



As an artist and designer, New York's Toofly is down with more creative scenes than Brooklyn has hot-dawgs. Her moniker, graf and artwork encompass both female smarts and creative strength, and her energy for art is infectious. Currently, the lady's involved in everything from launching a design company to customizing kicks. And the best part? She's totally down to earth.

Tell us a little about what you're working on at the moment... "I recently started my own art, design, and production company called STAY TRU™. I've been freelancing for so long it was about time that I established a real business around everything that I can do. Especially now that I have launched my own independent collection made up of limited exclusive prints, T-shirts, and fashion accessories. It's just the beginning of so many things I want to try and collaborate with others on." **What's the motivation behind STAY TRU? Apart from being a platform for your own work?** "I've always been motivated by organisation, and working with all kinds of people. No matter how solo the experience has seemed. When I am out there doing my thing, the support of people who appreciate the work drives me to do bigger and better things. If I am painting on the street with other artists, building with women worldwide, doing workshops with young people, working closely with friends, and helping my own family to get involved it makes life that much more rewarding. For now these are the kinds of people I want to continue to work with as Stay Tru begins to grow." **Where did Toofly come from? When was she born?** "Toofly the 'artist' was born in 1992 during my commutes to Fashion Industries public school. I was inspired and motivated by the street graffiti energy I encountered in my neighborhood all the way into the walls of my classroom. It was raw, free, and visually stimulating for me because I saw so many things about it I liked. I enjoyed the calligraphy tags styles and street bombing escapades of the graffiti writers I knew at the time. I wanted to be part of it somehow, so I found my own way to make my mark wherever I could." **Is she all you? Do you ever fight?** "Toofly the name, the art, and the story is all me. I don't fight what has naturally flowed out of me. I let it be, and grow wherever it feels right. I pour everything in my life into my work. From the early days as little teenager hustling to be somebody, to the real truth and relevance behind what my work now means to the culture." **Toofly needed to exist. It was the only way to bring something new and fresh from a female perspective.** **Have you had any female mentors along the way?** "A lot of independent women that inspire me are the ones that are pushing forward their craft. Whether it's art, graffiti, clothing, jewelry, or collectives I truly admire and support what they are doing. Altogether it helps spread some dope messages to people who may look up to us. If more women in our own community were to know about the work we individually do then our story would help motivate their dreams too."

"I think the biggest female mentor in my life has been my mom, and grandmother. They instilled values in me that hold weight across everything that I do. Just because you're in a field other than your home doesn't mean you forget who you are, and how you treat others. Everything begins with your intentions. If it's not coming from a place of honesty and love, no matter how cheesy that sounds, you can bet at some point things will fall apart and break. It's just never the same after that I think..." **Definitely. This is obviously a huge part of STAY TRU. What other platforms have you been experimenting with? I hear you've come up with some awesome customs...** "I'm not a crazy sneaker fanatic, but I make sure what's on my feet is on point! I've customized AF-1's for magazine features, collectors, and some for advertising gigs. In general, I love that they've brought back the Jordan 3's, 4's, and 5's. I think they are the best kicks ever made. As far as the rest of the sneaker culture is concerned, I'm just there to rep my art on the platform that has been created. As long as something can be executed correctly, and I am open to the experience I'm down to flex my skills and share the moment too." **If you could try your hand at any kicks, what would they be?** "I like AF 1's personally. They have a good area to do art, and design on. They are the most simple, and classic shape out of so many kicks out there. Vans and Chuck Taylors are dope too; they have a good area where graphics can work well. Other kicks or styles I think have too much going on." **Street art and graffiti are obviously a huge influence on your style, what else informs your work?** "Fashion, and photography have always been something that visually and aesthetically stimulate me too. If I could be anything else I would be a photographer. I would be a great at it, there's just not enough hours in the day to do it all unfortunately." **What's else is getting you excited right now?** "I'm excited in general about the changes taking place among people who are independently running their shit. I think everyone is sick and tired of working for the man, and they are just going for theirs and taking over various markets successfully. That stuff gets me excited because altogether we are leading, supporting, and making changes that fit a more independent thinking culture."

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