

TATTOO FREEZE FULL SHOW COVERAGE INSIDE

# Skin Deep

TATTOO MAGAZINE



**EUROPE VS USA**

**A BATTLE OF THE TRADITIONAL**

*UK stingrays*

**JORGE BECERRA & DEK KENT**

**FREE INSIDE SKIN SHOTS SAMPLER**

*Man and monster...*

**DAVE CORREIA**



**PUBLIC TATTOOS?**

*Who's in control*

# INK OVERLOAD



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MODEL: COURTNEY PHOTOGRAPHER: SCOTT COLE

**ARTIST PROFILES:** JASON CLAY DUNN YANN NEUMANN KUBA KUJAWA

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KURO SUMI

  
SILVERBACK INK

# The needle has landed



Nicky Connor

## THE WORLD YOU KNOW IS SLIPPING AWAY

My normal working day—not that it's normal as normal is normally defined—has a soundtrack. For some, the soundtrack would be shameful. For some, the music that wallpapers my day is a scar on the face of humanity. That soundtrack is a radio station I pipe into my internet radio called Hair Metal FM. Basically, it's a ton of stuff like Cinderella, Mötley Crüe and Skid Row. It wasn't called Hair Metal back then—if it had, you can guarantee I wouldn't have been into it—it was simply rock and we loved it because nobody was preaching to us about misery, politics or responsibility. Now I am old enough to know better, it still sounds good because I'm old enough to choose not to give a damn about misery and politics.

I do have some responsibilities now though—children, a dog, a car—those kinds of things that we all accumulate because to not accumulate anything that you care about just a little bit probably means living the existence of a hermit. And even a hermit would care about being alone enough to try and enforce it.

The music from the years in which I was pretending to be an

adult makes me feel good, but one day, I know exactly what will happen. One day, a song will appear that is not of my time. A song that is not what I would call a 'classic'. It will not belong to the Royal Pantheon and it will act as a herald that what you once thought you knew everything about has just changed. Depending on how old you are—it's an exercise you can easily run through yourself. If you're into football, there will be a very precise moment when what was 'your'

football, very quickly became somebody else's football. A point in time when you sat down on a Thursday night and no longer understood Top of the Pops. An evening you went out for a simple drink and found people you were pretty sure were too young to be in there crowding out your space.

That's how things work. To put this in context, right now—out there and working hard in the world—are a new generation of tattooists and artists. I know this because I've seen them. They don't care who Sailor Jerry is, and if they do, they don't particularly feel like paying homage. And I

understand that because—to put it in a different frame for you—it would be like Led Zeppelin not playing to the best of their ability because Chuck Berry is the ceiling. It's also admitting something came before you, and until you have claimed your place on the tree, paying homage is a dumb thing to do. This is how Nirvana spoke to a whole generation of people. This is how a studio like Buena Vista function. Move forwards. Screw the past. If the past was so

good, why is it no longer here?

You can make the same comparisons with football, cars, technology... things change all the time because people find better ways to do things on a daily basis. Not in the history of anybody I have ever known has the name John Logie Baird come up when we've been watching television, but I'm sure that once upon a time—maybe when the remote control came into existence—there was somebody standing in the corner saying something like "John would be rolling in his grave if he could see this". Though I suspect he would be rolling a lot faster still if he

### IF THE PAST WAS SO GOOD, WHY IS IT NO LONGER HERE?

ever witnessed some of the scratcher TV that masquerades as entertainment right now.

When you notice this change in your world, you will mourn it. You will mourn it because it means you got older without intending to. Kids will turn into young adults and they will be the very first people to discover tattoos... ever. They will not give a flying one about your 'ancient' tattoo whether you got it down the street from where you're standing right now or flew to the nether regions of Sweden for it. All they will give a damn about is their own tattoo. And when their friends get tattooed as well, they will tell them it's fantastic, but they will still go home and think theirs is the best in the world because that's how everything works.

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## ARTIST PROFILES

### IMMOVABLE OBJECTS

When the building Old Bones Tattoo studio was located in burnt down in 2011, Johan Svahn and Hans Schröder suddenly found themselves sans equipment. They decided to join forces, and no more than a year later Immovable Tattoo opened up in the centre of Malmö.

### JORGE BECERRA

Specialist in micro tattoos but that's not to say he's doesn't knock them out of the ballpark when it comes to a bigger canvas, Mr Jorge Becerra is one interesting son of a gun who can also put you to sleep should you be so bold as to let him...

### DEK KENT

There's an awful lot of colour in Dek Kent's work. But for the artist and owner of Electric Kicks studio in Pontefract, one stood out more than the rest in the early days: blue...

### YANN NEUMANN

Looking back over the history of tattooing, there are few styles that are as iconic as old school traditional or Japanese. More than any other style, they have stood the test of time and are still going strong.

### JASON CLAY DUNN

The unmistakable red beard, signature hat, stunning Neo-Asian tattoos, and very real, very serious struggle with panic disorder and anxiety are just some of the traits that set Ink Master Season 3 contestant, Jason Clay Dunn, apart in today's sea of artists.

### KUBA KUJAWA

He learned fine art painting as a 12-year-old in a class of adults applying for university. Later he made a living as a

P86



## TATTOO FREEZE

STAY FROSTY TELFORD!

comic book illustrator while tattooing for free. The world of Kuba Kujawa is art in different forms, and now he's taking his skills to Denmark and Bright Side Tattoo, hoping that his art picks up...

## SPECIAL FEATURES

### THIS MEANS WAR

A little while back, Mr Smith and Ms Pavone were discussing the relative merits of old school tattoos and their execution across the globe. She, coming from the extreme West (well, Canada) stated that the USA was all you needed. Mr Smith however, was adamant (as

opposed to Adam Ant though his dress code says otherwise) that Europe had so much more to offer on that front. Let's see how they lay the smack down on each other.

### TATTOO VIXENS

Courtney Kelly-Deeks is good fun but don't let that fool you none. She is switched in like a TV. We predict wonderful things for her. Enough of our mouth... here she is.

### DAVE CORREIA

The art of Dave Correia is a glimpse into a haunted daydream, with smiling monsters and bleeding roses that exist in a surreal realm

THIS MONTH'S PULL OUT:  
SKIN SHOTS SAMPLER



outside our own. A lot of the designs come from his own misrepresentation of reality and it's landed him work with car companies and Swedish heavy metal bands.

### TATTOO FREEZE

For the first year in living memory, Tattoo Freeze wasn't besieged by snow, but it was still damn cold. On the flipside of the coin—more artists than ever, a wonderful crowd, and more to do than you can shake a stick at...



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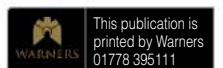
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# Sleeve Notes

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## ELECTRIC BUDDHA

**Electric Buddha Tattoo in Ramsgate are now looking for a fourth artist to join our busy, vibrant little band of merry men (and one woman)**

It's part-time to start, but for the right applicant there will definitely be a chance to go full-time. We are a custom based studio and the successful applicant should be able to work in a variety of styles, but development of personal style and subsequently, customer base, will not be discouraged. Previous studio experience is a must as this is not an apprenticeship. No drink, drug or attitude problems will be tolerated. Anyone interested, or wanting more information, should email a link to your portfolio to [danstone1975@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:danstone1975@hotmail.co.uk).



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limited edition that comes mounted onto acid-free hardboard and sealed for UV protection. Nice work, sir... back to work now. If you're in the market to hunt one down, head here: [brianmviveros.com](http://brianmviveros.com).

## UNAPOLOGETIC PIMP FOR CREW MEMBER TOM

**One of our crew—that would be Tom Abbott—has finally finished and released his novel *To The Pines***

As all of us writers here know, finishing your book is a big deal, so it's only fair that we send him out first into the world. If you're of the reading persuasion, you can check out the goodies here: [www.facebook.com/tothepines](http://www.facebook.com/tothepines)—the amazon link is so long and unwieldy, I fear we would have to pay him based on the word count, but you'll find it sure enough from there.



## LATE VACANCY

This just in as we were off to press: **Keep The Faith (Cardiff)** have a chair available for a tip-top artist who wants to work in a friendly, clean and professional shop to work. Full or part-time considered

You just gotta be white hot and happening! Opening hours at the shop are 10-6 daily (except Sundays which are 10:30-5:30) This is where you can make the magic happen: [keepthefalthsc@gmail.com](mailto:keepthefalthsc@gmail.com).





## UNIQUE FAIRGROUND ART COURSE

**This is aimed slightly more at our 'tattooing' audience than our 'get tattooed' ones but you never know...**

We are currently enjoying a renaissance of traditional hand-painted fairground art in popular culture, and it's important that the skills and techniques used and developed by the likes of Fred Fowle and Edwin Hall aren't lost. Joby Carter grew up on Carters Steam Fair, the world's largest vintage travelling funfair, which operates in the south and west of England. As a child he was fascinated by the paintwork on the rides, and so he pestered the signpainter, Stan Wilkinson, to teach him how to paint. Stan was from the proper tradition of signwriting, having been taught as a boy by a master signwriter, who in turn learnt the same way, going back into the 19th century. For Joby, learning from this conduit directly to the master painters of the Victorian age was an opportunity not to be missed. There are few people these days who can match this flamboyant talent with true skill, but Joby is one of them.

### THE COURSE:

Due to popular demand, he has decided to give you the opportunity to learn these techniques by copying one of the panels painted by Fred Fowle on Carters Steam Fair, on a new five-day intensive fairground course.

### ART PAINTING COURSE:

The course will teach you the basics of the fairground painting tradition, from lining and shading to scrolls, gilding, marbling, flamboyant painting, layout and design. You will be provided with a large prepared board and will have the opportunity to make your own version of a beautiful panel painted by legendary fairground artist Fred Fowle, which you can take home at the end. For an extra charge you can choose to paint a child's galloper horse instead.

Alternatively, if you would rather work on your own piece, you can bring it with you. Joby is passionate about fairground art and signwriting, and is keen that these skills don't die out and get lost in the mists of time. All materials are provided for the duration of the course, except for gold leaf which will be available at cost price if you would like to add it to your design. You will have the opportunity to buy your own equipment at the end of the week.

### COURSE DETAILS:

10-14 February 2014 (so be quick). The course will be held in Joby's paintshop at the Carters Steam Fair Yard, in White Waltham near Maidenhead. The course runs from 9am till 5pm every day, and lunch and hot drinks are provided. For more information & to book: [cartersentertainment.com](http://cartersentertainment.com) or [info@cartersentertainment.com](mailto:info@cartersentertainment.com) or 07889 775715.

## KARMA TATTOO

**Spear Studio is now called Karma Collective. They (and I quote) have a "new look studio, new philosophy and new website"**

"We still have an all-female tattoo family offering some of the best tattooing around.

We are also opening an online shop where you can buy

custom prints and even request bespoke artwork or wedding invitations, etc. There is a new clothing and merchandise range on the way which will soon be available. Gift vouchers are also available as brilliant presents for friends and loved ones."

You can find them right here: Karma Collective, 269-271 Alcester Road South, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 6EB • 01214433211

• [www.karma-collective.co.uk](http://www.karma-collective.co.uk) • [info@karma-collective.co.uk](mailto:info@karma-collective.co.uk)



## HENBO TATTOO

**A couple of months ago (maybe not even that long ago, it blurs after a while), we featured some artwork from Matthew Henning in Behind Closed Doors**

Just to prove that good apprenticeships are still out there and totally worth pursuing if you can nail down one of the good ones, here's a couple of items of his work to make your nod your head in silent agreement.

You can find him at Cheshire Ink or jump on board the love train at [@henbohenning](https://twitter.com/henbohenning). Bring it dude...



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# Conventions

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Trent Aitken-Smith ■ Manami 'Maki' Okazaki www.kingyobooks.com ■ www.amazon.co.uk

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## MILANO TATTOO CONVENTION

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milanotattooconvention.it

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Arizona  
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## LYON TATTOO CONVENTION

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69100 Villeurbanne,  
France  
lyontattooconvention.com

**15–16 February 2014**

## BUDAPEST TATTOO CONVENTION

Lurdy Ház  
Könyves Kálmán Avenue 12–14  
1097-Budapest,  
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budapesttattooconvention.com

**21–23 February 2014**

## EVERGREEN TATTOO INVITATIONAL

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Springfield,  
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evergreentattoo.com

**21–23 February 2014**

## SEVILLA TATTOO CONVENTION

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sevilla.spaintattooconventions.com

**29–30 March 2014**

## THE SCOTTISH TATTOO CONVENTION

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## THE GREAT BRITISH TATTOO SHOW

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Horimitsu by Irwin Wong



Horitoko II by Irwin Wong

Horitoku by Ivan Toscanelli

Horihito by Irwin Wong

## WABORI: TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TATTOO

**If you are a regular reader of *Skin Deep* or *Tattoo Master*, there is a good chance you will have read a feature or two by Manami 'Maki' Okazaki**

Originally from Australia, now based somewhere 'between Tokyo and a tropical island in the South China Sea', Maki is a specialist in everything related to Japanese tattoo culture. As well as writing for various international magazines, she has also filmed documentaries and given lectures about wabori culture, and in doing so, has had the privilege to meet and interview some of the best Wabori masters... many of whom don't usually give interviews.

In 2013, Maki released *Wabori: Traditional Japanese Tattoo*, a 250-page epic collection of five years worth of interviews. And it is a masterpiece.

So let's break this down... for readers who just want a great coffee table tattoo book, you can't go wrong here. Maki's book is a visual treat and she has made sure to load it with some truly amazing images. Not only is every interview accompanied by a full photo shoot, Maki has also managed to gain access to some of the artists private photographs. When you understand that some of the artists featured are pioneers in the field of Japanese tattooing, then you begin to realise how important, historically, some of these images are. There is not a page that doesn't feature an amazing piece of imagery that will leave you contemplating a full Japanese sleeve.

And now onto readers that want a bit more; the readers, rather than the lookers. Here again Maki has turned out something that will keep you totally engrossed for a good few days. Over seventeen interviews, Maki, interviews the legends of Japanese tattooing; including Horitoku, Horiyoshi III and Horiyasu. As an added bonus, there are two more interviews, one with wood block artist Motoharu Asaka, and the other with the daughter of a yakuza boss, Shoko Tendo. Through all these interviews, Maki, weaves a history of Japanese tattooing that is littered with anecdotes and sometimes, crazy, stories. The wealth of information held in them is priceless, a snapshot of history makers.

Combined, *Wabori: Traditional Japanese Tattoo*, is a visual tour de force, heavily backed up with interviews that will leave even the fans of *Wabori*, learning more about their favourite artists.





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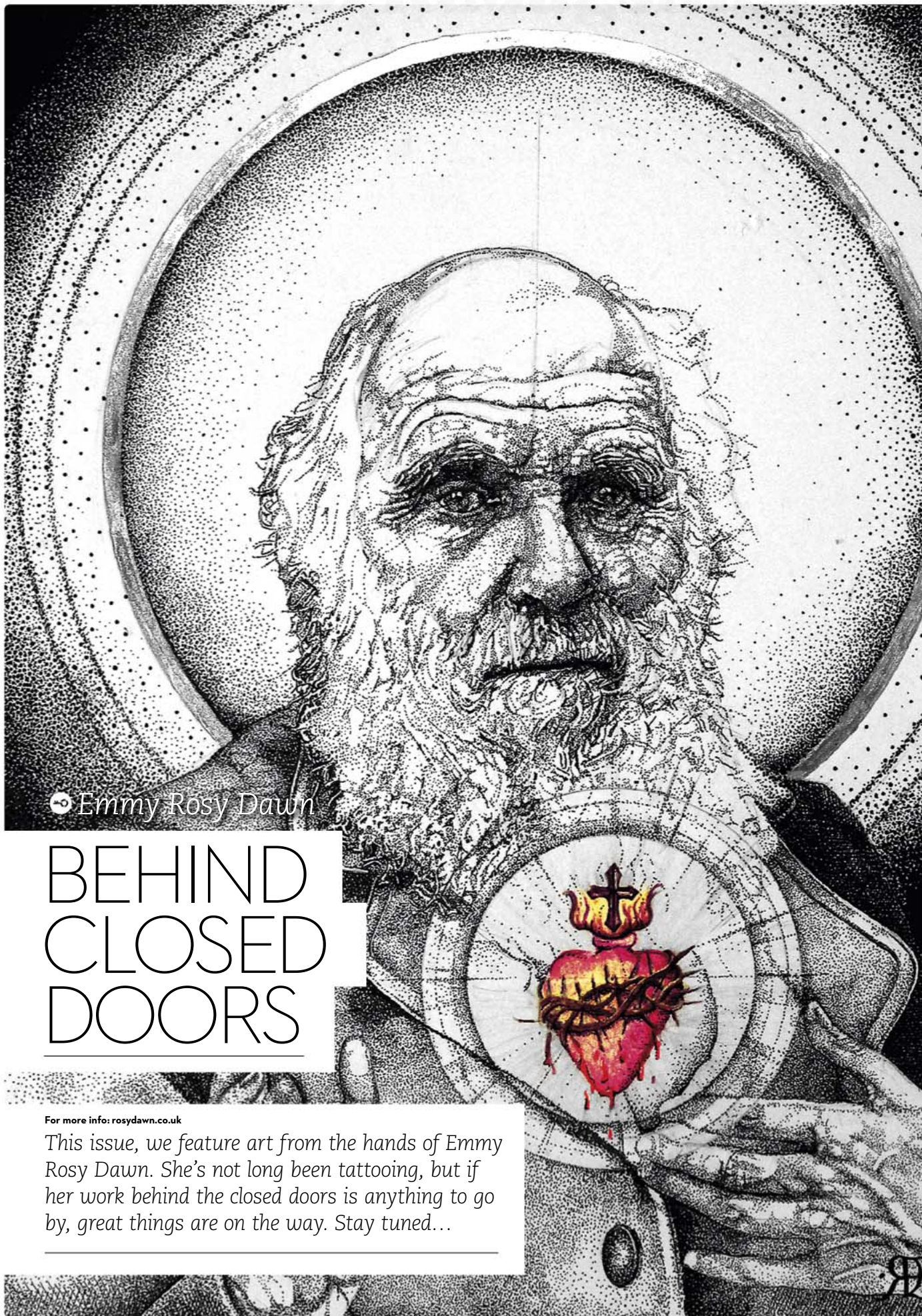
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*Tony Ciarro*  
2013

