

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Bechtler Museum of Modern Art Announces New Exhibition
Featuring Warhol, Basquiat, Haring and Contemporary Artists ThankYouX, Kristin Mclver and HEES**
- *Generational Exhibition Brings NFTs, Fine Art and “Phigital” Art to Charlotte* -

CHARLOTTE, N.C.— Andy Warhol was an American artist, film director, producer and the leading figure in the visual art movement known as Pop Art. His works explore the relationship between artistic expression, advertising and celebrity culture of the 1960s and 1970s and span a variety of media, including painting, silkscreen, photography, film and sculpture. Warhol (1928-1987) inspired a host of contemporaries; among the most famous of them were Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988) and Keith Haring (1958-1990). Together, these artists have inspired generations of emerging artists to push the boundaries of art.

On view September 10, 2022-January 2, 2023, the exhibition *Pop to Now: Warhol and His Legacy*, developed in partnership with Aktion Art, features select works by Warhol, Basquiat and Haring and follows their influence on pop culture, music, fashion and art through a mix of works on canvas, as well as unique objects and memorabilia from the heady years of the Pop Art movement to today’s cultural landscape of NFTs (non-fungible tokens), digital and data-driven art.

The exhibition begins with the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art’s iconic Warhol portraits of the Bechtler family, painted in 1973. Celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2023, these family portraits in the museum’s collection are complemented in the exhibition by nine other portraits by the founding father of Pop Art, many of them on loan from the personal collection of Warhol’s famous muse, Jane Holzer, and in partnership with Kasmin Gallery. Holzer, a film producer, actress and model, was introduced to Warhol by *Vogue* editor Diana Vreeland in 1964. She appeared in some of Warhol’s earliest films and has since become a well-known art collector and real-estate entrepreneur. Her world-renowned collection includes some of Warhol’s most important works, as well as works by Basquiat, Haring and an array of contemporary and blue-chip artists. In addition, a collection of memorabilia, including record album covers, commission magazine works, advertisements and limited design fashion items from the period provides these works with a cultural context.

Fast forward to now, and the continued influence of these legendary artists is highlighted through the ground-breaking work of Los Angeles-based contemporary artist ThankYouX, New York-based contemporary artist Kristin Mclver and geometric contemporary American artist HEES.

“While we are a museum founded on the celebration of the European modernist moment through our core collection, we are emerging as an institution that seeks to be accessible and of its moment, striving to explore the global legacies of modernism through living contemporary artists,” said Todd D. Smith, executive director. “The inclusion of contemporary artists who are working with NFTs gives us an opportunity to introduce Charlotte and our visitors to evolving technology and emerging artists inspired by modern art.”

Ryan Wilson, known as ThankYouX, is a pioneer of the digital art age and creator of “phigital” (physical in combination with digital) art. He first gained notoriety on the streets of Los Angeles in 2009 for his large stenciled iconic graffitied tributes to Andy Warhol, signing “Thank You X” underneath in a gesture of anonymous gratitude for Warhol’s aesthetic of rebellious integrity. More recently, he has trailblazed the explosive landscape of NFTs, creating both paintings that have NFTs embedded into their canvases, as well as immersive NFTs set to music composed by music pioneer Hans Zimmer. In addition to his NFT work on view, ThankYouX will premiere a unique mural created within the exhibition, designed as a gesture toward his artistic roots, inspired by Warhol.

Kristin Mclver’s multi-disciplinary conceptual practice includes sculpture, painting, sound and installation. Utilizing devices such as language, light, mixed media and new media, the works explore themes of identity and celebrity within the context of participatory and consumer culture. Her works featured in the exhibition are portraits composed of abstracted data interpretations of Warhol’s famous works.

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Rounding out the exhibition, Kevin HEES, a contemporary of Basquiat, incorporates acrylic, oil, and paint-stick on canvas and NFTs to portray universal concepts relating to geometry, music, science and numerology. HEES' work is known for his use of colorful circles, geometric shapes and his signature circle and three lines of marks that represent the number seven, symbolic of the ingredients for life and art. His deconstructed styles, raw canvas, use of pastels, literature, poetry, symbolism and spirituality draw upon the immediacy of Basquiat's approach to artmaking and his embrace of music and pop culture.

"Aktion Art is thrilled to be working alongside the experienced team at the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, our dear friend and mentor Jane Holzer, Kasmin Gallery and so many of our esteemed collectors to create and curate *Pop to Now*," said Aktion Art founders Nick Hissom and Kameron Ramirez. "We first had the opportunity to showcase the art historical dialogue between Warhol, Basquiat, ThankYouX and HEES at our gallery in Palm Beach on Worth Avenue. Working with the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art to bring these incredible artists to Charlotte has been an honor and privilege."

Pop to Now: Warhol and His Legacy is supported by the [Infusion Fund](#) and its generous donors, as well as the City of Charlotte and Foundation for the Carolinas. Additional support provided by the North Carolina Arts Council and the Arts and Science Council.

With special thanks to lenders Aktion Art, Jane Holzer, Kasmin Gallery, Edith Dicconson, William Stover, Lucy Guo, Finneas O'Connell, Russ Ball, Nick Hissom, Kameron Ramirez, Marley Kaplan, Antoine Ohanessian, Zeit Contemporary, Ryan Wilson (ThankYouX) and Kevin HEES.

About the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art

The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art is the only museum in the Southern United States exclusively dedicated solely to European and American Modern Art and its legacies. Capturing a remarkable era of art history from the collection of the Zürich-based Bechtler family, the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art collection includes works by some of the most important and influential figures of modernism, including Alexander Calder, Le Corbusier, Edgar Degas, Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, Barbara Hepworth, Jasper Johns, Paul Klee, Alfred Manessier, Joan Miró, Kenneth Noland, Pablo Picasso, Bridget Riley, Nicolas de Staël, Andy Warhol and a wealth of other 20th-century notables. The museum, designed by Swiss architect Mario Botta, prominently features the Niki de Saint Phalle's iconic *Le Grand Oiseau de Feu sur l'Arche* on its entrance plaza. Located in the heart of Uptown, the Bechtler is a light-filled community space created to inspire and engage first-time visitors and long-term supporters alike.

About Aktion Art

Aktion Art is a full-service primary gallery, and art advisory specializing in a wide array of works, ranging from the fastest emerging and contemporary names to the finest blue chip and museum-quality artists. Founded by Nick Hissom and partner Kameron Ramirez in 2019, their unique experience in fine art and media spans over a decade and has been widely covered since their formation of Aktion Art. Together, Nick and Kameron have created and curated a plethora of triumphant art experiences including shows by Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, and Damien Hirst, as well as collaborations with The Museum of Art and Design, the Norton Museum, and a host of highly profiled international events.

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Images and Interviews Available