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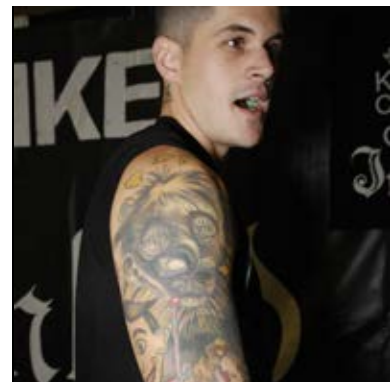
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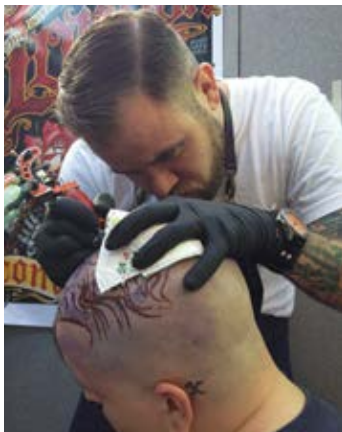
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## ADAM HAYS

Red Rocket Tattoo NYC  
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212-736-3001  
www.losttexas.us



**What year did you start tattooing?** I started tattooing in 2002 in Texas.

**How did you get into tattooing?** Tattooing fascinated me from a young age. It was something that I'd known I wanted to pursue since I was in middle school. I still have a heap of drawings from that time, of snakes and daggers and other tattoo imagery. After high school I moved around a bit within Texas and even went to L.A. for a while trying to find an apprenticeship. Eventually I moved back to Texas and found one in College Station.

**What was your first shop experience like?** The shop that I apprenticed at was a straight-up street shop in a busy college town. My apprenticeship didn't last long. They pretty much just told me which was the pointy end of the tattoo machine before I was shown my first client. I made a lot of mistakes. All tattoo artists do in their early days—usually the result of wanting to try something more elaborate and extensive without the knowledge to pull it off. Working

at that shop was a good experience in that I did get a lot of practice—some days I'd do over a dozen tattoos. But it wasn't really art-driven. I didn't have anyone there to influence me or to learn from, so I wasn't able to grow much. It wasn't until I moved to NYC that my horizons got really broadened.

**Do you have any special training?** I've never had any formal art training but I've been drawing since I was a little kid. I've always been interested in old trades, and I worked in quite a few of them: carpentry, woodwork, leather tooling, and metal engraving. I learned tricks doing that sort of thing that I apply in my tattooing all the time.

**What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?** I love the London show and do it every year. Milan, Brighton, Toronto, and New York City are some other shows that I do annually. Then there are the conventions that I've done mostly as an excuse to visit a given destination. I did the South



African tattoo convention in Cape Town a couple years ago, and it's still one of my favorites. I made heaps of great connections and friends. This year I'm doing fewer shows and more guest spots at different shops abroad.

**How do you describe your style?** I'd like to think I'm an illustrative traditional artist. I don't focus on any one genre of tattooing, so long as the tattoos still look like tattoos. I'm not the guy that's going to do hyperrealistic-looking, wet, shiny stuff on you. I like traditional tattoo imagery done in a more illustrative style, be it black-and-gray or color. I'm a strong believer in doing it all and doing it well. If a client comes in with a specific request and is willing to wait for an appointment, I'm not going to snub my nose at a genre or art style that he prefers. It's ultimately their choice.

**What inspires you as an artist?** I've always been a big nerd when it comes to comic books, and before I got into

tattooing I thought one day I'd do that for a living. The comic book influence definitely plays into my style. New York City, where I live and work, is also a constantly changing source of inspiration.

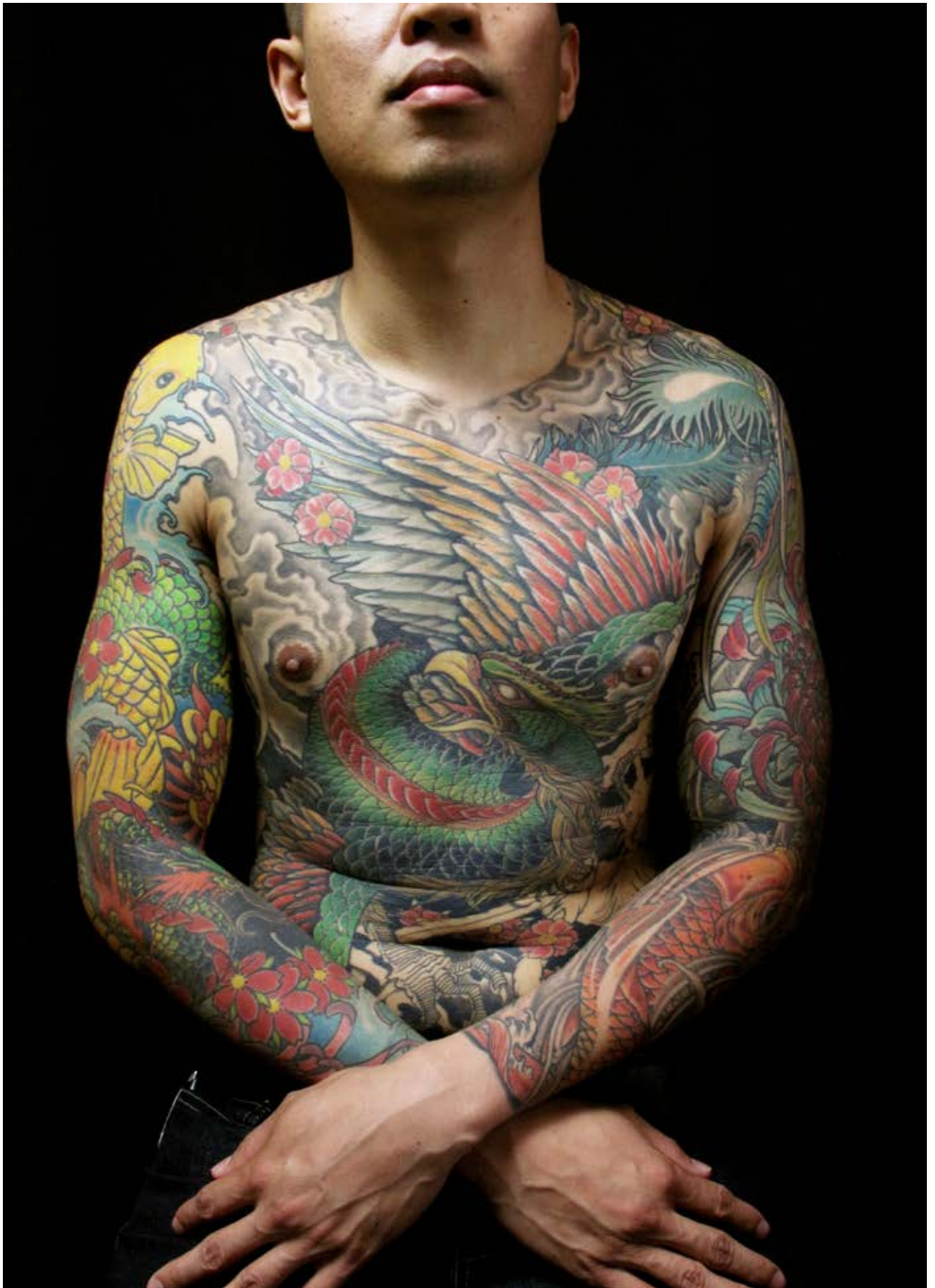
**What sets you apart from other artists?** I think one of the main things that sets me apart from other artists is my use of freehand. I'd say 75 to 80 percent of the stuff I tattoo these days is drawn directly on the body with markers rather than using stencils. Being able to draw things onto the skin directly allows you to work with the body's natural curves and motion.

**What other mediums do you work in?** Anything on paper I can usually work with. That's my preference. Watercolors, liquid acrylic, pen and ink are my usual media. At one time I did a lot of leather tooling, and still do whenever I can.

**How have you branched out from tattooing?** About two years ago I went

in as a partner with Mike Bellamy, the original owner of my shop, Red Rocket Tattoo NYC. I had been the manager, and as a part owner relocated the studio to the corner of a busy street in midtown Manhattan. I got to fully remodel a gutted space and build our shop from scratch. So now as well as tattooing, I'm trying to wrap my head around being a business owner and being in charge of 8 to 10 other people. Also, I've always done a lot of commissioned paintings: convention posters—I've done London and Toronto—and artwork for charity events where I'm from in Texas. Lately, I've been pursuing options to collaborate with existing brands.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** Guys like Phil Holt, who does great tattoos, owns a beautiful shop, runs a very successful pigment company, and finds time to spend with his kids. Though I don't know him personally, from what I hear, Mike Rubendall does the same thing.









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## ALEX GOTZA

Dirty Roses Tattoo Studio  
 Apelloy 4, Navarinou Square  
 54622, Thessaloniki, Greece  
 +30 2310 227217



**What year did you start tattooing?** I started working in 2002 in a tattoo studio as an apprentice for almost two years, studying and taking my first steps in tattooing. I always wanted to be involved with the tattoo scene, and the opportunity came to me by a friend who became my first tattoo teacher.

**How did you get into tattooing?** At an early age in my life I was trying to learn to draw, and when I was almost 12 years old I got a spray can and began making graffiti—that lasted about 15 years. Tattooing was a childhood dream that started to come true after a difficult period of my life with some family problems. Then, as I said, a good friend who needed an apprentice in his studio gave me this opportunity to make my dream come true.

**What was your first shop experience like?** I started in a small studio, in the middle floor of a building with a very comfortable environment and with more privacy.

**Do you have any special training?** No, I didn't get any special training. The only thing that I

remember is my personal efforts to learn things about drawing and graffiti, nothing more. I was just a kid with the ambition to learn drawing and put color all around me.

**What conventions have you worked at? Have you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?** I have gone to several tattoo conventions around the world, most of them in Europe, and I had my first convention in Taiwan a few months ago. I have won some awards, but for sure that is not my only purpose. The most important awards are the new people that I'm meeting at all of these conventions—the artists that you can talk with and exchange ideas concerning our common love with, and drink some beers with at the end of the day. I can't remember something exactly in particular as the best memory, because all of the conventions have too many things that I would like to remember.

