THE 5 DOLLAR BILL
Lee Jaffe and others

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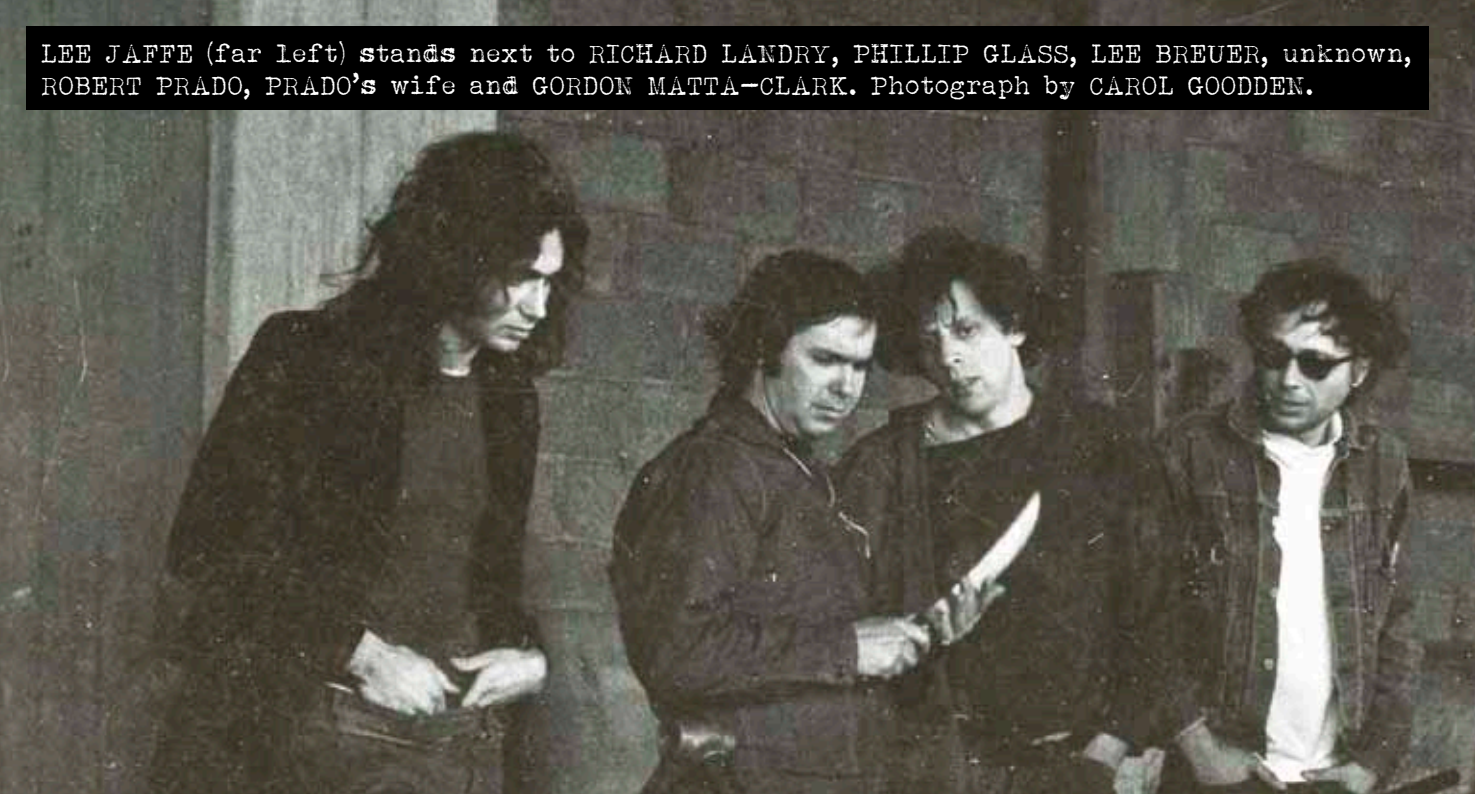
ONE DOLLAR

LEE JAFFE (far left) stands next to RICHARD LANDRY, PHILLIP GLASS, LEE BREUER, unknown, ROBERT PRADO, PRADO's wife and GORDON MATTA-CLARK. Photograph by CAROL GOODDEN.



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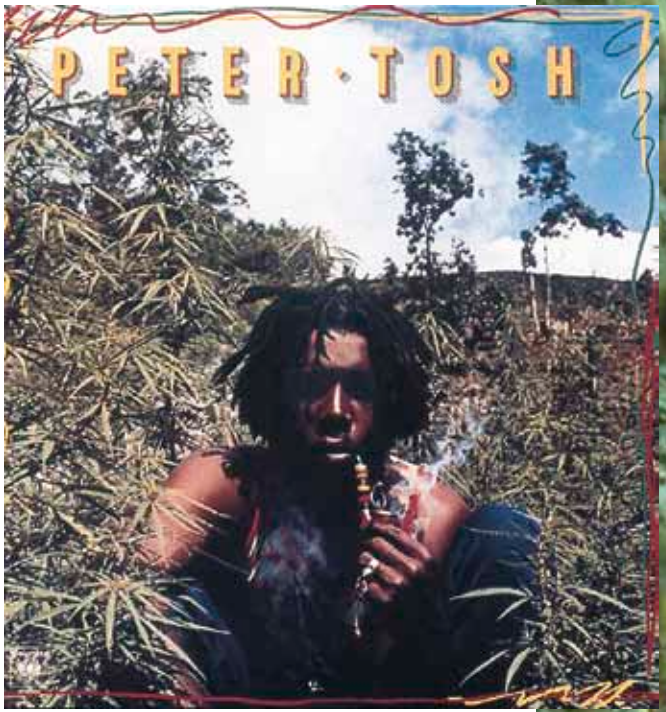
BOB MARLEY