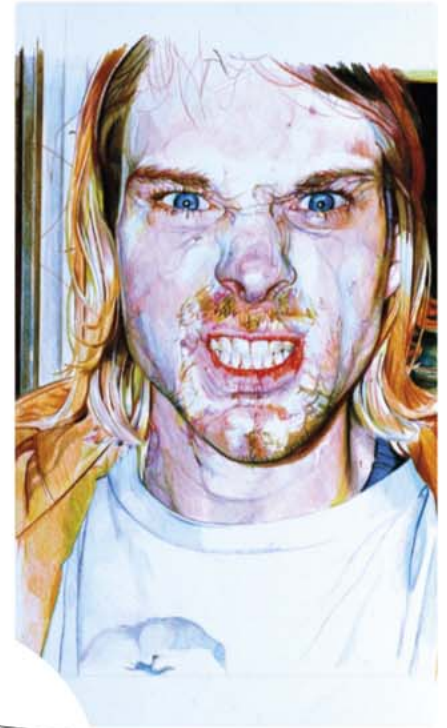
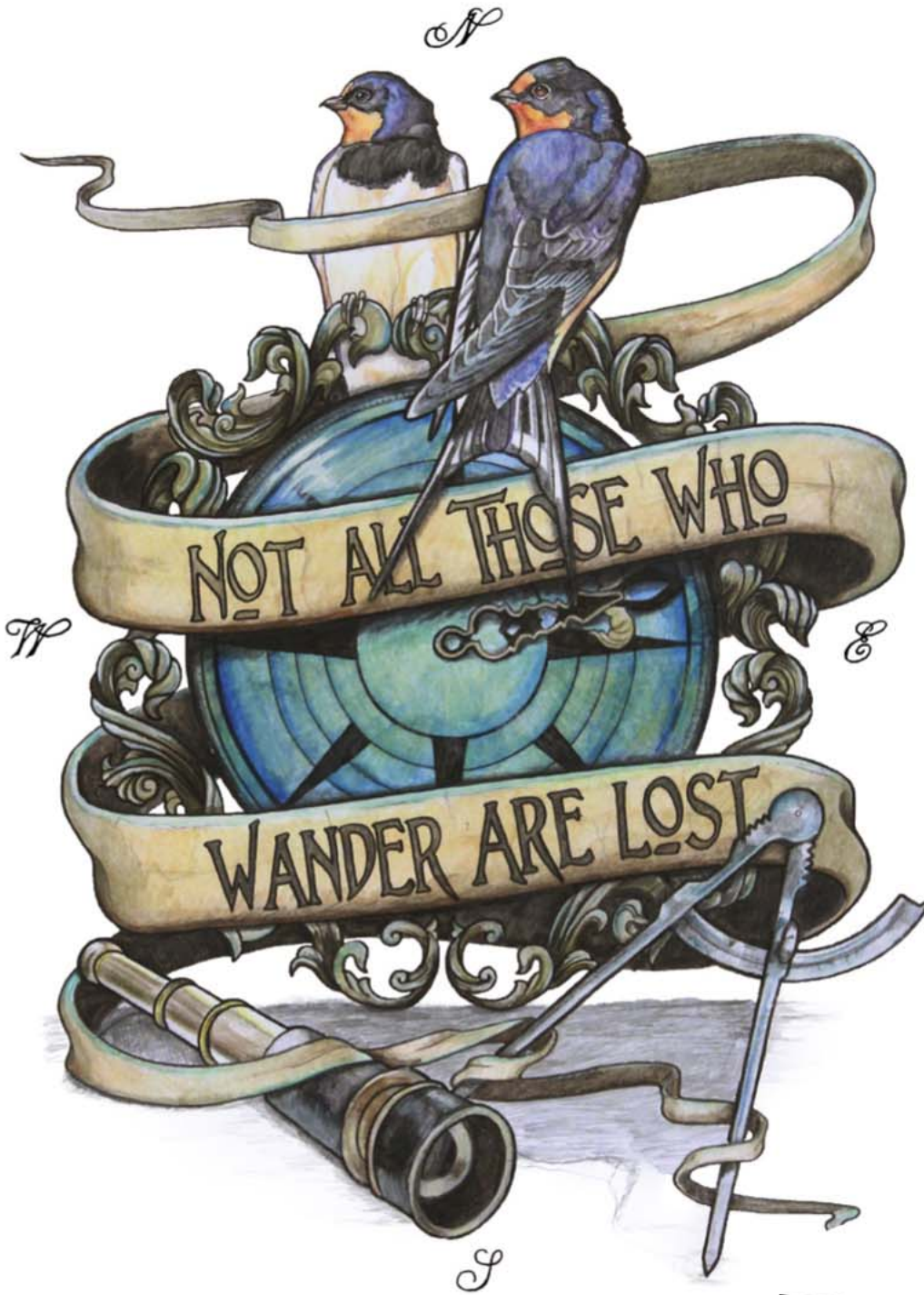


Emmy Rosy Dawn

# BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

For more info: [rosydawn.co.uk](http://rosydawn.co.uk)

*This issue, we feature art from the hands of Emmy Rosy Dawn. She's not long been tattooing, but if her work behind the closed doors is anything to go by, great things are on the way. Stay tuned...*



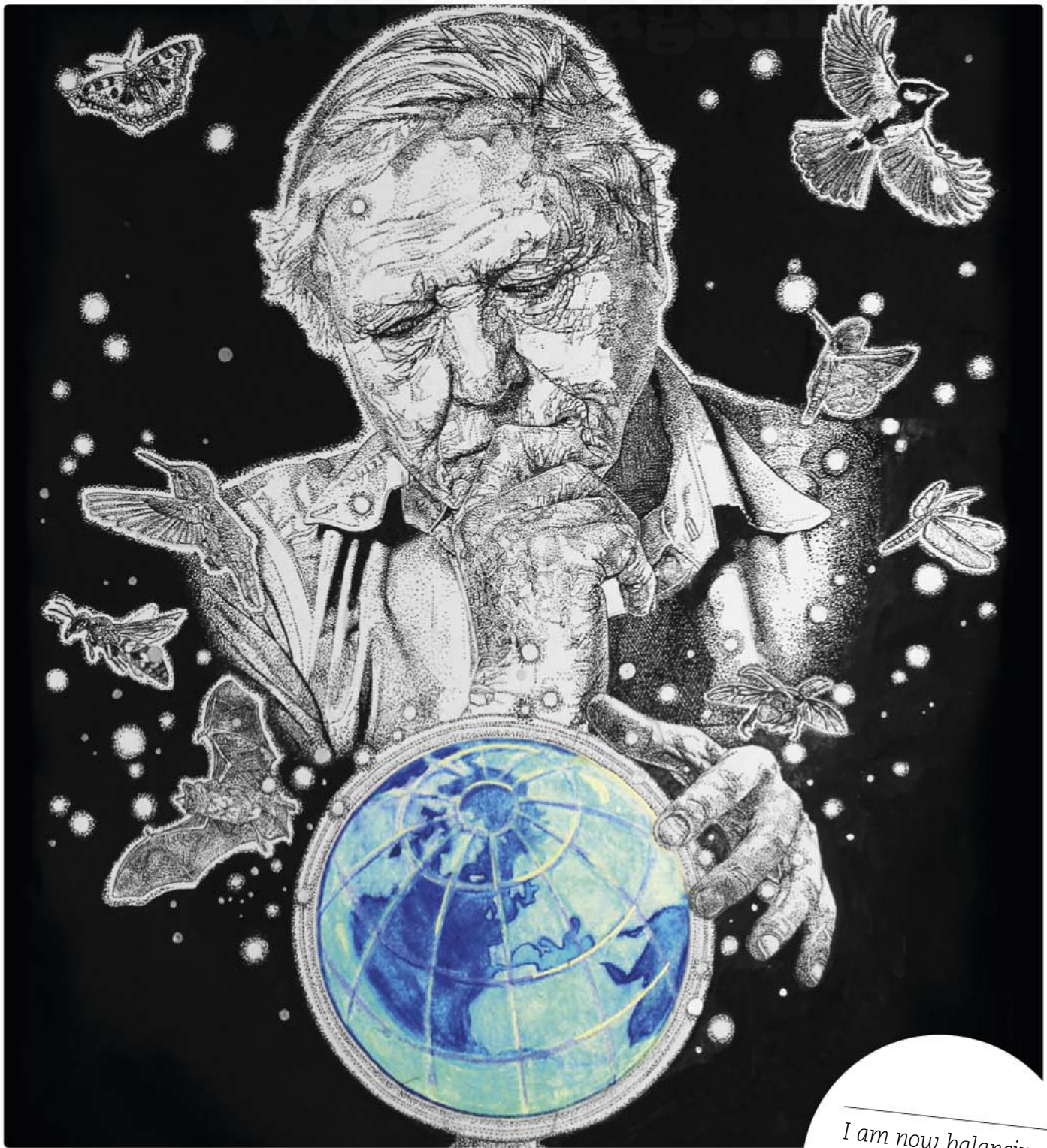
*I'd found a true art form to get behind*



"Tattooing didn't come into the equation for me immediately. Aged 21, following a politics degree, I met Bekka Protheroe (Mother of All Sins, Sutton Coldfield) on an art course where she suggested she tattoo me, though I was at first reluctant. After a while, I drew up a design based on an image of an elegant Japanese woman with a curving symmetrical pattern around her breasts. After some alterations, I settled on filigree style phoenixes in the same placement, took the plunge, and was instantly hooked. I'd found a true art form to get behind. I returned with more adventurous designs for Bekka, and every time the result surpassed my expectations. In addition, I loved the fun, creative studio environment."

WINTER IS COMING





*I am now balancing exhibitions with another apprenticeship*

“After an apprenticeship in Stafford, I came back to Macclesfield. Having built my portfolio of tattoo and fine art, I am now balancing exhibitions with another apprenticeship.”

“My current styles are dotwork inspired by Richey Beckett; portraiture influenced by Lucian Freud; and the colour combinations of Jo Harrison and Jeff Gogue. The fantastical imaginations of Tolkien and Brian Froud and the classical literature of Ancient Greece are ever present themes in my work. My newest exhibition is at the infamous 27 Club and it will be in residence at Cabin 5150, Macclesfield, throughout January and February.”



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## TOP 5 FAVOURITE OLD SCHOOL TATTOOS

Mr Smith/Ms Pavone • Gigi Stoll • gigistoll.com

A little while back, Mr Smith and Ms Pavone were discussing the relative merits of old school tattoos and their execution across the globe. She, coming from the extreme west (well, Canada) stated that the USA was all you needed. Mr Smith however, was adamant (as opposed to Adam Ant though his dress code says otherwise) that Europe had so much more to offer on that front. Let's see how they lay the smack down on each other



2



## BARBARA PAVONE

1

JF BIRON  
KUSTOM KULTURE  
INKYOURSOUL.COM

If you're going to use Sailor Jerry flash, you absolutely have to do it right and I think the master himself would be mega proud of this one. Nuff said!

3



2

DAN SMITH  
CAPTURED TATTOO  
CAPTUREDTATTOO.COM

Bold and eye-catching, this design is kind of like old school tattoo flash 2.0: All the traditional elements are there, but the imagery is 100 percent Dan Smith.

3

ADAM 'HONKEY KONG' HATHORN  
GURU TATTOO  
HONKEYKONG.COM

There's so much amazingness happening here, all I can think about is how I really, REALLY wish I had this lil' dude tattooed on me. Darn.

4

MINA AOKI  
FUN CITY TATTOO & DAREDEVIL  
TATTOOMINAOKI.COM

Doesn't get much more old school than a heart and dagger neatly executed in four bright colours—someone's done their history homework!

5

ZACH PENSMTIH  
MASTER TATTOO  
DIAMONDBACKZACHTATTOO.COM

For me, this one's all about the details—just take a look at that expression... and that hair—and the fresh take on a character that's been done to death. \*Insert cheesy Dracula joke here\* 🍷

4



5





1



## SION SMITH

1

**VLAD OCTAVIAN**  
**OLD LONDON ROAD**  
**OLDLONDONROAD.CO.UK**

Can you get any more old school than a lighthouse? I think this is just beautiful and I don't even have to justify myself. Take that to the bank, Pavone!



2

2

**SWAY**  
**SACRED ELECTRIC**  
**SWAYTATTOOER.COM**

The icon of icons—that old black panther chewed up by the next generation of big cat. Wonderful in every way.



3

3

**JOEL MADBERG**  
**SALVATION TATTOO**  
**SALVATIONTATTOO.SE**

If ever there was a traditional tattoo that covered all the bases, this one does it for me. You can interpret this in so many ways, it should be frightening. Instead, it's simply fantastic.



4

4

**MISS ARIANNA**  
**SKINWEAR TATTOO SHOP**  
**MISSARIANNA.COM**

Boars head in a chalice? Again, it says everything you need to know without trying very hard at all. In fact, it's effortless—which is perhaps the whole point.



5

5

**JAKE X**  
**TOP HAT TATTOO**  
**TOPHATTATTOO.CO.UK**

This is when old school speaks to me properly. There's nothing going on in this tattoo—and yet everything is going on. Genius. 🍷



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# Courtney

Courtney Kelly-Deeks is good fun, but don't let that fool you none. She is switched in like a TV. We predict wonderful things for her. Enough of our mouth, here she is...

**YOU TOLD ME THAT YOU HAD CRAZY ASS HAIR AS A KID BECAUSE NOBODY IN YOUR FAMILY KNEW HOW TO DEAL WITH IT—EXCEPT YOUR STEP-DAD WHO BOUGHT AN AFRO COMB BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED ON FRESH PRINCE OF BEL AIR. THAT'S HONESTLY JUST ABOUT THE FUNNIEST THING I'VE EVER HEARD—TELL US MORE ABOUT THE FLAT TOP AND MOUSTACHE YOU DEVELOPED AS WELL...**

I remember it fondly—the fro not the tash! It was the bane of my life and I used to walk to school each morning trying to squash the flat top back down! Thinking back though, my siblings and I all had bad hair; my sister with a centre parting bowl cut and my brother with blond ringlets. The tash is another story entirely! I can laugh about it now (and may even try and grow it for Movember one year), but the shaving, bleaching, waxing episodes throughout my teenage years were... interesting!

**SERIOUSLY THOUGH, NEWMARKET IS HARDLY BEL AIR IS IT? ACTUALLY, THERE'S NOTHING THAT'S REALLY LIKE BEL AIR. I BET GROWING UP WASN'T ANYTHING LIKE THAT SHOW, BUT SOMEWHERE DEEP INSIDE, I'M HOPING IT WAS, BECAUSE THAT WOULD MAKE AN EVEN BETTER TV SHOW.**

I don't need a TV show. I live in my own fairytale land most of the time! My ideal place would be like a Disney musical as I often randomly burst into song. I'm surprised I've not been locked

up yet. I'm often travelling about, weekends away in the UK and Europe, I love to travel and see new places.

**I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN OUT THERE DOING DRAMA TYPE THINGS SINCE YOU WERE A KID. HOW COME YOU'VE NEVER SERIOUSLY BATTERED THE DOOR DOWN WITH THAT—YOU WOULD BE GREAT! THERE MUST BE SOME PARTS YOU'VE SEEN ON TV AND THOUGHT YOU COULD DO IT MUCH BETTER?**

I always loved acting, singing and dancing, and although I was—and still can be—a real drama queen as a kid and got an A in drama, I never excelled in any of them. I'm not afflicted with false modesty. I don't want to be one of those X-Factor crazies on stage thinking I'm great when really I'm shattering glass. I have the raw materials but I never pushed any of them forward after college. I wanted to be 'famous' as a kid, but these days with all the reality TV shows, everyone seems to be famous but with no real talent. If I say I will do something, I will and will do it well—so yes, I have seen a few bits out there I think I could do better! Who knows, maybe some day...

**I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL WITH THAT 'SMALL TOWN/GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE' MENTALITY. SOME PEOPLE I KNOW STAYED PUT AND ARE**



**QUITE HAPPY BUT I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE IF I HAD STAYED. WHAT WERE YOUR OPTIONS? DO YOU EVER GO HOME AND WISH YOU'D NEVER LEFT. (I DO BUT ONLY SOMETIMES AND FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES).**

Home isn't where I grew up anymore. My folks moved so luckily I don't have that option! I moved out at 18 and never looked back. I had all these ideas 🍷

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**I dont want  
to be one of  
those X-Factor  
crazies on stage  
thinking Im  
great when  
really Im  
shattering glass**



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## I had an eating disorder for a few years and coming out the other side I'm finally happy with who I am

of moving to America and making use of my dual citizenship, I moved up to Scotland for a bit and wanted to move to London, but I'm quite happy having my little nest in my small town and venturing out. I'm quite happy to drive, jump on the train or fly alone so you can be anywhere in a matter of hours if you want to be.

