

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Keith Haring

Grote Hertstraat
12 Rue du Grand Cerf
Brussels, Belgium

October 15 – December 17, 2022
Opening October 15, 2 – 8pm

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of works on paper by Keith Haring. All created on December 9, 1989, weeks before his untimely death from AIDS, this series celebrates Haring's constant evolution as an artist and career-long determination to push the boundaries of his practice up until his passing. Through the artist's uncanny ability to constantly reinvent himself and bring forth complex narratives to life through his singular approach to artmaking, this late series is a revelatory body of work that highlights Haring's strength and inquisitive nature as an artist, which continues to influence contemporary artists working today.

This group of 17 drawings made with gouache and black ink on Japanese paper presents an indecipherable, layered narrative created with both familiar and less prominent characters and symbols from the artist's oeuvre. Birds peck at nude bodies and orifices, black hearts and amorphous blobs float in space and are stabbed by knives and beaks, and log-like elements grow from the earth or are violently split apart. There is struggle, there is acceptance, and life continues to evolve and repeat itself over space and time. Without any specific information left behind by the artist about the meaning behind these compositions, the viewer is left to examine each work to posit what these vignettes might be saying without a set framework. While there is a variety of familiar figures present in these works, there are some new protagonists, like birds covered in wispy feather-like markings. Each element is approached with a remarkable technical maturity and clarity that signifies both a beginning and an end for Haring: his ongoing boundary-pushing exploration of his practice and a reckoning with his own mortality and the work he will eventually leave behind.

Beyond the subject matter depicted, materiality also plays a significant role in these drawings. From the earliest moments in his career, Haring worked with and painted on unconventional and found materials, like bedheads, doors, tarps, and subway platforms. Acutely aware of how his paint, gouache, ink, and chalk would look and feel on any given surface, Haring's technique was influenced by what he had access to. Towards the end of his life, Haring was able to afford a different set of materials to work with, including shaped canvases, expensive inks, and specialty paper. Haring was particularly excited to work with this handmade paper with rough edges, and was mesmerized with how it felt on his brush. This material specificity enabled him to create these wildly imaginative, singular, and detailed works, which have remained relatively unseen and unstudied until now.

Keith Haring was born on May 4, 1958 in Reading, Pennsylvania and died at the age of thirty-one of AIDS-related illnesses in New York City in 1990. Since his death, his work has been the subject of major solo exhibitions around the world, including BOZAR, Brussels, Belgium; Museum Folkwang, Essen Germany; Tate Liverpool; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; the de Young Museum, San Francisco; the Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, Munich Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; Whitney Museum of American Art; Castello di Rivoli, Italy; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; and the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Haring's work is included in major private and public collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; The Bass Museum, Miami; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Ludwig Museum, Cologne; and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

For further information, please contact press@gladstonegallery.com
Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday–Friday, 10am–6pm and Saturday, 12pm–6pm