In 1983, after my time living in Jamaica with Bob Marley, eventually playing in his band and then producing Peter Tosh's first solo album, the iconic "Legalize It", for which I also took the cover photograph of Peter smoking his pipe in an herb field, I had moved to New York to resume making art again. Over the years a few of my closest friends from college had grown from small time dealers to become the largest cannabis smugglers in North America, bringing 20 tons from Thailand on tankers every six months. Half joking while we were recording the "Legalize It" album, they used to say to me that if our outcry were successful it would put them out of business.

I had a devout Jamaican Rasta friend living in New York. He had massive dreadlocks and 27 kids, a deceased wife and two very much alive ones. He had had a crossover reggae/dance pop hit in the U.S. and used his royalties to buy a large rundown house for himself, his wives and all his kids in a deep ghetto neighborhood-- Brooklyn's Bushwick-- and to open speakeasy's selling the good herb mainly in nickel bags to the local community. Maybe because I am "white" and of my involvement with Jamaican music, he asked me:



Cover of the "Legalize It" album, 1976.
Photograph by LEE JAFFE.

"Lee Jaff I, I man know ya have de connections mon. Set I up mon. I man need da supply of da bess herb. I man know ya di right mon can set I up wit da beses mos reliable supply..."

After nearly a decade devoted to music I was anxious to concentrate on making paintings and sculpture and to open a new studio in SoHo.

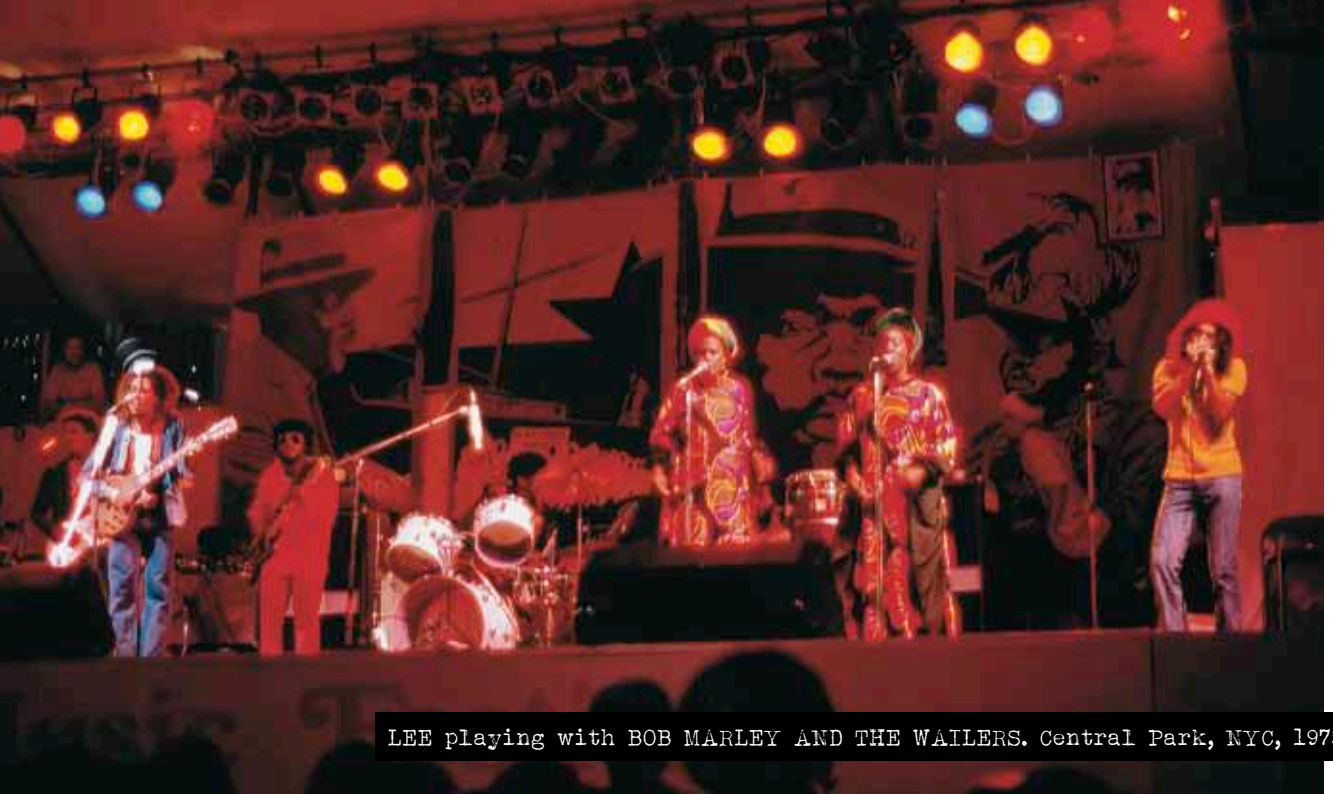
When I dropped out of college in 1969 I was making conceptual art. The core idea was to reject object making—a conscious effort to avoid a system seen as sustaining the ongoing tragedies in Southeast Asia. I moved to Rio de Janeiro and the fear being promulgated by the CiA backed military regime only served to deepen my resolve. I became involved in the "Tropicalia" and "Cinema Marginal" movements working with artists Helio Oiticica and Miguel Rio Branco, musicians Jards Macale and Nana Vasconcelos and filmmakers Neville D'Almeida and Rogeiro Sganzerla who were all actively creating work to subvert the dictatorship. It was dangerous work and we knew we could be arrested and tortured at any time and after spending eighteen months in Rio I became exiled from Brazil along with my Brazilian friends.

