

NEW YORK CITY BLACK BOOK MASTERS





Mr. 6 by RIFF 170 / LEED 3's black book / 1974



LAVA 1 & 2 / LEED 3's black book / 1974

good taste, who is looking to fill the pages of his book with the finest names and styles he can acquire. The second and more telling purpose of the black book is to use it as a 'training ground' for new ideas and works that might one day be realized on a larger scale (e.g. on a wall or train). Here you will see styles develop and morph—pieces that work well and others that do not and will never be seen by the public. Color experiments, biting, scribbles, and notes about the works to be painted are all included in these books.

And then there are a select few people who are true masters. Master illustrators are what they might be called in a school setting, but we know them as black book masters. These artists may or may not be the most prolific on the streets, but in the books they are amazing. Their craftsmanship is top-notch and their use of markers as good as the highest paid cartoonists in the business. Some only do letters, but these masters turn the page into a canvas and realize full concepts that are

more advanced than pieces on the average street wall. For these artists, the black book is the work of art itself. Within these pages we are honored to present to you the work of my peers, the people who in New York City paved the way for many of us and who continue one of our favorite traditions.

This book is dedicated to the memory of IZ THE WIZ who contributed his drawings to the book before his death. May he rest in peace.



ZEBSTER: When I visited NYC in 1989, I met BIO and NICER plus some other TAT guys and for the first time I had some original black books in my hand. I was really amazed by their detailed drawings and took some photos. While our black books were more in the style of scrap books and were filled with sketches, photos, train maps and even Hip Hop concert tickets, I understood that New Yorkers only used their books for drawings. That was really interesting for me to see. While going through my NYC slides to look for some materials for this publication, I felt totally disappointed that I only took a handful of photos. Those black book drawings were the best stuff I had ever seen in my life.

OE 3 / Collection of the artist / 1980





Soul by SHAME 125 /
Collection of the artist / year unknown



Drake by COS 207 / Collection of Ket / 1979



ZEBSTER: In April 1981 a German art magazine ran the first ever feature about the New York writing culture, simply called 'Graffiti'. I can't remember when I got a copy in my hand, but I still remember that the photos of the writers with their black books blew my mind. The letters and colors were extremely powerful and a big inspiration. I studied those thumbnail big pictures for weeks. Those photos of SLAVE, DONDI, GREG 167 and their black books by Marty Cooper encouraged me to put much more energy into my own sketches.



"Play"
WITH a HOT
piece... YA GET
YOUR FINGERS
BURNED!

We Are
BURNIN' ALL
SYSTEMS...

W
R
*

2

IM
CRASH

DRUG

FROM
NEW YORK
PASSIVE

DRUG
SUICIDE

WIND
STAR
THE END
WEN



WEN
FOUR



"GOT TO GET YOU HIGHER".....



* "STAY WIZ" *
THE MASTER
BLASTER *

... "BOOM LACA LACA LACA BOOM!"

DONDI
LIVES!

STREET LIFE

zhuji 1999





* 1975-1991 *

Ziggy
4P.
2/19/91



















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.**



BLACK books are not just glorified sketch books; they are the real lifeblood of a writer, a communication tool and a real source of pride. Within the pages of their black books, writers try out styles, plan out their next pieces, create colorful burners and collect signature styles from other writers. 'New York City Black Book Masters' pays homage to the black book with an intimate collection of personal drawings from some of New York's finest old school and new school writers, the likes of Riff 170, Noc 167, Case 2, Chain 3, Dondi, Erni, Daze, Iz the Wiz, Lady Pink, Zephyr, Ghost, Freedom, T-Kid 170, Cope 2, Nic One, Ewok One, Zimad and many more. It is an honor to be able to share the candid thoughts and styles that find their way into a writer's 'visual

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