KEITH HARING: DRAWING A POLITICAL LINE FOR THE PUBLIC

DESCRIPTION
In this two-part lesson, students will explore the iconic style that artist and activist Keith Haring employed to challenge public perceptions of art and the role of an artist in society.

OBJECTIVES
Evaluate and Identify: Students will evaluate multiple paintings and drawings by Keith Haring, identifying the lexicon of symbols he created throughout his body of work.

Observe and Analyze: Students will observe how the use of consistent symbolism in Haring’s body of work develops a narrative, and they will analyze how this narrative communicates the artist’s perception of his times.

PART I (approx. 60 mins.)

Focus Questions
• Who is art for, and how does an artist create a lexicon?
• How do artists express the times in which they live?

Materials
• Printed postcard with self-portrait and featured Keith Haring quote (one for each student)
• Eight images of Haring artworks (poster-sized prints)
• Appendix A: Keith Haring Expert Group Observation Worksheet and graphic organizer (one per student)

Vocabulary
• lexicon: The vocabulary of a particular language, field, social class, person, and so forth
• semiotics: The study of signs and symbols as elements of communicative behavior
• spokesperson: A person who speaks for another or for a group
• symbolism: The practice of representing ideas or concepts with symbols, or of investing objects with a symbolic meaning or character
Steps

DO NOW (5 mins.)

1. The teacher distributes the postcards, then tells the students, “This is a self-portrait of Keith Haring.”
   The teacher asks:
   - What do you notice about this self-portrait?
   - What is the artist’s perception of himself?
   - Who is he speaking for? What might he be saying? Who might he be speaking to?
   - If you were to draw your self-portrait, how would you represent yourself?

   The teacher asks the students to Think-Pair-Share a response to these questions. Students share their responses in a brief whole-class discussion.

2. The teacher and students choral read Haring’s quote, featured on the postcard:

   An artist is a spokesman for a society at any given point in history. His language is determined by his perception of the world we all live in. He is a medium between “what is” and “what could be.”

   —Keith Haring

INTRODUCE THE LESSON (15 mins.)

1. The teacher tells the students that Keith Haring created a series of symbols that he used repeatedly in his artwork. “For Haring, these symbols were a lexicon that he used to communicate ideas, and the symbolism in his art creates a narrative. Over the next two class meetings, we will analyze and explore the semiotics of Keith Haring’s work, analyzing his perception of the world we live in and the issues he chose to address as a spokesperson for his society.”

2. Students watch a short video clip of Haring creating an iconic subway piece: “From the Archives: Keith Haring Was Here”: www.youtube.com/watch?v=W04j0Je01wQ.

3. The teacher tells the students: “In the video, Keith says, ‘You don’t have to know anything about art to look at it or appreciate it.’ Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?”

   The teacher takes a thumbs-up pulse check, and then students can volunteer to share their reasoning.

4. The teacher draws a few commonly used symbols (such as a peace sign or a dove) on the board and asks: “What do these symbols mean? How do you know that?”

EXPERT GROUP ACTIVITY (30 mins.)

1. The teacher tells the students: “We know what symbols mean when we have a commonly accepted definition of what they stand for. Now you will have a chance to work in small groups to become experts on the symbolism that Haring used in his artwork. We have eight examples of Haring’s art, each representing a different theme from his body of work. You will look at one artwork, and then you will have ten minutes to sketch that focus piece on your worksheet, noting any symbols you see and explaining what you believe they may stand for. Then you will return to your expert group to share your observations and to take notes on the artworks you did not analyze. After comparing ideas and sketches, your group will create a ‘symbol dictionary’ for Haring’s work.”
2. Activity directions:

- Assign a number to each of the eight samples of Haring's body of work.
- Break the students up into groups of eight. Then assign each student in each group a number from one to eight.
- The students who are numbered “one” gather around artwork number one; the students numbered “two” gather around artwork number two, and so forth. (For example: in a class of twenty-four students, three students would gather around each piece of art. In a class of thirty-two, four students would gather around each piece of art.)
- Distribute Appendix A. Instruct students to sketch and then describe what they see in their focus artwork.
- After each student has completed a sketch and a written observation, he or she talks with the other seven members of their expert group.
- Every student takes turns teaching the others about what he or she saw while the others take notes and complete their worksheet for each of the eight pieces of art.
- After all eight students have instructed the group and guided one another through completion of the worksheet for each artwork, the group decides what they think the symbols in the artwork represent.
- As a group, they then complete the symbol dictionary for Haring's work, based on their personal interpretations.

**REFLECTION** (10 mins.)

Students respond to selected questions (orally or in writing):

- What do you believe each symbol could represent?
- How does your understanding of the symbols help you “read” the message of the artwork?
- What is the unifying theme of all these images?
- Haring was known as an activist artist. Using your understanding of his lexicon, what do you think he stood for?
- What more would you need to know in order to fully understand his work? Why?

**HOMEWORK EXTENSION ACTIVITY**

Create your own lexicon of symbols

Keith Haring said: “I paint images that are derivative of my personal exploration. I leave it up to others to decipher them, to understand their symbolism and implications. I am merely the middleman.”

- If you could draw your own artistic life map using symbols to represent your experiences, what would it look like?
- What lexicon would you create for your life?
- How does your lexicon intersect with important historical, political, and social events that might shape your choice of symbolism?
PART II (approx. 60 mins.)

Focus Questions

- If what the artist creates is how the artist influences society, what is the role of an artist in society?
- What is the artist’s responsibility to society?

Materials

- Contextual readings
- Eight images of Keith Haring’s artworks (poster-sized prints)
- Appendix B: worksheet including Haring’s common symbols and definitions (one for each student)
- Appendix C: political themes labels (one for each student)
- Tape, scissors, and poster paper for gallery walk
- Access to YouTube, projector, and computer
- Drinks and snacks for gallery walk (optional)

Vocabulary

- antagonist: A person who is opposed to, struggles against, or competes with another; an opponent or adversary
- propaganda: information, ideas, or rumors deliberately and widely spread to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution, nation, or other entity
- provocateur: a person who provokes trouble or causes dissension or the like; an agitator

Steps

DO NOW (5 mins.)

The teacher reads quote below while students participate in a quick, silent gallery walk activity to refresh their memory of Haring’s body of work:

I don’t think art is propaganda; it should be something that liberates the soul, provokes the imagination and encourages people to go further. It celebrates humanity instead of manipulating it.

—Keith Haring

LEARNING CENTERS (30 mins.)

NOTE: This activity allows teachers to design a center for each supplemental text. Students should identify the main ideas and important details described in each text. If the teacher so chooses, these can be accompanied or augmented by short video segments or images pulled from the Internet, or the teacher can simply highlight and read aloud passages of other texts.

1. The teacher tells the students: “Keith Haring believed that an artist should use his or her perception to play the role of an antagonist or provocateur in society. Today, we will look at eight pieces of artwork by this activist artist. First, we will read about some political and historical issues influential in the late ‘70s and ‘80s and consider how Haring addressed these themes in his art. After creating a context for his artwork, we will revisit the artworks you see here and attempt to pair each piece with a theme we think it addresses, based on our understanding of Haring’s use of symbolism to create a political narrative.”
2. Student centers: These are thematic stations with historical supplementals, and should be set up as follows:
   - Art in Public Spaces
   - Technology and Media
   - Street Art
   - Hip-Hop Culture
   - Reaganomics and Capitalism
   - AIDS: The Rise of a Movement
   - Apartheid and Nelson Mandela
   - Nuclear Concerns

**FINAL GALLERY WALK** (10 mins.)

1. The teacher tells the students: “In addition to your student-created symbol dictionaries that you completed yesterday, you have a worksheet that lists some commonly agreed-upon meanings of Haring’s most frequently used symbols. Now you also have background information on the time period in which Haring was creating his art. You will use all three of these tools to complete a second gallery walk.”

2. Distribute Appendix C.

3. The teacher tells the students: “Take the list of themes I have just distributed and match each theme to one piece of art that you believe it is meant to represent. Tape it to the wall. Then justify your reasoning with a discussion of the symbolism you see in the art.”

4. Model how art patrons discuss artwork in a gallery show. This discussion can happen organically, as if students were patrons of a New York show of Haring’s work.

**ROLE-PLAYING EXTENSION**

For a fun experiential twist, provide drinks and snacks, play 1980s hip-hop, and so forth during the gallery walk.

**REFLECTION** (5 mins.)

Students respond to the questions below (orally or in writing):
   - How does an artist become political without using art as propaganda?
   - What is the relationship among the artist, access, and consumption of art?
   - How does this notion relate to public space? Public art?
   - What did this artist live and experience that shaped his art?