**How do you describe your style?** Until now, I think I have worked in many different styles of tattoos because I didn't have the opportunity to focus on a specific style. I've also worked on



Oriental, even Polynesian tattoos. But now I finally have the choice of making more interesting and fun tattoos from my point of view, like black-and-gray realistic designs, comic and color themes. And the most fun part for me is that most of the people coming to me are coming to me for some of my personal style designs, which are more of a new traditional style. The most important thing is to like the design that you're working on—in this way you and your client will have more fun and the best result for sure.

**What inspires you as an artist?** For me—and for many other artists, I suppose—I get inspiration from several kinds of things and arts, from other tattoo artists and drawers of tattoos, from music and literary books, even from our daily life.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** I don't know if something sets me apart from other artists, but the one thing that sets us all apart from other people is our personality.

**How have you branched out from tattooing?** The business itself is sort of branching out from tattoos. It's taken a lot of personal efforts all these years—and my business partner, the amazing artist Kostas Tzikalagias, has taught me so many things. Our studio, Dirty Roses, has just been established in the last four years. Our coworkers help us as much as they can. They are the most important reason that I have branched out from tattooing, through business.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** I like and respect a lot of artists, new and old, from several styles in the tattoo world. Right now there are so many great artists with amazing works we can see through the internet. But the ones I admire most are the ones who are very good at their work and who have a low profile. They give all of their love to tattooing.

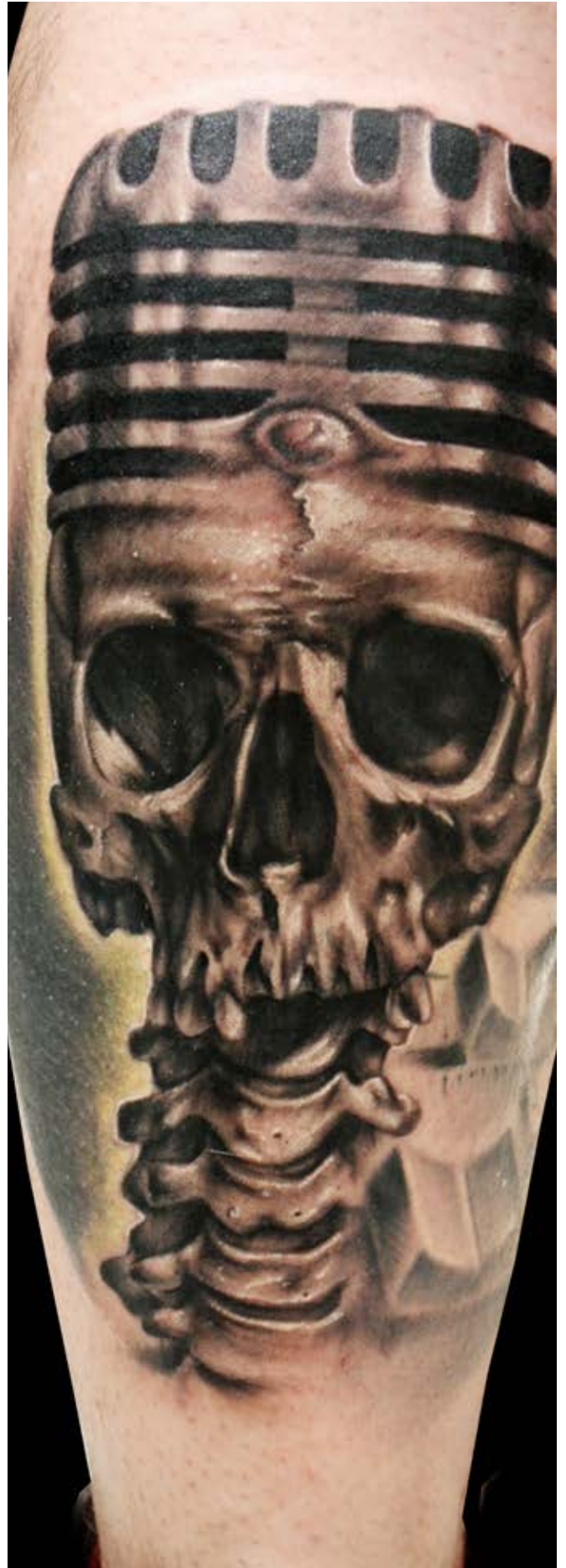
**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I want to evolve my art and

hope to have the opportunity to make many kinds of tattoos with new ideas and perspectives, but only the ones that I like to do.

**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** When we made Dirty Roses, one of our thoughts was to make only tattoos that we will like to make and those that we will have fun making, because even the simplest tattoos are better when they're made with pleasure. The only advice that I can give to people who want to get a tattoo is to think of a tattoo that they like, to search for the right artist who makes the style of tattoo they like. And also to listen to their artist, because most of the time the artist knows better.

**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?** Yeah, for sure. There are a lot of tattoos and ideas for tattoos that I would like to make—even those that I've already done—and many more that will come in the future.











## JOAO BOSCO

The Family Business Tattoo  
58 Exmouth Market  
EC1R 4QE, London, UK  
+44 (0)20 7278 9526



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

**How did you get into tattooing?** Since I was a little child, I have always been drawing. As a teenager, I got into bands and the heavy metal scene of my hometown. So all my friends wanted tattoos to look cool and badass, and they didn't have any money for that, so they thought, "Hang on a minute—Joao can draw, he can tattoo us!"

**What was your first shop experience like?** My early years weren't really great, as I didn't have any apprenticeship or anybody to show me the way. So it was full of ups and downs, until I started to be able to channel what I wanted to deliver through my work.

**What brought you to work at The Family Business Tattoo?** Three years ago I was looking for a shop where I could work. At the same time they were searching for somebody. I got along with Mo [Coppoletta] straightaway, so I decided to stay.

**Do you have any special training?** No special training. I learned from practicing and drawing for

endless hours, talking to friends, and getting tattooed by my tattoo heroes.

**What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year?** I have done Moscow (which is becoming a kind of base of mine, as I'm crazy for Russia), Kiev, Krakow, and London. Next year I'll do Brighton, Paris, London, and obviously Moscow.

**How do you describe your style?** I describe my style as fantasy, only because I can find no name for what I do. I feel like I'm still searching for a style, which I shall find one day.

**What inspires you as an artist?** Everything around me: comic art, Western and Eastern tattoos, Soviet propaganda, religion, music, Asian art, photography, and so on.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** I think that I try to get influence from everything when it comes to styles in the tattoo world. I like the power of Japanese, the strength of American traditional, the softness and contrast of realism, and the solidness of tribal and blackwork. I try to





bring all of those different strengths to my tattoos. And I think that if you look at them carefully, you might be able to see that all of that is in there.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I have done a bit of canvas, but I always have a problem finding time for it. I love Arches pads; they are really cool to work with.

**What is the tattoo scene like in London?** The tattoo scene in London is great, and it's getting better and better every year. But I still believe that the tattooists here could push the level of the artwork further and further. They should go where eagles dare and be excited about it. American traditional style is like a tattoo religion in the U.K., and some people hesitate to deliver anything other than that to their customers. That's why, in the U.K., you always have the feeling that you are watching a comedy stand-up show of a new comedian who just came to town—but you know all the jokes already. So then you end up being the only one in the audience who isn't laughing.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** There are so many. It's really hard to name one. But I shall say that Mauricio Teodoro is one of the top masters for me.

**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I would like to do a full bodysuit one day. Like, start on a brand-new clean customer, a first-timer, and go for the whole suit. That would be super exciting.

**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** Don't go crazy on partying the night before your session, especially if it's a big piece. And have a big champion breakfast before it.

**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?** Yes—I would like to tattoo more gods and demons from Asian mythology and religions. They are fascinating subjects.

**What has been one of your favorite pieces to tattoo?** I really like a grim reaper I did quite a while ago on a customer's rib

cage. I like the contrast of that tattoo. I also like the recent back pieces I have done. I think I'm getting quite close to what I want to be and deliver to customers. All I want is my tattoos looking strong and mighty still in 20 years' time. That's all I want.













## JAY JAY DALLAS

Royal Arch Tattoo  
Västerås, Sweden  
Instagram: @jayjaydallas444  
[www.facebook.com/royalarchtattoo](http://www.facebook.com/royalarchtattoo)



**What year did you start tattooing?** I started tattooing in 1994 back in Italy—that's where I'm originally from. About a year after I started, I moved to London in the U.K. That was to try to find a shop that could take me in.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I started to tattoo back in the north of Italy, but in the mid-'90s it was more complicated to get into this trade. I was lucky because my older brother had been tattooing for at least five years before I started, and in our family we have always been into art, painting, punk bands' logos, skateboard graphics, and so on. So he kind of showed me the basic idea of what you need to do to tattoo and tried to help me get some tattoo equipment to start to do my thing. Italy in the '90s was not really a place to work in a good shop, so the only way to do so was to emigrate to the U.K., where the tattoo scene was very advanced, with well-known tattooists.

**What was your first shop experience like?** My first shop experience was very good for the time being. After I moved to the U.K., I started to work at Evil From the Needle, which was one of

the best shops in London at that time. Our shop was more based on a new-school style of tattooing. It was a lucky shot for me to start in such a big and good shop, and at such a young age. The awesome cubist/new school tattoo artist Bugs taught me a lot about tattooing, the industry, and discipline in this line of work. I am very grateful to this man for giving me the opportunity to start to see this in a new perspective. That's probably why my style is kind of a cubist/new school sort.

**Do you have any special training?** Well, I'm sort of into painting and I've always grown up in a sort of artistic environment. In my teen years I used to do lots of graffiti. I attended some art college, but I quit before the lessons got interesting.

**What conventions have you worked at recently or are planning on attending?** In the last year I worked lots of conventions, like the Milan tattoo convention, Brussels, Stockholm Ink Bash, the Brighton convention in the U.K., Copenhagen, and so on. I work at some conventions outside Europe also, but not too often, like the Toronto convention a few times in Canada, and the Cape Town convention in South Africa,



and I have been thinking lately about hitting Australia, because the quality of work that has come out from there in the last few years has been outstanding.

**How do you describe your style?** I would think that my style has some new school influences and some sort of cubism in it, just because I like a real strong sort of design structure. And of course, I use some of the traditional ideas and twist them in my own sort of way.

**What inspires you as an artist?** The idea to try to find some sort of new challenge each time you draw a tattoo. I think this is what all the new tattooists should try to do—find something new, or at least try to!

