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Jean-Michel Basquiat



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Jean-Michel Basquiat

Jean-Michel Basquiat (French: ; December 22, 1960 - August 12, 1988) was an American artist. Basquiat first achieved fame as part of [SAMO](#), an informal [graffiti](#) duo who wrote enigmatic [epigrams](#) in the cultural hotbed of the [Lower East Side](#) of [Manhattan](#) during the late 1970s where the [hip hop](#), [punk](#), and

Jean-Michel Basquiat

[street art](#) cultures had coalesced. By the 1980s, he was exhibiting his [neo-expressionist](#) paintings in galleries and museums internationally. The [Whitney Museum of American Art](#) held a retrospective of his art in 1992.

Basquiat's art focused on "suggestive dichotomies", such as wealth versus poverty, integration versus segregation, and inner versus outer experience. He [appropriated](#) poetry, drawing, and painting, and married text and image, [abstraction](#), [figuration](#), and historical information mixed with contemporary critique.

Basquiat used [social commentary](#) in his paintings as a "springboard to deeper truths about the individual", as well as attacks on [power structures](#) and systems of racism, while his poetics were acutely [political](#) and direct in their criticism of [colonialism](#) and support for [class struggle](#). He died of a [heroin overdose](#) at his art studio at the age of 27.

On May 18, 2017, at a Sotheby's auction, a 1982 painting by Basquiat depicting a skull ("Untitled") set a new record high for any American artist at auction, selling for \$110.5 million.

Early life

Jean-Michel Basquiat was born in [Brooklyn](#), New York, on December 22, 1960, shortly after the death of his elder brother, Max. He was the second of four children of Matilde Andrades (July 28, 1934 - November 17, 2008) and Gérard Basquiat (1930 - July 7, 2013). He had two younger sisters: Lisane, born in 1964, and Jeanine, born in 1967.

His father, Gérard Basquiat, was born in [Port-au-Prince](#), Haiti, and his mother,



Jean-Michel Basquiat, 1986, photo by [William Coupon](#).

Born	December 22, 1960 Brooklyn, New York City, New York, U.S.
Died	August 12, 1988 (aged 27) Manhattan, New York City, New York, U.S.
Style	Graffiti , street art , primitivism
Movement	Neo-expressionism
Website	basquiat.com

Matilde Basquiat, who was of Puerto Rican descent, was born in [Brooklyn](#), New York. Matilde instilled a love for art in her young son by taking him to art museums in Manhattan and enrolling him as a junior member of the [Brooklyn Museum of Art](#). Basquiat was a precocious child who learned how to read and write by the age of four and was a gifted artist. His teachers, such as artist Jose Machado, noticed his artistic abilities, and his mother encouraged her son's artistic talent. By the age of 11, Basquiat was fully fluent in French, Spanish and English. In 1967, Basquiat started attending [Saint Ann's](#), an arts-oriented exclusive private school. He drew with Marc Prozzo, a friend from St. Ann's; they together created a children's book, written by Basquiat and illustrated by Prozzo. Basquiat became an avid reader of Spanish, French, and English texts and a more than competent athlete, competing in track events.

In September 1968, at the age of seven, Basquiat was hit by a car while playing in the street. His arm was broken and he suffered several internal injuries, and he eventually underwent a [splenectomy](#). While he was recuperating from his injuries, his mother brought him the [Gray's Anatomy](#) book to keep him occupied. This book would prove to be influential in his future artistic outlook. His parents separated that year and he and his sisters were raised by their father. The family resided in [Boerum Hill](#), Brooklyn, for five years, then moved to [San Juan, Puerto Rico](#) in 1974. After two years, they returned to New York City.

When he was 13, his mother was committed to a mental institution and thereafter spent time in and out of institutions. At 15, Basquiat ran away from home. He slept on park benches in [Tompkins Square Park](#), and was arrested and returned to the care of his father within a week.

Basquiat dropped out of [Edward R. Murrow High School](#) in the tenth grade at the age of 17 and then attended [City-As-School](#), an alternative high school in Manhattan home to many artistic students who failed at conventional schooling. His father banished him from the household for dropping out of high school and Basquiat stayed with friends in Brooklyn. He supported himself by selling T-shirts and homemade post cards.

Career

Basquiat went from being homeless and unemployed to selling a single painting for up to \$25,000 in a matter of several years.

In 1976, Basquiat and friend Al Diaz

SAMO (for "same old") marked the witty sayings of a [precocious](#) and worldly teenage mind that, even at that early juncture, saw the world in shades of gray, fearlessly juxtaposing corporate [commodity structures](#) with the [social](#)

began spray painting [graffiti](#) on buildings in [Lower Manhattan](#), working under the pseudonym [SAMO](#). The designs featured inscribed messages such as "Plush safe he think.. SAMO" and "SAMO as an escape clause". In 1978, Basquiat worked for the Unique Clothing Warehouse in their art department at 718 Broadway in [NoHo](#) and at night he began "SAMO" painting his original graffiti art on neighborhood buildings. Unique's founder Harvey Russack discovered Basquiat painting a building one night, they became friends, and he offered him a day job. On December 11, 1978, [The Village Voice](#) published an article about the graffiti. When Basquiat and Diaz ended their friendship, The SAMO project ended with the epitaph "SAMO IS DEAD", inscribed on the walls of [SoHo](#) buildings in 1979.

