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WE WERE THE EIGHTIES

Art from one of the most celebrated times in New York's history

New York, NY- April 14, 2005- A group of artists who ran with, celebrated and were in with the “in” crowd of 1980’s New York reunite at **Avalanche Gallery 39 East 31st Street 3d fl, NYC 10016**. Entitled *We Were the Eighties*, the exhibition features photography, painting, soft-sculpture and video from the crew that ate, drank and slept the Big Apple during the roller-coaster ride that was the decade of excess. Featured works by **Christina, Albert Crudo, Patrick McMullan, Lizzerd Soufflé, Nelson Sullivan** and **Paula Gately Tillman**.

“New York in the Eighties was a veritable playground for these artists. No one ever said no. The streets and nightclubs were their palette, their runway, their stage,” explains Bridget Kelly, director of Avalanche Gallery. “They were the ones out every night, seeing and being seen, they were right at the heart of it all- every party, every opening, amid a flurry of air-kisses and flashbulbs. Some creating the object d’art and interior atmospheres, some documenting the spectacle, others were the art themselves. Together they were the fuel for powering this incredible three-ring circus that the city was at the time.”

The exhibition presents the emotionally raw work of Christina, the transgender artist who was recently portrayed by **Marilyn Manson** in the movie *Party Monster*. Soft-sculpture by Crudo, whose latest painting of a nude **Donald Trump** has the real-estate mogul insisting he has the better body. McMullan, the world-renown photojournalist, will exhibit his real-life celebrity dramas- think starlet on the rise, think *young Madonna*. Soufflé hangs formal Technicolor portraits of Manhattan royalty **Lady Bunny** and the echelon of 80’s downtown divas. Sullivan’s video series captures every action and reaction, every outfit and evil comment of this driven cast of characters. Tillman delves with intimate personality studies including a teenage **RuPaul** and future media titans **Randy Barbato** and **Fenton Bailey**.

Christina, when asked where she was from, drawled in her best **Dietrich** “Pittsburgh or Germany... I can’t remember...” and so begins a strong, captivating narrative. Her provocative, often disturbing journey through life, teetering on the fence between genders, is exposed via her work on canvas; as is her blind ambition to get Warhol to make her his next super-star (which eventually lead her to commit her most notorious “art-act”— de-wigging the pop art icon at his ’86 Fiorucci book signing). Christina, who resided in the Chelsea Hotel for most of the Eighties, didn’t live to see the end of them. Her work was snapped up by savvy collectors immediately upon her ’89 demise- this is the first public showing.

Albert Crudo considers the 80’s a visual testing-ground for him. “It was out of control- there was so much going on, it was impossible to limit your creativity or medium- collaborating with the most amazing artists and incredible personalities.” So his body of work from this time reflects this synergy- it

is an eclectic mix of fine art artifacts- part sculpture, part haute couture, 100% surreal. He has exhibited at Bliss, Williamsburg, NY and DUMBO General, DUMBO, NY, HereArt- NYC, Asterisk Young Artist Project- Williamsburg. His work has been featured in Spin, Details Magazine, Star Magazine and The Daily New and is included in the collections of fashion guru **Robert Verdi** and **Joan Rivers**.

Patrick McMullan was encouraged by **Andy Warhol** to take his camera everywhere. McMullan heeded the advice and has since built an empire on knowing everyone. And being in just the right place at exactly the right time to capture that perfect photo-op— **Debbie Harry, Diane Brill, Sly Stalone and Eddie Murphy**, to name a few. Today he heads his own full service photography and digital imaging agency, The Patrick McMullan Company in NYC and has four published books (to date) including the sold-out *Men's Show*, *Secrets of the Riviera*, *so8os*, *A Photographic Diary of A Decade* and *Intents*. His work has been exhibited at The Homer Gallery- NYC, Tony Shafrazi Gallery- NYC, Steuben Corning Gallery- NYC and Spike Gallery- NYC

Lizzard Soufflé, a third-generation, classically-trained portrait photographer, presents grand, timeless images from a roster of nightlife luminaries that reads like a Who's Who in New York from 1984-'89— **Leigh Bowery, Kenny Kenny and Quentin Crisp**... Contrasting with the public immediacy of McMullan and the studied introspect of Tillman, Soufflé embraces the spectacle, the creation, the artiste in the grandeur of a controlled environment, their control. This is where these people explode- where they become who they are- Lights... Wigs... Camera! Lizzard's studio is now located in Portland, Oregon and her work has been in the pages of Vanity Fair, The Village Voice and Just Out.

Nelson Sullivan exploited the then emerging medium of video to the fullest. He and his camera were everywhere- from stage shows of **John Sex, Larry Tee and The Now Explosion** to the Woodstock getaway of **Sylvia Miles** and the first years of **Wigstock**. On July 4, 1989 this gifted seer was taken from us, but his tapes have taken on a life of their own. Curated by **Robert Coddington**, they receive accolades for being a virtual time portal to this amazing era. Exhibited at New Museum- NYC, Paris Tout Court (International Festival of Short Films), HOWL (East Village Film Festival), Cantonal Museum of the Fine Arts- Switzerland, The Lux- London and Musee d'Art Contemporain, France. A documentary of his life, based on his own videos, was produced in '94 for Ch 4 TV, London.

Paula Gately Tillman's stark black and white portraits of downtown glitterati intimately explore the vulnerability behind the veneer of fabulous. Exposing the wizard behind the gold lame curtain— her A-list includes **Dean Johnson, Brant Mewborn, Michael Musto, and Tish and Snooky**. Now living in Baltimore, Tillman's work has shown at The Fine Print Gallery, Maryland, Tuttle Gallery, Baltimore, Amaile Rothschild Gallery, Maryland. She was included in the '94 Atlanta Biennial. "Tillman mined the same gritty material as photographers like Annie Leibovitz... if anything, Tillman's images seem more in feel to the approach of photo-diarist Nan Golden."- Glenn McNatt, Art Critic, *Baltimore Sun*

Kelly surmises, "These visionaries capture the essence of what it meant to be a vital, young artist in New York at the end of the 20th century. This is a visually tactile way for someone who wasn't there to experience the intensity first hand. Their extremely diverse work embodies the aspirations and realities of that very special era and this exhibition is a veritable time capsule of that period."

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May 10 - June 3, 2005 at Avalanche Gallery, 39 East 31st Street, New York NY 10016
Wednesday through Friday - 1-7pm Saturday - 12-5pm Tuesday- by appointment
Reception- May 10, 2005 6-9PM