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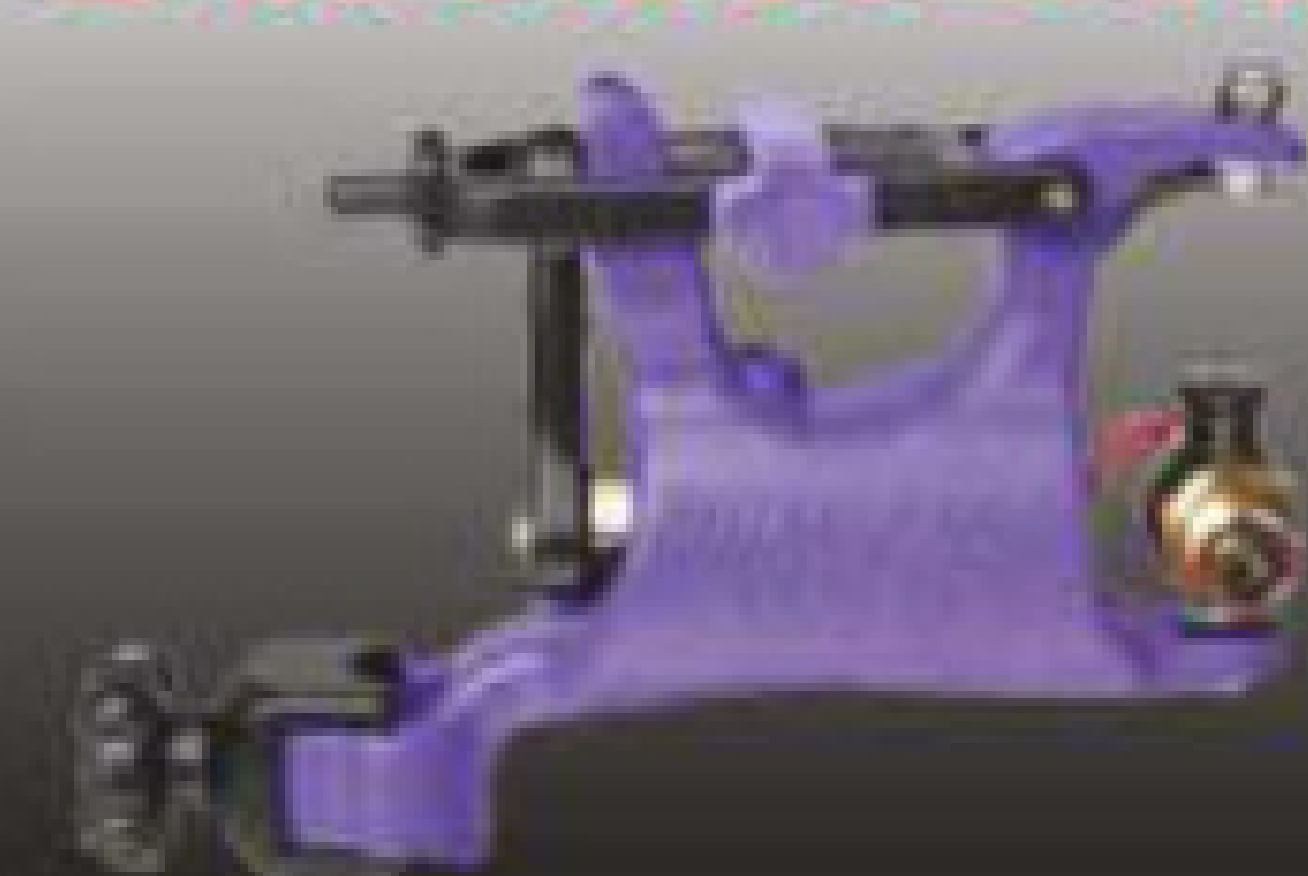
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Agá Hairesis

LOST IN THE CITY

A few weeks back, I was having a conversation with an artist about how to break out of what they perceived to be a 'life and art rut'. The work had gotten to be a grind - nothing more than a way of paying the bills and staying afloat - which was not the reason she got into tattooing in the first place at all. Once upon a time, it was a dream-like existence but unless you pay close attention, when your dreams become reality, the actual work attached to the dream can suck the magic out pretty damn fast.

You have to stay focussed and you have to keep building on the dream because if you don't, when you get there, you'll find that it doesn't look an awful lot like the thing you had in your head in the first place. That's a sad fact about pursuing your dreams - but the opposite is much, much worse.

If you don't follow your dreams, you'll probably find yourself working for somebody who did.

Related, but not obviously so, I've been thinking about putting a band together again. I tried that once and fell into the hole of it not looking like it should have when I 'got there'. I figured I might write some songs and see how I shaped up after almost 15 years of not

writing anything of the kind. One thing led to another and at some point, I hit the web and decided the twelve string Ibanez could take a backseat for a little while and I would learn how to play a different instrument. Foolishly perhaps, I thought the violin looked pretty damn taxing and when I asked around, was met with a lot of "you're starting too old", "it takes a lifetime to master" and "what the hell for".

IF YOU DON'T FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS,
YOU'LL PROBABLY FIND YOURSELF WORKING
FOR SOMEBODY WHO DID.

All of which made me more determined to get on with it. I'm not as old as I will be tomorrow and I have exactly what everybody else has to make it work - a lifetime. As for the "what the hell for" comment, I say: because it's there to be done.

In some hands, the violin is a squeaky old whiny piece of shit that I'd love to smash with a hammer. After looking around, I found that in some hands, it's seriously fucking sexy. I've never held a violin in my life and I couldn't write a song on one for all the money in the world. Not that I could write the sort of song I'd want to listen to on it but that's not the point. I also don't like - or maybe that should be 'don't understand' - classical music

(which is what it appears to be best at) but eventually, I found a violinist courtesy of YouTube who opened my ears to one single piece that I could listen to all the way through and I fell a little bit deeper in love with the idea.

I don't know where this road-trip will end. It still might end with a hammer but what it will do is take me down some roads that I wouldn't normally travel down. I think if

you're even a little bit creative, the secret to staying that way is to challenge yourself with things that are well out of your comfort zone.

Maybe it will all be for nothing but once you've been down a new road, you can't help but come out of the other side without being changed a little bit - and it's never a bad thing when that happens.

Even if the end result is some kick-ass hammer-action, it's got to be better than stagnating in a pool of your own juice.

FOOTNOTE

In The Sunday Times last week, I was asked to speak about 'my own tattoo experience' as part of a broad piece they were running on the

'scene' as they see it. I would like to add a little correction here to what was printed - being as they probably have better things to do this afternoon.

"My first tattoo was a huge tribal pattern that I got after interviewing Motley Crue" is not actually what came out of my mouth. What I actually said was "I first started taking tattooing seriously after being introduced to Paul Booth through the guys in Motley Crue." Those are two pretty different things. The tribal was not my first - nor the second actually - but it goes to show that if you can misrepresent something which, in the big scheme of things, doesn't mean anything to anybody, what the hell are we supposed to make of the material that makes it to the front page?

I kind of expected more from them, but I guess it could have been worse.

If you ask me, they need some hammers over in that office.

Sen

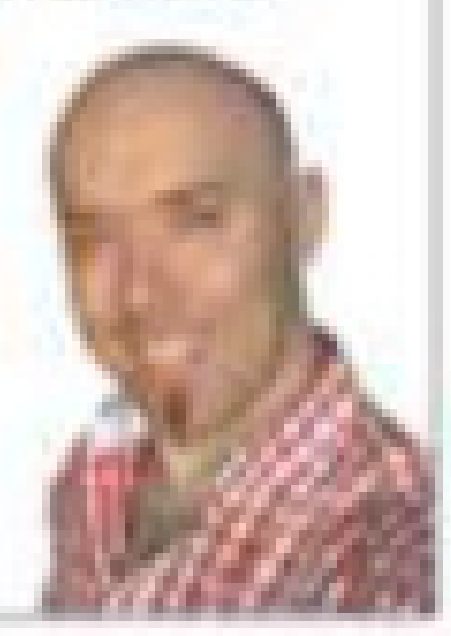


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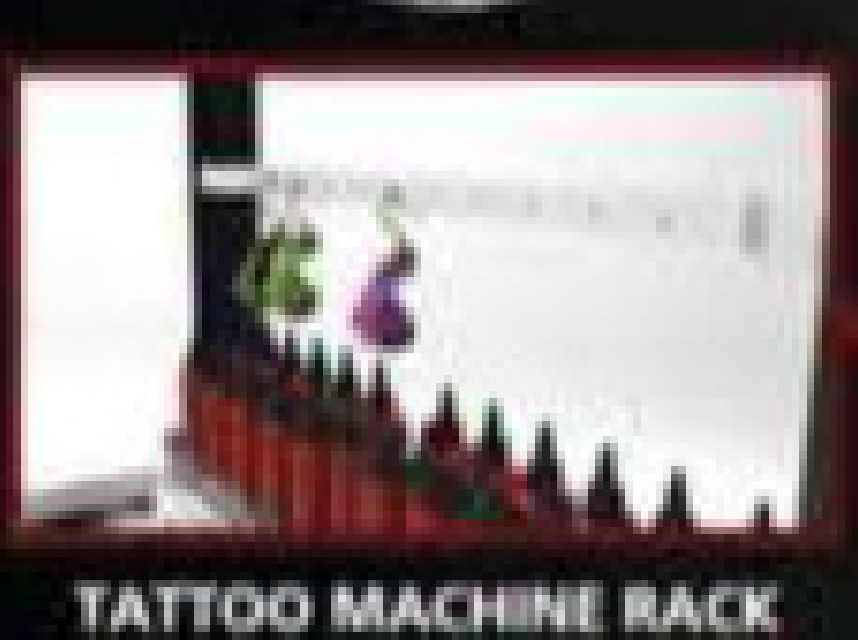
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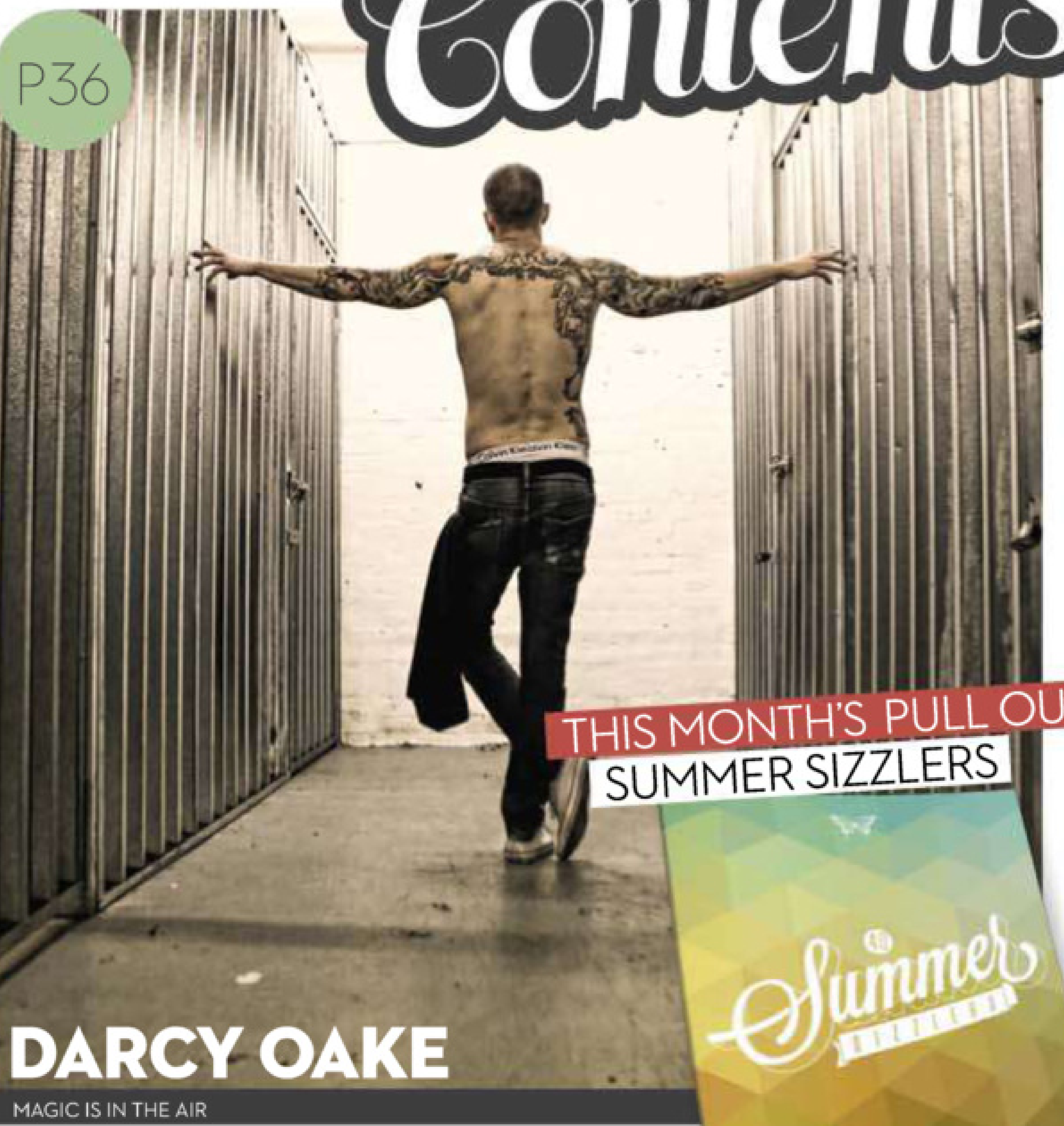
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For anything to survive there must always be a constant supply of 'fresh blood'. For the tattoo world, this is no exception. We hook up with some talent who have recently wrapped up an apprenticeship

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When illusionist Darcy Oake brought his show across the Atlantic to appear on Britain's Got Talent, he knew he was good. What he wasn't expecting, was for quite so many of us to believe it too.

60 HANNAH WILLISON
Hannah Willison is the kind of girl you'd find yourself in the presence of if you conducted some kind of Weird Science experiment using trees and earth instead of technology. This, I promise you, is an eminently good thing.

66 AARON SANCHEZ
Tattooing and cooking may go hand-in-hand these days, but it's not often you meet a chef who co-owns a tattoo studio near New York City's historic Bowery.

74 TOO MUCH TOO SOON
It's a big question. Are you getting too much ink too soon in your life? It's a



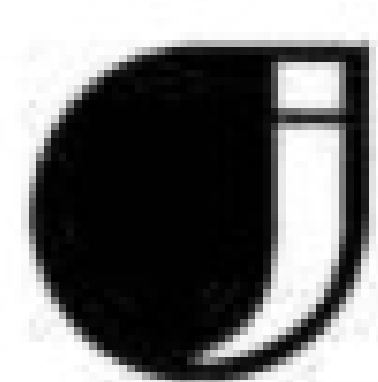
DARCY OAKE
MAGIC IS IN THE AIR

question many have asked - and some have even answered.

88 THAI ROAD TRIP
Buddhist monks, Spaniels getting a blow-dry, cigarette offerings and colourful Buddha army? Welcome to Wat Bang Phra, hot spot for Asian sacred tattoo and spiritual gathering of Thailand's working class.



YOUNG GUNS
APPRENTICES WHO SNAP AT THE HEELS



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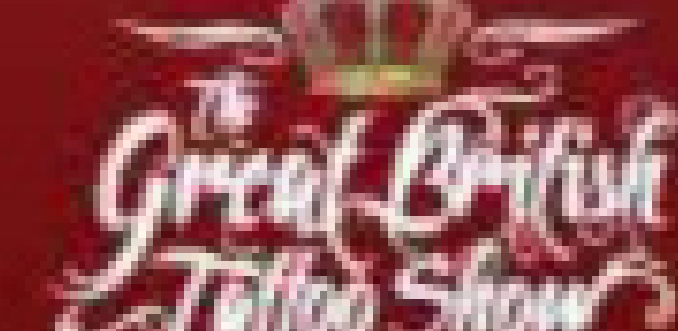
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Dane Grannon
Daniel "Dude Skinz"
Hartley
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Gemma Horrors
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Jo Lissoni
Jonaton Lambertina
Jordan Baker
Jorge Becerra
Justin Turnbull
Justyna Kurzelowska
Kat James
Kelvin Slack
Kurt Marlow

Lady FTS (Marie Cox)
Laura Sandell
Lauren Carroll
Lauren Spoors
Lawrence Ah Ching
Lawrence Canham
Lee Jonez
Lee Wood
Lewis Noire Williams
Lewis Tudor
Liam 'Canvas' Freeman
Louis Jacobs
Luke Sayer
Macky Davies
Marta Lipinski
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Princess
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Sleeve Notes

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You want some, we've got some – to be in with a shot, it's super simple (as always) – send an email to editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line of MANCHESTER – we'll do the rest and let you know in good time if you're one of The Chosen.



SHORT SLEEVES



GLOBAL UNDERGROUND

Two new artists have joined London studio Underground Ink. The studio's roster of talent now includes Romania's Mihai and Italy's Davide Famiglietti. "We're flying the flag for Europe and art!" says Kate, from the Underground Ink press team.

You can see more examples of Mihai and Davide's work at undergroundink.co.uk, and see a video of them in action on the studio's Facebook page (facebook.com/underground-ink).

AHOY: THERE!

Glasgow's Land Ahoy studio has just reopened in a new location. Artists Kenny Mitchell, Kyle Smith and Ross Grant (previously tattooing at Forevermore) will be creating their art at 118 Sauchiehall street, accompanied by Fiona Thomson (laser removal and piercing). Check out their work at landahoytattoos.co.uk or call 0141 3320338.

CHARITY IS A THING OF BEAUTY

Back in issue 237 we mentioned Steel Beauty's charity day, which was due to be held on Friday 13 June at the Gants Hill studio in Essex. The team were raising funds for the Cystic Fibrosis trust, a charity close to their hearts, and we're pleased to report that everything went rather well: they raised an impressive £3000 on the day.

Fine work, all! Thanks are also due to Powerline, who donated all the needles used during the event.

SHORT SLEEVES



PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Now here's a reader tattoo that we had to share. Jim, a tattoo collector and chef from North Wales, has plenty of ink, but he explained that for his knuckles, the work had to be perfect. "Thus came my decision," he says, "Skin Deep'. Why, you probably ask?! Well of course it's the name of the most famous and my personal favourite tattoo mag!"

We'd take that, naturally, but there's also a deeper meaning to Jim's choice of hand ink. "People judge, they look and they judge," he explains. "A select few human beings look at individuals with tattoos and instantly think that person is bad, a convict or basically someone that should be kept at a distance. This shouldn't be how it is. It's what's inside that determines a person's decision whether to be good or bad."

As Jim puts it, the tattoo is only skin deep but the soul runs much deeper. Excellent work, sir, we shake you by the hand - once it's all healed up, of course. Follow Jim on instagram: @Jimstagrammmmm. And don't forget to send us pics of your work, we always love to see what you're getting done! Email the Big Boss: editor@skindeep.co.uk.



ADDED BELLS AND WHISTLES

Leia from Bells & Whistles, Exmouth, got in touch this month to tell us about their new artist, who joins them from sunny Spain.

"We'd like to welcome Marta Timon to our international team of artists," she says. "Marta has tattooed for the last four years in Bilbao, Ibiza and Salamanca. She specialises in realism, enjoying both colour and black and grey designs."

Marta will tattoo alongside existing artist Lou Morales (from the US). Between them, they'll cover all styles of tattooing in the Devon-based studio. For more info and appointments email info@bellsandwhistlestattoo.co.uk, call 01395 488090 or visit facebook.com/bellsandwhistles.tattoos.

INK RECALL

Getting inked down under? Australian Health authorities issued health warnings this June relating to several tattoo ink products. The warnings were based on a series of recalls made over the past few years by the EU's RAPEX rapid recall system, which deals with dangerous non-food products.

The inks in question were made in China, Japan and the US by manufacturers Colourking, Kuro Sumi, Intenze, Eternal Ink, Dragon Tattoo Ink, Silverback and Star Brite.

According to the recall some inks from these manufacturers were found to contain high levels of potentially harmful chemicals and / or heavy metals. Due to the lack of research in this area little is known about the long term effects of these products when used in tattoos, but high doses of the chemicals themselves are known to produce reactions including allergic responses and skin problems.

It's important to note that the Australian authorities didn't go as far as initiating a new recall themselves, and also that some of the products in question are already banned in the country. However, it's a useful reminder to always go to reputable studios who use quality ink products - you'll get a better tattoo, and dramatically reduce any health risks.

You can find out more about the health advisory notice on the Victoria Department of Health website (health.vic.gov.au).

Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

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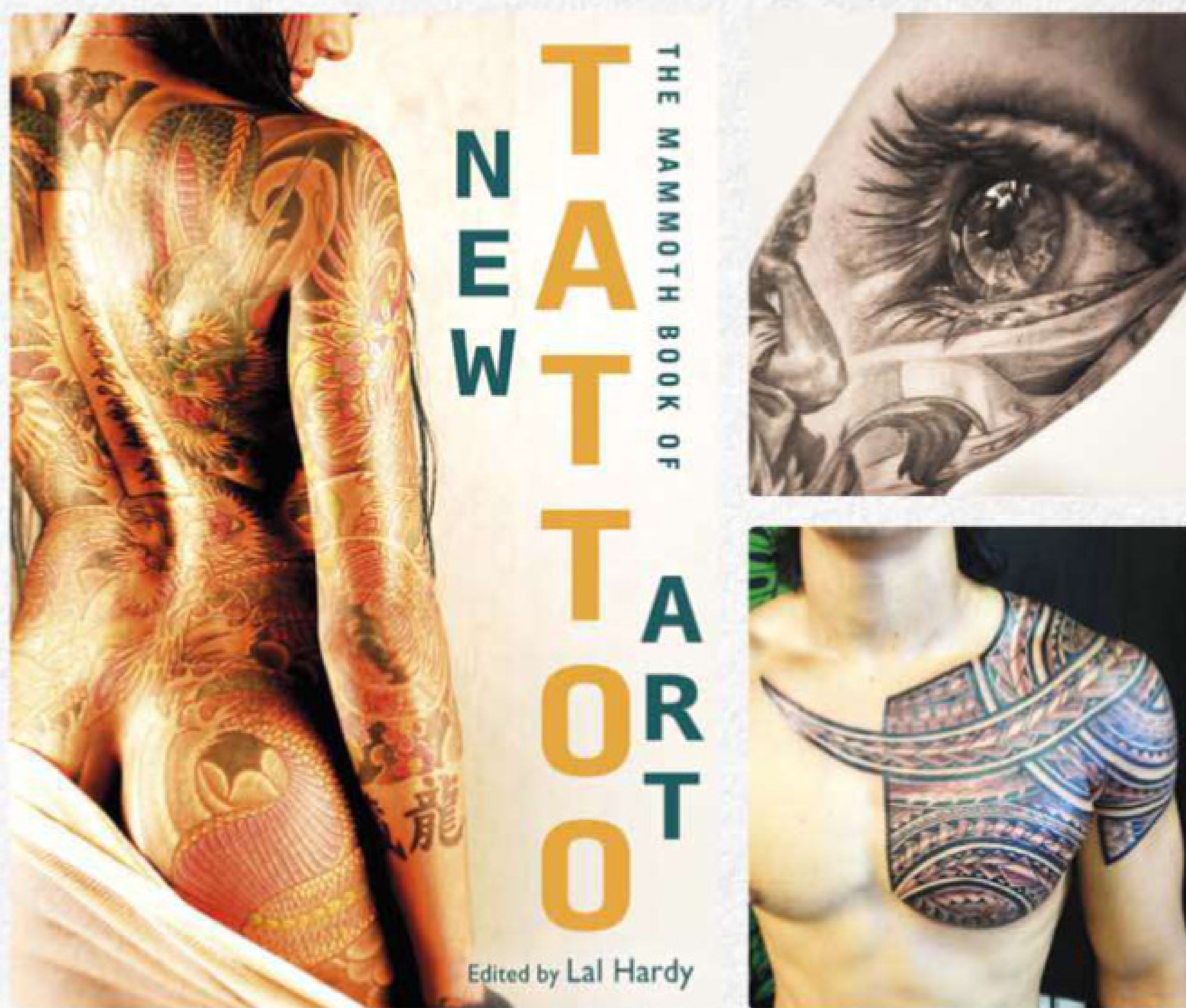
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THE BIG BOOK IS BACK

If you're looking for some inspiration or just a little glimpse into contemporary tattoo art, you're in luck: the latest edition in the Mammoth series has arrived in the form of 'The Mammoth Book of New Tattoo Art'.

The book includes over 700 full-colour photographs of the work of leading tattoo artists from all over the world. That means Horiyoshi III, Filip Leu, Louis Molloy, Hannah Aitchison, Buena Vista Tattoo Club, Jeff Gogue, Sarah Carter ... the list goes on.

As with previous editions it's been compiled and edited by ink legend Lal Hardy, and aims to show how tattoo styles are changing, influenced by the use of computer-generated art in addition to traditional pencils, markers, ink and paint.

Hardy himself told 'Ham&High' that

the desire to mark ourselves goes deep into the collective human psyche. "If you look at the year 2014, we've got people having extensive tattooing, cosmetic tattooing, cosmetic surgery, teeth whitening, hair dying different colours, body modification, laser hair removal, collagen lips. Human beings for some reason have this compulsion, in all cultures, to change themselves. The motivations and reasons for doing so are very diverse."

'The Mammoth Book of New Tattoo Art' is out now in paperback. £10.99, amazon.co.uk.

BRING THE BROTHERS HOME

The Chapman Brothers, sometimes thought of as the bad boys of the contemporary art world, are looking for funding to support a new show at the Jerwood Gallery in their hometown of Hastings. As an incentive they're offering art fans who donate cash to the cause a few unusual treats, from designer toilet roll to a trip to their studio – or a fake tattoo, designed by the brothers themselves.

Famous for pieces that include altered (or 'fixed') copies of paintings by artists including Goya and Hitler (yes, that one), or for recreating infamously brutal events from history – including the Nazi death camps – using Lego, the duo are promising to deliver their "biggest, baddest show yet" according to Jerwood Gallery director Liz Gilmore.

If you're interested in supporting the show – and maybe getting your next tattoo design drawn by the Brothers Grimm of the British art scene – visit jerwoodgallery.org or jakeanddinoschapman.com.

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tattoojam.com

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THINK BEFORE YOU JUDGE MY INK

Here at Skin Deep we're always pleased to hear from you on any subject (although tattoos is probably our favourite). It reassures us that we're not just shouting off into darkness. So when 18-year-old reader Josh Hender dropped us a line to ask if he could share his thoughts on tattoo discrimination, we were happy to oblige. Here's hoping everyone in his generation is as open-minded.

"I love tattoos, I think they're a great way to express yourself and it's a form of art. Unfortunately, society is full of people who immediately judge someone who has tattoos as a criminal or someone who had a bad childhood. A lot of businesses won't hire someone just because they have visible tattoos. The Australian Defence Force won't allow their soldiers to have visible tattoos; the same goes for the police force.

"To me, everyone should be able to get a tattoo wherever they want without the risk of being judged and discriminated against. If you have two full sleeves, it should not lower your chances of getting a job anywhere. What's next? Maybe in a year companies will say that you're not allowed to have long hair, or you're not allowed to have a beard. People with higher authority than the average citizen are getting way too controlling, and they don't seem to realise that they're contradicting themselves. Going

back to what I said earlier, I was taught to not judge a book by its cover, I was taught to treat others how I want to be treated, I was taught to respect everyone and everything, yet as soon as I step foot into the real world outside of school, everyone is judging everyone!

"People go to art museums to see paintings, photos, or graffiti art. People with tattoos are basically walking art museums, they have all these forms of art on their body but they don't get compliments on their art. Instead, they get discriminated against and asked if they had a rough childhood!

"In the end, more and more people are getting tattoos every day so eventually society will have to accept that they are popular and are not always linked to gangs and crime. So how about we all just treat each other as equal beings and care about more important things?"

Got something you'd like to share with us in Sleeve Notes? Email news@skindeep.co.uk and tell us all about it!

