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MUSIC  
ISSUE

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creative director / head of content ian sami hajar

photo/video director peter roessler

senior editor charlie connell

executive editor devon preston

video editor sammy martel

**contributing photographers**

ramirez, shirin tinati, troy conrad, adi muhtarovic, eddie diaz, travis shinn,  
erica lauren, victoria wonka, angry moon,  
mel d. cole, sanjay parikh

**contributing writers**

jonny watson, lucas villa, dan ozzi, ariana west

**ad sales** kristine mcguire / kristine@quadramediallc.com  
chris Enriquez

**marketing designer** jasmin chawla

**international licensing** john cabell, 303-449-9194  
cabell@cueballdigital.com

**magazine office** inked magazine  
150 west 22nd st  
new york, ny 10011

**corporate office** quadra media llc  
3103 Philmont Avenue #120  
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

**website** inkedmag.com

**chief executive officer** enrique abeyta  
**chief financial officer** edmund sullivan  
**chief operating officer** james welch  
**president** donald hellinger  
**vp of ecommerce** jami pearlman  
**head of digital** alvaro gomez  
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**newsstand consultants** ralph perricelli, irwin billman  
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# INKWELL

Hey there,

The power of music cannot be understated. The opening chords to a familiar song can bring back a wave of emotion powerful enough to make your entire day. Or ruin it, depending on the song. Throughout this issue we'll be looking at the people who make the songs we love, the photographers who capture the shows we'll never forget, and the artists who tattoo all of our favorite musicians. Welcome to Inked's 2020 Music Issue.

If you've been to enough concerts, I guarantee there is one that has been tattooed into your mind. Not necessarily because it was the best or your first, but because there was something magical happening. For me, that show took place during the spring of 2006 at Chicago's Beat Kitchen. It was an unseasonably sweltering night with the temperature hovering in the high 80s, meaning it was roughly 110 inside the packed bar when Avail took the stage.

The memories of the next 90 minutes are a blur to me now, jumbled up into snippets from a night of being tossed around the room like a buoy in a squall by the sweat-drenched crowd. All these years later, three things stand out from this show. 1. I was making physical contact with complete strangers for the entirety of the show. 2. At no point did I ever hear Tim Barry's vocals, I only heard every single person in the pit screaming their hearts out. 3. I will never ever, ever forget that night.

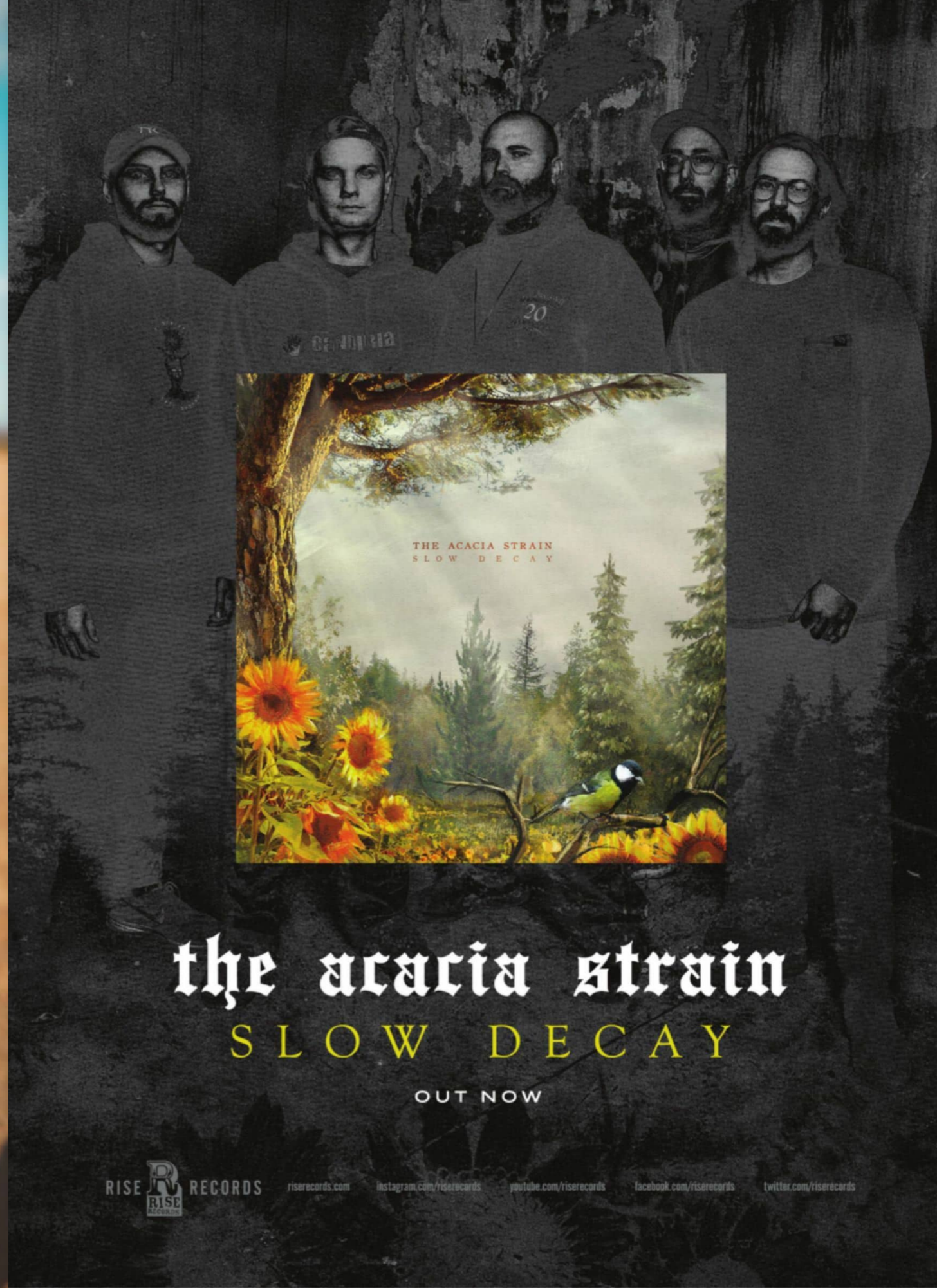
There's nothing out of the ordinary about my experience. The details of the concert etched in your soul are likely very different, but we share the way it made us feel. The way the memory brings a smile to our faces whenever it pops up.

Perhaps it was a Marilyn Manson show that sticks in your mind. We spoke with Manson as he gets ready to release his 11th album, a collaboration with Shooter Jennings that brings to mind "Diamond Dogs"-era Bowie more than it does the shock rocker who caused the nation to grasp its collective pearls.

Maybe you were blown away by the sheer talent of singer Zhavia Ward as she reached the finals of Fox's "The Four: Battle for Stardom." It could be that tracks from Anuel AA's album "Emmanuel" are currently dominating your Spotify Daily Mix. You may be eagerly anticipating the day when you can hit the clubs and vibe out to Swedish DJ Alesso.

Music permeates every aspect of our lives, arguments over music dominate our employee Slack, and its influence can be seen in our tattoos. No matter your taste, there's something for you in this issue. So turn whatever you're listening to up to 11 and enjoy.

- Charlie Connell, Senior Editor  
editor@inkedmag.com



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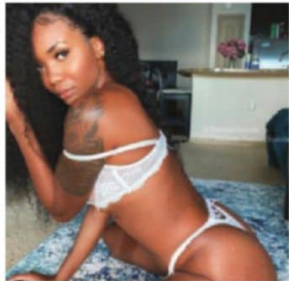
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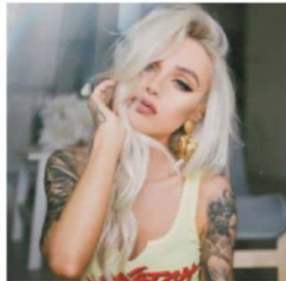
**Kehlani**

"Kehlani is my girl! I've been listening to her for years, ever since I heard her song on the 'Suicide Squad' soundtrack. Her new album is absolutely amazing, dare I say the best thing to come out of 2020 so far. As a new mom, I love her confidence and she's proving that we can still be sex goddesses. So thrilled to see Kehlani in my favorite magazine and thanks for brightening up my quarantine."—RACHEL SINCLAIR— JACKSONVILLE, FL

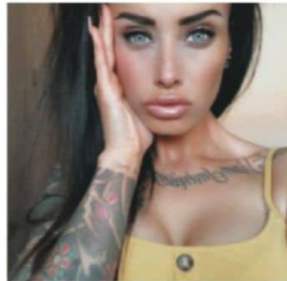
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#### RANDY BLYTHE

**MARGOT EVANS**— "This man is spitting straight facts! I love seeing this kind of interview and it made me check out Lamb of God, which is awesome BTW."

#### JOHN FINLAY

**SAM HAMMERSTEIN**— "I cannot believe that this is the same guy from <Tiger King.> Seriously, it's like looking at a completely different person."

#### JOJO

**JENN PRUITT**— "I've been a JoJo stan since her early days and I'm so happy she's made a comeback."

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# LENA *Scissorhands*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY VICTORIA WONKA

Instagram: @infectedrain\_official / @lenascissorhands

Lena Scissorhands is the frontwoman and founding member of Moldovan metal band Infected Rain, who released their latest album, "Endorphin," via Napalm Records in 2019. Fierce screams and growls, heavy riffs and pounding beats combined with ingenious samples make Infected Rain's style an energetic blend of the best modern metal styles the heavy music scene currently has to offer! Learn more at [www.infectedrain.com](http://www.infectedrain.com).





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# PICTURES FROM THE PIT

Erica Lauren's concert photography puts you right in the middle of the crowd, giving you the experience of being at the show without making your ears ring.

by jonny watson photos by erica lauren

*The reason concerts are so special is that they happen in a fleeting moment of time. You were either there or you weren't. Sure, you could listen to a live album or, if you happen to be from a certain crunchy generation, you can trade bootleg tapes with other fans. But these recordings never capture the energy in the room. The only thing that can come close is a dynamic photograph.*

*Few people have an eye for that perfect shot like Erica Lauren. Lauren grew up shooting with a disposable from the pit at punk shows, and you can feel that energy (and smell the sweat) when you look at her work. We spoke with her about the music that inspires her, the collective of female artists she founded, and the perfect Side 1, Track 1.*

**How did you first get into photography?** My relationship with photography started in high school. I took an art class that taught how to process film and the technical aspects of using a camera. So before I started shooting music, and way before I picked up a digital camera, I was taking pictures on disposable and film cameras every day, documenting my friends and family. From there I started bringing my camera with me to all the shows I went to.

**What drew you to concert/band photography?** Being a music fan is why I was drawn to music photography. Punk music especially has been a huge part of my life since I was 12 or 13. I would read books about different scenes and bands I liked and they all had these iconic images from photographers like Edward Colver, Roberta Bayley, Jim Marshall, BJ Papas, etc. Their photographs inspired me to keep making music-related work.

**How did you get into music? Was there an album or song that ignited your passion?** The Unseen's "Anger and the Truth" was a stand-out album for me. Before that I passively listened to Ramones, The Clash, Minor Threat and I think it was that record that opened my eyes to bands that were active and touching on relevant political issues.

**What's your all-time favorite Side 1, Track 1?** This is hard to pick, but I'll go with "Maxwell Murder" from Rancid's "... And Out Come the Wolves." For nostalgia, and also I just still really love Rancid.

**What was the first concert you shot for fun? What was the first concert you shot as a pro?** The first show I remember photographing for fun was The Virus with A Global Threat at the Glasshouse in Pomona. The first show I photographed for a site was Billy Talent and Thursday.

**Explain to us what makes a great concert photograph. I'm sure there are elements that stick out in your mind that let you know a shot is going to be great even before you take it.** In my opinion, a great photo will make you feel something. A great concert photograph, to me, makes me want to be back in the pit—whether it's a concert in an arena or a more intimate show. The way light hits, fan reaction and connection with the music, the expression of the band performing, all of those pieces make a photo powerful. It all comes down to feeling and evoking an emotion.

**Who is your favorite band to shoot and why?** This answer is constantly changing for me. I think my favorite band to shoot right now is whoever I photograph for the first time post-COVID.

**What is your all-time favorite concert venue to shoot at and why?** I was born and raised in Los Angeles so I feel pretty loyal to all of the local ones I frequent. From The Regent and The Troubadour to The Fonda and The Wiltern. I am pretty fond of all of them, and especially hope our independently owned music venues pull through this pandemic.

**What's the one band you haven't had the opportunity to shoot that you really, really want to?** Ghost. I think they'd be a lot of fun to photograph.

**Tell us about To The Front and how that all came together?** I co-founded To The Front with my friend and photographer Courtney Coles. It started as a small photo show at a gallery here in Los Angeles and has since turned into a collective of women and non-binary artists (graphic designers, photographers, illustrators and more) who work in music, all from different scenes and parts of the world. Primarily we held traveling art shows across America and Canada where we'd showcase and sell our work, have bands play, and raise donations for local charities. Since we can't travel right now we released our first book to benefit a local community center. It sold out in just a few days.

We have about 50 other artists who are a part of To The Front now, and we're working on continuing to grow. To The Front exists to promote representation and inclusion within the music industry.

**How badly do you want to be able to shoot a concert again? Or just go to one, for that matter?** Very badly. Not only for my own selfish reasons of wanting to just enjoy live music and take pictures but also to see my touring friends and peers employed again.







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# THE MORE I

# DRINK

Partying like a rock star used to be only about consumption, now musicians are getting involved in the production. From an easy-sipping rosé to a Belgian-style sour ale, there's a perfect libation to compliment every playlist.

photo by peter roessler



From left to right: Licataa (Raekwon), Maison No. 9 (Post Malone), Ciroc Black Raspberry (Diddy), No. 9 Iowa Whiskey (Slipknot), 19 Crimes Snoop Cali Red (Snoop Dogg), Horus A Christmas Friggin' Miracle and Ooh La La... (Run The Jewels), Dogfish Head American Beauty Hazy Ripple IPA (The Grateful Dead), Goose Island CIVL Pale Ale (100% of proceeds support live music through the Chicago Independent Venue League)

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## Growing Up Zombie

It's been 10 years since Rick Grimes woke up to a world overwhelmed by zombies. During that decade, an entire generation came of age never knowing a world without flesh-eating monsters. AMC's "The Walking Dead: World Beyond" is the

second spin-off of "The Walking Dead," and it will follow two sisters and a pair of their friends as the group of four leaves their comfortable corner of the world as they embark on a remarkably dangerous cross-country journey.

## Mask Up

Any notion that masks were going to be a passing necessity is long gone by this point, so you may as well grab some fashionable face coverings. Sprayground has a whole series of face masks that look killer with a ton of variations on their trademark shark teeth logo. Each mask is designed to fit perfectly on your face with a nose bridge as well as adjustable ear loops. You'll be doing your part to stop the spread of COVID-19, while looking good doing so.



## HONG KONG'S FINEST

Remember those old 3M ads where they would say, "We don't make the products you buy, we make them better"? That's what Hong Kong's sneaker customizing geniuses 199X do. They take some already choice kicks and go to town on them. From painting leather with anime characters to gorgeous embroidery, 199X creates shoes that are almost too beautiful to wear. Almost.



## Coming Your Way

A new generation of Fleetwood Mac fans are about to be born with the rerelease of their classic third album. Originally released in 1969, "Then Play On" saw the band starting to transform from a blues sound to something poppier and more popular. The expanded Celebration Edition features the original U.K. track list as well as four additional tracks. The vinyl includes new sleevenotes by author Anthony Bozza, as well as a personal foreword by Mick Fleetwood.

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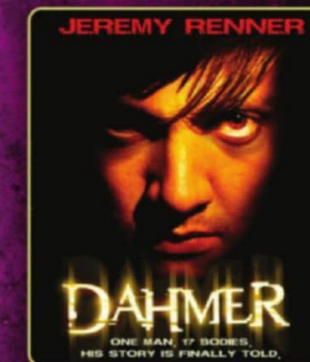
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## Pretty in Blackpink

This may be hard to believe given their immense popularity, but “BLACKPINK: The Album” is actually only the Korean girl group’s second album. Expect a lot of K-Pop stans to lose their collective minds when this drops in October.



## Be Excellent to Each Other

San Dimas may be best known as the hometown of the guys in Wyld Stallyns—Bill S. Preston Esq. and Ted Theodore Logan—so it’s fitting that there is now a guitar bearing the town’s monicker as well. The Charvel Pro-Mod San Dimas Style 1 HH FR E Ash Electric Guitar is custom made for shredding. Even if you’re guitar playing isn’t quite worthy of building an entire future society around, the neon pink ash finish will definitely catch people’s attention.



