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# CHELSEA GRIN

*ETERNAL NIGHTMARE*



OUT NOW!





# INKWELL



This is the second annual Inked for a Cause issue of INKED magazine and before you dive in, we would like to introduce you to just a few of the people who you are about to meet. We first hit the West Coast where Aaron Valencia, a man who was able to take the shattered bits of his troubled and painful childhood and put them back together again, all in an effort to give back. His mission in life has become to help the children, not only in his hometown, but across the globe. Hot rods and helping hands. Then we make our way to British Columbia, where Eileen Davidson has to show great physical and emotional strength just to make it through each day. Ravaged by rheumatoid arthritis and a host of other afflictions, Eileen's bravery is inspirational. Back out to the West Coast, via Japan and we meet Erena Shimoda, where through the power of water and photography she helps people in the throes of physical and/or emotional turmoil regain a sense of control over their lives.

Meet the assassins with hearts of gold. The Moncada brothers come to your screens each week via a past that was complete with gang violence and prison time. Now they are siblings with successful acting careers and a desire to help everyone and anyone who needs it. Like a beacon of light shining through a sky of dark clouds comes a feature on Kelly Eden. This young, talented creator has been empowering young women for years. Now, her YouTube channel is a destination for fun, inspiration and advice on mental health. And, of course, there is our cover story featuring Dave Navarro. Dave has gone through his fair share of hardships, sometimes sending him into a world of substance abuse that nearly killed him. Dave talks about how he was able to climb back out and what he is doing now to help people who may find themselves in the same hellish situation. A rockstar and a humanitarian.

Living within the tattoo culture is a microcosm of the universe, complete with good times and bad, success and failures, triumphs and tragedies. This issue of INKED is our way of giving back and extending hope and inspiration to all who need it...in fact, we all need it. Make the best of it.

Paul Gambino  
Editor-in-Chief  
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# LETTERS



## THE LIFESTYLE ISSUE

I just have to say that I couldn't have been happier than to walk into my local bookstore and see the love of my life, the apple of my eye, the doodle of my canoodle — on the cover of your latest issue. Post has got to be the hottest thing out right now, and for him to be on the cover of my favorite magazine — I thought I died and went to tattoo heaven. I just want to thank you for not only a great cover, but also those pictures inside were awesome! I always knew Post was a "player." — Lorna Duft — Goshen, New York

## facebook

### POST MALONE

**Alexandria Paulson**— So happy for Post that he finally got a cover! I loved learning what he's really like in person. I hope that he becomes a tattoo artist so that I can book an appointment one day.

**Renee Elizabeth**— He should stick to his day job. only kidding. Love him!

### ASA AKIRA

**Mike Donahue**— Not gonna lie, I hadn't heard of Asa Akira before. But I'm definitely looking her up after this.

### SAMII RYAN

**Luna Harrington**— Cannot believe how much Samii Ryan has changed since her cover with INKED! Glad to know she's still killing it.

### LIL DEBBIE

**Ryan Oats**— Sooooo jealous that Lil Debbie got to smoke trees with Don Juan. Would kill to shoot the shit with that dude.

## INKEDSTAGRAM: HASHTAG YOUR SELFIE #INKEDMAG



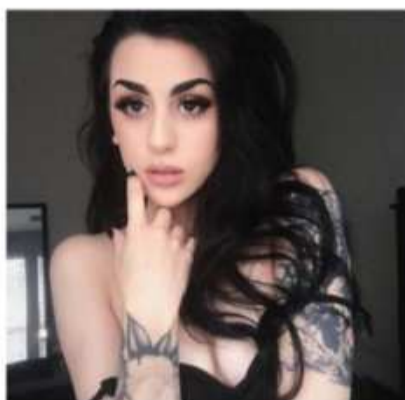
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# MONEY TALKS!

words by paul gambino  
photos by chad daly

**Chad Daly is a SOCAL artist that uses worldwide currencies to make social and political comments about the world around him.**

*The art coming out of Daly's studio is a combination of ancient origami, currency engraving and modern, high tech engineering. Here the three come together to create works of art that have part of their social message literally embedded into the work's medium. Daly, who has a collector's interest in currency from an early age, uses paper money found in circulation from across the globe from the last 75 years – sometimes the currency inspires his piece and sometimes the piece is inspired by the currency. Either way Daly's work is right on the money.*

**How did you come to live and work in Southern California by way of South Africa?** I immigrated with my parents at an early age to Southern California with hopes of a brighter future.

**How did the Money Origami project begin?** I played around with many art forms – from graffiti to oil painting to stone carving, and even tattooing. The cost of materials would always be the main factor in whatever medium was used. This, I feel was the spark that started the idea of using money as a medium.

**What is the process? The currency inspires the piece or the piece makes you seek out a relevant currency?** In regards to process and pieces, it's all about timing. Relevant events seem to dictate what is in demand. I feel the sculptures and the currency go hand-in-hand, sometimes one dictates the other.

**Are some currencies better to work with than other?** Yes. Most paper currencies are easy to work with. Polymer (plastic) currencies are a tough challenge.

**What's the largest bill you ever worked ever?** 100 Trillion Dollars from Zimbabwe. The irony is the currency is worthless, yet has a high collectors value (\$130-\$200). I've also worked with \$50s and \$100s of US dollar bills.

**What is the largest sculpture you've ever done with money as the medium?** Trophy mount of a deer head made from 276 \$1 US dollar bills. Almost life size (2.5 feet tall)

**How do you feel your South African upbringing has influenced your art?** I enjoyed having seen how creative people are with everyday items in South Africa. I remember admiring a motorcycle sculpture made from trash bags and soda cans.

**What has been the biggest "blow back" (if any) from using money as the medium?** The cost!

**Your favorite piece?** A perspective piece made from a \$1 bill and a \$100 bill. When standing in front, you see a mixture of money, only from the left side does the \$1 become visible and from the right side the \$100 becomes visible. The piece forces the viewer to interact and choose a side.

**The oldest bill you've ever worked with.** 1923 German, 2 Million Marks.

**The most controversial currency you've ever worked with.** North Korean.











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photos by peter roessler















# ALCHEMY



England · 1977

Model is wearing:

- R221 ..... Kraken.....Ring
- E409..... Kraken..... Earrings
- P818..... Kraken...Necklace

Model : Cassidy Rose  
www.cassidyroseofficial.com

Photo : Vanessa Marie  
Fotografin  
www.vanessa-marie.de

P822 ▶  
Talismanik  
Necklace  
**\$35.00**



P823 ▲  
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Choker **\$31.50**



R226 ▼  
Twin Hearts  
Promise Ring  
(Sizes: N,Q,T,W)  
**\$30.00**



◀P836  
The Maiden's  
Conquest  
Necklace  
**\$75.00**



R226  
Double Ring



E409 ▼  
Kraken Earring (Pair)  
**\$45.00**



R223 ▼  
Bacchanal Rose  
Ring (Sizes: L,N,Q,T)  
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P827 ▼  
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E406 ▼  
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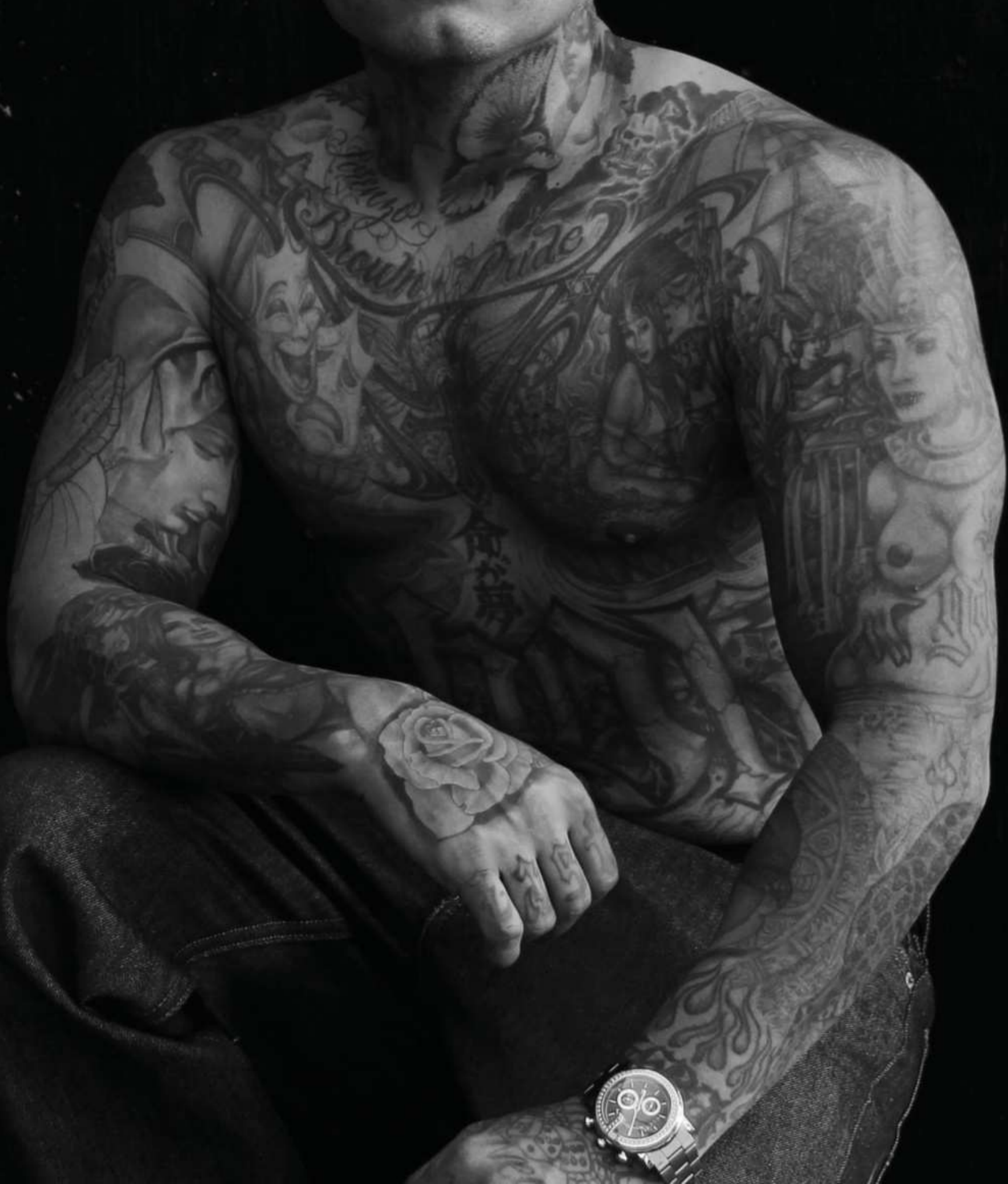


R222 ▼  
Emerald Venom  
Ring (Sizes: L, N, Q, T)  
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LOS ANGELES  
*Raiders*





# A FATHER'S FINAL GOODBYE

*FROM THE MAN WHO GAVE HIM LIFE COMES A TOUCHING TRIBUTE TO A TALENTED AND  
BELOVED YOUNG SON.*

photo by pep williams

In loving memory of Isaiah "Boo Boo" Negrete, a kind and generous soul who brought joy and laughter to all who encountered him. His radiant smile and commanding presence was a testament to his love of life and his faith in God. Isaiah cherished his relationship with others and loved people. Upon meeting him one could not resist his magnetism, hence why so many people loved him. Non-confrontational, respectful and always happy — a friendship with Isaiah was a lasting and meaningful experience.

Boo Boo was raised in the tattoo world. A true child of the industry, surrounded by great and legendary artists. Born with God given talent, he began his career at an early age, doing his first professional tattoo at the age of 14. Unwilling to work in the shadow of others, Isaiah found his own niche. He forged his own style of detailed fine line tattoos, thus creating his own legacy. His work was sought out by many and his celebrity clientele was vast.

His place in our lives and our industry will go down in the annals of tattoo history.

Isaiah is dearly loved and will be greatly missed.

**-Freddy Negrete**



# CRAIG DERSHOWITZ

Having grown up in crack-era Brooklyn, in between a housing project and a Russian ghetto, life was beautifully chaotic. I had the opportunity to experience multiple cultures. Not to mention, different tattoos – from praying hands and teardrops to black cats and ringed out fingers. I also had the choice to live two very different lifestyles. Neither was a perfect match, but both presented a very strong sense of three of the most motivating forces in my work today: community, history and our obligations to the other.

I chose to be actively involved in black rights and pan-Africanism movements. At a rally, a chant started. Based on the old Negro spiritual they sang, 'Go Down Moses...'. Moses, it struck me, was my family. The liberation struggle was a historic, Jewish venture. It was a passion that descended from Mt. Sinai in Israel to the streets of Coney Island and the alleys of Brighton Beach. Realizing this empowered me to take more risks in my advocacy work.

First though, I needed to liberate myself personally from some bindings. Something that only people who were heavily tattooed before 2000 understand is the intense sense of being an outsider in traditional society. The idea that people perceived you as some sort of, at best, outlier and, at worst, a biker, gangbanger, or whatever else their feverish imagine could conjure. For me, that was a place of great freedom. It was an excuse to do things that were unique, experimental, maybe a little weird. Being an outsider is a gift without a curse, so little is expected and so much can be gained.

I was working at Morgan Stanley at the time when they discovered my tattoos at a company retreat. Never having truly fit into the corporate culture, the reason was now manifest. All of a sudden, I was perceived differently. I had two choices, work hard to ingratiate back into their staid culture or, fuck it— double down on the preconceived bias. I pushed all the chips into the middle. I opened a graffiti magazine and, with seven others, co-Founded Artists 4 Israel.

Artists 4 Israel is a social impact organization that fights hate with art and places beauty over bigotry. Artists 4 Israel is the organization that administers the Healing Ink project. When we first considered this idea in 2013, we lost a lot. A member of the

Board of Directors quit in protest, another stayed, but there was an obvious rift. We had to fight a serious budget battle and find a way to justify the program within our broader framework. Organizationally, our goal had been to allow artists to see Israel for themselves, and when they inevitably fell in love with it, to empower them to creatively share that feeling with their followers. Tattooing did not fit.

We had no previous connection to tattooing. But, also just by being an organization that would consider such a project, we were different from our peers. Our previous work had always been extraordinary. We told the story of Israel's beauty, and fighting anti-Israel hatred but we did so in a social impact driven way. Such as 41 painted bomb shelters and the healing in Israeli communities under rocket fire. The Healing Arts Kits, a post-traumatic stress disorder preventative emergency first-aid kit, were distributed to thousands of children. Significant streetwear brands gave away free clothes to refugee children who found safe harbor in Israel from wars in Syria, Sudan, and elsewhere under the name of Artists 4 Israel.

We discovered that we loved helping people. Yes, we wanted people to love Israel, but, more, we wanted them to love doing good. The only way to claim the compassion, humanity, and creativity of the country we supported was for us, as a country, a people and an organization, to live up those very ideals of beauty, charity, and seeking life.

There we were, with no home in either place, a beautiful mess of confusing but interconnected goals. This was the foundation of the Artists 4 Israel term of "humanitarian advocacy." Every organization fighting for some idea should be forced to make sure that, no matter what else, they help people in some real, tangible way. You should demand it of them too. But, because we were adrift, our only obligation was to ourselves to make sure our tattoo program covered the scars of war, helped survivors reclaim their bodies, and that it all healed people.

Three years later, we finally had the courage to try. We wondered if we would find worthy tattoo recipients. Dror had jumped on a terrorist entering a concert venue and prevented the loss of hundreds of lives with his singular act of heroism. Barak absorbed

more than 30 bullets in his vest, arms, and legs while performing CPR on an injured soldier, only succumbing to his own pain when his brother soldier died in his arms and waking from his coma after months in the hospital. Shiri was flirting with a boy when a bomb exploded at the doorway to the bar where she had spotted her crush. 10 years later, she was finally coping. There have been more than a 100 more stories like these.

Could we find artists that were warm, kind, generous, egoless but also talented, respected and well-known enough to give the program merit. I am not going to list names for the sake of brevity, and because I refuse to cut anyone of the 30 plus artists out, but the answer is a resounding yes.

Working among priceless works of art and antiquities at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, or in a private backstage space of the Apollo Theater showed that we were also giving back to our artists, demanding their work be seen in the proper context of great art.

Artists 4 Israel led to Healing Ink Israel and, now, Healing Ink, NY, Healing Ink Orlando and Healing Ink Women's Liberation. Its core mission is to 'help people injured in terror or conflict heal through the art of tattooing.' In short, we wanted to cover the scars of terror survivors with tattoos. We wanted to help them reclaim their bodies. So much more happened. We brought people out of their self-imposed exile to meet others who had common pain. We combined survivors from around the world who had experienced common tragedy. Anti-Israel and Anti-Western hate-based terror created all too common suffering. We helped them all continue to find their uncommon strength.

