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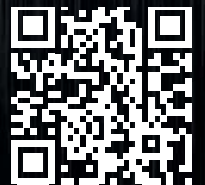
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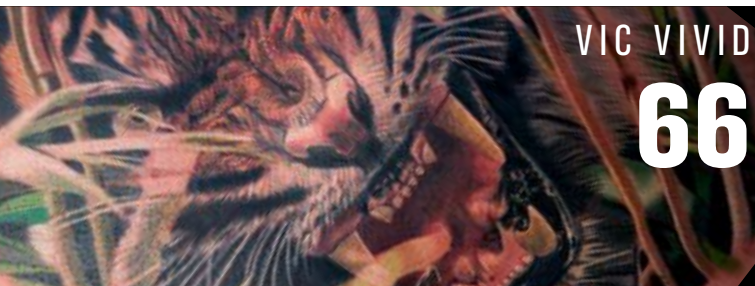
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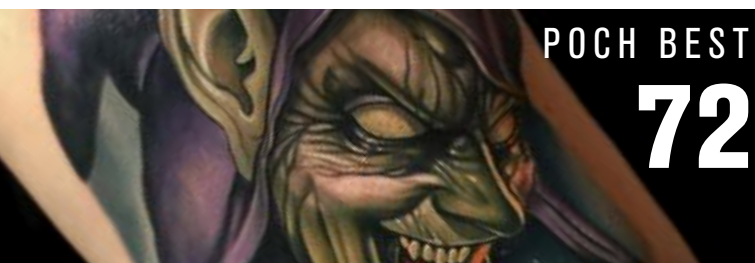
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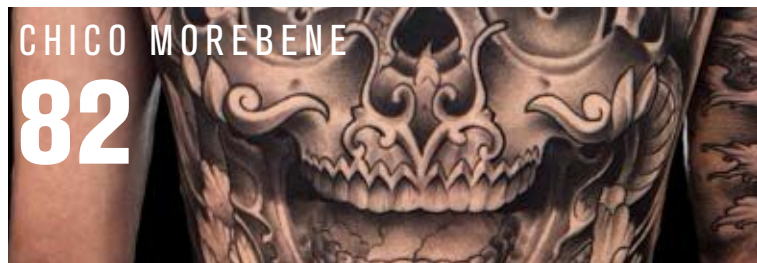
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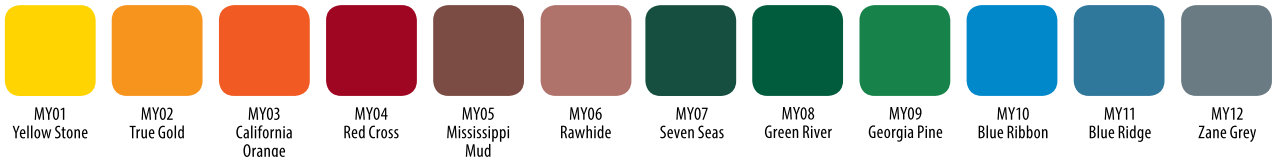
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ANRIJS STRAUME

Bold as Brass Tattoo Company The Basement, Charleston House 12 Rumford PL Liverpool, UK @anrijsstraume

What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in August 2008.

How did you get into tattooing? I was always drawing since I was a kid. My friends and being into alternative music inspired me to start tattooing. I saw all those metal bands with tattoos and thought it looked so cool. I started drawing lots of metal band logos, lead singer tattoos and some artwork that I'd seen on their CD covers. Friends started asking me for some sketch ideas for their tattoos and that's when I thought that it would be great to start tattooing.

What was your first shop experience like? It was great. I managed to find an apprenticeship/helper position in a cool studio in Derby. I slowly started tattooing smaller flash type of work, and some more fun stuff on friends after work.

What brought you to work in Black and Grey? In the beginning black and gray work seemed unreal to me. I started mostly with color work, new school used to be my favorite. The more I was working in a tattoo studio and learning about tattoos, the more I was realizing how black and gray work ages and how serious/classic it looks over the years. Slowly I started drawing more black and gray, and getting some work done on a few friends for experiments on my days off.

As far as we can tell you almost never use color. What sort of tattoos have you made an exception for? And do you relish the idea to be able to use color the very rare times that you do,

or do you not really care for it?

For the past 2 years I've done only black and gray. Some of the times I will add some red for blood effect. If a customer asks for some color work and I feel comfortable I will do it, but I'm happy with doing only black and gray. I really love it.

Tell us a little bit about your signature style, what exactly do you do in order to make a tattoo "Dark Trash Realism?" I came up with it around 2 years ago, while I was learning new techniques and trying new things and somehow mixing a million things made something like that. For most of my work I use photographic images/portrait photography, but I change them by adding some dark/atmospheric horror elements and background, a moon on forehead and initials/scratches/blood. A lot of times some lettering or tools adds some story for the character. I decided to name it "Dark Trash Realism" so there would be a real name.

Some of your pieces, especially those portraits with two sets of eyes, have a surreal feel to them. Where do you draw that inspiration from? I have seen some art work like that and tattoos before that's where I had inspiration for that. I'm trying to make my look like he really has two sets of eyes. I just love some unnatural look. I feel that some people will be disturbed by that look and will not understand why. But there is no why.

Let's be completely honest, some of the tattoos you create are downright horrifying, by design of course. Have you ever given yourself nightmares

with your own art? Or, more pointedly, is it difficult to spend so much time focused on such dark material? Yes, I do feel sometimes it's too much, especially when I'm searching for designs at night. Some days I feel anxious about all those demons I'm making and my choice of going for dark/horror type of art, as it's not the most positive, but I try to calm myself down with some fun movie or some happier music. I don't put any bad energy in my work, it's all made with positive thoughts.

Your wife, Monami Frost, has appeared in Inked in the past where she gushed about some of the work that you have given her. Tell us about what it means to be able to tattoo a loved one. Are those some of your favorite tattoos? How did the two of you conspire to create them? Yes some of them are my favorite tattoos. At first I was too worried to tattoo her, but now it's easier. It's great to tattoo loved ones, it's always fun and good memories. Sometimes I look too much at some tattoos and wish I could change something on them but I'm sure we will have time for that. Everyday we talk a lot about tattoos and some random ideas, and eventually if we are both free and feel we choose what fits/feels the best for that area and day.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I would love to do a Slipknot mask arm sleeve or leg sleeve. I have a few concepts for what I really want to do, but I need to keep it secret for now.









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COREY DIVINE

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What year did you start tattooing?
2007

How did you get into tattooing? I purchased a tattoo kit and started tattooing all of my friends. Soon after, I started working in different tattoo shops.

What was your first shop experience like? Sort of a joke now when I look back at it, horrible mentor.

Did you have a formal apprenticeship? Well he didn't really teach me much, he was a bad artist, and was always on heroin.

What inspires you as an artist? Other artwork, traveling, nature, psychedelics, music, life...

You started out doing a lot of new school and color illustrative tattoos, what drew you to black geometric art? Tastes change. I actually hadn't seen much of this geometric/ mandala dot-

work style until recently. I'm a big fan of "different," I think that's what drew me to this current style

Have you considered trying to mesh the two styles? Yes, absolutely. I think this is what will help me stand out.

You will occasionally use reds and purples in your pieces, how do you decide which pieces you want to use color in? More recently, I have started to suggest everyone into color again. But it's fully up to the client. All black, black with selective color, or full color.

How often do you use color in the geometric pieces? Recently, as often as possible.

You enjoy traveling, where have you found the most inspiration as an artist? Kathmandu, Nepal.

Favorite country or state to visit for work and why? I like traveling around Europe, it's different and new for me.

Where would you like to visit next? Probably Peru and around South America

What other mediums do you work in? Digital and hand sketching.

You're booked through 2017, is there any other way for a new client to get an appointment with you before then? Yes, I travel every other month and accept new clients in other countries.

Why are you choosing to only take on full back or torso projects? I feel like I made a mistake getting smaller tattoos on myself in the past. I wish I would have waited, and stuck to one artist for each limb. I feel like a tattoo should be a full arm, full leg, full torso, full back, or full body suit.

What other mediums do you work in? I love to try different stuff, but mostly digital or pencil and charcoal.









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TONI DONAIRE

Barcelona @tdonaire

What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in 2008.

How did you get into tattooing? I've been drawing all my life, I've always loved everything related to drawing and art in general. At the age of 17 I did my first tattoo and from that day I always thought of becoming a tattoo artist, until finally I was motivated by a friend and decided to go into the tattoo world, where I'm enjoying and learning a lot every day.

What was your first shop experience like? The experience in my first tattoo shop was really good. In fact, I'm still working in the same store today. We have a fun work environment—familiar and yet very professional. We tattooists spend most of our working lives in the studio, a good atmosphere is essential to me.

