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# Skin Deep

TATTOO MAGAZINE

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**236**  
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TOMMY LEE: 10TH ST ENTERTAINMENT

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# The needle has landed

Jerry Pipkins

## CLICK, CLICK, BOOM

As I sat down to write this column, one of my news feeds told me that today is Jack Kerouac's birthday. I don't think he would make a very good 92 year old. Road trips in your extreme old age are probably not half as much as much fun as they were in your twenties - but as I touched the red wire to the blue wire in my head, I looked at some pictures of him doing his thing and wondered if he was the kind of guy who would have gotten tattooed if he had been born into a different era - mostly; into our era.

I kind of like this game. Imagining figures from history and the tattoos they might have as we hit the year 2000. Would they be tattooed at all? Some of them may have rebelled against the rebellion of it but I still like the thought of Christopher Wren designing his own architectural tattoo and presenting it in a studio to challenge the poor artist on the other end of the machine with a task worthy of being called a task.

Importantly though, when I had gotten bored of that game, it also occurred to me that somewhere along the timelines of er... time, tattoos have become different things to different generations. If you send yourself back in time to its origin and really consider it at a base level, it had a real

purpose in life but if we stay within living memory, things are changing quicker than ever.

If I take myself back to my first time - which would be the late eighties - my reasons for getting a tattoo where genuine at the time. If you pressed me on it, I could probably come up with no better answer than "I wanted one". That was how things were thought about then. I certainly wasn't

YOU ARE NOT A METAL-HEAD OR A FAN OF SPORTS OR EVEN A SHAMAN ANYMORE - YOU'RE SIMPLY TATTOOED AND THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF YOUR INK

alone either. There were many of us who 'wanted one' and consequently, 'got one'. It was most definitely an act of rebellion for me. It was also very much inspired by wanting to be part of a tribe - in my case, the 'rock tribe'. Most of which was fuelled by our alternative cover star Tommy Lee and the other guys in Motley Crue. (Did I forget to mention we had two covers this month?) There were others though. I had friends back then who were big football fans who got football badges tattooed - and as much as I would like think my train of thought was much holier, time has taught me that really, we were both thinking the same thing.

As we zap forward in time, something has changed. At

some point, a tattoo not only became a sign of rebellion (and the irony is not lost on me that there are now so many of us, there's not much rebellion involved at all) but also a fashion statement.

I can't get my head into the mind of somebody who would want one for the sake of fashion but I'm grown up enough to say it's not a bad thing. Getting yourself a tattoo

to be fashionable is not really that different to getting one to be rebellious... which in turn, is not that different to marking yourself as the tribal shaman. Not really.

All of these concepts - and all those I haven't mentioned that happened in between - are valid. The end result is always the same. Whatever your reason for getting a tattoo, you are now tattooed - and that puts you in 'The Big Tribe'.

To those without ink, you are not a metal-head or a fan of sports or even a shaman anymore - you're simply tattooed and they don't care about the background of your ink. You are simply all the same because you have ink. End of story.

And yet, we are all very, very unique. I know this.

You know this. This means the whole world to us.

The question itself is only as serious as you want it to be in the first place but if you have this in your hands, it's worth you noting that we have only one issue of Skin Deep between this place and our twentieth birthday issue. Things change. We must always change. If you don't change you will get left royally behind.

I need a plan.

Being fashionable is not on the agenda. I wouldn't know fashion if it camped out in my garden. Being rebellious at this point in time, would be embarrassing.

That only leaves me with one alternative. Strap on some rockets and light the touch paper.

You didn't really think we haven't been working on this for months on end did you?

It's time to go all Christopher Wren on your ass.

*Sen*



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## ARTIST PROFILES

**36 SADE SONCK**  
Some six months back, the boss met Sade Sonck in Colorado but - as is the case with all meetings such as this - she was busy with a client and he was lucky not to come away from the encounter with some hand-knitted socks from her friend Nora...

**88 CHRIS JONES**  
**PHYSICAL GRAFFITI**  
If there's a name on the public's lips right now, it's that of Chris Jones. As he pounds out some serious realistic portraits that everybody can

identify with, we took all his toys away for an hour to drill inside his head. Well, most of his toys.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

**18 THIS MEANS WAR**  
This month, somebody had the bright idea of pitching artist vs artist - the rules went something like this: "Choose the top five tattoos from somebody who has actually tattooed you". The names out of the hat of doom were Russ and Barbara - so we taped up their fingers, laced up the gloves and left them to it.

**22 READER PROFILE**  
Hannah Graves is the manager, curator and piercer at AKA Berlin. She moved to Berlin from the UK in September 2012 to work at AKA. She'd spent the previous ten years working various jobs, from managing a skateboard shop to a busy high street bar, but always moving on when she got the boot or got bored.



## TOMMY LEE

ENTERTAINMENT, TATTOOS AND DEATH

**28 TOMMY LEE**  
Vince Neil. Mick Mars. Nikki Sixx. Tommy Lee. If we have to tell you these four mightily tattooed gentlemen, collectively known as Motley Crue, have single-handedly helped shape rock as we know it by being an integral and pioneering part of its history, we can't be friends.

**60 THE SOCIAL NETWORK**  
At no other point in human existence than now has technology played such an enormous role in shaping our day-to-day lives. To consider for even a

THIS MONTH'S PULL OUT:  
SKIN SHOTS SAMPLER



## CRAIG MEASURES

THE WORLD KNEELS IN HIS PRESENCE

moment that there was once a time when the Internet didn't reign supreme over our lives is a strange thing.

**76 CRAIG MEASURES: CHAMPION OF THE WORLD**  
Over ten days in

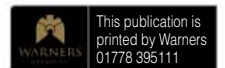
January, some of the finest illustrative tattoo artists gathered together at Frank La Natra's studio, Into the Woods, for what was to turn out to be the tattooist's equivalent of The Avengers Assemble.



Cover model: SaraX Tattoos: Carl Fuchs Wardrobe: Cheri Wilson Chagollan with Wonderland Corsets Photography: Jenna Kraczek Photography

1 Marcher Court, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 6BS Tel: 01244 881888 Fax: 01244 646016 www.jazzpublishing.co.uk info@jazzpublishing.co.uk

<p>EDITOR <b>Sion Smith</b> editor@skindeep.co.uk 07841 999334</p>	<p>PRODUCTION MANAGER <b>Justine Hart</b> production@skindeep.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 235</p>	<p>CREDIT CONTROL <b>Pam Coleman</b> pam@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 215</p>	<p>EVENTS MANAGER <b>Shelley Bond</b> shelley@jazzevents.co.uk 01244 881895 ext. 303</p>	<p>DIGITAL CONTENT <b>Gareth Williams</b> gareth.williams@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 302</p>	<p>MANAGING DIRECTOR <b>Stuart Mears</b> stuart@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 881888</p>
<p>ART EDITOR <b>Gareth Evans</b> gareth@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 204</p>	<p>ACCOUNTS &amp; ADMIN MANAGER <b>Emma McCrindle</b> accounts@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 207</p>	<p>MAGAZINE ADVERTISING MANAGER <b>Mark McCarthy</b> advertising@skindeep.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 304</p>	<p>EVENTS CO-ORDINATORS <b>Wendy Marks</b> wendy@jazzevents.co.uk 01244 881895 ext. 305</p>	<p>SUBSCRIPTIONS &amp; BACK ISSUES <b>Katy Cuffin</b> magazines@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 501</p>	<p>DISTRIBUTION <b>Susan Saunders</b> susan.saunders@seymour.co.uk 0207 429 4073, ISSN 0966-4351 <b>Can't find Skin Deep magazine in your newsagent?</b> Please contact our distribution company for your nearest outlet 0207 429 4073</p>
<p>PRODUCTION EDITOR <b>Fergus McShane</b> fergus@jazzpublishing.co.uk</p>	<p>ADMINISTRATION <b>Jan Schofield</b> jan@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 219</p>	<p>ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE <b>Rob Cunningham</b> advertising@skindeep.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 214</p>	<p>Sarah Shawcross sarah@jazzevents.co.uk 01244 881895 ext. 239</p>	<p>PUBLISHER <b>David Gamble</b> david@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 881888</p>	<p>WEB MANAGER <b>David Arthur</b> david.arthur@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 208</p>
<p>Asher Lloyd asher.lloyd@jazzpublishing.co.uk 01244 881888 ext. 275</p>					



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**Aaron Raw**  
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**Adam Bromby**  
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**Adi Earl**  
 Alan Turner  
**Alex Rattray**  
 Alex Roze  
**Alex Stark**  
 Alex Williamson  
**Alex Wright**  
 Ally Cat  
**Amalie Aerboe**  
 Amanda Greenidge  
**Amber Elliott**  
 Amy Edwards  
**Anastasia Karydas**  
 Andrea Mallus  
**Andrew Swarbrick**  
 Andy McDonald  
**Angel Totchev**  
 Angelika Graca  
**Antonio Troise**  
 Arabella Reynolds  
**Atom**  
 Auntie Eve  
**Barry Gilbert**  
 Bartosz Sapula  
**Bartt**  
 Beany  
**Ben Ashmead**  
 Benedetta Pagnoni  
**Ben Gadsby**  
 Ben Parry  
**Benjamin Del Castillo**  
 Benji Caltabiano  
**Billy Richards**  
 Billy Saunders  
**Bob Leach**  
 Boris Bianchi  
**Brett Fowler**  
 Burnie  
**Butler**  
 Carlos Aguilar  
**Casper Redmer**  
 Caz Tobitt  
**Chad Newsom**  
 Chantale Coady  
**Chelsea Bishop**  
 Chelsey Chung  
**Chris 51**  
 Chris Crossman  
**Chris Morris**  
 Christopher Lewis  
**Claire Brazier**  
 Clarke Dudley

**Clifford Falzon**  
 Cookie Horrifica  
**Colin Cooper**  
 Craig FH  
**Cree McCahill**  
 Dale Hearson  
**Dan Arietti**  
 Dan Stewart  
**Dane Forester**  
 Dane Grannon  
**Daniel Lake**  
 Daniel Robson  
**Danny Birch**  
 Danny Kovacs  
**Danny Stoner**  
 Danny Thorne  
**Darcy**  
 Darius Niewczasz  
**Darryl Mullen**  
 Dave Perry  
**Davey Jebadiah**  
 Dave Mitchell  
**David Pattinson**  
 David Robb  
**David Trowell**  
 Dean Cowley  
**Dek Kent**  
 Del May  
**Diana Jay**  
 Diego Pangel  
**Dika O'Real**  
 Diyan Ivanov  
**Don Alejandro Cervantes**  
 Donatas Lasys  
**Duane Illumineye**  
**Robinson**  
 Earl Noble  
**Edgar Ivanov**  
 El Tragico  
**Elena Di Legge**  
 Elliott Wells  
**Emil Giczewski**  
 Emilio Winter  
**Emma Burdis**  
 Emma Von Betson  
**Eric Borst**  
 Esme Loasby  
**Euan Thomson**  
 Eugene Rubuls  
**Eva Mpatshi**  
 Evan Sand  
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 Fabio Filippone  
**Fade FX**  
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**George Torrington**  
 Gemma Horrors  
**Gery Boy**  
 Gez Bradley  
**Gian Andrea Signorelli**  
 Glenn Cuzen

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**Grzegorz Prykas**  
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**HR Tattooist**  
 Hannah Lightspeed  
**Harry Hillyer**  
 Henrik Gallon  
**Holly Dixon**  
 Ian Hopkins  
**Imi Csikos**  
 Ina Weiter  
**Isobel Stevenson**  
 Ivan Bor  
**Ivana Belakova**  
 Ivano Foddai  
**Jake Galleon**  
 Jake Giles  
**Jakub Golebiewski 'Hendrix'**  
 James Krausz  
**Jamie Hawkes**  
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**Jan Sidirupoulos**  
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**Jessie Foakes**  
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**Joe Hill**  
 Jordan Keeble  
**Jordan Oterski**  
 Josh Bodwell  
**Josh Dee**  
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**Katan Costello**  
 Karl Cooper  
**Kayley Jayne Warrington**  
 Kenneth Nielsen  
**Kevin Sankarsingh**  
 Koen Chamberlain  
**Kolyok**  
 Kyle 'Egg' Williams  
**Lara Higgs**  
 Lauren Huddlestone  
**Lauren Spoor**  
 Lauren Sutton  
**Lee Armstrong**  
 Lee Dobbs  
**Lee Ganley**  
 Lee Smith  
**Lee Wood**  
 Leo Davies-Train  
**Leo Rios**  
 Liam Jackson  
**Lindsay Williams**  
 Lisa Walker  
**Loco MM Ink**  
 Lorenz Odermatt  
**Lu Loram - Martin**  
 Lucas Hales

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 Richard Barclay  
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 Richard Peel  
**Rob Jackson**  
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**Rose Harley**  
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**Rossi**  
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**Kelvin Slack**  
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# Sleeve Notes

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## DRINKING IN THE ART

It seems that the makers of J&B Whiskey grew weary of Sailor Jerry Rum having all the tattoo flash fun and decided to go one better. So they covered 25 bottles in latex skin and had Sebastien Mathieu of Le Sphinx studio, Paris, design and tattoo an original piece on each bottle.

The resulting bottles took 20 hours to tattoo and sure do look pretty, especially with their black silkscreened wood

presentation boxes. They sold out immediately, of course, but hey, at least we can look at pics until they show up on eBay – or you can see an example at Joséphine, the cocktail bar near Le Sphinx, should you be roaming the 11th arrondissement of an evening.

Check out the other enigmatic stuff the studio produces at [lesphinxparis.com](http://lesphinxparis.com), too – definitely worth a look.

## SHORT SLEEVES

### POWYS CHARITY TATTOO CONVENTION 2014

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## POWYS CHARITY TATTOO CONVENTION

On 26-27 July this year the second Powys Charity Tattoo Convention will set up shop in the middle of Wales to raise money for Help for Heroes and the air ambulance service. Last year's event raised over £3,500 and over the past seven years organisers x-angelus studios have brought in more than £15,000 for various causes.

This year's festival is a boutique affair so tickets are limited, but there are around 30 artists working over the weekend; there's also music from TA2FEST once the inking is done for the day. If you'd like to support the event, get tickets or just find out more, visit [powystattooconvention.co.uk](http://powystattooconvention.co.uk).

## DEPARTURES AT ELECTRIC KICKS

Dek and Sam at Electric Kicks have let us know that Craig Wilson has decided to move on from their studio to set up his own shop. The new venture will open soon – watch this space for details. "We are both gutted but happy for him," says Sam. "It's a new challenge, but he will be missed."

## PIERCING TRAINING COURSE

K. Brothers Studio in Glasgow is organising body piercing training courses. The courses will run over four days and end with a theoretical exam. According to the organisers, after completing the course students will be able to perform 10 different ear piercings >



**SHORT SLEEVES**

and 12 lip piercings, as well as tongue, cheek, septum, nose, eyebrow, nipple, navel and surface piercings. There will also be the chance to practice on some (brave, we presume) volunteers.

For details email [k.brotherstudio@gmail.com](mailto:k.brotherstudio@gmail.com), call 07712305702 or visit [kbrotherstudio.co.uk](http://kbrotherstudio.co.uk).

**OSIRIS GUESTING AT SACRED ARTS**

Sacred Arts in Northwich is hosting Osiris, an artist from Mexico's Blackline Custom Tattoo shop, from 22-27 April this year. You can see examples of his work at [facebook.com/blacklinecustomtattoo](https://www.facebook.com/blacklinecustomtattoo) or call Sacred Arts on 01606 74477 for more info (yes, that's the right number!).

**THE SHARPER IMAGE****Darts not flying quite as true as you'd like?**

Perhaps a rebrand is what they need. If you're looking for some ink-themed inspiration look no further than these 'Dart Ink' flights from Elkadart, adorned with images from Skin Deep snapper Scott Cole. The models featured have all graced our cover at one time and could be just the darts muse you need.

Get hold of yours via [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk), or for trade enquiries email [sales@retrieversports.com](mailto:sales@retrieversports.com).

**NEW HOME FOR WHITE HORSE**

White Horse studio in Hungerford is relocating to a bigger, brighter studio and the team sent us these pics as a sneak preview.

If you'd like to pay them a housewarming visit, the new premises are at 48c High Street, Hungerford, RG17 ONE. They're also hiring – see the classifieds section for more info.

**PARTY ON THE PATIO?**

As we head at the speed of light to the 20th Birthday celebrations of Skin Deep during the Great British Tattoo Show at Alexandra Palace, may we please draw your attention to the party to end all parties!

On 24th May, you too can embrace the thrills, spills and chills that we have on offer: spinning the sounds of fury will be the twin attack of the gorgeous Megan Daniels and the tattooed superstar that is Zombie Boy. Check out the ad on page 59 for more details and head straight over to [www.240514.com](http://www.240514.com) to declare your interest to crash the bash!

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# Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

## 7TH ANNUAL MUSINK MUSIC AND TATTOO FESTIVAL

21 - 23 March 2014

OC Fair and Events Center  
Costa Mesa  
California  
musink.org

## 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

## NORTH LAKES TATTOO SHOW

12 - 13 April 2014

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

## SOMERSET TATTOO CONVENTION

11 May 2014

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

## SKIN DEEP 20TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

24 May 2014

Alexandra Palace  
Alexandra Palace Way  
London  
www.240514.com

## THE GREAT BRITISH TATTOO SHOW

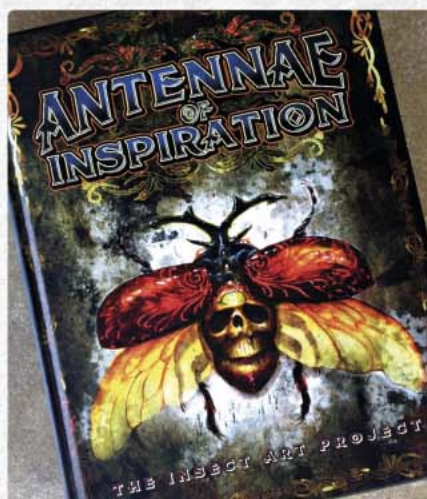
24 - 25 May 2014

Alexandra Palace  
Alexandra Palace Way  
London  
greatbritishtattoooshow.com

## READING TATTOO SHOW

7 - 8 June 2014

Rivermead Leisure Complex  
Richfield Avenue  
Reading  
RG1 8EQ  
readingtattoooshow.co.uk



## A BUG'S LIFE

Feast your (compound) eyes on this: part mood board, part entomological extravaganza, the latest title from Jinxi Boo's Out of Step Books is a real beauty. It's the second in the 'Inspirational Art Project Series' - the first, the octopus themed 'Eight Arms of Inspiration' is already out and the third, 'Feathers of Inspiration' is on the way - and features work from 848 artists from all over the world.