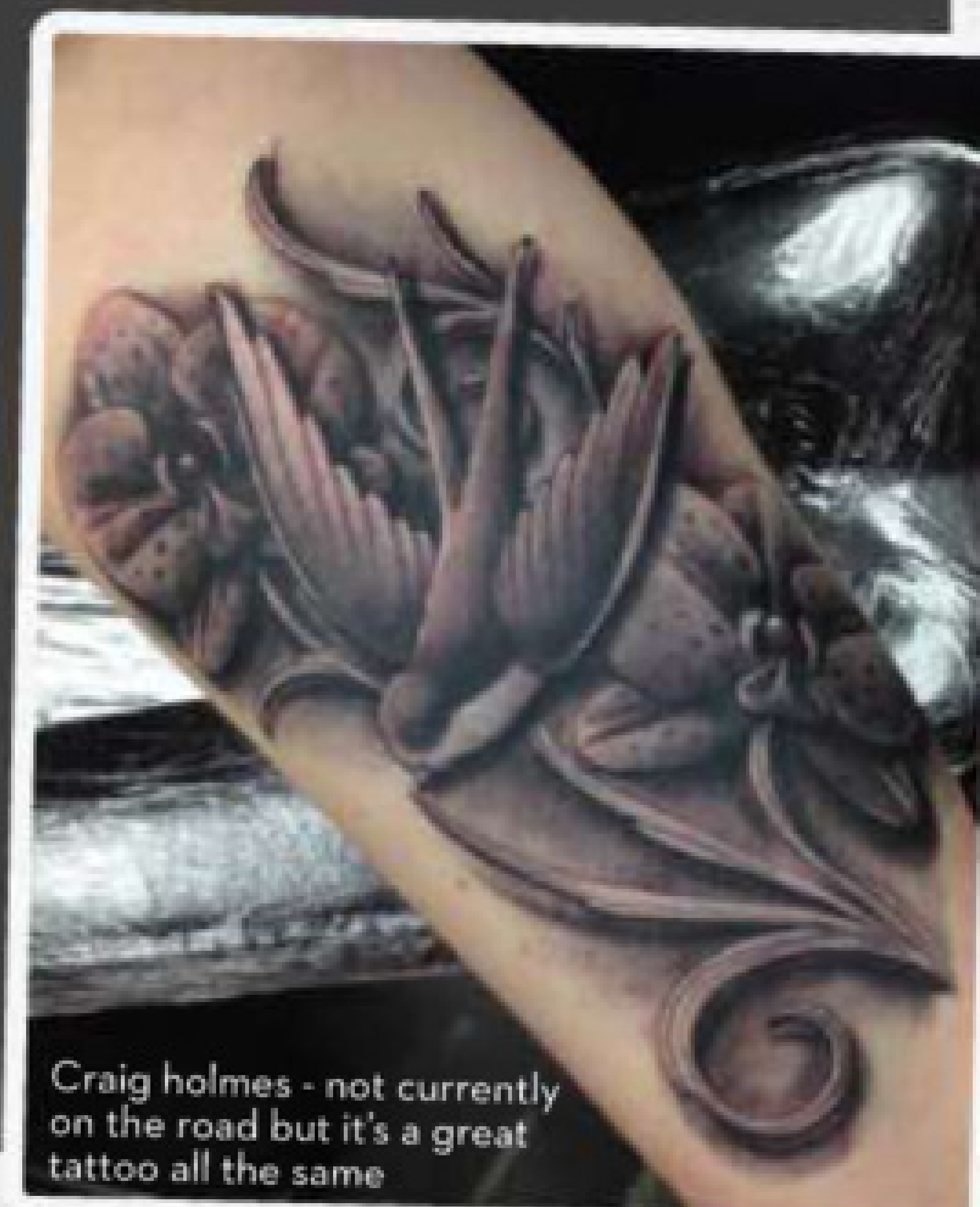
GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL!

Ah, travelling tattoo artists. They're much like the Pokémon characters of the real world: dashing about, seemingly infinitely varied yet strangely similar, and in some cases remarkably hard to pin down. (Fewer battles, mind.)

If you've got your eye on a particular artist but are struggling to keep track of their movements, you might want to investigate a new Instagram page, @where_they_tatt, which is dedicated to posting info about travelling artists and where they're working.

According to Aaron Morgan, the man with the 'gram, the aim is simple: to reduce the amount of time you spend trawling feeds trying to find out when and where someone will be, and putting all the info in one place. "It should give more people the opportunity to get sick tattoos around the world and not miss out when great artists are in town - specifically, their town."

See @where_they_tatt for more info, look up wheretheytatt on Snapchat or email wheretheytatt@outlook.com.

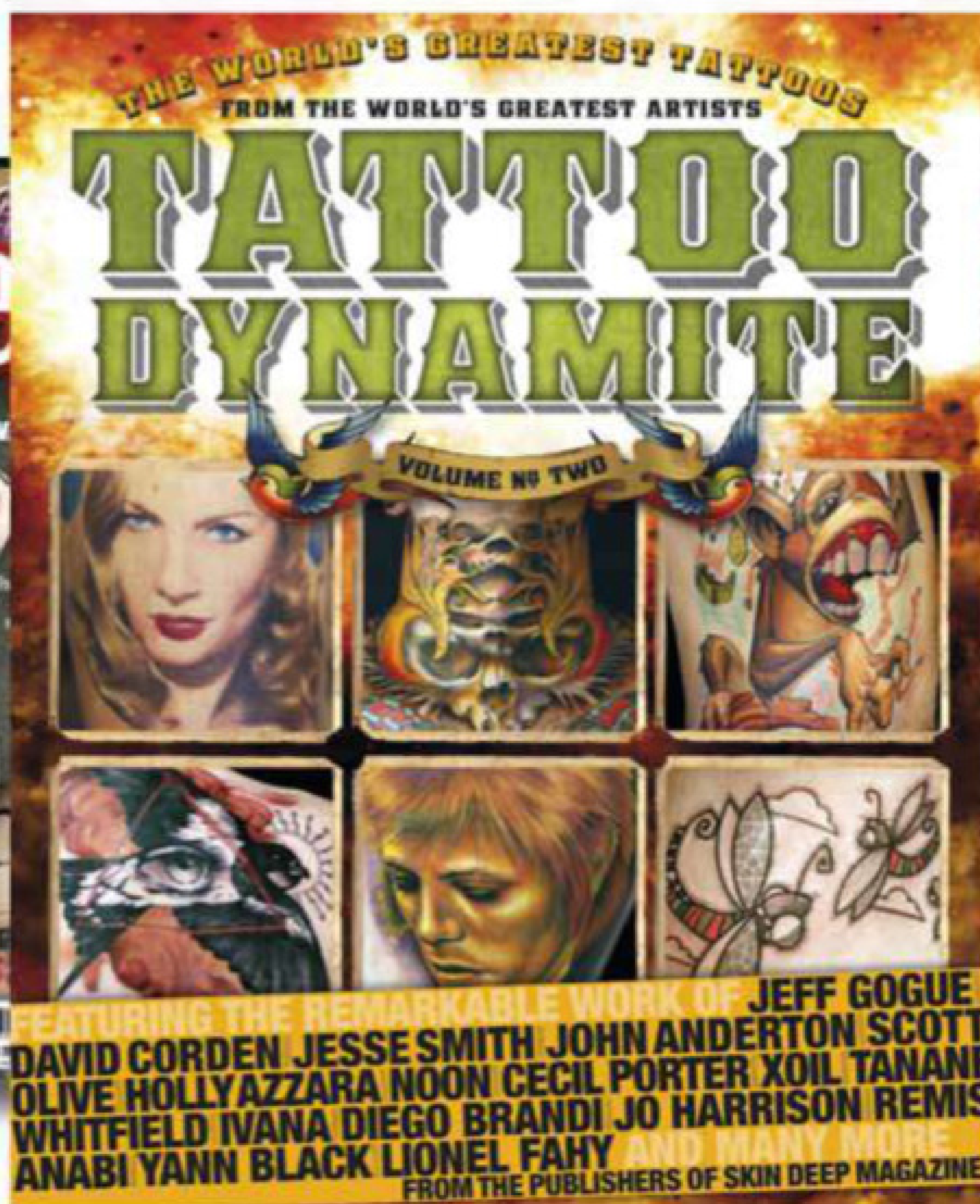


Craig Holmes - not currently on the road but it's a great tattoo all the same

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THE COFFEE HOUSE
SCENES FROM

This month, I had the good fortune of bumping into Zooki from The Sailor's Grave out in Magasin in Copenhagen. You can get Skin Deep in here - at current exchange rates, it sells for about £24 an issue. Anyway... as you can see, Zooki is on fire right now:

ON THE MENU

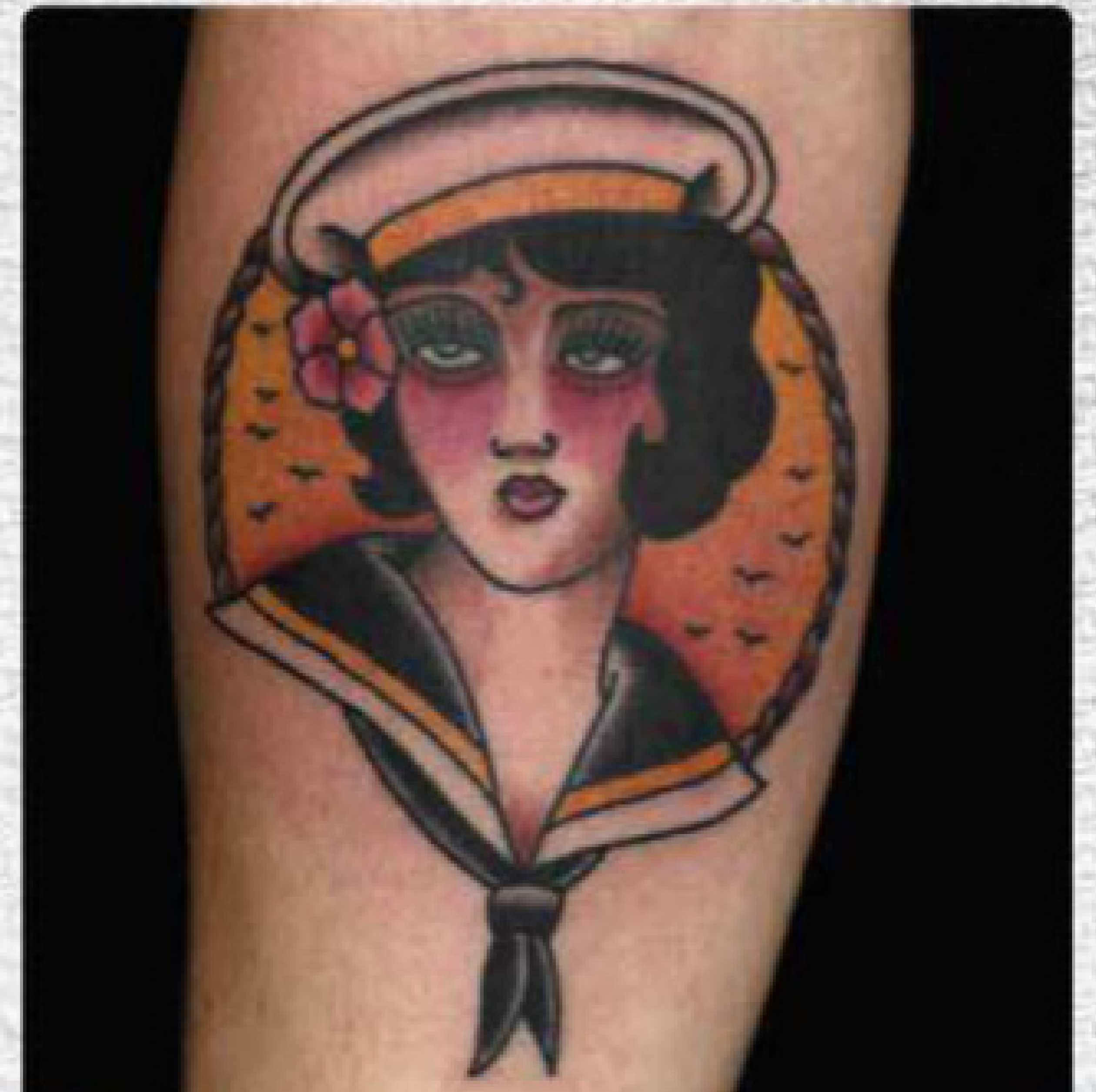


LET'S TALK ABOUT A TYPICAL DAY IN COPENHAGEN. IT'S MY FAVOURITE CITY IN THE WHOLE WORLD - AND YOU ARE STILL HERE SO I GUESS IT MUST BE PRETTY COOL! IS IT A SEASONAL AND TOURISTY KIND OF PLACE FOR TATTOOING OR IS IT BUSY ALL YEAR ROUND?

It is a nice place! I guess I've been fortunate enough to work mostly in custom shops, where it's an all year season. I had a shop for a while in Christiania and that went stone cold in the winter, but The Sailors Grave is always busy.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS WORKED IN THE TRADITIONAL STYLE AS A PERSONAL CHOICE OR IS IT WHAT WORKS IN THE CITY?

Always. I figured that if I could manage to apply a neat traditional tattoo, I would be able to tattoo most stuff - and I'm still trying to do that every day. Traditional, especially good traditional, is difficult I think. The application has to be perfect, because you can't really hide anything. The designs too - it's hard man!



I'VE SEEN QUITE A LOT OF STUDIOS AROUND THE CENTRE HERE. IS THIS A CREATIVE PLACE TO BE?

I think so. Denmark is a small country and for tattooing, Copenhagen is definitely the place to be.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU COULD POINT TO AS BEING A PARTICULARLY DANISH STYLE WHEN IT COMES TO TATTOOING?

Well, I'm trying! From the 1940's to 1970's, there was a strong, clear style, but now everything is influenced by the internet and so on.... I'm really trying to push that thin-lined, serious-looking traditional style. I think Copenhagen traditional is very close to the English traditional of the 1900's.

I GUESS IT MUST ALSO HAVE ITS SHARE OF PROBLEMS LIKE EVERY PLACE IN THE WORLD, BUT EVERYBODY THINKS IT ONLY HAPPENS ON THEIR OWN DOORSTEP. ARE THE LAWS TOUGH HERE ON ILLEGAL TATTOOING?

In Denmark, it is illegal to

tattoo people under 18 and to tattoo people on their hands, necks or faces. Other than that we have zero laws.

WHO ARE THE CREW AT THE SAILOR'S GRAVE RIGHT NOW? DO YOU ALL HAVE A SIMILAR STYLE OR DO YOU TRY TO BE OPEN TO EVERYTHING?

There are four of us: Judd and Marija Ripley, who are the owners and then there's me and Jesper, who started a month before me last year. We all do traditional based tattooing. It all looks very different, but we share the same idea of what makes a tattoo a tattoo.

WHAT'S A TYPICAL DAY IN JULY GOING TO BE LIKE HERE? I GUESS YOU GET YOUR FAIR SHARE OF PEOPLE ASKING STUPID QUESTIONS HERE AS WELL.

We meet at around 10 and finish up drawings, drink coffee, chit chat and so on.... The shop opens at 11. Normally I have a customer at 12 and then one at 4. At 6, we close, clean and that's it - I actually think we are rather lucky

TRADITIONAL, ESPECIALLY GOOD TRADITIONAL, IS DIFFICULT I THINK. THE APPLICATION HAS TO BE PERFECT, BECAUSE YOU CAN'T REALLY HIDE ANYTHING

with our clientele. Nice people, who seek us out to get awesome stuff. That's got to be lucky, right?

DENMARK IS A PRETTY EXPENSIVE PLACE TO LIVE - WHICH IS PROBABLY WHAT MAKES IT GREAT, BUT DOES THAT EFFECT WHAT PEOPLE EXPECT FROM A TATTOO HERE? ARE THEY PRICED HIGH BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO BE TO SURVIVE?

I think people who come to The Sailors Grave expect the best. We aren't any more expensive than other shops in Copenhagen but we are known for doing custom tattoos and that's what people expect. I like to think that we have high expectations to ourselves as well. We try to do the our best in every tattoo.

THE SAILORS GRAVE
Møntergade 4
Copenhagen,
Denmark
+45 33 14 34 34
thesailorsgrave.com

Ash Lewis

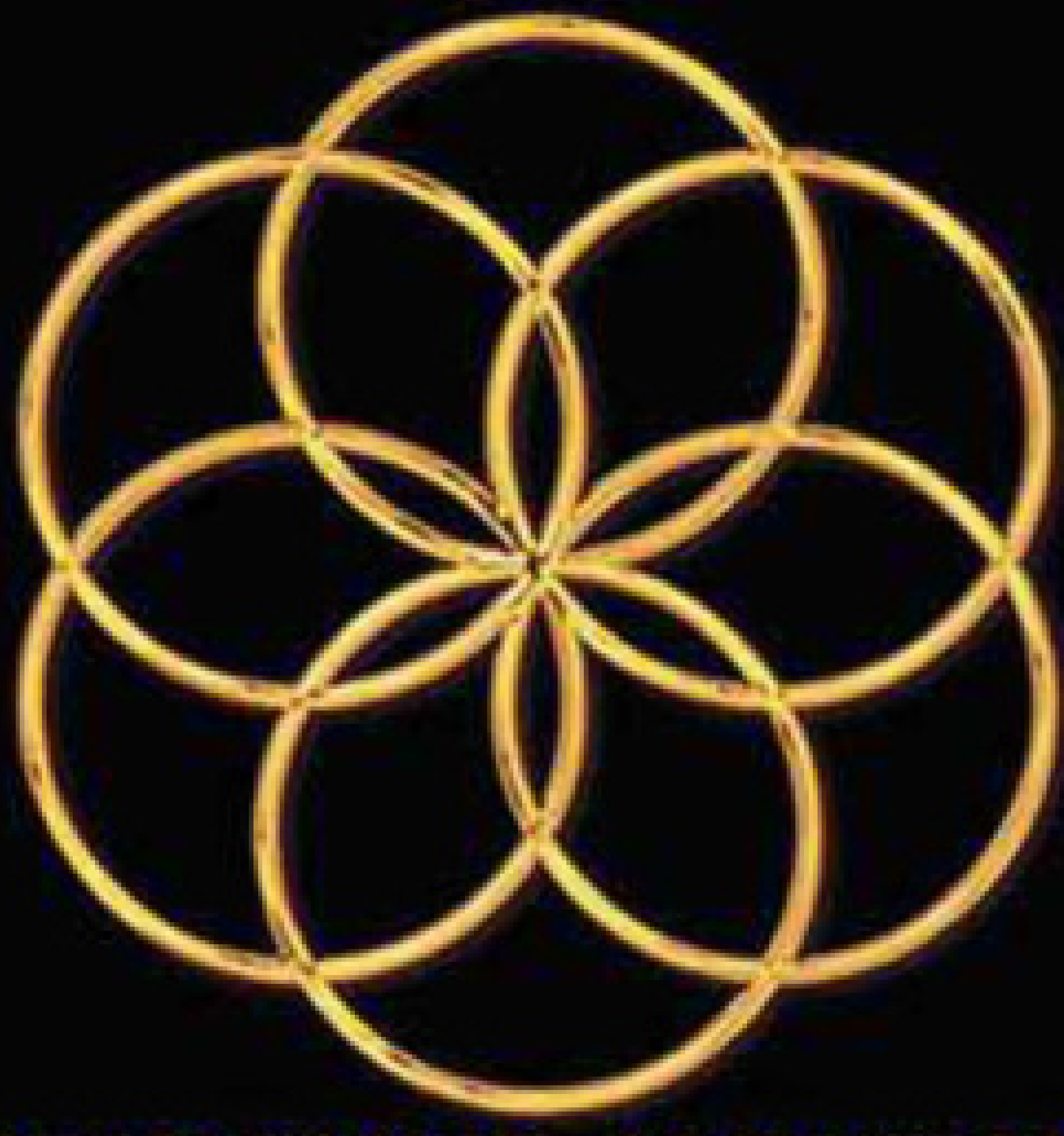


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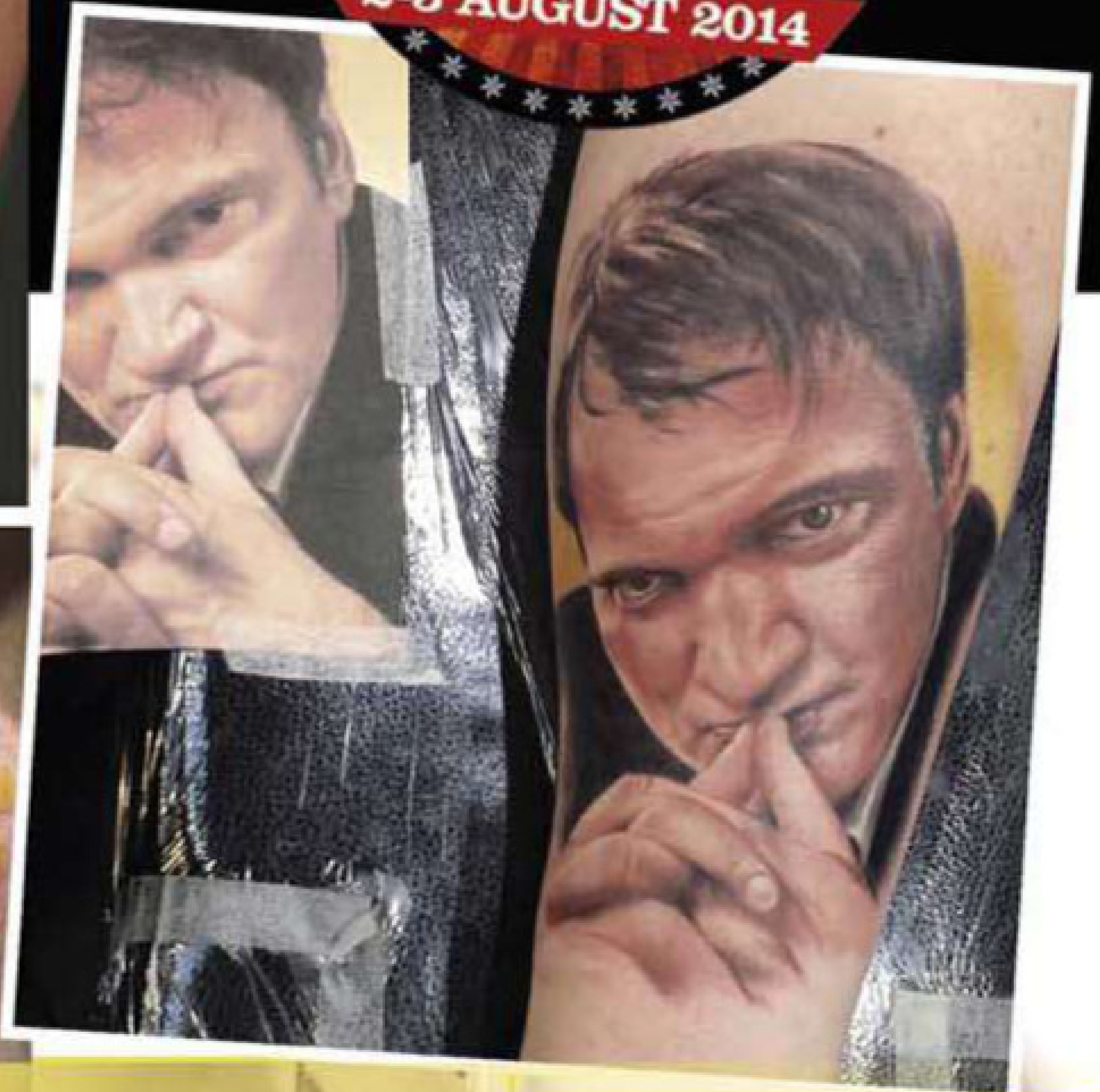
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Works at Stained Nation Tattoo Lounge. Apprenticed by Samael Cahill
Work with Fliquet Renouf, Peter Quinn, Billie Priestly and Sophia Rain (Family)



STAINED NATION
TATTOO LOUNGE



Artist: Samael Cahill



samaeltattoo



samaelcahilltattoo



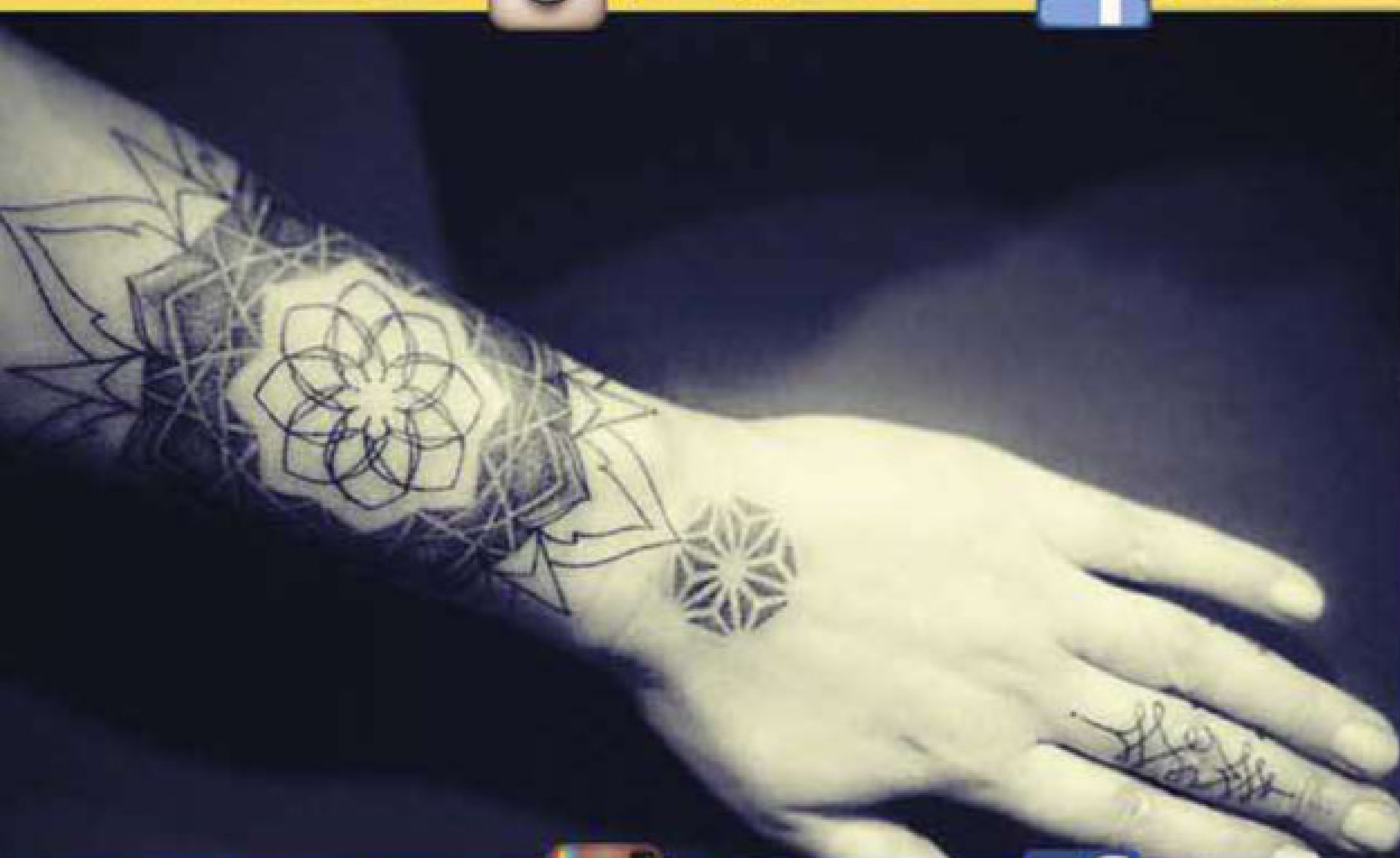
Artist: Peter Quinn



petaay_tattooartist



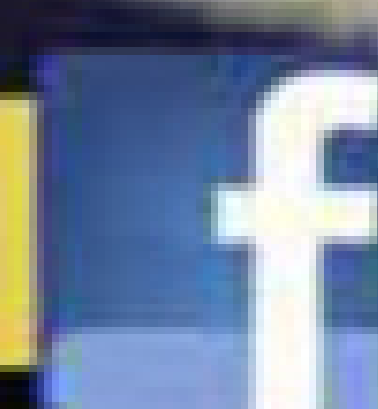
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Artist: Fliquet Renouf



bodyillustration



fliquet.tattoo

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Randy Randerson

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

The Elusive Puma Tattoo Studio 2060 W Acoma, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403
Tel: (928) 224-8359 Email: randyranderson13@gmail.com Instagram: @randy_r

This month, we received a huge swag of art that's going on behind the scenes from Randy Randerson out at Elusive Puma in Arizona..and we liked it a lot, so here's the big share of it:



I practiced that by redoing old traditional flash that I had to try and find my groove so to speak



 I began my tattoo career when I was still in high school. Like many of us I worked out of my moms house tattooing my friends from school for \$5 bucks and a pack of cigarettes. I got into a real shop a year later by lying about my age and refusing to leave. I just picked up a broom and started taking out their trash. I befriended a man there, Brandon Chavez and he would pull me aside and teach me about tattooing and who all the cool tattooers were. On Sundays, it was just me and him so he would secretly let me tattoo walk-ins. For the next 6 years I worked at many different shops learning what I could from them and developing my own style of drawing. I started drawing my own flash when I was 16 or 17 years old using prisma coloured

pencils on computer paper so I could take them around to the shops in Phoenix to make some extra money to buy tattoo supplies. Shockingly I didn't not sell very much. As my career progressed I stepped back from that to focus on drawing better tattoos. About two years ago I really started getting back into it and trying different techniques. I began using regular acrylic paint (whatever was cheapest), on the cheapest water colour paper I could find. I practiced that by redoing old traditional flash that I had to try and find my groove so to speak. It wasn't looking the way I wanted so my brother-in-law (fellow tattooer Manny Hernandez), suggested I try FW liquid acrylic and I really liked how it looked. I switched to arches paper and it made for a much smoother looking sheet which I then used tea to stain. 🍵

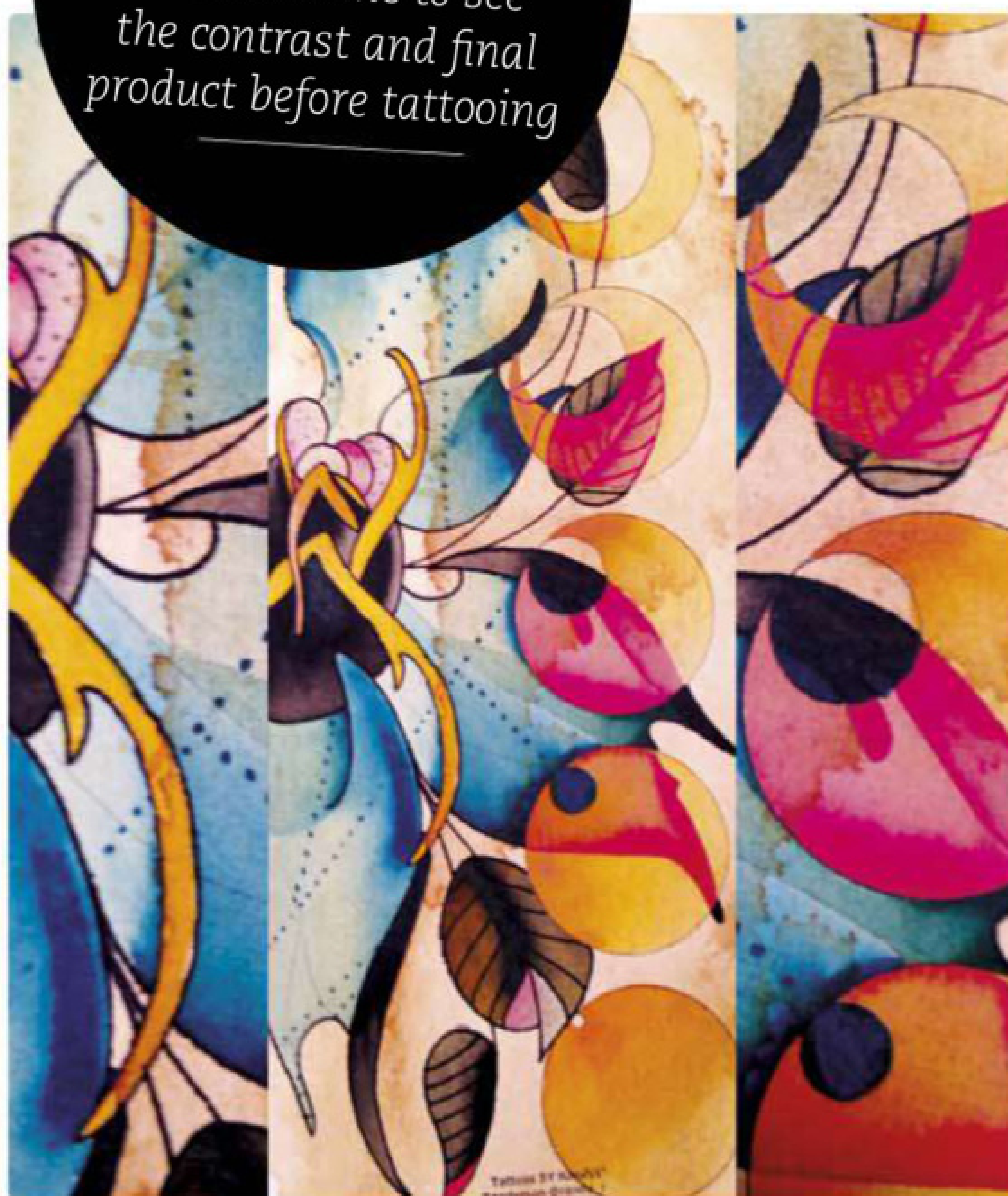


Painting influenced my tattoos more than anything else ever did. It enabled me to see the contrast and final product before tattooing



Before painting I sketch the subject matter on the back of the arches paper and then trace a finish product on the other side with a sharpie, this saves me loads of time and paper. I paint like I tattoo starting with the darkest colours to the lightest. Painting influenced my tattoos more than anything else ever did. It enabled me to see the contrast and final product before tattooing it which made it easier and allowed me to find the imperfections and tweak the tattoo if necessary. The women I paint aren't always "tattoo" ready but because of the time spent drawing and painting them, the changes they need come a lot easier than before. Painting also helped me develop my own style of design which has helped me in more ways than one.

