

MARCH 18, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

LEE QUIÑONES

QUINQUAGENARY

APRIL 20 - MAY 25, 2024

CJG2 - 961 CHUNG KING ROAD

OPENING RECEPTION | BOOK RELEASE

AND SIGNING: APRIL 20, 6-9PM

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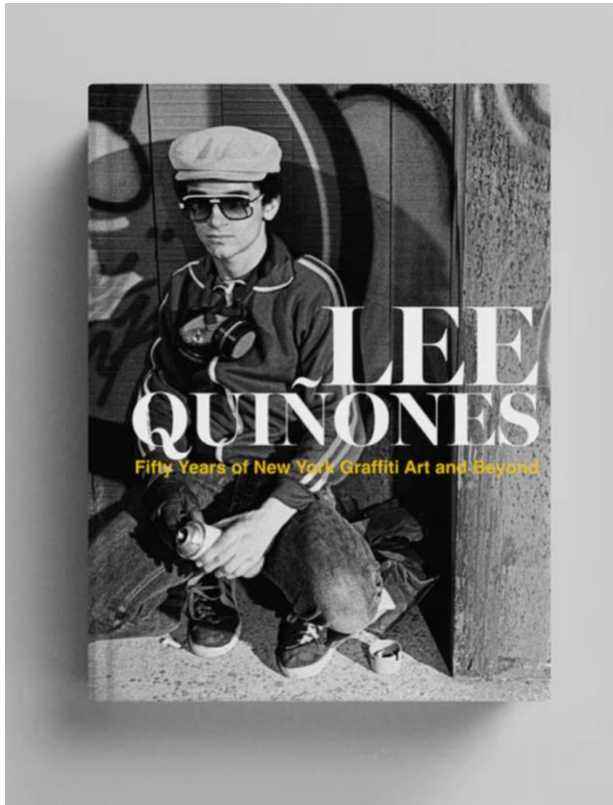
Charlie James Gallery is pleased to present *Quinquagenary*, a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the legendary career of New York artist **Lee Quiñones**. Quiñones made a name for himself while still in his teens with bold, whole-car subway pieces and handball court murals that often incorporated poetry, aphorisms, or sarcasm alongside explosive, comic-inflected imagery. Quiñones pioneered a particular East Coast style that found its zenith on the moving metal canvases of the MTA. The artist continues to innovate in paintings and drawings that employ the aesthetic vocabulary of graffiti in works that are tightly controlled, compositionally complex, and socially engaged.

The exhibition will feature a new series of SPIT paintings, deriving their name from the act of priming a paint marker. These works straddle the line between gallery and street, pairing tags and graffiti writing with bold, expressionist painting. Quiñones honors the tools of the artform, using spray paint and paint markers to create layered abstract compositions. On this 50th anniversary, the artist also looks back to his beginnings making art on the run, in one work depicting his own spray cans hidden away in the days when the city was his studio.

Quiñones has also created a new series of drawings, works on paper that fuse his sharp wit and social consciousness with the aesthetics of the street. Executed in ink, pencil, and paint marker, these drawings embody the energy and experimental spirit of the graffiti writer's black book.



Lee Quiñones, Spit #3: Drawing Conclusions" 2024



The exhibition coincides with the release of a comprehensive monograph on the work of pioneering subway artist, *Lee Quiñones: Fifty Years of New York Graffiti Art and Beyond* (Damiani Books, 2024): a sweeping overview of Quiñones' five-decade oeuvre, as he moved from subway cars and street murals to art galleries and museums.

The monograph pairs full-color images of Quiñones' street art works, paintings, and drawings with scholarship by art historians and reminiscences by his friends. Edited by Tamara Warren, the book features an introduction by Franklin Sirmans, director of the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), and tributes by Isolde Brielmaier, Bisa Butler, William Cordova, FUTURA, Debbie Harry, Leslie Hewitt, Jenny Holzer, Barry McGee, Odili Donald Odita, José Parlá, and Allan Schwartzman.

More info on the monograph is available here:

<https://www.damianibooks.com/en/products/6208811>

For BOOK INQUIRIES, please contact Amanda Domizio, amanda@domiziopr.com

Lee Quiñones is considered the most influential artist to emerge from the New York subway art movement for his expansive body of work that is ripe with socio-political content and intricate composition. Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico in 1960, and raised on the Lower East Side, Quiñones started painting trains in 1974, then shifted to a studio-based practice.

Quiñones has had numerous solo shows and exhibited internationally, first at Galleria Medusa in Rome, Italy in 1979. In 1980, he had his first New York show at White Columns, ushering in an important era as the medium of spray paint expanded from public spaces to stationary canvas works. His work was included in the critical "Times Square Show" (1980); "Graffiti Art Success for America at Fashion Moda" (1980); the "New York/New Wave" show at PS1 (1981); and in "Documenta #7" in Kassel, Germany (1983). His drawings and paintings have been shown in recent years at the New Museum of Contemporary Art (2005), El Museo del Barrio (2010), the Museum of Modern Art (2011), the Museum of Contemporary Art Rome (2017), Seoul Museum of Art (2019), the Bronx Museum (2019), the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (2020), the Gropius Bau (2021), and the Leroy Neiman Center for Print Studies (2022). He has had solo shows at PS1, Contemporary Art Center of Cincinnati, the Fun Gallery, Barbara Gladstone, Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, Lisson Gallery,

Barbara Farber, Nicole Klagsbrun, Charlie James, and James Fuentes. Quinones' paintings are in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of the City of New York, Pérez Art Museum Miami, Groninger Museum, Blanton Museum of Art, and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

Quiñones starred in Charlie Ahearn's 1983 film "Wild Style," which served as a blueprint for the burgeoning hip hop movement. He also appears in Blondie's "Rapture" video and the film "Downtown 81." He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.