

Hold That Feeling. Note from David  
by David Hershovits

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The other night I went to photographer Henry Chalfant's opening at the Eric Firestone Gallery on Great Jones St. I was in a zombie state of mind, looking like a semblance of myself yet inwardly disoriented, recognizing little about the world I thought I knew. An anchor had broken loose, and I was adrift in a sea of uncertainty. In the aftermath of the election, my mostly monolithic New York was similarly affected, each one of us dealing with it in our idiosyncratic way.

Henry Chalfant is famous for documenting the work created by a loose-knit group of urban youth who, in the late '70s, turned subway cars into moving artworks with their colorful graffiti. His seminal movie, *Style Wars*, tells the story of what would emerge as arguably the most influential art movement of the late 20th century. I feel very much a part of that generation in New York City history, so I went, fighting the funk as I climbed the four flights to the gallery on the top floor. But when I walked in, everything changed, like the part in *The Wizard of Oz* when the black-and-white movie turns into a Technicolor dreamscape.

The first person I saw was Lee Quinones, one of the legends of that era, who was signing a reproduction of a whole train car he "burned", produced as a souvenir for the exhibition. Lee was fully in the moment, enjoying the hive of good vibes that conquers all, at least on the occasion of an opening like this. I inched my way in, seeing familiar faces similarly engaged with the work, with each other. We were all affected by what had just happened, but something else had come along to make us forget. Before long, without even noticing, I was in the moment myself, laughing with old friends, part of a community united in its history and its commitment to a future that is temporarily being denied to our country, but not to us here, tonight.

We are living in a pivotal time. America has lost its innocence. For the first time in our relatively short history, we will join the long line of countries around the world who faced authoritarian regimes. But although we have lost our innocence, we have not lost our souls. We're in for a fight, but we know that when we get down, when we feel the funk, when the shadow of the dark night weighs heavily on our backs, we can shake it off. We can dance. We can get together with friends, with like-minded folks, allies, comrades. We can tell stories and see art and theater and listen to the music, to know in our bones what it feels like to be free. Together, we can remember not only how it used to be, but also what it can, and will, be again.