

# Reflections from the '80s

## Jamel Shabazz

Curated by  
Bene Taschen



***The Unknown Riders***  
**Flatbush, Brooklyn, NYC 1981**

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
76.2 x 60.9 cm (30 x 24 inches)

**“This photograph represents a new stage in my street photography, where I began to create a series of environmental portraits.”**



***Crack Kills***  
**NYC 1987**

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
60.9 x 76.2 cm (24 x 30 inches)

**“Legendary graffiti artist Chico was known for creating thought-provoking messages in his artwork. The crack epidemic of the 1980s devastated communities and contributed to the mass incarceration of people of color under the discriminatory Rockefeller Drug Laws.”**



***Back in the Days***  
**Lower East Side, Manhattan, NYC 1982**

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
60.9 x 76.2 cm (24 x 30 inches)

**“I’ve always felt a great degree of duty to engage young men and women about the obstacles of life and the need to prepare for the future. Prior to capturing this photograph I had a very positive exchange with these young men about goals and aspirations. For me, having constructive conversations was far more important than the photograph itself.”**



***A Mother's Love***  
**Brooklyn, NYC 1987**

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
76.2 x 60.9 cm (30 x 24 inches)



***Rude Boy***  
**Brooklyn, NYC 1981**

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
76.2 x 60.9 cm (30 x 24 inches)

**“This brother was one of the most dapper cats in Flatbush, Brooklyn. Sadly, he would lose his life in a very violent confrontation shortly after this picture was taken.”**



***Radio Man***  
**Flatbush, Brooklyn, NYC 1980**

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
76.2 x 60.9 cm (30 x 24 inches)

**“It was common during the '80s to see young men carrying around boom boxes. Here, this young blood from the Flatbush section of Brooklyn poses with his costume boom box while taking in some good rhythms.”**



***Rush Hour***  
**NYC 1988**

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
60.9 x 76.2 cm (24 x 30 inches)

**“The New York subway system is one of the most unique in the country, covering all of the five boroughs of the city running 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is where I spent countless hours a day during the '80s documenting this profound underground world. The available lighting was ideal and the subject matter was always unpredictable and intriguing.”**





***Undercover***  
**Lower East Side, Manhattan, NYC 1988**

**“A young officer shows off his goods.”**

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
60.9 x 76.2 cm (24 x 30 inches)



**Kid Freeze**  
Harlem, Manhattan, NYC 1980

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
76.2 x 60.9 cm (30 x 24 inches)

**“Kid Freeze has been b-boying since the birth of hip hop. Known for being the inventor of the classic headspin. Kid Freeze is considered to be one of the most iconic b-boys in the world today. The photograph was taken in Harlem, NY.”**



***Bittersweet***  
Lower East Side, Manhattan,  
NYC 1982

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
76.2 x 60.9 cm (30 x 24 inches)

**“This picture conjures up so many memories. The male in the photograph is what is known as a ‘gentleman of leisure’ and the two females are, for lack of a better word, his investments. I am not clear on who the young child is in the photo, but I take it that someone is the parent. There is so much to say about this photo, but out of respect for my subjects, I will just call it ‘An illusion of love.’”**



***Little Big Man***  
Flatbush, Brooklyn, NYC 1980

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
76.2 x 60.9 cm (30 x 24 inches)

**“I could not resist capturing this moment. This man/child had swagger and finesse of someone twice his age. I often think about him, and his life’s journey.”**



***Double Trouble***  
**Manhattan, NYC 1981**

Archival inkjet print  
Edition of 9 plus 2 AP  
76.2 x 60.9 cm (30 x 24 inches)

**“I crossed paths with these young cats as I was making rounds at one of my favorite places in the city to capture great photographs: ‘The Deuce’ also known as 42 Street / Times Square. At first glance, I was amazed with their display of bravado and natural swagger. They seemed far too young to move like seasoned lions, but they were ‘official’ and known for being able to navigate and survive through the harshness of the concrete jungle.”**

## JAMEL SHABAZZ – REFLECTIONS FROM THE '80s

On March 6, 2015, Hardhitta Gallery is proud to present its first exhibition of American photographer Jamel Shabazz in Cologne. The exhibition *Reflections from the '80s* will showcase honest and spirited photographs of New York City's street vibes over the course of the decade.

Shabazz has been visually representing urban New York for the past 40 years. His iconic images capture the lifestyle and vibrant energy of the time like no other. He has become one of the key people to immortalize the New York of the '80s. To this day, his quintessential and mesmerizing work influences international fashion trends and global youth culture, and has also served as a source of inspiration for countless films. His secret lies in his care and compassion for people.

Born in 1960 and raised on the tough streets of Red Hook, Brooklyn, during the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War, Shabazz grew up exposed to violent and war-torn visual imagery which gave rise to his deep sense of empathy. Instilled with the urge to speak out and show a different perspective, he first found self-expression in graffiti art and photography with the emergence of the hip-hop movement in the '70s.

From the age of 15, picking up a camera gave Shabazz a sense of purpose: "It allowed me an opportunity to have a voice and use my voice in a way that can inspire love and unity." His photographs reveal his daily search for hope, promise, and beauty.

At 17 and unsure of what to do with his life, Shabazz served in the U.S. army in Germany for three years. After returning home in 1980, he spent the next 20 years working as a correctional officer. Driven to help people in his community to stay out of the system, he spent his free time as a proactive street photographer searching for and spreading hope.

