

**FREE TWO WHEELED TATTOO SUPPLEMENT**



# The UK's **Big Tattoo Planet** Best Selling Tattoo Magazine

NOVEMBER '10  
ISSUE 191 • £3.95

**INSIDE**



**FREE TWO WHEELED TATTOO SUPPLEMENT**

**UK CONVENTION COVERAGE FROM:**

**London Coventry**

**East MEETS West**

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**Deep in the Heart of London**

**KINGS CROSS TATTOO PARLOUR**

**Barcelona UNCOVERING A HOTBED OF ACTIVITY IN ONE OF EUROPE'S FINEST**

**TOP ARTIST ADVICE ON: THE SECRET OF A GREAT PORTRAIT**

**EXCLUSIVE COVER MODEL**

**MISS IVI IN 'DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS!'**

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## THE NEEDLE HAS LANDED



## THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

As the world descended on Tobacco Dock for the London Tattoo Convention this past weekend, you could be forgiven for thinking there was little more to life. To say it was 'busy' would be an understatement.

Across three days, some of the world's greatest worked non-stop on those lucky enough to have bagged appointments - and over the weekend, I made it my goal to seek out those who were pushing the boundaries of what could be achieved on skin. After the heart-warming response to the Buena Vista feature in the last issue, I feel justified in thinking that the time is right to push the envelope even further. Simply watching the hundreds and hundreds of people flooding to see what Volko and Simone had to offer was touching. The crowds were sincerely interested in watching them work, talking about ideas they had for their own designs and of course, booking appointments for the future.

So who are these other artists? What does the future hold in store? That would be telling - but we certainly have enough material in the bag to make the next year at Skin Deep worth sticking around for. But wait - there's more...

On both this and the traditional side, the quality of work being output right now is breathtaking - and I'm also including in this statement the guys who build new machines for use in the studio right across to the ink manufacturers who, although behind the scenes, are pretty much unsung heroes in some corners - there's a new found feeling about tattoo art right now. It's a good feeling. A feeling that despite a little bad press and a bit of infighting (which let's face it, you can find anywhere human beings are forced to co-exist), things are looking pretty damn good.

I know this because - convention aside - over the last few weeks, I've dropped into quite a few studios as well and found shop owners to be raising the game on all fronts. Not only in the way cleanliness and hygiene

are observed, but also in the little things. The way art is displayed, the way customer service has come to the front of their businesses - aftercare also appears to have gone through something of a 21st century revolution. This isn't just my opinion; this is also the opinion of our readers who are now better informed than ever before. It's 2010 and collectors are willing to travel great distances or wait for the conventions to have the artist they want work on them rather than having to accept an imitation.

This last week, I also happened upon a discussion on Radio 2 of all places, which was prompted by the comments made by Pim de Lange - the boss of ferry giant Stena. When asked why he was reluctant to employ British sailors as part of his crew, he reportedly responded that British sailors were 'quite fat', 'covered in tattoos', and 'not fit for the job'. Apparently, he says he was misquoted but it brought the debate centre stage as caller after caller clashed heads on the subject of tattoos in the workplace. If you want to share your opinion on this or have a story to tell, check out the blog post on Big Tattoo Planet called *The Art of Working*. Bring it on...



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## FREE SUPPLEMENT

16 pages of Two Wheeled Tattoos

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[www.facebook.com/tattoomagazine](http://www.facebook.com/tattoomagazine)

# FALLOUT

Seen an interesting clipping in the press? Got something that you'd like reviewed or featured? Got some spare chocolate or beer? Send them to: Skin Deep, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ OR EMAIL: editor@skindeep.co.uk



## COMA CAPSULE

**Renowned Black n Grey tattoo artist, Jun Cha, teams up with C1RCA Select's Holiday '10 line with the Coma Capsule comprised of a limited-edition shoe, T-shirt and snap-back hat.**

A follow-up to the acclaimed "Black Tear" project, this time Cha focuses his efforts on subtlety for this year's collaboration, connecting the classic symbolism of the snake with skateboarding. Jun Cha's art career has been watched over and guided by some of the tattoo industry's modern masters. His career as an illustrator is equally fuelled by influences from his education at the Art Center College of Design Pasadena. At 21, Cha has already worked with a long list of celebrity clients and other worldwide personalities.

Visit Jun's blog over at [www.arudima.com](http://www.arudima.com)

The design project can be viewed at [www.C1RCASELECT.com](http://www.C1RCASELECT.com)



## READER OFFER

**Kate's Clothing over in Birmingham have contacted us with a great offer.**

Any reader buying from their website - [www.katesclothing.co.uk](http://www.katesclothing.co.uk) - can drop in the discount code SKIN1010 at the checkout for an instant 15% discount. With a company tagline that reads "for people who really don't want to wear the same thing as everyone else and don't want to wait around for it" and insider information that Kate herself has got a pretty mean left hook, we thought that was very reasonable...

ISSUE 190  
APOLOGIES AND  
AMENDMENTS

The transition of editorial responsibilities never runs smoothly, so to correct some items from issue 190: We inadvertently left off the photo credit for Sophie Ladycat which should have read: Mlle Ewa. Ryan's Royal Owl interview also featured one or two typos we would rather not have seen but somehow that proof slipped through the net. Finally, apologies to Trent Aitken-Smith whose name we forgot to mention even though it was his very own reader profile in our new feature "The Sharp End".

## COLLECTOR FORCED TO STOP DUE TO LACK OF SPACE!

**Isobel Varley, the world's most senior tattooed woman, is reportedly to stop collecting tattoos as she has run out of space on her body.** Since 1986, the 73 year-old Guinness World Record holder from Stevenage has adorned her body with colourful artwork from her head to her toes - literally! There are a few areas of flesh that remain uninked but that's not through lack of trying. "I haven't got any more room for tattoos," said Varley, "the soles of my feet can't be done because they rejected the ink, and if I do all over my face you won't be able to tell who I am." Hmm... we give her 6 months before she's back under the needle!



## RUDE AWAKENING

**Rude Studios Tattoo & Piercing is a new studio recently opened in Headingley, Leeds. The studio is owned by Sam Myers an award winning special effects make-up artist and body modification specialist.** The studio is a collaboration of artists, who together make a great working team, striving to provide a good customer service with a friendly atmosphere. Rude regularly have different events on including DJ's on a Saturday, tattoo drawing nights and soon to come, the grand opening party.

Artists in the studio are: Jon Tolley, Lee "Rude Boy" Reynolds, Michael Gibson (apprentice) and current guest artist Joolz Denby. All styles catered for including Japanese, New school, Traditional, realism and pin ups - or just bring your own designs.

Professional piercing is by Sam Myers including dermal anchors, skin divers, body piercing, stretching and custom piercing design. Rude Studios, 13b North Lane, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3HG t: 0113 3180451/07958061387 [www.rudepiercing.com](http://www.rudepiercing.com)

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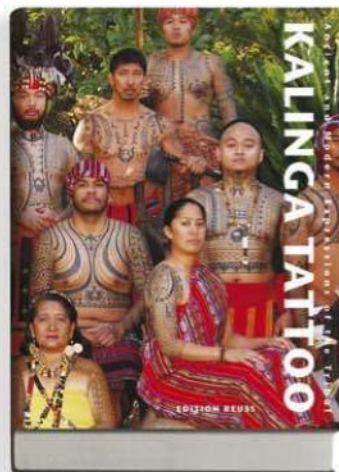
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## A KUSTOM KRISTMAS

London Lowbrow & Kustom Ko-op presents the first ever **Kustom Kristmas event, at The Horatia, Holloway, London.**

Taking place on the 5th December from 1pm til late, Kustom Kristmas will be the cream of London's Kustom crafters, makers and artists. It's the ideal opportunity to pick up one of a kind Christmas gifts, with alternative craft stalls, clothing, live art and pinstripping, a great food menu, and live bands in the evening. Entry is FREE and The Horatia is conveniently located 5 minutes walk from Holloway and Highbury & Islington Tube stations.

For more information visit the London Lowbrow & Kustom Ko-op fan page on Facebook, or email: [clumsypunkdesigner@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:clumsypunkdesigner@yahoo.co.uk)



## L FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

'Miss L Fire' was launched over five years ago in London and these days, their shoes can now be found around the world - from small high-end boutiques in London, to larger stores in America and, of course, across the web. The brand epitomises the glamour of the 1940's and 50's, but we're pretty sure you'll find something for the modern girl in all the collections. The A/W'10 collection is in stores now and is a true delight - think high 1940's inspired wedges, girly scalloped mid-heels with big bows, incredibly cute faux-fur booties with delicate ribbon lace ups and classic heels with poker-inspired detachable clips!

Miss L Fire & Shellys 6th Floor, Portland House, 4 Great Portland Street, London W1W 8QJ T: +44 (0) 20 3326 2590 [www.misslfire.com](http://www.misslfire.com)



## BIG BLACK BOOKS

Those stalwarts of the ultimate tattoo publication, **Edition Reuss**, this month release the monster publications **BLACK & GREY TATTOO 1-3** and **KALINGA TATTOO**.

Anybody serious about the top end of the art and getting a handle on its place in popular culture shouldn't be thinking twice about laying their hands on both of these - but you knew that already, right? Read the full review of Kalinga Tattoo on page 76.

### MOVERS AND SHAKERS

**Infinity Tattooing** - Ross On Wye Herefordshire are moving to new premises at 111 Westgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 2PG t: 01452 502022 [www.infinitytattooing.co.uk](http://www.infinitytattooing.co.uk). We would like to invite all our customers to visit us at our new studio where they will receive a warm welcome.

**The Body Garden Tattoo** who specialise in colour work is now open at Body Garden Tattoo, 09 Fletchers Walk, Paradise Place, Birmingham B3 3HJ t: 0121 236 1242 [www.bodygardentattoo.co.uk](http://www.bodygardentattoo.co.uk) Tuesdays to Saturdays: 10am to 6pm Closed on Sundays and Mondays

**Award winning Tattoo Artist** Kneill (ex Classic Tattoo, Paradise Tattoo) has just moved to Woodys Tattoo Studio in High Wycombe. Kneill has 18 years experience in tattooing and welcomes all of his customers at this amazing new studio.



## SWEET N SOURPUSS

Man, ten years can go by in the blink of an eye. Hard to believe that's what **SOURPUSS** clothing have got under their belts. Not only have they got a cool line in top quality t-shirts but with so many of the Skin Deep staff having babies, we also discovered they're a

great source of accessories for little ones as well.

For some reason, there was a big sigh of relief here when we found you don't actually need to be pregnant to shop there. Check it out here: [www.sourpussclothing.com](http://www.sourpussclothing.com)



## CONVENTIONS

All details correct at time of going to press.

**OCTOBER 10**

### **CITY OF STEEL TATTOO CONVENTION**

Magna Science Adventure Centre,  
Sheffield Road, Rotherham, S60 1DX,  
[www.cityofsteel.co.uk](http://www.cityofsteel.co.uk)

**OCTOBER 8 - 11**

### **6TH INTERNATIONAL LVIV TATTOO CONVENTION**

Lviv, Ukraine  
[www.gipertattoo.lviv.ua](http://www.gipertattoo.lviv.ua)

**OCTOBER 9 - 10**

### **TENBY TATT-FEST**

De Valence Pavilion, Upper Frog Street,  
Tenby, South Wales  
Info: Ink2Skin, 07789 115582

**OCTOBER 9 - 11**

### **KING OF TATTOO CONVENTION**

Ballroom 1.2, Daikanyama, Tokyo, Japan  
[www.tokyohardcore.jp/king\\_04/](http://www.tokyohardcore.jp/king_04/)

**OCTOBER 30 - 31**

### **HALLOWEEN TATTOO BASH**

Newton Abbot Racecourse, Newton  
Abbot, Devon, England  
[www.myspace.com/halloweentattoobash](http://www.myspace.com/halloweentattoobash)

**NOVEMBER 12 - 14**

### **EAST COAST EXPO**

Martello Holiday Park, Walton on the Naze,  
Essex, England  
[www.myspace.com/eastcoasttattooexpo](http://www.myspace.com/eastcoasttattooexpo)

**NOVEMBER 13 - 14**

### **THE INTERNATIONAL BRUSSELS TATTOO CONVENTION**

Brussels, Belgium  
[www.brusselstattooconvention.be](http://www.brusselstattooconvention.be)

**NOVEMBER 19 - 21**

### **8TH ANNUAL RICHMOND NOVEMBER SHOW**

The Holiday Inn Koger Center Select,  
Richmond, Virginia 23235, USA  
Info: Capital Tattoo, + 804 440 4255

**NOVEMBER 20 - 21**

### **ALKMAAR TATTOO CONVENTION**

St Laurens Church, Alkmaar, Holland  
[www.tattooconventiealkmaar.nl](http://www.tattooconventiealkmaar.nl)

**NOVEMBER 27 - 28**

### **NZ TATTOO & ART FESTIVAL**

TSB Stadium, New Plymouth,  
New Zealand  
[www.nztattooart.com](http://www.nztattooart.com)

**DECEMBER 10 - 12**

### **SINGAPORE TATTOO ART & CULTURE SHOW**

Formula 1 Pit Building, Singapore  
[www.sgtattooart.com](http://www.sgtattooart.com)

**DECEMBER 4 - 5**

### **TATTOO CHRISTMAS PARTY**

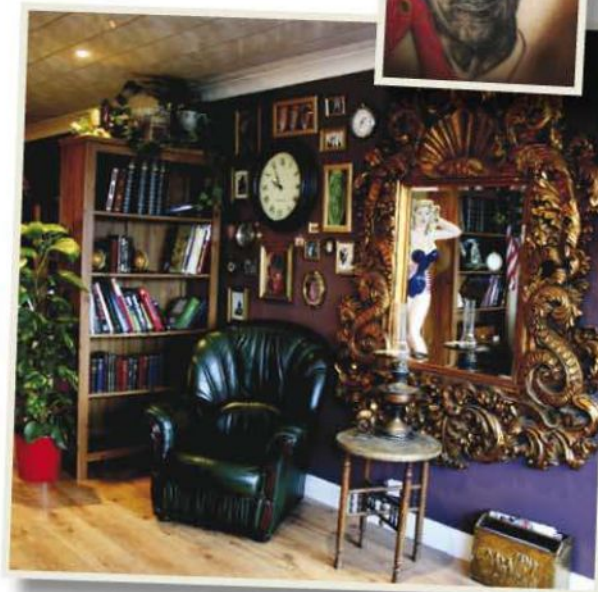
The Hawthorne Leisure Centre  
Pontypridd, Wales  
[www.thewelshattoooshow.com](http://www.thewelshattoooshow.com)

# WALK THIS WAY...

**H**ello Sailor is a brilliantly monickered new studio recently opened in Blackpool. Chelsea and Kat run the only female run studio in the town with a mission to change the reputation of the once vibrant seaside town that has been synonymous with tourist tattoos for so long:

"We opened Hello Sailor with the intent to provide a relaxed environment for people to look at designs and talk to us about what they're looking for. As a custom studio, we prefer to draw up individual designs for our clients rather than have them pick randomly from the wall." Chelsea's forte is old school with a love for designing her own arrangements. An illustrative and graphic artist, she likes to incorporate those styles through her art, having completed her apprenticeship at two acclaimed studios in Australia - West Side in West End and Seventh Circle - where she learnt from two of the most highly respected artists in the industry.

Complementing Chelsea, Kat's speciality is in portrait work in both black and white and colour alike. Kat had no formal apprenticeship but worked as a waxwork sculptor for three years and then briefly in special effects before turning a knowledge of the human face into tattoo art. Kat also loves pin-ups and realism.



"Our clients have been known to ask for anything from hotdogs with dancing shoes to the human fly and we always love the opportunity to draw something up that we know they'll love. We've both previously worked at another studio in Blackpool but decided to go into business for ourselves - after thinking long and hard about it, it's absolutely the right move. We think Blackpool is ready for us now!"

**Hello Sailor Tattoo Studio**  
28B King Street, Blackpool FY1 3DL  
t: 01253 752032  
[hello-sailor@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:hello-sailor@hotmail.co.uk)  
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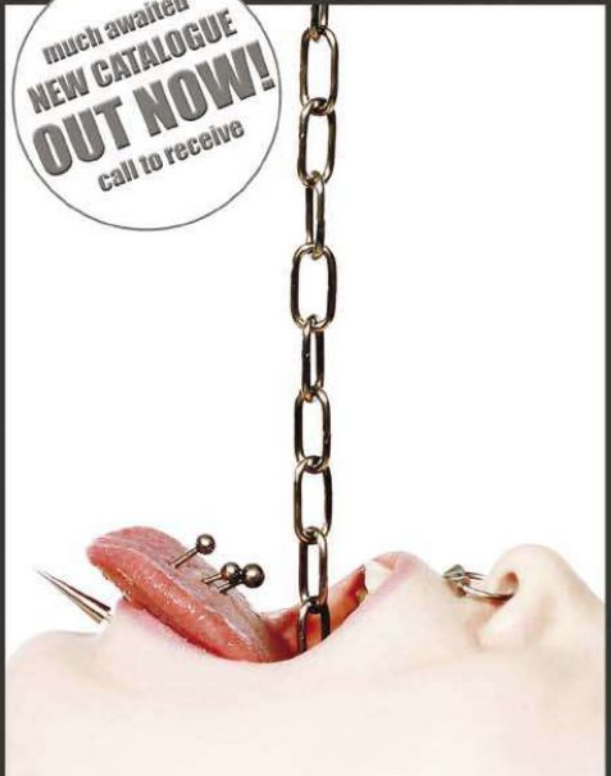
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- Seminare
- Piercing

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## CONVENTIONS

All details correct at time of going to press.

## 2011

JANUARY 14 – 16

## GATHERING OF THE TRIBES

Borneo Convention Centre, Kuching, Sarawak, East Malaysia

[www.tattooconventions.com.my](http://www.tattooconventions.com.my)

JANUARY 15 – 16

## TATTOO FREEZE

International Centre, Telford

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

JANUARY 21 – 23

## SURF 'N' INK INTERNATIONAL TATTOO CONVENTION

Gold Coast Convention Centre, Gold Coast, Australia

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

JANUARY 28 – 30

## RITES OF PASSAGE TATTOO CONVENTION &amp; ARTS FESTIVAL

Royal Exhibition Centre, Melbourne, Australia

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

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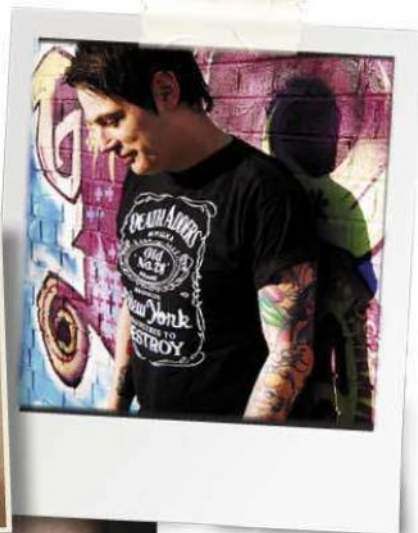
## SMALLMAN SYNDROME

One man's tragic obsession with the sillier side of tattooing...

