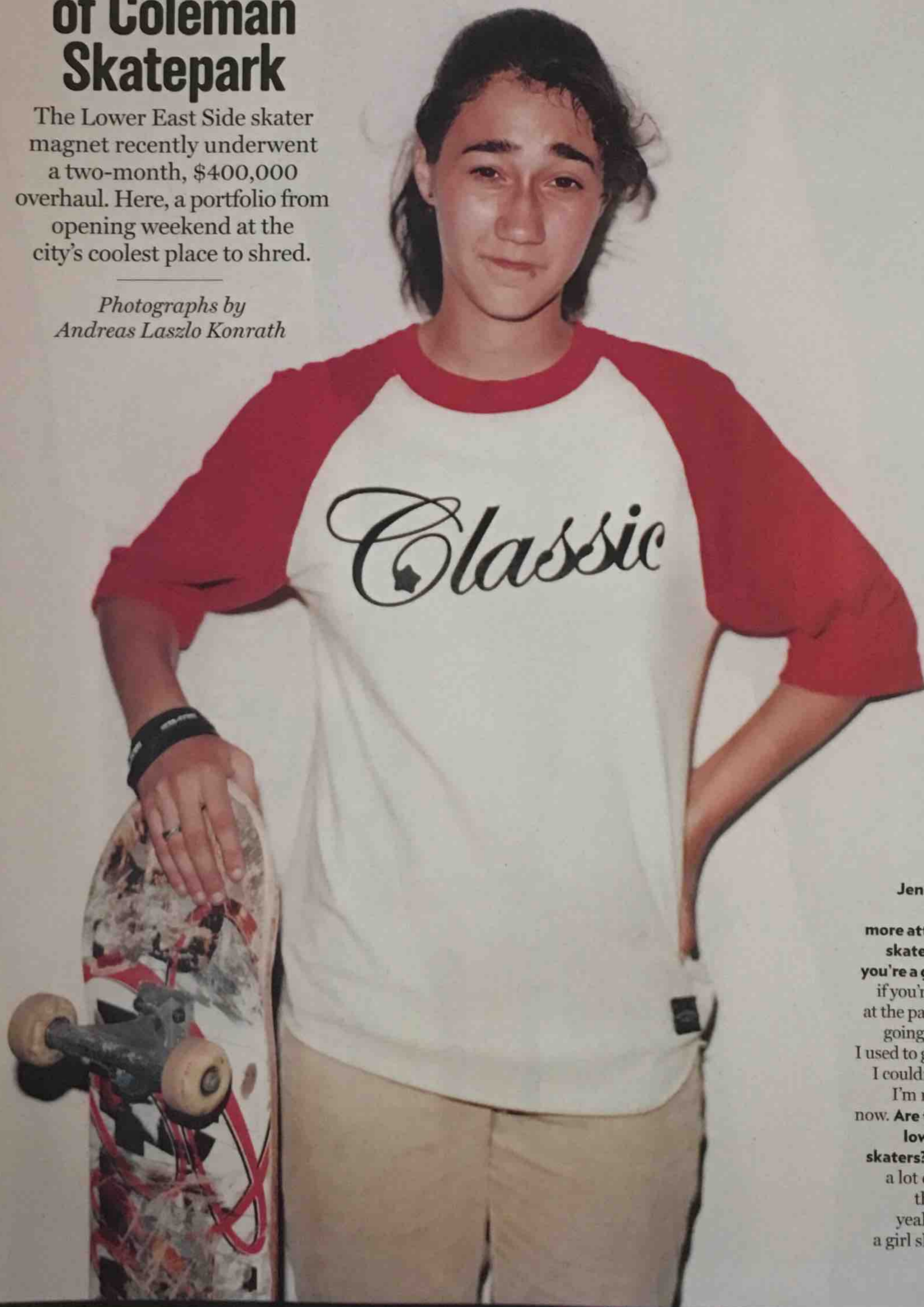


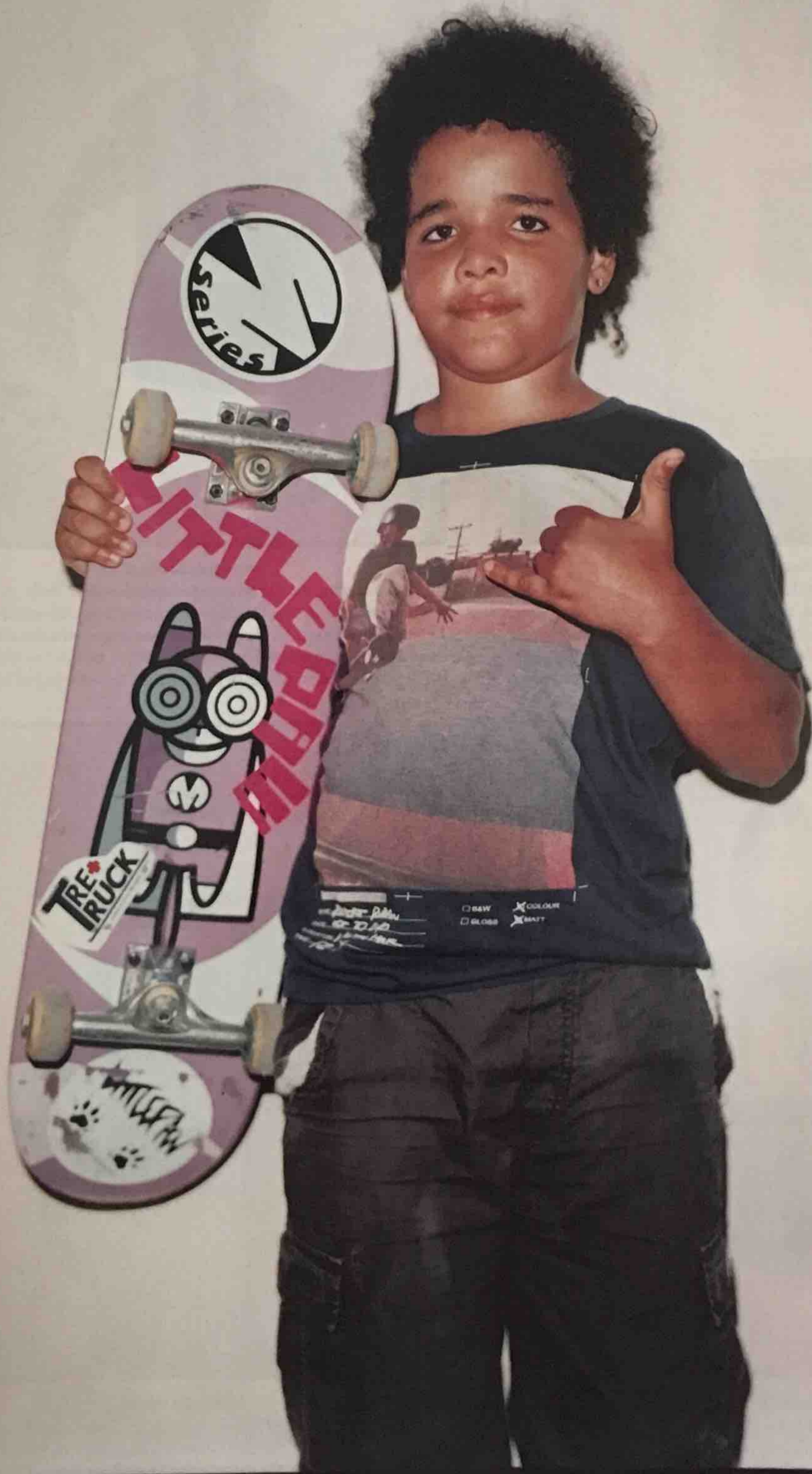
## The Kids of Coleman Skatepark

The Lower East Side skater magnet recently underwent a two-month, \$400,000 overhaul. Here, a portfolio from opening weekend at the city's coolest place to shred.

*Photographs by  
Andreas Laszlo Konrath*



**Jennifer Soto, 16**  
**Do you get more attention at the skatepark because you're a girl?** Of course if you're the only girl at the park, people are going to watch you. I used to get so nervous I couldn't even skate. I'm more sociable now. **Are the standards lower for female skaters?** If you talk to a lot of girl skaters, they would say yeah. But I'm not a girl skater. I'm just a skater.

