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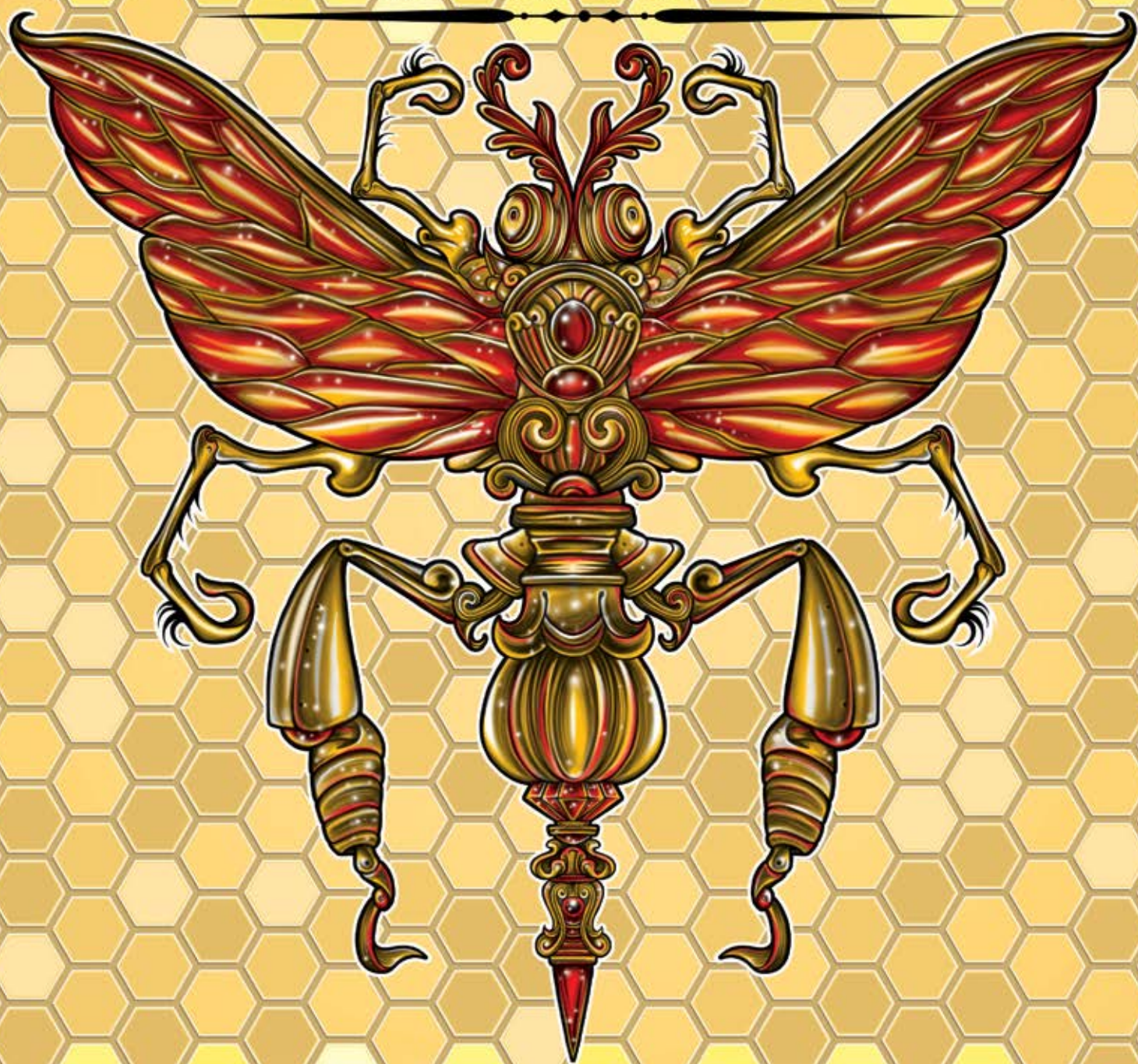


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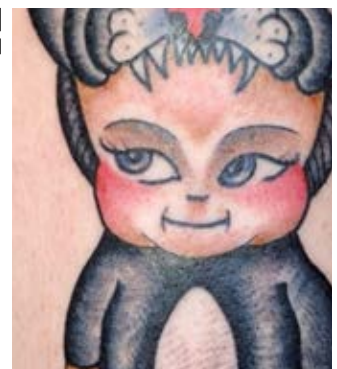
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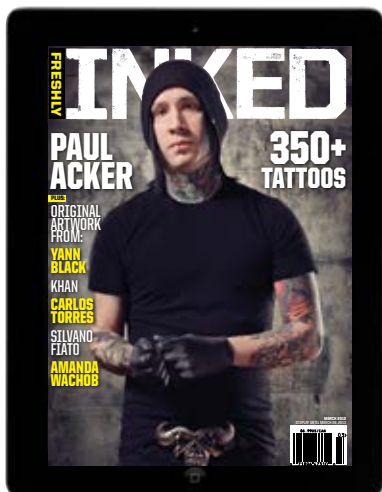
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What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing out of my house back in March of '98.

How did you get into tattooing? While surfing the artistic circles in Newport News, VA, I eventually stumbled upon a fella named Carlos Marshall, who tattooed out of his house. I honestly never intended on becoming a tattoo artist—I just really enjoyed drawing. Carlos eventually taught me how to build a “ghetto gun,” and I ventured off to do my first tattoo. Initially, I had only intended on doing a tattoo or two, but as soon as the word got out that I was doing tattoos, people started lining up at the front door—not because my tattoos were good, but because they were super cheap. After tattooing out of my house for about a year, I built a small portfolio of my work and took it around to all the local tattoo shops. They all rejected me. Every three months I would return with my new work, and after my third time around I landed my first job as a professional tattoo artist.

Where did you apprentice? I didn't do a formal apprenticeship. Most of what I know I picked up via working around great artists.

Do you have any special training? I studied illustration at Virginia Commonwealth University and received a BFA in spring of '04.

What conventions have you worked at? I've worked Hell City, Tattoopalooza, Hampton TattooFest, Richmond Tattoo Arts Festival, Tattoo Jam, Evian Tattoo Convention, Beijing, China Convention, Rock of Ages.

Have you won any awards? I've won a little over 30 awards.

What are some of your best convention memories? I had a lot of fun in Beijing, China. It was one of the most entertaining conventions that I've ever been to. They had ninjas throwing needles through panes of glass, contortionists, dragon dancers, etc. Also, the hosts of the



show were very hospitable and kind.

How do you describe your style? I like to call my style of tattooing “lo-brid.” I personally consider the “lo-brid” style a movement of tattooing that has collected inspiration from graffiti, tattoo, comic book, and lowbrow art.

What inspires you as an artist? A great deal of my inspiration comes from other artists. I also enjoy analyzing social dynamics and trying to find out clever ways to illustrate the dispositions that I find within them.

What sets you apart from other artists? The thing that most people tend to compliment me on is my color usage, compositions, and concepts. So I assume that is what sets me apart from other artists.

What other mediums do you work in? I've pretty much tried my hand at almost every medium I could get my hands on—spray paint,

airbrush, digital, charcoal, acrylic, color pencil, graphite, sculpture, marker, Conté crayon, etc. Lately, however, I've been really into painting in oils. I just really enjoy how pliable oils are.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I've been designing a lot of T-shirts lately, painting murals, oil painting, and I'm currently in the middle of trying to put together a book about the continent that I created called Carkayous.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? Just like everyone else, I have tons of artists that I admire, but the artists who I feel have helped mold my art into what it is today are Jime Litwalk, Gunnar, Tim Biedron, Jason Stephan, Tony Ciavarrro. These are all artists who have inspired my style, but there are a ton of artists outside of my genre that I really look up to.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward

to doing? I really enjoy doing large-scale work. I feel as though the impact of a large piece is difficult to beat on a smaller scale. Over the past couple of years I've been getting a lot of great clients coming in with great ideas that they're willing to bend if necessary. I'm really excited to get some of these tattoos knocked out.

Before someone gets a tattoo, what advice do you give them? I don't really give people advice—I just try to feel them out and see where it is that they want to go with it. If I find any holes in their idea, I do the best I can to bend them in a direction I feel would benefit their idea and design.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I've been lucky enough to have an awesome and open clientele who really seems to trust my artistic vision, so pretty much anything that I've wanted to do is in the works.











**TONY
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What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in 2006.

How did you get into tattooing? I was tattooed when I was 15. I was always infatuated with tattoos, and I found a shitty biker shop and went in and started getting a lot of work done. Ha—it wasn't the best decision, but I don't regret it. From that point on I started really getting into art and wanted to pursue a career in painting. When I graduated high school I went to Marywood University in Scranton, PA, to study fine art and painting. I found a local shop and started looking to get a back piece done. When I spoke with the artist about getting the tattoo he asked me if I wanted to apprentice under him. I never considered tattooing but I couldn't pass up the opportunity! So I started my apprenticeship.

Where did you apprentice? I apprenticed in Pennsylvania at a shop called Stormi Steel. It was a street shop but was a good experience.

The artist I apprenticed under was Steve Lutz. He was a great person to learn from and kept pushing me to better myself.

Do you have any special training? As for tattooing, I did a normal apprenticeship, but I went to university to study fine art and painting. Having a background in fine art really helps me push my style in art and tattooing. And it gave me a better understanding of where I wanted to be with my art. Having a broader outlook on art and understanding the reasons things are aesthetically pleasing opened up a whole new approach to what I wanted to see with tattoos.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? I don't even think I can begin to list all the conventions I have worked at over the years. I normally do about 15 conventions a year. Most of the conventions I do are in Europe. I am normally doing a convention and guest spot circuit in Europe



about four months out of the year and two months in the States. Traveling is important to me to be able to meet friends and other artists from around the world. It is a great way to learn and to be a part of the community. Somehow I think I am traveling more than I am at my studio during a normal year. It is humbling to be able to go anywhere in the world and have clients and be in a beautiful country experiencing their culture. I would say my favorite conventions with the best memories are conventions where all my friends are and having a good time wandering around a new city! Some of my favorites are Bregenz tattoo convention in Austria, and Florence, Italy. I have won many awards, international and within the States. I have many articles and four book publications with my work featured in them. It is hard to explain how much that means to me and how appreciative I am. But it keeps me pushing myself!

How do you describe your style? I have a pretty specific style but have a wide range of subject matter I work with. I would say I do more surreal and dark art, but with a classical approach. I look for some main elements in creating the work I do. Composition is the main focus. I feel no matter how great the tattoo is, if it doesn't flow with the body or look aesthetically pleasing, it doesn't work. I also am very picky when it comes to subject

matter. I draw everything I do unless there is a definitive need for reference. I spend a lot of time in my preparation for every tattoo I do. I research the idea and try to take an indirect approach to the design.

What inspires you as an artist? I get most of my inspiration from Renaissance art. The imagery is so powerful, and everything tells a story.

What sets you apart from other artists? I'm not really sure how to answer this question. I guess I would say I am consumed with tattooing and art. It's an obsession that I need to constantly be producing work.

What other mediums do you work in? I normally work in oil. I have been painting for a while now, and for some reason there is nothing that compares. I've worked with almost every medium but always find that I am not as satisfied while using another medium. There is just a fluidity with using oil. I layer and build up my painting in such a way that any other medium makes the process much more difficult. I also do a lot of pencil and charcoal drawing. There is an instant gratification with drawing that I cannot achieve with painting.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I have plans to take some time off

next year to focus on painting. I would love to build a body of painting all based around a central theme and hopefully have some gallery shows. I have been part of some shows but I would love to do some solo shows. I just need to find the time to paint.

What tattoo artists do you admire most?

