ALMINE RECH

Kenny Scharf
Emotional

Jun 29 — Oct 8, 2025 | Modern Art Museum (MAM), Shanghai, China

The Modern Art Museum (MAM) Shanghai announces Kenny Scharf's largest, most extensive solo exhibition to date globally from June 29 to October 8. Spanning five decades of Scharf's work, Emotional examines the artist's playful yet meticulous exploration of emotions through a vivid, cartoonish iconography. It features more than 120 multi-disciplinary artworks, including new pieces, displayed across three floors of the museum. At the center of the visitor experience is Kenny Scharf's Beach Club, an installation that transports guests into the artist's California beachside utopia.

Curated by Shai Baitel, Artistic Director of MAM Shanghai, the exhibition showcases Scharf's pioneering street art aesthetic and distinctive visual language. Featuring exaggerated faces and expressive forms, his work connects ancient pictographic languages and modern emoji culture. Long before emojis emerged to fill the emotional gap in digital communication, Scharf developed a visual language that captures the complexities of humanity's relationship with expression and feeling.

The show includes paintings, drawings, sculptures, and other objects organized into groups of emotions: Anger, Disgust, Fear, Happiness, Sadness, and Awe. The exhibition provides the audience with a glimpse into emotional expression through art history, focusing on Kenny Scharf's approach to this part of human nature.

"Through 'Emotional', we wanted to create an immersive and empathetic journey that could resonate in a digitally mediated world," says Kenny Scharf. "The exhibition features decades of my work — most of which feels as relevant today as it did when I initially created it — and I'm thrilled for the audience in China to enter into my world for the first time. We've engineered a universe that brings complex realities and emotions together into one central experience."

"The exhibition at MAM Shanghai spans decades of my work– each one as relevant today as it was when I first created them," says Kenny Scharf. "I'm thrilled to bring this depth of emotion, play, and thought to the audience in China.

Shai Baitel, Artistic Director of MAM Shanghai says. "Kenny Scharf is a giant whose art and influence cannot be overstated. He is one of the most distinctive artists today, having started alongside Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring. The exhibition, with the inclusion of the immersive Beach Club, creates a transformative experience for visitors and brings the power of Scharf's exuberant pop-art fantasy to life in the heart of Shanghai."