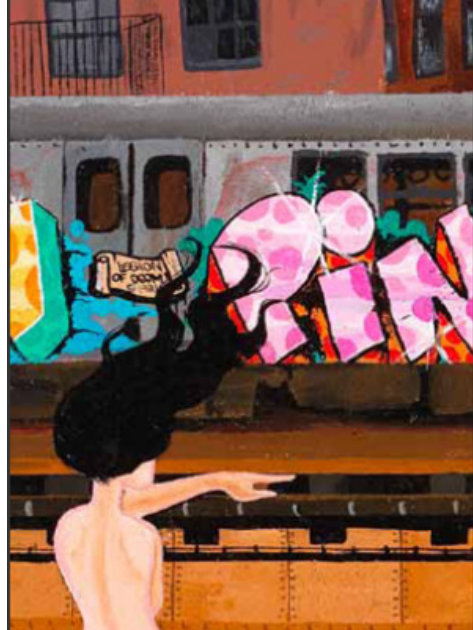


And if art
is a crime,
Let GOD
forgive all



CITY AS

GRAFFITI ART FROM THE MARTIN WONG COLLECTION

CANVAS

EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

ARTIST SPOTLIGHTS

MUSEUM
OF THE
CITY
OF NEW YORK

Frederick A.O.
Schwarz
Children's
Center



The Keith Haring Foundation Inc.

Introduction

This guide is intended to be used as a resource for teachers either preparing to visit the Museum of the City of New York's *City as Canvas: Graffiti Art from the Martin Wong Collection* or to use in the classroom following a class visit.

During the gallery tour of the *City As Canvas* exhibition, students will view highlights from the Museum's rich collection of 1970s and '80s graffiti art in New York. By analyzing the drawings, paintings, photographs and blackbooks collected by Martin Wong, students will learn about New York City artists known as "writers", like Keith Haring, Lady Pink, Lee Quiñones, and Daze, and the historical context in which their work was created. Students will be able to elaborate on the multiple perspectives surrounding street art, discuss the various styles represented, and will respond creatively to the pieces by drafting their own sketches.

The information and activities in this guide correlate to the guided tour, but may also be taught as stand-alone lessons utilizing the text, images, and suggested activities. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the information to the grade level and ability of their students. For further information or to schedule a visit to the Museum of the City of New York, please email the Frederick A.O. Schwarz Children's Center at schoolprograms@mcny.org.

Included in this guide:

- Curriculum Connections
- Key Terms
- Background Information on the Exhibition
- **Artist Spotlights: Keith Haring, Wicked Gary, Daze, Futura and Lady Pink**
- Suggested Activity – Middle and High School:
 - Gallery Review
 - In the Voice of the Artists
 - Debate it! Finding Space for Street Art
 - Write Your Own Exhibition Text
- Bibliography

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Lead funding for the publication has been provided by the Haring Foundation.



I. Artist Spotlight: Keith Haring



Keith Haring, *Untitled*, 1982 Acrylic and ink on wood. Museum of the City of New York, gift of Martin Wong, 94.114.102 © Keith Haring Foundation

Background Read

The following is text from the Museum's exhibition. Print copies for students to read individually or as partners. Ask students to underline key pieces of information and then share either as a class or in a group what they have learned about Keith Haring.

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Keith Haring: Biography

In 1978, Keith Haring moved from Pennsylvania to New York to study at the School for Visual Arts. By the following year, Haring had become interested in the graffiti writing movement. In 1980, impressed by the energy of the art he saw in the subway, he created numerous drawings on blank advertising panels throughout the subway system with his characteristic style of fluid, rhythmic lines. Haring used the subway as a laboratory, creating drawings on blank advertising panels as he worked out ideas and developed his visual vocabulary of symbols. Haring later joined forces with a teenager named Angel Ortiz, who tagged as LAll, and the two collaborated on numerous projects together. Haring's work was often heavily political and his imagery had become a widely recognized visual language, both in the U.S. and internationally. Striving to make his work as widely available as possible, he opened the Pop Shop in SoHo in 1986. The space was covered floor to ceiling with his drawings and served as a meeting space and store where one could buy t-shirts, posters, and buttons of his work. More than perhaps any other graffiti artist, Haring enjoyed both national and international recognition. Haring died in 1990 of AIDS-related complications at the age of 31. His work can be found in many museum collections.

