

Chromatic Dispatches: Jean-Michel Basquiat

Richard J. Powell

John Spencer Bassett Professor of Art & Art History, Duke University

Thursday, October 10, 2024

6:30PM

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC



Bruce Davidson, from *Subway* (New York: Aperture, 1986).



Left: Alexis Adler, *Jean-Michel Basquiat, New York*, c. 1979-80. Gelatin silver print.



Right: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled (Red Man)*, 1981. Acrylic, oil paint-stick, and spray paint on canvas, 80 ½ x 83 inches (204.5 x 210.8 cm).



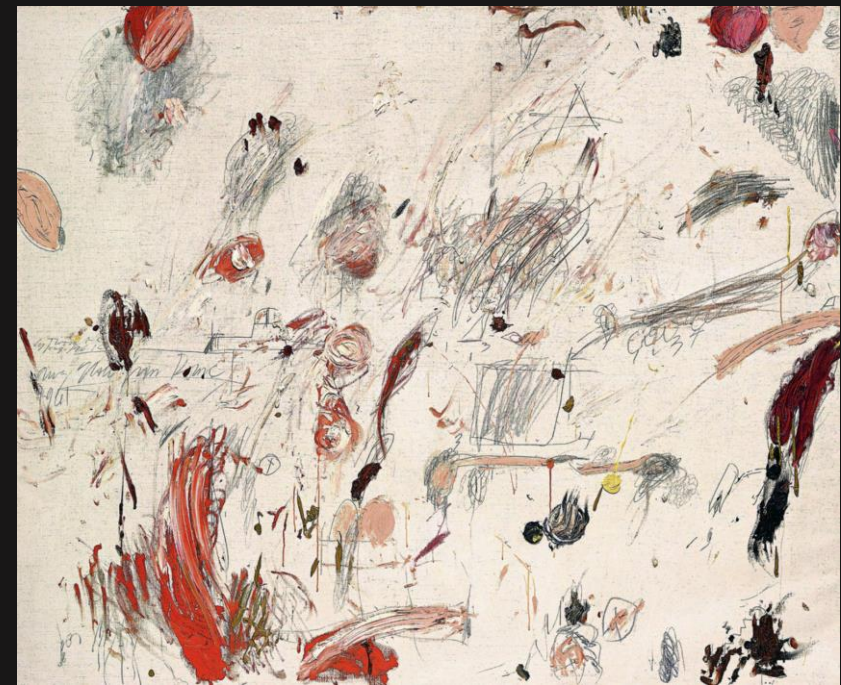
Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled*, 1981. Acrylic, oil paint-stick, and spray paint on wood, 73 ¼ x 49 ¼ inches (186.1 x 125.1 cm.) Private collection.



Above: Selden Rodman, *Door of a peasant caille with vever-like decorations near Gonaives, Haiti*, 1947. Photograph. Published in Selden Rodman's *Haiti: The Black Republic. The Complete Story and Guide* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1954).



Above: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Dos Cabezas 2*, 1983. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 84 x 84 inches (213.4 x 213.4 cm). Collection of Francesco Bellizzi.



Upper right: Cy Twombly, *Ferragosto II*, 1961. Oil, oil crayon & graphite pencil on canvas, 64 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 78 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches (164.5 x 200.3 cm). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution.

