



ART

WORDS: ANNA LANGER

YES. GREAT DUDES OF HISTORY

In this page we are always talking about the connection between art and snowboarding and as photography is the most prevalent art form in snowboarding we chose photo topsheets for this month's dissection.

Chris Prosser was only given one word as inspiration for his designs for the 2010/11 collection of YES. boards and that was YES. Romain De Marchi and JP Solberg, part owners of the label, were more than happy with the unique way he accomplished the task. "He came out with the dudes of history pictures which I think is a really powerful statement," said Romain, "I'm not always a fan of pictures on a board but those ones were well done and I'm really proud of this graphic." "The whole concept start to finish was perfectly executed" added JP.

Putting black and white portraits on the topsheet may seem a bit odd at first, especially as none of the dudes has any relation to snowboarding. But if you look at the whole series of the Great Dudes Of History featuring Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King JR, Abraham Lincoln, Haile Selassie, John Lennon and JFK, the pieces start coming together. "The 'dudes' all had one major thing in common: they all stood up and said YES WE CAN, just like the YES. NOW BOARD snowboard company. They were all revolutionaries, freedom fighters and generally righteous dudes," Chris explains. Picking them was almost a no-brainer. "It was totally clear immediately. As soon as they told me how many boards we had to work with I just whittled down the people I wanted on there."

The simplicity of the photos is key for the power of this board graphic or as Chris puts it: "The photos get the idea across, point blank. They are all famous portraits and amazing pictures." Keeping the rest of the design really old-school and plain only adds to the effect. And with the similarity between all the portraits the whole series also makes a really great collectors item; it's already decorating the drinks corner at JP's home.

But of course it's also the dudes themselves. "I would hope that you associate each of them with being pretty righteous individuals, dudes with a greater cause. They all preached or represented a higher level of being and I would also hope that people could apply that higher level of thought to themselves," says Chris. Martin Luther King and his fight for civil rights is probably the easiest to get, as is John Lennon who was spreading the ideas of love and peace, long after the flower power movement had wilted. Abraham Lincoln, whose ambition was to end slavery in America, and Haile Selassie, a messiah of the Rastafarian movement, not only fought for what they believed in but also inspired others, while Albert Einstein and his theories opened new horizons of thinking, as did the politics of John F. Kennedy.

You can of course always argue that printing a photo doesn't have a lot to do with art but as Chris counters, "it is graphic design; some people consider that art and some people don't. I'm not necessarily concerned about that. I wanted a powerful board graphic with a positive image", which is something both Romain and JP back him up on: "You can have anything for a graphic if it makes sense, right?" So lets draw this page to an end with the words of one of the Great Dudes, JFK, "If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him."

ADVERT