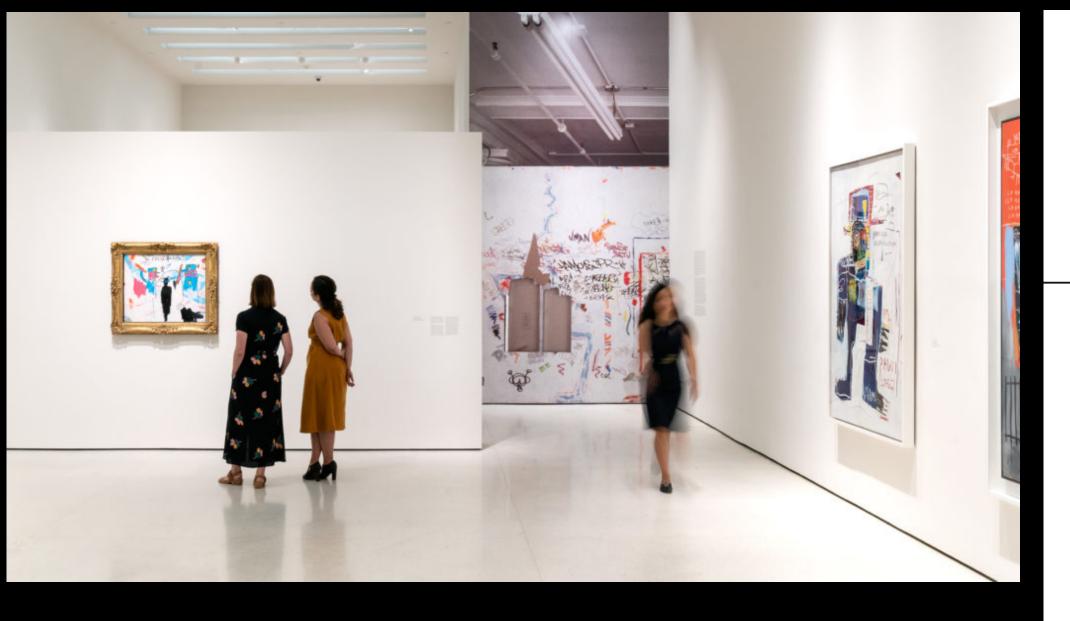
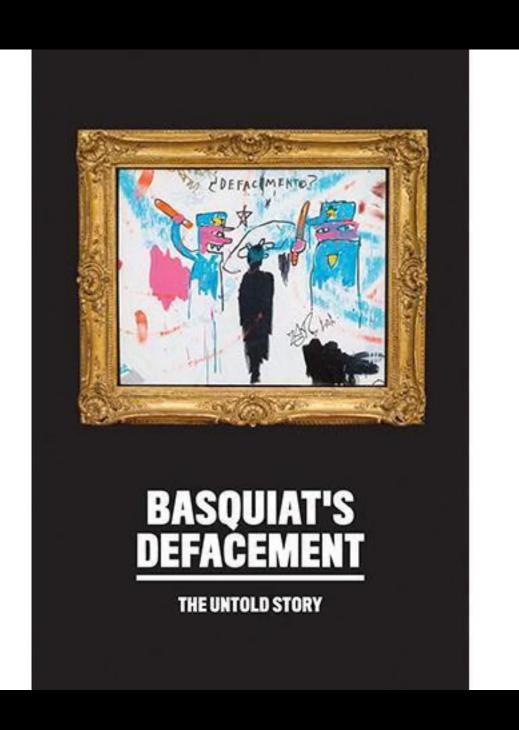


Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Defacement (The Death of Michael Stewart)*, 1983. Photograph: Allison Chipak/Collection of Nina Clemente, New York





