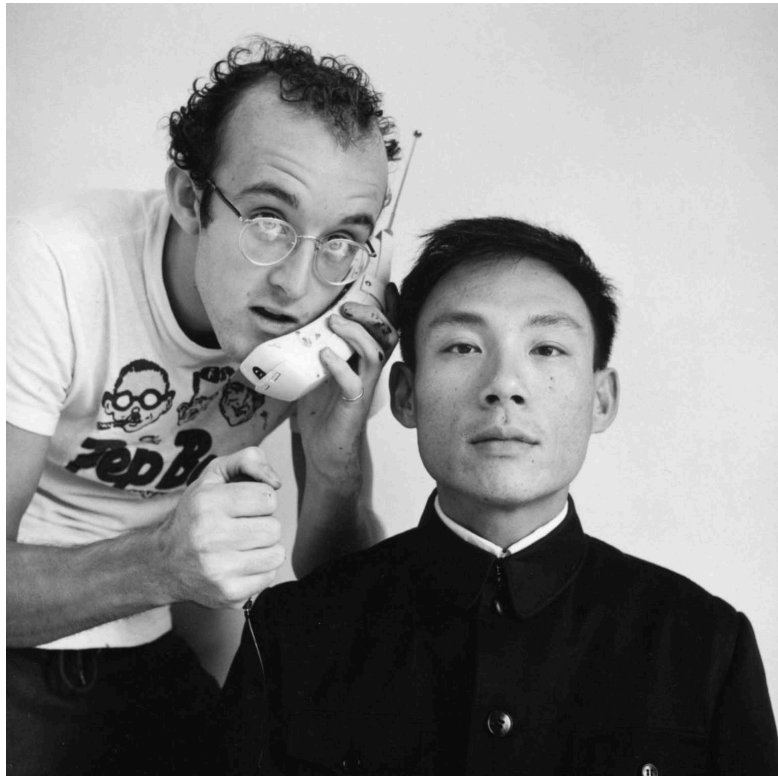


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Appreciating Tseng Kwong Chi's Radical Art, beyond His Photos of Keith Haring

Harley Wong Apr 30, 2020



Tseng Kwong Chi, Keith Haring and Tseng Kwong Chi, 1986. © Muna Tseng Dance Projects, Inc. Courtesy of Muna Tseng Dance Projects, Inc.

One late night in the spring of 1979, a man wearing high-waisted white corduroy pants on the corner of First Avenue and East Fifth Street immediately caught Keith Haring's attention. "He was so eccentric looking that I knew I had to meet this person," Haring wrote in his journals. "I ended up sort of cruising him, but then we became friends."

The man was photographer and performance artist Tseng Kwong Chi, who would go on to document much of Haring's career. Totalling over 20,000 photographs, Tseng's collection would become the largest archive of Haring's work in the world. Shortly after exchanging numbers, Haring invited Tseng to a poetry reading at Club 57, where Tseng reluctantly joined Haring on stage to help the artist read a poem he had written. This marked the beginning of a rich friendship that would last until they both succumbed to AIDS-related complications, passing away within one month of each other.

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