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BRINGING THE STREETS INSIDE

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Published 06/02/15

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DANNY MINNICK IN LOS ANGELES, APRIL 2015. PORTRAITS BY BRIAN HIGBEE.

Around the age of eight or nine, Danny Minnick drew his hand in art class. The teacher, he says, immediately asked if he traced his hand and accused him of cheating. From that moment until the end of school, he never took an art class again. At the same young age, Minnick began skateboarding, something he continued professionally until he tore the ligaments of his ankle. The accident altered his trajectory—he could no longer be Shaun White's stunt double or partake in competitions, so he brought his graffiti and doodles on skate decks into

PAGE 1/1 the studio.

"I work on whatever is available to me," he says, in true form of a street-turned-gallery artist. "There's some on canvas, but most of the recent work is from the studio wall."

These recent works are currently on view in a solo exhibition, "Break the Walls," at Boîte Noire Gallery in Los Angeles, and this Friday, the gallery and 4 Arts Management will celebrate with a reception in collaboration with Pacific Design Center's DesignLab. Minnick's large-scale paintings combine oil and spray paints with his signature drawings done with Krink and Mean Streak markers. The stark images channel Keith Haring's cartoons, Basquiat's sketches, and Pollock's drips.

"The energy of the wall, of the wood, is totally different than canvas," the Los Angeles-based artist continues. Aside from the visually apparent inspirations, Minnick also looks to figures like Rothko, Modigliani, de Kooning, David Hockney, and Egon Schiele, as well as Fab Five Freddy and "the MTV days." After first seeing his work on Instagram, we connected with the skater, artist, and actor (he'll be in New York next month to do a film with Uma Thurman) to learn more.

NAME: Danny Minnick

BEST COAST: I grew up all over, but we resided mostly in Seattle. I came [to L.A.] a couple times through skating, but I actually started living here, like renting land and having a place, in '97. I want go to NYC and hang out, [but] the weather—the West is the best!

BREAK A LEG: I was skating, doing all the stunt doubles for a commercial for Shaun White, and the directors were like, "Oh, we're done, we're done," and then they said they wanted three more. What they didn't realize was that somebody put down a blanket or was tearing down the ramp, so when I got to the end of the ramp it was like running at 50 miles per hour and then off a curb. I tore all my ligaments in my ankle.

Ever since I've been skating, I'd always doodle on my skateboard, [but] I seriously only painted two paintings before that accident. The first was when I was living with this artist in Los Angeles, and the next time was when I went to New York for a friend's funeral. I was in this other artist's studio, and he was saying, "Dude, if you wanna chill you gotta paint a painting." He gave me this piece of plywood and I painted a painting on it. From that he taught me how to stretch canvas, so then I did these two other paintings in the studio. I loved it.

THE ARTIST INSIDE: I grew up skateboarding in this place in Seattle called Red Square, at the University of Washington. Barnett Newman has a sculpture there that I used to skate in front of all the time. It was this pyramid [with] something balancing on top. I'd always kind of trip out on it, but I didn't know who the artist was. Years later, when I started painting, I'm like "Oh wow, this is Barnett Newman's work." I knew his paintings, but I didn't know he did these [Broken Obelisk] sculptures.

SKATING VS. PAINTING: They influence each other because they're both art; I like skating and painting as facets of art, as forms of expression and freedom. When you're out skating and cruising around it's the same as when you're in the studio painting on a canvas—you're just expressing yourself; you're in your own little world. I always listen to music when I skate and when I paint. I love Bob Dylan, or Nirvana, the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, David Bowie. I love jazz. The Velvet Underground, I've been listening to them lately.

THE STUDIO: The essence of The Actor's Studio inspires me. If you get in the Studio, it's a place where you can go and meet the specialists that know about the work—and I mean the real work, the classical work. You see older films and everybody's so beautifully trained and highly respected. They didn't use a phone, phone it in, and fake it. When you watch TV and stuff [now], it's like "Oh my God, what is that?" It's horrible, like eating fast food.

FOUND OBJECTS: I like finding things [to paint on]. You know what's even better? When things find me. For instance, when I threw my bed out I had this springboard, and I painted the most beautiful thing on it. It's called *Ralph*





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Steadman [and] now people who own Picassos have it.

AND... My collectors love me; I love them. Nick Cassavetes is a big collector of mine. Fred Durst, Cash [Warren] and Jessica Alba just bought a piece from a charity that I donated one of my paintings to. Mena Suvari...Lex Sidon, an amazing writer/director from New York...Marilyn Hassett has a piece.

JUST DO IT: I never go in with a result [in mind]. I just go in straight for the journey of worth. I just do it to have fun, express myself, and work with all these colors to express all emotions, all senses, all friends and family-everything you deal with in life. I do anything. Do you try to tie your shoes? You just do it—you tie your shoes. I don't care about the result; the result will come, the painting will dry eventually.

"DANNY MINNICK: BREAK THE WALLS" IS ON VIEW AT BOITE NOIRE GALLERY AT THE PACIFIC DESIGN CENTER IN LOS ANGELES THROUGH AUGUST 14. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT BOITE NOIRE GALLERY'S

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