## Basquiat's "Defacement": The Untold Story

Past Exhibition
June 21–November 6, 2019

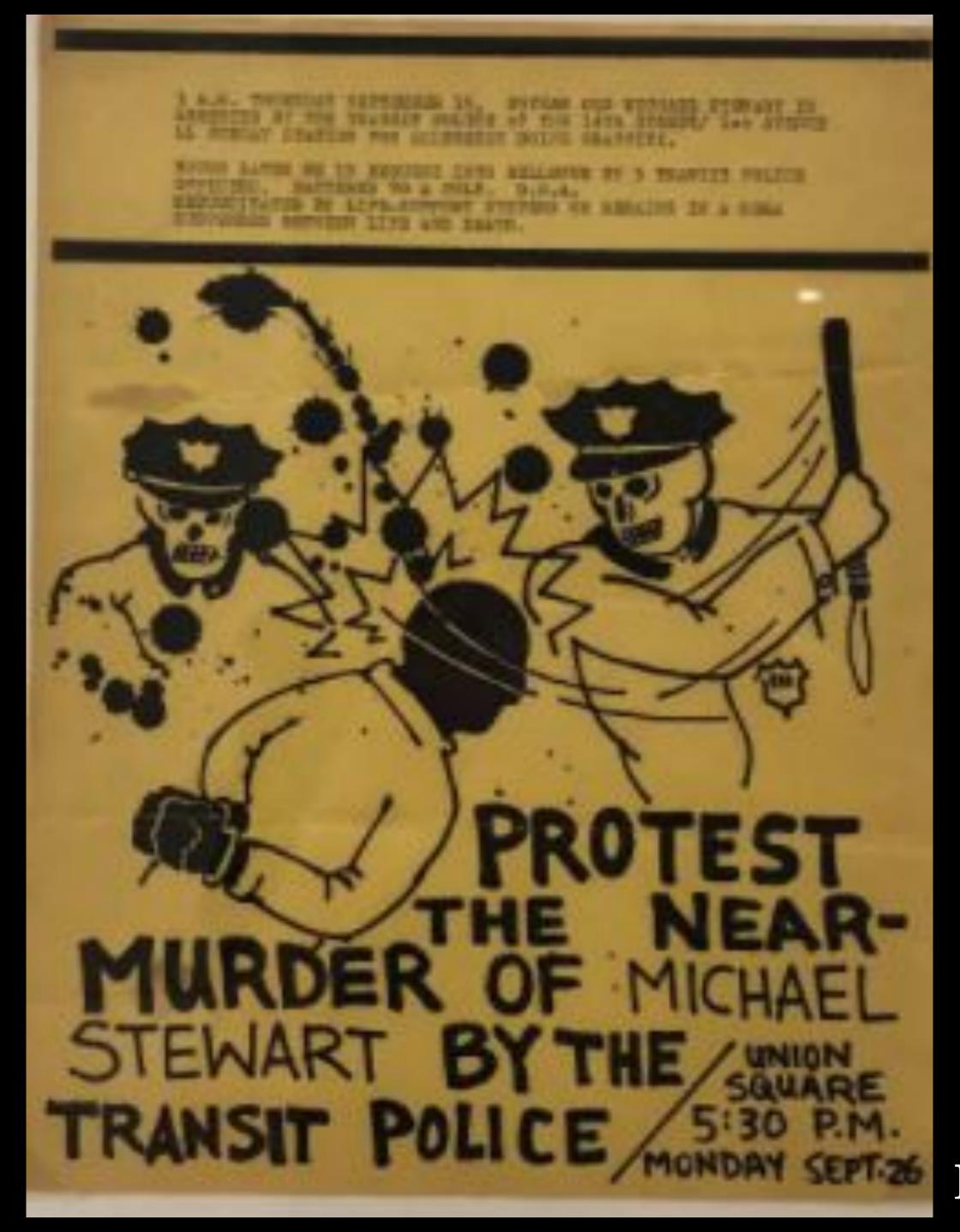
This exhibition took as its starting point the painting The Death of Michael Stewart, informally known as Defacement, created by Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960–1988) in 1983. The work commemorates the fate of the young, Black artist Michael Stewart at the hands of New York City Transit Police after allegedly tagging a wall in an East Village subway station. Originally painted on the wall of Keith Haring's studio within a week of Stewart's death, Basquiat's painting was a deeply personal lamentation that has rarely been exhibited in a public context. With The Death of Michael Stewart as its centerpiece, this exhibition examined Basquiat's exploration of Black identity, his protest against police brutality, and his attempts to craft a singular aesthetic language of empowerment. Several of the works by Basquiat presented in this exhibition illustrated his sustained engagement with the subject of state authority in the paintings depicting police figures. Other works explored his canonization of historical Black figures, especially the jazz legend Charlie Parker, who was perhaps Basquiat's favorite hero to depict on canvas. An early self-portrait, created the same year as The Death of Michael Stewart, suggests Basquiat's keen self-awareness as a Black artist navigating a predominantly white and often hostile art world.

