
BROKEN FINGERS
freestyle skateboarding quarterly
The Cardinal
Sins of Freestyle
Identity
Crisis
Old Spots
& Friends

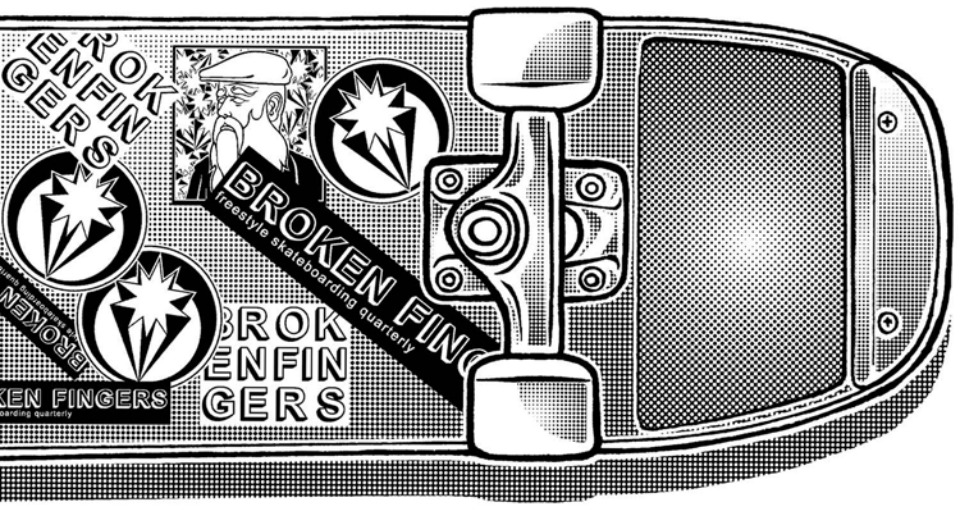


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BROKEN FINGERS

freestyle skateboarding quarterly

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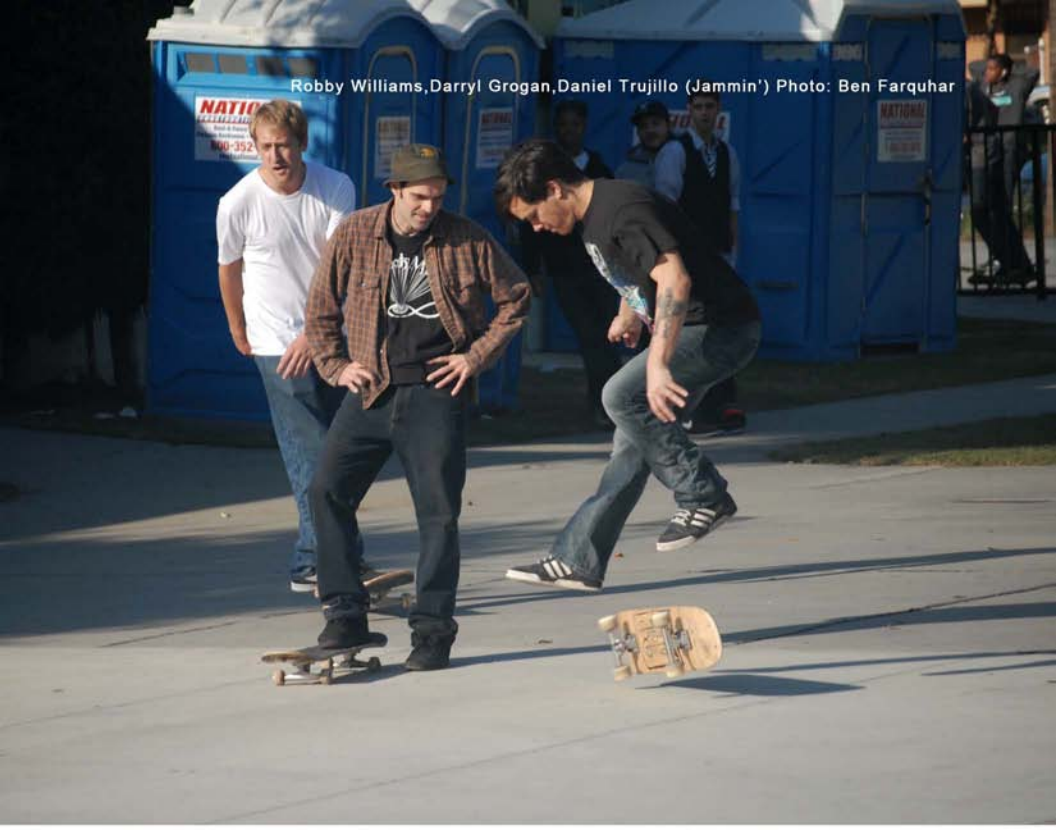
Cover Photo: Tony Gale (Fingerflip) by: Simon Mrozinski Artwork at top: Jeremy Elder ©2015