What conventions have you done recently or are planning to attend this year? I have recently been to the conventions in Barcelona, Brussels and Aarhus. So far I have only made plans to go to the convention of Leeds and Brighton. The truth is that I'm not a big fan of conventions, I prefer to do guest spots.

Can you give us a little bit of a look into what the tattooing scene is like in Barcelona? I think now is a great time to be part of the tattoo scene here in

Barcelona; there are a lot of good artists doing amazing tattoos.

Does the art that you find everywhere around you in a city like Barcelona inspire your tattoo work? Yes, most things we see daily and around us are serving as inspiration, although sometimes we are not aware of it. Also, Barcelona is a cosmopolitan city with lots of artistic expression in its streets which inspires me even more.

You work has elements of American Traditional, but you definitely make it your own. How would you describe your style? I think that my style could be defined as an evolution of the traditional tattoos because of my attempt to keep it clean, solid, and readable as the traditional tattoo but with a slightly more elaborate drawing.

What makes a good tattoo, in your opinion? To me, a good tattoo must be clean, solid and easy to read and try to look as good as the years go past.

In many of your portraits you include a line of text, almost like a tattoo on the person's face. It's sort of become your signature style. What's the motivation behind this? Normally I use this little text to help understand the meaning of the tattoo. Sometimes it is important to represent a word or a feeling that the client wants to express.

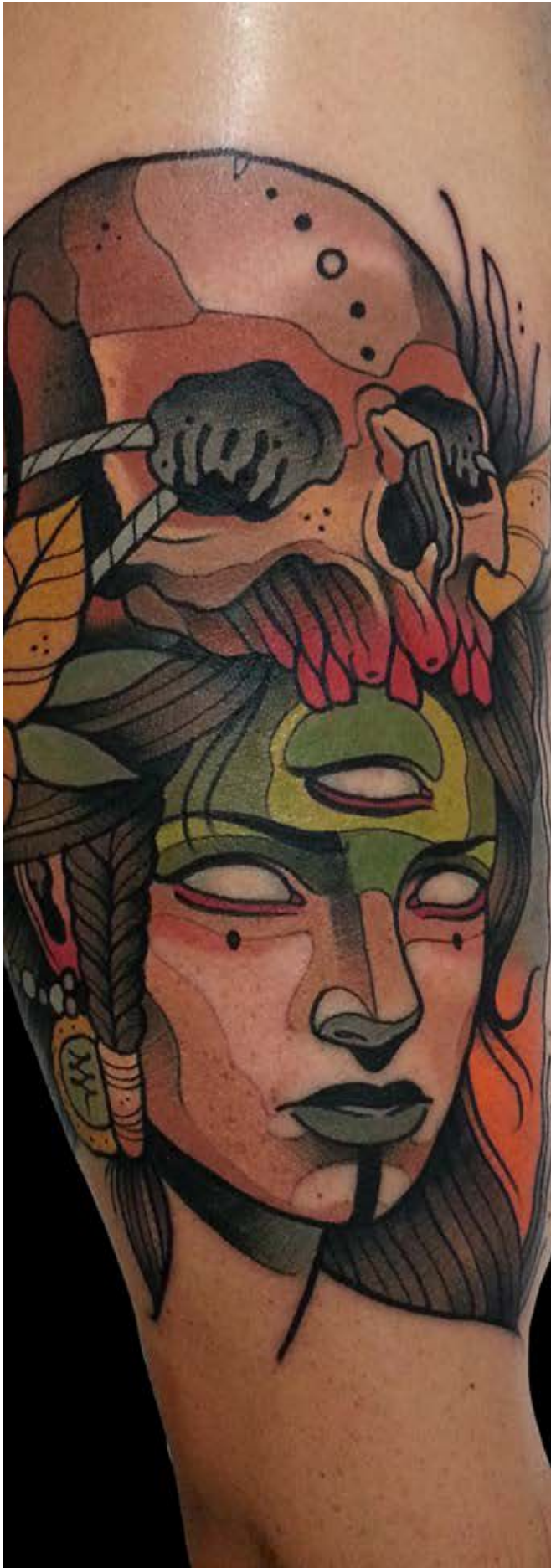
What other mediums do you work in? Before turning to tattooing, I was illustrating books and worked in animation. Unfortunately with tattoo designs and preparation I have practically no time to devote to other things. Although in the near future I would like to tattoo a bit less and to free up time for other projects and illustration.

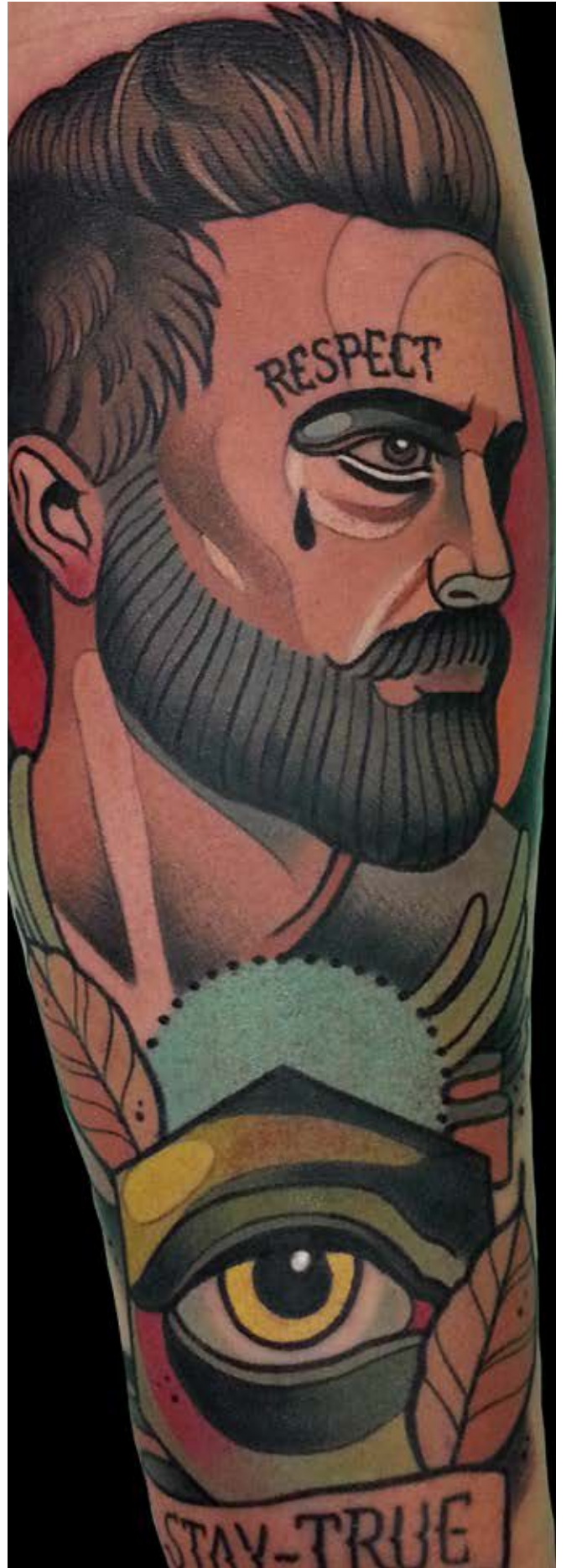
What tattoo artists do you admire most? I really admire so many tattoo artists; I'd need three pages to name them all (laughs). But to name a few I'll say my friends Johnny Domus, Rodrigo Kalaka, Koan, Victor Chil, UF, Jack Goks, Kat Abady to start. Others that I have the pleasure of knowing and admiring include Sam Clark, Lus Lips, Emily Rose, Alex Dorfler and many more.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give? I always recommend that they keep in mind that a tattoo is a wound and must be looked after as such. Fortunately, most of my clients already have tattoos so they already know how to take care of them properly.

Is there a tattoo that you have been dying to do that you haven't had the opportunity to work on yet? Not exactly a specific tattoo. But what I want to do is work on larger projects such as a whole back, an entire torso or a pair of sleeves.









ART BASEL 2015



Jon Mesa
Pro-Team '12

Photo by Polydee



MAXIME BUCHI

SANG BLEU LONDON TATTOO 29b Dalston Lane London e8 3df, UK @mxmttt

What year did you start tattooing? Officially in 2009. I was as an apprentice a couple of years earlier.

How did you get into tattooing? I always liked tattoos as a kid. Then I got into graffiti, and then later graphic design, photography and fine arts. Finally I decided to try tattooing.

Do you have any special training? I apprenticed with Filip Leu.

What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year? I did the Bay Area Tattoo convention. It was really good. I don't usually like to work at conventions since my type of tattooing requires a lot of material that is not really available usually. But I have to say that for the first time of my life I had a blast as a tattooist. As an attendee, I like Paris, London.