HELLO there, thanks for stopping by at my corner of Skin Deep. My name is Jim Smallman, stand up comedian and professional idiot. I'm arguably one of the most heavily inked comics on the UK stand-up circuit, with the proud boast that hardly any of my tattoos are in any way sensible. You may have bumped into me at Tattoo Jam either this year or last, as I was the shorts-clad imbecile running around on the main stage and doing announcements whilst trying my best to not sound too much like a local radio DJ (which I also happen to be, sometimes). Anyway, we'll come to the subject of my daft tattoos shortly. I was lucky enough to be tattooed twice at Tattoo Jam this year, and this was a new experience for me. I had the marvellously evil Akuma from the Streetfighter series etched into the back of my left leg by Matt from Tattoo UK, and German wunderkind Mr Halbstark tattooed a heart onto my chest. I adore both pieces, but there was one thing I didn't enjoy: trying to maintain the faintest illusion that these tattoos didn't hurt like all hell while people wandered past and in some cases, paused to watch for several minutes while my visage contorted into something halfway between being in tears and my sex face. That's what I tend to look like when trying desperately not to scream or slap at the face of my artistic tormentor like a camp swan.

So despite my own limitations with pain and exposure to the public, it was an excellent weekend. I met loads of great people, saw tons of amazing tattoos and ended up with two brilliant pieces myself – two of the more sensible ones that I happen to have. For Edinburgh in 2011 I've been inviting suggestions via my Twitter (see link at the end of this article) for an even dumber tattoo. Best ideas so far are:

- *A Charles and Diana commemorative plate.*
- *A pancreas.*
- *Holes in my body like I'm a human version of Operation.*
- *The scene in Corrie where Alan Bradley is hit by a tram.*
- *The Last Supper, recreated with all the winners of Big Brother.*



Whatever I end up with will be a surprise to be revealed next August, but in the meantime I would love to hear from any Skin Deep readers who think they can rival my silly ink. I don't mean mis-spelled or shoddy work, I mean works of art that are frankly, surreal or bizarre. Maybe you've got a beautiful black and grey replication of a classic James Dean pose but he's walking a small piglet? A hen driving a chocolate tram? A llama popping out of a Deal or No Deal box? I want to see them and hear the stories behind them. We'll print the best one each month and as well as my upmost admiration you'll win some Skin Deep goodies.

Send your amazingly daft ink pictures to [jim@skindeep.co.uk](mailto:jim@skindeep.co.uk) and I'll be back for more nattering next month. Toodle pip!

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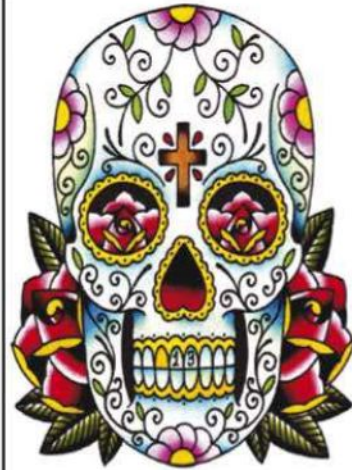


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THE RETURN OF

STORY SION SMITH

# THE LIVING DEAD GIRL

It's always a good feeling to come across somebody who walks it like they talk it. Ivonne Koerner - better known to the world at large as Miss Ivi - is one of those people. Stationed in Switzerland, close to the Italian border with her husband, together they man the good ship that is **The Flying Dutchman** - and when Miss Ivi says she has a new photoshoot on the horizon, what she really means is that she has a full scale epic on her hands and everybody needs to sit up and pay attention...



PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL ZARGARINEAD

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Let's dispense with the niceties - this is one hell of a photo shoot. Día de los Muertos - The Day of the Dead - is a festival celebrated by Mexicans in remembrance

of those friends and relatives who are no longer with us. It's not an uncommon one for those of us who aren't of Mexican descent either, with the concept being used for as many horror movies as you can shake a stick at - so what's the backstory behind the cover picture?

"I love the meaning of Dia de los Muertos - it's the few days in the year when we remember and honour our ancestors and loved ones who have passed away. The idea for the picture came from a meeting of minds when I was talking to my fantastic make-up ↪





PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMARI LIOR



PHOTOGRAPHER: ARTISTYLE PHOTOS

artist Christa Durante – we had heard that Jamari Lior, a young photographer from Germany who does crazy pictures wanted to do a shoot in our shop, so right away we decided we wanted to do it with her.

I love doing different types of photo shoots. At first, we couldn't find a good background to make it work and then we found the painting of the madonna - which my husband painted. Once we put this in as the backdrop, the picture turned out just the way we wanted. The make-up only took one hour and after that, the whole shoot was a wrap in no-time! Professional you see!

**No kidding. We see a lot of very professional model shoots but not many really take it to the extreme and have the capacity to reinvent themselves over and over. Is this the tip of the iceberg with more insanity to come?**

Pin up photography is and will always be my first love, but I love trying out all kinds of different styles. From trash all the way to high fashion and special theme shoots like this one are always a lot of fun. Getting into another role is like slipping into another person's skin or playing a part in a theatre for a few hours. It's fun to see how different I look in a lot of the pictures I've done so

far. Photographers tell me that I have so many personas, that they are always happy to work with me. So if anybody has any crazy ideas – I'm up for it!

**If I said you were an old school model, would that sit comfortably? You certainly don't fit in with the standard - dare I say - current 'American' trend of how the public thinks a model should look and behave.**

In the fifties, women were encouraged to show off their curves and dress in a feminine way instead of the skinny models you see today. I love showing off my curves and being all woman without showing everything. Being sexy and mysterious - like the Gil Elvgren models. Ooh - talking about Elvgren, on many occasions, I'm just as clumsy as many of the models in his paintings! That's why my new calendar for 2011 is meant as a tribute to the master of pin-up painting!

Being a pin up model is more than just dressing up. It's a lifestyle and that's how I look almost every day. My hubby is an old rocker, we drive a big American car, ride old school motorbikes that have been customised and based on models from the 50s and 60s. Our house doesn't look much like an American diner though - that would be too much for my husband! but it is stuffed with old things and we have an original jukebox in our living room.

We both love old things and pirates were the rebels and rock n rollers of the old days. They travelled the world and did whatever they liked. He is my pirate captain! He's been all over the world and now we travel together all over the world . I love it – who could ask for anything more! About three years ago, we opened our own shop. My husband is Dutch and because he travelled so much and was hardly ever home or stayed for any long period of time in ☺

**IN THE FIFTIES WOMEN WERE ENCOURAGED TO SHOW OFF THEIR CURVES AND DRESS IN A FEMININE WAY INSTEAD OF THE SKINNY MODELS YOU SEE TODAY I LOVE SHOWING OFF MY CURVES AND BEING ALL WOMAN WITHOUT SHOWING EVERYTHING**



PHOTOGRAPHY: WWW.GOTHESQUE.DE



PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMARILIOR





PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMARI LIOR

## WIN STUFF!

Miss Ivi has given us 3 copies of her beautiful 2011 calendar to give away.

To be in with a chance to bag one simply log into [bigtattooplanet.com/competitions](http://bigtattooplanet.com/competitions) and enter your details.

To order a copy mail Miss Ivi at: [info@tfd-tattoos.com](mailto:info@tfd-tattoos.com)

Photography: [www.cherrymuffin-studios.com/](http://www.cherrymuffin-studios.com/)

one place, he got his nickname the Flying Dutchman.

That's where the idea of opening his own shop in a pirate style came into being many years ago. He studied interior design and together with some friends we planned and built this dream with our own hands and made it reality. So for the last three years, we've had this wonderful crazy shop, filled with memorabilia from his travels, where we feel very much at home. He does mainly custom work - Japanese, black and grey and new school. Meantime, I am a piercer, the shop manager, book-keeper, housewife, model - everything else! We are a good team together and both love our jobs.

Also, we have some great artists here. The Leu Family, Mick from Zürich, Rob Koss and Valentin Steinmann. Switzerland is fantastic - we were looking for a place where we could combine more time together along with art, freedom, nature, good food, and nice people. Luckily, that's exactly what we found. We live where other people take their holidays - what could be better. This country has a lot to offer - mountains, snow, lakes, cheese fondues! I love it so much - how could you not with the chocolate and all these excellent artists. You should come and live here - or at least stay a while!

**Sounds dreamlike! Do you see your future in modelling or are there other things you'd like to do as well?**

I will model for as long as I feel like



PHOTOGRAPHY: CARMEN HERNANDEZ

**WE LIVE WHERE OTHER PEOPLE TAKE THEIR HOLIDAYS - WHAT COULD BE BETTER. THIS COUNTRY HAS A LOT TO OFFER - MOUNTAINS, SNOW, LAKES, CHEESE FONDUES!**

it. For me, it's an excellent chance to get away from my busy day job and do something fun at the weekend. Having fun and enjoying it is for me almost important as the work itself. That's

what keeps the stress away and stress can kill a shoot. It's wonderful modelling and seeing pictures of yourself selling a t-shirt or a skateboard deck. ★



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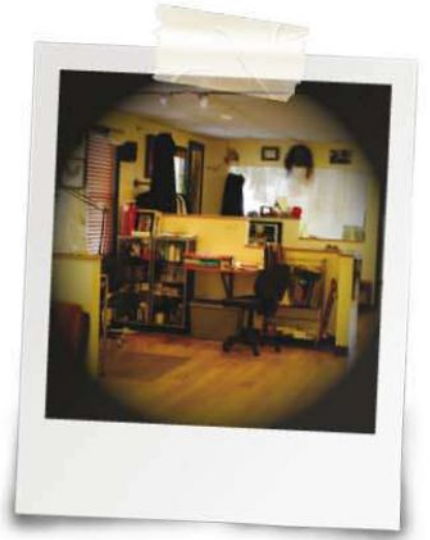
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WORDS BARBARA PAVONE

# HOW GRIME TOOK OVER THE WORLD

**Meeting Shawn Barber at last year's Art Tattoo Montreal convention was how I first discovered Barber's portrait of Grime.** The painting, which is part of Barber's Tattooed Portraits series, depicts Grime in an eccentric ensemble of floral printed shirt and striped trench coat, with signature styled hair and, surprisingly, very few tattoos. Now, this may go against a journalists' code of objectivity and all, but the portrait instantly became my favourite one of the collection.

**M**y interest and fascination with Grime's work and repertoire was sparked off by following some email tag with the artist's superstar assistant, Jeremy – and followed through to its logical conclusion - the opportunity finally arose to talk to the ever-intriguing and talented Grime.

Catching him at the start of his day just as he was opening the studio, Grime took time to talk freely about Skull and Sword Tattoo, his art, his upcoming book, "Iron Will" and to reveal the proud owner of the beautiful piece of art that so mesmerizes yours truly.

"To tell you the truth, I don't remember exactly when it became Skull and Sword," says Grime, easing into interview mode. "It's been at least two

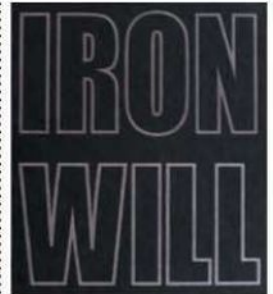


**SAN FRANCISCO WAS THE MOST PROGRESSIVE TATTOO CITY IN THE WHOLE WORLD AND I WANTED TO BE PART OF THAT, I WANTED TO EXPERIENCE AND LEARN FROM THEM.**

years, probably more like three, Marcus [Pacheco] was here when we were doing Primal Urge and he wanted to have a private studio, so when he left I changed the name to Skull and Sword."

Tattooing for 17 years now, Grime first made the move to San Francisco from his native Colorado in 1996, strictly

to pursue his passion. "In my opinion, San Francisco was the most progressive tattoo city in the whole world and I wanted to be part of that, I wanted to experience and learn from them." recounts Grime. Involved with a variety of shops throughout the years, it seems Grime finally struck tattoo gold with



**THE BOOK**

**Iron Will**  
Self-published  
384 pages  
In Grime's own words...

**What to expect:** You can expect to see a shitload of tattoos that I've done; it covers the last eight years of my tattoo career. It also has my journal writings, personal thoughts and photos of art but it's mostly focused on my tattoo work, as opposed to my first book, *Two Year Autopsy*, which I didn't want to be dominated by tattoos at the time, because I didn't want myself to be defined as just, 'Tattoo Guy.'

**Why it's worth picking up:** I protected a lot of my tattoos for a long time; I didn't show a lot of my favorite work, I was real selective with what I gave magazines and put on the internet, but I put it all in the book.

**Format:** It's gonna come in a slip case and in the slip case there's also going to be a softback, edited version of *Two Year Autopsy*. It's a pretty inclusive little volume of me over the last decade.

**Where to buy it:** [www.GrimeMonster.com](http://www.GrimeMonster.com) and in-person at Skull and Sword.





## LANGO

**Grime's take:** I actually tattooed him at Primal Urge in 1997 or '98, and he'd kind of been in and out of San Francisco visiting and getting tattooed by myself, or by acquaintances and friends of mine, so we always had a rapport. After he had moved here, an opportunity became available and he really wanted to work here - the guys agreed that we should hire him, and that's

turned out really well. **About Lango:** A native of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Lango is a self-taught artist who first became involved with tattooing around the age of 18. "I got into it because I was always drawing kind of weird stuff, crazy stuff and my friends encouraged me to start tattooing because a few of them were tattooers. They noticed that I had the ability to draw, but I

really hadn't had any direction, as far as where I was going to use my artwork, so they encouraged me to start tattooing." **First tattoo done:** A tribal piece on himself. "I knew tribal would be something that, if it looked horrible, I could practice inside the tribal area," admits Lango. **Biggest challenge:** "With time you get more knowledge and

experience, so it gets a little easier, but when you think that you've figured something out, there's another thousand things that you still haven't." **Working for Grime:** "He's an amazing boss. He's right in front of me, so I've got to say something nice," jokes Lango. "Nah, he is actually an amazing boss; a very fair person. I never had a better job."

**WE REALLY LIKE THE DYNAMIC HERE. WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF ATTITUDE, WE HELP EACH OTHER A LOT WITH OUR DRAWINGS, AND I THINK THAT'S WHAT MAKES OUR SHOP FAIRLY UNIQUE.**

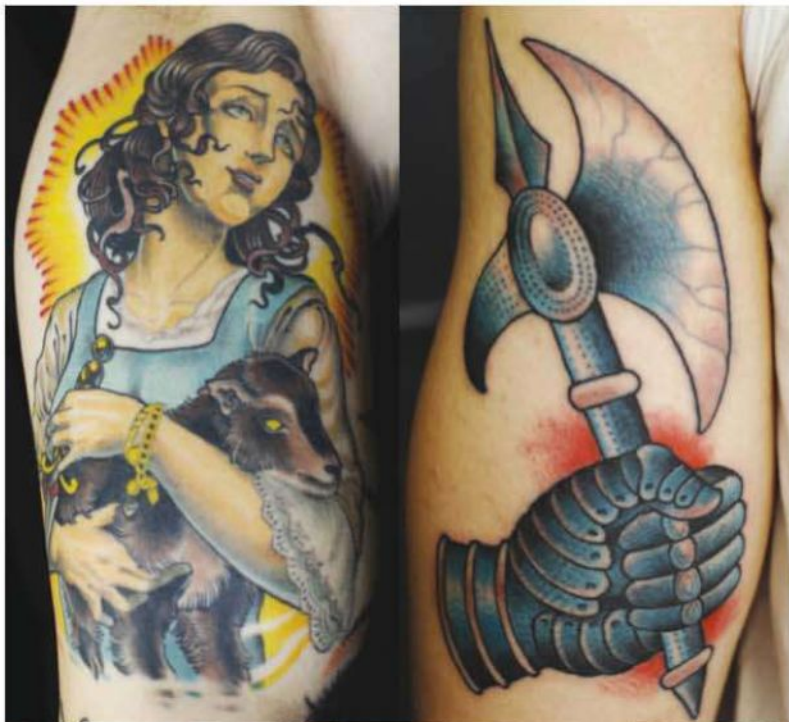
Skull and Sword. Talented guest artists aside, the studio's three permanent artists, in addition to Grime, help elevate Skull and Sword to a level of artistry well above most shops. Yutaro Sakai, Henry Lewis and Lango, who joined forces with Grime in that order, are the distinct and masterful artists at the shop's core.

"We really like the dynamic here. We don't have a lot of attitude, we help each other a lot with our drawings, and I think that's what makes our shop fairly unique," says Grime of the shop's energy and interactions.

"When each of us visits another shop - it's really interesting, we always come back and we always remark about how unique our shop is," adds Grime. "We add constructive criticism before and after the work has started, and I think that really sets our shop apart. And I think we're really lucky to have that."

But even with a portfolio as strong as this, it seems the greatest criticisms on Grime's work stem from within himself. "I'm hyper-critical," he admits. "I think in the past, I would say, 99 per cent of my work I didn't like at all. Now, I'm a little less critical of my work, and work in general, because I just see it looser - and some things I figure, you know, that's fine for now, or that's as good as you're gonna do for the moment."

However, where most would consider a critical eye a curse, Grime focuses on its upside; "I think I'm fortunate to have that because it's really pushed my work and it's helped these guys see things, and it's helped me understand when other people are discussing my own work, or other people's work, so I think it really aids in our ability to look at design and to determine subtle things like, you know, move this and





## HENRY LEWIS

**Grime's take:** Phil Holt used to work here, when we first opened the shop in this location, and when he was leaving and moving back to Florida, he was talking to Henry. And Henry had told him, 'Oh, I really wanna work there,' so I talked to him about that and we talked about stuff, and I was excited to have Henry. I had tattooed him as well, quite some time ago. I actually tattooed all three of them at Tattoo City when I worked with Ed. It just seemed

like a really good fit and he was excited about doing it, so it made a lot of sense.

**About Henry Lewis:**

Both a talented painter and tattoo artist, Henry Lewis's time management skills are something to be in awe of. Grime's one-word description of Lewis, "A.D.D.," may in fact not be that far of a stretch, but man is he ever good. A native of Los Angeles, Lewis made the move out to San Francisco to grow and perfect both his painting and tattooing.

**I'VE BEEN TATTOOING 17 YEARS AND IT'S STILL REALLY HARD TO DO EVEN A DECENT TATTOO. A REALLY, REALLY GOOD TATTOO IS REALLY FUCKING HARD.**



change that because it's going to have a different look, and it will make your eye move across the piece."

Wise words that, in all honesty, made me question my own receptiveness to criticism, and I soon found out that they had been passed on from another standout artist: "Marcus [Pacheco] taught me a ton about tattooing and he was, by far, the biggest influence I have in tattooing. He really has a great eye and understanding of a lot of things - he opened my eyes to those things and helped me understand them myself."

