

**New York Folklore Society  
2001-02 Documentary Heritage Project  
Documenting Hip Hop**

**Collection creator:**

DAZE

**Title:**

Graffiti black book.

**Dates:**

1980-82

**Extent:**

1 sketchbook

**Biographical/historical note:**

DAZE, who was born Christopher Ellis in Brooklyn, New York, spent his formative years in the Bronx, and is an internationally known graffiti writer (artist). DAZE's first significant graffiti works appeared on New York City subway trains on the IRT lines in the late 1970s. At this time, he was a member of the CYA crew, but he worked with many different artists and crews on all subway lines. In the early 1980s, DAZE began painting canvases as well, and has since had many group and solo exhibitions throughout the world. He was featured in the film *Style Wars* (1983).

**Scope and content:**

This "black book" (sketchbook) contains original drawings, throw-ups (bubble letters) and tags (artist signatures) by well-known graffiti writers of the early 1980s. Graffiti pieces in the book range in style and fill the entire book. Most are colored and supported by drawings and animations characteristic of the popular comic book style of that time. Some pieces are accompanied by still photographs of graffiti pieces done on subway trains. The majority of the tags appear on the book's inside cover.

Some of the artists were teenagers at the time they contributed to his book, and would, during the following decade, earn international recognition for their work on the New York City subway system. Contributors include: IZTHEWIZ, LADY PINK, TRACY 168, CRASH, BILLY 167 (known for his influential piercing style in the mid to late 1970s), T-KID, WASP, FREEDOM, NOC 167, CAINE 1 (deceased, known for whole subway car decorations on the 7 line), FUTURA 2000, PART, SEEN, and DEZ would later become a well-known Hip Hop radio and mix tape disc jockey using the name K-Slay. It also includes tags and throw-ups by notables such as KEL 1<sup>st</sup>, REVOLT, SMILY 149, STAY HIGH 149, COS 207, CAZ2, SAVAGE, and SPANK.

**Finding aid note:**

While there is no formal finding aid for this material, Vee Bravo has interviewed DAZE about this collection. The digital video recording of this interview/oral history is in Mr. Bravo's possession, and may be accessed by contacting Urban Think Tank; P.O. Box 1476, New York, NY 10185; phone 718-670-3739; fax: 718-596-1228; Email: urbanthinktank@usa.net.

**Location:**

Collection is held by Christopher Ellis.

**Restrictions on Access:**

Researchers wishing access to this collection must contact Urban Think Tank; P.O. Box 1476, New York, NY 10185; telephone 718-670-3739; Email: urbanthinktank@usa.net.

**Other authors:**

BILLY 167 (Graffiti writer)  
CAINE 1 (Graffiti writer)  
CAZ 207 (Graffiti writer)  
COS 207 (Graffiti writer)  
CRASH (Graffiti writer)  
DEZ (Graffiti writer)  
FREEDOM (Graffiti writer)  
FUTURA 2000 (Graffiti writer)  
IZTHEWIZ (Graffiti writer)  
KEL 1<sup>st</sup> (Graffiti writer)  
K-Slay (Disc jockey)  
LADY PINK (Graffiti writer)  
NOC 167 (Graffiti writer)  
PART (Graffiti writer)  
REVOLT (Graffiti writer)  
SAVAGE (Graffiti writer)  
SEEN (Graffiti writer)  
SMILY 149 (Graffiti writer)  
SPANK (Graffiti writer)  
STAY HIGH 149 (Graffiti writer)  
T-KID (Graffiti writer)  
TRACY 168 (Graffiti writer)  
WASP (Graffiti writer)

**Indexing terms:***Personal names:*

Ellis, Christopher

*Title:*

*Style Wars* (motion picture, 1983)

*Subject terms:*

African American youth – New York, N.Y.

Graffiti

Street art

Subways -- Decoration

*Geographical coverage:*

New York, New York – Social life and customs

*Occupation:*

Artists

*Form and genre/Form of material:*

Sketchbooks

**Date of interview and survey:** April 23, 2002

**Interview and survey by:** Vee Bravo for Urban Think Tank, Inc.

**This summary written by:** Nancy Johnson