https://www.guggenheim.org/exhibition/basquiats-defacement-the-untold-story

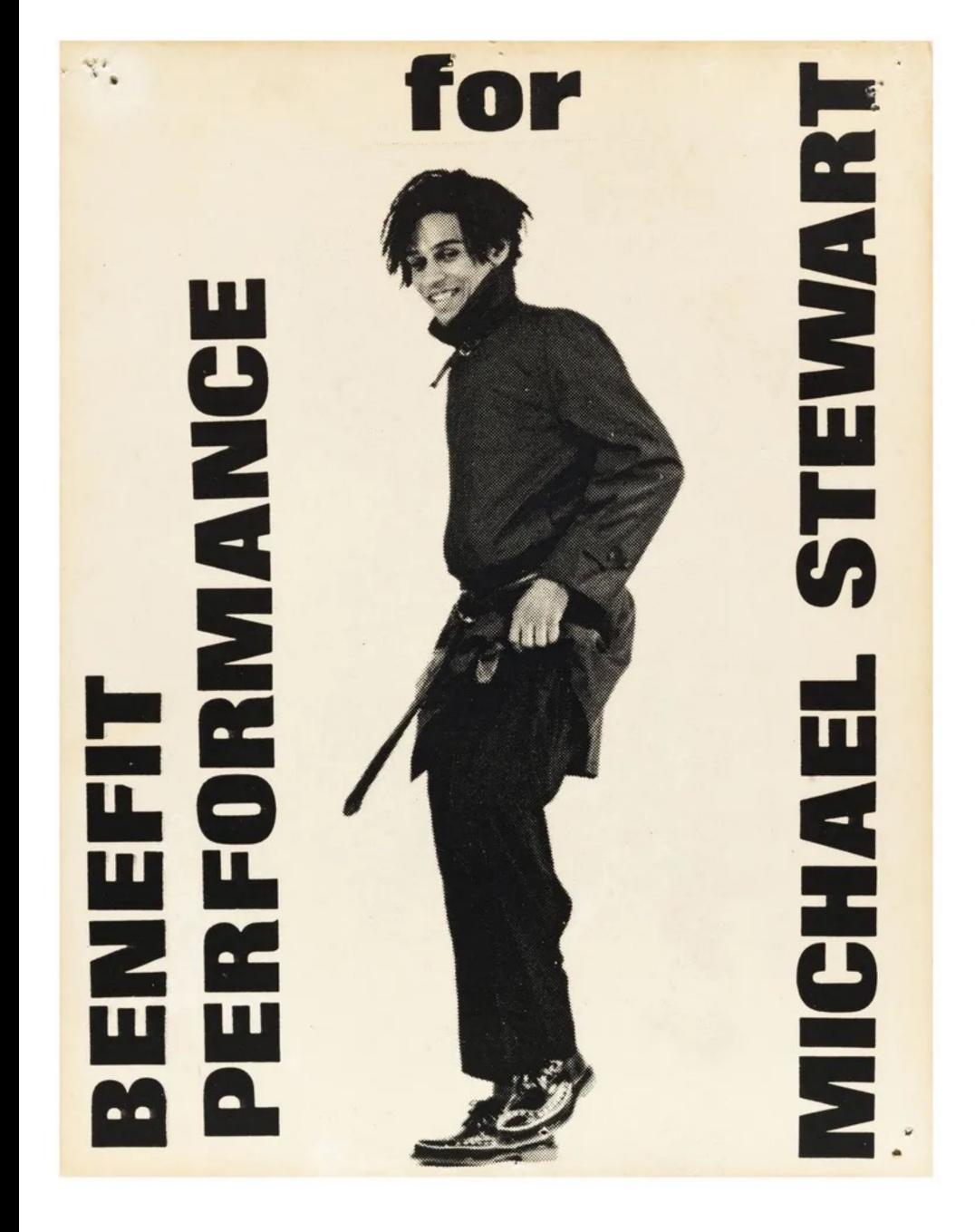