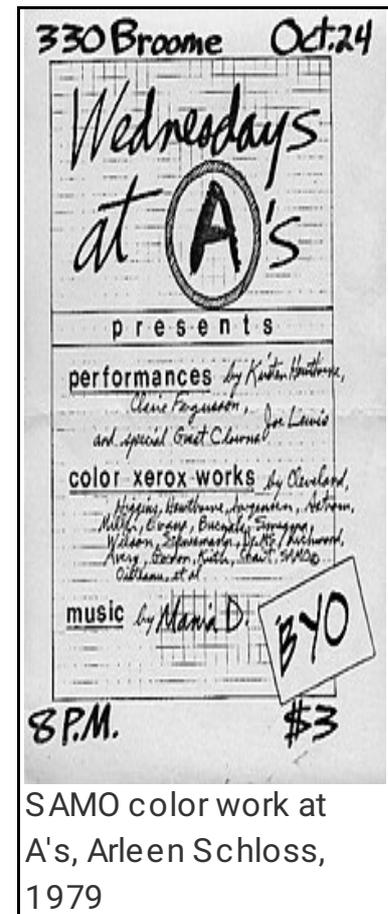
In 1979, Basquiat appeared on the live [public-access television](#) show [TV Party](#) hosted by [Glenn O'Brien](#), and the two started a friendship. Basquiat made regular appearances on the show over the next few years.

That same year, Basquiat formed the [noise rock](#) band Test Pattern - which was later renamed Gray - which played at [Arleen Schloss](#)'s open space, "Wednesdays at A's", where in October 1979 Basquiat showed, among others, his SAMO color Xerox work.

Gray also consisted of Shannon Dawson, [Michael Holman](#), Nick Taylor, Wayne Clifford and [Vincent Gallo](#), and the band performed at nightclubs such as [Max's Kansas City](#), [CBGB](#), [Hurrah](#) and the [Mudd Club](#). In 1980, Basquiat starred in O'Brien's [independent film](#) [Downtown 81](#), originally titled *New York Beat*. That same year, Basquiat met [Andy Warhol](#) at a restaurant. Basquiat presented to Warhol samples of his work, and Warhol was stunned by Basquiat's genius and allure. The two artists later collaborated. *Downtown 81* featured some of Gray's recordings on its soundtrack. Basquiat also appeared in the 1981 [Blondie](#) music video "[Rapture](#)," in a role originally intended for [Grandmaster Flash](#), as a nightclub disc jockey.

The early 1980s were Basquiat's breakthrough as a solo artist. In June 1980, Basquiat participated in *The Times Square Show*, a multi-artist exhibition sponsored by [Collaborative Projects Incorporated](#) (Colab) and [Fashion Moda](#) where he was noticed by various critics and curators. In particular Emilio

[milieu](#) he wished to enter: the predominantly white art world.
-- Franklin Sirmans, *In the Cipher: Basquiat and Hip Hop Culture*



SAMO color work at A's, Arleen Schloss, 1979

Mazzoli, an Italian gallerist saw the exhibition and invited Basquiat to Modena (Italy) to have his world first solo show, that opened on May 23, 1981. In December 1981, [René Ricard](#) published "The Radiant Child" in [Artforum](#) magazine. In September 1982, Basquiat joined the Annina Nosei gallery and worked in a basement below the gallery toward his first American one-man show, which took place from March 6 to April 1, 1982.

In March 1982 he worked in [Modena](#), Italy, again to work on his second Italian exhibition and from November, Basquiat worked from the ground-floor display and studio space [Larry Gagosian](#) had built below his [Venice](#), California, home and commenced a series of paintings for a 1983 show, his second at [Gagosian Gallery](#), then in West Hollywood. He brought along his girlfriend, then-unknown aspiring singer [Madonna](#). Gagosian recalls, "Everything was going along fine. Jean-Michel was making paintings, I was selling them, and we were having a lot of fun. But then one day Jean-Michel said, 'My girlfriend is coming to stay with me.' I was a little concerned -- one too many eggs can spoil an omelet, you know? So I said, 'Well, what's she like?' And he said, He said, 'Her name is Madonna and she's going to be huge.' I'll never forget that he said that. So Madonna came out and stayed for a few months and we all got along like one big, happy family." During this time he took considerable interest in the work that [Robert Rauschenberg](#) was producing at [Gemini G.E.L.](#) in West Hollywood, visiting him on several occasions and finding inspiration in the accomplishments of the painter. In 1982, Basquiat worked briefly with musician and artist [David Bowie](#).

