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## LIVING THE DREAM

Despite being born and raised in a place that had one standing stone, a river, two pubs and 150 billion blades of grass, once upon a time I had an 'American Dream' that included such classics as a New York apartment, two Great Danes (probably called Sapphire and Steel), and an unlimited sum of cash – no doubt to keep the previous two dreams in that list fed and watered. As time moved forward, I came to realise that New York was just another far away town that would likely be replaced by another town eventually, and no matter how hard you try, you can't out-run yourself or your own demons. Every man should know what he's running from and what he's running to.

The great thing about the American Dream is that it sounds right. Having a 'British Dream' (or a 'Welsh Dream' if we're being picky), doesn't sound so good and nobody has a clue what such a thing would be all about. There's nothing in that statement that you can attach to it that's worth a damn. So, for the sake of argument, let's use the term 'American Dream' and use it universally, otherwise

we'll be here forever trying to figure out if wishing there were less cars on the M1 really is a quality dream worthy of spending your time on.

The basic idea of the 'Dream' is to figure out what you love to do and then figure out how to get paid for doing it. Simple. I guess that underneath that simplicity is the somewhat harder task of managing the financial side of things. Contrary to popular

THE BASIC IDEA OF THE 'DREAM' IS TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU LOVE TO DO AND THEN FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET PAID FOR DOING IT. SIMPLE...

opinion, the idea of being paid well is not to be rich, but to grant yourself freedom to do more of what you want to do. The more freedom you have the more money you'll gather simply as a byproduct of being true to yourself.

And the great part of the American Dream is that when you get it right, it doesn't feel like work. You don't feel the need to take holidays, because why would you need a holiday from doing the thing you love most? Sounds incredibly all-time awesome on paper doesn't it? But there's a hole in the road. At some point during this journey, you'll be faced with the fact that what

you love has become work. You'll sit back in your chair one day and think to yourself, 'What the hell happened? All I wanted to do was draw/ write'\* (\*insert lifestyle drug of choice here to to suit) – if you're smart, you redefine whatever it was you thought you had to say and start the process all over again.

I had a good stab at my American Dream once... I missed Manhattan by a few

hundred miles and found myself in Syracuse in the middle of one of the worst winters in recorded history with about \$40 to my name. It was great fun and a life-changer, but not quite what I had in mind, which brings me not very directly to the point.

As I write this, Tattoo Jam is two days in the can. I thought I would take the train this year instead of driving. There are pros and cons of each; the big attraction of the train being that it saves a whole lot of time, but this is only true if you are paying attention and get on the correct train when it's time to go home.

That's right. Ear-buds firmly

in place and sunglasses on as a precautionary measure, I jumped on a train that was at the right platform at the right time only to find some miles later that this was the one before mine that was late turning up. With a little detour that didn't take me too far off course, I got myself headed back in the right direction but it would take a true non-attention-paying fool to do it twice, right? Switching trains at London, I found myself on one of those trains that splits up half-way along the route and sure as eggs are eggs, there I was on the wrong one. This time, miles off course.

So what did we learn this week? Following your dreams is a piece of cake so long as you're paying attention when the train shows up...

*Sen*



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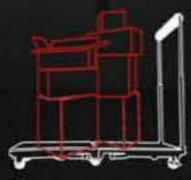
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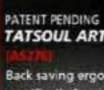
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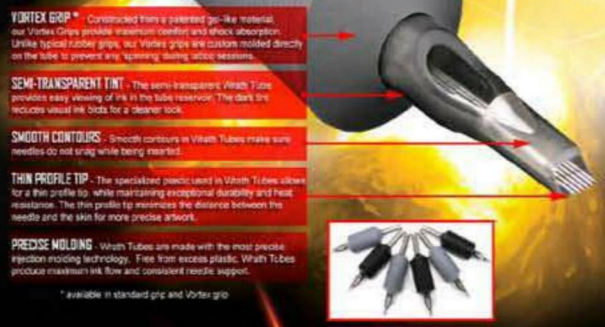


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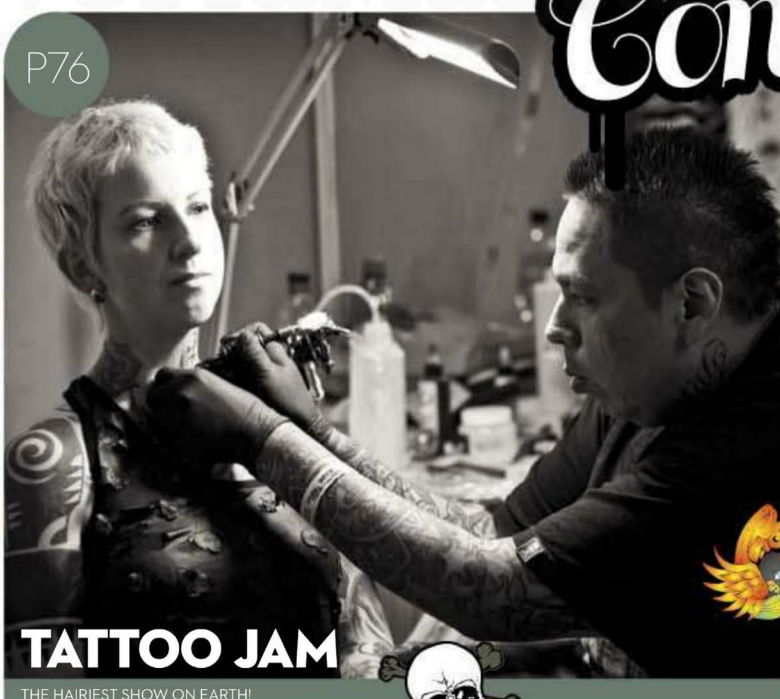
## ARTIST PROFILES

### 36 SEAN HERMAN (PART TWO)

Sean Herman's journey towards becoming a tattooer has featured skateboarding, punk rock, shuttling around the American South doing battle with gods in various guises, a stab at being a priest and an actual stab at him courtesy of a street hood in Birmingham, Alabama. Let's continue...

### 60 GENE COFFEY

There are tattoo artists you love, those you get along with, those you



## TATTOO JAM

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## RAIN CITY

A NEW WAY OF DOING THINGS.

respect, and those who you would let loose on you with whatever was at hand. Allow us to introduce the man who ticks all four of those boxes.

### 82 RAIN CITY COLLECTIVE

Once upon a time, not so long ago, in a dark and damp city where not much seems to grow, five friends got together, to drink beer

and dream of a world where things were different, where they would work together, eat together, and defeat dragons together... or at least draw dragons together.

### 90 ADAM HAYS

Adam Hays' thing is Star Wars. To the extent that he's done T-shirt designs for Lucasfilm and ended up in a coffee table book featuring Star Wars tattoos. But there are many layers to this former Texan saddle maker.

## CELEBRITY SKIN

32 **MASTODON**  
12 years, five albums, two Grammy Award nominations, dubbed "the greatest metal band of their generation" by Rolling Stone, and the "most ambitious, most fearless, most fun heavy metal band" by BBC. Tattooed? Check.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

22 **COVER GIRL**  
Being as we could, we did. That's right, this month's cover model, Lauren, gets a good verbal grilling from the boss.

26 **HORIKAZU REVIEW**  
We've said it before, but it bears repeating – when a publishing company knows what they are doing, you can find yourself in possession of some of the finest books on the planet...

76 **TATTOO JAM**  
It's the Big Show... enough said.



PHOTOGRAPHY: SCOTT COLE MODEL: LAUREN B MAKEUP: AMY JADE HILL JEWELLERY: BETE NOIRE

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# Sleeve Notes

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## IRONFIST

### CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAY

Oh yeah – popular as ever, those golden nuggets at IronFist have given us some new bumper swag to give away in time for Christmas. That's right, if you're way too cheapskate and lazy to think about getting your brother or boss something they might actually like, why not enter and see if you can simply blag yourself some free stuff instead! The designs you see here are a small selection of what we have on offer – same rules as always: send a blank email to [editor@skindeep.co.uk](mailto:editor@skindeep.co.uk) with the subject line 'IRONFIST' followed by your required size – so for example, IRONFIST LARGE for porkers or IRONFIST SMALL for waifs and strays, and if you're in between, I'm guessing that would be an IRONFIST MEDIUM. We'll do our best to fix you up good 'n' proper. Closing date on this one is December 1.

## CALLING ALL TATTOOISTS

Just a little wake up call to remind you that if you haven't seen Tattoo Master recently, you're missing a treat. We can hardly call him the new editor anymore, but Woody (that's him with Mr Smith on page 3) has been doing some great things over there. Each issue he brings you tales from the crypt, interviewing old school artists and talking about how things used to be... and it's shocking! Couple that with some handy articles on machines, how to push your business to run smoother and whatever else he finds lying in the street, and you've got yourself a very cool industry mag. Go check it out at [tattoomaster.com](http://tattoomaster.com).



## SHORT SLEEVES



## MONKI SEE...

Monki Do is proud to announce the opening of their second studio, Monki 2. Located in the courtyard opposite the Market Place in Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 1FZ, Monki 2 is a walk-in studio that runs on a no appointment basis – first come, first served. Opening hours are 11am-6pm Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, and 10am-5pm Thursday. [www.monkido.com](http://www.monkido.com) or [www.facebook.com/monki-do-tattoo-studio](https://www.facebook.com/monki-do-tattoo-studio).



## YOUNG GUNS

Flaming Gun Tattoo Studio have two new artists on board. Doug Fawke apprenticed under Mandie Barber for several years, and then progressed on to other studios around the midlands, recently relocating down south after nine years of tattooing, to join the Flaming Gun team. Jay J loves colour work, old school traditional and new skool lowbrow art, and has recently started hand poking and is really enjoying this very spiritual form of tattooing, but as an artist who cut his teeth in a traditional walk-in studio he prides himself on his versatility



## SHORT SLEEVES

## CUSTOM CARNAGE

With an anticipated 10,000 visitors over the weekend, Custom Carnage takes place next year at Stoneleigh Park on 13-14 July, 2013. Next year, it's time to put the money on the table with the Battle of The Sexes Tattoo Expo, a fun competition for some serious cash! For the 11 tattoo categories there is a £100 cash prize and trophy each. Whichever sex (male or female) tattooed the majority of the winning line-up will be awarded the coveted Kev Shercliff trophy, to be returned annually. So who's best? Boys or Girls? Now to the big bucks – a whopping £1,000 will be awarded to the best female and male tattoo artists at the convention, for consistency, technical ability and artistic creativity.

There's a whole heap more going down there too – check out the site for more details and we'll get into the guts of the thing a little closer to the time:

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

## KING OF HEARTS

Being as London Bridge still hasn't fallen down (and we're not sure that it ever will – and nobody is dumb enough to buy it twice surely), if you can find your way there, you can also find your way to King of Hearts as they're just one stop from it in the heart of New Cross Gate. They're fully licensed for tattooing, piercing, Shiatsu, and also sport an elegant boutique and art space. When you get there, you'll find eRic the Viking, David Bremer and Sean Ebbs awaiting your every need...

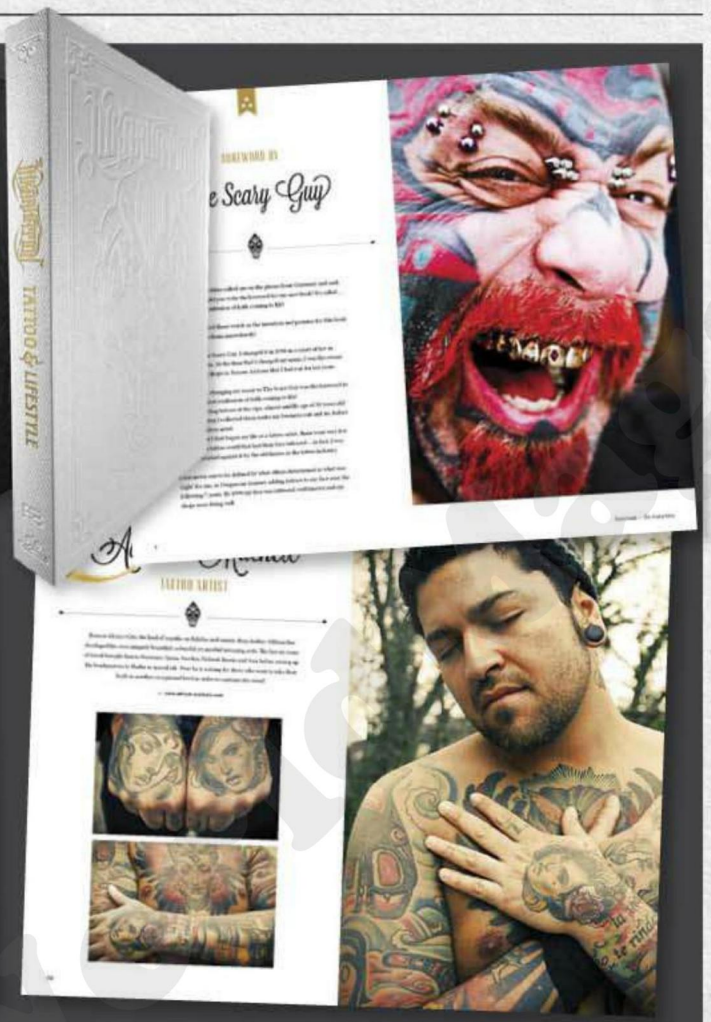


## REDS TATTOO

Based in a beautiful Grade 2 Listed building in the Victorian Corn Exchange in Leeds city centre, at REDS TATTOO you'll find Luke Naylor specialising in portrait and realism, and Lucy O'Connell who's doing her own take on traditional. Luke has been tattooing close on four years; he completed his two year apprenticeship then opened his own shop, Origins, in Bradford. After finishing a BA (hons) in creative practices at Sheffield University, Lucy has also quickly built up a loyal following for her unusual traditional style tattooing. There are also two full-time piercers, Dani and Ruth. If passing by, you know what to do...

## INKARNATION

Head's up, Flaming Youth! Our buddy, Dirk Behlau (who seems to spend more time on the road than a Mack Truck), releases the photography collection called **INKARNATION this month**. If you've been waiting for your chance to pre-order, that opportunity is now here – and with a limited run on the white variant of just 100 copies, you'd best get your skates on for the November 25 release date. You can do that right here: [inkarnaton.zeixs.com/PRE-ORDER-NOW-1](http://inkarnaton.zeixs.com/PRE-ORDER-NOW-1). We'll be looking closer at this in a future issue. Fact!







## PSST... WANNA BUY A BIKE?

Not our usual fare, but we took one look at these bikes and exclaimed, "Hellfire... they look like Choppers for grown-ups!"

On closer inspection, these bikes from Nirve look nothing like Choppers... they're even better. This range of bikes surely has to have been designed and built by people that actually ride and haven't just come out of university with a degree in concept design. To cut to the chase, without going too far over the top about them, we fell in love. All of us.

... and then, all our Christmas's came at once as we got a chance to jump on the Cannibal, with its body art designed by none other than Corey Miller. Which of course, gave us carte blanche to go on about them here. It's a beauty that's for sure. Also allowed home with us for a spin was the Ladies Classic – and she proved to be just as cool too. This is one brand you're going to hear a lot about in the future.

These bikes have no small amount of design put into them. They look fantastic – all of them, regardless of male vs female – and the build, without taking your budget into the upper echelons of bicycle obsession, is second to none. The saddles are particularly welcome as anybody who has jumped on a bike from a high street outlet recently will tell you, those things can cut you up like mustard.

With a five-mile road trip under the belts, the verdict came back that the saddles are indeed as good as they look. Not only that, but the bikes handle just like choppers, the huge tyres set up a great ride before you've even gone anywhere and all those things that should be smooth as silk out of the box – brakes, gears, etc. – really are.

So, with the gushing complete,

whether you're looking for a bike for your kids or yourself for Christmas – designed by Corey Miller or not, these machines from Nirve are simply incredible. I tell you

something; get yourself one of these and you'll really feel like you've bought a bike. Now I just need to figure out how to not give this one back...

If you're interested – and damn it you should be – you can either hit the Nirve facebook page [facebook.com/NirveUK](https://www.facebook.com/NirveUK) which will direct you to a retailer close to home, or you can check them out and buy directly online at [bigbikes.co](http://bigbikes.co).



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# CELEBRITY ART MATCH

The endpoint 'canvas' couldn't be more different – walls versus human skin. However, there is such common ground in the mutual influences, culture and artistic styles of tattooing and graffiti, that the boundaries between the two art forms blur

It was this heavy-duty and exciting cross-pollination that persuaded Louis Molloy to team up with graffiti artist, Replete, for a project bringing together the best of their two worlds.

The collaboration marks the launch of Forever Ink which was developed by Louis in conjunction with Skincare specialists, Forest Laboratories, and is now on sale through independent pharmacies and selected tattoo studios or online at [boots.com](http://boots.com).

"At heart, both tattoo and graffiti work are street art of the most creative

kind, but often still considered low-brow art. There are so many tie-ins that it seemed a natural collaboration to bring out the best about the art of each," said Louis.

The joint venture showcases the artistic talents of both cultures as they worked together on a giant street-art

work in Manchester's Market Street in September. This significant work will be donated to the world's largest tattoo museum in Amsterdam in the new year. Louis will also curate a pop-up exhibition

TATTOO ART WAS AN OUTLET. I WAS CREATIVE AND IT ALLOWED ME TO COPY AND DRAW STUFF I WAS. IT WAS A WAY TO DO ARTWORK THAT YOUR MATES WOULD STILL THINK WAS COOL. LOUIS MOLLOY



of tattoo and graffiti-inspired artwork at Blackall Gallery in London, Shoreditch, November 9-10.

Replete is one of a new-breed of up-and-coming graffiti artists making a name for themselves internationally. He started his career in the computer games industry as an artist and animator, then moved into the music industry.

He has been experimenting with graffiti in all its forms for more than 15 years, including aerosol, hand painted, sculpted, and animated. He's one of the artists featured in the best sites category, amongst the likes of Banksy, Daim and Seak on [www.artcrimes.org](http://www.artcrimes.org), the official and most respected graffiti site in the world.

"There really is no clear division between the two art forms," says Replete. "Graffiti artists look to tattoo art for inspiration and vice-versa – both buy books and magazines about the other when searching for new ideas. They share similar creative methods and design ideas move between them. Both recycle popular culture influences, such as hip hop, and both use lots of graphology.

"It's a constant round of absorbing ideas, such as those from Mexican art, and recycling them. There is no



# Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

## DOMESTIC SHOWS

**November 17-18**

### EAST COAST TATTOO EXPO

Highfields Holiday Park, Clacton, Essex  
redsonya6@mac.com  
www.eastcoastexpo.co.uk

**December 16**

### JURASSIC COAST TATTOO CONVENTION

Lighthouse, Poole, Dorset  
www.jurassiccoasttattooconvention.co.uk

## 2013

**January 13, 2013**

### TATTOO FREEZE

Telford International Centre  
Shropshire  
www.tattoofreeze.com

**February 2-3, 2013**

### SCOTTISH BODY ART SHOW

The Ice Factory, Perth, Scotland  
07901 970611  
bribsy@yahoo.co.uk

**April 7, 2013**

### INK & IRON TATTOO CONVENTION

The Tower, Reservoir Road, Edgbaston  
Birmingham, B16 9EE  
info@inkandiron.co.uk  
www.inkandiron.co.uk

**April 13-14, 2013**

### PORTSMOUTH TATTOO EXTRAVAGANZA

Pyramids Centre, Southsea  
www.tattooextravaganza.co.uk

**April 27-28, 2013**

### GREAT BRITISH TATTOO SHOW

London Olympia  
www.greatbritishtattooshow.com

**June 1-2, 2013**

### MILTON KEYNES TATTOO CONVENTION

info@mktattooconvention.com  
www.mktattooconvention.com

**June 9, 2013**

### READING TATTOO SHOW

Rivermead Leisure Centre  
Reading, Berkshire  
www.readingtattooshow.co.uk

**July 13-14, 2013**

### CUSTOM CARNAGE

Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire  
www.customcarnageuk.com



division and the only difference is the medium the art is displayed on – and of course the fact that tattoo work is more permanent than graffiti and the latter uses rollers and spray to create its large-scale effects.”

“I wanted to mark the launch of the two products from the new Forever Ink brand with a collaboration with an up-and-coming graffiti artist,” says Louis. “Replete’s work is incredible and not just image-based. He also does lots of quirky stuff which is inspiring and original. I can’t wait to see the canvas in Amsterdam’s Tattoo Museum.

“From the early days of graffiti when kids in New York and Chicago were spray painting underground trains, it was immediately obvious that it would prove a rich vein of link-ups with tattoo art.

“It’s all part of the same culture. Many graffiti artists were into skateboarding and in turn skateboarders were really into tattooing – so this collaboration with Replete seemed absolutely the right way to go.

“It’s quite common to see people with tattoos that have been directly lifted from graffiti art – and vice versa. There is some fantastic graffiti out there, but it is often in obscure, difficult places



to find and see. However, the one we did in Manchester made it possible for everybody to see the quality of graffiti and its links with tattoo art.”

The Manchester work produced from the collaboration with Replete is on canvas. “Obviously we would have liked to create this piece on a wall, but I’m not sure that the authorities would have taken kindly to us spray painting giant images in the heart of Manchester!”



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# Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

PAUL SWEENEY

## THE TATTOO (UN)CONVENTION

It might be hard to believe, but this year's Tattoo Jam was even more wonderfully unconventional and just as memorable as the last

### INTERNATIONAL SHOWS

November 2-4

#### FLORENCE TATTOO CONVENTION

Florence, Italy

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

November 2-4

#### OLD SCHOOL TATTOO EXPO

St Louis, Missouri, USA

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

November 23-25

#### BRUSSELS TATTOO CONVENTION

Tours &amp; Taxis, Brussels, Belgium

[www.brusselstattooconvention.be](http://www.brusselstattooconvention.be)

November 24-25

#### NEW ZEALAND TATTOO & ART FESTIVAL

New Plymouth, New Zealand

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

December 7-9

#### BERLIN TATTOO CONVENTION

Arena Berlin, Eichen Strasse 4

12435 Berlin, Germany

[www.tattoo-convention.de](http://www.tattoo-convention.de)

### 2013

January 11-13, 2013

#### SURF 'N' INK TATTOO FESTIVAL

The Radisson Resort Gold Coast

1/2098 Gold Coast Highway

Miami, Queensland 4220, Australia

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

March 22-24, 2013

#### MONDIAL DU TATOUAGE

Le 104, 5 Rue Curial, 75019 Paris, France

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

April 17-21, 2013

#### 34TH ANNUAL NTA CONVENTION

Rapid City, South Dakota, USA

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

January 12-13, 2013

#### DIAGORA ESPACE DE CONGRÈS ET D'EXPOSITION

Rue Pierre-Gilles de Gennes

31670 Labège, France

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

FEBRUARY 23-24, 2013

#### INTERNATIONAL TATTOO AND ART EXPO CLAUDELANDS EVENT CENTRE

HAMILTON, NEW ZEALAND

[tattooart.co.nz](http://tattooart.co.nz)

Very rarely will you hear the words 'convention' and 'tattoo' used together in the same sentence; unless of course you're referring to a gathering of some of the most unconventional individuals that happen to exist on this rotating sphere of contradiction we call Planet Earth. I am of course referring to TAAATTOOOO JAAAAAM!