The brief is suitably loose for such a vast subject but it's essentially 'what happens when you tell a bunch of artists to get bugs on their mind?'. The results include tattoos, paintings, stories, photography and more. Jeff Gogue's cover art is a wonderful example of what to expect inside.

If you'd like all 480 pages of hardcover insect goodness on your coffee table, head to OOSBooks.com. You can also follow @outofstepbooks on Twitter.

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[facebook.com/thegrasshoppertattoo](https://facebook.com/thegrasshoppertattoo) 

# Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

## WATERFORD CITY CONVENTION

6 - 8 June 2014

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

## CROYDON TATTOO CONVENTION

7 - 8 June 2014

Fairfield Halls  
Park Lane  
Croydon CR9 1DG  
[croydontattooconvention.com](http://croydontattooconvention.com)

## NORTH EAST TATTOO EXPO

14 - 15 June 2014

ARC, Stockton Arts Centre  
Dovecot Street  
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LL  
[facebook.com/northeasttattoosexpo](https://www.facebook.com/northeasttattoosexpo)

## INKFEST

13 - 16 June 2014

Sand Bay Leisure Resort  
67 Beach Road  
Kewstoke  
Weston-super-Mare BS22 9UR  
[inkfest.co.uk](http://inkfest.co.uk)

## MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL TATTOO SHOW

2 - 3 August 2014

Manchester Central  
Petersfield  
Manchester M2 3GX  
[manchestertattooshow.com](http://manchestertattooshow.com)

## TATTOO JAM

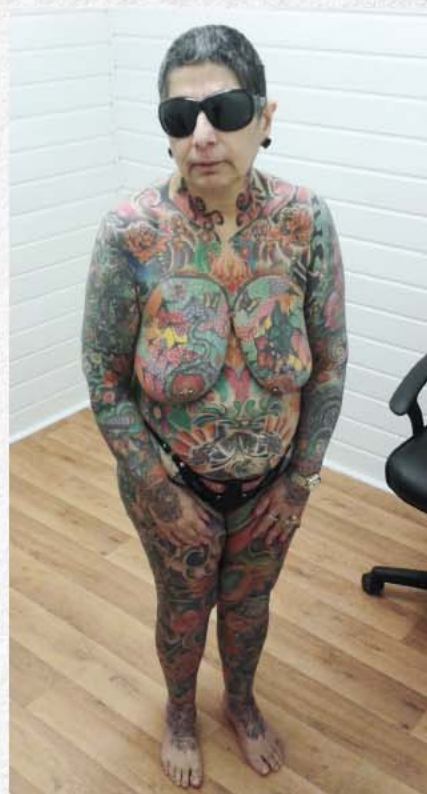
10 - 12 October 2014

Doncaster Racecourse  
Leger Way  
Doncaster DN2 6BB  
[tattoojam.com](http://tattoojam.com)

## TATTOO FREEZE

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**EDITOR@SKINDEEP.CO.UK**  
AND WE'LL DO THE REST

## BODY BEAUTIFUL

Greze at North Wales Ink ([northwalesink.com](http://northwalesink.com)) in Prestatyn has just completed a remarkable bodysuit. Many full body pieces are worthy of note, of course, but this particular one was completed over three years on Fran, a fifty year old local woman who is also blind.

We're hoping to follow this up in more detail in a future issue, but for now here's Greze: "It was great to do, but I only got to see the complete suit when we'd finished! If we were working on the legs, I'd see the bottom half, if we worked on the chest or back I'd see the top half, but I'd never seen Fran naked until a few days after we'd finished. That was weird..."



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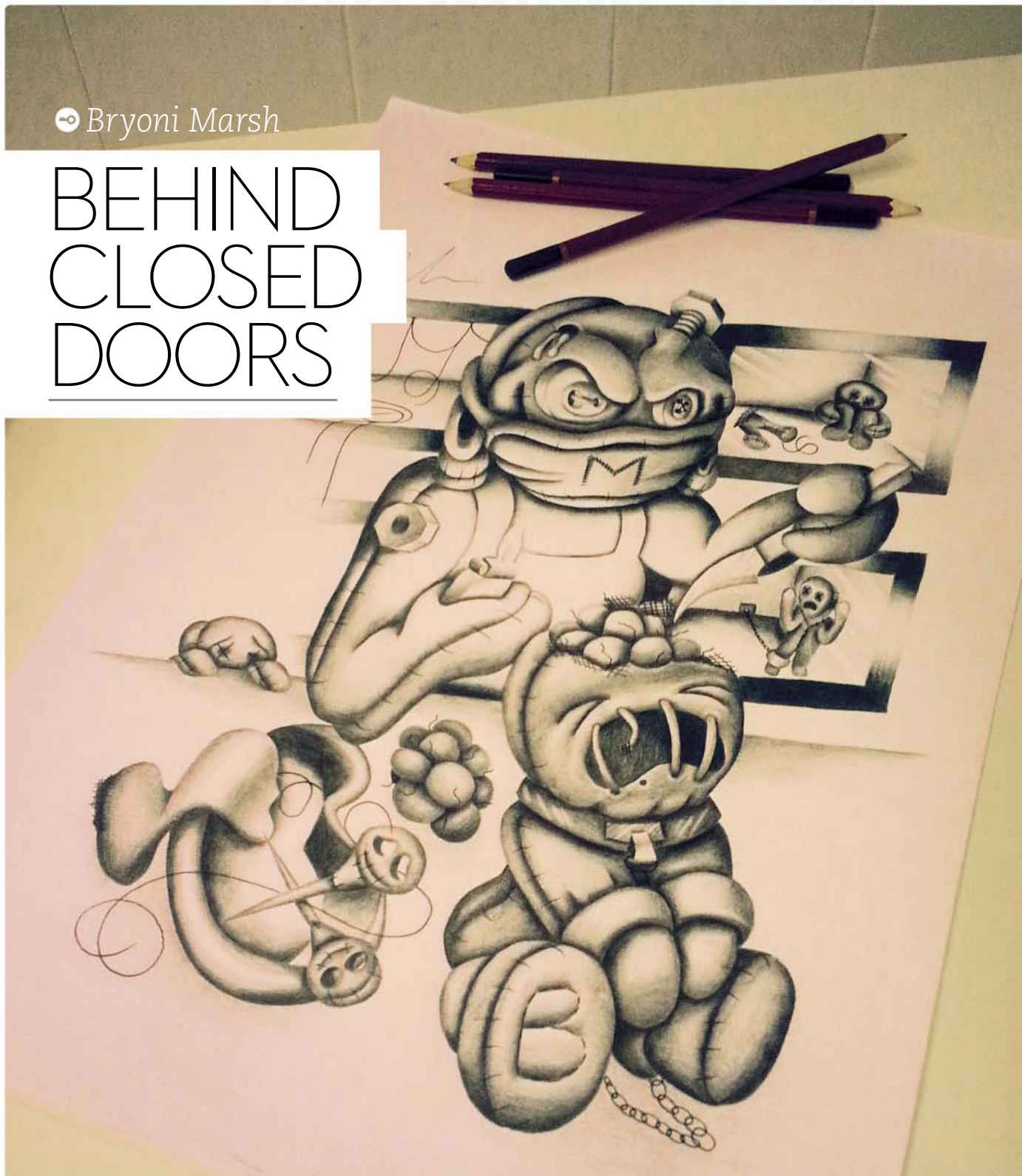
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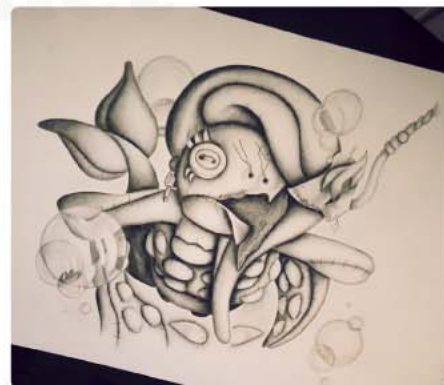
👤 Bryoni Marsh

# BEHIND CLOSED DOORS



Southmead Tattoo, 231 Southmead Road, Bristol BS10 5DX T: 0117 9507030 W: southmead-tattoo.co.uk E: info@southmead-tattoo.co.uk

As you'll have no doubt noticed, now and again in these pages, we've been throwing a spotlight on some of the work that apprentices are doing out there in modern apprenticeships - i.e: doing what you're supposed to be doing and not just making coffee. This month, we hook up with Bryoni Marsh who's currently learning her thing over at Southmead with Max and Bobby - and there can be no better feeling than when a customer comes in and wants some of your own art tattooed...




I worked '9 to 5' jobs for a long time because the tattoo industry seemed impossible to penetrate



"Growing up in Bristol, I've always been surrounded by art, although most of it has been on walls and buildings. My Mum was also a dab hand at drawing and I've always been keen to pick up a pencil, pen or anything I could get my hands on."

"Tattooing was a dream job as opposed to an ambition for me. I worked '9 to 5' jobs for a long time because the tattoo industry seemed impossible to penetrate - until Christmas 2011 when that dream became reality. At 20 years of age I started off learning how to run the studio, sterilisation, coffee making... and then on to fake skin to now: where I am sticking to the basics of getting my lines and colour solid."

"After a year or so of Max and Bobby steering me in the right direction, pointing out my flaws and strengths, helping me to develop my style of drawing, I then started to draw things I like out of my head and that's how my style of 'In Stitches' was born. Like many creatives I find drawing a huge release so try to fit in at least half an hour per day or around 3 hours on a bigger session."

"Competition is fierce out there! I'm no Michelle Maddison but I am now looking to transform my drawings into tattoos. I'm also working my first convention at the 7th Somerset Tat2 Convention (scary) this year, so with the lads kicking my ass on a daily basis I can hopefully bring something new to the table." 



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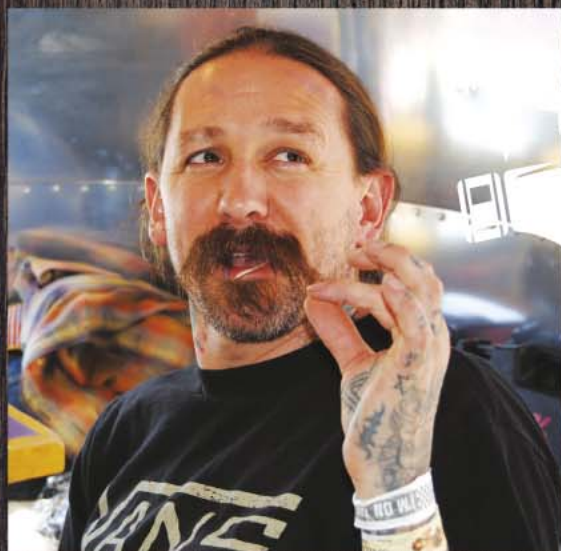


LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE

This month, somebody had the bright idea of pitching artist vs artist - the rules went something like this: "Choose the top five tattoos from somebody who has actually tattooed you". The names out of the hat from hell were Russ and Barbara - so we taped up their fingers, laced up the gloves and left them to it...

IN BARBARA'S CORNER

**OLIVER PECK**



Oliver Peck is a genuine ink master, which makes his gig as an Ink Master judge all the more appropriate. Tattooing since the age of 19 and specialising in old school American, he's undeniably unrivalled in what he does. In addition to co-owning Elm Street Tattoo in Dallas, Peck owns True Tattoo in Hollywood and holds the 2008 Guinness World Record for most tattoos completed in 24 consecutive hours: 415 number 13s.

Elm Street Tattoo, Dallas  
elmstreettattoo@gmail.com  
elmstreettattoo.com

IN RUSS'S CORNER

**SWAY**



Specialising in both traditional Western and Japanese tattooing, Sway came up through the ranks with some suitably old school apprenticeships, spending six months stripping machines and tracing flash at one studio. At the start of his career he was only permitted to tattoo in black. Now the owner of the exceptional Sacred Electric studio in Leeds, his roots come through in solid lines, deep colours and imaginative takes on trad themes. Bold will hold, baby.

Sacred Electric, Leeds  
sacredelectrictattoo@gmail.com  
swaytattooer.tumblr.com



**OLIVER PECK****ROUND ONE****SWAY****X FACTOR**

The king of tattooing awesome people at amazing events, Peck brought his talent to the X Games in January where he banged out this beauty on fine artist Buff Monster. If the design and its execution don't take your breath away, there's something wrong.

**VS****SIMPLY THE CHEST**

Just when you've think you've got him pinned down as a none-more-old-school artist, Sway will turn out a beautiful, intricate decorative tattoo like this. There's nothing to hide behind here, it's all about flawless linework and balanced composition, and he pulls it off with aplomb.

**OLIVER PECK****ROUND TWO****SWAY****KEEP IT CLASSY**

Does it get any more classic than a sultry pin-up girl? No, seriously, does it? Didn't think so. Extra points for the perfect makeup and, let's be honest, impeccable ass. The movement in the sheet also deserves praise.

**VS****ALL TOGETHER NOW**

This is a real show-stopper. There's a lot going on here but it all works together, no one part shouts down everything else. Plus, you'd know it was Sway a mile off, which is the mark of a top artist: that ability to take classic elements and give them a unique and recognisable twist.



**OLIVER PECK**

**ROUND THREE**

**SWAY**



**WAR PIGS**

So I'm the proud owner of this mighty fine Sailor Jerry pig, which, as you've probably guessed by now (unless your powers of deduction are having an off day), was done at SXS. So I'm biased. Sue me. Super bonus humour points for the tiny but extremely charming ducky.



**BANG BANG**

Big and bold is great, but there's also room for sweet little bangers. He nails it here: super simple and clean, just the right amount of detail and no fussiness at all. Plus, check out the contrasting expressions on the moon and the maiden. A joy.

**OLIVER PECK**

**ROUND FOUR**

**SWAY**

**QUACK OFF**

Sometimes the little tattoos are the ones with the most attitude. The ones that get you stopped on the street (OK, at the bar) with questions like, 'Duuuude, what's the story behind that wicked ink?' This duck is just oozing attitude and screams 'I'm a badass and I don't care who knows it!'



**BACK IN BLACK**

What's that? You need blacks as deep as a dungeon at midnight, wild-ass eyes and general snaggle toothed mayhem, but you need it all kept as tight and controlled as a Bruce Lee roundhouse kick? Sure, we can do that. Boom.

**OLIVER PECK**

**ROUND FIVE**

**SWAY**



**HARMONY RATS**

Talk about appropriate: It would be hard to get any more harmony packed into this tattoo if you sat down and prayed for it. The shading, the detail, the depth - there's a master lesson in placement to be learned here.



**SO FRESH SO CLEAN**

This is Sway in a nutshell. Restrained colour so that what's there really screams, confident lines, perfect shading - and look how solid those blacks and reds are. Plus, there's that little personal element, as individual as handwriting, that creeps through and makes this a one-of-a-kind piece. Killer stuff.

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# Hannah

www.akaberlin.com

Hannah Graves is the manager, curator and piercer at AKA Berlin. She moved to Berlin from the UK in September 2012 to work at AKA. She'd spent the previous ten years working various jobs, from managing a skateboard shop to a busy high street bar, but always moving on when she got the boot or got bored.

Throughout that time tattooing remained the one thing she never tired of. "I am heavily into music and I think tattoo culture crept into my life that way, but then kind of took over." Hannah remembers buying music and tattoo magazines, where the women just seemed different to anything else she had been exposed to. It was before Facebook or Instagram, and Hannah was fascinated. She moved around a lot as a kid and prides herself on being able to fit into different groups of people. At fifteen she realised she wanted to find those types of people and to fit in with them.

"AKA is very special. We have the studios in Berlin and London and working for AKA means being a part of the AKA collective. It's a continuous creative project." The studio is set up as a multi-disciplinary art space, involving a team of people from all over the world. As well as their resident artists, who are like family to Hannah, any guests that come through or collaborate with AKA become a part of the team too.

Tom Abbott  Adlan Mansri.

"That's a powerful thing. We have a real bond. Of course, taking care of day to day business can be stressful, with up to ten people tattooing at any one time, but we are a strong team and take care of the space together. No two days are the same and we are always working on new projects and collaborations. The standard of tattooing that comes out of that space is incredible, every single day. It's impossible not to feel incredibly lucky to be a part of it."

Part of the idea of the AKA project is that it is constantly evolving, creating an environment where the artists are always challenging themselves and learning from each other, which is why the studio is set up to accommodate both guest artists and the resident tattooers. There are different guests most weeks and there are also facilities for them within the space to live. AKA tries to collaborate with as many guest artists as the studio space will allow. "The guests who are always invited back are the ones who really become a part 🌻"





TAKING CARE OF DAY TO DAY BUSINESS CAN BE STRESSFUL, WITH UP TO TEN PEOPLE TATTOOING AT ANY ONE TIME, BUT WE ARE A STRONG TEAM AND TAKE CARE OF THE SPACE TOGETHER

of the team whilst they are with us. I have often shed tears of sadness when certain guests have left. I can get quite attached!"

"H.B. Nielsen is one of my favourites and he is constantly travelling and his style is constantly evolving. I'm also a big fan of Mike Mendes who spent a month or so with us and was always painting as well as tattooing which I love to see. I love the originality of Noons work, and he is one of the nicest guys going. Simon Erl is one artist I really want to host. He works out of AKA London and I am desperate to get him over to Berlin. We've worked with a lot of very well known artists such as Guy le Tatoer, Rafel Delalande, Liam Sparkes, Maxime Buchi and they have such incredible technique. I personally really like when we have guests who maybe don't really have much of a profile but do incredible work nevertheless. I really like to see AKA acting as a platform for pushing great tattoo work and talented artists beyond what might be fashionable or popular within mainstream tattooing at the time. Michele Servadio, who is a resident at AKA London, is a

great example of how that can work. He started working out of AKA London and has worked so hard, so consistently, and with so much originality and style that the last time he was in Berlin with us he was booked solid. I think the environment that we offer to our residents and guests only suits a certain type of tattooer. They have to be self-motivated and

entirely driven by the desire to make great tattoos. If you want to turn up at AKA and behave like a rock star then you won't get very far. We don't have time for that."

