



# TOSKA

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1st EDITION  
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@nxoed

**NXOED**  
aka James B. Hunt

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## Thanks for checking out Toska

The people who make Toska happen are  
Phil Hansen - Chats, transcription, editing, & layout  
Katie Marek - Cover design, logo, and more  
Nicole Yasaki - Transcription, and more

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## Topic: Zines

Phil - Tell me about this. (I say while holding the zine he just gave me.)

James - I just love putting out zines. This one is the last 100 posters I've made.

Phil - Holy crap this is amazing. Why zines? Why is this format what you chose?

James - There's something so personal about zines. The community aspect is something I hadn't experienced. Every once in a while The publisher of Fluke (the publisher of his zine) will let me know a letter to me surfaced in his PO Box. Like this one guy sent me a bunch of stuff he had laying around the house, art stuff, and he also sent 30 stamps and said "please send something back". It's almost like a game of tag. Now I want to send him more than he sent me. Which might make him want to do the same. And that's the zine culture. I don't think big publishing houses will connect fans to authors in that way.

Phil - No, no they don't.

(Mutual laughter.)

James - There's just people who honor the US Mail and are just excited about checking their mail and sending mail everyday. And their enthusiasm is getting me excited.

Phil - Yah, it would be cool to get something thoughtful and interesting in the mail.

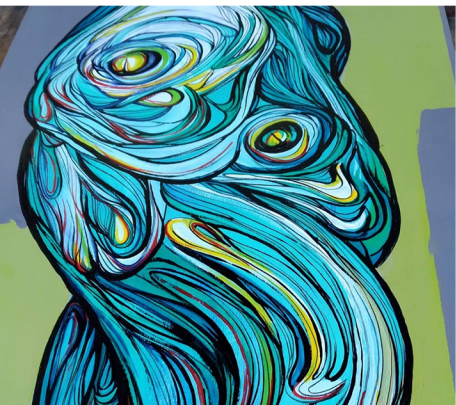
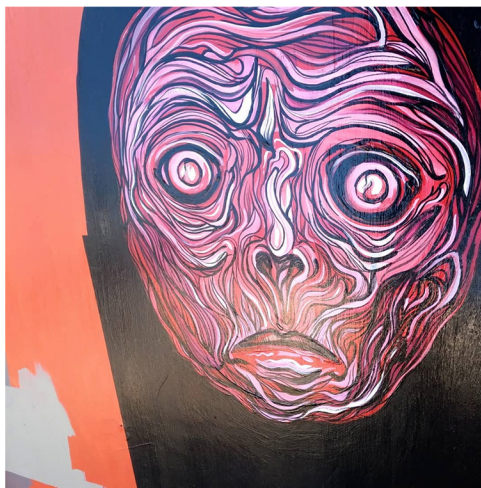
James - The social networking aspect of snail mail is much more intimate than what's online cause you're sharing with an individual and not the world. There's just something cool about receiving a physical copy of a thing you can flip through that's a lot more exciting than just sending a pdf.

## Topic: Style

Phil - How did your style develop? Is it something you sought out and put effort into or did it just happen naturally?

James - I guess a little bit of both. I produced a lot of trash but just kept going. It's like, if the first one sucks, keep doing it.

My black and white work comes from dealing with copy machines (back in the day) that were just trash. You'd put a photo in and it would come out awful. Pencil wouldn't pick up on the copy machines so I had to work in pen. I'd add little lines to create the variation that the copier could recognize. And it worked so I just kept doing it. Even now, it's not needed, but it's what I do.



## Topic: Staying Creative

Phil - Why have you been persistently creative? I'm always bumping into the fact that creative people have some indiscernible quality that makes them keep creating and creating.

James - I don't know but it's definitely happened at any semblance of a normal life. I don't know if I chose this life, but at some point, I just had this life. We either succeed and keep chasing that success or fail and keep creating.



