



STORIES & INSIGHTS

Meet Nikki Frelier Andrews



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Alright – so today we’ve got the honor of introducing you to Nikki Frelier Andrews. We think you’ll enjoy our conversation, we’ve shared it below.

Hi Nikki, thanks for joining us today. Can you talk to us about a project that’s meant a lot to you?

NFA Boards has (in itself) been a meaningful endeavor not only because our mission is dedication to providing accessibility and inclusion in skateboarding and supporting kids in all aspects of their lives, but because it has become a family affair. Both my children and husband have been

recruited to help me launch my business, in some way. I started my business during the 1st year of the pandemic. My kids, who once lived outside, were constantly on their devices because it was their only contact to their friends and the outside world. I needed to get them outdoors again. Their relationships were through a device, not the normal interaction they would have through school and sports. My business idea reconnected them with reality and helped them to become more physically active and social.

NFA Boards is dedicated to empowering youth through skateboarding while building confidence, encouraging physical activity and breaking down stereotypes. Proceeds from the sales of NFA Boards go to funding skate empowered programming for youth of all demographics including under-resourced and under-represented youth. Philanthropy is a huge part of who I am. Since I left tech industry in the Silicon Valley a decade ago, I've supported multiple arts and history museums boards and committees. But I wanted to do something more for our youth that could be fun and therapeutic.





Awesome – so before we get into the rest of our questions, can you briefly introduce yourself to our readers.

I am a practicing artist who, in a way, fell into designing skateboards. It became my new canvas, once my son asked for blank skate decks and spray paint for his 10th birthday, I thought, “Why am I not putting my artwork on these?”

I am originally an abstract painter. I would say, most currently, that I fall into the category of abstract realism. As an artist, a historian through visual information, I feel compelled to record our times, landscapes, feelings, and injustices. I have explored subject matter ranging from self-perception and body dysmorphia to the stillness of simple moments that touch us all. Whether it be a reaction, a sunset, or a memory, these moments help shape us even if we don't realize their impact at the time.

I believe that as an artist, you need every so often, to reinvent yourself. I've always wanted to get into design and fashion (skateboards, grip tape and clothing), and I finally have a new venue, through NFA Boards. My mother is an excellent seamstress and for Christmas one year (I was in the 3rd grade) bought me sewing lessons. I was always creating trendy clothes for my dolls before instruction. I now get to design and soon launch a clothing line, I am already selling t-shirts and baby onesies, in different shops around California. I'm excited to unveil new product.

I am very excited to announce my partnership with Big Sky Youth Empowerment, in Bozeman, Montana. I have been funding snowboarding scholarships for under resourced / under represented youth and will be helping them to incorporate a skate pilot to their summer programming this summer (2023) along with Skateboarding Alliance of Montana. I've also donated my skateboards for the program and will be helping to fund it. This past year, I also helped to sponsor and host a booth at the Exposure 2022 Skate Competition, whose proceeds go towards helping women and families who are survivors of domestic abuse. It was an amazing experience and I cannot tell you how much amazing talent there was at this competition. So many up and coming female skaters, of all ages, I was blown away.





What do you find most rewarding about being a creative?

Where do I begin? I was born into a very creative family. My father is a French Culinary Chef, he was a celebrity chef in South Lake Tahoe when I was very young. He is also a magician, who has been on multiple TV shows, he also authored a magic book called, "The Magic of Francis Carlyle", in 1975. My sister is an art teacher and my cousin Frank Frelier is an amazing practicing artist as well. We also have a distant relative who studied under Rosa Bonheur, who was a famous French artist. I was lucky to be brought up in a family, who supported all of us in following our passions and dreams. My mother is an amazing seamstress, who also encouraged me to learn how to sew. She bought me sewing lessons in the 3rd grade. I love fashion and thought that I would one day major in Fashion Design. I eventually majored in Fine Art, with an emphasis in Digital Media and double minored in French and art history.

If I am not creating something, via painting, design, crafts, etc., I am a miserable person. It is my passion, I was born a creative. I view the world differently and at times, come up with different answers to solving problems. I was tasked to build a life size Rodin Sculpture for a friends art party a couple years ago from scratch. Within 2 days I resurrected 'The Thinker', from foam, plaster of Paris and paper Mache. I think that creatives (ie. artists/designers) are overlooked a lot of the time. People don't always understand that creativity is Ingenuity! Artist are problem solvers just as much as we are documentarians. That's why I am such an advocate for the arts, we cannot cut programming and funding for the arts! It is a necessary tool for all of us to think outside of the box.





Is there something you think non-creatives will struggle to understand about your journey as a creative? Maybe you can provide some insight – you never know who might benefit from the enlightenment.

I think non-creatives don't always understand or appreciate our process and what we can do. I am especially getting pushback from some certain skate shops. Because I am not a pro or branded skater, they don't understand what I am trying to peruse.

Because of my age, I also get pushback. Who I was previously, no longer equals "current membership" into their club. A lot of people do not understand that as an artist, I feel the need to reinvent myself and how and what projects I take one. I grew up in the skate culture, I skated, I did professional roller derby, I surf I snowboard, yada, yada, but I am struggling to portray that I am the same person, I just have more mileage on me. I find it ironic that they can not see that through Skateboards, clothing, grip tape and other future projects, that I am just working on a new type of canvas. Same art, just using a different medium.





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Thanks to Michaela Joy Photography for the photos in my studio. The last 3 Nikki took.

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