I really admire any artist pushing themselves to take their art to the next level and finding a way to translate that into tattooing. Due to the popularity of tattooing, there is an overabundance of tattooers. Though it is a bit overwhelming for the industry, you see more great artists pushing the standard of tattooing now, which leads to a higher standard within the community. I think it's a good step forward. But most of the artists I look up to have been in the industry for a long time and have stood the test of time. I hope to be in this industry a long time and want to follow in their footsteps.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? Anything I can make interesting. I mainly do larger-scale work, so that allows me to create more dynamic compositions. Next year I think I have over 15 back pieces booked, which I am really excited to work on. I would like to take my work in a more surreal direction, so that is a goal for next year.











RICH PINEDA
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What year did you start tattooing? April 2010.

How did you get into tattooing? My good friend Jeff Cooper, who had been my tattoo artist, was at my house hanging out and he knew that I was really into art in other forms so he asked me if I had ever thought of becoming a tattoo artist. I had always thought about it but never really thought it was something I could get into. Long story short, he called me the next day, brought me out to his shop, and started teaching me the ropes. Six months later he opened a second shop, Liquid Tattoo, and I've been out there ever since.

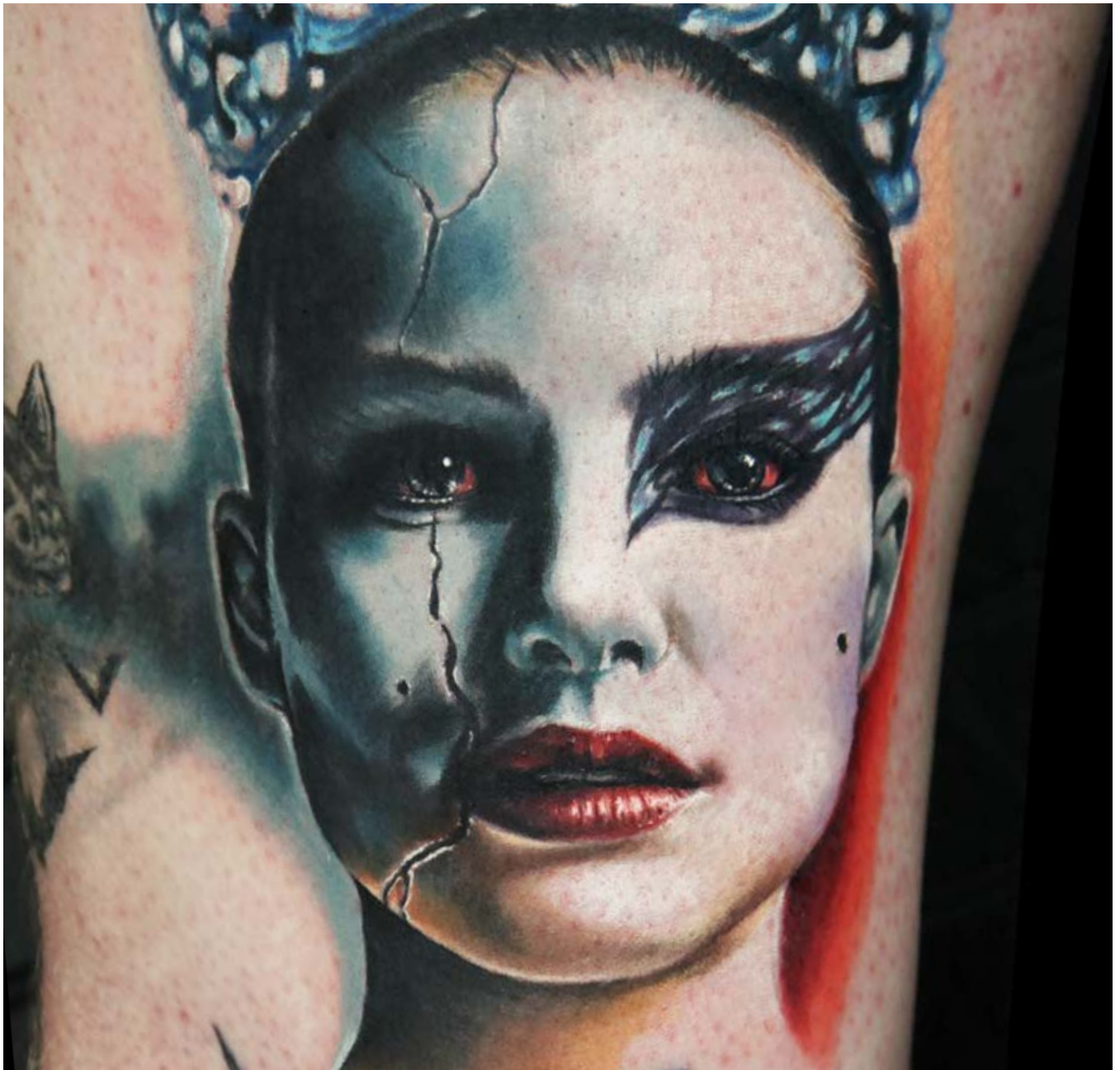
Where did you apprentice? Solid Tattoo in Palms, CA.

Do you have any special training? I've always done art in different forms—canvas, airbrushing, and metal work. I worked for a time painting custom bikes, trucks, helmets, etc. I also did faux painting on walls and created custom distressed cabinetry. I always wanted

to do something in the art field when it came to work, but I never dreamed I would be doing something I love like I am today.

What conventions have you worked? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? I do the Ink for a Cause convention every year in Ventura. I also had the pleasure of working at the Ink Masters convention in Orange County this year, where I took home tattoo of the day. That, to me, was probably one of my favorite experiences. To take home tattoo of the day was one of the highlights of my tattoo career. I also met a lot of cool people at that convention, including my friend Jeremy Hanna, co-owner of Sullen. I did a couple conventions on the East Coast as well, including the Live Free or Die convention, where I was honored to teach a seminar with my good friend Chad Chase.

How do you describe your style? I would definitely say the style I love to do is realism. Sometimes I feel like all I do are floating heads, but honestly that's where I feel most comfortable.



What inspires you as an artist? Seeing other artists and amazing pieces. Whether it's on canvas, skin, or sculpture, it definitely pushes me to want to take my art to another level. I also draw inspiration in other forms of art, including music and film. My family has been a huge part of the movie industry, and having them as role models has definitely inspired me to use my talents to the fullest and do everything I can to continue to grow.

What sets you apart from other artists? Not really sure. I think only an outsider's perspective could answer that.

What other mediums do you work in? I have never really committed myself to one medium. I've worked with everything from wood and leather to canvas and metal. I love art in any form.

How have you branched out from tattooing? Well, I actually feel like I have branched in, if that makes sense. I was always doing other things with other forms of art and didn't really get my start in tattooing 'til much later, but I am thankful that I did find it, even if it was later in life.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? I admire many artists. Nikko Hurtado, Franco Vescovi, Chad Chase, Rodney Eckenberger, Carlos Torres, Carlos Rojas, Bob Tyrrell, Jeff Cooper, Kirk Alley, Roman Abrego, Gustavo Rimada, James Strickland, Mike Demasi, Phil Garcia, Todd Townsend. So many people. I could seriously keep going—there are a lot of talented artists out there.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I've been doing a lot of

these girls' faces lately. I've had people who have appointments and call me to change it because they want one of my faces. I love it because it has definitely allowed me to get creative and design my own custom pieces.

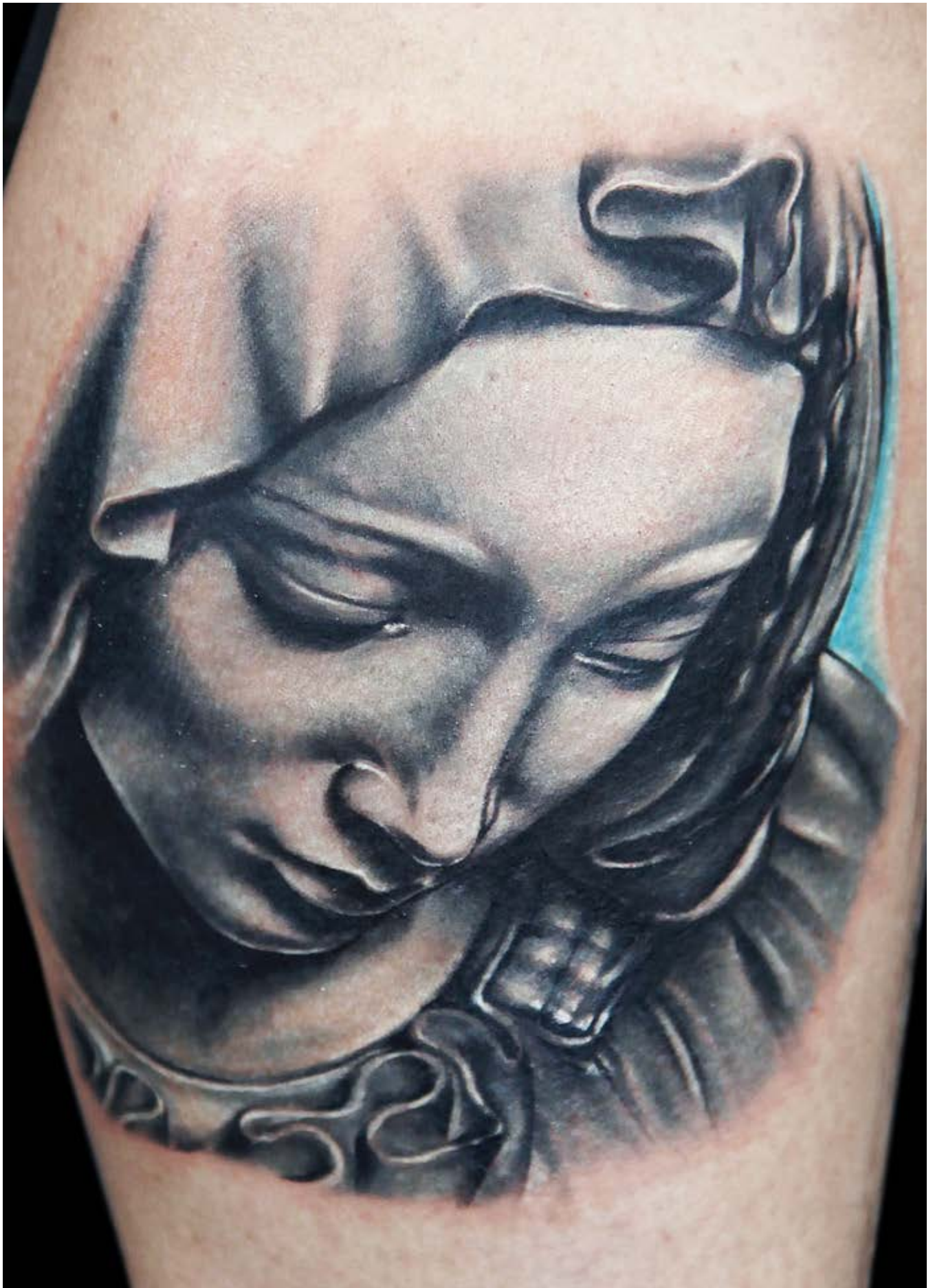
Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Definitely my advice is to be sure that you are getting what you want. If there is something that you don't like in a design, speak up and be vocal. It's easier to change a stencil then to cover something up that's been permanently put on your body.