Callum Bowran(Cross Foot Nose Wheelie) Photo: Simon Mrozinski



Mario Steinemann (Truck Transfer) Photo: Ohmel Suarez



Robby Williams,Darryl Grogan,Daniel Trujillo (Jammin') Photo: Ben Farquhar

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John Hanson (Rolling Handstand flip) Photo: Simon Mrozinski



Bob Loftin (Kickturn) Photo: Dale



Dale (Frontside Carve) Photo: Bob Loftin

Old Spots and Friends

By Bob Loftin

If you're a skateboarder, there's really nothing better than skating an old spot with an old friend. My friend, Dale, is from our town's generation of skater right behind mine. We met when I was in college and he was in junior high, and we've been friends ever since. Several times a year, Dale comes home for a visit, and we usually have at least one skate session. This time, rather than a skatepark, we went on a tour of a bunch of our old spots. This one is the Forest Bank, which starts out low but is about 6 or 7 feet high on the other end, with tight transition throughout (but totally skateable). We hadn't been there in about 24 years.

It was the same.

So were we. BL



Gary Holl (50-50 Truckstand)



Gregg Ayres 1977(One Foot 360) Photo: Gary Medeiros Courtesy of Tunnel Skateboards



Alex Foster (Filming) & John Hanson (Flipping) Photo: Simon Mrozinski



Darryl Grogan(English Handstand) Photo: Ben Farquhar



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Denham Hill (Rail Flip) Photo: Simon Mrozinski



The Cardinal Sins of Freestyle
By Tony Gale

Despite the name "freestyle," there are definitely some tricks that are frowned upon within our little niche. In fact, while it's largely unspoken, it's such a universally agreed-upon list that in the name of public service I'm compiling what I believe are the top-10 worst atrocities any freestyler can commit. And before you say it, I know, I've been guilty of a few in the past. I hang my head in shame and hope that by publicly asking for penance, no young skaters will make the same mistakes I did in my youth.

Foot-down Caspers
Honestly, this is the worst, but it's the most obvious so we'll get it out of the way first. There's no excuse for this — everyone knows a casper should be balanced, so why do people still do it? Disgraceful. And, for the record, this counts for BOTH feet. An accidental slip with the back foot is excusable. Doing it every time isn't.

Shuffled Caspers
Sometimes you need to shuffle a casper, hopping around a bit to get your feet in place. It still looks ugly as sin, though, and marginally ridiculous. I can't imagine anyone does it on purpose, but if you are, please stop. (It's worth noting the casper spacewalk, while still ridiculous, is acceptable if you're 360 flipping out of it; for so sayeth Mullen, and so it shall be done.)

Coconut Wheelies to Rail
Caspers are often done badly. Everyone knows this. The coconut wheelie, however — the on-trend trick of the last decade — has also been witness to some abhorrent crimes against style, and one of them is when you slide one to a stop and then drop to rail. Completely pointless.

Coconut Wheelie Grabs
I remember being encouraged to try as many grabs as possible, and even put together a video of different variations. One freestyler (who will go unnamed) told me he thought this was "progressive" and "exciting." Now I think it looks like I was trying to squeeze one out mid-trick. Squatting is never a good look. Which leads us to...

Monkey Flips
Don't know what I mean by a monkey flip? It's any sort of hand flip, rolling or stationary, where you have to squat and grab one of the rails. They're awkward, dorky, and a poor man's fingerflip. I can only think of one person who's ever done a good one, and I think that was a fluke.

