

LOOKING AT MUSIC: SIDE 2 EXPLORES THE CREATIVE EXCHANGE BETWEEN MUSICIANS AND ARTISTS IN NEW YORK CITY IN THE 1970s AND 1980s

Photography, Music, Video, and Publications on Display, Including the Work of Jean-Michel Basquiat, Blondie, Richard Hell, Sonic Youth, and Patti Smith, Among Others

Looking at Music: Side 2

June 10—November 30, 2009

The Yoshiko and Akio Morita Gallery, second floor

***Looking at Music: Side 2* Film Series**

September—November 2009

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters

NEW YORK, June 5, 2009—The Museum of Modern Art presents ***Looking at Music: Side 2***, a survey of over 120 photographs, music videos, drawings, audio recordings, publications, Super 8 films, and ephemera that look at New York City from the early 1970s to the early 1980s when the city became a haven for young renegade artists who often doubled as musicians and poets. Art and music cross-fertilized with a vengeance following a stripped-down, hard-edged, anti-establishment ethos, with some artists plastering city walls with self-designed posters or spray painted monikers, while others commandeered abandoned buildings, turning vacant garages into makeshift theaters for Super 8 film screenings and raucous performances. Many artists found the experimental music scene more vital and conducive to their contrarian ideas than the handful of contemporary art galleries in the city. Artists in turn formed bands, performed in clubs and non-profit art galleries, and self-published their own records and zines while using public access cable channels as a venue for media experiments and cultural debates.

Looking at Music: Side 2 is organized by Barbara London, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art, The Museum of Modern Art, and succeeds *Looking at Music* (2008), an examination of the interaction between artists and musicians of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Looking at Music: Side 2 is on view from June 10 to November 30, 2009, with an accompanying film series in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters to commence in September 2009.

The exhibition spans numerous forms of media by a diverse group of artists including: drawings by Patti Smith and photography by Dan Graham, Nan Goldin, and Jimmy DeSana; experimental video by James Nares; issues of influential zines and magazines including *Search & Destroy*, *Interview*, and *Punk*; posters designed by Adrian Piper and Collaborative Projects, Inc. (Colab); prints by Jenny Holzer, Betsey Johnson, and Bern Boyle; music videos with songs by Blondie and Suicide; record covers designed by Kim Gordon, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Raymond Pettibon; music from Television, The Ramones, and Talking Heads; and live band footage from performances at Max's Kansas City.

Barbara London states: "This exhibition shows how musicians and artists coalesced at a time when New York City, while financially struggling, seemed to incubate innovative ideas and facilitate the phenomenal success of a few, marking the transition into the next, more commercial decade of artists in New York City."

Outside The Yoshiko and Akio Morita Gallery, *Looking at Music: Side 2* is introduced through a title wall designed by the New York artist Laurie Anderson. Within the exhibition James Nares's video, *Game* (1975), greets viewers at the exhibition's entrance. Active in the 1970s on the Lower East Side as a Super 8 filmmaker and member of The Del-Byzanteens, Nares concocted a percussive, imaginary board game, performed with Seth Tillett, which he turned into the subject of his experimental film. Nares's work is accompanied by a monitor displaying segments from Glenn O'Brien's late 1970s Manhattan Public Access television show, *TV Party*. Equal parts party, talk show, video art, concert, and political action, *TV Party* took live television to a place it had never been before, including interviews with a number of the artists included in the exhibition. Also on display are drawings by Patti Smith and an audio station playing her song *Hey Joe/Piss Factory* (1974), considered to be the first punk rock record and funded by the photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. Two tracks from The Ramones, widely cited as the first punk rock group, play at a nearby audio station, including "Beat on the Brat" and "Blitzkrieg Bop" (1976). In vitrines, poetry from the musician Richard Hell and a record from the German artist Martin Kippenberger's short-lived musical project with Christine Hahn and Eric Mitchell are on display.

The exhibition next focuses on the work of New York based Colab, a non-profit artist collective distinguished for political engagement and the co-opting of public spaces, including an abandoned building in the heart of Times Square in 1980. In a set of video monitors, works from Colab artists are on display, including Coleen Fitzgibbon, a founding Colab member and instigator of the Times Square Show, which housed socially themed artworks in a derelict Times Square building. With a background in 1960s structuralist cinema, Fitzgibbon's Super 8 film transferred to video, *Time* (1975), is a nonstop visual flow of headlines and text, all drawn from an issue of *Time* magazine, with the effect of an incessant restlessness of the filmic frame. On a nearby monitor, the music video *Frankie Teardrop* (1978), set to the New York-based band Suicide, is on display. This coarsely-textured film-video hybrid combines super-imposed projector manipulations and high-end video post-production. An insightful collaboration between videomaker Paul Dougherty and *Art-Rite* zine editors Walter Robinson and Edit DeAk, the work interprets a strident song by Suicide about a poverty-stricken Vietnam vet pushed to the edge. These works are surrounded by posters, audio, and a video by Judith Barry, Richard Kern, and the New York band Sonic Youth and the work of Beth and Scott B.

