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TATTOOS**

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HALF MACHINE

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ARTWORK
FROM:
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SAMOHIN
KOBAY
KRONIK
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COOK**

VOL. 2 / ISSUE 5

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HOUSE OF BLUES
ENTERTAINMENT
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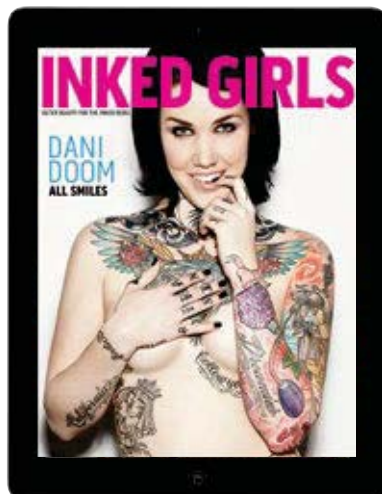
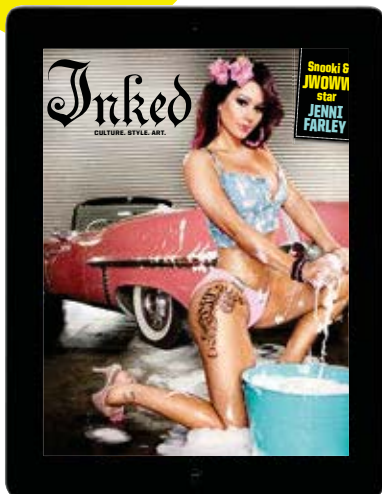
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Tattoo artist Jon Jon bonded a group of Brooklynites with Cyrillic "Hooligan" tattoos at Triple Diamond Tattoo in Gowanus, Brooklyn, in solidarity with Pussy Riot and their arrest in Russia for "hooliganism" this summer. Photo by Kate Black.

ink well

SOLIDARITY

Tattooing, though it has served as a vehicle for solidarity since neolithic times, is no longer reserved for mysterious relatives who were too wild in the '70s, freedom fighters in faraway lands, or ancient criminals and bandits in China. It is now reserved for you, limitless—tebori or electric! Offered to you anywhere in the world in endless shades of gray wash, vivid color, geometric lines, traditional designs, as replicas of those you love, and as the just plain strange. Limitless images that can tear things apart, bring things together, bond friendships, express ideas, pay homage to that which you honor, or show up just because you wanted them to.

After spending another summer traveling with FRESHLY INKED, it is so evident that now is the time to get tattooed. Tattooers now more than ever are fine-tuning and pushing boundaries within their art. Artists like Stuart G. Cripwell (page 46) and Ron Henry Wells (page 28) are adding so much more to traditional and folk tattooing. Artist Naoki (page 10) adds a fresh sense of humor and charm to his unique high-color pieces.

With all these killer artists and breakthroughs within the art of tattooing, you gotta wonder what Ötzi—a.k.a. "the Iceman," one of the oldest known tattoo collectors—would have added to his collection today. How about a biomechanical chest piece by Roman (page 58) or a mind-blowing portrait by artist Dmitriy Samohin (page 64)? The options are endless.

I don't know about you, but now that the summer sun, endless applications of sunscreen, and swimming in the ocean are over 'til next year, I am getting back to collecting.

Shannon Moran
Art director
shannon@quadramediallc.com

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TNS

1-11-18 B02 B03
Torikai Hachibou Settsu-shi
Osaka 566-0054
Japan

What year did you start tattooing? In 1997. Opened my shop in 1998.

How did you get into tattooing? I gave myself a tattoo when I was 17 years old. This was my start of how I got into tattooing. After that I made a trip to the U.S. to see what the tattoos in America were really like. I was impressed by the tattoos that I saw over there in the U.S. and made up my mind to become a tattoo artist.

Where did you apprentice? Never apprenticed. I studied on my own. At that time it was impossible to obtain tattoo equipment

in Japan, so I ordered some catalogs of American tattoo supplies, then bought some equipment and practiced tattooing using my own body.

Do you have any special training? Not really. I just draw every single day and try to see other artists' works as much as I can.

What conventions have you worked at? I have worked at the King of Tattoo in Tokyo, Bakuto in Osaka, Ink-N-Iron tattoo festival in L.A., and some more conventions in Japan.



Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? I received the best color award at King of Tattoo in 2008, the best of show award at Bakuto, and the best large color award at Dublin tattoo convention. One of my best convention memories is Ink-N-Iron.

How do you describe your style? Freestyle.

What inspires you as an artist? Things that I have never seen before. Traveling in America—just walking down the streets, going to the supermarket. Anything and everything inspires me.

What sets you apart from other artists? That's a hard question. Well, I try not to get

stuck with the rules and genre of tattoo so that I can design freely.

What other mediums do you work in? I used to use watercolor inks a lot, but these days I prefer color pencils. I'm going to study oil paintings, which I've been interested in for a long time.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I'm selling my paintings. I've been involved in design of some fliers, wedding boards, CD jackets and tour goods for Japanese artists, covers for books, logos for companies, and so on. I have also been a part of some exhibitions and group shows actively.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? The person I admire the most is [painter] Mark Ryden. As far as tattoo artists, Jime Litwalk,

Gunnar, and Grime.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? Any kind of tattoos if they would leave everything to me.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Once people get a tattoo, most of them wanna get more and more. So I would say: You should think about balance and arrangement for the next tattoo. If they have no idea where to get it, I'm happy to offer suggestions.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? A piece of work that is composed of several people's bodies along one theme.











LIZ COOK

lizcooktattoo.com

Rebel Muse Tattoo

570 South Edmonds Lane
Suite 101
Lewisville, Texas 75067

What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in 2009. It's been a short but very intense past three years.

How did you get into tattooing? I was a broke college student in Dallas while working at a beauty salon and was offered the opportunity to learn permanent cosmetics. I took it as a chance to earn more money and maybe be able to eat for a change. After college I went on a working holiday in Western Australia, where I was given an apprenticeship based on my art experience combined with the tattoo basics of the permanent makeup.

Where did you apprentice? I apprenticed at Abandoned Art in Perth, Australia, under the lead of the amazing artist Jonny Head. It was a short eight months but crazy intense! I tattooed a solid eight hours pretty much every day, with back-to-back-to-back clients the entire time. After about two months of initial shock and going home daily wondering why I was doing this to myself, it all just started to really click and I knew I would never look back.

It wasn't just the money or the perceived glam of the tattoo world that made me stick with it, though. It was the art of it; another medium and challenge for me to try and master in my own way.

Do you have any special training? Outside of the permanent cosmetics and my apprenticeship, I also have a bachelor's degree in studio painting and drawing. All in all, I've done a lot of trial and error to find what works best for me. Every piece is a learning experience, and I'm constantly trying to learn new techniques or adjust old ones.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? Some of the conventions I've worked were Surf n' Ink and Rites of Passage in Australia, Texas Round Up in Dallas, Ink Masters Tattoo Show Convention in L.A., Inked Hearts in north Cal, Ink-N-Iron in L.A., the Tattoo Life Tour in Texas, and the Motor City Show in Detroit. I'm honored to have won some awards, including best black-



and-gray, best realistic, best portrait, best color, best of day, and best of show. Some of the best memories are when my clients finally look at the finished tattoo and are completely satisfied with the result. I do get many tears-of-joy moments, especially with portraits of loved ones, and it's always a moment that makes it really worth it.

How do you describe your style? I specialize in portraits, realism, horror, pinups, and black-and-gray.

What inspires you as an artist? I feel inspired when I see other artists work. Not just tattoo artist, I mean painters, sculptors, musicians, anyone who can create something. I see their work and dedication to what they're doing and it gets my artistic bug going crazy. I love when I look at a piece of art and it evokes so much.

What sets you apart from other artists? I have a dedication to my clients to give them a truly one-of-a-kind design. I'm not afraid to

let them know that their idea might not translate well into a tattoo while helping them find an idea that will. I critique my work religiously, so I'm always improving to correct little things that I feel could have been better, and I keep an open mind and try to learn from each piece and each client.

What other mediums do you work in? Any that I can get my hands on! I love paints, charcoal, pastels, and pencils. Anything, really. All forms of art intrigue me, and I like to try everything at least once.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I have done several pieces of art for different shows and for upcoming books, and am now designing art for T-shirts and clothing companies.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? Guy Aitchison, Mike DeVries, Nikko Hurtado, Byron Drechsler, Roman Abrego, Victor Por-

tugal, Bob Tyrrell ...

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I definitely look forward to tattooing alternative, close-up, creepy girls, and bloody, macabre portraits and zombies.

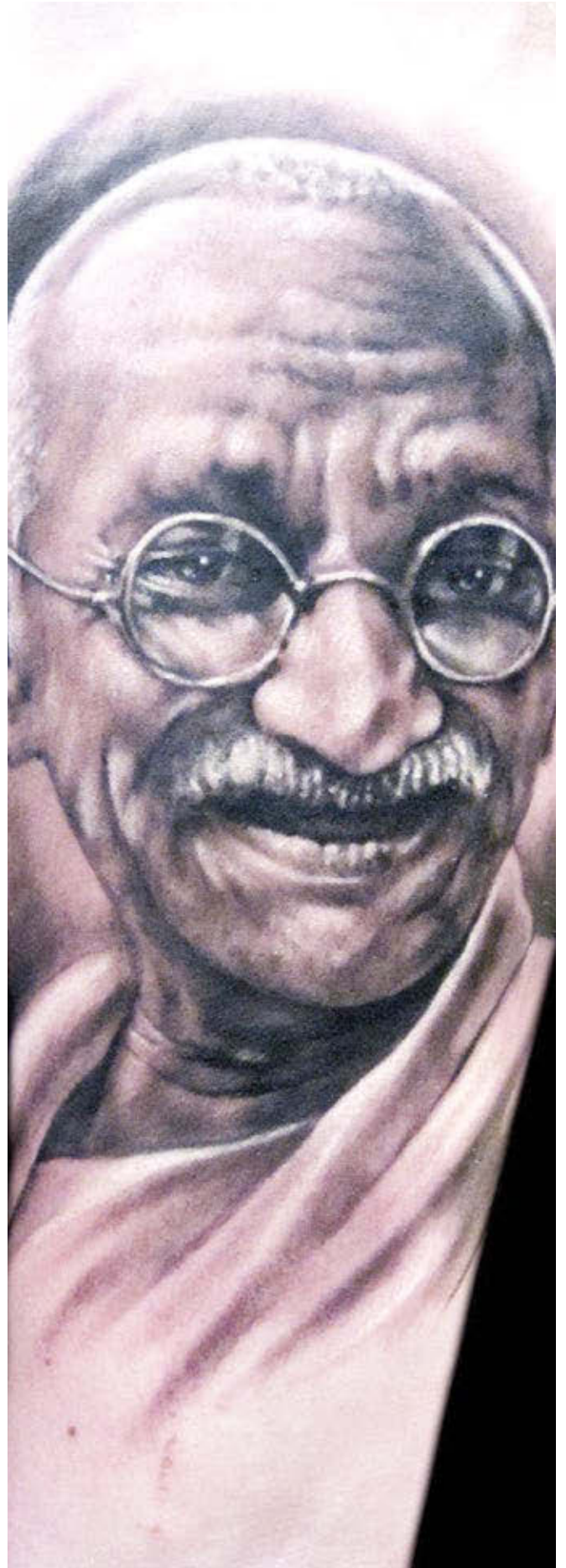
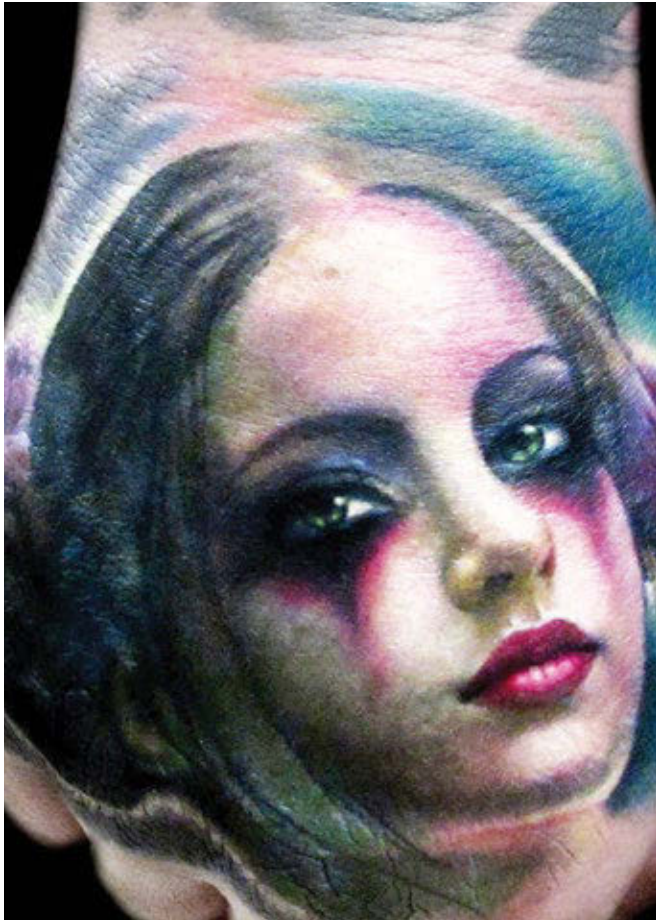
Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Tattoos are a big commitment. Not just financially or time-wise, but it's with you for the rest of your life. So research your artist, and when they suggest something, listen. If you don't get the "warm and fuzzies," then they're probably not the artist for you. Also, look at artists' portfolios. If they do a lot of biomech and organica, don't ask them to do a small tribal or lettering ... they will probably not appreciate it very much.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I'd really love to do some weird, creepy insects mixed with gothic, creepy girl faces.











WINSON TSAI

winsontsai.com
chronicinktattoo.com

Chronic Ink Tattoos
4300 Steeles Avenue East
Markham, Ontario
Canada

What year did you start tattooing? I started right after high school. That was 2010. I bought my first tattoo machine and I did one tattoo but I didn't end up continuing it. I did a couple dragons for my friend and learned I needed to learn a lot more.

How did you get into tattooing? I saw how all my friends had tattoos. I got interested, so I came to Chronic Ink and asked if I could just sketch in front of the shop. They said no because they said I was going to steal their drawings and go somewhere else. I went to another shop and they let me sketch there and eventually offered me a job. This was back in 2007. After, I went back to Chronic Ink and saw one of my friends getting a tattoo from Tristen, the head artist. I talked to him and then learned from both him and Tony, also of Chronic Ink.

Where did you apprentice? It was basically from another guy who worked at Chronic Ink. His name is Big Mike. He taught me everything. It was outside of the shop, though.

He took me to his house, gave me a couple machines, and sat down and showed me everything I needed to know about tattooing. But also, Tony was another guy who really helped me.

Do you have any special training? I graduated with a bachelor of graphic design. I used to airbrush and do murals. I started with graffiti, doing a few tags on walls, but then I learned about airbrushing. It's commercial. It's like graffiti but more fine-point, so you can be more accurate with portraits, for example. I was selling those airbrush Tupac shirts but then that era kind of ended.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? The first time I went to the convention was more of an excitement of just being there. After one year of tattooing on my own, I ended up at the convention with Chronic Ink. Tristen was winning all these awards so it showed me that someone I know is doing well. That



was probably the greatest experience, seeing someone I admire win all these awards for the shop I work for.

How do you describe your style? It started out with the Chicano style, working in the basement. A lot of it would be lettering, script, clouds, doves, roses, stuff like that. It's very Chicano style because most of my friends like it. I personally like working with Japanese- and Asian-style tattoos, which is why I like Chronic Ink, because they allow me to do that.

What sets you apart from other artists? I really like to do custom tattooing. I like to talk with my clients and figure out exactly what they want. I do it more when I know who I'm working with. At the shop, it's harder because I don't really meet people because it's so busy. But when I tattoo at home on the side, I read e-mails, call people, and do consultations with them. I customize it, measure their bodies, and sketch so it fits their body perfectly. They show me what they want and I show them what I think looks best. Once we reach an agreement, I start sketching so

there's no guessing.

What other mediums do you work in? My main thing is drawing and sketching. I love doing airbrushing but haven't had much time to do it lately. If I ever get big enough to the point where I can turn down small tattoo jobs, then I'll start doing more painting and airbrushing. I used to paint a lot but haven't really done it in a long time.

How have you branched out from tattooing? With my graphic design background, I've done websites for people. Making a website for Chronic Ink is one of the ways I originally got hired by them. I made the original Chronic Ink website four generations ago. I make logos for my friends and anyone who asks me. I also like to do T-shirt designs, poster designs, etc.

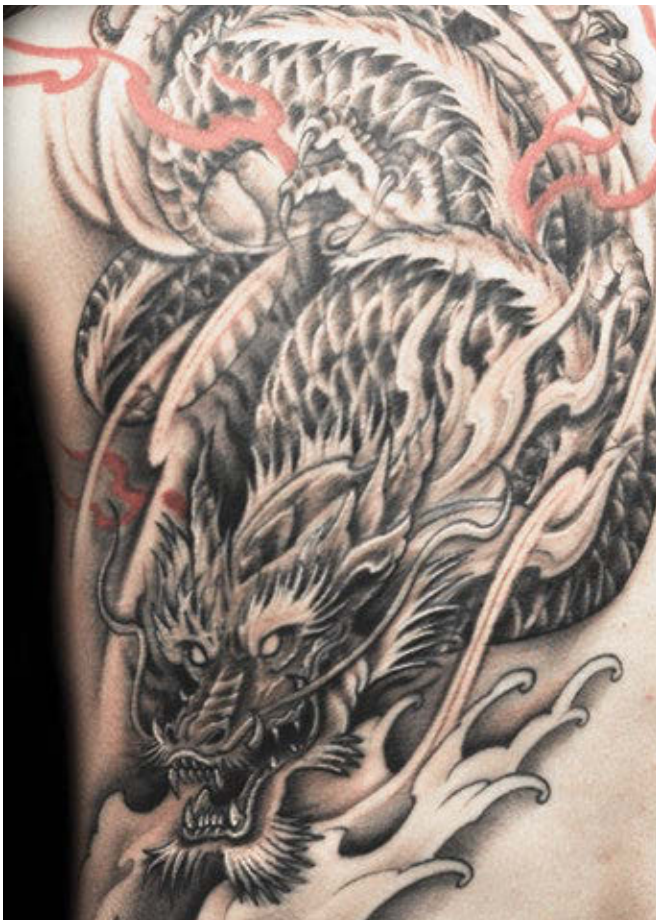
What tattoo artists do you admire most? I'm heavily inspired by Shige, Little Dragon, Jeff Gogue, Jun Cha, Mister Cartoon, and Jose Lopez. I was especially inspired by Mister Cartoon at first because I saw his work on

celebs, and then I go to New York and I see his murals on the walls. I go to L.A. and you can't even find his shop.

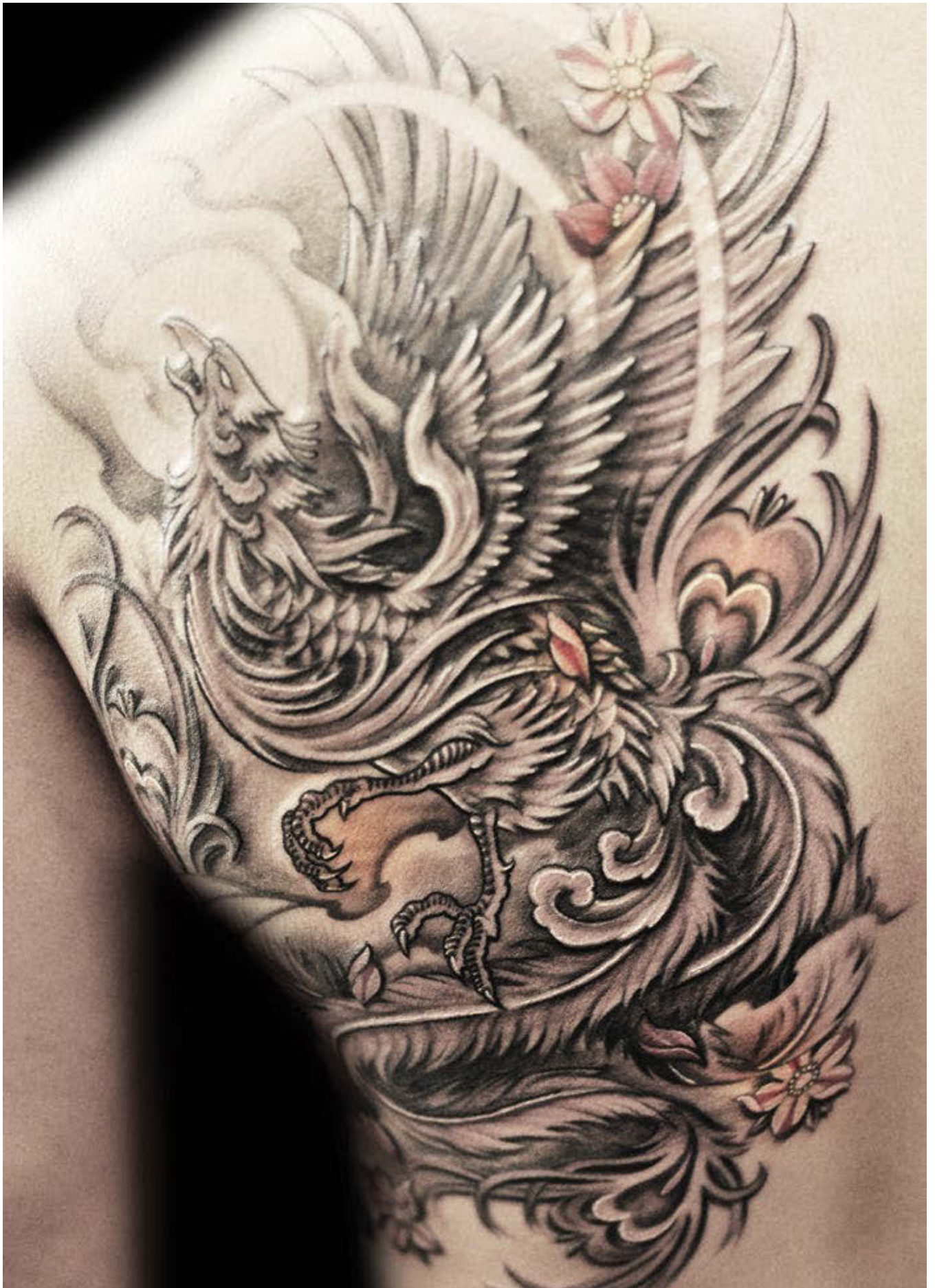
What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I like doing koi fishes. I eventually want the koi fishes to turn into dragons and phoenixes, tigers, and foo dogs. I enjoy doing kois, phoenixes, and foo dogs the most. I like to do dragons, but I don't feel like they're up to par with everything else. I want to get to doing Tony's beast dragons. His are massive and huge, so I want to get to that skill level.