Having no formal training and getting his start in what we can call public, non-commissioned art (i.e. graffiti), Grime admits being unsure of the primal root of his passion for tattoos. "I'd wanted to tattoo professionally since I was 14, even though it wasn't a burning desire per se, but it was something that was in my head. I had mentioned it to friends and thought about it, so it was definitely something that was on my

radar. But I didn't portray myself like 'Oh, I'm going to be this thing', or 'I'm going to do this when I get older.' I was young, I was stuck in the moment and I didn't know what I was going to do but it kept pursuing me, so it came to the point where I had to do it."

Following his first ever job, "a graffiti piece on a friend's calf," tattoos soon become the art that overpowered all. "I do other things, but tattooing is by far the thing I do the most and it's the medium that I'm most comfortable with. I know how to get my desired effects with tattooing easier than I even know how to with a pencil or a paint or anything else."

Even so, the most surprising aspect still remains "how hard it is," says Grime. "The difficulty of making really good tattoos is pretty staggering. I've been tattooing 17 years and it's still really hard to do even a decent tattoo. A really, really good tattoo is really fucking hard. And that's what amazes me about people who think that they're good, it

just blows my mind."

From this modesty comes a truly standout point about Grime; you can trust him. Trust him to be honest and to deliver. "There's some stuff I don't do," he says. "My number one goal in tattooing is to make really strong tattoos, so if it's something that I feel is like, 'Man, I don't know how to get that to even be a



**YUTARO SAKAI**

**Grime's take:** Yutaro started working with me earlier, when we still had Art Work Rebels at a different location here in the city. Jason Kundell and I were partners at Art Work Rebels, we opened it together, and when he moved to Spain indefinitely, I had to restructure the shop 'cause I didn't have a partner anymore. So I took on Yutaro as my co-worker. I had tattooed him some years prior, and he just really wanted the job. He's a really great person and a good tattooist, so I figured it was a good match.



decent tattoo,' I'll just turn it down."

Over the years, Grime has been involved in some noteworthy book projects and his latest, "Iron Will," is slated for release in late October. The book will feature the artist's work from the past eight years, interspersed with personal musings and other Grime touches. "Iron Will" is sure to be a success, even if the author may be, no surprise here, self-critical; "I'm pretty happy with it. There's things I'd like to fix, but it's one of those things too where you have to pick your battles and know when to just let it go."

Just don't expect Grime to get all author-y and come out with a full-blown book tour. "I don't know exactly what I'm gonna do with the book," he admits. "It took a lot of energy to do it and now that I'm done, I kind of don't feel like thinking about it for minute." Besides, there's the blatantly obvious downside; "One kind of problem of touring with books is that books are really heavy!"

This upcoming year may see Grime take in some conventions, including a potential stop in Barcelona in 2011, but the best way to get a Grime tattoo is to get your ass down to Skull and Sword. Then again, a convention queue may be more promising; "There's a two year waiting list, so if you wanna get in earlier than that, you're going to have to call the shop and do some finagling, I guess!" Considering my suggestion of paying one's way to the top of the list drew a big laugh, you can omit that approach.

Reaching the end of our interview, I ask Grime to describe everyone in the shop, including himself, in one word. After a few minutes of mulling over the idea, Yutaro scores "Warrior," Henry gets "A.D.D." and following a sad realization that "Brazilian Panda" is two words, Lango is summed up as "NWOBHN." As for Grime, with some

**YOU KNOW WHO OWNS THE PAINTING? AARON CAIN. STRANGE, RIGHT? AT LEAST IT'S NOT ABOVE THE FIREPLACE...**

helpful input from Jeremy and Lango, we arrive at "Magic."

Which just leaves the pressing question about the painting that sparked my reverence for Grime in the first place. "You know who owns it? Aaron Cain. Strange, right?" Even more bizarre, the purchase was unbeknownst to Grime: "I was at his house and I was like 'What the hell? Why do you have this? It's so weird that you wanna have this!' It's hanging in the kitchen, but his kitchen is really connected to his living room - and it's a fairly big painting. I'd say it's a good three and a half feet tall, and with the frame it's probably a little bigger." But at least "it's not like, above the fireplace," laughs Grime. ★







# LONDON CALLING

WORDS SION SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY AL OVERDRIVE

**The monster construction that is Tobacco Dock remains a stroke of brilliance on behalf of the London Tattoo Convention.** Easy to get to and big enough to cope, you can see the crowd from about 1000 metres away – and that’s impressive. Now in its sixth year and only showing signs of getting bigger, it’s hard to see how they can raise the bar next year but I’m sure they’ll think of something...

**T**he first thing you are met with at the Dock is a deep, deep crowd totally entranced with the hand tapping taking place not ten feet from the entrance. While almost everybody here is acquainted with the modern machine, this is indeed a sight to behold and an absolutely fascinating art to see in action. Te Rangitu Netana – the modern master of traditional Maori Ta Moko – sits front of ‘stage’ oblivious to the onlookers as he works away on a beautiful back piece. Many onlookers no doubt know his name as the creator of Robbie Williams’ arm work, but either way, it’s captivating and a real treat to watch this third generation artist at work.





Meantime – in the same area no less – are the Horiyoshi III family working their enviable Tebori style to an equally beguiled crowd of their own. You could easily spend all weekend in here and not grow tired of watching these guys at work. Intriguingly, from eavesdropping the conversations taking place, there were as many keen to submit themselves to this hand work as there were those equally sure that they weren't. One thing is for sure, leaving the room is like remembering you were supposed to be doing something else – it's all rather timeless.

Back in the real world, there's plenty to sink your teeth into – and look at. Every artist working the floor is busy from the word go. With so many international styles represented, there's certainly no shortage of choice either. Doubtless, some collectors here have waited a long old time for the privilege of sitting down with the artist of their choice – if I leave anybody out in the following comments, it's nothing personal. Quite the opposite – some artists you simply could not get near for either crowds or the intensity of their work ethic.

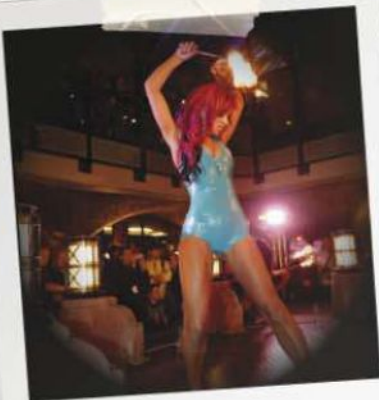
I'm really intrigued by what Europe has to offer at the moment. Calypso ➔

There were as many keen to submit themselves to this hand work as there were those equally sure that they weren't.



## OSOK

Edgar Hoil is a one off. One of life's true originals. Passionate and supremely talented at what he does. Through his brand – One Shot One Kill – he brings us images of parts of the world that most of us would never get the chance to see otherwise. Across the weekend, he took many interested parties on a tour of his exhibition and I guarantee, he would have been just as animated on the last as he was on the first, such is his enthusiasm for what he does. The exhibition on display was just a small part of his collection but not a single shot was wasted in his creation of this – making One Shot One Kill possibly the best brand name on the face of the planet. Watch out for a full interview feature soon.



Tattoo from Belgium found themselves with a good crowd for much of the weekend as they repeatedly displayed what they had to offer with their command of tribal designs from all four corners of the globe. Likewise the inimitable Amanda Toy's original designs continue to grow in popularity – whatever your opinion on whether her art is for you or not, it's impossible to deny just how unique it is and she certainly won my heart. Another great find in this department was Davide Andreoli at Italian Rooster whose cult collection of flash reeled more than a few in to stand by to watch him

work. Watch out for features over the coming months.

Meanwhile, representing the rest of the world, I spent some time at the stall of Enrique Diaz de Leon from El Indio whose clean, imaginative work

**Amanda Toy's original designs continue to grow in popularity – whatever your opinion on whether her art is for you or not, it's impossible to deny just how unique it is.**



## FUEL GIRLS

No alternative show is complete without the Fuel Girls. What they bring is so much more than a great fire show – fact of the matter is, it would be totally unacceptable for a show of this magnitude to go without some photo opportunities for the boys – and girls. The Fuel Girls need no introduction, need no explanation and no justification. Thus, I end my words here and let the pictures do the talking....



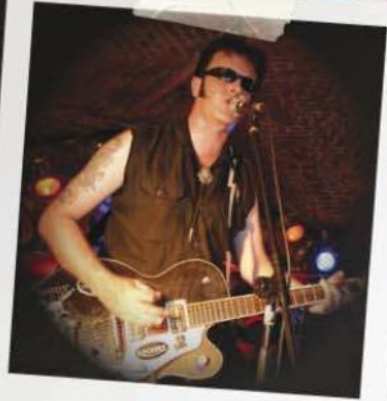
Most visible across the weekend were the Fuel Girls who over the last few years have more than paid their dues.



really impressed me. It was also great to find Phillip Spearman having mapped out a feature on him in this very issue. To wrap up this section of the show review, I must also take my hat off to the crew at Daredevil in New York who came, saw and conquered and particularly Amanda who was kind enough to spend some time with me in between appointments.

Suffice to say, you couldn't go very long without some of the entertainment making itself known. Most visible across the weekend were the Fuel Girls





**VINCE RAY**

Vince Ray and the Boneshakers are not only one smooth act these days, thanks to Vince, they also have a gnarly line in merchandise too – no home should be without at least one of his masterpieces. This year, the band delivered more of its fun filled double bass loaded rock than ever before and dare I say, they only get more popular as time rolls on. If you're missing out on Vince, you're missing a real treat. Also worth a mention here, on the Friday evening, 50ft Woman kicked off the weekend to a flying start with the unenviable task of warming up a crowd who would much rather have been getting inked... nice work.

who over the last few years have more than paid their dues and certainly know how to command a crowd – the addition of the acrobatic silks since I last saw them more than justifies battling through a music festival sized crowd in order to get a better view.

Also more than worthy of a mention is Billie Rae. Her twenties styled Burlesque show is truly outstanding and in a class all of its own – if you missed her show this weekend, one look at her calendar will tell you that you won't have to go too long before seeing her somewhere again.

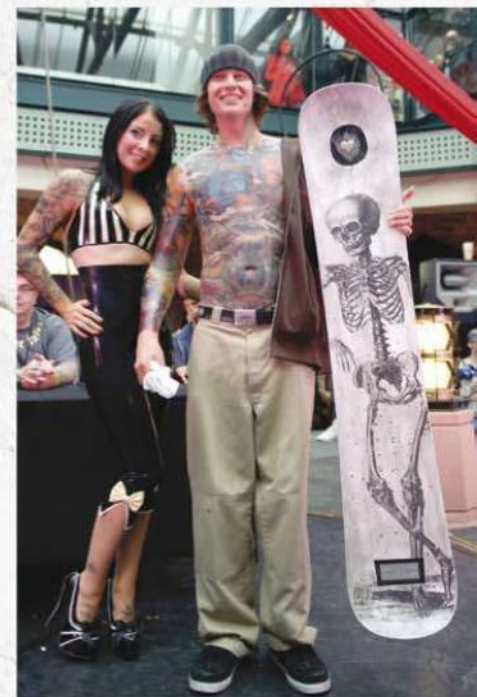
No less heart-pounding (for an altogether different reason) were the various art exhibitions on show throughout the weekend - particularly Edgar Hoill (One Shot One Kill) who took me on an extensive tour of his life in photography between Los Angeles and Japan and also Lars Krutak whose work as an anthropologist has breathed new life into the study of tribal symbolism. Both of these guys have worked extremely hard to bring images of cultures we would otherwise have no

**What stands out more than anything is the variation between 2010 and the very first London Tattoo Convention.**

concept of into the mainstream.

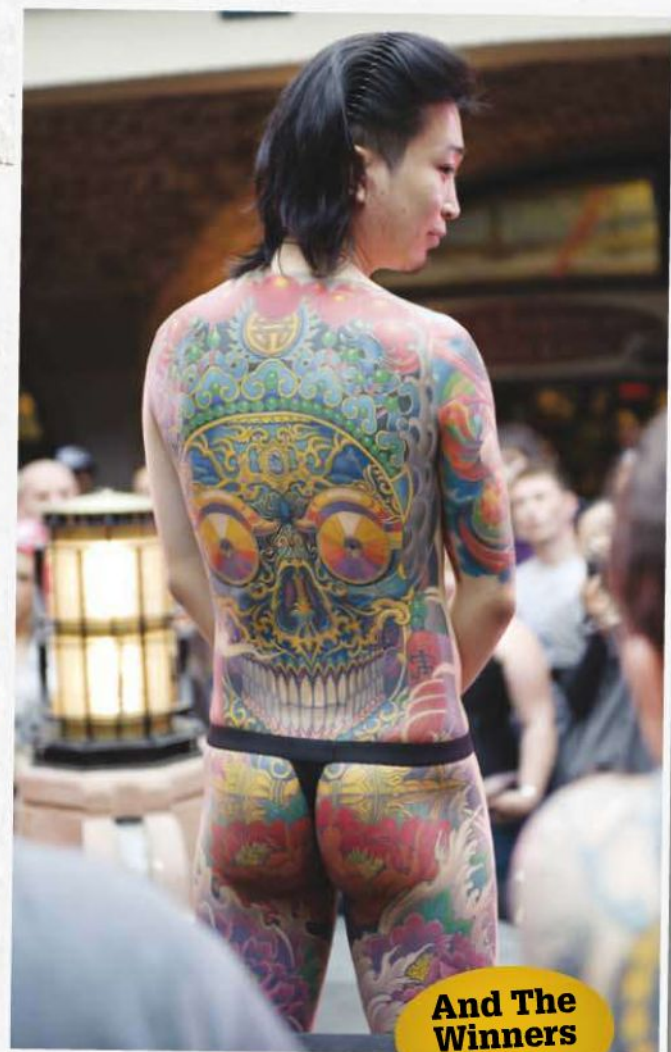
But of course, the big attraction across the weekend, was the people – and there were thousands of them. From the most delicate to the fullest body-suit – and in the case of Lucky Dimond Rich, the challenge is in finding bare skin – everybody was catered for. Old school, new school, school's that don't even exist yet and school's that have been forgotten for too long, they were all here – but what stands out more than anything is the variation between 2010 and the very first London Con. That year, I was a paying guest, curious to see what was on offer and if memory serves me well, it wasn't half as intense as it is now. Through this and other conventions – not just in the UK, but internationally – collectors are really able to show their colours and also allow artists to continue their work. One look at the images on show here shows exactly what I'm talking about.

To wrap up, what show review would be complete without giving





Through this and other conventions – collectors are really able to show their colours and also allow artists to continue their work.



mention to the traders in the underground vaults of the venue? The new opening hours of lunchtime until 2a.m. certainly gave a lot of scope to part with your hard earned cash and there was no shortage of quality to

spend it on either. We've come a long way in the last few years from selling "stuff" to unique goods that people really want to take home.

I think we can call that a roaring success... again.★

**And The Winners Are...**



- Black/Grey**
- 1) **José Lopez**, Lowrider tattoo
- 2) **Chuey Quintanar**, Good Time Charlies
- 3) **Jess Yen**, My Tattoo
- Best Ornamental**
- 1) **Genko**, Genko Tattoo
- 2) **Tommy**
- 3) **Chris Bagnell**, Aquaries Tattoos
- Best Colour**
- 1) **Steve Prizeman**, Eternal Art
- 2) **Scott Duncan**, Sugar Shack
- 3) **Ben Boston**, Tattoo Studio
- Best Back/Suit**
- 1) **Tang Ping**, Zi You Tattoo
- 2) **Takam**, Knock Over Decorate
- 3) **Trevor Mc Stay + Filip Leu**, Dynamic Tattoo - The Leu Family's Family Iron
- Best done in the show**
- 1) **Paolo Acuna**, Divinity Tattoo
- 2) **Alex De Pase**, Alex De Pase tattoo
- 3) **Bernie Luther**, Tattoo Art Demon



# SPANISH FLY

**It's been called the San Francisco of Europe and is said to be one of the most liberal, busy and artistic cities on our continent.**

Barcelona certainly has a widespread reputation to live up to, and in many ways it does. Tattoos and street art, on the other hand, are surprisingly rare...



**W**alking through the streets of Barcelona is a little like walking through an architecture exhibition. With Antoni Gaudí - creator of the weird cathedral La Sagrada Família - as the face of Barcelona architecture, the city features a truly amazing and unique style.

On a smaller scale, the narrow streets in areas like Gràcia, El Borne and El Búrrio Gótico creates a picturesque, almost village-like feeling (which many of these areas actually were before Barcelona expanded), perfectly suited for creative minds. Yet I notice something missing.

**PEOPLE HERE WANT WHAT THEY SEE. AND YOU KNOW THAT IF A FOOTBALL PLAYER OR AN ACTOR GETS A CERTAIN TATTOO, YOU WILL BE DOING THAT VERY TATTOO FOR MONTHS AHEAD.**

Two things in fact: street art and tattooed people.

During the five days I spent in Barcelona I saw very few tattoos and most of what I do see aren't all that impressive to be honest, but there must be some reason that there are around 200 tattoo shops in the area. Javier Castaña at Electric Tattoo, has a theory, at least about the tattoos that do exist:

"People here want what they see. They're not very original and it's all about fashion. If they see a koi carp, they want that. Some people want calligraphy but they often don't really know what words they want. They don't have a reason for the tattoo. If they see someone on TV having something cool like "Only God can judge me" written on them, then that's

what they want. And you know that if a football player or an actor gets a certain tattoo, you will be doing that very tattoo for months ahead!"