I keep three things with me: A key to the city of Sderot I received when Artists 4 Israel painted the bomb shelters there in the middle of a warzone and two challenge coins, one from the Orlando Police Department and another from the NYPD. Of all the awards and accolades received, these are the three that matter because they are rare, they show courage in the face of fire, and are given by brave men and women as part of some small society. They are like C/S used to be. We still live that traditional ideal of helping people even though it is applied in a very non-traditional way.



*inked people*









# JOSH LUBER

---

**Favorite location to have a meeting?** In order: via text, via email, on my couch.

**Favorite restaurant in the world?** 69 Bayard (Chinatown, NYC, now closed).

**One celebrity you would let tattoo you?** Jonah Hill.

**One exotic animal you want to own in your lifetime?** Not really down with owning animals, but it'd be cool to have a shark with a laser on it's head.

**Something you want to be known for?** My daughter Fiona. My son Javi. StockX, i.e., changing the future of all e-commerce and all investing. Fifty-one points in the 2003 B-league championship basketball game, Atlanta Rec League.

**Biggie or 2Pac and why?** 2Pac. West Coast all day. C'mon.

**Favorite musician of all time?** I don't have a favorite musician, but my iPod is 1/3 Eminem, 1/3 Billy Joel and 1/3 everything else. Also, I don't use an iPod anymore.

**Favorite business book?** *'You're Welcome'* from Moana has 378M views and we're still talking about books? Gary Vaynerchuck's IG page is spot on.

**Where you see yourself in 10 years?** Still running StockX; still taking naps.

**What's your ideal night out?** Playing poker

and answering emails.

**If you could bring someone back from the dead who would it be and why?** Kinda morose question, bro. It really depends on when you are bringing them back. All four of my grandparents have passed away, and I'd love to have spent more time with them, but if I'm bringing them back to the moment before they passed, that doesn't really work, ya know. Otherwise, can I choose a fictional character? Still don't think Jax really had to die on *Sons of Anarchy*. That was rough.

**Have you ever thought of being a musician?** LOL not for a second. In second grade they put a saxophone around my neck and I was like wtf. I think I pulled something.

**What's your daily routine?** Kinda personal, no? Let's just focus on sleeping: 3:00am to 7:30am; 2:30pm to 2:41pm; 8:30pm to 9:00pm.

**Favorite food?** Egg rolls from 69 Bayard. Spinach dip from Houstons. Cheesesteaks from Jims. Haribo Gummi Peaches.

**Top three vices in order of relevance?** Sneakers; 5 hour energy; candy.

**What would you describe your style as?** I don't even know anymore. It used to be eclectic, but when you're 40 and spend more time dressing your 6-year-

old daughter then watching what the cool kids wear, I think it just makes you random.

**Do you only listen to hip-hop?** No. What kind of question is that? Do you only eat spaghetti?

**First concert you attended?** First concert I ever bought a ticket to was Snoop during my junior year of high school (1993). But then he was arrested for murder and the show was cancelled. So the first concert I ended up going to do was Parliament during my freshman year of college. I'm not really a fan of concerts. Or crowds. Or standing too long.

**How will the world end?** We're good.

**Favorite sneaker?** I have seven pairs of the Air Jordan 1 Lance Mountain white, so that's relevant to this question, but I think my favorite sneaker of all time is the LeBron 6 Stewie Griffin.

**Most recent sneaker purchase?** Nike Air Max 1 Parra, for my wife.

**Favorite basketball team?** Sixers. Trust the Process.

**What is one trend in sneakers or streetwear that you'd like to see more of?** There is a this very, very, very little known trend of sending me rare and expensive sneakers and streetwear for free. That'd be cool to see more of.



# STEFAN JAMES

---

**Looking back, how did music play a role in your childhood and adolescence?** Music was everywhere. It's the only way I ever knew how to really communicate.

**What artists inspired you growing up, and helped to develop your own style?** A lot different artists inspired me growing up and today. Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder for his music and his activism, Boys II Men, Babyface, Sinatra, Luis Miguel most definitely, especially vocally. I grew up with a lot of music. There was always soul and church music at home, but R&B, for sure, has had the strongest influence on me since childhood until today. Our styles are way different, but I fuck with Travis Scott's music heavy [sic].

**What can fans expect from you in the near future in terms of new music?** I'm just writing about my life and being honest. Right now, the industry suffers from passionless mediocrity. No one writes for themselves,

everyone only cares about material success and polluting the music industry with fabrications. I'm a singer-songwriter at heart. I'm just writing about my life, no filters.

**Where, along the line, did you decide to pursue music as a career?** Music was never a career choice for me. I didn't grow up considering 'career choices.' Making music was instinctive. It was the only thing that helped me deal. It's my addiction and my therapy at the same time.

**What can fans expect from you in future in terms of new music?** After I drop this single in a few weeks, I'm going to keep dropping music consistently.

**Now, let's talk about tattoos. What was your first tattoo, and how did it lead you to become a collector?** I started getting tatted when I was young and never stopped. I'm 20, and I've had these tattoos for years. I feel

that most of these [tattoos] are reminders, and I get a new one every time I want someone or an idea to stay close.

**Do you have any tattoos related to music, or do you plan to get any soon?** Most my tattoos are related to experience, lessons, or reminders. There are a few music ones -- I have a guitar on me and some other things. Most my upper body is tatted, so there ain't much room now. I want to start on my back.

**What's your favorite tattoo, and why is it so special to you?** There are a lot. Some of the tats on my sleeves are reminders of my brother. The ones on my neck are some of my favorites; they're reminders of my constant struggle to get better. I have a "día de los muertos" tattoo—it's a constant reminder that I shouldn't grieve over the people I've lost on this earth, but celebrate their memory.











# SCOTTY SIRE

---

**After Vine died in 2016, were you worried that your career was also dead?** At that point, I think I'd already started making some YouTube videos and I wasn't making very much money, but I saw potential in it. However, when I saw it was truly dwindling out, I said, 'What am I going to do? I might have to move back home and be a bartender again.'

**What is the Vlog Squad?** The vlog squad was started by David, and what he did was something kind of revolutionary in the YouTube world. He took the idea of making a daily Vlog, but then instead of making it a vlog about his life, he made it a vlog about other people's lives. And since he had plenty of other big personalities, like Zane, Liza and Elton, he was able to throw them into these comedy sketches.

**If you had to give each member of the Squad a superlative, what would they be?** Liza and David would be 'Most Likely to Succeed,' Zane would be 'Class Clown,' Heath would be 'Most Likely to Get in

Trouble,' and I would be something about being sad.

**Has the Vlog Squad experienced challenges creating content since moving out of your house?** The vlog squad has experienced problems creating content since we started vlogging.

**What does 'too much Scotty' mean and why do you think it became a running joke?** I have such a hard time remembering how 'too much Scotty' came about, but I think it had something to do with me being really boring on camera. It was a joke where I would say something that wasn't funny, a dad joke or I took a joke too far. They would always cut me out of the video and people started commenting 'too much scotty.'

**In addition to vlogging, you've also launched a rap career. What made you decide to pursue a career in music?** Well, here's the tea, I always thought I had a beautiful voice. \*laughs\* No, my friend Fitz produced my first song and I went to help

him out with a video and he's like, 'You can actually rap. You're good at this.' And then we ended up making a song, and the song is my most viewed YouTube video. So, I started to take it more seriously. It's a lot of fun to do and I don't want to be stuck only making vlogs, if I can create something that I'm actually passionate about.

**What's your first tattoo, your favorite tattoo and your most recent tattoo?** I got my first tattoo when I was 18 and was still in high school. It's a huge bear on my side, which has a four-leaf clover, a CD eyepatch, a fish with legs, an anchor and a chain that says 'The Kids Want Techno,' on it. My favorite tattoo has always been the messed up smiley face on my stomach that turned into the Cheshire Cat. My most recent tattoo is a piece I got in Thailand.

**What's up next for Scotty Sire?** I'm releasing an album in September. Right now, I'm on tour with the Vlog Squad and I hope that once that finishes and I release my album, I can go on my own tour.



# FISHBALL

## The Italian Bombshell is Making Money Moves in the Music Industry

photos anotonio cassaro words by devon preston

*While she may have grown up on an island in the Western Mediterranean sea, today Fishball Suicide is one of the most well-known tattoo models in the world. In 2014, Felisja Piana was discovered by an Italian photographer on Facebook and soon after, became an official Suicide Girl. The alternative pin-up website ignited Piana's career overnight, and she became known worldwide as Fishball. Then, in 2016, she began shooting behind the camera for SuicideGirls and has had over 30 sets bought by the site. Instead of staying busy working as a model and photographer, Piana was dead set on becoming a triple threat.*

*Enter Bada\$\$ B, a girl group comprised of Piana and Christina Bertevello, that has already released two viral tracks with producer Razihel. We caught up with Piana to learn why she chose to chase a career on the charts and what fans can expect from eclectic influencer.*

**You're recognized around the world as a social media influencer, photographer, and tattoo model. What led you to become a Suicide Girl, and did you believe that you would one day have 1.6 million followers?**

**FELISJA PIANA:** It was totally random. It wasn't in my plans to be a Suicide Girl, or even a model or a photographer. One day, an Italian staff photographer from SuicideGirls wrote me on Facebook. During that time, I was living in the south of Italy on the island Sardinia. I was working on a farm in a small town of 400 people. For me, this is so crazy!

**What made you decide to pursue a career in music, and why did you form Bada\$\$ B?**

**FELISJA PIANA:** One day I was just chilling with Christina, the other member of Bada\$\$ B, and saying why we should try to make music. I love rap and trap music, it's probably my favorite kind of music. I've been into it for almost 13 years now. It's been such a long time that I'm listening rap music, so I've decided to try it out, and I discovered that I love writing songs. Now, I'm writing for two to three hours every day.







**Will you put modeling/shooting for SuicideGirls on hold while you're pursuing music, or do you plan to balance both careers?** Yes, I'll probably do less shoots as a model, but I'm not going to leave photography. I love also my job as a photographer, and I just need to figure out how to both without being crazy busy.

**How would you describe your music to someone who hasn't listened to it?** I'm not sure how to describe my music, actually, I don't think that it's possible to describe music. Music is a feeling, so it's really hard to explain. I'm actually working on two different projects: Bada\$\$ B and Fishball. The type of music for both projects is trap and rap, but Fishball will be more deep and personal. So, if I have to describe my music to someone, I'd say that my music is just my feelings.

**Who are your main influences and inspirations when it comes to music?** My favorite rappers are Young Thug, Future, Travis Scott, and a lot more American artists. I know that this may sound weird, but I'm actually really inspired by pictures. I'm following a lot of photography pages on Instagram, and when I see something that catch my attention, I start to write something about it.

**Which rappers and musicians do you hope to collaborate with in the future?** I would really love to work with international artists, from the USA or from the South America. But, it's really hard for a singer that is from Italy because no one outside of Italy can understand what are you saying in your songs. I'll try in the future to sing in other languages. I'm already writing songs in Spanish.

**What made you decide to make music in Italian? Do you plan to record any songs in English?** Yes, but I need to come to the United States for a long time because my pronunciation [sic] is not that good, and my accent is really strong. I need also to learn slangs and everything.

**What were the major inspirations for your songs "Lo So Fare" and "Cuba?"** I don't know, actually! My producer just sent me that beats, and I was like, 'oh I love these ones.' So, I started to record the vocal lines with my phone and the verses just came out.

**At the time we're doing this interview, the music video for "Cuba" already has over 2.8 million views. Were you surprised by this video quickly going viral?** Yes, I was super surprised. We have no label, and we didn't promote the video with paid sponsors. It's not easy to do these numbers in Italy without sponsors.

**Where do you hope to be in 5 years as a musician?** I don't know. I just want to do what I love now, and I'm not planning to be super famous. I just want to do the music that I like, and if people like it, for me, that's enough.

**What's up next for Fishball?** Who knows?







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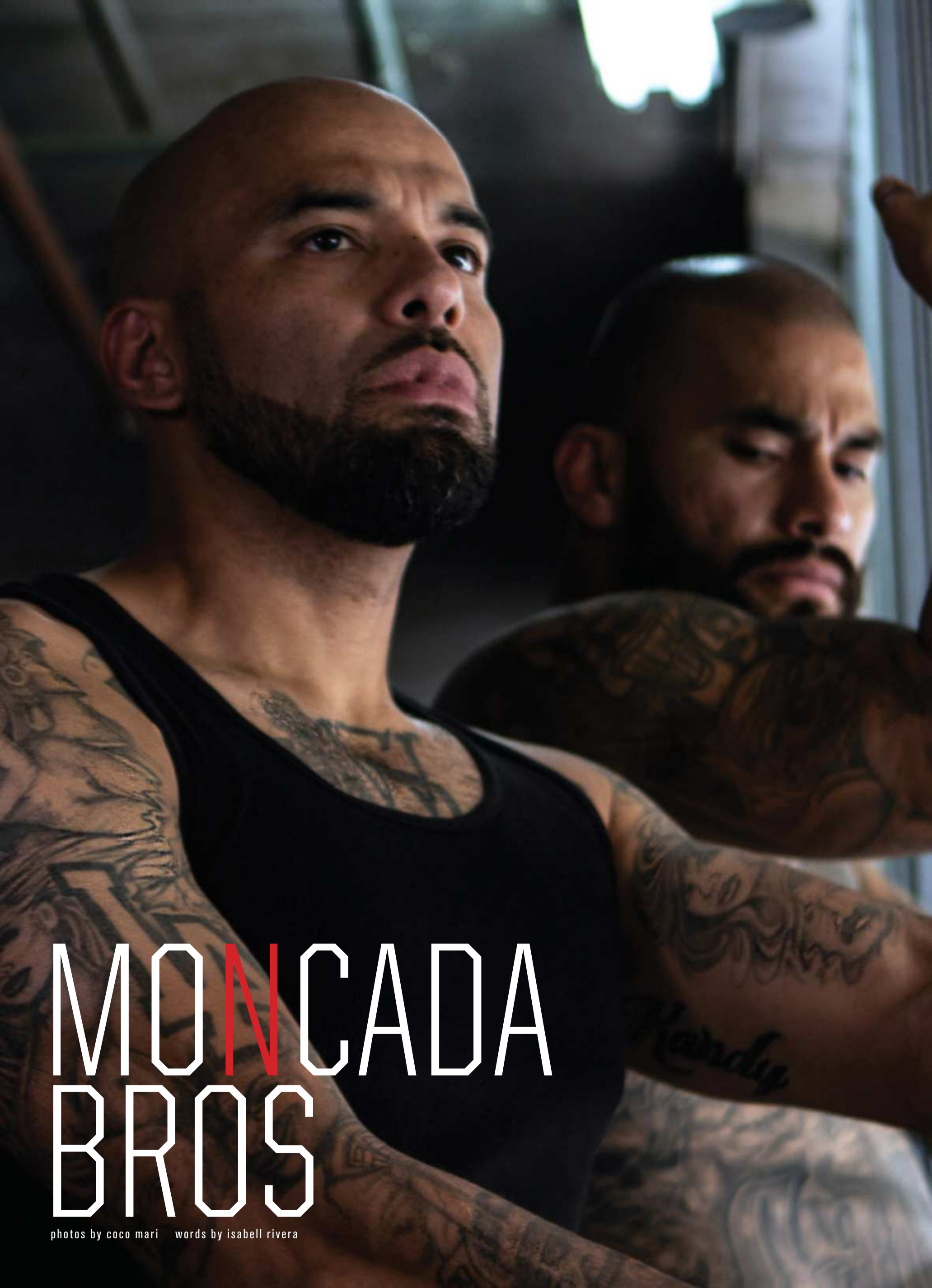
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# MONCADA BROS

photos by coco mari words by isabell rivera



*In season three of AMC's neo-western crime drama, Breaking Bad, Leonel and Marco Salamanca are first introduced as The Cousins. Together, they play twin brothers and fearsome hitmen of the Juarez Cartel. And while they were both murdered by an exploding bomb strapped to the back of a tortoise, they earned a second chance in the show's spin off prequel, Better Call Saul. We had the chance to talk with the real brothers, Daniel and Luis Moncada, about their bodies of work and their plans to take on the acting world by storm.*

**INKED: You play a cartel assassin in Better Call Saul. Do you relate to that role?**

**DANIEL (DANNY) MONCADA** I just put my past experiences of violence, prison, and people I have met, and other circumstances, into effect.

**What other character roles would you like to play in the near future?** As much as I like to play the bad guy, I would love to play a superhero at some point. Also, would love to do something that is boxing or MMA-related.