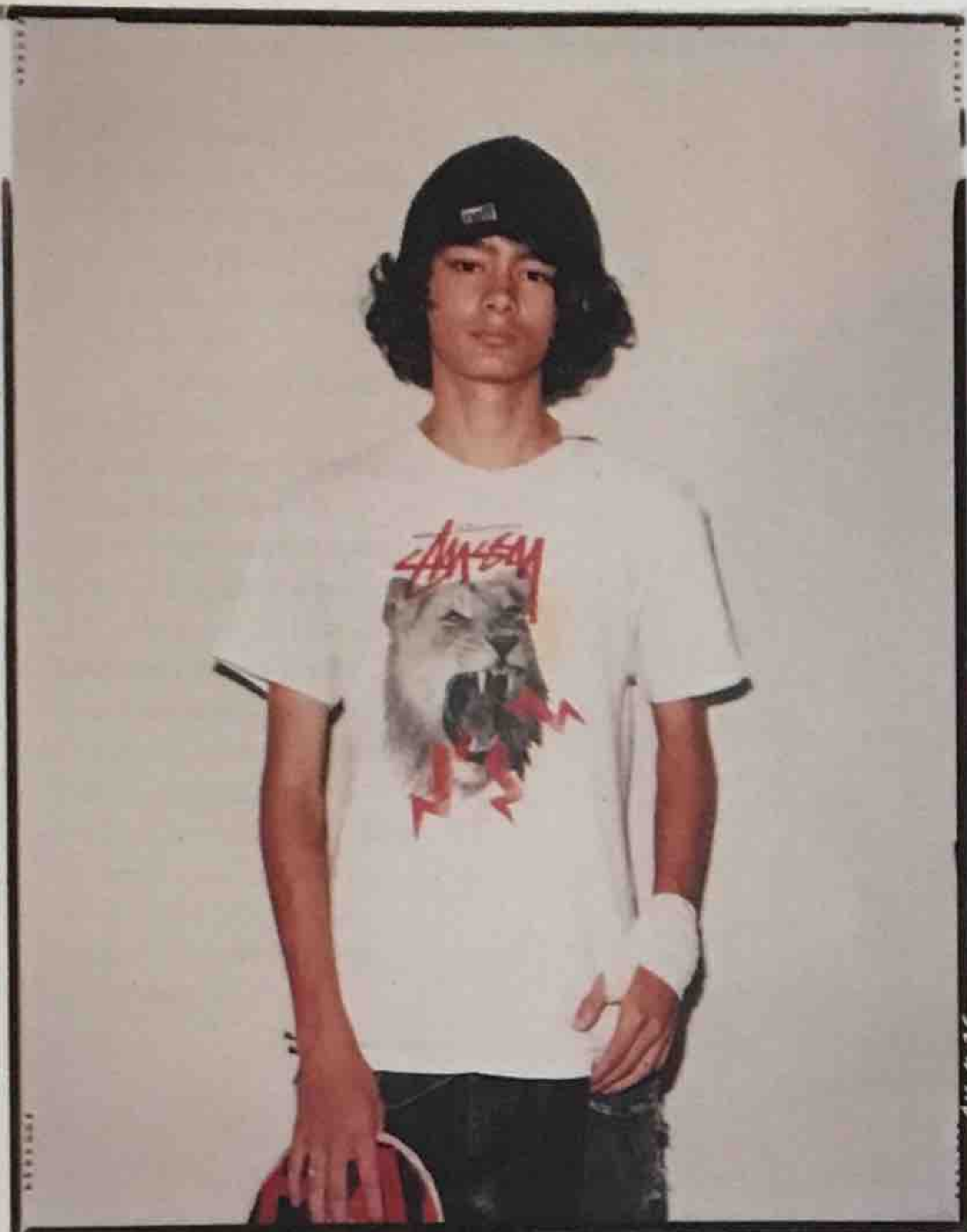


**Diego Heyde, 8**  
**How long have you been skating?** Since I was 3.

**What do you like about it?** You don't have to walk; you have wheels on, so you get to places faster. **Spoken like a true New Yorker.**

**Do you think you'll skate forever?** Oh, I'll never stop. I'm supposed to be pro by 14.

**What do you need to do between now and then?** I have to learn the two basic tricks: the ollie and the nollie. The nollie I can already do, but if I could do both of them, I could do anything.



**Sofien Saket, 15**

**What happened to your wrist?** I fucked it up bombing a hill. I also broke my face. **Sounds painful.** You should see the X-ray. I went for a drop-in, slid out, and just ate it. I had three fractures. **Why not take a break?** When I got into skateboarding, I signed a contract: I knew I was going to get hurt. This is me following through on that contract.