The team of residents has changed a lot in the time Hannah has been with AKA. Because it serves as a platform, a lot of artists will leave to go onto the next stage of their career. They were all sad

THE GUESTS WHO ARE ALWAYS INVITED BACK ARE THE ONES WHO REALLY BECOME A PART OF THE TEAM WHILST THEY ARE WITH US. I HAVE OFTEN SHED TEARS OF SADNESS WHEN CERTAIN GUESTS HAVE LEFT. I CAN GET QUITE ATTACHED!







IF YOU WANT TO TURN UP  
AT AKA AND BEHAVE LIKE  
A ROCK STAR THEN YOU  
WON'T GET VERY FAR



to see Valentin Hirsch leave last year - one of the most dedicated and talented artists Hannah has had the honour of working with - to open up his own shop. Several others have gone on to open their own studios in Berlin. Hannah is deeply effected when she sees tattooers who were part of the core AKA team go on and do their own projects, but she knows that it is in keeping with the true spirit of AKA for artists to do that, and also to travel extensively too. "We really are like a family. We spend more time with each other than we do anyone else and of course working with so many creative people in one space there can be tension but we all have work to do. The AKA project and its ideas are behind everything that we do collectively."

Music is still a real passion for Hannah. It serves as the starting point for a lot of the tattoos she has. She used to sing in a band and

it is something she would like to do again. Hannah used to put on shows anywhere she could; the bar she worked in, her old studio, and she is currently working on doing the same thing in Berlin. Living in Berlin gives Hannah plenty of opportunity to blow off steam and there is a real sense of the 'work hard/play hard' ethos at AKA. They spend a lot of time together outside of the space; eating together, partying together, and somehow it's all tied to that initial creative ambition. "Quite often we just go out looking for inspiration, whatever form that might take."

"I feel like tattooing is in this incredibly exciting, interesting but dangerous time. It's simply so popular, with so much exposure and such a sheer volume of people tattooing and being tattooed that I think it's hard for it not to get too diluted. I want tattooing to stay progressive, and powerful;

but I think it's getting harder to push boundaries or cover new ground creatively. I think it's inevitable that we are going to come to a point where tattooing just cannot sustain itself in the mainstream the way it currently does. Simply, it has to come to a point when it's just not cool anymore. At that point it's going to be the dedicated and passionate who stick around, as it goes back to the underground to re-emerge again as something different to a different generation, just as it has so many times in the past."

Hannah is really into traditional tattoos but is grateful that her job has exposed her to so many other styles of tattooing. She particularly appreciates exceptional technique, no matter what the style is. Tattooing, for Hannah, is really subjective, but she believes that there is such a thing as a 'bad' tattoo and that has 🙄



EVERY ASPECT OF OUR CULTURE IS SO DISPOSABLE THESE DAYS THAT I THINK THAT IS THE VERY REASON THAT TATTOOING IS SO POPULAR; IT'S THE PERMANENCE THAT APPEALS

everything to do with technique. "We seem to be at a point where someone can simply be a bad tattooer, lacking in knowledge and technique, but that can somehow masquerade as 'style' these days."

Hannah describes herself as being 'an absolute mess of tattoos.' At AKA they have dubbed 2014 as being the 'Year Of The Blast Over'. It's a term they are using increasingly to describe the process of putting black tattoos over existing tattoos. "We are seeing a lot of older neo-traditional stuff with heavy traditional black work over the top, but it isn't a cover-up. We call it a blast over as you are literally blasting right over the old designs." It is still obvious that the old tattoo is there, but what it essentially becomes is a second layer to the new tattoo. "Tattoos over tattoos, but not as

a cover-up, not to deny what was there before, but to transform it." A lot of the tattoos Hannah has had recently are blast overs that were started at AKA. Her favourite is a rose on her wrist by Philippe Fernandez. He also did one of Hannah's newer pieces; the traditional flowers on her sternum.

Hannah's close friend and colleague Brody Polinsky did one of her favourite tattoos for her. She has a 'Train In Vain' (a song by The Clash) tattooed on the back of her thigh. She has a lot of music-related tattoos that she admits haven't all stood the test of time but she loves The Clash one, and also a little tribute she has to The Cure's 'Boys Don't Cry' on the inside of her left wrist that was done by the same artist that did her neck, throat and hands, Jarek Slezak, or Sick D. Hannah also has PUNK ROCK written across the bottoms of her fingers, and it is one of her favourites as she hand-pushed it herself one afternoon when she was bored.

"My tattoos are all pretty autobiographical. I tend to get

tattooed to mark certain points in my life and I find that process cathartic. It's certainly not about the pain, but more the marking of the passing of time and different phases in my life. Michelle Servadio from AKA London just did an interview where he said that 'tattooing practice could be a form of real relation between human beings, involving pain, blood, ink, and tracing experiences forever.' I can really relate to that. Every aspect of our culture is so disposable these days that I think that is the very reason that tattooing is so popular; it's the permanence that appeals. The process of being tattooed, of creating something permanent and changing yourself forever is empowering to me. That aspect of relationships is true to me too; working within the AKA collective we have a pretty strong bond and the team here are always tattooing each other. It's part of the ritual for guest artists to trade tattoos with the team when they are with us. Tattooing is a great way to connect and to share." 🐾

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# CURTAIN CALL

Vince Neil. Mick Mars. Nikki Sixx. Tommy Lee. If we have to tell you these four gentlemen, collectively known as Motley Crue, have single-handedly helped shape rock as we know it by being an integral and pioneering part of its history, we can't be friends. In fact, I disown you.



Over the past three decades, Motley Crue has sold 80 million albums worldwide, earned a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, scored three Grammy nominations and topped it all off with four New York Times best-selling novels – not bad for a group of friends who got their start in 1981, playing good ol' rock 'n' roll in Los Angeles.

Unfortunately, Crue heads don't have 30 more years of new music and unrivalled live shows to look forward to, as the band held a press conference on January 28 to reveal that all bad things must

indeed come to an end.

Yes, it's true, Motley is calling it in, but not before it storms the world one last time with its massive, insane The Final Tour. And you better believe they're serious about their decision. So much so that they made history once more by becoming the first band to ever sign a formal cessation of touring agreement, effective at the end of 2015.

I had the honour of catching up with the inimitable Mr. Tommy Motherfuckin' Lee via phone a few days after the big announcement to talk ink, new (healthy) addictions and, of course, #RIPMotleyCrue. 🍷

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**THIS PAST WEEK HAS CERTAINLY BEEN A WHIRLWIND FOR MOTLEY - DID YOU EXPECT SO MANY PEOPLE TO REACT SO STRONGLY TO THE FACT THAT YOU'RE LEAVING US?**

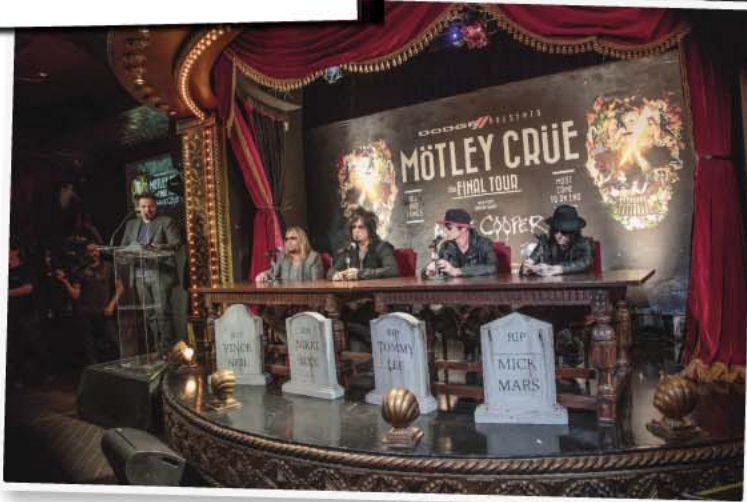
Yeah, I guess, of course we expected what we're getting and it's cool cause, judging by a lot of fans posting stuff, they're feeling like we are. It's cool that we're going out on top, people respect that, and it's sad. It's pretty emotional for everybody and I get it cause it's like that for us, so I guess it's all love, you know?



**MIGHTY MOUSE WAS LIKE MY BIGGEST CHILDHOOD HERO. ONE DAY I WAS JUST DODDLING AND DREW SOME DRUMSTICKS IN HIS HAND I WAS LIKE, THIS RULES! HE HAS GOTTA BE ON MY BODY SOMEWHERE!**

**THE DIRT MOVIE**

The Final Tour will coincide with the release of the highly anticipated The Dirt film, based on Motley Crue's New York Times best-selling autobiography of the same name. Set to hit theatres in 2015, The Dirt will be directed by Jeff Tremaine, one of the creators behind MTV's Jackass. No word yet on who will play Vince, Mick, Nikki and Tommy.



**WAS IT HARD TO GET ALL FOUR OF YOU GUYS ON BOARD WITH SIGNING THAT LEGALLY BINDING AGREEMENT?**

No, not at all. As a matter of fact, I was the one who suggested that. We were having some meetings about the press conference and I'm like, "You know what, you guys? Nobody is gonna fucking buy this. Nobody, not one person, is gonna go like, 'Oh, you're doing a final tour!'" because so many bands have ruined it with even that word 'farewell'. That's why we didn't use 'farewell' anywhere near us, that word's just got stink all over it.

People have used and abused the whole farewell tour thing and they come back two years, ten years from now and I was like, "We have to figure out a way to make this super legit, so nobody questions it at all" and we figured out a way, legally, how to do it, so I couldn't start Tommy Lee's Motley Crue and take three different dudes around or Vince couldn't do it or Nikki, you know what I mean?

**DEFINITELY! I'M GUESSING YOU'RE STARTING TO PLAN THE TOUR NOW, ARE YOU FEELING ANY ADDED PRESSURE TO MAKE THE FINAL TOUR BIGGER AND**

**CRAZIER THAN ANY SHOW MOTLEY HAS EVER PUT ON BECAUSE IT IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO DO IT RIGHT?**

Yeah, of course. I think one of the reasons why people are getting bummed is that when you go to see a Motley tour, you pretty much know you're gonna get your ass kicked. You're gonna see some shit that you're gonna be like, "Oh my God, dude, I can't even believe what I just saw!" We always put on the over the top shows, so of course that's just standard.

There's no extra pressure other than, and this will be a little more difficult than your normal tours, we want to create somewhat of a wake. A happy, fucked up celebration of death.

I was talking to the guys and I'm like, "Man, it's so weird when you go to someone's funeral or a wake and then there's that party afterwards where everyone's fucked up and drinking and celebrating. They're celebrating death but they're also celebrating life" and I go, "That's so fucking weird but so cool - that's how we gotta make this tour. That's what it is, so let's make it a really happy funeral." I think it's gonna be rad!

**THAT SOUNDS... FUCKING AMAZING! SO, TURNING TO TATTOOS, I KNOW MIGHTY MOUSE WAS YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCE**

**WITH INK - WHY THAT DESIGN?**

Mighty Mouse was like my biggest childhood hero. I felt like I had a lot in common with him cause I'm kind of a littler guy and he's little. I mean, I'm tall, but I'm skinny. And he always saved the girl. Man, he was my guy!

When he'd fly he'd always have his front fist out and one day I was just doodling and drew some drumsticks in his hand I was like, "This rules! He's gotta be on my body somewhere!"

**DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE YOU GOT IT DONE OR HOW MUCH IT COST, ANY DETAILS LIKE THAT?**

Where did I get that? I think it was 100 bucks or 80 bucks, something like that, and I think it took about an hour. Fuck, did I get this at Sunset Tattoo? My God, I can't remember! I think Kevin Brady did it. I think the artist's name is Kevin Brady and at that time he was working at Sunset Strip Tattoo. I think that's where I first got it.

**CAN YOU SINGLE OUT ONE OR TWO FAVE PIECES FROM YOUR TATTOO COLLECTION TO DATE? I KNOW YOU MUST LOVE THEM ALL, BUT...**

I just got one recently from Kat Von D that's fucking insane. It kind of goes from my ankle to the top of my knee and the front side of my leg and calf area and it's an awesome picture of Jesus Christ and the devil shaking hands and both of them have these shit-eating grins on their faces like, "Yeah, uh huh, nice to meet you, too". I saw that image and as soon as I saw it I was like, "Oh my God, I have to have that, this is so good and evil all at the same time!"

**ANY OTHERS THAT STAND OUT BECAUSE OF HOW THEY CAME TO BE OR WHAT THEY MEAN TO YOU?**

Umm, another one of 🌻

my favorites is my back piece, the big tribal on my back. I took this tribal design that I really liked and what I did was I folded a piece of paper and copied it on the other side and when I opened it, it looked like it would fit perfectly on my back. It was high on the shoulder blades and then came down to a 'V' down your back and over the top of your ass.

There was also kind of a hidden face in the design and I didn't really notice that until I copied it on a folded piece of paper and then I opened it and immediately I was like, "That's going on my back."

I didn't even think about it much more than a few seconds. When you know, you just know, right? Cause there are other tattoos you're like "Hmmm" or you're thinking about it - if you're thinking about it, don't do it.

So I reached out to the best tribal guy that was highly recommended to me. His name was Leo Zulueta and he was at a place called... oh, God... Black Wave Tattoo in Los Angeles.

He's the real deal. He's from Borneo and he only does tribal work, he doesn't do any other kind of work, and I sat with him for - my God, it was so long - a total of 21 hours. And we did it in four sittings, yeah. It's my favorite piece, I just I love it so much.

**THERE ARE A LOT OF FANS OUT THERE WITH MOTLEY TATTOOS, HAVE YOU SEEN ANY GREAT PORTRAITS OF YOURSELF OR ONES THAT MADE YOU THINK 'WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!' (LAUGHS)**

Yes, to answer your question, both. I've seen some fucking amazing ones; people with ones on their full back, like, it's fucking huge. For someone to do that always sets me back. I'm blown away and humbled and all that stuff like, wow, this guy has us on his entire back, this is fucking crazy, but I don't know if I would ever do that.

I'm a fan of a lot of different kinds of music and bands and all that, but I don't think I would

get a fucking huge back piece. That's some next level shit, so that always sets me back. In a good way - it's amazing. But in another way I'm like, wow, what possesses someone to do that? It's just crazy. It's really crazy and awesome all in the same breath.

The other ones that totally freak me out is when someone goes, "Hey man, sign my arm, I'm gonna go get it tattooed tomorrow". I always ask them, I'm like, "Dude, are you sure about this?" Or girl, girls and guys. "Do you really want my signature on you when you're 75? Are you still gonna be digging that?"

I always want people to think it through cause tattoos are forever, man. And yeah, maybe it's marking this time and this moment that may never happen again, I get that, but I also forecast into the future quite a ways and go, "Is this still gonna be cool to you when you are 75 years old?"

I don't think one person has ever said "Nah, you know, as a matter of fact, fuck it, Tommy, don't sign it!" [laughs] And then I'll see the people the next time around

on tour with the autograph tattooed or sometimes I'll see them the next day, they'll come to the next concert in the next town, and it's such an awesome but bizarre thing. I don't know if I'll ever understand it.

**AFTER SO MANY WILD, AMAZING YEARS IN THE MUSIC BIZ, WHAT STILL GETS TOMMY LEE SUPER STOKED? IS IT EDM?**

I still get super stoked about playing with Motley and I'm stoked about this last tour cause I know there's gonna be some fucking insane shit going on.

As far as down the road or musically or things that blow my doors off about that stuff... EDM is kind of not the right word cause that's kind of like happy dance music and I like the dirtier shit.

There's some really great kind of indie stuff out there that I'm in love with. There's a band called Chvrches, there's a band called Purity Ring, there's, oh God, I hate this, when people ask me and I gotta pretend I have my iPod here.

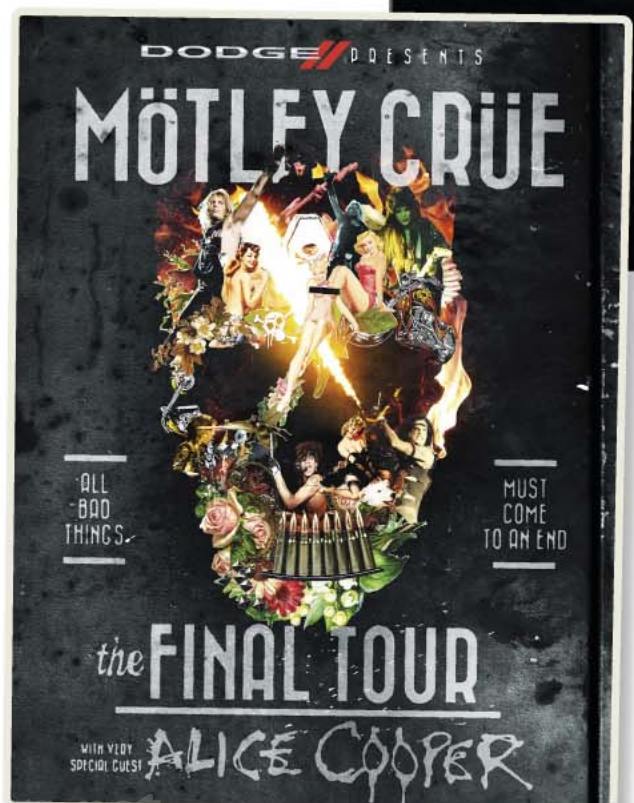
**AND YOU DRAW A BLANK - I GET IT! HOW ABOUT THINGS OUTSIDE OF MUSIC? SOMETHING FANS MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT YOU?**

Let's see, something that people might not know...

**IS IT TRUE YOU USED TO DO BALLET?!**

Yeah, I used to do that as a kid! I love to dance and watch people dance and I think that's one of my big attractions to electronic music. Everybody's fucking dancing around and there's nothing more satisfying than when you're playing or DJing and everybody's dancing. It's just a different version of moshing,

I JUST GOT ONE RECENTLY FROM KAT VON D. AN AWESOME PICTURE OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE DEVIL SHAKING HANDS







**MOTLEY X COUNTRY**

Motley Crue is getting a country spin - for real - this summer with a seriously unique tribute record, which will feature Crue classics reinterpreted by country artists. So far, Florida Georgia Line is the only confirmed act, but Big Machine Records, which is helping to spearhead the project, is also home to Taylor Swift, Tim McGraw, Rascal Flatts and many, many more.



everybody's kind of happy and dancing around and I just love that.

