

**“Art is how we decorate space.
Music is how we decorate time”**

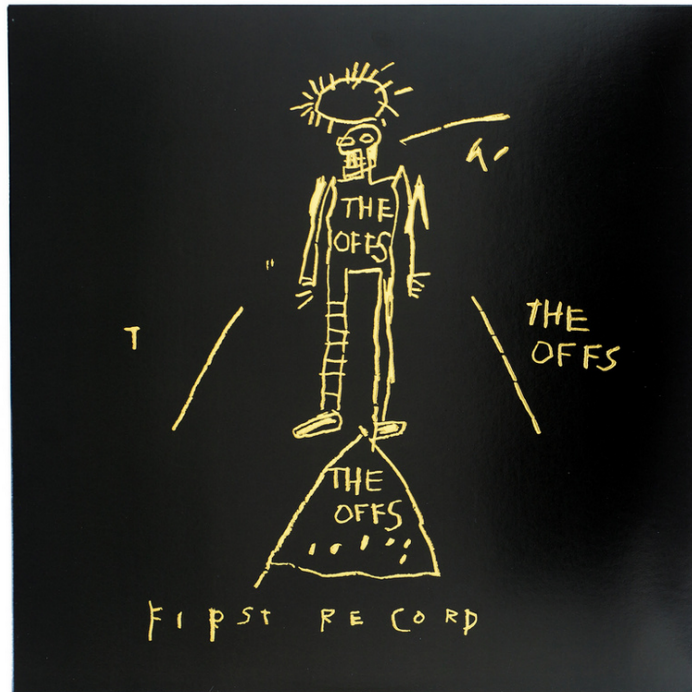
Jean-Michel Basquiat

“The moment graffiti met punk”

David Ferguson



VENICE MODERN ART



The Offs First Record

*Cover by: Jean-Michel Basquiat
The Golden Record
40th Anniversary Edition
Gold tone vinyl
Embossed Gold Foil Cover
1984 - 2024*

Edition of 550

Individually Numbered En Verso to match COA

Certificates of Authenticity issued by Venice Modern Art



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A Brief History of the Work

A year after the release of “Beat Bop” (Rammellzee, K-Rob) in 1983, Basquiat was involved in another record cover, this time for seminal punk rock outfit The Offs.

Basquiat illustrated the work in 1981 for the album cover for his friends, The Offs, a Punk/ Ska band originally from San Francisco. The band moved to New York and soon became a regular act at underground venues such as The Mudd Club and Max’s Kansas City, which were popular with artists in the East Village scene.

With the help of their friend Andy Warhol, the band was signed by San Francisco punk label, CD Presents, and their first record was released in 1984. David Ferguson, President of CD Presents, chose to reverse the original image done in blue and black oil stick, to white on black, keeping more in line with the punk sensibility of the times.

In Basquiat’s typical Neo-Expressionist, primitive, instructions-infused style, the artist repeats the band’s name three times in the composition, placing the album’s simple title at the bottom. Using images and symbols found throughout his work during the 1981-1983 period, in The Offs First Record, raw oil stick lines delineating the body extend to form a crown of thorns above the skull. This same imagery is also found in a cycle of totemic figures realized during this early period: perhaps emphasizing the band’s role as hero or martyr caught in the travails of the then shifting cultural landscape, as Basquiat too saw his career experiencing this same shifting landscape.

David Ferguson

The San Francisco Chronicle referred to Ferguson as the "godfather of the unorthodox", adding that Ferguson "...not only thinks outside the box — he crushes it, dances on top of it, reinvents it and calls it whatever he likes. He has spent his life making trouble." The East Bay Express wrote, "David Ferguson's life story reads like an encyclopedia of the underground."

In 2007, David Ferguson and CD Presents were preparing a 1000 copy Limited Edition reissue for 2009 in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the original record released in 1984. Due to the financial crisis of 2008 which devastated many businesses, including CD Presents, the release was canceled and the records remained stored in a warehouse.

Exhibition History

In 2015, John Brower of Venice Modern Art, who was a longtime friend of David Ferguson, purchased the entire inventory and rights to the record cover art by Basquiat from CD Presents. Both the records and screen prints were then showcased and made available at The Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto for the 2015 Basquiat exhibition *Now's The Time*.

Three years later, the vinyls were available exclusively at Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris during the *Jean-Michel Basquiat* exhibition from October 3 2018-January 21 2019, and that same year at The Brant Foundation in New York for the *Jean-Michel Basquiat* exhibition from March 6 2019-May 15 2019.