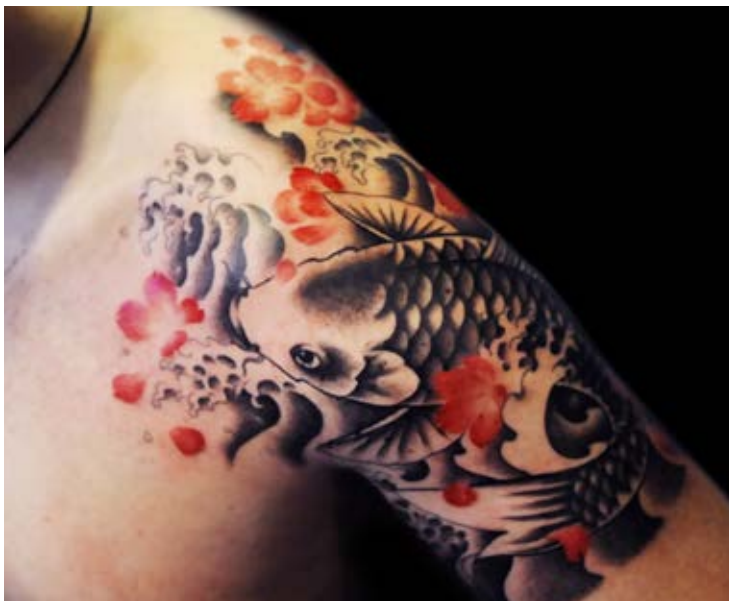
Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I am a huge fan of *Lord of the Rings*. I would love to do a sleeve or a back piece in a *Lord of the Rings* theme.











JOEY PANG
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What year did you start tattooing? 2004.

How did you get into tattooing? I had been in love with drawing but I didn't think of being a tattoo artist until my 20s. Tattoos in Hong Kong and China were thought to be only for criminals and sailors. Today most of the older generation still looks down on the practice and most of the younger generation hides their artwork. I started with cosmetics, then graphic design, moved to fashion, and finally interior design. Even then I hated how body painting and cosmetics were temporary. At one point I went to New Zealand and while there I saw how people carried tattoos with pride. These weren't pieces intended to cause fear. Tattoos were their tradition, culture, and art all in one. This completely changed my entire outlook.

Where did you apprentice? It's hard to say, as I took a somewhat different approach to the traditional "stationary" or set apprenticeship. Mine was far more nomadic. I was lucky

enough to be introduced to some of the most amazing artists in the industry. I asked questions and learned anything and everything I could. I traveled to Thailand, China, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, and Britain. I remember picking up lessons about coloring in Switzerland, detail work from portrait artists in the U.S., composition from another artist, and so on. I learned a lot from guest artists at my studio in Hong Kong, and most recently when I visited artists in France just weeks ago. Learning in tattooing never stops. There are always different possibilities to consider and new techniques to explore.

Do you have any special training? Cosmetics and design was, of course, a great foundation. I suppose a more specialized style of training comes from Chinese art. I studied calligraphy for decades and still go to Chinese painting classes every week. Hong Kong has many excellent Chinese art teachers, and I am constantly grateful for their expertise and guidance as I continue to learn.



What conventions have you worked? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? My current waiting list is around two years, so it's been really tricky to make it out to as many conventions as I would like. Seeing other artists as well as how cultures across the globe value tattooing is wonderful. I've been to Singapore, China, Taiwan, and Thailand. The next convention I'm planning on attending will most likely be in the U.K., and then a few over in the States. I did manage to make it to the Evian convention in October but could only go for a few hours on the first day as I had to fly back to Hong Kong for appointments.

How do you describe your style? My style is a little hard to pinpoint. I suppose the closest term would be modern Asian. I like to vary the traditional art techniques with new compositions. I've been studying calligraphy and Chinese art since I was very young. It's been many years of training with the Hong Kong Calligraphy Association and under many teachers.

What inspires you as an artist? For me it's about staying curious and excited. Inspiration comes from all around. When you learn a new skill or technique, this can benefit and affect everything you were doing before. Every kind of learning feeds another. This is why I try to not simply stay with reading one type of book or looking at one style of artwork alone.

What sets you apart from other artists? Each artist has their own aesthetic preferences and areas of specialty. What sets an artist apart is that no one else is able to do what they do.

What other mediums do you work in? How have you branched out from tattooing? The latest is a clothing line for the Chinese branch of MMA. The first collection will be coming out in 2013. Earlier this year I released an interior design collection with Indigo. These were "tattooed" couches, fine bone china, and many other items. The collection included two hand-painted club chairs that I actually finished preparing while I was

pregnant and then just after my son was born. Before that I designed a solid pewter tattooed champagne bucket with L'Orfèvrerie d'Anjou. I have done calligraphy and design work for a number of groups. There are a few others currently in development. To me tattooing is transferable. The idea is to bring art into the everyday. I almost see it as giving life to otherwise plain or dull objects.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? Filip Leu has to be right up there. I love Shige's work as well. There are different artists that I respect immensely such as Xoil, Horiyoshi, Paul Booth, Guy Aitchison, and many others. It's really hard to pick just a few!

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I would say that size is the key factor. It makes a huge difference when clients dedicate sufficient space for the artwork. So large pieces are some of my favorites. But I do look forward to all my commissions—otherwise I wouldn't have taken them.











ROXX
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What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing around 1986. I was doing it simply and on the fly using just my own hand and a needle. It wasn't professional at all, just hand-poked and punk rock. I was in London and really wanted to get an apprenticeship but couldn't get my foot in the door anywhere—every single place turned me down. So I decided to figure it out on my own.

How did you get into tattooing? I grew up in London during the 1970s. Whenever I would see punk rockers with their tattoos looking all badass and dangerous, I knew that I wanted to tattoo. So I did. I was always really good at art, and I realized that I could be a tattoo artist, make a living, continue to make art, and live my life making art. So I did, and I'm still doing it at 42.

Where did you apprentice? I never was able to get an apprenticeship. I think a lot of it was because I was a woman and there weren't many women in the business at the time. Add into that that I was seen as so young—I was 16 at the

time, and no one took me seriously. So now I am a totally self-taught person who just figured it out alone. I have to say, though, that is the really hard way to do it and I wouldn't advise it for anyone. It took a lot of strength of character and difficulty, and it's the very long, slow, hard way to go about becoming a tattoo artist.

Do you have any special training? None whatsoever. I didn't go to art school, I didn't get any training. I did it all myself, apart from art class at school. It was a pure passion for tattooing and love for doing it that drove me forward. In truth, I'm just kind of tenacious and I stuck it out because I absolutely love what I do.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? I've done a few conventions, mainly in Europe when I lived there, and recently some local conventions in San Francisco, but I haven't really been much of a convention person. Truthfully, I felt that me and my work didn't really fit into



the tattoo world. I do mainly black work, and I felt that it wasn't taken seriously or in favor, and that was really intimidating to me when I was younger. I didn't think my work was good enough to be in one for a long time.

How do you describe your style? As the person on the inside of my style, who is creating the work day to day, it's really hard for me to even see that I have a style. However, others can see it from a mile away and so they tell me a bit about it. Personally, I've always been really into working with the human body as a sculpture more than as a flat canvas. I like playing with the 3-D forms of musculature. My ideas are to make people look strong and powerful with my ink, as well as beautiful. I'm bringing a pretty hard-core warrior style of tattooing to the table, trying to celebrate people's journey through life. I give people tattoos that they can wear like medals of honor, showing what they have both accomplished and survived. I like to make people look like superheroes with their tattoos.

What inspires you as an artist? I really enjoy graphic design. I like to create images that look strong and have a big impact from a distance. I am very inspired by nature, by tribal and indigenous work from the past, by tattoo history, by architecture, by sacred geometry. I'm always looking at the form and movement of

the human body and creating work that looks very heavy and strong, but also fluid and delicate on the skin.

What sets you apart from other artists?

This is a scenario where I have to rely so heavily on what other people tell me. I really can't see and analyze what I create from the inside; for me it's just what I do. What I'm told is that my style is very unique. I personally don't try to follow any style, I just try and see the best design that will fit with a specific person's spirit and anatomy. I'm told that my work is really easy to spot, and distinctive. I don't see that so much, but then again I don't think about it a lot.

What other mediums do you work in? I'm not one of those traditional tattoo artists that paints or does watercolors in my spare time. I'm really into photography and graphic design. I'm not an illustrator, though I can do that work if I need to. I also enjoy sculptural work, but primarily it's all about photography and graphic design.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I haven't, really—tattooing is all that I do. I'm not interested in branching out. The only medium that I've used to diversify at all is the photography of my clients and building that skill so that I can capture their energy and who they are with their tattoo.

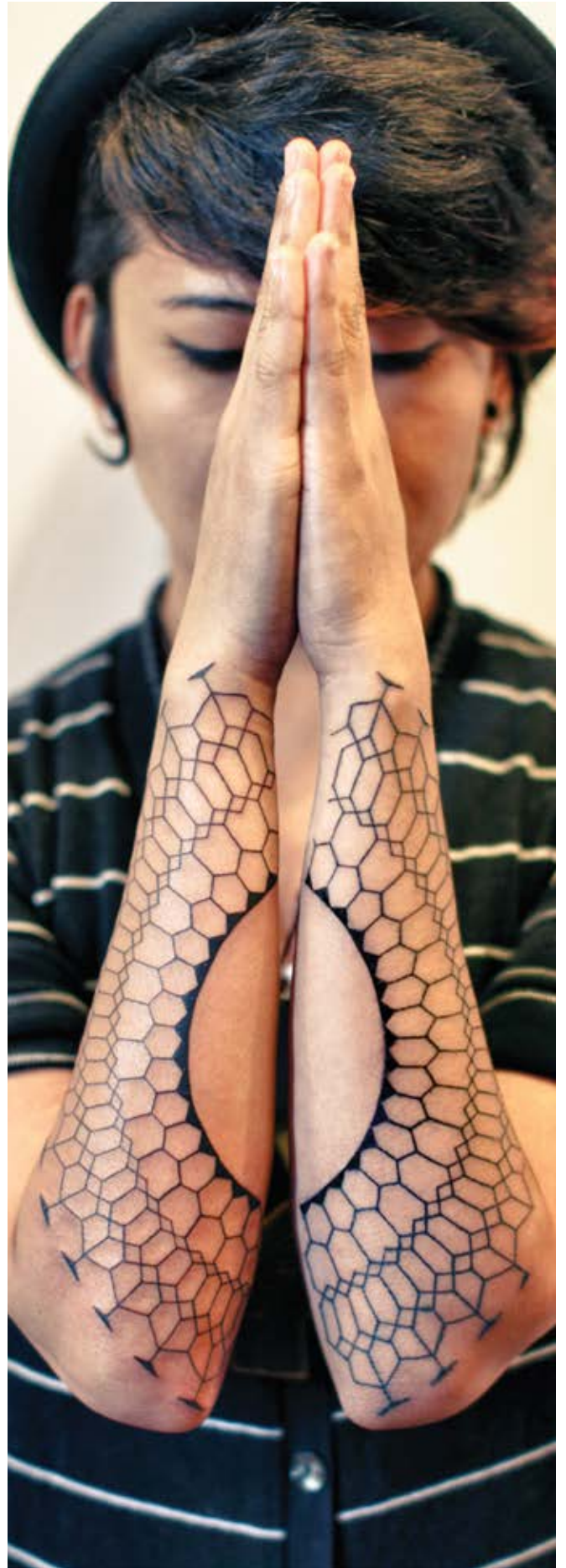
What tattoo artists do you admire most?