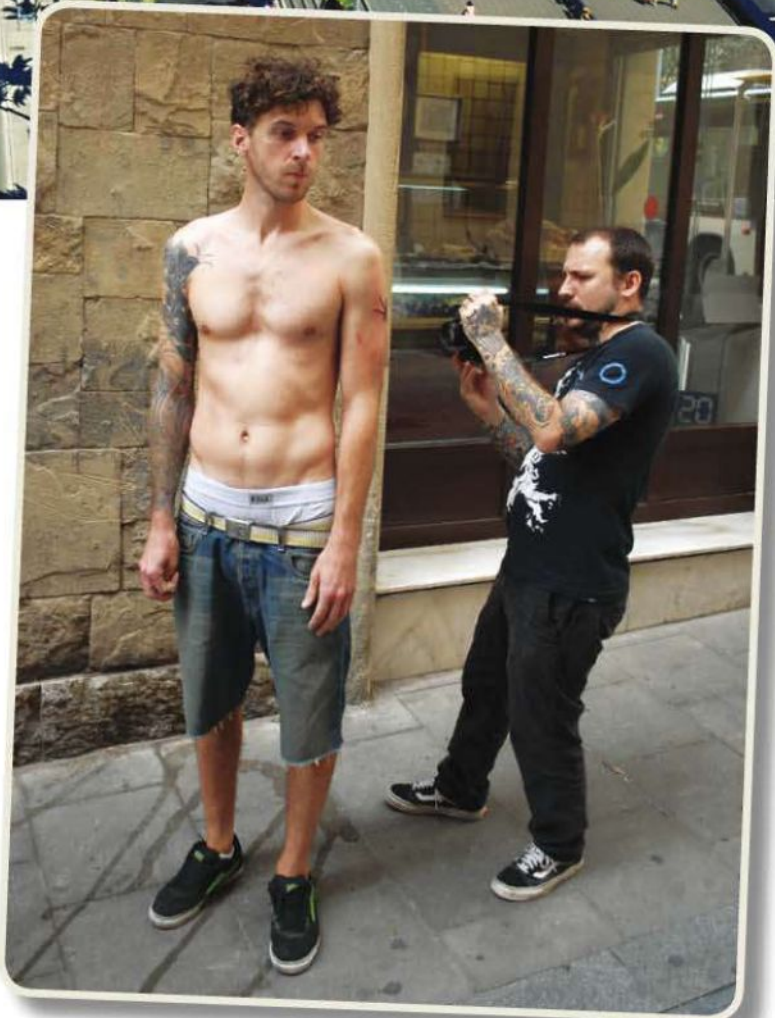
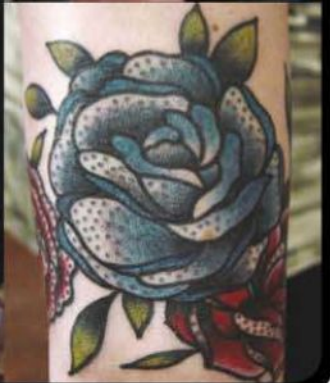
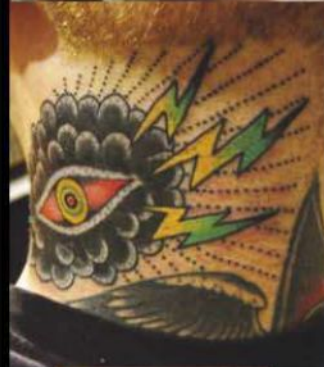
He's one of the city's most talked about tattooists and the trend doesn't seem to be bothering him too much. "Most of my clients ask about my work but I get some tourists as well and I don't mind doing commercial work now and then."

El Monga at Aloha Tattoos somewhat agrees with him. "It used to be more walk-in but it's changed a lot over the last five or six years. Ten years ago the tattoos made were mostly black and grey. Now there's more colour, more modern. There's still a lot of bullshit though. I'd say 80 percent of





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**THE CITY IS IN CONSTANT CHANGE. A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE MOVE IN FOR LIKE HALF A YEAR OR A YEAR AND IF I GO BACK TO A NEIGHBOURHOOD AFTER FOUR MONTHS, IT NEVER LOOKS THE SAME.**

the studios in Barcelona are crap. A lot of people who open studios don't know how to draw. They just think it's good business."

He, himself, moved to Spain from Argentina eight years ago and is one of many foreigners coming to Barcelona because of its good reputation. At the same time, a lot of people move out, and this constant change seems to be what Barcelona is all about, at least according to Sole at Santa Demonía Tattoo, who also is from Argentina:

"The city is in constant change. A lot of young people move in for like half a year or a year and if I go back to a neighbourhood after four months, it never looks the same. This has influenced the art scene. I work a lot with cultures from all over the world and that's easier when

they all exist here."

Another immigrant - from England this time - is Mervyn at Addicted Tattoo. According to Mervyn there's been another big change in the Barcelona tattoo scene, due to the recent financial crisis. One that has seen many of these out-of-towners disappear.

"There's been an exodus of tattooers from Barcelona the last couple of years. There are a lot of people who want to live here and try it out, but there's been too many. At one point I had two people per week coming in, asking me for a job - I also have a friend who owned a shop for ten years before he recently gave up. He just got tired of struggling."

Although it might sound bad, all the artists I talk to agree that Barcelona is still a thriving city when it comes to tattooing.

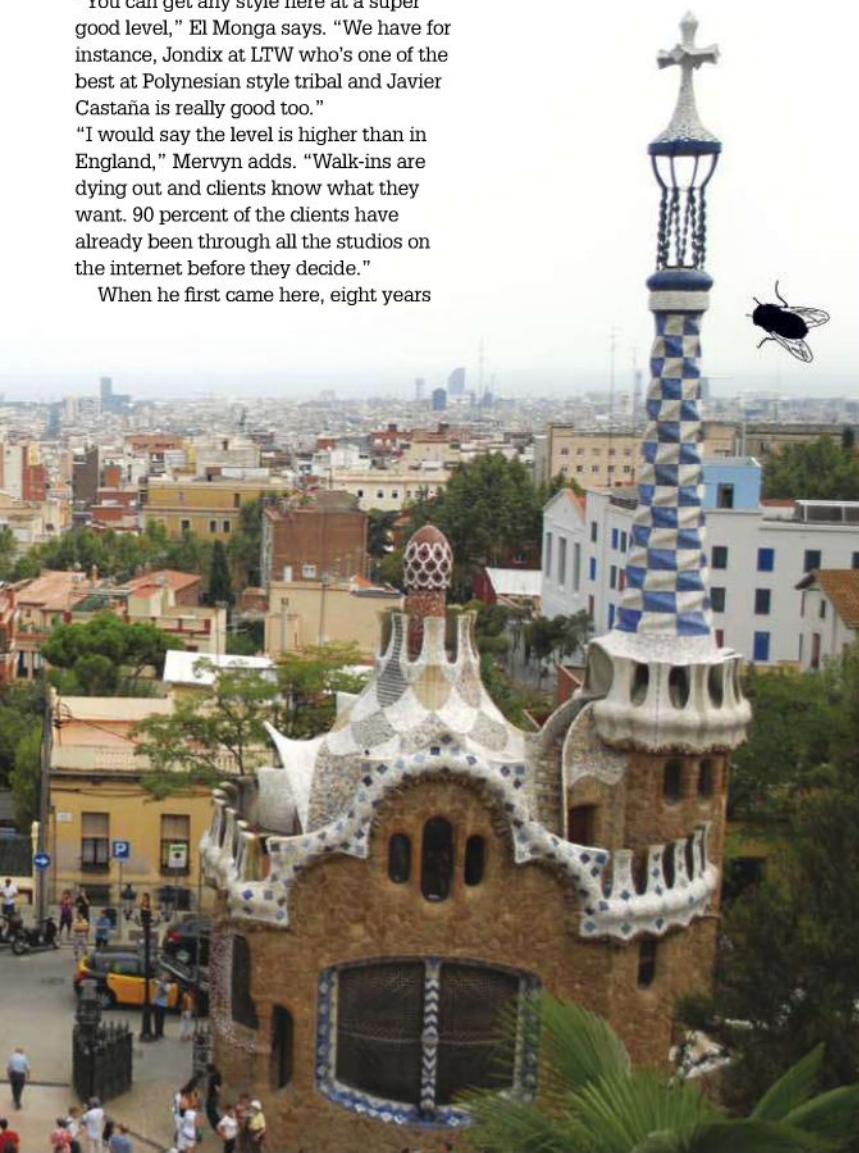




"You can get any style here at a super good level," El Monga says. "We have for instance, Jondix at LTW who's one of the best at Polynesian style tribal and Javier Castaña is really good too."

"I would say the level is higher than in England," Mervyn adds. "Walk-ins are dying out and clients know what they want. 90 percent of the clients have already been through all the studios on the internet before they decide."

When he first came here, eight years



**WALK-INS ARE DYING OUT AND CLIENTS KNOW WHAT THEY WANT. NINETY PERCENT OF THE CLIENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH ALL THE STUDIOS ON THE INTERNET BEFORE THEY DECIDE.**

ago, he saw a difference in the tattoo world between Spain and England, a difference that has basically been erased:

"It was easier to get a lot of interesting work down here. In England the more privileged tattoo artists got the interesting stuff. But nowadays, when you go back to London you see full sleeves everywhere. It seems to be booming there now, and in that sense, previously, Barcelona was ahead." The artists also agree there's no real Barcelona style of tattooing, but Mervyn does see a pattern in the motifs people choose.

"They do a lot of catholic symbols and family portraits. There are many 50-year olds who want pictures and names of their kids or grand-kids and if you go to the beach, you can see a lot of 70-year olds covered in tattoos. I'm lucky - I've become the local artist around here, so I tattoo the guy who owns the restaurant on the corner, the local baker and so on."

I don't feel I've received a good enough answer as to why I see so few tattoos, only hints, but I realise I probably won't either. Instead I address the issue with the non-existing street art. The explanation turns out to be simple: ➔



**ELECTRIC TATTOO**

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**THERE USED TO BE A LOT OF IT (STREET ART) BUT THEY BANNED IT A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO. PEOPLE CAME FROM OTHER COUNTRIES BECAUSE THEY KNEW IT WAS EASY TO PAINT HERE.**

"There are some walls on the outskirts of Barcelona but it's forbidden in the city," says Sara, Sole's piercing colleague from Sweden at Santa Demonía. "There used to be a lot of it but they banned it a couple of years ago. People came from other countries because they knew it was easy to paint here. It's just like the drumming in Ciutadella Park. It started off with a couple of drummers every Sunday and then it got bigger and bigger. It was crazy. Now you're not allowed to bring drums to the park at all."

Despite the lack of street art, Sole thinks Barcelona is a good art city where a lot of areas have their own character. "There are many small galleries around here with different sorts of art. There's even a bakery which does artistic pastry. El Raval has a lot of immigrants, so over there, the Arabic influence is big. They have a lot of festivals and the Museum of Modern Art. In El Borne, there are a lot of design and jewellery shops. It's a bit posh! In El B rrio G tico, it's slightly more commercial and in Gr cia there are a lot of artist collectives which do exhibitions. There used to be a few squats there but the city's made that harder now." Over the last three years, there's even been an alternative tattoo



convention in Barcelona, in addition to the proper one which has been around for 13 years.

"It's held in a squat and the money goes to the squatters," Sole says. "They have bands playing and about ten tattoo artists. It's not big and the quality isn't very high but it's charming and very well organised." ★





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WORDS & PICS: NIK

# SUFFOLK (RABBIT) PUNCH

WHEN YOU LIVE, LIKE I DO, OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, IN THE UK EQUIVALENT OF BUTTFUCK, IDAHO OR DOGDICK, DELAWARE, THEN TRULY EXOTIC CUSTOM MACHINERY IS A LITTLE BIT RARE ON THE GROUND, A BIT FEW AND FAR BETWEEN.



**H**aving said that, I had heard for years of some bloke in the area, a tattooist called Rabbit, and his trike which, apparently, was a V8. Now I've been living in this neck of the woods for a good few years now, on and off, and I thought I knew of most, if not all, of the customs round here and, as I hadn't seen hide nor hare (sorry ...) of the elusive Leporidae and his eight-cylinder'd motor tricycle, I was beginning to think that they were a myth, just a story - like Black Shuck, the ghost dog of the Fens, or the proposed dualling of the A11.

Then, one day as I'm coming out of a café in Lakenheath I heard a noise, a distinct noise, a very recognisable noise - a noise that you or I would know immediately as that of a unclad V8 being, as the saying goes, ridden as though it'd been stolen. And sure enough, a few seconds later a low, loud and dead 'ard-looking monster trike came barrelling round the corner, piloted by a heavily tattoo'd bloke in a pair of flying goggles and a shirt through which you could see his nipples. Bloody hell, they aren't a myth! Here they were right

in front of me eyes - Rabbit and his V8!

The trike actually started life as a bike. Yep, that's right - a bike. It was built many years ago by everyone's favourite uber-loony Chris 'Desperate Dan' Ireland as a V8 drag bike that he intended to campaign but, Rabbit says, after he'd run it a couple of times and it'd tried to kill him on every pass, he eventually decided he quite liked being alive and cut it up to put a rigid axle on it and sold it.

The next owner of the beast only got as far as buying parts for it as it sat in his garage before his wife decreed that it had to go (you can tell who wears the trousers in that family!) and it was at this point that our hero got his hands



## SPECIFICATION SHEET

### ENGINE:

Rover 3.5 litre V8 SDI, SU carbs, K&N filters, Borg Warner autobox, Lucas ignition, one-off exhausts by Mega-Tech Engineering, remote oil cooler & braided lines

### FRAME:

One-off by Desperate Dan's, one-off footrests & controls by owner

### SHARP END:

Honda Gold Wing wheel/brakes/forks, one-off external spring conversion by Mega-Tech Engineering, one-off polished billet yokes, braided brake lines, one-off tiller bars by owner, Honda master-cylinders & switchgear, Smiths clocks in one-off surround by owner

### BLUNT END:

Jaguar XJ6 axle/diff/brakes/wheels, one-off framework by Mega-Tech Engineering, Spax shocks, Yamaha master-cylinder

### TINWARE:

One-off front mudguard by owner, one-off radiator surround by owner, one-off dummy fuel tank by owner, one-off fuel tank by Mega-Tech Engineering, re-covered Honda Gold Wing seat by Bobby Wells, one-off rear mudguards by owner

### ELECTRICS:

One-off loom by Mega-Tech Engineering, triple Bates headlights, Honda Gold Wing & cat's eye rear lights, aftermarket marker lights, one-off indicators by Mega-Tech Engineering, rear-view camera, four 12v outputs

### PAINT:

One-off red/orange/black crackle finish by owner

### ENGINEERING:

Bike originally built by Desperate Dan's, converted by 4472 Engineering & Mega-Tech Engineering, fork brace engraved by David Fyson

### THANKS TO:

'Mega-Tech Engineering; David Fyson; Ian Fyson; & everyone else who helped along the way ...'



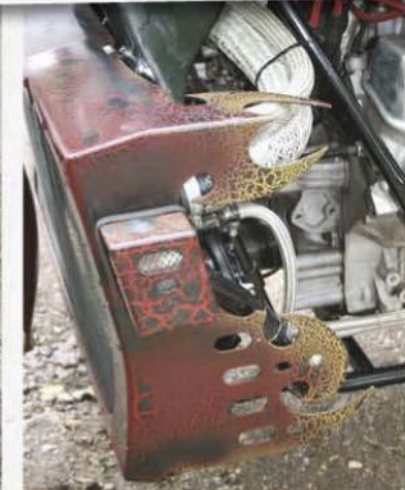
## AFTER HE'D RUN IT A COUPLE OF TIMES AND IT'D TRIED TO KILL HIM ON EVERY PASS, HE EVENTUALLY DECIDED HE QUITE LIKED BEING ALIVE AND CUT IT UP TO PUT A RIGID AXLE ON IT

on it. He finished assembling it, got it onto the road and then proceeded to ride the hell out of it – as you would. Unfortunately, though, this kind of hooligan behaviour immediately showed up its shortcomings – the rigid axle was just far too hard on the bumpy-arsed roads around his native Suffolk, and he was less than enamoured of the way that when the motor backfired, as it often did, it spat flame backwards and set fire to him. Something had to be done!

Dave at 4472 Engineering was the man commissioned to remove the rigid back end and replace it with a Jaguar one from an XJ6 and, with the relevant paperwork done and dusted, the trike

was back on the road and Rabbit's spine and teeth stayed where they were intended to. It lasted a couple of years in that form before it was decided that it really needed another look at and this soon turned out to be a major re-fit with new uprated forks, new seats, new exhausts etcetera etcetera etcetera. Rabbit then rode it around for a few more years until his daughter asked him if he could use it as the vehicle to deliver her to her wedding and so it was time for another revamp and that's how it stands at the moment.

So what actually is it? Well, the engine is one of the ubiquitous 3.5 litre alloy V8s, as fitted to the SDI Rover, driving



**SINCE IT WAS FINISHED A COUPLE O' YEARS AGO, IT'S TAKEN 'BEST TRIKE' AT A COUPLE OF LOCAL SHOWS**



through a Borg Warner auto 'box and it's been fitted with a set of funky stainless exhausts by local hot rod and custom car specialists, Mega-Tech Engineering in Brandon, who also beefed up the front end, made up a new larger and very subtle under-seat fuel tank, re-wired it and did a few other little jobs too. The frame was originally done by Mr Ireland, but has since been re-worked by both 4472 and Mega-Tech, and the front wheel and brakes are from a Gold Wing. The three headlights are Bateseseseseseses, Rabbit himself made up the chrome tiller 'bars, Bobby Wells covered the Gold Wing seats, and the back end is all XJ6 with Spax shocks. Rabbit sculpted and modified all the

bodywork and sprayed it in the red, orange and black crackle-finish paint scheme you see before you, and there's a rear-view camera ('cos mirrors are just so passé, daahling!) and four twelve volt output wotsits to make life at rallies and events that bit easier too. Since it was finished a couple o' years ago, it's taken 'Best Trike' at a couple of local shows, but Rabbit doesn't get to as many as he's perhaps like because his business, Grin N' Wear It Tattoo (01842 861104 or [www.grinnwearit.co.uk](http://www.grinnwearit.co.uk)), is one of the most respected tattoo and piercing places in the region and is always busy at weekends. Mind you, I'm not entirely sure that that's not a bad thing – the last time he took

it to a bike n' tattoo show in Milton Keynes, in a hall with an immaculate polished floor, it dripped hot oil onto it ruining the surface ... oops. If it's any consolation, mate, I once too me 'Onda to PSP in Norfolk, the guys who did the amazing fast-as-fook Triumphs, and it was the only thing that leaked onto their immaculate workshop floor ... ahem. It also hasn't really tried to kill him since either, which is always a Good Thing. Well, I say that, but it did throw one of its side panels at his head one afternoon as they were barrelling along a leafy back lane but, believe me, a bit of bruising around the noggin is much, much better than being set fire to any day ... ★

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# SMILE FOR THE CAMERA

WORDS: SION

**SOME SHORT WHILE LATER, WE CAUGHT UP WITH RABBIT BACK AT THE GRIN 'N' WEAR IT STUDIO WHERE - SLOTTED INTO A GENUINELY HYPER-BUSY SCHEDULE - WE SHOT THE BREEZE TO FIND OUT A LITTLE MORE ABOUT HIS LOVE OF THE ART:**

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**M**eanwhile, over at the Grin 'n' Wear It tattoo studio, Rabbit hardly ever gets to take a break - considering its location in the village of Lakenheath near the Norfolk/Suffolk border, it's surprisingly busy - I figure that the nearby monster sized airbases of Lakenheath, Feltwell and Mildenhall probably account for a fair old amount of trade but on closer inspection it turns out that's not the case:

"It's actually about 50/50 really. I'm from here originally and it's a great place to have a studio. The airbases are a bonus but being here, where's there's not too much competition like there is in most towns in the UK, let's us do pretty much whatever we want to do. We've been here twenty years and business has been steady for all that time. You know, when you specialise in something - whether that's a tattoo studio or a model car shop or whatever - people

are prepared to travel to get what they want and that's really what we've tapped into here. I have a constant two month waiting list which is no bad thing and it's been like that for a long time."