**LESSON EVALUATION** (10 mins.)

At the close of the lesson, the teacher asks the class to respond, either in writing or orally, to the questions below:
   - If you were an artist, what would be important to you?
   - What would you say through your art?
HOMEWORK EXTENSION

Choose one idea or issue of our time that you would like to communicate to an audience. Then create a piece of art, using symbols to communicate your message.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

ELA and Literacy in Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration, 1c and d
Students will pose and respond to specific questions around the central theme and review key ideas demonstrating understanding of multiple perspectives.

Reading Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details, 1 and 2
Students will cite textual evidence and identify a central idea.

Reading Informational Text: Craft and Structure, 5
Students will analyze how a particular element of a text fits into the overall structure to contribute to the development of ideas.

Reading Informational Text: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, 7
Students will integrate information presented in different media or formats to determine a theme or central idea.
KEITH HARING
THE POLITICAL LINE

KEITH HARING Quotes and Lesson Vocabulary
STUDENT RESOURCE SHEET

VOCABULARY

antagonist
a person who is opposed to, struggles against, or competes with another; an opponent or adversary

lexicon
the vocabulary of a particular language, field, social class, person, and so forth

propaganda
information, ideas, or rumors deliberately and widely spread to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution, nation, or other entity

provocateur
a person who provokes trouble, causes dissension, or the like; an agitator

semiotics
the study of signs and symbols as elements of communicative behavior

spokesperson
a person who speaks for another or for a group

symbolism
the practice of representing things with symbols, or of investing things with a symbolic meaning or character

QUOTES BY KEITH HARING

“An artist is a spokesman for a society at any given point in history. His language is determined by his perception of the world we all live in. He is a medium between ‘what is’ and ‘what could be.’"

“I paint images that are derivative of my personal exploration. I leave it up to others to decipher them, to understand their symbolism and implications. I am merely the middleman.”

“I don’t think art is propaganda; it should be something that liberates the soul, provokes the imagination and encourages people to go further. It celebrates humanity instead of manipulating it.”
### Keith Haring Expert Group Observation Worksheet

#### 1. Sketch of the Artwork

**Written Description of the Artwork**

I notice

__________________________________________________________________________.

There are

__________________________________________________________________________.

Some symbols the artist used are

__________________________________________________________________________.

I believe these symbols represent

__________________________________________________________________________.

#### 2. Sketch of the Artwork

**Written Description of the Artwork**

I notice

__________________________________________________________________________.

There are

__________________________________________________________________________.

Some symbols the artist used are

__________________________________________________________________________.

I believe these symbols represent

__________________________________________________________________________.

#### 3. Sketch of the Artwork

**Written Description of the Artwork**

I notice

__________________________________________________________________________.

There are

__________________________________________________________________________.

Some symbols the artist used are

__________________________________________________________________________.

I believe these symbols represent

__________________________________________________________________________.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Sketch of the Artwork</th>
<th>Written Description of the Artwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I notice</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>There are</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Some symbols the artist used are</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I believe these symbols represent</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Sketch of the Artwork</th>
<th>Written Description of the Artwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I notice</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>There are</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Some symbols the artist used are</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I believe these symbols represent</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Sketch of the Artwork</th>
<th>Written Description of the Artwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I notice</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>There are</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Some symbols the artist used are</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I believe these symbols represent</strong> ______________________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sketch of the Artwork</td>
<td>Written Description of the Artwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I notice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some symbols the artist used are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe these symbols represent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Sketch of the Artwork</th>
<th>Written Description of the Artwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I notice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some symbols the artist used are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe these symbols represent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Sketch of the Artwork</th>
<th>Written Description of the Artwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I notice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some symbols the artist used are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe these symbols represent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sketch of the Artwork</td>
<td>Written Description of the Artwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I notice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some symbols the artist used are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe these symbols represent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. Sketch of the Artwork</th>
<th>Written Description of the Artwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I notice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some symbols the artist used are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe these symbols represent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After reviewing the group's sketches and observations, we have come up with the following definitions of the symbols used by Keith Haring as part of his artistic lexicon.

**Keith Haring Symbol Dictionary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Definition or Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Example:</em> $</td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Definition or Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Round lines and lines around figures indicate movement. Short, straight lines indicate sound—for example, the barking dog. A line around a figure indicates energy: physical, auditory, spiritual, or sexual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>The characters in Haring’s work; generally, they represent people and players in society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barking dog</td>
<td>The “family dog” tag is, aside from the radiant baby, Haring’s most famous tag. Generally does not have explicit symbolism, though sometimes indicates action or suspicion. The dog character, who sometimes is a standing figure (seemingly combined with a human form), can represent authoritarian government, abuse of power, police states, and oppressive regimes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>A reference to organized religion, of which Haring was extremely skeptical and generally regarded with suspicion. The upside-down cross also appears in Haring’s work and is an anti-Christian symbol from art history—the cross of St. Peter, who was crucified upside-down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Naturally, represents love or individuality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick</td>
<td>Usually represents power and authority. It can also be a source of energy. Some art historians believe the stick may be connected to the artist’s paintbrush, but it does not literally represent this object in the narratives of the drawings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVs</td>
<td>Represent mass media and technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyramids</td>
<td>Refer to an ancient past and are also connected to the hieroglyphic-like movements of the &quot;electric boogie&quot; in hip-hop dance, which Haring often depicted his figures performing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFOs</td>
<td>Represent a kind of cosmic energy that can take on many forms. Haring himself said that this had no single meaning. The UFO suggests a dystopian future and supernatural forces, and also may be picking up on themes of outer space and science fiction in hip-hop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Definition or Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upside-down figures</td>
<td>Human figures depicted upside-down are usually B-boys and B-girls, the dancers of hip-hop, doing the iconic move in which they spin on their head. Figures contorting in backbends or jumps are probably also depictions of break dancers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiant baby</td>
<td>The crawling baby, with lines emanating from around its body, is known as the “radiant baby”—Keith Haring’s main tag, logo, or the symbol that represented him. Haring explained the nature of this symbol as representing youthful innocence, purity, goodness, and potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-eyed face</td>
<td>Usually represents greed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>Represents capitalism and consumerism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink triangle</td>
<td>Not only a symbol for Keith Haring himself, but also a symbol of gay pride and identification. In Haring’s work, it is also associated with AIDS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monsters, snakes, and bats</td>
<td>These scary presences in Haring’s work generally connote hellishness, fear, horror, or death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairs or stepped pyramids</td>
<td>Entrances, usually to places of fear or terror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollar signs</td>
<td>Capitalism, greed, and money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disney characters, e.g., Cruella de Vil and Mickey Mouse</td>
<td>Haring had a complicated relationship to Disney, so these representations are neither wholly praising nor indicting. Generally, they refer to mass media consumption and popular culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures with holes in their bodies</td>
<td>Haring notes in his journals that he first imagined a figure with a hole in his body just after the assassination of John Lennon. There is no strict symbolism here, but this figure may suggest violence and spirituality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEITH HARING AND THE POLITICAL LINE: AN INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVISM IN ART

DESCRIPTION

In this two-part lesson (consisting of two sixty-minute meetings), students will explore the role of semiotics in art. Specifically, students will explore Keith Haring’s use of symbols in his drawings and paintings to communicate his political views to his audience.

OBJECTIVES

• To evaluate multiple works of Keith Haring, identifying the catalogue of symbols that he created throughout his body of work
• To identify the use and function of symbols in works of visual art that express a political viewpoint
• To discuss the role of the artist in raising the political awareness of his or her audience

PART I: WHAT IS SEMIOTICS IN ART? (approx. 60 mins.)

Materials

• Image of Haring’s self-portrait: a postcard for each student
• Computer, projector, YouTube access
• Graphic Organizer: Introducing Keith Haring
• Six poster-sized images of key Haring artworks

Vocabulary

• symbolism
• semiotics
• signifier
• signified
• denotation
• connotation
• lexicon
• spokesperson
Steps

DO NOW

(10 mins.)

Teacher distributes graphic organizer (“Introducing Keith Haring”) and postcard (with image of Keith Haring's self-portrait) to each student. After studying the postcard, students write in response to the following questions in the space provided on the graphic organizer:

1. This picture is a self-portrait. The artist Keith Haring drew himself. Based on this picture, what do you think he wanted you to know about him? Does his picture hold any clues as to what he might be like?

2. If you were going to draw your own self-portrait, what would you like the picture to reveal about you? Explain and/or draw yourself.

