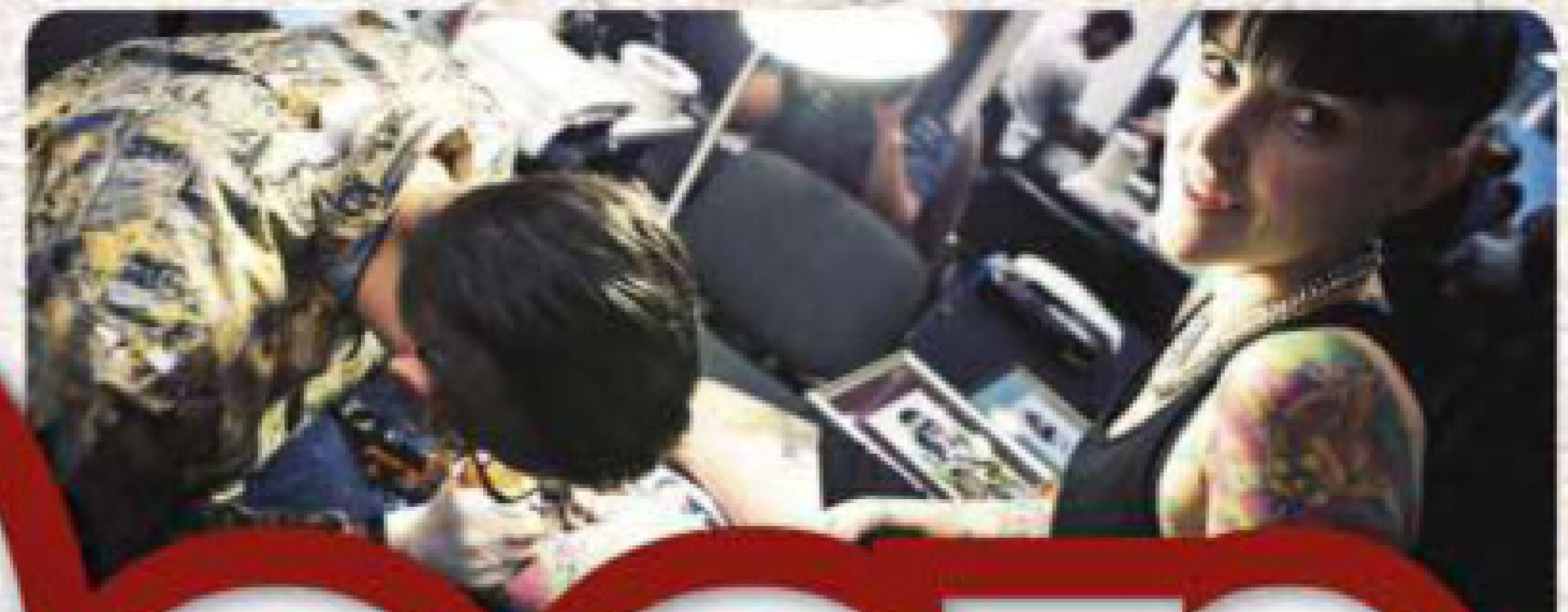


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TATTOO MAGAZINE



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WHAT IT TAKES?**

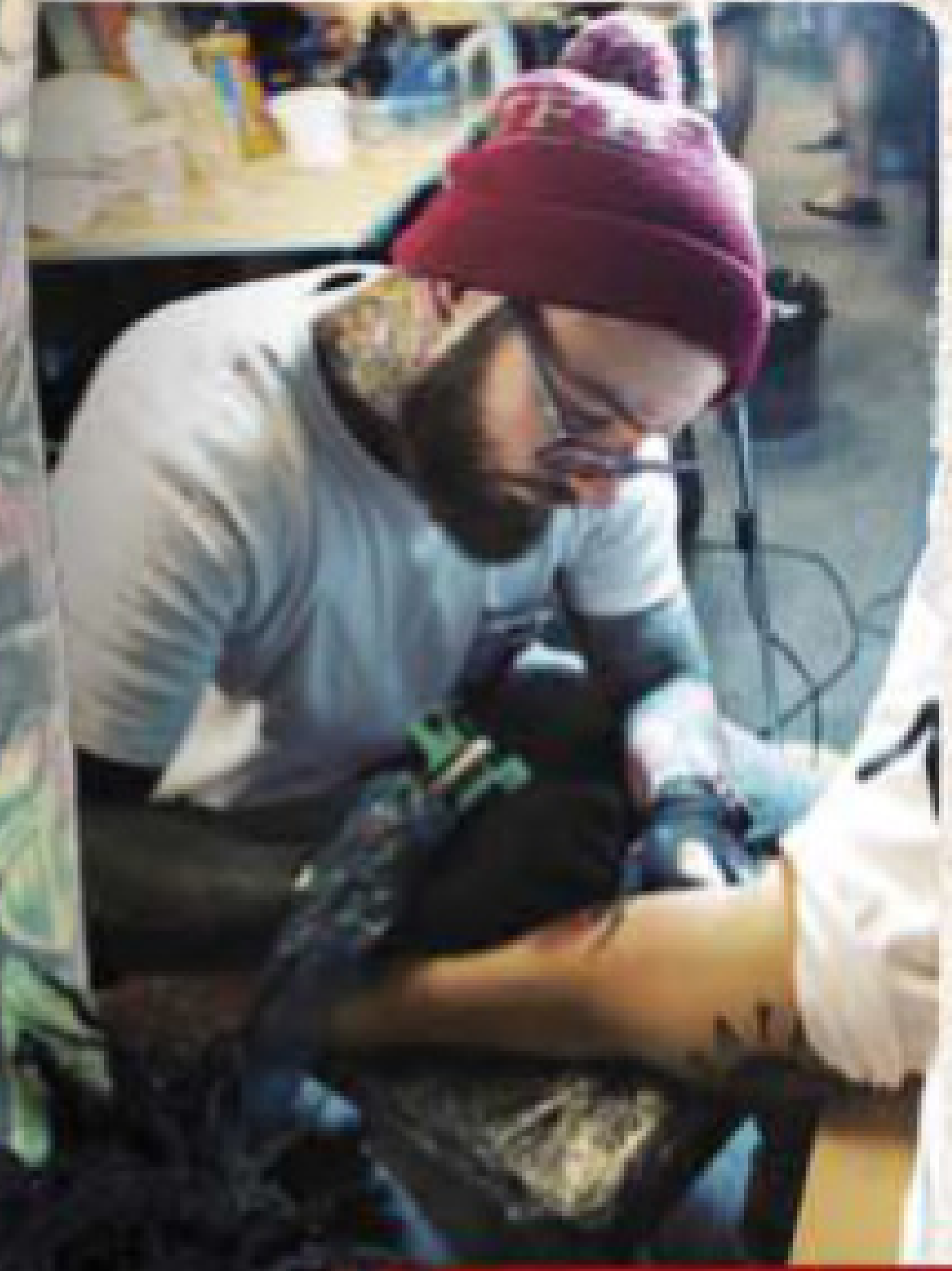
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PRESENTS
**THE POWER OF THE
FLOWERS**

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SMERKOV // VLAD OCHOJAN // VESAR // SANBHA KONIG // RYOKI // MR GREG // MATY HART

FREE INSIDE
FLORAL TATTOOS:
THE POWER OF
THE FLOWERS

Cooking with ink
STEVE LOCK
Chef extraordinaire

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TATTOOS**



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*Why the greats gravitate
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The needle has landed

Aga Hairesis

EVERYBODY WANTS SOME

Earlier this month, I saw one of my daughter's friends in Starbucks—I say 'friend' but the last time I saw them together was when they were about six and rustling up some country line dancing in the school field. They are both just turned 17, but larger than life, sitting on her wrist and hand for all to see like Long John Silver's parrot (was that him or some other treasure hunting dude? I forget), was a tattoo. A crap tattoo at that—there's no other way of saying it. I asked her where she got it and the answer didn't surprise me.

Now, before I come off as being somewhat out of touch, I still remember what it's like to go to the pub before you're legally allowed to and get so hammered that your face falls off. I also know the thrill of watching an 18-rated movie at 14 because the guy who owns the cinema doesn't care and, although I was 19 when I got my first tattoo, can imagine that—particularly now—the call of the ink is rather strong while you're growing up. Everybody wants to belong, right?

To a certain point, you can even let slide the fact that it happens—there's a certain logic that says if you want to

swan around your hometown at 17 with some kind of remedial art project on your shoulder, knock yourself out, but there's a responsibility that should lie with the tattooist for this as well.

See, I can kind of roll with the fact that at 17, you really want it done and also that you'll lie through your gritted teeth until you get your way. I can even accept the fact that a tattooist—somewhere—will do it too, because as much as I would like to say "it doesn't

whole life with something that was supposed to be Bugs Bunny on your shoulder, but a sprawling snail-line that comes down from your wrist and across the back of your hand like the results of an LSD fuelled henna party? That's a different thing altogether.

On the flip side of this, later that same day in fact, I was buying some shoes. The guy that took my cash had a tattoo right in the middle of his forearm—it was well done, really well done. I pointed

NOT PARTICULARLY SPEAKING AS THE EDITOR OF SKIN DEEP BUT MORE AS A SEMI-SENTIENT HUMAN BEING, EVEN AN EMPTY SACK OF GRAIN WOULD HAVE TO QUESTION THE PLACEMENT OF THAT PIECE

happen", it damn well does. Not particularly speaking as the editor of Skin Deep, but more as a semi-sentient human being, even an empty sack of grain would have to question the placement of that piece. It was obviously her first tattoo and somebody—with no real understanding of the art but a huge understanding that £30 for half-an-hour's work can put half a tank of petrol in your car—thought it would be fine to do it.

I don't know who's dumber. You really can live your

at it and said four words that made both of us smile: "Children of the Fence".

It probably means nothing to you and I won't bother explaining it here. Fact is, in those few minutes of buying shoes, we had a bond. I had discovered the thing in his life that he loved enough about to commit to good ink and the fact that I had deciphered his secret symbol, meant we were on the same page. I felt good that he felt good. He probably felt good because he didn't have to explain what

it was—and that's when a tattoo really works. They have a language all of their own and that in itself is priceless.

Anyway, merely hours apart, I stumbled across some of the best and worst of what tattooing has to offer—all you seemingly have to do these days is step out of the door. One fuels the reason the media like saying what they say about it, the other is the reason all of us reading this get up in the morning.

Do not think you can change it. It has happened for years and will continue to happen for many more. To try and fix it is truly pointless, but the fact remains: owning a machine, or a studio and hanging up a sign is not a licence to be a dick.

Or as I would prefer to spin it, just because you can get in that dress, doesn't mean it fits.

Sen



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ARTIST PROFILES

OFF THE MAP
When Ian Robert McKown said he would really like to interview the owner of TattooNow and Off The Map guru, Gabe Ripley, for us, what else could we do but hand over the pen...

DAVID BRYANT
A giant meteor heading straight for earth. The government gets to hide in a secret underground bunker. Are you a heart surgeon? Step right up. Tattoo artist? Goodbye and good luck. The wisdom of David Bryant is upon us.

THE LOVE BUG
If you were lucky enough to attend Tattoo Jam '13, there is no doubt that at some point, you would have bumped into George Binas and his One Love crew.

SPECIAL FEATURES

READER PROFILE
Laura Jane lives in an area called Mount Lawley, which is almost like Brick Lane of London. However, if you didn't know anyone in Perth, it would come across as being the kind of place you might not enjoy or appreciate.

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW AMANDA WEST...
Amanda West needs no introduction around here, so we get straight down to the good stuff...

CAN ANYONE BE A TATTOO ARTIST?
It's a question we've been asked more than a few times along the way, so we figured we would attempt to answer it.

P22



READER PROFILE

LAURA JANE TALKS TATTOOS IN AUSTRALIA.

But maybe it raises even more questions along the way.

STEVE LOCK
A foreign exchange money broker-turned-professional chef with a deep love of tattoos isn't exactly the kind of person you meet every day, which is precisely why we knew that a chat with Steven Lock was an absolute must.

WARSAW TATTOO CONVENTION
Eastern Europe is a well known hotbed of activity at the moment when it comes to tattooing—what else can you do but get the hell out there?

THIS MONTH'S PULL OUT:
THE POWER OF FLOWERS

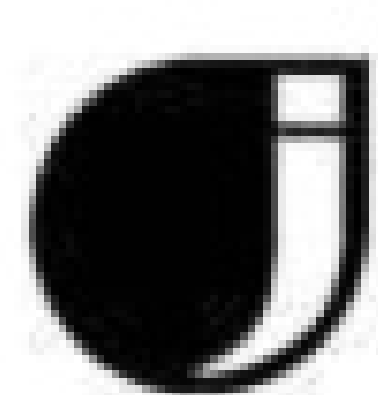


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THE LOVE BUG

ONE LOVE, WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER LOVE.



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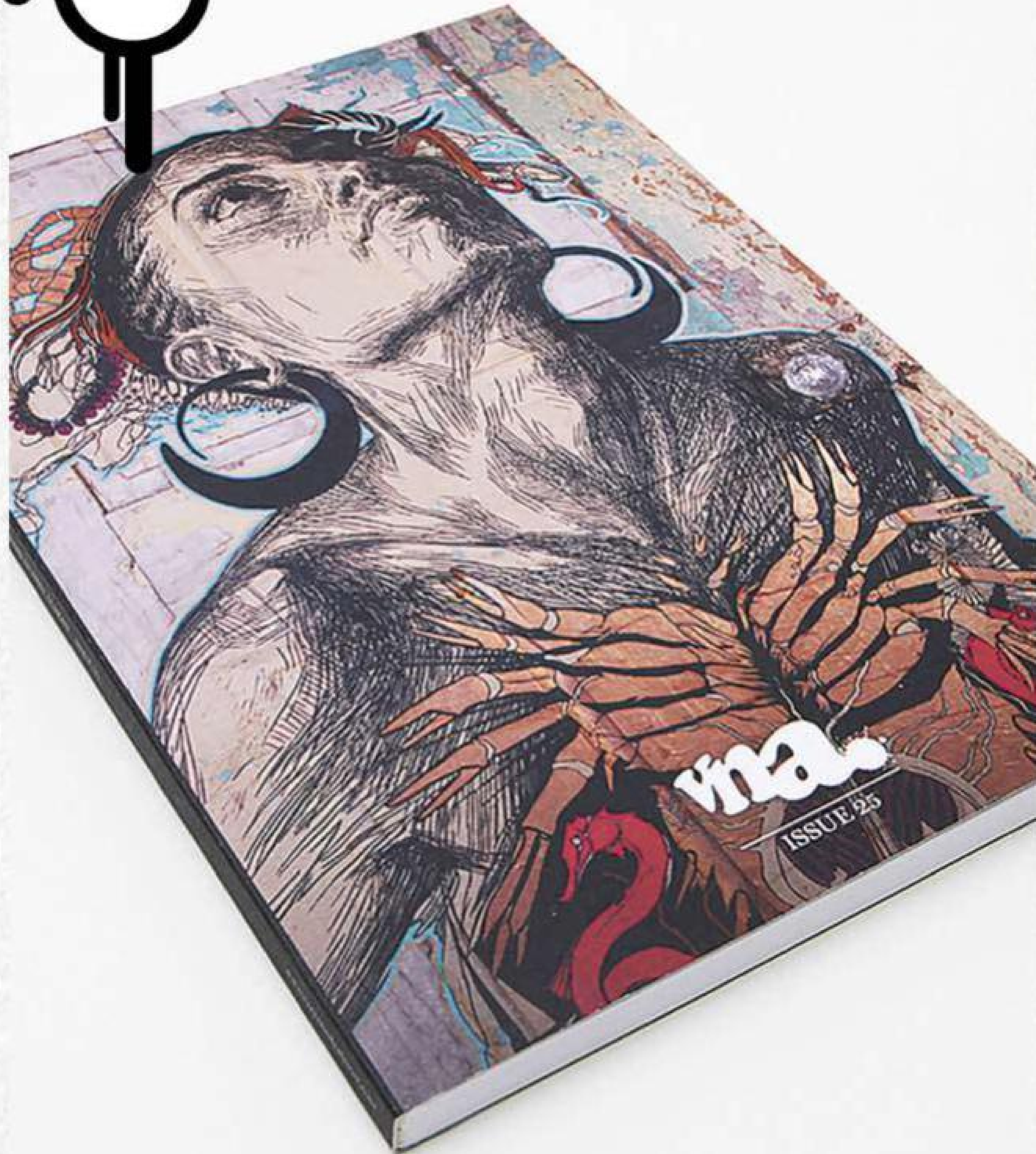


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Sleeve Notes

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



SHORT SLEEVES

KEEP US IN THE LOOP

If you've got a story you'd like to share with Sleeve Notes our newly-installed news ed, Russ, would love to hear it. Send him your studio updates, personnel changes, book announcements, events, births, marriages...you name it. Email news@skindeep.co.uk or tweet @russthorne to get in touch.



TIKIPEDIA

Armin Peters of Agnomic Ink Tattooing, Germany, has put together a new Tattoo Tiki Art Book. It's a hardback edition and features various interpretations of the traditional Polynesian carvings, all with a distinctive new-schooly vibe. You can find it on Amazon, or head to facebook.com/AgnomicInkTattooing for more info.



VERY NEARLY ALMOST 25 ISSUES

If you fancy venturing beyond these pages, street art, graffiti and art culture magazine *Very Nearly Almost* is celebrating their 25th issue with a bit of a blowout.

The excellent new edition features work from Kevin Lyons, Chloe Early, Dan Kitchener, Ben Brown and Aussie

tattoo artist Sprinkles to name just a few, along with city spotlights looking at the best in recent urban art and an exclusive interview with Swoon.

Pick up your copy at all good newsagents or from verynearlyalmost.com, and follow @VNAmagazine if you're into that Twitter business.

RELOCATION, RELOCATION, RELOCATION

Ireland's Belfast City Skinworks are heading to new premises on Oxford Street. According to our friends there, "After 14 years in our existing building we've outgrown it - and not just because of our waist lines!" Contact bcskinworks@hotmail.com for updates and appointments.



SHORT SLEEVES



NEW FOLK

Folklore Tattoo Studio is now open for business in Tamworth. Check out their nautical but nice décor on 119 Lichfield Street, Tamworth, Staffordshire B79 7QB, call 01827 768446 or email the team at folkloretattoos@live.com. They're also on the lookout for artists, see the classifieds for more.



THIS JUST IN FROM OUR COLOUR CORRESPONDENT

It's always a pleasure to check out some new work from mistress of hypercolour, Ivana, so we were delighted when these beauties arrived over the wires from California. She continues to knock that palette right out of the park. See more of her work at www.ivanatattooart.com.

If you're an artist with some killer new pieces you'd like to share, we'd love to see them. Send them to news@skindeep.co.uk and tell us more.

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OPEN GALLERY NIGHT AT IDENTITY TATTOOS

Identity Tattoo Studio in Bridlington are holding an open gallery night on Saturday 29th March to showcase artwork by their team. Pop down in person to 10 Manor Street, Bridlington or get your hands on some work in advance from identitystreetart.bigcartel.com. More? identitytattoos.co.uk will see you right.



THIRTY YEARS OF WIZARDRY

This month Tribal Images artist Oz celebrates his 30th year as a professional tattoo wrangler. He'll be celebrating with a party at one of his Stoke-on-Trent studios on Saturday 29th March – head down for anniversary t-shirts, offers and a prize draw for those getting tattooed.

Not content with owning three studios and with a stable of six artists, a piercer and an apprentice, Oz's professional history alone is an impressive read: a Black Country apprenticeship under Wally Willets (including needle making), first tattoo from Dennis Cockell at Ten the Butts and guidance along the way from Micky Sharpz.

Over the years Oz has also picked up numerous awards, made an appearance on MTV's Headbanger Ball and organised the successful Creation Tattoo and Custom Bike Show, in Stoke-on-Trent, for three consecutive years. Fine work, sir.

Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

TATTOO MELTDOWN

February 28–02 March 2014

Folkets Hus Kulturhuset
Kungsgatan 25
461 30 Trollhättan,
Sweden
tattoo-meltdown.com

TATTOO EXPO LEIPZIG

01–02 March 2014

Kohlrabizirkus Leipzig
An den Tierkliniken 42
04109 Leipzig
Germany
tattoo-expo-leipzig.de

MONDIAL DU TATOUAGE

07–09 March 2014

LA GRANDE HALLE DE LA VILLETTE
211 Avenue Jean Jaurès
75019 Paris
France
mondialdutatouage.com/en

17TH NYC TATTOO CONVENTION

07–09 March 2014

Roseland Ballroom
239 West 52nd Street
New York NY
10019-5893
United States
nyctattooconvention.com

INK & IRON TATTOO CONVENTION

06–08 March 2014

The Tower Ballroom Birmingham
Reservoir Road,
Birmingham
B16 9EE
inkandiron.co.uk

TATTOO INK EXPLOSION 5

14–16 March 2014

Kaiser-Friedrich-Halle
Hohenzollernstraße 15
41061 Mönchengladbach
Germany
tattooinkexplosion.com

THE SCOTTISH TATTOO CONVENTION

29–30 March 2014

Edinburgh Corn Exchange
10 Newmarket Road,
Edinburgh EH14 1RJ,
scottishtattooconvention.net

TATTOO EXTRAVAGANZA

12–13 April 2014

Portsmouth Pyramids Centre
Clarence Esplanade, Portsmouth,
Hampshire PO5 3ST
tattooextravaganza.co.uk



HUNGRY 4 MOORE

It's been a month for artists creating pretty things away from skin.

Take Toni Moore's 'Hungry 4 Moore' range, for example, which is available now. T shirts, tops and underwear featuring her tattoo influenced illustrations and scripts? Yes please. That's the outfit for the Great British Tattoo Show sorted, then.

<http://hungryformoore.bigcartel.com>

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ANYONE WISHING TO PURCHASE TRADE SUPPLIES AT THIS EVENT MUST BRING WITH THEM A COPY OF THEIR HEALTH CERTIFICATE

StoreMags.com Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

NORTH LAKES TATTOO SHOW

12-13 April 2014

The Shepherds Inn & Auctioneer
Montgomery Way, Rosehill Estate,
Carlisle CA1 2RR
northlaketattoo.co.uk

SOMERSET TATTOO CONVENTION

11 May 2014

Blake Hall
St. Saviours Avenue
Bridgwater
Somerset TA6 3NZ
01278 439569

LEEDS INTERNATIONAL TATTOO EXPO

24-25 May 2014

New Dock Hall - Royal Armouries Museum
Armouries Dr
Leeds LS10 1LT
leedstattoexpo.com

THE GREAT BRITISH TATTOO SHOW

24-25 May 2014

Alexandra Palace
Alexandra Palace Way
London
greatbritishtattoo.co.uk

WATERFORD CITY CONVENTION

06-08 June 2014

Crystal Sports & Leisure Centre
Cork Road, Waterford
Waterford, 00353
Ireland
[facebook.com/WaterfordCityTattoo](https://www.facebook.com/WaterfordCityTattoo)

MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL TATTOO SHOW

02-03 August 2014

Manchester Central
Petersfield
Manchester M2 3GX
manchestertattoo.co.uk

TATTOO JAM

10-12 October 2014

Doncaster Racecourse
Leger Way
Doncaster DN2 6BB
tattoojam.com



BEAUTIFUL NOISE

If you've played guitar for more than about five minutes, you'll know about Marshall amplifiers. If you don't play but you've listened to any guitar music, ever, you'll definitely have heard them. The iconic British brand has been the noisebox of choice for rock and metal artists since the 1960s but they've usually taken the Ford approach to design: rather a lot of black.

Not any more. The Custom Shop Tattoo range does just what it suggests: they've teamed up with some of our finest artists to create some amps that will hold their own against even the most flamboyantly spandexed rock loon.

"The brief was very open as we wanted to give the tattooists free reign to create something that was personal to them," according to Craig Glover, Brand Director at Marshall Amps.

"As well as being renowned for their work, each of the artists we chose to work with has a very different style, taste, influence and background and we really wanted that individuality to come through.

"Part of what inspired them to become tattooists was the bands who influenced them as teenagers, many of whom are part of the Marshall family.

"Tattoos and rock music go together like whisky and Coke, so we were really excited to do something which brought these two worlds together to produce some unique and striking results which are unlike anything we've done before."

The artists were Emily Wood of Black Heart, Phil Kyle of Magnum Opus, Tutti Serra of Black Garden, Antony Flemming of World of Tattoos and Vicky Morgan of Ghost House. We think you'll agree that the results are pretty special - wonder if any of the big guitar names will follow suit? We'd love to see the Gibson Gogue edition, for sure.

Find out more at marshallamps.com/customshop (don't blame us if you spend all your tattoo kitty).

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• Cree McCahill

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS



Old London Road Tattoos, Kingston Upon Thames, KT2 6ND, 0208 549 4705, oldlondonroadtattoos@yahoo.co.uk

This issue—rather topically as we had been discussing the massively increased use of Copic Markers lately—we feature here some work from Cree McCahill who currently works out of Old London Road Tattoo in Kingston Upon Thames. We know there's a lot of you out there creating magic with this great bit of kit—if you've got something to show the world... don't be a stranger. You know where we are



"I first started with the Copic markers late last year, mostly because I was interested in taking up an art form other than sketching and tattooing. I would see these other great artists out there with their watercolour, oil and acrylic paintings and other awesome styles of art. I have to tell you, I tried them all and failed in epic proportions! I tend to get pretty frustrated if I can't get used to something in a short amount of time, which isn't such a good thing.

"So, I picked the markers back up after seeing what a friend had done with them on watercolour paper. It seemed to me that the bleeding into the watercolour paper from the markers actually gave a look as if it was done with watercolours. He explained they were a lot faster to use, which I was drawn to immediately.

"I upped my game and took the markers a lot more seriously the second time around. I got used to them very quickly and was constantly watching YouTube tutorials on different techniques from other great artists who had mastered the style of the markers. Flicking through pages of magazines and watching the clips from other artists was inspirational and making me anxious to get better.

"So I used the markers initially because they were easy to get used to, but I'm happy I chose them—they're a lot of fun. To be honest here, they've helped a lot with my tattooing and my will to get creative with colours. The way I tattoo now is a lot different from how I did before I picked them up. Don't get me wrong here—they're still very difficult at times, which is why I'll be doing a lot more and hoping to progress. Compared to others, I'm only just starting out with them, so hopefully there's a lot more to come from these awesome little markers!"

If you're interested in getting to grips with these gems, you can find out more about them over at copic.co.uk

They've helped a lot with my tattooing and my will to get creative with colours



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Here in the now frontier

PAUL TALBOT

I think that it's probably best that I give you—the reader—a little bit of background as to how this column came about before I dive into it. It's conception, evolution and realisation haven't been exactly linear (or sober) you see. As most of the planning took place at conventions during the course of last year...

I was interviewed for Skin Deep last year and during the scheduling and actual interview the same question arose a couple of times, namely: 'What do you like to call this style?'

Simple question, right? Yep. Simple answer? Nope. The genre of tattooing I'm a part of has too many bloody terms used to describe it: graphic style, avant garde, art brut, trash polka, post-modern, abstract, watercolour and the rather lazy Photoshop style, the list goes on... and on...

Being (I think) the first major new branch of tattooing to emerge in our 'box it up, brand it and label it' world and the first of the internet age, it hasn't really had a chance to 'bubble under' for a few years as a closely guarded secret. Known only by a few clients, it's originators—like most of the tattoo style movements that came before it such as new school, realism, black & grey, or even tribal—artists have been forced to coin their own convenient terms to describe their work in lieu of any other suitable labels.