We've been hearing a lot of chat at the moment about employers clamping down on tattooed employees - is that a real world thing for you our there with the guys from the base?

"Not really, they have codes about how much work they're allowed to get done based on their rank and what sort of a uniform they have to wear, but it's always been that way. If you have a uniform that requires you to wear short sleeves, then you're confined to not having anything on your forearms, but if you're uniform is long sleeved, then you can, but to be honest uniforms and ranks can change, so a lot of people are coming in and getting backpieces done, which can only be a good thing!"

Back when I was twenty or so and when me and my friends were all





**IT USED TO BE THAT PEOPLE WOULD GET A TATTOO AS A LANDMARK IN THEIR LIFE, BUT LIKE I SAY, NOW THEY'RE NOW ALSO SEEN AS WORKS OF ART - COLLECTORS PIECES...**

starting our 'tattoo journey', it was pretty normal to aim for the upper arms and that was about it – nobody really ventured anywhere other than that. Now, it seems normal to go in and get yourself a sleeve or a backpiece as your first work – is that true or a misconception on my part?

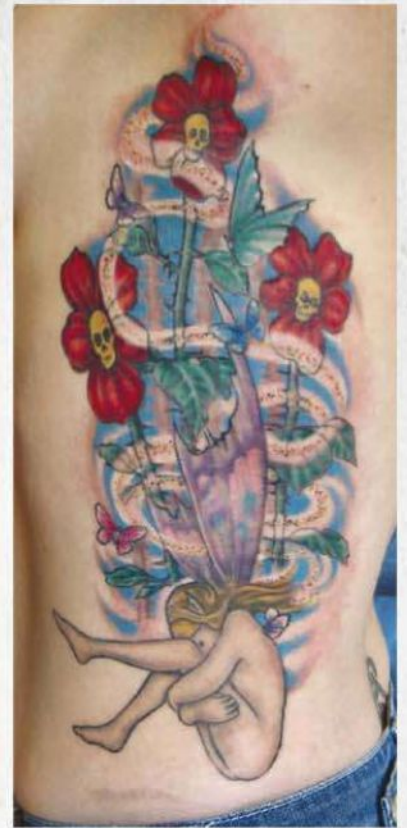
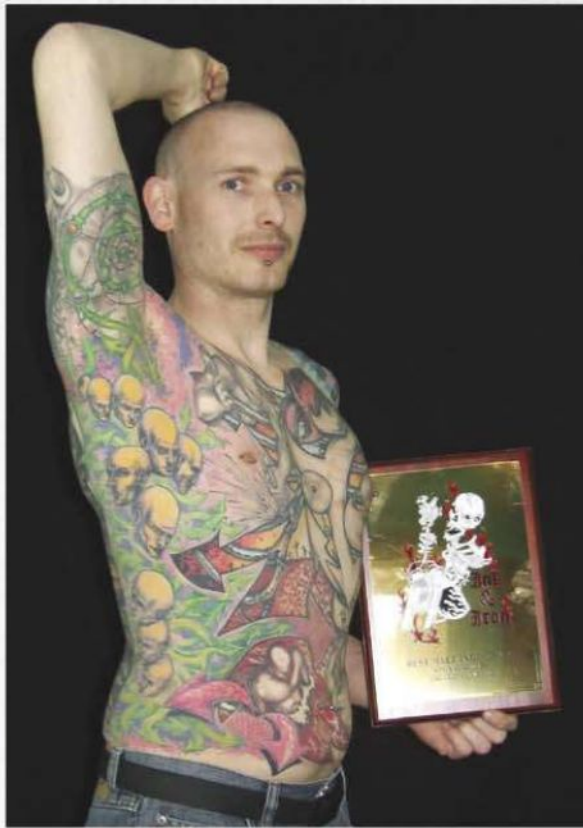
“No – I'd agree with that. For a lot of reasons, people now collect tattoos as personal works of art. It used to be that people would get a tattoo as a landmark in their life, but like I say, now they're now also seen as works of art – collectors pieces...”

Do you think TV is largely responsible for that? It has its good and bad sides

but it's definitely made people aware of what's possible and that you don't have to be a rock star to go that far.

“I don't watch those shows regularly – not because I don't like them but when you watch shows over and over that are essentially about your job, it gets to be a bit dull! There's been a definite rise in the amount of customers through the doors since they started though and yeah, to a certain extent, people are coming and getting bigger and bigger pieces done. The only real restraint is their budget, but if somebody wants to book an hour a month and work it like that, that's fine by me. You can get a lot of work done ➔





## I STILL WORK A COUPLE OF SHOWS EACH YEAR BUT I PREFER TO GO AND SEE WHAT EVERYBODY IS DOING RATHER THAN WORK THEM NOW.

in an hour and if you have the patience for it instead of wanting something ready to go in one appointment, you can get some serious work done!"

With the popularity of tattooing at the moment, do you think it will stay like this or find a way to dig itself back into a more underground culture?

"I'm not sure – there are a lot of conventions springing up all over the place so it looks like there's the demand for it to sustain its popularity. Not so long ago, there were a few big ones that were great to go to, but now they are everywhere and show no sign of slowing down. How long can that go on? I still work a couple of shows each year but I prefer to go and see what everybody is

doing rather than work them now. I've not peaked yet and I like seeing where things are headed. Some of the European artists are streets ahead of what's going on here. They are really pushing the styles and whatever is going on out there – its free flowing styles and fine art influences - will filter over here for sure, so I would say it's going to be a long time before it goes underground – if it ever does."

With a string of awards under his belt and a beautiful studio to hand, it's easy to see why Rabbit is one of the most popular tattoo artists in the UK – you just need to watch out for bits coming off that bike and hitting you round the back of the head! ★



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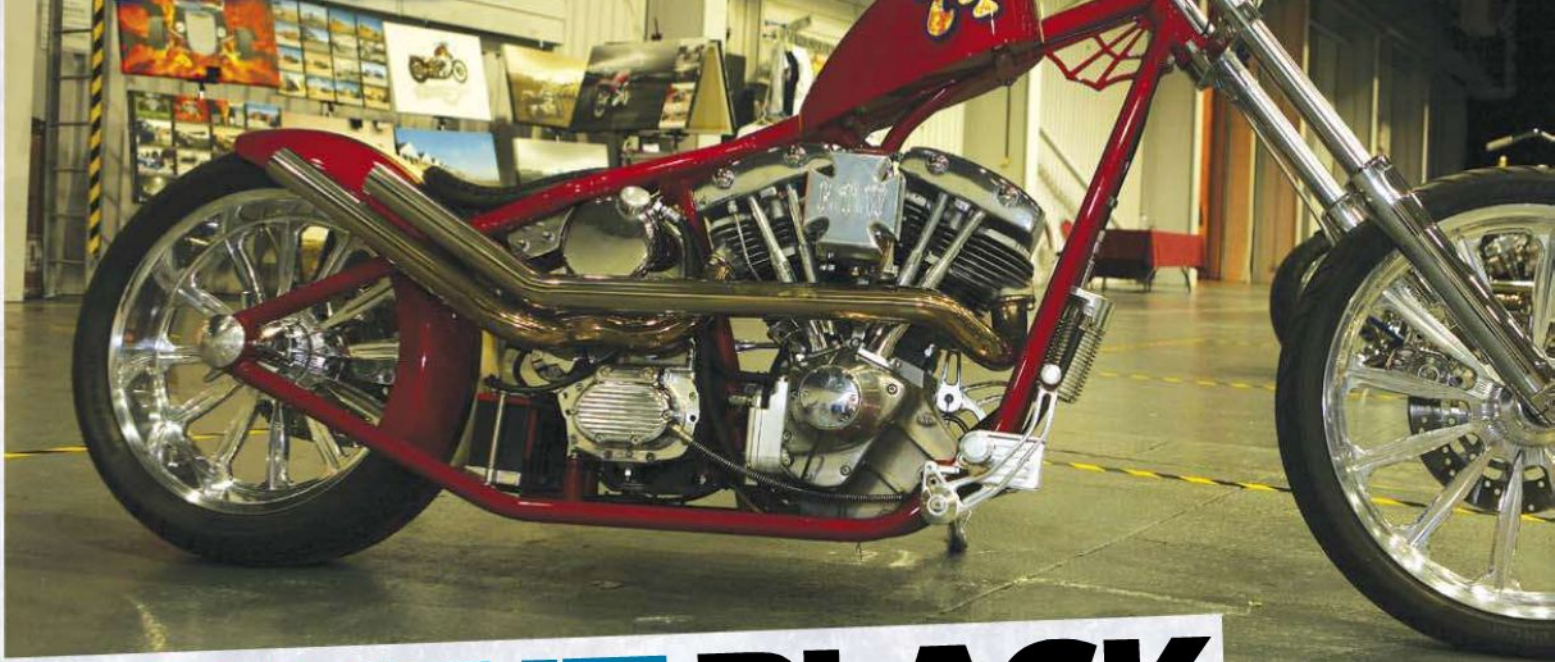
Dee Buchanan...



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# Tattoo FREEZE



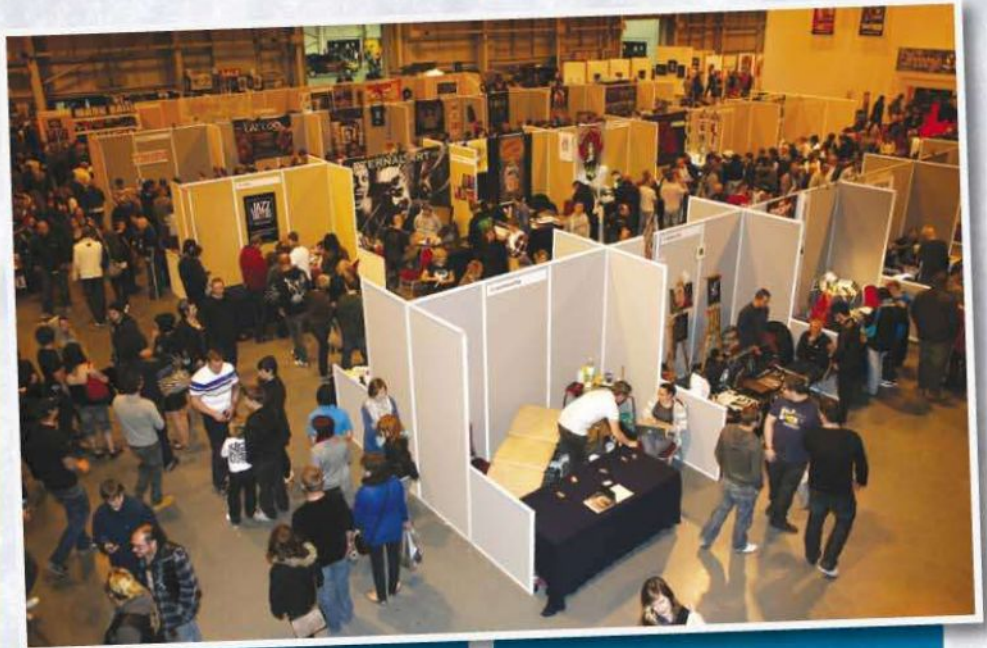
## PAINT IT BLACK

If there was ever a hulking great link between custom bikes and tattooing, it has to be all about the art, right?

**N**ext year, at Tattoo Freeze 2011, Skin Deep will be hosting a custom paint display that should send shivers down the spine of even the most hardened veteran. As hours and hours of passion and dedication are spent on customising vehicles every year (oh yeah – there'll be cars and trucks as well), we thought it only fair to let the public see just what's on offer, how it's done properly and also offer the chance to pimp your own ride.

That's right - not only can you spend time checking out some of the best airbrushers in the business as they demonstrate throughout the day, if you're feeling brave, you could even get your own wheels pinstriped by a leading pin-stripe artist who will be working the event.

Much like tattooing itself, there are a multitude of opinions with regards to what's right and what's wrong, what works and what doesn't, so whether you have a longing to get into it yourself or would



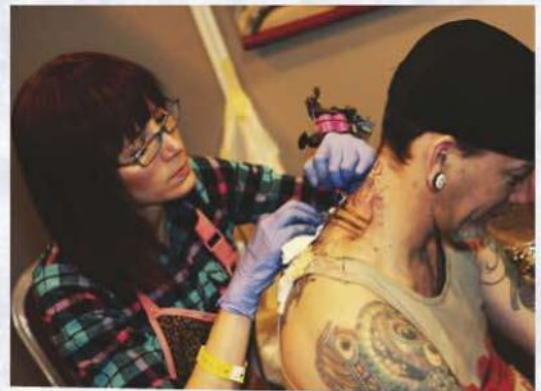
prefer to leave it to the professionals but still curious as to how the magic happens, this is the place to be.

For 2011, Tattoo Freeze has increased its foundations – now taking place over two days and with an additional 3,420m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, there will once again be graffiti demonstration and workshops (produced live by some of the country's best graffiti artists), BMX and skateboard

demonstrations, a BigTattooPlanet.com art gallery, ArtFusion canvases topped off by our National Tattoo Photography competition.

Held at the Telford International Centre and just minutes off the M54 Motorway, the event is ideally located to attract a large audience, which made it a great day out to kick off the show season.

**You can book tickets online now at [www.tattoofreeze.com](http://www.tattoofreeze.com)**



For 2011, Tattoo Freeze has increased its foundations – now taking place over two days and with an additional 3,420m2 of floor space.



**Tattoo  
FREEZE**

**15th - 16th  
January 2011**



# TWO WHEELS ARE BETTER THAN FOUR!

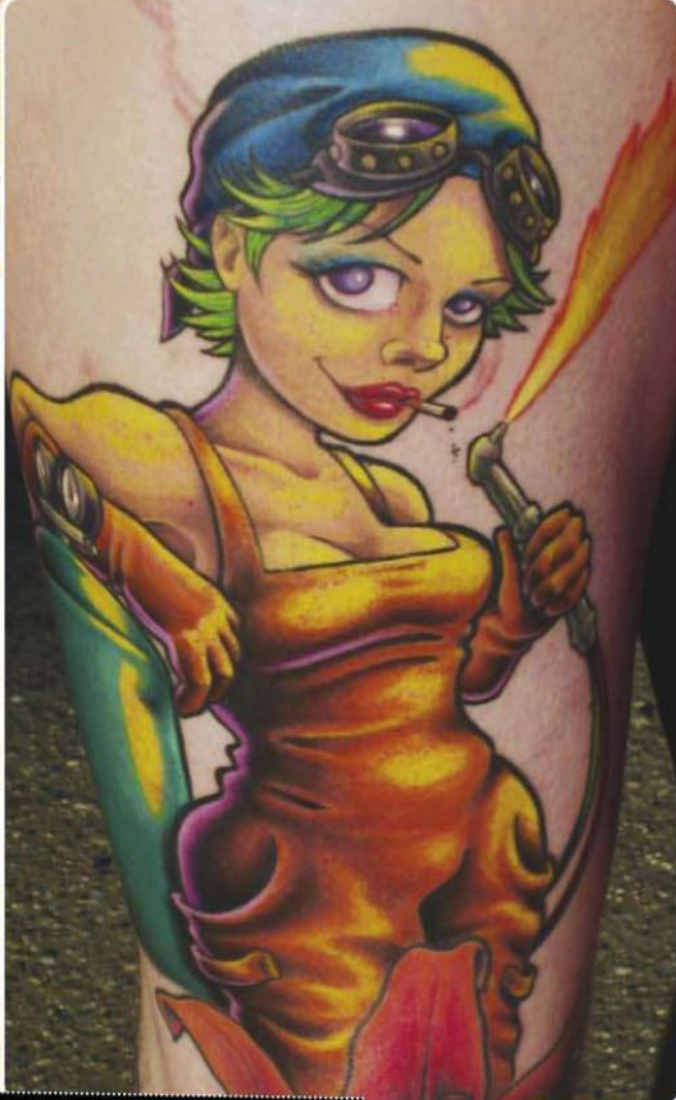
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LARRY BROGAN © OFFTHEMAPSTUDIO EASTHAMPTON MA



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# TWO WHEELS ARE BETTER THAN FOUR!



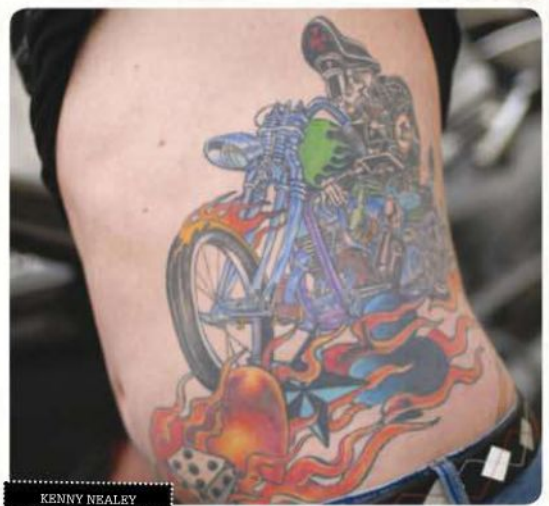
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MR CARTOON



SCOTT BY JESSE SANTORO



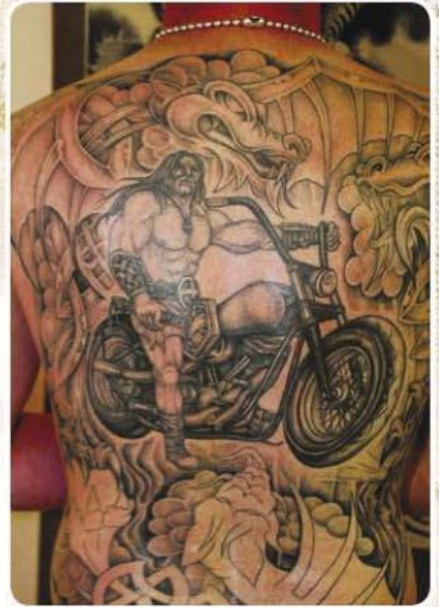
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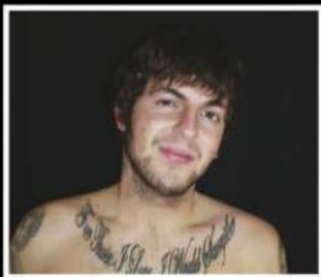
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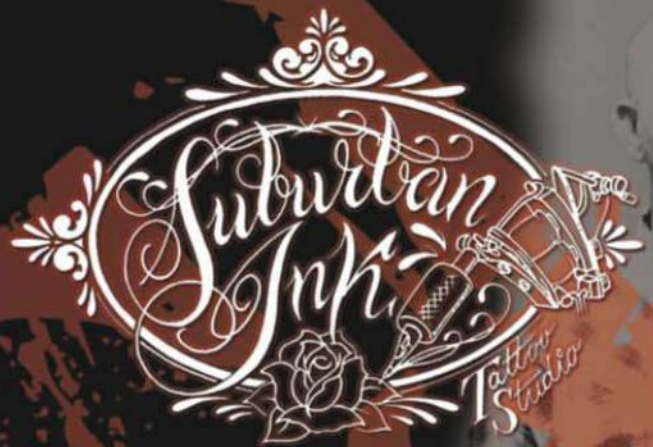


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WORDS RIK VAN BOECKEL PICTURES PHILLIP SPEARMAN

# TEMPLE OF THE PHOENIX

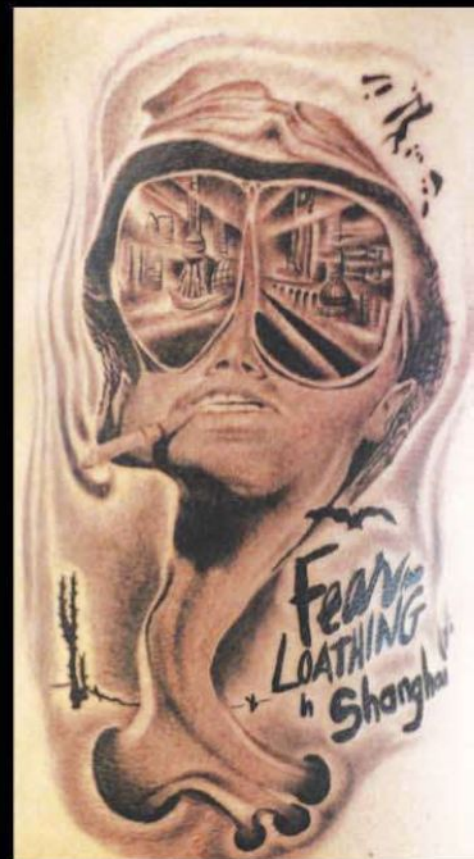
This past Spring, the award-winning Afro-American/Korean artist Phillip Spearman paid a rare visit to Europe attending conventions in both Breda and Amsterdam to show the world once more that Korean art should – and could – sit shoulder to shoulder with the more well known Japanese and Chinese styles. With his ‘home’ normally being Inkworks Tattoo, a private studio in Artesia, California, Spearman frequently treads the boards as a true pioneer as we discovered.