Last year's Tattoo Jam will always have a special place in my heart as it was not only my first time attending a tattoo convention, but the first time I had ever been faced with the overwhelming challenge of having to entertain a gathering of the unconventional (scary looking) masses – normally I'm the biggest freak in the room!

Despite my initial reservations, I was quietly relieved (not like that) by Tattoo Jam's loyal supporters willing acceptance of me and my notoriously inappropriate comments regarding their beloved ink. And whilst I was not quite carried aloft the shoulders of the crowd off into the sunset, I did manage to get bench pressed four times by a man resembling one half of Bebop and Rocksteady. Good times indeed!

I know it might be hard to believe, but this year's Tattoo Jam was even more wonderfully unconventional and just as memorable as the last. Aside from the stomach-churning performances from Sick Boy, Daniela DeVile, and Snake Fervor (two extra gasp points awarded to Snake for a swallowing a sword whilst still recovering from a

vomiting bug and almost setting fire to Doncaster Racecourse!), there were also jaw dropping performances, in an entirely different way, from Millie Dollar and Beatrix Von Bourbon. And among the numerous award winners, I was overjoyed to see a couple of artists I have grown to adore over the last year being awarded for their high standard of work; one of which has tattooed me and the other is planning to have me tattooed on him next year. All hail! Beki

'Bexysitch' Sanderson (Best Newcomer) and Simon 'Cookie' Cooke (Best something of some day or other – all days look the same from here).

After all of the near death experiences, awards and

other machine buzzing mayhem, the one memory that will stick with me for yet another year has to be Big D and his rockabilly candy skull tattoo, with real hair handlebar moustache! As a man who appreciates an old school tattoo and precision grooming, to see an amalgamation of the two blew my tiny (easily impressed) mind!

Many congratulations to all of this year's winners, and a massive thank you to everyone who made Tattoo Jam 2012 happen. I hope that next year, I will continue to be as surprised by the wide variety of spectacularly unconventional and truly unique individuals as I have been this year.

Here's to blood, sweat, ink... and moustaches!



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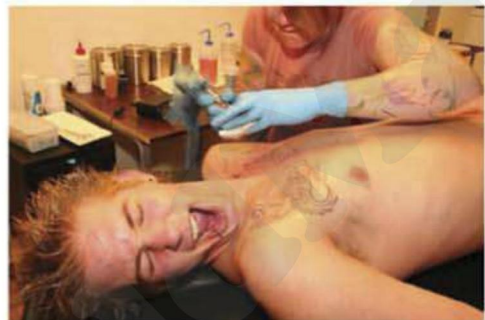
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# the cover girl

Lauren B hasn't been modelling for long, but we think she does it rather fetchingly... obviously, or wouldn't have planted her on the cover. Being a single mum to a little urchin, she was a little busy when we called round, so we did what we always do under these circumstances and dug out ten really stupid questions...

**WHAT WAS THE LAST BOOK YOU READ? ANY GOOD, OR DID YOU DUMP IT BEFORE YOU GOT TO THE END?**

I don't read books! I flick through tattoo books all the time, but that's such a cliched thing to say to you guys!

**A NEW MUM TO A BABY BOY, HUH? GIVE US YOUR TOP THREE TIPS FOR GETTING THROUGH THE DAY.**

The TV is definitely a good source of entertainment for babies! That's the first one. I walk miles with him, we're really lucky that Pembrokeshire has an amazing coast, and erm, I love to have a pint in the bath at nights to chill me right out and keep me sane. (Sounds just like my mum! Ed.)

**HAIR ALWAYS BEEN BLUE OR IS IT SOME KIND OF CHEMICAL REACTION TO GETTING UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?**

Nooo... I usually have long blonde hair, but Smurfs came into my room at night and attacked me.

**ARE YOU AN 'ONLY ONE TATTOOIST FOR ME' KIND OF GIRL OR A SERIAL ADULTERER IN THAT DEPARTME... AND WHO ARE THEY?**

I always go to different tattooists, but I've recently been going to Jon the Tike. He's fab!

**PLANS FOR FUTURE INK, OR ARE THEY ON HOLD DUE TO ALL YOUR SPARE CASH BEING SUCKED INTO MOTHERCARE AND TESCO?**

I have at least two hours of ink a week, but my new piece is going to be done at Cardiff Halloween Bash - a tattooed lady on my left arm.



**CHRISTMAS IS AROUND THE CORNER - WHAT'S ON THE CARDS FOR YOU THIS YEAR? EXPECTING SANTA TO COME CALLING AT ANY POINT?**

I hope Santa drops me off a hunky tattooed guy who can actually make a decent brew! That would be a good start!

**HANG ON... I JUST READ THAT YOU LIVE IN PEMBROKESHIRE... THAT'S LIKE STUFFED IN THE DARKEST CORNER OF WALES. I HEAR THE SURF IS COOL DOWN THERE. SURFER CHICK BY ANY CHANCE, OR ARE WE MORE LIKELY TO FIND YOU WITH YOUR FEET**

Mr Smith Mr Cole



\*  
 \* I reckon you're off  
 \* your box \*  
 \* and they would probably  
 \* ask you to take a drugs \*  
 \* test to be honest. \*

**UP, REMOTE  
 IN HAND?**

Pembrokeshire is mad for the surf, but I'd rather watch! I'm a terrible swimmer and scared of seaweed.

**IF YOU STAND ON YOUR  
 BED ON A SUNNY DAY, CAN  
 YOU SEE IRELAND OUT OF  
 YOUR BEDROOM WINDOW?  
 IF NOT, WHAT CAN YOU SEE?**

All I can see are fields, the sea and refineries – there are a lot of refineries here for some reason.

**I JUST FOUND OUT YESTERDAY  
 THAT THERE'S A HOUSE FOR SALE  
 BY MY MUM'S HOUSE WHICH HAS  
 A FAIRY MOUND IN THE GARDEN.  
 SAID FAIRY MOUND IS PROTECTED  
 BY THE LOCAL COUNCIL AND IF  
 YOU BUY THE HOUSE, YOU'RE  
 NOT ALLOWED TO FLATTEN IT OR  
 TOUCH IT BECAUSE IT'S 'HISTORIC'.  
 IF I BUY IT, WHAT DO YOU RECKON  
 MY CHANCES ARE OF GETTING  
 AWAY WITH "THE FAIRIES TOOK IT  
 AWAY" ARE?**

I reckon you're off your box and they would probably ask you to take a drugs test to be honest.

**CAN YOU BREATHE FIRE?**

I can't breathe fire, but I can dance with it. Does that count?

**MAYBE, WE'LL LET YOU KNOW... 🤖**



# BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

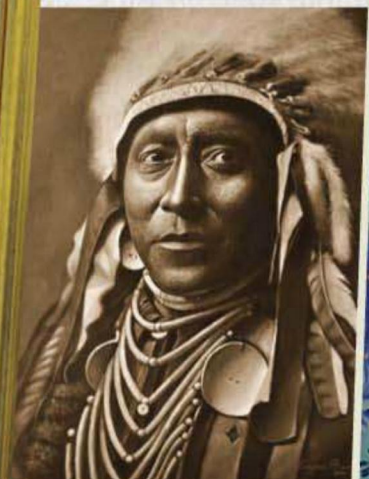
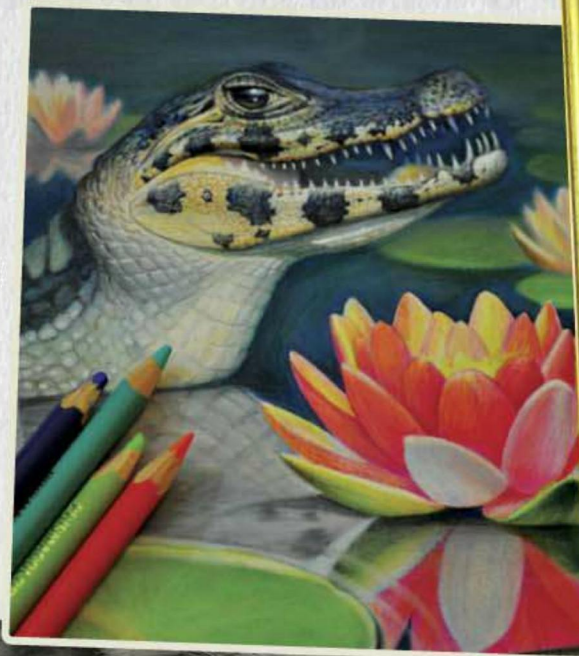
This issue, we hand over the crayons to Mr Eugene Rubuls – this my friends, is wildlife art at it's finest; he's a mean tattoo artist as well! Over to you, Sir...

**M**y name is Eugene Rubuls, I'm tattooist in Southampton, U.K. I've been tattooing professionally for four years now and I'm a self-taught artist. I use a wide range of media such as charcoal, watercolour, and oil, but my favourite is acrylic and pencils.

Most of my inspiration comes from wildlife; I also draw portraits and tattoo flash designs. I paint as often as I've got time for it. If I feel inspired I often end up painting from evening till early morning. I prefer to paint during the night, when it seems that the whole world is sleeping and it's just me and the canvas.

I always take something from painting to tattooing and opposite – it works both ways for me. From painting I can take new colour combinations, composition, flow, and tattooing gives me the ability to focus on details and learn how to be patient.

I'm now working in a new studio, Ian Ink (11 St James Road, Southampton) and I have a lot of ideas for cool tattoo designs for you. If you would like to see some of my work, check out my Facebook profile. 🐾









# BACK IN THE VAN...

Sometimes our travel itinerary can make me feel like a ping pong ball, bouncing between different places; after a short time in the UK we are now shooting back over to Germany, but I will not be bouncing between conventions as I am also working two guestspots this time around



One of the most annoying things about travelling so much is that I can never commit to large tattoos that will take a few sessions to finish. Most of the time I have to be able to finish my work in one sitting so I am not leaving a trail of half-finished work around the world. So it is quite a luxury to be going back to somewhere I have already been this year, returning to Bodyscript in West Germany. The shop is already feeling like home as I was only here a few months ago – knowing this at the time was great as I had a few return customers, and for the first time in nearly two years, I started a half sleeve. Time flies when you're having

20 CRAIGY LEE

fun, and as usual the week shoots by in the blink of an eye, and before I know it I am in the van again headed north to Recklinghausen.

Holy Diver is my next stop, it is a young shop owned by a young artist, 25-year-old Kristin Schubert. I crossed paths with Kristin many times at various conventions in Germany

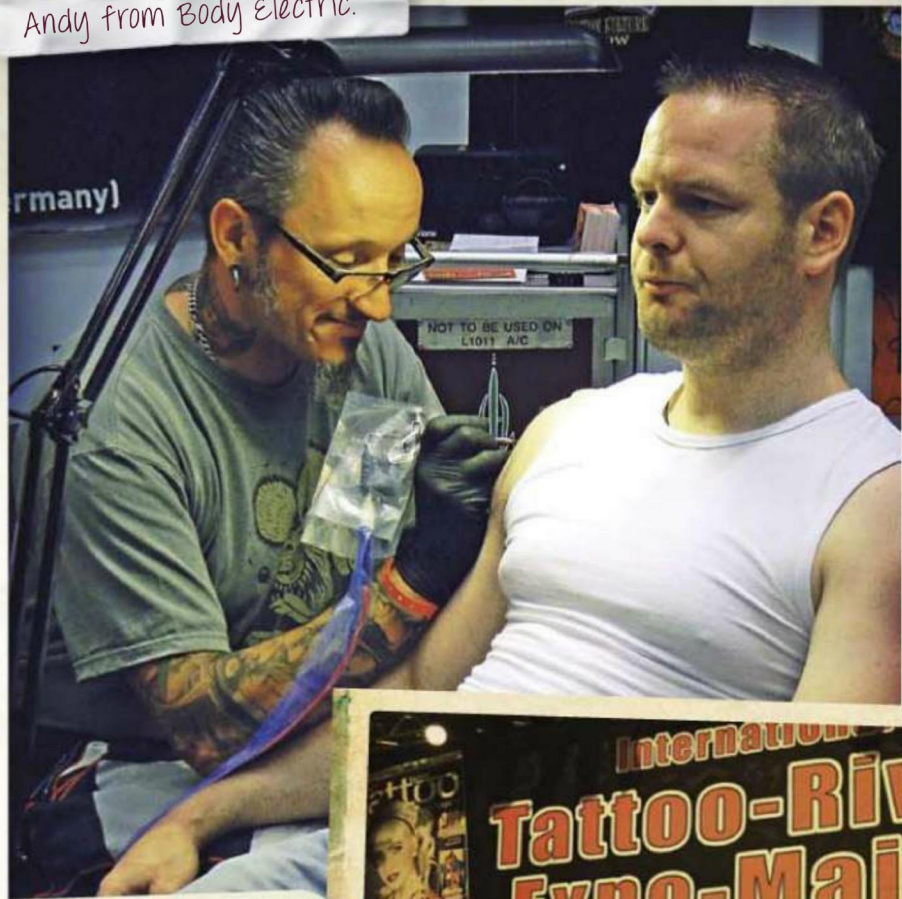
Inside Holy Diver



and she invited me to work at her shop. It is a custom-only studio and despite a shop front in town, it pretty much operates as a private studio; Kristin has a heavy work load and a long waiting list. It is not the only studio in Recklinghausen and despite opening close to other studios, it didn't really cause much of a problem: "The other



Andy from Body Electric.



The beach bar on the river.

IT WAS GREAT TO SIT BY THE RIVER ON A MAN-MADE BEACH – WITH SUCH FINE WEATHER, IMPORTED PALM TREES, AND SAND YOU COULD BE FORGIVEN FOR THINKING YOU WERE SOMEWHERE FAR MORE TROPICAL

shops came to visit me when I opened, but once they realised I was only doing large-scale custom work and wouldn't be taking their walk-in trade, they didn't

have a problem," Kristin tells me. Despite having a good customer base, opening a studio and working alone at such a young age must be quite daunting? "Sure, it takes a lot of guts to open a studio. I worry that other artists will not respect me, and there are lots of overheads to cover each month. I broke my arm earlier this year

which made it a struggle to cover the studio's running costs. I did have another artist, but he was unreliable, so now I will just stick to regular guest artists. I live in Essen which is a 40-minute drive to work, so I think when my lease is up I will relocate the shop closer to home so I can have more time to draw."

Hopefully, relocating the shop will not lose any of the shop's character or vibe. Inside is beautifully decorated, with dark wooden floors and ornate carved furniture, and the large waiting room with decorative wallpaper adorned with framed artwork



Judging at the Mainz convention.

and a large bookcase full of great reference material gives the shop a relaxed feel. Indeed the studio space is rather large for one artist and moving into something smaller makes perfect sense, so I look forward to seeing the new studio space on a future visit.

My final stop this month is the capital city of the Rhineland – the Palatinate region of Germany – the city of Mainz! Mainz is a great place to visit. The architecture is very typically German with Baroque-style fronts and facias on a lot of the buildings – there is also a Romanesque influence in some buildings, most notably the cathedral. After walking around and exploring the city, it was great to sit by the river on a man-made beach sipping a cold pilsner in the 'beach bar', relaxing in anticipation for the show. In fact,





with such fine weather, imported palm trees, and sand, you could be forgiven for thinking you were somewhere far more tropical.

The convention here is in its second year and is run by the organisers of the mammoth 20-year-old Frankfurt show, so I was already looking forward to it knowing the organisation and hospitality would be second to



**CONVENTION ORGANISERS IN THE UK NEED TO START GOING TO GERMAN SHOWS TO LEARN A THING OR TWO ABOUT HOSPITALITY, WITH SO MANY SHOWS POPPING UP, QUALITY WILL PREVAIL AND HELP THE DECENT ONES LAST**



London relaxing on the South Bank watching the world go by. The convention was held in one

*Craigy Lee ties the knot*

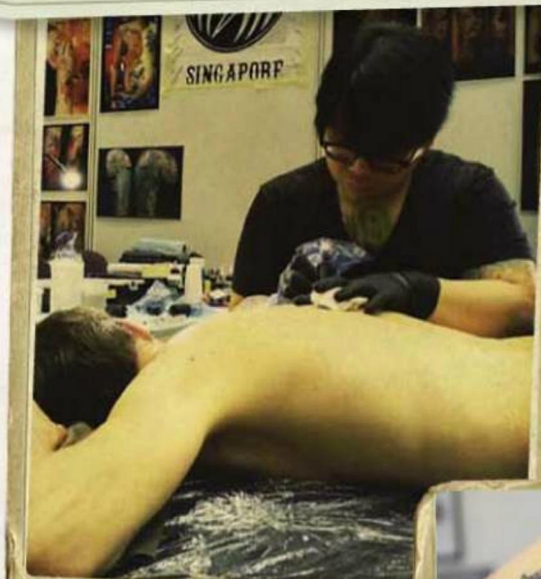


sept 22: Craig and India got married! Love ya! guys!

hall and was a lot smaller than Frankfurt, but being in its second year, it is very much a newcomer to the convention circuit. The whole side of the Rheingoldhalle is glass which makes the whole place feel bright and airy, and gives a great view of the river. My good friend, Andy, and his crew from Body Electric Tattoo were working hard all weekend. I caught up with Joe Wang from 8 Volts Tattoo in Singapore and also

made some new friends, notably, David, who is working at Andy Engel's tattoo studio after re-locating from LA, and Dane, who is another travelling artist from Germany. On Friday I was asked to judge the tattoo competitions, which was a great honour but an extremely hard job.

Everyone at the show was very friendly and most artists made the effort to come around and talk, which made the whole weekend feel very social. This carried on over Monday when the organisers of the show held a boat party for all the artists during the day to see the sights and the city from the river itself. Overall, a great weekend made even better by fantastic weather and great hosts. I think convention organisers in the UK need to start going to German shows to learn a thing or two about hospitality; with so many shows popping up, quality will prevail and help the decent ones last. Until next month Auf wiedersehen (Pet). 🐾



Joe Wang from 8 volts Tattoo, Singapore.

none. The show is held in the Rheingoldhalle situated on the banks of the bustling river Rhein which runs through the city. It is the longest river in the country and acts as a motorway for boats, barges and trade ships that navigate its 766-mile length delivering goods deep inland. The weather was nice and the artists catering is held outside in a tent next to the water, which was a fantastic place to chill out in between tattoos and have something to eat and recharge the batteries. Sitting in the sun by the river reminded me of days off in



By kristin at holydive





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# the whole of the moon

I've said it before, but it bears repeating – when a publishing company knows what they are doing, you can find yourself in possession of some of the finest books on the planet



Nishimura

They come in the mail, delivered by guys who wonder just what on earth you've ordered. I know what they are, even before I've broken into the packaging. Books from Edition Reuss are the literary equivalent of having an Audi appear outside your house and the keys stuffed through your letterbox. It's German engineering on paper. My collection is getting pretty big now too, but I digress. This isn't so much about Reuss as

Mr Smith  
Courtesy Edition Reuss

this one book in particular.

Over the last six months, I've grown to see traditional Japanese tattooing in a different light. Everybody knows it's impressive in both design and scale, but to fully appreciate it for what it really is, something else needs to happen in your head. An acknowledgement of this side of the art being so far away from what we in the West take for granted is a good start. Most newcomers to the concept will automatically trigger

dragons and koi in their heads and leave it at that, but that really is judging a book by a cover that somebody else put on it. Sure, it's a consistent part of it, but far, far away from the whole of the story.

And so, to the point – Horikazu (written by Martin Hladik) is quite simply the best book I have ever seen on the subject (hence this worthy page count for it). And it has ended up being so because it focuses on one man and his lifetime of work. Approaching it





like this means that instead of getting a birds-eye view on the tradition, we are on the receiving end of a lifetime of work – and that makes a world of difference.

It's worth noting that traditionally, the work you see on these pages is never displayed unless a man is getting undressed in his own home, facing an adversary in a street fight and displaying his skin as part of his holy arsenal, or carrying the shrine at Shinto festivals. I can totally appreciate the thought behind this. I can relate to tattoos as belonging only to me and those close to me. I'm certainly not one to flaunt mine, though if asked, I don't mind either. Maybe this mindset is part of what's making me so appreciative of traditional Japanese at the moment – that 🍵

Ichikawa Kazuya





Sasaaki Hiraku



Sasaaki Hiraku

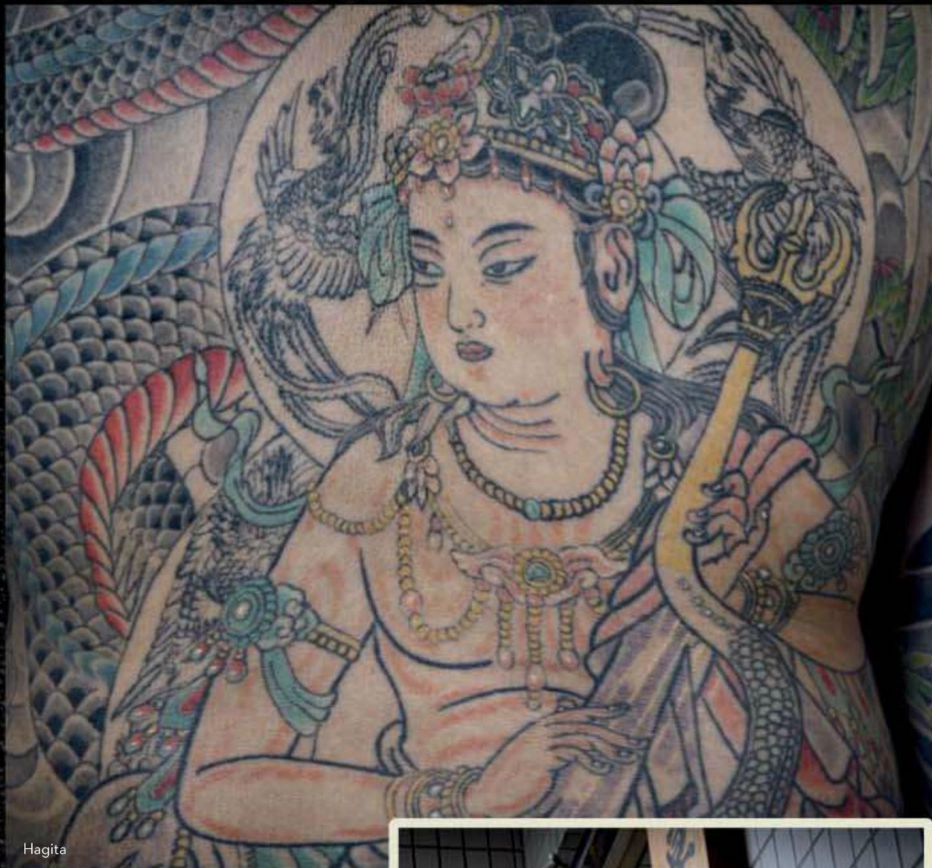




### TRADITIONAL TATTOO IN JAPAN: HORIKAZU

The lifework of the tattoo master from Asakusa in Tokyo is a highlight for all fans of tattoo history. Photographer, Martin Hladik, followed the Japanese tattoo master, Horikazu, with his camera for years, and presents in the book, the lifework of a remarkable tattoo artist in spectacular full colour images. Weighing in at 500 pages with more than 460 pictures, it's a wonderful way to dive into the still hidden world of traditional Japanese tattooing.

