

ART ANARCHY

# JUXTAPOZ<sup>®</sup>

PETTIBON  
COFFIN ART  
GWAR  
FORBES  
ZEPHYR

## KENNY SCHARF



**SAVAGE  
PENCIL**  
BANNED IN BRITAIN



SUMMER 1996



USA \$3.95  
CAN \$4.95

Volume 2 Number 3  
PRINTED IN USA



*Admire an Admiral* (above), oil and acrylic on canvas with custom frame, 63 1/2 x 51 1/2", 1988.

Opposite: *The mystical Kenny Scharf* (top). *Oozolution* (bottom), oil on canvas with silkscreen ink on wood frame, 65 1/2 x 81 1/4", 1994.

# KENNY SCHARF

BY KITTY BROPHY

The late '70s into early '80s were something else—art and

music everywhere, no AIDS,

Moral Majority, Christian Right, Wall Street crash or thought police to keep the fun kids in line. No, this isn't just nostalgia speaking, this is our truth and experience as we lived it in the greatest city on earth, with Kenny Scharf, Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Ann Magnuson, Jon Sex, Samantha McEwen, Kwong Chi, Joey Arias, Klaus Nomi, the B-52s, Talking Heads, Blondie and a resurrected Andy Warhol in the middle of the maelstrom. Me, hell, I was just the artist's artist/girlfriend, the debutante gone wrong having the time of her life, only to give it all up (the painting that is) when I saw the spray painted writing on



KEVIN MAZUR

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, let there be Fun—and there was KENNY SCHARF: man, husband, father, lover, friend, go-go dancer, fashion model, actor, teacher, writer, customizer, singer, gardener, environmentalist, swimmer, celebrity, artist, artist, artist, artist, artist, artist, artist, artist. GENESIS 1:23-58



Good bye to Santa Barbara, bonges, babes, big surf and Barbara Simpson's New Kitchen, 110th East Village (NYC), School of Visual Arts, Club 57, Fiorucci and the Estelle Series, Live Fast Die Young, Loud Fast Rules, Fuck Art Let's Dance, rents were cheap, clubs were free, coke was it and sex didn't kill. We'd spend the day in art school, go home and paint till eleven, dance till four, kick French toast at five, in bed by six and then up at nine to do it all over again. And we had fun, fun, fun till the Black Dog took the T-colls away.      Exodus 9:01:78

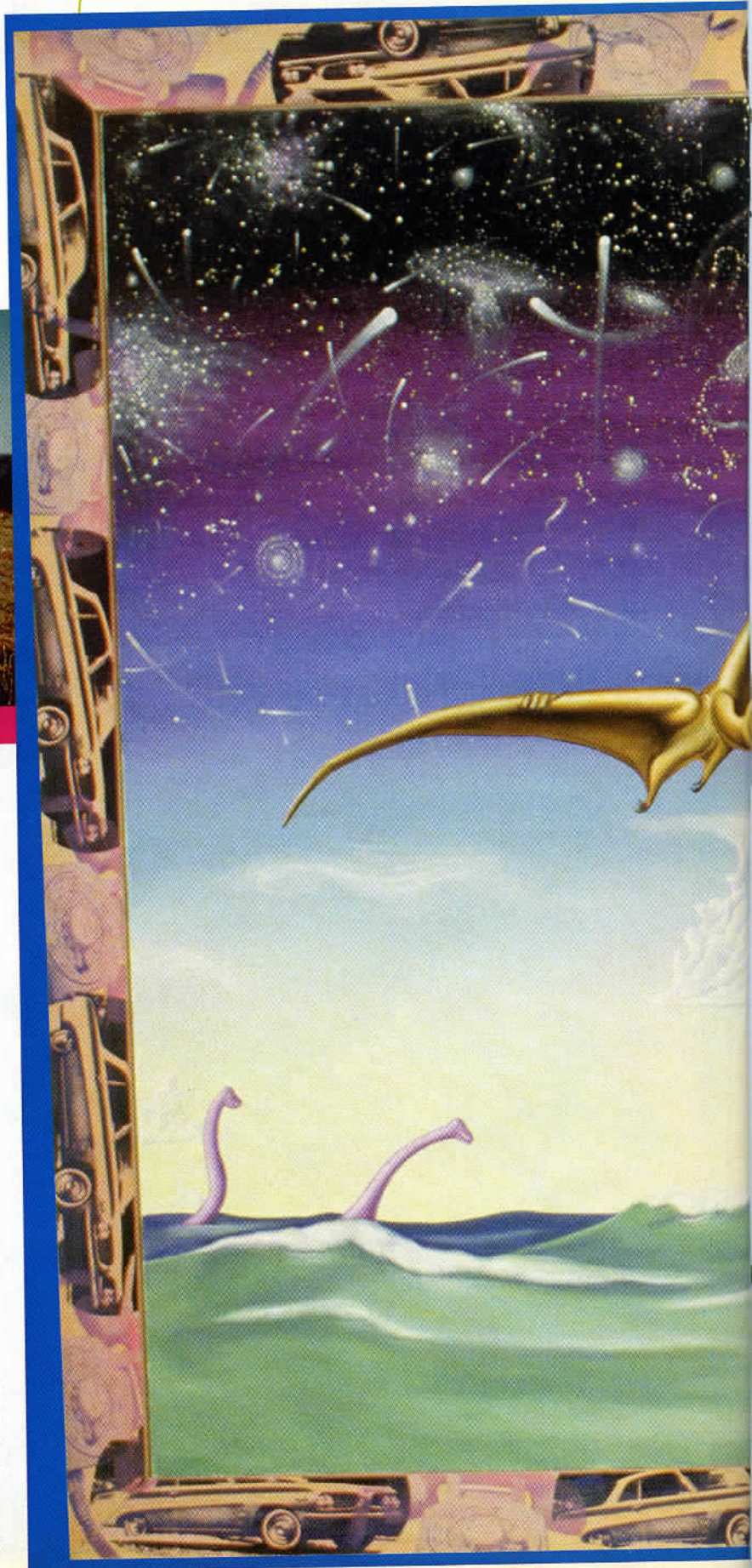


the walls: SAMO IS DEAD (Basquiat), barking dogs and radiant babies (Haring) and Jetsonism (Scharf). I lacked the belief that they had in themselves and stood in the wings as these so-tagged East Village graffiti artists rose from the soot of St Marks Place to SoHo to take their rightful place in art history.

