

FREE INSIDE THE UK'S BEST SELLING TATTOO MAGAZINE



**16 PAGE
SKIN SHOTS
SAMPLER**

skin Deep

**HOLD ONTO
YOUR JAWBONE**

HERE BE GIANTS

T M
Is in the house

T TT
Rock Detroit City

**THE VIEW
FROM THE BARS**
M

**THE AMAZING
WORK OF**
M

A movie masterpiece

*And his coat of
not many colours*

**MEET THE
TEACHER**

J M
M
*New school,
new school rules*



**AND THEN
THERE WAS**

WIN TICKETS TO:

U B
T
In Brussels

Not a hobbit in sight

**HERE COME THE
FREAKS OF**

*Things ain't like
they used to be*

COVER IMAGE: SHELLY BY ROWAN MURRAY
ISSUE 221 • MARCH 2013 • £3.95



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Barbara Pavone

GUDBYE TO JANE

I had a weird conversation this week with a guy that runs a fashion blog. Not really my sort of thing having been a fashion victim all my life, but his name is Dave Hill. Now, for somebody who more than appreciates glam rock, my first thought was 'Hey – Dave Hill – the guy from Slade with the fringe.' I was going to make some dumb comment about it in response when I noticed that Dave's signature actually reads:

'Not the one from Slade'
Dave Hill

Which in itself is a brilliant forethought, even though I think it should actually read Dave 'not the one from Slade' Hill, but it's not my signature and we should let him off.

Over on Dave's blog, his latest run of posts have got some fun tattoo commentary in there, which is why I mention it here – you can find him at thehatman40.wordpress.com which, maybe like you, got me to wondering who the other 39 people that wanted to blog about hats could be? Upon further investigation, I see that there aren't any, which was a bit of

a disappointment, but to be fair, is probably good news for Dave Hill. Not the one from Slade – the other Dave Hill. I never in a million years thought I'd find anything of interest in a fashion blog, but hatman40 is quite fun and has some good things to say.

COINCIDENTALLY, I ALSO CAME ACROSS A BRILLIANT BULGARIAN TATTOO ARTIST LAST WEEK CALLED NODDY HOLDER. WHAT ARE THE ODDS ON THAT HAPPENING?

Unlike Paul Sweeney – who can often be seen zipping about the countryside in a pair of yellow pants – these clothing items are not for me. It has, however, answered some questions that had been hanging around in my head for far too long. Questions like – who in the world would design yellow pants and be able to sell them commercially to high street stores and also expect people to buy them? Well now I have my answer. People like Dave Hill – and probably Dave Hill from Slade too. He may even have been the forerunner of the concept. I see his fringe style has already entered the realm of

being the fringe of choice for an awful lot of models.

While this has very little to do with tattooing as such, I find it a much more honest approach than sitting here writing an editorial telling you that we've got X, Y, and Z in this issue, because (brace

yourself) if you turn just one page, you'll find all of that on the contents page. Not only that, but rather cleverly, we've designed the magazine so that by turning the pages, you'll find out anyway.

Coincidentally, I also came across a brilliant Bulgarian tattoo artist last week called Noddy Holder. What are the odds on that happening? Seriously, what are the odds on a) a tattoo artist having the same name as the Slade dude in b) the same week as I was chatting with Dave Hill (not the one from Slade). I'll tell you exactly what the odds are. They are a big fat zero. I'm lying about the

Noddy Holder bit. Which just goes to show, you'll believe anything so long as it's in print and is why you should choose your reading partners very carefully.

So apologies for not having much of an actual tattoo theme to introduce the mag with this month – but last week was Tattoo Freeze, I have a mag to take care of, another mag to take care of, a big show to get behind, and some book projects poking me in the back. I think I'm allowed to find some inspiration in Dave Hill's yellow pants just this once.

I really, really don't mean that how it sounds, but it's quite humorous, so I'll let it slide. *Sen*



@mrsionsmith

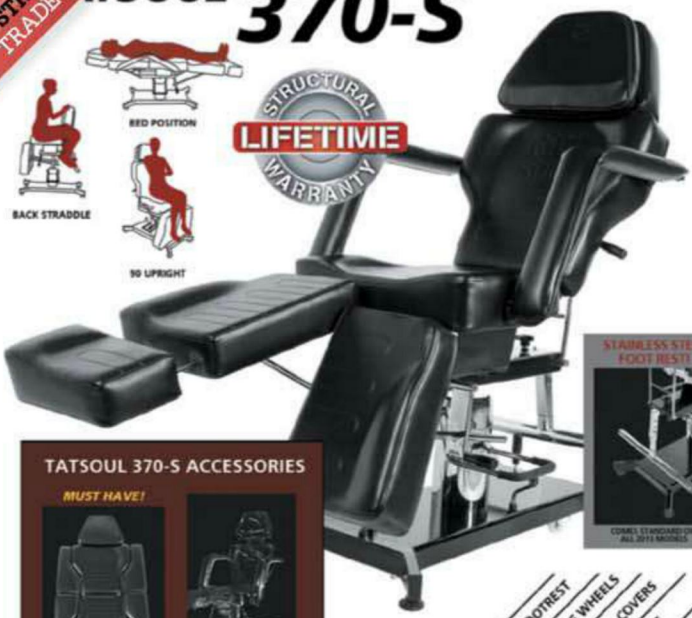
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THE USUAL SUSPECTS

- 06 SLEEVE NOTES
- 08 CONVENTION LISTINGS
- 10 THE BLOGOSPHERE
- 12 PAUL SWEENEY
- 14 CRAIGY LEE
- 18 BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
- 97 REVIEWS
- 98 AN EYE IS UPON YOU

ARTIST PROFILES

34 JEREMY MILLER
Early morning is not traditionally a time for creative souls to be firing on all cylinders – more a time for mumbling into coffee, but Jeremy Miller rises to the occasion.

60 TIM KERN
Secret governmental experiments on past generations and growing up under powerlines in Missouri have made him a seventh generation twin. At least that's Tim's theory...

70 MARK CROSS
We're hitting New York City hard at the moment, but are far

from draining it dry. Mark Cross is the next artist with much to show the world.

82 IRONCLAD TATTOO
Portrayed by mainstream media as a place ripe with desolate areas, Detroit may be used to its bad rep, but if there's one thing we learned from our visit to Ironclad Tattoo Co. it's that you can't always believe what you hear, or read...

SPECIAL FEATURES

24 REDLIGHT KING
A couple of months back, a chance encounter with the band Redlight King turned into a little more than intended...

26 MARK OF CAIN
In 2001 a documentary that uncovered the dying art of Russian criminal tattoos was released called 'The Mark of Cain'. It is a brilliant and objective piece of documentary filmmaking and we needed to find out more.

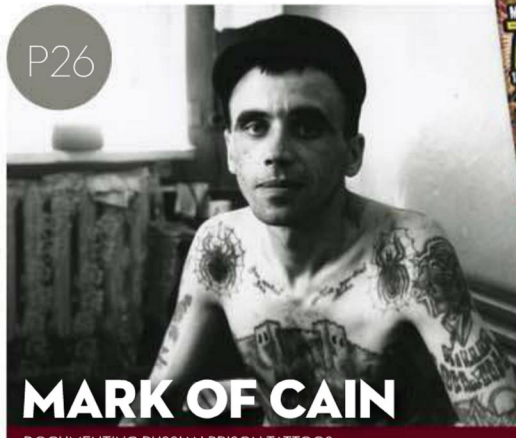


P24

REDLIGHT KING

TALKING TRACKS AND TATTOOS

THIS MONTH'S PULL OUT:
SKIN SHOTS SAMPLER



P26

MARK OF CAIN

DOCUMENTING RUSSIAN PRISON TATTOOS



86 GRAPHIK H.
Graphik is a French illustrator who's just starting out and using tattooing as an addition to his usual style. We kinda liked it and think you will too.

76 CONEY ISLAND
As the sun sets on Coney Island, Adam Rinn, better known as Adam Real Man, tells stories about the Brooklyn sea shore community of old and its heyday...

88 ROAD TRIP: NEW ZEALAND
A two-year wait proved more than worth it for the second NZ Tattoo & Art festival, as over 250 of the world's best tattoo artists converged on the small seaside town of New Plymouth on November 24-25.



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Sleeve Notes

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ALL SUBMISSIONS TO SLEEVE NOTES GRATEFULLY RECEIVED. BE IT NEWS, AN EVENT, NEW MERCH, A STUDIO MOVE... WE'LL DO OUR VERY BEST TO LET EVERYBODY ELSE KNOW ABOUT IT TOO. EMAIL: EDITOR@SKINDEEP.CO.UK OR IF YOU WANT TO BE ARCHAIC ABOUT THE WHOLE AFFAIR: SKIN DEEP, 1 MARCHER COURT, SEALAND ROAD, CHESTER CH1 6BS. BRING IT.

BLOODY KNUCKLES



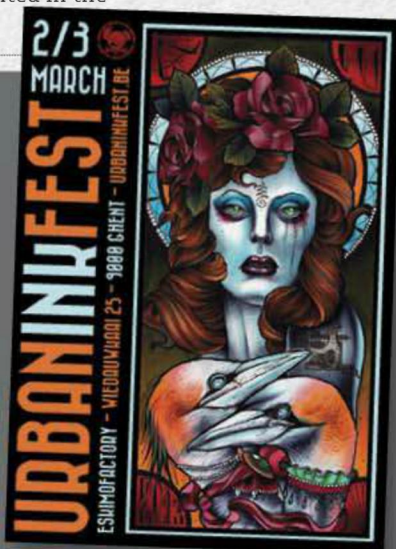
A week ago, this was going to be a news story about how the new Viveros print, Bloody Knuckles, was now available to buy – but it sold out so fast, that's no longer the case...

So, for those of you who thought you might have been in the market and got blown out of the water, best subscribe to the Viveros Prints site at www.iverosprints.com so you're not left disappointed in the future. Man, those things sell fast!

URBAN INKFEST

The last time we gave some tickets away to a European show, I think we may have been a little too late for people to make arrangements – thus, in (reasonably) good time for everybody, we have ten pairs of tickets to give away to Urban Inkfest (urbaninkfest.be)

Which is happening on March 2-3 in Ghent (Belgium for those of you that don't get out much), and will be hosted by none other than Femke Fatale. Send an email with the subject line of 'URBAN' to editor@skindeep.co.uk before February 12 and we'll pull winners out of the digital hat on that very day and let you know if you're a winner. That's three weeks to get



your act together. Which is more than enough time! If it's not, maybe you should get a little spontaneity going on – drop of a hat trips are the future don't you know...

THE HOT LIST

Time to re-instate an old favourite of mine from the 'library of great ideas'. Welcome to the funny papers where the people with pens here reveal their nearest and dearest. Yeah, I know, like you give a damn what we think... but it's fun all the same



SION

HOT STUFF PETER AURICH - GAME OVER.
COLD STUFF SUGAR SKULLS. DO YOU THINK WE COULD HAVE SOME ADVANCE ON THE CONCEPT?
BRING IT ON FRANK LA NATRA AND SELF DISCUSSING FUTURE 'EXCITING STUFF'.
TAKE IT OFF SULKY FACES ON PROPOSED COVER MODEL SHOTS - SMILE FOR THE CAMERA, PLEASE.
CRIMINALLY OVERLOOKED BABYTATTOO.COM - GET ON IT.
DIRTY LITTLE SECRET AUTHENTIC TRIBAL, WEEDS VIA NETFLIX, AND WOOL. NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER.
CENTRE OF UNIVERSE STILL THOSE DAMN KIDS...



PAULA

HOT STUFF BRADLEY TOMPKINS, JOE ELLIS, THE FUTURE OF BRITISH TATTOOING.
COLD STUFF RANDOM AND UNNECESSARY PATCHES OF BAHAMA BLUE INK AS 'BACKGROUND' - RELEVANT NEGATIVE SPACE OR NOTHING, PLEASE!
BRING IT ON SAVING THE AMSTERDAM TATTOO MUSEUM.
TAKE IT OFF OR RATHER, PUT IT BACK ON - SUICIDE GIRLS.
CRIMINALLY OVERLOOKED GEMMA B, ZOE BINNIE, TOM ARNISON, JASON ISBELL AND THE 400 UNIT.
DIRTY LITTLE SECRET CRIMINAL MINDS, A FONDNESS FOR SEASIDE PIERS, AND A LIFE-LONG CRUSH ON JOHN NETTLES.
CENTRE OF UNIVERSE MY NEW ACCORDION.

RANDOM READER

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MONTH

You're never too young to start getting into good reading habits. Ladies and gents, this is Kori, who – even though a mere 17 months old – has already shoved his Ma out of the way to catch five minutes with his favourite mag. Great picture. Sad backstory: due to a severe heart condition – hypoplastic left heart syndrome (a rare congenital heart defect in which the left ventricle of the heart is severely underdeveloped) – Kori will never be able to be tattooed. Pixi (that's his Ma), we bow to your sense of humour and throw bucketfuls of love in your general direction. Beat that suckers...



THE HOT LIST



RUSS

HOT STUFF SARAH CARTER, TRACEY D, MARIJA RIPLEY.

COLD STUFF BAD SPELLING AND ROGUE APOSTROPHES ON TATTOOS... SERIOUSLY, PEOPLE, CHECK!

BRING IT ON NEW YEAR MEANS NEW TATTOOS ARE PERMITTED. GOOD.

TAKE IT OFF USING TATTOOS IN FILM AND TV AS SHORTHAND FOR 'NE'ER DO WELL'. TRY ACTING, PERHAPS?

CRIMINALLY OVERLOOKED TAKAMI – BUT WE'RE WORKING ON IT...

DIRTY LITTLE SECRET BATMAN INSIGNIA TATTOOS, JEFF WAYNE'S WAR OF THE WORLDS AND BILLY JOEL SING-ALONGS.

CENTRE OF UNIVERSE ANYWHERE CONTAINING MY WIFE AND MY DOG.



BARBARA

HOT STUFF MILAN'S DAVIDE ANDREOLI, AKA THE ITALIAN ROOSTER; TAKASHI MURAKAMI, NOW WITH SKULLS.

COLD STUFF NECK AND CHEST PIECES ON KIDS AT VANS WARPED TOUR. YES, YOU'RE BADASS, WE KNOW.

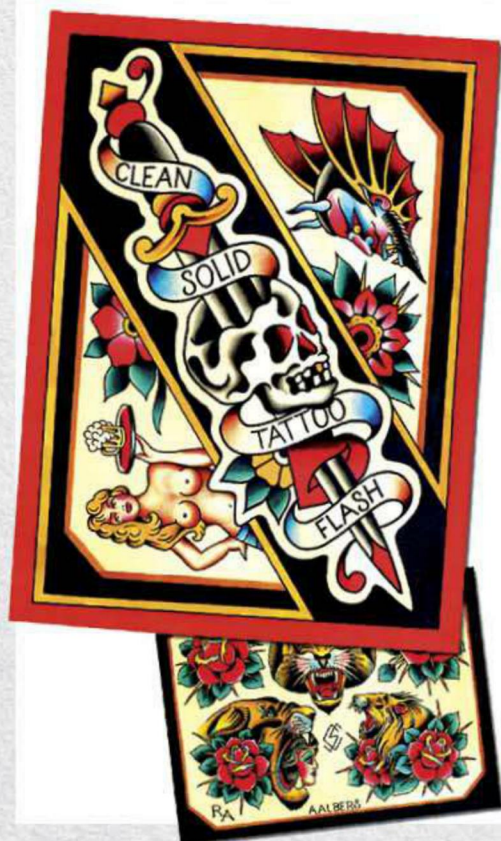
BRING IT ON WOULD THREE TATTOOS IN A YEAR BE TOO MANY?

TAKE IT OFF YOU'VE SEEN CHRIS BROWN'S NEW NECK TATTOO, RIGHT? HE OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T...

CRIMINALLY OVERLOOKED DAVID STOUPAKIS, AKA MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE TATTOOED NON-TATTOO ARTIST.

DIRTY LITTLE SECRET PHILIP TREACY HATS. ALAN CARR: CHATTY MAN. EVERYTHING LADY GAGA.

CENTRE OF UNIVERSE SEE ABOVE LIST. ADD MY MUM.



FLASH BOOK

Kintaro Publishing have just released a very cool book called *Clean Solid Tattoo Flash* by Robert Aalbers

We'll be reviewing in that next issue, but if you can't wait to get your flash-loving hands on it, get busy clicking on kintaro-publishing.com, you'll find everything you need over there – where I have to say, they've got some gorgeous looking products. But flipping this one around in our hands, it's a peach. For many of the designs, Aalbers pulls his inspiration from the masters it also contains originals too. There are 42 sheets in all and each is perforated along the spine, so if you want to get them up on your walls, you won't have to chance dancing with the gods of paper cuts. You know what to do...

THE HOT LIST



TOM

HOT STUFF GUY LE TATTOOER. PALM-SIZE TATTOOS.

COLD STUFF COVERAGE OVER ART. THE 'I CAN SHOUT LOUDER THAN YOU' CULTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.

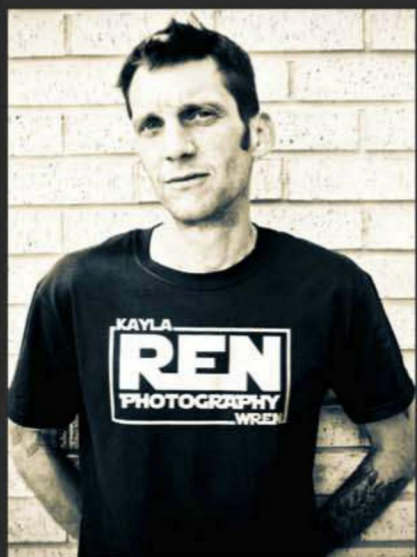
BRING IT ON THE PRISON TATTOO TRADITION. BLACK-WORK.

TAKE IT OFF TATTOO ARTISTS AS CELEBRITIES. *DOWNTON ABBEY*.

CRIMINALLY OVERLOOKED MINIMALISM IN TATTOOING. ANCIENT PATTERNS AND PROCEDURES.

DIRTY LITTLE SECRET *THE OC*.

CENTRE OF UNIVERSE CURRENTLY THE FAMILY PUPPY, BARNEY.



TRENT

HOT STUFF BRYAN CHILDS, FEEBLETOYS.COM

COLD STUFF TATTOO WARS ON SOCIAL MEDIA... IT'S BORING, PETTY AND ONLY HARMS THE INDUSTRY.

BRING IT ON TAKING OVER AS EDITOR OF TATTOO MASTER.

TAKE IT OFF TATTOO ICONOGRAPHY ON EVERYTHING. NO, YOU DON'T NEED AN OLD SCHOOL DESIGNED TOILET SEAT COVER.

CRIMINALLY OVERLOOKED 'KRIS D' DAVIDSON.

DIRTY LITTLE SECRET I REALLY WANT TO LEARN HOW TO STUFF ANIMALS - TAXIDERMY IS COOL.

CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSE THE GOLDEN RATIO.

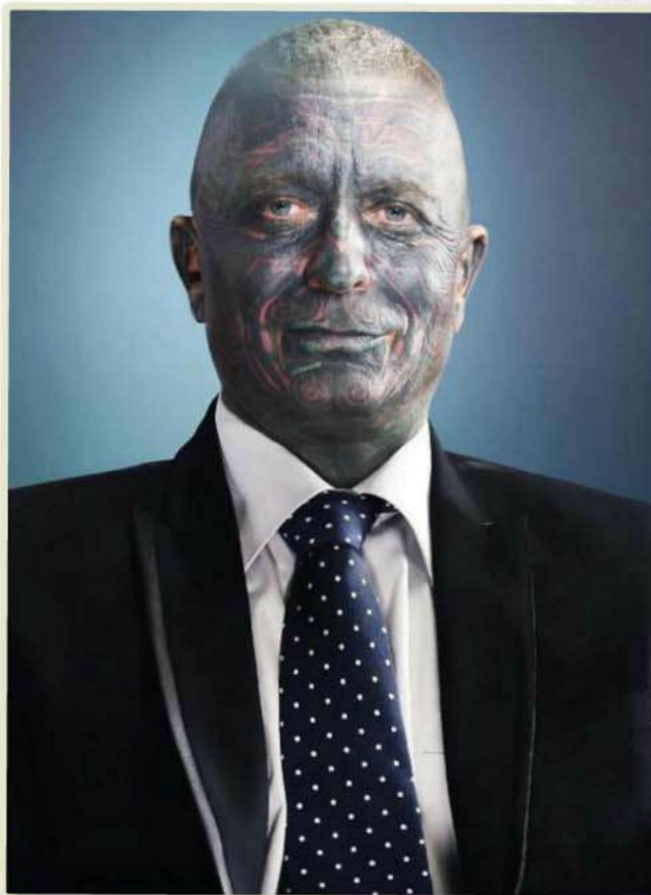
THE KINGMAKER

Check out the dude in the tie. This is Vladimir Franz – a 53-year-old Czech drama professor, painter, and prolific opera and theatre composer. As I write this, he's in third place to become the next president of the Czech Republic

For the record, he has 90 percent coverage on his body and is one smart cookie. While that in itself is pretty cool, as far as I can tell with my limited research/ Czech skills, his views focus firmly on moderate politics, promotion of tolerance, human rights, democracy, and more effort being put into the search for alternative energy sources. Also rather cool is the fact that he is the only strong opposition to the current political scene out there.

Knowing you guys and your Facebook habits, if you want to lend your support with the "blue thumb of like", you can find him there – along with over 25,000 other supporters.

I gotta find me a translator...



PETERLEE SHOW, SAD NEWS

The Peterlee Show that was scheduled for 24 March has sadly been cancelled. I received an email from Trudy yesterday who says it a lot better than I can, so I'll paste in the gist of it here for you

"Sadly just before Christmas, on the 21st – Big Al, our compere, suddenly passed away at the young age of 50. After ten loyal years of service to our event and everything that he did on and off the stage, along with trying to raise as much as humanly possible for our chosen charities, we feel as organisers, that his boots are too much to fill in such a short space of time. He will be a huge miss by ourselves – we would like to let his family know that our thoughts are with them. Big Al will always be remembered – R.I.P.