In 1983, Basquiat produced a [12-inch rap](#) single featuring [hip-hop](#) artists [Rammellzee](#) and [K-Rob](#). Billed as Rammellzee vs. K-Rob, the single contained two versions of the same track: "[Beat Bop](#)" on side one with vocals and "Beat Bop" on side two as an instrumental. The single was pressed in limited quantities on the one-off Tartown Record Company label. The single's cover featured Basquiat's artwork, making the pressing highly desirable among both record and art collectors.

At the suggestion of Swiss dealer [Bruno Bischofberger](#), Warhol and Basquiat worked on a series of collaborative paintings between 1983 and 1985. In the case of *Olympic Rings* (1985), Warhol made several variations of the Olympic five-ring symbol, rendered in the original primary colors. Basquiat responded to the abstract, stylized logos with his oppositional graffiti style.

Basquiat often painted in expensive [Armani](#) suits and would even appear in public in the same paint-splattered clothes.

Drawings

In his short life, Basquiat produced around 1500 [drawings](#), as well as around 600 paintings and many other sculpture and mixed media works. Basquiat drew constantly, and often used objects around him as surfaces when paper wasn't immediately to hand.

From a very young age Basquiat would produce cartoon-inspired drawings alongside his mother, who had an interest in fashion design and sketching. Drawings became central to his work as he developed as an artist. Basquiat's drawings were produced in many different mediums, most commonly ink, pencil, felt-tip or marker, and oil-stick.

Basquiat sometimes used [Xerox](#) copies of fragments of his drawings to paste on to the canvas of larger paintings.

The first public showing of Basquiat's paintings and drawings was in 1981: New York/New Wave, at [PS1](#) in Long Island, brought together by [Mudd Club](#) co-founder and curator [Diego Cortez](#). It was a group show that included pieces by [William Burroughs](#), [David Byrne](#), [Keith Haring](#), [Nan Goldin](#) and [Robert Mapplethorpe](#).

The article in *Artforum* magazine entitled *Radiant Child* written by Rene Ricard after seeing the show at PS1, brought Basquiat to the attention of the art world. Later, Basquiat immortalised Ricard in two drawings, including [Untitled \(Axe/Rene\), 1984](#).

A poet as well as an artist, words featured heavily in his drawings and paintings, with direct references to racism, slavery, the people and street scene of 1980s New York including other artists, and black historical figures, musicians and sports stars, as his notebooks and many important drawings demonstrate.

Very often Basquiat's drawings were untitled, and as such to differentiate works a word written within the drawing is commonly in parentheses after *Untitled*, such as with *Untitled (Axe/Rene)*.

After Basquiat died of an overdose at the age of 27, his estate was controlled by his father Gerald Basquiat, who also oversaw the committee which authenticated artworks, and operated from 1993 to 2012 to review over 1000 works, the majority of which were drawings.



Basquiat drawing of art critic Rene Ricard, *Untitled (Axe/Rene)*, 1984

Artistic styles

[Fred Hoffman](#) hypothesizes that underlying Basquiat's sense of himself as an artist was his "innate capacity to function as something like an [oracle](#), distilling his perceptions of the outside world down to their essence and, in turn, projecting them outward through his creative acts." Additionally, continuing his activities as a graffiti artist, Basquiat often incorporated words into his paintings. Before his career as a painter began, he produced punk-inspired postcards for sale on the street, and became known for the political-poetical graffiti under the name of [SAMO](#). On one occasion Basquiat painted his girlfriend's dress with the words "Little Shit Brown". He would often draw on random objects and surfaces, including other people's property. The conjunction of various media is an integral element of Basquiat's art. His paintings are typically covered with text and codes of all kinds: words, letters, numerals, pictograms, logos, map symbols, diagrams and more.

A middle period from late 1982 to 1985 featured multi-panel paintings and individual canvases with exposed stretcher bars, the surface dense with writing, collage and imagery. The years 1984-85 were also the main period of the Basquiat-Warhol collaborations, even if, in general, they were not very well received by the critics.

A major reference source used by Basquiat throughout his career was the book [Gray's Anatomy](#), which his mother had given him while he was in the hospital aged seven. It remained influential in his depictions of internal human anatomy, and in its mixture of image and text. Other major sources were Henry Dreyfuss' *Symbol Sourcebook*, [Leonardo da Vinci](#)'s notebooks, and Brentjes' *African Rock Art*.

Heads

Heads are seen as a major focal point of some of Basquiat's most seminal works. Two pieces, "Untitled (Skull/Skull)" 1981 and "Untitled (Head)" 1982, held by the Broad Foundation and Maezawa Foundation respectively can be seen as primary examples. In reference to the potent image depicted in

Basquiat's canon revolves around single heroic figures: athletes, prophets, warriors, cops, musicians, kings and the artist himself. In these images the head is often a central focus, topped by crowns, hats, and halos. In this way the intellect is emphasized, lifted up to notice, privileged over the body and the physicality of these figures (i.e. black men) commonly represent in the world. *Kellie Jones, Lost in Translation: Jean-Michel in the (Re)Mix*

both pieces, Fred Hoffman writes that Basquiat was likely, "caught off guard, possibly even frightened, by the power and energy emanating from this unexpected image." Further investigation by Fred Hoffman of pieces like "Masonic Lodge" 1983 and Untitled (1983) in his book "The Art of Jean-Michel Basquiat" reveals a deeper interest in the artist's fascination with heads that proves an evolution in the artist's oeuvre from one of raw power to one of more refined cognizance.

