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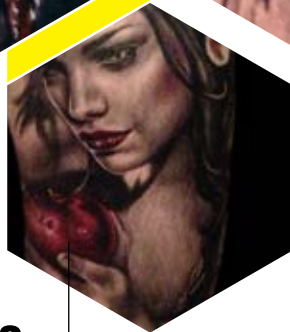
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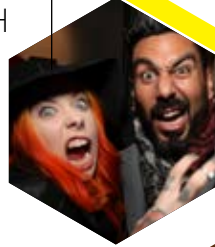
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What year did you start tattooing? 1997.

How did you get into tattooing? I graduated back then as a graphic designer and I suppose during that point in time, I was exploring various mediums and art forms. Also, I guess I was quite reluctant to go into the advertising scene, which was kind of like the next expected progression for me as a designer. However, I never really saw myself as a designer, as I was more into fine arts and illustration. To this day I still kick myself for not enrolling myself in fine arts instead. I started exploring tattooing as a medium purely out of experiment. I came across this tattoo magazine—can't remember which magazine it was now—and I was immediately intrigued by tattoos as an art form.

What is the tattoo scene like in Singapore? It is definitely a lot more open now compared to when I first started out. Back then tattooing was still considered rather taboo and often associated with Asian gangs and delinquents. However, with the awareness of tattoo art via popular culture and social media these days, you see more and more people perceiving tattoos as a form of art and individual expression. You will be surprised, too, by the caliber of tattoo artists we have here in Singapore.

I'm so proud of them because most people do not expect Singapore to have so many good tattoo artists.

What drew you to work mainly in black-and-gray? There is actually a funny story behind this. When I first started out, there wasn't a lot of good quality color ink made available to me back then. I wasn't able to achieve good color payout, so it was simply easier to work with black-and-gray. However, if you notice my works in the recent year, you will see a lot more color in my designs. There are just so many varieties and good quality colored inks available in the market these days.

What inspires you as an artist? Music is definitely a key influence for sure. Growing up and listening to rock music, I was always very drawn to the artwork on the album covers. I guess I always associated music and art from there. I also have this habit of perusing pictures, drawings, and illustrations from everywhere.

What other mediums do you work in? Oil, pastel, charcoal, to name a few. I use pencils and markers mostly. I also work with digital painting. I recently started experimenting with pyrography [wood burning].

How have you branched out from tattooing? I do commission paintings

and also T-shirt illustration for Sullen Clothing.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? Carlos Torres, Bob Tyrrell, Jeff Gogue.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I am always drawn to big tattoo pieces, as it gives me a chance to really work on the composition and details. A full bodysuit would be the most ideal!

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Always do your research, and come prepared with clear ideas of what you want in your tattoo design. Once you have identified the style you want, make sure you do research on the right tattoo artist who can deliver what you want and is within your budget. Last but not least, remember that cheap tattoos ain't good, and good tattoos ain't cheap.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? Yes, of course! For traditional style, I've always wanted to do a Chinese monkey god on a full back. As for realism, I want to do a full back silverback gorilla piece with just the gorilla face on the entire back. That would be really awesome! However, I am still waiting for that particular person to appear. ■









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JOHNNY SMITH

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What year did you start tattooing? 2008.

How did you get into tattooing? I've always been interested in artwork in one way or another. Aside from messing around with it when I was a kid, I first started to become more interested in tattoos when I was a teenager. I started drawing a lot of tattoo designs and staring at pictures in tattoo magazines. Eventually I moved to Oregon from Mississippi in 2005, and after much effort, got my foot in the door at a local shop doing grunt work.

What is the tattoo scene like in Oregon? Honestly, I love living and working in Oregon! I spent many years traveling all over the country and have yet to find anything quite like it. There are great artists scattered all over the state, and it constantly keeps me challenged to become better at what I do. I couldn't imagine a more perfect fit for me.

Do you have any special training? Aside from learning about art history and painting from my grandmother when I was younger, I am a self-taught artist.

What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year? Fortunately, in 2013 I was able to attend both Hell City shows, the

Paradise Tattoo Convention, Paradise Artist Retreat, the Worldwide Tattoo Conference in Boston, and most recently the Evian Tattoo Show in France. Next year I hope to do more traveling overseas. London, Italy, and Denmark are in the works so far; possibly a few more will line up.

You tattoo in a variety of styles. How do you describe your style, and what styles do you prefer? I do a lot of realistic color tattoos, although lately I've been getting more interested in black-and-gray. If I have any type of unique style, I accredit it to my background in painting, and the fact that I use my machine like I use my brush. It gives my work a saturated, painterly look that people recognize. Hopefully I can learn many more styles from all the artists I get to work with, and refine my work more in the future.

What inspires you as an artist? I find inspiration in all the great artwork I see coming out every day. It constantly challenges me to become a better painter and tattooer. I couldn't think of a better way to progress than being in this industry surrounded by such amazing artists. It definitely keeps me on my toes. I feel that tattooing is the new artistic movement, and I'm stoked to be a part of it.

What other mediums do you work in? I've been painting since I can

remember, and I'm sure I always will. I've also been messing around with sculpture and a few other mediums lately. Hopefully I can find the time to do much more with art aside from tattooing in the future.

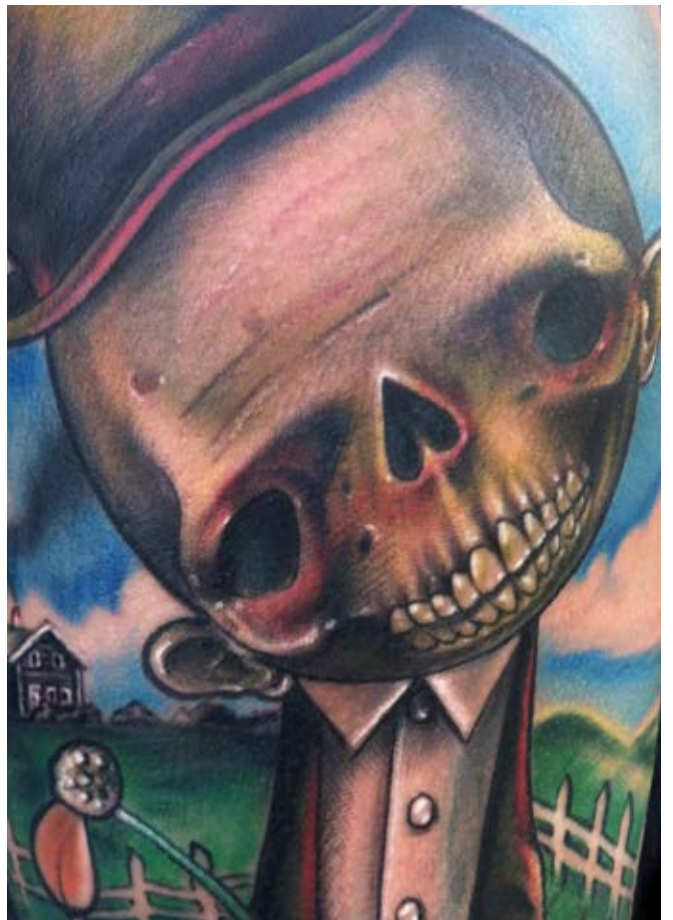
What tattoo artists do you admire most? Cory Norris, Jeff Gogue, Bob Tyrrell, Russ Abbott, and Remis.

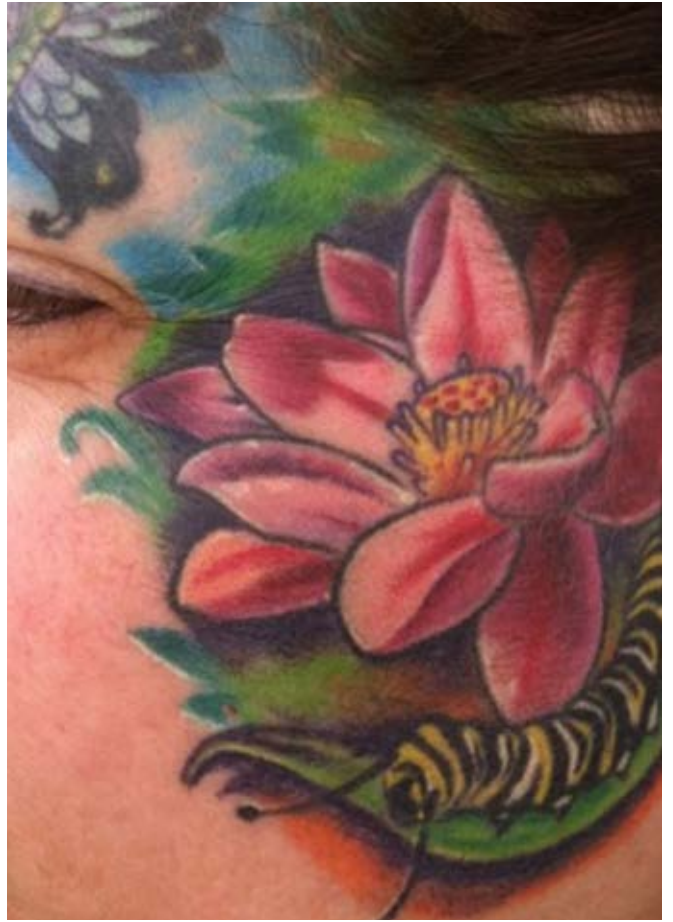
What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I'll probably always be a realist, but I would love to get more into traditional tattoos. I've always felt an attraction to clean lines and solid color. Hopefully that's something I can do a bit more of, and step out of my comfort zone a little.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? Research! Forget about price shopping, and put that effort into finding a good artist. There are so many fully qualified artists out there now that there's no excuse for getting a shitty tattoo anymore.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? My bucket list of tattoos mostly consists of portraits I've always wanted to do. Sam Elliott, Carl Sagan, Freddie Mercury, to name a few. I also love working with optical illusions, and I have some fun ideas I'm looking forward to putting on skin. ■









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How long ago did you start tattooing?

