

Is this a step on from Street Kids?

Hip Hop

— New York/Wellington Style

Nemo Adam

*Unemployment at a record high
People coming, people going,
people want to die
Don't ask me because I don't know
why
But it's like that, and that's the
way it is....*

Run D.M.C. (Black New York Poets)

Hip Hop... like Beatnik or Hippie subcultures has hit young Polynesians living in Wellington.

Hip Hop... sprawling colourful murals, breakdancing and a funky beat.

Hip Hop... Art. Music. Dancing. Talents worn anywhere, street portable. Popular not profitable.

Hip Hop... youth culture born in Black New York.

Hip Hop is here.

Kosmoe is a street-artist. When I first saw him he was sitting with four Home Boys (friends) in Wellington's Manners Mall.

They were all Polynesian, probably the type you'd notice on the street and pretend you didn't see.

I watched them for awhile.

Kosmoe (left) TeePee (right).

One drew graffiti in a sketch book, another watched him and the others danced around a large and colourful beatbox.

I walked over and explained who I was and that I'd like to write a story on the New York style graffiti around Wellington.

"Let's go.

"Take him up Lombards....

"Yeah, we're off... we move."

And we did. To a nearby carpark, that the Home Boys described as their graffiti gallery.

Kosmoe did most of the talking with the Home Boys agreeing, pointing at the works that were mostly his.

We were all impressed with the artwork and I asked Kosmoe if I could interview him tomorrow, same place, 1 o'clock....

At half past he showed up in clothes similar to those of the street-artist Ramo, in the Hip Hop film 'Beat Street', shown here last year.

Black cords, Pony shoes and a big U.S. army issue jacket. The top half of his face was covered with black shades.

He was a little disappointed when I told him I'd forgotten to bring the camera.

I asked him questions and he answered in an American accent that didn't drown his Samoan one. He was fluent....

"... fast throw ups... fresh, baddest... three piece caspars...."

Kosmoe often sacrificed answers to use Hip Hop lingo, but I wasn't complaining. I couldn't believe I was still in New Zealand.

Our discussion was interrupted by Kosmoe's impatient friends who began bitching him to give back their clothes.

Our chat muted we left, both happy we had just heard something new.

In the following weeks I got to know Kosmoe.

He was 18-years-old, unemployed with no qualifications. He told me he was doing an engineering course at Polytech, although he wanted to be an artist.

Living in an inner-city boarding house he said his parents lived in Los Angeles and that he had lived in the States.

I would ring him 12 o'clock most days to ask him where we would meet.

He spent most of his time hanging out with Home Boys around Wellington's inner-city streets, spraying various buildings whenever he felt the urge.

Kosmoe was also a celebrity, winning with his Home Boys, the national Bop-Olympics under the name of the 'Chain Reaction Crew'.

When it came to spraypainting they were called the 'Bloodz' notorious with the city council and cleaners who had to remove their "decorations" from Wellington's walls.

And when he told me of rappers and D.J's around the city... I realised a bit of New York had influenced a bit of Wellington... Hip Hop.

TeePee is a D.J. He's 21 and has been in clubs since he left Wellington College as a 16-year-old with school cert. Biology.

He lives in a state house with his mother and his stereo, his father leaving home when he was seven.

His job at two inner city clubs keeps him busy five late nights a week. When he's home he sleeps, cooks for his mother and listens to music.

TeePee wants experience overseas