Darkside Tricks
Now we're veering into Todd Falcon territory. I can see why people latch onto these — after all, you can stand on the rail, on the truck, on the tail, so why not just on an upside down board? Well, because it takes no skill, no balance and no precision. And, of course, we've all seen that one guy who flips a board round randomly, "lands" it upside down, then tries to claim it was to "darkside". No, mate. You missed the trick. Give it up.

Two-Feet Down (aka standing around, waiting for something to happen)
Bonelesses are rad. Proper no complies are hard. Standing on two feet (or, for that matter, hopping around on one foot) is not. Please stop.

Two-Board Tricks
Double-or-triple stacked kickflips. Daffys. AJ's "two-board bertleman." They're fun. They're silly. But if you're carrying around an extra board specifically to do them — or, worse still, stopping mid-run in a competition to grab an extra board! — you might need to question your sanity, your trick choices, or both. (Two-board 360s get a reprieve, but only if you can do them for as long as Kevin Harris.)

Pogos
I don't like pogos, but I'm not going to say, "All pogos need to stop!" They have their place. What I think we can all agree does need to stop are:

- excessively long pogos
- pogos off things
- pogo up things
- pogos down stairs
- pogos up stairs
- pogo anywhere near stairs

TG



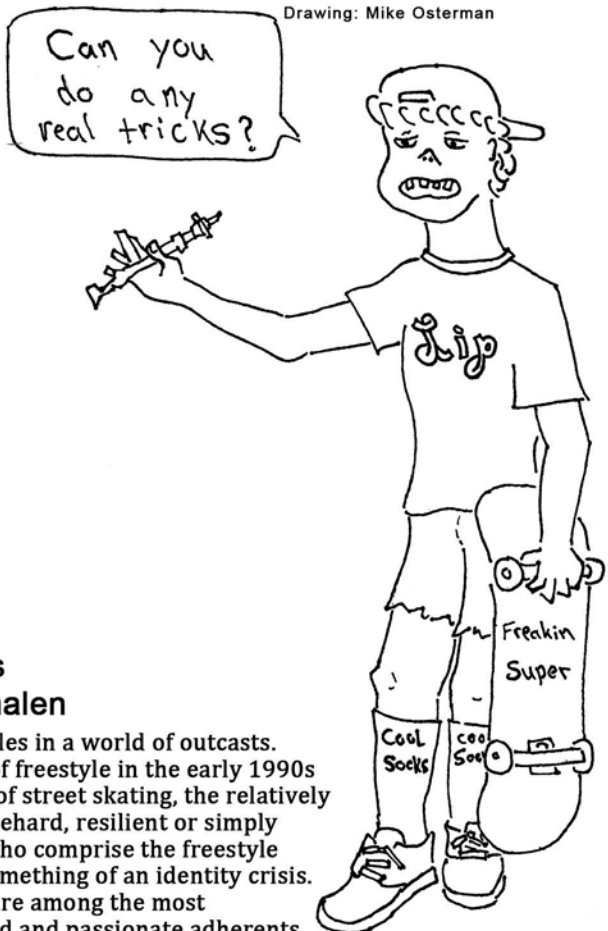
Sean Burke(Coconut Wheelie) Photo: Wendy Miller



Kim1977(Nose Wheelie) Photo: Gary Medeiros Courtesy of Tunnel Skateboards



Gary Holl(50-360-50)



Drawing: Mike Osterman

Identity Crisis
by: Jesse Whalen

Freestylers are exiles in a world of outcasts. Since the "death" of freestyle in the early 1990s and the explosion of street skating, the relatively small number of diehard, resilient or simply stubborn people who comprise the freestyle community face something of an identity crisis. While freestylers are among the most dedicated, obsessed and passionate adherents to the art of the board, they are also largely denied acceptance to the world of skateboarding, from the smallest skate scenes to the industry as a whole.

As romantic as it is to say, "We're all skateboarders," there is a real and definite delineation between the freestyler and the street skater. The growing standardization and progression of street skating only strengthens this gap. Street skating defines what most understand skateboarding as a whole to be. If freestyle is acknowledged, it is so as "old school" and associated with either Rodney Mullen or, worse: floral shorts, tiny boards and the 80s generally.