Although I have had my work displayed at other art shows and print shows I have never had a solo show. I have hopes to do one in the future. For now my work is on display at The Elusive Puma and can be viewed and bought through my instagram @randy_r. I also have a sketch book and a few flash sets available through Kingpin tattoo supply who have always been a supportive and helped in my career. 🐼



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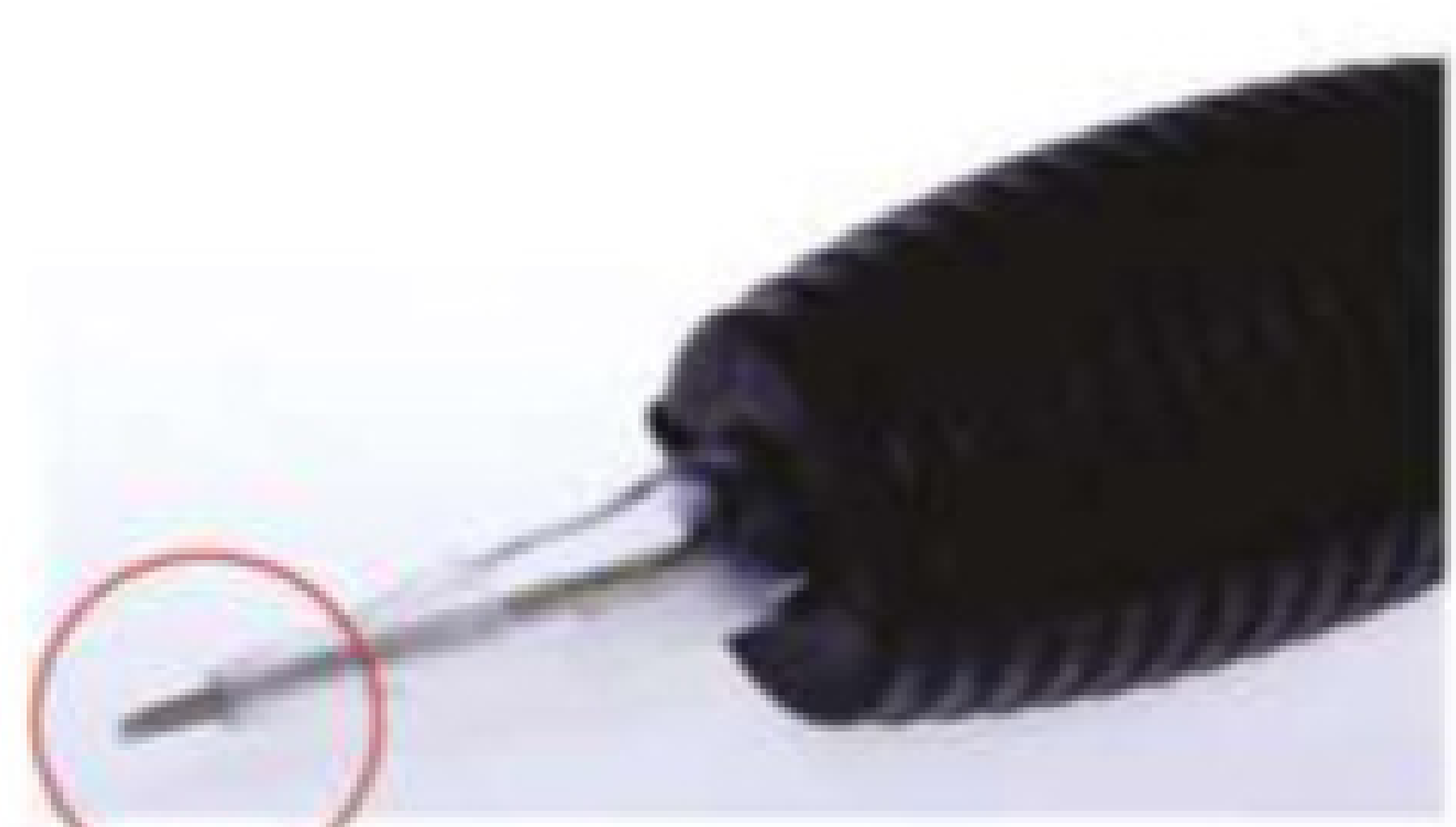
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INTERVIEW WITH A Vampire?

Eric Liyah Kane sounds like a creature of the night from her name alone. Getting together to unearth something of a background for her didn't disappoint either - and also turned up some unexpected goodies...

YOU'RE FROM A LITTLE TOWN IN POLAND - THERE ARE SOME GREAT ARTISTS COMING OUT OF POLAND RIGHT NOW. I'M GUESSING THAT YOUR TOWN IS NOT ONE OF THESE PLACES? DO YOU EVER GO HOME?

As much as I would love to think it is, it's so not. Where I lived was, and probably still is, very close minded. It didn't stop me from getting covered with tattoos though. It's close to an amazing city called Wroclaw - they on the other hand have amazing conventions every year. A lot of artist from Poland moved around the world for the same reason I did. Poland is getting there but society still has a little work to

do. I have my family there so I try to go back every three months. I miss them terribly all the time.

I HEAR THAT YOU LOVE READING - THIS IS A GOOD THING AND YOU CAME TO THE RIGHT PLACE. I COULD TALK ABOUT BOOKS ALL DAY. WHAT SORT OF BOOKS DO YOU LIKE TO READ NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE AND WHAT KIND OF BOOKS DID YOU READ

Mr. Smith: Scott Cole
Model: Eric Liyah Kane
Makeup: Eve Marie Parry
Hair: Nathan Pithers
Jewellery: Bête Noire





BACK HOME? I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER READ ANYTHING BY A POLISH AUTHOR - WHAT WOULD BE A GOOD PLACE TO START?

The Polish school system is awful, they force reading onto kids, so no wonder later on in life they don't want to read. I try to read everything that lands in my hands and I fill up my days with books like one would breathe air! Over the years, I've liked and disliked loads of books. One of my current favourites is Bukowski - the dude had an amazing view of life and even though most of his stuff doesn't put women in a very nice perspective, I still love every word this guy wrote. His poem 'Bluebird' changed my view on how you write good poetry. I adore Pablo Neruda and Edgar but I think most people do -

I try to read everything that lands in my hands and I fill up my days with books like one would breathe air



ones that read poetry anyway. Sylvia Plath, Chuck Palahniuk (everybody knows the "Club" that we don't talk about), Virginia Woolf, Arthur Miller, Voltaire and Nietzsche from the oldies. Poland has some amazing writers too. Swietlicki is one of my favourites - he writes very much out there new school poetry. There is S. Lec Jacek Podsiadło, Tomasz Różycki, Tadeusz Różewicz, Jerzy Andrzej Masłowski - I don't think there are any translations into English though. That's the poetry, but I love reading stories. I used to be obsessed with serial killers, so I pretty much read all that was on the market from individual stories to death row in Mexico - I know them all! I went to demonology after that - pretty dark - who would have thought that my first favourite book was The Last Unicorn. Today, I think a book, a garden and a fireplace are all you really need to be happy. I'm a bookaholic and I regret nothing!

WHAT KIND OF WORDS DO YOU LIKE TO WRITE? STORIES?

I try to write daily but it's not easy being at work, shooting and all the rest. When I have spare time, I

read. It keeps me away from overthinking everything else. I used to write much more but now I only write when I sort of have too... Like Bukowski said, poetry happens when nothing else can.

WHEN WE MET, YOU SAID WHEN YOU CAME TO THE UK, IT WAS LIKE WATCHING A MOVIE COMPARED TO POLAND. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO THE USA? IF YOU THINK THE UK IS LIKE WATCHING A MOVIE, GOING OVER THERE IS LIKE BEING IN ONE. DO YOU HAVE PLANS TO TRAVEL OUT THERE?

I always wanted to travel to Alaska which is not so much of the typical USA, I guess. I'm not one for all the noise and flashing lights - don't get me wrong, from time to time everything is good but I'm more of a 'sit in the mountains' or 'close to a lake' kind of girl. Surrounding myself with animals, fire and someone close is perfect scenario.

YOU TOLD ME THAT YOU'RE AUTOMATICALLY 'DRAWN TO THE DARK SIDE'. I DON'T THINK IT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU DECIDE IS IT? IT JUST KIND OF HAPPENS TO YOU WHEN YOU'RE GROWING UP. MOST PEOPLE I KNOW WHO ARE DRAWN TO THE



Today, I think a book, a garden and a fireplace are all you really need to be happy. I'm a bookaholic and I regret nothing

DARK AND VERY, HAPPY PEOPLE AND VERY, VERY CREATIVE. DOES THAT DESCRIBE YOU?

I think it's actually called nyctophilia (that put me in my place - Ed.) - love for the night and dark things. Not something I decided on, nope. It's kind of awkward to like vampires and have an interest in magic when you're a young Polish girl living in the country. I would love to think I'm creative - I have a good imagination that's for sure. I think understanding that 'dark' does not necessarily mean bad, gory

stuff takes a while for people sometimes - apart from that fuck it. I like that about me. At least I'm not plain and boring.

YEP - I THINK WE CAN ALL PROBABLY AGREE WITH THAT. ANYWAY, WITH A BOYFRIEND IN CAPE TOWN - I FIGURE THAT YOU MUST KNOW POLAND AND NOW, THE UK AND SOUTH AFRICA PRETTY WELL - DO YOU FIND THEM ALL VERY DIFFERENT IN THE WAY YOU'RE TREATED AS A TATTOOED PERSON?

Well, I'm only just starting to 🍷

Tattoo vixens

know Cape Town, but when it comes to tattoos, it's safe to say the UK is friendliest one of all! Poland like I said, is getting there slowly. Daniel is like a work of art though. He's covered almost all of his body, so it's kind of hard not to notice him and apart from that, he is ridiculously beautiful. It all works for him, but I think if you're heavily tattooed, you'll turn heads anywhere you go - either because they like it, hate it or simply are just curious.

OK - LET'S TALK ABOUT THE TEETH! ARE THEY CAPPED OR FILED DOWN? CAN YOU GET THAT DONE AT ANY REGULAR DENTIST IN SOUTHAMPTON THESE DAYS OR IS IT MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT?

Now that one was a mission and a half! It took me four years to find somebody who would do it and I fly home next week to have x-ray's to check that I don't have an overbite and whatever else they need to do for maintenance. After many calls and hang ups over here, I turned to my ginger-haired sister, Malina - she was absolutely amazing. She called and offered loads of money to dentists in Poland and in the end, we got an appointment. Sitting in the dentist chair, all excited, I heard that the dentist had decided not to do it. I thought

For the next two weeks, I was waking up with cut lips, not that I was complaining - its one of the best decisions I've ever made



I was either going to cry or punch her. I chose anger and more money and the next day I got another appointment it was done. She almost got rid of my canines and made beautiful fangs instead. For the next two weeks, I was waking up with cut lips, not that I was complaining! It's one of the best decisions I've ever made. I love them. I've never had to replace them and they've never chipped. Every now and again I go back to that dentist to have them sharpened again though. What good would they be if they couldn't do any damage!

I'M TRYING TO BE COOL HERE AND ASK YOU LOTS OF INTERESTING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR VAMP TEETH BUT ALL I REALLY WANT TO KNOW IS WHAT KIND OF TYPEWRITER YOU HAVE.

I'VE GOT AN OLD CORONA BUT I DON'T USE IT MUCH BECAUSE IT'S A BAG OF SHIT - WHEN I DO USE IT, I ACTUALLY FEEL LIKE A WRITER. SO WHAT HAVE YOU GOT - AND DO YOU USE IT MUCH?

Ah - cool. Vintage Coronas are real beauties. I have got an antique Remington Model 5 - it's a bit stiff, so I only use it when I have something good! It does make you feel like you're doing some 'proper' writing. It's in a beautiful case, so I can carry it around - not that I do - it's bloody heavy! It has that 'ink and paper' smell that's something I can't even describe. I want to collect more vintage models like the Hermes, just so I can smell them whenever I want! Actually, I'd like to have one that's actually capable of writing faster too. Laptops and ipads are so overrated! 🐾

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YOUNG GUNS

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For anything to survive there must always be a constant supply of ‘fresh blood’. For the tattoo world, this is no exception.

Without new artists, collectors and machine builders coming into tattoo studios and taking up residence, we would still have tattoos, but we might just not have as many styles to collect, or inkless bodies to fill. Because, at the end of the day, it usually is the newcomers who bring about change which, in turn, attracts the next generation of ink lovers. It's the bright young things fresh from art school, the graphic designers who are bored with the nine-to-five and the artists who exchange their paint brushes for tattoo machines; who mix things up.

Nowhere is this more noticeable than the crop of apprenticing, or recently apprenticed, tattoo artists plying their trade in England today. You only have to go to a convention, or surf around media

sites, to find a ‘youngster’ whose work makes you sit back and think, there's one to watch for the future! And some of them, not that far into the future. Some are already stirring things up.

If you were at The Great British Tattoo Show earlier this year, you would have seen one of these bright young things, Samantha Barber, in action. It was Sam's first convention and she just happened to walk away with Best of Day on the Saturday and then Best of Convention, with an African themed realism tattoo.

Sam's background has always revolved around art, her mother also was an illustrator and painter. “My mum used to paint my bedroom when I was younger, from Disney to woodland themes. All in full detail and all around the room. I used to love watching her paint! I have never ‘learnt’ how to



Matthew Henning



Koen Chamberlain

draw. I did the usual art at school but to be honest, I found most of it boring. I hate being told what to draw. I have always loved animal, especially cats. I would sit drawing the family cats endlessly. I never went to college or university.”

Sam was a bit of a tearaway when she was younger and made her way through a few jobs before she met Danny Birch, who was setting up a shop in town. Sam showed Dan her art and he offered her an informal

apprenticeship. A year later and Sam was tattooing fulltime.

“At first I would just sit and watch Dan tattoo, every day. I had already managed to teach myself most of the basics, he would just give me pointers and tips; some worked for me, others didn’t. He gave me pretty much free will to do what I liked with my time. My boss had more faith in me than I did! Pretty much everything I know I learnt through trial and error. I would just try stuff, or apply painting knowledge to tattooing and it would either work, or not. I’m still learning now, playing around with techniques. At some point I decided to ignore everything I had read, or watched, and just did it my way. I just applied what I knew all my life about drawing and painting and relied on my natural instincts. And that’s when it started to click.”

Because of her love of nature, Sam’s preferred style was always going to be realism. It was the style she learnt to draw in and

MY BOSS HAD MORE FAITH IN ME THAN I DID! PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING I KNOW I LEARNT THROUGH TRIAL AND ERROR

the style she has always loved.

“I would sit drawing animals all the time. Nothing else, always nature. For me it was just making sure what I was drawing looked like what it should be. I don’t really know another way! I love art that captures something, a feeling or a moment. I would like to bring that into realism, that’s my goal anyway. Not just make something look like what it is meant to be, but to capture something else in there too.”

At the other end of the spectrum is Illustrative inspired artist, Koen Chamberlain. Where as Sam likes her designs to reflect their truth, Koen likes his a little, twisted.

I met Koen around the beginning of 2014 when we got chatting about a mutual respect for the work of Frank La Natra and Jamie Ris. Looking at his art then I could 🌸

KOEN CHAMBERLAIN

I haven’t consciously ‘always been into art’ and have never previously studied it, however my Uncle is an acrylic and water colour portrait artist and my Dad was a Graphics/Technical Drawing teacher for twenty-six years, so I’ve had art in my house and been rendering cubes since the day before forever. I would say my main constant art contact has been Disney and video games. Once I started researching art, I love a good bit of research, I really loved the images that the best in the tattoo world were creating. And I was hooked.

MATT HENNING
I want to become a well-rounded tattoo artist with experience in all aspects and styles. I love attention to detail and will continue to push that. In terms of what's next, I want to play with colour more in my designs, with a focus on doing more Japanese pieces. I would also love to go out and do some more guest spots as it is so amazing to meet new and influential people within the industry, as well as learn more about their styles and how they can influence my future work.

already tell he was going to go far. At the time, he had just finished his apprenticeship. Now, six short months later and he's chatting to Frank about doing a guest spot!

"My main influences come from tattoo artists like Frank La Natra, Tanane Whitfield, Bob Kane and Dave Tevenal. In my early designs it was Jeff Gogue, purely for the flow of his work. It's flawless. Outside of tattooing I would say Walt Disney, Pixar and Dream Works are my inspiration. I have two young children that I use as my excuse for watching as many of these films as possible. Computer games like Final Fantasy also play major parts in my inspiration. The style of tattooing I am drawn to is unrealistic realism, or illustration. When I saw the works of people like Frank, Tanane and Bob, I realised I could create

my own characters for the client that, to them, would be timeless and, to me, would be a unique reflection of myself. I like the idea of taking a normal everyday object or animal, tweaking its physical form to emphasise traits and proportions that people would still recognise as the object, but couldn't physically happen. It would be really cool to be doing just illustrative tattoos and being able to put my all into that genre, but for now I'm happy with a tattoo machine in my hand and being the best I can be."

Another artist who was attracted by the lure of Disney and their artists is Matthew 'Henbo' Henning. Starting life wanting to work for Industrial Light & Magic, or creating illustrations like Spiderman for Marvel

IT WOULD BE REALLY COOL TO BE DOING JUST ILLUSTRATIVE TATTOOS AND BEING ABLE TO PUT MY ALL INTO THAT GENRE, BUT FOR NOW I'M HAPPY WITH A TATTOO MACHINE IN MY HAND



Koen Chamberlain



Bryoni Marsh



Bryoni Marsh



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Facebook: /Bryoni Marsh

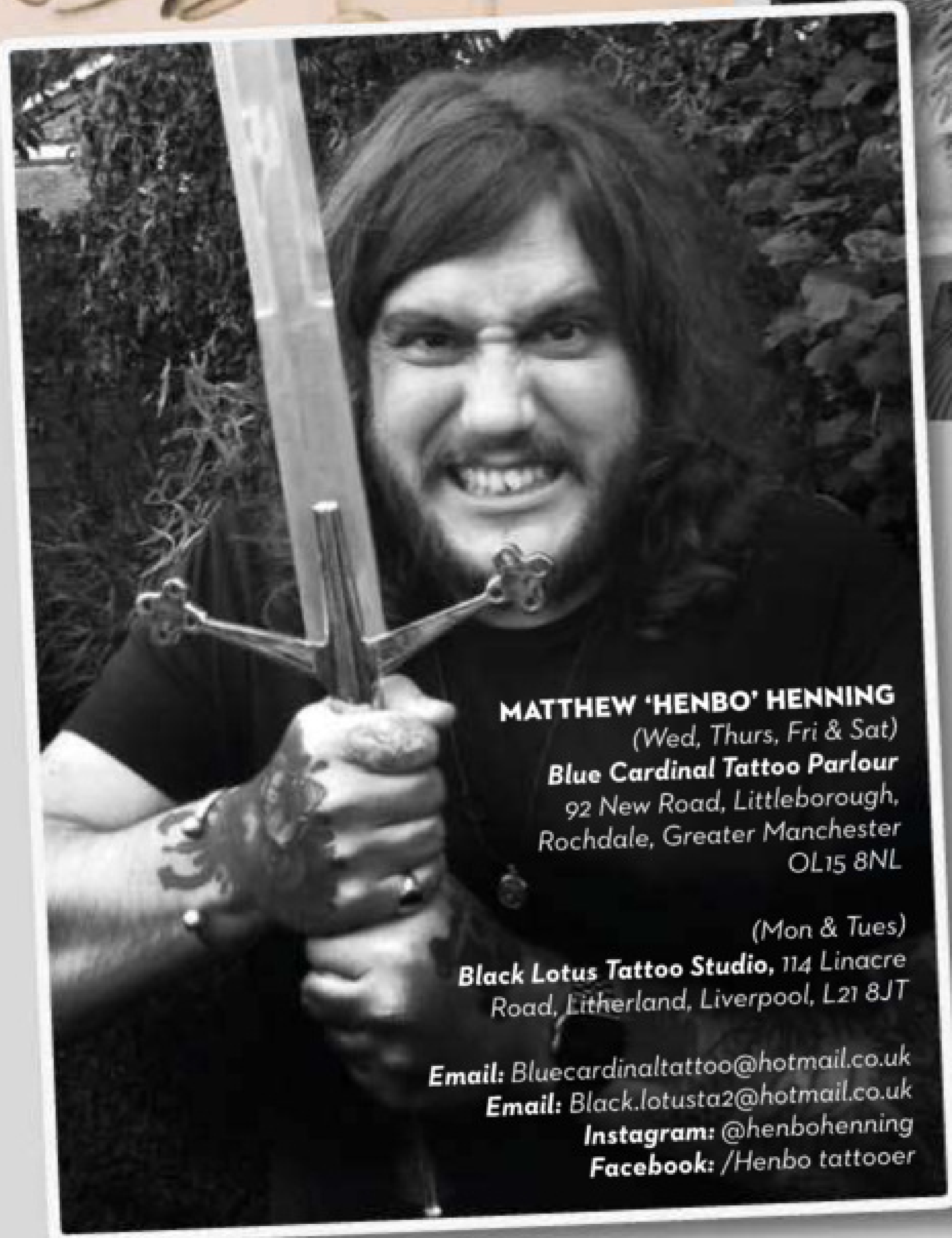
comics, Matt's influences have gone full circle and now he is concentrating on, "...archaic avant-garde line work, based on etchings and woodcut styles."

I couldn't put it better myself, other than to say, call it what you want, it rocks!

Once again, like Koen and Sam, Matt was into art before he could walk, he even had a deal with his English teacher that as long as he got two English pages done first, for the rest of the lesson Matt could draw. And it was this passion that drove him to follow



Matthew Henning



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Facebook: /Henbo tattooer

IT WAS ALSO THE PLACE THAT TAUGHT ME NEVER TO BE SATISFIED WITH MY WORK AND ALWAYS PUSH MYSELF AND NOT BE SO PROTECTIVE OF MY WORK

a path in art after leaving school.

"I was accepted to London Road Studios, which is an art collage set in an old converted Victorian Gym in Cheshire. It was an amazing place where my art really began to develop and I was encouraged to really experiment with my drawings. It was also the place that taught me never to be satisfied with my work and always push myself and not be so protective of my work. I remember we used to do life drawing for seven hours every Friday. On our very first day we had two hours to draw the model and I really put everything into

it. Then the tutor came round and ripped everyone's drawing up. I was gutted, but he just said, 'If you have done it once you can do it again... better!' This always stuck with me. After college I completed a degree in illustration with animation."

Once again, it was a round of unsatisfying jobs before Matt started thinking about the world of tattooing. And then he still needed his Gran to give him the final push.

"I didn't have my first tattoo until I was twenty-five. My best friend, who had been in the RAF, was coming out and to celebrate we decided to have a tattoo. I remember thinking at the time, this seems like a good job. But I was not aware of the possibilities and what could be tattooed. Most tattoos that I had seen had normally been bad script, tribal or religious tattoos. 🌸"



Sam Barber



Bryoni Marsh

I FOUND MYSELF ESPECIALLY DRAWN TO JAPANESE AND ILLUSTRATIVE STYLES OF TATTOOS. I LOVE HOW COMPLEX, DETAILED, YET SOLID THE DESIGNS ARE

BRYONI MARSH
I loved entering art competitions in school. I worked from the day I received my NI card and got a buzz from being able to pay my own way, so when I was accepted on an art course at Filton collage, I thought best to push that aside to pay the bills...aka...to cool for school. My grandparents have always been a great influence in my life, they've relentlessly encouraged me to be the best I can be and both being very successful have shown me the benefits of hard work. This has definitely rubbed off on me with everything I do, including tattooing.

Whilst on holiday, my Grandma began asking questions about my tattoo and suggested that I should become a tattoo artist. It was at this point that it just stuck in my head and from then on, it was all that I wanted to do. I started to see how amazing the art within tattoos was and how dynamic, bold and solid they could be. I found myself especially drawn to Japanese and illustrative styles of tattoos. I love how complex, detailed, yet solid the designs are."

For the next four years Matt got tattooed and worked on his portfolio until he finally became an apprentice.

"My apprenticeship was a year, but I still think of myself as an apprentice, even though I have been tattooing since December 2013. I did my apprenticeship under the watchful eye of Sonny Mitchell at Black Lotus, Liverpool. He was strict, honest and technical, which was great



Sam Barber



Koen Chamberlain



Matthew Henning

for me. We got on really well, which is also important as you're spending a lot of time with one person. I was the first one in and the last to leave and I also worked part time in another job. It was hard, but worth it.

Matt's work is highly detailed, the line work crisp, and you can see his influences in nature, The Lords of the Rings and Viking and Greek mythology.

The flow of his work and how it harmonises with the flow of the body give a shout out to artists like Shige, Filip Leu and master Horiyoshi III.

But where Matt's work can be dark and serious, artist Bryoni Marsh, likes things dark and fun. At first glance Bryoni's illustrations seem to be safe, Japanese kawaii, like Hello Kitty. But then it isn't long before you start to notice it's



IN THE LAST FEW YEARS I'VE FOUND MY OWN STYLE AND AM DEVELOPING IT AS WE SPEAK. I HAVE ALSO DONE A LOT OF GROWING UP THROUGH THIS EXPERIENCE

more in the vein of Roman Dirge's, Lenore: The Cute Little Dead Girl.