## Light My Fire

Fire and rock have gone hand-in-hand for decades. Whether the fire is in the form of great balls, in need of being lit or pleasant to stand next to, conflagrations have been an obsession of musicians for decades. Grab the You Rock candle at the Inked Shop and continue this time-honored tradition.

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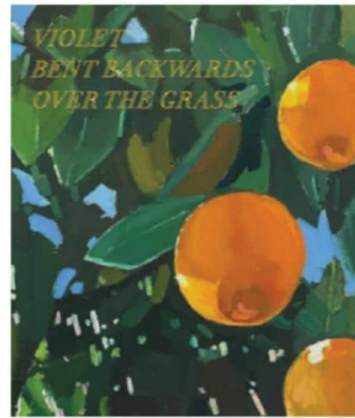


Football is undeniably the most popular sport in the world, and we're not talking about the violent game played on the gridiron here in the states. So it should come as no surprise that EA's "FIFA 21" is one of the most hotly anticipated games of the year. The changes to this edition go

beyond simple roster tinkering. Most notably, the Career Mode is getting an overhaul after players revolted using #FixCareerMode on Twitter. EA has responded by adding visual sim, loan to buy options and more. Prove your worth by getting Hull City into the Champions League.

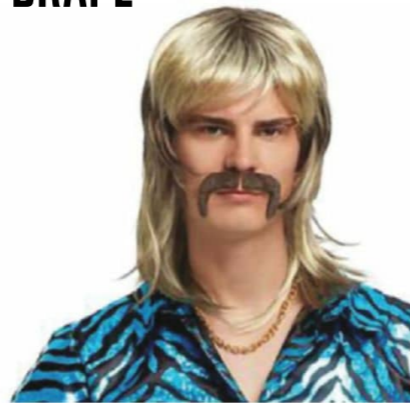
## Lust for Verse

Lana Del Rey is taking a page out of Jewel's play-book as she authors her debut book of poetry. "Violet Bent Backwards Over the Grass" features more than 30 new poems penned by the singer. Del Rey's poems are accompanied by her photography, making this tome a must-have.



## ROCK THAT APE DRAPE

Some call it Hockey Hair. Others have labeled it the Kentucky Waterfall or the Tennessee Top Hat. Many simply call it a mullet. The point is, there is no other hair style that can be its very own Halloween costume. But once you rock that sweet 'do and the various accoutrements included in Spirit's "Mullet Man" costume, you'll be the coolest cat or kitten in town.



## Jimmy Snaz's Playlist

- Blind Willie Johnson  
Dark was the night, cold was the ground
- Howlin' Wolf  
Smokestack lightening
- Elmore James  
Something inside of me
- Otis Redding  
Change gonna come
- Big Brother & The Holding company  
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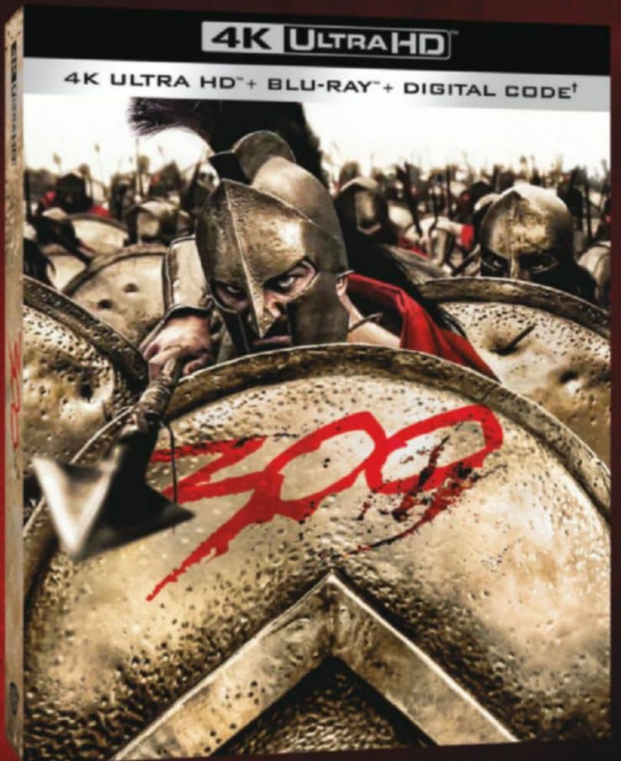
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# UPSAHL

by jonny watson  
photos by troy conrad

FOR CENTURIES PEOPLE HAVE ARGUED OVER THE ORIGIN OF MUSICAL TALENT. THEORIES ARE THROWN AROUND: MAYBE MUSIC IS AN ABILITY PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENETICS, OR MAYBE IT'S A SKILL THAT CAN BE LEARNED THROUGH HARD WORK AND DETERMINATION. IT'S AN INTRIGUING QUESTION BECAUSE THERE IS NO DEFINITIVE ANSWER, BUT AFTER SPEAKING TO SINGER/SONGWRITER UPSAHL, A GOOD CASE COULD BE MADE FOR MUSICAL TALENT BEING LEARNED THROUGH OSMOSIS.

"I grew up in a very musical household," UPSAHL says. "My dad was playing in bands all through when I was growing up, he was super involved in the Phoenix punk scene. I would be, like, four years old, waking up to go have some cereal and there'd be this band crashing on my living room floor. So I'd have breakfast with all these punk rocker dudes and after seeing the culture and the music I was like, 'I need to be a part of this.' I was singing and putting on shows, like, before I could talk."

That was that. UPSAHL would spend all of her free time in her family's music room, picking up instruments and figuring out how to play them. Music was always around her and it became the only thing she ever wanted to do. "My parents will tell you," UPSAHL says with a laugh, "[music] was the only thing I was good at."

The singer has come a long way since those performances for her family and whichever random punk band happened to be touring through Phoenix at the time. Even though she released an album while still in high school—titled "Unfamiliar," it was the inspiration for one of her tattoos—it wasn't until UPSAHL made the move to Los Angeles that her career really took off.

Most recently, she released a song called "People I Don't Like," documenting one of the most L.A. experiences of all—going to parties during Grammy Week. "Basically, you bounce around to all these different music industry parties," UPSAHL says, "and you meet the same people every night, but you reintroduce yourself. It's the most fake thing in the world. I was coming from one of the parties and I was pretty drunk, and I was ranting about it. We all go to the same thing, no one wants to be there, and everyone's so fake to each other."

"So we wrote a song about it," UPSAHL continues. "What I think is funny about the song is that it seems like it's hating on all these people, but I'm all these people. It's like a self-hate song at the same time."

There is more than a little irony in the timing of the song's release—right in the middle of a global pandemic. UPSAHL worried that it may seem rude to be putting out a song about parties at a time when most of the country is on lockdown, but along with her band, she found a fun way to debut the track. They put together a live stream, and while it wasn't the same as actually being able to play a show in front of fans, it was still a blast. "I haven't been able to play with my band since the end of 2019, so this was the perfect excuse," UPSAHL says. "It felt like a release party... by myself. But it was still the most fun we've had in a while."

On her 18th birthday UPSAHL chose to mark the occasion with her very first tattoo. The tattoo, an eighth rest, is on her wrist to serve as a reminder to slow herself down, to take a breath.

That first tattoo ignited a passion for UPSAHL. She's turned the birthday tattoo into an annual tradition, marking each year with a new piece. She's even gone as far as to dabble in creating some stick-and-poke tattoos with her friends, usually after a couple of drinks. To put it delicately, her technique could use a little practice.

"The first stick-and-poke I ever did was on my friend, it's a smiley face and it's so bad," UPSAHL laughs. "Then me and my friend did a stick-and-poke on my ankle that says, 'Power.' I was wasted, I have no clue why. But it doesn't look like it's going away any time soon, so I just have to own it. It looks horrible, but it was a fun night and it'll remind me of that night." Many of her tattoos have come about spontaneously, but there is one she's been thinking about for years. Ever since her song "Drugs" took off, UPSAHL has considered getting "Drugs" tattooed on the inside of her lip. She's yet to pull the trigger on it, but the thought is firmly implanted into her mind.

"Maybe I'll just tattoo it myself," she says with a laugh. "Maybe that's a good idea. Could you imagine? Looking in the mirror, pulling out my lip, tattoo gun in hand... nah."

Sometimes it's best to use a little patience. It won't be too much longer before UPSAHL will be able to get back on the road, spending her nights playing songs to crowds of people singing the words right back to her. And then, once it's safe to get her lip tattooed again, she can make that lip ink her next birthday tattoo.



# GERM

by ariana west  
photos by ramirez

GROWING UP IN ATLANTA, GERM DREAMED OF LANDING FRONTSIDE NOSEGRINDS AND JUMPING SICK STAIR SETS. WITH HIS MIND DEDICATED TO PROGRESSING AS A SKATER, HE NEVER EVEN ASPIRED TO A CAREER SPITTING RHYMES. "IT'S FUNNY BECAUSE WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL I HAD THIS GIRL I WAS MESSING AROUND WITH. SHE HAD A BOYFRIEND WHO WAS A 'RAPPER,' AND AFTER THAT I WAS ANTI-RAPPER," GERM SAYS. "YOU KNOW, 'YOUR MAN'S A RAPPER, BUT HE'S LAME AND I'M WAY COOLER THAN HIM AS A SKATER.' I DIDN'T GROW UP TRYING TO BE A RAPPER AND THINKING THIS WAS MY DREAM. IT KIND OF JUST HAPPENED THROUGH THE HOMIES RAPPING AND THEN I GOT INTO IT. IT CAME KIND OF EASY SO I JUST STUCK WITH IT."

Germ stumbled into the rap world via Fat Nick, who invited him to kick it at his crib after they connected online. It wasn't long after seeing Nick and fellow rapper Pouya killing it in the underground scene that Germ decided to give music a go. "I did my first-ever song with Pouya and Fat Nick, around 2014," Germ says. "We went to the studio, started fucking around and rapping. Pouya was on his up and up, so we got on a song and shot a video together. He went on tour that following summer and brought me along. I've been kicking it with them since then and watching everybody getting bigger."

From hanging and making music with Fat Nick and Pouya, Germ eventually became acquainted with Suicideboys, who'd go on to mentor him. After touring together, Suicideboys asked Germ to travel from Atlanta to New Orleans, where the cousins would help him craft his first solo mixtape. "I ended up taking a MegaBus to New Orleans and I was at Ruby's house for, like, three months, working and hanging out," Germ says. "When I was about to release my first mixtape, 'Bad Shit,' Scrim was telling me that everyone was going to hit me up and not to jump

the gun. I'd talked to them before that time and they'd wanted to start a label, so that was always in the back of my head."

Germ ultimately signed with Suicideboys' label, G\*59 Records, and has since released two albums, 2019's 'Germ Has a Deathwish' and 2020's 'The Hijinx Tapes.' But, despite his success in music, Germ hasn't forgotten his first passion. "'Germ Has a Deathwish' was themed off of Baker Skateboards and I took inspiration from their aesthetic to make my album," Germ says. "So for 'The Hijinx Tapes,' [Baker Skateboards] used to have a section in their videos called the hijinx montage, which was a bunch of bullshit and bloopers mashed up together. I mashed up everything over the past year—experiences, coming into more money, and shit that's happened—and put it into my own style."

In only six years, Germ has come a long way for an artist who found this industry on a whim. He's worked with other big artists, signed to a label and released several bodies of work. He's even brought someone else into the game, Lil Gnar. "I've probably known Gnar for, like, seven years now through skating," Germ says. "When I started rapping, it was the same time he started his clothing brand. I was always on the road and when I would come back to Atlanta, he'd hit me up about wanting to rap. Then we started rapping and it was lit. There's nothing like making music with the homie."

Germ makes his career sound like a breeze. Sure, he's put in a ton of hard work to make things happen, but since day one he's been working with his friends, so it never feels like an actual "job." Germ's got it all figured out. If there was a way we could all collaborate with our friends and make money doing it, this world would be a much better place.



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# Lexy Panterra

**Lexy Panterra is not just a pretty face. She's a hustler, a rapper, a daredevil and so much more.**

by jonny watson photos by travis shinn





**What track are you most excited about from “Baddie Vibez?”** I’m excited about the title track, “Baddie Vibez.” Personally, I think it’s a radio smash! It’s also the story of my transition into an edgier and more bold version of myself that I had to hold back before because of what I was expected to be. “Baddie Vibez” is me finally coming into my own, and I’ve never felt so good about where I’m at.

**Since you’ve built quite the following by twerking, what’s the best track from the album for twerking?** “Hot Girl.” “Hot Girl” is definitely the twerk track.

**Can you tell us about your first tattoo?** My first tattoo was “love” in Farsi, it’s on the inside of my wrist. My father brought me to a tattoo artist in the Hollywood Hills. He has the exact same one, and my grandmother who passed away also has it on her tombstone, so it’s a dear symbol for our family.

**How do you find the time for so many different side hustles?** There are no side hustles—it’s all hustle! All of my businesses and endeavors are my life and I love what I do. I put full energy into everything. My next project is Baddie Blunt Rings ;)

**Can you tell us how you came to love Patron so much? There’s got to be a story there...** I just like tequila. Straight shots! But what I really like is weed. The story behind “Patron” is that it’s the song of my quarantine! Things get really interesting when you’re stuck in the house with shots of Patron, so it inspired me to write this song.

**What’s it like to be releasing party music when all of the world desperately wants to be able to party?** This song should be an inspiration to turn up in the house! We have to make the most of the situation we’re in, so why not bring the party indoors? All you need is alcohol, good music, maybe in my case a strip pole, and you’re good to go.

**Tell us the difference between Lexy Panterra and “Virgin Lex.”** There is no difference—she is all one. But Virgin Lex is the born-again, virgin me, without everyone else’s input. This is who Lexy always has been, and we’re bringing it back to the beginning and shedding all the bullshit.

**What’s something you do that your fans would never have guessed?** I do my own nails! I constantly switch them out, I have a nail salon in my house and I do them myself. Desperate times, so I learned! I have my own decals coming out and they’re going to be epic.

**Do you ever miss riding motocross?** Yes, absolutely I miss riding. I think I just want to get the nostalgia back of what it felt like when I used to ride.  
**What’s the sexiest tattoo you have?**  
On my upper left rib cage (right under my boob), and it says “This love hurts.” My ex-boyfriend and I got matching ones.

# HEAL, PROTECT AND BRIGHTEN

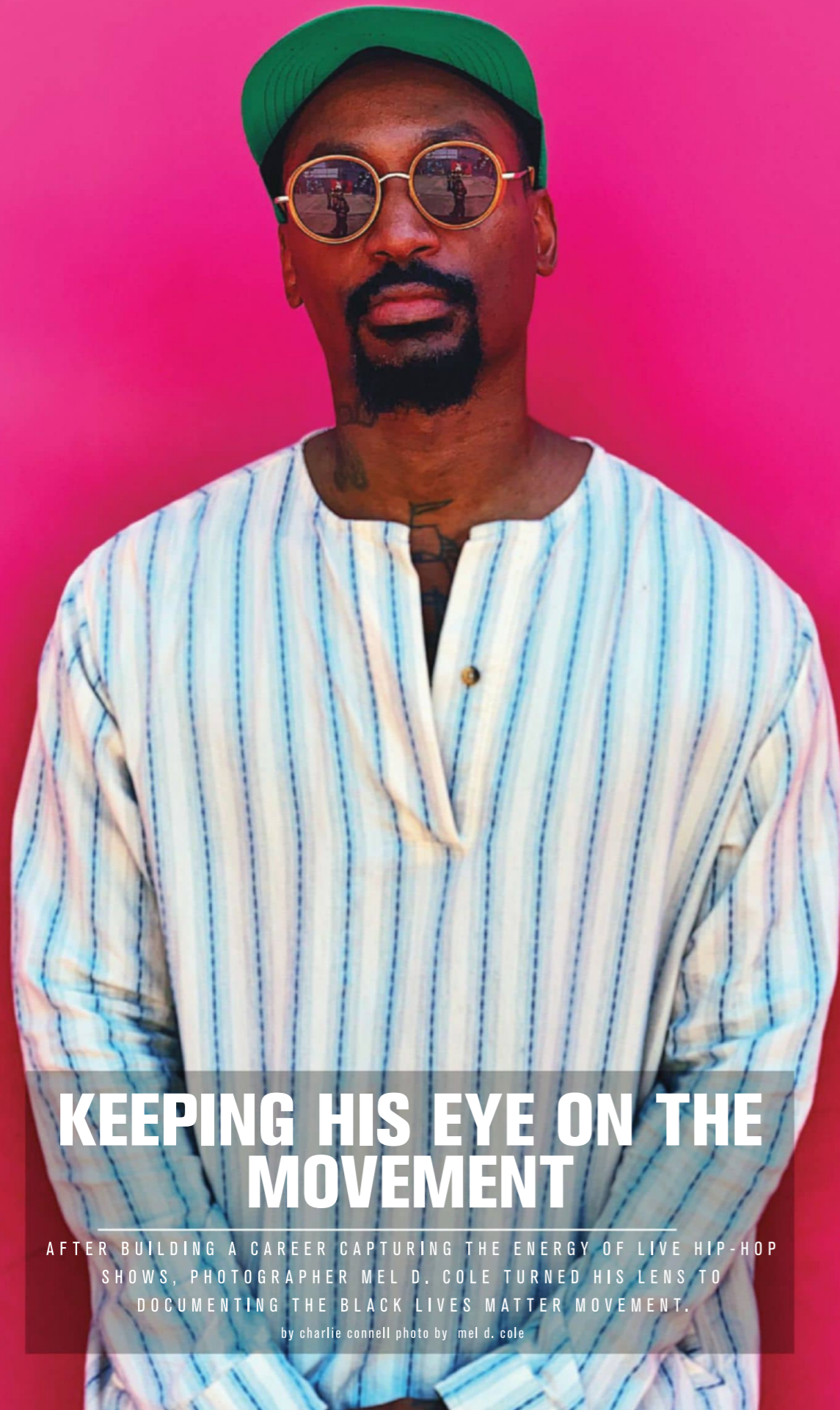


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# KEEPING HIS EYE ON THE MOVEMENT

AFTER BUILDING A CAREER CAPTURING THE ENERGY OF LIVE HIP-HOP SHOWS, PHOTOGRAPHER MEL D. COLE TURNED HIS LENS TO DOCUMENTING THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT.

by charlie connell photo by mel d. cole

My interview with photographer Mel D. Cole was scheduled for noon. I called a minute after 12, so it wouldn't look like I was too punctual, and the call went straight to voicemail. We had texted the night before about the interview time, so I knew he was expecting the call.

