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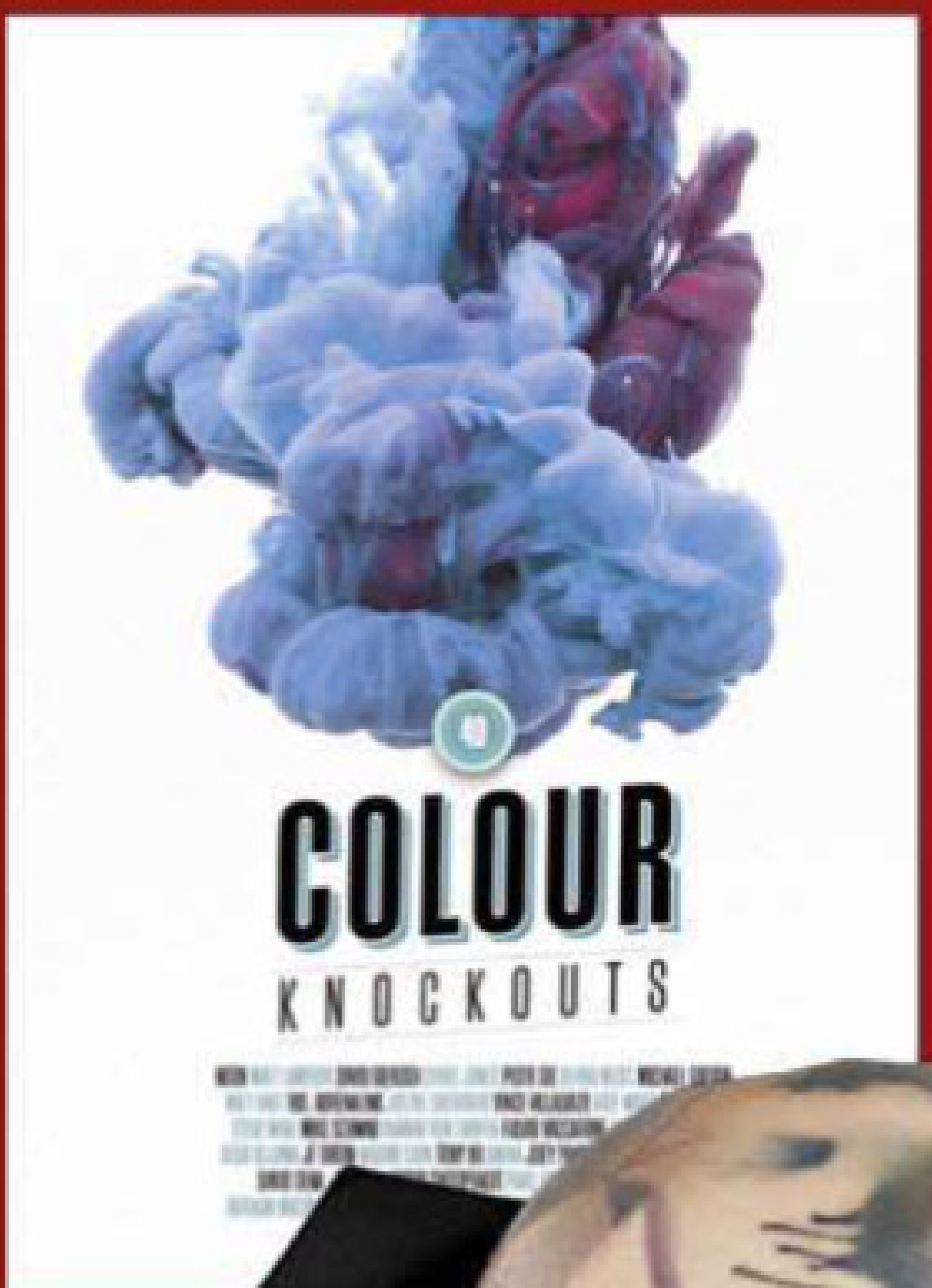


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TATTOO SHOW

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SCOTT IAN

HE'S THE MAN



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The needle has landed

Ken Penn

THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT

It was my birthday last month. My kids tapped me up for early pocket money the day before it so they could buy me something. In the evening, we went to see *The Hobbit* and went out for eats. £120 lighter by the end of the day, I was left with a large empty Toblerone box and a copy of an old *Howard the Duck* comic I had pointed out in a second hand bookstore window.

What the hell happened to the rest of the £40 I handed over?!

For those of you yet to enter the eternal punishment of being a parent, this is your future.

I actually like getting older—which is a good thing because there's not a damn thing I can do about it. God knows what happened to the last 20 years, but still being alive always counts as a success, right?

This looks like my cue to announce that 'back in the day' all we had a choice of getting tattooed was whatever was on the flash rack—or if you were lucky, you found a tattooer that could fix up your crappy drawing. But that's bullshit. That's verging on saying something like "things used to be much better before..." Before what?

If you haven't realised it yet, you're living in the golden age of the tattoo.

To elaborate: when it comes to music, vinyl is the ultimate in the musical experience—it has everything you could possibly need to milk it dry; books made of paper really are the only way to read something that means anything; and TV really was better when there were only three channels because sometimes, too much choice is really not a good thing.

FOR THOSE OF YOU YET TO ENTER THE ETERNAL PUNISHMENT OF BEING A PARENT, THIS IS YOUR FUTURE

However, tattooing lay under the radar for a long time, and right now, tattooing is coming into its 'vinyl' lifespan. It's gotten red-freaking-hot out there—it's truly wonderful but kicking in the windows of its golden-fleeced coat of many colours lies a threat.

The compact disc of tattooing, if you will.

It's called Instagram. Yeah, yeah, everybody is on it, everybody thinks it kicks ass and is the best kisser in the world—if you use it enough you can probably talk it into doing the washing up as well, but if you think it's the

gatefold sleeve of tattooing, you're barking up the wrong tree. It's good for business, it's good for showing what you're doing, but that's where it ends.

The tidal wave is too much. I've been to the edge and I've looked down already. I've been to the digital reading place and it left me feeling empty. I've committed to thousands of tracks stashed on a hard drive slaved up to a laptop rigged to a set of speakers, moved on to streaming when it got groovy, but all either

themselves instead of having an osmosis mindset. More people dared to be different because not hearing what other people think about you makes you not care. Do you think Norman Collins would have gotten far with his projects if he had asked everybody what they thought? Or that Frankenstein would have even made it past the first four pages without being hounded out of existence?

I don't actually have an answer to something that's possibly only a problem in my own head but, really? We're putting our faith in the future of tattooing by trusting the click of a heart icon?

I know... just an analogue kinda guy living in a digital world—or, as it says on the front of this *Howard the Duck* comic, I'm Trapped In A World I Never Made.

Ken



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THE USUAL SUSPECTS

- 06 SLEEVE NOTES
- 14 SCENES FROM THE COFFEE HOUSE
- 20 BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
- 90 CLASSIFIEDS
- 91 REVIEWS
- 95 THE TIME MACHINE
- 97 SOAPBOX
- 98 AN EYE IS UPON YOU

24 PAVEL KRIM
For one year Theres Zoi Karlsson—owner of Zoi Tattoo in Malmö and Stockholm—tried to convince Pavel Krim to move to Sweden from the Canary Islands and finally, he caved in...

28 THE COVER GIRL: AMANDA WEST
If ever there was a cover model that needed no introduction, surely it has to be Amanda West.

34 BAM
Life is Good for Polish Artist Lukas 'Bam' Kaczmarek - we talk painting, piercing and pots. Lap it up—it's beautiful

64 MIKE BOYD
Ever the sucker for being distracted by a killer rendition of any kind of bird tattoo, the boss got sucked into the pseudo-nouveaux art world of Mike Boyd—and is having real trouble stepping away.

64 SCOTT IAN
There aren't many musicians who would unfalteringly stick with their bands for over three decades of ups and downs. In fact, you can count those who have on your fingers and right at the top of the list is guitarist Scott Ian of five-time Grammy-nominated Anthrax.

70 SADEE JOHNSTON
You know that old grumpy dude who tattoos at the shop down the road? Course you do. The place with the blacked-out windows and dodgy flash on the wall. Sadee Johnston knows him. He even tattooed her, once.



SCOTT IAN

HE'S THE MAN—AND HE'S TALKING TATTOOS!

76 OLD LONDON ROAD
A pilgrimage from York to London to explore Old London Road studio uncovers a mellow place with plenty worth shouting about.

84 RICHMOND TATTOO & ART
Every November, the city of Richmond, Virginia hosts the annual Tattoo Arts Festival. It's only right that we stick our camera through the door.



SADEE JOHNSTON

RUNNING WITH THE DEVIL.



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Sleeve Notes

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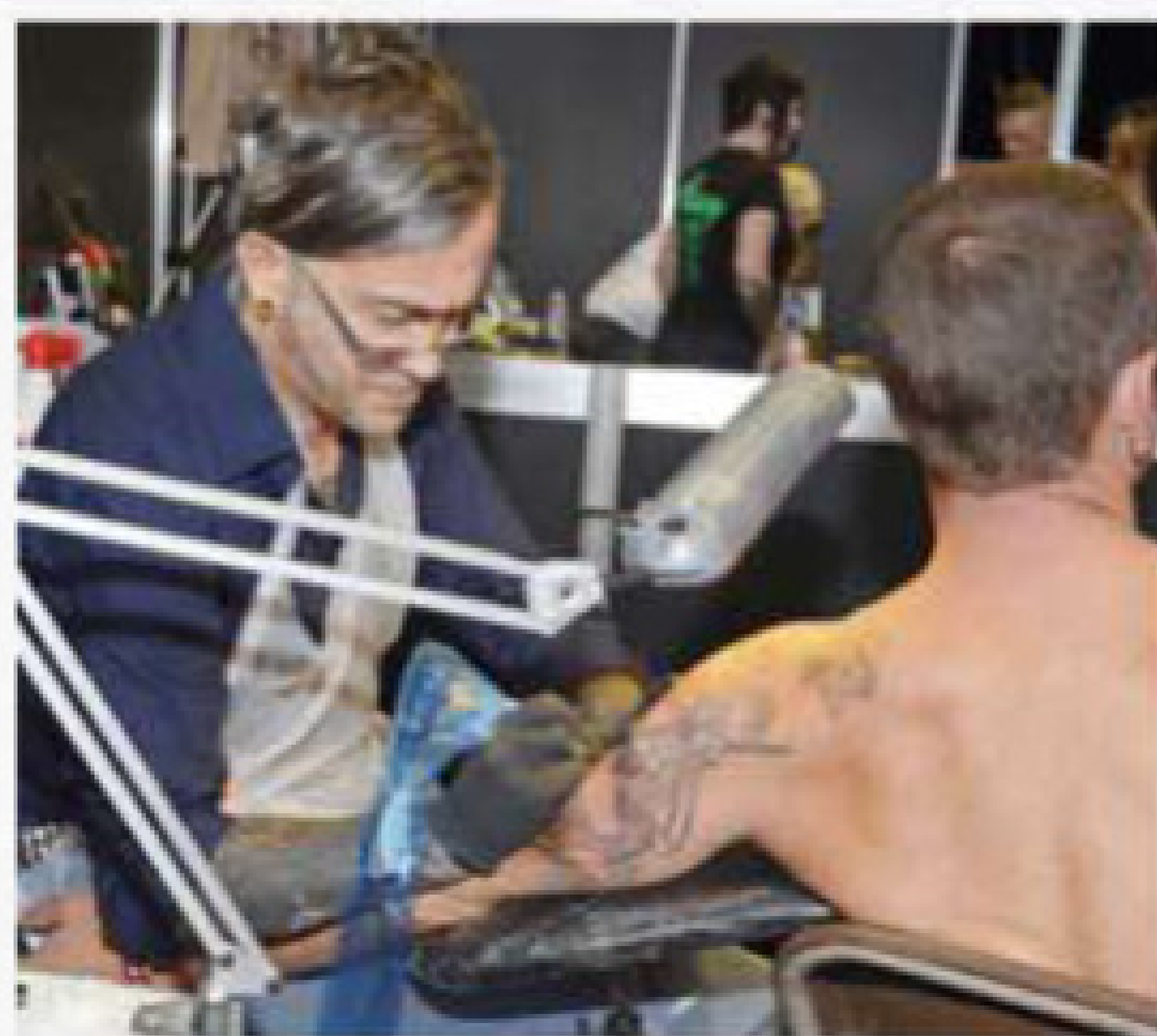
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SHORT SLEEVES



NEVER NEVER EVER AGAIN LAND

It's a sight we never thought we'd see this side of 2048 but here it is. The one and only Bez cutting a dashing figure as the one and only Peter Pan! Just another day at TripleSix? Not quite. Raising money for Autism Outreach in Sunderland, the studio pulled together and raised a whopping £2,744.61 which is so much, we actually had to check more than once that it wasn't a mistake. There's not a lot else to say about that feat of awe—somehow "grow up" doesn't seem appropriate—so instead, we shall simply salute from afar. Good work people!

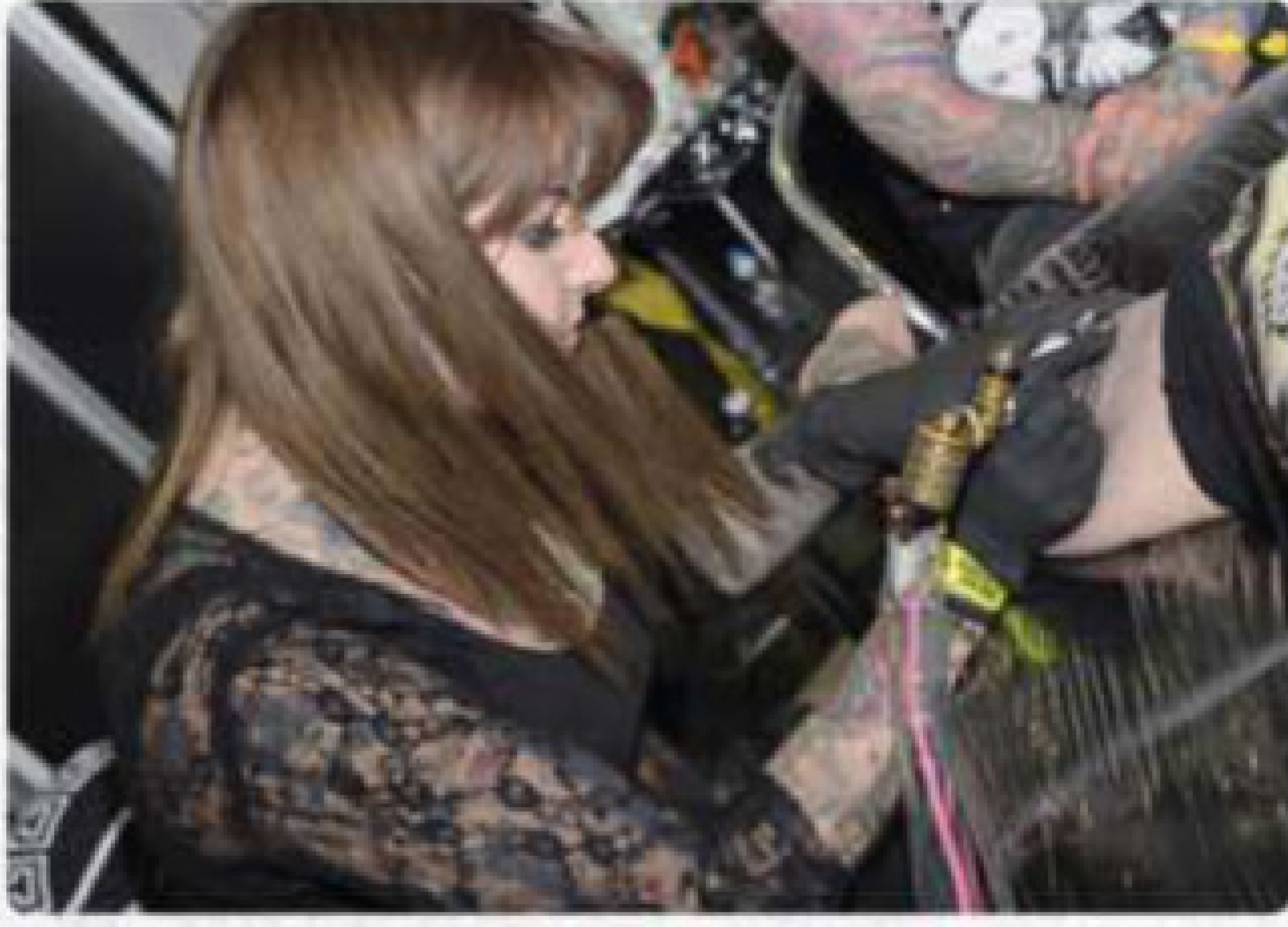


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TICKETS TO MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL TATTOO SHOW

Wanna come? This issue we're giving away ten pairs of tickets to the show and it's as easy as it ever is! All you have to do is send an email to editor@skindeep.co.uk with a subject line of **MANCHESTER** and we'll do the rest. There's ten pairs up for grabs - this year we're showcasing a whole raft of new talent and as always there will be a truckload of entertainment if you happen to find yourself at a loose end.

SHORT SLEEVES



FROME TATTOO CON

Not so far from right now - in a few weeks in fact from January 31 to February 1st - Frome in Somerset will be hosting its very own show. In association with one of our lovely friends and 2014 award winning Best Female - that would be Miss Jo Black at Black Inc - the show is playing host to some world class artists and a whole bunch of other convention related fun too. For the full experience, head over to [facebook.com/frometattoocon](https://www.facebook.com/frometattoocon) and kick up some dust. Tickets are available from cheeseandgrain.com.



NEW NEST FOR SONGBIRD

Songbird Tattoo, formerly of Honiton, have moved to become Exeter's most central tattoo shop, now situated at 57 High Street Exeter. Here's what you need if you're passing through: First Floor, 57 High Street, Exeter, EX4 3DJ 01392 254626 www.songbirdtattoo.com songbirdtattoo@live.co.uk Facebook Songbird Tattoo-Studio Exeter Twitter @SongbirdTattoo Instagram @songbirdtattoo

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE FOR A TATTOO

What could be better than having fulfilled your last wish? When you look death in the eye, or even when you are already deceased, Thai tattooist, Yasamota can tattoo a prayer or mantra on your body. Yasamota apparently flies all around the world to fulfil these wishes. Relatives of the deceased regularly call on Yasamota for help and expertise. The mantras can protect against voodoo and communicates a spiritual message to make the transition to the next world a positive one. Yasamota tattoos Sak Yant designs and mantras that protect and bring happiness and prosperity. At the request of his relatives Yasamota



fulfilled the last wish of a deceased father: tattooing a special mantra on his chest. We'd like to know how you get on if you take him up on it but we're having some problems figuring it out... if anybody has any great ideas, you know where we are. You can find more information about Yasamota's method on the website yasamota.com.

IN THE CLUB

A club that brings together photographers, tattoo artists and bikers has launched a special service aimed at reducing the number of badly drawn tattoos.

Shoot the Ink, which holds a themed event every month, is using its photography know-how to give would-be tattoo customers the chance to have their design projected onto their body ahead of going into a parlour. Dennis Smart, from Shoot the Ink, explained: "The idea came about when we read in The Plymouth Herald about a guy who was making £2000 a week removing tattoos. That got us thinking that their must be a lot of mistakes going on. "We can give people the chance, using photoshop software, to have their tattoo projected onto an image of themselves exactly where and how they want it. They can then take that image of the tattoo on their body to the tattooist. "It reduced the heartache and hurt that comes with a tattoo which is the wrong size, the wrong shape or in the wrong place." Based at Tamar Valley Studios, in Christian Mill Business Park, the club hopes to come together once a



month to provide themed events for photographers. Dennis Smart, who owns the studios, said: "The idea was sparked off by a model who is quite heavily tattooed and said she was having difficulty finding photographers that wanted to work with her. "We were all really surprised. So we decided to set up a group where like-minded people could get together and share their passion for tattoo art." At last month's event, Shoot the Ink had around £500,000 worth of motorbikes and machinery at the studios, making it a fantastic photographic opportunity for members.

Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

TATTOO FREEZE

11 January 2015

The International Centre
Saint Quentin Gate,
Telford,
Shropshire TF3 4JH,
United Kingdom
tattoofreeze.com

TATTOO EXPO ZWICKAU

16-18 January 2015

Neue Welt Zwickau
Leipziger Straße 182
08058 Zwickau,
Germany
tattooexpozwickau.de

INTERNATIONAL TATTOO CONVENTION OF GENEVA

23-25 January 2015

Salle des Fêtes du Lignon
Place du Lignon 16
1219 Le Lignon
Switzerland
tattoo-geneve.ch

28TH ANNUAL AM-JAM TATTOO EXPO

23-25 January 2015

BEST WESTERN PLUS
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6555 old Collamer Road
Syracuse,
NY 13057,
United States
am-jam.com

MILANO TATTOO CONVENTION

6-8 February 2015

Hotel Quark
Via Lampedusa,
11/320141
Milano,
Italy
milanotattooconvention.it

SEVILLA TATTOO CONVENTION

13-15 February 2015

NH Central Convenciones
Avenida Diego Martínez Barrio,
841013
Sevilla,
Spain
sevilla.spaintattooconventions.com

DIAMOND GIVEAWAY

Diamonds & Dusters have joined forces with that icon of cool - Toni Moore - to bring the world a whole new clothing line.... so it was only right that we should step in and procure some goodies for the valiant readership. What we've got is this:

- 1 x medium navy hoodie
- 1 x large black hoodie
- 1 x grey beanie
- 1 x bobble

Do we give away four prizes or do we offload it all onto a single winner? That's for you to decide. Send an email to editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line of either **SPLIT EM UP** or

KEEP EM TOGETHER - whichever gets the most entries is what we'll do. That will keep the Ed on his toes.

Be sure to check out our social media pages for info and updates:

F: [facebook.com/diamondsanddusters](https://www.facebook.com/diamondsanddusters)

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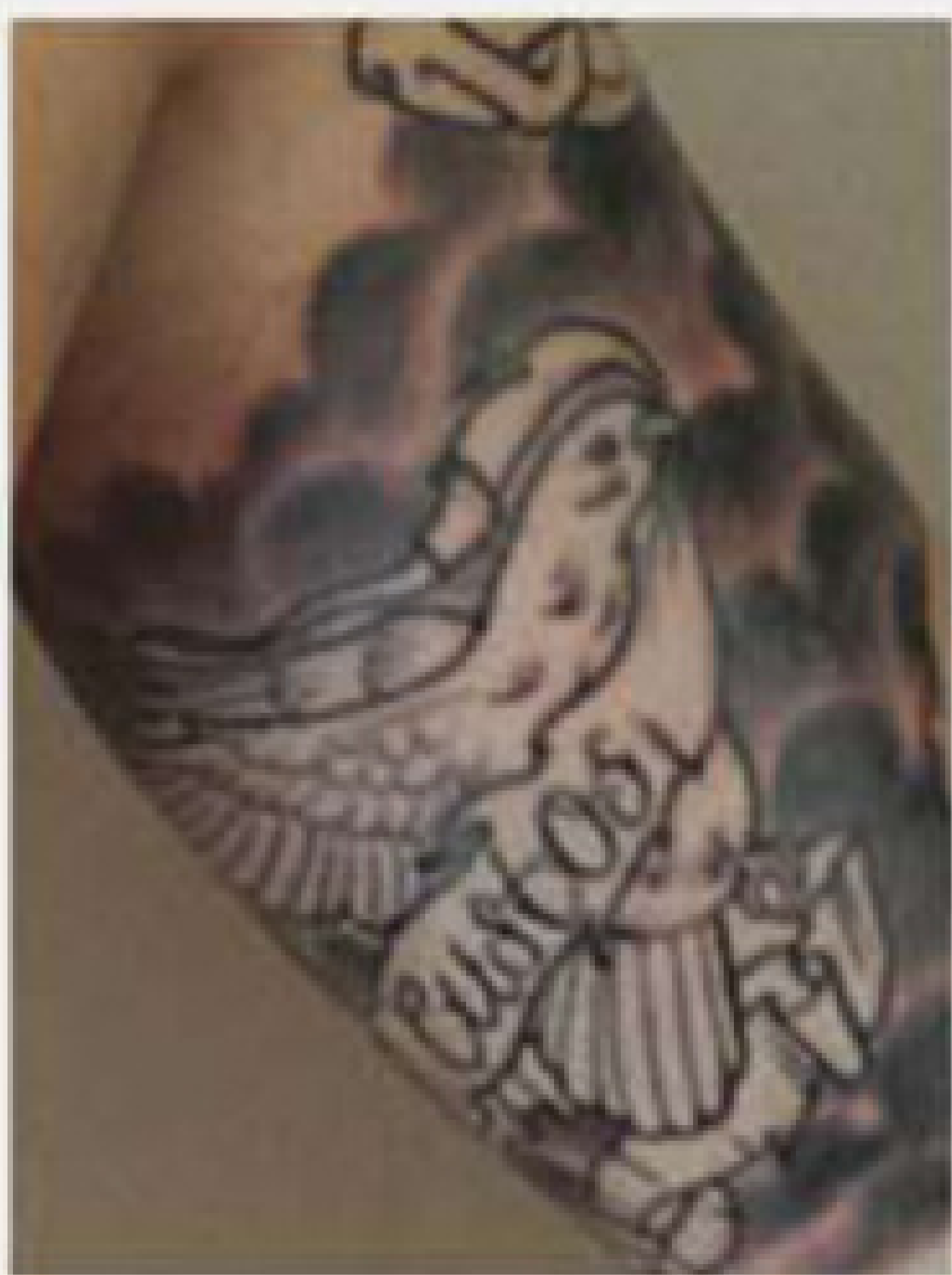
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BUDAPEST TATTOO CONVENTION 14-15 February 2015

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

MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL TATTOO SHOW

28 February-1 March 2015
Manchester Central
Petersfield,
Manchester,
M2 3GX
manchestertattooshow.com

TATTOO EXPO LEIPZIG 7-8 March 2015

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

ROTTERDAM TATTOO CONVENTION

14-15 March 2015
Ahoy Rotterdam
Ahoyweg 10,
3084 BA Rotterdam
The Netherlands
unitedconventions.com

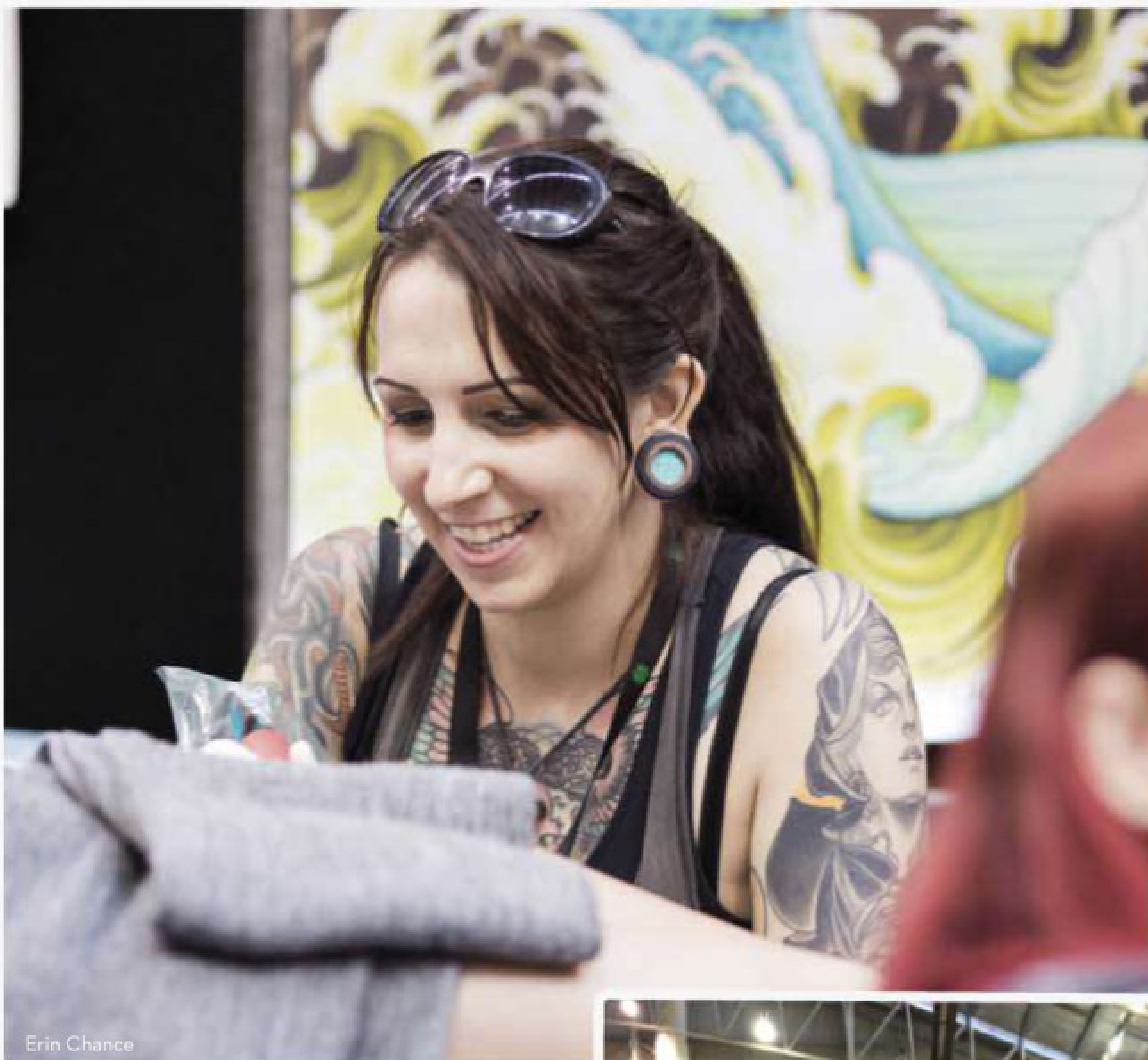
rites of passage TATTOO CONVENTION & ARTS FESTIVAL

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Carlton Gardens Tennis Club,
9 Nicholson Street, Melbourne VIC 3053,
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ritesofpassagefestival.com

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NEW ZEALAND TATTOO & ART FESTIVAL

With big crowds and more international names in the line-up than ever, the 4th New Zealand Tattoo & Art Festival in New Plymouth hit the target in fine style



Erin Chance

Festival organiser Brent Taylor estimate more than 8000 visitors attended the two day festival held in the in last weekend of November.