### HOW DID YOU FIND YOURSELF HOOKING UP WITH THOSE CRAZY ASS FRIENDS OF YOURS?

Well, I have you to thank for that! And 'crazy ass' they are indeed! I met Terri, Roxy and Lauren firstly at The Great British Tattoo Show last year where I was on the catwalk, and Annalieza at Manchester, and we all worked together at Tattoo Jam. Courtney was my friend before I entered the modelling world though; she stumbled into my small town as the 'cooler, more tattooed' Courtney and we clicked straight away.

### YOU TOLD ME THAT YOU DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A MODEL BECAUSE YOUR SELF IMAGE WAS "NOT TALL ENOUGH/NOT SLIM ENOUGH". AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, THAT'S WHAT MOST PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THEMSELVES—I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER MET ANYBODY WHO DIDN'T HAVE THOSE WORRIES. IS IT SOMETHING THAT YOU DON'T WORRY ABOUT TOO MUCH ANY MORE?

I spent many years worrying about the way I looked. I had an eating disorder for a few years and coming out the other side I'm finally happy with who I am. This is more of an internal thing though. As far as I can tell, everyone, no matter how others view them, have some body hang ups. I have bad days but mostly only good. I'm happy to be a

WorldM

'curvy' woman; I love my food. I always joke that if I died, I would want to die with a full tummy as I don't want my unfinished business to be that I was hungry! I'm healthy and to me that's more important than my looks.

**THIS IS AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO PIMP THE BAND WHOSE VIDEO YOU WERE IN—ARE THEY GOOD OR DID YOU TAKE THE GIG BECAUSE IT WAS A GOOD CHANCE TO GET YOURSELF OUT THERE. AND HERE'S A HORRIBLE QUESTION—IS IT SOMETHING YOU MIGHT LOOK BACK ON LATER AND WISH YOU HAD NEVER DONE... KIND OF LIKE COURTNEY COX IN THAT BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN VIDEO?**

The band are a lovely bunch of lads. I had fun shooting the video so no, I won't regret it, I wasn't naked or anything, so I think it's ok! They're a local band just starting out—Phoenix Calling—and the video I'm in is called 'Everybody Knows'. I'm also briefly in Myles Sankos' 'Come On Home' video. I'd love to do more... push the actress in me a bit!

**LET'S REWIND A SECOND HERE AND TALK ABOUT HAIR—I THINK PEOPLE COULD USE THE TIPS OUT THERE. I HAVE A FEW ISSUES MYSELF—I HAVE SAGITTARIUS HAIR. IT DOES WHATEVER IT LIKES NO MATTER WHAT I HIT IT WITH. THAT AUSSIE SHAMPOO IS PRETTY GOOD AT KEEPING IT HAPPY, BUT I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND ANYTHING THAT STOPS ME FROM SMELLING LIKE A WET DOG WHEN IT RAINS. GOT ANY TIPS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD?**

Where to start! My biggest tip, which I've learnt my lesson with is LEAVE THE BLEACH ALONE! For some reason I think I'm an expert in everything. I have cut my own hair, dyed it, shaved it and finally, killed it. In fact, we are now not far from the fro I started with. From now on, I will let only the real professionals at it. I just hate having plain hair. I love changing the colour, it's a great way to freshen your look—but after last year having grown out my undercut then dying to



## ‘I have cut my own hair, dyed it, shaved it, and finally, killed it

red, pink, white, blue then purple, then from extensions to short, I've decided wigs are the way forward!

**FINALLY, WHAT DOES THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS? GOT ANYTHING EXCITING**

**ON THE CARDS THAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?**

Performance! I want to dance again, I miss being on stage so that's the plan. It's all in the process at the moment, but it's exciting to get back to doing what I love! 🍷



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# WELCOME TO THE WEIRD

The art of Dave Correia is a glimpse into a haunted daydream, with smiling monsters and bleeding roses that exist in a surreal realm outside our own. A lot of the designs come from his own misrepresentation of reality and it's landed him work with car companies and Swedish heavy metal bands



[www.zerofriends.com/](http://www.zerofriends.com/)  
[www.playwithknives.com](http://www.playwithknives.com)



Simon Lundh  
 Ransom & Mitchell, [www.ransommitchell.com](http://www.ransommitchell.com)

“Therapeutic and frustrating”... that's how San Francisco based painter, Dave Correia, describes his own work. A way of keeping focused, more or less. "If I haven't drawn for like two weeks I'll get weirded out, not knowing what to do with myself," he says. "I can't remember that actually happening, but I need to draw or paint for my own piece of mind, to keep focused. The frustrating part is when you have an idea that's clear in your head, but you can't get it out. You can't convey it. Normally

drawing makes me very calm and collected, but when that happens I have to stop and force myself to leave for a couple of hours or a day. Normally when I come back, I realise straight away what to do." His ideas come from everyday life, at least his own distorted interpretation of it. "They come from my own morbid curiosity, how I hope some things really do look like in real life. I can see a weird shape when it's really just someone hunched over at a bus stop, and I kind of play on it in my head. It's like when you look at a cloud and see a cow drinking milk, or something. Then I add on to it in my head and that makes me excited to draw.







*When I graduated high school I didn't really know what to do, but people were making decent money working in computer animation for Disney and stuff, so I saw it as a way to support myself doing art*

Now I want to see that. It's like I'm constructing a character or a world on my own. It starts with a thought and the drawing is just the final stage of getting it out."

He knew fairly early on that he was going to be an artist when he grew up, even though his self-esteem wasn't always on top.

"I guess it was a self esteem thing. I don't always see my work as amazing—just something that I do. Art was like an escape. Every chance to draw, I'd take. I knew I was somewhat talented because I took classes and some people told me I should pursue it as a career. When I graduated high school I didn't really know what to do, but people were making decent money working in computer animation for Disney and stuff, so I saw it as a way to support myself doing art."

So Dave went on to college, earning a degree in computer animation—an orientation he never pursued in the end.

"During these years, however, I lost interest in computer animation and started painting a lot more. I was more into 🌻



the analogue stuff.”

Outside of school he started hanging out with people involved in zines and underground comics, which would ultimately decide his life path. “I made all these friends who were doing their own non-superhero comics and publishing their own books, and that’s what I wanted to do. So we started doing shows together. I worked at a sign shop during the day and at night and on weekends we’d do T-shirts and stickers, anything that could sell. These shows landed us other freelance gigs, and I did ads, album covers and gallery shows. Every show was a frog leap into the next and we were actually making money of it.”

The big leap came when he was asked to do an ad campaign for car manufacturer Scion’s new XD model.

“I got an email out of nowhere. They had seen some of my work on a website I had at the time, and told me they were taking submissions. I really hated my

work at the sign shop and wanted to do something more creative and fun, so it was perfect and I quit my other job after two weeks. It was a cool job and an edgy campaign. They wanted monsters tearing up the cars, and at first I kind of held back, but they wanted scarier. It’s rare that a car company wants demonic monsters with horns, hooks and spikes, and also black and white illustrations. It felt good that they wanted me to do my style. I did two commercials, billboards, a website, comics and posters, and it gave me the self-esteem I needed. People liked it and I approached other companies, got other jobs and did more paintings and books. That job changed my outlook on things and my career.”

Ironically he basically stopped doing black and white illustrations six months after the campaign.

“The main reason I did illustrations was that it was a printing thing. We were doing shows on a shoestring budget



*It was a cool job and an edgy campaign. They wanted monsters tearing up the cars, and at first I kind of held back, but they wanted scarier*

and we used to go to Kinko’s to reprint, so it was cost-effective. In 2008 or 2009 I wanted to paint and try colour again. I hadn’t painted since college and I first tried acrylic, but the blends I wanted to do took forever, so I picked up oil painting. That



our idea is to showcase artists that fit in our brand, people who have similar styles and grew up with the same nostalgic pop culture

same nostalgic pop culture.”

Through Alex and ZeroFriends he also got the opportunity to do the cover for the latest release by Swedish metal band In Flames, ‘Songs of a playground fading’, again ironically enough in almost only black and white.

“Alex had done the cover for the previous one, ‘A sense of purpose’, so they asked him again, but he didn’t have time. Instead he and Darren showed them my art and In Flames instantly said ‘let’s use him’. I worked close with the singer, Anders Fridén, and he wanted it to look de-saturated with just a little bit of colours. We were all really pleased with how the album came out. Based on time constraints, the album art was created entirely in Photoshop.”

In 2012, Dave held his first solo exhibition, ‘Friends in the Dark’, at Fifty24PDX Gallery in Portland, Oregon, featuring his collection of oil and acrylic paintings that depicted “luculent monsters and cadent beauties illuminating a bleak and shadowed world”.

He now spends his time creating art for ZeroFriends, as well as drawing and painting for gallery shows, new books, or simply for his own personal enjoyment. 🐾

worked better. There are so many techniques and vibrant colours.”

One of the friends he made doing his own comic books was fellow artist Alex Pardee, who was to become an important figure in Correia’s life. Through him he became a part of the ZeroFriends family, just shortly after his work with Scion.

“When he and his friend, Darren Scott, started the art company ZeroFriends, I was knee-deep in

freelance work, so I didn’t get into that straight away, but a couple of years ago I did. I’ve known Alex for 12 years and ZeroFriends became a platform and a support group.”

Two-and-a-half years ago he even became part-owner of the business.

“It’s a darker company, so I fit in well and our idea is to showcase artists that fit in our brand, people who have similar styles and grew up with the

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January 2014



*Paco*



*James*

*Pozan*



*Will*





# IMMOVABLE OBJECTS

When the building Old Bones Tattoo studio was located in burnt down in 2011, Johan Svahn and Hans Schröder suddenly found themselves sans equipment. They decided to join forces, and no more than a year later Immovable Tattoo opened up in the centre of Malmö



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Simon Lundh

Right after Old Bones Tattoo moved into its new location in Malmö, Hans Schröder and Johan Svahn joined the outfit. They both came from further north and were both to work there for about three years, and the move turned out to be very significant for them both.

“Ask any tattooist how long they’ve been tattooing and they’d prefer to say a year,” Hans says. “Whatever’s been before you’d rather shove to the side. When I moved down here I learned a new way of thinking. Everything I brought with me I could put in a little ‘good-to-have’ box. Working with Jens and Peter, the owners of the studio, and a legend like Charlie, was overwhelming. It went from zero to 100 in two seconds. I learned a lot and it’s the best thing I’ve ever done.”

Johan agrees: “Working with them formed me very much. At the time I needed that inspiration and technical know-how, well, everything, really.”

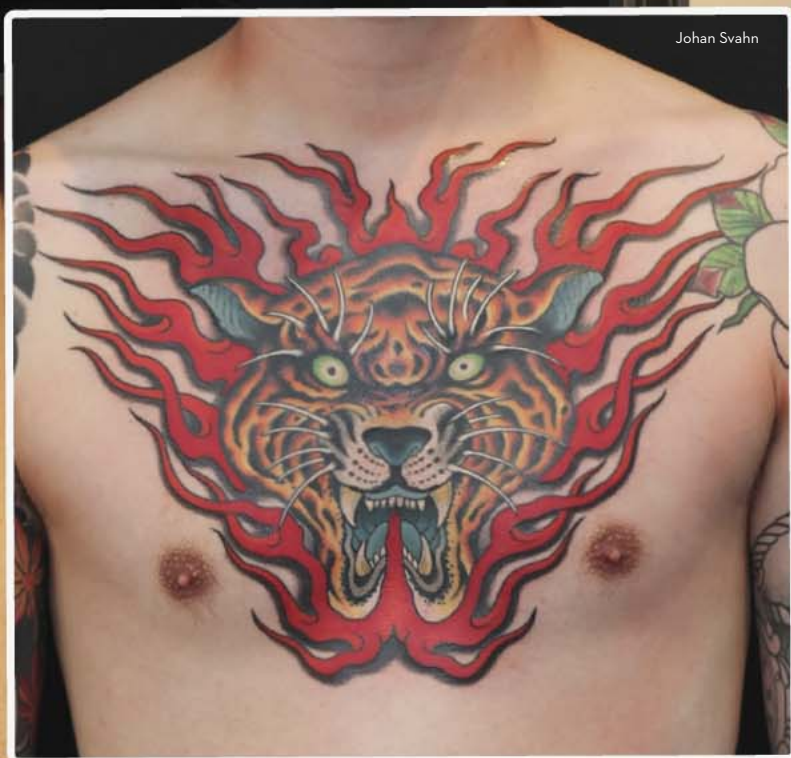
He moved to Malmö after having begun tattooing on a whim, according to himself, and then spent three years at Karl Lee Tattoo in the nearby university city of Lund.

“I wanted to do something different from what I’d been doing. I’ve always drawn a lot and I used to be a graffiti artist, so I started working at Karl Lee Tattoo and I loved it immediately.”

Ten years earlier, in the opposite part of the country, Hans started tattooing in his apartment at a cartoon drawing school in the small town of Hofors. “Of all the places...” he says and laughs. “My roommate had a machine



Hans Schröder



and some needles in a cardboard box. When he saw me drawing designs for a tattoo artist in my hometown of Bollnäs, he asked me if I wanted to try tattooing on my own. I'd never even considered it as a possibility, but I tried it out on him. All he had was a see-through green colour, so it looked horrible. All that came out

was a couple of green stripes on the legs," he says with a smile.

After this he ordered his own tattoo equipment from the United States, without actually knowing what he was paying for.

"Back then you had no internet, so I borrowed a price list in a catalogue from a tattoo artist so I could order some stuff.

ASK ANY TATTOOIST HOW LONG THEY'VE BEEN TATTOOING AND THEY'D PREFER TO SAY A YEAR. WHATEVER'S BEEN BEFORE YOU'D RATHER SHOVE TO THE SIDE

He didn't want to lend me the catalogue, but the price list was OK. Everything was abbreviated so I had to guess. Nothing was correct, it took three months for it to arrive and it was fucking expensive. I totally panicked. I didn't even know where some of the stuff went, but fortunately there was a security school right next door to our school and they didn't care if it looked like crap as long as it was for free. So there's a whole generation of security guys with ugly tattoos up there."

In 2001 he opened up his 🍷

first own studio, Schröders Tattoo Parlour.

“I worked out of my apartment for quite some time while having other jobs on the side. I was, for instance, a Harley-Davidson mechanic, so I worked as that during the day and tattooed at night and on weekends. In 2001 a friend of mine bought a building in Bollnäs, so I rented a place there. I was there until 2004 or 2005 when I moved into a new place and changed names to Bulls Eye Tatttoo. The worst name in the world and I don't know why I chose it. I guess it was the hillbilly in me.”

2001 was also the year he started making his own tattoo machines.

“It was hard to get a hold of the kind of machines I liked so I started building my own.

IT WAS HARD TO GET A HOLD OF THE KIND OF MACHINES I LIKED SO I STARTED BUILDING MY OWN. BUILDING MACHINES ISN'T SOMETHING YOU DO TO GET RICH



Hans Schröder



Hans Schröder



Johan Svahn

Around 2003, 2004 they started to be good. Building machines isn't something you do to get rich. You're actually more likely to lose money on it since you're not in the studio tattooing, but it's a part of tattooing I like. Everyone in tattooing used to know how to build a machine, but nowadays it's a dying art form. There's no longer a need for it when needles are three pence each and a rotary machine is ten quid. When I started out I bought magazines with pictures of tattoo machines at conventions to see how they were assembled. What took a couple of years to learn back then takes about five minutes with YouTube today.”

Even though building machines isn't where he makes his money, it is what brought him to South Sweden.

“I built a lot of machines then and got in touch with a supply 🙌



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company in Malmö. We started doing business together, but then, I'm happy to say, tattooing took over. In 2008 I started working at Old Bones and the first year-and-a-half I was commuting to Bollnäs every week. After having worn out a Jaguar, an Audi and a Passat, however, I gave away my studio and moved down with my girlfriend. Now I'm driving a Peugeot, so I'm constantly trading down," he says and laughs.

Three years after Old Bones opened up shop it burnt to the ground after a small fire in a trash can spread and just about everything went wrong. Both Hans and Johan lost a lot in the fire.

"It was a disaster," Hans says. "I only had a small insurance that really didn't cover anything, so there I was, after 17 years of tattooing, with only one machine left."

"The first thing we did was to go in and see which machines were still intact," Johan says. "It was overwhelming when we all stood outside. At the same time, we wouldn't have been here, had it not happened. Not that it was something positive, but things



Hans Schröder



Hans Schröder



Johan Svahn

I WAS COMMUTING TO BOLLNÄS EVERY WEEK—AFTER HAVING WORN OUT A JAGUAR, AN AUDI AND A PASSAT, I GAVE AWAY MY STUDIO AND MOVED DOWN WITH MY GIRLFRIEND. NOW I'M DRIVING A PEUGEOT

happen in life. That's the way it is. All side tracks lead to something new and it's all up to you to create something good from the bad."

Meaning the duo's new studio. After the fire the tattoo artists at Old Bones spread around Malmö. Johan and Hans ended up at Skinlab Tattoo before they opened up Immoveable Tattoo one year later.