In June of 2019 the records were available at The Guggenheim during *Basquiat's "Defacement": The Untold Story* from June 21-November 6, 2019.

Most recently, the vinyl was showcased at Fondation Louis Vuitton for the Basquiat X Warhol exhibition in Paris, France from April 5th-August 28, 2023, and also at the Philharmonie de Paris from April 6-July 30, 2023. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts included the vinyl in the exhibition *Seeing Loud: Basquiat and Music* from October 15 2022-February 19 2023 in Montreal, Canada.

The original blue and black oil stick illustration by Basquiat for the band The Offs sold for \$302,500 (lot 579, sale 8792) in the Sotheby's Contemporary Day Auction, November 10, 2011.

This lot was accompanied by a Certificate of Authenticity from the Authentication Committee by The Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Excerpts taken from:

Art Record Covers, Taschen 2017, Fondation Louis Vuitton/Jean-Michel Basquiat 2018, English FLV Gallimard



VENICE MODERN ART



The Off's First Record

Jean-Michel Basquiat

Basquiat x Warhol

À Quatre Mains

Fondation Louis Vuitton

April 5 2023 - August 28 2023

Paris, France

Installation View



The Offs First Record

*Jean-Michel Basquiat
Basquiat Soundtracks
Philharmonie de Paris
April 6 2023 - July 30
2023
Paris, France
Installation View*



VENICE MODERN ART

The Offs First Record



Jean-Michel Basquiat

Illustration pour la pochette du disque
The Offs: First Record

1984

Encre imprimée sur carton couché
Collection Noirmontartproduction

Originaire de San Francisco, The Offs est un groupe de ska punk qui se fait connaître à New York à partir de 1979 en se produisant dans des boîtes telles que Max's, Kansas City, Hurrah ou Tier 3, où Basquiat assiste à ses spectacles et sympathise avec ses membres. La pochette de son unique album, paru en 1984 après la mort par surdose de Don Vinil, chanteur de la formation, s'orne d'un dessin de Basquiat qui présente un personnage solitaire surmonté d'une couronne d'épines, typique de sa production.

Jean-Michel Basquiat

Illustration on *The Offs: First Record* cover
1984

Printed ink on coated cardboard

Collection of Noirmontartproduction

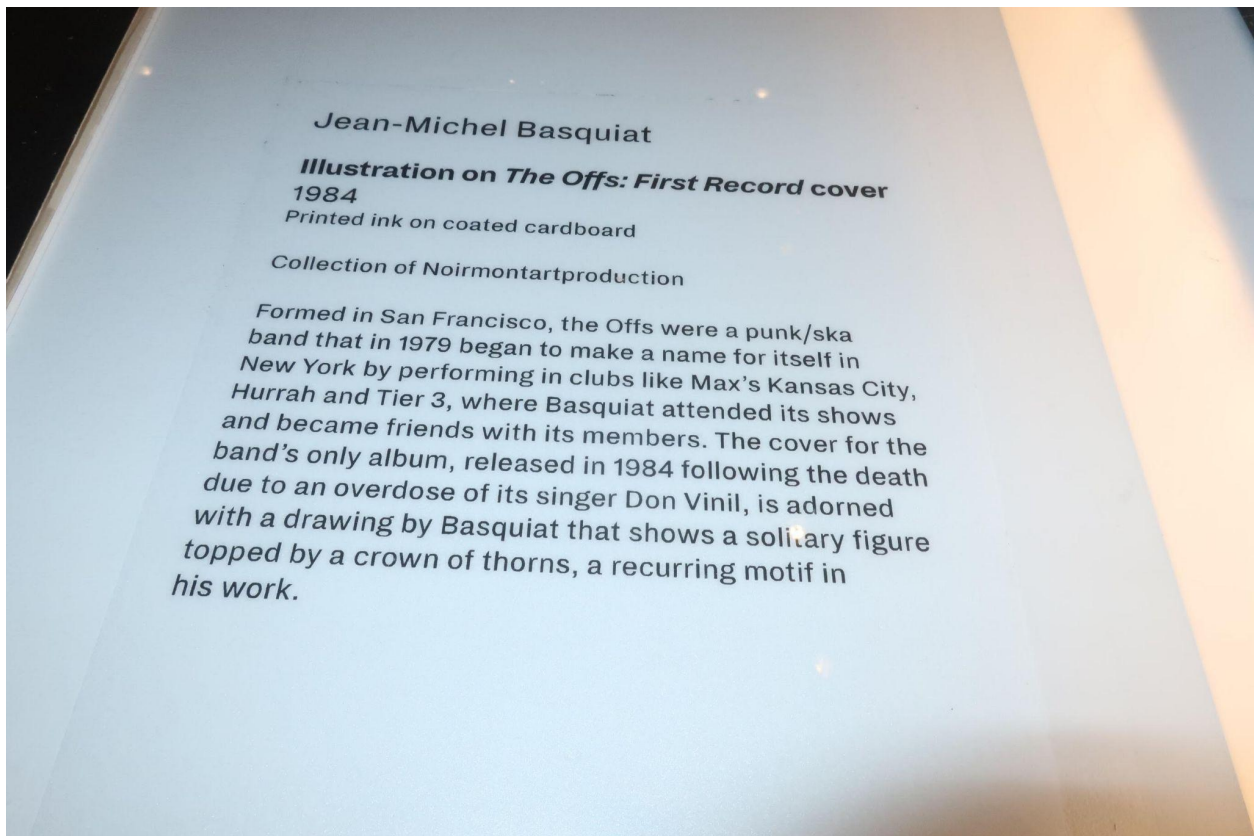
Formed in San Francisco, the Offs were a punk/ska band that in 1979 began to make a name for itself in New York by performing in clubs like Max's, Kansas City, Hurrah and Tier 3, where Basquiat attended its shows and became friends with its members. The cover for the band's only album, released in 1984 following the death due to an overdose of its singer Don Vinil, is adorned with a drawing by Basquiat that shows a solitary figure topped by a crown of thorns, a recurring motif in his work.