How do you describe your style? How did you come to know that this was the type of art you were looking to create? It is a mix of all my influences and interests. Growing up in Switzerland, I was never confronted by sailor or military tattoos, but I did grow up around Gothic cathedrals, Roman ruins, LeCorbusier houses and pharmaceutical industries. I try to bring together these elements at the same time as a real understanding of the tradition of tattooing from Japanese to tribal or black and grey!

Out of curiosity, have you ever used color? I have. My first back piece was a blue and purple tribal tattoo which contained a mandala based on the Metallica logo. 100% true. I was trained old school style—being able to do everything. I love traditional tattooing.

Do you ever feel limited working only in black? I don't limit myself to anything. I just think in forms, textures and shapes rather than nuances.

Can you tell us a little bit about the importance of placement when designing a piece? It is crucial. Placement and size is everything. The same design at a different place and scale is a different tattoo. I apply teachings from Japanese and tribal but also tailoring, jewel design or even armor or architecture and try to apply it to tattooing—as long as it's relevant to push the boundaries. I am not obsessed with creating new designs. I mostly work from references. It's all about how they're used. The same design on different people or different spots can be either very good or very bad.

Some of your most inspiring work is spread out over two different limbs, what sort of unique difficulties do you face when creating tattoos like this? It is all about perception. We tend to think of limbs as separate because we learn "head, shoulders, knees and toes," but the body is fluid, dynamic and so is the perception that we have of it. The front and the back of the legs are much more different than the back of the right leg and back of the left leg. Most of the time both legs will be seen at the same time as a whole. I try to think like this. But it is very challenging technically. Once again, many solutions have already been figured out by the main tattoo traditions such as Japanese or tribal tattooing. You have to compare tattooing to music; anyone who wants to make music on a very high level needs to study classical music. It's not about liking German music from the

1700's, it's just that they had figured almost everything there is to figure about music from a technical point of view. Why reinvent the wheel? What is hard is figuring out how to apply this knowledge to new approaches. My tattooing is like Jazz.

What subject matters do you prefer? I do not deal with subject matters as such. I don't like tattoos that say something. But I am drawn to certain themes. Nature, romance, kink, spirituality, monuments. Things that are beyond the simple human nature.

What inspires you as an artist? I would say that I think a tattooist has a certain duty to react and vibrate with his/her time and so I am inspired by my environment and events of my life. I love traveling, studying things, watching the news. Anything really. I am very empathic and emotional but also very driven and disciplined.

What other mediums do you work in? I still do a lot of graphic design and typography, I draw but I also work on computers a lot. And on the other hand I am also working on clothes and sculptures.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? Generally I am happy to do very large-scale work now. But I often think about trying new styles. I would love to do straight tribal or old school. But I also love fine line work...

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give to them? Chose the tattooist, not the tattoo.









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CARLOS TORRES

Timeline Gallery 1117 S Pacific Ave, San Pedro, CA 9073 @carlostorresart

What year did you start tattooing and how did you first get into the business? I would probably say I started tattooing around 1997. I started off by being the kid in the neighborhood that could draw; all my buddies figured I should start tattooing them. Looking back, this probably wasn't the best way to break in to tattooing (laughs).

In the past you have mentioned that you are almost entirely self-taught, and that in looking back you wish that you had apprenticed. While there are some regrets, what benefits do you think came out of being self taught? There was so much trial and error when I was trying to learn on my own. If anything, I think I learned the skill of patience and the ability to analyze things. Tattoos are meant to last forever. So to this day, I am still analyzing how tattoos look over long periods of time and developing better techniques or art that will make for a better tattoo. For me, a tattoo should look good the day it leaves the shop, once it's healed and years down the road.

Has being self-taught influenced the way you approach teaching apprentices? Do you think of the things that you wish you were taught when you were just trying to figure out the game? I was self-taught to a certain point. I never served a true apprenticeship, but in 2000 I got into a very popular tattoo shop and learned a lot. Aside from learning about tattooing, I gained knowledge about running a business, having a good work ethic and providing customer service. Now with our apprentice, my first apprentice in 18 years, we really try to show him that from the get go, along with the things we are still learning now. It's been nice. I think I am becoming a better artist having taken on an apprentice.

Tell us a little about what led to the opening of Timeline Gallery. The original concept or idea for our shop was a place for us to showcase our paintings and hold art shows. At the time, Alan Padilla and I were really getting into the fine art side of things. Oil paintings, drawings, etc. There was a pretty good size group of us that were taking workshops and classes with world-renowned fine artists and teachers. We felt that by learning from them our

tattooing would also progress. Our shop became a place where you could really come and focus on your craft. Everyone here at the shop does some kind of art outside of tattooing so there is plenty of advice and help to push forward here.

How do you feel your career changed by being a shop owner? It for sure has taken away time from trying to just focus on art. Sometimes I daydream of just running home and painting! Owning a business brings on a whole new set of tasks and obligations. But everyone in the shop is so easy going that it makes being an owner easier! We just keep working to create a place with a lot of freedom to grow.

How has your painting been progressing? Have you moved on to any other types of art?

Last year I really had a hard time finding time to produce a lot of art and was hating everything I was doing. I kind of felt like my art was in a rut. This year though I've set aside a lot more time and I'm finding a nice balance between tattooing and other art forms.

You work almost exclusively in black-and-grey, how did you first fall in love with the style? Have you ever dabbled in color? I have always thought that black and grey has such a timeless quality. It's like a black and white photo—it will always look cool no matter what! I really never thought about doing anything else, only trying to progress black and grey. Growing up here in Southern California it is what we saw. We have the pioneers of the black and grey world. I really just want to push the boundaries and see how far we can take this.

Being as your work often walks the line between realism and surrealism, where do you find inspiration? I grew up down the street from a comic book store so I was so into surrealism and fantasy art. If there is one thing that I can really say about myself it is that I have one hell of an imagination! That, combined with my love for old masters' work, I just figured that was the direction I wanted to take my art. When I first started seeing what was possible

from guys like Robert Hernandez and Paul Booth, I knew that was where my tattooing was going to go.

You've mentioned that you find your style to be almost painterly, explain what exactly this means. I've always been a fan of seeing an artist's brushstrokes in paintings. I feel that you can see a lot more emotion and in my opinion it feels more realistic. Sometimes when an image is too smooth it just kind of loses it for me. I like to see textures and maybe a little human imperfection. The trick now has been to translate it into a tattoo and make it last for as long as possible. Still a lot of trial and error!

You often mix surreal elements within a realistic portrait—can you tell us a little about the process you go through to do this? What kind of reference do you work from? Do you separate the elements of realism and surrealism in your mind while tattooing? Over the past few years I have really been working on taking my own reference photos. I usually will work from a portrait and get that right first. Then the hard part comes in and I have to be able to draw the surreal elements and not be afraid to destroy the image. This usually involves a lot of adding and erasing, taking away and putting back. Sometimes I get timid and that's usually when I get bummed out for not pushing myself.

What makes the perfect skull tattoo? Not sure to be honest. I have drawn skulls since I was little and used to get scolded for always drawing them. I figured everyone has a skull, why is it so creepy? They hold our faces up! Right now I am really into skulls with realistic proportions and I think the lighting of a skull tattoo is important in making it a good tattoo.

Last time you spoke with Freshly you mentioned a desire to do a body suit on a pristine canvas, have you gotten a chance to start this yet? Yes!! Actually I have started one. I'm a big fan of Japanese style tattooing and the way they use the body as a canvas, so much flow and movement! Now I just take my black and grey and see what kind of fusion I can make. See what boundaries are next to push!











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RYAN EVANS

Kamil Tattoos and New Wave Tattoo London, UK @Ryan_Evans

What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in September 2010.

How did you get into tattooing? I really hadn't had much exposure to tattooing before I decided that it was something that I wanted to do. I didn't personally know any artists or studios that I could ask for help or advice on what to do so I collected a bunch of drawings that I had been doing at the time, put them into a folder and started going around studios asking if they were looking for an apprentice. I knew that apprenticeships are very hard to come by, but I figured it was going to be the best way to start. I was lucky enough to be taken on in a busy street shop in Auckland, New Zealand.

What was your first shop experience like? I apprenticed under a busy tattooer and there were a lot of very long hours and hard work. It was pretty crazy, everything was totally new for me. I was very excited, I knew straight away that it was something that I really wanted to do every day. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to start the way that I did.

What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do last year? My most recent convention was the London Tattoo Convention, I really love that show. It's well organized and it brings so many of the greatest artists together. For me, I am very humbled to be able to work there. It is very inspiring to watch artists that I look up to. I am also heading home to New Zealand soon this year to do the Convention there, it is a really fun show and it gives me an excuse to go home again.