**What sets you apart from other artists?** The way that I interpret what I see around me in my own sort of way. And of course you have to have a positive attitude towards customers who want your work on their skin, and to be honest I like to get to know my client before I tattoo them, just to understand

what kind of person I am going to work with. A positive experience must be exchanged in both ways, because I like to give my art away to clients, but I think they must deserve it. It's not only about money; that's what I think and what I stand for.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I like to paint in oils, acrylics, and different sorts of media mixed up. I paint graffiti maybe once a year, unfortunately, and I love to paint and build military scale-model dioramas. I think that is one of my greatest interests after tattooing in the last few years.

**How have you branched out from tattooing?** Well, after nearly 20 years in this industry, I've learned a lot on how to deal with people and tattoo artists, and also on how to see life in different ways. And in the last few years, I have been trying to travel lots, doing guest work in different shops in Europe and expanding the name and my work to the rest, while meeting lots of people and starting to have relationships as friends with more people around the world.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** Filip Leu and Family Iron, Guy Aitchison, Aaron Cain, Paul Booth, and more.

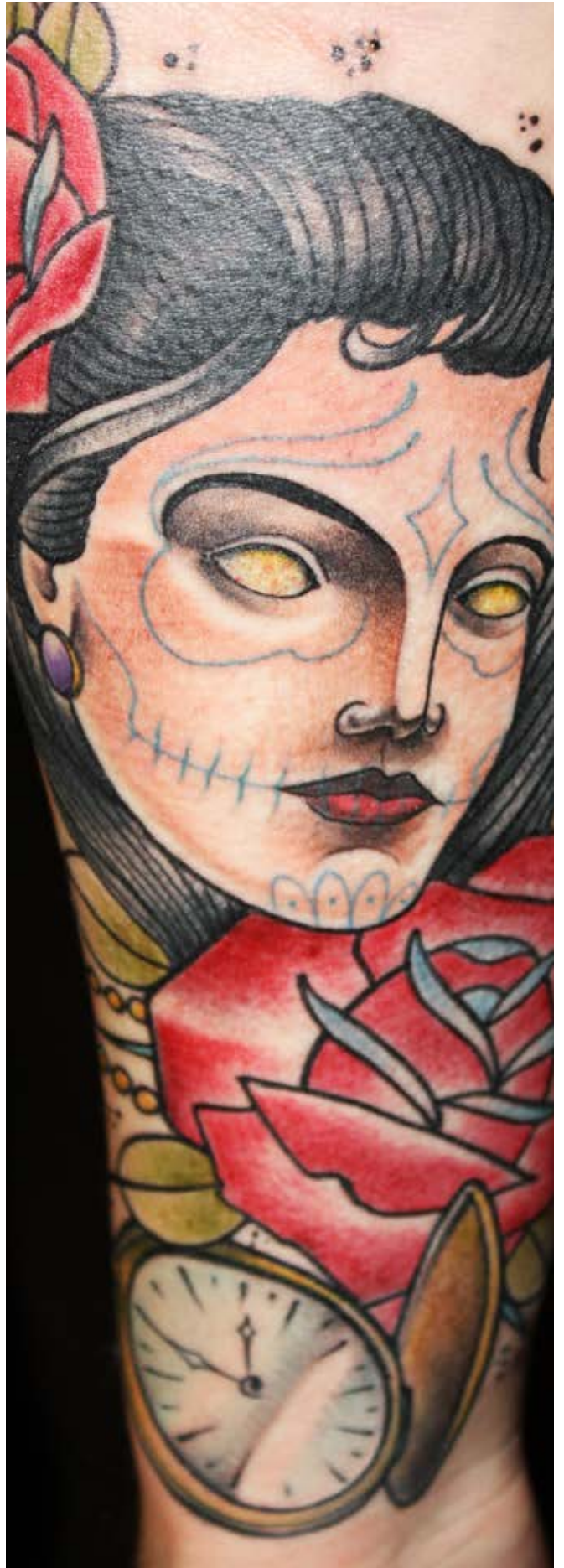
**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I'm not really sure about this; it all evolves day by day, in my view. I've been starting to do some sort of big-scale tattoos lately, and for me that is a new thing. I prefer to tattoo sort of small-medium size kind of work, just because I like to start and finish the piece at once—makes me happier to see the result finished all at once!

**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** I, of course, try to understand what kind of person they are, and see if we will be able to work well together or if it's going to be difficult for me to do a clean job.

**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?** Well, not really, but I've been trying to do more animal figures. I find it kind of hard to draw them in my sort of style.











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FRESHLYINKED



# BANG BANG

Bang Bang NYC  
26 Clinton Street  
New York, NY

photo by JOHNATHAN MANNION

### **What year did you start tattooing?**

I started in 2003 or 2004; I was in 12th grade. I was 18 and working at Red Lobster, and I really liked tattoos but I couldn't afford them. I always had the ability to draw—I wouldn't really have called myself an artist, but I had the ability. So I just bought everything online—like, a whole kit—and I taught myself. I spent about three months tattooing in my mother's kitchen, which is the exact opposite of where you want to learn to tattoo, but that's how I did it.

### **And you apprenticed under Paul Booth at Last Rites Tattoo Theater?**

I worked with Paul Booth, and I suppose that anyone who works with him learns from him. I wouldn't go as far as to call myself his apprentice and I bet he wouldn't either, but I'm proud to say I worked for him. I was pretty young when I did. So it was pretty influential to work at his store. I was 23 at the time. I was about 10 years younger than anyone who had ever worked there, and so I was really nervous every day, and it didn't wind up working out. I wasn't the right fit for that spot, but when I left there, I had so much confidence in my ability to tattoo that I started cranking out really good tattoos, ones that I was really proud to show people. And so from working with him I learned a ton.

### **You said you wouldn't have really considered yourself an artist, but did you have an art background before you started tattooing?**

I mean, just the ability is really my background. My father used to make video games; he still does make video games. He used to work for Disney. My mother was an artist. My grandmas on both sides are artists. So the ability was always there. My problem was, once I would figure out something that I was drawing—you're trying to figure it out as you're going, and once I'd figure it out I was done. I would draw a beautiful eye and a nose or draw, like, a beautiful shape of a person and hands. I kept it really unfinished and kind of sketchy. But when I found tattooing, it made me complete thing. So my art grew so fast and the people I worked around just told me everything I needed to do to make it tattooable. So really, tattooing was my first medium.

### **Who are some of your main artistic inspirations?**

So many. Man, it would be a laundry list of every artist that has ever inspired me. It's such a long list. It would be a shorter list to tell you who doesn't inspire me. You know? *[Laughs.]*

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

Well, today it's going to be portrait art of New York City buildings because that's what I'm doing. I started as a portrait artist and then realized that I wanted to be really diverse, because if I'm only doing portraits there is a whole group of people

that I can't tattoo, so I wanted to learn every style that was fun for me. The only things I don't really do are traditional Americana tattoos, and it's really only because I'm in New York City, where everybody does it so well. If I'm not, like, one of the best guys doing it then I will totally recommend somebody better. So anything that I can do well, I really look forward to tattooing. So as long as I think I can do it well, I would love to tattoo it—I'm honored.

### **Do you ever go to conventions?**

I used to do conventions, and then I realized that I wanted to stay out of the tattoo community until I was good enough to be proud of my work. So I haven't done conventions in a long time. I pretty much stay at home and work as hard as I can. People know where to find me. I just crank here all day, every day.

### **If you could tattoo anyone with any image, what would it be?**

You know, I get to do that a lot, so I'm not sure. People let me do whatever I want to do a lot of the time. They just want me to make it cool, so I get to do it. Japanese is really intriguing to me, so the last couple of years I've been really working on my Japanese style—which is so incredibly difficult to do, but so fun. There are a lot of rules you've got to stay in, but there's also a lot of freedom. And it's all about body motion, how it conforms to you, and then also about how it looks close up and far away, so you're thinking of all of that when you're designing them. And it's big and it's intricate and everything interacts, so it's a great, great challenge—even more so than doing a portrait for me.

### **Do you have any advice for someone before they get tattooed?**

Just to do your research and meet artists to see the vibe. You're going to be spending hours with this person putting something that will be on your body forever, so you want it to be a good experience as well as a good tattoo. Make sure you like your artist, make sure you guys get along and vibe well—and that could be a knee-jerk reaction. You guys don't have to go to dinner prior, but you can feel somebody out pretty quick. And that's it; make sure they do good tattoos and make sure they are polite.

**What artists have tattooed you?** A lot of people. Little Dragon has tattooed me quite a few times, and Tye [Harris] tattooed me. And just artists I've worked with throughout the years, but those are my most recent ones.

**What did Tye do?** My portrait of my daughter. It's crazy. I'm so proud of it.

### **Where has your favorite place outside of this shop been to tattoo?**

Last Rites was really cool for me, especially my last visit there. I got to work on the stage where

the guests work at, and I got to come back to work for Paul as one of the dudes. You know, when I first worked there I kind of felt like the kid who barely got the job, and when I was sitting tattooing next to Paul Booth, Robert Hernandez, and Bob Tyrrell one day, I looked around and went "I don't belong here! uh-oh!" And so this time coming back, I was so busy—I was busier than the hours they had open. It was tough for me because I was booked 10 hours a day and they're open for eight. So I was so busy; I was really proud to come back and contribute.

### **How has the reputation of tattooing changed since you've been involved in the industry?**

I hope it's changed positively; some artists might not think that. I like to think that I helped make it okay to get a tattoo, you know? Maybe people see these celebrity tattoos and go, "Oh! Cool! I want one!" So I think it helps the industry. I hope it helps the industry.

### **So what's it like knowing that you've been talked about in *Rolling Stone* and really top-notch non-tattoo-related magazines?**

I guess it's weird to hear. Although when I see my picture in, like, *People* magazine, for some reason it's not weird to see because I was there. I remember the photo. And also, I'm not huge on celebrity buzz and stuff, so I don't read a lot of that stuff—I'm a little out of the loop. So I guess it's really cool, and my grandma is really proud and my mother's proud when they open a magazine that has my name in it or something, but I'm comfortable.

### **Have you ever had a celebrity come in and had no idea who they were?**

Yeah. *[Laughs.]* Sometimes now I find out before they come in their name and what they do, but I try not to learn a lot about them because I want to get to know them. So I didn't know who Rihanna was, I didn't know who Katy Perry was. I knew that they were on the radio, but I don't listen to the radio, so I don't listen to a lot of their songs—you just hear their name a lot. And when I meet them, I get to know them and see them. Every celebrity that I have tattooed I've really liked and gotten along with, so I've become their fans and I want to hear their work and I want to see their work. I'm a fan of them as a person, first off, and then I like to check out what they do.

