderlands of abstraction. **Richard Prince's** lush Ektacolor print *Untitled (Fashion)* (1982–84) also plays with the presentation of women in mass media as objects of desire and, ultimately, stimulants of commerce. Divorced from any original association with a product for sale, the female subject is all that is left to consume.

Lévy Gorvy's booth will also include artworks by Terry Adkins, Dan Colen, Yayoi Kusama, Roy Lichtenstein, Beatriz Milhazes, Adrian Piper, Sigmar Polke, Ken Price, Carol Rama, Ed Ruscha, and Pat Steir.

About Lévy Gorvy

Lévy Gorvy cultivates a program devoted to innovation and connoisseurship in the fields of modern, postwar, and contemporary art. Founded by Dominique Lévy and Brett Gorvy, Lévy Gorvy maintains gallery spaces at 909 Madison Avenue in New York and in Mayfair, London. The gallery fosters continued dedication to the living artists and artists' estates it represents and pursues a robust program of exhibitions and multidisciplinary events. Lévy Gorvy also produces ongoing art historical research and original scholarship, publishing exhibition catalogues, monographs, and other key publications.

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¹ Foster 2001, p.79