"We had to save, save, save and now we're both broke," Hans says with another smile. "We've had the studio since May 2012 and there's still some stuff to do, but it's gone well."

They both do mostly Japanese tattooing, but they're open to almost everything.

"I've always been into Japanese,

but I'll do anything that comes in through the door, except realistic," Johan says. "Traditional and Japanese are more graphical styles. There's more thought behind it than realistic, and it's more evident that it always will work."

"I prefer Japanese, but also traditional American," Hans adds.

Not too long ago they also received an addition to the team, again with Japanese preferences.

"Petter Ydmark worked with the same guy in Lund as I did," Johan says. "He needed a spot when that studio moved, so we took him in. He's worked for three years and is a big talent. He's very good and does about what we do, but with his own twist. It felt natural to include him." 🙌

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# THE MAGICIAN



Specialist in micro tattoos, but that's not to say he's doesn't knock them out of the ballpark when it comes to a bigger canvas, Mr Jorge Becerra is one interesting son of a gun who can also put you to sleep should you be so bold as to let him...



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A coffee shop. There's no better place to conduct an interview apart from maybe an airport. The shuffling of cards and the magic that comes along with this one that so distracts the customers, is I think, a once in a lifetime bonus for them. They are intrigued but being as we are in London, nobody says a word to us. Had this been New York, people would have been freaking out and running away to tell their neighbour, who is inevitably an agent; Jorge would be looking at spending the next seven months in a perspex box above the Hudson and I would be looking on from a riverside apartment nursing a latte lovingly made by a very expensive machine. Outside of my apartment is a big neon sign that says 'I told you so'.

That's in another world. In this one it's cold, but the fact remains: Jorge Becerra is something of a talent. Known for his extremely small tattoo work—which skimps on none of the detail, Jay (as he is also better known) headed to the UK from Spain around five years back (having already been tattooing for ten) and found himself at one of the centres of the known tattoo universe alongside Jason Butcher at Immortal Ink.

Let's face it, if you want to learn from one of the greats along the way, there's probably no better place to find yourself. With no plans to go back anytime soon, we put our heads together and stick our hands straight into the pot of melted glass to see what sticks...

"In Spain, there are not really as many great artists as there



Mr Smith Mr Becerra Picture of Jorge: Nicky Connor

DETAILS ARE THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE FOR ME—THE TINY DETAILS. I ALWAYS TRY TO MAKE THINGS AS DETAILED AS POSSIBLE IN ALL MY TATTOOS

should be—though there are some quite unbelievable ones. Things are more difficult out there because the customers are not as adventurous as they are here in the UK. I don't think the same opportunities come along."

He's right. When it comes to tattooing, the great British public can be a complex but very fun beast to deal with.

"Every day in the studio, we are able to work together and there's so many opportunities to learn from the other guys—it's a great place to work. I have absolutely no complaints at all! It's hard to explain how I feel about being able to work there because Jason and Lianne are such incredible artists. I look at what they do

and you can't help but appreciate how amazing it is, but I don't feel under pressure. It's definitely the best place for me right now. You can't help but get better in that kind of environment."

Jay has made quite a name for himself by specialising in miniature tattoos. To see them in the flesh is quite something. As you would imagine, not everything 🍌

works in miniature, and therein lies the key to making it work.

“Details are the important things in life for me—the tiny details. I always try to make things as detailed as possible in all my tattoos. I had the chance to work with Ben Grillo—a really, really great artist from the States—and I was asking him every question under the sun to figure out how he did miniature so good. After that I spent four to six months torturing my own legs trying to figure out how it worked, and once I felt secure in the fact that I wasn’t messing up, I went for it.”

One of my big gripes about micro tattooing is that when it comes to detail, the road is full of potholes. There are certain things that I’ve never seen done as they should be—most notably things like logos that appear on motorcycle helmets. If you’re gonna be a bear, be a grizzly, so I’m really impressed that—consummate artist that he is—Jay knows what to do and, more importantly, what not to do.

“The micro tattoo really needs to be simple to begin with—extra details can be added easily as it comes together but the key is to begin with something very simple, otherwise you can lose the thread of the design quickly. Finding the balance is important for the artist. I make my own ‘order’ in my head as to what is going to

work and what isn’t, but artists need to think about who they are working on as well. The guy who comes to the studio who works in construction is not the same canvas to work on as the woman that comes in who has very soft hands. If the construction guy comes in asking for micro work on his finger, then that’s obviously not going to heal—and the same if a girl with soft hands wants a micro tattoo in the palm of her hand, that’s not going to heal either. Knowing what you’re going to be working on is half the battle when you’re tattooing small.”

I offer up that this is one of the differences between a tattooist and a tattoo artist—one will do what the customer wants, the other will make personal decisions to make the entire experience that little bit sweeter.

“I think there can be a role to play here though. Some days you have to be the tattooist and deliver exactly what the customer wants because nobody gets turned away if there is time and space available, but at other times, you get to be the artist you want to be.

They both have their merits—one is not necessarily better than the other. If you’re smart about it, you can learn something all the time.”



MICRO TATTOOING REALLY NEEDS TO BE SIMPLE TO BEGIN WITH—EXTRA DETAILS CAN BE ADDED EASILY AS IT COMES TOGETHER BUT THE KEY IS TO BEGIN WITH SOMETHING VERY SIMPLE

For me, the dividing line that so many have a problem with is exactly what I just stated: that a tattooist will do as he is asked and the tattoo artist will do what he wants. It’s not a big deal because if you’re good, you’re good. Just because you do what you like doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re white hot, but I think

it important that people recognise the difference and source their artists accordingly. However, when you find a talent who is both of these things and knows when to wield the appropriate brush, you should hang on to them and spread the word on the streets.

Time is pressing on and amongst a hundred other things 🍷









that I want to talk about with Jay, the top of the list begins with his love of NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) and how it can help not only in your daily life but also when it comes to pain management during tattooing.

"I've been performing for years. I haven't got anything out there at the moment but I'm writing some material for this coming year. Going back in time, I remember being a kid and seeing a show on TV and I got totally hooked thinking how amazing it was. That exact moment was a segment where the guy was controlling minds and I immediately decided that I wanted to do it. I eventually grew up and I read all the books I could find and watched a lot of DVDs about it—and then one day, in the studio in Edinburgh where I was working when I first came over, somebody who worked there went to a medical centre for some hypnotherapy where they were doing courses for dentists and doctors.

"I made an appointment and told him I was sceptical—I was there for maybe five minutes before I was under and I became a believer right then. I began to study hard and all these years later, I now do it subconsciously—reading body language, looking for speech patterns and I saw that I could help people. Help them when the pain gets too much in the middle of a tattoo, for instance using the techniques that I've learned. It's easy to fix and I get to talk about it every day too. You can be a long time getting your tattoo and people ask me to help with things like stopping smoking and appetite suppression while I'm working. The best thing of all is that I really like helping people, so why wouldn't I!

"It would be very beneficial for every tattoo artist to know even the basics of the practice. When I look at it, it's just another aspect of the tattooing that I do. There have been a few times when the guys in the studio have called me over too. The thing is, a lot of people think—when you talk about hypnosis—that it's junk and



THE GUY WHO COMES TO THE STUDIO WHO WORKS IN CONSTRUCTION IS NOT THE SAME CANVAS TO WORK ON AS THE WOMAN THAT COMES IN WHO HAS VERY SOFT HANDS

they are non-believers before you start but the fact of the matter is, we're all hypnotised every day of our lives by something or other."

I'm afraid the next hour of the interview is taken up with both of us digging too deep for public consumption. We talk about hypnosis, Richard Bandler, the three states of the mind, shamanism, and generally gorge ourselves on a thoroughly intense conversation. It's better than good—however—editorially speaking, I must be responsible and remember that most of you reading will be far more interested in Jay's work than a third hand conversation—and that's OK. Book yourself a slot—he'll be only too pleased to share his wisdom with you.

What we have here is a fantastic artist who is so engrained in making things better every day of the week—and by 'things' I mean art, the tattoo experience, his own life, his own approach—that you can't help but love the guy for doing the right thing with all his heart.

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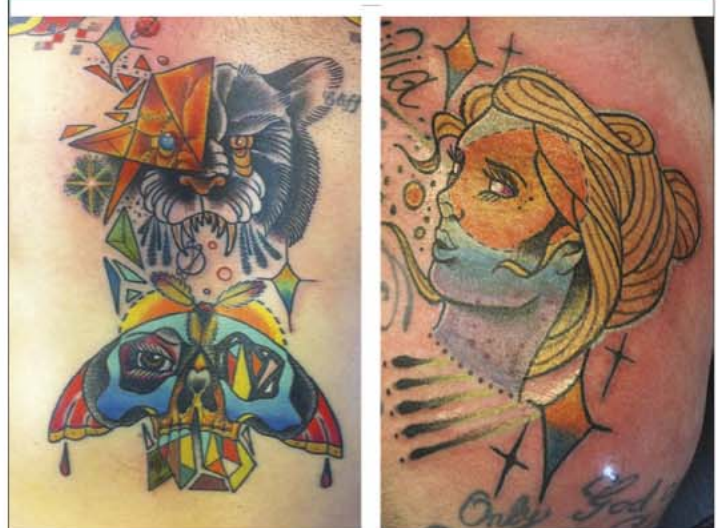
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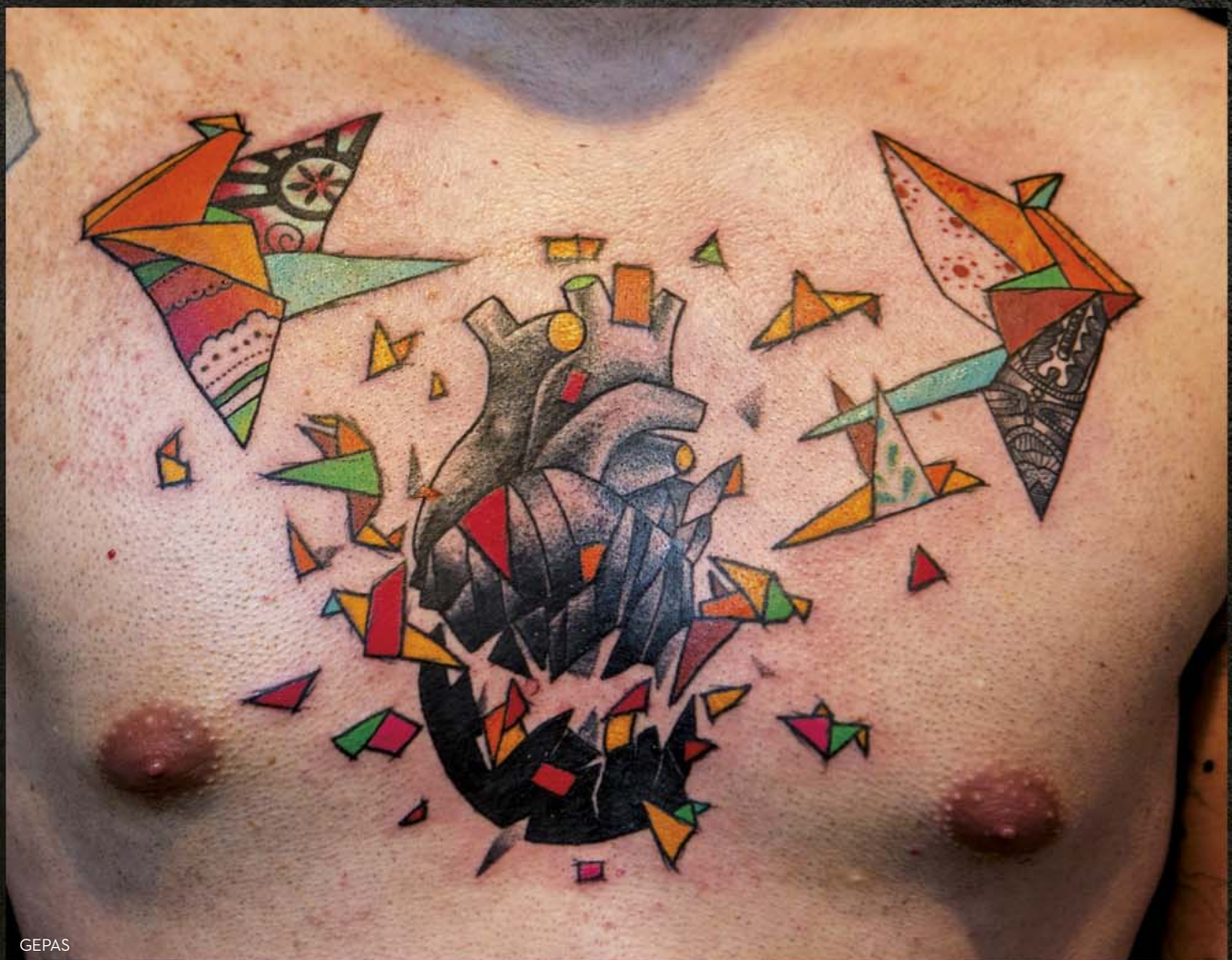
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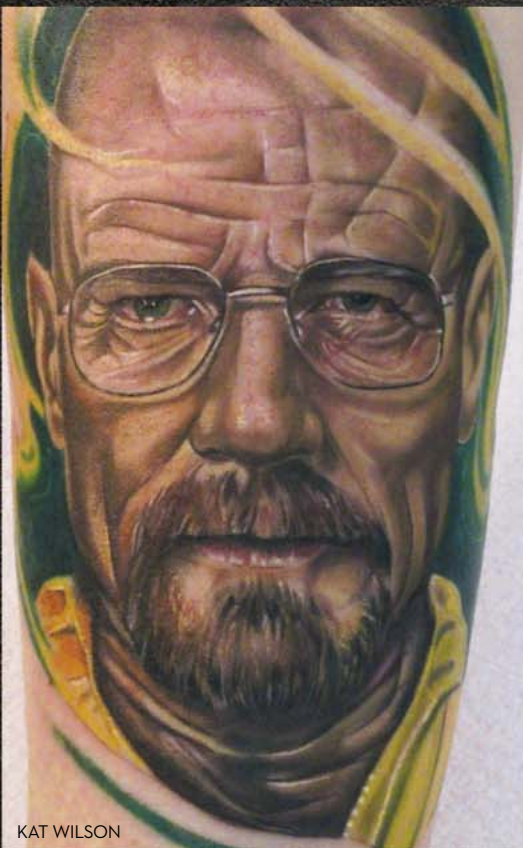
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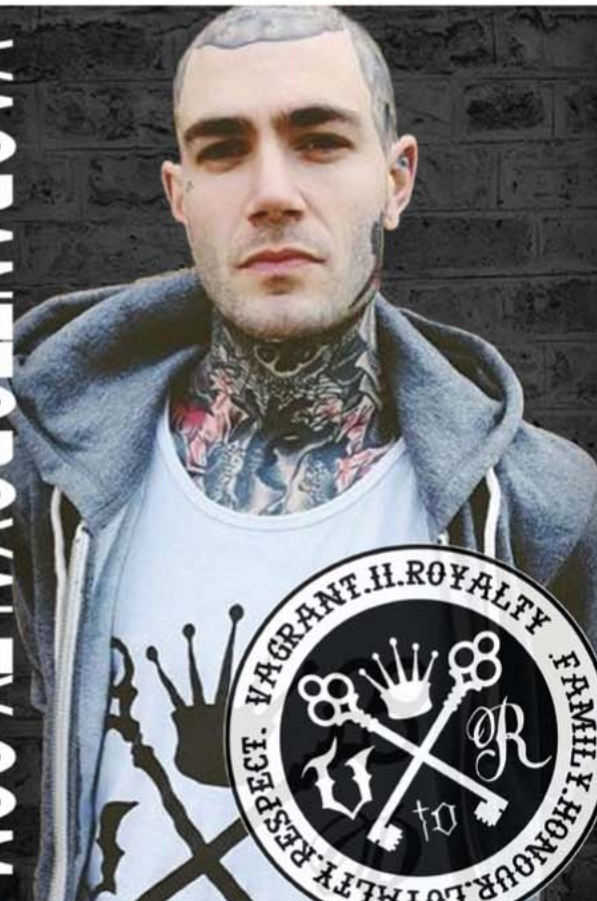
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# OUR FRIEND ELECTRIC

There's an awful lot of colour in Dek Kent's work. But for the artist and owner of Electric Kicks studio in Pontefract, one stood out more than the rest in the early days: blue...



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Russ Thorne Russ Burrow

"I love to see old blue arms; they've lived and have a visual effect that can't be achieved by modern equipment and inks," Dek said. "Back then I didn't know about styles or different genres. They were just tattoos."

By 'back then', he means childhood. Dek's journey into tattooing started as something of a family affair, as his dad had tattoos that the young artist-in-waiting "always thought were cool". His parents' lifestyle embraced long hair, ink and rock music so the young Dek was "exposed to that kind of scene", as he puts it.

So it's probably not surprising that his dad was with him on the day he received his first tattoo. What's slightly more unusual perhaps is that it was Kent senior's idea. "I remember my first tattoo like it was yesterday," said Dek. On the way to a local college (where he was sent to learn a trade after being laughed out of the school careers office for wanting to be a tattoo artist), they passed a tattoo studio.