I think my first contact with tattoos was 1996, when hippies came to my town. They were tattooing in a tent with a homemade machine, and the idea fascinated me. Really, I'm in this because once when I opened a magazine and saw a tattoo by Paul Booth, I said, "Wow! This is what I should do." It was nothing like I had seen so far. It was amazing. I started to travel to Brazil, where there was a very large tattoo movement and the tattoo artists were very good. I always felt fascinated by black-and-gray, and what fascinated me most is that only some black ink and water could achieve that magic.

Which culture do you think has been more of an influence on your art?

Around '98, I began this adventure. I began to travel to Argentina and Brazil with many tattooist friends, exchanging ideas, techniques, theories, etc. In the beginning I tattooed just about anything, but I always felt inclined towards the dark art. I think when I moved to Europe was when everything changed—architecture, seeing buildings and Gothic cathedrals and baroque Italy was incredible for me.

You are one of those artists that changed the game. Your style is very

strong, and we can see how many artists have been influenced and inspired by your art. Do you feel some kind of pressure, knowing that many expect a mind-blowing piece from you? As I said before, black-and-gray excites me; I'm always open to other styles but always return to my roots. It's hard for me to describe my style; I try to raise the contrasts to have a greater legibility at a distance, and that also determines its durability. I'm really very happy that people like what I do, but I feel I can give a lot more. So you could say I'm in the evolutionary process. I am proud to see that other artists have referenced my work.

When you are looking for a new tattoo approach, where do you search for inspiration? Inspiration is everywhere. At first I looked at many magazines, but I was unconsciously influenced by other tattooists and that started to bother me. Anything can be an idea for my next tattoo. It depends on the moment. One must stay perceptive: a light at a concert, a sunset in the forest, branches, sunlight, humidity in a wall! Anything goes if you have the right light and know how to interpret it.

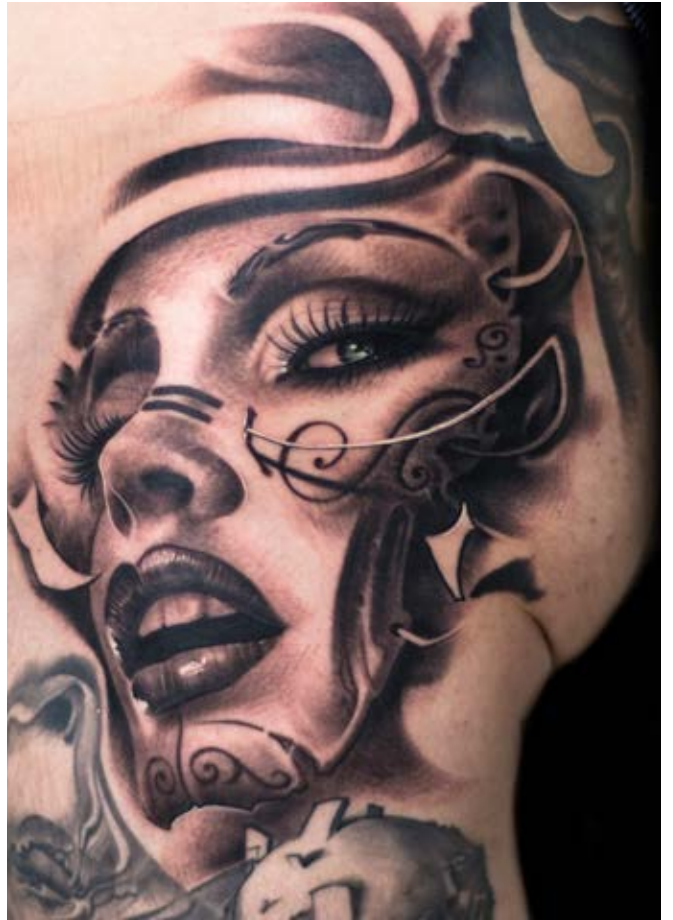
Even when your approach is dark imagery, it appeals to the general

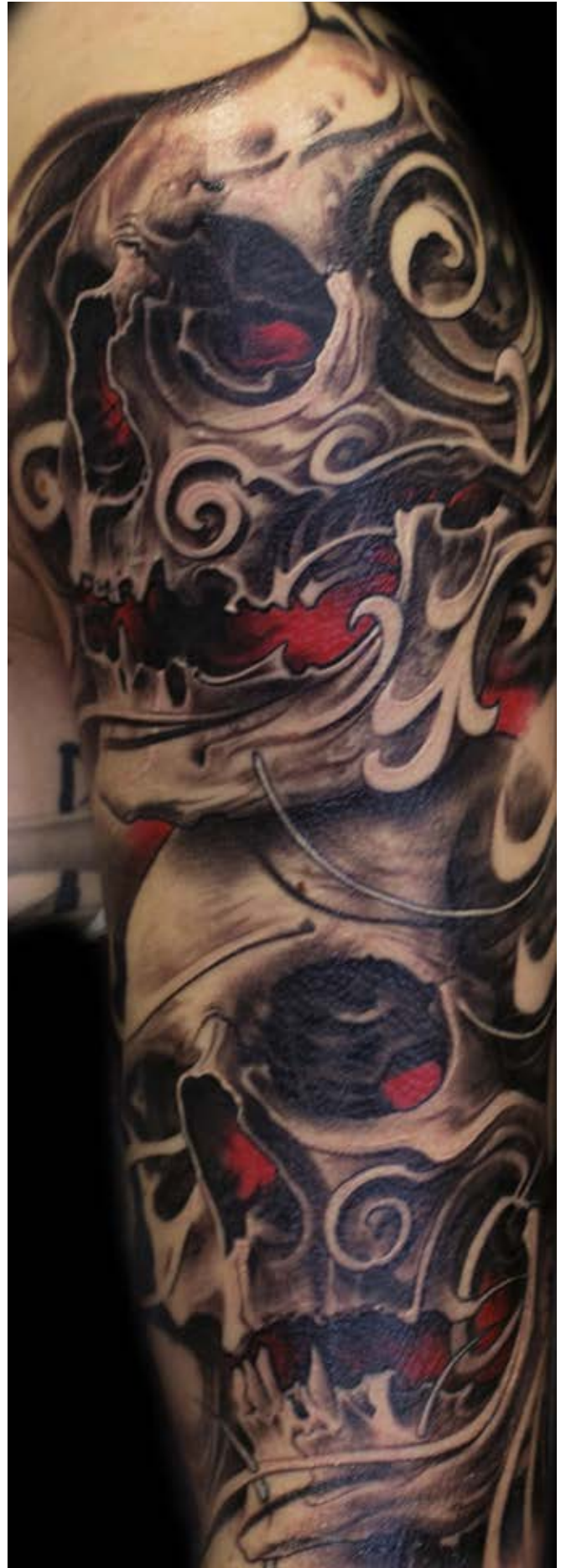
public. How did you come to this style?

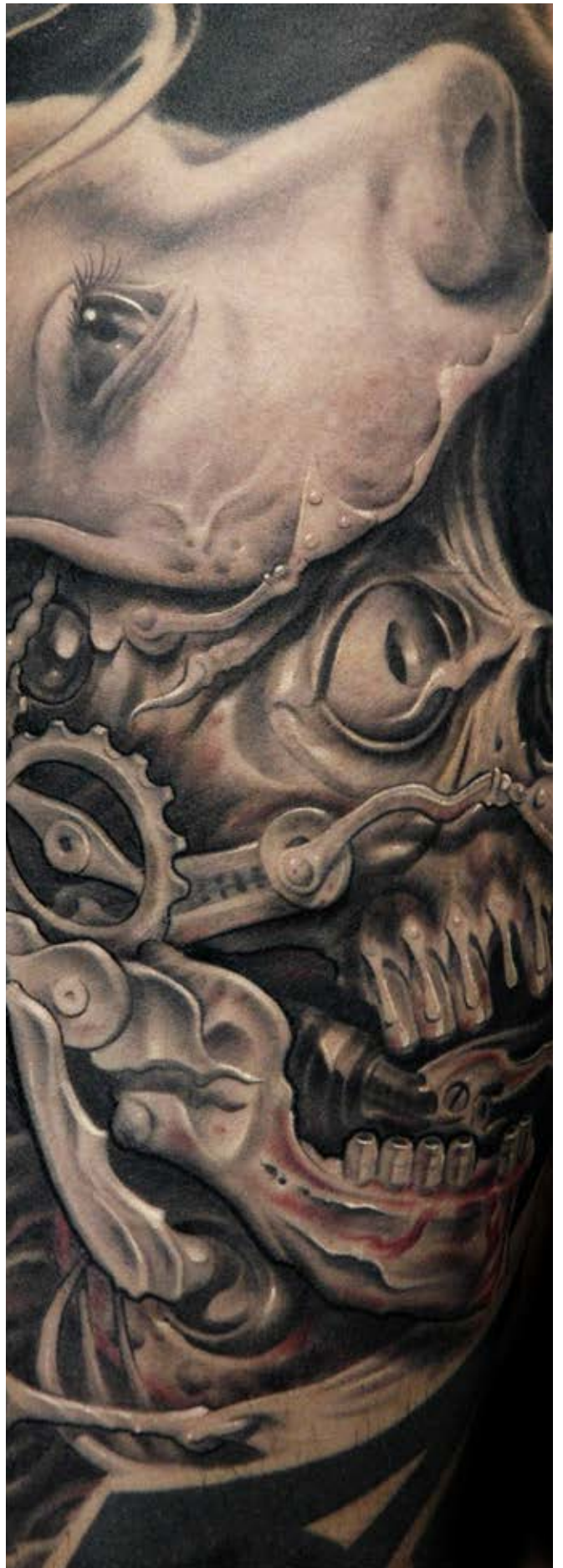
I always try to find a balance; I used to draw and to tattoo darker things—skulls, demons, devils, etc.—'til I got bored. To me that was very boring, to see a mass of demons in gray on a sleeve. Then I started to apply the "contrast" key and discovered that those dark and evil skulls were missing something soft. I began to combine it with female faces, and add a little color, flow, harmony, etc. Since having too much gray in large tattoos was looking very heavy, I started to put in some red and warm colors.

