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skin deep

TATTOO MAGAZINE

SPECIAL: ALIVE!
THE PHOTOGRAPHY
OF DIRK BEHLAU

FREE INSIDE



**SKIN SHOTS
SAMPLER**

**JOSH
PEACOCK**
*In The
Coffee House*

**READ MY
BODY**
*Tattoos As
A Musical
Instrument?*

*The
Traditional
Art Of*
**QUYEN
DINH**

**JORELL
ELIE**
*West Coast
Hero*

**MORE
ADVENTURES
IN THAILAND**

**{ BRACE
YOURSELF
FOR EPIC
INK }**
NEW FACES
OF TATTOO TV



ISSUE 241 • SEPTEMBER 2014 • £3.95
MODEL: SCOTT COLE PHOTOGRAPH: AMY PREECE

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The needle has landed

TORCHES AND BLANKETS

got back from our Manchester show about fifteen hours ago.

Every show we do turns up something that surprises me. A show review (probably next issue) is not the place to cover those surprises - but here? Here is a great place to lay out the things I have found.

I met at least four people with severe scarring who, for their own personal reasons, chose to cover/disguise/incorporate their scars amongst tattoo art. The surprise comes from exactly how much thought has to go into this before it's attempted. It's not an easy thing to get started on these projects - sometimes, that opening conversation with a tattoo artist about what's required will be the first time the scarring has been talked about honestly and openly in years - maybe ever. I know this to be true. I think it's incredibly brave to do this - it's also very clever and requires no small amount of thought and commitment, but I make no bones about the fact that it's a lot of responsibility for the artist who takes it on. This is when a tattoo is so much more than a tattoo... it's a life-changer.

But you don't have to be scarred to get up to this level of tattooing. I also met a guy who came back from death - that's right, death - and chose to celebrate his second chance on the planet with a wonderful tattoo that was so damn personal and smart, you couldn't help but be moved by it. Sometimes, when you hand out those awards at the end of the day (which are,

FOR EVERY FLAMING TORCH YOU CHOOSE TO THROW A BLANKET OVER BECAUSE YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU SEE, WE - COLLECTIVELY - WILL LIGHT UP ANOTHER ONE.

after all, based on what you see and not any back-story you may find out later) it makes life seem that little bit more hopeful for everyone.

Then you jump on a train to go home when it's all over and you find yourself sitting opposite somebody reading the Daily Mail who really doesn't want to be sitting opposite you when she looks down and sees your arms. There's a noise those people make to let you know they are thinking this. It sounds like a pig with its head stuck in a bucket. So be it. You spend your life being bigoted about the human race, lady, and I will at least try do

something constructive about it. For every flaming torch you choose to throw a blanket over because you don't like what you see, we - collectively - will light up another one.

I had only been home an hour when I saw a social media comment asking what 'right' did we - 'we' being Trent, Paula and myself - have to be judging a tattoo competition and being

dismissive of people who work hard. If I remember correctly, the comment called us a 'couple of magazine writers and an enthusiast' (which to be fair is basically what is says in the show programme) and that we knew nothing about the real life of tattooers. Something like that.

Investigating further, I saw that it was made by a tattooist and it made me a little bit sad that somebody might think the three of us do not spend 16 hours a day shining our torches and promoting the shit out of great work in some way. I don't mind what anybody thinks, but take away the platform that social

media has become and all you're left with is bitterness.

The next day (that would be this morning) came the emails about the show - the people who had a great time, those who found a new artist to work with, artists who had faith injected back into what they were doing when they thought all hope was lost, artists who arranged to trade chairs and get out a little more - at which point, I really couldn't care less what a tiny pocket of doom may think.

All of this has not really got anything to do with this show in particular. It could be any show, in any country; these occurrences and many, many others happen all around the world, every day.

Don't let the torch get heavy. And - always carry scissors to cut holes in blankets.

Sen



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PATENT PENDING
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WorldMags

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

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98 AN EYE IS UPON YOU

22 WDIRK BEHLAU: ALIVE

Over the last few years, Dirk Behlau has been permanently on the road cataloguing the tattooed counter-culture with his trusty camera for the release of his book: *ALIVE*. Come along...

36 QUYEN DINH
Traditional, timely, detailed, derivative, bold, beautiful, badass, inspiring, and innovative: there is no shortage of words when attempting to describe the art of Quyen Dinh. Her talents are only exceeded by her character and desire to experience life.

80 READ MY BODY
In this age of pervasive tattooing, world firsts are getting harder to achieve. Yet Russian artist Dmitry Morozov has done just that by creating a machine that reads tattoos and turns them into music.



QUYEN DINH: ART FROM THE HEART

P60



EPIC INK: TATTOO TV LIKE NEVER BEFORE

60 EPIC INK
Epic Ink, a new tattoo reality show, has wrapped and as we wait for it to air on the 20th August, we are once again left wondering: could this one be 'the one'?

74 JORELL ELIE
After four years of working at The Honorable Society, Los Angeles-based artist

Jorell Elie tells of the unique circumstances that united him with tattooing - flawlessly quoting Anchorman along the way.

80 THAI ROAD TRIP: PART 2
Valued by the world's lost youth for its fascinating

vulgarity, Khao San Road is also home of another treasure: the tattoo shop BKK Ink, owned by the Thai/French team on a mission to conquer the tattoo world.

THIS MONTH'S PULL OUT:
SKIN SHOTS SAMPLER



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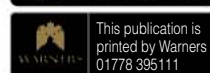
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INDUSTRY AWARDS

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

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FIGHTING



STILT
WALKERS



GRAFFITI
ART



FREAK
SHOWS



PHOTO
SHOOTS



BATTLE OF
THE BANDS

ARTISTS CONFIRMED SO FAR

Andy McDonald
Anrijs Straume
Adam McDermott
Adam Thomas
Alan Turner
Alex Rattray
Alex Williamson
Alex Wright
Andrew Govan
Andy Bowler
Andy Syme
Andy Walker
Angel Tochev
Anna Garvey
Arran Knott
Ash Lewis
Barbara Sharuzen
Beki Ess
Ben Gadsby
Ben Parry
Beth Cust
Bez
Billy Sleight
Boris Bianchi
Brownie
Callam Godley
Carlie Bennee
Casper Redmer
Ceri Williams
Cesar De Cesaro
Chad Newsom
Chantale Coady
Charlotte Dodd
Charlotte Hughes
Cheryl Gouldthorpe
Chris Byrne
Chris Collins
Chris Harrison
Chris Jones
Chris Ormond
Cido
Claire Hamill
Craig Cardwell
Craig Measures
Craig McGee
Dan Arietti

Dan Barren
Dan Henk
Dan Mihalache
Dan Stewart
Dane Grannon
Dan Hartley
Daniel Hartley
Danny Eddy
Darryl Mullen
Dave Brace
David Corden
David Lindgren
David Pattinson
David Robb
Dean Cowley
Dean Gleeson
Deathpop
Dek Kent
Derek Bauwens
Dizz
Dome Fleming
Duane Robinson
Ell Torres
Emile Cook
Emily Dawson
Emma Wroe
Fanel Alexe
Gator
Gavin Clarke
Gavin Skelton
George Torrington
Giles Twigg
Graham Longton
Guy Tinsley
Gypsy (Jean Pierre Letienne)
Hao
Hannah Von Farren
Hannya Jayne
Henry Pyykko (Mr Dist)
Ivano Foddai
Jake Giles
James Bull
James Hobbs
Jamie Rees
Jase Jones
Jay Blaudums

Jennifer Maw
Jo Black
Joe Lumbard
Joe Meakin
Johnny D Matthews
Jon Bennee
Jorge Becerra
Jorn Grotwinkel
Jordan Oterski
Josh Peacock
Joshua Williams
Joshua Young
Judd Ripley
Jules Gordon
Jurgis Mikalauskas
Justyna Obwojska
Keety
Keifer Lilley
Kelvin Slack
Keng Timsuwan
Kev Carlin
Kevin Brodie
Kieran Palmer
Koen Chamberlain
Kris Taylor
Laura Jones
Lawrence Canham
Leah Moule
Lee Denham
Lee Jones
Lee Pickles
Leanne Fate
Liam Jackson
Liam Monahan
Lisa Walker
Liz Buckland
Loz Phillips
Lucian Broughton
Lukasz 'Bam' Kazmarek
Luke Foley
Luke Williamson
Marcin Ptak
Marcin Sonski
Marie Cox
Mark Bester
Mark Gibson

Marc Nutley
Mark Poole
Mark Reed
Martin Morrissey
Mat Lapping
Matt Abraham
Matt Vinyl
Matt Webb
Matthew Owen
Martin Binczewski
Michael Fadi
Michael Vro
Michelle Maddison
Mike Philp
Mike Stockings
Mikee Cue
Morgan Charles
Neko
Nik Brierley
Nikita Nevermore
Niorkz Meniconi
Ollie Tye
Pam Green
Paul Davies
Paul Smith
Paul Talbot
Paul Vander-Johnson
Paula Castle
Pauly La Vey
Pedro Mendonca
Peter Nelson
Philip Sanderson
Rachel Oyston
Rich Knight
Richard Peel
Rob Bates
Rob Clements
Rob Jackson
Rob Ratcliffe
Rob Richardson
Roman Benedik
Rose Green
Rudy
Ryan Smith
Sam Cahill
Sam Whitehead

Samuel Connelly
Scott Grozier
Shaun Wainwright
Simon Ashley
Simon Cooke
Simon Grayson
Simon Greenwood
Sonny Mitchell
Steph Reed
Steve Jarvis
Steve Tucker
Stu MacDonald
Tim Kingsbury
Toni Moore
Tony Cox
Travis Broyle
Tuomas Stoor
Sade Sonck
Vicki Norton
Victor Hell Yeah Tattoo
Vladimir Smirnov Rusu
Wayne Bewley
Wayne Green
William Jones
Zooki

TRADERS CONFIRMED SO FAR

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Bedlam
Blink Laser
Cam (UK) Supply
Cooperwhite Wines
Diamonds & Dusters
Firefoods
Global Tattoo Supplies
Hex Piercing Ltd
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Sleeve Notes

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

SHORT SLEEVES

UNLICENSED ARTIST FINED

A Darlington man has been fined after a court found him guilty of carrying out unlicensed tattooing from his home. The case was brought when a local woman reported the 'artist' after receiving a tattoo from him; the court heard that the tattoo was carried out while the defendant was smoking and drinking, and allowing his dogs to be loose in the room.

Apparently the plaintiff later chose not to pay £200 to have the original £30 piece fixed by a registered artist. We're saying nothing (heads are too busy thumping against desks), but we'd highlight the council's point that it's always a good idea to visit a reputable studio whose premises are registered with them.

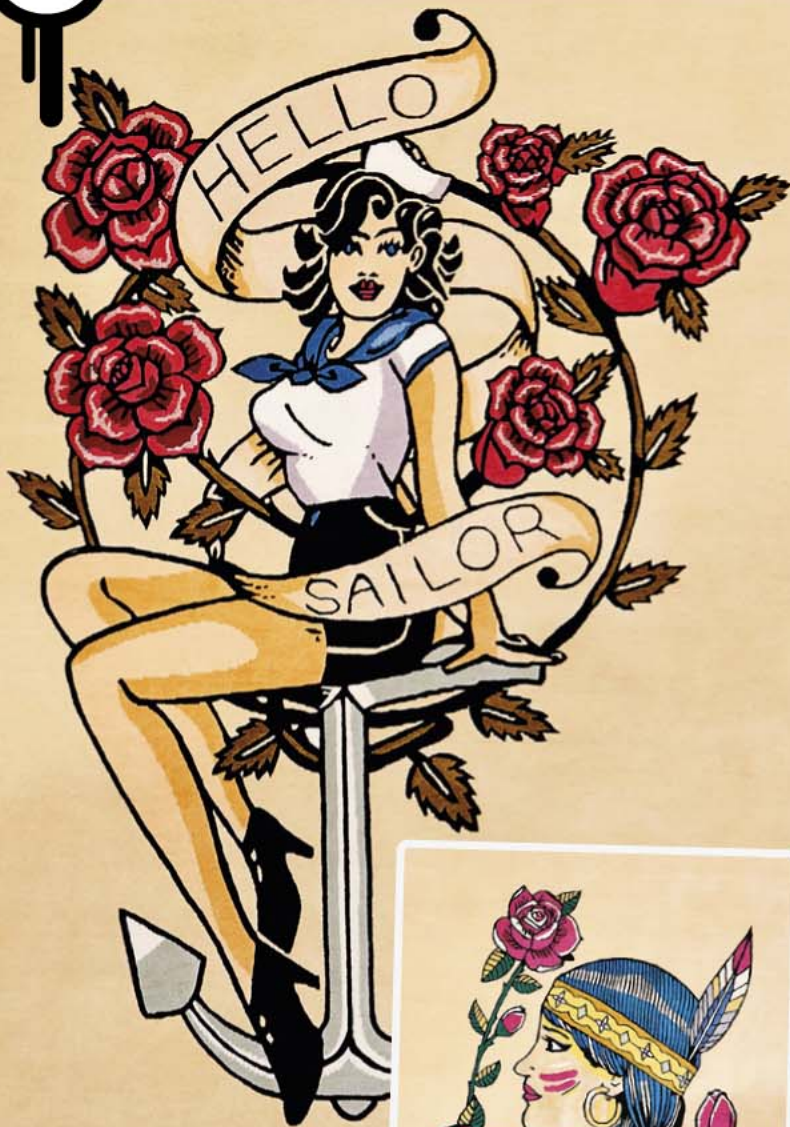
HAVE A BREW WITH THE INFINITY LADIES

The all-female team at custom outfit Infinity Tattoo Studio have recently opened their doors in Flixton, Manchester. On Friday 26 September they'll be holding a Macmillan Coffee Morning to raise money for the cancer support charity, so if you're in the area, why not pop in and help them out? Doors open at 10am. See facebook.com/tattoosbysugar for more.

HYGIENE RATINGS FOR GLOUCESTER STUDIOS

Tattoo studios in Gloucester will have the opportunity to display their hygiene credentials courtesy of a new scheme approved by the city council. Under the voluntary scheme, studios can be inspected and receive one of four ratings, from 'needs improvement' to 'very good', which they can then promote in their windows.

The intention is to give collectors confidence in the studio they're visiting. However, some artists have commented that any studio with a less than stellar rating should be closed down anyway; others have suggested that inspections are not regular enough for the ratings to be reliable.



FLOOR FILLERS

Looking to spruce up the lounge? Or, like the Dude, are you searching for the ideal rug to tie the room together? Then Floor Story might have the answer.

Their tattoo range features old school designs as imagined by illustrator Rob Pybus. There are three to choose from, each one hand-crafted from 100% wool using traditional Tibetan weave, and arriving with its own certificate of provenance telling you just where it came from and how it came into being.

They're undoubtedly things of beauty, and they'd need to be: prices start at



£1500 for a 160x230cm piece, with each design limited to a run of twenty. But if you're after a touch of luxury with a tattoo twist, these might hit the spot nicely. We'd recommend keeping the red wine well away from them, though.

Head to floorstory.co.uk to see the whole range.

SHORT SLEEVES

TATTOO KIT RECALL

The US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) issued a recall around White & Blue Lion tattoo products earlier this month.

Their statement read, in part: 'White & Blue Lion, Inc. in the City of Industry, CA is recalling all lots of tattoo inks and tattoo needles due to pathogenic bacterial contamination. Use of these products may cause bacterial infection and can lead to sepsis, a potentially life-threatening complication of an infection. The recall includes all tattoo inks, tattoo needles, and tattoo kits distributed by White & Blue Lion...'

At the time of writing there had been one case of illness caused by use of the products, which are available from 8Decades, White & Blue Lion and through Amazon.com. The FDA.gov website has more details. As ever, go to a good studio and a good artist and this won't even come close to affecting you.

TWISTED ARTS OPENS IN RICHMOND



Artist Dan Young, AKA Dano, has opened a new studio in Richmond, North Yorkshire. Dano has been tattooing for more than a decade, most recently alongside Mick Tomo at York's Ruby Arts studio. The new shop, Twisted Arts, is dedicated to custom work: visit twisted-arts-tattoo.co.uk, facebook.com/twisted-arts-studio, or call 01748 822100 for more info.



CALENDAR GIRLS

Student photographer Sophie Baker and her friends are creating an alternative nude calendar to raise money for cancer charities.

The "real women" will be baring skin and ink to increase awareness of different types of cancer, Sophie explains. "I know that people have done this before, but we feel it's our time to have a go and raise as much as possible for a good cause. The girls within the group have had family members or friends who have been affected by cancer, so it's something that's close to our hearts."

Sophie has support from studios including Underground Tattoo in both Walsall and Tamworth, as well as Retribution Tattoo, Brownhills. She hopes to sell the calendar in as many locations as possible and donate all profits to charity. The shoot will be taking place soon (in a tattoo studio, naturally) - we'll keep you updated on the results. In the meantime, here are some examples of Sophie's work.

MEDIC!

If you're just looking to start your tattoo collection you might not know that the work you put in after you get inked is just as important as the work you put in (research, finding the right artist and so on) beforehand. How you take care of that fresh tattoo will determine how well it heals and how it will look in the long run.

If you're an old hand you'll already know the importance of aftercare, but whatever camp you fall into, if you're anything like us you'll be intrigued by any new tattoo care products. So here's a new one for your consideration: Inkmedix tattoo oil (rrp £14.99).

All aftercare products claim to reach parts others can't, and this one is no different. Instead of a thick lotion, it's a light oil that the makers suggest will 'deeply moisturise while still allowing the skin to breathe'. It's not tested on animals and is paraben, petroleum, colour, fragrance and essential oil free, so there aren't too many nasties to irritate newly tattooed skin. Instead, Inkmedix packs in ingredients like coconut, almond and hazelnut oil (not one for nut allergy sufferers, then).

You can find out more from inkmedix.com. The team here have no tattoos to heal at time of writing (dammit), so it's over to you: if you try it, let us know how you get on.



Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

TITANIC INTERNATIONAL TATTOO CONVENTION BELFAST

15 – 17 August 2014

Titanic Building Belfast

1 Queens Rd

Titanic Quarter

Belfast BT3 9EP

facebook.com/titanic.tattooconventionbelfast14

DUNDEE TATTOO CONVENTION

16 – 17 August 2014

Abertay Union

1-3 Bell Street

Dundee DD1 1HP

dundeetattooconvention.co.uk

NORWICH BODY ART FESTIVAL

16 – 17 August 2014

The Open Youth Venue

20 Bank Plain,

Norwich, Norfolk

NR2 4SF

norwichbodyartfestival.co.uk

TATCON BLACKPOOL

22 – 25 August 2014

Norbreck Castle Hotel

Queen's Promenade

Blackpool FY2 9AA

tatconblackpool.co.uk

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL DEAF TATTOO CONVENTION

05 – 07 September 2014

St. John's Deaf Community Centre

258 Greens Lanes

Manor House

London N4 2HE

deaf-tattoo.com

BOURNEMOUTH INK 'N' ART TATTOO EXPO

12 – 14 September 2014

Pavilion Theatre

Bournemouth

BH1 2BU

[Facebook.com/ink-n-art-tattoo-fest](https://facebook.com/ink-n-art-tattoo-fest)

FEMALE TATTOO SHOW

14 September 2014

Leamington Assembly

Spencer Street

Warwickshire

CV31 3NF

femaletattooshow.co.uk



TATTOO ART EXHIBITION AT SOMERSET HOUSE

London's Somerset House is hosting a tattoo art exhibition with a difference. Curated by the super-talented Claudia de Sabe (Seven Doors Tattoo) and Miki Vialeto (Tattoo Life), 'Time: Tattoo Art Today' features work from 70 of the greatest artists currently working around the world.

The roster includes Ed Hardy, Horiyoshi III, Paul Booth, Mister Cartoon and Chris Garver (of 'Miami Ink' fame), with each artist presenting an original work around the theme of 'time'.

The results are varied and spectacular,

ranging from oil paintings and watercolours to bronze sculptures and painted skulls.

'Time: Tattoo Art Today' runs until October 5. Admission is free – see somersethouse.org.uk for more details.