Looking at Music: Side 2 next examines the cross-influence of hip hop and art in New York City, including the video of *Rapture* (1981) by Blondie. *Rapture*, the first video to incorporate elements from rap on MTV, opens with choreographer William Barnes dancing in a white suit and top hat in New York's Upper East Side. Barnes is joined by Debbie Harry and her bandmates—

easy-going, cross-over artists who bridged uptown and downtown scenes. In the final sequence of the music video, the band dances down a street passing Fab 5 Freddy and graffiti artists Lee Quiñones and Jean-Michel Basquiat in action. The video is accompanied by photographs of Basquiat's graffiti work from the 1970s, by Peter Moore and Stephanie Chernikowski, and a large-scale drawing by the artist, *Untitled* (1981).

The exhibition concludes with images from five rock n' roll photographers. Adjacent to a large-scale photographic collage of the work of Bob Gruen, adapted from the 2007 installation *Rock and Roll Teenager's Bedroom* and measuring 7.5' x 22.5', the exhibition includes vitrines with photographs of Suicide by Godlis and Sonic Youth by Stephanie Chernikowski, along with additional photographs by Roberta Bayley and Marcia Resnick. On a monitor beside these works is Bob Gruen's *New York Death Cult (Live at Max's Kansas City)* (1976), featuring grainy footage from famed music club Max's Kansas City, which captures the raw, immersive spirit of up-and-coming musicians of that era such as Patti Smith.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Barbara London, Associate Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art, joined the Museum in the early 1970s and founded the Museum's video exhibition and collection programs. Ms. London organized the upcoming exhibition *Projects 90: Song Dong* (2009) and past exhibitions *Looking at Music* (2008), *Automatic Update* (2007), *River of Crime* (2006), *Stillness: Michael Snow and Sam Taylor-Wood* (2005), *Anime!!* (2005), *Music and Media* (2004), *TimeStream* (2001), a web commission by Tony Oursler; a series of Web projects undertaken in China, Russia, and Japan; *Video Spaces: Eight Installations* (1995), and Projects shows with Nam June Paik, Shigeo Kubota, Peter Campus, Thierry Kuntzel, and Steve McQueen, among others.

AUDIO GUIDE:

The accompanying audio guide features three original conversations specifically recorded for *Looking at Music: Side 2*—Richard Hell in conversation with Vito Acconci, James Nares in conversation with Coleen Fitzgibbon, and Diego Cortez in conversation with Fab 5 Freddy. MoMA Audio is also available for download on www.moma.org/audio and as a podcast on iTunes. MoMA Audio is available free of charge courtesy of Bloomberg.

MoMA ONLINE:

Website: An online exhibition will provide an interactive presentation of the works included in *Looking at Music: Side 2*, with a slideshow of selected highlights, interpretive texts, and original acoustiguide conversations recorded for the exhibition. The site will launch by June 17, 2009. www.moma.org/lookingatmusic2

Flickr: In conjunction with MoMA's exhibition, visitors to MoMA's Flickr page, <http://www.flickr.com/groups/lookingatmusic>, will be able to add personal photographs and remembrances of the music and art of New York City during the 1970s and 1980s.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

"Modern Poets: Raw Edges"

Friday, July 24, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden

A poetry reading in conjunction with the exhibition *Looking at Music: Side 2* will be held in the Museum's Sculpture Garden. Participants include musician and writer Richard Hell, whose work is also included in the exhibition, along with poet Eileen Myles, and poet, actor, and musician Saul Williams.

Modern Mondays

Monday, October 19, 2009

Modern Mondays, The Museum of Modern Art's Monday night screening series of new works by contemporary filmmakers and multimedia artists, features engaging and thought-provoking programming by a diverse selection of cutting-edge international artists. On October 19, a conversation will be held with artist-musicians, exploring the influence of music on the art of the 1970s. Further details and participants to be announced on www.moma.org.

FILM AND VIDEO PROGRAM:

A film-and-video series which features works by a selection of video artists and film directors will be screened in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters between September and November 2009. The program is organized by Ms. London.

Films

Taxi Driver. 1976. Directed by Martin Scorsese.

A Vietnam war veteran works as nighttime taxi driver in NYC, whose perceived decadence and sleaze feeds his urge to violently lash out, attempting to save a teenage prostitute in the process.

