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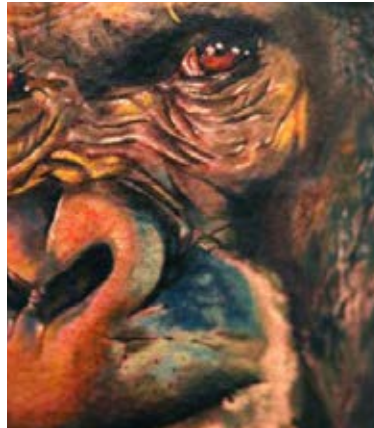
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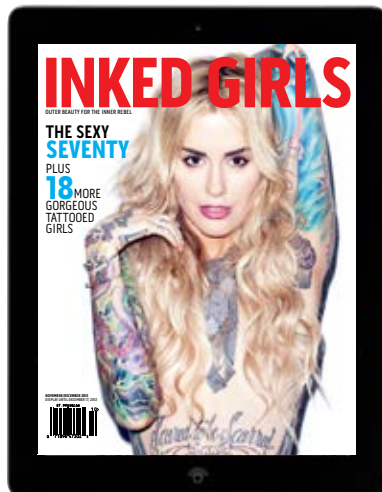
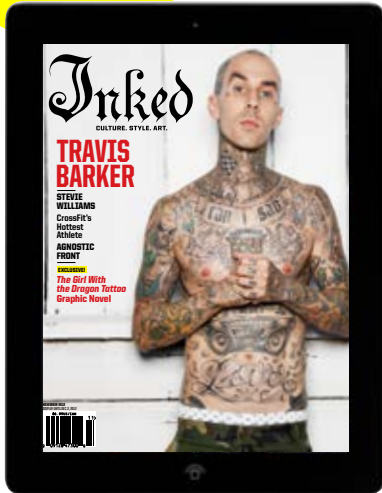
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## TIM HARRIS

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### Hope Gallery Tattoo

835 Woodward Ave  
New Haven, CT 06512



**What year did you start tattooing?** I started in 1998.

**How did you first get into tattooing?** Well, I didn't exactly go looking for it—tattooing kind of fell into my lap. Basically, I was presented with the offer by a local tattoo artist from my town.

**Did you have any special training?** No—I already had been very involved in my own personal artwork, and I had a little bit of schooling as well.

**Did you go to art school, or were you self-taught?** I'm self-taught.

**What conventions have you worked?**  
**Have you won any awards?** I've done Hell City, in Ohio, as well as Phoenix. I've done the Tried and True convention in Florida; I've done the Seattle convention many, many years ago,

as well as the Voodoo Tattoo Expo in New Orleans. I haven't done as many as some of the guys in the studio, but I've done my fair share of conventions—enough to know that I've had a good time. I've earned plenty of awards, from flash to tattoo of the day, as well as tattoo of the show.

**What is your best convention memory?** My best convention ever was the Tried and True. I think that was a couple years ago. I earned tattoo of the day as well as best tattoo of the show.

**How would you describe your style?** My style is photorealistic, with attention to detail, as well as the classic pinup with a concentration in flesh tones.

**What are your favorite images to tattoo?** Realistic images with great amounts of detail, and primarily, the classic pinup.



**What inspires you as an artist?** My inspiration lies in my environment, in my surroundings. Wherever I go, I try to be inspired. Whether it be the bookstore, a movie, or an art exhibit, anything [can] influence me to want to tattoo better, or paint better, become a better artist, and gather in more styles.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** My attention to detail in the pinup profile; I put as much emphasis into the face as the rest of the tattoo. The face of the pinup is ultra important. It's where you make it or break it. If you don't nail the face, everything else really doesn't matter as much.

**What tattoo artists do you admire the most?** It's not one. I would say it's many. I respect any artist who respects my work, but as far as my inspiration? My inspiration lies within the guys at work. Joe [Capobianco]

was a primary influence in my pinup art. As far as black-and-gray, I respect and admire [Bob] Tyrrell, and the guys who are doing photorealism, such as Nikko [Hurtado]. They all factor in as a very big influence.

**What kinds of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I look forward to doing anything that's going to challenge my abilities. I look forward to not doing the same thing every day. I look forward to anything that's going to help me implement a new technique, or diversify my style.

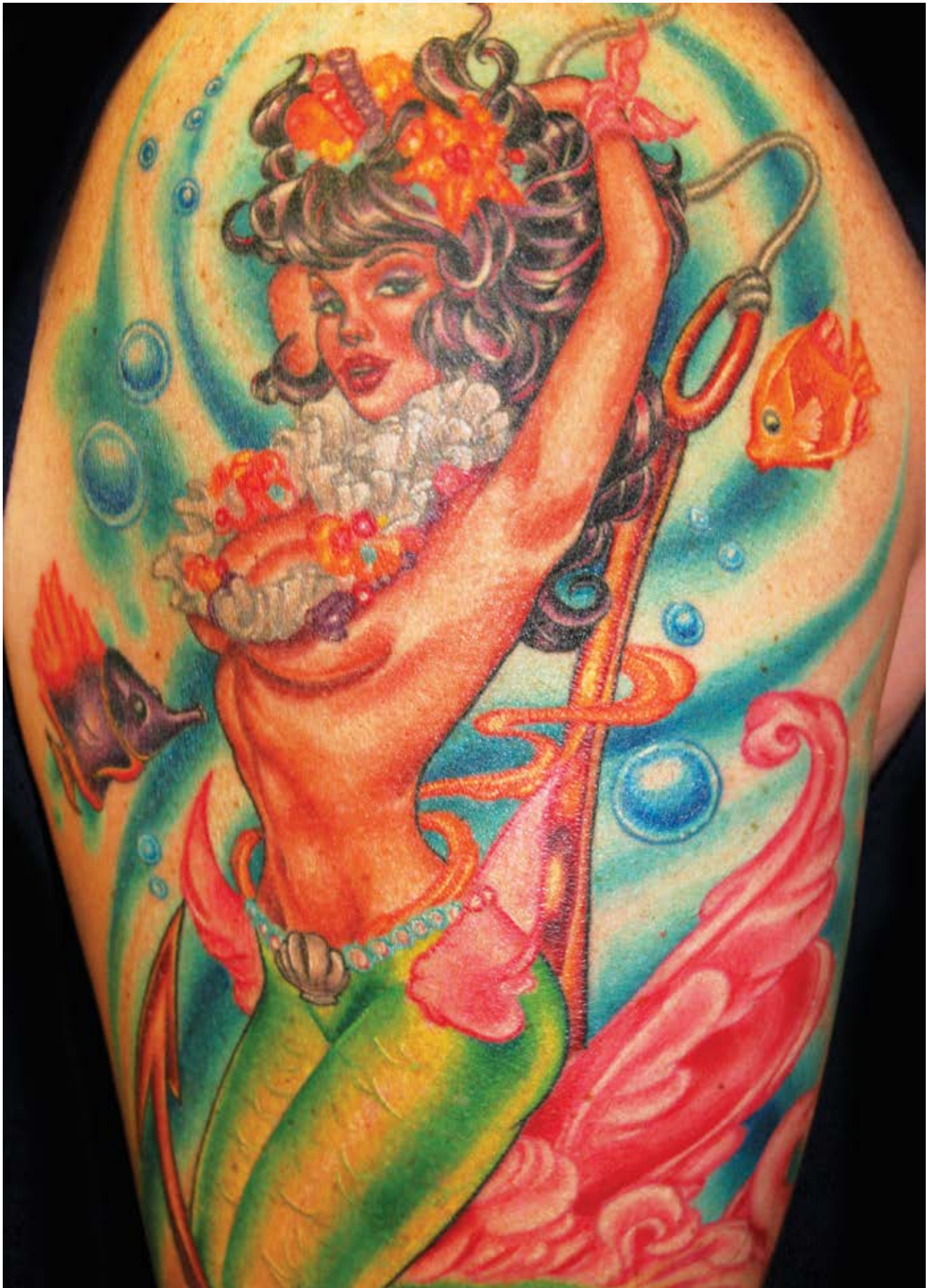
**How have you branched out from tattooing? From the time you started to now, has your style changed? Have you changed as an artist?** Yeah, incredibly. I went from a street shop, tattooing the standardized iconic images—such as the American flag, eagles, tribal, and Old Eng-

lish lettering—to realistic images. A lot of stuff that people allow me to do is of artistic license. They put a lot of faith and trust into what I'm going to do for them, what I'm going to work with them to achieve and produce to give them the best overall tattoo.

**Before someone gets a tattoo, what kind of advice do you usually give out?** If they're unsure about the idea, or what tattoo they want to get, or they're not 100 percent about it, they need to take a little bit more time to think about it. Because I can give them a wonderful tattoo, and if their idea wasn't 100 percent, I want to make sure that they're thrilled—enthralled—with the tattoo, and ecstatic when they leave. I want to make sure that before they even start the tattoo, they're 100 percent sure about what they want to do, and I'm more than happy to work with them.

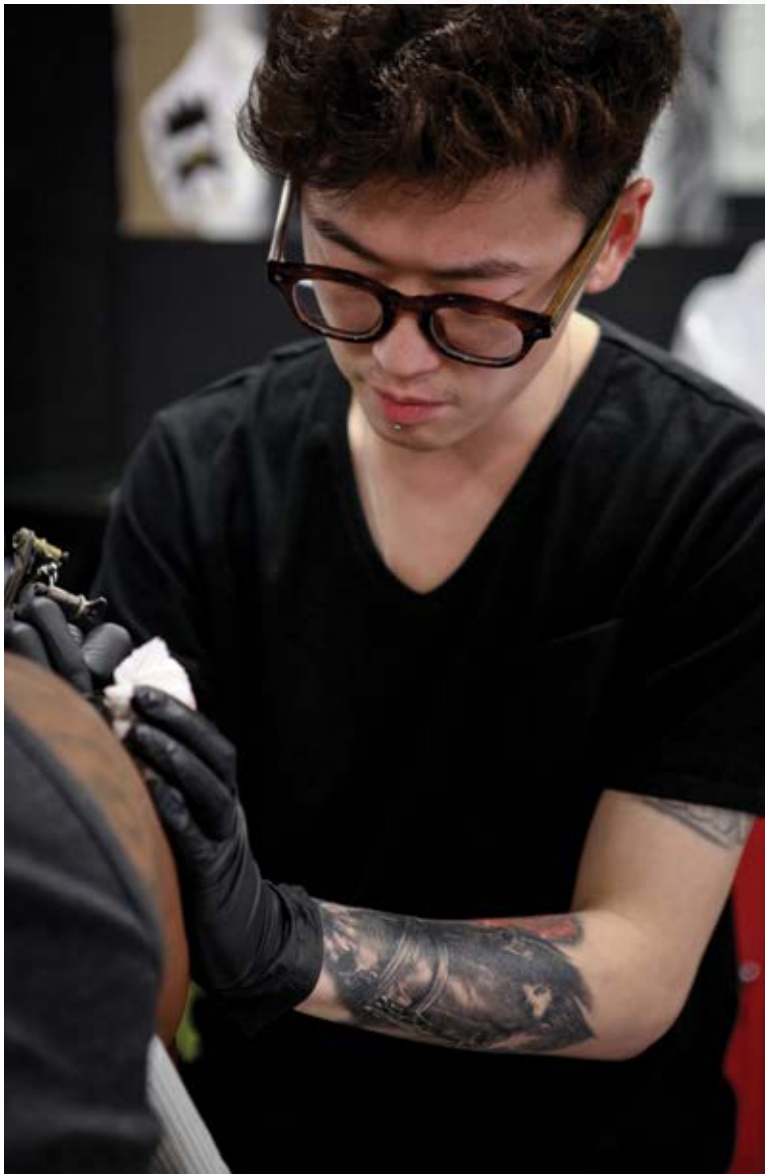












## SEUNGHYUN

foreveryongeink.com

FY Ink  
Toronto, Canada

**What year did you start tattooing?** I started on January 15, 2009. I'll never forget that day. Everything changed for me from that point on.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I always enjoyed art and I wanted to do something creative, something I could develop into a career. I decided to learn to tattoo and found a mentor. I learned as much as I could. I also studied tattooing on my own to get better. Apprenticing was tough work, but I knew I had to pay my dues to get better.