After 5 minutes, students share their responses with a peer. Then peers share their impressions in a brief whole-class discussion.

(15 mins.)

Teacher explains to students that over the next two class meetings they are going to learn about Keith Haring, a famous artist who died young, but whose artwork made a significant impact on the world during his lifetime. Then the teacher takes the following steps:

1. Teacher directs students to second section of graphic organizer, “Viewing Guide.” Students will answer these questions as they watch the brief film clip that follows.

2. Teacher shows students brief film clip, “From the Archives: Keith Haring Was Here” (3:21), about Keith Haring: www.youtube.com/watch?v=W04j0Je01wQ.

Questions:

- The commentator says that “opportunity for Haring is a blank advertising poster.” What does this mean? How is a blank advertising poster in the subway an opportunity for the artist? Explain.
- In the video, Keith Haring says, “You don’t have to know anything about art to appreciate it. . . . There aren’t any hidden secrets or things you’re supposed to understand.” What does he mean?

Students briefly share their written responses with a partner.

NOTE: Students will read a brief biography of Keith Haring for homework. Teachers with more time may opt to begin Part 1 with a K-W-L chart. Ask students what they know about the 1980s in terms of popular culture, the arts, government, and world affairs.
SIGNS AND SYMBOLS: A LOOK AT SEMIOTICS (35 mins.)

This activity requires that the teacher post each of the Haring images around the classroom for a “gallery walk.” Note that the texts for each image are not added until Part II. For now, students encounter the artworks on their own terms, with minimal context.

Students continue to the Signs and Symbols section of the graphic organizer. Teacher introduces students to key terms:

- **semiotics**
- **signifier**
- **signified**
- **denotation**
- **connotation**
- **lexicon**

Teacher explains definition of **semiotics** in plain terms:

- The study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation
- An investigation of how meaning is made through language and iconography

The teacher explains that the most basic way to understand semiotics is to recall the difference between **denotation** and **connotation**.

Working in pairs, students complete the table “Signifier and Signified” in the third section of the organizer. In anticipation of their first in-class gallery walk, students remain in their pairings.

Still in pairs, students take their first gallery walk. As students study each of the images, they make quick sketches of one item (figure, shape, object) from each artwork in the fourth section of the organizer, “Keith Haring's Art: A First Look.” As they stop to view each image, students discuss and write down their associations with the iconography they have selected.

(Closing minutes)

Assign homework. Inform students that they will return to the art in the second part of the lesson. For homework, they will read and annotate a brief biography of Keith Haring, and then respond to questions accompanying the reading. Leave the artwork images on the walls for the following day’s gallery walk.

**Optional Exit Ticket**

In the video, the commentator says that Haring’s drawings are “all different, but all the same—in certain ways.” Given what you’re discovering about signs and symbols, what does this mean?
PART II: WHAT IS THE ARTIST’S ROLE IN SOCIETY? WHAT ARE HER RESPONSIBILITIES? WHAT ARE HIS LIMITATIONS?  (approx. 60 mins.)

Materials

• Graphic Organizer: Introducing Keith Haring
• Eight images of key Haring artworks, poster-sized
• Eight summaries of political issues prominent in Haring’s artwork
• Drawing paper
• Colored pencils or markers

Vocabulary

• symbolism
• lexicon
• spokesperson
• political agency

Steps

DO NOW (10 mins.)

Continuing with the graphic organizer (“Introducing Keith Haring”), students respond to the following quote by answering the questions below:

An artist is a spokesman for a society at any given point in history. His language is determined by his perception of the world we all live in. He is a medium between “what is” and “what could be.”

—Keith Haring

• What does it mean to be a spokesperson for society? Can you think of any people who speak for the concerns of many?
• Interpret the final sentence in the quote: what does it mean to be a medium between “what is” and “what could be”?
GALLERY WALK AND RESPONSE TO HARING (25 mins.)

Working in the same pairs, students revisit each artwork. This time, images are accompanied by texts, providing context for Haring’s art. Texts and images are paired as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of artwork by Keith Haring</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>Untitled</em>, October 1982</td>
<td>Reaganomics and Consumerism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <em>Untitled (Apartheid)</em>, 1984</td>
<td>Apartheid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <em>Untitled (Subway Drawing)</em>, 1984</td>
<td>Political Art in Public Spaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each image and set of readings, students answer two questions in the organizer (“Introducing Keith Haring”).

(25 mins.)

Recalling the question about Keith Haring’s concerns if he were alive today, students use Haring’s iconography to create their own artworks. Encourage them to pick a current social issue and to illustrate this issue using Haring’s style.

Optional Exit Ticket
What does it mean to be a spokesperson for your society? What would you say? How would you express yourself?
COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Reading Standards for Informational Text, 6-12

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Writing Standards, 6-12

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics of texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
Introducing Keith Haring

PART I: WHAT IS SEMIOTICS IN ART?

DO NOW

DIRECTIONS  Study the self-portrait of the artist Keith Haring and respond to the following questions:

1. This picture is a self-portrait that the artist Keith Haring painted of himself. Based on this picture, what do you think he wanted you to know about him? Does his picture hold any clues as to what he might be like?

2. If you were going to draw your own self-portrait, what would you like the picture to reveal about you? Explain and/or draw yourself.
VIEWING GUIDE

DIRECTIONS  Keith Haring is a famous artist who died young, but his artwork made a significant impact on the world during his lifetime. After viewing the brief film clip “From the Archives: Keith Haring Was Here,” answer the following questions:

3. The commentator says that “opportunity for Haring is a blank advertising poster.” What does this mean? How is a blank advertising poster in the subway an opportunity for the artist? Explain.

4. In the video, Keith Haring says, “You don't have to know anything about art to appreciate it. . . . There aren't any hidden secrets or things you're supposed to understand.” What does he mean?
**SIGNS AND SYMBOLS**

**DIRECTIONS** Working with a peer, complete the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word or image</th>
<th>Signifier (Denotation = surface or literal meaning)</th>
<th>Signified (Connotation = associations or deeper meanings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong></td>
<td>Heart: A traditional shape that is pointed at one end and indented at the other.</td>
<td>Affection, love, romance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong></td>
<td>Rose: The fragrant flower of a prickly bush or shrub</td>
<td>Love, beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your turn:</td>
<td>Television: An electronic system of sending images and sounds by a wire or through space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your turn:</td>
<td>Mushroom Cloud: A massive, mushroom-shaped cloud of smoke and debris created after a nuclear weapon explosion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your turn:</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**KEITH HARING'S ART: A FIRST LOOK**

**DIRECTIONS** Working with a peer, complete the following chart. To do so, study each of the artworks posted throughout the classroom. In the center column, draw one figure, shape, or object in each of the artworks you examine. When you are finished with your drawings, discuss them with your partner. Fill out the right-hand column by brainstorming associations you both make with the images you identified in Haring’s art.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of artwork by Keith Haring</th>
<th>Signifier</th>
<th>Signified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Untitled</em> (Self-Portrait), February 2, 1985</td>
<td>Draw one of the figures, shapes, or objects in the artwork you are examining.</td>
<td>What associations do you make with the thing you drew?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Untitled</em>, October 1982</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Reagan: Ready to Kill</em>, 1980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Andy Mouse</em>, 1985</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Introducing Keith Haring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of artwork by Keith Haring</th>
<th>Signifier</th>
<th>Signified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Untitled (Apartheid), 1984</td>
<td>Draw one of the figures, shapes, or objects in the artwork you are examining.</td>
<td>What associations do you make with the thing you drew?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled (Subway Drawing), 1984</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled, 1982</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untitled, February 3, 1981</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. The commentator says that “opportunity for Haring is a blank advertising poster.” What does this mean? How is a blank advertising poster in the subway an opportunity for the artist? Explain.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Introducing Keith Haring

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF KEITH HARING

DIRECTIONS Read and annotate the text below. As you annotate, write out interesting facts and areas of confusion in the margins. Also, note any words or phrases that are unclear. When you are finished, answer the questions that follow.

Born in 1958, Keith Haring grew up in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. From a very early age, he loved drawing. The illustrations and animation of such figures as Dr. Seuss and Walt Disney captivated him. He learned basic cartooning techniques from his father.

After graduating from high school in 1976, Haring enrolled in the Ivy School of Professional Art in Pittsburgh, a commercial arts school. He soon realized that he had little interest in becoming a commercial graphic artist, and dropped out after two semesters. While in Pittsburgh, Haring continued to study and work on his own. In 1978, he had a solo exhibition of his work at the Pittsburgh Arts and Crafts Center. Later that same year, Haring moved to New York City and enrolled in the School of Visual Arts (SVA). In New York, he encountered an alternative art community that was developing outside the museum system. Inspired by painters, musicians, performance artists, and graffiti writers, he began to organize and participate in exhibitions and performances at Club 57 and other alternative venues.