### **Anything else you want to add?**

I suppose I just want to reiterate that this is my first article in any magazine tattoo-related, and it's a real honor that I've gotten to come into the industry so quickly and be accepted by so many great people. And INKED was the one that I wanted to do; *Freshly Inked* was the one that I wanted to do. I'm really excited to start bombarding the tattoo industry with my attempt at tattooing.















# LEATHERNECKS TATTOO

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## ELIZABETH MARKOV

Bang Bang NYC  
26 Clinton Street  
New York, NY 10002



**What year did you start tattooing?** 2007.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I always loved tattoos, got my first one at 17, so it was a pretty natural transition to me. I just one day realized I wanted to be a tattooer, and the next day I went to a shop and said I wanted to learn to tattoo.

**What was your first shop experience like?**

I started tattooing in Florida and my first shop was near the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, so I got to tattoo lots of sailors and pilots.

**What brought you to work at Bang Bang NYC?**

The first shop I landed in after relocating back to New York is where I met Bang Bang, so we worked together for some time. Big shout-out to him for inviting me to join the team at Bang Bang Tattoos!

**How do you describe your style?** I guess I can say my style is illustrative. I equally enjoy doing black tattoos as well as traditional, neo-traditional, or geometric tattoos.

**What inspires you as an artist?** Lots of things: nature, books, the need to create. Other artists

inspire me. To be able to give somebody a good tattoo they will love inspires me.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I love to paint when I have time.

**How is the tattoo scene in New York different than other places you've worked in?** I think it's the diversity of ideas and tattoos made in different styles. Also, New Yorkers are very patriotic about their city, so you get a lot of New York-inspired tattoos.

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

There are so many! To name a few: Xam the Spaniard, Stefan Johnsson, Jason Minauro, Valerie Vargas, Dean Kalcoff, Jessica Swaffer, Philip Yarnell, Gerhard Wiesbeck and Justin Hartman.

**Is there anyone you would like to tattoo?** It would be cool to tattoo my father.

**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?** I would really like to do an ElfQuest tattoo. So to all ElfQuest fans out there, you know where to find me.





## JON MESA

**BANG BANG NYC**



**How has your art and style developed in the time since *Freshly Inked* last spoke with you?** I feel like my artwork has become more complete and has more of my personal style. Every year I become more critical of the work that I'm doing and I keep trying to push myself to get better. I've been working a lot on the anatomy of the things that I draw and the level of realism that I can achieve while still trying to keep a tattoo looking like a tattoo.

**What first brought you to work at Bang Bang NYC?** I've known Keith [Bang Bang] for a few years. We met when he tattooed me at Last Rites. We clicked from the go and have been friends ever since. When he was ready to open up Bang Bang Tattoos he called me up and it just seemed like the right move to make.

**How has such quick success in the tattoo industry affected you and your art work?** Honestly, it has pushed me to keep getting better and to set a high standard of quality to every piece I do, whether I'm at Bang Bang's or on the road working at a tattoo convention. So I make sure that every tattoo I do and every tattoo some-

body sees from me out there, that they have the same feeling of "Wow, that's just as cool as when I saw it online."

**What was one of the strangest pieces you've ever tattooed on someone?** One of the strangest pieces I've tattooed is still in progress, actually; my client wanted a collage of work from, like, 15 famous artists as a half sleeve. He has stuff in there ranging anywhere from Mickey Mouse for Walt Disney to a melting clock for Salvador Dalí. I was kind of skeptical about the concept in the beginning, but it's turning out to be a really cool piece.

**If you could tattoo anyone, who would it be and why?** I think I'd tattoo my mom. She's the one person I've always wanted to tattoo.

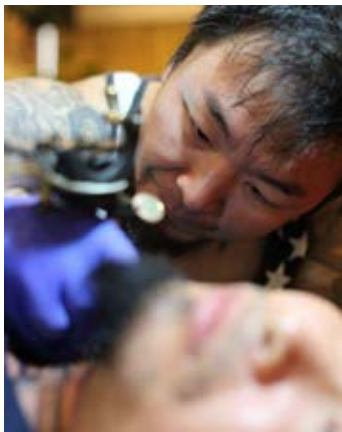
**How would you say the tattoo scene in New York is different than other places you've worked in?** I think that the New York City tattoo scene is really diverse. No style dominates the city. There are good artists in almost every category of tattooing, which makes it a very competitive market.





# LITTLE DRAGON

BANG BANG NYC









## CALLY-JO

### BANG BANG NYC



**What year did you start tattooing?** I did my first few tattoos in 2007; I then began apprenticing in a local tattoo shop in 2011.

**What was your first shop experience like?**

The first shop I worked in was on a busy high street doing mostly walk-ins. I worked for free, cleaned tubes, made appointments, etc., like most apprentices do. During my time there, I was approached by a local artist, Pete Belson, who offered to take me under his wing.

**What first brought you to work at Bang Bang NYC?**

I met Bang Bang at his shop opening; we began talking and discovered that we were following each other on Instagram and had already seen each other's work. I was at the time already doing a guest spot in New York and had wanted to come back to fit in some more clients that I didn't have time to tattoo, so we discussed me coming out to work, and since then we have become great friends!

**How would you describe your style?** I think that my style is pretty dark. I have a huge obsession with skulls—if I could tattoo and draw skulls

all day, every day, I'd be a happy woman. I love tattooing in black-and-gray as well as color, but I definitely feel like I'm more in my element with black-and-gray tattoos.

**What other mediums do you work in?** Pencil is absolutely my first love.

**How is the tattoo scene in New York different than other places you've worked in?** I'm from a small town called Eastleigh in the south of England where little to nothing exciting happens; there's only one tattoo shop in the town. The clientele is a whole lot different in New York; people are willing to pay good money to get tattooed, and there's a lot of great shops in the city with some really great artists.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** Tim Hendricks, James Tex, Victor Portugal, Xam of The Family Business, Big Meas, Ben Grillo, Niki Norberg, Tanane Whitfield, Kelly Doty, and Timmy B. are massively inspirational to me.

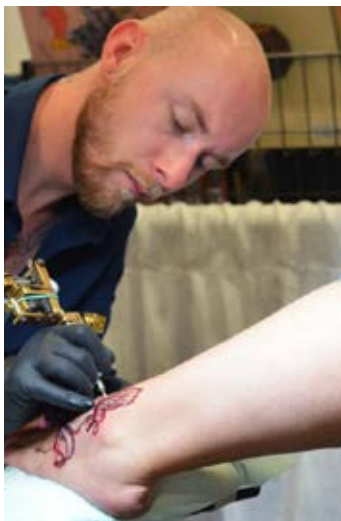
**Is there anyone you would like to tattoo?** I really want to tattoo my mum.





## ANATOLE

BANG BANG NYC



**What year did you start tattooing?** I started tattooing in the fall of 2006, when I turned 18.

**How did you get into tattooing?** Most of my friends wanted designs for their tattoos and they asked me to draw something up for them. I saw lots of amazing work coming out of the neighborhood shop Studio Enigma, on Avenue U in Brooklyn. So I went over there for my first tattoo by Joe Khay and to pick his brain, and luckily he said the shop needed an apprentice, and that was my golden opportunity.

**What first brought you to work at Bang Bang NYC?** I heard that they needed an artist, and since I had nothing to lose but everything to gain, I put in my work.

**How do you describe your style?** Realism. I love capturing what I see and maybe I give it something extra or even take a little off. I'd say my style is closer to minimalism than to hyperrealism.

**What inspires you as an artist?** Besides the amazing artists around me, I'd say New York City. I love what this city has to offer. I've heard nonstop

people say how much energy this city has, and it's true. It's always moving; it gets me motivated.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I love working with plain pencil to paper as much as acrylics, oils, charcoal, ballpoint pen, spray can—pretty much anything that helps me get my ideas out for the vision.

**How is the tattoo scene in New York different than other places you've worked in?** What New York has to offer is foot traffic that never sleeps. There's always movement and it never gets boring. I love walk-in tattoos as much as appointments; it's like the yin and the yang.

**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I love religious imagery a lot. Most of the art that inspires me came from the Renaissance and the early modern period.

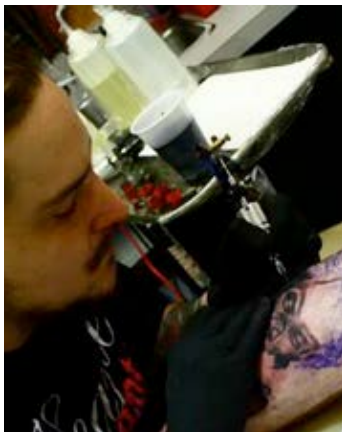
**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?** Too many to list, but right now I'd like to do a back piece of an old sailing ship, like a painting with the full scenery of the ocean and clouds.





# TYE HARRIS

**BANG BANG NYC**



**What year did you start tattooing?** I started tattooing in early 2005. It was about a year and a half of working out of my friend's house and tattooing my brother and myself before I got into a "real" tattoo shop.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I was getting tattooed when I turned 18 by my friend who had made a homemade machine and learned to tattoo in prison. It was a pretty rough setup to say the least. I continued to get tattooed like that for about a year before I got the crazy idea that just maybe I could pull off a tattoo. Little did I know it would be years before I actually could do a decent tattoo. I went ahead and bought some supplies from the first place I found online and started going at my legs and my brother's legs. Needless to say, we are both in dire need of some love from a laser. I kept tattooing out of houses for about a year or so before I went into a shop trying to buy needles. Then the guy behind the counter asked me for a portfolio and asked if I would be interested in a job. I brought a buddy of mine in the next day to do my audition tattoo, which wasn't too impressive, but it was enough to get me my first job in a real-life tattoo shop.

**What was your first shop experience like?** It was a biker shop in San Antonio, TX. The shop had about 10,000 flash sheets so there was always something for us to reference, and the customers were always very fond of the "pick it and stick it" method of tattooing. I really started to tattoo a lot every day and started to get comfortable having the machine in my hand when I started there. It was a very hectic shop where artists were always fighting with each other, and no one really seemed to get along. I was 19 and it was a pretty tough lesson in the world of tattooing. It's made every shop experience since not seem quite so bad.

**What first brought you to work at Bang Bang NYC?** Me and Bang have been talking since back in the Myspace days. Just recently when his shop opened was when he invited me up to guest spot and we finally met. Bang Bang's mad skills are what brought me to the shop.

**Do you have any special training?** No kind of training at all, really. Just picked up a machine and started going to town. I would love to take some oil painting classes one day if I can find the time.