KNOW YOUR PLACE

Residents of Myanmar (sometimes referred to as Burma) have been warned that getting a tattoo of a map of their country below the waist could lead to imprisonment and / or a fine, according to reports on the Mizzima news website. "We can accept this symbol tattooed on the upper part of the body because it might demonstrate the wearer's pride in their country, but a tattoo on the lower part disgraces the country's pride," said Mandalay Region Advocate-General U Ye Aung Myint, speaking at a Mandalay Region assembly meeting.

Good to know, just in case you had a Myanmar-themed piece in mind...

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Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

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tattoojam.com

HALLOWEEN TATTOO BASH

8-9 November

Wolverhampton Racecourse
info@halloweentattoobash.co.uk
[facebook.com/halloweenTattooBash](https://www.facebook.com/halloweenTattooBash)

SHEFFIELD TATTOO SHOW

15 – 16 November 2014

Magna science centre
Sheffield Road
Rotherham
sheffieldtattooshow.co.uk

EAST COAST TATTOO EXPO

15-16 November

Highfield Holiday Park
London Road,
Clacton
www.eastcoastexpo.co.uk

CARIAD INK FESTIVAL

29 – 30 November 2014

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MAKING WAVES

Well, here's a handsome devil. Scorpion Front publishing are tattoo artist owned and operated, consistently turning out lavish art tomes that make our eyes pop, and their latest venture is no different.



'Lost at Sea' has been compiled by artists Nick Caruso and Eric Perfect. It features work from over 200 artists, all dedicated to one of the tattoo artist's oldest and most loyal customers: the sailor. As such it's a feast of nautical delights, from sharks and swallows to sailor's graves and rocks of ages, with a good dose of monsters and mermaids added for good measure.

Contributing artists come from all over the world, all of them introduced by the mighty Henk Schiffmacher, Dutch artist and tattoo historian. The finished product will have double reinforced case binding, gold stamping and



hardcovers – you can get your hands on one from early next year.

Find out more and order your copy from scorpionfront.com.

Ash Lewis



Ash Lewis



ASHLEWISTATTOOIST

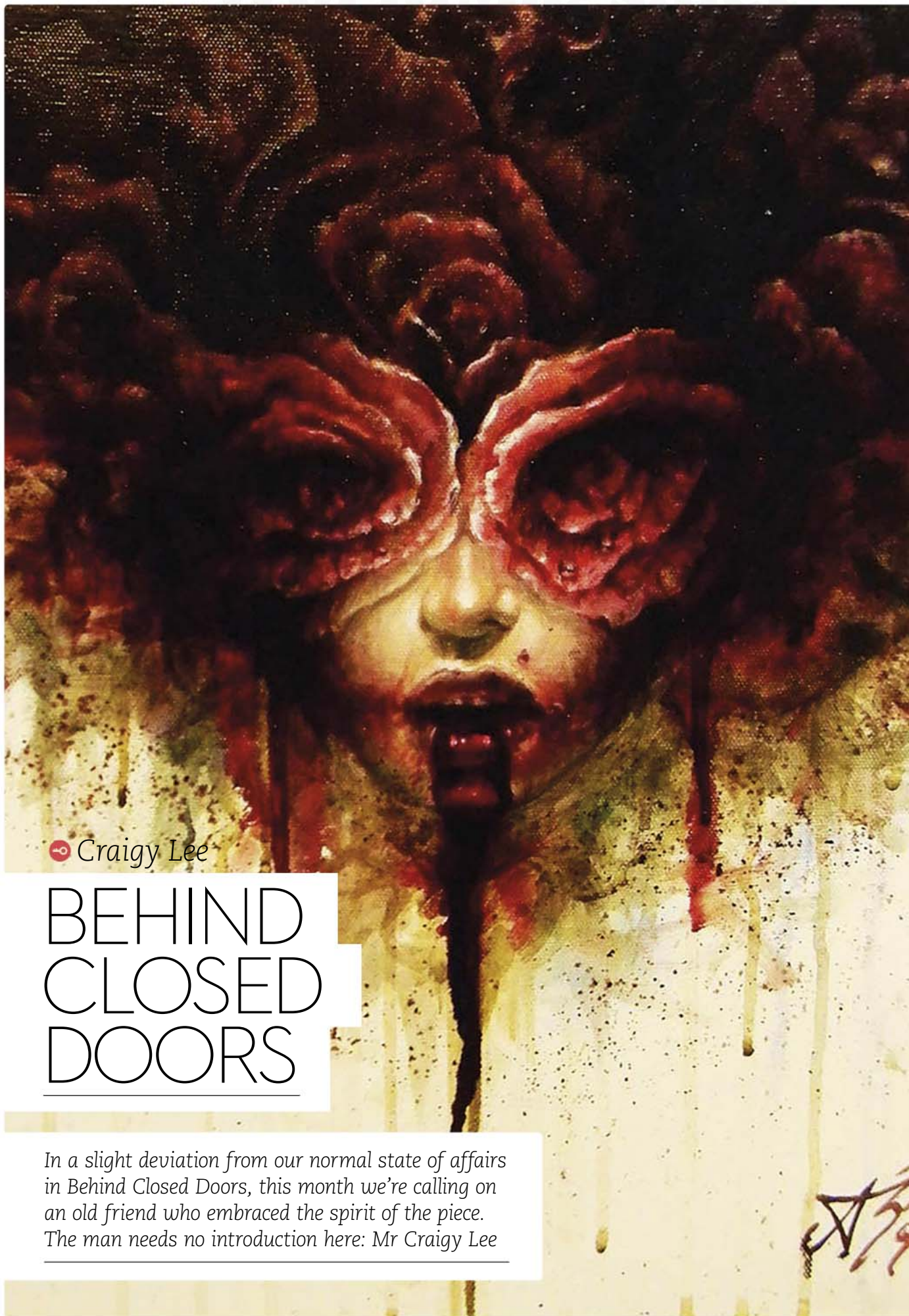
Ash Lewis Tattooist


Ashlewistattoo



STAINED NATION
TATTOO LOUNGE

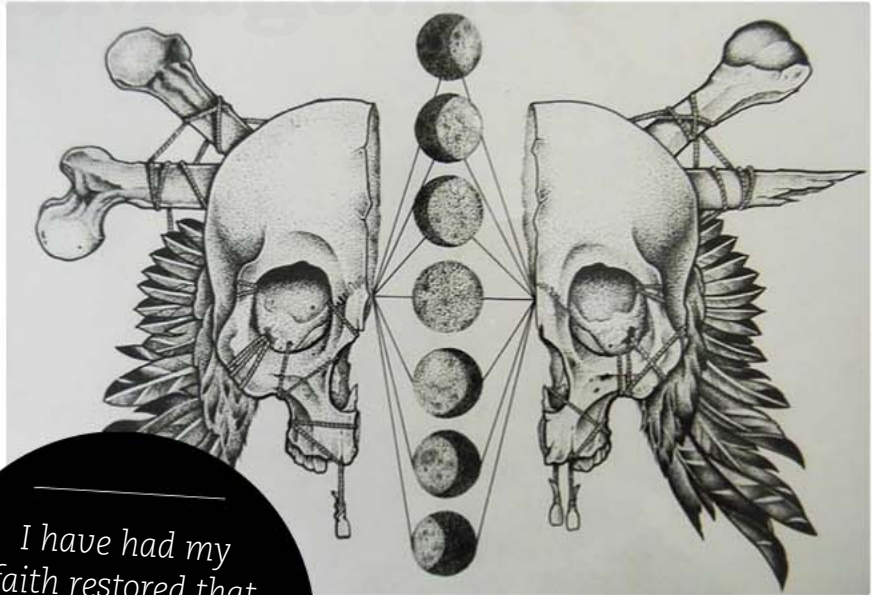
Works at Stained Nation Tattoo Lounge. Apprenticed by Samael Cahill
Work with Fliquet Renouf, Peter Quinn, Billie Priestly and Sophia Rain (Family)



 Craigy Lee

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

In a slight deviation from our normal state of affairs in Behind Closed Doors, this month we're calling on an old friend who embraced the spirit of the piece. The man needs no introduction here: Mr Craigy Lee



I have had my faith restored that the community spirit among tattoo artists is strong!



"This month I thought I'd like to draw attention to a tattoo art project that showed what can be achieved if we all pull together. I have had my faith

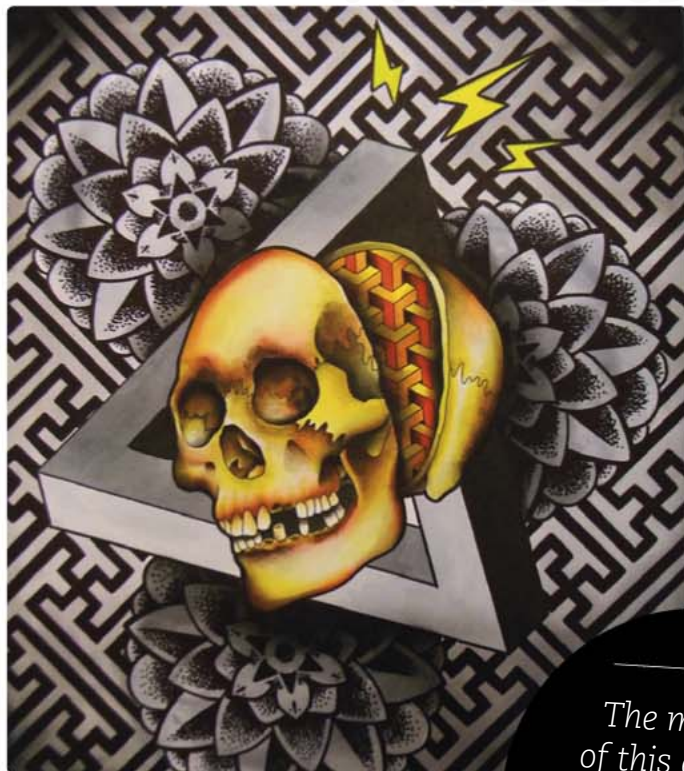
restored that the community spirit among tattoo artists - at least in New Zealand - is strong!

New Zealand is a small country, with a population half the size of London, there's not much going on over here. We only have two (yes, two) tattoo conventions a year at either end of the summer and to be honest not much else, especially in the winter. Despite this, the small size does have some up-sides, not only is most of the country unspoilt, because there are only two tattoo

conventions, almost everyone goes to them giving much more of a community feel to the events than other countries I have worked in.

So earlier this year we came up with an idea to bring more of a community spirit during the winter months to our capital city of Wellington. A group art show was planned and tattoo artists from all over the country were invited to submit work in any media they chose influenced by the show's title.

The result was "Dark Days", New Zealand's first tattoo art show, aimed at bringing tattoo artists together in the colder months of the year. The show picked up a lot of momentum from the start with support from artist's as well as sponsorship from Sailor Jerry Rum. 🍷



The main aim of this exhibition was to bring people together and talk about art



The show opened during a cold weekend in July and featured work by over twenty of New Zealand's best artists: Andrew Swarbrick, Lara Higgs, Ben Clark and Abraham Jude showed what Christchurch had to offer, Ajan Ann from Dunedin, Sam Carter from Napier, Asher Vallen from New Plymouth and Richard Warnock from Auckland all showed their worth and finally a strong presence from Wellington based artists Heath Todd, Joe Chin, Caleb Clayton, Rhys Phillips, Tim Gau, Rohan skilton, Mikey Hurman, Tim Hunt, Simon Morse, Gil Jeremy, Craigy Lee (that's me) and Ali Reid.

The opening night proved one of the coldest evenings of the year so far, yet around three hundred people turned up to support the event and were rewarded with a mulled Sailor Jerry's rum with apple cinnamon and spices to warm their cores. The main aim of this exhibition was to bring people together and talk about art, tattoos and whatever else they could share with like minded people, so it was great to see the majority of the artists involved in the show turn up, as well as artists from studios that didn't have work on display coming with support.

This interest means we are now going to make this a yearly event. These things only work if people get out and support them, so why not organise your own event? Maybe a drawing night, some art fusion or anything else that helps studios in your area come together... 🐼



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THE COFFEE HOUSE SCENES FROM

The rules of the Coffee House were supposed to be fuelled by accidental meetings in the street - the fact that I drove 30 miles out of my way to accidentally bump into Josh Peacock should not affect your enjoyment. Rules? Made for breaking...

ON THE MENU



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ON THE MENU:
JOSH IS HAVING
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MR SMITH
IS ALSO HAVING
A LATTE
(How cultured of us)



I'VE BEEN AROUND THE ART WORLD FOR A FAIR OLD TIME BUT THIS THING YOU'VE GOT GOING ON WITH ... WHAT SHALL I CALL IT... WELL, IT'S ALMOST LIKE THE CUTS MADE IN A DIAMOND - WOULD THAT BE A FAIR THROW OF THE BALL TO DESCRIBE IT?

I come from a graffiti background so I tried to work the techniques of that into my tattoo work. In this case, using the shader as though it's a marker pen. I'm also influenced by cubism,

futurism, as well as the avant garde styles of tattooing. Just messing around, I came up with the term 'Odd School' or 'Mag Style'. The angular edges and diamond cuts are my take on describing organic forms with fewer curves, strong lines and flat plains. I like that I can create energy this way as well as movement and potential movement. I have so much fun doing this style and hopefully, this shows in the tattoo itself.



IS IT A STYLE THAT HAS A LOT OF SCOPE THAT'S GOING TO STICK AROUND FOR THE LONG TERM? FOR THAT MATTER, DO YOU EVEN SEE IT AS 'YOUR STYLE'?

The style is very flexible and can be used diversely. I'm lucky to have so many open-minded and adventurous customers, who, like me, crave originality, expression and boldness.

The style has been used by artists such as Bugs, for quite a while now, and more recently Bam, Halb Stark and Marc Scheuchl - all amazing artists - with very different outcomes. It's a loose, expressive style but deceptively technical. I love it.

HAVE YOU REACHED A POINT WHERE YOU CAN - AND DO - TURN AWAY WORK THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO DO TO ENGAGE WITH FOR THE STYLE YOU LOVE? I KNOW A LOT OF ARTISTS THAT DO, BUT THERE'S ALSO A LOT OF MILEAGE IN NOT DOING THAT AND SHARPENING YOUR BASIC SKILLS WITH AN ON THE SPOT CHALLENGE. THOUGHTS?

I prefer not to turn away work

unless another artist here is more suitable. I have this style but I also like to dip into new school, black and grey portraiture and occasionally neo-trad. It keeps me on my toes and I'm always learning. But, the 'odd school' style is what comes naturally to me and I enjoy every part of the process.

I SAW SOMETHING A WHILE BACK, IN WHICH YOU NODDED YOUR HEAD AT JESSE SMITH AS BEING 'THE MAN' - I LOVE JESSE BUT I HAVE TO SAY, IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, I'VE SEEN AN AWFUL LOT OF PEOPLE WORKING IN THE UK AND EUROPE WHO ARE STEPPING UP TO THE MARK - AND IF GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY BY CUSTOMERS TO ACTUALLY DO THE WORK AS IT NEEDS TO BE DONE - COULD START TO GIVE HIM A RUN FOR HIS MONEY. CARE TO COMMENT?

Jessie Smith is still the man and a lovely guy too, but you're right, we have such talent exploding in this country - in all styles. I'm lucky enough to work with Mike Stockings who's one of the most gifted and consistent artists I

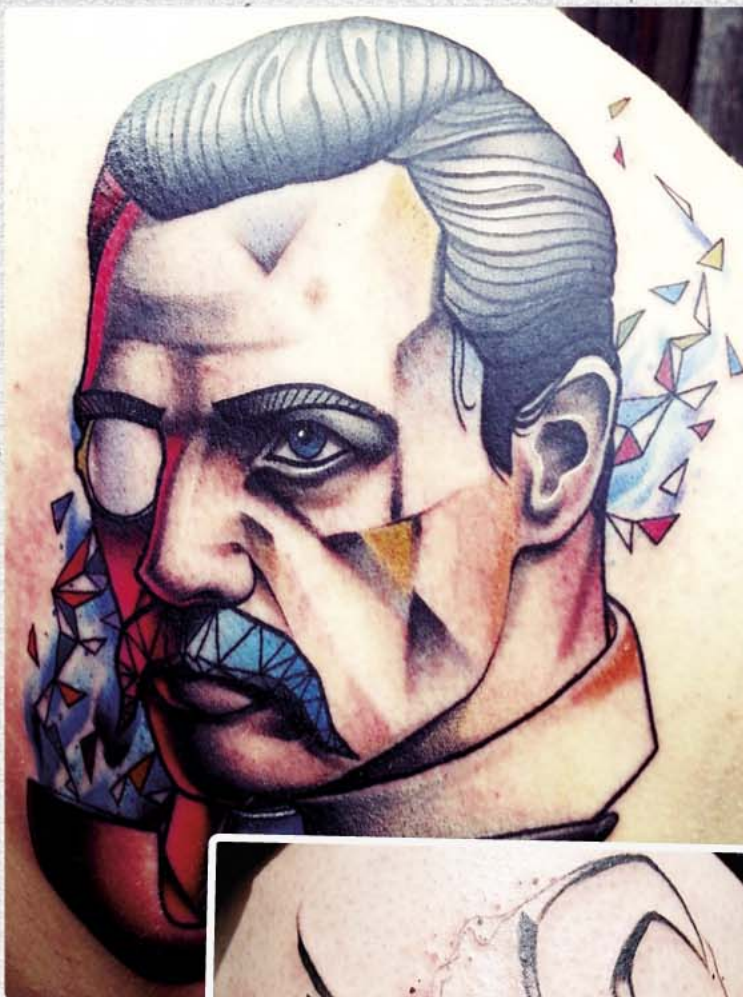
THE ANGULAR EDGES AND DIAMOND CUTS ARE MY TAKE ON DESCRIBING ORGANIC FORMS WITH FEWER CURVES, STRONG LINES AND FLAT PLAINS.

know. In the new school style we have the likes of Matt Difa and Matt Lapping who are killing it as ever, as well as Jamie Ris (also 'the man') just over in Holland. We're spoilt for choice really.

I THINK IT'S INTERESTING TO NAIL DOWN A TYPICAL DAY FOR AN ARTIST - LOOKING AT WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING OVER THE LAST FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE MADE A COMMITMENT TO DRAWING AND DEVELOPING IDEAS MORE THAN EVER ON TOP OF YOUR TATTOO TIME.

A typical day is to start tattooing at 10 through until five or six. Then, come home and drink tea and prepare my designs for the next day and deal with appointments for a couple of hours. After (finally) eating and

LEGACY INK
27 High St
Haverhill, Suffolk
legacyink@hotmail.com



I LIKE TO DOODLE UNTIL TWO OR THREE IN THE MORNING AND HOPEFULLY WAKE UP TO FIND SOME COOL IDEAS.

relaxing for a little bit, I like to doodle until two or three in the morning and hopefully wake up to find some cool ideas. This is when I draw for fun, but it's these ideas that filter through into my tattoos a lot.

A QUICK OVERVIEW OF LEGACY INK: IS THERE STILL JUST YOU AND MIKE THERE? MIKE HAS A FANTASTIC STYLE TOO - ON THOSE GROUNDS, HOW IS THE WAITING LIST SHAPING UP OUT THERE? GETTING BIG AND LONG OR DO YOU LIKE TO KEEP IT DOWN IN THE NAME OF 'FLOW'

It was just me and Mike for a while but the studio has been extended so we are now joined by Natalie Gardiner, Josh Hurrell and Chris Stockings. I try not to forget just how lucky I am to

work with such talented people. Our booking times are quite reasonable, as we don't like to book too far in advance, leaving us some flexibility for guest spots and conventions.

TALKING OF WHICH, ARE YOU WORKING ANY SHOWS THIS YEAR? ARE YOU A MAN THAT LIKES TO BOOK UP BEFOREHAND OR ARE YOU GAME FOR SEEING WHAT TURNS UP? BIG SHOWS SUIT SOME ARTISTS DOWN TO THE GROUND AND OTHERS, NOT SO MUCH.

