

BASQUIAT

Leonhard Emmerling



TASCHEN

Taschen
BASQUIAT (I) #BASICART

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BA

cartonato con sovraccoperta

cm 21,0 x 26,0, 96 pp.

italiano

9783836559805

10,00€

Disponibilità Immediata

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Linee della vita

La stella artistica degli anni Ottanta che ha messo al muro povertà, potere e razzismo

Icona della New York anni Ottanta, **Jean-Michel Basquiat** (1960–1988) cominciò a farsi conoscere come writer con lo pseudonimo di "SAMO", prima di allestire il suo studio e assurgere rapidamente alla notorietà all'età di vent'anni. Anche se la sua carriera durò appena un decennio, resta una figura di culto nel campo dell'**arte improntata alla critica sociale** e un pioniere della mediazione **tra graffitismo e arte da galleria**.

Le opere di Basquiat attingono a diverse fonti e mezzi espressivi per creare un lessico artistico originale e incisivo, formulando una **critica pungente alle strutture del potere e del razzismo**. La sua produzione fonde astrattismo e figurativismo, poesia e pittura, mentre le sue influenze comprendono **l'arte greca, romana e africana, la poesia francese, la musica jazz** e i lavori di artisti contemporanei come Andy Warhol e Cy Twombly. I risultati sono commistioni vivide e viscerali di parole, emblemi africani, figure da cartone animato, chiazze di colori accesi e molto altro.

Questo volume presenta la breve ma prolifica carriera di Basquiat, il suo stile unico e il suo profondo coinvolgimento nelle questioni sempre attuali di integrazione e segregazione, povertà e ricchezza.

La collana:

Ciascun volume della collana Basic Art di TASCHEN comprende:

- Una sintesi dettagliata che ripercorre cronologicamente la vita e l'opera dell'artista, soffermandosi sulla sua importanza a livello storico e culturale
- Una biografia concisa
- Circa 100 illustrazioni a colori con didascalie esplicative

L'autore:

Leonhard Emmerling ha conseguito il dottorato presso l'Università di Heidelberg con una tesi intitolata *Kunsttheorie Jean Dubuffets* (La teoria dell'arte di Jean Dubuffet). Dal 2010 dirige il dipartimento di Arti visive presso la sede centrale del Goethe-Institut a Monaco di Baviera e in passato è stato curatore per varie istituzioni artistiche in Germania. Le sue pubblicazioni per TASCHEN includono *Jean-Michel Basquiat* e *Jackson Pollock*.

#BasicArt



“Riding with Death” The Final Years

In 1984, on the Hawaiian island of Maui, Basquiat for the first time rented a ranch, where he set up a studio. In subsequent years he returned there many times to recuperate from big-city life.

At Basquiat's behest, Bruno Bischofberger set up an August 1986 exhibition at the Centre Culturel de la France in Abidjan, the capital of Ivory Coast (see ill. p. 26). The artist attended the opening, once again in the company of Jennifer Goode. His interest in visiting Africa perhaps was due to the influence of Shenge Ka Pharaoh, the assistant who kept his accounting books from 1983 to 1986. Shenge's cultivated mix of Black consciousness, Reggae ideology and interest in Egyptian cults may have caused Basquiat for the first time to consider seeking out an identity that did not reject or ignore his blackness, but accepted it as fundamental.

A second museum-run Basquiat retrospective was held in 1986 by the Kostner Society in Hannover, and Basquiat was interviewed on that occasion by Isabelle Graw for the German-language magazine *Wochenkult*. This document is remarkable for the openness on both sides. "How do you work?" Graw asks. "I start a picture and I finish it," Basquiat answers. "I don't think about art while I work. I try to think about life." Graw: "What about the influence of Afro-Caribbean art, or of Cy Twombly, as discerned by the critics?" Basquiat: "I don't listen to what art critics say. I don't know anybody who needs a critic to find out what art is." The interview ends with Graw asking if she should come to New York before writing her article on him. "What would you do if you were writing about a dead artist?" Basquiat replied. "I would do as much research as possible, to get all of the available information," says Graw. "Then do it that way," Basquiat says. "Just pretend I was dead."

