



# Jean-Michel Basquiat

He picked up a paintbrush, chisel, or piece of clay to create  
The world's most famous works of art



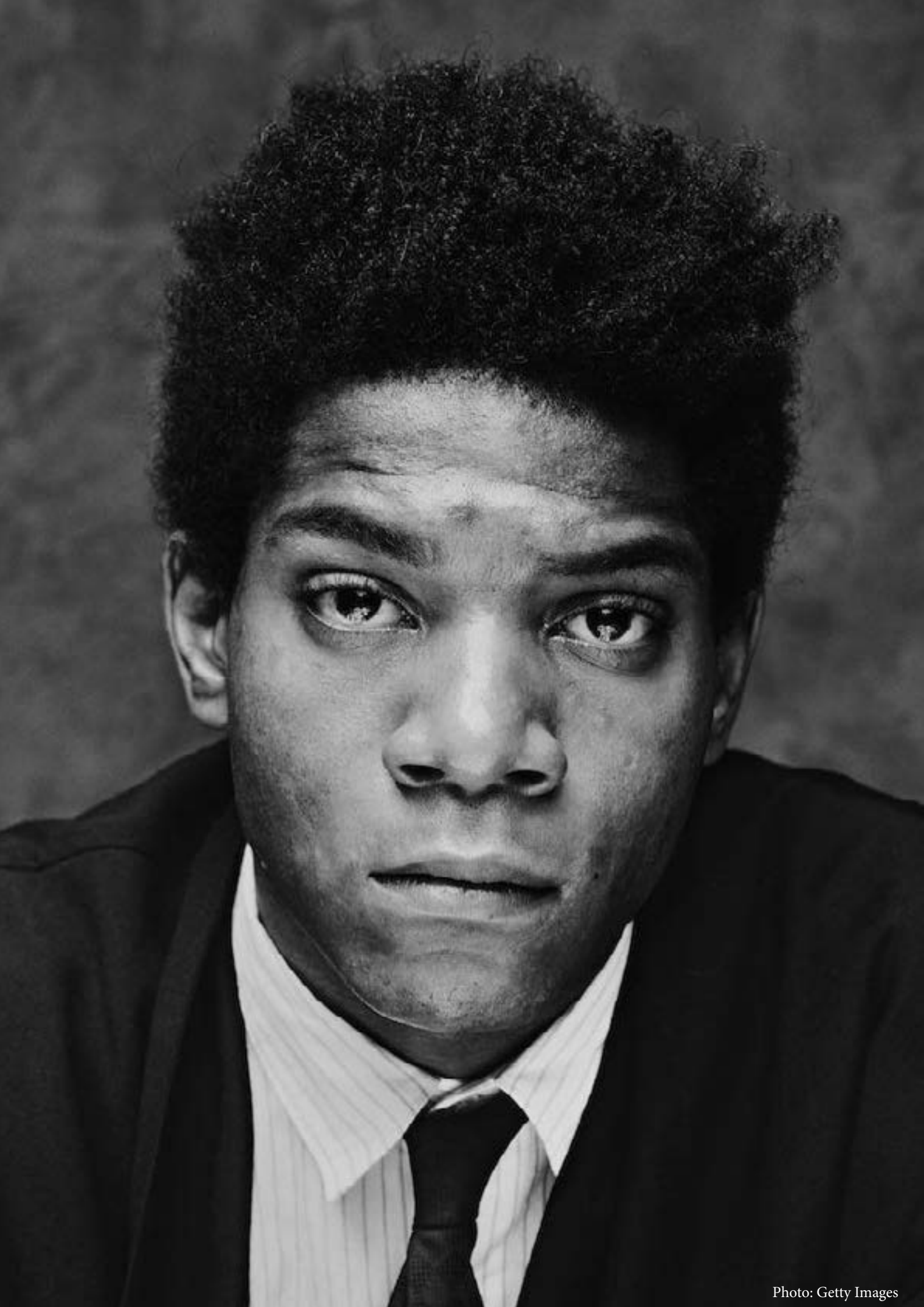


Photo: Getty Images

# W

hy did a painting by Jean-Michel Basquiat sold for \$57.3 million, one year later, another painting from 1982, Untitled, sold for \$110.5 million?

We have to go back to his roots from his early life.

“

**I don't listen to what art critics say. I don't know anybody who needs a critic to find out what art is.**

”

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT





Untitled (Pollo Frito) 1982

Basquiat was born on December 22, 1960, Brooklyn, New York City. He was the second of four children to Matilde Basquiat. Matilde took her son to art Museums frequently, which made him fall in love with art.

