

PRESS RELEASE

HOW QUANTEL'S PAINTBOX CHANGED OUR WORLD

THE COMPUTER ARTS SOCIETY



Design by Kimmanesabbott.com

© Keith Haring Foundation. Courtesy of Andrea De Gioia/Young B&V

**Paintbox has totally revolutionized the notion of art
and the image - why hasn't anyone noticed?**

Keith Haring

May 2023 Phoenix, Leicester

Dec 2023 BCS, London

computer-art-society.com

curated by Adrian Wilson

PRESS RELEASE

The Computer Arts Society Presents

HOW QUANTEL'S PAINTBOX CHANGED OUR WORLD

AN EXHIBITION OF WORK CREATED ON DIGITAL'S FIRST GLOBAL ART STAR

This Premier Exhibition Includes Work From Over 20 Artists Spanning More Than 40 Years, including Never-Before-Seen Digital Art By Keith Haring, Jennifer Bartlett and David Hockney

May 9-Jun 30, 2023
Phoenix Cinema and Art Centre
Leicester

Dec 6, 2023-Feb 23, 2024
British Computer Society
London

April 6, 2023 - To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of Quantel, the company that first brought digital art and graphics to the masses, the Computer Arts Society are revealing twenty pieces of digital art created on Quantel's Paintbox in the 1980's by some of the world's most famous artists.

Launched in 1981, this full-colour, 24bit, broadcast-quality, stylus-operated digital art studio was so user-friendly, Quantel joked it took 3 years and a day to become a Paintbox Artist: 3 years at Art College and a day on the Paintbox.

David Hockney raved about this "new medium" while using a Paintbox in 1985, referring to the digital art on the screen as his "first coloured glass drawings", two decades before his famous iPhone artwork. Nam June Paik incorporated the iconic Paintbox palette and menu into his 1990's artwork and Andreas Gursky still relied on a Paintbox to construct his complex photographs in 2010.

April Grieman described the Paintbox she had used to create a poster for MoMA as "training for the release of the Macintosh", adding "The Mac seemed like it mimicked everything the high-end Paintboxes could do." This small company in the English countryside got a decade ahead of Silicon Valley's best by including artists in the User Interface and software design, by funding dozens of digital art apprenticeships and by donating millions of dollars of equipment to art colleges.

"Paintboxed" was the verb for digital image retouching years before Photoshop 1.0 was released. The exhibition includes digitally manipulated images which laid the foundations for our 'Photoshop Age'. Adrian Wilson, a Paintbox photo-artist since 1985 and Quantel historian, was chosen to curate the exhibition. Wilson owns one of the last working Paintboxes in the world, which he is using to restore Keith Haring's unseen digital work. After flying to Rome just to try a Paintbox shortly before he passed, Haring excitedly wrote "It has totally revolutionized the notion of art and the image - why hasn't anyone noticed?".

By revealing Haring's 30 year old Paintbox art for the first time, they finally will



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The UK's **Computer Arts Society** (CAS) was founded in 1968 to promote the understanding of the role of digital and electronic media in the arts. As it has developed over time, a key aim has become to ensure that the long history of the computer arts is recognised by contemporary artists, technologists, audiences and collectors. The society organises exhibitions, talks, events and performances to highlight the ways that digital and electronic technologies can be of value to the creative sector

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Exhibition Curator **Adrian Wilson** is regarded as the first photographer to specialize in image manipulation, using a Paintbox from 1985. He was a guest artist at Quantel and his work was used on the front cover of their Paintbox brochure in 1986. One of the foremost Quantel historians and co-producing a documentary, Wilson has selected key pieces from his extensive Paintbox Archive, along with important artwork loaned by original artists or their Estates, to create this, the world's first Paintbox fine art group exhibition.

Wilson owns one of the last Paintboxes, on which he still creates art in NYC
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Exhibition and Poster designer **Kim Mannes-Abbott**'s iconic work was chosen for the cover of the 1994 book Paintboxed! A Paintbox artist since 1984, Mannes-Abbott travelled the world for Quantel, working on Paintbox in Japan, Europe and the US. She now runs a successful design agency in Amsterdam
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