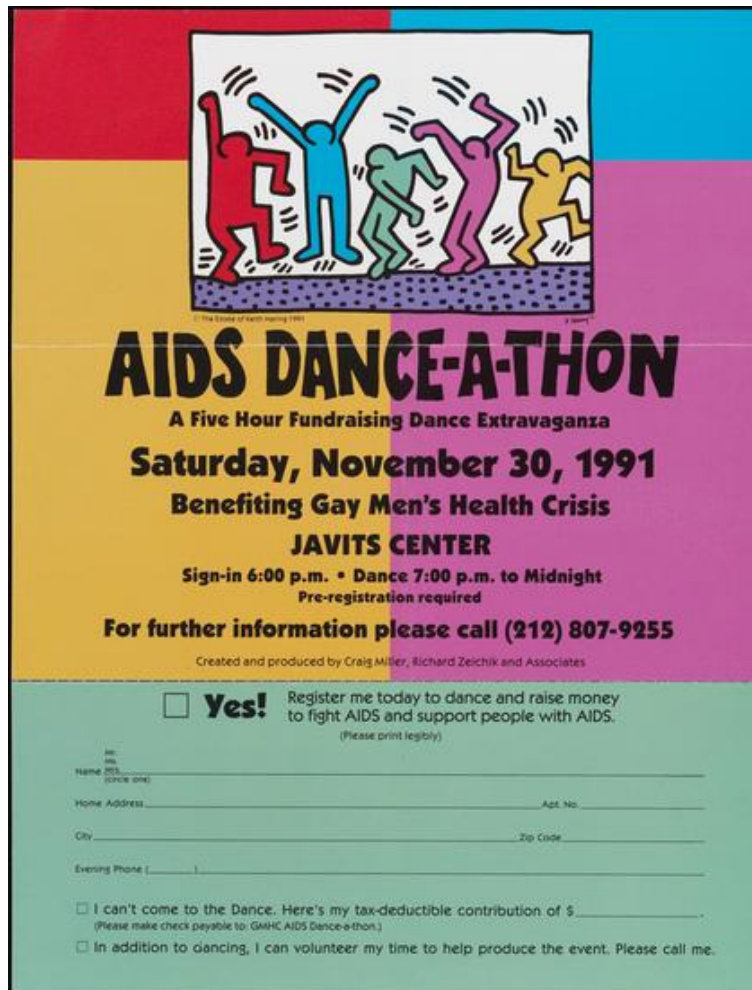
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Keith Haring: AIDS Dance-a-thon



Keith Haring (1958-1990) AIDS Dance-a-thon Date: 1991, *Registration for a five hour fundraising dance extravaganza, Saturday, November 30, 1991.* X2011.12.133

Questions for consideration:

What makes Keith Haring's imagery immediately recognizable?

How do you think Haring's piece adds to the message of the flyer?

Can you think of other artists whose work has been used to support social activist messages?

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Keith Haring: Obituary

The New York Times

Keith Haring, Artist, Dies at 31; Career Began in Subway Graffiti

By ANDREW L. YARROW
Published: February 17, 1990

Keith Haring, an artist whose graphic talents made him one of the stars of the youthful 1980's art scene and whose images could be found as often on T-shirts as in museums, died of AIDS yesterday at his home in Manhattan. He was 31 years old.

During his brief but meteoric career, Mr. Haring invented a cartoonish universe inhabited by crawling children, barking dogs and dancing figures, all set in motion by staccatolike lines. This universe was first mapped in the New York City subway system, where the young artist, still a student at the School of Visual Arts, was inspired by what he considered the beauty and immediacy of graffiti.

But Mr. Haring was a graffiti artist with a difference. Instead of painting subway cars, he drew with white chalk on the black paper pasted on unused advertising spaces, working in a distinctive style that became widely known before anyone knew the artist's identity.

From these beginnings emerged a style of illustration that became known throughout the world and a mode of distribution that largely circumvented the traditional art gallery system. Mr. Haring said he was committed to being accessible. Not only were his images widely considered irresistible and the morality tales they told easy to comprehend, but his work, at least in the beginning, was also easy to own.

Questions for consideration:

When Haring died in 1990, his friends and colleagues in the art world gathered to celebrate his life. Read the obituary published in the *New York Times*. What made Haring's work unique?

The *Times* states "But Mr. Haring was a graffiti artist with a difference." What made him different from other graffiti artists?

Why do you think he wanted his work to be accessible? Do you think it is? Why or why not?

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II. Artist Spotlight: Wicked Gary



Gary (Wicked Gary) Fritz WG [Page in Wicked Gary's piece book.] Date: MID 20TH C. 94.114.277.29

Background Read

The following is text from the Museum's exhibition. Print copies for students to read individually or as partners. Ask students to underline key pieces of information and then share either as a class or in a group what they have learned about Wicked Gary.