**Where did you apprentice?** I apprenticed for a year at a small shop in Seoul called Studio Red.

**Do you have any special training?** I don't have a lot of formal training in art, but growing up I always tried my hand at different kinds of painting and drawing. Everything I know is either self-taught or through picking up tips from artists, and some skills were picked up from my fashion design background.

**What conventions have you worked? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?** I'm pretty new to the convention world. I worked the NIX convention in Toronto this past summer, and I've done a few others across Asia a few years before. No awards yet. NIX was a great learning experience, and meeting my favorite artist was also very exciting.

**How do you describe your style?** I like doing a lot of realistic work. I work with a lot of colors, but also black-and-gray stuff.

**What inspires you as an artist?** Mostly seeing a lot of amazing work from other artists. It makes me want to do the same and create the best tattoo work that I can. I love tattooing and that in itself makes me want to be a better artist.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** I like reimagining realistic tattoos with a lot of color. A lot of focus is put into color values and details.



**What other mediums do you work in?** Aside from tattooing, I like to work with watercolors, oil paints, and even sketching. But my focus is really on tattooing. There is so much to learn in this art, so I'm always studying more if I can.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** Nikko Hurtado and Paul Acker are two of my favorites out there. I think they are amazing. Many artists like to use a lot of skin in a tattoo, but these guys really focus on color use throughout the whole piece, which is great.

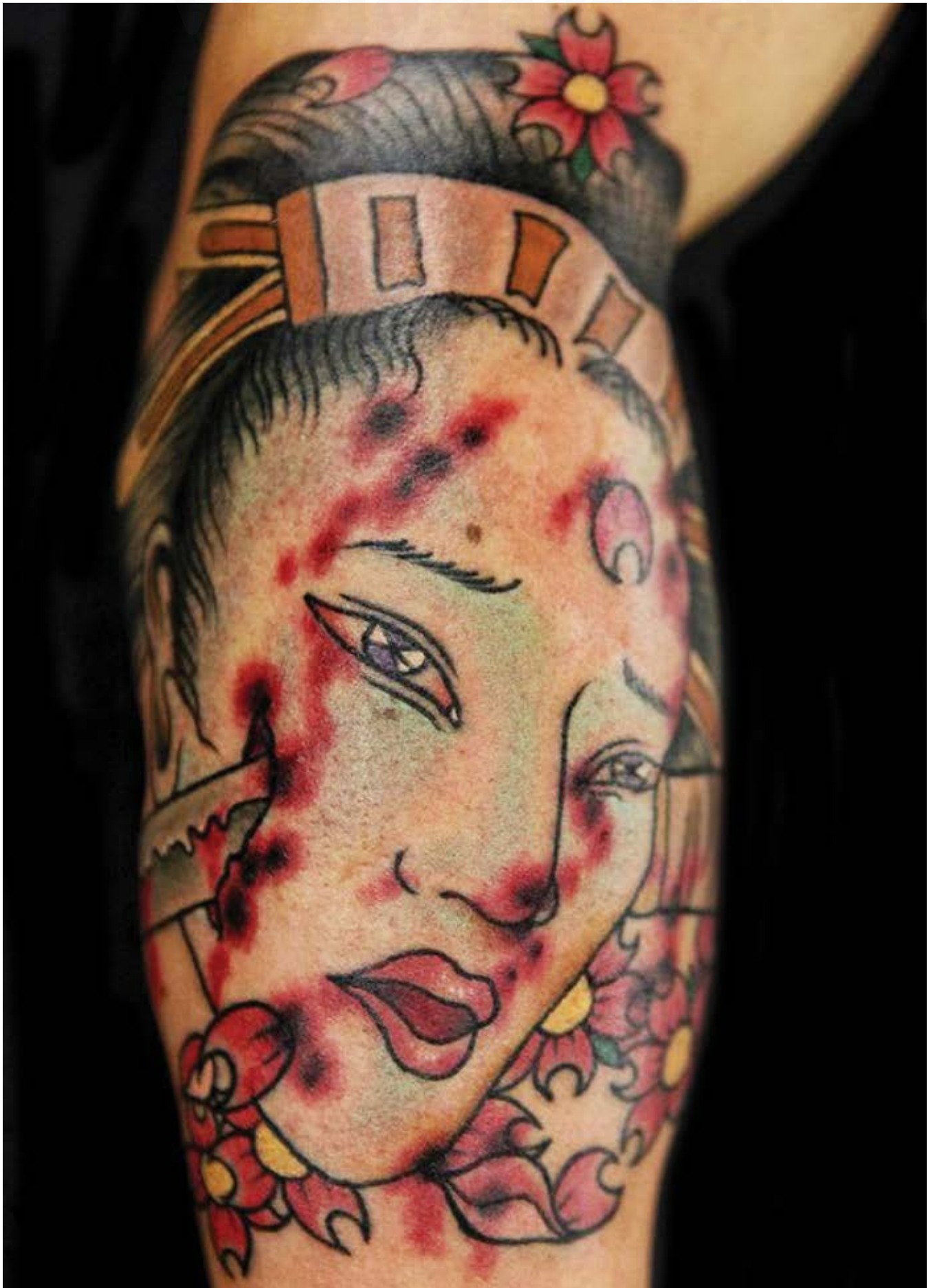
**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** Just more realistic stuff. I would love to do just a really solid, colorful piece and focus on the detailing.

**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** Just make sure they're confident about their choice. It's my job to give them an amazing tattoo, and I can offer an opinion. But the customer is the one who makes the final decision.













**ZACK SPURLOCK**  
zackspurlock.com

**Anonymous Tattoo**  
9 East Bay St.  
Savannah, GA 31401

**What year did you start tattooing?** I started my apprenticeship in May of 2001. I did my first tattoo in September of 2001.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I got into tattooing by hanging out in tattoo shops and getting as many as I could afford. I went with any friends who got tattooed as well. I kind of pestered enough tattooists about it until I finally got lucky one day.

**Where did you apprentice?** I did my apprenticeship in Augusta, GA, but I did an extended apprenticeship with Clay McCay and Katie Sellergren when I moved to Savannah. I'd say that's where I really started learning.

**Do you have any special training?** I don't have any special training other than the apprenticeship. I have a BFA, but I think this impeded my tattooing progression until I realized art and tattooing are separate entities. I get the chance to work with amazing tattooists every day at the shop I'm in, and have also had the opportunity

to work with guest artists as well as with other shops. I think the best training is coming from firsthand experience, and trial and error.

**What conventions have you worked? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?** I have worked a few conventions in Florida and Philadelphia. My convention list is very limited. I'm not very interested in working conventions. I thrive on routine and prefer working out of the shop I'm in. The roaming tattoo gypsy life that seems to be all the rage is not for me. I am staying local. But no, I didn't win any awards at the conventions, and I also didn't ask clients to attend any judging. I don't drink and don't party, so that makes a convention just feel like work. I'm not opposed to conventions; I just prefer not to work them.

**How do you describe your style?** I don't know what my style is. I try to draw things as accurately as I can and try to stop before including too much detail in hopes that the





tattoo will age well. I do what clients ask for and make suggestions based on size and placement. I'm not focused on one thing. I am focused on the long-term result. I want to feel good about a tattoo 20 years later.

**What inspires you as an artist?** I am inspired by many different things. I am inspired by *The Twilight Zone*. I think about things like this while I am drawing tattoos. For example, what makes those episodes from the '60s so timeless? Is there anything I can include or exclude to make my tattoos have that kind of staying power? I'm also influenced by contemporary pop music. What makes it so bad? Are there parallels I can draw between this and the over-polished, overly rendered tattoos I hate?

**What sets you apart from other artists?** I think one thing that sets me apart from "some" artists is that I am not trying to express my ideas on a client. I want to make their idea as impressive as possible, but I am not going to make some sort of personal statement on their tattoo.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I work in marker and pencil while I am drawing for customers; this occupies most of my free time. Watercolor or liquid acrylic can help you think about the application of tattooing. If I do find myself with enough spare time to make something other than a drawing for a customer's tattoo, I would prefer to use something that I think is going to further my understanding of tattooing. Watercolor and liquid acrylic have that very deliberate approach that tattooing does.

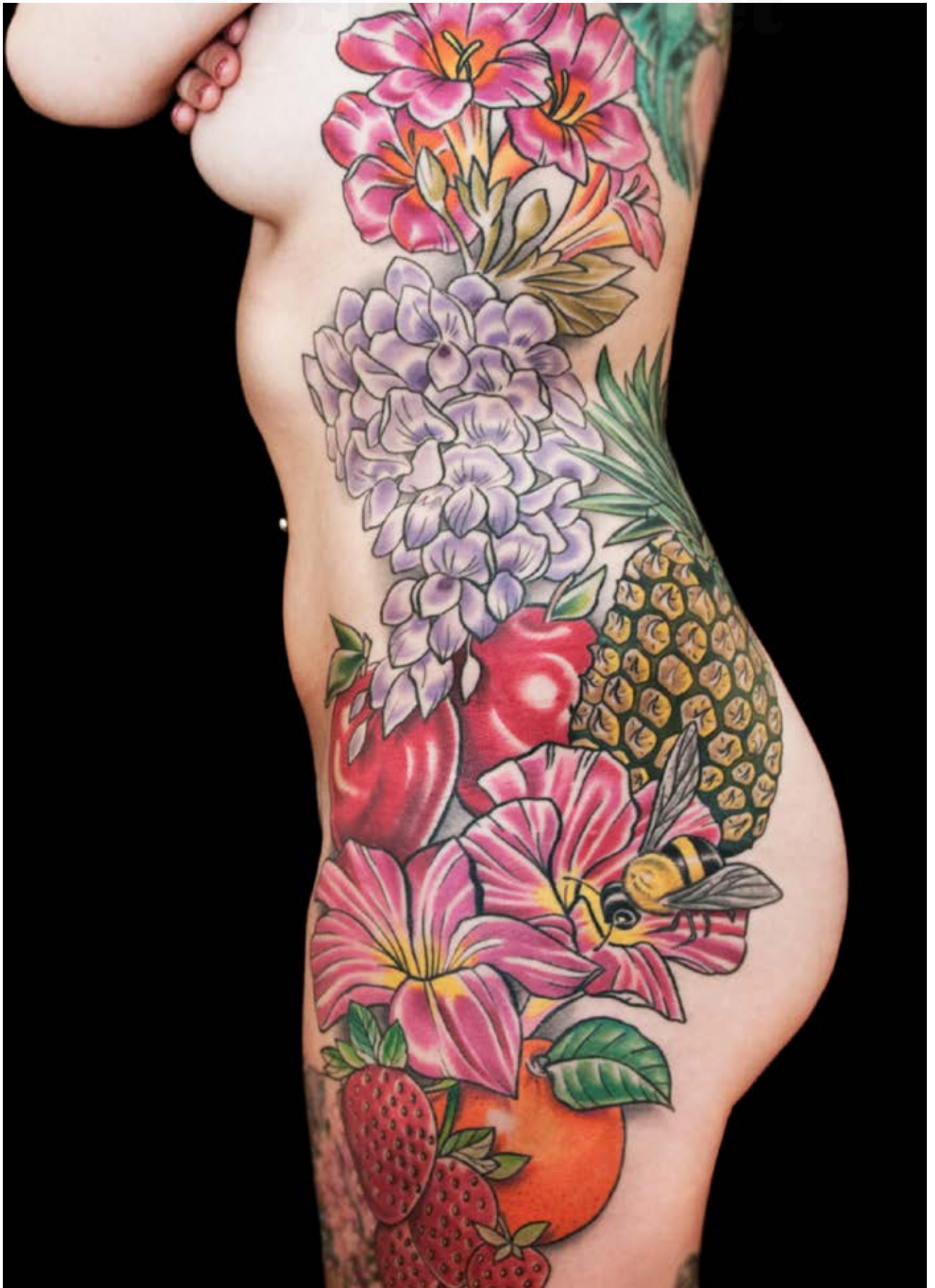
**How have you branched out from tattooing?** I really haven't branched out from tattooing much. If anything, I'm finding myself more obsessed with it now than ever. I am constantly trying to be more focused and have less interests or hobbies that could steal my focus from tattooing. However, by default I am the co-owner of a fabric store with my wife. She owns Fabrika in downtown Savannah.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** I admire the crew I work with on a daily basis.