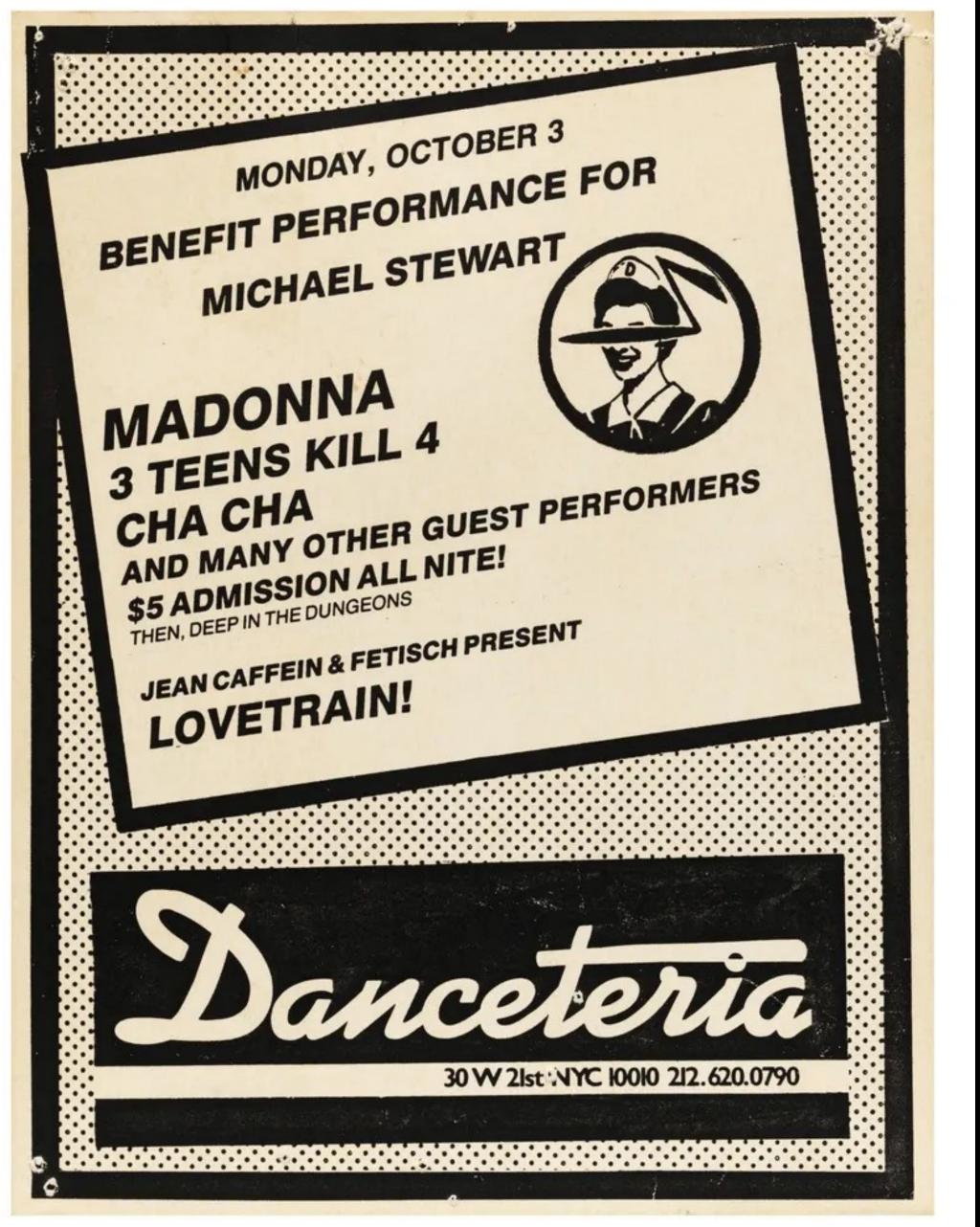


Michael Stewart was an aspiring artist and model when he was arrested on Sept. 15, 1983



