

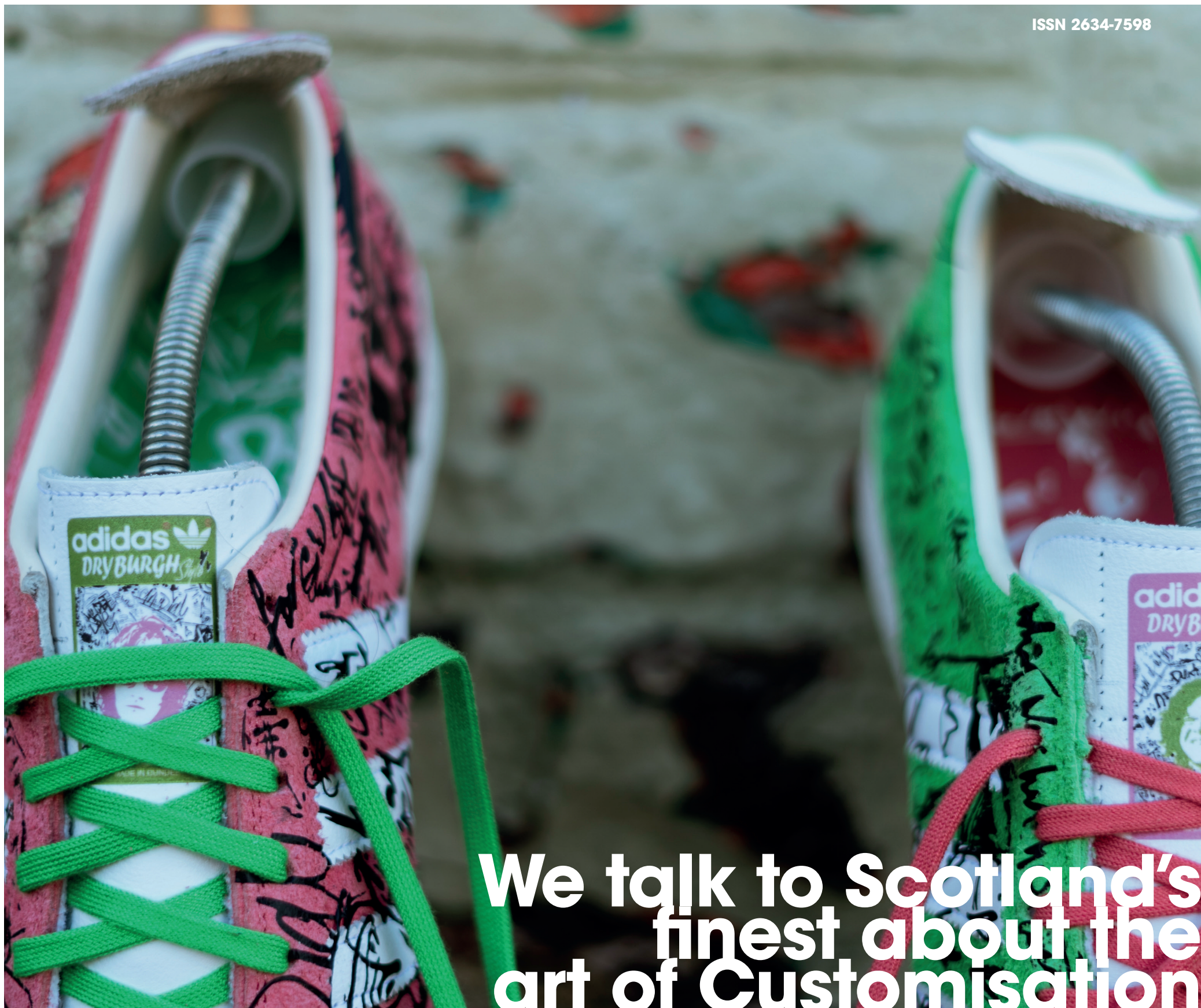


Z I N E

TRAINERS
SNEAKERS
KICKS+WEBS
STRIDES+SOLES
CREPS+BEATERS
TRABS+TRAINEES

Whatever you call your footwear, there is a particular tribe who are obsessive about theirs.

