



Detail from DASH piece. (Germany, 2001)

Return of the Dragon: DASH FC/TC5

As told to Roosevelt Franklin
Photos: Courtesy of Dash/TC5

Dash167th... I use a lot of aliases, but that's the name I burn with.

Dash in the dictionary – the word signified violence and I was a pretty violent kid, plus the letters flowed, so I kept it. At the time no one else was writing it, at least not with no fame.

I was born in Manhattan and grew up in the BX near Broadway and the 1 Line. I got into writing after the summer of '82. I wrote until 1989. I had been back and forth between NY and FL my whole life, but in 1986 I moved to Miami, where I wrote for another 4 years. In the 90's it was all about...

FC (Fame City)

I think the legacy of FC is our ethic. We have a lot of style, heritage and tradition handed

down from the crews we are associated with, mainly TC5 but also other crews such as FBA, TNT, NTA, IBM, and the X-MEN. When it comes to style we all follow the same guidelines and build off the same root, yet the styles flow differently between us, from me to West to Risk, whoever.

Everyone down with us, no matter from what generation, understands that this is about FC, and it's bigger than the individual.

Although FC was originally a bombing crew, I think that people will always remember us as masters of style, and also for our conceptual productions. Before we came out with the big organized "Concept" crew walls, no one was painting like that, now most crews won't paint unless it's like that. A lot of writers spent the late 80s and early 90s trying to imitate the



DASH from FBA wall. "Art is the Word" (Miami, 2000)

FC style from the trains, and the rest of the 90s trying to imitate the FC conceptual ideas and layouts for walls.

TC5-

The Crazy5 is almost as old as graff itself. The crew was handed down to Seen TNT in the late 70s. He reorganized it and recruited writers from other crews that were rocking. Seen and Doze were huge influences on a lot of their contemporaries and on those of us who came later. So although each crew is independent, TC5 is the umbrella under which all those crews unite. We call it a graffiti dynasty and like FC, with every generation we just keep handing down the knowledge, the tradition, the styles, and it keeps reinventing itself.

My Style

I rock hardcore letter styles that remind people of how it "use 2 be" and at the same time push the limits of letters, and how they interact within a piece. Writers tell me my shit looks straight out of 1985 sometimes. I ain't mad at that, it's basically an old school style, but with a futuristic spin. Like how pieces would look today if the masters never would have stopped and piecing would've kept evolving on trains. I do the burners that make old writers gimme a pound and the competition's jaw drop.

"Before we came out... no one was painting like that, now most crews won't paint unless it's like that."

My Own Thing - sculptures + canvas

I only done a couple of shows over the years, but I always knew that if I did any gallery or other type of venue, I would have to do straight out graff, I wouldn't compromise that.

For years, I was reluctant to apply any time or effort into producing anything else. Then

I'm versatile, because it's important to me that people respect all aspects of graff, whether it be a tag to a straight letter to a full color burner to a full scale mural with 100 colors. They need to understand the evolution of this movement to understand the transformation of the art form. They also need to understand how it's been corrupted over the years by infiltrators (fake "art school" writers) and the media.

The Industry

Yes, I have infiltrated the industry and managed to crank out work for some big companies. But it wasn't always easy to get the respect. Art directors don't take you seriously when you're a writer. They wanna pay you shit and look down their nose at you, so I hooked up with writers like Wane/COD (Writers Bench) and Kel139 (Voiceoftheghetto.com). Those dudes were already in the game and put me on to how the industry operates and showed me how to make money. I currently work in the

fashion industry and freelance in Web design. I've done a lot of corporate work and a lot of underground work over the years, but now I'm thinking of branching out. I want to do my own thing...

after working as a graphic designer for other people, I noticed I had an option. Since I was already starting to push the limits of traditional design, I figured I could incorporate my graff ideas into what I was doing.

I started experimenting with my letters as the elements of the design itself, as icons, as typefaces, as interfaces, as architectural blueprints, as aerodynamic diagrams for machinery, as functional devices. I started



Detail from DASH piece. (Germany, 2001)

experimenting with constructing and deconstructing the letter, things I couldn't do when I was bombing, but I could incorporate into my design. Through this process I developed a series of pieces consisting of print, Web, 3-D animation, and video graphics.

Still I wanted to do something solid, more permanent than paint that could last through time, and that anyone could appreciate. Kind of how the Pharaohs carved their knowledge in stone and we can still go to the pyramids and study it 5,000 years later.

I got a lot of advice from Mare139, who has been doing wild style letter sculpture for

FC : SEAM, DASH, TEAL (MIAMI, 1997)



“People need to wake up and realize that they are being spoon-fed a corrupted and distorted version of the very culture they grew up with.”



DASH/ TC5 'Chunky Style' (Miami, 2000)

years, and inevitably I followed his lead into building some of my ideas into physical objects.

As for the canvas work I'm doing now, it's interesting because a lot of it reflects the studies that I developed during the time leading up to the Letter Sculptures.

No Interviews

Editor's note – For years, Dash deeded all interview requests. Mugshot got it like that, though, but we still had to ask why...

When was the last time you saw a writer or a b-boy on the cover of a (so-called) Hip-Hop culture magazine, or a legitimate article or interview with a writer or b-boy in any corporate magazine? They have been very few and far between, and for the wrong reasons. Most forms of media don't want to understand graff and give it the respect that it deserves. I don't support them because they don't support the culture.

Corporations and the media have been exploiting graff since the birth of rap music and they are still exploiting it to this day.

They pimp graff and breaking to push rap music into your living room, under the disguise of Hip-Hop culture; meanwhile there hasn't been any Hip-Hop in rap for over a decade. Shit, this weekend VH1 ran commercials all day with dudes breaking in front of some wack-ass graffiti, and then when you tune in to watch, the show was all about rap music.

The worst part is that they succeed because of the consumer's ignorance. People need to wake up and realize that they are being spoon-fed a corrupted and distorted version of the very culture they grew up with. And the rappers are no better than the labels, most of them don't even remember what Hip-Hop is.

SHOUTOUTS

To those I've rock with, [laughs] and to those I've rocked.

Rest in Peace Dream and Nace.

FC Kings... Forever



DASH from FC goes to the moon. (NYC, 1994)