Protest poster that may have inspired Defacement

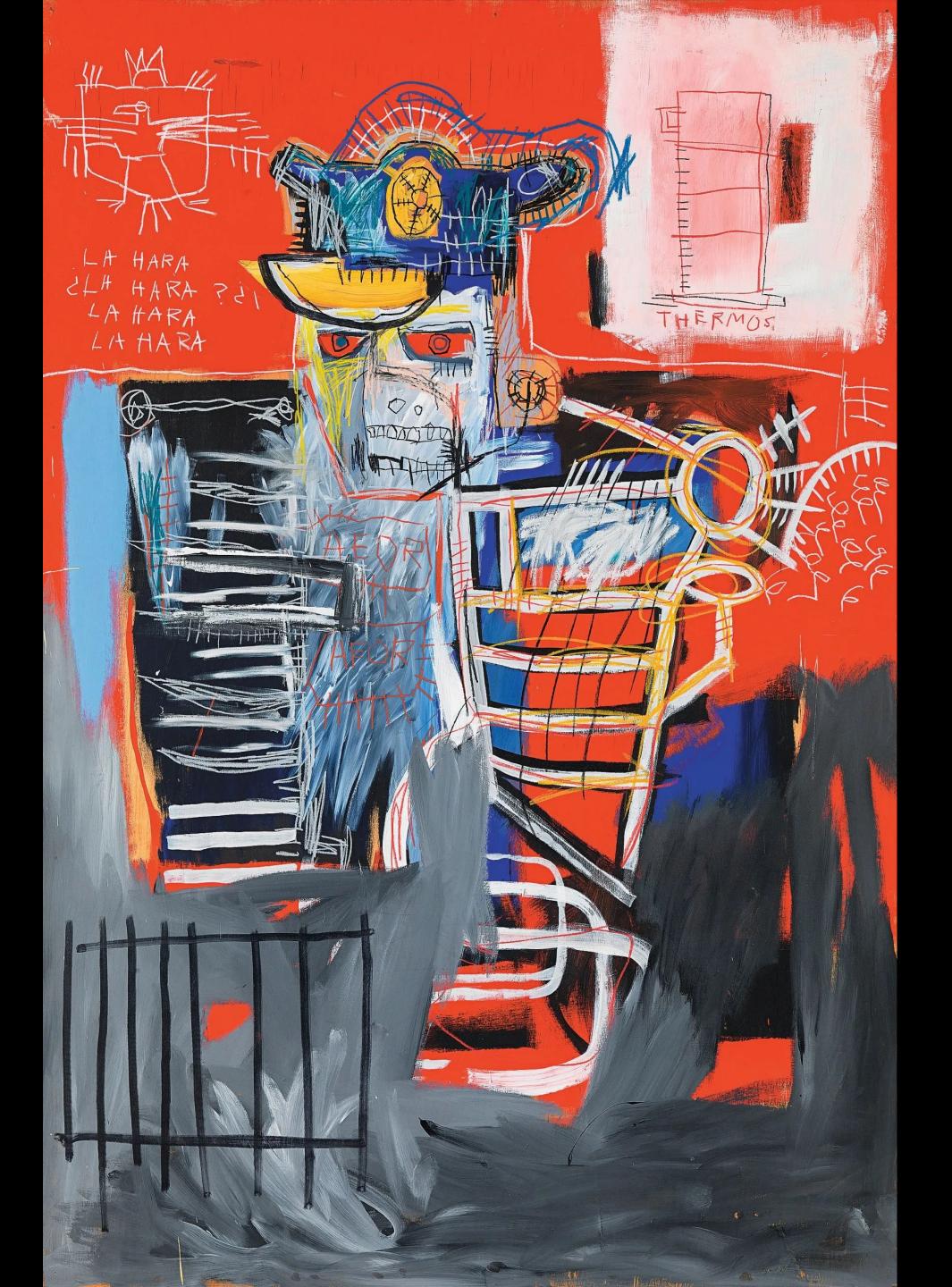




Card for a benefit performance for Michael Stewart, from 1983



Jean-Michel Basquiat, Irony of a Negro Policeman, 1981



Basquiat, La Hara, 1981



Keith Haring, Michael Stewart – USA for Africa, 1985



https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/aia-reviews/basquiat-defacement-guggenheim-protests-racist-violence-60187/



## Jean-Michel Basquiat, Michael Stewart, and 'Defacement'

POSTED FEBRUARY 16, 2021 BY SAM MOSKOWITZ

In our new African American History curriculum for middle school students, we explore how Jean-Michel Basquiat's art also served as a platform for advocacy, addressing some of the most pressing issues of race and discrimination of his (and our) day. Basquiat was already a successful studio artist when, on September 15th, 1983, events transpired in the East Village that inspired him to create one of his most debated, dissected, and discussed works, *Defacement*. This piece has inspired generations of activists, including the current Black Lives Matter

https://www.villagepreservation.org/2021/02/16/jean-michel-basquait-michael-stewart-and-defacement/

Jean-Michel Basquiat • This article is more than **5 years old** 

## Defacement: the tragic story of Basquiat's most personal painting

The death of artist Michael Stewart, allegedly the result of police brutality, inspired Basquiat to create one of his most impactful works

**Dream McClinton** *in New York* 

Fri 28 Jun 2019 09.00 CEST

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https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jun/28/defacement-the-tragic-story-of-basquiats-most-personal-painting

