

Newark Community Art Club with Elaine Winter

Session 10: A look at the enduring relevance of Keith Haring

Materials needed:

Pencil, rubber, sharpener

Scissors

White paper to draw on (any size you like to work on and whatever you have at hand) – ideally several sheets

Colour materials – ideally coloured paper – whatever you have to hand.

Ideally a relatively thick black felt tip pen or marker

Introduction: June is LGBTQ+ Pride month so it seems appropriate to look at the enduring relevance of the art of Keith Haring. Keith Haring was an openly gay artist who was living and working in 1980s New York. He would chalk up his images on unused areas of the poster displays of the New York Subway with the aim of making art that was accessible to a diverse audience. His work is particularly interesting because although it was very accessible, colorful and in many ways a joy to look at, it also tackled important social and political messages to do with LGBTQ+ rights (particularly relating to the AIDS epidemic), campaigns against drug use and the fight to end Apartheid.



Activity 1: Do some research into the life and work of the artist Keith Haring. Here are some research questions for you to answer.

What part of New York did Keith Haring live and work in?

Can you name any of his friends that were also well known?

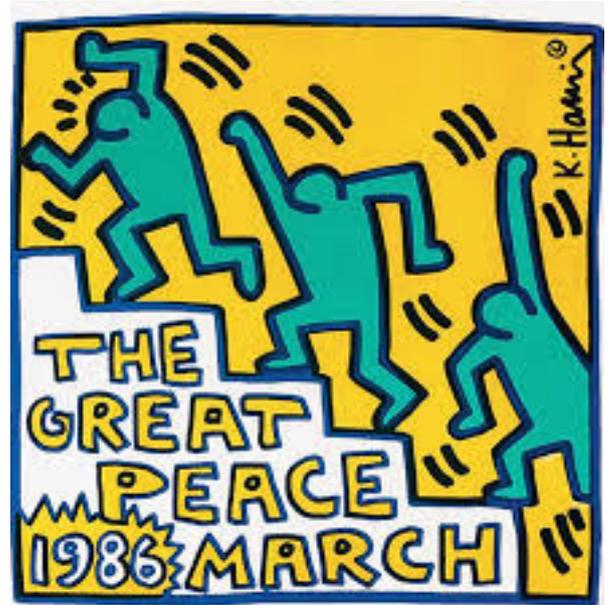
Who did he collaborate with?

How and where did he show his work to make sure it was accessible to diverse audiences?

How did his work relate to music?

What work did he do with young people?

What is the Keith Haring Foundation and why was it set up?



Activity 2: Look at a variety of Keith Haring's artworks. There are some for a starting point on the downloadable powerpoint.

What are the characteristics of his style?

Observe the colours he uses.

What do the graphic black outlines add?

How does he show movement?

How does he use words?

What scale are these works?

Other than the New York Subway (and latterly galleries), where else might you have found Keith Haring's work?

Activity 3: Over to you! Use the research you've done and reflect. Try to design a poster with a clear campaign message using the style principles of Keith Haring. The things you need to consider are the campaign you want to get behind, the message you want to get across, and do you need to use words at all or can you do it all through images? Use the bold colours and graphic lines that Haring made fantastic use of. If you like you can make yourself some little card templates of Haring inspired figures that you can draw around repeatedly to make a big overall design.