"We had so many visitors on Saturday that we simply lost count!" says Brent. "This year was the biggest and best event yet. The level of tattoos produced goes up each year with some amazing tattoos on display in the best of day competitions."

While the tattoo festival is a chance for ink lovers to get a tattoo from more then 250 local and international artists, it is also a competition across a number of categories.

Two artists took out most of the top awards – Las Vegas based DJ Tambe and former Kiwi, Erin Chance who currently lives in Virginia and who also won the Best Artist of the Festival last year. This year Erin walked away with awards for Best of Day for Sunday, Best Arm and the penultimate award - Best of Show.

DJ Tambe picked up the awards for Best of Day for Saturday, Best Realistic and Best Artist of the Show.



DJ Tambe

The award for the Best Oriental went to Holger from Sanctuary Tattoo Christchurch, while the Best Maori/Pacific design went to Steve Nesbit from Powerhouse Tattoos, Palmerston North.

Best Colour as well as Best Black & Grey went to Steve Butcher from Shipshape Tattoo in Orewa. Best Leg was won by Jaco Schmit from Taupou Tatau and Best Back/Chest was won by Coen Mitchell also from Taupou



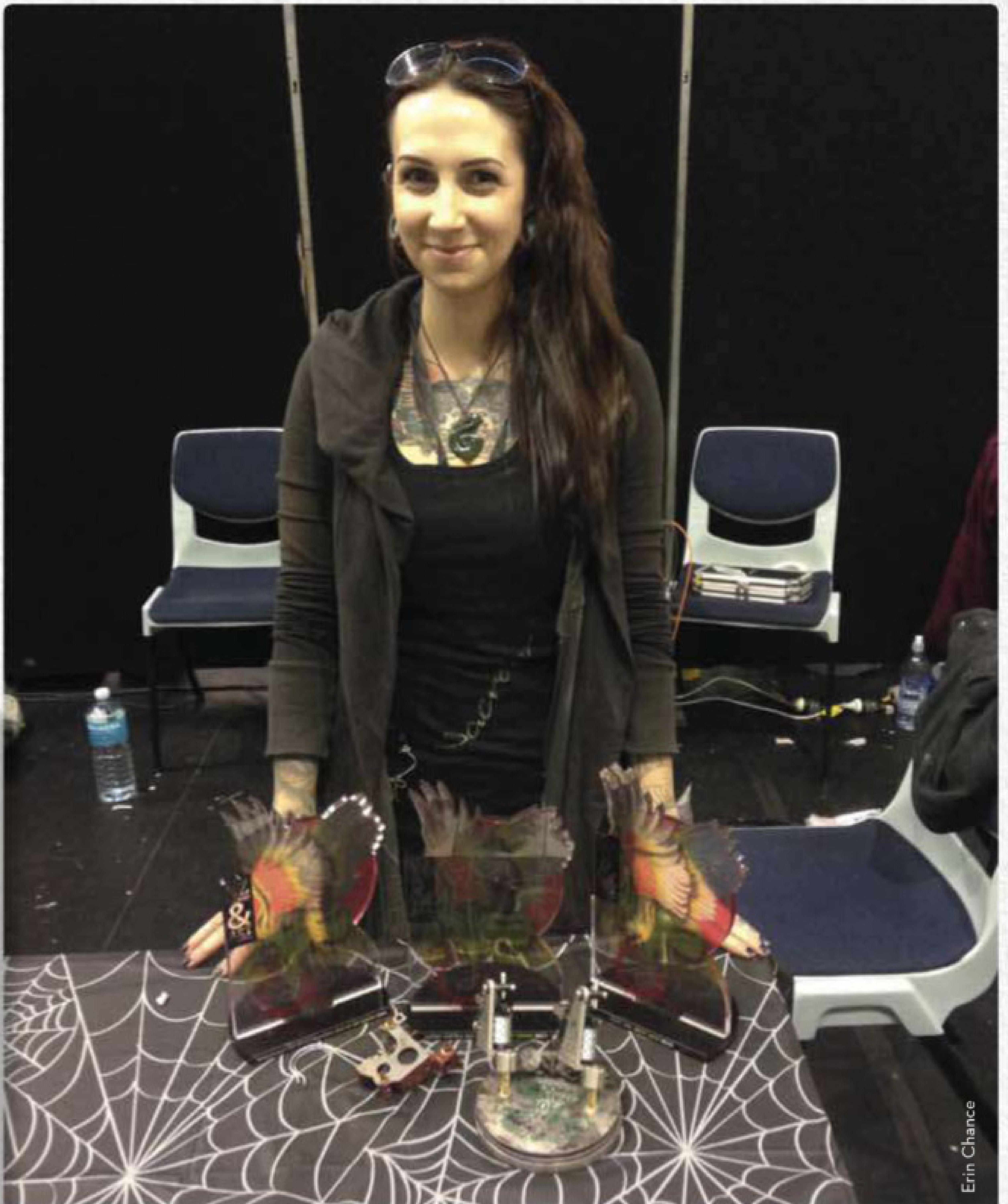
Sam Carter



Erin Chance - Best of day Sunday



Dan Smith



Erin Chance

Tautau. Best Traditional went to Kieren Fenson from Left Hand Path studio in Christchurch.

“Every year the quality of the tattoos produced over the weekend goes up another level,” says Brent. “There’s a real buzz around the venue with thousands of like-minded people just having a great time. It is becoming a must do event on the international tattoo calendar - already the majority of big name international artists have confirmed they will be back in 2015”

Brent says the international artists love coming to New Zealand with talks underway with some new big name tattoo artists and pin-up model sensation Sabina Kelly already confirmed. “I think the festival keeps growing in popularity with international artists due to a combination of a few things. They love how beautiful New Zealand is, we treat everyone like our good friends and being in a

smaller town, everyone hangs out together afterwards, so it creates a really great vibe over the weekend.”

The Joes garage Charity Auction & Tattoo competition also raised more than \$2000 for the Children’s and Neo Natal wards of the Taranaki District Health Board’s base hospital.

Good work guys!



Greg Campbell

BLACK MAGIC/BLACK MARKET TATTOOS

Two men are being investigated by Thai police for trying to export tattooed human body parts to America. The contents of erroneously labelled packages were picked up by a security scanner on their way out of Thailand heading to Las Vegas...

The macabre parcels contained a baby's foot cut up into three pieces, a baby's head, an adult heart with a stab wound, and pieces of tattooed human skin. Shocked DHL staff immediately contacted the authorities. The local police have ascertained that the body parts were stolen from Bangkok's Siriraj Hospital Medical Museum which displays preserved human remains.

This is not the first time body parts have been uncovered in Thailand. In 2012 police arrested a British man in Bangkok's China town after finding him in possession of six human foetuses. The foetuses had been baked and decorated in gold leaf. Back in 2010 police also made a disturbing discovery at a Buddhist temple in Bangkok uncovering more than 2,000 illegally aborted foetuses. These grotesque finds are just the tip of the iceberg in the underground trade of human body parts. The black market demand for human flesh extends beyond Thailand and there is a growing global trade in human artefacts which are used in bizarre black magic rituals. The practitioners of these occult ceremonies believe the rituals bring power, long life and prosperity. Particularly prized for ritual use are the bodies of babies and tattooed human skin.

In this latest discovery, the first

of the two pieces of tattooed skin features a jumping tiger; the second is tattooed with an ancient Asian script. Both are believed to have held religious significance to the original owners. In certain Thai magic cults the possession of a spiritual tattoo bestows on its owners good fortune or protection from evil. Magician and occult scholar Anton Frankovitch explains.

"In many cultures, not just Thailand, people hold the belief that a spiritual tattoo has power even after the person has died. By skinning that person and taking the tattoo they believe that they are harvesting the magical power of the tattoo for their own gain. It becomes a totem, or a magical fetish, which wards off evil and attracts good luck."

Tattoos and magic date back to the Stone Age. Ötzi the 5300 year old ice mummy found in the Alps has tattoos on his body which corresponded to areas where he was suffering from arthritis. Archaeologist and Ötzi expert Dr. Andreas Putzer believes these marks could have been applied during symbolic rituals as a form of healing magic.

"Generally the tattoos were made by shamans and they had a high social status in their community."

These early magically imbued tattoos were a far cry from modern machine based tattooing.

"When you look at Ötzi the blue-black lines are found in various places on the body: near the lumbar spine, on the knee and ankle joints, and on one calf. The technique is known as scarification. A cut is made to the skin with a sharp flint stone and then a paste is rubbed into the skin. In the case of the Iceman, they used charcoal. These marks are probably the oldest tattoos in the world."

Tattooing's link to magical rituals is clearly ancient and throughout history tattooing has been associated with magic and religion. Head-hunter tribes from Borneo obtained neck tattoos to protect them in battle, in voodoo a tattoo of Virgin Mary is believed to bring good luck and modern Satanists have the glyphs of demons tattooed into their skin to bestow on them power and knowledge.

The Thai police are carrying out an ongoing investigating into the recent finds at the DHL depot and are monitoring the 2 American men responsible for trying to ship the packages out of the country.

What is disturbing about this recent discovery of tattooed skin being traded on the black magic market is the illegal means it was obtained.

"If people are willing to break the law to obtain tattooed human skin this presents the authorities with a real problem," explains Anton.





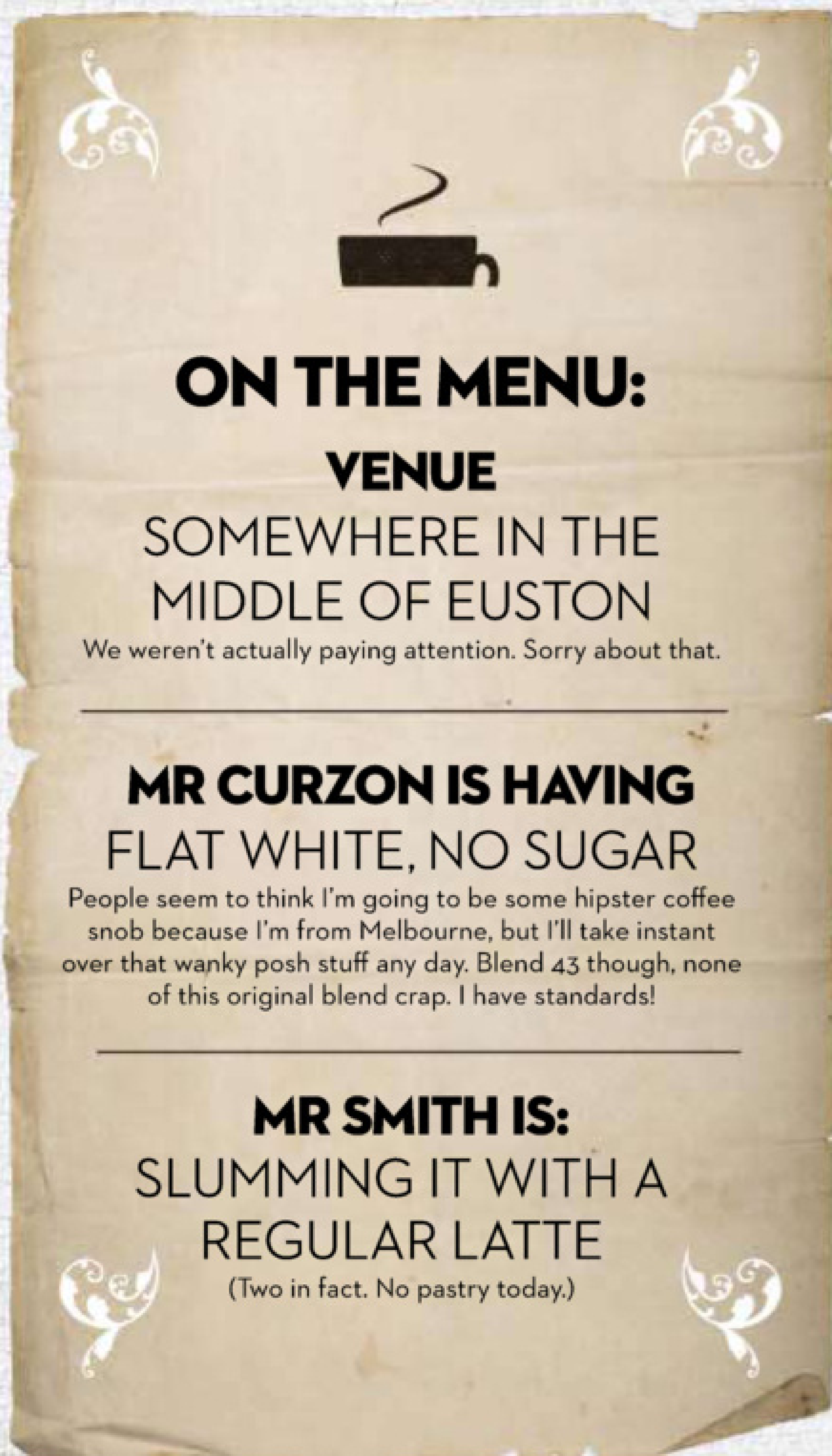
IF PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO BREAK THE LAW TO OBTAIN TATTOOED HUMAN SKIN THIS PRESENTS THE AUTHORITIES WITH A REAL PROBLEM

“These samples were stolen from a medical museum which demonstrates the risks people are willing to take to capitalise on the high price people will pay for tattooed human skin. There is a growing tourist trade in Thailand with westerners visiting to get traditional tattoos many of which hold spiritual significance. If people are willing to steal to obtain tattooed human skin who knows what lengths they will go to. Tourists need to be careful they don't end up victims of the illegal trade in human body parts.”

THE COFFEE HOUSE SCENES FROM

A few weeks back, I heard on the grapevine that Matt Curzon was passing through town. The Matt Curzon who's been hanging out with my buddy Mike Moses? The very same. Coffee? Absolutely...

MATT CURZON



SO... THE LAST I HEARD, YOU WERE STILL IN SEVILLE. ARE YOU STILL BASED THERE OR BEING AS YOU SEEM TO BE OVER HERE A LOT, ARE YOU PLANNING ON MAKING A MOVE ON US?
Yeah that's still home base. I've been at the shop there since we opened and I'm super proud of the reputable studio it's grown into. Some cool artists have joined me over the past 6-12 months, so it's all good vibes and things are going from strength to

strength. I'm definitely enjoying jumping between Australia and the UK at the moment though. I'll have to settle at some point, so I suppose in the next year or two I'll make a decision and a move could be on the cards.

IS THAT A MOVE PROMPTED BY WORK AND OPPORTUNITIES OR DO YOU JUST LIKE HOW FREAKING COLD IT CAN GET AROUND HERE?
Certainly not the weather! I got sunburnt the last day I was



in Melbourne, and over here I've had to buy a new wardrobe just to make it to work without freezing. There's some good work opportunities though, so if the right one presents itself who knows? I'm certainly not going to commit to a permanent shift at this stage, but I do like the fact that practically all of Europe is so easily accessible—and the strength of the UK tattoo scene.

I HAVE TO BE HONEST—I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OF YOUR WORK FOR ALMOST A YEAR, BUT LOOKING AT YOUR SWAG FROM RECENT MONTHS, I WOULD SAY YOU'RE REALLY COMING INTO YOUR OWN NOW. DOES IT FEEL THAT WAY... I THINK A BETTER WAY TO PUT IT WOULD BE THAT YOU SEEM FOR COMFORTABLE WITH YOURSELF AND WHAT YOU'RE DOING. WOULD THAT BE FAIR?

Yes and no. I've definitely refined my style a lot more over the past 12 months. I've found a bit more direction and I know more about what works for me and how I can make tattoos look good. I wouldn't use the

term 'comfortable' though, quite the opposite. I'm always looking for areas I can improve and pushing to lift my game. If I'm not improving it means I'm standing still, and with the amount of elite artists around that are continually raising the bar, things can move past you pretty quickly. Particularly when you're still catching up (laughs).

I GUESS WHIPPING AROUND THE GLOBE AND BEING WITH PEOPLE WHO PUSH FORWARD CAN'T HELP BUT HAVE AN EFFECT ON WHERE YOU'RE GOING TOO. SO WHO EXACTLY HAVE YOU BEEN HANGING OUT WITH?

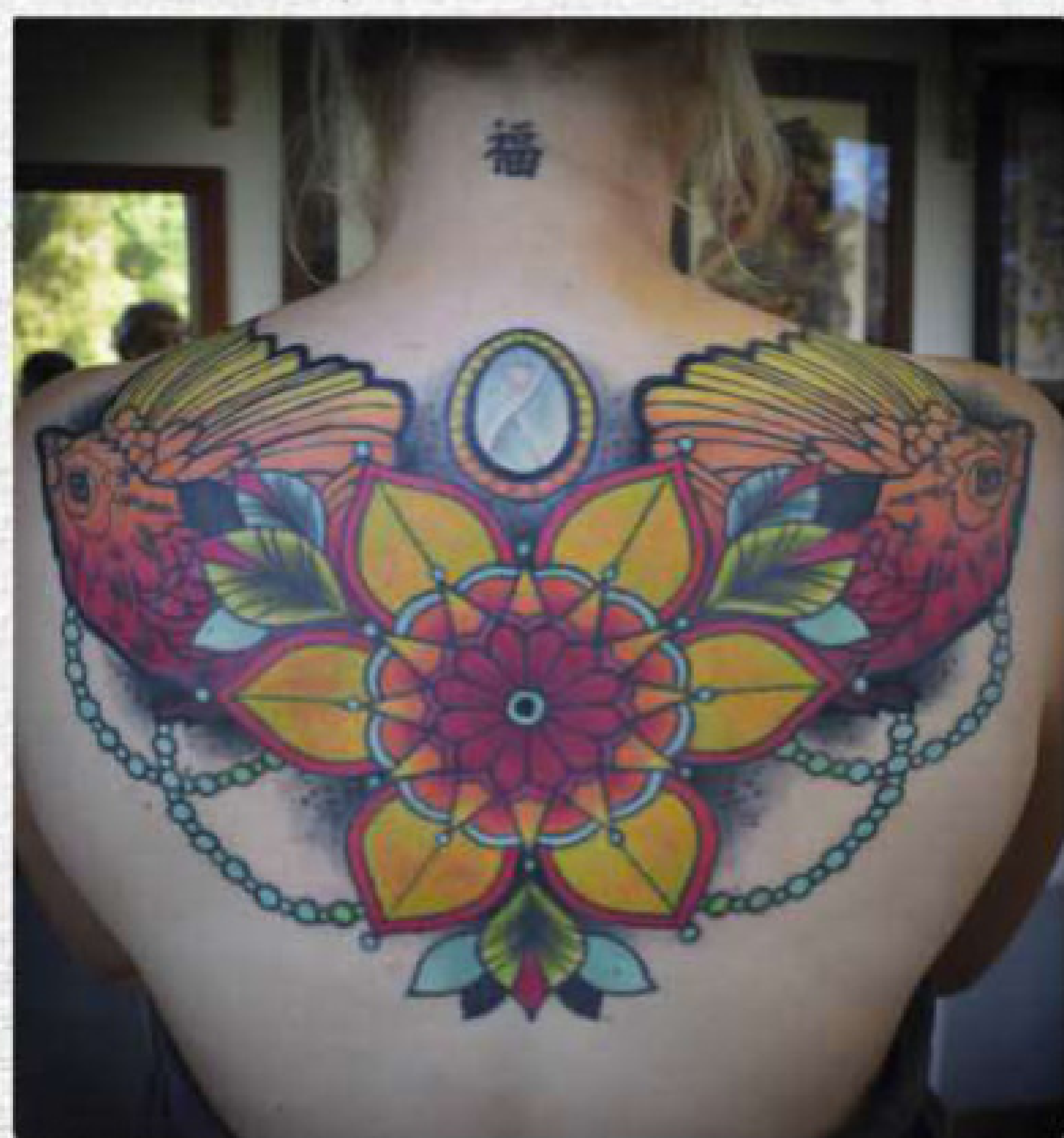
Well I've been predominately back in Australia for the past year, and the guys back home are doing some killer work. It's a pretty creative environment and we all tattoo different styles, so I think we're able to see a lot of contradistinctive techniques first hand and implement certain things to work within our own style. Before I got back I spent a bit of time at O' Happy Dagger and Lucky 7 Oslo, which are both

I'VE FOUND A BIT MORE DIRECTION AND I KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT WORKS FOR ME AND HOW I CAN MAKE TATTOOS LOOK GOOD

cool custom studios bustling with diverse artists. On my recent travels I've also been tattooed by Rachi Brains, Mike Moses and David Swambo to name a few. Meeting these guys who really inspire me and getting to watch them go about their business gives you a pretty big kick up the arse in terms of motivation.

I THINK AUSTRALIA IS OVERLOOKED A LOT BY THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE A LOT IN THE BIG SCHEME OF TATTOOING. THERE'S SOME SOLID ARTISTS WORKING OUT THERE. IS IT SIMPLY THE SIZE OF THE COUNTRY VS THE SIZE OF THE POPULATION THAT CAUSES THAT DO YOU THINK? IS THAT PART OF THE REASON FOR THE MOVE? THIS COUNTRY IS STACKED TO THE MAX WITH PEOPLE WANTING GOOD INK THESE DAYS.

Really? That surprises me. I 🌸



think Australia has the most consistently high overall standard of tattooing anywhere I've been in the world, in terms of quality over quantity. By that I mean that the industry is much less saturated than it is over here or in the USA, and I think that naturally filters out some of the dregs. Although it's increasing, there's still not a shop on every single corner, so in order to work in a studio you generally have to colour in between the lines pretty good. I still probably haven't spent enough time over here to make a fair comparison, but on the surface there seems to be a few more diehard enthusiasts over here who know what they want, and it's something rad. Back home everyone just has tattoos whether they are an informed enthusiast or not.

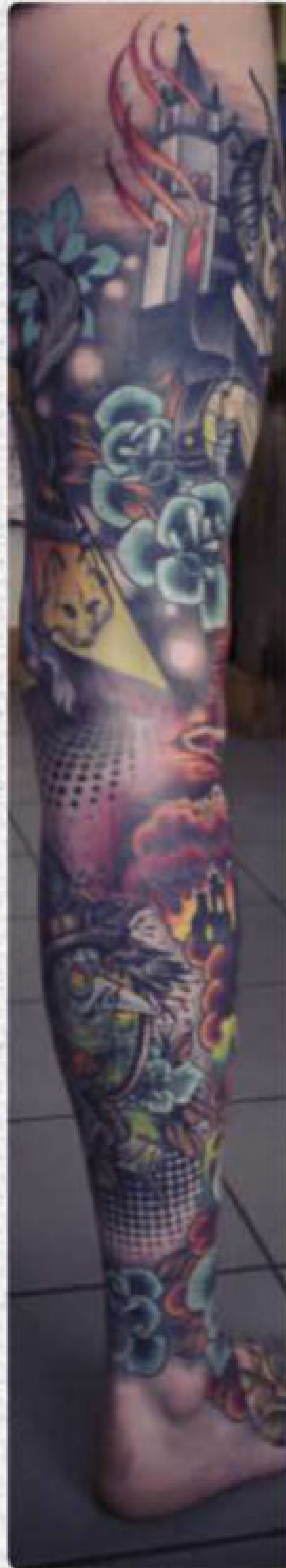
ACTUALLY, A GOOD BOUNCE OFF FROM THAT IS WHAT THE CLIENT BASE IS LIKE OUT THERE - IT SEEMS PRETTY LOCKED IN TO A TRADITIONAL FRAME OF MIND FROM AFAR - IS THERE MUCH OF A MARKET FOR THE MORE ABSTRACT SIDE OF TATTOOING OUT THERE—

SAY IN THE STYLE OF BUENA VISTA, YANN BLACK OR BERND MUSS—OR WOULD THEY BE EATING TOAST ON A PRETTY REGULAR BASIS?

I think Europe's clearly leading the way in terms of guys like that breaking boundaries and introducing new styles to tattooing. In my experience black and grey realism, traditional/neotrad and Japanese tend to dominate the clientele in Australia. I feel like that's more dictated by the artists though, so I daresay those guys wouldn't be eating toast for long if they set up down under!

IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, YOU DO SOME PRETTY WHITE HOT ARTWORK TOO. ARE YOU ABLE TO KEEP THAT UP WHILE TRAVELLING OR DOES IT THROW A SPANNER IN THE WORKS?

Yeah, I very much slow down on the 'finished' art projects when I'm travelling. I'm not much of a straight-up painter so my finished works tend to be mixed medium, and my process for applying the different mediums in the correct order can be very time-consuming. Sometimes I get requests for commissioned



I THINK EUROPE'S LEADING THE WAY IN TERMS OF GUYS BREAKING BOUNDARIES AND INTRODUCING NEW TATTOO STYLES

pieces while I'm on the road, so I still do that stuff on the side if I can—but I have much less time and materials to do artwork for my own personal satisfaction. All that being said, I've got some interesting collaborations I'm supposed to be involved in while I'm over here, so we'll see if they end up happening. Anyway, I'd rather be tattooing—or watching *Come Dine with Me*.

REALLY? WHAT'S YOUR BIG PLAN FOR THE FUTURE THEN—ASIDE FROM COOKING A MEAL FROM SCRATCH FOR A BUNCH OF PEOPLE YOU'VE NEVER MET BEFORE? DO YOU HAVE ONE OR ARE YOU THE KIND OF GUY THAT JUST TAKES EACH DAY AS IT COMES AND SEES WHAT TOMORROW BRINGS?

What do I want to be when I

grow up? Eventually I'd like to open my own shop, for a bit of security when my eyes, wrists and bowels go, but right now I'm enjoying having the flexibility to move about. I do like to have a short term outline of what I'll be doing and where I'll be working, but for the most part I'm happy going with the flow and as long as I'm working hard things will take care of themselves.

SO FOR THOSE WHO LIKE WHAT THEY'RE ABOUT TO SEE: WHERE AND WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO BE OVER HERE ACROSS 2015 OR IS THAT A WORK IN PROGRESS?

I'm guesting in London at Evil from the Needle in January, and I'm working on specific details of some other January guest spots in the south of England as we speak.