"Alongside this very sad news of Alan, we have also had my dad very poorly (Eddie), he has just undergone major life-saving surgery and after seven long weeks in hospital he is now home, but his lengthy recovery will deter him in being present at the show, so given the above, I honestly feel that the show would not be the same without either of these guys present this year.

"I would like to thank all those who sent well wishes to my dad and family on his recovery. It means a lot in this time of need. I would also like to apologise to all who make the event possible: tattoo artists, traders, and of course, all attendees for cancelling the event at such short notice, but to keep their eyes peeled for 2014's date."

All of the staff at Skin Deep would like to send their condolences to Big Al's family and also wish Eddie a spectacular and speedy recovery as I'm sure you do too...

I can't follow that with anything as important right now, so I'll just come back later. Sigh... this life is just too damn short.

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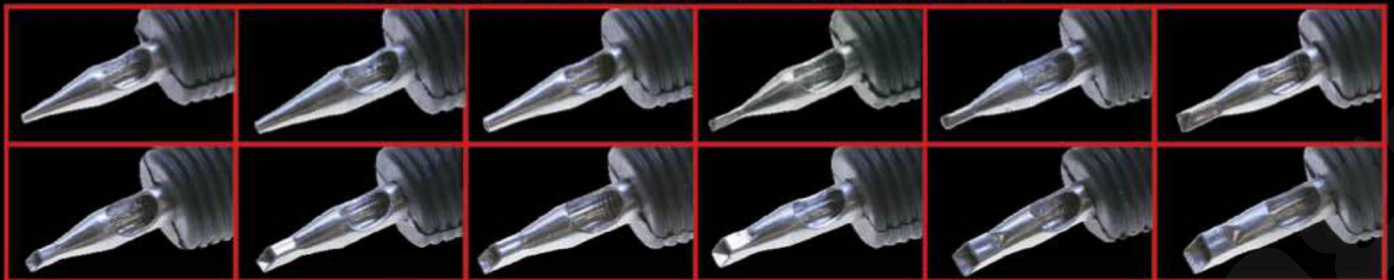
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Conventions

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eddiestattooostudio@yahoo.co.uk

April 7

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info@inkandiron.co.uk

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MAY 25-26

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www.greatbritishtattooshow.com

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Milton Keynes
info@mktattooconvention.com
www.mktattooconvention.com

June 1-2

NORTHAMPTON TATTOO CONVENTION

The Saints Rugby Ground,
Weedon Road, Northampton
www.northamptoninternationaltattooconvention.com
Nigel or Sue 01604 949958
sunsandrosestattoo@hotmail.com

June 9

READING TATTOO SHOW

Rivermead Leisure Centre,
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July 13-14

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July 20-21

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ESCAPE FROM HAT

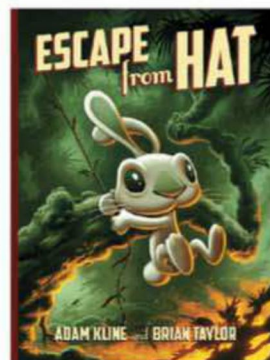
Something a little different for you this issue – for those of you who like slick animation and mind-blowing books of excellentness – I present to you, *Escape From Hat*



ORIGINAL PENCIL SKETCH



COLOUR ROUGH



FINAL ILLUSTRATION

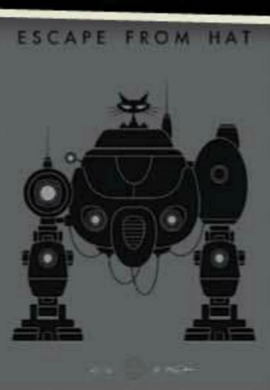
Art books are one thing, but nothing beats an art book with a purpose to also tell a great story. *Escape from Hat* brilliantly echoes classic children's adventure stories whilst still managing to be nothing at all like any of them by adding its own contributions for future intrepid travellers to grasp hold of. Wonderfully written by Adam Kline, it tells the story of Leek, an especially lucky and talented rabbit who finds himself in a bit of a fix. I won't blow it for you – you need to see it for yourself.

The art you see here is from the hands of Scottish artist, Brian Taylor, who regularly (thankfully) posts online about all of his latest projects. If this is floating your boat – and why wouldn't it – you should hunt down their previous joint project 'Rustboy' (YouTube is a good place) which was sadly shut down due to Sony staff movearounds.

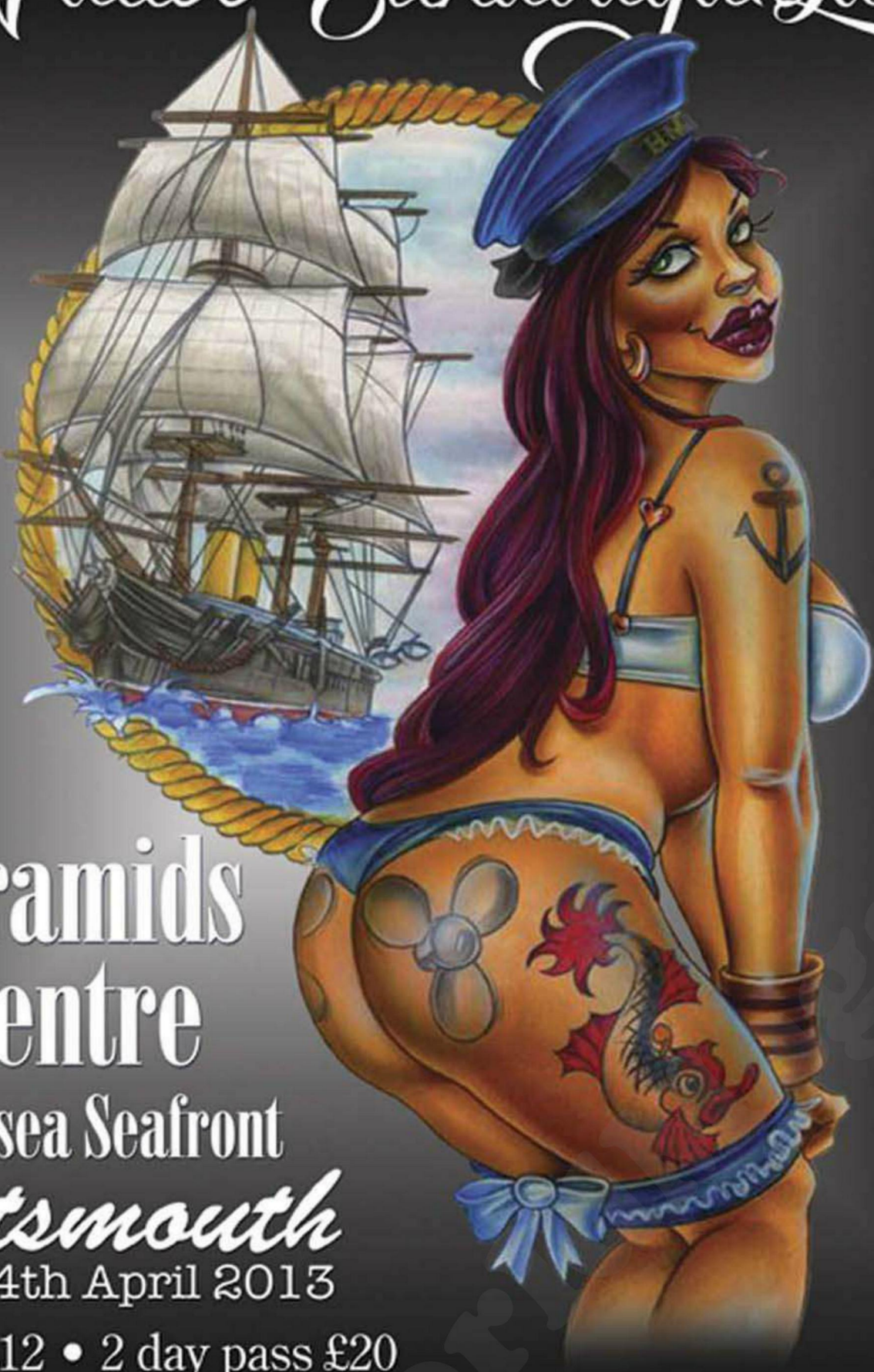
Escape From Hat is widely available

online at Amazon and is published by Zova Books.

You can also follow Brian's work over at candykiller.wordpress.com where lots of other things go on as well.



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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

What's that? You'd completely forgotten it's been a whole year since I first started scribing; loosely tattoo-related nonsense, for the wonderful people at Skin Deep magazine? For the love of Shakespeare! I don't know why I bother sometimes?

Yes, I suppose time does fly when you're having fun, and this last year has been such fun you hadn't even noticed you're right it has been a whirlwind of wisely cracked witticisms. Well since you put it like that, I forgive you!

So, it's been a year well spent, force-feeding you my bizarre perspective on life; as I know it. One big old year; that's nearly a lifetime, if you happen to live as long as Mad Max or Albert Einstein (Mad Max and Albert Einstein were the names of my first, and only, hamsters. Just in case you thought, a) I was under the impression Mad Max was a real person, and b) He and Albert Einstein only managed to succeed in living for just over one year). Ironically Mad Max was actually the smarter of the two (again within the context of my hamsters and not, as previously stated, anything to do with their more commonly recognised namesakes).

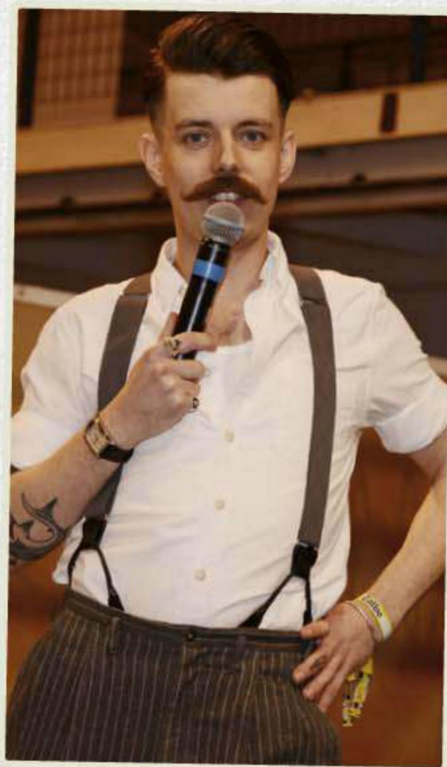
Childhood pets aside, this last year has been a memorable one, and even if I'm struck down by the early onset of Alzheimer's (I just had to look up how to spell Alzheimer's, because I'd forgotten; that can't be good?), at least I'll have

these articles to look back on and remind me that my life can be seriously fuck weird at times.

I can derive some pleasure from the fact that I no longer have four coffins in my living/ dying room. Technically

speaking – 'I don't have a living room. What I do have is a number of other people's living rooms that I am more than welcome to visit occasionally...

"The world is my sofa" there, I said it! I will never have it tattooed, I don't ever want to say it, or hear it said again. It's 2013 and I'm on the sofa. If your couch needs a potato – I can be your Mr Potato! I think that's made me sound like I'm advertising in the back pages of some kinda lazy chip fetishist magazine? (Could be arranged. Ed)



I CAN BE YOUR MR POTATO! I THINK THAT'S MADE ME SOUND LIKE I'M ADVERTISING IN THE BACK PAGES OF SOME KINDA LAZY CHIP FETISHIST MAGAZINE

I can't end my anniversary article on that lethargic, deep fried note, can I? No, surely not? Well, I guess it would be fitting to say something touching about my journey since I began working for Skin Deep; at Tattoo Jam in August 2011 and how that led to me writing for them at the start of last year.

But I only had this much space... and I prefer writing about hamsters.



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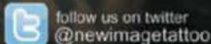
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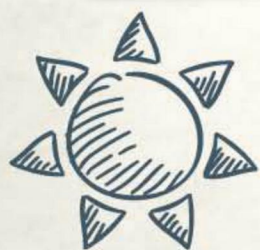
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"Some sins don't wash away..."



RETURN TO OZ

For many, going to Australia is the trip of a lifetime, so I feel very privileged to be boarding a plane headed down under for the second time in my life. My love affair with the country has only just begun, and with the cold weather drawing in on London, it's time to migrate towards the sun



Returning back to the UK last year really made me feel like Australia was where I wanted to be, but unfortunately, getting any kind of working visa, nevermind a permanent one, is becoming harder for the people of blighty, despite the fact UK passports are being dished out like happy meals. So I felt another trip to weigh up my options and explore new avenues was exactly what I needed. After over two years of being constantly on the road, every man must think about settling down to some extent at some point. I would like to say a huge thanks to my buddy Joel, for sorting out our plane tickets and getting us to our first stop, Sydney, for a whirlwind four days of sun, sights and tattoos.

One of the nice things about previously spending such a long time in a country, is you have a

bit more knowledge of the cool, trendy areas and where the best places to stay are, so we are headed straight to 'hip' Newtown where I will be spending a few days at King St tattoo with my buddy, Todd. Newtown is a vibrant place, with cafes, bars and funky eateries sprinkled up and down the streets – it reminds me of a less touristy Camden with far fewer chain stores.

Now, because of the biker influence on the city, Sydney does not have many well-known studios; many artists prefer to move to Melbourne or Brisbane where they are free to control their own shop and inter studio relationships are more friendly. King St tattoo on the other hand is trying to change that. The studio has only been open two years, but owners Duncan and Emil have been tattoo enthusiasts for decades, and despite the fact that



Melbourne Expo

they are not artists, their passion and love of tattooing is equal to any artist I have met. Duncan in particular has an incredible collection of tattoos from an array of amazing artists located all over the world.

A few hours after I land I am in the shop starting my first tattoo. Everything is ready before I arrive, after spending the last 24 hours on a plane it makes slipping into the chair that much easier, and it's the attention to detail in looking after artists that makes you feel that much more welcome in a new shop. The vibe

©Craig Lee

Sydney

I WORKED 24 CONVENTIONS LAST YEAR, AND THE AUSTRALIAN SHOWS ARE BY FAR THE MOST EXPENSIVE SHOWS I HAVE EVER WORKED IN THE WORLD! QUITE WHY THIS IS THE CASE, I AM YET TO FIND OUT



Merrick Ames at Melbourne



With the guys at King St.

in the studio is really laid back and everyone is very friendly. There are 11 artists who work over two floors, the shop is open 11am till 11pm and the day is split into two shifts. I am working downstairs alongside Todd and Miles (who has just moved back to Sydney after a few years working at Frith St in London). The location and attitude of the shop makes me feel it will only be a matter of time before they start making some serious waves in Sydney, and indeed the rest of Australia.

The first few days are really

hard adjusting to the time difference and I find myself waking up super early, but this isn't all bad as we get out and about and head over to the harbour and to the Museum of Contemporary Art of Australia. Last time I was here the museum was undergoing some serious renovations which are now all completed – the museum is now a lot bigger, brighter and a good way to spend most of the morning, not

to mention entry being free.

Our few days here go by quickly in a jetlagged blur, and before I know it we are back on another plane headed down to Melbourne for the second International Tattoo Expo. I worked the show last year and this year things seem to be 🌸

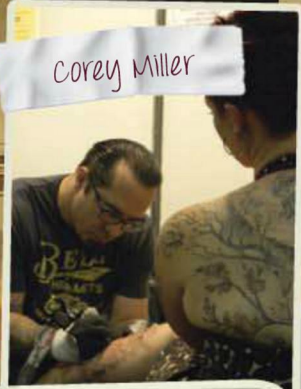




Modern art is rubbish, so they say



Sydney Modern Art Gallery



Corey Miller



The crowds waiting to get in

**ONE THING IS FOR CERTAIN,
IT SURE IS GOOD TO BE
BACK DOWN UNDER!**



growing bigger and better with the organisers flying in Corey Miller, star of TV's *LA Ink* to make an appearance and tattoo at the show.

Unfortunately, there is a new convention taking place in Melbourne just one week before this expo with the likes of Paul Booth, Bob Tyrell, and Joe Capobianco attending, so I was unsure of what to expect this weekend and if it would even be busy. But one thing is clear, the world tattoo stage is starting to pay attention to Australia.

The convention is held in the same venue as last year, and as far as conventions go, it's pretty corporate and soul-less; the Melbourne exhibition centre has around 11 halls, and as we walk in the building we walk past a 'carbon convention' and a 'mind of a millionaire conference' – it

certainly makes it feel more commercial and business-like. The cost of the booths reflects this also, I worked 24 conventions last year and the Australian shows are by far the most expensive shows I have ever worked in the world! Quite why this is the case I am yet to find out.

Once the doors open and the crowds pour in, it is evident that the attending public this year are a much more mainstream crowd – last year there were a lot of scene kids, artists, and tattoo collectors in attendance; this year it seemed to be a lot of families and 'average Joes', the tattooing world is slowly getting watered down and becoming more accessible here like the rest of the world, I'm not sure if that is a good thing or a bad thing.

Everything is progressing and it's great to see some of my friends and artists I met last year and seeing where they are taking the art. I am working in a big booth alongside a heap of cool artists. Alex Bock, whom I worked with in Brisbane last year, has now made the move to Seventh Circle Tattoo, he has come on leaps and bounds since I first met him; I will

be booking in some time with him for sure! Nicole Draeger is working to my right, last year she was in her own shop in Adelaide and has now moved to Green Lotus in Melbourne. To my left is fellow Brit, Gemma Pallet, who is still on the road and currently working from Nelson in New Zealand. I also got the chance to see Terrance Tait, whom I worked with in Cairns and has now opened his own studio up there. Myles Paten is also here and is still working at the same studio, though renamed 'Nine Lives Tattoo' creating some killer clean work. I also got to see Benjamin Laukis tattooing who is putting out some amazing work that I strongly recommend checking out. Corey Miller was of course busy all weekend, tattooing Australian football players and judging the competitions.

The weekend was bustling, and things have certainly changed a lot from last year, it will be very interesting to see what happens with tattooing and conventions over here in the next few years, as similar to England, more and more shows are cropping up all the time. But one thing is for certain, it sure is good to be back down under! 🇦🇺

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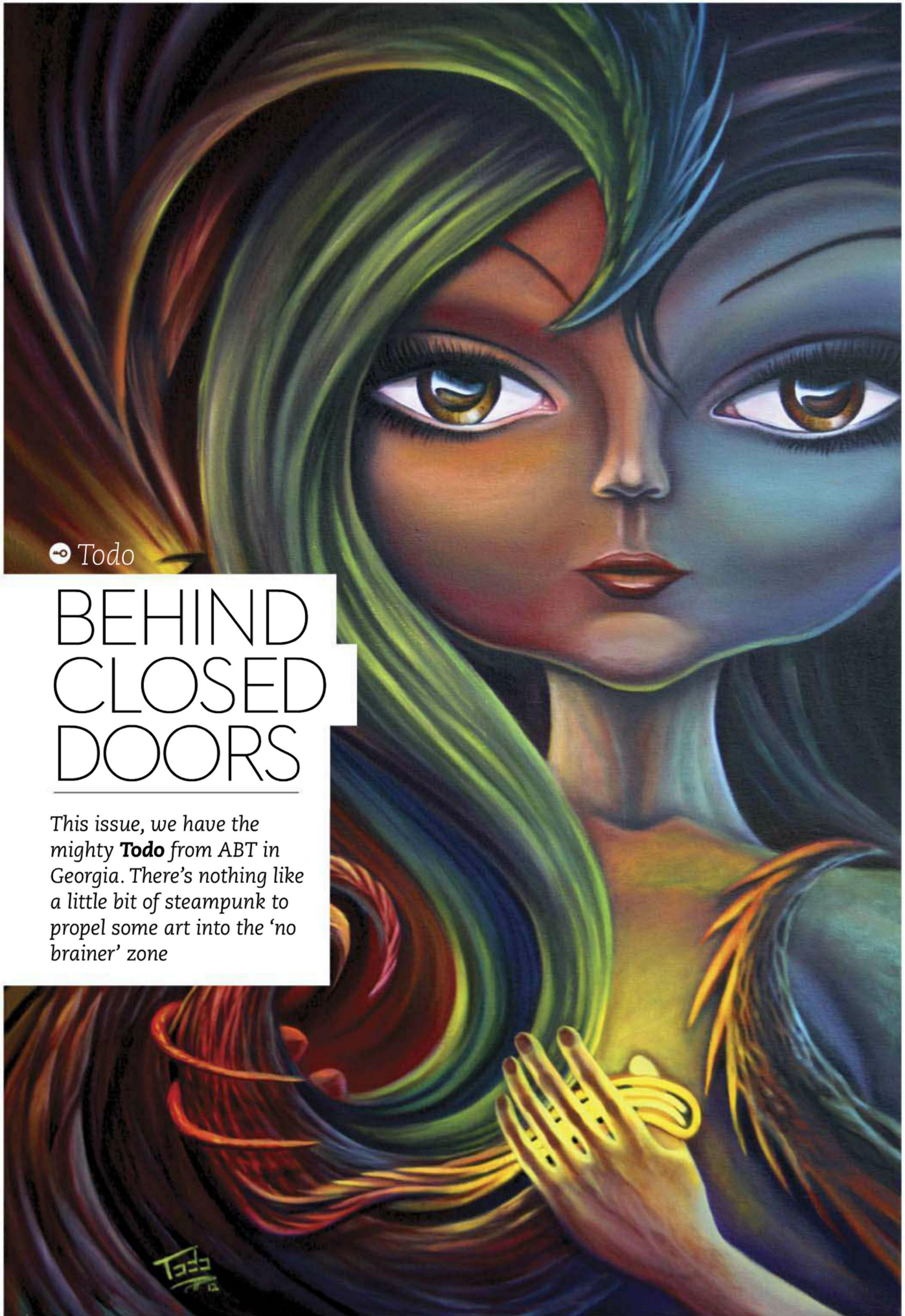
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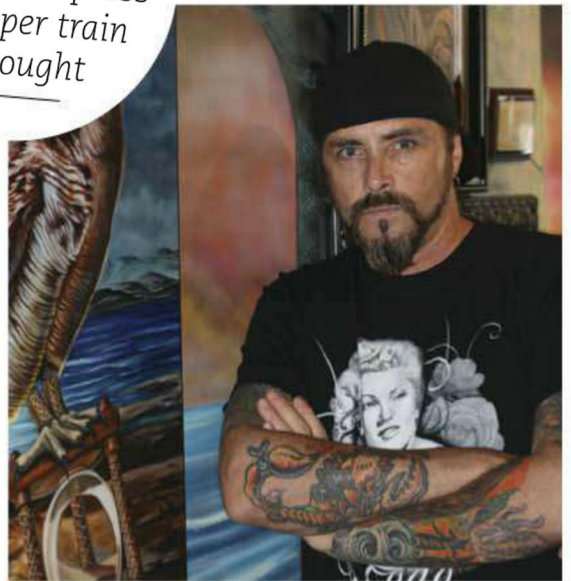
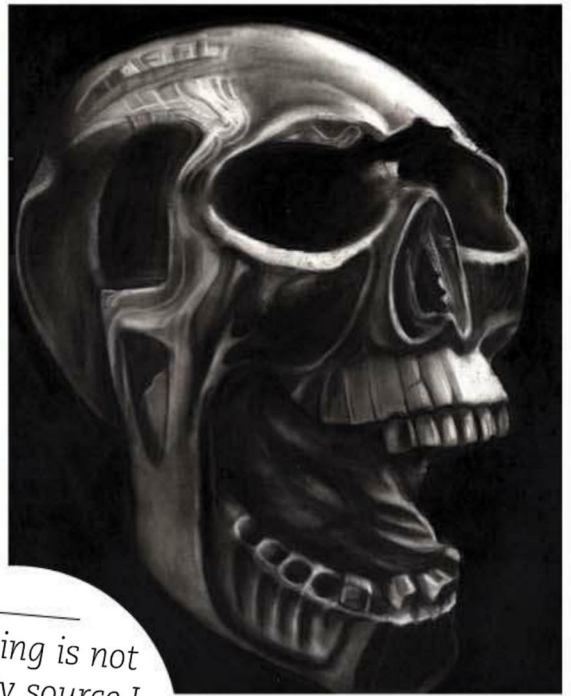
Todo

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

This issue, we have the mighty **Todo** from ABT in Georgia. There's nothing like a little bit of steampunk to propel some art into the 'no brainer' zone



Tattooing is not the only source I can use to express my deeper train of thought



“In my many years of experimenting with different art mediums, I’ve come to find that tattooing is not the only source I can use to express my deeper train of thought. I’ve completed many works of art over the years, but I have to say my favorite medium to work with would either have to be charcoal or oil paint. Both have a different significance to me. Charcoal I use to learn more about lighting techniques, that I later use as a reference to bring a more dynamic look to my tattoos. Oil painting, on the other hand, is a fun way for me to work with the different areas of the colour wheel and learn which colours best complement others, and how the complements themselves can make tattoos seem deeper. By using layering techniques that I’ve only been able to learn through oil painting, I’ve 🙌



All in all,
every single piece
of art I create
is connected in
my mind



been able to learn how to layer my ink in skin as if it was my canvas at home.