After a year in New York creating ephemeral conceptual works that consisted of risking death or bodily harm I was invited to come to Paris by the gallerist Ileana Sonnebend-- the first dealer to work with conceptual art. She had gotten my work into two big survey shows, one in Germany and the other the Paris Biennial. At a time, when the documenting of non-objects became objects in themselves -- in the form of photographs -- "conceptual art" was beginning to implode into the white walled boxes I was trying to avoid. Escaping the conundrum I used my time in Paris to make a 50 minute narrative film with a French cast and crew which my friend and mentor Walter De Maria had urged me to do and had helped to finance. It was a kind of Gallic "Chelsea Girls" shot in a dilapidated mansion in Clichy with lots of heroin shooting and ambiguous sexuality--straddling between the death of the hippy dream and the dissolution of the passion and optimism of "68. I showed a rough cut to the legendary great (physically as well as intellectually) Henri Langlois, who reigned over the hallowed halls of the Cinematheque and he enthusiastically arranged a screening. People liked it and from that I was able to lure a stellar cast of young French stars, including Maria Schneider who had just finished starring in "Last Tango in Paris" opposite

to Marlon Brando, to work for three weeks and for free in what was to be my first feature. It was to be filmed scriptless —a retracing of a trek through the mysterious mystical mountains of Chile that my artists friends Jeffery Lew (founder of the seminal artist run gallery 112 Greene Street) and Gordon Matta-Clark (whose father was the Chilean surrealist painter, Matta) had recently taken in search of hallucinogenic potions used in shamanic ceremonies by the native people of the Andes. We had a Chilean co-producer who was arranging all the film equipment, crew and accommodations.

It was 1973 and the CIA was inciting and financing a coup that would overthrow elected president Salvador Allende. "Disappeared" (Desaparecido) had begun to be used as a transitive verb. People on the left—students, university professors, intellectuals, union leaders—were beginning to disappear.

Our cast and cinematographer were all gathered in New York in anticipation of leaving for South America when we lost contact with our man in Santiago. As my cast had commitments beyond the scheduled shoot and we were effectively stranded, my movie began to be "disappeared" too.



LEE playing with BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS. Central Park, NYC, 1975.

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We-e-ell, why do you look so - look so - look so sad -
look so sad and forsaken?
Don't you know: When one door is closed - when one door is closed,
many more is open?
We-e-e-ell, would you let the system get on top of your head again?
No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, Dread, no!
Would you let the system make you kill your brotherman?
No, Dread, no!
We-e-e-ell, would you make the system get on top of your head again?
(No, Dread, no!) No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no!
Well, the biggest - biggest man you ever - ever
Did-a see was-a - was-a once a baby.
In this life, in this life, in this life,
In this, oh, sweet life,
We're (coming in from the cold) from the cold!
-----from "Coming in From the Cold"---Bob Marley

* * * * *

BOB and LEE at the Chelsea Hotel. NYC, 1973.

It was late January 1973, a particularly bitter cold winter. My friend Jim Capaldi was in New York with his band "Traffic"—an eclectic band that mixed rock with jazz and African percussion—to play a gig at Madison Square Garden. After the show I went to visit him at his hotel on 56th and 6th. Traffic was signed to the U.K based Island Records and a Jamaican singer wasensconced in a corner of his suite. It was Bob Marley whose Wailers had just finished recording their first album for Island. He was in New York to buy equipment for his group in order to start rehearsing for dates to support the album's release. Jim had a boom box and said, "you hear this." Listening to that album was a transformational experience—raw, poetic, vehemently anti-colonialist, spiritual. My life was to change from that day on.

Bob was humble and witty and very aware that there were huge obstacles in front of him in order to bring the music to the world. I took him to W.48th where its dozens of music shops lined both sides of the street and bustled with musicians—exponents of every musical genre—a cacophony of ethnicities bounding from store to store in search of perfect sounds and good deals. I helped him choose amplifiers and microphones, to bargain with the sales people

and to try out guitars—eventually he chose the Gibson Les Paul Special that I advocated for. Its powerful yet sweet sound and earthy hard body look suited him perfectly and its weight and feel would give him the freedom to use his athletic dance moves on stage.

