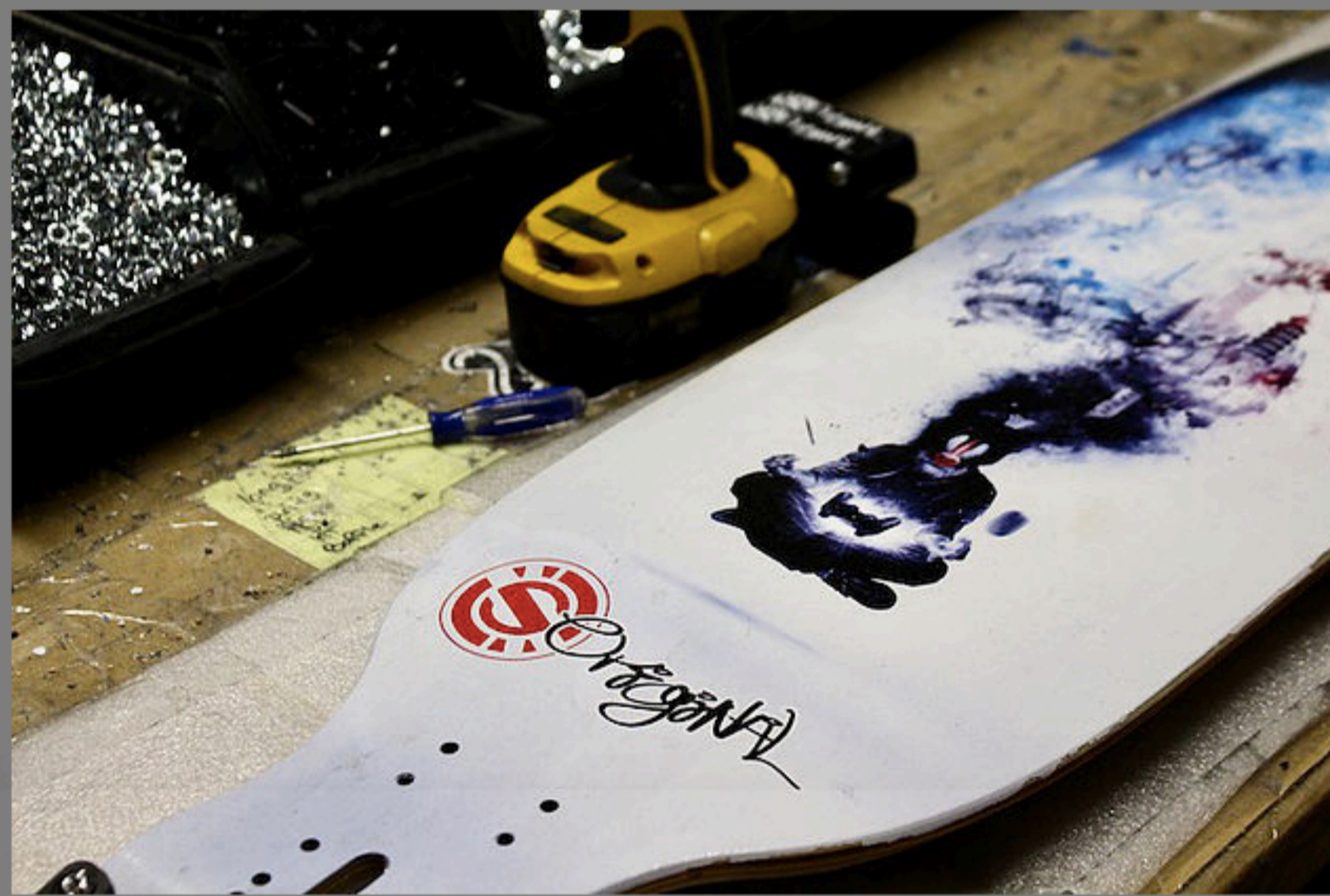


A Visit to Original

November 15, 2016 | Danny Fedkenheuer



With the rush of the biggest city in the world right next to the New Jersey border, it sometimes goes without a second thought to take a look into the Garden State's skateboarding scene. That's exactly why I made a trip out to the placid corner of Northwestern Jersey to check out the headquarters of Original Skateboards.



Upon arrival, I was relieved to even find my way to the doors of an otherwise unassuming warehouse. Inside, a foyer plastered in skate stickers and action shots almost lead me to believe I was about to enter a full skate shop, rather than a production HQ. Instead, President, Joel Penkala welcomed me into a command central bustling with the operations of one of the East Coast's top longboarding brands.



We took a tour to find Mark Imbrie, father to founders Scott and Brad Imbrie working in a much more evolved space than his garage, where the company started. In another room, a pair of graphic designers were reviewing the finishing touches on some ads to be run and a revamped website to be launched. Finally, in a warehouse that would make any longboarder swoon at the sight of stacks of decks and bins of wheels, a team of assemblers were working together to fill an order from one of the the company's largest retailers.

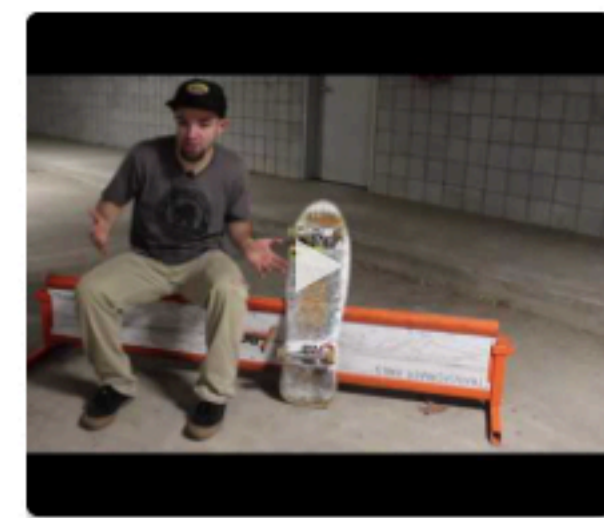
From wall to board-covered wall, the Original Skateboards headquarters echoes Penkala's description of the company's mantra: "Be original and be yourself." Also noting that the allure of riding so innately universal, the folks at Original seek to bust down the categories and labels that tend to shade the skateboarding world with gray areas. From traveling the world with friends in search of beautiful destinations and smooth concrete to stoking locals by bringing the best of the best professionals to local events, OS seeks to spread this passion with board riders on any terrain at any age.



With this, Penkala explained to me how from the early stages in the child's life, the search for adrenaline embedded in human nature draws them towards wheeled objects. In a world where the range of options across the bike, scooter and skateboard markets are ever expanding, the President hopes that children stick with the latter of the three and sees Original as a gateway to an inclusive skating community. After all, Penkala delights in the fact that his proudest contribution to the skateboarding scene is to hear someone say that OS was the reason they got into skateboarding. "Longboarding is what brings us together" he added with a smile.

With one of Original's new Arbitrator KT's under my arm, I left the headquarters and headed back into the quiet North Jersey suburbs. This time, however, I felt a particularly burning desire to get out and ride knowing that a local East Coast heavyweight was right in NJ's backyard; cranking out boards and showing riders everywhere what it's like to get out and experience the world with an Original Skateboard under their feet.

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