

THE FIFTH ELEMENT

Filmmaker Danny Hoch takes hip-hop in new directions



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It's been a year since Danny Hoch graced the

cover of the Envoy. In the midst of a lawsuit with Rawkus records, who didn't want to give up the rights to the musical score of his film, *Jails, Hospitals and Hip-Hop*, were holding up the movie's release. The lawsuit is still pending. But thanks to Hoch's producers, Kick Down Productions, his film has a new soundtrack with 25 original tracks by MixMaster Mike, which includes the likes of Tony Touch and the Perverted Monks. His movie was originally due for release March 2000. The powers that be at Rawkus—who to this day have not given a reason for withholding the rights—have delayed it until now! Nevertheless, the film, written and co-directed by Hoch, drops onto screen Oct. 12 at Village East Cinemas on 2nd Avenue and 12th Street.

As for concern that the film might be outdated, Hoch reassures that, "unfortunately it's still timely. It's scary that all the issues [within the film] are still plaguing us: good for the film but bad for our state of affairs." Whack MCs are still rapping about ho's, blunts, guns and Rolexes, police brutality is still a rampant problem, and stereotypes are haunting. Luckily, Hoch is keeping busy: staying involved in the struggle against oppression. He is helping Hip-Hop evolve into its next and most crucial phase.

Hoch is fully aware that mainstream society's only reference to Hip-Hop is Hot 97 and MTV. Declaring during interview, "commercialism has hip-hop in a stranglehold—I refuse to be held in that stranglehold." He went on to explain that rap music is no longer the most powerful element of hip-hop. Hoch claimed he wanted to take hip-hop back the "grassroots movement," when the MC, DJ and B-boy were griots and the graffiti

artist was a visionary. Hoch chooses to ignore the wack MCs and focuses instead on the B-boys/girls, who have stepped up to become educators, philanthropists,

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politicians and activists.

Hoch, much like the graffiti artist of yesteryear, is a visionary, looking to take advantage of the hip-hop-pers who are "making a lot of cake." He wants to give some of that money back to the community. Hoch is taking hip-hop back, to when it was a resistance, a revolution whose goal was to get its people out of poverty and be given an opportunity to have their voices heard.

Instead of being P-Diddy dumb and renting out a house in the Hamptons, Danny co-founded the Active Element Foundation. A non-profit group looking to further inspire activists, artists and community conscious organizations—many of which are going broke—by giving them money. Last year they gave \$150,000 to such groups. This year they estimate doubling that and they are hoping to raise \$1 million next year.

The hip-hop revolution has become nothing more than a meaningless token phrase. With support it can fulfill its original purpose. Beginning by supporting Hoch's film and becoming conscious fans who support real hip-hop, not clothing lines or ignorant rappers.

For more information on Danny Hoch, *Jails, Hospitals and Hip-Hop* and the Active Element Foundation, check out the following websites:

www.dannyhoch.com
www.jails-hospitals-and-hip-hop.com
www.activeelement.org