What brought you to work in black and

grey? I'm not entirely sure when the turning point was. I started off using color as well but as I progressed, I found myself doing more and more black and grey and also enjoying it more than the color work that I was doing. I really like the look of black and grey tattoos and a lot of my favorite artists are black and grey artists, so I guess it was a natural decision for me to make.

What are the major differences between color and black and grey pieces? Personally I find color a little more difficult, maybe because 99% of my work right now is black and grey, I'm not sure. I do like the fact that I have less bottles of ink to carry when I travel.

Some of your most revered pieces are of statues. Can you tell us how the process is different between capturing a portrait of a person versus capturing that same likeness as if it were a statue? I actually think that using a statue reference is a little easier than doing a portrait. Often statue references have a lot of contrast and great composition, which are a big help straight off the bat. They also provide a lot of hard edges that portraits often don't have, which I find a whole heap easier to work with compared to a portrait. That makes it easier right from the stencil as well.

One of the most impressive things that you do as an artist is the way you depict reflections. Is it difficult to achieve this effect in a tattoo? I try to pay as much attention to detail as I can, right from the start when I make my stencil all the way through the end of the tattoo. I think if I take my time and really focus on shapes and contrast in each individual part of the tattoo, trying to match

the reference as best as I can, then the end result is going to be more realistic. At the end of it all, a reflection is just a part of the stencil that if you copy as close as you can, it's going to look pretty similar to the reference. I don't find I treat it any differently than the rest of the tattoo.

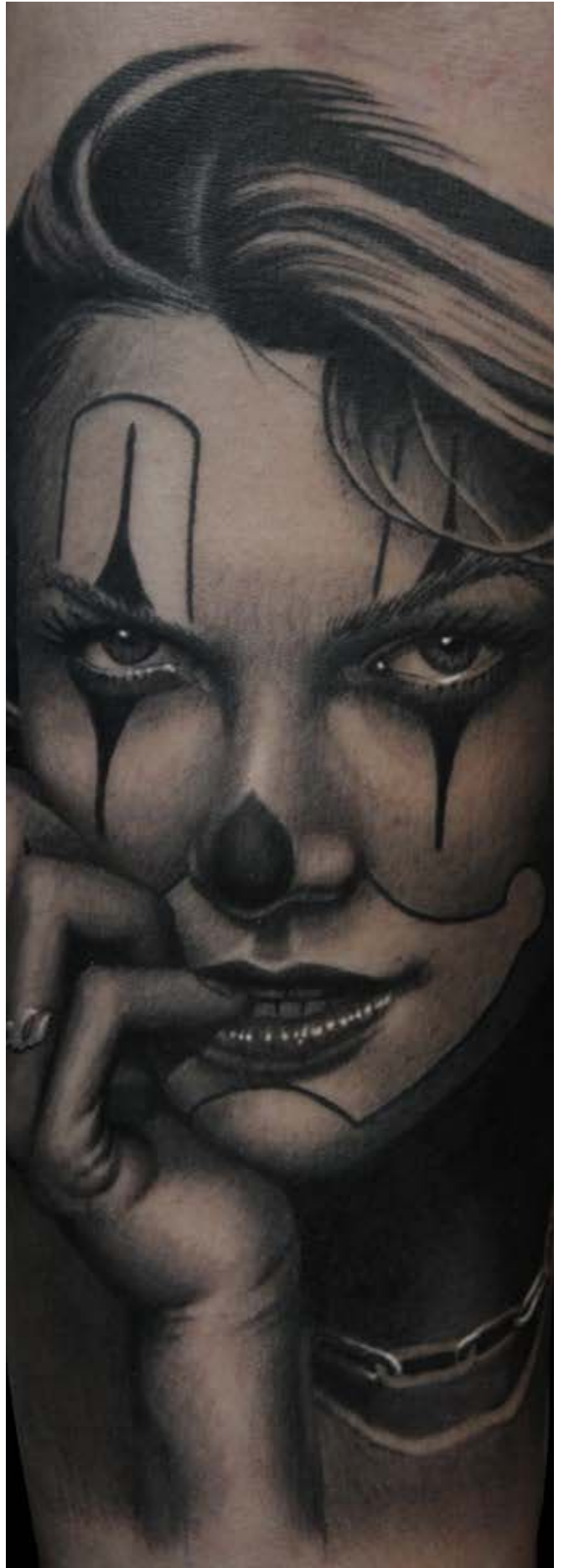
What inspires you as an artist? I get inspiration from everywhere. Obviously, social media plays a big part in that. It is very easy to follow other artist's work, which is where a lot of my inspiration comes from. Seeing all the amazing work that is getting turned out really gives me a lot of inspiration and drive to push my own. I also find a lot of inspiration working alongside my colleagues every day, being friends with the people that I work with and sharing the same passion for tattooing is a huge push.

Can you tell us a little bit about tattooing in London? The scene seems so vibrant there. It certainly is. Coming from a small country, London is huge. Which is a good thing, the population is massively bigger, meaning far more people getting tattooed, and also far more studios. I don't really know too many artists over here, but the ones that I do are from all corners of the globe and great people. It is really cool to be submersed in such a diverse range of people and backgrounds all doing the same thing as me (tattooing).

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? Yes, a portrait of Dolly Parton.



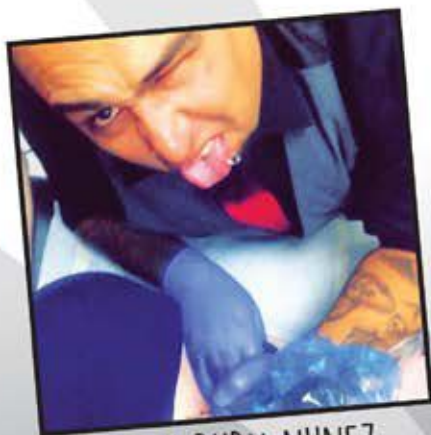






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SAMUEL POTUCEK

What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing immediately after leaving high school in 2009.

How did you get into tattooing? When I was at elementary school I began to draw on my forearms with marker pens instead of learning. Basically, I wanted to do tattoo since I remember, but real tattoos came to my life during high school, when I started visiting one tattoo studio to sit there on a couch. It was enough for me to be happy. After leaving high school I started with true tattoos. I didn't earn much money for it, so I had to steal my first machine. But also bad things can help, huh.

What is the tattoo scene like in Bratislava? Here in Bratislava there is a big boom of establishing tattoo parlors these days, I think. Guys find out that this is a straight way to earn easy money, but they forgot that they should know how to do tattoos at least well. My only hope is that these things will not ruin the entire market. I know we have very gifted and skilled people here.

Do you have any special training? Maybe I have some kind of "special training" because I studied school to be a professional jeweler. And that means fine precise work, where you need tons of patience.

What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do last year? I love conventions. It is the only place, where I don't feel different from others, and the others probably see and feel the world the same way as me. I was in Milano this year and I really love

it there. High quality artists and a lot of people. I also visit Bucharest often, there is a great friend of mine John Maxx and we have a lot of fun each time...it is more relaxed. This year I also made it to London convention—one of my dreams came true. Just being there was like winning it. My next plans are Barcelona, Roma and Paris.

How do you go about preparing your designs before tattooing? I prepare pictures from primary photos, which I customize in photoshop. In fact, I prepare whole work, also the details, but also improvisation during work takes place. It is really individual. I try to make things like artist – it is about feeling and you can feel it only in that moment, so it is about it.

Tell us a little about your use of color—how did you develop your style of seamlessly melding multiple colors together? Are you ever afraid that the colors will bleed into each other over time, or is this something you take into account as you tattoo? It is hard to describe my own evolution. I remember that I started to think about how does color work under skin and how I should put layers onto them, that I can cover them. I think that I am in a phase of improving myself and I don't consider my style and way of tattooing finished. It never will be. If I should say something about technique, then it is that the basis of my work is the overlaying of colors. Some people do tattoos with one layer and they don't return to that area; for me the opposite is true. I splash colors throughout them.

