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## Basquiat at the Barbican

### *Basquiat: Boom for Real*

Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK

21 September 2017 — 28 January 2018

Media View: Wednesday 20 September, 10am – 1pm

#BoomForReal @barbicancentre

*The exhibition is sponsored by NET-A-PORTER, tp bennett and PHILLIPS*

*Basquiat: Boom for Real* is the first large-scale exhibition in the UK of the work of American artist **Jean-Michel Basquiat** (1960-1988). One of the most significant painters of the 20th century, Basquiat came of age in the late 1970s in the post-punk underground art scene in downtown New York. By 1982, he had gained international recognition and was the youngest ever artist to participate in Documenta 7 in Kassel. His vibrant, raw imagery, abounding with fragments of bold capitalised text, offers insights into both his encyclopaedic interests and his experience as a young black artist with no formal training. Since his tragic death in 1988, Basquiat has had remarkably little exposure in the UK; not a single work of his is held in a public collection. Drawing from international museums and private collections, *Basquiat: Boom for Real* brings together an outstanding selection of more than 100 works, many never seen before in the UK, and opens at Barbican Art Gallery on 21 September 2017.

More than any other exhibition to date, *Basquiat: Boom for Real* focuses on the artist's relationship to music, writing, performance, film and television, placing him within the wider cultural context of the time. Paintings, drawings, notebooks and objects are presented alongside rare film, photography, music and archival material, capturing the range and dynamism of Basquiat's practice over the years.

**Jane Alison, Head of Visual Arts, Barbican**, said " *We are truly thrilled to be staging the first show on Basquiat in the UK in over 20 years. The creative brilliance and emotive power of Basquiat continues to have a huge impact and influence. This is a rare opportunity for visitors to see a body of some of his most famous and also little known works in one place, and to see those works in the context of the New York scene of the 1980s.* "

**Jean-Michel Basquiat's sisters, Lisane and Jeanine Basquiat** said " *We are delighted to be working with the Barbican on this important exhibition, which is so long overdue* "

Basquiat first came to the media's attention in 1978, when he teamed up with his classmate Al Diaz to graffiti enigmatic statements across the city under the collective pseudonym SAMO© (a contraction of 'same old, same old shit'). Soon he was making drawings in his own blood, collaging baseball cards and postcards and painting on clothing, architectural fragments and improvised canvases. He starred in the film *New York Beat* with Blondie's Debbie Harry (written by Glenn O'Brien and produced by Maripol), appeared in nine episodes of O'Brien's cult cable-television show *TV Party*, and performed in his experimental band *Gray*. He collaborated with other artists, most famously with Andy Warhol, created murals and installations for notorious New York nightclubs including the Mudd Club, Area and Palladium, and in 1983 produced 'Beat Bop', a classic hip hop record with K-Rob and Rammellzee.

Highlights of the Barbican's exhibition include a partial reconstruction of Basquiat's first body of exhibited work, made for Diego Cortez's watershed group show *New York / New Wave* at P.S.1 in February 1981. Fifteen works are brought together for the first time in over 35 years, allowing visitors to understand how Basquiat so quickly won the admiration of fellow artists and critics. The exhibition continues with an exploration of his energetic, often collaborative work as the prodigy of the downtown scene; from the birth of SAMO© to his relationship with Warhol. In the downstairs spaces, new scholarship sheds light on some of his most acclaimed paintings and drawings. A famously self-taught artist, Basquiat sampled from an extraordinary breadth of source material – from anatomical drawings to bebop jazz to silent film – but many of these

reference points have remained relatively opaque until now. With the support of the Basquiat family, the curators have conducted extensive new research, which will allow these important works to be understood as never before.