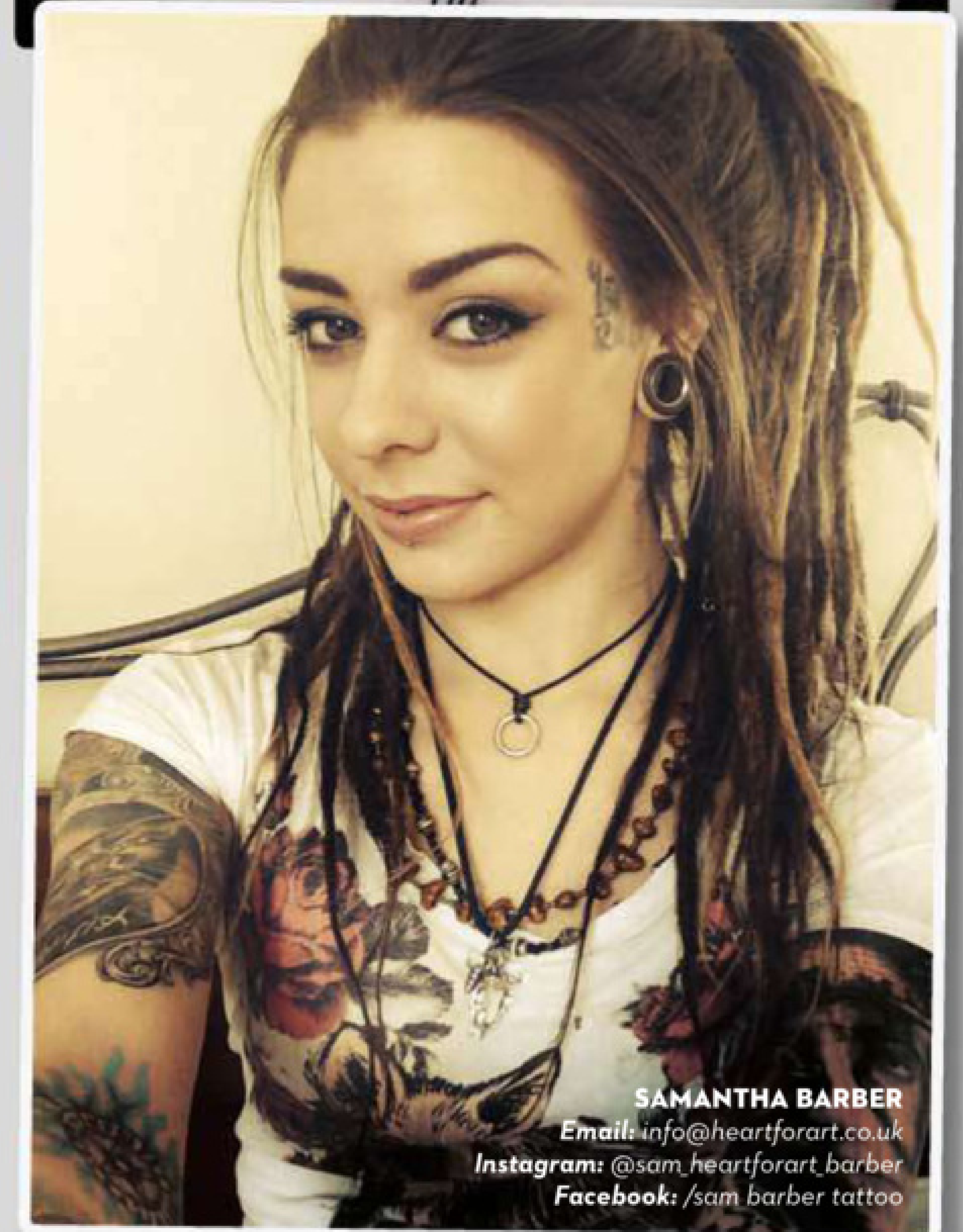
From a young age Bryoni wasn't censored from any form of body modification and from a young age, "...found it all rather fascinating." With questions like, "How do they do it?" and "How great must it be to have a tattoo, due to the pure pain some people go through to get one!" curiosity finally got the better of her and so she set out to get her first bit of ink. And immediately fell head over heels in love with the craft.

In November 2011 Bryoni was accepted as an apprentice by Max Pniewski, at Southmead Tattoo Studio. Two and a half years later and Bryoni still sees herself as an apprentice.

"I am still at a very basic stage of tattooing and have a hell of a long way to go, but in the last few years I've found my own style and am developing it as we speak. I have also done a lot of growing up through this experience and all of this is due to my beautiful, supportive tattoo family! Max

is an exceptional realism artist and works incredibly hard in and out of the studio. I've watched him for countless hours but I fail to see how he manages to create these fantastic illusions! I have a couple of realism tattoos myself but have no interest in tattooing realism. Apart from it being far from my strong point, I just can't get my head around it. Although, I kind of like it that way. It keeps that magic I felt from tattoos when I was little."

"Since being at Southmead Tattoo Studio I now get why Mum used to say there's not enough hours in a day! Time flies when you're having fun, so five years doesn't seem too far away. In five years I guess I hope to have worked a big collection of conventions around the globe and to have tried other things on the side, like making voodoo dolls, things of that nature. But my sole priority is and always will be tattooing. I would like to then be at a stage where my mark in the tattoo world is big enough for me to be able to take a



break and, dare I say it, pop out a future apprentice of my own and give them the encouragement that all my loved ones have shown me."

I got to agree with Bryoni and her Mum there, time does fly and five years isn't that long a way. And in five years there will be more fresh blood snapping at the heels of these guys, we will see new styles being born and new artists will appear to once again turn the tattoo world on its head.

But for now, these four are my ones to watch. Sam and Koen are taking established styles and making them their own, Matt and Bryoni are forging new paths into the unknown. Either way, they're keeping the tattoo world fresh and alive.

And for me, that just makes the next five years an open book. 🐾

SAM BARBER

I would like people to look at my work as art, in all senses of the word, not just the skill involved in tattooing. For the image itself to be appreciated. One of my favourite tattoo artists is Paul Talbot. I love the fact he does something totally unique and original, it's the complete opposite to realism. His work makes you look hard and makes you think. I love that. I met him just over a year ago for my first tattoo and after spending the day at his studio and talking (he can talk!), I left very inspired.

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SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

When illusionist Darcy Oake brought his show across the Atlantic to appear on Britain's Got Talent, he knew he was good. What he wasn't expecting, was for quite so many of us to believe it too.

When it comes to magic, not everybody in the room will sit up and pay attention, but that's OK. We're in good company because the same could be said for tattooing. The good side of that is whether it's dismissed or adored, there will always be an opinion - and very occasionally, something special will come along and change the minds of any doubters.

Such a thing did come along when Darcy Oake committed himself to the television screens of the UK on a Saturday night by entering the equally loved/derided, Britain's Got Talent.

A tattooed illusionist? Here's a gift-horse I need to look in the mouth.

Having interviewed another great illusionist - Criss Angel - some ten years back to make a comparison to, I found Darcy to be fresh and alive - alive in a way that nobody has been on this scale for a long time. He is, quite simply, himself. Mr Angel is a very different animal onstage to off it, but what you see with Mr Oake, is exactly what you get.

"Yeah, Criss is very different in

person than he is on stage. I can't work like that. What I'm being is the same guy. I'm the same off the stage as I am on it, so at that level, it's a lot easier to connect with a crowd when you're not playing at being a character. To make yourself - myself - stand out from the crowd, it was much a matter of presenting it differently, in a way that people haven't seen in a while."

And anybody watching Darcy's auditions as the show went along, also couldn't fail to notice that there was as much reaction for his tattooed body as there was for escaping with his life from a man-sized bear trap - what's weird at this point is that I see it so much, I didn't even notice he was tattooed until the judges began to swoon. Personally, I found it a little 'Beatle-esque', almost as though they were more in awe of the 'chiselled tattooed man' himself than the act he had just performed. Does this happen a lot?

"Well, it's all part of the 'brand' now. You don't see tattooed magicians that often. I like it actually - the tattoo thing is part of my look I guess. Nobody expects a magician to look like 🧙"



PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

"The important thing with an illusion is that it has to work. You can practice in front of yourself in a mirror for years, but the second you walk out in front of a live audience it's a whole different ball game. As I'm sure it is with a tattoo artist - you can practice on a grapefruit all day long but as soon as somebody sits down in front of you, it's a totally different experience.

"So, it's important to record your performances so that you can review everything over and over. For the record, magic is the one art where you relentlessly practice to hide your skill as opposed to display it. You practice to hide everything until what you do essentially becomes invisible."



Christie Goodwin



HOW MAGIC HAPPENED (1)

Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin (1805-1871) was a French magician who is widely considered the father of the modern style of conjuring. His father, Prosper Robert, was one of the best watchmakers in Blois. A skillful artisan and hard worker, Prosper Robert's main ambition was to provide for his family, but he also wanted his children to climb the social ladder. Jean Eugene's mother, the former Marie-Catherine Guillon, died when Jean was just a young child, so at the age of eleven, Prosper sent his son to a school thirty-five miles up the Loire to the University of Orléans. At 18, Jean graduated and returned to Blois. His father wanted him to be a lawyer, but Jean wanted to follow into his father's footsteps as a watchmaker.

that. It's not like I got tattooed to be a tattooed magician, they're just there and part of who I am but if people get a kick out of that as well, who am I to argue!"

Being a magician is all Darcy has ever wanted to do, so for those who are of a mind that this was a fast and easy ride, you might want to rethink that:

"I've been doing this since I was about seven or eight. It started off, obviously being a lot smaller than it is now and gradually worked its way up to much bigger things. To come up with an idea - especially the really big things - then flesh it out and have someone build what you actually need is a long process. Then once you've received it, you have to figure out all the details and the little nuances that are involved to be sure that it will work on stage - then you need to flesh out that routine in front of a crowd, it takes

a really long time before you can commit to having it in your show."

Are we talking months? Years?

"Years.

Minimum. Some of the things I did on Britain's Got Talent are still being worked on. I mean they're done and they're more than acceptable but I can do so much more to them to make them even better - at least that's how I look at it from my side. I don't think a lay audience would see anything that I think could be improved on, but there are little subtleties and a few psychological aspects that can always make an illusion just that little bit tighter."

Things are obviously hotting up out there for Darcy after the show and I know enough about magic to know he's not looking in living memory for what he wants to achieve, so exactly how far back is he going with his research? In recent memory we've got Criss Angel, Penn & Teller... taking a few steps further back we have David Copperfield and Siegfried & Roy. They all seem too obvious an influence to me from what

I've seen. Does Darcy go back to the likes of Harry Blackstone?

"You have to go back further. In the grand scheme of things, all the concepts that currently work as part of an illusion go, have been the same for at least a century. Technology moves on but in terms of an illusion that's performed on stage, most of what you see in an act right now, has been around for at least a hundred years, so to find new material to work with, you have to go way further back in the crate.

"Harry Blackstone is a good place to look but even further back than that to the guys like Robert-Houdin and take those things and put a modern twist on them."

What I found interesting about guys like Copperfield and the whole Vegas thing back in the day, was how quickly it all became dull. It was so big, it became pointless

- and in this new millennium, it connected with less and less people. It became so unbelievable, that we didn't actually believe it - at which point, the

illusionist has lost their audience.

"Well, the path that it went down did get tired but then it changed and went to what we would term, I guess, the genre of street magic - and it's been there for twenty years now if you're counting. As always everything is cyclical. Criss Angel is a good example of how to work within the times though because he took illusions to the streets and made it work."

Let's look at this from a different angle - open any history book and you will find very few arts have actually been protected from the outside world by their practitioners. One is magic and the only other two are probably wrestling and tattooing. Do you think the modern audience is still prepared to hand over their disbelief?

"I think that the lack of secrecy is both good and bad. If you add an additional layer, then it's a good

I WAS THE WORLD'S WORST EMPLOYEE - I EITHER GOT FIRED OR QUIT WITHIN TWO WEEKS. I WAS ALWAYS TOO BUSY THINKING ABOUT MAGIC





Christie Goodwin

thing. You can hit the internet and find the answer to anything - it will even finish your sentence for you before you even ask it, right? So, that's why magic and illusion is a top art form - there aren't really that many guys actively doing it because you have to stay one step ahead of the game all the time and it's more important to understand the actual psychology behind it and how to fool someone as opposed to simply hiding a secret. There's so much more going into it than just the secret of the trick - it has to be presented properly for it to be effective.

"Magic is in an interesting place right now because you can find the answers to anything you want to know, if you take the time to look. In the grand scheme of things, it will propel magic forward because people really want to experience that. We're in a society where nothing is a mystery anymore and there's an appetite for that."

Perhaps it makes it more mysterious. It's not too far removed from when the wrestling world came clean and admitted things might perhaps have been tweaked a little behind the scenes - then it became even more popular. It was as though people were more intrigued as to why you would want to partake in something that had rules they didn't know about - but the game was seriously raised on the stage from that point forward regardless.

"Exactly - you know for me, I'm ready for whatever happens next. I'm rolling with the opportunities that the show has brought to my doorstep but I also have a larger plan in motion. I have an idea for a mass appeal show that will avoid being a part of that Copperfield thing we were talking about before where it gets so big that it's ridiculous. The plan is to put on a show that will feel enormous but it certainly won't be outshined by the size of the props on the stage.

"I've gotten so much positive feedback from doing that show. It's been a long time since a new illusionist has been popular and I'm hoping that the way I'm trying to do it... taking the 🍀



HOW MAGIC HAPPENED (2)

Instead of studying law, he tinkered with mechanical gadgets. His employer sent him back to his father. He was told that he was better suited as a watchmaker than a lawyer, but by then, Jean's father had already retired, so he became an apprentice to his cousin who had a watch-shop. For a short time, Jean worked as a watchmaker. In the mid-1820s, he saved up to buy a copy of a two-volume set of books on clockmaking called *Traité de l'horlogerie*, or *Treatise on Clockmaking*, written by Ferdinand Berthoud. When Jean got home and opened the wrapping, instead of the Berthoud books, what appeared before his eyes was a two-volume set on magic called *Scientific Amusements*. Instead of returning the books, his curiosity got the best of him and from those crude volumes, he learned the rudiments of magic. (You can't make this stuff up - can you?)



📷 Zakary Belamy

IT'S ONLY BEEN THREE DAYS SINCE THE FINAL AND I THINK THINGS WILL HAVE CHANGED BACK HOME QUITE A LOT BY THE TIME I GET BACK THERE TOMORROW

really old, classic material and wrapping it in my own personable approach... well, I'm not saying that I've figured out the formula but I've certainly more or less figured out what works for me.

"It's very similar to being a tattoo artist - you will eventually find yourself in a genre in which you work best. Dynamo does street magic, Copperfield does illusions, Derren Brown does... well, what does Derren Brown do? He's amazing - we met a couple of days ago. He was the nicest guy - and you know how sometimes when you're a fan of someone and you don't want to meet them in case they're a let down - in this case, my respect went up so many levels. He's so warm and such a nice guy."

And isn't that part of the key to all of this? That you could go out for dinner with Derren Brown and it wouldn't be weird in the same way that going out for dinner with, say, David Copperfield.

"He has the whole thing figured out - it's inspiring for somebody like me."

Let's wrap this puppy up - it

seems that with all art, respect comes in the form of either 'You are great at this and we accept you' or 'We don't believe in what you're doing.' Is that a hard road to travel as a magician?

"Well, when you tell people - and yourself - that you're going to be a magician, there's not a huge belief system there for people to get behind, but I'll tell you this - before Britain's Got Talent, I was still paying my dues - doing really artistically unsatisfying shows and cutting my teeth, but then when it arrived on that platform, on that show, the acceptance was instant.

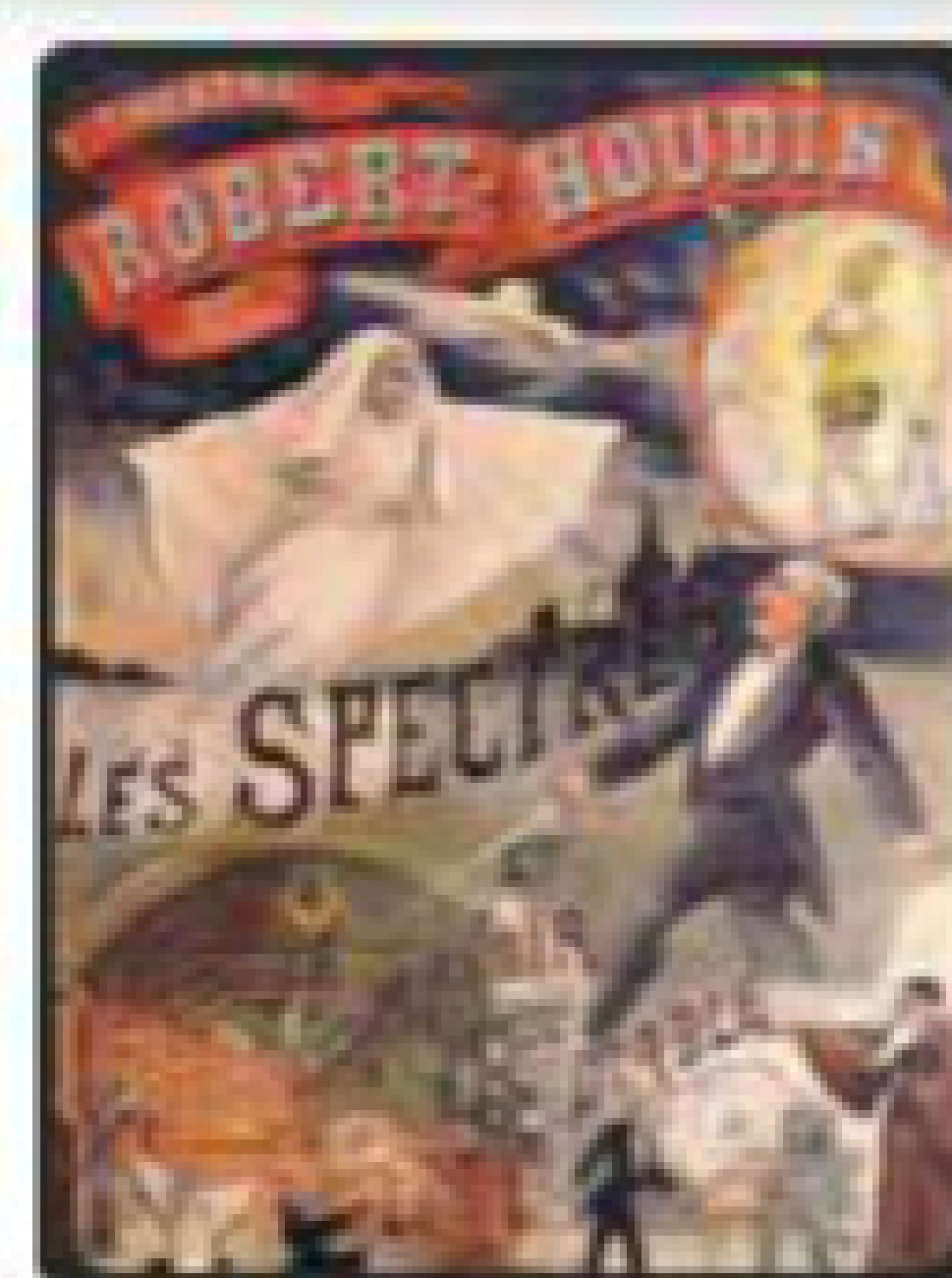
"It's only been three days since the final and I think things will have changed at home quite a lot by the time I get back there tomorrow."

So what did we learn from this? Darcy Oake is going to be huge. Is that all? No. I also have this:

No matter how much work you put into your social networking and all of those other things, there's no substitute for being on TV to get three years of work done in about five minutes. 🐶



📷 Christie Goodwin



HOW MAGIC HAPPENED (3)

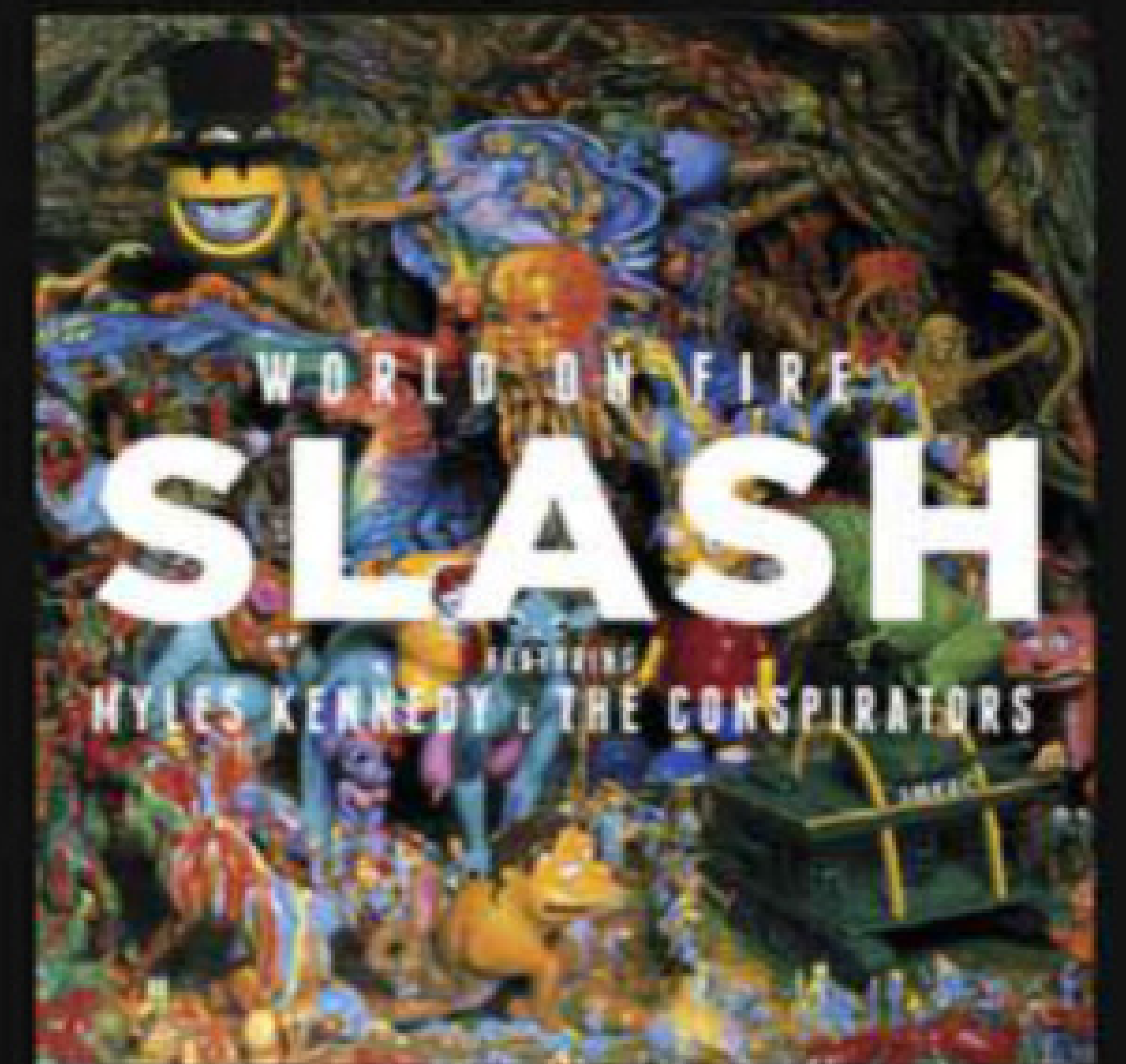
Robert-Houdin's inventions were pirated by his trusted mechanic Le Grand, who was arrested for making and selling duplicate illusions. Many of those illusions fell into the hands of his competitors, such as John Henry Anderson, Robin, Robert Heller, and Compars Herrmann. It is not known whether Herrmann or the others bought the illusions directly from LeGrand or from another source, but they willingly performed the illusions after knowing that they were invented by Robert-Houdin anyway.



Christie Goodwin

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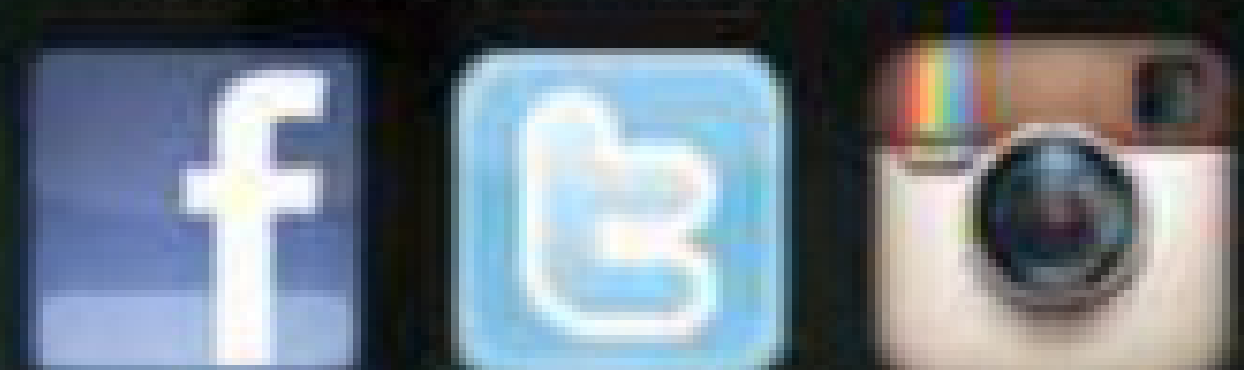
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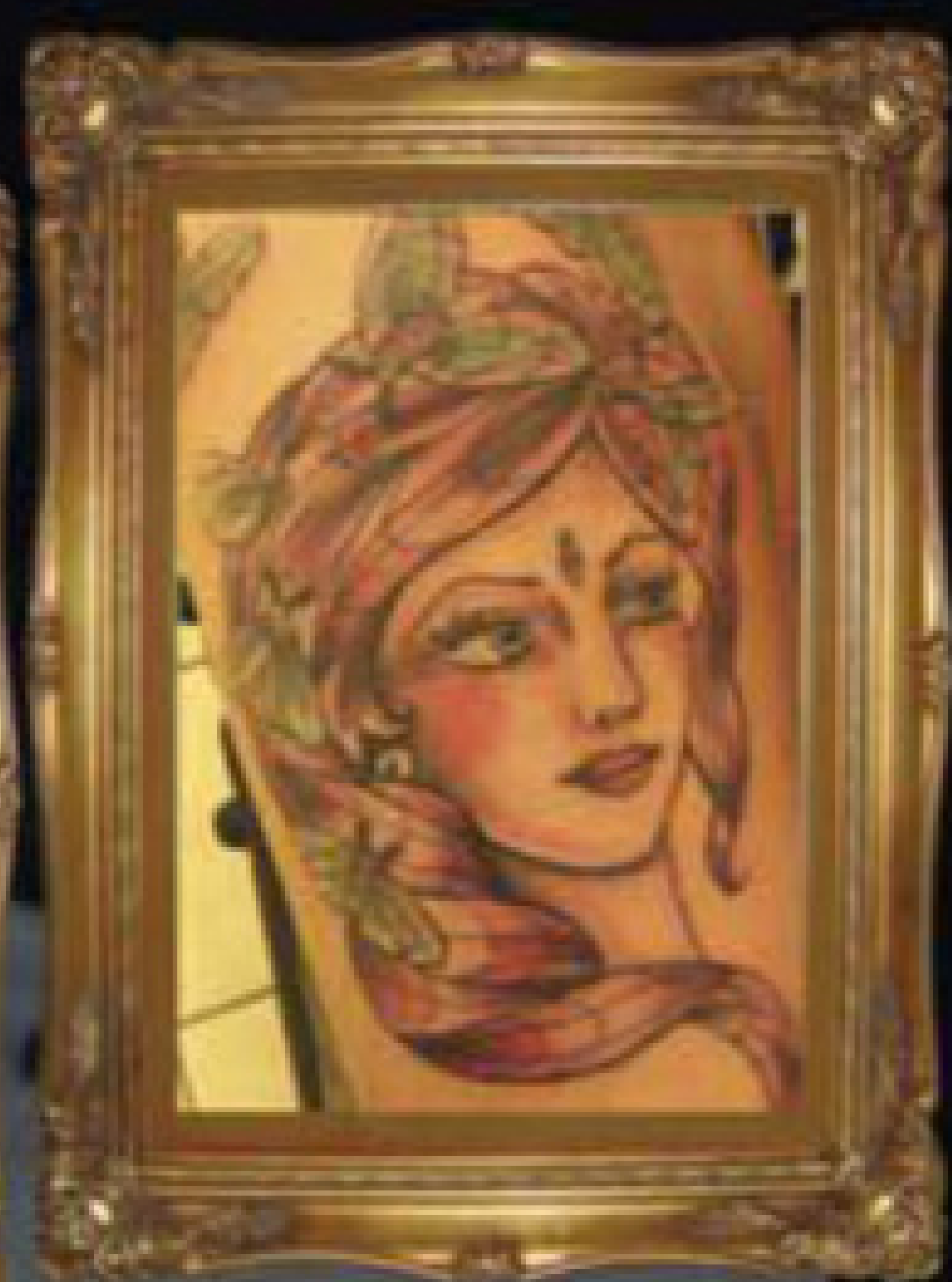