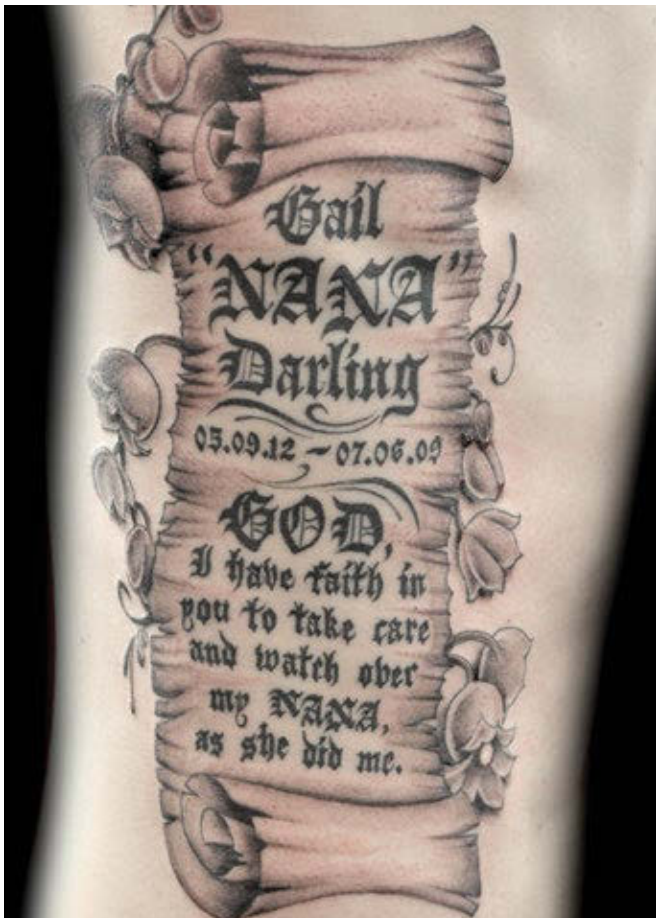
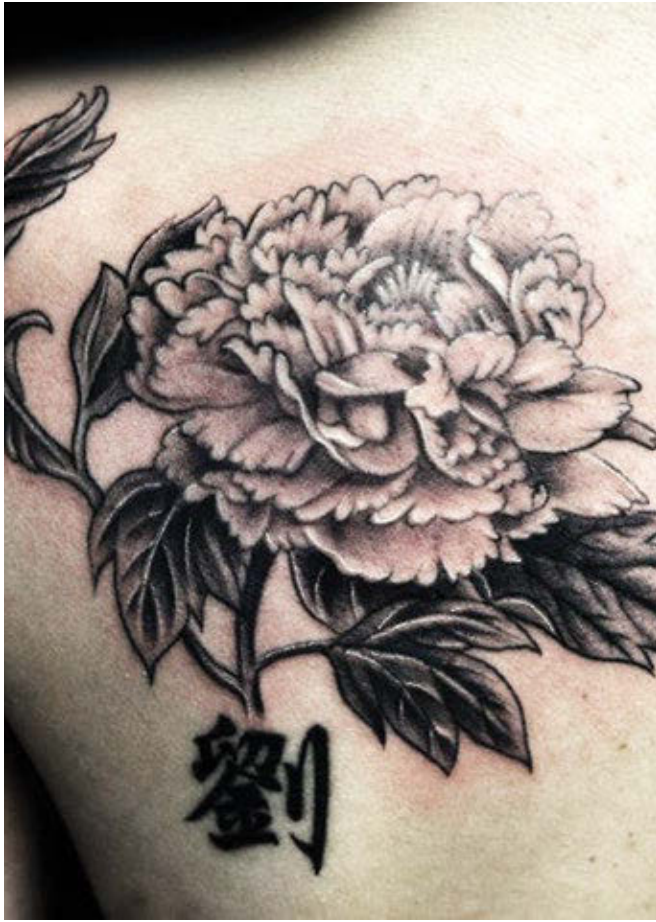
Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Make sure you know what you want, and do your research. Also, make sure you're not on drugs, I guess.

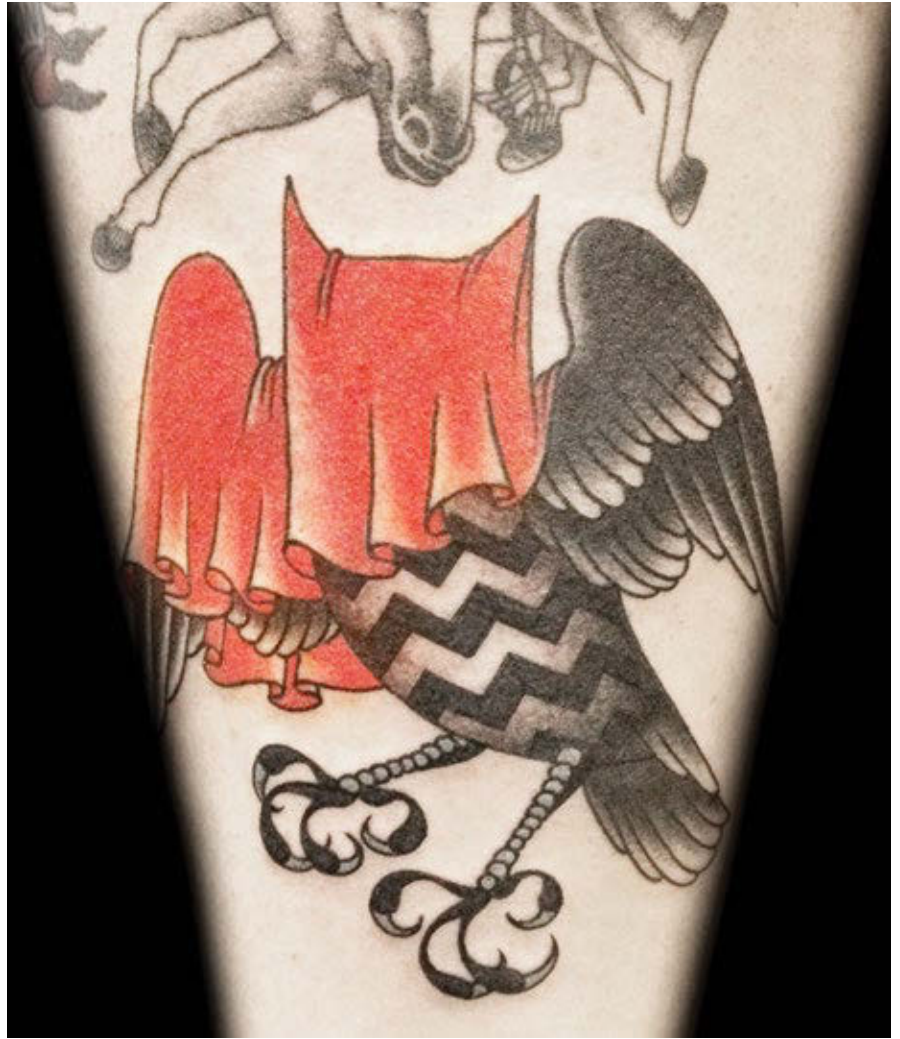
Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I'm dying to do a Jeff Gogue skull piece, Chicano-style portraits, and guns and roses sleeves. I would like to take it step by step. So I would want to get the skull pieces down first before I start doing any portraits.











RON HENRY WELLS

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Brooklyn, New York

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Portsmouth, New Hampshire

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Bridgewater, Massachusetts

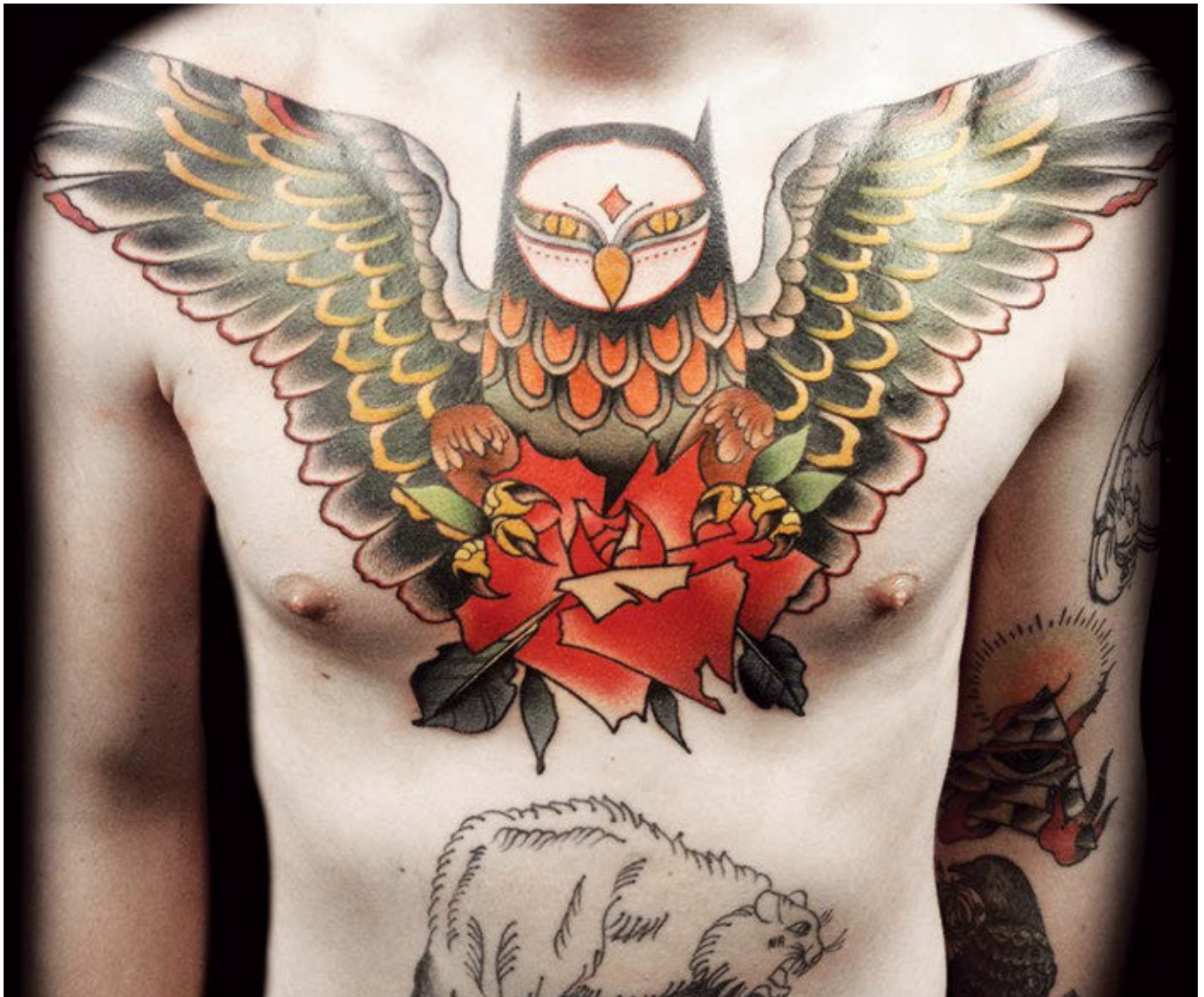
What year did you start tattooing? I haven't been tattooing long—March 10, 2007. Why anyone would want to read an interview with a tattooer who's only five and a half years in is beyond me. The hell do I know?

How did you get into tattooing? Probably the same as everyone else, for the most part. Had a few older cousins with tattoos that I was kind of taken with when I was younger. But mostly it was due to going to hardcore and punk shows when I was a teenager in the '90s, which is where my unabashed love of tribal comes from. Seemed like everyone had that Borneo scorpion design. To this day it's probably one of my top 10 favorite designs.

Where did you apprentice? I was fortunate enough to have apprenticed at Anonymous Tattoo in Savannah, GA, under Ricky McGee and Clay McCay. It was a truly great experience for me. Both of those guys have been tattooing a good long while and had some seriously amazing information to pass on. They both kind of tattoo in opposite ways, so at first it was difficult to figure out how to deal with that, but I eventually picked the stuff from each one that worked best for me. I still set up exactly like Ricky sets up, but I run my machines closer to how Clay runs his. I learned so much at that

shop, and not just from those two guys. I also worked with Zack Spurlock and Kim Reed. Zack is a truly amazing tattooer that totally didn't need to show me or tell me anything—he wasn't one of the dudes apprenticing me, but he showed me a lot and I'm eternally grateful for it. Even Kim—I don't tattoo anything at all like her, but I learned a bunch from her. And I thank her for it. I feel like I got a very balanced apprenticeship that's been invaluable to me. Anonymous is primarily a custom shop, but it has a large walk-in contingent due to being right on one of the main tourist streets in Savannah. So I had a bit of street shop in there right along with the custom stuff, which lasted throughout my time at that shop. Good mix of walk-ins and custom stuff, plus the runoff from other dudes who were booked up. It was a lot of pressure every day with the quality of work going out of that shop. Trying to live up to that and not let bad tattoos walk out the door that would make the shop look bad. I mean, the amount of Tums I ate every day just to calm my stomach from stress is unbelievable, ha ha ha. So yeah. That's where I broke in.

Do you have any special training? Well, I mean, I drew my whole life. Not really much formal training. I actually wish I had more of that. I drew my whole life, wrote graffiti from the time



I was 9 'til pretty much the day I started tattooing, and did a fairly steady amount of gallery shows of my paintings in the years before I started tattooing. I fully believe those all helped me out, but yeah, I wish I had way more formal art training. I went to The Colorado Institute of Art for about a quarter and a half. Money I didn't have. Oh well.

How do you describe your style? I don't know. Answering questions like this always makes me feel douchey no matter what I say. I get inspired by traditional, but on the heavier side? I like black, but that's not special. Everyone likes black. I guess I try to combine how heavy tribal looks on the skin with the designs rooted in the architecture of traditional, mixed with all the other non-tattoo shit I like? Fuck, who cares? I try to make clients happy while not getting an ulcer.

What inspires you as an artist? *Twin Peaks*, New England—especially in the fall—Tom Waits. Clowns. Other artists. I try to look at other tattooers less and less, but that's difficult since some of my favorite people and favorite artists are tattooers themselves.

What sets you apart from other artists?

I don't know that much actually does. I could say the amount of black, but there are tons of people out there doing extra heavy, extra black tattoos, and I certainly wasn't anywhere near first in that line. I'm probably near the back. I got it from the guys who taught me. I don't know. I hope it does stand out, but to be honest I'm still trying to figure out my voice. I'm confident that search will never end, but I'm still so green that I can't really claim too much as my own. I try real hard to keep my drawings honest, but I'm not sure that makes anything special either.

What other mediums do you work in?

Eh, I used to work in a bunch of other crap, but I'm still so concerned with learning as much as I can tattoo-wise, I pretty much keep most of my artwork tattoo-oriented. Mostly just watercolor at this point, but I've been itching to mess around with other mediums again.

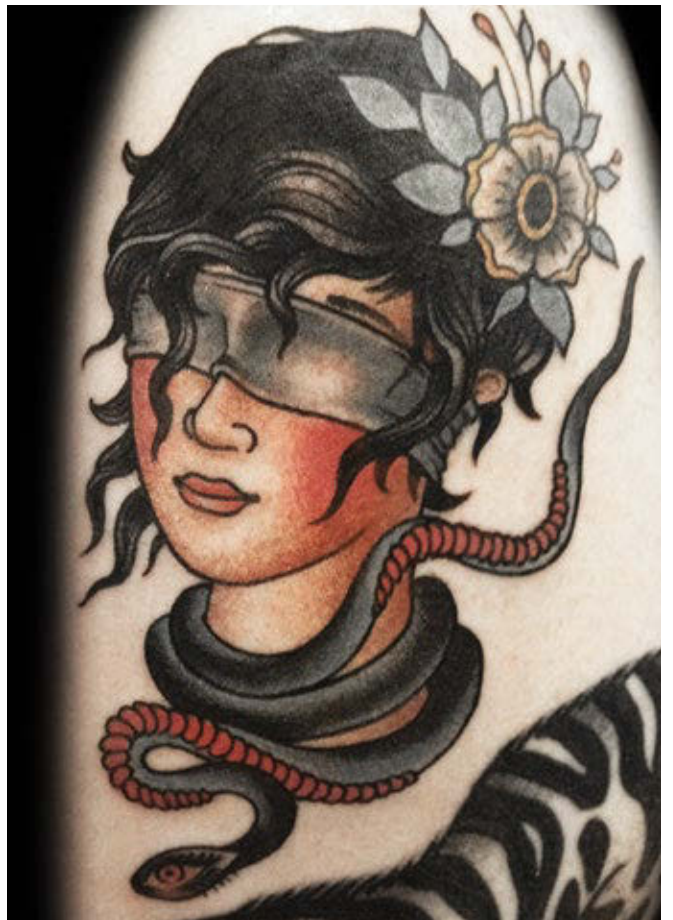
What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?

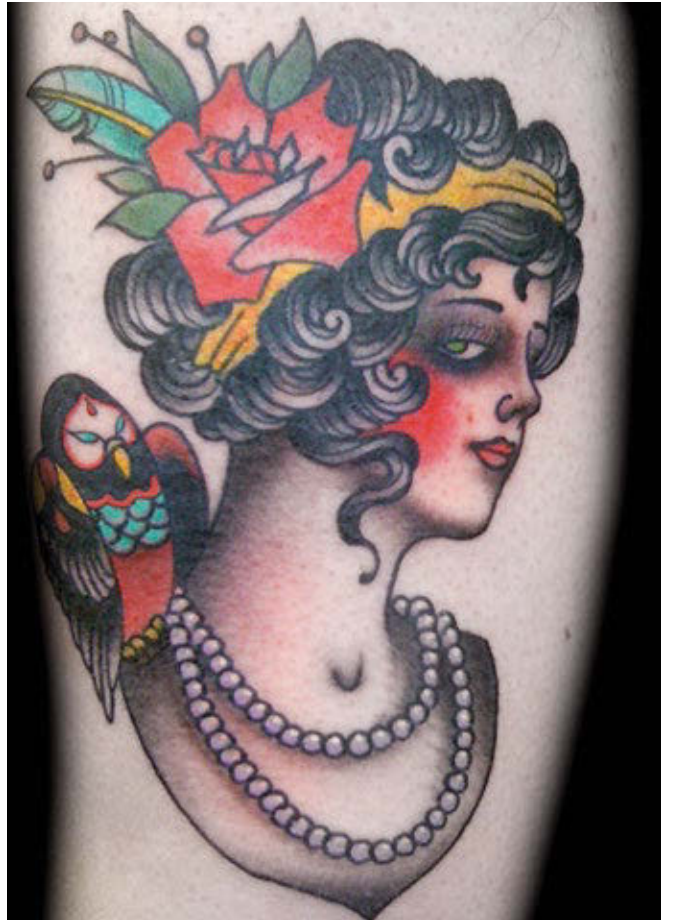
Clowns. Fuck you, I love them. My granddad and great-granddad were both part-time circus clowns. I love that shit. Big

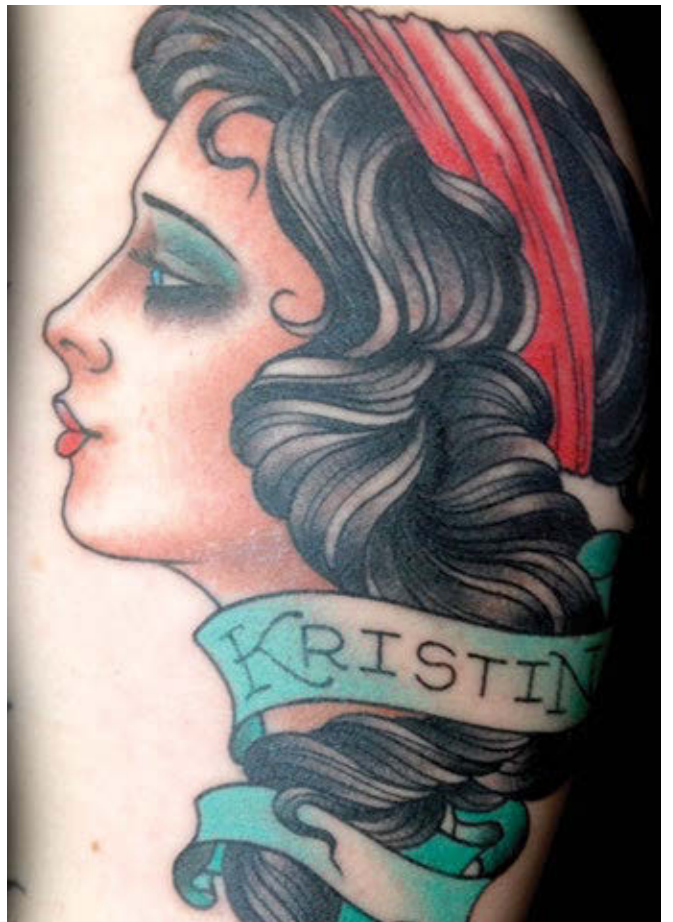
tribal. I know it's the cool thing nowadays to talk about how much you love tribal and script and kanji so you don't sound like an egomaniacal art douche, but I fucking love huge, heavy tribal. That panther that Thomas Hooper did? HOLY SHIT. I wish I got to do shit like that. Just giant black shapes that fit the body. I love it. I also like doing lady heads. Yeah, yeah. So trendy. Fuck off, I don't care. I like pretty girls. Who the shit doesn't? How could anyone be too cool to make a drawing of a pretty lady? The fuck is wrong with you? I love tattooing ships also. I grew up on the water. My dad built boats.