Nonetheless, freestyle is growing, and as it grows further, there emerges a need for freestyle to establish an identity that transcends the static, antiquated stigmas that plague it. Until freestylers figure out what they're all about and carve a unique place for themselves, they will remain either the shadows of 80's glory or clones of freestyle's one household name.

Within the freestyle community there is a largely unspoken debate as to how to confront this dilemma. On one side, there are self-avowed "purists," who have no desire to incorporate obstacles into their skating yet also want nothing to do with the styles, tricks and mentalities associated with street skating. It is among this group that one will often see skid plates, single-kicks, and the terminology of the 80s. On the other hand, there are "hybrid skaters," freestylers who also skate obstacles, embrace flip tricks and know more than one way to execute a kickflip. Both approaches hinder progress, evolution and the future identity of freestyle.

While among purists there are undoubtedly creative and even progressive skaters, their deliberate block against the vocabulary of modern skating only strengthens the association of freestyle with the past. Purists seem to forget that the various sub-disciplines of skateboarding have always influenced one another. These skaters, whether intentionally or not, neglect the rapid growth of flip tricks, for example, and in doing so pass on an opportunity to incorporate these tricks into the spectrum of freestyle. It is easy to see the purist community as nothing more than a reenactment, which overlooks the endless benefits of a more syncretic approach.

Though hybrid skaters tend to possess a more thorough and updated vocabulary of tricks, they also tend to incorporate these tricks into street skating and, in doing so, abandon the possibility of freestyle's growth. The rising emergence of freestylers who adapt their tricks to street, such as Kilian, Rademaker, Carlos Lastra, and Daniel Wade, to name a few, certainly inject novelty into a mainstream that is growing increasingly standardized. However, what does this adaptation do for freestyle? Doing a primo slide on a bank ramp, or a fingerflip off a ledge is no more a freestyle trick than Tony Hawk's fingerflip airs. At best, hybrid skating reduces freestyle to nothing more than a useful set of skills, a building block on which to build an impressive manny game.

In order for freestyle to evolve, an approach is necessary that both embraces the forgotten tricks of the past and the constantly evolving tricks of the present. Even more important than this middle ground, however, is the idea of the flat ground and its endless possibilities. Within this horizontal plane, the tricks, styles and approaches of the past and present dissolve, giving way to the future of freestyle.

While purists identify with the tricks of three decades ago and hybrid skaters bring the freestyle repertoire to the street, a select few within the freestyle community continue to explore what can be done with nothing more than the board and a slab of flat concrete. These pilgrims of pavement (TKC, the Fujii brothers, Connor Burke, Pete Betti and Mike Osterman, to name a few) affirm freestyle's progress with every original trick, contest run and video part. In Takashi's fakie G-turn to varial flip, Connor Burke's fingerflip caballerial and Mike Osteman's coconut wheelie impossible, it is impossible to deny that there are still flatground treasures to be discovered and waiting to be sculpted from the imagination. JW



Darryl Grogan(No Handed 50-50) Photo: Ben Farquhar



Philly Freestyle event at Paine's Park Philadelphia, PA Photo: Wendy Miller



Matthew Cheeseworth(50-50 combo) Photo: Simon Mrozinski



Alex Foster (Pogo) Photo: Simon Mrozinski



Darryl Grogan(Kickflip) Photo: Ben Farquhar



Robbie Wiliams(Swedish Nose Wheelie) Photo: Ben Farquhar



Alexander Rademaker(Flat Bank 50-50) Photo: Simon Mrozinski



Denham Hill (Spacewalk) Photo: Simon Mrozinski



Tony Gale(Triple Kickflip) Photo: Simon Mrozinski



Connor Burke (Flipping) Photo: Wendy Miller



Robbie Williams(Airwalk) Photo: Ben Farquhar



Marco Sassi (Rail Handstand) Photo: Mario Steinemann



Gunter Mokulys(No Handed 50-50) Photo: Wendy Miller



PHOTO: LAURENCE HERRING

TONY GALE
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