What goes through your mind when you are about to create a new piece? How do you determine how one thing flows well with the other? Composition for me is first; the harmony in the body is everything. Maybe that's why I feel better tattooing bigger things that cover large parts of the body. I find it more difficult to do small tattoos than to do an entire rib! Free-hand is what helps me integrate the design into the body, taking advantage of muscles' ways; but when I make things symmetrical or clock gears I need to make a stencil. For me the most difficult and stressful part is getting started. The first hour is crazy. Then, when it takes shape, I feel more relaxed! 🎨













TENEILE NAPOLI

Garage Ink
Shop 9, 40 Browns Plains Road
Browns Plains, QLD, 4118
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garageink@live.com

What year did you start tattooing? I first began drawing in 1998 under the guidance of my mentor, Shane Little, and I did my first tattoo in 2001. But through life, love, and family it truly started whole-heartedly in September of 2005.

How did you get into tattooing? My friend and mentor, Shane Little. Once upon a time, my year 10 teacher, Mr. Henry, said, "There is a girl at school that has tattoos similar to your drawings—she would love your art." That day at lunch, Sarah [the girl] came over to see my work and said, "You just have to meet Shane." So next lunch I skipped school and went to meet him. I fell in love with his art and vision straightaway. We would draw together and he would show me and tell me so many things, and he still does to this day. I now have his son working with me, and Shane is always popping in and telling us of all the prophets of doom and death. He is the dark wizard.

What was your first shop experience like? Very much old-school. I was the shop slave, did all the artist stencils, draw ups, set up, clean down, shop clean, made all the needles for everyone, dealt with bookings, along with other things. It was certainly the complete opposite of the environment I have now created for my studio.

What brought you to open up Garage Ink? When Shane retired I knew I needed to make a studio with the same dream as his, and that was to create an environment for artists to grow and learn from each other, to come and go as they please, and to create no pressure—just to teach love and show understanding for clients and each other. The clients are number one in our shop. If you don't give respect, how can you have respect, truth, honesty, and just flat-out fun?

Do you have any special training? Well, I could step over the line, but let's keep it G-rated. *[Laughs.]* I have a diploma of visual arts and new media, also in marketing and management and photography. I also know how to nearly touch my toes. Not quite there yet, but it's my dream and I'm going to make it happen!

What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year? Melbourne convention in November 2013, and Hamilton, New Zealand, in February 2014.

How do you describe your style? Not too sure—probably a lot of freehand fantasy with a realistic twist.

What inspires you as an artist? Happiness, love, and expression of one's desires, to create from my heart. And,

of course, all the amazing artists I follow on Instagram. Thank you guys so much! I'm being inspired every day!

What other media do you work in? My main medium in the last two years has been pencil, but recently I've tried oils, and man oh man, am I in love!

What tattoo artists do you admire most? All my team in the studio inspire me every day. I love Fabz, Carlos Torres, Carl Grace, Nikko [Hurtado], Niki Norberg, Moni [Marino], Emily Rose Murray, Jasmin Austin, Dmitry Vision, 613, Victor Portugal, Bob Tyrrell, Paul Booth, Josh Duffy, Dean Lawton, and Daniel Rocha, just to name a few. There are just too many.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? Girls and dark gothic—I love the suggestive curves of a woman's body. I try to capture the love, the pain, sadness, or lost longing in the eyes' emotion when I do faces.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them? That I'm only going to do the best tattoo I can do, and to have trust in me.

What is the tattoo scene like in Australia? Very cool. I have made some amazing, lifelong friends in the industry here in Australia, as well as all over the world. ■









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What year did you start tattooing? Professionally, in 1997, at a shop called Distinctive Ink.

How did you get involved in the industry? My boys where I grew up had tattoos all around me, so it was part of my environment at the young age of 14.

Your online bio states that you started tattooing professionally around age 22, but first started doing it unprofessionally at age 14. What was tattooing like for you at such a young age? It was crazy. I really didn't know what I was doing, but my friends wanted me to tattoo them because I was able to draw fairly well.

What brought you to work in the black-and-gray realism style? Well, that's simple. Growing up in our streets of Los Angeles, CA, that's all you would see is black-and-gray Chicano art. As I grew as an artist I would go to the liquor store, look at tattoo magazines, and specifically look for Freddy Negrete, Jack Rudy, and Paul Booth. I wanted to do ink like them.

You are one of the three artists on Spike TV's tattoo cover-up show, *Tattoo Nightmares*. What brought you to specialize in cover-ups? I did cover-ups [before the show] but not as often as I do now. Then I was asked to do this show on Spike TV. First thing I asked was, "Is this a drama show?" because I'm not into that. Long story short, they said, "no," and I was all in. I figured as a tattoo artist, other artists—especially young ones—look up to that. I would take and accept this challenge of doing cover-ups on this show *Tattoo Nightmares*. But I am no expert by any means, as I believe I just have learned to adapt to my new job as a cover-up artist.

What is your convention circuit like? Oh man, that's my life! I travel a lot for work, mostly supporting my friends' shows on the circuit and helping as much as I can with this new popularity I have gained. I love sharing that with my tattoo family. Let's just say at times I live in hotels and airports and my house is just an expensive storage unit, 'cause my ass is never home!

Who are some of your main artistic inspirations? Wow, that question can be a whole interview on its own, but at the moment I love going to museums around the world, studying other masters, sculptures, buildings. Many things inspire my mind. I have

a few friends that I am very blessed to learn from that are masters in this day and age. Kevin Llewellyn, Michael Hussar, and Shawn Barber influence me heavily as a student in the art of oil painting.

You are also a graffiti artist. How does graffiti relate to tattooing, and vice versa? As a graffiti artist, I bring my style into certain designs as a tattoo artist; and as a tattoo artist, I bring my fine-line photo-realism into my graff work, making it look a lot more realistic and less stylized.

What other mediums do you work in? Oils, acrylics, airbrush, watercolor. If you can draw with it I can do art with it. *[Laughs.]* I like to write on walls with crayons, and painting by number is super fun!

What advice do you have for someone before they get tattooed? First, look up the artist. Any artist with any good work will have some social media stuff out there. Look to see if their work is consistent. Also, visit the artist before making your decision. See if you both feel each other on the tattoo idea you are bringing to him. This will help to make sure the artist's style matches your vision for your tattoo. Also, make sure the artist works in a clean, well-known shop. Your health is very important. At all times make sure they have the proper education on blood-borne pathogen control.

What artists have tattooed you? Oh man, myself. *[Laughs.]* Also, Bob Tyrrell, Corey Miller, Tony Olivas, Carlos Torres, Alan Padilla, Tommy Montoya, Mr Flaks, and Ska. Still not done with my back piece being done by my brother Mike Demasi, and my ribs are going to be Josh Duffy. They're all like family to me and I'm honored to have ink by all of them.

How has the reputation of tattooing changed since you've been in the industry? I believe it's changed in a positive way. Artists are more open-minded. Artists work with each other, instead of like the old days, when artists could not even tell each other what needles they would use. So it's nice to see this change and so many new styles of tattoo art being born. This is also due to the huge number of tattoo artists coming from art backgrounds in fine art.

What brought you to work at Art Junkies? My best friend, Mario Rosena, and my brother Mike Demasi—they have been

big influences on me as a person and artist. Being around them is always a positive thing; I love them both, as they have helped me become a better man and artist. And not to mention, our crew is sick. Tim McEvoy, Brent Olson, Dagger Face, and Ryan Mullins be killing it. One of our newest to the family, Scott, has grown to be a great artist as well. Pretty amazing artists have come from this shop, like Nikko Hurtado, Mike DeVries, Dark Horse, (a.k.a. Aric Taylor) and so many others have blessed the inside walls of Art Junkies.

Are there any up-and-coming artists that the industry should look out for? Tim McEvoy, Ryan Mullins, Brent Olson, and Rich Pineda. There are so many young, great artists; it's insane. I love it.

We've heard you really like to fish. How did you get into that? I got into it from a friend of the family who took me fishing and would take us to the park as kids. We didn't have a father, and this man would take us and show us amazing things about the outdoors. Mr. Studdel was a great friend to us and served this country in WWII. He has everything to do with my love for fishing—and fishing, oh man, fishing is my way to escape from the everyday hustle. I love being in the ocean or in the river all alone. It seems so surreal that these places exist in this crazy world. It's my way of rebooting my mind for my clients and giving them my 100 percent of drawing ability.

If you could tattoo anyone with any design, who would it be and of what design? My mother, who passed away when I was 19. I would tattoo some pencils and brushes on her with a little note that says, "Thank you for giving me the gift of life. Love, your son Big Gus." I miss her more than you could imagine, but at least she taught me to be good, to learn from my mistakes, and to draw to clear my mind of all that is bothering me at the moment, which I will pass on to my daughter, Breezy!

Anything you would like to add? Thank you for this opportunity to show those kids who struggle and draw every day that they can feel like they belong somewhere on this planet. Your art will always take you to where you truly want to be. Always believe in yourself. Dreams do come true—you just have to work hard and commit to the art within yourself. 🎨













LEATHERNECKS TATTOO

BROOKLYN NY

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RON RUSSO

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What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing around 13 years ago.

