

# LOSINGTODAY

## Style Wars

Revisited  
(Public Art Films)

Style Wars may not be about music per se, but it is an inside look into the roots of hip-hop culture and its effects on society. The film is a documentary which originally appeared on PBS, which explores the rise of graffiti writing on the New York City subway lines, as well as a quick look at break-dancing and rapping. Through interviews with some of the major graffiti writers of the time we learn about the development of different artistic techniques of "tagging up" and what the motivation was for so many inner-city kids to get into such a dangerous and illegal hobby (most say it was for the fame of having people see their name). Although many in New York at the time saw graffiti as a nuisance, the writers ultimately had the last laugh as many of them were brought into the Downtown art world and parlayed graffiti writing into a successful art career.

The original film is short (a slim 69 minutes) so this DVD thankfully offers up a host of bonuses such as the 34 minute "Style Wars: Revisited" which catches up with some of the writers 20 years later to see what they had been up to - surprisingly many of them are still passionate about graffiti and some of them are even still writing. Other bonuses include four new interviews with writers from the film, a somewhat incongruous Aesop Rock video, and a 30 minute loop of old graffiti masterpieces called Destroy All Lines. All in all, Style Wars is a truly essential piece for fans of graffiti, old hip-hop or urban culture.