**Have you ever gotten seriously injured doing your own stunts?** No. Everything I've done has always been rehearsed, and I trust the stunt coordinators that I have worked with. Shout out to all the stunt performers out there, without them there would not be action on film. We need to get those guys Oscars and Emmys.

**How did you get into acting?** My brother Luis went to audition and after the audition, then casting directors started chatting with him. They asked him if he had any new tattoos. He replied, 'Yeah, my brother just did a tattoo on me' (as he was pulling up his left pant leg). The casting director and her associates looked at each other and asked, 'You have a brother? Does he look like you? Has he ever acted?' He said, 'No,' but the casting crew looked at each other again, got the sides [dialogue pages for the scene] and handed them to my brother and told him, 'Bring him in tomorrow, and make sure he studies.' The audition was for Breaking Bad, and my brother has a tattoo of La Santa Muerte (Saint of Death). On "The Cousins" intro for Breaking Bad season 3, episode 1, there is a scene of us paying homage to La Santa Muerte. Coincidence?

**What's your next tattoo?** I want to finish my thighs. I have an awesome tattoo that my buddy Carlos Rojas did on my right thigh; and on my left thigh, I have a tattoo I did on myself when I got out of prison in 2006. I would also like to get a portrait of my beautiful mom on my forearm — still contemplating because I told myself I was not going to go below my elbow, but if I do my mom's portrait, it's definitely going there.

**Do you have a favorite?** Yes, definitely the one on my back. The Maya piece "The Hero Twins" Hunahpu and Xbalanque in the K'iche' language. The twins have also been identified in the art of the classic Mayas (200-900 AD). The twins are often portrayed as complementary forces. The complementary pairings of life and death, sky and earth, day and night, sun and moon.

**Who does/did your tattoos?** I got most of my tattoos in prison. The homie that tattooed me is serving a life sentence. Solid dude. He's been in there since 1995. So many talented artists in there, unfortunately. They're lost in the system forever.

**Are people intimidated by you?** Yes, because of the way I look. A lot of people look at me funny because I look mean and have tattoos, but little do they know that I'm a teddy bear. When I was younger, I used to take it personal,

now I just laugh at how ignorant they are, and I don't care because I know who I am, what I stand for, and where I am going.

**When you're not acting, what do you like to do?** I love boxing, Muay Thai, and MMA — period. Unfortunately, I got into a car accident in late 2016 and got pretty messed up. I'm in a lot of pain, even after three epidurals in my lower back and a PRP injection on my left knee. I hope one day to get back to how I was before the accident, but I doubt it. I also love tattooing, but I haven't done it in a while. Any victims on here reading that want me to come out of retirement? Hit me up!

**Is there something people would be surprised to know about you?** Yes, that I love helping people. I get a huge satisfaction of helping others. I don't care about getting anything in return. All I care is that I helped someone. My reward is to see that person that I helped happy. That fills my heart with joy tremendously.

**With your look, you can easily be typecast as a gangster. How do you see yourself branching out of that?**

That's a great question. As of now, typecasting is paying the bills, and I honestly love being the bad guy. We get to do the cool shit, like explosions and shoot outs. But yeah, I would like to branch out of being the bad guy.

I recently worked on Kidding, Jim Carrey's new TV show for Showtime, which premieres September. That role is a bit different than what I usually play. Some of my other projects are a Clint Eastwood feature, which he stars and directs, called The Mule. It has great cast — Bradley Cooper, Andy Garcia, Michael Peña, Laurence Fishburne, Taissa Farmiga, Clifton Collins Jr., and the list goes on. And of course, Better Call Saul season 4 as Leonel Salamanca.

**You play a cartel assassin in Better Call Saul? Do you relate to that role?**

**LUIS MONCADA:** In certain ways, we relate. Not everything, but there are things that are very similar. We're not ruthless killers, but we've done and seen some crazy shit.

**What other character roles would you like to play in the near future?** I'd like to do comedy.

**How did you get into acting?** It was all by accident. While doing security/bodyguard work in 2002, I was asked to be the star actress' bodyguard. From there, I went on to get an agent, a manager, took acting classes, read books on acting, and here we are.

**What's your next tattoo?** Something related to Muay Thai or boxing

**Do you have a favorite?** The ones my brother did.

**Who does/did your tattoos?** I did most of them in prison. The rest my brother did.





**Are people intimidated by you?** Sometimes, until I open my mouth and they see I'm a normal, nice guy. A funny guy.

**When you're not acting, what do you like to do?** Muay Thai and boxing.

**Is there something people would be surprised to know about you?** That my son melts me. He works me all the time. He's got me in the palm of his hand.

**With your look, you can easily be typecast as a gangster, how do you see yourself branching out of that?** It happens way too much, but I'm branching out slowly. I'm testing the waters, and when the opportunity comes, I will strike.

**What made you want to get your eyelids tattooed?** I was in prison when I did it. The reason was stupidity. I was mad at the world, and didn't think I was going to make it to see 21. So, I got it with the mindset that when I died, everyone was going to see them.

**How do people react to them?** People love them. I make fun of them myself now, but back then, it wasn't fun. Now I make the best of it. I tell them the story of how I got them, using a metal spoon, and they just

can't believe that. But that's all we had in prison. We had to improvise. (In prison, tattoos on the eyelids are made by inserting a metal spoon under the lid so that the 'needle' doesn't penetrate the eye).

**You mentioned in another interview that you were in jail and in a gang. Were you lucky to get out, or is there still hope for others to get out?** Yes, I was in a gang and in prison. I was lucky to see the light. It's hard to get out of that life if you grew up with it. If that's all you see every day, you're almost expected to be in it sooner or later. But, change is wanting and trying to improve yourself, to be someone, to do something in your life aside from going to prison time after time, and starting from zero every time. There's hope for anyone that really, really want change.

**Is the way you entered the gang life, and eventually jail, the same path kids are taking now?** Yes, it's always the same thing. Kids that need to belong, or are troubled and seek father figures look at these gang leaders, and for the moment they seem cool and nice, but all that is BS. They're just going to use you for the gang's purpose — whatever the gang needs. It's not about you anymore, it's about them.

**What did you learn through that experience?**

I learned that there's nothing more important than school and family.

**Do you have any gang-related tattoos?**

Yes, I still have some, but I removed the majority with laser — the visible ones.

**How do you feel about your gang tattoos now?** Regret.

**Tell me about the work you do in school and prison. What do you tell those kids and prisoners?** I've done motivational speaking for schools, after school programs, probation school, camps, and jails. And I'll keep it short, but it comes down to...there's a different way. You don't have to go to jail or be in a gang to seek love or belonging — just be yourself. The right people will come around and love you for who you are. Prison is a waste of time. Gangs are a waste of time. Put all your energy into school, sports, or whatever you're passionate about. Do and treat people how you'd like to be treated, or how you'd like people to treat your family — with love and respect.



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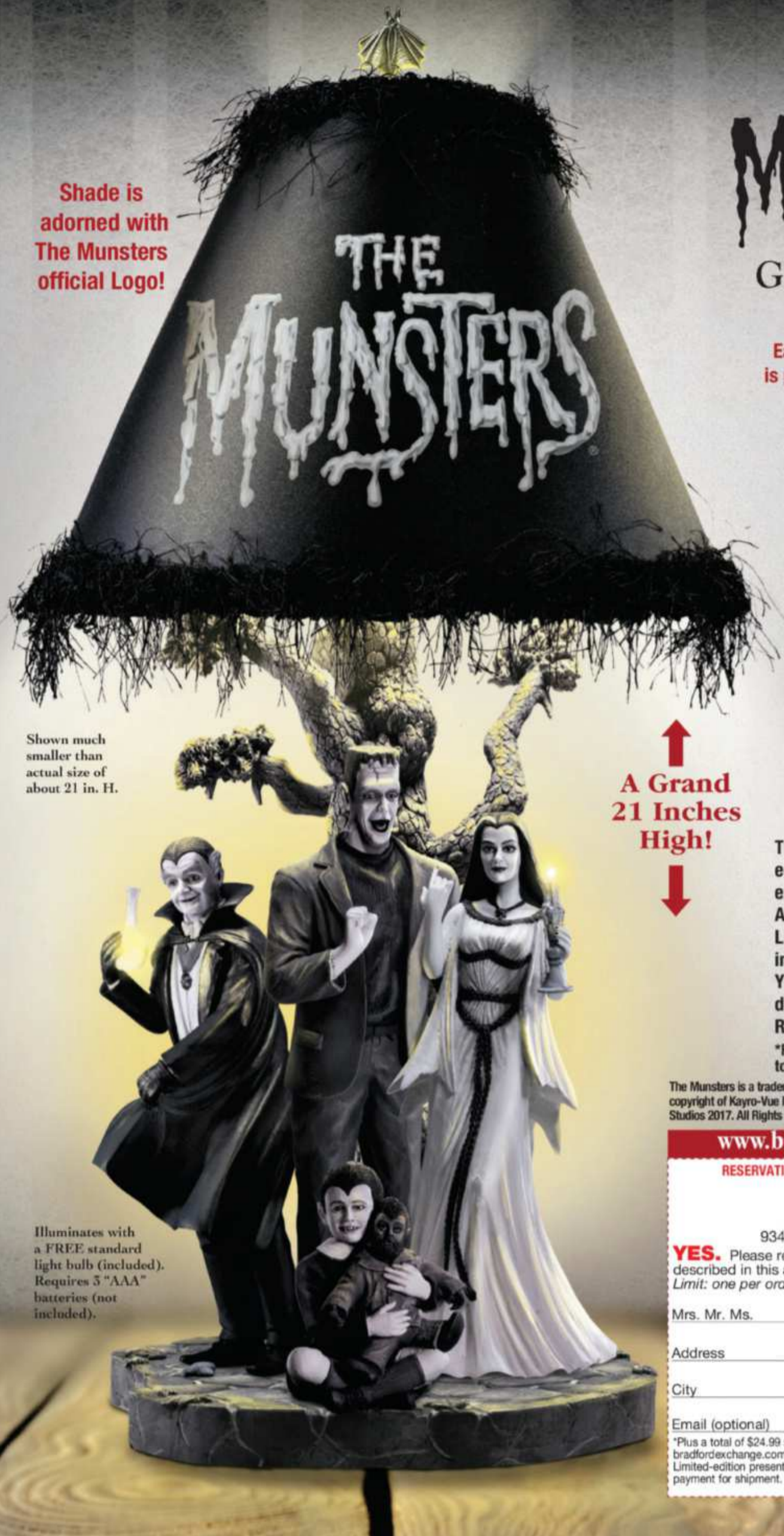
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# DARKNESS TO DAWN

Dave Navarro talks drug addiction, mental illness and Ink Master with Oliver Peck

photos by brian ziff words by paul gambino







In 1986, Dave Navarro joined the alternative rock band Jane's Addiction, and the group quickly became one of the most successful acts of the early 1990s. Navarro went on to release four studio albums under Jane's Addiction, following a stint as a guitarist for the Red Hot Chili Peppers from 1993 until 1998. Aside from being regarded as one of the greatest guitarists of all time, his impressive acting chops on the small screen haven't gone unnoticed; nailing roles in television hits such as *Sons of Anarchy* and *Odd Mom Out*. Unfortunately, his path to stardom didn't come without tragedy. Just three years before joining Jane's Addiction, Navarro's mother was murdered by her ex-boyfriend. At 19 years old, he suppressed the trauma of losing his mother by thrusting himself into a world of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. Soon, Jane wasn't the only addiction in Navarro's life, as he spent years battling with substance abuse and mental illness. Luckily, Navarro was able to turn his life around and has since become an advocate for addiction recovery with MusiCares.

Navarro may have some recurring roles on TV, but these days, his creative vitality shines as the current host of Paramount Network's *Ink Master*. We caught up with Navarro and tattooer Oliver Peck between takes to learn what it took for the guitarist to go from darkness to light — and how he's leading others down the same path.

**OLIVER PECK: Let's start with the recurring question people ask me about Dave, and that is, 'Why the fuck is Dave Navarro a judge on a tattoo show?'**

**DAVE NAVARO:** I get that a lot too. The answer is, I have a history of getting lots of tattoos. Some are really good, some are really terrible. I know the difference. I've been a big part of the community and just a fan of the art for many, many years. However, I don't think the show stresses the point enough that I'm supposed to be the guy that goes into the shop and gets a tattoo. I'm the customer. I'm the client. So, there needs to be a judging voice from someone who's not coming at it from an artistic standpoint, not from a technical application standpoint, but just an overall, 'If I was a canvas and walked into the shop, would I be stoked with that tattoo?'

**Another thing I tell people is that Dave has been getting tattooed longer than some of the people that are on this show have been alive. You've got tattoos from some groundbreaking artists.**

Yeah. My first tattoo was at Spotlight with Bob Roberts when I was like, 17 years old. I have work by Mark Mahoney, Hanky Panky, a lot of the second generation 'old timers.' Ironically, out of the three of us, I'm probably the one that knows best what it's like most to be judged by people not of my profession, you know what I mean? So, every review I've ever had was written by a non-musician. Every critic we've ever had has been a non-musician. Every fan that talks shit online is usually a non-musician. So, in certain sense, I identify with the artists because they're putting it out there — putting their work and what they love out on the line for everyone to see and to judge and to critique. I can relate to what it feels like to be in their shoes, and I can also relate

to being a canvas, being a customer and a client. So, I kind of come at it from both ends.

It's really weird. I get stopped on the street now by people who say, 'Hey, you're that Ink Master guy,' and they have no idea that I play music. It's just the weirdest thing that there's a whole new generation of people who only know me from the show. This thing is really, really become something I don't think any of us expected.

I love doing the show. It's nothing but inspirational for me. Whether it's somebody who goes home first, whether it's somebody [who] wins, whether it's anybody in between — just watching people with a passion who believe in their work and want to step into the arena like that. I think victory goes to them no matter what because there's a lot of people who sit back on the couch and say, 'I could do that,' but they're not doing it.

**That's another thing people don't realize, just how long the judging process is.**

You're right. People are not aware that the critiquing process is about five or six hours long. They just see little snippets and hear sound bites like, 'This is great, this sucks, this is fucked,' but we're there all day, and those artists have to stand there for the entire time.

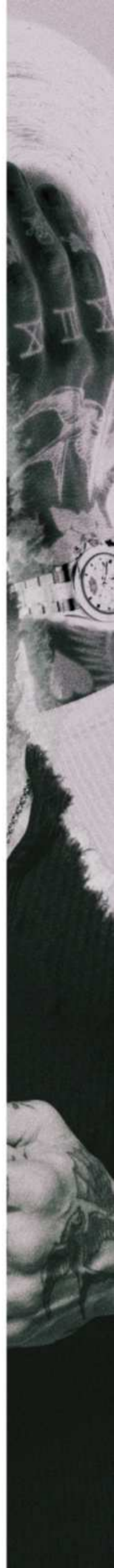
Yeah, sometimes there has been a few times where after the votes were made, we we're like, 'Man, it could've gone a different way. It really could've gone either way.' Sometimes it's so close. It's one little thing for sure, and then you look back at it the next week and say, 'If I concentrated on a different element, this could have went a different way.'

**That brings me to another burning issue and that's the haters.**

I remember when *American Idol* first came on the scene and people that never played a live concert before were instantly famous. So, a lot of old school musicians fought against that premise and said, 'Hey, this is bullshit. I fucking paid my dues, driving in a van from city-to-city for shit gig money.' But now, *American Idol* and these other shows, that's the norm. That's the way it is, people. And so, the same thing happened when *Ink Master* started. People were like, 'Well, I've been tattooing for 20 years, and I had to travel the country and travel the world and the build my name up, and now there's some kid that's only been tattooing for a few years and now he's on *Ink Master* and showing off to the world.'

**Let's get into your music side. You've been a part of so many great bands, most notably Jane's Addiction and Red Hot Chili Peppers, and you are heavily involved in the music industry and the music community, but now focusing a lot of your energy toward raising awareness and to help with the struggles other musicians are dealing with.**

You're referring to the MusiCares foundation. Well, there's a number of things about MusiCares. It's been around for a long time and was founded years ago, and is now part of the Grammy Association.





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MusiCares has always been there for musicians and struggling addicts in the music industry, whether it's the lead singer, or the monitor guy, or the lighting guy, whomever. Anybody who's struggling with drug addiction, substance abuse, which you know I certainly have. I'm an ex-junkie. I mean, one of the worst most my friends said they had ever seen. When I got clean years ago, I wrote a book with Neil Strauss [Don't Try This at Home: A Year in the Life of Dave Navarro, HarperCollins] all about my ups and downs with drug addiction.