A missed call isn't unexpected, even when everybody seems to be on the same page, but I was a little surprised it went straight to voicemail. I shot him a quick text and thought nothing more of it, even as the hours went by without a response. Then, about eight hours after our scheduled interview would have taken place, I saw his Instagram story. He had been arrested.

At the time of his arrest, Cole was doing the same thing he had been doing on a daily basis since the murder of George Floyd—documenting Black Lives Matter protests in the streets. He wasn't engaged in any sort of illegal activity, he was simply being a journalist. "This is the first time I've been to jail when it wasn't my fault," Cole says. "I wasn't risking [getting arrested]. I know that I'm risking my life just by being outside. I've already been punched in the face by racist white men in Philadelphia, I was already hopped on by cops for going into a Best Buy store, but they used common sense and let me go.

"But this one, I was like, 'Are you fucking kidding me?'" Cole continues. "I've been standing here the whole time and you guys just literally walk up to me and point to me, and the next thing I know I'm being arrested for no reason. They couldn't tell me a reason the whole time."

Aside from all the normal fears that must run through the mind while being arrested, Cole was worried about what would happen to his cameras. Not only did they hold the footage that he had risked so much to capture, but they are very literally the key to his livelihood. "There was a very decent officer who really took care of my cameras," he says. "I showed her the utmost respect and she gave it back to me."

This time, Cole escaped unscathed. He wasn't even charged with anything. While officers never explained what compelled them to make the arrest, a "white shirt" (a commander in the NYPD) told Cole that he should feel lucky the police chose to only hold him for a few hours. It was yet another reminder why the Black Lives Matter movement is so important, a reminder why Cole is drawn into the streets every single day.

"I have a unique point of view and I have a platform that's bigger than a lot of photographers who have been out there, and I'm going to use it," Cole says. "I'm going to use my platform to make sure these stories are told in a proper way, these Black stories that need to be told. That's why I still go out there, to make sure that my camera is pointed in the right direction."

Over the past few months there have been so many things to be disheartened by, but Cole has seen a lot of hope in the protests. Among those things are the way he's seen white allies on the front lines respecting spaces and trying to understand what's going on during marches. But it was at a slightly different protest at New York's City Hall where Cole became really inspired. "Occupation City Hall at its height, right before the vote for the budget, was one of the most amazing things I've ever seen," Cole explains. "To see the community come together for one common cause, feeding each other... they had the most amazing food.

There was a place they called the People's Bodega that had everything you would need to live in the community, they had it for you. That made me smile. That brought me hope."

Long before Cole took to the streets documenting a movement, he made his name shooting the world of hip-hop, as can be seen in a collection of his work, "GREAT: Photographs of Hip-Hop 2002-2019." It wasn't four years spent at art school honing his craft that launched Cole's career, but a memorable night at one of NYC's most notable venues. "It was in 2002 with a disposable camera at SOB's," Cole says. "I was there to see a Common concert. I took some photos, and I didn't really think anything of it until maybe a month later. I was looking at a couple of magazines and I told myself that I think these photos I took at this Common concert, which was arguably the greatest concert that I've ever been to in my life, were pretty good. I got inspired by the work I did, and by the music, and that led me to buy a more professional-ish camera."

It was at a Kanye West concert at Madison Square Garden where Cole would quickly learn that what he lacked in professional training was more than compensated by passion and a little swagger. He didn't have credentials or a bag filled with different cameras and lenses, just a Fuji digital camera with a small memory card that he had to constantly delete pictures from as the show went on. "So I just played the part, went to the front, and they didn't say anything to me," Cole laughs. "I just kept shooting, it's just me and the house photographer. I shot the entire concert and no one said a word. Now they're kicking your ass out immediately."

Looking back on his past—the jobs he left a little prematurely because he thought he was ready to make a go of it and the hand tattoos that helped terminate any chances at a life as an office drone—while considering the present gave Cole an idea.

Covering the protests, Cole kept hearing from friends who wanted to offer him some cash to help with the expenses that were coming up, including bail and travel fees. "Friends kept asking, and I said, 'You know, I don't really need the money right now,'" Cole explains. "'Why not help out these other Black photographers?' A lot of them are unemployed, and they're out there shooting and putting themselves in danger just like me. Then the light bulb went off."

Within hours Cole set up a GoFundMe with the hopes of raising \$5,000 to spread around. If nothing else, it would be a little bit to ease the burden. The goal was met within 20 minutes. So he bumped it to \$10,000, then to \$15,000 and finally, \$20,000. The funds were spread out among 15 photographers, leaving Cole with a warm feeling in his heart and the ambition to make this grant a yearly endeavor.

The events of the past few months have spurred Cole, and his work, in a new direction. Previous large-scale events, like Occupy Wall Street, didn't move him in the same way. Plus, he always had a hip-hop show to shoot the next night. This time, things are very different.

"I'm activated now," Cole says. "I'm not going to stand back and not lend my eye and my lens to what is going on. Me being me, I feel like it would be a fucking waste if I didn't do what I had to do."

DaniLeigh was born knowing her purpose in life and put it into practice at an early age. As a singer, DaniLeigh reaches millions of people around the world every day, and her breezy lyrics instantly uplift those who hear them. "I felt like I [always] knew what I wanted to do with my life, and that's to inspire people," DaniLeigh says. The singer commemorated this with her first tattoo, which reads "Inspired to Inspire." But even before DaniLeigh could legally go under the needle, she was already on her way to inspiration.

DaniLeigh grew up in a Dominican household, where loud music was always playing. Her mother encouraged her to take classes in voice and piano as a child, but as a teenager, dance was the career path she saw for herself. Her dedication to singing came later on, as it wasn't always something she was confident in. "At 14, my mom had a restaurant and I would be in the back on the computer doing YouTube covers all the time," DaniLeigh says. "It was in my own little world because no one knew that I loved to sing as much as I did."

Two years later, DaniLeigh made the decision to leave her life in Florida to pursue a career as a backup dancer in Los Angeles. She signed to a dance agency and quickly began booking music videos, as well as commercials. Immersed in the entertainment capital of the world, DaniLeigh grew comfortable with herself as a singer, and while it was her desire to dance that brought her to L.A., her true passion came through her voice. "I met my producer Johnny at 18, and that's when I made the studio my home," DaniLeigh says. "That's when I really found passion in being an artist. Dancing was cool, but I really wanted to do music, have a message, and be my own boss."

Like many singers trying to break through, DaniLeigh began showcasing her songs online, hoping that one of her videos would catch the attention of the right person. The tactic itself is unremarkable; what makes her story so unique is the man whose attention she caught—Prince. "He found me online, reached out, and that was that," DaniLeigh says. "He said, 'I want you to write a treatment for this song and direct it.' He gave me a full budget and that's how it happened." DaniLeigh was given complete creative control of Prince's video for "Breakfast Can Wait," and the project became the first chapter of a mentorship between DaniLeigh and the High Priest of Pop. "I learned a lot from him," she says. "He definitely taught me a lot about the industry in the beginning. There had been labels reaching out to me and he always told me to be careful who I signed to and to own your stuff."

With Prince in her corner, DaniLeigh controlled her own destiny, and shortly after signing to Def Jam, she released her first EP, "Summer With Friends." "At that time, I was definitely new to the industry, so it was cool to put out something that had a lot of different vibes to it to see what people rocked with the most," DaniLeigh says. "It was my first EP, so it was really cool being able to create a project and put it together." The next year, DaniLeigh put out her first full-length album, "The Plan." She used this body of work to show listeners a different, more evolved side of herself. "My mindset was super boss-type, let's get it and let me focus on the plan," DaniLeigh says. "'Summer With Friends' was more fun and 'The Plan' was more serious in the sense of the topic. But I still carried on with the versatility in both projects, having different vibes and showing everyone each side of me."

By 2019, DaniLeigh stepped out of her mentor's shadow to truly come into her own as an R&B artist. While she didn't release an album last year, she gained the attention of the mainstream by collaborating with some of the biggest names in the game—starting with Chris Brown. "With Chris Brown, I was in the studio with him and we were playing back-and-forth with the aux," DaniLeigh says. "I was showing him all the new stuff I was working on and he was showing me everything he was working on. He was like, 'Dang, you don't have one bad song. Every song you've got flows.' I played him 'Easy' and he was like, 'Oh, this is a hit, let me get on this right now. Pull it up.'" Simply by vibing to each other's work, the two created a platinum-selling single.

Just like how each of her songs on "The Plan" is a little different, showcasing her versatility, DaniLeigh has proven that she approaches collaborations in the same manner. Each track deserves its own unique approach. For her track with G-Eazy, all DaniLeigh had to do was text him the song "Cravin'" and he replied back with his verse. With PartyNextDoor, they created their single together in the studio, building the track as a team. And when it came to putting together "Levi High" with DaBaby, it was her moves that got her in with the chart-topping rapper. "With DaBaby, we built a friendship and did his choreography for the 'Bop' video," DaniLeigh says. "It was dope and we definitely vibed on that set. Then, when I played him 'Levi High,' that song was already done and he wanted to hop on it."

Her voice propelled her to fame, but DaniLeigh hasn't forgotten the passion that brought her to L.A. in the first place. Choreography comes second nature to her, and while she may not choreograph 100 percent of her own videos, she always gives her input. For her video with DaBaby, she was in the driver's seat, and with dozens of backup dancers on set, she needed something that would make a big impression without being too chaotic. "I definitely know how to groove, that's my main thing," DaniLeigh says. "When I did 'Bop,' I peeped how DaBaby had little signature moves and I knew that there were going to be so many people in the video. Even though it was super simple, having so many people made it look bigger."

Following a whirlwind year of successful singles, DaniLeigh promises that an album is coming in 2020. In the two years since her last project, DaniLeigh has taken the time to put together a body of work that tells a story from start to finish and she admits it's her best work yet. "It starts with some 2000s R&B vibes, then I've got some bops, girl anthems that I think all of my girls will relate to, and then it turns into a party where you want to turn it up," DaniLeigh says. "It will get you in your feelings, both good and bad. There's definitely a transition between being in love, being hurt, having a 'fuck you' type of attitude, and then being sad again. You can relate to it all because everyone goes through these things."

While we don't have a name or know when her album will drop, based on her track record, her connections in hip-hop and her excitement about it, we know it will be making major waves on the charts. In fact, DaniLeigh puts this album up there with her most successful single when it comes to her body art. "I just got a tattoo that says, 'Take it easy.' It's from my biggest song," DaniLeigh says. "And I'm definitely going to get my next album tatted on me."



## INSPIRED TO INSPIRE

DANILEIGH DISHES ON FINDING HER VOICE, DIRECTING FOR PRINCE AND COLLABORATING WITH DABABY.

by devon preston photos by adi muhtarevic



# STROKE OF MIDNIGHT

HOW ALESSO TOOK SWEDEN'S HOUSE SCENE BY STORM AND CAPITALIZED ON AMERICA'S EDM BOOM.

by devon preston photos by eddie diaz

Before the internet and social media took over the music industry, many artists got their break by passing out demos in person or mailing them to labels for the chance of being discovered. Most of the musicians you hear today, however, found success by posting their songs and videos online, either growing an organic following or getting noticed by a celebrity. Alesso went with the old-school approach and got his work in front of his idol, Swedish House Mafia's Sebastian Ingrosso. "I met him through his father in Sweden. He used to go to this coffee shop where my girlfriend was working at the time," Alesso says. "She gave him my CD and he listened to it the same day, which is crazy."

Although he swears he would have continued pursuing a career as a DJ if Ingrosso had turned him down, this opportunity was a foot in the door of a very competitive industry. Ingrosso became a mentor to Alesso, or a big brother as Alesso calls him, helping the young DJ every step of the way. "He knew what to think about and what to focus on," Alesso says. "He always let me do my own thing and he was never deciding things for me, he was just giving advice. And obviously I took most of his advice, because I trusted him and valued his opinions."

Those first few years trying to make it in the EDM scene were tough and many nights were spent putting together songs. With Ingrosso helping him through it, Alesso had support that many up-and-comers lack. He was also coming up in a time when many DJs shared tutorials for music programs on YouTube, which artists from years past had to figure out on their own. With the right team of people behind him and modern technology on his side, Alesso was primed for success. But he soon learned from his mentor that these things will only get you so far when it comes to creating a lasting career. "I think one of the best things he said was that no one is going to care more about your career than you," Alesso says. "Don't expect people to go to war for you and make your dreams come true. It's all you, all the time."

In the start of his career, Alesso's biggest dream was to perform at a club in Ibiza. Yet he soon found himself riding the wave of the American EDM movement, rising to the top of the pack with his 2014 single "Heroes." The single came about in collaboration with Tove Lo, who was still relatively unknown to the music industry at the time. "She had a couple of demos that I'd heard through my label and not only did I love her voice, but her songwriting was really unique," Alesso says. "We got connected through my label and I played her some beats. Then she came back a week later with the song 'Heroes' and I loved it, so we started going from there." Alesso loved the song from the beginning, but after recording it, he doubted it would be the biggest hit on his album. Then, after playing it for his label, he realized he had a hit on his hands. "When we made the song, we just wanted to make a cool, awesome song and I was just happy to make music with [Tove Lo]," Alesso says. "But that's good, and that's the state of mind I try to be in to make music. Not trying to chase it all the time, because that can be exhausting when you don't get the results you want. I just want to make music that represents what I love."

Throughout his career, Alesso has learned the importance of making music he loves because people can tell when a song is made for business over passion. Although the masses may not be skilled in recognizing the technicalities of songwriting, people are exposed to millions of artists through streaming platforms, and even kids are developing a palate for good songs. "If I'm trying to

get an idea of how well a song will do I play it for kids, my sister, and my mom," Alesso says. "Because everyone's opinion is as valuable as [that of] the biggest songwriter."

Following the trends of today's youth while staying true to his own interests, Alesso became inspired by 2018's Fortnite craze. For his single "Tilted Towers," he wanted to get involved with the video game phenomenon, and in order to get in with the gamers, he went to the most popular player of all time—Ninja. "When I made that song, it was so far from all the other stuff I'd been doing and I didn't know how to put it out in a cool way," Alesso says. "Then this Ninja compilation came about and we played Fortnite together. It was such a cool and fun way to put out a song."

