



Damn Son Where Did You Find This?: A Book about US Hip-hop Mixtape Cover Art

By Tobias Hansson, Michael Thorsby

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Damn Son Where Did You Find This? is the first book ever to focus on the cover art of the modern US hip hop CD mixtape. From the bootleg recordings of Kool Herc in the 1970s to Lil' Wayne, Jay-Z, Nicki Minaj and Drake's latest opus, CD mixtapes have been and continue to be an essential part of hip hop culture. A visual world that reached unseen levels at the turn of the millennium, uncensored, unregulated and extreme, it is the most anarchic of all genres of graphic design. To make their music stand apart from the dozens of mixtapes regularly released on sites like datpiff.com, hip hop artists rely on cover art to catch listeners' eyes. The race for attention-grabbing covers led mixtapes to adopt a lurid movie-poster aesthetic: flashy and explosive.

Freed from label guidelines, legal opinion and moral hindrances, the five designers featured in *Damn Son Where Did You Find This?*—KidEight, Miami Kaos, Mike Rev and Tansta & Skrilla—created covers for the likes of Lil' Wayne, Jay-Z, Nicki Minaj, Drake, Gucci Mane, Rick Ross, The Game, Tupac, Eminem, Raekwon, 2Chainz, Young Jeezy and A\$AP. Along with 500 of these covers, interviews with the designers recount how they entered the hip hop mixtape industry, taking us through the creative process, describing how visual trends have come and gone, and how designing mixtape covers changed the trajectories of their lives. Originally published as a limited edition of 400 hand-numbered copies (which quickly sold out), *Damn Son Where Did You Find This?* is at last available as a trade edition.

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- Rank: #1136855 in Books
- Published on: 2017-02-28
- Original language: English
- Dimensions: 11.90" h x .60" w x 8.60" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 148 pages

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