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"CAPTURED"

Text: Jericho Parms

Most anyone of age in New York in the 1980s has some recollection of the chaos and creativity of the downtown arts scene. For those who don't, BENvsDAN—three young filmmakers just off the premiere of their debut in film festivals this year—are ready to change that. These true city boys are taking matters of the industry into their own hands and are about to launch an independent release in cities worldwide.

Captured profiles Clayton Patterson, an art activist best known for his footage of the Tompkins Square Riots of 1988 and subsequent run-ins with the NYPD, who has spent decades documenting the Lower East Side, amassing an archive of thousands of still and moving images: portraits of street kids, squatters, drag queens and junkies, video of drug busts, evictions, performance art and punk shows.

"These are the passing images of our childhood," says Dan Levin who, alongside Ben Solomon, grew up with his own snapshot memories of New York in the 1980s and 1990s. Together with Jenner Furst, these filmmakers come from the same alt-arts pedigree that nurtured the avant-garde and are continuing Patterson's legacy behind the lens.

In the early 1980s, after a brief stint in the Soho art scene that nurtured the likes of Haring, Warhol, and Basquiat, Patterson opened a storefront on Essex Street as the Clayton Gallery and Outlaw Museum where he has since showcased the work of artists like Dash Snow, and Nico Dios. It was the Lower East Side where Patterson came into his own, shunning all things mainstream. Now, noted for his provocative rants indicting gentrification and the loss of cheap rent, Patterson's work is a seamless extension of his visual curiosity in mingling with the disenfranchised.

"He was intensely interested in people," Furst says, noting that even now Patterson is everywhere, documenting the otherwise unseen. "It's a compulsion," he adds. "But it's a beautiful compulsion—a bygone era lives on."

The subtle genius of *Captured* exists in the filmmakers who boldly follow suit, pursuing an underbelly of cultural history in a neighborhood they believe is fading. Though not received by traditional industry outlets, BENvsDAN, employing the familiar DIY spirit in their upcoming release, may be courting the notion of a cult classic.

Interspersing Patterson's images with original footage and interviews from former Mayor Ed Koch to legendary front man, Jimmy Gestapo of Murphy's Law, the film aptly preserves the raw, uninhibited clips of an era without bullying or shunning outsiders. Through scenes of the hardcore and promiscuous, the gritty and dangerous, the ugly and the beautiful—the streets of New York's infamous cauldron—*Captured* reminds us that nothing and no one is lost forever.

For more information on the release of *Captured* visit, www.capturedmovie.com. The film screens at N.Y.C.'s Millenium Theater on November 8th.

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COMMENTS

None at this time.