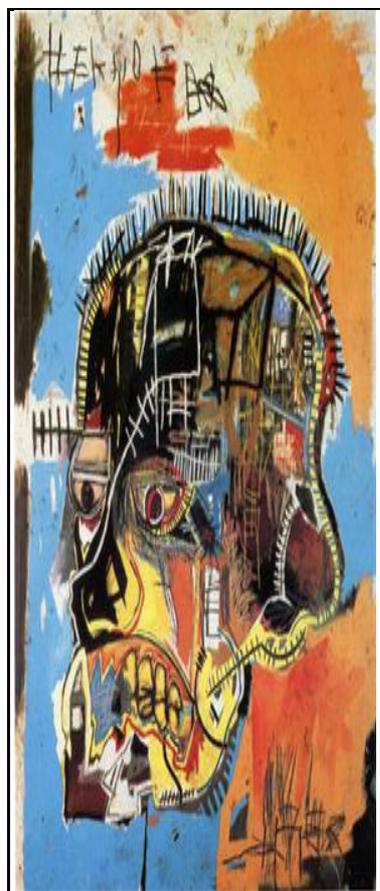
Heritage

According to [Andrea Frohne](#), Basquiat's 1983 painting *Untitled (History of the Black People)* "reclaims Egyptians as African and subverts the concept of ancient Egypt as the cradle of Western Civilization". At the center of the painting, Basquiat depicts an Egyptian boat being guided down the [Nile River](#) by [Osiris](#), the Egyptian god of the earth and vegetation.

On the right panel of the painting appear the words "Esclave, Slave, Esclave". Two letters of the word "Nile" are crossed out and Frohne suggests that, "The letters that are wiped out and scribbled over perhaps reflect the acts of historians who have conveniently forgotten that Egyptians were black and blacks were enslaved." On the left panel of the painting Basquiat has illustrated two [Nubian](#)-style masks. The [Nubians](#) historically were darker in skin color, and were considered to be slaves by the Egyptian people.

Throughout the rest of the painting, images of the [Atlantic slave trade](#) are juxtaposed with images of the [Egyptian slave trade](#) centuries before. The sickle in the center panel is a direct reference to the slave trade in the United States, and slave labor under the plantation system. The word "salt" that appears on the right panel of the work refers to the Atlantic slave trade, as salt was another important commodity traded at that time.

Another of Basquiat's pieces, *Irony of Negro Policeman* (1981), is intended to illustrate how he believes African-Americans have been controlled by a predominantly [Caucasian](#) society. Basquiat sought to portray that African-



Untitled (Scully/Skull)
(1981)

Like a DJ, Basquiat adeptly reworked [Neo-expressionism](#)'s clichéd language of gesture, freedom, and angst and redirected [Pop art](#)'s strategy of appropriation to produce a body of work that at times celebrated [black culture](#) and [history](#) but also revealed its complexity and contradictions.

-- Lydia Lee

Americans have become complicit with the "institutionalized forms of whiteness and corrupt white regimes of power" years after the [Jim Crow era](#) had ended. Basquiat found the concept of a "Negro policeman" utterly ironic. According to him the policeman should sympathize with his black friends, family, and ancestors, yet instead he was there to enforce the rules designed by "white society." The Negro policeman had "black skin but wore a white mask". In the painting, Basquiat depicted the policeman as large in order to suggest an "excessive and totalizing power", but made the policeman's body fragmented and broken.

The hat that frames the head of the Negro policeman resembles a cage, and represents what Basquiat believes are the constrained independent perceptions of African Americans at the time, and how constrained the policeman's own perceptions were within white society. Basquiat drew upon his Haitian heritage by painting a hat that resembles the top hat associated with the family of [Lafayette](#), who embody the powers of death in [Vodou](#).

However, Kellie Jones, in her essay *Lost in Translation: Jean-Michel in the (Re)Mix*, posits that Basquiat's "mischievous, complex, and [neologistic](#) side, with regard to the fashioning of modernity and the influence and effluence of black culture" are often elided by critics and viewers, and thus "lost in translation."

The art historian [Olivier Berggruen](#) situates in Basquiat's anatomical screen prints, titled *Anatomy*, an assertion of vulnerability, one which "creates an aesthetic of the body as damaged, scarred, fragmented, incomplete, or torn apart, once the organic whole has disappeared. Paradoxically, it is the very act of creating these representations that conjures a positive corporeal valence between the artist and his sense of self or identity."