Before the book came out, I began to feel it wasn't right to [be] making money off the stories revolving around the darkest times in my life -- and other people's misery. So, the one solution I had was all the proceeds from that book went to a greater good, and that was MusiCares. This was around 2001, and that's when I got involved with them, and since then, I've had the opportunity to reach out to musicians who are struggling, or addicts that are, you know, close to death or need treatment and can't pay for it. MusiCares steps in and provides that care, puts people right into treatment, [and] gets them on the road to recovery. But, they've also really branched out into the world of mental health awareness, which is really something that I'm passionate about because, you know, I'm also a survivor of violent crime.

What we want to do is pull the covers off the whole stigma around mental health and say it's ok because lots of people suffer from this, and there is help available and you're not alone. They have worked with a lot of friends of mine — some that have done really well, and some who ultimately haven't done well. But, over the past year I lost a couple of really dear friends that were successful and had everything and they ultimately decided to leave. They chose the path out and left everybody with a huge hole in our hearts and their fan base. We've lost a lot of tattooers to drug addiction too. We even saw it with one of our own winners — Scott Marshall died of a drug overdose. I mean, he was one of the most talented dudes we've ever had.

I think whether people are famous or not, whether people are successful or not, the one thing a lot of people who take their own life have in common is that most people think that those people were doing great. Now, people are okay with discussing their drug problem, but when somebody has a mental health issue, people are less reluctant to tell admit it. They'll say they're just depressed, don't feel well, and that leads them down a road of secrecy, and then by the time they're gone, people were like, surprised.

I think there's a tremendous amount of shame attached to asking for help. Whereas, my messages are telling people that it's a great strength to share your vulnerability. You know, it's a great strength to reach out and say, 'Hey, I'm suffering. I don't know what to do.' I'll tell you man — and you know this better than anybody -- that I personally have gone through that, and I was very, very close. I know what that emptiness and loneliness and hopelessness feels like. If I didn't have the people around me, and I didn't reach out, and I didn't make what I was going through known, I may not be here. I think that the real strength is knowing that reaching out for help — whether it's therapy, whether it's a best friend, whether it's a wife, whether it's a program of some kind, whether it's treatment, whether it's psychiatry — who gives a fuck as long as you're breathing.

My point is, is that over the last 30 years, it's become normal for people to seek help for drug addiction. So, for people that want to get off drugs, they'll go to their friends, they'll say, 'Hey, I need...I'm on..I'm on heroin or Oxycodone, and I need help. It's become a normal thing to ask for help. Yeah. What we need to tell people is that no matter what your problem is, whether it's alcohol, drugs, depression, or just drinking, just straight up feeling fucking insane. Yep. It's okay to ask for help.







A photograph of a dollhouse interior. The walls are painted a soft pink. A white door with a semi-circular window is visible in the background. Above the door, a blue deer head with a floral arrangement is mounted on the wall. To the left, a white wooden balcony with a decorative railing is visible. In the foreground, a white, ornate chair with a high back and curved legs is partially visible. The floor is made of light-colored wood. The overall aesthetic is whimsical and feminine.

# Beyond the Doll House

photos by hugo v words by devon preston











With almost 10 years in the entertainment industry, Kelly Eden knows better than anyone how to maintain a lasting career as an influencer. She began as a model and quickly soared on to the industries' radar, landing features in almost every major tattoo magazine in print and gaining campaign deals for international companies. And while Eden could have continued to ride the wave of her modeling success, she chose to expand her brand to YouTube and has since developed an exciting, new following. On YouTube, she's had the opportunity to show the world her true colors, which aren't always girly pastels, and create a brand that is both multidimensional and sustainable. We caught up with Eden to learn how she went from Model Mayhem to the YouTube homepage.

**How did you begin your career as a model?**

This is a career that just kind of like fell into my lap, because I started doing it for fun. This was back when I was in college, my friends would take pretty pictures together and do mini photo shoots. Then from there, I got on modelmayhem.com—it's a space for photographers, models, makeup artists and anybody who's in the industry. I was able to network with all the local photographers and I was doing it just for fun. I thought it would be cool to take pictures to show my kids someday. I ended up becoming a well known name in Denver and then eventually in America.

**What are your thoughts on the way that young models enter tattoo modeling today? Do you think they have advantages or do you think that you had it easier?**

I think it's different. I came around the golden era, you know when tattooing became really, really popular and there were dozens of tattoo magazines out there. I wouldn't say it was easy for me, but I think I had a lot more options and I did things right. I got a really good artist, I was able to network really well and I was in almost every single tattoo magazine out there. Nowadays, there are like one or maybe four [tattoo magazines] at the most. And all you really hear about today is INKED. Now I think it's just different. I think a lot of people look at my success and the things that I've done, and they think 'oh, I want to do that too.' Which is fine, but they also say 'I want to do this so I can pay off my student loans or whatever,' and I have to be like 'oh no, no, no, there's no money.' In a way it's still kind the same, it's all still based on trade and the passion of it. But it's different because there's less options available out there.

**How has your personal style impacted your career?**

Well, it's really impacted it. I would say that once I got on YouTube and was able to show the aesthetic of my whole house and how over the top it is—I think people became very intoxicated and interested by it. I think that really intrigues people and I think it's added to my brand as Kelly Eden, but it's also a neat way of expressing myself. It's gotten me a lot of unique attention, but it's a very small niche.

**How did you transition your existing following to YouTube or did you develop a whole new following?**

You know, what? It really feels like a whole new following. The YouTube audience is so different than what you see on Instagram. I would say that Instagram's audience is a little bit more mature, whereas I feel like there are a lot of kids, younger teens and young adults on YouTube. It's almost like a different society. I really had to start from the ground up. A lot of people who are my fans on Instagram transferred over, but it's been a struggle creating on a new platform and trying to gain a new fanbase.

**One of the things with YouTube, that really ensures success, is being honest with your audience. What made you decide to open up about your personal life online?**

When I started on YouTube and Instagram, I always thought that I had to only show my very best self and it kind of became a decorated persona that I couldn't really keep up with. I couldn't psychologically handle it because it was unattainable and wasn't even really human. It just felt like I was performing as a Barbie doll or something that just wasn't realistic. It really causes depression where I was conflicted with who I was and this persona that I created on YouTube. [The persona] was still me, but it was very forced, very smiley and something that I couldn't keep up with. And then I started doing videos where I talked about my feelings and was honest. If I would fumble over my words, I would leave it in there. And it felt so therapeutic that I could really be myself, say how I feel and not worry about how anyone's going to perceive me. It was actually really well received and it was a learning experience. When you're vulnerable and you show that you're like anybody else, then people can relate to you more and therefore they feel a stronger connection to you.

**How does it feel to be a role model to the younger generation on YouTube?**

It definitely feels a lot more fulfilling. It was really fun being a tattoo model, but it left me feeling like I wanted to do more in the world, create a sense of purpose and some meaning to my life. It's been great and very cathartic to be able to be open and honest knowing that I'm helping others in some way or another. It's just kind of created good sense of meaning to my life, which is something that I crave as an artist.

**What is the best advice you would give for creating a lasting career as a social media influencer?**

Be comfortable with who you are and just be yourself. It's not just for the sake of your brand, but the sake of your mental health. If you're trying to be something that you're not, then it's just not going to go anywhere and you're going to feel like a fraud in the end. And I think that anyone who is striving to be an influencer will find a more meaningful life if they are exactly who they are and go for that.

**What's up next for Kelly Eden?**

Right now I'm really focused on my family and getting in touch with my roots. I'm really focused on my mental health and enjoying my life with my friends and my family. I'm also trying to figure out how to enrich my life, but keep that balanced with work.









WHORE





HANNAH  
SHAW





*If you're a fan of watching heartfelt animal videos on Facebook, there's a good chance you're already familiar with Hannah Shaw. Shaw, aka the Kitten Lady, is a neonatal kitten rescuer, educator, and advocate making a monumental impact on social media. We caught up with the viral animal activist to learn why she's dedicated her life's work to saving tiny but mighty felines.*

photo by andrew marttila    text devon preston

**When did you start getting tattooed?** My first tattoo was a big piece on my back that says vegan. I was so committed to animal rights at that point in my life and still am obviously. And after that, all the pieces I've gotten are fairly large, I don't really have any small tattoos.

**How does your brand as a heavily tattooed person combat the crazy cat lady stereotype?**

People have this stereotype of cat ladies being these old, lonely ladies. They literally make costumes, board games, and action figures of cat ladies, and it's always the same thing. For me, that's absolutely not the case. I think that what I do is very strategic and deeply goal-oriented. It takes a lot of strategy, passion, and a deliberate effort that is not even remotely crazy. I think the crazy cat lady stereotype harms cats, as well as people. People are scared to get involved with cats because they don't want to be accused of being a crazy cat lady. A lot of men don't feel comfortable getting into involved with cats because they think it's something only for women. It's important to totally break down those stereotypes because it's 2018, and that's just not the case. People who work in feline welfare are many different genders, races, ages—it's a very diverse community.

**When did you become the Kitten Lady?**

I got involved in kittens about a decade ago when I found my first cat outside. I was living in Philadelphia and I was in a public park when found a kitten high up in a tree. I climbed the tree, shoved her down my shirt, shimmied down, and then was like, 'Oh my God, what do I do now?' After I found Coco, it was like a veil was lifted, and I started seeing how many kittens there are pretty much everywhere. So, I started taking care of them and finding them homes. It sort of grew and grew and grew. The name Kitten Lady came about because I'd never been a cat person before. When people asked me questions about cats, I'd say that I'm not really a cat lady, I'm a kitten lady. I'm a specialist in kittens because that's what I've dedicated my life to for the last decade.

I created the Kitten Lady social channels maybe four years ago now, as an effort to share the kittens I was saving and educate people about how to do it [themselves]. I was so happy to see it grow because having worked in animal welfare for most of my career; I've seen that kittens are a population that's gone underserved. They make up a large portion of the euthanasia

at animal shelters every year. And this is something a lot of people don't realize because unweaned kittens require specialized care, supplies, and knowledge that many shelters don't have on hand. If you're a two-week-old kitten and you enter the average shelter in America, you're not going to make it to the end of the day.

The first step for me is educating people about the fact that this is an issue. The second thing is educating people about the need for foster parents. I'm trying to get people involved on the local level with their animal shelters. The third thing is teaching people how to do it well and deal with all of the situations that come up when you're caring for [a] neonatal kitten. I try to share all of these skills in a way that is accessible, comprehensive and fun to watch.

**What's the most rewarding part of your job and what's the most difficult?**

Definitely the most rewarding part is the moment that a kitten turns the corner. I had this kitten recently, and he was hot mess. I got him as a preemie, when he was just hours old. I pour so much love into them and you just hope that it's going to be ok. I didn't know if he would survive. Then, right around four and a half, five weeks old, his eyes brightened and I sensed something changed. You realize that all this hard work is paying off. The hardest thing is putting out constant content, because people want a new video every week on YouTube. People want to know what's going on at all times, and I'm dealing with the expectations of hundreds of thousands of people, which is not easy. I want to be able to help every person one-on-one, but I can't because it's grown so big that I can't even open my Instagram without having hundreds of DMs. And a lot of these people are asking for valid help. It's heartbreaking to me that I can't physically be there to help every single person, but I use that as fuel to create better resources. The book that I'm writing for instance, it's called *Tiny But Mighty*, and it will be out in 2019.

It's going to be the most comprehensive piece of educational material that I've ever put out and nothing like it exists. There are like dozens, hundreds and thousands of people asking me for a very specific advice every day, but I know I can't help them all one-on-one. But creating these resources makes me feel that it's going to keep getting better.



# THE OCEAN IS WIDE, THE OCEAN IS HUGE...

Meet the woman who has pioneered a transformative therapy practice and empowers people with underwater portraits as they struggle through their physical and mental turmoil.

photos by erena shimoda words by paul gambino

Erena Shimoda is a talented photographer who specializes in taking beautiful underwater portraits while at the same time helping her subjects become empowered and feel beautiful and strong...sometimes for the very first time in their lives. She donates her time and money for this project as a way for survivors of cancer, domestic violence, PTSD and physical disabilities to take back their lives. Erena's goal is to spread this project across the globe, because "Everybody needs to escape and experience this life-changing underwater transformative photography session."

When Erena came up for air and put her camera equipment down for a well-deserved break from work, we asked her a few questions about her life and her passion.

**What came first for you, photography or scuba diving?** Scuba diving in Honduras in 2003! It was my first solo trip to Latin America with my little Spanish dictionary. I wanted to get lost and figure things out on my own, just like when I came to U.S. with no English skills in 1989.

I absolutely loved scuba diving and I become a dive master in Venezuela. My first camera was a disposable camera!

**When and how did you make the connection to bring the two together?** I volunteer for the Look Good Feel Better program. It's a place for cancer patients to learn how to put on makeup and wigs while undergoing chemotherapy. This program is for them to support each other, feel beautiful and gain confidence. It's giving them hope.

When I'm not shooting in the ocean, I shoot portraits in a swimming pool. I've been an underwater portrait photographer for over 10 years and I began to realize my clients gained confidence by facing new challenges — like having to pose underwater. I thought this will also work for survivors of cancer, domestic violence, PTSD and physical disabilities who are struggling with their new body. I wanted to give them courage by trying something new — an underwater transformative photography session. It's powerful and a beautiful escape.

**When did you realize the healing power of water?**

When I was struggling with my own depression. I reached out to psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists. I was on a few different medications, but nothing worked. I just felt worse and worse. I also could feel medications were hurting my body inside and out, but I didn't want to give up on finding a solution. One day, I read an article about a psychologist prescribing swimming as an antidepressant for his patients. Then I realized when I scuba dive, I can let all my worries and anger go. However, since I wasn't close to scuba destinations, I decided to go swimming every day.

I was hoping to feel better by being underwater. It worked! And now, I'm off all medications.

**Tell us how being underwater helps empower the subject.**

As soon as you're submerged (usually in the warm water), you quickly feel the physiologic and psychological changes. The body releases its stress and tension. The world is silent except for your breath and the bubbles and you forget all your worries and the distractions of life. In Japan, we take a hot bath after a long day of working. We say, "ahhhhh" and start rubbing and massaging wherever we feel tight on our body. We breathe slowly and deeply. This is the moment, we can let go of their stress and feel free. We can escape from the real world.

**What are the biggest difficulties in shooting these underwater portraits?** Finding crystal clear water with the right temperature! The other factor is the weather. I love to shoot in the ocean, but I can't control mother nature so I'll also reserve a pool as a back-up. Crossing my fingers all night before the photo shoot!

**You have traveled the world. Are there any bodies of water that you feel have the strongest healing powers?**

It's difficult to choose only one out of all the beautiful islands! I'm always rejuvenated and restored when I ascend to the surface. I have come to believe that underwater is my meditation space, I can be alone and be free. On average, the body of an adult human being contains 60% water. I definitely feel I have a lot more than that after these beautiful underwater escapes I have experienced

**You are tattooed and so are many of your portrait subjects.**

**What are your feelings about tattooing?**

I was born and raised in Japan, so I know that having a tattooed body is such a big deal. I can't enter certain public places because of my ink. When my mother found out, her eyes were full of sorrowful tears. It was heartbreaking for me to see that and I understood completely. So, when I go back to Japan or am around her friends and family, I hide my tattoos out of respect to my mother and the culture. To me, tattoos are defining my life and a further beatification of my body. I'm an introvert so this is a way to express who I am. People are interested and intrigued by the original, unique design concept. I'm proud to be Japanese and have beautiful work done by Colin Stevens who also grew up in Japan.

Tattoos on the cancer survivors are done by Shane Wallin.

A portion of the creative portrait business funds this project.

Erena is also looking for sponsors and donations so she can reach out to more survivors.

[www.underwaterhealer.com](http://www.underwaterhealer.com)





















# EILEEN VS. ARTHRITIS

“Disease isn't something that will stop me. If I am going to be the sick girl, I might as well kick ass at it.”

photos by eileen davidson and abi ghoulson-darktones photography words by paul gambino

It was a bitterly cold day in January of 1986 in the Lower Mainland of beautiful British Columbia when Eileen Davidson was born. . . it was also the same day the Space Shuttle Challenger blew up 73 seconds after lift off. Directly out of high school Eileen became an esthetician working in various spas and salons for the next decade. A month shy of her 27th birthday she gave birth to her son Jacob became a single mother. Shortly after, she began to experience chronic pain, fatigue and intense emotional disturbances like she never experienced before. After much confusion, embarrassment, shame and misdiagnosis at the age of 29 she was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, later followed by osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia. Unfortunately her nightmare had just begun. . .

Tell us what it's like to have rheumatoid arthritis. I often get asked if my tattoos hurt, rheumatoid arthritis taught me that's a pain that goes away. Just like the tattoo though, RA is permanent. There's no cure for arthritis.