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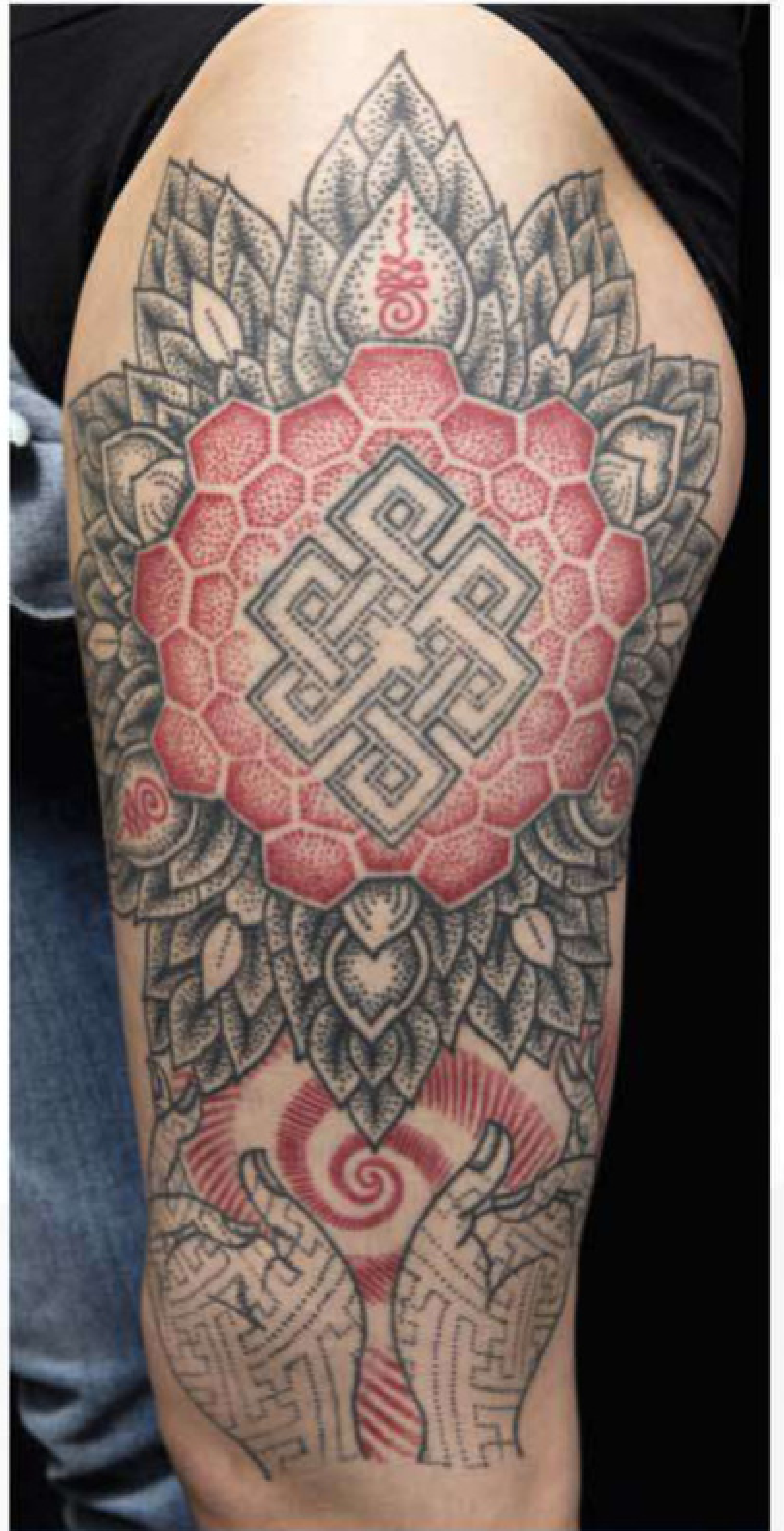
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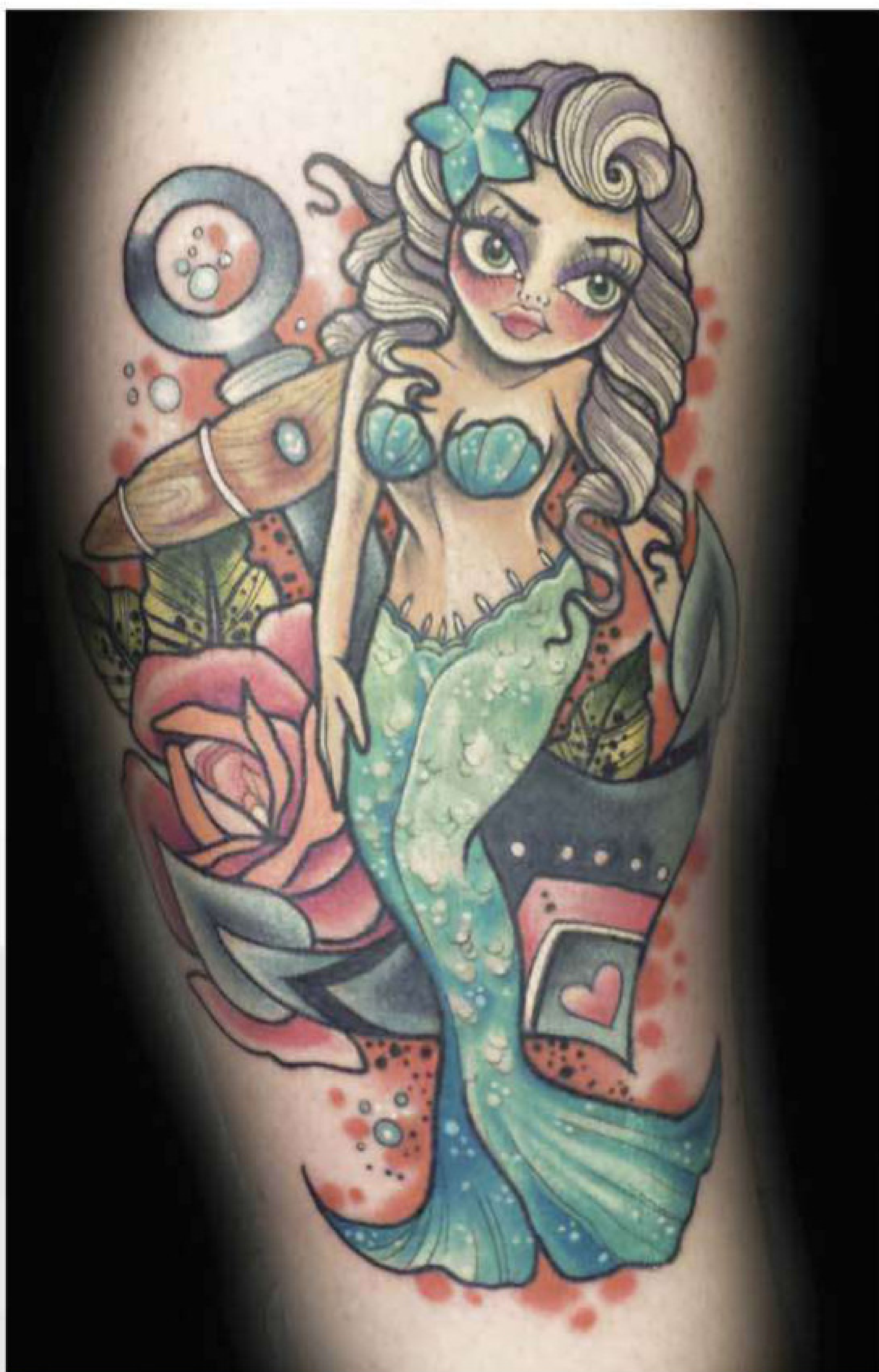
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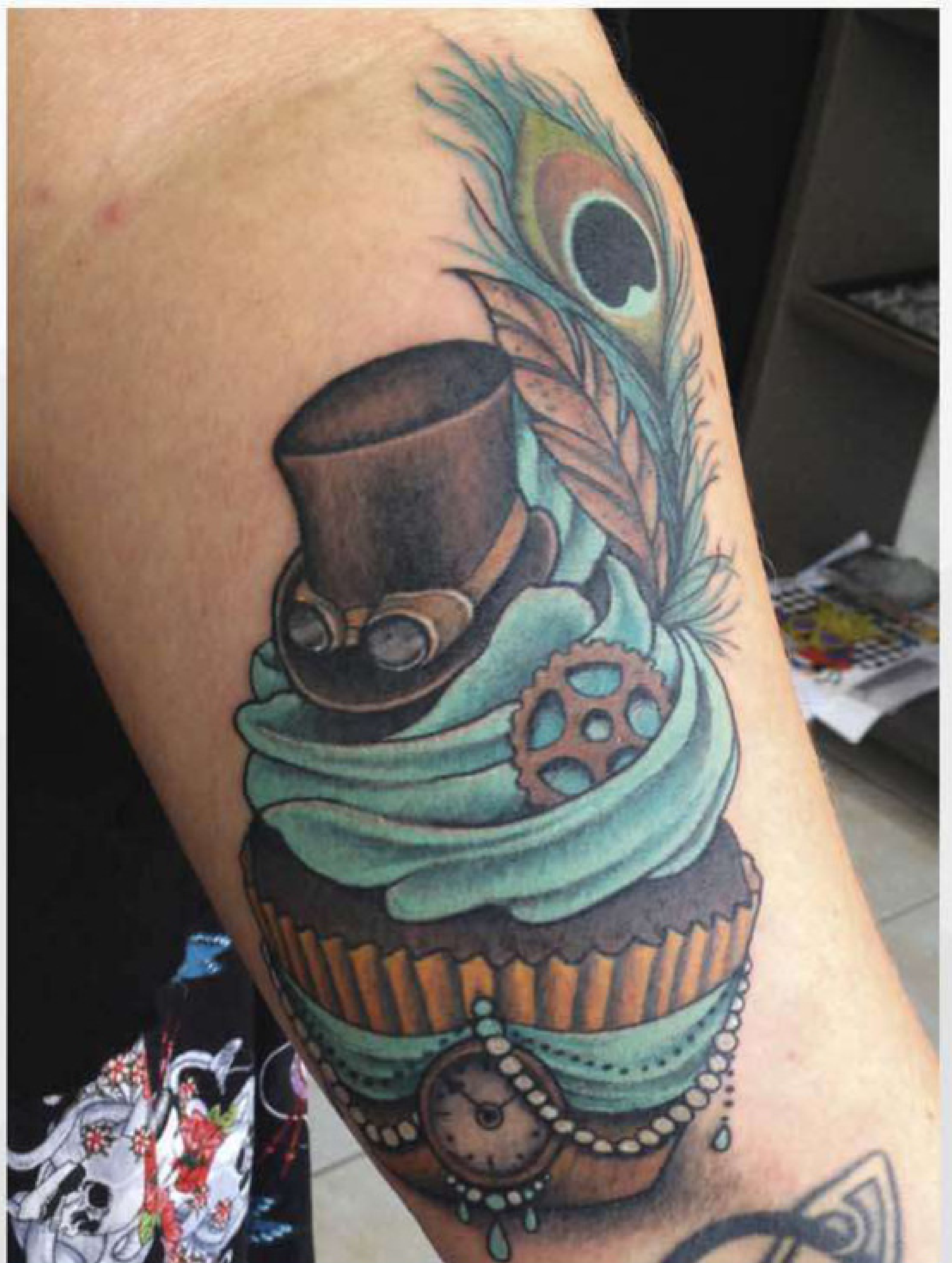
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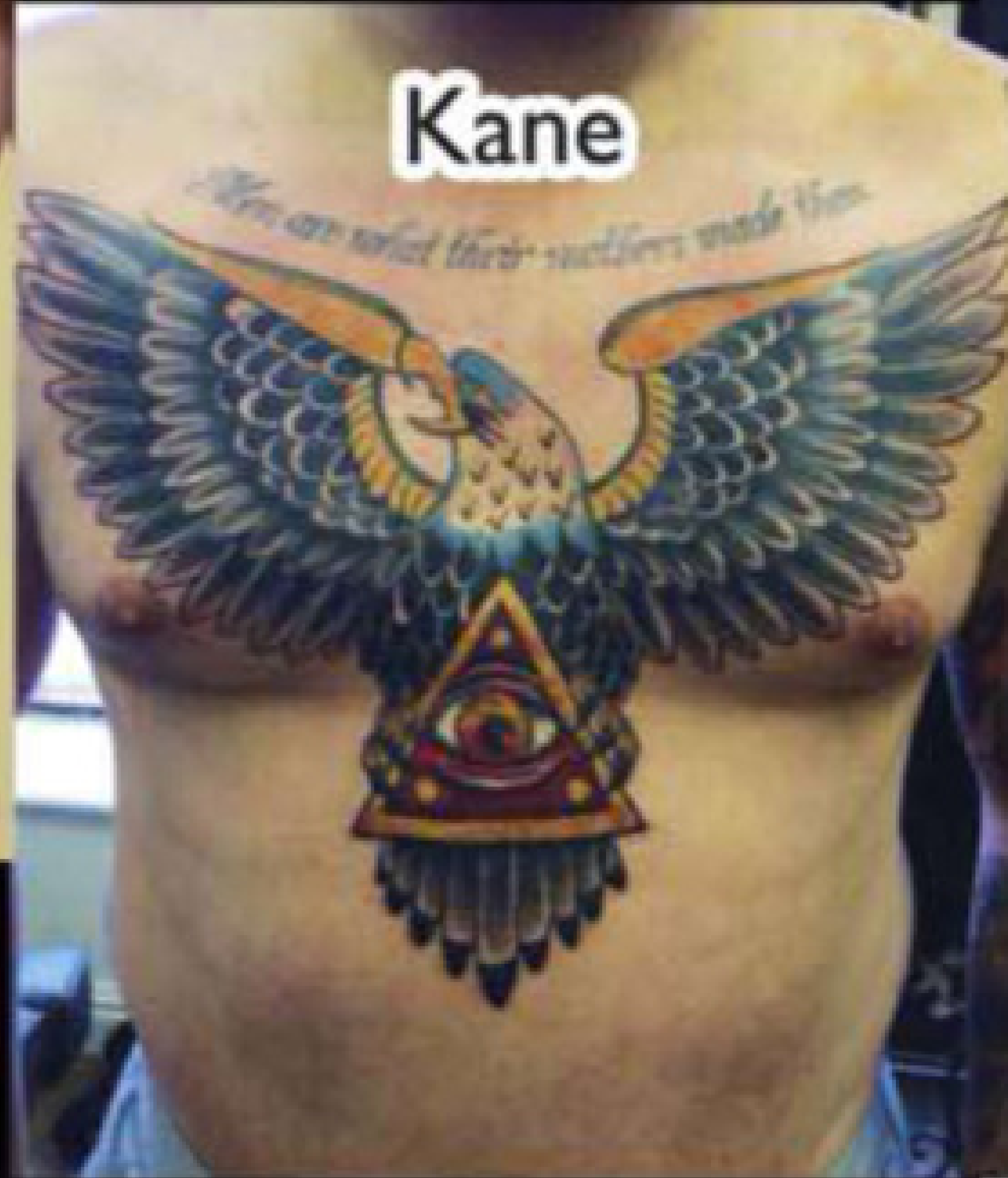
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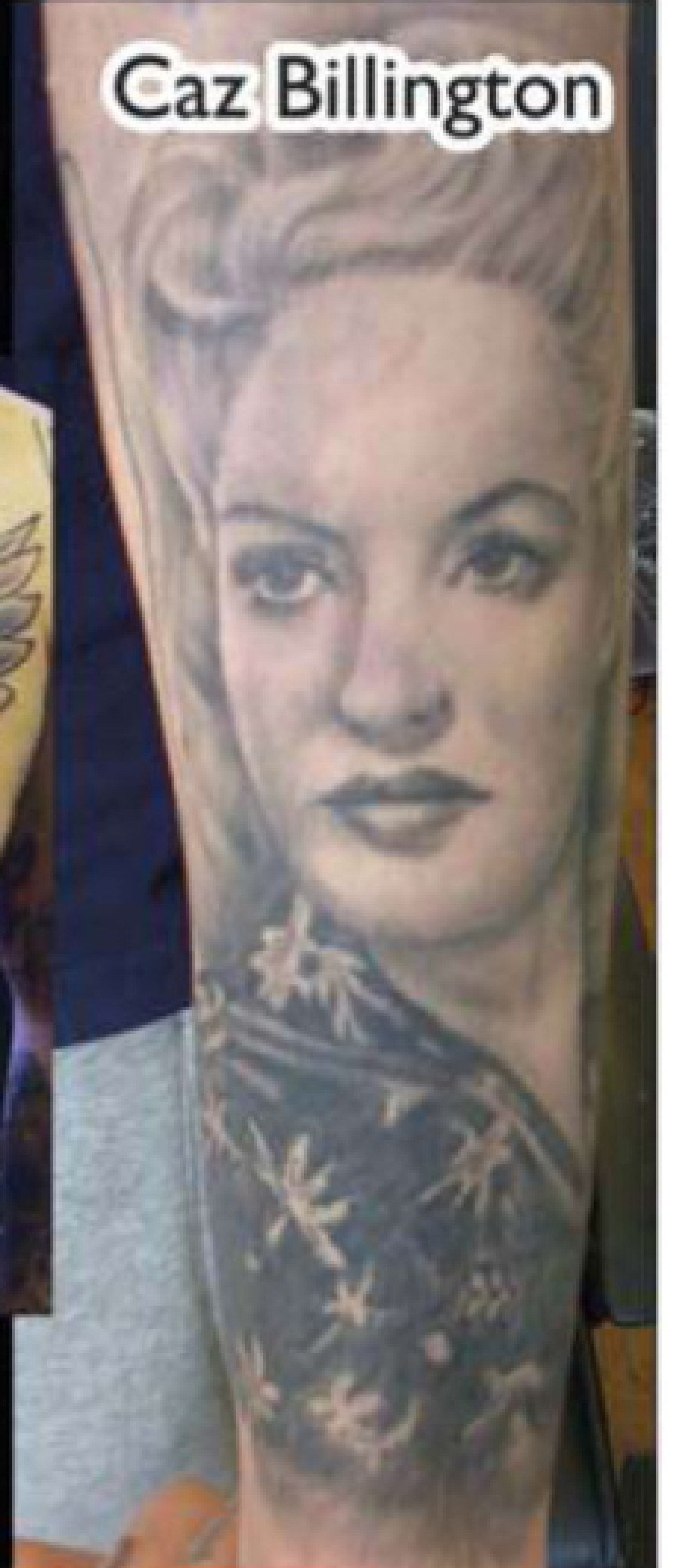
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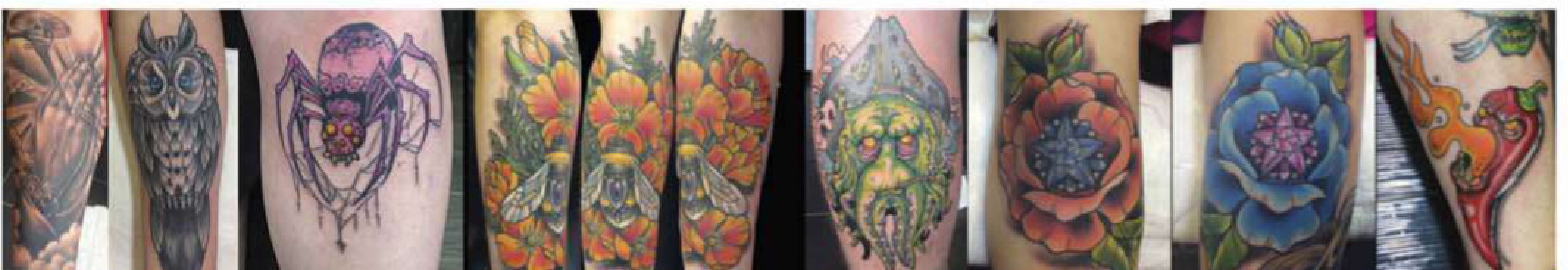
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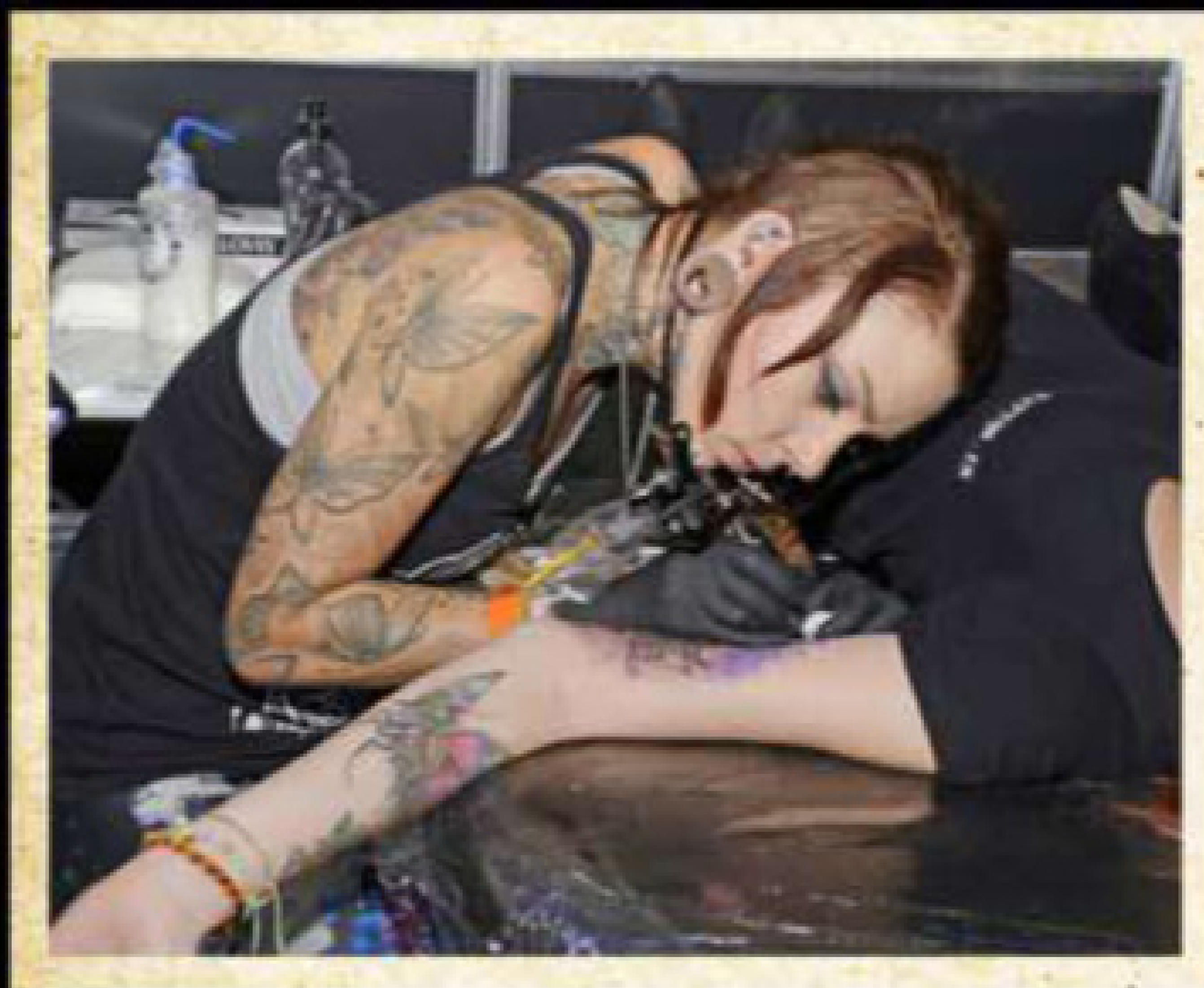
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CONSCIOUS CREATIONS

Hannah Willison is the kind of girl you'd find yourself in the presence of if you conducted some kind of Weird Science experiment using trees and earth instead of technology. This, I promise you, is an eminently good thing.

Email:
hannahwillison@gmail.com

That introduction will only make you laugh if you've ever seen *Weird Science*. In my head, everybody has and you all love it. The statement stands however because I've never met anybody before in my life that's as fuelled by the elements as Hannah - and as luck would have this also, she's got more than a good line in the art that she likes to tattoo.

It's only correct that we do our thing outside sitting on the grass like children. It's definitely the right thing to do, I'm down with the whole daisy chain thing but is this the way it's always been with her art too? It's a kind of obvious question - one

of those in which she tells me she's been drawing animals since she was six years old that is normally best avoided - but with Hannah, I think it's important.

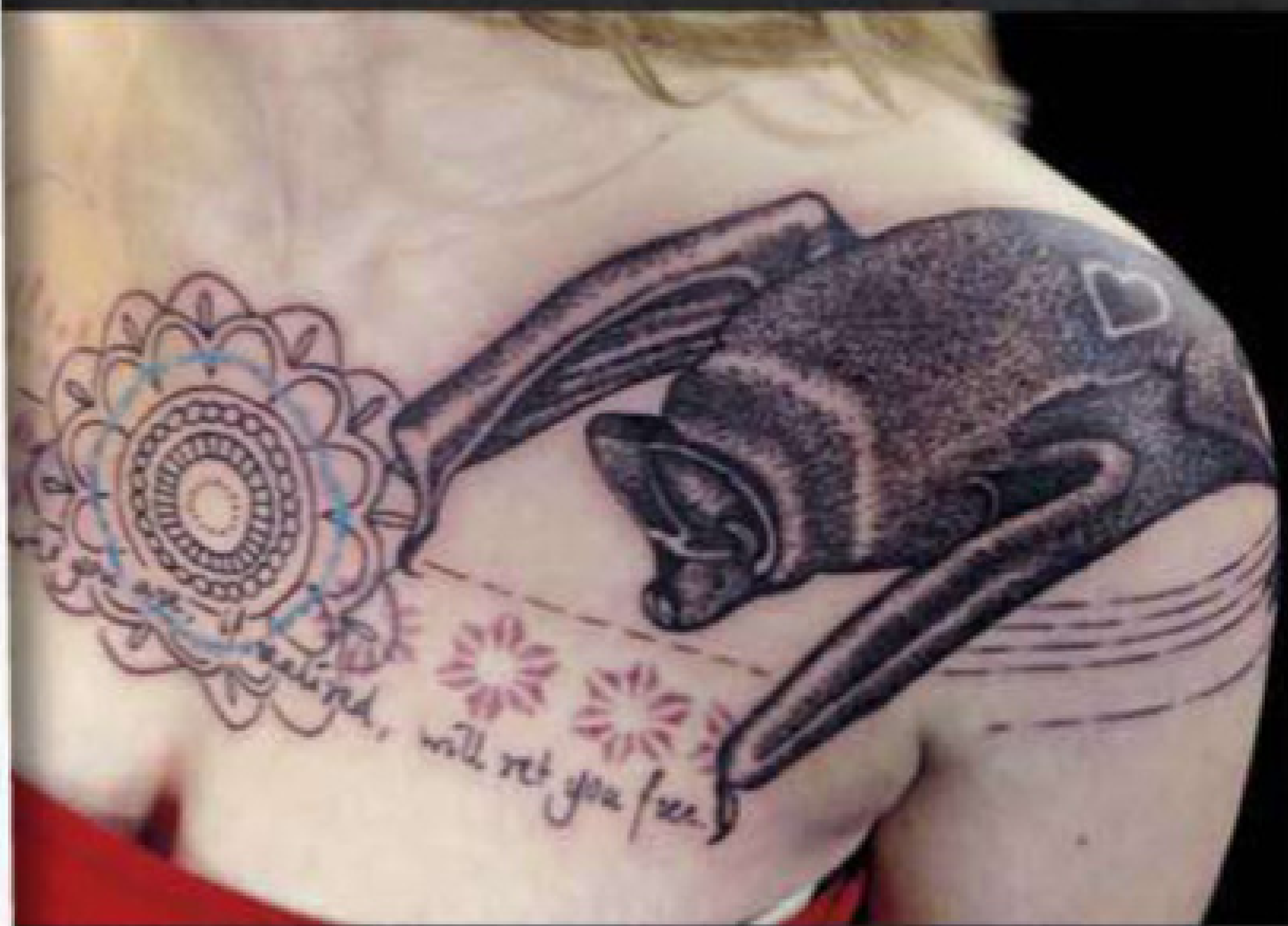
"I remember being obsessed with drawing mermaids at about six years old. They weren't the most delicate kind of sea beauties you maybe imagining, but more disjointed, unruly creatures, with insanely large boobs. I guess this was when the fascination with the under water world began.

"Seriously though, the animal theme wasn't an intentional choice of direction in the beginning. It's evolved over the past couple of years, and has been a natural progression



ever since. Somewhere along the way I became inspired by Ernst Haeckel, and his works '*Art Forms in Nature*'. It was this influence which fuelled my interest in the natural world.

"I'm fascinated by consciousness in general, especially within non-human animals - that greatly influences my work. As my interest in animal welfare has grown, so has the collection



GEOMETRY

I'm interested in sacred geometry in general, and how it symbolises our connection to nature, and everything within the universe. I like to work it into the more spiritual inspired designs. Seen here are a couple designs that are inspired by veganism and consciousness.

of animal inspired pieces."