*Basquiat: Boom for Real* is co-curated by **Dr Dieter Buchhart** and **Eleanor Nairne**, Curator, Barbican Art Gallery, and organised in collaboration with the **Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt**

## Notes to Editors

### Press Information

For further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact:

**Ann Berni, Senior Communications Manager** +44 207 382 7169, [ann.berni@barbican.org.uk](mailto:ann.berni@barbican.org.uk)

**Lily Booth, Communications Officer** +44 207 382 6162, [lily.booth@barbican.org.uk](mailto:lily.booth@barbican.org.uk)

**Bréifne Ó Conbhuí, Communications Assistant** +44 207 382 7254,

[breifne.oconbhui@barbican.org.uk](mailto:breifne.oconbhui@barbican.org.uk)

**Jean Tang, Communications Assistant** +44 207 382 6138, [jean.tang@barbican.org.uk](mailto:jean.tang@barbican.org.uk)

### Full press pack available online from the Barbican Newsroom:

Links to all documents can be found in the 'Downloads' box on the top right-hand side of the page from [www.barbican.org.uk/BasquiatNews](http://www.barbican.org.uk/BasquiatNews)

### Public Information

Barbican Art Gallery, London, 0845 120 7550, [www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery](http://www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery)

#BoomForReal @barbicancentre

**Opening hours:** Sunday to Wednesday, 10am – 6pm

Thursday to Saturday, 10am – 10pm (last entry 9.30pm)

Bank Holiday Mondays: 12noon – 6pm, Bank Holiday Fridays: 12noon – 10pm

The exhibition is closed on 24, 25 and 26 December 2017.

**Important note:** The exhibition will also close at 6pm on Thursday 5 October for a private event.

### Ticket Information \*ADVANCED BOOKING ESSENTIAL\*

**Standard:** £16 / **Concessions (OAP and unemployed):** £12 / **Students/14-17:** £10

**Young Barbican (14 -25s):** £5 (no booking fee) / **Art Fund Members:** £12 / **Membership**

**Plus:** Unlimited free entry + guest / **Membership:** Unlimited free entry

**Under 14s FREE**

### Exhibition

*Basquiat: Boom for Real*, 21 September 2017 – 28 January 2018, is curated by the Barbican, London and organised in collaboration with the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt. The exhibition will be presented from 16 February to 27 May 2018 at Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt. The show is designed by architects **Carmody Groarke**. Graphic design is by **A Practice for Everyday Life (APFEL)**.

The exhibition is supported by an advisory group comprised of **Celeste-Marie Bernier**, Professor of Black Studies at Edinburgh University; academic and curator **Dr Augustus Casely-Hayford**; friend and former bandmate, **Michael Holman**; former studio assistant and art advisor **Joe La Placa**; and Basquiat scholar **Jordana Moore Saggese**.

The exhibition is sponsored by **NET-A-PORTER**, **tp bennett** and **PHILLIPS** with additional support from **Momart**. The public programme is supported by **Cockayne Grants for the Arts**, a donor-advised fund of the London Community Foundation. The official hotel partner is **Ace Hotel London**. The development of this exhibition was supported in part by an **Art Fund Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Research Grant**. Outdoor Media Partner: **Jack Arts**

### Book

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated book published by **Prestel** and designed by **A Practice for Everyday Life**. Introductory essays are by the exhibition curators **Dieter Buchhart** and **Eleanor Nairne** alongside new thematic texts by poet and cultural critic **Christian Campbell** on SAMO©; curator and writer **Carlo McCormick** on the 1981 exhibition *New York/ New*

*Wave*; the late writer **Glenn O'Brien** on the downtown New York scene; academic **Jordana Moore Saggese** on Basquiat's relationship to film and television; and music scholar **Francesco Martinelli** on *King Zulu* (1986) and Basquiat's obsession with jazz. The publication also features rare photography, previously unpublished archival material and a new chronology.  
Price: £39.99. ISBN: 978-3-7913-5636-5

### Barbican Art Gallery Shop

In addition to the exhibition catalogue the art gallery shop also features a selection of books on Jean-Michel Basquiat and other related titles, as well as special products, exclusive gifts and official exhibition merchandise, stationery, postcards and more. A selection of the Barbican Shop ranges can be found online at [www.barbican.org.uk/shop](http://www.barbican.org.uk/shop)

### Events

The exhibition is accompanied by a rich programme of talks and events.

Full events press release available from the Barbican Newsroom from August 2017

[www.barbican.org.uk/BasquiatNews](http://www.barbican.org.uk/BasquiatNews)

### Barbican Film Season

*The Grime and the Glamour: NYC 1976-90*

29 September – 5 October 2017

New York in the 70s and 80s: a time of fear, poverty, uncertainty and unparalleled artistic freedom. With the earliest film in the season dating back to 1976, a year after the city's financial default, these movies capture a moment of significant historical change and creative energy in Jean-Michel Basquiat's hometown.