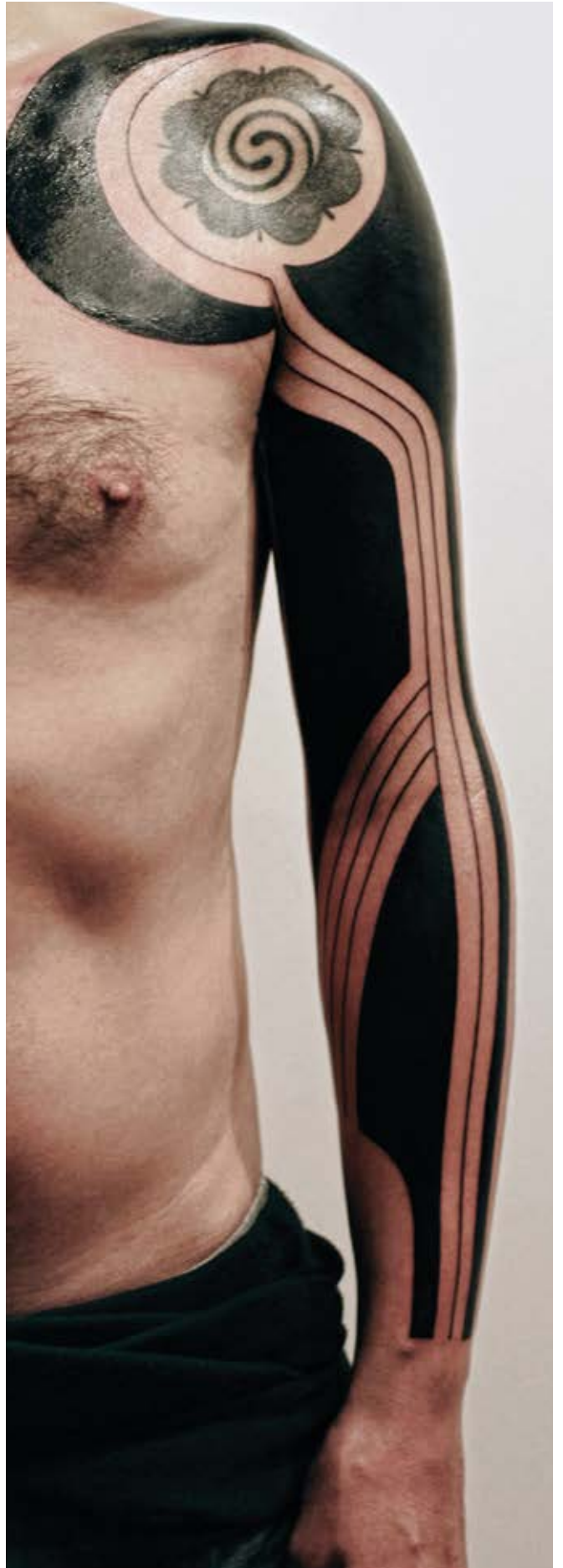
Definitely the late, great artist Sulu'ape Paulo. I was fortunate enough to get tattooed by him before he passed, and I was so inspired and impressed by him.

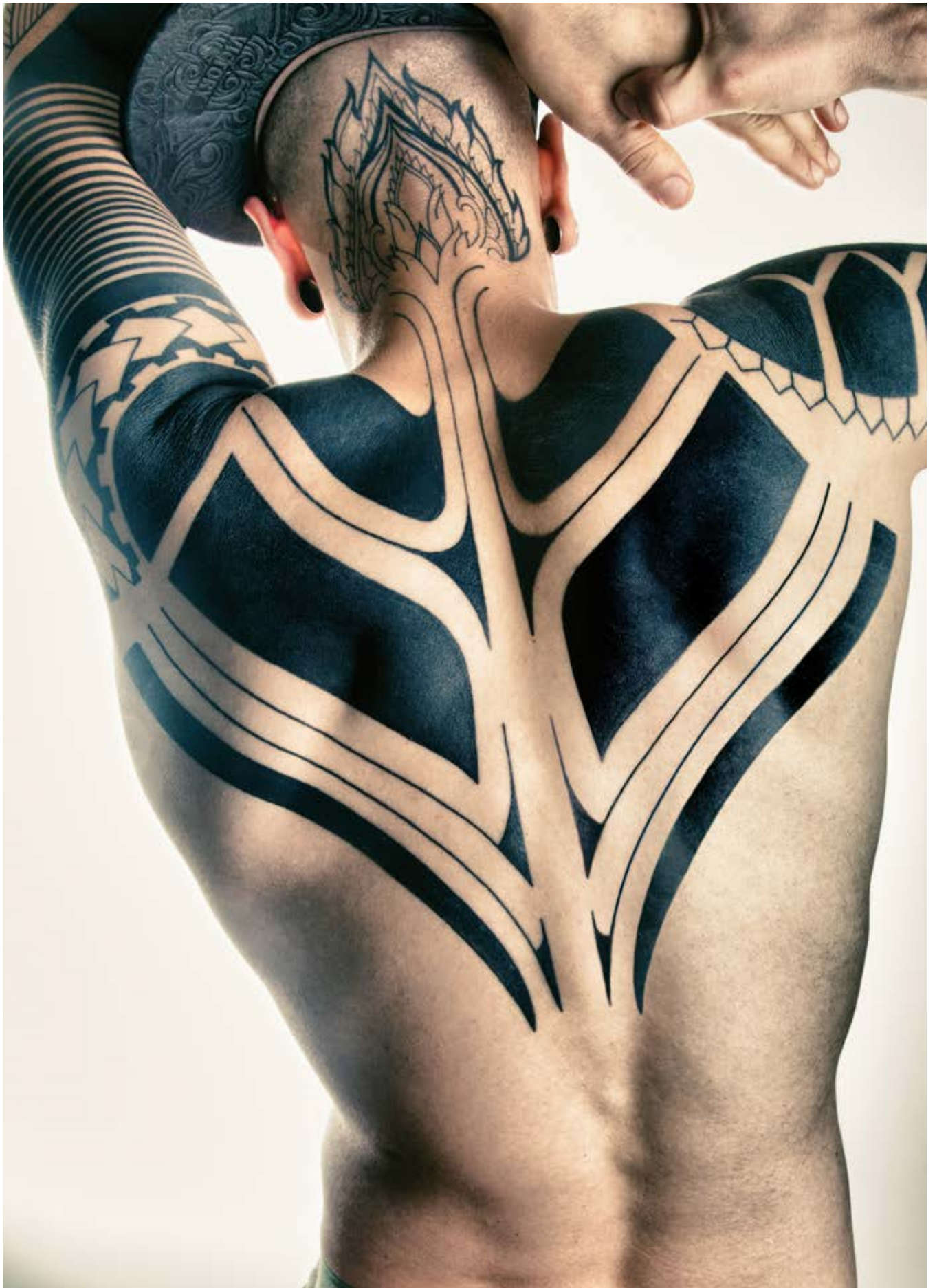
What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I'm kind of spoiled these days. How I work now is that people come to me, offer me a body part, and let me do what I want.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? I need to know that they're 100 percent committed to their tattoo. That they know it's not going anywhere and that it will be there for the rest of their lives. The way I work with people is pretty serious. This is a deep and spiritual journey that we're going on together. I need them to come from a place of really wanting it and being sure. I want them to treat it as a sacred thing.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? There are hundreds. I have hundreds and hundreds of designs in my head waiting for the right person to come along and get them. Each person inspires new designs with who they are and what their experience sparks in my mind. I've got a good 20 years left of working on people's bodies, and there is a lot of art that can come out of that.











BRANDON BOND
 brandonbond.com
All or Nothing Tattoo
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 (770) 435-9966



What year did you start tattooing?

Twenty-one years ago. 1992ish. I actually did my very first tattoo four years before that, but that was not professional, nor was it in a shop.

How did you get into tattooing?

I was drawing tattoos for my friends, and mimicking what I was seeing hanging on the walls of tattoo studios. Creating sheets of flash, and not even being aware that that's what I was doing. As I hung out at tattoo shops, I would draw some of the tattoos for the artists that worked there. Back then 99 percent of tattoos were simply stenciled from line drawings off the wall, so if there was a custom request they would kick it down to me because I was one of the few guys around that could actually draw the imagery being tattooed.

Where did you apprentice? My first apprenticeship was for tattooing specifi-

cally and was in Fort Walton Beach, FL, at a small shop called Tattoo Zoo. That shop still thrives to this day. And the man that gave me my first tattoo machine, Jim Wolfe, is still the owner and boss that he always was.

Do you have any special training?

I traveled all over this country and tattooed at all of the great shops of their time. I had the opportunity to tattoo with, and get tattooed by, almost all of the great artists of my generation. I lived on the road for years. I did tattoo conventions almost every other weekend for 15 years. I did guest spots and stuck around as a resident in more shops than I can count.

What conventions have you worked at?

I personally have tattooed at hundreds and hundreds of conventions. Our staff at All or Nothing Tattoo has a tour schedule every year, and artists go to as many as they would



like to go to. As I type this, we have guys en route back from a trip this weekend. We have guys going out almost every weekend during touring season, and that's when we have guest artists come and tattoo out of the empty booths. We tour very heavily, and have done so nonstop since our inception.

Have you won any awards? That's a crazy question. Our studio looks like we make trophies instead of tattoos. Every corner, every nook, every wall, and every shelf is covered in awards. We have a garage full of them as well. And sometimes we use our trophies for target practice if they're ugly. However, we proudly display the big ones. Like when I won artist of the year the first time, as well as the second time. Best of show is always a good one. A couple of years ago they flew me to England to give me a "Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Tattoo Industry," and it's a cool-looking trophy too, so we have no plans to shoot that one. As a collective of artists we have won more awards than any other studio in the world.

What are some of your best convention memories? I have very fond memories of touring. Working with amazing artists, doing collaborations with people like Paul Booth, traveling with my friends, my All or Nothing family. Being single and touring is definitely different than being with a woman and touring, but some of my fondest memories of having more than one girl at the same time was on tour. Two heads are better than one. And three are better than two. A lot of my best pieces were also done on the road, frantically drawn at the last minute in the hotel room nursing massive hangovers.

How do you describe your style? The most important characteristic of what I think makes a good tattooer is diversity. It was very important to me from the beginning to not be pigeonholed into one style, but to be able to learn and master all styles and then incorporate the strong aspects of each into one. Like Voltron, but with art.

What inspires you as an artist? I take things from my daily life and put them in my tattoos every time. I think it freaked out my baby mama at first—random things we would see would later show up in back pieces and whatnot.

What sets you apart from other artists? Workaholicism. I worked really hard for a really long time at one thing and only that one thing. Tattooing. I focused specifically on that with my entire life. I would like to think it's reflected in my career as well as our awards and accomplishments. I think this is also reflected in my clientele, as almost all my clients are very successful in their own world. I tattoo mostly athletes and musicians, people who have excelled in their field. After all, "game recognize game," right?

What other mediums do you work in? None whatsoever. I don't paint, I tattoo. While all my coworkers through the years were in the back doing watercolors, I was in my booth tattooing. If I wasn't tattooing I was drawing for a tattoo that I was about to do.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I own an online retail company that sells clothes, art books, weapons, tattoo equipment, coffee-table books, sketchbooks, kids' coloring books, art prints, posters, stickers, tattoo flash,

etc. I have been fortunate enough to be on a lot of different television programs. *Animal Planet*, TLC, A&E, VH1 etc. We also used our powers for good and had several events for charity. I also own a pit bull rescue endeavor. The last five years we've done everything from Toys for Tots to disabled veterans and fallen police officers. We sponsor our local SWAT team, the way that many small businesses sponsor T-ball teams.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? Dave Tedder, Zeke Owen, Albie Rock, Joshua Carlton, Bob Tyrrell, Mike Demasi, Sean Herman, Josh Lindley, Mike McMahon, Matt Dunlap, John Lloyd, Josh Woods, Alli Macgregor, Mike DeVries, Oscar Zornosa, Justin Weatherholtz, Pepto, Paasche One, Flaco Martinez, Tim Furlow, Frankie Mirisciotti, DJ Minor, Tim "Victim" Pangburn, Jason Adkins, and one million that I'm forgetting to add. But these are the artists that have inspired me and continue to on a daily basis.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I love it when it's a huge, blank hunk of skin. Like an entire back that doesn't have a single tattoo on it yet, or a pale, meaty thigh. I prefer the client to just give me a loose concept, like a one- or two-word theme they are trying to convey.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Above all else, research the artist. Everybody and their brother claims to be a tattoo artist nowadays. Don't get tattooed by somebody who isn't in an amazing shop. Once you find an artist that meets the criteria above, put your faith in the artist. Listen to what he has to say about your ideas, and be open to them.