But you know what's kind of got me really excited, I just started about a month ago, I've made a commitment, I just turned 51 years old and I want to be in the best shape I've ever been in in my life. I'm pounding three or four days a week in the gym and doing all this training because all of a sudden I've got this new inspiration for just being super, super healthy and in shape.

I just want people to look at me and go like, "Man, that dude's 51?! That motherfucker is in shape!" [laughs] You know what I mean? There's something that feels really good about that and I'm kind of getting addicted to it, so we'll see.

**I'D SAY THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD ADDICTION TO HAVE. SO, TO WRAP UP, I'D LIKE YOU TO FINISH THIS SENTENCE FOR ME: TOMMY LEE IS...**

A cool mothafucka! 🤘

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# HOME IS WHERE THE ART IS

Some six months back, I met Sade Sonck in Colorado but - as is the case with all meetings such as this - she was busy with a client and I was lucky not to come away from the encounter with some hand-knitted socks from her friend Nora. Fast forward to the future and it's damn cold out here in Finland...



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The first thing you'll notice about Sade if you should come into contact with her - and you very much should as she is working at Tattoo Jam later in the year - is that she is not tattooed. You might think they are hidden somewhere but you would be wrong - there are none to be found. I know because I asked.

Whilst being tattooed is absolutely not the mark of a great artist, being bare really did used to be frowned upon in the community but these days, I could name three that I would absolutely trust to rustle up some Grade A goodies.

"It's true, I don't have any tattoos - not yet! It has only been a positive issue in the eyes of clients. I think my work speaks for itself - and I think the world have changed hugely in terms of judging people who have tattoos and tattoo artists who don't.

"Doctors, airline pilots and lawyers are all clients of mine who have tattoos - these days, this is totally normal for me at home."

Home for Sade is a studio



called Unique Art in Finland - the studio actually came first and afterwards, she searched for an apprenticeship from Stéphane Chaudesaigues in Paris and eventually - rightfully so - began tattooing out of his shop.

"This was the beginning of a great friendship too and it was fantastic to welcome him to visit

my shop back in 2010. It was actually around this time that I felt I was also ready to do my first convention. So that's how I found myself invited to the Belfort Family Tattoo Convention in France working in Stéphane's booth in 2011 and from there, I continued on to work at Ink'n'Iron in Los Angeles - and those two 🍌



IT'S TRUE, I DON'T HAVE ANY TATTOOS - NOT YET! IT HAS ONLY BEEN A POSITIVE ISSUE IN THE EYES OF CLIENTS. I THINK MY WORK SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

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**ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR**

*I see that you won Entrepreneur of the Year award too. That's quite something for a tattoo artist to pull that out of the hat. What lies behind it? I am guessing that the award is for the way you run your business and pushed its profile forwards? I don't think that would ever happen in the UK.*

'This was an huge thing to win this award from all the different type of enterprises that were nominated - a tattoo shop! The award was given for the way I run my business and how I have been developing a positive and stable image for my shop in our community and also creating new jobs for new tattoo artists.'

shows are exactly where I fell in love with doing conventions"

"In the past, I've done many things besides tattooing. I spent some time living in France where I studied to be a dance teacher of salsa and reggaeton. After that I created a dance school here in Finland, but my first profession is as a milliner.

I have also owned an Italian gelateria, an ice cream café for few years, but the tattooing conquered my heart completely, so finally, I gave up all the other enterprises. I thank the universe that I have been able to change my hobbies into work."

One of the big advantages of throwing yourself at the mercy of the world to see where it takes you is that quite often, the universe likes to push back. Recently, Sade was asked to lecture at a Congress

in Copenhagen on tattoo and pigment research. What gives?

"It was an honour to give a lecture there and represent Finland with Doctor Nicolas Kluger with all the associations of the tattooing industry of

Europe. There were doctors, colour manufacturers and researchers from all over the world there.

"Basically, there was a new law scheduled to come in this year (2014) that would have banned the use of most of the



I'M ALL ABOUT NATURE AND SIMPLE THINGS, BUT I DO ENJOY GOING TO BIG CITIES FOR FUN





THERE WAS A NEW LAW SCHEDULED TO COME IN THIS YEAR (2014) THAT WOULD HAVE BANNED THE USE OF MOST TATTOO COLOURS IN FRANCE...

tattoo colours in France. After much researches and debate, the Association Tatouage et Partage has made a big work of getting this law denied - and in the real world, the law could have spread all over Europe if passed. I'm so pleased that it didn't though - as a big fan of coloured tattoos, this was potentially a really big issue."

*(For those of you who are interested to learn more about this - and can read French - there's some good links here: [tatouage-partage.com/fr/actualites](http://tatouage-partage.com/fr/actualites) - meantime, we had best set somebody to work on translations!)*

I've never been to Finland before. In fact, the sum total of my knowledge about Finland amounts to the careers of Hanoi Rocks and H.I.M. - which won't get us very far here. Any one of us could take a guess that it

sounds cold up there before you even get off a plane though.

"I think people need to come visit Finland to understand it. I have lived in many different countries and I always want to come back home - even if it is -30. We are a nation of people that loves nature and simple values like honesty.

"Lots of great things have already come from Finland though - Nokia, Koskenkorva Vodka, Angry Birds, the sauna and Santa Claus all come from Finland to name just a few things. When we met in Colorado - that was great with the views and atmosphere - I liked it a lot. It had the same kind of feeling as in Finland, except we don't have such huge mountains.

"Seriously though, there are many talented tattoo artists in Finland. We are a people



who are modest and like to work mostly without making a fuss about ourselves - maybe we should now and again."

Back at the studio, I find that Unique Art offer training for artists - a more informal kind of apprenticeship perhaps. 🌸

W

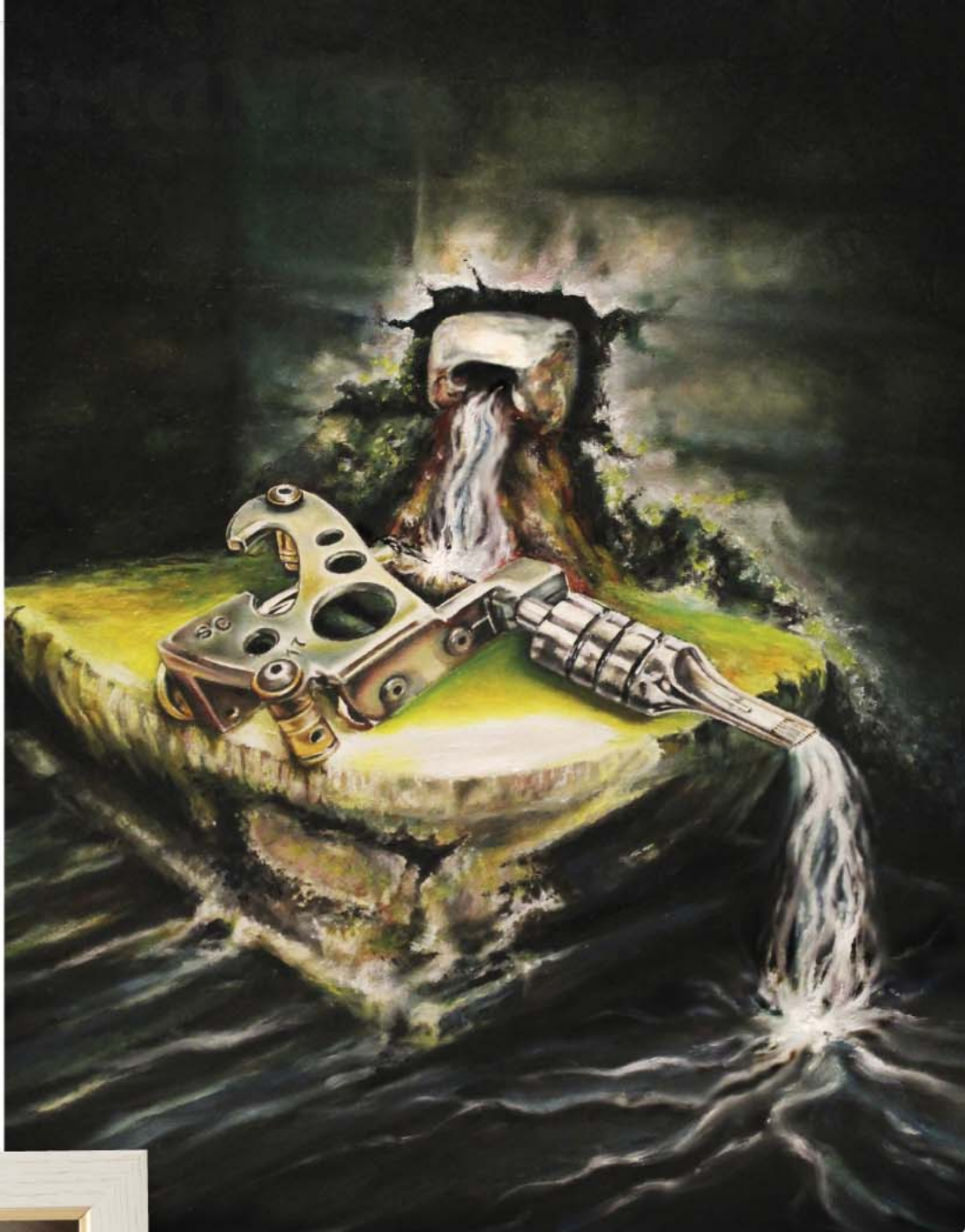
My guess is that it must be successful otherwise, it wouldn't be on the menu.

"There are lots of talented people who have passed this training and are now working full time after completing an apprenticeship. I always choose some artists to join my crew but there are lots of good shops where trainees have continued learning as well. It's always so rewarding to see how many good tattoos they are making when they start for real.

"We have many talented tattoo artists here: Tuomas Stoor, Nina Ylimäki and my new apprentice Heidi Meriläinen as well as our piercer Tatti Olkkonen. Our website is getting an overhaul at the moment but all of this will be on there soon as well."

Sade's instagram account reveals all kinds of cool things about her. There's one image on there of her taking on a tattoo in a retirement home. That's the kind of thing that's very unlikely to happen in the UK - though once people read this, I have no doubt somebody will see some way to make it happen.

"Imagine that this lady had



I NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO DO THE ROSE TATTOO FOR MY GRANDMOTHER THAT SHE WANTED - SHE PASSED AWAY BEFORE I HAD A CHANCE...

been dreaming all her life of a rose tattoo - it's simply that she asked me to come do it for her. I spoke with her nurses and they gave me the green light to do it there. It was a big deal for her - and for me too. I never had the chance to do the rose tattoo for my grandmother that she wanted - she passed away before I had a chance, so this was my opportunity to do it for someone who appreciated it a lot."

Finally, it's worth mentioning here that Sade was pretty damn pregnant when we first met -

and now she is not! Will that change the way she works? Is she going to stay at home for a little while or get straight back on the road anyway with a baby strapped around her neck?

"I have such a long list of people waiting for me to come back from my maternity 'vacation'! This spring, I'm taking things a little easier until July when I start again by doing the Cantal In'k the Skin convention in France. We will see if my little guy is ready to come with me for his first tattoo convention!" 🐾



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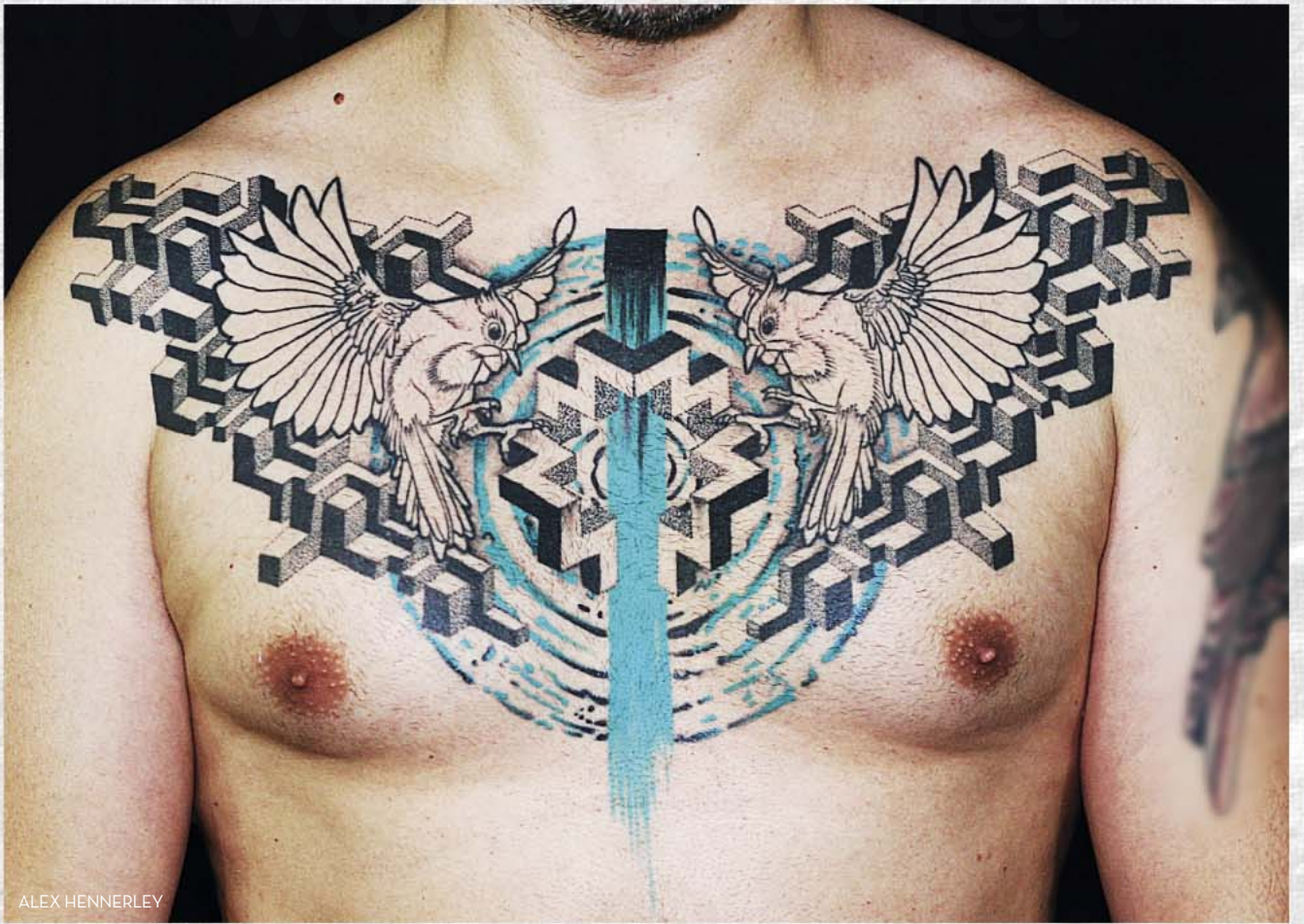
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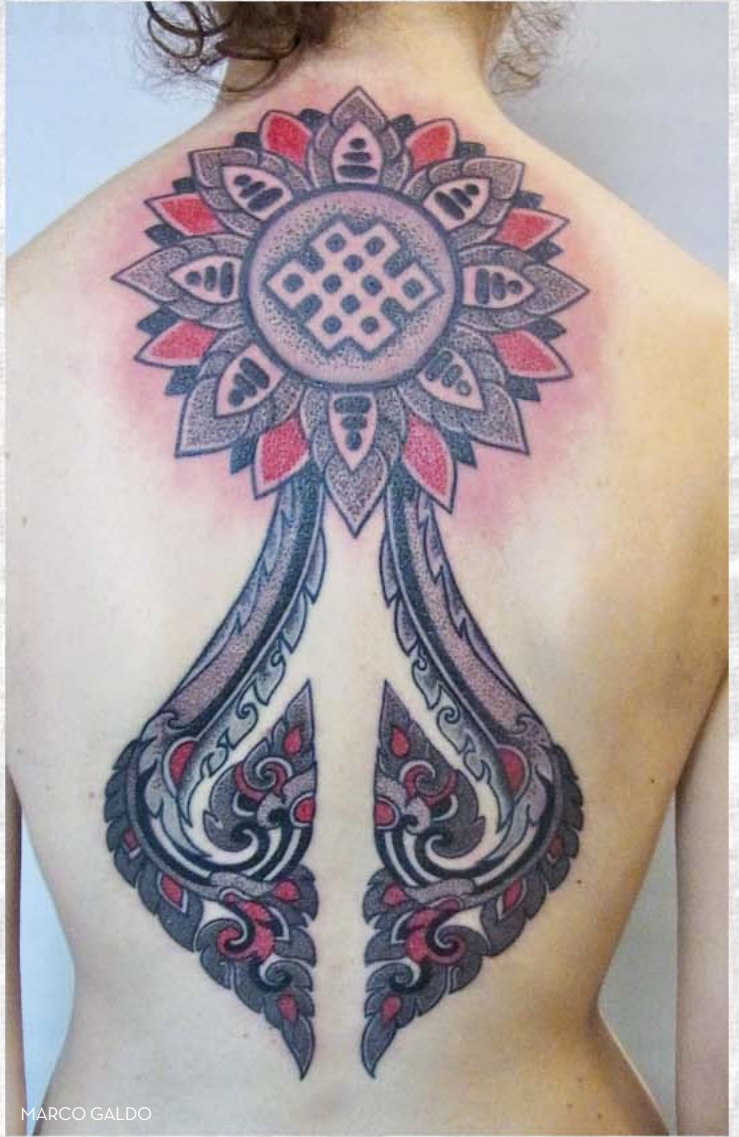
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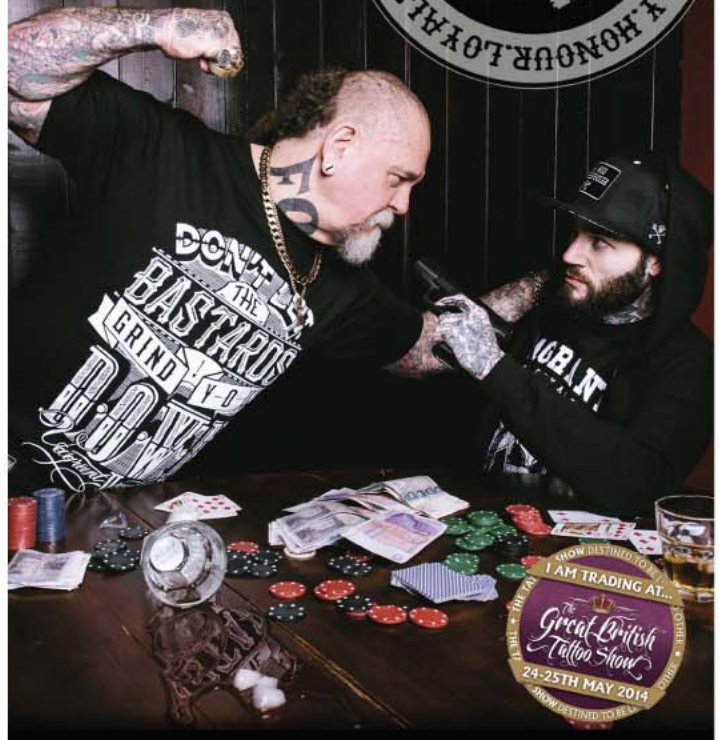
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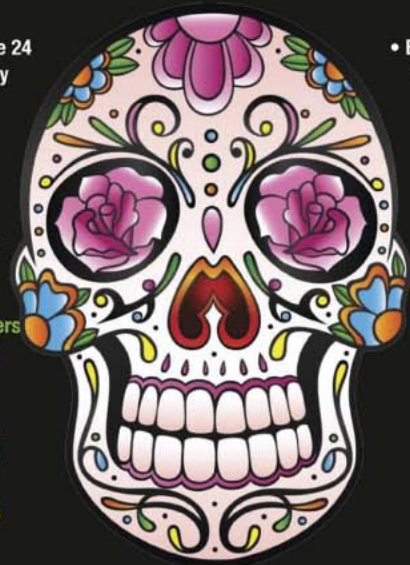
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# THE SOCIAL NETWORK

At no other point in human existence than now has technology played such an enormous role in shaping our day-to-day lives. To consider for even a moment that there was once a time when the Internet didn't reign supreme over our lives is a strange thing.