I'm really glad to be working Tattoo Jam as well as Ink and Ride in Hamburg with my friend Bernd Muss - I'm also working at Tattoo Royale. I prefer to book for conventions beforehand, just because it's less stressful. I'm a creature of habit so conventions



used to be a bit disorientating but I've grown to love them. They're a great chance to meet and book in with the artists that you've been admiring in magazines or online. Best. Job. Ever. But I could use some more sleep. 🐼

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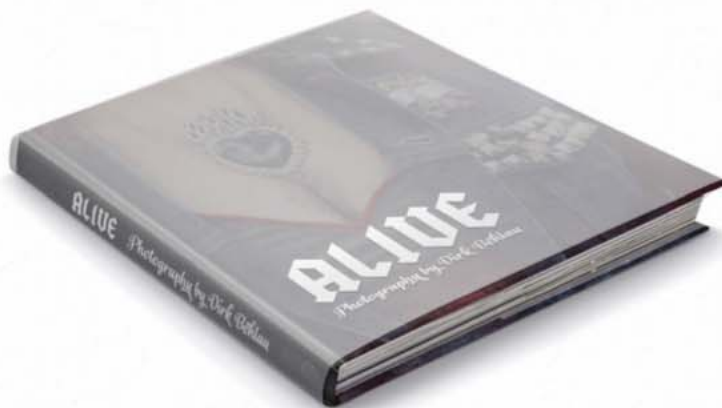
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ALIVE

LIVE: WITHOUT A NET

Over the last few years, Dirk Behlau has been almost permanently on the road cataloguing the tattooed counter-culture with his trusty camera all in preparation for the release of his book, ALIVE... and now the day of publication is finally upon us, let's take a look.

TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT THE MONSTER BOOK - I'VE OBVIOUSLY SEEN SOME OF THE SPREADS FROM IT AND IT LOOKS FANTASTIC. IS THERE A THEME AT WORK THROUGHOUT THE BOOK GIVEN ITS TITLE?

I chose the title because it's a big synonym for doing what you love, living your life to the max and with passion. The people in the book live their very own unique lives - they are "alive" - because they are not following the mainstream and play by their own rules.

And then of course, there's the album "Alive II" by KISS which is one of my favorite records. The title is a massive homage to Rock n Roll. I remember opening that gatefold LP cover as a kid. I was so impressed with that live shot of pyro and fire.

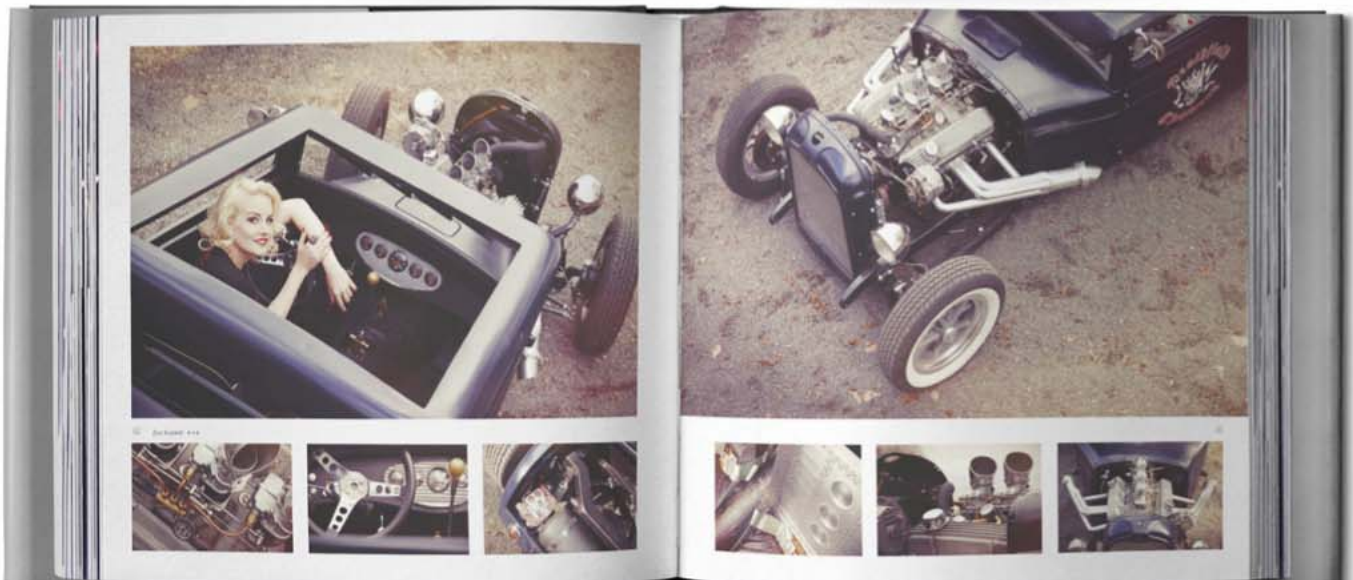
YOU SEEM TO BE TRAVELLING MORE THAN EVER - I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH YOU. FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN MAKING AN ATTEMPT AT A SIMILAR CAREER, TELL US EXACTLY HOW MUCH YOU'VE TRAVELLED TO PUT THIS BOOK TOGETHER AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW YOU'VE MADE IT WORK FOR YOU. IT'S PROBABLY NOT AS EASY AS IT LOOKS IS IT.

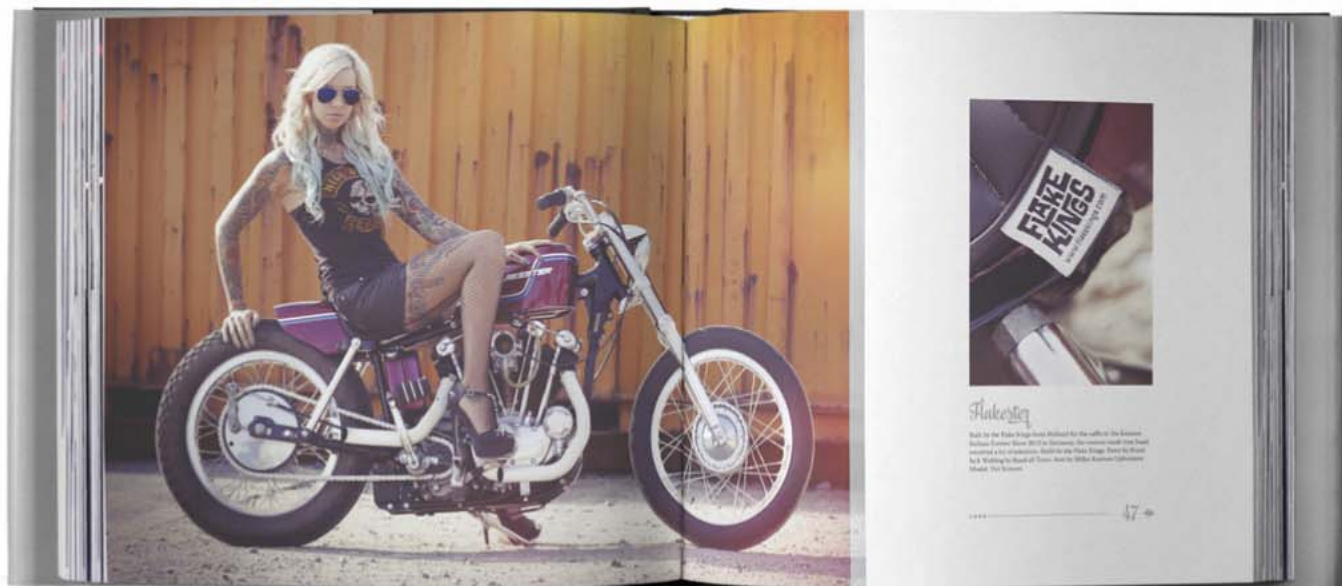
That's true - there's more than a lot going on - right now I'm in Vienna shooting for a client. The photos in the book are from the last four years (my last 'Hot Rod/ Kustom Kulture Lifestyle' book came out in late 2010) and are a 'little' selection of my favourite moments and shots. They are from California, England, Italy, Sweden, France, Germany... it was kinda hard to break down

the photos because I shoot so much cool stuff all the time. Until the deadline I was continually thinking about removing and adding photos, but any project like this has to have a deadline and you have to bring it to an end. I shot a lot of cool stuff within the last few days in Austria but it won't be in the book.

THERE'S SOME BIG PRODUCTION VALUES AT PLAY HERE - RIGHT DOWN TO THAT TRANSPARENT COVER YOU'VE GOT WRAPPING AROUND THE HARDBACK COVER. BEAUTIFUL. IS THIS SOMETHING YOU KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO DO 'BIG' BEFORE YOU BEGAN?

I had the whole concept in my mind before we started working on it. The format, the look, the layout. I have a lot of design 🙌





books on my shelves and I love big books with class. Simple but elegant layout with very few gimmicks. The transparent dust cover was something I've wanted to do for a long time. I'm not a big fan of the normal paper wrapping, it gets damaged very quickly. My last book - Kool Fellas, Ltd - was smaller than this, so with ALIVE, I wanted a big, bold coffee table book. 320 pages, lots of full page photos and right in your face. My publisher totally got it from the start!

THIS IS A BOOK THAT SHOULD COME WITH A BIG SLAB OF A VINYL ALBUM IN A SLEEVE AT THE BACK. FOR ME, IT'S VERY INSPIRED BY OLD SCHOOL VALUES AND, JUST AS YOU PLANNED, IT'S VERY, VERY 'ROCK N ROLL' - WAS THAT THE INTENTION WHEN YOU KNEW YOU WERE BRINGING THESE LIFESTYLES INTO THE PUBLIC EYE?

Actually, the limited edition version - which has a black transparent cover - comes with a CD by my favourite surf-band from SoCal, The Dynotones. It's the perfect soundtrack while

diving into the book. I designed the album as well so it's the whole package. There will also be stickers and a t-shirt in the limited edition package. It's my way of bringing the Kustom Kulture lifestyle into the public eye. It's about friendship, passion and having a good time.

I GUESS SOME PEOPLE MAY NOT BE INTERESTED IN THIS, BUT I AM, SO I'LL ASK IT ANYWAY. WHERE DID YOU GO FOR THE PRINTING? CHINA? I KNOW THINGS TAKE A WHILE OUT THERE (MOSTLY



IN SHIPPING) BUT MAN, THEIR WORK IS FANTASTIC AND AT A FRACTION OF ANY PRICES YOU CAN FIND IN EUROPE.

The publisher produces in Asia and it takes three months before you get the copies but it's worth the wait. Making a book like this is heavy - the price is 50 Euros and you just can't do it like this anywhere in Europe.

I'M PLEASED YOU SAID IN YOUR INTRODUCTION THAT WHAT YOU DO IS ABOUT PEOPLE - I DON'T THINK THAT'S BEEN

STATED ENOUGH. IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE THAT INTEREST IN PEOPLE AND THE HAPPINESS THEY FIND IN WHAT THEY DO, YOU WOULD BE A MUCH LESS INTERESTING PHOTOGRAPHER.

It's quite simple. I only shoot what I love and when working with people, I usually get a very close connection to them. They are all more or less what I call friends. It's about the people and their world. Just shooting the person without knowing anything about the character is useless. It's their lives that make them who they

are and you have to look behind the scenes - they are alive - there we go again with the title.

DOING A BIG PROJECT LIKE THIS HAS TO BE AS EXCITING AS HELL - HAS THE AUDIENCE FOR YOUR WORK JUMPED OUTSIDE OF EUROPE AND 'GONE GLOBAL'? I KNOW YOU SPENT SOME TIME IN THE U.S. LAST YEAR.

It's for the people in the "scene" but it's also for people who are interested in sub-cultures, in good photos and in coffee table books too. (That 🍷)



is actually a genuine sub-culture, just ask Taschen. Ed.)

My clients are global - brands like Harley Davidson in the U.S. and other companies from the automotive sector. I think I've 'gone global' for a couple of years now. I also work for a lot of magazines in the US - we had the film premiere of the documentary film I did with my buddy Jesper Bram from Denmark - Flake & Flames - in Long Beach, SoCal last October. Is that global enough for you?

I GUESS THE MORE WORK YOU DO, THE MORE YOU MUST GET ASKED TO DO. WHAT DOES THE REST OF THE YEAR LOOK LIKE?

I'm really a lucky guy. Sometimes I wake up and still can't believe how it all worked out. I have a great girl and kids, good friends around the world and lots of cool projects coming up all the time. I do a lot more besides photography - I have a beer brand on the German market called Hell Yeah Beer, a clothing brand with two other friends called

Snakebite which is jeans, jackets - things like that. I direct music videos for international bands, design record covers and so on. So shooting photos is just one part - although it's a big one. The rest of the year, I'm busy with more shows, conventions, shootings and so on. There's always those moments though where I think 'what the fuck?' For example, I'll direct a music video for an American metal band whose records I bought when I was still in high-school - that's just crazy. 🤘

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Amy

SO YOU THINK YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW

Amy Preece has so many things going on inside her head - all at the same time - it was hard work figuring out where the hell to start taking her apart! It's a dirty job but someone's got to do it - which is also known as, "nice work if you can get it"...

JEEZ - WHERE TO START WITH SOMEBODY WHO LIKES TO STICK THEIR FINGERS IN SO MANY PIES! LET'S START WITH THE DAY JOB. YOU'RE A NURSE. ANY PARTICULAR KIND? HOW IS THE BELOVED NHS RIGHT NOW WITH TATTOOS ON THEIR STAFF? TO BE HONEST, SO FAR AS I CAN TELL, THEY DON'T ACTUALLY GIVE MUCH OF A DAMN - WHICH IS A GOOD THING, OR IS THAT JUST MY IMAGINATION?

I work for the nurse bank which basically means I step in to cover when they are short staffed. I work both general and psychiatric but much prefer the psychiatric side of it. I find it far more interesting and they seem to be a bit more understanding with my

tattoos actually. I don't think the general side actually 'like' them but there's this big thing called 'discrimination' out there. I studied it at university, so that helps a lot - they kind of have the rule that so long as the tattoos aren't religious or sexual - basically anything that could offend people - it will be tolerated, otherwise I'm pretty sure I'd get the boot!

DO YOU THINK THE RESPONSE WILL BE DIFFERENT WHEN YOU GET AROUND TO THAT HEAD TATTOO YOU KEEP THREATENING? WHAT HAVE YOU GOT PLANNED FOR UP THERE ANYWAY?

I'm not too sure what reaction I'll receive when I get my head done. It isn't going to hold me back

though. I'm thinking maybe I'll just part my hair on the other side to cover it for a while and break them in slowly! I'm working on the idea of a little dream catcher up there with the feathers going down behind my ear - or even some script work. I'm torn between the two. I'm hoping to get it done within the next two weeks though.

WHO IS YOUR ARTIST BY THE WAY? ARE YOU A 'LOYAL TO ONE ARTIST' KIND OF GIRL?

Most of my work is done by Ken Kneath who worked at itat in Swansea but he recently left before my second sleeve was completed. I searched the 🍷

Mr Smith Scott Cole Model: Amy Preece Makeup: Eve-Marie Parry



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**I'm thinking maybe I'll just
part my hair on the other
side to cover it for a while
and break them in slowly!**



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internet looking for someone that could relate to what I had already started and came across John Smith's page on Instagram, I was immediately impressed and contacted him straight away - he wasn't keen on the idea of finishing off someone else's work but I was persistent and he gave in eventually. John works at SWYD in Cardiff which is owned by Pritchard from Dirty Sanchez - the shop has a real cool look and the artists are both very talented. John has come up with loads of ideas for future tattoos. I'm super excited - I love getting inked!

LET'S MOVE ALONG TO THE MMA YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN - ARE YOU STILL OUT THERE IN THE WORLD AS A RING GIRL? DID

I just think I'm street wise and sharp with a lot of stuff. I'd make a good investigator though, not much gets past me these days!



YOU EVER COMPETE AND HAVE YOU ESCAPED INJURY FREE?

Yeah - I've witnessed a guy's knee being dislocated at an event and someone's arm being snapped too - that was a hands over the eyes moment! I've got an old injury on my ankle from horse riding when I was younger which interfered with my training but nothing too major other than that. I started doing MMA after I had my second baby - a friend messaged me and mentioned he'd opened up a gym, so I immediately asked for help to lose weight. At the time I wasn't aware it was MMA! I just assumed it was a regular gym. I went and got a massive shock but not one

to back down, I gave it go and wow - what a buzz. I loved it! I struggled to walk for a few days after but stuck at it. I kept going for the fitness side of things but after a while, my body got toned and I started to look a bit 'manly', so I laid off for a bit. I was so passionate about the sport though and I didn't want to stop completely. I got asked to be a ring girl at an event, which at the time was a little bit daunting as I've never done that sort of thing before - but I did it and really enjoyed myself. I didn't compete though. Have you seen some of the girls that do it! They're worse than the guys! 🍌

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...AND THEN WE HAVE YOUR FASCINATION WITH MURDER INVESTIGATIONS AND HORSE RIDING TOO! IF I STAND BACK AND LOOK AT WHAT YOU'VE GOT GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE, EVERYTHING LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE SET YOURSELF UP TO BE PERSONALLY CHALLENGED - WOULD THAT BE A FAIR ACCUSATION?

Personally challenged. Yes, I think that pretty much sums me up. I don't do things by half and I'm far from lazy but I think it all stems down to my upbringing. As a youngster, I was always out with the horses, I'd be up and out first thing and back late at night, I lived in those jodhpurs. Those were the days! Jesus, we did some crazy things and took some massive risks which at the time I think I was too young to realise or even care about. I was having fun and that's all that mattered. I was always really competitive and had to have the fastest horse though. How childish! The biggest risk I take now is walking my miniature chihuahua and praying she doesn't latch onto someone's ankles. And yeah... I'll admit that murder investigation books really interest me - I find them fascinating. I could sit for hours and analyse those things.

'I was always really competitive and had to have the fastest horse though. How childish!'

DID YOU FIND YOURSELF IN NURSING BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO DO FORENSICS? THERE'S STILL TIME TO GET ON THAT HORSE YOU KNOW! ON THAT TV ADAPTATION OF 'THORNE' (ER... SKY ONE I THINK, A COUPLE OF YEARS BACK) - THEIR FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST WAS TATTOOED AND PIERCED TO HELL AND BACK. IT'S A GOOD LOOK. IS IT TOTALLY OFF THE RADAR FOR YOU?

I think I'm over the fact that I'm never going to make it as a pathologist. You have to go

through a doctorate degree first and I don't think I'm that intelligent, I just think I'm street wise and sharp with a lot of stuff. I'd make a good investigator though, not much gets past me these days!

WHAT TOOK YOU DOWN THAT ROAD IN THE FIRST PLACE? IT'S NOT AN ODD THING TO WANT TO DO BUT IT'S PROBABLY PRETTY DEMANDING AND 24/7... WHICH WOULD PROBABLY BE A BIT ROUGH ON THE SENSES

WITH A COUPLE OF KIDS.

When I was younger, I lost my dad in some shitty circumstances and in my head I always wanted to know why. I was never going to find the answer, but it gave me insight into some of the things that people go through and I wanted to learn more. I guess that's more the psychiatric side. As for forensics, my friend always tells me I should do it. I pick up on little things that most people wouldn't and it baffles her. I have an eye for detail - or maybe I'm just super sneaky. 🐱



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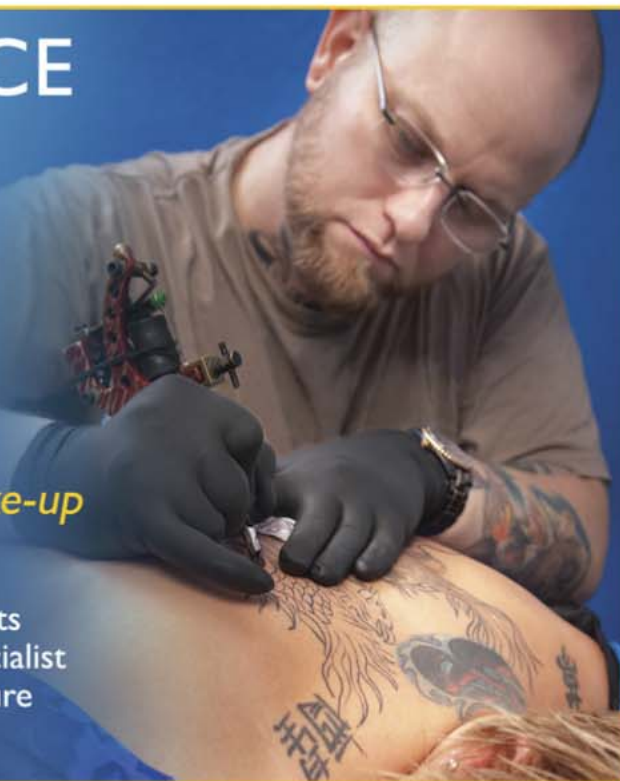
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LITTLE LADY, BIG ART

Traditional, timely, detailed, derivative, bold, beautiful, badass, inspiring, and innovative: there is no shortage of words when attempting to describe the art of Quyen Dinh. Her talents are only exceeded by her character and desire to experience life - a life that almost ended before it even had the chance to begin.