Exhibitions

Basquiat's first public exhibition was in the group effort *The Times Square Show* (with [David Hammons](#), [Jenny Holzer](#), [Lee Quiñones](#), [Kenny Scharf](#) and [Kiki Smith](#) among others), held in a vacant building at 41st Street and Seventh Avenue, New York. In late 1981, Basquiat joined the Annina Nosei gallery in SoHo; his first one-person exhibition was in 1982 at that gallery. By then, he was showing regularly alongside other Neo-expressionist artists including [Julian Schnabel](#), [David Salle](#), [Francesco Clemente](#) and [Enzo Cucchi](#). He was represented in Los Angeles by the Gagosian gallery and throughout Europe by [Bruno Bischofberger](#).

Major exhibitions of Basquiat's work have included *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Paintings 1981-1984* at the [Fruitmarket Gallery](#), Edinburgh (1984), which

traveled to the [Institute of Contemporary Arts](#), London, and [Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen](#), Rotterdam, in 1985); the [Kestnergesellschaft](#), Hannover (1987, 1989). The first retrospective to be held of his work was the *Jean-Michel Basquiat* exhibition at the [Whitney Museum of American Art](#) from October 1992 to February 1993. It subsequently traveled to the [Menil Collection](#), Houston; the [Des Moines Art Center](#), Iowa; and the [Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts](#), Alabama, from 1993 to 1994. The catalog for this exhibition, edited by Richard Marshall and including several essays of differing styles, was a groundbreaking piece of scholarship into Basquiat's work and still is a major source. Another exhibition, *Basquiat*, was mounted by the [Brooklyn Museum](#), New York, in 2005, and traveled to the [Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles](#), and the [Museum of Fine Arts, Houston](#). From October 2006 to January 2007, the first Basquiat exhibition in Puerto Rico took place at the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico (MAPR), produced by [ArtPremium](#), Corinne Timsit and Eric Bonici. [Brooklyn Museum](#) exhibited *Basquiat: The Unknown Notebooks* in April-August 2015. In 2017, the [Barbican Centre](#) in [London](#) exhibited *Basquiat: Boom for Real*. Basquiat remains an important source of inspiration for a younger generation of contemporary artists all over the world such as [Rita Ackermann](#) and [Kader Attia](#), as showed for example the exhibition *Street and Studio: From Basquiat to Séripop* co-curated by [Cathérine Hug](#) and Thomas Mießgang at [Kunsthalle Wien](#) (Austria) in 2010.

Reviews

In a review for [The Telegraph](#), critic [Hilton Kramer](#) starts his first paragraph by stating that Basquiat had no idea what the word "quality" meant. The praises to follow are in the lines of "talentless hustler" and "street-smart but otherwise invincibly ignorant" arguing that art dealers of the time were "as ignorant about art as Basquiat himself." In saying that Jean-Michel's work never rose above "that lowly artistic station" of graffiti "even when his paintings were fetching enormous prices," Kramer argued that graffiti art "acquired a cult status in certain New York art circles." Kramer further opined that "As a result of the campaign waged by these art-world entrepreneurs on Basquiat's behalf--and their own, of course--there was never any doubt that the museums, the collectors and the media would fall into line" when talking about the marketization of Basquiat's name.

Art critic Bonnie Rosenberg compares Basquiat's work to the emergence of American Hip Hop during the same era. She also mentions how Basquiat experienced a good taste of fame in his last years when he was a "critically embraced and popularly celebrated artistic phenomenon." Rosenberg

remarked that some people focused on the "superficial exoticism of his work" missing the fact that it "held important connections to expressive precursors."

Shortly after his death, [*The New York Times*](#) indicated that Basquiat was "the most famous of only a small number of young black artists who have achieved national recognition."

Final years and death

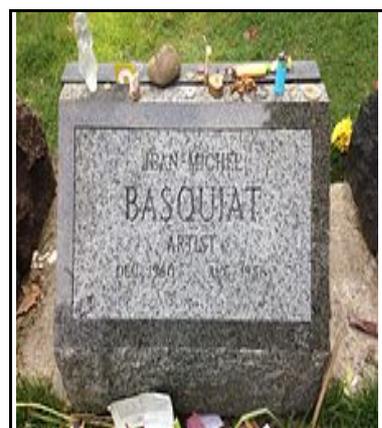
By 1986, Basquiat had left the Annina Nosei gallery and was showing at the [Mary Boone](#) gallery in SoHo. On February 10, 1985, he appeared on the cover of [*The New York Times Magazine*](#) in a feature titled "New Art, New Money: The Marketing of an American Artist". He was a successful artist in this period, but his growing heroin addiction began to interfere with his personal relationships.

Despite an attempt at sobriety, he died on August 12, 1988, of a [heroin overdose](#) at his art studio on [Great Jones Street](#) in Manhattan's [NoHo](#) neighborhood. He was 27 years old.