Jennifer Goode, who was probably the most important woman in Basquiat's life, separated from him in November 1986. A second shock followed a few months later with the death of Andy Warhol from complications during a gall-bladder operation on February 22, 1987. Basquiat's grief was inconsolable. In memory of Warhol, he created *Gravestone* (ill. p. 77), a triptych of three castaway dozes: a flower and cross on the left side, a skull with a heart engraved on it on the right. The center and highest doze bears the repeated word, "Perishable." Though all living things are ephemeral, Basquiat is also suggesting that death is a passage, a door into a different form of existence.



To Repel Ghosts, 1986
Acrylic on wood, 112 x 83 x 10 cm
(44 x 33 x 4 in.)
Paris, Collection Pierre Corneille de Saint C

1982-74
Untitled, 1985
Acrylic and oilstick on canvas,
triptych, 244 x 104 cm (96 x 75 in.)
Private collection
Courtesy Tony Shafiq Gallery, New York

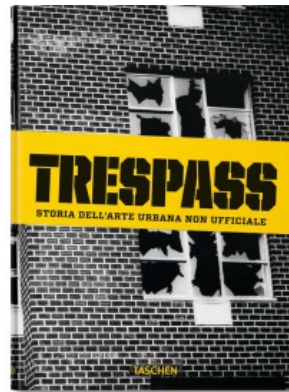
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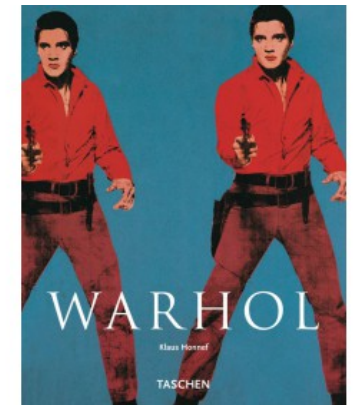
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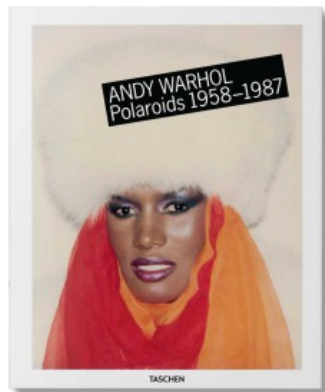
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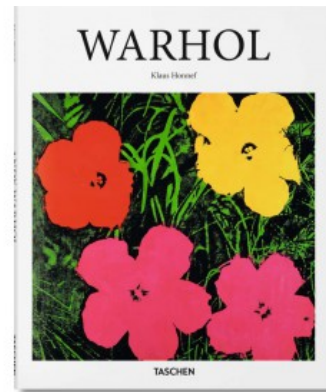
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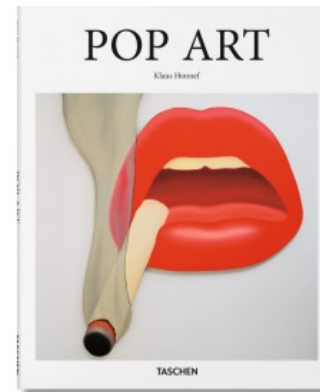
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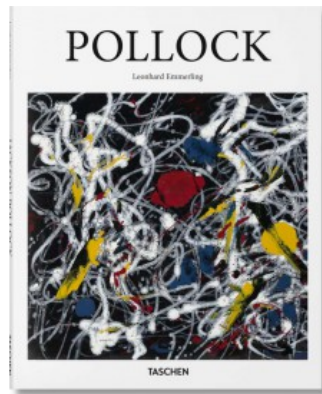
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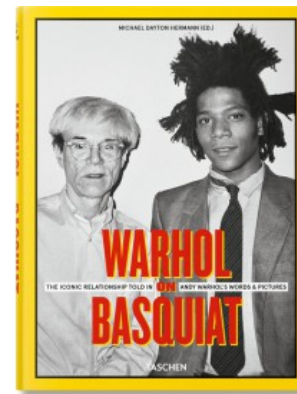
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