I first met Spearman during the Needle Art Convention in Breda, at the end of May. Baltimore born Spearman, moved to L.A. at the age of three where he grew up and started to draw at an early age. “One of my friends said ‘If you know how to draw, you know how to tattoo,’” he tells me at the first day of the convention. “I said: ‘No way, I don’t even know what a tattoo machine looks like’ so he went out and bought a machine and equipment for me! I tried it and have loved it ever since. Back then, I kept trying to get an apprenticeship anywhere I could. They were hard to get - it was 1995, it’s a lot easier now.”

Spearman started tattooing at the age of 21. He is self taught but enhanced his skills by visiting studios in and around

L.A. “I always went to studios, even if they didn’t give me an opportunity. I always wanted to learn. It wasn’t that I wanted to tattoo for the money, I just wanted to be good at it. I learned from everybody I could and took little bits of information from wherever I could - Jack Rudy, Mario Barth, Horiryu from Japan, Billy Eason, Outer Limits, Mark Mahoney, Shamrock Social Club, just to name a few. They are all great people!”

It didn’t matter to Spearman what he had to tattoo - “For me, it was important that someone was able to wear my art on them. I was intrigued by what I did on them, because it’s forever. Whatever they liked, I just did my best.” Nowadays though, he likes to travel to see what artists around the globe are contributing to the culture. To do





just that, he closed his regular shop in Artesia that he ran for over eight years. "Now I am tattooing out of a private studio in Artesia by appointment only. My clients love it so much more. There are no interruptions, they can relax - it's just me and them. More importantly, I can travel whenever I want to!"

Spearman's Korean genes come from his mother's side. It is partly this that makes him want to widen the concept of Asian tattoos to include Korean art, not just the more commonly acknowledged Japanese and Chinese varieties. He is the first artist to publicly do this and has brought him to work

on a Korean Tattoo Art book that he is hoping to publish early in 2011.

Aside from this, one of his other projects includes compiling a DVD of work inspired by traditional Korean art: "Korean art inspires me - there's a lot of influence from China and Japan. Back in the day, Japan had taken over Korea and there's a lot of that Japanese tradition that got added to Korean culture but there was also a lot that was taken away. If you look on the internet, you won't find any Korean artwork." ☞



## **DID YOU KNOW THAT JAPANESE DRAGONS HAVE THREE CLAWS, KOREAN DRAGONS HAVE FOUR AND THE CHINESE FIVE?**



## **PHILLIP SPEARMAN AND THE THREE-LEGGED PHOENIX**

"Koreans have a lot of similar things as in Japan," he says, "but did you know that Japanese dragons have three claws, Korean dragons have four and Chinese five? These are the little differences that give Korean art its own place within the art world. Korean mythology has its own gods, its own creatures and entities. Like the three-legged phoenix - if you look in the temples where the kings died, you have pictures on the stone walls of a three-legged phoenix that take them to the afterlife. I came back with that nugget of information from one of my trips and drew my own version of it. There are also kois and geishas - the Korean geishas are called kisengs and I draw them to show that kisengs have a very distinct hairstyle that only they wear in this culture. There is also Haete and many other different gods such as the turtle snake that protects the north, the south, the east. Back in those days for protection, they would have a green dragon or a white tiger. I am already tattooing those images."

## TATTOOING IN SOUTH KOREA

Right now tattooing is a kind of taboo in South Korea, there are artists working but it's illegal. "In my book, I also let Koreans know that - whether you love it or hate it - you have to respect it because I am sharing knowledge and information with the rest of the world. When I put it like this, people are happy about it. I have been in South Korea and helped the artists and now they are travelling as well. There's one guy called Yushi who is very good - he started in Korea but is now in L.A. - he does some nice Japanese art work."



It's sad and unfortunate because if you look at the map of Korea, you have China here, Japan there - all these neighbouring countries have a history of tattooing, but there's none in Korea. So I visit the temples and museums in South Korea every 2 or 3 months to do my research. There's no tattoo art but there is a lot of cultural and traditional art. I do this because nobody outside of the

country itself knows about Korean art. I am just collecting as much information as I can to draw on my own style of what I like in Korean art work. I have discovered that there's a lot of interest from Koreans and non-Koreans all over the world. I have been looking for this all my life and now it's here!"

Spearman talks with much enthusiasm about his search for Korean

**I HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THERE'S A LOT OF INTEREST FROM KOREANS AND NON-KOREANS ALL OVER THE WORLD. I HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR THIS ALL MY LIFE AND NOW IT'S HERE!**





art. In L.A. he is in the right place because the city has a big Korean population: "I guess it's the biggest Korean town in the USA because I have waited so long to get better at my craft to do it. I can work in many different styles - I can do it in portrait style, colour or Asian style. All my Asian art I do freehand. So many people see my work now, even non-Koreans love it. See how many non-Japanese people wear Japanese artwork. They're not Japanese but they love the art. So I am at a point now, whether it's Japanese, Chinese or not, people like what I do and they let me put anything I want on them."

Although Spearman sees it as his mission to show the world Korean art, he is not only focused on that. "You know, I don't want to be known for just doing Korean art. If you look at my art, I am very diverse. I do a lot of portraits, Korean artwork, Asian artwork... I always go on tour with my friend Horiryu from Japan. He is a major influence on my tattoo career as far as my Asian art is concerned. I want people to know of the quality of the work that I do and that I pay attention to a lot of details. I want everybody to know that I am a true craftsman, I take my craft very seriously. If you got tattooed by me, no matter what it is, you'll have an excellent tattoo!" ➡

**I WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW OF THE QUALITY OF THE WORK THAT I DO AND THAT I PAY ATTENTION TO A LOT OF DETAILS. I WANT EVERYBODY TO KNOW THAT I AM A TRUE CRAFTSMAN, I TAKE MY CRAFT VERY SERIOUSLY.**







**WITHOUT SACRIFICE, YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO GET THERE. YOU ALSO NEED TO HAVE A VISION ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO TATTOO.**

**DISCIPLINE AND VISION**

"If you have discipline, you learn to be technical. Professionalism is also important, persevere and be serious about what you do. I see a lot of tattoo artists in magazines, saying 'I wanna be like this', but they don't know what it takes to get there. I spend so much of my own money on trying to move forward and sacrifice a lot to get there. You know, without sacrifice, you're never going to get there. You also need to have a vision about what you're going to tattoo. That's

another reason that I like to travel - I get influenced by so many things I see outside the USA - right now I love what I'm seeing in Holland. So everywhere I go, I take a piece away with me."

*Spearman is also the creator of Envy Needles and co-owns TatSoul Spearman, a tattoo supply company, to create medical grade, premium needles known as the TatSoul Spearman Advantage. ★*



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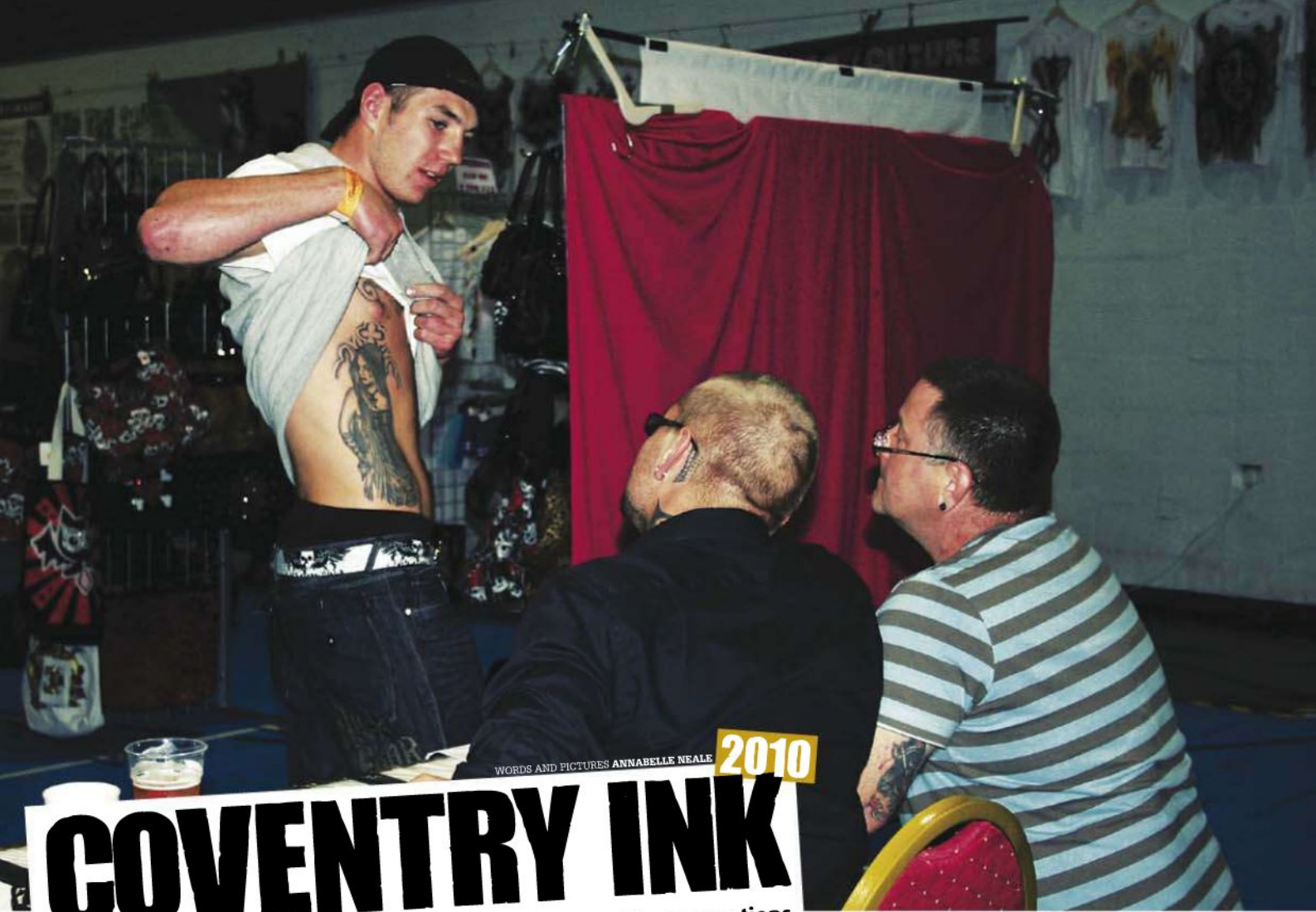
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WORDS AND PICTURES ANNABELLE NEALE **2010**

# COVENTRY INK

Will 2010 be remembered as the year in which the smaller conventions finally take off and start holding their own against the big guns? Judging by the success of this one, that really may be the case:

I quite surprised myself when it dawned on me that, considering it's so close to home and in its third year, I had never been to Coventry Ink before. Being used to the bigger shows that the UK has to offer, looking at the list of artists and studios prior to the show I have to admit, some of them I had never heard of. There were no "Blood Brothers" or "Family Business" banners here.

Luckily then, I was surprisingly blown away with the quality of the artists once I'd had a chance to get my bearings: Chris Smith at Lucky 13 in Northampton was looking hot as where the guys from Touch of Ink down in Portsmouth but I was most impressed by what the artists at No Regrets in Cheltenham were dishing out – a point worth making I feel as they walked away with three awards from the event and they were all more than deserving. I said previously that there were some studios I hadn't heard of – one of these was Mantra from Cheltenham and I need to see more of what they have to offer!

But isn't that what tattoo conventions are all about? Giving artists the chance to showcase the artwork they have to offer? Coventry Ink Convention 2010 did exactly that and honestly, I will be



KEVIN BY TOM SUGAR @ GLOBAL-TATTOOS, WIRRAL



VLAD BY SASS OBUHOV @ NO REGRETS, CHELTENHAM



ADAM FINNEY BY DONNA FINNEY @ INFINITE INK (MALE, SMALL WINNER)



ROB HALLIWELL BY TOMMI @ NO REGRETS, CHELTENHAM (BEST SLEEVE)

coming back next year even if I'm not asked to cover it.

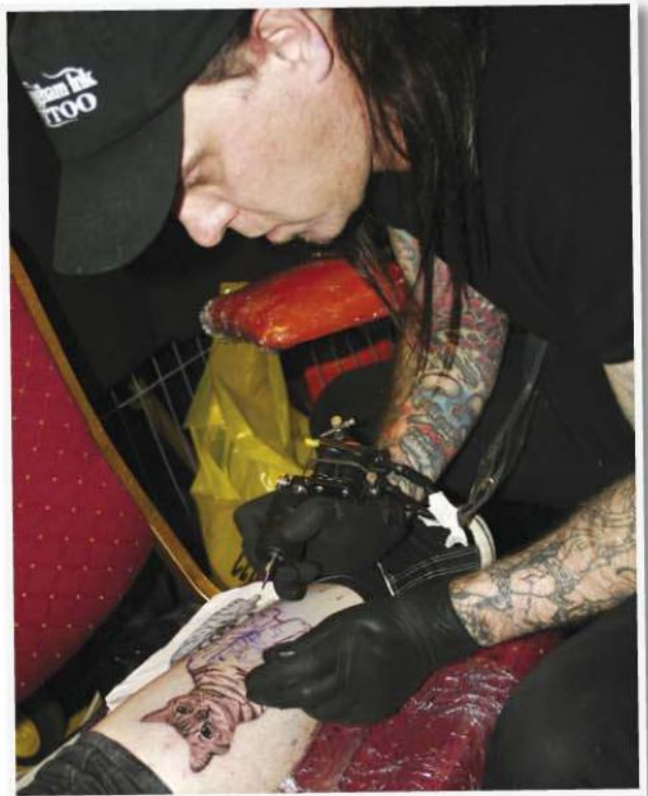
Typically, the venue is quite small in comparison to the other UK conventions that occur throughout the year, but this didn't detract at all. The layout and the atmosphere was perfect and it actually makes a refreshing change to be able

to enjoy the event rather than rushing around an arena in search of the next big thing – only to find that the next big thing is rather busy. There was a good range of traders as well - not something that every smaller convention gets right. Three stalls worth of flash from Jenny Clark was well worth checking in on ➡

Isn't that what tattoo conventions are all about? Giving artists the chance to showcase the artwork they have to offer?



GRACE GOSLING BY AMY KINSELL @ SIGNATURE TATTOOS, LICHFIELD





and Vixen Couture's range of handbags is heartbreaking - it's a girl thing!

As we neared the end of the weekend, judging opened – a little late with guest judge Dan Gold still putting ink in skin - and for once, showing the benefits of the smaller show, there was

hardly any disagreements in the final choices. The event host, Stacey and her team did a great job here with Coventry Ink and with the assistance of some random cupcake tattooing, also raised over £1000 for the Help For Heroes charity over the weekend. ★

**And The Winners Are...**

**Black and Grey Large**  
Lukasz by **Dariusz** @ Czas

**Black and Grey Small**  
James Williams by **Tim** @ Skill Inskin

**Tribal**  
Alex by **Ronnie Godard** @ Blood, Sweat and Pain

**Portrait**  
Grace Gosling by **Amy Kinsell** @ Signature Tattoos, Lichfield

**Female Back Piece**  
Abby Hinton by **Tommi** @ No Regrets, Cheltenham

**Male Back Piece**  
Scott Guilford by **Deric Campbell** @ Ultimate Tattoos

**Female Small**  
Grace Gosling by **Amy Kinsell** @ Signature Tattoos, Lichfield

**Female Large**  
Jen by **Danny Edwards** @ Voodoo Tattoo

**Male Small**  
Adam Finney by **Donna Finney** @ Infinite Ink

**Male Large**  
Ryan by **Tommi** @ No Regrets, Cheltenham

**Best Sleeve**  
Rob Halliwell by **Tommi** @ No Regrets, Cheltenham

**Best In Show**  
Paul Smith by **Mark Bester** @ Marked For Life, Stockton-on-Tees

It actually makes a refreshing change to be able to enjoy the event rather than rushing around an arena in search of the next big thing.



PAUL SMITH BY MARK BESTER @ MARKED FOR LIFE, STOCKTON-ON-TEES (BEST OF SHOW)



FIONA LOVE BY TONY EVANS @ OPULENT INK, WOLVERHAMPTON



CHRIS JARVIS BY AIDEN BAKER @ COVENTRY INK, COVENTRY



JAMES WILLIAMS BY TIM @ SKILL INSKIN (BLACK AND GREY WINNER)



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WORDS & PICTURES AL OVERDRIVE

# KINGS OF THE WILD FRONTIER

**Kings Cross station is probably London's most important rail link to the rest of the UK.** Surrounded by typically grey London streets populated by people in suits rushing around, I was pleasantly surprised to see a dash of colour in the form of a shop front reading 'Kings Cross Tattoo Parlour'.