Whilst still in its infancy it has strewn itself all across the web, been copied and re-copied by any hack that thought throwing a paint splat on a piece of classic flash made it all 'trash' and modern. It hasn't

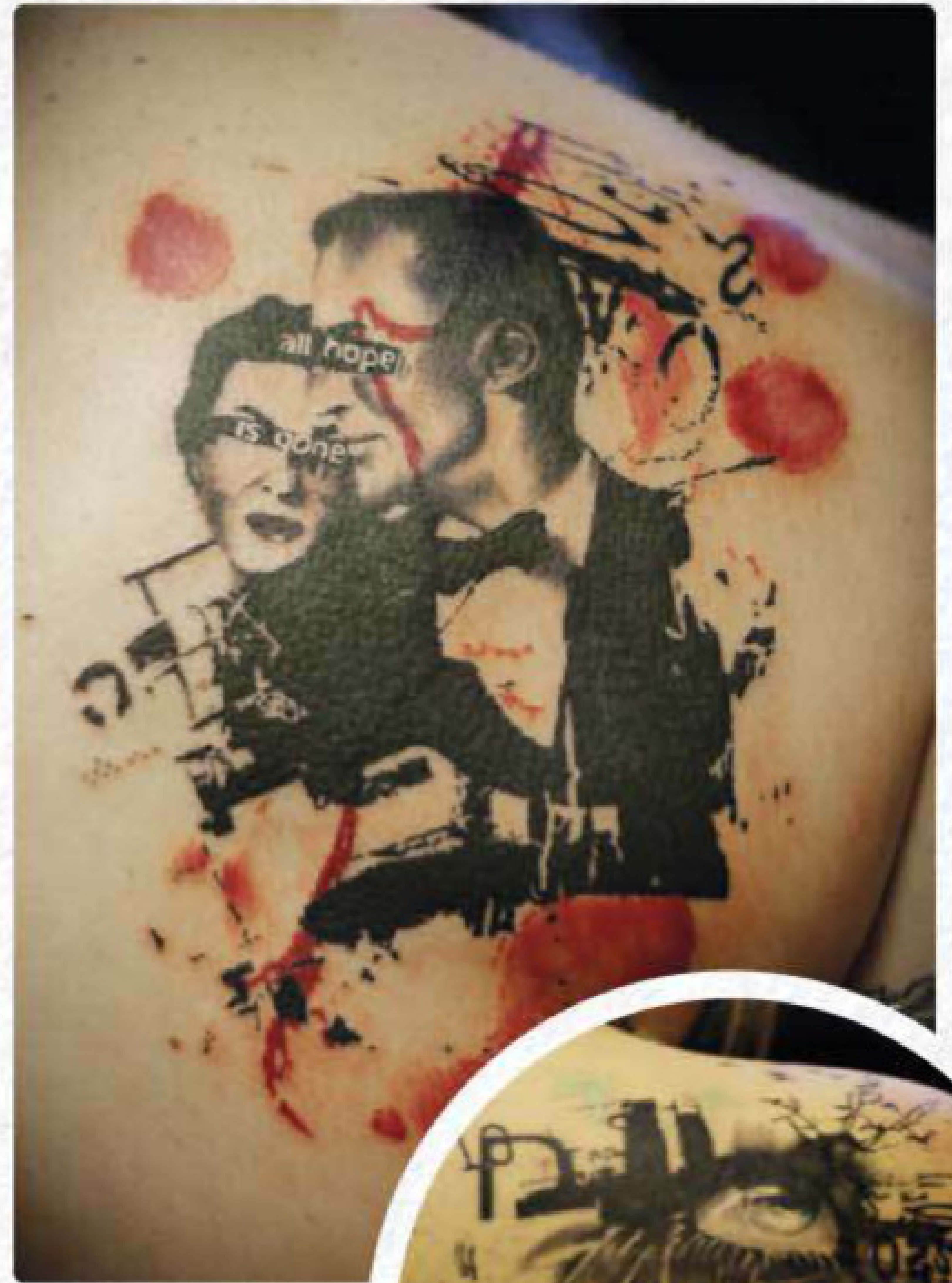


had the time that the (now) established styles had to mature before finding its place in the world of tattoo. This the probably first new tattoo movement that will have to grow up in public.

So, we—Mr Smith and myself—decided that maybe 'what do you call this style' would be a massive benefit to its adolescence. At least once it has an umbrella term used to describe it, it can get on with the next phase of dealing with girlfriends and acne. It'll also make your life a lot easier when trying to find an artist who does 'that scratchy red and black tattoo shit' and in understanding the many artists and branches of the style that have already emerged.

During the coming months, I'm going to attempt to figure out what the best term for this new style of tattooing actually

is. I'm going to interview the originators and some of the artists who I think have played a key role on the development of the 'graphic' style—the term I'm going to temporarily adopt until I find a better one. But before I do that, I think it's important to look at how this style has come about. Its emergence is interesting because this is the first tattoo movement that has been driven not by popular culture but by technology.



THE WAVE OF CHANGE

Ultimately, every tattoo will have to be applied by hand from a tattoo artist and that isn't going to change anytime soon. But while this beautifully artisan process will always connect every tattoo artist to our rich shared heritage, technological advances in both creating the image and applying the ink have meant the methodology for doing so has changed dramatically in recent years.

Tattoos no longer need to be designed by hand. A tattoo artist skilled in Photoshop (or any other graphics program for that matter) can create vibrant layered imagery that goes well beyond mere drawing—going so far as to even experiment with typography. This time-

THESE NEW TOOLS AND PROCESSES MAKE POSSIBLE IDEAS AND DESIGNS THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN UNIMAGINABLE JUST A DECADE AGO

honoured combination of text and image—a staple of old time tattoo parlours—is now being re-imagined by tattooists with some serious graphic design chops and myriad influences from far beyond the usual iconography.

These new tools and processes make possible ideas and designs that would have been unimaginable just a decade ago. Combine these digital creations with modern tattoo machines and techniques and you've got a (mini) revolution in the way some tattooists approach and re-approach the art form. Without these advances, graphic tattooing probably couldn't have existed.

It has a little way to go before it has earned its place in the wider world of tattooing and I hope this column will help it along a little. Let's find out...

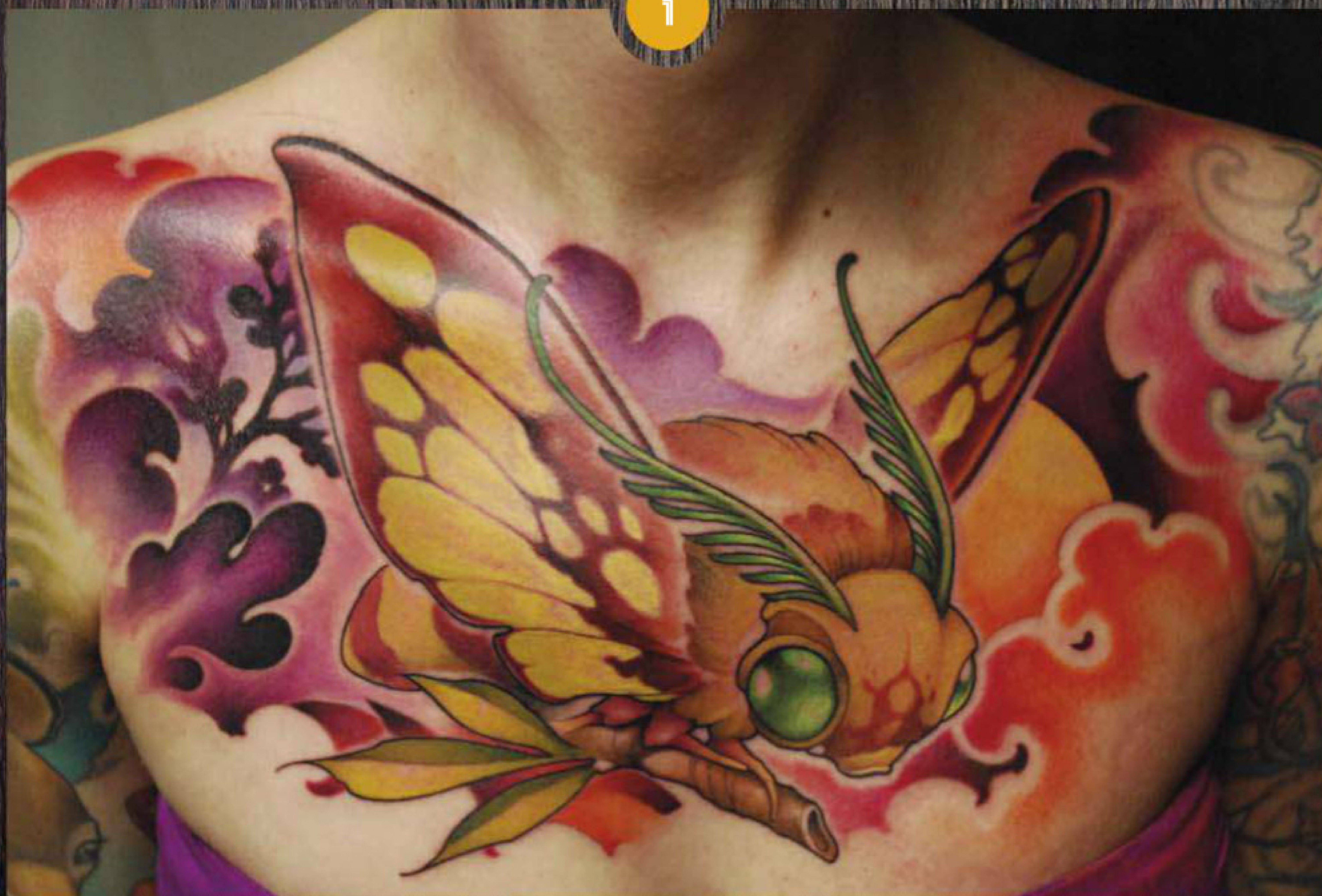
Any questions? Drop me a line: paul@postmoderntattoo.com. 



TOP 5 FAVOURITE ILLUSTRATIVE TATTOOS

This issue, I handed over the gauntlet for Trent to choose the subject and countries and he came up with illustrative tattoos. This was harder than it looks, simply because there's so much fantastic work out there. If you're looking for clarification on this, here's his brief: 'Illustrative tattooing takes all the best elements of traditional tattooing and turns them up to ten. Bold, thick lines and intense colours maxed out. Subject matter is also key as illustrative artists tend to take the everyday and put a crazy spin on it. A possum could be cool, but it will be even cooler smoking a cigar while playing poker. Think of it like this, Scooby Doo is traditional, Pixar is illustrative.' But you knew that already... let's go

1





2



TRENT

5

EMIL EDGE

Emil is top of my list purely because he was the first illustrative artist's work I ever saw, therefore introducing me to a style I love.

4

MAT LAPPING

What I love about Mat's designs is that he uses all the elements of this style of tattooing, but instead of going quirky, he goes sexy. We're talking Jessica Rabbit mark two.

3

MARCUS MAGUIRE

I chose a design of Marcus' rather than the tattoo, as it is a brilliant example of an illustrative tattoo idea, made solid. Marcus takes a subject we all know well, screws around it, flips it on its head... and we'll never look at Ewoks in the same light again.

2

JJ JACKSON

Perfect dark lines (proving that black can highlight just as well as white) and beautiful bright colours. And of course, a crazy mix of ideas... a dinosaur ripping the head off a robot! Perfect.

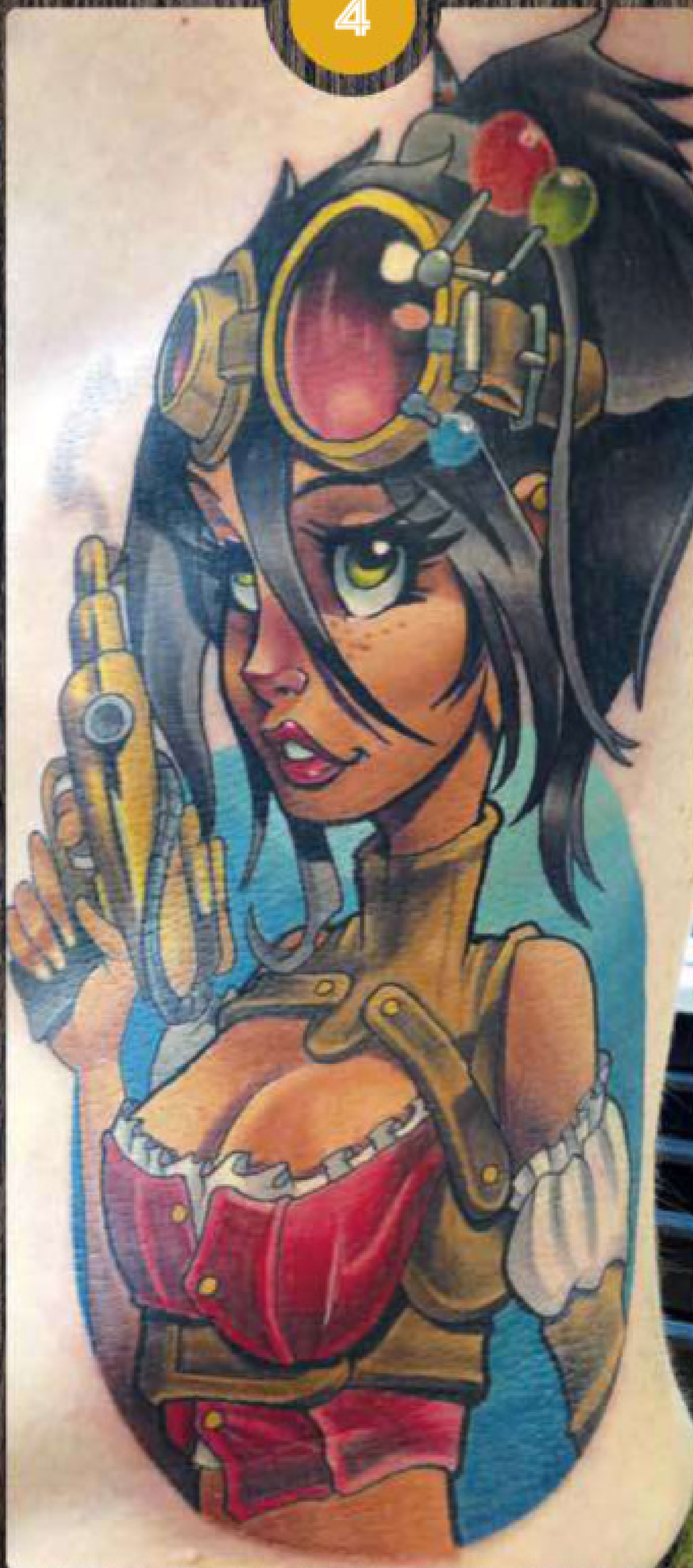
1

JAMIE RIS

Every colour complements and enriches the colour next to it... and the smooth transition between shades of the same colour are perfect. Colour-bombing at its best. 🍌



3



4



5



SION SMITH

5

TANANE WHITFIELD

A classic from Mr Whitfield. I never get tired of his work for similar reasons as Trent chose for Emil. First love and all that...

4

KELLY DOTY

This is a great piece. Kelly will soon be the name on everybody's lips out there—if she's not already. Mark my words, she will be an earthshaker in the years to come. Her style really kicked in over the last 12 months, but this is the one that made me sit up and take notice.

3

FRANK LANATRA

Knowing Frank pretty well, I hope he's happy with this piece that I've plucked from his collection. It takes everything in the brief and delivers it flawlessly, and when you see what he puts into his work, it means even more.

2

JESSE SMITH

The undisputed master? Quite possibly. Mention the phrase 'illustrative' and his is the first name on your lips. One day, the whole world will know his name. Words have no suitable way of describing this piece.

1

GUNNAR

A curveball at number one? There's something about Gunnar's art that really excites me. Expect the unexpected—every single time, and I like that. A lot. Massively under-rated out there. Pay attention people.



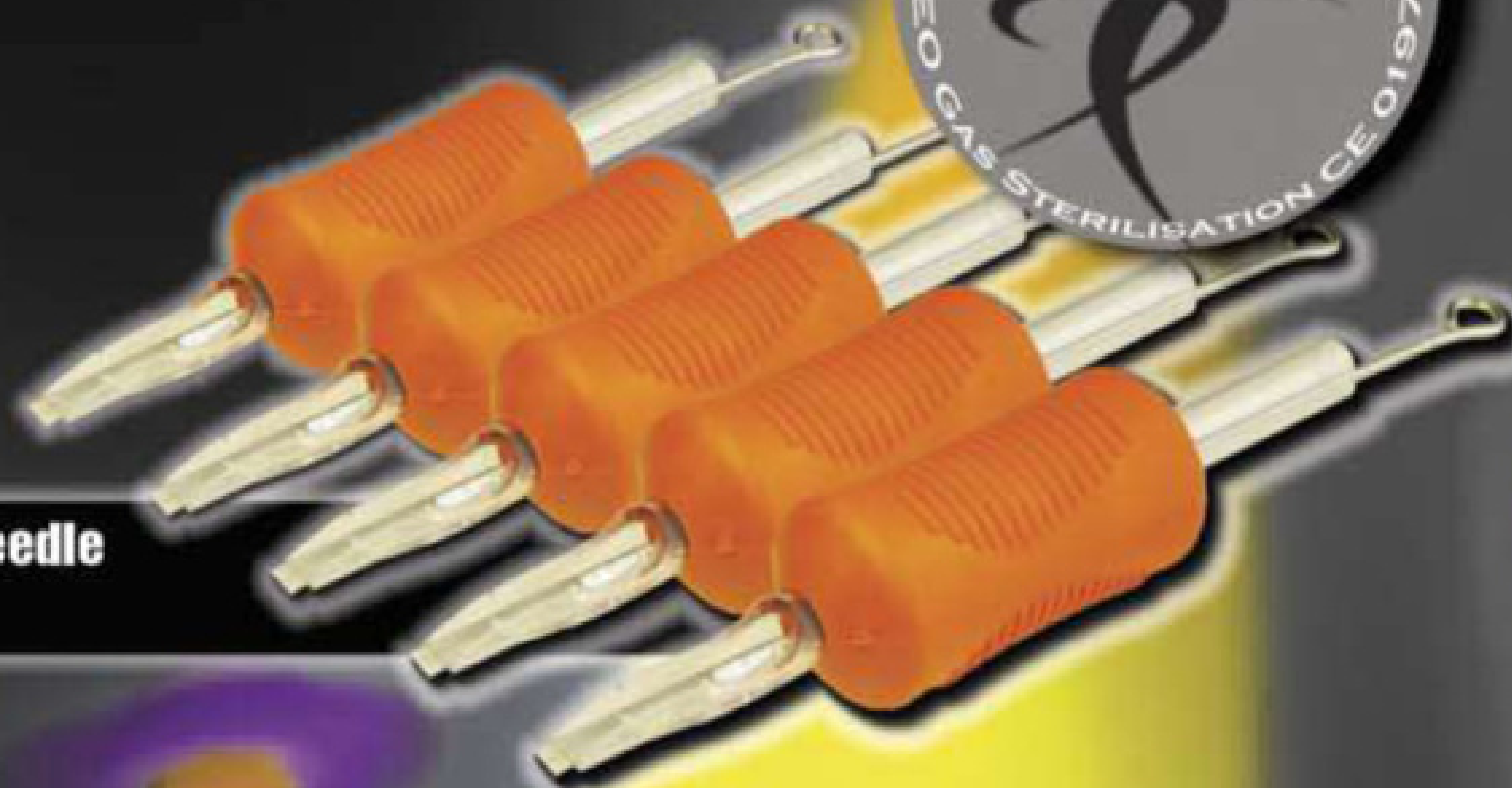
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The Future's Bright, The Future's STARR

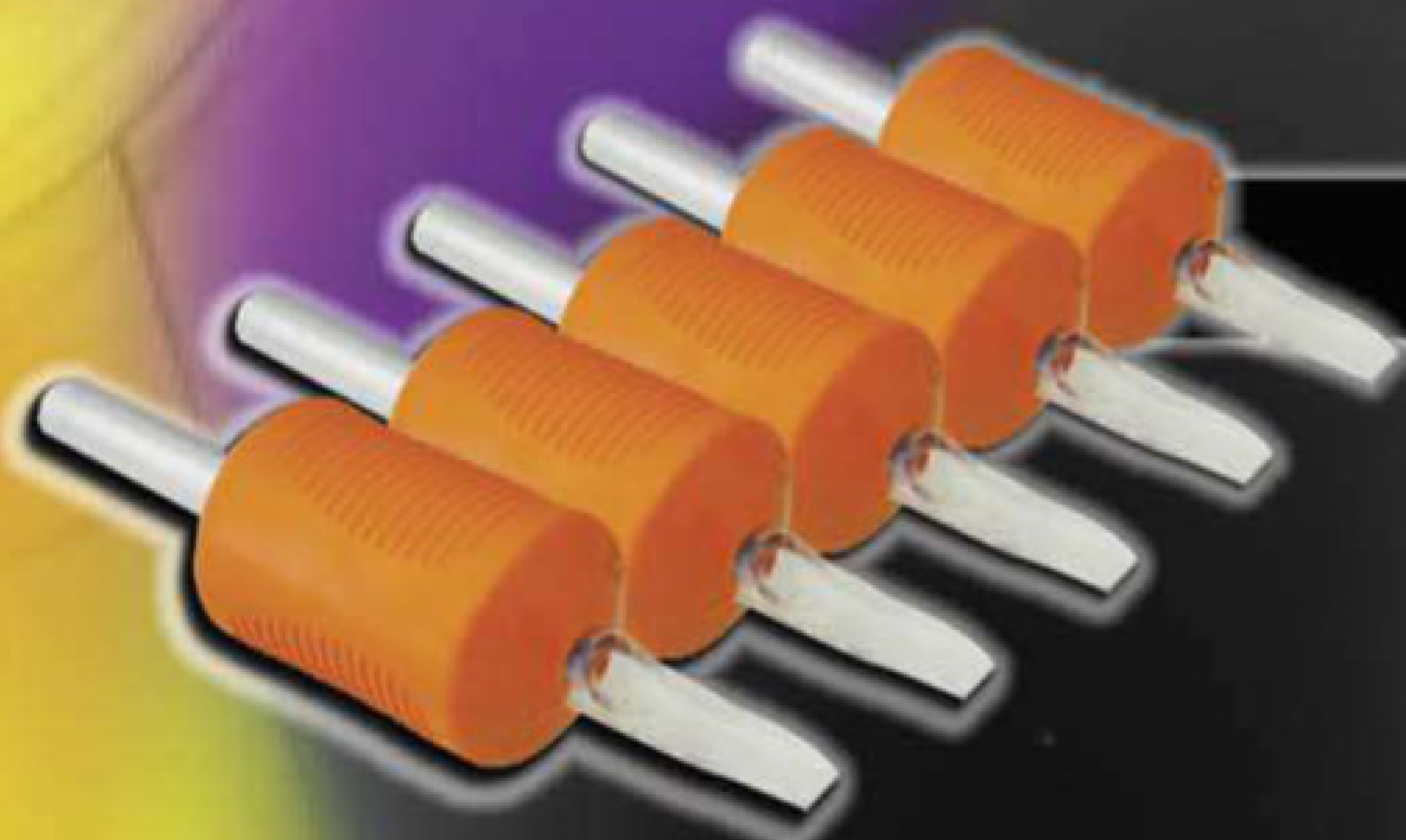
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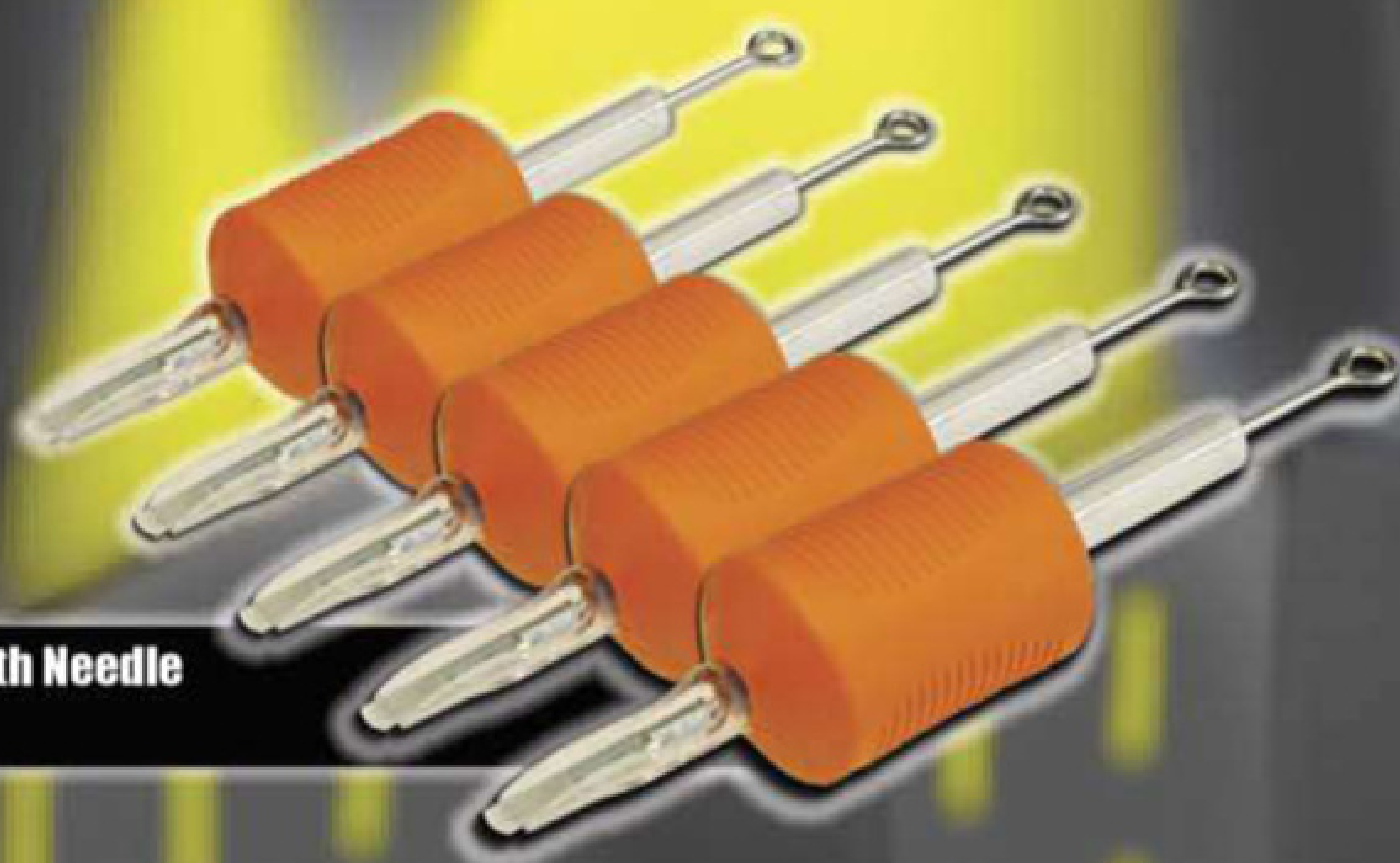
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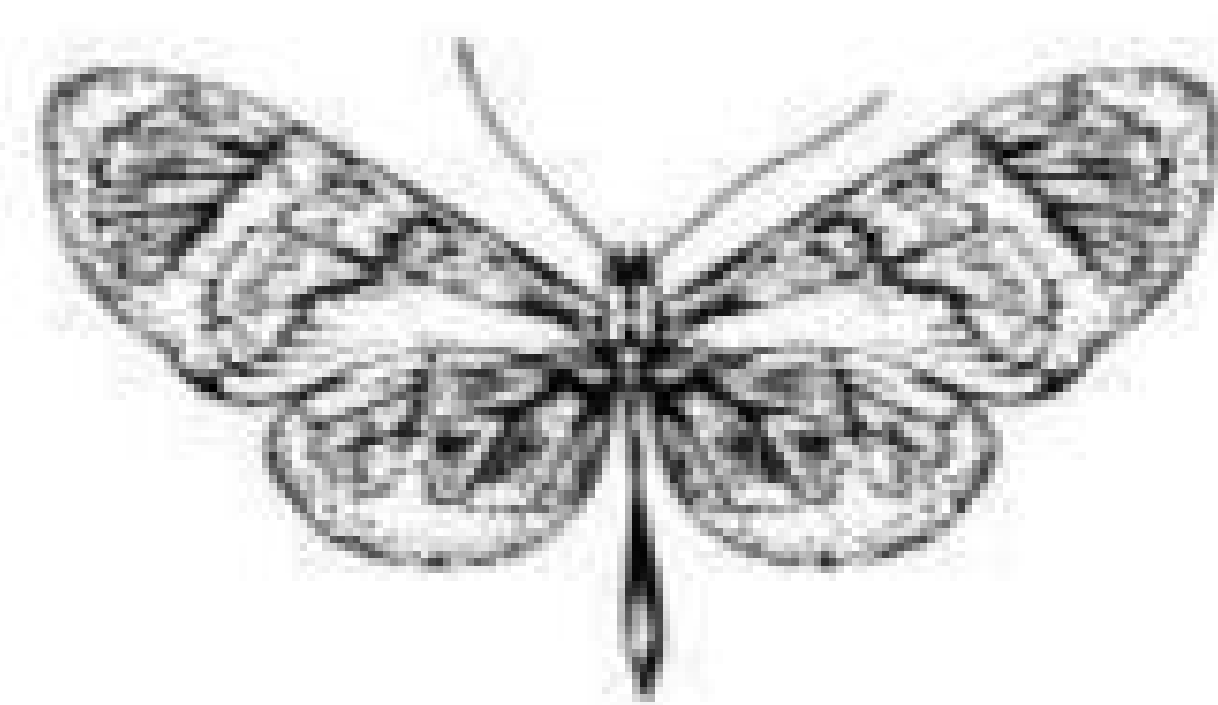


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Laura

Laura Jane is 25 and is from Perth, Australia. She lives in an area called Mount Lawley, which is almost like the Brick Lane of London, but not quite as “wanky”. However, if you didn’t know anyone in Perth, it would come across as being the kind of place you might not enjoy or appreciate

Places like Mount Lawley are slightly off the tourist track. Apparently, and much to the dismay of many residents of Perth, *Lonely Planet* portrayed the city in a harsh light and failed to properly do Perth justice. But Mount Lawley is the place to be, and Laura Jane knows just about everyone in this bohemian part of the city.