You do excellent work in both color and black-and-gray tattooing styles. When you first started working professionally in the tattoo world, which style was more interesting to you? Black-and-gray was definitely my starting point. I watched my mentor do a large amount of black-and-gray, so of course I thought it was cool. It just seemed easier at the time than doing color tattoos, but now that I attempt to do them both correctly I realize that they are two different worlds, and you can't look at one as being easier than the other. This learning process came with becoming a better artist and understanding value. I did end up becoming a color tattooer and I love the challenge of using color, but I love to do black-and-gray just as much. I'll do black-and-gray when I think the piece calls for it. I try to do what's best and what will make the best tattoo for that person.

Another thing that we love and respect about your work is that there is always what we'd label a "Ron Russo trait." You definitely have a style of your own. For many tattoo artists, finding that style could be the hardest part of their career. So how did you find yourself, both in your style and in your technical approach? Well, I'm not too sure how

it happened. Maybe through trial and error and watching others I admire work. I have the opportunity to work around some badass artists, and talking tattoos is one of my favorite topics. My technical approach is my main focus, maybe even more than the style thing. My main goal is to saturate every tattoo that I do to the fullest. I like to use as many darks as possible. I'm also very picky with keeping my work super clean.

As a tattoo artist do you feel that there is more you would like to learn or apply directly to your tattoo technical approach? I'll go to my grave not learning as much as I really want when it comes to art or tattooing. Every year I try to set goals that will improve my work. I go back and look at a lot of my work and see what I really don't like about it and work from there. I'm always after new ideas, things that others aren't doing with their work. For my technical approach, I'd really like to work on placements and flow with the body.

What is your favorite medium to work with besides tattooing? I paint and draw any chance I get, but that's not enough. If I have a cancellation I go right to working on a painting. I like to paint with oil the best but I enjoy painting large-scale acrylic paintings, not to be perfect but more for the mental exercise of it. Lately I've also

been drawing with pencils, which is a whole new world for me.

You also do a lot of fund-raising and giving back to the community. You even had a painting workshop for kids. What sort of additional activities are you involved with these days? I did a thing for a while on Saturday mornings painting with a bunch of kids. It's really cool to watch them get into the whole painting thing and listen to their ideas. I had them all do a huge painting collaboration with acrylics. Like 10 kids on this huge canvas going crazy! Most were painting skulls and fire. *[Laughs.]* Most of the fund-raising and charity you see that comes out of my shop are done by my wife, Geena. She just did this huge thing on Christmas where she wrapped 300 gifts for the whole Wilkes-Barre Head Start.

We really enjoy anything that comes from the tattoo community, whether it be art shows, books, T-shirts—whatever! Are there any upcoming projects you are working on at the moment that we can start getting excited about? I'm actually in the process of working on a book with Jinxi and her husband, Steve. It's a limited horror book that'll be out in a few months. The book is called *Diabolico*. It features the best horror-related tattoo artists out there, such as Paul Booth, Paul Acker, Tommy Lee [Wendtner], Dan Henk, and many more. 📖













IVANA BELAKOVA

Outer Limits Tattoo
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What year did you start tattooing? 2000.

How did you get into tattooing? My friend offered me a job in her new shop that she was planning to open up. I had no idea what I wanted to do for work so I decided to go for it. I didn't know how to tattoo so I started to practice at home on my brother, then eventually other family and friends. After the first piece I did, I was hooked! It was definitely "love at first sight," and I love it more every day. I am very grateful!

What brought you to work at Outer Limits Tattoo? I met Kari Barba, the shop owner, many years ago at a tattoo convention in London. Later on, I did a guest spot in her shop and we had an amazing connection right away. Above all of this, I liked her shop. It naturally came that now, after a few years, I would end up happily working side by side with Kari. There are no politics in our shop; every artist is special and brings something different to the table. We all get along great, and a positive work environment is very important to me.

What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year? Recently I just attended TattooLaPalooza in Miami. I am going to attend Le Mondial du Tatouage in Paris, Tattoo Ink Explosion in Ger-

many, and the International London Tattoo Convention. I am sure I will be working at a few more; so far I have confirmed the ones above.

How would you describe your tattoo style? I would say that I do funky color. I enjoy doing "modern," funky-looking designs, a marriage of street art and graphic art with a peppering of realism at the same time. My main focus is to be able to get into my client's mind and try to connect with their feeling. My tattoos are fusion. It's my client's energy and my expression of something.

What drew you to work with such bold, bright colors? It was a natural process for me. For many years I did only black-and-gray tattoos, but later on I started to be attracted to color more and more. I tried it a few times and I noticed I had more fun with it. I liked the fact I could kind of play! I liked to blend colors together and create all different effects. To be very honest, I enjoy doing both, whether it's full-blown color or a black-and-gray tattoo. The most important thing to me is the actual idea or concept.

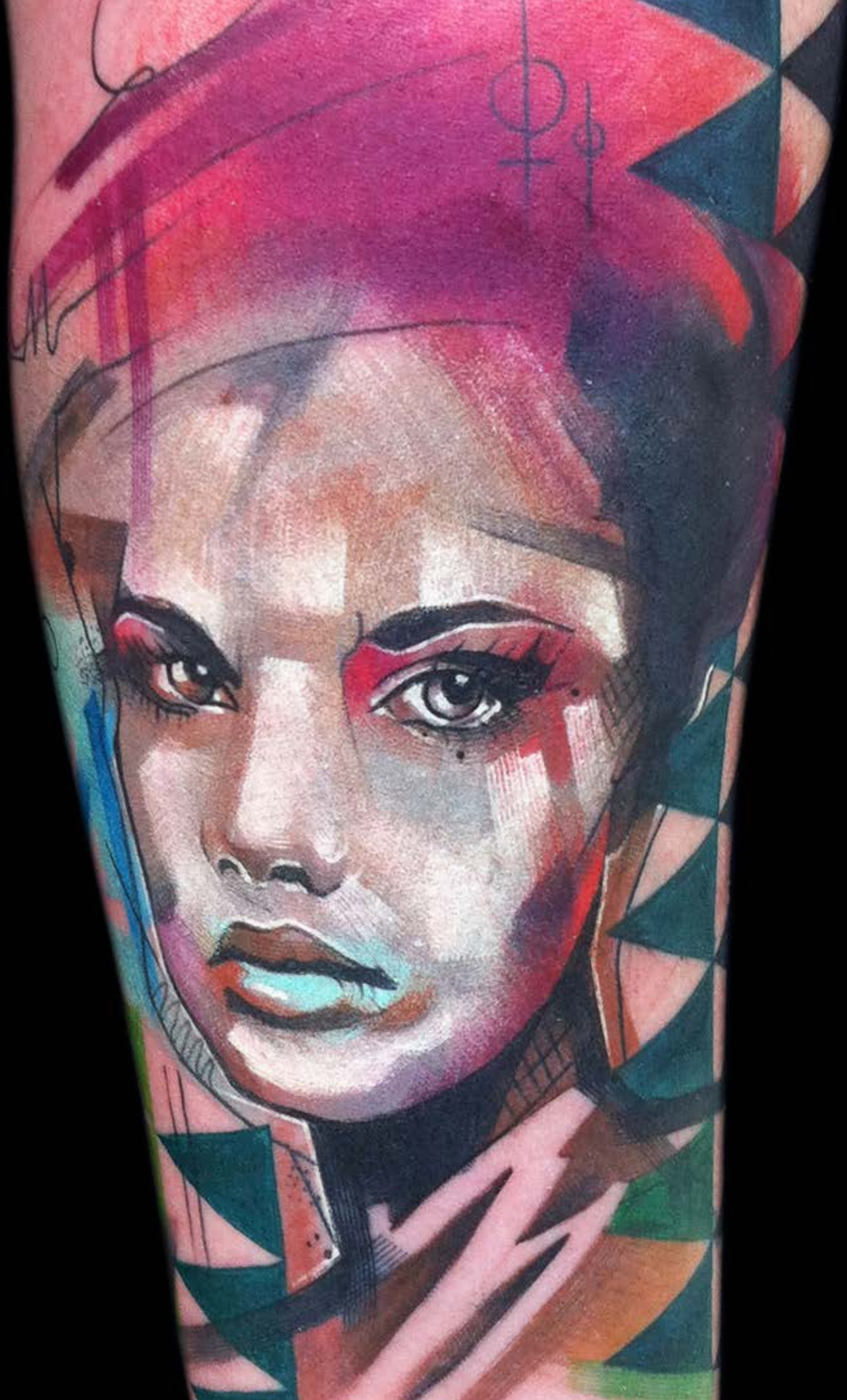
What inspires you as an artist? I am inspired by nature, by what would be considered ordinary or everyday things around me—fashion, literature, music, and just about everything that I am surrounded with.

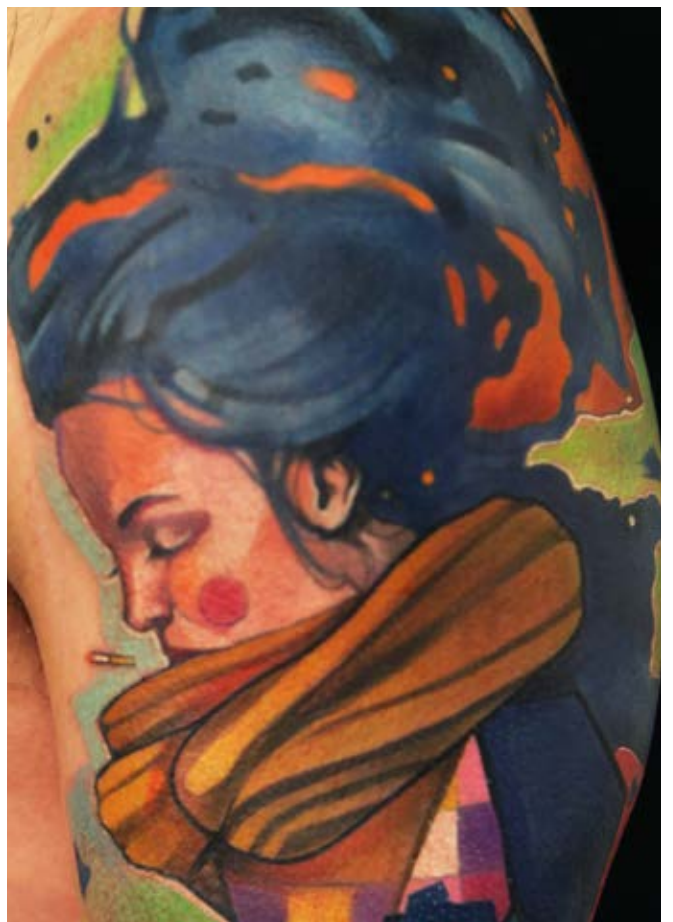
What other mediums do you work in? I draw, and I enjoy photography very much. Those are definitely additional creative outlets for me.