In 1980, Haring found a way to communicate with the wider audience he desired. He noticed the unused advertising panels covered with matte black paper in a subway station. He began to create drawings in white chalk upon these blank paper panels throughout the subway system. Between 1980 and 1985, he produced hundreds of these public drawings, sometimes creating as many as forty “subway drawings” in one day. His art became familiar to New York commuters, who often would stop to talk with the artist when they encountered him at work. The subway became, as Haring said, a “laboratory” for working out his ideas and experimenting with his simple lines.

Between 1980 and 1989, Haring achieved international recognition as an artist. Though he continued his subway drawings, his artworks were now exhibited in prestigious galleries in New York City and around the world. He also devoted considerable time to public works, which often carried social messages. Through his art, he spoke out against racism, capitalism, homophobia, dictatorship, atomic war, environmental degradation, and the excesses of technology and the mass media. He produced more than fifty public artworks in dozens of cities around the world, many of which were created for charities, hospitals, children’s day care centers, and orphanages.

Haring was diagnosed with AIDS in 1988. In 1989, he established the Keith Haring Foundation as a way of providing funding and imagery to AIDS organizations and children’s programs. During the last years of his life, he spoke out about his own illness to raise awareness about AIDS. He died of AIDS-related complications at the age of thirty-one on February 16, 1990. A memorial service was held on May 4, 1990, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, with over one thousand people in attendance.
Introducing Keith Haring

1. What questions would you like to ask Keith Haring?

2. If Keith Haring were alive today, do you think he’d be happy with U.S.-American society? Why or why not?

3. If Keith Haring were alive today, what issues do you think would most inspire his art?
PART II: WHAT IS THE ARTIST'S ROLE IN SOCIETY?

DO NOW

DIRECTIONS  Read and annotate the following quote, then answer the accompanying questions:

An artist is a spokesman for a society at any given point in history.  
His language is determined by his perception of the world we  
all live in. He is a medium between “what is” and “what could be”.  

—Keith Haring

1. What does it mean to be a spokesperson for society? Can you think of any people who speak for the concerns of many?

2. Interpret the final sentence in the quote: What does it mean to be a medium between “what is” and “what could be”?
Introducing Keith Haring

KEITH HARING: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

DIRECTIONS For homework, you read and annotated a brief biography of the artist. Team up with the partner you worked with yesterday and compare your responses to the biography. Working with your partner, devise two questions you would ask Keith Haring if he were alive today.

1.

2.
**KEITH HARING’S ART: A SECOND LOOK**

**DIRECTIONS** Now that you have gotten some exposure to Keith Haring and his art, visit each image again. Read the texts accompanying each artwork and answer the questions.

**Untitled (Self-Portrait), February 2, 1985**

In this self-portrait, Keith Haring has covered himself in red spots, possibly as a sign of contagion. What was his personal connection with contagion and sickness? What is the societal significance of contagion? Is this self-portrait political? Why or why not?

**Untitled, October 1982**

The economic policy that was called “Reaganomics” proposed to stimulate the economy using a combination of reduced government spending, tax cuts, and limits on government regulation of private businesses. Supporters stressed that the system functioned on the free market. Detractors labeled the policy as trickle-down economics. What does this painting indicate about Haring’s view of Reagan’s economic policy? Explain.
Introducing Keith Haring

**Reagan: Ready to Kill, 1980**

Haring made art by collaging important headlines from the news of the day. This headline—“REAGAN: READY TO KILL”—is provocative, but what is Haring’s message? Explain.

**Andy Mouse, 1985**

In this painting, Haring combines various images: dollar signs, a cartoon mouse, and the face of a famous artist, his friend Andy Warhol. What associations do you make between money and a cartoon mouse? What does this mix of motifs say to you about consumerism and/or capitalism? Explain.

**Untitled (Apartheid), 1984**

In your opinion, what do the two figures (one black, one white) stand for? What does the cross symbolize? Based on this painting, does Haring think that apartheid will continue in South Africa? Explain.
**Untitled (Subway Drawing), 1984**

Haring made artworks with messages, such as this one, that were drawn with chalk in subway stations. How was this similar to graffiti and tagging? What do you make of the impermanence of chalk? Why didn’t the artist use paint—a substance that will last? Finally, why do you think Haring chose to do this kind of art in subway stations?

**Untitled, 1982**

What do you associate with the symbols in this painting? The encircled heart? The cross in the upper right-hand corner? How does the action of the picture—someone is breaking something—unify the symbols to create meaning? What does this image mean to you?

**Untitled, February 3, 1981**

Haring was suspicious of some new technologies, especially ones that had the potential to be destructive. As you read about Three Mile Island, write about any connections you can make between nuclear power and the images in this picture.
The International Struggle to End Apartheid in South Africa

The term “apartheid” means “apartness,” and refers to a system of race-based segregation that was in place in South Africa between 1948 and 1994; white people ruled the country, even though they represented the minority, and blacks the majority. Reminiscent of the Jim Crow laws in the United States that were established in the decades after the Civil War, laws in South Africa allowed the white minority to keep the nonwhite majority out of certain areas. Black people had to carry special papers (passes) and have permission to live and work in particular areas. Persons of different races were not allowed to marry each other, a practice known as miscegenation. Black people could not own land in white areas. They could not vote. Racial segregation had been practiced for centuries in South Africa, but the new policy launched in 1948 was stricter and more systematic.

Apartheid faced strong and constant resistance within South Africa. Two organizations, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the African National Congress (ANC), used tactics such as nonviolent demonstrations, protests, and strikes to resist government policies. Eventually, these organizations formed military groups that organized armed resistance to the pro-apartheid government.

In 1976, thousands of black children from Soweto, a township outside of Johannesburg, participated in a march against apartheid and were met by police violence in the form of tear gas and bullets. International attention on South Africa after this event helped to shatter the illusion that apartheid was a fair and peaceful system. This led the United Nations to impose sanctions on South Africa that year. In 1985, at a time when many political activists around the world were protesting apartheid, the United States and Great Britain imposed their own economic sanctions on the country.

The government authorities imprisoned or executed most resistance leaders in South Africa. Nelson Mandela, a founding member of the military arm of the ANC, was jailed from 1963 to 1990. His imprisonment drew further global attention to the anti-apartheid movement and helped garner popular support for the ANC’s cause. Mandela quickly became the face of the anti-apartheid movement domestically and internationally. In 1994, as a result of government negotiations with the ANC, an interim constitution was established and elections held; Mandela became the first black president of South Africa, forming a multiethnic government to oversee the country’s transitional period. Mandela retired from politics in 1999 and passed away in 2013, at the age of ninety-five; he is considered a symbol of resistance and the fight for social justice all over the world.

In the United States throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, a vibrant anti-apartheid movement developed; the movement received public support from artists such as Keith Haring, who developed iconic images to illustrate the injustice of apartheid. His iconography appeared on posters, T-shirts, and pins to raise awareness of the growing anti-apartheid movement.
Keith Haring and Hip-Hop

This guide examines the relationship between Keith Haring and hip-hop. The culture of hip-hop—the music, dance style, and people—inspired and energized the artist.

A Brief History of Hip-Hop

With Kanye West and 2 Chainz on the radio, it’s hard to imagine a time before hip-hop! But hip-hop was straight up INVENTED in the South Bronx, New York, in the 1970s. As a result of white flight to the suburbs, de-industrialization, and dis-investment in the neighborhood, times were tough, and gangs were getting heated. Local figures like DJ Cool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa decided to build community through music, parties, and hot dogs. The first hip-hop was spun at a neighborhood block party in the summer of 1973, when Cindy Campbell and her brother Herc hosted a bash.

So What Is Hip-Hop?

There are five widely accepted elements of hip-hop:

1. **DJ-ing**: spinning and scratching records, mixing the recorded music of hip-hop.
2. **B-boying / B-girling**: break dancing, the hyper-athletic form of hip-hop dance.
3. **MC-ing**: spitting, flowing, or rhyming, the MC is the poet and lyricist of hip-hop.
4. **Graffiti**: using media like spray paint and chalk to replicate the visual style of hip-hop.
5. **Knowledge**: preserving and passing on knowledge of the world and self. Hip-hop is a vast literature of wisdom, tunes, rhymes, dance, geographies, politics, and art.

Haring and Graffiti

Graffiti were the most beautiful things I ever saw.