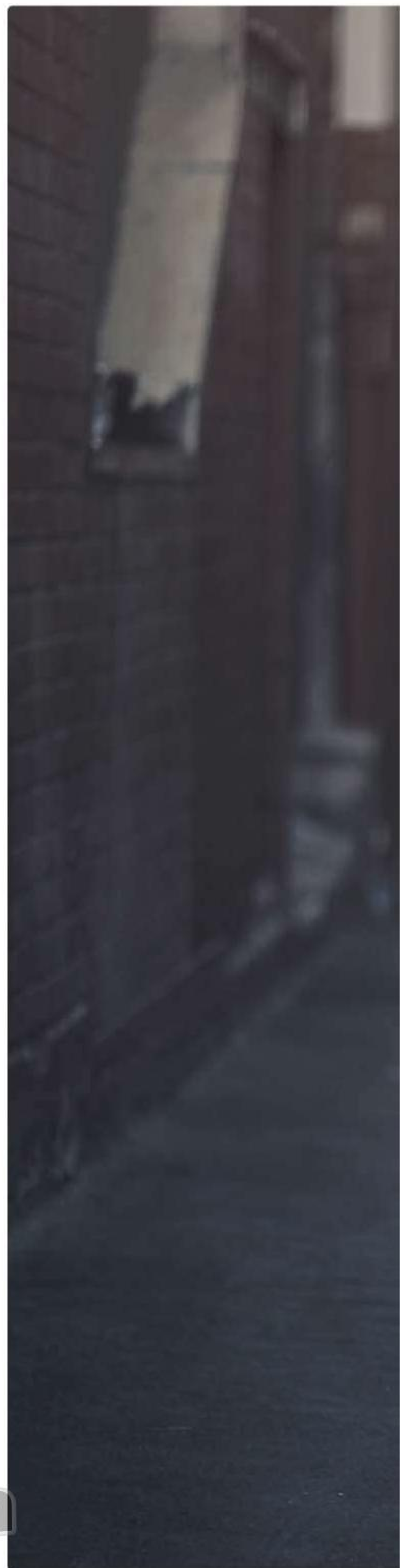
After finishing school, Laura Jane decided to not go onto university, however, she did spend time doing vocational courses at TAFE (Training and Further Education) in graphic design—and also at the time thought she wanted to go into interior design, but that has since changed. Laura Jane wants to always be doing ‘hands-on’ work, but despite her artistic sensibilities she doesn’t feel like she is good enough at drawing to become a tattoo artist.

So, Laura Jane took to hairdressing. She has now been working as a hairdresser for a number of years and just recently her hairdressing career has really taken off. “I guess the really

big news is that I’m moving to Toronto. I just got published in a Russian hair magazine and I was a finalist for the Australian Hair Fashion Awards Men’s Hairdresser of the Year in 2013. I’m entering a load of competitions this year and did three more individual collections last year.”

Laura Jane is hoping that Toronto will be a great base for furthering her career, but she’s quick to add that she will miss Perth tremendously. “I’m having to leave Stooze, my cat, here with my old housemates because he’s now 15 years old. He was originally the next door neighbours’ cat (of my dad and stepmum) and then they adopted him. He had his head run over about ten years ago in the same week my grandfather died. It was a pretty traumatic time. He disappeared for a week, then came back all skinny and covered in dried blood with a fractured skull. Now he looks uncannily like my grandfather... Well, I think so.

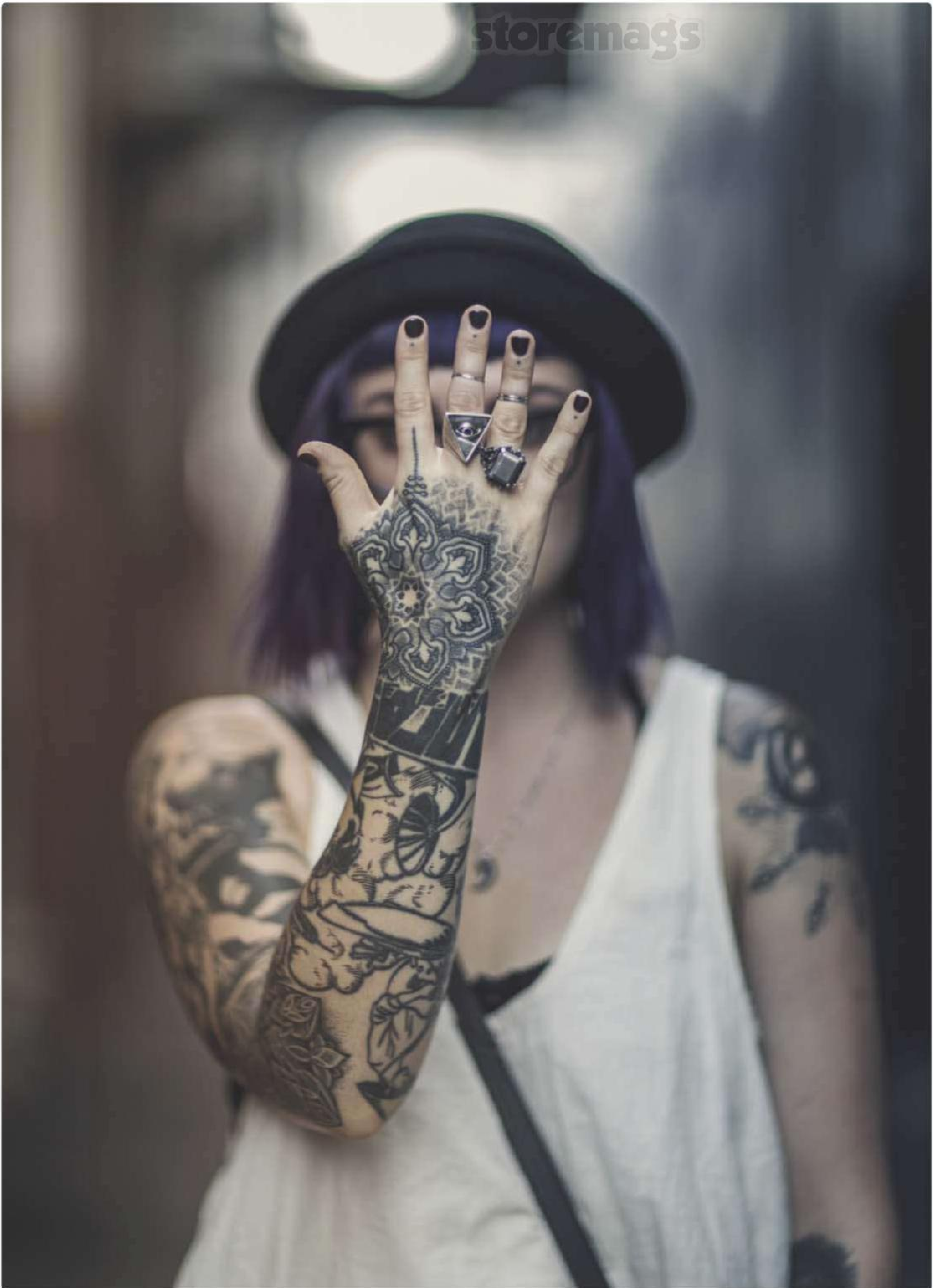
“Then I adopted him about seven or eight years ago and he’s been in two shared houses 🐾”

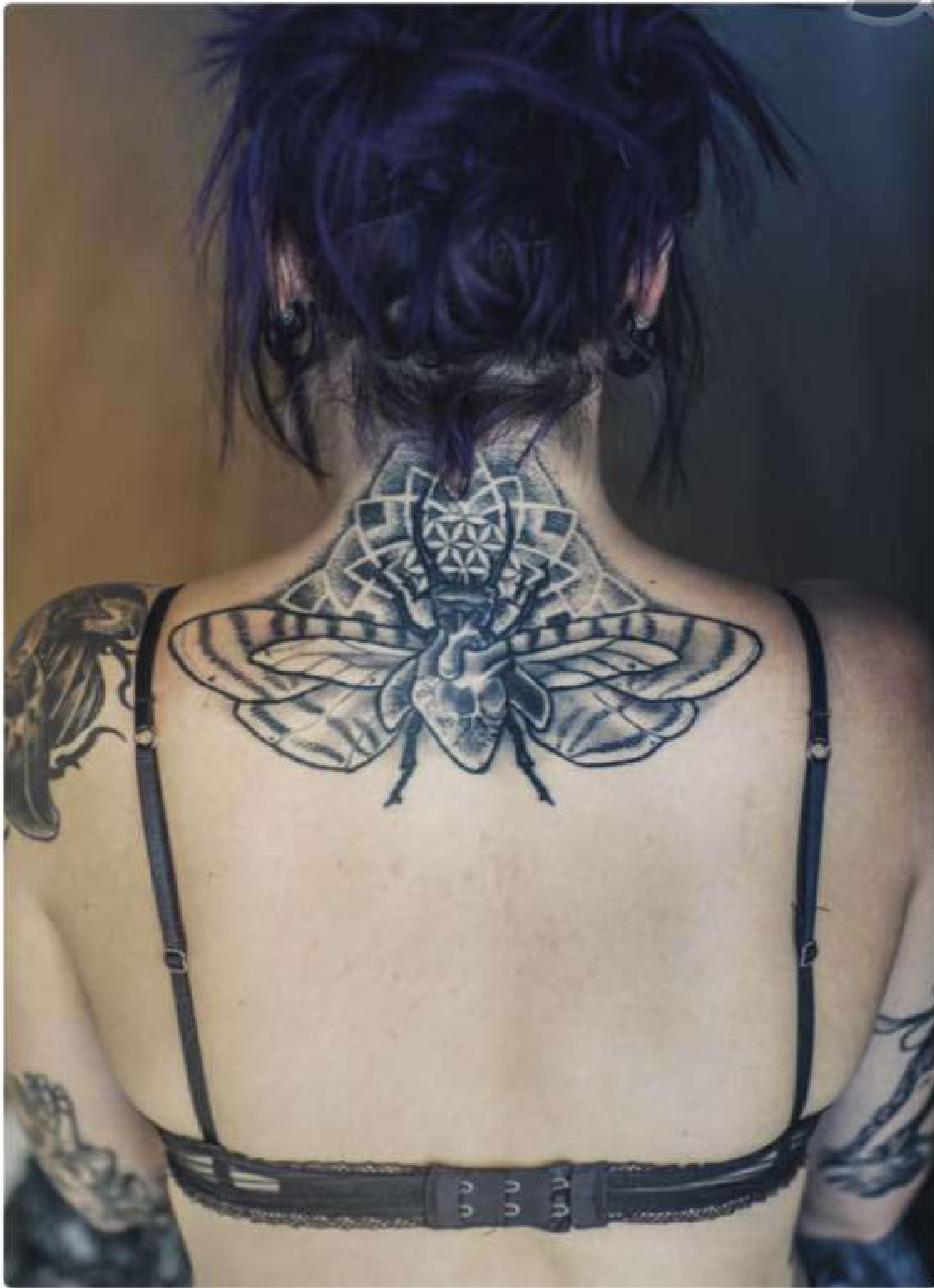




IT'S A VERY BOLD STATEMENT BECAUSE IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE HEAVILY TATTOOED, PEOPLE ARE GOING TO SEE THEM. BUT YOU DON'T GET THEM FOR OTHER PEOPLE, YOU GET THEM FOR YOURSELF

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with me, and all my friends and housemates have adored him. He's a crotchety old cunt, and I love him. Anyway, to cut a long story short, I asked my friend, Stacey Anne, if she'd be keen to tattoo him on my kneecap. She was stoked and did so for a hair trade—friends in the industry!"

The first tattoo Laura Jane ever got was of Alice in Wonderland, and it was on her 21st birthday. It is taken from the first ever edition of the book, which was illustrated beautifully by Sir John Tenniel; it shows Alice holding a flamingo. Laura Jane has always had the drawing up in her room ever since she was a child and was always taken with it, particularly the way the flamingo is looking at Alice. Getting tattooed was never a problem in terms of what her family would think. Her Dad has a few tattoos, and she recalls that he always found women that looked different to be the most interesting, so Laura Jane felt very

confident about getting her first tattoo. The tattoo is on her leg and is in black and grey. Alice's feet rest on Laura Jane's ankle.

I've known Laura Jane for a number of years now, after meeting her on a Facebook page I'd dedicated to my love of Maggie from the Love and Rockets comics. She once posted a photo of a Love and Rockets tattoo she was having done on her arm and it was the tattoo which led to mine and Laura Jane's friendship. It is also her largest tattoo and is still in the process of being filled in with mandalas by Ryan Smith, one of her best friends and a great tattoo artist she often gets tattooed by. She was introduced to Love and Rockets—a comic written and drawn by the Hernandez Brothers, Jaime and Gilbert—when she was 14, and immediately fell in love with it. To this day she continually returns to the comics, particularly the work of Jaime. He has a beautiful and simple outlook

MY APPROACH TO TATTOOING IS SIMPLE. I PICK AN ARTIST WHOSE WORK I LIKE, CHOOSE A SUBJECT MATTER THEY DO WELL, AND A SPOT ON MYSELF I THINK WOULD WORK - THEN I JUST LET THEM RUN WITH IT

on life, and his work with only black ink portrays this perfectly. LJ wanted to immortalise her feelings for Love and Rockets by having a half-sleeve tattooed on her forearm. She and her tattoo artist chose various images, particularly from the early 'Mechanics' comics, and arranged them into a stunning mural.

On the inside of each of her calves, she has two praying children. They were inspired by a book of nursery rhymes, illustrated by Janet and Anne 🌸

Grahame-Johnstone, that her very close friend Colleen found in a charity shop. The book was also particularly biblical and reminded Laura Jane of her father, who is a Christian. Beneath the praying children, and in order to not give the impression of them 'hovering' on her legs, LJ has had further tattoos done just beneath them. These designs are also taken from the same picture of the children, but come from the border around them.

On Laura Jane's hand is a bee. It was the third tattoo she ever got. This tattoo represents where LJ is from. There was a "paste-up" on a wall that showed a swarm of bees that LJ had been seeing for years on her walks around Mount Lawley. The ever-decreasing population of bees in the world has also saddened her and so she decided to get one tattooed on her hand. When she first met her present partner, she was delighted to discover that he had a cicada tattooed on the inside of his arm.

"I was tattooed by Liam Sparkes early last year while I was in London. I told him he could pretty much do what he liked. I had an idea for a deep sea jellyfish and he just made it weird and awesome for me. I was also lucky enough to get a piece by Scott Move on the same trip. I asked him if he'd like to do a little crabby with a castle shell, and he was stoked on the idea and drew me



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I JUST GOT PUBLISHED IN A RUSSIAN HAIR MAGAZINE AND I WAS A FINALIST FOR THE AUSTRALIAN HAIR FASHION AWARDS MEN'S HAIRDRESSER OF THE YEAR IN 2013



up a gnarly little beast. He is a lovely and genuine guy and I really enjoyed the experience.

"My shoulder was done by a girlfriend of mine here in Perth, Kat Abdy, as a thank you gift for taking her from red to blonde for her wedding. I'm about to get tattooed by Pari Corbitt next week, another amazing artist we have here in Perth.

"My approach to tattooing is simple. I pick an artist whose work I like, choose a subject matter they do well, and a spot on myself I think would work. And then I just let them run with it. There's no point trying to

dictate to an artist exactly what you want and how you want it. You are commissioning a piece from them because they're amazing at what they do. I like to get an original design, where their artistic process hasn't been interrupted or compromised.

"Tattoos are becoming more socially acceptable and the stigmas attached to them are starting to lose credibility. It's a very bold statement because if you're going to be heavily tattooed, people are going to see them. But you don't get them for other people, you get them for yourself." 🐛

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Tattoo vixens



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SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW Amanda West

This month, we figured we might try a different slant with our cover model interviews. Amanda West needs no introduction around here, so let's get down to the good stuff...

YOU TOLD ME ONCE THAT NOBODY WANTS TO HEAR ABOUT BOOK-KEEPING—AND YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT—BUT DO YOU KEEP REAL BOOKS? LIKE, PAPERBACKS? IT'S HARD FINDING READERS THESE DAYS—WHAT WAS THE LAST BOOK YOU READ (AND YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE 'BOOK-KEEPING FOR DUMMIES'—THAT'S NOT A BOOK)

I have always loved reading. I have a lot of books. Mostly crime and horror, but a few 19th century novels too. My favourite author has been Dean Koontz for years. He comes under the horror banner but I feel he's more crime-y really. I do like crime. Val McDermid is a good read too. Sadly, these days, work and kids and sleep come first, so I haven't

read a book of my choice for a very long time.

The last book I actually read was *Here Comes Mumfie* by Katherine Tozer. It's a book that was a favourite of mine as a child; my mum used to read it to me when I was little. I recently read it to my kids as it has a Christmas theme and is about a toy elephant who comes to life. They made it into a TV series in the '70s. Since I lost my mother quite recently, I just wanted to pass on my love of this book to my kids. They loved it. The result? 'Dear Father Christmas, can I have a toy Mumfie please?' Oh lord! A plush toy from the 1970s? Let's say I had to improvise and do a little sewing work for that one...

DO YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS, THE SUPERNATURAL AND OTHER RELATED SPOOKY PARAPHERNALIA, OR IS IT ALL



NOTHING MORE THAN AN EPISODE OF SCOOBY DOO FOR YOU?

I don't really go around consciously believing in ghosts but I don't disbelieve. I know a lot of reliable people who have seen things that can't be ruled out as normal occurrences—one of those people being my own very own, no nonsense Grandmother! I can't believe that something as complex as a person's entire personality can just disappear and have had no reason for being. People are too individual and animated for that.

I don't really think too much about it though as it could turn me back into the goth I once was! 🍷

Mr Smith: Scott Cole • Model: Amanda West
Makeup: Amy Jade Hill Jewellery: Rebellion



Tattoo Vixens

TALKING OF SCOOPY DOO—WHEN MY KIDS WERE SMALL, IT WAS HARD FINDING GOOD CARTOONS ON THE TV THAT WE COULD SHARE—I'M GUESSING IT HASN'T GOT ANY BETTER OUT THERE. SHARK DOCUMENTARIES WERE POPULAR THOUGH... DID/DO YOU EVER USE THE TV AS AN EXTRA PAIR OF HANDS?

TV can be useful at desperate times, but to be honest, I am usually out with my children, having fun [Thanks for making me feel bad Amanda! Ed.] or doing homework or reading. When I do allow TV, I prefer it to be a movie or something with a proper story to get absorbed into. Cartoons lack something. It's just fast, cheap thrills. Like fast food. No nourishment. Luckily, both my kids seem to be adopting my love for books, so they're not really too fussed about whether they see TV or not. They play together really well, so I'm lucky. They seem to employ their brains and imaginations a lot of the time.

DOES EYELINER ALWAYS NEED TO BE RE-APPLIED DAILY OR IS DAY TWO OF THE EYELINER FAR SUPERIOR IN EVERY WAY. I SPEAK FROM EXPERIENCE...

I apply eyeliner daily of course. NEVER SLEEP IN MAKEUP! Even when super drunk. It's something I can't bear... although it has happened on very rare occasion. Fresh looking makeup is a must. Especially in an industry, where how you look does get scrutinised... whether we like it or not.

WHAT UNGODLY HOUR OF THE DAY DO YOU HAVE TO GET UP THESE DAYS? CAN YOU STILL TAKE THE PACE OF THE LATE NIGHTS? THERE'S NOT MUCH CHOICE WHEN YOU NEED TO GET THINGS DONE IS THERE?

I like to try and get up at 6.30am, but 7am is fine. I can usually get myself sorted and get the kids out on time that way. I'm definitely not too great at late nights at the moment. It comes in fits and



starts. Last year my mate Jim and I were out every Saturday night for over three months. I coped well, but how I survived, I don't know. I think I was just excited to be out dancing, which I still love. I just want to sleep more in winter generally, I think. I'm looking forward to my next burst of energy. Going out with friends is such a treat. I really love that when I get the chance.

Of course, I still have to be awake for the children, so common sense when drinking is usually employed.

IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY—LIKE, FILTHY STINKING RICH LOTTERY—IS THERE MUCH OF YOUR LIFE THAT YOU'D ACTUALLY GIVE UP? YOU SEEM TO BE PRETTY HAPPY OUT THERE, BUT MONEY... IT CAN CHANGE EVEN THE BEST OF US.

The lottery question is a thing I talk about sometimes actually—even though I'm not a lottery player or fan. It would mean an amazing change for my career. Oh God—I would do the most amazingly priced, yet huge tattoos, just for fun. I could probably tempt people into really





exciting pieces, just because, earning a living would be out of the equation. Needing to earn a living can be the really balls side of tattooing. It's such a fun job but dealing with cancellations and paperwork because you have to, is something I'd love to eliminate. More time to relax and enjoy the best bits of my job would be the result of a lottery win!

HOW'S YOUR LOVE OF HEAVY METAL SHAPING UP NOW WITH KIDS AROUND THE PLACE? MINE ARE GETTING OLDER NOW BUT

WE STILL HAVE TO MIX UP KATY PERRY WITH ROB ZOMBIE IN THE CAR. IT'S THE LAW. WE DO HAVE COMMON GROUND IN NICKELBACK THOUGH WHICH I CAN LIVE WITH... HOW ARE THINGS IN YOUR CAR?

I still love metal and since getting back to the gym, I have been listening to it when I work out. In the rest of my life, though, it's some rock (my kids love grunge/rock music) and a lot of dodgy hip hop. I'm fairly eclectic really. My latest love is the Africaans, superstar rapper, Jack Parow (or Zander Tyler, as he's really named).

This guy is great. It's just comedy and the music is just the kind of sound I enjoy. Sadly, Parow is never played in clubs in the UK. He's really best known in South Africa. Although his lyrics are very explicit, he did release a couple of clean versions of his albums Jack Parow & Eksie Ou. I was really happy because my kids love him. Another artist I enjoy, in a more serious capacity, is Kendrick Lamar. He's one of the first people, to make a recent album that actually grabbed my attention other than Jack. Most of my music is stuck in the '90s.

I DID A SEARCH FOR OTHER AMANDA WEST'S ONLINE. THERE'S A FEW OF YOU OUT THERE. HERE'S ONE FOR YOU: AMANDA WEST IS THE GLOBAL HEAD OF INNOVATION AT REUTERS. SHE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INNOVATION AND EXPERIMENTATION, IDENTIFYING TRANSFORMATIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE REUTERS GROUP. GIVEN THAT WHAT YOU DO IS TECHNICALLY NOT ACHIEVABLE IN A DAY (BUT ROLL WITH IT HYPOTHETICALLY)—WOULD YOU CHANGE JOBS WITH HER FOR THAT DAY? HEAD OF INNOVATION AT REUTERS? HOW HARD CAN THAT BE? FANCY YOUR CHANCES OR SACKED BEFORE THE DAY IS OUT? ACTUALLY, THERE'S ANOTHER AMANDA WEST HERE—WWW.AMANDAWESTMUSIC.COM—WHAT DO YOU THINK? A LITTLE BIT TOO HIPPIY FOR MY TASTE, BUT WOULD YOU TAKE A TRADE FOR A DAY? SONGWRITING OVER TATTOOING? JUST TO SEE WHAT IT WAS LIKE?

Ha! There are many other Amanda Wests! One is a porn star. This fact distressed me for a while, as I was afraid of mistaken identity. Actually, we look nothing alike. Thank God!

As for the Head of Innovation, that would be fine for me in most fields. I do like to be inventive and innovative but usually it's jokes, pranks, wordplay and the occasional serious thing. Finance, however, can 'do one'. I could never be involved in the world of finance to that extent. It isn't the right kind 🌻



of innovative, for me. Also very stressful, I should imagine. I think in that sort of job, I would put a lot of pressure on myself, constantly. I could see a breakdown on the horizon in a job like that. I work pretty hard as it is, but certain things turn me into a monster over achiever and perfectionist. Tattooing seems to keep things fun and level for me and stops me getting quite as crazy about academic things. Being academic didn't make me happy, so I ditched it a bit and thought less. Ignorance truly IS bliss sometimes.

As for the musical Amanda

West, that'd be fine. I have a bit of a musical background. I used to play a few instruments. Mostly the violin. I loved music but gave it up for art. I'd happily go back to it. Music and wordplay are two things I enjoy greatly. Writing songs is fun. I would probably write poetry. Actually, if I won the lottery, I could take more time off tattooing and do that!

BY YOUR OWN ADMISSION (CERTAINLY NOT MINE) YOU WOULD TERM YOURSELF AS "BEING IN THE GAME A LONG TIME". IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU MISS ABOUT '90S

TATTOOING ASIDE FROM PEOPLE CUTTING CUSTOM HOLES IN THEIR CLOTHES (WHICH AMAZINGLY DOES STILL HAPPEN—AND IS SOMETIMES MUCH PREFERABLE TO THE NAKED FRAME WHEN JUDGING AT CONVENTIONS). ACTUALLY, DID YOU EVER THINK WE WOULD END UP HERE? IN THIS PLACE OF ALWAYS PUSHING FOR EXCELLENCE AS OPPOSED TO TATTOOING FOR TATTOO'S SAKE?

The world of tattoos is crazy different now. The main thing that I take from being old and tattooing in the 1990s is black! Always try to use black—or some dark colour contrast because in five to ten years, when all the light colours disappear, the black is still there—holding the piece together. There's a beautiful bit of the '90s for you, but other than that, the '90s can bugger off.

Tattooing now is incredible. Every day I feel like I'm just about keeping up with general populous, but it's hard. There's a lot of amazing talent now and it's great to see and to get it tattooed on myself. I love feeling like I have so much to learn still—it makes things more exciting, every time you feel like you've made an advancement of any kind.

LAST ONE! AND I'LL MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE... THERE MUST BE THINGS ON YOUR WISHLIST OF THINGS TO TATTOO THAT YOU STILL HAVEN'T DONE YET. NAME THEM. WISH-FULFILLMENT IS OUR BUSINESS AND BUSINESS IS, ER... ONGOING!

This is tricky. One is a realistic bacon rose. Rashers for petals. Maybe a meat bouquet? It's ridiculous, but James O'Driscoll, you know where I am. That tattoo has to be yours my friend! Probably more animal morphs. Animals with different heads and bodies or similar. I did start a sleeve like this on a friend but he's been too busy to finish it. I love birds as well. Anything bird-related is good. I've had a lot of bird things tattooed on myself because I love how crazy birds look. More bird-related things and animal morphs—result! 🐦



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FINE TATTOO ART

RIPLEY'S GAME

A little while ago, we bumped into Ian Robert McKown at the Paradise Tattoo Gathering in Colorado... we got to talking about Gabriel Ripley (owner of tattooonow.com and engineer of said Paradise show amongst others) and Ian said he would really like to interview him to see what makes him tick and where he came from. What's a man going to do but hand over the pen...

Over the past couple of years I've had the good fortune of working for, and at times alongside, Gabriel Ripley—owner and operator of Off The Map Tattoo (three locations including their newest in Milan, Italy), tattooonow.com, as well as the man behind the Paradise Tattoo Gatherings, Paradise Artist Retreats and the World Wide Tattoo Conference. His shops boast an impressive list of national and international guest artists as well as turning out world class resident tattooers. Given how much he has helped to promote quality artists and tattoos I felt it was about time someone picked his brain a little.

WHAT WAS YOUR INTRODUCTION INTO TATTOOS AND TATTOOING?

The first tattoos I remember were on my mom's boyfriend. I got my first tattoo from a biker shop in New Haven, CT in 1992—just a tad underage. I couldn't afford the parrot, so I got the dove... on my ankle. I thought I was tough! It took a few tattoos to realise



I was supposed to find a great artist—and then it took a few more to figure out how to get good tattoos from a good artist. I've lasered off my first 10–12 years of tattoos. The tattoos weren't horrifying necessarily, but I have access to some of the very best tattooers these days so anything that isn't fantastic is coming off.

FROM SOME OF OUR DISCUSSIONS I GATHER THAT YOU'VE BEEN INTO COMPUTERS AND PROGRAMMING FOR THE MAJORITY OF YOUR LIFE. HOW DID TATTOONOW COME ABOUT, AND CAN YOU

GIVE US A BIT ABOUT WHAT SERVICES IT PROVIDES?

I've been programming computers since I was eight. In my late teens and early 20s I would use freelance programming money to subsidise my own time, and around 2000 it became clear that the tattoo websites were very effective. In an effort to fund TattooNOW, I wrote a professional business plan. The banks all loved it and would fund it—if I had collateral. So while I was reminded that it took money to make money and the system isn't set up for poor white trash, I had a clear



WHILE I WAS REMINDED THAT IT TOOK MONEY TO MAKE MONEY AND THE SYSTEM ISN'T SET UP FOR POOR WHITE TRASH, I HAD A CLEAR BLUEPRINT TO A GREAT BUSINESS

blueprint to a great business.