From working with Tove Lo and Ninja, as well as other artists like Hailee Steinfeld, Florida Georgia Line and Calvin Harris, Alesso has topped the charts by embracing collaboration. Although it's possible for a DJ to find success with a solo single, many today work with known singers and songwriters, adding the dimension of vocals to an electronic track. By 2019, Alesso had come up with the beats for a song he knew needed an all-star vocalist, and through his label Liam Payne became involved. "In the beginning, I didn't even know if he was going to listen to it and then he sent me the rough version," Alesso says. "He came to Sweden and we recorded together last year, right before Christmas. Sometimes you just make music online, but I wanted to meet in person because this song was really important to me. It's a very emotional record and he needed to mean what he's saying."

Alesso and Liam Payne's "Midnight" debuted during the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak and for the single's promotion, Alesso knew he wanted to get their fans involved. They asked fans to share their renditions of the single, and in just a few days they gained hundreds of responses. "Now that we're isolated, we think it's important to connect, entertain and make the best of this time," Alesso says. "We're all going through this situation together and we thought that maybe our fans would want to sing our songs. It was the craziest thing I'd ever seen, I didn't know so many people would want to do it."

While Alesso may be at home with more time to create music now than he's had in the past 10 years, one of his favorite parts of his career is being able to travel the world. Coming from Sweden, Alesso began his career playing music in Europe, but it has since taken him on the adventure of a lifetime, including tours through the Americas, Asia and Australia. To represent his whirlwind of a music career in a tattoo, there was no other way than to incorporate travel. "I have one tattoo made by Dr. Woo that represents my music," Alesso says. "It's a compass, because music has taken me all around the world, and it's definitely one of the most detailed tattoos I've ever seen."

Alesso's career began in a very unexpected way and took him further than he ever dreamed possible—from working with his favorite DJ to collaborating with top-tier creators to sharing his sound with audiences around the globe. He's come a long way from being a rookie from Stockholm, and with all this time to create new music, we have no doubt he'll be throwing out some serious bangers in the months to come. And while he's made us wait "Forever" since his last album dropped in 2015, it's only a matter of time before we see another body of work come from this electronic powerhouse.

Back in 2016, fans of the critically acclaimed Netflix dramedy "Orange Is the New Black" were introduced to the character Brandy Epps, a member of the prison's white supremacy gang. Actor Asia Kate Dillon brought Brandy to life and, over the course of the show, portrayed a character that couldn't be further from their real self. However, eagle-eyed fans may have noticed that the producers snuck part of the actor's true identity into the character, through Dillon's real neck tattoo—lettering that reads "einführung." "The tattoo means empathy or one feeling," Dillon explains. "I discovered that German was the first to translate the word empathy out of Greek. It was translated in the 1850s by a German philosopher who was trying to come up with a word for the experience that people have when engaging with art."

Dillon felt an empathy for art at a young age and was raised by a single mother who filled their home with music, films and books. At 6 years old, Dillon found acting in kindergarten through a Hans Christian Anderson play. And despite being cast as a townspeople and not having a single line, they fell in love with the stage. "It's an age-old thing, but I got bit by the bug as it were and I never stopped," Dillon says. "My mother sensed that I had artistic instincts and followed my lead when I joined the school choir, did the spring musical and the fall play. I've been so grateful to have a mom who really supported me and always encouraged me. In our household, being an artist was as noble a profession as being a doctor."

Dillon went on to attend the American Musical and Dramatic Theater, landing their first major theater role as the titular character in "My Name Is Rachel Corrie." From this role, Dillon was spotted by an agency who helped them turn the corner into the world of television. "My first one-liner was on the TV show 'Younger' and I played a normcore flea market shopper," Dillon says. "That experience was particularly thrilling because it was my first time on a real TV set and I remember feeling like I was right where I'd wanted to be working. It really all clicked for me in the same way it did when I was 6 and on stage for the first time."

Booking "Orange Is the New Black" changed Dillon's life overnight, catapulting them to stardom. Despite playing a relatively minor character, it wasn't long before Dillon was snatched up for a much bigger project. "For 'Billions,' like 'Orange,' I got an email from my agent saying they had this audition appointment for me," Dillon shares. "I auditioned with the casting director and she said I was going to come back to meet the producers. It was one of those moments that I feel like I watched in movies when I was younger and that's how people magically got the part. I didn't think it really happened that way."

Dillon made a positive impression on the show's producers, Brian Koppelman and David Levien, booking the part a day after the Season Four premiere of "Orange Is the New Black." And unlike their last television part, the role of Taylor Mason hit much closer to home. "It was the first time I'd encountered a fictional or nonfictional character who identified as nonbinary but hadn't undergone a physical or medical transition," Dillon says. "[This] certainly was the catalyst for me coming to a full understanding of my gender identity. Taylor Mason is also important because they represent a queer, trans, nonbinary character in

a predominately cis world. They're a character who's integral to pushing the story forward and that story is not focused on their gender identity."

The character Dillon plays made history as the first nonbinary main character to be portrayed on a North American television show and one of the first things the character addresses is their use of gender-neutral pronouns. Mason's presence in television history and Dillon's portrayal of the character as a nonbinary actor shows tremendous progress is being made in queer storytelling. "[Cinema] has done damage to the queer community for a very long time and more recently we're seeing representation that is more truthful," Dillon says. "We're seeing trans and nonbinary stories told by or with the consultation of trans and nonbinary people, which is relatively new. Taylor Mason being part of that history is important to me and I feel proud to be one part of that history."

Honest and dimensional representation of trans and nonbinary characters is integral to helping LGBT+ see themselves on screen, but also allows the rest of the world to understand and empathize with these communities. Despite the progress our society continues to make, only 30 percent of adults know someone who's trans or nonbinary, according to a 2016 study by the Pew Research Center. "I've had people say they were homophobic or transphobic, but have loved 'Billions' and my character and I've really changed their hearts and mind," Dillon says. "The hope is that a person falls in empathy with a trans or nonbinary character on screen, so that when that person meets a trans or nonbinary person in real life, hopefully that love, understanding and empathy translates to the person in front of them."

But Dillon's fight for nonbinary representation doesn't only adhere to the fictional world of high finance. Growing up, Dillon rejected the word actress and the separation of genders at awards shows long before they came to understand their nonbinary identity. Then in 2017, Dillon was contacted by Showtime, who wanted to know how they would like to be submitted for the possibility of being nominated for an Emmy. "At that time, they told me any performer could enter either category for any reason," Dillon says. "Being told that I could submit in either category felt like progress to me and when I was nominated for best supporting actor at the Critics' Choice Awards, I felt really respected and seen in my identity." However, not every awards show offers the gender-neutral category of best actor, such as the SAG Awards, which honors outstanding female and outstanding male actors. Dillon realized there was more work to be done and will be meeting with the SAG Awards to discuss making this change. "I've come to an understanding that allowing nonbinary performers to enter either category for any reason is actually not progress because it still denotes between men and women," Dillon says. "As a nonbinary person, I'm not a man and I'm not a woman. Nonbinary people have always been here and it's time for Hollywood to acknowledge that and embrace it. The time is past due, and it's now."

Asia Kate Dillon has their work cut out for them, both on screen and off. Changing the traditions of an institution is no easy feat, but if anyone can rise to the challenge with tenacity, charm and empathy, it's this tattooed trailblazer.



## BEYOND BINARY

ASIA KATE DILLON DISCUSSES "ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK," "BILLIONS" AND GENDER ROLES IN HOLLYWOOD.

by devon preston photos by shirin tinati



Upon picking up his very first guitar, a young Zach Myers thought he'd be able to play it with one hand behind his back. No, the future lead guitarist of Shinedown wasn't filled with an abundance of confidence at 12 years old. It's just that he had some interesting ideas about how to play guitar in the first place. "I'm sure people will make fun of me for this forever," Myers says, "but when I got the guitar, for some reason, I didn't think you were supposed to put your left hand on the neck, which is the dumbest thing you could probably ever think. I was just strumming the guitar with my right hand, like an idiot."

This novel method of playing guitar would work if Myers wanted to only play the introduction to Metallica's "Nothing Else Matters," but if he wanted to advance beyond that, his left hand was going to have to get in on the action. Like so many kids picking up the guitar, Myers learned what he could from watching MTV. Specifically, from Bush's "Machinehead" video.

"I was watching that video and I was like, 'I can do this,'" Myers explains. "I started playing along with what I was watching on TV. Looking back, it was probably like that scene in 'The Wolf of Wall Street' when he thinks he gets home fine after taking all of the Quaaludes. I was probably playing it terribly. But in my head I was like, 'Yes. This sounds kind of good.'"

Luckily, Myers had the good sense to take some lessons instead of relying on picking everything up from grainy live videos on "120 Minutes." Fast forward a couple of decades and Myers is playing guitar in three different bands—Shinedown (the rock band), Smith & Myers (the acoustic project with Brent Smith, the singer of Shinedown) and Allen Mack Myers Moore (the folk-country outfit).

Where some people could see this as spreading himself too thin, Myers sees each project as a way to scratch a different musical itch. For example, as a kid he dreamed about being Garth Brooks, and Allen Mack Myers Moore lets him show-case that side of him. "I always feel like it's weird when guys are in rock bands and they go and start a rock side project," Myers explains. "I'm like, 'What are you doing?' To me, if you're in a band, you should get your creativity out with that project. I would never start another rock thing. I get everything I need out of Shinedown."

Don't ever expect Myers to run out of rock music to play—it turns out the guys in Shinedown are pretty prolific songwriters. Each album cycle, they end up with dozens of songs that never see the light of day. "I think there were 78 demos for 'The Sound of Madness.' We went down to about 50 on 'Amaryllis,' about 31 on 'Threat [to Survival],' and only about 19 for 'Attention Attention,'" Myers says. "Either we're getting better at writing songs or we're just getting more cocky about our songwriting ability [laughs]."

Having so many songs in the bank proved especially useful back in May. As the United States struggled to bring the COVID-19 pandemic under control, Myers and crew knew they wanted to do whatever they could to help. As they looked through their back catalogue they came across "Atlas Falls," a song that felt like it was written specifically for this turbulent moment in history, even though it had been penned for 2012's "Amaryllis."

The plan was to release the song along with a T-shirt for \$50 and to donate the money, but where to? With something like

a natural disaster, it's easy to know how to get support in the right hands. But with a pandemic that is affecting the entire world, who needs that support most and how can the money get to them most directly? "Brett [Smith] found Direct Relief, which is a nonpolitical charity," Myers says. "Literally their whole job is providing hospitals, clinics and testing facilities with their supplies, scrubs, masks, gloves, testing products and everything they need to do their job. They provide to frontline workers, who are the people we should be taking care of the most right now. They don't have a choice to go out there and be involved in this, and they risk their lives and their family's lives every day doing so."

As of early August, Shinedown had raised around \$400,000 for Direct Relief, and that number will continue to grow. "It felt really good to find a charity that has no bias towards anything," Myers says, "no agenda beyond just helping people."

In a normal year, Myers ends up spending more than 200 days on the road. But the pandemic has completely upended touring for the foreseeable future, and that breaks Myers' heart. Even after all the years grinding, he still gets excited every time he plays a show. Never jaded, the guitarist likes to show up early and find a seat near the top of the arena so he can watch everything fill up once the doors open.

On the other hand, Myers has been able to spend a ton of time with his family, including his two young sons. "I've just been super daddying and I'm getting to go on vacations that I've never gotten to go on before," Myers says. "I've been spending as much time with them as I can. We live on a lake, so we go fishing every day. There's definitely some days I wake up and think, 'Man, I wish I was playing a show today.' But it doesn't happen every day, some days I'm just really glad to be home."

His role as a doting dad comes across as he talks about his tattoos. He has a tribute to each of his sons inspired by songs that he sang to them as lullabies. Of course, having a rock star dad means he wouldn't always sing a "traditional lullaby," but a Coheed and Cambria tune. "It's funny, I can wear a long-sleeve shirt and just look like super dad," Myers says. "But then with short sleeves, you see all the artwork I have and it's like, 'Oh, OK.'"

Myers isn't the type of man to go out and get a tattoo on a whim. He's a planner. Each of his pieces, including his very first tattoo, has thought behind it. He already had a cohesive sleeve planned in his head—a Nintendo theme starting off with the flying Mario from "Super Mario Bros. 3." Joining Mario in the 16-bit sleeve is Little Mac from "Punch-Out," Mega-Man, the Paperboy and others.

"Everyone always rags on me for not including Zelda," Myers explains, "but the reason I got the sleeve was because, when I was 14, my cousin committed suicide. I had an excellent childhood, but I don't really remember too much from my childhood. I remember playing all of these games with my two cousins, Jacob and Justin. Justin died early, so in the paper that the Paperboy is throwing I have his initials in the headline. I thought it was a cool tribute that wasn't overt or blatant."

Everything Myers does has a deeper layer of meaning beneath it, from the tattoos he has to the music he plays, to the way he spends his time. In a world where so many things lack substance, it's nice to see a true man of purpose.



## A MAN OF PURPOSE

SHINEDOWN'S ZACH MYERS EXPLAINS HIS RATIONALE BEHIND HIS MYRIAD MUSICAL PROJECTS, THE THOUGHT PROCESS BEHIND HIS COLORFUL SLEEVE, AND HOW HIS BAND FOUND A WAY TO HELP FRONTLINE WORKERS DURING THE PANDEMIC.

by charlie connell photos by sanjay parikh

# HEAVEN

We spoke with Marilyn Manson about his prescient new album, the loss of his close friend Norm Love Letters, and collaborating with Shooter Jennings.

by charlie connell photos by travis shinn



## MARILYN MANSON IS THE HUMAN EMBODIMENT OF CHAOS.

Countless twists and turns define his 30-year career, as he has gone from shock rocker to Antichrist, painter to actor. Each stage of Manson's oeuvre could fill a tome—the only constant is that Manson's next move is never what you expect it to be.

For his 11th album, "We Are Chaos," Manson teamed up with an unlikely partner, Shooter Jennings. The two had met around the time Manson was on "Sons of Anarchy," and the television series had wanted them to collaborate on a song. While that didn't come to fruition, the musicians struck up a friendship and knew that one day they wanted to work together.

"It's strange, because I've worked with different artists over the years," Manson says. "Shooter is probably the most, if possible, perfect producer for me to work with. The songs came so fluidly. We started doing stuff together and it just bloomed into something that we weren't really certain was going to be able to be finished because of touring and complications."

The two carved out time whenever they were able to, and after two-and-a-half years of intermittent studio time, they put the finishing touches on "We Are Chaos" right as the world was starting to shut down. "It didn't literally take that long to make it," Manson explains. "It took this long for it to marinate and become something. I've found in this life that things happen in strange ways, good or bad, for a reason. [The title track] happened to come out, unexpectedly, at a time when it definitely speaks to how a lot of people feel.

"Hopefully it reaches people in a way I have not even expected it to," Manson continues. "It was more about mental health than it was about physical health."

Many of the lyrics throughout the album feel like they were specifically written to fit this very moment in history, despite being penned well before COVID-19 was part of our lexicon. There is a delicate balance between the lyrical content of the album—which can come across as quite apocalyptic—and the music playing beneath those lyrics. Yes, there are the sort of grinding guitar sounds that one expects from every Marilyn Manson album, but there are also sounds reminiscent of Roxy Music, Iggy Pop and, most notably, David Bowie.

"Our conversation began with the Berlin Era, [Brian] Eno and Bowie," Manson says. "We were talking about our love for different songs. We love 'Diamond Dogs' so much and we wanted to really try to put our mindset into doing something that felt that way to us. We weren't trying to emulate it, or trying to replicate it, which is impossible, but we wanted to capture the feeling that was around us."

Their shared love of that time comes through, particularly on tracks like "Paint You with My Love" and the haunting album-closing "Broken Needle." The respective

musical backgrounds of each musician are also evident, complimenting each other throughout the album, but also pushing themselves toward a new direction.

"The strange thing is that a lot of it was recorded with Shooter playing guitar while I was singing," Manson says. "He doesn't really like to play guitar, although he's great at it, he's too shy to admit it [laughs]. I would force him to play guitar, and some bass lines also. There is a haunting element to it, I wouldn't say country, I would say 'Gimme Shelter'-era Stones. It has haunting elements of his father [Waylon Jennings]."

Manson, as he tends to do, presents many raw emotions throughout the album. Some of the pain stemmed from the loss of somebody close to him. "I had just finished a tour and one of my best friends was Norm Love Letters, the tattoo artist," Manson recalls. "We had a scheduled appointment in two days... I had talked to him two days before he died. It was so heartbreaking. We had a very, very close relationship. I love that guy so much."

Manson's tattoo collection can be broken into two distinct sections—the ones he got very early on and those he got after 2006. The demarcation line can be seen quite clearly, as his later tattoos, many of which were done by Norm, are only in black ink. Those earlier pieces were often a topic of discussion for the two.