Interviews with the late master (2011) and his successor, Horikazuwaka, provide intimate insights into the art of tattooing in Asakusa and give a glimpse into an entire dynasty of tattoo artists by publishing full-page pictures of Horikazu's clients, presenting their full-body tattoos openly and with self-confidence. All of the tattoos reproduced are one of a kind and exclusively created for the wearer by hand. *Horikazu* is available by mail order from [www.editionreuss.de](http://www.editionreuss.de) priced at €120.



Hagita

and being a writer of course.

For these are not merely tattoos. The men you see here and throughout the book (and obviously through the whole of Japanese tattoo culture) are walking novels. To think simplistically of them as only tattoos, would be to not understand a Japanese master at all. The tattoo is only half the story. These men, having undressed for the purpose of the book and to pay homage to Horikazu, are sweeping stories, the heroes and content of which go centuries back in time. To take a man and cover him so that inspecting so much as a square-inch will tell you part of a story is genius and deserves to be looked into much further.

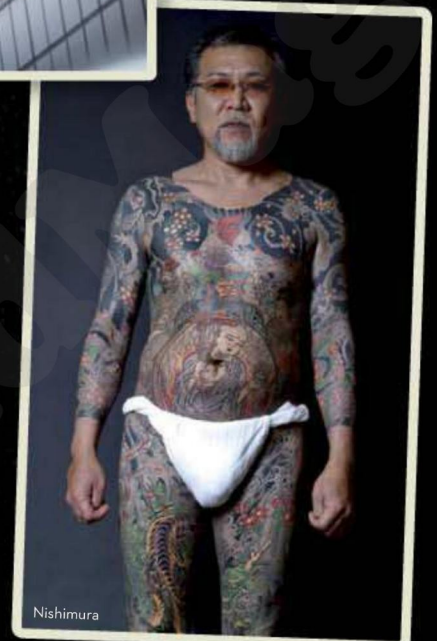
A tiny example of such a thing is to see a tiger appear from the floral undergrowth – close inspection will allow you to see that the tiger is no more important than the flowers. A story told in this Japanese style happens all at once. There is no beginning, middle or end. Simply the whole story all at once, and that's something we don't really have over here. Maybe it's just the way things have



Horikazu

panned out whereby tattoos are individual symbols of the fractured way we live our lives, as opposed to a deep rooted sense.

In closing, *Horikazu* is an essential piece of work if you're looking to know more about the Japanese masters and their legacy. Just as importantly, the continuing series of books from Edition Reuss keeps on adding to the upper levels of education that we so badly need around the world. If you're serious about tattooing and its history, you really need to get with the programme on this one. 🙏



Nishimura



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# who you calling mammoth?

12 years; five albums; no line-up changes (shocking!); two Grammy Award nominations; Dubbed “the greatest metal band of their generation” by Rolling Stone; and called the “most ambitious, most fearless, most fun heavy metal band” by BBC. Thank God Mastodon really are this fantastically talented or it would be a real shame, wouldn't you say?



Going at it for over a decade, the Atlanta, Georgia-based band's latest album, *The Hunter*, debuted at #10 on the Billboard Top 200, no small feat for a metal band. Touring North America in support of the record, guitarist, Bill Kelliher, found himself reclining on a leather sofa in the back room of the band's tour bus, sitting amidst video games and guitars, doing his last interview of the day with yours truly...

**UNLIKE YOUR LAST RELEASE, THE HUNTER ACTUALLY ISN'T A CONCEPT ALBUM. WAS THIS A CONSCIOUS DECISION MADE FROM THE GET GO?**

Brann, he's like the concept master. He'd come up with this crazy, way over the top story that was gonna go along with it, and I think by the time we got into the studio and

started recording, everything was moving so quickly we just kind of surpassed that. We were like, we don't really need to put all this hoopla to it, let's just make a record.

When you attach the whole crazy story and theme to the music, you have to follow some kind of rules; every song has to lead into the next song and be congruent with the last one, and everything has to flow together, but the songs we were coming up with were all over the place. We were just like, this doesn't seem like a concept record, screw that, lets just write a record for the sake of writing a record.

**WAS THE CREATIVE PROCESS MORE LIBERATING, MORE INTERESTING SINCE YOU WERE APPROACHING THINGS IN A NEW WAY?**

I think so, yeah. I don't wanna say we reinvented ourselves, but we kinda flipped the script. We were

getting pigeon-holed as the band that does these giant concept records with all the artwork and all the stories and all this shit going on on stage; we had to play the record from beginning to end, and it was like, let's not do that this time, let's just throw everybody off and just write songs about whatever we wanna write about. So it was very liberating in that way.

**YOU'VE MENTIONED THAT WHILE CREATING THE HUNTER, THE BAND TRIED TO FOCUS ON POSITIVITY AND NOT DWELL ON THE DARKER THINGS THAT WERE HAPPENING AT THE TIME, LIKE THE PASSING OF BRENT'S BROTHER, WAS THAT EVER DIFFICULT?**

There's always death and bad times, no matter how good a band you are, life is happening.

That's the kind of stuff that happens when you're back home

## THOUGHTS & TATTOOS

I usually have a list of stuff in my head that I want and then when the opportunity comes up I kinda think about the artist and if he's capable of what I want him to do. So it is thought out, but sometimes I don't know I'm getting tattooed until I'm actually sitting down and they're like, okay, there's an artist here today, he's gonna tattoo you.





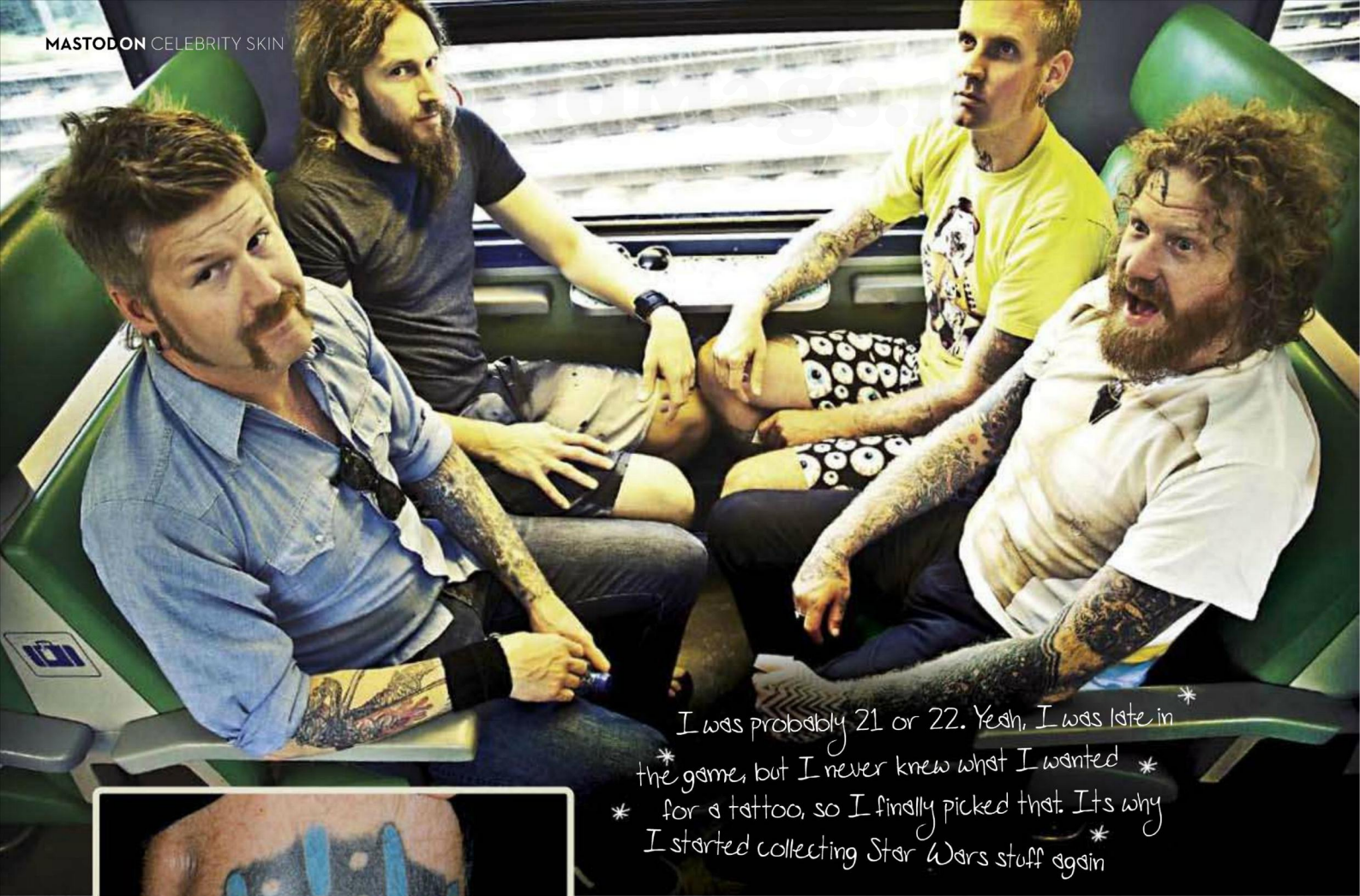
and you're with your family and things are starting to chill out. Then all of a sudden something tragic will happen, a friend will die, I had my own demons I was battling.

When you're on tour it's kind of like a fantasyland. You don't have any responsibility except to play a good show every night. You don't have anyone looking over you, telling you what to do. Everyone does everything for you 'cause this is our job and we pay the people to do what we say, so when you go home, at least for me, that's when I step back into real life.

I have a house and a wife, two kids, two dogs, cars and bills and all that stuff. My wife understands this is what I do for a living, we've been together for 20-some years, so she doesn't harp on to me about this. But the adjustment of tour life to normal life and to being a dad again, it doesn't just 🍌

We were getting pigeonholed  
 \* as the band that does these giant  
 concept records with all the artwork  
 and all the stories and all this \*  
 \* shit going on on stage





I was probably 21 or 22. Yeah, I was late in the game, but I never knew what I wanted for a tattoo, so I finally picked that. It's why I started collecting Star Wars stuff again



happen overnight, it takes a couple weeks to sink back into. Like, okay, there's no one who is gonna mow the lawn for me, I gotta go out and do that myself. [laughs]

Then real life happens again, so we kinda reflect on those times and that's when we usually write, sitting still at home. I mean I'm never sitting still, but so to speak. Things happen and then we write about it. Every record is a moment in time that we've taken a snapshot of, lyrically and musically.

**THE HUNTER WAS PRODUCED BY MIKE ELIZONDO, KNOWN FOR HIS WORK WITH HIP HOP ARTISTS LIKE DR. DRE AND JAY-Z, HOW DID THAT COLLABORATION COME ABOUT?**

I think he'd just been a fan of the band and he started working at Warner Brothers as their in-house producer and I think after the smoke cleared, he was the one still standing there like, hey, I'm still here, I wanna work with you guys.

He flew to Atlanta and took us out to lunch and was just like, 'I really wanna do this record, let me hear some stuff, let's talk about it'. He's worked with Dr. Dre and all that stuff, but he's a true metal fan at heart.

Not that it really mattered, because I think if you're a producer of music, your job is to make whatever artist it is sound as best as they possibly can, regardless of what your interests are.

**INK TIME! TELL ME A BIT ABOUT YOUR FAVOURITE, MOST MEANINGFUL PIECES...**

My first tattoo was a Boba Fett Mandalorian armour insignia, which, when we were sitting

around trying to think of a name for the band, Brent looked at it and said, what is that, is that like a mammoth? What do you call a prehistoric elephant? I was like oh, a mastodon. Everyone was like, yeah, mastodon, let's call it mastodon, so that kind of instigated the name.

Shit, I was probably 21 or 22. Yeah, I was late in the game, but I never knew what I wanted for a tattoo, so I finally picked that. It's why I started collecting Star Wars stuff again.

One arm was done by a guy named Babak Tabatabai; he's from Iran but he lives in Tennessee. It's all the bounty hunters. He's a big Star Wars nerd too and he was like, why don't we just do the whole arm since you've got this Boba Fett? Babak also did this Mandarin Spawn from Todd McFarlane. I collect a lot of toys and I just thought it would make a really cool tattoo.

This one I got done recently by Jeremy Barber, who lives in Denver now. It's my wife's initials with the sacred heart.

The Princess Leia slave girl



was done by a guy named Goat in Colorado Springs. It was my birthday in 2007/2008, I was just wandering around and walked into a studio. We were playing down the street, and he was just like, hey, aren't you in Mastodon? Want a tattoo? I was like, sure, it's my birthday too, let's do it!

My Ms. Pac-Man, Jeremy Barber did that, I got that on Mayhem or Ozzfest... I forget, it's been a while. Back in the day we used to drive around in a van and go to play all over the States; there was a lot of videogame time in little bars and stuff, so there was a lot of Ms. Pac-Man going on. I remember playing on one quarter for like an hour. I was just like I love this game! This is great! I'm getting it tattooed on me! [laughs]

These are all on-tour tattoos. I've never been to a real tattoo chair.

**ARE THERE ANY ARTISTS YOU SPECIFICALLY SOUGHT OUT BECAUSE YOU LOVED THEIR WORK?**

Most of the tattoo artists who have done my stuff, especially Jeremy and Babak, are really good friends of mine, even though we live in totally different cities and states, I try and keep in contact with them.

Jeremy I met on Myspace... remember Myspace? [laughs]

He sent me a request and was like, I see you're coming through here in six months, I'll give you a tattoo. So I looked through his portfolio and when I met him, he picked me up at Pop's in Sauget, Illinois, and I got into the car with him and his girlfriend; he just looked like a total dirt bag, real skinny, missing a front tooth, backwards baseball hat on, raggedy clothes. I was really, really hung over and his girlfriend's driving and they're passing a bowl back and forth, smoking it on the freeway, and she's just weaving in and out of cars. And I'm just like, what the f!k?

I had just woken up and gotten into his car, I didn't even know these people; I was like, what the f!k, put the bowl down and drive the damn car, girl! I thought I was gonna get killed.

**ROLLING STONE CALLED YOU 'THE GREATEST METAL BAND OF YOUR GENERATION', HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO THAT, DO YOU AGREE?**

It's really nice of them to say that, but it's just one person's opinion. I don't feel like that. There are a lot of good bands out there that people just don't know who they are yet, you know?

We're one of the lucky ones



**ALBUM NUMBER SIX**

I've been writing a lot on the road in my spare time, because once I get home I don't wanna have to think about writing. There's a lot of downtime on the road where you're kinda just sitting around, and it's like, what are you gonna do? Pick up a guitar and write something and save it for later, so when you get home it's like, I got this, I got that.

– we just worked so hard and kept touring and touring and touring, getting in people's faces. And I think we have a certain chemistry in our band that attracts more than just the underground dirt bags.

We actually got nominated for a Grammy twice. For me that's a real honour because we're kinda saying like, hey, look at us, we're relevant too, we write music, we're not pop stars, but we do have a big following, there's people that like us, you should recognise us.

**SO THEN DOES THAT KIND OF SUCCESS PUT PRESSURE ON YOU TO CONSTANTLY KEEP OUTDOING YOURSELVES?**

When you get to writing, it's kinda just what comes out of you and what you think sounds good at the moment.

When I write stuff, I write to impress myself and the other guys in the band. I wanna write a riff where they're like, oh yeah, I like that! And then we let it grow. 🐉



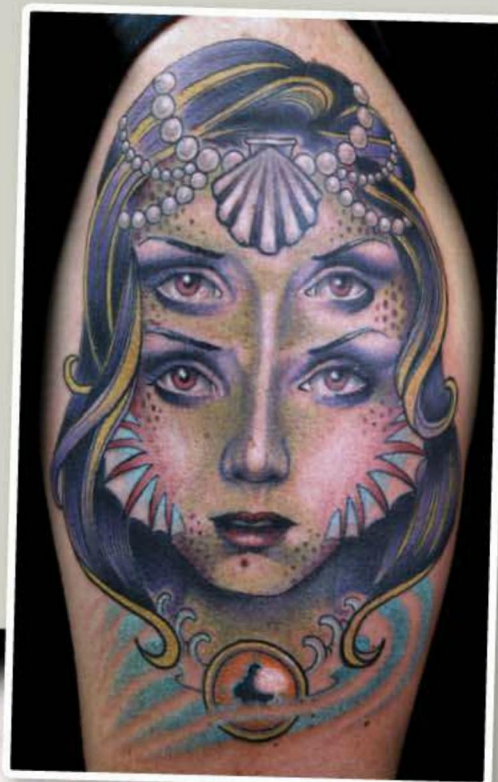
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# PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Now, where were we? Sean Herman's journey towards becoming a tattooer (he prefers the term to 'tattoo artist') has featured skateboarding, punk rock, shuttling around the American South, doing battle with gods in various guises, a stab at being a priest, and an actual stab at him courtesy of a street hood in Birmingham, Alabama



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[seanherman.com](http://seanherman.com)

It's been an uneven road that's finally led him to Royal Street Tattoo. This is his church. This is where he heals his – and others' – hurts, which quickly becomes apparent when we delve deeper into his life as a working tattoo artist.

But before that, a little scene setting is in order. Royal Street is the tattoo temple founded by CW Neese, himself a character of some repute. "He was the guy that everyone had heard of," says Sean, recalling his early encounters with CW. "He lived one of those lives everyone talks about when he was young – quit school by the time he was 15 and was hopping trains across the country."

Nowadays, CW presides over the studio that's very much his heart in a building, according to Sean. "He wanted to create an environment where the people he loved could work and grow. Every person who gets involved with the shop goes through CW first. Then he approaches the four of us who have been here since early on, and we all discuss if we want that person to be involved."

The studio operates much like a collective: each member of the Royal family (sorry) takes responsibility for a different aspect of the day-to-day running of the shop, from bills to maintenance. "CW treats everyone as if they are family and does whatever he can for them," says Sean. "Not many



shops have that, and I'm truly lucky to be involved."

## DOWN TO BUSINESS

Stage duly set, it's time to discuss tattooing. Sean has talked at length about the idea of the

energy transfer that takes place during the tattoo process [see last issue] and the importance of creating a positive experience, which begs the question: what's that process like for the artist? It must be challenging to channel



YOU HAVE TO GO INTO THE SITUATION KNOWING THAT YOU CAN ONLY GIVE SO MUCH, BECAUSE YOU ONLY HAVE SO MUCH TO GIVE

'positive energy' every day, be that in the form of mystical intent or simply the act of not becoming a surly brute after six hours behind the needle.

"It's definitely not easy," he admits. "You have to go into the situation knowing that you can only give so much, because you only have so much to give." The Herman canon involves morning meditation to help him focus his mind on the here and now, without getting overwhelmed with plans for the coming day. "That helps a ton, because then I can give my client the time that they deserve, and the time that I want to be able to give them."

It all feeds into creating a good tattoo and also a good tattooing experience, as keeping his attention in the present avoids cluttering his head with distracting thoughts and helps each tattoo design (and the act of creating it) stay fresh. "All that matters is the tattoo, and the experience created. There are definitely days, many of them, when I am completely drained from it all," he says. "I'm at a point now where I'm trying to work on keeping my energy up, not let myself get so drained. It's all a process, a continual learning process."

**GOOD TIMES, BAD TIMES**

He certainly finds the tattoo process liberating, despite the occasional weariness, because of the tranquil state of mind it can produce. "I am in complete freedom because nothing else is happening," he says, "my mind is 🌻"







IF WE EXPECT TO FIND COMMON GROUND, THE ONLY WAY IS THROUGH MUTUAL RESPECT. TELL ME ABOUT YOUR GOD, I'LL TELL YOU HOW I THINK, AND WE MAY BOTH BE SURPRISED BY HOW SIMILAR WE ARE

completely focused.”

Of course, he’s had his share of bad experiences, like every artist, working in shops where his first interaction with the client has been when they arrive for their appointment. “Those are the situations that I think start off as

difficult because the client already feels disconnected, which is the last thing that you want to have happen.”

However he says it’s been ‘years’ since he had to deal with a negative session, which he attributes in part to taking control of his schedule, making sure to build in a little time to get to know the people he works on. “Connection and communication are key to a good tattoo experience. I want the client to know what’s going

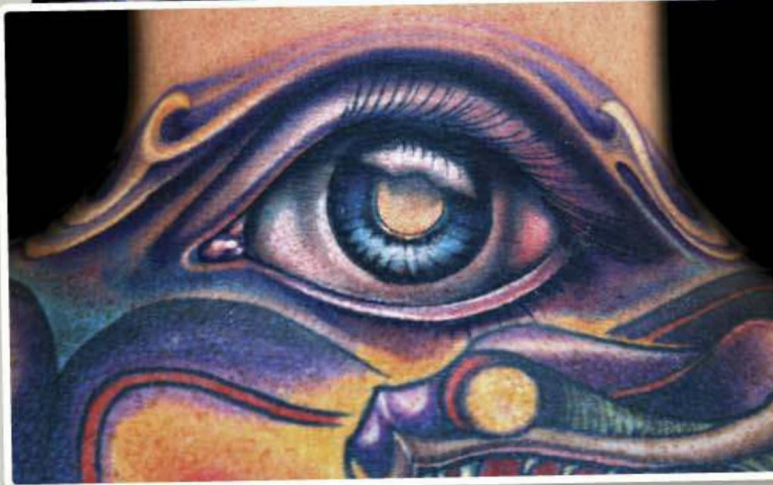
on in the situation. They’ve been counting down the days to this appointment, I want them to know that I have too.”

Perhaps the other secret to his success is a loyal congregation; he’s basically been tattooing the same 20 people for several years now, with a new client only settling into the chair every now and then. The result is an engaging rapport with clients and a relationship “based on respect”, which inevitably leads to inking sessions having a positive feeling and a high level of energy.