"All of the art that I create is either inspired by my tattoos, or is the inspiration for them. When I'm laying out a cool tattoo, sometimes I feel the need to create it in charcoal first, just so I can better understand the inner workings of the piece. It's not all the time that I get to create tattoos that are straight from my mind, so instead of letting my

ideas go, I use oil paint to bring them to life. When my paintings are completed and released to the view of the public eye, it encourages people to get a tattoo with a similar subject base. All in all, every single piece of art I create is connected in my mind. Whether it be on my canvas' at home, or a skin canvas presented to me by my clients. My art is my legacy, it will long outlive its creator, so I like it to tell my stories without having to use my voice." 🐼

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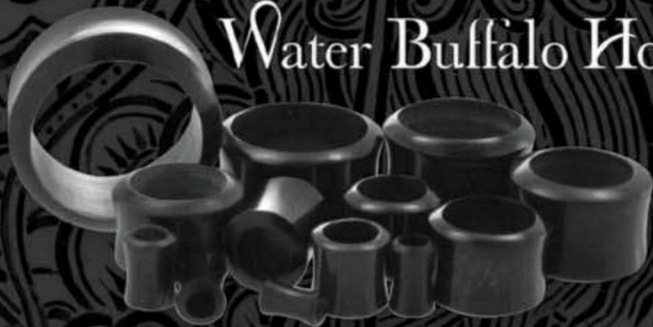
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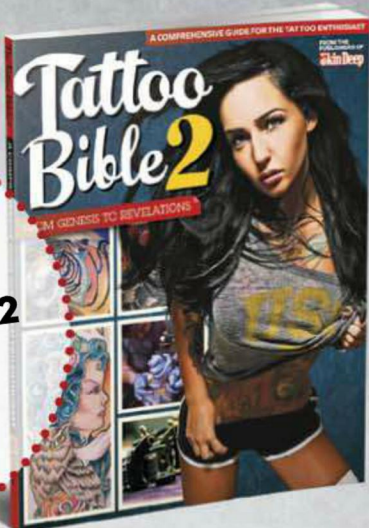
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Red light. Green light

A couple of months back, I ran into Kazzer from the band Redlight King. We got to talking about tattoos and music and that's always worth a share in my book...

Kazzer – or Mark Kasprzyk as he's known to his folks back home in Ontario – is the mastermind behind the band, Redlight King. Spying a full quota of sleeves, I figured this deserved some attention.

Whilst Redlight King might not be a name that slips off the tongue in the UK, you will absolutely, without question be familiar with the band from their contribution to the the *Avengers* movie in the shape of the song, Comeback. Far from being a one trick pony, their album *Something For The Pain* is totally worthy of your attention if your heart is made of rock.

"I've been around the music scene for something like 12 years now – had various deals with various bands, but this feels



WE'RE NOT A SINGLES TYPE OF BAND. WE DON'T WRITE SINGLES FOR RADIO. WE WROTE A RECORD SO, IF YOU REALLY WANT TO GET INTO THE BAND - YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO THEIR WHOLE RECORD AND LISTEN TO IT TWICE IF YOU'RE NOT SURE!

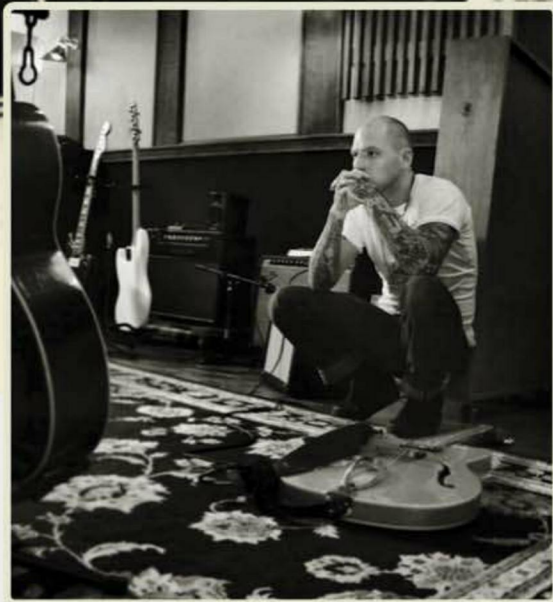
right. I'm in a good place having wrestled my demons into some kind of submission, and my songwriting is really hitting its stride."

You can imagine what those demons are – they pretty much come with the territory of being in a band, and a lot of that surfaces on the album track, Past The Gates. In fact, much of the

record positions itself as a lyrical stake in the ground of the past being somewhere Kaz doesn't intend going back to. It's a very retrospective kind of affair, but it's also littered with 'fight the future' tracks such as Bullet in my Hand (which had got a mean aircraft hanger video clip to it).

"I'd say that was a good statement of the album, but the 🍀





YOUNG'S OLD MAN

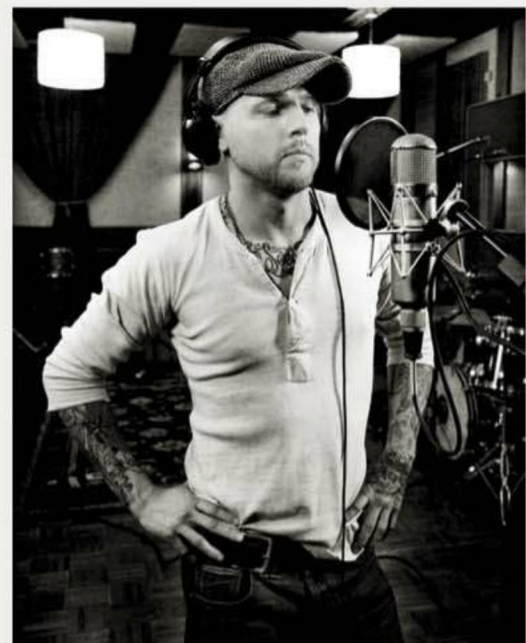
Kazzer made the news in 2011 for his success in securing permission from Neil Young to allow a sample of his 1972 song, Old Man. The sample is included in the song "Old Man" (originally titled "Hardworking Hands") and took a lot of ignoring rejection before eventually getting the song in front of Young himself to get clearance. There's a good lesson to be learned there in the art of persistence.

best is certainly still to come. I've got the full support of the record company, and the future is looking good. You know, a band can't only live off a record deal anymore – not if you're dead intent on making it. The future for bands is in live music. You've got to hit the road and put in the miles. It's old school. Unless you're a pop artist, there's no real future to be had in simply releasing records. It's the cornerstone, but it can't be all there is. The time on the road honing your craft constantly is going to take music back to where it used to be, and that's the way it should be."

THERE'S NO REAL FUTURE TO BE HAD IN SIMPLY RELEASING RECORDS. IT'S THE CORNERSTONE, BUT IT CAN'T BE ALL THERE IS

And the tattoos? It's hard to find a rock band without them – and that's also the way it should be. These sleeves are full of road stories. Some are memorials and captured moments in time, others are signs of nothing better to do while you're waiting around (and boy, is there ever a lot of waiting around when you're on the road). Time has greyed the fact that this is how I used to think too. It's no bad thing.

Something For The Pain is a world away from the guy that was once a judo champion on the national squad and headed for the 2000 Olympics. I think I'd rather have the band out there though... go check them out. 🐾



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WELCOME TO THE FREAKSHOW

As the sun sets on Coney Island, Adam Rinn, better known as Adam Real Man, or The Professa, tells stories about the Brooklyn sea shore community of old and its heyday...

Or maybe not its heyday, since the art of sideshow was dying out when Adam grew up here in the '70s, just a couple of blocks away from the beach.

"Even so, I had the best backyard in the world. Imagine being a kid and living a couple of blocks away from this," he says, looking out towards the amusement park. "Although, at this time the sideshow was dying down, because of political correctness and modern medicine. Freaks just weren't being born like they used to. Moving into the '70s and '80s, Coney Island still had a dozen permanent sideshows, but things moved in the direction where there were no freaks. Video killed the sideshow star. Why pay for something when you have entertainment

Simon Lundh

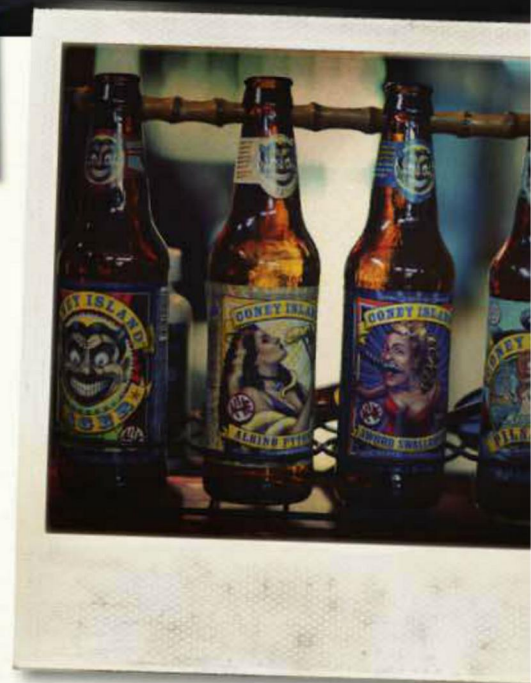
in your own home?"

And alongside the cultural downfall came a general decline of the neighbourhood.

"It was very rough here in the '70s, like the movie *Warriors*, but without the inter-racial gangs. It was bad, the area fell to neglect by the city and the landlords. We had a lot of beautiful architecture along this street, like palaces and bath houses," he says and points down the street. "But they've been torn down during the last 40 years."

Today the area is a lot safer... and more boring, according to Adam.

"It's like New York City 15-20 years ago. Times Square was filled with junkies and prostitutes; now it's become a sanitised version of itself, but it's also lost its edge. I like the edge. I prefer to keep it a bit gritty; we're the link to the



grittiness, the old Coney Island."

Even if Adam had the greatest backyard in the world, it took him a long time before he himself got involved in the world of oddities and freaks.

"In the mid-80s I started going to sideshows and I was blown away, but it looked really dangerous and I didn't want to



“THIS USED TO BE A SIDESHOW AND ON THIS LOT AS WELL. THEY WERE BROTHERS-IN-LAW AND RIVALS. AND OVER THERE IS THE OLDEST NOW REMAINING HOUSE AROUND, A BEAUTIFUL OLD BUILDING...”



pester them. It wasn't until 2000 that I took some classes and now I'm a teacher at the school here.”

Not only that, he's also 'the dean' and a performer of everything from human blockhead to sword swallowing, fire eating and glass walking – but only part-time.

“Most of the cast do this full-time, but I'm lucky enough to have another job as well. But that's a different story.”

Even though he's seen this culture at its low, he's also seen it rise. When he got started, the sideshow was already experiencing an upswing, a boost that remains even today.

“About 20 years ago, Jim Rose toured Lollapalooza with his sideshow and that brought attention to the masses, at least the alternative masses. He was probably the first guy doing this that they'd ever seen, and in the last 12 years it's grown enormously. There's not a small town without a sideshow performer today.”

One of the explanations could

HISTORY (I)

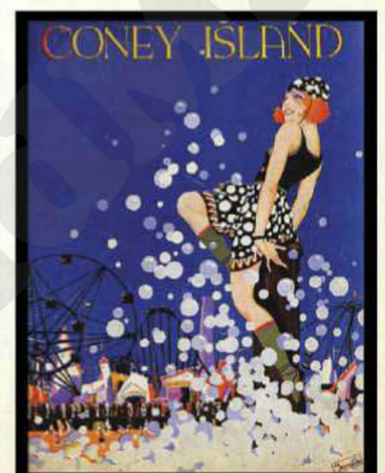
Coney Island is a peninsula and beach on the Atlantic Ocean in southern Brooklyn, New York City. The site was formerly an outer barrier island, but became partially connected to the mainland by landfill. Coney Island is possibly best known as the site of amusement parks and a major resort. The attractions reached their peak during the first half of the 20th century, declining in popularity after World War II and years of neglect.

In recent years, the area has seen the opening of MCU Park and has become home to the minor league baseball team, the Brooklyn Cyclones. The neighborhood of the same name is a community of 60,000 people in the western part of the peninsula, with Sea Gate to its west, Brighton Beach and Manhattan Beach to its east, and Gravesend to the north.

be the ever increasing interest in tattoos, in which aspect Adam could be considered the freak.

“I don't have a single one and have no interest in getting one. I walk the line between normal and freak, and it's a beautiful line to walk.”

As darkness approaches on this mid-October evening only a few rides are open. The occasional scream from a roller coaster or the 'clinks' of a slot machine 🎰



HISTORY (II)

Between about 1880 and World War II, Coney Island was the largest amusement area in the United States, attracting several million visitors per year. At its height it contained three competing major amusement parks, Luna Park, Dreamland, and Steeplechase Park, as well as many independent amusements.

Astroland served as a major amusement park from 1962 to 2008, and was replaced by a new incarnation of Dreamland in 2009 and of Luna Park in 2010. The other parks and attractions include Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park, 12th Street Amusements, and Kiddie Park, while the Eldorado Arcade has an indoor bumper car ride. The Zipper and Spider on 12th Street were closed permanently on September 4, 2007, and dismantling began after its owner lost his lease. They are to be reassembled at an amusement park in Honduras.

On April 20, 2011, the first new roller coasters to be built at Coney Island in 80 years were opened as part of efforts to reverse the decline of the amusement area.

are heard when you walk down the boardwalk, but the season is basically over and most of the restaurants will shut down along with the Coney Island Circus Sideshow. However, Halloween is a-comin', and the activities at the sideshow haven't quite died down yet...

"We have what we call 'Creepshow at the Freakshow', a play in pure Halloween spirit featuring dead presidents. Altogether we have 40 programs, like Burlesque at the Beach, the museum and the sideshow school, for instance. It's an insane amount of programing

considering the small staff."

And next year it could be even more.

"This year we're closing down due to construction. Otherwise we would have had a year-round program, but next year we will have theatres, varieties and much more."

Adam proudly talks about the sideshow and its cultural heritage. Founded in 1982 it's the only permanent show of its kind in the United States alongside the much, much younger Venice Beach Freakshow in Los Angeles. Not that there haven't been

other people trying to establish themselves, some of them right here in Coney Island.

"Most of them close down after a few weeks. We had one that lasted one or two seasons, but we outlast them. Of course there is always room to improve, but we're the superior show."

And he thinks he knows why.

"Nowadays there are less naturally born freaks and more working acts, like sword swallows and fire eaters, but the last couple of seasons we've been lucky enough to have a lot of born freaks. In the golden days

AT THIS TIME THE SIDESHOW WAS DYING DOWN, BECAUSE OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND MODERN MEDICINE. FREAKS JUST WEREN'T BEING BORN LIKE THEY USED TO





IT WAS VERY ROUGH HERE IN THE '70S, LIKE THE MOVIE WARRIORS, BUT WITHOUT INTERRACIAL GANGS

white horror movie displayed on the big screen or just chit-chatting, Adam continues to talk about the positive trend that has hit this beloved passion of his.

"It's a little more mainstream now. You still see the occasional punk rocker here, but you get all types. Not hipsters, though," he says with a smirk, "but families, people from the neighbourhood, and even Hasidic Jews. Coney Island's always been a working class area. It's affordable. For a few dollars you can spend a whole day here, the sideshow costs less than a movie – and it's live!"

So if you ever get the urge to bang your head against hard material or shove a sharp, long object down your throat, Coney Island lets you pursue that dream. Here you can learn all the freak skills as well as banner painting and magic – but it might be hard considering the popularity the sideshow school has now attained.

"We have people coming from all over the US and Canada. We even had a guy coming in from Portugal, I think it was. Some of them go on to be a part of our show."

As the curtain rises I see a deceased Abraham Lincoln before me, as dead as all the items in the lobby...



they were the highest paid and many went on to start their own sideshows."

The lobby-slash-bar-slash-gift shop has the same at-ease spooky atmosphere as a homemade

haunted garage or cellar in a small American town around Halloween; the main difference being the history that goes into these spooky items contrary to the plastic Walmart cob webs, witches, and skeletons that ornate every house in the US throughout October.

As the anticipating creepshow attendants sip on their beers, either watching the black and



HISTORY (III)

In June of 1956, Walt Disney made a visit to Coney to see how the park was run. He was in the process of building Disneyland in California. Coney's president, Mr. Schott, was a 'paid' consultant for Disney on the new park project. He was paid \$1 for his services.



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But that's not the case with Texas-based tattoo artist, Jeremy Miller, whose cheery personality is a good match for the blazing new school work he creates.

"I'm a happy person, I like to be happy and I want to bring that into my work!" he says animatedly as we sit down. And what work it is – super new school contrast and thick lines, cartoony images in psychedelic shades that loom woozily off the skin as if operating in a different dimension. It's pretty distinctive stuff, and a long way from the first work he did.

"I started drawing tribal," he recalls. "It was the late '90s, early '00s, and it was all tribal, that's all anybody wanted." Pretty much everything he drew was tribal, he says, remembering one occasion where he drew a non-tribal piece for a friend, only for them to change their mind at the studio and opt for tribal flash instead. "Maybe that's why I hate it now!"

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

All the same, tribal work provided a way into tattooing for someone who admits to starting off as a stay-at-home scratcher. "When



I was 18 I went and got my first tattoo and after that I just kinda started drawing all of my friends' tattoos. About a year later I discovered the art of scratching and got a tattoo kit off eBay and started doing that."

The 'art' of scratching is referred to with no small amount of irony, and it seems not to have lasted

long. Instead, the military came calling and Miller spent some time in the Army, landing an apprenticeship once he left. His new employers weren't troubled by his early adventures in DIY tattooing, he says. "Fortunately they didn't look down on me scratching at home so I was able to get into a shop and start learning."

Russ Thorne Jeremy Miller



EVEN THOUGH EVERYONE ELSE WAS DRAFTING ON COMPUTERS, I WAS STILL HAND-DRAWING, SO EVEN THOUGH IT WAS DIFFERENT TO WHAT I DO NOW IT WAS STILL A FORM OF ART... IT'S ALWAYS BEEN IN THERE!

momma's boy. But she hates each and every one of them. On occasion she tries to scratch 'em off; if I get a new one she's mad for a few days!"

Out of respect for his mother he keeps his own pieces conservative and sticks to a 'no hands, neck or face' rule, so they can be covered up "when we go to church or if I go home for the weekend." All the same, he laughs, "it's definitely created some arguments!" But despite their artistic differences, she remains a staunch supporter

of his work. "She helped me out when I needed investors to start my studio; even though she doesn't like it, she's still very proud and very supportive."

The journey from tribal to his current adventures in new school lunacy has been, as for many artists, a lifelong one. The young Miller was always drawing, never formally training through art classes, but being "the kid in school who doodles". He took drafting lessons, but even there it was all about the pen and paper. "Even 🍌"



though everyone else was drafting on computers, I was still hand-drawing, so even though it was different to what I do now it was still a form of art... it's always been in there!"