"It was something that Norm used to joke about," Manson says. "He would joke with me about the tattoos I have on my shoulders that are, you know, from the '90s. He would say, 'Man, these are the best '90s tattoos.' I'm like, 'Are you fucking making fun of me?' He'd say, 'No man, I'm serious. I want to bring back '90s tattoos. I want to bring back tribal tattoos.' And believe me, that was something I was never interested in."

As Manson speaks about all of the work that his friend did on his body—the sigils on his fingers, the cross on his chest, the back piece that he reworked—you can hear the love, and a tinge of pain, in his voice. It is clear that these tattoos are revered by him in a way that his earlier tattoos aren't. "I wanted to remember each piece as part of my life," he says of his more recent tattoos.

As a man who dabbles in art of all kinds—painting being his preferred visual medium, including the cover of "We Are Chaos"—Manson has had some input into his tattoo work. Many of those '90s tattoos that Norm was so fond of were based off of Manson's own illustrations. Has he ever created a tattoo?

"Yeah. Not successfully though," Manson laughs. "I can paint. It's not in any way the same thing as making a tattoo. The way that I like to work as a painter is too fluid, I just don't understand the tattoo gun like I do a paintbrush. I suppose with enough practice... but it seems really fucked up to practice on people. I like the idea, but I don't think my penmanship or my geometry... the point is that I don't think it would be smart for me to put something permanent on someone's body [laughs]."

It's funny that Manson mentions his penmanship,



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because while he may not be giving out a lot of tattoos, he has seen countless tattoos of his signature on fans. "When I'm at meet-and-greets where people pay to meet me, which is insane," Manson says, "I feel sometimes like Santa Claus in a weird way. I'm very conscious when signing, I don't want it to look like shit. It's a weird thing to have someone tattoo your signature on them. It's flattering, of course. But it's also odd. In some ways I feel obligated to make sure I maintain them as a fan so that they don't feel like shit about getting the tattoo later."

By this time in his career, he's likely seen thousands of tattoos inspired by his music, but he's never become jaded by it. He's seen his signature, he's seen pieces inspired by his paintings, he's seen lyrics, and he's seen some pretty strange ones. He often takes pictures of the portrait tattoos he finds, amazed by the level of artistry put into them by the tattooer.

For an artist who continually reinvents himself, it's interesting that he has covered himself in permanent art. One would think

that the constant chaos and change in Manson's career would steer him away from such everlasting work, but it has been quite the opposite.

It's oddly appropriate that when the rest of the world was in turmoil trying to come to grips with a lockdown, Manson was at ease. "I prefer silence and the ability to be alone," Manson explains. "Admittedly, it's been claustrophobic at some points, but not so much where I can't... I have five cats. So that's one part that entertains me."

Manson is releasing an album into a world that is far different than the one in which he created it. Words written two-and-a-half years ago feel strangely prescient.

"We are sick, fucked-up and complicated," Manson sings on the title track. "We are chaos, we can't be cured."

He's right about that first part. The second part? We'll have to wait and see.



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# REGGAETÓN'S COMEBACK KING

Anuel AA talks bouncing back from prison, his relationship with Karol G and his most personal tattoos.

by lucas villa photos by javi neris

"I'm a super fan," Anuel AA says of the Goku and Vegeta tattoos on his left arm. "Everybody that has lived that street life is a fan of 'Dragon Ball Z.' They're like soldiers and that's why I identify with them." In 2018, Latin music became the fifth-most consumed genre of music in the U.S., placing ahead of country music. As the genre continues to do impressive numbers, the superheroes of the Latin movement are the reggaetoneros, or reggaetón music artists. This year, Anuel was one of two Latin artists to achieve the Herculean feat of debuting inside the top 10 of the all-genre Billboard 200 chart. For Anuel to soar to such heights with his "Emmanuel" LP, he had to come back from rock bottom.

Emmanuel Gazmey Santiago grew up in Carolina, Puerto Rico, where reggaetón music was cultivated. In the early 2000s, reggaetoneros like Daddy Yankee, Tego Calderón and Don Omar helped popularize the once-underground genre on a global scale. "If it wasn't for them, like, all they did in reggaetón, there would be no Anuel," he says. At the time, his father, José Gazmey, was the vice president of Sony Music Puerto Rico's A&R department, so a young Anuel was able to connect with those icons. "Thank God I met them when I was a little kid," he says. "It was meant to be. I see it like that."

When Anuel was 15 years old, his father lost his job at Sony Music so their family struggled financially. The rapper moved out to the projects to work on his own music. "Something always happens, but I kept knocking on doors, and I made it," he says. The "it" that Anuel is referring to was being discovered by hip-hop producer Spiff TV, who brought him to the attention of Rick Ross and his Maybach Music label. "Nobody in the Spanish music industry believed in my music in the beginning," Anuel says. "They were the first ones, so I'm always going to be grateful." As Anuel was becoming a rising star in Latin trap music, he was arrested in April 2016 outside of a nightclub in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, for illegal possession of firearms. The judge sentenced him to 30 months in federal prison.

"Shit, I fucked up," Anuel recalls. "I was thinking, I'm going to have to go back to the streets when I come out because people ain't gonna be waiting for me." While Anuel was behind bars, the community he built with Daddy Yankee and Calderón along with his contemporaries came through for him. "Ozuna, J Balvin, Bad Bunny, everyone, they held it down for me," he says. "They shouted me out in their shows and recorded on my songs when I was in prison. Like my song 'Sola' with Daddy Yankee, Farruko and Wisin, that helped me a lot." Anuel's team dropped his "Real Hasta La Muerte," or "Real Until Death," mixtape at the peak of the #FreeAnuel movement. That mixtape made him one to watch in both Latin trap and reggaetón. "It

was like a movie," he recalls. "My career kept going as if I was in the streets."

When Anuel was released from prison on July 17, 2018, he independently released his debut album, "Real Hasta La Muerte," which opened at No. 1 on Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart. Not only did Anuel step out to the success of a platinum album but also to some unexpected romance. Tattooed on his back is a photo of him linking tongues with Colombian reggaetonera Karol G. The frostiest character in reggaetón in terms of his signature "BRRRR!" tagline and his iced-out neck and grill, warmed up to one of the biggest female artists in the genre. "That was the first picture we took kissing each other," he says. "When I met her, it changed my life for good. Something in my mind and my heart told me she was the one. That she was going to be the girl I spend all my life with."

The reggaetón power couple went public with their relationship in early 2019 on their single "Secreto," or "Secret." The music video featuring Anuel and Karol G's intimate moments together broke the Latino internet and now has over a billion views on YouTube. "People think that just because you're an artist or you're famous that everything's good," he says. "They see you shining. They see the camera flashes. Of course, life is great, but it comes with a lot of stress too. Having Karol, she lives that same life. She understands it. She's really a big fan of mine and I'm a super fan of her music. She helps me a lot and I help her too." He even has his fiancée's name tattooed on his finger. "When I showed her, I was like, 'Yo, if it's real, tat my name then,'" Anuel laughs. "Yeah, she got it too."

Last summer, Anuel assembled the Avengers of reggaetón for his biggest hit single, "China." The song turned a sample of Shaggy's 2000 smash "It Wasn't Me" into a refreshing reggaetón banger featuring Daddy Yankee, J Balvin, Ozuna and Karol G. "That song, I was going to drop it by myself, but I was like, nah," he says. "Somebody played one of those reggaetón classics that had all the legends on it and I was like, 'Yo, this is what I want to do.' If that song wouldn't have gone No. 1, I would've retired. With all those big artists, it was impossible for 'China' not to be big."

"China" was one of the songs that led up to Anuel's second album, the self-titled "Emmanuel." "This is the first album I dropped since I came out [of prison], basically," he says. "The other one was done already. This is the first album that I could sit down and work on. I could pay more attention to it." Among the surprise features on the album is Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker on "No Llores Mujer," a Spanish reworking of Bob Marley's "No Woman, No Cry." "He's really humble," Anuel says. "He's a super legend and he likes my music, so we're probably going to keep working together." Rap icon Lil Wayne features on "Ferrari."

"For me, that was a dream come true," he says. "I didn't know he was going to know who I was because that's how big he is. He treated me like family."

On having Daddy Yankee and Calderón on "Emmanuel," Anuel says, "I see them as my big brothers because we work together." It's an especially rare occasion for Calderón to be on "Rifles Russos," or "Russian Rifles." "He's like family," Anuel says. "When I was in prison, he paid for my lawyer. I wanted people on the album who are very close to me, so I hit him up. Even though he's on another phase in life, he loved the song. I was like, 'Bro, nobody else fits on this.'" The album opened at No. 8 on the all-genre Billboard 200 chart, making Anuel the second Latin artist (the first being Bad Bunny) this year to have a top 10 debut on that chart.

Anuel featured on Bad Bunny's "YHLQMDLG" and Bad Bunny returned the favor on "Emmanuel." Because of their similar career trajectories and successes, the two are often pitted against each other. "There's always going to be respect between us," he says. "It's a competition for the people the most. Right now I'm in a phase of life where I only gotta be better than myself. Every time I do something, it's gotta be better than the last thing I did." Rappers like him and Bad Bunny are broadening reggaetón's appeal. "Reggaetón is the type of music in the Latin industry that used to get criticized a lot," Anuel says. "Reggaetón came from the streets. The streets had a lot to do with reggaetón's success in the beginning, so seeing [Shakira], Enrique Iglesias, Drake, everybody doing reggaetón, for us it's super legendary seeing how it has grown so much."

"My biggest fan base is the streets all around the world," Anuel says of his own legacy. "When I grew up, my only role models for real were the drug dealers, so for me, making it like this and being one of the biggest artists in the Latin industry is like a dream come true. It's a lot of responsibility, so I gotta keep making the right decisions and making the right music. The most that anybody can say about me is: 'He came from the streets and he made it. He knows what's falling down and getting up.' I'm super proud of that."

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# ZHA

From the silver screen to the big screen to the airwaves, there's no territory Zhavia Ward can't conquer.

# VIA

by devon preston photos by robert pho

Zhavia Ward grew up surrounded by music and her family supported her aspirations from day one. Ward picked up her love for music from her mother, who'd sang lead in a metal band called Xenoterra. And when it came time for Ward to choose her own path, there was no question she'd follow in her mother's footsteps. "I've definitely been working on my craft since I can remember," Ward says. "There was never a moment where I was like, 'I think I'm going to do this.' I just knew that this is what I'm supposed to do and I've always felt that way. I've been singing ever since I could get a word out of my mouth."

It wouldn't be long until Ward got her big break in music, as she was cast in the first season of Fox's "The Four: Battle for Stardom." At just 16 years old, Ward could make an impression on not only Sean Combs, DJ Khaled, Megan Trainor and Charlie Walk, but also on the millions of people watching at home. It's hard to imagine now, but Ward almost turned down the opportunity of a lifetime. "At first, I didn't really want to do a show," Ward says. "When I was younger I was definitely interested, but as I got older I strayed away from that idea because I wanted to try to make it by putting out music. Obviously, that's really hard to do." With her mom's encouragement, Ward eventually decided to give the show her best shot. "The Four" put Ward on the map while teaching her that only the strong survive in this business. "[Being on the show] was definitely very intense," Ward shares. "It's a whole different world from what I was used to, and TV is very demanding. I had to try my hardest and practice, even when I didn't have any sleep and my voice was tired. A lot of the time on the show my vocal chords almost had nodules, so it was really hard emotionally, mentally and physically."

Despite the many challenges the teenager encountered during the show, Ward proved she had the mettle required in the cutthroat entertainment industry and she became a finalist. Shortly after, she signed a deal with Columbia Records and in no time released her first single, "Candlelight." Still riding the wave of her newfound success, Ward used her debut single as an opportunity to take things back to a time when she expressed real doubt in her career. "'Candlelight' was a song I'd written a couple of years before I even went on the show," Ward says. "It's about a time in my life when I felt like I didn't have any opportunities and my dreams weren't going to come true. At the end of the day, it was about how I saw the world from my perspective. And if I could change my mindset, then I could change my world and where I ended up. I had to be positive about my situation, keep pushing and fight for what I wanted."

And fight she did. Ward appeared in Diplo and Lil Pump's single "Welcome to the Party" for "Deadpool

2." Not long after that first big collaboration, she was given another life-changing opportunity—recording a cover alongside Zayn Malik for 2019's "Aladdin." "When I found out Zayn had asked me to sing 'A Whole New World' with him, it was really crazy because I was a big fan of his," Ward shares. "I think he's an amazing artist and it was amazing for someone of that caliber to recognize me as an artist. The fact that Disney was down with the idea of me singing that, I didn't really think they would pick someone like me, especially with all my tattoos."

Ward isn't wrong that it's out of the ordinary for Disney to go for a heavily tattooed artist to perform a song for one of their films. Especially someone who started getting tattoos as a teenager. "Ever since I was a kid, I always knew that I wanted to be covered in tattoos," Ward says. "That's what I always dreamed of. The moment I was able to get a tattoo I just went for it and got my first tattoo on my hand, which is a black and yellow rose. I got it for my mom and it was definitely a painful place to get tatted for the first time."

Because her parents are both heavily tattooed, Ward wasn't afraid to go big and bold. After tattooing her hand, Ward added a number of sizable pieces to her collection including various black-and-grey portraits on her arms, lettering across her lower stomach and a Grim Reaper on her bicep. But the piece that arguably gets the most attention is the large cross on her chest and neck, which was inked by the legendary Robert Pho. And if you didn't already think she was a badass, allow Ward to change your mind. "The first day we did my chest for 12 hours and then the next day he kept adding and we did another 12 hours," Ward says. "I came back a couple of months later and he finished my neck. The whole process probably took 36 hours in all. It was really painful, especially since during that time I was having health problems. I guess I had appendicitis and didn't really know it. I was literally throwing up every couple of hours and it was really bad. But I'm glad I did it because I will not do that again."

Ward did her research before getting this tattoo and she selected a master to craft the stunning piece. But that doesn't mean she's only allowed world-class artists to adorn her body with permanent designs. Just like her mother supported her dreams by introducing her to the music industry and encouraging her to go on TV, Ward helped her mama to follow her passion. "My mom is interested in learning to tattoo and I let her practice on my leg," Ward says. "She did a 'Pink Panther' but it's not done yet." It's not every day you hear about a mom tattooing their kid, but at the same time, the Ward household was pretty far off from most of our "normal." Then again, who the hell wants to be normal?







**2nd place - Scotland Dinsmore -**  
Scotland is a bubbly, lighthearted, positive woman who has learned through life experiences to simply be herself. Her nautical-themed tattoos are inspired by her love of Florida, the beach, and being on the water. Currently residing in Chattanooga, TN, this blue-eyed babe is active in her community by volunteering to help in any way when it comes to disaster relief. Scotland wakes up every day determined to make people laugh and see life in a positive light. She is inspired by the huge amount of support during the competition. Keep your eye out for her in the future.