This sustained relationship with his clientèle suits Sean’s personal approach and helps those who come to see him. “If the client comes in with an emotional







problem going on, say the loss of a loved one, that already established relationship is usually then strengthened because of the trust that we have developed. We can discuss the situation or not talk about it at all, whatever they need."

#### SKIN SCHISMS

Of course, tattooing is a broad church and there will be many collectors and artists out there for whom Sean's take on the process – energy exchange, emotional empathy et al – will prove hard to swallow. "Fair enough," he says. "If someone feels tattooing is a certain thing to them, then that's what it is and they're entitled to that."

"If those people are being honest with how they feel, and being truthful, then I commend them and they're completely right," he continues. After all, tattooing isn't one thing at any one time; it depends on your point of view. The tattoo experience might differ for the client, the artist, the people viewing the finished piece, or even those (friends or family, say) affected by an artist's devotion to their craft. "For all those people, it may be an entire range of different things, different things that they feel tattooing is, or should be."

He's passionate about his work and tattooing as a whole, but 🍌

I LOVE WORKING ON THE SAME PEOPLE, BECAUSE YOU GET TO SEE YOUR WORK AGE. I ENJOY LOOKING AT ALL THE PIECES FROM OVER THE YEARS, AND HAVING PEOPLE TELL ME STORIES ABOUT WHAT THAT TATTOO NOW MEANS TO THEM

#### BEHIND THE INK



"This piece was on another regular of mine who I have been tattooing for years. We'd talked about a few things to finish up one of his sleeves, but nothing was concrete. Right before he came down from Atlanta, he emailed me and told me that his dog had passed away; this dog was incredibly close to both him and his lady, it was family to them and had lived a long life. Anyone with a pet knows how heartbreaking that is, and I really sympathised with them."

"After I read the email I started doodling and working on sketches that were in my head – I wanted to do a piece on him that represented the growth that comes from death, and the death of a loved one. The piece eventually got too large to fit in the small spot to finish out his sleeve, but I figured he wouldn't mind if we had to put it somewhere else."

"When they came in I brought the piece out and explained where I was going with it to them. I usually tattoo a face to represent the person getting the piece; then the multiple eyes are for a collective consciousness that we live in, that we are united in. So I'm conveying how 'we' feel in the piece. The keyhole is set in the mind's eye to show that consciousness is something we can unlock, if we choose. The skull is set back in the keyhole to show the depth of mortality that we are living with; one day we will die. The silhouette of the birds flying upwards represents the freedom that will be found in death."

"So all in all, the piece represents a freedom and understanding that is found for us all in death. After my long ramble, Dave just looked over at me and said, 'I love it, it's perfect'. The words all tattoo artists want to hear!

"It's a pleasure to get to tattoo my clients, especially Dave and his lady Shana, and that day was no exception. We got to talk a lot about what they had been going through, and about fun, silly stuff like horror films and punk rock. When all was said and done, Dave looked in the mirror and again said those magical words, 'it's perfect', I was a happy guy."





CONNECTION AND COMMUNICATION ARE KEY TO A GOOD TATTOO EXPERIENCE - THEY'VE BEEN COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS TO THIS APPOINTMENT, I WANT THEM TO KNOW THAT I HAVE TOO

perhaps a lesson learned the hard way, he feels no pressure to evangelise. "If someone hates tattooing, that's fine. It's not our place to tell people what to think." He points out the irony of the counter-culture disciple who complains about having religion shoved down their throats, but expects the world at large to pay attention to their own causes. "If we expect to find common ground, the only way is through mutual respect. Tell me about your god, I'll tell you how I think, and we may both be surprised by how similar we are."

It all comes down to vocabulary, he argues. "I think that if we sat down and talked with those tattooers who say tattooing isn't magical, took out silly vocabulary words, we would find how much we really have in common."

#### THE FAITHFUL FEW

It's perhaps unusual for an artist to stick with a small group of regular clients, but it makes sense that once Sean has found that common ground with a client –



and vice versa – he'll stick with them. "I think it happens because of the relationship that forms between the two of us. We end up spending hour upon hour together once a month for quite a while. As a tattoo artist, I tend to engage quite a bit with the client."

Gradually, one piece leads on to another, a personal retrospective of Sean's art on each client. Does it bother him to see old pieces? "No, I love working on the same people, because you get to see your work age. I enjoy looking at all the pieces from over the years, and having people tell me stories about what that tattoo now means to them, or about interactions that they have had with people involving it."

There's also the learning curve. "I tend to do things differently all the time, so it's also really interesting to look back on older work and see how things look now, as opposed to how they looked then."

#### DESIGNS FOR LIFE

Royal Street is far from a closed church though, despite Sean's fixed band of regulars. Getting a tattoo from him starts with a conversation, usually by email, about the sort of piece a client has in mind. "If it's something that I can imagine anyone else doing, I will always recommend that they do it. I want the client to get the best tattoo they can get, not something that is me trying to be someone else."

Then there's a consultation



where possible, discussing their ideas or – if they just want a Herman original – the elements of his work they particularly enjoy. "Then I'll ask what things they're into in general. In the end, they're the ones wearing the piece, so I want to make sure it reflects them, more than anything." And with that, the design takes shape.

But ultimately, this is a story about change, whether that's in the form of faith-shaking encounters on the street or career-altering apprenticeships, so all those steps are just part of the journey towards the final piece. For Sean, change is the only constant – and consequently, it doesn't matter how much planning goes into a tattoo, something will always come up to alter things. "I will usually do a few drawings and figure out which one reflects what we talked about best," he says. "Then change everything last minute!" And so the journey continues. 🌟



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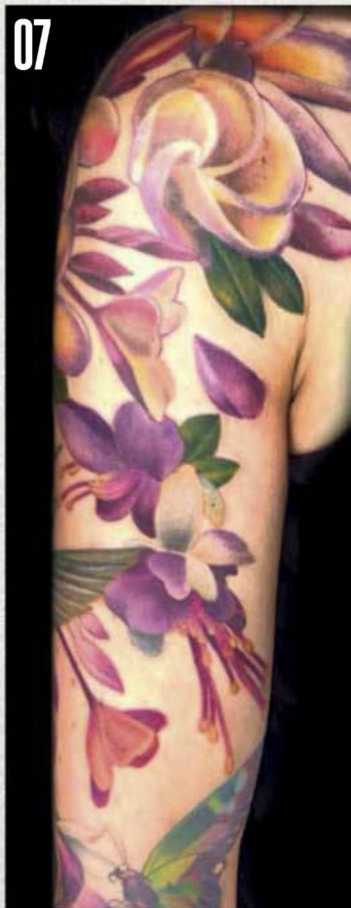
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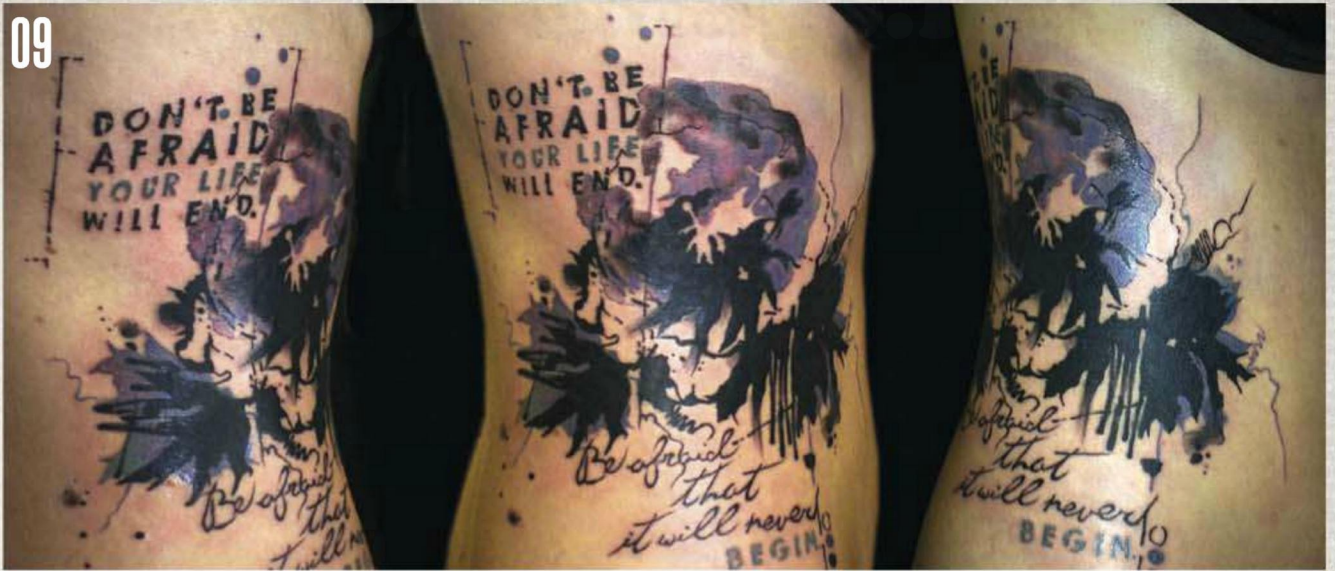
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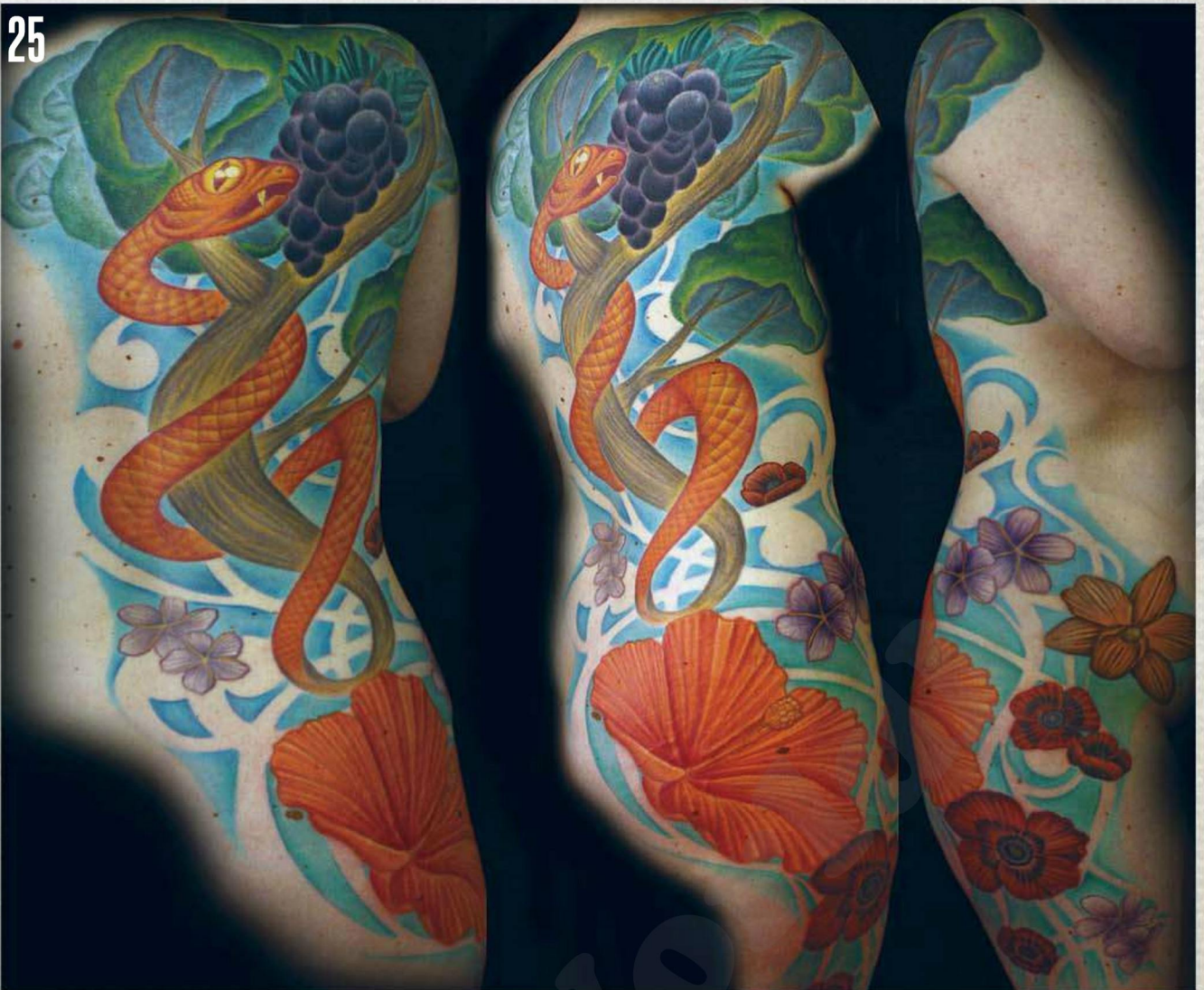


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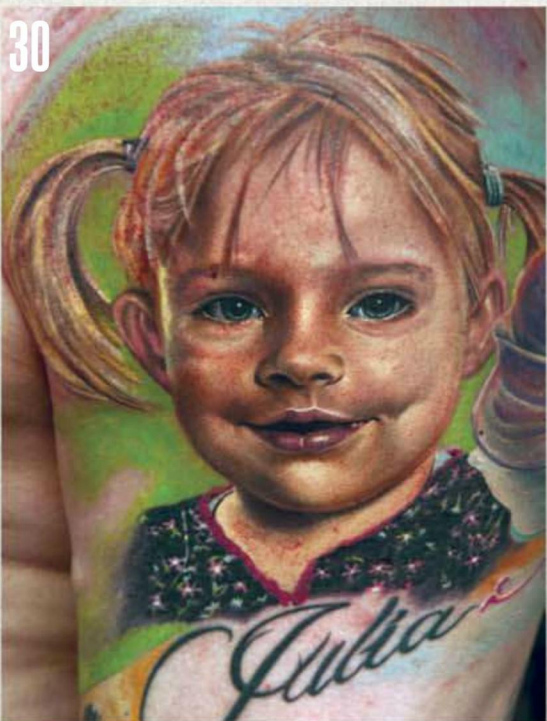


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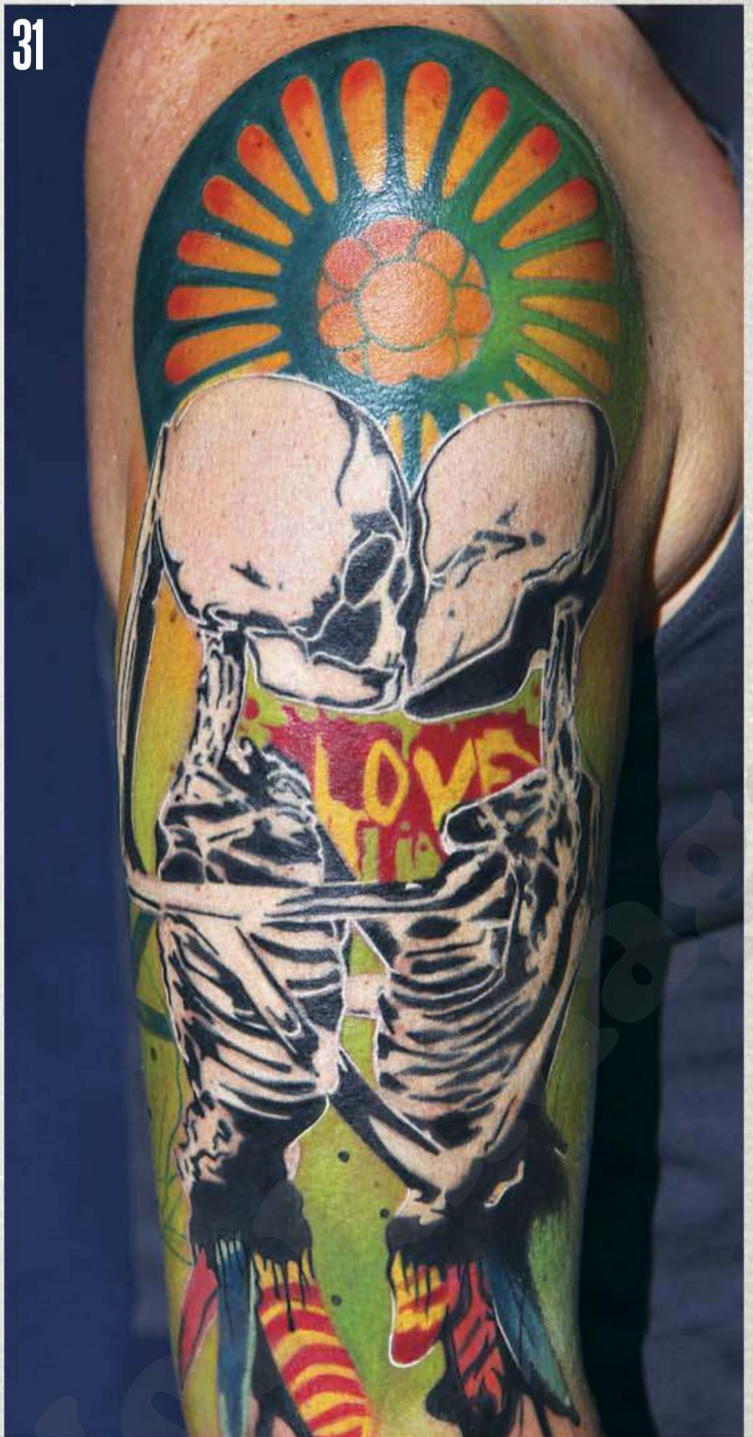
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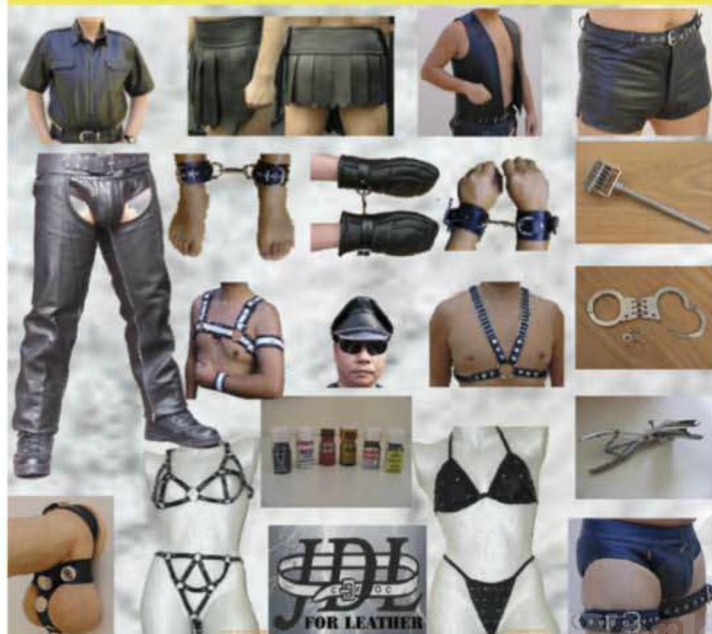
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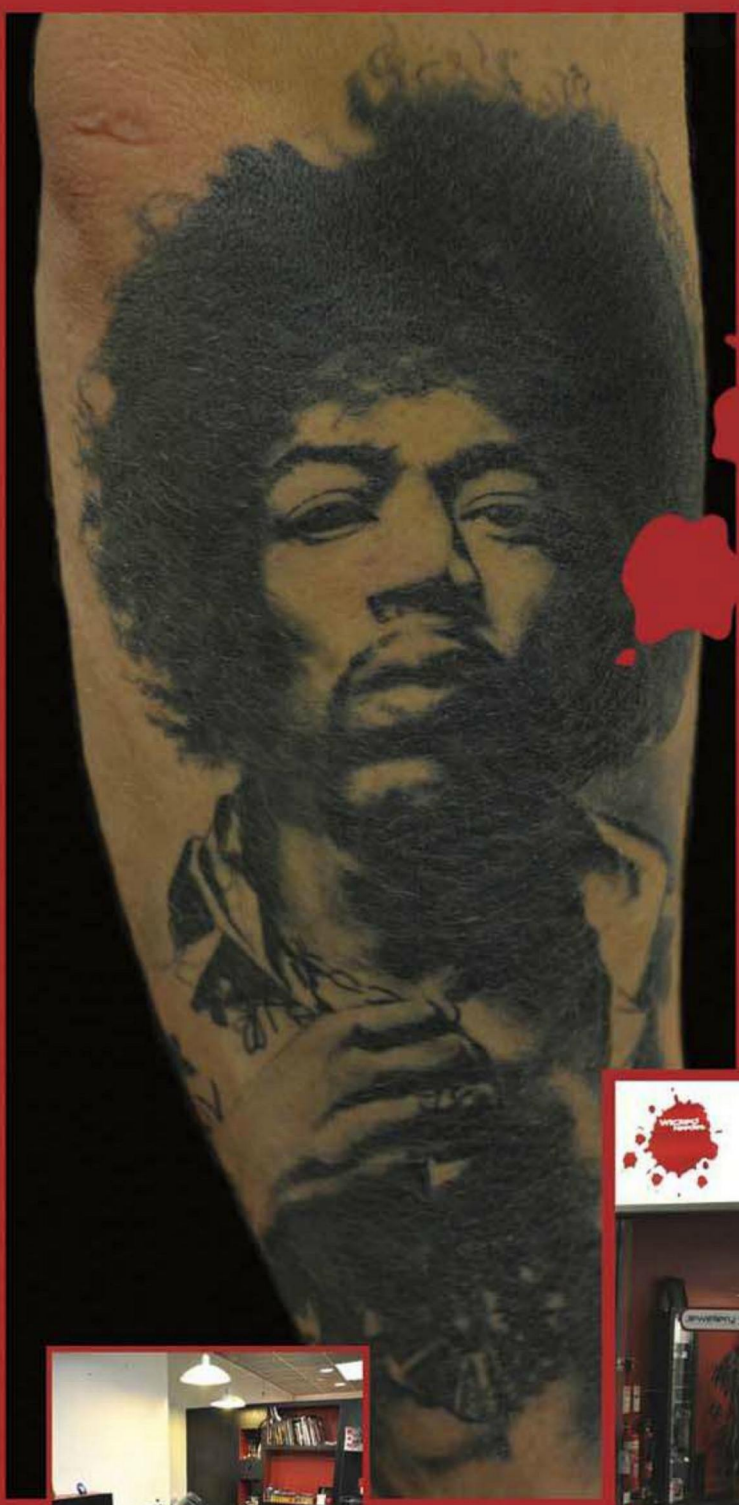
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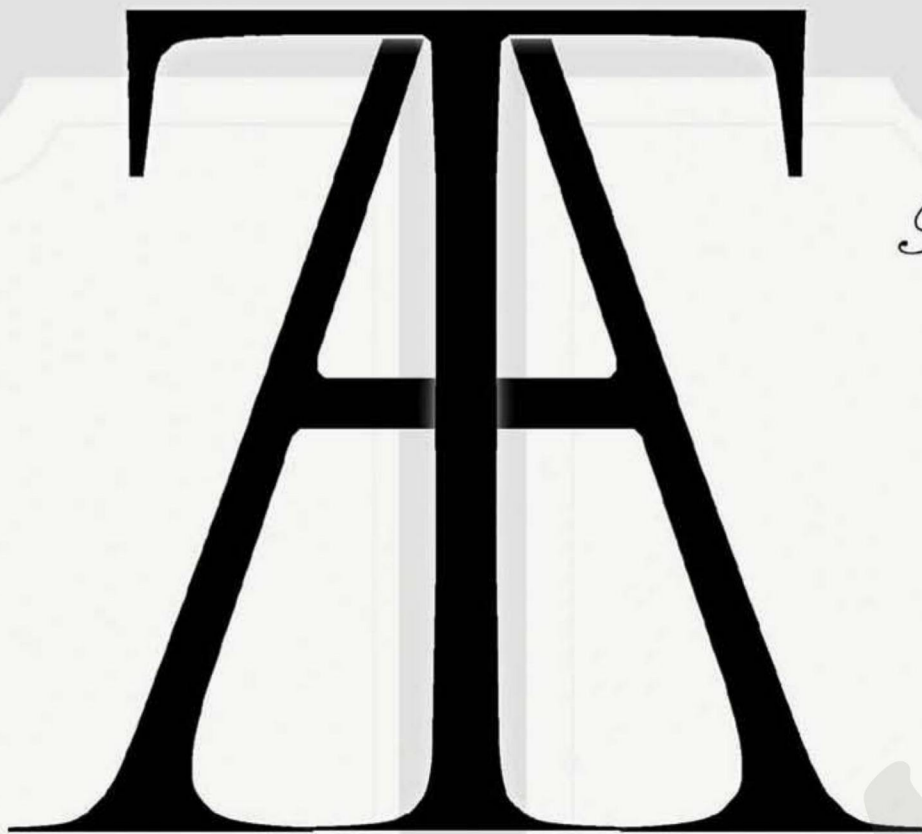


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# COUNTER CULTURE

There are tattoo artists you love, those you get along with, those you respect, and those who you'd let loose on your skin with whatever was at hand. Allow me to introduce the man who ticks all four of those boxes for me...