It all changed when he stumbled across the early work of new school artist, Tony Ciavarró. "When I first got into a shop I'd never really seen new school before. It was mainly tribal and a little bit of black and grey stuff from the internet," he says. "But I saw a set of Tony's flash, this was 2003-04, fairly old now, it had a lot of that very high contrast stuff. I started trying to draw those cartoony images, but I couldn't figure out how to get that kind of dynamic perspective."

His solution? If it don't fit, bend it. "I just started bending everything. Another artist, Elmo Boyd [currently based in Kansas City, check out tattoosbyelmo.com] tattooed a friend of mine and he tattooed a pencil that was curved, which gave me the idea to just curve *everything*, and eventually that started evolving more and more into whatever it is I do now, which all looks like it's made out of Play-Doh..."

THE COLOUR AND THE SHAPE

Warping the perspective of his tattoos while still keeping the bold contrasts and dynamic colours of new school work created what he calls "these crazy, weird-looking pieces. I like to make them so they look like you could pick each little part of it off, somehow."

It certainly works. Some of the pieces we've seen do indeed have a 'pluck me off and eat me' pick 'n' mix quality to them. So how much of that is about intuitively knowing what works, and how much is understanding technical things like colour theory? Another new school expert, Mr Tanane Whitfield, certainly thinks the theory side is important [see *Skin Deep* 208, folks!]; what does Jeremy make of it?

"I completely agree, and it's weird because I've never had any formal training in it. TJ Page, who works for me, has a colour wheel



I JUST KNOW THAT IF I'VE GOT SOMETHING RED I'VE GOTTA HAVE THE OTHER THING BE BLUE, AND HAVING COOL COLOURS VERSUS WARM COLOURS AND MAKING THEM BOUNCE OFF EACH OTHER

at his station and he's always referencing it." Miller has been encouraged to use the wheel by his colleague, but admits he has no idea how to use it. It seems to be an unconscious grasp of the theory, for him.

"I just know that if I've got something red I've gotta have the other thing be blue, and having cool colours versus warm colours and making them bounce off each other. It's not really a formal understanding, it's just knowing that a cool colour will make a warm colour look warmer. It's pretty much an intuitive thing. The more you work with bright colour, the more you get it; you just have to screw a few up first!" he laughs.

OBJECTS OF FUN

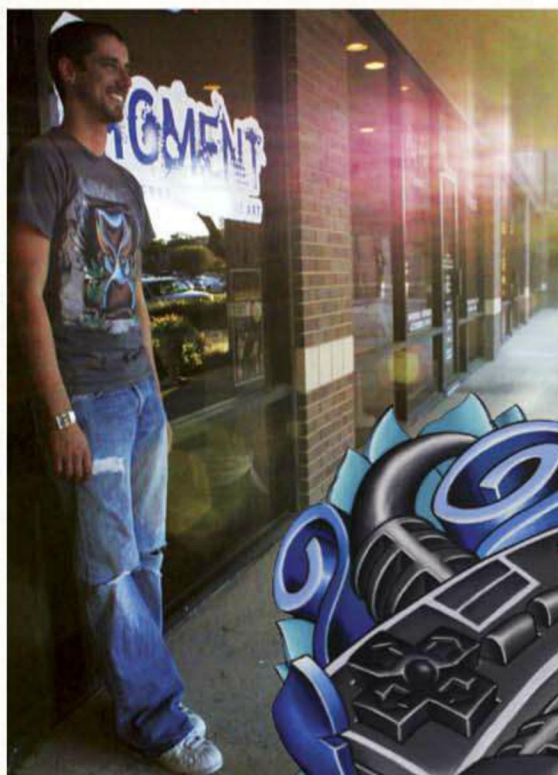
That's the approach for the colour and the linework, but what about the ideas themselves? How does he end up at gas masks, worms with monocles, knuckleduster coffee mugs, or indeed any of the weird and wonderful creations parading these pages?

"I really prefer it if someone gives me a random idea," he says. "My favourite thing to do is just to pick a random object; we're

sitting here right now, like let's do this table. And that would be a fun tattoo, even though it's just a table." He points out my tiny dice earring (partially hidden by hair, which probably says something about his powers of observation and finding inspiration in the small things) and suggests a dice tattoo. "I can do anything with that! Throw some leaves, or bones, or roses or flames or whatever around it, but having that one central object is my favourite way to work."

He likes to work with a certain amount of freedom once a client has suggested a central theme to him; it feels restrictive any other way, he explains. "I have a client who wants a really detailed piece, they want every little piece just the way they want it... and I hate it, I don't even want to do it any more. It's a pay-the-bills tattoo, because it's thinking too much, it's not just having fun. It's not 'you do this style, let's get tattooed by you in this style and here's an idea I have'." 🍌





WHEN YOU LOOK BACK IN TEN YEARS AT THE TATTOO, AND YOU'RE REMEMBERING GETTING IT, I'D RATHER THAT BE A HAPPY MEMORY THAN YOU THINKING 'SHIT, THAT HURT!'

The 'fun' factor is important to Miller, who doesn't think it's a tag that demeans new school art. "A lot of times you can get a serious tattoo with it, but you're still getting a cartoon. You're getting something that's inherently lighthearted, so I think that's good."

However, he does believe that calling new school tattoos 'amateur' compared to other styles is to do them a disservice. "To think that they're amateur because they're cartoony is completely false," he says, going on to emphasise the positive impact that new school's cheery disposition can have. "For the most part when you look at a new school tattoo it's going to be fun, it's going to have whimsical colours. Even if you're doing a tribute piece for someone, you can still capture all the pieces you need to make a memorial, but perhaps you'll be capturing a happy memory as opposed to getting a

black and grey portrait – and I have nothing against them – that can be more sombre, more serious."

SERIOUS FUN

Miller likes his clients to have a good time, not just when they look at their finished pieces, but also while they're getting them. "I try to make sure customers are having fun, even when I'm torturing them. We always have a blast! When you look back in ten years at the tattoo, and you're remembering getting it, I'd rather that be a happy memory than you thinking 'shit, that hurt!'"

Having the right attitude is an important part of the business now, he thinks. "If you look back at the history of tattooing over the last 50 years, you went into a lot of biker shops and you got a particular attitude, and that attitude rubbed people the wrong way. I can understand it completely because it was this kind of backroad, hidden thing in the shadows, but now it's more mainstream."

The result? It's nice to be nice. "Your customers pay your bills, you can't have that shitty 'if you don't have a ton of tattoos you're not good enough to be in here' attitude. Even the lady getting her first little tiny butterfly, she's still a customer and you never know, she might be back next week to get a full sleeve; but if you're an asshole she might not come back!"

RENEWAL

He's clearly come a long way from those tribal flash-bashing beginnings, but he's not done yet. The next step is to expand and evolve, perhaps moving into painting to bring something new into his tattooing. "I've never done it before, so I'm going to devote some time to oil painting and try to develop a few more realism skills, and then transfer that into my tattooing. You know, to

incorporate a big bold colourful piece with a soft, pastel, more realistic looking piece."

Is that going to mean retreating to a cabin in the woods for months and coming back re-invented? "No way, I couldn't do that, I'm way too much of a people person! I'm just gonna see what happens."

There's a loose plan of sorts, involving working with his artist wife to develop his basic painting skills, and perhaps getting some inspiration from painterly colleagues such as TJ, too. "The thing for me will be getting through those first few months where I try to understand the basics of painting, because I've never done it. I'm so used to doing everything with ink and colour pencils, so even doing the same stuff with a different medium might give me a new perspective and change things up a little bit."

So why the need to change things up? "You have to try something that's a little bit different. You might suck at it, but trying it gives you a different perspective on what you originally did."

He might want to evolve things a little, but this is a man content with his chosen path. He must be – his business masters degree would open doors to more highly-paid careers, but that's not for him. "This is not a job, this is pure fun. There's not another job I could do that would be this enjoyable."

There are challenges, though, he admits as we drain our coffees. "Last night I was drawing a tattoo – a gas mask for someone's neck – I thought about putting bones behind it, because the mask has a cracked lens and it would give it an armageddon kind of look," he says. Problem is, he did something similar a few weeks ago. "So figuring out how to change that while still getting the same idea in there, really seems to be getting tough!"

Maybe he should just go to the woods for a week, then? "Haha, maybe three or four days," he says. "It'll be fun!" Know what? We reckon it would be. 🐼



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Butler - I have been tattooing for just under a year now and I love doing realistic tattoos I am extremely passionate about tattooing and loving every minute of it.

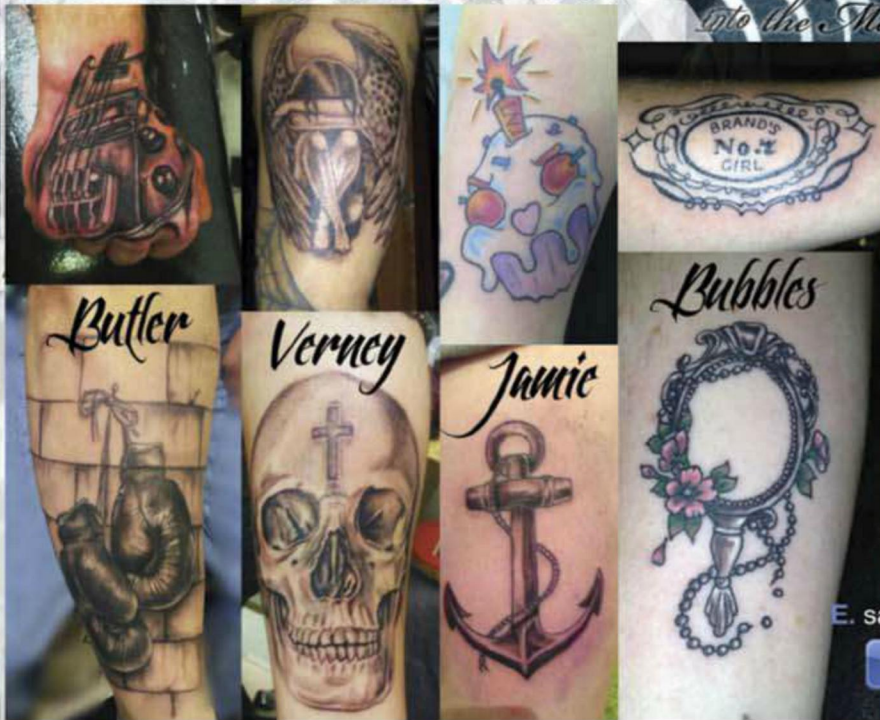
Verney - Tattooing for nearly 8 years specialising in black and grey tattoos.

Jamie - Hiya I'm Jamie and I have been tattooing for a year now and I like new school tattoos.

Bubbles - Hello, I'm bubbles I'm the only girl of the group and I love doing my script and realistic tattoos, I am the proud owner of the studio and we have been open for 5 months now.

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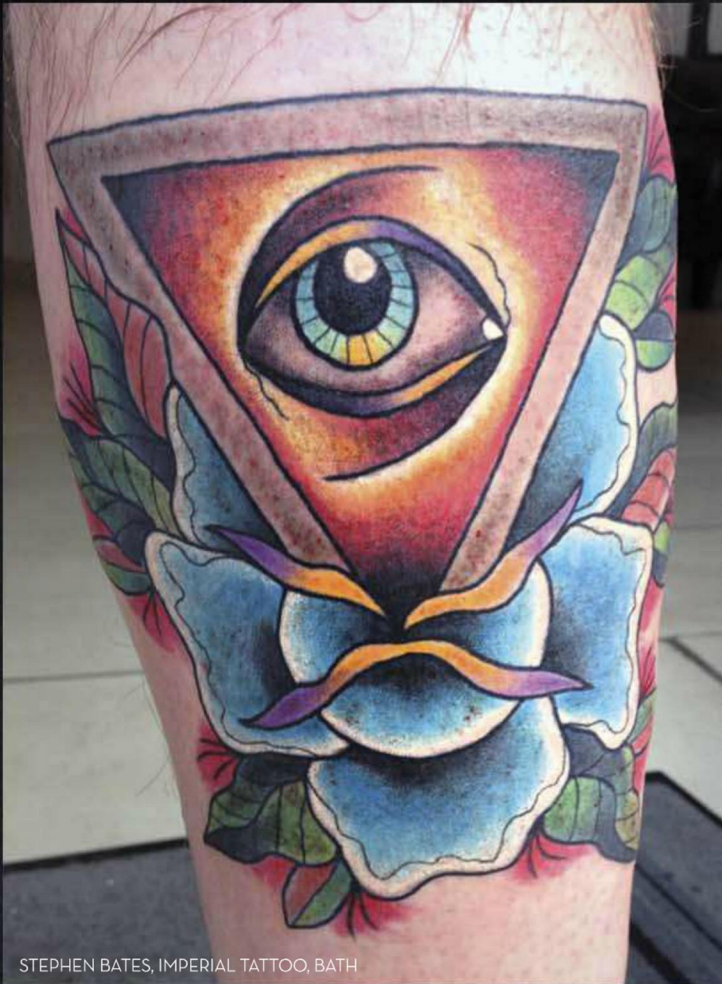
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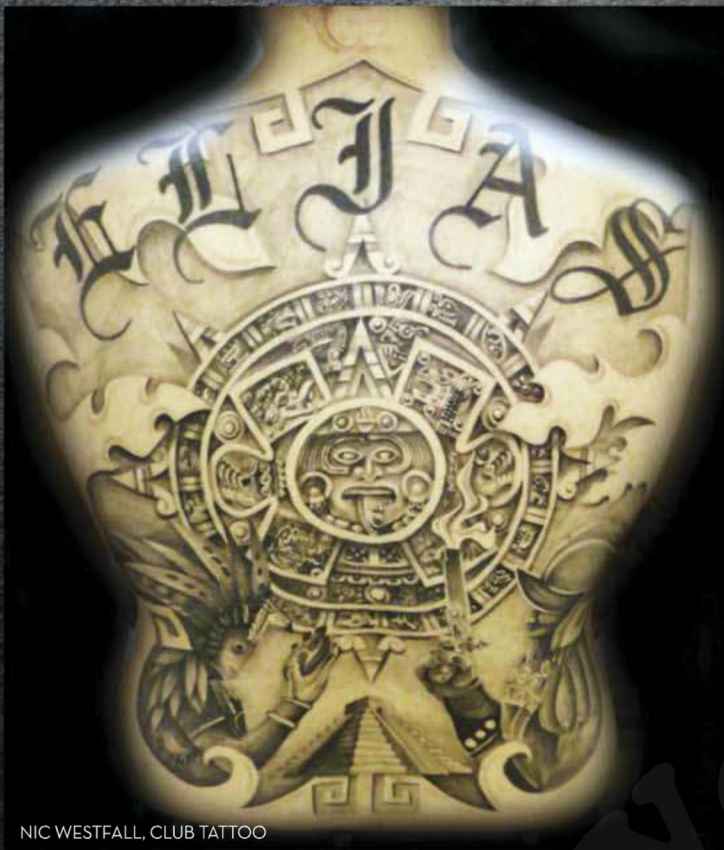


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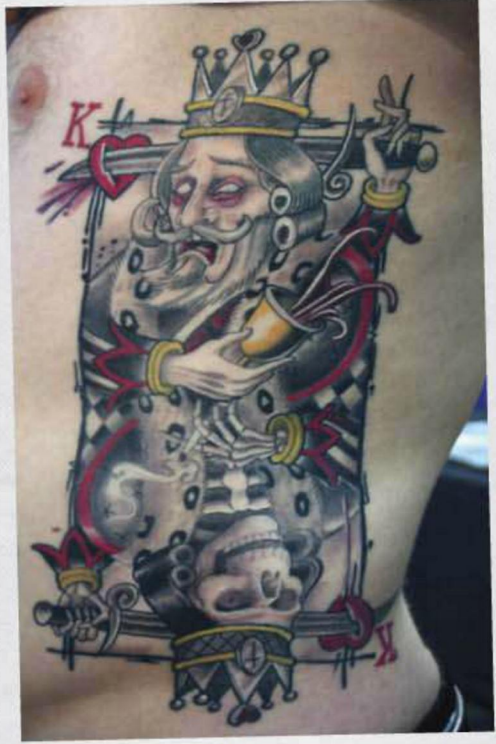
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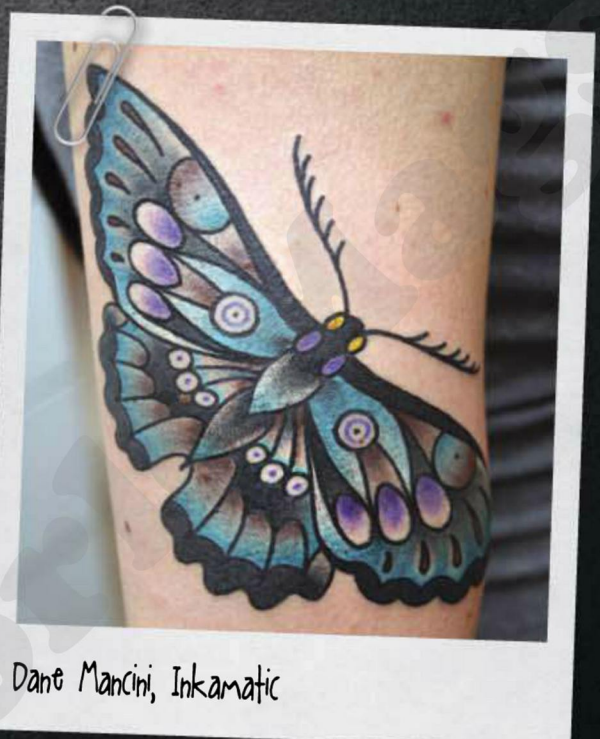
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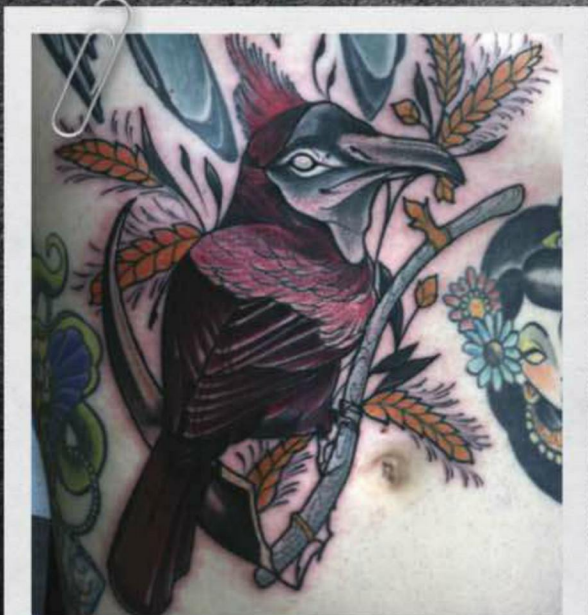
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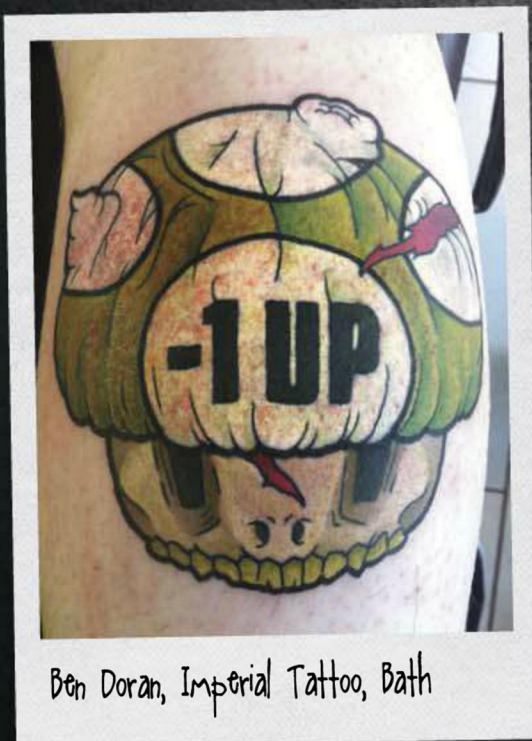
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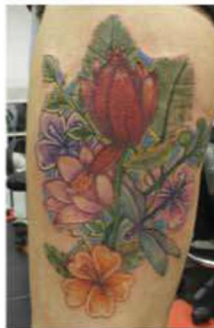
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WARNING: The Circus of Horrors contains some nudity and language of an adult nature, it is not suitable for children, sissies or chavs. This show contains nuts!
The dangerous nature of our performances means individual acts may sometimes change




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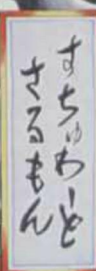
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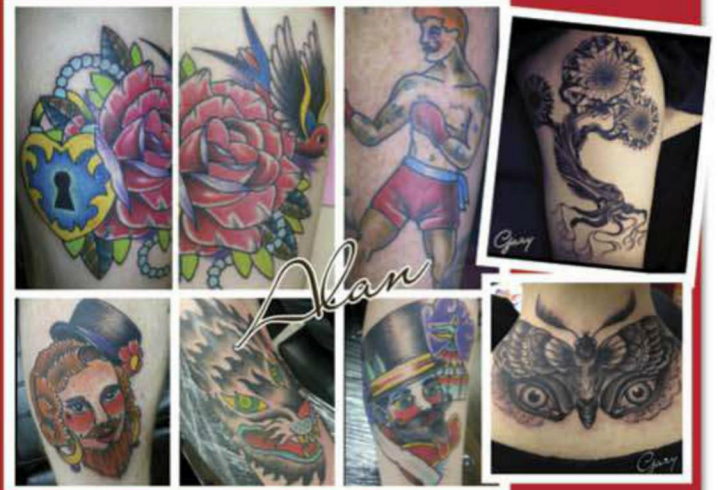


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IT WAS NOT ME, IT MUST HAVE BEEN

MY EVIL TWIN

Secret governmental experiments on past generations and growing up under powerlines in Missouri have made him a seventh generation twin. At least that's the theory. Today, Tim Kern adorns skin with realism in a teeny, tiny studio in New York's trendy East Village by the name of Tribulation Tattoo



Tim Kern's journey to becoming a tattooist in New York went via Chicago, but it all started in his home state of Missouri, where he grew up as a seventh generation twin.

