

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HVW8

“THEN”

by Lisa Leone

New photo exhibition documents hip-hop's moments of truth.
Before hip-hop was an industry, it was a community.

THEN, a new solo show from photographer Lisa Leone, is a deeply personal portrayal of the last days of hip-hop's innocence, of a culture caught between an intimate past and a global future.

Born in the Bronx and raised throughout New York City, Lisa Leone has been surrounded by hip-hop culture for virtually her entire life. By the late eighties, as a widely published photographer, she was in a unique position to capture a behind-the-scenes perspective on the spirit of collaboration that fueled hip-hop's early artistic triumphs. “To see a young Nas in the studio with Q-Tip, Premier and Large Professor was not only inspiring,” she reflects on one of the candid photos included in the show, “it is ‘the decisive moment’.”

THEN explores a series of such moments through the eyes of the young artists that would go on to become the hip-hop generation's biggest stars: Snoop Dogg, Lauryn Hill, Mary J. Blige, Wyclef Jean, Run DMC, Nas, A Tribe Called Quest, Rosie Perez, the Roots, Queen Latifah and many others.

But these are not mere portraits. Each image captures a unique interaction between an individual and their environment, and is supported with text drawn from new interviews with the subjects themselves.

“It was still fresh and we, the generation of that movement, still dictated what it was and meant to us and not the mass media. MTV wasn't calling the shots. We were still telling them what the rules were.”
– Rosie Perez

“THEN is a testament to the natural eye and passion of a real New Yorker, presented now through the collected three decades of her work and experience.” – Eric Haze



HVW8 Art + Design Gallery, 661 N. Spaulding Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036
Inquiries: 323-655-4898 or Info@hv8.com
www.hv8.com



From rooftops and fire escapes to recording studios and stages, THEN follows this diverse cast of characters as they struggle to create a place for themselves in the urban culture of New York in the late eighties and early nineties. At the same time, the show is also a haunting portrait of the city itself, captured at the exact tipping point between the devastation of the seventies and the rebirth of the nineties. Leone captures the spirit of an era when a city, a musical style, and a group of young artists all began to turn toward the future.

The exhibition at HVW8 Art + Design Gallery will feature unique presentations of these timeless images, helping to transport viewers back decades into a time now long gone but never forgotten.



“No one...can fail to be moved by Lisa Leone’s evocative portraits of Hip Hop legends captured in the midst of their young lives...set in those moody South Bronx scenes of abandonment that was their home.”

– Henry Chalfant, producer of “Style Wars”

HVW8 Art + Design Gallery, 661 N. Spaulding Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036
 Inquiries: 323-655-4898 or Info@hvw8.com
www.hvw8.com



“With this show I’d like to recreate the experience of that time,” says Leone, “the creativity, the raw spirit and the sense of community...a city that was waking up from its darkest years, but still hadn’t had its first cup of coffee.”

About Lisa Leone

Bronx born Lisa Leone began her career as a photographer shooting musicians Moby, Lauryn Hill and Maxwell, as well as personalities like Debi Mazar and Spike Lee. She worked for British Vogue and VIBE where she was a contributing photographer and columnist for two years.

While shooting stills on a music video the director asked Lisa to shoot B roll. At that moment she traded in her stills camera for a film camera. So began her career as a cinematographer shooting music videos for artists TLC, D’Angelo and The Brand New Heavies.

A few years later, Lisa began work on Stanley Kubrick’s last film “Eyes Wide Shut”, starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. Impressed with Leone’s talent and drive, as well as sharing Bronx roots, Kubrick quickly became her mentor. Little did she know the project would consume the next four years of her life where she would do everything from set decorating, film & lighting tests, acting and directing second unit. “He trained my eye to maximize the use of practical lighting, composition and using skeleton crews”, says Leone.

Upon Kubrick’s death Lisa dived into a deeper study between the relationship of cinema and imagery.

She continued her cinematography with work on independent films and shows for directors: Nancy Savoca’s “Dirt”; Showtime, Michael Kang’s “The Motel”; Sundance 05’, Reno’s “Rebel Without a Pause”, Havana Film Festival, Florence film festival, where it received the Peace Prize and “Citizen Reno” for Bravo.

“Exactly” was Leone’s debut film as writer, director and cinematographer. It stars Rosie Perez (Fearless) and Sarita Choudhury (Mississippi Masala). It premiered at Tribeca film festival in 2004, and went onto Sundance 05’ and the London film festival 05’. “Good Morning Baby” was the second film Lisa directed starring Piper Perabo. Produced by Moxie Pictures it was a part of the Glamour REEL Moments shorts series. “Just For Kicks” is a full length documentary Lisa shot and co-directed. It premiered at Tribeca film festival in 2005, and was shown on SpikeTV, Canal+, among other stations around the world. It’s currently out on DVD.

After seeing “Just For Kicks” NIKE enlisted the team to shoot a film for the 25th anniversary of the AF1, as well as the music video “Classic” featuring Kanye West, Nas, Rakim and KRS-1. She’s directed and shot a series of short films for Tommy Hilfiger’s “Dreaming” campaign. The films premiered in NYC June 2008.

Inspired by Nicholas Kristof’s book “Half the Sky”, Lisa found herself in Ethiopia where she shot and co-directed the film “Woinshet” with Marisa Tomei. In 2010 she teamed up for a fourth time with director Nancy Savoca to shoot her feature film “Union Square” starring Mira Sorvino and Tammi Blanchard. The film premiered at the 2011 Toronto Film Festival.

Lisa has also shot and directed commercial and web campaigns for clients: Revlon, Kia and Cazadores Tequila.

Currently, Lisa is working on a new photo series that explores the raw beauty, sensuality and essence of women. With Lisa’s gift to commune and capture images of authenticity, she is developing her first feature film about sex, love, family and the Bronx.

About HVW8 Art + Design Gallery:

HVW8 Art + Design Gallery represents and facilitates the spirit and collaboration between art, music and design. In 1998 Tyler Gibney founded HVW8 in Montreal, Canada with local artists Gene Pendon and Dan Buller. The trio created the HVW8 Art Installation and toured the world creating musically inspired live art pieces and installations. In 2005, Tyler Gibney and Addison Liu opened the HVW8 Art + Design Gallery in Los Angeles. With a focus in supporting avant-garde graphic design, it soon became the premier underground gallery in Los Angeles and over the past three years has featured artists such as Parra, Geoff McFetridge, Kevin Lyons, Anthony Lister, Lance Mountain, Mos Def with Cognito, Brent Rollins, Charles Munka, Michael Leon and Alvaro Illizarbe.



HVW8 Art + Design Gallery, 661 N. Spaulding Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036
Inquiries: 323-655-4898 or Info@hvw8.com
www.hvw8.com