"My dad pulled out a piece of paper with a design on it that I had drawn about a year before. I'd been making loads of noise about getting it done on my arm,"



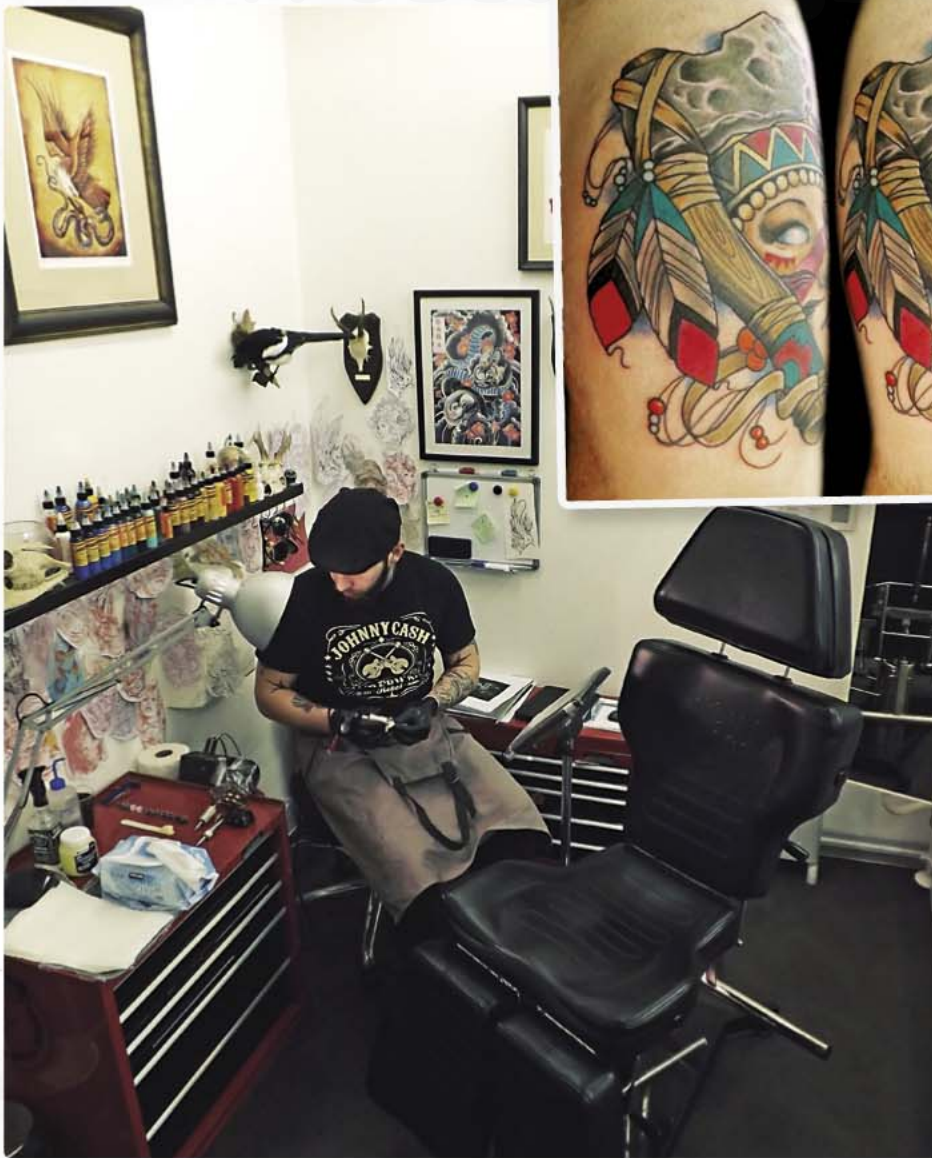
he says. "Dad told me we had time and we went inside." Dek received a ram's head; his father, a Native American's head. Not the average school run, then? "That's the benefit of cool-ass parents."

Tattooing has remained something of a family passion between Dek and his parents

ever since. "I have tattooed them both and I'm very proud of that."

## THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN

While the school careers adviser may not have been on board, art was the other early passion in Dek's life. "Art came first," he explains, "it was something that



floors or make tea if you were lucky, but that was it. Being from a fairly rural community the tattoo shops kept it in the family."

What little experience he could get came from perseverance and a little trial and error. "I bumped around a few tattooists who seemed more interested in making some beer money," he says. "I have been lucky to work with some good people along the way, but it's a tough business to break into."

He's managed, though, so what's the secret of his success? It's a remarkably analogue tale for our digital times, suitably old-fashioned for an artist who loves those blurry blue arms. "I would class myself as 95 percent 🍌"

came naturally. All the other school subjects didn't make much sense." Where most 11 year olds would have been content looking at pictures of dragons and motorbikes, Dek went one further and simply painted them on his bedroom walls (another benefit of cool parents, perhaps).

"Around the same time I also won a tracksuit in a gallery-run competition for a cross-stitch I had displayed," he adds. Wait, what? "Seriously!" Well, it shows an early ability with a needle.

However, it was going to take more than artistic leanings and a mean cross-stitch to land an apprenticeship, and sure enough the early days were an uneven mix of good advice and dead ends. There was no traditional apprenticeship available, he explains. "You could go mop up

EACH TIME I SAW ONE OF MY DESIGNS TATTOOED I FELT MISERABLE INSTEAD OF PROUD. I WAS SURE I COULD HAVE DONE A BETTER JOB. THAT MIGHT SEEM BIG HEADED BUT THAT'S HOW IT WAS



self-taught," Dek said, recalling a number of false starts with tattooists leading him on under the pretence of an apprenticeship. All were happy to use the young artist's designs, but without giving him anything in return.

"Each time I saw one of my designs tattooed I felt miserable instead of proud," he remembers. "I was sure I could have done a better job. That might seem big headed but... that's how it was."

**DISTANCE LEARNING**

So he "dicked about" with those artists for a few years. But at the same time he was putting the work in using ink of a different kind. "I actually learnt a lot more from people I wrote to," he says. There was no internet or social media on his side initially, and even when the technology was present he couldn't afford it, so he stuck to the ink and paper route. "I would

study work in magazines, break the images down and try to work out the process. If I couldn't, then I would write to the artist and ask. Some replied and some didn't."

The absorption method continued in other ways, too. He bought books on every subject—art-based or otherwise—that he thought would help with his tattoo quest, and because practice is everything he "drew and a painted and painted and drew some more".

As Dek puts it, his grounding in all things tattoo comes from "a hell of a lot of leg work", and some 13 years later he's still hunting for knowledge, still buying the books and still drawing and painting.

Of course at some point he had to make the transition from ink and paper to ink and person.

Getting hold of his own machine involved an epic trip in itself, travelling to Cornwall to a small machine shop. "I remember having to wait until the guy's boss

went on his break so he could sly them out," he says. But surely after that personal odyssey they were worth it? "They ran like shit. But they got me started."

His first client was very close to home. "The first tattoo I did was on me! I still have it and it's shit. I started with some small cherry blossoms on my lower leg." From those beginnings the piece has now

evolved into a full Japanese Koi scene. Next in line—keeping it in the family—was his brother. "I owe him a lot for letting me practice on him!" he says. "We're still working on some of the pieces we started back then." How was that first



I WOULD STUDY WORK IN MAGAZINES, BREAK THE IMAGES DOWN AND TRY TO WORK OUT THE PROCESS. IF I COULDN'T THEN I WOULD WRITE TO THE ARTIST AND ASK





I SOMETIMES GET A CALL MAYBE THE WEEK BEFORE ASKING IF I CAN ADD SOMETHING. SO IT PAYS TO WAIT

session tattooing another person, though? "I think I was freaking out more than he was. He had complete trust and faith in me."

Now armed with his own machine and with the seal broken, he pursued his dream with a vengeance. "I took every opportunity to practice. Whenever. Wherever. I loved it. And that's how it went for a while."

#### CAREER BREAKS

Eventually he felt the need for a break and, in keeping with his unorthodox career path, moved away from tattooing into—you guessed it—snowboarding. What happened? "I drifted away from tattooing for a couple of years and I became an instructor," he says. There was no grand plan, according to Dek. "I just wanted to step away from it for a while; I didn't know what to do next."



As often happens though, a plan arrived anyway. During his two year tattooing hiatus he met Sam, now receptionist at Electric Kicks and also his wife, mother to his daughter "and my best mate". It was a perfect match. "She has a great way of pointing me in the right direction," he says. "If it wasn't for Sam, Electric Kicks may never have happened. I might still be floating about dreaming

instead of doing. It's all about the doing and doing well."

From what he himself described as not the best start, his career and the studio are doing well. "I couldn't be happier with the road we are now on."

Day-to-day in the shop, that road means Dek draws and tattoos to his clients' specifications: colour, black and grey, line work, dot work... "whatever the piece 🍷"



WHEN I SIT DOWN TO DRAW MY OWN WORK I LIKE TO MIX A BIT OF REALISM WITH SOME BOLD IMAGERY

requires." As his diverse portfolio shows, he turns his hands to a lot of different styles and schools, which has its advantages when it comes to creating custom work. "Working every day on so many styles makes it easier to draw on some specific elements to build my designs," he says. "When I do sit down to draw my own work I like to mix a little bit of realism with some bold simple imagery."

It's easy to see that blend of realism and traditional, not-quite old school, lining in his art. There are little hints of the psychedelic warping of some new school work too, with the occasional foray

into line-free impressionist pieces alongside full-throttle mentalism courtesy of beheaded, gore-dripping wolf skulls. If all of that means Dek doesn't quite slot into one pigeon hole, that's just fine by him. "I don't worry too much about a style or classifying my work... it all comes from me so it's just my style."

If it comes from anywhere, he suggests it's from drawing for pleasure, but with one eye on how a design will feel to tattoo, making it comfortable for his hand. It might also be a throwback to those old tattoos again, too, which were "simply tattoos and not really categorised into styles".

#### GOOD THINGS COME...

A Dek Kent piece has simple beginnings—all he asks from his customers is to provide a theme and a few words about the sort of content they're after. "Then I need to know where it's going and how much of that space I have to work with."

Pieces start on paper with basic shapes and layout, with finer details added much closer to the actual appointment with the client. He likes to finish things near to the day itself, for a few different reasons. "The first is that if I have a deadline, I'll work right up to it." Sounds like a





creative mind at work so far. The second reason is slightly unusual, though. "It's nice and fresh in my mind and my hand has already done the work on paper so it's prepared." I've never heard an artist invoke muscle-memory like this before, but there's logic to it. A dress rehearsal for the tattoo performance, perhaps?

Finally, leaving the final design until the day adds a further element of client care and saves having to rework a finished design courtesy of 11th hour flashes of inspiration from the collector. "It gives them time to add or tweak their design, which happens a lot, because people wait for months at a time. I sometimes get a call maybe the week before asking if I can add something. So it pays to wait."

#### OILING THE MACHINE

Meanwhile, Dek the artist is still in there, developing and practising away. While the cross-stitch hasn't re-appeared (a noble art in

itself, but perhaps not one that easily complements tattooing), the oil paints have arrived on the scene after years of working with pencils and watercolours. He's kept the same open-minded principles he applied to tattooing when it comes to grappling with

the new medium, rather than dashing in headlong. "I've been reading up on oil technique and have had a few chats with a local artist. I've learned so much more about colour and blending, I feel like it's already appearing in my tattoo work." Back in the studio, he likes to have a steady flow of "want to do" pieces, born of various ideas and musings and intended to challenge his skills and ideas. "I suppose I have lots of goals. It's an ever-changing, ever-developing process with a never-ending stream of goals. I like that about tattooing."

And what about the old blue arms? Have they kept their



appeal? "Yeah, I do love to see the old stuff. It's kind of sad when somebody comes in for advice on cover ups or laser treatment." For an artist who's always looking to develop, they also act as a benchmark. "It's like seeing a vintage car: it really shows how far we have come doesn't it? Makes you wonder where we'll be in 20 or 30 years," he says. "It's a thought that excites and scares me at the same time." 🐼

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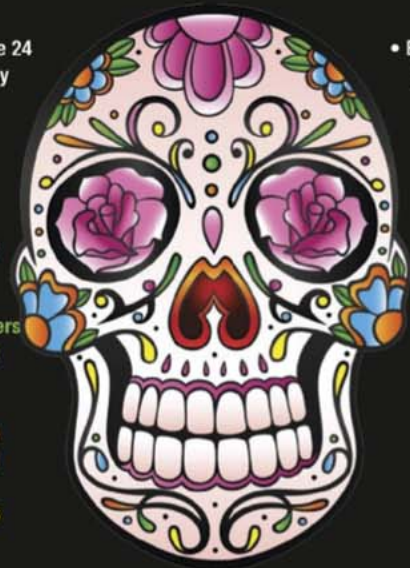
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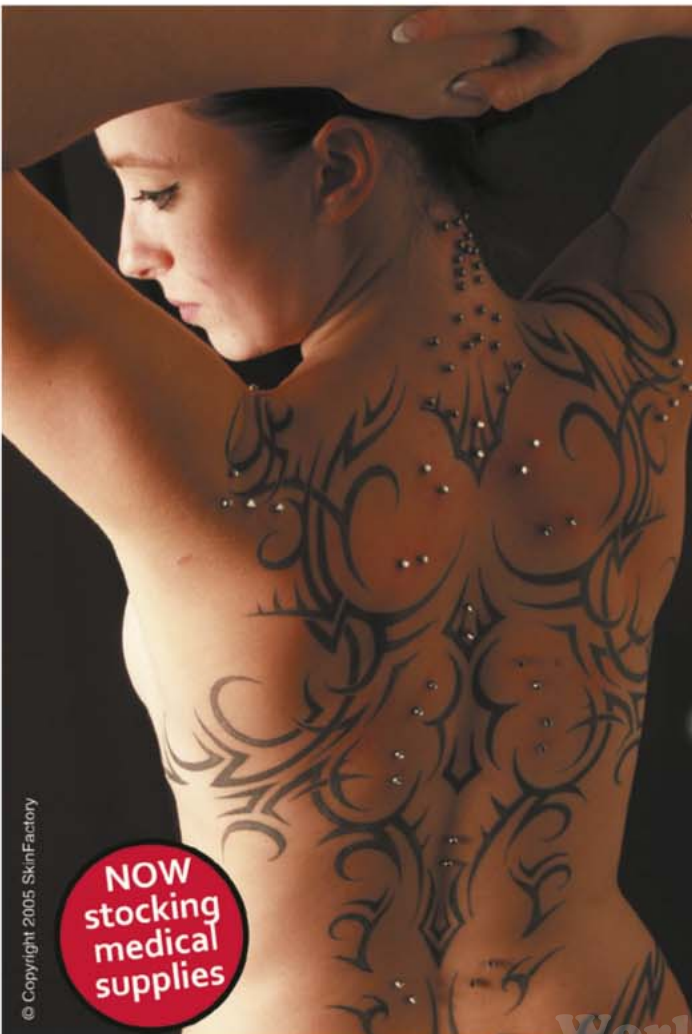
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# WISHFUL THINKING

Looking back over the history of tattooing, there are few styles that are as iconic as old school traditional or Japanese. More than any other style, they have stood the test of time and are still going strong



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The reason for this could be put down to various things; you could say that it is because they both have long and colourful histories, or, they are styles that go back to the very beginnings of tattooing. But another reason, and why I think they are still around, is because visually, the styles are strong and effective. It's like tattooing stripped down to its base components... strong lines and bold colours. The start of it all.

When Yann Neumann was a kid, he was always sketching but never got around to filling his sketches with colour. Neither was he interested in drawing in a realistic way, it was all about the line-work. So when he got his first tattoo at 18 and was looking for ideas for his own designs, he ended up settling on a Japanese motif because

he loved the dynamic lines.

"Drawing has always been one of my hobbies, but I only started drawing tattoo designs when I decided to get my first tattoo. At this point, it was more like wishful thinking saying I wanted to become a tattoo artist if I failed at school. I was interested, but it was still at the back of my mind.

"When I was at university, my drawing skills had reached a certain level and I noticed that the stuff I was drawing wasn't that far away from actual tattoo designs. I guess you could say that my interest in tattooing had nothing to do with an interest in art itself, it was more like the opposite. Tattooing let my interest in classical art grow as I started to look for inspiration through the work of other tattoo artists."

Not much later, when Yann





decided that that he actually wanted to learn the art of tattooing, he decided that, maybe, the Japanese style wouldn't be the best choice to begin with.

"Japanese tattoos are mainly designed to cover large body areas, so to start with, I had to find something smaller to concentrate on. That's how I ended up tattooing

in the traditional style, as they shared similar qualities. By now the idea of becoming a tattooist wasn't wishful thinking anymore. It had become a real goal that was achievable and so I invested more and more time in it. I started drawing day and night to get a proper portfolio, hoping I would find someone who would teach

## IT WAS MORE LIKE WISHFUL THINKING SAYING I WANTED TO BECOME A TATTOO ARTIST IF I FAILED AT SCHOOL

me. I travelled in an 80km radius around my home base, visiting any tattoo shop that seemed to be fit what I was looking for."

During this time, Yann met someone who did a little private tattooing. It wasn't much but it was a chance to get his hands onto his first machine. A little while later and after a lot of feedback about his work, Yann adapted his portfolio again and found another tattoo shop where he could get more experience. Once again it wasn't to last long, and three weeks later that first shop experience was already over.

"In the end, I never had the chance to work through a proper apprenticeship. But I did manage to develop my artistic abilities and working knowledge through a lot 🙌"

of hard work. There were endless hours of drawing and lots of very good friends to practice with, if you know what I mean. In the summer of 2012 I finally got into a studio in Luxembourg where I managed to work out of. But again, it was over before it began.”