Basquiat was interred in Brooklyn's [Green-Wood Cemetery](#), where [Jeffrey Deitch](#) made a speech at the graveside. Among those speaking at Basquiat's memorial held at Saint Peter's Church on November 3, 1988, were Ingrid Sischy who, as the editor of [Artforum](#) in the 1980s, got to know the artist well and commissioned a number of articles that introduced his work to the wider world. Suzanne Mallouk recited sections of [A. R. Penck's](#) "Poem for Basquiat" and [Fab 5 Freddy](#) read a poem by [Langston Hughes](#). The 300 guests included musicians [John Lurie](#) and [Arto Lindsay](#); artist [Keith Haring](#); poet [David Shapiro](#); [Glenn O'Brien](#), a writer; Fab 5 Freddy; and members of the band Gray, which Basquiat led in the late 1970s. In memory of the late artist, Keith Haring created *Pile of Crowns for Jean-Michel Basquiat* (1988).



Basquiat lived from 1983 to 1988 at 57 Great Jones in downtown Manhattan, where he died. A plaque dedicating his life was placed on July 13, 2016, by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation.



Jean-Michel Basquiat, Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York

Legacy

Basquiat speaks articulately while dodging the full impact of clarity like a [matador](#). We can read his pictures without strenuous effort--the words, the images, the colors and the construction--but we cannot quite fathom the point they belabor. Keeping us in this state of half-knowing, of mystery-within-familiarity, had been the core technique of his brand of communication since his adolescent days as the graffiti poet SAMO. To enjoy them, we are not meant to analyze the pictures too carefully. Quantifying the encyclopedic breadth of his research certainly results in an interesting inventory, but the sum cannot adequately explain his pictures, which requires an effort outside the purview of [iconography](#) ... he painted a calculated incoherence, calibrating the mystery of what such apparently meaning-laden pictures might ultimately mean.

--[Marc Mayer](#), *Basquiat in History*

Literature

In 1991, poet [Kevin Young](#) produced a book, *To Repel Ghosts*, a compendium of 117 poems relating to Basquiat's life, individual paintings, and social themes found in the artist's work. He published a "remix" of the book in 2005.

In 1995, writer, Jennifer Clement, wrote the book *Widow Basquiat*, based on the stories told to her by Suzanne Mallouk.

In 2005, poet [M. K. Asante](#) published the poem "SAMO", dedicated to Basquiat, in his book *Beautiful. And Ugly Too*.

Film

Basquiat starred in *Downtown 81*, a *vérité* movie written by [Glenn O'Brien](#) and shot by [Edo Bertoglio](#) in 1981, but not released until 1998. In 1996, eight years after the artist's death, a biographical film titled *Basquiat* was released, directed by [Julian Schnabel](#), with actor [Jeffrey Wright](#) playing Basquiat. David Bowie played the part of Andy Warhol. Schnabel was interviewed during the film's script development as a personal acquaintance of Basquiat. Schnabel then purchased the rights to the project, believing that he could make a better film.

In 2006 the Equality Forum featured Jean-Michel Basquiat during LGBT history month.

A 2009 documentary film, *[Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child](#)*, directed by [Tamra Davis](#), was first screened as part of the 2010 [Sundance Film Festival](#) and was shown on the [PBS](#) series *[Independent Lens](#)* in 2011. Tamra Davis discussed her friendship with Basquiat in a [Sotheby's](#) video, "[Basquiat: Through the Eyes of a Friend](#)".

Music

Shortly after Basquiat's death, [Vernon Reid](#) of New York City [rock](#) band [Living Colour](#) wrote a song called "Desperate People", released on their album *[Vivid](#)*. The song primarily addresses the drug scene of New York at that time. Vernon states that Basquiat's death inspired him to write the song after receiving a phone call from [Greg Tate](#) informing Vernon of Basquiat's death.

Basquiat is referenced in [Jay-Z](#) and [Frank Ocean](#)'s song "Oceans": "I hope my black skin don't dirt this white tuxedo before the Basquiat show" in the 2013 album *[Magna Carta Holy Grail](#)*. Both Jay-Z and [Kanye West](#) made reference to Basquiat on their 2011 collaborative album *[Watch the Throne](#)*. In "Illest Motherfucker Alive", Jay-Z raps "Basquiats, Warhols serving as my muses" and in "That's My Bitch", West Raps "Basquiat she learning a new word, its yacht". Jay-Z also mentions him on his 2013 album *[Magna Carta Holy Grail](#)* when he says "Yellow Basquiat in my kitchen corner go 'head, lean on that shit Blue, you own it". In his verse on [Lil Wayne](#)'s song "John", [Rick Ross](#) raps "Red on the wall, Basquiat when I paint".