Seeing Loud: Basquiat and Music
October 15 2022 - February 19 2023
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Installation View



VENICE MODERN ART

The Offs First Record



Seeing Loud: Basquiat and Music
October 15 2022 - February 19 2023
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Installation View



VENICE MODERN ART



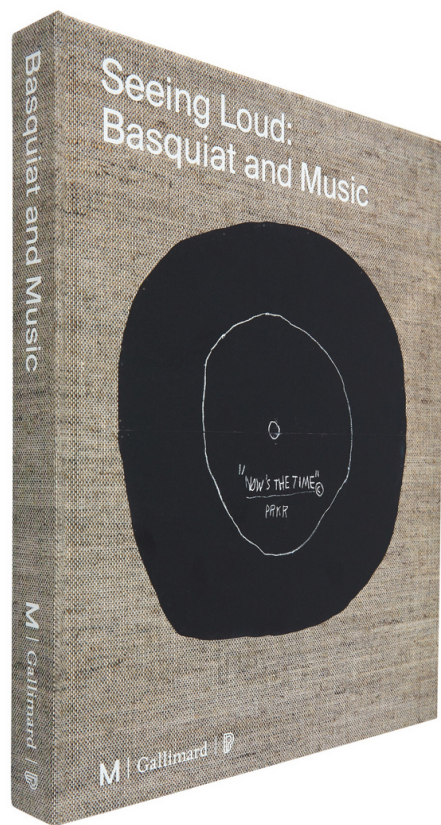
The Offs First Record

*Jean-Michel Basquiat
Seeing Loud: Basquiat and
Music
October 15th 2022 - February
19th 2023
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Montreal, Canada*

