

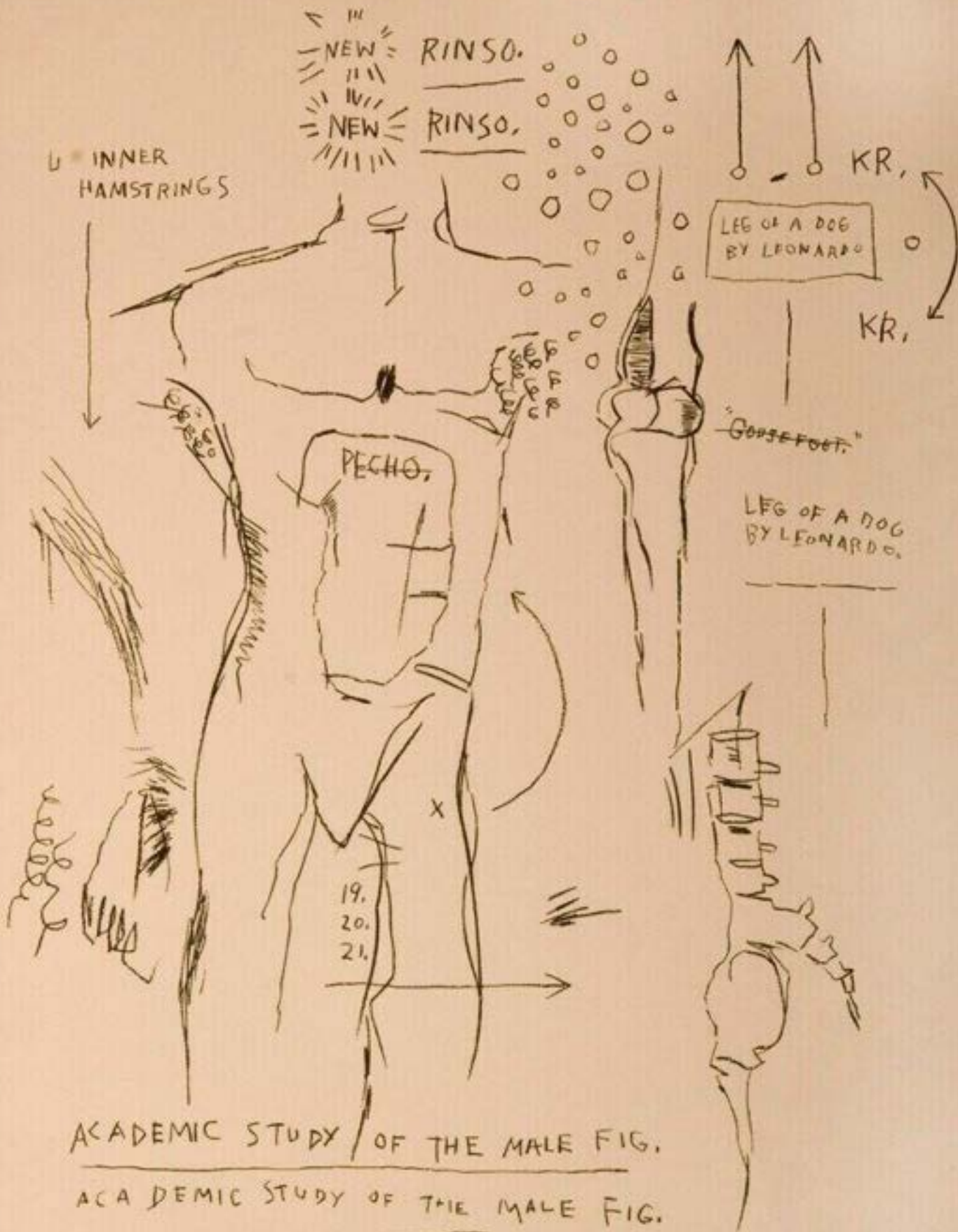
Virtual 
LAVENDER
 **Labels**

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT
(American, 1960-1988)

*Academic Study of
the Male Figure, 1983*

Brown screenprint on Okiwara paper
31 1/4 x 39 3/4 in.

Museum Purchase from the Michel Roux Acquisitions Fund, 2007.14



ACADEMIC STUDY OF THE MALE FIG.

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Basquiat created iconic works of the 1980s, informing his reputation as a Neo-Expressionist. Though he did not finish high school, Basquiat studied art history from books and in the cultural museums of New York City. Born in Brooklyn to a Puerto Rican mother and Haitian father, he was fluent in French, Spanish, Haitian-Creole, and English, sometimes applying text in more than one language to his art. He also studied the monumental textbook, Gray's Anatomy, while recovering from a childhood car accident, referring to that time as foundational to his visual, textual practice in this Anatomy Series.

Intersecting the experience of both Black and bisexual men, his work illuminates his insightful, and sometimes tumultuous, engagement with the heterosexual dominant culture. In *Academic Study of the Male Figure*, Basquiat juxtaposes a familiar academic-style anatomy study with an artist's conceptual language, applying Da Vinci-esque markings.

He reduces the human figure to body parts, lines, and shapes – a common practice for figure artists throughout their studies.

The energy of the lines presents the simultaneous presence of ideals and distortions of labels; arrows and notes display focus areas for the viewer, evoking questions about what it means to embody a certain figure or identity.

How do you interpret your own identity in its simplest form?