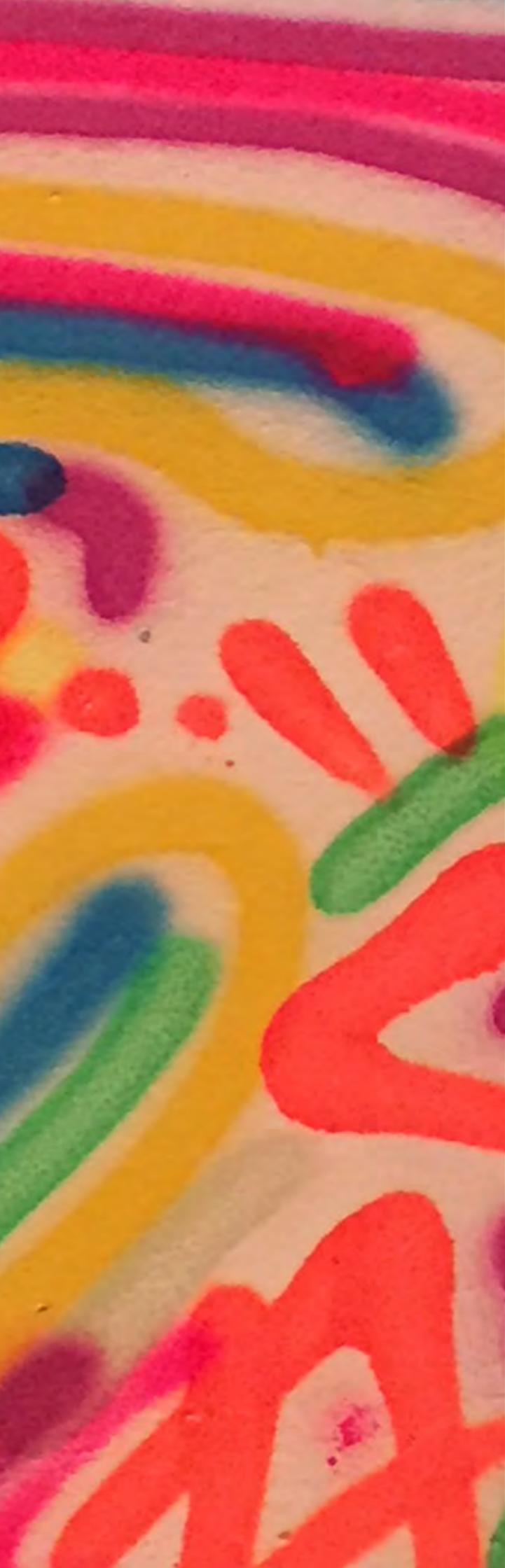




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Keith Haring, Untitled, 1984

**ARTIST**

Keith Haring (1958-1990) and LAII (b.1967)

TITLE

Untitled

MEDIUM

Spray paint on wood

DATE

1984

SIZE

40 3/4 x 148 1/4 in : 103.5 x 376.6 cm

INSCRIPTIONS

Tagged by LA II in several places

PROVENANCE

Elio Fiorucci, Milan; Private collection, New York City

CERTIFICATION

This work is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity from the Estate of Keith Haring, dated November 10, 1992

REFERENCE

AC17-14

“I remember arriving in New York at the beginning of the seventies and, as I got to know the city better, being struck by a twofold image: on the one hand, the growth of new and glittering skyscrapers, and on the other, the apparently unstoppable invasion of its subway stations and cars and its streets by graffiti executed with multicolored spray paint.

I felt that a revolution was underway – a revolution which rejected the concept of total minimalism and functionality with its vision of modernity unrelated to humanity. The graffiti represented the need for a sign of humanity in a place where technology seemed to be getting the upper hand.

I remember Oliviero Toscani and I had decided to use the subway stations of New York for a series of photographs with Donna Jordan as the model, as for us the graffiti represented modernity better than the glass and steel facades of skyscrapers, however beautiful. I believe that the need for the post-modern had its origins in the same sensation that I had at the time, and that many others were to have.

Years later, recalling those emotions and at the suggestion of Tito Pastore (Fiorucci’s long-standing Art Director), we got in touch with Keith Haring, who had become famous after launching his career with graffiti in the subway stations of Manhattan, and who had become a friend of Andy Warhol, since he had been able to express the whole philosophy of that time and the spiritual needs of that moment with the skill of a great artist.

I will not go here into what has already been said in many books about Keith Haring. We were convinced that Keith was the right person to bring everything

that he had achieved in New York to Milan in the shape of a great performance.

In 1984, we stripped bare our store, measuring 1,500 square meters, and asked Keith Haring to treat it as a space of his own, in which he would be able to create a great work of art. After talking it over with Andy Warhol, Keith had agreed to the initiative, partly because Andy told him that he had a great liking and esteem for Elio Fiorucci and for everything he had done and thought. Haring decided it would be very interesting to embark on this collaboration, as he, too, felt himself as being on the same spiritual wavelength. Keith also decided he wished to collaborate on the actual mural painting with his friend and protegee Angel Ortiz (LA II), a wonderfully gifted sixteen-year-old graffiti writer.

In those years, this type of art was not a question of money, but of a common vision of the world.