"I was also born with a lazy eye and I think that has to do with growing up under powerlines in St Louis," he says with a smirk.

"Also, it was disclosed a couple of years ago that the government had performed secret war experiments there, releasing toxic chemicals in

the air to see how people reacted. That really bothers me because my Mom's health is kind of bad."

Needless to say, his interactions with the government are now kept to a minimum.

"I try to ignore it. I pay my taxes and vote, and that's it."

The path of tattooing was started upon at the age of 23, still in his home state.

"I went to an art school in a small university town called Columbia in Missouri, and I had a lot of friends who were tattoo



Simon Lunnh & Tribulation Tattoo

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www.tribulationtattoo.com

**SECRET WAR EXPERIMENTS (I)**

Project MKUltra is the code name for a covert research operation experimenting in the behavioral engineering of humans (mind control) through the CIA's Scientific Intelligence Division. The program began in the early 1950s, was officially sanctioned in 1953, was reduced in scope in 1964, further curtailed in 1967 and 'officially halted' in 1973. The program engaged in many illegal activities; in particular it used unwitting US and Canadian citizens as its test subjects, which led to controversy regarding its legitimacy. MKUltra involved the use of many methodologies to manipulate people's individual mental states and alter brain functions, including the surreptitious administration of drugs (especially LSD) and other chemicals, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, isolation, verbal and sexual abuse, as well as various forms of torture.

I LIKE IMAGES, THINGS, NOT ABSTRACTION. IF I DO BIOMECHANICS I TRY TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE PIECES OF ANTIQUE TOYS

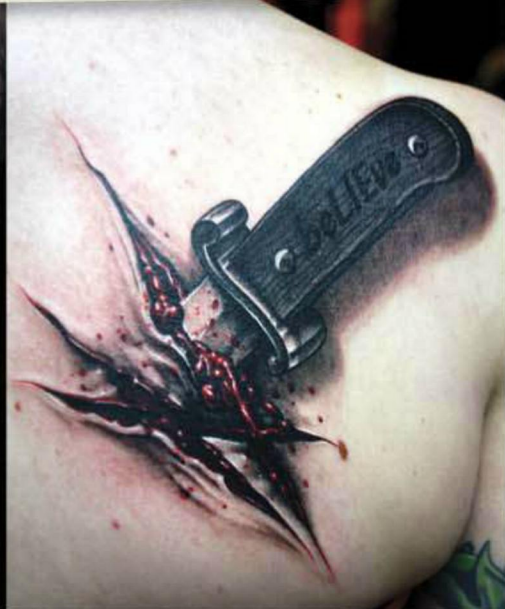
artists since I had been getting a lot of piercings, but at the time I had no tattoos. Anyway, they liked my drawings and encouraged me to start learning. I got an apprenticeship at a studio, but my brother actually started tattooing nine months before me, in Chicago. We learned together but in different states. My apprenticeship was more formal,

but he had more good artists around him. We used to talk over the phone and exchange ideas."

After a couple of years Tim reunited with his brother in Chicago for a while before he came to New York in 2002, grown weary of the Windy City.

"I was bored. I needed something new and different and Chicago wasn't doing it for me. I liked 🍷"





I LIKE TO DO STUFF THAT I DON'T DO ALL THE TIME. I DON'T GET ASKED FOR PORTRAITS MUCH AND WHEN I DO I GET ALL EXCITED

SECRET WAR EXPERIMENTS (II)

The scope of Project MKUltra was broad, with research undertaken at 80 institutions, including 44 colleges and universities, as well as hospitals, prisons and pharmaceutical companies. The CIA operated through these institutions using front organisations, although sometimes top officials at these institutions were aware of the CIA's involvement. MKUltra was apparently allocated six percent of total CIA funds. In 1977, a Freedom of Information Act request uncovered a cache of 20,000 documents relating to project MKUltra, which led to Senate hearings later that same year. In July 2001 some surviving information regarding MKUltra was officially declassified.

New York and luckily I got hired by Paul Booth at Last Rites, where I worked for five years."

And the move turned out to be not just a geographical one.

"In Chicago, I used to do a lot of the big-eyed cutesy stuff. You know how you do one thing and then everyone wants that. I did a biomechanical cover up on a Japanese MMA-fighter and when I went to Japan after that I did nothing but biomech, but I'm over with that now. I like images, things, not abstraction. If I do biomechanical, I try to make it look like pieces of antique toys. Anyway, Paul hired me because I did colour. Nobody did that there at the time, and once I started working there I got asked for more dark stuff. I'd always been into that, but I was never asked. Sometimes I still do cute and fucked up, but I basically grew away from that."

Basically it seems like it's all about not getting bored.

"I like to do stuff that I don't do

all the time. I don't get asked for portraits much and when I do I get all excited. People say that I have a style, but I don't see that. I think I'm all over the place. I want to mix things and keep from getting bored. I want every tattoo to be unique."

Speaking of portraits and dark stuff, one of his clients chose to display people from a category of interest for Tim on her body.

"She wanted Albert Fish and Jeffrey Dahmer, both serial killers and cannibals. I'm interested in serial killers in general, and have done a lot of reading on the subject. But she got really crazy tattoos; she had one of a butcher chopping up a little girl as well."

We're sitting in Tim Kern, and his business partner, Dan Marshall's current tattoo parlour, Tribulation Tattoo on 6th Street in New York's East Village. Three stations are set up like a small train in this miniscule studio.

"If our customers are alone it's not a problem, but if they bring friends or if one of them has to lie down, then it gets a bit tough. But hey, this is New York."

Soon enough it will be a little more comfortable, though, as the third tattooist in the studio, Liorcifer, is opening up his own shop.

"Not that I want him to leave or anything, but it will probably be more comfortable. It's hard to find someone you click with. 🍌"

SECRET WAR EXPERIMENTS (III)

The Agency poured millions of dollars into studies examining methods of influencing and controlling the mind, and of enhancing their ability to extract information from resistant subjects during interrogation. Some historians have asserted that creating a 'Manchurian Candidate' subject through 'mind control' techniques was a goal of MKUltra and related CIA projects. Alfred McCoy has claimed that the CIA attempted to focus media attention on these sorts of 'ridiculous' programs, so that the public would not look at the primary goal of the research, which was developing effective methods of torture and interrogation. Such authors cite as one example that the CIA's KUBARK interrogation manual refers to 'studies at McGill University', and that most of the techniques recommended in KUBARK are exactly those that researcher Donald Ewen Cameron used on his test subjects (sensory deprivation, drugs, isolation, etc.).





SECRET WAR EXPERIMENTS (IV)

One 1955 MKUltra document gives an indication of the size and range of the effort; this document refers to the study of an assortment of mind-altering substances described as follows:

1. Substances which will promote illogical thinking and impulsiveness to the point where the recipient would be discredited in public.
2. Substances which increase the efficiency of mentation and perception.
3. Materials which will cause the victim to age faster/slower in maturity.
4. Materials which will promote the intoxicating effect of alcohol.
5. Materials which will produce the signs and symptoms of recognised diseases in a reversible way so that they may be used for malingering, etc.
6. Materials will cause temporary/permanent brain damage and loss of memory.
7. Substances which will enhance the ability of individuals to withstand privation, torture and coercion during interrogation and so-called 'brain-washing'.
8. Materials and physical methods which will produce amnesia for events preceding and during their use.
9. Physical methods of producing shock and confusion over extended periods of time and capable of surreptitious use.
10. Substances which produce physical disablement such as paralysis of the legs, acute anemia, etc.
11. Substances which will produce a chemical that can cause blisters.
12. Substances which alter personality structure in such a way that the tendency of the recipient to become dependent upon another person is enhanced.
13. A material which will cause mental confusion of such a type that the individual under its influence will find it difficult to maintain a fabrication under questioning.
14. Substances which will lower the ambition and general working efficiency of men when administered in undetectable amounts.
15. Substances which promote weakness or distortion of the eyesight or hearing faculties, preferably without permanent effects.
16. A knockout pill which can surreptitiously be administered in drinks, food, cigarettes, as an aerosol, etc., which will be safe to use, provide a maximum of amnesia, and be suitable for use by agent types on an ad hoc basis.

A material which can be surreptitiously administered by the above routes and which in very small amounts will make it impossible for a person to perform physical activity.





YOU GET A LOT OF INTERESTING CUSTOMERS HERE, ESPECIALLY AT LAST RITES. A LOT OF COLOURFUL PEOPLE AND THAT'S WHAT I LIKE, MEETING INTERESTING PEOPLE

I'm not a very social guy. I don't like talking on the phone except with my Mom – and my wife and I mostly text each other, so adding one person to the group might be more than we could deal with. It's more important to be comfortable."

All three of them worked at Last Rites, which at the time was located in the East Village as well, before they decided to take the next step about five years ago.

"We didn't have a specific plan. I tattooed out of my apartment for a about a year, Dan was in Williamsburg, and Liorcifer in Queens before we found this place. We all worked under the name of Tribulation Tattoo, though, when we went travelling."

Since he first started working in East Village, a lot has happened. An increase of rent has made a big part of the artistic community that once

inhabited the area move out to Brooklyn and Williamsburg. It's just not what it used to be, according to Tim. At least to some extent.

"Ten years ago this place was quite different. Prices went up and when the crisis came it all went to south. Landlords still think they can charge the same, but all you get is a lot more empty store fronts. At the same time, it used to be pretty tough here and now it's a lot nicer. East Village is still East Village, just a lot less. It has its own character and a good mix of people."

And the mix of people is one thing that, despite not being a "very social creature", he really enjoys about his profession.

"You get a lot of interesting customers here, especially at Last Rites. A lot of colourful people and that's what I like, meeting interesting people." 🦋

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THE ILLUSTRATOR

It's times like these that you wish you had paid more attention to that lovely lady called Mrs Barlow, who drove a Peugeot she could barely see over the steering wheel of in order to teach us kids some French... amazingly, some of it stuck. But luckily this spread is about some fresh art, so here's a look at new kid on the block, Graphik H.

WHAT'S YOUR BACKSTORY, SIR?

I started drawing when I was a kid. I'm still studying art and I'm pretty new on the scene at the moment, but am hoping to attract the eye of the professional community. I currently live in the south of France, in a small village near Nimes. There is little activity related to illustration, which makes the job difficult! The big activity is obviously mainly present in Paris.

DID YOU START OUT USING TATTOO FOR EFFECT, OR IS IT SOMETHING YOU'VE STARTED PUTTING INTO YOUR WORK RECENTLY?

No, I didn't start with the tattoo influence, but it is an art that always interested me. I am not tattooed myself, but I find it really great to work with. There are a few times I have come across photos of tattooed men and women and thought they were graphically interesting enough to use in

my illustrations. Putting the 'drawing into the drawing' brings an added dimension to the finished piece. At the moment, I'm just doing work that suits me personally - I just finished a visual for a DJ recently, but work is hard to find. I would actually give my right arm to work on a serious project.

I'VE NOT SEEN THIS STYLE OF ILLUSTRATION FOR A LONG TIME. HOW DO YOU COME TO BE WORKING IN THIS PLACE?

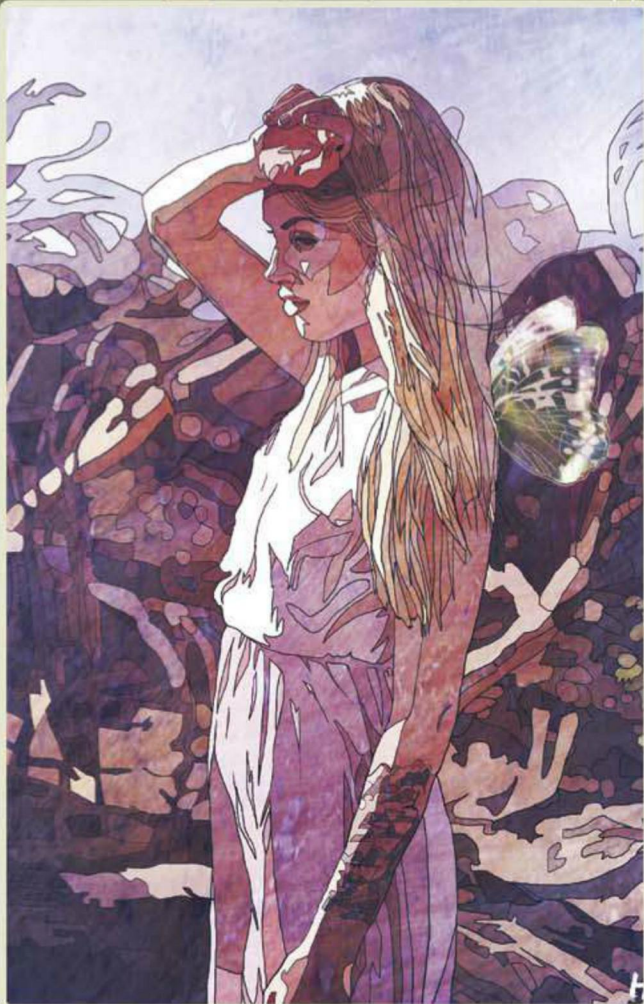
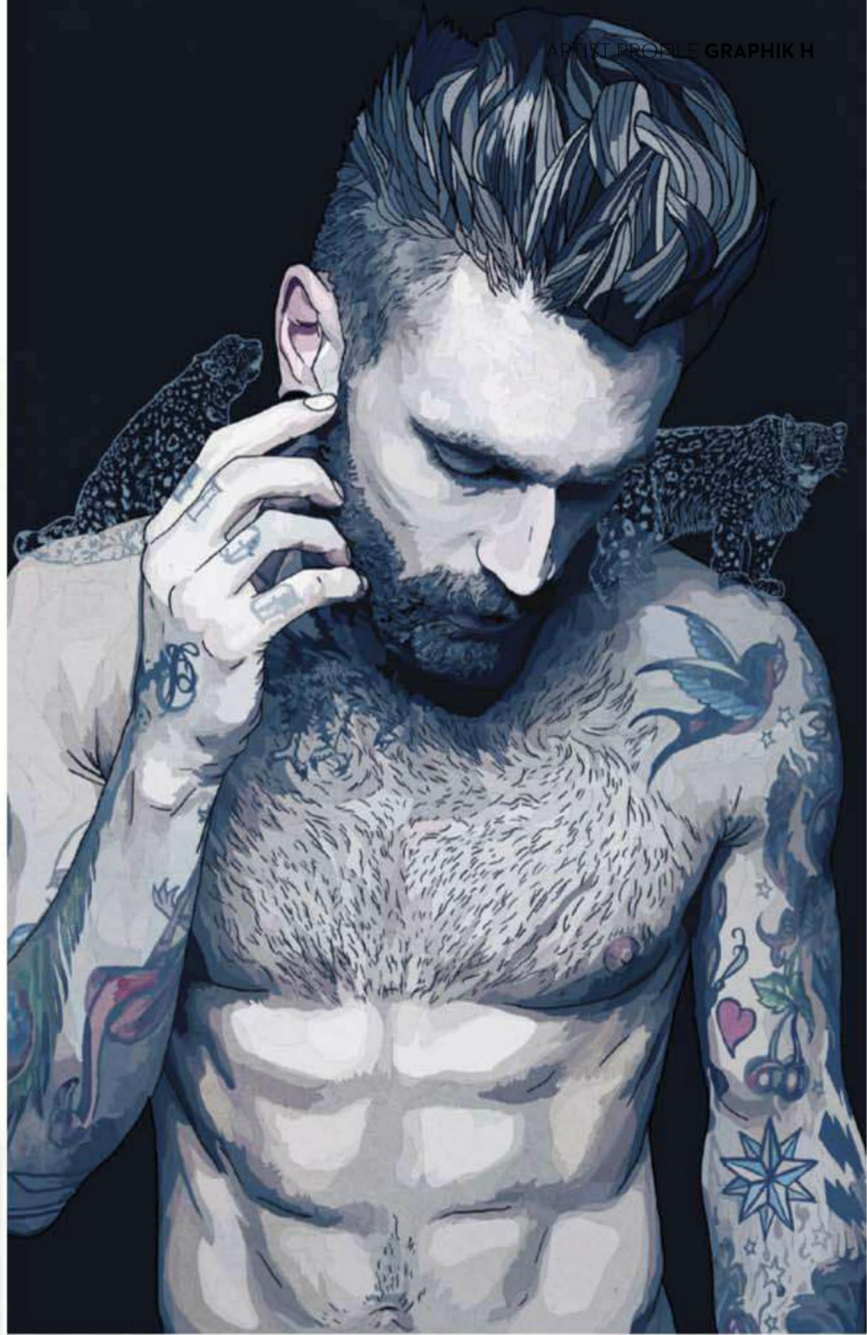
It is true, today, many people turn to the years gone by to find inspiration to use as a basis for new creations. There are a lot of diverse influences that I've pulled in to cultivate different eras and different genres to my work.

My former professor (and author of comics), David Sala, always gives me good advice. I owe him much in the way that I observe the world around me today. I listen to his opinion a lot because it is one of the few opinions that doesn't have a



Mr. Smith

PUTTING THE 'DRAWING INTO THE DRAWING' BRINGS AN ADDED DIMENSION TO THE FINISHED PIECE. AT THE MOMENT, I'M JUST DOING WORK THAT SUITS ME PERSONALLY



AT THE MOMENT, THERE'S A LOT OF WORK STILL TO DO, BUT I AM VERY APPRECIATIVE OF GETTING THE CHANCE TO SHOW MY WORK TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE WHO MIGHT COME TO APPRECIATE IT AND FOLLOW ME

vested interest and makes no concession to my work. When it's bad, he tells me. It is not there to gratify my ego – it just is. I have very little contact with people from the illustration world.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU - WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?

I really want to show what I can do in an illustrated book; I need to test myself in real terms. At the moment, there's a lot of work still to do, but I am very appreciative of getting the chance to show my work to as many people as

possible who might come to appreciate it and follow me.

Believe it or not – those few sentences were hard work! But it doesn't matter. The point here is the art. I like the way he's brought these vaguely tattoo-related icons into his work and crossed more genres over than you probably think. You can find and appreciate him on facebook by searching for Graphik(H) where he's also linked up everything else that he's working on – or you can check out his portfolio and an absolute ton of other great art over at slanted.de/portfolio/6772/graphik-h-0 – definitely one to watch.

COME BITE THE APPLE

New York City continues to be a hotbed of artistic talent; in the last few months I would say that 90 percent of my interviewees have hailed from (or at least, made their home in recent years) the Big Apple. Next up is Mark Cross, who plies his trade at Greenpoint Tattoo Co in Brooklyn, even though he grew up on the opposite side of the States, in a suburb of the equally artisan, San Francisco

Tom Abbott Mark Cross



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“I grew up near San Francisco in a place called Foster City. It was built on a landfill in the marshlands of San Francisco Bay near the airport in the late '60s and is a quintessential middle-class suburban city. I remember my neighbour's mum was obese and bedridden. There was never much of anything to do, so mostly we would just buy tons of different drugs and hang out in my neighbour's living room all night while her obese mum was stuck upstairs in bed; it was perfect. I think she has since had her stomach stapled and can walk again... maybe she took advantage and left. Around the time I was 16 I dropped out of high school and moved into San Francisco.”

Keen to know how Mark discovered tattooing, I asked him when tattoos first entered his life and in what form. “Well, I have always been into bad-boy stuff. When I was really young, a family friend had a tattoo on the top of his forearm of an American flag. I thought it was the coolest thing! I could never remember his name so I just called him ‘tattoo’. Uncle Tattoo was a serious bad-boy. I think he is to blame.”



Everyone knows (or has heard) that an apprenticeship is the most respected initial foray into tattooing, but as I've uncovered in a lot of my recent interviews, not all tattoo artists have taken this route, so I decided to ask Mark how he entered into it. “I kind of did it both ways. I went to art school in SF for a bit – I used to steal art supplies and sell them to fellow students as well as tattoo shops. I befriended a few

tattooers at one shop I frequented in Oakland and began hanging out with them, trading art supplies for tattoos and such. Eventually they needed a new shop guy and I jumped at the opportunity.

“I dropped out of art school and started busting my ass working for the shop. I never did a formal apprenticeship exactly; I just worked at the shop for a good, long while and gleaned whatever information I could. One thing 🍏





I COULD NEVER REMEMBER HIS NAME SO I JUST CALLED HIM 'TATTOO'. UNCLE TATTOO WAS A SERIOUS BAD-BOY. I THINK HE IS TO BLAME

led to another and eventually they began tipping me with tattoo supplies. I slowly gathered what I needed and did my first tattoo on myself on January 15, 2006.

“Currently I work at Greenpoint Tatto Co., in Brooklyn, New York. The shop opened last year and I started working there a few months ago. It’s a big space set up for the sole purpose of doing tattoos. That’s it. The walls are covered in flash and I have been working diligently at putting up my

own designs. I’ve put up 20-plus new sheets in the last few weeks and plan on keeping up that pace for as long as I can. It’s such an important part of how I tattoo. I would love it if my customers could find something new that they like on the wall each time they come in. That is the goal anyway. I like that style of tattooing. I’ve always been tattooed that way.”

One of the main attractions of this writing job is that I get to spend hours and hours of my

own time looking through tattoo artists on the internet. The more you look, the more you learn, and the more you can differentiate between what you are interested in or not. Mark Cross happened to be one of those artists that stood out immediately from the pack. His style is bold, brash, and colourful. His thick lines are as clean as blank paper (*that might be the best phrase I have ever heard!* Ed), and I was keen to know how it came about.