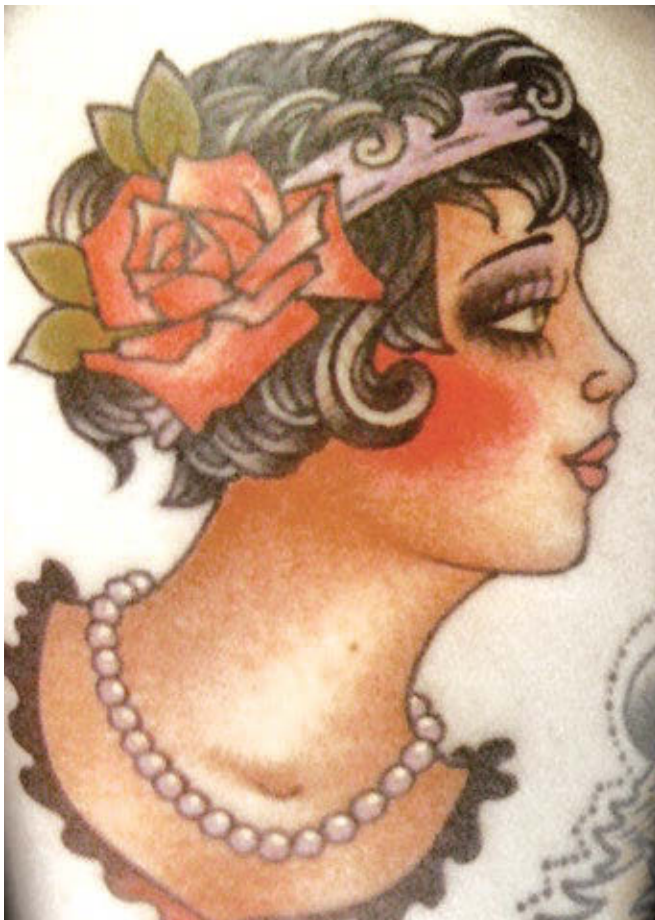
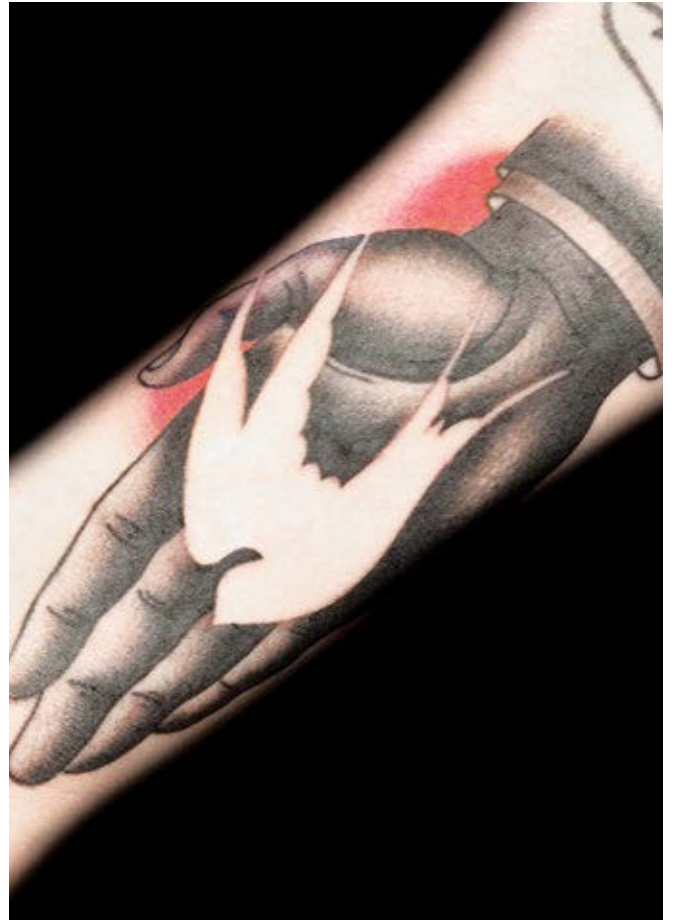
Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?

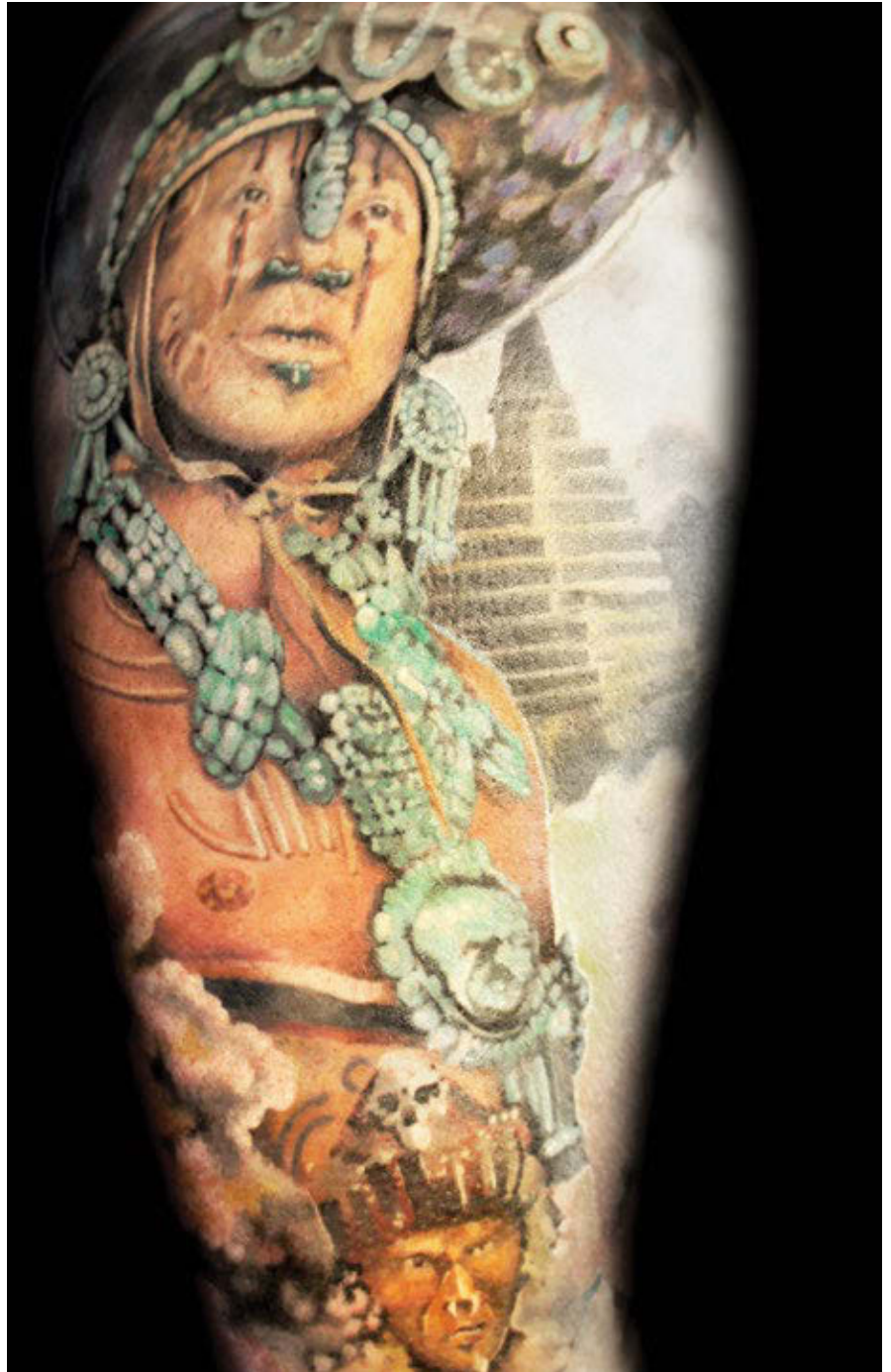
I mean, I'm pretty lucky. I get great clients with great ideas and similar interests, so I'm not complaining about not getting to do certain shit, but if you're fishing I've always wanted to do a Calvin and Hobbes sleeve. All the snowmen and hidden in there Calvin getting ready to pelt the living shit out of an unsuspecting Susie Derkins. Also, I've never done a goddamned Playboy bunny logo, but this isn't 1986, so I guess I'm fucked.











ANDREY BARKOV

grimmy3d.ru

Moscow

What year did you start tattooing? I started doing tattoos in 2009.

How did you get into tattooing? I always liked tattoos, watched photos of tattooing on the internet, read different forums. And one day I thought that it was the time to act. I bought my first tattoo machine.

Where did you apprentice? Nowhere. I asked for help from masters whose work I liked. I wrote letters, watched videos, read forums.

Do you have any special training? No. I did not attend any kind of special training—I have no art education. Actually, I am a system programmer—I graduated from the University

of Applied Technology.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? I'm not a frequent visitor of conventions, been only to a few in Russia. I'm afraid of big crowds. Consequently, I did not get awards. The most important thing is that people like my work. I get feedback, letters from different countries, and this makes me very happy.

How do you describe your style? I would like to call it realism, but it turns out not like realism. Probably some kind of pictorial realism.

What inspires you as an artist? I find inspiration in the images created by nature. Traveling,



cities, architecture, visiting museums. If you look closely, you can see the genius of creation in any subject. For example, look at the cabbage—it's a real organic [example of art].

What sets you apart from other artists? I really would like to believe that my style of work is recognized, to be honest.

What other mediums do you work in? I love to paint in oils, but unfortunately, I do not have time for this. Still, I would like to paint more. At one time I was very fond of creating computer graphics, 3-D modeling, samples of which can be found on my website.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I dedicate a lot of time to my family, walking with the daughter—her name is Lisa. We love to travel to historic places, go to exhibitions and museums, eat delicious food, drink good beer with my close friends.

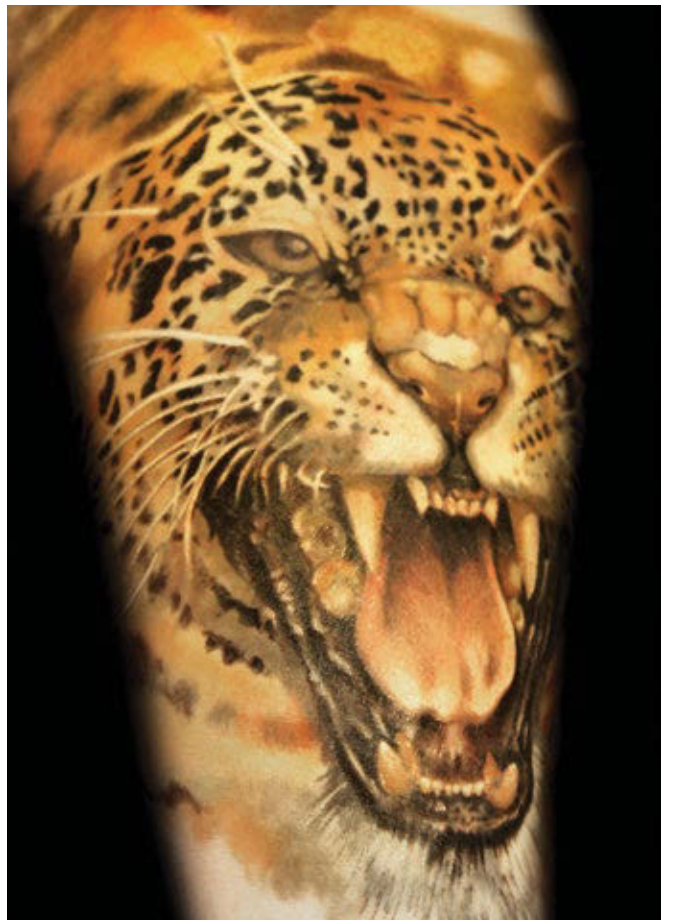
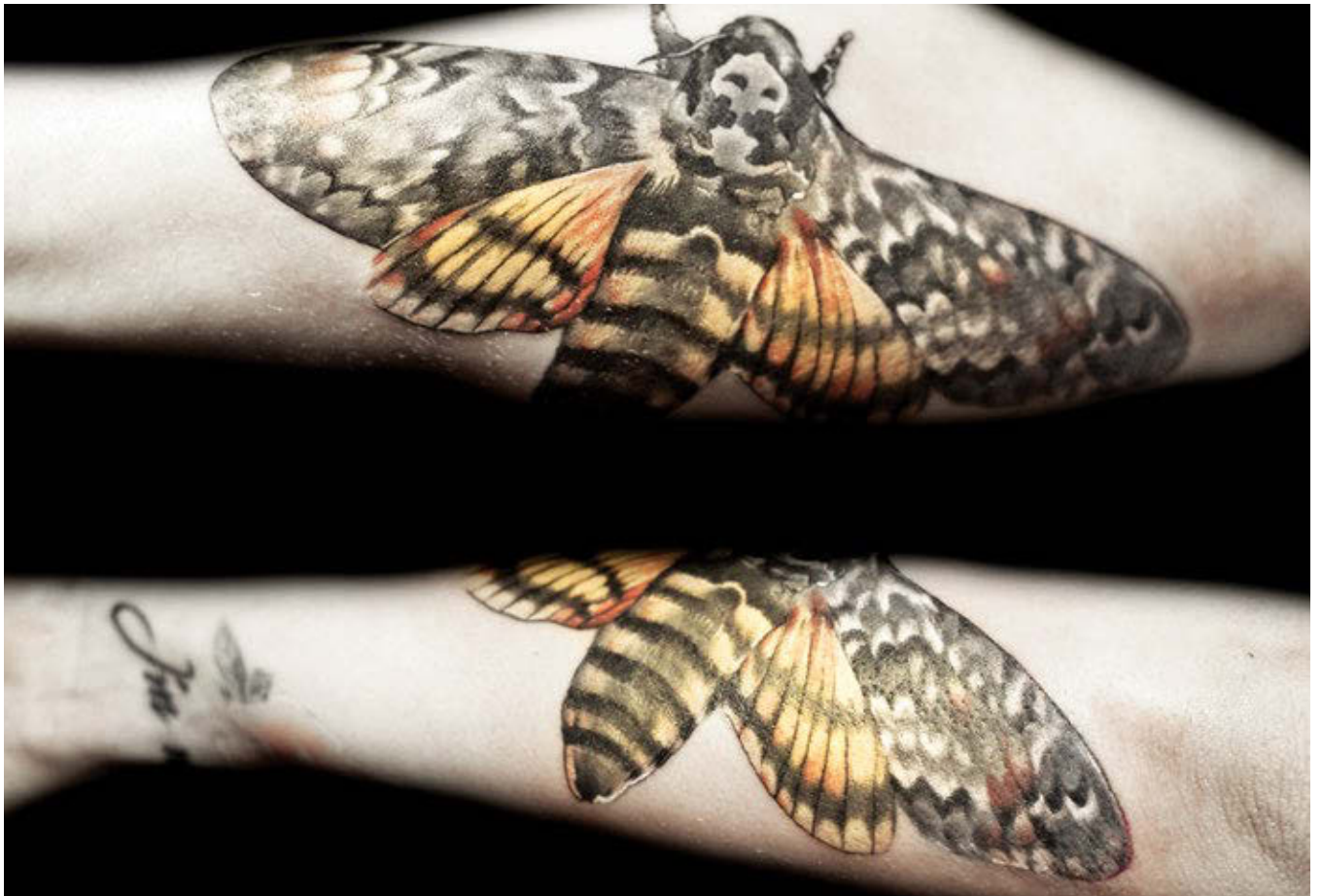
What tattoo artists do you admire most? I probably will not be able to list all now. I have always admired the work of Den Yakovlev, Kathy Mikky, and of course Dmitriy Samohin. As for foreign artists, it is of course recognized artists such as Cecil Porter, Nikko Hurtado, Joshua Carlton, Markus Lenhard, Liz Cook, John Anderton, and others.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I would like to develop my own style and do more portraits and realism.

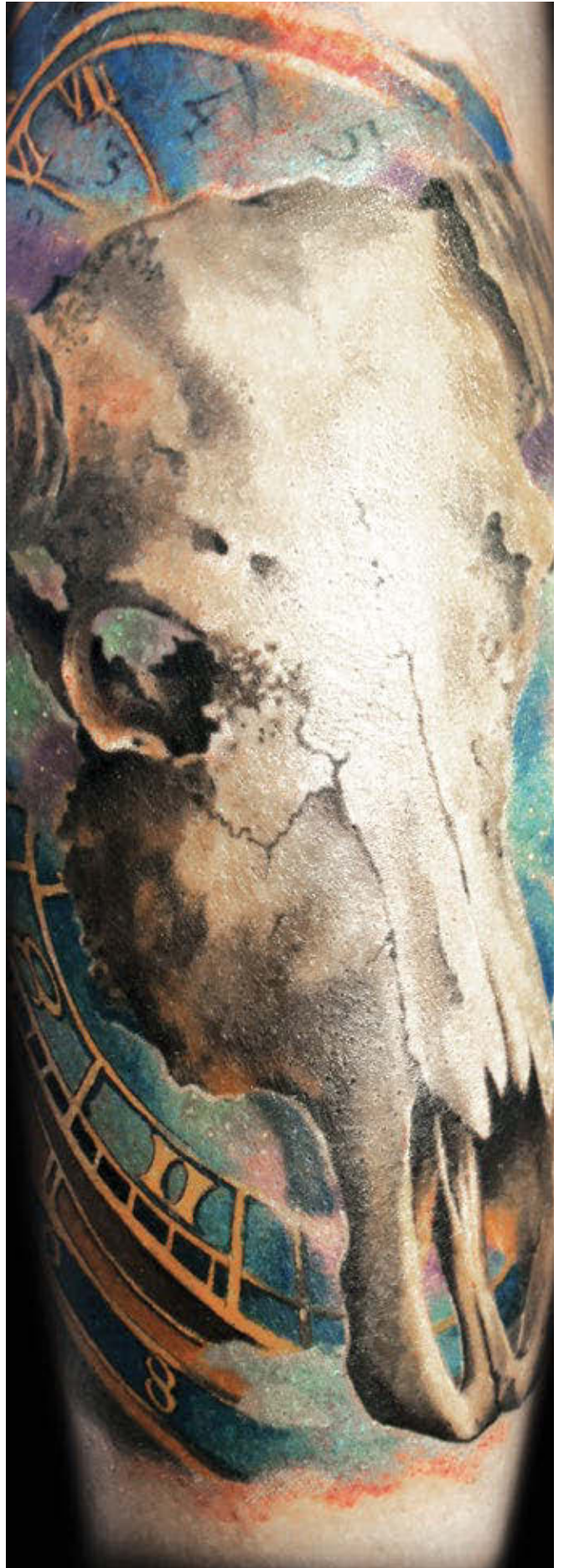
Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Be careful choosing a master. Do not take ill-advised, not-thought-out decisions. It's always difficult to correct.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I have only been tattooing for three and a half years, so there is a lot of interesting work that I look forward to doing. I want to make a huge ant's head, making a complete back piece.











ANTONIO TODISCO

080 23 75949
mackotattoo.com

Macko Tattoo Shop

Via Vecchia Ospedale 57/59
70043 Monopoli, Bari
Italy

What year did you start tattooing? I started eight years ago. As a professional, maybe six.

How did you get into tattooing? When I was young I grew up with watching my grandpa—he was a big painter. Then I finished the school of art in Florence. I was a writer as well, deeply involved in street art, and a tattoo addict. So tattooing came out naturally.

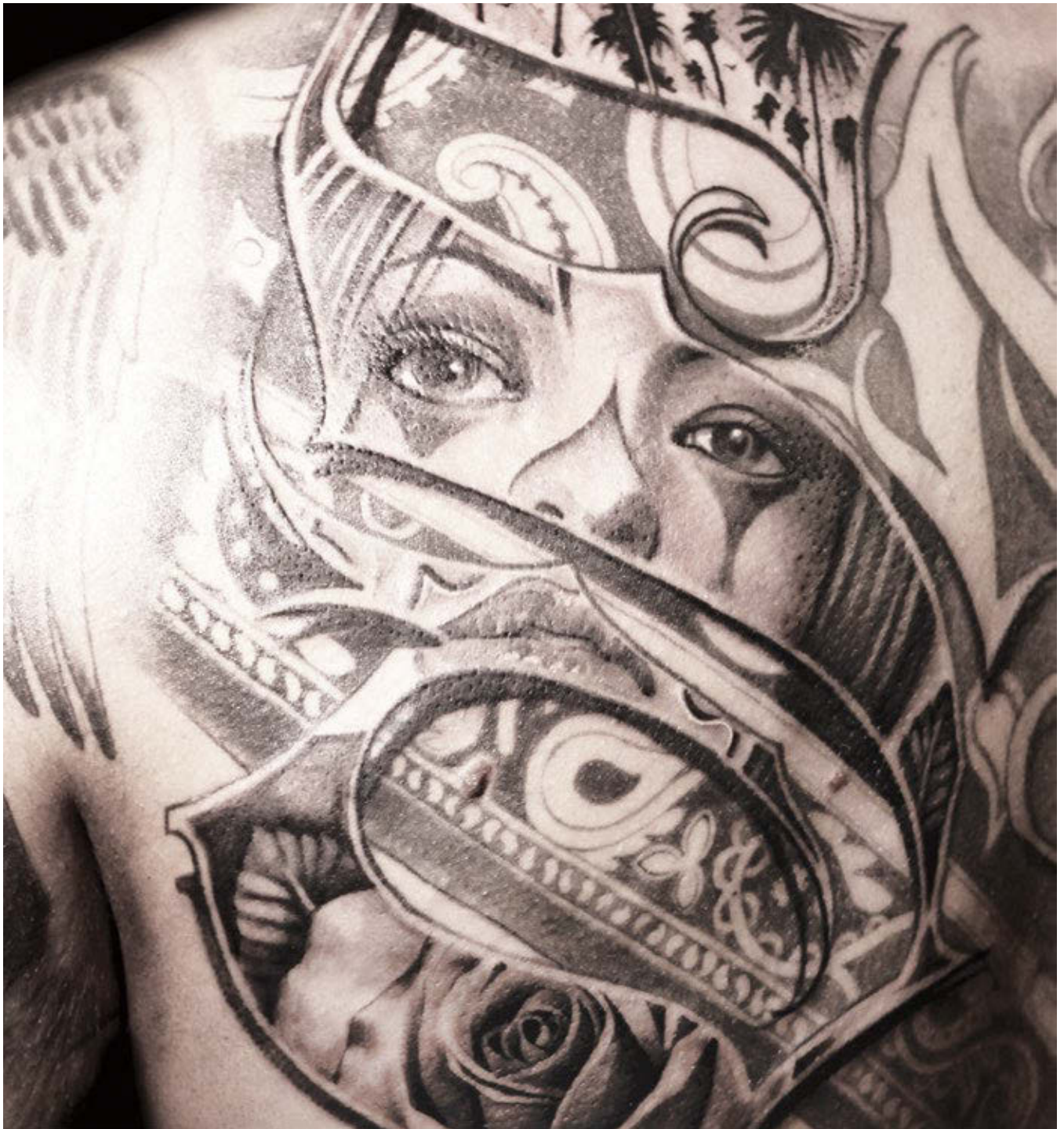
Where did you apprentice? I never had a real apprenticeship. I tried to get inspiration from the big names in the biz or watching other artists tattooing during the expos!

