



DVD Review :Rock Fresh

Directed By Danny Lee
MVD Visual

Rock Fresh follows five graffiti artists (Axis, Kofie, Trixster, Clae and Tyer) as they embark on their creative endeavors on and off the streets of L.A. It is a change of pace from most Graffiti vids which are usually a mash of clips of street bombing. This is a well-edited look at the struggle to succeed and at times even survive as a Graffiti artist.

There is nothing more rewarding to do what you love, even if it means you are destined to be an outsider to the norms of society. Even those who appreciate your work will never really understand it. "Fuck them anyways", is the consensus one gets, from these rebels of regular. Witness a progression of style and an even medium as the right combination of color, canvass and size and location is experimented with, to put food on the table and buy more Krylon.

In regards to Rock Fresh, the DVD exposes truth: The bottom line is they earned their cred as and still have the "fuck you" attitude as content for their creations.

Therefore, what is the point of graffiti, from looking at this DVD? Why do these artists coat their lungs with lead and stay broke in hopes of one day being king? It looks to me, that Rock Fresh was made not by choice, but rather a necessity to express and show a glimpse of their world.

By NA

Dirty Handz 3: Search and Destroy

Everyone, obviously, has seen a train pass them by. Often, anonymous, generic boxcars flit past, carrying who-knows-what to who-knows-where. Motorists (who never seem to think of turning their fucking engines off) foam at the mouth as their cars idle gas away. Then the train is gone, and no one has really paid much attention to it. Sometimes, though, a bright flash of colour - urban art, graffiti, or vandalism, breaks the monotony as different people would name it. Maybe no one thinks about that much either, but the latest (and final) release in the Dirty Handz graffiti video series, Dirty Handz 3: Search and Destroy, aims to shed some light on this: the often fascinating escapades that result in graffiti writing passing through neighbourhood upon neighborhood on the side of train cars.

Search and Destroy follows the loose narrative of an anonymous French graffiti writer who traveled throughout Europe, and finally to New York, in the process of filming the documentary. In different urban centers, starting in Paris and visiting London, Stockholm, and Berlin among others, the writer joins with other groups in nightly raids on train yards, in which they go about their work. The artists focus on commuter trains, which are ubiquitous in European cities. The groups which the writer links up with turn out to be highly organized, staking out train yards and stations to gauge arrival and departure times; levels of security; safety issues and so on.

Sometimes they have mere minutes to do their work, other times things are more leisurely. In addition, everything is caught on video, the artists of course masking their faces with balaclavas and a wider array of accessories most often seen on TV bank robberies.

The camera work is very guerilla-style, probably by necessity, but the editing along with the sound track is pretty tight. It is a decent production, done by and for the graffiti community, and deserves respect for that. However, while the action is helped along by a decent hip hop and techno sound-track, it's not necessarily the sort of thing you'd feel the burning desire to watch in one sitting. This DVD is over an hour long, not counting the extras, and it tends to drag even despite the switching of locales. Touched on, though not thoroughly explored, are the political aspects of train writing. The narrator describes the crackdown on graffiti artists in France shortly after the documentary was shot, and according to the Dirty Handz website, the previous two releases in the series have been banned. Clearly, graffiti culture is often a convenient target for government and law enforcement, but does this mean, as the narrator speculates, that urban art is actually a threat to the Powers That Be? It's possible, but if graffiti art is something that rattles the foundations of society, as opposed to the imposition of business types, those foundations must be built on some shifty ground indeed.

By Derek Leschasin

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