



Tseng Kwong Chi

eric firestone gallery

Tseng Kwong Chi (born 1950, Hong Kong; died 1990, New York) was a photographer and performer internationally known for his photographic series East Meets West a.k.a. Expeditionary Self-Portrait Series. At age 10, he began Chinese painting classes in Hong Kong and was regarded as a child prodigy. In 1966, his family immigrated to Vancouver, Canada. He received his formal art training in Paris and graduated with honors in 1975.

In the provocative images that comprise the East Meets West series, Tseng poses—always donning his stereotypical Mao suit—in front of iconic architecture and sublime nature as his invented artistic persona, a Chinese “Ambiguous Ambassador.” “A cross between Ansel Adams and Cindy Sherman,” his work explores tourist photography in a playful juxtaposition of truth, fiction, and identity, while also paying homage to landmarks and the grandeur and mystery of nature.

During one of his early performative photographic expeditions for the Soho Weekly News in 1980, he crashed a high society party at Diane Vreeland’s “Manchu Dragon Robes” exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Tasked simply with photographing their lavish outfits, Tseng instead posed as a Chinese “Ambiguous Ambassador,” interviewed the guests and repeatedly photographed himself next to royalty and famous designers.

Shortly after his arrival in New York City in 1978, he became friends with Keith Haring, John Sex, Kenny Scharf, Bill T. Jones, and other luminaries of the downtown scene. He was an important documentarian and denizen of the downtown 1980’s New York club and art scene. Invited to be Keith’s official photo-chronicler, Tseng captured Haring’s guerilla style underground subway drawings, political actions, and collaborations with peers. This decade long friendship created the world’s largest photo archive of Keith Haring.

In 1990, Tseng died at age 39 from complications related to the AIDS virus, leaving an enduring body of work that engages major photographic traditions — the tourist snapshot, portraiture, the Sublime tradition of landscape photography, documentary and performance. Tseng’s photographs have been exhibited widely in international exhibitions and are in numerous prestigious major public museums and private collections all over the world.



Tseng Kwong Chi | *Keith Haring and Tseng Kwong Chi*, 1986

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Tseng Kwong Chi
Jean Michel Basquiat NY, Jenkins,
1987

Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm
edition of 5

71h x 71w in
180.34h x 180.34w cm
edition of 3

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Tseng Kwong Chi

*Keith Haring, drawing Art in Transit, New York
subway, 1983-84*

Color C-Print on Dibond

40h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

60h x 40w in
152.40h x 101.60w cm
edition of 5

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Tseng Kwong Chi
Basquiat Smoking Joint, 1987

Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm
edition of 5

71h x 71w in
180.34h x 180.34w cm
edition of 3

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Tseng Kwong Chi
Warhol and Basquiat Sitting, 1985

Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm
edition of 5

71h x 71w in
180.34h x 180.34w cm
edition of 3



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Tseng Kwong Chi
Keith Haring, New York Studio, 1988

Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm
edition of 5

71h x 71w in
180.34h x 180.34w cm
edition of 3

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Tseng Kwong Chi
On The Subway, 1983

Gelatin Silver LE Print on Dibond

40h x 60w in
101.60h x 152.40w cm
edition of 9

53h x 81w in
134.62h x 205.74w cm
edition of 5

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Tseng Kwong Chi
*Jean-Michel Basquiat, Great Jones Street,
New York, 1987*

Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm
edition of 5

71h x 71w in
180.34h x 180.34w cm
edition of 3

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Tseng Kwong Chi
Warhol (Red Room with Liz), 1986

Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm
edition of 5

71h x 71w in
180.34h x 180.34w cm
edition of 3

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Tseng Kwong Chi
Haring Pop Shop Window
New York, 1986

Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm
edition of 5

71h x 71w in
180.34h x 180.34w cm
edition of 3



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Tseng Kwong Chi

Keith Haring, Bad Boy, Bordeaux, France, 1985

Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 40w in
76.20h x 101.60w cm
edition of 9