**THE  
WINNERS'  
CIRCLE**

Meet the finalists of the 2020 Inked Magazine cover contest  
photos by christopher k. kolk



**3rd place - Jamie Pilar Chapman**

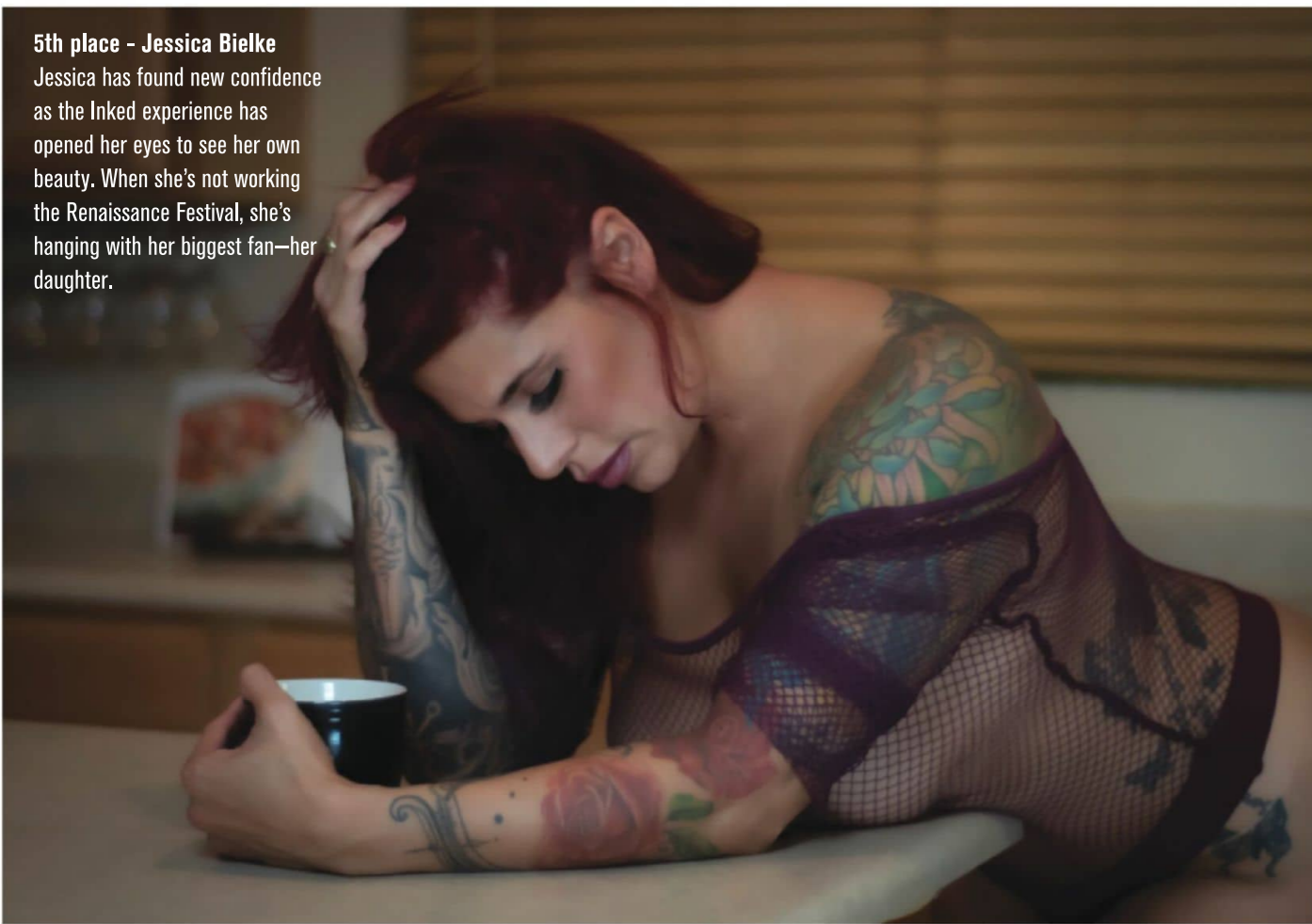
Jamie is an Alabama girl whose positivity and lust for life is infectious. She'd like to thank all of her fans for supporting her through this journey, "The amount of love I have felt through this experience is very humbling. Remember, do not ever give up on your dreams!"



**4th place - Olivianna**

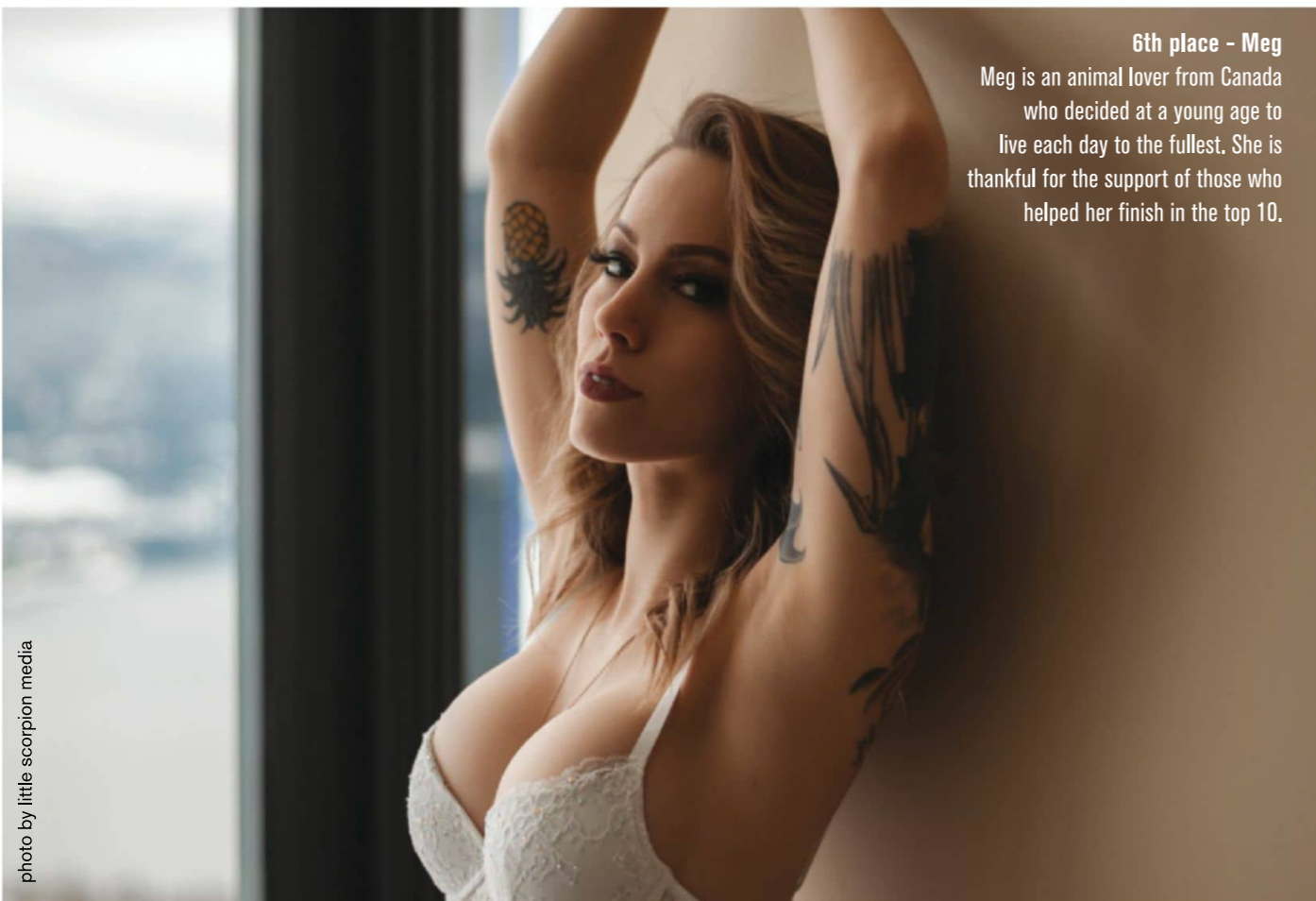
Olivianna is a Detroit native who cannot get enough of the Russian Matryoshka doll tattoo on her arm. She continues to learn from her experiences and would one day like to get to Tokyo.

**5th place - Jessica Bielke**  
Jessica has found new confidence as the Inked experience has opened her eyes to see her own beauty. When she's not working the Renaissance Festival, she's hanging with her biggest fan—her daughter.



**7th place - Angela Fosnaugh**  
Angela is a small-town girl with big dreams. Her art is colorful, much like her personality, and wants the world to know she is thankful for her fans and to be featured in Inked magazine.

**6th place - Meg**  
Meg is an animal lover from Canada who decided at a young age to live each day to the fullest. She is thankful for the support of those who helped her finish in the top 10.



**8th place - Rayea Lang**  
Rayea is a beach babe who chooses the positive path and remains true to herself. In her free time, she goes camping and volunteers at the San Diego Zoo because she enjoys being around animals.



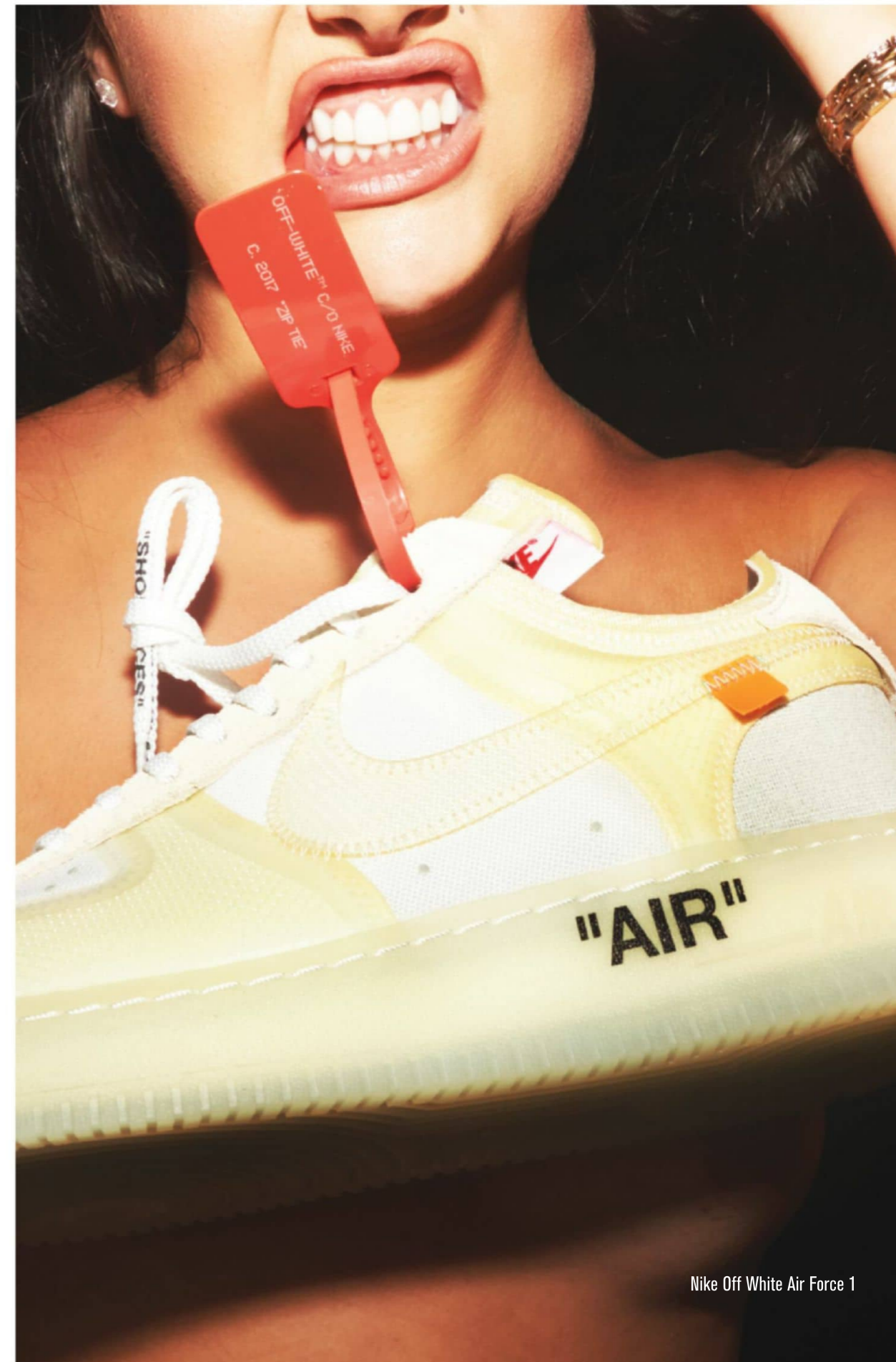
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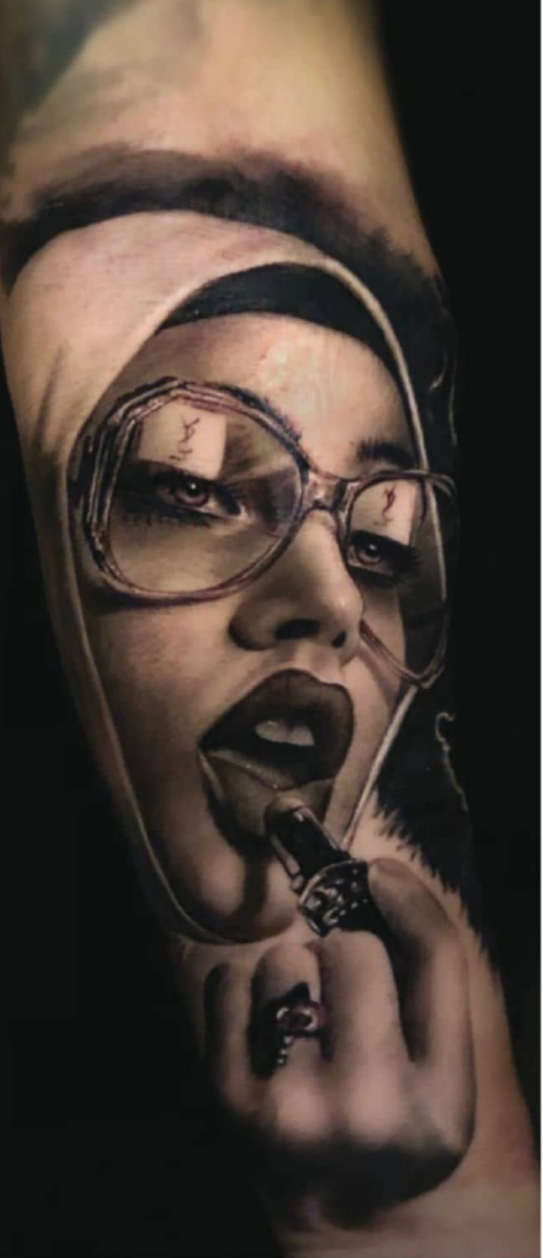
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# GANGBATHAATTOOS

@gangtattoo



*There are thousands of talented tattoo artists around the world, so to be picked by a celebrity you not only need to be at the top of your game, you also need to be chill. Celebrities want to feel at home in a tattooer's chair and put their trust in an artist who can kick it like a homie. Ganga is one of those world-class artists who has impressed the likes of Hollywood with his top-tier skillset, notably chart-topping musicians Drake, Post Malone, Chris Brown and Nicky Jam. We sat down with Ganga to uncover his meteoric rise in the industry and understand why he's decided to make Los Angeles home.*

**Take us through your start in the tattoo industry.** The beginning of my tattoo career was difficult. Initially, nobody wants to get tattooed by you because you don't have experience. I had to begin by tattooing all of my close friends until I started to get a name for myself and people began to trust my work.

**How did you develop your signature style and what drew you to black-and-grey?** Practice. I spent every day working and eventually started to feel comfortable with my specific style. I tried every style, and it's paved the way for what I do today. There's no specific reason behind why I do black-and-grey, I guess it's the style I feel most comfortable doing.

**How did you meet some of your well-known clientele and what was your experience like tattooing them?** It's been a life-changing experience getting to know them personally and growing relationships. I met Odell [Beckham Jr.] back in the day while I was on Drake's tour and from there, we've grown a friendship.

**What advice would you give to your fellow tattoo artists about getting a celebrity in your chair?** Stay calm. It has been difficult for me not to get nervous while I'm tattooing Drake, Odell, Chris Brown or Post Malone. But at the end of the day, you have to do what you do every day—tattoo.

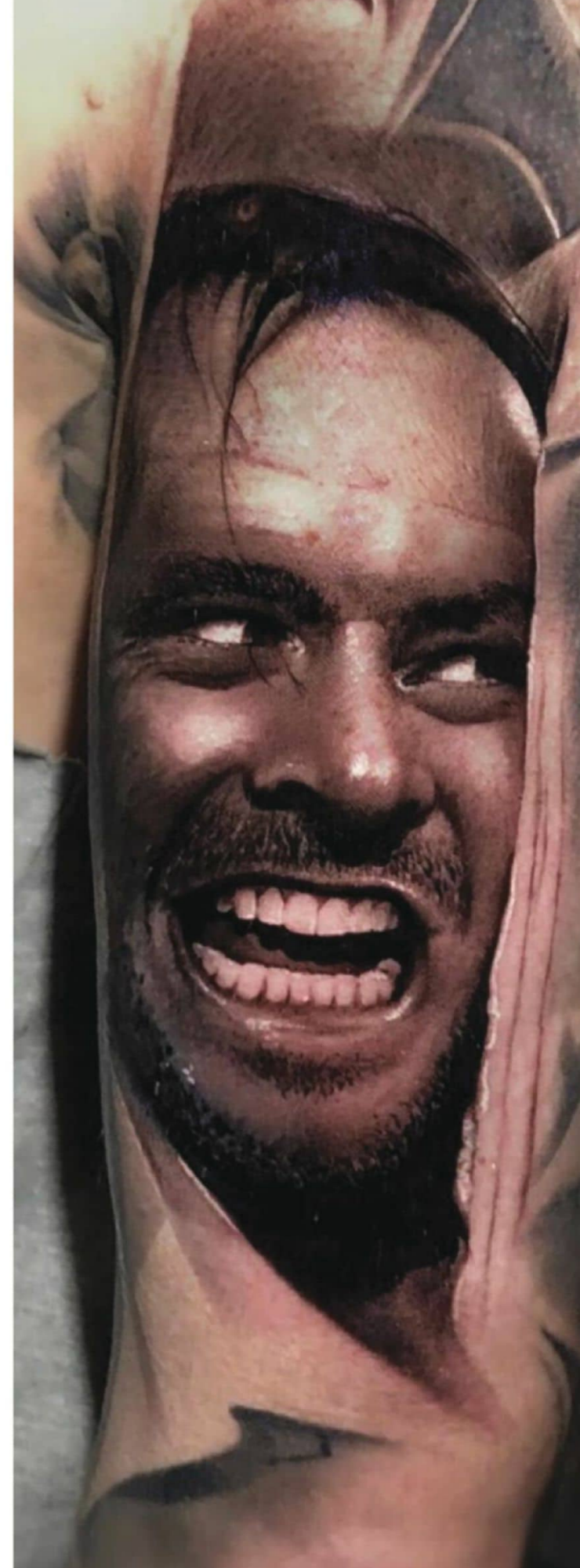
**How has your celebrity clientele impacted your business and changed the way you work?** [Tattooing celebrities] has benefited me very positively. They all have huge platforms, so if they show that they trust your work then a lot of people will see that. The impact can be huge if your work is good.