Ernst Haeckel? There's a blast from the past. I forgot he even existed. The first time I ever saw his work was the time I realised that all creatures are actually symmetrical. Even when an artist tries to go off radar by inventing monsters and other creatures, they still always conform to that symmetry. When you throw away that rule, nothing works. 🍄

ERNST HAECKEL (1)

Ernst Heinrich Philipp August Haeckel was a German biologist, naturalist, philosopher, physician, professor and artist who discovered, described and named thousands of new species, mapped a genealogical tree relating all life forms, and coined many terms in biology, including anthropogeny, ecology, phylum, phylogeny, stem cell, and the kingdom Protista. Haeckel promoted and popularised Charles Darwin's work in Germany and developed the controversial recapitulation theory claiming that an individual organism's biological development, or ontogeny, parallels and summarises its species' evolutionary development, or phylogeny. No, I don't understand it either but it sounds great. The published artwork of Haeckel includes over 100 detailed, multi-colour illustrations of animals and sea creatures.

I guess that plays into a tattoo artists hands nicely also - so long as your placement is good.

"For sure. Good placement is key, especially for those more symmetrical designs. I take into consideration the body shape before I start work on the design. I'll then work out the design based on how it will compliment the body. The design and placement have to get along with each other, otherwise they are going to fight and things will get messy!"

Inevitably, Hannah and myself have talked about her getting to work on me - I can't let her go that easily - so within the context of knowing that will happen, this is a good time to throw some light on how she works should you ever wish to partake in the magic yourself.

So let's say I have fallen head over heels with what you do (which I have) and I want you to work within the theme I already have going on, which is the raven.

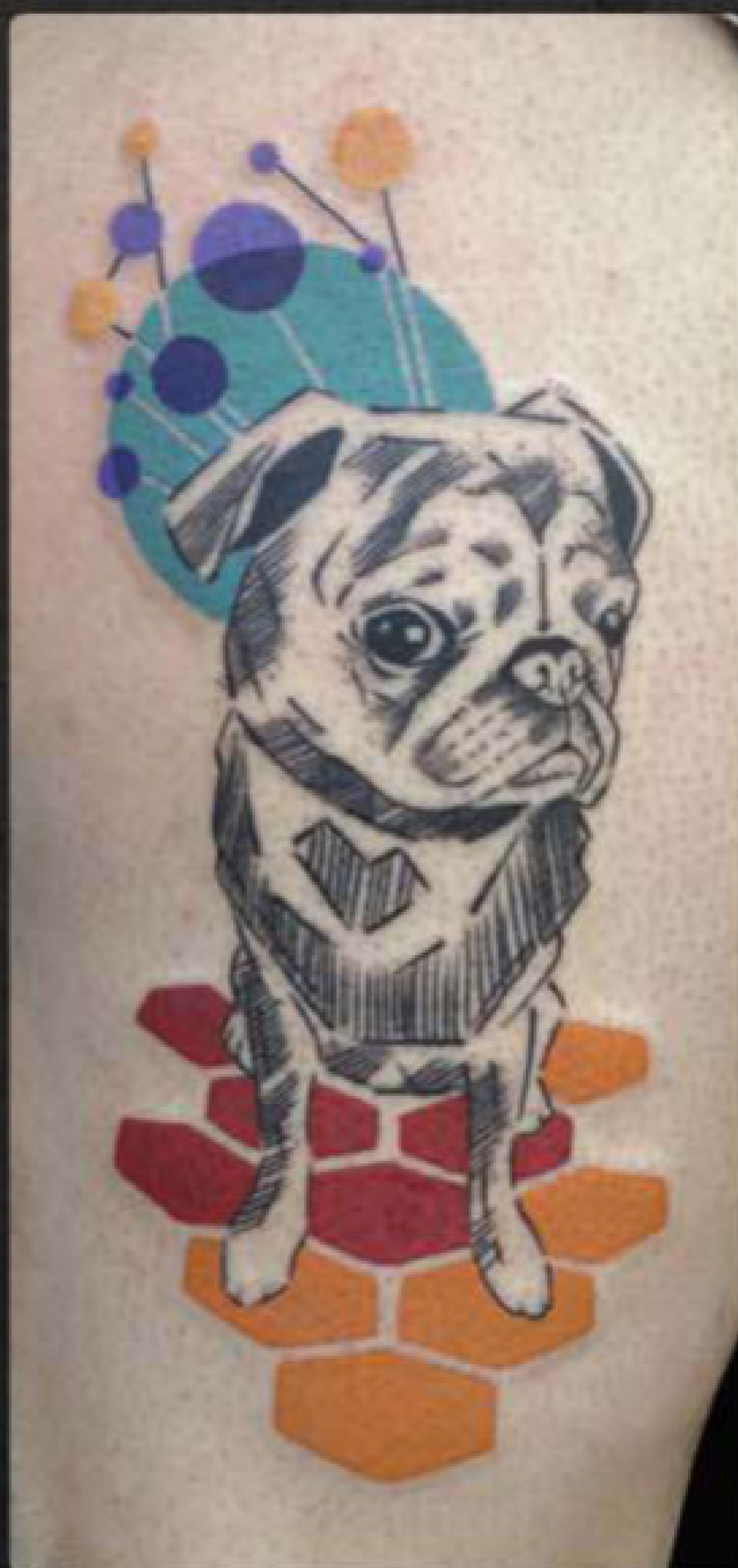
AS MY INTEREST IN ANIMAL WELFARE HAS GROWN, SO HAS THE COLLECTION OF ANIMAL INSPIRED PIECES

Is she happier if I stop right there and leave it at that or would more information make a big difference to the end result?

"Well, a general idea or one word even - 'ravens' is actually more than enough info and if you care to throw in your ideal placement, that's perfect. The rest you can leave up to me. I prefer to work with total creative freedom because the designs evolve better without too much control. It's

hard for me to say how a design is going to look when it's finished at least until I've experimented with ideas. I spend a lot of time at the drawing stage - sometimes I won't go with the first or second design. It often takes a few drawings until I'm screeching "This is the one!"

What brought me here originally - aside from falling in love - was the fact that Hannah is one of a rare (but growing) breed who have made the transition to only



tattooing her own creations. Some people fight for years to get to this place and really struggle with figuring it out.

"I feel really fortunate to have transitioned to this stage, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to work solely on my custom work. I have to thank the studio where I work for allowing me to focus on my style, without having to compromise my work. This has been a total blessing."

I point out that she's in danger of me painting her as an overnight success but that's far, far from the truth.

"I've been tattooing for five years. I did more than one apprenticeship, but I'm not sure how proper they were, I just feel that I learned techniques from a few different artists along the way. I didn't come from a tattoo background, when I started and I had no tattoos. I was an international fashion model before tattooing and trained as a hair stylist before that. I worked in a crematorium for a bit too but we'll skip over that. Mostly though, I would draw and paint a lot in any spare time I had."

Which is presumably how she's come to settle in such a place. There's some clever use of colour



DESIGN AND PLACEMENT HAVE TO GET ALONG WITH EACH OTHER, OTHERWISE THEY ARE GOING TO FIGHT AND THINGS WILL GET MESSY!

in her work that accentuates the black in a very smart way.

"Absolutely. I enjoy applying colour in an unconventional way - that's how I would term it. I like to merge and layer solid colour against the black to make the images more intense. The colour is usually arranged in a linear movement and I like to use coloured graphics that compliment the body shape too."

Being a vegan, as you'd expect, Hannah is a staunch supporter of vegan inks. That's something that's not really explored greatly in the media. It's not something I've ever personally been overly interested in but right here, right now - I am. Is there as big difference in using them? I guess that's only relevant if you ever used 'regular' inks previously but there's no real reason why all inks shouldn't be put together that way is there?

"To be honest, I've only ever used vegan inks out of commitment to the vegan lifestyle. Most popular brands of ink are vegan. Some people have raised concerns about vegan ink fading more rapidly than regular ink but it's nothing more than a myth. Vegan inks not only have good longevity, but are also known to have faster healing time because of the more natural ingredients."

A swift look at Hannah's workload for the coming months is mighty surprising. Flitting around the world is more often than not, 🌻



firmly on the agenda. Is there an ulterior motive to the amount of time she spends on the road?

“Not particularly - but who doesn't love to travel? Sometimes I'll visit a studio or two when I'm being a tourist. I usually check out a few studios online before visiting an area. I'm curious and I like to create new opportunities for travel. Sometimes I'll organise a guest spot in a far flung place I've never been to before, but would love to visit - the unknown can be just as exciting if not more so.”

Finally - what kind of feature would this be if I didn't give Hannah the freedom to pimp her forthcoming clothing line? While I wrap up this daisy chain that's now longer than Tom Baker's scarf - she can tell you all about it herself:



FEATURING THE DESIGNS ON CLOTHING FEELS LIKE A NATURAL PROGRESSION. I WANTED TO GIVE PEOPLE AN ALTERNATIVE TO SKIN AS WELL

“Yes, very excited for this new project! Featuring the designs on clothing feels like a natural progression. I wanted to give people an alternative to skin as well. For now, I'll be selling the clothing through my Instagram:

hannahwillisontattoo and Facebook page: *hannahwillisontattooartist* Be sure to check it out.”

Feel free to form an orderly queue when you're ready - just so long as I'm in front, knock yourselves out people... Le Fin! 🐙



ERNST HAECKEL (2)

Haeckel argued that human evolution consisted of precisely 22 phases, the 21st - the “missing link” - being a halfway step between apes and humans. He even formally named this missing link ‘Pithecanthropus

alalus’, translated as “ape man without speech.” Haeckel's entire literary output was extensive, working as a professor at the University of Jena for 47 years, and even at the time of the celebration of his 60th birthday at Jena in 1894, Haeckel

had produced 42 works with nearly 13,000 pages, besides numerous scientific memoirs and illustrations. So if you think you're knocking it out of the ballpark with a few sketches, you might need to rethink that and cancel your subscription to SKY.



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DAREDEVIL

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Tattooing and cooking may go hand-in-hand these days, but it's not often you meet a chef who co-owns a tattoo studio near New York City's historic Bowery. That on top of running numerous restaurants, starring in several successful TV shows and publishing two ace cookbooks. Then again, it's not often you meet someone as electric and unique as Aarón Sánchez.



If you've ever found yourself in the Bowery, the place that gave birth to such legends as Bowery Stan and where tattooing in New York City truly blossomed, you know it doesn't get much cooler - or realer - than that.

Walking into Daredevil Tattoo to meet chef, Food Network star and avid tattoo collector Aarón Sánchez, the first thing to strike me are the walls lined with memorabilia, documenting tattooing's roots and heritage.

The second is the way the energy in the entire shop - perhaps on the entire block - instantly reaches explosive levels as Sánchez strolls in a few minutes after me.

WELCOME TO DAREDEVIL TATTOO

Deciding to kick things off with a tour of Daredevil Tattoo's two floors, Sánchez begins pointing out some of his favourite collectibles, including a black and grey photo of a tattooed female from a long-gone era, while recounting the story of how he got involved in this whole crazy ink business.

"Michelle Myles had been a part of the underground scene down here for many years on the Lower East Side and when tattooing was legalised in '97, she and Brad Fink opened Daredevil together right up the street," he says.

"I was looking at restaurant 🍷"

Barbara Pavone FOX Life



CULINARY SCHOOL

"I went for one year, but I'm not a culinary school dropout! I didn't finish because when I went, I had already gone through kitchens and they were showing me how to cut peppers this small, so I was like, 'You know something, I'm gonna party.'" [laughs]

spaces throughout that whole time and then I found one across the street and we opened in '98. I just became friends with them, being neighbours, and we started bartering tattoos for food, so it started very organically."

"They would come over after work, I would go and get tattooed on my days off and it was very cool like that," he continues. "Then I started to know more about Michelle's story and Brad's story and they were real history buffs in many different areas, but obviously with tattooing and the history and lineage of it. Part of them deciding to be down here, where we're at here is Chatham Square, was that this is really where tattooing in New York was born."

"Brad, who had a shop called Iron Age in St. Louis, had been collecting memorabilia and flash and different machines and photographs of the founding fathers of tattoo over the years and now that this shop opened, there was ample space to [display] everything, so he

slowly brought up all of these items and that's what you have right here," he explains.

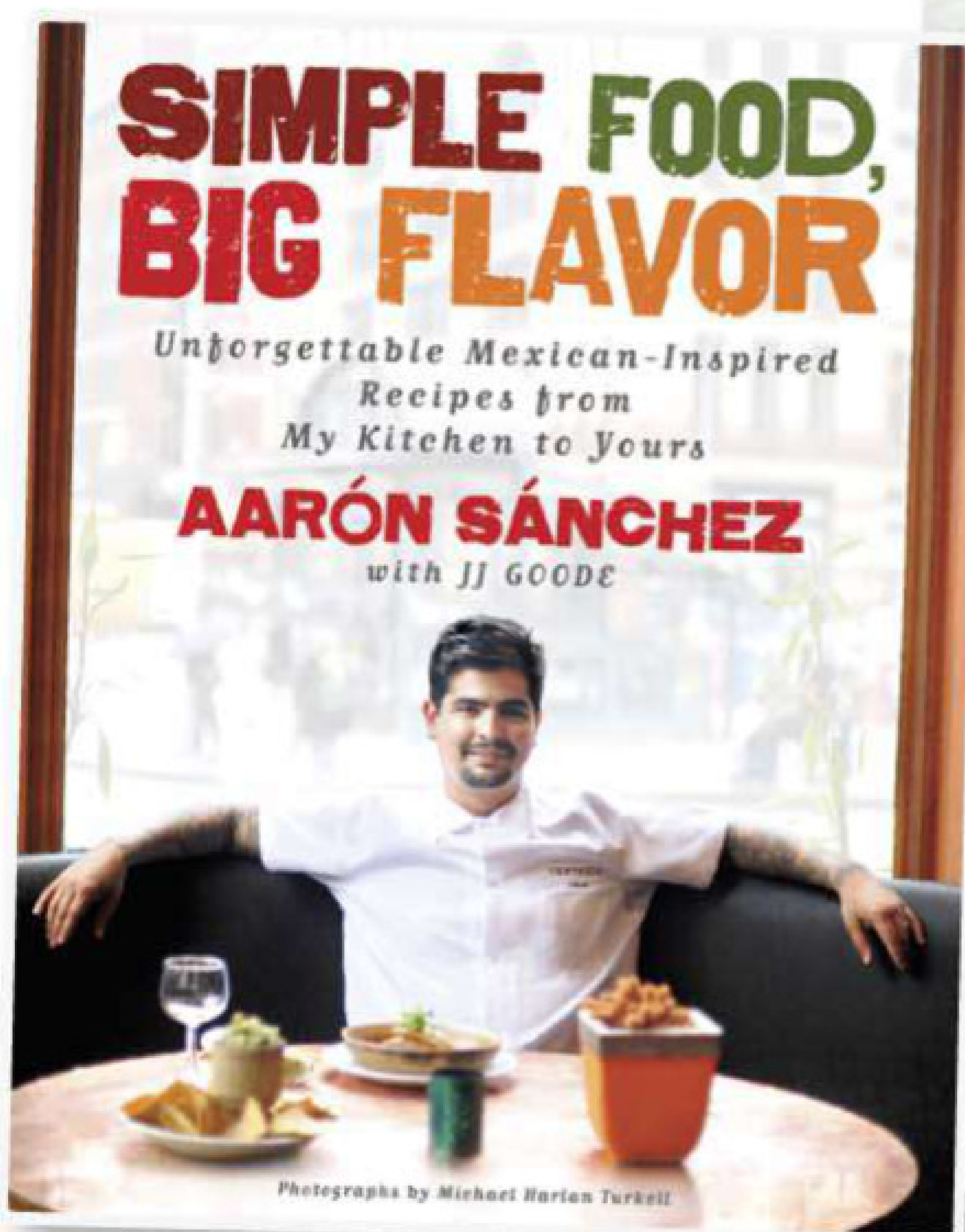
Opening a little gate near the reception desk, we make our way past the first set of work stations before arriving at a secluded area in the back whose walls are lined with mirrors and stencils.

Faced with a short flight of steps, we head downstairs and I can't help but ask what in the world would inspire a chef to take the leap from tattoo collector to tattoo entrepreneur. "Part of it was, I was coming here so often, this was gonna be my place to hang out, kind of relax after work," laughs Sánchez. "And, you know what, part of it is a real estate move, part of it is a business deal, but also it's more about them being able

to have a place that they can really grow and we can cultivate cause this area is only gonna get hotter. They're building Ace Hotel right over here, this is the last cool frontier of the Lower East Side, so there are a lot of reasons why you would wanna open a business here and I wanna be a part of that!"

Pausing in front of a stack of flash, Sánchez picks up a few sheets and says, "They do this thing every year on Friday the 13th - \$13 tattoos and a lucky \$7 tip - and all of the artists contribute to the flash, but one year, let me see if I can find it, it was pretty awesome, it came at a really bad time, so they were like, 'We're gonna do tranny 13 tattoos.' Who does that? Like someone's gonna

THIS IS THE LAST COOL FRONTIER OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE. SO THERE ARE A LOT OF REASONS WHY YOU WOULD WANNA OPEN A BUSINESS HERE AND I WANNA BE A PART OF THAT!





come and say, "That's exactly what I was looking for! How much for the whole flash!"

FIRST INK

After we return to the main floor and settle in on a couple of chairs in the back, Sánchez begins his tattoo story.

"I used to party down here in the mid '90s before tattooing was legalised and I used to see these tattooed guys at bars and be like, 'What the hell is that, man?' One guy said 'Hey, there's this woman that I know, I'm not supposed to tell you, but her name's Michelle' and it started kicking in then," he remembers.

"I went in there and I was like, 'Just give me this piece', typical shit. Now that I'm covered, she's like, 'You have good ideas and they're awesome tattoos, but we can't fit them in', so now we work backwards instead of forwards."

"We're kind of doing the second layer right now," he laughs. "I'm just running out of space and I also have cooler ideas now. I look at some of my tattoos and I'm like 'How did I think that was cool? What the hell was I smoking?'"

"And the quality and diversity have gotten better, too. Before you could just get a cool panther or a skull, nowadays, if you have an idea, guys like Diego Mannino can actually make it happen," he says, walking up to Diego who just so happens to be working on fellow Food Network star Nate Appleman's backpiece.

"Diego's done a fair bunch of my tattoos," says Sánchez and laughs, "Apparently he specialises in chefs - I dunno what the hell that means."

"Nate's been getting tattooed forever like me, but now I feel like every young cook has a pig tattoo and I wanna puke!" Taking off his short-sleeved shirt, Sánchez points to his arm and says, "This one right here is very important, it's my grandmother. This is the Catrina, which is sort of this Dia de los Muertos figure from Aguascalientes and it's more spiritual and really represents many aspects of Mexican

NATE'S BEEN GETTING TATTOOED FOREVER LIKE ME. BUT NOW I FEEL LIKE EVERY YOUNG COOK HAS A PIG TATTOO AND I WANNA PUKE!

culture. Let's say somebody wants to commemorate a certain important moment in Mexican history, the Catrina will be the base for it."

"It's very funny, some of my tattoos ended up having more significance afterwards, like this rope right here, it's like nothing can get through to my grandmother, like it's blocked off. These are the mountains over El Paso, so the mountains are looking over her."

Turning around to show off the impressive work on his back, Sánchez explains, "This is actually done by Mister Cartoon, this is Emiliano Zapata who's sort of our champion, our hero, he spoke for the common man. This is Mexican history all on my back. It's Dia de los Muertos, Zapata, the Virgin Mary."

That's when a certain piece on his upper arm catches my eye. Asked about its significance, Sánchez laughs, "It's kind of a cover-up of my ex-wife, so 🍌"

CHEF REVOLUTION

"For a long time we were forgotten people who were just in the back. Now you're starting to see all the other interests that chefs have. Most people who are creative have another facet of art that inspires them and now you're starting to see that more with chefs."

maybe that's not a good one. What I will say is that Michelle is really funny. I told her, 'I need you to help me out with this' and she was like, 'Dude, I covered up my buddy's wife, too, I turned her into a zombie! I must have a little following now, maybe I have a niche here!'

"One thing that's interesting is you can't say my tattoos go into one particular area, they're all over the place," he adds, rolling up his jeans. "Like this leg is all American traditional with the old school panther, the dagger with the snake, the old school eagle - this is as classic as you can get. I'm gonna do a really badass buffalo head on my foot next."

FOOD, FOOD, FOOD

Sánchez is the proud owner of Mestizo in Kansas with Paloma (Connecticut), Alegre (New York) and Johnny Sánchez (Maryland and Louisiana) all joining his restaurant family in 2014. He's also revamped the menu at House of Blues, a chain of concert venues across the U.S.

IN THE KITCHEN

"My mom, Zarela Martinez, had a restaurant for 25 years in the city and I grew up in that environment, so I started cooking before there was even food TV," says Sánchez of his introduction to the kitchen. "The reason I first went on TV, it was just an appearance because I wanted to



PEOPLE WILL WATCH ME AND THEY'LL LIKE ME, BUT THEY WON'T REALIZE I'M HEAVILY TATTOOED AND IF I'LL BE AT AN AIRPORT AND YOU'LL HAVE THESE CONSERVATIVE OLDER PEOPLE GOING, 'HEY, I REALLY LIKE YA!

[promote] my restaurant. If I go on TV and people come to my restaurant, then it's a useful tool."

Sánchez's small screen credits include being a Food Network regular, starring on shows like Chopped, Best Thing I Ever Ate and Next Iron Chef.


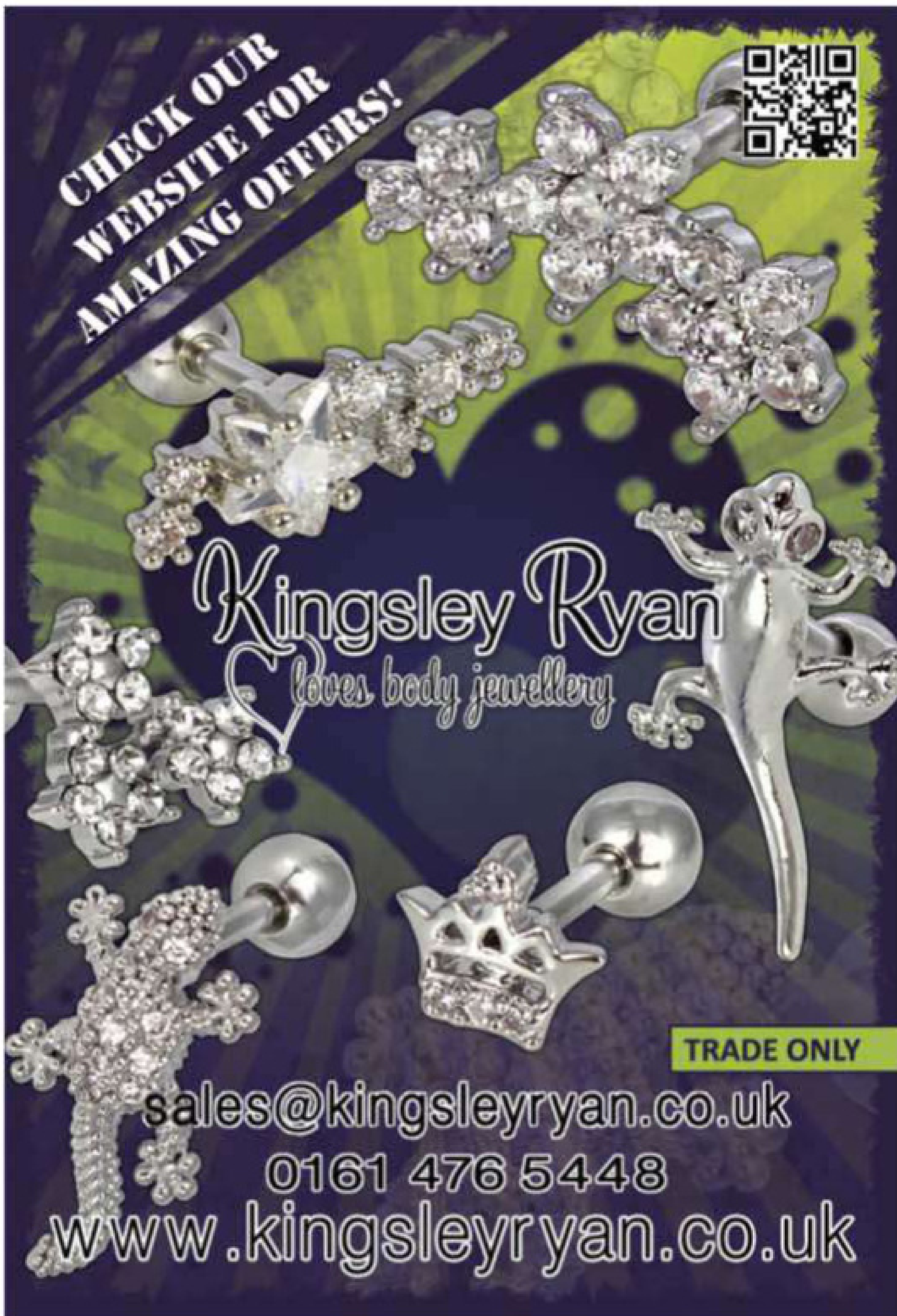
Debating television's merits, he says, "Somebody might go their whole life not knowing what a chipotle pepper is, but food TV can help teach them that, so now you're impacting people's lives culturally and from a food point of view and that's neat. That's power and you have to be responsible how you handle it. I keep that in mind all the time."

As it turns out, food TV is also helping to change how tattoos are perceived. As Sánchez tells it, "People will watch me and they'll like me, but they won't realize I'm heavily tattooed and then I'll be at an airport and you'll have these conservative older people going, 'Hey, I really like ya!' Food has been that bridge for us, I've seen it happen."

Which inspires the most important question of all: Is Aaron Sánchez the proud owner of any food-inspired tattoos?

"I only have one, just a knife. I don't think a bunch of radishes on my arm is gonna make me a better cook!" he laughs. 🍴

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TOO MUCH TOO SOON

In the last seven years I have acquired a fair few tattoos. The only thing that has really prevented me from getting any more than I have currently, is the lack of disposable income. If the financial gods had blessed me with greater wealth, I know that by now I would be approaching full capacity in terms of ink on skin. Given the opportunity I would have had more tattoos, and though this view is shared by many, there are those that feel differently.

Las-
er treatment aside, the placement of permanent ink on skin means that each time you have a tattoo, you are left with less and less space upon your body. The car park that is your body, is slowly being occupied with vehicles, and once you reach maximum capacity, you cannot add another level. This relationship of permanence and scarcity leads to thinking the question: "Are too many cars being let in too quickly?", or in tattoo-talk: "Am I getting too many tattoos, too young?"

The question was one I found one commentator asking themselves a few months ago. Rosalie Woodward, the editorial assistant over at Things&Ink, blogged her thoughts on the topic and very kindly answered the questions I sent her way. Rosalie is worried that she may be covering herself too quickly. She holds concerns over "people getting chest pieces at 18", getting hand tattoos before anything else, and seems uneasy with the fact that an old school friend of hers "recently had two complete arm sleeves done in a matter of months."

Rosalie told me that she is worried about her taste in



tattoos changing over time. She admitted that what people say really does influence her, and that at 22, she is yet to find "the confidence in her choices that older people may have". It is clear that Rosalie is assessing the potential of future regret. Striving to find her own self-identity, she is worried that at a young, impressionable age, other people are likewise

making decisions that cannot be undone, and that will stay with them forever.

The fact that Rosalie is even asking herself these questions shows great foresight, as well as demonstrating the essential skills that come with making any permanent decision. Though tattoos are growing in popularity and acceptance, they are still not



something to be taken lightly. Rosalie is fully aware of this, despite her love for them.

As well as the possibility of regretting any tattoo she may have, Rosalie also sees the tattoo process as a form of 'opportunity cost'. My words, not hers. Opportunity cost is business speak for the cost of choosing one course of action instead of another. In terms of tattoos, this is present at every inking session a person has. Your choice to get a stencil style sleeve of portraits by say, Reverent Rudles, means that you have then lost the ability to get a unique black ink masterpiece by Duncan X.

Rosalie's concerns about getting too many tattoos too young essentially fall into two categories. The first being that of future regret, and the second being opportunity cost. She says that "there are so many amazing artists" that she wants "to save some skin for", and being covered at a relatively young age would prevent this. I wondered if other people held such concerns, and if

they did, do they fall into the same categories, ie: regret and opportunity cost. With that in mind I hit the streets and did some crowdsourcing online to get in touch with some heavily tattooed youngsters.

Matthew Turner, a 23 year old tattoo apprentice in South Wales, has spent around £2,500 on tattoos, and has been getting them ever since he turned 18. He has his neck, arms, hands, fingers, chest, hips and feet done, as well as a few on his legs where he has used his own skin to practice. Matthew has both his legs already planned and is looking to do some travelling to get more work on his front and back. He tells me that getting tattoos quickly became an "addiction", and he plans to cover his entire body, except his face.

Matthew said it wouldn't bother him if someone said he was getting too many tattoos too young. His approach to life appeared to be very 'live and let live', telling me that he disagrees with people thinking "it's their right to tell you 🍌"

I'D HAVE COMPLETED MY GOAL AND I'D BE WHAT I WANT TO SEE IN THE MIRROR





I KNOW MY AIMS AND AMBITIONS IN LIFE AND AM MAKING PROGRESS TO REACH THEM



what you should do with your own body". He understands that people may judge and stare, but essentially it his choice what he decides to do with his own skin.