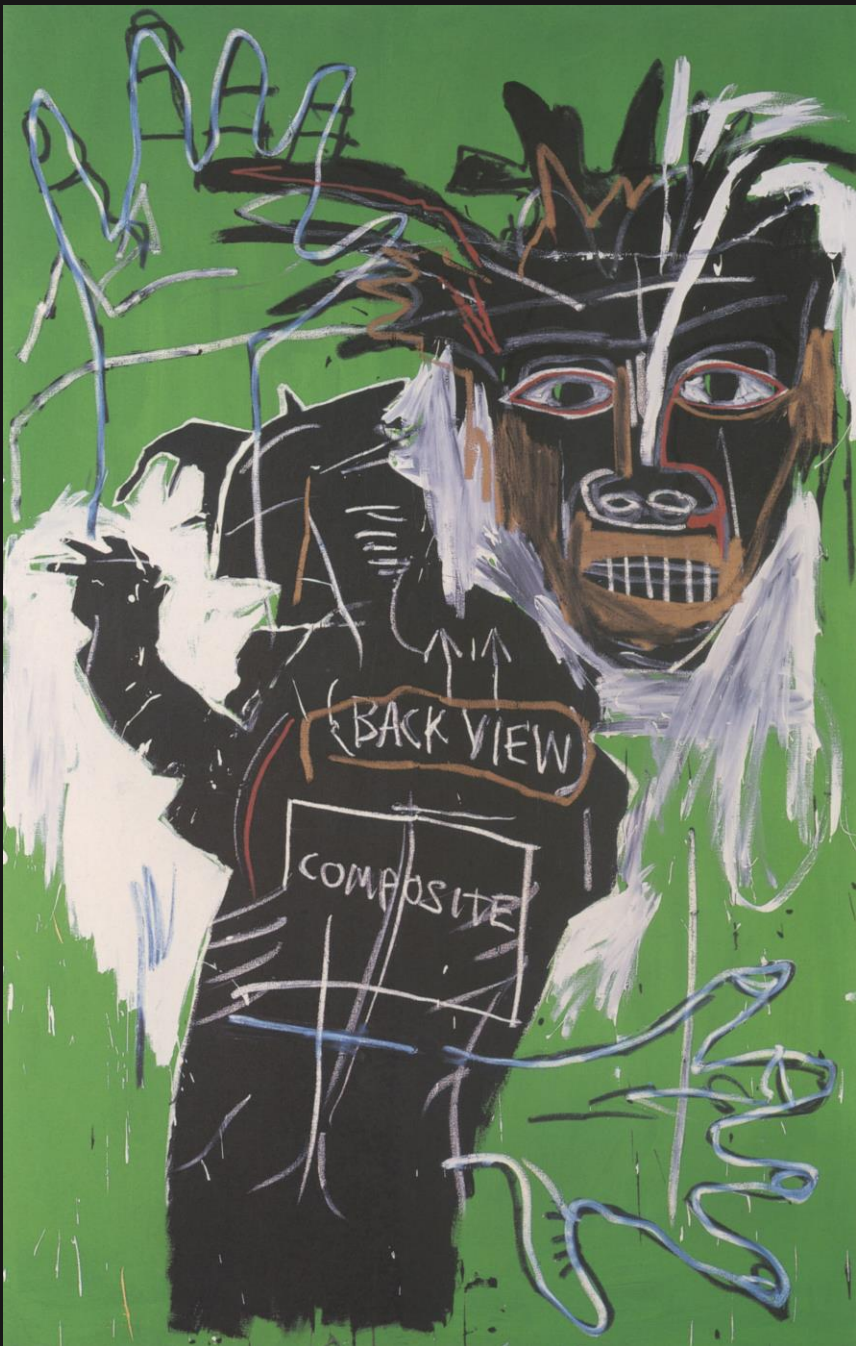


Lower right: Example of New York graffiti, late 20th century.



Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled*, 1981. Acrylic, oil paint-stick, and spray paint on wood, 73 ¼ x 49 ¼ inches (186.1 x 125.1 cm.) Private collection.

Above: Hervé Télémaque, *Dérive I (Drift I)*, 1983. Acrylic on canvas, 79 x 122 inches (200 x 310 cm). Private Collection.



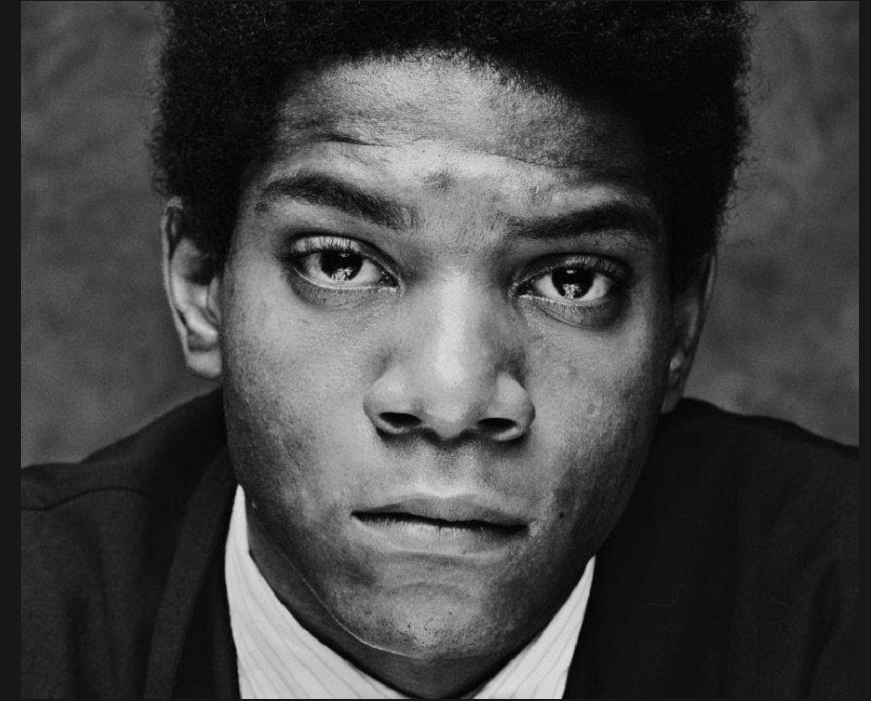
Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Self-Portrait as a Heel, Part Two*, 1982. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 96 x 61 ½ inches (243.8 x 156.2 cm). Collection of Stephane Janssen.



Center: Jamal Shabazz, *Young man with boom-box and cans of spray paint, Brooklyn*, c. 1980s. Color photograph.



Upper right: Bob Kane, Cover of DC Comics book *Bat-Man*, September 1963, no. 158.



Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *All Colored Cast (Part II)*, 1982. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 60 x 60 inches (152.5 x 152.5 cm). Private collection.

Above: Chalkie Davies/Getty Images, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, 1984. Photograph.

documenta 7 Kassel

documenta 7 Kassel



R.H. Fuchs, Coosie van Bruggen, Germano Celant, Johannes Gachnang, Gerhard Storck & Walter Nikkels, *Documenta 7*, vol. 1 & 2 (Kassel: Documenta 7, 1982).



Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled*, 1981. Acrylic, oil paint-stick, and spray paint on wood, 73 ¼ x 49 ¼ inches (186.1 x 125.1 cm.) Private collection.

Right: Aelbrecht Bouts, *The Man of Sorrow*, mid-1490s. Oil on oak panel, 14 15/16 x 10 7/16 inches (37.9 x 26.5 cm). Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Cambridge.





Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump*, 1982. Acrylic, oil paint-stick, and spray paint on canvas, 94 ½ x 165 ½ inches (240 x 420.5 cm). Private Collection.

Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled*, 1983. Triptych, Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 96 x 72 inches (243.8 x 62 cm). Museum Brandhorst, Munich.



