



ROCK FRESH

MVD Visual

4 out of 5

There are actually loads of graffiti DVDs available, most of which are fairly low-budget flicks made by the graffiti artists themselves which chart the evolution of their pieces - that's "bombs" and "tags," yo. Check urbandictionary.com for even more hip street lingo.

Danny Lee's graffiti documentary, *Rock Fresh*, first received a theatrical release in 2004 and is out again now as a special-edition DVD, with deleted scenes and the like.

It's a great modern bookend to *Style Wars*, Tony Silver's excellent documentary about New York City's graffiti scene of the early '80s.

In *Rock Fresh*, the milieu shifts to California, but some of the arguments haven't changed. Is it, as some government officials contend, a facet of urban blight, or, as the documentary's obvious bias asserts, art?

The pieces shown in the film certainly support the idea that graffiti is great. Some of the artists featured are truly amazing, manipulating spray bombs like brushes and displaying an encyclopedic knowledge of paint density and the effects of varying nozzles.

Still, the film could have shown a few really crappy pieces to at least demonstrate that the Man isn't completely out to lunch. There is, inarguably, a lot of really bad graffiti polluting metropolitan landscapes.

The film's debate between traditionalists, in it for the art, and artists who have started tagging shirts, hats and shoes, amongst other commercial enterprises, is old before it ever gets started - a silk-screened graffiti T-shirt doesn't really denigrate art any more than a print of a Picasso painting does.

However, that graffiti finds itself subject to such a debate lends to its credence as a viable art form.

- Yuri Wuensch

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