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Actually, that's a lie. I'm going to make no introduction whatsoever. What I'm going to do instead here is let you sit with us whilst Gene and myself shoot the shit. By the time you get to the end and soak up all it entails, you'll understand why.

"I grew up mostly on Spider-Man comics – that's where I started to learn how to draw. I think comic books in general have a nice continuity to them. An issue that might come out today really goes all the way back to issue one.

"I liked the art in comic books and that's really how I learned to draw when I was seven or eight, just tracing the drawings over and over. That's how you do it! You're just training your hand/ eye from following the line, and then once you've learned how to trace the line that's already there with your hand. And then you look away from the tracing onto a plain sheet of paper – and it's still the same thing. Your hand is still following a line, but it's just not pre-drawn.

"Then you don't even think about it anymore. One day, my wife was watching me draw and she doesn't get it at all. It's so second nature, you just don't even think about it anymore."

Do you find that you have to lock into work mode, or are you inclined to get up in the night with the thought that 'this has to be done right now'?

Mr. Smith Mr Coffey



"Occasionally maybe. Sometimes I go on art binges. I tattoo every day, but painting I have these spurts of inspiration where I paint for six hours every day. I'll get home from work and start painting, but that will last for maybe a month and then I dry up. Then a couple of months will go by where I'll do maybe one little thing and all of a sudden it will come on again, but I don't wake up in the middle of the night screaming with inspiration."

What I find with a lot of tattoo artists, especially when they also paint, is that whilst tattooing you're totally submerged in that world; inspiration and creativity creep in through the back door – kind of like it's formulating while you're doing something else. Is that the same for you?

"For me, both things simultaneously feed each other. My paintings since I started tattooing have totally changed,





## YOU HAVE TO FUCK UP A LOT AND BE WILLING TO TAKE THE RISK OF BEING WRONG

and the more I paint, the more my tattoos change, so each feeds the other at this point. But also, more so recently, even as close as the last couple of months, my tattooing has become more like what I paint.

"I went to a bunch of galleries a couple of days ago and sometimes that's the spark I need. I'll go to galleries in the city and come out thinking 'what the fuck is this crap?' But this week, I saw some stuff that was so freaking amazing that took some ideas that I had been using but to a whole other level. I came out with my mouth open, and tattooing is the same thing. I can do something and I'll like it, but then a week later I can look at it and wonder what's missing."

This is something I understand from a writers perspective as well. The piece has to be produced

– and when it's done, it's done. Everything has a lifespan all of its own, and then you need to keep moving, otherwise you'd be producing the same piece of work over and over.

"That's exactly it man. It's good when you do it, and then instantly my brain will start to pick it apart. I'll see any technical flaws in it, start thinking about how I could have done the design differently, or time will have passed from when I did the tattoo – which was perfectly good and I was proud of it at the time – but a month or two later, I will have seen different things, little nuances that I could have done. Maybe the splatter could have gone slightly differently... stuff like that. So what I'm getting at here is that, yes, I'm always trying to push myself.

"I recently saw this theatre 🍷"





group in Manhattan – they might actually be from London – they’re doing this performance called Sleep No More. Now, I don’t really like theatre. Never been into it, but this was like this really immersive theatrical performance. I had never seen something so... well, I can hands down say it was the coolest thing I have ever seen in my entire life. Anyway, it shifted something in me. There was something so unique about it and so fucking... well, it changed something in me psychically, to the point where I start thinking

to myself that I want to produce something that is of that calibre.

“I have no idea how though, so now I’m going through this process of thinking how do I push what I do, to get to the calibre of this thing.”

The business of pushing can be a tricky business. Personally, I’m all for making mistakes along the way. You simply can’t get where you’re going without making them, and if you do, you’re either a genius or not trying hard enough.

“Yeah, you have to fuck up a lot and be willing to take the risk of being wrong. Periodically, throughout my life, there’s been different influences. Jackson Pollock is one. I never liked him when I was younger, but then I saw his work again just as I hit 20 when there was a retrospective at the MOMA in the city. And to see these giant, huge paintings live – these massive things – totally changed the way I painted.

“Up until that point, my work had been very realistic, Dali crossover surrealist/surrealism stuff and that show was so powerful it shifted something in me.”

Influences are strange things. You pick them up subconsciously and wring

them dry of all you need from them without ever really being aware that this is what you did – obviously, otherwise it would be called ‘copying’.

“It’s always there though isn’t it? It’s not like you trashed it. You’re not throwing it out – I don’t think you can – you take it and you build on it. Everything from when you’re a baby until now are always your building blocks. I can still see those things in everything I do but if you’re growing, the water will start to muddy as you move away from them. They won’t be so obvious anymore.

“I recently cleaned out my house and found all these old sketchbooks and paintings from when I was 18 or so. Most of which were fucking awful. So full of ‘I’m 18 and I’m an artist and I understand the world’, but in reality, it really was 18-year-old masturbatory bullshit. But every now and then, there would be that one little thing where I hit something and I could still see that what I’m doing today harkens back to that.”

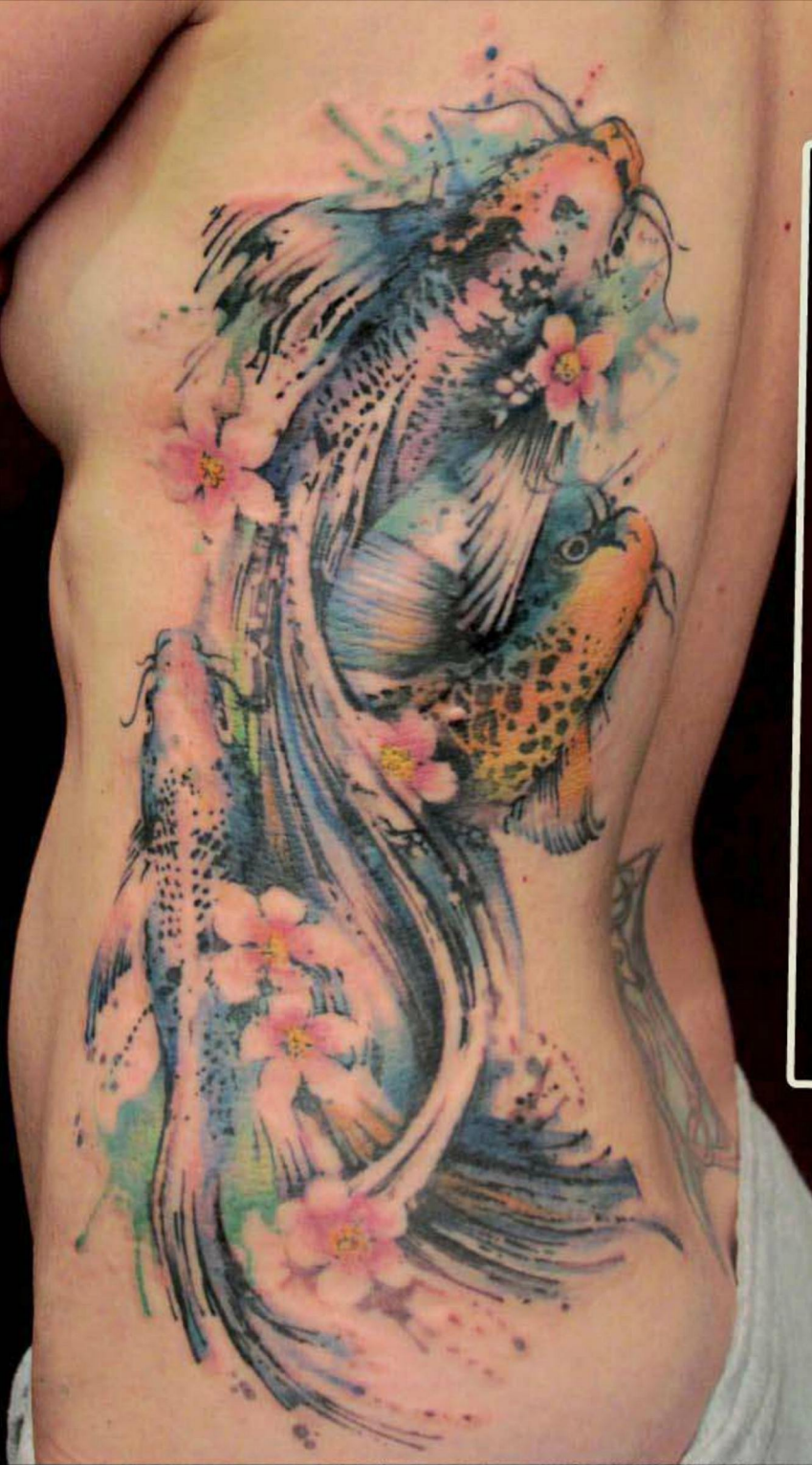
I think it would be very cool to one day, hopefully when you’re very old, be able to trace some kind of spinal column throughout an artist’s work. Be able to pick out the threads of your own originality maybe...

“I would think so. One thing simply leads to another in this game. Every five years or so, it’s good to do that. Recently, I found

MY PAINTINGS SINCE I STARTED TATTOOING HAVE TOTALLY CHANGED, AND THE MORE I PAINT, THE MORE MY TATTOOS CHANGE, SO EACH FEEDS THE OTHER AT THIS POINT







EVERYTHING FROM WHEN YOU'RE A BABY UNTIL NOW ARE ALWAYS YOUR BUILDING BLOCKS. I CAN STILL SEE THOSE THINGS IN EVERYTHING I DO, BUT IF YOU'RE GROWING, THE WATER WILL START TO MUDDY AS YOU MOVE AWAY FROM THEM. THEY WON'T BE SO OBVIOUS ANYMORE

a bunch of old pictures from when I first started tattooing and I was like 'how did I get away with that?' – not that they were bad or anything, but it's a whole world removed from what I do now."

Gene and I had a conversation before we hid ourselves away to do this interview – I don't know

about you but I love it when you 'discover' an artist whose work you think is out of this world and matches up with what you've got in mind as to where you're going next. Throw in the fact that you become friends and there are no losers in that equation. It wasn't always like

this... still isn't for far to big a part of the equation for my liking. Hooking up with somebody for what they can do when set free is insanely superior to hooking up with them simply because they have the tools for the job...

"That's the direction I want to keep going in. Having people come to me because they like my style and not have them come because I can do what they want. In tattooing, you have a lot more people that are coming from a fine art background now, that are starting to become tattooists who are simultaneously in this kind of painting/ tattoo culture, and they are more emotionally attached to the tattoos that they do. I certainly am more attached now that I'm doing what I want to do and use my own style. It's closer to the way I feel when I paint, so consequently, I get really into it. I mean, I get totally lost in a tattoo these days, as much as I do as when I paint.

"Prior to that, I was just doing 🍌

#### PRINCE VS MICHAEL JACKSON (KIND OF...)

Best get to the end of the main interview before you read this, otherwise, you'll wonder just how the hell we wound up talking about Prince in the first place...

"Have you ever seen the video of Prince's first performance? You've got James Brown and Michael Jackson on stage, and Brown shouts down to the crew to bring Prince onstage because he wants everybody in the crowd to see how amazing he is. So Prince comes to the stage on the shoulders of this big biker dude and just let's rip. I'd like to say it was an amazing performance, but it was more like an 'I don't give a fuck, this might be my one shot and right now I am going to do me' performance."

No, I had never seen that. Now I have – and you must watch it too. You can find it here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPK12SymqeQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPK12SymqeQ).





a tattoo. Somebody comes along and they want, say, a heart. I would still try to do it as well as I could, but it was in a 'tattoo style'. But now I feel that I am able to express myself, and the people who come to me connect on that level. That 'heart' guy? He doesn't get me or my style - now there's this spiritual connection with the clients who come, because they get what I get. We share something before we even begin.

"Seeing those tattoos walk away though... man, it hurts when they end up as nothing more than a photo in my portfolio. Recently though, I had a customer come back in for a new piece and the last time I saw her was five years ago. The piece I did was in this new graphic style that I was into - it was very unique to me and I was really attached. I remember at the time I was so excited to be doing it because it was so different. Now she comes in for another piece in my current style, but that one is holding

up. It was great to see it again.

"From a business point of view, working in a distinct style, you mark your territory because you can't really have anybody else work that space and have it work. You're pretty much guaranteed repeat custom. I mean people can do whatever they want - and they do - but speaking aesthetically, it's very hard once you've had people like me or Noon or Loic work on you, to make anything else work in that space. You could throw a traditional panther in there next to something I had done, but it's gonna look weird.

"It's not an intentional thing at all, but when you work with artists who are very singular in what they deliver, it comes

with the territory. There's this one piece I did which is an animal cruelty sleeve just on her forearm. We built that piece by piece, and the style I work in, it's really easy to do that and build on what I've already done. When you're expressionistic, you have way more options for linking pieces together.

"Actually, there's this one piece I did of koi fish on this woman's ribs. It's probably one of my favourite pieces. It's super traditional and it's been done a thousand million times, but the way I approached it... well, I just did it my way. There are no lines in it, but it still remains very traditional in its approach even though it's got me written all over it. You know, if you're in a band, you're not going to find a riff that's not been done before - we can all trace everything back to a source - and I like that kind of history. What makes

I HOPE I AM ALWAYS UNHAPPY WITH MY WORK. IT'S WHAT KEEPS ME WORKING THIS HARD. IT MAKES ME REALLY UNCOMFORTABLE TO HAVE YOU SIT THERE AND TELL ME HOW MUCH YOU LOVE WHAT I DO



ON ONE HAND IT'S GREAT THAT YOU LOVE IT, BUT RIGHT NOW, I COULD GO PICK UP MY PORTFOLIO AND SHOW YOU TEN THINGS ABOUT ANYTHING IN THERE THAT I FUCKING HATE

the artist is how you spin it.”

I find it strange that there are a finite number of basic themes in the world, and yet a seemingly infinite number of things you can do with them. Much is the same for words as pictures. 26 letters in the alphabet; whether you're good or bad at what you do, all rather illogically depends on nothing more than what order you put them in. But it's also about knowing where to draw the line with your talent – things can become unreadable, unlistenable and unartistic very quickly if you don't know where that line is for yourself.

It also becomes apparent from this train of thought that living 'now', is not so easy as it would appear. So much influence and history behind us actually carries a fair amount of responsibility when it comes to what comes next. I flaunt my trashy analogy at Gene that goes something along the lines of... Hunter S Thompson never set out to be a

great writer, he just wrote what he wanted. The fact that people grew to like what he did was accident and not design. You can't manage those circumstances no matter how hard you try.

“Yes, it could have been anybody, but it was him. Anybody could have painted the Mona Lisa; anybody who had the technical expertise to do it and the fucking patience to sit there and get on with it could have painted that piece, but Da Vinci did. Anybody could have painted a Jackson Pollock painting, but Pollock did.

“There's something different inside that person that makes them do it. That's the difference. There's a drive in the person that they have to work out for themselves and that is the difference between good and great, which is something I'm still trying to figure out... and that's a problem, because I don't think you can figure it out!”

I suspect that if you try and figure it out too much, you will

likely go mad at some juncture. Start doing crazy shit like cutting off your ears, but the fact remains, those who continually push themselves to be great, will always be unhappy with their work. Always. It's part of the deal.

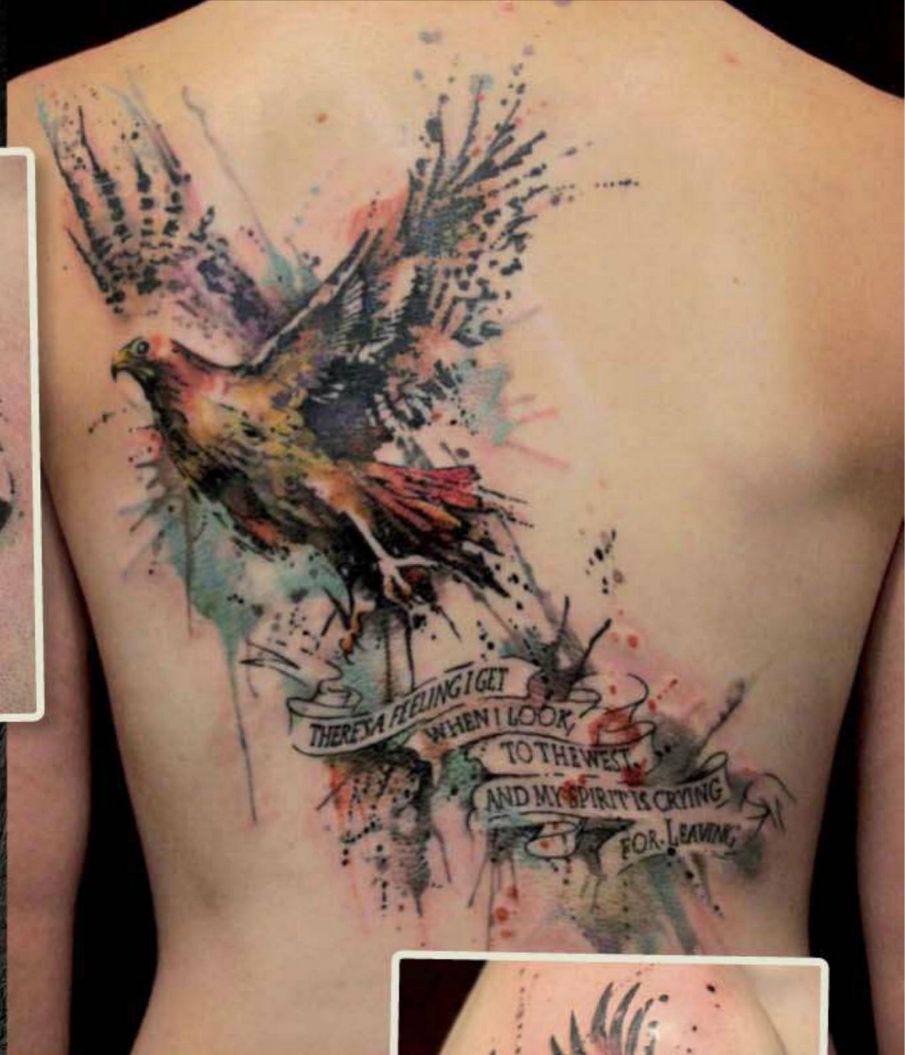
“I hope I am always unhappy with my work. It's what keeps me working this hard. It makes me really uncomfortable to have you sit there and tell me how much you love what I do. On one hand it's great that you love it, but right now I could go pick up my portfolio and show you ten things about anything in there that I fucking hate, but I can't.”

I get this. I really do. In any creative endeavour, only the creator will ever know all the times they changed their mind mid-flow, all the things that could have been, all the things that were self-edited out before they even had a chance to be something...

“Yep. Once you've filled that space with some colour, that's the space filled – otherwise, you would never do anything. It's a little different with music because there are multiple opportunities to change it, or if you miss a note, you just keep going. I would say that there are a million 🌸







YOU'RE BUILDING A VOCABULARY. THE MORE YOU ARE TRUE TO YOURSELF, THE MORE YOU BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND IT. AT FIRST, I WAS JUST MAKING A MESS, BUT NOW IT'S GETTING MORE REFINED AND I AM ALWAYS SEEING BETTER WAYS OF PUTTING A TATTOO ON A PERSON

musicians that would disagree with that statement though!"

So, Mr Coffey, where are we all going next in this big old world?

"Well, what goes around always comes around. There's a big interest right now in avant garde/fancy art tattoo; at the same time there this incredible movement in realistic work. Look at how Jeff Gogue is twisting things - who knows really where we're going to find ourselves in a few years? He's like Prince in the fact that you never really know where the hell he's going to go next, but at the same it doesn't matter because it's simply going to be 'that good' when he does it."

So follows much lengthy discourse about The Purple One (see box copy), but it is relevant. Can we imagine a world in which somebody like Bob Tyrell came out of his already genius box and did something so totally different than was expected?

"I think the world would stand back and proclaim 'whoa!' But that's kind of what I did a couple of years ago. I could show you my realism stuff from two years

ago that was tight and great and everything, but I made the decision that I wanted to make the jump to what I wanted to do and that alone. I made the choice, I took everything off the internet and from my portfolio and buried it. I decided to say no to customers that would come to me and ask for anything but what I wanted to do, and that's scary.