After that I'm heading back to Australia for a bit, but I'll be back to do a couple of conventions and a wider range of guest spots later in the year, so keep an eye out and I'll keep everyone up to date with my movements as they come to hand. Safe to say if you're in the UK and want a tattoo in 2015 I should be able to make it happen.

YOU HEARD THE MAN... 🐼

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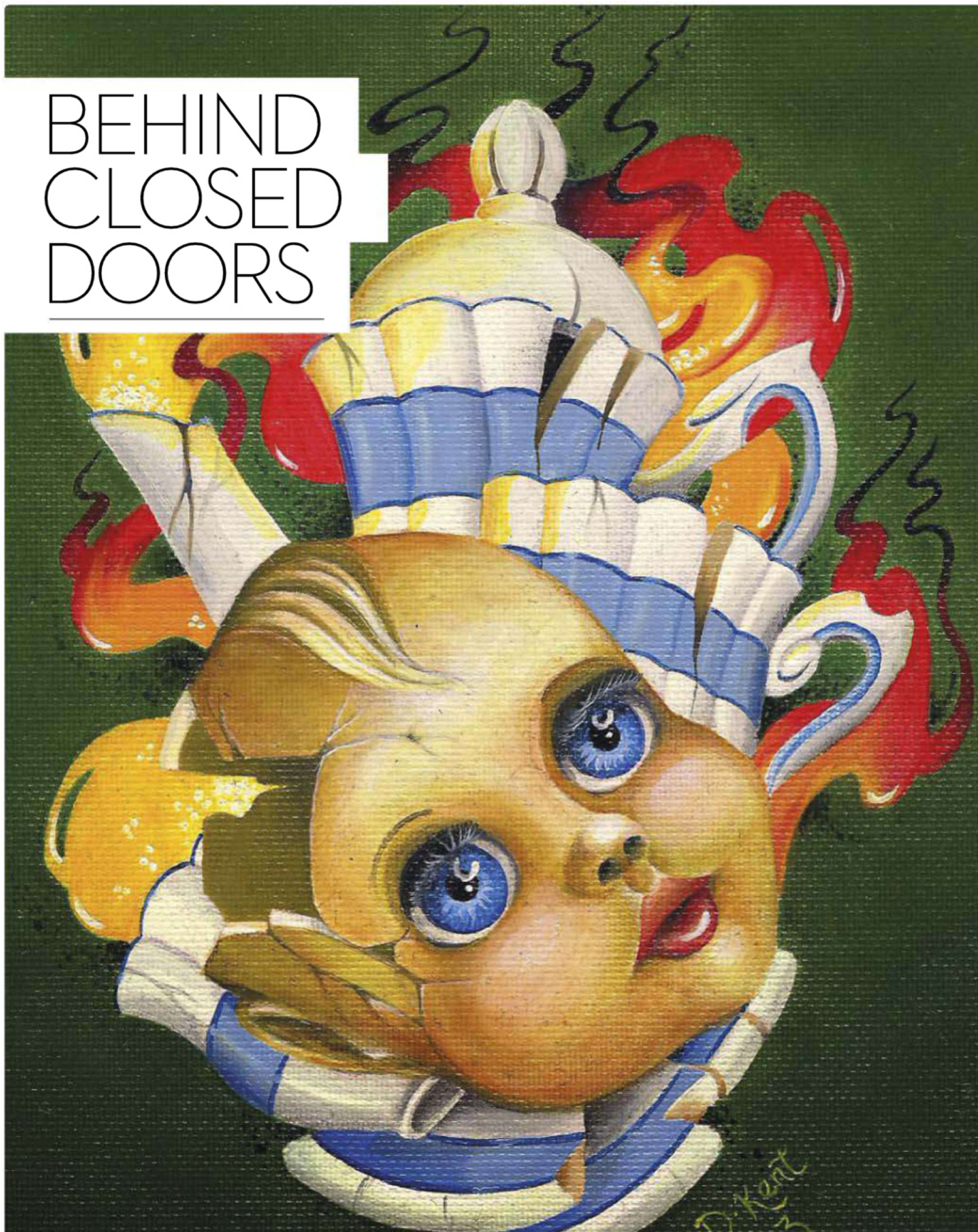
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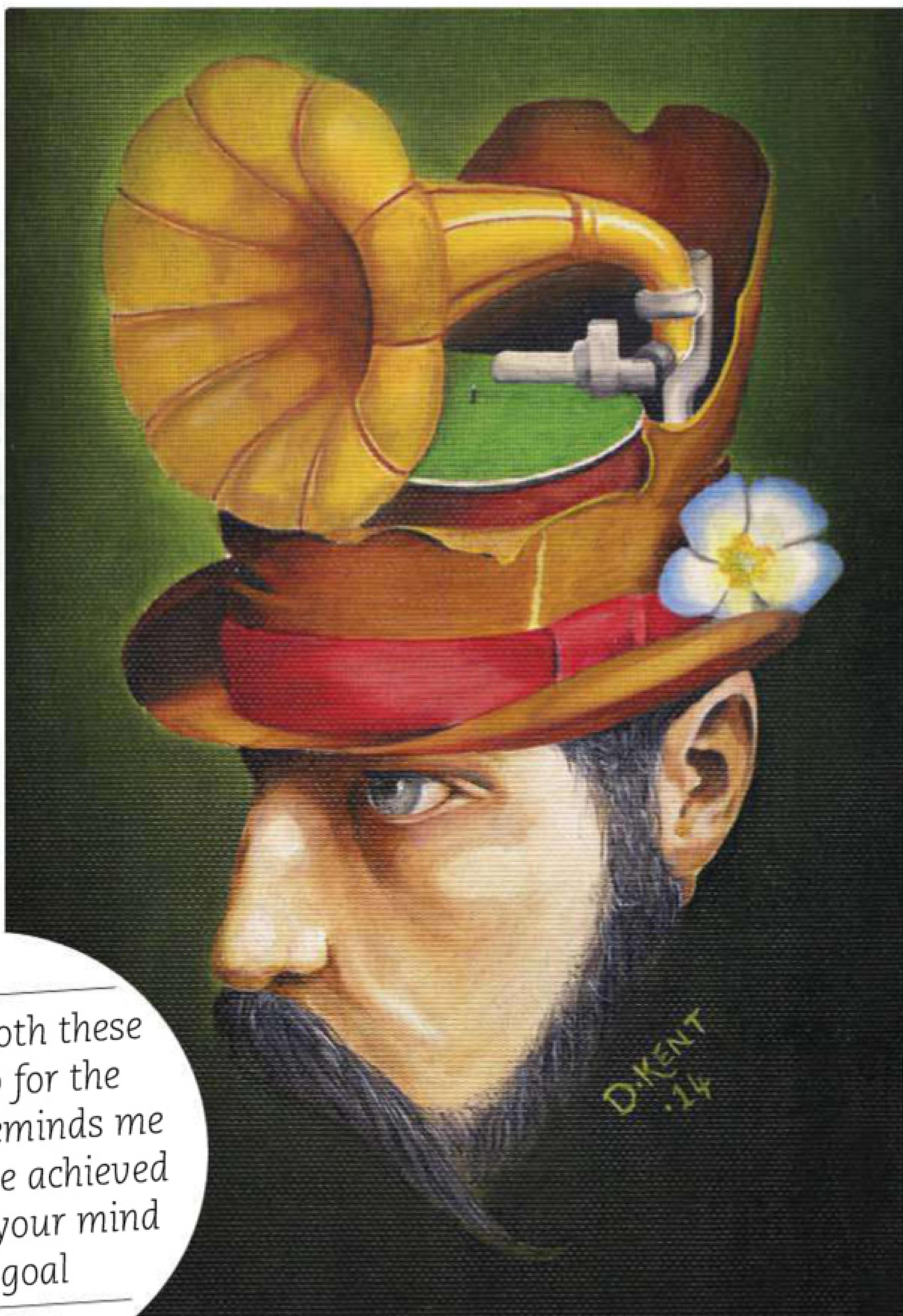
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BEHIND CLOSED DOORS



Electric Kicks, 17 Front Street, Pontefract, WF8 1DA • Tel: 07725 029 567 • electrickicktattooostudio.co.uk

This month, we discovered a treasure trove of goodies in the studio of one Mr Dek Kent at Electric Kicks. From art for arts sake across to designs waiting to be tattooed... let's swing back the curtain



I framed both these pieces up for the studio; it reminds me what can be achieved if you set your mind to a goal



EMBRACING OIL

Broken was the first oil painting attempted.

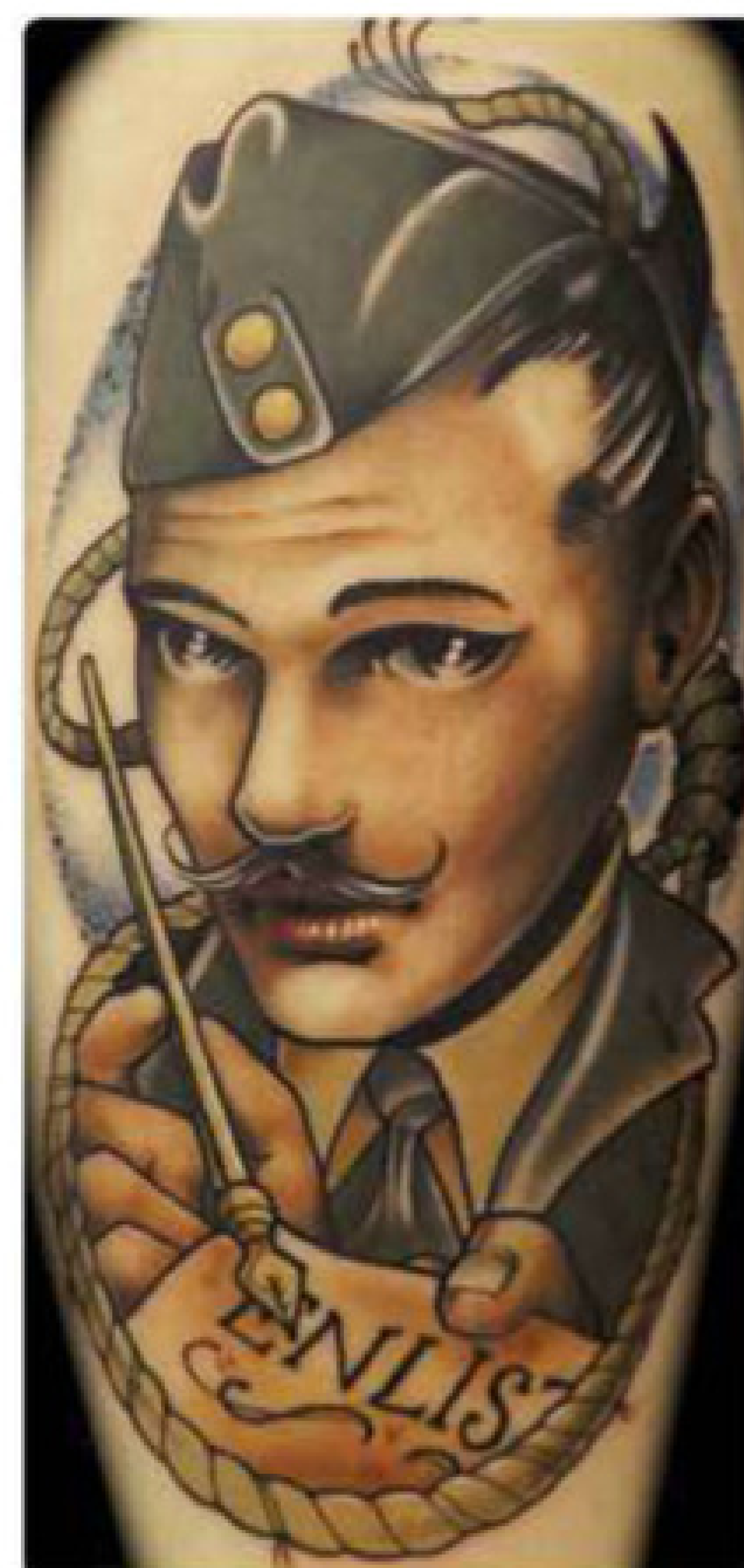
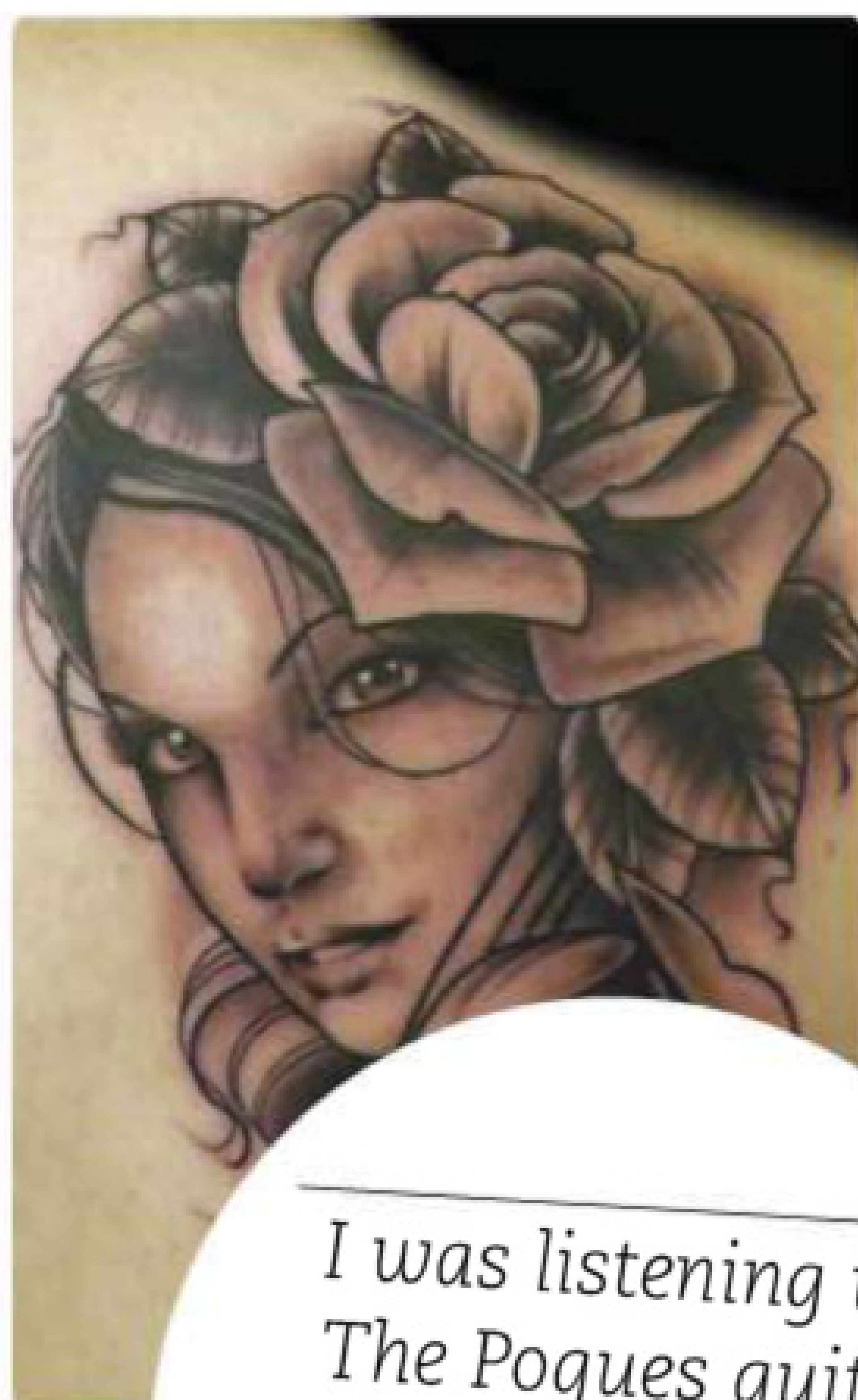
These are the only two I have done so far. I started with the project at the end of last year. I'm hoping to get another one started soon. I wanted to create art that I would never tattoo. In my usual way, I got some books and spoke to a local artist and got cracking. It was a great learning curve. The idea for the image just came about by itself really. It must have been influenced in a subconscious way.

Music man was the second and only other oil painting so far. I enjoyed the first one so much I got started on this after a brief pause to gather the idea for it. I framed both these pieces up for the studio; it reminds me daily what can be achieved if you set your mind to a goal.

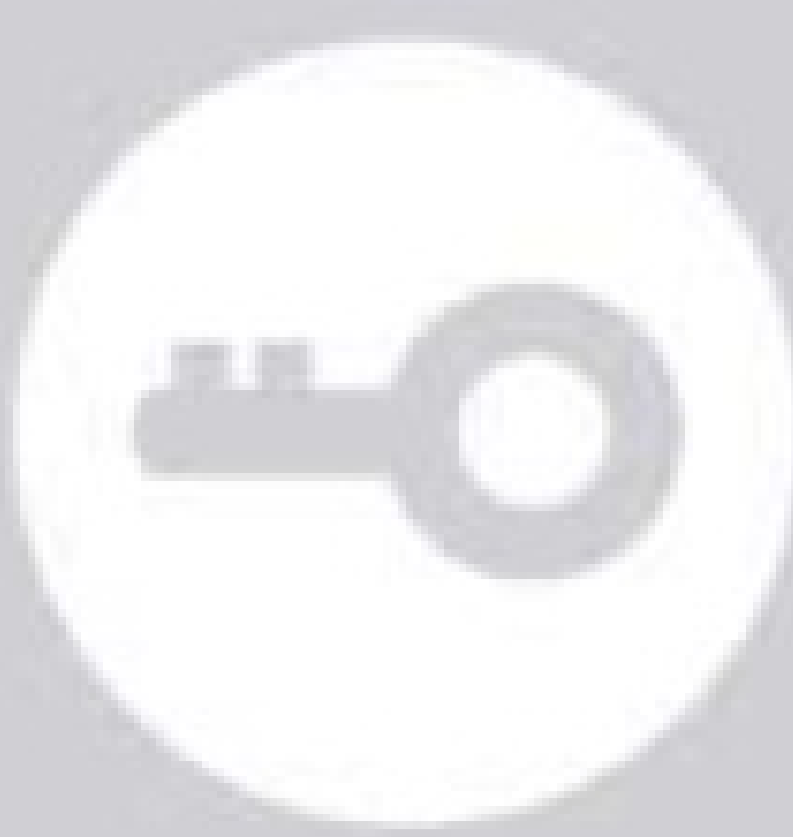
GANGSTER WRAP

These three ladies are not yet booked for tattoo. I wanted to create a set of designs that incorporated cast shadows. The hats do that really well and who doesn't like a chick with a gun being all badass. [Well said Sir! Ed] 🍷





I was listening to The Pogues quite a bit and this song 'The Medley' stuck with me for ages



DESIGNS FOR TATTOOS

Lady rose: I wanted to draw a beautiful

lady. I had an idea about the rose being of a similar size to the face so that you see the whole image rather than be drawn to separate aspects of the tattoo. The chap who took this design fell in love with it decided to put her on his shoulder. It was his first tattoo.

Enlist: We are influenced a lot by music, well I am! I was listening to The Pogues quite a bit and this song 'The Medley' stuck with me for ages and it gave such a strong impression of this recruiting sergeant that I just had to get the image down on paper.

DEK'S WIFE, SAM, AND THE SKATEPARK

I have skated for years. I worked at this particular shop/skate park many years ago. I still skate and I know Sally the shop manager very well. The Subvert skate park is such a positive place for kids to learn to skate and hang out. She called me up one day asking if Dek would be interested in doing a design for a skateboard deck... of course we do! The park and the Subvert skate decks are not for profit and we were happy to give them a design to place on their skate boards. Dek spent weeks getting the right feel for the image. He came up with this "take it, it's yours" theme. The world is in your hands and you can do with it what you like. I think its such a positive message and I hope skaters are inspired by it. I saw one of these skate boards in the park recently, all covered in scratches and stickers and I just loved it. This person is an inspiration! This person is having a blast! 🤘

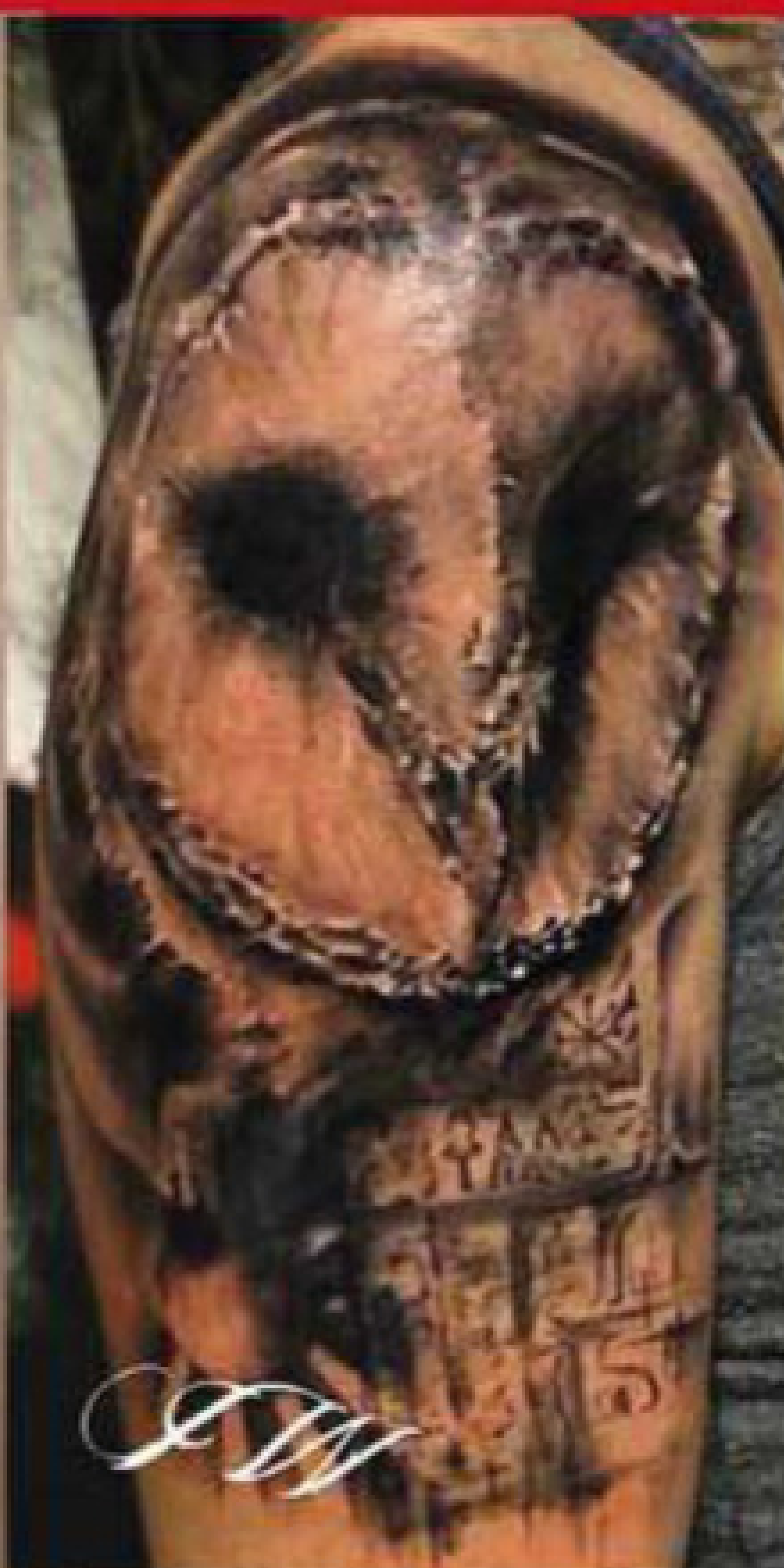




John Williams
07895245629

Dee Harvey
Tattoo makeup artist piercer

Lee Hardy
07779020910





PAVEL KRIM

For one year Theres Zoi Karlsson—owner of Zoi Tattoo in Malmö and Stockholm—tried to convince Pavel Krim to move to Sweden from the Canary Islands and finally, he caved in. The Estonian has now lived here off and on for three years and has hardly missed a day. “I don’t like vacation,” he says with a smile...

*Zoi Tattoo - Malmö, Stora Nygatan 42, 211 37, Malmö Tel: +46 40 120290
Stora Nygatan 15, 111 27 Stockholm Tel: +46 8 41099290 Web: zoitattoo.com*



WHEN PAVEL KRIM GOT HIS FIRST TATTOO THERE WERE NO TATTOO STUDIOS IN HIS HOMETOWN OF TALLINN, IN THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLIC, BUT IT DIDN'T STOP THE 12-YEAR-OLD FROM EXPERIMENTING ON HIS OWN.

PAVEL (P): I started early, when I was in sixth grade. A friend and I used small needles and pencils to make dots on each other. I actually don't know why I wanted tattoos at the time. It was mostly criminals being tattooed back then and then other people saw that and wanted the same.

AFTER HIS DEBUT, IT WASN'T UNTIL HE DID HIS MILITARY SERVICE BEFORE HE DID THE NEXT ONE.

P: I think I was around 20, 21 years old when I built a tattoo machine out of an electric razor and did a popular military symbol on myself.

HE THEN WORKED FOR 18 YEARS, AS A FISHERMAN AND METAL WORKER AMONG OTHER THINGS, BEFORE HE DECIDED TO COVER UP HIS EARLY CREATIONS. THAT'S WHEN THE INTEREST FOR TATTOOING AWOKE FROM ITS SLUMBER AND HE STARTED WORKING PROFESSIONALLY.

P: The first tattoo studio in Estonia had opened up only the year before and my friend worked there. I was there every day for one year to visit my friend and observe what he was doing. In those days it was mostly about tribals, black panthers, butterflies and small Spanish style flowers. We didn't have that many customers, though. I think there were many people who wanted tattoos, but most of them couldn't afford them.