**What conventions have you worked at?**

The International Brussels Tattoo Convention and the Evian Tattoo Expo are a couple of favorite shows that I have worked recently. Definitely the best convention memory I have is Bloodapalooza in Dallas. I think it was 2008, or 2009 maybe. That's where I met one of my best friends, Mr. Timmy B., and that's also where I met Bob Tyrrell and took his seminar. That seminar of his really sent me down the right path on how to approach realism. I've looked at tattooing totally differently since that weekend.

**How do you describe your style?** Photo-realism, for sure. I prefer to do portraits of people, but Gothic architecture and dark art is always a fun switch-up from time to time. Also, I love doing animal portraits.

**What inspires you as an artist?** My biggest inspiration as an artist is to be 100 percent happy with the art I produce and to push my tattoos as far as possible. If you strive for perfection, progress is what you will get. Growing as a person and an artist and traveling the world meeting amazing people is the biggest inspiration I could ask for.

**What sets you apart from other artists?** I'm not positive, to be honest. I definitely feel that I approach my tattoos in an unorthodox way that most artists find a bit ridiculous. I tattoo very slowly and meticulously. I find a

lot of portrait artists who just won't take their time. An eight-hour portrait is going to look very different from a three-hour portrait.

**How is the tattoo scene in New York different than other places you've worked in?**

There's a much more artistic approach to tattoos in New York City in a lot of shops here, lots of tattooers who do sculptures and oil paintings and whatnot, rather than just tattoo all the time. It's inspiring, for sure.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I've dabbled in oils and acrylics and a little bit of airbrushing. I'd really like to focus more on oils in the future. It's a solid way to learn lighting and color theory. Painting really helped me grow a lot.

**How have you branched out from tattooing?** I really haven't. I would like to see what other ventures I could get into someday. This industry has a lot of doors opening these days; I'd like to try my hand at another aspect of the tattoo industry.

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

Bob Tyrrell, Victor Portugal, Jason Butcher, Tommy Lee Wendtner, Carlos Rojas, Carlos Torres, and Nikko Hurtado, for sure. That dude is a beast. That's just to name a few. I'm not sure there are enough pages in the magazine to name everyone who has inspired me over the years.

**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I'd like to get into more surrealism-type stuff. Maybe start throwing some flair into my portraits. I really like the way Robert Hernandez approaches portraits, more of an impressionistic style. I would also like to do more color realism. That's always such a fun challenge.

**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** If it's a portrait that the client is getting, I try to get them to choose three pictures that they would be willing to get tattooed, then I go over the photos with them and discuss which photo will transfer best into a tattoo. I also discuss placement and size as these are very important factors in achieving a solid portrait.

**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?** I've still never done a back piece; I would love to tackle that project one day. A big, evil back piece would be rad. I'd like to give a color portrait a shot one day too. That's intimidating for some reason.

**What was one of your favorite pieces to tattoo?** I did a Freddy Krueger portrait on my brother about three years ago, and that is still one of my favorite tattoos that I've done. It was one that I was kind of scared to do for years and he just kept asking me for it. I was certain I was going to screw up those scars, but in the end I was very pleased with it.









# MIKE PASTORE PRESENTS MASTERPIECE TATTOO



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MIKE



## SHEY HAF-DED

BANG BANG NYC



**What year did you start tattooing?** I started my apprenticeship in New York City in 2006.

**How did you get into tattooing?** A friend of mine asked me to draw a tattoo for him. When he went to have it done, I went with him. The artist at the shop explained to me how to draw things in a more tattoo-friendly manner.

**What was your first shop experience like?** My first experience was a few years before I started my apprenticeship. I was so fascinated; I knew right then and there that it was something I wanted to do.

**What first brought you to work at Bang Bang NYC?** I actually met Bang as a client, and years later he invited me to work at his shop.

**Do you have any special training?** I don't have any special or formal training; I just really enjoy drawing, painting, and art in general.

**What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year?** I have only worked a few conventions: Roseland Ballroom,

Ink Life Tour, and Cape Fear. No plans for this year as of yet.

**How do you describe your style?** I think I gravitate more towards realism.

**A lot of your tattoos deal with sci-fi or comics—are you a science fiction fan, or is that just your clients' preference?** I am most definitely a sci-fi/horror nerd; I'm fortunate to have clients with the same tattoo preference.

**What other media do you work in?** I started off with pencils, and in the past few years I've become a big fan of oil painting. It takes up a lot of my free time when I'm not tattooing.

**How is the tattoo scene in New York different than other places you've worked in?** New York has a lot of diversity when it comes to the subject matter of tattoos that clients request.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** One of the people I admire most is Robert Hernandez, both as a tattoo artist and as an artist in general. He's the Salvador Dali of our generation.



**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I guess more of the realistic comic book style.

**What was one of your favorite pieces to tattoo?** My favorite, I would say, is on one of my good friends, Josh Boogie. It's a Master Yoda portrait I did at Ink Life Tour Convention in Myrtle Beach, SC.

**What was one of the strangest pieces you've ever tattooed?** An Andy Warhol piece. His artwork is amazing.

**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** Find a good artist. Let them just do what they do best.

**What artists have tattooed you?** Bang has done a fairly big H.R. Giger tattoo on my leg—needless to say, my favorite tattoo yet.

**How has the reputation of tattooing changed since you've been involved in the industry?** Tattoos are finding their way into everyday life.









## JOSE PEREZ JR.

Dark Water Tattoos  
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Bridgeview, IL 60455  
708-598-0999  
www.jpjtattoos.com



**What year did you start tattooing?** 2003.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I started messing around with tattoos when I was about 16 or 17, tattooing friends and family as somewhat of a hobby. Tattooing intrigued me and I was determined to figure it out. At the time I never thought I would be doing this for a living. I've always loved great art as well as the art of tattooing. About 10 years ago, I started tattooing friends as a hobby and a friend recommended that I buy professional equipment. I began tattooing on a regular basis and haven't stopped since.

**Where did you apprentice?** I'm a self-taught artist and self-taught tattoo artist. I have a way of breaking things down and studying them and understanding how things are done.

**Do you have any special training?** I recently have been having some one-on-one art lessons with an art teacher to further my understanding of color theory and expanding my artistic abilities into other mediums.

**What conventions have you worked at? Have**

**you won any awards? What are some of your best convention memories?** Over the past year I have done both national and international conventions. And upcoming this year I will be attending Hell City, Northern Xposure, Crazy AITS, Paradise Tattoo Gathering, and more, in addition to doing a lot of guest spots all over the country, including working part-time at Last Rites Tattoo Theatre and guest spotting at Loose Screw Tattoo. Check out my Facebook and website for all travel dates and conventions. The most recent awards I've received were from the Rosemont Tattoo Convention, in which I took first place for large color (female), second place extra-large black-and-gray (male), and second place large black-and-gray (female). Working conventions is always a great time to hang out and meet with other great artists, but my best convention memories would have to be from the Paradise Tattoo Gathering in Keystone, CO, and Crazy AITS in Melbourne, Australia.

**How do you describe your style?** Black-and-gray realism incorporating organic textures and, of course, my own freehand designs.

**What inspires you as an artist?** My inspira-





tions range from da Vinci to Michelangelo, old architecture, and realism.

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

Knowing that tattooing is a vast industry, I had to push myself to learn and re-create realism to be able to stand out amongst great tattoo artists. I continue to work hard to perfect my craft. I consider myself to be a true well-rounded tattoo artist—able to tattoo anything in any style. My extensive portfolio displays all arenas of tattooing.

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

Pencil, oil paints, acrylic paints, pastels, and charcoal.

**How have you branched out from tattooing?**

Dark Water Press—our original apparel line [darkwaterpress.com]—participating in art shows, and recently doing a time-lapse video for Sullen TV. And I plan to create blogs that include instructional tips and tricks for tattooing.

**What tattoo artists do you admire the most?** Robert Hernandez, because I admire his originality, use of realism, textures, lighting, contrast, and drop shadows. He's been someone I have looked up to for years, and he's currently working on my sleeve.

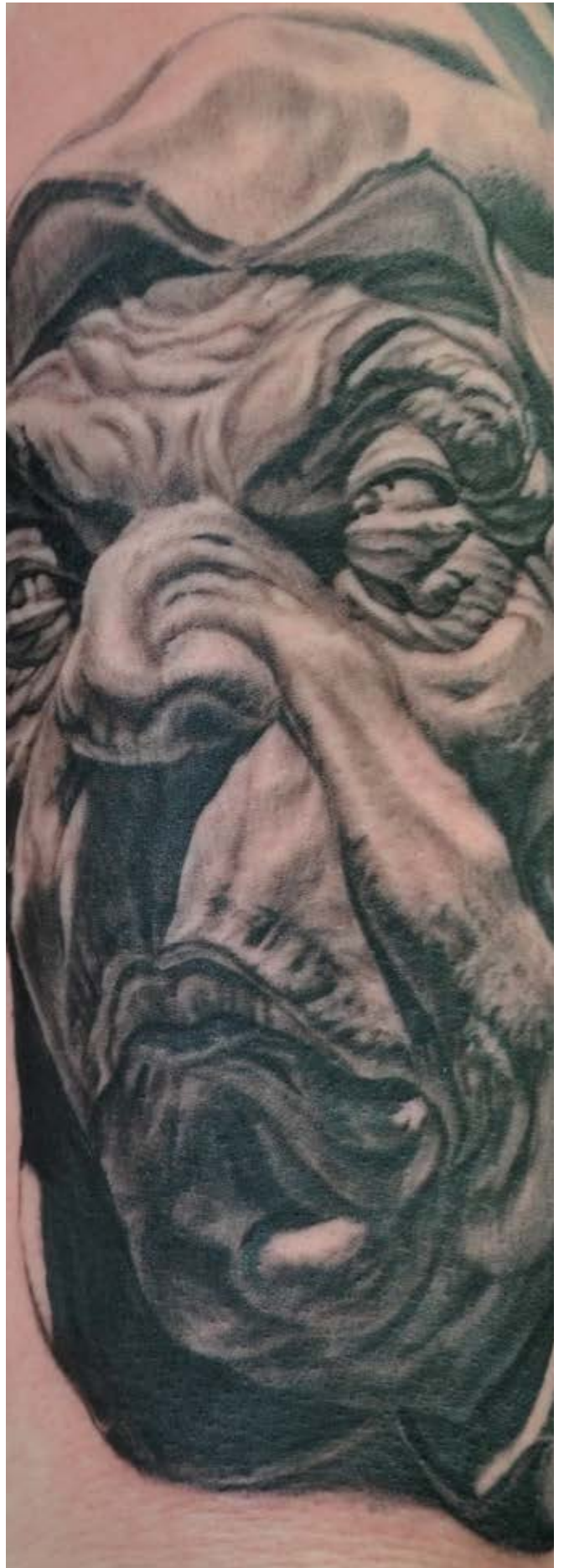
**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** I look forward to tattooing more recognizable portraits and movie characters, interesting organic textures, and, of course, my own freehand designs.