"But the scares didn't come. The exact opposite happened. As soon as I started saying no to projects that weren't part of where I was going, I went from being booked up two to three weeks in advance to being booked up four to five months in advance. I think if you're being true to yourself - totally true to what you believe, then it's going to work out OK. You can't go at it half-assed though. You've got to go all the way. That's something that Noon helped me out with. There were a few things I would have liked to keep in my portfolio, but like the man said, 'sure, it's a great tattoo, but it's not what you want to do, so take it out. If you keep showing that, you will keep doing that.'

"It's all about focus. You can't be in focus and have out of focus - it will take away from the focusing process. You're building a vocabulary. The more you are true to yourself, the more you begin to understand it. At first, I was just making a mess, but now it's getting more refined and I am always seeing better ways of putting a tattoo on a person."

And right there, is where I'm going to leave you hanging by a rope. I feel we have said enough here and Mister Coffey's work more than speaks for itself. If you're not looking at your blank spaces right now, you weren't reading properly... 🐼



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# OLD ENGLAND

The Hobgoblin, Bath. My pub of choice. A line of skulls hangs along the top of the bar; a line written above the urinals reads 'Fuck, I just pissed on the floor reading the walls'. I feel comfortable in this place; I can go in there in whatever mood

the times. A couple of years ago people were doing Japanese, now they're doing neo-traditional."

I was curious to find out if Jesse felt there were a few artists around the world that were dictating these trends. "There are a few artists out there that people rush to their style quite quickly. Valerie Vargas and Simon Erl blew up big last year, and for good reason; their stuff is solid, clean and really well done. Americans doing new school, animation based work,



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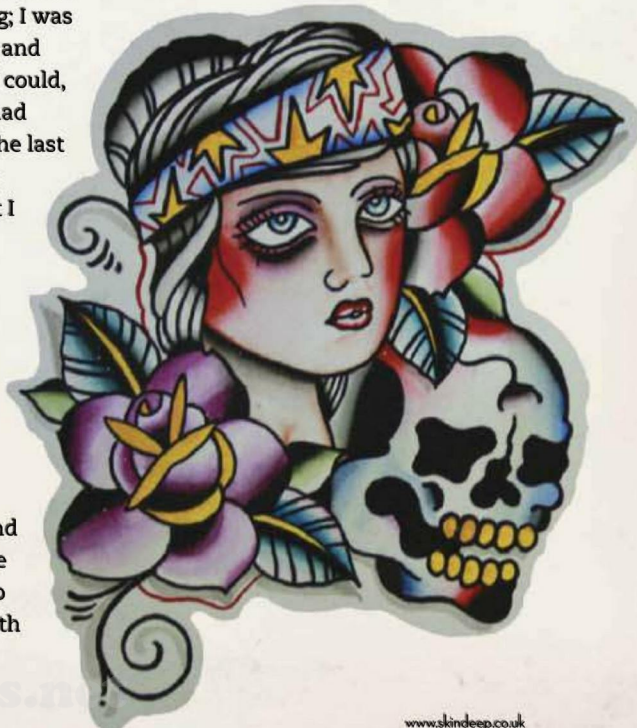
"So it seemed fitting that the first interview I do for Skin Deep to be based in my hometown of Bath is in The Hobgoblin. And it's with Jesse Rayner of Electric Vintage, the tattoo shop just opposite the entrance to the pub.

"I grew up in Kingston, South London. It's a good place, a little bit rough. I had some great friends. I listened to a lot of hip hop, hung with the guys from Rarekind, and got pretty heavily into graffiti. Between Portsmouth and Brighton I'd do a lot of trackside painting between these districts. Mainly illegal stuff. I had a lot of friends who were getting to 18/ 19 and spending all their money on paint and markers, and looking for ways to get paid for their art. A few of them took the tattoo route, but it didn't occur to me at first to take a similar path until I started getting tattooed myself.

"When it came to that, I didn't go down the route of buying a machine and tattooing myself at

home. I was really into graphic art and line drawings, so I'd already built up a portfolio. A lot of people I knew were doing Mexican-style artwork, all that side of things. Mexican themed skulls, girls, and street art was massive at the time, so I kind of followed the crowd with that for a while. For about two years I didn't really know what style I was doing; I was doing just everything and painting as much as I could, drawing whenever I had the time. It's only in the last six months or so that I've really found what I want to do in tattooing.

"It used to be that people would stick with their own style, but it seems now that people are more likely to go with trends. For example, dot work and bold traditional at the moment is very in. So you learn to move with



Tom Abbott © Jesse





has really caught on recently and there's some awesome work coming out of Poland as always; Adrian Edek and that crew. The ink shows in America haven't had any effect on the style, what they've done is just mainstream tattooing even more, and I think that hype is finally over. Everyone's over it and getting down to business now.

"When I was first getting tattooed, I was just going in and picking out a piece of flash from the wall. I remember going in once and the guy told me I had five minutes to pick out a design or get the fuck out! So I ended up getting some nasty horrible thing because I was young and scared of the big bad tattoo man and just really wanted a tattoo, which I'm now getting lasered off. I spent about a year getting heavily tattooed before I really knew anything about it. So I regret a lot of that, and I'm getting a lot of lasering done at the moment, which includes a full back tattoo... it's a painful time in my life, but you learn from it."

I asked him to explain his apprenticeship to me. "I picked up a machine within a couple of weeks. I was very much thrown in at the deep end. A lot of it

I THINK WHAT SEPARATES A LOT OF TATTOO ARTISTS IS WHETHER THEY WANT TO GET BETTER. YOU HAVE TO CONSTANTLY STOKE THE FIRE THAT YOU HAD IN THE BEGINNING, THE FIRE THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO GET BETTER

didn't go so well at the beginning. Various kinds of bribery... if you give me this I'll teach you that or whatever, and then they wouldn't actually teach you. It was pretty rough for a while. But yeah, it was very much 'here's the machine, this is how you do it, tattoo on some mates'. I was definitely

thrown in at the deep end. But I thank them for that.

"You bite the bullet. It's get good or get out. So I bit the bullet. It was very old school. It wasn't all bad by any means. I mean, I've learnt to tattoo. I was doing that for a few years. I had some moments of doubt 🙄"





throughout it. Where I was, the people that wanted to help you, wanted to poach you for other shops. So people were moving around constantly, there was no sense of consistency. I gave up my whole life for it though, so I kept going back, I wanted it so badly. It wasn't an option to me that I wasn't going to make it. So I threw my whole life on the line.

"I do wish my apprenticeship had been different, but I wouldn't be where I am now without it, so all I got is thanks for those who put the time in. They know who they are. Some people get good stories out of them and some people get bad. I guess I got it somewhere in the middle. I suppose that taking the rough with the smooth sculpts you as a person and I believe that makes a good work ethic. Where I am now, we all get along. And we all get along with our tattooing. There's no bullshit, no politics. And we have some fun. I try not to get involved in the politics anymore."

Jesse, based in Swindon, now makes the daily trip to Bath where

DOT WORK AND BOLD TRADITIONAL AT THE MOMENT IS VERY IN. SO YOU LEARN TO MOVE WITH THE TIMES. A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO PEOPLE WERE DOING JAPANESE, NOW THEY'RE DOING NEO-TRADITIONAL



he presently works with Chantale Coady at Electric Vintage. "Bath is expensive. It's a lot cheaper for me to live in Swindon and make that commute, plus there's a fairly big graffiti scene and we ain't too far from Bristol, so I'm loving it. I

love it in Bath though. Like I said, all the tattooers around here just get down to work. I feel like I've found my home here. We get a lot of customers. There's Broad Street which is filled with great artists. And I have my focus on new







THE INK SHOWS IN AMERICA HAVEN'T HAD ANY EFFECT ON THE STYLE, WHAT THEY'VE DONE IS JUST MAINSTREAM TATTOOING EVEN MORE AND I THINK THAT HYPE IS FINALLY OVER. EVERYONE'S OVER IT AND GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS NOW

all my free time into it. I don't think there's anything else I'll ever do... well, besides painting, but old habits never die.

"I'd love to pack a bag and do some on-the-road tattooing – definitely the States. I'd love to work New York; Daredevil Tattoo, for example. It would be nice to meet new people, do a bit of networking. I like to travel. I'm never in more than one place so it gets stressful. That might change now I'm at Electric Vintage. It's just the right set-up. And my lifestyle living out in the sticks near Swindon really suits me too."

I asked Jesse if he was still involved with graffiti. "I've kind of eased off it. Pretty much for legal reasons! It was crazy some of the stuff we got up to and probably shouldn't try to go down that route again. They caught up with us eventually. It's not something I want to go too much into. A set of friends of mine from London are still doing it, they're still not getting caught, but it's pretty crazy. But I've found a legal way of carrying on doing my art... I found some friends in Swindon/ Bristol that do legal-based painting. I'd like to do more public spaces where you don't have to worry about the law. I'm really enjoying that. I think the term 'street art' has killed it big time. The division

of graffiti and street

art, in my opinion, is quite big, as you can control and prep for a piece choosing colours and just basically showing the skills you've worked hard to acquire with graffiti.

This is a little different from cutting out a stencil of a police officer pissing up a wall and telling everyone it's art because its edgy. You just can't compare."

Jesse was on a break from a large traditional sleeve he was working on across the road, and it was getting to the point where he had to get back to his client, so I asked him if he had any final words. "I want to say a big thanks to Chantale and Sara, who run our shop, and all my writer friends who are still about. Big thanks to Danielle; I wouldn't be here without her. Massive props to the Raw crew and all they're doing in Wiltshire for the kids. And a big one to NT gang for the past times. All the others know who they are." 🐼



school and Japanese work, and I just keep getting more and more work. It's a great atmosphere.

"From a promotional point of view, I'm not comfortable with promoting myself. I put all my tattoos on people, and the word has spread around. So now I've got people coming from all over the place, but I don't know how – I'm not putting it up on the internet, I guess other people may be. So that's great. I'm happy with that. But generally I shy away from getting everything I've done up on the internet, and it's worked out fine for me.

"I work my ass off now. I just have this endless hunger to advance my style. So I'll often come in on my days off if there's a particular tattoo I feel really passionate about doing. I will put



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# TATTOO TATTOO TATTOO MASTER



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Finally, and at last, a magazine that gets as close as possible to the core of what tattoo art is truly about, without the glam, glitz, showbiz and gloss. Within these pages you will find a lack of celebrity junk. What we give you instead is a lot of hard-nosed, common sense, proper tattoo world reality that guarantees to capture traditional tattooist values. Everything is consigned to the bin that isn't relevant to actually tattooing."

Woody

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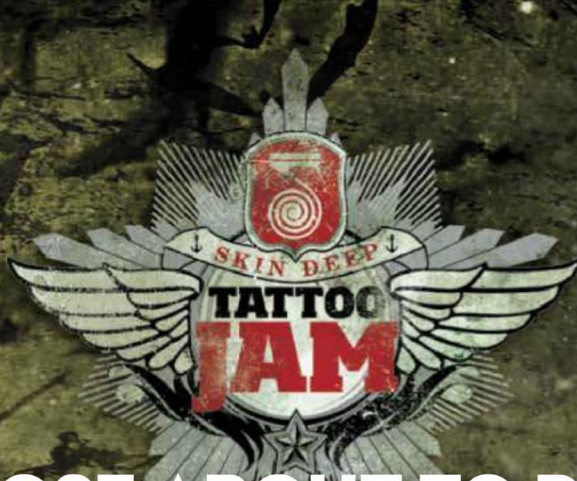
CHRIS-O



SCOOTZ







## FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK...

Here we go again. With the Manchester International Show now sitting pretty in the previously sunny August spot of our calendar, Tattoo Jam found itself a new home during pumpkin season when the sun sets early only to let the stars come out and shine...

When the highlight of Tattoo Jam isn't getting to swank about in Adam Ant's jacket, you know it was great show – but where to start? I mean, even when you're there, it's impossible to catch everything, but there were multiple opportunities to catch girls walking up ladders made of swords, girls eating fire, girls taking their clothes off... but it wasn't all for the guys. There was also plenty of time to catch the demon Sickboy drilling masonry attachments up his nose and doing things with a chainsaw that they probably advise against in the instruction manual. Most dangerous of all, there was a stand-up comic with a tongue faster than his brain could keep up with.

Across the traditional three-day tattoo bender, there was also a glut of art, pumpkin drilling, scary dressing up, a couple of nasty looking stilt-walking Ring Wraith type things, and most importantly of all, a mega-ton of incredible tattoos, just as many laughs, and if there were tears, then I guarantee they were for the right reasons.

Let's rewind for a moment. With the benefit of hindsight and a total of about five hours on stage judging the fruit of everybody's labour, I can hand on heart say that the standard of tattoos pumped out this



### BONZO

For some reason, we decided in our wisdom that anybody that worked for Skin Deep/Jazz would not be allowed to enter their tattoos into the competitions. Which is dumb because none of us are tattoo artists, but you know what people can be like. Anyway, my buddy James got the chance to sit down with Xoil this weekend and the result is this tattoo right here. Too good to let it sit on his arm forever and not let you guys see it – so here it is. Months of thought, a great artist briefing and a total handover of trust for Xoil to do his thing and you have yourself a tattoo that's simply incredible. Jealous? Me? I did punch him in the bollocks for his trouble...

THE BAR HAS BEEN RAISED NOW TO SUCH A POINT WHERE THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR ANYBODY IN THE UK TO EVER HAVE AN AVERAGE TATTOO AGAIN

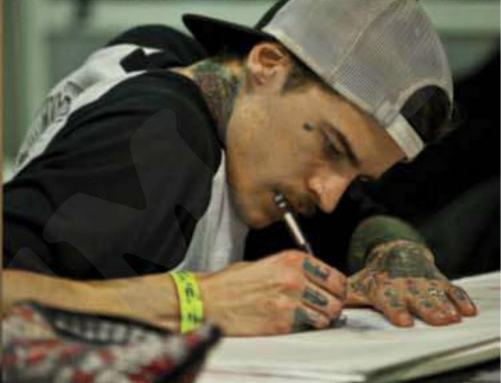
weekend is the highest I have ever seen. Everybody brought their game face this year, and the bar has been raised now to such a point where there's no excuse for anybody in the UK to ever have an average tattoo again. We're talking some serious raising of standards here... and they were already pretty damn high.

As is only right and correct, it takes me about three hours to do a full circuit of the floor – and may the Gods have mercy, I do try to say hello to everybody, but by the time the bell rings for school to start, it's not long before everybody on the floor is buzzing with work. So on a personal note, if I missed you, it's only out of respect for letting you get on with your weekend.

The Tattoo Masters' Ball which took place in its traditional spot on ARTIST friDAY evening unleashed a few surprises in the Industry Award camp. Major kudos went out to Bez at Triple6 for taking the Best UK Male award – there was nothing but respect for that one I promise you. It's kind of like watching Led Zeppelin get an award for 🍷













**WINNERS LIST****SMALL BLACK & GREY**

Sam by Jarek Baka at The Country Gent / Rock Tattoo

**LARGE BLACK & GREY**

Chris Winlow by John Anderton at Nemesis Tattoo Studio

**ORIENTAL**

Colin Ellis by Jo Harrison at Modern Body Art

**PORTRAIT**

Ed John by Ben Laukis at Pure Vision

**BEST REALISM**

Lauren Stephens by Tom Ruki at Tenacious Tattoo

**BEST AVANT GARDE**

Scott Carney by Xoil at Needle Side

**CHEST PIECE**

Matt Lowe by Nigel Kurt at Funhouse Tattoo

**SMALL COLOUR**

Adrian Parrish by Simon Cooke at The Ink Spot

**LARGE COLOUR**

Mark Conner by Bez at Triplesix

**BEST OF SATURDAY**

Paul Joyce by Jarek Baka at The Country Gent / Rock Tattoo

**BEST OF SUNDAY**

John Potter by Jeremy Miller at Pigment

**BEST OF CONVENTION**

Paul Joyce by Jarek Baka at The Country Gent / Rock Tattoo

something because there's simply no arguing with just how great that guy is. Rakhee Shah took a hold of the Best UK Female award, and again, that was much deserved. Rakhee plays her cards very close to her chest, doesn't broadcast anything with a megaphone and slowly, word of mouth has made her very popular – but we've been watching, and a lot of us here at Skin Deep rather suspect that she can do anything she puts her mind to.

Tanane Whitfield took home one an award, which was pretty cool given that he designed them for us. Reasons? The guy is a grade-A globetrotter who just gets better and better every time we see him. To put it in perspective for you, when we rolled it at 4am from having a few post-show drinks, who should we find sitting at the breakfast table drawing with Boog and working like a dog? That's right, Tanane, who had only finished something like a 12-hour sitting a few hours previously. That, my friends, is who the future belongs to.

It also warmed the heart to be able to hand out our new Best Innovation Style Award to Paul Talbot. This new addition to the pantheon was brought about by some thought going into what we saying with these awards. They really had to begin to mean something special as we go forwards, and next year will hopefully see them expanded

into more categories (but don't quote me on that). Anyway, we felt that Paul totally deserved this for sticking to his guns and pushing forward in a style not always appreciated by the British public – that's one bar already set very high.

Talking of heart-warming, it was nothing but a total pleasure to hand one of these pumpkin bombs over to Wayne and Pam at ABH for their outstanding contribution to the industry. They work tirelessly at everything, if you need a hand with something – they're the go-to guys. Throw in Ink 4 Heroes and the Cupcake Club and you have a great bunch of people giving everything they've

got to this community. Totally deserved. No question.

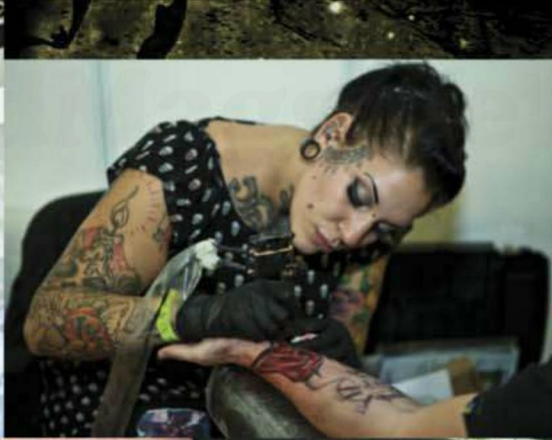
Finally, we also added a Best Newcomer Award; this was aimed well and truly at finding somebody who was on the road constantly, was improving every time we saw them, and was constantly on the tip of other artist's tongues as somebody to watch out for. Beki Sanderson walked home with that one... a little shell-shocked maybe, but definitely walking.

Saturday saw big queues as usual rattling the doors to come in, and – as always – ten minutes after the doors were opened, it looked like the Jam had already been on for a few hours. And like those battleships in *War of the*

IT WAS NOTHING BUT A TOTAL PLEASURE TO HAND ONE OF THESE PUMPKIN BOMBS OVER TO WAYNE AND PAM AT ABH FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE INDUSTRY







Worlds, still they come.

It's hard trying to be omnipresent at the Jam – it's a big old space – but across the weekend, I bore witness to some quite remarkable things. Jeremy Miller, who joined us as a last minute addition from the States, found himself both the winner of Best of Saturday and also the creator of a tattoo for Dizz who funded his ink by means of a random collection from the generous patrons of the show. Weird.

My buddy, Mark Poole, not only finished one tattoo this weekend (for the man is well renowned for continually making things bigger than planned once started), but two! Looking forward to seeing more of this 'finishing' lark as the year progresses. John Anderton knocked a great sleeve out of the ballpark too and snatched a cool Best Black and Grey trophy for his trouble.

The troublesome crew at Bridgend put in some serious work across the weekend (check out that Michael Jackson tat from Chris), and Johnny D also found himself well and truly making it onto my editorial map by upping his game on himself. Andy Walker at Creative Vandals continues to get better every time I see him; Tony Unwin introduced



**ANGELS**

Sometimes, something very small can snap a very large object into a very sharp focus for you. Tattoo Jam is a serious amount of fun, but when I got home, I discovered that for some people, it means one hell of a lot more than that. This tattoo – created by Przemek at Dragon's Den in Blackpool – has a beautiful story behind it. A story that I'm not going to publish here... instead I'm going to send you to its source: [walkingwithangels.co.uk](http://walkingwithangels.co.uk). If other posts have superceded it, scroll until you find The Perfect Tattoo. My heart melted...

LIKE I SAY ABOUT MOST THINGS, IF YOU CARED, YOU WERE THERE. IF YOU WEREN'T, NEXT YEAR, COME JOIN US. IT REALLY IS A TOTAL BLAST

me to a whole new world when it comes to describing where tribal tattooing is headed in the West; and Toko and Kevin James from Needleside proved that there is nothing quite so captivating as art that you don't really understand but know is white-hot anyway.

I know I've missed out a whole load of people and these are only my highlights – ah, if only I had the room to let you know what everybody was up to. Still, like I say about most things, if you cared, you were there. If you weren't, next year, come join us. It really is a total blast.

On a final personal note – from Arabella Drummond to Xoilo (can't think of anybody that was kicking around with a name that begins with a Z, so that will have to do), and

everybody in between – thanks for making Tattoo Jam 2012 a landmark event yet again.

Which really begs the question, what the hell are we going to do do for next year? Bring it on... whatever it is. 🙌





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**A TALE OF TATTOOS  
AND FRIENDSHIP IN**

# THE RAINY CITY



Once upon a time, not so long ago, in a dark and damp city where not much seems to grow, five friends got together, to drink beer and dream of a world where things were different, where they would work together, eat together and defeat dragons together, or at least draw dragons together...



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Somehow, on that cold winter's night, an idea was laid. Then when summer came, the egg hatched and out into the thin northern sunshine came a new baby. Rain City Tattoo Collective was born into the arms of four expectant dads, and one tiny auntie. This is their story.

Matt Cooley, Gre Hale, and Daniel Morris are convinced that Rain City came about due to a drunken night out. But there's a lot more to it than that though. All three, along with their fourth partner, Danny Rossiter, wanted to give Manchester something that it strangely lacked – a big, creative, custom shop with multiple artists and regular guests, influenced by the UK studios where they received their own tattoos, studios such as Into You (London) and Magnum Opus (Brighton).

Where Rain City differs from other big tattoo shops is in its structure; instead of having a traditional boss and worker hierarchy, the studio they envisaged on that drunken night out functioned as a collective, with everything from costs to decisions equally divided in

order to allow each tattooer more time and freedom to really concentrate on their art. Gre says, "here, because the costs are split four ways, we don't have to go tattoo-tattoo-tattoo, walk in-walk in-walk in, we can do one or two tattoos a day, take our time and really do our best." Danny talks about the benefits of working collectively similarly: "We're artists. No artist wants to have a boss and be told what to do, it goes against everything we stand for. The studio I used to work for was run by people that don't even tattoo, so for them, it wasn't about art, it was just about money. It's different for us."