Clay McCay I can say taught me everything I know. Ricky McGee, elemental and straight-forward. Dean Denney, so clean, so bold. Marco Sullivan, the Steve Perry of tattooing. The Anonymous Crew—these are my tattoo heroes.

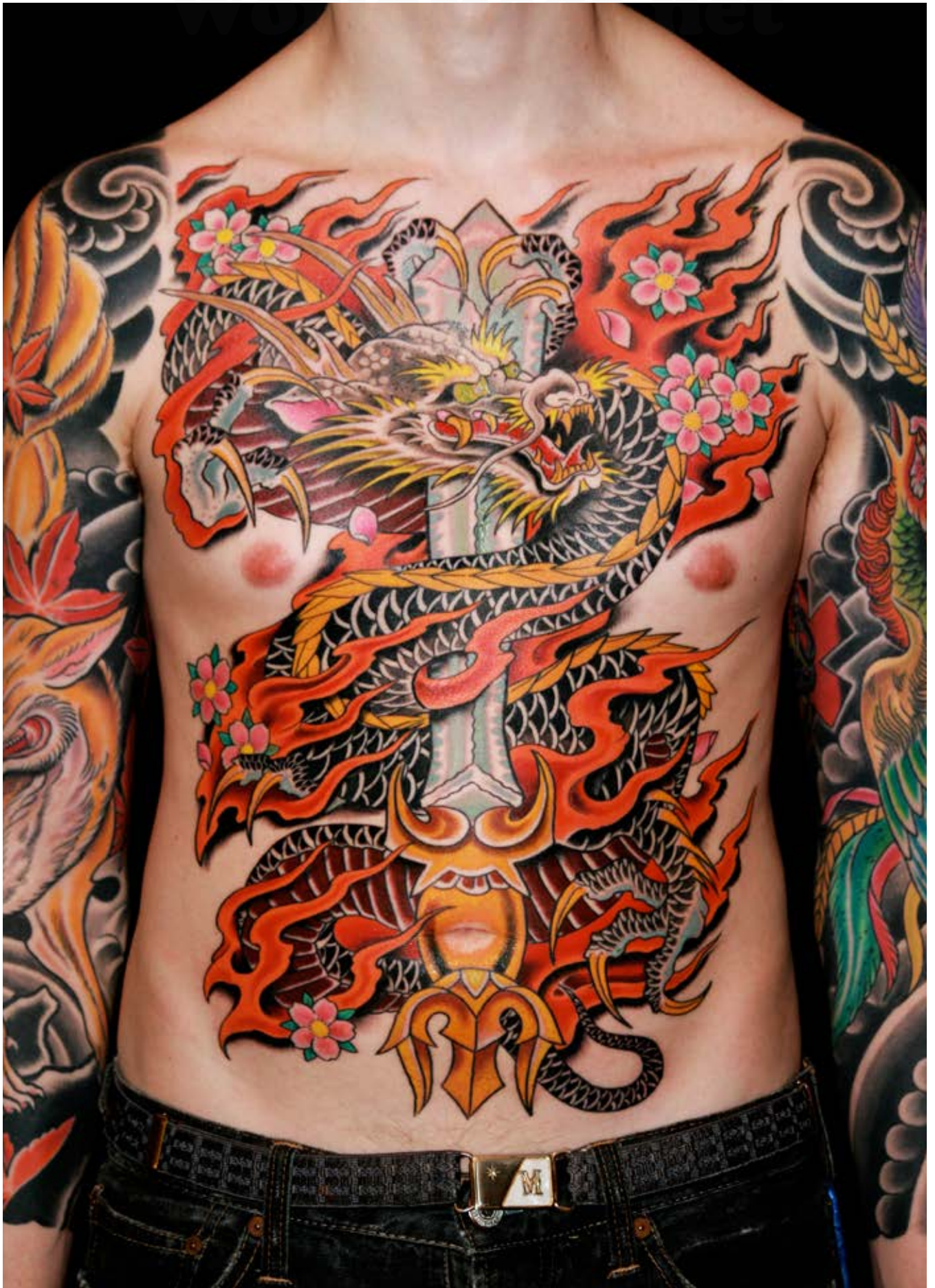
**What kind of tattoos do you most look forward to doing?** I look forward to doing most tattoos. I have an amazing clientele that give me a lot of leeway to make their ideas work. For the past few years I have been doing mainly Japanese-influenced tattooing. I like tattooing for the sake of it, though. I am even still stoked on tribal.

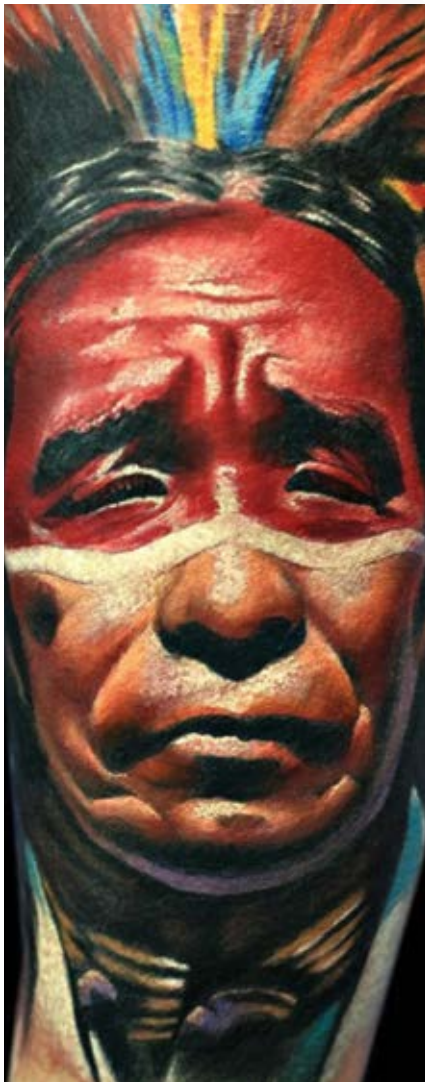
**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** I try to help someone make good decisions on their idea, such as size and placement. If they want a large tattoo like a sleeve or a back piece, I try to let them know what an involved process it's going to be and the possibility it could take years to finish, based on both parties.











## OLEG SHEPELENKO

oleg-tattoo.ru

### Oleg-Tattoo

Rostov-on-Don, Russia

**What year did you start tattooing?** My tattooing began in 2005.

**How did you get into tattooing?** Thanks to my friend Alexander Haishyanu—he showed me how to build a homemade machine. Since then, I've become caught in the wave of tattoo culture.

**Where did you apprentice?** I had no teachers. I was looking for information on the internet, searching for books, and looked at the work of famous tattoo artists and tried to [replicate their work].

**Do you have any special training?** I have no special training. I spent hours redrawing portraits of people and animals. It was interesting, and every time I got better and better.

**What conventions have you worked? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?** I started to go to conventions recently. I went to a convention in the south of Russia. There I took second place. After that I went to a convention in Prague, in the Czech Republic, and took third place in the color tattoo competi-

tion. I also went to a convention in Poland, in Krakow. I will continue to go to conventions—it helps me grow as an artist. In February, I will be going to Milan.

**How do you describe your style?** I try to work in the style of realism. But I do not like doing fine details—I like realism, without many details. I want to make long-lasting tattoos that will still look good 10 years after they are done.

**What inspires you as an artist?** I try to look for inspiration in photography. I spend a lot of time on forums and websites of great photographers—they inspire me.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** It's difficult to answer this question; I like a lot of artists.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I don't. I have a very narrow specialty.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** I like the work of what I consider to be very high-level artists. Mike DeVries, Mike Demasi, and Nikko Hurtado.















## MIKE MOSES

thedowntown.com  
thedowntown@gmail.com

**Thicker Than Water Tattoo NYC**  
181 Ave. B  
New York, NY 10009

**What year did you start tattooing?** I started tattooing the basics—kanji, baby daddy's/mama's names, and small tribal—in November of '03.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I had moved from my hometown of Roanoke, VA, to Richmond to go to college for art. I actually never took any of my required classes that weren't art-related, and then three years later I dropped out. I never thought I'd end up tattooing. It never really even crossed my mind.

**Where did you apprentice?** I had been working the desk at a shop since early '01. I was fortunate enough to procure an apprenticeship from my good friend and mentor Mr. Fred Pinckard, who now owns Salvation Tattoo in Richmond with his wife, Katie Davis.

**Do you have any special training?** I'm not sure what that would be defined as exactly. I can cook my ass off, I have the top score on Mr. Holiday's Candy Striped Pinball Disaster down at Laurel and Eckard Street. I draw smaller than any man alive and am still capa-

ble of convincing 76 percent of people to see things my way.

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

I've only worked the Baltimore convention, twice. I'm not particularly fond of large groups of people—why in the hell am I living in NYC? After being told I couldn't even show a piece that I had entered in a competition due to the extreme partiality of judges to award only the big names, I'm not really all that concerned with the whole ordeal.

**How do you describe your style?** There's some rendered stuff, some really flat stuff, some spirograph, some dark stuff, never goofy stuff. It's illustrative. I'm just trying to do things in the least predictable, least expected way. I always tell my clients when they set up appointments, "It's not going to look a thing like what you think it will, but it's going to be really fucking cool."

**What inspires you as an artist?** Inspiration comes from all sorts of things, from the



mundane to the profound. I'm not going to fill anyone's head with any sort of higher thought order expected art mumbo jumbo. By mundane I'm talking about the cigarette I'm smoking as I write this. Look at the smoke curling off of it; I'm going to use that. By profound I mean: How about the latest Tom Waits video? Not only was it my favorite track off of *Bad As Me*, but it's visually stunning. Take that approach to the imagery, which was adapted pretty literally from the lyrics and musical cues. It's simple. It has impact. It's moving. Let me sum up a wolf head like that next time. Take something stark and basic, shift it out of the usual context, simplify it, render the hell out of it, and then flatten it into a cardboard cutout of itself. The next skull I do, it's going to be like that.

**What sets you apart from other artists?**

I don't think [there is a] trick to [being] set apart from other artists. We're creative people. We're going to have more chaos, more different directions, and more arguing. We're all hardheaded, stubborn think tanks. We all have our own unique visual dialogues, and we

all have our own agendas. Being apart from other people is being an artist.

**What other mediums do you work in?**

I work in as many mediums as I feel like I have a direction for. I mostly paint with acrylics on wood panels, but I also dabble in watercolors, digitally rendered illustration, digitally manipulated photography, sculpture, screen printing, music, audio, and guerilla art tactics.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?**

I've had the great fortune of coming into contact with some really great and inspiring people lately; too many to name all of them, so forgive me for not rattling them all out. Sean Rhodes keeps me on my toes in so many ways; his stuff blows my mind constantly. Dusty Neal—I've been very fortunate to get to know him lately through the miracle of Instagram. Lynn Akura; we met when she came from the UK to do a guest spot at Red Rocket Tattoo. She's an incredible illustrator and has one of lightest touches with a tattoo machine I've ever felt. Nathan Kostechko, a.k.a. "Cool Nate"—I met him while getting tattooed at

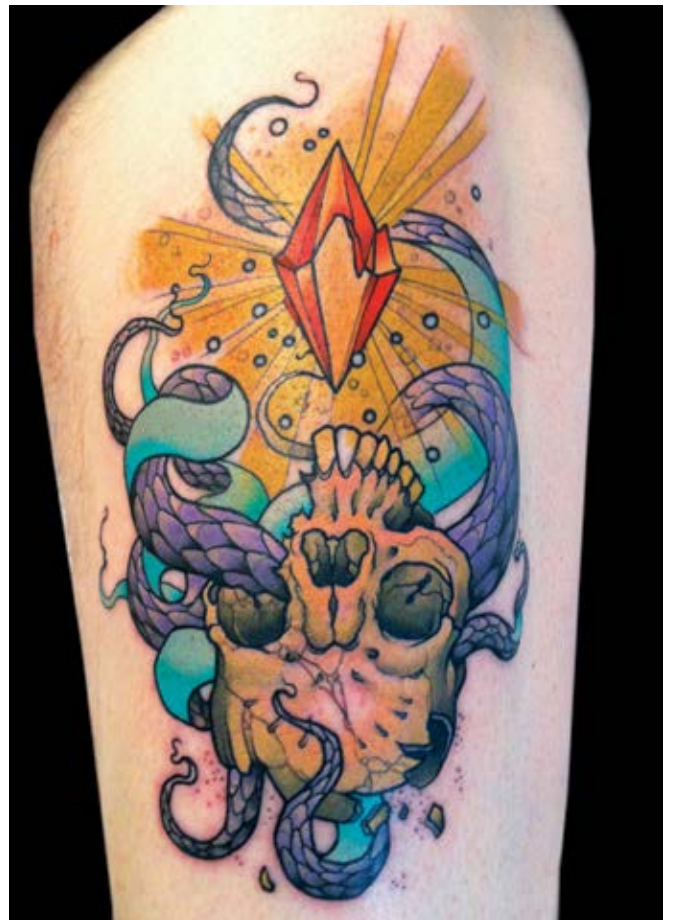
Saved in Brooklyn by Zac Scheinbaum. While our styles are vastly different, I can't think of too many people who have influenced my thinking more. Richard F. Smith Jr., I work with at Thicker Than Water—this kid has only been tattooing for a few years and keeps me motivated and pushing myself forward, if nothing else to stay ahead of him because he's so good it's almost not fair.