In January of 2013 Yann decided that he needed a place where he could tattoo by himself—he had a fully booked diary but no place to work. So, with a lot of support from friends and family, Lions Grave Custom Tattoo was opened.

“I got a lot of help from my parents when I opened the studio. I am very grateful to have such understanding parents. It took me about one year from doing my first tattoo to my first place in a studio... and then four months later, I opened my own shop. So overall, I have been professionally

tattooing for about 14 months.”

Lions Grave is a one-man shop, located in a small town in the south of Luxembourg, but this seems to suit Yann just fine. He keeps his opening hours (the time he classes as when people can walk in and talk to him) very short, as when he is working he likes to focus all his attention on the client.

“I actually work a five- or six-day week and I usually do two clients a day... which is plenty of time to enjoy a 10- or 12-hour working day. Some people would call me a workaholic, but I love my job, so I take it as a compliment. I only do traditional and Japanese style tattoos and all my designs are one of a kind, custom and adapted to the wishes of the customer.”

Yann is also quick to point out that working in Luxembourg has its advantages, as a tattooist and

**I TRAVELLED IN AN EIGHTY KILOMETRE RADIUS AROUND MY HOME BASE, VISITING ANY TATTOO SHOP THAT SEEMED TO BE FIT WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR**



as a collector. Being central to a lot of European countries, like France, Belgium and Germany, many people travel to visit his studio. And like any a city in any other country, there are many street shops where you get what you are paying for, as well as outstanding artists like Dan Sinnes.

“It all depends on what you want to get and how far you want to travel for it. One great thing about being an artist in Luxembourg is that you can profit from its size. Word-of-mouth advertising is everything here. You do one tattoo on the right guy, who posts it on Facebook, and the next day everybody knows your name. That’s a good thing... if your work is good! But on the other hand, there is not a lot of knowledge exchange between the artists here. Maybe this is because I am still new on the scene, or maybe it has always been like that, I don’t really know. For me, that’s the main reason why I try to work a lot of conventions. Conventions are the best way



**I ONLY DO TRADITIONAL AND JAPANESE STYLE TATTOOS AND ALL MY DESIGNS ARE ONE OF A KIND, CUSTOM AND ADAPTED TO THE WISHES OF THE CUSTOMER**

to show my work to a bigger audience and also to get to know some more artists and get some feedback to improve my skills.

As with everywhere else in the world, the acceptance of tattoos is constantly growing in Luxembourg. Of course there are still some professions where it is less accepted than in others, but as the demand, especially from the youth, is exploding the whole thing can only be growing in a positive direction."

And just like every other major city around the world, the tattoo laws in Luxembourg are not as they should be. Up until a few years ago, there wasn't even 🍷





**THIS HAS A FUNNY, BUT VERY ANNOYING, SIDE EFFECT. IF YOU WANT TO OPEN A TATTOO STUDIO TODAY, YOU NEED TO FULFIL THE SAME CONDITIONS AS SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO OPEN A NAIL STUDIO OR A BARBERSHOP**

any health and safety related laws at all in Luxembourg, then the government decided to implement a standard and decided to put tattooing under the category of permanent make-up, which meant that tattooists were pooled together with hairdressers and cosmeticians.

“This has a funny, but very annoying, side effect. If you want to open a tattoo studio today, you need to fulfil the same conditions as someone who wants to open a nail studio or a barbershop. Needless to say, but, I managed to open my shop legally.”

Yann is already thinking about getting a larger studio so that in a few years he can have someone working with him, but at the moment it seems that plan can wait. For now, it is all about improving.

“In the near future I’m going to try and improve my skills so that I reach a level which will allow



me to work the more popular conventions. Further more, I’m going to try to work some guest spots, travel around a little, meet new artists and generally get new ideas for how I can get better.”

Big plans and hard work are in store and it looks like an interesting time ahead for Yann. And with new artists pushing the traditional styles of tattoo forward into the future, the way I see it, things can only get better. As we like to say in this colourful world of ink, bold will hold...and in this case it’s not just the tattoos we are referring to, it’s artist like Yann, who take the old and keep it alive. 🦉





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# THE ALCHEMIST

The unmistakable red beard, signature hat, stunning Neo-Asian tattoos and very real, very serious struggle with panic disorder and anxiety are just some of the traits that set Ink Master Season 3 contestant Jason Clay Dunn apart in today's sea of artists. But perhaps most impressive of all is the traditional (read: really damn hard) apprenticeship he started at just 19



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The business mind in me started my journey with a small toolbox and a business card,"

says Jason Clay Dunn who owns St. Montclair, California's Tattoo Alchemy and is truly a tattooer in a league all his own.

Ask him to tell you his story and you'll not only be riveted, but laughing and wanting to high five him in no time.

"I would tell people everywhere I went I was a tattooer and all I had was a portfolio of drawings of tattoos I saw in magazines," he continues. "I was never a great artist or a natural by any means, but when I learned that I could draw what I could see in magazines, I knew I would at least be able to do a few tattoos... I had no idea I'd be able to make a living at it. I was just trying to find a backup plan to being a musician.

"However, I knew that the only way into a real job at a tattoo shop was through an apprenticeship, and back then they weren't handing those out daily. I tattooed for a while out of houses as a scratcher, like everyone does, and one day I walked into Claremont Tattoo in Rancho Cucamonga, California and I asked Buddy Tanner for a job.

"He was really reluctant because



they actually had an apprentice already. He never truly gave me a definitive answer, but I just grabbed a broom and literally swept around the other apprentice. I suppose I just wanted it that bad. I never left, plus, I was able to learn how to make and solder needles better than the other guy and that helped.

"I worked over 80 hours a week with no pay and worked under several artists there at that time, drawing up patterns. I dealt with customers, cleaned all day long, delivered food and begged for food and cigarettes.

"I fucking hated it with a passion," he laughs. "This was 🍌"

Barbara Pavone Jason Clay Dunn



**JASON CLAY  
DUNN ON...  
DISCOVERING  
TATTOOS**

I was always fascinated by ink in the skin as a kid and really became amazed when I saw my first tattoo magazine. I never knew you could do that sort of design work in the skin. I'll never forget those feelings of excitement and the smell of the equipment.

**ARTISTS ARE KINDA DICKY BY NATURE AND BACK THEN WOULD SAVE SECRETS OR NOT EVEN REALLY KNOW HOW TO TEACH WHAT THEY WERE DOING**

back in a time when there was no Internet or guys had a different approach to teaching. There wasn't really any sit-down, hands-on learning. Basically, it was slaving until one day there was an open slot and someone didn't want to tattoo.

"Artists are kinda dicky by nature and back then would save secrets or not even really know how to teach what they were doing."

**TV LAND**

After finally being given a chance, Dunn went on to amass 20 solid years of tattoo experience before taking on his next great challenge: Television.

"I was sent an email [about Ink Master's third season] one day and I announced it to my crew and one of my artists wanted to try out, so they were tossing around the idea of us both trying out. I was not really wanting to do it because I just didn't know how I would cope out there and I hadn't flown in several years—just the thought was giving me panic," he explains.

"We proceeded to the tryouts in Burbank and apparently they thought I was something to look at because they gave me a slip telling me to come back the next day for a video shoot. I don't know why because the first thing I said was, 'I don't know what the hell I am doing here'," he laughs. "Who knows, maybe they thought I was funny or something."

Eventually jumping on the Ink Master bandwagon without really knowing what to expect, the biggest surprise for Dunn came in the form of "how gruelling it was to shoot the film every day. If you just watch the show, it's cut so fast that you don't think about the lack of sleep or mental stress you can be under.

"I call this reality show a pushed



reality because you are being yourself, however, the stories are writing themselves and when you are tired or irritated, people can prompt you to say things you might not normally say.

"People have to remember that this is entertainment and not a normal situation at all. You are living with 16 characters and they are all nuts in their own way—some shit's gonna go down. Mix that cocktail up with bad diet and lack of sleep and you get some interesting tattoo work."

As for the show's judges...

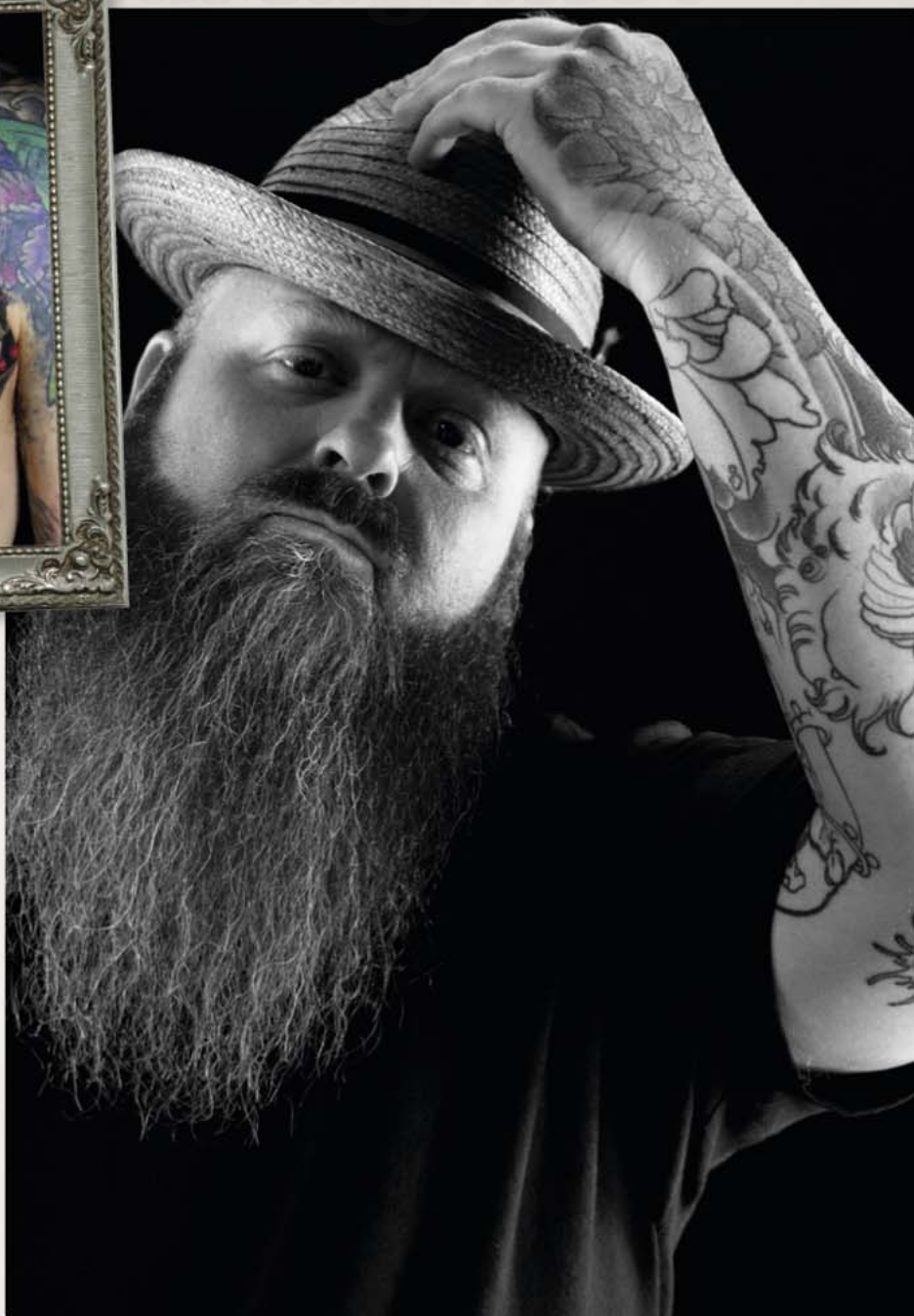
well, they were characters in their own right.

"Dave came up to me one day on set and said I have great energy," remembers Dunn. "That was a great compliment. I think we just had a mutual respect. Oliver and I got on great; we're both clowns and love to joke around. During filming we'd have staring contests and just overall prank-type stuff. I really wish I would have gotten to know Chris more, but I believe he was distracted a lot."

In the end, it was the live person portrait challenge that

**JASON CLAY DUNN ON... TATTOOING DAVE NAVARRO**

Dave is really cool when you get him one on one. He was real sensitive to the fact that the challenge gave me panic. I pulled him aside and asked if he wanted me to do the tattoo. At this point in the show, I was really tattooing like shit, but he assured me he'd love for me to do the tattoo. If I was only to win one challenge this would be the one to win and I did.



sent Dunn home in the season's tenth episode, just two shows before the finale, even though the human canvas jury voted for a different contestant to be out.

"I agree with how they judged my portrait, however, the challenge was accuracy," starts Dunn. "I could tear apart every one of those portraits if you'd let me. Tatu Baby was praised for using artistic license in doing a highlight in an eye that was actually supposed to be darker, when I used 'artistic license' on the hair of my guy's portrait and was put down for it.

"I honestly feel my portrait was better than Kyle [Dunbar]'s any day. I think he's a great tattooer, but when you look at them side by side, he was un-accurate on about as many things as I was; I think the majority of the public has agreed on that one.

"I'm not bitter, though," he adds. "I do and will always appreciate all of their critiques regardless what anyone says because we all need to relinquish the ego and allow ourselves to look at our work outside our little bubble and take a different perspective."

#### ANXIETY STRUGGLES

As someone battling panic disorder and anxiety, Dunn made no secret of his struggles while on Ink Master and didn't hide the fact that the journey wasn't always the easiest for him.

"This was the biggest challenge for me; even getting on the plane," he says. "I felt like a winner just for doing that. The day-to-day struggle with not knowing where and when and what we were doing really took me out of all my comfort zones. I really took this challenge head-on, was open about my issues, and turns out, it brought people closer to me by being straightforward. I know on the show it was edited as me talking about that a lot and it was a big part, but not every moment was I freaking out!

"After the show airing, I realised how much of a big deal it was for me to attempt to go on it," continues

**THE SHOW WAS MUCH BIGGER THAN JUST ME TRYING TO WIN MONEY. I HAVE CHANGED LIVES AND HAD MANY PEOPLE REACH OUT TO ME AND TELL ME WHAT AN INSPIRATION I HAVE BEEN...**

Dunn. "The show was much bigger than just me trying to win money. I have changed lives and had many people reach out to me and tell me what an inspiration I have been... and to think I couldn't even walk on the second floor of the mall two days before I left for New York."

And there was more to it than just personal gain. 🍀



**JASON CLAY DUNN ON... INK MASTER CONTESTANTS**

I talk to Joey all the time, Jackie and Jime. I hope to stay in contact with them for a long time. For me, the win out of this whole thing was getting to hang out and draw and exchange tips and gain friends throughout the country. Even if you didn't always get along, it was an experience only a select few get to have. It's almost like we went to Nam together!

"I am so glad I made it through—knowing that I could ever help one person or give them hope makes me emotional and gives my life and occupation a whole new meaning," he says.

"Anyone who really suffers from this knows that it can be like a roller coaster of emotions. It's a must to be focused in the mind. I feel as if, for me, I had to really meditate on 'What if?' and get to a point where I was okay to die. I know this sounds crazy, but when you suffer just trying to stand in line at a bank or feeling stuck in a fast food line or if you trip out in large buildings and are afraid to walk in the

**I TATTOOED THE WORDS 'I AM' ON MY HAND AS A REMINDER THAT I WANT TO PUT OUT IN-THE-MOMENT THOUGHTS TO THE UNIVERSE. SUCH AS 'I AM CALM' OR 'I AM RELAXED'**

mall, life is so painful because you feel as if you are not living anymore. I constantly tell myself I want to live even if it kills me.

"I tattooed the words 'I am' on my hand as a reminder that I want to put out in-the-moment thoughts to the universe. Such as 'I am calm' or 'I am relaxed'."

**ALCHEMY OF THE FUTURE**

"A simple definition of the word 'Alchemy' is 'a power or process of transforming something common into something special'," starts Dunn when asked about the story behind his shop name, Tattoo Alchemy.

"I chose this word because I wanted to develop a true gallery of different artisans coming together to create a combination of beautiful art and a place of inspiration and positive energy," he explains before looking to the future.

