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SHAPING UP

Kent Lingeveldt, founder of skateboarding brand Alpha Longboards, is shaping boards *and* local skate culture.

More than a skater, a shaper, an artist and a photographer, Kent Lingeveldt is also an inspirational figure in a growing community of people - those picking up a board for the first time as well as those finally getting back on one.

You've been shaping boards for more than 18 years. Was it a natural

progression from skating? It's only when I shifted from street to downhill skateboarding in the late '90s that I realised there was a major component of my gear missing: a longboard. Because I didn't have money to buy the imported longboards, I had to improvise a bit and figure out how to make my own. I knew I wanted to be in skateboarding forever and to make a living from it, so starting

Alpha Longboards in 2001 was just the perfect solution.

Your aim with Alpha Longboards is to put skate culture first. How do you make this happen? Whenever I'm faced with a decision, I always ask myself: "Is it good for skateboarding?" I come from a simpler, purer time in skateboarding. We weren't the cool kids. Our shoes weren't cool. Our hoodies weren't



being worn by non-skaters worldwide. Unbeknownst to me, I actually started skating during an industry slump! Because of all of these things, I am very protective of my idea of skateboard culture. Whatever I put out, I want our skate forefathers to look at it and go, "Yes, I can dig that. It's why we forged the path we did." I want the current skate generation to go, "Yeah, this is skateboarding," not the illusion of fame and fortune that big corporates now hold as carrots to young skaters in a bid to buy into our culture.

You collaborate with artists on custom boards, including Atang Tshikare and Dion Cupido. Is there anyone else

you'd still like to collaborate with?

Before I talk possible collabs, I want to tip my hat to Atang, Dion, Kaylin Carr, Khaya Witbooi, Ice 7, Conform, Ello Xray Eyes, Mishal Weston, King Champion and Dylan Sause - all artists I have and will continue to work with. I have just started a collaboration with STREETART YOYO, a Korean artist based in Zambia, and I am excited to see where that goes. I also want to extend the work I do with the current stable of artists to merchandise and apparel. Look out for something from Kaylin Carr, Atang Tshikare and Ice 7 later this year.

What are your plans for the rest of 2019? From an Alpha Longboards

perspective, we are solidifying our merchandise line to work in tandem with our ever-growing longboard art range. From a Kent Lingeveltdt perspective, we've just kicked off my travelling skateboard photo exhibition, *SKATE AT OWN RISK*, which will run at different venues locally and hopefully abroad too. Other than that, I want to build on the great foundation of the past 18 years and continue to be a true reflection of and ambassador for skateboarding worldwide.

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