

For Immediate Release:

Michael Lavine

Selections from the Artist Portrait Project

16 October through 22 December 1996

Team will present an exhibition of new work by the photographer Michael Lavine from 16 October through 22 December 1996. The gallery is located at 527 West 26th Street, between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, on the ground floor.

Michael Lavine shot Cher. He has also shot Clint Eastwood, David Bowie, Yoko Ono and Brad Pitt. He's shot John Leguizamo and Paul Rudnick; Kelly Lynch and Joe Eszterhas. As a photographer, however, his teeth were cut on rock; the American alternative scene: Nirvana, Sonic Youth, The Smashing Pumpkins, Hole, The Breeders, The Butthole Surfers, The Cramps, Dinosaur Jr., Soundgarden, L7, Babes in Toyland, The Meat Puppets, Pavement, Pearl Jam. Among the British pop bands rank Blur, PJ Harvey, Stereolab and Lush.

The color photographs that make up this exhibition are from a new series of portraits taken of contemporary artists. The focus is on the diversity of the new art scene and the exuberance of its practitioners. Among the subjects included are Elizabeth Peyton, Peter Halley, Jutta Koether, Anna Gaskell, Sylvie Fleury, Renee Green, Karen Kilimnik, Alex Bag, Christian Schumann and Toland Grinnell.

Mr. Lavine does not critique popular culture, he creates it. His photographs of alternative rock stars, which began to run in the popular press in the mid-'80s, first had an influence on the look of the celebrity photograph, which then, in turn, had an effect on the overall look of print media. Originally considered outside the mainstream, Lavine's look and style were soon co-opted by advertising concerns, with Lavine's images for IBM leading the pack.

Now the eye that has framed and delivered some of the most iconic of recent pop celebrities has set his sights on the world of contemporary art practice. The apotheosis of style and craft, an apostasy toward content, these photographs tell us infinitely more about the artists than they do about their artwork and this is half the fun. Matching the personas they have adopted for Lavine's camera with one's own notions of what that artist should look like is by turns riveting, comforting, disappointing, spellbinding.

Lavine studied photography for five years in Seattle (where he documented the by-now legendary local music scene), then moved to New York in 1985 to attend Parsons School of Design and to work as assistant to Francesco Scavullo. In 1987, he started photographing local bands: slapping them against violent backgrounds, shooting them from above (giving them giant heads and tiny feet) and bending and stretching them as in a fun house mirror. Even when his subjects are motionless; they are hardly static through Lavine's use of dynamic compositions, forced perspectives and saturated color.

Gallery hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11am to 6pm. For further information and/or photographs, please call 212.279.9219.