Monday, September 21, 7:00 p.m. T2

Sunday, September 27, 5:00 p.m. T2

New York Dolls - All Dolled Up. 2005. Directed by Bob Gruen and Nadya Beck

This documentary captures the band during early performances in New York at Kenny's Castaways and Max's Kansas City, then follows the Dolls on their tour of the west coast, including footage from the Whisky A Go Go, the Real Don Steele Show, Rodney Bingenheimer's E Club, and much more.

Wednesday, September 23, 4:00 p.m. T2

Monday, September 28, 7:00 p.m. T2

The Blank Generation. 1976. Directed by Ivan Kral, Amos Poe.

Amos Poe and Ivan Kral married silent footage with live tapes or demo recordings of bands (most of whom had yet to release a record) to create a deliberately rough audio-visual record of the burgeoning punk scene, including bands such as Blondie, Talking Heads, The Ramones, and The Heartbreakers.

Saturday, September 26, 4:00 p.m. T2

Wednesday, September 30, 4:00 p.m. T2

Blank City. 2009. Directed by Celine Danhier

A documentary about New York City in the late 1970s, when underground filmmakers collaborated with experimental musicians and vanguard performance artists, all on a shoestring budget, to create the most daring work of their generation.

Thursday, October 1, 7:00 p.m., T2

Deadly Art of Survival. 1979. 58 min. Directed by Charlie Ahearn.

Charlie Ahearn's first Super-8 feature is a Bruce Lee-style docu-epic, shot in the housing projects of the Lower East Side, with a story revolving around the real and imaginary rivals of an idealistic martial arts school led in actual life by the star of the flick, Nathan Ingram.

Underground USA. 1980, 85 min. Directed by Eric Mitchell.

In this 16 millimeter film, Victor (played by Eric Mitchell), a street hustler, meets Vicki (played by Patti Astor), a Manhattan movie star who has fallen from fame, at New York venue the Mudd Club. The two entertain each other for a while, but Victor betrays Vicki, leading to a bleak ending.

Monday, October 5, 7 p.m., T2

Wednesday, October 7, 4 p.m. T2

Downtown 81/ New York Beat Movie. 1981 and 2000. Directed by Edo Bertoglio, written by Glenn O'Brien, and produced by O'Brien and Maripol.

The story of a charismatic artist (Jean-Michel Basquiat) who attempts to sell a painting amidst the rappers, junkies, strippers, models and art-world matriarchs on the Lower East Side. With music by Kid Creole and the Coconuts, Tuxedomoon, The Plastics, DNA, The Lounge Lizards, and Basquiat's own band, Gray.

Friday, October 2, 7 p.m., T2

Sunday, October 11, 5 p.m., T2

Men in Orbit. 1979, 33 min. Directed by Lydia Lunch, written by John Lurie

A "sci-fi povera" film shot on Super-8, "Men In Orbit" features musician John Lurie and Eric Mitchell as chain-smoking astronauts occupying a decrepit New York living room transformed into a spacecraft.

G Men. 1978, 40 min. Directed by Beth and Scott B.

An exploration of social schizophrenia in which terrorists consult their mothers before planting bombs, and the head of the NYC bomb squad succumbs to his dominatrix. With Bill Rice and Marcia Resnick.

She Had Her Gun All Ready. 1978, 28 min. Directed by Vivienne Dick.

With Lydia Lunch and Pat Place, this film, set in the Lower East Side, is about unequal power between two people (of any gender), or the repressive side of a person in conflict with the sexual powerful side.

Wednesday, October 7, 7 p.m., T2

Sunday, October 18, 5:30, T1

Rome 78. 1978. Directed by James Nares.

A noted classic of the "New Cinema" of underground East Village filmmakers, this color Super-8 film presents a narrative surrounding the Roman Emperor Caligula set in a shabby New York apartment. Ultimately, James Nares proposes an analogy between ancient Rome and modern America as cultural empires.

Monday, October 12, 7 p.m., T2

Saturday, November 28, 7:30 p.m., T2

Stranger than Paradise. 1984. Directed by Jim Jarmusch.

A self-styled New York hipster (John Lurie of the Lounge Lizards) is paid a surprise and quite unwelcome visit by his sixteen-year-old Hungarian cousin. From initial hostility and indifference a strange affection grows between the two exiles.

Saturday, October 17, 8 p.m., T1

Sunday, November 29, 2 p.m., T2

Variety. 1984, 100 min. Directed by Bette Gordon.

In Bette Gordon's pioneering indie film about voyeurism from a female perspective, a young woman (played by Sandy McLeod) works as a ticket taker in a porn theater, and her curiosity leads her to shadow a male patron.

Friday, November 27, 7 p.m., T2

Monday, November 30, 4 p.m., T2

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No. 50

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For downloadable high-resolution images, please register at www.moma.org/press.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesdays, except December 19, December 26, and January 2.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information.

Visit us on the Web at www.moma.org