"I know I am not setting any art history records with my art, so I would just like the public to remember me for being a guy that tried to put out positive

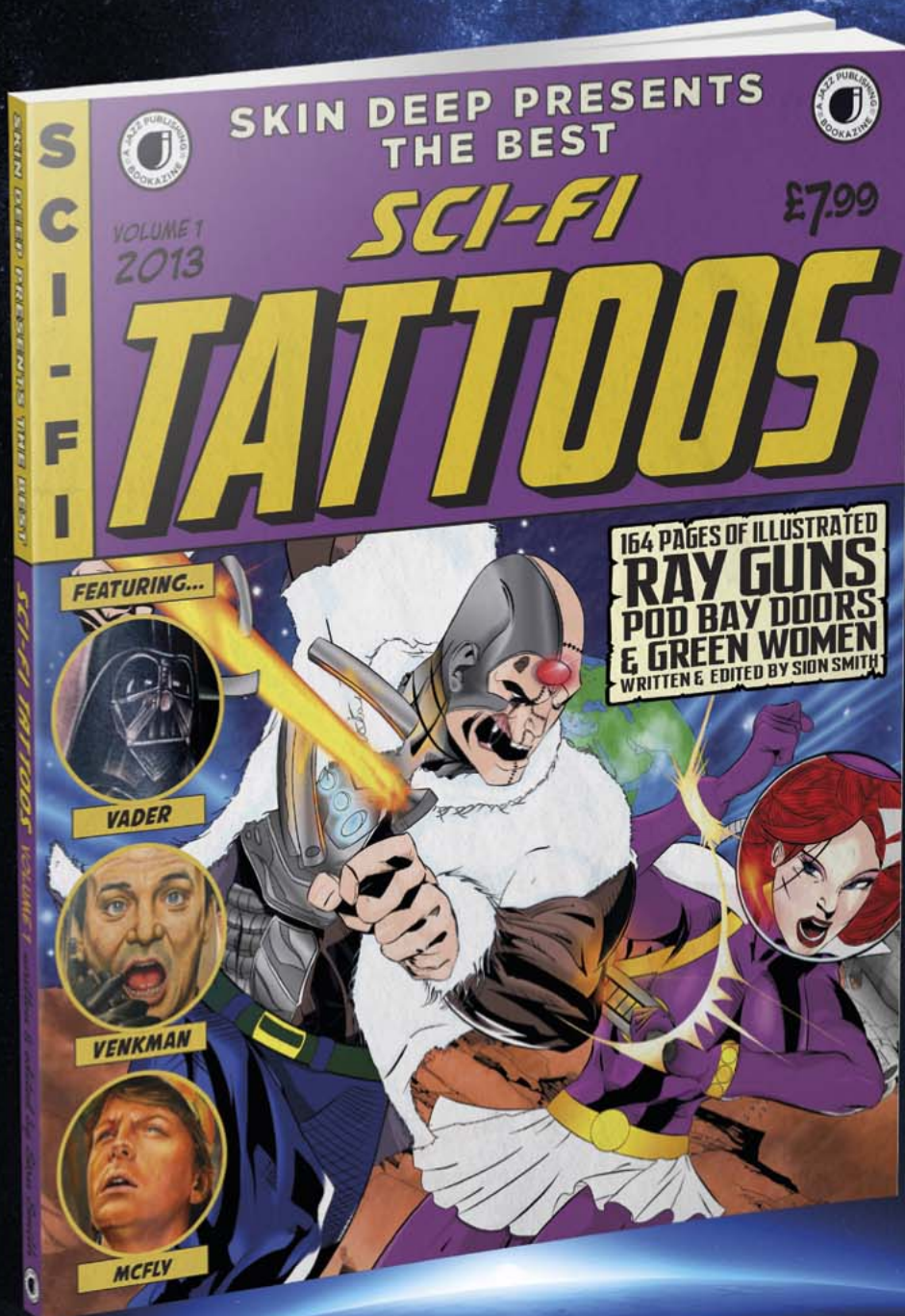
energy, loving kindness, and proved that anything is possible if you never stop," says Dunn, and adds that, "many things are next; the entrepreneur in me is always developing.

"I have a new talk show I will be doing called Talk Fu [on Google+], I have a line of all-natural aftercare products called Metta that's about to hit the shelves and I am currently writing a book on the topic of panic and anxiety from a regular dude's perspective. Not all the fake medical facts that doctors claim, but [facts] from someone who actually lives with this day-to-day. I am also developing a drawing book of Asian-influenced art; a sketch book of sorts for the tattoo industry."

As for that famous beard and hat, don't expect them to go anywhere anytime soon—but forced to get rid of one, which would he part with?

Laughing, Dunn makes the tough choice: "I am not too attached to either, but I can assure you the public doesn't need to see this ugly mug, so maybe lose the lids!" 🐼

# THE FINAL FRONTIER



Once upon a time (in a far away galaxy) tattooed people were few and far between. Now, they walk among us. If anything, we have become the very people our parents warned us about. In Skin Deep Presents The Best Sci-Fi Tattoos, we're taking a long hard look at the ultimate genre for hardcore collectors and obsessives. How far will they go to commit their obsessions to skin? As you'll find out inside, quite far indeed. From literature to the movies and the imaginations of those who work in this hyper-creative field, anything is possible if your passion is strong enough. Alongside of this, we talk to some of the premier tattoo artists working in the world today, check in with creators and artists from the science fiction world who are either tattooed themselves or have contributed to the great art in some form and we also travel back in time to take in some history to see exactly what makes this fantastic world tick.

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# THE PRODIGAL SON

He learned fine art painting as a 12-year-old in a class of adults applying for the university. Later he made a living as a comic book illustrator while tattooing for free. The world of Kuba Kujawa is art in different forms, and now he's taking his skills to Denmark and Bright Side Tattoo, hoping that his art picks up...

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After just a couple of art classes with other

kids at city hall Kuba Kujawa was 'promoted' to the class the teacher's husband was teaching instead. 12 years old he suddenly found himself among adult artists preparing for university exams.

"It was super weird having to compete with them and I don't remember why she thought I was good enough. I have a hard time saying that I was better than anyone else, but when I did that sort of role playing you do as a kid where you picture the future I always saw myself as an artist," he says.

It did however give a strong impression, of course, especially the head of the class, who he often mentions as a big influence

when talking about his art today.

"For a period of time I denied being that influenced by him, but he turned out being my main influence. I'm from Poland, so even if I didn't grow up in a super religious family you still had crosses and pictures of the Pope at home. That iconography is very familiar to me, and my master was very into the religious way of painting. The subject itself isn't necessarily religious, it's the way you display it. In my case the subject comes from my own personal experiences. Then I try to give it more magic by adding the religious element. I like old religious Russian stuff as well, and my master had and did paintings like that as well."

Kujawa's paintings are probably perceived as fairly dark, but it didn't start out that way. It came with getting older and the realisation of the world around him.

"I recently noticed I'm most satisfied with the result when I'm sad, but my master was super 🌹"

*In my case the subject comes from my own personal experiences, then I try to give it more magic by adding the religious element*

Simon Lundh 📷 Mikas Lundh









positive. He tried to compare it to Star Wars. There's a dark side and a good side, and as a kid I focused more on positive stuff, but as I grew up and started reading books and noticed the world around me, the real face of humanity, I started focusing on the dark side. I did this self portrait where worms are coming out of my head and that sort of sums it up. Behind the nice exterior we only think about ourselves."

After a few years of art classes with his main influence he went to art high school. He had now gone from doing comics to fine art.

"As kids normally do I drew comics, but in my master's class I started doing traditional painting, landscapes and figures and so on. I did, however, keep doing graffiti and more funky stuff as well. I've tried a lot of different techniques, like computer art as well, but in the end I prefer traditional painting, oil or pastel."

After high school he continued on to the university, studying art in his hometown of Poznan. At this time he developed an interest for tattoos, but he never planned on becoming a member of the profession.

"A friend of mine invited me to

do an apprenticeship when I was 23, and I thought why not. The ideas are the same as in painting, but it's a different medium. There is one big difference, however. You can't paint with tattoo machines. A lot of people try, but it just gets blurry. I want to do old school instead. Artsy tattooists often forget the technique. That's why I prefer old school and Japanese and why I'm going to the States soon to see old school tattoo artists work. Recently I have, however, started merging a little bit more. I've only been tattooing for five years and still consider myself a freshman, so I haven't felt comfortable enough with the technique to start experimenting and bring my painting into tattooing until now."

When he first started out he didn't make a living as a tattooist, though. Instead he'd went back to his roots after high school.

"I knew there was money to be made in tattooing, but that's not why I started. I tattooed for free. Instead I worked for a Canadian company drawing comic books. I'm terrible at writing so I didn't do that, I just did the illustrations."

After a while he did start getting paid for his tattoos and now he's more or less a full-time tattoo

*As a kid I focused more on positive stuff, but as I grew up and started reading books and noticed the world around me, the real face of humanity, I started focusing on the dark side*



artist in Poznan, working at a studio called Czaszka I Sztylet, which means 'skull and dagger' in Polish. He's not staying for much longer, though, as Copenhagen and Bright Side Tattoo is calling.

"I was looking to move somewhere after 20 years living here. I want to experience something different and see something else. I did a couple of guest spots at Bright Side so it was a perfect solution to move to Denmark. I like Scandinavia and the people there. Poland is a wild country and I don't like arguing in traffic and on the streets all the time. I don't feel the urge to give someone the finger at every crossing. I actually tried out Sweden for a while, but it didn't work out. A former girlfriend lived in the countryside in Dalarna, but there were no shops or jobs for me there."

After some time of mostly tattooing he hopes to find his way back to painting in Copenhagen.

"I want to get a nice place with a lot of space for my big paintings and focus more on that. I haven't had any exhibitions in a while. Right now I'm a tattooist, but the perfect plan would be to tattoo three days in a week and paint four days. That's how I see the future, and maybe when I'm around 40 years old I have more time for exhibitions." 🐼



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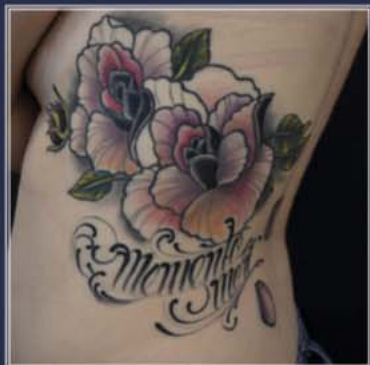
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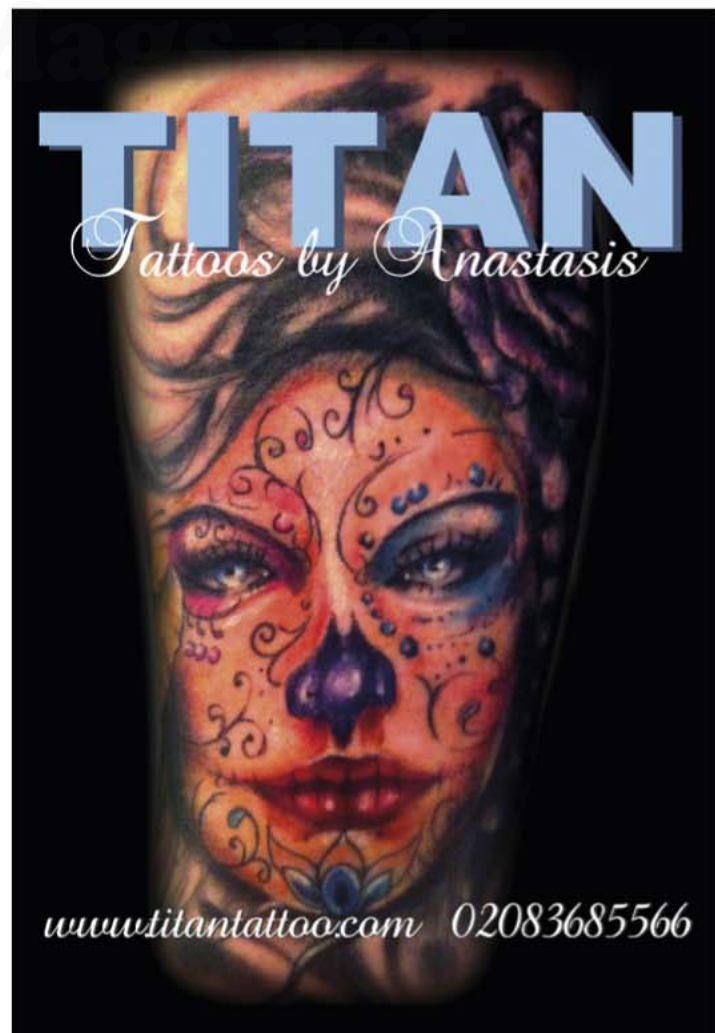


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# Tattoo FREEZE

## THE BIG CHILL

For the first year in living memory, Tattoo Freeze wasn't besieged by snow, but it was still damn cold. On the flip side of the coin—more artists than ever, a wonderful crowd, and more to do than you can shake a stick at...

Actually, that's a lie. There were thousands of people shaking sticks. For me, this show has always been a real testament to how tattoo fans could care less about the weather and will come whatever happens to be going on outside—and that's a beautiful thing.

For the uninitiated, Tattoo Freeze is a single day show that thinks it's a two-day show. It's busy—all the time. There's never a lull and it can get pretty tough to fit everything in sometimes—blink and you can be five minutes behind.

I'll begin at the end for a change. Judging the show, as ever, is harder work than it looks. It's not hard in a 'digging a ditch' kind of way, but rooting out the best of any category takes no small amount of attention. So this year, it was a blast to finally offer up some slabs of glass to some artists that I've watched grow over the years—and it has to be said, they have never stopped growing either.

Those people? Max Pniewski, Johnny D Matthews and Dek Kent (who with a feature on



**MY POINT IS THAT THERE REALLY IS NO REASON TO BE STARING DOWN THE BARREL OF AN AVERAGE TATTOO WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY WHO CAN MIX IT UP WITH THE BEST**

board this issue is likely to find his phone a bit on the warm side over the coming weeks). That's not to say the others (see box copy) are not equally deserving or as good, but these guys I have shared beer/coffee with over the years and grown to really appreciate how they all work. Actually, Trent, who was judging with me, will probably tell you exactly the same about some of the guys who took awards

in the other categories.

Now that I think about it, there were a lot of people who I can say the same about who didn't win this time around—so I guess my point is that there really is no reason to be staring down the barrel of an average tattoo when there are so many people in this country who can mix it up with the best of them. 'Polish' Dan—who Trent rates as amongst the best in the 🍷



Winner Best Avant Garde  
Emilio Winter, True Colour Trinity



Winner Best of Day  
Max Pniewski, Southmead



Winner Best Small Colour  
Dek Kent, Electric Kicks

Winner Best Large Black and Grey  
Giles Twigg, Inky G's





Winner Best Small Black and Grey

Winner Best Portrait

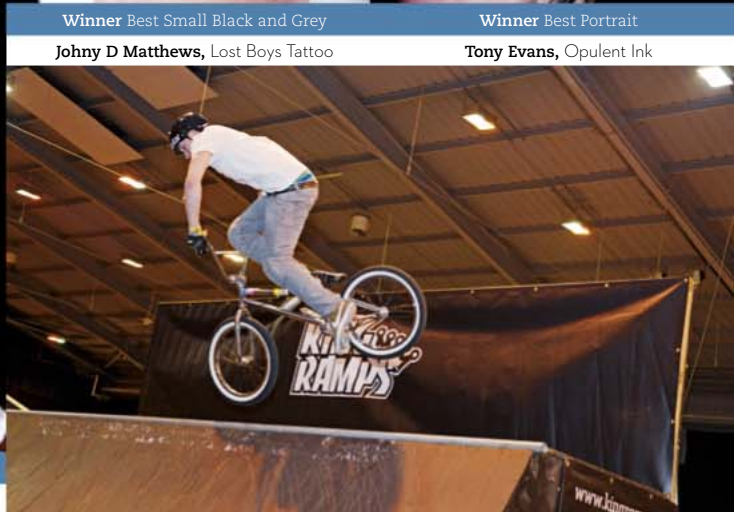
Johny D Matthews, Lost Boys Tattoo

Tony Evans, Opulent Ink



Winner Best Large Colour

Adam Jeffs, La Familia Tattoo Studio







country right now for realism, turned in a Leopard that was actually frightening in its execution it was that good.

All of which is to say that, more than anything, quality is definitely up. And even better news is the great tattooed public are pushing the artists to think harder than they ever have before. When you get visitors from Greece coming over for a one day show in the middle of winter to get work because that's the only slot available, you know you're doing the right thing.

Meanwhile out on the peripherals of the Freeze—which is a family event—there's plenty of things for kids to do (bouncy castle, face painting) and if you're into such things, there's a whole section of the show cordoned off and dedicated to Camper Mart. A strange thing to do some had noted. Brought about because of one of our sister magazines here, the halls can actually take it quite comfortably, and it actually provides a great acoustic barrier to soak up the noise from the Roller Derby events

#### WINNERS LIST (1)

##### BEST SMALL

##### COLOUR

Dek Kent, Electric Kicks

##### BEST PORTRAIT

Tony Evans - Opulent Ink

##### BEST ORIENTAL

Marc Nutley - Studio Ink

##### BEST AVANT GARDE

Emilio Winter - True Colour Trinity

##### BEST REALISM

Polish Dan - True Colour Trinity

##### BEST SMALL BLACK AND GREY

Johnny D Matthews - Lost Boys Tattoo

##### BEST LARGE

Giles Twigg - Inky G's

##### BEST LARGE

##### COLOUR

Adam Jeffs - La Familia Tattoo Studio

##### BEST OF CONVENTION

Max Pniewski - Southmead

**MORE THAN ANYTHING, QUALITY IS DEFINITELY UP— EVEN BETTER NEWS IS THE GREAT TATTOOED PUBLIC ARE PUSHING THE ARTISTS TO THINK HARDER THAN THEY EVER HAVE BEFORE**



Winner 'Angel' by Scott Cole

that run all day too. At first, we were all a little perplexed as to whether it would work, but it does and in an odd way too. I think I may have said it previously—campervan fans can't stay away from the lure of tattoos and the spectacle of happenings. As far as I'm concerned, any day that you can show people who would never in a million years come into contact with tattooing at such a high level, is a good day. There are few who were there who would disagree with me on that point.