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled (Cadmium)*, 1984. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 66 x 60 inches (152.5 x 152.5 cm). High Museum of Art, Atlanta.





Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Max Roach*, 1984. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 60 x 60 inches (152.5 x 152.5 cm). Private collection.

Above: Album cover, *Max Roach and his Orchestra & Chorus, It's Time*. Impulse! Records (1962).

Richard J. Powell, ed., *The Blues Aesthetic: Black Culture and Modernism* (Washington, DC: Washington Project for the Arts, 1989).

THE BLUES AESTHETIC:



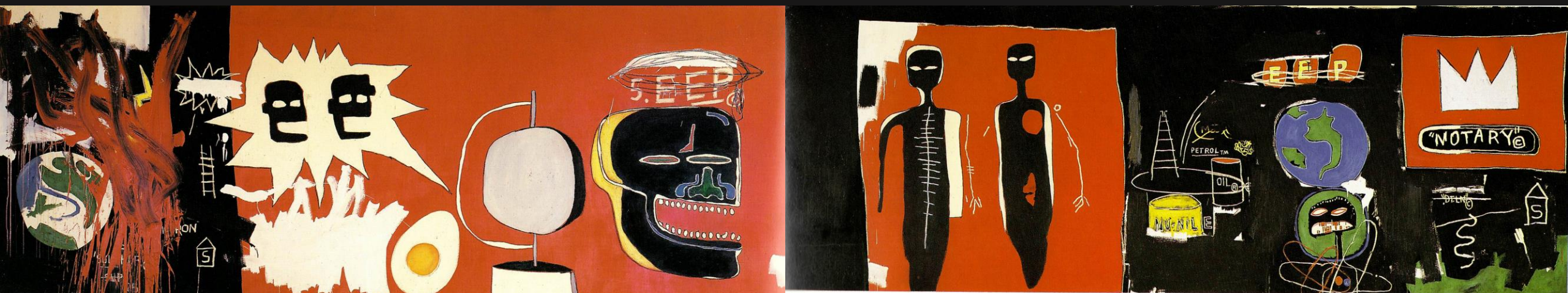
BLACK CULTURE
AND MODERNISM



Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Max Roach*, 1984. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 60 x 60 inches (152.5 x 152.5 cm). Private collection.



Above: Photographer unknown, *Scene at night on 52nd Street, New York*, c. 1950s. Color photograph.



Above: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Nu Nile*, 1985. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 92 ¼ x 480 inches (234.3 x 1219.2 cm). Private collection.

Right: Vintage *Nu-Nile Hair Slick Dressing Pomade* container, c. 1930.





Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Max Roach*, 1984. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 60 x 60 inches (152.5 x 152.5 cm). Private collection.



Above: Archibald J. Motley, Jr., *Saturday Night*, 1935. Oil on canvas, 32 x 40 inches (81.3 x 101.6 cm.). Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

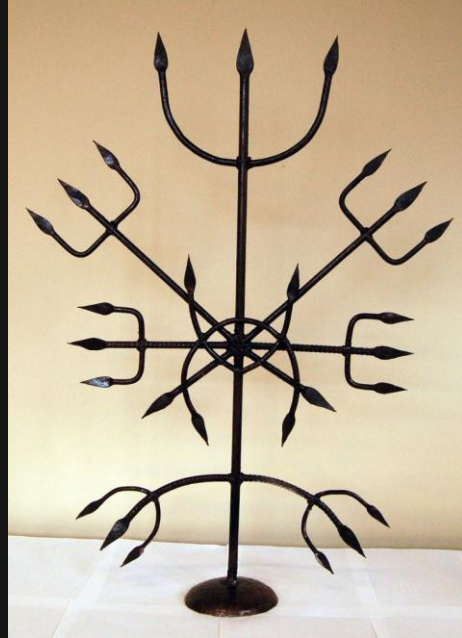


Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled*, 1985. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on wood, 60 x 60 inches (275.6 x 217.2 x 30.5 cm). Private collection.



Lizzie Himmel©

Right: Lizzie Himmel, Jean-Michel Basquiat, New York (seated in front of the unfinished *Untitled*), for the cover of the *New York Times Magazine*, February 10, 1985. Photograph. © 2022 Lizzie Himmel.



