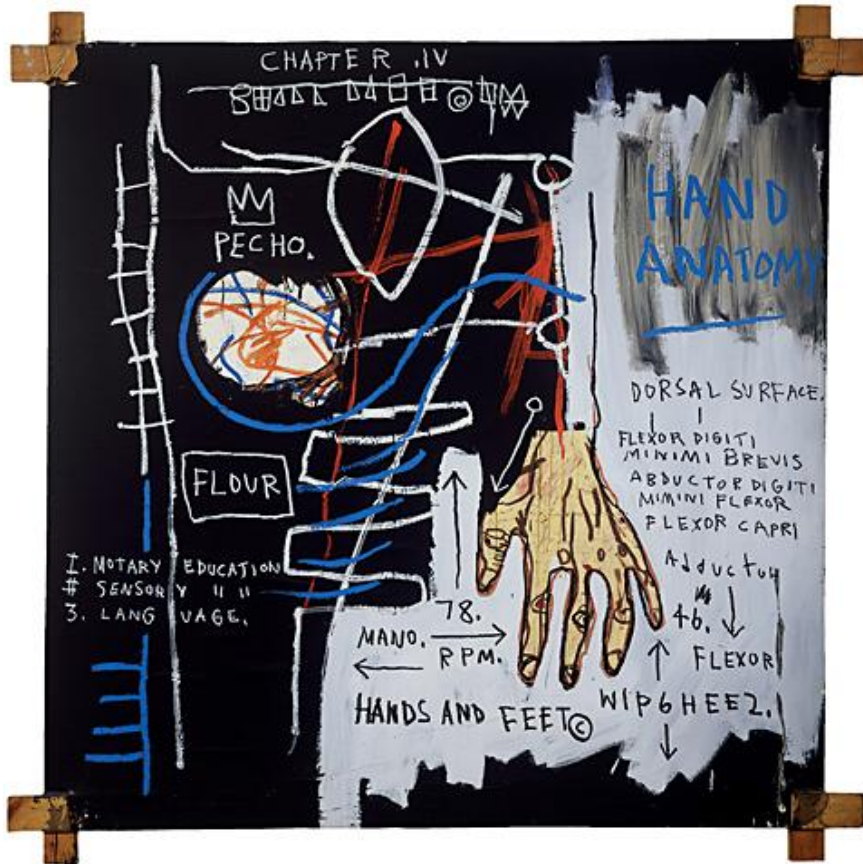


Kukje Gallery

## Jean-Michel Basquiat



*Untitled (Hand Anatomy)*  
1982

Acrylic, oilstick and paper collage on canvas with tied wood supports  
152.4 x 152.4 cm

© 2013 The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat / ADAGP, Paris / ARS, New York  
Image provided by Kukje Gallery

Use of images **must** clearly credit the artist and other relevant parties.

**February 14 – March 31**

○ **Exhibition Information**

Artist: Jean-Michel Basquiat (American, 1960-1988)

Exhibition Dates: February 14 – March 31, 2013

Exhibition Space: Kukje Gallery K2

**Press Conference: February 14 (11am), Kukje Gallery K2**

Opening Hours: Monday – Saturday: 10am-6pm, Sunday, Holiday: 10am-5pm

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# KUKJE GALLERY

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○ **About the Exhibition**

Kukje Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of Jean-Michel Basquiat opening February 14th. Sometimes dubbed the black Picasso of American Art because of his incredible output of masterworks, Basquiat has come to be seen as an icon of his generation during a dynamic period known as Neo-Expressionism. Highly successful from a very early age, Basquiat had a prolific eight-year career until his untimely death at the age of 27. This is Kukje's second exhibition of this seminal artist presenting a broad survey of his iconic work made during a major historical period in the art scene of the 1980s in the US, reflective of the emergence of the counter cultural and the socio-politics of the time. His paintings are characterized by eclectic references to historical black heroes (such as highly successful Africa-Americans including Charlie Parker, a jazz musician, and Hank Aaron, a baseball player), comic books, anatomy, graffiti, and issues of race. He was also able to incorporate his autobiography into his work, infuse his paintings with symbolic text and poetry, and powerful socio-political messages.

