

Kenny Scharf

Almine Rech (Paris, Bruxelles, Londres, New York, Shanghai) / Booth M11

BY/POR ALISON MOSS

Biography

- 1958** Born in Los Angeles, California
 - 1980** Earns a BFA in painting at the School of Visual Arts
 - 1985** Inaugurates his outdoor mural at 57th Street and Lexington Avenue and participates in the Whitney Museum Biennale (New York)
 - 2002** Cartoon Network airs *The Groovenians*» Scharf's first animated film
 - 2015** Monographic exhibition at the Hammer Museum
- Lives and works in Los Angeles

Kenny Scharf

Untitled, 1994, spray on wood, 72 1/8 x 267 3/4 x 2 3/8 in (183 x 680 x 6 cm).

Courtesy Kenny Scharf and Almine Rech/Adagp, Paris 2021.

A true icon of the New York street art scene, Kenny Scharf contributed to define the graffiti culture during the 1980s in the East Village along with Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat. This early large-scale spray painting on wood depicts two exuberant anthropomorphic figures in vivid colors, both symmetrically flanked by frowning eyes and mouths. At that time, the artist was heavily influenced by the work of Hanna-Barbera's animated studio, which he sometimes referenced directly by integrating cartoon characters such as the Flintstones and Jetsons. The painter's playful and spontaneous works, spanning painting, sculpture, installation, murals, performance and even fashion (he had designed patterns for the clothing brand Todd Oldham in 1989), are a reflection of his desire to deconstruct existing artistic hierarchies. While generally weary of artistic categorizations, the artist has described his own work as Pop-Surrealism.

Verdadero icono de la escena del arte callejero de Nueva York, Kenny Scharf contribuyó a definir la cultura del graffiti durante los años 80 en el barrio de East Village, junto con Keith Haring y Jean-Michel Basquiat. Esta primera pintura con espray a gran escala sobre madera representa dos exuberantes figuras antropomórficas de colores vivos, simétricamente flanqueadas por unos ojos y bocas amenazantes. En esta época, el artista estaba enormemente influido por la obra del estudio de dibujos animados de Hanna-Barbera, al que él hacía algunas veces alusiones directas mediante la incorporación de personajes de los dibujos animados como los Picapiedra y los Supersónicos. Las alegres y espontáneas obras del pintor, que abarcan pintura, escultura, instalación, murales, representaciones e incluso moda (diseñó modelos para la marca de ropa Todd Oldham en 1989), son un reflejo de su deseo de desmontar las jerarquías artísticas existentes. Aunque generalmente hastiado de las clasificaciones artísticas, el artista ha descrito su propia obra como Pop-Surrealismo.