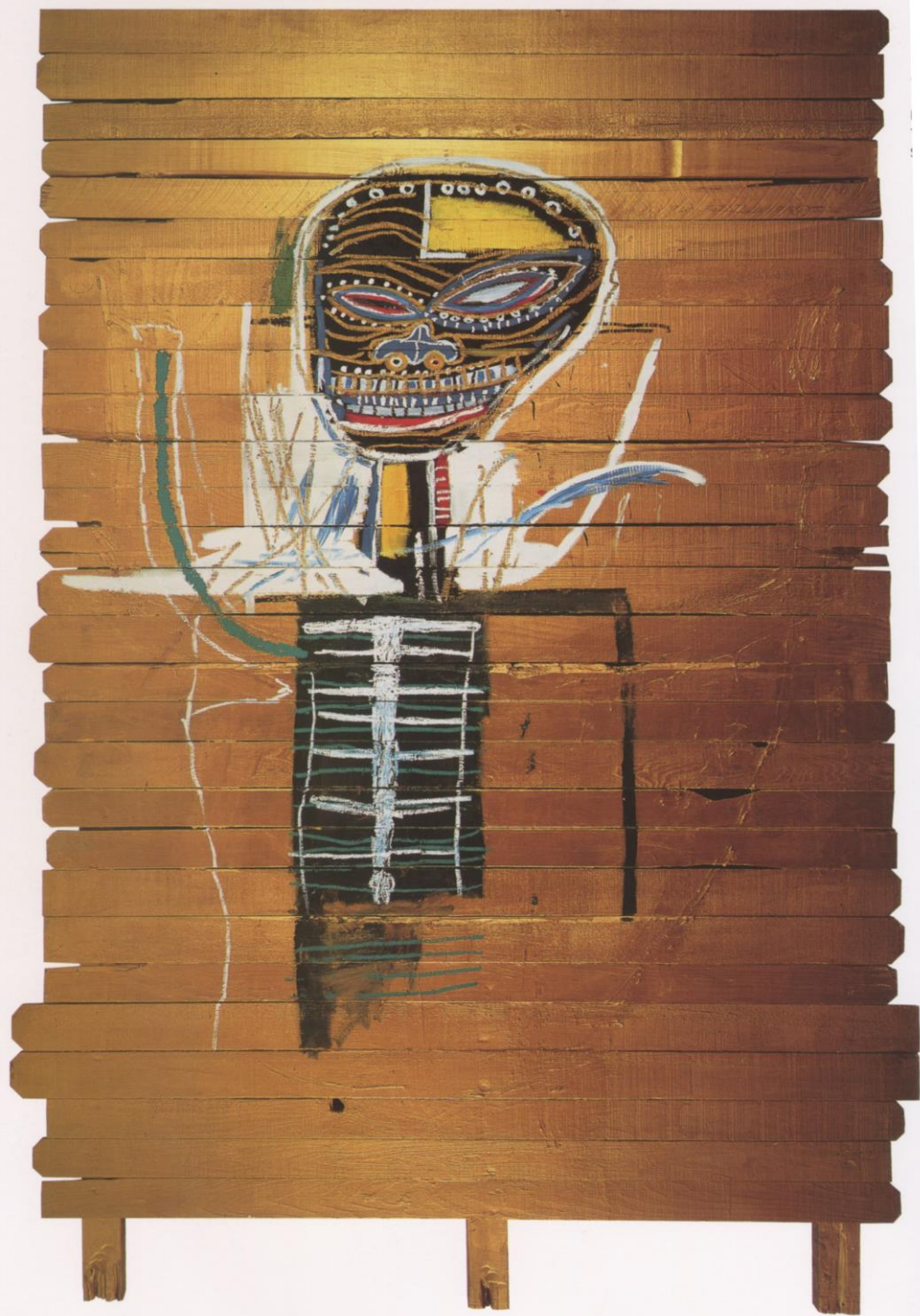
From left to right:

Santeria devotee, Havana, Cuba, *Altar for Eshu-Elegbara*, 21st century. Mixed media.

Candomble devotee, Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, *Altar for Exu*, 21st century. Iron.

Andre Pierre (Haitian), *Legba*, Late 20th century. Enamel on paperboard.

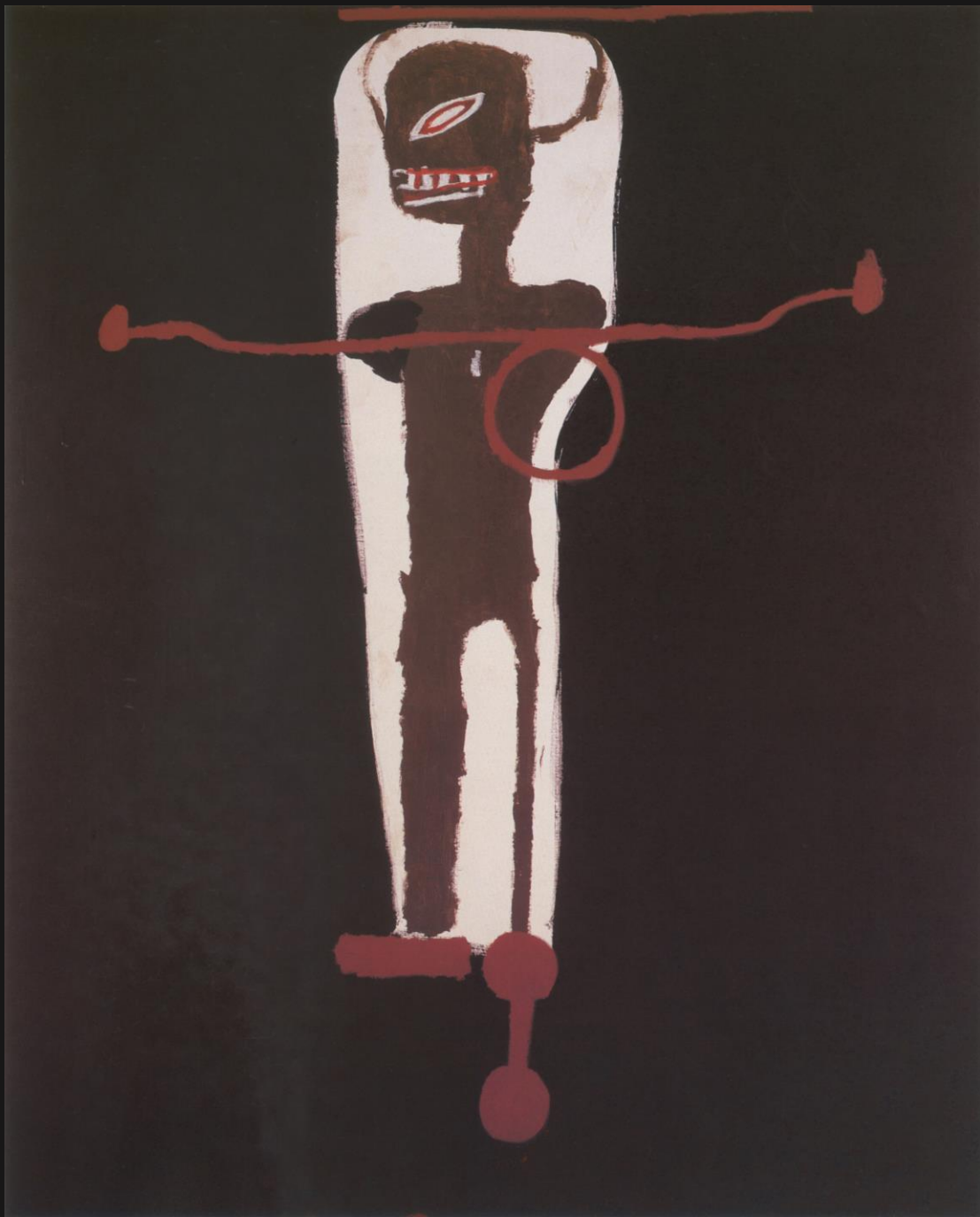
Sam Doyle (South Carolina, U.S.), *Dr. Buz*, c. 1970s. Paint on sheet metal, 49 ½ x 26 ½ inches. American Folk Art Museum, New York.



