

ONE WEEK PHOTO EXHIBITION CELEBRATES MOS DEF'S TWO GRAMMY AWARD NOMINATIONS FOR "THE ECSTATIC"

MOS DEF: ECSTATIC MOMENTS - Photographs by Cognito Opens Jan. 30, 2010

LOS ANGELES (Jan. 25, 2010) — HWW8 Art & Design Gallery, Union LA & Frolab present a photo exhibition entitled **MOS DEF: ECSTATIC MOMENTS**. Photographer, filmmaker, visionist **Cognito** showcases rare performance and behind-the-scenes images captured during the two year journey of making and supporting the June 2009 release of "The Ecstatic" (Downtown Records.)

This special one-week exhibition features candid photographs of Mos Def, including images from visits to the Cape of Great Hope, South Africa, performing in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and a powerful series of US Summer Tour "end-of-the-night posse shots" featuring such artists as Jay Electronica, Talib Kweli, Erykah Badu, and even a surprise guest appearance by the legendary Shuggie Otis. Cognito has also immortalized Mos Def in bright moments from "The Ecstatic" studio sessions with producers Madlib, OH NO, Preservation & Georgia Anne Muldrow. The photographs in this exhibit, soon to be published in book format, are offered by Mos Def to his family, friends and fans in order to share the many "ecstatic moments" he experiences while creating, recording, traveling and performing around the world.

Regarded as one of the most insightful artists of our time, musician, activist and actor Mos Def has captured the attention of critics and audiences alike with a celebrated body of work that has crossed all artistic genres—from music to the Broadway stage, film and television. In 1996, Mos Def became an underground favorite in the hip hop world, which led to the recording of "Black Star", his legendary collaboration with Talib Kweli, whose debut release would become one of the most critically acclaimed hip-hop albums of its generation. The following year Mos released his solo debut, "Black On Both Sides", which was certified gold and credited by critics with bringing hip-hop back to its soapbox roots. His latest album, "The Ecstatic", has been lauded by critics as one of the top albums of 2009 and has garnered two GRAMMY Award nominations in the categories Best Rap Album and Best Rap Solo Performance for the single "Casa Bey."

Over the past twenty years, Cognito has contributed immensely to the propagation of Hip Hop culture—from concert promoter to FatBeats record store operator to touring the world as a member of the underground group massinfluence. Most consistently, Cognito is known for documenting legendary hip hop artists such as De La Soul, Talib Kweli, MF DOOM and Kanye West on both still and video media. He has filmed MF DOOM for the Gorillaz live DVD, documentaries on both Talib Kweli and Goodie Mob, and a music video for rock diva Nikka Costa. Though their friendship began over 10 years ago, Cognito has acted for the past two years as the "official archivist" for Mos Def. Cognito is well known within the Hip Hop community for his ability to connect artists for significant collaborations. Examples include his roles as A&R for the Black Eyed Peas' remix album "Renegotiations", bringing Pete Rock, DJ Premier, Large Professor and DJ Jazzy Jeff to the

project. Cognito also worked as consulting producer on the recently aired documentary on music sampling entitled Copyright Criminals, securing Pete Rock, De La Soul, Mr. Len & Bobbito Garcia for their priceless insight. Cognito is the co-founder of Frolab.com, a marketing, design and production collective based on the concept of "frolaboration," formed with graphic designer and photographer Jewell Green.

Mos Def looked to the multiple dimensions of his life for inspiration for the album "The Ecstatic". His album is named after the book by Victor LaValle, and a still image from the groundbreaking 1970s film Killer of Sheep by Charles Burnett is used as the cover artwork.

A private VIP opening reception will be held Friday January 29, 2010 hosted by Frolab with music by Mos Def's DJ, Preservation.

The exhibition will be open to the public from January 30, 2010 through February 6, 2010 at the HVW8 Art + Design Gallery, located at 661 N. Spaulding Ave., Los Angeles CA, 90036; open Tuesday to Sunday, 1 – 6 pm or by appointment. (323) 655-HVW8(4898)

In addition to the photo exhibition, there will also be a limited edition t-shirt produced in conjunction with style destination Union LA. The t-shirt is available exclusively at their boutique, located at 110 S La Brea Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90036 (323) 549-6950. Union LA is one of the only US retailers for Japanese brands Neighborhood & Visvm, worn by Mos Def in many of the photos on display.

Established in 2005 in Los Angeles by Tyler Gibney with Addison Liu, the HVW8 ART + DESIGN GALLERY is a studio/gallery space for HVW8 and friends. The current mandate is supporting avant-garde graphic design such as Dutch designer/illustrator Parra (April 2007 + April 2009), American designer Brent Rollins (August 2007), Swedish design SSON (Sept 2007), Kevin Lyons (June 2008), Ray Noland (August 2008), the Enjoi Pop-Up Shop (March 2009), Michael, Kevin and Geoff (Michael Leon, Kevin Lyons and Geoff McFetridge Nov. 2009) and most recently the Megane Zine exhibition featuring Ed Templeton (Jan. 2010).

For more info:

www.frolab.com/ecstatic

www.hvw8.com

www.unionlosangeles.com

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