

No Jheri Curls & No Drugs: A David Lee Photo Exhibit

No Jheri Curls & No Drugs: A David Lee Photo Exhibit is part of **Brooklyn Honors Spike Lee**, a multifaceted tribute conceived by PlanIt Brooklyn that celebrates the breadth and scope of Spike Lee's work and explores the impact Spike Lee has had on popular culture. The Brooklyn Historical Society is proud to participate in this lively series of programs to recognize the profound impact of Spike Lee's work and celebrate his insights about Brooklyn's complicated cultural and social life beginning in the 1980s through the present.

No Jheri Curls & No Drugs features forty-two photographs taken on and around the set of *She's Gotta Have It*, Spike Lee's first feature-length film. Spike Lee wrote and directed the film in 1986, which stars Tracy Camilla Johns as the unforgettable Nola Darling; as well as Tommy Redmond Hicks, John Canada Terrell and Spike himself as her suitors. The film was shot in twelve days during the summer of 1985 on a budget of \$175,000.

She's Gotta Have It tells the story of "a young, beautiful, sexually frank woman" struggling for independence and identity in a male-dominated society. The *New York Times* wrote that the film "ushered in the American independent film movement of the 1980s. It was also a groundbreaking film for African American filmmakers and a welcome change in the representation of blacks in American cinema..." The highly stylized, black-and-white film features a score by Lee's father, Bill Lee, who went on to score many of Spike Lee's other films.

About the Photographer

David Lee has been photographing behind the scenes of his brother Spike Lee's films since Spike's first film, 1982's *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads*. Highlights from their collaboration include working on Spike's racially charged *Do The Right Thing*; meeting former South African President Nelson Mandela during the filming of *Malcolm X*; and working with tap-dancer and actor Savion Glover on the set of *Bamboozled* and Michael Jordan during the "Mike & Mars" campaign for Nike's Air Jordans.

Other notable photographic work on the sets of films in David Lee's resume include *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *American Gangster* and the first season of HBO's "The Wire."

Work from David's fine art portfolio has been shown at the Museum of the City of New York, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. and Boston's Photography Resource Center. David was also included in "Songs of My People," a group show of works from 100 African American photographers that has traveled internationally.

David Lee is a proud, life-long Brooklyn resident and a graduate of Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn Heights.

Raquel Wilson, Curator

Images in the exhibit are courtesy of and from the collections of David Lee and the 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks Archive.