Even a glimpse back on how far we've come in terms of technology is to be reminded of a point where the mere concept of email was truly revolutionary. As time passed, sending an email became as commonplace as making a phone call and the arrival of sites like Geocities, Friendster and MySpace began to hint at a new form of online interaction. Though we didn't know it at the time, what we were witnessing was the birth of social media. By 2004, things were taken to the next level: Facebook, an online social network, was enjoying such success in America that it was launched internationally the following year. This in addition to the arrival in 2006 of Twitter, brought everyone from tweens to twenty-something hipsters, to housewives to a level of online commonality. These seemingly innocuous social sites grew at a very rapid pace, but it wasn't until December of 2010 that the world got a taste of exactly what this meant. A series of popular

uprisings dubbed the Arab Spring transposed dictators in Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Tunisia. The prime source of the revolts' information sharing was attributed to the likes of Twitter and Facebook. Social media had officially arrived and it was truly a force to be reckoned with.

A decade on from the birth of Facebook and we're able to compile a rather comprehensive definition of its current impact. A study from online market research firm YouGov found that 95% of 16-20 year olds and 74% of 21-24 year olds in the UK accessed Facebook in January of 2012 alone. With such popularity as this, it is therefore not reaching too far to draw parallels between the development of social media and tattoo. Like social media, tattoo has seen its popularity skyrocket over the past decade. In the UK alone, 29% of people aged 16-44 are now tattooed. Instagrammed photos of freshly tattooed



flesh are uploaded to Twitter or Facebook via mobiles the world over on an absurdly regular basis. This interaction between technology and craft can't help but have an impact on the tattoo world, but exactly what sort of impact? More importantly perhaps, is whether or not it's of any ultimate benefit?



Nic Westfall



For starters, whether or not tattoo needs social media really isn't much of a question. The straight answer is a resounding no. Tattoo has survived for centuries prior to the arrival of any form of technology, that much is obvious. Even a society stripped of all but the barest of essentials could arguably still have tattoo if it so desired, as evidenced by the earliest and most primitive accounts of tattoo in human history. However, the salient facts are these: despite the apparent contradiction between tattoo and technology and no outright need for the technology on offer, social media has had an almost instantaneous effect on the way tattoo is viewed,

LIKE SOCIAL MEDIA, TATTOO HAS SEEN ITS POPULARITY SKYROCKET OVER THE PAST DECADE. IN THE UK ALONE, 29% OF PEOPLE AGED 16-44 ARE NOW TATTOOED

experienced and acknowledged.

In the years prior to the advent of the Internet, the general public maintained a rather limited level of exposure to tattoo. It was commonly understood that tattoos were strictly reserved for fringe elements of society and as such, there was minimal mainstream concern over where and how to get one. The necessary knowledge on where to go to get tattooed was privy to those marginalised few from whom mothers would steer

their children clear of on city sidewalks. Word of mouth was king amongst the tattooed and the greatest word of mouth on the topic was found in a variety of places, none of which attracted a clientele even remotely close to what it does today. The times, as we're all well aware, have changed. From 2009-2012 alone, there has been a 112% increase in tattoo start-ups in the UK. Whether or not there's a need to incorporate tattoo into the mainstream is irrelevant 🌻

because it's already arrived in a very big way. What's more, this tremendous increase in tattoo start-ups means that there are now entirely new generations of tattooists waiting to cash in on what is currently being touted as a massive trend. If you'll excuse the cynical tone, the intent here isn't to cast aspersions on every new tattoo start-up out there – far from it. New outpourings of tattooists means there will be some excellent new talent, but it's far more practical to expect that this abundance means

NEW OUTPOURINGS OF TATTOOISTS MEANS THERE WILL BE SOME EXCELLENT NEW TALENT, BUT IT'S FAR MORE PRACTICAL TO EXPECT THAT THIS ABUNDANCE MEANS A LOT OF NOT SO EXCELLENT NEW TALENT



Andre Zechmann



Dawnii Fantana



Marcus Maguire



ENTIRE GALLERIES OF CRINGE WORTHY TATTOOS ARE REGULARLY CIRCULATED ONLINE, AND WHILE COLLECTIONS OF THIS SORT OFFER A LAUGH OR TWO, THEIR SUBTLE STRENGTH LIES IN THE EXPOSURE THEY OFFER



Miguel Bohiques



Jesse Smith

a lot of not so excellent new talent. An influx of overnight tattoo denizens in response to what many perceive to simply be a trend just doesn't paint a great picture of hope. And that is exactly where social media steps in with necessity.

Equipped with the ability to offer instantaneous feedback on this ever-growing crop of tattoo start-ups, social media's role can be an invaluable one: who is good, who is crap, who is professional, who doesn't deserve to own a tattoo machine, etc. Experiences far and wide flood in and find their way to mobiles and laptops everywhere. Anyone with a spare fifteen minutes is now at least afforded the option of semi-clarity on an otherwise daunting playing field. Entire galleries of cringe worthy tattoos are regularly circulated

online, and while collections of this sort offer a laugh or two, their subtle strength lies in the exposure they offer. At the risk of being reductive, the more exposure the public gains regarding the mass influx of tattoo, the better equipped they are to make rational decisions about the work they seek out. Traditionally, the best advice anyone can receive regarding all avenues of tattoo is that it's best to never take the quick and easy route. The challenge today however, is working out whether or not the easier route is such a bad choice after all. There's something to be said for the ability to arrive in a city for the first time and still retain a working knowledge of who does the best tattoo and where. Why shouldn't outsiders have just as much access to high calibre tattoo as the locals? As a matter of fact, even locals need a hand now and then, too. Consider the example of London-based hip-hop artist Ghostpoet, who has taken to twitter on numerous occasions to ask for (and receive) advice on the best places in London to get tattooed.

But if for no other reason than holding on to something believed by many to be sacred, the initial point of avoiding the easy route is a valid one. Each and every one of us remembers a time in our lives when we asked around our circle of friends in pursuit of the best tattooist or studio. It was a process that took time. It didn't happen overnight and we didn't mind. This is a characteristic that perhaps isn't always widely recognised, but it's definitely got deep roots in the concept of tattoo as we know it. Social media can't provide the same low-key, intimate experience,

but then again, neither does it claim to. Its word of mouth is of a different stripe – one that is grander and further reaching. It's the word of mouth of a new generation, one that involves advice, the ability to see the artist's work and an opportunity to learn about the artist all rolled into one. Gaining the low-down on your friend's favourite tattoo artist can't be compared to thousands of people the world over passing on their tattoo experiences. As making the decision to get tattooed remains a serious choice, the sheer amount of options possible necessitates a greater number of opinions than ever. If those opinions can be accessed rather quickly, perhaps that's a good thing.

This change then, brought about as a result of a marriage between social media and tattoo - does it compromise the very nature of tattoo as an art form? The answer to this is inevitably as simple as you want it to be. For some, the immediate response is absolutely not. For others, it's a far more complex issue. In terms of what this still nascent form of technology can provide for an artist, it's hard to deny the benefits. If your work is truly great, it can be argued that social media or not, people will find you and they will want you to tattoo them. More than a few extremely talented tattooists are utterly content to spend their entire careers quietly tattooing in small studios, completely removed from mainstream concepts of success and hype. They take no bookings over email and have no Twitter or Facebook accounts by which to contact them. Actions like these could understandably be regarded 🍌

as valuable self-preservation in a time where nothing seems safe from technology's ever encroaching grasp. It's important to emphasise however, that this disengaging from the Internet and its spoils, while respectable, does not confer any sort of moral superiority over the artist. It's admirable to dedicate oneself to a more modest and some would argue traditional side of tattoo, but at the same turn any artist who wishes to raise their profile via the internet can't be singled out as frivolous or somehow less dedicated to the true essence of their craft. There is great benefit for an artist to have the option of placing

their portfolio online, thereby allowing it to be discovered by a vast network of peers, potential employers and clients. Unfortunately, even the most perfect of plans has its failings. The easy access propagated by social media has the ability to create self-entitlement in new and particularly younger generation artists. This has been the case with musicians who downright spam people into listening to their tracks on sites like Twitter and YouTube. The frame of mind that the entire effort involved in becoming a successful artist is as simple as nagging enough people to click on a link is troublesome, to say the least. It is a phenomenon borne entirely out of the ease of mechanics on offer from a digital age - a new age problem, so to speak. Used correctly, social media

can help push an artist in the right direction, abused, it can create a rather nightmarish reality in which true success is glorified as a form of celebrity and reduced to a superficial gloss. When inundated 24-7 with tweets of actors or athletes showing off their tattoos and praising specific tattooists, the desire to seek out similar glory for the impressionable newbie artist can turn social media into a perceived shortcut to fame and wealth, rather than another stepping stone in the ever challenging process forward. In the original old school method, an artist would take his or her work to a variety of different tattoo shops looking for an apprenticeship. There's effort and integrity in that route. As any successful tattooist undoubtedly knows, success comes not through copying and pasting links into a Facebook feed, but by the straight-forward, no nonsense hard work of paying one's dues. Paying ones dues is the basis of tattoo and without it, the final vestiges of what tattoo has always been will be eroded. Many are fine with the idea of tattoo moving forward by whatever means necessary, be they online or otherwise, but it is understandable how others could find the flexing of social media muscles as nothing more than an unwanted encroachment on an already far too rapidly changing craft. Time waits for no man. The advancement of technology is inevitable. For good or ill, social media is now a fixture in our every day lives. Keeping that in mind, it's worth acknowledging that simply because we have seen one side of social media does not mean we have seen the only side. Even the mighty are not invulnerable to the effects of time. According to the same YouGov survey cited earlier, 23% of British Facebook users said that they used the site less than they did 12

IF YOUR WORK IS TRULY GREAT, IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT SOCIAL MEDIA OR NOT, PEOPLE WILL FIND YOU AND THEY WILL WANT YOU TO TATTOO THEM

Marco Galdo







doesn't thrive on the concept of technology, because it is inherently anti-technology. For the diehards, tattoo will always be exactly what they want it to be. Its lifespan will be dictated not by mobile phones, tablets or laptops, but by stories and lessons passed directly on from one human being to another. The possibility that an entirely suitable method for linking tattoo with social media both now and in the future isn't all that unlikely of a concept. It took users of Facebook and Twitter the better part of half a decade to realise an 🍌

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER SOCIAL MEDIA CONTINUES OR FADES AWAY, WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE TATTOO. IT DOESN'T THRIVE ON THE CONCEPT OF TECHNOLOGY, BECAUSE IT IS INHERENTLY ANTI-TECHNOLOGY

months earlier. A further 19% of that percentage believed that they would use the site even less in one year's time. Granted, this is only one survey and it does not represent or seal the entire fate of social media. But the idea that many are tiring of giants like Facebook is enough to make one consider that perhaps these forms of online communication are a trend that could one day be pushed aside for other pursuits, or that as time passes, people will grow so inundated by the technology that the entire concept of social media will be rendered dull. It seems that at present, both the future of social media and tattoo are in uncertain, ever shifting places. That commonality keeps things interesting and unpredictable. Perhaps those who are leaving Facebook behind are simply heading for newer, faster and further reaching forms of social media. Only time will tell. Regardless of whether social media continues or fades away, we'll always have tattoo. It



Rich Pineda

appropriate and literally revolutionary use for the technology. Tattoo is hardly as earth shattering as the disposing of a dictator, but the point here is that users were able to find a purpose for Facebook and Twitter that elevated it above the standard definition of what these sorts of sites could be.

Who knows exactly what sort of roles tattoo could play within the context of a greater evolved online world. The framework for that evolution is still being constructed and at present, isn't perfect. Maybe the day will come when tattoo and technology complement one another with perfect finesse. Then again, maybe it won't. Technologies come and go, appearing revolutionary when given their initial time in the spotlight, only to be considered fusty and cumbersome at a later date. This is not a fate that tattoo need concern itself with. Its methods may have been altered here and there since James Cook first made Europe



eRic the Viking



Richard Barclay

MAYBE THE DAY WILL COME WHEN TATTOO AND TECHNOLOGY COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER WITH PERFECT FINESSE. THEN AGAIN, MAYBE IT WON'T. TECHNOLOGIES COME AND GO, APPEARING REVOLUTIONARY WHEN GIVEN THEIR INITIAL TIME IN THE SPOTLIGHT,

aware of the existence of tattoo back in the eighteenth century, but the intents and purposes are largely the same. There has always been an element of honour, hard work and strength of community about tattoo. Staying true to these basic tenets no matter what occurs will serve to ensure that tattoo stays true to itself and its roots, even when faced with a technology obsessed future. 🤖

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LET'S GET

# PHYSICAL

If there's a name on the public's lips right now, it's that of Chris Jones. As he pounds out some serious realistic portraits that everybody can identify with, we took all his toys away for an hour to drill inside his head. Well, most of his toys...



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Wayne Simmons Chris Jones

In 2007, my girlfriend and I travelled from Belfast to attend the Cardiff Tattoo Convention. It was our first con. I was booked in with a young, Welsh upstart named Chris Jones who was fast becoming one of the most prolific new school artists in the UK.

I met Chris on the Saturday. He was in good spirits, chatting about where everyone was going out that night. Sunday came and I was up and out nice and early, keen as you like. Chris was a little bleary and needed a brew. We got started an hour later but Chris worked fast: he whipped that chest piece up within 90 minutes.

I looked in the mirror, liked what I saw. Asked what I owed him. "Eighty quid," he said. I gave him ninety. We entered the competition

and the piece won best of the show. I was blown away, proud as punch as we left the venue.

Chris was, too. "On the phone to me mam," he shouted over as we passed, big smile on his face.

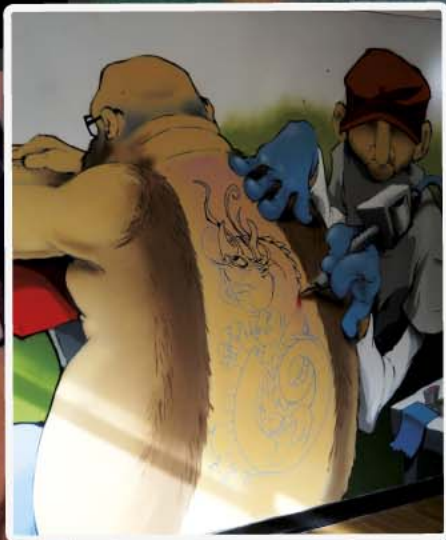
Fast forward to 2012 and we'd relocated to Cardiff. Chris was no longer based in the Valleys, now co-owner of Cardiff-based studio, Physical Graffiti. I called in looking for another tattoo. There was a big demand for Chris' work; a three month waiting list. Worth it, of course. When I got my new tattoo, it immediately became a favourite piece.

Today, I'm visiting the shop for a different reason. Chris is waiting for me at reception.

"You been here since the place was done up?" he asks.

I hadn't and so I get a mini-tour. The studio looks great. Very





**NOWADAYS, YOU GET TATTOOISTS WHO START DOING REALISM, SAYING THEY'RE NOT DOING RELIGIOUS SLEEVES OR WHATEVER. I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY, BUT I THINK YOU HAVE TO EARN THAT**

"The first year of junior school. There was a drawing competition. I drew a tarantula and won." He laughs. "I won it every year."

So what led him into tattooing?

"My gramps had tattoos and they fascinated me. Even though they were old and blue, I still thought you had to be a really good artist to do something like that. But when I got one and they put a stencil on, I thought, 'You're just tracing a line!'"

Tattooing became more accessible, then. Not the dark art he'd thought it to be. So, did Chris seek out an apprenticeship?

"I asked my local tattooist, Dave Fleet." But Dave turned him down, so Chris went out on his own, converting his spare room into a studio. "Back then, there wasn't the big thing about scratchers and

everything else, like there is now. I wanted to do it properly, though, so got Environmental Health to come and check everything and registered as a tattoo artist."

Chris was working for the job centre at the time, a suit-and-tie job. He cut down his hours, worked there Monday to Wednesday and spent the rest of the week tattooing. "I did that for months until one day, I just couldn't bear to put the tie on anymore."

He tattooed whatever came through the door: a fair share of Beckham angels, religious and tribal. "It's a good way to start. Nowadays, you get tattooists who start doing realism, saying they're not doing religious sleeves or whatever. I can understand why, but I think you have to earn that. You need to learn 🌻"

modern and professional with seven artists in residence and numerous guests working. There's a door on the first floor. "This is the best bit," Chris says, the door opening into his apartment. "Always hated commuting to work. Now I don't have to."

