Keith Haring: Silence = Death

Nellie Jalalian

Chapman University, jalalian@chapman.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/cusrd_abstracts

Part of the Contemporary Art Commons, Graphic Design Commons, Illustration Commons, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Commons, Other History Commons, Political History Commons, Printmaking Commons, and the Theory and Criticism Commons

Recommended Citation


https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/cusrd_abstracts/338

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Undergraduate Excellence at Chapman University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Scholar Symposium Abstracts and Posters by an authorized administrator of Chapman University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact laughtin@chapman.edu.
The American AIDS crisis was one of the most important epidemics of the contemporary world, yet many Americans do not know the severity of the crisis or the true lasting effects it brought. In my project, I will go over personal accounts of individuals directly affected by the illness, like famed artist Keith Haring, to give it a more human perspective. I will also reflect on the art that was created during the time of severe need, as if America left behind the pain of being othered and not helped in a time of serious need, as if America left behind a huge demographic because of its homophobia tendencies. Keith Haring's opinions on the crisis took center stage in his works such as Silence=Death, where he has his iconic people doodle with all of the covering their ears and eyes with a pink triangle on top. The people seem to not want to listen or learn about what is going on, as if it makes the uncomfortable. The pink triangle was used in Nazi Germany to single out gay people. By using this symbol, Keith Haring creates a comparison between the treatment of LGBT people in WWII Germany to America in the 1980s. He抒 the pain of being othered and not helped in a time of serious need, as if America left behind a huge demographic because of its homophobia tendencies.

Keith Haring's Rise to Stardom

Keith Haring was born in Reading, PA in May 4th, 1958, and was educated at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. He found his footing in the art world by starting off with graffiti design on the streets of New York, with the tag of a baby or a dog. He engaged in the NYC nightlife scene and eventually started using his friends became afflicted with AIDS when the illness became more known. He began his activism work for AIDS and created visuals such as Silence=Death and Talk to Us About HIV (AIDS) in 1989 to help educate people on the illness. When he was diagnosed in 1989, he created the Keith Haring Foundation to help with funding AIDS-related research.

Pain in Art

Haring's legacy

Keith Haring has influenced a plethora of artists, like Shepard Fairey. His contribution to the art world is still seen in a huge number of collaborations his foundation runs, to keep his legacy alive. His involvement in AIDS activism has been praised by the masses. He will always be remembered as the artist whose line figures were able to tell an important story. After he passed, AIDS research improved the slightest bit; it was still not enough, however there are more preventative measures widely available.

Abstract:
The American aids crisis was one of the most important epidemics of the contemporary world, yet many Americans do not know the severity of the crisis or the true lasting effects it brought. In my project, I will go over personal accounts of individuals directly affected by the illness, like famed artist Keith Haring, to give it a more human perspective. I will also reflect on the art that was created during the time of severe need, as if America left behind the pain of being othered and not helped in a time of serious need, as if America left behind a huge demographic because of its homophobia tendencies.

Keith Haring: Silence = Death

Nellie Jalalian
B.A. Art History

Keith Haring’s anxieties over the illness were reflected in his works in the Apro- (type) series, in collaboration with William S. Burroughs. At one point he believed that the government ignored the illness as a way to test out germ warfare and he thought that they placed it on the gay community and IV users because they “were the perfect people to wipe out”. He also did a lot of humanitarian work, such as painting murals for AIDS Awareness Day and the Princess Grace Hospital.

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death

Silence = Death