

The art of rap: 'Haute Hip-Hop' at Projects+Gallery closes with party, panel

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By American Staff

When hip-hop sprouted from the streets of New York in the 1970s, the genre was labeled a musical fad.

The assumption was that cutting-edge sound and complimentary creativity expressed through dance, style, art, language and attitude would be contained within the African American experience before it ultimately faded into obscurity.

Nearly five decades later, it stands as a multi-billion dollar global industry in its own right. It has also emerged as a popular culture phenomenon that has saturated the mainstream in nearly every element.

Hip-hop has become the great influencer and a standard for trendsetters – and the local creative community has enjoyed a glimpse of hip-hop's evolution into the culture of record with "Haute Hip-Hop."

And after an extended run at Projects+Gallery, Barrett Barrera's presentation of "Haute Hip-Hop," an exhibition that celebrates the rise of the hip-hop phenomenon and its cultural influence, will go out with a bang.

On Friday, March 25, a closing party will be held 5-8 p.m. at Projects+Gallery, 4733 McPherson Ave. The celebration will feature local hip-hop musical artists, including Bates and female emcees from St. Louis' own Femcee Nation Organization. DJ Agile One will spin throughout the evening.

Featured artists of the exhibit include Tyler Boye, St. Louis native Jermaine Clark, Joe Conzo, Dolce & Gabbana, Shepard Fairey, Fantich & Young, Gregory Ingram, Jonathan Mannion, Charlie Le Mindu, Marilyn Minter, Moschino, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Fahamu Pecou, Hank Willis Thomas, Mickalene Thomas, Valentino and Kehinde Wiley.

Images of rap gods and pioneers like 'Pac, Biggie, Eazy-E, Salt N Pepa, The Fugees and Wu Tang Clan share space with the anonymous facilitators of the movement back in the South Bronx as part of the "Haute Hip-Hop" collection.

So are examples Louboutin's signature red bottoms, gold chains, turntables and evening gowns decorated with graffiti.

"This exhibit examines the progress of hip-hop style and influence, rooted in its music, art and attitude, from its conception in the social and cultural tumult of 1970s urban America to its place at the forefront of innovation in art, fashion and culture," Projects+Gallery said in the description of the exhibit.

"As a movement, hip-hop has inverted the traditional path of diffusion, rising from the streets to the throne of haute couture, revolutionizing what we wear, what we listen to and who we are, while always keeping it real."

Portraits and visual art inspired by the movement make for a visual mixtape that suggests the broad influence hip-hop has had on every generation since it was introduced.

Projects+Gallery will also host a [panel discussion on hip-hop](#) and its influence on contemporary art, fashion and culture from 3 to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 26.

Moderated by Adrienne Davis – art collector, professor of law, vice provost at Washington University and president of the St. Louis Art Museum Board of Directors – the discussion will include gallery owner Susan Barrett, founder and president of Barrett Barrera Projects, and John Harrington, co-founder of Paint Louis, Slumfest and Beats 4 Eats.

The closing party for “Haute Hip-Hop” will take place 5-8 p.m. Friday, March 25 at Projects+Gallery, 4733 McPherson Ave.

Projects+Gallery’s [panel discussion on hip-hop and its influence on contemporary art, fashion, and culture](#) will take place 3-4 p.m. Saturday, March 26.

For more information, visit [www.http://www.projects-gallery.com/current-exhibition/](http://www.projects-gallery.com/current-exhibition/).

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