I get the Dictaphone going. Chris grabs a drink, pours me one too and we get started. I take us back to the beginning: little Chris with his crayons at school. What are his earliest memories of art?

how to tattoo, about putting colours in and blending and doing solid lines, before you can specialise in anything.”

Eighteen months later, Dave Fleet came and offered Chris a job. “I became known as the custom guy at the shop who would draw up designs for people.”

I remember the magazine ads Chris used to run in Skin Deep around that time: bright, vibrant and definitely new school. It soon became a speciality. He’s moved away from that now, establishing himself as the go-to-guy for realism. So why the change in style?

“I stopped doing new school because people like Mat Lapping started doing it better,” Chris tells me. “Joshua Carlton put

out an instructional DVD and I watched it and did two portraits of my then girlfriend’s kids in black and grey. They won awards left, right and centre. I’d go to a show and get first place with one, second place with the other. So I started doing more of that.”

“There weren’t a lot of colour portraits being done around then,” Chris explains. “If you wanted realism, it was black and grey. So I did that for quite a while even though, looking back, I don’t think I was that great at it.”

“Then someone came into the shop wanting a Christian Bale portrait from American Psycho in colour. Again, I watched an instructional DVD; Mike DeVries had just released Get Real. I did the piece, the customer loved it, it healed perfectly and things just went from there.”

We talk about the prep involved for portraits. Chris refers to Photoshop, how it’s really helped to up his game.

“It’s surprising what you can do.

A guy came in recently wanting Iron Man with the face plate open. But if you google that, there’s only one image that comes up and it’s out of focus. So I looked for someone that was making an Iron Man costume and found some photos of the helmet, face plate open. I then searched for a photo of Robert Downey Jr. looking at the same angle and Photoshopped his face into the helmet. I try to do that as much as possible: look for bits of images that I can stick together to make a tattoo that no one else is going to have.”

Sci-fi movies are also a big part of Chris’ life. Along with twenty or so others in the industry, he’s a licensed Lucasfilm artist, working some big events in the US and Europe. He organised the Star Boards project in 2012, a fundraiser where tattoo artists designed Star Wars themed skateboards. He has his own convention, Cardiff’s Tattoo And Toy. And there’s more in the pipeline...

“I went over to Oregon in

**THERE WEREN’T A LOT OF COLOUR PORTRAITS BEING DONE AROUND THEN. IF YOU WANTED REALISM, IT WAS BLACK AND GREY**



November to film a pilot for a sci-fi based tattoo reality TV show," he reveals. "They filmed it as a sizzler and I'll find out soon whether it's been picked up. I'm still unsure about doing it. From a public point of view, tattoo reality shows are great, but the industry hates them and I don't want to be that guy that everyone calls a sell-out."



## I STOPPED DOING NEW SCHOOL BECAUSE PEOPLE LIKE MAT LAPPING STARTED DOING IT BETTER

Hardly a sell-out when sci-fi is something he is genuinely passionate about, that's played a huge role in developing his passion for art and is influencing his style even today. We talk about some of Chris' favourite comic book artists: "Simon Bisley: his work's outstanding. Alex Ross, too, purely for the realistic element. And then there's Joe Madureira: his stuff reminds me of Mat Lapping's work; almost new school in a way."

I wonder if anyone would ever go to Chris, now, for anything apart from sci-fi realism or portrait work.

"You'd be surprised," he laughs. "Someone e-mailed the other day after googling 'Talented tattooists in Wales.' 'Your name came up

round the top', they said. 'Your portraits are amazing and my friend wants this tattoo'. I looked at the photo she's attached and it's that feather exploding into birds - we've all seen it.'

It's a common misconception that a good artist will excel at all styles. In reality, a good portrait artist isn't necessarily going to be good at, say, traditional.

"God, no! I'm terrible at traditional!" Chris laughs. "And script. I used to do it because I would get asked for it, but now we've got Ash working in the shop and his script is amazing. I've had the odd piece where I've had to do a portrait and there's been script underneath and I've been: 'Ash, 🍀





**I WENT OVER TO OREGON IN NOVEMBER TO FILM A PILOT FOR A SCI-FI BASED TATTOO REALITY TV SHOW. THEY FILMED IT AS A SIZZLER AND I'LL FIND OUT SOON WHETHER IT'S BEEN PICKED UP**

can you draw this script for me?"

As always, his candour and honesty is refreshing. And being open to such guidance has clearly helped Chris evolve as an artist, something he's still striving for today. He recently posted a facebook status update saying it was time to take it to the next level and I ask what he means.

"It's just to push myself, I think. With tattooing, there's always someone new on the scene, snapping at your heels and I think, What can I do to keep where I am?"

Is it a peer pressure thing?



"It's a bit of everything. Peer pressure from other tattooists but then there's the pressure that you put on yourself."

I mention Stephen King; how he was asked in a recent interview whether he was still trying to write his best book at 65 years old. His answer: Well, I'm not phoning it in. Would Chris be happy to plateau? Would that be good enough for him?

"Probably not. I'm my own worst critic. I beat myself up a lot. I think maybe it's the medium we work in. You take a photo, once

a tattoo's done, and it's distorted because of the curve of the body. I get like that a lot, to the point where sometimes I take a photo and won't post it anywhere. That's the pressure that I put on myself: trying to constantly improve so I like what I do."

Does he talk about that with other artists?

"Sometimes. The last time I saw an improvement in my work was when David Corden was guesting at the shop. After working with him for a couple of weeks, watching how he does stuff, it changed what I do. I'd like to do more of that; bring guests into the shop that I look up to."

We finish talking about Chris' TV work because, frankly, you can't interview Chris Jones without asking him about that Come Dine With Me episode. So why did he do it? Was it for further promotion? Another aspect of taking it to the next level?

"Because I live here, next door to the shop. And what better form of advertising than getting the shop on TV!"

He was a little tipsy during filming and worried before it came on TV. "But most of what I said was cut out. I was hardly in it at all." He laughs, thinking back on it. "Probably for the best, really."

And that's Mr Jones for you in a nutshell: brutally honest to the end. 🤖





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CRAIG MEASURES

# CHAMPION OF THE WORLD

Over ten days in January, some of the finest illustrative tattoo artists gathered together at Frank La Natra's studio, Into the Woods, for what was to turn out to be the tattooist's equivalent of The Avengers Assemble.

**CRAIG MEASURES  
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GALLERY**  
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**Web:**  
[www.intothewoodsgallery.com](http://www.intothewoodsgallery.com)

Frank had decided to assemble the group at the studio because he wanted to have a massive collaboration of amazing illustrators together in one place, with out the distractions of a convention. As Frank puts it, "A place where we could sit around and tattoo, draw, or just bullshit about art and things if we wanted to. Almost like an art getaway with friends."

But hidden amongst this great gathering was a story that was too good to ignore, the personal journey of tattoo

artist and collector, Craig Measures of Golden Dragon Tattoos, Chester.

When Frank pulled together the original line up, Craig's name wasn't on the list. This wasn't because Frank didn't want him involved, he just hadn't thought of him... yet. Undeterred, Craig mentioned to Mat Lapping how 'insanely jealous' he was that Mat (and his studio partner Andy Walker) had been invited to Into the Woods to hang out. Craig loved the illustrative style and

artists and was trying to become a bigger part of this new scene.

"Mat said to me that I should go with him and Andy and that Leah Moule was also joining them. I thought he was joking around at first but he continued to tell me that I should be a part of it and this would be such a good thing for me and my work. Alongside getting some awesome



Trent Aitken-Smith & Craig Measures  
Craig Measures, Frank La Natra, Robert Kane



ALONGSIDE GETTING SOME AWESOME WORK, I ALSO WANTED THIS TO BE AN EDUCATION; IT WAS TOO GOOD AN OPPORTUNITY TO MISS

work, I also wanted this to be an education; it was too good an opportunity to miss. I had met Frank previously but wasn't sure if he would remember me, I get pretty star struck when meeting such awesome artists. I contacted Frank to start off with, saying I was an artist working at Golden Dragon, trying to become a part of the illustrative scene and would love to be a part of this experience."

Craig also messaged Tony, Robert and Tanane, telling them the same thing. He explained how he was trying to line up as much tattoo work as he could while he was over and asked if they were up for tattooing him. Craig has had his fair share of full days spent in the big chair to know that he hated getting

tattooed, so tried to be sensible about it and get it perfectly planned out and booked. If this all went to plan, Craig's body was going to have to cope with extensive amounts of tattooing over a short period of time.

"Straight away I was booked in with Tony and then Frank. All of a sudden, Tanane was also jumping on board, as was Bobby. This fitted into a sweet schedule of two painful days, recover, then 2 more painful days. And I hate getting tattooed, it really sodding hurts! I wanted a nice easy break into it as I hadn't been tattooed for about eight months, when Mat did my space monkey, so planned Tony to tattoo me first on my right arm, then Frank would tattoo my head the following day. The head was going to be the killer but I 🙄

#### THE CREW

**Craig Measures**  
Golden Dragon,  
Chester, England  
**Frank La Natra**  
Into the Woods,  
Dania Beach FL  
**Robert Kane,**  
Into the Woods,  
Dania Beach FL  
**Christa Z**  
Into the Woods,  
Dania Beach FL  
**Mat Lapping**  
Creative Vandals,  
Hull, England  
**Andy Walker**  
Creative Vandals,  
Hull, England  
**Tanane Whitfield**  
Studio Evolve,  
Virginia Beach VA  
**Tony Ciavaro**  
Stinky Monkey Tattoos,  
Kingston MA  
...plus **Leah Moule,**  
**Teresa Sharpe,** **Kelly**  
**Doty,** **Ron Russo,** **Ryan**  
**Nutini,** **Julie Bauschardt,**  
**Piero Bockos,** **Joe Casal**  
and **Jessica Brown.**





STRAIGHT AWAY I WAS BOOKED IN WITH TONY AND THEN FRANK. ALL OF A SUDDEN, TANANE WAS ALSO JUMPING ON BOARD, AS WAS BOBBY...

thought, let's get it over and done with, out the way! Then two days to recover would set me up for Tanane to work on the other side of my arm, followed by Bobby on the side of my right thigh, next to an existing tattoo I have."

**DAY ONE - TONY CIAVARRO**

Craig's first day was with Tony, who had shown Craig the design he'd drawn and in Craig's words, "...was freaking mega awesome!" Craig's brief for Tony was simple, do anything zombie related.

"We had a chat and planned to move it to start from my armpit, cover my inner bicep and down across my elbow ditch... so much for a gentle ease into my tattoo marathon! But, as he began tattooing, it was all fine. My tattoo nerves settled and it was feeling OK. I've got to say, Tony is amazing! He was mega funny, proper nice and an excellent teacher. I learnt so much from him and I was

already feeling inspired. I was nervous still but trying to take in everything he was saying. Tony's piece, aside from being absolutely stunning, was also massive. Still, it only took him 11 hours so it all went pretty quick. I had a real laugh with him - he's proper chilled out and taught me loads. His whole approach to drawing designs and then tattooing them is truly inspiring and I can't wait to sort out more work with him. If you're reading this Tony, how'd you fancy doing a full back piece for me?"

**DAY TWO - FRANK LA NATRA**

The next day and it was Frank's turn to work on Craig's head. And this was the one he was most nervous about. Craig wasn't too worried that it was on his head, it was more the, "sheer bloody agony that was to come!" Once again, Craig's brief was simple, a toucan.

"The choice was for no other

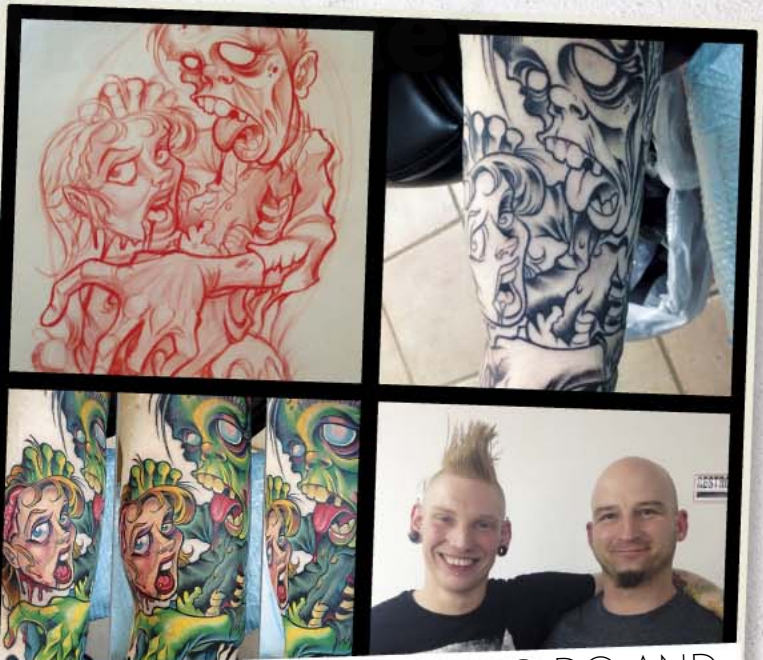


reason than I thought the shape of a toucan's beak would sit well on my head. I don't really mind what I get tattooed nowadays. I always think of a theme but then just leave it to the artist as I really just like it when they put their own spin on things and do what they want with it. The design Frank had drawn was a toucan holding a drink, resting one of its wings on the top of my ear...very clever.

Watching Frank set up, with his apprentice Jess, was an education in itself. He is very particular about things and everything is so organised, it was really awesome seeing his approach. You could

**FRANK LA NATRA**

"As far as setting the scene, it was something that set itself. It was one hell of an experience for everyone there. I have to be honest, the collection and collaboration of artists in one shop like that has never been done before and it was just amazing to see how much everyone got along, hung out and drew with each other, tattooed with each other and just loved being there. We had clients and other artists, from other shops, stopping by the whole time just to catch a peek at the event and meet some of the artists. It was amazing, artists just picking each others brains, drawing together and collaborating on pieces together."



THE TOUCAN TOOK 7.5 HOURS TO DO AND THE LAST HOUR WAS BY FAR THE EASIEST. I THINK BY THIS POINT I WAS SO EXHAUSTED FROM PAIN THAT MY BODY THOUGHT SOD IT



see in his set up alone that the whole thing, from planning the design, to researching, to drawing and all the other steps Frank goes through to get the end result, is what has got his work to the insanely superb level that it's at.

He began tattooing and I was right, it was disgusting! I shut my

eyes and thought, give it 10mins and it'll get easier...it didn't get easier, not one bit! The majority of it didn't even feel like a tattoo, there wasn't sharpness or dull irritating pain, just the feeling that someone was swinging a baseball bat at my head. The toucan took 7.5 hours to do and 🤢

**TWO OF A KIND**

FRANK: "This actually led me to a great idea for my next big shop event in July... and I'm going to do it bigger and better. I'm going to turn it into a big collaboration only event for all the artists that come. So over the week you will see at least 20-30 collaboration pieces by some of the best artists in the business. I won't tell you what it is exactly, but let's just say it involves a lot of amazing artists coming together to give you something very different. It'll be an event that you haven't seen happen yet and people aren't going to want to miss it! It's titled, "Two of a Kind".

the last hour was by far the easiest. I think by this point I was so exhausted from pain that my body thought sod it, let's just lie here and not even care.

I was really hoping to learn bits from Frank but I obviously couldn't watch and to be honest, I didn't feel like talking too much. What I did learn from him though was his entire approach to tattoos; the way he thinks about it, plans it and then researches it, is nuts. He's is so thorough in every step, to the point where, even when he said we were finished, he paused and pulled up a picture of a toucan's beak to check the length of the stripes. That's crazy attention to detail! Needless to say, I was pleased the stripes were already how he wanted them."

Craig had gotten through the worst of it and now had two days to recover. Sleep was out of the question, so Craig hung out at the studio and went from artist to artist watching the group of talented tattoo artists and making notes on his phone.

"I also tried to help out when I could and ran around getting things for Mat and Andy. I felt like an apprentice to them which was actually a real honour. At

some point throughout the days there was always someone sat around the table drawing designs in sketchbooks and as I was sat there watching, Bobby and Frank came through and told me they were going to tag team me and work on a collaboration together. It was Bobby's bearded dragon he had drawn for me, except now it would be going on the back of my thigh, not the side. Ouch!"

TANANE CONSTANTLY THINKS ABOUT DETAILS IN HIS WORK AND SEEMS TO CONTINUALLY TRY TO PUSH HIS DESIGNS TO THE NEXT LEVEL







I BEGAN SINGING INTO MY HOODIE, DISNEY SONGS WERE THE MAIN CHOICE. IT GOT ME THROUGH THE NEXT 2.5 HOURS BUT BY THE END OF IT I HAD HAD ENOUGH

#### DAY THREE - TANANE WHITFIELD

But before Craig was tag teamed by Frank and Bob Kane, it was Tanane's turn in the marathon. Once again it was a zombie inspired piece, though of course, with a spin on it that could only occur in the mind of Tanane Whitfield. Craig kicked off his third tattoo at one in the afternoon and it would be half three the following morning before he could sit back and relax again.

"It was a long day but one of the easiest tattoos I've ever had. And Tanane is hilarious! I got to watch the whole of this tattoo and asked questions about his work and tattooing in general. Like the others, I picked up bits from him, one thing in particular was that I need to push myself further and that us British don't do no where near as many conventions, or travelling

for work, as the Americans do. Again Tanane constantly thinks about details in his work and seems to continually try to push his designs to the next level. It was ace seeing him think about things whilst working on my arm. The piece is awesome and is such a cool contrast to my other zombie tattoo that Tony did, which is exactly what I wanted... two completely different interpretations based on the exact same theme."

#### DAY FOUR - FRANK LA NATRA & ROBERT KANE

On the final day it was the Frank La Natra v. Robert Kane collaboration and Craig couldn't help feel nervous. It had been a late night and the memories of his other back of the thigh tattoo were playing on his mind. Not to mention he was still recovering from three other tattoos, that included his head. It was also



to be Frank and Bob's first joint tattoo, so the stakes were high.

