



Kenny Scharf & '80s Street Art Opens at Nassau County Museum of Art

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by Pat Rogers

Street art receives an intense look through two exhibitions opening at the [Nassau County Museum of Art](#) in March. The solo show “Kenny Scharf” and the group exhibition “Glamorous Graffit” peel back time to examine the New York graffiti and street art movement of the 1980s as well as reveal the pathway of Scharf’s art through the present. Both exhibitions open on March 19 and continue through July 10, 2016. A live painting event takes place on June 19, 2016 when Kenny Scharf paints a new mural for the museum.

“Kenny Scharf” presents major paintings and sculptures from throughout the artist’s career. “Glamorous Graffit” examines Scharf’s contemporaries of the 1980s and include art by [Keith Haring](#), [Jean Michel Basquiat](#), [Crash](#), [Futura 2000](#) and others.

Kenny Scharf (b. 1958) is known for his vibrantly colorful large-scale paintings and exuberantly playful installations. Emerging with the New York City graffiti and street art movement of the 1980s, Scharf’s imagery draws upon pop icons, media advertising and consumer culture of the 1960s, including TV cartoon characters such as the Flintstones and the Jetsons.



“Pink Frosted Cruller in Outer Space” by Kenny Scharf, 2010. Oil on linen, 24 x 24 inches. Private collection.

Curated by Director Dr. Karl E. Willers and the Museum’s staff, highlights of “Kenny Scharf” include the expansive mural *Pop Renaissance* that surrounds the viewer, a version of the artist’s *Cosmic Cavern* club-like environment, and a recreation of the artist’s former Brooklyn studio complete with spattered walls, painted furniture and other workspace ephemera.



Detail of “Pop Renaissance4” by Kenny Scharf, 2013. Oil, acrylic, enamel, silkscreen on canvas, 77 x 119 inches. Collection of the artist, Courtesy Honor

Fraser Gallery.



“Plasomospace” by Kenny Scharf, 1982. Oil and spray paint on canvas, 103 x 114 inches. Private collection.

Scharf inaugurated his iconic *Cosmic Cavern* installations when he turned his basement into one of the day-glo environments that have been his trademark since the 1980s. Versions of these *Cosmic Cavern* installations have been seen at the 1985 [Whitney Biennial](#) and at [MoMA PS1](#) in Long Island City.

Works by Scharf are held in the collections of the [Whitney Museum of American Art](#), the [Guggenheim Museum](#) and the [Jewish Museum](#) (all in New York City), [Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Monterrey](#) (MARCO) (Monterrey, Mexico); the [Museum Ludwig](#) (Cologne, Germany); the [Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam](#) and others.



From the “Cosmic Cavern” Installation by Kenny Scharf. Collection of the artist.

In speaking about his art, Kenny Scharf commented to the museum: “I believe the artist has a social responsibility to engage others in a thought process that ultimately brings the creative process into everyday life thereby enhancing the quality of our experience.”

Visitors are invited on June 19, 2016 to watch Kenny Scharf paint a new outdoor mural for the future Manes Family Art & Education Center on the Museum’s grounds. Other exhibition programming includes Lunchtime Talks presented by museum docent Riva Ettus on Kenny Scharf and his career held on April 14, May 12 and June 9, 2016.

“Glamorous Graffiti” looks at the work of Kenny Scharf’s contemporaries in the New York graffiti and street art movement of the 1980s. Highlights of the exhibition include a 1988 portfolio of five silk-screened prints by Keith Haring, a range of graffiti styles are explored through the work of the artists Jean Michel Basquiat, Lee Quiñones, Crash, Futura 2000, Toxic and many others.

Films documenting early 1980s graffiti and urban culture are also part of the exhibition. Artists [A-One](#), [Daze](#), [Dondi](#), [Koor](#), [Lady Pink](#), [Noc](#), [Richard Hambleton](#) and [Rammellzee](#) appear in the films “Downtown 81” by Edo Bertoglio, “Wild Style” by Charlie Ahearn and “Style Wars” by Henry Chalfant and Tony Silver.

BASIC FACTS: “Kenny Scharf” and “Glamorous Graffit” are exhibited March 18 to July 10, 2016 at the Nassau County Museum of Art, 1 Museum Dr, Roslyn, NY 11576. www.nassaumuseum.org.

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