Just in time: A Haring Renaissance

Pop artist Keith Haring has transcended the 80s to reflect the highs and lows of a new generation struggling to claim their queer joy, writes Elio Iannacci

I was 15 years old when I had my first Keith Haring encounter. It was 1986 and I spotted him on MuchMusic, preparing a cameo appearance in Grand Theft Auto’s video for the song “I’m Project For Toy.” I remember how excited I looked starting from my window, peering through the dark. Haring’s patterns were on the screen, white on a black background. That was the first time I saw his work, and it was love at first sight. I started collecting his posters and paintings, and eventually made my way to the Brooklyn Museum to see his retrospective. It was there that I discovered the true power of his art, and how it could change the world.

In her own way, Haring was a rebel. He was a gay man in a world that didn’t accept him, and he used his art as a form of resistance. His work was a form of self-expression, a way to challenge the norms of society and to create a space for himself. His art was a form of activism, and he used it to fight against the oppression of the LGBTQ+ community.

But Haring was more than just an artist. He was a teacher, a mentor, a friend. He inspired a generation of artists and activists, and his legacy lives on today. His work continues to inspire, to challenge, to empower, and to bring hope to those who need it most. Haring’s art is a beacon of light in a dark world, and it will continue to shine for generations to come.
Haring: In the 'Don't Say Gay' state the artist's hallmark of resistance and resilience remain important

Almost four decades later, Haring’s vision is more present and powerful than ever. This is particularly apparent as this year marks the 20th anniversary of the month-long retrospective of his work that opened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1982. In honor of that exhibit, the Museum of Modern Art is currently hosting a major retrospective of the artist’s work, which features more than 300 works, including paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures.

The exhibition includes a wide range of Haring’s most iconic works, such as his famous “Gates of Heaven” series, which consisted of 13 large scale murals that were painted on the walls of the High Line Park in New York City. The mural was completed in 1982 and is considered one of the most important examples of 20th century street art.

The exhibition also features a number of other significant works, such as the “Cats in the Windows” series, which was created in response to the AIDS crisis of the 1980s. The series consists of 131 paintings of cats, each one representing a different gay and lesbian couple who had lost someone to AIDS.

The exhibition is housed in the Museum of Modern Art’s new, state-of-the-art building, which was designed by Spanish architectForum. The museum has been closed to the public for the past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but is now open for visitors to see the exhibition.

The exhibition is scheduled to run until September 6, 2022. Tickets are available for purchase on the Museum of Modern Art’s website.