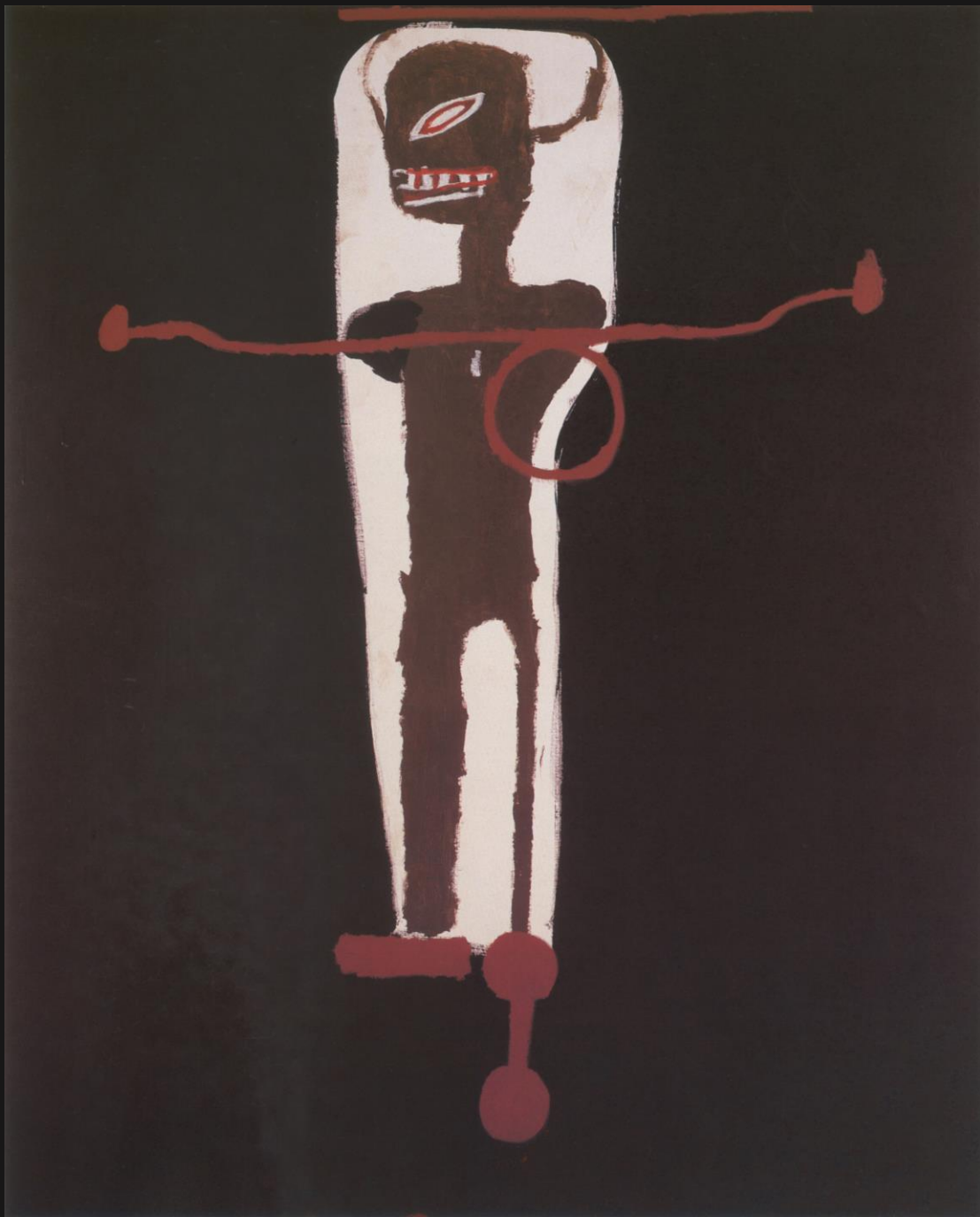
Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Gold Griot*, 1984. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on wood, 117 x 73 inches (297 x 185.5 cm). The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica.

Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Jim Crow*, 1986. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on wood, 81 x 69 inches (206 x 244 cm). Private collection.