## Basquiat's Story We Need to Hear

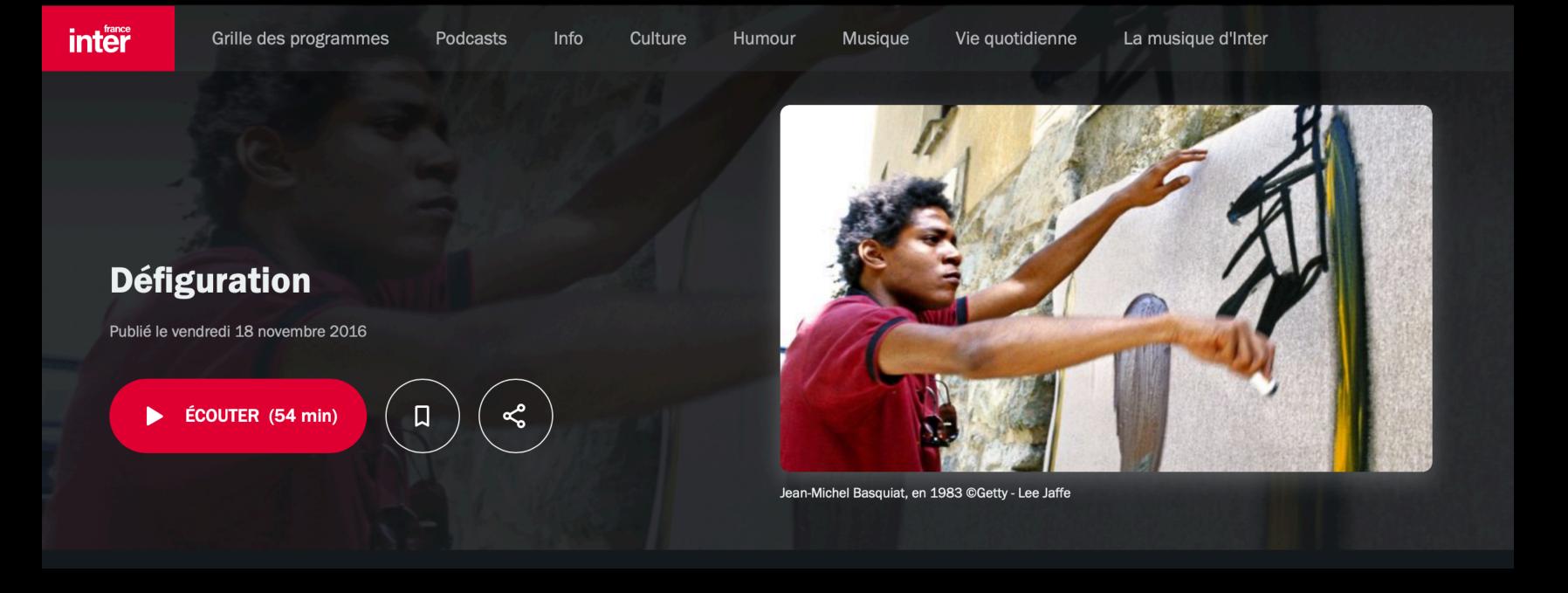
BY
SAM BEN-MEIR

The Jean-Michel Basquiat exhibit currently on display at the Guggenheim does exactly what art should do: tell us a story we don't want to hear but need to, about the racist brutality so prevalent in



Jean-Michel Basquiat, Defacement (The Death of Michael Stewart), 1983. Acrylic and marker on wood,

https://jacobin.com/2019/08/jean-michel-basquiat-defacement-death-michael-stewart-guggenheim



https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/podcasts/affaires-sensibles/defiguration-1623227

https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/aia-reviews/basquiat-defacement-guggenheim-protests-racis violence-60187/

https://www.villagepreservation.org/2021/02/16/jean-michel-basquait-michael-stewart-and-defacement/

https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2019/02/18/how-a-protest-poster-by-david-wojnarowicz-may-have-inspire basquiats-defacement

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https://jacobin.com/2019/08/jean-michel-basquiat-defacement-death-michael-stewart-guggenheim

https://www.culturetype.com/2018/12/12/guggenheim-mounting-exhibition-focused-on-jean-michel-basquiat defacement-painting-about-police-brutality/

https://www.johnmcdonald.net.au/2019/basquiats-defacement-the-untold-story/

https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/podcasts/affaires-sensibles/defiguration-1623227

https://www.guggenheim.org/exhibition/basquiats-defacement-the-untold-story

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/08/basquiats-memorial-to-a-young-artist-killed-by-police