

LÉVY GORVY 厲為閣

DEBUTING A NEW GLOBAL SERIES OF SINGLE-WORK FOCUS EXHIBITIONS, LÉVY GORVY WILL BRING RARE MASTERPIECE BY JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT TO HONG KONG

Jean-Michel Basquiat: Royalty, Heroism, and the Streets to be the First Gallery Presentation in Asia for the Late Celebrated Artist
王英雄主義街頭

7 July–10 September 2020

Lévy Gorvy
Ground Floor, 2 Ice House Street
Central, Hong Kong



Jean-Michel Basquiat. *Untitled*, 1982. Acrylic, oilstick, and metallic paint on canvas, 94 3/4 x 60 inches (240.7 x 152.4 cm). © The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat

Hong Kong—This summer, Lévy Gorvy will inaugurate its new global initiative REVEAL, an ongoing series of single-work focus exhibitions devoted to postwar and contemporary masterpieces, accompanied by in-depth contextual materials and educational programming both in its spaces and online. The first REVEAL exhibition will open at Lévy Gorvy Hong Kong on July 7, 2020: *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Royalty, Heroism, and the Streets* brings a rare and exceptional painting by Jean-Michel Basquiat from his breakthrough year of 1982 and is the first Asia gallery presentation of the artist's work.

On view through September 10, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: Royalty, Heroism, and the Streets* will be presented at the Hong Kong space in conjunction with an exhibition of major works by French artist Pierre Soulages.

Basquiat's *Untitled* (1982) is an electrifying portrait of a Black hero figure standing proud amidst the chaos of abstracted painterly form and color. The canvas is one of Basquiat's most impressive and important works, part self-portrait, part idol, part dream image, part nightmare vision. *Untitled* is one of famous trio of large-scale paintings on the theme of the prophet that Basquiat made in 1982, the

pivotal year of the artist's meteoric rise to international stardom. Supported by his first dealer Annina Nosei, who provided him with his first supply of high-quality working materials and a dedicated space to paint, Basquiat was able in 1982 to realize for the first

time an ever-more extraordinary sequence of hauntingly powerful paintings depicting what he described as “royalty, heroism, and the streets.”

The vast majority of paintings that Basquiat made during this period depict a lone Black figure as hero. Throughout 1982 and afterwards, these figures began to function like talismans or spiritual guides within an ever-widening personal mythology that the artist wove into his art. Some works from this time appear to draw upon an inner world populated by saints, prophets, and ghosts. The Basquiat painting *Untitled* on view at Lévy Gorvy Hong Kong falls into this category, presenting the viewer with the artist’s omnipotent, embattled alter ego.

In the summer of 1982, Basquiat began a trilogy of proxy self-portraits on the theme of the prophet that included *Untitled*. Distinctly totemic, the inner anatomy these figures is sometimes visible, as if seen via an x-ray. Suggesting an artist-as-seer, these manifestations of Basquiat’s psyche give form to his self-image, radiating energy and psychic power. With its semi-abstract composition of colorful brushwork, *Untitled* fuses self-portraiture with the gestural style of America’s leading Abstract Expressionist masters, Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, revealing Basquiat’s deep and uniquely astute engagement of both art history and street life. The result is an expressive masterpiece from a defining moment in Basquiat’s career that Lévy Gorvy is proud to exhibit for the first time in Asia.



Annina Nosei and Jean-Michel Basquiat in his studio in the basement of the Annina Nosei Gallery on Prince Street, SoHo, in front of works from the partially destroyed series *Prophets*, New York, 1982. Photo © Naoki Okamoto. Artworks © The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat/ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London

“We are excited to launch REVEAL, a new series of focused exhibitions that will bring major works of art to our galleries around the world,” says Brett Gorvy. “At a time when travel is heavily restricted, we look to engage with collectors and the public on the ground while simultaneously connecting to a global audience using our digital platforms to introduce these preeminent artists and their masterworks. We are proud to start this program with Jean-Michel Basquiat’s *Untitled* (1982). Basquiat’s work feels incredibly relevant and alive today. In *Untitled*, Basquiat presents himself as a prophet and seer. His raw emotion and the spontaneity of his brushwork conveys an emotive power that seems especially significant to our times.”

About Lévy Gorvy

Lévy Gorvy cultivates a program devoted to innovation and connoisseurship in the fields of modern, postwar, and contemporary art. Founded by Dominique Lévy and Brett Gorvy, Lévy Gorvy maintains gallery spaces at 909 Madison Avenue in New York, in Mayfair, London, and in Central, Hong Kong. The gallery fosters continued dedication to the living artists and artists’ estates that it represents and offers a robust program of exhibitions and multidisciplinary events. The gallery also produces ongoing art-historical research and original scholarship, publishing exhibition catalogues, monographs, and other key publications. The Zürich office, Lévy Gorvy with Rumbler, offers bespoke private advisory services to collectors and institutions around the globe.

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