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Wicked Gary: Biography

Gary Fritz (born in New York, 1956) began writing in the early 1970s on the streets of Brooklyn, where he adopted the name WICKED GARY. It was while attending Erasmus Hall High School in Flatbush that he met many of the young people who, in 1971, formed the Ex-Vandals, the first club organized strictly to write graffiti. The group's membership quickly expanded to include many of the best graffiti writers from throughout New York's five boroughs. Today WICKED GARY is active as an aerosol art historian, and is an accomplished percussionist and DJ. WICKED GARY amassed this collection of tags—the stylized signatures of the graffiti writers—during the early years of the graffiti writing movement, as he traveled with the Ex-Vandals throughout the city, meeting and recruiting other graffiti writers. Many of the artists represented in this collection pioneered the foundations of style writing.

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Wicked Gary: "Wicked Gary Card Collection"



Gary (Wicked Gary) Fritz "Wicked Gary Card Collection" Date: 1970-1972
Collection of graffiti tags made on cardboard rectangles, mounted in a wood and plexiglass frame. 94.114.40.

Questions for consideration:

What do you notice is similar about most of the tags represented here? What do you notice is different?

Why are tags important to graffiti artists?

If you were to create one to represent you, what would it be?

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III. Artist Spotlight: Daze and Futura



Andrew (Zephyr) Witten Christopher (DAZE) Ellis (1962-) Futura 2000 Sandra (Lady Pink) Fabara (1964-) [Tagged page in DAZE's black book.] Date: ca. 198194.114.263.219

Background Read

The following is text from the Museum's exhibition. Print copies for students to read individually or as partners. Ask students to underline key pieces of information and then share either as a class or in a group what they have learned about Daze and Futura.

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Daze and Futura: Biographies

Christopher Ellis (born in Brooklyn, 1962) was raised in the Bronx and started writing on the 1 and 2 subway lines at the age of 15. DAZE met many talented writers, including DON ONE and LADY PINK, while attending the High School of Art & Design in Manhattan. He was a founding member of the Crazy Young Artists (CYA) crew and worked with dozens of partners on nearly every subway line in the city before retiring from painting trains in 1983. DAZE first painted on canvas in 1980 at the Graffiti 1980 Studio, where businessman Sam Esses was offering graffiti artists two-month residencies and access to materials, as a way to foster the graffiti movement and encourage artists to make works that could endure. DAZE has maintained a successful studio practice and is widely considered one of the masters of the movement.

Leonard Hilton McGurr (born in Manhattan, 1955) began writing graffiti in 1970 while in high school. As FUTURA 2000, he founded the Soul Artists (SA) crew along with his writing partner and best friend ALI (Marc Edmonds). An explosion caused by spray paint cans coming in contact with a live third rail left ALI with severe burns and brought an abrupt end to FUTURA 2000's early period of writing. He dropped his artistic pursuits, and did a stint in the Navy. In 1979, FUTURA 2000 returned to New York and the re-formed SA crew. He made a dramatic comeback, working in a distinctive abstract style with fantastic bursts of color, while also making the transition to working on canvas. His work rejected the widespread focus on the letter and instead explored pure abstraction, a deviation that earned him comparisons to the Russian painter Vassily Kandinsky. FUTURA 2000 went on to collaborate with the punk band The Clash, creating album sleeves and spray painting canvases onstage as the group performed, and he has designed apparel for Nike, Supreme, and Levi's.

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Daze: Classic



Christopher "Daze" Ellis, "Classic," 1984. Acrylic on canvas. Museum of the City of New York, gift of Martin Wong, 94.114.31

Questions for consideration:

Consider the title. What information is the artist conveying about the style of his work by entitling the piece "classic"?

Visit the Museum's online Collections Portal at collections.mcny.org. Using the menu, locate "themes" and choose The Martin Wong Graffiti Collection. Locate tags of additional artists. Choose one to compare to Daze's piece and explain what is different and what is similar between the two images.