“There is a vocabulary of classic tattoo images that I try to honour and I’m trying really hard to find a voice within that vocabulary. I feel like something clicked in

my brain, honestly, sometime in the last year and I began to feel a sense of direction in my work that I hadn't before. My mind was cluttered with so many other things for so long, and about two years ago I made a conscious and concerted effort to eliminate those things. I quit doing graffiti and quit partying and fucking around in general and began to focus wholly on tattooing. Since then I feel like my progress has been significant, although I still have a long way to go. I want to be the best... and I'm definitely not... so I've got my work cut out for me."

Whilst on this voyage of discovery about Mark Cross (short of flying over to NYC) I stumbled upon a website of his called Muddguts. "It's basically just a place on the web where I dump photos that my friends and I have taken. In March 2010 I curated a Muddguts show at a museum in Rotterdam, Holland. The site has remained relatively stagnant since that show, but it's still there (www.muddguts.com). I'd like to work on it more but it's something I've had to put on the shelf since making the decision to focus on tattoos. I occasionally show other

THE WALLS ARE COVERED IN FLASH AND I HAVE BEEN WORKING DILIGENTLY AT PUTTING UP MY OWN DESIGNS. I'VE PUT UP 20-PLUS NEW SHEETS IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS AND PLAN ON KEEPING UP THAT PACE FOR AS LONG AS I CAN

kinds of work as well. I had some work in a graffiti show called 'art in the streets' at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles last year, under a pseudonym. Lately I've been working with a gallery in Los Angeles called New Image Art. I suppose if anybody was interested in my other works they could get in touch with them.

"Graffiti was a huge influence as a youth. It really helped to mould who I am. It taught me about respect and honour and all that crap. And it toughened me up a lot. But mostly it taught me to work hard. I've never met anybody more tenacious than a dedicated graffiti writer."

I'm hoping that one day I'll know about the next time Mark is in England so I can get tattooed, so I sneakily asked him if he has taken his tattooing on the road before. It turns out he has. "With the exception of not knowing where anything is in a new shop, tattooing has been pretty much the same for me no matter where I've travelled. Thanks to the internet, specifically Instagram, I've been able to get my work out there to people all over the place who are down to let me do my thing. I don't do a lot of custom work, generally, and even less when I travel. I draw constantly on my downtime at home, and have amassed a hefty stack of pages full of tattoo-able designs which I've dubbed 'the menu'. The menu comes with me wherever I go and it makes everything a lot easier... for everybody I think.

"I've always travelled a lot around the United States. I try and go back to the west coast and work at least a few times a year. I recently worked at Frith Street Tattoo Parlour in London. I had never worked outside of the country before. Frith St. is an exceptionally well-greased

machine of a street shop. Dante (the shop's owner) is a true bad-boy and has made a respectable career out of being a cool ass dude. It was a great experience and I hope to go again. Everybody was very hospitable."

Asking Mark about the machines he likes to use, he responded, "I just try to approach tattoos practically. I am not a stickler about supplies. I use a liner and a shader. One time I used a rotary, but I didn't like it. Otherwise, so long as the needles are sharp, the colours are bright, and my power supply 'goes to 11', I am happy."

Gestalten published the incredible book, *Forever: the New*



Tattoo recently, and I wasn't in the least bit surprised to find Mark Cross in there. I asked him how that came about. "Pretty much in exactly the same way this interview came about. A lady wrote me an email a few months ago asking me for pictures to put in a book. I'm not exactly sure how she found me and I don't really know much about it, but she was nice so I sent the photos. I think being a genuinely nice person counts for a lot. Sometimes at least. I haven't seen the book yet, but I heard it is out now." 🙌

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THE MARK OF CAIN

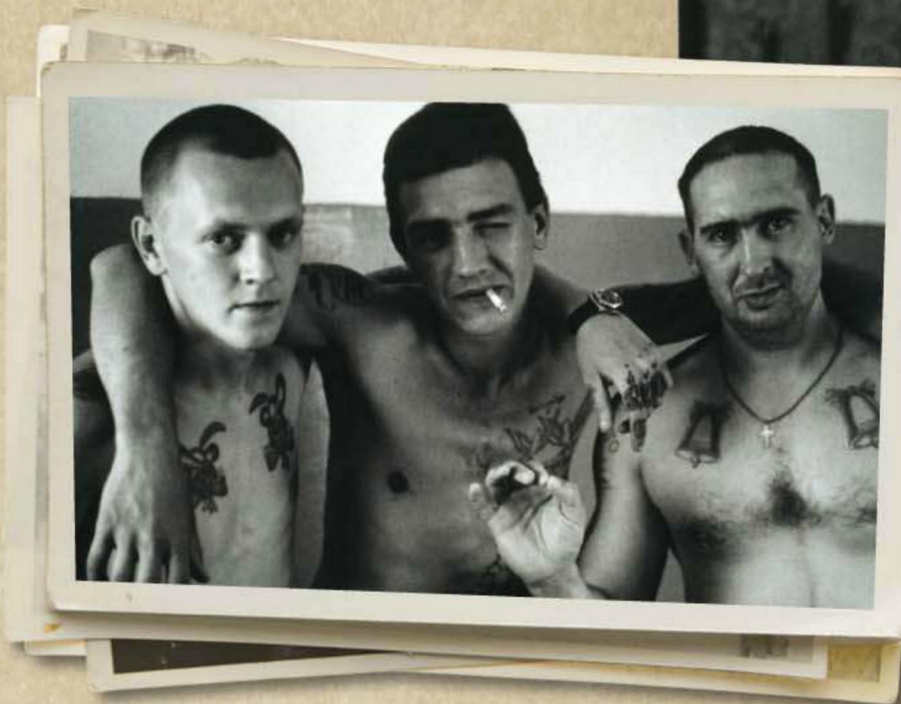
In 2001, a documentary that uncovered the dying art of Russian criminal tattoos was released called *The Mark of Cain*. It is a brilliant and objective piece of documentary filmmaking that has had a subtle, yet profound influence on the tattoo world since then. The director/ producer, Alix Lambert, is an artist based in New York City, and I was eager to find out more from her

Tom Abbott  Courtesy of Alix Lambert

“All my work starts with an idea, so whether it’s sculpture, film or mixed media, it is in the service of the idea. The Mark of Cain was very much a break from the conceptual artwork I had been doing. I appear in a lot of my earlier fine art work, but with the subject in Cain I felt it was important not to. It needed a different kind of approach. It had a broader audience than I was used to and was the first feature-length documentary that I had made.

“I had a pretty much non-existent budget to make Cain, but a very dear friend of mine, Rob Bingham, who has since died, gave me \$40,000. We took 30 of it to Russia and put ten of it in the bank, and shot the film for 30. I was then later given an additional 30 for post-production from Roberto Edwards who founded the Fundacion America, an organisation based in Chile that supports projects having

THE MARK OF CAIN COST AROUND \$100,000, WHICH IS A NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE BUDGET. PEOPLE DIDN'T GET PAID. I WOULDN'T WANT TO DO THAT NOW, BECAUSE YOU CAN ONLY ASK FOR THAT SORT OF KINDNESS ONCE



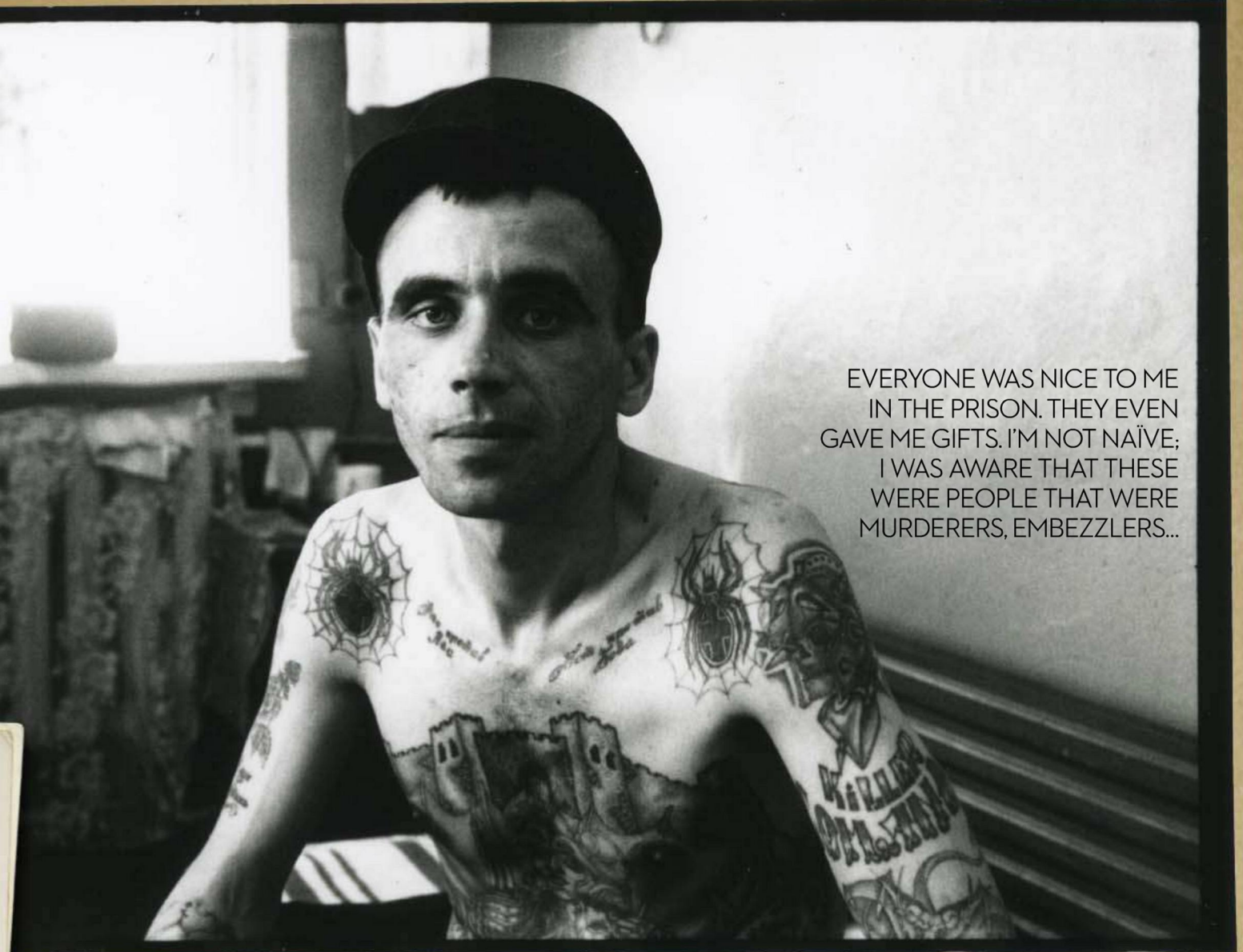
to do with body modification. The Mark of Cain cost around \$100,000, which is a nearly impossible budget. People didn’t get paid. I wouldn’t want to do that now, because you can only ask for that sort of kindness once.”

I was interested to know why Alix picked tattoos as a subject to investigate, particularly prison tattoos. “I’ve always been interested in non-verbal ways of communicating. This was a complete language and it was dying out. I

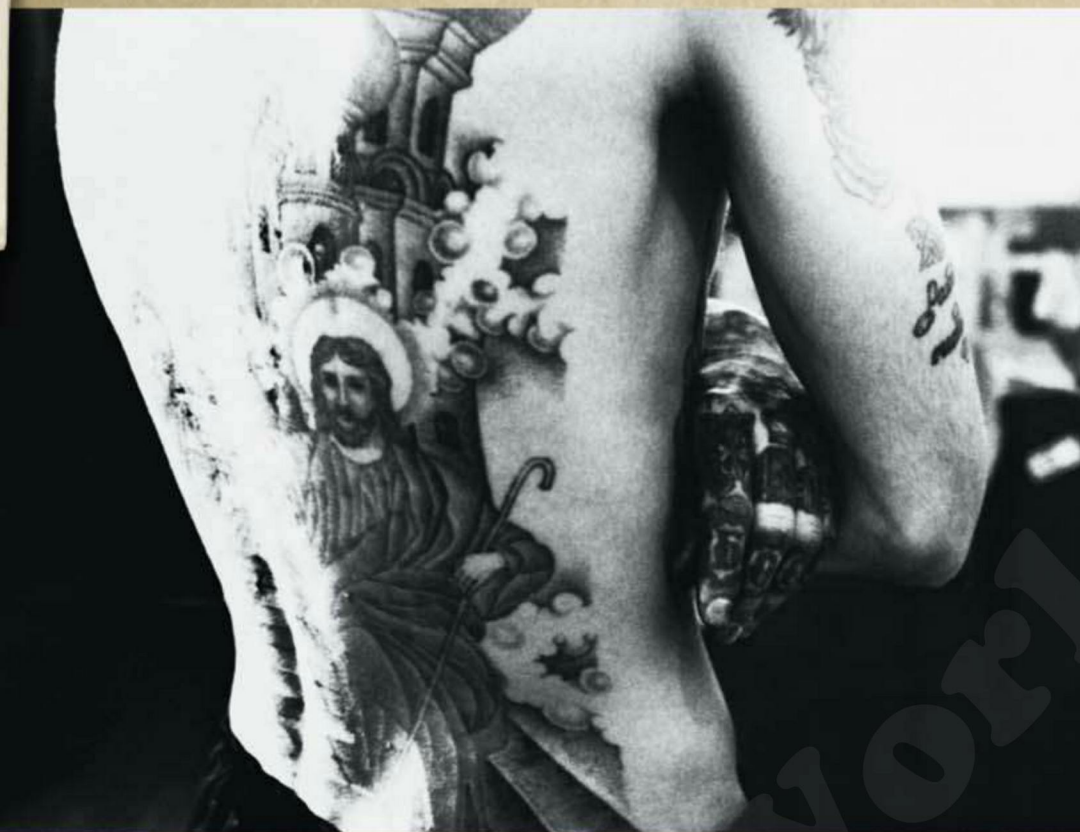
wanted to document it.”

I asked if it had been a scary experience at all. “I had my crew with me, so I didn’t feel scared. Everyone was nice to me in the prison. They even gave me gifts. I’m not naïve; I was aware that these were people that were murderers, embezzlers. But I never felt that I was in any personal danger.

“Even though it was only 12 years ago, it was a different time back then. I had no cell phone, we also had no internet. There was



EVERYONE WAS NICE TO ME IN THE PRISON. THEY EVEN GAVE ME GIFTS. I'M NOT NAÏVE; I WAS AWARE THAT THESE WERE PEOPLE THAT WERE MURDERERS, EMBEZZLERS...



no contact with the outside world, so we were completely immersed in what we were doing. I think I made a call home from Moscow once. That was it. You're gone, so your entire world changes. You're in a very intense situation. It was strange talking to people when I got home because nothing had changed for them. It was hard to connect at first because it seemed like their concerns weren't so great... it isolates you, but at the same time I feel more comfortable working on projects that address some social issue. It grounds me.

"I first heard about the tattoos through my friend Steven Parrino. He had cut an article out of a magazine for me about them because he felt I'd be interested, and of course I was. In America, we have tattoos that have meanings, of course, but nothing like the language that 🗣️"



IN AMERICA, WE HAVE TATTOOS THAT HAVE MEANINGS, OF COURSE, BUT NOTHING LIKE THE LANGUAGE THAT THE RUSSIAN PRISONERS HAD. PRISON REFORM IS SOMETHING I CARE ABOUT DEEPLY; THE US SHOULD NOT BE PROUD OF THEIR PRISON SYSTEM

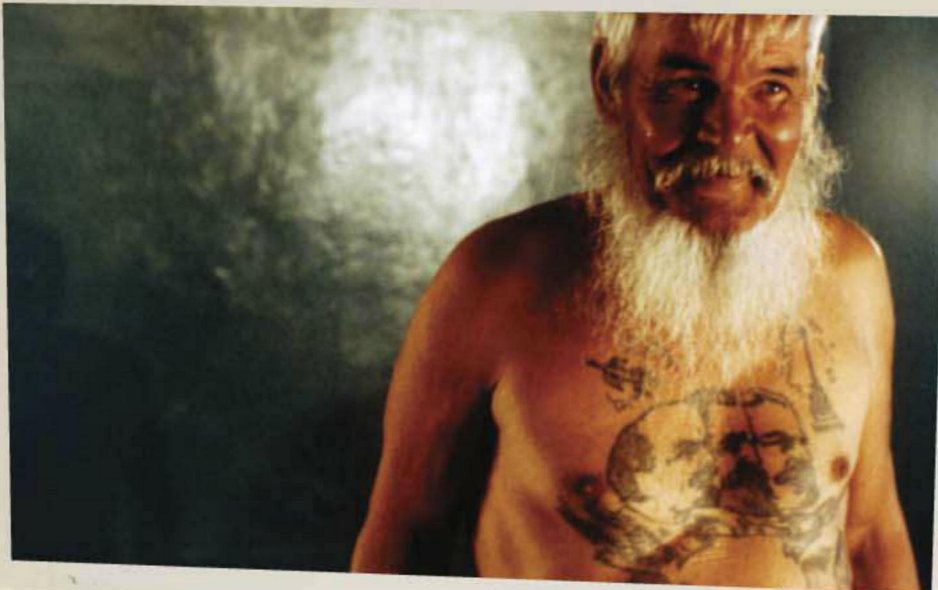
the Russian prisoners had. It's an extensive language that the prisoners can communicate to each other without the prison guards knowing, and so therefore it is a rapidly changing language. Once the meaning is known, then it evolves. So that to me was very interesting, and it was also visually stunning. I've been back since and it has pretty much died out.

"The History Channel wanted me to go back, and so I went back about ten years later. I ended up going to a lot of ex-convict homes to find tattoos. In the film, you see at the end that the concerns of the new younger generation of prisoners are wearing Adidas track suits and money has become their currency for status behind bars. Outside of the prisons in Russia, tattooing exists as it does

everywhere else; you get your girlfriends' name or whatever, but the camp tattoos are gone. There were certain people I was looking for and was excited to find. When I returned ten years later I found one of the men I had interviewed in Cain. In the original interview he had just been released. When I found him ten years later, he had stayed out of prison and was working construction.

"Tattoos have meaning in other places, for example, the Yakuza in Japan. This interests me. America and Russia have the biggest prison systems in the world. Prison reform is something I care about deeply; the US should not be proud of their prison system. The reason I pre-emptively said that about America is that sometimes with Q&As after The Mark of





Cain, people would say, 'well don't you realise America also has an awful prison system?' and I'd never said that America didn't! From what I do understand about American prison tattoos, there is not as extensive of a language as in Russian prisons. The British publisher, Fuel, released three volumes of Russian prison tattoo encyclopedias, which are worth getting your hands on. They are very beautiful. At this time, those encyclopaedias and the film that I made were really all there was on the subject.

"Occasionally people will email me and tell me they're getting

a Russian prison tattoo because they saw my documentary and that upsets me. These prisoners got them for very specific reasons and getting an 'un-earned' tattoo carries serious consequences. It's not a fashion statement. There are clothing lines that have come out as well. It shows a lack of understanding. But it happens."

I was curious to know a little more about the caste system in the Russian prisons, particularly those on the lowest rung of the ladder. "I wasn't able to interview any of the prisoners that were in the lowest caste. They didn't want to speak on camera because

the stakes were higher for them. I'm not interested in talking to somebody that doesn't want to talk. When someone's life is terrible, I don't want to make it even worse. You see a couple of down-casts in the film, but they don't identify themselves as down-casts. A lot of them have facial tattoos. There was one 🐶

I WASN'T ABLE TO INTERVIEW ANY OF THE PRISONERS THAT WERE IN THE LOWEST CASTE. THEY DIDN'T WANT TO SPEAK ON CAMERA BECAUSE THE STAKES WERE HIGHER FOR THEM.



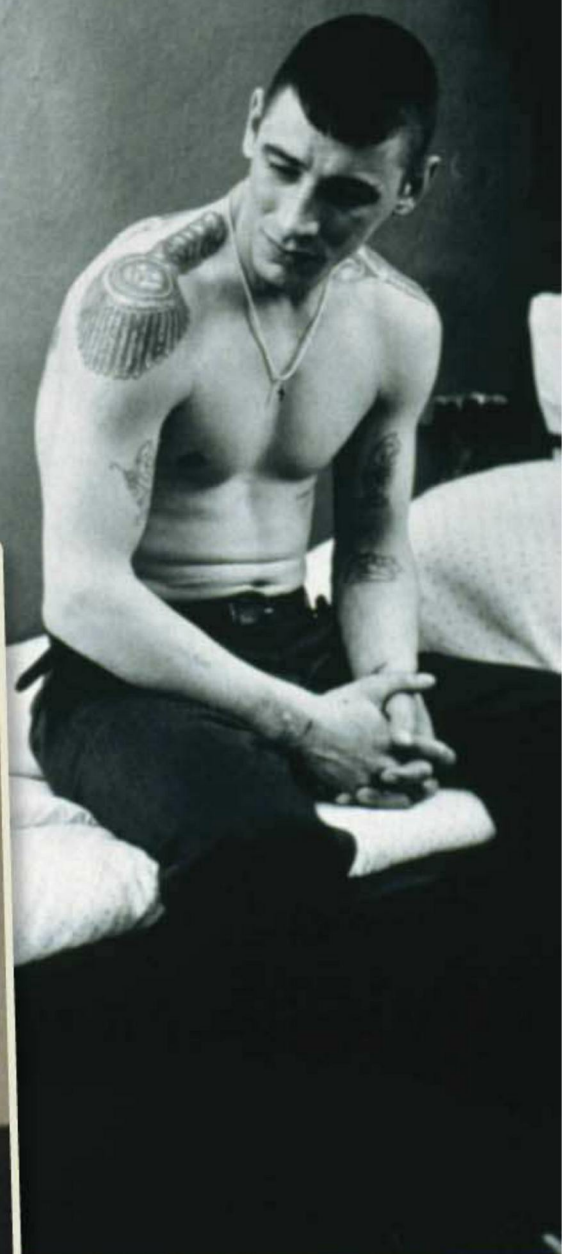
THERE WAS ONE PERSON WE SPOKE TO IN THE FILM, AND ALTHOUGH HE DIDN'T IDENTIFY HIMSELF AS A DOWN-CAST, I COULD SEE THAT HIS TATTOOS WERE VERY LOW-RANKING TATTOOS



person we spoke to in the film, and although he didn't identify himself as a down-cast, I could see that his tattoos were very low-ranking tattoos. That was interesting. But as a team making a documentary, we never labelled anyone unless we were 100 percent sure of what they were. You will see half-naked women tattooed on the upper bodies of high-ranking prisoners, but if a half-naked woman is shown on the lower body then that is more of an indication of a down-cast; also, if there are eyes tattooed above the penis. Once you are a down-cast, you will be marked.

