

On View

Street Artist Kenny Scharf Painted 250 Unique, Expressive Faces on the Walls of Jeffrey Deitch's Los Angeles Gallery—See Them Here

There's a face for every mood.

Caroline Goldstein, August 11, 2020



Installation view, "Kenny Scharf: MOODZ" at Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles. Photo: Joshua White.

As galleries and art institutions around the world begin to reopen, we are spotlighting individual shows—online and IRL—that are worth your attention.

“Kenny Scharf: MOODZ”
through October 31
Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles

What the gallery says: “Who are the characters depicted on Scharf’s multiple canvases? He explains that they all reflect aspects of his own personality. Some days he needs to release his aggressive energy and they may reflect his anger. Other faces reflect his exuberance and love of painting.

Scharf embraces the immediacy of spray paint. His gestures use his entire body. The process is totally physical, like a dance. He paints while listening to music on his headphones, entering into a zone where his mind and body merge. His strokes follow the beat.”

Why it’s worth a look: Before there were emojis, there was Kenny Scharf. Back in 1981, the artist began trawling the streets of New York City armed with cans of spray-paint, applying his range of emotive, psychedelic cartoon faces to surfaces across the metropolis. A contemporary of Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, and Andy Warhol, Scharf grew up in California before moving east, and never lost his connection to the aesthetic of laid-back consumerism.

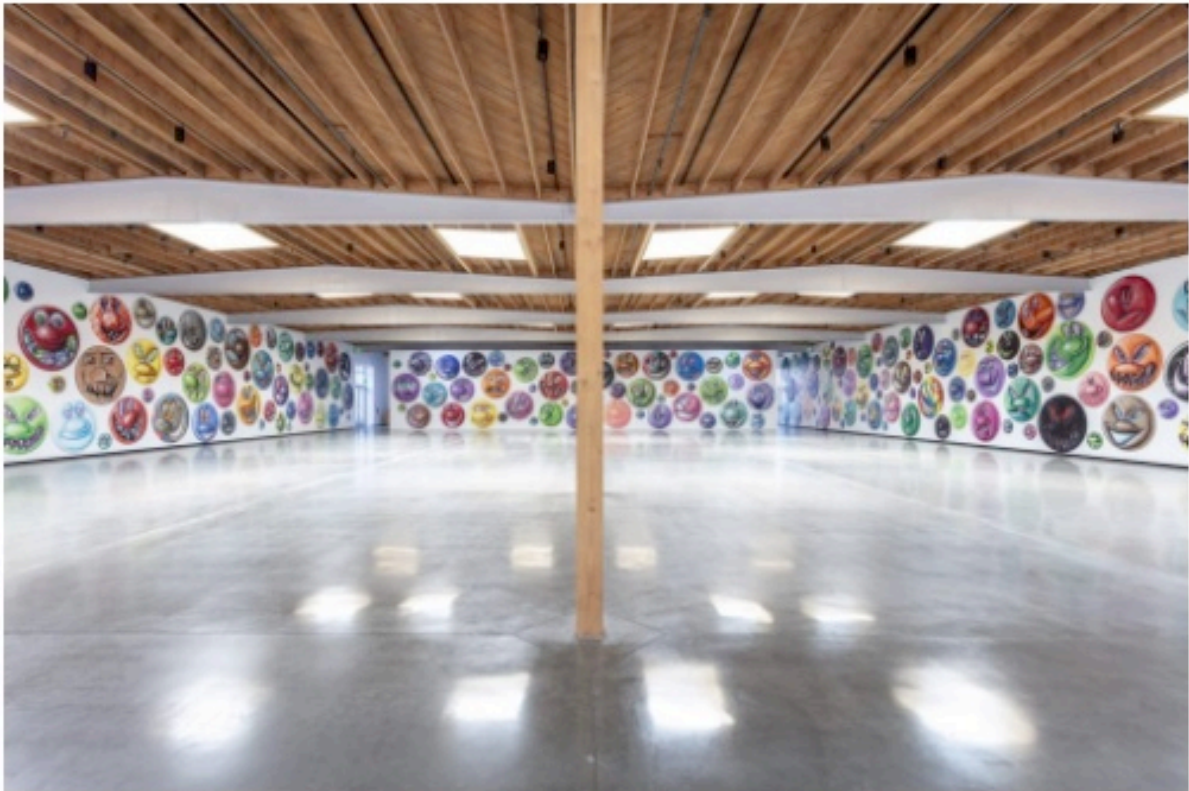
Scharf draws a line between the seriality of his work to his early experience watching pixelated images beam through his parents’ television set. This interest in repetition inspired him to create the massive 250-face exhibition at Jeffrey Deitch. He worked for months to render each individual face, often creating multiple images a day. The result is an engulfing show with a visage for every mood.



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Kenny Scharf, *Monstrono* (2020). Courtesy of the artist and Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles.

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