—Keith Haring

Haring is most tied to the element of graffiti. Graffiti is **POLITICAL**: it is all about claiming public space by writing YOUR TAG (name or symbol), often taking the shape of large-scale murals. Spray paint started to appear on the subways and walls of New York in the 1970s, around the time that Haring moved there from Philadelphia, in 1978. Haring was just one of many graffiti artists working on the streets and subways. Others included **TAKI 183**, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Fab 5 Freddy, and Futura 2000.
Keith Haring and Hip-Hop

Haring and Dance

Break-dancing was a real inspiration, seeing the kids spinning and twisting around on their heads.

– Keith Haring

Haring loved going to the clubs and watching the B-boys and B-girls dance all night, and you can see the dancers throughout his work. *Untitled (Three Dancing Figures) (1989)* is a circle or cypher of B-boys, and *Red Break Dancer (1985)* represents a B-girl doing a move known as “the bridge” and calls for another dancer to do a flip over her arched body. Some figures do Egyptian-style movements, termed the *electric boogie (1982).* Haring was influenced by the *outer space* theme in early hip-hop hits like Afrika Bambaataa’s “Planet Rock,” and the *electric energy* of dancers also took on a cosmic form in Haring’s drawings, as *UFOs* and *zapping ray beams.*

Haring and Hip-Hop Knowledge

The *realest* part of Haring’s hip-hop practice was his love of knowledge and justice. Haring’s interest in hip-hop was tied to his political activism. “*The Message*” (1982), by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, is one of the first hip-hop rhymes on the theme of social justice. Hip-hop was one of the first racially *integrated* popular forms of art and music, and Keith was in the mix. In his activism, Haring fought for five main causes: *racial equality,* the *environment,* *AIDS awareness,* *nuclear disarmament/peace,* and *avoiding the dangers of greed and capitalism.* Knowledge of self, as in this untitled self-portrait from 1985, is inextricably bound up in knowledge of the world.
Three Mile Island Accident

The Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station (TMI) is a nuclear power plant located on Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania. The TMI accident, which began on March 28, 1979, is the worst commercial nuclear disaster to take place on American soil. This event ignited American fears about nuclear power. People protested nuclear energy throughout the country, and public approval of this power source dropped dramatically.

Nuclear power plants use a water-based cooling system to maintain a safe level of heat in the reactor core. The events at Three Mile Island started when a relief valve, which allowed coolant to escape, failed to close. This open valve allowed water to evaporate from the system, causing the temperature to rise. Instruments in the control room failed to show the valve was still open. The faulty instruments and human communication errors caused much confusion throughout the event. On March 30, radioactive gases began to leak into the environment. After consulting with the federal government, the governor of Pennsylvania requested that pregnant women and children preschool age and younger leave the area within five miles of the power plant. Fearing the effects of radiation, ultimately 140,000 people evacuated the plant’s twenty-mile radius. National media reported on the story, with renowned newsman Walter Cronkite describing the situation as a “horror” that “could get much worse.” To help assure residents and the nation at large, President Carter inspected the power plant on April 1. His visit restored confidence in the safety of the plant and marked the official end of the crisis, although decontamination and safe shutdown would continue for years, and a major overhaul of nuclear safety regulations would result.

Three Mile Island was less than fifty miles from Keith Haring’s childhood home in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. Julia Gruen, Haring’s assistant and today director of the Keith Haring Foundation, recalls that “Haring always made a point about how close he was to Three Mile Island and how scary it was.” Haring participated in the first antinuclear rally, held in Washington, DC, in 1979.

The impact of Three Mile Island still informs the discussion about nuclear power in the United States. Commenting on current American sentiments toward nuclear power, Clyde Haberman wrote the following in the New York Times in 2014:

Yet American attitudes on nuclear power, as measured by opinion polls, are far from irrevocably negative. As TMI faded in collective memory, the popularity of that energy source has waxed and waned, each rise tempered by a new cause for alarm, notably Chernobyl and Fukushima. . . . In the last few years, new [power plants] have been proposed, encouraged by President Obama, who has described nuclear energy as necessary—along with renewable sources like wind and solar—in any plan to wean the country from fossil fuels. The need for swift action would seem greater than ever, given new warnings from a United Nations panel that time is running short for countries to adopt strategies to keep worldwide carbon emissions from reaching intolerable levels.
AIDS and the Rise of a Movement in the 1980s

An entire political movement grew up around the silence of the Reagan administration. The AIDS activist movement took as its call to action “silence equals death” because literally the silence of the Reagan administration was resulting in the deaths of thousands and thousands of gay men in our communities across the country.
—Sue Hyde, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

In June 1981, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a government agency dedicated to protecting public health and safety, reported that five gay men in Los Angeles had developed rare forms of pneumonia and cancer. Within a few days, doctors from around the country were reporting similar cases to the CDC. These discoveries became the first reporting on what is known today as the AIDS epidemic.

By 1982, health care specialists had given the condition a number of names: GRID (gay-related immune deficiency), “gay cancer,” “community-acquired immune dysfunction,” and “gay compromise syndrome.” It soon became clear, though, that AIDS was affecting not just gay men; heterosexual men and women, over half of whom had used intravenous drugs at some point, were getting sick too. The CDC used the term “AIDS” (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) for the first time in September of that year, when it reported that an average of one to two cases of were being diagnosed in the United States every day.

President Reagan was slow to acknowledge the emerging AIDS epidemic. In press briefings at the White House in 1982, journalists asked spokespersons for the president about AIDS. The Administration claimed little or no knowledge of the danger. In fact, President Reagan did not speak publicly about AIDS until 1985—about four years after the disease first appeared.

With the death of film icon Rock Hudson, a gay actor many had assumed was heterosexual, the American public began to pay attention to the potential dangers of AIDS. Even then, though, public response was often unsympathetic to those suffering from the disease, due to commonly held attitudes toward homosexuals and drug users. Public opinion polls revealed homophobic attitudes throughout American society. Some parents successfully urged schools to expel children testing positive for HIV, the virus identified as causing AIDS. People with AIDS lost their jobs with no recourse. Many conservative pundits called for publicizing the names of people with AIDS. A California ballot initiative to require a mass quarantine of those diagnosed as HIV-positive garnered nearly four hundred thousand signatures. Still, President Reagan failed to give a public address on the crisis until 1987. His refusal to acknowledge through public policy the spread of AIDS inspired a political movement.

In the early 1980s, the unifying issue among gay activists and those sympathetic to their cause was government negligence about AIDS. In the early years of the epidemic, public officials and the national media rarely discussed AIDS. The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) formed in 1987, taking as its motto “silence = death,” a slogan that placed blame for the alarming rate of increase of new AIDS cases on the lack of governmental response. By advocating for medical research and legislation to protect the rights of the infirm, ACT UP became a political voice for people living with AIDS.
AIDS and the Rise of a Movement in the 1980s

Throughout the 1980s, many gay activists sought to raise public awareness about the epidemic through art, and enlisted artists such as Keith Haring to participate in such events as Art Against AIDS. In the spring of 1988, artist Keith Haring himself was diagnosed with AIDS.
Reaganomics and Consumerism

Consumerism centers on the idea that personal happiness can be derived from the acquisition or purchase of material goods and products—“stuff.” In discussions of consumerism, questions arise: What does consumerism look like in the United States? Does consumerism promote greed or make individuals less empathetic? Does materialism undermine collective efforts to address such societal problems as poverty?

In the 1980s, President Reagan responded to rising unemployment and inflation with controversial economic policies that his supporters saw as imperative to the health of capitalism in the United States, and that his critics derided as favoring the richest individuals in society. Sometimes collectively called “Reaganomics,” these policies relied on the following strategies: 1) reduction of government spending; 2) reduction in taxes; 3) limits on government regulation of private businesses; and 4) control of the money supply as a way of managing inflation. In sum, Reagan argued that if members of the American business community were allowed to pursue their own self-interests, reduced prices would follow; and if all citizens were to be relieved from excessive taxation, consumers would inject the money back into the economy by spending it, spurring economic growth, and, in theory, widespread prosperity. Opponents called this approach “trickle-down” economics and argued that the benefits of Reaganomics disproportionately accrued to the wealthy.