For the good folk at Rain City, it's all about the tattoos, and the love and respect they have for this most immediate of art forms is obvious. As Danny observes, "being a tattooist is pretty cool. Yes, some shit comes with it, but all the good bits override the bad bits. It's rewarding in itself, and even after ten years of tattooing, I still find it exciting to do."

And Gre is just as enthusiastic, "there is no other job around that's got this sort of history. I mean, plumbers don't go 'Remember that sink that was



fitted by that top plumber back in the day?" I think tattooing is special because it's a people thing, it's not high brow like fine art, which also has a tradition and a history, it's art, but it's little people thing and I think that's why I like it." Daniel Morris takes it even further, "I live and breathe tattooing. I can't think of any other job I could do that would make me feel like that; some days it doesn't feel like work at all."

"We get to hang out with really cool people all day," offers Gre. "Rain City is like a big social club; we all go round and look at each other's work and talk to all the customers, it's great." Matt Cooley loves the community feeling too, "I've got so many friends all over the world that I just never would have met if I'd been working in an office. People like Hexa, soon to guest at Rain City, and Harry Morgan. There's a real sense of all 🍻"

Paula Hardy Kangelos James Robinson www.jwrobinson.co.uk



# World







**DANNY**

**DANNY ROSSITER**

Danny Rossiter makes Japanese style tattoos that look so traditional, you'll feel like you've seen them somewhere before. Thoroughly influenced by the classic imagery of Eastern painters, printmakers, and craftsman, Danny describes his work as "all copied" - a humble oversimplification of the respectful homage he pays to his predecessors whilst still managing to demonstrate a definitive stylistic flourish of his own. A man born in Zimbabwe who apprenticed in New Zealand shouldn't be able to make Japanese tattoos as good as this.

**YEARS TATTOOING:** 10  
**TATTOOED BY:** Luca Ortis, Matt Black, Borneo Headhunters, Saz Saunders, Bara, Aaron Bell, Adam Craft and Paco Exel.  
**INSPIRED BY:** All at Rain City, and those that have tattooed Danny personally.  
**CONTACT:** [raincitymanchester@gmail.com](mailto:raincitymanchester@gmail.com)

IT'S ALMOST LIKE APPRENTICES AREN'T ALLOWED TO MAKE MISTAKES ANYMORE, THERE IS SO MUCH KNOWLEDGE OUT THERE ALREADY, THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR ERRORS

**being in it together.** It probably seems quite cliquy from the outside, but it's not really." "I've also met a lot of people who are just really, really nice," says Gre. "There are lot of people tattooing at the moment who are around the same age as us, doing a similar style of tattoos, and I find them really inspiring." Cooley ends this train of thought, "I feel so stoked that my customers like what I do enough to enable me to make a living from it." And that's the overriding feeling you get hanging out at Rain City, everyone is stoked to be there, making art and talking tattoos, day in, day out.

Things aren't always completely rosy though, bad days and mistakes are part of

**the creative life too.** Cooley says, "the mistakes I've made are in relation to myself in retrospect; I opened a shop too early; I took on an apprentice too early, two in fact - Shaun Bailey (now of Cockasnook) and Jemma Jones, luckily they've both done amazingly well. I jumped into the deep end and realised quite quickly I couldn't swim... yet."

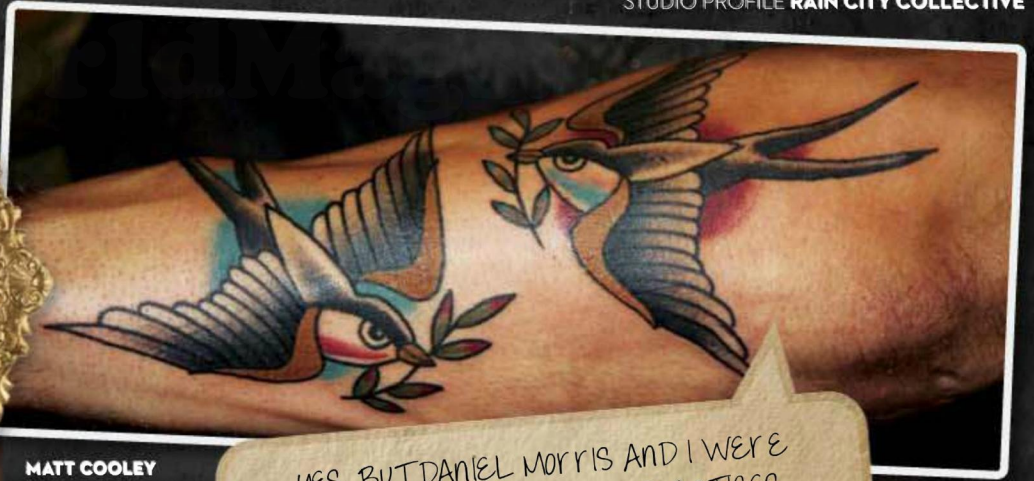
Gre's thoughts are optimistic, "everyone is learning all the time. Some days you go home and think 'Well that could definitely have gone better', but as long as you take that new knowledge to your next tattoo, you'll keep improving." Daniel Morris is also upbeat, in his characteristically measured way, "making mistakes doesn't traumatise me the way it did in the early days; I used



to lose sleep analysing what I'd done that day. Now I see those tattoos and I'm surprised at how much better they are than what I'd believed back then. They don't look too bad."

Jemma Jones is Matt's apprentice - she doesn't quite consider herself a fully fledged tattooer just yet, even though her easily identifiable art says otherwise - she worries "I don't really know what I'm doing, so maybe everything is a big mistake. I've gone home and cried before..."



**MATT**

YES, BUT DANIEL MORRIS AND I WERE  
IN THE LAST WAVE OF APPRENTICES  
THAT HAD IT REALLY TOUGH

**MATT COOLEY**  
Matt Cooley's tattoos are very traditional, simple and elegant, but served up with a sense of humour. A grouchy, sardonic wit that portrays Jesus as a tiny tattooed boxer, turns a love letter into an enthusiastic obscenity and swells the posterior of a Latino pin up to gargantuan proportions. Stripped back to big outlines, black shading and a muted, restrained, vintage colour palette, Matt is perhaps best described as 'Five colours Cooley', but he also enjoys bringing a western twist to Japanese style tattoos, geometric work, and has a growing interest in portraiture.

**YEARS TATTOOING:** 7  
**INSPIRED BY:** My peers and colleagues inspire me and show me new ways to tackle problems every day. I'm lucky to be able to count many great tattooers as friends, Harry Morgan and Tom Arnison, who I work beside at Blue Blood, Nick Mayes, Rachel and Nick Baldwin, the guys at Cockasnook, Jamie Greaves, Mitch and Rich in Leeds, Pedro Soos, Hexa, Simone Capex, Phil Kyle, Jonas Pederson. I also love the work of Matty D'Arienzo, Stevie Edge, Ben Rorke, Job De Quay and Josh Stephens.  
**TATTOOED BY:** Danny Rossiter did one of my first, about 12 years ago. I might let him tattoo me again sometime, since he's been practising. El Monga, Adrian Willard, Bob Corner, most of the friends mentioned earlier and probably a lot more that I can't remember.  
**CONTACT:**  
[www.mattcooleytattoo.com](http://www.mattcooleytattoo.com)

maybe I'm a wuss. I love making my customers happy though."

Danny Rossiter worked hard to support himself while apprenticing too, although he doesn't think his story is an unusual one: "My beginning is boring. I was working in a fruit and veg shop in New Zealand, and it was great, I loved working there. Then the guy who was tattooing me asked if I wanted to learn myself, and yeah, damn right I did! I worked there everyday for a couple of years, not getting paid and having to keep up another job too. Then he got himself a drug habit so I went to work in a canoe factory for six months. After that I moved to the UK and started tattooing full-time straight away."

Daniel Morris tells a similar story: "I didn't look for an apprenticeship, I sort of fell into it. I was at art school doing



a photography degree, I was coming to the end of it and didn't know what the hell I was going to do with my life. Luckily, Simon Sloan, who was tattooing my sleeves offered me an apprenticeship."

Jemma Jones also went to art school, studying almost every discipline, textiles, photography, graphic design, and fine art (along with Rachel McCarthy of Modern Body Art), before finally hunting for an apprenticeship after graduation. After a couple of false starts Matt took her on and she says things have been "really good" ever since; "I feel really lucky that I'm getting to

learn. It's all great, apart from the carpal tunnel thing I have. I'm hoping that it's just that I have weak little hands and I can get stronger in time. Maybe I'll have to cut off my hand and have a machine implanted at the end of my arm." Gre started out in advertising as a creative, and it was Danny that suggested he get an apprenticeship based on his skill for illustration, which he did, at 72 Tattoo.

Matt is the only member of the collective that hasn't had formal art training, and instead studied politics and philosophy, but "there aren't many jobs advertised for philosophers, nor 🌻"





**GRE**

**GRE HALE**

Gre Hale makes traditional tattoos with a flat, bold, graphic style finish reminiscent of a tattoo from a 1940's comic book. In fact, if Captain America wanted to have his vintage stars and stripes shield tattooed on his forearm, Gre would be the perfect choice to do it. Best of all, Steve Rogers' iconic emblem would clearly benefit from the addition of at least two roses and a cyborg owl, potentially smoking a pipe, which is pretty much how Gre's whacked-out western aesthetic works.

**YEARS**

**TATTOOING:** 3

**INSPIRED BY:**

Graphic artists old and new.

**TATTOOED BY:** Chris

Cleen, Jurgen Eckel, James Kiley, Luca Ortis, Oliver Peck, Jonas Pedersen, Rich Hadley.

**CONTACT:**

[raincitymanchester@gmail.com](http://raincitymanchester@gmail.com)



EVERYONE IS LEARNING ALL THE TIME. SOME DAYS YOU GO HOME AND THINK 'WELL THAT COULD DEFINITELY HAVE GONE BETTER', BUT AS LONG AS YOU TAKE THAT NEW KNOWLEDGE TO YOUR NEXT TATTOO, YOU'LL KEEP IMPROVING

politicians. My friend offered me a job as a receptionist at his studio, and then, I don't know how, but I gradually learned everything from the bottom up. It was an accidental apprenticeship!"

Talking about the early days reminds Daniel that he recently covered up one of his own early tattoos, "on my friend, Dave. He

actually mentioned the original one in his speech at my wedding. It was awful, it should have been a checkered flag, but it looked more like the Windows 95 logo. It's OK though, it's got a big black skull over it now."

Matt adds to Dan's thought, "normally when you make tattoos, your art walks away from you, so it's different when it's a partner or a good friend. I did one of my first ever tattoos on one of my best friends, Bundie - we're still friends now and, luckily, it's not even his worst tattoo.

I've tattooed quite a few of my close friends and some of them still look OK, some are terrible, but it's all part of the learning curve. When I tattooed my wife, Hanna's (studio manager at Blue Blood) right sleeve three or four years ago, it was quite early in our relationship. I didn't know I was going to marry her, I was just concentrating on where my next meal was coming from, not thinking ahead. Now I don't really like looking at my old work everyday so when she asked me to do her left sleeve, I suggested she ask Jemma instead. I think Hanna's been tattooed by everyone at Rain City anyway.

Rain City Collective has a definite family feel, I wonder how their actual families feel about their tattoo familia? I know about Dan's family of course, he's my husband, so I ask Cooley first. He smiles, "my son, Callum, is nearly six now and loves tattoos. He always says he wants to work with me at the studio when he's older. Once, he saw Bailey drawing some flash and helped him out by drawing a few extra designs for him to tattoo; Callum's work is flaming skull heavy and a little abstract! In the future I'll support him in whatever he wants to do, the same way my parents





**DANIEL MORRIS**

Daniel Morris learnt to tattoo in an old school British street shop, tattooing whatever came in the door from kanji to Cherry Creek. He brought this open minded attitude to the big city, happily turning his hand to most traditional tattoo styles, from blackwork mandalas to Japanese peonies and Western hearts and swallows, visually dissecting each discipline to better understand what makes it work and using that knowledge to now create stripped back, black tattoos, devoid of colour yet full of texture, using different line weights and high contrasts. Dan's tattoos are the visual equivalent of making a 3 piece band sound like a 6 piece.

**YEARS****TATTOOING, 9****INSPIRED BY:**

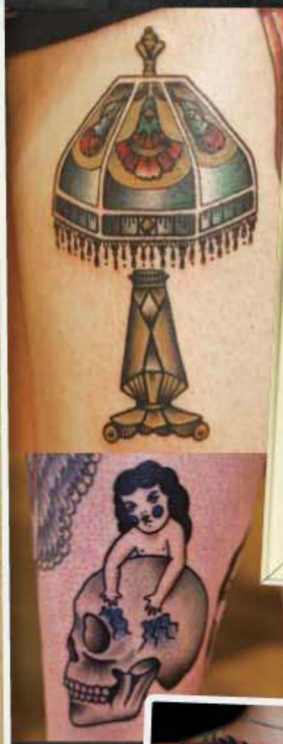
Traditional tattoos, artists that I've been tattooed by, my good friend Matthew Glover (Sineater Illustration) and all my other creative friends - they make me want to try harder.

**TATTOOED BY:**

Thomas Hooper, Steve Byrne, Mo Coppoletta, Duncan X, Valerie Vargas, Rachel Corbett, Rachel Baldwin, Jenny Shaw, everyone at Rain City and many more.

**CONTACT:**

[danmorrstattattoo@gmail.com](mailto:danmorrstattattoo@gmail.com)

**JEMMA****JEMMA JONES****YEARS****APPRENTICING, 1**

Jemma Jones has eaten a large bunch of vintage illustration, partially digested it, and thrown it back up again, ready to stain the tattooed folk of Britain. She describes her work as "black" and "a bit stupid". It's certainly dark and rather odd; Jemma has created a whole world of strange she allows us to peep at through an imaginary keyhole - devils, insects, and naked Kewpie dolls drip with crocodile tears, or stick out lascivious tongues, somehow managing to be both silly and sinister at once. Jemma says she likes tattooing babies (designs, not infants).

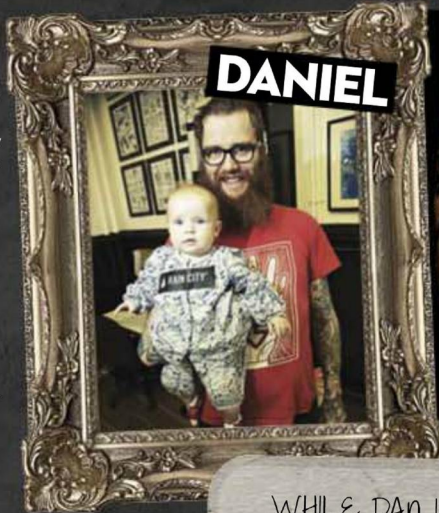
**INSPIRED BY: A**

variety of ever-changing sources; music, art, literature (mainly poetry), and film. My friends and co-workers at Rain City are all hugely inspiring - I feel very lucky to be working alongside and learning from such talented people. Other tattooers I find inspiring are Robert Ryan, Tomas Garcia, Matty Crocker, Javier Rodriguez, Rich Hardy, Simon Erl, and Stuart Cripwell.

**TATTOOED BY:** Guy Le Tatoer, Mike Adams, Sway, Rachel Baldwin, Shaun Bailey, Kerry-Anne Richardson, Gre Hale, Philip Yarnell, Matthew Cooley, Simon Erl, Jonas Pedersen.

**CONTACT:**

[jemmajonestattoo@gmail.com](mailto:jemmajonestattoo@gmail.com)

**DANIEL**

WHILE DAN IS THOUGHTFUL, "WHEN I'M OLD, I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO ART SCHOOL AND JUST DRAW FOR THREE YEARS WITH A NEW APPRECIATION FOR IT"

supported me. I want him to pick his own path."

Dan also wants to raise his children to be individuals, "I'll be happy for my daughter and stepson to get tattooed, if that's what they want to do. I'll be pretty annoyed if they go to someone rubbish though. Ivy's so little she probably thinks everyone is covered in pictures, most of the adults she knows are. Nate is 12 and talks about his future Marvel-related tattoos every time a new film comes out. Being a parent, makes me work harder, I already have a pretty dedicated work ethic, but having to keep someone in nappies is an extra motivator."

We talk about the silly

questions that the tattooed face from non-tattooed folk, especially the classic 'But what are you going to do when you're old?'

Again, Danny is his usual straight-talking self, "I don't care what people think about me now while I'm young, I'm really not going to care when I'm old. Will people really go 'look at that man over there, he's old and he's got tattoos'? I don't give a f!k. We'll all be old and tattooed together..."

As usual it's Gre that diffuses the Danny bomb, "I want to

look like Gandalf..." while Dan is thoughtful, "when I'm old, I'd like to go back to art school and just draw for three years with a new appreciation for it, an appreciation based on the whole lifetime of experience behind me." Matt ends with a statement they can all get behind... "life is pretty flimsy, I think if we even make it to old age we're doing well. You don't want to look back with regret. Live it!" Bright things are happening in Rain City, there will be rainbows. ☁️



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# CAN YOU FEEL THE FORCE?

Adam Hays' thing is Star Wars. To the extent that he's done T-shirt designs for Lucasfilm and ended up in a coffee table book featuring Star Wars tattoos. But there are many layers to this Texan former saddle maker turned New York tattoo studio owner



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Simon Lundh Adam Hays

Whenever Adam Hays goes to a tattoo convention nowadays, the majority of what he tattoos features something from Star Wars. It all started when he worked in his first shop in College Station, Texas, and got bored one day...

"I was doing 14-15 tattoos per day. Tiny ones, all about the size of a quarter," he explains. "Sorority girls that wanted little crosses and stuff like that. Man, I hated it. When I was bored I used to try to come up with my own flash sets, and in 2004 I did my first Star Wars flash set.

"I try to do Star Wars tattoos that look old school rather than just screenshots that I've seen so many other people doing. These characters are so cool. You can do so much more with them and draw your own interpretation. "At the time there wasn't much of this going on, so now wherever I travel I end up doing Star Wars tattoos. I think I probably hold the Guinness world record for doing the most Star Wars tattoos." His reputation eventually



gave him the opportunity to work with George Lucas' production company, Lucasfilm. It happened after he was featured in *The Force in the Flesh*, a coffee table book on tattoos from the movies published by the Canadian

to see your name on the back of official Lucasfilm merchandise. In 2010 they asked me to come and tattoo at Celebration V, the 30th anniversary of *The Empire Strikes Back*. I couldn't go, but I will do Celebration

RIGHT NOW I HAVE TO TRAVEL MORE IN EUROPE. I THINK I WILL TRAVEL IN THE STATES WHEN I'M READY TO RETIRE

writer and Star Wars aficionado, Shane Turgeon, in 2007.

"I think I have the largest spread in there, and eventually I got to do a T-shirt design for Lucasfilm. They did a line of Star Wars tattoo T-shirts and I got to do the first one. It's pretty cool

VI this year, which is the 30th anniversary of *Return of the Jedi*."

Strangely, every tattoo that he does at the celebration will be an officially licensed Lucasfilm piece of art. "I will have to pay royalties to them, which is kind of interesting, it will be a fun

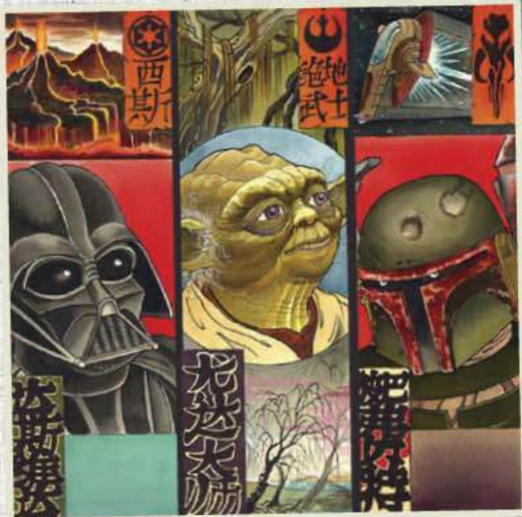




A LOT OF PEOPLE PUT DOWN THAT MOVIE  
BECAUSE OF THE EWOKS, BUT THAT'S THE ONE  
I SAW IN THE THEATRE AND THE ONE THAT  
BLEW MY MIND



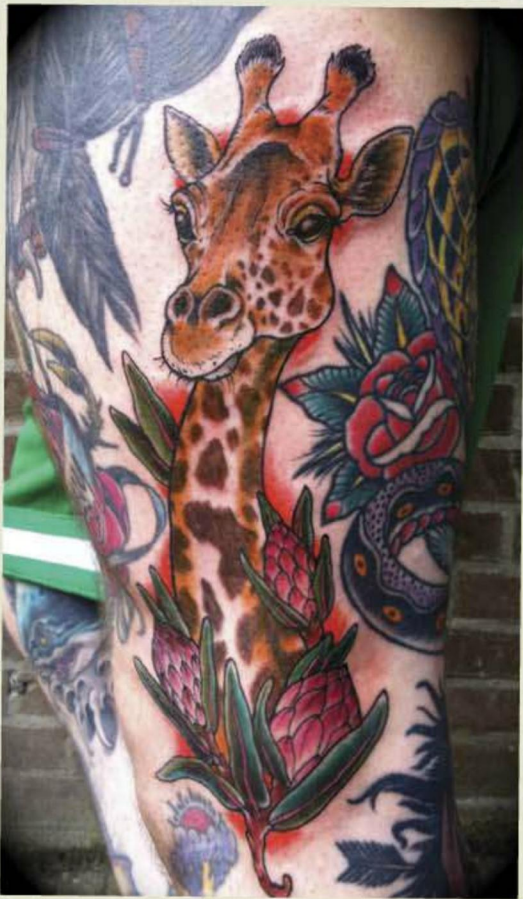




thing to do though. I really hope I get to tattoo somebody in full Stormtrooper armour. That would be great. I don't want to take myself too seriously. I think there are a lot of people in this industry who try to act like bad-asses, but if you break it down, you're just a working artist colouring for a living. How bad-ass of a



I WOULDN'T SAY I GOT INTO TATTOOING BECAUSE OF THE PUNK ROCK SCENE OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. I WAS ALWAYS JUST A DORK WHO WANTED TO DRAW COMICS AND I GREW UP DRAWING MARVEL COMIC CHARACTERS AND STUFF LIKE THAT. I THINK THAT STILL SHOWS IN MY WORK



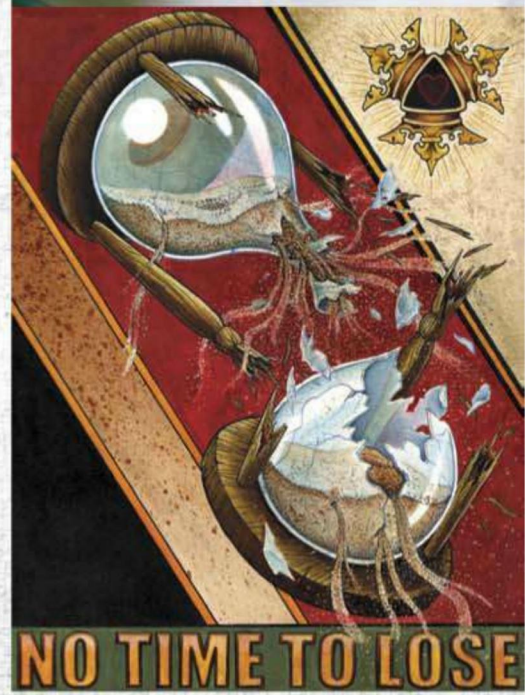
dude can you actually be?"