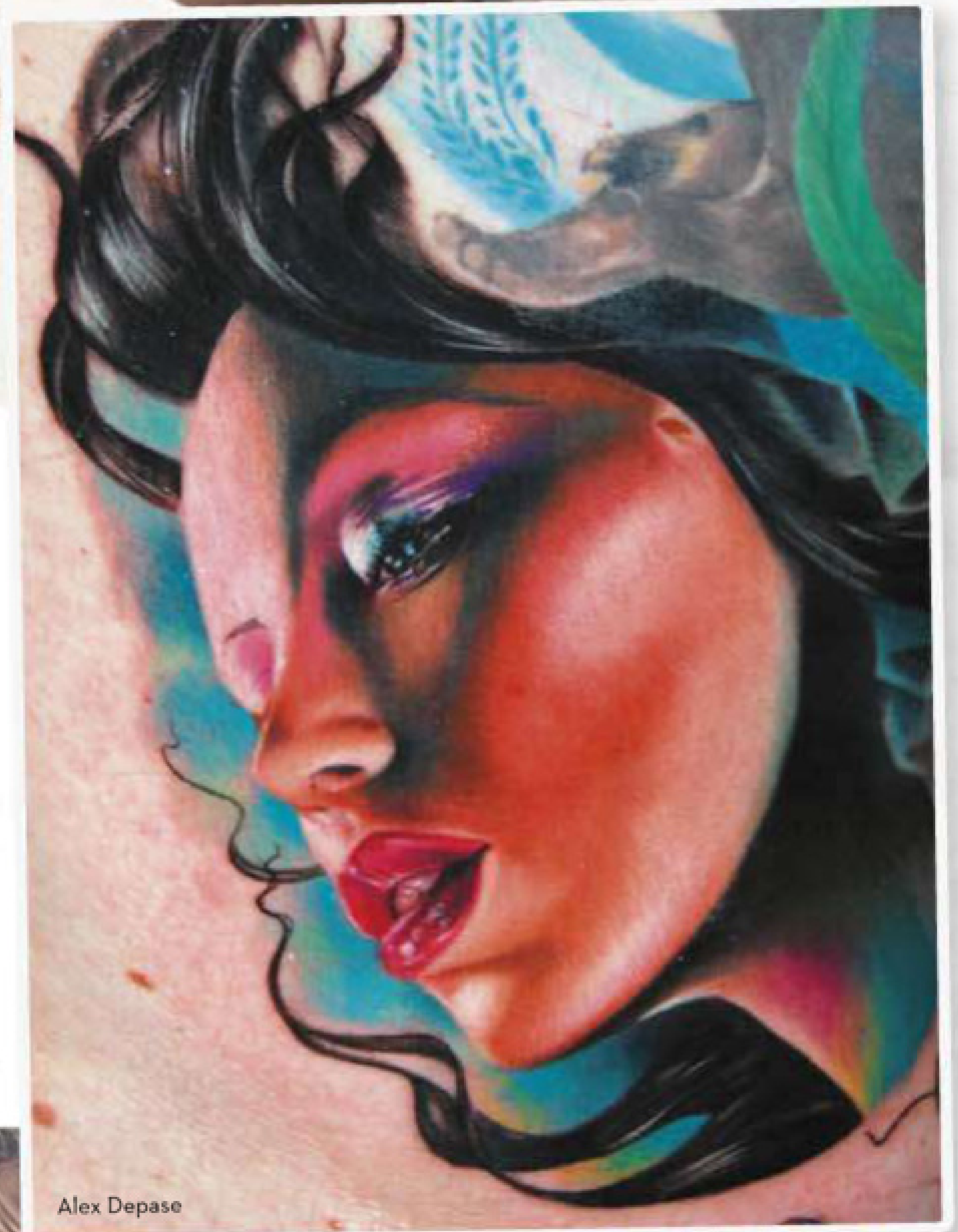
So, instead of getting 125k to hire people and fund the business, we had to build it with sweat equity. A very daunting task, but I was already working with some amazing talent—Nick Baxter. com is our oldest active website and I had seen the success our websites could fuel. We are finally wrapping up some of the details from that first business plan written over ten years ago.

We currently offer high traffic websites, mobile apps, and professional development for tattooers, studios, and conventions.

HOW DID OFF THE MAP TATTOO COME ABOUT AND HOW WAS/ HAS IT BEEN RECEIVED?

When OTM was started, TattooNOW.com was getting over one million unique visitors a month. I had a great network of quality tattoo artists who trusted that my hard work would benefit them. My wife and friends helped, I had a few silent partners who put in sweat equity building the place and investment money. A

bank loan and credit cards filled in the gaps. For the first few years, TattooNOW was where I got paid. Our opening received a mixed reaction by the industry. Of course, we always had die-hard TattooNOW fans that supported the shop, but the locals would ask things like if we used new needles. We barely had our shit together at first, and we're more well-known outside of our local area than around here! But right 🌻



Alex Depase



from the beginning, there has been a lot of great support from many of the world's most talented tattooers. We take our cues from them and they have helped Off the Map grow into the shop it is today.

WERE YOU AT ALL CONCERNED AT FIRST ABOUT—LITERALLY—BEING OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE?

I suppose success is for others to judge. I was never concerned about being in the middle of nowhere. It was a tad brash, but I knew from the amount of interest we could generate from our websites that having a quieter place free from big city (or big town) distractions would work.

At first I was concerned about very little, as the shop I had worked with starting up TattooNOW grew to 13 full-time artists, but then I found out how different starting a shop as a non-tattooer was! However, I had

I SUPPOSE SUCCESS IS FOR OTHERS TO JUDGE. I WAS NEVER CONCERNED ABOUT BEING IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

seen the end product, and knew that we would get back there.

YOU SEMI-RECENTLY TOOK OVER OPERATION OF JEFF GOGUE'S SHOP IN OREGON. HOW DID ALL OF THAT COME ABOUT?

A few years ago Alex De Pase contacted me about contacting an artist or two to teach at the first Worldwide Tattoo Conference in Rome. As I was replying and connecting him, I joked that if he wanted someone to teach a business and marketing class, I'd love too. He said that would be great, and the other teachers were Jeff Gogue, Boris, Nick Baxter, and himself. I just about crapped myself! Anyways, after stressing about my seminar for months, I taught the class for over 200 tattooers in Italy. After I was done, Jeff asked if we wanted to partner with him out in Oregon, and of course, we were happy to have the opportunity! It has been going great, having Jeff as a part of the company is amazing. He sets the bar so high! It has been an amazing experiment and couldn't be going better as far as I'm concerned.

WHAT'S GOING TO BE THE NEXT MOVE FOR OFF THE MAP TATTOO?

The next natural step is Europe—Alex De Pase and Off the Map are partnering to open a location there March 21 2014. Already slated for the opening party are Jeff, Oleg Turanskiey, Kynst, Bez, David Cordon, Nate Beavers, Nathan Kostechko, Matteo Passquilin, and Ralf Nallwier. We will have limited edition seating for seminars the few days beforehand, it's



Stefano Alcantara



Remis

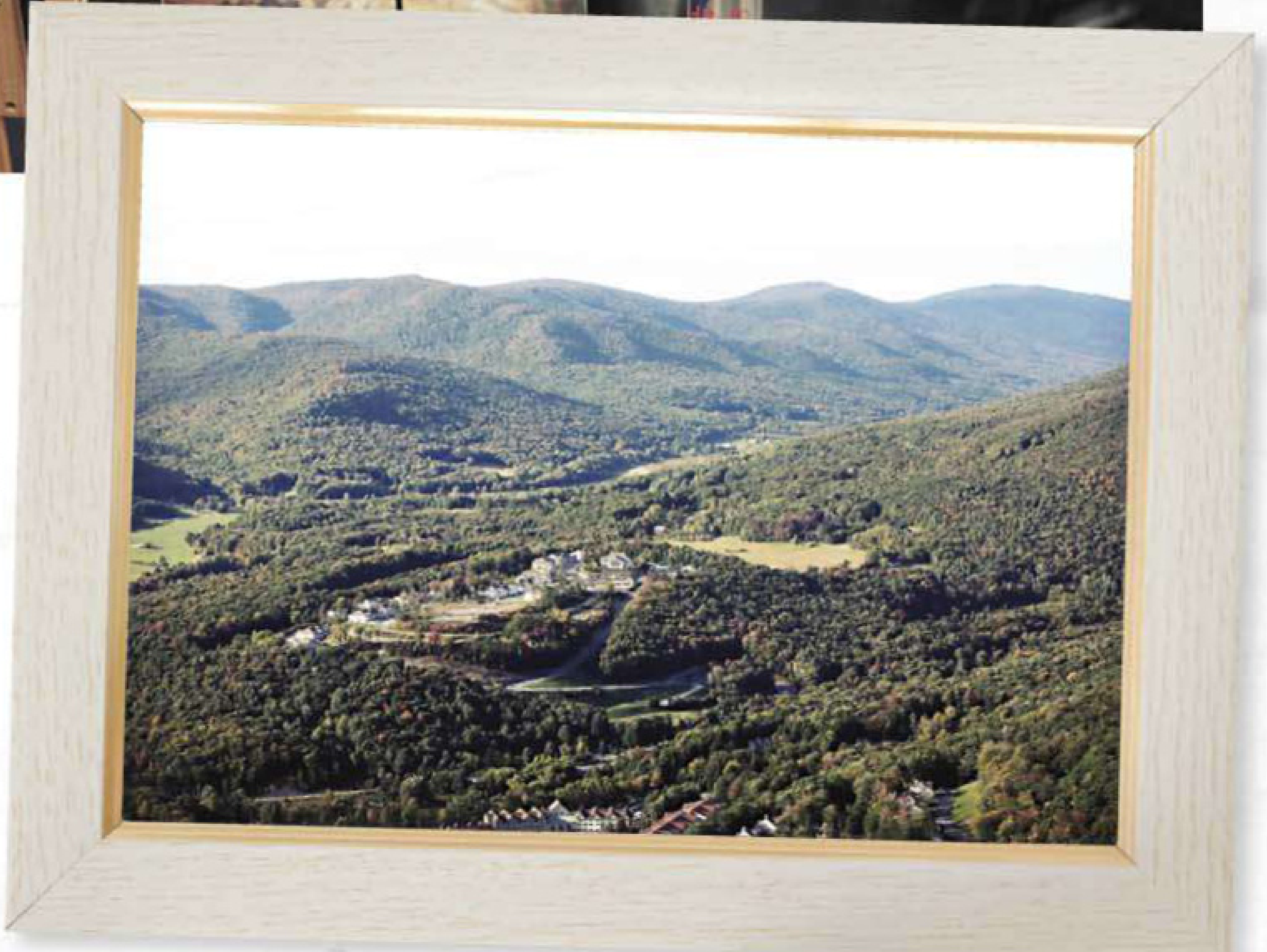


I HAVE WORKED LONG AND HARD IN A POSITIVE MANNER FOR TATTOOING, AND TO BE TOLD THAT I AM PART OF THE PROBLEM CERTAINLY ISN'T FUN

going to be a great tax write-off for artists... just saying!

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON BEING A NON-TATTOOER IN THE INDUSTRY AND SOME OF THE ISSUES YOU'VE HAD TO DEAL WITH REGARDING THAT ON YOUR END?

The biggest issue was/is owning a tattoo shop and not practising the art. I never made a tattooer's income, and for years didn't draw money from the shop because there was no extra. It was a deliberate move, and we didn't open the shop until I could rely on TattooNOW. In this way I was already immersed in the tattoo world, so all my energies were going in the same direction. It is frustrating when tattooers don't think I could have the arts best intentions at heart. I have worked long and hard in a positive



manner for tattooing, and to be told that I am part of the problem certainly isn't fun. Tattooing people would certainly be an easier job than what I carved out for myself! I am sure of my place though and take advice from some of the industries most smart and talented tattooers, and even some advice from outside the tattoo world.

I've been told I am a capitalist with an altruistic facade, which I find amusing because I am the

most hippie left wing progressive bleeding heart businessperson you'll meet. Whatever. In the long run, my intentions are obvious and not hidden. Of all the criticisms thrown at me, being dishonest or sneaky will never stick. I've been accused of kissing rock star tattooers' ass, or licking ass as they say in Italy. It's sad—what my accusers don't understand is the folks I work and am friends with may be immensely popular tattooers, but they don't fuck 🍌

around. They are honest, no bullshit hard workers. Everyone's kissing their ass, and they work with me because I give them the respect they have earned, working hard with them to produce results. In short, if I kissed their ass they wouldn't do business with me.

FROM WHAT I'VE COME TO KNOW OVER THE YEARS, YOU'RE A MAN OF STRONG PRINCIPLES. HOW MUCH DO YOUR OWN IDEAS AND ETHICS GUIDE YOUR BUSINESS DECISIONS? DO YOU FEEL IT'S IMPORTANT FOR ARTISTS TO KEEP THEIR PUBLIC/ SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCES AS PALATABLE TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS THEY CAN, OR SHOULD THEY OFFER A MORE PERSONAL PERSONA FOR THEIR CLIENTS TO KNOW AND WORK WITH?

FOR ME, IT'S ALL WRAPPED UP TOGETHER. I WOULD NEVER EXPECT ANYONE TO WITHHOLD OR CENSOR HIS OR HER OPINION ONLINE OR OFFLINE



Bob Tyrell



Nearly 100%. The only reason I would make a business decision that isn't in alignment with my morals/principals is to spite myself—which I do on occasion. But seriously, I don't separate out a business persona and a political persona and a social one. For me, it's all wrapped up together. I would never expect anyone to

the more accessible someone's ideas and actions are, the wider the net they can cast is and the less people they'll piss off. Whether an artist should hold back/let it all out is up to them. It depends on what they have inside, and what they want to be known for. If someone where a jerk on the inside, I

withhold or censor his or her opinion online or offline, and I try to be true to who I am in any medium. I am probably vocal and opinionated to a fault. Certainly

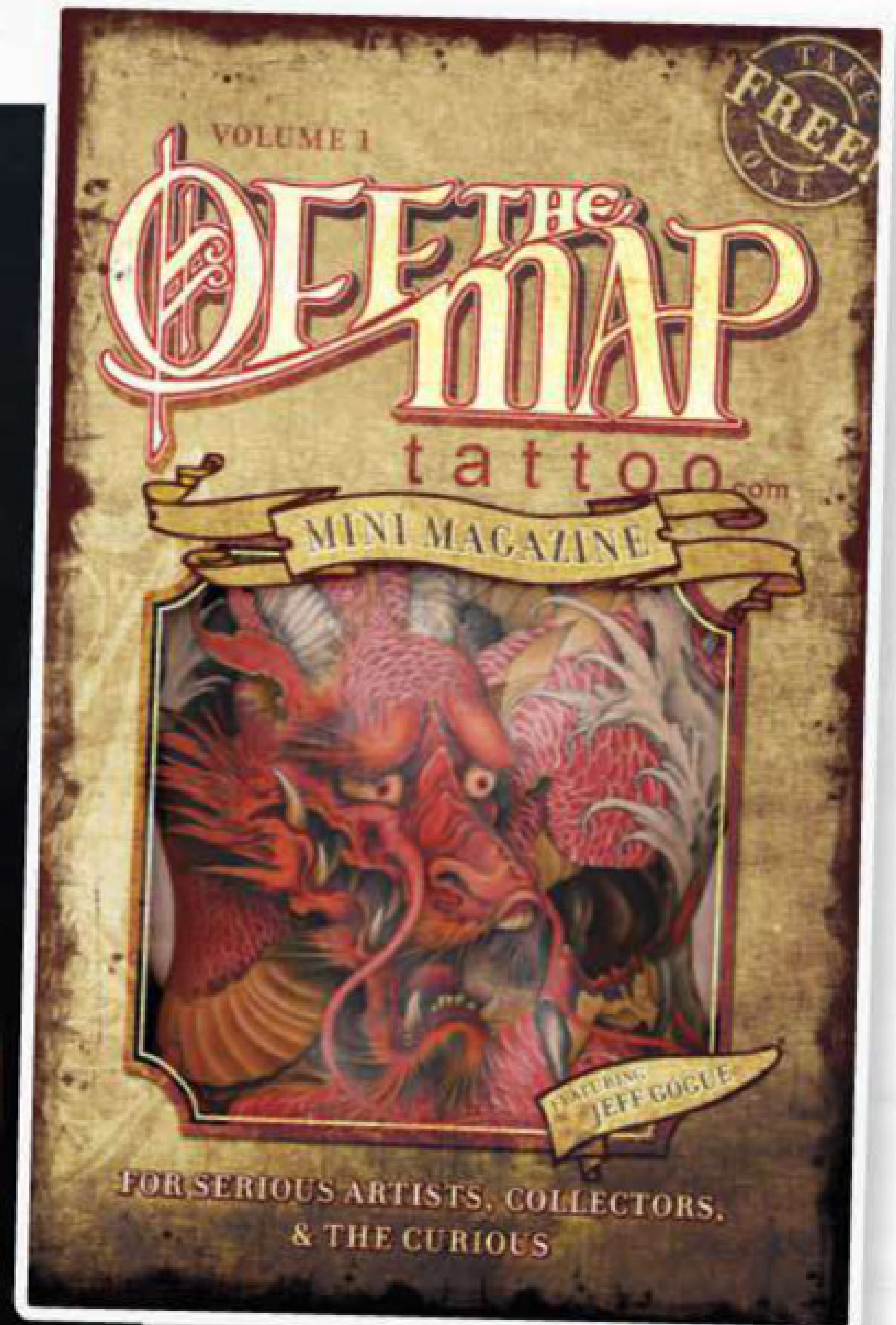
would not necessarily advise not posting their honest thoughts online, but not being a jerk.

THE PARADISE TATTOO GATHERINGS AND ARTIST RETREATS HAVE BECOME ONE OF THE YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS FOR ARTISTS AROUND THE WORLD. WHAT IS THE IDEA BEHIND THESE EVENTS?

As a company, we spent the last few years going nuts with our events. They are a lot of fun; an amazing energy is created and expanded. The Tattoo Gathering gets together like-minded artists, clients, and the curious out in the largest numbers we can muster. The Art Retreat has everyone leaving behind their machines



Guy Aitchison



new locations overseas, we are taking some time off the US events. Of course we won't be slowing down—we will take the same energies that produces the events and create smaller events we can broadcast via TattooNOW and the internet. The same amazing guests and teachers, only we can broadcast from an Off the Map location, and go home to our families at the end of the night! It's truly amazing to be broadcasting to every nook and cranny of the world.

We will be producing various shows for TattooNOWtv.com, including Guy Aitchison and Michele Wortman's Hypercast Live show. Check the website for over 20 hours of archived footage.

Every other Sunday night from here on out, we will be promoting live viewing parties. The shows will be broadcast live, and live viewing parties from around the world will have a chance to Skype in their questions live. Each viewing party is promoted on the websites so tattoo artists and fans alike can get together to learn a bit about tattoos, ask their favorite artists questions in the chat room, and show off their work live! Details on how to get your viewing party on the website are, well, on the website, TattooNOWtv.com. 🐼

and picking up their brushes to paint. Then art collectors come out and buy paintings and other artworks. We also co-produce the Worldwide Tattoo Conference in the USA (I teach at many of the overseas ones). The conference is two days of focused seminars with no tattooing, art, or any other distractions. I could name drop like any other promoter, but I invite anyone curious to check out the websites for the lineups. They speak for themselves.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR TATTOONOW AND OFF THE MAP?

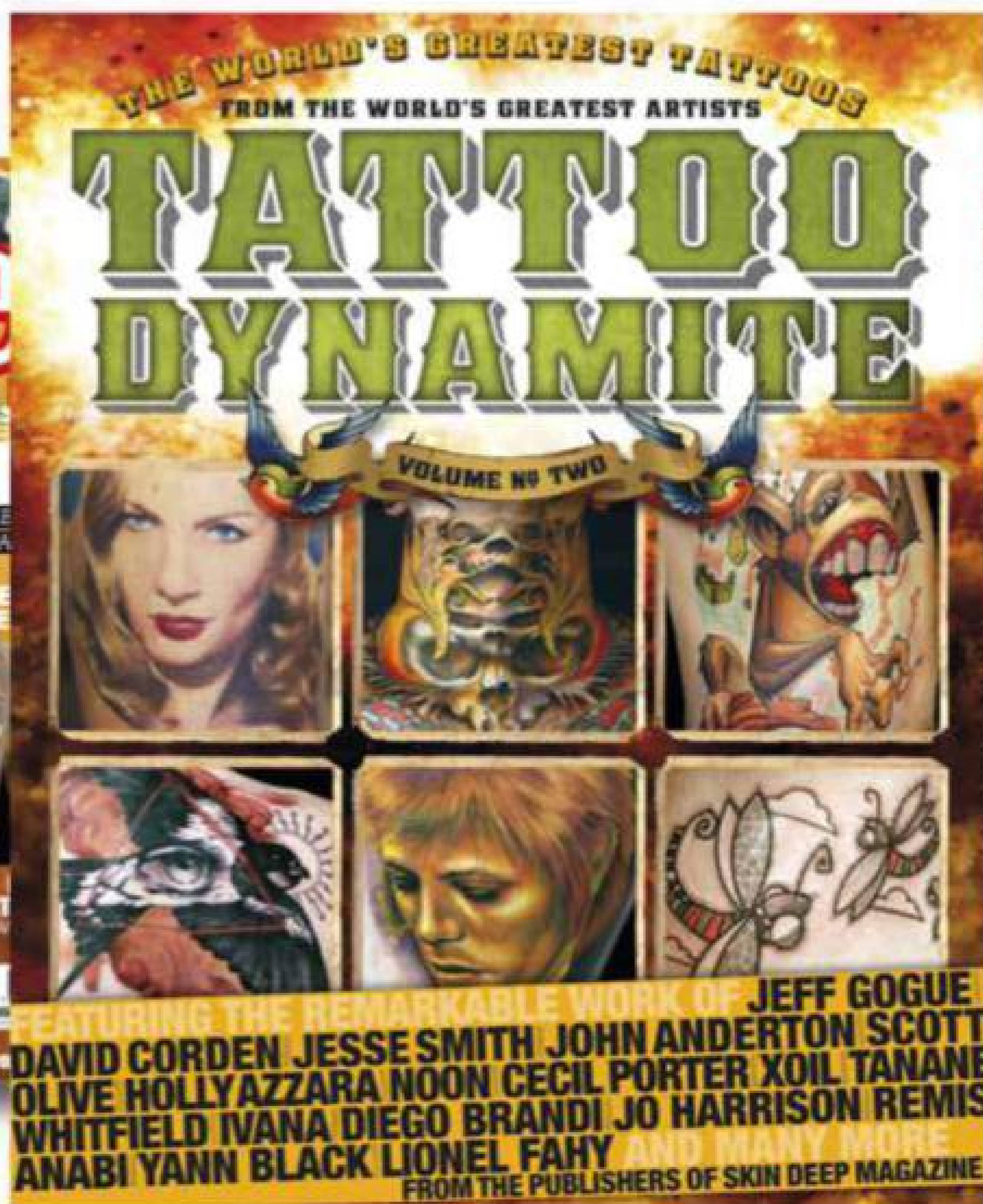
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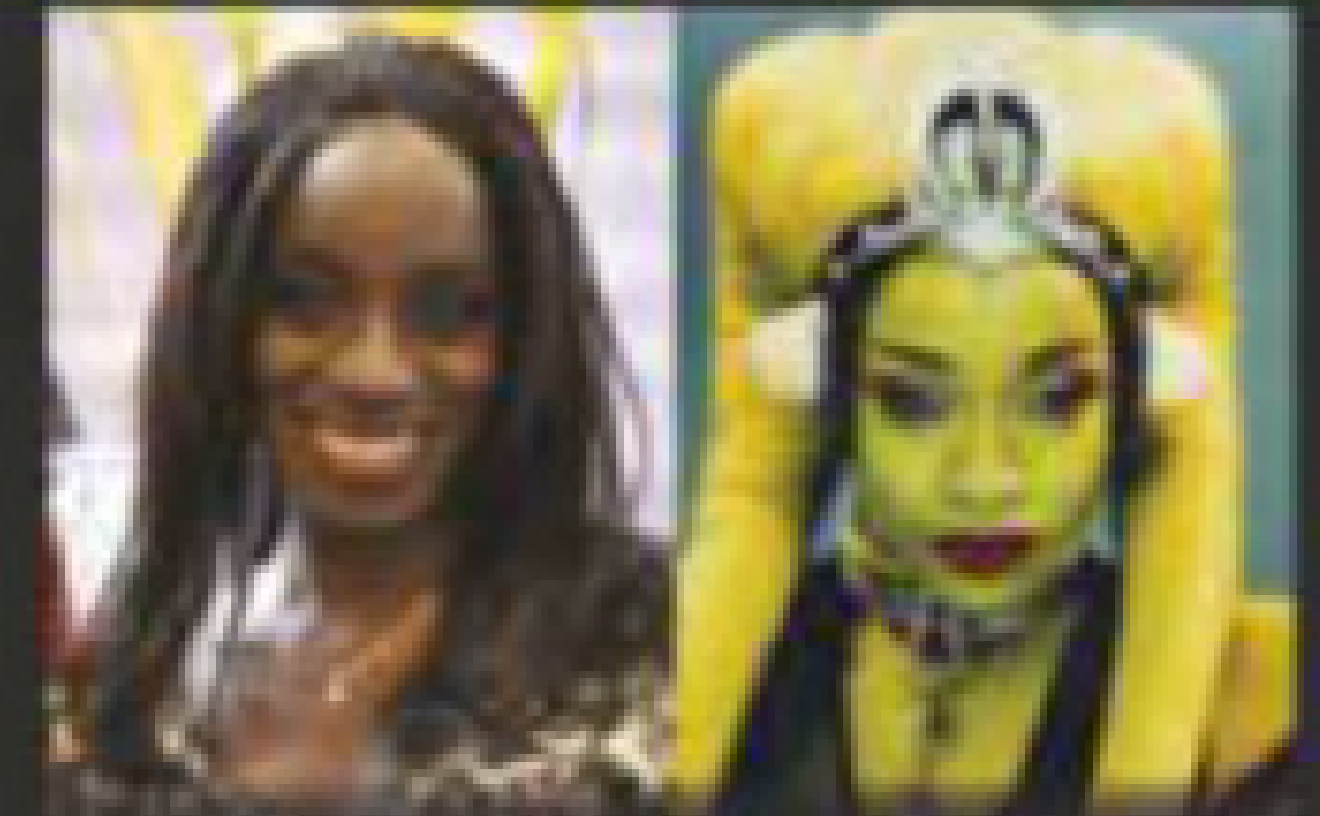
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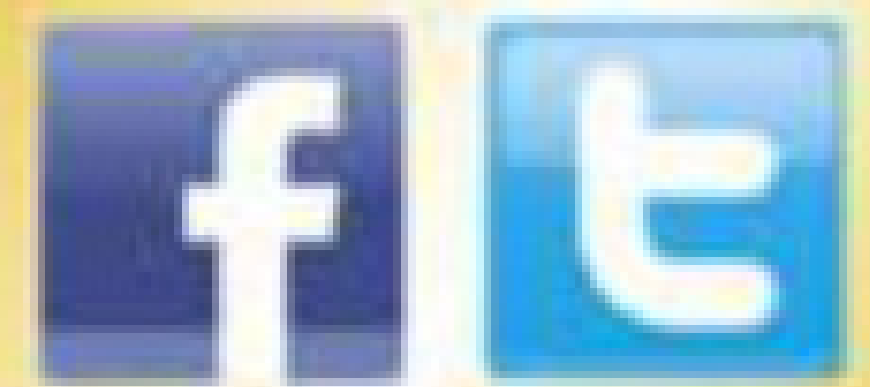