KIKU
kikutattoo.com

Invisible NYC
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New York, NY 10002
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What year did you start tattooing? I started in 1996 in Tokyo.

How did you get into tattooing? When I got my second tattoo by Jun Matsui in Tokyo. It was a tribal tattoo, and I remember thinking he was the coolest guy! It made me want to be just like him.

Do you have any special training? I did not have a traditional apprenticeship; however, I have always wanted to grow as an artist. It has been very fortunate for me to work with artists like Troy and Regino at Invisible NYC. I feel like working with talented artists like them has made me grow as an artist myself.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? I would have to say that the conventions in Long Beach at the Ink-n-Iron were my highlight. It was good to be out there

because it felt like a vacation. Honestly, it has been five years since I have participated in a convention. I miss it and I look forward to more in my future.

How do you describe your style? Fun, dark, heavy, bold, readable, strong, graphic Japanese traditional tattoo with a little bit of punk rock attitude.

What inspires you as an artist? I'm inspired by Japanese folk art such as wood-block prints. I enjoy artists like Kuniyoshi, Kyosai, Hokusai, Kunisada, and the list goes on. I love that there is a sense of madness and darkness in the art. The images are very strong. Also, Japanese traditional kite and netsuke (little tiny accessory).

What sets you apart from other artists? I suppose that's always the challenge of ourselves is knowing ourselves. Ultimately, I can only hope that people can see my personality in my tattoos and enjoy them.



What other mediums do you work in? I've always been into watercolor painting. I have considered developing on oil painting more these days.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? For Western traditional my favorite would have to be Ed Hardy. He is an artist of no limits, and I find that really inspiring. Also, for Japanese traditional, my favorites are Yokosuka Horihide, Gifu Horihide, Horiyoshi III, and all the masters who I can't name here. They have truly mastered tattooing, and I can only study what they have accomplished. They produce unforgettable imagery that's very strong and dark.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I have really been interested in doing more back pieces these days. They are a challenge, and they push me as an artist. On the other hand, I also enjoy doing a fun banger from time to time. It is always great to have clients that allow me the free-

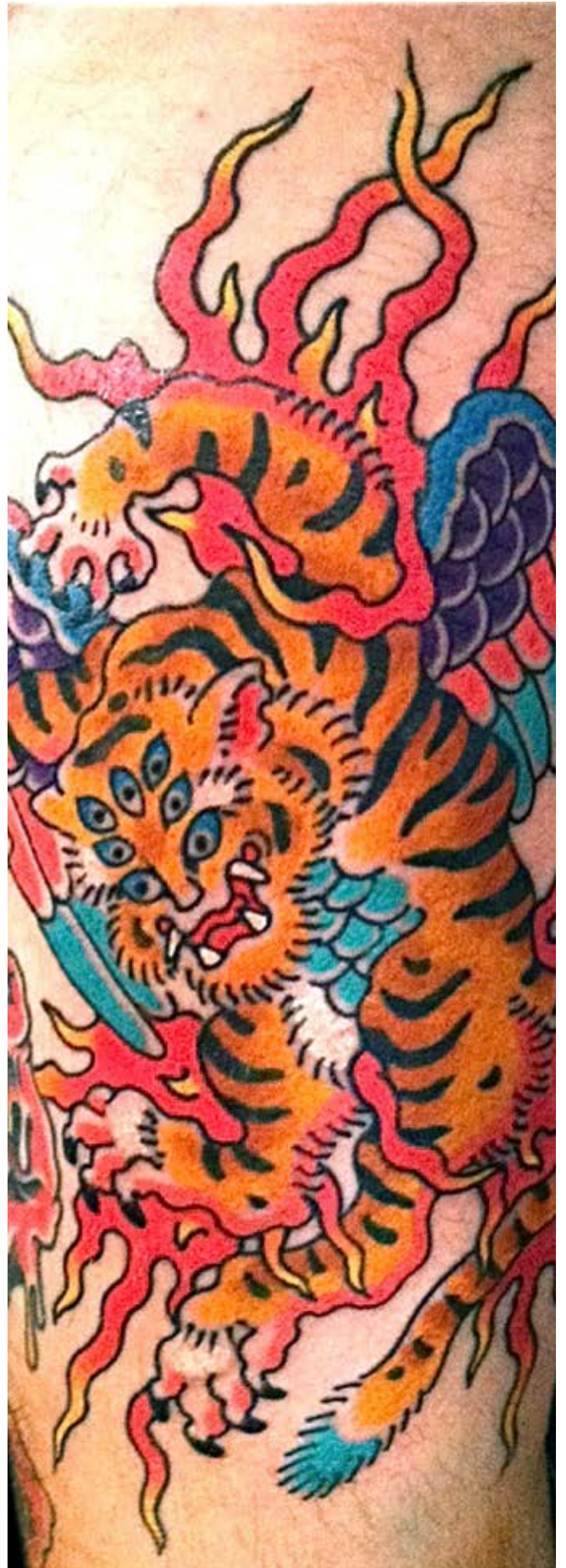
dom to give them a wild tattoo. That's all I could really ask for.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Usually, I would begin with finding an artist that fits your style and personality. It wouldn't make sense to go to an artist that truly enjoys doing realism tattoos for traditional pieces and vice versa. It's great to have a relationship with your artist that fits. You are going to be sitting with this person for a while, trusting them to manifest your ideas; make sure that you are getting what you want. Once you can find someone that you can trust, give them freedom to take it from there.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? There are still so many designs from the great masters of Japanese wood-block print I have not yet had the privilege of doing yet. Though on the top of my list would be some battle royal back piece.





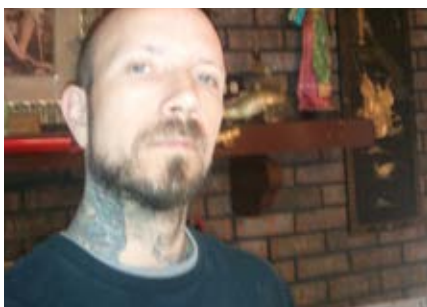








CHRIS VENNEKAMP
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What year did you start tattooing? 1994, in good ol' NC.

How did you get into tattooing? Odd luck. My dumb friends bought a kit and gave it to me to tattoo them. Literally everything, an autoclave—the whole nine yards. I didn't have a clue what I was doing. My very first tattoo was on my friend Wayne. He wanted a kanji dragon. That tattoo these days would take me, like, 10 minutes; it took me an hour that day. Two days later he had a half-inch scab, and when it healed the only thing left was the outline. Don't try this at home, it's dumb.

Where did you apprentice? After tattooing for a few months, I got a bit better and [was] educated at Skin Art in Gastonia, NC. Yes, get an apprenticeship, kiddos!

Do you have any special training? Not really, pretty much self-taught—not that you

don't learn from people along the way and get inspired by them to do better. My good friend Jimmee Schlotterhausen taught me a lot—amazing guy. And the three guys I taught to tattoo, even though their styles are completely different, continue to make me proud and keep inspiring an old guy to keep pushing forward.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? I've worked Miami, Philadelphia, Oklahoma City, Atlanta, Tennessee, North Carolina, to name a few. I'd say I have taken home maybe 30 awards in tattooing from best traditional, believe it or not, to most realistic, best color, etc.

How do you describe your style? I tend to do hyperrealism, but here lately, I've been really fond of doing the gothic neo-traditional



thing. I started out at a time when we mostly did old-school and Oriental tattoos. Back in the day, the old guys would fire your ass for doing some no-line color shit. They didn't believe that it would hold up. In a lot of ways they are right, though. If not applied properly it will get loose on you later. It's all about how you go about putting it in there.

What inspires you as an artist? Everything. My family, my feelings, anger, love, my obsessions—like movie makeup, monsters, and fantasy characters.

What sets you apart from other artists? Even though I love a painterly style, I tend to be really technical with the way I tattoo for better longevity.

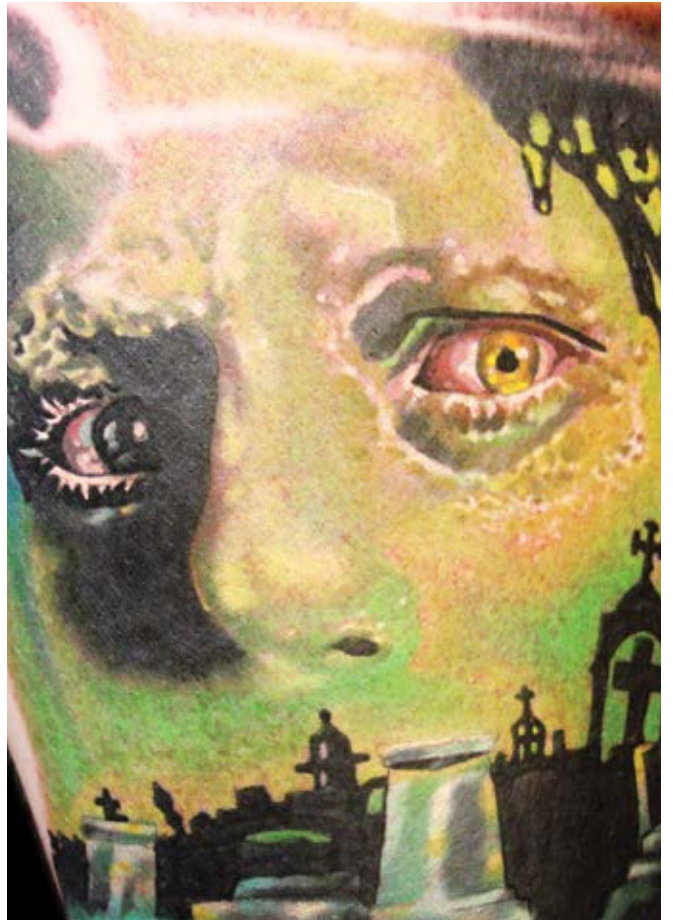
What other mediums do you work with? Oils, pastels, airbrush, but mostly SPFX [special effects] makeup.