Do you have any special training? The first big step up for my game happened thanks to my mentor and now big friend Jose Lopez. He gave me a lot of help and has totally vibed me.

I started watching him tattooing—now I follow him during the European expos, and this year I'm going to guest spot at Lowrider. A real blessing for my art.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? I think I have worked in all of the big expos all over Europe. I won some international awards during these expos, especially for black-and-gray, and this year a best of show in Rome. I've always had good times and memories, but maybe the bigger emotion for me was the first time in Milan and London. I love those conventions!

How do you describe your style? I learned drawing from classic art and got inspiration from underground culture. Street art and reli-



gious themes have intrigued me all my life. I was born and live in south Italy, so I'm attached to our Latin culture, and the Chicano style is what interprets this best.

What inspires you as an artist? All I have around me could be an inspiration. Sometimes I'm looking into the past; I really love the European Renaissance. Sometimes I look into the big interpreters of the classic cholo art. For my *charra* girls theme or clown lady I always get reference from the big Estevan Oriol woman photo. It's so sick!

What sets you apart from other artists?

I think every artist has his own style, so I think nothing sets me apart from the other artists.

What forms of media do you use for promotion? Usually I use my own website and blog. Facebook and Instagram give me the opportunity to share my works with all my followers and have a direct response. I wanna continue doing conventions around the world—it's the best way to meet and know the artists and ink addicts. Soon I'll be part of a TV program talking about the Italian tattoo scene.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I started selling my flash sets and took part

in some Chicano-style book. I even sold some drawings for clothing brands.

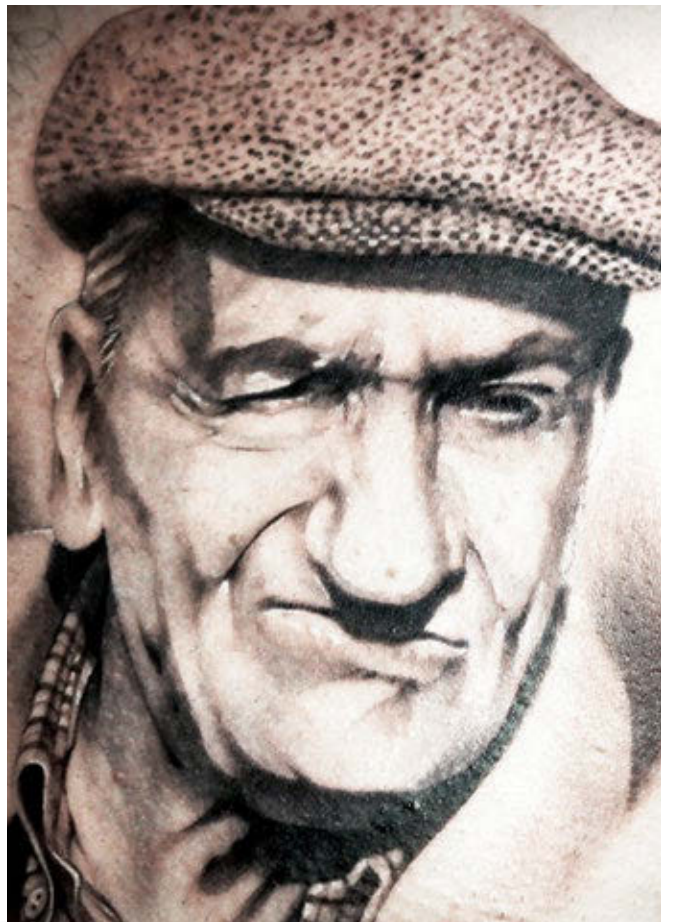
What tattoo artists do you admire most? I admire all those on the black-and-gray scene, especially from the L.A. area. Some very badass artists come from there!

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? Nothing so special. I really like doing back pieces, because you have the opportunity to make a big subject full of details and 3-D effects.

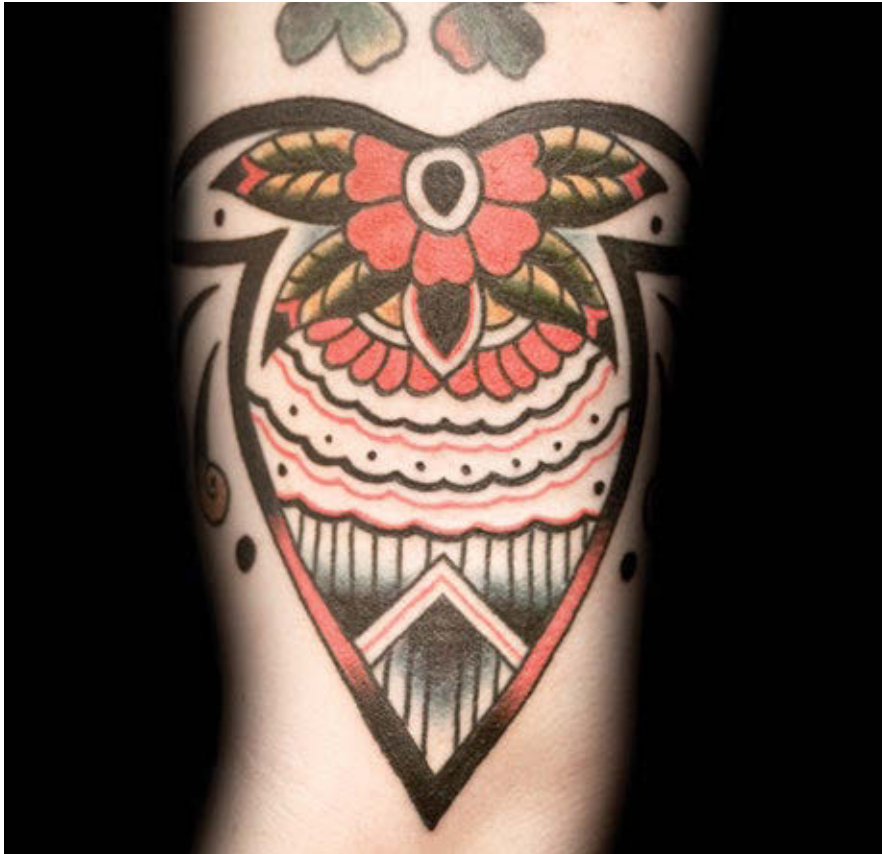
Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Reeeeeelaxxx!











STUART G. CRIPWELL

stuartgcripwell.com

Spider Murphy's Tattoo
San Rafael, California

What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in 2004.

How did you get into tattooing? I was trying to get involved in tattooing whilst traveling for a while with no luck. My only exposure to tattooing at the time was through magazines, and I found that most of the artists I respected worked in the Bay Area. I wish I'd moved here 10 years earlier to see the '90s movement in San Francisco with shops like Primal Urge, 222, and Tattoo City, to name a few, but I ended up moving to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2003. Spider Murphy's was always on my list of places I wanted to work, but I didn't think it would happen at all. It was more of a pipe dream for sure. I checked out and asked in at a lot of shops and one day I humbly went into Spider Murphy's to meet Theo and the rest of the crew. We struck up a conversation about tattooing and were chatting, and felt like it was a great first introduction. I went back maybe a few days later and talked about getting tattooed and finally got the courage up to ask Theo if he needed any shop help. I didn't roll into there asking for an apprenticeship, which is the mistake most people make. I basically asked him if he needed help so I could get my foot in the door. Anyway, he said "Sure," to my amazement, and took my number. A few days later he called and offered me a job as the shoppy. I don't think I've ever been so stoked in my entire life. I was kind of stuck in this weird reality of "Is this really going to happen?" I loved being the shoppy. It was just the start of it all, so it was great to learn how the shop ran and how to deal with customers, making needles and watching Theo's every move. I also had the

pleasure of working alongside Jeff Rassier, who I learned a lot from, for a year while he was at the shop. I still didn't know if I would end up apprenticing. We never spoke about it until I had been there for eight months, so when that time rolled around I couldn't have been happier. A few months passed and things developed and I started to apprentice under Theo.

Can you tell us about your apprenticeship?

It was a one-year apprenticeship. I had my schedule worked out for the year with weekly tasks and deadlines to meet. I did everything from tracing, drawing, trying to learn to paint and do a set of flash, and sign painting, amongst other things. It was a super challenging year. I have never been tested mentally like that ever, but I made it through the apprenticeship. I had learned so much in a year—it was crazy. So I was going into tattooing knowing what I had to do. I just had to put it into practice on myself and faithful friends, keep drawing and painting and studying and get the technical side down while gaining knowledge about machines.

Do you have any special training? I didn't go to art school in any major way, just through high school I would obviously do art and draw at home for fun. I would have liked to have gone to art school. I think it would have helped a lot, but it just never worked out. I just wanted to travel after high school.

What conventions have you worked at? I've worked at London and Milan and Ink-N-Iron a few times, and also the State of Grace convention a few times too. I'm not a huge fan of con-



ventions—they're very hectic for me. I guess I have been very privileged to start tattooing at such a great and comfortable work environment, so I feel very at home at the shop. I have never skipped around shops; I have been at Spider Murphy's for my whole career. I think this is why I find it hard to do conventions, compared to tattooers who are used to guest spotting and traveling all the time. Those things totally prepare you for conventions.

How do you describe your style? My style is definitely something that I found early, after completing my apprenticeship. Obviously it has changed a little over the years, but I always knew what I wanted my tattoos to look like. I studied old tattoos and flash from Owen Jensen, Ralph Johnson, George Bigmore, Joseph Hartley, Zeis, and Amund Dietzel, amongst many others. Those old sheets show so much grit and soul, so that's what I wanted my work to look like. Dirty, powerful, with lots of black and a limited color palette. I would describe my style as just pure traditional. If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

What inspires you as an artist? I think just looking at old flash and tattoos and books. I don't really look at other people's tattoos to get inspired. I mean, a lot of people are amazing, but if you reference that, everything starts to look the same. I love their work; I just try not to pull any ideas from them. I prefer to stick to what I try to do.

What sets you apart from other artists? I think just an individual style that is recognizable to everyone. I think that's what sets tat-

toos apart for sure. When you instantly know what tattooer it was done by without a second glance.

What other mediums do you work in? I just stick to watercolors at the moment—that's all I was ever taught during my apprenticeship. I've never really used oils, and have only used a little acrylic. I would love to learn to work in different mediums, and I'm sure I'll get there someday. I definitely admire people like Mike Davis, who is without a doubt one of my favorite oil painters.

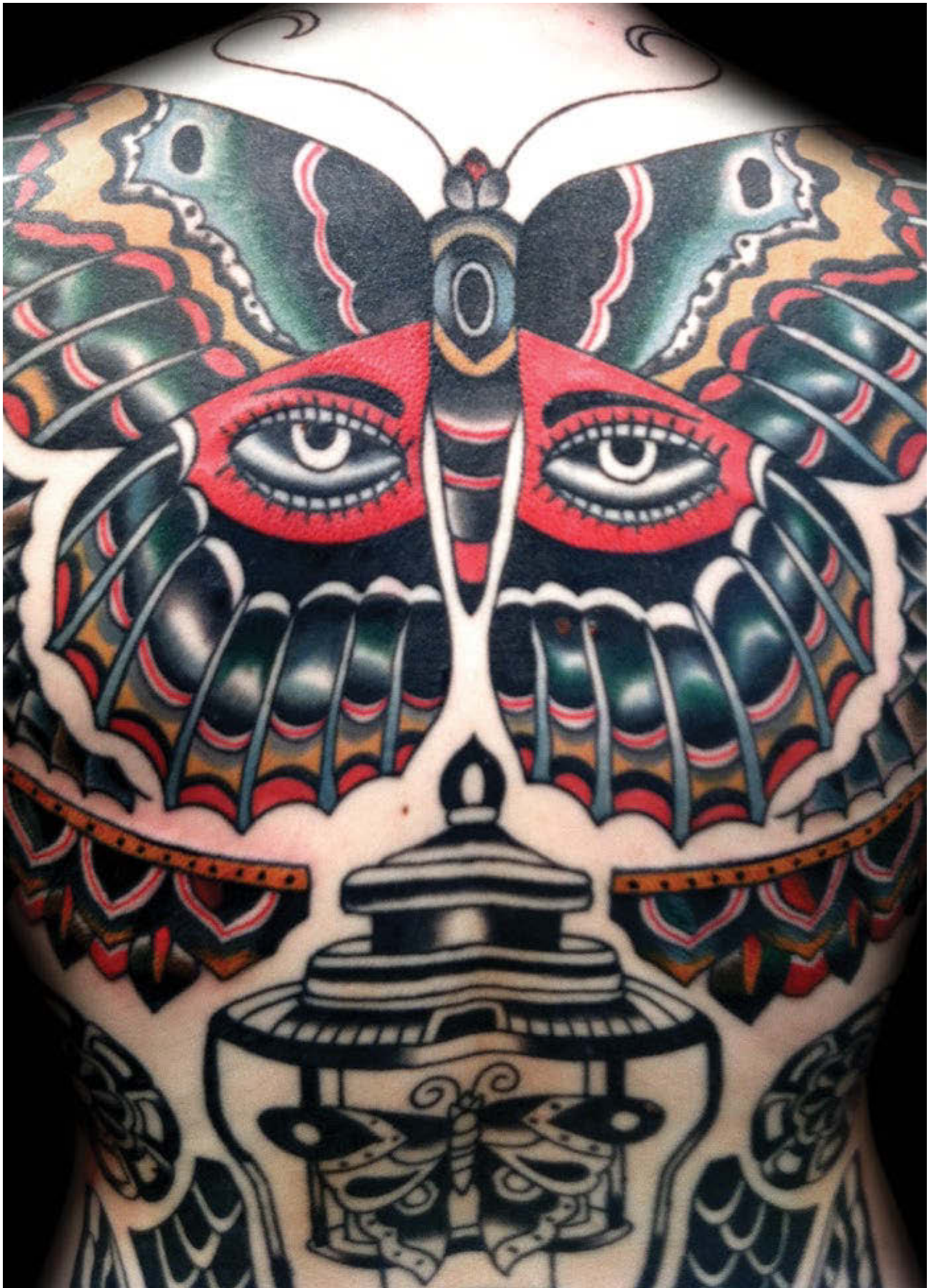
Have you branched out from tattooing? Not really—I just try to immerse myself in what I do, and learn about traditional tattooing. I do love to paint, and I love putting together machines for myself, so maybe that will develop into something one day. There are so many great machine builders out there that it would just be a personal thing, I think, but I do admire people who make the time to do things like that. Like building and selling machines and making pigment, putting books together. Things like that. Things that help you and that don't disrespect tattooing in any way.

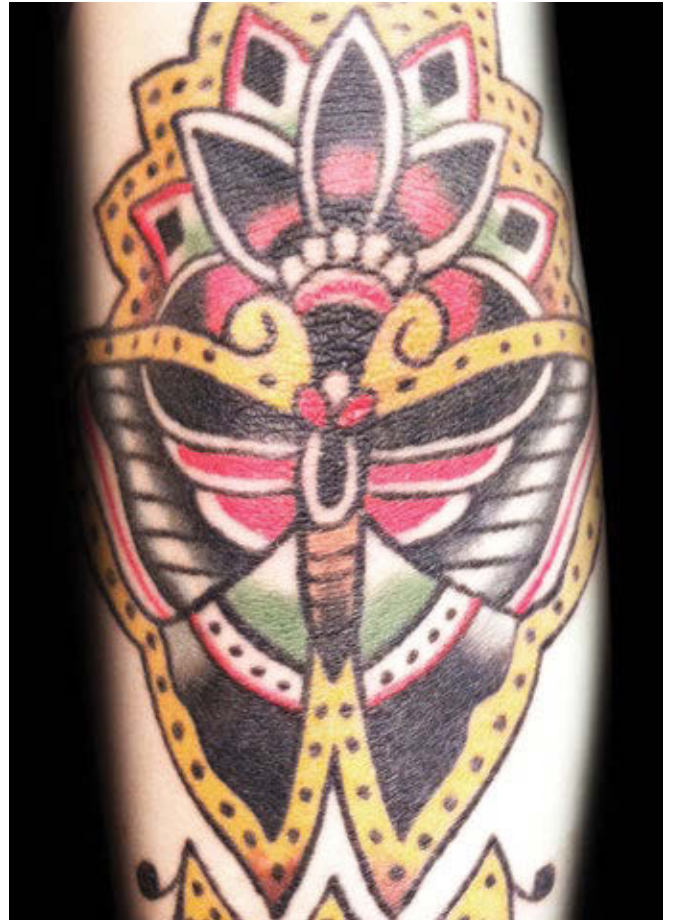
What tattoo artists do you admire most? There are so many I can't mention them all, but the main ones that come to mind are obviously the people I work with. Theo has been the biggest influence on me, but Heather Bailey, Paul Dobleman, Matt Howse, and Bryan "I'm looking at scopes in the back" Randolph are all amazing, and I learn from them all the time. Bert Grimm, Owen Jensen, Percy Waters, Eddy Deutsche, Alex Binnie, Dan Higgs, Freddy Corbin, Chris

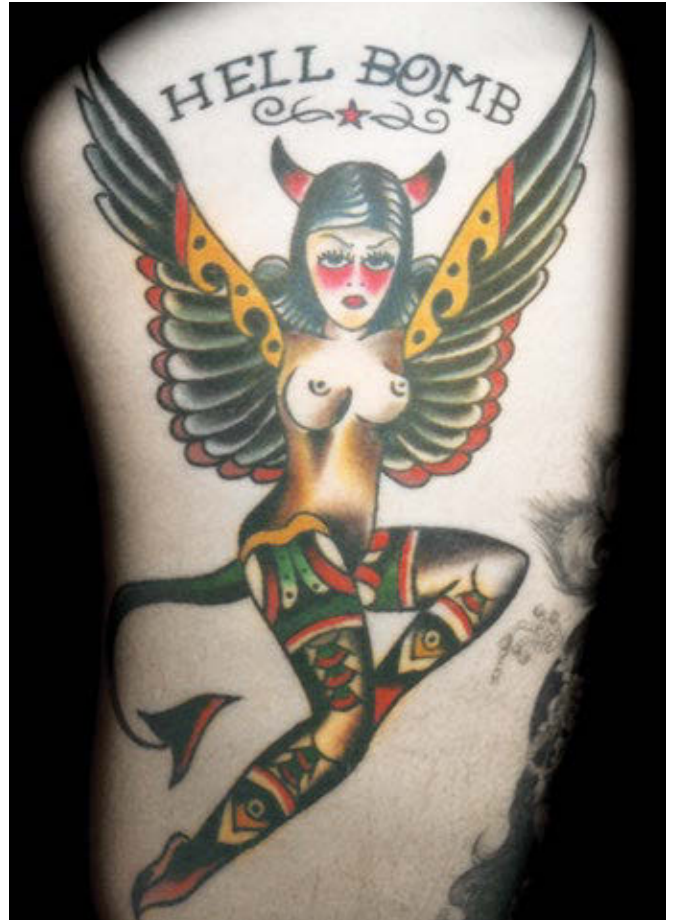
Trevino, Scott Harrison, Chris Conn, Jef Whitehead, Todd Noble, Beppe Strambini, Timothy Hoyer, Jeff Rassier, Scott Sylvia, Tim Lehi, Nick Rodin, Heath Preheim, Jeremy Lynn, Robert Ryan, Steve Byrne, Thomas Hooper, Daniel Albrigo, Erick Lynch, Rob Benavides, Thomas Garcia, Lina Stigsson, Rob Admiraal, Angelique, and Job de Quay. I could go on forever but mainly these are the guys that definitely inspire me, and I admire them as artists and good friends.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? There are so many things that I would like to do. I'm always finding ideas and seeing things on old pages of flash and in books that I have. There are a million ideas out there; you just have to put them together into your specific style.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I would just love to do more traditional bodysuits. I'm almost finished with one at the moment. My friend Matt has been getting tattooed for almost five years, every two weeks or so. He's let me choose everything he has on his body, has never turned down an idea, and has trusted me to put the suit together, so it looks right and consistent throughout, which is a very challenging thing to do. He really is the best customer I have ever come across, and I hope I have more like him. It's just extremely rare these days to have a customer who commits to a traditional circus-style bodysuit that's just done by one artist. It's pretty much the ultimate thing for a tattooer to be presented with, and I'm definitely very thankful for it. Thank you to Matt for everything.











**KOBAY
KRONIK**

Kronik Tattoo
Tor Tattoo

What year did you start tattooing? In late 2007.

How did you get into tattooing? As a child I wanted to be a painter. I met tattooing in my teenage years. So that dream changed in a few years. Becoming a tattoo artist was a dream—and then a reality.