You recently released the book *Narcissistic Rockstar*. What was the mindset behind the book? It's all about me! About a year ago, I published *Narcissistic Rockstar*. It's a 120-page, full-color volume loaded with over 100 photos of my tattoos and illustrations, and some personal writings. The book is basically a summary of my work, thoughts, and lifestyle. I put a lot of myself in the book and I hope people who do not follow my work will also enjoy it.

What kind of tattoos do you most look forward to doing? I really enjoy doing original designs in which I have plenty of freedom, no boundaries, and no rules or restrictions, and can do whatever I please. I also enjoy doing nature-inspired pieces, like animals or flowers for sure. Most recently, I've loved doing abstract, watercolor-type tattoos.

Is there a particular tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? Huge, heavy blackwork! Not necessarily any design in particular, but I would love to do a collaboration with other artists. It's not about what we create but the magic in the collaboration itself. ■











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REMBER ORELLANA

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What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in August of 2007. Although I still consider myself new in the tattooing industry, I feel very fortunate to be where I am today.

How did you initially get into tattooing? I've always loved to draw. I used to draw pictures in art class at school and my friends would suggest that I get into tattooing. One day I put together a homemade machine and tattooed five or six of my friends in my garage, my first tattoo being an eyeball with wings. In 2007 I met a friend who had already been tattooing for four or five years, Angel Ramirez. Angel was the first person to introduce me to real tattoo equipment. I still had to figure out on my own how to put a machine together, what kind of needles to use, what kind of ink to buy, etc. I had no apprenticeship. Although I knew I always had fun when I did a tattoo, I had no idea at that time that this would later be my career. After about a year and a half of tattooing, I got a job at a shop in Dallas at Lucky's Tattoo; that is where I met Robin Carpio. Robin had an excellent technique, and his talent stood higher above anyone I knew at that time. He was a great inspiration for me and had a very competitive attitude. I also credit him with influencing me to go to shows and enter my work in competitions.

You are originally from Guatemala. What is the tattoo scene like there?

The tattoo scene in Guatemala is very different from what it is in the United States. In Guatemala, they don't have the advantages that we have here as far as being able to have such easy access to getting supplies, equipment, updated technology, and social media. In Guatemala these things are very limited and hard to come by.

What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year? Every year I try to attend Paradise Tattoo Gathering, Ink-N-Iron, Hell City, United Ink NY, and Motor City, because I believe these are some of the best being held in the United States. I'm hoping next year to be able to travel more and attend some conventions worldwide.

How would you describe your tattoo style? I would describe my style as surrealistic/gothic. It involves a lot of realism, but I incorporate different elements such as gothic architecture. I work very hard to try and keep my style original but evolving so that my viewers are always seeing new things. Although my style is getting more defined, I've been working on introducing more elements to make my work more elaborate. I enjoy using a very delicate face while incorporating a gothic/medieval

style of art to give each piece I do a unique look.

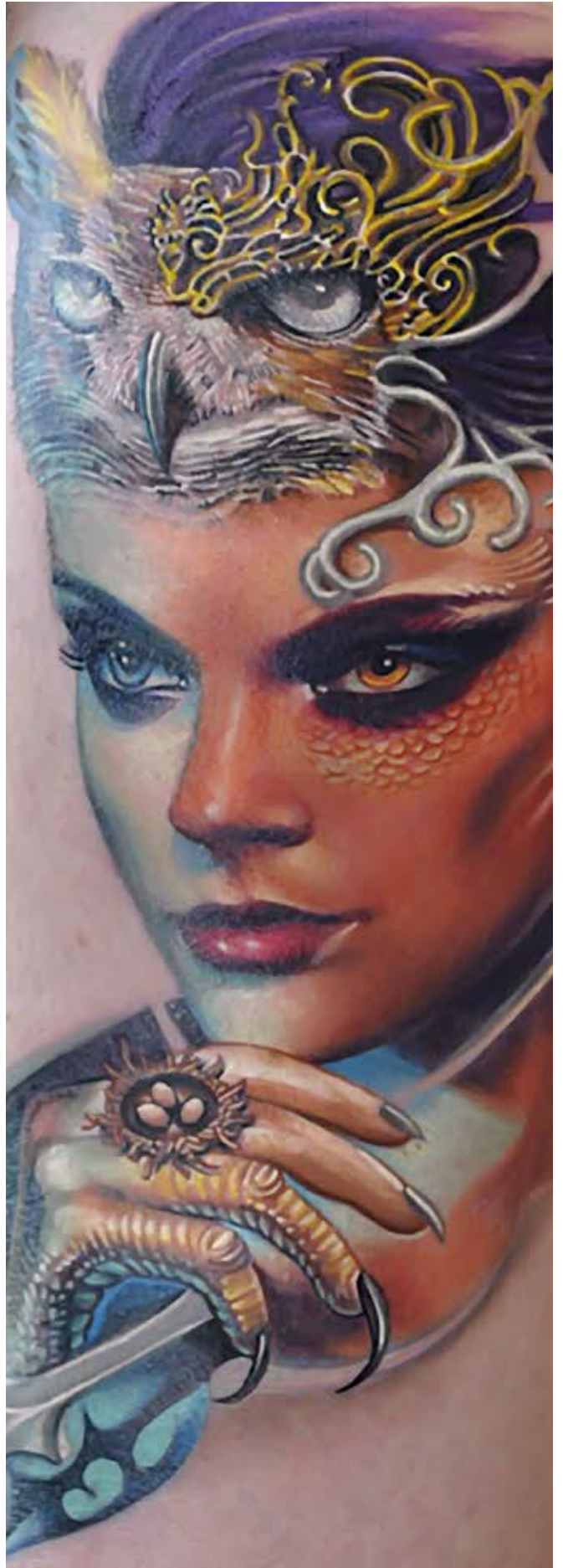
What sets you apart from other artists? One thing that continues to keep me growing as an artist is that every time I finish a tattoo, it doesn't matter how many times I've gone back to add just one more detail to it, I'm never fully satisfied that I've created the perfect tattoo.

What brought you to work at Rebel Muse? I really liked the artistic atmosphere at Rebel Muse. I always like to surround myself with other artists who are striving to improve, and that is what Rebel Muse offers. However, I am currently in the process of opening my own shop in the Dallas area.

What other mediums do you work with? I enjoy working with chalk, oil, and pastels. Because my free time has become so limited, pastels tend to work best for me; they don't require much setup time.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? I admire different artists for their different artistic qualities. Some artists have an outstanding technique, like Dmitriy Samohin, Bob Tyrrell, and Nikko Hurtado, while other artists, like Victor Portugal, Carlos Torres, and Nick Baxter, have a very unique style. I also am very inspired from a lot of upcoming artists. ■









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What year did you start tattooing?

I started tattooing at 19. I had just returned to Barcelona after moving to a very small town where I started with graffiti. In Barcelona I started drawing school and decided to get a tattoo by Rafa from Ronin Tattoo. After getting a bit more confidence, I told him that I would like to learn to tattoo. He agreed to help me. Then I went back to my town and tattooed my friends. When I had more practice I started tattooing more often in Barcelona. It was really hard at first because I did not know people in the tattoo world, but I was always very consistent and I never thought about quitting.

Although you have a new school style, your work is very clean, and it's also nicely saturated. It often incorporates textures and creates good depth, and the way you use the color is amazing and soft. How do you manage to find ways to make your ideas transfer to your work?

I always try to play with several styles. With new school, traditional, Oriental, and realism, I merged resources and the applications of each technique into one. Whenever I draw up a design for a tattoo I first look for fluidity and a dynamic in line with the body. The same idea does not have the same composition for a leg as it does for an arm. Each part has its composition, and then I look for a more aggressive, sweeter, or crazier style. Then I add illustration

and narrative techniques, which allow a clear reading of the drawing and personalization according to the customer, all with a clear and worked application to last for years.

In addition to caricature, your work in realism and portraits is very good. You use great colors that resemble actual skin tones. You get to work in these styles that are so different from new school—so which do you find more difficult?

The truth is that realism relaxes me. It also requires more time because I have to be copying. Compared to new school, in which I have the flexibility to be more expressive and looser as I decide how to do it. I do not start from any reference, I find it more comfortable and faster. Regarding the difficulty, I think realism is more difficult, as just a line or a shorter color spot in the wrong place can change everything and make a beautiful girl look like a man. With new school, you can change a teddy bear to a fat teddy bear, and that helps. *[Laughs.]* So it is easier since I will decide where the lines and colors go and what colors to use. Obviously, the style that I find most amusing is new school; I can do crazy and funny stories as seen in my tattoos that tell stories very visually.

Where do you find your muse, your inspiration? Inspiration? I love Pixar animation movies; they do an amaz-

ing job! I am also inspired by comic artists, and certainly many tattoo artists inspire me.

