

SHOWSTOPPER LEE QUINON

Lee Quinones setting up the exhibition.

Photos by Dustin Ross

LEE QUINONES: PRELUDE

OCTOBER 19, 2006

CANDELA ARTS AND
MUSIC FESTIVAL

OLD SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

We've all got to start somewhere. That's what painter Lee Quinones' solo exhibition at the Candela Arts and Music Festival alludes to: an homage to the era when he earned his stripes as an aerosol art Don, and an era that also happened to be the petri dish for hip-hop culture. There was a time when Lee Quinones wasn't famous with an esteemed catalog of work in far-reach galleries and museums, nor a film star of the pulp classic *Wild Style*, nor a prominent figure in hip-hop and graffiti-based documentaries. In other words, there was a time when Lee wasn't an iconic fixture in graffiti lore. It was the 1970s, and the Puerto Rican native was furiously busy developing his street art skills, and squandering 12-inch vinyl funk for

York surfaces and subway cars. It was this youthful electricity that made hip-hop culture exciting to the generation that brought it to fruition, and fuels the craving of youngsters coming up.

Quinones captures the essence of these times with vibrant, provocative imagery in nine paintings from his series, *Amplified*. This exhibit of paintings about the intimate relationship of music and art makes a fitting debut in the locale of Lee's own prelude in Puerto Rico, where hip-hop roots are also traceable. Images resonate loud and clear, hungry, eager fingers clutching the sleeve of Baby Huey's sole 1971 release, *The Living Legend*, slips inside a faded blue jacket. Fuchsia splashes balance the vintage

percussion on *Bongo Rock*, Incredible Bongo Band. Squ off covers of classics like *First* by Babe Ruth loom in the pa *Base Ruth*, surrounded by lay suggestive green swooshes.

Quinones shared several stu from *Amplified* in the show c by Isolde Brielmaier. Situated the lively and musically drive Sebastian block of Old San J Candela enhances the exhibi vor. Luckily, plans are in the to bring *Prelude* to New York 2007. —Tamara Warren