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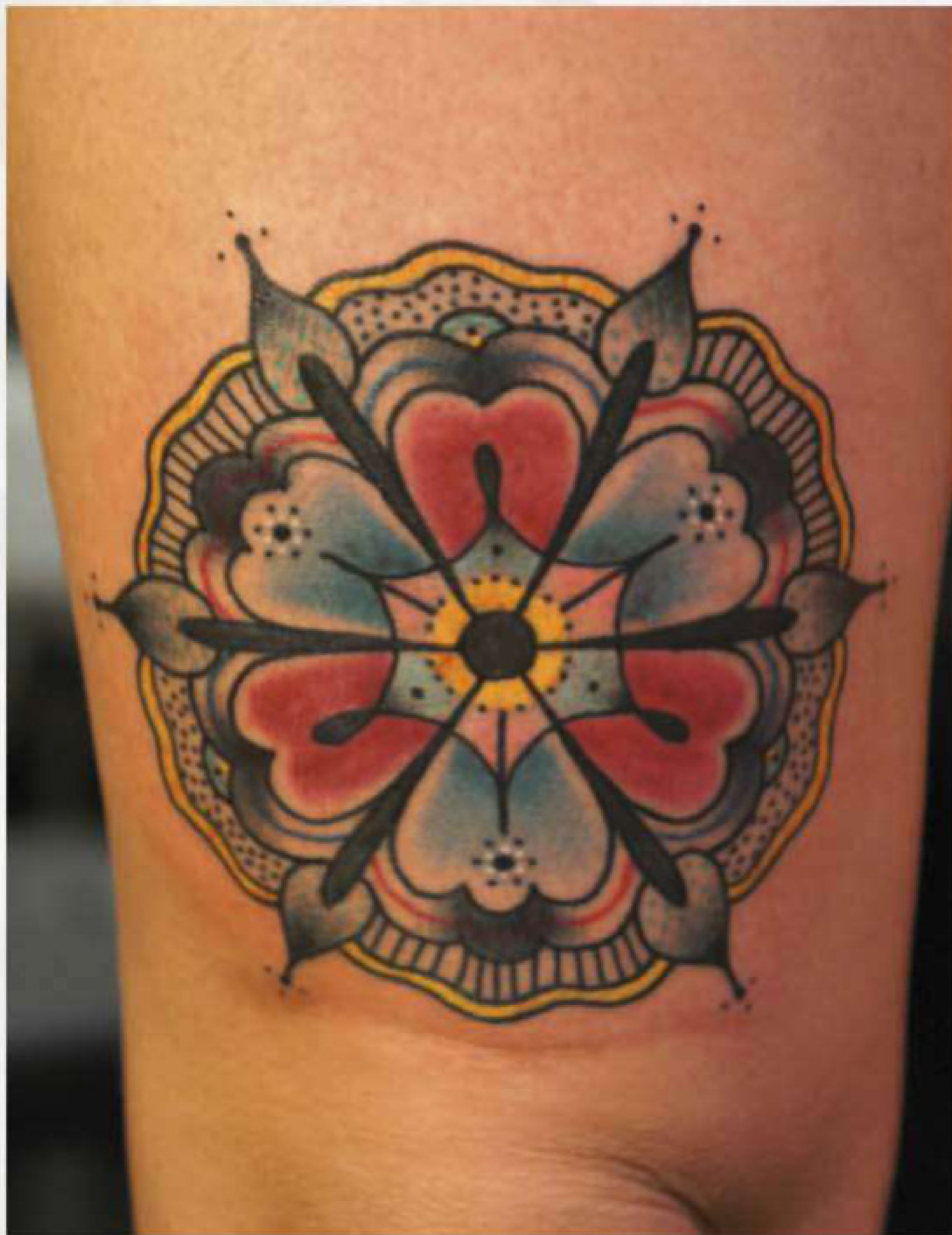
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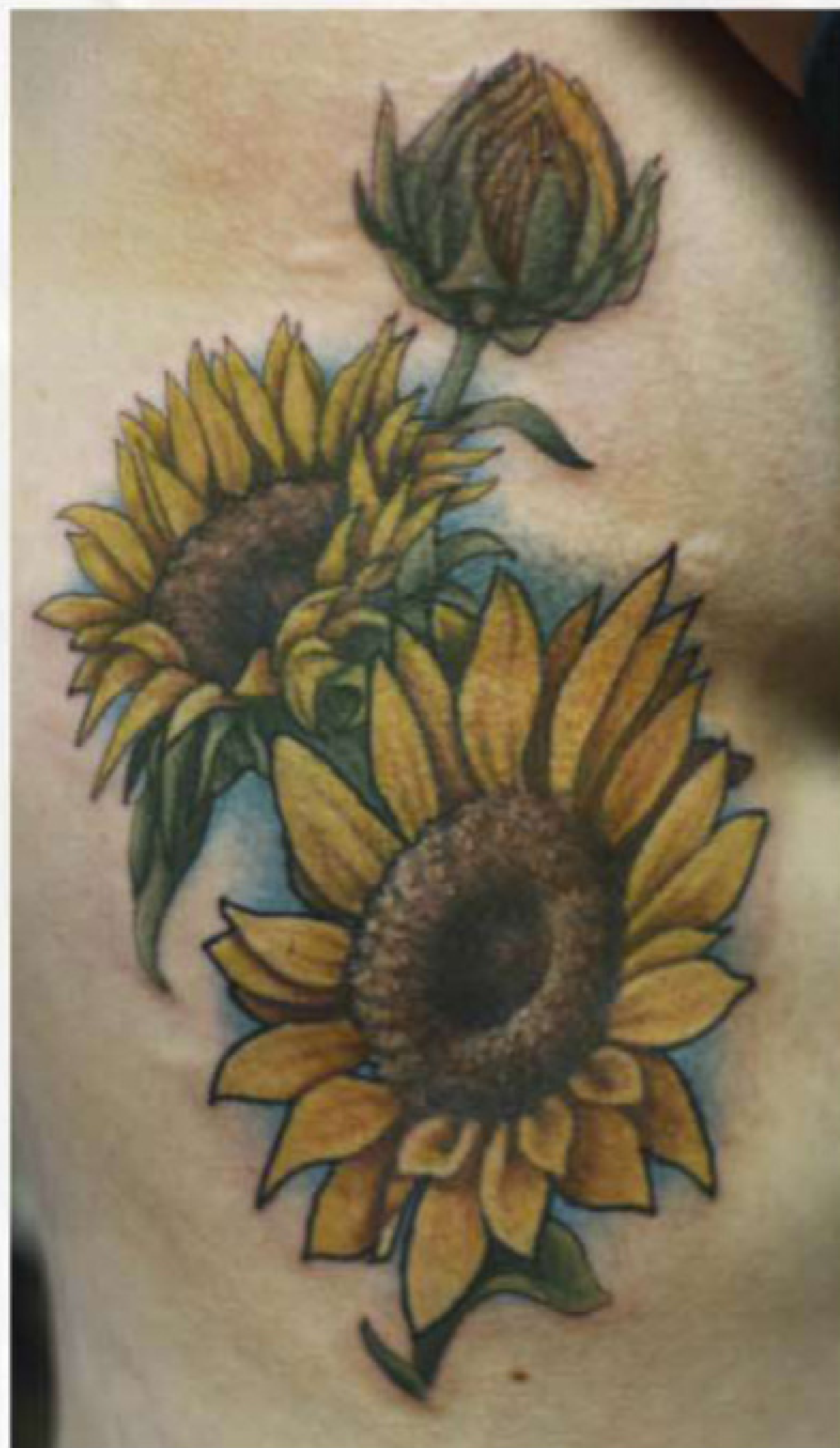
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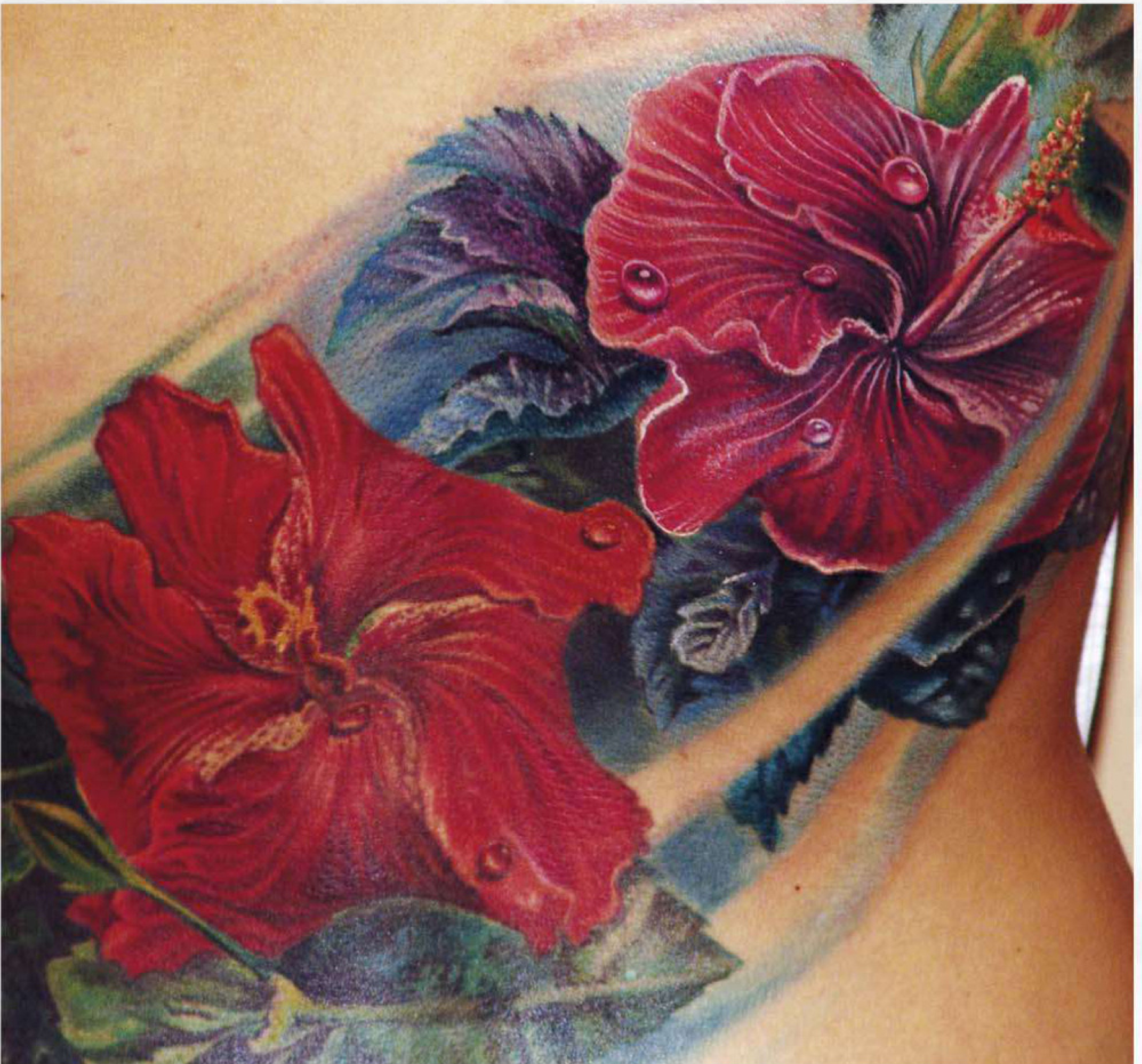
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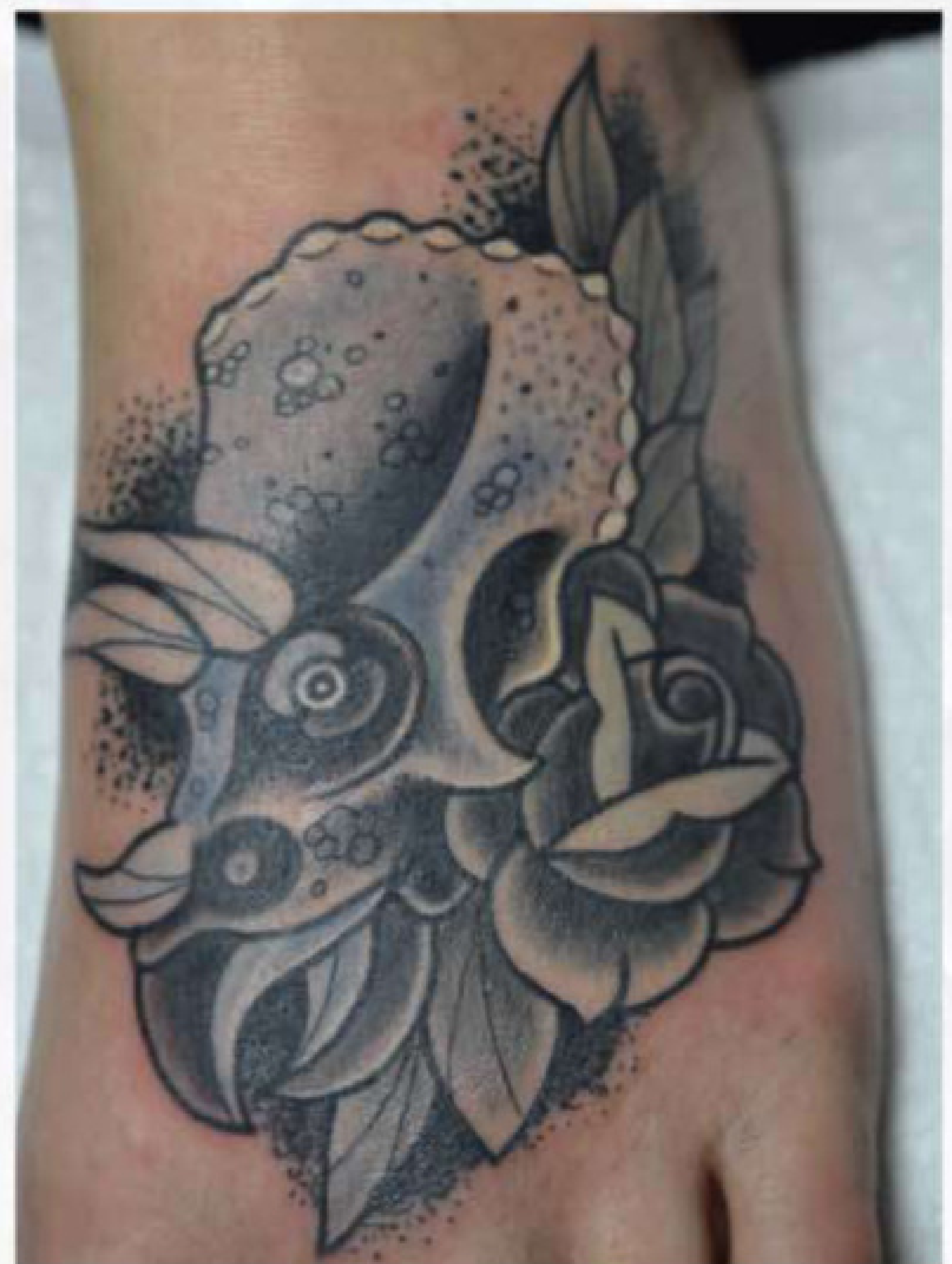
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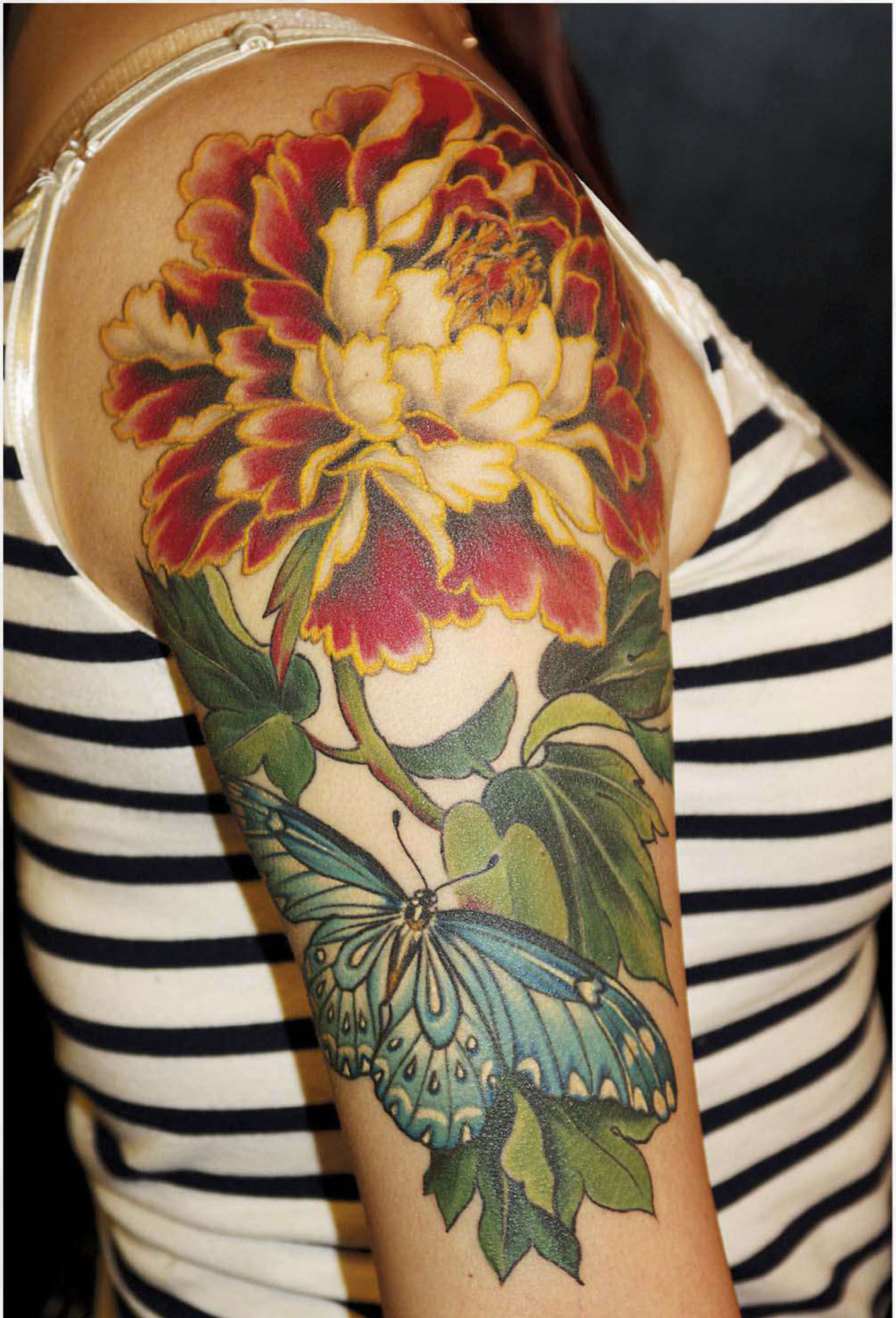
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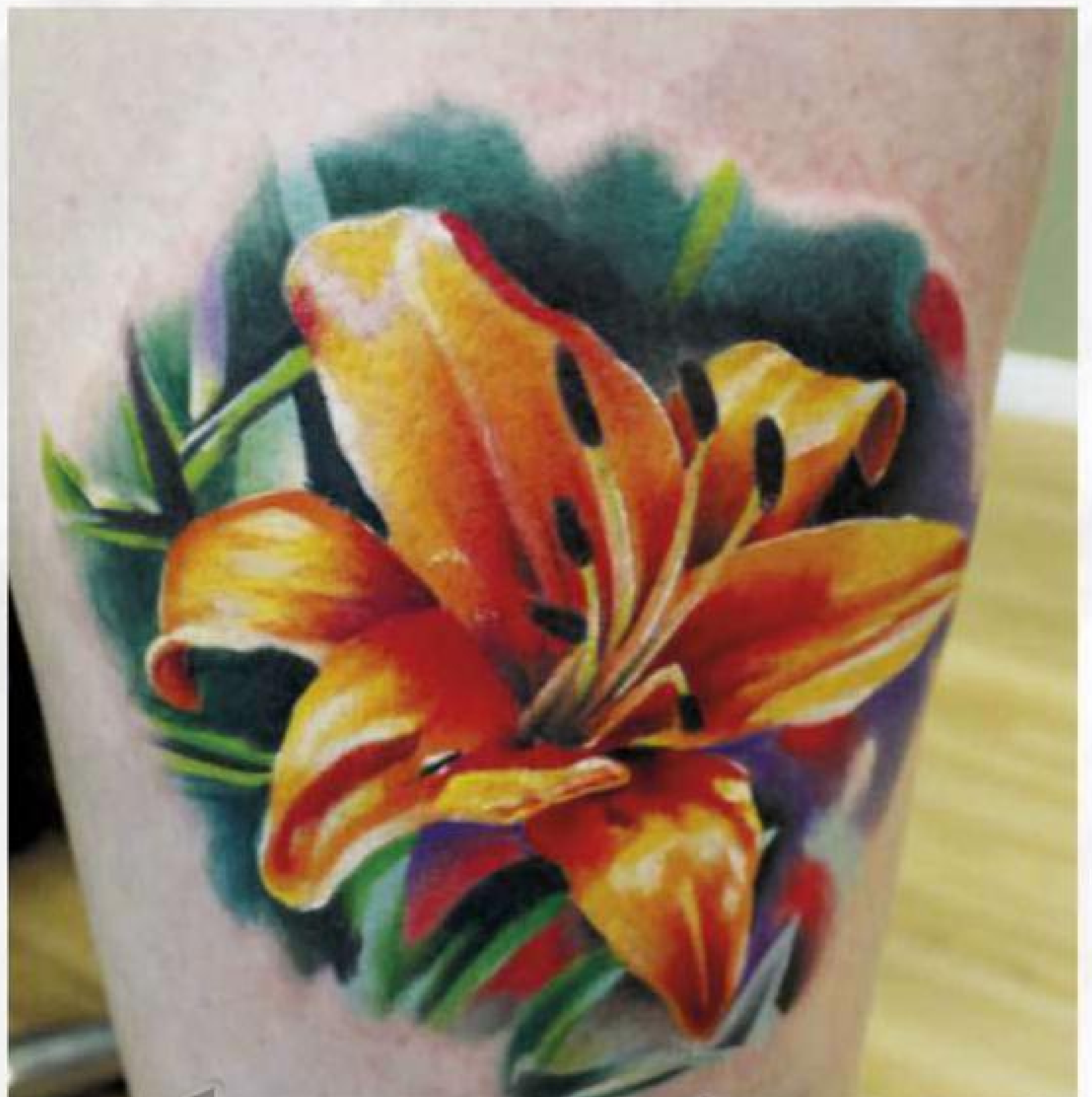
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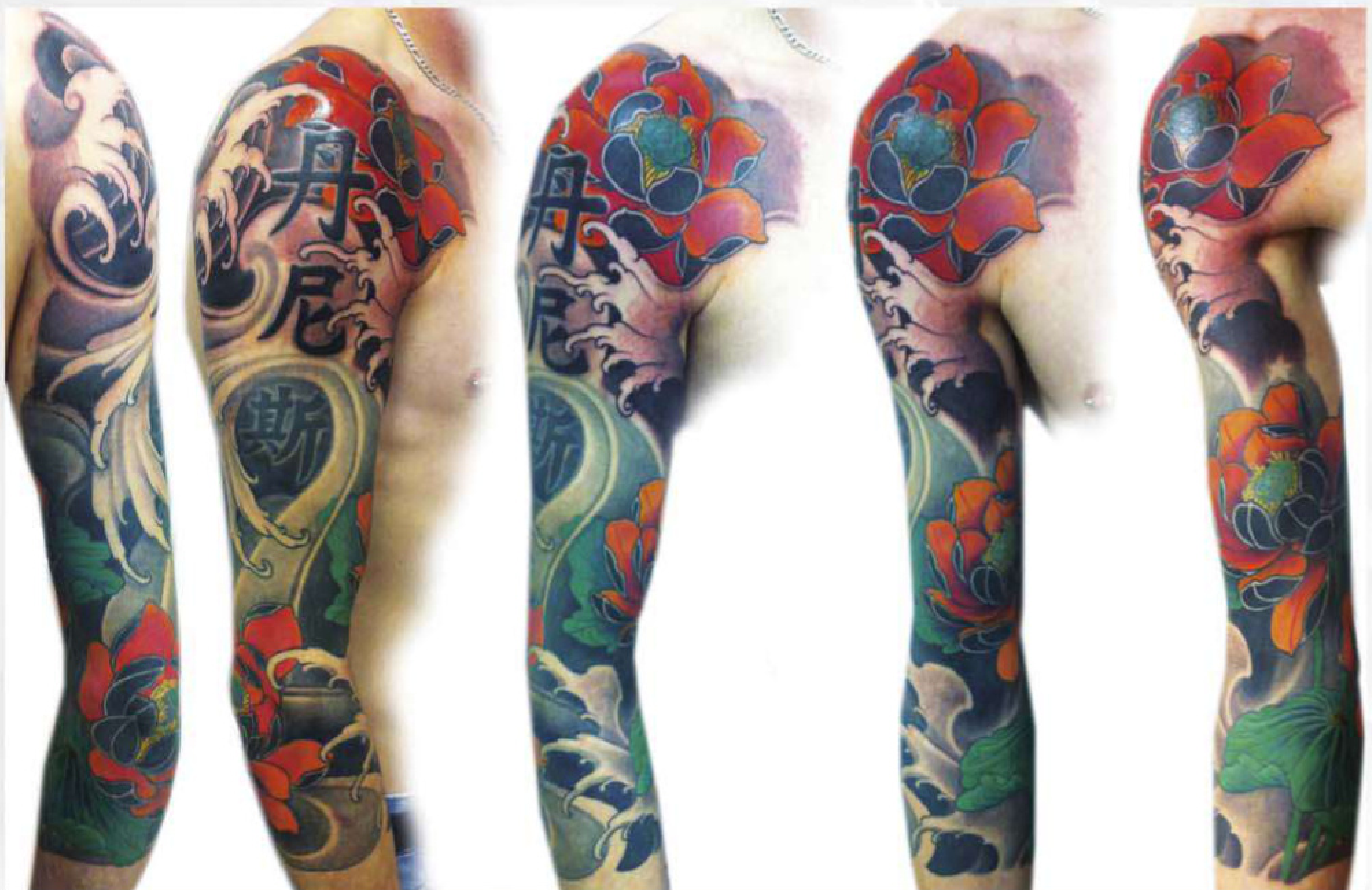


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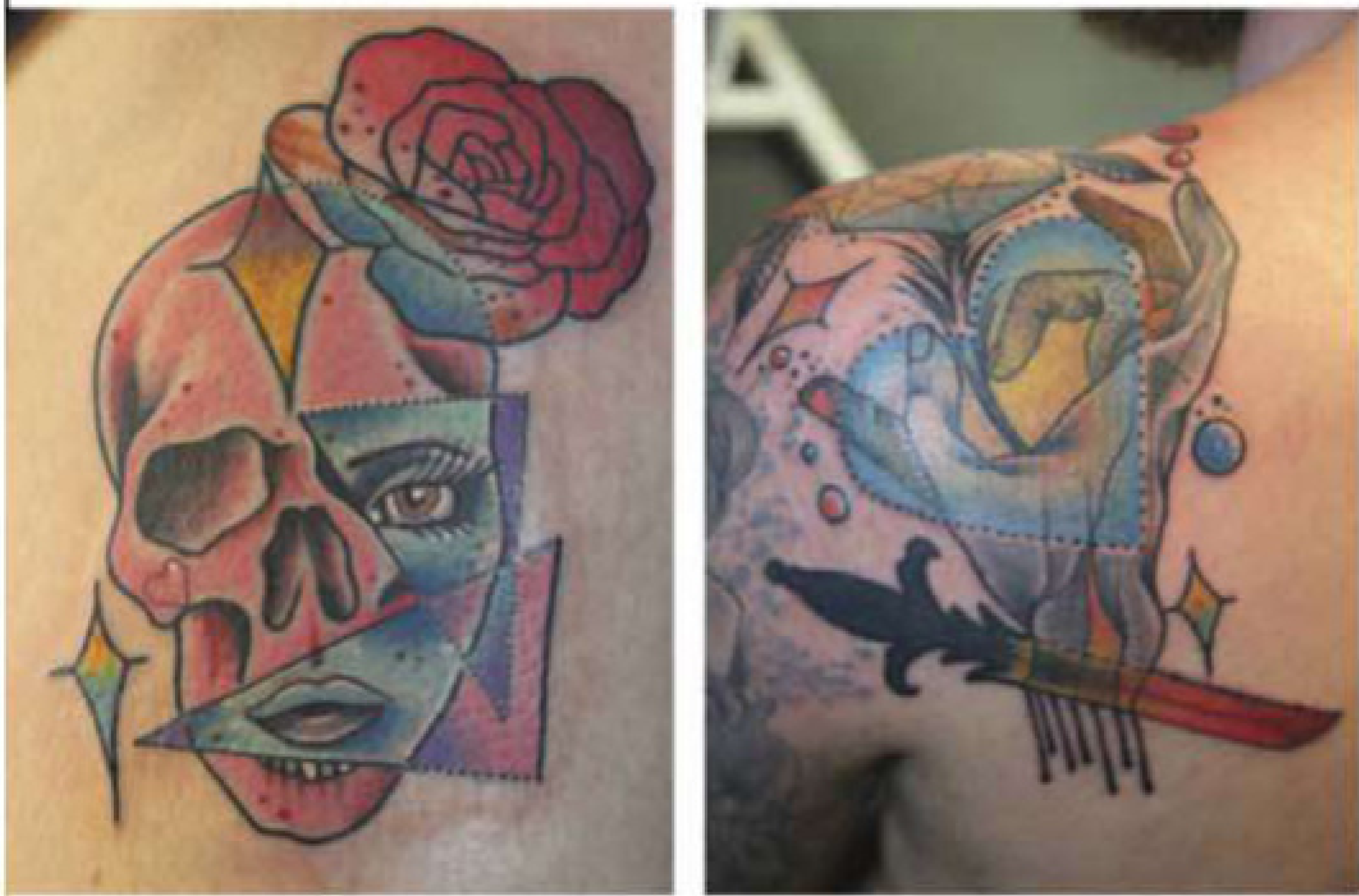
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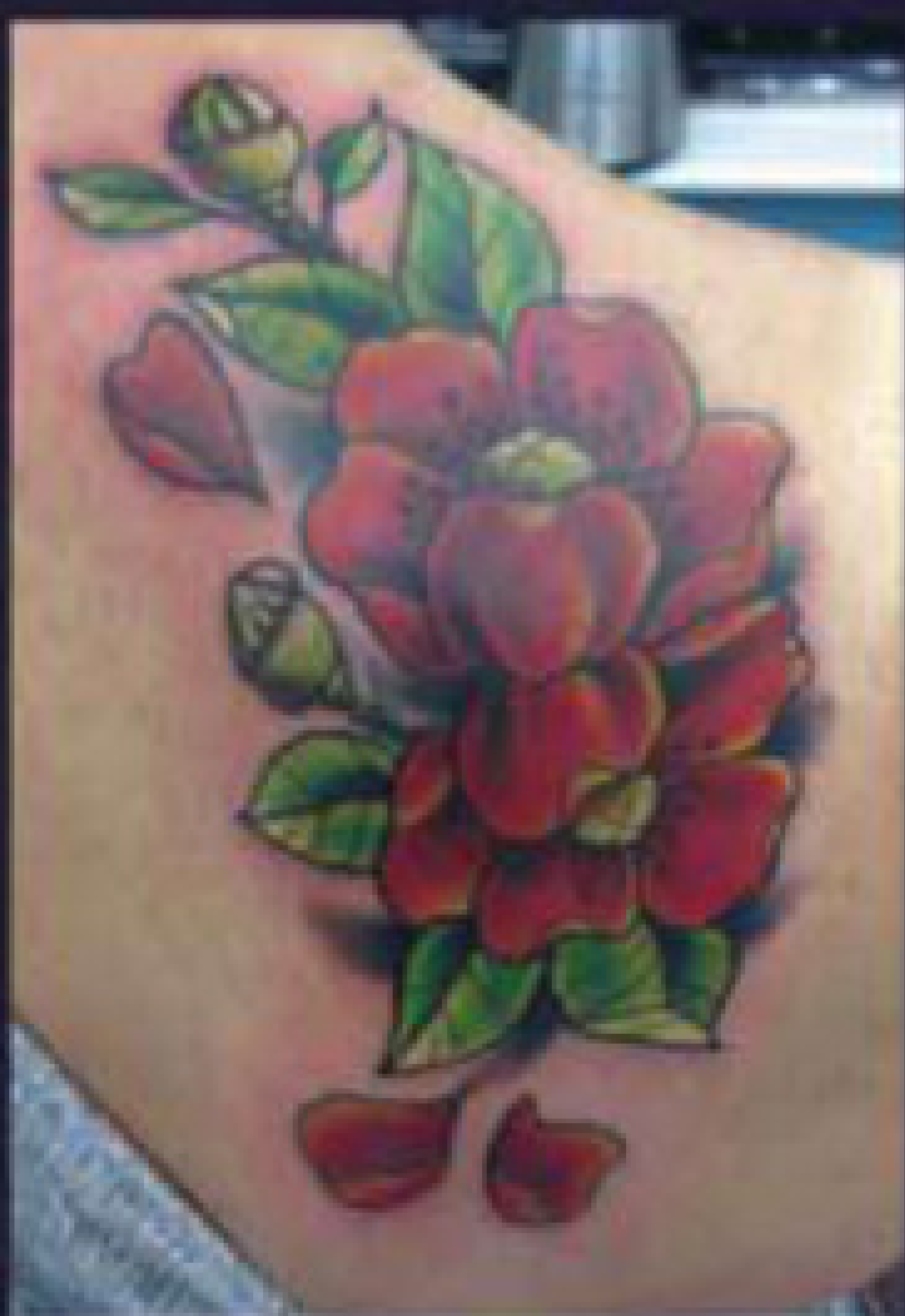


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A PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

The end of the world is extremely nigh. The government is deciding who gets to hide in the secret underground bunker and who gets to take their chances with the giant meteor heading straight for Earth. Are you a heart surgeon? Step right up. Engineer? Come on in. Tattoo artist? Goodbye and good luck



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Hannah Smith

I'm drinking coffee at Dave Bryant's workstation at Lifetime Tattoo in Derby, and he is telling me what's going to happen when the apocalypse hits. I wonder if he's planning to retrain.