40h x 60w in
101.60h x 152.40w cm
edition of 5



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Tseng Kwong Chi

*Jean-Michel Basquiat and Andy Warhol
Collaboration (Hand on Shoulder), 1985*

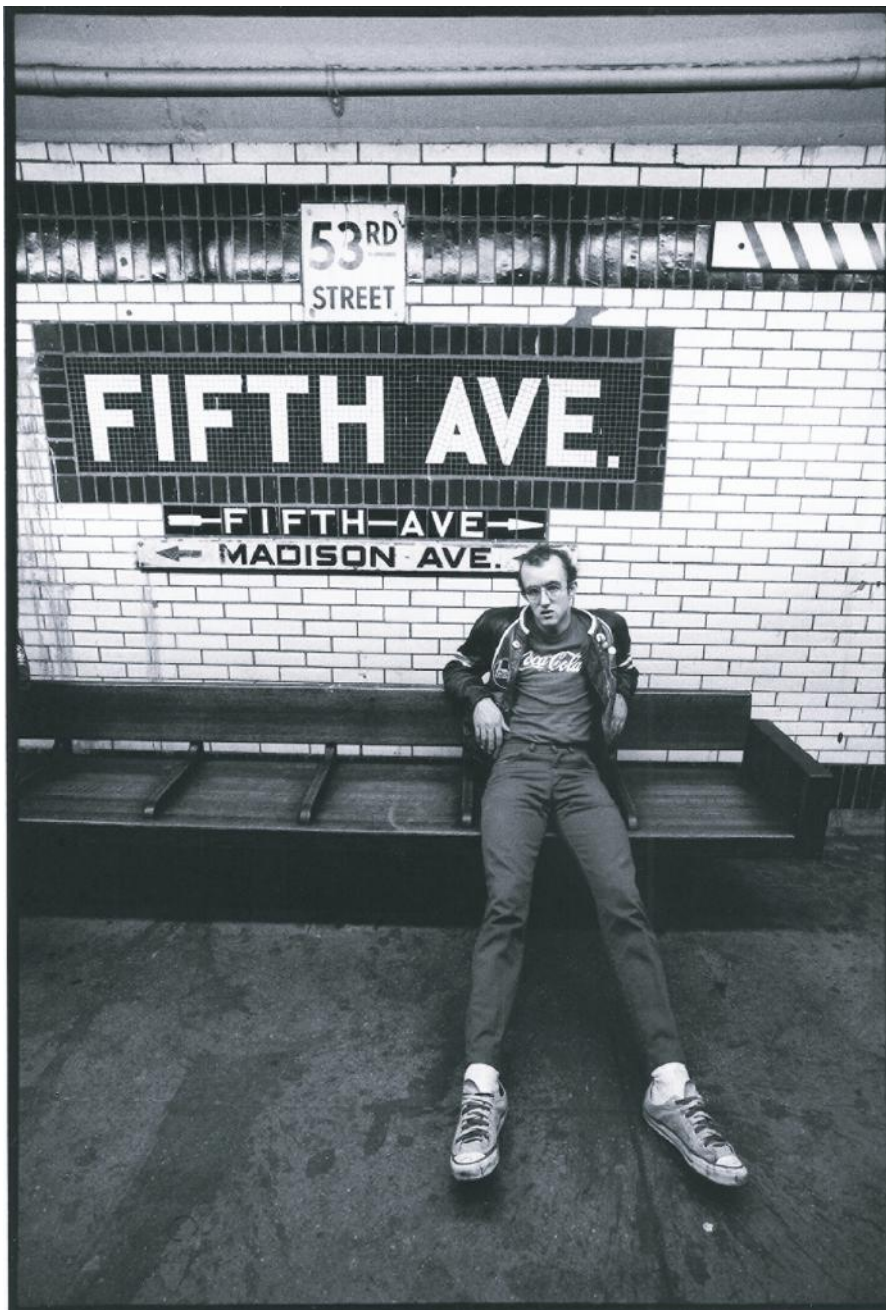
Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm
edition of 5