**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?**

Honestly, the things that I look forward to most are pieces where the client is allowing me to make it as cool as I can conceive. Clients are full of great ideas that I wouldn't normally think of, and as long as I can twist and mold that idea a bit and actually use a real color scheme, then I'm happy.

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

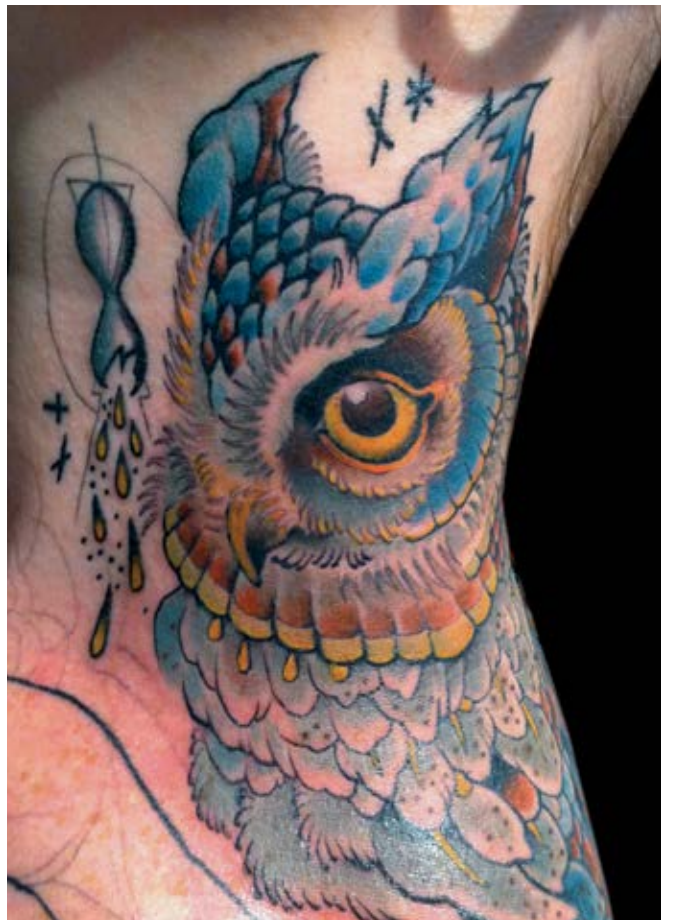
The only things I typically say to people before they get tattooed is to pray to whoever their god is and hold on for dear life. I'm also fond of saying, "This was all your idea"—not really sure if that's advice, though.













## EVA SCHATZ

evaschatz.com  
mintclubtattoo.com

**MINT CLUB · Tattoo Atelier**  
Salzburg/Austria/Europe

**What year did you start tattooing?** I started tattooing in the beginning of 2007.

**How did you get into tattooing?** While working as a graphic designer in 2005 I decided that I wanted to do more of what makes me happy, so I quit my job. I was always into drawing and painting, so I started to draw some flash sets. I bought a starter set—oh, yes I did, oh my God—and tried to tattoo myself. I took photos of them to make a portfolio and showed it to Leo, and I think he liked it, so a few weeks later I started my apprenticeship.

**Where did you apprentice?** I learned tattooing from the talented Leo from Naked Trust Tattoo in Salzburg, Austria. I worked there for five years.

**Do you have any special training?** No, I don't think I had special training. I was always a creative girl. As a kid I wanted to be a fashion designer. I attended the fashion school in Salzburg, but Salzburg is not a hotspot in Europe, so my fashion designer dream didn't come true.

**What conventions have you worked?** I've worked at so many conventions! I've worked in many European conventions, like Berlin, Milan, Frankfurt, Brussels, Krakow, the Ink Explosion in Germany, Styrian Tattoo and Hotrod Show in Austria, and many, many more.

**Have you won any awards?** I won best newcomer of the year in 2009, in Germany and Switzerland—that pushed my career a lot. I don't normally attend the contests at conventions. I don't think that you can really judge "best of the day," because I think all styles are different and you can't measure it.

**What are some of your best convention memories?** The Styrian Tattoo and Hotrod show was really crazy because a whole village in Austria is involved in this show—it's so unreal! After this show, we had some really rad days with a bunch of great artists at the spa, and we had a drawing seminar with Jack Mosher.

**How do you describe your style?** I don't know if I can call it a "style" yet, but I really



love to tattoo bright, colorful designs. I love lady heads, animals, and flowers mixed with graphic elements and dot work.

**What inspires you as an artist?** Everything. Sometimes I will see an advertisement for a new eye shadow and I think, Oh, this is a beautiful girl—I want to draw her in my style.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** Maybe it's the way I draw the faces of my lady heads and use my color palette. It's a really difficult question for an artist because I always want to stay unique.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I love to paint with watercolors and oils. When I have time I print T-shirts in my own silk screen room.

**How have you branched out from tattooing?** A few times a year, I do screen prints with my designs for special limited edition T-shirts.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?**

I admire all tattoo artists. I look on the internet and something inspires me, and in this moment I admire this artist. So I don't want to pick someone out.

**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I've realized that my style is changing a lot, and so I am looking forward to tattooing some new projects, which you have never seen from me before.

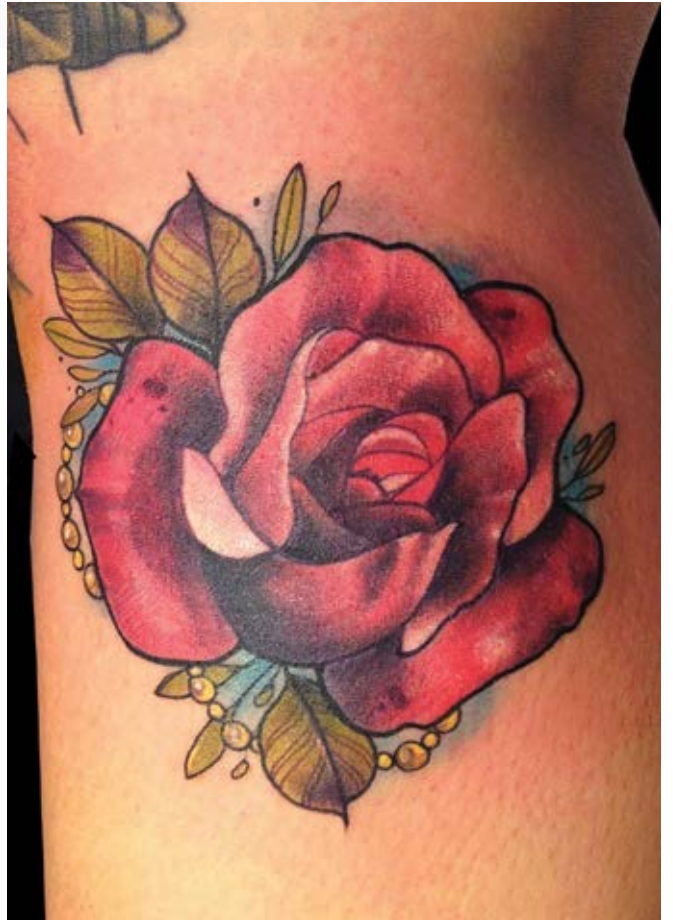
**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** I advise him or her to really think about their idea. I don't think that you need a special meaning for your tattoo—when you love your idea and you're really sure that you want to have it, then you should get tattooed. Not a single tattoo I have has a special meaning, and I love them all. The only thing you should think about is if you are doing it for yourself.

**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?** I have a book filled with designs that I have drawn that I would love to tattoo.













## DANIEL ACOSTA LEON

La Duquesa Collectivo  
Bucaramanga, Colombia

**What year did you start tattooing?** I became interested in learning how to tattoo in late 2002. I was an apprentice for a year, cleaning, serving, selling, drawing, learning, and asking everything I could. I think that should be the order for all the tattoo artists—it creates a great strength and great knowledge of the profession.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I got my first tattoo at the age of 14. The truth: As with any teenager, the influence of my social circle was very evident, and that is why I got my first tattoo. Later, while I was in university, I became interested in learning how to do tattoos. I was studying visual arts at that time and I found tattooing could be a very good way to apply what I had learned in a different technique. Human skin turned out to be a great canvas.

**Where did you apprentice?** I owe my learning to many great local artists: Julio Díaz of Store Tattoo, Miguel Dark and Joakin Forero of Acid Ink, Cesar Gomez of Violent Tattoo, and Sergio Cobra of Cobra Tattoo. Thanks

to all of them—they were a great inspiration and gave me their friendship. Every day I learn something new.

**Do you have any special training?** I love painting and commercial illustration. I try to generate a mix between both; therefore, I paint and draw constantly as an exploration exercise.

**What conventions have you worked? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?** I'm not much of a convention person, but I have good memories of Lima, Peru. A few years ago, Victor Portugal and another important group of artists opened my eyes to the tattoo world and helped me to further my way of thinking about it.

**How do you describe your style?** I really like European neoclassical paintings, illustrations, the French comic, urban art, and the ritual iconographic concept of India and Thailand. I try to combine all of them to generate a single visual product.





**What inspires you as an artist?** Well, within the tattoo world, I admire Jee Sayalero, Adrian Lee, Peter Aurisch, Joakin Forero, and Tim Biedron. In urban art, I really like El Mac, Retna, Kofie, Ariz, Nychos, and Reyes. In painting—that is now my stronger source of inspiration—Odd Nerdrum, Jorge Mantilla Caballero, John Asaro, Natalia Fabia, Shawn Barber, Shepard Fairey, and Ron English.

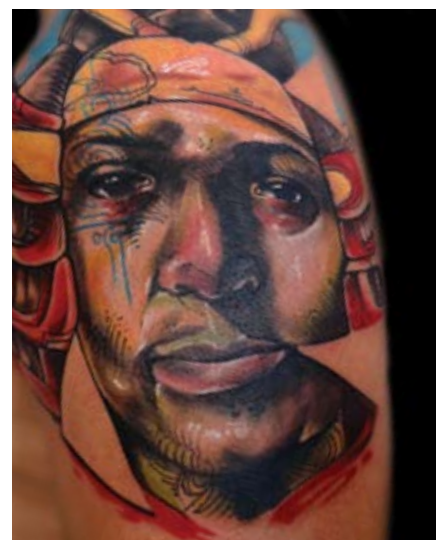
**What other mediums do you work in?** Well, obviously, drawing is very important. I work a lot with watercolor, but my favorite medium is acrylic, and at this point I'm starting to explore oil.

**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I live in a small city—the mentality of my clientele is different from what you'd find in a larger city. They look for tribal styles,

and Arab or Chinese letters. In big cities like Bogotá and Medellín, and in California, the clientele has a more global vision of tattoos, and they understand styles and trends. The question is not what kind of tattoo I like to do, but how to do it.