True, tattooing is not exactly a noble vocation or a higher calling—not curing cancer, brokering world peace, or rescuing babies from burning buildings.

"Yes, it is important and it is permanent, but it isn't life or death. Tattoos are pretty fucking non-essential—tattooers ain't getting in no bunker. If they're going to let the guys that do the Beverly Hills nose jobs in, then maybe they'll let one tattooer in. Maybe. But I'm happy with that, I accept my place in the universe."

Dave has 15 years of tattooing behind him at this point in his life, most recently at Jeff Ortega's busy Camden Town studio Evil from the Needle where he spent eight years, before relocating to Derby last year.

Now he works at Lifetime, a friendly and spacious studio with a relaxed vibe, housing five artists who work across two buildings, right next door to an interesting little art gallery. "It's quiet, I like the pace," says Dave. "It's only in recent months that I've started drawing my own stuff again, because I've got more time on my hands now."

The things he likes to draw are pretty varied, although he has a major soft spot for traditional

tattoos. If he could only tattoo one style for the rest of his life, it would be the Sailor Jerry influenced classics. But why?

"I guess their simplicity and speed play a part. You can do a forearm in a couple of hours, start and finish a tattoo on the initial wave of enthusiasm on both sides. They also just look right—they look like tattoos to me, nothing unnecessary."

I ask why he thinks traditional tattoos have stood the test of time to remain as popular as they have, and how they have managed



IN ONE BREATH, TATTOOING CAN MEAN EVERYTHING AND FUCK ALL. IT'S BEAUTIFUL AND UGLY TO SOME, IT'S ESSENTIAL AND TOTALLY POINTLESS

to infiltrate popular culture so thoroughly. Dave suggests it is people's love for nostalgia and desire to connect to the colourful past of tattooing, when it was much more of a symbol of rebellion, positioning the wearer on the fringes of society.

"I think it's a small feeling of connection to tattooing's rich history, a time when tattooing wasn't as accepted, the people who wore it in the face of stigma long before the mainstream acceptance of today. That and they look great and, if done well, they age well and are timeless. A colour portrait of the *Breaking Bad* dude? We'll see."

Aside from the traditional stuff, Dave's drawings show off an illustrative style which covers the full spectrum from Japanese to geometric. The finished tattoos in his portfolio have in common solid, clean lines, and the strong primary

colours which are so characteristic of traditional tattoo designs.

Dave doesn't see himself as an 'artist' exactly, and actually does not have a lot of love for the art world. You definitely couldn't accuse him of being pretentious.

"I find the art world to be a bit wanky, to be honest. I would rather go to the pre-Raphaelite section of an art gallery. If the Tate Modern burned to the ground, I wouldn't even notice. Once in the Tate I saw a pile of bricks. Whatever the meaning behind it, visually it was just crap. To me, an image is very important."

He did attend art college but hated it, and was trying to figure out a way to make a living doing something artistic. Happening to flick through a tattoo magazine one day, something clicked, and Dave started on the long, hard road to becoming a successful tattooer. 🌟



storemags

At the beginning of most tattooists' careers in street shops or wherever they may start off, they have to adapt to whatever the customer wants or they don't last long in the job. Some artists specialise in certain types of work later in life, but some remain all-rounders who are prepared to turn their hand to anything and put their own stamp on it.

"When I started out there were no 'styles' really. You saw the Paul Booths and the Guy Aitchisons appearing, but for most of us, you did whatever walked through the door. If a Tas walks in, do a Tas; if a kanji walks in, do a kanji; if it's a tribal armband, do it. You can't go 'oh well, it's not my style', because they'll just get rid of you and find someone whose style it is."

Since he is open to taking on

a lot of different types of work, I ask if there is any one particular tattoo project which has stuck in his mind over the course of his tattooing career. He recounts the moving experience of tattooing one customer, an octogenarian gentleman who came to the studio to get a tattoo of the crest of his army regiment.

"His whole group had got it while on active duty in the war and he had backed out at the last minute, making him the only one to not get it. Present day, he's the last one left alive and he doesn't want to meet his boys again without the badge, so we do the emblem for him. It was his first and last tattoo."

This is one of the perks of the job for tattooists—you never know what is going to walk through the door next, and every day brings something new. For Dave, the love of tattooing encompasses the whole process, from the germ of an idea, to the drawing, to the technical elements involved in getting the ink into the skin.

This includes a fascination with tattoo machines, which he has been building and refurbishing for about the last ten years, and selling them on a small scale to friends in the tattoo industry.

"They were a mystery to me at first, but then I was hooked. I just loved the idea of building a tool from scratch. You realise there are guys building them in their sheds and garages, starting with a scrap of raw material and ending up with a fully functioning tool. That is why I enjoy tattooing in its entirety, not just the end product."

One of his main complaints about tattooing today is that some practitioners have lost their connection with the tools of their trade, if they ever had it to begin with. Anybody can buy a cheap machine and declare themselves a tattooist, without really having any of the old school skills of more experienced artists.

"Most people, if you dismantled their machines and hid their pre-mades, they wouldn't be able to tattoo. I'm not saying that is

ONCE IN THE TATE I SAW A PILE OF BRICKS. WHATEVER THE MEANING BEHIND IT, VISUALLY IT WAS JUST CRAP. TO ME, AN IMAGE IS VERY IMPORTANT





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essential anymore, but there are some tattooers that can come into work, build a machine, put needles together, mix their ink, and still do a tattoo, and there are others where if Google images was down, they'd be fucked."

The problem is that, in the eyes of the general public, there is nothing to distinguish those tattooists from the ones who have spent years honing their craft. The chances are, these two types of tattooist will charge the same hourly rate, and the customer who has failed to do their research properly might end up paying the one with the inferior skills.

"This is where word of mouth and your own credibility comes into play. There is nothing to say 'number of years served in the craft'. Even people working in McDonald's have the gold stars."



It can also be hard for the uninitiated to figure out who is out to make a fast buck and who really cares about the tattoos they are putting on people, which will be there for a lifetime. Continuing

the food analogy, Dave says there is "fast food" tattooing and then there is "restaurant" tattooing, and people need to work out for themselves which is which.

"Scratchers, I would go and 🍌"



THERE ARE SOME TATTOOERS THAT CAN COME INTO WORK, BUILD A MACHINE, PUT NEEDLES TOGETHER, MIX THEIR INK, AND STILL DO A TATTOO, AND THERE ARE OTHERS WHERE IF GOOGLE IMAGES WAS DOWN, THEY'D BE FUCKED

shake their hand because someone has seen their portfolio and still gone to get work done there. It's like a cafe saying 'our food tastes like shit, come and eat here'."

Some tattooists feel they have a certain responsibility to try to educate the public about tattooing, what makes a good piece of work, and why price should not be the main factor driving your choice of artist. Dave says people are adults and should make their own decisions—in his experience, they rarely listen to advice anyway. During his time working in Camden, he saw a lot of young kids with no tattoos coming in wanting their hands or necks done, and would spend time trying

to tell them why this might not be the best idea, only to see them go to the shop next door to get the work done. There is always someone less scrupulous who will do what is being asked for.

"No-one wants to be told 'you're drinking too much, smoking is bad for you'. The Ferrari salesman doesn't say 'now, are you sure you're not going to go too fast in this?'"

"Do we have a responsibility to educate people? Maybe we have a responsibility to try and make sure they don't completely destroy their lives, but we're trying to hold back a river. Someone else is going to do it. I'm not saying it's right, but at least I won't be the one who

made little Billy unemployable before he's even left uni."

He concludes that tattooists are not being paid to be anyone's "moral compass", they are just there to create tattoos, however meaningful (or not) that job might be. "In one breath, tattooing can mean everything and fuck all. It's beautiful and ugly to some, it's essential and totally pointless."

No doubt the old soldier Dave tattooed would say tattooing meant something to him. When the meteor is about to destroy the earth, most tattooists will be able to hold their heads up high and say they offered something meaningful to society. Shame they'll be saying it from outside the bunker. 🐻

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CAN ANYBODY BE A TATTOO ARTIST?

It's a question we've been asked more than a few times along the way—so we figured we would attempt to answer it—but maybe it raises even more questions along the way. You know where we are if you have an opinion...

Well, if that isn't the \$64,000 question, I don't know what is.

What I hope this article will achieve, is for the reader to understand that not everybody who calls themselves a tattoo artist actually is one. You're not a rock star just because you're in a band. Those things are for the public to decide in the long-term. Hopefully, it may even put some things into perspective for those who are too afraid to ask a stupid question.

The question itself came about from a couple of readers who felt they had been 'cheated' out of something potentially great by heading for a perfectly respectable and quality tattoo studio and finding that their 'custom skills' were perhaps not quite as good as their 'flash skills'. On those grounds alone, it's a question worth addressing. There's absolutely nothing wrong with being a flash artist or simply doing what you're great at, but there's a certain expectation

that needs to be met on both sides of the counter when looking for custom work.

At its core, the answer is a simple and very honest "yes". If you cut through all the caveats that come with it, just like being a surgeon, a lifeguard or a writer, all you have to do is learn the mechanics of the trade because at its very basic level (and I'm talking really basic here), all you have to do is guide the machine that deposits the ink into the skin.

Based on that equation, there's nothing to it—and as we have seen far too often—some people are quite happy to go no further than that and announce themselves a tattoo artist—with the results being as expected.

I am no artist. I do not tend to think in pictures. I think in words. This piece is something like 1,800 words. There was a time many years ago when that would have given me the jitters, but now, I've cut my teeth and been doing it



long enough to know how to handle it. In fact, it's not very many words at all really. Your average novel is something like 80,000—that's hard work, but also not impossible. So for those of you that don't tattoo, are simply interested in the question, or actually thinking about it, that analogy works because even if you don't read



TATTOOING IS A CRAFT THAT EVERYBODY CAN LEARN BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU ARE GONNA BE THE ARTIST. MAX PNIEWSKI

CAN ANYBODY BE A TATTOO ARTIST? MAX PNIEWSKI

I think anyone can be a tattooist but not everyone can be a tattoo artist. Tattooing is a craft that everybody can learn, but it doesn't mean you are gonna be The Artist. If you go through an apprenticeship, then you'll certainly gain the technique and ability to tattoo a star or a name, but it doesn't make you a tattoo artist. You can make a living putting tattoos on people but it's not necessarily going to be on the art level. The artistic level happens—as I like to say—"after 6pm" when the studio is closed. At home when you are really putting something into it and generally being intolerant of your progress as an artist, when you create stories, visions, styles; creating something different on a paper, canvas or doing digital art before you tattoo it... that's when it will start to fall into place. Even using Google references with artistic ability, you can play and make them look different, give them a personal impact or touch, give them that 'magic thing' so everybody will look at it and think 'fuck... he/she's done it completely different than 100 other tattooists!' It's sad to watch how many 'tattoo artists' can't draw for shit and thinking they are amazing because five people told them they are on Facebook or Instagram. What's really 'dangerous' in our game is that it's very easy to believe that you're amazing, but it's very hard to ask yourself if you really are...

or draw, everybody knows how far they could take such a task. Now I must draw a line in the sand. For me, a tattooist will be able to replicate exactly what you have asked them to do, be it their own creation or yours. A tattoo artist on the other hand will be coming up with themes of their own—themes that work, that are 🍷

Max Pniewski



Darren Wright

original, that you've never seen before and enhance your brief dramatically. If you're sitting there thinking 'that's me' and that you now have carte blanche to set the world on fire, you'd be very much mistaken.

Being great is no walk in the park. Being great takes serious hard work. Being great means having to do a lot of things you don't want to do as well because (duh) that's what it takes. I took the liberty of asking a few artists that happened to be around at the time, what they thought... the results of which you can see littered about here. We all say the same thing in many different ways, though it is interesting to hear Frank LaNatra say that it depends how badly you really want it. I guess there are always exceptions to any rule.

For me, great tattooers along with great singers, actors, writers, artists (the list goes on in the creative field), are born and not made. If you're

THINGS IN LIFE HAVE A LOGICAL PROCESS THAT YOU MUST ENJOY ALONG THE WAY OTHERWISE YOU WILL BE MISERABLE AND IT WILL SHOW! **JORGE BECERRA**

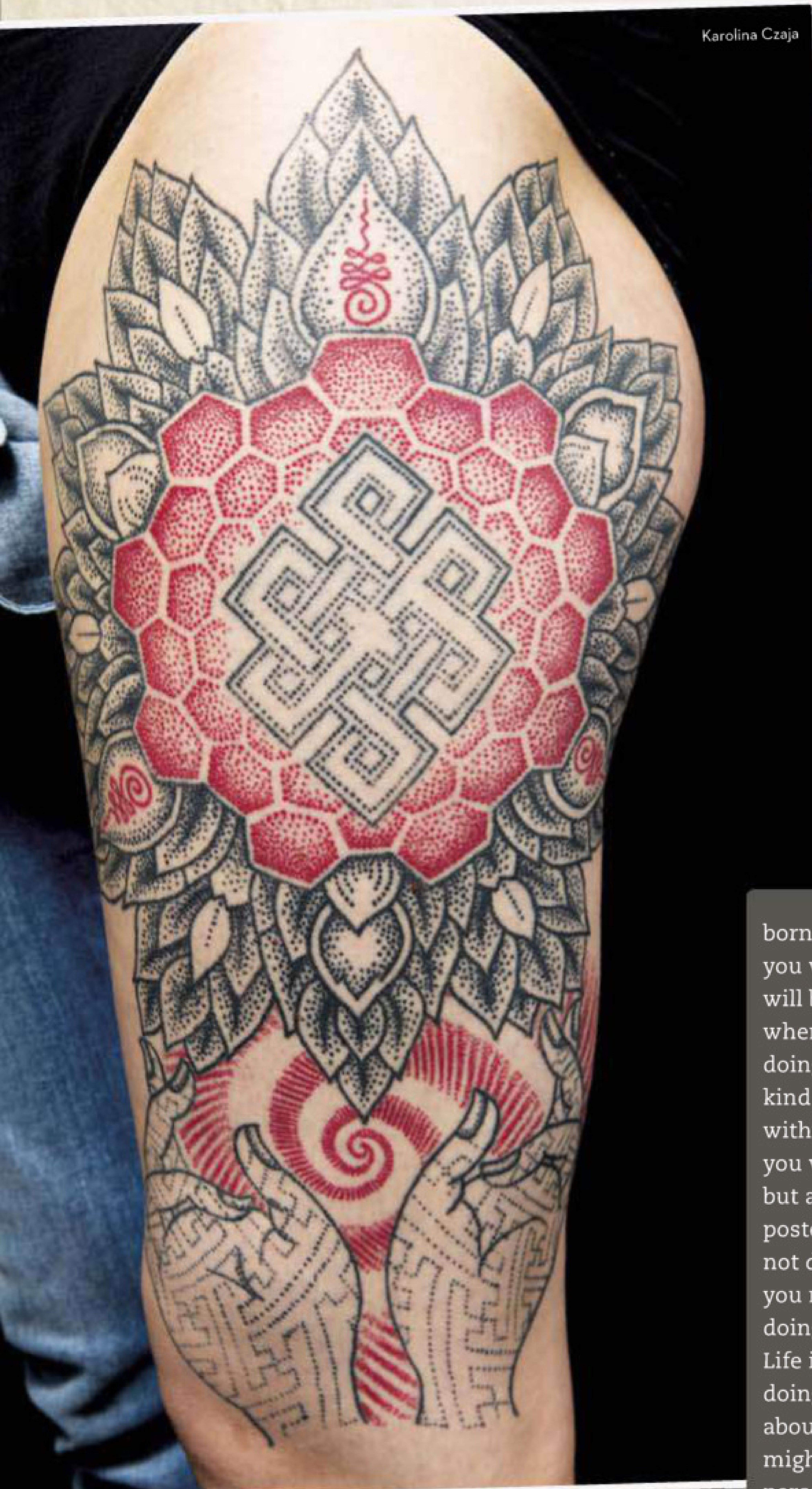
CAN ANYBODY BE A TATTOO ARTIST? JORGE BECERRA

Everybody could be a tattooist and every tattooist could become a tattoo artist, but things in life have a logical process that you must enjoy along the way otherwise you will be miserable and it will show! You don't start to build a house by putting the roof on first.



David Corden





Karolina Czaja



Mr Hyde



Joshua Payne

born with it in your blood, you will know it because you will be pulled towards doing it whenever you're not actually doing it. You can't teach that kind of commitment. It lives within you—and if you think you want to be a tattoo artist but are drawn to designing posters all the time that you're not dreaming about tattooing, you really should think about doing the poster thing instead. Life is long—you should be doing what you're passionate about not what you think you might be good at or what you perceive will make you the most money very quickly.

It doesn't work like that around here. I know far too many people who used to tattoo and don't any more because it got too much for them. It's not an easy ride out there.

What I think makes 'being great' hard these days is nothing more than living in the modern world. I can't tell you how many emails I get that say something along the lines of 'Please feature my work. I have been tattooing four months now and would like to be published'. There are people who have 🌸

CAN ANYBODY BE A TATTOO ARTIST? MR HYDE

Tattooing requires an immense passion for visual arts, extreme dedication and full commitment, but also an enormous aesthetic sense and creative personality. You've got to have many skills that are somehow natural for the trade like being able to put together a composition that 'flows' and pleases the eye:

- You have to have a vast imagination
- You have to be a 'mind reader' to understand and interpret people ideas
- You have to have patience—much, much patience!
- You have to invest years of your life before you can actually see some positive results (happily unpaid)
- You have to be able to work under stress/pressure
- You have to be humble enough and always respect the fact that if you managed to start this career you are blessed, therefore you wanna sit down and squeeze some good work out!

Of course there is the 'technical' part to be mentioned as well... machine understanding, calibration and tuning, together with a scrupulous A to Z study of your equipment. Some sort of basic anatomy knowledge, extreme hygiene and cross-contamination awareness and so forth. To answer the question though, I don't think that just anybody can become a tattoo artist—it's too long and too difficult. Eventually, there will be a few that even with very little imagination and the minimum of drawing skills will manage to put a kit together and tag themselves as 'tattoo artists'—sadly copying others work with no morals whatsoever. These are not considered professionals. If you cannot bring good to the industry by pushing it forward and evolving... just don't bother. Also worth saying is that being good at drawing does NOT mean you'll be a good tattoo artist at all. A good place to start if you're determined though is with the right kind of attitude...



Marco Galdo

CAN ANYBODY BE A TATTOO ARTIST? THINK!

GEORGE BINAS

Everybody can learn physics, but not everybody will be Einstein. With hard work, dedication, and patience, all can learn how to tattoo. To be a master at this form of art is going to require something different though. You have to combine a lot of skills: drawing, positioning, understanding how skins react and what your tools are capable of doing. An understanding that it's a very 'moral art'—since your art is on another person's skin—means you must respect that and be as focused as you can. Anybody can be a tattooer but a few can be master in tattoo art.

YOU HAVE TO COMBINE A LOT OF SKILLS: DRAWING, POSITIONING, UNDERSTANDING HOW SKINS REACT, AND WHAT YOUR TOOLS ARE CAPABLE OF DOING GEORGE BINAS



Kyle Cotterman

been tattooing 20 years who are still not good enough to parade in front of the readers.

The modern world is geared up to make you think you can have it made in the blink of an eye. Post your piece on Facebook and you can have a group of friends who know nothing about what makes a great tattoo, saying you're fantastic. It's a strange place we're in media-wise right now and being an overnight success apparently doesn't take half as long as it used to.

If you really think you've got the chops to be an artist, you need to be playing the long game. Five years under your belt before you start thinking about going public sounds about right in my eyes. If you're a natural before, that is cool; if you're not and simply working hard, that's what it's going to take. 'Know thyself' is a good rule of thumb to live by.

The 'industry' will let you know when you're great. The invites will start to come (providing you didn't learn how to be a prima donna along the way). Your work



eRic the Viking



Mark Bester


WILL IT TAKE YEARS OF HARD WORK, DETERMINATION, LONG HOURS OF STUDYING ART AND PRACTICING DRAWING, TATTOOING AND ALL OTHER MEDIAS? YOU BET YOUR ASS THAT IT WILL FRANK LANATRA

CAN ANYBODY BE A TATTOO ARTIST? FRANK LANATRA

There is a fine line there. Can anybody be a tattoo artist and succeed? Yes, of course. Will it take years of hard work, determination, long hours of studying art and practising drawing, tattooing, and all other medias? You bet your ass that it will. Some can have a natural affinity for it and pick it up super-easy, but I do believe that someone can teach themselves to be great at it. So I think determination can get you there; it just depends on what actions you take and how determined you are to suffer through it.

will start appearing in print and on the premier websites. Your waiting list will have the potential to be incredibly long, and by this point, you'll have taken enough knocks and have built up enough business savvy to handle it. To wrap up this meandering thought pattern, just like any craft, it takes a lifetime of constant progression and

evolution to become an artist. You're never done learning and you'll never feel like you've got it totally 'sussed'. It's a long hard journey that kicks your ass at every turn and it takes a dogged, bloody mindedness to keep going. It's this—the passion for the journey and the drive to push yourself constantly to achieve that ever-elusive 'perfect' tattoo—that

separates and elevates artists beyond mere technical ability. Knowing how many volts to run a machine at and the correct way to hold it will only take you part of the way. At some point you'll have to put something of yourself into your work and if at that point you have only the basics of technical knowledge and nothing else, you'll be found wanting... your call. 

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A foreign exchange money broker turned professional chef with a deep love of tattoos isn't exactly the kind of person you meet every day, which is precisely how we knew that a chat with Steven Lock was an absolute must

Barbara Pavone Edward Price

Before becoming a chef, I was a foreign exchange money broker and ate out at the best restaurants London and the capital cities of Europe had to offer, developing a love of fine dining. But I was always a keen amateur cook," says Lock, revealing that his sudden choice to change careers was perhaps less a giant leap of faith and more a calculated, brilliant risk.

"When I left the money markets in 1999, I decided to give myself a year out and learn the skills I would need to become a chef from the bottom, hence the year-long course at Pru Leith's School of Food and Wine in Kensington."

While retraining in a completely different field at the age of 30 was, not surprisingly, "both exciting and nerve-wracking", Lock is adamant about the fact that his time in school certainly paid off and explains that, while there, he "learnt the basic techniques and realised I had enough ability to give it a crack, but nothing really prepares you for when you start in a busy kitchen—that has to be learned the hard way!"

Similarities between his journey and a young tattooer's who strives for the perfect balance between apprenticeship and hands-on training are not hard to find.

Fast forward two years and Lock found himself taking over the position of head chef at a "100 cover restaurant on Charlotte Street in London," but even with so much success, which he says all



LOCK ON... PUTTING HIMSELF ON A PLATE

If I had to make a dish to represent myself, it would have to be canapés! Lots of different tastes, colours, textures—mouthfuls of joy!

Food-related tattoos are not really for me. Food is my work thing while tattoos, music and fashion are my interests and I like to have them as a release

came down to "hard work, belief and the skills I learnt at Leith's", the up-and-coming culinary star was itching for something more. Something different.

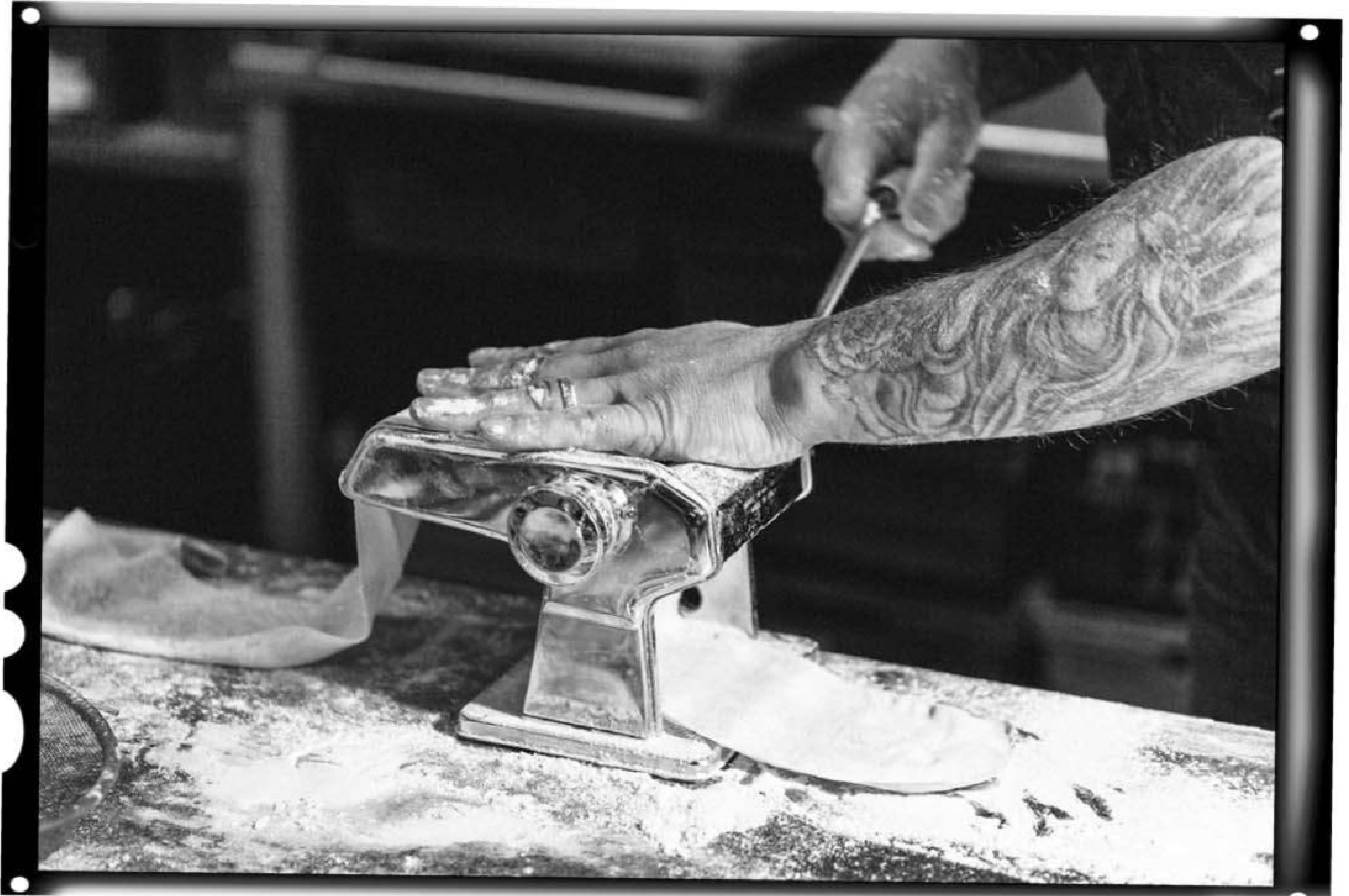
Deciding to uproot and make the move to Winteringham, North Lincolnshire, primarily choosing the location because he considered it to be a great place to raise a family, it wasn't long before Lock and his wife, Diane, seized the opportunity in front of them and opened their own business. All it took was

one really great experience.

"I did the catering for a friend's wedding in Somerset for 100 guests and loved the buzz I got from it, so I thought I'd see if I could make it a full-time project," remembers Lock.

Enter Lock Fine Dining, a family-run catering company whose online portfolio filled with photos of fresh pasta, tasty treats and decadent sweets, all made with locally sourced and seasonal ingredients, is sure to make you drool. 🍷





Just as comfortable catering wedding receptions and dinner parties, as he is putting on a hog roast, Lock is about as creative and exciting an executive head chef as you'll find, but achieving his goals, as is the case with any truly worthwhile endeavour, took time.

"After a tough first year, I gradually built a reputation of excellence along with superb and attentive staff and the functions grew in size year after year until the biggest so far in 2013—a function for 1,000!" he enthuses, but admits there have been a few downsides to running his own show.

"Mainly missing out on family time because the business takes over your life [and] not being invited out to friends' for dinner—no one likes to cook for me!" he laughs.

INKED FOOD

"Food-related tattoos are not really for me," says Lock without much hesitation. "Food is my work thing while tattoos, music and fashion are my interests, and I like to have

them as a release. I can regularly work 100-hour weeks and when I'm relaxing, the last thing I want to do is look down at my arm and see a cupcake!" he laughs.

An avid collector, Lock has "gradually added tattoos over the past 16 years, but it has gathered pace over the last five years".