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As Quyen sat across from me, sipping her water and crispering the collar of her denim button-up, I couldn't help but think to myself "Damn, she's tiny." Tiny, talented, fashion-forward and groomed to the T. Her self-tattooed arms peeking out of the cuffs of her shirt and a black & grey butterfly seemingly perched on her throat. This was Quyen Dinh. I had finally met the tremendously talented traditionalist who's produced art for the likes of Suavecito and Old Tyme Ginger Beer; I could finally say I'd met her and that I knew her. Little did I know, I didn't know shit...

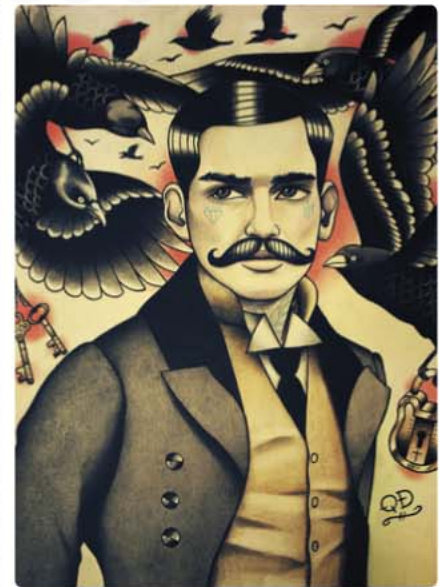
At the age of one, Quyen boarded a fisherman's boat with her mother and over 200 other Vietnamese refugees to begin the weeklong trek across the South

China Sea. The conditions were harsh and malnourishment took hold of Quyen's infant body. "You better throw her overboard. She's going to start stinking up the boat," this from the Captain - who was basically just a fisherman assisting the escape - told Quyen's mother. "She's still breathing. Please, just let me hold her until she stops," Quyen's mother pleaded. Quyen eventually made it to America, and most importantly, she never stopped breathing. Now, years after making the escape, she's making a name for herself in the tattoo world, one parlour tattoo print at a time.

"I almost died. I was almost buried at sea. I think that's part of the reason I try to live my life to the fullest. I lived for a reason."

At first glance, Quyen's work looks expectedly bold and traditional, an array of multifaceted subject-matter filling the pages. But delve in





I almost died. I was almost buried at sea. I think that's part of the reason I try to live my life to the fullest. I lived for a reason

deeper and you will find that she's taken traditional artistry and made it all her own. Whether it is an innate quality or an acquired capacity, it is apparent that Quyen encompasses an X factor that can mix retro realism with pop culture charisma, and traditional trademarks with contemporary innovation.

"I see myself as a storyteller. If it's not my story, it's a relatable story. I guess I'm just trying to elaborate on the traditional genre. I want to expand my style and refine my art so it 🌟"



The traditional flash style is something I love. It's so simple, yet so bold and powerful. It's inexplicable and Van Gogh is like that

becomes something that people want to put in their homes."

It's quite easy to look at traditional art these days and see exactly where the inspiration was derived. Given the current and ever-climbing tattoo craze, we've likely seen every rendition spun in every possible direction. It's not often that a traditional artist references fine art when speaking of a muse. But leave it to Quyen to make a connection between the obvious and the seemingly unexpected.

"Growing up, I was always drawn to Van Gogh because of his colours. I've always been drawn to colour. That's why the traditional flash style is something I love. It's so simple, yet so bold and powerful. It's inexplicable. And Van Gogh

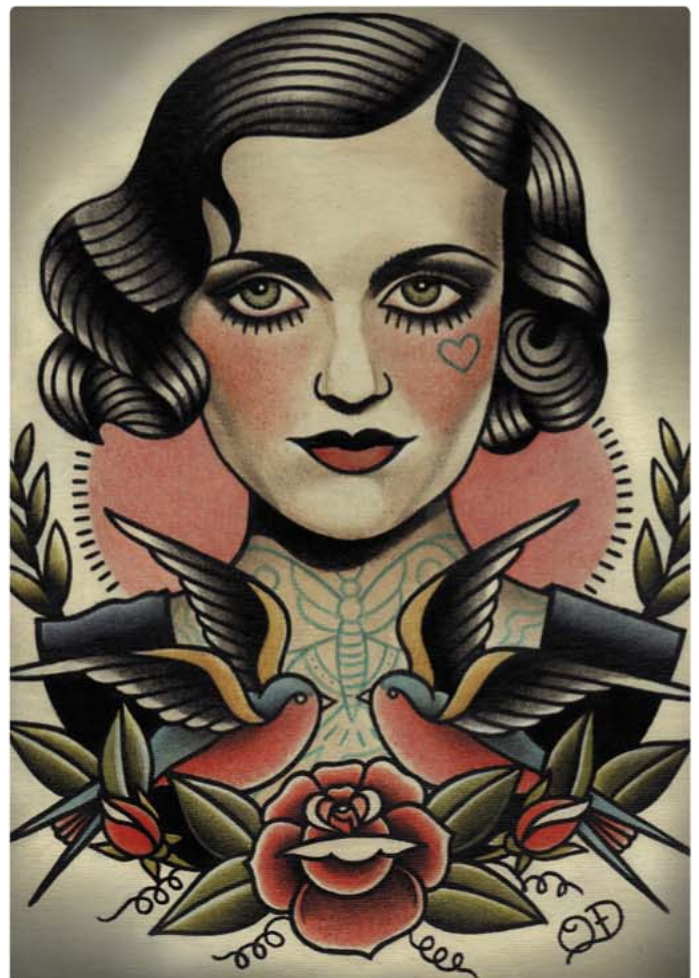
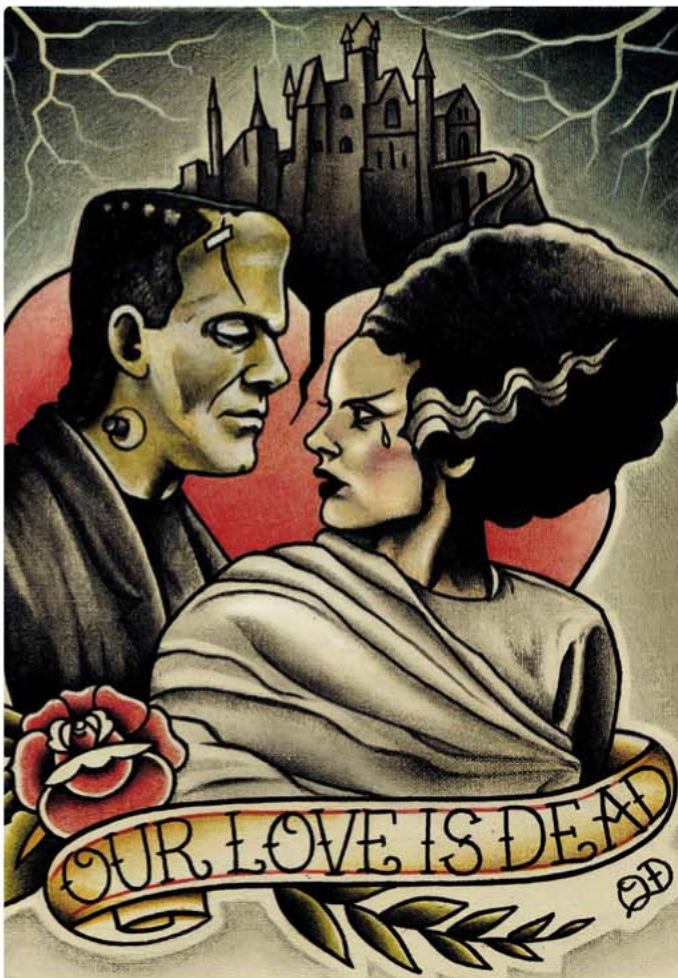
is like that... and Sailor Jerry of course. Can't leave him out."

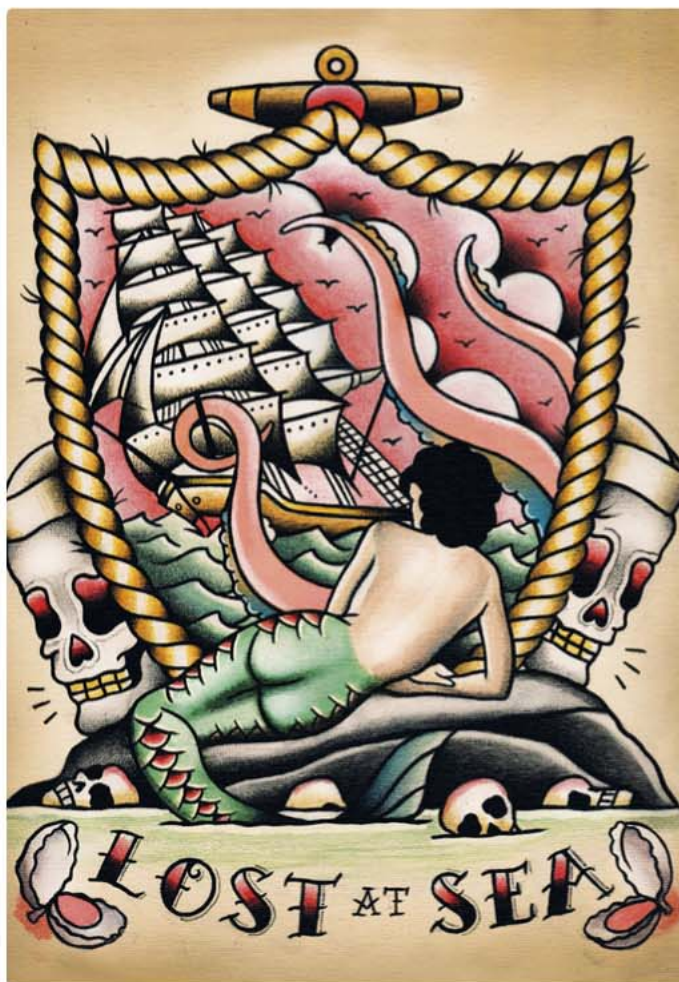
Quyen is well-known for her bearded men and handsome barber paintings, but her connection to hair goes far deeper than the occasional praise of chin pubes. Trying her hardest to rebel against her father's strict Vietnamese perspectives, Quyen decided not to go to college to become a doctor. She had lost all faith in her artistic abilities, mostly because her parents just couldn't fathom the idea of their only daughter pursuing a career in art. So, under the circumstances, Quyen also opted out of art school. However, it wasn't until a friend presented the prospect of beauty school that Quyen decided to take her love of hair to the next level.

"As a kid, that's what I loved: men's haircuts. I'd look around the house, see my uncle and dad, and I'd be like 'You need a haircut. I can clean that up.' I've always been into style, fashion, and aesthetics."

She attended cosmetology school, graduated and worked at a salon for a short while until she realised it definitely wasn't where she wanted, or needed, to be. However, it wasn't in vain. That same love for hair has transpired into an alternate art form—the kind that has barbers all around the world plastering her prints upon the sacred walls of their shops.

While Quyen may have made it to the 'Land of Opportunity,' her childhood was not completely free of her Vietnamese culture. In many ways, she was just like any other child: rambunctious and wild, a ding-dong-ditching socialite. But her life was rigid with discipline 🙏





and highly criticised by her father.

"I remember being in 4th grade and having to memorise 20 vocabulary words a day. I'd have to read the Encyclopedia, pick words I didn't know, and then memorise them. It was literally homework. And if I didn't have them memorised by the time he got home, he would spank me. He was a typical Asian father; he wanted me to be a doctor and for their child to be into art, like I was, was something they just couldn't register. I am thankful to my dad, though, because he did teach me the value of working hard. I took a great work ethic from my parents."

Quyen realised early on that art was it for her. It was in 2nd grade, after taking 1st place in an art contest she didn't even realise she was entered in, that the notion was seemingly solidified.

"When I came up to accept my award in front of everyone—and it was huge because the whole school was there—I was like, 'Whoa, this is big. Does this mean I'm good at this?' That was the first moment I can clearly remember asking myself, 'Am I talented? I think I am. They think I am.'"

Fast forward about 30 years and Quyen is currently a self-proclaimed workaholic. One scroll through her instagram and you can see that sleep is a rare commodity. Whether it be a tattooed flapper, a bearded sailor, or a traditional rendition of Michael Myers holding a blood-spattered blade, she is constantly and consistently producing new prints. Quyen's new found reclusive work ethic has allowed her to become an artistic sensation in a swift and speedy manner.

"I see my fans as my family. At my age, most people are tending to their families and careers, so that's what I'm doing. I wake up and all I think about is art. I brainstorm and then I work on my orders during the day. By the time night falls, I sketch something up, and then I do my night shift into the early morning. I basically work around the clock. I took a break from my other style of art to do some tattoo flash for myself, just



for fun, and the rest was history. I've had my shop for less than two years, so all of this happened within months of me putting out my tattoo flash. It's kind of crazy."

Don't get it twisted, Quyen is not a tattoo artist; she is simply a lover of the craft. Her art reflects the style, and the style nourishes her creativity. And, yes, it is true that Quyen has been known to bang out a tattoo here and there—especially on herself—but she is merely a fine-artist with an infatuation for tattoos.

"They're two different, extremely separate approaches. It's like living on two different planets. I like my freedom, and my art gives me that. Who knows, I say this now, but maybe 10 years from now I'll have my own art shop and tattoo out of there. I can tattoo, and I appreciate the craft, I just love painting; it's my passion."

As we began to close our meet-up so that I could grab a beer and she could tend to her disabled doggies, it struck me: in the intangible self-written life story of Quyen Dinh, she's barely reached the first sentence. Hell, she may even still be working on the title. She still has so much more to give, and she is ambitiously intent on giving it. And for that, the tattoo



Who knows, I say this now, but maybe 10 years from now I'll have my own art shop and tattoo out of there. I can tattoo, and I appreciate the craft, I just love painting; it's my passion

world is one lucky motherfucker.

"I'm an adventurer. I want to experience everything. I just try to do everything I can, whether it be study everything I can, travel everywhere I can, etc. I want to make a film, I want to write a book; I just have so much in front of me...My ultimate goal creatively is to leave some sort of legacy. I want to be the type of person that, one day, someone wants to do a documentary on. I want to leave my mark not only on the tattoo world, but the art world in general." 🐼

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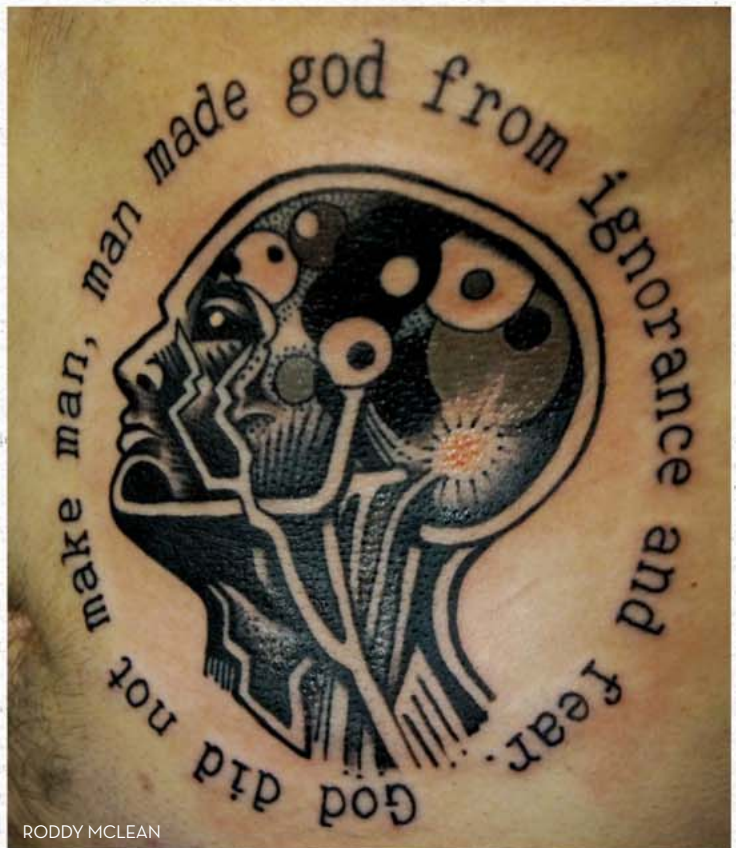
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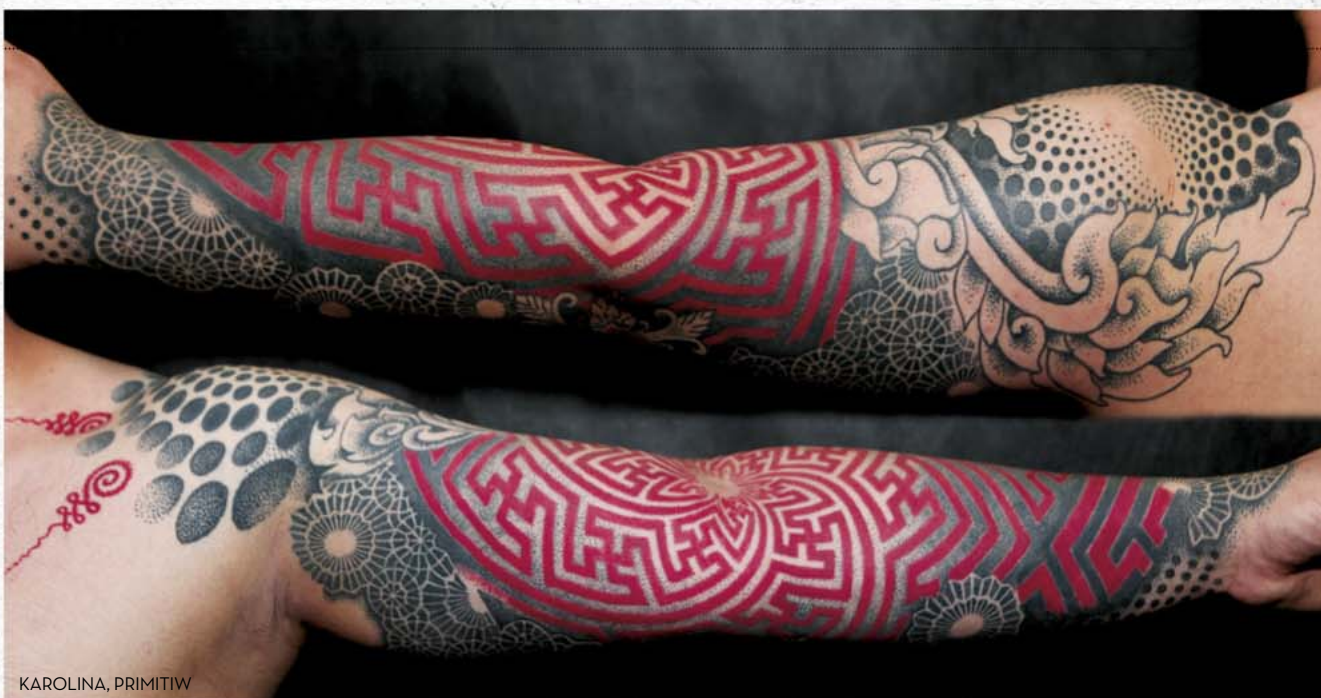
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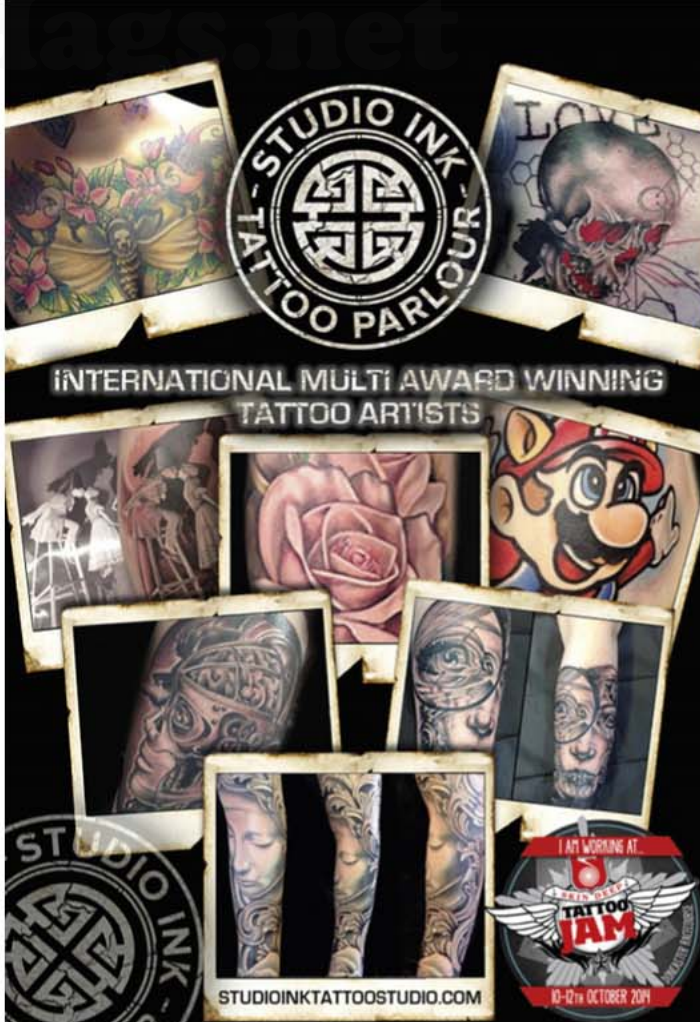
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EPIC INK

Epic Ink, a new tattoo reality show, has wrapped and as we wait for it to air on the 20th August, we are once again left wondering: could this one be 'the one'?