He was a very clever child, who learned to read and write when he was only 4 years old. Later on in his school years, he would skip school with friends, and started to illustrate for the school newspaper.

He and his dear friend, Diaz, developed the character "SAMO". The saying "SAMO" had started as a private joke between them, which stood for "Same old shit".

After being expelled from his school, and being kicked out of his parent house, he started to work for a clothing warehouse during the day, and graffiti during the night.

“ I don’t think about art when I’m working. I try to think about life. ”

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT





A woman passes by Basquiat's *Untitled* (1982), and *Irony of Negro Policeman* (1981).

In early May 1978 started Basquiat and his friend Diaz to spray graffiti on building in Lower Manhattan. They used "SAMO" as their tag and started to paint various art messages.

After a while, a big fight ended the relationship between him and Diaz, which ended the relationship between him and Diaz, so Basquiat started to paint "SAMO IS DEAD" on the walls instead.

This caught attention from High Times magazine, which then published an article "Graffiti '80: The State of Outlaw Art". This became Basquiat's first national publication.

After the publication, he got invited to The Time Squares Show. He was noticed by various famous people, which led him to have more contacts around the fashion, beauty and art world, such as Andy Warhol, Madonna, Debbie Harry, Rene Ricard and more.

A big incident happened in later summer of 1983. Michael Stewart, a black artist in the downtown club scene, got killed by transit police. Basquiat got deeply effected by it, which changed his art a lot in the future.

Basquiat have many famous symbols connecting to his arts, such as crowns, halos and anatomy. He wasn't afraid to speak out against injustice with his art in many different ways.

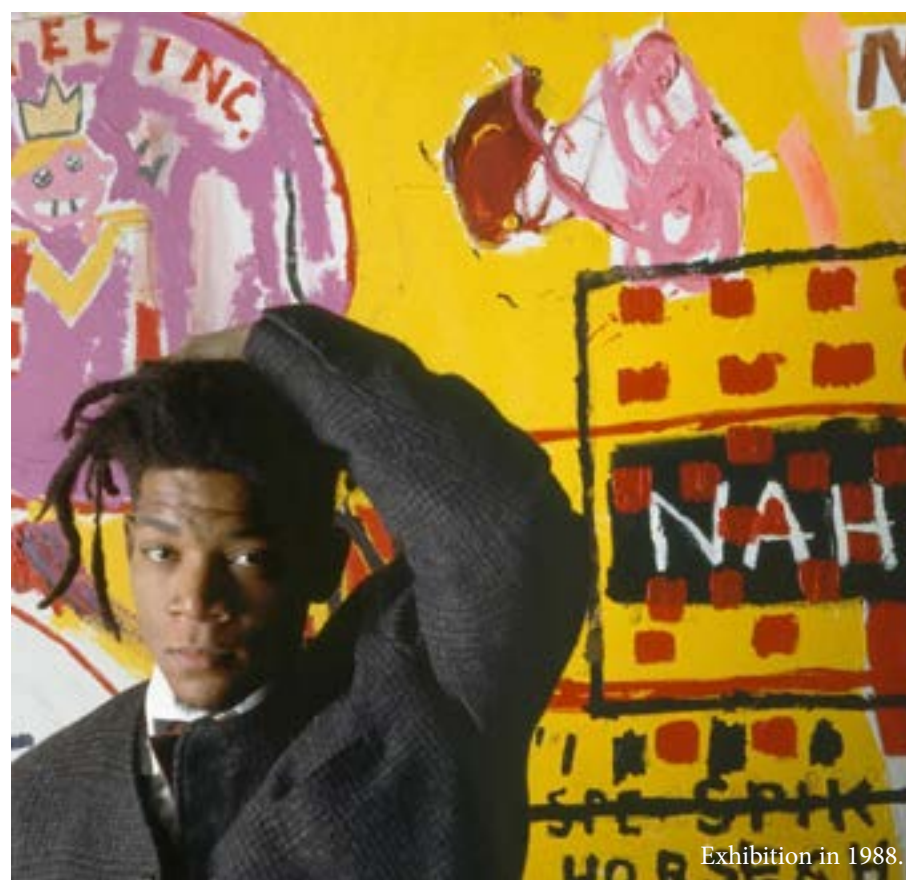
Not long time after his death by overdose in 1988, The New York Times wrote "The most famous of only a small number of young black artists who have achieved national recognition."

If you ever get the opportunity to go to an art exhibition by Jean-Michel Basquiat, I *highly* recommend attending it.



Pez Dispenser, 1984

“  
I wanted to build up  
a name for myself.  
”  
JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT



Exhibition in 1988.