So, there does not appear to be any regret with Matthew and his tattoos, and even when his plan to cover his entire body is completed, he says he won't be too disheartened. Like Rosalie, he understands he won't have any more space for tattoos but he would see it as an accomplishment, rather than a missed opportunity. He tells me: "I'd have completed my goal" and "I'd be what I want to see in the mirror".

Liam Davies was another South Wales based tattoo enthusiast that I was able to speak to. At the tender age of 22, he says that he has had "over 200 hours" of work, spending "approximately £9,000 on tattoos" in the process. He justifies this by referring to the famous Sailor Jerry

quote: "Good work ain't cheap. Cheap work ain't good". Unlike Matthew, Liam does not work in the tattoo industry, and is not looking for a career within it. His is an important perspective to gain, as being young and heavily tattooed in society is even more a stigma than being young and heavily tattooed in the tattoo community.

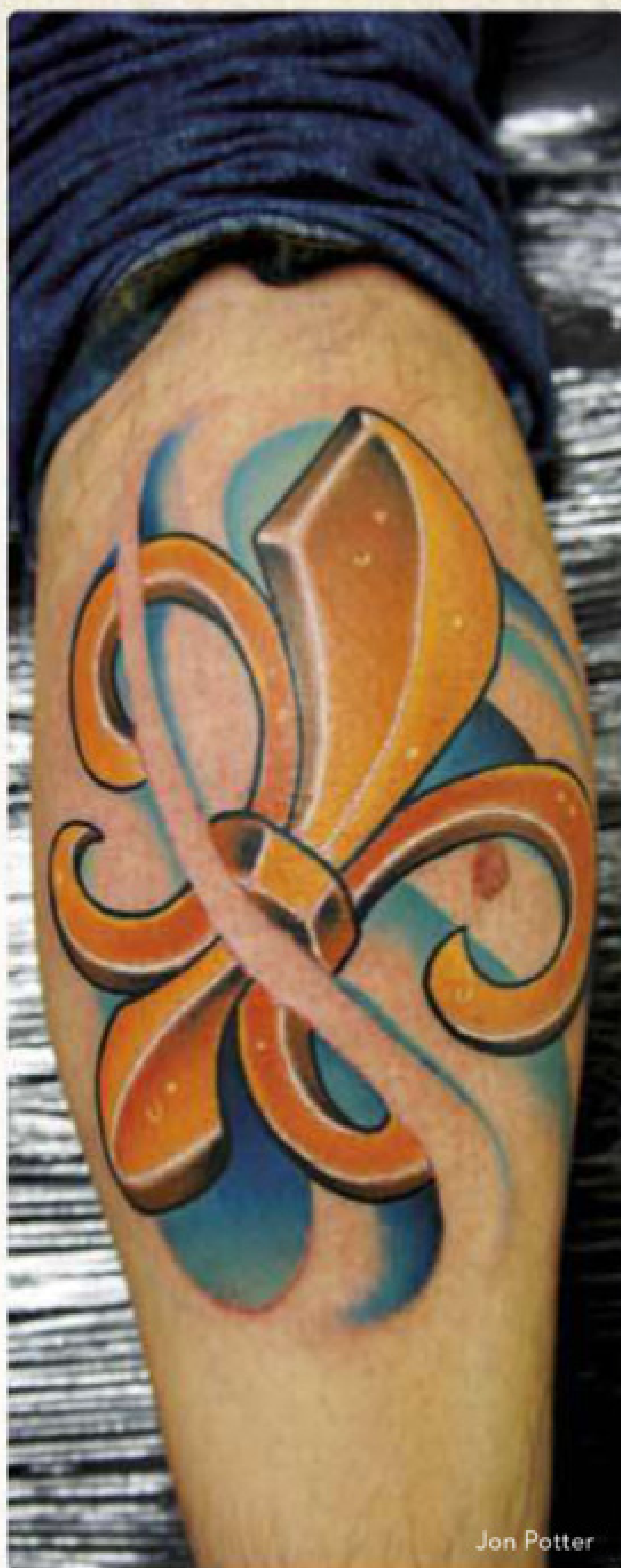
Liam's plan is to get full body coverage, leaving only the areas termed "jobstoppers" untouched - hands, face and neck - despite his desire to get them done. It is sensible logic from a young man that seems to be a collector of artwork, rather than someone who wishes to get tattooed simply for the sake of it. He comes across as very focused, stating: "I know my aims and ambitions in life and am making progress to reach them." Liam does not currently regret any of his tattoos, and believes that regret stems from poor decision making. He appears to be very





Rakhee Shah

Simon Barry



Jon Potter



Chris Harrison



Liam Jackson

THOUGH NEITHER THINK IT IS LIKELY THEY WILL LATER REGRET THEIR ARTWORK, THE THOUGHT HAD CROSSED THEIR MINDS.

self-assured and very confident that he will never regret any of his chosen artwork, and this is due to his thorough research into every piece that he gets.

Rosalie's opinions are echoed in the thoughts of both Matthew and Liam. The two main concerns highlighted in her work are also present in the interviews with these men. Though neither think it is likely they will later regret their artwork, the thought had crossed their minds. As well as this, the issue of running out of space features, with Matthew seeing it as unfortunate but necessary to accomplish his goal, and Liam deliberately saving space on his body for some of his favourite artists.

Amy Wyllie was my third victim for interrogation. Not yet 21 and with almost £2,500 🍷

spent on ink already, Amy is well on her way to achieving her plan of covering her body. Like Liam, Amy is also choosing not to tattoo those jobstopper areas. The idea that you can have too many tattoos too young seems stupid to her. She told me that if anything, she does "not have enough at the moment". Amy does not once mention regret as we talk, and like Matthew, she sees running out of space as somewhat of an achievement, stating: "I think when I'm covered I'd be satisfied. I'd feel complete."

What was noticeably absent from these discussions was the mention of age. The very topic we were choosing to focus on was not addressed at all. Despite the original blog post that looked at the issue of getting



Johny D Matthews

THE IDEA THAT YOU CAN HAVE TOO MANY TATTOOS TOO YOUNG SEEMS STUPID TO HER. SHE TOLD ME THAT IF ANYTHING, SHE DOES "NOT HAVE ENOUGH AT THE MOMENT"



Liam Jackson

too many tattoos too young, age did not appear to be the issue. The issues seemed to be running out of space, regretting the tattoos you have, and future career opportunities. Not once did anyone say "I am too young to have this much ink".

Even though age was a crucial element of the question we were attempting to answer, we had ignored it somewhat. That being the case, I decided to get in touch with Professor Vanessa Burholt, a Gerontologist (someone that studies ageing) at Swansea University.

Luckily, Professor Burholt had both a professional, and a personal interest on the issue of tattoos, and was more than happy to speak with me on the topic. I explained that my previous interviews had led me to the conclusion that age was nothing but a concept, and is not even that relevant when discussing the issue

of tattoos. She agreed and immediately began to discuss one of the common themes that was present throughout my research; the topic of regret.

Professor Burholt said that age has "little relevance" when looking at issues relating to tattoos. The key issue when looking at the question of too much, too young, is in fact regret, stating; "If you have a tattoo you regret, I believe it is the same at any age."

In theory then, seeing a heavily tattooed 20 year old, is no different to seeing a heavily tattooed 40 year old. Why should we assume that the 20 year old has got too many, and the 40 year old does not? Why should we assume that the 20 year old will regret theirs and the 40 year old will not?

Professor Burholt believes it may be "more about how society views ageing, and the prejudices that people have."



Mr Greg



Fade FX

THAT REGRET IS JUST AS LIKELY TO HAPPEN AT THE AGE OF 25 AS IT IS AT 35, OR 45, OR 55. THERE IS NO END POINT WITH AN AGREED FIGURE

Though her work focuses on the older generations, what she says is true also for the younger. There is an ageism within society that shines a negative light on both the older members, and the younger members. With tattoos, in particular, having always been a somewhat easy target. The older generation face the myth that tattoos are going to look awful on ageing skin, and the younger generation get told that they are too young, and they will regret their artwork.

For once, I feel like we may have come to a conclusion. Is it possible to have too many tattoos too young? No, I don't believe that it is. Is it possible that you will regret being covered by the time you are 25? Yes, absolutely - but that regret is just as likely to happen at the age of 25 as it is at 35, or 45, or 55. There is no end point with an agreed figure, dictating how many tattoos you can have and at what age. It is your life, your body, and your choice.

I was able to ask one final question to Rosalie, the person whose blog post inspired this

entire article. I asked how she would feel if there was a change of law and the legal age for getting a tattoo increased to 21.

She replied, quite simply: "Age restraints are just that, too restraining." 🤖



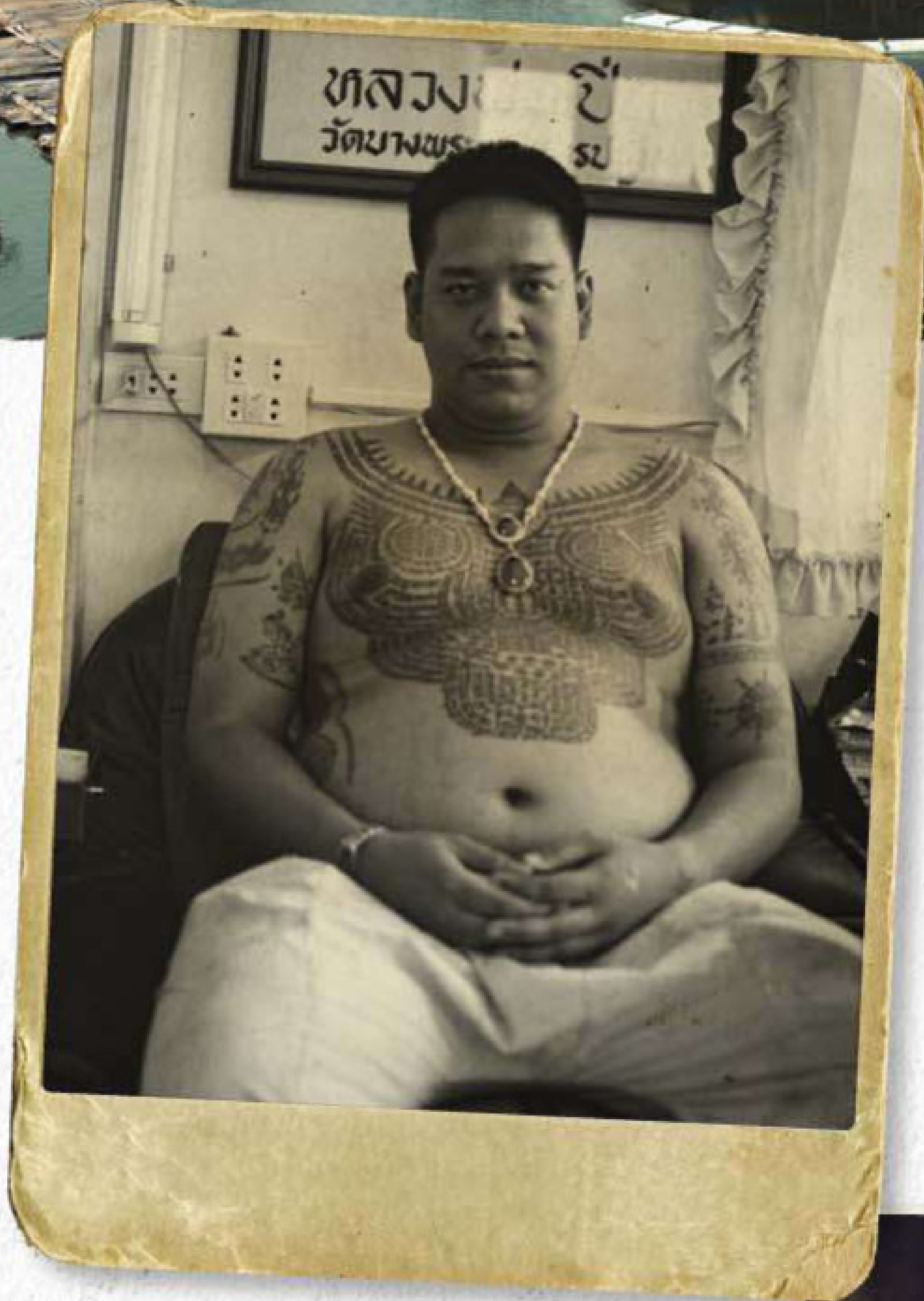
El Patman



WAT BANG PHRA:

SACRED TATTOO TEMPLE

Buddhist monks, Spaniels getting a blow-dry, cigarette offerings and colourful Buddha army? Welcome to Wat Bang Phra, hot spot for Asian sacred tattoo and spiritual gathering of Thailand's working class.



Laure Siegel P.Mod (Translation: Sharlyn Gals)

A ladyboy in tiny shorts with bunny ears on her head – a must-have fashion accessory on the streets of Thailand - is getting tattooed by a half-naked monk, himself tattooed from chest to toes, holding a cigarette in one hand and a long bamboo stem in the other. There are about twenty other temples and a hundred people who practice tattooing

in the country, but the huge religious facility located 50km east of Bangkok that is Wat Bang Phra is the most popular place for Sat Yant (sacred tattoo) in the country. Thousands of people come here every year to get tattooed by the Ajarn, masters to whom loyal 'customers' are linked all their lives.

Between 10% and 20% of the Thais have a Sak Yant. They

almost never show them off in public, but these tattoos represent a very powerful spiritual process in their belief system which is a mix of Buddhism, Animism and Hinduism. In a country where everybody (with no exception) believes in ghosts, each pattern adorns a specific power, from virility enhancement to bullet-



BACK TO THE TEMPLE'S FIRST FLOOR: IN THE HALLWAY STANDS A HALF NAKED MAN WITH A DEAD SERIOUS FACE, EQUIPPED WITH A BLOW DRYER



proofing. Every year in February, during the temple celebration also known as Wai Khru (Professors Day), the atmosphere is even more impressive: 50,000 believers gather in the yard amongst sculptures of animals, Buddhas and legendary characters sometimes looking harrowed but often smiling. They honour their masters through celebrations, trances and assembly line tattoo sessions.

Back to the temple's first floor: in the hallway stands a half naked man with a dead serious face, equipped with a blow dryer and taking care of the fur on one of the many stray dogs that reside in the surroundings of the building. After being blessed by the monk, the ladyboy chats in the middle of a group of smiling children, girlfriends and Spaniels. Two monks with full body suits are sitting on either side of a huge altar covered with offerings

and ink. One of them waves us to step closer to him and exchanges a few words with us in a very approximate English before he spontaneously blesses us with oil and gives us a piece of cloth with a Luand Por Phern portrait print on it. Luand Por Phern is the monk who dedicated his life to resurrect the culture of Sak Yant after WW2. He is the origin of the actual popularity of the temple. His body is now kept preserved in a glass coffin in one of the temple's praying rooms. Reflecting in front of his body is a mandatory step before getting tattooed.

On the ground floor, around thirty people are patiently waiting 🙏

5 MAJOR PATTERNS KAO YOT: THE NINE PILLARS

It is the first tattoo believers get from their masters, often below their neck. This most sacred Buddhist pattern has a protective power. In mythology, the nine pillars represent the mountains of the Gods: Mount Meru. There is an infinite possibility to draw them by using all geometric shapes possible. It is not the shape nor the aesthetics of the tattoo that define its function, but the mantras engraved inside.



A YOUNG MAN IS GETTING A FULL BACK PIECE BY A MONK LEANING OVER HIM WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF A MAN WEARING A 'PUNK'S NOT DEAD' TEE-SHIRT.



**5 MAJOR PATTERNS
HAH TAEW: THE FIVE SACRED LINES**

Women prefer this other geometrical pattern because it is quite discreet and has a seductive power. Prostitutes often choose it because it is supposed to make them more desirable to the opposite sex and therefore attract more customers. Every line picked in the Buddhist book of prayer has a different meaning according to the master and the demands of the believer, making this pattern the most adaptable to every personal situation. Often it includes love and tenderness, success in all aspects of life, amplification of charm, good eye and protection against bad spirits.



their turn, watching the lucky believers getting their backs inked, playing with their phones or chatting with each other - all of them are sitting between the golden cups intended for offerings such as flowers, money or a packet of cigarettes.

At the back of the gloomy room where the fresh air contrasts with the outside heat, a young man is getting a full back piece by a monk leaning over him with the assistance of a man wearing a 'Punk's not dead' tee-shirt. Believers can get a full piece for less than £10. After this ordeal for the body and the mind, the tattooed person is given an animal mask and is blessed by the monk, who entrusts him with a list of guidelines to follow.

First, the five principles of



Buddhism which is the country's official religion: Do not steal, Do not kill, Do not sleep with somebody else's wife, Do not lie, Do not do drugs or fall into addictions. The suggestions also include everlasting respect for his master, his parents, and the injunction to fight with another tattooed believer in order to keep the harmony in the small community.

The community is still

preserved from mass tourism and mainstream cultural appropriation. It consists of 'night-lifers' living during the hours when nobody judges anybody. In times of military coup d'état, censorship and corruption, leading the country to slowly slip towards chaos and civil war, the believers still have a symbol they can count on: the unchanging energy of their Sak Yant.

TOM VATER:

AUTHOR OF SACRED SKIN

Tom Vater is a writer who lives in Bangkok and has been wandering through Asia for the past twenty years looking for the most unbelievable stories. A former journalist specialised in international issues and punk-rocker in his spare time, he has been devoting himself to the writing of thrillers for a few years now. Last year he published "Sacred Skin" along with the Thai photographer Aroon Thaewchatturat.

We thought interviewing the man in an Arabic restaurant of Nana's gloomy neighbourhood at dawn was a rest idea:

"I wanted to do something about Thailand with Aroon, but not about the beaches, the elephants or the monks, those touristy things that have been done hundreds of times already. This country works like a pyramid system you cannot escape from: monarchy, aristocracy, military, businessmen, working class, and at the very

bottom, the poor. Be it on TV, cinema, music, advertisement and and all of this pop culture, the poor are never represented. All these people with darker skin because they work outside all day long, are totally excluded from the political, economical and cultural discourse. So it happens that tattoos are one of their means of expression. By integrating the Sak Yant community, by becoming believers, they become individuals. We wanted to make a book about those people that are never given a chance to speak.

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS OF FINDING PEOPLE? HOW DID YOU DO IT?

It took almost two years of work from scouting to publishing.

We first wrote a letter to the Abbot, the monk at the head of the Wat Bang Phra temple, explaining our approach and our goal. The temple's committee decided to support our project and thanks to them every temple of Bangkok and the



surroundings welcomed us in. Every day we would put together a photo studio in a different temple, with all of the technical difficulties it implied. Everything else followed quite naturally: as soon as we would portray an Arjan, his regulars also wanted to have their picture taken, as homage and a form of respect. We met dozens of heavily tattooed people, with beautiful full body suits, and then we picked about thirty of them. Contact with them was easy because Aroon is Thai and of the same social class as they are, therefore they trusted her and accepted to shoot without their clothes on - which is not an easy thing to do in their culture.

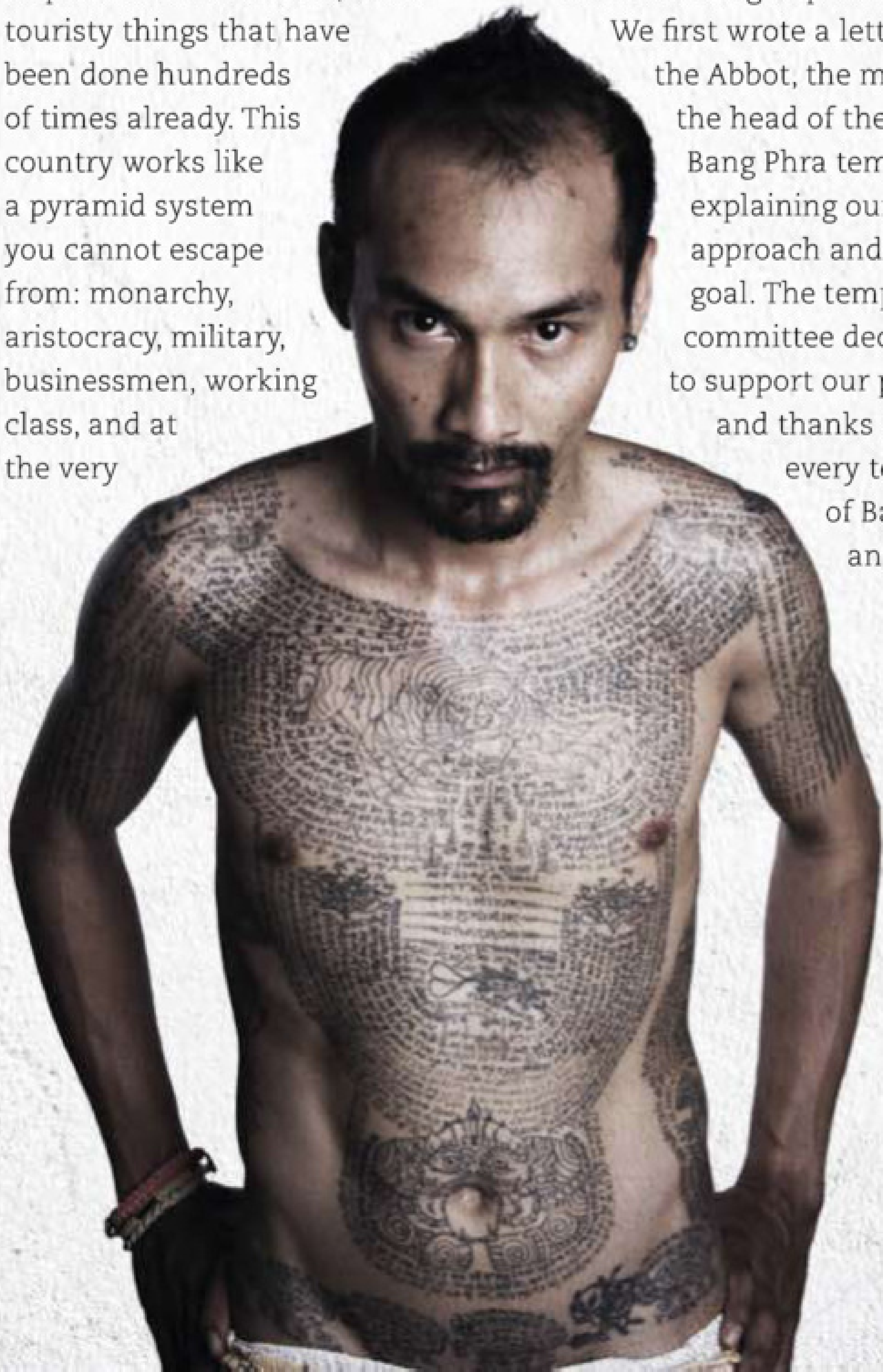
My only regret is that I don't have more than two women in that final selection, but they were the only ones who agreed to have their photo taken.

WHAT SAK YANT DO WOMEN GET?

Most of the women wear the five bands, the same pattern Angelina Jolie came to get tattooed at Wat Bang Phra in

5 MAJOR PATTERNS YANT SUA: THE TIGER

This tattoo, sketched in a traditional or in a contemporary way, brings together strength, bravery and power. It is a favourite of policemen and soldiers, as well as businessmen who believe that this pattern will favour them against competition. It is also known for protecting against evil spirits. A headless tiger saves its owner in life and death situations, while a tailless tiger is often chosen by a men in powerful professional positions. It can be worn anywhere on the body, but they are quite often tattooed on the chest.





IF SOMEBODY WHO GOT THE PATTERN THAT'S SUPPOSED TO STOP BULLETS KILLS SOMEBODY, THE TATTOO WILL LOOSE ITS POWER AND WILL BECOME JUST A PICTURE ON THE SKIN

5 MAJOR PATTERNS PHO KAE: THE HERMIT

According to legend, a hermit is a wise, lonely man who lived in the reclude forests of India to meditate and study traditional medicine and arts. Most tattoo masters worship this character, asserting that they got their powers from a line of descent of wise hermits. The size of this pattern depends on the tattoo masters knowledge. The Hermit, who walks bent over a stick, bears with him knowledge, generosity and serenity. He is sometimes drawn with a third eye - a metaphor for his ability to see the past, present and future.

2004, creating a wave of demands from a lot of celebrities in the world. Traditionally, monks are not allowed to touch women, so they use a pillow between them and the back of the woman to avoid direct contact. Even though tattoo has become more popular for women during the last ten years, it is still not socially acceptable for them to have one. If the woman is a night worker, it doesn't matter because they work in a dark field so nobody is going to judge them. For the women who have 'normal' jobs and want to get tattooed, they usually use sesame oil: the pattern has the same power but it remains invisible, so they can avoid discrimination and stigmatisation. The pattern is only visible when they get angry or have an adrenaline rush.

Same thing happens for policemen and military: they cannot be tattooed before they join the corps because of the image. Most of the time, they wait to be well integrated and get tattooed afterwards, when the hierarchy doesn't check any longer. There are a lot of tattoos specifically for the military.

WHERE DOES THE SAK YANT COME FROM?

The origins of the Sak Yant remain blurry. A theory asserts that Brahman priests sent by India in the surrounding countries to spread Hinduism and counter-balance the Buddhist influence imported this tradition. To this day, the king of Thailand still has nine Brahman

advisors. Others suggest that Thai's imported this culture from Cambodia during the 15th century. A Chinese diplomat, the only one to have written about the country when it was at its height, explains in his notes that Cambodia's king was wearing pieces of metal under his skin. That body modification became fashionable and to this day people still insert copper tubes engraved with prayers under the skin of their chin. The same prayers told during a Sak Yant session.

In any case, the action of transcribing this pattern onto the skin is very specific to South-East Asia. In India, they engrave it on wood or clothes. We think it comes from soldiers, who sewed it on their jackets at first as a sign of recognition and power, but as they often lost them during the battles, they started getting them tattooed on their skin.

Most of the patterns come from Hinduism, such as Ganesh, Burmese ethnic group from Yunnan, of the South of Tibet. Influences mixed with Buddhist imagery specific to Thailand, such as the nine pillars of Buddhism, one of the most popular tattoos for men.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE MAGIC ATTRIBUTE OF THOSE TATTOOS?

It is very important not to judge. The only thing to remember is

that all of the Thai people believe in the corrective power of the tattoo. A lot of Arjan think they will turn bad boys into good ones by tattooing them. Sak Yant is a powerful visual reminder who helps to always follow the right path. But, if somebody who got the pattern supposed to stop the bullets kills somebody, the tattoo will loose its power and will become just a picture on the skin. The same thing will happen if a guy drinks 300 beers a night and takes some speed.

During one of the interviews, a girl told us the following story: on her back she has a tattoo usually worn by soldiers, very powerful, right above the tattoo of a tiger. One day, her sister came to her crying, telling her that she had discovered her husband had been



cheating. They proceeded to go find the husband together, in a gloomy motel where he was with another girl, to try to convince him to come back. He had a gun and threatened them to leave while insulting them. The girl jumped and hit him in the shoulder. The guy was instantly paralysed and stayed a few weeks at the hospital. To protect her against her own ardor, her Ajarn decided to tattoo birds at the top of her back to balance the power of the other tattoos. They all work in harmony - it all has a deep meaning.

**5 MAJOR PATTERNS
YANT PHRA PIK
KANED: GANESH**

The famous Indian God, a man with an elephant head, is a symbol of success that helps overcome obstacles of life. Ganesh is a cheerful divinity decorated with sparkling jewellery and a crown. It is very popular in Thailand and has become a standard sacred motif.



THE TRUE ARJAN HAVE THE SECRETS OF FABRICATION BECAUSE THOSE TATTOOS ARE VERY POWERFUL AND THEY DO NOT WANT TO GET THEM STOLEN.

AS SOON AS A TOURIST SETS FOOT IN BANGKOK, AN ADVERT AT THE AIRPORT WARNS THEM AGAINST THE DISRESPECTFUL USE OF BUDDHA AS A TATTOO MOTIF. WHAT IS THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION?

The government gave out flyers to the tattoo shops asking them to refuse to tattoo Buddhas on


honesty of these guys: Pali is the language used in Buddhism, a very old language from India that nobody talks anymore. All the mantras are told in this language, but revised the Cambodian way because they were transcribed with the Cambodian alphabet. If the tattoo artist doesn't speak both languages, he cannot



hippies' asses on holidays here but it didn't have a big impact in reality. Tattooists do whatever they want to do, nobody checks or is watching them. It was just some pre-election operation to show or pretend they are doing something to preserve the Thai culture.

To come back on the subject of Sak Yant, you can even get some tattooed at Khao San Road, Bangkok's 'debauchery street' that attracts more than 2 million tourists a year. The problem is the level of education and

produce something with a meaning, something accurate - he can only copy what has already been done. The true Arjan have the secrets of fabrication because those tattoos are very powerful and they do not want to get them stolen. They change one letter or the order of the letters at a very specific place, to hide the true meaning of the tattoo. It is just like a copyright - a secret between the Ajarn and his regular customer.