When do you find yourself working in black and grey? Going by your Insta-

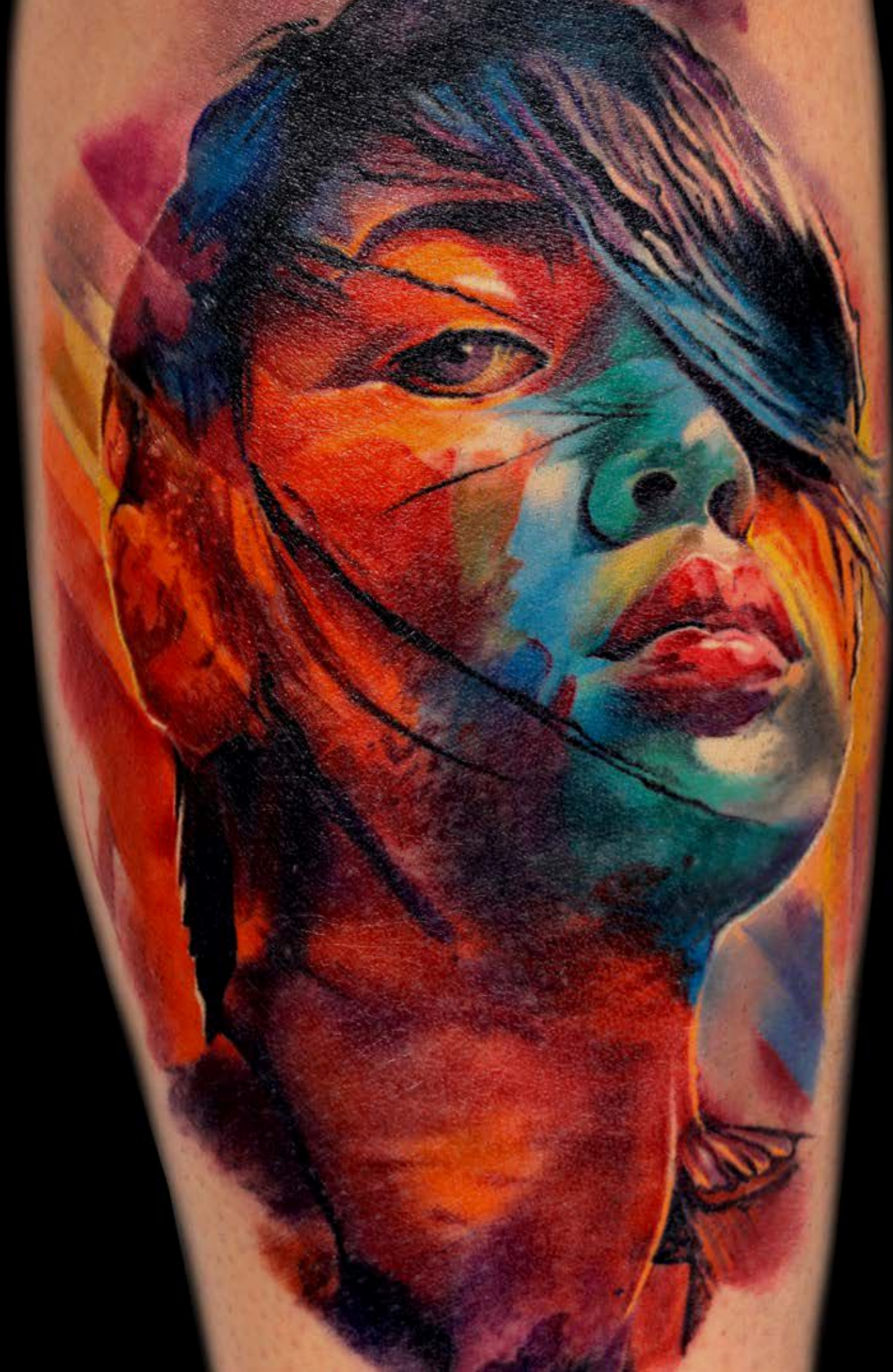
gram, which may or may not be in chronological order, it appears as if you binge on black and grey from time to time.

I treat social networks like a presentation of my work. Or, better yet, of what I want to do. That is why I put out mostly full color tattoos, I want people to want them. But I do like black and gray and I actually do it more often than full color. What an irony. It is more relaxing for me because it is much more simple.

What are some of the major subject matters you like to tattoo? My favorite thing is portraiture. I am doing it whole life. I can leave feeling and human character in the picture. For many artists this is the hardest thing, for me it is the easiest and I really enjoy it. I need only to complicate it, for example hair, jewels, lights and shadows and so on—I see myself in details such as these. I like realism so much.

What inspires you as an artist? The greatest inspiration is to leave something that will last long after me in this world. The only way to do this is through art. With it I can be special and demonstrate my art. I appreciate this very much and I am thankful that I had this opportunity, because not everybody has it.

What sets you apart from other artists? My approach and way of thinking. I feel tattoo in the nature of art. Everyone is trying to be similar to Nikko Hurtado and others famous artists. For me, it is essential to not be similar to anybody. That is what makes me different from others.







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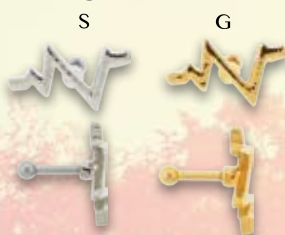
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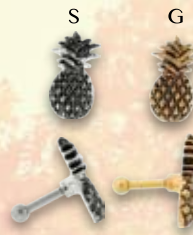
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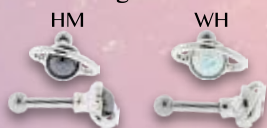
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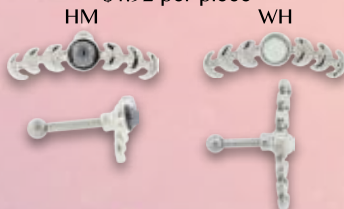
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RICCARDO CASSESE

Barcelona & Naples @Riccardo_cassese_tattoo

When did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in 1998 in Palma Campania, the village where I'm from, near Napoli.

Back then I was attending the Napoli Art School and I was no more than 20 years old. I was so fascinated with tattooed people since childhood, so after listening to a friend's advice I bought my first "tattoo kit" to start tattooing without knowing anything about it. I learned step-by-step how to solder needles and started to do little tattoos for friends and other people of my village that trusted me and knew me from other artistic fields. From then on I started feeling a deep passion for tattoos so I made it my profession.

Your work is strictly B&G with heavy contrast but also very nice values and smooth shading. How did you achieve a technical approach that has become so consistent in all of your work? Maybe I achieve it thanks to the years, the experience and paying close attention to the appearance of my tattoos once they have healed. At the beginning many of them look quite light, but smooth and clean. Little by little I started to intensify the black tones leaving lighter tones as they were, and creating as a result a quick understanding of the object.

Do you specifically look for legibility and longevity on your work? Yes, I do. The first thing I look for is the legibility (a quick and easy understanding) of the tattooed object, a direct impact on the eye of the observer. To obtain this I try to put in place all the elements. I like the idea of my tattoos being legible at first sight, without need of getting closer (just to appreciate more subtle details). All this helps to the longevity of the tattoo.

Tattoos are a lot of work when you are creating custom designs—you need to consider things like placement, body flow, and composition before actually

drawing the work. How is your creative process when designing a tattoo like this? What do you feel is the hardest, challenging and more satisfactory part of the process? Behind every tattoo there is a lot of work, and that's the most important part, but also the most challenging. Usually I spend a lot of time selecting images, talking to the customer and preparing the stencil with all its details. The creation process can change from one tattoo to the next, but basically I always take into consideration the same elements. From the beginning I start looking for images with strong impact that are strong by themselves, able to express sensations and with a good composition of the lights and the shades. If not I will intensify the contrast. In occasions I use Photoshop to build the composition of images, and other times I improvise at the same moment I'm tattooing, even directly with the machine (no drawing involved) if I'm doing secondary elements such as background, light effects, textures and so on. The most satisfactory part of the process is seeing the customer's face once he sees the tattoo finish and his gratitude. They even cry with emotion with their relative portraits.

Was this the style you've always wanted to do? What type of tattoos were you doing back when you started? After a few years of tattooing I realized that black and grey/realism is my style, although I started tattooing every single style. I recently passed through a phase where I also did realism in color. It's a long process, but I'm glad that my customers are looking to get tattooed by me because of my style.

If you have the freedom to do a certain tattoo, what would it be? This is a difficult question to answer, because there are so many things that stimulate me. Several times I have the chance to do what I want, for real! Customers

give me that freedom. Tattoo collectors give me the most freedom even to pick the placement.