If you don't submit to it, it'll be forced upon you."

I recently saw the David Cronenberg film, *Eastern Promises*, which tells the story of a man (played by Viggo Mortensen) working undercover in the Russian mafia in London. One of the lasting memories of the film is the attention to the tattoos, and so I was interested to know whether Alix had anything to do with the film or not. "Viggo Mortensen is somebody that I've known for many years, pre-dating *Eastern Promises*. I did a short piece on him for PBS on Viggo's work as a poet and photographer,



which didn't air because the show got cancelled, but we became friends then. People naturally assumed we met over *Eastern Promises*. But anyway, he took my film to David Cronenberg and they watched it and used it as source material. I was over for a few days when they were filming which was a real treat for me because I'm a fan of Cronenberg. I thought they made a beautiful film."

Due to time constraints I unfortunately had to bring our interview to an end, but I'd like to suggest to readers that they keep a look out for other films/books/ art installations that Alix has created and/or will be creating. Visit her website at www.pinkghettoproductions.com.

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THE REAL DETROIT

Portrayed by mainstream media as a place ripe with desolate areas and where poverty and violence abound – just think back to the 2002 hit film *8 Mile*, starring local rap superstar, Eminem – Detroit may be used to its bad rep, but if there’s one thing we learned from our visit to Ironclad Tattoo Co., it’s that you can’t always believe what you hear, or read



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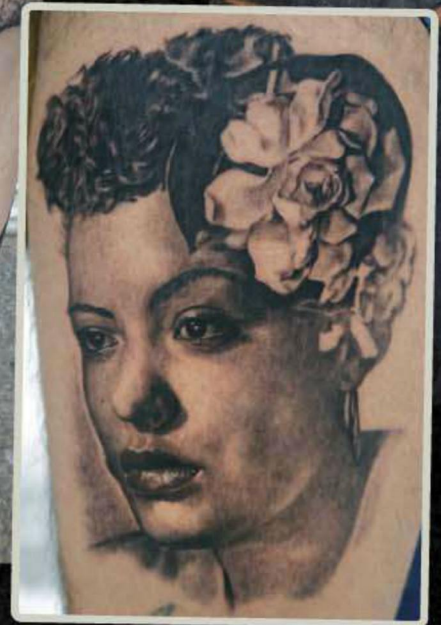
Barbara Pavone Ironclad

Well, as for *8 Mile*, I can’t really say much. It is what it is, a lot of strip clubs for the most part, but living in this area I kind of lose sight of what the rest of the world’s perception of Detroit really is,” says tattoo artist, Keith Grodi, one of three co-owners behind Ironclad Tattoo Co.

“I hear things from time to time about how bad it is and how dangerous it is, but I do not find that to be the case,” he continues. “Detroit is a very special place and I believe it is just somewhere you have to spend a good amount of time to appreciate it for what it really is.”

It makes sense then that when Grodi and business partners, Mike Moore and Mike Bagwell, were thinking of opening up their own tattoo and piercing studio, leaving their old haunt, Eternal Tattoos, behind, they didn’t look further than Troy, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit.

“I started working for Eternal Tattoos about eight years ago and I was super excited to start working with [tattooer] Tom Renshaw,” remembers Grodi. “Then, about three years later, Mike Moore started working



there as a body piercer and it didn’t take too long for the two of us to become good friends; our personalities were pretty opposite, but sometimes that’s what it takes to balance each other out.

“One big thing we had in common was our drive to be better and our overall work ethic, so, over time, things just ran their course at Eternal and we both wanted to move on to do our own thing, our own way.

“Mike Bagwell came into the picture because he had apprenticed under Tom for

about a year a few years back, so when Mike Moore and I were talking early on in the process, we thought he would be a great fit at the new shop. When we approached him about it, he showed interest in being an owner as well, so that just settled things for us and it all worked out great.”

Renshaw was the first non-business partner artist to jump on the Ironclad bandwagon and the total tally is now up to two piercers – Mike Moore and Chase



I WENT AND GOT A TATTOO FROM SOME GUY IN A KITCHEN AND WATCHED HIS EVERY MOVE. I FELT LIKE ALL I NEEDED WAS TO WATCH ONE TIME AND I COULD TAKE IT FROM THERE - CLASSIC MISTAKE

Suarez – and four tattooers – Keith Grodi, Mike Bagwell, Brent Swosinski and Matt Lambdin – since the shop’s opening back in August of last year.

We decided to sit down with Keith Grodi and up-and-coming traditional artist, Matt Lambdin, to get the lowdown on Ironclad Tattoo Co.

INTRODUCING MR. KEITH GRODI...

“Actually, I got into tattooing in kind of a strange way. A few of my friends were getting some

lowball, cheesy tattoos from random artists, and soon after they started bugging me to start doing them, probably because they didn’t want to pay for them anymore,” laughs Grodi.

“At the time, I kinda got myself into a little problem with gambling on football games, I dug myself a bit of a hole, so I got a small loan from the bank to pay off the bookie. After I paid him I had a few bucks left over, so I bought a kit from Spaulding and Rogers from the back of a magazine.” 🍀





THERE ARE WAY, WAY, WAY TOO MANY 'ARTISTS' OUT THERE THESE DAYS AND ALTHOUGH IT WAS ONLY 20 YEARS AGO WHEN I STARTED, I DON'T REMEMBER IT BEING LIKE THIS

Although he had been artistically inclined from an early age – “I remember drawing a ton of Iron Maiden album covers; I was obsessed with Eddie” – picking up tattooing was a whole different animal, and as Grodi admits, “unfortunately, I learned the hard way; I am 95 percent self-taught. I went and got a tattoo

from some guy in a kitchen and watched his every move. I felt like all I needed was to watch one time and I could take it from there... classic mistake.

“The next three, four years were very tough and I made a ton of mistakes and pretty bad tattoos. And, to be honest, I would like to forget those first five years because I am not proud of them, but at the time, I didn't really know any other way and thought I could do anything. Boy, was I wrong.”

That first-hand experience and the fact that he chose to learn from his mistakes, working non-stop to better his craft and

become a fine artist may be why the current number of individuals who think they can just pick up a machine and become rich and famous riles Grodi up.

“I have a very strong opinion on this subject,” he starts, easing his way in. “There are way, way, way too many ‘artists’ out there these days, and although it was only 20 years ago when I started, I don't remember it being like this. It was still somewhat overcrowded for the tattoo demand at the time, but when the whole tattoo TV trend started, it took it to a whole new level.

“Now, the biggest problem is



IT'S KIND OF LIKE KIDS HAVING KIDS WHO NEVER REALLY HAD THE RIGHT PARENTING FROM THE BEGINNING, IF THAT MAKES ANY SENSE...

two-fold. First off, tattoo supplies are made way too available to the general public. With the growth of people wanting to start tattooing nowadays, there are far too many supply stores popping up all over the place. We have at least four or five just in metro Detroit – why in the world are there five supply stores in one metro area? It makes no sense to me at all. And most of the suppliers out there are fly-by-night operations, selling garbage supplies to meet the demand of the kitchen artists buying one tube and one needle at a time.

“Secondly, we have a vicious cycle occurring of unqualified artists, shops and recent apprentice graduates taking on apprentices of their own, and it’s usually because some random unknowing ‘artist’ with high hopes is willing to give them money. It’s kind of

GRODI ON SETTING UP SHOP

It comes with all the trials and tribulations of any other shop trying to stand out in a crowd. I personally have a pretty solid following, but opening up and trying to showcase yourself and the entire studio’s talents is quite a task in a pretty saturated market, but so far, so good!

like kids having kids who never really had the right parenting from the beginning, if that makes any sense. In a nutshell, it’s people without the proper training trying to train others.”

Which is not to say that all hope is lost and all of us tattoo-loving folks with standards are doomed.

“I actually believe that Michigan is a pretty good place for the tattoo scene,” adds Grodi. “We have a lot of great artists of all types and styles in the Metro Detroit area. I also think, for the most part, there is a pretty great harmony between the good and established artists in the state; we all seem to get along very well and have a special respect for one another.”

INTRODUCING MR. MATT LAMBDIN...

“I can’t really pinpoint a time when I was first attracted to art,”

says Lambdin, trying to recall his tattoo roots. “I remember my brother had a book filled with how-to-draws of superheroes, I also used to buy blank hats and draw skateboard company logos all over them; not really sure why, [but] listening to aggressive music is probably what exposed me to tattoos. My mom had gotten a small yin-yang on her ankle, but I never thought much about it. To tell you the truth, I didn’t think much about tattooing almost until I got into it myself.” Which was no easy feat.

“I hate to say it, but I can’t deny it, I went about learning in the complete wrong way,” he says. “Right after I graduated high school, I got my hands on a couple of junk machines and went to town on myself and all my naive friends. I know, it’s the typical scratcher story, but after 🍌”



AFTER I REALISED THAT I WOULDN'T LEARN ANYTHING BY TEACHING MYSELF, I GOT A FORMAL APPRENTICESHIP THAT LED ME DOWN THE RIGHT PATH

I realised that I wouldn't learn anything by teaching myself, I got a formal apprenticeship that led me down the right path."

Just last year, that path almost took Lambdin to a completely different city when, at the last minute, the opening of Ironclad Tattoo Co. ended up putting his tattoo journey on a totally different course.

"I had actually just got back to Michigan from a long bicycle trip with a friend, meanwhile trying to decide if I wanted to pursue tattooing here or go somewhere entirely new," he remembers. "I was set on moving to Brooklyn and had a spot in a shop lined up and everything, then I got an email from Keith Grodi, telling me about this new shop opening up and that there'd be big things happening, so I figured I'd meet with the crew and see how it went."

Catering to a range of clients

with a variety of tastes – "I don't think the area itself has many trends" – and desires – "I actually got an inquiry to tattoo a man's shaft the other day, but what's odd these days?" – Lambdin is standing behind his decision to not leave for New York.

"Now I'm here and I love it. Being at the new shop hasn't been very difficult, in my opinion. The walk-in rate isn't the greatest, but I try to keep busy booking ahead of time. I also don't think the countless shops all around Metro Detroit affect us much. I'm just doing my thing and hoping I get noticed from that alone."

When asked about all the misconceptions attached to his city of choice, Lambdin



LAMB DIN ON ARTIST OVERSATURATION

I don't like to be the one to decide who can and can't be a tattooer. It's really up to them and if they're good, they're good. If they're garbage and people are still interested in getting work from them, then I'm happy to not have to service those people.

laughs, "well, let's just say that I live off of 8 Mile, and I think I'm doing alright! It's just like every other major city, except a little desolate in areas. I know this place has a reputation, but I don't think much of it."

The shop itself is also keeping him happy, pushing thoughts of Brooklyn far out of his mind.

"It's very roomy and we all have our shifts set up to make sure we don't get too sick of each other," says Lambdin, then laughs, "most of our time is spent giving each other shit and talking about how Mike and I are the best-looking ones there. And tattooing, of course!"

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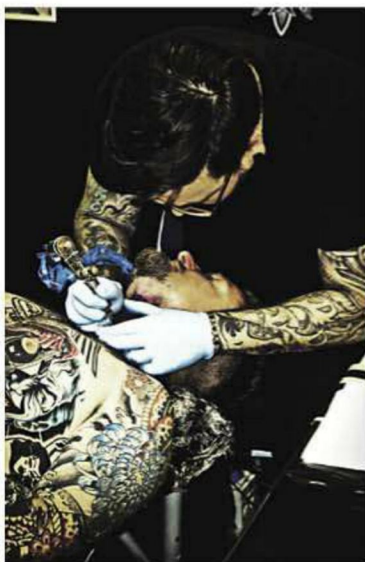
A two-year wait proved more than worth it for the second The Mill New Zealand Tattoo & Art festival, as over 250 of the world's best tattoo artists converged on the small seaside town of New Plymouth on November 24-25

With the sun shining all weekend and Mt Taranaki as a perfect backdrop, the NZ Tattoo & Art Festival once again proved why it's the premiere tattoo event down under.

There were over 100 more tattoo artists than the previous festival, with over 170 of the 250 artists coming in from around the globe; public attendance was also up on the 2010 event with tattoo collectors from around New Zealand and Australia ensuring the artists were kept busy all weekend. The queue extended around the building before opening and it wasn't long until the



A POWHIRI, WHICH IS A TRADITIONAL MAORI WELCOME, TOOK PLACE ON SATURDAY MORNING OFFICIALLY WELCOMING EVERYONE TO THE FESTIVAL AND GIVING THE INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS A FURTHER INSIGHT INTO MAORI CULTURE



familiar buzz of tattoo machines could be heard throughout the TSB Stadium, located near the centre of New Plymouth.

The Friday before the festival was an opportunity for artists to learn and network with a full day of seminars by American legend, Paul Booth, and a Horimasa tebori seminar and Japanese mythological creatures seminar by Crystal from Gominoko books in Japan. All seminars were well attended and are something the organisers, Oni Events, would like to continue developing in the future, creating more of an artist

day on the Friday and turning the event into a three- to four-day celebration of everything that is great about tattooing.

That evening the combined artist-only opening and Western Magnetic's 2nd birthday parties were held at local bar, Our Place – Western Magnetic is a tattoo supply company owned by Marv Lering and Seth Ciferri. The night is a great way to break the ice, treating artists and VIPs to complimentary drinks that got everyone in the party spirit and set the tone for an entire weekend of fun and networking.

A pōwhiri, a traditional Māori welcome, took place on Saturday morning, officially welcoming everyone to the festival and giving the international artists a further insight into Māori culture and the history that makes New Zealand such a special and unique place to visit. 🇳🇿

NEW ZEALAND (I)
Aotearoa (often translated as 'land of the long white cloud') is the current Māori name for New Zealand, and is also used in New Zealand English. It is unknown whether the Māori had a name for the whole country before the arrival of Europeans, with Aotearoa originally referring to just the North Island. Abel Tasman sighted New Zealand in 1642 and called it Staten Landt, supposing it was connected to a landmass of the same name at the southern tip of South America. In 1645 Dutch cartographers renamed the land Nova Zeelandia after the Dutch province of Zeeland. British explorer, James Cook, subsequently anglicised the name to New Zealand.







The 2012 artists list was impressive: Paul Booth making his first trip to New Zealand; Dan Smith from LA Ink; Nikole Lowe from Good Times Tattoo in London coming home for her first ever convention; Boog, Adam Dorsett, and Steve Shippey from America; Sabado and Hori Benny led a large Japanese contingent; Davee, Adrian Edek (Kult Tattoo), and Ania Jalosinska from Poland; black tattoo specialist, Patrick Huetlinger; and tebori masters Horimasa and Horitsuna, along with two other tebori artists, pleased crowds of interested onlookers all weekend with their hand-poked tattoos.

Other artists to get plenty of attention were Horitatsu from Japan, Dust Wu from Hong Kong, Bobby James from Malaysia, and Apro Lee from Korea. Most of Australia's top talent crossed the Tasman with the likes of Mick Squires, Byron Dreschler, Heath Nock, William Yoneyama, Teniele Sadd, and Anna Day, to name just a few, all producing some amazing tattoos for some extremely satisfied clients. Meanwhile, young Australians Benjamin Laukis, Keegan Hawkins, Laura Marshall, and Matty D Mooney made a big impression over the two days and will be names to lookout for in the future, highlighting just what makes these events so great with more and more amazingly talented artists being exposed to the tattoo community.

Add to this New Zealand's very best, headed by Dean Sacred, Dan Anderson, and Erin Chance from Sacred Tattoo, Pepa from Bohemian Tattoo Arts, Adam Craft,

Andy Swarbrick, and Matt Jordan (who once again took Best Artist of Show award, and walked away with four trophies in the tattoo competition). Young New Zealand artists who stood out were Capili, also from Auckland Tattoo Shop, Sacred Tattoo with his own take on traditional tattoos, and Aaron from the Tattooed Heart in Auckland's slick oriental style.

New Zealand's best Ta Moko (Māori tattoo) exponents, including Rangi Kipa, Hohua Mohi, and Thomas Clark, were in attendance in New Plymouth. And the countries close links with the pacific also meant the best Polynesian artists were in attendance; Steve Ma Ching, who is well-known for his tattoo work on

All Black, Sonny Bill Williams, took the Best Māori/Pacific in the tattoo competition, while Steve and Pat Morrow did some nice Samoan tattoos all weekend.

The tattoo competition was held on Sunday afternoon and the quality of work on display was a step up from that seen in 2010, making the judges Kent Smith and Fabz jobs extra hard. Guys and girls entered large pieces of an extremely high standard in all ten categories, especially the tattoo removals Best of Show award (judged from all of the winning tattoos) which was, after much deliberation, finally taken by Erin Chance with an impressive fox hunt back piece on a client from Australia.

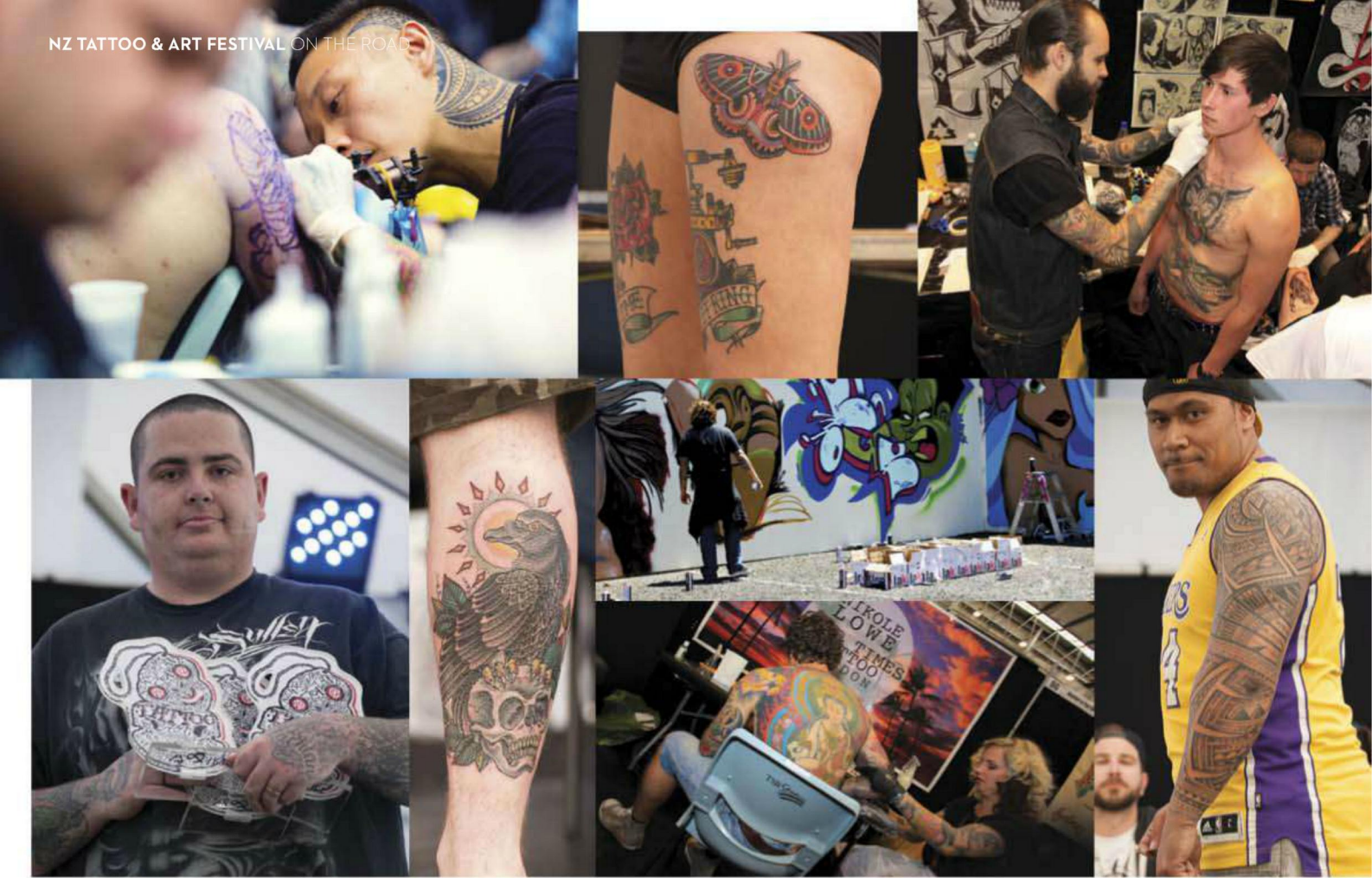
Chris Stuart from America took the Best of Day Saturday with an owl and skull tattoo, which was a nice change from the realistic tattoos that seem to dominate the competitions these days; Keegan Hawkins won the Professionals Real Estate Best of Day Sunday with a skull hand tattoo. All artists received a tiki trophy designed by Dan Smith, a tattoo machine from Western Magnetic, and Alla Prima ink sets amongst other prizes.

Aside from world class tattooing 🌻

NEW ZEALAND (2)
Māori had several traditional names for the two main islands, including Te Ika-a-Māui (the fish of Māui) for the North Island, and Te Wai Pounamu (the waters of greenstone) or Te Waka o Aoraki (the canoe of Aoraki) for the South Island. Early European maps labelled the islands North (North Island), Middle (South Island) and South (Stewart Island/Rakiura). In 1830 maps began to use North and South to distinguish the two largest islands and by 1907 this was the accepted norm. The New Zealand Geographic Board discovered in 2009 that the names of the North Island and South Island had never been formalised, but there are now plans to do so. The board is also considering suitable Māori names, with Te Ika-a-Māui and Te Wai Pounamu the most likely choices according to the chairman of the Māori Language Commission.