"Cheryl Gouldthorpe from Illustrated Ink in Barton upon Humber is responsible for all my recent work and cover-ups of bad ones. Lots of angels, swallows and roses with some naked women thrown in just about sums me up!"

With so much to choose from, settling on a favourite is no easy task, but after a few minutes of chewing over the question (no pun intended!) Lock finally says, "I think my favourite is the angel on my back, keeping a watchful eye on me."

As for one he could do without, that honour goes to "some hashed writing that an amateur did of my kids' names that is being removed; Cheryl will re-do them for me."

Although he's already considerably covered, Lock

I'm hoping to make a breakthrough this year; I've got some ace fresh ideas

has no plans of slowing down when it comes to ink. At least not until he gets a few more key pieces completed.

"I love going to visit my pal in New York, so the next time I'm there, I'm booking in at Wooster Street Social Club and getting Ami James to do a small piece, which will be so cool," he says.

There's also the "half-finished piece on my stomach which is being finished off soon and a small piece planned for my neck later on in the year. The piece on my stomach has an angel face on my right half and a sexy, smouldering girl on the other—it's got a good and bad sort of thing going on—so there is background shading, a halo, some red and a few flowers to do. As for my neck, I've got a couple of people doing designs for me, but it will be some sort of angel in black and shade. Then I'll probably be 🍷

LOCK ON... EMBRACING COOKING

People must not be fearful of cooking—it's a cool thing to do! Just follow the recipe, do your prep, clean up as you go, get the best ingredients you can afford and, most of all, have a wicked time.



Lots of angels, swallows and roses with some naked women thrown in just about sums me up!



CHERYL GOULDTHORPE

After receiving her degree in illustration from Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, Gouldthorpe decided to pursue tattooing in 2009 and got her start at Barton upon Humber's Road to Nowhere studio. Last year, she opened up her own shop, Illustrated Ink.

finished and happy," he says, but can't help adding, "For now!"

TV, RADIO & BEYOND

With food-related TV programs on the up and up, Lock has his sights set on joining the television game.

"I'm hoping to make a breakthrough this year—I've got some ace fresh ideas," he says. "I'm currently working hard to get them off the ground

as well as, just as importantly, still running my business."

No stranger to creativity, Lock never gives up a chance to have fun in the kitchen. "I made a white chocolate vanilla bean and clotted cream ice cream to go with a hot chocolate fondant for a client's function the other week that was pure sex on a plate!" he laughs.

However, working for others does, admittedly, require keeping their tastes at the forefront. Something most tattoo artists could easily attest to.

"I do all the creativeness at my work kitchen—it's where we can concentrate on different flavours, combinations and textures—but the ideas normally come from the client's own tastes and I just transform them and make them practical to create their function's menu.

"Because I normally cater for such a large number of people, I can't put anything too risky on menus. Oysters are always a bit hit-and-miss along with the chilli and chocolate combination."

Given the chance to spend some time with any of his

fellow peers from the culinary world, Lock would choose none other than English celebrity chef, Heston Marc Blumenthal, who just so happens to have a three-Michelin-starred restaurant, The Fat Duck, under his belt. Not too shabby!

"I think that Heston has an ace job and is a genius," reasons Lock. "I think we would have some fun in his lab and I'd just have to create some edible tattoos!"

With a weekly podcast for a group of radio stations in the works and planned to "get off the ground this year, along with some cooking demonstrations at big shows around the local counties and keeping my business running, we're very nearly fully booked again this summer with big society weddings in marquees". Lock, it seems, is working towards his master plan at full speed.

As he puts it, all of his achievements—past, present and future—are "going to be part of a portfolio that is being put together to smash through onto TV and give Gordon Ramsay a run for his money!" 🍷

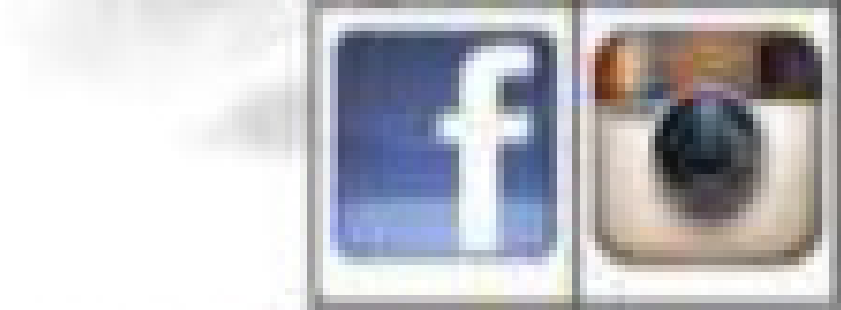
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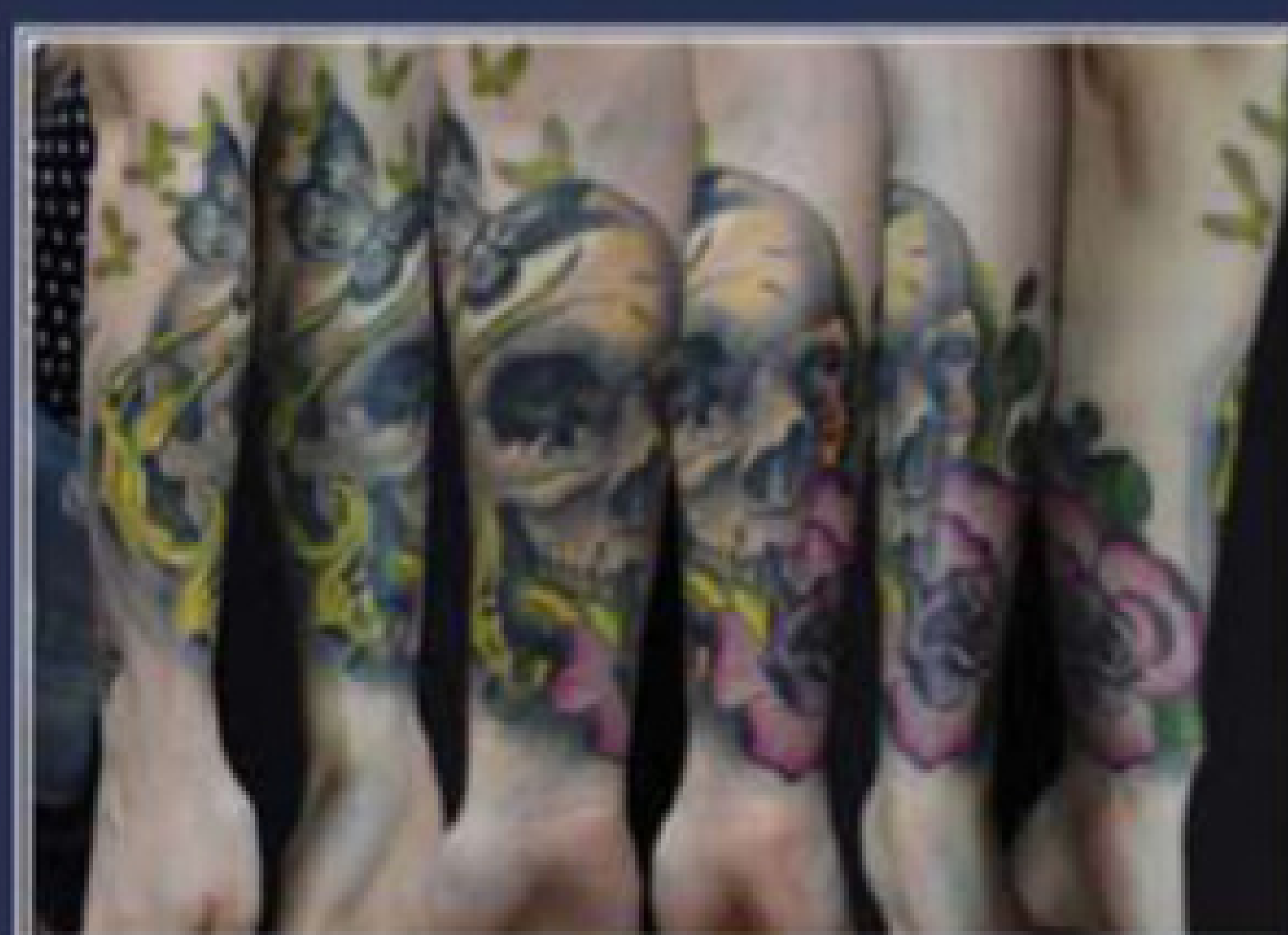
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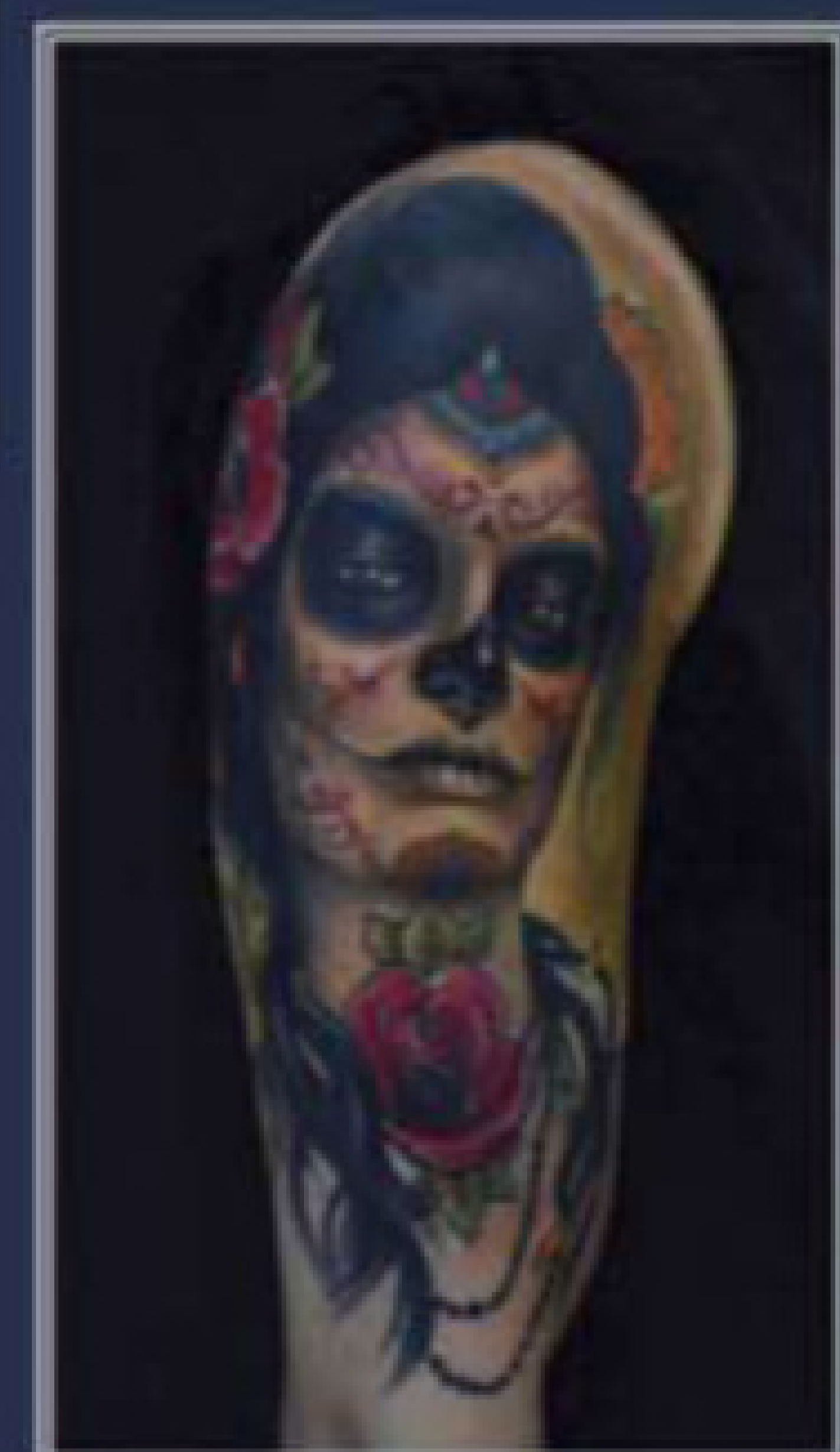
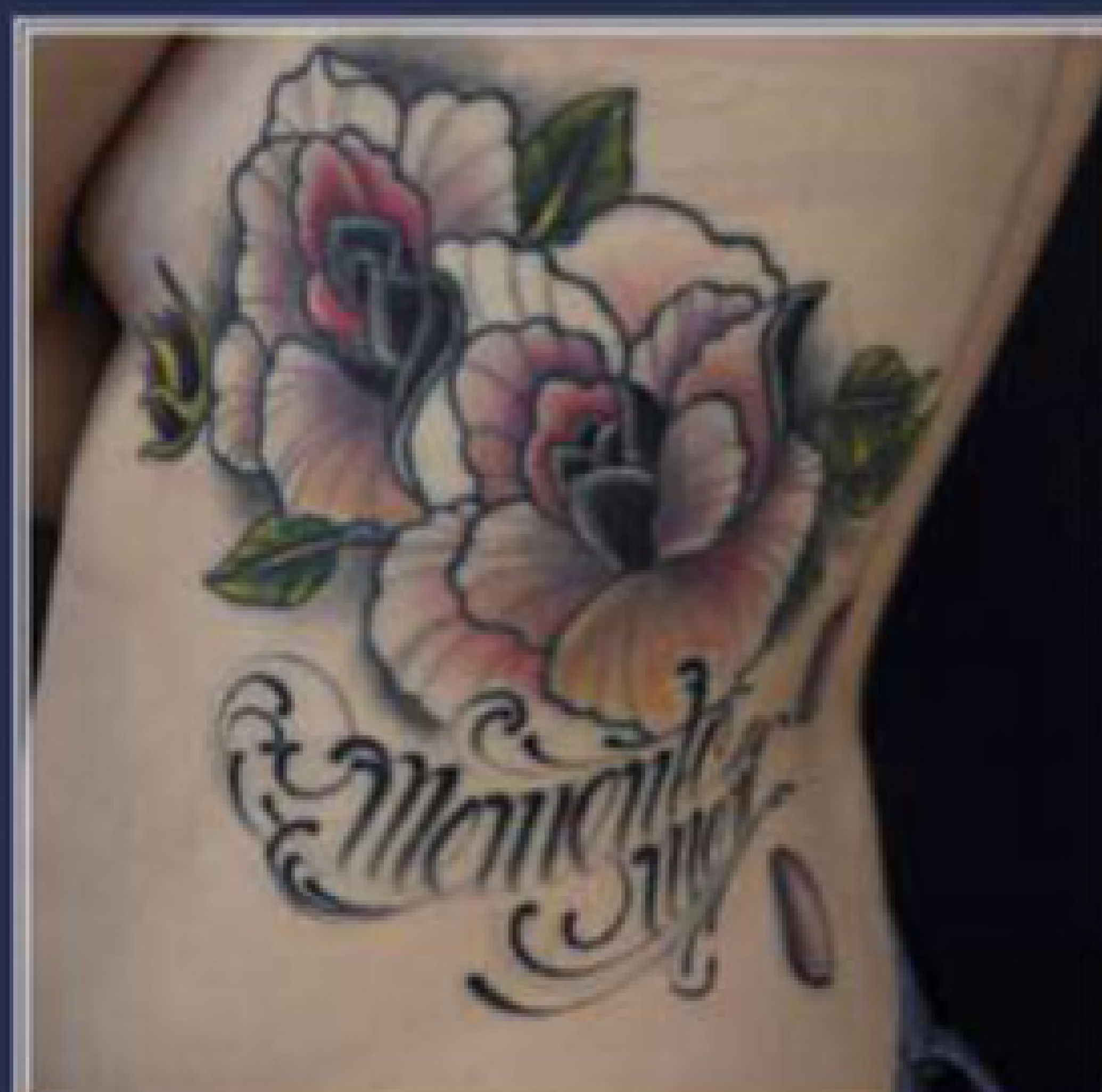


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Before the Ink...

JOHNY D MATTHEWS

Trent Aitken-Smith Chards Remain Photographical

More and more tattoo artists seem to be entering the tattoo world having first followed a less ink-stained path. Most have had boot camp careers that artistically lean towards their new lives in tattooing and so are now influenced by those beginnings

One of these artists is Johnny D Matthews and it all started when Johnny was visiting a friend's house, aged about ten. While wandering around the house looking for the toilet, Johnny happened to stumble across his friend's father's drawing room, where he discovered a technical detailing office that blew his young mind.

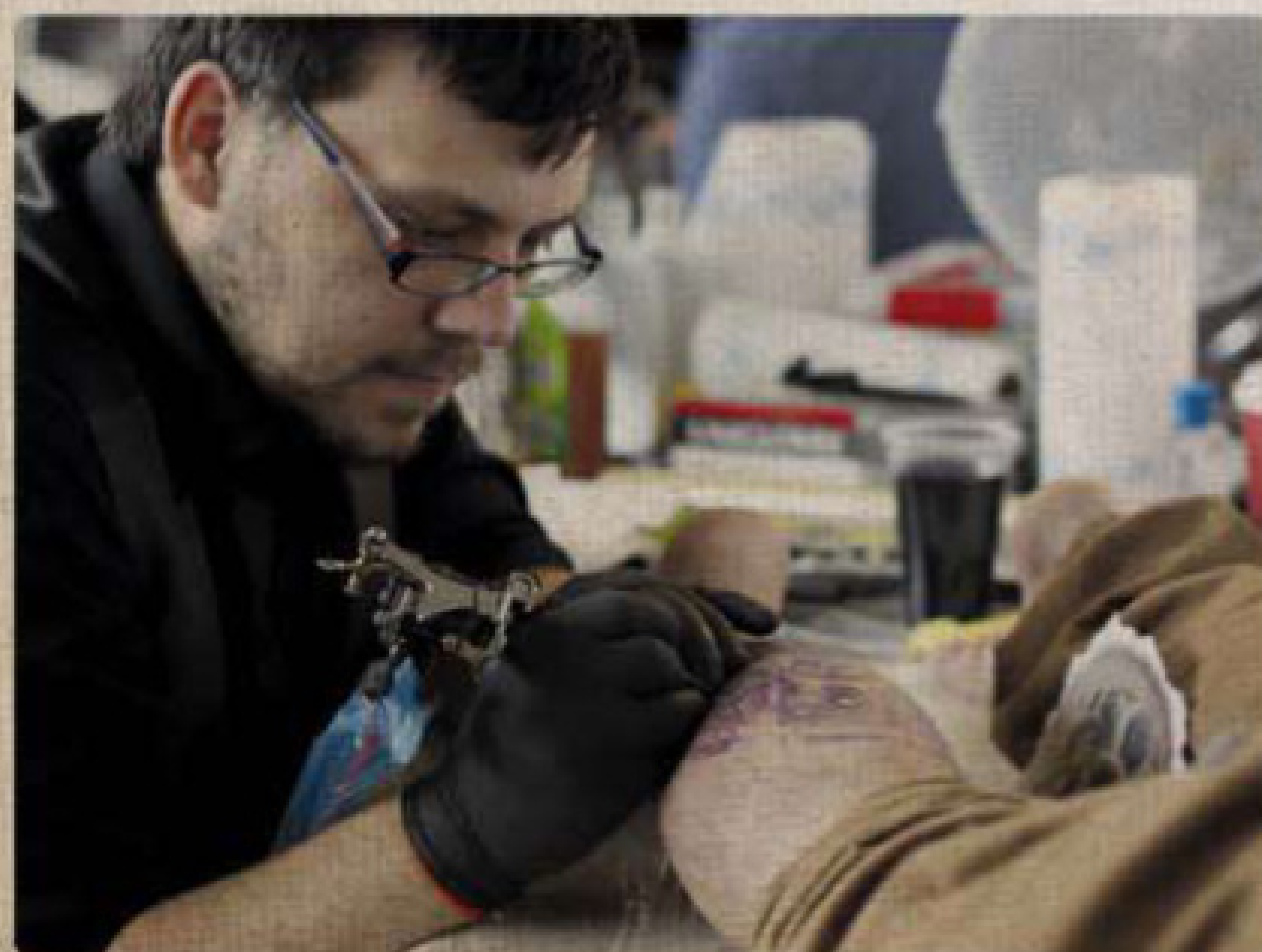
"There were extremely high detailed architectural plans and drawings littered all over the walls and drawing desks, and I thought to myself, 'Wow. I want to do this!'"

Following his discovery, Johnny researched how to become an architect and found it was a lot of studying. A few years passed and he found sitting still in a classroom something that didn't come naturally to him, resulting in him leaving school with the amazing record of zero GCSEs. However, he wanted to make something of himself, and

THERE WERE EXTREMELY HIGH DETAILED ARCHITECTURAL PLANS AND DRAWINGS LITTERED ALL OVER THE WALLS



Nicky Connor



willing to work hard, at the age of 16, he managed to talk his way into tech college and onto an architect's course. Six years later and the course was completed, but even with a degree, Johnny found it hard to get any job within the technical industry.

Thankfully though, some of Johnny's drawings were spotted by a tattooist in Sheffield.

"I am not sure I realised at the time how hard tattooing apprenticeships were to come by. It is just a real privilege when someone wants to help you out and teach you their art. So when Andy asked if I wanted to learn from him, it was an

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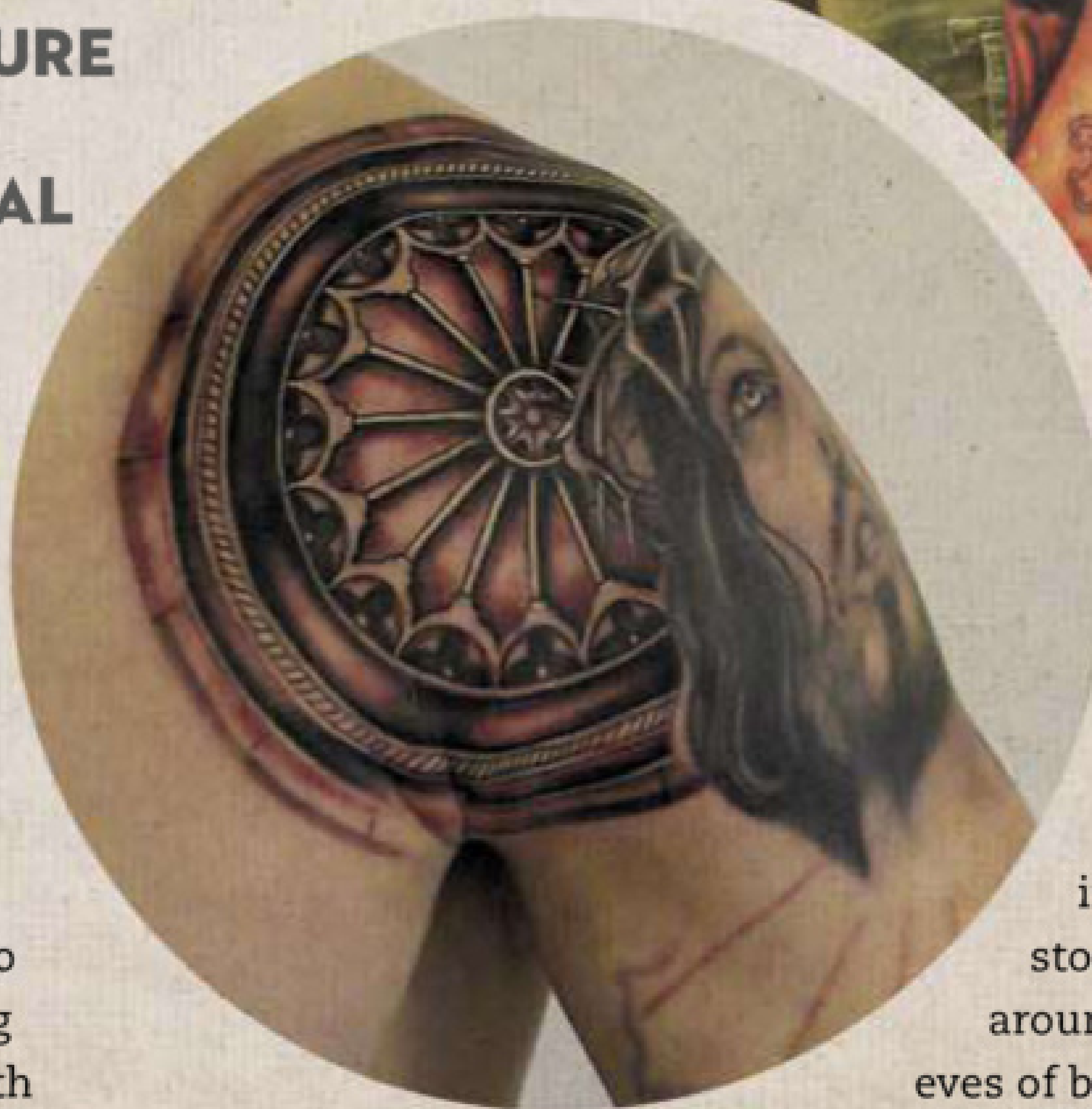


THE KEY THINGS THAT CAPTURE MY IMAGINATION ARE THE LONG, PERFECT, SYMMETRICAL LINES THAT MODERN BUILDINGS ALWAYS GIVE

amazing opportunity and something that obviously had a huge impact on my life.”

For the next 18 months, Johny was taught how to tattoo and how to turn that creativity inside of him into permanent artwork. During this time, he fell in love with tattooing and knew that this was something he wanted to do for the rest of his days.

“I think architecture has seriously affected me and my tattoo style in many ways over the years. The key things that capture my imagination



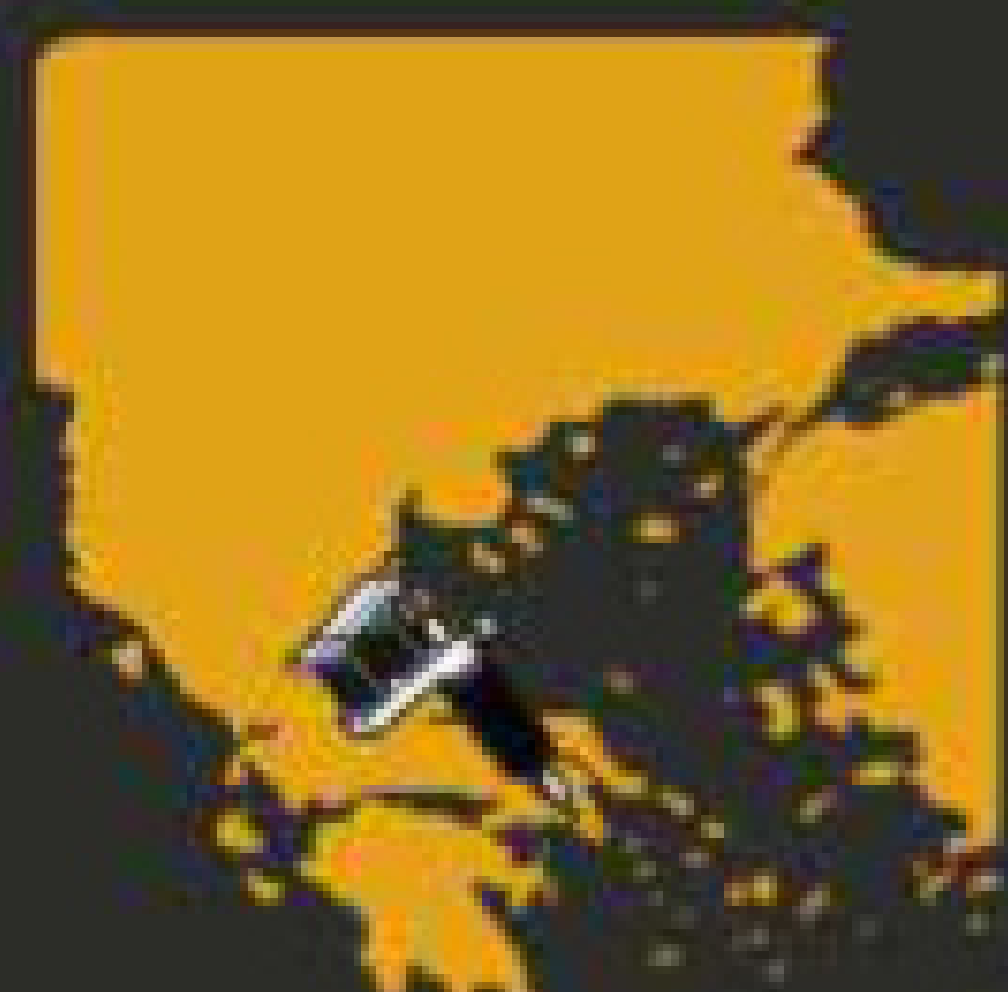
are the long, perfect, symmetrical lines that modern buildings always give, but I also love the fancy details and impact of the Renaissance period; the great detail in the unnecessary stone carvings and fixtures around church windows and eaves of buildings of this period.

And it is these aesthetics that I try to apply to my tattoo work whenever I can, For example, if someone asks for a religious themed sleeve, I will design it but with the architecture as the focus rather than the religious icons.”



THE LOVE BUG

If you were lucky enough to attend Tattoo Jam '13, there is no doubt in my mind, that at some point, you would have bumped into George Binas and his One Love crew



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Trent Aitken-Smith
One Love / Luv 'n' Roll

George was the guy who looked like an extra from some surfer movie, bouncing off the walls whilst pimping his stable of artists. His pure excitement about all life had to offer was infectious, and once the show was over, I got hold of George to find out more about One Love and the forces that drive this one-man dynamo. Thankfully, I wasn't to be disappointed.

