

Mick Rock and Barney Clay

United States

A few months ago, we met up with film director [Barney Clay](#) at the infamous and soon-to-be-defunct Mars Bar in New York City to talk about his re-imagination of [Mick Rock's](#) footage of [David Bowie](#).

A prolific photographer during rock and roll's early days, Rock captured musicians like [Iggy Pop](#), [Lou Reed](#), and [Queen](#) during their wonder years, encapsulating almost an entire era in music. After gaining David Bowie's trust, and that of the artistic community, Rock went on to become one of the most iconic rock photographers of our time.

Clay, a long-time fan of Rock's work, set out to make a documentary about Rock, and in the process uncovered a veritable treasure trove of never-before-seen and long forgotten footage of some of rock's greats. We approached the duo about turning some of the material into an installation, and they happily agreed, anxious to give the work new life. They chose to use footage of Bowie because, as Clay says, "ultimately, he's the centerpiece of all of Mick's work—through Bowie, Mick became who he was."

Rock and Clay decided to focus on the outtakes and raw footage from Bowie's "[Life On Mars](#)" video because of "its iconic, pure, simple, and memorable qualities." Passing off the dusty and antiquated original film and negatives to [The Mill](#), one of the world's premiere post-production houses, they began to shape their new vision for the track, adding visual effects and experimental flair to the piece.

After viewing an early cut of the resulting film, Rock reflected on the course of his monumental career, humbly stating—"I was at the right place, at the right time, had the right sensibility, which was mostly completely out of my mind, but it worked." Working on this project gave Rock an opportunity to re-imagine his work for the modern era, "taking the gems and presenting them in a new piece of jewelry," as he so aptly put it.

David Bowie requested that the piece only be shown in galleries and museums, and we were honored to premiere the final film and sound installation during our [Paris event at La Gaîté lyrique](#) June 9-11, 2011.