Where did you apprentice? I was never an apprentice. I taught myself this art.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? I attended the Bucharest and Iasi conventions and won these awards: first place best of realistic, first place

best of color, first place best of day, and first place best of show.

How do you describe your style? Realistic, showing the unseen details.

What inspires you as an artist? All the documentaries that bring nature and the details of nature to our homes. Because I live in the city and it's hard to see even a little green here, I get very inspired by these documentaries.

What sets you apart from other artists? I don't know that yet. I still don't think that my style is completed yet. I still have to learn and try a lot of things.



What other mediums do you work in? In many other branches that have to do with visual arts. For example, taking pictures, doing oil paintings.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? Artists like Den Yakovlev, Tomasz Tofi, Dmitriy Samohin.

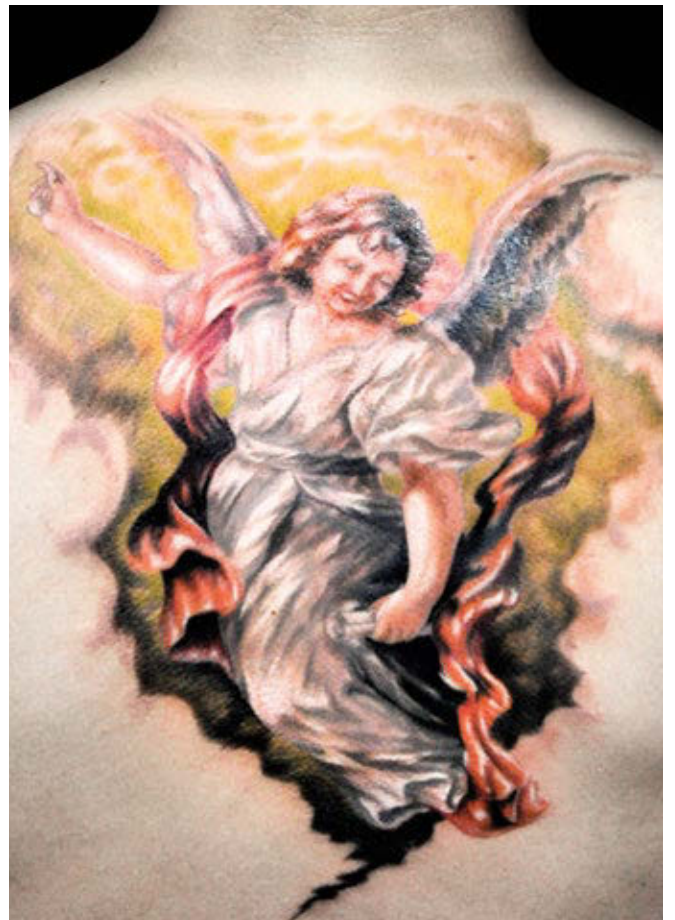
What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I look forward to doing chest tattoos.

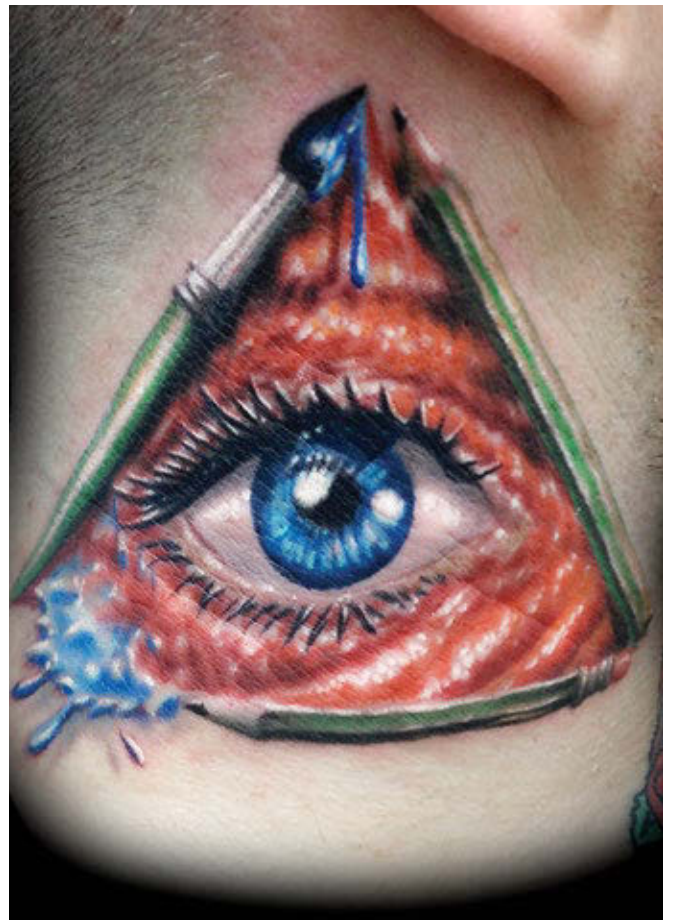
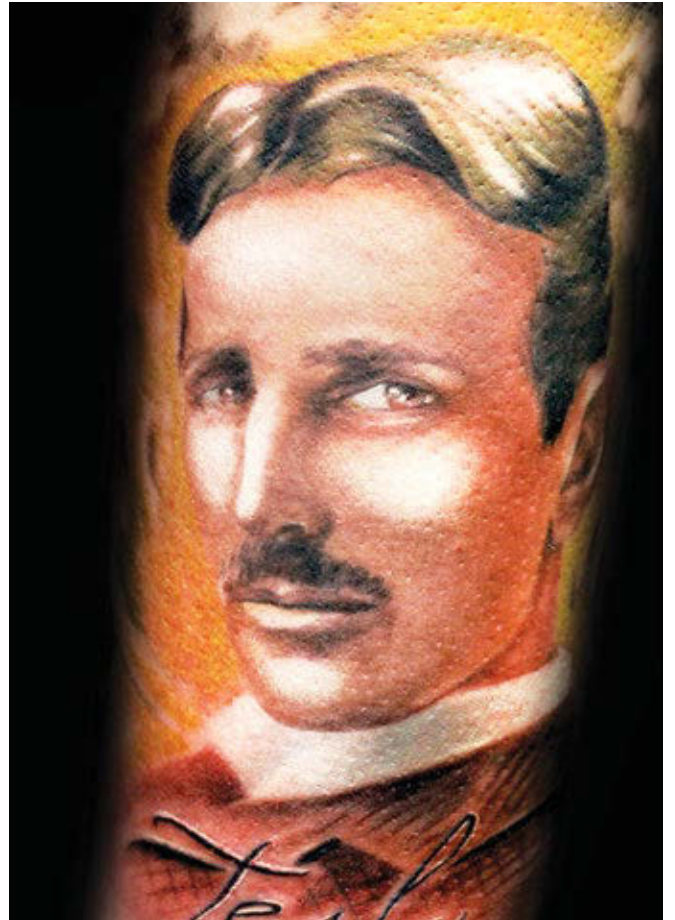
Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Are you sure? Look, this is your last chance! :)

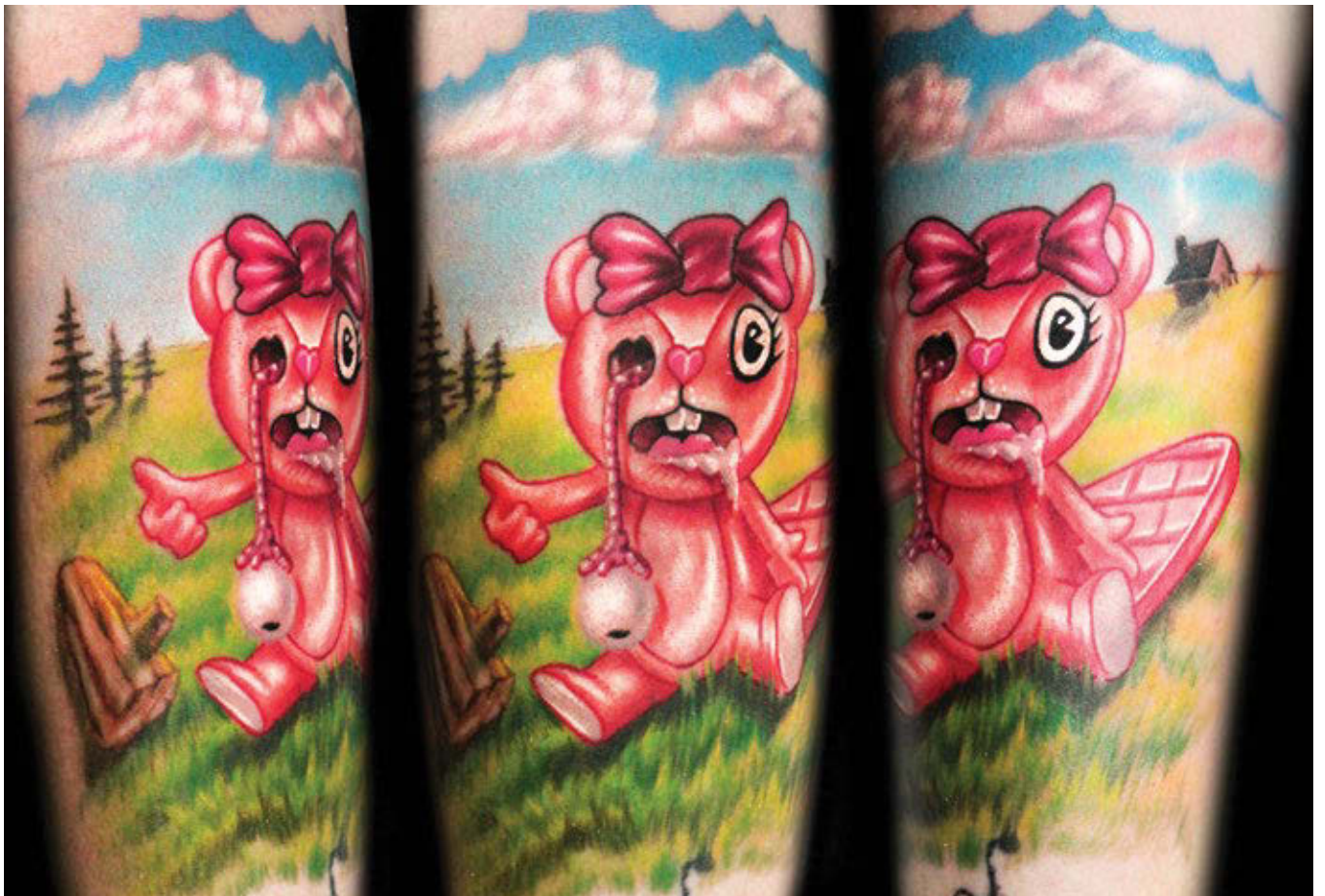
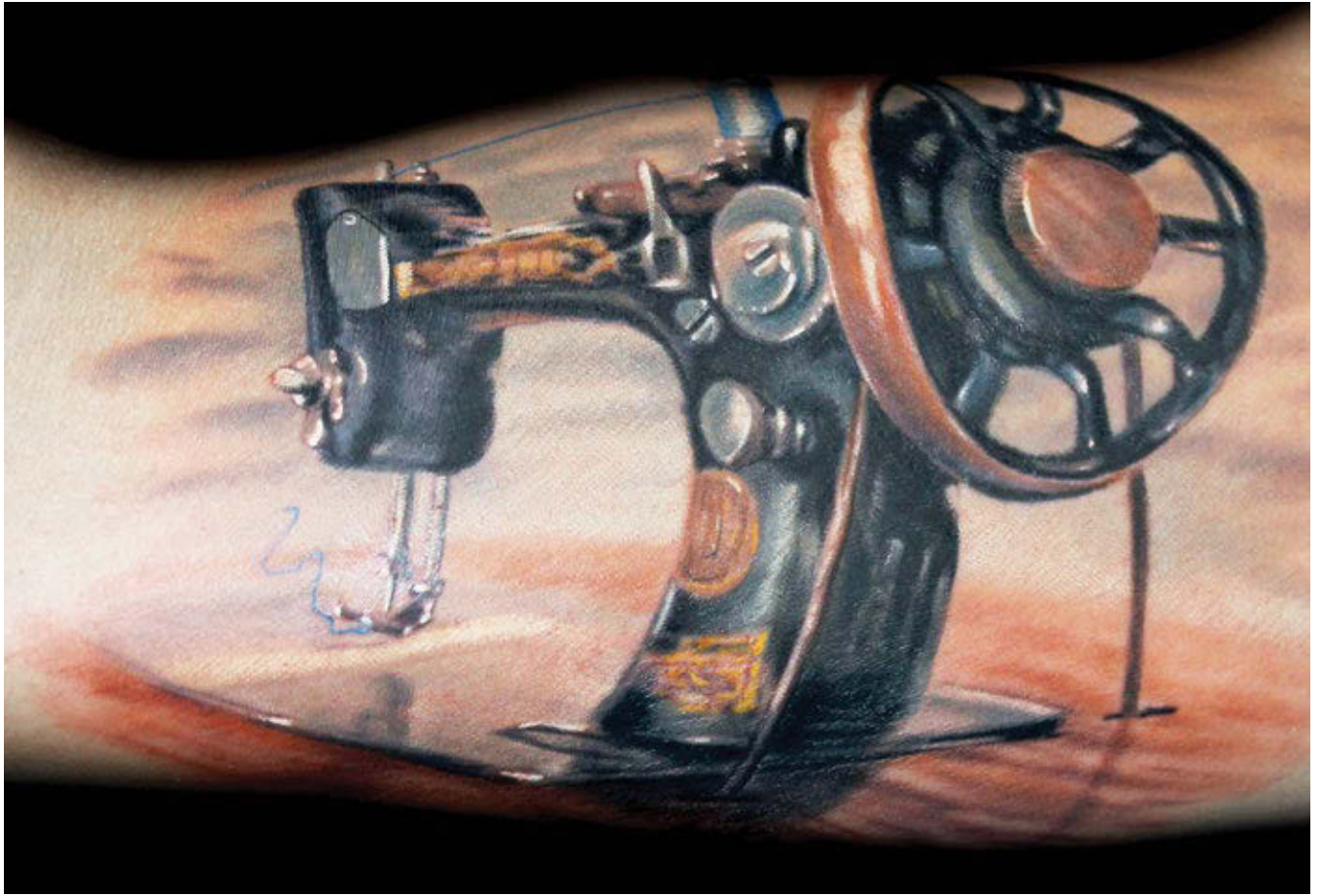
Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I still don't have a back piece. I'm just curious what I can do with a back piece.













ROMAN

Instagram @romantattoos
909-797-8280

Artistic Element Tattoo
34185 Yucaipa Boulevard
Yucaipa, CA 92399

Artistic Element II Tattoo & Art Gallery
7460 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90036

What year did you start tattooing? I think I started tattooing around 2000, but my memory is shot.

How did you get into tattooing? I was working road construction and I hated every minute of it. I hated being in the sun and I hated waking up early. Luckily for me, my uncle bought me a tattoo machine and I started tattooing my friends and coworkers on the road. Eventually I made a decision to make tattooing my career.

Where did you apprentice? I never had a formal apprenticeship and pretty much was self-taught. I pretty much made every mistake you could ever think of because I never had an apprenticeship and had no idea what I was doing.

Do you have any special training? Well, I was lucky enough to meet and work with Mike Cole and Carson Hill early on, and they both have had a huge influence on me. That

counts for special training, right?

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? Man, I have done a lot of shows. I pretty much will go wherever people want me to go if I can fit it in my schedule. I used to be on the road all the time, but now I have my own shop to run, and I have a family with two beautiful little girls, and it's becoming harder to travel and be away for extended lengths of time. I have won a few awards, ha ha. I used to be all about it, winning trophies in competition, but nowadays I really just want to do good tattoos. Some of the most memorable ones I have won would have to be the two I received from *Tattoo Society* magazine. I also took home a tattoo championship belt, like the UFC belts, for tattoo of the show in Texas. The first award I won ever in San Francisco. My Hell City awards—Hell City is a awesome show that Durb puts on, and it has



nothing but the best artists attending it, so any award you win there is special.

How do you describe your style? I do bio-mechanical color realism shit ... ha ha.

What inspires you as an artist? I am inspired by all sorts of things. Anything I look at can give me inspiration—stuff I have seen before, from the different shapes, curves, and bends in metal to how water looks on chrome. A lot of it comes from right out of my head. I just start drawing on the skin with marker and it will start to take shape. Early on I was all about H.R. Giger. I was all into Giger and I was all into Boris Vallejo, as well as guys like Guy Aitchison, Aaron Cain, and Ron Earhart.

What sets you apart from other artists?

My good looks and my awesome personality.

What other mediums do you work in? I paint when I can, but it's hard to find time with my crazy schedule. Lately I have been getting into digital art and painting with the computer or on my iPad. I am on the road a lot, so it's real convenient to pull out my iPad and stylus and go crazy while I'm on a plane or in an airport.

Have you branched out from tattooing? Not really. I have a T-shirt line I'm working on and a few other ideas. But first and foremost I tattoo. That's what I do, and that's what I want to be remembered for.

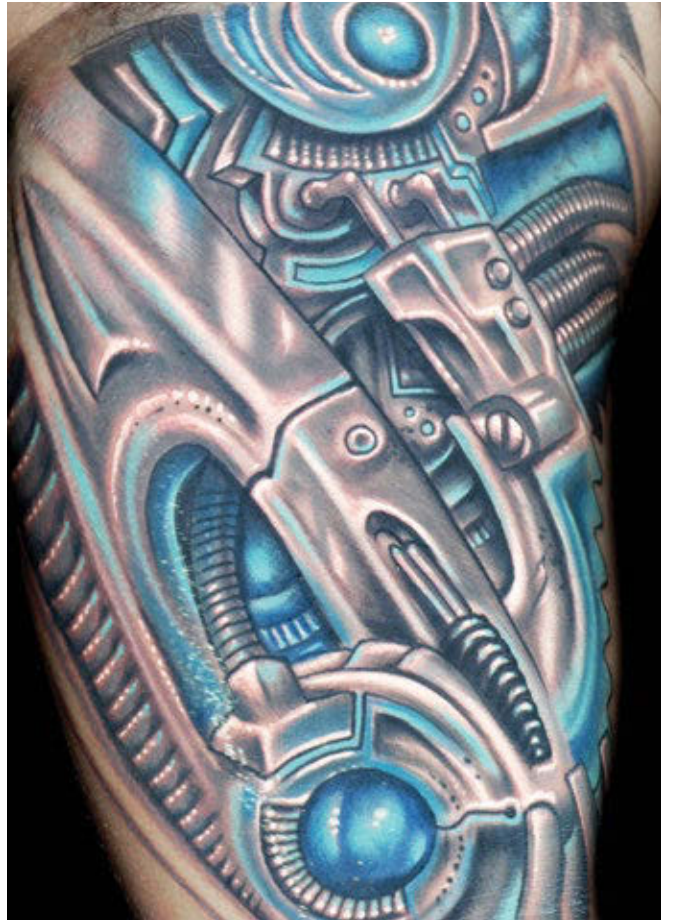
What tattoo artists do you admire most? Mike Cole, Carson Hill, Guy Aitchison, Aaron Cain, Ron Earhart, Nick Baxter, Nikko Hurtado,

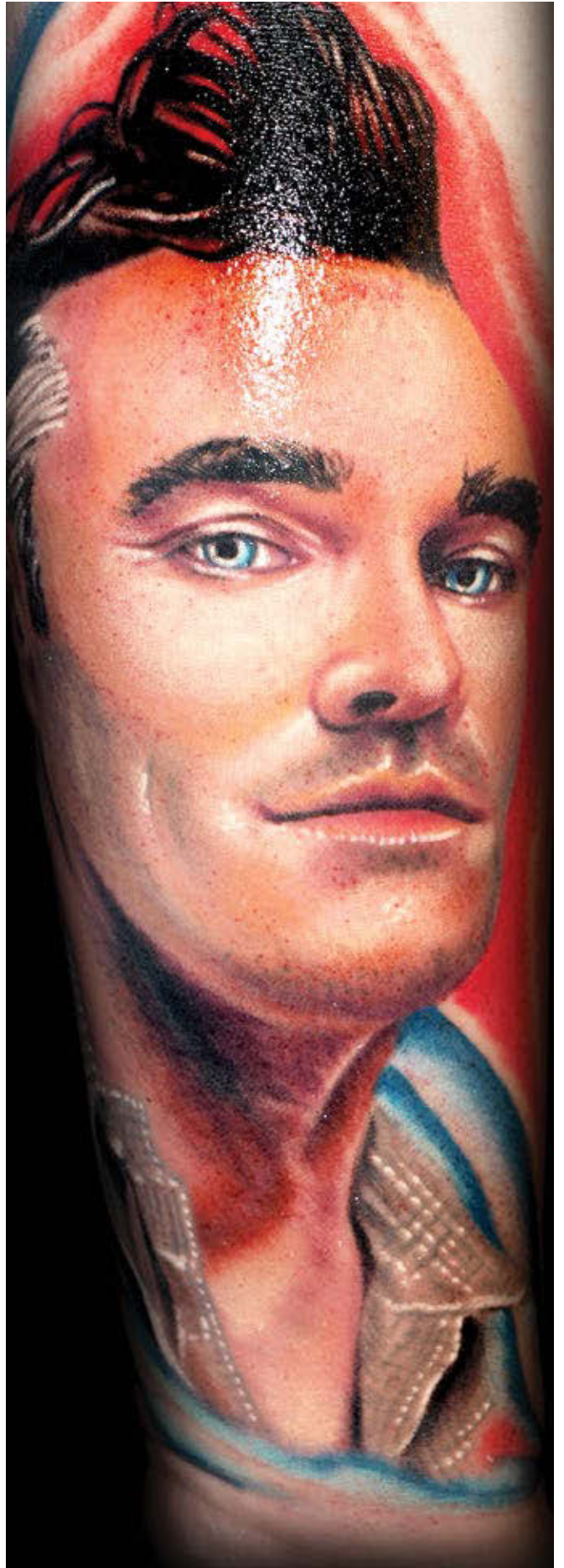
Mike DeVries, Mike DeMasi, Randy Engelhard, and Timmy B. I'm sure I forgot a few, and if I did, I'm sorry.