*The Grime and the Glamour* line-up includes **Susan Seidelman's** *Desperately Seeking Susan*, with Basquiat's ex-paramour **Madonna** in her iconic turn as Susan; **Jim Jarmusch's** *Permanent Vacation*, which saw Basquiat himself using the film set as a makeshift crash pad; plus hip hop classic *Wild Style*, starring the legendary **Fab 5 Freddy** and **Ramellzee**, personal friends and musical collaborators with Basquiat.

Other films in the season feature a host of classic NYC haunts frequented by the artist as a young man including CBGBs, Times Square and legendary nightspot Danceteria. *Remembering CBGBs – A Triple Bill* featuring **Patti Smith**, **The Ramones**, **Talking Heads** and **Blondie**; *Smithereens* (1982), starring **Television** frontman **Richard Hell**; **Chantal Ackerman's** hauntingly beautiful *News From Home* (1977); female erotic fantasy *Variety* (1984); conflicting portraits of the former Puerto Rican enclave now uber-hip Brooklyn neighbourhood Williamsburg in *Los Sures* (1984) + *Living Los Sures*; a documentary celebrating bohemian cabaret artiste and **Warhol** consort *Tally Brown, New York* (1979); an early offering from the cinematic king of New York's underbelly **Abel Ferrara**, *Ms. 45 (aka Angel of Vengeance)* (1981); and credited with capturing the last gasp of the downtown scene before its decline is **Raul Ruiz's** *The Golden Boat* (1990).

Book tickets [here](#).

### Barbican Theatre

nitroBEAT – *nitroBEAT Pit Party – Suckerpunch Boom Suite*

Friday 29 – Saturday 30 September 2017, The Pit

Press performance: Friday 29 September 2017, 8pm

Pioneering New York artist **Jean-Michel Basquiat** is the source of inspiration for this fluid theatrical gig, which unites a vibrant community of collaborators at the forefront of experimental sound, lyricism and physical poetry.

This uplifting event sees theatre-makers, visual artists and performance poets draw on their past and present to envision a progressive future. Their pieces are set to free jazz, hip-hop, electronic and psychedelic funk played live by a band, engaging audiences in the party atmosphere.

Influenced by Basquiat, *Suckerpunch Boom Suite* responds to some of the themes and deeper truths present in his work. In this spirit, nitroBEAT's Artistic Director **Diane Morgan** curates an

evening that celebrates freedom of expression through contemporary black culture, cross-fertilisation, liberation and inclusivity.

### **Barbican Music**

A number of concerts at the Barbican feature the heady concoction of sonic influences that sound tracked Basquiat's life. From jazz to disco via numerous subcultures of punk and no wave – these sounds intertwined, unraveled and cross-pollinated across New York during the 70s and 80s.

Two upcoming *Jim Jarmusch Revisited* concerts in the Barbican Theatre on 20 and 21 September are landmark live tributes to the soundtrack of American independent director Jim Jarmusch's poetic films. The set of one such film, *Permanent Vacation*, provided Basquiat with a temporary 'crash pad' through his friendship with Jarmusch. For the concerts a stellar cast including musicians **Mulatu Astatke**, **Alex Kapranos**, **Camille O'Sullivan** and **Jolie Holland** will revisit the sonic world of Jarmusch's cinema as well as the works of Tom Waits, Iggy Pop, Neil Young and more with specially curated new arrangements of the music. All backed by a house band, assembled by musical director **David Coulter**.

The Barbican Hall welcomes two Basquiat-connected musicians on 7 October, **Kid Creole and The Coconuts** and **Arto Lindsay**. The musical languages of both Kid Creole and Lindsay draw further multicultural parallels to Basquiat given their shared Caribbean and Latin American heritages. Kid Creole, a.k.a. Bronx-born and raised August Darnell, and his band return to the Barbican for the first time since 2010 with a selection of hits from the back catalogue. No Wave legend, New York icon Arto Lindsay also returns to the Barbican to present a new chapter of his genre-defying music career: the new album *Cuidado Madame*, mixing pop, noise and Brazilian reminiscences. Additionally DJ **Justin Strauss** joins the evening's line-up, a former resident at NYC's infamous Mudd Club where Basquiat, Kid Creole and Arto Lindsay took to the dancefloor. This evening's performance also closes a special day-long programme of Basquiat activities and happenings across the centre throughout Saturday 7 October under the title *Too Young For What?*