The successes and failures of Reaganomics are debated to this day. What is more certain is that throughout the 1980s Americans were spending more money on consumer goods than in any previous decade in history. As pop star Madonna parodied consumerism in her hit song “Material Girl,” middle-class Americans had more disposable income for larger homes, private schools, personal computers, and the latest home appliances. In an effort to increase corporate profits, marketers studied demographics and created shopper profiles, as reflected in the following excerpt from the landmark 1984 article in *Fortune*, “What Will the Baby-Boomers Buy Next?:

> With the oldest boomers now approaching 40 and the youngest just leaving college, the generation is entering its prime years of earning—and spending. . . . The boomers are a mouthwatering market . . . because they’re maturing into the most affluent generation the U.S. has ever seen. Not only will they be rich, but the boomers will also spend a greater proportion of their wealth than any previous generation. It all adds up to the hugest consumer market ever.

During Reagan’s first term, critics cited increased poverty and homelessness as signs of a failing economic polity. Supporters of Reaganomics pointed to the drop in poverty by the end of his first term as evidence that the benefits of tax cuts did indeed “trickle down” to the poor. Still, the president’s critics noted that the poverty rate rose in the first year of his second term, implying that the full effect of Reagan’s policies led to an overall increase in poverty. Near the end of his presidency, Reagan told the *New York Times* that many homeless “make it their own choice for staying out there.”

Keith Haring was an outspoken opponent of the negative effects of capitalism and consistently railed against consumerist excess in his art.
Political Art in Public Spaces

Shaped by the radical culture of the 1960s and the horrors of the Vietnam War, Haring had an uncomfortable relationship to the politics of Reagan-era America. He was inherently suspicious of organized power, religion, and political structures, and perceived them as oppressors in his quest for personal freedom. He saw the role of the artist as an antagonist, with a responsibility to speak out against inequity and injustice.

Haring was absolute in his desire for his work and its message to reach as wide an audience as possible. His art was direct and confrontational, and he wanted it to be relevant to everyday life, and hewn from it. The streets of New York were the laboratory for Haring’s first forays into public art with messages for a large audience. Inspired by a variety of artistic traditions—traditional American cartoons, graffiti art, and the propulsive beats of club music and hip-hop culture—Haring produced drawings, collages, sculptures, and paintings on tarpaulin that were equally at home in the studio or the city street.

Subway Drawings

Riding the subway to and from his uptown apartment in New York City, Haring recognized a distinct opportunity to create a unique form of public art infused with political content. Between 1980 and 1985, he made thousands of chalk drawings throughout the New York subway system, creating mischievous, inventive compositions that radiate with energy. Executed on expired advertising panels, each drawing that Haring made on these subway “blackboards” was a kind of performance, carried out with speed and assurance in the moments before a train departed or arrived at the platform. The rapidity of their creation made for distinct, instantly recognizable imagery and a vocabulary of forms that includes barking dogs, winged angels, pulsing TVs, zapping spaceships, and amorphous, multi-limbed figures.

The sheer volume of the drawings distributed throughout the subway system gave them the power of a mass media campaign, even if they were each ephemeral in nature, easily erased or posted over with an incoming advertisement. But these drawings were at once rigorous, accessible, and brimming with political and social commentary.
Mass Media and Technology

As a child, Haring was transfixed by the cartoons of Charles Schulz and Walt Disney, and he eagerly mined imagery from popular culture as subject matter for his art. He was a member of the MTV generation and was attracted to the power and potential of mass media—in particular, television and computer technology—but was equally suspicious of its ability to thwart creativity and individual expression. Paradoxically, Haring also enjoyed his celebrity status and associations with eminent artists such as Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat, and popular musicians and performers such as Grace Jones and Madonna.

Televisions, computer screens, and keyboards populate Haring’s compositions, often standing in as surrogates for the head or brain. Sometimes they have an almost demonic presence, seeming to overrun his compositions. Writing in his journals, Haring warned: “The silicon computer chip has become the new life form. Eventually the only worth of man will be to serve the computer. Are we there? In a lot of ways we are.”
Capitalism and Consumption

Haring was an outspoken opponent of the negative effects of capitalism, and consistently railed against consumerist materialism in his art. Sometimes he handles the topic with an air of contempt, as in the large, circular canvas that depicts a pig devouring a mouthful of squirming human figures. The red, bloodshot eyes, stained yellow teeth, and reversed dollar sign emblazoned on the snout signal the artist’s distaste for the excesses of capitalism.

At other times Haring's response was more playful, as in his painting Andy Mouse, which combines the cartooned form of Mickey Mouse (in bubble gum pink) with the face of Andy Warhol, set against a green background adorned with dollar signs—an explicit reference to the commercial successes enjoyed by both the Walt Disney Company and Andy Warhol.

As Haring's career blossomed in the mid-1980s and he was championed by vanguard art dealers such as Tony Shafrazi, his commercial success was occasionally met with suspicion. He was well aware of the dualistic nature of money: “Money itself is not evil, in fact it can actually be very effective for good if it is used properly . . . [but] it does not make you any better or more useful than any other person.”
Haring: Coming of Age


Keith Haring:

My first real memories of begin attracted to another boy—and realizing I felt a genuine attraction—was at camp. This was when I was a bit older, maybe thirteen or fourteen. He was a light-skinned black boy who became my best friend. We never really did anything, but I was the first time I felt something different. We became inseparable.

Of course, there were girls—you know in the fourth, fifth, or sixth grade. I had obsessions. And there were little parties, and I was always very good at choosing presents for girls—and making cards. There was the whole note-sending thing—writing love notes back and forth. Getting caught with love notes, and breaking up with girls.

But I was mostly with boys, and I discovered my sexuality that way. In Kutztown I had two friends, both younger than me, and their father was a wrestling coach. Well, these two friends and I would spend nights at each other’s homes—and we did things like hugging and rolling around. One of my fondest memories was going with their father, the wrestling coach, to Kutztown College—where he was teaching—and watching him at practice with young college kids. After the wrestling practice, the fellows used to go swimming naked in the college pool, and we’d jump in too, and it was neat swimming in the pool with these hot young wrestlers!

And I remember going to the college dorm one day—and just being there, just the smell of the dorm and seeing these guys walking around with a towel around them—it was one of the earliest and most potent sexual memories. The male thing seemed more interesting to me, and even though I was only eleven or twelve, I was already hanging out with college students, and through them I became more aware of what was happening in the world…
Untitled (Subway Drawing), 1984

Keith Haring believed in and practiced public art. The Subway Drawings, like this one from 1985, are part of Haring's most famous series of publicly installed drawings, which he drew in New York City's underground subway stations during the early 1980s. The drawings were created on the black paper panels used by the Metropolitan Transit Authority to fill empty or transitioning advertising spaces on the subway platform walls. The black-and-white color scheme and consistent size of each Subway Drawing makes this series easily distinguishable from Haring's other colorful paintings and drawings on paper and canvas. He was prolific in the subway, making five to ten thousand drawings between 1980 and 1985. Tony Shafrazi, whose New York gallery represented Haring, remembers the burst of Haring's underground productivity: "In a short time after he arrived in New York at age 20, he practically took over Manhattan with his Subway Drawings, which were an instant series of signs and pictograms that everybody became familiar with."

The Subway Drawings highlight the importance of graffiti practice and style to Haring's work. Spray-painted words and pictures started to pop up on the subways cars and throughout the cityscape of New York in the 1970s, just as Haring arrived there from Philadelphia in 1978. Haring was inspired and heavily influenced by the graffiti he saw around the city: "I was immediately attracted to the subway graffiti on several levels: the obvious mastery of drawing and color, the scale, the pop imagery, the commitment to drawing worthy of risk, and the direct relationship between artist and audience." Haring ran in the circle of notable graffiti artists that included Jean-Michel Basquiat, Fab 5 Freddy, and LA II (Angel Ortiz), to name a few. Fab 5 Freddy was a member of an early Brooklyn-based graffiti crew that gained notoriety for painting in the subways. Basquiat’s tag, “SAMO,” was as famous as Haring’s “radiant baby” tag of a crawling cartoon infant. LA II’s style of writing and tagging was so admired by Haring that he actively sought him out, and although LA II was only a teenager at the time, they collaborated on several graffiti-style works, including Sarcophagus (1983). Although Haring did other graffiti-style work, his Subway Drawings were perhaps his most significant work in this mode, in that their placement on the subway walls put them in direct dialogue with advertisements, movie posters, other graffiti, and the general public passing through the tunnels during their commutes.