Living with autoimmune disease rheumatoid arthritis is like living with a never-ending flu or hangover, along with pain and stiffness as if I ran a marathon the previous day. The fatigue is an unrelenting wall that prevents you from doing the simplest tasks and the cognitive dysfunction it wreaks upon you can make taking in information or forming sentences near impossible. Tired doesn't even begin to explain it — sleeping doesn't stop the chronic fatigue from nagging away at me constantly. The pain and fatigue plays tricks with my mind. The brain is a powerful organ, mental health is just as important and painful as physical health.

During my three years with RA, I've tried over a dozen pharmaceutical medications and a massive list of really fun physical and mental side effects to go with them, including lowering my immune system, ulcers, stomach bleeding, night sweats, hair loss, infections — to bursts anger, extreme depression and suicidal thoughts. We've all seen the commercials and read or heard the endless side effects, often the

drugs can be as bad as the disease.

Rheumatoid arthritis is more than your little old lady arthritis, and it ain't going away with over-the-counter pain killers.

**How and when were you diagnosed?** It was shortly after my 29th birthday. My son was just over 2 years old as I entered the world of juggling single motherhood tagged with chronic illness. It was to my surprise someone my age could get arthritis and even more surprised as I painfully discovered what arthritis really is like to live with. My aunt passed away the week I was diagnosed with the same autoimmune form of arthritis she was stricken with. I never saw her walk more than a few steps my entire life. I felt so alone, scared and confused. Fear paralyzed me.

For a number of years my chronic pain and tiredness was brushed off because of my age, profession as an esthetician and then pregnancy — I was misdiagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome. I wondered why the pain wasn't going away, only increasing, why I was so tired and so forgetful. It wasn't until I asked my family doctor to test me for rheumatoid arthritis did I start to get the answers and treatment I was in dire need of, but by that point, I was ready to be added to the list of people with the number one cause of long term disability in North America. I wasn't even 30.

**Do you have any other conditions?**

When you live with an autoimmune disease or chronic illness it is common to have more than one — physical or mental — which is why I also live with degenerative osteoarthritis, the other most common form of arthritis, musculoskeletal pain disorder fibromyalgia, major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder.

Arthritis effects 1 in 4 women, but the disease doesn't stop there. It doesn't discriminate against age, sex or race. Arthritis is an umbrella term for over 100 diseases and conditions, many of them include autoimmune forms such as lupus, psoriatic arthritis, and juvenile idiopathic arthritis, which can effect children as young as infancy. Every case is different.

What are the biggest misconceptions about your condition?

Arthritis has a number of misconceptions behind it, such as, only the elderly get it or it's just achy joints. Invisible disabilities are often looked over, it can't be that bad if you can't see it. People are confused when I tell them my disease is autoimmune. And even more confused when I tell them a two-year-old can be diagnosed. The severity of arthritis is often diminished by those who haven't experienced it firsthand or secondhand from loved ones.

Rheumatoid arthritis is the most crippling form of arthritis. The disease starts with the body's immune system attacking this fluid in the joints capsule called the synovial membrane which creates inflammation that affects the joints, which can cause deformation as the cartilage is destroyed, creating bone erosion and damage that is irreversible. There are 360 joints in the body for arthritis to target, including in your ears and jaw. Because RA is a systemic disease it can also affect the organs such as, the heart, lungs, brain, skin and eyes. If left untreated RA can be as fatal as stage IV Hodgkin's lymphoma or triple vessel coronary artery disease. The disease causes comorbidities such as, fighting off infections like pneumonia potentially very deadly. There is a high rate of suicides among the chronically ill and elderly.

Stigmas hurt when arthritis already





hurts enough. Arthritis is more than just achy joints and fatigue.

**What have you done not to succumb to a world of hurt?** In November of 2016, I introduced myself to The Arthritis Society to become an ambassador. I created my blog [www.chroniceileen.com](http://www.chroniceileen.com) to let my frustrations out as a chronically ill single mother set on a mission to improve the lives of those living with arthritis. My late aunt and grandmother both suffered severely from arthritis, a lot of what I do is in their memory. In less than a year I started being featured on top health websites, on TV, campaigns, traveling and winning/nominated for nearly a dozen awards for my patient advocacy. It didn't take long for me to start seeing the impact I could make. Through my struggles with pain, I found my voice and my purpose — tattoos included.

**Your first tattoo?** I was 22, confused, broke and was offered a free tattoo. I had wanted to be covered since I could remember but anxiety made me frightened of going into shops because anxiety makes you do a lot of weird

things. My first tattoo has since been covered up by my latest tattoo!

**Your most recent tattoo?** Covering up my first tattoo of crappy anchors with beautiful dark smoky purple roses on my chest by Lydia K at Arcane Body Arts in Vancouver BC Canada.

**Do you have any “disease based” ink?** I have the rheumatoid arthritis ribbon and a fighter on my wrist. It helps remind me through tough times that if I am going to be the sick girl, I might as well kick ass at it. Rheumatoid arthritis taught me how to be strong and to keep fighting.

**What's it like getting tattooed with your conditions?** It's more painful than without the condition, that's for sure, especially when going over joints that have been affected by my arthritis. Fibromyalgia tends to heighten pain. I've avoided my back because of my constant back pain from all three conditions, but I don't think it can stop me forever. I might swell more, bleed a little more and I may take longer to heal and scar easier. I also need to make sure I time it right with my medications, and when

switching I always ask my rheumatologist if it's ok to get tattooed on the medications. Timing can be important. So far, I've had no issues. To help ease the pain I have found relief with Ink Eeze Spray, Dr. Numb, THC/CBD edibles and/or a muscle relaxer. I always make sure to eat a big meal before, have candy on hand and drink plenty of water. I do need to take small breaks if my body is cramping up so communication and being comfortable with the artist is important. I'll expect to be exhausted for a few days after and spend them resting.

Tattoos are my own expression of myself and help me feel beautiful on the outside when I feel a lot of invisible pain.

**Something you are most proud of?** My son. My ability to overcome disease and use something positive with it while leaving an impact on other's lives. I got into the gym, lost 50 lbs and gave up alcohol. I learned how to take care of myself the best I could with despite chronic illness. Realizing just how strong I am, and I can be more than my disability.

Visit Eileen at [www.chroniceileen.com](http://www.chroniceileen.com)



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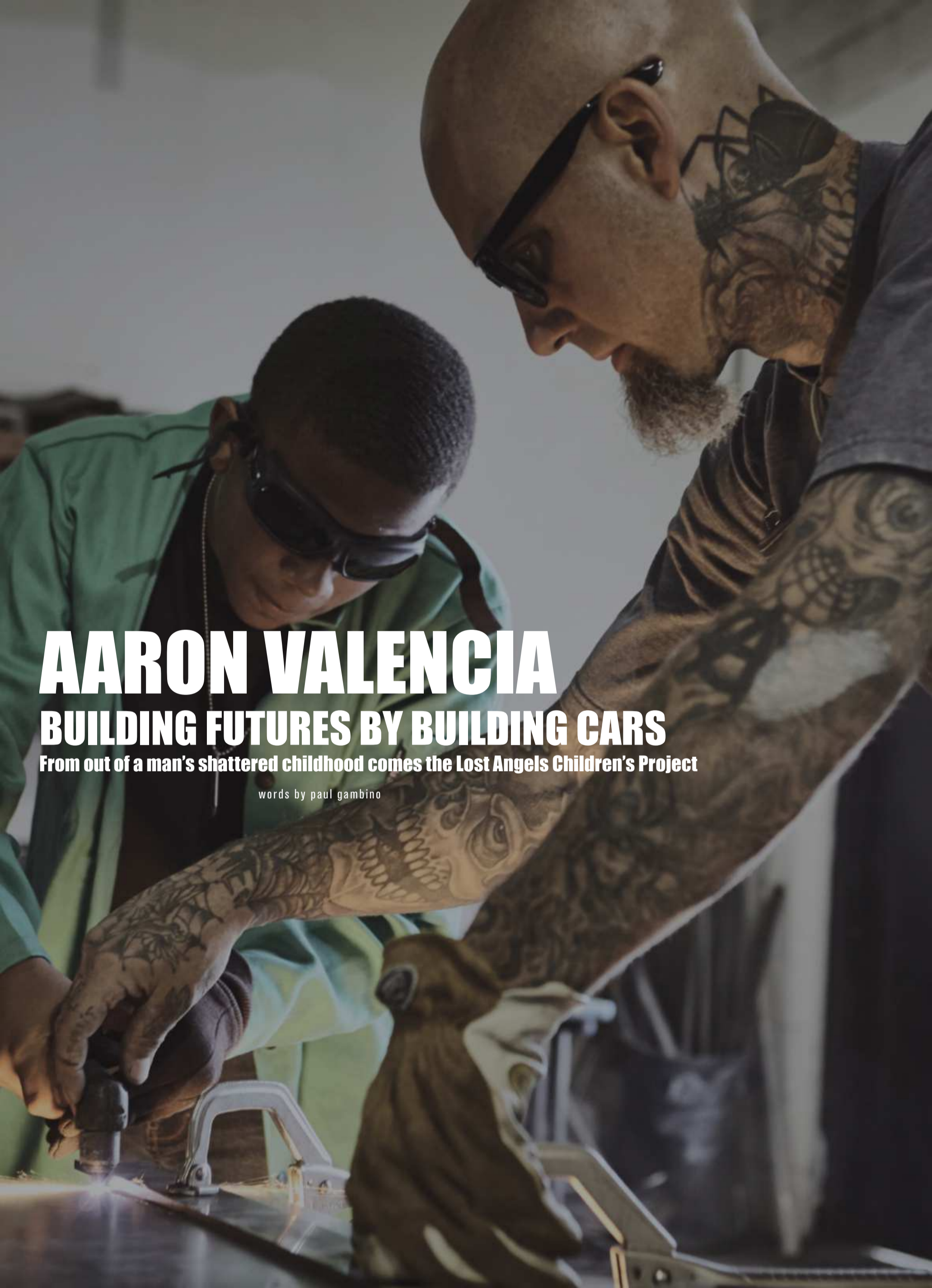
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# AARON VALENCIA

## BUILDING FUTURES BY BUILDING CARS

From out of a man's shattered childhood comes the Lost Angels Children's Project

words by paul gambino





photo courtesy of paul abell

Unfortunately, it's literally impossible to go through life and not be repeatedly slapped with the heartbreaking reality that too many children grow up in an environment that is wrought with pain and suffering. Broken families riddled with parents and siblings battling substance abuse and mental illness create a childhood that is nothing short of hellish.

Many of us donate money to certain causes and give lip service to countless depressing scenarios that are realities for far too many. Aaron Valencia is a man who came from the depths of teenage homelessness and drug addiction only to pull himself up by his bootstraps and turn his life around. Despite making a "name" for himself in the custom car market, Valencia had a soulful desire to never slip into a state of complacency and forget his roots. His journey began in 2011, volunteering in the soup kitchen at the Grace Resource Center in Lancaster, California where he quickly became "Hot Meal Leader." Eager to do more, he sold his prized possession — a Harley Davidson motorcycle — and stepped away from his work at the soup kitchen, all to make himself available to the needs of at-risk children.

That decision lead him through Southeast Asia, traveling through Chaing Rai, Thailand and, later, Laos, Cambodia. He taught English at a mountain school, helped construct a school for orphans, and assisted a non-profit helping with fresh water supply and building a playground at a school for abandoned families.

Upon returning to the states, Valencia began devoting his time to the children in his own community. It was at this time that Aaron realized he had found his calling, and merged his two passions together: restoring cars and helping children in need.

On his way to change children's lives at the Lost Angels Children Program, Aaron answered a few of our questions and told us how a chance encounter on a city bench saved his life — and is inspiring others.

**What did you do today?** Well, today was all day working on our fundraiser — our annual raffle. We're working nonstop on the giveaway, which is a 1954 Buick Riviera. Even some of the kids are coming in on off hours just to help keep the project moving forward.

**What were you doing 20 years ago?** I was homeless and I was a drug addict. I didn't have a lot of hope. I didn't have a positive outlet. I didn't have any resources to go to. All my role models were outlaws and gangsters, and I got strung out on drugs early. There just wasn't a lot family life. Mom was a foster kid. My Dad booked out when I was little. My mom's new husband — he was a drug trafficker — and when I was about 11 he got busted for smuggling a lot of coke and got like 25 to life. So, he was gone and then, we just kind of bounced around.

There was no stability and I think when there is no stability and you're surrounded by drug addicts, gangsters and punkers it's really easy to be drawn towards that negativity. Especially when there's not a positive force around — whether it be a male figure, a dad, older brother or whatever. My mom, she's an alcoholic and I have a couple of older brothers, but at that point they were doing what they were doing and I was kinda left to my own devices — you know, riding my skateboard and getting into trouble.

I don't know if it's an impression of yourself or a low self-worth, but when no one cares about you, you don't really care about yourself. So, it's like if I live or die, so what? I'm not tripping. I'm not going to live to see 18 anyway, so fuck it.

In June of 1999, I was 19 years old and homeless. I was strung out. I was sick. I had burned every-

body. I had people looking for me. I wasn't going to live much longer. That's when I met some dude while sitting at a bus bench in Pico Rivera. The guy was wearing a narcotics anonymous t-shirt. I told him I'm was trying to get into rehab, and he told me about this place in Norwalk that he had went to. So, I went and got myself checked in. There was nobody to help me. To hold my hand or any of that. It was just that I had to get off the streets. If not, I was going to die.

It was a free rehab and I had no intention of staying clean. I just wanted to get off the street and let things cool down a little. However, after I got cleaned up a bit, I started seeing a different side of life. Life doesn't need to be destruction and despair. I was around other cats that were like me and had a gnarlier story then me, and they were turning their life around. It was inspiring. I grabbed onto that. I lived there for a year. I soaked up all that Info, and I never went back. I never went back out on the streets.

**Do you see yourself in some of the kids in Lost Angels?**

There is a lot that I do align with and it really gets to me. There's a lot of kids that are already cold. You know, they've already been through it. They've been bounced around foster parents, they're cold, but they're still a kid and they still want that sense of acknowledgement. You know, even though you look at them and you talk to them they act like they don't give a shit. Like, they don't care about nothing, but when they accomplish something and learn a skill you could see that spark. They still want that positive praise as much as they may have been beaten down already. They still kind of crave that family, that positivity. I see that a lot, which is really inspiring for me. So many of the kids are eager to learn. They don't have to come here. It's not court mandated. You can go









photo courtesy of paul abell



and get your community service hours, but a lot of our kids are showing up because they want to.

**How did the Lost Angels Children Project begin?**

Four years into my sobriety I was working. Paying my bills and building cars for rich people. I began volunteering at a local homeless shelter, and after a few years of watching kids come through the food lines, I became frustrated. I wanted to be able to do more than just serve up a plate of hot food or a backpack. I started taking scrap parts from junkers, building a car and selling raffle tickets in an attempt to raise money for a couple of local homeless shelters. Well, the raffle concept was a huge success, and I began to think, 'Why don't I open up the doors here and have the kids can come in after school and learn a trade? A way for the kids to change their lives by learning how to weld, mechanics and fabrication. It could be a way to show these kids how to create a life for themselves versus just, *Here's a new pair of shoes.*'

**What do you hope for the future of the Lost Angels Children Project?** To broaden out with more curriculum that fits in with the program we have now. Also, to further develop the social enterprise side where we're creating products and creating merchandise — products that the kids can create in-house. I want them to be able to go from taking the class, learning the skills to actually on the job paid training.

We can give them all the tools. All the know-how. But if they can't get that first job, other than selling tacos, that's not a success. I think we could shoot a little higher.

**One tattoo question. What's your most important tattoo?**

For me it's definitely the little stick and poke on my ankle. Yeah, me and my brother tattooed each other. I was nine. He was twelve. I got the little cross on my ankle. I have a cross on my face. I'm not even a religious person, but it's just one of those daily reminders of just to try and be a better person.