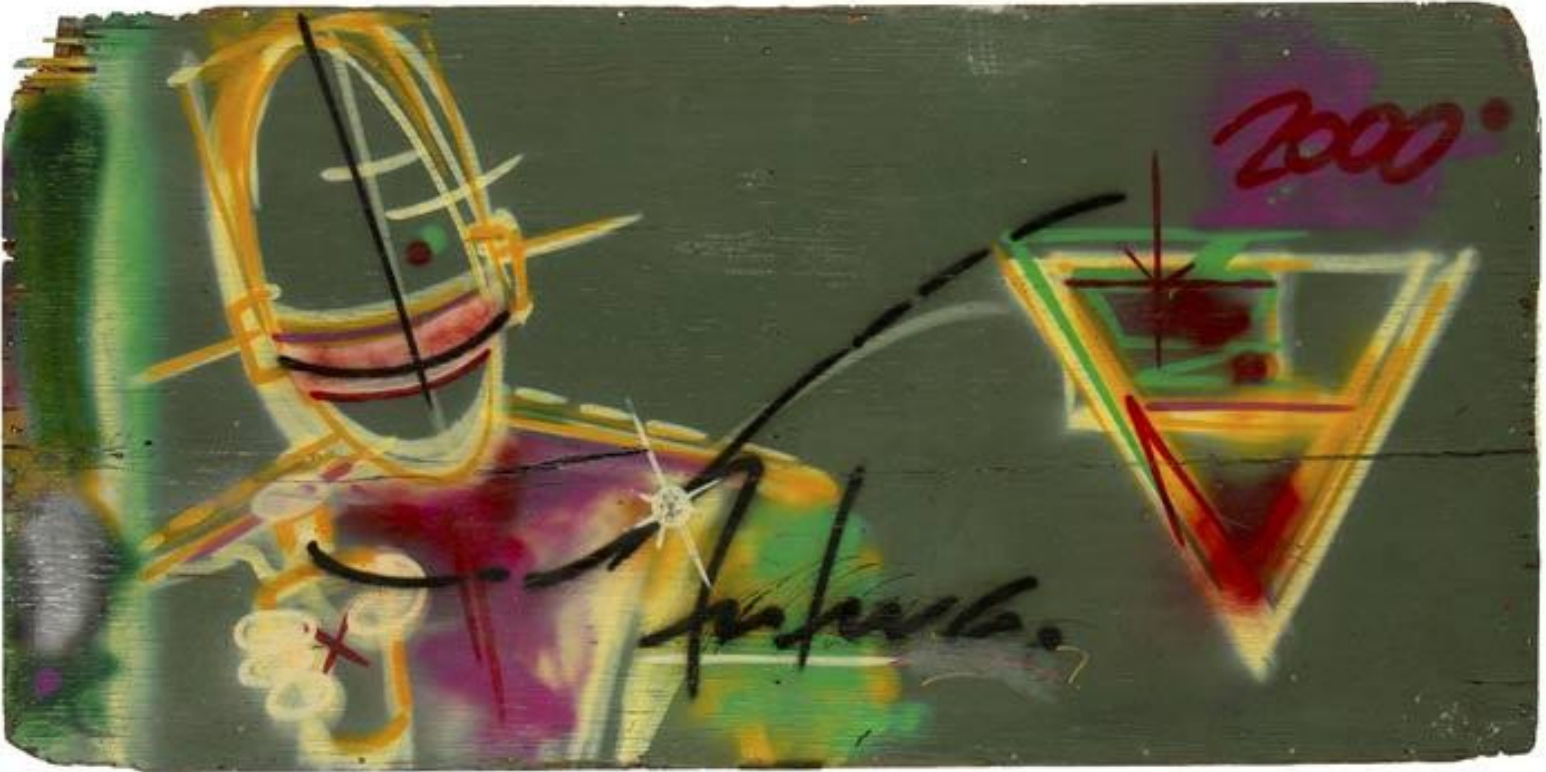
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Futura: Untitled



Futura 2000, Untitled, 1982. Acrylic on wood. Museum of the City of New York, gift of Martin Wong, 94.114.17

Questions for consideration:

Consider Daze's piece "Classic". Find Futura's tag in this piece.

What does this piece tell you about Futura's style? How would you describe it?

The piece is untitled. What title would you give it? Why?

