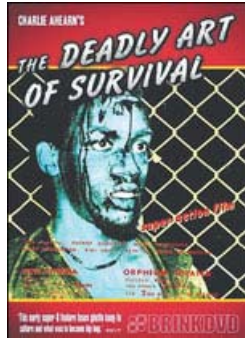


~~Vidiot's box~~

Rudy has indeed failed. Now that anyone who's not an incipient fascist reactionary, in drag or otherwise, is breathing a deep sigh of relief at the collapse of Rudolph Giuliani's presidential aspirations—and auspiciously, NYC graffiti legend Futura 2000 is gracing the cover of the *Mirror*—it's perhaps the right time to cast a glance back at the Big Apple as it was before Giuliani's scorched-earth makeover/takeover of the '90s, with three titles from the Brink imprint.

This isn't to say that New York City was some polycultural, libertarian wonderland prior to Mickey, the Lion King and the kommando kops who love them planting the flag of suburban security-mom supremacy at the centre of Times Square. It was a dirty, dangerous, depressing place, a sense that permeates 1979's *The Deadly Art of Survival*. This is the raw, hour-long first feature from Charlie Ahearn, who'd later make his name with 1982's iconic hip hop movie *Wild Style*. Shot in cruddy 16mm, *Deadly Art* captures not only how kung-fu cinema had stoked the imagination of young, inner-city black dudes (42nd St. grindhouses, a focus of Rudy's fury, were key to this), but also the gritty energy of the post-punk "no-wave" aesthetic and newborn hip hop culture (watch for graf by Lee Quinones!).



In 1991, Ahearn kept a video diary of the sordid goings-on below his apartment window, edited down to the 40-min. doc *Doin' Time in Times Square*, but he was later outdone by director Richard Sandler, whose *The Gods of Times Square* screened at Fantasia some years ago. Re-released in a two-disc special edition with supplemental interviews, it's a sprawling, often hallucinatory swan dive into the mythic mania of that dense and legendary patch of asphalt and neon, captured just as Giuliani's re-do loomed. Delusional street preachers and other odd denizens share their vivid and frequently hilarious spiels amid the general ground-level sleaze of the place, juxtaposed against abstracted footage of splendid monuments to Mammon, the outsized billboards and signage mirroring the theo-sexual delirium squirming below. It's all memories now, of course.

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