What artists inside and outside tattooing have inspired or influenced you?

First Rafa, who taught me. Once I acquired more culture, the likes of Shige, Jeff Gogue, and friends like Alan Padilla, Fonzy, and Riccardo Cassese impressed me. Outside of the tattoo world, artists like Caravaggio, Goya, and many others of that time fascinate me, and my favorite contemporary and close friend of many years, Raul Moreno (Xusco).

You are an artist with a very full schedule. Which conventions do you attend regularly? Normally I attend conventions around Europe, like Rome, Barcelona, Naples, Amsterdam, Milan, Florence, Nantes, Brussels, and some others. Last year, 2013, I attended the London Convention for the first time. It's the best yet! I plan to visit friends in Los Angeles in March 2014. I guess I'll be there a month and I'm thinking of going back again for summer—I cannot wait!

When you are not tattooing, how do you like to spend your time? When I have free time, of which I have very little, I try to rest if I'm not painting—and attempt, I repeat, *attempt* to do a bit of sport, and that does take guts. *[Laughs.]* ■













KARL BERRINGER

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What year did you start tattooing?

I was probably 13 or so when I found out about the hand poke method of tattooing, so I started doing those on my friends. I later graduated to a homemade. In hindsight, I realize I was doing everything wrong, but at the time, being young and uneducated about it, I thought it was great. Fast-forward to 1998, Justin Wright was tattooing the right way in a shop. The shop he was at needed another artist, so he suggested me and the rest is history.

How would you describe your style? I

guess it might fall into the category of color realism. Working so many years in a walk-in street shop made me a lot more versatile than if I'd started off in a custom shop, because you never knew what was going to walk in the door. On a typical day I might have done some old Cherry Creek flash followed by lettering and a custom drawn piece. As much as it annoyed me at the time, I think it gave me a strong technical foundation and the ability to be versatile. Today my favorite type of tattoos to do would definitely be horror-themed, followed by any type of color realism.

I think your black-and-gray work is pretty good. But I do not see many black-and-gray tattoos coming from you. Is there a reason for that? I really like doing black-and-gray work but most people don't ask for that from me. It's like a vicious circle. They don't see me

doing it so they don't ask me to do it. Overall, I think color tattoos are more difficult simply for the fact that you have to think more about your color choices and how they work with each other.

Do you practice any other medium besides tattoo art? I do draw and paint as well. I recently started oil painting and it's been very humbling. It definitely seems to require a different way of thinking. I'm used to tattooing, which to me is like painting with paint that dries immediately, and the super long drying times of oils are tough for me to get used to. I've painted with acrylics in the past and they seemed a little easier for me to use.

Whenever you are searching for a new idea, where do you find inspiration?

There's inspiration to be found everywhere if you can slow down and see it. I'm always so busy rushing to get here or there that I miss out on things. There are so many artists out there that inspire me to push harder through their work ethics as well as their skills, like Cecil Porter, Dave Tevenal, and Victor Chil.

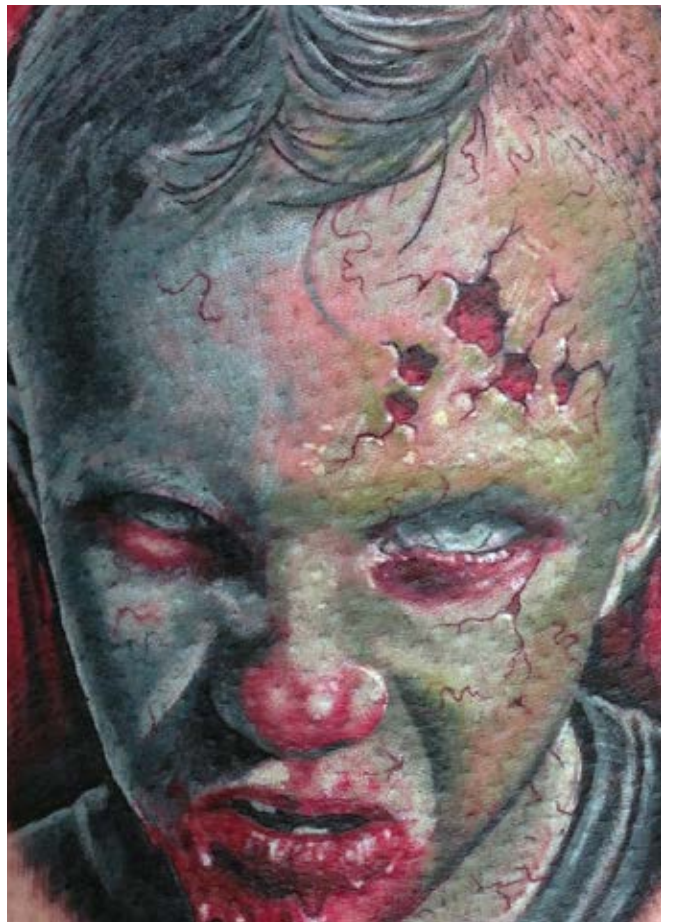
Do you have any hobbies or any other talents? Well, when I'm not working or taking care of my son, Evan, I love motorcycles. I recently redid mine and love going out riding when it's warm enough, but being in northeast Ohio, that's not very much. I've always been mechanically inclined and even went

to college for a while with the major of mechanical engineering.

How many conventions do you work? I usually only get to do about three to four shows a year because of my son, but I'd love to do more. They're always a good time. I think my favorites to work at so far have been TattooLaPalooza in Miami and the newer NEPA Tattoo Arts Fest that Ron Russo started putting together. Hell City is always great, but I still haven't worked at one. 📍













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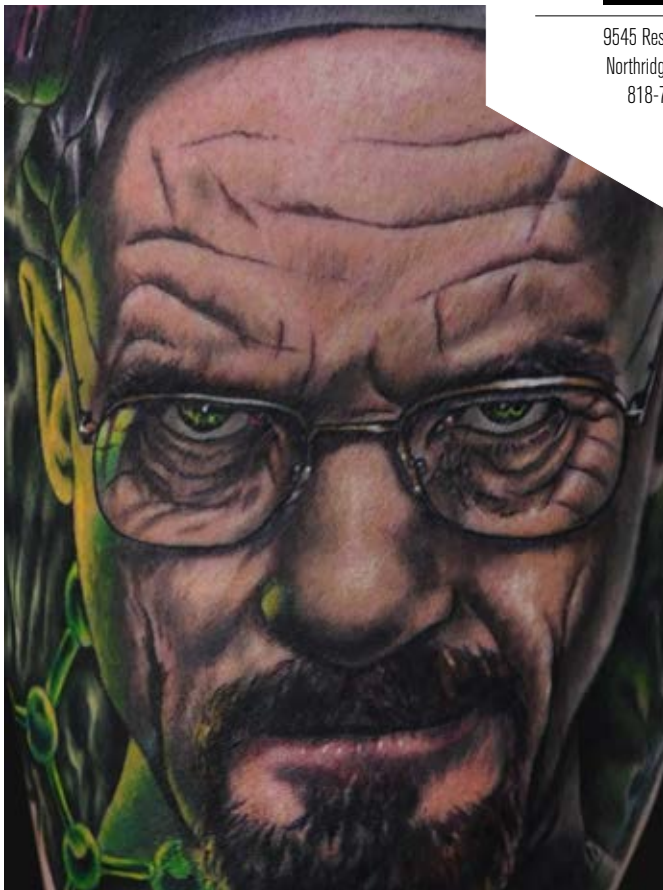
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Shop artists (clockwise starting with top right): Marc Durrant, Katelyn Crane, Jamie Lee Parker, Mike DeVries, Daniel Chashoudian, and Spencer Caligiuri (apprentice).

What sets MD Tattoo Studio apart from the average tattoo shop?

DeVries and Crane: We here at MD always pride ourselves on being a completely custom shop. We have some flash on our walls, but we use it more for decoration and inspiration rather than reproducing any of the flash designs. We like the one-on-one contact with our clients, including them in the planning of their tattoo, and making sure they get something that they not only are proud to wear but is accurately interpreted from the idea that they came to us with in their heads. It takes a lot of time and a lot of effort, and sometimes the preparation takes longer than the actual tattoo, so we all usually only tattoo once or twice a day. All our artists here specialize in a wide range of styles so we can help out anyone who walks through the door. We also think one thing that sets us apart is our customer service and the overall environment at the shop. We want everyone who gets tattooed here to feel very comfortable!

What is the overall environment of the shop?

DeVries and Crane: Our tattoo shop was modeled with the intention of having it resemble an art studio. All of our art is framed and displays the work of our artists, past employed artists, our friends and influences. It's a small shop in square footage, so all of us work within earshot of each other, which usually leads to all of us engaging in one main shop conversation. All of us work mainly with rotaries, which makes it the quietest shop around. We all have different tastes in music, so the music is constantly changing. We are currently all hooked on stand-up comedy so we've been listening to a lot of it. We strive to make [our clients] feel at home with a very friendly

staff that cares!

What inspired you to open MD Tattoo Studio?

DeVries: I think it's a dream for most tattoo artists to one day own a shop to call their own. I look at it as one of those things in life that is an achievement, and to be able to look back on all the previous years of building and say, "Wow, we did it!"—that's a good feeling. We are not stopping now; this is just the start. But let me be very honest: It was a hard road! Anyone can go open a shop and say they did it, but to create something special within that shop, that's the hard part. I'm mostly proud of everyone who works here, and that's what makes this place awesome.

What drew you to want to work at MD Tattoo Studio?

Crane: The personalities that have been involved with the studio have been inviting, relatable, and a joy to be around. Mike invites us to be individuals. He is always pushing us to be the best versions of ourselves and always puts the extra effort in to make sure the shop is well advertised and marketed. It is a relaxed atmosphere and we are able to work at our own pace.