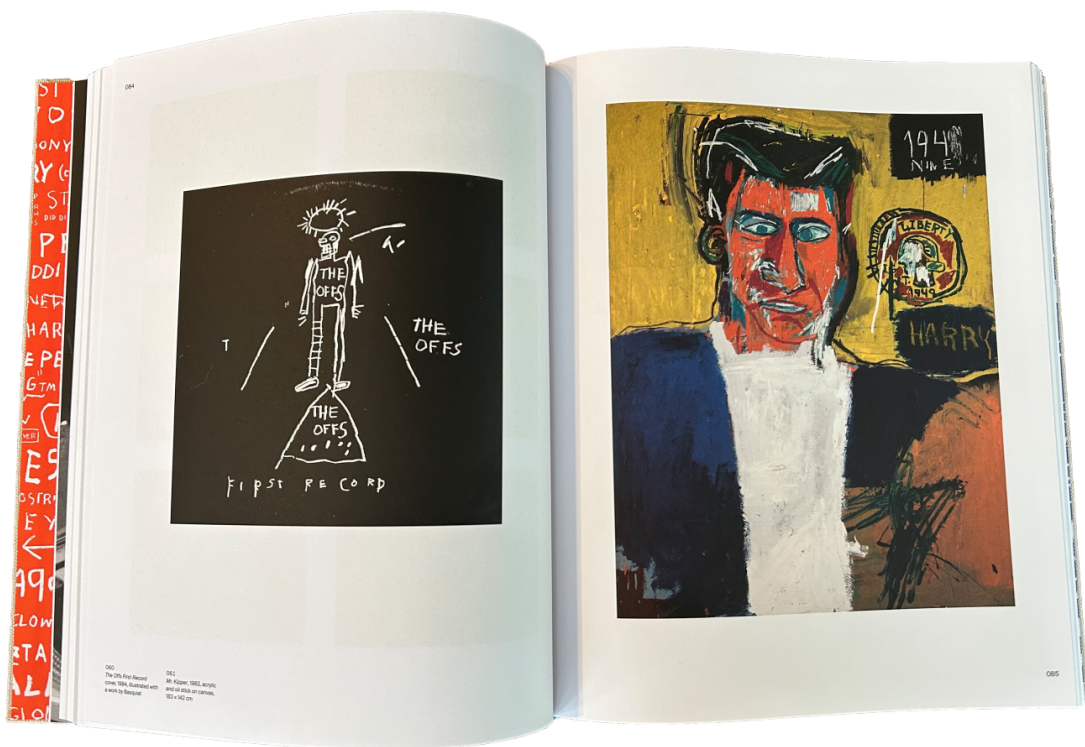
Installation View



VENICE MODERN ART



Seeing Loud: Basquiat and Music
October 15 2022 - February 19 2023
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Exhibition Catalog



Seeing Loud: Basquiat and Music
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 Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Exhibition Catalog



VENICE MODERN ART



The Offs First Record

Jean-Michel Basquiat
October 3, 2018- January 21,
2019

Fondation Louis Vuitton
Installation View



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The Offs First Record

*Jean-Michel Basquiat
The Brant Foundation
New York City
March 6th-May 15th 2019
Installation View*

WA

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The Offs First Record

*Jean-Michel Basquiat
The Brant Foundation
New York City
March 6th-May 15th 2019
Installation View*



Art Record Covers / TASCHEN
Francesco Spampinato
Hardcover, 29.3 x 29.3 cm, 448 pages
March, 2017





The Offs First Record, 1984

Album cover and vinyl

(Front)

