



ART

A PRO SNOWBOARDER'S SIGNATURE MODEL IS ALWAYS A TAD FANCIER THAN REGULAR BOARDS, BUT WHILE MANY RIDERS JUST GIVE THEIR NAME AND A BIT OF FEEDBACK, TRAVIS RICE'S LIB TECH IS REALLY HIS BOARD. FROM CORE TO TOPSHEET.

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PHOTO: VERNON DECK



For Travis it's a lot more than just a pro model board. It's his "shield of arms", as he puts it, and also his opportunity to "speak out and use my influence for something meaningful".

As a result he's not only involved in the construction of the board, tweaking the features until it rides exactly how he wants it, he also has full control over the artwork. And for these he selected none other than Mike Parillo, fellow shred head from Jackson Hole, who is more than able to visualise the ideas Travis has. This is the third board they've worked on together (following the previous models in 2006/07 and 2008/09) and proves once again that the result of their cooperation isn't just a run-of-the-mill board graphic, rather it's something much more once you take a closer look and if you're "capable of stepping out of yourself for a moment," as Travis puts it. The 2010/11 collaboration between Travis and Mike sort of closes the trilogy ("there are never just two good movies or books") and is peppered with even more hidden meanings than the previous ones.

The most obvious, and also "main element of the story" as Mike explains it, is the child sitting in front of the TV. "He's absorbing all the info, the TV is the portal and everything behind it that looks like an island is funnelled through it." McDonalds may be burning in this picture, but Travis is dismayed by what the kids are taught and are growing up with these days – symbolised by the images of Paris Hilton and Butters from South Park in the smaller sets by side.

"As I get older and wiser, I find it appalling what the youth is growing up with. They are taught that fast food is normal and that it's fine to watch TV or play video games all day. It's parental cop-out and totally flawed," he says. So by burning McDonalds and sign-posting the way with little "Eat Organic", "Think Pink" or "Buy Local" road signs, Mike and Travis are trying to

raise awareness and spotlight what's wrong with our society and the distractions the human race is giving in to more and more.

Another example for the "corruption that the media provides" is embodied in the girls on the side, who don't have faces but are only shown as naked flesh. "Have you ever watched a Girls Gone Wild commercial?" Mike responds when asked about this element. "That shit is gross. It's the clearest proof of how boys get screwed up ideas about girls and how girls get screwed ideas on how they should look and act."

But besides using top sheet and base of a snowboard as a tool to air their views, they both also very strongly believe that the graphics give the rider a certain energy. Looking at all of Travis' boards, there are two consistencies that immediately catch the eye: bright, powerful colours and triangular shapes. "The triangle is such a strong shape," Rice explains. "There are about 15 triangles in the whole art piece. And it seems like so much is based on the principle of threes." They also play a part in the very subtle composition of the art piece, which distinguishes it even more from regular board graphics. Because if you look carefully, even elements you wouldn't expect are arranged so that they form triangles as well - for example the purple eyes on the sides and the all-seeing eye in the middle.

His passion for art has recently borne other fruits too: together with Parillo, Travis set up a business to share it with the rest of the snowboard scene and even the world. Their Aymbol Gallery is not only a platform where artists in snowboarding finally get the recognition Travis feels was missing, it also gives the fans and consumers a chance to actually buy the art that is behind their favourite graphics. Because more often than you think there is a lot more to it than just a snowboard design.

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