**What are some of the biggest differences in tattoo culture between Spain and the United States?** I feel that people in Spain still don't accept tattoos the way they do in the U.S. We still have a lot to learn in Spain about if someone has or doesn't have tattoos. It doesn't change a person on the inside.

**How would you describe the tattoo culture of L.A. and where do you fit into it?** I think it's the tattoo capital of the world. I love it here and I'm learning a lot of things about the industry that I wouldn't be able to learn back in Spain.

**What's your favorite thing to tattoo?** I would say portraits of movie characters are my favorite.

**What's something you'd like to tattoo in the future that you haven't gotten around to yet?** I can't think of a specific one now, but probably a movie character. I love tattooing Johnny Depp, since I'm a big fan of his work, so maybe one of his characters that I haven't done yet.





# MANH HUYNH

FOLLOW: @MANH\_HUYNH



At the intersection of traditional Japanese tattooing and your favorite childhood cartoons, you'll find artist Manh Hunyn. Born and raised in Vietnam, Hunyn developed a passion for continuing the legacy of Japanese tattooing but with his own unique flair. By incorporating beloved cartoon characters into traditional motifs, Hunyn has taken the centuries-old art into a new frontier. In Hunyn's universe, Tom of "Tom and Jerry" has ditched the self-destructive cycle of humiliation at the hands of a mischievous mouse for an irezumi bodysuit and a life spent shooting hoops. Through the combination of his fertile imagination and impeccable skill, anything is possible in Hunyn's world.

**Take us through your upbringing in Vietnam and what led you to becoming a tattoo artist.** The learning environment in Vietnam isn't suitable for tattoo development. Many people don't have sympathy for it. For instance, a person with a tattoo is usually considered a criminal or a bad influence. Only in recent years have people started to accept and have an objective opinion toward tattooing.

I've had a passion for painting and fine art since I was a child. My first time seeing tattoos on skin, I was impressed and really wanted to try it. That's what stimulated me to study and practice this type of art.

**What is the tattoo scene like in Vietnam and how has it changed?**

Tattooing in Vietnam has developed slowly in comparison to the rest of the world. However, recently it has become more widely recognized and has progressed considerably, catching up with the international tattoo world. This is because more and more of us tattoo artists have been working conventions abroad.

**What led you to traditional Japanese tattooing and did you go through a formal apprenticeship with it?** I'm impressed by the layout and lines of Japanese tattoos. Tattoo trends come and go, but Japanese tattoos stay the same over time.

All of my knowledge and skills have come from researching and teaching myself. At the time I started tattooing in Vietnam, almost no one provided a formal apprenticeship.

**What inspired you to put cartoon characters into your tattoos and which character was the first of this series?** I'm very attached to cartoon characters from my childhood and the first character I tattooed was The Pink Panther.

**Who are some of your favorite cartoon characters to tattoo?** The Pink Panther, Tom [of "Tom and Jerry"] and The Simpsons. They're all cartoon characters I love and I see a lot of similarities between them.

**Why do you think people are drawn to your tattoos and where do you find inspiration for new designs?** From the perspective of a tattoo artist and a tattoo lover, I believe what the tattoo world needs right now is freshness. The tattoos I create are as fresh as a summer breeze. Of course, many types of tattoos can stand the tests of time, but it's really interesting to see new things that can stimulate the senses of tattoo fans.

**How do you take a client's idea and make it your own?** My customers have usually been following me for quite some time, so they know what I like to do. So when I get an idea for a new design, it's usually in my style. It has to be traditional Japanese with the combination of cartoon characters I think it will match. New styles can be applied, but the tattoo will not stray away from my style.

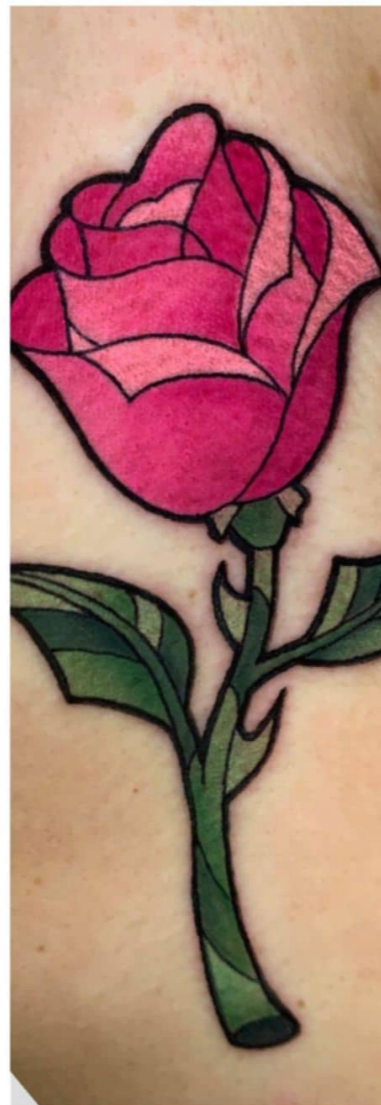
**Where do you hope your tattoo career takes you?** I'm trying my best to be present and hoping to develop a foundation for the future. I also plan to maintain my traditional Japanese style, which I've continued to pursue since I began tattooing.

**What else should our readers know about you?** My tattoos tell you a lot about myself and my character. I use my tattoos to form a character and through that character, you can see who I am.



# NICOLE ZULIANELLO

FOLLOW: @NICOLE\_ZULIANELLO



Italian tattooer Nicole Zulianello discovered tattooing at an early age, 12 to be exact, and hasn't looked back since. Today, she's a heavy hitter in the style of New School and frequently brings to life the characters of Disney, Nickelodeon and anime onto skin. We spoke with Zulianello to learn why she became a skin cartoonist and what advice she'd give to aspiring artists who have a love for New School designs.

**Take us through your upbringing and tattooing yourself at 12, then your friends at 16.** Now I realize tattooing myself was a very stupid thing to do, but those were the first warnings of what my future would hold. When I came home from school in the afternoon, I took a needle, wrapped it with cotton film, grabbed some ink and got tattooed. Obviously I did everything in secret, because my parents never approved these actions. After a few years my friends saw my tattoos and they wanted them too, so I started doing it for free because it was a pleasure for me and I didn't have any idea that what I was doing was a job. After another few years, my friend bought a tattoo machine and he let me try it. After tattooing him, he gave me \$20 and from that moment I understood that my passion could be my work. So I decided to buy a tattoo machine by asking my mother for some money on loan and from there, I started my journey to become a professional.

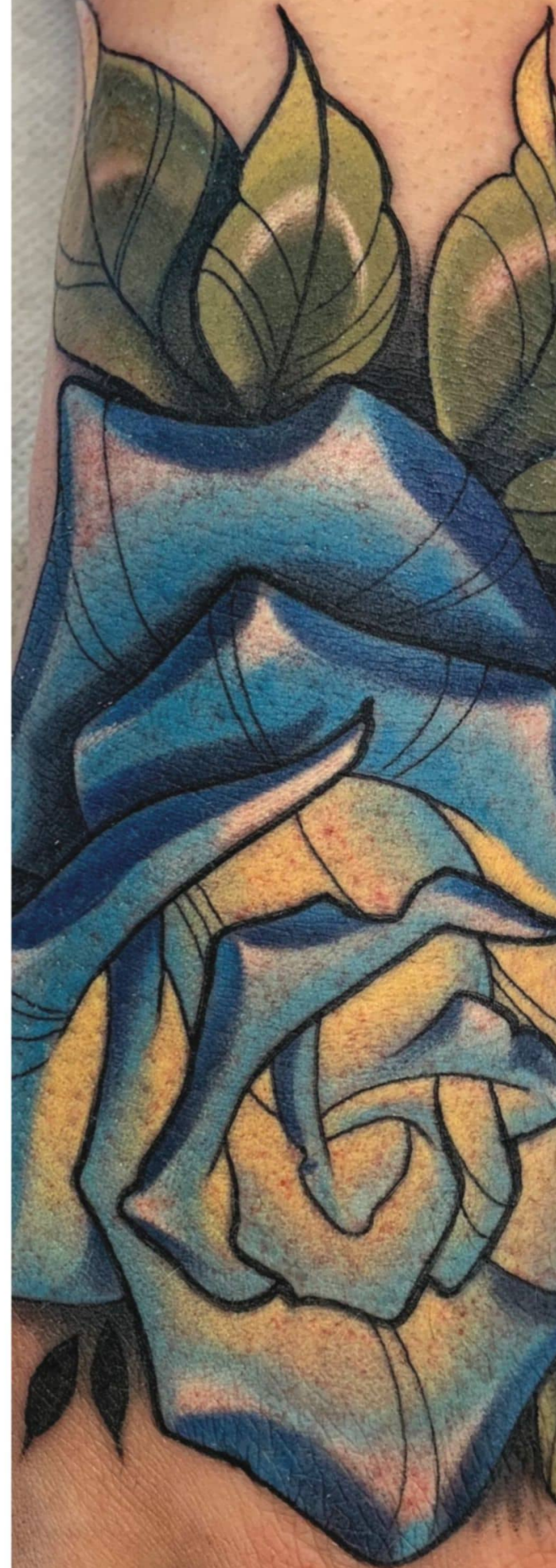
**How did art school impact your tattoo career and would you recommend it for aspiring tattooers?** Many tattoo artists could say that I chose the easier way and not the traditional one, but I think that these days, we need to look around us and understand that it is essential to receive an artistic and tattoo technique education that prepares you for the life of a tattooist. I think that if I didn't do the MITA Academy, I wouldn't be here talking about myself.

**What drew you to New School?** It's not I that chose New School and cartoon tattoos, they chose me. At the beginning of my career, I did some cartoon pieces for my friends, after that many customers of the studio started to ask me for them.

**Who are some of your favorite New School artists?** I respect Vincent Bloodline as a friend and an artist and the super original creations of Canti and Ikos. My project for the future is to do my own leg with a lot of pieces from my friends.

**Which cartoons are your favorite to tattoo and what do you hope to tattoo more of in the future?** I love to do "Dragon Ball Z," "The Simpsons," and hentai cartoon characters. For my future, I'm searching for a more elaborate technique for light sources and to create a crossover with a few different styles.

**What advice would you give to artists who want to tattoo in a New School style?** I would recommend always choosing the path of diversity because this is a style that requires imagination, irony and good knowledge of anatomy.



# CAM POHL

FOLLOW: @CAMPOHLTATTOOS



Cam Pohl was one of the breakout stars of the 12th season of "Ink Master," proving that you don't need to win it all in order to make it as a top tattooer. Since the season ended, he's not only finessed his black-and-grey but also gained an understanding of his core strengths as an artist by specializing in beautiful female portraiture. We caught up with Cam to learn how he got into the tattoo world and what he learned from his time on television.

**Take us through your upbringing and what led you to become a tattooer.** I was probably 17 at the time and hadn't looked into the medium as a career path much more than [thinking of it as being] something you saw on your sketchy step-brother. One night, I took the \$100 I had to my name and begged my mom to let me use her credit card to buy an all-in-one tattoo kit off eBay, which for whatever reason she let happen. A week later, I was tattooing my brother, myself and anyone I could convince it was a good idea to have a child permanently mark their body with questionably obtained products. After a half-assed attempt at going to college and pursuing a "normal" career, I walked into a local shop that was close to campus and bugged them to let me do anything that would let me get my foot in the door. After about three weeks of consistent pestering they let me mop the floors, ask questions, and begin what would become the most meaningful and passionate pursuit of my life.

**How long into your career did you discover your signature style and how did it grow from there?** It's funny that I find myself working in such a specific style because when I was just starting out, I wanted to be the guy who could do everything. I never understood why anyone would shoehorn themselves into limiting their creativity to pump out one thing. In the midst of experimenting, I found myself constantly drawn to anything that was a bit soft, delicate and feminine. It wasn't until about three years into professional tattooing that the end of a certain relationship sparked a massive desire to improve my black-and-grey abilities, which in turn, ended up mixing really well with the aforementioned delicate aesthetic.

**What's your secret to executing smooth black-and-grey?** I think tattooing is fascinating in that there's hardly ever a one-size-fits-all approach to any one aspect of it, and I feel black-and-grey application is no different. For me personally, it's being able to maintain patience and consistency throughout the multiple hours you might be spending on a tattoo that someone else could finish in 45 minutes. None of this really makes sense to me though because in everyday life I'm wildly impatient.

**How was your experience on "Ink Master" and would you do it again?** I'm not sure if I experienced "Ink Master" the same way that most tend to. I was extremely disliked right off the bat despite my efforts to make friends, and I've never done well with feeling alienated in group situations. The actual tattooing didn't get to me until the tension of the living situation wore me down to the point where I didn't know who I was anymore. Looking back, there's at least a million things I wish I could've done differently, but in no way do I regret it. I met some fantastic people, and learned an incredible amount about tattooing and myself—I would do it again in a heartbeat.

**What's the most valuable lesson you learned from "Ink Master?"** Never stop pushing yourself, and never be content. Complacency is the enemy of everything.

**What advice would you give to someone who wants to tattoo like you?** Find someone better than me. I love tattooing and am always honored when people enjoy my work, but I'm incredibly inexperienced compared to other more gifted and phenomenal artists out there. If you want actual advice, I'd say focus on subjects you're passionate about and don't be afraid to acknowledge your own shortcomings. Focus on the details and it will always pay off in the end.

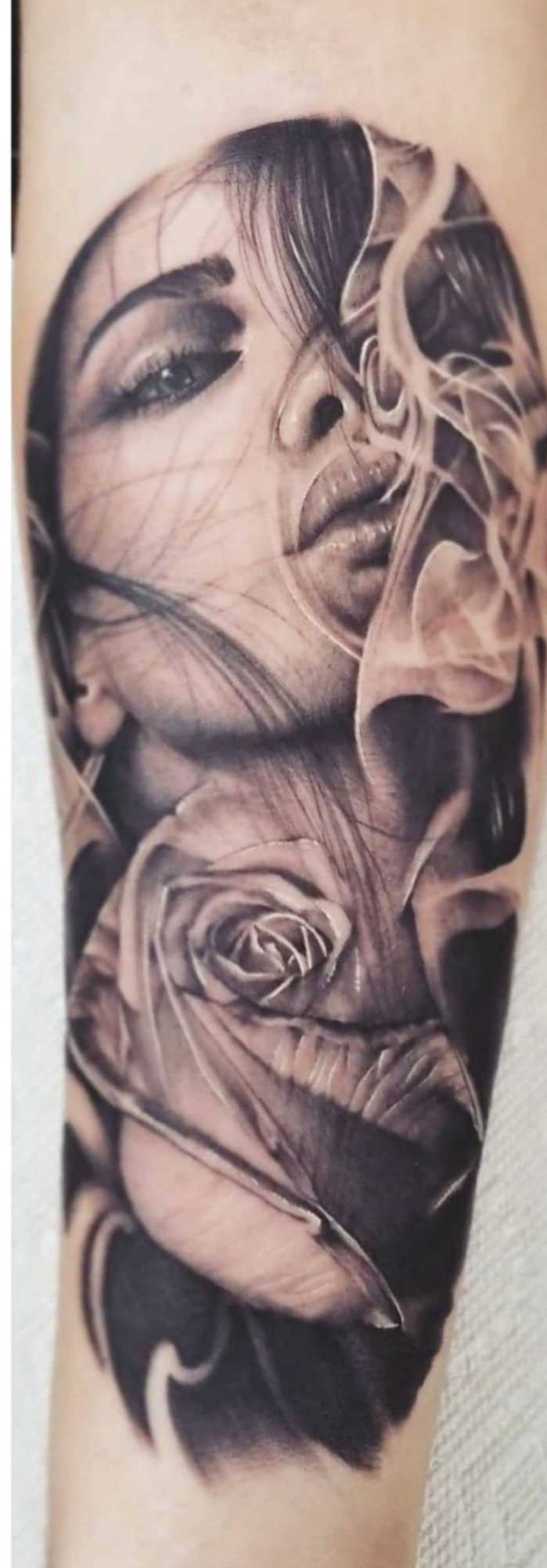




photo by anthony frisketti

## TATTOO stories

From a well-planned sleeve to a drunken banger done in the back of a moving tour bus, there's a tale behind every tattoo. Nine of the most notable names in metal share some of their favorite tattoo stories.