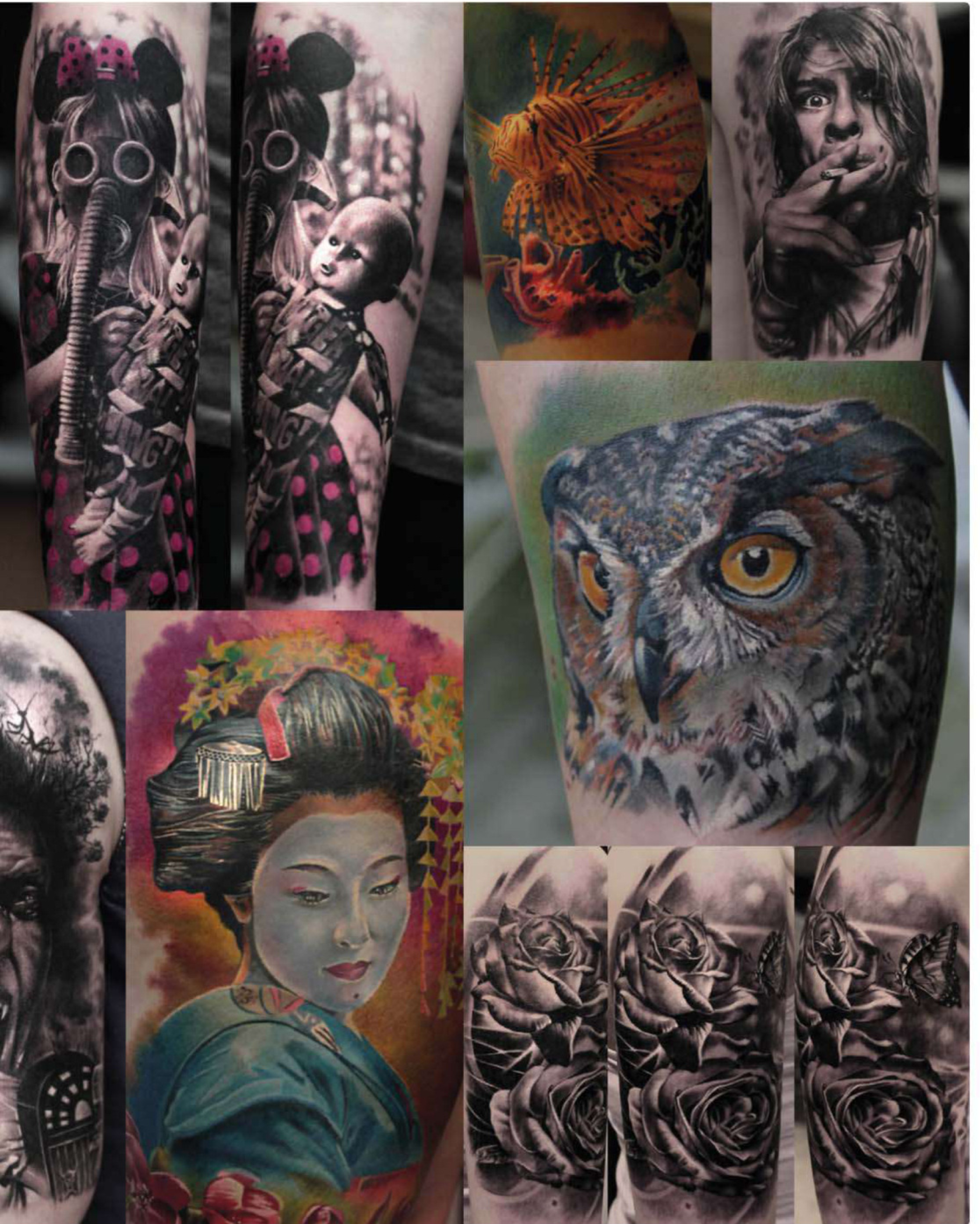
THE ESTONIAN TATTOO SCENE HAS OF COURSE GROWN

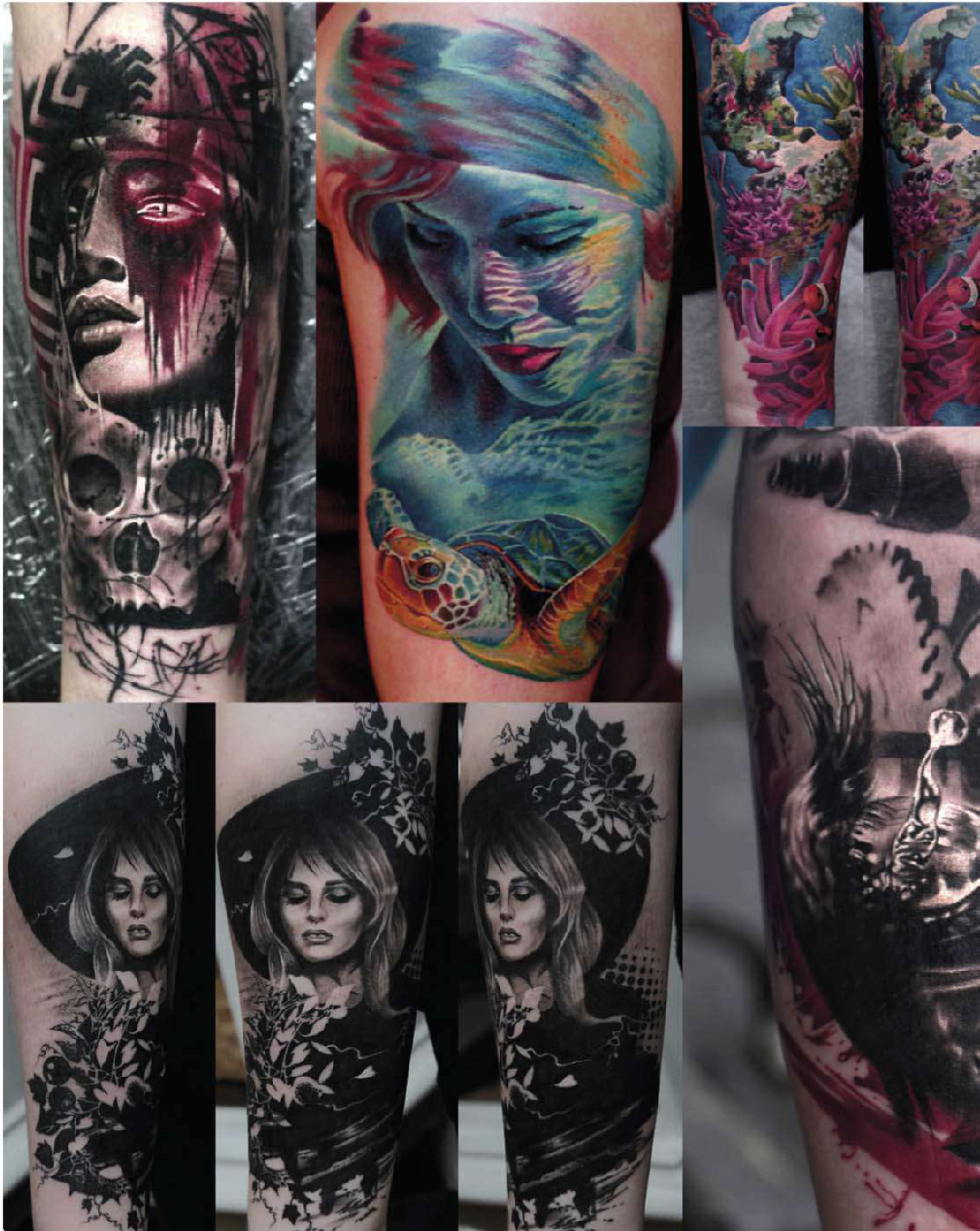
SINCE THEN, MOST TATTOOISTS SEEM TO SEEK THEIR FORTUNE ABROAD, ANYWAY.

P: People still don't have that much money there, so as a tattoo artist, there's a lot more money to be made abroad. I remember doing a full back piece around 2005 for about 1,000 euros, and I didn't work very fast then either. I didn't have much equipment either so it took me about six months to finish a big tattoo like that. Right now there are maybe about three good artists out there.

PAVEL WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO CHOSE TO LEAVE. FIVE YEARS AGO THE CANARY ISLANDS BECAME HIS NEW HOME.

P: I wanted to move somewhere. It didn't really matter where, so I sent some emails to different studios and Canary Tattoo replied. Altogether I worked in three studios over there. 🍷







THAT'S WHERE THERES ZOI KARLSSON, THE OWNER OF ZOI TATTOO IN STOCKHOLM AND MALMÖ IN SWEDEN, DISCOVERED HIM.

THERES (T): I saw his work on Facebook and immediately fell in love with his style. I nagged him for a year to come here. I sent email after email but only received like two replies.

P: My English isn't so good so I didn't understand all of them! Some of them I showed to my wife so I could respond.

AT FIRST HE WASN'T CONVINCED MOVING WAS SUCH A GOOD IDEA.

P: I didn't want to move to another new country, but Theres convinced me. For two years I had done small butterflies and text. Occasionally I got to do a full sleeve, but most often I did tourist tattoos. The few people who wanted big tattoos wanted Japanese so they went to a different studio. In Sweden I get to do bigger designs and in Scandinavia as a whole the tattoo interest is bigger, and people's skin is fairer, making it easier to tattoo.

HE STARTED OUT LIVING IN MALMÖ, BUT MADE THE MOVE

IN SWEDEN I GET TO DO BIGGER DESIGNS AND IN SCANDINAVIA AS A WHOLE THE TATTOO INTEREST IS BIGGER, AND PEOPLE'S SKIN IS FAIRER, MAKING IT EASIER TO TATTOO

TO STOCKHOLM LAST SUMMER, AND SINCE THE MOVE NORTH THREE YEARS AGO HE'S WORKED MORE OR LESS EVERYDAY IN BOTH MALMÖ AND STOCKHOLM.

P: I don't like having time off. I want to evolve and be better, and when I'm off work I get itchy straight away. I get restless. I need to work.

T: It's called ADD [Laughing]. You even cancelled your last vacation.

P: There are so many good artists here and I learn something new every day.

T: And he's had customers from day one. People liked his work and the word spread.

P: I actually had four days off around New Year's Eve... it was insane. My hand started shaking and it felt like I had forgotten how to tattoo.

WHEN HE STARTED WORKING PROFESSIONALLY IN ESTONIA HE DID REALISTIC TATTOOS RIGHT AWAY. THE MOVE TO SWEDEN MEANT HE GOT TO GO BACK TO THE

GENRE HE STILL PREFERS TODAY.

P: I like that realistic tattoos have more life. Traditional tattoos aren't for me. Here in Sweden I mostly do portraits, graphical and music related tattoos. In Stockholm I do more music tattoos than in Malmö.

T: Maybe because the music store, Sound Pollution, is located on the other side of the street.

P: Most of all I've done portraits and I really like the retro style, old photos and stuff like that.

T: And you've also done a lot of animals—especially lions.

P: That's right, and I don't know why. Before that it was a lot of angels. That's the way it is. Every five or six months it changes.

First it's angels, then clocks, then Japanese and now lions.

T: The pictures you send to magazines dictates what tattoos you'll be doing. So don't include any lions this time...

P: I won't. I don't even have any lions on my website anymore. 🐾



Amanda

If ever there was a cover model that needed no introduction, surely it has to be Amanda West. Am I right or am I right?

Mr Smith & Mr Cole
 Model: Miss West • Hair (and lots of it):
 Nathan Pithers • Makeup: Eve-Marie Parry

GOD MORNING MISS. I SEE YOU'VE HAD THE SHOPFRONT REFURBISHED SINCE WE LAST SPOKE - LOOKS GREAT! WHAT PROMPTED THAT?

That was prompted by the fact that we had the inside done ages ago. Changed the logo, changed everything except the shop front! We had a few people lined up to do it a couple of years back but due to business or incident - on their part - it never happened. We finally hassled a couple of mates and it was done in October. Feels much better now that the inside matches the outside.

I SEE THAT YOU'RE ALSO BUSY PIMPING E-VAPE PARAPHERNALIA. IT'S LIKE THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY VERSION OF A HEAD SHOP! THINGS ARE GETTING WEIRD OUT THERE WITH PEOPLE TAKING IT UP EVEN WHEN THEY DIDN'T SMOKE IN THE FIRST PLACE.. OR IS THAT JUST THE PEOPLE I HANG OUT WITH?

Well, the boss Alan, has this mate Baz Jenkins (this sounds like a great story before we've even got started. Ed) who's a pretty good guy to have around. He wanted to start up a new business venture, E-Vape Zone and after his own, incredible success with quitting cigarettes, he decided that vaping was something he was passionate about and needed an outlet. Al said that our place could work and already had a clue about the whole thing because our chain smoking (30 a day), tea drinking, receptionist, Jim, had amazing, overnight, success, himself, after switching to vaping. As an ex-smoker, I can vouch for the fact that it is very pleasant and preferable to cigarettes. It has a whopping 60% success rate for people, against the 2% success of other, less enjoyable, methods. If you buy the correct kit (not a cheap, garage one) it can be as satisfying to a smoker as the hit from a cigarette. It's far cheaper too and the health benefits are surprising. I used to be able to hear Jim breathing and coughing. Now he's like a stealth manager! You never know where he is, at any given time. Hopefully it'll take off for Baz.

We like having him there and his merch makes the shop look pretty and shiny. Check him out at evapezone.co.uk

ANY CHANCE THAT YOU MIGHT START SELLING FURRY FREAK BROTHERS COMICS TO GO ALONG WITH THAT BECAUSE I'M DAMNED IF I CAN FIND COPIES OF THEM ANYMORE. I REALLY HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT THE HELL I'M TALKING ABOUT. YOU MUST. YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST. PLEASE KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT...

I have no idea about Furry Freaks. My best bet is that it's some kind of revamped, 70s porn material. Hahahahahaha.

NEVER MIND. LET'S MOVE ALONG! I'VE ALSO JUST DISCOVERED YOUR #BEAMANADAWEST TAGGING GAME ON FACEBOOK WITH THOSE POSTERS THAT CAME WITH SKIN DEEP. THAT'S JUST BRILLIANT. PLEASE TELL ME THERE'S MORE THAN JUST THE ONE SHOT OF DAVID CORDEN AND YOU HAVE A WHOLE SERIES OF THESE THAT I CAN GET A LOOK AT. THAT COULD BE A WHOLE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT IN ITS OWN RIGHT.

The "face in the hole" #BeAmandaWest, was a hoot. I got a few good friends to do it. Mostly good friends, Claudio de Rosa (Clod the Ripper), Lianne Moule, Jason Butcher (Jason and Lianne's turned out particularly funny), David's beautiful girlfriend, Kelly-Marie, Gordon Patterson, a random waiter in a fancy restaurant - you know... 🌸





I look at other artists who I admire and I admire them but I can't be influenced by them because I'm me. I can't be anyone else

the usual. My favourite was when the victim's arms exactly matched mine on the poster or where comedy background things created surprise headgear. I would love to collect Amanda's. I'm definitely game for that! I just felt that I may lose serious followers on the internet, if I kept the game going too long.

YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME! WE COULD HAVE HELD A

COMPETITION IN YOUR HONOUR AND GIVEN AWAY SOME REAL QUALITY JUNK IN THE PROCESS. MAYBE I'LL GET THE GUYS TO MAKE A PROPER ONE LIKE YOU'D GET AT THE SEASIDE - OUT OF PLYWOOD - AND SHIP IT AROUND TO ALL OUR SHOWS AND SEE HOW MANY AMANDA WESTS WE COULD COLLECT ACROSS 2015. GAME?

A competition could still happen. You have my blessing. Maybe a more "face in the hole" friendly, picture, could work.

FUN ASIDE - I'VE NOTICED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS THAT YOUR REALISM HAS BOUNDED ALONG IN QUALITY. IS THAT A

CONSCIOUS EFFORT ON YOUR PART OR HAVE YOU SIMPLY JUST DONE SO DAMN MUCH OF IT THAT YOU DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE?

Thank you so much. Quite the compliment but my realism altering has just been a consequence of what I'm asked for. If I keep getting asked for certain things, I alter how I do it, to fit my mood and the client's wishes. I like to do everything still and can't ever say my work is realistic. I refer to it as more realistic or semi realistic. I like a mix to be honest. A tiny bit of realism with made up things, that goes a long way with me.

DO YOU EVER CONSIDER LOCKING YOURSELF TO ONE PARTICULAR STYLE? I GUESS THE CHALLENGES OF EVERY DAY SHOP WORK ARE WHAT KEEPS AN ARTISTS ON THEIR TOES.

I could never lock myself into one style. There are things that I can't do and that is enough for me. I daren't deliberately limit myself when I enjoy something. Sometimes I have a sweet tooth and sometimes I just want chicken. It isn't natural for me to stick at one thing. I need variety. I enjoy too many things and would miss so many excellent clients.

DO YOU HAPPEN TO GET INFLUENCED BY OTHER ARTISTS OR ARE YOU AT A POINT IN YOUR CAREER THAT YOU'RE MORE THAN COMFORTABLE WITH WHAT YOU DO?

I look at other artists who I admire and I admire them but I can't be influenced by them because I'm me. I can't be anyone else. I'll always have my own, ridiculous and impractical ways of doing things. I like how things go and the older I get, the more comfortable I get, with myself. Life throws obstacles for sure but I think I'm better at tackling things than I was and as long as I see progress, there's no need for a shake up. A plateau would be more of an issue to me - not whether I'm keeping up with somebody else or not. 🌸

I could never lock myself into one style. There are things that I can't do and that is enough for me. I don't deliberately limit myself when I enjoy something

As an insecure young, woman, I have spent a lot of my earlier life wishing I was like other women. I'm not. I never can be. I'm Amanda and as long as my kids love me like this and my friends and clients enjoy my tattoos and company, I am happy, with being this woman.

ON A SIMILAR KIND OF SUBJECT - AND BECAUSE IT'S TOPICAL (SOMEBODY ASKED ME THIS MORNING AND I LAUGHED IN HIS FACE - SORRY DUDE). ARE YOU A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION KIND OF GIRL OR ARE YOU JUST TOO DAMN BUSY TO MAKE THOSE SORTS OF STATEMENTS TO YOURSELF?

I actually, actively avoid, New Year's Resolutions. I believe that it creates a massive issue, around a problem and sets people up for a fall. Traditions take over will power and actual want for change. I don't think it's healthy. Change when you want to and use the power inside yourself. Why wait for new year??

I am pretty annoyed

that my own life change, started last January. It was literally because of circumstances with childcare. Just a shame it clashed with the dreaded gym surge of JANUARY!

I met an awesome guy, who is very aesthetically pleasing and he kindly offered to share his gym time with me. He's now one of my best mates. I used to be into the gym in a massive way but all cardio. He taught me to lift weights and I have never enjoyed food and exercise more.

I feel like my old self again, for the first time in years. I used to love feeling fit. Resolutions happen all the time and should be embraced at any time of year. My great friends and work colleagues, Lee Mallett and Jim O'Driscoll

have also changed themselves.

Lee is boxing and has dropped so much weight, he is actually hard to recognise. He also turned my attention to pad work at our local gym - Pitman's Fight Factory. It's a lot of fun and great cardio. Jim has quit smoking with the vaping and is doing weight lifting with us and long distance hikes, regularly. Who needs a new year for motivation when it happens all the time!



Who needs a new year for motivation when it happens all the time?!

LET'S CLOSE ON A GOOD ONE: WHEN WE SPOKE EARLIER, YOU WERE BUSY MAKING CHRISTMAS COSTUMES FOR THE KIDS... WHAT WHERE THEY? YOU MUST BE PRETTY DAMN GOOD AT IT BY NOW!

Well, I am a busy woman but I love my kids and have a very weak spot for fancy dress. They both do Taekwondo and have a Taekwondo Christmas party, to attend. It's fancy dress and I did say that if they came up with a good idea, I would make it. I have a background in textiles, so it seems plausible.

In the back of my car, Layne bursts out that his idea was Emmet, from the Lego movie and my daughter, Ember, wants to be Wild Style, also from the Lego movie. Genius ideas. I couldn't resist. Sadly it means that I had to sacrifice a night of designs and a kids day out at the weekend. Their costumes will no doubt posted on my Instagram and Facebook. For now though, it's playing catch up. I have a lot of drawing to do and also a t-shirt design for David Norwood's Obstinate Clothing range. I'll find some time to sleep... eventually. 🐼



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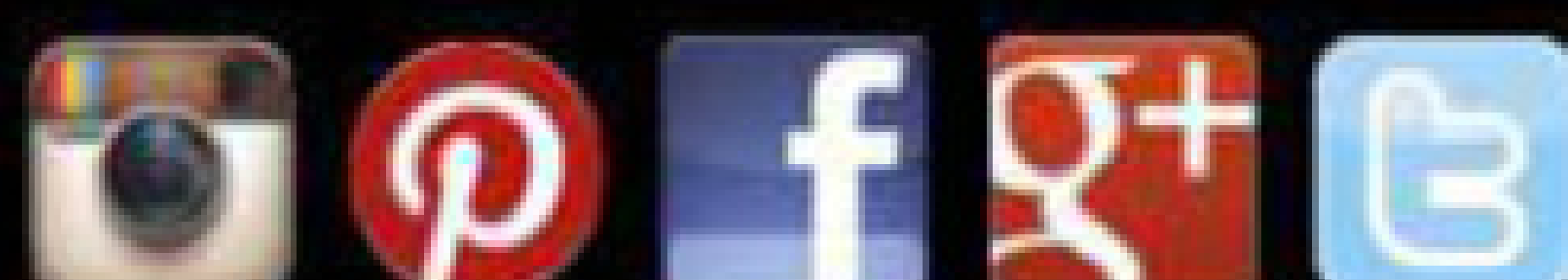
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URBAN ALCHEMIST

'Life is Good' for Polish Artist Lukas 'Bam' Kaczmarek.
We talk painting, piercing and pots.



Nicky Connor Bam

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Bam is known for his bold use of colours and shapes. In his tattoos, he blends tones together as if they were paint; applying colour, shade and depth as if using a brush or a spray can, not a needle. He definitely showed this when I saw him tattooing at Tattoo Jam, creating alluring graphic pieces with his usual enthusiasm and friendly personality.

Bam has been around the tattoo scene for a while. He began

tattooing at Kult Tattoo studio in Kraków and working for Tattoo Fest being involved with the magazine and the convention. Initially starting out as a body piercer, he began tattooing around five years ago and recently moved from Kraków to the city of Bielsko-Biala where he has opened his own private studio, "Life is Good".

Growing up, Bam was always drawing but was told the 'old chestnut' that you can't make a living out of art. He never thought

of becoming a tattoo artist and studied to become an English teacher. Once he graduated, he left his home town and moved to Krakow -where, as well as falling for the great music and art scene- Bam found a job as a piercer at Kult Tattoo. In addition to being good at piercing, he really enjoyed it and this eventually led on to him becoming a tattoo artist. Working at Kult Tattoo he was surrounded by great artists like Davee Blows. 🙌

GENERALLY SPEAKING
I GET A LOT OF
INSPIRATION FROM
NATURE AND ITS
ELEMENTS. I LOVE
ORGANIC STRUCTURES
LIKE WOOD, STONE,
SAND AND WATER



This influence was valuable from both a technical standpoint and as a cool example of tattooists being commercially successful and breaking new ground. Bam carries this ideal of professionalism and customer service with him in his work and he salutes Davee for breaking many boundaries with his colour tattoos.

"The great thing about working at the shop was, aside from observing the technical side—which was great—was working with artists who were good and successful at what they do, it was a really good example."

Bam's new studio in Bielsko-Biala (southern Poland) is in a city that boasts its own 13th century castle and was originally two cities joined together in the 1950s which date back to the 12th century. Similar to other European artists, Bam has chosen to have a closed, appointment only studio as he finds this approach works best for him. It provides the freedom to work independently and to take time out to travel and work internationally. Bam

does not categorise his work in a particular tattoo style and feels that as all tattoos are creative; there is no need to label styles as sometimes these labels can restrict the designs.

"There is too much about strictly categorising things, when people ask me what style I have I just say I do what I like to do, but I know how it sounds. This is the most fair way to describe it though because I don't want to follow a particular style."

Bam is also a passionate tattoo collector himself wearing lots of beautiful ink. He has an amazing neck piece by Davee, but what intrigues me most is his blackout right arm and the contrasting positive and negative graphic shapes on his ankles. Much

like his artistic practice, Bam's tattoo selection is a creative and eclectic mix of colours and styles. His arm was originally a large colour piece, but is now solid black with some white outlines. He likes to experiment and it's a curiosity in the outcome that keeps him innovative.

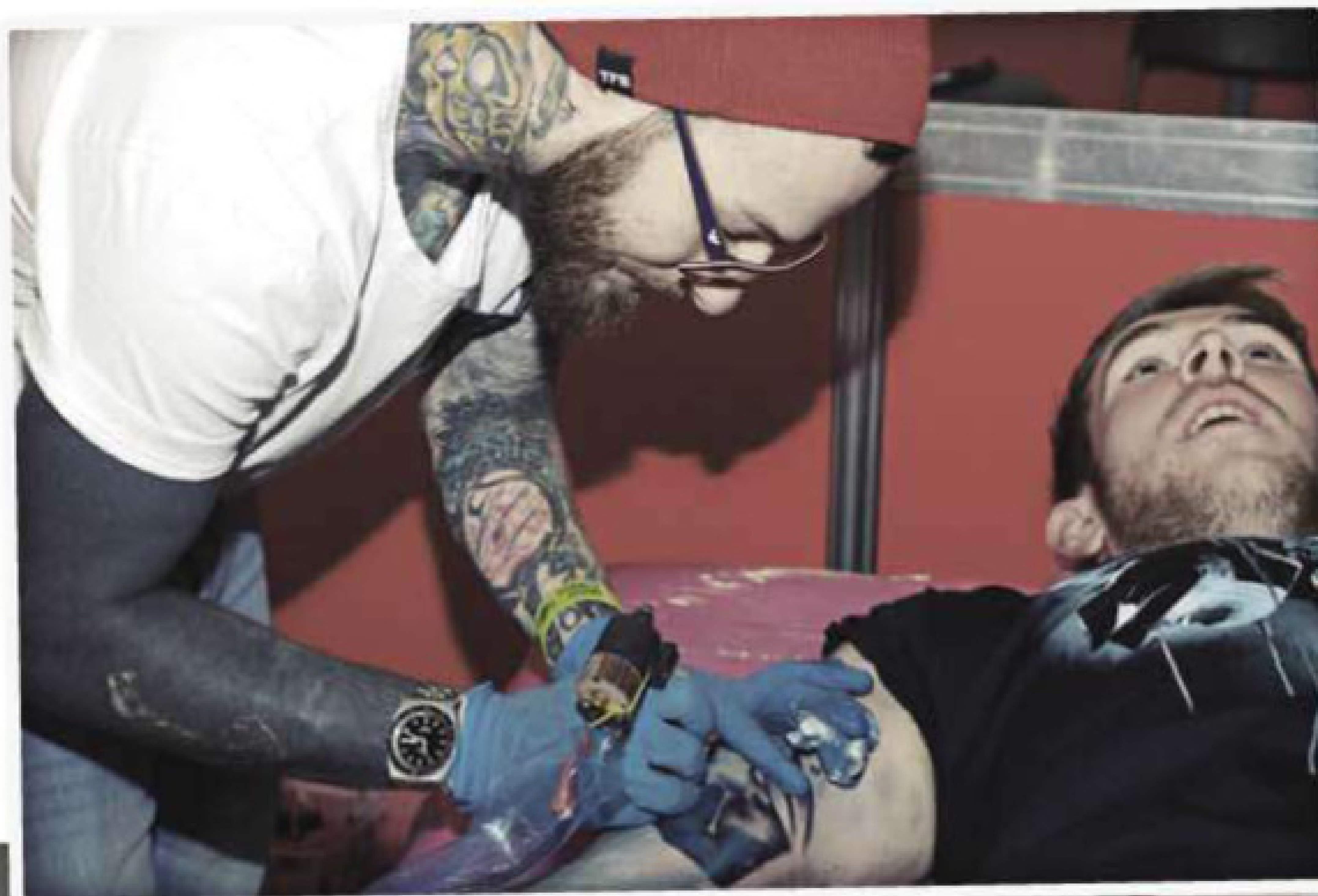
Tattooing is a large part of Bam's everyday work, but it's only one example of his artistic output.

In addition to skin and ink, Bam makes art using many different media including paint, stencils and found objects. Pottery and ceramic art are the next venture which he is really excited about as his new shop has the needed space. Through all his artistic endeavour, Bam still sees tattooing as

STARTING OUT

Starting out as a piercer, friends and colleagues encouraged Bam to try tattooing but he was reluctant - not because he didn't want to, but because he was aware of the responsibility of marking someone's skin. 'I felt there was no turning back, once you do it (tattooing) you have to be good at it. It was not an easy decision, but I guess it was the best decision I ever made.'

IT IS NOT ABOUT THE DETAIL SO MUCH, IT'S ABOUT THE BIG PICTURE SO KEEP IT SIMPLE, KEEP IT BLACK





THERE IS TOO MUCH ABOUT STRICTLY CATEGORISING THINGS, WHEN PEOPLE ASK ME WHAT STYLE I HAVE I JUST SAY I DO WHAT I LIKE TO DO, BUT I KNOW HOW IT SOUNDS. BUT THIS IS THE MOST FAIR WAY TO DESCRIBE IT BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO FOLLOW A PARTICULAR STYLE

the biggest creative challenge because of the limitations of the medium in comparison to using paint or other materials.

"Nowadays I consider tattooing to be a medium where there's a lot more limits, but that's kinda good because the more things you know won't work, the more clarity you have as to what will. I perceive limits as guidelines and believe there's far more guidelines in tattooing compared to painting."

He loves the creative processes and explorations that arise from using different artistic media, he finds tattooing is one art form that continually holds his creative attention. Working with a range of media materials that influence each other in different ways keeps him continually creative and curious though.

'Although I treat different medias separately, it's natural that in time, work you do in other media has an impact on your tattooing—and when you're not forcing any changes and let things just infiltrate back and forth, it forms a 'self-inflicted' energy/inspiration source.'

"The cool thing about using different medias is that you're never bored, you also can't execute the same means for different medias, so it's challenging and keeps you in shape creatively."

When constructing his sketches and designs Bam takes inspirations from lots different sources too:

"Generally speaking, I get a lot of inspiration from nature 🌿"





I DON'T REALLY LIKE IT WHEN A PIECE IS TOO COMPLICATED OR MESSY, SO USUALLY I SET IT ALL AROUND ONE VERY DOMINANT OBJECT

and its elements. I love organic structures like wood, stone, sand and water. I am inspired by all the patterns colours and shapes that exist in nature and in general, I tend to tattoo a lot of floral and animal themes, but I'm not really trying to reinvent the wheel."