Will we finally get a show that is in the hands of the artists, or are we just going to get another that is governed by folk solely interested in capitalising on a continuously strengthening industry? We might, but then again, I have a feeling, we might not.

My reason for thinking this is down to one person, Chris Fifty-One, one of the stars of A&E's new real life tattoo series, Epic Ink, which follows the artwork and exploits of a group of tattoo artists at Area 51 Tattoo in Springfield, Oregon. I've known Chris a long time now and over the years I have had the privilege of seeing how Chris works. In a world of cut throat competitiveness and the lure of celebrity, Chris is one of



those artists that manages to keep his head clear of the politics and his feet firmly on the ground. As Chris said to me early on about his concept, "People need to know about this show. It is the most

real and respectful show out there. Totally legit. It is a rule breaker and game changer." And when Chris 51 makes a statement like that, he means it!

So how did the whole idea



PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS SHOW. IT IS THE MOST REAL AND RESPECTFUL SHOW OUT THERE

and concept of the show come about? Chris saw the current flock of tattoo related reality shows and thought, I could do something different and better! So, instead of sitting around and bitching on media sites, he went out and did something about it. He decided to bring the reality back to reality TV!

"I have had this idea brewing

in the back of my mind for years. The first time I saw a tattoo show I thought, this isn't very real! Most tattoo artists I know aren't trying to be all tough guy and macho. We don't really fight like this. Most of us are geeks and nerds, that's why we got in to this business. Because we had an insatiable appetite for drawing comics and cartoons. Television is





CAROLINE RUSSELL

The sweet and innocent nerd-virgin of the group, but don't let her innocence fool you for fire! Caroline stands her ground with Heather and the boys and has no problem putting them in her place; which is a land of cuddly kittens and magical rainbowed unicorns. She has lots to learn in the art of pop-culture 101, but her intelligence and attitude will enable her to master the education. Sweet Caroline runs the counter at Area 51, complete with rolling eyes and sighs of, when are these dudes going to come back to reality?

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portraying us as these hellion brutes and that's not fair, only a small percentage are like that."

While it is impossible to deny that shows like Miami/LA/London Ink, or Ink Masters, have blown the tattoo world apart, for better or for worse, when you live in the tattoo world you do just see most of the shows as caricatures of real life. It's television for the quick-fix, bling, over the top multi media generation. It's tattooing turned up to eleven...and then some.

So who better to bring it back down to earth than a bunch of artists who are not only ink splashed, pop culture geeks, they are some of the best artists tattooing in the world today. Thinking along these exact lines, Chris started putting his dream into action.

"I opened my latest shop in Springfield Oregon with a TV friendly floor plan, hoping this would be my next major progression in the industry. I spent my free time plotting and scheming and making connections. I knew the people I would want involved when the time was right. As fate would have it, before I could even start reaching out to production companies, one, Matador, got a hold of me. Their director of development heard of me and told me he wanted to do a sci-fi themed tattoo show and I replied, 'You're kidding me? I've wanted to make a pop-culture themed tattoo show for a long time now!' And so we started down a joint quest to bring our double



Chris 51



Jeff Wortham



Heather Maranda



Chris Jones

I SPENT MY FREE TIME PLOTTING AND SCHEMING AND MAKING CONNECTIONS. I KNEW THE PEOPLE I WOULD WANT INVOLVED WHEN THE TIME WAS RIGHT

vision to a singular fruition.

"I presented the production company the artists in a way that showed how great their personalities would be on television. Not to mention they were all the very best artists I knew in their genres. A true geek dream team! I basically piled so much information and ideas on them that I forced it so they couldn't refuse. I was ready and prepared for this and they knew it."

Suddenly Chris found himself in a very cool position. He had a ready to go idea, and more importantly, he had an interested backer; something that doesn't come easily in modern media when every second person is throwing their storyboards onto the slush pile. Next it was time to secure the deal and get the artists onboard. Chris' geek dream team was becoming a reality.

The artists of Epic Ink were

**CHRIS JONES**

The quiet mastermind of the crew. He doesn't talk much, but when he does it counts, delivering comedy and antics with a polished grin. The foreigner of the cast, Jones brings a wealth of English pop-culture and sexy mis-pronounced vocabulary to the mix. His colour portraiture is amongst the best in the world and his passion for what he does is captured in every piece, along with his nerdiness! He has been nominated for Top UK artist of the Year four years running. Jonesy is a licensed LucasFilm artist and admitted Star Wars freak, he even sleeps in Return of the Jedi sheets.

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**CHRIS FIFTY-ONE**

The captain of the mothership, Area 51 Tattoo and star of the new A&E series, Epic Ink. The bossman is all business when it comes to his shop and tattooing, but all geek when it comes to his staff and personality. He is a self-proclaimed Simpsons, action figure expert and avid choc chip cookie connoisseur. Chris has the entrepreneurial talents of a young Trump but the savvy of an old Heffner.

His tattooing is based in a painted nature and flowers flavour, but his true artistic love is everything sci-fi and cartoon. He is a licensed LucasFilm artist and travels the world tattooing at comic cons and teaching business seminars at conventions. He has written several books on everything from tattoo flowers to baseball history, football trivia and poetry. This Big Cheese runs a tight ship in the loosest way possible. He is very proud and protective of his crew.

www.chris51.com • **chris@chris51.com**
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are all very close, long-time, friends. No divas, no attitudes or egos. All had a great sense of humour and exceptional social and professional skills. "My first order of business was to make sure that my four other artists were all on board and knew the real sacrifice needed to make this happen the right way. Josh Bodwell was already in. He and I are very like-minded about this sort of thing and I told him about it all first. He had actually been contacted by the production company too, but he trusted in me to make it happen once he heard that I had jumped

at the opportunity. He knew that I would run at it with my full attention like a crazed cheetah. He is also the geekiest and one of the smartest guys I know, so his involvement was mandatory.

Next I contacted my tattoo cousin, Jeff Wortham. Jeff would be the younger artist with a unique style all of his own. Jeff has an attitude and character that is contagious, you just want to be around him. Chris Jones was a no-brainer. I knew the show needed some foreign flavour, not to mention the greatest colour portrait artist that I know, and so Chris Jones 🍌

KATIE FIFTY-ONE

Katie can be seen sporadically throughout the series as the true-boss lady of all things 51...Area 51 and her fiancé, Chris 51. The beautiful and polite Katie has been known to drop the hammer once in a while to restore order, but it's a toy hammer so it doesn't hurt too badly. She also serves as Chris 51's memory and humility.

Instagram:@katiefiftyone

was in. Heather Maranda is not only the best female artist that I have ever seen, she has enough spirit and spice, not only to tolerate all of us men, but out-do us as a collective. Rounding off the group is Jeff's fiancée Caroline Russell. She is so cute, sweet and innocent and her bubbly persona would make for the perfect counter girl."

His artist avengers assembled, Chris was on fire. After a couple of months of talking and planning with the production company, he finally got the go-ahead to make a sizzle reel (a ten minute pilot).

"Within a few anxious months of waiting, A&E Network came

calling. They loved the sizzle and had so much faith in us that they signed us to a full 10 episode season from the start. They have been nothing short of incredible to work with. They have given us massive leeway and allowed us so much freedom in creating this show in our vision. They assigned us the best crew to work with and we all became best friends. When you practically live with 20 other people for 16 hour days over two months, all sharing the same goal, you better get along and fall in love with them, or life will turn in to a nightmare."

Finally it was roll time. With Chris' studio set up for just this day, it was time to move the filming crew in and unleash his idea on the world.

"Filming the show was the hardest, most demanding, and yet the most fun thing I have ever done in my entire life. The adventure spanned two straight months to make 10 episodes.

We each did 10 tattoos over the course of the show. That is 50 tattoos in total, which they will use maybe two-thirds of. These were no ordinary tattoos though. Every single piece was a half sleeve or quarter back-piece minimum. They were all-day long marathon sessions. No audience has ever seen this type of epic work being created day in and day out consistently.

We had plenty of our share of fun and pranks too. There were few times when someone wasn't laughing to the point of tears, so much in fact that we were shushed all the time like a bunch of obnoxious pre-teen girls at a slumber party. Farts would clear rooms and mayhem would follow. Graphic artwork would be left on unaware camera gear and pants would be dropped during interviews by fellow artists. It was absolutely impossible to keep a straight face at moments and I thank the crew for having

"FILMING THE SHOW WAS THE HARDEST, MOST DEMANDING, AND YET THE MOST FUN THING I HAVE EVER DONE IN MY ENTIRE LIFE"



Josh Bodwell



Chris 51



Heather Maranda



Chris Jones

**HEATHER MARANDA**

Vinegar and spice mixed with everything perfect and nice, Heather is Chris Farley reincarnated and infused with Lisa Lampanelli. For every wise crack that ensues, a tender moment trails. She is the princess of crazy and the queen of art. Her tattooing skills are rivalled by only female Jesus, but she is funnier! The detail and attention she puts in to every facet of her life is reflected in her artwork and it's as beautiful and unique as she is. Also a licensed LucasFilm artist, Heather outdoes her competition every step of the way. She is the definition of a true artist. Her antics will leave you laughing, crying and in awe, drooling for more.

www.HeatherMaranda.com • Facebook: /Heather.Maranda
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JEFF WORTHAM

The young southern daredevil of the bunch. He has the swagger of a Hollywood player but the charm of a fresh prince. Jeff has the heart of a lion and the mouth of a cheetah...it never stops running! His aura is so likable and funny it is contagious. Jeff's artistic skill is as lovable and unique as his personality. Combining neo-traditional with realism and geometric wizardry, it casts spells on its collectors. Jeff is also a licensed LucasFilm artist and Star Wars theorist. His passion for storytelling is only outdone by his quest for scientific phenomena. Jeff has the brains of Einstein mixed with the wit of Gandalf, mouth of 2-Pac and the moves of Michael.

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so much patience with us.

The entire staff is very close and tight so we all hung out and stayed a family and team every minute of every day...and even had dinners and movies on our very few days off. Nobody ever left early until their part was done. We were as inseparable as a fat kid and candy. Not everybody is on at once though, so at times we would find Bodwell or Jones crashed out on a couch in my office, or Caroline passed out snuggled up to Jeff. Heather would be playing with markers or her video games. I usually would be in the snack area eating cookies. Literally every single



day was so memorable. I have never seen such a collection of perfect tattoos! Epic really is the only way to describe them and the talent that the cast has. Between Jones' colour portraits, Bodwell's colour realism, Heather's amazing detail and Jeff's unique wizardry, I was in awe everyday! One might think that we would get tired or annoyed with each other, being so close in the same building for so long, but it was quite the opposite. I have never felt so close to a group of people in my life. We all really bonded and became blood. We got coined the 'space-friends' because our antics and closeness were out of 🍌



this world. The relationships you see on the screen are 100% real!"

"We want the viewers to be comfortable enough to invite us to their dinner table despite our outward appearance. We are lovable, goofy, and don't take ourselves too seriously... unless it comes to our tattoo work. That we take with the utmost sincerity."

Staying true to the ethos of the show, the crew only wanted companies involved whose products they personally used in real life, everyday. Another fact that was important to everyone, keeping it a 'friends and family' show.

"My good friend, Rob Smead, owns Electrum Stencil Primer and he supplied us with enough goodies to last all year. Killer Ink supplies literally sent a ship load of everything needed, all the way from Liverpool. Tubes, needles, medical supplies, you name it, Layth really hooked us up. Ego sent us three damn shiny new machines each. Jones and Bodwell were already sponsored by Ego, so that was a great connection. Mike at Ink Eeze took care of our numbing needs and more. Waterloo went above and beyond, sending us 5 pallets, on a semi truck, full of their alien-green coloured work stations...which are the coolest things ever. Ink Beds replaced all

of our furniture in-house with state-of-the-art client chairs. Richie Bull sent over a shit-load of Hustle Butter, enough to bathe in...and I actually did, my balls have never smelled so good! I am doing some business things with Copic markers, so they took care of all of our artistic needs and demands, and believe me we demanded a lot because let's face it, Copic markers are so bad ass! Lots of local companies helped out and supported us too. LevelUp arcade, which is our local hangout, made sure all of my vintage pinball and arcade games were working and looking great. Ninkasi brewery helped with some after-filming refreshments. I could go on and on, oh wait, I guess I have. Anyway, as you can see, the support we had was incomparable."

"We actually had the first-world problem of having too much good content for the show. Surprise celebrities showed up to get tattooed and

even stayed to hang out. And some partied a little too much with the cast. The most non-graceful and absurd athletic endeavours were moronically attempted by the artists, who in fact did all their own stunts! Sophisticated art gallery outings turned to spontaneous dancing outbreaks by overweight and rhythmless tattooers. Fire dancing, concrete block crotch sledge hammering, paint-filled balloon fighting, Goonies house exploring, donut contest eating and countless other shenanigans ensued; all while maintaining minimal dignity and unflattering partial nudity.

Everything you see is totally genuine. The producers let us be ourselves and turned us loose. Everything we talked about was what we normally discuss, all of our own ideas and thoughts. Sometimes you could even hear the producers in the back room laughing at us. Every crew member and producer said that they have never seen anything

WE ACTUALLY HAD THE FIRST-WORLD
PROBLEM OF HAVING TOO MUCH
GOOD CONTENT FOR THE SHOW





Josh Bodwell

JOSH BODWELL

The king nerd of the bunch. His wit and wisdom on all things pop-culture and Star Wars are rivalled only by Google. 'Bodders' is the trivia guru and movie genius, rarely challenged by mere humans. His vivid colour tattoos are so saturated you have to ring them out just to make sure they are in fact real. Josh is a licensed LucasFilm artist and travels the globe tattooing at all events pop-culture, spreading his love for the Galactic Empire and Rebel forces equally. Always smiling, always happy, Josh has the calm of a Jedi master but the spirit of a Padawan Learner. He is the perfect mix of Yoda and Spock.

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like that before and it was the 'realist' reality they have ever seen. A&E network showed tremendous faith in us and the production and let us do what we do, like we do! It was like a dream, it really was such an exhilarating and positive experience. I could do it for the rest of my life...as long as I had the same production crew and cast. I love them all! In fact, the only thing I would change is to

make the show even longer to showcase even more tattoos and random spontaneous craziness!"

And now we wait. When this piece is out there will be one week before the show airs, August 20th on A&E at 10:30pm ET. And I for one can't wait. If you know Chris Fifty-One, or have seen him and the rest of the Epic Ink crew at a convention together, you know this show is going to be a riot.

There is more enthusiasm and excitement bottled between this small crew than a bunch of pre-schoolers on energy drinks. With these guys, everything is an adventure. Life is there to be lived. Add to this the quality of art they produce between them and the show has nothing but success written all over it.

With Chris's dream now a reality, I think, this could be 'the one'. 🐼

READ MY BO

In this age of pervasive tattooing, world firsts are getting harder to achieve. Yet Russian artist Dmitry Morozov has done just that by creating a machine that reads tattoos and turns them into music. We sent Nacho Brown to Moscow to get the low down on this ground breaking cybernetic sound-smith.



<http://vtol.cc/>

Along Dmitry's lower arm runs a precise, black, geometric tattoo. It brings to mind a game of Tetris and to the untrained eye it appears to be simply an abstract, arithmetical, bold design. Dmitry proceeds to connect an elaborate electrical device to his arm that resembles a hybrid between a synthesiser and a printer. He turns the device on and it begins to scan his arm. As it does so a cacophony of digital sound breaks the air. Pulsing beats break into high analogue chimes before descending in to eerie computer drones. It sounds like the kind of digital soundscape Aphex Twin

Nacho Brown Dmitry Morozov

or Autechre would release.

"This is the beginning of my project 'Reading My Body'. We are surrounded by technology and we are increasingly dependent on it; the internet, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, it's everywhere. We have computers in our cars, in our watches and even our washing machines. We wake up with our cell phone, it stays with us all day then we go to bed with it. Technology is everywhere now. We can't be separated from it; it's now a part of us. That's what inspired 'Reading my Body'.

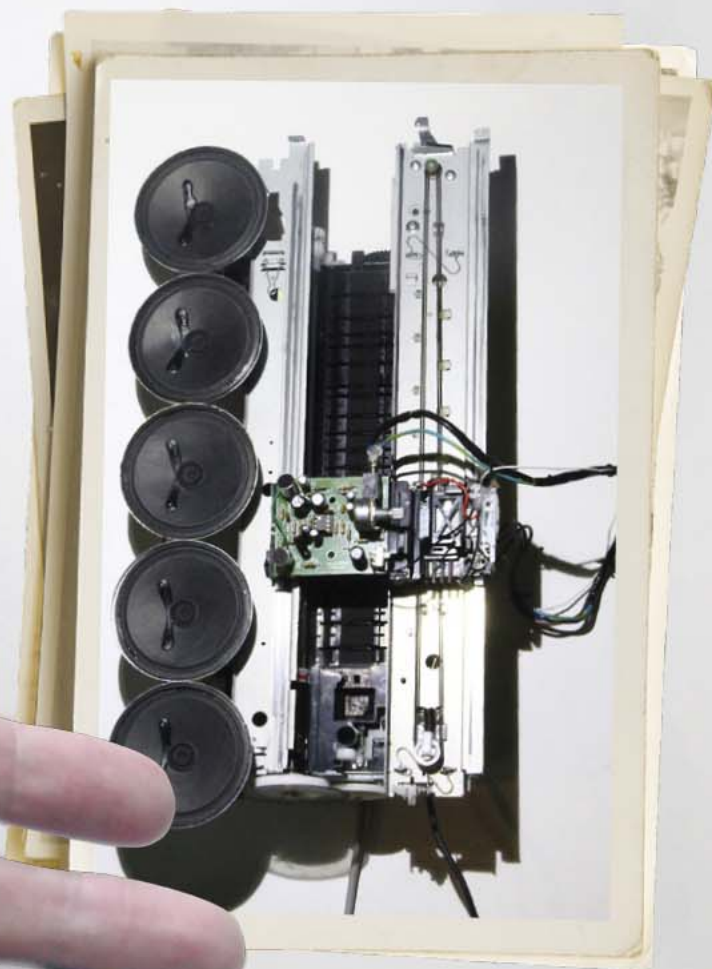
"It's not only a reflection of this social trend, it's hybrid art. I'm seeing how far I can push the envelope of body

modification, art and technology. It's like a living dream of how far technology can go, not only surrounding us but becoming part of our bodies and affecting the world around it creating a new reality."

