

**STATEMENT FROM JULIA GRUEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE KEITH HARING FOUNDATION, NEW YORK.**

For over twenty years, The Keith Haring Foundation has been regarded as the authority on Keith Haring. I worked by Keith's side for six years, and he personally selected 3 of our current 7 trustees. My years with Keith and our two decades of work with conservators, artists, curators, museums and galleries legitimize us to have the leading, authoritative voice in all matters concerning conservation, documentation, cataloguing, licensing and authentication of Haring's oeuvre, including the disposition and maintenance of Keith Haring's numerous remaining public works. As such, we expect our input to be recognized as significant and substantial by the parties involved in the Melbourne mural.

As a board we deal with public works projects on a case-by-case basis. Generally speaking, we are in favor of repainting Keith's murals, as was the case with the Carmine Street Pool, Crack is Wack and Children's Village, because we believe it is more important that the work convey Keith's ideals and respect for the communities in which he worked, rather than preserve a brushstroke. To us, Keith Haring's heirs (legal and otherwise) a repainted Haring mural is still a Haring mural and the public, generally speaking, feels the same way.

We have opened our doors and archives to researchers, conservators and consultants associated with the Melbourne project (a few of whom did not show up), and we have solicited the opinions and testimonials of Keith's contemporaries (including artists, international museum directors and curators, Haring mural custodians, and others) regarding the future status of the Collingwood mural. I would like to state, for the record, on behalf of our staff and board of trustees, that we believe the Collingwood mural should be repainted.

The proposed conservation treatment apparently thwarts any possibility of successfully repainting the mural in the future. Perhaps the voices of other conservators should be considered? Will Shank, for example. Mr Shank has proposed a compromise solution that should satisfy all parties. It will be costly, but then so is the current plan to delicately preserve and protect the mural in its current, disgracefully neglected condition. I attach Mr Shank's recommendation below. We would wholeheartedly support this method of treatment if the replica wall were affixed to the current site (not elsewhere) and executed by hand, rather than by any mechanical method.

Keith stated in a 1984 video interview conducted on the occasion of his visit to Australia that the Collingwood mural in Melbourne (unlike the murals he painted in Sydney on the same visit) was to be permanent. Due to 27 years of neglect, the Collingwood mural is now a shadow of its former, vibrant self, and merely maintaining it in its current condition is an incomplete solution. Although the opinions of many in Melbourne go against our recommendation, we feel that further argument is pointless. So consider this to be our final plea to return the Melbourne mural to its formal glory.