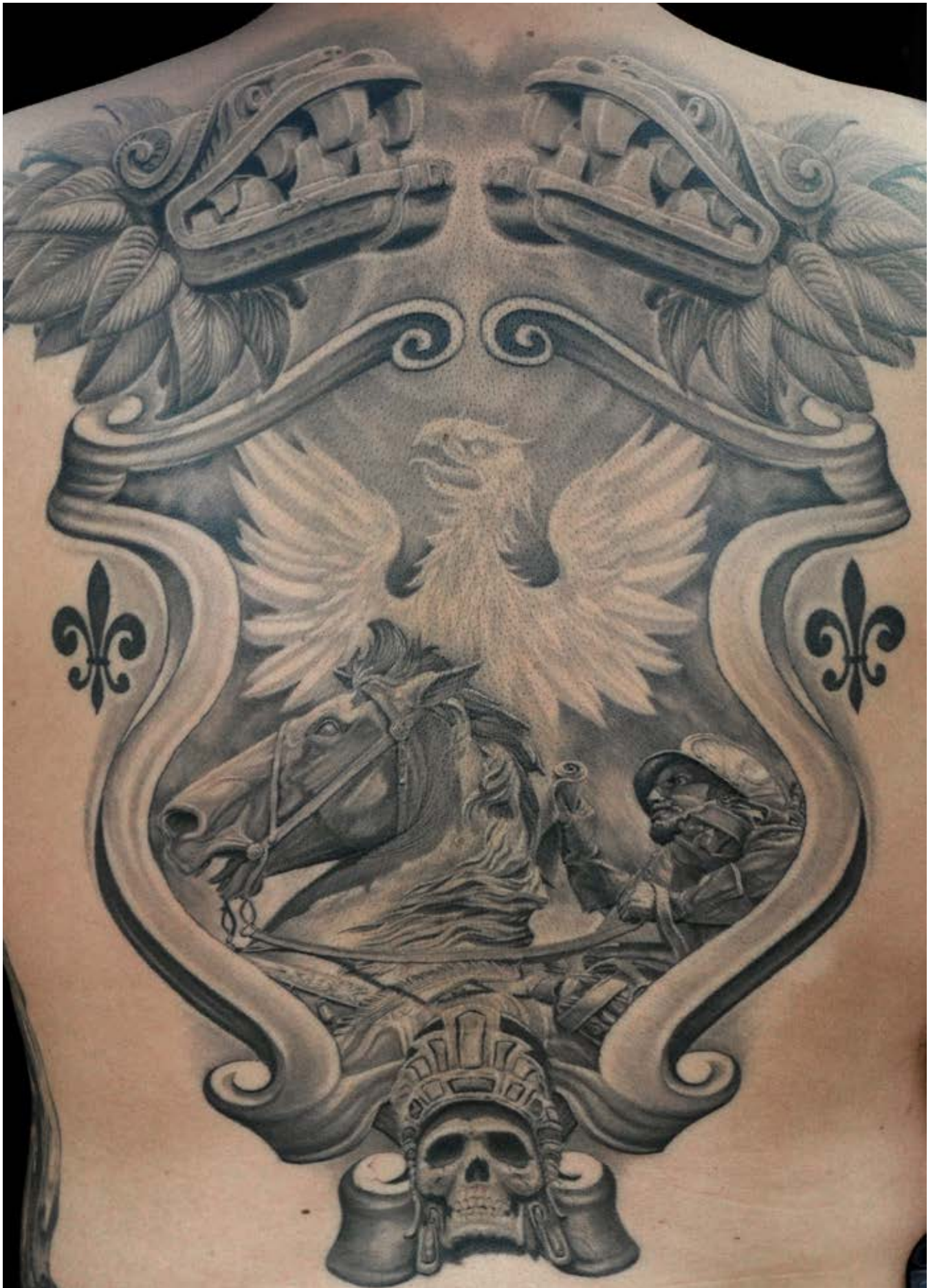
**Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?** I encourage my clients to do their research, to find reference photos of their ideas. It's important to eat and be well rested. Just relax and enjoy the ride.

**Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?** Frankenstein, Einstein, Native American portraits, Jackal from *Thirteen Ghosts*, rhinos, close-up insects, and statues from the Italian Renaissance era.













## NICK BAXTER

Private Studio  
Austin, Texas  
nickbaxter.com



**What year did you start tattooing?** Conveniently, I did my first tattoo on New Year's Day of 2000.

**How did you get into tattooing?** I was an artistic child, always encouraged to create by my parents, and by the time I was a teenager I was certain I wanted to make art for a living. During that time I became fascinated by the rebellion and expressive power of tattoos, and vowed to find a way to do them myself. A few years later, after enrolling in art college, I finally found an apprenticeship at a local shop, Tattoo International in Wallingford, CT, under owner Mark Savaikis.

**What was your first shop experience like?** My first tattoo shop experience was terrifying and intriguing. I grew up a very sheltered suburbanite, and the whole lifestyle and attitude on display in the cliché dodgy street shop I first visited was enough to simultaneously make me really nervous, and really curious to experience more.

**Do you have any special training?** I completed three semesters of art college, where I

learned the basics of traditional sharp-focus still life painting and drawing, as well as some color and design theory. This path has shown me that you don't need a formal college degree to have knowledge, be successful, or go beyond what's expected of you. You simply need the internal motivation, discipline, and desire to seek out the knowledge you want, and apply it to your life.

**What are some of your best convention memories?** At my first-ever convention in 2002, I won best of show for some pixelized tattoos I had just done. I was a wide-eyed, naive nervous wreck for that whole weekend, and winning that award right at the end practically gave me an anxiety attack from excitement and all the new attention that I was completely emotionally unprepared for. More recently, I've participated in an event called the Worldwide Tattoo Conference, which is sort of like TED Talks for tattooers. Another inspiring event that recently grew out of the tattoo convention format has been the Paradise Artist Retreat, which is an intensive four-day art camp for tattooers that's taken place in serene nature resorts, featuring seminars and creative camaraderie.



**How do you describe your style?** I think my tattoos could be described as color surrealism. I enjoy blending special effects and optical illusions with highly rendered, dynamic, and dimensional forms. I think the genre of “biomech” or “bio-organic,” which I’ve done a lot of in recent years, falls under this description.

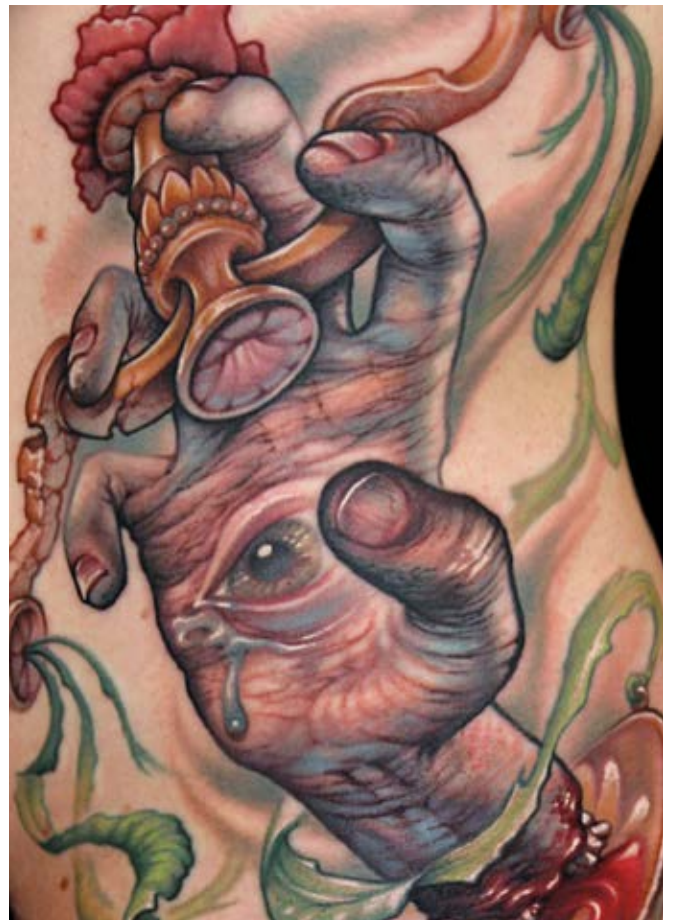
**What inspires you as an artist?** I’ve always been inspired by any artistic movement that involves careful craftsmanship, refined technique, or deep philosophy, such as the art of the Renaissance, surrealism, photo-realism, and photography. My focus on art forms and intellectual discourse outside of—and often completely unrelated to—tattooing is what may set me apart from many other tattooers.

**How have you branched out from tattooing?** My biggest foray outside of tattooing has been oil painting, which I was actually doing before tattooing. In recent years I’ve started to show my paintings in galleries around the country, and have had paintings featured in some books, print catalogs, and juried competitions. In 2010 I channeled my

love for painting into an instructional book called *Sharp-Focus Realism In Oil*, which is intended for tattooers looking to learn the oil painting discipline of realism. Tattooer Guy Aitchison published the book under his label, Proton Press. I’ve also been an avid reader of books and philosophy, and perhaps not surprisingly, I love to write, which has been a great outlet for all the ideas I can’t express visually. I’ve found a different kind of fulfillment in sharing knowledge with others through the written word, so I’ve been trying to do more of that lately. In the past few years, in addition to my instructional painting book, I’ve been writing articles for the *Tattoo Artist Magazine* blog, as well as their new project, *Tattoo Culture Magazine*.

**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** Throughout my career I’ve admired the innovative and visionary tattooing of Guy Aitchison, as well as his paintings and huge teaching contributions to our craft and profession. I’ve also had a chance to spend time working alongside friends like Jeff Gogue, Adrian Dominic, and Jeff Ensminger, among others, and have always admired the creative energy of my friends, tattooers and non-tattooers alike.