Dmitry is a busy man combining work, art and boundary pushing technology. It's fast approaching one in the morning but despite the late hour and his obvious tiredness his enthusiasm is abundant.

"I'm an artist who mostly works with technologies, primarily sound but I'm working a lot with robotic art and combining video and gadgets into my work. I also make

DY



"I CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF THE TATTOO BEING LIKE A SCORE FOR MUSIC OR A TRIGGER FOR SOUND THAT COULD BE READ BY A COMPUTER SYSTEM"

RUSSIAN TATTOO TABOO

"Geometric tattoos have made me fall in love with body art. All my life I was against tattoos because in Russia tattoos are seen as part of the criminal underworld and they are frowned upon by the police, families and the mainstream. Tattoos are taboo and the prison tattoos are crude and ugly. It's a challenge to make a tattoo in Russia and you get a lot of unwanted attention if you're tattooed."

synthesisers; that is going well. I've sold them all over the world."

Dmitry disconnects the machine from his body and hands it to me. It's clearly a prototype but expertly put together. I ask him about his background.

"I'm pretty much a self-taught engineer - my educational background is art history. I came to technology through art but I have always been fascinated with electronic music. I started messing

around with synthesisers and started with circuit bending which is an old trick to DIY a synthesiser or drum machine to make crazy new sounds. That's where it all started 7 or 8 years ago. I've grown in knowledge and confidence to reach where I am now."

"I wasn't interested in tattoos at first but when I saw beautiful geometric tattoos on the internet, I was inspired to design my own to match my love of the digital aesthetic and

my addiction to technology. After I was commissioned by a festival to produce a sound installation, I decided to combine my new passion for tattoos with my love of digital music."

"I came up with the idea of the tattoo being like a score for music or a trigger for sound that could be read by a computer system. I made a design in Photoshop and demoed it on paper with great results. I've got very pale skin so the black ink contrasts beautifully meaning an ultraviolet scanner can read the tattoo really easily. Once I got started the project moved really quickly, one day I designed the tattoo, the next I built the sensor. It all came together in less than a week."

Dmitry designed the tattoo but he went to a professional to get it put into his skin.

"The guy who tattooed me didn't even know what it was for. He just copied my design 🙄"

BY MOVING MY ARM IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AS THE TATTOO IS BEING SCANNED, I CAN CHANGE THE SOUND BEING PRODUCED

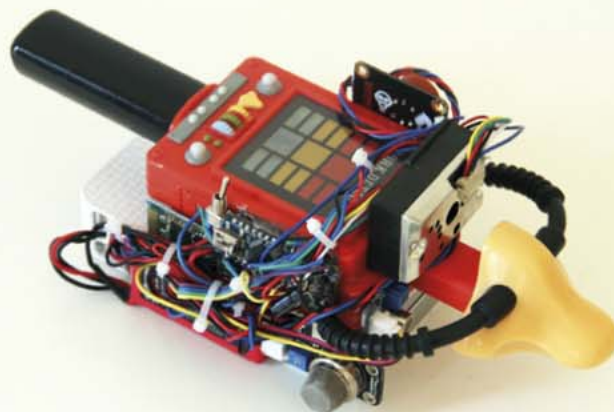
WHEN DMITRY MET ELECTRO MUSIC LEGEND APHEX TWIN

"I love the music of Aphex Twin and he is definitely an influence on my work. I actually met him a while back when he came to Russia to buy one of my synthesisers. He's crazy about synthesisers, like me he's addicted to them. He was a really nice guy, very smart, an amazing person. He came to my synth studio and he's like a big encyclopaedia not just on music but on so much else. He's a true artist."

and did a great job. It's got perfect straight lines and I think it's the best I could get."

I turn my attention back to the scanner. I'm surprised by how light but sturdy it is. To my amateur mind it looks ridiculously complicated but Dmitry assures me it is based on modest principles and widespread technologies.

"In terms of the machine, it uses a very simple, ultraviolet black and white line sensor. It's very common in industry - in robots - to allow them to carry out instructions. In the machine is a 3D motion sensor which allows me to add more expression to what I'm doing. By moving my arm in





SOME PEOPLE HAVE TROLLED
MY ONLINE VIDEOS
DISRESPECTING MY IDEAS
BUT OVERALL, PEOPLE HAVE
BEEN REALLY INSPIRED
BY WHAT I'VE DONE

different directions as the tattoo is being scanned, I can change the sound being produced."

It is this motion control that transforms the machine from a read only playback device to an interactive musical instrument.

"I can sit on a stage and use the scanner, tattoo and the motion of my arm to create a unique musical composition. It's like the robot is reading me and I'm feeding back to it and changing it's interpretation through the movement of my body. It's poetic; like meditation. The unison of man and machine, it sets me free from the usual knob twiddling of synthesiser music."

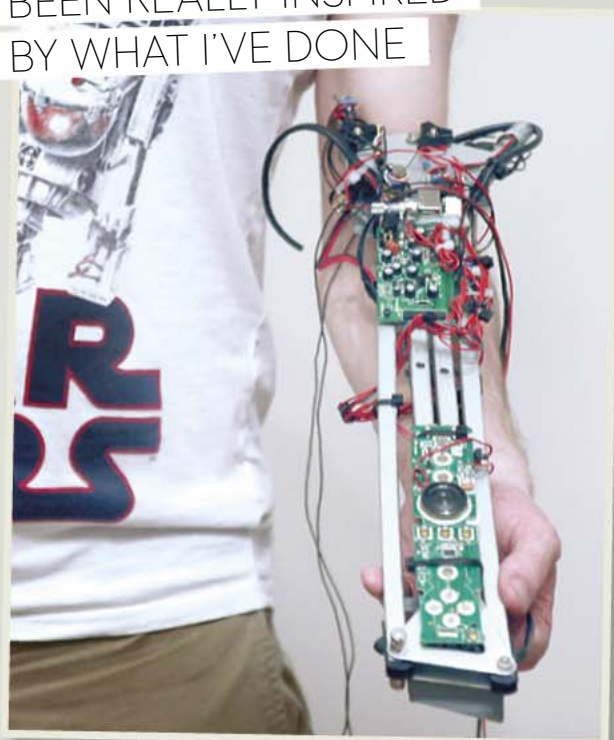
"It also raises an interesting artistic and philosophical

question. Am I making the music or is the robot. Who is in control? Man or machine?"

The video for 'Reading My Body' has received over a million views on YouTube alone.

"I've had great feedback on the project. Some people have trolled my online videos disrespecting my ideas but overall, people have been really inspired by what I've done. I never set out to be the first in the world to do this, it just happened that way. I didn't even realise nobody else had done this before. I just developed it to pursue my dream of the body, art and technology combining. To push our reality into the science fiction realm."

"Tattooing is a great symbol of 🧙‍♂️





TATTOOS ARE LIKE A DRUG, I WANT MORE. I ALSO WANT TO SEE HOW I CAN UTILISE AUGMENTED REALITY TECHNOLOGY AND TATTOOS

destruction being creation. You hurt your body but you rebuild it anew. It's boundary pushing in its nature and that's what makes me passionate about art and music. I want to play with the edge of what's possible and see how far I can push the envelope."

Dmitry is clearly driven by artistic passion but he appreciates there are commercial avenues for his technology and he would love others to get involved.

"I would love people to adopt my ideas and get their own tattoos that work with technology to produce sound. I would love to make a body orchestra and do live performances.

Each person with a unique tattoo, connected to a specially designed machine making music together - their bodies being the driving force for the sound."

"I want to develop the scanner technology further so it can detect colour and produce visuals as well as sound. I want to make a spinning disc scanner that works like a chakra reading a design on somebody's stomach. I want to make ergonomic sensors that can fit on different parts of the body."

"Tattoos are like a drug, I want more. I also want to see how I can utilise augmented reality technology and tattoos. I love the work of Karl Marc where he



combined tattoos, animation and smartphone technology. He's really inspiring and he has influenced my work. I don't want to copy what he has done but I want to look at bringing together cameras, tattoos and visuals to create something really beautiful. I'll have to improve my programming skills first but it's a future goal I hope to achieve." 🐼



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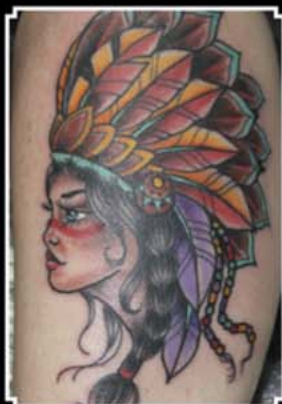
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TATTOOS & MONOCLES

After four years of working at The Honorable Society, Los Angeles-based artist Jorell Elie is on the verge of shaking up the industry, big-time. From the unique circumstances that united him with tattooing to the way he flawlessly quotes Anchorman and his exciting new project – a vegan studio – he likes to kick ass while marching down his own path and we applaud him for it.

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Barbara Pavone Jorell Elie

Catching up with Jorell Elie who, it must be said, is one of the most genuine individuals

I've ever met, it was easy to forget all about the fact that I was supposed to be interviewing him, as he immediately made me feel like we'd been friends for ages. Add to that plenty of talent, a portfolio that would have most tattoo lovers saying 'Sign me up!' in no time and the raddest dog on the planet and you've got yourself a winning formula.

I'VE (FOOLISHLY) AGREED TO LET YOU KEEP THINGS UNDER WRAPS

ABOUT YOUR NEW VEGAN SHOP - MONOCLE TATTOO - UNTIL YOU'RE FULLY SETTLED IN, BUT IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'RE WILLING TO SHARE? I'M DYING OF CURIOSITY!

In general, everything that we use in the tattoo process is vegan-friendly. Ink, ointment, stencil papers, stencil applicators, soap, disposables, all the way down to the razors we use. The vegan tattoo process is so similar to a non-vegan process that I hope to make it the standard.

My business partner and colleague is James Spooner and we also brought in a great body piercer, Allen Dabbs, to round out



the team. I don't want to divulge too much, but I will leave you with what makes us a bit different: We are Los Angeles' first full vegan procedure tattoo shop. "Vegan tattoos don't hurt (animals)."

LET'S GO WAAAAAY BACK TO BEFORE YOU DECIDED TO CHANGE THE GAME. HOW DID YOU FIRST COME INTO CONTACT WITH



THIS UNIQUE FORM OF ART?

Being that I have one of the worst memories ever, I don't remember the first time I saw a tattoo! [laughs] It was probably on Popeye, but even then, I am not sure I knew what a tattoo actually was.

I remember always being attracted to the idea of a tattoo since there is something special about something that's so 🍷



TRAVEL VS. SHOP LIFE

I think travel is one of the many perks of our job, however, I actually don't enjoy travelling that much. But being that I feel networking and travel are important to growth I continue to do so. I think being too comfortable can be damaging to growth. What is that saying? A rolling stone gathers no moss.



permanent, but always changing. Perhaps it's because my dad is a South African Zulu, so body mods are just in my blood. [laughs]

I also really like the ability tattoos have to illustrate and physically express what a person is about. I started to get tattooed because I wanted to express who I thought I was. That's probably why my first tattoo was of the two flags of my parents' origins: South Korea and South Africa.

WHAT SPARKED YOUR DECISION TO TRANSFORM FROM A MERE COLLECTOR INTO A TATTOO ARTIST?

There wasn't an actual moment that invoked a decision. Rather, there was an opportunity that presented itself. I was getting a tattoo that I had initially made a design for - since I thought I could design tattoos before I tattooed - and somehow, during the tattoo process, the fact that I could draw came up while the owner of the shop was looking on. He asked if I had a portfolio, I responded that I didn't, so I brought in a sketchbook I had been doodling in. Long story short, the owner of the shop graced me with an apprenticeship on the merits of my sketchbook.

After a few tattoos, I was hooked. The anticipation of

actually tattooing someone was addictive. For me, tattoos were sort of therapeutic, so I thought I was helping people, which is ironic since my tattoos when I first started were less than desirable and probably didn't help much. [laughs]

I READ THAT YOU ACTUALLY STARTED YOUR CAREER IN ATLANTA. HOW DID YOU END UP THERE AND WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO MOVE BACK TO LOS ANGELES?

After high school, my family moved to Atlanta and I wasn't ready to leave L.A. just yet. I was

working a decent paying retail management job and was finishing my associate's degree. I was living comfortably in California, maybe a bit too comfortably. So much so that in an attempt to shake things up, I ended up moving to Minnesota to follow a girl. Six months and one snowy winter later and this Angelino was ready to get out of there.

I had been offered a few scholarships out of high school to play soccer, so I reached out to some of those schools to see if the offer was still on the table

TATTOOS WERE SORT OF THERAPEUTIC, SO I THOUGHT I WAS HELPING PEOPLE, WHICH IS IRONIC SINCE MY TATTOOS WHEN I FIRST STARTED WERE LESS THAN DESIRABLE AND PROBABLY DIDN'T HELP MUCH

INSPIRATIONAL PEERS

Grime, James Tex, Shige, Jeff Gogue and Dmitriy Samohin are a few artists that are really pushing the boundaries of what can be tattooed [and] really make me want to learn more.



and, astonishingly, I was offered a scholarship to play in Georgia. Since my family was there, it was a good move for me.

It was in Georgia that I met my wonderful wife and had my beautiful daughter and with a new family and a new job, both in their infancy, I thought we would be more comfortable to embark on these journeys in a place I was more familiar with. Not to mention the weather and beaches are much better in L.A.!

YOU ACTUALLY HAD THE CHANCE TO TRAVEL WITH FELLOW TATTOOER TIM ORTH FOR A YEAR. WHAT WAS THE BEST LESSON YOU TOOK AWAY

FROM THIS GREAT ARTIST?

Tim is seriously one of the best men I know. The best lesson that he left me with was to be humble and open to learning. I started tattooing with an undeserved confidence that was quickly dismantled and redirected by him. Most of his significant lessons for me had nothing to do with tattooing nor were they intended to be lessons. The conversations we had, since we drove everywhere we travelled, were enlightening and fulfilling.

I FEEL LIKE ARTISTS ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE SEDENTARY THESE DAYS, WHICH IS SORT OF THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT YOU'D EXPECT, WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON THAT?



THERE IS A HEALTHY SUBCULTURE OF TATTOOISTS THAT ARE BRANCHING OUT INTO OTHER PROFESSIONAL FIELDS AND USING TATTOOS AS THEIR PEDESTAL

I don't think good artists are sedentary at all. It may just seem that the artists that pop up in our social feeds are doing the same things over and over again, but there is a healthy subculture of tattooists that are branching out into other professional fields and using tattoos as their pedestal. Mark my words: Within the next few years there will be many more mainstream collaborations between tattoo artists and other professionals.

BACK TO L.A. FOR A SECOND: IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT IT, WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

One thing? I'd change my student loan payoff amount! [laughs] On a serious note, I would like to see the people of Los Angeles care a bit more about the world we are going to leave our children. Between the state of our economy and the declining condition of our environment, it would be nice to see more of us doing more for other people. 🙏



THE RANDOMISER

I'd like for you to say the first thing that pops into your head when you think about...

Tribal tattoos? Africa. My dad is Zulu, so probably not the same thing most tattooists may correlate.

Los Angeles? Home sweet home. GREAT CITY!

Face tattoos? Not my cup of tea.

Apprenticeships? Apprenticeships should be mandatory and should be required to receive licensure to tattoo. They should also only be administered by artists who have the best intentions for the industry in mind.

Flash? Foundations of Western tattooing.

Jorell Elie? Imperfect.

OTHER THAN TATTOOING AND DOING YOUR PART TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE, WHAT GETS YOU SUPER STOKED?

I am a huge car lover. I love old cars. Cars that you can get dirty working on or using! I have a '67 Plymouth Barracuda that I have just started working on with my good friends at All American Speed Shop. I am also working on a Range Rover classic that is going to be my "bug out" rig. Aside from cars, "well, I have one great passion that lives deep within my loins like a flaming, golden hawk." [laughs] Anchorman quotes and beer! I am an amateur home brewer and professional beer enthusiast.

IF YOU WERE ONLY ALLOWED TO KEEP ONE THING FROM YOUR CURRENT HOME, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I'm assuming my dog [Gunner] is in tow already, so I would have to say the photo album that contains the clothes button that my wife pooped out when she was a toddler. It's a family heirloom now that my daughter has added a pebble to the collection.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE ON EARTH?

I LOVE THE SANCTUARY A HOME GIVES YOU. I KNOW WHERE EVERYTHING IS, MY TOYS ARE THERE, MY DOG IS THERE

Cheesy but truthful answer is: Anywhere with my wife and kid. I like being at home with them; I love the sanctuary a home gives you. I know where everything is, my toys are there, my dog is there, but if not home then an empty beach will suffice.

IF SOMEONE WERE TO VISIT L.A. FOR JUST 24 HOURS, HOW SHOULD THEY SPEND THEIR DAY? OTHER THAN GETTING TATTOOED BY YOU, OF COURSE! [LAUGHS]

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NOT TO PUT TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON YOU, BUT WHICH IS THE MOST SPECIAL TATTOO ON YOUR

BODY AT THE MOMENT?

My favorite tattoo right now is my cicada on my left pectoral done by Paul Deters at THS. The cicada reminds me of my nights in Georgia and although I didn't want to stay there, the best things in my life came from being in Georgia.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION PEOPLE HAVE ABOUT TATTOOISTS IN THIS DAY AND AGE?

I suppose it depends on the "people" you're referring to. I think with the help of television and social media, the general public has undoubtedly become more accepting of tattooists, but obviously they still maintain their reservations about us. In general, we are a hardworking group of blue-collar people. We have families, friends and responsibilities just like any other person. Keep that in mind when you want to cast a judgment about someone you don't know! 🐼

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LOST IN THE CITY

PART TWO

Valued by the world's lost youth for its fascinating vulgarity, Khao San Road is also home of another treasure: the tattoo shop BKK Ink, owned by the Thai/French team on a mission to conquer the tattoo world. Here is a portrait of these two tattoo artists from the sky, live from Bangkok's crowded slum.

There is no false orientalism at BKK Ink. The shop is bright, super clean, the walls are white

and the couches are made of black leather. Tony is a friendly thirty-year-old who welcomes us at dusk. This French expatriate has been in Thailand for about ten years, and has opened this shop at the end of Khaosan Road, the street of backpackers in flower shorts, the same street where Leonardo Di Caprio's wild journey begins in *The Beach*,

the street where you can eat grilled scorpions, get your feet nibbled by fish, book a trip to Cambodia, and get alcohol poisoning for less than five Euros. But the district is also a strategic point for its two million visitors each year.

"My girlfriend and I had been acquainted with the world of tattooing for quite a while when I met Ball and Tom, who wanted to fly solo as oppose to work in other peoples

shop's for years and years. We decided to form a partnership: I deal with the paperwork and management of the shop, they take care of the tattooing". Ball and Tom nod politely.

In a country where upward social mobility has been quasi





I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE WATCHING AND ADMIRING OTHER ARTISTS' WORK, AND I WANT TO FIND AND IMPROVE MY OWN STYLE NOW



inexistent since the Kingdom of Siam, Ball's story sounds like a fairy tale. He is 24, wears his cap backwards and shiny sneakers. Born of the country's labour class, he stopped going to school at the age of fourteen and started working for less than 150 Euros a month, helping night market merchants push their carts around. At the heart of this universe of laborers, he meets street tattooists who let him have his own tattoo stand and show him a few tricks. He copies, draws, persists, trains on a few friends, and then, at the age of 19, he meets Tony.

"He lied to me about having a professional experience in the industry, but it didn't matter: I saw his drawings and could tell he was different, head and shoulders above the others" tells Tony. Five years later, his work is acclaimed, his salary has multiplied by 40, he won the first prize at the Parisian Mondial for a full back piece, and he travels around wherever there are conventions in Asia.