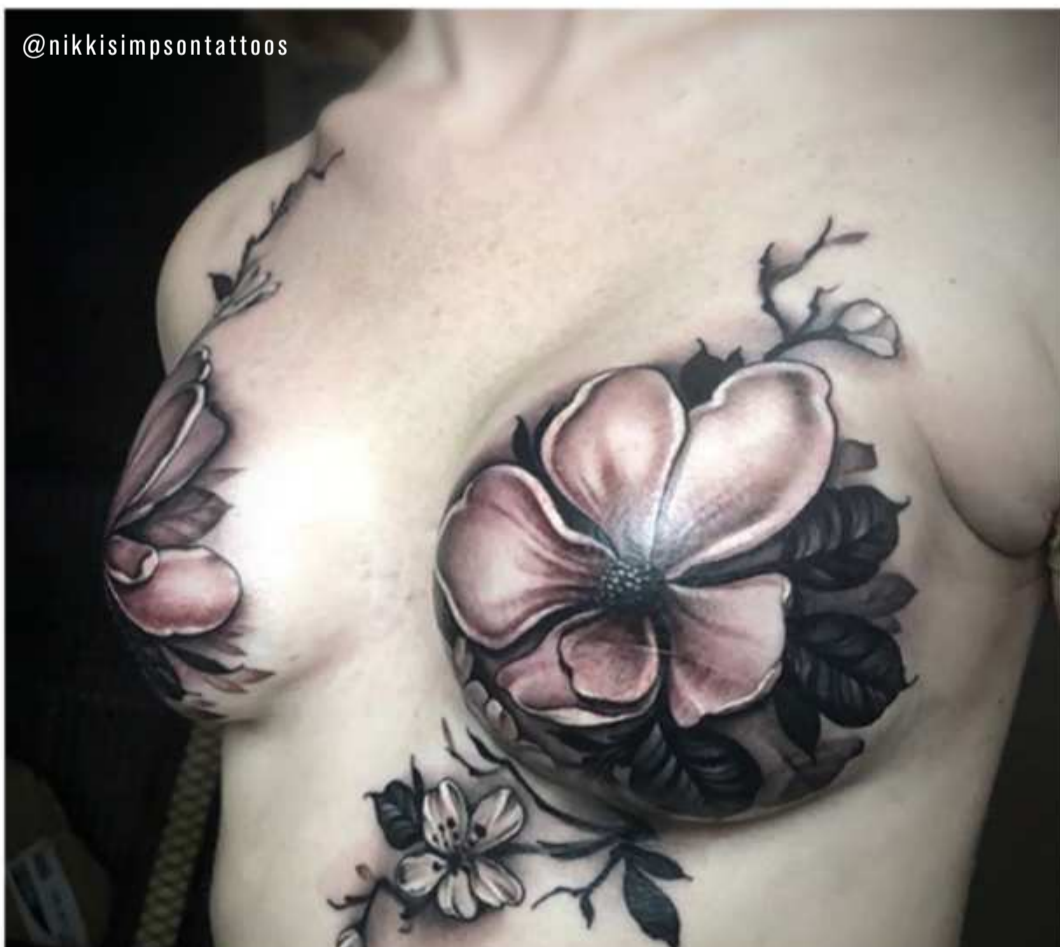


photo courtesy of eric fisher



# SECOND chances

Whether they gained their scars from breast cancer, an emergency surgery, or self-harm— these collectors got a second chance with beautiful tattoo coverups. Every one of the tattoos below was personally crafted by an artist to ensure that life's imperfections would go undetected. Take a look at 10 tattoos you'd never believe cover scars and stretch marks, but bear a very important part of life..







@quangpham1610



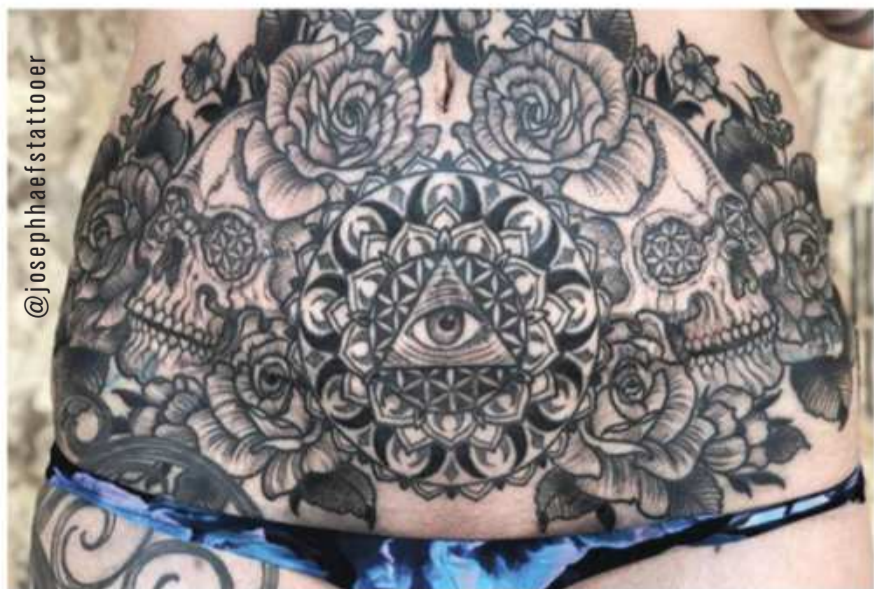
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## VENOM — BOX OFFICE POISON

Based on the Marvel comic book character, which was first seen in Spider-Man 3, Sony Pictures has made it clear that Venom will play no part in the Spider-Man universe and the film will stand on its own. We are down with that. Look, any movie that has the graphic eccentricity of Venom, a henchman being played by

Woody Harrelson and a love interest with Michelle Williams...oh yeah, and did we forget Tom Hardy as Eddie Brock/Venom!? This is gonna be one of those great "dark" anti-hero superhero flix...we hope!

## DROP

The world of the Hypebeast has led to a virtual destruction of the traditional delineation between street and 'high' fashion. Limited edition pieces enjoy global cult status, draw thousands of hopeful purchasers, and can resell immediately for up to 10-20 times retail immediately after release on sites like Grailed. Drop dives into the world of streetwear queue culture, with original photos of product launches from across the globe.



## TWO BLIND BROTHERS

Believe it or not, but this shirt is made by Two Blind Brothers... literally. This clothing line is built by two brothers who are losing their vision to a rare eye disease. They turned their challenge into a unique brand by making the softest shirts in the world. Even better than that, they donate their profits to research to cure blindness. Get one at their website, [twoblindbrothers.com](http://twoblindbrothers.com). We've got a code for you too! Use 'INKED20' for 20% off.



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This 'magical' device allows you to launch fireballs from your open palm. Pyro's secret is that the barrels are filled with 'flash' paper—a specially-treated tissue paper that burns extremely quickly and is gone in the blink of an eye, with no smoke or residue. Magicians have used flash paper in their acts for decades to get huge reactions from a tiny burst of fire. With a rechargeable USB, the Pyro Mini can shoot up to 600 fireballs on a single charge! And here comes the warning...every precaution has been taken to make the Pyro Mini safe, but as it shoots real fire, it **MUST** be handled responsibly. Thousands upon thousands of units of Pyro have been sold with superb, safe results.



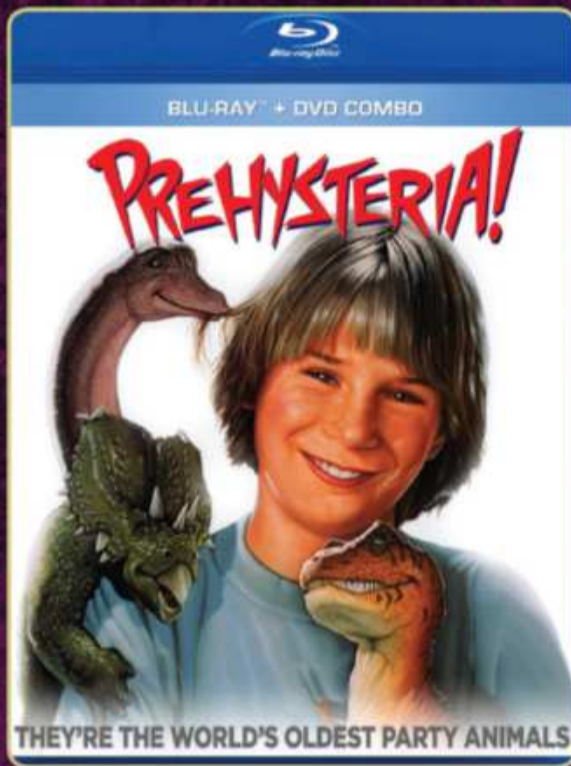


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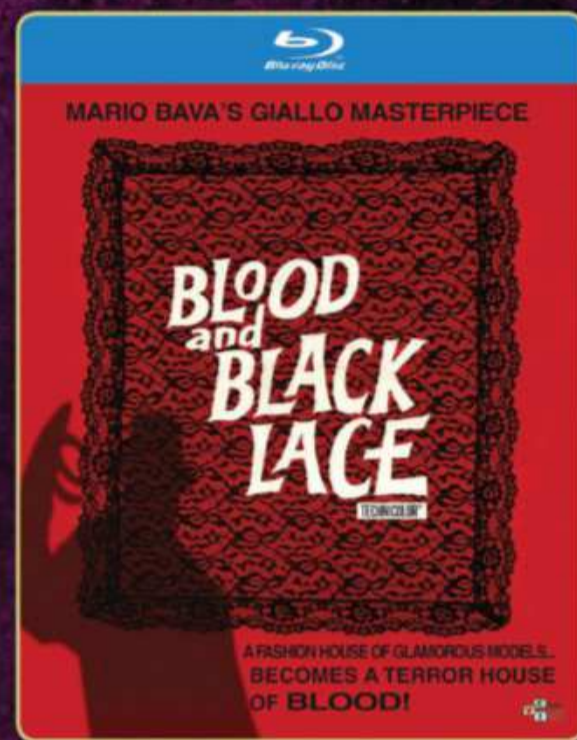
## THE UNNAMABLE

There are things on God's Earth that we can't explain and we can't describe. From the depths of Hell comes...



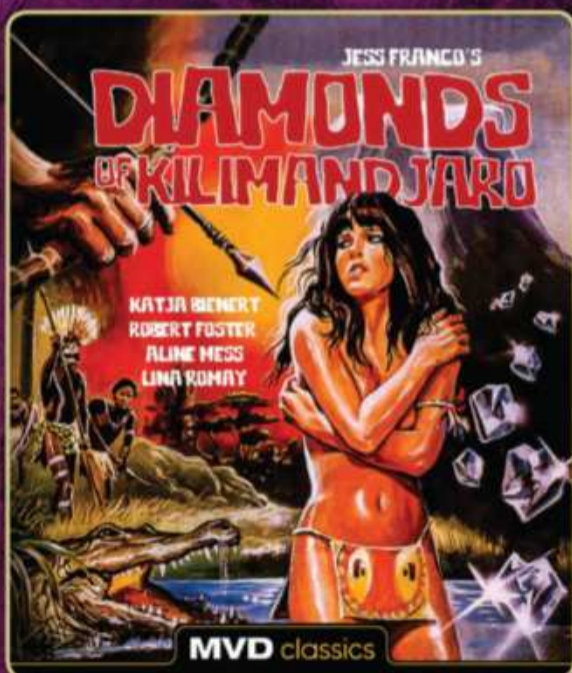
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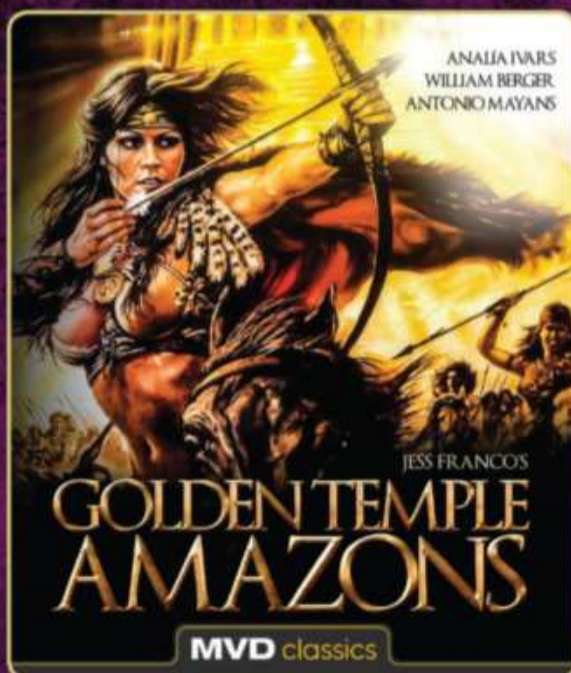
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# WILDE ABOUT SEX

Jessica Wilde (@JessicaWilde) is here to answer your burning sex questions—though if it burns consult an actual doctor right now! She's not a doctor, but she once role-played as a nurse so she's beyond qualified. Send your questions to [press@inkedmag.com](mailto:press@inkedmag.com).

Why do women get jealous when men talk about other women? - Anon  
 Women are fickle creatures. Not speaking for everyone, of course, but usually a woman wants to feel like #1, even if she's not interested in you! That's right, even if she has no romantic interest she will probably want to feel like she can have you.

Why do the women I date try to change me into something I'm not, instead of accepting me for who I am? -shearer.jon  
 Women are notorious for trying to spot potential in a person. Whether it's there or not, we tend to see what we want and then try to change a person to fit that mold. It's a flaw in us, not you.

How can you not catch feelings for a f\$%k boy? - abiggin8924  
 Protect yourself! We tend to want what we can't have, which includes emotionally unavailable people. My advice to you is to not surround yourself with these boys in the first place.

What's the best way to approach a woman at the gym without feeling like a douche? -marc\_funn  
 There is no best way, just don't do it. If you see a sweaty woman at the gym getting a workout, leave her alone. On the other hand, if a woman is dressed to the nines perhaps she's asking to be talked to. Maybe try asking her advice like, how she got her biceps bigger than yours.



## ONE FOR THE CREW

Cameron's Brewery teamed up with the remaining members of Motörhead to create a collaboration beer called Road Crew — an homage to the Motörhead fan favorite '(We Are) The Road Crew,' which appears on the 1980s 'Ace of Spades' album and was penned as a tribute to the band's dedicated team of roadies. With lines like 'Another beer is what I need,' the name fits perfectly for a beer everyone can enjoy.

## SOCK IT TO ME!



The praise collection pays tribute to legendary music artists who are no longer with us today by immortalizing their images on socks. These artists had an enormous impact on music and street culture that can still be seen and heard around the world. With the blessing of the estates of Eric 'Eazy-E' Wright, The Notorious B.I.G., and Aaliyah, Stance respectfully delivers this homage to the greats, bless up! Introducing Praise B.I.G.

## 300 SHOPS PROFILED IN ONE BOOK



TTT: Tattoo by TTTism and Nicholas Schonberger is a seminal art book from leading tattoo studios. This distinctive and incomparable volume embraces contemporary tattooing as an artistic practice and explores the art form as a complete culture. It looks at work from more than 300 of the world's best tattoo studios and individuals, including Rock of Ages, the Leu family, Scott Campbell, Duncan X, Maud Dardeau, Stephanie Tamez, Tomas Tomas, Matt Lodder, and more. The book also includes features on Chicano-style tattooing and insightful essays exploring topics like copyright and how social media is influencing the tattoo community.



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## 3D TATTOOS

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## A MILLENNIUM FIRE PIT FOR MILLENNIALS!

Now you can bask in the warmth of a roaring fire while marveling at the 'Death Star' going up in flames. Enjoy this homage to one of the most iconic weapons in movie history, right in the comfort of your own backyard or patio. The wood burning Death Star requires no tools for installation and can be expected to oxidize naturally over time. It will set you back \$4,000.



Photo by Zenae FilmZ

## MEETING OF THE DARK MINDS

Earlier this summer, renowned Testament guitarist Eric Peterson announced the release of his highly-anticipated new DRAGONLORD album entitled Dominion, and he decided to hold a press conference at a venue that would be most fitting with the dark themes that are synonymous with Peterson — at the gallery of legendary tattoo artist Paul Booth. Paul's three-story space is a triplex of the macabre and must be seen to be believed. Check out DRAGONLORD and visit Paul's NYC lair!



## STRAIGHT OUT THE '80s

The Gucci-Dapper Dan collection for Fall Winter 2018 is straight out of the '80s and '90s. Dapper Dan, a well-known Harlem designer, invented his own creations by reconstructing luxury brands' motifs into personalized coveted pieces. Now, through his and Alessandro Michele's artistic vision, a contemporary interpretation of streetwear and accessories has been developed for a new generation. A mix of unisex, men's and women's styles and accessories are introduced in specially produced materials. This piece will set you back \$3,390.00.

## PLANT YOUR PENCIL!

Let's make the world Sprout. A Sprout pencil is a fun way to make sustainability visible and easy to understand. Look closely at the tip of this unique pencil and you'll see a small seed capsule. When your Sprout pencil is too short to be used, simply plant it and watch it grow into a lemon balm, basil plant, forget-me-nots, Calendula or many other plant varieties. Perfect for adult coloring books, sketches and as highlighter.



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# A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEX AND TATTOOS

By isabell "rocsi" rivera photo by peter roessler

Hand drawn by the artist in black ink and script, the word "Pleasure" decorates my left wrist. The right wrist reads "Pain" in red ink, like dried blood from the scars that marked the same location.

"Pain" I experienced because I felt unloved and misunderstood, and the "Pleasure" I felt when I released the pain and the feeling of my warm blood running down my arms.

Yes, I used to be a cutter.