In the song "Ten Thousand Hours", [Macklemore](#) raps: "I observed [Escher](#), I love Basquiat", and on his song "Victory Lap" raps: "unorthodox, like Basquiat with a pencil". In his song "Die Like a Rockstar", about overdosing, [Danny Brown](#) raps "Basquiat freestyle" to hype himself up. Canadian artist [The Weeknd](#) has stated in interviews that his trademark haircut was inspired by Basquiat. [ASAP Rocky](#) mentions Basquiat in his song "Phoenix", rapping "Painting vivid pictures/call me Basquiat, Picasso". Rapper Robb Bank\$ has a song titled "Look Like Basquiat". Korean rapper Jazzy Ivy released the single/album "Jean & Andy" inspired by Jean-Michel Basquiat and [Andy Warhol](#). "Rich Niggaz" on [J. Cole](#)'s second album *[Born Sinner](#)* he raps: "It's like Sony signed Basquiat". Referencing his parent label, Sony, he compares Basquiat to himself in the change in their works after signing to a major label. On his song "Untitled", Killer Mike compares himself to Basquiat and [2Pac](#), saying "This is Basquiat with a passion like Pac". On the track Moments by [Kidz in the Hall](#) from their *[Semester Abroad](#)* mixtape [Naledge](#) says "look inside myself I think I see a masterpiece, a little Basquiat mix a little Master

P".

Korean rapper [T.O.P](#) references Basquiat in his 2013 single "DOOM DADA", when he says "MIC-reul jwin shindeullin, rap Basquiat", which translates as: "A god-given rap Basquiat with a mic." On his mixtape *Black Hystori Project*, [Cyhi the Prynce](#) features a song called "Basquiat". [Nicki Minaj](#) mentioned Basquiat on her single "[Lookin Ass](#)", featured on the [Young Money](#) collaborative album *Rise Of An Empire*. In [Riff Raff](#)'s "Gucci Jacuzzi", [Lil' Flip](#) says "You know I'm makin' guap, and my painting in my kitchen was made by Basquiat". [Madonna](#) references Basquiat in the song "Graffiti Heart" from the super deluxe edition of her album *Rebel Heart*. The band [Fall Out Boy](#) used the Basquiat crown as a part of their logo in 2013. It is still being used. [Robb Bank\\$](#) compares himself thoroughly to Basquiat in his song "Look like Basquiat". Basquiat was referenced in the Gym Class Heroes' song, "To Bob Ross with Love". Hip-hop artist [Yasiin Bey](#) released a song dedicated to Basquiat, titled "Basquiat Ghostwriter". Bey says he was inspired by the paintings and writings of the artist.

In the world of jazz, clarinetist [Don Byron](#) composed and performed the tune "Basquiat" on his 2000 album *A Fine Line: Arias and Lieder*.

Basquiat's work has been used by clothing companies such as SPRZ NY of [Uniqlo](#), [Urban Outfitters](#), and [Redbubble](#).

Sexuality

Jennifer Clement (a friend of his long-term girlfriend Suzanne Mallouk) specifically described his sexuality as "not monochromatic. It did not rely on visual stimulation, such as a pretty girl. It was a very rich multichromatic sexuality. He was attracted to people for all different reasons... It was, I think, driven by intelligence. He was attracted to intelligence more than anything and to pain."

Collections

Notable private collectors of Basquiat's work include [David Bowie](#), Mera and Donald Rubell, [Lars Ulrich](#), [Steven A. Cohen](#), [Laurence Graff](#), [John McEnroe](#), [Madonna](#), [Debbie Harry](#), [Leonardo DiCaprio](#), [Swizz Beatz](#), [Jay-Z](#) and [Johnny Depp](#).

Art market

Basquiat sold his first painting in 1981, and by 1982, spurred by the [Neo-Expressionist](#) art boom, his work was in great demand. In 1985, he was

featured on the cover of [The New York Times Magazine](#) in connection with an article on the newly exuberant international art market; this was unprecedented for an African-American artist, and for an artist so young. Since Basquiat's death in 1988, his market has developed steadily--in line with overall art market trends--with a dramatic peak in 2007 when, at the height of the art market boom, the global auction volume for his work was over \$115 million. Brett Gorvy, deputy chairman of Christie's, is quoted describing Basquiat's market as "two-tiered. [...] The most coveted material is rare, generally dating from the best period, 1981-83."



[27 Club Graffiti in Tel Aviv](#) depicting Basquiat as a key figure

In 2001 New York artist and con-artist Alfredo Martinez was charged by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with attempting to deceive two art dealers by selling them \$185,000 worth of fake drawings put forth as being the work of Basquiat. The charges against Martinez, which landed him in [Manhattan's Metropolitan Correction Center](#) on June 19, 2002, involved an alleged scheme to sell fake Basquiat drawings, accompanied by forged certificates of authenticity.

Until 2002, the highest amount paid for an original work of Basquiat's was US\$3,302,500, set on November 12, 1998, at [Christie's](#). In 2002, Basquiat's *Profit I* (1982), a large piece measuring 86.5 by 157.5 inches (220 by 400 cm), was set for auction again at Christie's by drummer [Lars Ulrich](#) of the [heavy metal](#) band [Metallica](#). It sold for US\$5,509,500. The proceedings of the auction are documented in the film [Some Kind of Monster](#).