ASIDE FROM WORLD CLASS TATTOOING THE ENTERTAINMENT IN THE FORM OF VENUS STARR WAS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEKEND PROGRAM WITH HER BLINDFOLDED AERIAL SILK ROUTINES TO ROB ZOMBIE...





there was also entertainment in the form of Venus Starr, who was a highlight of the weekend program with her blindfolded aerial silk routines to Rob Zombie, hanging ten metres in the air on two bits of silk dangling from a crane above the outdoor burlesque stage – it was standing room only for her performances. Venus also demonstrated her hoola hoop skills in a gold bikini which kept everyone thoroughly entertained. Bonita Danger Doll also pleased the crowds all weekend long with her seductive fan routines on the burlesque stage. And both girls were kept busy signing prints and taking photos with fans in between performances.

The ALC Ramp Jam was a mini ramp skate comp, with skaters from around the country battling head-to-head in a knockout format with the winner walking away with a \$2,000 cash prize; the two-hour competition kept crowds entertained while punk rock cranked in the background. 11 bands played over the two-day festival in the outdoor entertainment marquee – Saturday was headlined by punk band, Bleeders, who were playing a

WITH THE SUCCESS AND ENTHUSIASM SURROUNDING THE FIRST TWO NZ TATTOO & ART FESTIVALS, THE ORGANISERS, ONI EVENTS, HAVE DECIDED THAT IT WILL NOW BE AN ANNUAL EVENT

reunion show, along with Kitsch, and metal band, Beastwars, managed to fill the marquee effortlessly and provided those not getting tattooed with a great afternoon out. Sunday had a more laid back feel with loop artist Mihirangi, and ska band, The Skitz, hitting the stage.

Along with making the festival a fun event for those in attendance, the organisers also have a community development focus by raising money for the Taranaki Base Hospital's children's and neo natal wards. During the weekend, The Joes Garage Charity Art Auction was held with over 40 artworks on canvas painted by tattoo artists, and sold by silent auction; proceeds from this auction plus the entry fee for the tattoo competition and the sale of graffiti art walls was donated to the hospital.

The New Zealand Tattoo & Art Festival has a unique party

NEW ZEALAND (3)

The largely rural life in early New Zealand led to the image of New Zealanders being rugged, industrious problem solvers. Modesty was expected and enforced through the 'tall poppy syndrome', where high achievers received harsh criticism. At the time New Zealand was not known as an intellectual country. From the early 20th century until the late 1960s Māori culture was suppressed by the attempted assimilation of Māori into British New Zealanders. In the 1960s, as higher education became more available and cities expanded, urban culture began to dominate. Even though the majority of the population now lives in cities, much of New Zealand's art, literature, film, and humour has rural themes.

atmosphere that sets it apart from the other tattoo events in this part of the world; everyone comes together to do or receive nice tattoos, and network or party with like-minded individuals.

At the close of day on Sunday, everyone headed back to local bar, Our Place, for the artist-only after party that went into the wee hours of the morning... and for some wound up with a bonfire on the beach till the sun came up.

With the success and enthusiasm surrounding the first two NZ Tattoo & Art Festivals, the organisers, Oni Events, have decided that it will now be an annual event. The next festival will be held on November 23-24, 2013, once again at the TSB Stadium in New Plymouth. Organiser, Brent Taylor, already has plans underway to top this year's festival and attract the world's best tattoo artists down under once again. 🤘

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Letters

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Time waiting in the wings

I write with the hope that this will inspire your readers who both have and may not have tattoos.

I have not always been a fan of body art, and this is most likely down to the comments made about those people adorning such art as I grew up; 'jobs', 'scum', and 'scruffy bastards' were always words associated with those people. As I have grown, it is clearly not the case to judge a book by its cover, although sometimes the cover can be an exact description of the content.

I am 30 now. I have many friends who have tattoos and they are all very decent people (well, almost all of them are decent). I hold and have held a position for over ten years now whereby I face clients every day and have to deal with senior management of large companies. The men and women holding these senior management positions are certainly from a different generation in most cases and certainly there are many who would agree with my previous comments on those who have been tattooed.

Nevertheless, I decided in the late part of 2011 to get a tattoo, but it had to be right. I am not a fan of the Chinese writing and the very fashionable tribal bands. I have never been a follower and certainly was not going to start with a tattoo. I looked long and hard at all tattoo designs and also at what I wanted. What is it that I like and want, what means something to me, and who cares what anybody else thinks? This is a personal thing you do and that should be something you remember throughout the process.

I finally decided on my perfect design that I found as an image on the internet, but it was only featured once; it was not an image that was in numerous places. Perfect! It was not until April of 2012 that I approached a tattoo studio to enquire about the design, time and price. The tattooist I found was local and when I checked out the information available on him I was happy. Carl Cooke of Bowburn, Durham, was my chosen artist and a great job

Long arm of the law...

Just a quick response to the article in issue 220 from Claire Jackson (pages 66-70). I would like to re-assure Claire that whilst the Metropolitan Police may be oppressive towards their employees, not all are. I am a serving police officer with ten years service and am in the progress of completing my second sleeve. Whilst my arms mainly remain covered whilst at work, this is more to do with the cold weather than anything else. I also have a colleague who has an almost complete bodysuit.

From experience my tattoo's are a positive talking point with most people, and I can honestly say that in ten years in the Police, I have had two negative encounters (that I am aware of), one with a colleague who openly asked how the hell I had got in to the job, and another from a (drunk) member of the public who commented rather loudly that I was "asking for trouble" standing on the street with my tats out (yes, I said 'tatts').

Police officers can only truly serve communities if they are selected from all walks of life. People should never be judged on how they look, only on their ability and professionalism (especially when it comes to work).

PS. I have been reading your magazine for nearly 16 years... keep up the good work.

David Bowman,
Aberdeenshire.

Thank you, Sir... nice to see a voice of reason in a world spinning more out of control every time you open the window to get some air.



@Rog_w:
"Finished reading Shoko Tendo's Yakuza Moon; thanks for the review @SkinDeepMag - what's next on the reading list?"

@bozdeniro:
"@SkinDeepMag had a great time yesterday working at @tattoofreeze busy all day. Good work"

@hazeleyes78:
"YES!! Got a RT off @SkinDeepMag of my latest tattoo, so happy!"

@ronniehuxford:
"@TattooFreeze @SkinDeepMag another amazing convention! Thanks for making us feel welcome yet again!"

@Alyx1185:
"Mums renewed my @SkinDeepMag subscription for Christmas! Happy times!"

@HollieHills: "An extra half hour in bed to read @SkinDeepMag the best way to start the day!"

@DanPeregreen:
"Had my @SkinDeepMag in the post today, 1 year's subscription was the best Xmas present ever!!"

that it was.

The main point here is that I looked beyond the usual derogatory comments and even more importantly, I picked out my design and stuck with it for the months leading up to my appointment. This is where I think people go wrong. Your tattoo should not be about fashion, following the trend or changing your mind five, ten, or 15 times before you get there. The only way you will live with what you get is by thinking it through and making it all about you.

I have recently had my second one which is a copy of a Viveros picture which I discovered in your magazine. As I said, I do have a professional position and have had the tattoos in places that can be covered. I am not ashamed of them but we have to live in the real world.

If you choose to publish this, it is simply a letter from a person who has waited for the right time and took the time to do it right. Nobody should be put off by the negative comments out there, just do it for the right reasons and enjoy every part of the experience.

Now a subscriber to your iPad version, I take great delight in looking through for what may be the next new piece of artwork in my life.

Daniel Raymond, Lead Assessor, Worldwide Quality Assurance Ltd

And again... thank you, Sir! Blimey no letters for ages and then two from people who can think! Whatever next...



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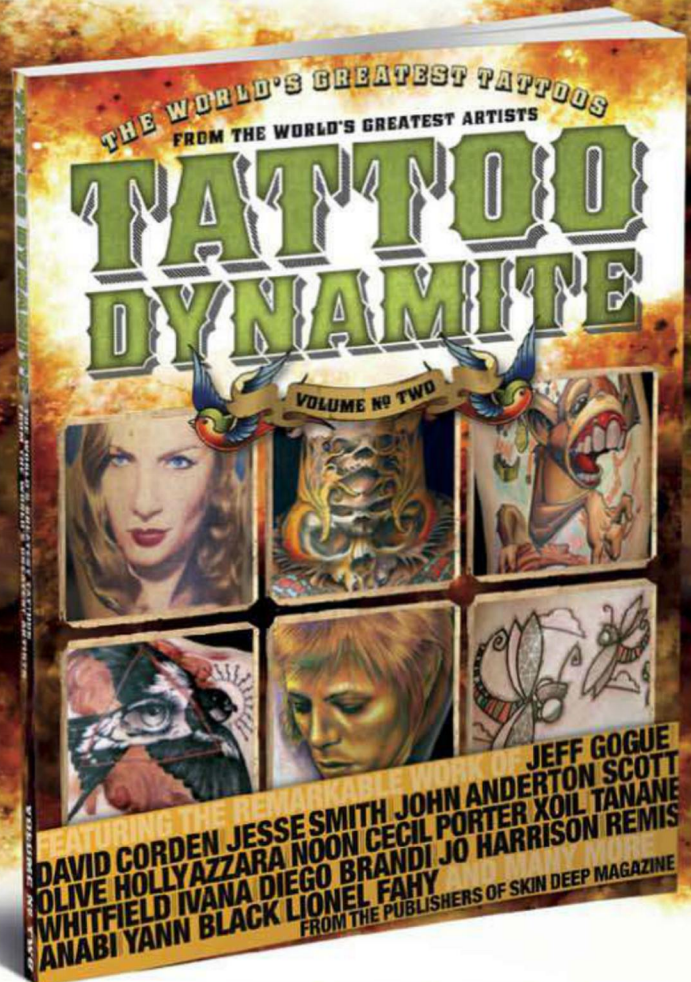
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THIS ISSUE, WE HAVE SOME ALTERNATIVES TO THE ALTERNATIVES - GATHER THESE THINGS AROUND YOU AND BECOME INSTANTLY CULTURED!

ADAM ANT

IS THE BLUEBLACK HUSSAR IN MARRYING THE GUNNER'S DAUGHTER

In an effort to once more confuse the world into submission, Adam Ant returns (surprisingly) without fanfare and an album title that sounds like a film (which it is, soon).

A good two, maybe three years, after word first leaked that Ant was back in the studio recording new material, *Gunner's Daughter* was released earlier this week. What to expect? To run to the store or let it come to you?

Well, the only thing you can ever truly expect with Ant, is the unexpected. No two albums ever sound the same. If you were hardcore back then, what you'll find here is some kind of mash-up between *Dirk Wears White Sox* and advances in technology since 1979. Anybody looking to rediscover the greatest pop force of the '80s is likely to be disappointed though. And for what it's worth, that's a good thing.

Right at the core of *Gunner's Daughter* is Ant's songwriting. Always under-rated or under-scrutinised, with the majority of press - regardless of hierarchy

- choosing to focus on style over substance, if you're appreciative of being experimental then this should be right up your street.

I don't have a lot of room here, but if you're the kind of listener who likes the re-releases of early Bowie and Bolan albums - the ones that feature demo cuts, undefined ideas and can still appreciate them for what they are, you should take this album to heart and love it. It is undefined, it is confusing, but it's also amazingly creative and there's not an awful lot of that around to cling on to right now.

It's 2013. Does it really take Adam Ant to come back from the dead to add some authenticity to a barren wasteland of music?

You know what - yeah, it probably does.

Mr Smith

DEVITA UNAUTHORISED

EDITED BY NICK BUBASH

PUBLISHED BY D.A.P.

PRICED: £21.99

Thom deVita is a name that might have passed you by if you haven't had your ears plugged into the underground for the best part of



40 years. A tattooist and artist from New York, deVita's style of art is a one-off featuring a collaboration with himself that features montages of stencils, pencil constructions, and to be frank, just about anything else to hand in the name of art.

To flip through the book and dismiss it as basic would be to not understand what deVita was trying to get at. It's a slim, but slick and well put together volume that does exactly what it sets out to do - provide a snapshot of a man who found influence in anything from Pueblo Indian designs to shopping bags. The story of deVita is long and fantastic - there's some great video footage around at VICE online too that's well worth looking into.

What deVita accomplished - aside from produce some fine work - was actually enable others to follow in his path. Not exactly in his path, for that would not be possible, but it was a path that didn't exist before all the same.

Pick it up - if only for the story about the bell in the cupboard - which might be the greatest story ever told. I need to get me a bell story. Everybody should get themselves a bell story.

Mr Smith

ON THE ROAD

DVD RELEASE: FEBRUARY 25

Perhaps one of the greatest books ever published, if you'd asked me



(good thing nobody did), I would have said it was un-filmable - and part of me would have been correct. It depends how you look at the movie. If you think you might find a faithful recreation of Kerouac's masterful sign of the times, you may be in for some disappointment.

On the other hand, if you can embrace the spirit of the concept of the work itself, there is much here to be admired. You may also be in that boat if you've never read it - though I suspect, it's not the kind of film you'll be desperate to watch on a Saturday night in that case.

Relevance to tattooing? A lot more than you think perhaps. This cross-country tale of autobiographical misbehaviour and adventure is close enough to the lifestyle of many.

The glamour is non-existent. The quest to get your art in front of people who aren't listening is ever present, but you knew that already when you started - and that's where the vague concept of anti-glamour comes into play.

With some big guns on board to lend it weight in the guise of Kirsten Dunst and Viggo Mortensen, *On The Road* is an out and out, love it or turn it off affair. Like I said, it's nigh on impossible to translate such a book faithfully, but if you're game for the road trip for its own sake, you'll get this big time.

Irresponsibility has never been so cool.

Mr Smith

ADAM ANT



An Eye is upon you

LOVE/HATE

Tabloid newspapers love an opportunity to describe those accused of crime as 'tattooed', casually and continuously reinforcing the accepted narrative, sailor, criminal, whore



Paula Hardy Kangelos

Yet, this negative portrayal of tattoos is at odds with the lived experience of many – for most of us, being tattooed is a positive experience, more likely to indicate a love of alternative music or a period at art school than a jail term.

If news media fails to reflect tattoo society, is fiction doing any better? When a character is created each facet can be carefully cut – from name to hairdo, everything is there because it should be there. So if everything is imbued with meaning, to what ends does cinema employ the tattoo?

In *The Night of the Hunter* (1955) we meet Harry Powell, an itinerant preacher with 'Love' and 'Hate' knuckle tattoos, played by Robert Mitchum. Powell is an escaped convict and misogynistic serial killer and is eventually captured hunting children. Harry Powell appears at number 29 on the American Film Institute Top Villains list (one place above violent veteran *Taxi Driver*, Travis Bickle) and his iconic tattoos were sufficiently powerful to enter the cultural lexicon – we see the same tattoo years later in Scorsese's remake of *Cape Fear* (1991) where it is sported by the extensively tattooed Max Cady (played by Robert DeNiro), a murderous sociopath with a conviction for rape.

Another homicidal antagonist with a penchant for tattoos is the terrifying Francis Dolarhyde (*Manhunter* and *Red Dragon*), abused and abandoned as a child, sadistic and delusional as an adult, Dolarhyde is a super strong serial

killer known as 'The Tooth Fairy'. So far, so predictable.

Tattooed crazies aren't just restricted to the horror section – *Iron Man 2* features Mickey Rourke as Russian nemesis, Ivan Vanko. Extensively patterned with tattoos whilst incarcerated for arms dealing, Vanko is deceitful and vengeful. He's also highly intelligent and emotionally attached to his pet bird, so at least this time around the stereotype is given a new layer.

More complexity is found in the tattooed characters of *American*

and his loyalty to his friends, as fixed as his ink.

Screen tattooed ladies aren't treated with any more balance than their male counterparts; Lisbeth Salander (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*) is another criminal, a computer hacker. Portrayed as clever, talented and possessing a photographic memory, she is also damaged, antisocial, murderous, paranoid, psychotic, and possibly schizophrenic.

After all those troubled fictions, it's rather a relief to get to Captain Jack Sparrow, Johnny Depp's rock and roll pirate. Jack is still a criminal – he's a pirate – still, he's articulate, witty, flighty, irreverent, and fame hungry. Jack wears his back and arm tattoos like a modern day celebrity, his 'sparrow' tattoo designed to promote his

own legend, much like Justin Bieber tweeting his 'Believe' ink.

TATTOOS ARE THE ART OF THE PEOPLE, AND SO MUCH MORE BESIDES. NOW, DOES ANYONE WANT TO MAKE A FILM ABOUT IT?

History X and *Eastern Promises* – a former Neo-Nazi gang member dealing with desire for revenge, enlightenment and regret, and an Eastern European gangster climbing the career ladder of organised crime whilst secretly helping the police and a baby girl. Derek and Nikolai, respectively, are self-reflective, independent thinkers making difficult moral decisions. Sadly, their tattoos are used to remind us that they can never really move on from their criminal pasts, just as they remind their owners of what they've done.

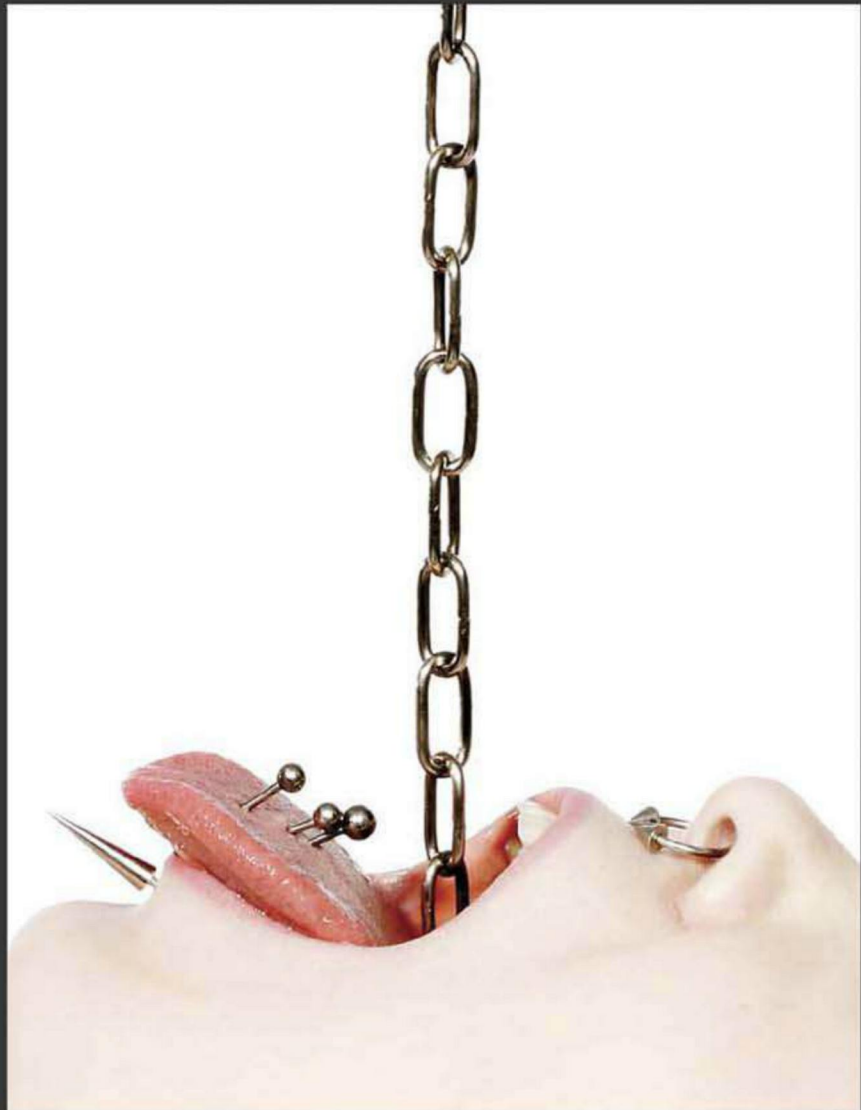
Sirius Black (*Harry Potter*) is yet another fictional tattooed ex-prisoner, although not a guilty one, and while his tattoos might be convenient shorthand to denote his past experience, they can't be describing an innate tendency towards crime. Perhaps instead they are employed to illustrate his rebelliousness, his outcast status

A character even more legendary than Captain Jack is everyone's favourite good guy, Santa Claus, and the animated *Rise of the Guardians* gives him a superhero style makeover, adding protecting children to his current present supply and delivery job.

Santa's 'Naughty' and 'Nice' forearm tattoos and his firm, friendly and fun persona are unusual in cinematic terms, but we know the truth... tattoos are for everyone, and in real life, tattooed people are just as likely to be 'Nice' as 'Naughty'. Being tattooed is powerful, it can help us to discover who we are, it can lift our spirits, mark important life events and pledge our allegiance to social groups – tattoos are self-confidence boosting, life enhancing, positive; tattoos are the art of the people, and so much more besides. Now, does anyone want to make a film about that?

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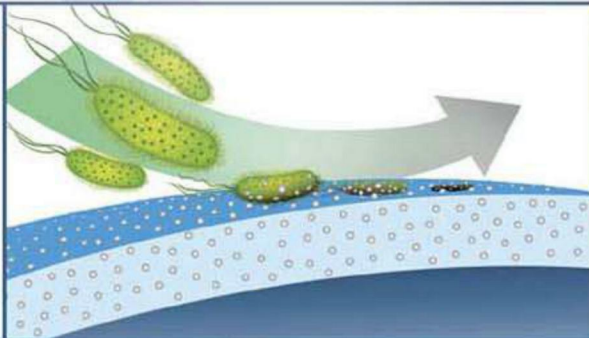
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