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We talk to Scotland's finest about the art of Customisation

KO: So, where did your love of trainers begin?

KDS: It's a crazy story, I've always loved trainers and my love of adidas I would say started with *Predators* you know with the football back in the day. In the '90's you might see maybe a Campas and a Gazelle, Samba but I wouldn't say there were loads. So my first memory of trainers has to be Lacoste like loads of tennis shoes. Everybody was kicking about in Nike and Lacoste but with football boots it was adidas, because all the best players when I was a kid were wearing adidas, Zidane, even Beckham. But I would definitely say that it started for me with football. I credit that boot alone that's what started it for me yeah.

KO: It was Lee (@Refreshed Kicks) that put us in touch...

KDS: Yeah he's cool man.

KO: He's great and like you he's got loads of stories and it's that narrative and community vibe that Paul and I are really interested in capturing - what trainer life looks like for different individuals from the sub-culture. So, how did you get into it?

KDS: I've always had this daft knowledge of adidas because it goes back to music. One thing I will say you know how I mentioned before, about the casual culture here, that it was dominantly Nike that was on the terraces, but the thing before that is Nike was nothing until the Jordan came out in '85. All the music sort of stuff you'd see like the musicians were wearing adidas, and with all that sort of

knowledge because I was right into my music, I was in a band and stuff and all the musicians you'd see them kicking about in Gazelle's, SL '72's, The Rolling Stones, even John Lennon you've got John Lennon wearing adidas! Yeah, so I had a daft knowledge of that and I started selling vintage clothes and then I was going through all the catalogues and you start to see all the trainers and I was just like I'm getting into the trainers. I came across Transalpino (rare, vintage and deadstock trainer shop in Liverpool) and I seen that they were actually making it work and I was just basically amazed at how they managed to get these trainers and the boys were buying them, so...

PO: When did you start as 'Dundee Sole'?

KDS: Probably about 2016. Prior to that, I've had my own business entirely, but one thing led to another. I was just cleaning shoes and then I actually came across Lee (@Refreshed Kicks) and Benji (@Blunt Shank) online, because at the time no-one else was really doing it. I remember how big a deal the gold lettering was and they were the only ones who were able to do the gold lettering at the time.

KO: Lee (Refreshed Kicks) was telling us about this.

KDS: Well it was a massive deal back in the day. Not now because Benji (@Blunt Shank) sort of publicised it. I would sit up all night looking at these boys work, trying to work out how they had done it, and it sort of took off from there. I went down and worked for Benji (@Blunt Shank) for three days. He taught me how to re-sole, he showed me how to do the gold lettering and he also

taught me how to make stripes. The guy is super, super talented. I always say if I had his knowledge I'd be a millionaire, lol. So, yeah I done that, I came back and just started up and then one thing led to another.

KO: So do you still customise clothes as well as trainers?

KDS: I do T-shirts. But it's hoodies that just seem to fly. Every time I release anything like that, they just seem to sell out. I just do a certain colourway for a couple of weeks or a couple of months, before I release another.

KO: Are you still working across different brands?

KDS: 90% of the stuff I get is adidas. I always say I don't discriminate against trainer brands, I'll work on anything. I've got a pair of OG (original) Jordan's here just now, they're an absolute state but they're one of the good projects I'm going to be doing soon. My knowledge is in adidas, I don't really know too much about it (Nike).

KO: Do you have a favourite project or custom piece?

KDS: I've just recently done a Wu Tang Clan (American hip hop group formed in NYC '92) custom during lockdown. I ended up hating it 'cos I looked at it for too long. I was amazed it sold out before anybody had seen it.

KO: I like the yellow one's.

KDS: They're the ones that drove me daft. I just thought they'd look different in my head, but I had fun with it.

PO: Can you talk us through the process of that custom?