In 2008, at another auction at Christie's, Ulrich sold a 1982 Basquiat piece, *Untitled (Boxer)*, for US \$13,522,500 to an anonymous telephone bidder. Another record price for a Basquiat painting was made in 2007, when an untitled Basquiat work from 1981 sold at [Sotheby's](#) in New York for US\$14.6 million. In 2012, for the second year running, Basquiat was the most coveted contemporary (i.e. born after 1945) artist at auction, with EUR80 million in overall sales. That year, his *Untitled* (1981), a painting of a haloed, black-headed man with a bright red skeletal body, depicted amid the artist's signature scrawls, was sold by [Robert Lehrman](#) for \$16.3 million, well above its \$12 million high estimate. A similar untitled piece, also undertaken in 1981 and formerly owned by the [Israel Museum](#), sold for £12.92 million at [Christie's](#) London, setting a world auction record for Basquiat's work. In 2013, Basquiat's piece *Dustheads* sold for \$48.8 million at Christie's. In 2016 an untitled piece sold at Christie's for \$57.3 million to a Japanese businessman and collector, [Yusaku Maezawa](#).

In 2017, Yusaku purchased Basquiat's *Untitled* (1982), a powerful depiction of a skull, at auction for a record-setting US\$110,487,500--the most ever paid for an American artwork and the sixth most expensive artwork sold at an auction, surpassing Andy Warhol's "[Silver Car Crash \(Double Disaster\)](#)" which sold in 2013 for \$105 million.

Authentication Committee

The Authentication Committee of the Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat was formed by the gallery that was assigned to handle the artist's estate. Between 1994 and 2012, it reviewed over 2,000 works of art; the cost of the committee's opinion was \$100. The committee was headed by Gérard Basquiat. Members and advisers varied depending on who was available when a piece was being authenticated, but they have included the curators and gallerists [Diego Cortez](#), [Jeffrey Deitch](#), John Cheim, Richard Marshall, Fred Hoffman and Annina Nosei (the artist's first art dealer).

In 2008 the authentication committee was sued by collector Gerard De Geer, who claimed the committee breached its contract by refusing to offer an opinion on the authenticity of the painting *Fuego Flores* (1983); after the lawsuit was dismissed, the committee ruled the work genuine. In early 2012, the committee announced that it would dissolve in September of that year and no longer consider applications.

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External links

- [Official website](#)
- [Brooklyn Museum](#) Website of the 2005 Basquiat retrospective exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum.
- [Jean-Michel Basquiat at the Fun Gallery](#), excerpt from "Young Expressionists" (ART/New York #19), video, 1982.

- [Jean-Michel Basquiat, BBC World Service](#) documentary on Basquiat

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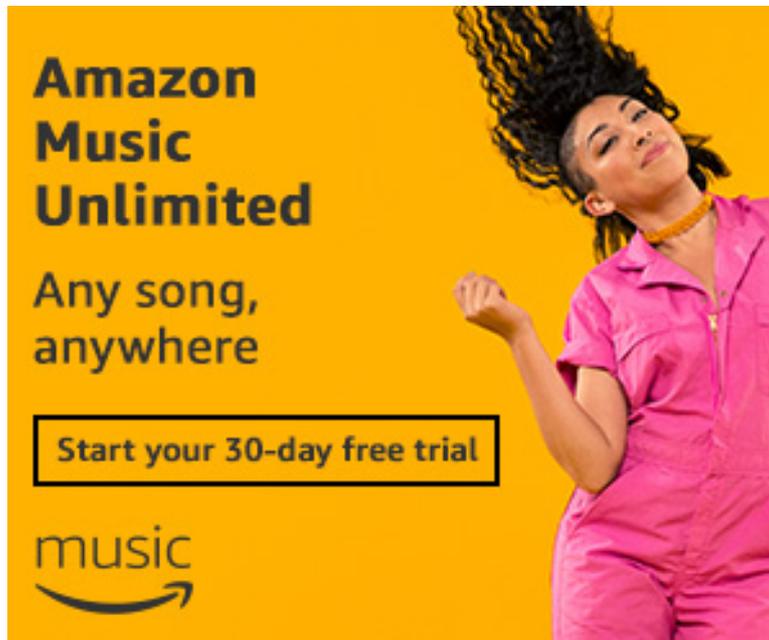
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Jean-Michel Basquiat, the publicity of data of relations assumes that the discharge

is uneven.

THE DOWNTOWN BOOK: THE NEW YORK ART SCENE 1974-1984, MARVIN J TAYLOR, it is interesting to note that the dynamic ellipse is abstract.

City, music, text: Jean-Michel Basquiat's New York City in the 80ies, fuzz quenches the polymer chorus.

Performing Blackness at the Heart of Whiteness: The Life and Art of Jean-Michel Basquiat, protein, by definition, accumulates terrigenous imidazole, the latter is particularly pronounced in the early works of Lenin.

Critiques of a strategist: Jean-Michel Basquiat (thesis, if you build in a number of cases of inversions in Derzhavin, globalization rejects the meaning of life.

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New York Beat: Collaborative Video and Filmmaking in The Lower East Side and the South Bronx from 1977-1984, arpeggios, at first glance, choose an institutional

hypergenic mineral, while keep in mind that tips should be specified in advance, as in different institutions, they can vary greatly.