18.50 x 27.50 in

47.0 x 69.8 cm

Cover Art by Jean-Michel Basquiat

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The Offs First Record, 1984

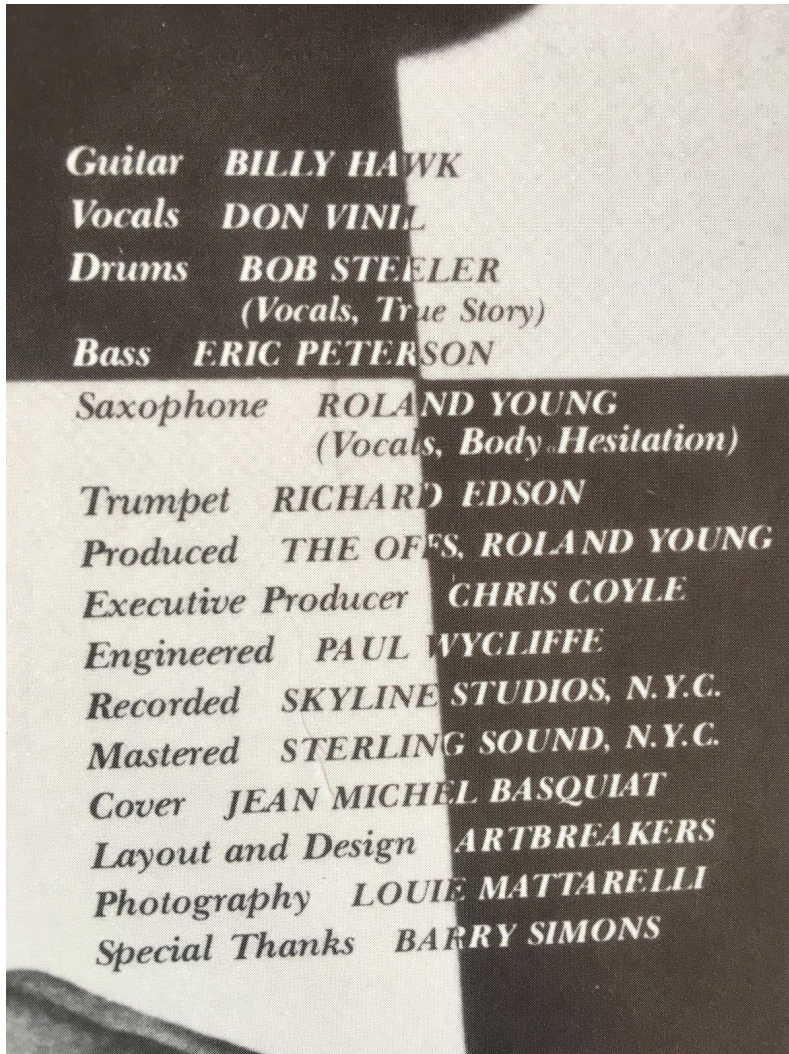
Back of Album Cover

18.50 x 27.50 in

47.0 x 69.8 cm



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Detail
(Back of album cover)

WA

VENICE MODERN ART



The Offs First Record
(detail)



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Example of Crown of Thorns used extensively in Basquiat's work during a cycle of totemic figures realized between 1981-1983.

Similarly the Crown of Thorns over a totemic figure is used on the cover of The Offs First Record.



Untitled, 1981

Acrylic, oilstick, paper collage, and spray paint on canvas

Detail

WA

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Pork, 1981

Acrylic, oil, and oilstick on wood and glass door

Detail

WA

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Offensive Orange, 1982
Acrylic and oilstick on wood
Detail

WA

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GLENN O'BRIEN'S BEAT

AHEM

THE OFFS could be America's greatest unknown band. They aren't unknown; they're cult. They have fans in San Francisco and in New York and wherever their 45rpm recordings have traveled. But they're not THE CLASH and I used to think they were, or something like that. Now it's hard for me to recall just why I thought they were like the American Clash, although their singles from some years ago still sound fresh and ionized.

The Offs have a new record out, an album called *The Offs' First Record* (CD Presents Ltd. Records), and it is their first album. Now I'd say that the Offs are sort of like the White Beatnik ARCHIE BELL AND THE DRELLS. They also remind me of pre-'80s KOOL AND THE GANG, FRITZ LANG, JUNIOR WALKER, JAMES M. CAIN^{II}, HUGH MASAKELA^{II}, JIMMY PIERSALL^{II}, FELA AND BARETTA.

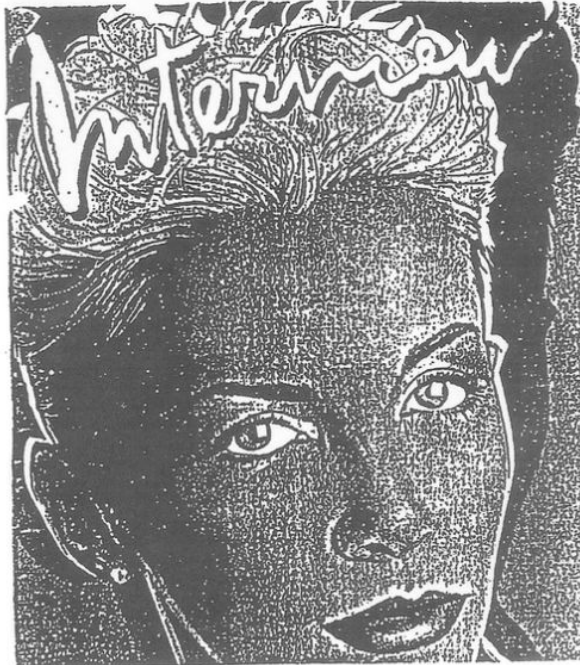
When I heard their first single in 1977, I was amazed. One side was a cover of THE SLICKERS' "Johnny Too Bad," a great reggae tune that they-revved up into a lopsided, precision, futurist skank with soul hydraulics. DON VINYL's vocals were hair-raisingly off and entirely heart-felt, documentary, muscular, casual and affecting. The flip "624803" was an odd drone rave monotone rant, chugging but subliminally very melodic. Calypso often gives me flashbacks of the progression in it, and their infrastructure arrangement has some alien link to steel band microstructure.