I had insisted he get a mini amplifier that he could take with him on the road and after arranging for the rest of the gear to be shipped to Kingston we grabbed a cab up to a brownstone apartment on W. 87th, just off Central Park. I had a college friend we called "Bru" who was one of the leading "grass" dealers in New York and this was his stash house. We walked up three flights to the top floor railroad flat.

Bru opened the door to a normal looking living room of not cheap mismatched furniture with hip European film posters like "Blow Up" and "La Dolce Vita" hanging on the walls. Bob had a cassette of his album and Bru loaded it into the state of the art Macintosh stereo system. On the blue glass antique coffee table was a hand carved wooden Nepalese box with an ounce of sticky dark red Columbian buds plus some rolling papers. He proudly offered it to Bob with the confidence of knowing he had the best smoke in the world. Then to Bru's

HELIO OITICICA

astonishment Bob licked five papers together and rolled the largest joint Bru had ever seen. Before lighting, Bob looked up with a wry satisfied smile-- "In Jamaica, we call dat a spliff mon". Not missing a beat Bru said, "I have something to show you".

We walked to the back of the flat to a bedroom that looked down to a small now frozen backyard garden. Bru turned on the light and pulled down the dark curtains. He wheeled the bed to one sidewall, partially lifted a hanging 11"x14" framed photograph of Jimmy Hendrix burning his guitar on stage at Woodstock, and reached his hand behind it. Slowly the wall opposite the bed began to lift up, revealing a stash of 40 or so 20 lb. crocus sacks wrapped in clear plastic bags of the grass Bob had just rolled, neatly stacked one on top of each other in rows of two.

Bruce lifted one and moved it to the center of the room. He pulled a wooden handled ratchet knife from his pocket and cut two long slits into the plastic, peeled the plastic back and then cut into the crocus sack. "Have a whiff mon," Bru said in a fake Jamaican accent lowering his nose to have a whiff himself...

Bob was anxious to get a feel for his new gits and he plugged into the tiny portable amp. I played harmonica—an instrument rarely heard in Jamaican music—and Bob loved the novelty of it and the fact that it had such a rootsy sound. We jammed for several hours smoking Columbia's finest.

I followed Bob like the pied piper.

Chris Blackwell, the Island Records founder, started in the early 60's by driving around Jamaican 45's to record shops in every nook and cranny in the U.K. that the Caribbean diaspora might have infiltrated. Island Records had grown into an eclectic label with a stellar cast. From folk rock artists like Fairport Convention and Jethro Tull, to the brilliant singer songwriters Sandy Deny, John Martyn, Nick Drake, Cat Stevens, and rock groups like Free, King Crimson, Traffic and Roxy Music. To me, Island Records represented the quintessential model for what a music label should be—one that had commercial success with artists that were innovative and pushed the limits of pop culture and whose success allowed for less mainstream artists to work and be heard without having to compromise.

Chris had rented a DC3 to go on a ten-day island-hopping trip from Kingston to Trinidad for Carnival. Capaldi, Bob and Esther Anderson were invited and I was asked if I wanted to join. I had met Chris several months earlier in the fall of 1972 when I had gone to meet Esther in London. She was a stunningly beautiful Jamaican actress who had grown up in a tiny mountain village in the parish of St. Mary, green and lush with mango trees and breadfruit and ackee.

Marauding mongoose that had been brought from India along with indentured servants--among them Esther's great grandmother--endured the interminable voyage from southeast Asia and to the Caribbean. The long tailed low elongated creatures had killed off the venomous snakes that plagued both colonizer and colonized but now, after their great success in vanquishing the last remaining reptiles, could be seen scurrying across pot-holed country roads, left to pillage for stray foul, rodents and crabs.

Esther had just starred in a Hollywood movie opposite Sidney Poitier. She was responsible for introducing her ex-boyfriend, Marlon Brando to Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci and for convincing him to do "Last Tango in Paris", a picture that revived his sagging career after a string of box office

ESTHER ANDESON

CHRIS BLACKWELL on the way from Kingston (Jamaica) to Trinidad for carnival, 1973.

flops. She lived in a small but elegantly hippy chic flat in Cheney Row in the posh Chelsea area of London, with lavish Moroccan rugs and ornate Afghani water pipes and when I knocked on her door she said, "we are going to the movies".

Chris drove a 1969 Firebird convertible with steering on the wrong side—I would have expected him to show up chauffeured in a Bentley like the rock and roll royalty he was—and his style and humility made an indelible impression on me. With him was the Jamaican director Perry Henzell and he got out and pulled the seat forward to let Esther and myself in the back. We wove our way across the Thames towards the Jamaican ghetto of Brixton.

The movie theater was packed and hummed with anticipation. I was acutely aware that I was most likely the only non-Caribbean person in the audience (belying his lighter skin tone Chris was as Jamaican as Bob).

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You can get it if you really want
You can get it if you really want
You can get it if you really want
But you must try, try and try
Try and try - you'll succeed at last
----Jimmy Cliff

* * * * *

"The Harder They Come" was an instant classic—an iconic film that introduced reggae music and Rasta culture to the world. It told the story of a poor country boy who comes to Kingston with aspirations to become a professional singer but refuses to be exploited by the corruption of the music industry and becomes a worker in the ganja trade. Again refusing to be subjugated to the corruption of the police and a repressive government and afterwell-publicized shootouts, like Clint Eastwood in a Sergio Leone western, he is elevated to mythical proportions and his music ironically becomes irresistibly popular.