#### **Jim Jarmusch Revisited**

**Featuring Mulatu Astatke, Camille O'Sullivan and Jolie Holland**

**Wednesday 20 & Thursday 21 September 2017 / Barbican Theatre / 19:30**

Tickets £15 – 30 plus booking fee

[Find out more](#)

#### **Kid Creole & The Coconuts / Arto Lindsay**

**+ Justin Strauss**

**Saturday 7 October 2017 / Barbican Hall / 19:30**

Tickets £17.50 – 25 plus booking fee

[Find out more](#)

#### **Too Young for What?**

**A creative celebration of Jean-Michel Basquiat**

**Saturday 7 October 2017**

In celebration of its major exhibition *Basquiat: Boom for Real*, the Barbican stages an innovative programme of free events, installations and special performances on Saturday 7 October.

Providing opportunities to develop and showcase young people's creativity *Too Young for What?* celebrates the spirit, energy and creativity of Basquiat and showcases a range of new work with and by young people from across east London and beyond. *Too Young for What?* also explores what Basquiat and his practice means to young and emerging artists today through a range of art forms including music, performance, street art and poetry. Programme highlights include Basquiat inspired work from Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning's community of young creatives, including the **Barbican Young Poets, Young Programmers** and **Young Visual Arts Group**. The day culminates with a ticketed concert in the Barbican Hall that evening, featuring vibrant, party-starting music by Kid Creole and The Coconuts and Arto Lindsay.

## Barbican Box

The Barbican's flagship schools programme **Barbican Box**, takes Basquiat as its inspiration for the 2017/18 academic year. A cross-art form Box exploring key themes and motifs from Basquiat's work and influences will be delivered in schools from autumn 2017. Students and teachers will visit the exhibition *Basquiat: Boom for Real* and explore the artist's life and work through a series of artist-led workshops and activities across a range of mediums including poetry, street art, photography and zine making. The Box will fuse visual arts and performance, enabling participants to explore cross-arts practice and create contemporary responses to Basquiat's work. The Barbican Box programme works with over 700 school and college students from across east London annually.

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/education/schools/barbican-box-secondary>

## Barbican Youth Panel

The Barbican is launching its first **Youth Panel** in 2017. Rooted in the principles of Youth Voice and Participation, the Youth Panel will help to ensure the ideas and opinions of young Londoners aged 14-25 can be brought into conversations, projects and events across the Barbican Centre. Panel members will have the opportunity to get involved with major Barbican shows including exhibition *Basquiat: Boom for Real*, as well as gaining experience of teamwork, project management and leadership. There will be mentoring opportunities available, free tickets to some Barbican events, and travel expenses within London will be provided. Young people can apply to join the Youth Panel [here](#). The deadline for applications is 5pm on Sunday 18 June 2017.

## Barbican Art Gallery and The Curve

Our visual arts programme embraces art, architecture, design, fashion, photography and film. Many of our exhibitions explore the interconnections between disciplines, periods and cultures, and aim to imagine the world in new ways. Designers, artists and architects are our collaborators in this process.

We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow; the Curve is one of the few galleries in London devoted to the commissioning of new work. Through our activities we aim to inspire more people to discover and love the arts. Entrance to the Curve is free. Through Young Barbican we offer £5 tickets to 14-25 year olds for our paid exhibitions, children under 14 are free.

Our exhibitions are complemented by comprehensively researched catalogues and a full range of public events. We develop engaging online content for audiences and offer special tours for schools. In partnership with renowned museums and art galleries, many of our exhibitions travel to reach both national and international audiences.

## Barbican newsroom

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Media Relations team's contact details are listed on our website at [www.barbican.org.uk/news/home](http://www.barbican.org.uk/news/home)

## About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over 1.1 million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas One, Two and Three, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, foyers and public spaces, a library, Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue Entertainment](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). International Associates are [Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam](#),

New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig and Jazz at Lincoln Center.

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