

An aerial photograph of a city street scene, likely in New York City. In the foreground, a large, circular garden with concentric paths and a central fountain is visible. The garden is surrounded by a concrete wall. In the middle ground, a street with several cars and a white van is shown. In the background, a dense urban landscape with tall buildings is visible. The entire image has a teal color cast.

BOWERY ARTIST TRIBUTE VOL. 2

01 Dash Snow, UNBORN/THREE
DIEBOLD/STEF BUTTNEY
WINDS COLUMBIAN, 1997, 48x61.
350 printed gelatin prints mounted
on paper, light, white, plastic, foil,
lignin, metal, 4.5 x 6.5 x 0.1 x 1.2
x 1.0 cm. Courtesy Peers Projects
and the Dash Snow Estate

02 Dash Snow, Silver Life
Boyle, 2007, 48x61. Artist's
book, offset print, black and
white, 420 pages. Courtesy the
Dash Snow Estate

03 Dash Snow, UNBORN, 2007.
College, 11.75 x 11.75 x 0.88
x 28.6 cm. Courtesy the Dash
Snow Estate

04 Dash Snow (foreground)
and Brandon Fowler, 2011 (see
B&W, "The 9 Mile to 13th"
music video, 2007). Directed by
Indee Ward



ART
DASH SNOW
138 BOWERY (2007-2009)



Dash Snow (1981–2009) worked with spray paint, newspaper clippings, photography, and his own body to create work that stretched from the condemned territories of downtown New York to countless exhibitions around the world. His restless, enthusiastic spirit drove Snow to combine and mutate materials, obsessively modifying arrangements and connotations in his collage, portraiture, and self-published artist books.

Snow began his creative activity as a prolific graffiti writer, notorious both for his intensity and his ability to access remote spots. He rejected the late 1990s tendency towards extreme technical skill and avant-garde character design, instead setting dominance and daring as his goals. His word, SACE, always executed in legible, sharply defined letters, was applied relentlessly throughout the city, either brahly applied to the front door of a twenty-four-hour deli or unfathomably high on a building's façade. A stolen camera acquired at the age of sixteen accompanied Snow on these outings, capturing the proscribed sites and unseen views of the city that his graffiti adventures provided. His transient passage through subway tunnels, rooftops, and abandoned buildings was solitary, but his prints fixed his view of the city in a format that could be openly shared.

Alongside these desolate panoramas, Snow began to document his other nighttime activities—the bare skin, consumption, and exhaustion that colored his life. Giuliani's mayoral reign, which extinguished Chelsea's mega-clubs and neutered Times Square, canalized Manhattan's youth culture downtown once again—concentrated that particular culture of drugs, sex, and mayhem into a limited patch south of 14th Street. This was Snow's turf, marked clearly by his tag at every block. The sites that people spent entire nights (or summers) searching for—the fading dive bars; the basement rock clubs; the 5 a.m. loft make-out parties—Snow found every one, and photographed the ensuing fistfights, drunken kisses, and triumphs. Just as Nan Goldin documented the drug use and transgression of her own community

in the same neighborhood two decades earlier, Snow used snapshots to document his extended family; to commemorate intimate situations that normally pass without notice. The tone of his photographs never approached objectification or spectacle; like Goldin he was a part of the community he documented, and the work was a reflection of his relationships with the subjects. The photos portray moments of revelation, fired with an open spirit of welcome.

Snow's generosity was best disseminated through his self-produced, photocopied zines. Recording photos, sensational news stories, typewritten fragments, and rescued debris, Snow's publications collage disparate materials into an intensely personal narrative, illuminating his sense of humor, his morbid fascinations, and his adoration





for friends and family. Often running hundreds of pages long, these zines revel in secret affinities: handwritten notes mirror excessive *New York Post* headlines and familial snapshots exhibit the same rapt facial expressions as found photos of occult gatherings.

In Snow's collage works, the impulse towards collecting and contrasting reveals much darker fascinations. Built upon a foundation of aged, midweek-toned paper, these rigorous compositions combine depraved headlines and deftly edited photos to create sharp-edged, deeply frustrated commentaries. Snow would often splice together two sentences, alternating the words in a manner that reinforced the brutality of current events while surrendering to their absurdity. Collages without text edged together images of battlefields, celebrities, and consumer goods: an architecture of suffering and misplaced

desire. These works, while occasionally imbued with the amusement and thrill of his photography, exposed a cynical, troubled side of Snow, complicating notions of the artist as party documenter.

Throughout Snow's installations and publications, his key compositional elements—debauched flesh, prurient clippings, and adoring portraits—jostle one another much in the same way that these energies struggle in life. Viewed at this scale, Snow's consideration of this balance is savagely conspicuous. In one collage, 1930s pornographic photos are combined and drawn upon, forming a crass, aggressive orgy; but in a second work, the same naked bodies splash through a pond, cast with a Walden-esque freedom that is reinforced by the glued-in words, "Have Fun." Front-page photos of Saddam Hussein with a noose around his neck, doused

in semen and glitter, scratch through strata of violence—war, execution, state terror, bloodthirst—but ultimately resist any conclusion of good or evil. Snow treated such judgments as unnecessary, even divisionary, preferring instead to build a dynamic between confrontation of the constant maelstrom of violence and the shelter of a loved one's face.