He does however have specific ideas he prefers to use in his work like a lot of black in his designs. He loves the contrast of light and dark and likes to mix in colour.

"It is not about the detail so much, it's about the big picture so: keep it simple, keep it black."

He creates tattoos designs beginning with a very rough sketch and no colour, only using a very basic stencil and

only pre-designing part of the piece. The focus is the tattoo, not the initial design so a client has to really trust him.

"I don't really like it when a piece is too complicated or messy, so usually I set it all around one very dominant object. The aim of mine is not to be different, I feel like I'm not good at following any particular style, so what I do is just as personal and natural as it gets.

"I'd actually say I consciously make designs as much led by my clients as I possibly can. What I usually do is try to squeeze out as many ideas as possible from interested clients, figuring out what I believe has the biggest potential and then I just do my job.

Outside of tattooing life is pretty chilled for Bam. He enjoys reading a good book, watching movies and the occasional single malt. He is

fascinated by mechanical watches especially diving watches and has many interests including retro design from the 60s and 70s. What really intrigues me about Bam—aside from his amazing artwork—is his quirky charm and eclectic mix of styles that are reflected in his own personal collection of tattoos.

How can you not admire a man who, when he is not producing art or globe-trotting, is taking care of his own little collection of bonsai trees? 🌳

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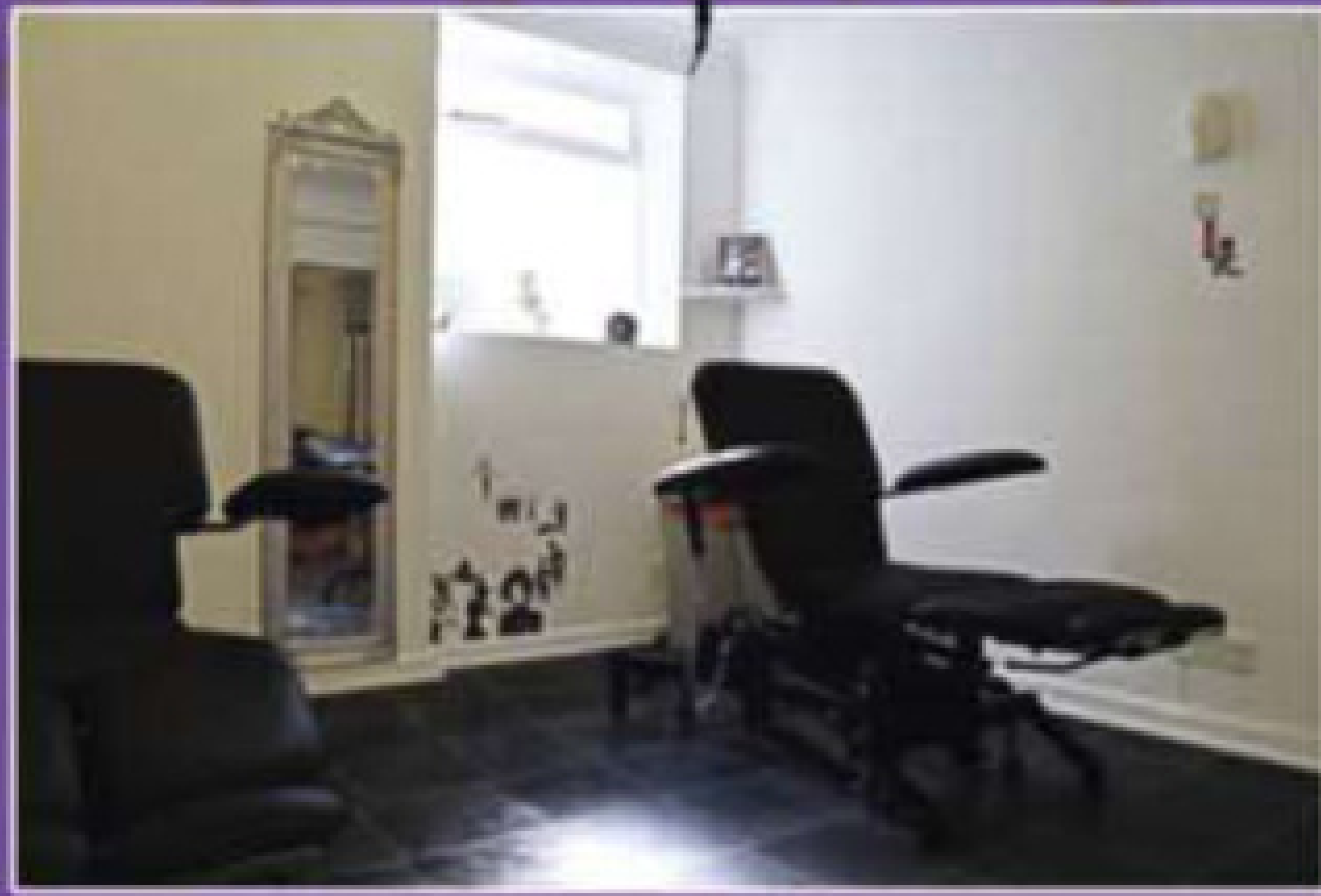
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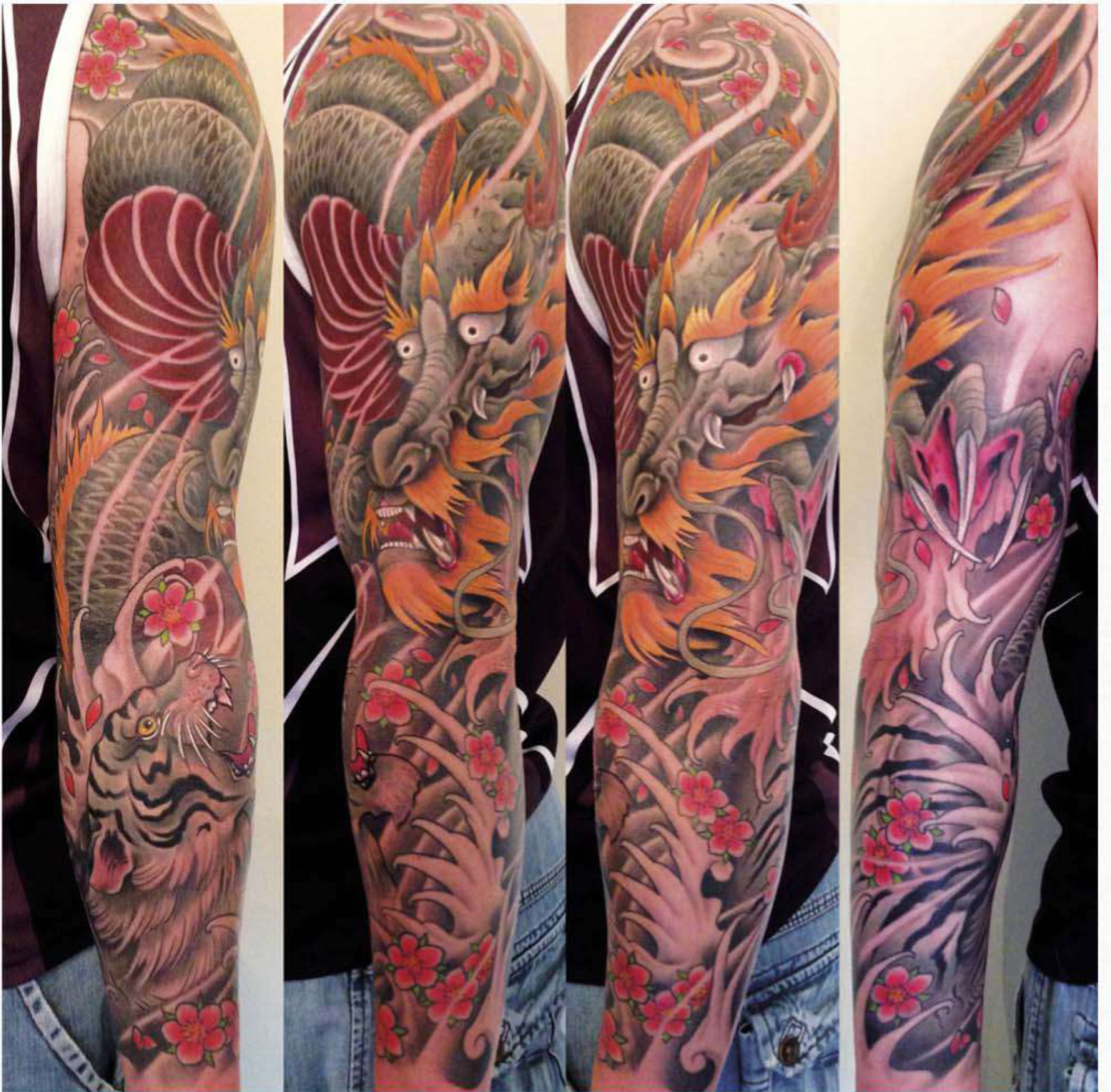
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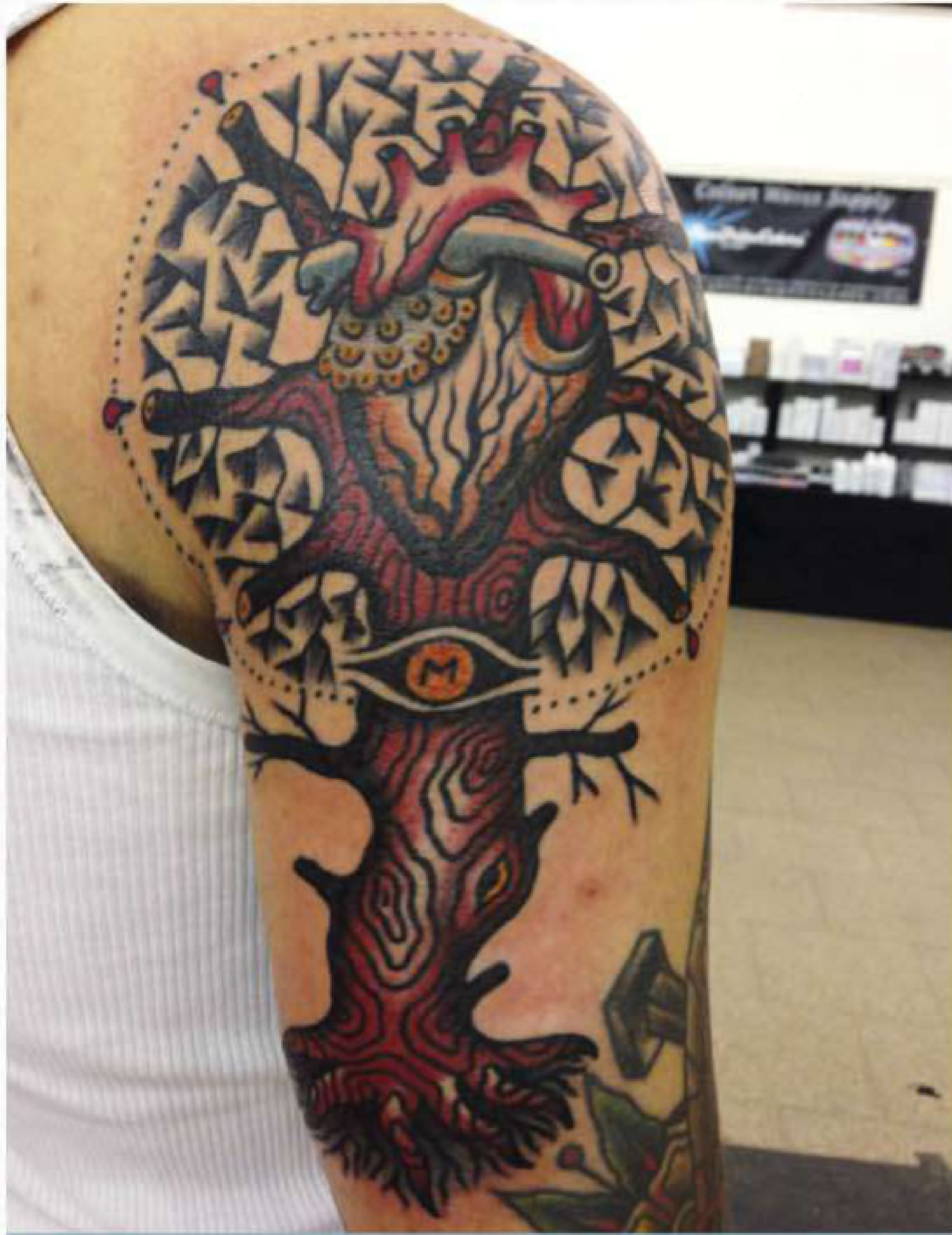
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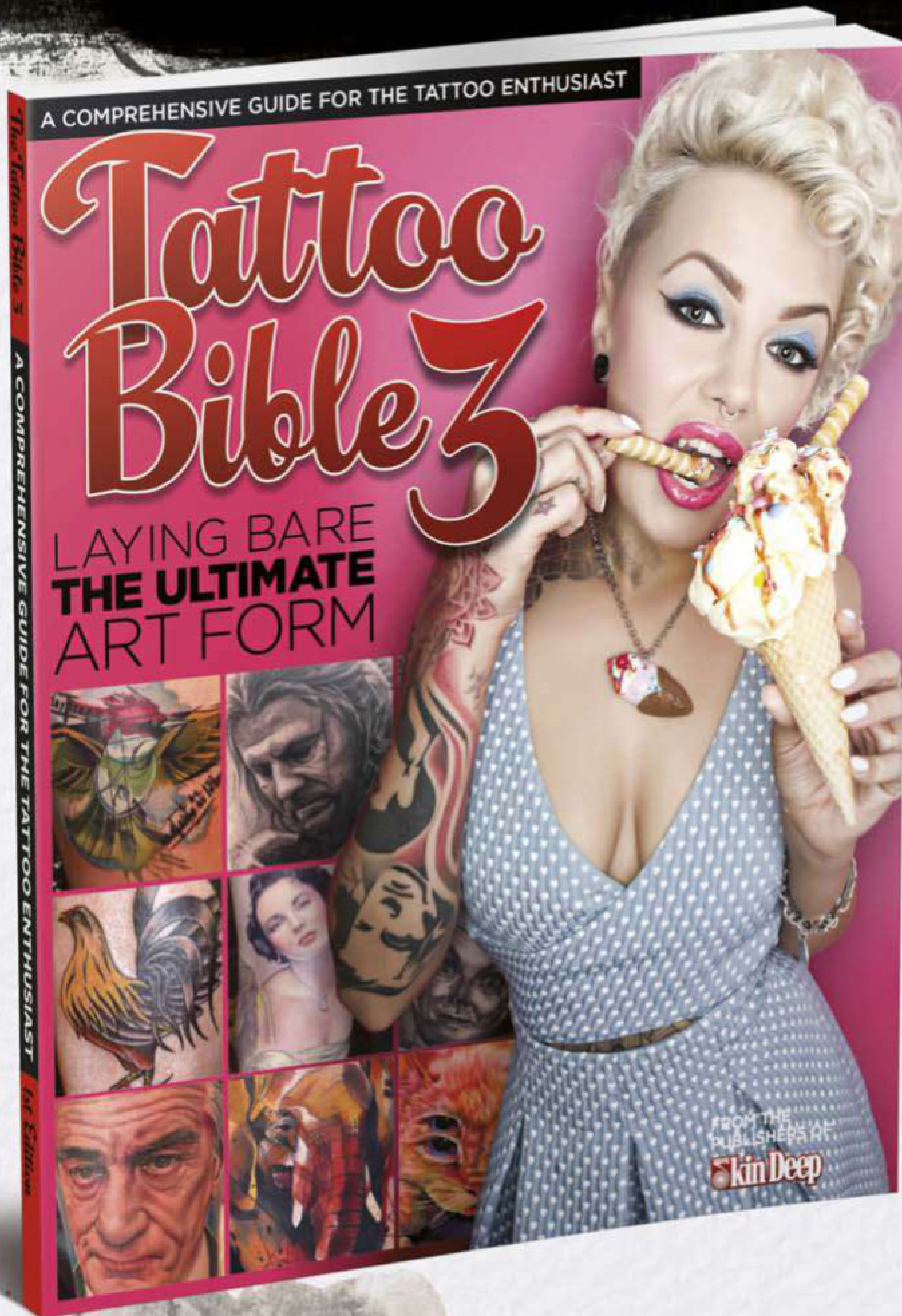
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DOWN THE RABBIT:

WHOLE

Mr. Smith Mike Boyd

Ever the sucker for being distracted by a killer rendition of any kind of bird tattoo, it was the Kingfisher that hooked me into the pseudo-nouveaux art world of Mike Boyd—and now I'm having real trouble stepping away



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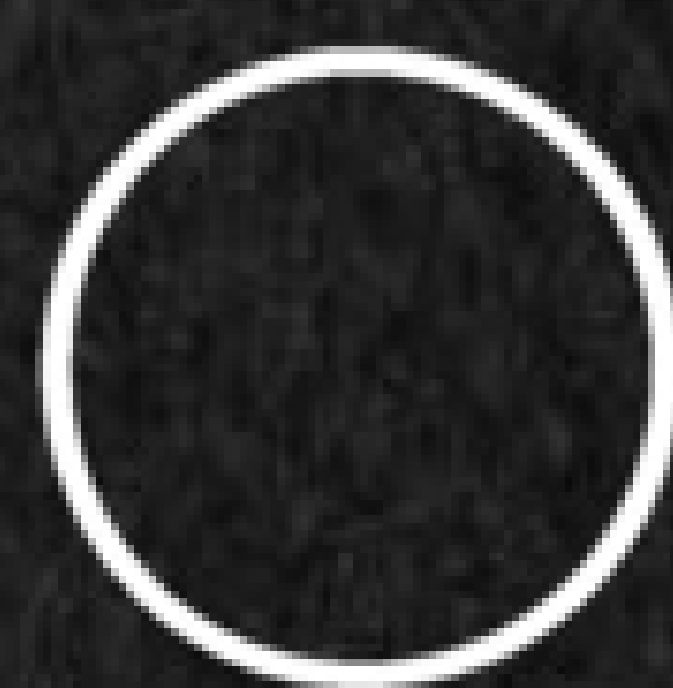
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K, so I made up the term 'pseudo-nouveaux'. After spending time with

Mike and his work, calling his creations 'graphic', 'colour' or anything else that gets bandied around in the name of description simply didn't seem to cut it. I'm not alone in this either, but we'll come to that shortly.

First, I'm finding it a little bit hard to believe that not everybody thinks Mike's artistic

output is solid as a rock.

"You'd better believe it. There are plenty of the older guys that come up to me more often than I'd like—usually in some dark corner of a convention hall—and ask me what exactly it is I think I'm doing. But that's fine really, because there's an equal amount of much younger people who go out of their way to let me know they think I've got something of quality going on.

"Before this, I was just a

walk-in tattooer up in Norwich.

Anything that came in, I was your man, but I took my eye off the ball and I did it for too long. When Joe Carpenter started work at the shop, we became good friends and he was the one that pointed out to me that I was actually a good artist and I should be doing more with my life. We had 'that' conversation which was about finding out what you want to do—but it's not easy and I pissed around 🍌



I WAS JUST SITTING AROUND AND STARTED DRAWING A BLUE TIT—I STARTED TO EXPAND ON IT AND I’VE BEEN EXPANDING ON THE IDEA FOR THE LAST 18 MONTHS

for ages trying to figure it out.

“I had a background in graffiti and spent a lot of time in train-yards when I was younger so I went back to that to see if I could do something with it. One day—it was a day when I had a really, really bad hangover—I was just sitting around and started drawing a blue tit, nothing special and how I sketch normally but I started to expand on it, and I’ve been expanding on the idea for the last 18 months.”

This is how all the best things begin. You can’t go looking for them purposely; that’s when they choose to hide from you. The route to finding a calling is to announce to the world that you might be coming looking one day soon and then go and get lost in the woods. Then, and only then, is when it will show up in ways that you least expect it.

I HAVE NO IDEA HOW FAR I CAN TAKE IT, BUT I CERTAINLY WANT TO TAKE IT AS FAR AS I CAN



Mike’s route to figuring out was straight down the woods known as the M11 and into London:

“Things started changing for me as soon as I made the choice to leave and come here. In Norwich, I was doing a lot of bigger pieces but here in London, I find myself doing more smaller pieces but that actually suits what I do. I have no idea how far I can take it but I certainly want to take it as far as I can.”

Passers-by have suggested at various times that Bugs is a big influence but that would be too easy. There’s more to it than that:

“His work is very blocked and very square—and I do like cubism—but I don’t think mine is at all. I don’t really see the comparison. I’ve always tried to push what I want to do and keep it as original as possible by not being consciously influenced whenever I can. There’s so much



ALL I EVER WANTED TO DO WAS MAKE TATTOOS THAT WOULD LAST AND THAT PEOPLE COULD IDENTIFY—TATTOOS THAT PEOPLE COULD POINT AT AND SAY ‘MIKE DID THAT’

in almost nine months. I’ve had the discussion with quite a few artists though. I don’t want everybody under the sun to know what I’m doing, but you can’t stay quiet otherwise there’s no point to being ‘an artist’. All you can keep hold of is your integrity, that you did create something of your own—and if other people are happy to copy, I’m not the first in that queue and I certainly won’t be the last, but as soon as I left Norwich, there was somebody that started copying my work. I couldn’t believe it and I’ve noticed some others doing the same—not even adapting it, just a straight ahead carbon copy. It was a shock because I never actually expected that to happen; I never took my work too seriously, you know?

“Until I moved to London, I never realised how much social media can make or destroy you 🌸

repetition in tattooing these days, so many people afraid to think for themselves... I love a bit of traditional but how many times do you really want to knock out some Sailor Jerry flash? For me, that’s like working in a factory and not what tattooing is about for me at all.

“So, anyway, I went out on a limb and did the first few in the style I wanted to work in for free to see what would

happen and they came back healed really well—just how I wanted—so I kept pushing.”

At which point, I feel the need to bring up the ghostly shape of social media and how it can work for and against you... and that, of course, all rather depends what you want out of life.

“When I left to come down to London, I had something like 600 followers on Instagram and now I have almost 7,000—that’s



THERE USED TO BE A LOT OF EFFORT YOU HAD TO PUT IN TO FINDING SOMEBODY TO DO THE TATTOO THAT YOU WANTED...

as a tattoo artist. I don't care for it too much but it is part of the game. All I ever wanted to do was make tattoos that would last and that people could identify—tattoos that people could point at and say 'Mike did that'. I never wanted fame, and money is a nice byproduct of it, sure, but the only thing I've ever been good at is drawing. I'm really happy right now to be doing what I'm doing."

As a place to live and work, London works for some, and can be a living nightmare of gigantic proportions for others—but even when you find yourself at least on the same page as the city, it ain't always an easy move.

"I was going to go to art school but my older brother and my Dad, they both said to me 'look at your brother here, he works in Morrison's. You'll always be good at art, why not do something else', so I went to university and did a degree in biology for four years, and that—like so many of us—was when I got my first tattoo. As soon as my student loan arrived that's the first thing I did. Anyway, Joe and

me came down here to see the Roy Lichtenstein exhibition and I was sold. I moved down here in the January and I eventually found myself working here.

"It's really quite brilliant working here (at The Circle); it's exactly what I wanted from a tattoo shop. It's vibrant—there're so many great artists working here and passing through too. You can learn so much here but it's almost like it's by osmosis the atmosphere is so good. I'm not just saying that because I work here—if I wasn't this happy, I'd leave!

"I'm not in it for awards either. It really is all about good, solid tattoos for me. There're so many tattoos out there right now that are good for the one photo, but then... I don't know, it makes me feel a little bit despondent for the industry. Nothing's sacred anymore. There used to be a lot of effort you had to put in to finding somebody to do the tattoo that you wanted, but now, with the addition of a hashtag you can come up with dozens and dozens, and people are just





picking one. And if that's what you want out of the experience, great, but it's not the same as the hunt for 'The One'. That was one of the things that was always magical about it to me—the whispers about how you got to a certain studio that was off the radar. That's gone and I don't think it's ever coming back."

The cats are out of the bag on that front. I think we can all agree on that.

"It's an odd chain of events to be honest. I came to London to progress my work and push it out there a little, but now that I've started doing that, I almost want to pull it back in a little bit—but then, I worry that my work is quite niche in a love/hate kind of way. I've always had a plan of what I wanted to do and now I'm doing it; I'm not entirely sure of where to take it next. Maybe I'm

overthinking it. Time will tell!

"I have this yearning to take it to a really abstract place—I keep thinking about taking the lines out, but I'm not sure they would last in the same way. The lines are very definitive and a big part of what I do, but sometimes I wonder if they're only there for the sake of Instagram, you know? So the tattoo is defined enough for the observer. But I'll figure it out—that's what the creative process is about for all of us."

I've learned a lot from this time spent with Mike—mostly that it's actually quite difficult to be an artist right now. In order to move on, you're continually caught between being true to what's inside of you and balancing that up against being your own publicist. And the way of the world is that if you're not hitting the internet, you're not hitting

THAT WAS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WAS ALWAYS MAGICAL ABOUT IT TO ME—THE WHISPERS ABOUT HOW YOU GOT TO A CERTAIN STUDIO THAT WAS OFF THE RADAR. THAT'S GONE AND I DON'T THINK IT'S EVER COMING BACK

the right place. Not if you want to eat when you get home.

But I've also come to the conclusion that Mike is the consummate perfectionist. Nothing he ever does will be good enough for him—bad for Mike, great for the rest of us, because the man simply keeps getting better and better with each passing week, no matter what he thinks of himself. Artists like Mike are keepers, and the next few years for Mr Boyd are going to blossom into something really rather unique.

You can quote me on that. 🐼

THE MAN

There aren't many musicians who would unfalteringly stick with their bands for over three decades of ups and downs. In fact, you can count those who have on your fingers and right at the top of the list is guitarist Scott Ian of five-time Grammy-nominated Anthrax. Time to bow down to thrash royalty.



Fresh off the heels of Anthrax's set at one of North America's biggest metal festivals, Heavy Montreal, I managed to hunt down Scott Ian via phone. Killer performance aside, there was a lot to talk about, from the band's new live DVD, *Chile on Hell*, and upcoming record to Ian's memoir, *I'm The Man: The Story of That Guy from Anthrax*, which documents thirty-plus years of legendary feats, music and, well, life.

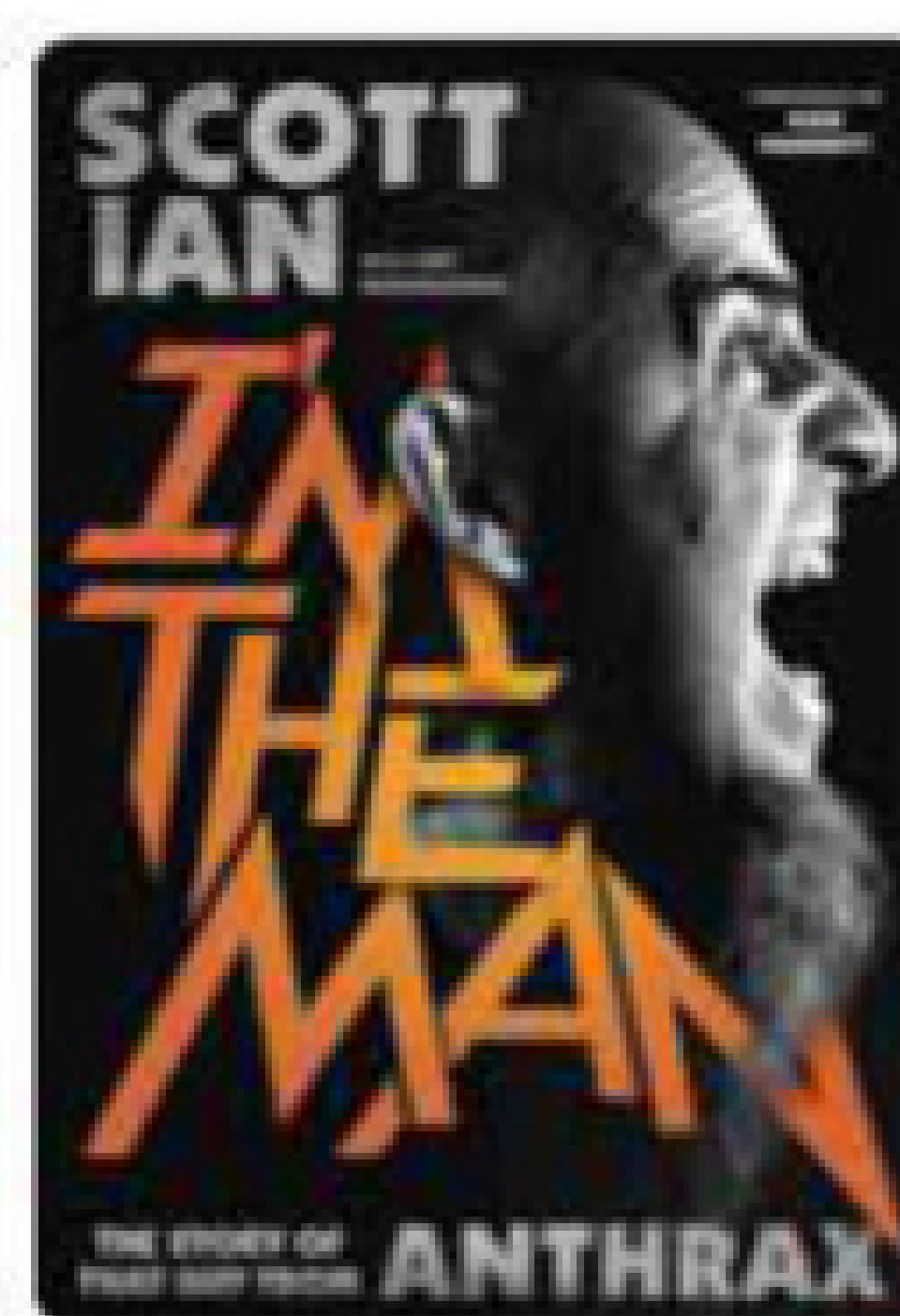
With so much happening, it was only right that when asked to describe himself in one word, Ian immediately chose "busy". Following a few dropped calls due to some pesky California canyons, we were on to the good stuff.

