

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BT: The Last Days
Opening Reception
Newark Arts Council Open Doors '10

WHEN: September 26, 2010. 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

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Newark-based photojournalist and filmmaker Akintola Hanif will host his photography exhibition, "BT: The Last Days," which documents the drama of Newark's Baxter Terrace housing project throughout the year before its demolition began. In 2009, the City of Newark began tearing down the development as part of a larger campaign to build better housing. Shot over a period of twelve months, "BT: The Last Days" is an objective look at the beauty, despair & diversity that existed within one of Newark's most notorious housing projects.

The exhibit will be held in conjunction with the Newark Arts Council OPEN DOORS 2010 Gallery Crawl & Studio Tour. There will also be a screening of his trailer for the film which accompanies this project.

Hanif, who was raised in Brooklyn, became engrossed in the story of the project's demise while working on a film about New Jersey gangs, which he has been photographing for nearly a decade. "BT: The Final Days" is an intimate look at residents during the diaspora. "I was moved by the honesty & sincerity of the community at large," says Hanif. "I admired the way they cared for each other's children and exercised loyalty and compassion for one another. I was also equally fascinated by the beauty & duality that existed there: mother and drug addict, gangster and gentleman."

Hanif's focus and main objective is the documentation of under-represented communities, like Baxter Terrace, and to create empathy for groups that are marginalized, invisible and misunderstood.

"He portrays his subjects with a quiet dignity and his photos are beautifully realized and spontaneous. He offers us an unblinking look at the lives of people who are bearing the weight of the brutal economic sink in which they find themselves," says urban culture photographer Henry Chalfant. "This is documentary photography at its best...Hanif's work displays a brilliant mastery of fine art photography and a grasp of commercial techniques that has enabled him to attract a diverse list of clients. But clearly his passion and his sense of justice and concern...has led him to documentary portraiture, and in this he really excels."

"Three generations of my family lived in Baxter Terrace which was a beautiful community before the drugs came. I still see that beautiful community that everyone else can't see. I'm glad Akintola Hanif had the brilliance and courage to capture B.T.'s last days in a way that clearly portrays this," says Founder and Executive Director, Stop Shootin' Inc., Yusef Ismail.

BT: The Last Days debuts at Akintola Hanif's studio: HYCIDE located at 31 Central Avenue Suite #7 in downtown Newark, N.J. This event is free and open to the public. Appointments for private viewings are available.