**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** It is really important that the customer thinks about the future—the decision they make now will affect them in some way for the rest of their lives. "Think before you act." A good tattoo artist is probably more important than the right design; he will make sure you get the perfect design in the end.

**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?** I have several designs and flash that I'd love to do.













## JOSH STEPHENS

holditdowntattoo.com  
joshstephenstattoos.tumblr.com

### Hold it Down tattoo

302 N. Goshen St. Ste. #100  
Richmond, VA 23220

**What year did you start tattooing?** I started my apprenticeship in 2005 and didn't start tattooing until 2007.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I always liked tattoos growing up, so I started getting tattooed pretty much right away. The more I got tattooed, the more I had this feeling that it was what I wanted to do. Although I never drew and felt like I wasn't very artistic, for some reason I really thought I could do it.

**Where did you apprentice?** I apprenticed at a shop called Marc's Tattooing in Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, PA.

**Do you have any special training?** Not really—I never drew growing up, and in terms of art all I care about is tattoos. Whenever I paint I still look at it from a tattooing view. Everything I paint is translatable to tattoos.

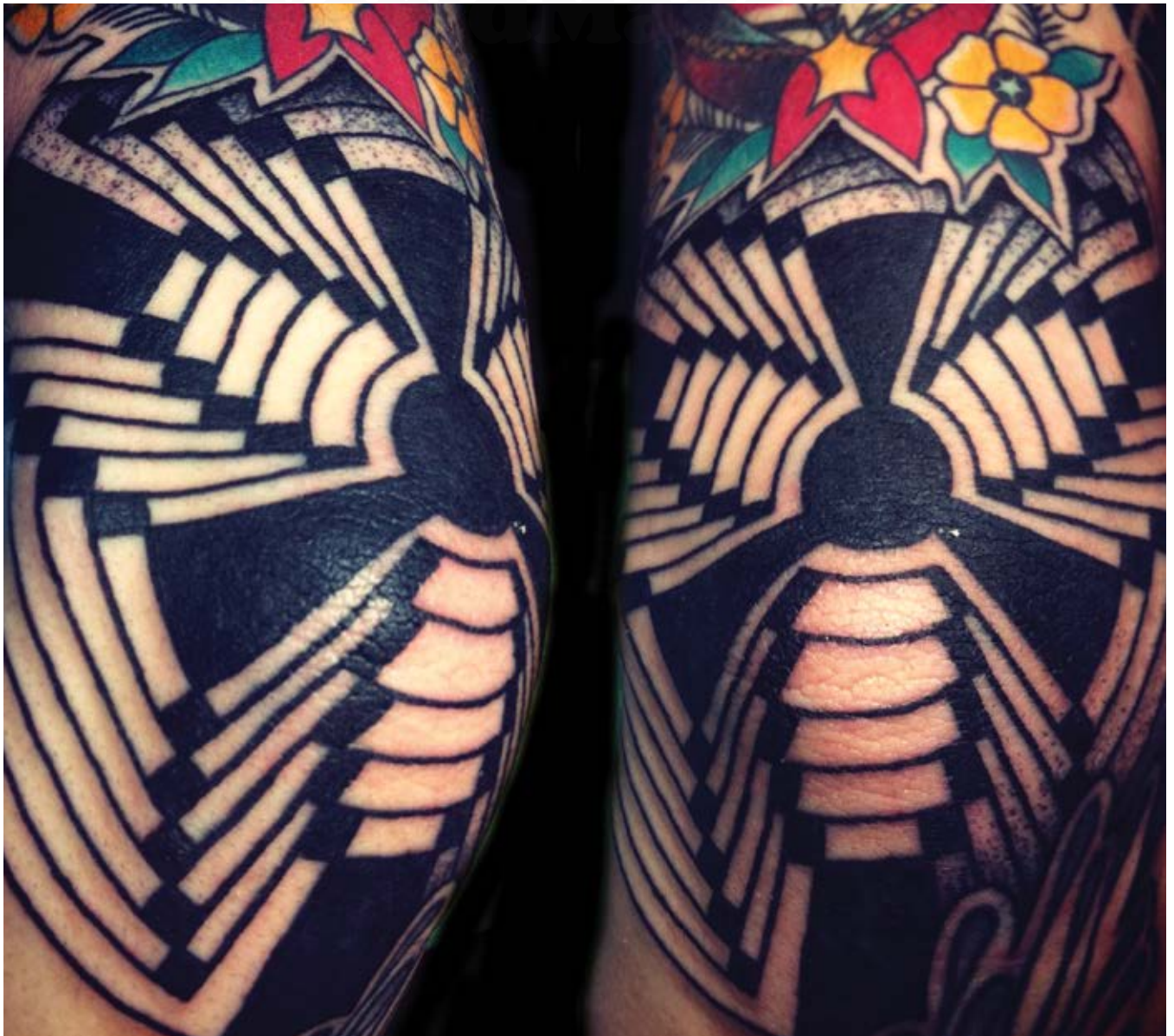
**What conventions have you worked? Have you won any awards? What are**

**some of your best convention memories?**

I've worked Philly for three years—it's insane how many people are there. I've also worked Boston, Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, and the Baltimore convention. As far as most memorable, definitely the Baltimore convention. It was my first convention outside of PA, and it was the year of the huge snowstorm that dumped three feet of snow on Baltimore. Everyone was snowed in—it was kinda cool. I haven't won any awards because I don't like to enter competitions. I don't believe in them.

**How do you describe your style?** Definitely American traditional-based—bold, clean lines; limited color palette; lots of black. Lately I've been sort of experimenting with weirder stuff, definitely Daniel Higgs-influenced. I really try as hard as I can to make a tattoo that's going to last forever, simple and bold.

**What inspires you as an artist?** I don't really consider myself an artist. I feel more like a technician than an artist. I really enjoy



Pennsylvania Dutch art—specifically barn hex signs—Daniel Higgs, Native American artwork, geometry, bridge architecture, and anything that's more structure-based. Then of course there are all of my favorite tattooers, past and present. To name a couple, Tom Berg, George Burchett, Amund Dietzel, Joe Lieber, Mike Adams (my BFF), Daryl Rodriguez (who I work with), all of the tattooers at Smith Street, Marina Inoue. Matt Bivetto is doing some of the coolest stuff ever right now, paintings and tattoos! There are so many more tattooers that I love, but there isn't enough time or room.

**What sets you apart from other artists?**

Honestly, nothing. There are so many great tattooers out there doing great tattoos in a similar vein as I am. I'm not doing anything new or different. My whole goal in tattooing is to just do good, solid, clean tattoos. I hope that I'm doing a good job at that. *[Laughs]*

**What other mediums do you work in?** I do watercolor paintings, but I really don't enjoy

painting. When I paint, it's usually just to try an idea for something I want to tattoo or for a trade or commission. My main focus is tattoos.

**How have you branched out from tattooing?** Like I said, I do commissioned artwork for friends, bands, for shirts and stuff, but I really only care about tattoos.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?**

My BFF Mike Adams does the cleanest and most perfect tattoos I've ever seen. My friend Matt Bivetto is doing the most mind-blowing paintings and tattoos I've ever seen—his stuff really inspires me to move away from the strict American traditional and get into a more experimental subject matter, but the execution is still done in a traditional way. And of course all of the tattooers from Smith Street have huge influences on me. I've been tattooed by Steve Boltz, Eli Quinters, and Bert Krak, and every time I go there I feel so inspired to work and just be better at what I've dedicated my whole life to.

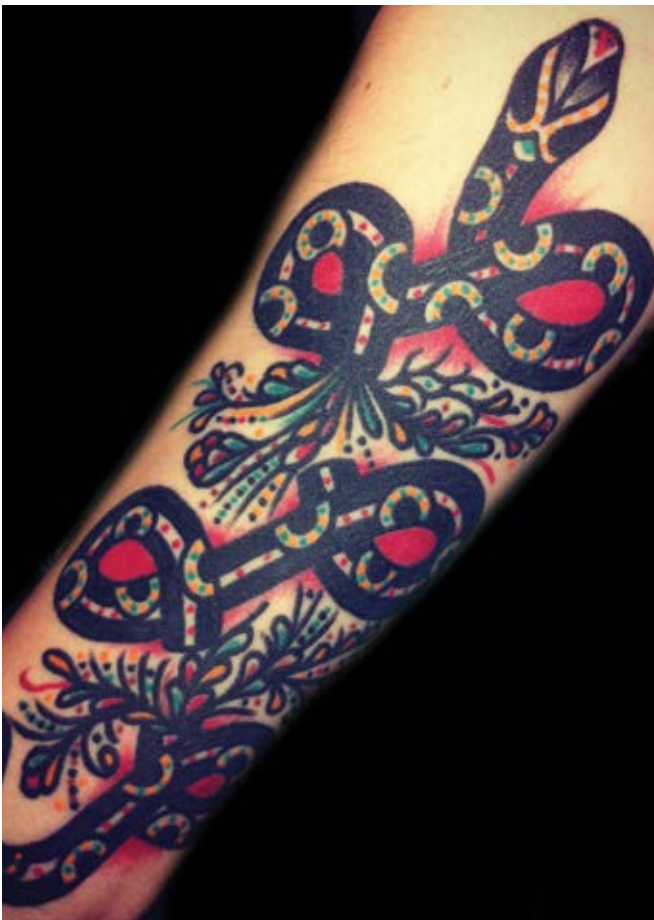
**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I would really like to do weirder stuff, like sea creatures and bugs. I've done a few, and I always really enjoy doing stuff where I get to design something completely from scratch with no structural limitation. It's interesting to see what images the mind makes when you just do whatever you want.

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

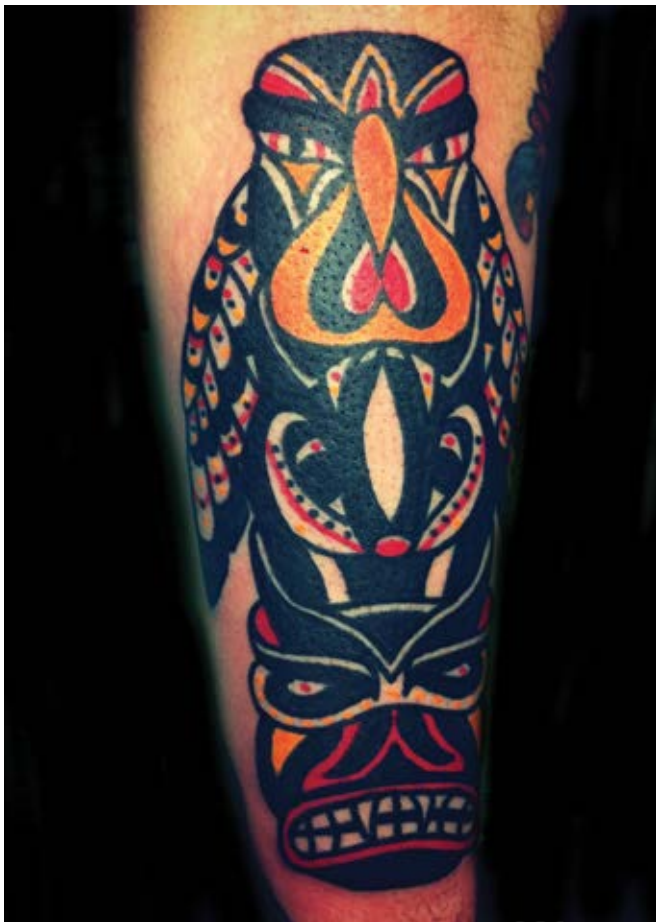
Do your research! Make sure the person you want to tattoo you does exactly what you want. You wouldn't ask Picasso to paint a Rembrandt, so you shouldn't ask Bert Krak to do a color portrait of Leatherface!