What styles of tattooing can be found at MD Tattoo Studio?

DeVries: All different styles can be found at our shop. Daniel Chashoudian prefers black-and-gray but also likes doing color. Katelyn Crane prefers illustrative color but dabbles in realism; she also loves messing with varying black line weights. Marc Durrant prefers mostly illustrative realism and graphic art both in vivid color and black-and-gray. Jamie Parker likes to do realism but definitely likes to mix it up and do other stuff as well.

Crane: Mike DeVries is known for his realism, but he tends to call his style realistic-ish because he likes to keep his stuff in the realism spectrum but also likes to stray in other directions and kind of tweak and make things up

as he goes.

DeVries: If everyone who did a realistic portrait of Rambo and nailed it identical to the photo, then they will all look the same—and who wants that?

What is it like having a tattoo studio in Northridge, CA?

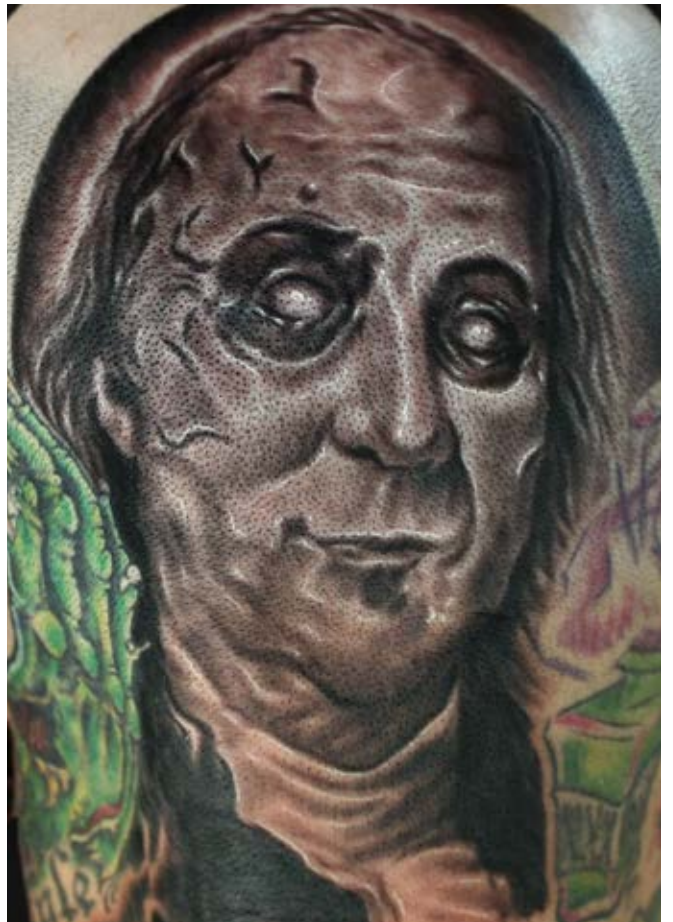
Crane: Having a shop in Northridge definitely has its perks. It's close enough to Los Angeles for us to reap the benefits of all the culture of the city but far enough away to not be in the middle of all the crowded, hectic frustrations that come with a large city. All of the artists live in or are from the valley, so that makes it easy for everyone to get to work, which is convenient for us. We are also located across the street from California State University Northridge, so we have the opportunity to influence younger patrons to go for a higher-quality tattoo and get the young, eager energy in the shop.

What have been some of the best overall experiences you've all had together?

DeVries and Crane: Our shop charity events have been great! Once a year, around the holidays, we tattoo all day and donate the proceeds to a Christmas charity to help people in need. We usually have a good turnout and tattoo our asses off and try to make the most we can for charity. It's special for us; we offer small tattoos at a reasonable price, which combined with the money going to a good place makes for a busy, exciting day! Also, some of our best experiences come from working conventions together. We've had the opportunity to make a lot of memories together, whether it's surrounded by art or sharing our individual hobbies with one another. We've been lucky enough to be able to travel and do what we love, and that's create art! Every trip is an adventure, and we always come back with great stories and experiences—visiting museums, hitting some nightlife, and just enjoying life! Being able to do that with your coworkers and not wanting to kill each other is a great thing. We are all good friends, so anytime we get to do something 🇺🇸









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imagery art. Now when I choose a tattoo artist, it's about how an artist catches my attention with his style, authenticity, or originality, or just his technical approach to the art form. Also, I like it when an artist is a down-to-earth person.

What artists have you gotten work from? Tim Kern, James Kern, Paul Booth, Filip Leu, Robert Hernandez, Toxyc, Bob Tyrrell, Jeff Gogue, Timmy B., Ron Russo, Andy Engel, Victor Portugal, Sean Herman, Boris, Mike DeVries, Juan Torres, Big Meas, Juan Salgado, Freddy Negrete, Isaiah Negrete, Juan R Lopez, Randy Engelhard, Nathan Kostechko, Johan Finné, Marshall Bennett, Tommy Lee Wendtner, Thomas Kynst, Megan Hoogland, Benjamin Archilla, Nikko Hurtado, Camila Rocha, Abey Alvarez, Fibs, Jeremiah Barba, Liorcifer, Jime Litwalk, Jose "Mota" Ortega, Stefano Alcantara, and Myke Chambers are the artists who have added their work to my bodysuit to this date.

What themes or style are your tattoos? As I said, mostly dark imagery, surreal and realism black-and-gray, some with color fusion and even two color pieces now. *[Laughs.]* Also, some lettering on my knuckles and the Yallzee tag on my back. Also, some Japanese-influenced and even a new school style. I would like to add more styles possibly before I run out of room; I really enjoy sitting down and looking at the difference of styles or different approaches between similar styles.

Who are you looking to get work from in the future? Wow, there are many, many great artists around the world for only one body, but some of the ones that come to mind I would like I would say are Ryan Hadley, Josh Duffy, London, Carlos Torres, Scotty Munster, Shige, Horiyoshi III, Klown, Stéphane Chaudesaigues, Jason Butcher, Jose Perez, Daniel Rocha, Ivano Natale, Shane O'Neill, Josh Woods, Dave Tevenal, Steve Soto, Jose Lopez, Paul Acker... In fact, as I just said, there are too many—I might keep adding the ones I am more close with as friends or wait for those unexpected moments when I end up getting tattooed without having that planned. *[Laughs.]*

What was your first tattoo? The [graffiti] Yallzee tag on my back.

When did you start collecting? I started collecting I think about 13 to 14 years ago.

How do you choose a tattoo artist? Well, when I first started collecting, I would always look for those who did dark imagery, and black-and-gray artists. That was back then, because the more I kept falling in love with the art of tattoos and the more passionate I was became, I was already caught up appreciating all of the other styles in the art as much as I liked the dark

**YALL
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COLLECTOR

What is the difference between a collector and the everyday tattoo parlor client?

In my personal opinion, some of the things that make the difference are the commitment to the art form, and the passion and love for the work they have collected. I believe a true collector takes care of that work, and also is a person who looks for specific artists with knowledge and determination. A collector knows what he wants or most likely knows what he does not want. I would also say, it's not a typical customer who just goes into a shop looking to get

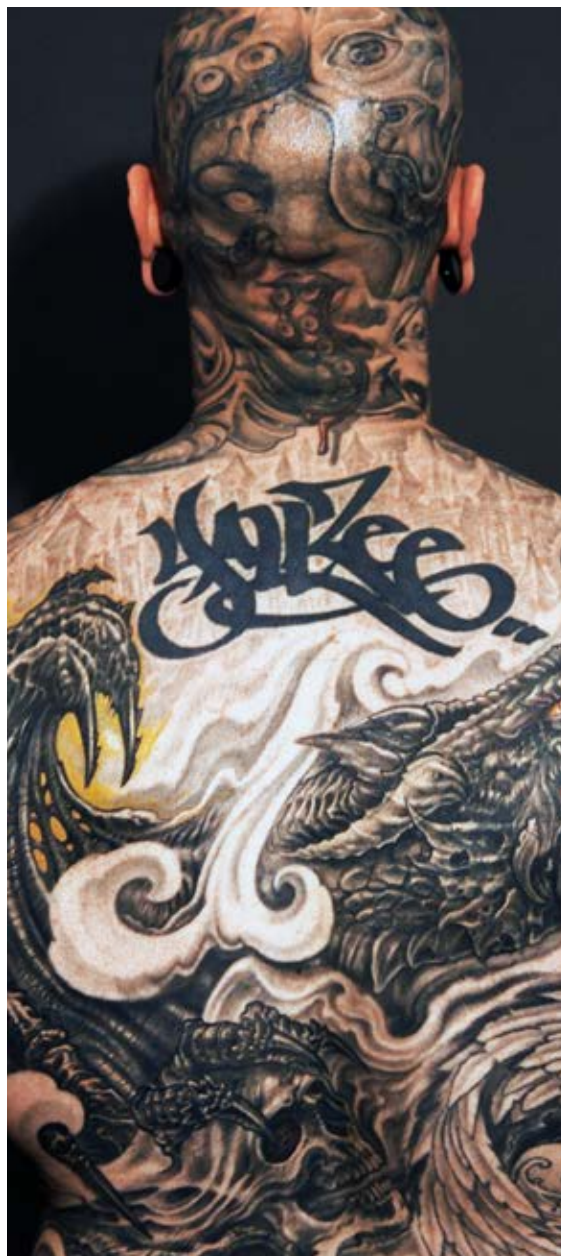
tattooed just to get tattooed, going from shop to shop looking for a cheap price. A collector respects the artists and recognizes other collectors with respect. I am sure of that because of all the amazing collectors I have met along my journey. I would like to add that a collector is not only the one who has many artists on their collection; I have seen many great collectors who only collect from one artist or few artists.