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Passing it several times on my way to various shoots, each time hearing the buzzing of tattoo machines, I became curious and wanted to know more about the place. When Skin Deep asked me to go down to do a feature, I jumped in with both feet.

**Kings Cross isn't the first place I'd think of when it comes to finding a Tattooist. What inspired you to open up in such a prime location?**

**Snappy** We opened up about two years ago, I had grown tired of working for someone else and started to look for a shop of my own to rent and run my own way. I wanted to avoid a basement studio and started looking for something

spacious, on a high street and in Central London. I knew it wasn't going to be cheap to find somewhere and after a long search a large shop near Kings Cross station was available and felt right. The price was high, so when my friend long time friend Rod offered to be my business partner, I went for it. I was confident that the gamble would pay off - I had years of experience as a tattooist and running a shop, money in the bank, confidence in my plans and the support of my best friends.

**Does Kings Cross Tattoo Parlour have a particular philosophy behind it?**

**Snappy** Our mission is to provide not only awesome tattoos, but good customer service too. We hear from far too many customers how they have been

treated like shit by different studios so we promised ourselves we wouldn't let that happen here. We depend on our clients for our work so we listen to them and treat them with patience and respect. Dealing with the public can be as challenging as it is rewarding at times, but it's part of the job as a tattooist and you can't avoid that. We don't have room for ego in this studio!

Apart from the artists, we also have Thaiana as our full-time shop manager to ensure we can give the best service possible and make people feel welcome. If people want to check out our website or drop by for a chat about a tattoo design they are more than welcome. I hope you like what we offer.

I started tattooing in '89 in my hometown of Porto Alegre (South Brazil), like a lot of kids, my friends and I started out doing punk tattoos on each other. I had been drawing for ages and took them into the local shops to show the old timers. They were impressed but as soon as I started asking about tattooing and learning the art, the



**WE DEPEND ON OUR CLIENTS FOR OUR WORK, SO WE LISTEN TO THEM AND TREAT THEM WITH PATIENCE AND RESPECT. WE DON'T HAVE ROOM FOR EGO IN THIS STUDIO!**

answer was always the same 'Get the fuck out of my shop!'. I used to hate the old timers, but I've come to realise some of them were right...

I finally managed to get an apprenticeship with a lot of persistence, not being allowed to go near the customers, watch the artists and just cleaning the place and doing drawing. I found out the owner was passing off my work as his own, so I left. I learnt some stuff from the shop including how to sterilize and clean everything properly.

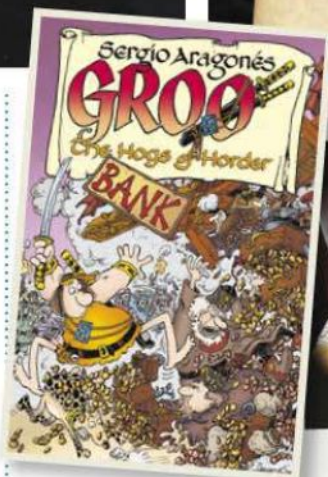
Then in '92 I went to my first tattoo convention - Tattoo Ages Festival - and met artists from other

cities that were in the same boat as me. Young and hungry for inspiration, I was inspired to travel.

After working in a few shops, I opened up in my hometown in '97 and eventually was drawn to London. I tattooed in Angelic Hell for four years and now I am here with the help of my friends. I love working with the guys that I am working with now. Everyday I see amazing tattoos leaving the shop. They inspire me a lot.

I can say that right now I'm in the place that I wished to be years ago - the right place, with the right people and I feel I'm on the way to the place I want

to be in the future. My customers keep coming back and sending other people



## THE LEGEND THAT IS SERGIO ARAGONÉS

Aragonés is a Spanish born artist who started to make his name in 1963 when he began to contribute "silly drawings" to the seminal MAD magazine and apart from one tiny hiccup, has had work published in every single issue since. This was his main output until the late seventies when he created - along with Mark Evanier - the legendary Groo the Wanderer strip and although the comic didn't see publication until the early eighties, it outlasted many of the publishing companies that released it. To give you some idea of just how influential Aragonés is, amongst others he won the Harvey Special Award for Humor in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2001.



**I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INTO COMIC BOOKS. THESE WERE MY HEROES AND ALL I WANTED WAS TO BE ABLE TO DRAW LIKE THEM WHEN I WAS A KID.**

along too, so these are the people that motivate me to keep progressing, I want to keep on impressing them with better and better work!

**Do you still attend many conventions? Do you like to work them or just see what new work is coming out?**

Yes I do sometimes. Conventions are essential but I think there are maybe too many now. Unless I am working I would only want to go once a year, I cant see anything new in tattooing happening over a month, but it can be good to give it a rest, then come back and see what's new.

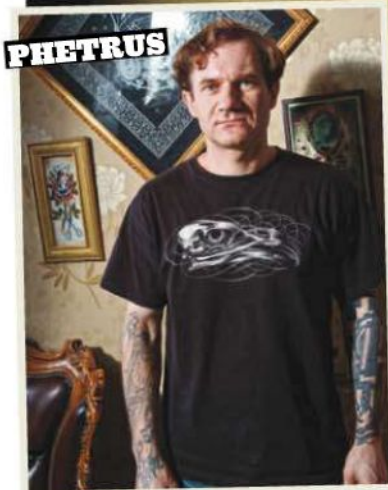
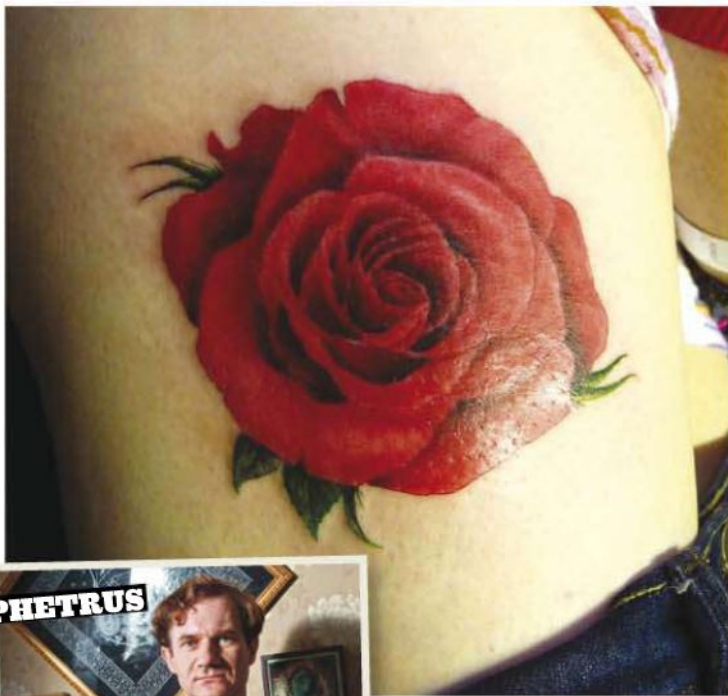
**You talk of how comic books have inspired you as an artist.**

I've always been into comic books - artists like Jack Kirby, John Buscema and Sal Buscema, Moebius, Watson Portela, Albert Uderzo, Sergio Aragones and Robert Crumb. I think these were my heroes and all I wanted was to be able to draw like them when I was a kid.



**SNAPPY GOMEZ**





wall paintings which have stayed with me from the first time I saw the small reproductions of it in some catalogue - many years later, I had a chance to see them in Prado and they didn't disappoint me! Francis Bacon, Anselm Kiefer for their mysticism mixed with ugliness, blood and flesh of the living, then Bill Viola for his perception of time, every little moment and action being so meaningful and finally, the writing of Bruno Shultz. I'm big fan of Agustin Cavalieri's art, the way he pays attention to details and importance he gives to whole composition always amazes me.

I enjoy working with as much freedom as possible and would prefer not to do a tattoo than do something I feel isn't right or forced on me. I have too much respect for the art.

**What would be your dream piece?**

That's easy! Somebody who can afford sessions every two weeks! People these days are busy and sometimes I have a really hard time when someone appears after a year's break with just a few lines on their arm ready to do few more. Then, I have to go through all my sketches and old stuff, finding out what exactly I was about to do in that particular piece or just simply improvise - but I don't like pure improvisation under those circumstances.

**Are you a fan of conventions?**

For now, I'm not attending any besides the London Tattoo Convention. I've tried a few conventions and I realised that it doesn't go with me and how I work. The type of tattooing I do takes time, I

**PEOPLE THESE DAYS ARE BUSY AND SOMETIMES I HAVE A REALLY HARD TIME WHEN SOMEONE APPEARS AFTER A YEAR'S BREAK WITH JUST A FEW LINES ON THEIR ARM READY TO DO FEW MORE.**

**Phetrus, is a close friend of Snappy and is an important part of the feel of the shop. He told us a little about what it was like tattooing in Poland before moving to the UK**

I started out when I shared a house with some friends. It was 1994 and things in Poland were different to now. It was more difficult to get information and I had to learn a lot by myself. I had a lot of fun learning and opened a shop, it was always busy but I felt I needed to see more. So I travelled to the UK and started working in Self Sacrifice in London, it was here that I really made progression and almost felt as if I was learning the process all over again. I met Snappy when he was at Angelic Hell and joined him in business when he opened KXTP.

**Who inspires your work and style?**

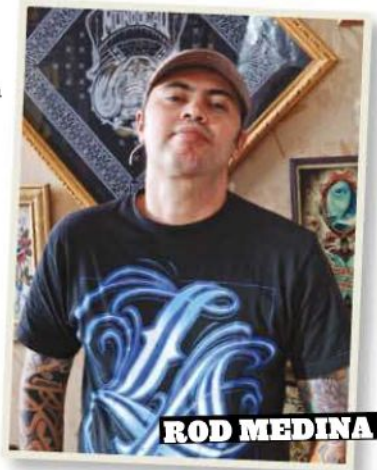
Some artists I have admired from my youth and still admire their art, all of them strongly influenced my perception, always being greater inspiration. Starting from Diego Velazquez with his delicate touch of brush, richness of tones and colours in such a narrow palette, then Francisco de Goya for his nightmarish



**FRANCIS BACON LIFE IN THE RAW**

Dublin born Francis Bacon died in 1992 leaving behind a wealth of art that would surely disturb even the most optimistic of people - Margaret Thatcher (though not particularly known as one of life's big optimists) once described him as "that man who paints those dreadful pictures". Well known for his travels, having spent long periods in Berlin, Paris and London, he is one of the UK's best known modern masters and should not under any circumstances be confused with the other Francis Bacon who died in the 15th century from contracting pneumonia while studying the effects of freezing on the preservation of meat.

Bacon always stated that he never prepared for any of his works by sketching them first but since his death, a number of sketches have indeed surfaced and have not yet been acknowledged as legitimate canon. As is the norm with great artists after they have died, much furor surrounds their work and Bacon is no different - two of his major works - *Popes* and *Heads* - which were thought destroyed appeared in the art world and are considered to be amongst the better of his output.



**ROD MEDINA**

work quite slowly which is exactly the same way that I draw or paint. I enjoy making decisions and trying a few options before every step, so if I do things quickly and spontaneously, I often finish with feelings that there were some parts I could do in a different way. Still, I think tattoo conventions are important to build relations between customers and tattooists in the same way that tattoo magazines do. It gives a good opportunity for meeting people you probably wouldn't meet otherwise and share information.

**Rod Medina:** The first time I came into contact with tattoos was when my grandfather took me on a round the world trip from Rio to Tokyo, stopping in a lot of places in-between on a merchant ship. I was just 14 but I remember seeing some sailors with amazing tattoos. I started tattooing when I was 18 in Rio de Janeiro, I was used to seeing a lot of tattoos on the beach and my friends had started to ask me to draw tattoos for them, so after a while I started doing them myself.

When I started there was nowhere I could apprentice, so from Rio then returned to London in 2001. After working a few different studios I was invited to join Snappy at KXTP and feel quite settled here.

I am free here to be honest with my customers; I don't give them false hopes about what can or cannot be tattooed and feel totally comfortable in sending them to a different artist if I feel they are better suited.

**Oliver Macintosh echoes these sentiments..**

I feel here that I am free to work as hard as I can and concentrate on custom tattoos, my preferred style is traditional tattoos. I like it most when customers come in with one or two ideas and allow me to guide them towards a great design. I think my favourite things to

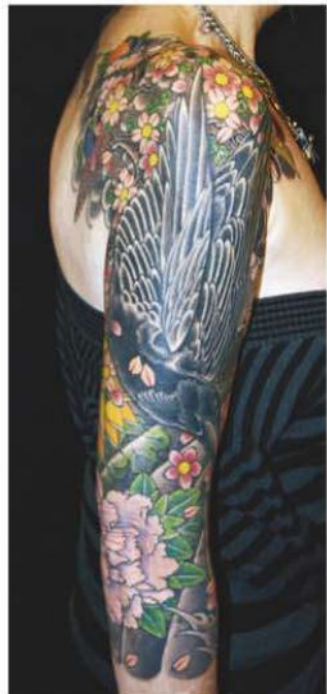


**OLIVER MACINTOSH**

**I DON'T GIVE THEM FALSE HOPES ABOUT WHAT CAN OR CANNOT BE TATTOOED AND FEEL TOTALLY COMFORTABLE IN SENDING THEM TO A DIFFERENT ARTIST IF I FEEL THEY ARE BETTER SUITED.**

tattoo at the moment are Snakes, Eagles and Wolves.

These guys like to let their work speak for itself, so if you want to see more of their work, either drop by and flick through their portfolios in their wonderfully decorated studio, or check them out at [www.kingscrosstattoo parlour.co.uk](http://www.kingscrosstattoo parlour.co.uk) ★



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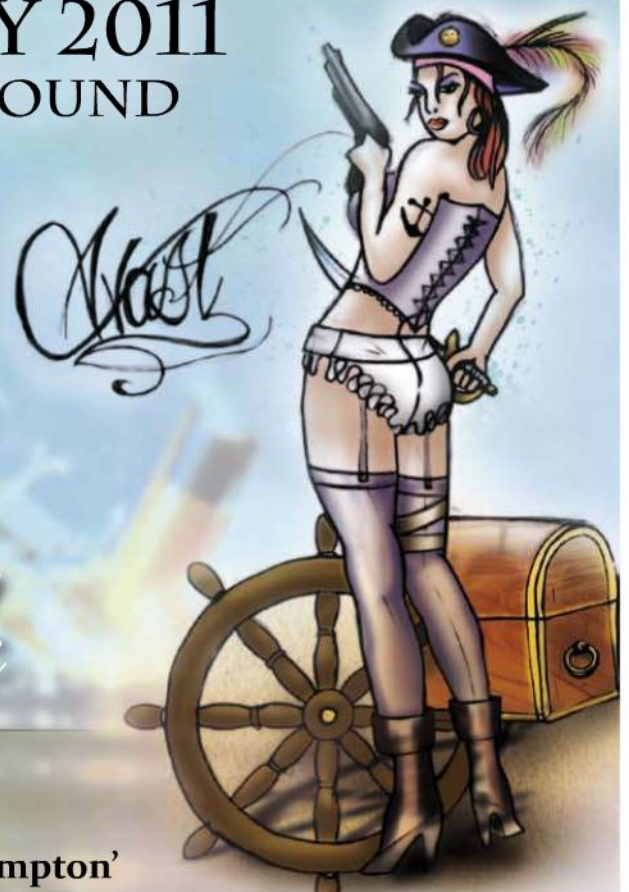
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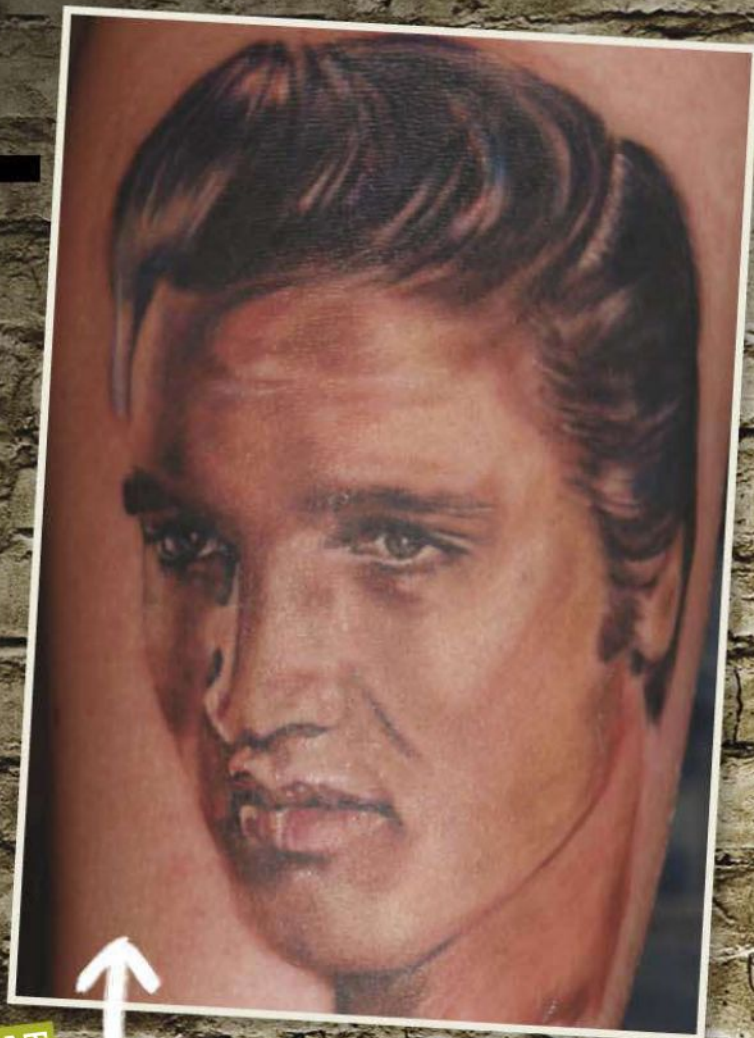
# THE SECRET OF...

This issue, we thought it would be neat to ask some of the artists who had submitted work for the mag to give their expert opinion on how to get the best out of them when you want that most difficult of arts:

*A Great Portrait*

**JON  
ACE ART,  
ROTHERHAM**

When an individual is wanting a portrait tattoo, there are a lot of things to consider: the main thing is there are only a handful of artists out there that can produce high quality portraits, so choose wisely! Do some research on the quality of that art they have produced. A professional photograph usually helps but every artist can do certain things to enhance photos based on experience and experience counts for everything in the tattoo industry! It takes a long time to build up the confidence it takes to do certain aspects of tattooing, especially using the correct techniques to get different effects with smooth shading that a portrait requires.



**KAT  
HELLO SAILOR  
BLACKPOOL, UK**

Artist, Kat says 'I think the best start to doing portrait is a great picture and a strong stencil. If in doubt keep placing the stencil until you are completely happy. It also helps to study the image for a few days too.'