KDS: Yeah course. Well at first I had the idea, the thing is with doing a customisation I'm finding out now what I really don't want to be doing because I think the

custom game has just got so tacky over the past because so many people have learnt how to do it. And like I said stuff has been publicised, and people don't always have the same care and detail, they just want to throw anything on a trainer and think it's a custom job. I'm just kinda more interested in the ridiculous stuff. So my idea was to do something that I wanna do, make it look as cool as I can and go from there. I collab with my mate who does the boxes, so me and him sit down and we talk about how to make them look and he did an outstanding job of putting them together. He even put for the Shaolin (Kung Fu martial art) custom, German text on the stripe on one side which I was pretty amazed by. It was just an idea to try and make it look totally different to what everybody else is doing. Lee (@Refreshed Kicks) put me on to this American boy and said "have you seen what this boy's doing?" 'Cos the Americans are right into this drip effect (paint drip) just now. It's done with a rubber paint, so it's not the easiest to work with and to be honest, I never actually thought it would go down that well here, I thought people would look at that and be like, that's terrible, it's not our culture. So I was quite scared of that one, but I just ended up going for it in the end.

PO: So that's hand painted black on yellow?

KDS: The (adidas) Studermakers, I dyed one of them black. If you look at the (adidas) Shaolin custom there's a little Wu Tang (clan) symbol under the heel and what I had to do with that, I had to stick a vinyl on the shoe, thicken up the dye for the dye

job, so it was a bit clumpy, and then paint over it so the dye didn't start going underneath the vinyl. Waited for it to dry and then wipe it off and I had a clear Wu Tang symbol so that's the original colour of the suede. But the whole idea was to make it look like it was from the street.

KO: That's interesting, because the yellow one's almost look embossed because the texture of the suede is still three dimensional.

KDS: That's just going hard at it with a brush

KO: It's such a good job. I like the fact that you can't tell how it's been done.

KDS: I had other plans for it, I wanted it to go onto the heel tab, but I could not get a proper match of vinyl to colour the (adidas) Jamaica. So I ended up scrapping it because I thought it would end up looking silly with too many different colours. I had to do 3D printing for them to get some of the stuff done, and I'd never done that before, so that was a fun couple of days. I done a Wu Tang label, like (adidas) Spezial label which just hang on. It would have been more interesting if I'd have got it to look how I wanted it to. I wanted it to be round and Dundee Sole etched into it, but that was really hard as I'd learnt to 3D print in a day. So that got scrapped and we made a flat one.

KO: People buy into trainer customisation and this sub-culture, but there's also another side to the craft in terms of keeping attire for longer, a more ethical and sustainable approach, do you feel there are skills and processes that you use within the customisation

of trainers which could be applied to garment, which may encourage people to love their clothes for longer?

KDS: I think with today a lot of things comes down to how limited it is. It's like that 'one up man-ship' still. Supreme (Skate/fashion brand established in NYC 1994) for example whenever they drop something and then boom, the resellers market, like the brick (2016 Supreme released an actual branded boxed house brick). I'm sure someone was telling me it's £500 for a Supreme brick, but who would wanna buy a brick?!

PO: I think some of those bricks went for £3000!

KDS: People don't even care what it is, they just want it 'cos it's Supreme. The whole customisation T-shirt would be a cool thing. Remember the thermo thing in the 80's (Hypercolor clothing brand established 1991) where people would put their hand on the fabric and it would change colour. Thermo-chromic it was called. I always thought that was really cool. Everything seems to come around again. At the moment, there's a thing that they're all wearing embroidery. Everything is embroidered. There's these big baggy T-shirts and they've had them embroidered with little logos and slogans.

KO: I think that embroidery tends to be viewed as more luxury. That's the notion. A print which is flat is quite accessible so embroidery is considered more lux.

KDS: I think that is the case just now.

CONTINUED:

with Kris Boyle



and Kayla + Paul @sole_magazine



Z I N E





“It’s definitely a mad world to be part of”

Instagram:
[@dundeesole](#)

Size:
10

First Pair:

Nike 96 / Stockholm 2008

Latest Pair:

adidas ZX8500 Overkill

Holy Grail:

adidas French ZX800

CONTINUED:

KO: Who is your typical customer Kris? Are they regional, global?