His partner in crime can also



be proud of his remarkable career. Tom is from the countryside and starts tattooing his friends when he is 22 with a tattoo gun he has built himself with the battery of a cassette tape player. After his two children are born, he has to start working to feed his family and finds a job in a mechanism factory. But he quickly starts building tattoo machines again, connects

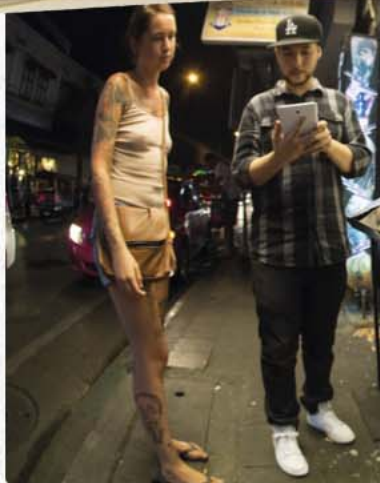


MY PASSION IS REALISTIC AND NEO-TRADITIONAL. IT HAS TO REQUIRE A MINIMUM OF ARTISTIC AND CREATIVE WORK TO MAKE ME ENJOY IT



with people in the industry and begins to tattoo more seriously. Before he joins the crew of BKK Ink, he works regularly for a man who sends him on three-month long missions in South Korea. What is the deal? To tattoo the bodysuits of mafia people in padded hotel rooms because tattoos are prohibited there. He earns 2000 Euros a month, quite a nice sum of money in Thailand, but there is no appreciation for his artistic skills whatsoever.

"I'm happy to work here with the respect of the art. I want to keep on working and make my own way, go to conventions with the crew and improve my skills in Asian style. I've spent my whole life watching and admiring other artists' work, and I want to find and improve my own style now" Tom adds. Tony explains that having your own style is not a common thing in Thailand. "Tattoo artists in Thailand are like 4x4's: they can almost do any style or any design. They always follow the occidental



trend. Thai customers like new school and neo-traditional, and all kinds of trendy designs, such as birds. European customers are more into Japanese/Asian style. In our case, Ball already has fans and tourists from anywhere in the world who come to get his realistic pieces. He is lucky to be incredibly gifted with drawing".

The young prodigy enjoys the luxury to be able to choose the designs and the customers. He is the happiest whenever somebody walks in with a complicated idea for a big piece. "My passion 🍌





is realistic and neo-traditional. It has to require a minimum of artistic and creative work to make me enjoy it". This state of mind is oddly compatible with Tom's who is more flexible and doesn't mind juggling between Asian and graphic styles. Tradition also demands that the two of them also have to do sacred tattoos sometimes, usually the famous Sak Yant on Thai's who don't want to get tattooed at the temple

for hygienic reasons. All tattoo artists know the basic design by heart, and send the customers to see a master for the technically complex pieces. For the sacred aspect of the tattoo, the customers have to go to the temple to have their art blessed anyway.

So what about tattoos of Buddha - which is a touchy topic in South East Asia?

"There is a certain pressure from extremists on tattoo

artists to not mess with the image of Buddha, but it seems pretty obvious that no Thai will mess with those icons. They are Buddhists themselves and know



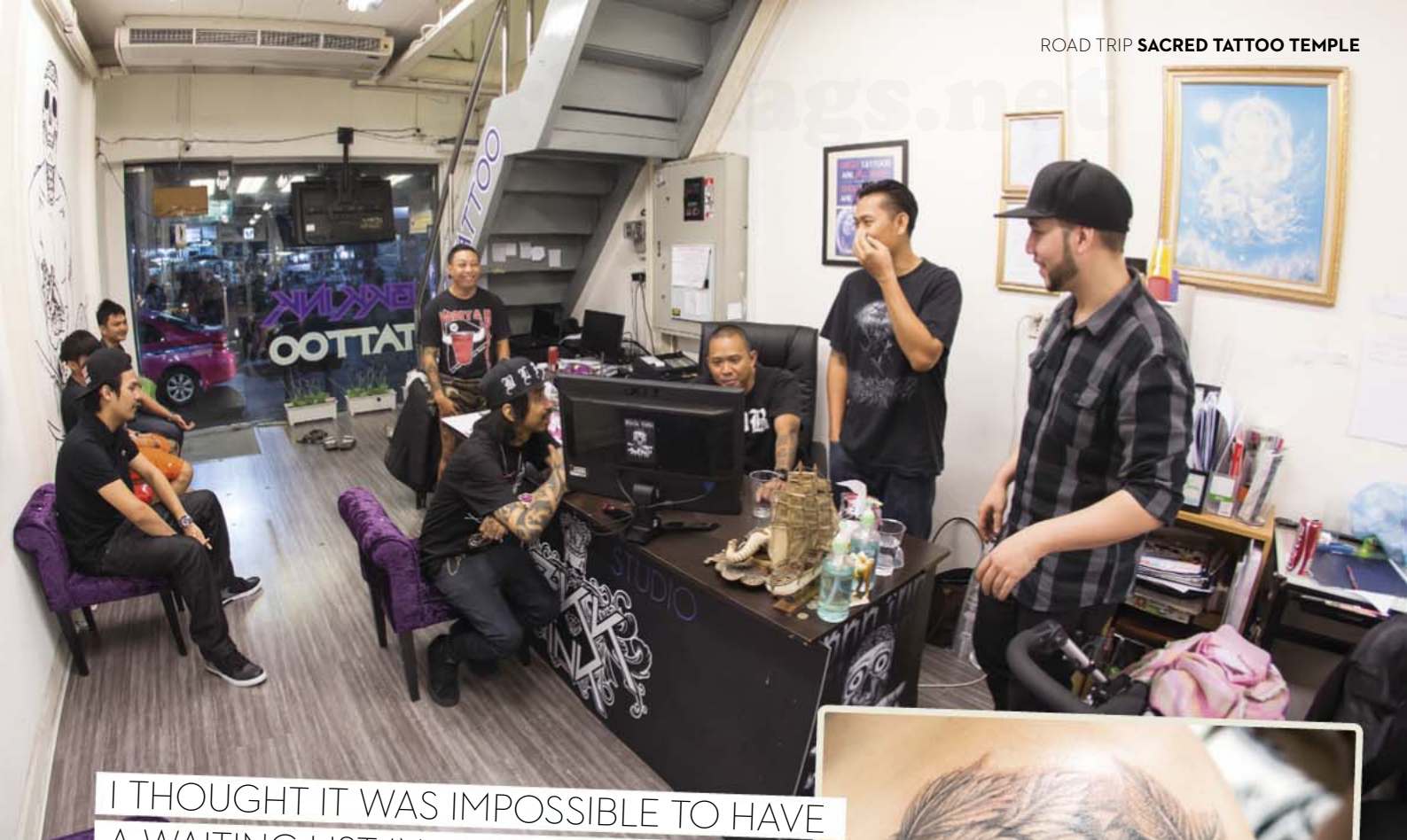
THERE IS A CERTAIN PRESSURE FROM EXTREMISTS ON TATTOO ARTISTS TO NOT MESS WITH THE IMAGE OF BUDDHA, BUT IT SEEMS PRETTY OBVIOUS THAT NO THAI WILL MESS WITH THOSE ICONS



- and have known ever since they were born - what is right and what is wrong. They will never tattoo it in the wrong place or in a scandalous position, - such as a Buddha tattooed under a foot which is the least respectable part of the body for Buddhists - or smoking a joint, for example. The same goes for the image of the King" Tony explains.

BKK Ink customers are, in the majority, occidentals, attracted by the fame of the artists, the quality of the service, and the place itself. "I thought it was impossible to have a waiting





I THOUGHT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE A WAITING LIST IN THAILAND, BECAUSE PEOPLE ONLY COME HERE FOR A FEW DAYS ON VACATION, BUT THERE IS A TWO MONTH WAIT RIGHT NOW



list in Thailand, because people only come here for a few days on vacation, but there is a two month wait right now. We have built our credibility little by little and no bad tattoos come out of this shop. I am very demanding about quality. I would love to open a shop in Phuket - there are a lot of Australian customers who would love huge pieces. It bothers me that we don't have more Thai costumers too: they think it's expensive here because it's for white people, but our prices are the same as any other good shop in the city, around 3000 Baths per hour (less than 70 Euros)," Tony adds.

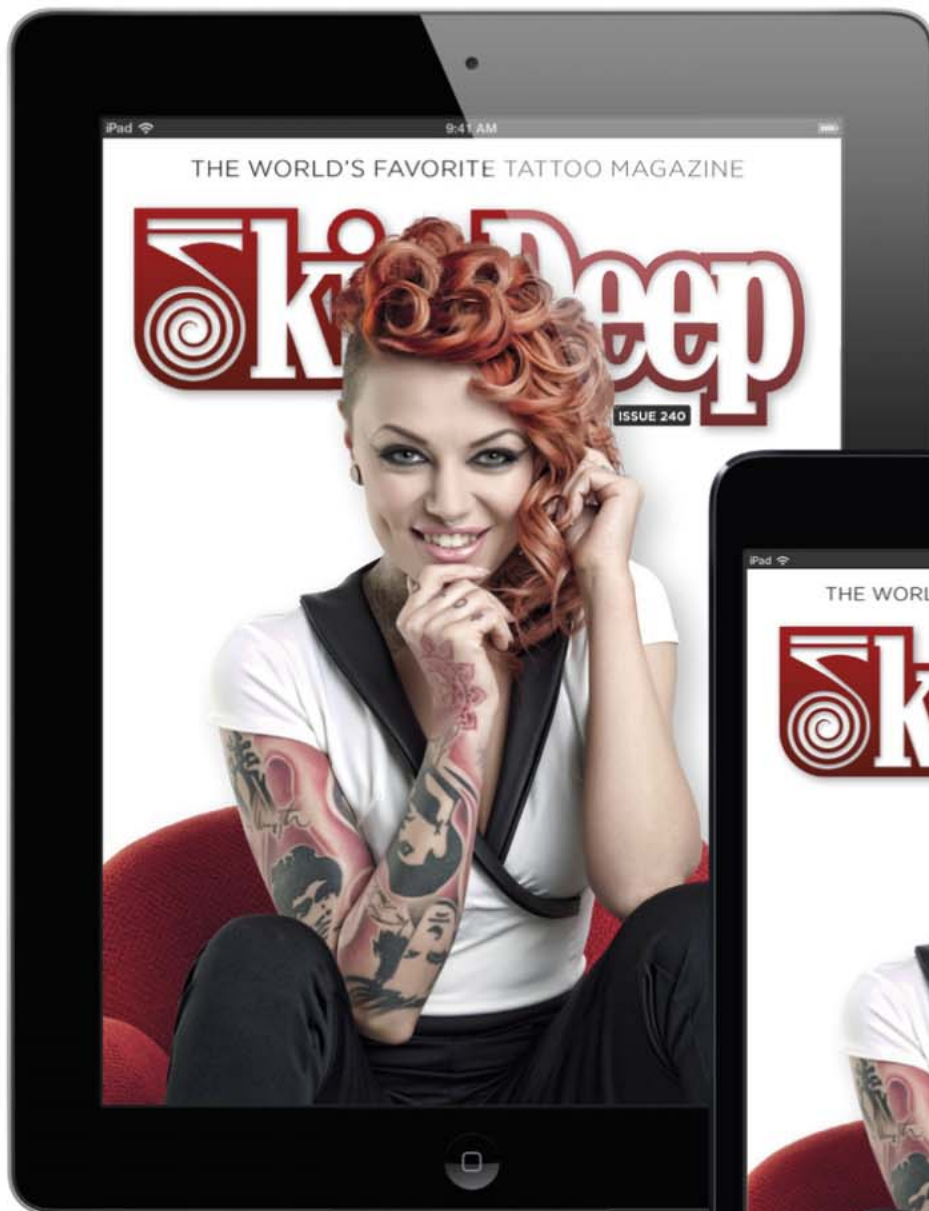
On top of being an artistic forerunner, BKK Ink also brought professionalism into Bangkok's tattoo world. They were the first to introduce the notion of a license in the country where the law is about as important as interior decoration. "I got inspired by the actual constraints in European countries and



we really wanted a legislation here so we introduced it to the authorities - who were a bit surprised that such a thing even existed. I wanted it to be clear. It's simple, if you don't create the law, you have to pay a bribe to the cops, and I refuse to get involved in that stuff" 🐾

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Reviews

40s: ALL AMERICAN ADS

JIM HEIMANN

PUBLISHED BY: TASCHEN

ISBN: 978-3-8365-5131-1

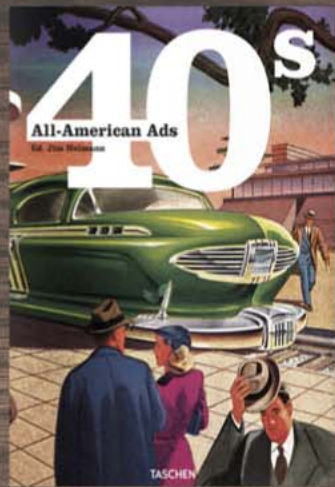
As the USA shifted itself from poverty to riches across the 1940s, it also created a golden age of wonderful advertising. They call it marketing now, but advertising is what it was and what it will always be.

Aside from the raised eyebrows at exactly how much the system pushed cigarettes and alcohol onto a nation (Basil Rathbone, Bob Hope, an entire baseball team - advertising Chesterfield cigarettes?), All American Ads is also riddled with pages upon pages of the other great American love-child. Cars. Anything that wasn't nailed down was hauled in to help shift the metal monsters. Wives, sex, kids, picnics - and once you had a car to claim your place in the world, you probably needed reminding that your life was not complete without a toaster, oil, a hat, weed killer, straight teeth and of course, Coca Cola.

Products aside, for artists and creatives, there's gold inside these pages. As the 40s moved from tentatively poking at the fire and the second world war receded, America found a set of big steel balls when it came to creativity. There's some beautiful artwork here that, quite honestly, across 700 pages must have taken an eternity to compile and sort out.

What's particularly interesting is the portrayal of people in the adverts - everything without exception - is aimed at the consumer being young, sexy, handsome/beautiful or, if the years caught up with you, building a successful family unit with all the right pieces in place. Anything more than two kids is positively a freakshow. You have been warned.

If you were old, black, gay, a teenager, sported a beard, wore glasses or anything else that deviated from The Dream, you were not a concern because you had no money.



That said, there were more severe crimes than being a minority in the 1940s. If you were German or Japanese, you were in deep shit as the big guns took no prisoners in shooting you guys from the sky - and by big guns, I'm talking Shell, Texaco, Asbestos (which I didn't know was a brand), Buick, Ford, Kodak. But if there's ever a call for a wise, regal and honourable elder statesman, why not pull in a Native American chief to fill the void?

The more things change, the more they stay the same, huh. Simply believe everything you're told and everything will be fine - and if it looks great seventy years on, we'll let you off the hook.

Mostly though, I am pleased to know that "In a recent nationwide survey, more Doctors smoked Camel than any other brand of cigarette".

A fantastic book on every level you can possibly think of.

MR SMITH

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

OUT NOW

Over the past 20 years comic book heroes - and thus their filmic counterparts - have become darker, more internally-conflicted and complex.

So, what a joy then for this particular bunch of the most unlikely superheroes ever, to turn that whole movement on its head



and give us stropiness, wide-eyed innocence, flippant backchat and emotional arrested development.

Guardians is a breezy, sometimes cheesy movie full of that one thing most other superhero tales don't deliver; uncomplicated, straightforward fun-time entertainment.

Welcome to the universe of Peter Quill (an unexpectedly excellent Chris Pratt), an earthling who was abducted by pirate-like space scavengers while still a boy. Now he's a man, but with the emotional maturity of a hormonal teenager, who has reinvented himself as 'Star Lord', a legend in his own imagination. Peter has been hired to retrieve a mysterious orb from a distant planet, but arrives to find he's not the only person who is after it and he is soon in a pitched battle with rival scavengers Rocket (a fast-talking pocket-seized raccoon) and his buddy Groot (a humanoid tree voiced by Vin Diesel), and expert warrior Gamora (Zoe Saldana going from Avatar-blue to grungy green for the role) for possession of it.

Before you know it the whole bunch of them have been locked up in a high security jail for their antics where they meet muscle man Drax (Dave Bautista), destined to become the last piece of the Guardians' jigsaw as all five have to come together as a fierce, mean fighting machine in order to deny evil Ronan (Lee Prince) ownership of the orb which he wants to use



to snuff out the entire universe.

So far, so uncomplicated and although there are other layers to the characters' back stories none of it is taken very seriously. This is a shoot 'em up in the stars action extravaganza with big set pieces, some beautifully designed hardware, a fantastic soundtrack that plays an important part in the storyline and plenty of great gags and one-liners.

This is a movie that is meant to make you laugh and it surely does that with expert comic timing and characters you really feel for. The screenplay is by director James Gunn in conjunction with Nicole Perlman and her woman's touch really shows in the lightness and deftness of the storytelling and in two or three scenes that are genuinely emotionally affecting (when Rocket believes Groot is lost forever, he is inconsolable until man-mountain Drax tentatively reaches out a hand to gently stroke his head).

It certainly doesn't outstay its welcome being one of the few films this year that leaves you wanting another instalment - which it obligingly sets up with no fuss or convoluted plotting.

Will Star Lord and Gamora get it together? Will Rocket and Groot be reunited, and will Drax reveal his feminine side? I for one can't wait to find out!

DEE PILGRIM

BLOOD FOR BLOOD

HELLYEAH

ELEVEN SEVEN MUSIC

OUT NOW

In the past, groove metallers, HellYeah, could have been dismissed as little more than the sum of their parts - the hybrid of drummer Vinnie

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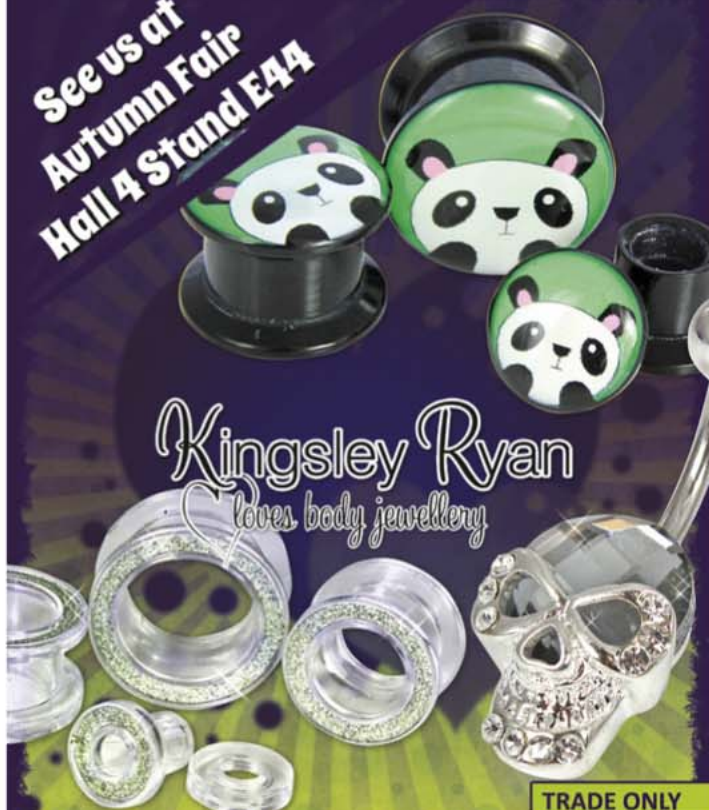


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BlingBling Boutique

Paul's Pantera and vocalist Chad Gray's Mudvayne. With third album, *Blood for Blood*, the band really comes into their own.

These boys mean business. Guitarist Tom Maxwell lets rip from the get-go, chugging thrash-style on opener, *Sangre Por Sangre*, while Gray's blistering vocal kicks things into top gear. The boot remains firmly on the pedal with *Demons in the Dirt* and *Soul Killer*, but it's on fifth track, *Cross to Bier*, where the album peaks with its kickass riffing, thundering drums and fist-in-the-air chorus line. Ninth track, *Say When*, is where the shit really hits the fan, though, unleashing a full-on fury of screams, distortion and blast beats. In short, this album will rip your head off.