LET ME START WITH THE OBVIOUS: YOUR SET WAS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS YEAR'S HEAVY MONTREAL. HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

It was our third time playing that festival, so we feel pretty lucky that we keep getting asked back - we love it there. It's a great metal audience in Montreal, more akin to Europe than North America and that's not because of the French thing, but because people are just nuts up there!

I BELIEVE CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER! I'M THE MAN IS A FANTASTIC READ; IT'S SO CANDID, IT'S HARD TO PUT DOWN. WHAT WAS THE WRITING PROCESS LIKE?

It's kinda hard say. About three years ago is when the process



SCOTT IAN ON... I'M THE MAN

"It really tells the story I was trying to tell this time around of being a kid coming from nothing in Queens and against all adversity and every wall ever thrown up in my path, against all odds, for lack of a better expression, being able to do what I wanted to do with my life."



Barbara Pavone As Credited



I just started writing stories down because I was starting to forget shit you know when you can't remember something and it drives you fucking crazy because you know that you know it



everyone has way more important shit to do in their lives than worry about my band. At the same time I've never written a song or played a show to please anybody but myself.

started, although, there was no intention of it being a book. I just started writing stories down because I was starting to forget shit. You know when you can't remember something and it drives you fucking crazy because you know that you know it?

Right around the time my son was born, so much of my focus went to my child that I really started to forget a lot of stuff and it kinda worried me, like, 'Shit, I've got all these great stories from 35 years of my life, maybe I should start documenting this, so I don't forget it all' and that was the initial catalyst.

Whenever something would pop in my head, I would take a moment and make notes, either on a piece of paper or in my iPhone. I was having so much fun reliving that stuff that it turned into the talking shows where I get

on stage and tell stories and out of THAT came the idea that maybe I can put this together into a book. Because I had so much of it written out already, I had a nice start on it, but it's one thing to get on stage and tell stories and another to write a book. For me, as an avid reader, I wanted it to be a cohesive tale, not just a whole bunch of stories, so I wanted an Act 1, Act 2, Act 3. I just knew I was in way over my head, as far as if I committed to a book there's no way I was ever gonna make any kind of deadline. If they told me 'We need it done by October', I'd be like 'When? In 2019?' [laughs]

IS THAT HOW MUSIC JOURNALIST JON WIEDERHORN GOT INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT?

I love Jon and we've done a lot of stuff together - I wrote the forward for his book, *Louder Than Hell: The Definitive Oral History of Metal* - and I was like 'Hey, do you wanna work on this with me? Do you wanna come to my house, get drunk for a week and just record me talking, then we'll start putting it together?'

WAS IT BIZARRE TRYING TO SELF-EDIT AND SQUEEZE YOUR LIFE INTO 400 PAGES?

At first I thought it was way too

short! [laughs] I was like, 'What? My story should at least be 800 pages.' Believe me, there's a lot more, but I think for the way I'm telling this story in this book, it flows really well. As they say, it's all killer, no filler and that's something I feel is very important just from making records for the last 30 years. You wanna do your best to have every song be interesting, not have a bunch of wasted time on the record, and it's the same thing with my book. There's no wasted time here, there's no tangents or boring asides, it's just punch after punch after punch from the beginning of my life up until 2011.

YOU AND DRUMMER CHARLIE BENANTE ARE THE ONLY MEMBERS OF ANTHRAX WHO'VE PLAYED ON EVERY ALBUM AND YOU'RE THE SOLE MEMBER WHO'S BEEN THERE SINCE DAY 1 - HAVE YOU EVER FALLEN VICTIM TO THINKING 'FUCK IT, I CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE?'

You'll have to read the book. [laughs] I'm not just gonna give it away, it's in there.

THAT'S THE MARKETING GENIUS IN YOU TALKING - I LIKE IT!

Exactly. I gotta sell this thing somehow, right?

I RECENTLY HAD A METAL FAN TELL ME 'I DON'T LISTEN TO ANTHRAX BECAUSE THEIR NAME OFFENDS ME' - DOES THAT MAKE YOU LOVE THE NAME MORE? THAT WOULD CERTAINLY BE MY REACTION.

My reaction is complete indifference. Look, don't get me wrong, I appreciate that anyone even takes the time of day, whether they're the most hardcore fan and they love everything we've ever done or they're somebody who says 'I don't listen to them cause the name offends me', to think about my band. I appreciate that because everyone has way more important shit to do in their lives than worry about my band.

At the same time, I've never written a song or played a show to please anybody but myself and the four other guys in the band. The fact that anyone out



My first tattoo wasn't until something like '90 or '91 and I was 26 years old but back then people weren't getting tattooed as young as they are now



there likes what we do, that's fucking awesome, but that's never been the impetus behind being in Anthrax. If somebody doesn't listen to me, I don't care. If people see me walking down the street and think they're busting my balls by saying 'Your band sucks', I'm like, 'Alright, I don't give a shit what you think'.

But I do have to say that this person who was offended by the name probably needs to grow up a little bit because if that's offensive, Jesus Christ, how do you live on this planet? That's pretty fucking sad, if you ask me. [laughs]

AGREED! SO IF WE CAN TALK TATTOOS FOR A MINUTE, WOULD YOU WALK US THROUGH SOME

OF YOUR OUTSTANDING WORK?

Every one has just been on a drunk dare.

WHAT?

I got Kat Von D tattoos on drunk dares. No! [laughs]

I WAS GONNA SAY THAT'S A LOT OF DARES THAT WORKED OUT...

I started relatively late in life, my first tattoo wasn't until something like '90 or '91 and I was 26 years old, but back then people weren't getting tattooed as young as they are now. I had plenty of ideas from the time I was 15 or 16, most of them having to do with Marvel or DC Comics characters or Judge Dredd, but I never acted on those impulses and I'm kinda glad I didn't. I'd probably have a lot of really stupid, shitty tattoos 🍷



THE ANTHRAX LEGACY

Formed in New York in 1981 by Scott Ian and bassist Dan Lilker, Anthrax has released 10 albums, sold over 15 million records worldwide, become one of the most iconic metal bands in history and part of the Big Four alongside Metallica, Slayer and Megadeth. Even cooler, Anthrax was the first group to have its music played on Mars when NASA picked 'Got The Time' to wake up the Mars Rover in 2012.

that I would have wasted a lot of my skin on and then wanted to maybe get rid of, so it saved me a lot of time, pain and money.

But yeah, they all obviously mean something to me, whether it's my son's name or band-related stuff or my portraits of Angus and Malcolm from AC/DC that Kat did, a black tooth Bob Tyrrell did in memory of Dimebag and my Gene Simmons tattoo that Paul Booth did based on the fact that Gene is the reason why I wanted to start a band. If I were just basing it on my favorite art, though, it would certainly be Paul's Gene Simmons or Kat's two portraits because from a sheer artwork perspective, that's the best art I have on my body.

DO YOU PLAN TO KEEP THE COLLECTION GROWING OR TAKE A BREAK NOW THAT YOU'RE PRETTY HEAVILY TATTOOED?

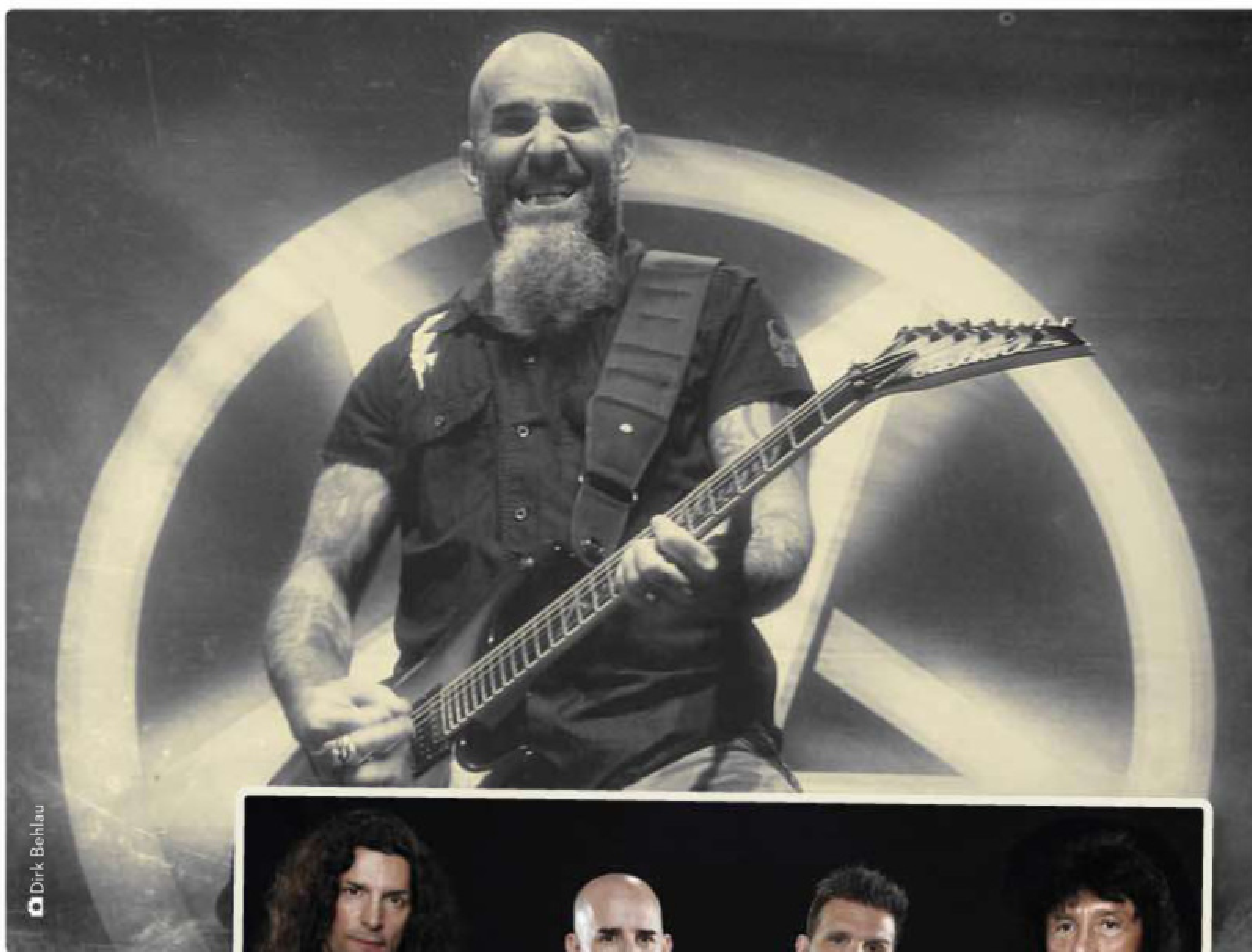
I'm really not heavily covered other than my arms. I have pretty much my whole mid and upper back, my whole front and from my knees up, but I don't think I'm gonna get much more work.

Paul's gotta finish my Gene Simmons. The whole top of my foot is outlined - Gene's tongue turns into a snake's head on the top of my foot - and truthfully, the only reason why I haven't gotten it finished is because the outline hurt so much, I'm just being a pussy about going back. [laughs]

My patience for sitting and

If I were just basing it on my favorite art though it would certainly be Paul's Gene Simmons or Kat's two portraits because from a sheer artwork perspective that's the best art I have on my body

getting ink has diminished over the years. It's just like anything else: If you go out and party, hangovers get way worse the older you get. I used to be able to sit for



HEAVY MONTREAL
Heavy Montreal just keeps getting bigger and louder and this year, the two-day festival welcomed a record 75,000 fans to its outdoor site. 2014's lineup counted Metallica, Slayer, Anthrax, Twisted Sister, Body Count and Babymetal as some of its most buzzed about performers.



six or seven hours, no problem - sure, it was uncomfortable, but I just had patience for it - and now, one hour and I'm like, 'Fuck you, I'm done'. People keep telling me about this cream I can use, but I dunno, I've never tried it and it just seems weird to me.

YOU RECENTLY SAID YOU'D LIKE LADY GAGA TO COVER AN ANTHRAX SONG - I LOVE THAT! - AND THE NEWS BLEW UP ON SOCIAL MEDIA. WERE YOU SERIOUS?

Yeah, why not? She's an Anthrax fan. Our drummer is friends with her and I know they've had discussions about music and actually doing something together, which would be even cooler. She's a great piano player and a great singer and she knows

her shit when it comes to metal, she's not a poser, so it would be fucking awesome trying to write something with her from scratch.

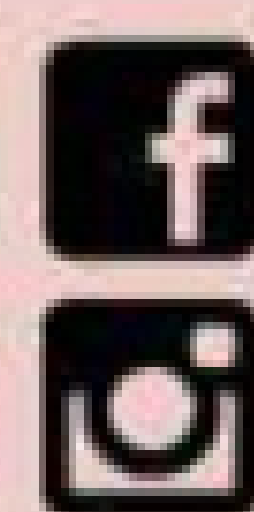
DO YOU EVER THINK OF DOING SOMETHING A LA MOTLEY CRUE'S FINAL TOUR AND GOING OUT WITH A BANG OR WILL YOU STAY ON THE ROAD TILL THE END OF TIME, LIKE LEMMY?

I don't think about either ever. I've never really taken that kind of long view of things. 30-something years ago I never thought about what I would be doing in 2014, I was too worried about trying to get an amp that sounded good. Right now, I'm really focused on making the best Anthrax record we can make. 🤘

I'm the Man: The Story of That Guy from Anthrax is available from Da Capo Press as of now in hardcover and e-book format.

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RUNNING WITH

THE DEVIL

You know that old grumpy dude who tattoos at the shop down the road? Course you do. The place with the blacked-out windows and dodgy flash on the wall. Sadee Johnston knows him. He even tattooed her, once  Wayne Simmons  Sadee



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Most people our age have got a stinker that was done when we were sixteen', she laughs. 'Because it was different back then. You went into a studio and they said: "What do you want? Number 45? Lovely! Sit down and someone will be over to you at 2.30." And, yeah, there are still studios that make a decent living out of operating that way. But generally the industry's changed.'

Sadee's part of a new breed of artists. Young, friendly, funny as hell. There's no drama with Sadee, no ego or attitude. She's about as far from that old grumpy dude down the road as you can

expect to find. She doesn't take herself too seriously but she takes her art very seriously.

'I've always drawn,' she tells me. 'Always. I was encouraged a lot by my mum. When your parents tell you that you're good at something, I think you naturally take a shine to it and you do it more. When I was little, I won a competition for drawing a picture of Henry VIII and that's the first time I remember thinking, I'm good at drawing. And, I guess when you think you're good at something in school, you really get into it. It was my thing: some people were good at singing or maths, I was the loser who sat



conditioning my paint brushes and got excited about trips to WH Smiths to buy new stationery.'

Her passion continued through college, one rather eccentric lady proving to be a major influence. 'Mrs Bird,' Sadee recalls. 'Our art teacher. A crazy, Polish alcoholic. She was nuts and I loved her. Anyone who took art seriously and didn't take the piss out of her weird teddy collection, she took a bit of a shining to. I'd hang about after class and she'd give me pots of acrylic paint to keep and take home.'

A few years with Mrs Bird and Sadee was ready for uni, Illustration her subject of choice. Like many students, she became intrigued by tattoo art. But she had absolutely no intention of becoming a tattoo artist.

'I had plenty of respect for the trade,' she tells me, 'but I guess I thought I wasn't good enough

I GOT ASKED BY PEOPLE TO DRAW DESIGNS FOR THEM TO TAKE TO THEIR ARTISTS AND JUST STARTED THINKING, HANG ON A MINUTE. IF SOMEONE IS WILLING TO TATTOO SOMETHING I HAVE DRAWN THEN MAYBE I COULD DO THIS?

to tattoo. I mean, I looked at the artists doing it and thought, They're amazing. There's no way I could ever do anything like that with my silly little drawings. But then I got asked by people to draw designs for them to take to their artists and just started thinking, Hang on a minute. If someone is willing to tattoo something I have drawn then maybe I could do this?'

The rest is history, so to speak, Sadee now peddling what's known in the business as neo-trad. It's a hugely popular style that seems to be just about everywhere 🍷

right now: in magazines, at conventions, maybe even at ol' Grumpy Dude's flash wall down the road. I try to get a flavour of what the term 'neo-trad' means to Sadee. Is it simply a mix of old and new school?

'That's it,' she agrees. 'But then again, sometimes it's not anything. It's not old school, it's not new school, it's anything and it's everything. And that's the fun part: I get the best bits of everything. Some elements of traditional, like decent lines – I like lines in a tattoo to hold it together – and then a varied colour pallet which I guess is more new school.'

Done to perfection, might I add, because Sadee's art is turning quite a few heads right now. Chances are you've already seen her name within the pages of this very publication as well as sister mag, Skin Shots, where

I LIKE LINES IN A TATTOO TO HOLD IT TOGETHER – AND THEN A VARIED COLOUR PALLET WHICH I GUESS IS MORE NEW SCHOOL



Sadee's work has been featured as Editor's Choice. Her art stands out, you see. It's clean, it's bold, and it pops like you wouldn't believe. She's a cut above the rest and yet, somewhat refreshingly, Sadee remains very grounded.

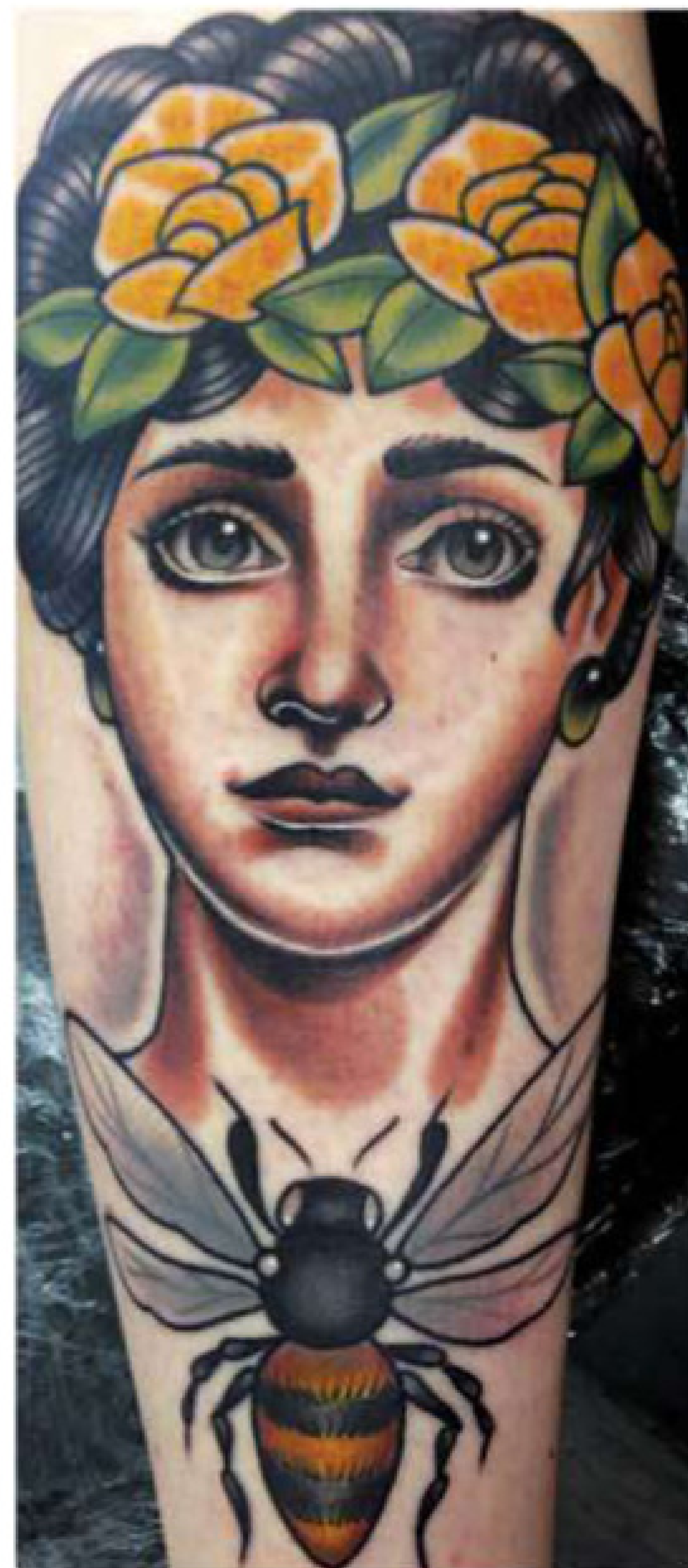
'It's just how my drawings come out,' she shrugs.

Not that all this attention is lost on her. On the contrary: being in magazines has played a huge part in building Sadee's confidence as an artist. 'It's self-validation,' she explains. 'Like, someone else thinks I'm okay – that's nice. And the next time, it's nice again. And eventually, you stop cutting out the pictures and sending them to your mum saying, I'm in a magazine!'

And then there's her ever-growing client base, another form of self-validation. 'There's no greater compliment than loyal customers. That's something I have never taken for granted and am eternally grateful for.' Or other artists who come to her for



I'M THE ONLY GIRL IN THE SHOP, WHICH IS WEIRD SINCE I HAVE ALWAYS WORKED IN STUDIOS WITH WOMEN, BUT IT'S REALLY GOOD FUN



work. 'That's awesome! Especially when they're good. Although, it's scary tattooing tattooists!'

Sadee has worked with quite a few good artists to date, first starting out at Ruby Lou's in Swindon before moving to Picture House in Chippenham. She's now back in Swindon, working out of Great Western Tattoo Club with Sam Ricketts, Jay Thurley, Joel P Blake, Chris Martin and Scott Owen. 'They're good eggs,' Sadee smiles. 'Hardest working guys I know and a constant source of inspiration and entertainment. I'm the only girl in the shop, which is weird since I have always worked in studios with women, but it's really good fun. I am constantly learning from them and they are making me a better tattoo artist. I think it's important to surround yourself with positive influences in this industry.' 🐝



WE'RE LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO COMBINE THAT WITH OUR JOB: TRAVEL TO DIFFERENT CONVENTIONS, STUDIOS, CITIES AND WORK. NOT ENOUGH OF US EXPLOIT THAT ASPECT OF THE JOB

And her plans for the future?

'Travelling abroad. Do a lot more conventions, a lot more guest spots. Just be busy. Go here, there and everywhere. We're lucky enough to be able to combine that with our job: travel to different conventions, studios, cities and work. Not enough of us exploit that aspect of the job, I think. You

can learn from artists all over the world. Meeting and tattooing people who live in different places, knowing that they're going to be walking around in that country with a little bit of you on them.'

Finally, looking back over her time in the industry to date, is there anything Sadee would do differently?

'I would never do a football logo,' she jokes. 'Horrible things!'

Not even a neo-trad Liverpool badge? Because, let's face it, Sadee would nail that.

Which leaves me wondering what number that little gem would be on the flash wall at ol' Grumpy's shop down the road.

666, perchance? 🍀

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Russ Thorne made a pilgrimage from York to London to explore Old London Road studio, a mellow place with plenty worth shouting about...

It's a still, sunny morning on Old London Road and The Fighting Cocks bar is silent. From the looks of things, it doesn't stay that way once the sun goes down: a liquor bottle pyramid glitters behind the bar, the no-nonsense punk gig venue round the back is littered with passionate, presumably drunken graffiti from famous noiseniks, and there's a sign warning hippies

to use the back door. For now, though, peace prevails over the bare boards and bar stools.

Across the street at Old London Road tattoo studio it's the same story: all is calm. The studio is the bar's twin, owned by manager Renea 'Ren' O'Grady and her husband, but here the peaceful vibe is nothing to do with the time of day. They just like it that way.

"I want people to feel welcome," says Ren. "I want them to feel that the artists and front of house staff care, and I want them to have a great experience where they're comfortable and happy with the end result. It's as basic as that."

It may sound basic, but it's not always easy to achieve, especially in a major city. Old London Road, however, is neither your average



I WANT THEM TO FEEL THAT THE ARTISTS AND FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF CARE, AND I WANT THEM TO HAVE A GREAT EXPERIENCE WHERE THEY'RE COMFORTABLE AND HAPPY WITH THE END RESULT

street, nor your average studio. Outside it's a high street from another era, with indie shops and a palpable sense of community. Inside it's equally indie - gas masks and shrunken heads, anyone? - and the community spirit is alive and well, too.

"When I met Ren I really liked her ethos of treating every client the same, no matter how big or small the piece is," says studio manager and piercer Emma.

"I just love the way the studio works; [tattoo artist] Edgar and I have worked together for so long now that he's almost like my brother. It's a very friendly place, but also very professional."

The 'professional' part is in full flow right now. Mornings at Old London Road are for consultations, and there are already several clients in place on the sofas awaiting their appointments. "It's just about

trying to keep it organised!" says Ren. "It allows the artists to have a chat with someone, we process that and they can then tattoo all day without interruptions. It makes things run smoothly."

Artists tend to stay with the studio long-term, which is usually a good sign. It could be the structure, the team, or perhaps the rather nice working space they come into every day. At the end of a long corridor 🌸



CHRIS MORRIS

PREFERRED STYLE:

Bright and colourful

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT WORKING AT THE STUDIO?

There's a great atmosphere working with the other artists, and I think that really rubs off onto your clients and puts everyone at ease so that the whole working environment is very calm and friendly.

HOW DO YOU LIKE TO WORK?

We have space allocated for one-to-one personal consultations, and I like having the opportunity to sit down and get a feeling for what a person is really hoping to achieve out of their tattoos.

Whether somebody wants a design that is very meaningful to them, or simply wants something that they think looks pretty, I want to understand exactly what they're looking for in their tattoo.

HOW HAVE YOU DEVELOPED YOUR ART OVER THE YEARS, AND WHAT HAS INFLUENCED YOU?