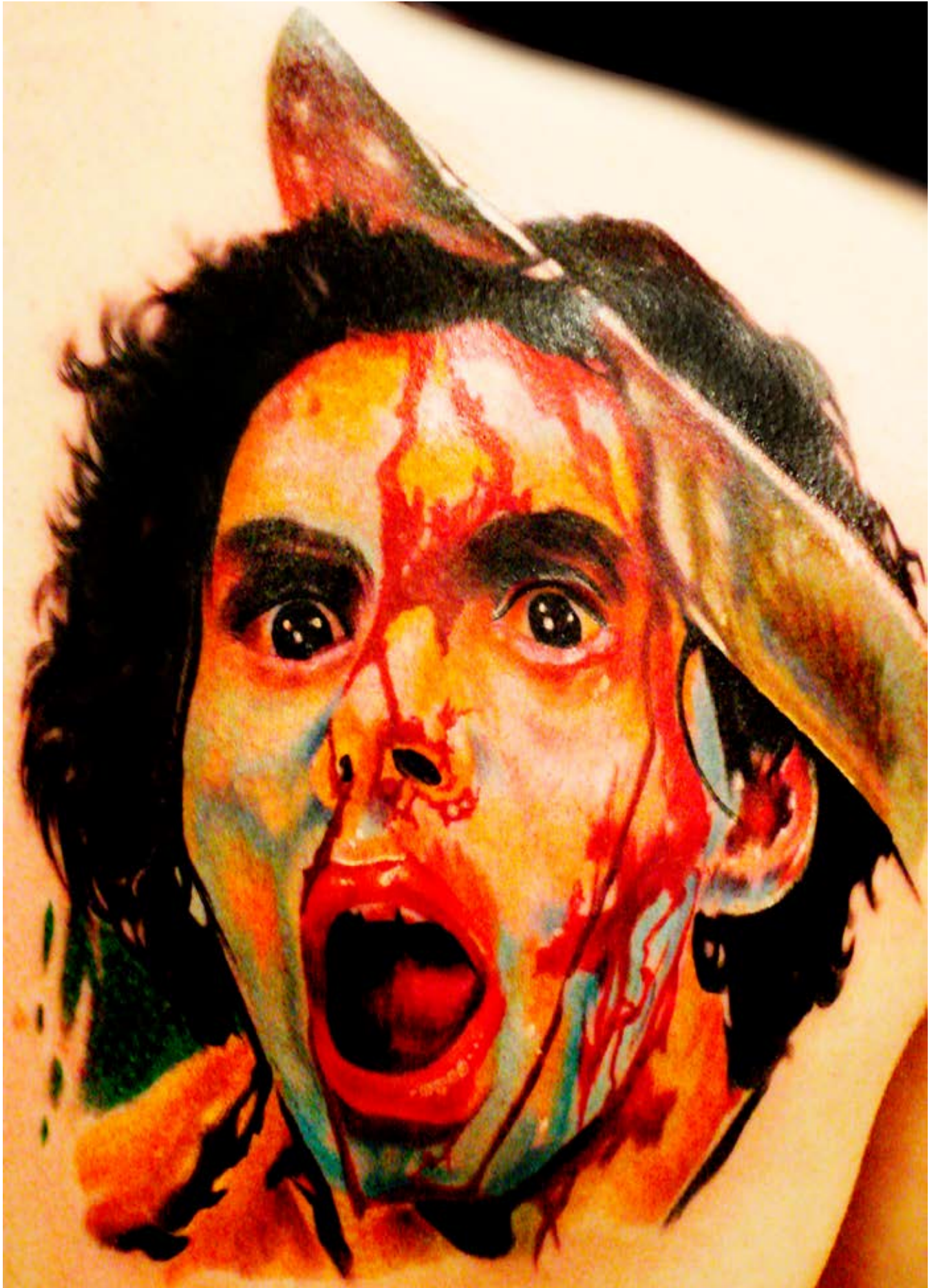
How have you branched out from tattooing? Into SPFX. I currently own Night Terror Productions (ntpfx.com). Over the past six years I have created a line of props, latex and silicone masks, and appliances. I have been working on my special effects makeup abilities.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? Man, that's tough. I really love the art of Tom Strom, Paul Acker, and Derek Noble.

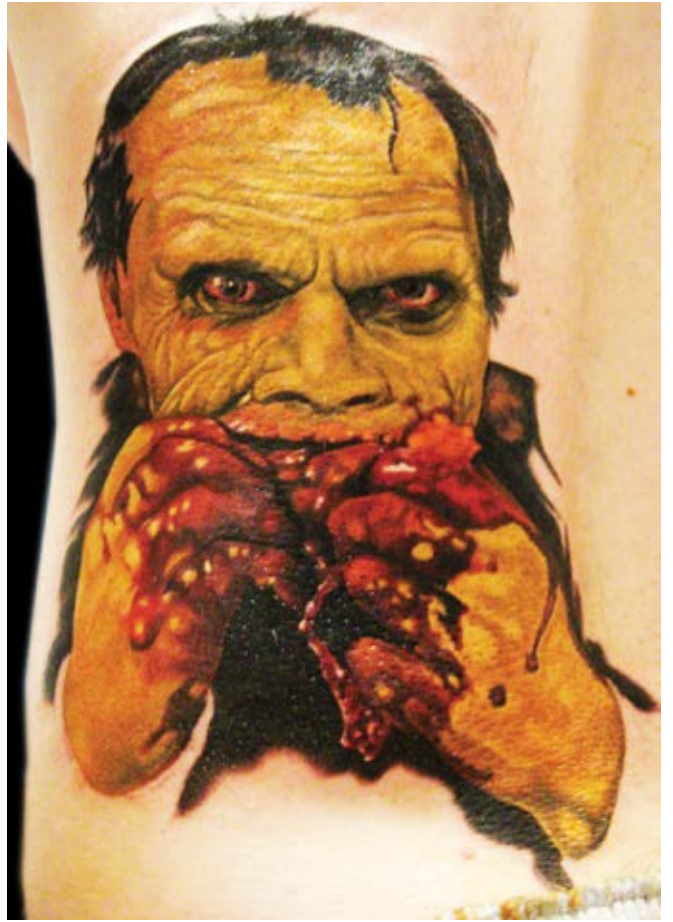
What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? [I] always love the horror-related work, but I like going back to my roots from time to time. Anything that my client will let me run with in my own way; I am not one of those guys who will shoot your idea down, unless it's just a bad tattoo idea. I am partial to neo-traditional. I love hyperrealisms but they are destroying my hand.













DAN HAZELTON
danhazelton.com

Private studio
West Allis, WI



What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in 1998 in Menomonee Falls, WI. I was just out of high school, and at that time tattooing was illegal in Milwaukee, WI, where I am from. The ban was lifted about six or seven years later and still is today. After nine years of doing walk-ins and developing my art style, I moved to a shop closer to where I bought a home, in West Allis, WI. By that time I was strictly doing my own custom style. After about six years there, I had a clientele built up enough to leave the street shop setting and go my own way. Today I can be found in my own private studio, also in West Allis. It is not a storefront. No sign, no phone, etc. All appointments are made over e-mail or my social networking pages.

How did you get into tattooing? I was the classic metalhead in high school, drawing skulls, grim reapers, and flames on everything. People loved that stuff back then in

the '90s. When my friends "found" tattoos, they asked me to draw what they wanted and had local shops tattoo it on them. After a few times doing that for my own tattoos, I decided to give it a shot myself.

Where did you apprentice? After doing a few pieces on my buddies, I was shown the basics from the guys I worked with back in Menomonee Falls. Absolute Tattooing was the shop. I found that watching and asking questions work best for me. So I don't have one specific person that taught me. I quickly met other great tattooers that helped me see what was possible. Seeing and knowing what is even possible to do by the few is very important. That can really help to avoid a plateau, in the flash side of tattooing and in the custom side.

Do you have any special training? Wish I could say I did, but I don't. I took some com-



mercial art classes in high school, but all I did was frustrate all my art teachers. Everyone I've had brought me out in the hall at some point to tell me I need to apply myself more. I did, just not then and there.

What conventions have you worked at?

Have you won any awards? I haven't worked many conventions at all. I always feel I'm too easily distracted for that. Plus, I enjoy attending conventions myself, but on the other side of the booth. My studio here is the complete opposite of the convention vibe. When it's time to work, I'd rather have that. Quite a few of my clients have entered the contests at conventions and got hooked on the competition, so through the years I've gathered my share of awards. I feel that part is more for the person wearing the tattoo to enjoy, especially for their large projects/investments. It gives them an extra satisfaction to have an award for the project they grit their teeth through for many sittings. Just a little confirmation from judges to something they already loved themselves.

How do you describe your style? Hazelmec! Ha! I like to work in the biomechanical style, my take on it at least. More recently, I have been into full biomech pieces, but what I would call "Hazelmec" would be the pieces I add—the skulls, faces, eyes, mouths inside the biomech. I still love to do that too. I can be pretty busy doing those alone, but every once in a while someone will come to me with something other than biomech that catches my attention.

What inspires you as an artist? Sometimes it's easier to say what *doesn't* inspire

me. Life inspires me. Talent inspires me. Achievements inspire me, and the people with that inspire me. Without being so vague, other artists inspire me quite often. Watching others over time is always interesting. A good artist in any medium usually has a progression of ability and subject matter that I like to notice and see what they do with it in the future.

What sets you apart from other artists?

I feel that is not for me to say. I guess I hope it's my work that sets me apart, other than the fact that I am a full custom artist in a private studio, as opposed to a flash artist in a street shop.

What other mediums do you work in?

I've been airbrushing since 2004, mostly stretched canvas paintings, but I have done some automotive projects as well. A bunch of helmets, some tank-fender sets, and fairings to bikes. I also have done a few full vehicles, but those are a big chore for me. I wish there was time to do more of that. After getting the hang of the airbrush, I gave digital artwork a try. I use Photoshop and Corel Painter with a Wacom tablet, but there are a few ways digital art can be done. I really enjoy the digital stuff. It is very "collab-friendly," very easy to collaborate with others over e-mail on the same piece. You can work on your own time and so can they. It's very easy to post to the internet, print out for high-quality prints, T-shirts, or whatever else you can think of. Very recently, I finally gave oil painting a try for the first time since high school art class. I've only put brush to canvas a handful of times so far and don't have anything finished

yet, but I am starting [to] see how fun it could be once I figure some things out.

How have you branched out from tattooing?

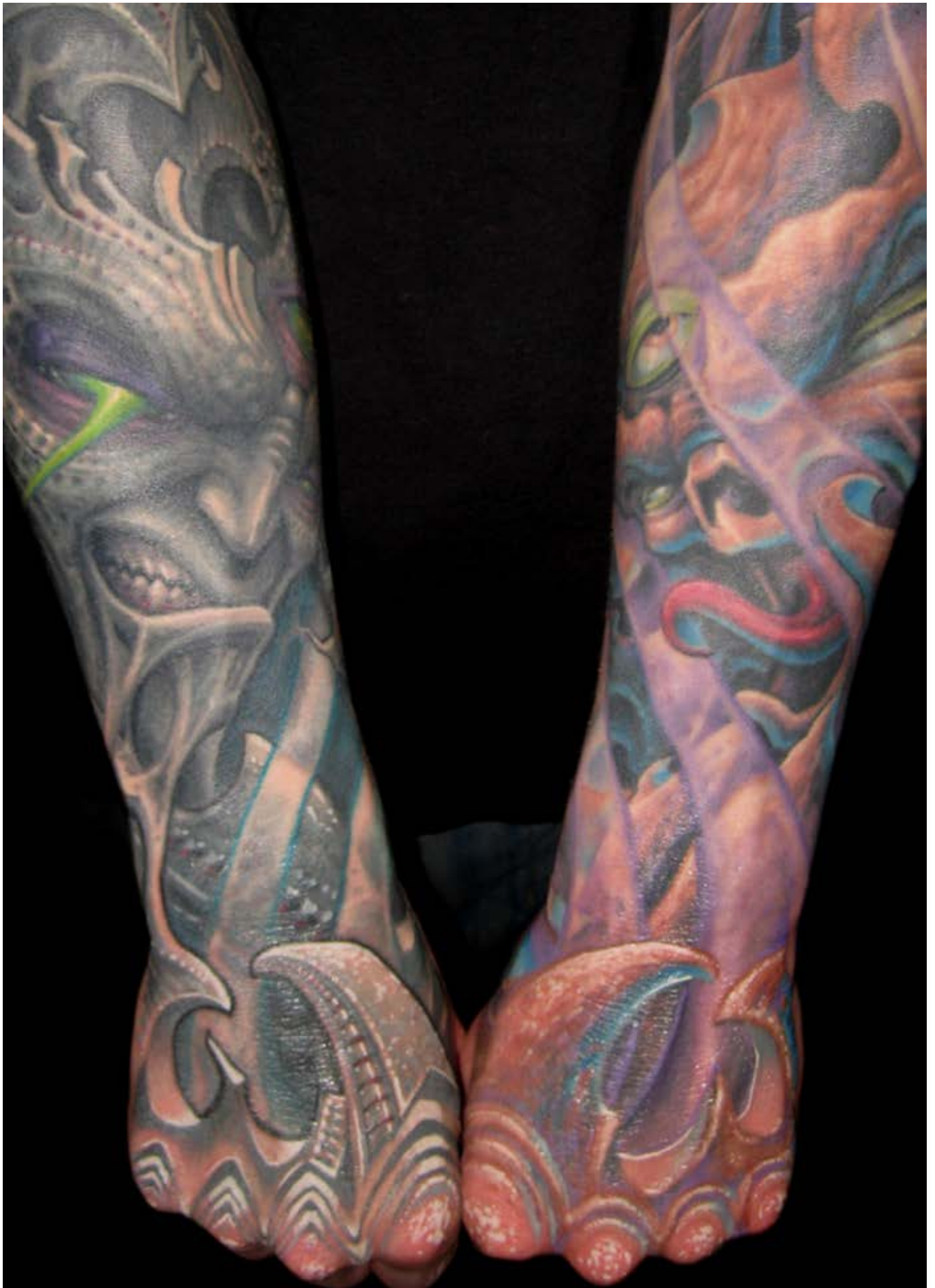
Other than the previously mentioned, I tattoo full-time, and that keeps me plenty busy and content. No branching out in my near future.