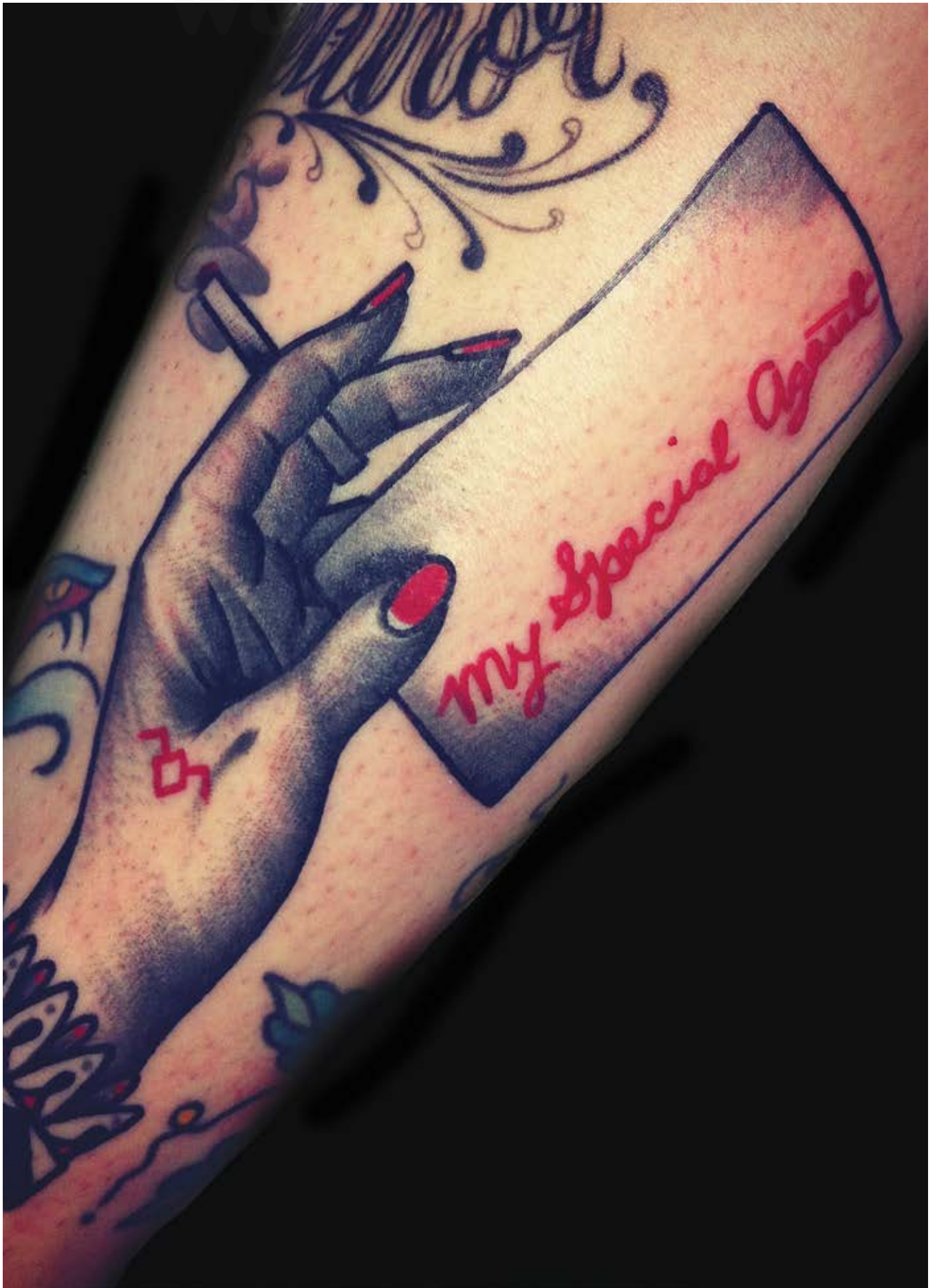
**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?**

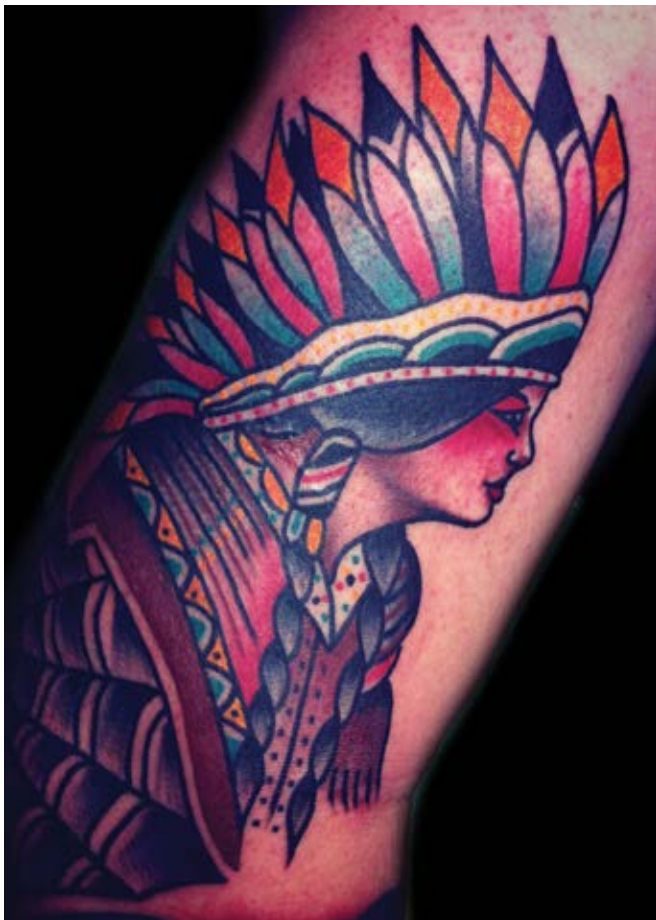
Not really—I'm so fortunate to get to do everything that I want to do. I would really like to do more bugs and sea creatures, but I do get to do a bunch already so it's not like I don't ever get to do them.













## VINCENT CASTIGLIA

omegatattoo.com

Omega Tattoo  
New York

**What year did you start tattooing?** The tail end of 2000.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I had a considerable amount of tattoo coverage from Mike Peretto, and I was already an artist, but I didn't consider tattooing for a while because it's such a heavy art form. So unforgiving—artists with any modesty would carefully consider whether or not this was something they could accomplish and commit to. Until about three or four people who didn't know each other, within the same week, all strongly suggested it—then it hit me that this could very well be the practical outlet for my work. That's where the obsession began.

**Where did you apprentice?** I didn't have a formal apprenticeship. I cite Mike Peretto as my informal mentor. I spent a lot of time with Mike, getting tattooed, talking life, art,

and tattooing. I asked questions, observed how he worked, and had tremendous admiration for him as a tattooer and a person. That was really it. He's from the old school—he has probably been tattooing 40 years now, and is still going. If you grew up in Brooklyn during a certain era and were getting tattooed, Mike was doing them.

**Do you have any special training?** I put myself through three years of art college before deciding to withdraw and focus all of my energy on my personal art. I can't say I got much out of the experience besides the discipline that comes with managing a full class schedule. That was probably it.

**What conventions have you worked? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?** I've worked the New York City show at the



Roseland Ballroom several years in a row. Also did Northern Ink Exposure in Canada with my friend Tim Reid. But I'm not big into conventions. I'd rather attend them than tattoo there. It's just such a hectic environment. Thousands of people crammed into one space, music blasting on the PA system while they're all trying to ask you questions while you're working. Not ideal for me, but everyone's different.

**How do you describe your style?** As a tattooer, I'm a black-and-gray artist. I like doing realistic work. As an artist, I suppose the work would be considered surrealist. It's figurative and surrealistic.

**What inspires you as an artist?** Earlier events and circumstances throughout my life have inspired most of my work. That's shifted somewhat over the last few years, as I've

already expressed those things through the work. Now I find inspiration coming from a more here-and-now place, although my visual language is essentially similar.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** All styles, mediums, and paths are valid. I'd say the brutal honesty of the work would be what stands out. I'm baring my soul in the work. That can be frightening in certain ways. It makes you vulnerable and exposes things from the inside out. I'm not projecting anything through the work—I'm just searching for answers.

**What other mediums do you work in?** Besides on skin and with human blood on paper, pen and ink was an old favorite. Much of my earlier art was pen and ink. That then evolved through the addition of human blood—then the blood just took over.

**How have you branched out from tattooing?** It actually happened the other way around—I made art my whole life. Tattooing sprung from existing artistic affinities. Tattooing was an extension of my personal art, and similarly, my personal art has been sharpened and enriched by tattooing. They coexist in my life now.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** That would be a long list. But if I had to choose three, they'd be Anil Gupta, Guy Aitchison, and Mike Peretto.

**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I really like the challenge of sleeves, back pieces, et cetera. It's a big commitment on both ends of the tattoo. When a large project is close to being complete and everything is coming into focus, it's really just the best feeling.













## STÉFANO ALCÁNTARA

stefanoalcantara.com

**What year did you start tattooing?** The first time I grabbed a tattoo machine was in 1994. I didn't have an apprenticeship, so during the first three years of my graphic design career I practiced with friends. After tattooing for three and a half years I decided to open my first tattoo shop in Lima, Peru—Stéfano's Tattoo Studio. It's been in business for almost two decades and [is] still open.

**How did you get into tattooing?** In Peru, at that time, there was not an established tattoo shop, and tattoo magazines were not available in stores. A friend of mine showed me a tattoo magazine he bought at the flea market in Lima, and I was shocked by what I saw. I'd never seen details or even color in tattoos before, so I thought, I need to do this at least once! I wasn't exactly aware of what was involved [with being] a tattoo artist, but that's where it all started.

**Where did you apprentice?** I didn't have an apprenticeship, but I wish I had! It would have saved me time and I would have accomplished what I wanted to do better and faster.

**Do you have any special training?** I have a degree in graphic design, and I continue to take courses in painting. This summer I attended an illustration master class taught by professional artists, including my biggest inspiration, Boris Vallejo.

**What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?** I've attended so many conventions in my career that I can't count them all. When I came to the States, I went to as many conventions as I could to promote myself and put my name out there. Now I'm blessed to be invited and taken care of at major conventions, so the



tables have turned. I've won a lot of awards throughout the years. My focus now is more about pushing myself with each piece and not about collecting more trophies.

**How do you describe your style?** My style is realism, but I try to put a signature spin with textures to achieve a surreal vibe.

**What inspires you as an artist?** Everything around me. I'm a visual person, so I can find inspiration in movies, photography, fine art. I'm inspired for each new challenge. I love when clients give me the freedom to do what I think is best for the piece.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** I don't know if I am so different from other people, but I do have a special hunger to grow because I came from a third world country with very little opportunity. I appreciate that

I can succeed doing what I love, because I consider tattooing an art form and not a job. For me tattooing is fun!

**What other mediums do you work in?** I have been focusing my attention on oil painting lately, but my portfolio of work ranges from colored pencils to airbrushing various surfaces, like body painting, murals, graffiti, etc.