I actually only came into the art world relatively recently. Until 2011 I was studying to be an ancient history teacher, and although I had always been a great fan of tattoos I had never even considered the possibility that I might have any artistic talent. I find now that

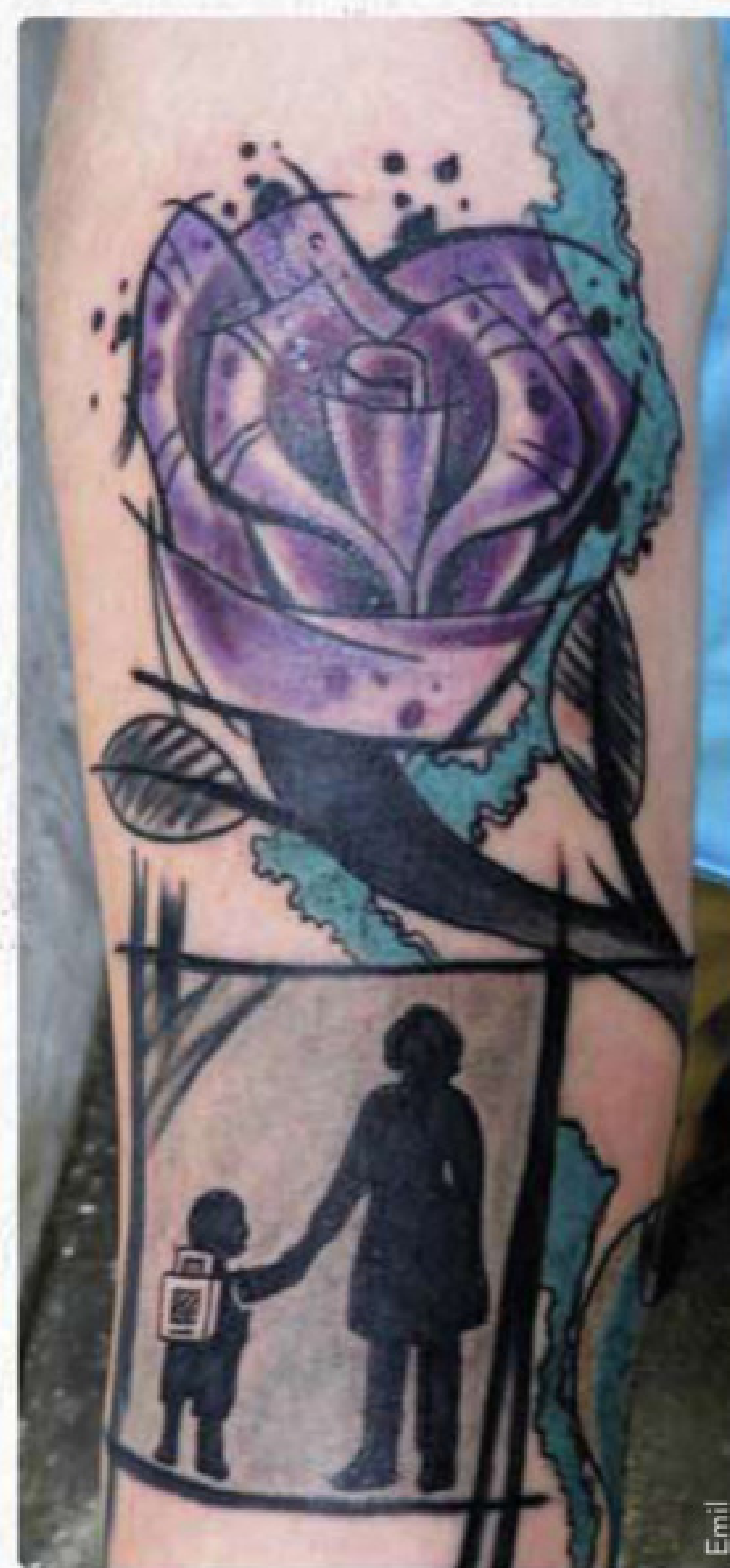
the cartoons I enjoyed seeing most growing up, such as Disney films and Looney Tunes, influence some areas of my work; while the marble statues of classical Greece and Rome provide my main influences for black and grey realism.

WHAT'S YOUR IDEAL COMMISSION?

I love drawing and tattooing cute, colourful, cartoon animals. If I can put something so colourful and bright on the skin that people mistake it for a sticker then I'm happy. Cartoons have always made me laugh and smile, so I like the idea that my tattoos can cause the same reaction.



Marie



Emil



Daniel



Chris

YOU GO INTO A LOT OF TATTOO STUDIOS AND THE LIGHT IS SO HARSH THAT YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE UNDER INTERROGATION FOR THREE HOURS

(past more masks), the space opens into a mellow, open-plan cavern with low lighting and a map of the world on the ceiling.

"The low light is for the customer," Ren explains. "You go into a lot of tattoo studios and the light is so harsh that you feel like you're under interrogation for three hours!" OLR's artists have individual work lamps so they can deal with the pointy end of things without breaking the relaxed ambience. "They can see but the customer doesn't get that



Lauren



Chris



Edgar



Edgar



Edgar



Edgar



EDGAR IVANOV'S

PREFERRED STYLE:

I love black and grey realism! The more difficult, the better. The variation in light and shadow is very important for me. I love my tattoos to be dynamic and bold, so the backgrounds have to be really dark and have contrast with the light tones!

HOW DO YOU LIKE TO WORK?

I work closely with my client on the design to get the best result, so that when the tattoo is done I get to see that special smile that people have when they're happy!

HOW HAVE YOU DEVELOPED YOUR ART, AND WHAT HAS INFLUENCED

YOU?

I've always been into photography, so most of the time my art has been heavily influenced by photos! Caravaggio is also a huge influence on me, as are many of the Western European paintings from the 13th to the 19th centuries; they're amazing! The use of light and a lot of dark tones in the background is just phenomenal and I find this type of shading works very well in tattooing.

DO YOU CREATE WORK OUTSIDE OF TATTOOING?

I draw using different mediums nearly every day, in order to constantly develop my skills. It's good because you'll discover new things that you're

able to do if you put time into it. In my opinion, without drawing there's no tattooing. Recently I have also started to learn oil painting and I love it!

WHAT PIECES DO YOU ENJOY DOING THE MOST?

I love my clients and the variety of designs we come up with every time. Especially when customers have put a lot of thought into their pieces and it's something special. I'm very lucky to be a tattoo artist, so I'm not waiting for my special piece. I put all of myself into every tattoo, just as I would do if I drew it on myself. Every tattoo is challenging and I can't wait for tomorrow's appointment!

interrogation light in their eyes."

Artists are also less restricted courtesy of the layout. "The open plan aspect came about through talking to the artists," says Ren. "It allows them to move around so they don't have to work in one position and hurt their backs." Are you getting the idea? It's really rather nice here.

The kind of team effort represented by the design of the work room is at the heart of OLR's success - and it helps them stay in touch with the inked

world at large. "Not tattooing means I've got the time to keep up with the tattoo world, and I have a great manager who's fantastic at keeping an eye on what's happening," says Ren. "The artists bring a lot to the party too, they're out at conventions and travelling the world - Edgar has recently been working in China and Tibet, meeting lots of people - it's about keeping within the community and keeping connected."

There's that 'community' 🌻



VLAD OCTAVIAN

PREFERRED STYLE:

Traditional, neotraditional, dotwork, oriental

HOW DO YOU LIKE TO WORK?

First we have a consultation. We put all the ideas on paper and add my ideas too if possible. I design something for the client, and then if they like it, they get the tattoo.

WHO INFLUENCES YOU?

I've had a lot of influences over the years, but coming to England three years ago had a big impact on me. So many people get tattooed and traditional tattoos are very popular, so seeing tattoo artists, tattooed people, magazines and conventions regularly is very helpful. I also get a lot of old

school tattoo flash, books and sketchbooks that really inspire me.

WHAT ABOUT WORK OUTSIDE OF TATTOOING?

Away from tattooing I like to create tattoo flash and I work with watercolours and markers. I like to create flash inspired by old school traditional tattoos: bold outlines, colours and contrast.

WE HAVE PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE THEY'VE HAD HERE, OR SAYING THAT THEY STARTED WITH A SMALL PIECE AND NOW THEY WANT THEIR WHOLE LEG DONE,"

word again, and it's not some throwaway term - repeat custom and recommendations are a huge part of the studio's success, according to Ren, along with a highly visible and super-friendly social media presence (thanks largely to the equally visible and super-friendly Emma).

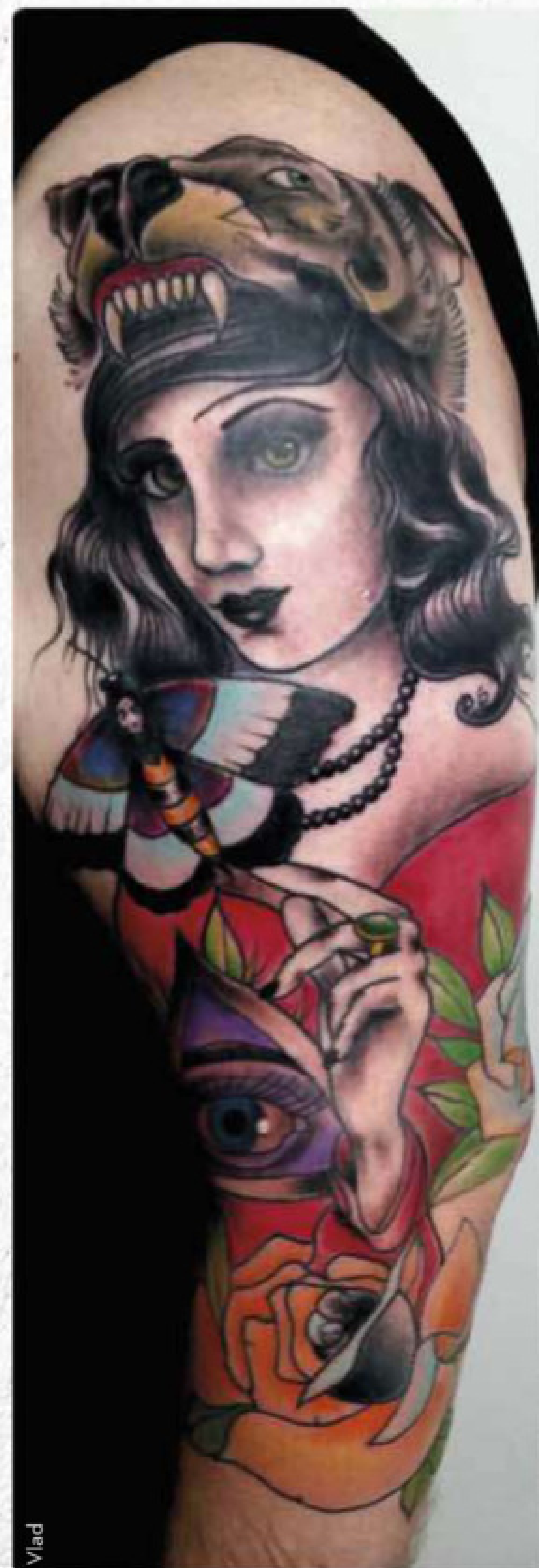
Back at The Fighting Cock, sunset will doubtless bring another raucous evening. (I'm



Chris



Marie



Vlad

pretty sure there was an electric chair in there somewhere, doubtless to be used on any doorstepping hippies.) Old London Road studio, on the other hand, is staying quiet; but their reputation is only getting louder. "We have people talking about the experience they've had here, or saying that they started with a small piece and now they want their whole leg done," says Ren. "That sort of thing is the best advocate for success." 🌻



Edgar



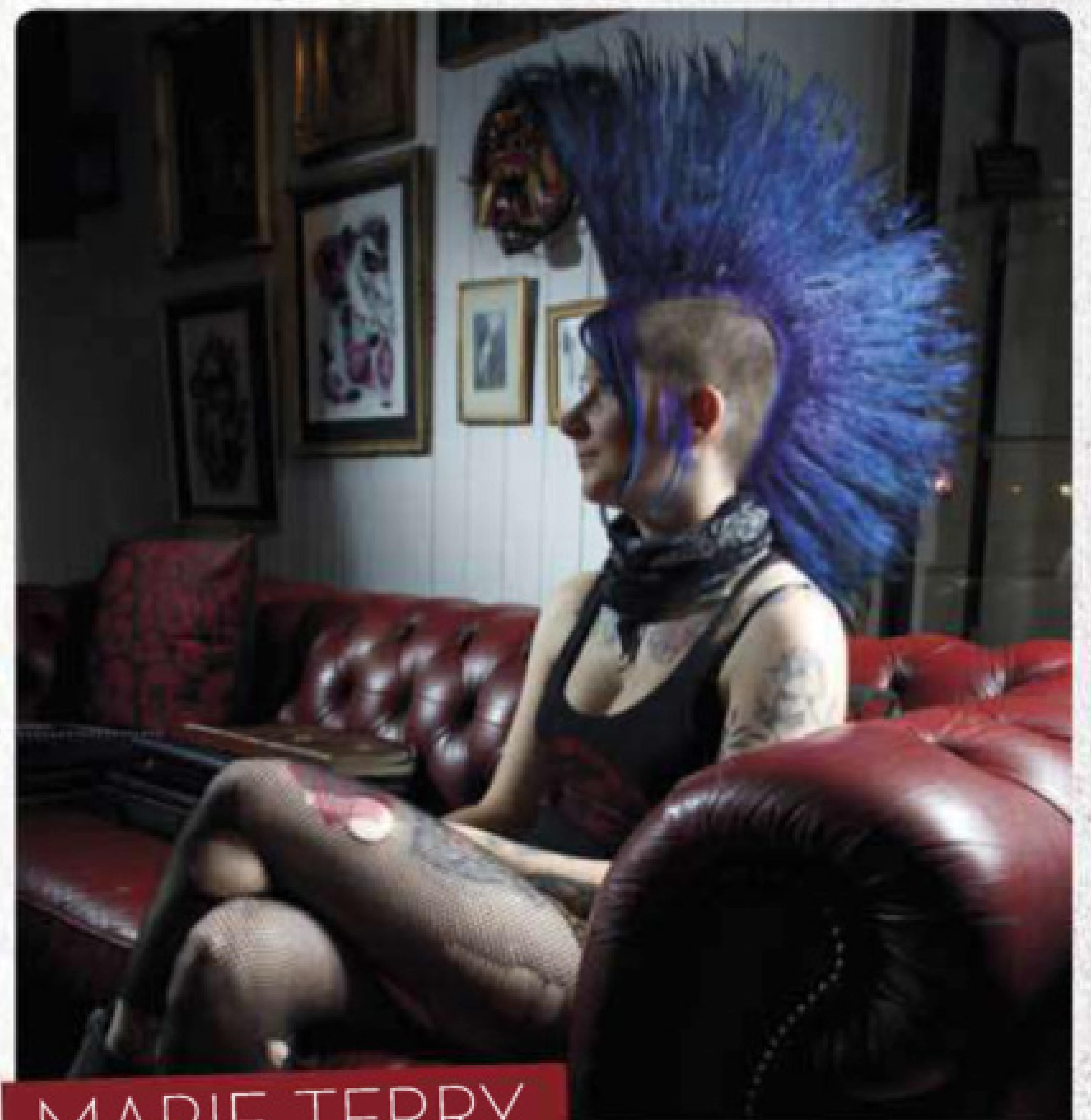
Marie



Chris



Emil



MARIE TERRY

PREFERRED STYLE:
Photorealism

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT WORKING AT THE STUDIO?

It's very busy and most of the clients are very nice and open minded. Also I have the privilege of working with a talented bunch of artists who all share techniques and advice with each other, which helps everyone grow.

HOW DO YOU LIKE TO WORK WITH YOUR CLIENTS?

I like a consultation in person first off, to get an idea of what they would like. It's better to talk in person than over email because we can talk to each other using hands and feet to explain things! Everything gets lost in translation over email. I like it when they bring lots of photos, but I prefer if they aren't too specific with the position, colours

and so on as that ends up making the tattoo stiff or not my style.

WHAT HAS INFLUENCED YOU OVER THE YEARS?

Mostly I'm influenced by other tattoo artists, the ones I work with in the studio and also the ones I follow on instagram and facebook. There are a lot of great artists, tattooists, and graffiti artists on instagram, I wish I had joined it earlier!

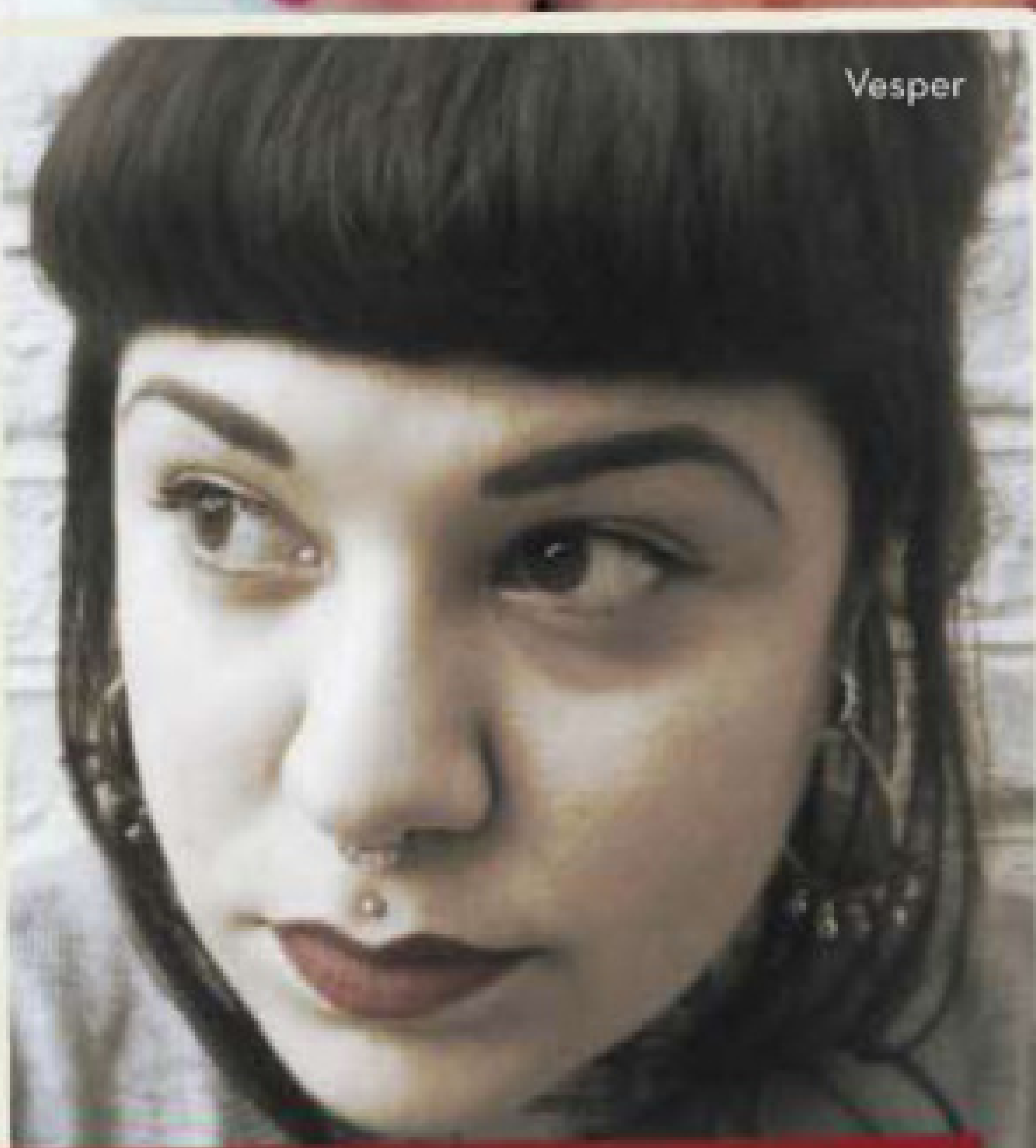
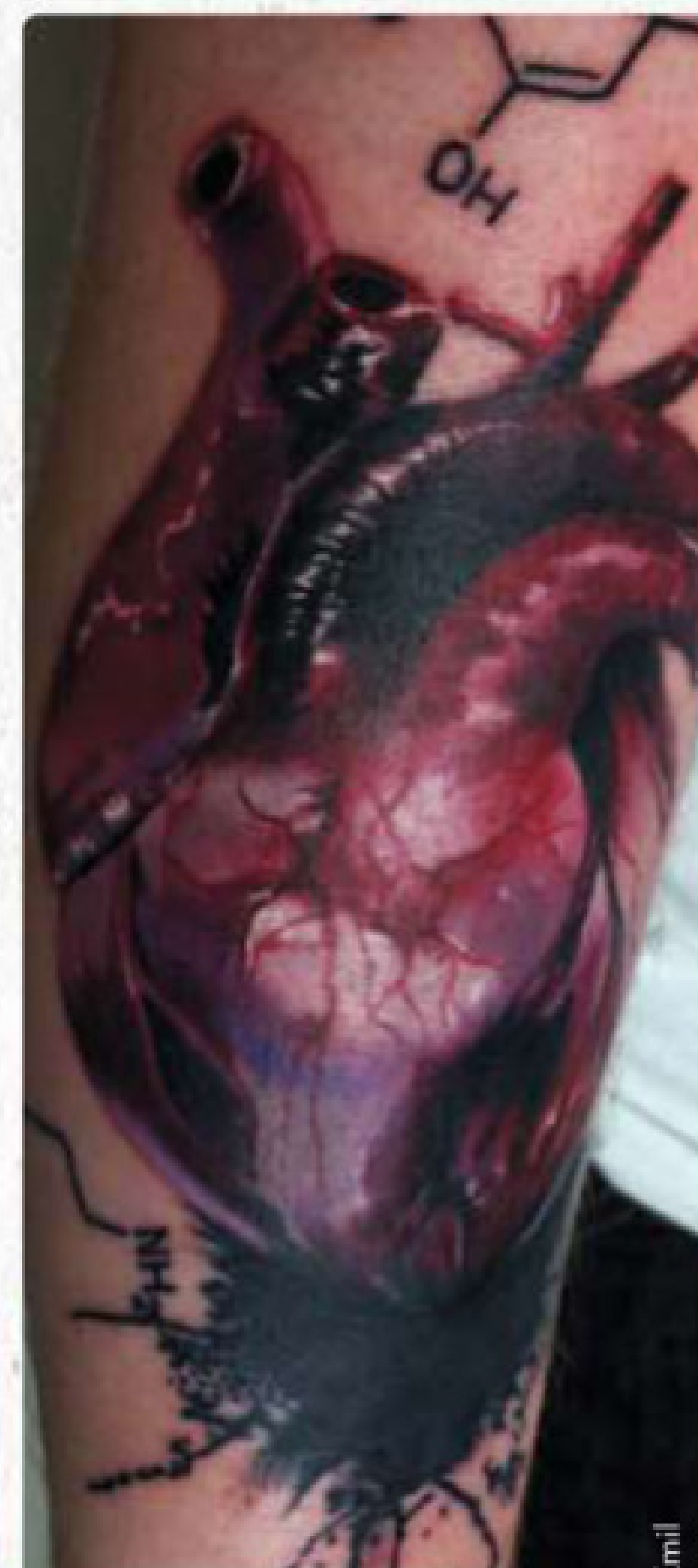


Vlad



Marie

I'M NOT GOING TO DO SOMETHING FOR THE SAKE OF A PHOTO, THAT YOU'D PUT IN AND TAKE OUT WITHIN MINUTES



THE SHARPER IMAGE

Old London Road also embraces body piercing and modification, with a dedicated piercing room and two piercers - Emma and Vesper. "I've been in the industry quite a long time and I've always been a bit dissatisfied with studios not really understanding how integral body piercing is to the tattoo industry," says Emma. "Because it really is."

For Emma, body modding can - and should - be as considered, artistic and permanent as getting inked. "I get people coming in for consultations and we're sitting down, taking pictures of their ears or whatever part of the body, we're drawing over the bits they want to work on and we're coming up with elaborate projects."

"The key thing for me, and I say this to all my clients, is that I'm not going to do something for the sake of a photo, that you'd put in and take out within minutes.



We want to do something that's going to be on you in thirty years' time, or up until you pop your clogs! I don't want projects that only look amazing for a few months. It's really fun and inspiring, because everyone's anatomy is so different!"

Vesper agrees. "We modify our bodies for so many different reasons and I'm just a guide to help the client realise their vision in a safe, professional and gentle environment. I truly enjoy any piercing or modification that helps the wearer to accentuate their own natural beauty and that successfully provides them with their ideal vision of themselves."

Just like the tattoo artists

working next door, Vesper's work is "customer service centric, very intuitive and sensitive, so I'm always experimenting to find new ways of doing things that will make the piercing experience itself more organic and personal." Successful piercings can offer a sense of joy and accomplishment, she says; that's the real - and not always celebrated - beauty of them.

"There is nothing like really connecting with a client and seeing the look on a their face after you've done a procedure, when they realise they've accomplished something positive for themselves. I tend to get a lot of hugs and happy tears and it's like sunshine for the soul." 🐾

FRESH BLOOD

Since our visit Old London Road has added more artists to the team in the form of Luna Sangre (neo trad/realism), Lauren Sigrún and Daniel Nowak (both realism). See their website for more!

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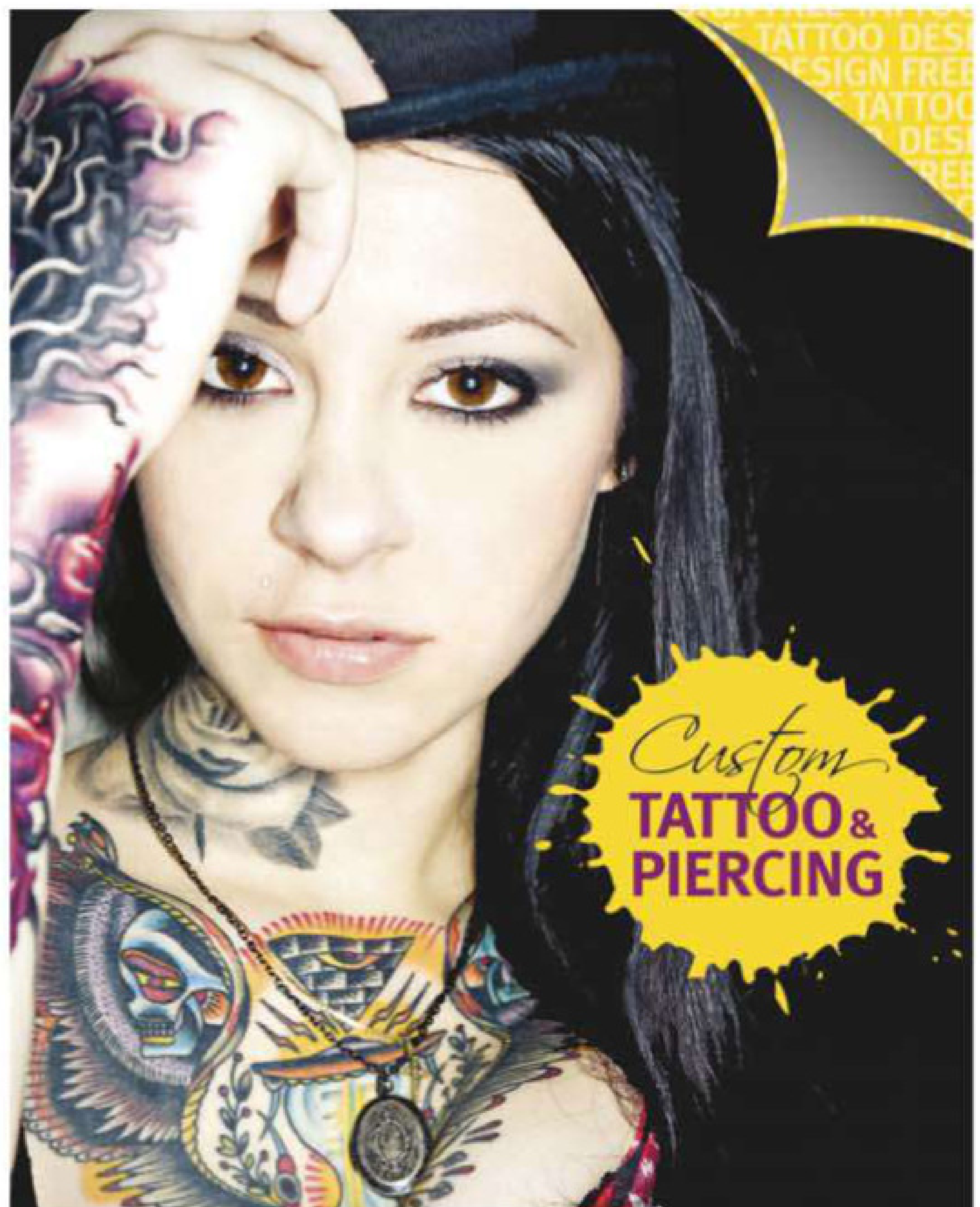
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RICHMOND TATTOO ARTS FESTIVAL

Every November, the city of Richmond, Virginia hosts the annual Tattoo Arts Festival. For the last three years, two Richmond Natives who are now based out of Salt Lake City, Utah produced the event: Flaco Production's C.J. Starkey and tattoo artist Nate Drew, owner of Lost Art Tattoo.