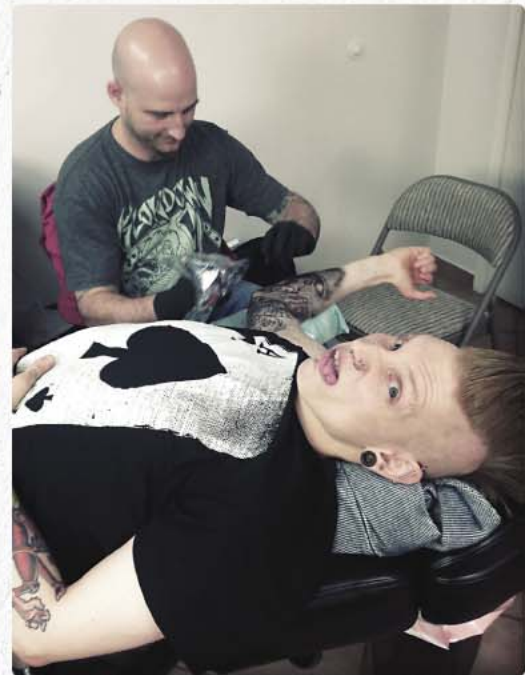
"As I mentioned before, the theme was a bearded dragon and Bobby had drawn up an absolutely stunning design. It was incredible! They began working and to start with it felt 🍌"

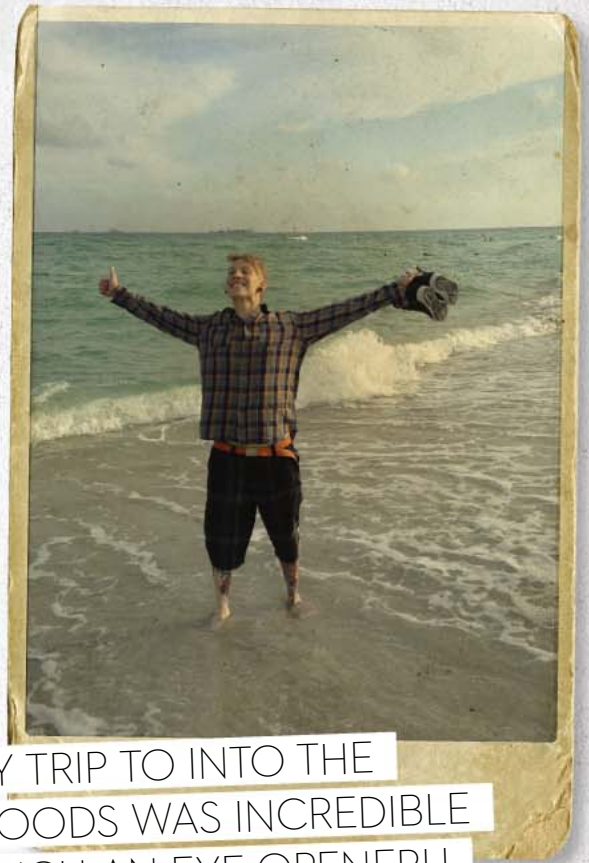
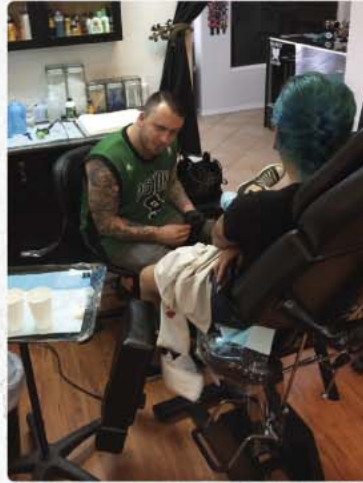


I FEEL SO HONOURED AND PRIVILEGED TO HAVE BEEN A PART OF THIS GATHERING. I MADE SOME AWESOME FRIENDS AND GOT SOME INCREDIBLE WORK - THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE WAS WAY MORE THAN I COULD HAVE EVER HOPED FOR

OK. Bobby went first with the outline and then Frank jumped on the shading. Then it was back to Bobby who did some more, starting with the rocks and mushroom, before Frank jumped back on it with more background. They continued to tag team throughout and it wasn't as bad as I expected, more crippling back and stomach pain than tattoo pain. It was ace chatting to Bobby, he's proper cool, very down to earth and good fun to chat with.

About seven hours in and it started to get kinda sore. I began singing into my hoodie, Disney songs were the main choice. It got me through the next 2.5 hours but by the end of it I had had enough. I had reached my limit. I reckon I could have gone for a cheeky four hours with Mat or Andy the following day but I was glad of the rest really. I had just had four amazing artists do some incredibly stunning work on me, I was feeling pretty good! A great way





MY TRIP TO INTO THE WOODS WAS INCREDIBLE - SUCH AN EYE OPENER! I LEARNED SO MUCH FROM EVERYBODY THERE AND I FEEL VERY INSPIRED

in Blighty, was it all worth it?

"My trip to Into The Woods was incredible - such an eye opener! I learned so much from everybody there and I feel very inspired. Mark Bailey (Golden Dragon) taught me that one way to learn to tattoo is to get tattooed. I definitely felt like I learnt a lot. On getting back I've been trying to push things with my work more and more, making each piece better than the last. I feel so honoured and privileged to have been a part of this gathering. I made some awesome friends and got some incredible work - the whole experience was way more than I could have ever hoped for and I cannot wait to make a trip over there again, next time hopefully working alongside these awesome guys!"

Speaking to Frank, there's already a bigger and better guest spot convention planned for July. How he will top this is anyone's guess, but it's Frank... anything can happen and probably will. 🐉

to finish my tattoo marathon."

So let's break that down and digest it for a moment. Four of the world's finest tattoo artists. Four tattoos done and dusted. Forty hours, thirty minutes of tattooing. If that is not a marathon, I don't know what is!

And there wasn't just tattooing going down. Throughout the week Craig was treated to a lot of firsts, including a trip to the shooting range with Tanane and a day of drinking that reads like something out of a Hunter S Thompson novel.

"It was terrifying! Proper good fun but scary as hell. Tanane's trunk is full of tons of guns and rocket launchers and a-bombs. It was nuts! Leah was insanely good at it, I reckon she secretly shoots

in her spare time. Andy and I went to Miami and started the day drinking copious amounts of alcohol which resulted in eating at a gay restaurant, a trip to a sex shop, a gym session on the beach, a drunken bike ride and being yelled at by officers on the boardwalk. Frank and Bobby took us to an amazing arcade which was insane. Great fun though - spent way too much on this awesome fishing game. England needs arcades like that! Cheesecake Factory served a pudding called Craig's Crazy Carrot Cake Cheesecake and we had donuts sprinkled with bacon and maple syrup."

Well, I guess he kind of deserved it after the week in the chair that he had. But now back



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# Here in the now frontier

PAUL TALBOT

Continuing on from last month's column, Paul Talbot continues his quest to find answers about the latest graphic styles currently being thrown into the spotlight of the world. This month he talks to Justin Nordine owner of The Raw Canvas in Grand Junction, Colorado.

**THE RAW CANVAS** 507 Main Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501. (970) 985-9649

You can check out more of Justin's work at: [www.therawcanvas.net](http://www.therawcanvas.net) <http://instagram.com/justinnordinetattoos>

When I first saw Justin's signature watercolour/style I immediately fell in love with it. It clearly comes from an abstract 'fine art' place but has an edge that gives it a 'broken but beautiful' vibe that - I think - sets Justin apart from other artists currently exploring the possibilities of watercolour techniques in tattooing.

Justin opened The Raw Canvas Tattoo Studio and Art Gallery in October 2008. Walking away from 5 years of teaching fine art to urban city students in Denver, CO to follow a dream of being a full time tattoo artist and fine art gallery owner. The Raw Canvas brings together the art of tattooing and local fine artists into an urban styled art gallery where he puts on major art and music events every other month. By showcasing local art, music and food, it's become a major point of interest in the grand valley.

In addition Justin's success as a self-taught tattoo artist and his aforementioned signature vivid watercolour style have seen him go from strength to strength. Most recently bringing home awards from conventions in Chicago and Minneapolis.



**I SEE A LOT OF 'TRADITIONAL' MEDIA TECHNIQUES IN YOUR WORK WHICH GIVES IT A BEAUTIFUL ILLUSTRATED/ WATERCOLOUR STYLE, BUT THE USE OF NEGATIVE SPACE IN YOUR COMPOSITIONS SEEMS MORE LIKE THE WAY A GRAPHIC DESIGNER WOULD APPROACH IT. HOW DID YOUR STYLE EVOLVE?**

"My style evolved from being trained as a fine artist. I got my fine art degree in 2002. Along with that I took several years of graphic design. I have always had a love for the more "graphic" look of my illustrations. Where as painting, its much more loose. My traditional aspects literally come from my training in painting and using those skills and colour theory and apply them to my tattoo designs. So by combining the two elements that I love, I have created my signature look

that I'm known for here in the US and abroad."

**I NOTICE YOU CREATE A PRETTY COMPLETE LOOKING WATERCOLOUR REFERENCE FOR EACH OF YOUR PIECES. CAN YOU EXPLAIN A LITTLE OF YOUR PROCESS?**

"For sure. My process is pretty in-depth actually. My



OFTEN, MY CLIENTS COME TO ME WITH LITTLE ARTISTIC KNOWLEDGE OR UNDERSTANDING OF LAYOUT. THEY OFTEN ARE VERY LITERAL OR REALLY HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO GO ABOUT THE PROCESS

one on one with clients is very important to me. I will schedule a 30 minute consultation with all my clients and really try to understand what they are looking for in a design. Often, my clients come to me with little artistic knowledge or understanding of layout. They often are very literal or really have no idea how to go about the process. So we spend a good 30 minutes discussing various elements, selling them on design, colours, overall concept. From there, I typically will create the piece the morning before or the night before the actual appointment. I'm a procrastinator by nature and I tend to do better work when my dead line is relatively close. I will typically put together a design concept sheet using illustrator or photoshop. Mostly for inspiration, colour mapping, etc. From there the designing begins. I usually take 2-3 hours per piece, sometimes less. I find creating these for my clients gives them a map in the direction I plan to go with their tattoo. My style is so unique that it can't be found on the internet so I feel a nice colour design helps them know where I am going. I also like having these colour illustrations to show how I can take my drawings and literally translate them to the skin. I have lately been doing more and more drawing on the skin, I like doing this with sharpies as I can mimic the brushstroke/watercolour look doing this and really use the body and its contours to develop my designs." 🍷



**YOUR STUDIO - THE RAW CANVAS TATTOO STUDIO AND ART GALLERY BRINGS TOGETHER THE ART OF TATTOOING AND LOCAL FINE ARTISTS (JUSTIN PUTS ON MAJOR ART AND MUSIC EVENTS EVERY OTHER MONTH). AS THE 'GRAPHIC STYLE' IS STILL PRETTY NEW, HOW DO YOU THINK OTHER ARTISTS INCLUDING THOSE IN THE TATTOO WORLD RESPOND TO YOUR TATTOOS?**

"That's a great question. Because it's so new, especially in the US, the traditionalist aren't sure what to think. It's new, it's completely outside the norms of traditional tattooing, but what is interesting is that the foundation and application of the tattoo is based on traditional techniques. I've just adapted and am able to use the same tools but create unique effects on the skin. I just got back from both the Minneapolis Tattoo Convention and the Philly Tattoo Convention in January and I can not tell you how many times I was approached by other tattoo artists thanking me for bring something fresh to the industry and being inspirational to them. That's a really great compliment from my peers, who I admire for their abilities to create photorealistic images on the skin. Taking home an award last year in Chicago for 3rd place female colour and then taking 1st for large colour in Minneapolis this year is great, not because I won award for myself, but my work was recognised by my peers amongst more traditional based pieces. I'm proud of the direction I have taken my work and hope it continues to inspire others. There are definite critics about the 'longevity of water-colour tattoos.'

"My response to that is, if it's done right, good use of values, colour saturation and layout, whats

IT'S COMPLETELY OUTSIDE THE NORMS OF TRADITIONAL TATTOOING, BUT WHAT IS INTERESTING IS THAT THE FOUNDATION AND APPLICATION OF THE TATTOO IS BASED ON TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES







JUST AS REALISM WAS CRITICISED AND NOW IS HUGE IN THE INDUSTRY, SO WILL THIS NEW TREND OF MORE FINE ART/WATERCOLOUR STYLE TATTOOS

to say it won't stand the test of time? I think the word "watercolour tattoo" throws people because they see or hear "water". I do not dilute my inks with water. It's actually a combination of layering like colours and how you run your machine and set your needles. I have seen watercolour tattoos done incorrectly, with diluting the ink with water, THOSE tattoos will be gone in several years. You still have

to use the basic traditional aspects of tattooing to still create solid watercolour tattoos. That will never change. Just as realism was criticised and now is huge in the industry, so will this new trend of more fine art/watercolour style tattoos. It is going to open up an amazing amount of freedom for not only artists to do, but for clients to be more expressive."

**WHAT'S NEXT FOR JUSTIN AND THE RAW CANVAS?**

Well...I've got a few things up my sleeve! No, but really I've got a great convention in New York, The Empire State Tattoo Expo in June, I'll be at Off the Map in Oregon in August then at Off the Map in Massachusetts in October. I've just been invited to Norway, Taiwan and Germany, maybe coming to your place Paul for a guest spot (Justin will be guesting with me sometime in 2015 - schedules permitting). I'm trying to figure how to make all those places work either later this year or starting next year. I'm booked solid for the rest of the year, but hope to start taking appointments for January 2015 starting in September or October of this year. More conventions throughout the US as well. I just hope to continue to be able to develop my work and keep doing what I love. I'm truly blessed and honoured to be apart of this community. I sometimes just sit back and think how truly blessed I am and how grateful I am for this opportunity, I get to create art for a living. So cool. 🙌

*As usual - if you want to follow up any of the concepts laid out here, you know where we are or you can contact Mr Talbot at [paul@postmoderntattoo.com](mailto:paul@postmoderntattoo.com)*

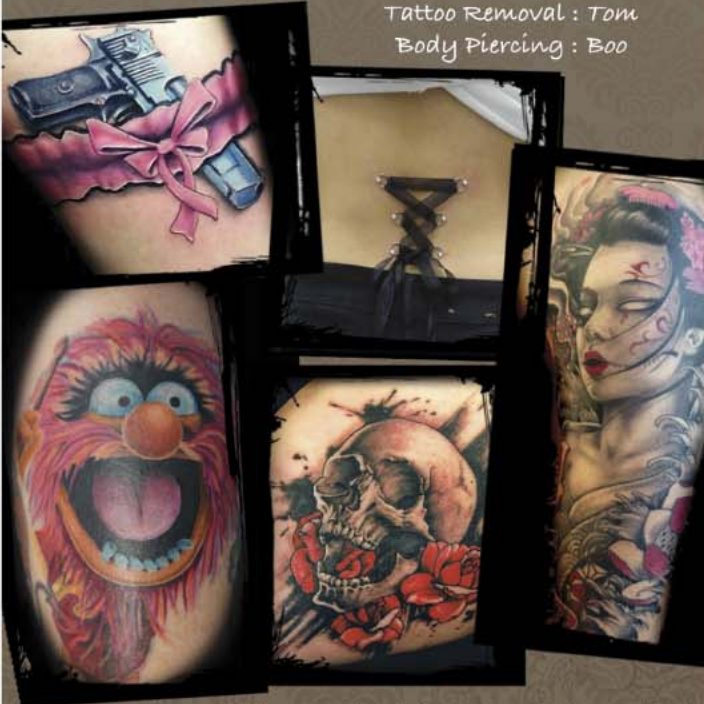
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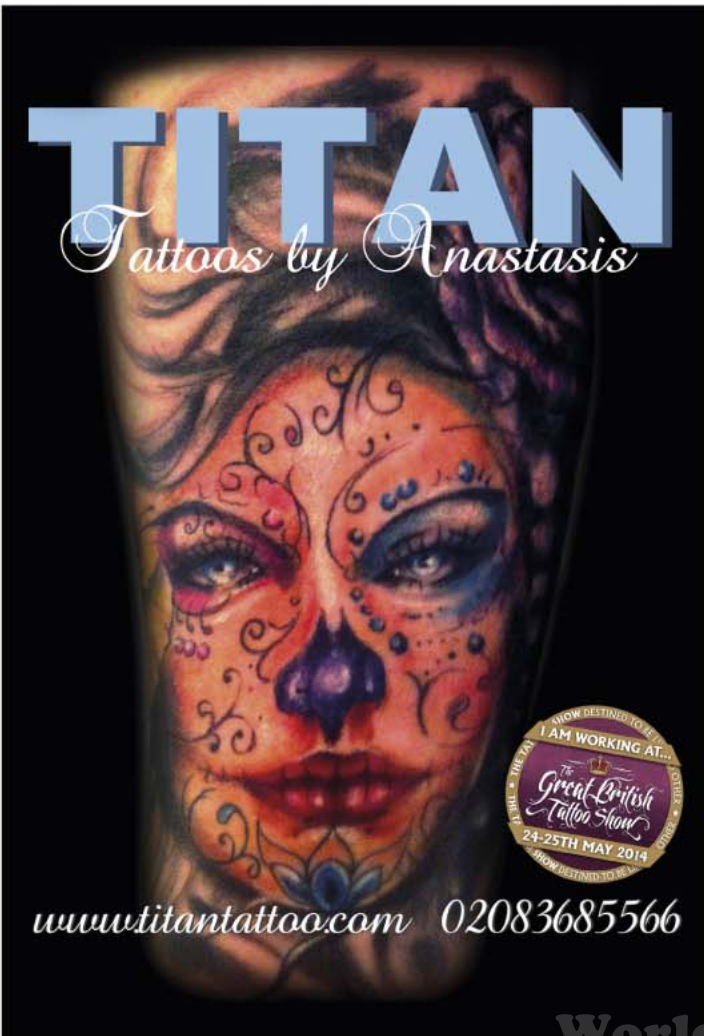
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# Before the Ink...

ED HARDY

Emiko Omori

In 1955, Don Hardy and a friend opened a tattoo shop in Hardy's den. They sold soda bottles to buy eyeliner for outlines, and coloured pencils for shading. Ed Hardy was eleven.

As humans there is something in us that likes to ignore history and come to the, usually incorrect, assumption that we are the first to do things a certain way. Especially in the tattoo world. Our industry is corrupt, they're selling machine kits on Ebay, it is all going to end in despair, we cry... while overlooking the fact that Milton Zeiss was selling tattoo kits way back in the fifties that were, " ...so simple even children could learn to tattoo". As a side note, he also ran a tattoo school.