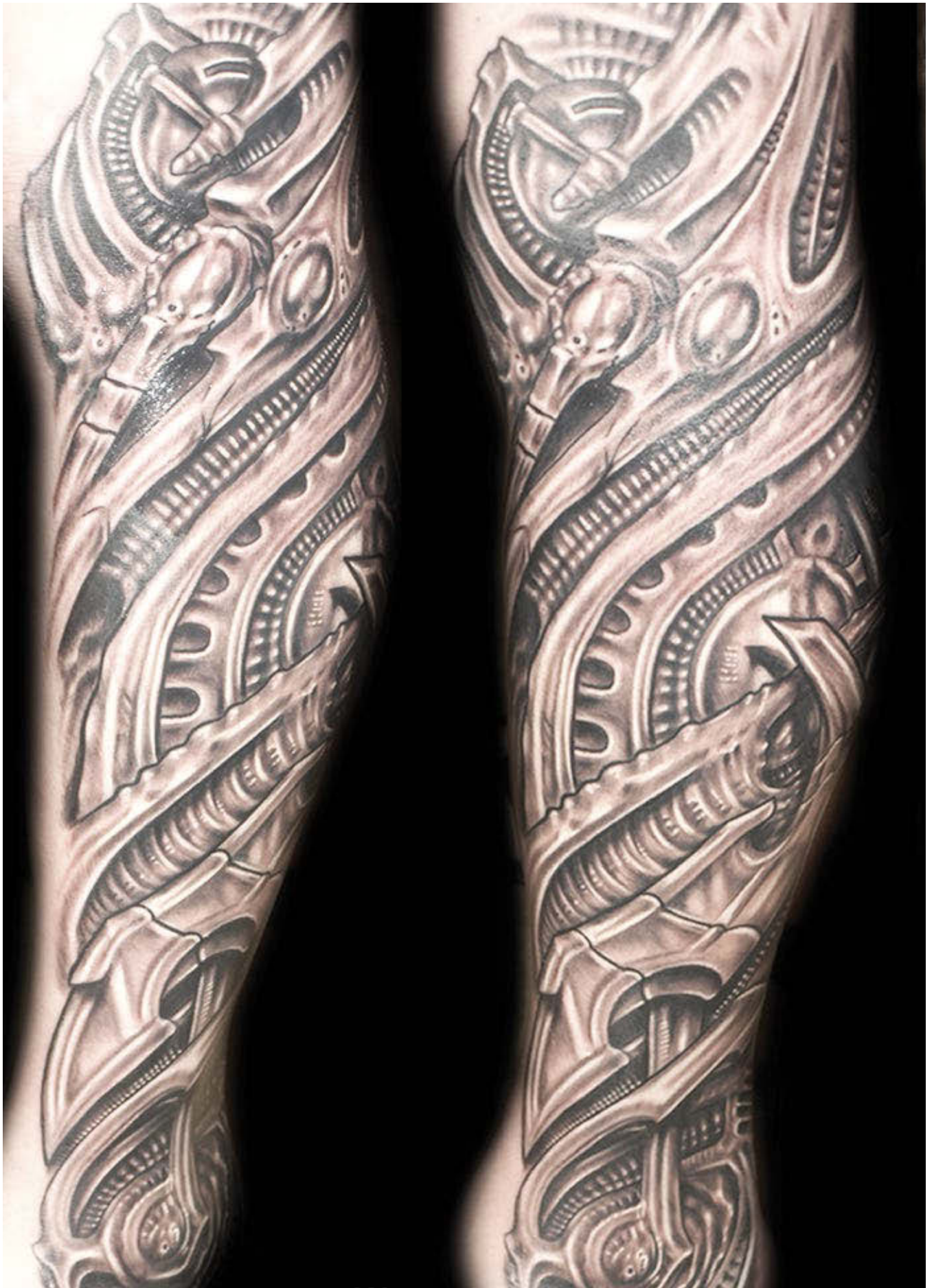
What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I love doing bio and I love doing color realism, so anything along those lines I really look forward to doing.

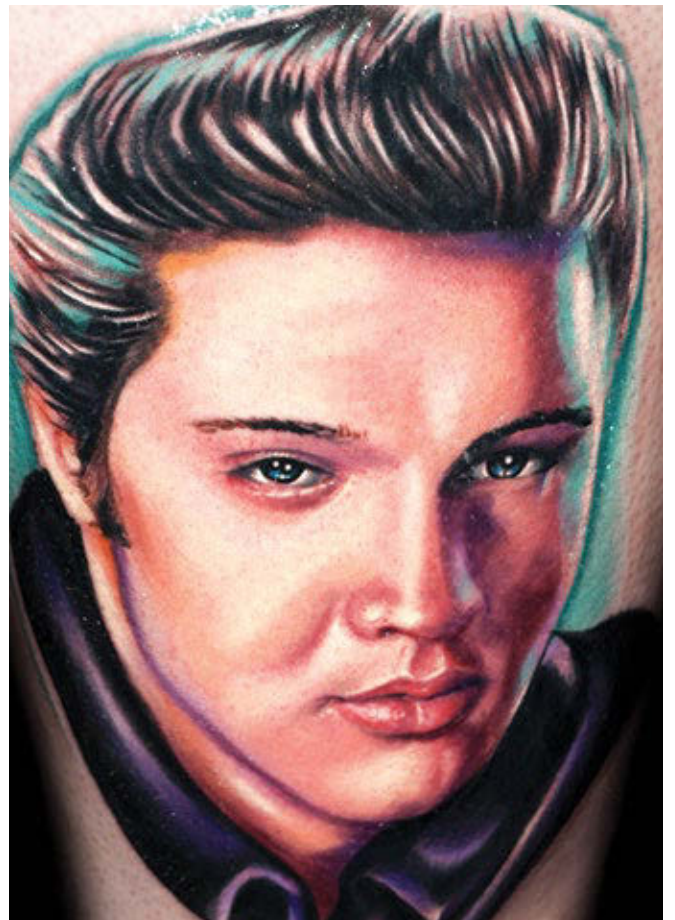
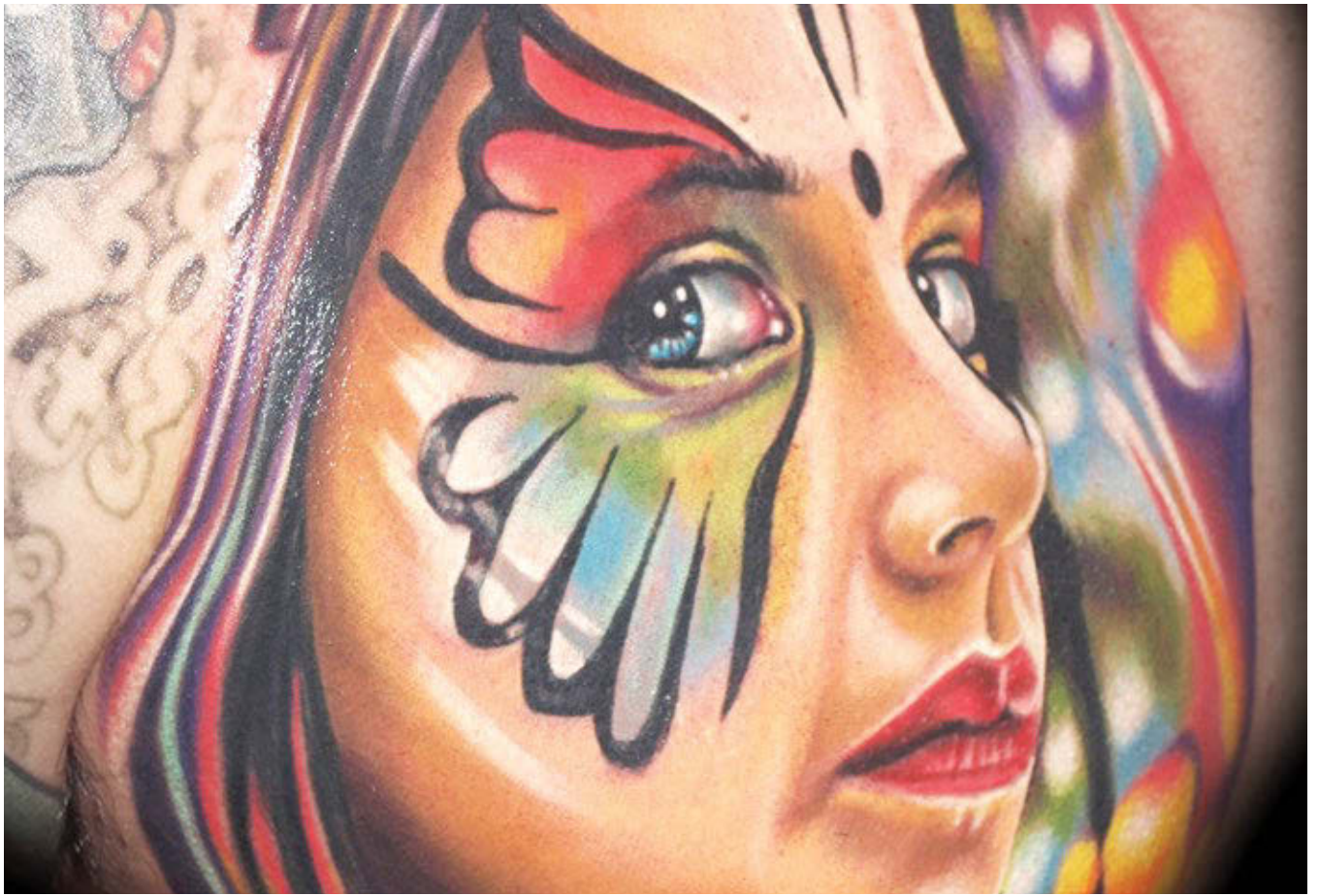
Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Research your artist and find the right artist for what you want to get done.

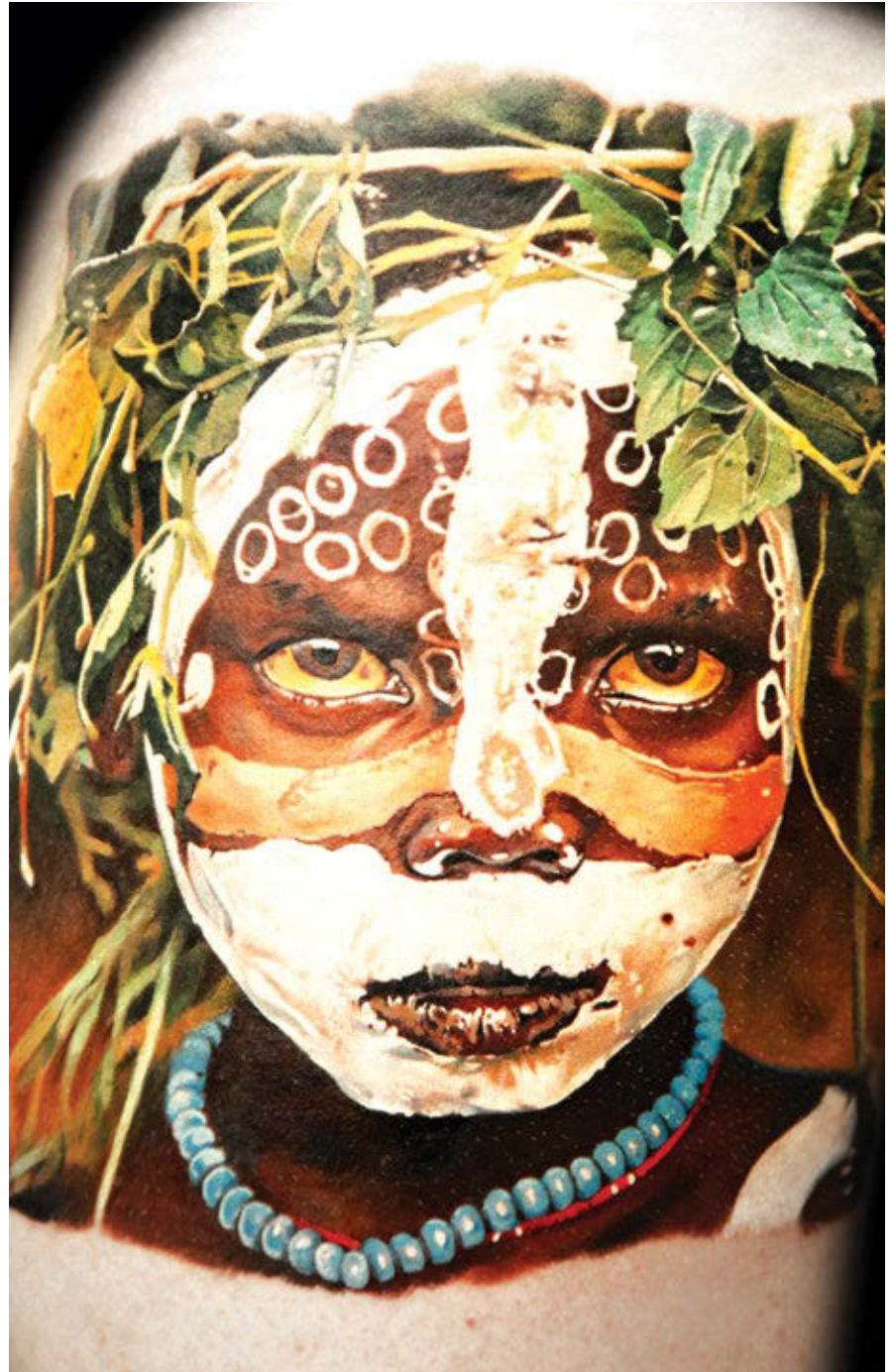
Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I am about to start a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle sleeve that I am really excited to do. But ever since Nate Dogg passed away I have wanted to do a portrait of him. Any takers? Ha ha.











DMITRIY SAMOHIN

Studio Euphoria
65125 Odessa
Ukraine

What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing over 10 years ago.

How did you get into tattooing? I decided to become a tattoo artist during my time in the army. I discovered a tattoo magazine, went through it, and that is where I decided to become a tattoo artist. I was intrigued by this type of art form. I wanted to create on skin what is possible on paper or on canvas.

Where did you apprentice? I am a self-taught artist.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?

I did a few conventions in Russia and Odessa, and last year we went to the Brussels convention in Belgium. In February of this year we were at the Graz convention in Austria. I have several clients who go to conventions as well and enter my work into contests. I have awards from Russia, Odessa, USA, Norway. All conventions are pleasant to attend, and I treasure good memories for each one.

How do you describe your style? I do not like to attach my work to any one specific style. I am aware I am known for my realism, but I like every style. Every style is interesting to me and I like to do them all. The wide variety of styles keeps my work interesting and fun.



What inspires you as an artist? My inspiration comes from everyday life—things I see walking down the street, things I hear, things I read, sometimes things just get triggered during conversations with people. My basic everyday life inspires me.

What sets you apart from other artists? I think each artist sets their own style. Each artist is unique and famous for their work. The only difference I can think of is that some artists create work that is that different from the others, and in that way they are looked at as unique. Same as for any artist, either if that is in music, art, photography, etc. There are always a few that stand out.

What other mediums do you work in? I paint or sketch whenever there is free time.

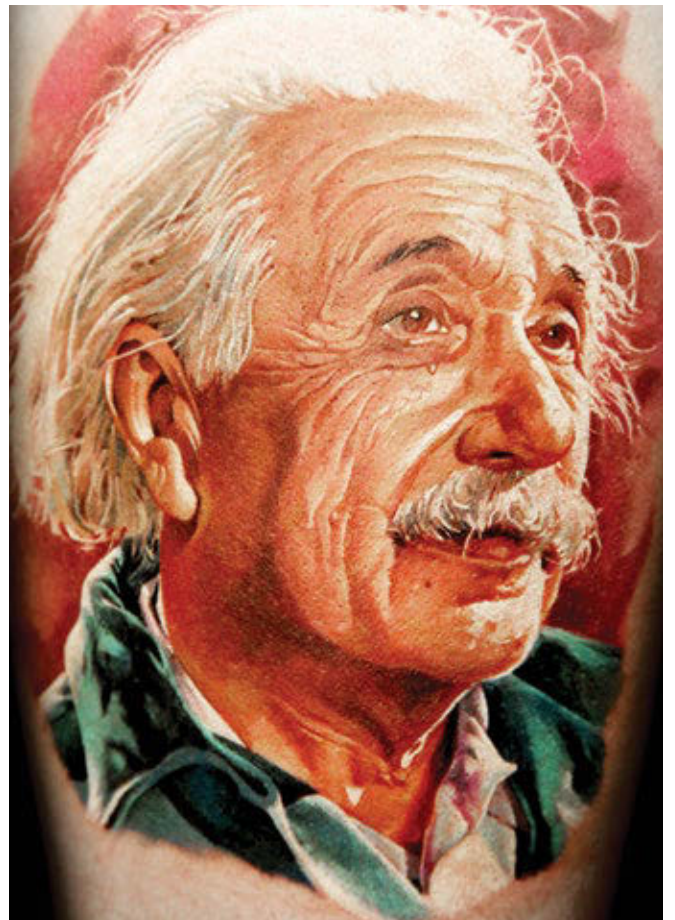
What tattoo artists do you admire most? I like many talented artists, but to name a few: Shawn Barber, Alex De Pase, Robert Hernandez, Zhivko, Boris, Jeff Gogue, Victor Portugal, Phil Garcia. There are many other quality artists I also admire.

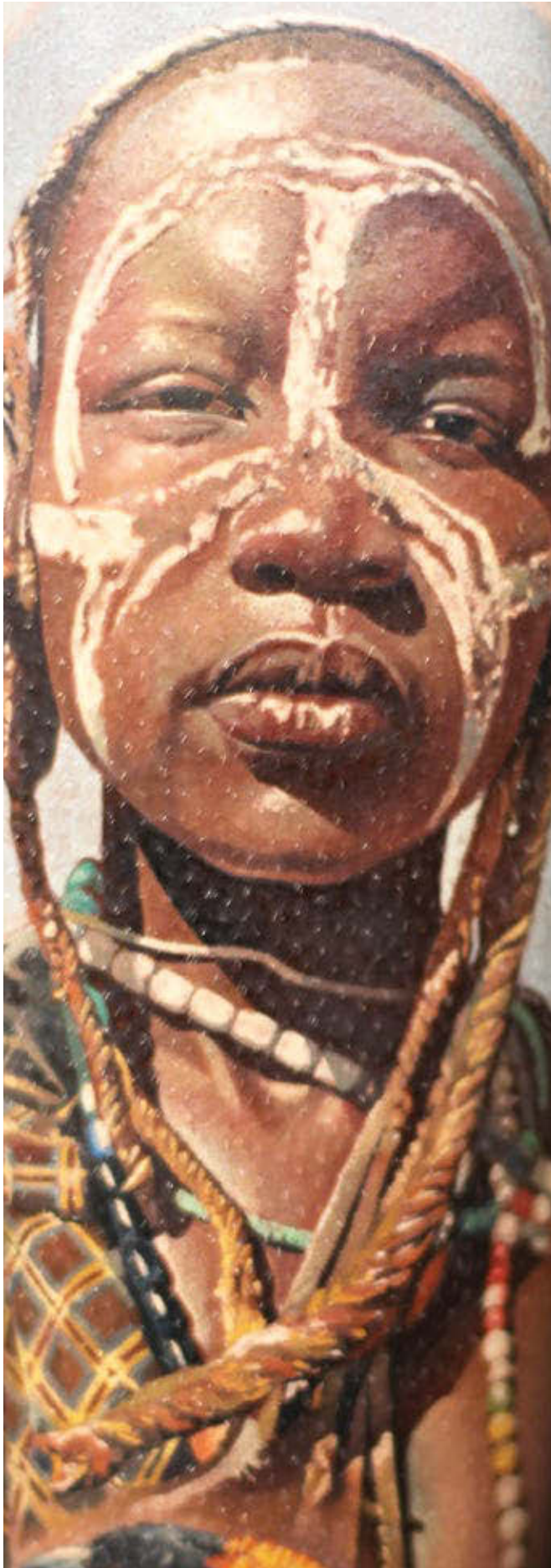
What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I like every tattoo. If I agree to do a tattoo it means I approve of the design or the idea. All my clients know I stand behind every piece I do, as I make it clear I will only agree to do what I believe in. I am not afraid to debate

an idea or say no.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? What is most important is that each person knows what they want. Hearing they had the desire for a specific tattoo is reassuring. Many people ask me to do something I want to do, but that is not something I will ever do. It is so important that each person knows I will work with them to create a design and work with them on their idea—giving advice, etc.—but it is their body, their life, their tattoo they will wear forever, and I do not take this lightly. I want my clients to be satisfied, happy with the work I lay on their body.











RYAN NEEDLES

310-833-6900

Timeline Gallery

1117 South Pacific Avenue
San Pedro, California 90731

What year did you start tattooing? Late 1998, 1999. I was more of a hang-around at the local shop, but I knew I wanted to pursue this. I started to tattoo friends on the side; I wasn't allowed to tattoo at the shop yet, so it was more of a discreet thing at first.

How did you get into tattooing? I was always doing art as a kid but I never really considered tattooing as something I could do, definitely not as a profession. I think my interests toward tattooing were really sparked by my last name, Needles. A good friend said one day, "Your last name is Needles and you always draw—why don't you tattoo?" I think that was the moment that changed my look on tattooing as a profession.

Where did you apprentice? Modern Ink, Inglewood, CA. Never did a formal apprenticeship, at least as far as being tormented and hazed like

lots of other guys got. I definitely was taught all the ropes by some good friends along the way.

Do you have any special training? No special art schools, just lots of studying artists who inspired me—and lots of practice. The best training for me has always been to study and try to channel artists who I wanted to be like, taking tattoo seminars as well as paint workshops, life drawing, whatever it takes to keep that drive under you.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? I've worked not too many—the Pomona and L.A. shows at first, San Francisco, mostly local or California stuff. I recently started doing the Hell City shows, which I really enjoy. They are an awesome gathering of amazing artists—most of them inspire me—so it's a really positive experi-



ence. I did the Boston show also last year—that was an awesome city. One of the best things about conventions is traveling and experiencing different cities and people. I've never won an award before. I haven't really done tons of shows and have entered even less contests, so I'm sure the awards will come one day and be that much sweeter when they do, I guess. Some of my best convention memories are probably lost with the blackouts after too much alcohol. Awesome parties and people I've met, inspiring artists, cities, places, and restaurants. The Paradise convention was a big one for me. I didn't work that one in particular, but it was probably one of the best times I've ever had at a show. There were tons of artists I looked up to that I am able to call my friends now. I also took some seminars, which really helped me progress to a new level. That's really what it's all about.