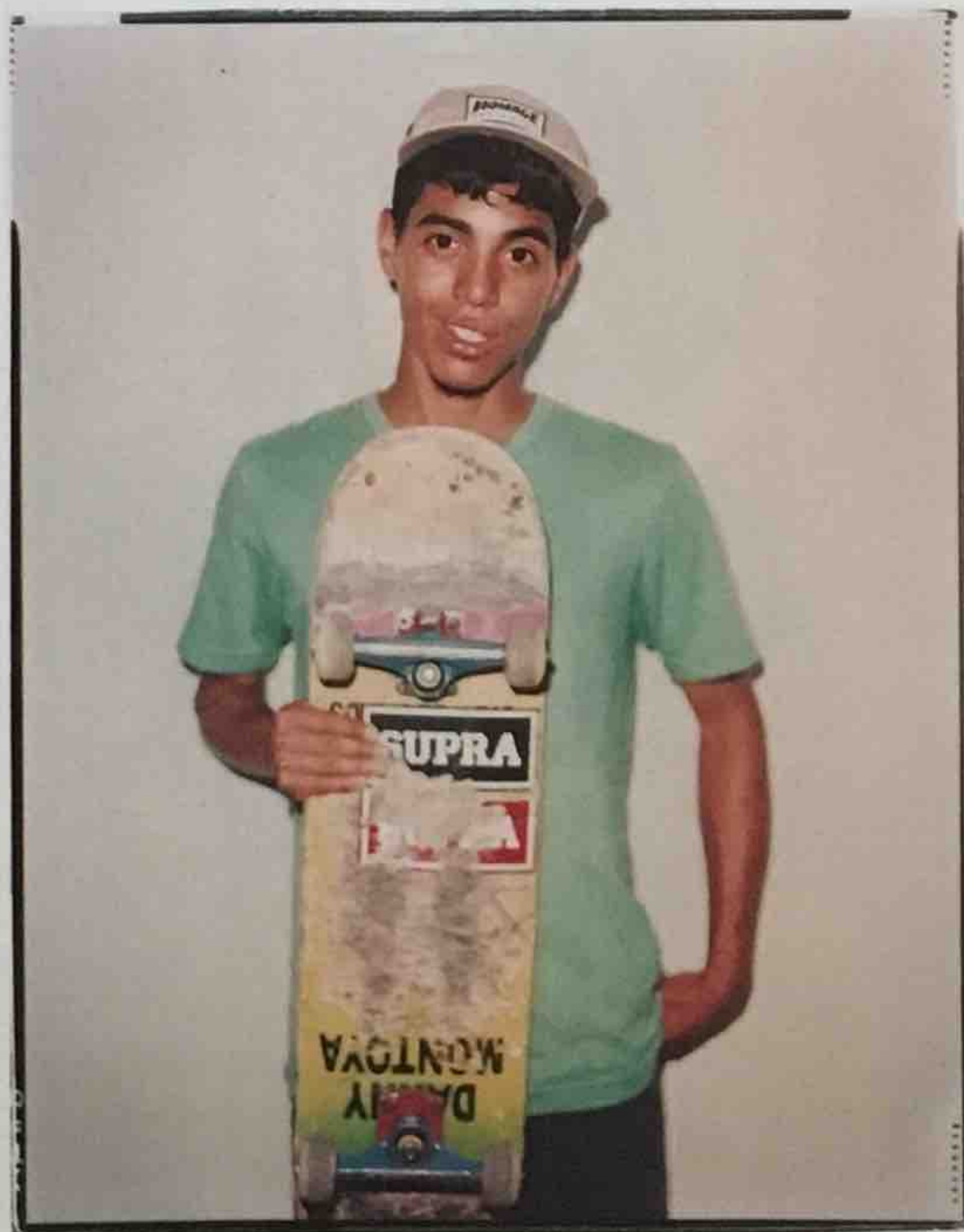
**Marquis Blondel, 15**

**Does skating make you popular with the girls?** Yeah. But I'm popular without it, too. I used to play basketball and was like, *This is too easy.* I wanted a challenge. **Skateboarding used to be a white-boy thing. Now, not so much.** I get offended when people say skating is for white people. Black, white, or Spanish like me—we're just having fun.



**Brandon Brumell, 14**

**What are your best tricks?** Like, my favorite is the fakie half-cab flip. **Come again?** It's when you're riding fakie, like in the opposite direction. See, my stance is goofy, so I ride goofy, and then I go in a fakie and do a 180 kick-flip. **Right. What do adults think when they see you?** That we're troublemakers. But we skate to keep *out* of trouble.



**Wilfredo Ayala, 17**

**Where do you skate?** Everywhere: LES, Canarsie, Far Rock, 157 by Yankee Stadium ... lately I've been going from the Bronx to Astoria. I don't have money for the train so I just skate there. I like to bond with my skateboard. Like, holding onto a car when you're riding and jumping down flights of stairs. I push my limits to the edge.

**Thomas Lara, 16**  
**You are rocking some seriously seventies hair.**

Yeah. Everyone loves my hair. I'd give up cell phones and computers to live back then. **How**

**come?** That's when music was at its pinnacle. **What do you think of the new park?** The

remodeling is awesome. It's actually kind of slippery because it's so clean. **Have you**

**gotten hurt?** I fractured my elbow; otherwise, I take a few slams and get right back up. It sucks, but it's too much fun to stop.

INTERVIEWS BY  
KATE LOWENSTEIN