(1956) 11 year old Don Ed Hardy with self-done tattoos

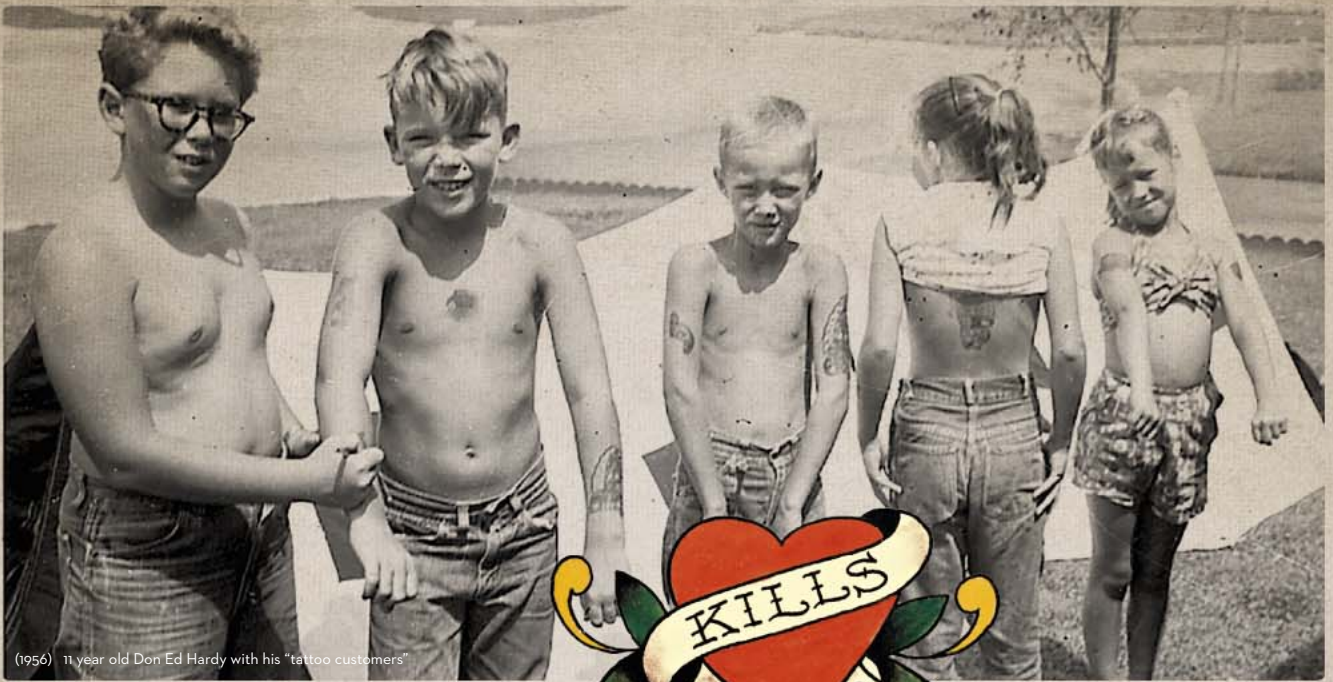
Sound a bit familiar? But I digress. Don 'Ed' Hardy always loved art. In his own words, "My life has always been in pictures. I've been drawing obsessively since the age of three and have always been interested in people's stories and the stores that pictures tell."

But this was the late fifties and tattooing was still the realm of sailors, criminals and ne'er do wells. Tattoo shops were shady places, run by formidable men. As time passed, Hardy moved into his teens and his attention moved from ink on skin, to ink

**I'VE BEEN DRAWING OBSESSIVELY SINCE THE AGE OF THREE AND HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN PEOPLE'S STORIES AND THE STORES THAT PICTURES TELL**

on canvas and he started to pursue other mediums. In the sixties, Hardy enrolled at the San Francisco Art Institute and took a degree in printmaking. It was during this time that he realised that not only

Thanks to Emiko Omori, director of the documentary *Ed Hardy: Tattoo the World* for the images. [www.edhardy.tattootheworld.com](http://www.edhardy.tattootheworld.com)



(1956) 11-year-old Don Ed Hardy with his "tattoo customers"



Production still: Omori videoing Hardy in Hawaii (Photo by Eva Lee)



**HARDY'S THOUGHTS RETURNED TO HIS CHILDHOOD 'TATTOO' SESSIONS AND HIS INTEREST IN TATTOOING WAS REIGNITED**

was the art world hard to get into, but there wasn't much money to be made for a relative unknown trying to make his mark in the industry.

In an effort to come up with a way he could still express himself through art, and still make a decent living, Hardy's thoughts returned to his childhood 'tattoo' sessions and his interest in tattooing was reignited. In 1966, while still studying his printmaking degree, Hardy started an apprenticeship under Phil Sparrow. Later, in 1973, Hardy spent six months in Japan studying under



19-year-old Don Ed Hardy "tattooing" a friend


Horihide, adding his love of Asian art to the mix.

From there, the rest is tattoo history. As one of the first 'artists' to tattoo, Hardy realised the potential of tattooing as a respectable medium and, with his fine art background and love of Asian illustration, changed the face of tattooing forever.


So next time we say the tattoo world is being over run with art students, maybe we need to think back on Ed Hardy and realise, maybe it's not such a bad thing. 🐼

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

**Sacred Art Tattoo Manchester** are looking for a new artist to join the team on a full-time basis. A strong portfolio and somebody who enjoys colour work preferable. Anyone interested in the position should forward their portfolio with a little bit about themselves to the following email address: [tattoo@sacredarttattoo.co.uk](mailto:tattoo@sacredarttattoo.co.uk)

**Experienced tattoo artist wanted in Huddersfield.** A great opportunity for someone wanting to branch out and start an independent project. The studio closed recently due to personal reasons, and I am now re-opening it and starting over. I am looking for one or two artists to use the vacant studio space to their own advantage in the studio half of the shop. The studio is based in a lovely Victorian arcade in the town centre of Huddersfield, just next to the train station. No drink/drugs/attitudes. If you are interested or would like more information, please email [diamondsndusters@gmail.com](mailto:diamondsndusters@gmail.com).

**Border Rose tattoo studio in Littleborough** is looking to take on another tattoo artist. Minimum two years' studio experience. No prima-donnas, attitudes, drug habits or drink problems. Must not mind sexual misconduct Fridays and naked Saturdays! Please send reference, contact details and your portfolio to [ink@borderrosetattoo.co.uk](mailto:ink@borderrosetattoo.co.uk).

**Tattoo Artist Required:** Demonic Dermagraphic Tattoo Studio is looking for a tattoo artist to work in their busy shop eight miles south of Bath. Must have a minimum of three years' experience and a portfolio is essential, as is a friendly attitude when dealing with people. We are NOT looking for an apprentice or anyone with a bad attitude, overblown ego or drug/alcohol issues. No time wasters or dreamers please. Email: [demonicdermagraphic@hotmail.com](mailto:demonicdermagraphic@hotmail.com).

**The Old Smithy team are hiring.** We're looking for another full time

artist but also have space for a part time artist and guest spots! We're also looking for a piercer to join the team. We're looking for people who are passionate about art but professional, without an attitude problem or an ego. No apprentice enquiries please. For more information please e-mail us at: [theoldsmithytattoo@parlow@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:theoldsmithytattoo@parlow@hotmail.co.uk). To apply for any of the roles please email us a portfolio of your recent tattoo work and a paragraph or two about yourself.

**Tattoo artist wanted.** The Tattooed Arms in Lincoln are currently looking for a new tattoo artist to join the team. Applicants must have a strong portfolio of tattoos and artwork with over three years' experience in the industry. We are a custom shop with a great reputation in the area. Good communication with clients and reliability are essential. This will be a permanent position for the right person. To apply, email examples of your work to [alex\\_stark@live.com](mailto:alex_stark@live.com).

**Tattoo artist wanted at Electric Kicks Tattoo Studio.** We are a busy studio based in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, and are looking for the right person to join our team. You must have shop experience, a varied portfolio, be able to draw freehand and have a good work ethic! We already have an apprentice. Please no drugs or (heavy) drinkers or attitudes! Send your portfolio to [electric.kicks@hotmail.com](mailto:electric.kicks@hotmail.com) for the attention of Sam.

**White Horse Tattoo Studio in Hungerford is expanding.** We are looking for an experienced tattoo artist to join the team. We need someone with artistic flair, proficient in all styles of tattooing, and who will be an asset to our reputable studio. We are also looking for an assistant/receptionist, which may lead to an apprenticeship in the near future. Applicants for either position must be hard working, reliable and dedicated. Please email CV and examples

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In **The Best Science Fiction Tattoos**, we've got artists such as Chris Jones, Mark Poole and Josh Bodwell talking about their obsessions alongside of some crazy stories about things like H.G. Wells, Back to the Future, Doctor Who and all other time and space figurations we could find! 164 light years of excellence at your fingertips!

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Pages shown from *The Best Horror Tattoos* and *The Best Comic Book Tattoos*.

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# Soapbox

CRAIGY LEE

📍 Craigy Lee 📍 Ash Springle

Do you know what has really been annoying me recently?  
People sticking smart phones into my face and asking "how  
much for this mate?"

It happens in the shop on a daily basis and even happens when I am out socially.

When I go out nowadays to parties where I don't know many people, I cunningly tell them I work at Tesco to stop the barrage of oncoming questions, smart phones and "quotes" for tattoos. Sometimes it's just easier. Sometimes I don't want to talk about work - I want to have a good time and when you tell people you work in a supermarket, the work conversation seems to end right there.

However, if you want to know what annoys me even more than that blasted smartphone rammed in my face and an inch from my nose, it will be the picture on the phone - because nine times out of ten, it's a picture of a tattoo.

What's wrong with that?

You may well ask!

You're a tattoo artist, so people are going to bring pictures of tattoos into tattoo shops - but the main problem is the lack of originality. The majority of customers going into tattoo shops these days overlook the vast array of reference material available and instead opt for pictures of other peoples tattoos - tattoos that already exist on somebody else.

Last month, I wrote about stealing or copying artwork and this links in with that topic. I talked about why it was wrong and the impact copying tattoos has on the artist who designed that tattoo along with the collector wearing that tattoo; so really, this is the source of the issue.

Websites like facebook, pinterest and instagram see many, many people reposting artwork and tattoos. When it's reposted, the original artists name is lost in cyber space - unless they watermark

their photos - so not only is their tattoo getting stolen and copied but they are not even getting the credit they deserve for working up that tattoo in the first place!

I fully understand some people lack originality - it seems safer to follow the crowd than to dream up something new and exciting for yourself. But you don't have to be able to draw to come up with a cool design. There are these old buildings in most towns called libraries. They stock these things

called books that people used to look at pictures in before the internet came along. As far as I know, they still make books too, new ones that are up to date! You can also get magazines in libraries; magazines like National Geographic for instance, which is full of fabulous reference pictures.

So next time you're thinking of a tattoo, think of an idea - a rough general subject, then instead of scrolling through google images for wolves or whatever else you want, go to the library. Go to the art section, the natural world section, the magazine section and have a look and see what you can find, don't worry if it doesn't have roses around it. Give your artist the idea and let them run with it. You will get a far better tattoo.

*Got a burning issue or topic you want me to talk about? Want to get your voice heard?*

*Well don't just sit there do something about it Drop me a line [craigylee@skindeep.co.uk](mailto:craigylee@skindeep.co.uk)*



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# An Eye is upon you

## CARROT OR STICK?

In the 1958 movie, King Creole, Elvis Presley plays Danny Fisher, a motherless boy who attends high school by day and clears tables by night. When a socially powerful, supercilious customer bullies Danny into singing with the restaurant house band, Danny doesn't back down...



Paula Hardy Kangelos

Instead, he climbs onto the bar and sings, 'if you're looking for trouble, you've come to the right place... I'm evil... don't you mess around with me'. With every line he becomes increasingly self-assured and by the end of the song he has transformed - the fidgeting, petulant teen is now a bone fide movie badass. Danny Fisher doesn't take the easy option, he doesn't just sing something pleasant and ineffectual and go back to clearing tables. By choosing the difficult path he challenges the perceptions of others, and ultimately wins, turning the diners jeers into cheers.

### ARE WE REALLY THIS SIMPLISTIC, OR IS THIS SHRUNKEN EXPERIENCE SOMETHING WE'D BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT

Danny Fisher is a busboy, he isn't expected to be a singer, and he isn't supposed to take on those that are 'above him'. Society likes us all to be sorted into similar, neat order, we're meant to pick a category and stay there: pessimist/optimist, single/married, rich/poor, cool/nerdy, tattooed/not tattooed. Largely, we accept these categorisations and even embrace them, but when we narrow down our options, our views can diminish too.

Think about our school days, we start out learning everything, cut it down when we take 'options' in our early teens, and again at A Level, this time down to just three subjects. At university, we are expected to choose just one, and

in doing so, we shrink our futures.

This narrowing is not just caused by outside forces pushing against our metaphorical walls; we do it to ourselves too. Humans love to see themselves reflected back and our friends and partners are often just like us. Opposites attract, says the cliché, but it's rarely true, more usually, opposites don't come close enough to notice any magnetism. In Maths, reciprocal numbers are those that when multiplied together = 1. Opposite numbers are those that when added together = 0. Are we all ultimately just mathematical equations, avoiding what we believe will add up to nothing? After all, it is society that determines our shapes, but like a child with a sorting toy, we ourselves seek the corresponding shaped holes in which to fit. So are we really this simplistic, or is this shrunken experience something we'd be better off without?

Let's do a pop quiz, the kind we all do online and maybe pretend we don't. It's a multiple-choice affair and it will only take a second, humour me?

Are you:

- a) A happy and contented person?
- b) An unhappy and dissatisfied person?

a) An optimist? b) A pessimist?

Do you respond better to:

- a) Praise? Or to b) Criticism?

I'm a 'mostly a' kind of person - I like to be liked, I like to make others happy and I like to feel happy. I work hard and live for little glimmers of praise, from my dance teacher, my gym

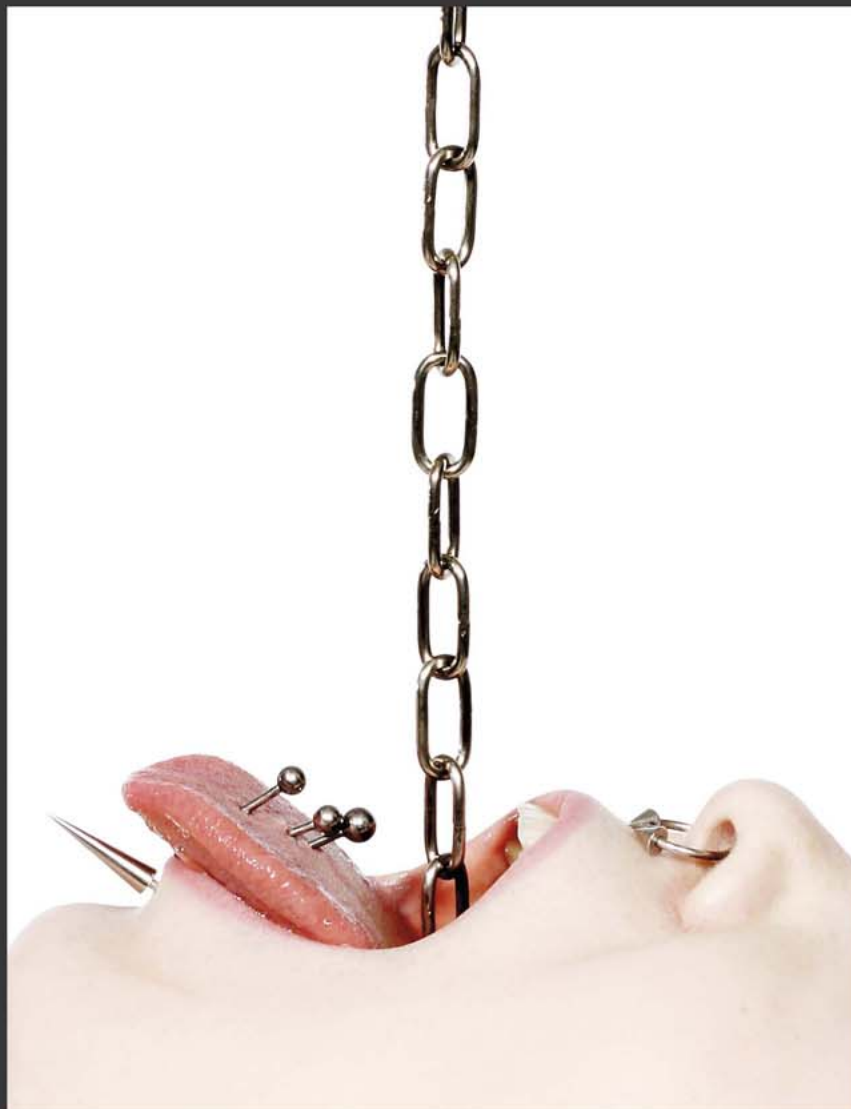
instructor, my boss (Hi Sion!). I can be irritatingly chirpy, am honest and forthright, I trust others and I'm prone to deep attachment and total heartbreak. I'm not just an optimist, I'm also a romantic, an idealist and a dreamer - If I were a donkey, I'd be stretching my neck towards the dangling carrot.

Yet that can't be the whole picture - when I reflect on my decisions made and actions taken, past and present, it doesn't make sense - I don't live my life with palms outstretched in gentle supplication, instead my fists are tightly clenched. I don't believe I'm motivated by the threatening stick behind my metaphorical donkey-self, yet I repeatedly dare the stick to come and find me. I'm a thrill seeker, a joyrider and a provocateur; I make my own life needlessly difficult in a number of ways from stupidly long mathematical equations, to adding extra steps into a dance move. I'm always late, always busy. I ride my deadlines as a surfer rides a wave, standing on top until the last available minute, then crashing. I stay up until 4, and still go to the gym at 6.30. I love the trainer that tells me, I'm 'on fire' but I work far harder for the one that tells me he won't be ever be impressed.

When I look in the mirror, all of this is right there reflected back at me. To be tattooed is to ask for the stick - the disapproval of others. Tattoos are not for those that are seeking an easy life, they are expensive, painful and they close as many doors as they open. They separate us from others, rule us out of certain career paths and generally make things so much harder - to be tattooed is to be Elvis Presley as Danny Fisher. It's oppositional, it's defiant, it's exciting, but it doesn't stop us being 'carrot people' too, and it doesn't mean we aren't essentially, just like everyone else. Maybe we can fit square pegs into round holes, after all. 🐘

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