Although Haring believed in the political power of public art, making graffiti in public places was risky. He was fined and arrested for “criminal mischief” for drawing in the subway, despite already being a well-known artist. In the early 1980s, New York Mayor Ed Koch waged war on graffiti by putting razor-wire fences and guard dogs around the subway yards and literally whitewashing the train cars with white paint. The stakes were incredibly high for artists working in public spaces: graffiti artist Michael Stewart was brutalized by the New York City Transit Police, and later died in their custody. Haring represents the horrific death of his fellow artist in the painting Michael Stewart—USA for Africa (1985). While Haring's and Basquiat's graffiti work was lauded throughout the art world, many similar works by other (especially non-white) artists were excluded from museums and galleries. Haring eventually stopped creating his Subway Drawings because people, many affiliated with commercial galleries, started to remove the pictures from public installations and sell them, a practice that ran directly counter to Haring's goal of creating “art for everybody.” The making and reception of Haring’s subway pictures are immortalized in his book Art in Transit (1984), a collaboration with photographer Tseng Kwong Chi.
Andy Mouse, 1985

Keith Haring’s Andy Mouse is a fusion of two figures who loom large in Haring’s art: Andy Warhol (1928–1987) and Walt Disney (1901–1966). Warhol, an American pop artist, was both a contemporary and friend to Haring. Haring never met the iconic American animator Walt Disney, but felt Disney’s constant presence in the television programs and books of his childhood. “I consider myself,” Haring wrote, “a perfect product of the space age not only because I was born in the year that the first man was launched into space, but also because I grew up with Walt Disney cartoons.”

One of four children, Haring started drawing as a kid, at the same time he would have been watching Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse films, which had a lasting influence on his art.

Given Haring’s interest in mass media, America, childhood, cartoons, and popular culture, it is not surprising that he was drawn to both Disney and Warhol. The image of Mickey Mouse often appears in Haring’s drawings and paintings among Haring’s original, cartoonlike characters—crawling babies, barking dogs, spaceships, men, and women. Haring’s childlike style of drawing bold lines and bright colors invites comparison with Disney cartoons. However, Haring’s Mickey Mouse is not always the innocent Disney version: the Haring Mickey sometimes has a crazed look in his eyes, is seen dissolving into nervous squiggles and dots, or appears casually masturbating in the corner of a picture.

Haring was also similar to Andy Warhol: they both loved film, media, and celebrity, and often reproduced photographs in bright colors and with cartoonish lines. Warhol, before Haring, created a “pop” style of art that used images of characters from popular culture, Hollywood, and cartoons—Marilyn Monroe, Superman, Santa Claus, Mickey Mouse, Dracula, Donald Duck—in screenprints.

This picture is one of twelve “Andy Mouse” pictures by Haring, in which the image of Mickey Mouse merges with that of Andy Warhol. The Andy Mouse figure retains identifiable features of both the cartoon mouse and the man: Mickey’s ears, tail, shorts, and shoes; and Andy’s iconic hair, glasses, and face. In this work from 1985, the image is repeated six times, imitating Warhol’s famous screenprint style. The dollar signs represent the mass marketing of both Disney and Warhol, representing capitalism in American pop culture.


**Untitled, February 3, 1981**

This untitled drawing in sumi ink on parchment paper is an early work produced by Keith Haring in simple black and white. The drawing is divided into four boxes, like a newspaper comic strip. One expects this simple cartoonlike drawing to end in a punch line. Instead, in its place is mystifying content. Reading the images from left to right, top to bottom, a dark narrative unfolds: a flying saucer zaps a surface, a group of people are both running and ducking for cover (perhaps in fear of the saucer), three figures move forward in a game of leapfrog, and finally, the ground is sucked into the black abyss of an unidentified hole (perhaps part of the saucer).

The flying saucer motif is a recurring image in Haring's iconography. This picture, from 1981, would be an early instance of the flying saucer, which Haring drew for the first time in sumi ink in 1980. Haring describes the appearance of the saucer in the 1980 drawing: “The flying saucers looked like Mexican sombreros, but they were my archetypal vision of what I thought a mythical flying saucer would look like. The saucers were zapping things with an energy ray, which would then endow whatever it zapped with its power. So these zapped things or people or animals would have these rays coming out all around them.”

Like all of Haring’s iconography, there is no singular meaning for the UFO. He said, “I had made these symbols that were nonverbal, but were signs that could have different meanings at different times.” Many of Haring’s symbols have to do with electricity or energy; the saucer represents a kind of cosmic energy that can take on many forms. In this picture, the UFO is sinister: the people flee from it, and it turns into a black hole. In other drawings, however, the cosmic energy of the UFO is positive, zapping electric energy into hip-hop dancers. Haring anticipated and engaged with outer space themes that emerged in early hip-hop hits like “Planet Rock” (1982), by the DJ Afrika Bambaataa, whom Haring heard play at various clubs: “Rock, rock to Planet Rock, don’t stop / You’re in a place where the nights are hot / Where nature's children dance and set a chance / On this Mother Earth, which is our rock.” In Haring’s drawings, his energized dancers perform the Egyptian-style movements of a popular hip-hop dance called the electric boogie. The flying saucer in Haring's art is an early visual form of this aspect of the hip-hop aesthetic.
Reagan: Ready to Kill, 1980

This collage of newspaper clippings is an example of pieces Haring created to look like headlines from the *New York Post*. He snipped words and images from print media and rearranged them to create bizarre, ironic, or humorous imagined headlines. Other collages read, “REAGAN SLAIN BY HERO COP;” “POPE KILLED FOR FREED HOSTAGE;” and “MOB FLEES AT POPE RALLY.” Haring photocopied these collages onto hundreds of flyers and pasted them on lampposts and newsstands. “Because they looked so real,” he writes, “people were forced to confront them. There were completely confused—and the posters really made a mark, because they got into people's consciousness.”

The *Reagan: Ready to Kill* collage also manifests the importance of news and print media to Haring's art practice. According to his friend Kermit Oswald, Haring “got his themes from the newspaper.” Although most of Haring’s art takes up issues of popular culture, current events, justice, health, and society, incorporated into Haring’s iconography of cartoonish figures, animals, UFOs, snakes, dancers, vibrating patterns, crowns, stairs, and babies, these newspaper collages are not as mediated; they are transparent in the way they draw from politics and current events.

This collage’s statement, “REAGAN: READY TO KILL,” is also a pointed political critique. Haring was a critic of the capitalistic greed and violence he saw as resulting from the “trickle-down” economic policies and the aggressive foreign policies of the Reagan administration. Poverty, homelessness, and growing prison populations were seen by many, including Haring, to be the early consequences of “Reaganomics.” By conflating the president with a killer, Haring sharply addressed the policies of an unmitigated pro-capitalistic and militarized society.
OBJECT DESCRIPTIONS

*Untitled, October 1982*

The dog is one of Haring's most recognizable icons, and recurs throughout this exhibition. Here, the dog wields power and presents a physical threat to the figures in his orbit. The artist was suspicious of state power, and this picture could serve as an allegory for any number of political sociopolitical concerns Haring cared about: racism in the United States and South Africa, capitalistic oppression of the poor, or global civil rights abuses of minorities. It is tempting, then, to say that the dog serves as a symbol of the abuse of power in Haring's vocabulary. However, dogs also appear as benign or even happy figures in a variety of other paintings, seen in playful scenes in the company of babies and dancing people [or: dancers], or sometimes engaging in sexually explicit activity.

A large, red figure of a dog dominates this untitled painting from 1982. The dog stands upright, supported by a human-like lower body (unlike the horizontal, rectangular “family dog” of other paintings that walks on all fours). The massive red dog squashes one green human figure underfoot, and takes another flailing green person into the air with its paw. The painting uses a bright color scheme, and the figures are rendered in a cartoonish style, both typical aspects of Haring's work. The viewer can “read” this painting like a comic: motion is represented by the curved lines emanating from the limbs of the figures, and the sound of a bark is indicated by the short, straight lines near the dog’s open mouth.

This painting exhibits the contradiction of style and content inherent in Haring's work: the cheery colors and cartoonish flavor are not necessarily indicative of a cheerful theme. The domination of the red dog-human figure over the two green figures—one upside-down in the air and one pinned to the ground—is a scene of authoritarianism and oppression of the weak by the powerful. Haring's paintings often contain disturbing or sophisticated content rendered in an easy, readable, and enjoyable way. The curator Ralph Melcher describes this “heaven and hell” quality: “A brief overview of [Keith Haring's] work immediately shows that cheerful, happy, optimistic themes by no means predominate, and that even many of the pictures of a basically or at least apparently positive mood possess an undercurrent of a darker nature.”