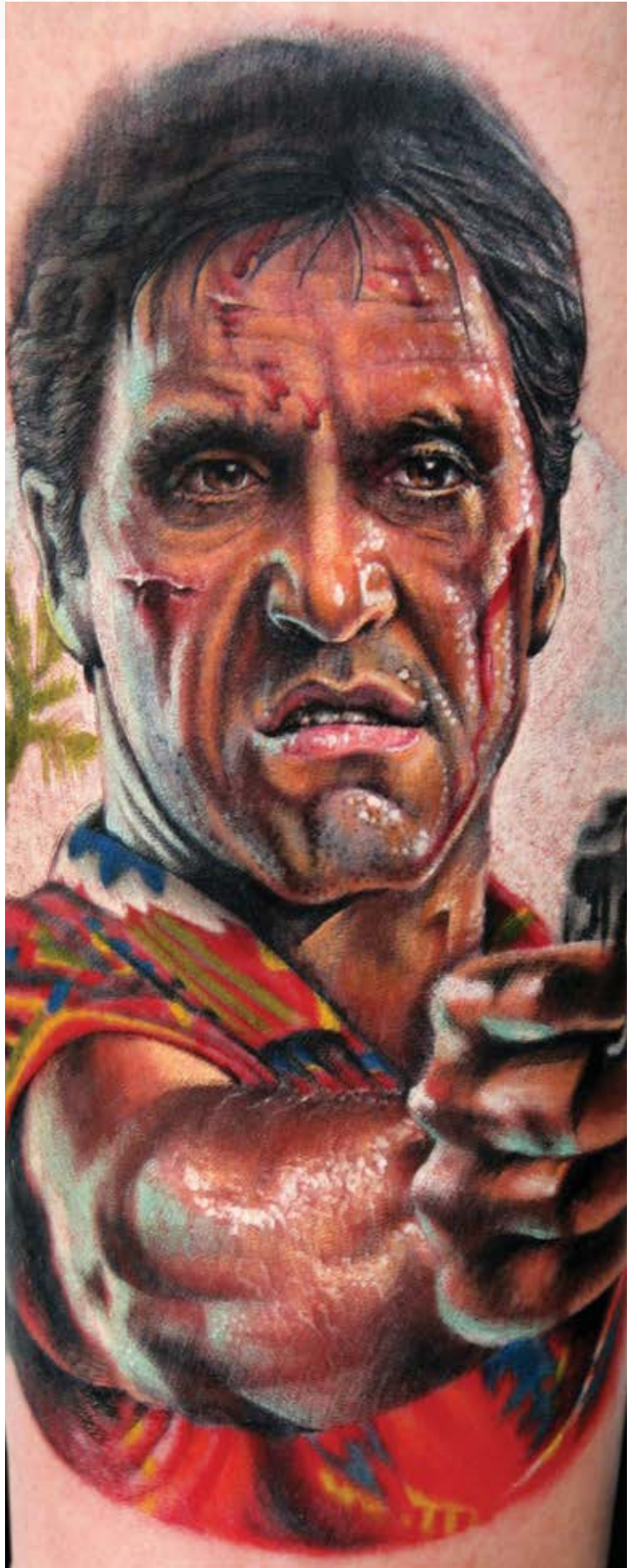
**How have you branched out from tattooing?** Through Last Rites, I participated in Art Fusion, and being exposed to the art that came through that gallery has inspired me to branch out into painting more in my studio. Exploring other mediums has enhanced my tattoos because my approach to pieces has totally changed.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** I appreciate tons of tattoo artists' work,

but to admire an artist, for me, comes after being friends and knowing them as a person. Throughout my tour, I had the luxury to see into the lives of artists whose art extends past their tattoo shop. I don't want to leave anyone out of my list, and it continues to grow, but you know who you guys are!

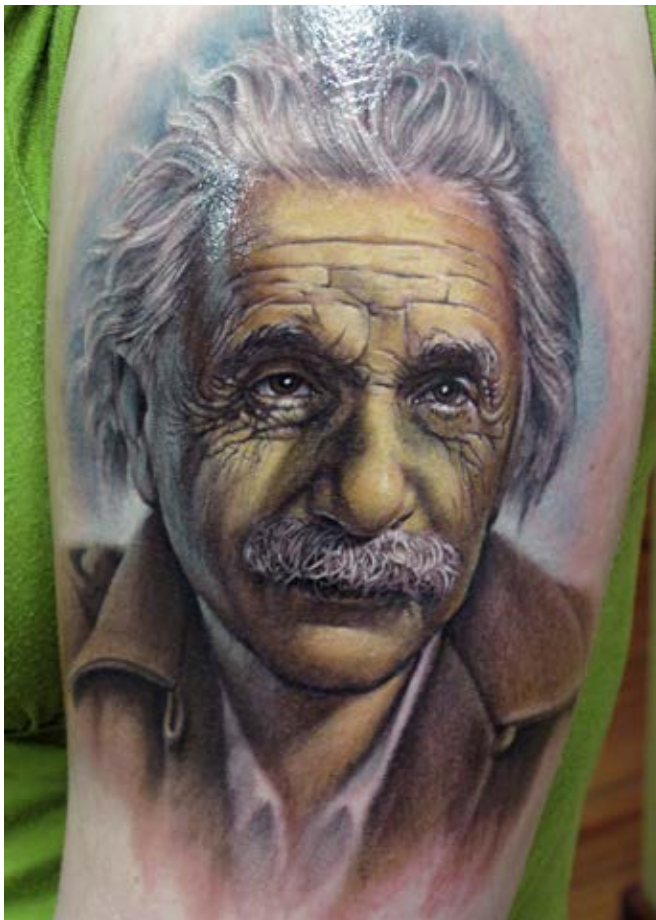
**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I want to create tattoos on a larger scale and also tattoos with more creativity in the concept. I feel this is happening more often but I am excited for what is to come.

**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** My advice to clients is to think about the entire body part you are starting to tattoo. Ask if you are going to fill a certain amount of space, so that the placement and flow will look the best for future additions.

















**MIKE COLE**  
mikecoletattoo.com

**What year did you start tattooing?** 1992.

**How did you get into tattooing?** Fate.

**Where did you apprentice?** I didn't.

**Do you have any special training?** No.

**What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?** Too many conventions to count and list. Over 200 around the world. Yes, I've won awards. Hard to say for memories since I've worked hundreds.

**How do you describe your style?** How long is a piece of string?

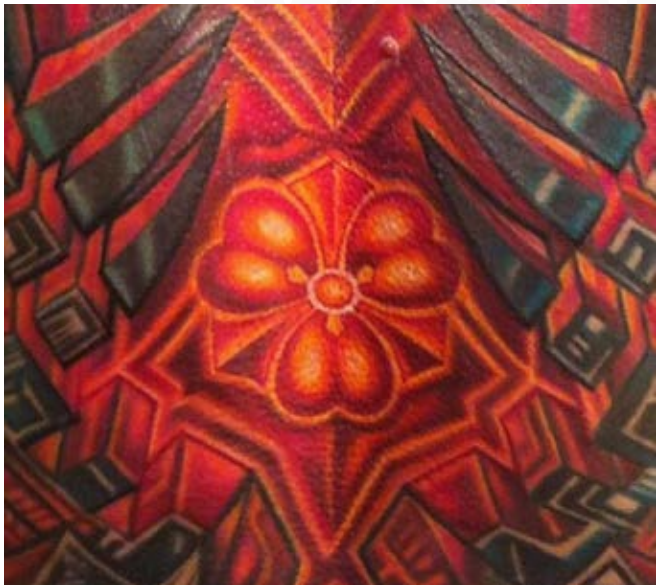
**What inspires you as an artist?** The universe.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** My DNA.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I'm very fond of oils, but [I use] everything and anything I can get my hands on.

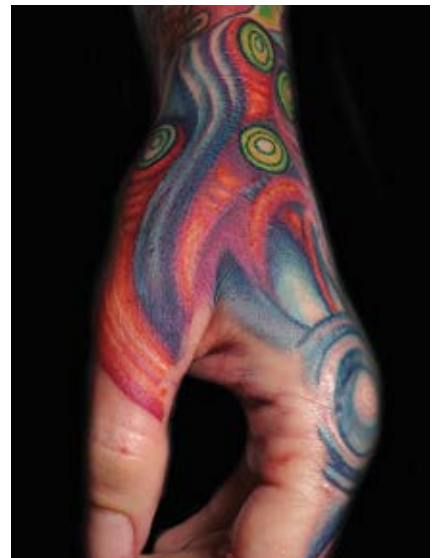
**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** The list is too long.













## CHAD CHASE

venomink.com

**Venom Ink Tattoo**  
207-206-1828

**What year did you start tattooing?** 1995.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I was always interested in it due to my dad and all his friends being inked up. I [have been] drawing since I can remember, and it seemed natural for me to delve into tattooing.

**Where did you apprentice?** I never had an apprenticeship. I tried to find someone who would take me on back in 1995 and was unsuccessful. I started practicing on myself and some friends, then opened my own place in 1996. I've never worked for anyone else. It was a long, hard road, but I stuck with it. Learned all the proper ways to be clean and sterile, taught myself how to make needles and how to build and tune machines, etc. I don't recommend this route for anyone. It would have saved me years if I had someone to teach me.

**Do you have any special training?** Nothing specific, but I am trained to make the best tattoo that I can!

**What conventions have you worked?** I've worked a few, mostly close to home. Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and I've worked Hell City a couple of times. Conventions are tough for me, having a shop to run and two little girls to take care of. I am going to try to get out to some further-away shows that I've never worked before.

**Have you won any awards?** A couple.

**What are some of your best convention memories?** Definitely last year was great in Oregon, working a show and hanging out with my Formula 51 family. I'm sponsored by Formula 51 and couldn't ask for a better group of guys to be in with. Also the New Hampshire





Live Free or Die show was great as well. My friend cosponsored artist Rich Pineda and I held our first realism seminar together. It was called "The Quickening," and was a first for both of us. It went really well and we had a blast doing it. We plan to do more at other shows in the future.

**How do you describe your style?** Slightly messy and somewhat realistic.

**What inspires you as an artist?** Other great art, of course. Artists who I admire that don't have an attitude. That's a big one. I hate rock star tattooists. You color for a living; it's really nothing to be a cocky prick over!

**What sets you apart from other artists?** Nothing, really. We all do our thing and work hard to improve and make the best tattoos we can. There are people who give a shit and

those who don't in this business. That's really the only separation amongst tattoo artists, I think. Everyone within their own category is equal. I fall into the give a shit category.

**What other mediums do you work in?** Acrylic and oil, though I feel I'm horrible at it. It's very humbling to try to achieve with paint what you can do on skin. But a fun challenge as well.

**How have you branched out from tattooing?** Besides being business-minded and the painting, I haven't, really. This is my life.

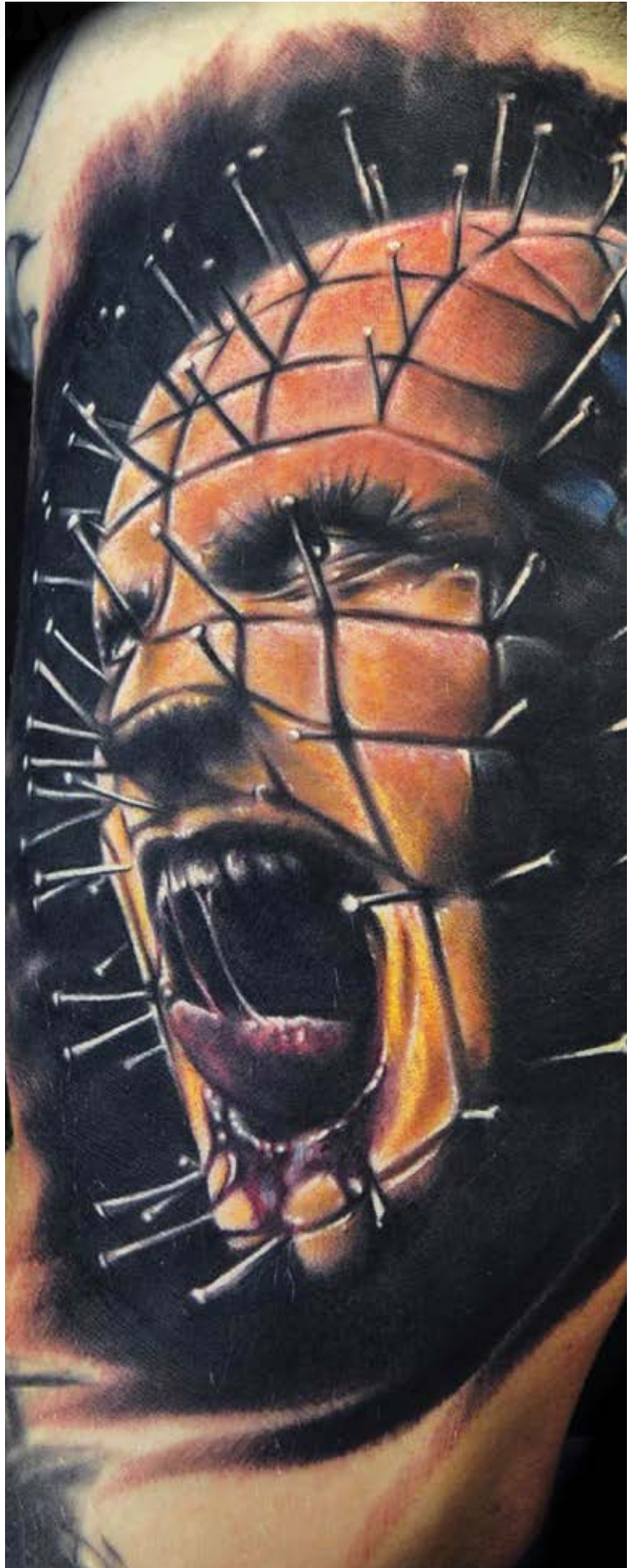
**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** If you're a great artist and we meet and you're a prick, then I'm not impressed with you anymore, no matter how good you are at tattooing. List toppers of great guys and artists that I know personally are Chris Fifty-One, Joshua

South, Rich Pineda, Kyle Cotterman, Joshua Carlton, Josh Bodwell, Chris Chubbuck, Timmy B., and Stéfano. I'm sure there are many more—sorry if I left you out, you know I love you! But those are some artists who I have met and know, and who aren't all high and mighty. Just down-to-earth guys who are doing their thing.