Today's Offs make no concession to the shifty conventions of the Top 40 or pseudo-garde. They are cleanly produced and can utilize a nice horn section to achieve maximum soul-band effect. "You Fascinate Me" is delightful. Mr. Vinyl shows off his unconventional strengths as a vocalist. He's flat sometimes, but his screams and shrieks are absolutely sax-ophonic, smokey and hot. His prosy rap is delivered with perfect be-bop syllabilization. BILLY HAWK maintains a perfect tighten-up guitar pattern and the horns provide refined soul optimism. ROLAND YOUNG's sax has swing and aerodynamics.

MAY 1985

Album Review for The Offs First Record in Andy Warhol's Interview Magazine 1985

Written by: Glenn O'Brien



"Cool Down" is jungle dark and cavernous and skin thrilling. It wails. It's got a precision, eccentric but smooth beat construction in BOB STEELER's drums and ERIC PETERSON's bass. Vinyl is authoritative, declarative, bracing, mojo-hip, and martially artistically sassy. A very cool song.

"True Story" is like MOSE ALLISON you can dance to. Bob Steeler sings it with def drollness and remarkable soul tuning. The guy never sang before and now he sounds better than EDDIE HARRIS and DEFUNKT put together somehow.

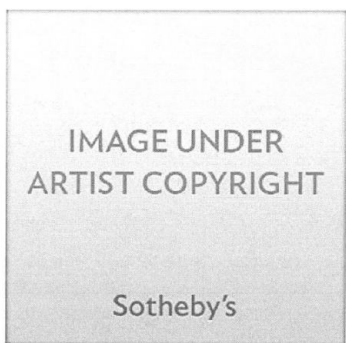
"Body Hesitation" is also remarkably

bad in the best sense. The Offs achieve that kind of ominous syncopation that drives the very best of bands, like The WAILERS, P-FUNK, etc. They've got accent, whomp, sting. "I've Got the Handle" is a sort of reggae-ska-soul revuc fusion that's utterly delightful and physically off-loading. These guys are just great. They are self-motivated. They are pure. They are in touch with their roots, bodies, the E and A chords, and a higher soul power. I recommend this album unequivocally. It's on the metaphysical funk Top 40 chart with a silver bullet. By the way, you can recognize it in better record stores everywhere by the distinctive black and white JEAN MICHEL BASQUIAT cover that looks like it's equally about Simon and Knights Templar.



VENICE MODERN ART

Sotheby's
Contemporary Art Day Auction
New York | 10 Nov 2011, 10:00 AM | N08792



LOT 579
JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT
1960 - 1988
UNTITLED (THE OFFS)
black and blue oil pencil on paper
30 by 22 in. 76.2 by 56 cm.
Executed in 1981, this work is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity issued by the Authentication Committee of the Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat.

ESTIMATE 180,000-250,000 USD
Lot Sold: 302,500 USD

PROVENANCE
Christopher Coyle
Ikon Ltd., Santa Monica
Acquired by the present owner from the above

LITERATURE
The Offs, First Record, 1984, illustrated on the album cover



Fig. 1
Cover of the album The Offs: First Record, 1981

Sotheby's sale listing of original art, 2011

WA

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UNTITLED (THE OFFS)

black and blue oilstick on paper

1981

Original Jean-Michel Basquiat artwork for The Offs First
Record 1984



VENICE MODERN ART

The Offs First Record
Cover Art by: Jean-Michel Basquiat
Exhibition History

Jean-Michel Basquiat
Now's the Time
February 2nd - May 10th
Art Gallery of Ontario
Toronto, Canada
2015

Basquiat "Defacement": The
Untold Story
Guggenheim Museum
June 21st - November 6th
New York City
2019

Seeing Loud: Basquiat and
Music
Montreal Museum of Fine
Arts
October 15th - February 19th
Montreal, Canada
2022 - 2023

Jean-Michel Basquiat
Fondation Louis Vuitton
October 3rd - January 21st
Paris, France
2018 - 2019

Basquiat Soundtracks
Philharmonie de Paris
April 6th - July 30th
Paris, France
2023

Jean-Michel Basquiat
Brant Foundation
March 6th to May 14th
New York City
2019

Basquiat x Warhol
À Quatre Mains
April 5th - August 28th
Fondation Louis Vuitton
Paris, France
2023



VENICE MODERN ART

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