"Sacred Skin, Thailand's Spirit Tattoos", Visionary World editions, available on amazon 

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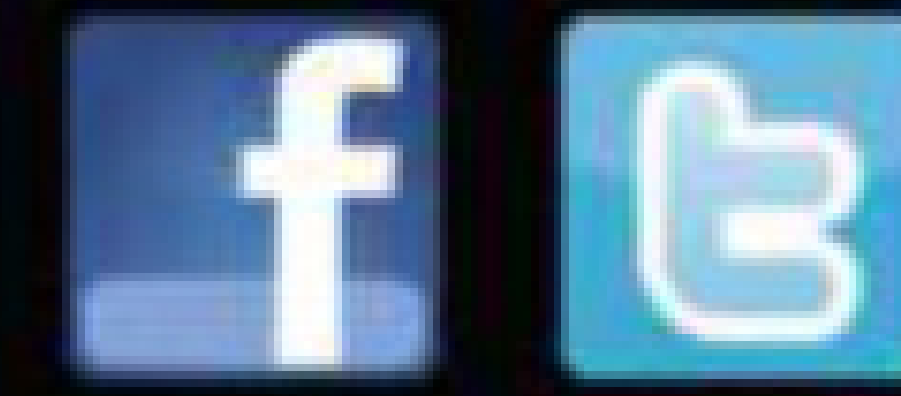


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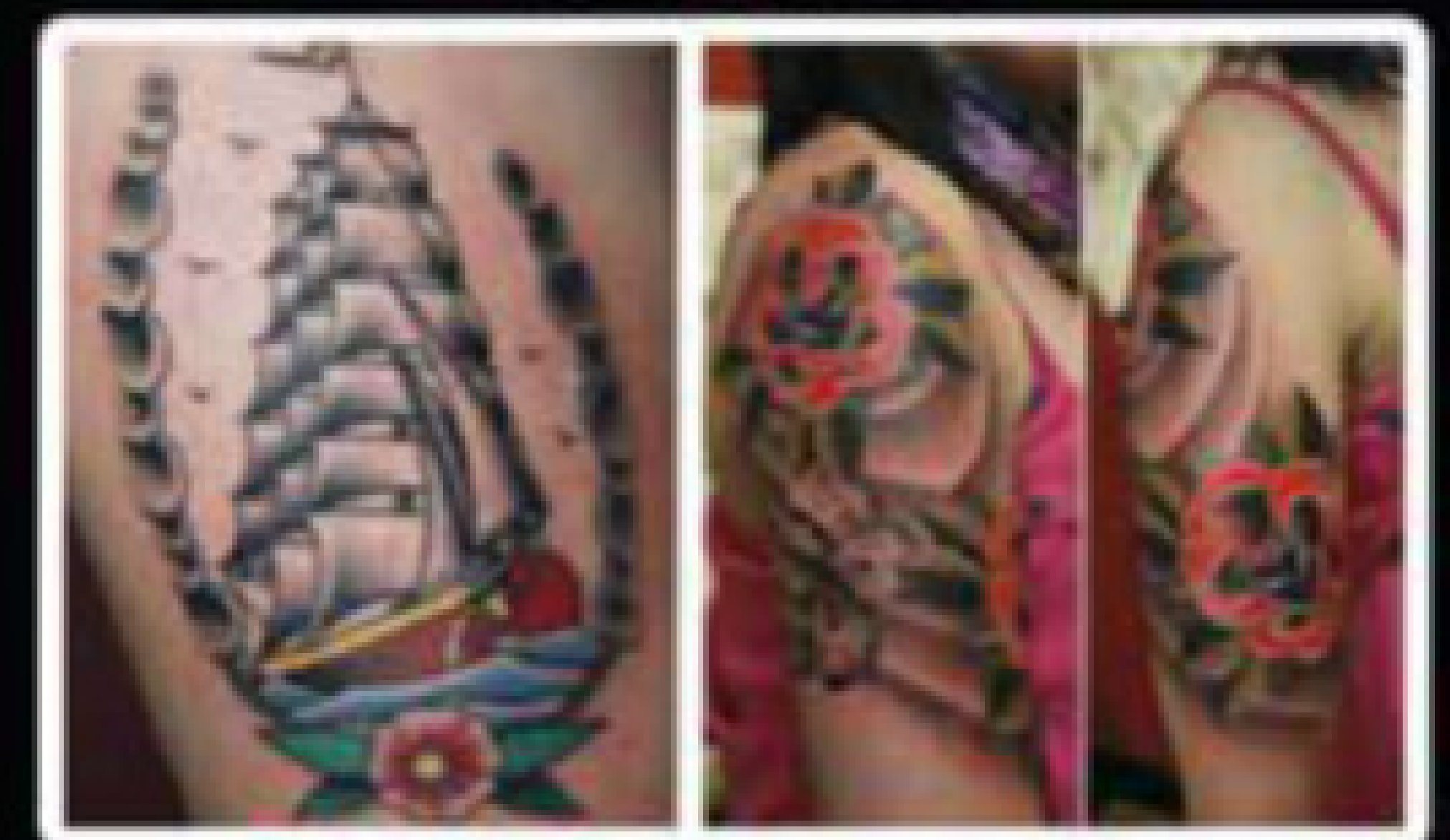
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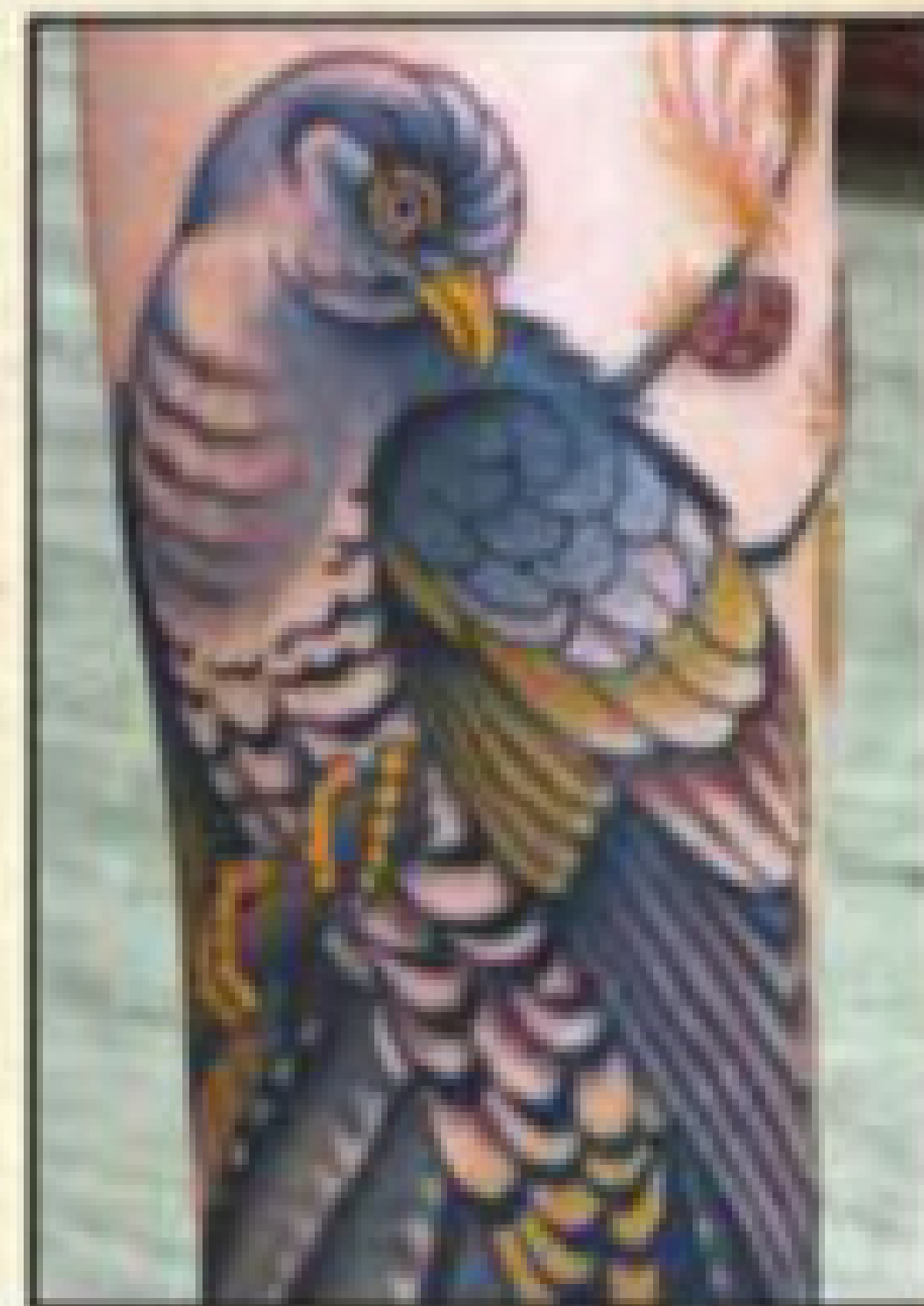
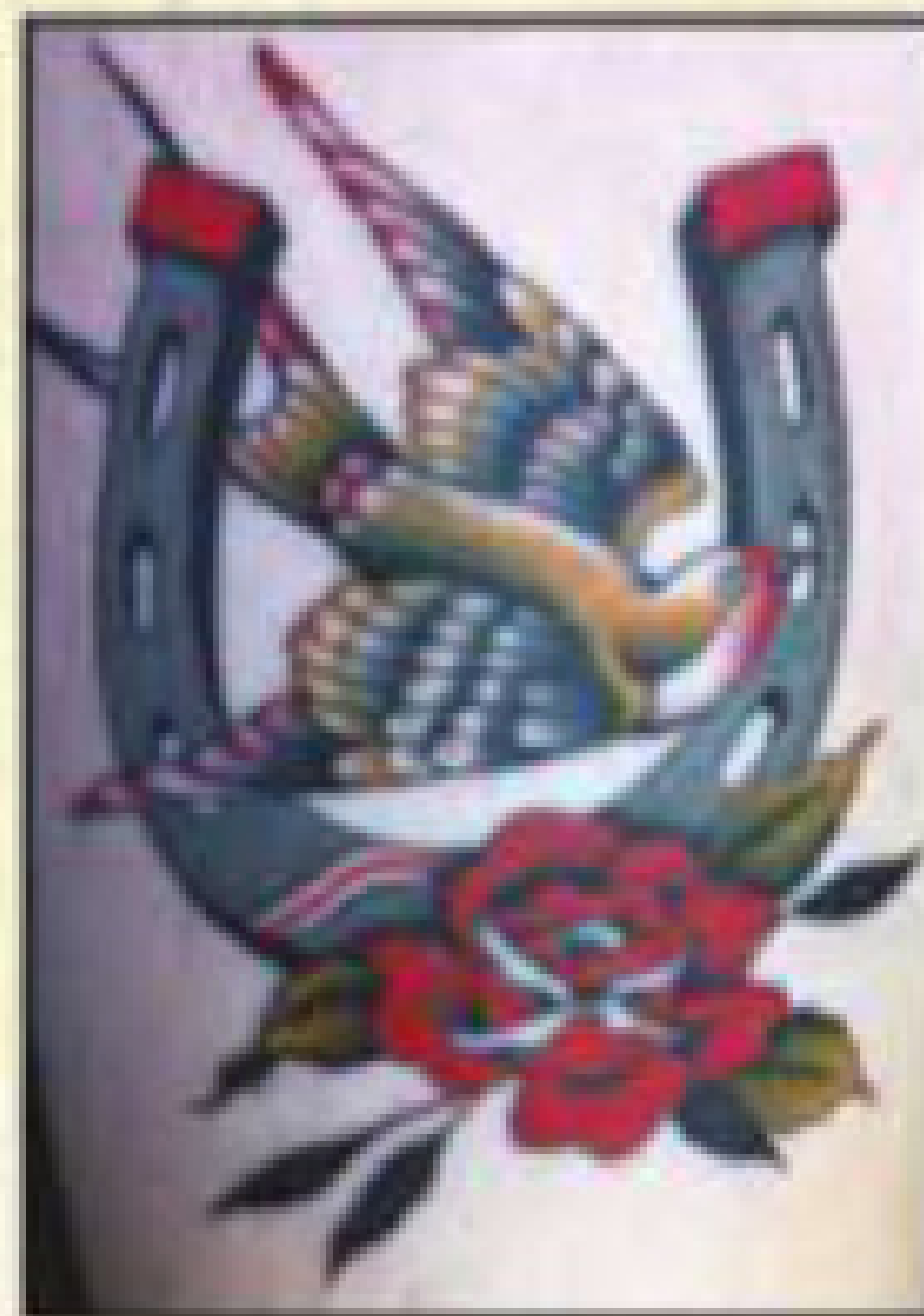
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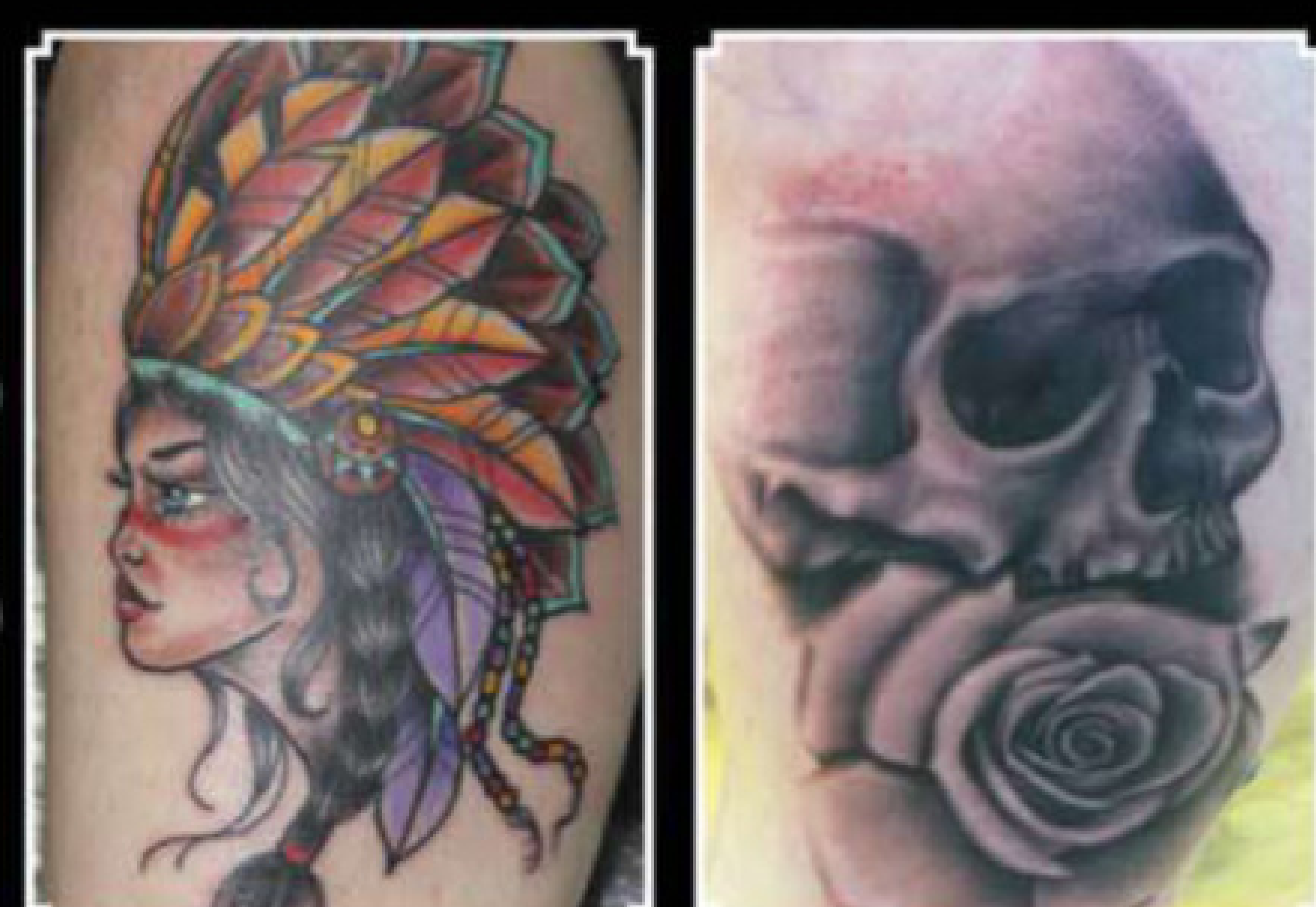


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Pages shown from *The Best Horror Tattoos* and *The Best Comic Book Tattoos*.

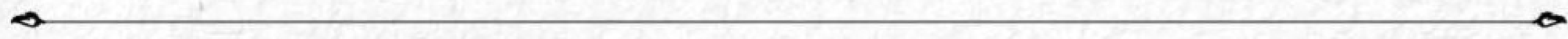
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Here in the Now Frontier

PAUL TALBOT

In our continuing journey with Paul Talbot as he traverses the new world of graphics in tattooing, this issue, Mr T gets a lesson in learning a lesson. Or something like that:



I was asked recently if i would be interested in creating a traditional Japanese sleeve. Not a stylised version of my own making but an actual traditional piece.

I have never studied - to any great degree - the finer points of Japanese tattooing and, as such, my knowledge of the subject is restricted to studies of the composition, colour theory and importance of black. I have no idea how to correctly combine the myriad of elements or of the rules (or lack of) surrounding the position and direction of wind-bars, finger waves, clouds etc. So I declined explaining that, whilst my resulting piece may look like a piece of traditional Japanese art, it would almost certainly be a huge insult to any artist that has spent years acquiring the necessary knowledge in order to correctly create art that is deeply rooted in religion, history and culture.

I'm a western, suburban, heavy metal kid (Fuck yeah! Sorry. Ed.) that grew up with comic books, album covers, advertising and graffiti. As well as being a tattooist, I'm also a graphic designer and graphic design - the art form (yeah, you heard me - The Art Form) forms part of my 'culture'. Let me bring you up to speed - well about as far a 1922 - in order to explain a little...

While graphic design as a discipline has a relatively recent history, graphic design-like activities span the history of humankind: from the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages, to the dazzling neons of Ginza. Many books in the classical world were illustrated, although only a handful of original examples survive. Medieval religious illuminated manuscripts have used graphics extensively, but it





IN GRAPHIC DESIGN "THE ESSENCE IS TO GIVE ORDER TO INFORMATION, FORM TO IDEAS, EXPRESSION AND FEELING TO ARTEFACTS THAT DOCUMENT HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

wasn't until the late 19th-century when the first official publication of a printed design was released which marked the separation of graphic design from fine art. Henry Cole - one of the major forces in design education in Great Britain, informed the government of the importance of design in his Journal of Design and Manufactures in 1849.

From 1891 to 1896, William Morris published books that are some of the most significant graphic design products of the Arts and Crafts movement. Morris created a market for works of graphic design in their own right to create a profession for this new type of art for aspiring individuals who wished to earn a living through these skills. Morris' work, along with the rest of the Private Press movement, directly influenced Art Nouveau and is indirectly responsible for developments in early twentieth century graphic design in general including The Bauhaus - a German art school set up in opposition to the old European art academies. The Bauhaus evolved a new language of art and design that was abstract, dynamic and liberated from historicism which all had a profound influence upon subsequent developments in art, architecture, graphic design, interior design, industrial design, and typography.

Right now you're probably thinking 'And, your 🍷



IN TIME, GRAPHIC TATTOOING WILL FIND ITS PLACE IN THE WIDER WORLD OF TATTOO JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHER 'NEW' STYLES THAT WENT BEFORE IT. THE GOOD WILL BE SEPARATED FROM THE UGLY AND THE TALENTLESS WILL WITHER AND DIE

point is?' Well, In both this lengthy history and in the relatively recent explosion of visual communication there is sometimes a blurring distinction and overlapping of graphic design and fine art. After all, they share many of the same elements, theories, principles, practices and languages. This is no less true in the emerging graphic style of tattooing but it is important to know that graphic design has its own history that is both connected and separate from that of fine art. It's a history that must be understood. It is also a discipline that must be learned and it has rules that must be followed in order for the communication to work. In this respect it's no different from traditional Japanese tattooing, except that - in the world of tattooing - it currently isn't afforded any of the respect given to this other ancient art.

In order to do it correctly you have to have studied graphic design and know the rules, you can't just throw a few flowers, wind bars and mythical beasts together and expect it to be a traditional Japanese tattoo and in the same way graphic tattooing isn't just a random 'grab bag' of objects, paint effects and a bit of type plonked onto the skin any old how. Just like all other forms of tattooing, it's composition must be

balanced as should its placement on the body.

Having interviewed a few artists over the previous months, it's become clear that the biggest misunderstanding of graphic tattooing in its many forms is that, like the more established traditional forms, it's a field of specialist expertise. It's an area that most tattoo artists don't feel comfortable attempting - and who can blame them. It's an area of art most haven't studied at all, so even the simplest of decisions becomes a nightmare.

And that some should wise up, get off the trend wagon and leave alone.

In time, graphic tattooing will find its place in the wider world of tattoo just like all the other 'new' styles that went before it. The good will be separated from the ugly and the talentless will wither and die. But at the moment, it's you - the reader, the customer, the collector - that are quite literally paying the price for bad artwork and in my book, that's unacceptable.

Thus, in the coming months, as well as interviewing graphic tattoo artists from all over the world, I will also be taking a look at some of the key principles of graphic design and how they translate into graphic tattoos. Hopefully, better informed and armed with a little knowledge of how things should actually be done, you'll be able to sort the wheat from the chaff and make sure that you get a 'real' graphic tattoo done by an artist with a background in graphic design and not a dodgy bootleg.

Bootlegs are only cool when it comes to music (and even that's debatable).

Until next month. Peace. 🌻



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The Time Machine

WAYNE JOYCE

Last issue, we promised we would make a valiant attempt to demystify the technical jargon you might get handed when looking for laser removal. We intend on keeping that promise, so here we go:



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It might seem like new ground, but laser removal has been around for something like 20 years - it's only in recent years that it's actually become something people are seriously thinking about as an option with unwanted ink.

To give you some background first on the mighty laser and how it works - without getting too scientific - what happens is, the laser shoots beams of light with a massive amount of precision at the layer of skin that the ink of your tattoo lives in. This light, then breaks up the ink (and therefore your tattoo) from the inside out. The lasers can be set to different frequencies depending on what colours you're going to be removing, and once lasered, your body will then go about the pesky task of healing the wounds and metabolising the ink.

The tech part of this (and why you should be heading to a qualified practitioner) lies in knowing what kind of frequency to use. Some older models such as Intense Pulse Light (IPL) lasers look good and are still called lasers, but their job is hair removal, not tattoo removal - so be warned.

Luckily, technology keeps moving forwards - it's pretty much like trying to keep up with the latest version of your phone but just because a new model is released with some bells and

whistles, it doesn't mean your old phone is suddenly a piece of shit. Occasionally though, a major upgrade does take place and that's where the benefits of progress really do come in to play.

The laser options that you should take seriously are: standard active and passive Q-switches, which get decent results but take quite a few sessions meaning more detriment to the skin. The new generation of lasers, the Picosure lasers, are far superior in the quality of the ink dispersal in fewer sessions. Having fewer sessions can thus reduce a lot of the aggravation associated with removal.

This is a choice that you must make as the customer based on your cash-flow and your amount of patience. Tattoos removed by Q-switch lasers will be cheaper (on a session by session basis), but take longer and tattoos removed by the Picosure laser are not so cheap but work harder for you.

Hey - we're not your parents. What you decide to do it is totally in your court. As we said, all we're doing here is making it simpler for you to understand what's available, what you're getting and maybe even, getting what you actually want - but as with everything in this game, you will get what you pay for.

Finding the correct piece of tech to get the results you want might require a bit of research but it's imperative if you're serious about your skin.

If you have any questions or want to pass by for a consultation, you can contact me here: wayne@resetroom.com



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Soapbox

CRAIGY LEE

📍 Craigy Lee 📍 Ash Springle

Over the past few months in Queensland there has been a bit of an uproar as the state brings into effect licensing for tattoo artists...

It happened in New South Wales last year, where in a similar way to the UK, each state (council) has their own guidelines and regulations, which leads to a somewhat varied state of hygiene across the country resulting in certain areas having stricter rules than others. The knock on effect of this is that certain parts of the country are slightly easier to open a tattoo studio in than others. Overall though, every council's licence rules are based around hygiene and sterilisation, which is more than justified in an industry that deals with blood on a daily basis. Things also seem to be moving forward in Blighty with the first person ever being prosecuted this year for tattooing from home in an unlicensed premises.

However, the uproar in Australia is well justified and it may horrify you to learn that the licensing being implemented has nothing to do with hygiene, cleanliness, sterilisation or anything else that will ensure tattooing is done in a safe environment.

So what the hell is it to do with?

It seems to have more to do with biker gangs and trying to make some quick cash. The police and government want to know who is tattooing and where. If you have a criminal conviction - no matter how long ago - or have been a member of/affiliated with a bike gang - past or present - then you will not be allowed to tattoo, or own a tattoo shop.

This is robbing people like "Little Mick" of their livelihood who has tattooed in Brisbane for over twenty years. Mick has paid his taxes and never broken the law, but because he happens to be a member of the Rebels



Motorcycle Club, he cannot get a licence to tattoo, so in effect has been robbed of his job.

Meanwhile, artists in Queensland who can get a licence, are being stung with a fee of \$1150 for one year or \$1990 for three years, which will only be issued once police checks are cleared.

To get this licence, artists have to go to the police station, give their fingerprints, have their photo taken and be put on record.

Quite rightly artists are standing up and declaring it to be an invasion of their human rights - they are having to get a criminal records check which results in being put into the system just to prove they are not a criminal. The new regulations also mean police can randomly search a tattoo studio at any time without a warrant.

It's certainly a sad state of affairs for hard working, normal people who seem to be criminalised because of their occupation.

So next time you think your local council is being harsh by checking your autoclave service history or what you are cleaning your worktops with, just think about the poor fellows in the southern hemisphere being given a criminal record to prove they don't have one!

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 and find me on instagram @craigy_lee 🐾

An Eye is upon you

NO OPINION

A month or two ago a good friend of mine announced his intent to lose weight - my first instinct was to immediately deny that such action was necessary, but I stopped myself before the clichéd, 'Why? You are fine as you are' left my lips.



Pam Van-Damned

wanted to reassure my friend but suddenly felt excruciatingly aware that I had no adequate response, for agreeing would be to criticise his body as he stood before me, and disagreeing would be to belittle his wishes for the future. Either option felt like a misplaced entitlement, so instead, I tried to offer no opinion at all, only support.

When one has tattoos that are on a very large scale, or that are difficult to conceal, one is likely to attract a certain amount of attention and opinion from others. Leaving aside the educated tattoo art fan (who generally only ask who a particular tattoo is by anyway) most folk can be divided into two categories, those that are non-tattooed (a.k.a Team: 'Tattoos Aren't For Me But...') and those that have at least a little ink of their own, (a.k.a. Team: 'I'll Show You Mine If You Show Me Yours').

DON'T JUDGE EACH DAY BY THE HARVEST YOU REAP, BUT BY THE SEEDS THAT YOU PLANT

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Some time ago, I came to the understanding that if I wanted the privilege of a life that was, at least aesthetically, outside of usual societal constraint, then that privilege would be unavoidably tempered by an obligation to tolerate the opinions and judgements of others. This obligation was not created by the act of becoming tattooed, rather, it is a by-product of my choosing

to make that act visible - there are many tattooed folk out there with vast swathes of tattoo coverage under their clothes who keep well covered as they go about their day-to-day business, for them there is no social agreement to engage. It is perfectly possible to live a life as an extensively tattooed person whilst still keeping the tattoos themselves entirely private (if the rumours are to be believed, Queen of Country Music, Dolly Parton consistently wears long sleeves in order to conceal her tattooed sleeves), but the very nature of that privacy means that the quietly tattooed are invisible to the general public, who are left to believe the mainstream media narrative - that tattoos are born out of a desire for attention, that tattoos exist purely to be looked at, and that tattooed people are always a painting hung on a wall, not an illustrated book in a private library.

Because I chose to have tattoos, and I choose to show them, I have effectively signed a unwritten contract of engagement. I have opened myself to the opinions and judgements of others and I am presented with them at the gym, in the supermarket check-out queue, and in the school playground (and once, in the dentists chair). I meet admirers and critics everywhere I go, who approach me full of questions they've always wanted to ask and statements they've wanted to make, but have not quite dared to before now. If my new friend is from team, 'Tattoos Aren't For Me, But...', I'm rarely flustered. I've gotten

quite efficient at satisfying both their desire for communication and my own desire for brevity and have a number of well-used answers ranging from silly one-liners to philosophical discourse. However, if my new acquaintance is from team, 'I'll Show You Mine If You Show Me Yours', I can be rendered uncharacteristically speechless, for what is one supposed to do when presented with someone else's tattoo?

Often, when we ask someone what they think, we aren't looking for truthful opinion, instead we're seeking approval. We don't really want to know if our bum looks big in this, or what someone truly thinks of our new hat, we just want to be told we look nice. Fortunately, politeness is so intrinsic in our everyday interaction that the asker is rarely disappointed, reassurance is given and the world carries on. When it comes to tattoos is it best to take the advice of our grandparents and when we, 'can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all'? Should we stop telling each other, 'as long as you're happy with it, that's all that matters' and instead speak out about the bad, the mediocre and the unoriginal, knowing that the truth may hurt now, but that it could help in the long term, the tattoo-critique equivalent of a medical procedure?

Or, perhaps once the tattoo is there, assimilated into the wearers body, we should work on offering no opinion on the past at all and talk only of the future? 🐼

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