**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** Anything realistic and in color.

**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** Let me do my thing. I want your tattoo to come out better than you do.

**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?** I have about 400 images stored away on a hard drive that I'm dying to do! Which do you want?











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**What year did you start tattooing?** I started six years ago.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I had always loved drawing, but it was here in London that I started to really pay attention to tattoos and tattooing in general. While I was working as a bartender I came into contact with a lot of tattoo enthusiasts, and my love and interest grew from there. On my return to Italy I bought the necessary equipment, and my journey into the tattoo world started there.

**Where did you apprentice?** Like many of us I started to tattoo at home, but I soon realized that to progress I would need the help of a professional environment. My first real shop work was with Diego Brandi, at Subskin Tattoo in Rome. He kindly offered me the chance to learn and practice in a clean, knowledgeable setting.

**Do you have any special training?** Prior to tattooing I worked in a few small graphic design studios as an illustrator.

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

I must say I'm not particularly keen on working at conventions. I find the whole process a little stressful. Having said that, I have enjoyed working at the London, Edinburgh, and Rome conventions and plan to work these, and maybe some more, this year. What interests me the most about conventions is catching up with old friends.

**How do you describe your style?** When I started tattooing I was in love with very simple, rugged, traditional-style tattoos. As my work evolves it's becoming more detailed and less rough.



**What inspires you as an artist?** I find London fascinating, and I jumped at the opportunity to work here at The Family Business. London is so diverse and full of culture—I would say that this city is one of my main inspirations.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** I believe every artist is different from another, as there are so many ways to approach and interpret the same subject matter, depending on your past experiences, inspirations, and tastes.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I love to draw in pencil a lot, [but] I'm starting to use color a lot more.

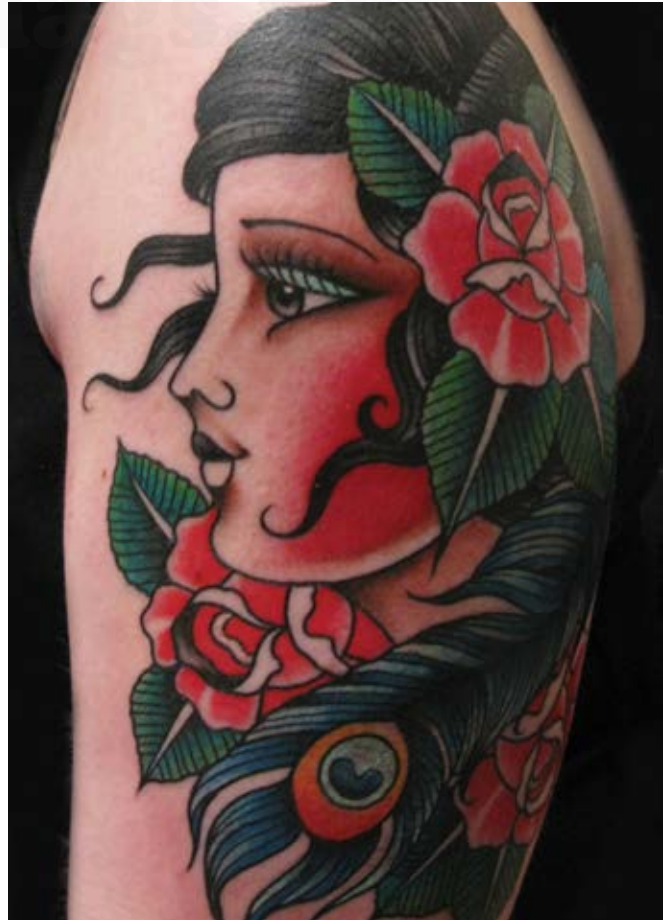
**Which tattoo artists do you admire the most?** There are a lot of artists who I admire, but to name a few of them, I'd say Rudy

Fritsch, Jeff Gogue, and Stizzo.

**What kind of tattoos do you most look forward to doing?** I like tattooing a lot of different styles—like neo-traditional and realistic—but I like to often change my approach to the work, in an attempt to broaden and evolve my style.

**Before someone gets tattooed, what advice do you give them?** I don't tend to give too much advice to customers. I just like to try to ensure they have a nice, enjoyable experience. I [don't] like to dictate what or where they get tattooed.

**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you're dying to do?** I enjoy tattooing women's faces and animal portraits. I'd love to do more tattoos of sharks, as I've always admired them.









## BOSTON TATTOO CONVENTION

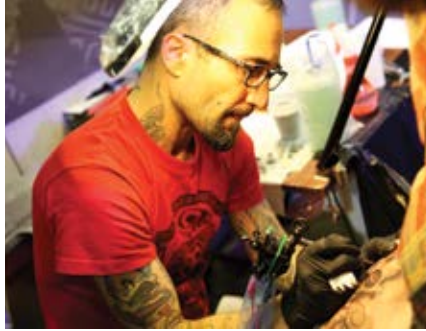
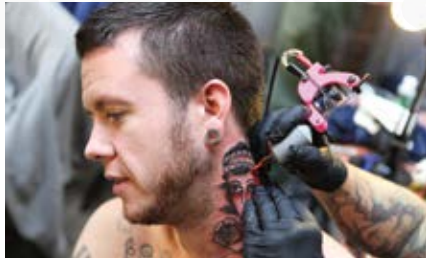
The Timeless Ink Tour launched its first annual show this past July 13 to 15 in Phoenix. The show featured some of the top tattoo artists, including Johnny Quintana, Placaso, Fonzie, and many more artists tattooing on-site all weekend long. The Timeless Ink Tour also featured a large custom car show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



# LEATHERNECKS TATTOO

photo by Ellen Stagg

667A 5TH AVENUE, BROOKLYN, NY 11215  
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## LONDON TATTOO CONVENTION

The year 2012 saw the London Tattoo Convention—one of the world's largest and most successful tattoo conventions—celebrate its eighth consecutive year. Again located in the heart of East London at the amazing Tobacco Dock Venue, the convention was perfectly placed to pique fans' interest. Crowds flocked by the thousands to get tattooed and check out this year's festivities. Artists from all over the world stepped up and made an appearance. Some of this year's talent included the who's who of tattooing: Oliver Peck, Tim Hendricks, Ami James, Filip Leu, and tattooing legend Jack Rudy all made an appearance. And of course the hometown boys and top London shops also turned out to represent—Frith Street Tattoo, Into London, and The Family Business were there putting London on the map.

Slap in the heart of one of the world's most amazing cities, the London Tattoo Convention, with its long list of amazing artists, is certainly a convention that people make the effort to turn out for. It's definitely the one convention that barely sees a dull moment. Besides the hundreds of tattoo artists that rock up for this bash, the convention offers a wide variety of entertainment. The underground levels of the venue were packed with vendors and shops this year. And come nighttime, all the in-house bars were rammed full of jolly old Londoners having a few pints, making London Convention one hell of a party. For more information on next year's convention, go to [thelondontattooconvention.com](http://thelondontattooconvention.com).



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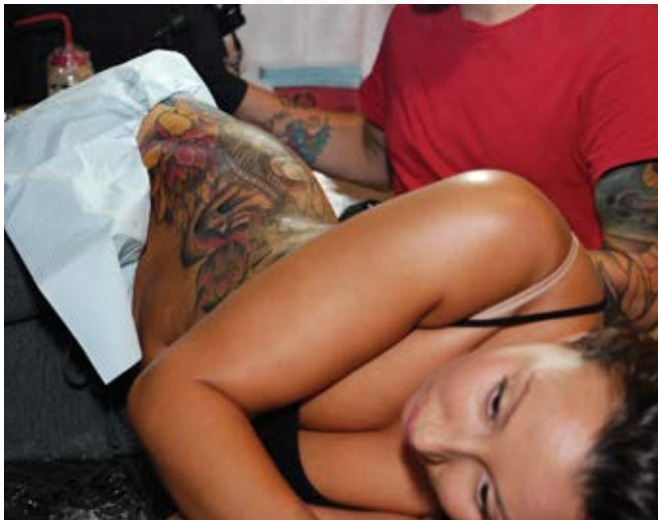


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**VISIONARY TATTOO FEST**  
 This year's Visionary Tattoo Arts Festival pulled in amazing artists from around the nation for a three day weekend full of tattooing, performing, partying, and straight up relaxing on the beaches of Asbury Park, NJ. Whether it was the beauty of the ocean or the incredible freehand work of Carl Grace walking around, the positive energy of the show left everyone inspired. For more information on next years show please visit [www.visionarytattoofest.com](http://www.visionarytattoofest.com).



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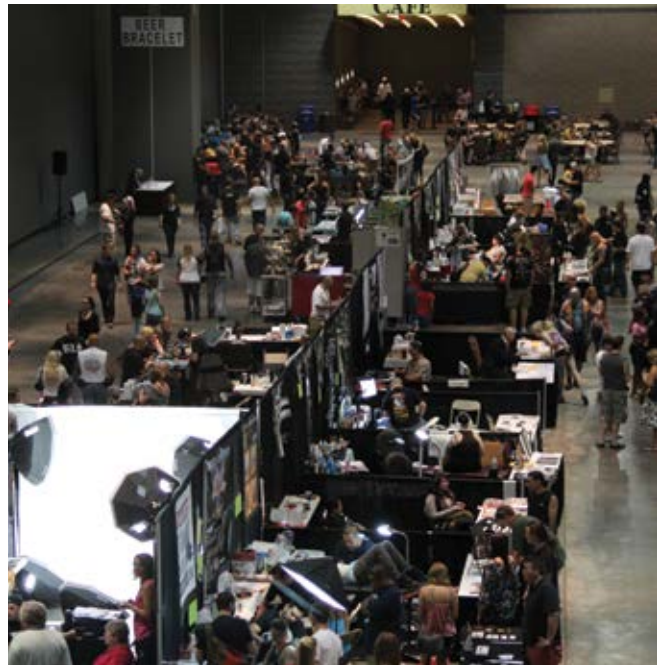
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## TOMMY'S TATTOO CONVENTION

Tom Ringwalt Jr., owner of Tommy's Supplies, put on the first annual Tommy's Tattoo Convention in Hartford, CT, at the Connecticut Convention Center August 17 to 19, 2012. It was very successful, with about 4,000 people attending and over 100 booths sold. Some of the most talented artists from all over the world left clients astonished and excited to show off their new ink. Guests and acts included but were not limited to Amy Nicoletto from *LA Ink*, The Enigma Man, The Lucky Daredevil Show, and The Ink Illusionist. Live music included bands Tester, Tragically Said, and V. If you did not attend this year, be sure not to miss next year's convention. It will be bigger and even better, with more artists, vendors, sideshows, and customers attending. This was the first tattoo convention in Hartford, and we are confident that it will not be the last! Check us out online at [tommystattooconvention.com](http://tommystattooconvention.com) for 2013.





# DC TATTOO EXPO

No.

3



## JANUARY 11-13, 2013

**Eternal Ink**  
The Original Color Proof



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**AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL**

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



**FOLLOW NO ONE**

Make a bold statement in this hoodie (\$60, [inkedshop.com](http://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](http://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).



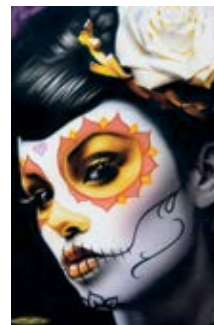
**STYLIN'**

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



**DOUBLE TROUBLE**

Skulls can be seen as a symbol of danger and death, or glory and the afterlife. Represent both with this Watto, Twin Skull Belt Buckle (\$65, inkedshop.com), completely handmade of steel.



**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).

Mark Mahoney's



Gangster  
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