**What kind of tattoos do you most look forward to doing?** I just want to keep producing inspired tattoos, to the best of my ability. I really can have fun doing almost any style of tattoo, as long as the client and I have a solid respect and understanding of each other, and an interaction that produces a positive energy to create from. The longer I pursue tattooing, the more I want to avoid being a factory, merely churning out predictable and expected work, day after day. So I tattoo a lot less nowadays, and try to select the most interesting projects with the right set of circumstances and the right vibe surrounding them. I’m also a big fan of bartering and the practice of creating mutually beneficial, non-hierarchical relationships with people outside of the capitalist economy, which I see as oppressive and destructive to human happiness. Many tattoos have happened in my career because the client has had something more valuable than money to offer for my work. I’ve traded tattoos for all kinds of inspirational experiences, travel adventures, and life needs—like healthcare and food—and many of these have ended up being the most rewarding tattoo proposals I’ve accepted.











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## EL-E MAGS

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**What year did you start tattooing?** 1999.

**How did you get into tattooing?** As a teenager, my sister's boyfriend had this dragon tattoo on his whole torso, and I was fascinated by how it could be done with a tattoo machine with such detail. It was the first time I had seen a tattoo like that in person, and I said to myself that this is what I wanted to do. No one wanted to apprentice a young kid, so I started on my own. Luckily, I met a dude named Calvin Hill who said he would help me out.

**What first brought you to work at Bang Bang NYC?** I was looking to work in a shop, so I went to show my portfolio to this shop in the Lower East Side, and the shop girl pretended I wasn't there. Then Bang came up to me, looked at my book, and said, "Come outside with me for a sec." He was like, "Listen, I'm digging your work and I'm about to open up a shop in a couple of months and I want you to work for me." Now here I am.

**What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year?** The last conven-

tion I did was in Gothenburg, Sweden. I've been lying low, but next year I plan on doing some conventions in Europe and South America.

**How do you describe your style?** I really don't like to label myself, but I guess you could say neo-traditional. I like to mix things up, and I like to do what I like.

**What inspires you as an artist?** NYC. There is art everywhere.

**What other mediums do you work in?** I like to paint; oil, acrylic, and watercolor. Recently I've been doing some silk-screening. I'm working on my own T-shirt line.

**How is the tattoo scene in New York different than other shops you've worked in?** The tattoo scene in New York is pretty cool. I'm an NYC tattooer. I learned how to tattoo here and have worked in over 15 shops in New York City, so I understand the vibe.

**Is there anyone you would like to tattoo?** My father.





## MICHAEL E. BENNETT

2Spirit Tattoo  
11 Pearl Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
instagram: @childthepeacemaker



**What year did you start tattooing?** I started tattooing in 2002. I had been working in and around tattoo shops since 1998 or so, sweeping up, answering phones, etc.

**How did you get into tattooing? What was your first shop experience like?** I've always wanted to be a tattooer, for as long as I can remember. My grandpa had a Woody Woodpecker tattoo on his arm and I thought it was the coolest thing! At school I started drawing Ninja Turtles on kids' forearms and it just stuck. After high school I got a job sweeping up at a shop called Body Basics in Chicago, and the love for it just got deeper. That shop had super talented artists who all did different styles, and they loved what they did. It made me see that I didn't have to fit a certain mold to be a tattooer. Hannah Aitchison, Patrick Cornolo, Jason Leisge—who was and still is a huge influence on me—were all working there at that time. It was a really great environment to be in early on. Later on I had the privilege of working at Faith Tattoo in Santa Rosa, CA. I learned so much working with that crew. Justin Shaw, Jesse Swanson, Andy Chism, and the constant flow of amazing guest artists really

helped me figure out what I should be doing as a tattoo artist.

**What's it like being part of the 2Spirit Tattoo family?** 2Spirit is one of my favorite shops I've ever been in, let alone gotten to work at. Roxx has really made a fantastic environment for the clients and the artists. Very mellow, fun place to be, and you can feel it in the people who work there. It's more like a family than a place of business.

**Do you have any special training?** I have recently started taking Tibetan thangka painting classes with master Tashi Dhargyal. Thangkas are the ancient Tibetan Buddhist paintings depicting deities and bodhisattvas. Tashi is showing me everything from mixing your own mineral-based pigments, the correct dimensions for each deity, and how to correctly stretch the canvas.

**What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year?** I do the State of Grace convention each year with 2Spirit, and I'm planning on doing the Rochester convention with my good friends Justin Shaw and Andy Chism. That should be fun. I also try to guest spot at



New York Adorned as much as possible—lovely people at that shop. It's always a pleasure to work with all of them. I also got the chance to work at Saved in Brooklyn this last trip, another amazing shop. I feel so lucky to be able to spend time there.

**You work in a lot of dotwork and black-work. What drew you to that particular style?** I was drawn to dotwork because of the power they seem to produce. Even if the piece doesn't necessarily have any subject matter, all the textures and strong black seem to draw you in and give off energy. I've always been drawn to powerful imagery. Seeing work from artists like Xed Le Head and Tomas Tomas, where there isn't any central figure or storyline but the movement and power of the patterns draw you in and make you feel something. Man, that did it for me; I was hooked.

**What inspires you as an artist?** I'm inspired by all kinds of things, from ancient Islamic rugs to Indian Rajput paintings. I'm drawn to anything spiritually based or

geometric, really. I have to say that my wife and daughter are my biggest inspirations. They both show such love and commitment to their interests; it really helps me keep focused and reminds me of the fun my job allows me to have.

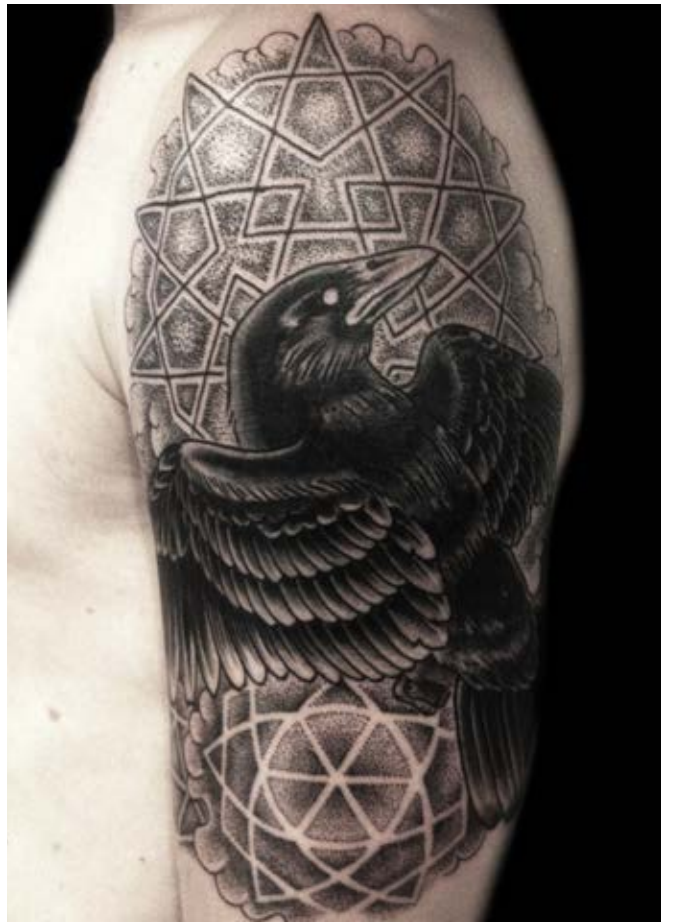
**What tattoo artists do you admire most?** The list of tattoo artists that I admire is constantly changing. The more work I see out there, the more in awe I am of all the talent and energy in our culture today. The constants are Leo Zulueta, Xed Le Head, Tomas Tomas, Gerhard Wiesbeck, Leu Family Iron, Thomas Hooper, Jondix, Dave Moore, Jason Leisge, Mike the Athens, Erik Jacobsen—I could go on forever. I feel so lucky to be alive and part of the tattoo culture right now. So many books and information at our fingertips!

**What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?** My favorite tattoos to do have a mix of geometric- and organic-based images. I love the duality of nature and math.

**What was one of your favorite pieces to**

**tattoo?** My favorite piece I've ever done would have to be my friend Jen's throat. The combination of the Fibonacci sequence and the reaching filigree I think make for a strong image. Plus, she's a super cool person! It was a pleasure to spend the time with her.











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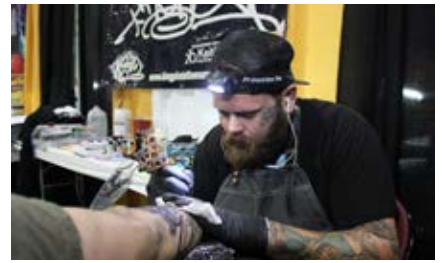
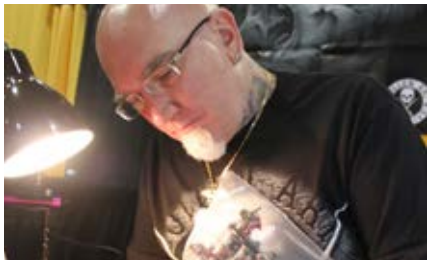


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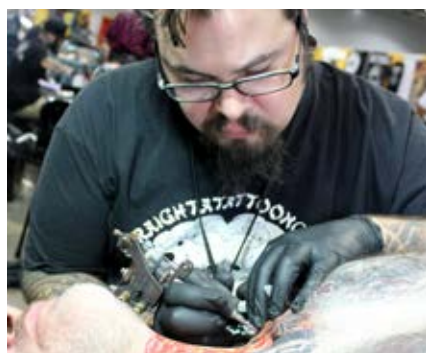


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**STEEL CITY**  
 Shane O'Neill's Steel City was "beaming" with excitement. (Get it? Steel beam? Eh?) The *Ink Master* season 1 winner was found tattooing at his own convention in Pittsburgh this year. Let's just say that he has a soft heart for parents who want a piece of ink to represent their love for their child. Other big-name tattoo artists, as well as local tattooers, were found among the "jinzers" in the crowd. Check out [shaneoneillproductions.com](http://shaneoneillproductions.com) for information on next year's shows.



