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TIMOTHY GREENFIELD SANDERS



CRUTCHMASTER: NOT YOUR GARDEN-VARIETY SKATE PUNK.

DOGTOWN COMES TO NEW YORK

WATCHING BILL SIMMONS — aka Crutchmaster — sailing through Broome Street traffic on his skateboard is like watching an odd combination of *Jackass*, the Bolshoi, and Cirque du Soleil (with whom he has worked as a consultant). Bill, who can get around only with the use

of his crutches, has taken his challenge and transformed personal transportation into a high-energy art form. "I call it urban street slalom," says Bill, who first appeared in the November '99 issue of *Index*. "I negotiate pedestrians and automobiles, but on the beat. I'm the first person to successfully merge skating and hip-hop." Of course the streets of downtown New York are lousy with punks on four wheels jutting

through traffic, but Bill has taken it to an entirely new level. "There are social implications of being on a skateboard with crutches. People want to know if I really need them — it's an ambiguous message. People see me and say, 'Bill is disabled.' They should say, 'Bill is an artist.' I'm breaking the lines. It's pure street performance." Not that anyone would ever confuse Bill with a garden-variety skate punk. In addition to turning the

pavement into his personal performance space, Bill works closely with Creative Time in New York, promoting a live and web-based presentation of his street art called "What Is What." But his energy is focused less on art than on sheer practicality. "It's about travel and transportation. It's based on a Dogtown style. It doesn't work in San Francisco."

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