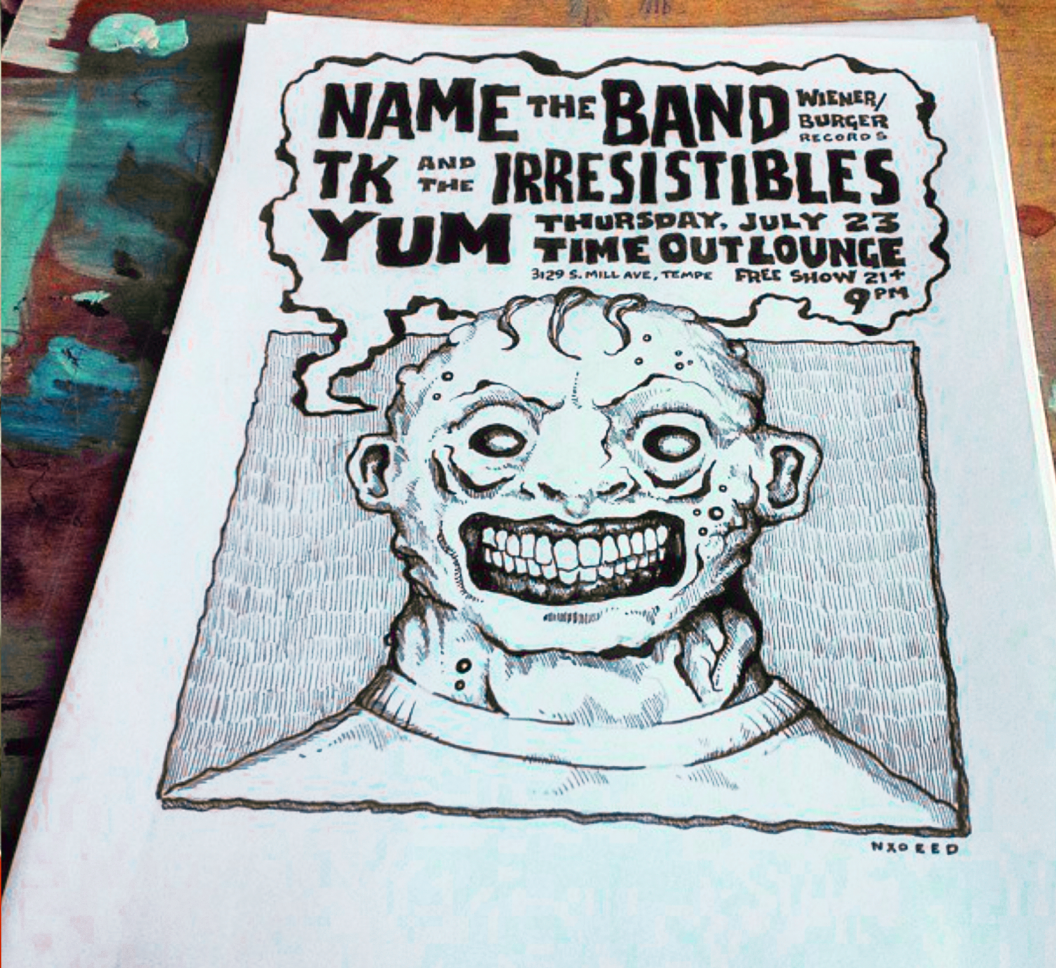
### Topic: The grind

James - There are probably 3 to 4 days a week I wake up and think 'screw this!' And then by 10 o'clock I start to find my rhythm and motivation. I have to force myself to give a shi#. It's really easy to be discouraged being an artist. There's a lot of failure everywhere.

(I laughed in agreement)

Phil - But how do you deal with it? With failure?

James - Make \$#!^!. You make \$#!^!. And just keep going. And after a couple decades, like it or not, you have a body of work that defines you.



### Topic: Working for free

James - I've done it but the requests never stop. There have been a few times I've worked for free. Like there was this one young band, the kid who commissioned me, paid me in Little Debbie treats! He just gave me a box of Debbie treats and I was like 'cool man'.





If someone reaches out and  
wants a portrait of their  
dog, the answer is no.

I mean, I could,  
but they aren't going to  
like it when I bring them  
the piece and the dog  
looks like a dead thing.

-NXOED



## Topic: Charging ahead

Phil - Sometimes I look back at my early art and think 'Wow that piece was bad' yet at the time, I thought it was good. Any idea where that deludedness comes from?

James - Yah, I know what you're talking about. So much magic comes out of not knowing what the %&\$# you're doing.

I was in Tempe the other day putting up posters and I went into a venue to see a friend and I heard a loud noise outside. I went out to see what was going on and there was a punk band from Yuma Arizona playing a show from the back of a truck running off of a generator. They had told people about it on Instagram and 90 teenagers showed up. It was the coolest thing I had ever seen. And they did it because they wanted to play the Yucca Tap Room (my friends place) but they didn't know how to book a show so they just said 'Let's just play a show next to the Yucca Tap Room'. Which is the wrong way to do it but also the coolest show I've seen all year. And it came from these kids saying 'what do we do' and their answer is to play a show from the back of a truck! That's awesome! There's magic in that. And the older we get, we have to fight to retain that magic because you lose bits and pieces of it everyday.

## Topic: Finding your footing

James - When you're starting out it's scary. Maybe you don't know how to approach a gallery and so you carry your painting in and say 'can I show this here' and they look at you like you're crazy and say no. So you go to another gallery and on and on and eventually someone will say yes and so you do your show there. The point is, you now have a show, forget the rejection from before, you got a show.



## Topic: Sticker drop

James - This idea started because I was having a \$#!^ty day. I woke up one morning and had nothing goin on. I needed something and so I drew out the words "Sticker Drop" and explained to people that at this event you throw your stickers on the table and you pick up the stickers from other artists that you like. But it was fiction, it wasn't true, it was just an idea in my head. But people got excited about it and I was like "okay, I guess we're actually doing it." And it was cool because people who have been making stickers for years were right there with artists who have never shown anywhere before and these were their first stickers.

Phil - And this was the first Sticker Drop?

James - Yah. We had 130 people at the first one. We should have about 600 at the next one.

Phil - Can other people be involved.

James - Absolutely! If anyone has stickers they've made, they can send them to me and I'll put them in the next Sticker Drop. I'm dying to make a poster with 1,000 artists listed.

**Join the next STICKER DROP**  
**Send your stickers to Toska.**  
**We will forward them to James.**  
**Include your name so James can put it on the poster.**

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**Topic: Difficulty**

James - My late teen years were very lonely. The friend group I had decided to punish me by not speaking to me because of something I did. I struggled talking to everyone, even cashiers. There were times I would go months without hearing my own voice. It was hard. But the art got me through it. If there was a moment when I knew art could get you through anything it was that. There have been a few moments over the last couple decades where I had nothing, like really nothing... but I still had art.

We are at our best  
when we're doing what  
we're doing and not  
worrying if it's  
relevant.

-NXOEEED