In George's own words, "One Love is not just a tattoo studio, it's the idea and philosophy based on love, truth, evolution and singularity. It is proven that we're all one, and in my opinion, love is the ultimate power holding the whole universe together."

I can't say as I disagree with George on that statement, but I was interested in finding out how this could relate to running

a successful studio. In order to do this, I quickly realised we were going to have to go delve a little deeper into George's past, back to that age old battle between the suits and the paintbrush—or in this case tattoo machine wielders.

As a youngster, George always enjoyed creating and so took art and drawing. Unfortunately, at the age of 13 when school decides your subjects are important to your future, the 'business' subjects won out and George concentrated on mathematics and physics. When he was 18, George then enrolled at the National Technical University of Athens to study applied mathematics and physics. And this is when it started to get fun.

"At university, I also loved studying philosophy and psychology, so I decided that I should follow a path within marketing and entrepreneurship





IT IS PROVEN THAT WE'RE ALL ONE AND IN MY OPINION, LOVE IS THE ULTIMATE POWER HOLDING THE WHOLE UNIVERSE TOGETHER

A few months later and George was now the marketing manager of the small local studio where he got his first tattoo. While managing the day-to-day business, George started observing how the tattoo industry worked and soon enough came to believe that he could make a few big, positive, changes. Quickly, the small studio expanded and started becoming very popular, crewed by a handful of talented artists that George had discovered. But the partnership wasn't to last long and soon George was left looking for a new creative outlet.

But, as with all things, sometimes a dip in the road is just what you need to get you where you need to be and it wasn't long before George was back behind the manager's desk, 🍀

for the rest of my life, in order to remain free and creative."

Sounds a strange stance to take? But I get it, the more successful your business, the more free time you have to be creative.

But we still need the ink addiction and that was to come at the age of twenty-two when, three years after the loss of his

father, George got his first tattoo, a memorial to him. And since then, he has never looked back.

"I found tattoos a very impressive form of art. Art with a holy cause. Creating art on someone's body for the rest of his or her life, that's art in this life and beyond. At this point I realised I had fallen in love with tattooing."

DEATHPOP

Our classic nerd of the crew, Deathpop even studied robotics. He is obsessed with details, information and video games. Deathpop has been drawing since a young age, is a hard worker and can create amazing concepts... seemingly without references. He puts everything into his art, earning him the nickname, robot. Deathpop's styles lean towards biomech, bio organic...but also can whip out new school and new traditional. Rumour has it, he was the first artist who brought the watercolour style to Athens.

this time on his own terms.

"Me and Deathpop started preparing the whole concept of One Love in my university dormitory. We sorted out a home studio; I was the manager for the appointments and Deathpop did the tattoos. We were pretty busy so I started promoting the future shop via our Facebook page, meanwhile sponsoring lots of big events in Athens. In addition, while this was all going on, I was searching all over Greece for talented young artists with the same philosophy in life as ours.

Just over a year later—with lots of 24/7 hard work and hard times, mixed with plenty of positivity—the team and the shop was ready to rock 'n' roll. We had three tattoo artists, one piercer, one graphic designer, and me as the manager. At the

same time we announced the 'Summer One Love Tattoo Shop' which is located at the Farout Beach Club, on the island of Ios.

There is always more than meets the eye in Ios, it is my favourite Greek party island. I saw a great opportunity here because of the people from around the world who love partying, tattoos and travelling. So now, every July and August, the shop in Athens closes and we all move to Ios, so no one misses any fun. We work from 14:00 till late at night and then we party with our friends and customers! We also throw the One Love party in Farout and other bar-clubs. The shop is in front of the most beautiful beach on the island, where a huge party



CREATING ART ON SOMEONE'S BODY FOR THE REST OF HIS OR HER LIFE, THAT'S ART IN THIS LIFE AND BEYOND. AT THIS POINT I REALISED I HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH TATTOOING



is going on every day. The only bad thing is that after a couple of days we know all the songs, and times they will play, by heart!

At One Love, the crew seem to be pushing work of a high quality and custom designing that the tourists seem to love. Add to that the fact that due to the current economic situation in Greece, prices are generally low compared to other countries, it only gets better.

"Yeah, so we offer a unique design, at a good price, many thousands of miles from home. We also make sure we book customers in on the last day before they leave, so they don't ruin our work. And we get to promote our philosophy and our work, worldwide. We're very lucky that not only do we get to tattoo our Greek customers, who are very tough customers, we also get to tattoo people from all over the world."

And it looks like there is no slowing down for One Love.



WE ALSO MAKE SURE WE BOOK CUSTOMERS IN ON THE LAST DAY BEFORE THEY LEAVE, SO THEY DON'T RUIN OUR WORK!



Losing their convention cherry with Tattoo Jam '13, the crew are firmly hooked on the buzz of the convention circuit, looking to, "travel more and meet new friends". And with their own in-house graphic designer, the studio is starting to incorporate logo design, branding, street art and a custom clothing range, Luv 'n' Roll. And if that is not enough, George has set up a renting library at the studio, something that does not exist in Greece anymore, since it's a free service.

"I believe that everyone has to be their own master. If you want to learn more, to discover more and open your mind, reading is something very important. So I 🍷"



LAST HOPE 108

George describes Last Hope as, "a woman artist with man's soul". Last Hope believes slow and steady wins the day and throws out some amazing pencil sketches. She has drawn since she was a kid, practising daily until she was confident with her skills; as they say, we become what we really try hardest at. Last Hope can turn her hand to most styles but loves those clients who let her mix different styles... realism, illustrative, dot work. Last Hope is a promising artist and it won't be long before she is a household name in the tattoo world.



I BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE HAS TO BE THEIR OWN MASTER. IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE, TO DISCOVER MORE AND OPEN YOUR MIND, READING IS SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT

MIKE KIRTATAS

Mike is the sensitive guy of the group and his paintings and tattoos always leave you with the feeling that it is a cruel world for innocent souls. Mike's ambition is to be a great painter and, in general, a world class artist. Only behind the ink machine for just over a year and he is already making himself known for his unique style. Mixing trippy concepts with a more artistic approach and you have a style Mike likes to call, scratcher; watercolour crossed with new school. But if it's good old black and grey or realism you are after, Mike can turn his hand to those styles too. When he's not working at the studio, Mike loves to paint and work with his local activist organisation.

brought all of my books to the studio and lots of people helped us with this positive action. We got books on philosophy, from ancient Greece up to today, fiction, comic books, National Geographic, and more. We try to collect books to add to the collection and we provide this service for free. I'll charge you for a tattoo, or a T-shirt, but not for reading a book!"

Oh, this might not be the right time to mention, but One Love is closing. So what am I doing stringing you along. Well, before you all get upset, in truth, it is rebranding. I'll let George explain.

"The studio name is still One Love because I love that name. But in order to be legit and not have problems with copyright in the future (think Bob Marley), I changed the company name to Luv 'n' Roll... which I find pretty right and cool! It was Don K's idea and the team loved it! Simple, sounds good and free! So the clothing



brand and what people will know in the future is Luv 'n' Roll. One Love will be for the first few, the beloved! At the moment, our site is under construction but when it is ready, it will blow your minds! Get ready for luvnroll.com, a custom collective on your doorstep."

So there you have it. Whether you're into one love, or luv 'n' roll, George and his band of merry inkers are sure to have something that will catch your eye. And if you're lucky, you might just learn a thing or two along the way.

"One Love represents

my philosophy in life. It is mathematically proven that the whole universe is made of the same material and I believe that love is the ultimate power that keeps everything together and therefore helps us to evolve. Along with my best friend, I had the One Love logo tattooed on me at the age of 22... and I never imagined that this would one day be the trademark logo of my company. We're talking around 65 people, around the world who have this heart tattooed on them now... and that makes me smile." 🌟



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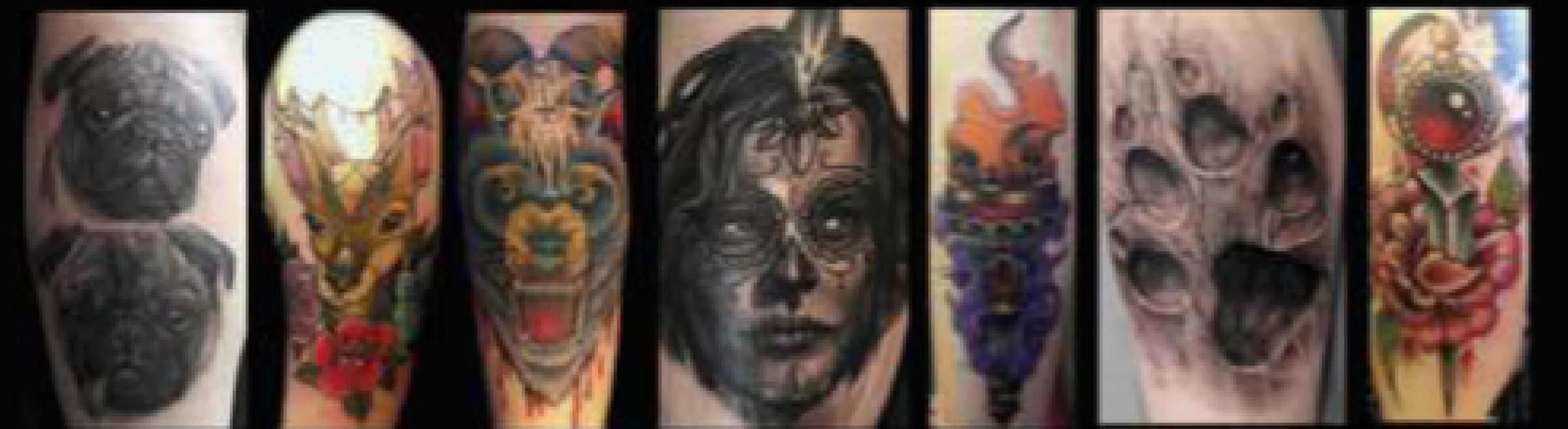


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Tattoo Convention
WARSAW

Eastern Europe is a well known hotbed of activity at the moment when it comes to tattooing—what else can you do but get the hell out there...



28 November. Car packed, cameras ready, lights ready and finally, I was ready for the last tattoo convention of 2013 for me—the very first edition of Warsaw Tattoo Convention.

For some crazy reason I decided to drive there; 1,128 miles to be precise. I knew it was worth it though.

I knew the organisers and how serious they are about the industry. Even though it was only the first edition I was certain that I'm heading for a weekend full of great work and entertainment. Was I disappointed? Read on to find out.

The event took place in the Business Class complex of the famous Legia stadium. Through

the windows you could check out the green grass of unusually calm field and silent stands. Taking into consideration the cold and rainy weather, looking through the window was definitely enough.

I like when everything happens in one room—tattooing and entertainment—luckily that was the case in Warsaw. Otherwise I feel like I'm missing out.

Tattoo artists arranged their spacious booths, some had already started tattooing. Everything was ready for the visitors to be let in. Let me remind you that it was only the first edition, so always the extra pressure and uncertainty is on.

Regardless of the cold weather there was a massive queue

REGARDLESS THE COLD WEATHER THERE WAS A MASSIVE QUEUE OUTSIDE, WHEN THE DOORS OPENED VENUE QUICKLY FILLED UP WITH PEOPLE TRAVELLING FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

outside and when the doors opened the venue quickly filled up with people travelling from all over the country for this event. Saturday was so crowded that getting from one end of the room to the other was quite a lengthy adventure. I think organisers were really positively surprised with such an amazing turnout. But as they say, "there's always a room for improvement." Here literally, 🤔



Andrzej Misztal at RcoK Ink



Junior at JuniorInk



Kamil Brzezinski at RMK Tattoo



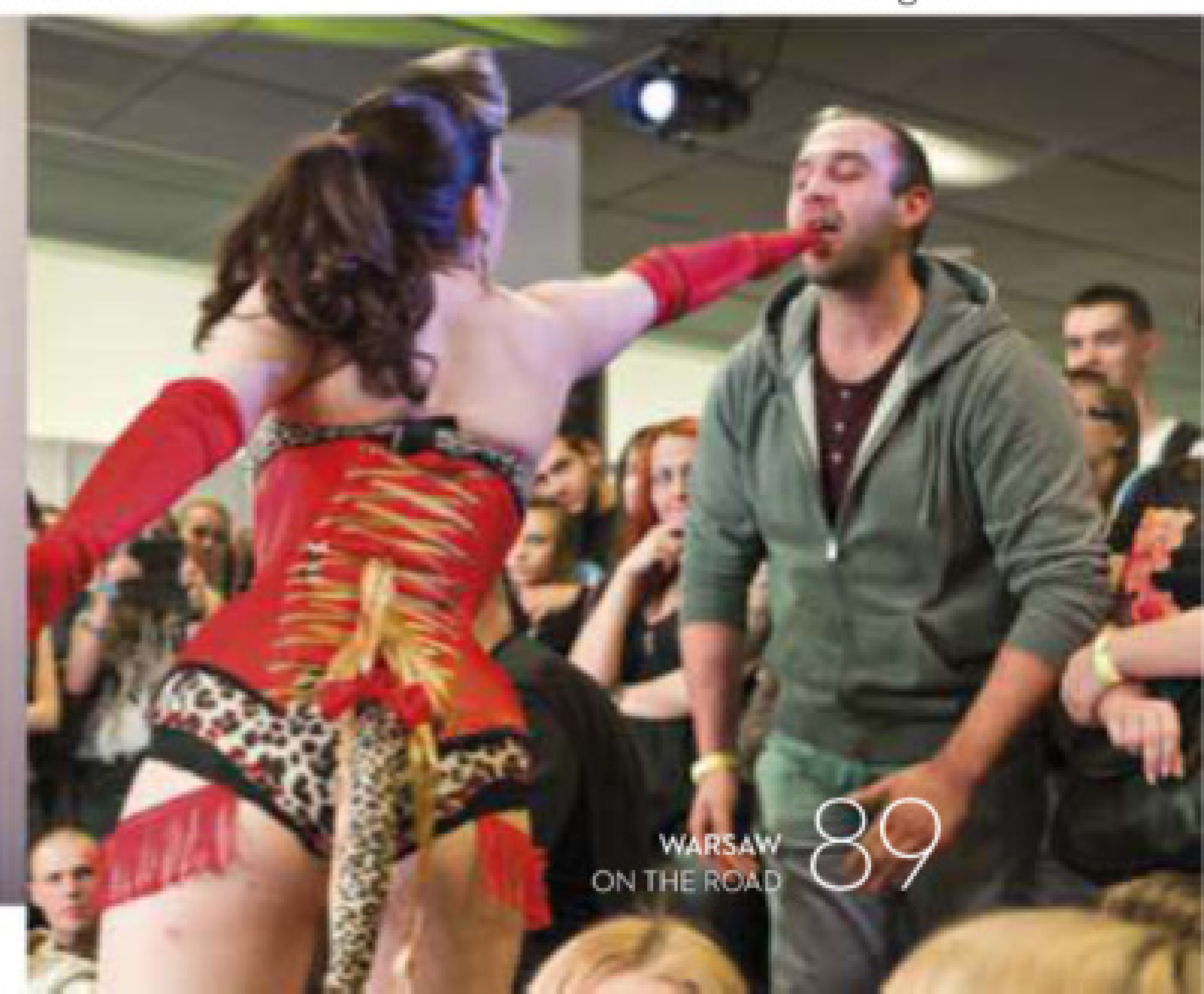
Grucha at Tattoo-Zone



Enzo at Ink-ognito



Skin Deep Magazine Issue 235





Live2 at Tattooligans, Greece

Bartek Kos by Kult Tattoo



Marianna Sikora with her brand new scarification



Kuba Krzemiski at Dirty Lust



Dzikson

AS I WALKED AROUND THE PLACE I WATCHED SOME BEAUTIFUL PIECES OF WORK BEING PUT TO LIFE BY SOME OF THE BEST POLISH REPRESENTATIVES OF THIS EVER SO GROWING INDUSTRY

I hope they'll take this into consideration for the next edition and provide a bit more room.

As I walked around the place I watched some beautiful pieces of work being put to life by some of the best Polish representatives of this ever-so growing industry. Tofi and Enzo from Ink-ognito; full of young talent Szery Tattoo; the guys from Krakow's famous Kult on one side, then Warsaw's

legendary Junior Ink, Agrypa and incredibly talented Karolina Czaja who mastered handpoking technique from Primitive Tattoo on the other side. Not forgetting Anabi, who is constantly surprising us with his ideas beautifully translated into the skin.

There's an artist whose works caught my attention in particular that weekend. As we all feel more and more like we've seen it all, Gepas definitely stands out. He combines realistic tattoos with children's drawings. Very interesting, very refreshing.

There was a bunch of great international artists there too. Perdibird from Sweden, Phil Wilkinson from England (who got the Best of Sunday award),

Eddy from Lithuania, Jack Ribeiro from France, just to name a few.

You could only try to keep up with everyone's 'under the needle' progress—with so much talent under one roof you can only try...

Let's move to the busy entertainment program.

Tomasz Madej through his 'Tattoo Unplugged' seminar took us on a little trip and explained a thing or two about the traditional method of tattooing. Beautiful pin-ups, Candy Girl, Betty Q and Anja Pavlova took over the stage with their burlesque performances. A drummer, Raydom, with DJ Maku mixed some tunes together—what an interesting duo. Olaf Deriglasof with the band provided some heavy sounds for the audience, 🎸

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Tofi at Ink-ognito



David Rudzinski at Theatrum Symbolica



Janusz Wieckowski at Jan Tattoo



I'VE WORKED AT MANY TATTOO EVENTS BEFORE. HOWEVER, WARSAW TATTOO CONVENTION WAS DIFFERENT AND A LITTLE BIT MORE SPECIAL TO ME THAN ALL THE OTHERS

there even was real headbanging going on in front of the stage!

However, one of my favorite acts of the weekend was a capoeira show by Beribazu Polska. They had people clapping and dancing to their music—everyone loved it! Especially when Junior (one of the organizers) surprised everyone when he jumped in and joined the show. I always look for new and refreshing

performances. And this was it!

Tattoo event promoters around the world trying to keep up with the standards and they're doing a great job, but they forget about adding variety to their programs. Something new and interesting is always welcome. Great job Warsaw Keep it up.

Finally, I would like to mention that Warsaw Tattoo Convention supported an action 'Tattoo for the Philippines'—there was an art fusion and painting of the T-shirts, as well as various auctions happening during the event and after with all the proceeds going towards the help for victims of the typhoon.

I've worked at many tattoo events before, but Warsaw Tattoo

Convention was different and a little bit more special to me than all the others. Why? For a couple of reasons, it took place during my birthday weekend and I travelled there not only as a photo reporter, but also as a guest. I just released my new, hardcore calendar—In Her Eyes 2014 (you can find more about it at www.inhereyes.bigcartel.com) and I was invited to exhibit featured photos for the duration of the event. I must say, it was such an honour.

That busy couple of days have come to an end. I'm certain that Warsaw will definitely take a solid place on the worldwide tattoo conventions map. Hopefully see you next year! 🐾

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Bells and Whistles are looking for a new artist. We are ideally looking for a black and grey realism local artist, but if that's not you we would still like to see your portfolio. We have space for other styles and people from out of town as well. This is a new shop, we are getting busier by the minute and will be heavily promoting both shop and artists. Exmouth gets very busy in the summer so it's a good opportunity to get your foot in the door and build up a regular client base. Contact us at info@bellsandwhistles.co.uk, call 01394 488090 or visit www.bellsandwhistlestatattoo.co.uk.

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Soapbox

CRAIGY LEE

Craigy Lee Ash Springle

This month's topic is something I am constantly hearing tattoo artists talk about and post status's about on social media. It has existed as long as tattooing, but in recent years with the availability of the internet it has become a much bigger issue. The plagiarism of artwork and replication of tattoos...

I'm not talking about reproducing or tattooing flash here; if you are an artist that paints flash and sells it or puts it out there, then that is what it is for—to be tattooed. I have even seen artists complaining about their flash designs being tattooed after they have had it featured in a magazine, I'm sorry to break it to you, but that really is what flash is for guys.

We are in the modern age of laptops, internet phones, tablets and free wi-fi in almost every place you go. As soon as an artist finishes a tattoo, it is online within minutes and seen by hundreds—or even thousands—of people. 90 percent of customers who come into a tattoo studio do not pick flash off the wall or have a homemade drawing of an idea... they come armed with an iphone full of pictures of other artists' tattoos they have found on pinterest or instagram.

Generally speaking, the public are not artists and far too many already think tattoo artists are nothing more than human photocopiers who can recreate anything you give them—even if it's a tattoo that's already been done. Most decent artists worth their salt can take that idea, redraw it and turn it into something original. However there are always the shops and tattooers that will happily take it, trace it and tattoo it.

Now let's think from the artist's perspective. That tattoo is more than likely an original custom piece. The artist has taken a lot of time and effort to come up with it, designing it, drawing it and then finally tattooing it. Most of us tattoo all day long, so when do we have time to draw? This more often

than not happens in our own time, late at night working hard to keep up with the appointments we have booked for the week ahead—time we could spend with our families, socialising or actually enjoying life.

Likewise, the person wearing that tattoo has probably paid a lot of money to get that custom piece, and possibly (depending on the waiting list) waited no short amount of time to get it tattooed. They have made the effort and as a tattoo artist,

so should you. Copying a tattoo is just plain lazy; if you cannot pull something special out of the hat for your customer, then maybe you shouldn't be tattooing. God knows our craft is overrun with poor to mediocre tattoos.

When you're tracing a tattoo as described here, that custom tattoo becomes not quite so unique anymore. Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but when you've spent a lot of time and effort on something only to see someone else do exactly the same piece line for line, it just sucks.

From both sides—whether you're getting the tattoo or being asked to do it—a little more respect for the art of the craft would go a long way don't you think?

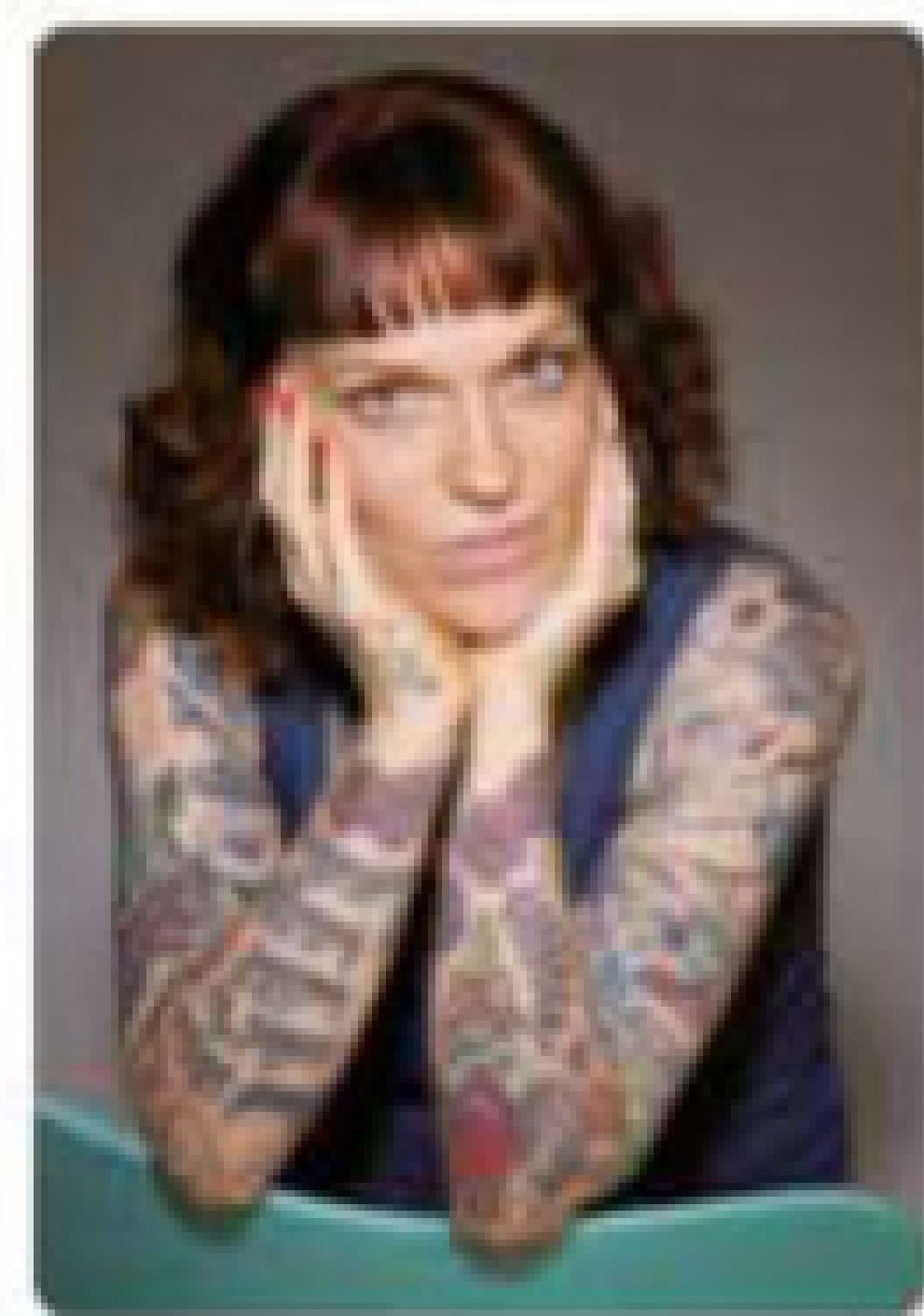
Join in the discussion: is there an important issue on your mind you would like me to discuss in an upcoming issue? Drop me a line craigylee@skindeep.co.uk



An Eye is upon you

THE DEATH OF AN OBJECT

Lately, I've been spending much of my time thinking about things, literally. Things—things that I own, things that I love, things I couldn't bear to part with



Paula Hardy Kangelos

Books, records, furniture, musical instruments, clothes (oh, the clothes!). I'm both proud of my things and ashamed of my liking for them, I envy the minimalist lifestyle, but I can't see how it's possible to live a life without stuff.

When I was younger, much younger, I'd invite myself back to the homes of interesting people, just so I could see their things. I wanted to see what they read, what they ate from, what they listened to, their bed clothes, and what they hung on their walls. I used it like a short cut, believing that their possessions would direct me straight to their inner selves. It became a way of weeding people out fast—don't like their CD collection? Books not to my taste? Leave. Don't look back.

THE THINGS WE MOST OFTEN USE TO DEMONSTRATE WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE COME FROM, THE STUFF TO WHICH WE ATTACH THE MOST IMPORTANCE, IS FACING EXTINCTION

I'm not as ruthless these days, but I'm still occasionally guilty of judging a person by their possessions, although the person I judge most often is myself. In this, I'm not alone, we all make calls and decisions based on what is easy to see, and we all construct images of ourselves using the clothes that we wear and the things we display, it's normal.

Right now I'm obsessed with the US TV series, *Hoarders*, a reality show that documents those whose possessions have overwhelmed their existence—people with so much stuff that they are

hidden behind it, and instead of indicating their personalities their stuff has become more important than themselves.

Most of us recognise this extreme behaviour as dysfunctional, but are we really any better? We ask ourselves, 'what would we rescue from the burning house? I cannot answer, I'd want to rescue everything. I have never been travelling, in part, because I couldn't bear to leave my stuff behind, to trade in the objects for the experience.

Yet the things we most often use to demonstrate who we are and where we come from, the stuff to which we attach the most importance, is facing extinction. How do we demonstrate who we are if we no longer have books, photographs and albums to display? As these indicators shrink, dissolve into their new form, digital memory, are we intuitively seeking new forms of non verbal communication? Is the disappearance of things a catalyst for the increasing visibility of the tattoo?

I have photographs—boxes and boxes of photographs, starting around 1905 (just a few—dark grey on thick, cream card) the numbers increase through the '20s, '30s, and the people, serious and uniformed in the '40s, are standing at the end of the garden in a one piece bathing suit by the end of the '50s. The colours change too, from the azure blue skies of the '60s, into the faded ochre of the '70s. The paper alters, the texture, the dimensions—my nan used 110 film, my mum, 135—it's easy to discern who was behind the camera. The

last photographs are my son's early years, taken via Polaroid, just for fun.

When I hold one of these photographs in my hand I don't just see the image in the photo, I'm sharing the experience of touch with everyone that held it before, and everyone that will hold it in the future. Similarly, our relationship with books is not based purely on the text inside, instead it is a multi-sensory experience—the weight, the texture, the smell, can never be reproduced by electronic readers, but humans love convenience and we learn to adjust. My 'real' photographs stop abruptly, in 2002.

Now that photographs are digital, we snap away without thinking about posterity, after all, we'll just delete those we don't want, and we don't even really look at those we keep. The joy of the digital photograph is in the taking and in the immediacy of its publishing, the very function of photography has evolved.

Our society is filled with mixed messages about ownership, we are bombarded with instructions to buy things, yet made to feel shallow when we do. Now that the few things we are unquestionably permitted to keep, the cultural, the souvenir, are disappearing inside technology, how are we supposed to respond? How do we construct our sense of self and indicate our identity now? Is the rise of the tattoo a direct response to the death of the photograph?

Tattoos, like the solid photographs of the past, mark out the significant—love, death, travel, ageing, and almost as a photograph catches light, the tattoo captures the moment in which we are tattooed. Like books, tattoos tell stories, like music, tattoos make connections and prompt memories. Tattoos are where experience and souvenir entwine forever, we cannot separate them and nor should we wish to. There is no digital equivalent and there never will be.

Tattoos really are ours to keep. 🐾

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