How do you describe your style? Dark, realistic, detail-oriented, capable, and progressing.

What inspires you as an artist? Other people, other artists, painters, sculptors, architecture, even things like the ocean, nature, darker emotional things like homeless people, sick children, war, violence, speed. Just about anything can inspire me. I think that's what it takes for any artist, to find inspiration where others can't.

What sets you apart from other artists? I think we are all set apart with individuality. I have a strong will to succeed and progress; I constantly fight to be a better artist and tattooer. I'm not nor have ever been in this business for the money—it was always about the art. But I think that most tattooers in my position or better positions have all had a strong will to succeed and a good work ethic. I've found you can't get anything worth having in life without hard work.

What other mediums do you work in? Acrylic and oil paint—only the last two years properly, at least. I still just love to draw with number 2 pencils and ballpoint pens sometimes. I sketch with pastel pencils—really whatever I'm feeling at the time. I've also just got into the digital world a bit with the Intuos drawing tablet.

How have you branched out from tattooing? Painting for sure, but I think tattooing really drove me to be a better artist all around. I guess smaller jobs for friends, designing things like logos for their company T-shirts, stickers, things like that. I was offered a thing at a Nike event once; it never panned out. I still really enjoy tattooing so I haven't tried much to branch out. Maybe more in the future.

What tattoo artists do you admire most?

There are many tattooists I admire, mostly the ones who are humble. Arrogance is, in my opinion, a horrible trait for a tattooist. I can't admire people who are too good for everyone else. It's sad to see all the artists who have become mainstream by doing TV shows lose their senses and forget that talent is more important than a paycheck from dramatized TV shows. These are some of the people who could have the biggest influence on our industry but are too taken by TV fame.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?

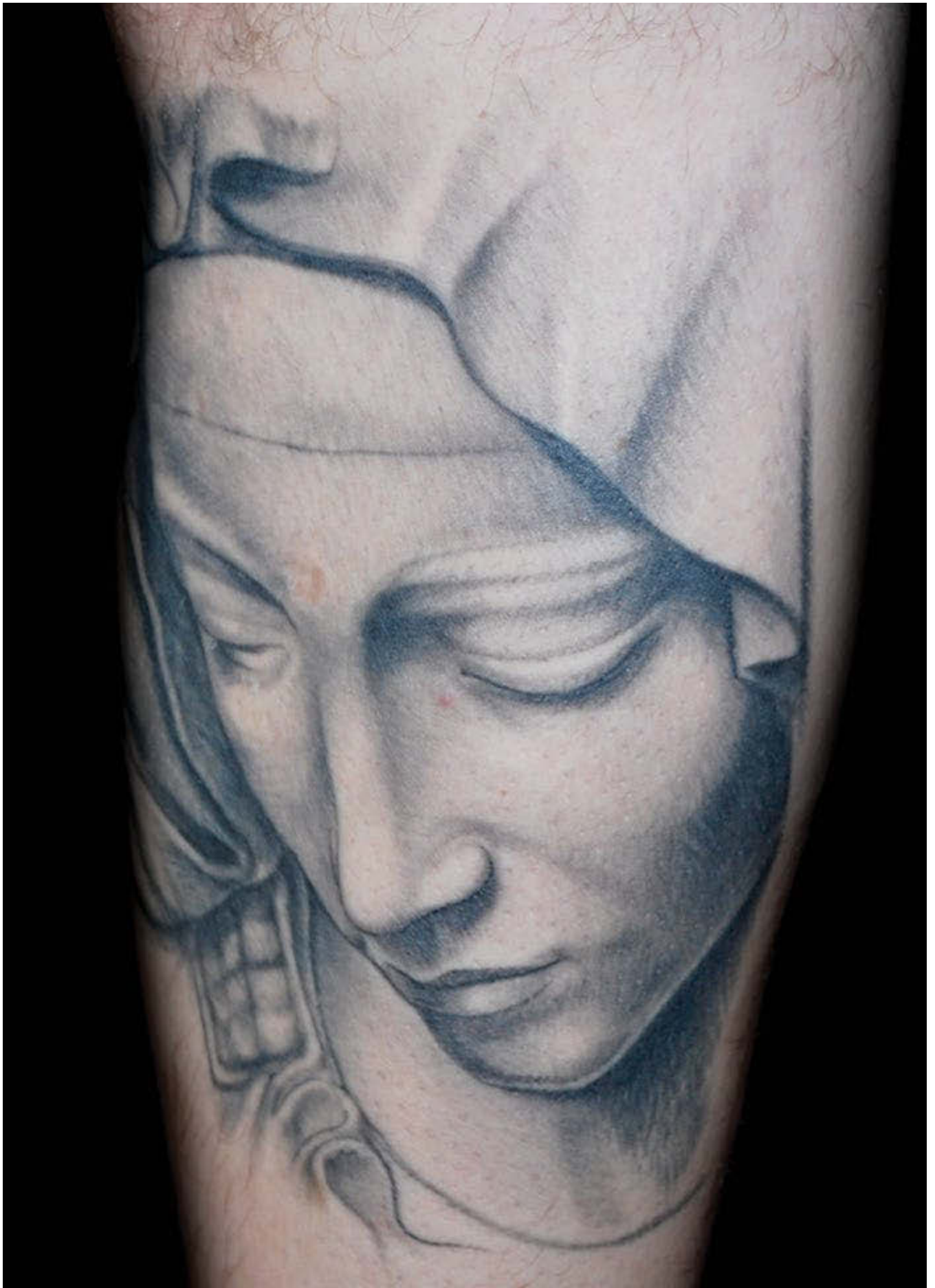
I always look forward to tattooing things that are original and unrestricted, even if it's a little out of my typical genre. Anything evil, no color, and freehand are a plus. Things like tribal or script are boring and unartistic. There are always exceptions but I think for the most part they're a horrible task and only done for the money.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?

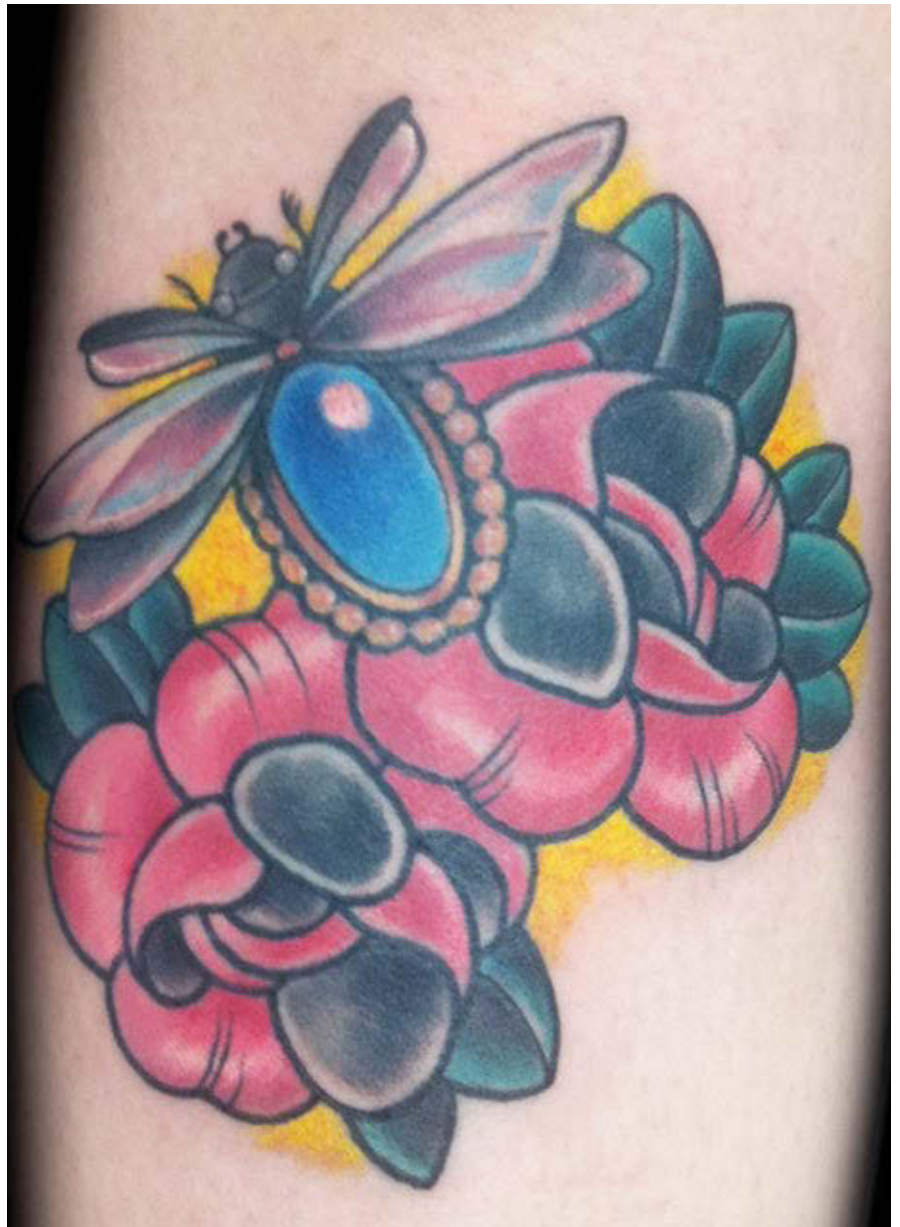
I'm sure there is; I just don't really focus on particular images. I take each day fresh, not knowing most of the time what I'm tattooing for the day. That way there's more feeling put into it instead of overthinking things, which takes the art away from things. Anything different is always good.











SHANNAN MEOW

Artistic Skin Art

Unit 4, 146 Great Eastern Highway
Midland, Western Australia 6056

What year did you start tattooing? Early 2009, but in 2010 I restarted at Sink or Swim and had to relearn everything I'd been "taught."

How did you get into tattooing? Well, I had a lot of friends who were tattooers, and they always offered me work in their shops, but I wanted to know that I got it on my own merit. Basically, I took two weeks off work as a waitress at Cosmopolitans in Fortitude Valley, a really scummy cafe where people like me could work. I was a bit of a dirty goth at the time. I got my head down and did up a portfolio with a bunch of designs, and took them into Psychedelic Tattoo in Mt. Gravatt. Paul told me to go home and redraw the portfolio and then bring it back in a week. I did, and he seemed surprised to see me back, but he was impressed and put me on the counter and I started my apprenticeship.

Where did you apprentice? I was at Psychedelic for about a year before I started learning to tattoo, doing general apprentice

duties, earning no money!

Do you have any special training? When I started at Sink or Swim I was fortunate enough to work alongside Basto, a longtime friend, and he's a line Nazi. He pretty much retaught me everything, and it changed the way I tattoo completely.

How do you describe your style? No idea. Usually a bit dark, and girly. It's fun, but it depends on my mood! Sometimes I'm really upbeat, or super serious, and it shows in my work, I think.

What inspires you as an artist? Fluffy animals, unicorns, dark video games, demons, jewelry, and nature.

What sets you apart from other artists? Nothing! Everyone is different in their own way.

What other mediums do you work in? I try



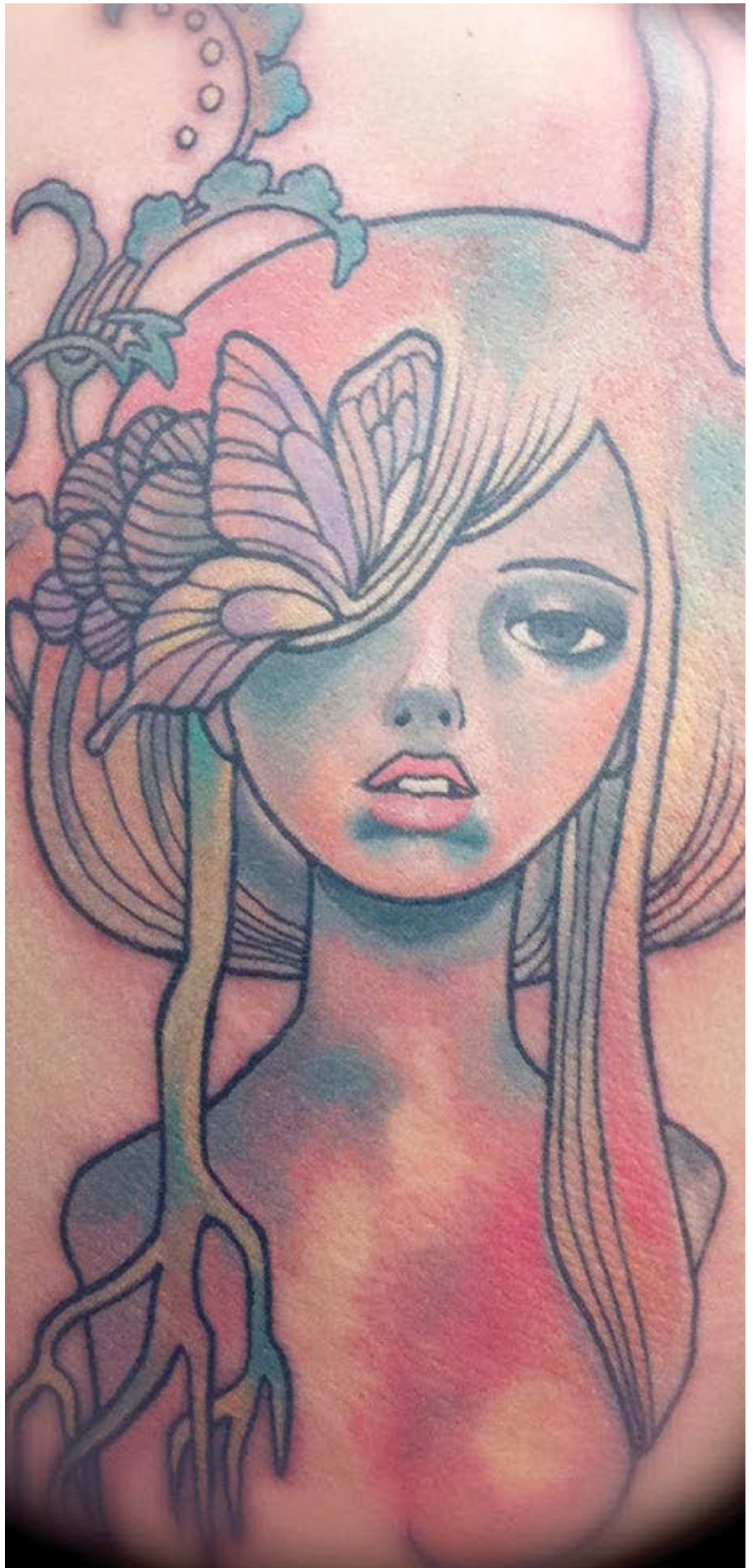
and do acrylics and watercolors as often as I can get motivated!

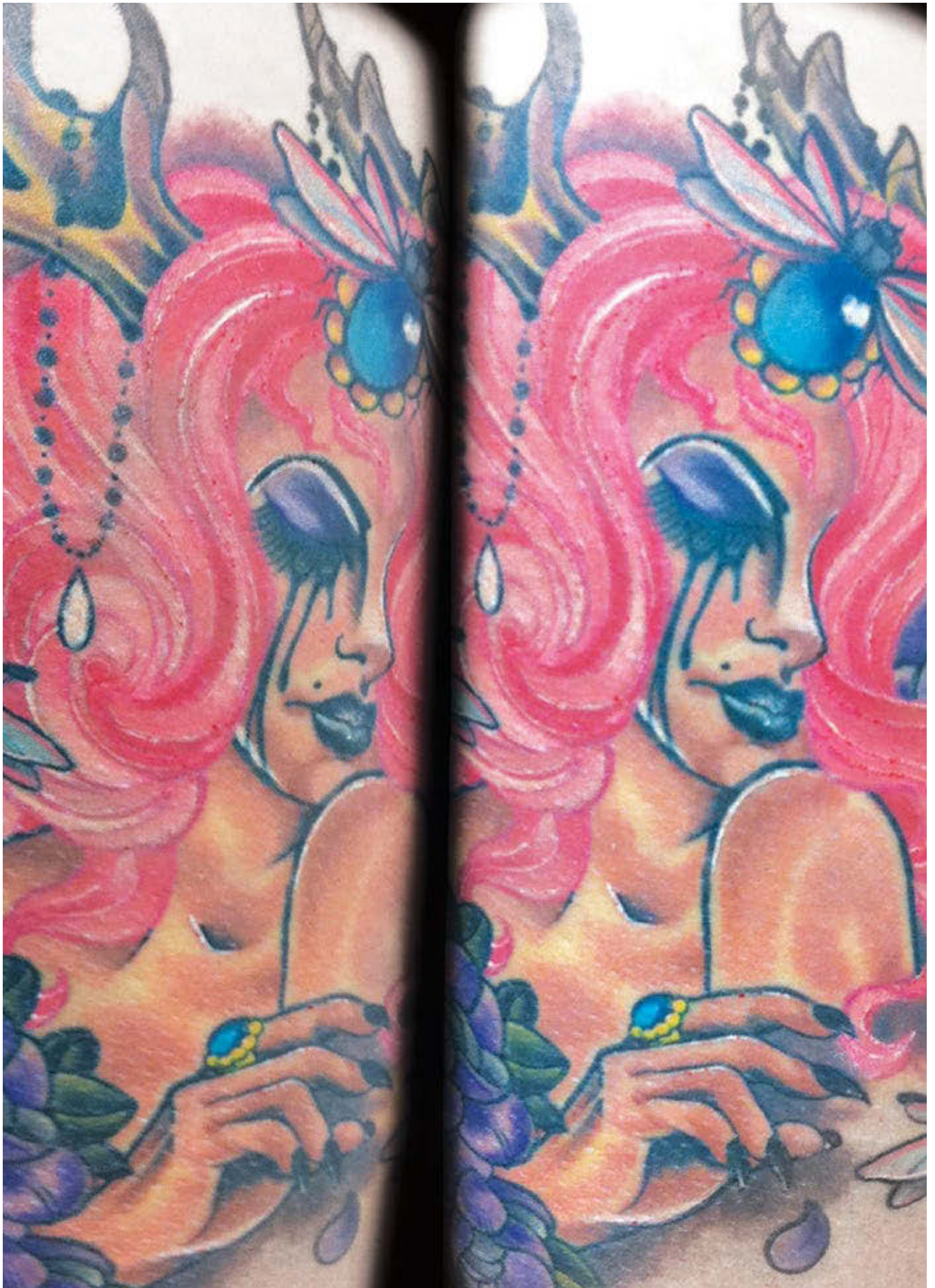
What tattoo artists do you admire most?

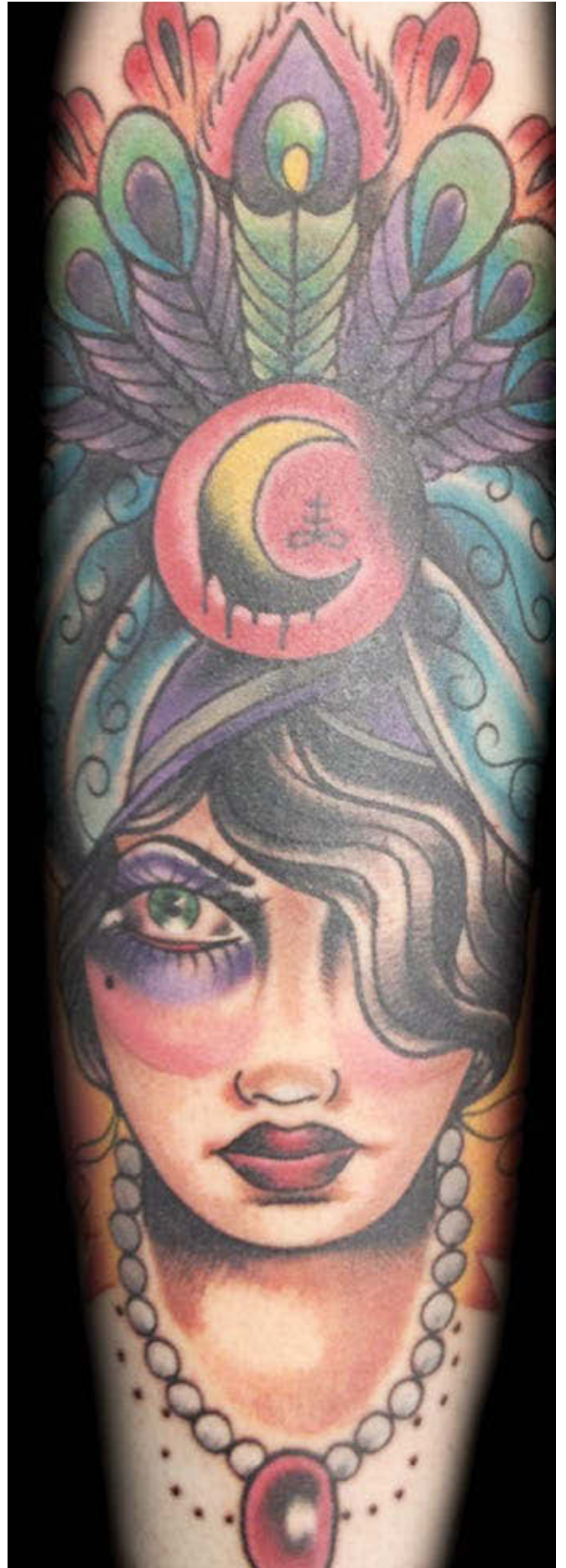
Milly Loveknuckles at Rock of Ages, mostly. She has inspired me to be a tattooist from the moment I met her 13 years ago. As for art admired there are just way too many to list—so many amazing artists now doing so much amazing, unique work—but Sam Rulz and Zane Gooneytunes are the most standout for me.

