



NORTON MUSEUM OF ART

Keith Haring (American, 1958 – 1990), *Julia*, 1987, Painted aluminum, 96 x 78 1/2 x 58 1/2 in. (243.8 x 199.4 x 148.6 cm),
Gift of Bob and Pam Goergen, 2018.94. © Keith Haring Foundation



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OF ART

A CLOSER LOOK

CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION

Keith Haring (American, 1958 – 1990)

Julia, 1987

Painted aluminum

96 x 78 1/2 x 58 1/2 in. (243.8 x 199.4 x 148.6 cm)

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ABOUT



The Artist

Keith Haring was born on May 4, 1958, in Reading, Pennsylvania. He developed drawing skills at a young age, influenced by his father, popular culture, Dr. Seuss, and Walt Disney. In 1978, he moved to New York and enrolled at the School of Visual Arts. There, he immersed himself in Pop Art, street graffiti, and the music scene, and became friends with like-minded artists, such as Kenny Scharf and Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Between 1980 and 1985, Haring used white chalk to cover blank advertising space in New York City subway stations, producing rhythmic line drawings that turned into recognizable characters. Haring became known for creating public art that addressed social injustices and raised awareness about pressing issues. In 1986, he opened the Pop Shop, where his art was inexpensive and accessible to everyone. During his short, prolific career, he exhibited in cities around the world and produced over 3,000 works on paper and almost 300 paintings before his untimely death from AIDS-related illness at 31.

Keith Haring's philanthropic legacy is sustained through the foundation he created to support not-for-profit organizations that assist children as well as organizations focused on the prevention of AIDS. Today, Haring's dear friend, Julia Gruen, still serves as the Foundation's Executive Director Emeritus.



The Artwork

The bold shapes and expressive silhouette of Keith Haring's sculpture, titled *Julia*, reflect the artist's distinctive graphic style in drawing and painting. The sculpture's bright yellow aluminum planes cut through space, evoking the dynamic movements of a dancer. Inspired by Haring's close friend, Julia Gruen, the sculpture embodies the joy of dance without detailed facial expressions. Haring sought to make art that was direct and relatable, influenced by his love for music, graffiti, and pop culture. While he is primarily recognized for his paintings and murals, Haring valued sculpture for its enduring qualities, believing it held a unique power because of its sense of immortality.

"I am interested in making art that can be experienced and understood by everyone."

— Keith Haring

Left:

Keith Haring, painting Palladium backdrop at the Palladium night club, New York City, Photo: Bernard Gotfryd, Date Created/Published: May 1985.

Right:

Keith Haring (American, 1958 – 1990), *Julia*, 1987, Painted aluminum, 96 x 78 1/2 x 58 1/2 in. (243.8 x 199.4 x 148.6 cm), Gift of Bob and Pam Goergen, 2018.94. © Keith Haring Foundation

SEE



Observe & Describe

Have students take a moment to examine Keith Haring's *Julia*.

As they look closely, first ask students: What do you see? Encourage students to notice as many details as possible before moving on to the next question or giving any information about the artwork. Ask them to describe the lines, colors, shapes, and textures. Encourage even closer looking by asking:

- What else do you notice?
- What does the artist do visually to help our eyes move around the work of art? Where do you see negative and positive space?
- Pose like *Julia*! What is one word you would use to describe the pose? What do you see in the artwork that makes you say that?

Start a Conversation

- *Julia* is inspired by the nightlife of 1980's New York City, where new types of dances and music came alive, including break dancing, voguing, and hip-hop music. How are these pop culture moments represented visually in this artwork?

Left:
Installation view of Pamela and Robert B. Goergen Garden (2024) at the Norton Museum of Art. Photo: Ashley Kerr.