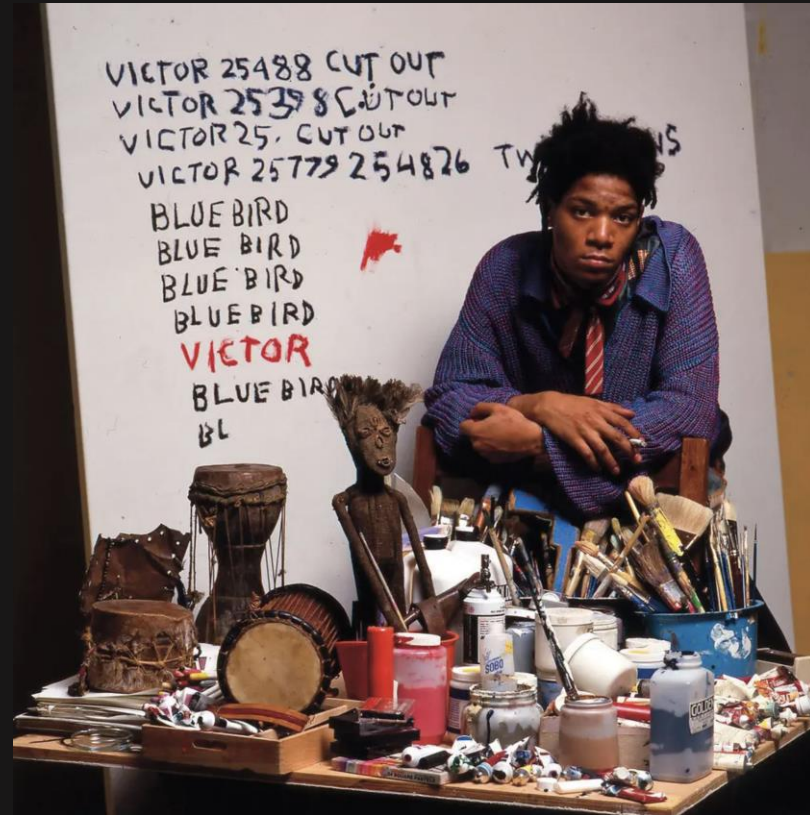




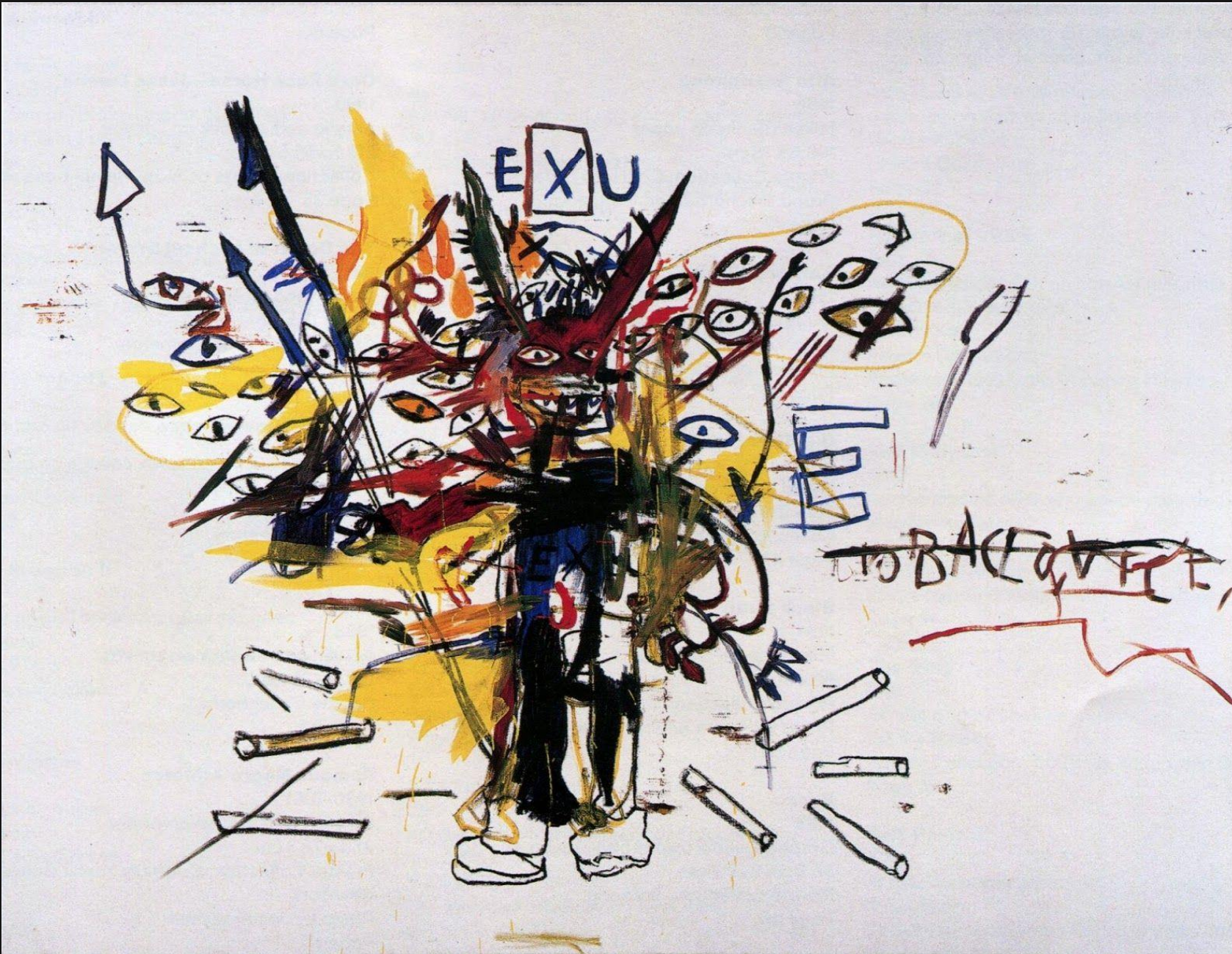
Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Gri-Gri*, 1986. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on wood, 70 x 56 inches (177.8 x 142.2 cm.). Collection of Richard Rodriguez.