Sure, there are a few moments of respite: ballad, *Moth*, lends a plaintive *Alice in Chains* vibe to proceedings while the emotionally charged *Black September* will have you reaching for your cigarette lighter. For the most part, though, you get a lot more bang for your buck here than, say, the band's sophomore outing, *Stampede*.

Blood for Blood is a killer. The kind of record a band with the name *HellYeah* should be making: vital, in your face and brutally addictive from start to finish. Artwork by Paul Booth. Fact.

WAYNE SIMMONS

DESIGNA

TECHNICAL SECRETS OF THE TRADITIONAL VISUAL ARTS

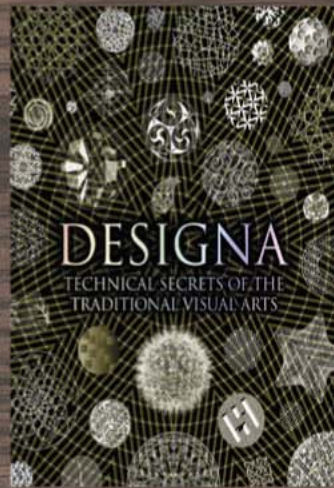
ISBN: 978 1907155 154

OUT NOW: £14.99

WOODEN BOOKS

This is a special little book. A collection of *Wooden Books'* six bestselling titles in one volume (*Celtic Art*, *Islamic Design*, *Curves*, *Perspective*, *Symmetry* and *The Golden Section*) pulls together a mass of essential reference material that should find itself a comfortable home in any tattoo studio as a one stop shop for those determined to do things the right way.

Superficially, it provides a decent grounding for beginners too - the Celtic section being particularly strong with its grounding on how everything is derived from a living world, a great explanation of



Recursive Roundels (wheels within wheels), how to draw knotwork from scratch - if you've never tried it, it ain't easy I promise you. The same can be said for the Islamic section - in fact, these first two parts surprisingly have rather a lot in common. From a tattoo point of view, if you were looking to work up some dotwork in one these styles, you could find yourself owning something incredibly unique if done well.

The mid section, is perhaps not so useful from a tattooing angle but is interesting all the same. If however, you find yourself challenged with tattooing one of the classic 'impossible objects' (and good luck to you with that) then there is at least something here to fall back on.

Finally, working towards the back, the final sections are tech heavy on mathematical grids, guides and symmetry - and that includes difficult concepts when it comes to art such as mazes and how the paisley pattern works.

Wooden have done a nice job on bringing this together - considering its small (154mm x 187mm) size, the details are still highly visible. Not as much as a coffee table art book perhaps but you wouldn't get one of those for £15, making this is a peach of a little book. It won't break the bank but it might make a difference if you find yourself in a hole one day.

MR SMITH

WAR ETERNAL

BAND: ARCH ENEMY

LABEL: CENTURY MEDIA

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Formed in 1995 from the ashes of

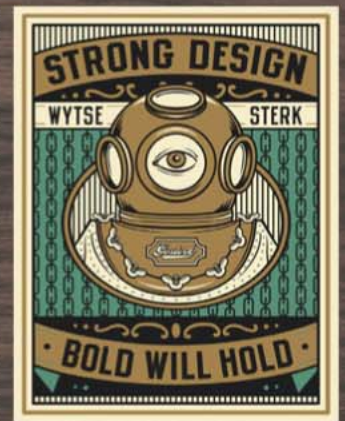


Swedish band, Carcass, Arch Enemy is what's known in the business as death metal. But don't let that put you off: this is melodic death metal, with all the thrills and chills and big chorus lines you'd expect from such a term. In fact, Arch Enemy helped define the sub-genre; guitarist and founder, Michael Amott, setting out to create the heaviest and yet most tuneful din he could.

But it wasn't until Angela Gossow joined in 2001 that Arch Enemy really came into their own. Their risk of bringing a female vocalist into the defiantly male arena of extreme metal paid off and the band's popularity soared. Yet, with further line-up changes over the last few years, not least Gossow herself stepping down, some feared the worst for the Swedes.

On *War Eternal*, Amott & Co. come out fighting. This record has it all: hooks, riffs and, most importantly, songs. Title track, *War Eternal*, and the brooding *You Will Know my Name* are already seeing massive airplay but they're not the only high points on the album. *Avalanche* is the closest Arch Enemy get to a power ballad with its anthemic chorus and hint of clean vocal. There's no shortage of aggression, though; blast beats aplenty erupting from opener, *Never Forgive, Never Forget*, and reigniting throughout. With Arch Enemy, you can always count on some impressive shredding. Amott and new boy Nick Cordle's duelling guitar licks bringing a classical - even symphonic - flavour to the mix. But it's new frontwoman, Alissa White-Gluz, who shines the most; her clear and enigmatic vocal delivery injecting a gutful of soul into those death growls.

With *War Eternal*, Arch Enemy has nailed their colours firmly to



the mast. This is melodic death at its very best; a record that should not only delight veteran fans but appeal to new blood, too. Enlist now!

WAYNE SIMMONS

STRONG DESIGN

BOLD WILL HOLD

WYTSE STERK, KINTARO

ISBN: 9 789081 701440

There are graphic designers and there are Graphic Designers. Wytse Sterk belongs firmly in the latter category and this collection will silence any who disagree. Logos, posters, t-shirts, branding, stickers plus larger scale graphics from one of the modern masters make up this superb book of his latest work. I don't use the word 'master' lightly either. To make an image 'bold' is not simply a matter of flooding an image with buckets of the same colour - it's far more complex than that. The flood colour needs to be worked seamlessly and subtly into the rest of the design too. There's a lot of mileage in these pages for any artist interested in the concept and also plenty of killer ideas that could up your game if you choose to embrace them. When you can take two colours and make it appear as though you've worked with the entire colour spectrum, you know you're doing something right and have got a handle on it.

The phrase "bold will hold" is bandied around this industry an awful lot, but not everybody has an accurate understanding of what that means. Theoretically, this book could change your working life - and if not, it's still one of the coolest books of its nature that I've seen in at least a year.

I feel a feature coming on. Stay tuned.

MR SMITH



Here in the Now Frontier

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PAUL TALBOT

If you're considering incorporating text into your next tattoo, prick up your ears as we take a look at some important issues in the typography of your chosen design.

I hate Bleeding Cowboys, I hate Times New Roman, I hate Papyrus and I really, really hate Comic Sans! What am I talking about? Fonts - and in the next 1000 words or so I'm going to introduce you to the art of working with type. Also known as typography.

I'd be surprised if you haven't already heard the term, just as I'd be surprised if you hadn't heard of at least a couple of my most hated fonts. In the digital age, 'typography is now something everybody does'. Most of us have to make a choice of font at some point (and I'll come back to font choices later) even if it's only for a 'wet paint' sign or which is the most suitable font for a CV, but that's about as far as we take it.

We are all used to saying what we want to say with the words we write, but what about when we want to write something on our bodies and what if the chosen design consists only of type?

Typographic tattoos are a big personal favourite of mine but a quick google image search of the term 'typography tattoos' throws up a list of - for the most part - not particularly impressive type-based tattoos. I don't mean badly tattooed, just not typographically very interesting. The content - the actual words - used in the tattoos are very powerful. Deeply personal, motivational statements of intent sit alongside hopeful little haikus of love, loss and longing that brush shoulders with the comically nerdy and the tragically hip.

But the type - oh dear God the bloody type! It's a collision of fonts chosen at random - with choices mostly restricted to typewriter, script, old english or handwritten. Everyone of them a 'came with the computer' font with all the values left at the default



setting. This isn't typography, it's just typing...

There are essentially two schools of thought when it comes to typography. The first is that type is 'a crystal goblet' merely an invisible container that allows the message to be communicated clearly and without embellishment. Now, that approach is fine for, say, this very article where legibility is critical to allow you to read my - mostly - cohesive ramblings. But what about that amazing, life-affirming quote you've decided to have inked permanently onto your body? In this setting I think that the second school of thought - in which type should be as expressive as possible - is far more relevant. In a typographic tattoo the type itself should form an integral part of

All our dreams can come true,
if we have the courage to pursue them

1

All our **dreams** can **come true**,
if we have the courage to **pursue them**

2

All our
dreams
can
come true,
if we
have the
courage to
pursue
them

3

All our **DREAMS** can come true if we
have the courage to pursue them.
— Walt Disney

4

"all our dreams
CAN come **TRUE**,
if we have the
COURAGE to
pursue them."
— WALT DISNEY —

5

ALL OUR
DREAMS
CAN
COME
TRUE
IF WE HAVE THE COURAGE
TO PURSUE THEM

6

the design as a whole and illustrate the sentiment of the words without the need to actually read them.

You see, done properly great typography communicates without the need for the actual words, it gives life to them and supports the meaning, giving it even greater depth.

Take this quote for example "All our dreams can come true – if we have the courage to pursue them." It was said by Walt Disney and it makes for a pretty good example of how some simple typographic changes can have a huge impact on appearance and communication.

In the first example, I've set it in Times New Roman - all the same size and all the same weight and it looks, well, dull. But with a few tweaks to the size and weight of the key words, the phrase starts to take on a visual rhythm even without changing the godawful font. The importance of the key words is emphasised and the 'gist' phrase can be understood with just a glance. This is typography at its most basic but even this is better than where we started.

The other examples show what happens when we start to think a little further with type. Example 5 shows that a hand-written style - the absence of a font - complete with the emphasis, give the design a totally different rhythm. Swapping the key words into the Disney font and changing which words are emphasised changes the inflection of the quote so that it reads in a slightly different way.

Now, I'm not suggesting that any of these designs would make a good tattoo - far from it - I'm simply trying to show you how, with a little extra thought, you can take a great phrase and

YOU CAN TAKE A GREAT PHRASE AND MAKE A GREAT TATTOO OUT OF IT BY THINKING ABOUT THE VISUAL RHYTHM AND THE CHOICE OF FONT.

make a great tattoo out of it by thinking about the visual rhythm and the choice of font. This thinking also applies to incorporating type into your designs. I work with type a lot and - as you can see - the shape and rhythm of the type play a massive part in some of my own pieces.

When I design a typographic tattoo I prefer to set the phrase, initially, in a fairly neutral font (usually Helvetica) in order to figure the visual rhythm. Once I have the emphasis I want, then I make my font choice before deciding on the final shape of the piece as it's these two factors: visual rhythm and font choice that will govern the overall look.

But what font? There are literally millions of fonts available and hundreds of great online resources that offer 'free for personal use' fonts in - pretty much - every style imaginable. Professional fonts are very expensive to buy but if, like me, you make a living from using them I would strongly suggest investing in your favourites. If you want to experiment with type for a tattoo, then a website like www.dafont.com is a great place to start. It's important to understand that a font can communicate merely by looking a certain way and that choosing the correct font will massively strengthen the design. This is partly because we see fonts and typography all day, everyday. From road signs and advertising to product labels, we are almost pre-programmed 🧠



WHEN YOU'RE CHOOSING THE FONT FOR YOUR TATTOO, REMEMBER IT'S THE FONT THAT COMMUNICATES THE MESSAGES CONTEXT AND THE VISUAL RHYTHM THAT GIVES EMPHASIS TO THE PHRASE.

to attach meanings to fonts because we are used to seeing them only in a particular context.

This is testament to the success of graphic designers who, over the years have been responsible for everything - from making sure we can find our way to the correct terminal in the airport to helping us choose the right deodorant. Next time you're in a supermarket, take a closer look at the branding of the products in your basket, you'll be surprised how many of them fit your 'personal brand and ethic' and how many of them communicate all of that by simply using the correct font to attract you. For that matter, take a look at most 'tattoo brands' out there and you'll notice that a lot of them go for the 'can of Relentless' look. This is because marketers have decided that you and I as tattoo fans, will react to this look more positively than, say, Helvetica and of course we do and that's why I'm sick and tired of seeing Bleeding Cowboys used for every new 'tattoo lifestyle' product.

To illustrate how a font can change the context of a statement, in example 6, I've changed the font to an American college style one. As you can see it totally changes how you perceive it. Set like this, it's a powerful 'go for it!' style message rather than the whimsical, dreamy statement that is example 5. So when you're choosing the

font for your tattoo remember it's the font that communicates the messages context and the visual rhythm that gives emphasis to the phrase.

You don't need any special software to experiment with type, you can use any modern word processor program that comes standard with most computers to have a go at it for yourself. If you don't feel confident (and most people don't) then, as with all tattoos, find an artist who is comfortable working with type. Most aren't (or at least the ones I've spoken to aren't) so it's very important that you see some examples of their work with type to make sure it's the kind of thing that you have in mind. If you can't find an artist local to you, then consider having a graphic designer (or even design student) create the design for you so that your chosen artist can accurately recreate it. Remember not all graphic designers understand the various limitations of tattooing either, so have them create the artwork actual size and let your tattoo artist can check that it's do-able first. Then you'll have time to go back to the designer to get it amended to make it suitable prior to your appointment.

I hope this brief introduction to type has given you some inspiration for your next typographic tattoo, or has given you some ideas on how to incorporate type into your designs. A more in-depth look at working with type is beyond the scope of this column but it's something I may write for Tattoo Master Magazine in the future if you're a subscriber to that.

In the meantime, if you're inspired to take some action, we'd all love to see what you make of it - you know where we all are.

Until next month... 🐾

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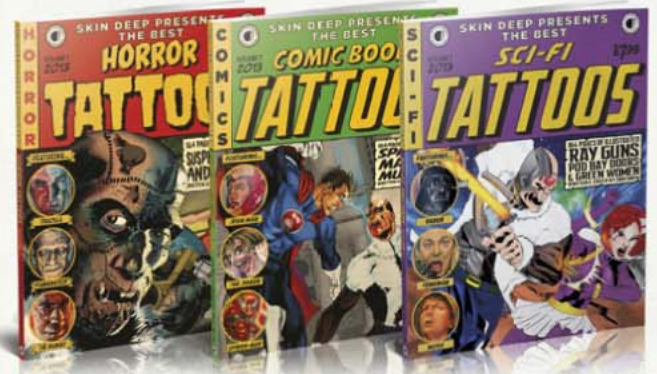
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Pages shown from *The Best Horror Tattoos* and *The Best Comic Book Tattoos*.

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The Time Machine

WAYNE JOYCE

This month, we're going to take a look at aftercare post-laser and make some suggestions for how to best get your skin back in shape for further tattooing.



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Post-laser aftercare is generally the most important aspect of lasering and there is not one single gospel that suits everyone. I always advise using the least 'dense' product as possible, such as an Aloe Vera gel - this allows the skin to breathe whilst giving it some nutrition. Ointments and dense lotions can aggravate the lasered area by creating hives and spots created by a blockage in the pores. Despite what you may find on YouTube videos and in other media horror stories, blistering is actually a common side effect and will require breathable gauze patches to keep the area clean and protected. They also decrease the chances of scarring if not looked after correctly.

In the real world, there's not much you can do about the blisters other than taking good care of the area to avoid the negative long-term effects. If an infection does arise, you can generally get away with an antiseptic ointment but in some severe cases, antibiotics may be required, that's up to your GP.

(Editor's note: It's worth me jumping in here and stating that the lasering I'm currently going through has produced a lot of blistering and in the first 36 hours, has looked pretty gross but luckily there's no pain or itching to go with it. In fact, it doesn't feel like anything at all, so it's really easy to ignore. My personal after-care regime has been nothing but Aloe Vera gel and this has taken care of the skin just fine. The blistering has lasted a couple of days and so long as you're taking care of yourself and not doing anything stupid like sun-


bathing while your body is taking care of business, it disappears pretty fast. Total turn-around healing time for me on a reasonably large lasered area has been about six or seven days - after which time, my skin has noticeably started to return to normal with no scarring or any other detrimental effects).

With regards to scarring, there are many products out there touting magic formulas to reduce the appearance of them, but I've yet to find one that actually works. In my professional (and personal) opinion, a regular bottle of pure vitamin E oil gets the best results if used on regular basis.

There is also an option to use fractional lasers to reduce scarring but none of these solutions will get your skin back to its original state.

Another negative side effect from lasering is the pigmentation issues: hypo pigmentation (lightening of the melanin) and hyper pigmentation (darkening of the melanin). The destruction of the melanin can create a whitening over the lasered area, which happens because the laser is looking for colour and can't distinguish between melanin and tattoo ink, so it attacks both. Hyper pigmentation occurs because the body knows there's been light damage and is trying to prevent it from damaging the skin, so the melanin groups around the area. This isn't always a permanent feature but could take time to recover.

The best advice - exactly the same as with a new tattoo - is to be vigilant with your aftercare, as prevention is always better than cure.

As always, if you have any questions or want to pass by for a consultation, you can contact me at wayne@resetroom.com 



An eye is upon you

BEING CLAIRE

My life isn't all about tattoos - in fact, most of the time I barely even think about them. They are there with me in everything I do but somehow, much of the time they are hidden from me, in plain sight.



Pam Van-Damned

Nonetheless, my tattoos are often the first thing that other people see and naturally, they've become a short cut for others to define and describe me. I take no umbrage with this - I know I am more than my wrapping yet I understand that it's convenient to use something so obvious as an identifier. Still, I wonder how much value this descriptor holds when it seems that these days everyone is tattooed? How much longer will it be before I must be described as, 'the tattooed redhead'? Or indeed, the tattooed, accordion playing, Lindy Hopping redhead, from St Albans'?

It can be hard to not to feel peeved at how everyday tattoos have become.

Genes, geography, upbringing, education, interests and life choices make us who we are and it's inevitable that we'll share some of these characteristics with innumerable others, but that doesn't mean we're all the same. We are sums of many parts, rocks cut with multiple facets and it's the combination of traits and characteristics that distinguish us. Think of the game 'Guess Who?' some of the characters have hats, some have glasses, but only Claire has both, and that's what makes Claire individual.

Even so, it's easy to get precious about wearing a hat - I consider dancing to be one of those multiple individual facets that make up who I am; I started with ballet as a preschooler and (although

some periods were mostly spent shuffling around at Indie nights in DM boots) 35 years later, I still dance at least once a week. These days, swing (specifically Lindy Hop) is my preferred dance form and since I started more than a decade and a half ago, it's grown in popularity everywhere. The original swing dancers of the 1930s were rediscovered in the 80s by small handfuls of dancers in America, Sweden and Britain and when I started out, you could pretty much guarantee that all teachers had learned from one of these revered 'old timers'. Now people dance and teach Lindy Hop all over the world and some of the newer teachers have never even watched the footage of the first generation, let alone studied with them. Not everyone approves of this, of course, some mourn the loss of how it was, 'back in the day' when the scene was smaller, more exclusive and closely knit.

Compare this to tattooing - when I first heard about custom tattooing in London more than twenty years ago there were very few people actually doing it. If you saw a tattooed sleeve on a London street in the early nineties you'd most likely be able to discern the tattooer responsible for the work. It wouldn't be a particularly hard task, you'd be picking from a list merely single digits long. Almost all of the names on that short list would have talked to and learned from an even smaller list of overseas artists, often via postal correspondence. Now,

not only do we see a far greater number of people displaying large scale tattoos, but apart from the innovative one percent of tattoo artists at the very top of the profession, identifying an author is almost contrary to reason. Again, some long term artists and fans understandably preferred it the old way and would love to restore the familial feeling to the tattoo community, reserving great, custom tattoos for the few, but even if it were possible, would putting the tattooed genie back in the bottle really be worthwhile?

If swing dancing is the Guess Who? equivalent of wearing a hat, and tattoos are the Guess Who? equivalent of glasses, I'm Claire. If I were to make a Venn diagram of Lindy Hoppers and extensively tattooed folk, there wouldn't be that many names in the bit where the circle overlaps. Yet, they aren't so different really - swing dancing and tattooing are both vernacular arts, meaning they belong to the people. Humans have responded to rhythm through movement and marked themselves since people began, they are art forms that live outside of the academic institution. No one owns dancing (not even Lindy Hop), no one owns tattooing, enthuse your passions and defend their honour, but don't get precious when countless others also want to experience the joy of wearing a hat - all that extra colour makes the world look prettier and it doesn't make one's own hat any less fabulous, besides, we can always wear glasses too. 🐼



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