



ART

NICOLAS

THOMAS



In Artpage we set out in search for art in snowboarding. The thread of this interview with artist Nicolas Thomas is 'Freedom of thought', so as you can imagine, he comes from the land of liberty, La French.

Nicholas Thomas is a well known and successful artist in the boardsports industry. With 34 global exhibitions, 16 years designing for Apo Snowboards (before that A. Snowboards) and to date 5 collaborations with Billabong, he has made his mark on the scene.

He started drawing as a kid and studied industrial design at uni, but never thought of becoming an artist like so many other tortured souls. He hadn't even shown his art to anyone, until a friend, Jerome Catz, asked him to participate in a new project he was starting, the Space Junk Art Centers. "They asked me to show my drawings and paintings that I had never shown to anyone. After I sold a painting there and I decided to make another one," he remembers,

chucking to himself.

While some may begrudge him his success, as by his description it seems all too easy, Nicolas is a true artist. When he is asked about the inspiration for his unique works that mix heavy paint with meticulously detailed drawings, he's not sure what to say. "I think everything is inspiration. You just look around and you see everything!" Also his signature "strange characters" as he describes them, come straight from his mind and not from reading comics, as you might assume considering how many articles describe his pieces as "comic style".

Of course a mind so full of ideas as his has to be cleared every once in a while, which he does snowboarding. "Art and snowboarding are the same in the way that they empty the mind. When I paint or when I snowboard I think "I'm painting" or "I'm snowboarding" but nothing else."

Before snowboarding came skating, which he picked up

when he was 14. That was also what finally led to his relationship with Billabong, when a guy he used to skate with as a teenager and who was working for the brand, asked him if he wanted to do something with them. 2011/12 is now his fifth year of collaboration: "I'm totally free in what I do, but of course I keep the brand's aim in mind at all times. For this year's jacket, I took a lot of photographs near my house in Grenoble of a lot of different materials. The aim was something street and also vintage, like a jacket you bought 5 or 6 years ago. It's still cool, but the colours are faded. It looks like something old, but is still strong."

Besides his numerous exhibitions and collabs, he's also working as art director for Apo Snowboards, coordinating designers, artists and of course creating images, ideas and campaigns.

Check out more of his work at spacejunk.tv or follow Nicolas's footsteps and empty your own mind in the mountains!