BOB and PETER at the rehearsal studio
at 56 Hope Road, Kingston 1973.

It exposed the struggle of all marginalized and repressed peoples of the world and was a manifesto and inspiration to all those who would "get up stand up" to the colonialist and neo-colonialist, the guardians of capitalist systems subjugating and exploiting the so called "third world".

Being in that Brixton theater surrounded by the non-stop laughing and cheering that resounded around me while watching and listening to a movie that, although ostensibly in English, had dialogue in a patois I could only comprehend a fraction of the time was a thrilling and unforgettable experience. It prepared me for my meeting some six months later with the revolutionary singer and poet who was to become my closest friend.

The DC3 that Chris had rented had all but 10 of the seats removed to allow space for us to move around. We flew low and if there was an island with a nice beach and an airport we would touch down-- Martinique, Anguilla, Tobago and on to Trinidad for a few days of carnival. On our return to Jamaica, flying over Santo Domingo with the warm crimson sun beginning to meander towards the horizon, someone said let's stop in Haiti. The pilot informed us that to land the plane there we would need to give 24-hour notice. Undaunted,

we wired in feigned engine trouble and upon landing I got my first taste of trouble in paradise, Caribbean style.

Two hundred Ton Ton Macoutes in shiny suits and shades with AK47's drawn welcomed us and escorted us to the hotel they had determined we stay at. There was a casino out of a Graham Greene novel and I never felt such an outsider in my life. Chris played baccarat and our light complexions never seemed so white. I was thinking, if he keeps winning we'd never leave this island alive. Neither of us ever returned to Port au Prince again.

In Kingston, Chris had bought an old colonial "great house" at 56 Hope Road just a few hundred yards from Jamaica House, the Prime Minister's residence. There was a big wrought iron gate at the entrance and the front of the house had been separated to become the new modest Island Records office in Jamaica. The rest of the two-story house was living space with three roomy bedrooms and a large kitchen. Behind the house was a yard with a giant mango tree and behind it, at the bottom of the sloping property, was a shack that had at one time been the slave quarters.

When we first reached the house I could hear music coming from the shack. It had been converted into a rehearsal studio for The Wailers and Bob motioned for me to come. Peter Tosh was there with the group's rhythm section—bass player Aston "Familyman" Barrett, his brother the drummer Carlton and keyboard player Wire Lindo. They were rehearsing Peter's song "400 Years". I could sense the past and present ghosts through the smoky, dimly lit room and the potential of that powerful music, a clamor and a fulcrum for liberation...

* * * * * * * *

400 years 400 years, 400 years
And it's the same, the same philosophy
I say it's four hundred years (400 years, 400 years)
Look, how long, and the people they still can't see.
Why do they fight, fight against, the poor youth of today?
------Peter Tosh

