

CONTACT HIGH

A VISUAL HISTORY OF HIP-HOP



SYNOPSIS

CONTACT HIGH: A VISUAL HISTORY OF HIP-HOP

Through iconic images from the 1970s to today, the evolution of hip-hop unfolds as a revolution in music, politics, race, and fashion—an enduring legacy documented in *Contact High: A Visual History of Hip-Hop*. The images—many of them displayed alongside contact sheets from the session—give us a rare glimpse into the creative process behind some of hip-hop’s most iconic photos.

While the music was establishing itself as a cultural force, photographers were on the scene, documenting the urban spaces where hip-hop came alive. The music reflected everyday experience; the images captured and memorialized it, providing a necessary perspective—sometimes empowering, sometimes controversial.

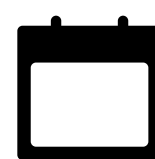
A single image can define a decisive moment, creating an instant icon. And that’s exactly the point. Photography has helped shape hip-hop, which has always been about self-definition. Press photos and album covers announce the arrival of the style, swagger, bravado, singularity, and artistry that help the performer become an icon. For this genre that speaks truth to power, reclaims and concretizes identity, idealizes self-representation, and visualizes political rhetoric, the images are inseparable from the music.

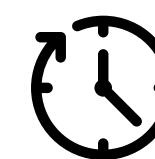



EXHIBITION OVERVIEW



 5,000-7,500 square feet of gallery space required

 Available: Q4 2025 and onward

 Rental Period: Minimum of 13 weeks

 Language: English
(See Overview of Specs slide)

TARGET AUDIENCE

People of all ages who are interested in hip-hop. This includes young people interested in learning about the genre and its history, as well as folks interested in seeing pictures of musicians they know and love. This exhibition also provides a detailed overview of hip-hop history, making it interesting for people who are still unfamiliar with the genre.

LIST OF EXHIBITION ELEMENTS

ARTIFACT HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Exclusive images of some of hip-hop's biggest influences, including Missy Elliot, Jay-Z, Queen Latifah, Nas, Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac Shakur.
- Dozens of unedited contact sheets ranging from Barron Claiborne's iconic Notorious B.I.G. portraits to images of Aaliyah, Wu-Tang Clan, and Salt-N-Pepa.
- Supporting artifacts from MOPOP's permanent collection upon request. Artifacts can include costumes, mixing tables, original liner notes, fliers, etc.



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OVERVIEW OF SPECS

SPACE REQUIREMENTS

(ceiling height, minimum access dims, environment)

- Ceiling height is a minimum of 8ft (size of the tallest exhibit component).
- Empty crates and shipping blankets required 400 sq ft of clean, dry storage.

SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

- During opening hours, trained museum security staff, professional guards, and/or monitored cameras must be present.
- Alarm system, cameras, and/or guards are required during closed hours.

SHIPPING

One Truck - Hosting institution is responsible for providing Certificate of Insurance prior to shipping.

INSTALLATION TIME

MOPOP recommends 10-14 days for installing this exhibition. 5 days are required for deinstall.



OVERVIEW OF SPECS (CONT.)

POWER AND LIGHTING

- Dedicated full-power circuits for exhibit casework and AV hardware.
- Sufficient outlets and/or power supplies to distribute exhibit circuits to components within exhibit.
- Sufficient lighting fixtures with UV filters and a variety of lamps, lenses, and filters to adjust the beam spread and intensity.
- Light fixtures require UV filters and a compliment of lamps, lenses, and filters to adjust the beam spread. Non-artifact items can have slightly higher light levels.
- A MOPOP technician/registrar will recommend light levels. Hosting venue is responsible for maintaining and monitoring light levels.

INCLUDED/ NOT INCLUDED

INCLUDED:

- 100+ original photographic prints from prominent hip-hop photographers and contact sheets.
- Illuminated lightboxes for display.
- Interactive elements to explore photographer's contact sheets.
- 3D artifacts (costumes and other memorabilia) from the MOPOP permanent collection.

NOT INCLUDED:

- Large-scale wall graphics.
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

LANGUAGES

English

AVAILABILITY

Q4 2025 and onward.



CONTACT US

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mopop.org/traveling-exhibitions

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