Basquiat swiftly rose to fame when he emerged in the New York art scene in the 1980s at a young age. He has been compared to masters of Modern and Contemporary Art (including Pablo Picasso, Jean Dubuffet, Cy Twombly, and Robert Rauschenberg), but Basquiat received critical acclaim in both America and Europe for his uniqueness and ground-breaking work which combined text and imagery, despite his lack of formal arts training. Some seminal pieces on view in the exhibition reference a personal trauma he experienced having been hit by a car at the age of 7. It was during his recuperation from spleen removal surgery that his mother gave him a copy of the medical text *Gray's Anatomy* which would later inform his lifelong interest in anatomy and also provides a good example of the diverse influences for Basquiat's development of a new visual language which transcended the traditional vocabulary of art.

Although the span of his career was brief, Basquiat is celebrated as one of the most dynamic and original artists of the late twentieth century. He was able to fuse together disparate elements drawn from his autobiography, black heroes, comics, anatomy, graffiti, symbols and iconography with themes such as money and capital, racism and death, composed with his original way of incorporating text. Basquiat's inspiration is diverse and the themes he explored are difficult to define into definitive boundaries but his usage of repeated imageries and texts reveal his deep-rooted interests and concerns.

## ○ About the Artist

Jean-Michel Basquiat was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1960 to a middle class family. His mother was of Puerto Rican heritage and his father a former Haitian Minister of Interior, and he grew up exposed to different languages, diverse literature and culture. From a young age he displayed an aptitude for art and his mother encouraged him to draw, paint, and participate in other art-related activities. In 1977, he began spray painting graffiti on buildings in lower Manhattan with his friend Al Diaz under a *nom de plume* SAMO© (an acronym for “same old shit”). SAMO’s statements were terse yet insightful aphorisms that critiqued material culture and the stresses of urban life and they came to be a popular and ubiquitous presence in Manhattan. Basquiat had already become known as a graffiti artist by the late 1970s and he first showed his work in a gallery in June 1980, participating in *The Times Square Show*, with artists such as Jenny Holzer, Keith Haring, and Kiki Smith. In 1981 he was included in the *New York/New Wave* exhibition at PS1 and by 1982, he had successfully completed his first solo exhibition in the United States. That same year he became the youngest artist to be invited to participate in *dOCUMENTA* in Kassel, exhibiting alongside Joseph Beuys, Gerhard Richter, and Cy Twombly. At this time he is also befriended Andy Warhol, a friendship that led to a number of collaborative projects. Basquiat showed regularly in leading galleries of the time across the USA and Europe, and his works were exhibited at the Biennale of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York (1983), Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (1984), and the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hannover (1986). In 1985, Basquiat appeared on the cover of *The New York Times Magazine* for an article about the New York art scene — an image that solidified his role as a central player and further heightened his international profile. In 1988, travelling and preparing for future shows and at the height of his creative powers, Basquiat tragically died of a drug overdose.

Today, his legacy is secure with major works in many distinguished public and private collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Andy Warhol Museum, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Fukuoka Art Museum, the Daros Collection and the Rubell Family Collection.

Exhibition Images & Captions

Use of images **must** clearly credit the artist and other relevant parties, and image editing cannot be performed without prior permission.



**Jean-Michel Basquiat (American, 1960-1988)**

DESMOND  
1984

Acrylic on canvas  
218.4 x 172.7 cm

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Image provided by Kukje Gallery

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**Jean-Michel Basquiat (American, 1960-1988)**

Untitled (Lung)  
1986  
Acrylic on wood  
244 x 140 cm

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**Jean-Michel Basquiat (American, 1960-1988)**

Procession  
1986

Acrylic and wood relief on wood  
162 x 244 cm

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