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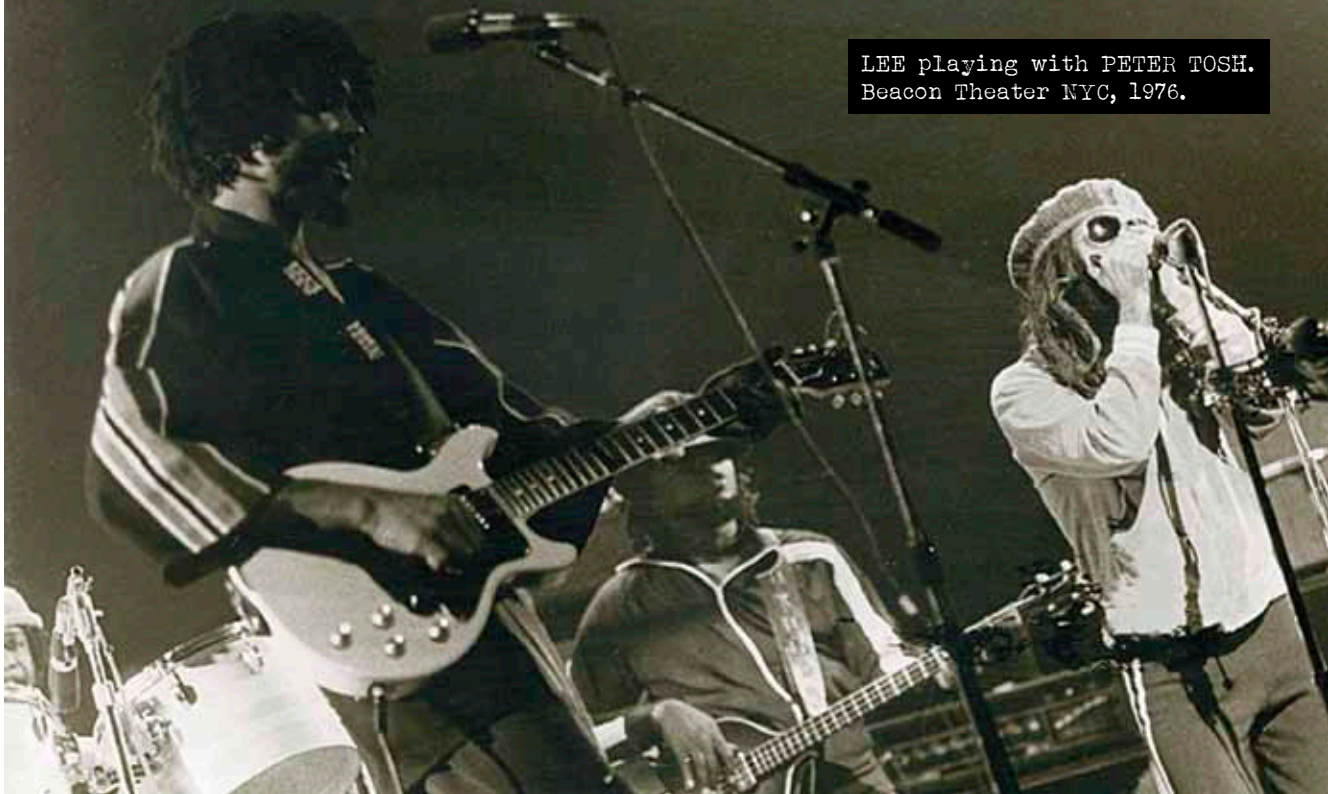
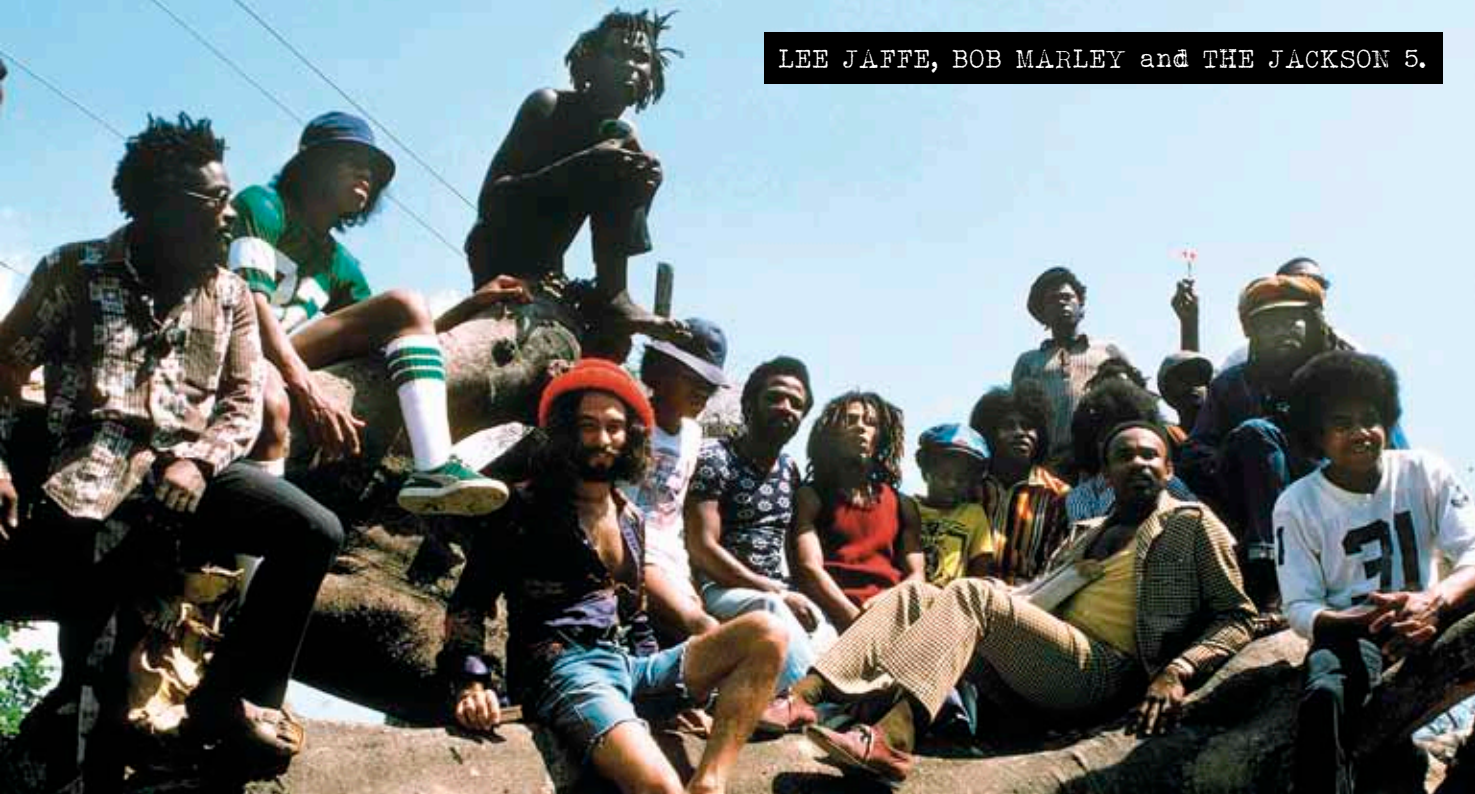


LEE playing with PETER TOSH.
Beacon Theater NYC, 1976.

