

ON THE RUN BOOKS together form an encyclopedia that catalogs graffiti and urban art from around the world. Since 1990, the OTR team has built an ever-growing archive, eventually to be donated to the Museum of Urban Art, a project presently under development as part of the Campus of Urban Culture, which focuses on Hip Hop and graffiti culture. With every title, we digitize and preserve original material from various key artists, and bring their story to the public. All this, and in keeping with our motto: **KNOW YOUR HISTORY.**



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HALL OF FAME NEW YORK CITY

NEW YORK CITY is the birthplace of style writing. It is here that young graffiti writers first began to transform letters from simple tags on a wall to elaborate masterpieces of colorful letters embellished with characters which depicted friends, heroes and tributes to a wide range of cultural influences.

Since the days when graffiti first gained popularity in New York City, the schoolyards attracted kids eager to practice graffiti writing while hanging out. One of their favorite painting spots since the late 1970s was a schoolyard in Harlem, which later became New York City's official Graffiti Hall of Fame.

Its motto, "Strictly Kings and Better," dared only the most accomplished graffiti artists to leave their marks, and over the years the word spread beyond New York around the world. This book documents the legacy of the Graffiti Hall of Fame, which spans over 30 years, thus making this collection of burners a full-blown history lesson in New York City styles.

Join us on this artistic retrospective of a famous and historic New York City landmark: the Graffiti Hall of Fame.

HALL OF FAME

NEW YORK CITY



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TOPIC





SR106 GHOF (JEAN13) / 1982 / Photo by Martha Cooper



right page: Stingray (DEZ), VULCAN / 1982 / Photo by Martha Cooper



left page: FUTURA 2000 / 1982 / Photo by Martha Cooper

“As a kid I would go and see the walls. It was a who’s who of graffiti—all the graffiti superstars were represented. Back then there was no such thing as the internet or [graffiti] magazines. To see the Futura with the character was wild. It was not the traditional style, it was way advanced. Even the Skeme with the b-boy character was great. It was a major learning point for my career.” NICER



DUE2 / 1982 / Photo by Martha Cooper

INCH / 1982 / Photo by Martha Cooper





BIO, T-KID 170, CEM / 1990

PER, Koos (SHAME 125), BOM005 / 1990

“ I first painted here with my cousins Rudy (Rude106) and Mike (Trans-am112/Firebird112/TA112/FB112). I was a ‘baby’ among the Skulls so I was hitting up the wall for the gang, but not as a writer, even though Smily 149 (RIP) was close to my cousin See2 (a Savage Skulls warlord). I remember my other cousin Chino Malo as being a dope artist before being a writer and introducing me to Smily149. I tagged 174 Spider and my gang name on the wall with three cans I stole from the hardware store on Lexington Avenue. ” BOM005





'ROUGHNECK REALITY' by VULCAN, SPON / 1993

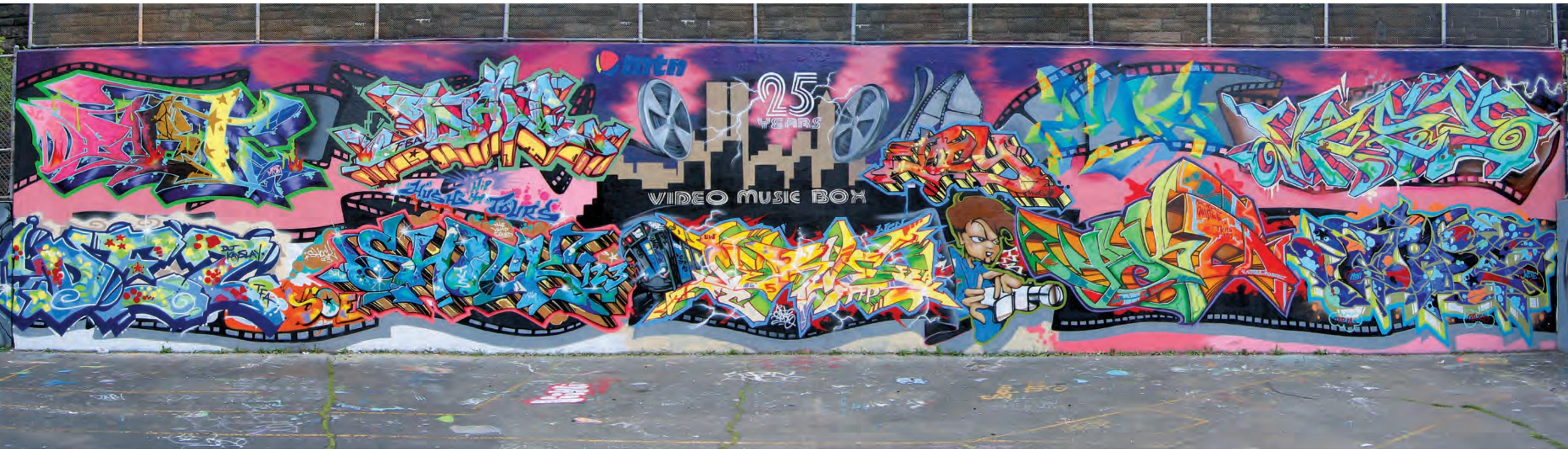
“Vulcan’s ‘Roughneck Reality’ was a real accomplishment; the wall is huge and he did it all by himself. It’s something like four handball courts put together—no piece of cake. I don’t think there is another wall this big in the city. To get this done you have to lay it out right and it takes a lot of paint. The piece spoke about what was happening in the city and the neighborhood at the time—reality was based on being a roughneck, a hoodlum.” PART ONE