The performance was broadcast on television and attended by a group of artists who arrived at the very beginning. It lasted two days and two nights, during which time the store remained open to all the inhabitants of Milan, who followed the performance with great curiosity.

The event has embedded itself in the memory of the Milanese as one of the most extraordinary, surprising, and modern of those years.”

Elio Fiorucci

This essay is published in *The Keith Haring Show* (Milan, Italy: Skira), 2005. P. 81 – 85.



Keith Haring

Keith Haring was an American artist, active in the 1980s in New York, who is considered to be the first 'street artist' in the sense that is now more widely understood. Haring used a visual language composed of outlined intertwining figures, objects and animals, in his graffiti and street works, often to express deeply held political and social beliefs.

Haring was born in Pittsburgh, where he would study commercial art before losing interest and taking a maintenance job at Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. There, surrounded by important works of contemporary art, he rekindled his passion and developed his style, culminating in his first one man show there in 1978.

He moved to New York, where he would become close friends with the artists Jean-Michel Basquiat, Andy Warhol, Maripol and the performer Madonna. Relatively quickly, he began to attract attention for his subway drawings and his easily recognised calligraphy, and he participated in the prestigious Whitney Biennial in 1983. He made over 50 public murals during the 1980s, becoming something of an establishment figure despite the subversive nature of his work.

Haring was concerned with breaking down the barriers between high and low art, and what work he did sell he sold cheaply, prioritising the distribution of his ideas over profit. He opened a shop, 'Pop Shop' in SoHo, and used it to further awareness about safe sex, the anti-apartheid movement and the growing epidemic of crack-cocaine use. Haring was diagnosed with AIDS in 1988, prompting him to set up a foundation tasked with increasing AIDS awareness and to spend his last years generating activism over the subject.

The artist died in 1990 at the age of only 32, leaving an enormous legacy of work and influence which continues to be widely felt. His work is held in the collections of MoMA and the Whitney Museum in New York, and the Pompidou Centre in Paris amongst many others.





LA II

LA II (Angel Ortiz) (b.1967) is a graffiti artist from New York, noted in particular for his collaboration works with Keith Haring

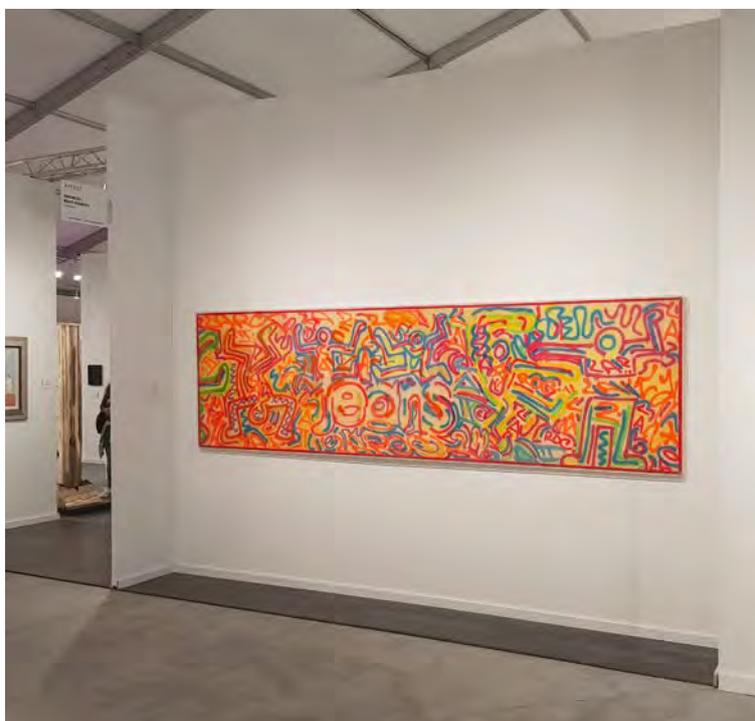
LA ("Little Angel") II is also known as LA2 or LA Rock, all tags which have been seen in his artwork. LA II met Keith Haring in 1980 at the age of 13 when he was already one of the most recognizable graffiti artists in New York's Lower East Side. The two would form a collaborative partnership for 5 years, during which LA II dropped out of High School to travel the world working together with Haring.

LA II's role in Haring's life and work can be compared to that of Jean-Michel Basquiat to Andy Warhol, in that a brief and intense period of collaboration forms a clearly recognisable and unique body of work in the development of the more senior artist.

"All the work [Angel and I did] was about surface and usually covers or transforms the object it is applied to", Haring said of the partnership. Haring and LA II combined their styles, often working in day-glo colours, graffiti writing mixed with the contemporary and ancient symbols that had become Haring's visual language. LA II and Haring were constant creative partners for half of Haring's decade-long career, and LA II's position in Haring's world is only now being reassessed and reevaluated.

LA II and Haring showed together at Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York, in 1982, and in 1983 at Fun Gallery, New York City, as well as Galerie Watari, Tokyo, Robert Fraser Gallery, London as well as Special Projects Paint Fiorucci, Milan.

LA II subsequently collaborated with Richard Hamilton. In 2008 he was famously caught tagging his name on a restored Haring outdoor mural without permission, and in 2011 he went to jail for one month due to graffiti offences around Manhattan. LA II lives in New York and works to continue creating graffiti art.



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