KDS: I've got customers from everywhere. The customs is something I've not been doing for a while. The restoration is what I get loads of. I've got a big pile of customs to do as well. I've not been taking on work since the start of the year I used to have staff a year ago, but I don't now. I got this big job list to do and I'm trying to get through it and there's only me, it's a bit of nightmare.

PO: Is restoration the biggest element of your business in that case?

KDS: I don't know... I do get quite a lot of restorations, even if that's classed as a touch up of paint, I suppose. But, I started off predominantly with customs, 'everybody was giving me their customs,' 'cos at the time I was one of the drivers, doing the colours and that 'cos I could mix colours properly.

PO: You must have repeat customers who know the depth of your talent though.

KDS: I have got a very loyal customer base I must say a lot are really understanding. The boys I do work for, I've been working with for years.

KO: You've got your shop and Instagram but do you showcase any of your work at trainer festivals. How do you prefer to showcase your customs?

KDS: I went to Laces Out (Liverpool based trainer festival) last year, twice and another festival called Steel City (trainer festival) in Sheffield. They've asked me to take some stuff.

KO: Do you want to do more of that type of presentation?

KDS: Just now, I'm trying to get out of the restoration stuff, because I'm exhausted with it to be honest, I'm having to do

a lot of stuff that I don't want to do. Like, this might sound petty, but I really don't like Rangers (FC) I do a lot of putting Union Jacks all over (adidas) Gazelle's and stuff. I'm trying to focus on my own stuff (custom) and still sell the trainers, but still make it a bit different.

KO: Do you feel you want to pass down or share your skill with others?

KDS: I've actually tried to. The problem is I want to find somebody whose like me, who actually wants to do it. The people that I've had in, and I can understand it, if they're not really interested, you get that vibe, you know what I mean. I'd be happy to teach anybody who wants to learn.

KO: So when you are doing a custom, do you make a conscious decision to record the process?

KDS: For people who actually want to see my work I'm actually really good at putting stuff on my (Instagram) story. Unless I'm keeping it a secret, then I try not to (post). In a way stuff is sort of documented.

KO: It's been really great to talk to you Kris. What's next on the horizon?

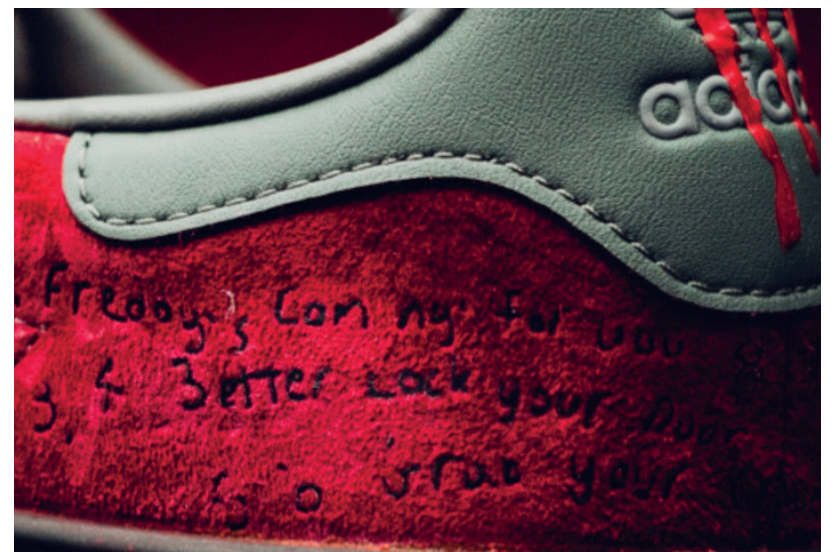
KDS: The shop idea is what I want to concentrate on... maybe like a Transalpino, dead stock vintage sort of place.

PO: So, like Transalpino, a destination store?

KDS: If I can ever feel like I'm in the same category as Transalpino I'd be a very happy man but just now I'll be working very hard to even get close.

KO: Too modest... thank you so much for your time Kris. I really appreciate you talking to us.

KDS: Anytime, it was good talking to you's. Speak soon.



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