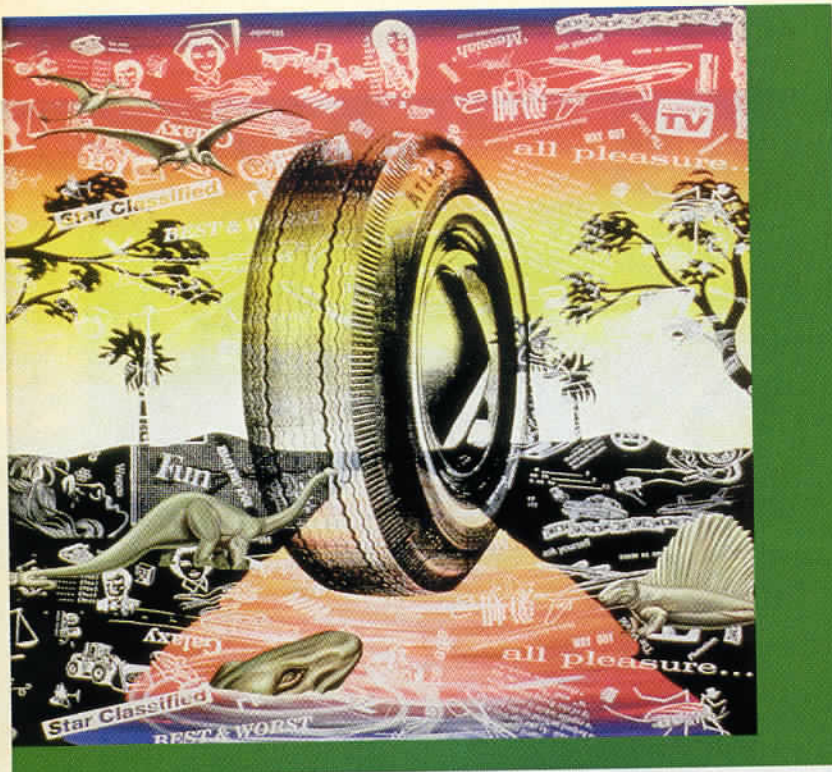
Kenny has always crossed the lines of fine and commercial art by defying the parameters set up by the critics who are often too ready to dismiss his latest creative evolution, because they just don't get it. What's so bad about making art that is beautiful, colorful, psychedelic, fun and infused with surrealistic messages about sex, politics, ideologies and the environment? The collectors, dealers, museums, universities, art books, students and much of the general public got it. All 20 solo shows, 79 group shows and 9 public collections across the universe of it. Not bad for a laid-back but ambitious California native who almost failed life drawing and was once encouraged to go into his father's business because "being an artist was no way to make a living."

But he did, and then some. After moving with his wife and two girls to Miami Beach four years ago to start anew, he has continued to rip apart the polite envelope of the art world by opening the Scharf Schak on NYC's Prince St to sell his affordable custom clothing, caps, bags, jewelry, mouse pads, note cards, drinking glasses and watches.

*Ultima Suprema Deluxa* (above), acrylic, spraypaint and found objects on a 1961 Cadillac, 1984. *Prehicosmicarical* (right), oil on canvas with silkscreen ink on wood frame, 94 x 125 1/2", 1994.







Clockwise, from top left page: *On the Road to the End is Near the Beginning*, acrylic, oil and silkscreen on canvas, 68 x 58", 1990-91. *Junguloony*, acrylic, oil and spraypaint on canvas, 91 1/2 x 90", 1986. *Barbara Simpson's New Kitchen*, oil on canvas, 18 x 24", 1977. *The Scharf Schak in NYC. XR7*, acrylic and oil on canvas, 68 x 58", 1994.

He's also designed a lifeguard tower on Miami's South Beach, created the Cosmic Cavern inside NYC's Tunnel Club, designed fabrics and jewelry for Todd Oldham, had two shows at the Tony Shafrazi Gallery in NY, a retrospective at the Museum of Art in Fort Lauderdale, a current exhibition entitled "Heads" at the Center for Fine Art in Miami and an upcoming travelling retrospective to be launched in May at the Museo MARCO in Monterrey, Mexico.

When I recently asked Kenny just how would he like to be remembered, he replied, "As a totally awesome dude. Just kidding." (Yeah, right.) "Okay, how about as a non-classifiable artist."

He's been called a graffiti artist, pop artist, East Village artist, an '80s artist (as if he's no longer painting in the '90s) and has labeled himself a pop surrealist. Ultimately he should be thought of as a multi-media artist who has been able to reach many audiences via many avenues. Why shouldn't everyone and anyone be able to afford Kenny Scharf's art, whether it's a set of his cartoon character refrigerator magnets, a customized 1961 Cadillac convertible or a 10 x 12 foot oil paint masterpiece? ☑

*Kenny Scharf is represented by the Tony Shafrazi Gallery in New York.*