It's not all science fiction, though. He does other stuff as well.

"I was looking for a niche. Something different that would make people at conventions remember me, but I think I've pigeon-holed myself now!" he says with a laugh. "Everywhere I go, people want Star Wars characters and I'm like: 'Hey, I can do other stuff as well. I think I do good animals. How about a panther?' But it's always fun, because I know wherever I travel I will have a cool piece to do."

And most of what he does is freehand...

"Most of the times I think you get a cooler, more original piece that way. People will be happier in the long-run. A lot of people get annoyed when they don't get to see the design ahead of time, but it seems like most of my clients nowadays understand. When it comes to

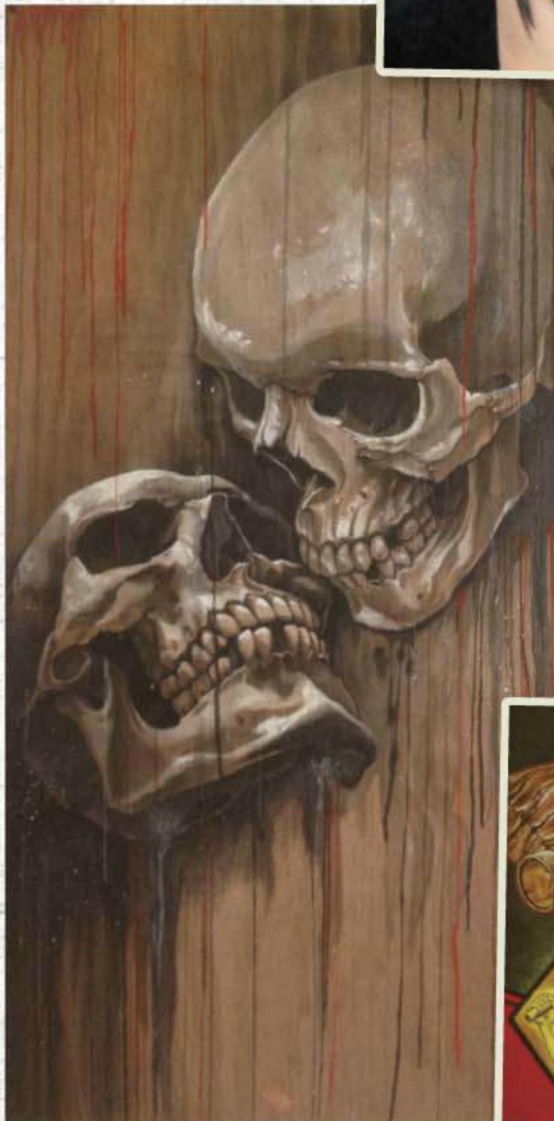




anything organic, like Japanese, it's always better just drawing it on. I think that was one of the biggest steps in my career, when I went from drawing all on paper to drawing primarily on skin. I never liked stencils. I always felt limited putting stuff on paper and then being stuck with this set design. It's hard to adapt and I can't really change the flow once it's on there. This way it makes it more of an art project than a working project, and it's especially good for cover-ups."

And how about New York? Planning on staying now?

"New York grows on you like a fungus, man. I thought I was going to be here three, four years, and now I own a tattoo studio and I'm looking into buying a house. I'm going to be here for a while – but I have a lot of guns. As they say, 'you can take the



NEW YORK GROWS ON YOU LIKE A FUNGUS, MAN. I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE HERE THREE, FOUR YEARS, AND NOW I OWN A TATTOO STUDIO AND I'M LOOKING INTO BUYING A HOUSE. I'M GOING TO BE HERE FOR A WHILE

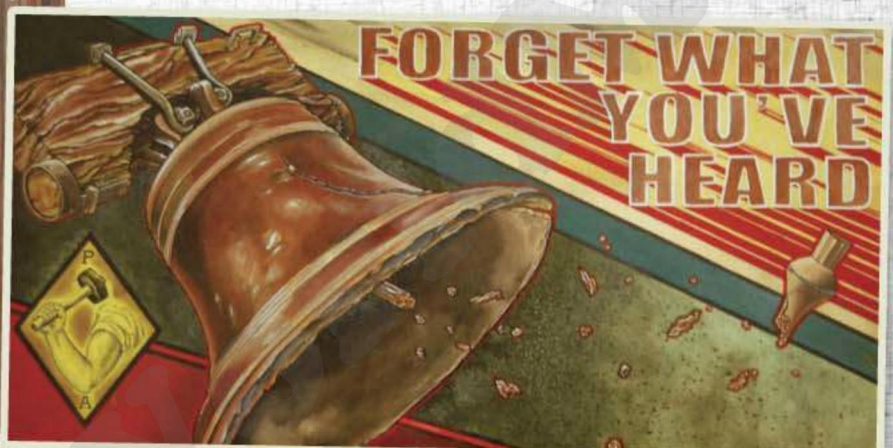
boy out of Texas, but not Texas out of the boy'. I can't have them here in New York though. I have them at my Dad's place."

To whom he apparently is a let-down, Adam explains with a smirk.

"I grew up really blue collar. My Dad is a ditch digger and I would have been a third generation ditch digger, so I'm probably a huge disappointment. I'm

thinking of my Dad, 65 years old, breaking his back and I'm sitting in an air-conditioned room colouring on a pretty girl's butt. That's not work, that's fun. It's luxury, not a necessity."

"I worked in a saddle shop and that's where I got my sense for details. You can't undo anything there. There are no erasers, and I still do portfolios and motorcycle seats every now and then." 🐾





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# EXCISION

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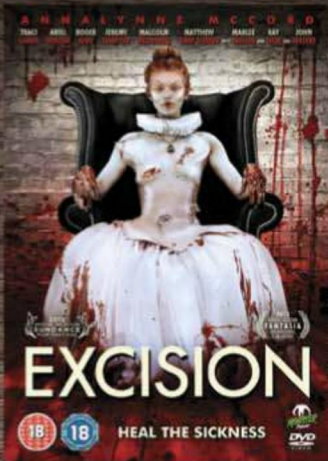
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WELCOME BACK TO THE REVIEW SECTION! IT'S BEEN A WHILE, HUH. SOME IS TATTOO-RELATED, SOME IS JUST PLAIN COOL AS THE BREEZE - ALL OF IT IS ESSENTIAL. GAME OVER

# Reviews



## EXCISION

MONSTER PICTURES  
OUT NOW

I'm growing to like these guys at Monster Pictures - or rather I was. I must be getting old. For a man who pulled an all-nighter with Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers and Street Trash once upon a time, I'm surprised that my thought process during this screening culminated in 'Jeez... that's a lot of splatter'.

Putting aside my age and apparently queasy stomach, this is another great movie from these guys who know how to wield the horror banner properly. Written and directed by Richard Bates Jr., *Excision* is an examination of Pauline (Anna Lynne McCord from 90210) - a rather obsessive young girl whose liking for picking at scabs escalates into a dark obsession with flesh. While that may be the basic premise, I much prefer the official intro to the movie which reads:

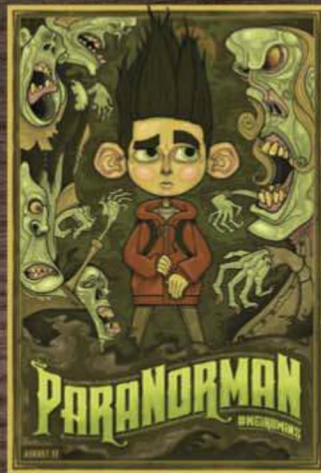
'A surgery-obsessed teen struggles with her outcast status while plotting to lose her virginity and save her sister from the ravaging effects of cystic fibrosis.'

Two paragraphs in and surely you must have decided whether this is your cup of tea or not? Honestly though, if you like your horror to be nothing quite like anything you've seen before - even to the point that you're not sure it's strictly horror, then grab a chair. Superb production values and a killer script lift this from being the unholy carnage it could have been to a serious contender for one of the best things you're likely to see all year.

Oh, and just so that you really know what you're in for, Pauline's mother is played by Traci Lords - and she does it brilliantly.

Prepare to be entertained... preferably before lunch.

Footnote - check out these two totally different artworks from the movie. The 'throne' version is for the UK and the other from the US. I'm not sure which does the best job...  
*Mr Smith*



## PARANORMAN

OUT NOW IN CINEMAS

You may not have heard much about this stop-motion animation, as it doesn't have an A-list voice cast, but don't let that put you off going to see a truly imaginative and at times, truly scary movie for kids of all ages.

Our hero is Norman, an 11-year-

old who sees 'people'. Norman is cursed with the ability to see the dead, including his granny with whom he has long conversations while sitting on the sofa. Not surprisingly, Norman's special gift makes him a real outsider at school, where he is the target for the school bully, while at home he's either being got at by his dad or his teenage sister.

As in all the best 'loser kid' movies, the only person who does befriend Norman is the fatty in his class, who doesn't seem to mind Norman's unusual talent. But when Norman's estranged uncle explains he too can communicate with the dead and that Norman must keep up the long family tradition of saving his town from a witch's curse, things get a little too spooky, even for Norman. With his uncle's untimely demise Norman must step up to the plate, but he finds himself unable to banish the witch, and with a gang of zombies about to descend on the town, he must use his special skills to win the day.

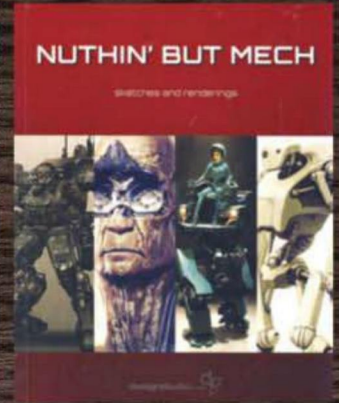
The film has a unique look all its own, but what makes it so memorable is the mature way it handles its themes of being an outsider, bullying and also isolation. There are one or two remarkable scenes, but it's the finale that really impresses where Norman must confront the witch, a young girl condemned to death for witchcraft who's now Carrie-like in her fury and vindictiveness. As she rages at Norman the imagery becomes jagged and inflammable, like one huge howl of anguish. It's not what you expect from what is ostensibly a children's movie, but *ParaNorman* constantly defies expectations, which is why it's such a satisfying film experience.

*Dee Pilgrim*

## NUTHIN' BUT MECH

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*Nuthin' But Mech* is responsible for reminding us all that robots are still cool and aren't all out to get us,



whilst also bringing a fantastic set of robot illustrations to the table by some of the industry's best.

The book is the brainchild of Lorin Woods, who had the idea after his successful blog, [www.nuthinbutmech.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.nuthinbutmech.blogspot.co.uk). He wanted a place to harbour his passion for robots, so he put together a blog formed by a collective of the top entertainment industry designers' work.

The featured designers in this book bring a broad range of perspective and ideas to this subject. As expected, some of the big names on the list are people like Alex J. Cunningham, Carlo Arellano, and Feng Zhu, but all the designers approach this subject differently; the one thing they all have in common is that they simply all wanted to draw something cool. It's great to see the different styles flip from one to another as you pour over the pages, and I have no doubt that you'll find yourself re-evaluating your own ideas on mech design and how to incorporate it into your pieces. The illustration that stood out the most for me was from the mind of Ben Mauro, called Altered Carbon. It's a depiction of an old Chinese man with neural and cognitive modifications and is a great mix of the mechanical with the organic with the striking contrast of the new implants against the old man's skin. You can check out his work at [www.artofben.com](http://www.artofben.com).

Whether you're into mech and robots or not, you can easily find yourself marvelling at the designs that may one day be working next to you, or worse... kicking down your door.

*Mark McCarthy*





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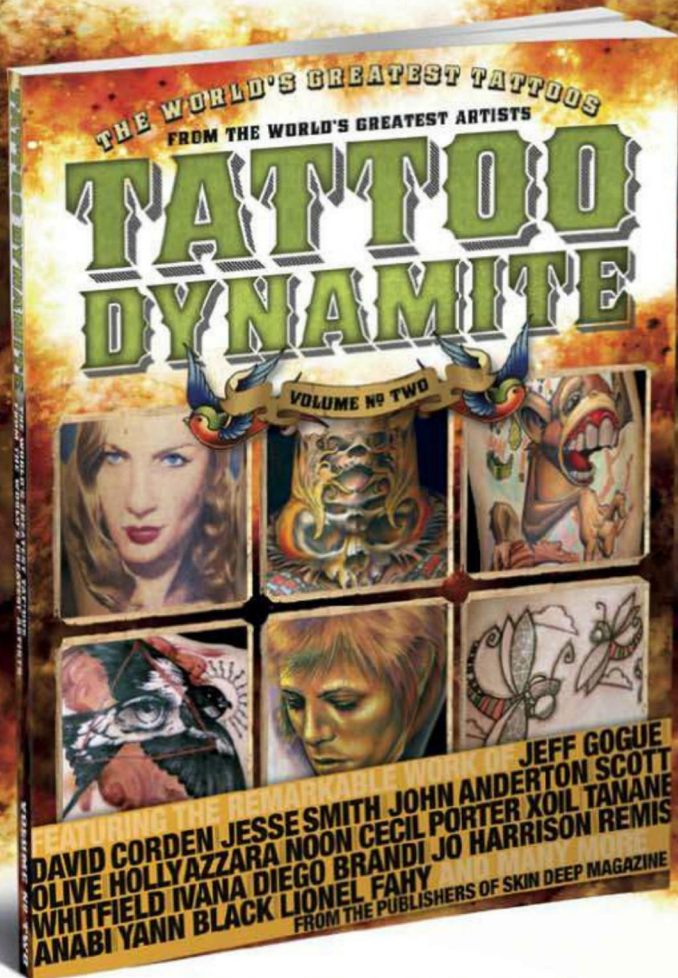
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I am a 19-year-old female, and I am looking for a piercing apprentice in the London area. I've emailed studio's and I've had no luck in finding anything. I'm a confident person, and I'm a quick learner. I would love to do something I have a keen interest in, and would love to study and work in the correct environment. Please contact me on: 07967944476 or email me at: [perfect.mess@live.co.uk](mailto:perfect.mess@live.co.uk).

**Wanted:** self-employed tattooist for a up-and-coming studio in Neston, South Wirral. Must have studio experience and be able to carry out flash and custom work please contact: 0151 345 1448 or 07564 308 184 or visit [www.paletteofpain.co.uk](http://www.paletteofpain.co.uk).

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**Tattoo artist wanted** for South Coast Ink, Eastleigh nr. Southampton. Must have at least three years experience. Looking for someone with a great work ethic and extensive portfolio who can do custom as well as flash. Email your portfolio to [crazyhogz@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:crazyhogz@hotmail.co.uk) with a bit of background info and some contact details.

**Jesters Tattoo Works** in New Eltham, London SE9, are looking for an experienced tattoo artist on a part-time basis to work Fridays and Saturdays and to cover staff holidays. Applicants must have a minimum of three years experience a positive and pleasant attitude and strong portfolio. Must be able to do custom designs as well as flash. No drug, drink or attitude problems, please! Call: 02082 945777, email: [jesterstattoos@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jesterstattoos@hotmail.co.uk), or pop in and see us: Jesters Tattoo Works, 739 Sidcup Road, New Eltham, London, SE9 3SA.

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**Tattoo artist wanted** in an established personal custom studio located near great Yarmouth, Norfolk. Will be working on a self-employed basis. Experienced tattooist preferred, but would be willing to train if the right person was to ask! Contact Jacko at [inkasylum@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:inkasylum@hotmail.co.uk).



## ONLY WOMEN BLEED

Barely a day goes by without something tattoo related popping up in the news – this month alone we've seen tattoos and performance art in the Independent, tattoos and the police in the Daily Mail, and tattoos and middle-aged women in the Telegraph



Paula Hardy Kangelos

One article, however, raised my eyebrows; The Guardian's 'Women Tattoo Artists make their Mark' featured tattooers Saira Hunjan, Angelique Houtkamp and Lina Stigsson, all talented, inspirational artists, but I was surprised at the tone of the piece and its theme – that women artists are just now becoming accepted in tattoo culture. Is the feminist angle relevant, or is it simply an excuse to print another puff piece on everyone's favourite 'edgy' art?

Feminism once had clear aims, to secure equal rights for women, firstly in terms of votes and education and later in law and society. In the West, although the most quantifiable of these aims has been achieved, equality in society is yet to be realised and feminist work continues here and abroad. Tattoo society might be expected to be a microcosm, a reflection of the ideals and difficulties of the larger culture to which we belong, but in my experience this is not so, here, cultural equality is much closer to realisation.

A successful, British, male tattooer, once told me (with a completely straight face) that women should only have "lady's tattoos... fairies, flowers, vines, that sort of thing". A silly sentiment roundly rejected by myself and my many decorated sisters – even historically women have been as tattooed as men, both in tribal cultures and at the advent of Western electric tattooing. Indeed, by the publication of Margot

Mifflin's 1997 book, *Bodies of Subversion*, Don Ed Hardy's clientele is described as 60 percent female and although official statistics are not collated, it is certainly reasonable to assume that today's tattoo customers are at least split 50/50, like the population proper.

The first American woman tattoo artist, Maud Wagner, was recorded in 1927 and since then the number of female artists has grown substantially. There are a number of women tattooing today that have

### A 'WOMEN-ONLY' TATTOO SPACE REMAINS AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT IN ARTISTIC ENERGY, BUT A SEPARATE CONVENTION FUNCTIONS ALMOST AS A KIND OF VANISHING POINT

had noted careers spanning two or more decades, Pat Fish and Kate Hellenbrand in the US, and Fiona Long and Theresa Gordon-Wade in the UK, to name but a few.

The fascination with the tattooed female body is strong – the circus tattooed lady is undoubtedly more magnetising than her male counterpart – tattoos seem more extreme on a female body than a male one. Perhaps because we are more used to the bareness of female skin, through nude paintings, page 3, and barely clad fashion models, or perhaps because the 'soldiers and sailors' myth is so pervasive.

Putting aside these external cultural conventions and the gender of the person inside the tattooed body, skin is skin, and tattoos are simply art on skin. Why then, do many tattoo shows persist with segregated competition

categories, judging tattoos on males and females separately? This kind of divisive categorisation is even more common in awards for tattoo artists, but art is not sport and our differing physiologies do not demand separate competitions – the size of our hands does not affect the kinds of tattoos we make, so why should women compete only against other women? Why isn't it simply 'Best Tattoo Artist'?

Florida's 'Marked For Life' women only tattoo show was established in the mid '90s, but Britain's inaugural Female Tattoo Convention took place more than 15 years later when many of the original concerns, such as a desire for greater exposure, had already

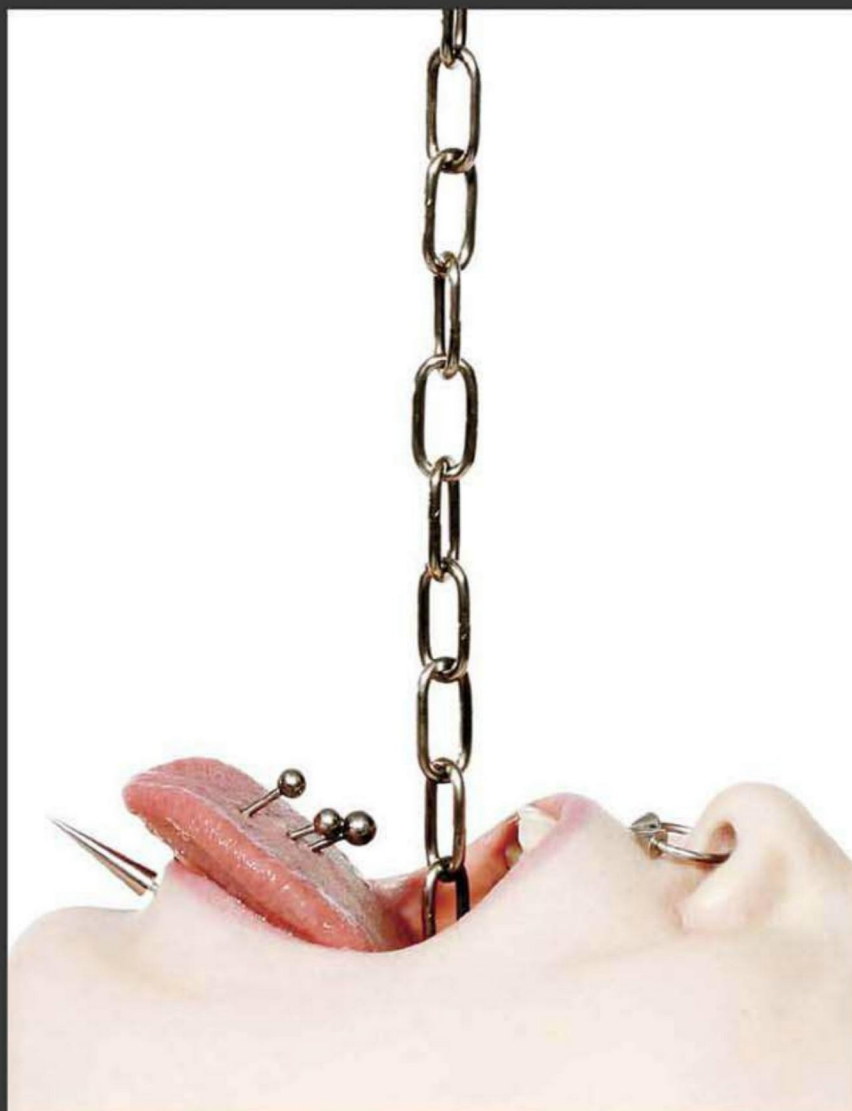
been addressed. Nonetheless, a 'women-only' tattoo space remains an interesting experiment in artistic energy, but a separate convention functions almost as a kind of vanishing point. By dividing female and male tattoo experiences into separate, parallel narratives, we cause them to travel away from ourselves, to recede rather than resonate and while the experiences of the individual vary as much as the bodies we are choosing to adorn, our stories are as common as they are different. There is far more to gain in sharing than there will ever be in isolation.

We don't need metaphorical pedestals – categories, conventions and magazines of our own. We just need respect and space to be the best we can be – exactly the same as our male counterparts. Women's tattoo culture IS tattoo culture. 🐾



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