Like all of the recurring images in Haring's lexicon, the symbol of the dog can have multiple valences and readings, depending on context. As the curator of this exhibition, Dieter Buchhart, writes, “It would be a mistake to believe that all these generic silhouettes of dogs and people in some way suggest the artist's pursuit of standardization.” The complicated nature of Haring's multifaceted symbolism enacts his mission to make political commentary while representing the diversity of individuals, meaning, and experience.
Untitled (Apartheid), 1984

Keith Haring’s art and politics were inextricable from one another. His political ideology scorned discrimination, organized religion, bigotry, racism, state-enforced violence, oppression, and abuses of power. In a journal entry from March 28, 1987, he wrote:

Control is evil. All stories of white men’s “expansion” and “colonization” and “domination” are filled with horrific details of the abuse of power and the misuse of people. I’m sure inside I’m not white. There is no way to stop them, however. . . . I’m glad I’m different. I’m proud to be gay. I’m proud to have friends and lovers of every color. I am ashamed of my forefathers. I am not like them.

Haring’s political ideals were not vague concepts, but, rather, the deeply personal foundation for his political activism. Haring used art to engage in debate and express his political stance.

Haring lived and worked during a historical moment when non-white South Africans lived under the oppressive regime of apartheid, and he would have read about the unjust policies and violence of the white Afrikaner nationalist party there in the news media of the 1980s. Haring joined the international resistance to apartheid with this painting from 1984. A large, black figure is collared and leashed by a smaller white figure in the right corner. The black man clutches a radiant cross, glowing with red energy lines. While Haring’s pictures usually align the cross with oppressive figures, as a criticism of organized religion, here the cross appears in the rare position of being on the side of morality. The motion lines surrounding the black figure suggest movement or struggle, and despite the fact that the figure is kicking the white oppressor, there is no indication of impending release in Haring’s picture. The relative sizes of the two figures correspond to the white minority population’s ruling control over a black majority population in South Africa.

This painting would make a broader impact in 1985, when Haring adapted the image into an anti-apartheid poster. “I also created my Free South Africa poster,” Haring wrote, “which had first been a painting, but the image was strong enough to also make a good poster. It was conceived to make people aware of the problems of apartheid.” A photograph by Tseng Kwong Chi, in the catalogue for this exhibition, shows Haring distributing some of the twenty thousand anti-apartheid posters of this image inscribed with the phrase “Free South Africa” to a crowd in Central Park, New York City, in 1986. This painting, and its subsequent poster form, show how Haring liked to create affordable and distributable versions of his work, to both profitable and political ends.
**Untitled (Self-Portrait), February 2, 1985**

In an exhibition so heavily focused on the specific political issues and subjects Haring examined in his work, this self-portrait stands out. The viewer is invited into the artist's space between the red and black borders that delineate the edges of the canvas. Haring depicts himself as pensive: hair slightly electrified, eyebrows raised, and vision clarified by his signature round-rimmed glasses. He looks out into the world beyond the picture frame. The self-portrait shows an artist whose interiority is activated by the world outside, an artist who looks to the current events, people, and cultures around him. Although it lacks an overtly political subject, this portrait is not apolitical; rather, it considers the role of the artist in society.

For Haring, knowledge of self and knowledge of the world were synonymous. Haring sussed out his own identity in his artwork, taking many photographic self-portraits between 1980 and 1988, and rendering other self-portraits in paint and ink throughout his life. His famous “tag”—the radiant, crawling baby—became a symbol, signature, and logo to represent him, and can be construed as an unconventional self-portrait, according to art historian Bruce D. Kurtz. Every aspect of the commentary Haring expressed through his art is filtered through his distinctive style and his unique perspective as a gay white man; as a Kutztown, Pennsylvania, native and New York City transplant; and as a person with considerable anxiety about the insidiousness of nuclear war, bad political policy, the encroachment of technology into life, threats to public health, and the many other political issues he addressed as an individual. When the *New York Post* asked Haring, in 1983, if the crawling radiant baby was a self-portrait, he responded, “Not necessarily. It’s the archetypal child. Any human.”

This self-portrait takes on a poignant meaning, memorializing Haring’s short but brilliant life as an artist dedicated to public discourse. He was a celebrity in the public eye, a friend and collaborator to such creative people as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Madonna, Grace Jones, and Run-D.M.C., and an acquaintance of public figures including Mayor Ed Koch and Andy Warhol. He was prolific and dynamic in life: “He was always on the go, so you were always on your toes or else you’d miss something,” said Tony Shafrazi, Haring’s friend and gallerist. His style and iconography, despite treating heavy political issues, make room for levity, joy, and color. After being diagnosed with AIDS in 1987 (“I went over to the East River on the Lower East Side and just cried and cried and cried,” Haring wrote), his work became tinged with the knowledge of his own sickness and impending death. But even in sickness, Haring remained energetic as an artist, continuing to work prolifically and advocate for community issues and AIDS awareness. After his death, Haring was remembered both for his vibrancy and fearlessness, and mourned as a young victim of one of the worst public health crises in American history.
**Untitled, 1982**

This painting’s bright, neon lines on a black ground lend a dynamic quality to this picture—a quality that art historian David Frankel claims is integral to Haring’s life and work. “Energy must have been a primary value for Haring,” Frankel writes. “The word hums through his writings and speech like the chorus of a song.” The qualities of “radiance” and “radioactivity” are often used to describe Haring’s art, placing his glowing figures among both heavenly realms and the zones affected by the fallout of nuclear accidents, such as the one that occurred at Three Mile Island, near the town where Haring grew up. The stick in this picture is a site of energy, as Frankel puts it: “Haring saw the glowing wands held by some of his figures as symbols of physical and political power.” Gallerist Jeffrey Deitch famously likened these “energized rods” to Haring’s paintbrushes.

The iconography of the radiant rod can be interpreted variously in Haring’s work, but it often represents power or authority. Sometimes it is being zapped and endowed with radiant power by a passing UFO; at other times it is the scepter of abused power in the hand of a tyrannical figure. In this image, a red human figure stands on black ground, outlined in electrified neon green. The figure flexes and exerts his arms, having just snapped apart the two halves of a black stick in his balled fists. Above him, upon a black sky, a heart floats in a circle on the left and a cross floats in the upper right corner. Here, the stick—the site of opposition between the left and right poles of the heart and the cross—is snapped, destroyed, and disrupted.

In this picture Haring palpably depicts the act of struggle against authority by portraying the snapping of the stick. Rather than making the painting specific to a single issue through the iconography of war (mushroom clouds), technology (televisions), or capitalism (pigs and dollar signs), he allows for a more open-ended interpretation of the picture. “I don’t think art is propaganda; it should be something that liberates the soul, provokes the imagination and encourages people to go further,” Haring wrote. Because of its capacity to address the artist’s general struggle—in politics, society, and with AIDS—this picture has become an emblem of the exhibition *Keith Haring: The Political Line*, representing the tangible urgency and broad political stakes to which Haring committed his art throughout his career.
RESOURCES

Additional Teacher Resources on Keith Haring

*CBS Sunday Morning*: “Keith Haring Was Here,” a brief video clip featuring Haring completing a subway drawing and then being detained by police
www.youtube.com/watch?v=W04j0Je01wQ

“Drawing the Line: A Portrait of Keith Haring, Part 1” (Elizabeth Aubert, 1989)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eD2uvkEJJY

Keith Haring Foundation: Semiotics Lesson for Kids
www.haringkids.com/lesson_plans/

Keith Haring Foundation: Books for Kids
www.haringkids.com/

List of books about Haring and his work, and activity books for kids
novaonline.nvcc.edu/eli/evans/his135/events/haring90/haring.html#Recommended%20Books%20and%20Articles

Additional Teacher Resources on Apartheid and Nelson Mandela

National Endowment for the Arts: Classroom Resources for Nelson Mandela, Apartheid, and South Africa. In particular, check out the two short clips from the PBS POV series entitled “Living Under Apartheid.”
www.nea.org/tools/lessons/57530.htm

African Studies Center: Resources for Teaching on South Africa
www.bu.edu/africa/outreach/resources/safrica/

“Amandla! Awethu!,” a brief clip showing the call-and-response slogan of the anti-apartheid movement, meaning “power to the people”
www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlxhrDf8lv0

“Nelson Mandela,” a postmortem reflection on Mandela as a radical and humanitarian, by rapper Talib Kweli
news.genius.com/Talib-kweli-nelson-mandela-annotated#note-2538096

History.com: Apartheid. This includes excellent links providing background information and video segments exploring the history of apartheid and Nelson Mandela.
www.history.com/topics/apartheid
KEITH HARING: THE POLITCAL LINE

1. Political Art In Public Spaces
2. Subway Drawings
3. Mass Media and Technology
4. Racism
5. Capitalism and Consumption
6. Ecocide And Apocalypse

Herbst Exhibition Galleries
LOWER LEVEL • DE YOUNG