

BASQUIAT/WARHOL

September 16 – October 22, 2022
23 East 67th Street



NEW YORK, NY - Upsilon Gallery is pleased to announce a group exhibition of seminal works titled *Basquiat/Warhol*, on view from September 16 to October 22, 2022. An opening reception will be held at 23 East 67th Street on Friday, September 15th, from 6:00-8:00 PM.

The six-year friendship between Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat has fascinated the art world for decades. *Basquiat/Warhol* revisits this extraordinary relationship as told from Warhol's perspective.

Warhol and Basquiat were an unlikely pair: though both iconic creative minds and aesthetic pioneers they were from very different backgrounds. Despite this they would forge one of the most important relationships in the history of contemporary art. Warhol, founding father of Pop art, and his much younger Neo-Expressionist protégé Basquiat emerged from different generations, but within the span of six years, through a deeply intimate albeit turbulent friendship, the mutual respect and admiration that Basquiat and Warhol shared for one another inspired two iconic bodies of work - both of which have become emblazoned on our contemporary aesthetic consciousness.

The story begins in the early 1980s, when the teenage Basquiat frequented Warhol's New York City studio, *The Factory*, in an effort to infiltrate its social scene. At first, Warhol regarded the ambitious Basquiat with aloofness, but in late 1982, Swiss power-dealer Bruno Bischofberger set up a lunch between them, and Warhol started to pay attention.

Emerging as a revolutionary figure in the 1960s, Warhol had been at the heart of the art establishment for over twenty years by the time he met Basquiat. The two artists were at different stages in their lives and careers by this point. It seemed that during the '70s "Warholism had superseded Warhol," in the words of legendary critic and art historian Robert Pincus-Witten. Warhol had become aware of critical disinterest following a decade dominated by portrait commissions, and by the 80s he was increasingly concerned about his public reception.

- continued -



According to Pincus-Witten, the artist was desperate to inaugurate “the Return of Andy Warhol.”

When the two were first introduced to one another in 1982, Basquiat was a young graffiti street artist who had only just gained legitimacy and recognition. Through their friendship, each found in the other something that he himself lacked. Basquiat sought the fame, recognition, and access. Warhol desperately desired a shock of innovation and renewed energy in his work. Basquiat and his fresh perspective offered the essential injection of life that Warhol was looking for to revive his career. And the well-connected Warhol offered Basquiat the notoriety and network to establish his critical reputation.

But the symbiotic relationship was not just borne of professional ambition. According to those who knew the two artists back in the '80s, Warhol took an almost parental role in Basquiat's life. Warhol and Basquiat had a remarkably close friendship lifted by a genuine mutual respect.

The late 1980s would become one of the most productive periods of Warhol's career, resulting in some of his greatest works. Keith Haring in his 1988 essay 'Painting The Third Mind' wrote of the pair: “Jean brought back a much-needed touch of mischief that had been disappearing from the Factory agenda. But, he also brought an atmosphere of obsessive production that left its mark long after the collaborations had stopped.”

“For an artist, the most important and delicate relationship he can have with another artist is one in which he is constantly challenged and intimidated,” Haring wrote. “This is probably the only productive quality of jealousy. The greatest pleasure is to be provoked to the point of inspiration.”

Basquiat and Warhol have come to embody a profoundly symbiotic and mutually beneficial creative relationship. The friendship monumentalizes a fleeting moment when two of the most revolutionary artistic minds of the 20th century found a fruitful common ground.

Basquiat/Warhol draws widely from local sources, including private collectors, and galleries, and includes a total of 24 works, both unique and editioned, on canvas and paper.

Upsilon Gallery is located at 23 East 67th Street, New York, NY 10065. Exhibition hours are Monday to Friday 10:00 AM-6:00 PM, Saturday by appointment. Please contact the gallery at (646) 476-4190 or email at info@upsilongallery.com for further details.

Image: Andy Warhol, *Cow II.11*, 1966, screenprint on wallpaper, 45 1/8 x 29 3/8 in. (114.7 x 74.7 cm).

For additional information and media inquiries, please contact:

Carter Williams

tel +1 (646) 476-4190

email press@upsilongallery.com