In the '80s, New York was a tough environment: violent rival street gangs, drugs, and arrests were part of the city's dark fabric and gave rise to the artistic expression of social and political injustices of the African American community. Many young people found themselves at difficult crossroads or facing challenging and often violent day-to-day realities. Shabazz wanted to do what he could to ease the tension of his community and help kids stay out of trouble. So he took to the streets with his camera, attracting young people for whom he became a mentor and inspiration, helping with life choices and keeping a positive outlook for the future.

These photographs are his visual diary – a collection of memories, moments, conversations, people, and details. They reflect personal relationships, while giving expression to universal sentiments of all adolescents, such as hope, dreams, self-discovery, and living in the moment.

## HARDHITTA GALLERY

Hardhitta Gallery was founded by Bene Taschen as a temporary gallery for contemporary photography and painting in 2011. After the solo exhibitions of American photographers Gregory Bojorquez and Joseph Rodriguez, the gallery expanded its program last year to include Berlin photographer Miron Zownir. Previous exhibitions in Berlin, Cologne, and Los Angeles include *A Story to Tell* (Berlin, 2014), *Oliver Blum – Echtzeitmalerei* (Cologne, 2014), *Insights* (Los Angeles, 2014), *Photography from 1978–2013* (Cologne, 2014), *Joseph Rodriguez – A Humanist Gaze* (Cologne, 2013), *Gregory Bojorquez – .45 Point Blank* (Los Angeles, 2012), and *Gregory Bojorquez – Streets of L.A.* (Cologne/Berlin, 2011). In 2013 and 2014 the gallery exhibited at Paris Photo Los Angeles. In 2014 the gallery added German painter Oliver Blum to its roster. In 2015 the gallery presents a solo exhibition by American photographer Jamel Shabazz.

## BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1960 in New York  
Lives and works in New York

Education:  
1985–1987  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice,  
New York City

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015  
**Reflections from the '80s**  
Hardhitta Gallery, Cologne

2012  
**Represent**  
Grand Army Plaza Brooklyn Public Library,  
New York

**Represent**  
Maison Folie de Wazemmes, Lille

2011  
**Pieces of a Man**  
Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York

2010  
**Seconds of My Life**  
Time Inc. Building, New York

2008  
**Community**  
Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York

2007  
**Men of Honor**  
African American Museum,  
Philadelphia

2006  
**B - Boys**  
Parsha Gallery, São Paulo

2005  
**A Time Before Crack**  
Powerhouse Gallery, New York

2003  
**The Last Sunday in June**  
Kravets/Wehby Gallery, New York

**Women Only**  
La Case Gallery, Milan

2002  
**Back in the Days**  
Kravets/Wehby Gallery, New York

**Strictly Old School**  
Les Deux Gallery, Los Angeles

**New York Underground**  
Secret Gallery, New York

**When Two Worlds Meet**  
La Piscine Museum, Roubaix

2001  
**Back in the Days**  
Prosper Gallery, New York

1999  
**True Signs**  
Galerie Beaurepaire, Paris

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013

### **A Choice of Weapons**

Mill City Museum, Minneapolis

2012

### **Rituals of Chaos**

Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York

### **Harlem and the City**

City College of New York, New York

### **The Box That Rocks**

MoCADA Museum, Brooklyn,  
New York

### **The Romare Bearden Project**

Studio Museum in Harlem, New York

2011

### **Becoming**

Nasher Museum at Duke University,  
Charlotte

### **Posing Beauty**

USC Fisher Museum of Art,  
Los Angeles

### **Fear into Fire**

Columbia College, Chicago

### **Posing Beauty**

Newark Museum, Newark

### **Conflict in the New Century**

Oak Cliff Cultural Center, Dallas

2010

### **Addis Photo Fest**

Addis Ababa

### **Rewind Remix Replay**

Scottsdale Museum of Art, Scottsdale

2009

### **Posing Beauty**

New York University Tisch School of the  
Arts, New York

### **1968: Then and Now**

Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York

### **Ancient Futures**

MoCADA Museum, Brooklyn, New York

### **Obama: The Historic Campaign**

Schomburg Center, New York

### **Fashion vs. Sport**

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

### **Street Art, Street Life**

Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York

### **I Am a Man**

MoCADA Museum, Brooklyn, New York

2007

### **Black in White America**

Powerhouse Gallery, New York

### **Keep the Change**

Nathan Cummings Foundation,  
New York

### **Free for All**

Hillwood Art Museum, Brookville,  
New York

### **Reasons to Riot**

Memphis College of Art, Memphis

### **Black Style Now**

Museum of the City of New York,  
New York

### **Shoot Out**

African American Museum, Philadelphia

### **Bebop to Hip Hop**

Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York

2005

### **Resurrections**

Latin Collector Gallery, New York

### **Saturday Night, Sunday Morning**

African American Museum, Philadelphia

### **Collection Remixed**

Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York

### **Art for Life**

Russell Simmons Estate, East Hampton

2001

### **This Is the Modern World**

Modern Culture at the Gershwin Hotel,  
New York

### **The September 11 Photo Project**

Prince Street Gallery, New York

### **Hip Hop Nation**

Brooklyn Museum of the Arts, New York



## SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Smithsonian Museum of African American  
History and Culture

Whitney Museum of American Art

Rubell Family Collection

Schomburg Center for Research in Black  
Culture

Brooklyn Public Library

Kenneth Montague Collection

Fashion Institute of Technology - Fine Art

## SELECTED BOOKS

2015

**Reflections from the '80s**

HARDHITTA GALLERY

2012

**Represent:**

**Photographs from 2005–2012**

2011

**Back in the Days: The Remix**

powerHouse Books

2007

**Seconds of My Life**

powerHouse Books

2005

**A Time Before Crack**

powerHouse Books

2003

**The Last Sunday in June**

powerHouse Books

2001

**Back in the Days**

powerHouse Books