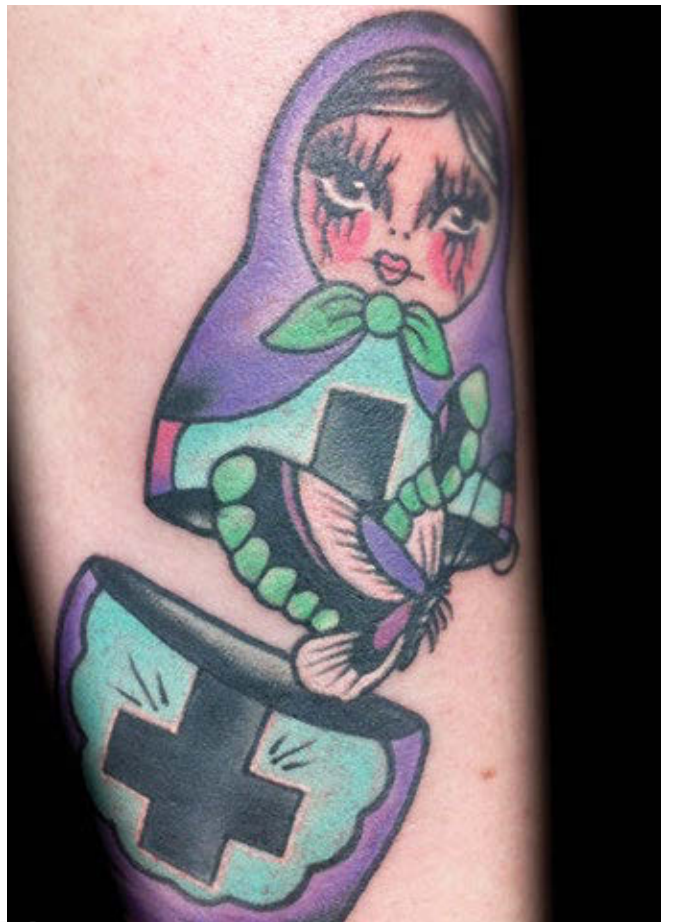
Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?

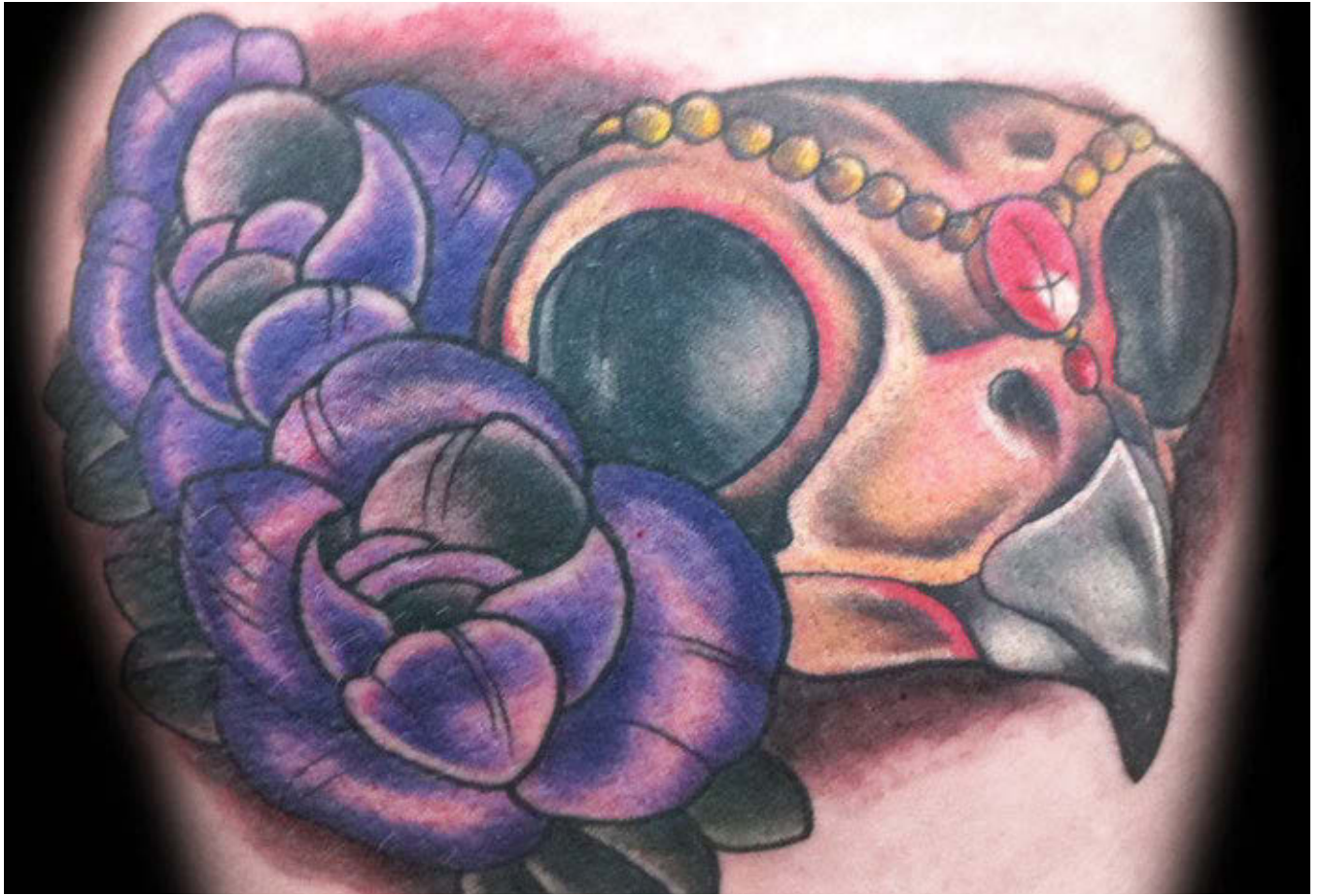
I'm not sure if you would call it advice, but if someone is freaking out I just tell them that I'm the biggest pussy when it comes to getting tattooed, and I'm covered, so they will be fine! And if they need a break or don't feel okay, to let me know—and there is no pressure to finish the tattoo at once if it is hurting them.













MATT BROTKA

mattbrotka.com

Salvation Tattoo

819 West Cary Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220

What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in 1997.

How did you get into tattooing? The popular answer these days is "tattooing found me." It holds true for so many of us. Being involved in the punk rock scene in the early '90s, I had been interested in tattoos from seeing various work on people at shows, but tattooing wasn't like it is today. Most mid- to larger-sized cities only had two or three shops, if lucky. Maybe three or four national tattoo magazines. No internet. You just had to be the kind of person who would seek it out on your own. Whereas today, it's thrown in your face. Tattooing is the only thing in my life that makes sense.

Where did you apprentice? In 1994, there was a tattoo shop that happened to be on my way home from school. Most days, I would stop in and peek around, annoy all the tattooers and ask about trading art for tattoos. One thing led to another and I was off and running. A good friend of mine at the time was really encouraging me to get involved so he could get free tattoos. He helped me build my first crappy homemade "guns" and let me mess his arms and legs up. I got a few false starts with

a few different shops along the way, but it was more abuse and misinformation than anything, so I skip mentioning them and go right to a fellow named Mike Beauchesne in Rhode Island who REALLY showed me the way. He had to cure me of a lot of the bad habits I had picked up prior. He was hard on me, but a wonderful teacher. Credit also goes to a coworker at the time, Rob Young. Together, he and Mike really helped me iron out the kinks and taught me how to put on solid tattoos and set me straight in proper ethics of tattooing.

Do you have any special training? I have no formal art training besides a few high school art classes. I feel as though I learned to draw from comic books in the late '80s and early '90s the most. Wendy Pini, Bob McLeod, Robert Crumb, Daniel Clowes all were large influences on my own drawing.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? I've worked a lot of conventions, so listing them all would just be dull. I've tended to stray away from conventions recently, as they all are seeming to become increasingly



obscene. The focus now seems to be on “satellite” personalities that really don’t contribute to the tattoo world other than gaining themselves more 15-minute fame from vapid and destructive tattoo television shows. Promoters are packing a convention center with 300 automaton tattoo droids that have the same outfits, personalities, and identical portfolios. So, yeah, I don’t even bother, for the most part. One of my favorite convention memories recently was the 2010 Baltimore show. A huge blizzard hit that weekend, covering most of the East Coast in four feet of snow. We were basically stuck in the hotel for three days and although it made for some slow work days, it was the most fun I’ve ever had at a convention.

How do you describe your style? I’m not really sure what my style would be. I like tattoos that lean toward the traditional, with clean, simple lines and heavy shading, but have a bit more illustrative flair. Traditional American and Japanese with a modern twist, perhaps? I like to try and make strong compositions with lots of layers.

What inspires you as an artist? I can find inspiration from just about any aspect of life. Travelling, books, music, art. The more I paint or draw, the more I feel inspired for new projects.

What sets you apart from other artists? After a customer called me “the tape jerk,” I have been much more thoughtful about placing tape for a bandage. I think I have been getting pretty awesome at taping. It sets me apart from the crowd.

What other mediums do you work in? I mostly work in watercolor, liquid acrylic, pen and ink.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I have a few very non-tattoo-related paintings in the works. I’ve also been working on a small autobiographical comic book for a few years now.

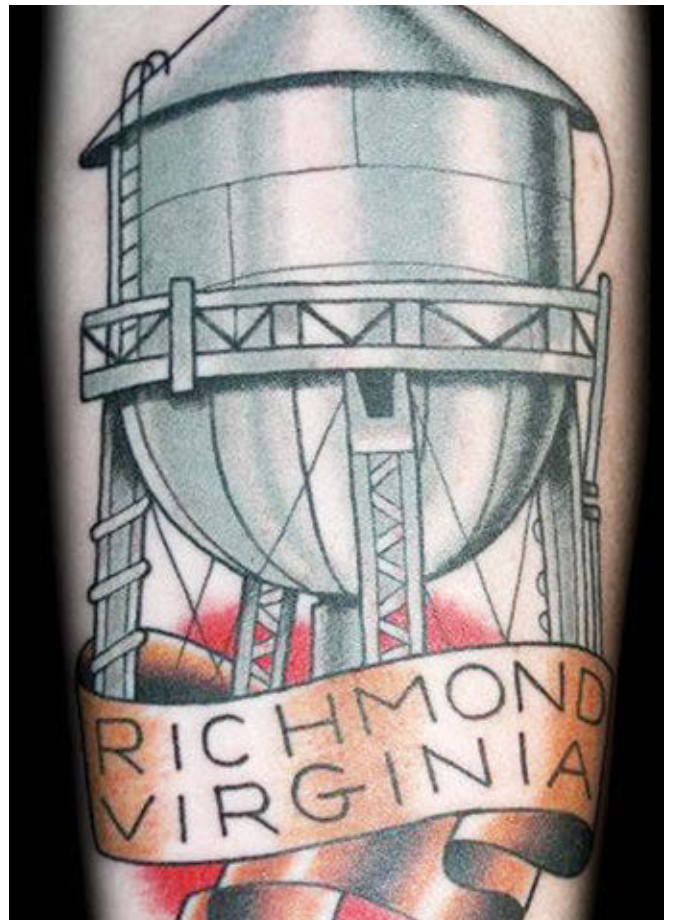
What tattoo artists do you admire most? Ed Hardy, Bob Shaw, Chris Trevino, Theo Min-dell, Filip Leu, Timothy Hoyer. Also my coworkers Katie Davis and Fred Pinckard.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? No specific subject matter, I suppose. I enjoy doing more layered, large-scale work. I like tattoos that tell a story without using hundreds of words.

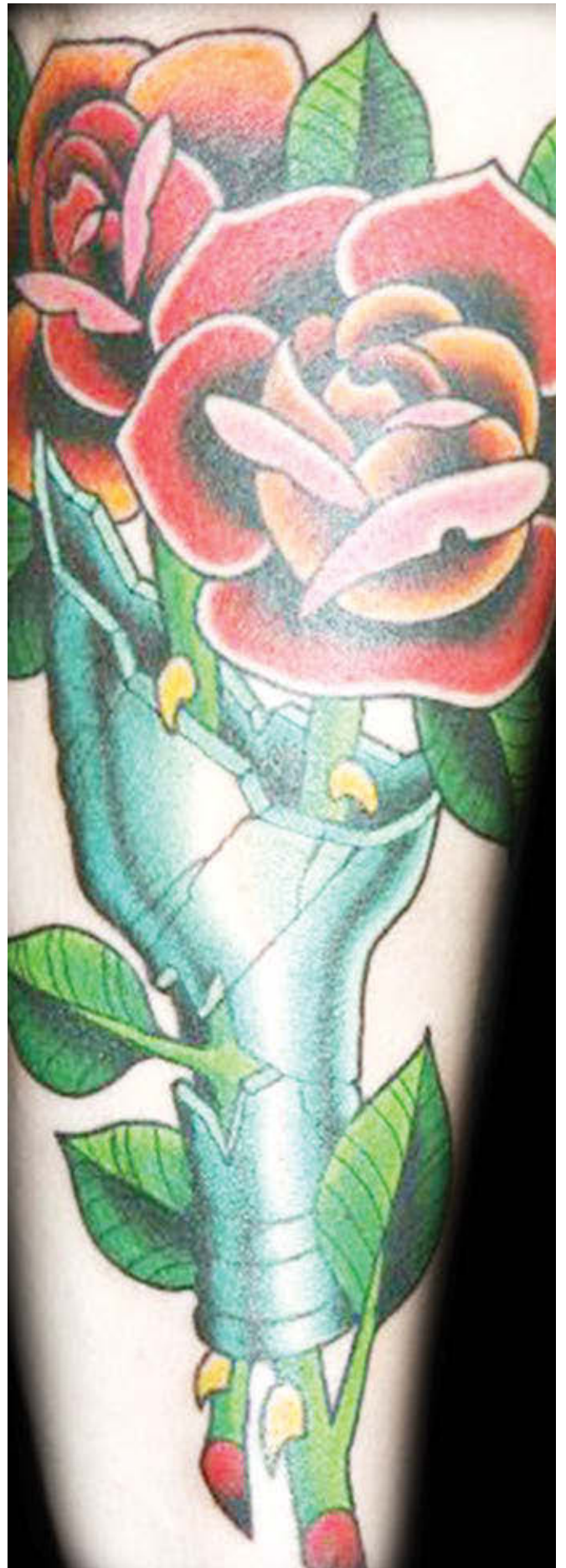
Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? You need to put more trust in your tattooer! If you’ve researched someone’s work, taken the time to meet with them, etc., etc., just listen to what they have to say. If a tattooer has a portfolio full of beautiful tattoos that you love, believe them when they say, “Hmm, this might not work so great because” Stop micromanaging your tattoos to the point of ruining them. Tattooing is not a Google image search, nor is it a re-blogged photo on Tumblr. They are made by human hands, and they look the best when you can see that.

Is there a tattoo that you haven’t done yet that you are dying to do? Not in particular. I’d love to do more pretty ladies with fancy hair, more dark and emotional imagery. I love nautical themes.











JAY PARANICH

fullcoveragetattoos.com
856-933-1900

Full Coverage Tattoo Studio
148 Broadway
Westville, New Jersey 08093

What year did you start tattooing? How did you get into it? I started tattooing in mid-2003 after doing an apprenticeship in Arizona for a little over a year. I have been around tattooing since around age 5—I used to sit and watch my mom get tattooed. She was covered, and that was it—I was hooked. It took years to find an apprenticeship; there weren't as many shops as there are now, and back then people were not really receptive to taking on an apprentice, so I didn't start 'til later in life. But I wanted to do it the right way, so I waited until I got the opportunity. After tattooing I made friends with artists in Japan. One artist I developed a friendship with is Hori Hiro of Japan, and that's where my journey into tebori really started. He is an amazing person and great teacher—for those of you who don't know who he is, look him up. He is a true master of the craft.

What is tebori? What is the difference between it and traditional electric tattooing? Tebori is Japanese tattooing by hand. The outline is done by machine and all the color work is done by hand. It's not something that people should just try without any guidance.

How would you describe your art? What inspires you as an artist? For the most part all my work—tattoo work, paintings, leather work—is inspired by traditional Japanese art.

What conventions have you worked at?

I do regular guest spot work in Long Island, at Alchemy Tattoo Arts [2771 Jerusalem Ave., Bellmore, NY]. As far as conventions, I have done the Philly show, Boston, Atlantic City, Wildwood, Baltimore, Milwaukee, New Hampshire, and many others. I was doing one a month for a while, but I'm taking some time away from the shows 'cause they really are not what they used to be, and I'd rather focus on my studio and my work.

What sets you apart from other artists? I'm

not sure what would really set one artist apart from one another other than their style. In the end we are really nothing more than craftsmen. I think people lose sight of that—as tattoo artists we need to be grateful to our customers for letting us work with them. Without them we would not be able to do what we love to do.

What other mediums do you work in? Watercolor, leather, woodworking—pretty much anything I can get my hands on.

What tattoo artists do you admire most?

Hori Hiro, Hori Kyo, Horitoyo (Yutaka), Horitatsu, Kyung-jin Kim, Scott Terrotola, Takashi Matsuba, all of who have helped me along the way. And Horiyoshi III for sharing his work with the world, and Kuniyoshi—I study his work a lot.





TIMELESS INK TOUR

The Timeless Ink Tour launched its first annual show this past July 13 to 15 in Phoenix. The show featured some of the top tattoo artists, including Johnny Quintana, Placaso, Fonzie, and many more artists tattooing on-site all weekend long. The Timeless Ink Tour also featured a large custom car show and had live performances and entertainment all weekend long as well. Saturday night headliners included Kid Ink and Future—and it was a show you didn't want to miss. They also had tattoo contests all weekend, including cash prizes for the artists. The next stop on the tour is Tucson, AZ, this October 19 to 21, with more concerts, more custom car shows—and, of course, more tattoos. Follow the Timeless Ink Tour at timelessinktour.com.





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LIVE FREE OR DIE

New Hampshire's Live Free or Die Tattoo Convention was a great time this year, loaded with tattoos and piercings, as would be expected. More than just the usual tables of vendors and artists, Live Free or Die offered other entertainment—including live suspension by the alluring Crash that was quite the shocker for those who had not experienced hooks in skin before! Not to mention a sideshow circus, including a worm-eating contortionist, a sword swallower, and a man hammering nails, drill bits, and knives up his nose. It was a wicked good time! Check out livefreeordietattoo.com for information on next year's lineup.



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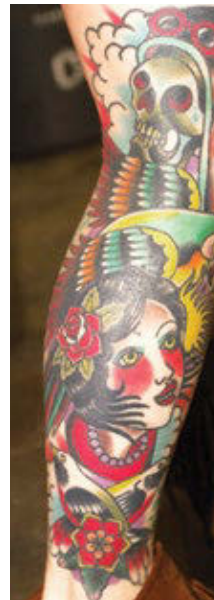
 twitter.com/tattooexpo

TATTOO ARTIST MONI MARINO FROM ITALY



UNITED INK EXPO

This year, United Ink brought out the big guns, literally. Tattoo Lou broke a Guinness World Record by putting together the world's largest tattoo machine. Those who wanted to learn more about different tattoo techniques had their pick of demonstrations on the ancient Japanese tebori technique. Fans of the "body" in "body art" checked out some fierce Olympic-style competing (not to mention shaking and shimmying) in the pole dancing competition. The expo also had highlights for minor tattoo fans, including special performances and temporary tattoos. After the kids went to bed and the artists packed up their equipment, adult parties and inked celebs—including *Ink Master's* Shane O'Neill, Myke Chambers, Paul Booth, Roman Abrego, Nikko Hurtado, and Liz Cook—gathered for the United Ink Awards Ceremony, where they all made the inked honor roll. Sound good? To see for yourself next year go to newyorktattooshow.com.



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R134
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P183
Nosferatu's
Rest
Pendant

R173
Runeband
Ring
(Sizes Q,T,W,Y,Z)

P622
Birth Of
A Demon
Pendant

R24
Eye Of
The Devil
Ring
(Sizes L,N,Q,T,W,Y)

P620
Skull Of
Azrael
Pendant



ULP31
Switchblade
Choker

ULP35
Steel
Guitar
Pendant

UL13

ULFP12
I Love, I Hate
Pendant

ULFP7
Bow Bells
Pendant

ULP10
Dead Man's
Hand
Pendant

ULFE14
Pirate
Ear Stud

ULP33
Loyal
Diamond

ULW1
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Wrist Watch

ULFE5
Live Now
Stud: (pair)

UL13

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Classic Americana is always enough. This design by Johnny Gargan is available as a T-shirt (\$24.95, inkedshop.com) and also as a print (\$19.95, inkedshop.com).



FOLLOW NO ONE

Make a bold statement in this hoodie (\$60, inkedshop.com) with art from Chris Parks and Jason Kelly on the back and the Steadfast Brand logo on the front.



CREATURE OF THE DEEP

This gnarly octopus pendant by Gasoline Glamour (\$29.95, inkedshop.com) is made of raw brass and plated in gunmetal.



ROY G BIV

Artist Carissa Rose gives us a brand-new series of prints; her Spectrum Series (\$34.95, inkedshop.com) displays six very colorful—and haunted—beauties.



BEWARE OF DOG

Sometimes "man's best friend" just doesn't want to be friends with everybody. Let it be known with this nickname tag (\$10, inkedshop.com) courtesy of Underground Hound.



FOR BABY

Perfect for daddy's little girl ... in a Wednesday Addams sense of the phrase. Sourpuss clothing has something for the whole family. This and other baby bibs are available now (\$14.95 each, inkedshop.com).



STYLIN'

The hairstylist's outfit of choice, this Shears top (\$21.95, inkedshop.com) by Annex Clothing is available now.



DOUBLE TROUBLE

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ART BY DANIEL ESPARZA

The Inked Store Gallery doesn't disappoint. Get inspired by the work of artists such as Black Market Art Company's Daniel Esparza, who created this beautiful piece, titled *Victoria* (\$19.95, inkedshop.com).

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