Right:
KAWS (American, 1958 - 1990), *SEPARATED*, 2021, Cast silicon bronze, paint, 48 x 39 1/8 x 49 1/2 in, 570lb. (121.9 x 99.4 x 125.7 cm), Gift of Per Skarstedt, 2024.92.
© KAWS

THINK



Let's Compare

SEPARATED

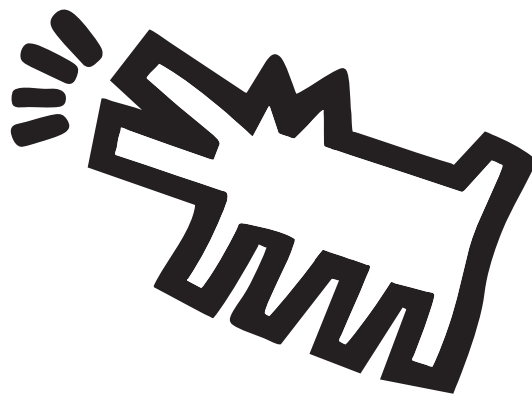
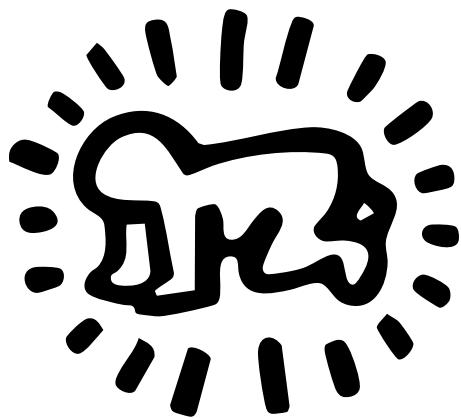
SEPARATED, created by the artist KAWS, is a sculpture featuring one of the artist's characters, named Companion. Companion was created in 1999 in collaboration with a Japanese toy company. This was the first time his character was produced in three dimensions, allowing the artist to imagine working in sculpture. Companion is always depicted with Xs over his eyes, wearing gloves, and is usually grey and white, although some later versions incorporate color.

Like Haring, KAWS is interested in creating art that is easily understood. Many of the characters allude to popular cartoons or images, creating an instant connection between the viewer and the artwork. KAWS started his career in animation, then began graffitiing in New York City in the late 1990s. His graffiti gained attention when he altered advertisements he saw on the street, at times covering the faces of models on posters with his characters. KAWS has also had commercial success collaborating with fashion designers, shoe companies, and even designing cereal boxes for General Mills.

Ask students the same Observe and Describe questions above that also apply to the KAWS sculpture. Then, have students discuss the following:

- What similarities or differences do you see between the two artworks?
- Haring and KAWS are both inspired by pop culture and images from our everyday world. What images from pop culture does *Separated* remind you of? What does *Julia* remind you of?
- Imagine Keith Haring and KAWS met. What do you think they would talk about? Why do you say that?
- Imagine the characters of *Julia* and *SEPARATED* met. What do you think they would say to each other? Why do you say that?

WONDER



Classroom Discussion

Keith Haring created a sculpture in honor of his dear friend and associate, Julia Gruen. If you could make a sculpture about someone you know, who would it be? What pose would you give them, and what colors would you use to represent their character or emotions?

For Younger Students

- The artist used painted aluminum to form Julia. If you could recreate this sculpture using different materials, what materials would you use and why?
- How might the sculpture's pose and overall mood or feeling change if you used different materials?

For Older Students

- Haring shared his art in public places, like subway stations, and used his art as a powerful visual tool to address a range of social issues. What is a current social issue that is important to you? How would you choose to represent this issue visually?
- Where do you think Haring would choose to put his artwork in a public space in your community? Why?
- Both Haring and KAWS have achieved commercial success, partnering with brands and making their art more accessible to the broader public. Both have also had solo exhibitions in prestigious art museums. Do you think their art should be considered fine art? Why or why not?

Extend it! Activity Ideas

For Younger Students

Keith Haring's moving figures are iconic due to their vibrant and energetic style that often translates as dancing. Ask students to use air-dry clay and create their dancing sculptures. Add pipe cleaners as an option to allow for flexible limbs that can twist into more dynamic and active poses.

For Older Students

Start by looking at how Keith Haring used bold, simple symbols, such as the "Radiant Baby" and the "Barking Dog," to express ideas about society and culture with students.

Then, let your group brainstorm their own line-based symbols to represent popular ideas and pressing themes in their community. Have students incorporate these linear designs on a large-scale symbolic mural, highlighting how collective effort can create something powerful and inspire change.

Above:
© Keith Haring Foundation

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