### Raven Cox - Raven Black

**How's it feel to see a fan with a tattoo inspired by your band?** It's amazing and I still get shocked whenever I see the photos or meet them at shows. Several of them are my actual face. It's such an honor.

**What's your weirdest tattoo-related tour story? Weirdest?** Not as weird but a few times I autographed a fan's body part" and next time I see them, it's tattooed. Didn't expect it so it's always surprising to me.

**What's the most metal tattoo?** I'd say my self portrait anime with all my weapons.

### Aaron Gillespie - Underoath

**Do you and your band have any matching tattoos that you've gotten together? What are they?**

The whole band doesn't have any matching tattoos but [singer] Spencer [Chamberlain] and I have two. We both got a 'Rebirth' tattoo – the name of our first tour back as Underoath after we broke up. We also have a songwriting tattoo together that's just some letters.

**How's it feel to see a fan with a tattoo inspired by your band?** That's a really overwhelming thing. It's super hard to wrap my brain around the fact that people care about something I've been a part of that much. It's really an honor, honestly.

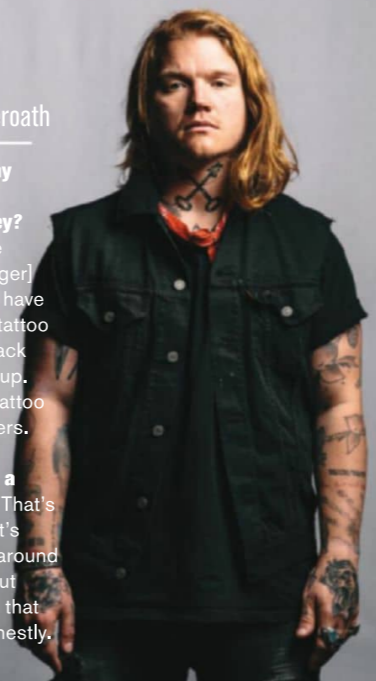


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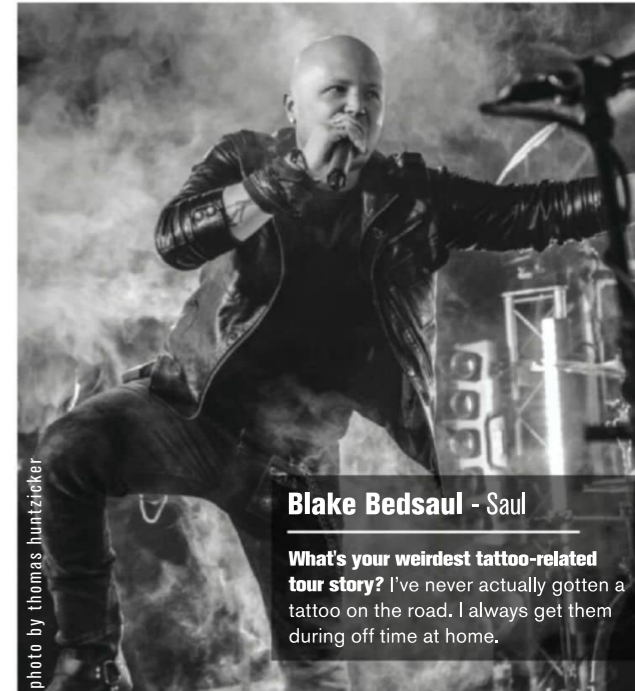


photo by thomas huntzicker

### Blake Bed Saul - Saul

**What's your weirdest tattoo-related tour story?** I've never actually gotten a tattoo on the road. I always get them during off time at home.

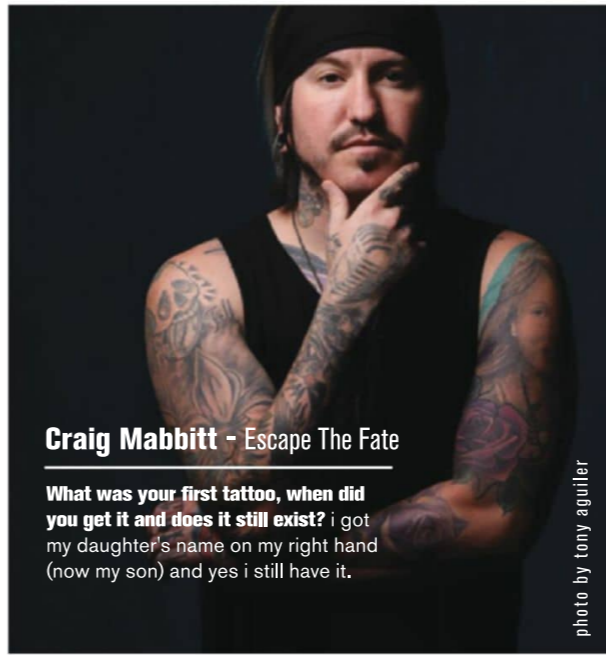


photo by tony aguiler

### Craig Mabbitt - Escape The Fate

**What was your first tattoo, when did you get it and does it still exist?** I got my daughter's name on my right hand (now my son) and yes I still have it.



photo by kurt mackey

### Brian Burkheiser - I Prevail

**Do you and your band have any matching tattoos that you've gotten together? What are they?** Yes! We all have the state of Michigan. The design is a call back to our music video for 'Crossroads,' which shows us playing hometown shows and walking through different cities in the state where we're from.

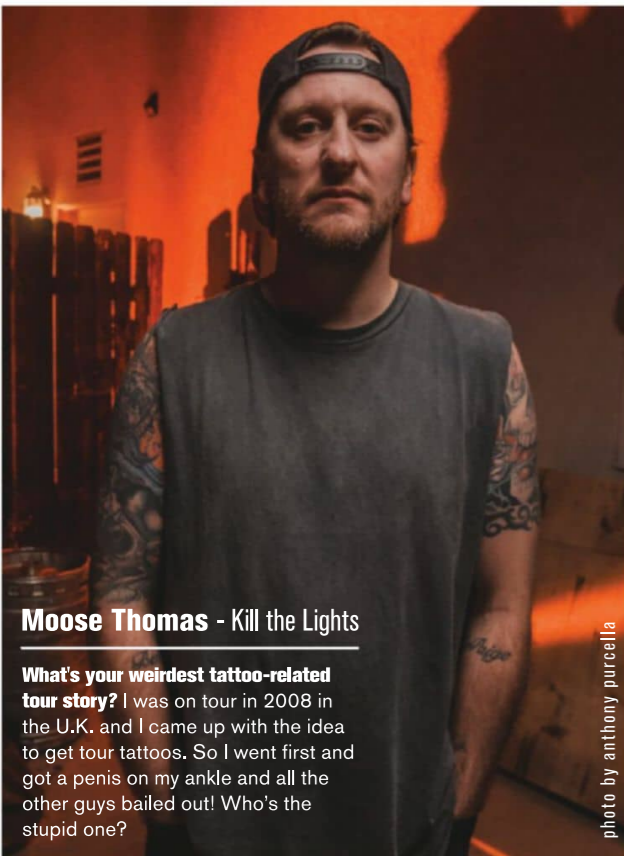


photo by rachel naomi

### BälSäc - Gwar

**What was your first tattoo, when did you get it and does it still exist?**

The first tattoo I got was the crop circle on my thigh. Crop circles are awesome. It is amazing when you think about these little green guys flying halfway across the universe just to make temporary art in some farmer's field. Well, I thought it was a shame that they went to all that effort just to make cool patterns that would only last for a couple days, so I got a few tattooed on me. Since I'm immortal, now their art will last forever.



**Moose Thomas - Kill the Lights**

**What's your weirdest tattoo-related tour story?** I was on tour in 2008 in the U.K. and I came up with the idea to get tour tattoos. So I went first and got a penis on my ankle and all the other guys bailed out! Who's the stupid one?

photo by anthony purcella



**Patrick Miranda - Movements**

**Do you and your band have any matching tattoos that you've gotten together? What are they?** Our bassist and I have matching Movements tattoos but they're a secret. We're trying to convince our guitarist and drummer to get it too. We'll see if that happens.

**What's your weirdest tattoo-related tour story?** One time, I was getting tattooed in a green room in Florida during a show. Security found out and forced us to stop mid tattoo because it was "illegal" (not sure if that's really true or not). So the artist had to stop and break down his whole set up while security just stood there and watched. Meanwhile, I have a half done tattoo just sitting on my arm! We ended up bribing one of the other bands on the tour to let us use their bus to finish the tattoo.

photo by anthony purcella



photo by errick easterday

**Griffin Landa - The Acacia Strain**

**What's the most metal tattoo?** My full sleeve on my right arm is a man strapped to a chair being controlled to play vintage instruments. The concept was because I have been a recording engineer for around 12 years now, and I have pretty much lived my adult life as a human using a computer to manipulate musical performances. My tattoo represents the opposite... a machine manipulating a human to create music, and that's pretty metal.

**What was your first tattoo, when did you get it and does it still exist?** My first tattoo was a half leg sleeve, although it was done in around 4 or 5 sessions. I got it around 2007 or 2008 I believe. It definitely still exists, and it expanded into a full leg sleeve over a few years. My friend Joshua Bowers, who I also work for when I am home from tour, has done around 90% of my tattoos.

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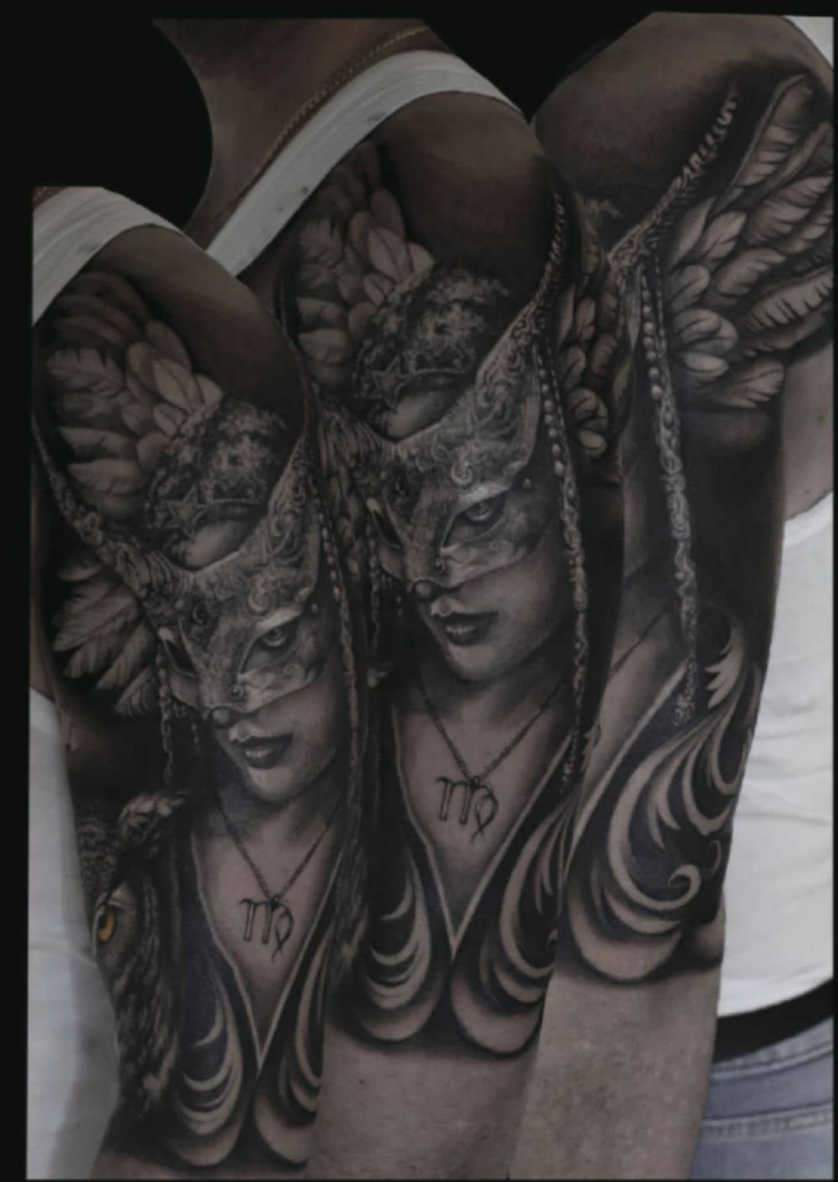
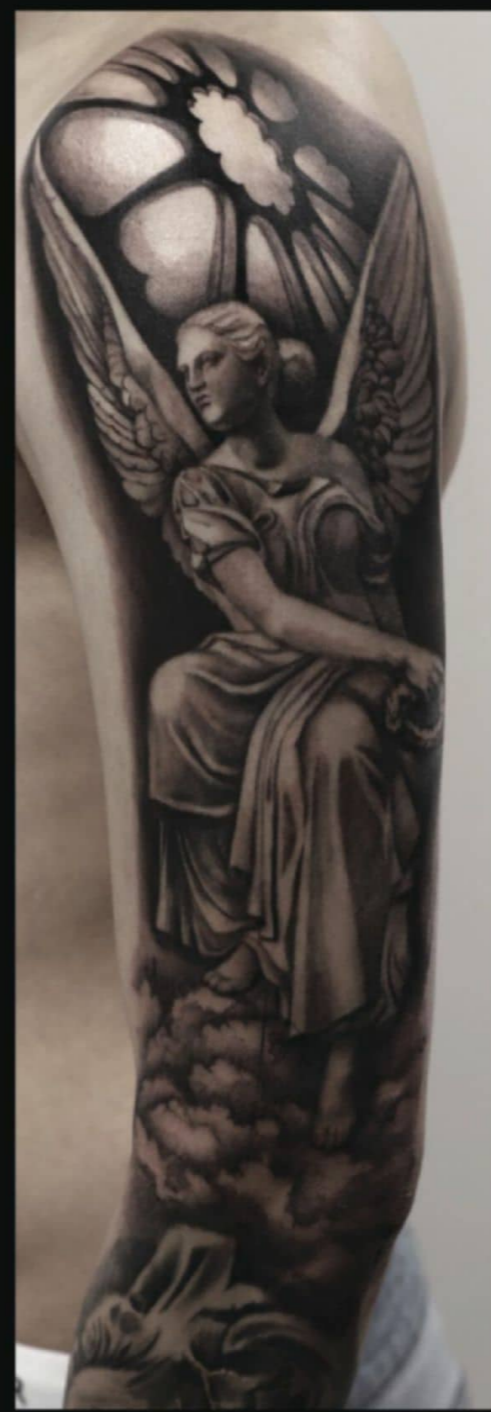
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## WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT

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by dan ozzi

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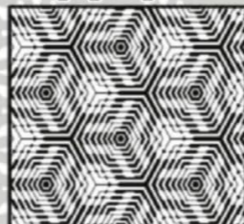
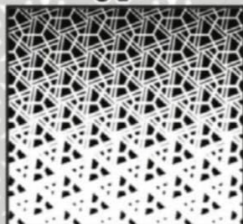
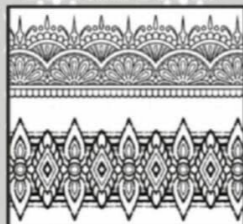
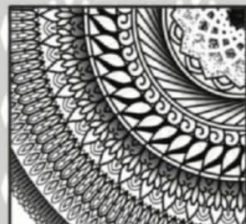
Mandalas

Pattern Bands

Fading patterns

Wallpaper patterns

Dotwork tool



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Whip shading

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# Inked

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