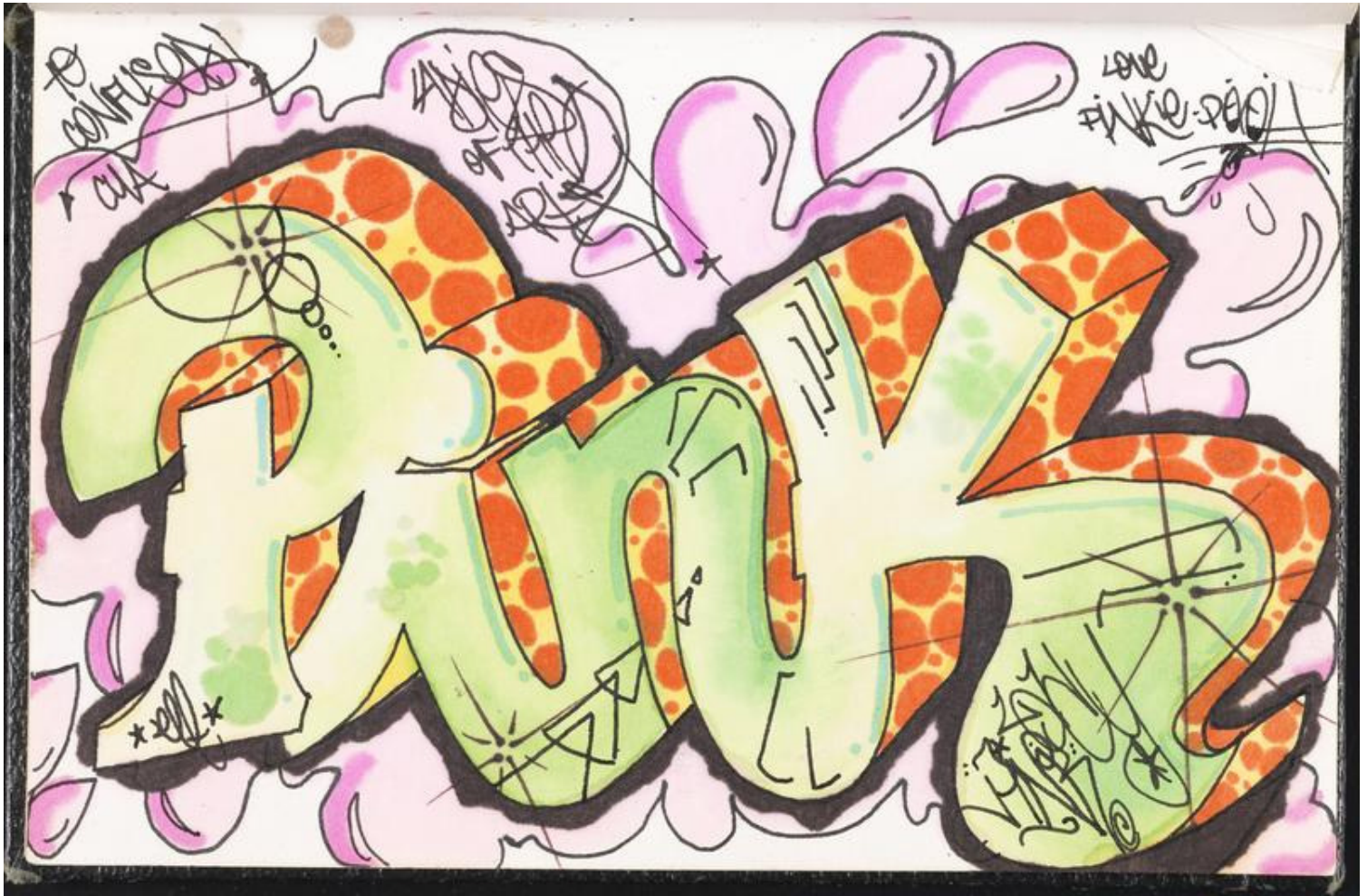
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IV. Artist Spotlight: Lady Pink



Sandra (Lady Pink) Fabara (1964-) Pink [Page in Daze's black book.] Date: 1983 94.114.263.86

Background Read

The following is text from the Museum's exhibition. Print copies for students to read individually or as partners. Ask students to underline key pieces of information and then share either as a class or in a group what they have learned about Lady Pink. Ask students to write Lady Pink's biography in their own words.

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Lady Pink: Biography

Sandra Fabara (born in Ambato, Ecuador, 1964) grew up in Astoria, Queens, and attended Manhattan’s High School of Art & Design. As one of the few women participating in the writing movement at the time, LADY PINK gained respect for her artistic talents and her commitment to the movement, and between 1979 and 1985 she painted on subway trains with many of the most accomplished graffiti artists of her era. Today LADY PINK continues to create vividly imaginative paintings and is active in her community, leading mural workshops with school groups and lecturing on art at New York–area colleges.

LADY PINK created *The Death of Graffiti* in response to the MTA’s campaign to rid the subway system of graffiti. She depicts herself nude on a pile of aerosol spray cans pointing to a “clean train,” signifying the city’s effort to give all trains in service a fresh coat of white paint.

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Lady Pink: The Death of Graffiti



94.114.96 Lady Pink *The Death of Graffiti* Date: 1982

Questions for consideration:

Consider the title. How does this painting depict the death of graffiti?

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