



# Flash Art

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R E V I E W S

PARIS

KENNY SCHARF  
BEAUBOURG

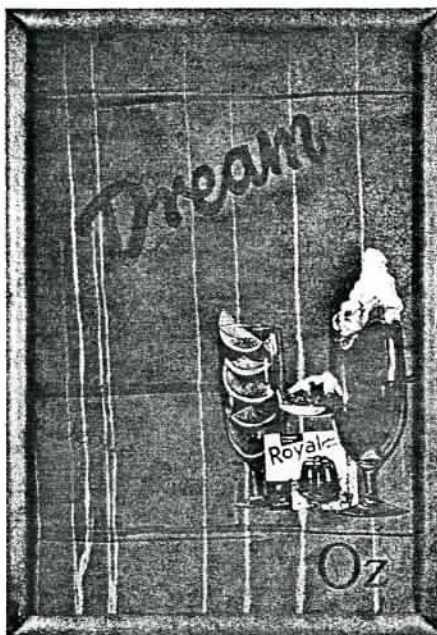
Victim of his own success, Kenny Scharf is abandoning the spontaneous frenzy of his Jetson style for the Pop artist academia of Dennis Hopper. Henceforth, his pictures will no longer find their inspiration in television cartoons but instead in 1950's consumer society, with its sunny imagery of pin-ups, Cadillacs, mahogany television sets and ice-cream comets.

However, it is difficult for Scharf to wholly renounce the delights of his "bubble-gum" aesthetic, which encroaches on the canvas with its proliferation of lifeless psychedelic forms. A few canvases are nevertheless surprising in their tentative purism; in these examples, a box of American cheese, a box of Pall Mall cigarettes, or some gelatine is placed on a base, which is alternately fluorescent and tachiste. Looking at the exhibition *in toto*, we have patchwork canvases, samplers, and rap canvases which rework all the graphic and pictographic conventions typical of the 1950s and 60s.

The ensemble see-saws up and down within the frivolous "super-aesthetic," whose blinding fluorescence amounts to an assault on the eyes reminiscent of 1960s Op-art. It is as though the Santa Monica gangs were graffitiing Warhol for the first time. It is like seeing ordinary Pop art saturated with acid and fluorescence, enough to make us want to throw all our Rosenquists and complete Mickey magazine collections out of the window. American graffiti à la Scharf nevertheless has more charm than the frenzied simulacrum he made his debut with. Each canvas is like a single on the jukebox of our (complex-free) taste. It is as if Warhol, Rauschenberg and Spoerri were discussing one of Michael Jackson's video clips around the same restaurant table. Kenny Scharf, with his first individual exhibition in Paris, will either positively dazzle you or leave you to suffer retinal trauma.

Olivier Zahm

(Translated from French by Georgina Barry)



KENNY SCHARF, ROYAL DREAM, 1990.  
OIL ON LINEN, 223 x 157 CM.