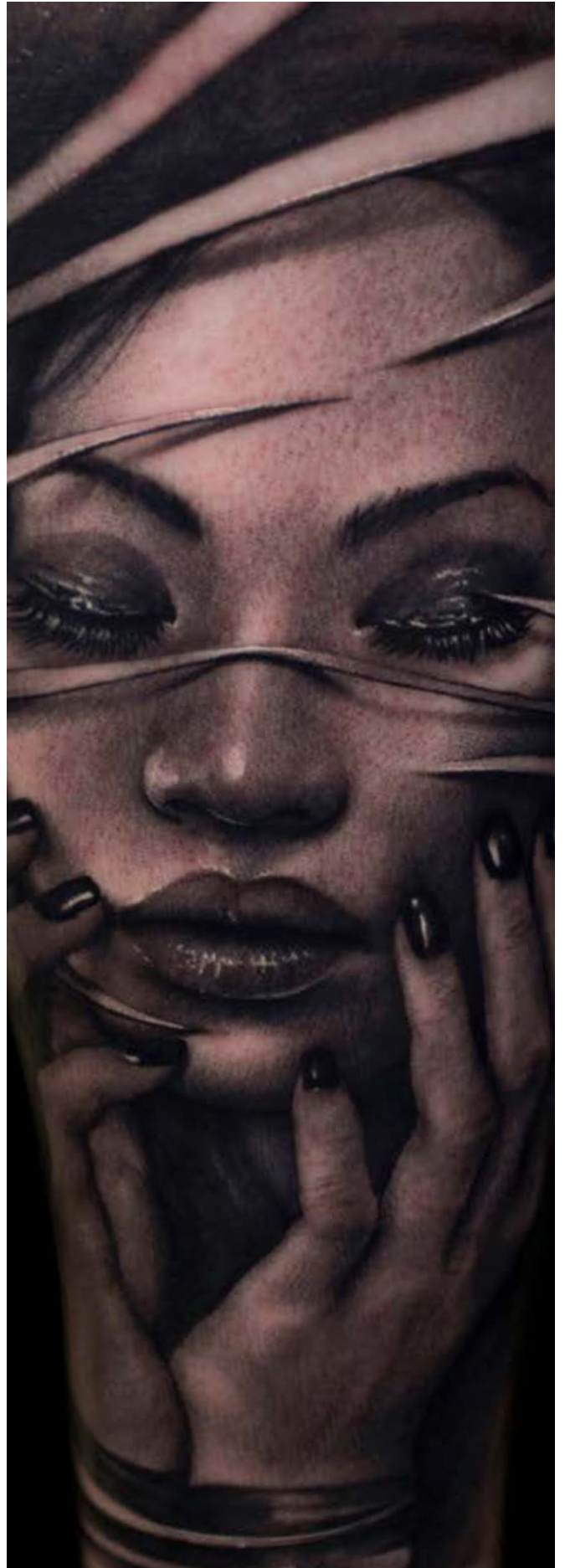
What is your creative process when you are about to design a tattoo? I tend not to get a design "per se" ready before I start tattooing, so many times the "creative process" doesn't exist because most of my tattoos are portraits of people, animals, reproductions of statues, clocks, etc. where I only have room to add some external "artistic" element once I already started tattooing or during the process. When the style is not as rigid I feel free to create and to add much more art into it, the creative process becomes a different thing then. It all starts with the selection of a picture of reference that fit the wants of my customer, but also the one that will perfectly fit into the body and into the composition, and also it has to be able to transmit something powerful. I tend to pick several images until I get the right one, when you find it you know it will be the one!

Where do you usually find inspiration? What or who inspired you in and out of the tattoo world back when you started tattooing? What or who inspires you today? I think you can find inspiration everywhere, every day—not only in the things we see but also in the things we live and feel. This is the real inspiration; life and the surprises it brings us, both the good and the bad ones. I started tattooing long ago and there weren't as many tattooers. Never forgetting the big ones like Filip Leu among others, one I really liked was Robert Hernandez who was a true innovative. Also Paul Booth and Victor Portugal in whom I saw something more introspective than the rest. They were strong influences back in the day and good referents for me, although I always tried to follow my own path in order to find my own style and to express myself.









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VIC VIVID

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

How did you get into tattooing? Tattooing was something I never thought I would be doing. From middle school all the way through college I attended magnet art school. In 2008, I graduated college with a Bachelor's Degree in Automotive Design but, unfortunately, the industry took an economical hit that year which made it difficult to find employment. I stumbled into tattooing at that point. Some things really are a blessing in disguise.

Do you have any special training? I've been in art school ever since I was a kid allowing me to explore a wide range of mediums. Everything from painting to sculpture.

What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year? This year I did Musink, Ink and Iron, and Biggest Tattoo Show on Earth. I was lucky enough to win two Tattoo of the Day awards. I look forward to traveling more often and tattooing alongside some of the industry's best in 2016.

What led you to work primarily in color? I've always been fascinated with color and its application because it allows me to explore value, tonality, hues, and saturation.

How does your approach change when switching from color to black and grey? What factors do you consider before committing to color or b/g? I usually

leave it up to the client on choosing their preference. Black and grey is classic and works on all skin tones. When it comes to color, one has to make sure their palette is lighter than their canvas.

Do you find one style more difficult than the other? Both have their challenges, but that's what I consider to be the fun part of tattooing.

Other than the obvious color choices how does the tone of subject matter change your approach while creating a tattoo? The tone of the subject doesn't change my approach. Whether it's a rose, a portrait or a toy, tattooing to me is about focusing without rushing.

I've noticed that you've done a ton of Star Wars tattoos, including of characters from the upcoming Force Awakens. Is it strange to be doing something so permanent for people who know nothing about the character yet? In other words, if Kylo Ren ends up being like Jar Jar are you going to feel guilty about that tattoo? Quite frankly, I love movie related content because its fantastic imagery of characters that most people recognize. I don't think it's peculiar because my clients who ask for a character tend to be big fans of the entire saga.

When you tattoo cats the fur looks completely different than it does when you tattoo dogs, you've captured the texture so perfectly that one feels like they can almost feel it. How important do you think this is when creating a tattoo?

Tattooing animals is one of my favorite things to do. I focus a lot on the texture because I feel that's how you can more accurately capture the uniqueness of each animal.

What inspires you as an artist? I grasp inspiration from life, nature, creation, evolution and death.

What sets you apart from other artists? Art is in the eye of the beholder. Artists interpret imagery differently, what they choose to bring into focus in their art is what makes everyone of us individual. I don't cut corners—my focus is on the details.

What other mediums do you work in? Currently digital painting but lately I've been yearning to start creating art in multiple mediums.

Do you approach portraits in the same way you approach other subjects? And do you approach portraits of animals in a different way than you do humans? It's all about taking the time needed to execute something properly. The approach doesn't change, only the reference does.

Do you take your own photo references? As often as I can.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? Off the top of my head I would say Dmitriy Samohin, Phil Garcia, and Nikko Hurtado.











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POCH BEST

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When did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in 1996, but I've been involved since 1994.

How did you get into tattooing? I got into tattooing at a real young age. I was born and raised in New York City in the Patterson projects located in the Bronx. To keep me out of trouble and the streets my mother took notice of my artistic talent and tried her best to keep me occupied with any and everything that had to do with art. I tapped into oil painting, acrylic, charcoals—even spray paint—but there was one art form that I had never tried but sparked my interest. Tattooing.

What was your first shop experience like? My first shop experience was not too pleasant. When I started there was no such thing as black young men tattooing due to it being more of a biker scene. I used to run down to the Manhattan on St Mark's and 6th Avenue just to be on the scene and see what all of the local tattoo artists were doing but I wasn't allowed due to me being young and black. I got slapped, drawings ripped up, spit on, laughed at and I also was told "niggas wasn't allowed." It wasn't until the manager named Jason at Andromeda Tattoos saw my drawings and allowed me to sit outside and draw and observe how the shop was ran. I spent about a year there and knew if I wanted to be good and be a part of this industry I needed to push

myself, learn as much as I can from every one and just travel.

How do you describe your style? I think I really don't have a style. I love tattooing and drawing realism or anything that catches my eye.

How did you decide to focus on realism? Realism was something that always fascinates me. Being able to look at an object or a photograph and being able to mimic what I see or being able to capture the essence of someone's emotion is priceless.

What is it about color work that appeals to you more than black and grey? Doing color work is awesome and challenging but I love color and black and grey just the same. The way I tattoo my black and grey is just like color except I use true grays instead of washes to create what I do.

When doing a pop culture tattoo how do you choose a reference? I try to stay off of Google and use more of my own images. I usually buy a movie and freeze frame different positions and scenes to capture what I am looking for.

What tattoo artists do you admire? My big bro Roman Abrego and working at Artistic Element has been a big influence on my career and someone I have admired for so many years. There are

so many artists I admire and look up to for more than just their artwork. I think you can tell a lot about a person's artwork by knowing who they are and where they have been.

What sort of tattoos do you look forward to? I look forward to tattooing more creative realistic images and seeing where this next year's taking me.

What advice do you give before someone is gets a tattoo? Before getting a tattooed I would advise a client to do their research about aftercare, the process, how long it takes, and find a artist who better fits your style that you are looking to do.

How do you see your art evolving in the future? I have evolved so much in the past few years and I'm still learning as we speak. You are only as good as you allow yourself to be and I plan on being so much more. I am thankful and blessed on all my accomplishments and who I have become and I plan on taking my art to the next level.

Are there any downsides to working so diligently to perfect your art? One of my biggest regrets is sacrificing time away from my daughter and the love of my life. She has been one of my biggest supporters and has grown with me through the years and is one of the reasons I am where I am today.