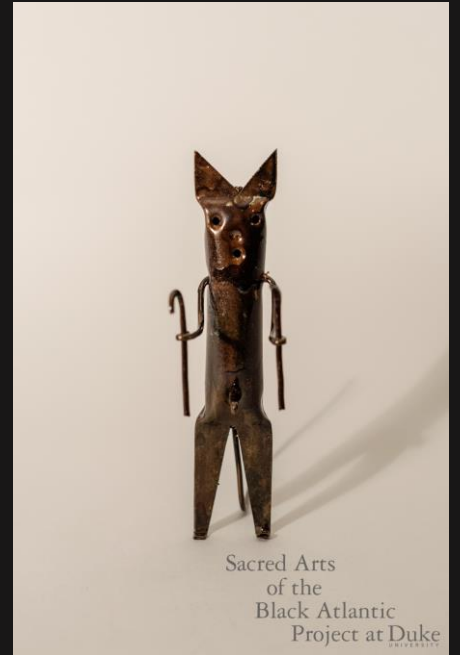
Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Gri-Gri*, 1986. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on wood, 70 x 56 inches (177.8 x 142.2 cm.). Collection of Richard Rodriguez.



Above: Tseng Kwong Chi, *Jean-Michel Basquiat, New York*, 1987. Chromogenic print, 50 x 50 inches.



Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Exu*, 1988. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 79 x 100 inches (199.5 x 254 cm.) Collection Aurelia Navarra.



Above: Unknown Brazilian artist, Exu statue, 21st century. Metal. The Sacred Arts of the Black Atlantic Collection, Center for African and African American Research, Duke University, Durham.

Clarence Major, ed., *Black Slang: A Dictionary of Afro-American Talk* (New York: International Publishers, 1970).

