

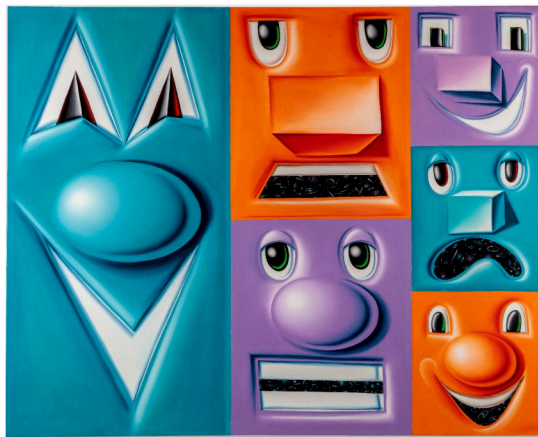
MA、藝倉美術館
MODERN ART MUSEUM
SHANGHAI

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**“KENNY SCHARF: EMOTIONAL” OPENS
AT MODERN ART MUSEUM (MAM) SHANGHAI**

This is Scharf's largest solo exhibition to date, featuring an immersive Beach Club experience



Kenny Scharf, Headblox, 2016, Oil on Canvas, 120 x 90 inches

Shanghai, China — The Modern Art Museum (MAM) Shanghai announces Kenny Scharf's solo exhibition from June 29–October 8. Spanning decades of Scharf's work, *Emotional* examines the artist's playful yet meticulous exploration of emotions through a vivid iconography. It features more than 120 multi-disciplinary artworks displayed across three floors of the museum. At the center of the visitor experience is Kenny Scharf's Beach Club, an installation that transports guests into the artist's California beachside utopia.

Press Day is scheduled for June 27, VIP Day on June 28, and the official opening will be on June 29.

Curated by Shai Baitel, Artistic Director of MAM Shanghai, the exhibition showcases Scharf's pioneering street art aesthetic and distinctive visual language. Featuring exaggerated faces and expressive forms, his work connects ancient pictographic languages and modern emoji culture. Long before emojis emerged to fill the emotional gap in digital communication, Scharf developed a visual language that captured the complexities of humanity's relationship with expression and feeling.

The show includes paintings, sculptures, and other objects organized into groups of emotions: Anger, Disgust, Fear, Happiness, Sadness, and Awe. The exhibition provides the audience with a glimpse into emotional expression through art history, focusing on Scharf's approach to this part of human nature.

"I am honored and excited for this opportunity to show my work in such a large format and scale at MAM Shanghai for my first museum show in China," says Kenny Scharf.

Shai Baitel, Artistic Director of MAM Shanghai says. "Kenny Scharf is a giant whose art and influence cannot be overstated. He is one of the most distinctive artists today, having started alongside Jean Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring. The exhibition, with the inclusion of the immersive Beach Club, creates a transformative experience for visitors and brings the power of Scharf's exuberant pop-art fantasy to life in the heart of Shanghai."

Kenny Scharf Beach Club



Rendering of Kenny Scharf Beach Club; credit: Stefano Lattanzio

Scharf's illustrated creations often transcend canvases and are applied to surfaces ranging from household appliances to automobiles and extend into experiences that blur the line between art and lifestyle. This sentiment comes to life with the Beach Club concept where an entire floor of MAM Shanghai is converted into a quintessential beach adventure inspired by Scharf's daily swimming routine. The installation captures the sunny, lighthearted, and breezy energy of Venice Beach with delicate sand, emerald green palms, beach huts, and vendor stands that have Scharf-designed memorabilia that blend kitschy nostalgia with his signature pop art aesthetic.

The installation reinterprets the iconic pink Miami Beach lifeguard tower as its centerpiece. Six new sculptures surround the tower while beach chairs, paddleball games, vintage surfboards, inflatables, and skateboards – all with visual interventions by Scharf – complete the experience. Visitors are encouraged to arrive in flip-flops and beachwear or tread barefoot throughout the sand to fully immerse themselves into the escapist environment.

MAM Shanghai is hosting public beach parties in the space every weekend with select DJs.

About Modern Art Museum (MAM) Shanghai

The Modern Art Museum (MAM) in Shanghai, China, is an institution focused on diversity, equality, nurturing creativity, and education. An institution with a global and multidisciplinary approach, MAM Shanghai aims at contributing to the education, knowledge and enjoyment of art through an immersive and engaging experience. Its vast industrial architecture offers a versatile and dynamic space to connect the shared cultures of the East and West. Located along the 'cultural corridor' of museums and galleries that runs along the riverside in the Pudong New Area, MAM Shanghai utilizes innovative methods to facilitate public participation and engagement with art.

About Kenny Scharf

Kenny Scharf (b. 1958, United States) is a renowned artist affiliated with the 1980's East Village Art movement in New York. Scharf developed a distinct and uniquely personal artistic style in paintings as well as sculpture, alongside his mentor Andy Warhol, and contemporaries like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring with whom he pioneered contemporary street art.

References to popular culture recur throughout his works, such as appropriated cartoon characters from the Flintstones and Jetsons, as well as imagined anthropomorphic creatures. Through ecstatic compositions and a dazzling color palette, Scharf presents an immersive viewing experience that is both intimate and fresh. Scharf's multifaceted practice- spanning painting, sculpture, installation work, murals, performance and fashion-reflects his dedication to the creation of dynamic forms of art that deconstruct existing artistic hierarchies, echoing the philosophy of Pop Artists.

Yet Scharf's artistic significance expands beyond the art historical terrain of Pop Art; the artist instead coined the term "Pop Surrealist" to describe his one-of-a-kind practice. His inclusion in the 1985 Whitney Biennial marked the start of his international phenomenon, a reputation that continues to thrive today.

About Shai Baitel

Shai Baitel is an arts executive and creative director with extensive experience in the fields of arts, culture, and business. He serves as the Artistic Director of the Modern Art Museum (MAM) Shanghai for which he created, among others, the exhibitions "Marina Abramović: Transforming Energy" (2024), "David Hockney: Paper Trails" (2024), "Zaha Hadid Architects: Close Up" (2021), and "Bob Dylan: Retrospectrum" (2019).

Baitel envisioned, co-founded, and helped Mana Contemporary, the largest and most comprehensive arts center of its kind, grow into its current form as an internationally recognized arts-destination. He conceived and realized large scale productions incorporating visual content and choreographed performance art, as well as performing art and theatre. In this capacity as an independent creative director, Baitel has worked for and with high-profile individuals and corporations. Baitel is a prolific writer and frequently contributed to major publications.

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