

BRONX DOCUMENTARY CENTER

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SEIS DEL SUR Dispatches from Home by Six Nuyorican Photographers

On View: January 19 - March 8, 2013
Opening Reception: January 19, 4PM



© Ángel Franco



© Ricky Flores



© Francisco Molina Reyes II

You cant miss anything you've never had. I didn't miss backyards, the private schools and white picket fences 'cause I never had that. But I had my St. Mary's Park, People's Park, the abandoned buildings to run and play in, Johnny on the Pony, the pumps, and the multiple fires to entertain me. –Joe Conzo, Jr.

The Bronx Documentary Center is proud to present *Seis del Sur: Dispatches from Home by Six Nuyorican Photographers*, an exhibition of photographs, video, and ephemera by Joe Conzo, Jr, Ricky Flores, Ángel Franco, David Gonzalez, Edwin Pagán and Francisco Molina Reyes II, all photographers of Puerto Rican descent. The exhibition depicts the South Bronx in the 1970s, 80s and 90s as captured by those who lived through the famous devastation. This groundbreaking exhibition, a combination of street photography, portraiture, crime scene photos, and snapshots from the birth of hip hop, has been “thirty years in the making.”

The photographers in *Seis del Sur*—meaning *Six from the South*—have formed a collective of the same name. Although a few of the men had been previously acquainted, they all met serendipitously at an opening of Conzo's in 2009. After comparing notes, they quickly realized they had often crossed paths during their youth without knowing it—living on neighboring blocks or photographing the same scenes. They even appear in one another's party photos, images that chronicle the birth of hip-hop.

Marked by a remarkable energy and exuberance, *Seis del Sur* is unique in providing an insider's view of the Bronx at a time when the borough was cast as an impenetrable outpost of hopelessness. In the 1970s and 1980s outsiders were travelling to the South Bronx to photograph the infamous burning buildings and heaps of rubble, results of neglect, white flight and failed fiscal policies. New York City was effectively bankrupt and the borough became a nationwide symbol of urban blight.

The men in *Seis*, however, were turning their lens on their communities – and finding different results. With access unavailable to outsiders, they depicted families, neighbors and friends. Their collective archive adds intimacy to the overstated record of terror and blight. Yet, the group doesn't attempt to sugarcoat the difficulties of life in the Bronx. The marks of poverty, alienation and violence can be clearly seen. The photographers stake no claims to creating a definitive depiction of the time period. Rather, the goal is to create a richer story and to

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©David Gonzalez



©Edwin Pagán



©Joe Conzo, Jr.

expand the conversation. Says Bronx Documentary Center founder Michael Kamber, “the exhibition allows our community to debate and reflect on where we’ve been and where we’re going.”

The exhibition covers a period early in these men’s creative careers. Ángel Franco became a Pulitzer-winning staff photographer for *The New York Times*. Gonzalez pursued a career as a journalist, also landing at *The New York Times*, where he has been a columnist, foreign correspondent and now co-editor of the Lens blog. Ricky Flores widely exhibits one of the deepest photographic archives of the South Bronx in the 80s. Pagán is a filmmaker and founder of Latin Horror, a popular website dedicated to the fans of the genre of Latin horror. Reyes pursued a career in TV news and created an extensive archive of writing and photography of Latin music. Conzo, known for photographing the birth of hip hop, exhibits this work widely and is author of *Born in the Bronx: A Visual Record of the Early Days of Hip Hop* (Rizzoli, 2008).

The website for the collective is www.seisdelsur.com.

The exhibition is made possible with support from The Department of Family Medicine, Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center and 

RELATED SCREENINGS

Sat., January 26, 7:30PM From Mambo to Hip Hop: A South Bronx Tale. Followed by Q+A with Henry Chalfant.

Sat., February 23, 7:30PM Latinos Beyond the Reel. Followed by Q+A with Edwin Pagán and the directors.

ABOUT THE BRONX DOCUMENTARY CENTER

Founded in 2011, the Bronx Documentary Center (BDC) is a non-profit gallery and educational space devoted to documentary projects from around the globe. Located on the ground floor of a recently revitalized building in the South Bronx, the BDC aims to create an engaging environment for local and international photojournalists, artists, filmmakers, critics and educators committed to innovative methods of non-fiction storytelling.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Bronx Documentary Center, 614 Courtlandt Avenue, Bronx, NY 10451 | info@bronxdoc.org | 347-332-6962

Directions

Subway: 2/5 train to 3rd Ave-149th Street. BDC is located three blocks from the station.

Bus: BX2, BX6, BX13, BX32, BX41.

Car: Parking lot available adjacent to building.

Gallery Hours

The Bronx Documentary Center is open to the public Thursday to Sunday, 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

<http://bronxdoc.org/>