



Times photo — BRENDAN FITTERER  
Barbara Hollander has a journal autographed for her by Keith Haring when her husband, Louis, left, a retired New York transit cop, arrested Haring for his subway graffiti in 1982.

## NOT YOUR EVERYDAY SUBWAY ARTIST

By

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When New York City police officer Louis Hollander arrested Keith Haring in 1982, he thought he was booking just another kid smearing the subway station with graffiti. Only later did he realize Haring was showing off his art above ground as well — in major art galleries.

Hollander, now living in New Port Richey, recalled the incident when he learned Haring's works were on display in a show at the Tampa Museum of Art through Sept. 1.

And when a St. Petersburg Times story told how Haring had been arrested for covering blank ad spaces with chalk cartoons, and how he had given some officers his autograph, Hollander recognized himself.

Graffiti was rampant in New York in 1982, and city officials were cracking down. Hollander, routinely patrolling a subway station, spotted a Bohemian-looking fellow, blatantly drawing stick figures in every empty space. In line with standard operating procedure, Hollander whipped out his handcuffs and made the arrest.

"I thought he was just a beatnik, a hippie on his way home from college, wanting to mark up the subway station," recalls Hollander. "I don't even remember where I booked him."

Haring put up no resistance. He was released on his own recognizance, to return for a hearing at a later date.

But during the booking process, he told Hollander he was an artist, and afterward he gave Hollander a catalog from his recent two-person show (with Vernon Fisher, a Fort Worth artist). Hollander flipped through it and handed it back, but Haring told him to keep it.

Hollander asked him to autograph it to his wife, Barbara. The artist whipped out a ballpoint pen and rapidly sketched two dogs barking at a figure. He signed it, "K. Haring 82." As a final touch, he added his best-known image, a radiant baby.

Hollander doesn't remember how the hearing turned out. Sometimes graffiti artists were put on cleanup duty.

He forgot about the catalog. In 1989, at 44, he moved to Florida after more than 20 years with the NYPD. Currently he is a driver examiner for the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

An obituary notice of Haring's death in February 1990 sent the Hollanders scurrying to see if they had saved the catalog when they moved. They found it but did nothing with it until this month when they shared it with R. Andrew Maass, director of the museum. Maass had no idea what it is worth. Haring's subway work has sold for thousands; his gallery art for six figures.

Maass did make suggestions on preserving and appraising the work.

Hollander, who has seen the show twice, says the gallery reminds him of the subways.

Of approximately 100 works on display, more than two dozen are the chalk drawings first shown in subway stations.

"There could be 20 blank spaces on a platform," recalls Hollander. "And he would put his mark on all of them. It was like a gallery."