Let me see, what else have I got stored in my memory banks? A walk of the floor

revealed some new faces and as always it's good to see people again (it was lonely this Christmas). Gav at Obsession was piecing together a nice Uncle Albert on my first tour of the floor; he's one to watch and push with that stick I was talking about—the best is yet to come from there. Miss Jo Black is another favourite who keeps getting better every day of the week. Chris Jones & Co from Physical Graffiti were head down and away with the fairies by the time I got there (best not wake the bear while he's working); Nipper from Bridgend was laying down another pat of 🐾



Winner Best Realism  
Polish Dan, True Colour Trinity



Winner Best Oriental  
Marc Nutley, Studio Ink

a nice Marvel sleeve he had on the go; and it was great to see Michelle Maddison laying the smack down.

Hmm. Having written that, I figure there were so many artists up from South Wales, that next year, I might organise a minibus for them and take myself to Corfu for a week with the profits. That's one serious hotbed of talent in that neck of the woods. Up at the other end of the country, those guys at Rock 'n' Roll Tattoo are still pushing and hungry—they have some great artists up there right now and are totally worth the miles if you need to travel to get there.

I must also mention David Corden here. I take my hat off to the man. He must have more miles on his clock than One Direction (and I'm not talking age). Hell that man gets around. Whenever I'm out in the world... there he is taking it to the people. If you're looking for a role model to figure out how to "do it" properly, look no further. There will be words from Mr Corden later in the year (we both have to be on the same page of the map to make that happen). How good is he? Call yourself a



**ANY DAY THAT YOU CAN SHOW PEOPLE WHO WOULD NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS COME INTO CONTACT WITH TATTOOING AT SUCH A HIGH LEVEL, IS A GOOD DAY**

fan? Get with the programme.

Finally... I got the chance to check out Jemma Krysa again on the acoustic stage which is always a pleasure. One day, I'm going to say I'm not working an event and go as a member of the paying public so that I can see exactly what you see, but it will never happen. Not in a month of Sundays.

This list of talent is never ending—if you made it, you know what I'm talking about here. If I missed anything, I apologise, I was kind of busy putting scaffolding up with people for future. As always, thank you to all the artists who

made it, but mostly, thanks to you guys for getting out from in front of the TV and coming along. Without you... it would simply be a lot of bewildered people standing around in their coats wondering if something had happened that nobody told us about.

Next stop for internal affairs? I can see it from here... the Great British Tattoo Show—which happens to coincide with the 20th birthday of Skin Deep. If you're looking for a good time, I certainly don't need to point in any other direction. Stay tuned—it's going to be a monster... 🦋

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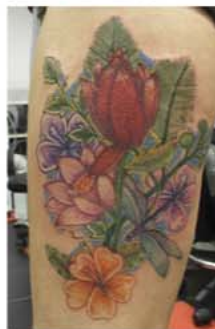
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# Soapbox

CRAIGY LEE

Craigy Lee Ash Springle

This issue, Craigy Lee takes a look at using your head when it comes to getting public tattoos. It might not seem to be a big deal right now... but one day, it just might be

Once upon a time, hands and necks were the last bits of the body a person would get tattooed; it was that bit of space you filled when everything else was full. Once upon a time, most tattoo artists had ethics and a moral code, they weren't money hungry and simply wouldn't dream of tattooing an 18-year-old's neck or hands for their first tattoo.

Maybe I'm getting older? Maybe people have fewer morals these days? Maybe with so many tattoo shops in every town, some tattoo artists are just tattooing anything to get by? But sadly, the fact is that it is not unusual to see teenagers and younger folk with their hands, neck, throat or even face's tattooed with very little other coverage on their body—it seems like a crazy fashion in which they are trying to outdo each other.

I work in a tattoo shop and have worked a lot of tattoo shows, and I spend the majority of my time with friends who have large amounts of coverage on their body, including face and head tattoos; I've been tattooing a while now and it just becomes the norm. However when I go out to a shopping centre or mall (I hate shopping centres so this is a rare occurrence) I am reminded how 'normal' everyday people are, not covered in tattoos like the folk I hang around with.

And no matter how much everyone likes to argue on Facebook or other social media sites, THERE IS still a stigma attached to visible tattoos. Yes, tattoos are becoming more socially acceptable, and we are seeing them more and more, but employers still have the power. If there are five applicants for a job who are equally skilled and they don't like your appearance

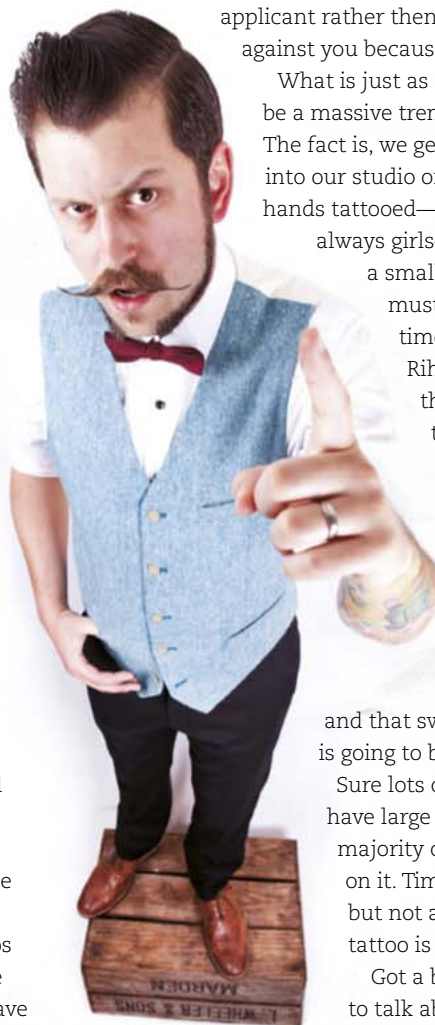
because of tattoos, they are well within their right to pick another applicant and put it down to someone being a better applicant rather than the fact they are discriminating against you because your throat is tattooed.

What is just as shocking is hand tattoos seem to be a massive trend with young girls at the moment. The fact is, we get young 18/19-year-old girls come into our studio on a weekly basis asking to get their hands tattooed—I'm not being sexist, literally it is always girls—and if this is happening to us in a small city in a small country, then it must be happening all over. Most of the time they tell me they want it because Rihanna or some other role model of theirs has it. My next step is to ask them what they do for work, they usually tell me they're at college, sometimes they tell me they work at Tesco or Subway and sometimes they tell me they do nothing. Which is all well and good, but sooner or later they're going to want a better paying job with actual prospects—

and that swirly crap tattooed on their hand is going to be a big problem for them.

Sure lots of successful business people have large coverage of tattoos, but the majority of employers still look down on it. Times and attitudes are changing but not as quickly as fashion, and a tattoo is not a fashion statement!

Got a burning issue or topic you want me to talk about? Want to get your voice heard? Well don't just sit there do something about it. Drop me a line [craigylee@skindeep.co.uk](mailto:craigylee@skindeep.co.uk)



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# Classifieds

WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR AN ADDITIONAL ARTIST FOR YOUR STUDIO, A HOUSE MANAGER OR ARE SELLING AN ESTABLISHED BUSINESS LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS, THESE FREE STREAMLINED CLASSIFIEDS OUGHT TO GET THE BALL ROLLING. SEND YOUR NEEDS TO JAZZ PUBLISHING, 1 MARCHER COURT, SEALAND ROAD, CHESTER CH1 6BS, OR EMAIL THEM INTO: EDITOR@SKINDEEP.CO.UK

All details correct at time of going to press. Adverts cannot be taken over the phone. Please include your full studio details even if they are not to accompany the wording.

## Bells & Whistles, Exmouth, Devon.

American tattoo artist Lou Morales is opening his own studio in Exmouth, Devon. Having tattooed in Chile, Australia, Las Vegas and Miami, Lou brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the South West tattoo scene. Lou specialises in custom designed traditional tattoos, and wants to create a studio with all the 'Bells & Whistles' and non of the attitude. Appointments are now being taken for December. We hope to take on a second artist in the New Year, and welcome any interest from talented artists. Bells & Whistles is located at: 14 Exeter Road, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 1PL Telephone: 07402979451 [www.bellsandwhistlesatattoo.co.uk](http://www.bellsandwhistlesatattoo.co.uk) or like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/bellsandwhistles.tattoos](http://www.facebook.com/bellsandwhistles.tattoos)

**Electric Buddha Tattoo** in Ramsgate are now looking for a fourth artist to join our busy, vibrant little band of merry men (and one woman). It's part time to start but for the right applicant there will definitely be a chance to go full-time. We are a custom based studio and the successful applicant should be able to work in a variety of styles, but development of personal style and subsequently, customer base, will not be discouraged. Previous studio experience is a must as this is not an apprenticeship. No drink, drug or attitude problems will be tolerated. Anyone interested, or wanting more information, should email a link to your portfolio to [danstone1975@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:danstone1975@hotmail.co.uk)

## Full time tattoo artist wanted:

Monster Ink is a well established tattoo studio in Ayr, Scotland. We are looking for three years minimum studio experience. Portfolio of artwork and completed custom tattoos is a must. Good all rounder. No drug/alcohol/ego problems! The position is permanent and can start A.S.A.P Call 01292 261031 or Email [monsterinkstudio@gmail.com](mailto:monsterinkstudio@gmail.com) for further info

**Wanted:** Body piercer on self employed basis. You will have your own room to work from must have no drug or alcohol issues, references and portfolio. If interested contact Paul on 07539247799

**Tattooist wanted.** Looking for tattooist, experienced, good understanding of the industry and artistic ability. Must have a portfolio, to start as soon as possible. This is for a self employed, permanent job. Please contact, Kari-Anne on 07709909488, Queen of Diamonds, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire.

**The Inkpot Galleria** in Stafford, Staffordshire are looking for two artists with a minimum of 2 years experience for town centre studio. Must have up to date portfolio and preferably client base. Contact Lee at [lee.hickin@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lee.hickin@hotmail.co.uk).

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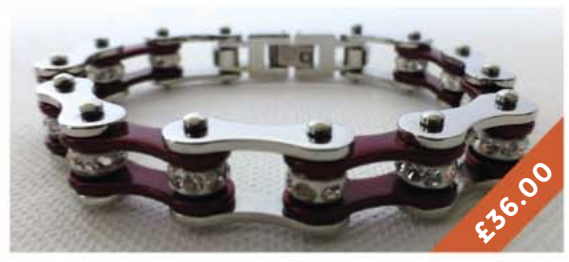
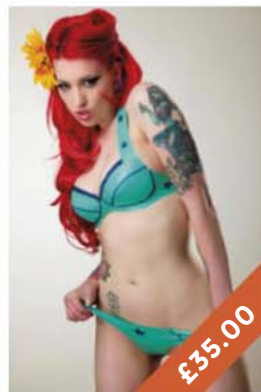
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## A COSTLY BUSINESS

Money—it's a difficult subject—most of us would like a little more of it, many of us need to be careful with it. With energy and food prices rising continuously, life in Britain gets a little tighter all the time. Against this backdrop, spending money entirely on oneself can seem at best, decadent, and at worse, selfish



Paula Hardy Kangelos

I'm often asked, "how much did all that cost?" or told, "I'd love tattoos like yours but can't afford it", and it makes me feel somewhat defensive. I don't question others' decisions to spend their hard-earned on whatever they choose, holidays, gadgets, cars, trainers, etc., because spending the spare on what we love is what makes the 9-5 (or the 6-2 or the 12-8) bearable... it's a reward, a treat, an escape. I wouldn't dream of asking how much someone had paid for their shoes, or their sofa, or their mobile phone—it's just not polite—but is being direct about the financial aspect of

### YOU CANNOT SIMPLY BUY YOUR WAY TO A GREAT TATTOO, INSTEAD YOU MUST RESEARCH

tattooing actually beneficial? Should we put aside politeness and talk cold, hard, cash?

If you are reading this magazine, I imagine it's because you are interested in the art of tattooing, in the progress and innovation of tattoo art, and because you have, or plan to have, unique tattoos that you wear with pride. If this assumption is true, I do not have to tell you that the cost of a planned tattoo should never be the criteria by which one decides. The old adage that 'good tattoos aren't cheap and cheap tattoos aren't good' is difficult to argue against, however, the unspoken implication that a costly tattoo is guaranteed to be a good tattoo is

no certainty. You cannot simply buy your way to a great tattoo, instead you must research—online, through word of mouth, in person at conventions, and through publications like this one. It would, however, be disingenuous to say that cost is not also important.

Let's say you wanted a new car, perhaps you start out by making a list: what do you need? Two seats? Four doors? A people carrier? What kind of journeys will you be making? Which fuel will be most economical? What features do you need, what features would you like? What colour? What trim? You narrow it right down, pick a make, a model, and find your nearest dealership. You're ready to make the purchase, safe in the knowledge that you've made the right choice for you, but would you sign the finance agreement without reading it? Would you agree to make the purchase without checking the cost against your budget? So why do we expect to make a final decision on a tattoo without, at least, a ballpark figure on the cost?

Tattoos, like anything handmade or custom, are difficult to price—the materials + labour + profit margin formula used in mass production doesn't mean much when the labour cannot be divided. And how do you assign a monetary value to innovation or originality?

The variables are numerous, predicting the time required is an acquired skill and even then, so much depends on us the customer—will we be punctual? Sit well and last the

whole appointment? Will we want to discuss every colour choice at length? It's hardly any wonder that tattooers are loathe to put a final price on anything.

The media obsession with celebrity tattoos further contributes to the value quagmire—Cheryl Cole's recent Nikko Hurtardo piece faced derision in the tabloid press, in part due to its reported £14,000 cost. However, divide 14,000 by the 55 hours taken and the resultant £250 an hour is higher than average, yet certainly not unreasonable. Hurtardo is tattoo-world renowned, innovative in his chosen style, and undoubtably in demand. His hourly rate, like most tattooers, will include hidden expenses, studio costs, materials, hygiene services, drawing and research time, and likely the wage of a couple of support staff too. That's why good tattoos can't ever be cheap and tattoo artists must be given space to price what they do appropriately.

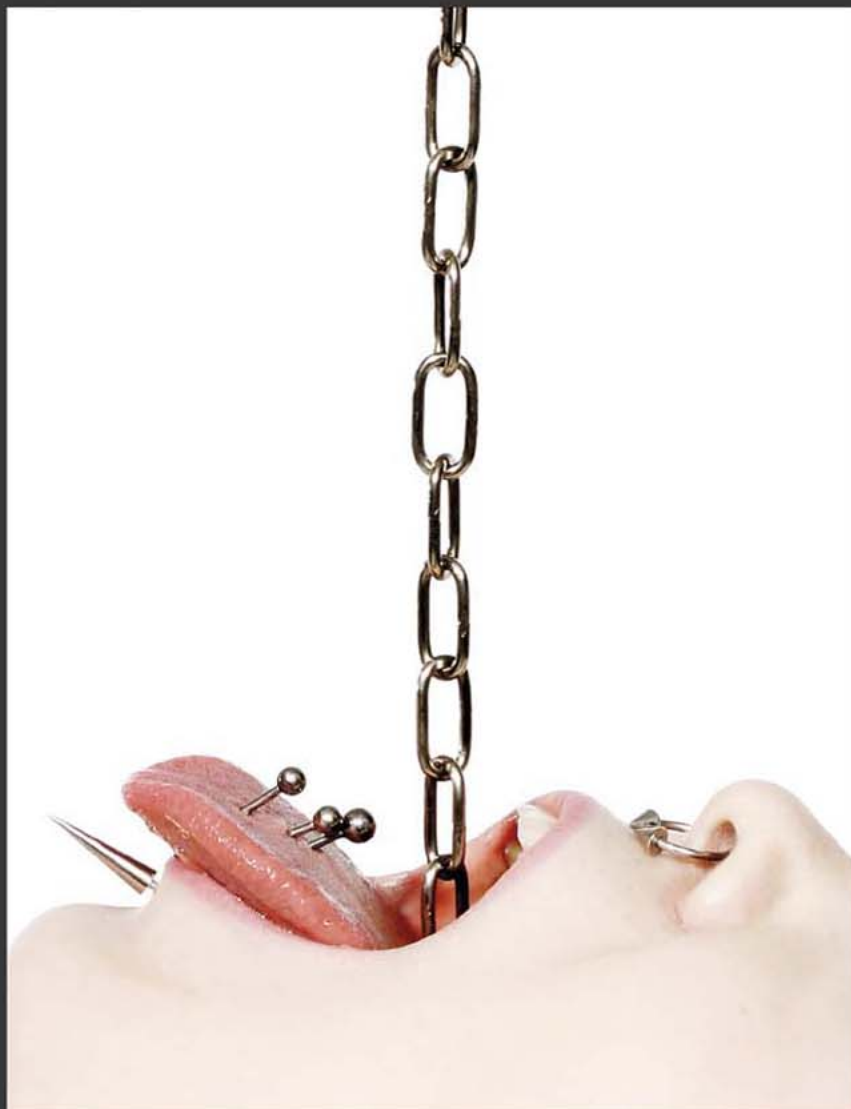
Tattoo collectors will do whatever we need to do to afford the tattoos we love. We will forgo the foreign holidays, shop less, prioritise, save and wait, but we need to know what we're working towards. Let's make an agreement, to be honest, open, and respectful of both the cost of tattooing and its value. To talk about it, artist-to-customer, collector-to-public, even if we can't give exact numbers.

As for the answer, to the original question? Well, the cost of my tattoos is comparable to a brand new hatchback.

Luckily, I like cycling. 🚲

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