What tattoo artists do you admire most?

Any tattooist that has his or her own custom art style that they translated into the tattoo medium, any style of art. I feel that's what it takes to stand out from the rest. Have something to offer the public that the only way they can get it is if they come to you. I have way too many favorite tattooists to mention them all fairly. With the internet, it allows you to see their work from all over the world. Every day it seems I stumble across another tattooist that impresses me.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?

I have so many large projects going on, so many people I'm working with at this very moment, that the only tattoos on my mind now are those. As a tattooist, I can get just as anxious to finish these things as the person wearing it—if not more. I personally like to keep working on a project as soon as the healing allows. Large projects can take a long time, and spacing out the appointments just makes it take forever. For the best interest of the finished product, it's best to finish your piece before the tattooist has any major changes in their art style. It is something that does happen, and there is no way to avoid it unless you wish a plateau on your tattooist.











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Black Anchor Collective
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What year did you start tattooing? I officially started tattooing in May of 2002, after a six-month apprenticeship. This May will mark 11 years I have been tattooing.

Where did you apprentice? I apprenticed at Art Junkies in Hesperia, CA.

Do you have any special training? I have been drawing since I was a little kid; it was something that was fun for me. I would draw things like Hello Kitty for the girls in my class in elementary school. I was really into comic books, so I would copy the art. *X-Men* and drawing *Wolverine* were my favorite. I took high school art classes and attended a few courses at Art Center in Pasadena, CA. I've never had any type of formal training until my apprenticeship. I have always taken seminars from other tattoo artists, early in my career from Guy Aitchison, Bob Tyrrell, and Deano

Cook, to name a few. Just recently I took a one-week painting workshop, and to this day I am still trying to learn by watching other artists, taking classes and workshops, reading, and being inspired by other artists. I have never had any formal training, but I will try to learn as much as possible until the day I die.

How did you get into tattooing? I always say that tattooing found me. I was a house painter at the time and work was really slow. I stopped by Art Junkies to say hi to Mike Demasi and see the new shop. Previously, he had told me to come and work a few times and I would just kind of laugh it off; I never really gave it too much serious thought. I told him I'd be by in the morning. I don't think he believed I'd be there. The next day I was there and started my apprenticeship, which lasted about six months, and I have loved tattooing since.



How do you describe your style? I would say I do a realistic-style tattoo. I do a lot of portrait work. It's something that I really gravitated toward.

What inspires you as an artist? A lot of different things inspire me as an artist. I mean, going to museums and looking at old Dutch master paintings. Recently, I was able to go to LACMA and see the Caravaggio exhibit. He is one of my all-time favorite painters. I have had the opportunity to visit many countries and visit museums, walk around the cities, see the architecture and sculptures, and see other cultures. When I visit other places I take lots of photos and use these photos as references for tattooing.

What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories? I've been lucky enough to be invited to many conventions. To name a few from last year were the Sydney, Belgium, Denmark, London, the Tokyo conventions, and too many more to name. I have won a few awards at the conventions for best of show, best color tattoo. Sometimes a client will ask for their tattoo to be perfect or make it exactly like the photo. I am not perfect and I cannot guarantee that it will be exact, but I can promise them I will give them my best. When I do win an award it is a great feeling and I am honored, but what's most important is that my client can feel proud to wear my work. The best times are just being able to hang out with my friends. It's nice to

be in an unfamiliar place and have your friends there as well. Especially when I'm feeling a little homesick, it's nice to have friends around. Last year in Tokyo I changed my flight one day later so I could go to karaoke with Bob [Tyrrell], Robert [Hernandez], and Tony [Romel] after the convention. It was a really good time to experience something I'd normally never do. Being invited to Tokyo was an honor.

How have you branched out from tattooing? Tattooing will be something that I will always do. It is something I feel that saved my life from going down a very different path, a potentially negative path. I can't imagine a day will come when I'm not tattooing. I have done some oil paintings. Two of my paintings were in the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles this year, alongside some of the best tattoo artists in the world. It was a very surreal feeling because I haven't been painting. I feel I have a long way to go, but I was honored. This year I would really love to take more time off to learn more. I have a long way to go.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? My favorite tattoo artists are Bob Tyrrell, Robert Hernandez, Carlos Torres—there are so many that I admire and look up to. Too many to list. Those guys are some of the most talented tattoo artists that I know, and I am lucky to call them friends.

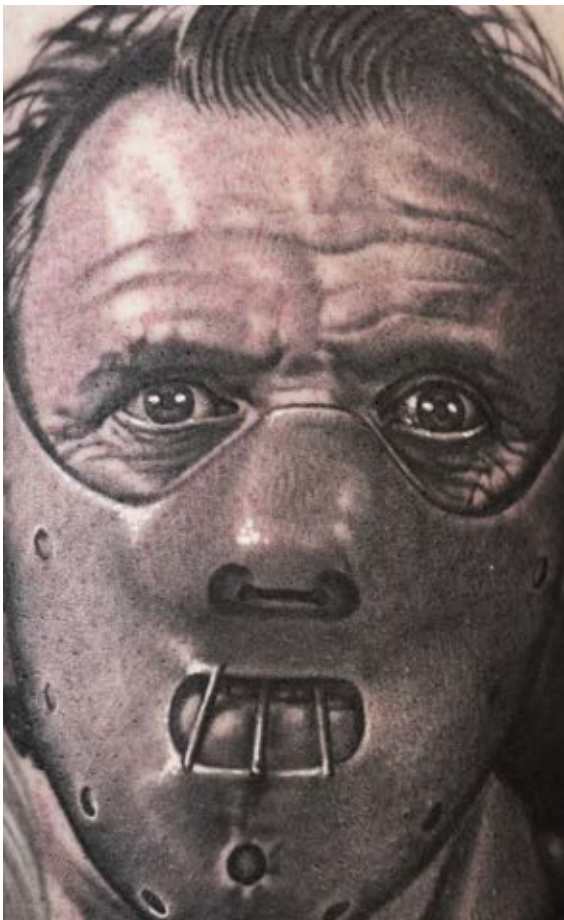
What other mediums do you work in? As I mentioned before, oil paintings. I used to

get together once a week with Michael Huszar—who, as many of you know, is an amazing artist, to say the least—and a group of us would do alla prima paintings where we'd have a model sit for us and we'd do a one-session painting. It is something I really enjoy, but it's very difficult. We have done it a couple times this year and I hope to continue, but with all of our busy schedules it gets hard to get together. It's a great learning experience.

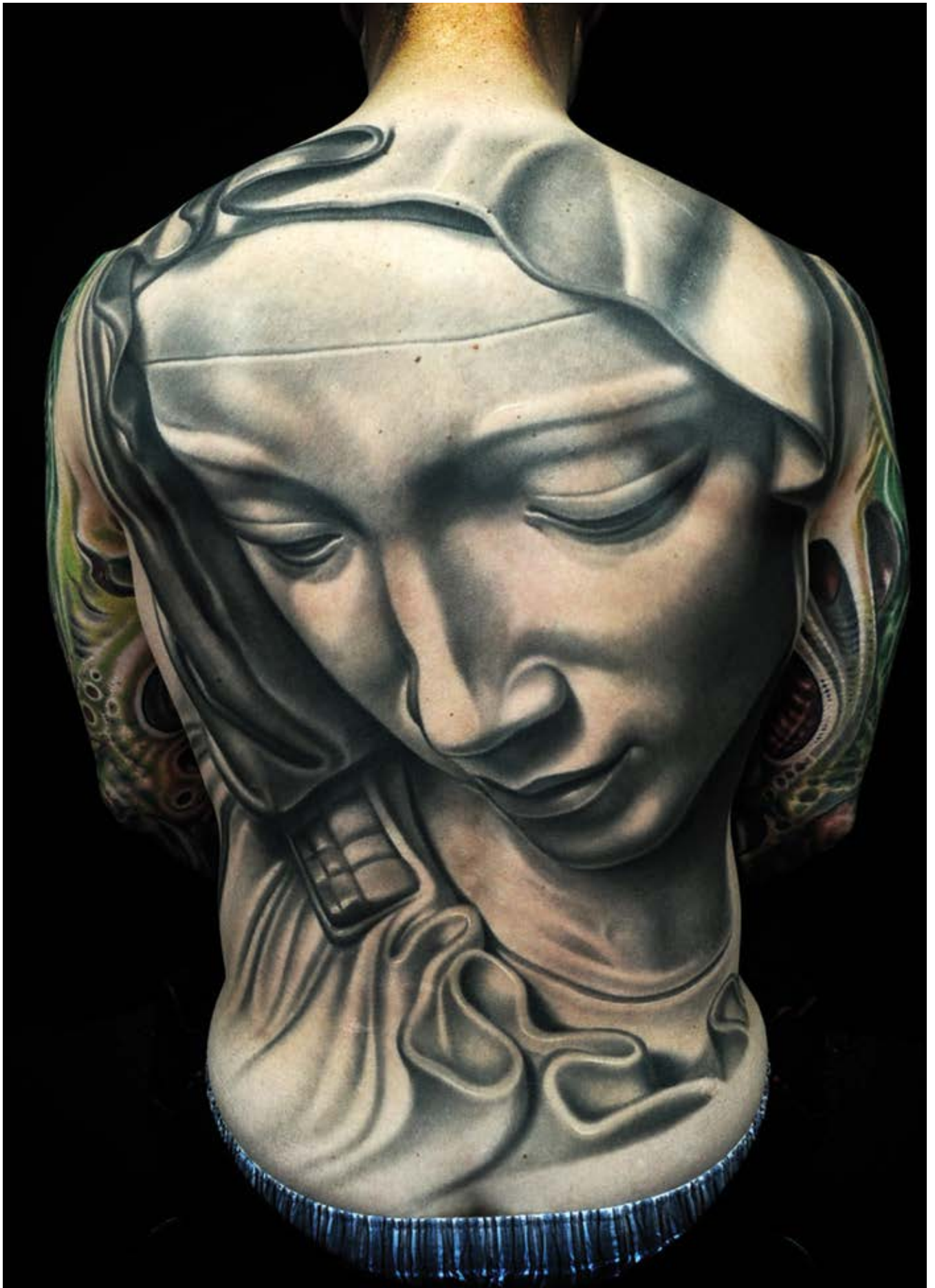
What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I love doing portraits, but lately I have been starting a lot of large back pieces and sleeves, which are really challenging. It is a lot of fun to go from the collaborating of the design with the client as far as them conveying their ideas, and then me getting it all together for them [and] planning it all out.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Aside from the obvious like researching and checking out different styles of artist, pricing, cleanliness of the shop, etc., I would say you need to trust the artist. For me, I like when my clients give me an idea and let me run with it. I like when my clients trust me.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I would really love to do a bodysuit. Something well planned out, where I could draw, take reference photos, plan it all from beginning to end. It's something that I would really love to do. Any takers?