“ The very first time I painted there was in 2002, when I did three pieces at the same time. Joey TDS called me up so I came and rocked a Bear167 and Noc167 on the big wall with Part, Dez, Wen and Virus, and a Serve FBA on the side wall with Tack, Kaze and Dash. ” SERVE



REVOLT, Hurst (DOVES, JAMES TOP), Characters by DOVES / 2003

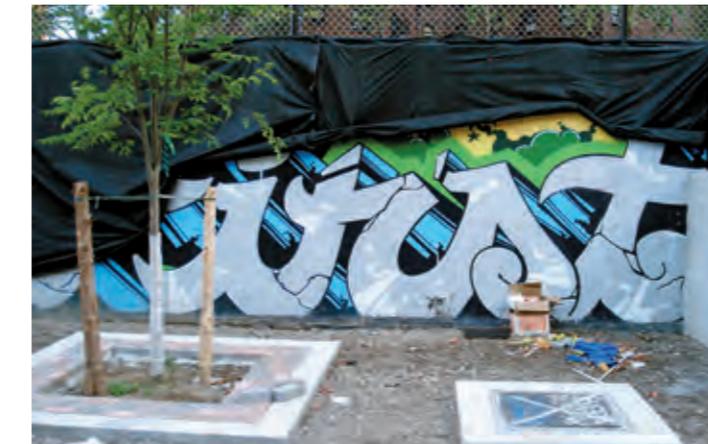


'VIDEO MUSIC BOX—25TH ANNIVERSARY' by PART ONE, DEZ, DAN ONE, Shock 123 (SERVE), SERVE, T-KID 170, Joey (SERVE), KING BEE, VASE ONE, COPE 2 / Photo by BEENS



MAKEOVER

IN 2008, the Jackie Robinson Educational Complex, the school where the Hall of Fame is located, began an extensive redesign of the schoolyard, which cost around \$14 million dollars. That is an enormous sum in a community plagued by unemployment, obesity, crime, soaring student dropout rates, gangs and a poverty rate that is twice that of the rest of New York City, as well as the highest asthma rate in the entire country.* In a community in which residents are dealing with such a myriad of issues, it is difficult to see the need for such an expense when the needs of the youth and what they are missing cannot be fulfilled by cosmetic renovation.



Under construction / 2008

Today, in the midst of a global economic recession in a city run by a billionaire mayor, the Hall of Fame, like many of the other public areas in New York City, is a picture perfect schoolyard with a new running track, trees, chess tables and the required surveillance cameras. The school has a fresh coat of paint, new windows, and padlocks on the entrance gates along with a new policy: no visitors to the schoolyard and no photography unless it's the weekend. There are no signs of a recession, just signs of exclusion and sanitation. It's the overarching theme in New York these days: clean streets, surveillance, thousands of police officers, thousands of banks and ATM machines—a

virtual tourist haven. Yet if you speak to Harlem residents, they cannot hide the truth with fresh paint—violence is a serious issue here. It can also be linked to gang arrests (which have increased by 134%), and although crime is historically lower in this community,** the problems of the hood persist.

As New York City opens itself up to the changes that improve the quality of life for

many of its citizens, there are still those who are left behind and excluded from the benefits of the changes. In East Harlem, the school that once housed the famous Graffiti Hall of Fame has undergone many changes: there is new faculty, a new principal, the old school has now been broken up into multiple schools. From the outside there seem to be improvements from the days of violence and poor performance in the school. But take a deeper look and you'll see that inside the school, the kids are still struggling; the school is still behind when it comes to learning and performance.

The schoolyard now has walls that are obstructed from view by trees and the pieces are no longer front and center. As the school has modernized the schoolyard, the art on the walls have taken a backseat to the yard and the supposed needs of the kids, as is so customary in New York City and in other cities where public art does not receive its due recognition. What was once a sign of youth culture and vibrancy is now little more than an asterisk, an afterthought, in a community with very little public art. However,



* East Harlem Promise Neighborhoods Program study by Sinergia, Inc.
 ** NYPD Compstat Unit report, 23rd precinct, Volume 19, Number 20.



'CASE2 MEMORIAL' by 2Nasty (KING BEE), FLITE, SKE, Kase2 (PART ONE), Butch2 (VASE 1), Case2 (SEN2), Case2 portrait by DARIC 4B / 2011

“ The ghosts of all the writers who have painted here are still here. This place still means a lot. It’s still the Hall of Fame. It’s still history. With the new architecture, it looks all commercialized now, but that doesn’t matter because it’s still the Hall of Fame that inspired the world to create their own halls of fame. ” WANE ONE

← KASE
R.I.P.

“ Kase was one of my most prolific mentors. His personality and diversity in the culture has influenced the world. Jeff (Kase) introduced me to not only the world of style but also taught me to handle and protect our culture to the extreme. He introduced me to the local Hip Hop heroes of the time like Chief Rocker Busy Bee. We witnessed the famous battle between Kool Moe D and Busy B at the club called Harlem World on 116th St. In turn I introduced Kase to emerging artists from my high school such as Doze, Lil Seen, Daze and Lady Pink. If I remember correctly, Lady Pink’s first piece was with Seen, Doze, Kase and me at the Ghost yard. I will forever miss my mentor, homie and brother. His presence is missed. He was truly a king birthing other kings! ” ED SACASA AKA KING PHADE