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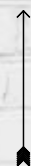
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JUAN SALGADO

Color Conspiracy Tattoo Gallery 1851 Calle Loiza San Juan, PR 00911 @juan_salgado

You were in our very first issue of Freshly Inked back in 2011, how would you say your art has changed in the last five years? First of all, it was a real honor to appear in your first issue. I remember being very excited for that, definitely a big step in my career. Wow, a LOT has happened in 5 years! I've changed and my art indeed has changed. I believe my artwork has become more solid, more real, more colorful, darker, and more original since I never have, nor ever will, stop learning. Lately I've been experimenting with combining the good things of every style I appreciate and have practiced during my career. I've been experimenting with cover-ups trying to do the impossible and push the boundaries to the limit. I've gained more knowledge in needle usage and machines so now, after 12 years of tattooing I can say I'm starting to almost understand a bit about this medium.

How do you think your background in fine art has influenced you in your tattooing career? My background in fine art is linked directly to my tattooing so it not only influenced immensely but it is also an essential part of that exploration. I truly believe tattooing is a fine art, so besides the obvious differences in techniques it is basically the same in context.

Were you ever dissuaded from pursuing a career as a tattooist given all of your training in other areas of art? My family is very "conservative" so, yes, at first I had a bit of doubt from them, but mostly support and love through out the way. For many reasons I've been fascinated by tattoos since I was a little kid. In school teachers often got mad since I was always drawing designs on my skin so you can imagine the extent, but when I started tattooing I had no idea this was going to be my

career. I was studying art at the time so it complemented me perfectly and out of all the mediums I've already tried at the moment this one haunted me the most, basically taking over my life. I love tattooing with a passion. I truly feel the medium chooses you, not the other way around!

Your most notable work is filled with vivid colors that seem to fly off the skin. Can you tell us a little bit about the importance of color within a tattoo? What considerations do you put into choosing color within a piece? I'm a big fan and an explorer of the color theory and it's definitely the most important component of a colorful tattoo. The way I see it is as a game of contrast, luminance, values, feelings and impact. Personally, I like to contrast warm and cold colors to create values. Since I almost always like to create the effect of light I also like to create contrast with bright and dull colors to make some parts brighter. I also leave the bright parts for the center of the muscles creating kind of a 3D effect. I always recommend you just have fun and play around with the color wheel and explore your own tastes—you'll see that you can create great imagery.

You are also proficient in black and grey. Do you prefer one style to the other? Is one more difficult than the other? I love tattooing black and grey. I don't have a preference amongst the two but there are definitely differences. Black and grey is more comfortable for me because you mainly focus on values and contrast. In color tattoos you focus on values and contrast as well but adding the whole color theory, so in essence it's more complex by nature. It's definitely fun and amazing to move back and forth between the two but now I'm mostly interested in combining

both to the point where they have no more boundaries.

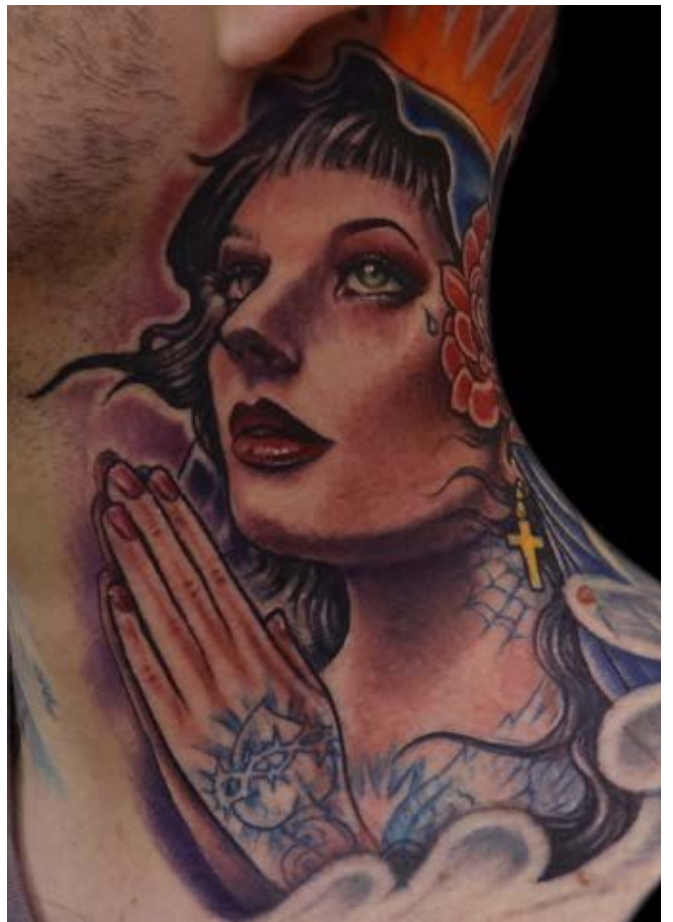
Many of your pieces have a bit of a surreal touch to them. Do those ideas come from you or your clients? Or is it collaboration? I like to see myself as a vessel; I try to feel no pressure or suffering when I'm creating art. Tattoos should always involve collaboration between the artist and the one who wears the art for the rest of their lives. In my personal experience I enjoy and strongly recommend working around the client's feedback and get to an agreement where both will be happy.

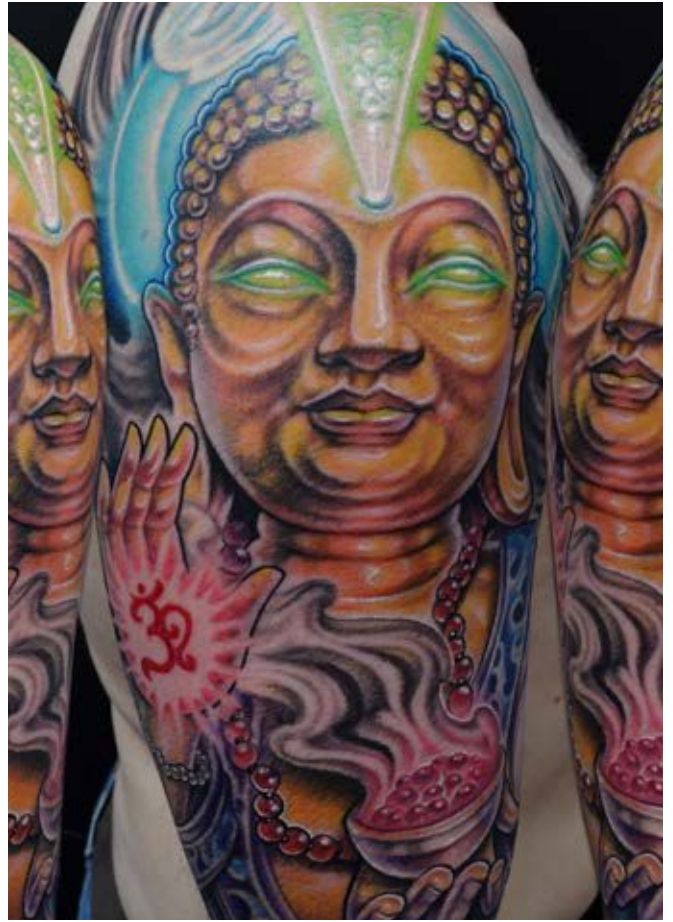
What inspires you as an artist? Nature, feelings, light, human interaction, art, contrast, nostalgia, women and being conscious that we are mortals. That pushes me go the extra mile and to work without limits for my dream.

We know that you love oil painting. Are there elements from painting that you bring into your tattooing? And likewise, are there any techniques or skills that you picked up tattooing that you apply to painting? I try to bring the most knowledge I have from my painting experience to tattoos and vice versa. They are basically the same thing except for some technical differences that you learn to adapt to with practice and education. I strongly recommend picking up an art form besides tattooing to keep feeding new knowledge to both mediums.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I look forward to doing some big pieces. I want to keep exploring the boundaries of tattooing on all of its branches but mostly I want to keep on doing what I love and having fun every day.









CHICO MOREBENE

Porto Alegre, Brazil @chicomorbene

What year did you start tattooing? I started tattooing in early 2010.

How did you get into tattooing? I worked in the IT branch, and opened a computer store with a tattoo studio of a friend. The computer industry was not working very well, so I've always liked to draw. One day drawing in the shop my friend saw me drawing and asked me, "Chico why not get a tattoo, I'll teach you." And that was how I entered the tattoo industry and I'm falling in love more and more with this art.

Do you have any special training? The only seminar I have is drawing with the great Charles Lavesso.

What conventions have you recently attended or are planning to do last year? Last year I attended many conventions large and small. Even winning some awards and even got to convention in Argentina last year. I am planning on going to some conventions in Europe this year.

What brought you to work in black and gray? I started doing black and gray because I have always liked line drawings since childhood. I think the work in black and gray will become increasingly beautiful over the years with a good application technique.