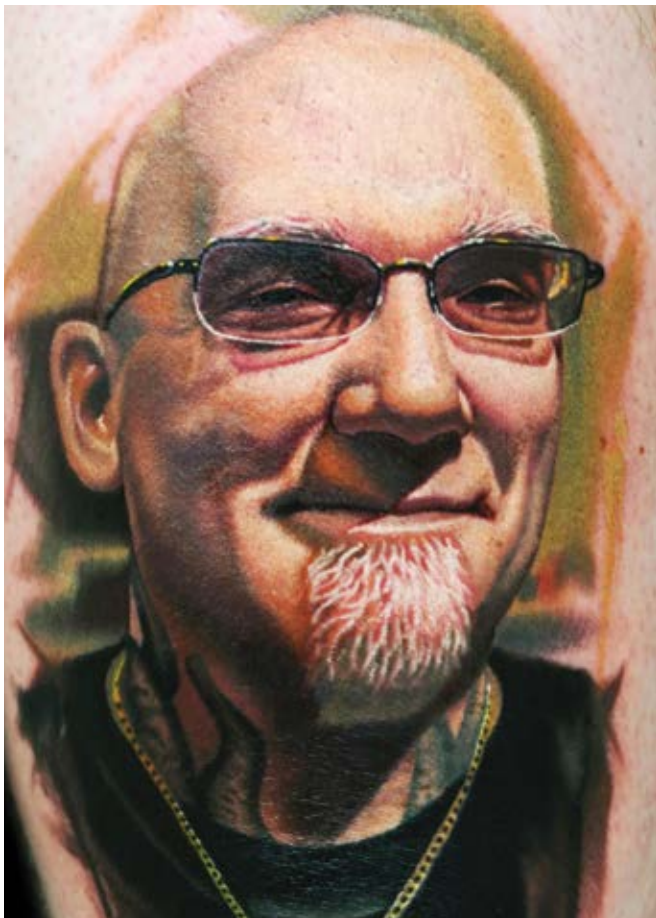














PLACASO

facebook.com/pages/Placaso-Tattoos

Orange, California

Tattoos by referral appointments only

What year did you start tattooing? 1997.

How did you get into tattooing? I always loved art, and when I was a kid I saw someone with a tattoo. All I thought was, That's cool—art that goes with you everywhere you go. I started when I was 17. I wanted one so I took a sewing needle and thread and tattooed myself. When I was 21 I started tattooing with a homemade machine. All

self-taught, trial as error. In 2003, I started looking on the internet and saw that they sell so-called professional start-up kits. So I convinced everyone at the job I worked at to pitch in with me to buy it and I would tattoo them for doing me the favor of helping me out because I didn't have much money at all. So once payday came, everyone except one backed out so I sacrificed the light bill for a tattoo setup. That was almost 10 years ago.



Where did you apprentice? None.

Do you have any special training? None.

What conventions have you worked at?
Have you won any awards? Los Angeles, Pomona, NYC, Boston, Sacramento, San Francisco, Chicago, Milwaukee, Denver, and San Antonio. I've won a few awards.

What are some of your best convention memories? None.

How do you describe your style? Chicano gangster art.

What inspires you as an artist? Yahweh. God Almighty is the one creator, and no one is as creative as he is.

What sets you apart from other artists?

The experiences in my life. The things I've seen, heard, and felt make me see life differently than some, so I always try and make my art more personal by free-handing tattoos on the skin. It flows with the structure of the canvas better. I feel more of a challenge in free-handing. It's a thrill—and a lot of pressure, because you can mess it up and someone will have to live with your mistake the rest of their life.

What other mediums do you work in? Pencil and ballpoint pen and airbrush.

What tattoo artists do you admire most?

Mister Cartoon, Jose Lopez, Sleepy G, Abel Rocha, Ink Slingers, Jack Rudy, Steve Soto, Chuey Quintanar, Pint, and Franco Vescovi.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? Free-handing anything realistic. Anyone can learn to tattoo. A tattoo machine is a tool, like a hammer. Anyone can learn to swing a hammer, but only a few can hit a nail in with one swing. It's an art also. If you are not an artist, you won't do artwork—you'll just copy and paste. For me that's not as fulfilling. I need the challenge to push me to be better.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Advice I give before the tattoo is: Bring your friend to hold your hand, because it's going to hurt!

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? Finish tattooing my wife's arm.









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What year did you start tattooing?

I started tattooing in early 2008.

How did you get into tattooing?

I had been trying to get into tattooing for a long time. Whilst studying art in college I used to go bother shops asking for work, offering to just clean and do anything. Nothing ever came of it. Shops were few and far between. I carried on working regular jobs for years, continuing to get tattooed and meet artists and gain great advice from them along the way. A good friend of mine was doing her apprenticeship and I'd visited a few times, and I was asked if I wanted to work the desk. Obviously, I took it.

Where did you apprentice?

I apprenticed in a shop that was called Inkspired in a small town in the midlands of U.K. Unfortunately, I had very little to learn there. I was mostly left to my own devices. Luckily, I had made friends with great artists I really respect who were nice enough to help me out, give me pointers, sit with me, pick my work apart, give me their precious time, and pushed me on.

Do you have any special training?

I studied art for a few years, but I saw it going nowhere at the time and there were bills to be paid. I learned more from just being around tattooing.

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

I have worked Norwich a few times, Ink-n-Iron, and Toronto NIX. I haven't really worked many. I won best portrait award at Ink-n-Iron for an Edgar Allan Poe. It was my second try at one so I was super proud of that one. Memories, my best are of my time in Toronto—great city. Being around great artists and people that have been in the business longer than I have been alive and hearing their stories was great.

How do you describe your style?

It's developing. I'm not sure I have a distinct style as of yet. I'm just doing what feels right at the time. I do like anything with heavy black work and minimal muted color. Style will progress constantly, and I'm looking forward to seeing what happens to my work in coming years.



What inspires you as an artist? I take a lot of personal inspiration from music and film. Things that just spark ideas in my head. I'm just a huge nerd. So movie- and music-based tattoos keep me happy. It's great to see what other people are doing with their work, and I think that inspired me to just try and up my game and improve.

What sets you apart from other artists? Not a lot ... we're all basically the same. All artists are crazy.

What other mediums do you work in? Mostly just watercolor ink these days. I haven't really worked in anything else for a few years. I'd like to get back into oil painting one day. It just requires a lot of time and attention.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? I admire artists that just keep doing good, clean, solid work regardless of what's going on in the world, ignoring trends and just doing what they do. And people who can still stand out of the crowd in a world where

everything you can possibly think of has been done before. There isn't anything new to create, really. A couple of artists who I love seeing what they're doing: Steve Byrne, Bailey Hunter Robinson, Jonas Uggli, Iain Mullen—constantly blows my mind. And good friends whose work I really admire, James Kiley and Nick Baldwin.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I look forward to getting any customer who is just pretty easy and just has a vague idea and lets you run with it. Again, any kind of nerdy-related tattoo to throw a new spin on. Placements: You can never go wrong with legs ... legs all day.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Make sure that they have fully checked out the work so they know exactly what the outcome is going to be. Make sure that they have a good meal, well-rested, and not hungover. I still don't know why people come in hungover. It's not fun for anyone.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? So many. Too many to mention. I have a stack of drawings, so anyone is welcome to come by and check them out.











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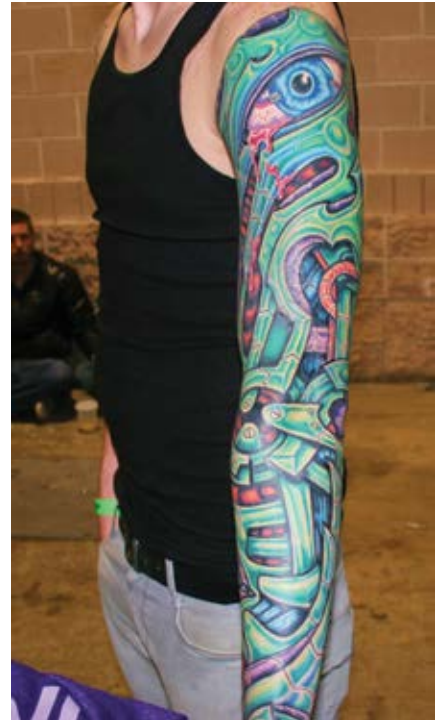
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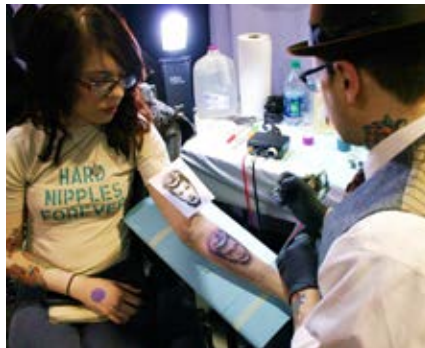
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If you can picture one massive room filled with some of the nation's best tattooers, imagine hearing the sound of tattoo machines buzzing, and fantasize about being surrounded by the Inked Girls of your dreams, then you are very close to knowing what it was like to be at this year's Philadelphia Tattoo Arts Convention. Throw in some PBR, Sailor Jerry, and Rockstar Energy Drink and you were practically there! Those lucky enough to attend were witnesses to some incredible work put out by *Freshly Inked's* own cover model, Megan Massacre, as well as a handful of incredible artists traveling with the Inked Up World Tour, sponsored by Rockstar Energy Drink and the Sullen Art Collective. Big thank-you to Vinny Romanelli of Red Rocket Tattoo in New York City for joining us at the *Freshly Inked* booth!





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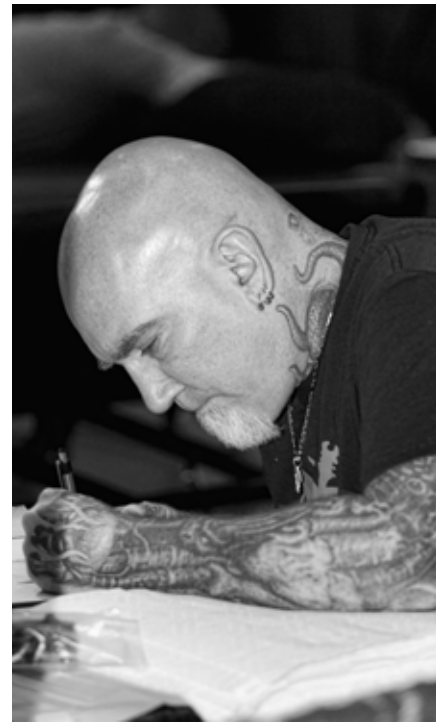
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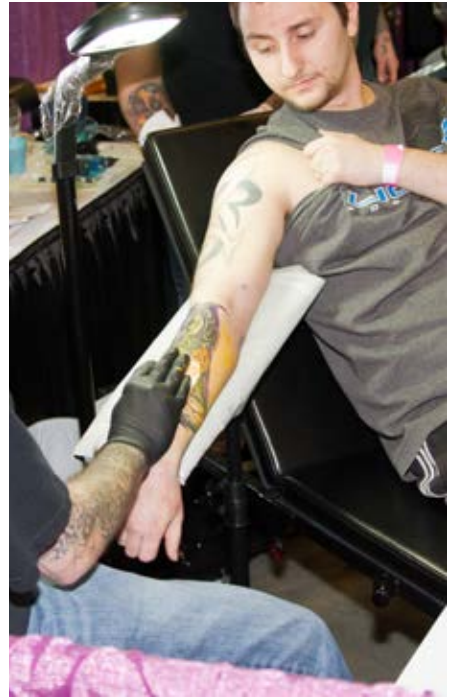
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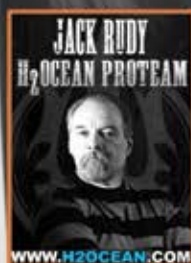
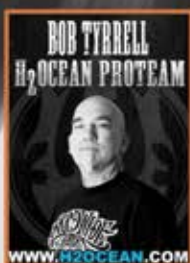
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