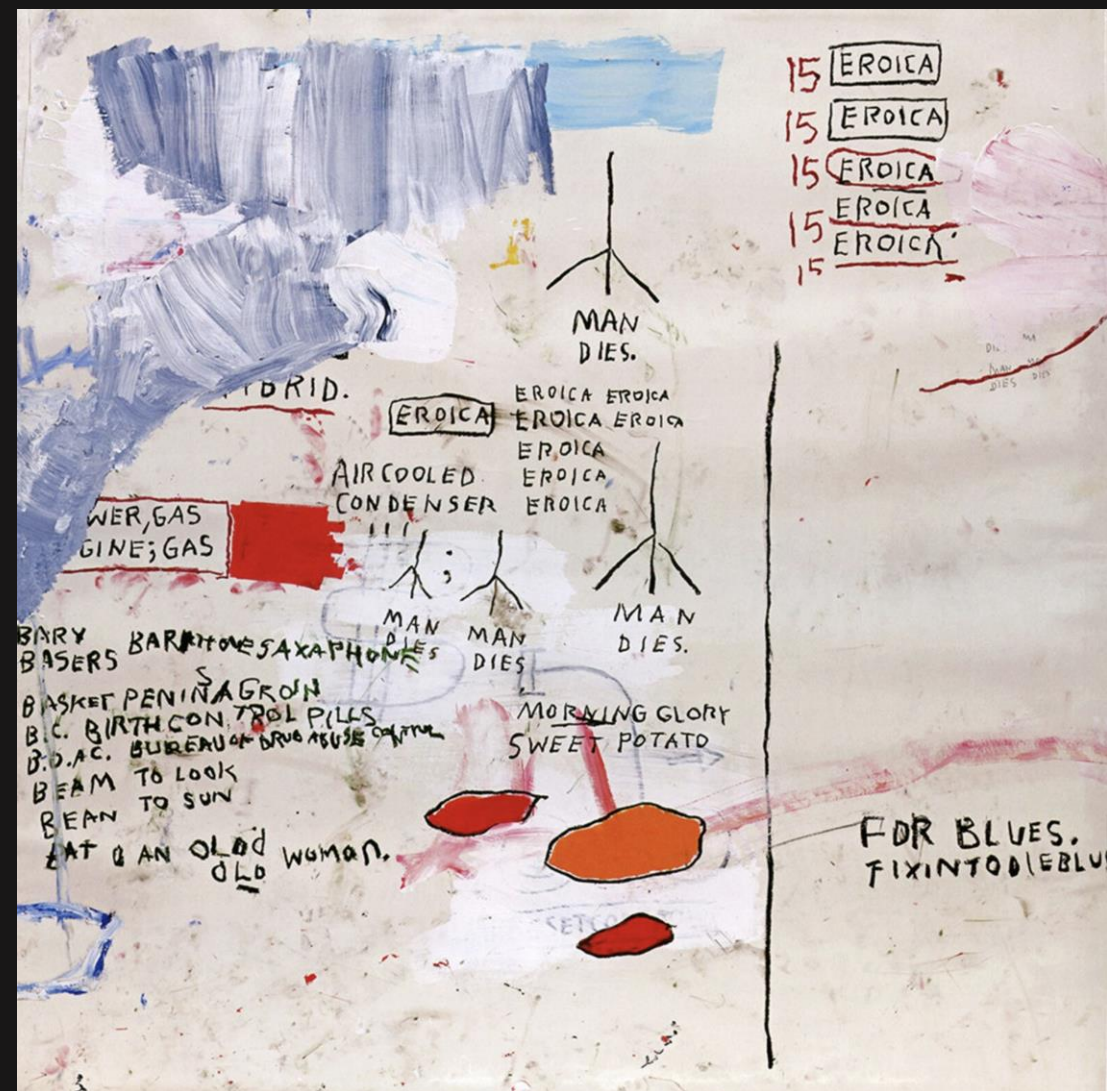
Black Slang

A Dictionary of Afro-American Talk



Edited by

Clarence Major



Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Eroica II*, 1988. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on paper mounted on canvas, 91 x 89 inches (230 x 225.5 cm). Collection of Leo Maica.

Right: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Eroica I*, 1988. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on paper mounted on canvas, 91 x 89 inches (230 x 225.5 cm). Collection of Alberto Spallanzani.



Hervé Télémaque, *Josette et Jean-Michel*, 1993. Lacquer paint and coffee residue on wood, 49 x 51 x 30 inches (125 x 130.5 x 77 cm). Collection of the artist's estate.

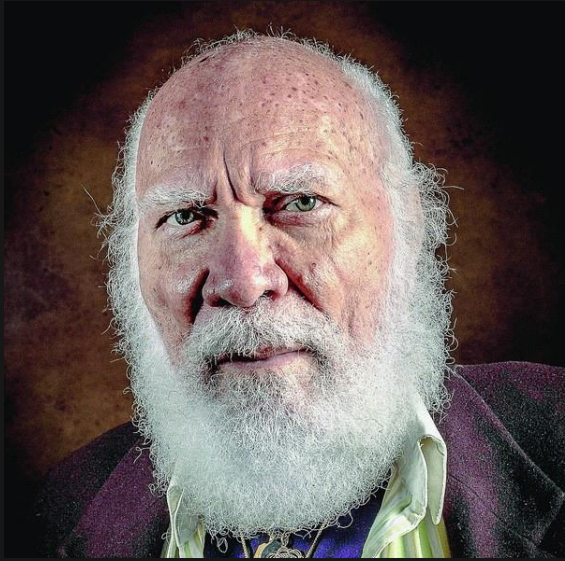


Clockwise from lower left: Hervé Télémaque, Paris, 2019. Two installation views of the exhibition *Haiti: Deux siècles de création artistique* (showing Jean-Michel Basquiat, *King of the Zulus*, 1984-85; Jean-Michel Basquiat, *She Installs Confidence and Picks His Brain Like a Salad*, 1987; and Hervé Télémaque, *La Terre Couchée/The Sleeping Earth*, 1985), Grand Palais, Galeries nationales, Paris. February 2015. Jean-Michel Basquiat, New York, 1983.



Left: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Hollywood Africans*, 1983. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 84 1/6 x 84 inches (215.5 x 215.4 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Right: Tseng Kwong Chi, *Jean-Michel Basquiat, New York*, 1987. Chromogenic print, 50 x 50 inches.



FRANKÉTIENNE

Ready to Burst



Translated from the French by Kaiama L. Glover

archipelago books

Lower left: Frankétienne, *Ready to Burst*. Translated by Kaiama L. Glover. New York: Archipelago Books, 2014.

Upper left: Frankétienne, Paris, 2013.

Right: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Rubber*, 1985. Acrylic, collage and oil paint-stick on canvas, 86 x 68 inches (218.4 x 172.7 cm). Private collection.



“Stumbling against a piece of broken concrete, he falls down at the intersection of Jean-Jacques Dessalines Boulevard and Fronts-Forts Street. He keeps rolling. Then comes to a complete stop. On his back. His body, a blazing torch. His limbs, bursts of flames. His head on fire, a flaming mass filled with exploding shells...”



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Gas Truck*, 1984. Acrylic and oil paint-stick on canvas, 3 panels, 50 x 169 inches (127 x 429.3 cm.) Private collection.



“Eyes open, he looks at the corner of the street whizzing by like wagons jam-packed together, mounted on rails like a high-speed train, an express train to the sea. It’s funny ... I’m taking the midnight design express. It’s beautiful, this aboveground landscape of neon signs! The sky chopped into ragged pieces. Neon flowers light up ... shut off ... light up again ... Blue ... red ... green ... yellow. How quickly it goes by, this silent, freewheeling train to the dock! Blue-green ... blue-red ... deep yellow.”

Excerpt from *Frankétienne, Ready to Burst* (translated by Kaiama L. Glover). New York: Archipelago Books, 2014.

Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Riddle Me This, Batman*, 1987. Acrylic and crayon on canvas, 117 x 114 inches (297 x 290 cm). Private collection.



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Victor 25448*, 1987. Acrylic, oil paint-stick, wax, and crayon on paper mounted on canvas, 73 x 133 inches (185.5 x 338 cm). The Stephanie and Peter Brant Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut.



Above: Hervé Télémaque, *Y'a Bon*, 1964. Lithograph on wove paper, 9.8 x 9.8 inches (24.89 x 24.89 cm). Private Collection.

Right: Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Page 1 from Untitled Notebook 3*, 1980-81. Metallic ink, ink marker, and wax crayon on ruled notebook paper, 7 5/8 x 1 1/4 inches (24.4 x 19.4 x 0.6 cm). Collection of Larry Walsh.

