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What do Mickey Mouse, artist Kenny Scharf and trash have in common?

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Born in November of 1928, our beloved Mickey Mouse has turned 90. The image of this animated little mouse inhabits, not only the American consciousness, but that of much of the planet from Paris to Hong Kong and Mumbai. His birthday is being celebrated all around the world well into 2019.

Mickey Mouse took up early residence in the consciousness of artist Kenny Scharf whose space-age fantastical iconography derives from an American childhood steeped in television, cartoons, and street culture. Scharf calls himself a "Pop-Surrealist". As he puts it: "Surrealism is about the unconscious, and I feel my work is about the unconscious and my unconscious is filled with pop imagery." So with a huge body of work based on this primary source of inspiration, Scharf was a perfect choice for inclusion in an important New York group exhibition celebrating our most famous pop icon's goth.





Born in Southern California, Scharf moved to New York to study art at the School of Visual Arts in the late 70's. He came to fame as an artist in the early 1980's East Village art scene along with the likes of his contemporaries Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Inspired by Andy Warhol's pluralistic approach to creativity, he applied his boundless energy to everything from painting to elaborate street murals, performance, fashion, video and sculpture.

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inspiration for his **Mickey Mouse Cosmic Cavern** commission from the timeless Mickey Mouse watch, forever a treasured timepiece.

Street trash grabbed his attention early on. "I've always been obsessed with garbage," he says. "When I moved to New York in 1978, the city was basically a trash heap. And I found it fascinating because there was so much great stuff. As punk rock and new wave kids, we were finding all this cool 1950s stuff which we were inspired by and allowed us to both mourn and make fun of the 'death of the American dream.'" This attraction gave him the idea to cram the closet of his apartment near Times Square with street trash and random items left behind by friends which he painted with fluorescent spray paint and illuminated with a black light he found lying around. Thus was born the first "Cosmic Closet"...

Scharf created many after that and these Day-Glo installations filled with all manner of stuff made their way in short order into serious art venues like the Tony Shafrazi Gallery in 1984 and the 1985 Whitney Biennial. These quintessentially pop-culture environments evolved into the "Cosmic Cavern A-Go-Go" in 2008 and into the "Cosmic Cavern Museum". Scharf intended all these iterations as an immersive experience complete with loud irresistible dance music.

With Scharf's creative output inseminated by the animated cartoons he internalized during his childhood, his signature Cosmic Caves were ideal for inclusion in the celebratory exhibition of the foremost animated cartoon personality of our time. It was a perfect match and Scharf took his





The exhibition will be up for just 10 more days. Seize the moment and make a plan now to step into a Day-Glo time capsule where art, punk, pop, trash, sound and Mickey Mouse all come together!



Mickey: The True Original Exhibition, organized by Disney Partners, opened in New York City on November 8, 2018 and closes **February 10**. The entire exhibition inhabits a 16,000 sq.ft. space and includes historic material and the work of 22 other outstanding contemporary artists besides Kenny Scharf.