Which is your favorite piece? Where is it located, who did it, and when

did you get it? I can't just choose a favorite piece—even the smallest filler I've gotten is a big contribution to my suit progress, and if I have to choose a piece that would be my whole bodysuit. All of the pieces are a collaboration to my suit and a great experience in my journey.

Any advice for aspiring collectors?

To get involved in the tattoo community, to show love, respect the art form, to be humble, to keep learning, to fall in love with this—that is a beautiful thing. And defend it. 🇺🇸



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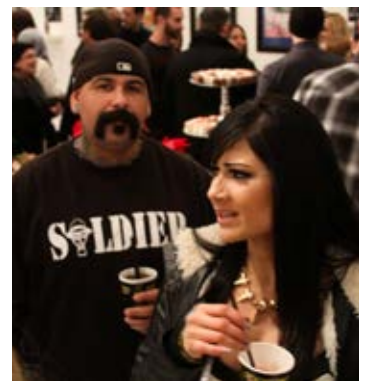
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SULLEN WRAP PARTY

The Inked Up World Tour presented by Rockstar Energy Drink decided to end on a high note with an art-gallery-turned-wrap-party sponsored by INKED and Sullen at the Known Gallery in Los Angeles. A slew of extremely talented and diverse tattoo artists were invited to create their own masterpieces, which would later be printed as deluxe designs on Rockstar Energy Drink cans. Among the artists were Bob Tyrrell, Shawn Barber, Camila Rocha, Robert Hernandez, and Jack Rudy. In the end, though, it was the lovely Austria-based Moni Marino who won the title of Best in Show with her oil painting of a woman. This was truly a successful night and a big moment for collaborations within the tattoo and art world.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TAADOW68K

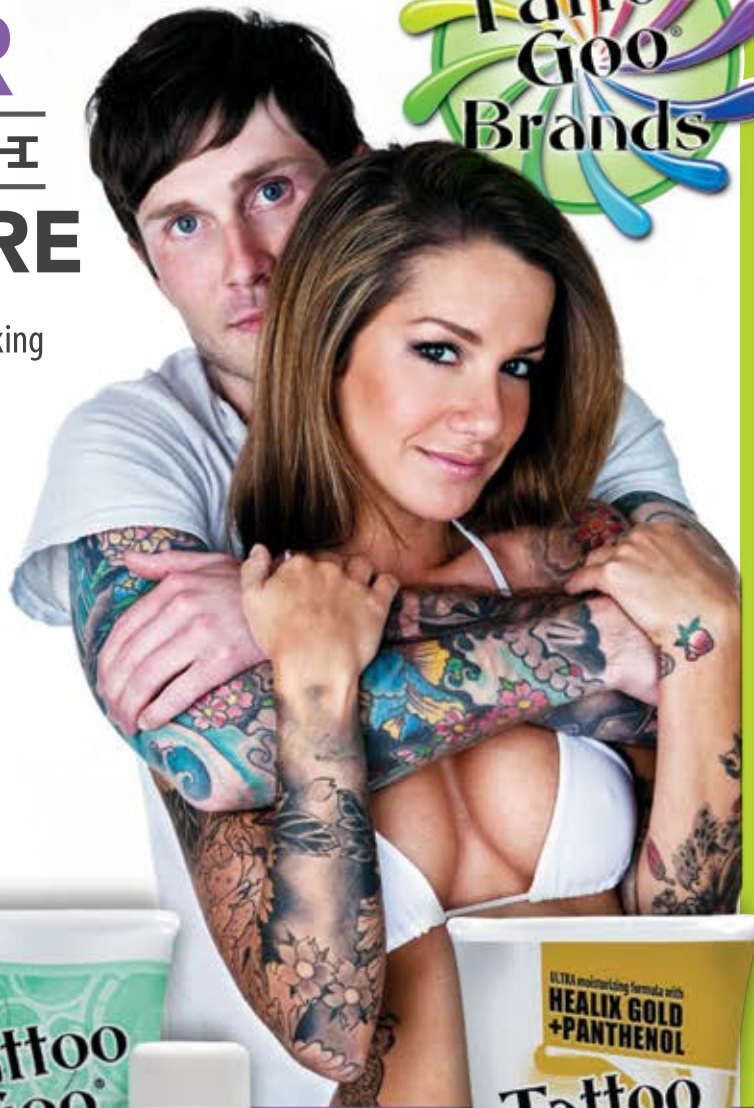
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TAROT UNDER OATH

Every year Paul Booth's Last Rites Gallery hosts several art exhibitions with varying themes and guest curators. The first major show of 2014 is the "Tarot Under Oath" art show curated by Aunia Kahn. A wide selection of artists were each given a specific traditional tarot card and asked to recreate the piece in their preferred medium and style. The images created were both beautiful and macabre. Julie Zarate opted to assemble her own interpretation of the Magician tarot card in a sculptural stance, whereas Jared Joslin went for the more traditional oil on canvas with his interpretation of the Hanged Man. These paintings will be up for the next several weeks, but you will have to wait for the next opening night to enjoy all that the gallery has to offer. Whether it be a private screening of some of your favorite horror films or live art in the form of the best artists in the industry collaborating on a piece the opening night is not to be missed.



PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY LAST RITES GALLERY

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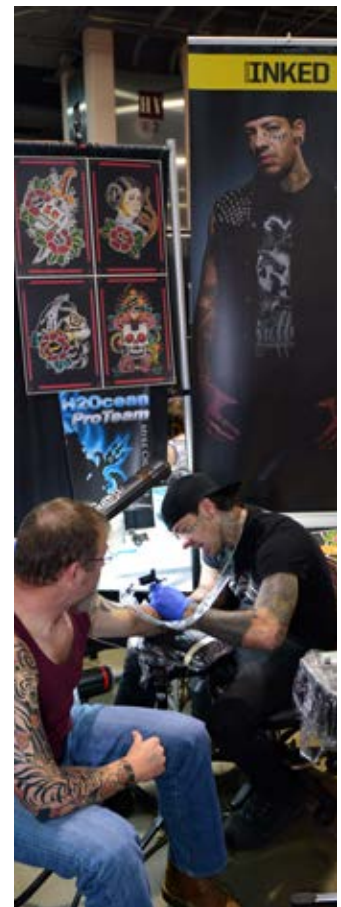
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PHILADELPHIA TATTOO CONVENTION

Every year tattoo artists, entertainers and brands from across the globe come to the Philadelphia Tattoo Arts Convention to do what they do best, and this year was no exception. *Freshly Inked* cover artists Myke Chambers, Stefano Alcantara, and Nikko Hurtado were in attendance, working out of the INKED magazine booth and taking pictures with fans the whole weekend. We also spotted a few other familiar faces in the sea of artists, Megan Massacre, Timmy B, Big Meas, Dave Tevenal, Ish Schuurbiens, Kristel Oreto, Paul Booth, Big Gus, and Jon Mesa. In addition to live tattooing, The Enigma & Serena Rose, Misguided Youth Suspension, Olde City Sideshow, Mario Marquise, and The Inlusionist provided entertainment throughout the weekend. Miss out on the fun? There's always next year!



PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL DEMICHELE



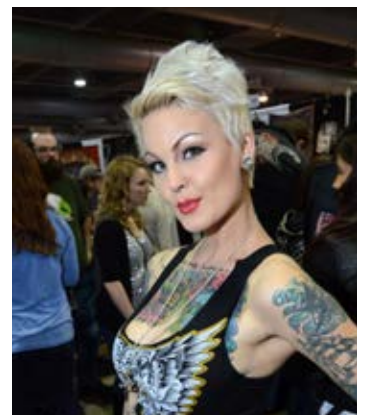
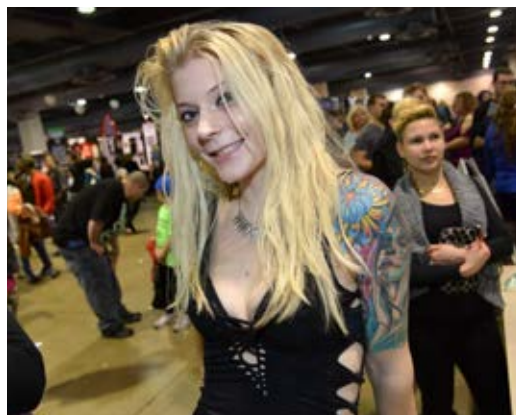

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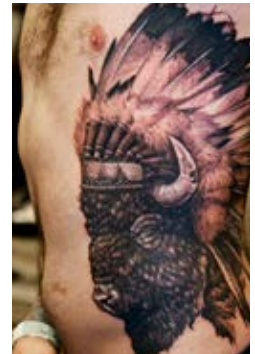


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DC TATTOO EXPO

Gorgeous tattoos and beautiful ballrooms, that's what you get every year at the DC Tattoo Expo held annually in the Arlington Ballroom. In only its fourth year, DC has already proven itself with a selection of top-notch artists. New School artists like Timmy B and lettering masters like Big Meas were tattooing away the whole day. You could even catch *Freshly Inked* cover artist Myke Chambers and *Ink Master* contestants like Kyle Dunbar walking around and showing off their art. And, like most conventions nowadays, the entertainment was up to par and offered something for everybody. Everything from a Miss DC Pin Up Contest to a circus sideshow was on the agenda. With all the incredible artwork being made and displayed, this show gave a whole new definition to ballroom event.



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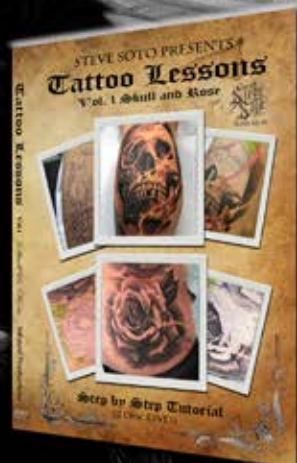


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