**Vecchiato Art Galleries**

Milan, Italy

**Keith Haring**

curated by Luca Beatrice

**9 April 2009 - 30 June 2009**

The **Keith Haring** exhibition officially launches the opening of the **new venue** of the **Vecchiato Art Galleries** in Milan, in the heart of the city close to the Cathedral. The exhibition curated by **Luca Beatrice** depicts the main steps of the artist's creativity through a careful selection of works, among which some meaningful sculptures made from 1981 to 1988. The works on show well represent the visual universe of Keith Haring, which is very colourful, primitive and symbolical; to this effect all his works are made with different materials and stands: from ink to acrylic, from etching to enamel, from paper to cardboard, from steel to tin to carved wood.

Luca Beatrice says: "his art 'for all', as the artist loved to point out himself, became more and more universally defined by signs which found a unique expressivity in the most diverse shapes - from a tiny wooden or metal frame to the wall of a church. Whatever the material, cardboard, styrofoam or tin, or the instrument, a huge paint brush, an incision or acrylic painting, Haring's stylized little men live in the collective imagination as an ironic and playful message of derision towards the reigning primness of Western society".

Such freedom of expression effectively develops in the exhibition at the Vecchiato Art Galleries where one can admire among others: "Untitled" of 1986, an etching on paper representing the head of a modern Medusa, which puts together myth and contemporaneity; the magnificent sculpture "King and Queen" of 1987/88 in enamel on steel; "Untitled (Wood Relief)" of 1983, a work in carved and painted wood of primordial shapes and colours; "Untitled (Burning Skull)", a tin mask of 1987 which once more takes the audience back to an ancestral beauty.

Beyond being the artist of the popular and accessible language, as we are reminded by "Untitled" of 1984, a big heart in acrylic on styrofoam of pop inspiration (on display as well), Keith Haring has been "the star" of a counter-culture which laid the grounds of today's public art, overtly political, also mixing graffiti and brut art in a style that became iconic, proving wrong those who in his popular gaudiness saw the wake of a meteor doomed to fade. His activity, which lasted a little bit more than a decade up to 1990 when he died, surely hadn't been a seasonal phenomenon.

To prove his expressivity, which is unconventional, we mention the ironic "Untitled" of 1982, made with red Sumi and black ink on paper, "Best Buddy" of 1986 in carved wood and the peculiar and funny "Untitled (Happy Face)" of 1987, work made on two wooden shutters and painted in acrylic.

In 1984 Haring says: "Art lives through the imagination of people who look at it. Without this contact art doesn't exist. I gave myself the job of being a producer of images of the 20th century and every day I try to understand the responsibilities and the implications that this choice involves. It has become clear to me that art is not an elitist activity for the appreciation of the few, but it exists for all of us and it is this idea that I will keep pursuing".

To describe Keith Haring it would be necessary to call back to life all those characters who made New York history at the end of the 70's and 80's and who together with him symbolized that amazing decade, from Leo Castelli to Jean Michel Basquiat, from Andy Warhol to Madonna. Haring has been a campaigner against Aids, drugs (the "crack", which was very much mainstream in American parties in those years) and homosexual discrimination: his work was open to anyone, a constant giving and receiving. This is confirmed also by his commitment to children's rights, for which he always fought and never abandoned the cause.

This exhibition takes place at the same time as the one that the BAM Museum of Mons in Belgium dedicates to the great US artist and it will continue with additions in October and November at the old venue of the Vecchiato Art Galleries in Padua.

A comprehensive bilingual English and Italian **catalogue** completes the exhibition, published by Vecchiato Art Galleries with critic text by Luca Beatrice.

In opening this new location in Via Santa Marta 3, in Milan, Vecchiato Art Galleries (already historical Gallery in Padua which continues its activity) confirms once more the high quality of its artistic research.

For art lovers the gallery, of which Dante Vecchiato is the artistic director, becomes an important gathering point to admire the artworks by the great masters of modern and contemporary art, as well as works by young and accomplished international artists, among which are worth mentioning the Chinese and the new Indian and Egyptian avantgardes. The characteristic that has always identified the gallery is in fact their ability to anticipate the new trends.

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