I planted myself in a corner bedroom and a ten-day trip turned into months and years. I was educated in the ways of Rasta—environmentalism, fitness and healthy living being crucial and my hair began to locks. I felt humbled and privileged to be invited to Jamaica and to be welcomed in joining Bob and his partners, Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingston in their struggle to transform a consciousness of greed and repression into one of love and equality and to help in the active battle to deconstruct the theories of race propagated by European colonialism.

It was an exciting opportunity for me as it allowed me to transition to a world that was creatively stimulating and also offered an escape from the conundrum and impending dead end of the "conceptual art" movement. It was also satisfying my political and social impulses. I viewed correctly that the music and poetry of these revolutionary and almost totally unknown artists, creating this new and powerful music called "reggae", could potentially reach and certainly inspire hundreds of millions of people on all corners of the earth.

At first I did whatever work was needed that I thought I could help with. The Wailers were beginning to rehearse to go on tour to support their soon to be


LEE JAFFE, BOB MARLEY and THE JACKSON 5.

released first album for Island, "Catch a Fire". Chris, sensing my enthusiasm and desire to be involved, asked me if I would want to arrange the North American tour dates. At the time, although Island was having huge success both critically and commercially with many of their artists, they still had no presence in the U.S. For North America, they were licensing all their releases to Capital Records.

I organized passports and visas, plane tickets, hotels and car rentals. I helped our ital cook to organize food and found the cannabis, the herb, the ganja needed to help create the live music. I booked the dates—small but prestigious clubs like Max's Kansas City in New York where we played for a week (two shows a night and three on the weekend opening for Bruce Springsteen) – and got us interviews with newspapers and with sympathetic radio stations (not many at the time).

After The Wailers recorded their second album, "Burnin", I did the same for the next tour. I got us 8 dates in arenas opening for Sly and the Family Stone and mixed in club dates in venues of 500 to 800 capacity, substantially larger than the ones on the first tour.

After "Burnin" Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingston left Bob to begin solo careers. I got to play on Bob's next album "Natty Dread" and to play on stage as a member of The Wailers. Then I worked with Peter Tosh to produce his first solo album "Legalize It". After the album was finished, I moved to New York with thoughts of resuming an art career.

Needing cash to finance my new SoHo studio and begin creating the large scale works I envisioned, a van would show up as courtesy of Bru and my other college friends. It would have ten cardboard boxes each containing a 15 to 20 lb. bale of grade A Thai herb. The best herb you could get at the time. My Rasta friend in Brooklyn would send two of his older kids (he had 27 of them) to come collect the herb from me and a week later they would bring me bags filled with money--mostly $5 dollar bills. My college buddies would not accept them as legal tender, leaving me the arduous task of devising ways to change hundreds of thousands in 5's into 20's or larger bills.

One day, while separating the bills and extracting the 5's I came across a 'poor man's counterfeit'. I was astonished by the ingenuity of what I was seeing. The counterfeiter had brilliantly turned a $1 bill into a $5 bill, making sense

(sight) overcome essence. Slowly, while examining the bill I realized how he had cleverly done it. He had meticulously cut one corner off of four different $5 bills and scotch taped them to the corners of a single $1 bill. Being that each $5 bill was missing just one small corner, they could still be used. The newly created $5 bill was a masterful and totally engaging and unique object—one that had a fate of its own.

My doorbell rang. Jean-Michel Basquiat was coming by. We had recently taken a trip around the world together and would regularly stop by each other's studios. I showed him my newly found object. I had a spliff rolled, lit it and passed it to him. He took a long draw and the exhaled smoke floated around his eyes and danced towards the ceiling—"I'm going to Andy's today. Why don't I get him to sign it and you can photograph it and we can blow it up."

My mind flashed to the mountains of Thailand, to my friends with the Thai farmers loading donkeys with the tons of herb and the paid military escort meandering tens of miles down toward the sea to load the awaiting ship. And to my friends with machine guns bought from the Thai military standing on board, eyes scanning for pirates in the south seas and sailing onward to a secluded

LEE JAFFE and JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT

strip on the Oregon coast, where some other college friends had organized speed boats to meet the tanker and off load to safe houses. Also how eventually some small portions of the load would periodically find its way east to me and on to the clandestine ghetto speakeasy's.

Furthermore, how this engaging object would be handed to me in a gym bag, concealed amongst many thousands of normal $5 dollar bills used in exchange for the herb and then passed to Jean-Michel and then to Warhol's "Factory", where the rich and famous would go to have their vanity gratified in portraits, and then morph again by Andy's hand--the red marker he used looking like blood-- into an object whose perceived value would equally, and yet elusively, become exponentially increased.

And last but not least, how Jean-Michel was and remains the perfect conduit for this ultimate conceptual art work, even.

Lee Jaffe, 2016

Conclusion:

The line between a concept and physical object, between money and art is often grey. This is a beautiful moral tale in which a $1 bill becomes a $5 bill in an ingeniously handcrafted operation. Then the perceived value of the massproduced bill increases exponentially with the addition of Warhol's signature demonstrating the value placed on the hand of the artist.

Many years later the story has evolved again: Remade and over printed by Factum Foundation, the object has now become part of a narrative. The narrative is about memory. Warhol and Basquiat, Oiticica and Matta-Clark, Marley and Tosh, Chris Blackwell and many others are memories woven into the fabric of the object and Lee Jaffe's life. This poetic readymade speaks of different times, different values, different interests and different concerns.