71h x 71w in
180.34h x 180.34w cm
edition of 3

eric firestone gallery



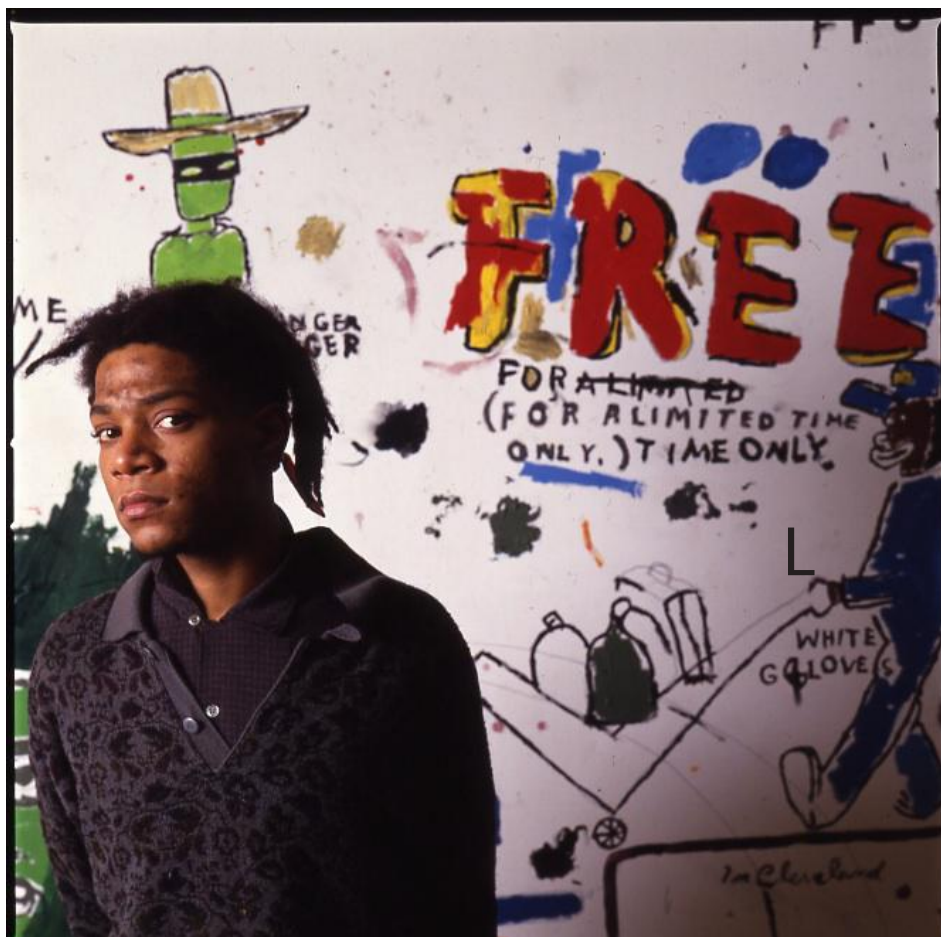
Tseng Kwong Chi
Keith Haring (5th Ave Subway), 1984

Gelatin Silver LE Print on Dibond

40h x 30w in
101.60h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

60h x 40w in
152.40h x 101.60w cm
edition of 5

eric firestone gallery



Tseng Kwong Chi
Jean-Michel Basquiat, NY, Free, 1987

Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm
edition of 5

71h x 71w in
180.34h x 180.34w cm
edition of 3

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Tseng Kwong Chi

*Jean-Michel Basquiat in Studio, New York
(coffee cup), 1987*

Color C-Print on Dibond

30h x 30w in
76.20h x 76.20w cm
edition of 9

50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm
edition of 5

71h x 71w in
180.34h x 180.34w cm
edition of 3




KING PLEASURE

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PASTEL

Wishman
1998



Recent Auction Sales

eric firestone gallery



Tseng Kwong Chi
Jean-Michel Basquiat, New York, 1987

CHRISTIE'S

Color C-Print on 4-Ply Museum Board
edition 2/5
50h x 50w in
127h x 127w cm

Price Realized: USD \$125,000

Post-War and Contemporary Art Day Sale
Nov 11, 2021

Recent Museum Exhibitions

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Myth Makers: Spectrosynthesis III
Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong
December 24, 2022 - April 10, 2023



Somewhere Downtown: Art in the 1980s New York
UCCA Beijing
October 1, 2022 - January 29, 2023



Ming Wong and Tseng Kwong Chi
Tate Modern, London, UK
On view until July, 2023

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East Village NY: Vulnerable and Extreme
Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea
December 18, 2018 - February 24, 2019

MoMA

*Club 57: Film, Performance, and Art in the East
Village, 1978–1983*
MoMA New York, New York
Oct 31, 2017–Apr 8, 2018

**GREY ART NYU
GALLERY**

Tseng Kwong Chi: Performing for the Camera
Grey Art Gallery, New York
April 21, 2015 - July 11, 2015

Museum Collections

The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

Asia Society, New York, New York

Ford Foundation, New York, New York

Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles

California M+ Museum, West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas

National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