But getting tattooed instead, helped me cope with emotional pain. However, tattoos can also symbolize the emotional pain experienced through a relationship. When I was 25, I was at my quarter-life crisis, one could say. I didn't know where life would take me, so I lived in the moment. I wanted to be free as a bird and explore the world, for me, that world was the concrete jungle — otherwise known as New York City.

One day, I came across this guy named John who worked at a tattoo shop in Greenwich Village. While peeking through the window, I instantly felt this warmth surrounding me. Everything seemed hazy, and it was as if he had a halo. I guess that's when Cupid's arrow hit me in the heart.

His shiny black hair was partly covered by a fedora hat, which I would later find out was his trademark style. His shirt's sleeves were rolled up, he wore denim and black Chucks, and his arms showed off a collection of traditional tattoos. John was a punk kid at heart, in the heart of the Village — at least whatever was left from that era.

He was charming and funny, and I felt drawn to him immediately. I felt comfortable with him, like we knew each other from childhood, or from a different life.

The first touch of his hands and the sound of his machine were literally penetrating the cartilage of my ear with a red treble clef. A symbol of my love of music, which is deeply connected to my passion for tattoos, or the expression of emotions — good and bad. After that, I didn't see him for months. Until one day I received a text.

My mind said, "No, this is a bad idea." But my heart had a mind of its own.

The movement of my heart's decision

put me in a difficult position, dealing with a guy who's about to get married wasn't really what I was looking for. But, I was drawn to him, like a moth to a bare bulb. His tattoos tell a story. His body is a map, just like mine was to become — telling my own story.

One of the first tattoos he did on me were the sugar skulls on my knee caps, one female, one male. Like the yin to the yang. The sexual tension between us was unbearable, and we finally gave in right after. I felt good, yet guilty. I'm not sure how he felt, but I knew I signed up for a ride to hell. The black-and-grey lady with the skull, represented just that, I knew this would be the death of me.

Getting tattooed by him again, felt orgasmic, as he didn't just penetrate my skin, but went deeper. It was a sexual experience on a more mental level.

I felt deeply connected with him, but also didn't know where this would be going, since he was about to be a married man. Since "pain and pleasure" was the motto I used to live by, I dug an even deeper hole. In the summer of 2012, the saying, "now or never" rang truer more than.

Our relationship didn't start like a fairytale. He cheated on his fiancé with me, and then eventually broke up the engagement. As the saying goes, "Once a cheater always a cheater," which was stuck in the back of my head. I felt like the feeling of love was killing me, especially being in a relationship that didn't grow from pure honesty. I decided to remind myself that "Love Kills" and everything eventually dies. John tattooed it on top my wrists.

After he broke off the engagement, I finally had John to myself. Or so I thought. Unfortunately, the only commitment he had no problem with was tattooing, getting tattooed, and his daily bar visits. However, I couldn't compete with alcohol. I loved getting tattooed by him, but it seemed as if I projected what the future would bring for us.

He became like a drug to me. I felt I couldn't live without him. But at the same time, I felt I was suffocating with him. Since his nickname was "black bird", I wanted a girl puking up a raven. A perfect rsymbol of our relationship.

Despite the dynamic toxicity of our

relationship, John did remarkable work. He designed my chest piece which goes down to the sternum and represents guns with roses and an anatomic human heart. It shows the constant battle between my borderline personality disorder and me. But, it also became a battle between us.

John did some "happier" pieces on me, such as the lipstick-swacked New York Doll, the smoking skull with a top hat (a reference to John) and the lock and key tattoos on my shoulders.

The last tattoo he did on me was on my birthday in 2014. We were already split up, but were trying to reconcile. He said he would love to tattoo me since I always get tattooed on my birthday. I was somehow torn, and felt like it might be a bad idea, but I went anyway. We decided on a shark — very prophetic. It was the inevitable beginning of the end.

John has been married for two years now, to the girl he allegedly cheated on me with. He seems happy. She might be the one who was able to turn him around and bring out the best in him. I wasn't able to do that. I think I brought the worst out in him. When we were good, things were really good — I felt one with him. Then, at times, I felt like he or I was drifting away. I often felt I wasn't a part of him anymore. We didn't spend any time together, and we both kind of did our own thing.

At the end of the day, it wasn't so much him and his behavior, or that we came together under horrible conditions — it was my insecurities and unhealthy relationship towards myself and men pushed him farther from me. I didn't know what a good relationship meant.

I even went to therapy during our time together, and dragged him with me once. I thought by fixing him and me, our relationship would survive. It felt like trying to glue something back together that broke into a million pieces, that's how my heart felt. But, I guess you can't fix something that started out broken.

Looking back, everything happens for a reason. I still have love for him and I do love most of the tattoos he did on me. However, others I grew to dislike. Regardless, I'll always be reminded of the changes I need to face in order for me to be happy and experience a good and healthy relationship.









# HOLY GRAILS

photos by peter roessler









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# *ZOMBIE BOY'S FINAL BOW*

*THE TATTOO WORLD'S BELOVED AMBASSADOR OF EXTREME TATTOOING, RICO GENEST,  
LEFT THIS WORLD JUST DAYS SHY OF HIS 33RD BIRTHDAY.*

photos by joey L   words by paul gambino





It is with a heavy heart that we put together this short, but heartfelt tribute to a good friend, to not only myself, but to INKED magazine and to the tattoo community at large. Rico became Zombie Boy as a personal journey and way for him to express himself. Below is an excerpt from an interview we did with Rico a few years back.

Rico Genest has the heart and soul of a “Zombie Boy” long before ink and needle ever marked his skin. Unable to find his place in society, the native of Southwest Quebec decided to step outside the species rather than be defined by accepted human standards.

Genest embraced his role as an outcast, and displayed a full body of tattoo work to transform himself into a living zombie. His outer appearance and one-man war against conformity lifted Rico to a level of antihero that often crosses into mainstream celebrity status. Actor, musician,

model, sideshow freak are all titles Zombie Boy is comfortable with. The only label you’d better never try to pin on Rico Genest is “normal.”

**What impact has the transformation of your outer appearance had on you mentally and emotionally?**

I don’t think I ever changed; still troubled, headstrong and irrational.

**Much of your intricate work was done by tattooer Frank Lewis. Can you talk about how you came to know Frank, and how your creative relationship with him developed?**

Frank worked detail into what I had; gradually into my neck. When I asked him to work my face, he declined. I had it done elsewhere, and then went back to Frank for more work, due to our relationship.

**Would you consider your ink work to be a political/social statement, a means of creating a reaction from people, just an artis-**

**tic expression, or something else entirely?**

My body art is very much a pictograph verbalization. It represents defiance and rebellion. The notion of being alive while dead is defiance to the very laws of nature. The first step to anarchy is defiance. ‘A great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within.’ That’s a quote from William James Durant.

**You have been closely connected to the term “anarchist” in the press. Are you an anarchist? If so, can you talk about how you arrived at becoming an anarchist?**

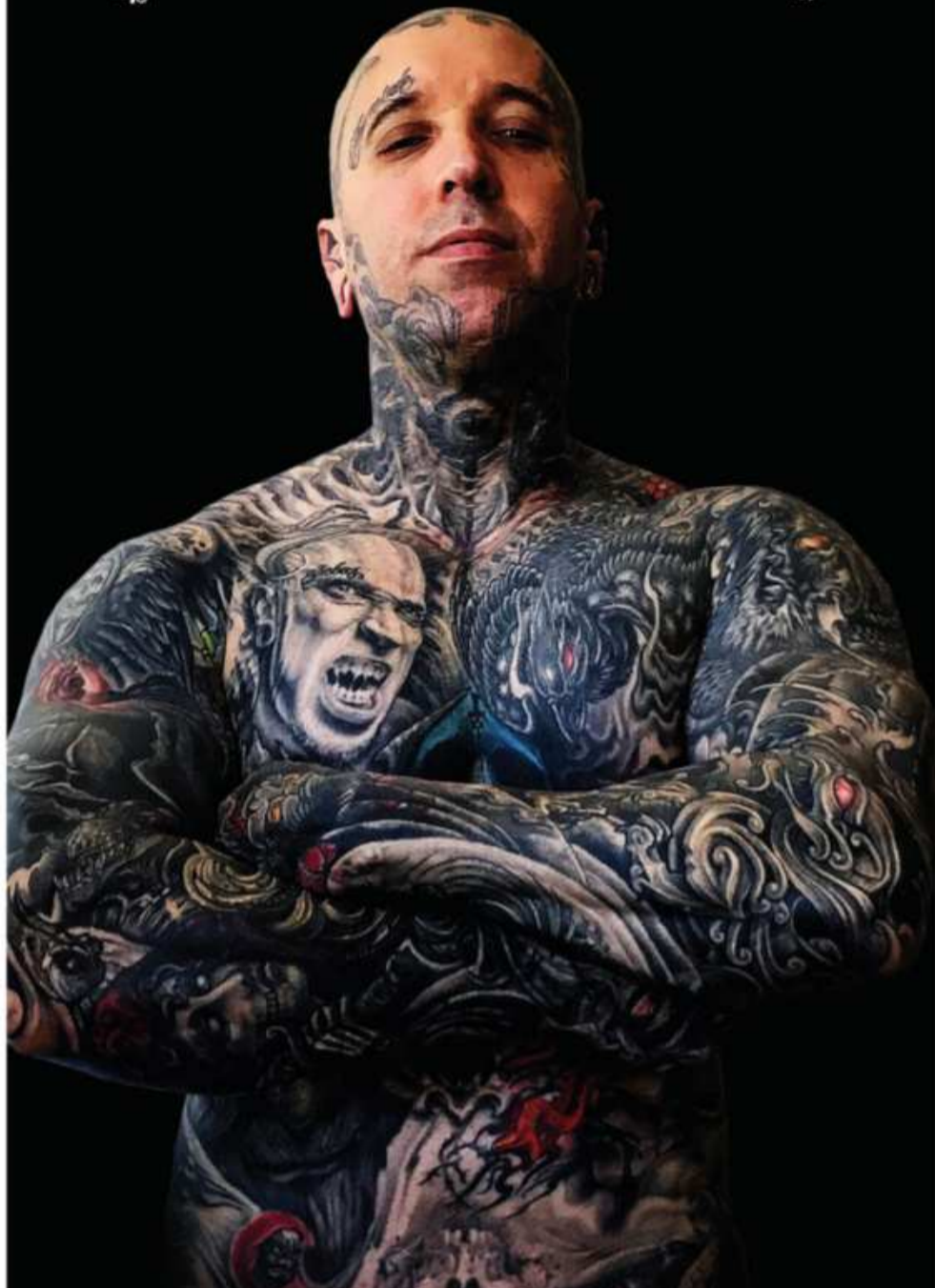
Well, in consideration, I am pro freedom and believe in self-government; in a world where, in theory, we are responsible enough. True power to those who are, and fight for it.

**What is your definition of “beautiful,” and what is your definition of “ugly?”**

Beauty is love. Ugly is hate.



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words devon preston

# CHRISTIAN

FOR THEIR 11TH SEASON, *INK MASTER* HAS INVITED BACK TWO FORMER CONTESTANTS TO GO HEAD-TO-HEAD IN A FULL-ON GRUDGE MATCH. THOSE TATTOOERS ARE, OF COURSE, CLEEN ROCK ONE AND CHRISTIAN BUCKINGHAM, WHO FIRST MET BACK IN SEASON SEVEN AND LATER REUNITED ON SEASON NINE. NOW, THESE RIVALS ARE COMPETING AS COACHES, AND ONE WILL FINALLY BE TOLD THEY DO HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE *INK MASTER*. WILL IT BE CLEEN, THE FOUR-TIMER WHO FIRST ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE BACK IN SEASON FIVE AND WENT ON TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST TALKED ABOUT CHARACTERS IN THE SHOW'S HISTORY? OR WILL IT BE CHRISTIAN, WHO WILL BE HEADING INTO THE COMPETITION FOR A THIRD TIME AND ALMOST TOOK THE TITLE TWICE? WELL, UNFORTUNATELY, WE CAN'T SPILL ANY SPOILERS FROM THE SHOW. BUT, WE CAN SHARE A ONE-ON-ONE CHAT BETWEEN THE TWO COACHES AND LET YOU DECIDE WHICH VETERAN ARTIST WILL COME OUT ON TOP THIS SEASON.

**Christian:** So Cleen, what made you decide to go on *Ink Master* for a fourth time?

**Cleen:** I needed to go on *Ink Master* for the fourth time. Since I was going back as a coach, I did have something to offer instead of just going back as a contestant. I'll go back as many times as it takes to win, it's just contagious. So, why are you coming back for the third time?

**Christian:** Well, because I think that you and I got screwed. We've had this little rivalry going on, but I think one of us deserves to walk away with something. I think we both got shafted. I think both of us really should have a title. And so I think we're the two guys who deserve it most.

I knew who you were when I was an apprentice and I used to follow you back when you were at the top. Do you feel your style isn't appreciated as much nowadays because the industry has moved on?

**Cleen:** People always say, "Oh, you're so that [Sic] you're probably super busy because of the show." But honestly, I was super busy before the show. It wasn't until after season five that I lost a lot of my clientele and the phone wasn't ringing. So, after season five, I honestly thought that I tainted my career and I was like 'Dude, what the fuck did I do?' [clients] weren't coming around anymore, you know. They were like, 'Well, you're too cool for school now, you know, or, or they're like, 'You're too Hollywood or you're too busy.' So, I did season seven and I honestly thought I had nothing else better to do here. But, as far as style goes, you either like it or don't like it.

**Christian:** In this industry, everybody's following whatever style is hot right now. I even noticed on season seven and nine when you



came in, a lot of the younger tattooers didn't take you seriously. I would tell them, 'Don't fucking count that dude out.' Then, I think you'd work right next to them, and they're like, 'Oh shit.' Do you get a satisfaction out of that? Because I know I do.

**Cleen:** What's weird is on the show, I would have to do tattoos that weren't my style, and I would just get so much praise. But, as soon as I would do something my style, it would get totally dogged on it. It was a little disheartening because you're like, 'Why even bother drawing your style if everybody's just going to shit on it?'

**Christian:** Yeah, I can see that. It's a little odd, because as an artist, I try to do things that I've never seen before and push myself artistically to do things that nobody has seen before. People ask me sometimes what the deal is with you. And I think they don't realize there's a lot of guys who've been on the show, but I think you're one of those people who can do everything, and you've always surprised people with your technical ability. I feel like we both get discounted sometimes. I always get lumped in as the black-and-grey guy. I see a lot of mediocre cats who are getting a lot of praise because they're doing a trendy style of tattooing. I think, 'Should I just go ahead and start doing the same exact style of that time, just to make money, or to I stay true to my art?' Do you ever think about that? Do you ever think about just saying 'Fuck it' and doing more modern tattooing?

**Cleen:** No, because now I've come full circle. After season five I got into a slump where I felt like I had to go on the show again because nothing was going on. Then after season seven, my whole clientele changed. It went from being tattoo people, and now I'm tattooing a lot of soccer moms. Now, people come in and are like, 'This is what I want. Just go ahead, do whatever you want.'

**Christian:** So, how would you describe yourself as a coach?

**Cleen:** I've owned a tattoo shop since 1999, and I've always kind of felt like a coach. I would hire guys that wanted to work underneath me, and I always felt I was coaching these guys to be better tattooers. Just because they're my employees and I want them to do good tattoos. So, I was always helping by pushing my guys to do better, technical tattoos and be better tattooers in general. I feel like I've been coaching for years now, but just not with the title of coach. I always try to lead by example. I get in there, get dirty, and show you how to do it.

**Christian:** I think the hardest part about coaching is not being able to jump in and show people. Because I've owned a few shops, and if you're a shop owner, you'll probably make for a better coach. That part came pretty natural.



# VS. CLEEN





I've been raising kids and running businesses my whole life. I think for me, the hardest part was trying to explain things to people without being able to actually sit and show them what to do, you know? If you and I had partnered up, how do you think we would do in a competition?

**Cleen:** I think we'd do well. I'm surprised they didn't do that. I think the bottom line is, if you have fundamentals, you're gonna prevail.

**Christian:** What season was your favorite to film so far?

**Cleen:** Season five was my favorite because when I got there, it was already the rival thing and whatnot. I always like, 'As long as Tim and I don't go home first, I'm happy,' you know? I'm not going to say that I already defeated them, but a lot of them already knew my name and were familiar with my work. I think all in all, it was just more of a relaxing environment, and we had a lot of fun off camera.

Then I think on season seven, I saw that everybody was so uptight and headstrong about winning. Even off camera there's always like this weird tension. I feel like that's gotten worse every season, you know what I mean? I feel like people are coming in more and more serious and take everything really seriously on and off camera.

