

‘Off Safety’ by Paul Chan

The photo exhibition by DIY photographer Paul Chan has been traveling to LA, NY and Paris. Now HVW8 brings it to Berlin in October 2015.

The photos of Paul Chan represent the later part of the golden era of hip hop. Like blues and jazz before, hip hop is a true American art form. Born in the late 70's and early 80's from the New York boroughs, by the 90's hip hop became the voice of the disenfranchised in inner cities battling years of Reaganomics, joblessness, and the crack epidemic that plagued American cities. Often drawing from this inspiration, hip hop soon dominated a large part of popular culture. Fueled by MTV and publications like the Source and Vibe, the genre constantly reinvented itself taking root in regional epicenters in the West Coast, Midwest, and southern US.

Paul Chan documented hip hop from 1997 - 2003, a period often referred to as the „Shiny Era.“ Its styles range from the positivity of De La Soul, the gritty realism of Ghostface, the Gangsta / Pimpin west coast tales of Snoop Dogg and Too Short, to the commercial vibe of Mase and Kelis. His photos demonstrate the regional diversity and styles throughout the US such as New York's Nas, the Wu Tang Clan, Cam'Ron, and Q-Tip to Philadelphia's The Roots. The West Coast is represented by Los Angeles' Ice Cube and Dr. Dre, and Bay Area icons Del the Funky Homosapien and E-40. He photographed New Orleans' Cash Money and a young Lil Wayne and Birdman who would soon form an international powerhouse. He documented southern artists like Virginia's Neptunes, Houston's 5th Ward don Scarface, and St. Louis' Nelly to Midwest luminaries like Detroit's Eminem, Slum Village (with the hugely influential Jay Dilla) and Chicago's Common. Candid photos of young upstarts that would later become global mainstays. Paul Chan captured this movement in the midst of a DIY ethos and aesthetic.

Paul Chan, by admission, is not a professional photographer or a studied fine artist. He was a graphic artist for a publication from Southern California called Kronick Magazine. Printed on newsprint, Kronick was on the tail end of the bygone era of analog media. Frustrated with the standard press shots sent by labels and agencies, Paul Chan set out to document these artists with his father's Nikon F2. The result is intimate, unpolished, and unstaged photos of present day icons shot in candid dialogue; a method championed by the likes of Terry Richardson, Larry Clark, and Juergen Teller. Unrehearsed and genuine, these images capture the energy and personalities free of stylists or publicists. Shot on film prior to the standardization of digital photography, these images pre date the wide accessibility of digital cameras, cell phones, Youtube, and the internet where everything is recorded and instantly circulated to millions. Many of these photos were shelved for over 10 years despite being the sole documentation of classic artists from their origins.

Paul Chan's 'Off Safety' is a brief moment in time of highly influential musicians captured by a young DIY photographer.

Opening: October 8, 2015, 7–10pm

Location: HVW8 Gallery, Linienstr. 161, Berlin
Fresh Pizza by Tiny Tim

After-party with DJ Free The Robots, noMSG and more, 11pm — tba

Paul Chan is available for interviews. Please contact us!

Facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1628959704038603/>


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Links:

<http://www.slowculture.com/home-1-1-1-1-1-5/>

<http://www.monsterchildren.com/27266/exhibit-paul-chan-off-safety/>

<http://hypebeast.com/2014/12/paul-chan-off-safety-slow-culture-gallery-featuring-photos-of-camron-dr-dre-snoop-dogg-ghostface-and-more>