**DANNY STONER**  
**POISON INK**  
**BASINGSTOKE**

For a customer to get the best portrait I ask them to bring a number of photos and we can pick the one which will transfer to the skin well, looking for picture clarity, good contrast and a good size. If the portrait is a film character/star I recommend magazines/websites or if of a current family member suggest taking a few photos with some different light sources/angles to capture the best possible image. As an artist, I believe the most important factors of a good portrait are, positioning, attention to detail and contrast, using tones ranging from black all the way to soft greys and highlights.

Always research artists web-sites and their work. Most artists will specialize in their own style, for example, portraits, old school, Japanese, etc. Every studio that specializes in portraiture will have a portfolio collection of portraits for you to check out prior to deciding on your tattoo. Decide on colour or black and grey. Some artists do work with both mediums but not all, so decide which style that you would prefer first. Not every photograph is suited for a portrait tattoo. The image must be clear and have depth, with loads of sharp tones. A professional portrait photograph works best. Don't use a passport photo or a picture of someone standing off in the distance. I personally like it when an image has more in it, like a hand on the face, a ribbon in the hair or a hat. It adds more character to the final piece. Remember you only get one shot at this and the finished piece should be a perfect mirror image of the picture that you give to the artist that you decide on. If you have to travel to get the artist that you prefer, then travel. Remember, it has to be perfect so go that extra mile.

**JOE MYLER**  
**JMDs BODY ART**  
**WATERFORD CITY,**  
**IRELAND**





# THE SECRET OF...

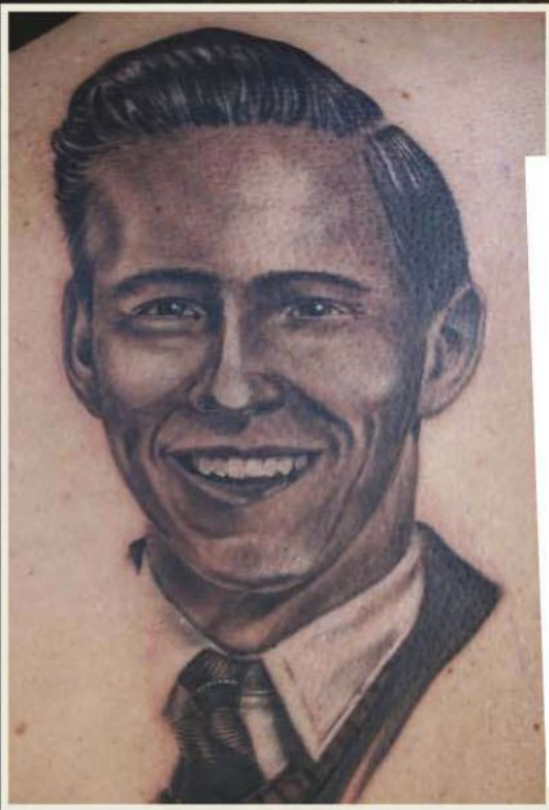
## A Great Portrait

"It's essential to look at what other artists are doing and study their work. A good stencil is a must, always respect your references but feel free to express your ideas to complement the portrait. Do not omit small details, it'll make the whole of difference to your work and be very careful with the highlights. Do what you see unless you make it surrealistic. There are no shortcuts for a great portrait, so take as long as you have to."

**ROLY VIRUEZ  
TATTOO TECHNIQUE,  
CLARKSVILLE, TN**



**DAN STEWART  
LUCKY RABBIT  
MUNCIE, IN**



Look at portfolios, pick up the latest magazines or do the research online and ask around. There are great resources available to give you an idea of what a great portrait looks like. There are many artists capable of doing a great portrait so don't settle for anything short of amazing. If you're still unconvinced that you've found the right artist, there are many conventions around the world (and we love to travel!). Wait for the very best, they are sure to attend a convention near you. As an artist, I've learnt to slow down and pay close attention to what happens in the detail. Take the time to look for depth and the true values in the piece and the highlights that are there. If you're not busy doing portraits, study the great portrait artists of today and study photography. Understanding what makes a good photograph will help you understand what makes a good portrait.

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**NORTHAMPTON**, Royal & Bergate Wed 23 March  
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**WARNING:** The Circus of Horrors contains some nudity & language of an adult nature, it is not suitable for children, sissies or chavs. This show contains nuts!

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A Great Portrait

KEVIN PAUL  
SEVENTH DAY TATTOO,  
DERBY

SKIN DEEP SAYS...  
"Great depth of field  
Bro! Nice work."



PJ  
SLAWIT INK,  
HUDDERSFIELD  
WEST YORKS



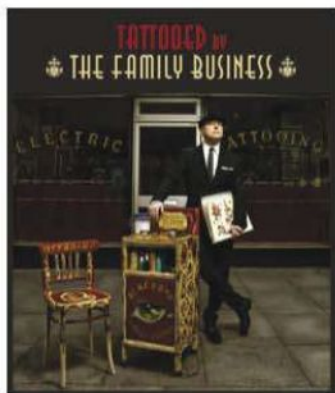
When doing a portrait I always look for a good contrast of colours and a good black undertone. It's best if the client can bring as many photos of the portrait as they can because not all photos make good tattoos. I still like to take my own photos when at all possible so I can get the light in the right spots to make the tattoo pop out.

Before sitting in that chair, research your tattoo artist. Talk to them and make sure you're confident with them and their skills. Research the styles they do best and make sure that coincides with what you want. These pieces have to reflect the soul, so a lot of time and effort has to be spent with the small amounts of detail, such as the eyes and their reflections - shading, structure... take your time! There's not point rushing something this personal. You're only as good as the last piece you did!

# REVIEWS

If it's a feast for the eyes and tattoo-related, you'll find it here under the microscopic glare of the review page.

Be they Books, DVDs or VHS are welcome at Skin Deep where judgement shall be passed upon them...at the very least, we'll tell you if they're any good or not.



## TATTOOED BY THE FAMILY BUSINESS

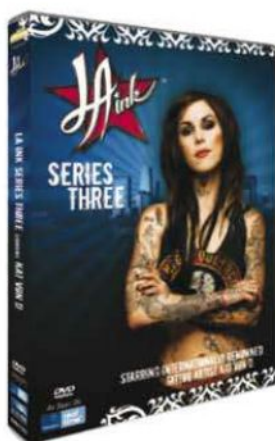
Available now ★★★★★  
Published by: Pavilion books  
Price: £30

A work of art in its own right, this beautifully produced book transports you into the depths of Mo Coppoletta's renowned London studio, The Family Business. Packed to the roof with amazing photographic portraits by Fredi Marciani, 'Tattooed...' is also crammed with top quality reportage by Chris Terry and – of course – inspirational tattoos!

"If you want to succeed in tattooing, you need to breathe, eat, drink and smell tattooing." Mo Coppoletta.

Both a source for designs and a peek behind the scenes at The Family Business, this book is a true reflection of the studio's tagline, "tasteful tattooing for first timers, old timers and serious collectors." With an international reputation for high standards of safety and creativity, combined with talented artists, Coppoletta's studio is understandably a huge success. Clients range from accountants to nurses and celebrities – all are treated the same and made to wait their turn.

Just like the artists' creations, this book is immaculately compiled and is more than deserving of a space on any enthusiast's bookshelf.

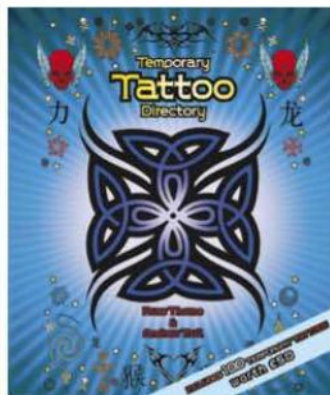


## LA INK – SEASON 3

Released: 18 October ★★★★★  
Revelation Films  
Price: £34.99

Everybody loves Kat - don't they? As a rule of thumb, the public love her even if artists the world over seem indifferent at best. Personally, I think she's a fantastic public face for tattoo art. Let's face it, with the amount of press and publicity the art has been getting these last few years, it was going to happen anyway. Putting aside Kat as a personality, does this series show what it's like in a real studio? No, but that was never the point - in terms of being enjoyable TV about a tattoo studio in L.A., it's priceless – if it wasn't, we wouldn't be on our third series with a fourth looming.

Series three picks up the threads of two (natch) and we find Kat looking for artists to replace her top artists that have since moved on. In tried and tested 'reality TV' style, there are everyday trials to overcome and the usual incompetent liggers for comedy value, but if you can get past this and take it for what it is, you'll find a great artist hard at work trying to make a name for herself in the most extreme of circumstances. More importantly, you'll find a great TV show at the peak of its production powers – and for my money, I'd much rather be sitting in front of Kat than most other shows right now.



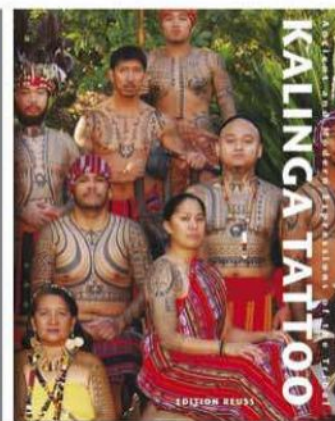
## TEMPORARY TATTOO DIRECTORY/ TEMPORARY TATTOOTREASURY

Available now ★★★★★  
Apple Books  
Price: £12.99 each

Unless you're particularly keen on the use of temporary tattoos – marketed to us here by saying they're great for figuring out whether or not you really want a piece of art in that particular place – this twin-set appears to be little more than cashing in on Christmas.

That said, both have some relative merits – the author teams working on these books certainly know what they're talking about, but some of the better content is overshadowed by the presentation which is aimed squarely at the teen market – one would assume the pink cover for girls and blue for boys. I originally felt bad about this gut reaction but when my two girls (ages 13 and 9) discovered them in my office, I was redeemed as I caught them hunting for scissors to get the most out of this pre-Christmas bonanza.

There is some good advice about committing to future permanent art but I can't help feeling it plays a very small second fiddle to what the books set out to achieve.



## KALINGA TATTOO

Kalinga Tattoo ★★★★★  
Published by: Edition Reuss  
Price: 98 Euros/424 pages

Tattoo art books don't come any better than this – they never have and it's hard to see how they ever will. The production values of this company are true to their German roots for quality and they're no slouches in the quantity department either.

With that said, it should come as no surprise that Kalinga Tattoo is (another) master-stroke from Edition Reuss and credit must be given to author Lars Krutak for having the vision to put something of this magnitude together authoritatively and compelling at the same time. He begins his forward with a tale of how he was first met by Whang-Od who at the time was focussing on a pig's liver to see what omen's he may have brought to the village.

From here on, we should know that we're in the presence of something special as page after page of captivating imagery leaps off the page. Very little commentary is needed to tell more of the story than the pictures already do, but when it does appear, it's for a very good reason.

A simply stunning book on both Kalinga and the nature of human beings and their cultures. Totally essential.

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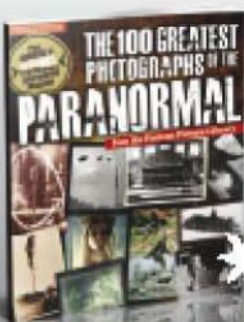
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IN AT THE DEEP END

BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO

**"This is very exciting for a tattoo world hungry for an alternative to tattoo problems that are baffling and can only be answered with the muddy, pancaked mess of cover-ups."** Woody



It's the end of the issue again. One of the hot topics we've been chewing over in the office is the ever increasing presence of lasers being used for removal. With useful information being pretty scarce on the subject, we went cap in hand to the walking encyclopaedia that is Woody:

Woody's Tattoo Studio  
28 High Street, High Wycombe, HP11 2AG  
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woodystattoostudio.com

If I said that poor quality tattoos could easily be removed to allow for quality tattoo artwork to be put in their place a lot of people wouldn't believe me. In the past lasers for tattoo removal promised a lot but was followed by horror stories of rip off prices and deep ugly scarring. Lasers did not have a very auspicious start in the tattoo world.

In fact the technology has been there for a great many years for proper tattoo removal which could really do-what-it-says-on-the-tin. But the technology was expensive and the operators of lasers were apathetic as to the deeper motivations of their clientele. In effect, the wrong lasers were used by the wrong people for the wrong reasons.

Let me be very clear here; lasers can reduce and even remove unwanted tattoos over a period of time (months), without scarring and at a reasonable cost when used by the right people who know what they are doing. It doesn't feel very nice but if you are prepared to put up with it, it is quick and a means to an end. I have many customers who will attest to its worth in the long run. A quality laser will far out-do any other method of tattoo removal and can create clear skin ready for a beautiful piece. A medical grade laser will target a tattoo in a way that it doesn't need to cut the skin, doesn't attack the various elements that make up the skin and doesn't generate heat. It basically only disrupts the tattoo, breaking it down so that the body can wash the debris out as it does with any other dirt. This is very exciting for a tattoo world hungry for an alternative to tattoo problems that are baffling and can only be answered with the muddy, pancaked mess of cover-ups.

Your greatest difficulty, however, if you want to have lasering, is the lack of information. There are so many pitfalls awaiting the uninformed that

your chances of stumbling across a knowledgeable operator, sympathetic to your goals and using the right laser are slim. So what should you look for?

Well first off you need to be aware that from the 1st of October the Care Quality Commission has ceased to be the regulating body for tattoo lasers. Since 1984 they strictly enforced the rules that basically said that only serious, competent people with the correct training and safety in place could operate lasers. The deregulation means that anybody can buy or use tattoo lasers with no regard to a lack of training, history, competence or care. CQC deregulation of tattoo removal lasers was brought about because they are now classed as non-medical and therefore attract VAT to finance a government strapped for cash. So we have gone from strict regulation to no regulation. It is that bizarre. The informed laser industry in general thinks that the government has made a huge error because lasers are not toys and should be seen as potentially highly dangerous. The Local Authorities and Environmental Health are not likely to be taking up a regulatory role any time soon as they don't have a clue. Worse still, the way that the Health and Safety legislation is worded the only people not covered are the very clientele most at risk. If you want lasering your best bet for safe laser use is to check that the user is insured as this is a form of regulation. Insurance companies have a lot to lose if they insure inept operators.

Secondly, be aware that lasers can be set up in tattoo studios, hair dressers, chip shops, bedsits, mobile vans, etc, without a Laser Protection



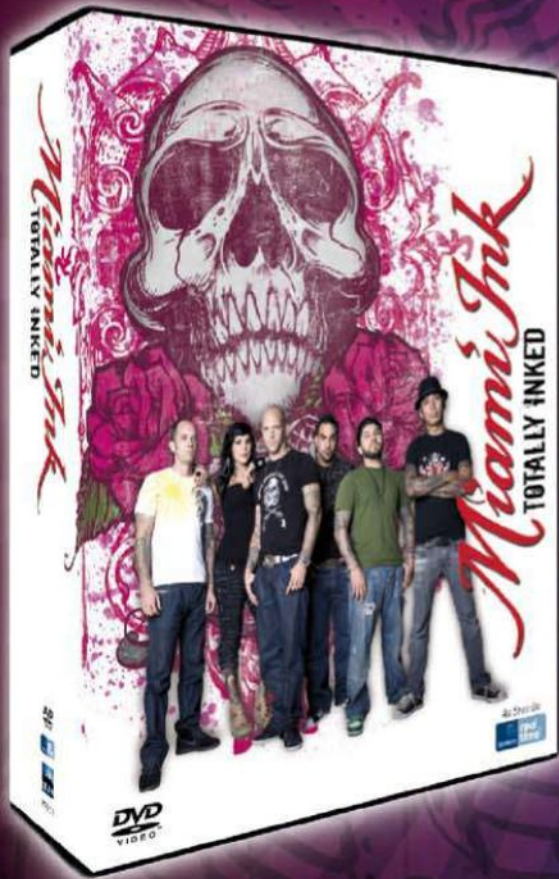
Advisor needing to be present to check that the premises are safe for a laser. This was previously necessary for CQC registration. Put simply, a tattoo laser will generate a very powerful beam which will burn or blind you at enormous distance. The light is invisible, very fast, and just as dangerous when bouncing off a watch strap as it is when looking directly down the muzzle of the hand piece. Proper eye ware is necessary and expensive. Looking away or putting a hand over your eyes won't do. If you are in a lasering environment and you see chrome, mirrors, windows or generally shiny surfaces then you probably shouldn't be there.

Thirdly, be aware that there are differences in laser types. Hair removal IPL's cannot be used for tattoo removal. Cheap imported passive tattoo lasers (small and generally referred to as bench top) lack power, depth and adjustability. They create heat (called the photo-thermal effect) which leads to scarring and disappointment. They are not classed as medical grade lasers. This is in contrast to the medical grade tattoo lasers which deliver a controlled pulse (photo-mechanical). An "active" Q-Switched Nd:YAG is seen as the gold standard tattoo removal laser. Note the word "active". They are not cheap.

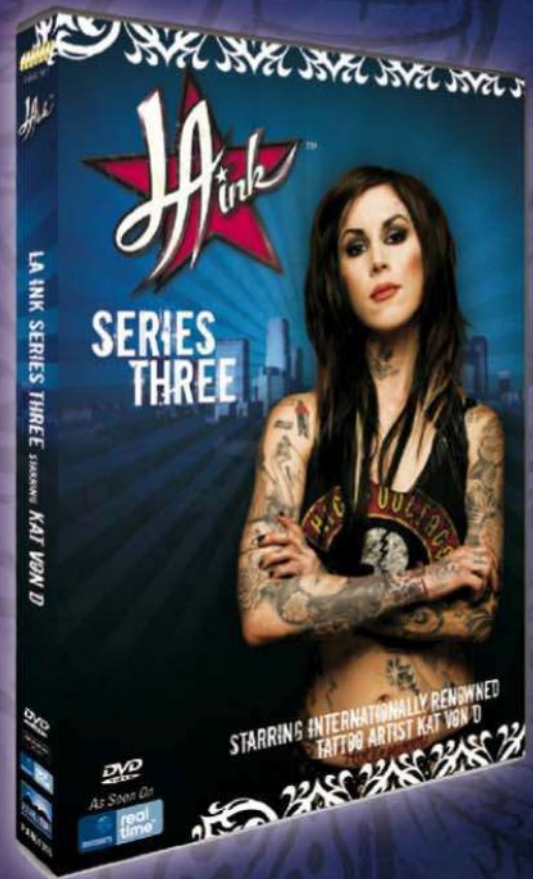
If you want to ask questions then feel free to phone my studio. If you want to get into the fledgling laser business you can ask about the laser workshops that I speak at. Since Einstein came up with the idea for the laser in 1916, you can take it that it is potentially a very good idea when used intelligently. ★

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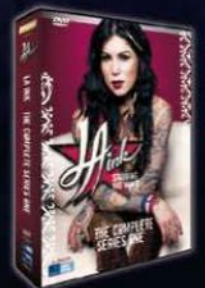
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