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FEBRUARY 5TH, 2016

HAUTE HIP HOP

Susan Barrett the curator Projects Gallery in St Louis, Missouri presents the new exhibition HAUTE HIP-HOP. An exhibition that celebrates the rise of the hip-hop phenomenon and its preeminent cultural influence.



Haute Hip Hop Invite

We were honoured to be asked to be part of the exhibition with a hand picked selection our collections shown as Wearable art.



Haute Hip Hop opening night by Suzy Gorman



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We then had to pleasure to sit down with Susan to talk about the roots of Hip-Hop, which Hip-hop star would Bex Rox be and the go to places of St Louis.

When did you get into art and what sparked your love for it?

There has never been a time that art wasn't a part of me! I grew up drawing, painting, making little house plans... I can't imagine my life without art- the activity of creating it or following it or aspiring to find it. I can't imagine any life without art!

-How did you and why did you decide to do Haute hip hop exhibition?

This has been a long term interest for at least 10 years after I read an inspiring article about the Hip Hop Chess Federation in Oakland and how it used hip hop and chess to transform lives for kids at risk. The organization uses hip hop as an art form, a language to communicate with the kids needing it the most. I learned that hip hop is an art movement- the most successful one in the 20th century- it's over 40 years old and has transformed cultures internationally through music, art, fashion, communication and attitude.

- Can you tell us a little more about it?

There is no way to ignore the influence and power of hip hop- anywhere in the world. Every culture has adopted hip hop creating a universal language and art. What we are exhibiting is just a sliver of this massive cultural change focusing on the influence hip hop has made in the Arts and Culture with capital "A"s and "C"s.... Hip hop started as a youth revolt (as all great art genres have). It started in NYC in the 70's after education cuts in the arts among other economic disparities; Youth took to the streets with their creativity, re appropriating found objects as materials: Graffiti art, scratching, break dancing, rapping. What began as a cry and attempted escape from the "hood" has become influence and leadership in the business and art worlds. Hip hop has redefined what success looks like and how to attain it- artists and designers have always taken notice. This exhibit exemplifies the influence of this powerful art form in the "elitist" worlds of the Art and fashion worlds.

- We love the idea that you have acknowledged Bex Rox for your Hip Hop show, what made you think of us and how will you be showing it?

We love the boldness of Bex Rox: it's rebellious while still adhering to elegance.

- If you had to pick one hip hop star for Bex Rox who would it be? and which piece?

I'd love to see Missy Elliot in a Bex Rox- like the work: she's fierce and strong and always proud of being a woman.

- Can you give us your top 5 tips to get the ultimate sensory St Louis experience?

1. **Food!** St. Louis has a long, rich tradition in the culinary arts. Besides having a few James Beard winning chefs, our local food is amazing: Ooey gooey butter cake, barbecue ribs, toasted ravioli, Imo's pizza and Ted Drews Frozen custard- oh, and my favorite: World's Fair Donuts- they are the most amazing and are still baked by the same family after 50+ years.



World Fair Donuts at Vandeventer Ave

2. **Neighborhoods:** St. Louis is really a series of small towns connected together and every town has its own personality which is as diverse as the Central West End (where projects+gallery lives), which is a little like the West Village in NYC to The Hill, which is a throwback in time to the 40's and '50's where the Italian Americans lived- still full of restaurants, Italian bakeries and bocci ball courts. There's Soulard, which is the oldest area of St. Louis from the early 1800's that was inhabited by the French which still has some cobblestone streets, a daily food market and restaurants and clubs and Cherokee which is now inhabited by the Mexican population with restaurants, grocery stores as well as where the cool kids play with a bustling art scene, bars and clubs and vintage stores.
3. **Baseball!** We're a baseball town and no real St. Louis experience is complete without attending a game, watching the Clydesdale horses, drinking Budweiser beer and eating Gus's pretzels! The energy is amazing!
4. **City Sculpture Park-** this is an amazing couple of blocks in the middle of a busy downtown that is filled with world renown art and fountains that kids can climb on and play in the fountains! Best of all, it was completely donated by a local foundation so that everyone in St. Louis can get up close and personal with the art and experience the joy of it!
5. **The arts!** St. Louis has a disproportionate amount of art institutions for its scale. We have the St. Louis Art Museum that just completed an addition by Chipperfield, the world famous zoo, the Pulitzer Art Foundation housed in the first Andoe designed museum in the US, the Richard Serra sculpture downtown, the Botanical Gardens, the Fabulous Fox Theatre, the world renown St. Louis Symphony, Opera Theater, the Contemporary Art Museum, the World Chess Hall of Fame, the Blues Hall of Fame, the Photography Hall of Fame, the Sheldon Theater and art galleries, White Flag Projects, Laumeier Sculpture Park..... I have not listed half of the institutions- oh, and did I mention they are free? Even the zoo! The arts are accessible to all in St. Louis!



The Way (1972-80) by Alexander Liberman at Laumeier Sculpture Park in Sunset Hills, Missouri. Photo by Kevin J. Miyazaki



- Your life mantra or a quote you adore!

Pretty feathers make pretty birds.

- Your favourite Bex Rox and why?

The lions, of course- the king of the jungle- it's a jungle out there; it makes me wonder sometimes! Hello? Hip hop kings!!!!!!!

The Lion Collection is now available at HAUTE HIP HOP at Projects & Gallery, St Louis, Missouri.



Lion Pedant



Lion Earring Set



Lion Ring

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