If this note, with its adroitly pasted corners can trigger thoughts about the complex relationship between the past and the present it will have become 'telling'. If it can also help to fund the preservation of the past it's objectification could become legendary!

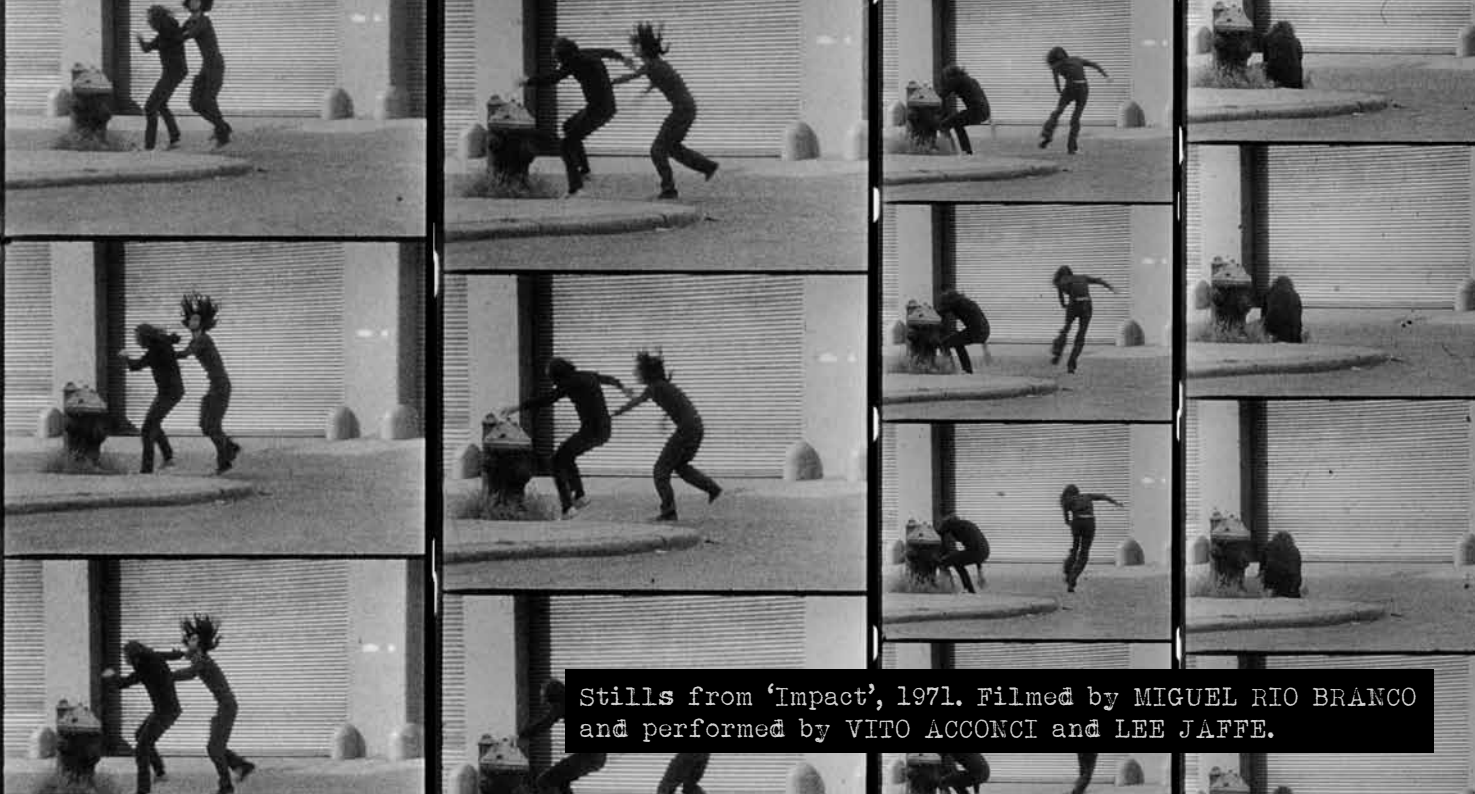
Originality is not a fixed state - it is dynamic and continually evolving, enriching, in flux. Mahler once said that 'Tradition is not the worship of ashes but the preservation of fire'. The aim of this edition is to provide the fire - the resources - to ensure that the articulate evidence of the past can be preserved, that it can be communicated and that it can help us to listen to the voices and values of the past in a way that will shape those of the future.

Factum Foundation in working in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt and in Lebanon, Daghestan, Italy, England, Spain, France and the USA. Projects are being developed in Chad, Nigeria, Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Scotland. The list is endless as technology is used in creative and meaningful ways. Anywhere that people leave their trace is a potential subject. In this case the evidence is a piece of paper with a designated value of $1 that mutates into something much more significant through a series of unpredictable transformations.

Everyone who is touched by this narrative can get involved. For more information please visit www.factumfoundation.org or simply make a donation to the foundation.

Adam Lowe,
founder of Factum Foundation
for Technology in Conservation

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
IN GOD WE TRUST
ONE
FIVE
ONE DOLLAR
ONE



Stills from 'Impact', 1971. Filmed by MIGUEL RIO BRANCO and performed by VITO ACCONCI and LEE JAFFE.

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