**Christian:** Yeah. I've been thinking about that, and one of the hardest things you realize after the whole thing is over is that you go after these people because you're in a competition type setting. The setting is naturally geared to be aggressive, and you realize later that you actually really liked these people. In season seven, I couldn't stand Jime Litwalk. But then, I hung out with him a couple of times after the show, and now we get along great. I think the show and the competition put you into this fucking gladiator mode. I think the first time especially, you take it more seriously, because you don't realize you can lighten up, and off camera you can chill.



# Inked

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**WHEN DID YOU FIRST COME ACROSS TRASH POLKA?** I'm a graphic designer, that's my art background and the discipline I studied. So, when a tattooer friend showed me some early examples of Trash Polka about 13 years ago, you know, stuff by artists like Noon, Jeff Palumbo and Yann Black. I was instantly attracted to the idea of creating Trash Polka tattoos in my own way. In fact it was so early on that the term Trash Polka wasn't actually being used at the time and 'Graphic tattoos' (a term I prefer) had many different names; Art Brut, Avant Garde and The photoshop style were all terms that were used to describe Graphic tattoos early on. The Trash Polka term came later, but it was the one that stuck with clients and the wider world of tattooing so it's the one everyone uses today.

# PAUL TALBOT

FOLLOW: @PAULTALBOTTATTOO

**IF YOU COULD DESCRIBE YOUR TATTOO STYLE IN ONE WORD, WHAT WOULD IT BE?** Freedom. I had a long conversation with Volko about where the term came from and why he and Simone chose that phrase, specifically. He told me that they wanted a term that meant nothing so that it could potentially mean anything. Anything can be Trash Polka, there are no rules when it comes to the form of the art itself. It's not just red and black tattoos it can be done in a riot of colors and still be Trash Polka it can also be a single black line and still be Trash Polka. Its all about understanding the ethos. Trash Polka is an attitude not a color. There are no rules that say what is and what isn't, but at the same time, it has to be beautiful. Tattooing is a decorative artform after all. So, even if that beauty is unusual it has to be there. It's like the difference between Jazz and Punk—both can be hard to listen to, both take a moment to understand, but both are music. Trash Polka is like music, it's not just about knowing the notes, it's also about understanding the gaps between the notes and about knowing when to whisper and when to scream.

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### HOW DID GROWING UP IN THE HOOD IMPACT YOUR ART AND YOUR CAREER AS A TATTOOER?

More, importantly than me growing up in the hood, I grew up poverty stricken and homeless for most of my young life. I literally came from nothing and I only ever had my mom in my life. The only thing that I ever imagined, dreamed about, or thought about through any given day was how to become great at something, even if it was illegal, and how to become better at whatever I was doing, because there was no going backwards, I was already at the bottom. After a serious chapter in my life where I went to jail for someone else's gun, I got a firm grasp on what was really toxic in my life. So when I went a bit low-key and picked up tattooing after being exposed to it by a friend who ordered a tattoo kit. It started by us tattooing ourselves and after I found out I could make money at it, it motivated me to get better. I decided to have a last-ditch effort at having a successful life by going all in on my craft and learning everything I could about the industry. Because I came from nothing, I saw nowhere to go but up. So when I got serious about tattooing, I would look at the best in the world instead of the best in my city and think to myself, How did they get their pieces to look like that?

# SHINE

FOLLOW: @ISHINEINK



### HOW WOULD YOU PREDICT THE FUTURE OF TATTOOING CONSIDERING WHERE THINGS ARE HEADED TODAY?

Tattooing, tattooers and tattoo art are going to excel increasingly as the years pass. There will be no more room for people that are stagnant or not moving forward because the pieces are getting better and better every day. The designs are getting more creative with the integration of tablets and rotary machines are applying tattoos easier and becoming the leading set-up in the industry. Social media has probably made the biggest impact, because artists are becoming real influencers, instead of just a guy in a shop. Everyday it will evolve into a new, more proficient way of tattooing.

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**WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO CREATE A CONTEST FOR SELF-HARM?** I can't really take credit for this idea, as I remember seeing a few other artists doing it before me. It really inspired me, I just had to jump on the bandwagon and offer to do it too. Being able to make someone proud and happy about a part of themselves that used to be a reminder of bad memories is a gift, and I wanted to do my part.

Hopefully, more and more tattooers will want to spread some love, and this whole movement can become a trend that benefits a whole lot of people who truly need it!



# ARIELLE GAGNON

FOLLOW: @MERMAIDSKETCHES

**WHAT WAS IT LIKE HAVING STRANGERS OPEN UP TO YOU ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH SELF-HARM?** Well, I really wanted to make sure I was approaching this whole thing with the utmost respect, and I certainly didn't want anyone to feel like they had to talk to me about their experience because I understand how personal it can be. I wasn't necessarily expecting it at first, but some people chose to confide in me and tell me about their stories, which deeply touched me. Some people have gone through really tough times and it just felt like this was the least I could do.

**WHAT WAS THE PROCESS OF GIVING THAT CLIENT A TATTOO, AND HAS IT CHANGED YOUR OUTLOOK ON TATTOOING?** Picking out a winner was probably the hardest part. A lot of people actually ended up writing to me and it was heartbreaking not to be able to realistically make time for all of them. I had to draw a name because there was no way I could just make that choice.

My client ended up being the absolute sweetest. Seeing how happy she was made it so worth it, and shed some light on this whole new aspect of the craft for me. If a simple tattoo can have this much of a positive impact in someone's life, then it almost gives us tattooers a special power.



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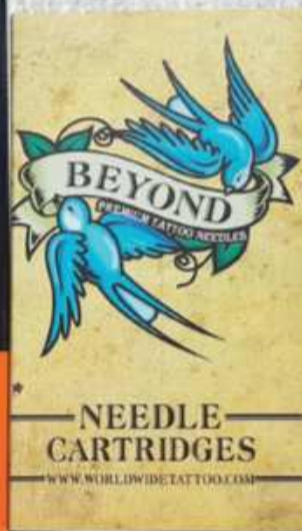


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# SARA FABEL

photo by steph durante words by **devon**

**What was it like growing up in Finland and how did it shape you as an artist?** I personally feel that Finland can be a very cold environment to live in, and by that I'm not referring to the obvious issues with a northern climate, but rather the way people are introverted. I spent my childhood drawing and entertaining myself. It was my favorite pastime, and that grew into a career as an art teacher, and later as an artist and tattooist.

**What led you to leave Finland and begin a new career halfway around the world?** I never felt like I fit in Finland culturally. I enjoy working in customer service and I enjoy talking to people. One of the best parts of being a tattooist is the ability to meet interesting clients and spend time talking about their lives, loves and careers. In Finland, the people never would open up and lacked the passion for life I was seeking.

**Which came first: your career as a model or as a tattoo artist?** Oh God, I still cringe when the term "model" is used. I do not know why. But yes, being a model definitely came first. I took up modeling as a hobby to make new friends and find a pastime that included something creative rather than sitting at bars. Later on, that hobby turned into organized commercial modeling. Although, fairly short lived it was an eye opening experience. I am beyond grateful I did it for as long as I did and I am humbled for the connections and friendships I made during those years.

**What is the biggest misconception people have about tattoo artists who model?** I don't know if there are any misconceptions, other than the stereotypes. In the end, the path I took had little to do with tattoos or tattooing, so it is hard to comment.

Being a "model" is also a very broad term; modeling could include posing for life

drawings, modeling for fun, professional and commercial fashion modeling, cat-walk modeling and so on. Having been a person who did migrate through these different types, I cannot put enough emphasis that hobby modeling is far from commercial high-end productions where you are in constant cycle of maintaining yourself physically and performing for paying clients. It is work, and it is exhausting. And at the end of the day you are physically and emotionally drained.

**What was your experience with Anarchy Parlor? Would you act again?** I felt beyond lucky to have the experience to work in the production. I had never acted before, so it was fascinating to see how much work those actors put into their roles. Seeing all the behind the scene tears made me understand the breaking points of the human psyche and why there had been so many instances where actors got caught in their character's personalities. This even applies to me and after the project I took a few weeks off to clear my head from my character whose personality was the polar opposite from mine. Toxic thoughts, even just as the character still induce a deep reaction in your core self.

**How does your background in art education help you as a tattoo artist?** Not as an artist, but as an educator yes. I worked with special needs students that required plenty of extra patience. So, I do apply that to customer service. Take your time, try and relate and be patient.

**When apprenticing in Australia, how did you develop your style as a tattooer?** I did not develop my style in Australia, but rather after I moved to United States. I entered tattooing in the beginning of the apprenticeship rush. I started by tattooing full color neo-traditional and with whatever was given to me. I wanted to have a be able to work in a variety of techniques before focusing on one. I looked up to

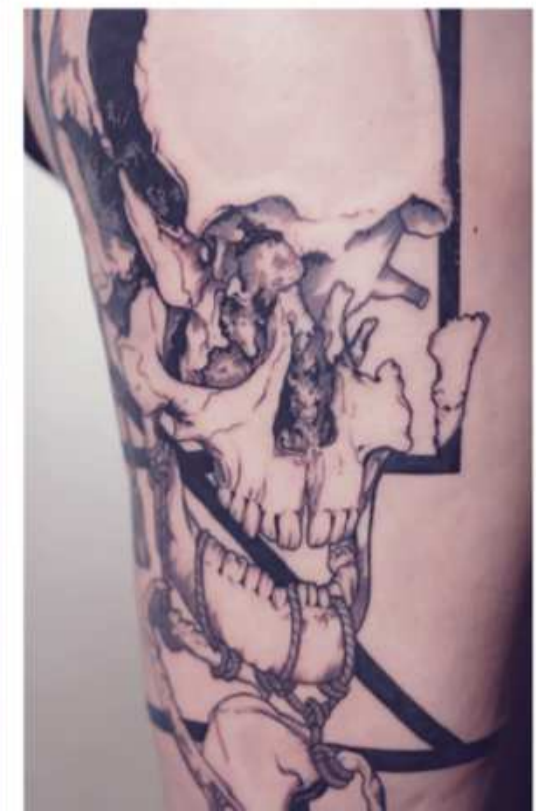
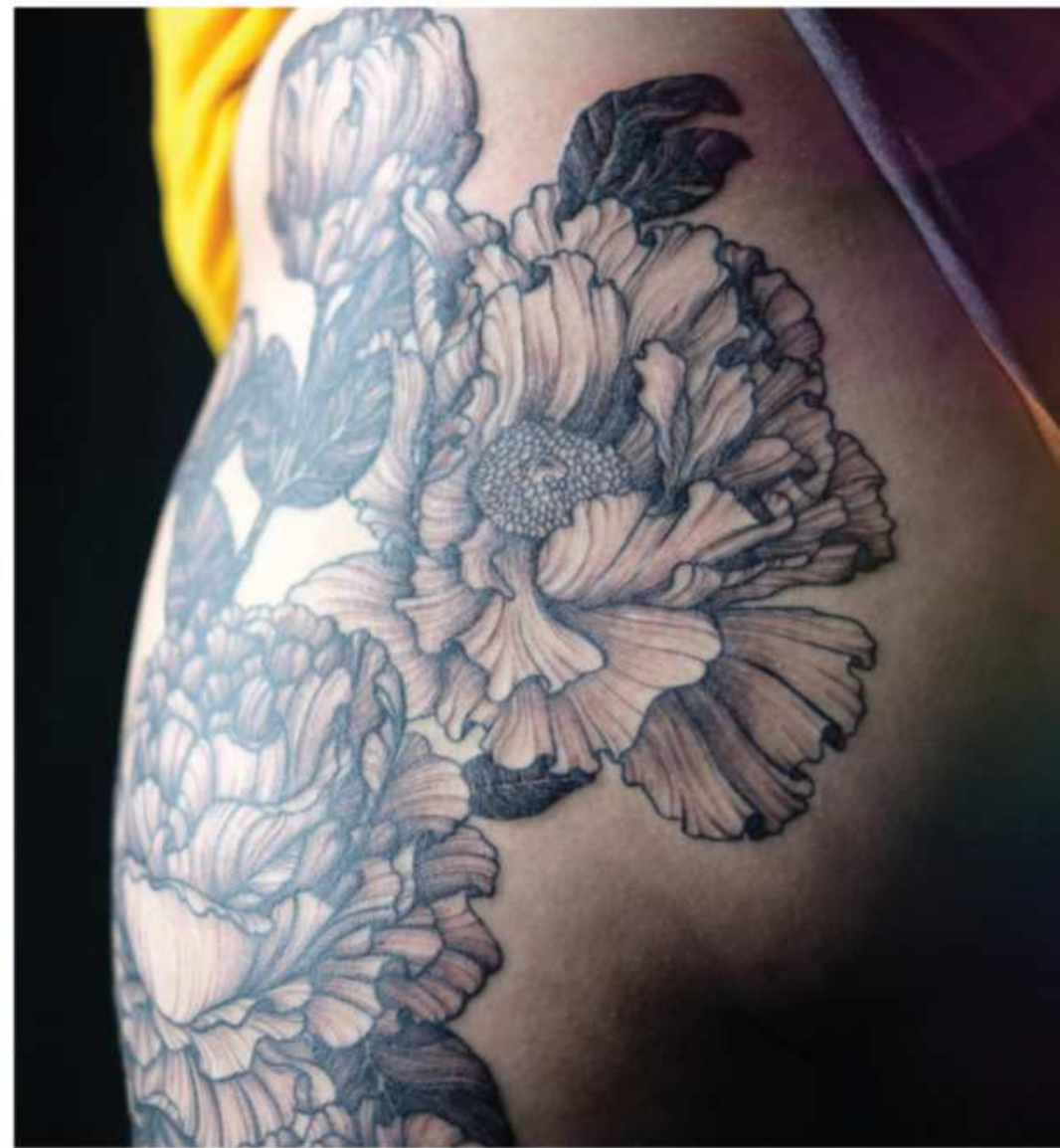
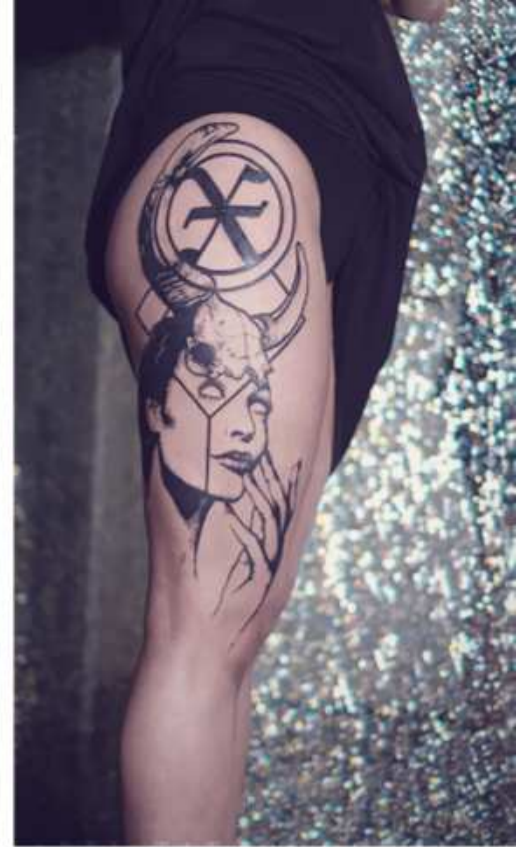
and respected (and still do) Daniel Sharp who took me in to the shop and helped me get going. My friendship with him has still continued to this day and I hope one day to go visit his new Requiem tattoo Galelery in Melbourne, Australia.

**What made you decide to move to LA full-time and focus primarily on tattooing?** I was deported from Australia and a friend of mine bought me a ticket to the United States. There isn't much of a backstory to that, but rather "why not". After years of visa battles I was able to obtain a green card and am currently planning to stay in Los Angeles.

**Where do you find inspiration for your tattoo designs and have they changed over time?** My design ideas have definitely shifted over time, and they still do. I find beauty in the balancing of flora and fauna. These two themes are the ones that I hold closest to my heart. As with a lot of tattooists we often walk a fine line with giving the client what they want and making our own design shine. I am an absolute pushover, but I have started understanding the need to say "no" to my clients when I feel like I am compromising the integrity of the end design. As much as we are in a customer service profession, we are responsible for protecting the image of our own unique brand.

**What's up next for Sara Fabel?** I have entered a time in my career where I feel interested in exploring other venues of creating art. Tattooing is still my main income, passion and love in my life and I can't see that changing any time soon. However, I want to keep things fresh and interesting, so I do find that creating reasonable breaks and alternative projects outside tattooing gives me new perspectives in how I create my designs and adds to the list of inspirational elements. I am not sure where things will take me. Currently I am happy floating away with whatever may come my way.









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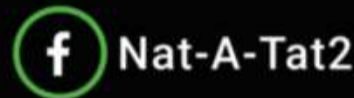


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