What are the main differences between

color and black and gray pieces? I think there is a huge difference except for the mode of application. While I think the more colorful style is pretty cool, for me the biggest difference is the durability of black and gray

One thing I noticed about your work is its ability to replicate texture, especially those based off pieces of marble statues. Is texture is something that you focus on in particular? My work is always focused on texture and always works with a lot of contrast in lighting creating tattoos. I focus a lot on the lines to make the cuts and look like statues and even work with a lot of ink skin space to create dimension.

When do you choose to work in color? I've done work with colors at the beginning of my career but I did not fall in love with it like I did with black and gray, so that's my focus.

What inspires you as an artist? Power inspires me.

What sets it apart from other artists? I think my work differs a bit by the amount of black that I put in my work and much of the skin that I leave untouched in my work creating light on the tattoo. I am also very focused as an artist and person.

What is the tattoo scene like in Brazil?

I think Brazil is increasingly evolving and appearing on the world stage in the tattoo scene with the great artists we have in our country.

What tattoo artists do you most admire? I admire and follow the work of many artists of various styles. Q inspires me. So do Riccardo Cassese, Paul Booth, Bob Tyrrell, Ralf Nonnweiler, Silvano Fiato, Victor Portugal, Oscar Akermo and many others.

What kind of tattoos you look forward to? I look forward to working on a certain client's back. I'm doing a full back piece with the statue of Caesar.

What advice would you give someone wanting to be a tattoo artist? Study hard, draw more and more, and if you have a dream to become a great artist, never give up.

Is there a tattoo that you have not done that you're dying to do? I have not done the image of the Savior there, yet I really want to do that (laughs).

How do you see the black and gray scene evolving? I think the world black and gray scene has evolved a great deal already as we have more and more artists with impressive works in black and gray on the national and world stages.





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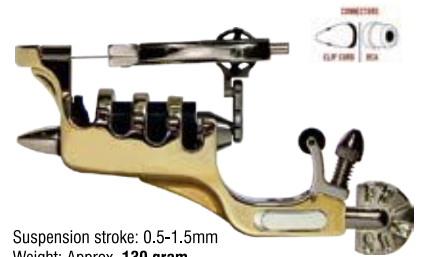
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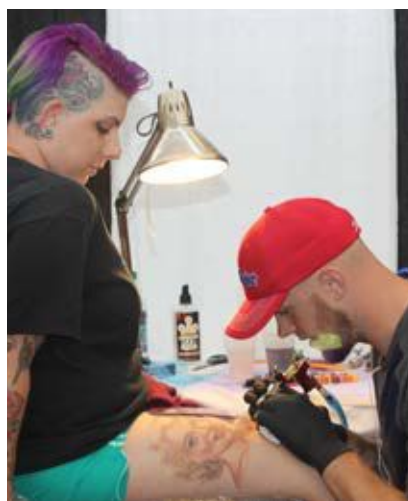




STEEL CITY TATTOO CONVENTION

photos by Melanie (Czoka) Simmons

Shane O'Neill Productions has done it yet again with its 3rd annual Steel City Tattoo Convention. The people of Pittsburgh were in for a special treat this year with over 300 talented artists in attendance. Some of the amazing artists to make an appearance included Paul Acker, Szalai Tibor Tibi, and Pony Lawson. Not only were the artists working their booths, but vendors like Steadfast Brand and Ink Addict Apparel kept their booths filled all weekend. After another successful year, we can't wait to see what O'Neill's next convention has in store for us.



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INK LIFE OKC

photos by inked photography

The last stop on the Ink Life Tour for 2015 was made in Oklahoma City at the Cox Convention Center. Among the talented artists that made it, Ink Master's Kito Talbert and Joey Hamilton showed off their skills all weekend! Besides the amazing live music performed by Twista', other performances blew the crowd's minds. One of the main events included a human suspension show. Following the all weekend show, Ink Life Tour presented an outrageous Halloween Ball for all artists and their friends. The Ink Life Tour has four more tour dates picked out for 2016 and they will be hitting Oklahoma City even harder next time!



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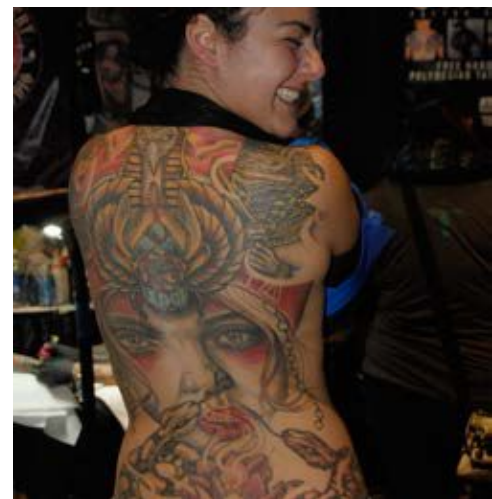
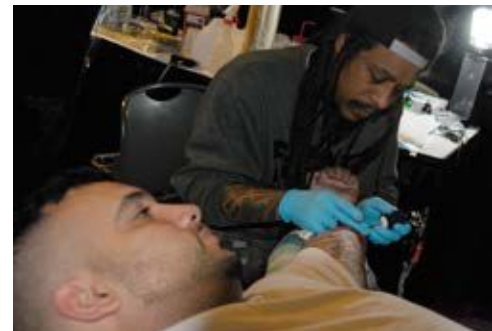
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ATLANTIC CITY TATTOO CONVENTION

It's not always all about alcohol and gambling in Atlantic City. Sure, we are attracted to the city for the excitement and partying, but it's also one of the wildest places to hold an annual tattoo convention! It was an amazing weekend for all tattooers and guests who had the chance to attend. Each category winner not only walked away with a trophy but an original piece of the A.C. boardwalk. From live entertainment involving people playing with swords and snakes to the creative new tattoos, this was a weekend to never forget. This year's show had over 100 artists and vendors, including Ink Master's Chris Blinston, Tattoo Rescue's Joey Tattoo, and the newly named Artist of the Year, Sarah Miller. 2015's show went out with a huge bang, and we know that next year's show will be even more spectacular.





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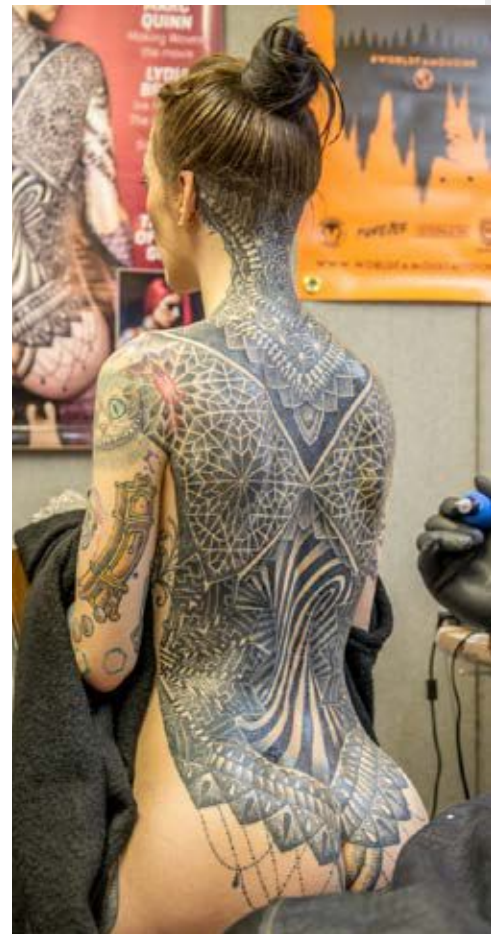
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EAST COAST TATTOO CONVENTION

The East Coast Tattoo Expo brought extra pizzazz to their 2015 show. It only took a handful of glamour, glitz, and gambling for Sin City to be transported over seas and was selected as this year's expo theme. From late night parties to live entertainment, the weekend was one to remember. Show goers were able to play various Vegas favorites like blackjack, roulette and craps. Artists such as Dotwork Damian, Samantha Ford, and Sonya Clark, were just some of the many to attend this year's event. We all can't wait to see how spectacular next year's theme will be!



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BRUSSELS TATTOO CONVENTION

The International Brussels Tattoo Convention just had one of its wildest weekends to date! With over 17,000 attendees, magic was made both in and out of the tattoo booths. Side shows included a freak show, live performances from local bands, a gorgeous burlesque show, and the exciting Globe of Death with an added driver from the years prior. Keeping the tradition alive, the Tiki Beach bar was filled with free Sailor Jerry rum shots and arm wrestling contests for all the tough guys. The biggest hit of the week-end was the newly added pro wrestling death match show. Jak Connolly, Yushi Horikichi, and Dave Paulo were just some of the international tattoo artists in attendance of this year's convention. If you didn't make it to this year's festivities, there's no need to worry. The 2016 show is already being planned to be bigger and badder than ever before!



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