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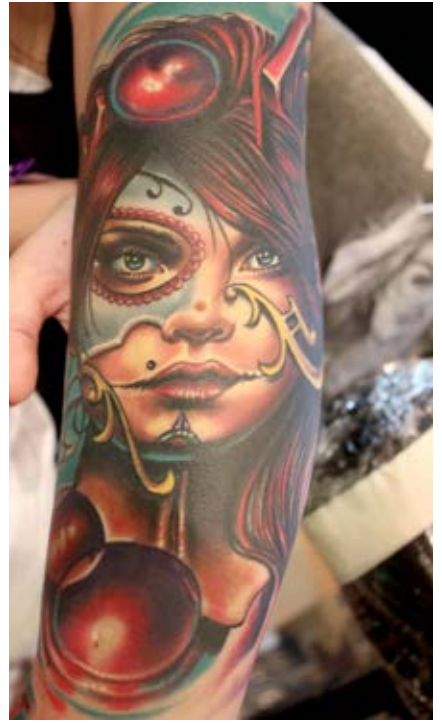
**BALTIMORE**  
TATTOO ARTS CONVENTION  
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**WARSHIP OLYMPIA**  
TATTOO ARTS CONVENTION  
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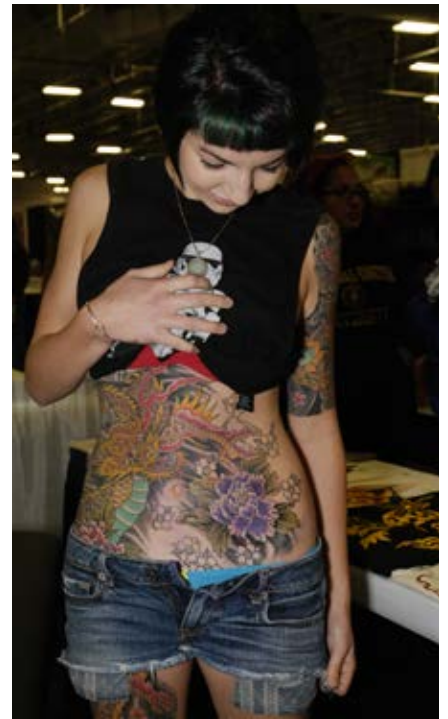
**HELL CITY**  
 Hell City's second yearly installment—appropriately housed in the blazing city of Phoenix—was filled with excitement. The event that everyone can't stop talking about is the totally insane, live body suspension that happened on the main stage that Saturday. Let's just say that it involved a meat hook and spinning. Oh yeah—there was also the moment when some of the Suicide Girls decided to start twerking onstage. Did you miss both of the Hell City conventions this year? You can burn in hell in Columbus, OH, this coming April, and in Phoenix this coming August.



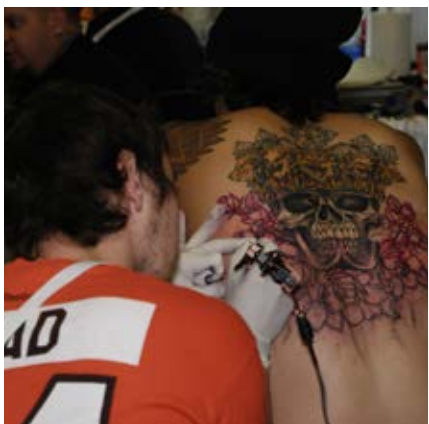
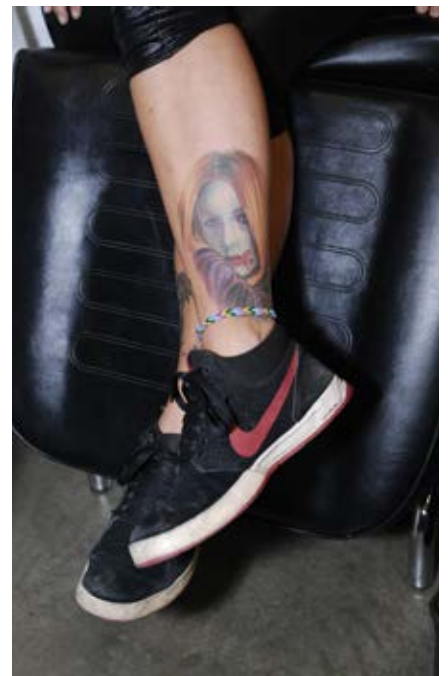
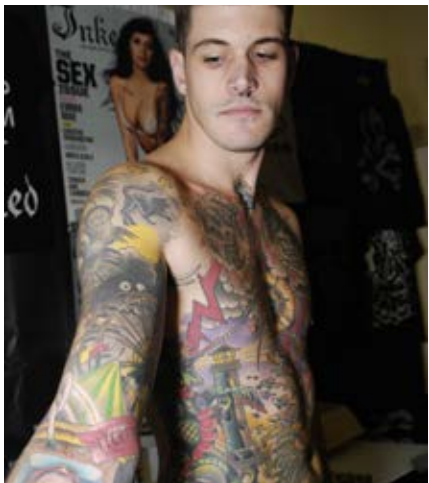


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**INKED OUT NJ**  
Each year, Mario Barth and Starlight Tattoo bring the annual Inked Out Tattoo Show to the New Jersey Meadowlands for a whole weekend of all things tattoo. This year, INKED decided to set up a photo booth—complete with photographer, lights, and changeable backgrounds—and invited the conventiongoers to step into the spotlight. We found everything from epic ink to badass beards, and then some. Even esteemed German tattoo artist Randy Engelhard stopped by to check in on all the action. Here are some of our favorite pics from the shoot.







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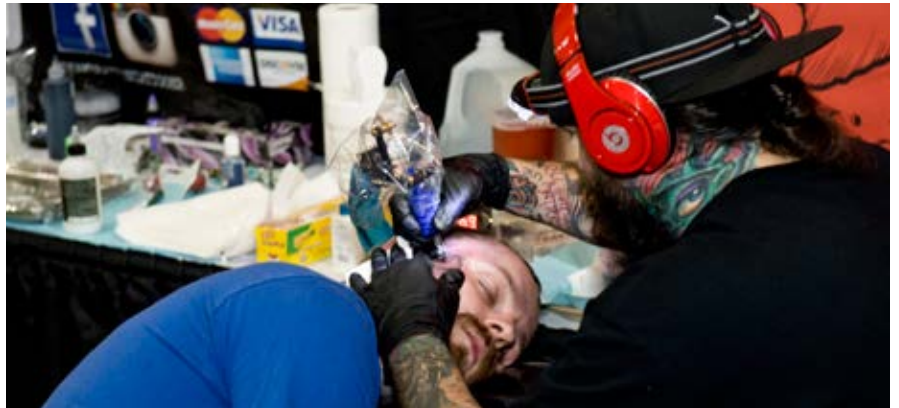
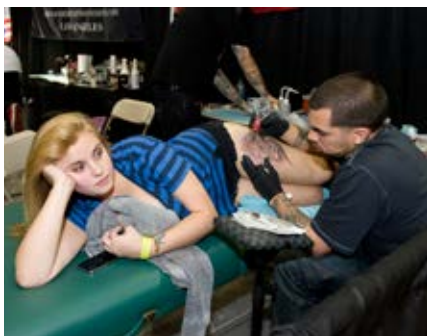
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**BOSTON**  
Every year for the last 12 years, Boston has hosted the annual Boston Tattoo Convention. With sponsors like Jägermeister and Pabst Blue Ribbon, there was tons of fun to be had by all. And with insanely talented artists like Jon Mesa, Timmy B., and Big Meas, even Luke Wessman had to stop by to investigate the proceedings. There was also hourly entertainment and seminars, including workshops led by Myke Chambers, the Miss Boston Ink beauty pageant, and the Black Cat Burlesque Show. Boston has a lot of pride, and it was certainly on display during this convention—especially during the Boston Pride Tattoo contest, with guest judge Scruffy Wallace of the Dropkick Murphys. This is not a convention you are going to want to miss next year.



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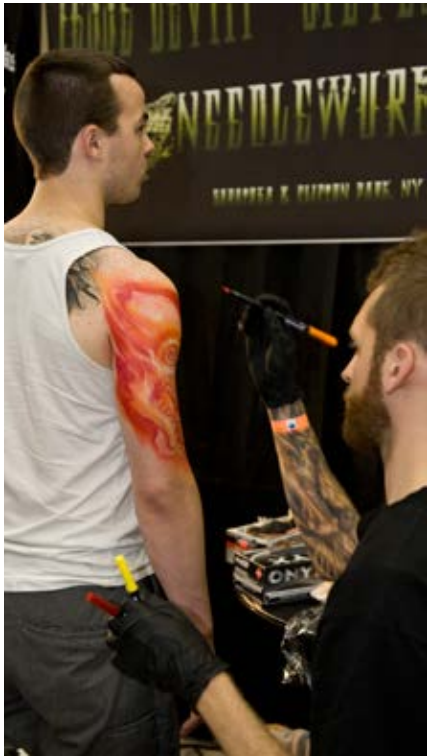
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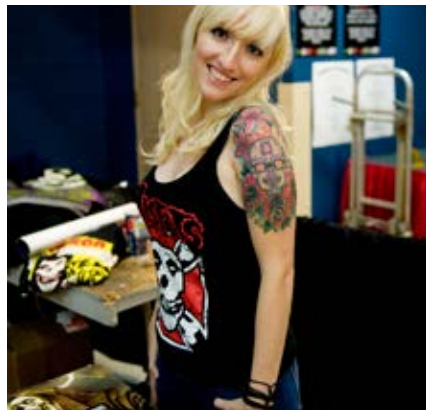
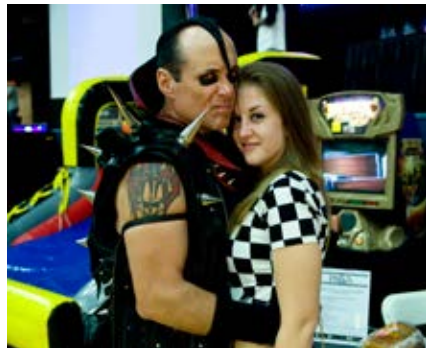
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DEC 4	CLEVELAND, OH	HOUSE OF BLUES
DEC 6	SILVER SPRING, MD	THE FILLMORE
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DEC 14	NEW ORLEANS, LA	HOUSE OF BLUES
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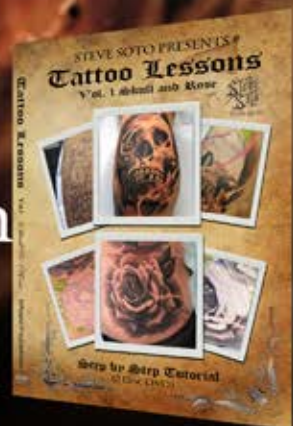
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