ALL THESE LITTLE CHURCHES, SHOPS, PUBS, RESTAURANTS, ALL THE PARTY LIFE AND FOOD SURROUNDED BY HISTORICAL BUILDINGS AND STUNNING ARCHITECTURE— FOR THESE ON THEIR OWN IT'S WORTH PAYING BARCELONA A VISIT.

Artists began arriving in town mid week to get settled in for the weekend's convention held at the Richmond Convention Center. Old friends were reunited and new friends were made as everyone gathered for various eating and drinking events around town before the 12 noon check-in on Friday, November 21st.

Friday at 3pm the doors opened and eager patrons set off to see what talent was loaded throughout the aisles of the convention. Artists from around the country

came to attend this historic convention, previously produced by the late great Billy Eason.

It's always great running into familiar faces of the industry, including tattoo legend Doc Dog of the world famous Las Vegas Tattoo Company, the first tattoo shop opened in Las Vegas back in 1977 by Doc Dog and his partner at the time Smilin' Paul.

From the opposite end of the convention showroom floor I spotted the iconic white wizard beard of another tattoo legend Mike Skiver, curator of the

AS THE CROWDS Poured INTO THE CONVENTION CENTRE EACH DAY, APPRECIATION FOR THE TRADE WAS A PROUD THING TO WITNESS

Personal Art Tattoo Museum. After chatting a moment with Mike I started photographing some artists at work throughout the convention room.

Artists of every specialty were in attendance, from traditional, realistic, black and grey, to vibrantly coloured illustrative 🎨



Jesse Tseronis



Daniel Farren



Daniel Farren



Charles Berger



Shaun Carroll



Skin Deep Magazine Issue 246





Chris Toler



Sean Karn



Nelson Arias



Peter Lamos



Dmitry Vision



Jon Adams



Bryan Arlen



FROM THE OPPOSITE END OF THE CONVENTION SHOWROOM FLOOR I SPOTTED THE ICONIC WHITE WIZARD BEARD MIKE SKIVER, CURATOR OF THE PERSONAL ART TATTOO MUSEUM

pieces and portraiture that you wouldn't believe. At the end of each day, the tattoo contests were held. Tattoo of the day, went to a tattoo completed that day or over the weekend, best back piece, best sleeve etc. During these contests I was able to pull aside select people to get crisp photos of their tattoo work including Denver's own William Thidemann of Mammoth

American Tattoo, Kenny Brown of Jack Brown's tattoo Revival in Fredericksburg Virginia, Richmond native Jason Stephan of Loose Screw Tattoo, and Brad Mariachi of Lost Art tattoo to name a few.

As the crowds poured into the convention centre each day, appreciation for the trade was a proud thing to witness, Tattoo enthusiasts waited to get work for a pre-booked appointment with an artist they may only get to see once a year. I witnessed tattooer Matt Mays also of Mammoth American Tattoo add some new work to a long time customer who happens to live in Richmond.

Paintings, and art of all kinds were also on display, from tattoo flash and t-shirts to elaborate oil paintings or the taxidermy art of Richmond locals "Rest in Pieces". There was "Built of Tradition" by Tattooer Jeromey "Tilt" McCulloch, a display of 100 back piece designs that are 15x20 water colour paintings. The paintings were also recently published as an 11x14 limited edition bound book. I saw live portrait artists drawing zombie portraits of patrons on the spot and a new but frequently seen booth of tattoo

removal services offered options for those wanting to erase past mistakes or lighten them enough to get new work over them.

Saturday was the most active, people filed in from the moment the doors open at noon till the end of the last contest around 10:30 when the floor was starting to close. As I packed my camera gear up for the day I could still hear the distinct buzz of tattoo machines as a select few old school artists were allowed to finish their tattoos of the day.

Being surrounded by such high levels of artistry, always leaves me awed and inspired to create as well. Capturing these moments for the artists and the world keeps me motivated as well and stoked to be a part of the scene I have grown up around since I was a young teen.

The late night brought, various after parties, food expeditions and select private get togethers that happen or start at the hotel adjacent to the convention centre. Plans for the next upcoming convention or well needed vacations were overheard as I braved the cold to let my good friends take a smoke break.

Another familiar sight, the 🍁



Jason Stephan and Jessie Smith



Dmitry Vision



Jason Stephan and Jessie Smith



Nelson Arias



BEING SURROUNDED BY SUCH HIGH LEVELS OF ARTISTRY, ALWAYS LEAVES ME AWED AND INSPIRED TO CREATE AS WELL

infamous "Cool Bus", a small yellow school bus owned by the convention crew was used to transport people back and forth from the hotel to various social spots around town for free. The S and H in the word school is spray painted out on the actual bus exterior to leave the words "Cool Bus", displayed to all those who should wonder.

Sunday was a hard one to wake up to, the final day of the

convention and the exclamation point to a weekend of socialising and creativity. The day seemed to fly by as once again the crowds appeared at noon and with only a few hours of sleep everyone was back at it producing amazing work for their clients. Roses on necks, blue horned skulls, a portrait of Jimi Hendrix and two children sharing an innocent kiss were amongst the pieces I photographed throughout the day.

Then suddenly after one last round of tattoo contests, it was time for it to end. The banners, art and tattoo ink were packed away one last time as the floor crew waited to begin final clean up

and breakdown. It's hard to pack up when you see familiar faces walking out of the back entrances and you don't want to miss a chance to say bye until next time. Somehow everything was loaded and I still got to hang out with a few social diehards who always bring entertaining conversation.

Richmond's Tattoo Arts Festival has a strong feeling of family that seems to grow stronger every year, the crew runs like a machine and every artist, including me, is treated with the respect they deserve. I started looking forward to the 23rd annual convention the moment I left my friends on that last Sunday night. 🐾

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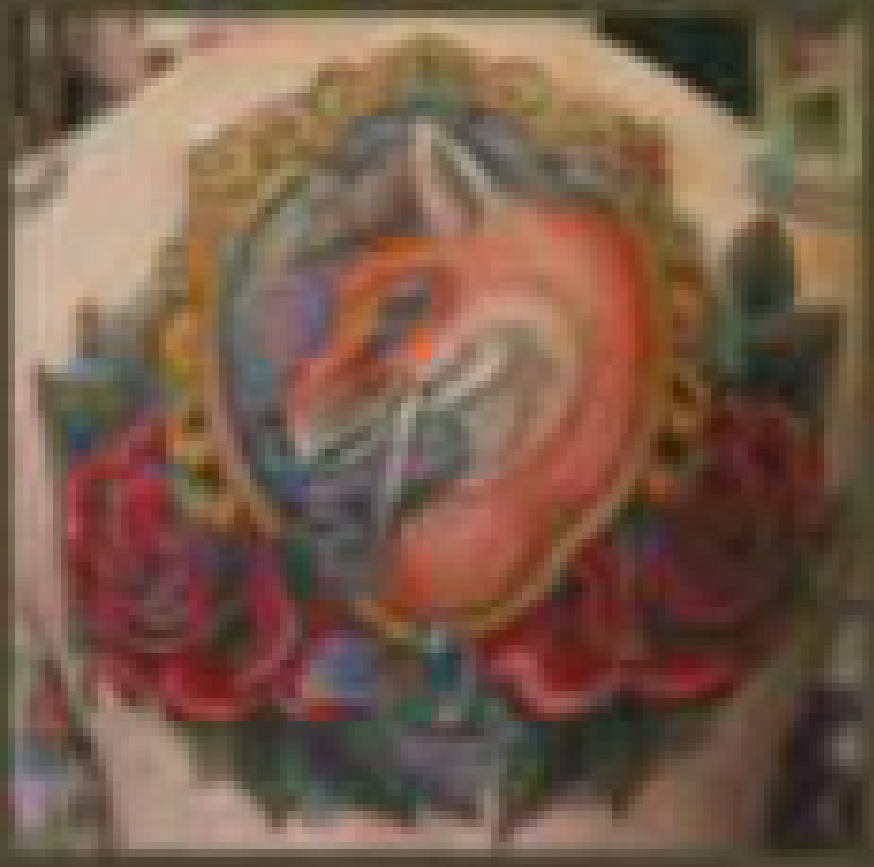
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Full details can be found on the website along with examples of the artists' work.

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I am looking for an apprenticeship in a tattoo studio in the Liverpool area, I own my own tattoo kit. Very hard working and confident can work well with others and individually, passionate about art. I have a strong drawn portfolio I am willing to travel please contact Callum on 07827853132

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Reviews

LET'S CRANK UP THE ACTION AROUND HERE. IF YOU'VE RUN OUT OF CULTURE AND ARE DESPERATE TO IMPRESS A FUTURE MATING PARTNER WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS, YOU'RE SHIT OUT OF LUCK HERE - BUT WHILE YOU'RE SITTING HOME ALONE WITH YOUR CAT AND COUNTING YOUR POKEMON CARDS, YOU CAN AT LEAST SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THESE WONDERFUL THINGS:

THE ART OF PIN-UP

TASCHEN £135

Pin-ups are a popular subject matter when it comes to tattooing, if I have a gripe about that, it's that we keep seeing the same pin-up time after time. It's not a huge love interest of mine, but even an outsider could venture a guess at exactly how much differing material there is out there - and having lived with this book for six weeks, this outsider has learned that the tip of the iceberg is not even being licked. Which leaves me thinking that a lot of the pin-up tattoos we see are tattoos of tattoos with no reference made to the source material at all.

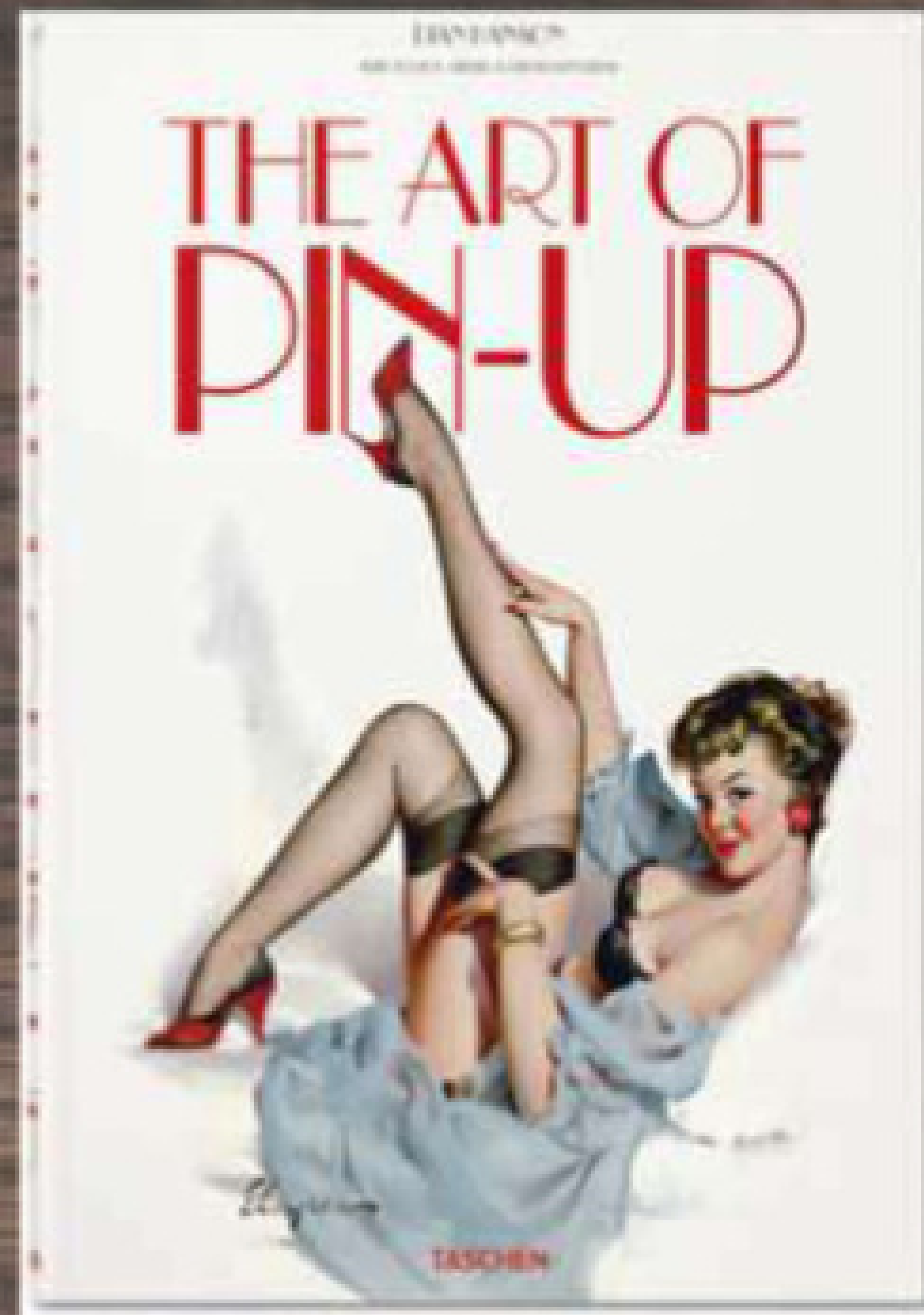
So, if you happen to be in the market for making a name for yourself in an oddly untapped niche, *The Art Of Pin-Up* is exactly what you need. There's some stunning work in here by artists whose names are not used often enough in the tattooing community. Artists such as Zoe Mozert, Bill Medcalf and George Petty IV form a backbone of much worth but for my money, Alberto Vargas has the game sewn up from inside to out.

Such a work of serious art is this book that even a casual observer would get some outrageous mileage out of it - but then, this is what Taschen do best. The repro of the images is damn near perfect - to the point that you could even navigate your way around the brush stroke but more than anything, taken as a whole, it will draw you into a fascinating world that is far, far from any tacky reputation you think it may have.

Throw in that the book itself is a talking point. It's big at 15 and a half inches high, it's clothbound and it's 546 pages thick - and you should have the last definitive word on the subject. Authored by Dian Hanson, Sarahjane Blum and Louis Meisel, you'll be hard pressed to find anything more authoritative than this if you're a fan.

Then again, if you're a fan, you knew all of that already, right?

MR SMITH



THE COMPLETE LITTLE NEMO

ALEXANDER BRAUN

TASCHEN £135

...and if I considered that book to be big, Taschen hit me with a curveball with this one. Weighing in at 708 pages, *The Complete Little Nemo* is even bigger.

My guess is that nobody - absolutely nobody at all reading this - will have heard of *Little Nemo*, not unless you're a seriously hardcore comic collector and even then, it's not guaranteed.

What we have here is a comic strip - *Little Nemo in Slumberland* - created by Winsor McCay that mostly appeared in the pages of the *New York Herald* from 1905 to 1926 (there's 21 great reasons never to have heard of it right there), and had a huge following. It's certainly a sign of the times with regards to its subject matter - but more than this, it's gorgeously deep - deep enough to drown in. It's packed with psychology, fear, truth and consequences and once you've read a few of the (549) strips you can begin to see how it would have an effect on the people that came up after it - artists like Robert Crumb, Spiegelman and Fellini.

It's pretty hard going in places (and that's saying something coming from somebody who can chew weird shit up for months on end) and totally deserves its place as a weekly strip. Attempting to read it like a book - all at once - is



perhaps only for the brave or the foolish. As a piece of comic book history however, it holds just as important a place as anything that ever came out of the Marvel or DC stable... and its influence on both of those companies is as plain as the nose on your face if you've ever collected some of the experimental titles from those publishers. Most of all, what it brings to light is exactly what can be accomplished when you take the gloves off - and that is actually truly frightening.

Its value for the tattoo artist or the art lover is beyond question. If you think you've reached the limit of what you can create or are on the hunt for new ways in which to express yourself, you could mine *Little Nemo* from now until the end of time and never run out of ideas - and for that, if nothing else, it's pretty damn priceless.

Besides, you have to love a comic strip in which the main character is woken up from his adventure at the end of every single episode.

MR SMITH





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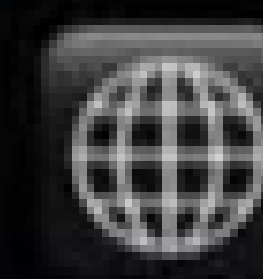


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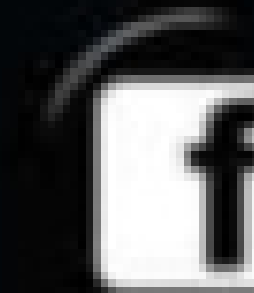


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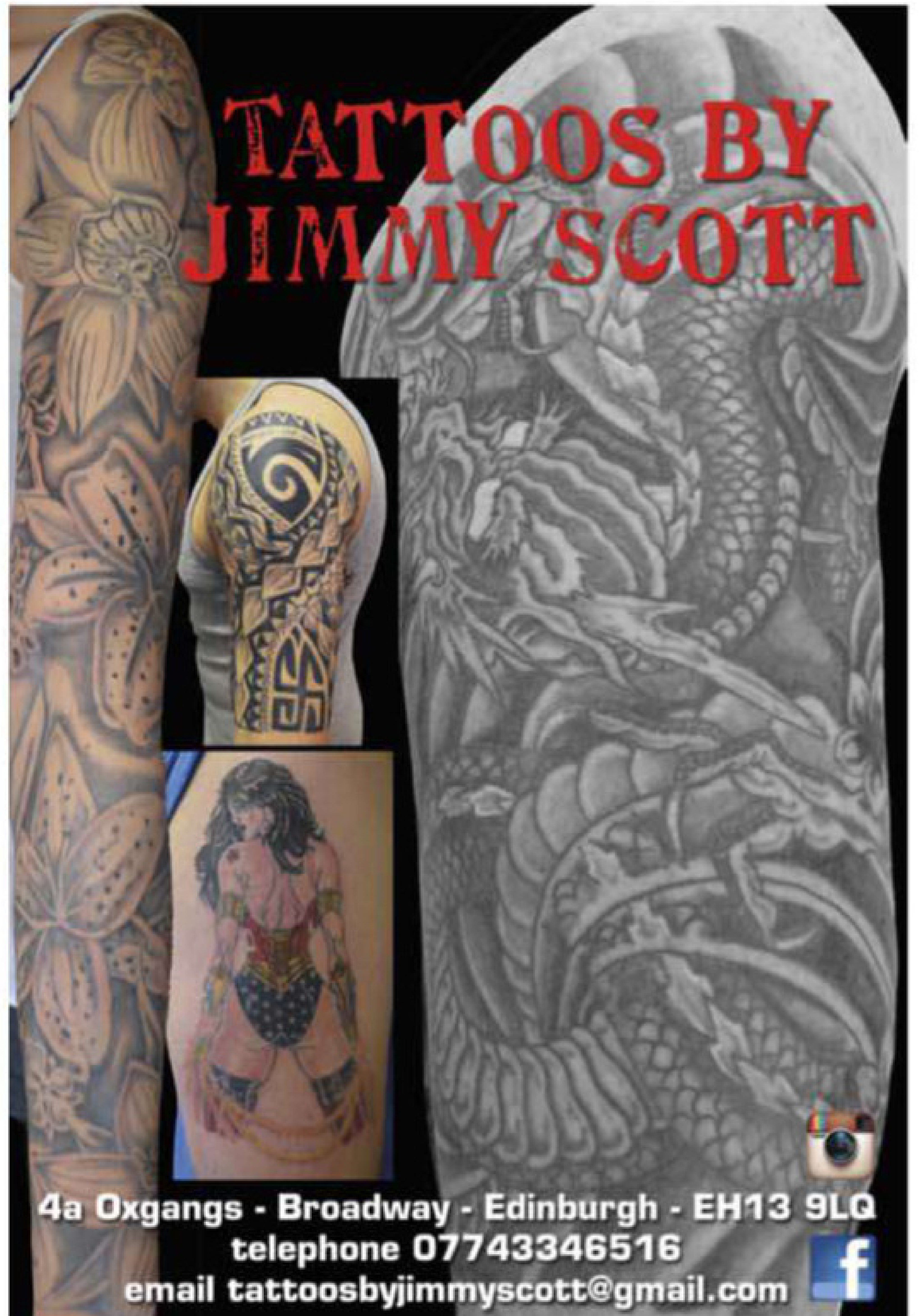
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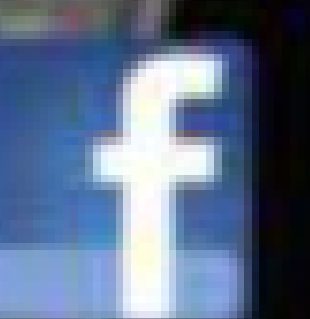
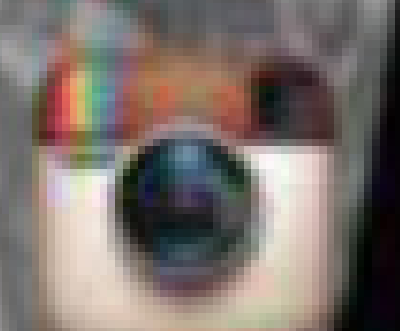
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The Time Machine

WAYNE JOYCE

This issue, I thought I'd give some tips on how to get the best results from lasering with regards to your actual health and not just a tech talk.

It may sound obvious but it's always good to repeat information when it comes to lasering - the better shape your health is in, the better the results. Looking after your insides results in a far better skin condition and with all the health talk at this time of the year, it's a good time to start.

It's all about your immune system and your circulation. These are the two things that affect the healing and outcome from laser treatments. Boosting your intake of vitamins and anti oxidants in the period following lasering, will result in a better skin condition and overall health. Eating more fruit and veg is an obvious way to get what your body needs and the skin essentially thrives when fed with natural versions but if that's never going to happen for you, tablet forms can work just as well.

The more vitamin C you can absorb, the quicker your skin will regenerate because it contains the building blocks for collagen. That doesn't mean you need to go on a diet of water and lemon juice - adding it to a healthy eating regime will give you the best intake alongside other essential and needed minerals. So, more citrus fruits, nuts, berries and worth paying attention to are blackberries - they're a real winner as they contain loads of anti oxidants too. Anti oxidants are widely regarded as skin guardians and help the skin regenerate at a much faster pace. Good sources for these can be found on any decent nutritional web page or health supplement. Zinc is also key for a healthy immune system. Like Popeye showed

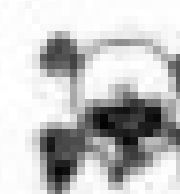
us, spinach is a boss super food and is packed with all kinds of goodness, especially in its raw form.

Alongside of this, your circulation is very important from an every day aspect of health and healthy skin. Obviously we all know how bad smoking is for us, how detrimental it is to our health and it can be one of the biggest factors to circulation reduction. I read an article on how smokers tend to need more sessions than non smokers to get their desired results and I can vouch from my own experience how true that is, (me too, Ed.). Noticing the results my non smoking clients get, leaves me pondering

how long it's going to take me to wake the hell up and stop ploughing my internal avenues with asphalt.

Preventing problems before they arise is always a better option for your skin. Being pragmatic puts this into perspective. We all want to look younger for longer and keeping that in the back of your mind will help you persevere towards a healthier external organ. With your skin being the largest organ your body has, it makes sense to help it out as much as you can. It's a very intelligent organ that's for sure, but it can also be very lazy, so giving it a kick in the pants with a health boost will pay off big time.

I haven't gone into too much depth about which foods you should eat and that's because we're all different. If you are unsure about what supplements you should be taking or what foods you should eat to get your skin healthy, please seek advice from a nutritionist or your GP.

As always - if you have further questions or want to discuss something, you can email me here: wayne@resetroom.co.uk 



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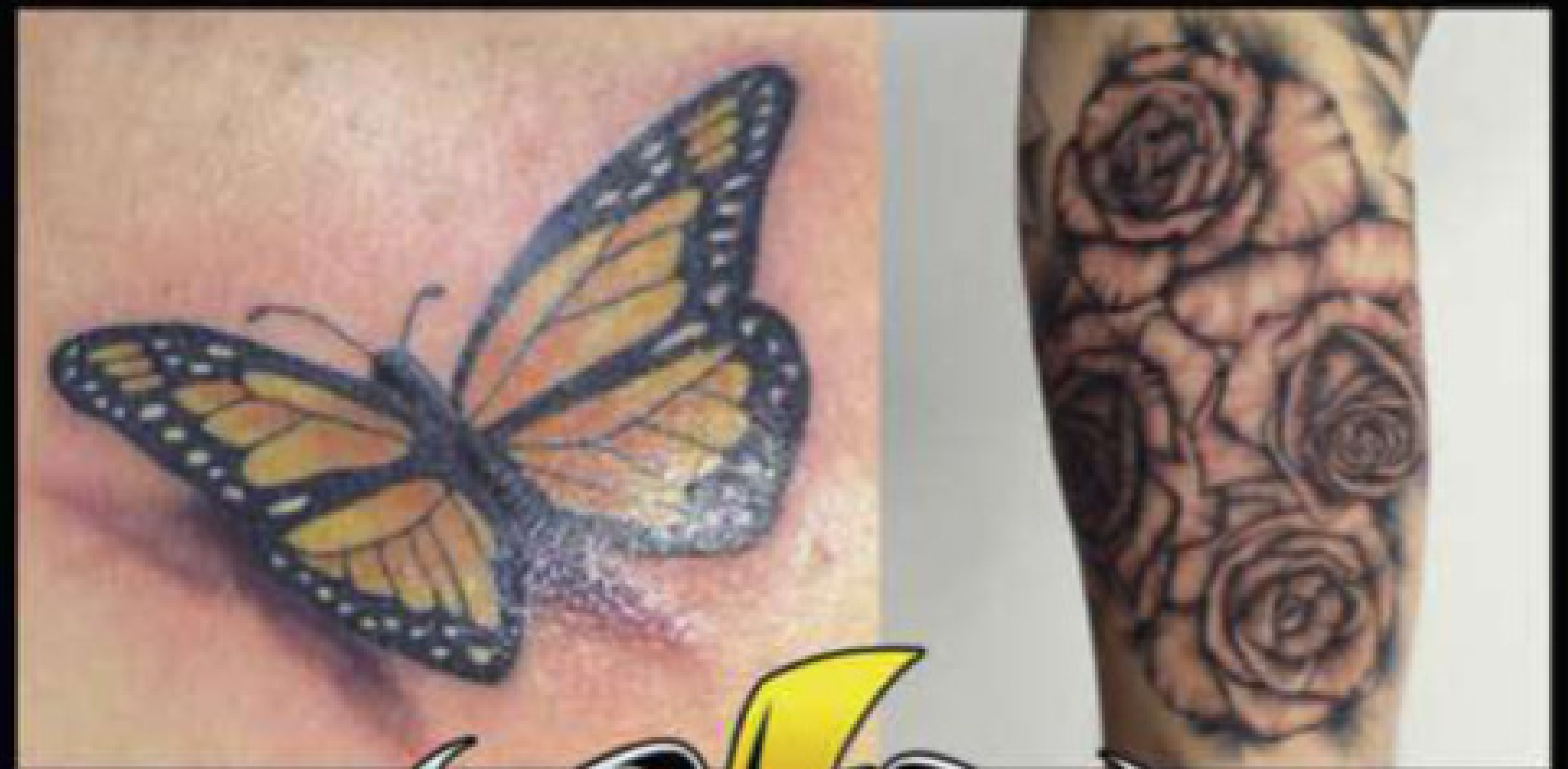


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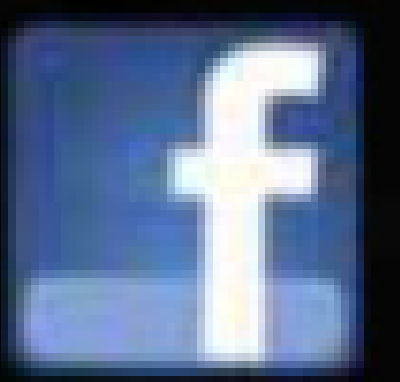


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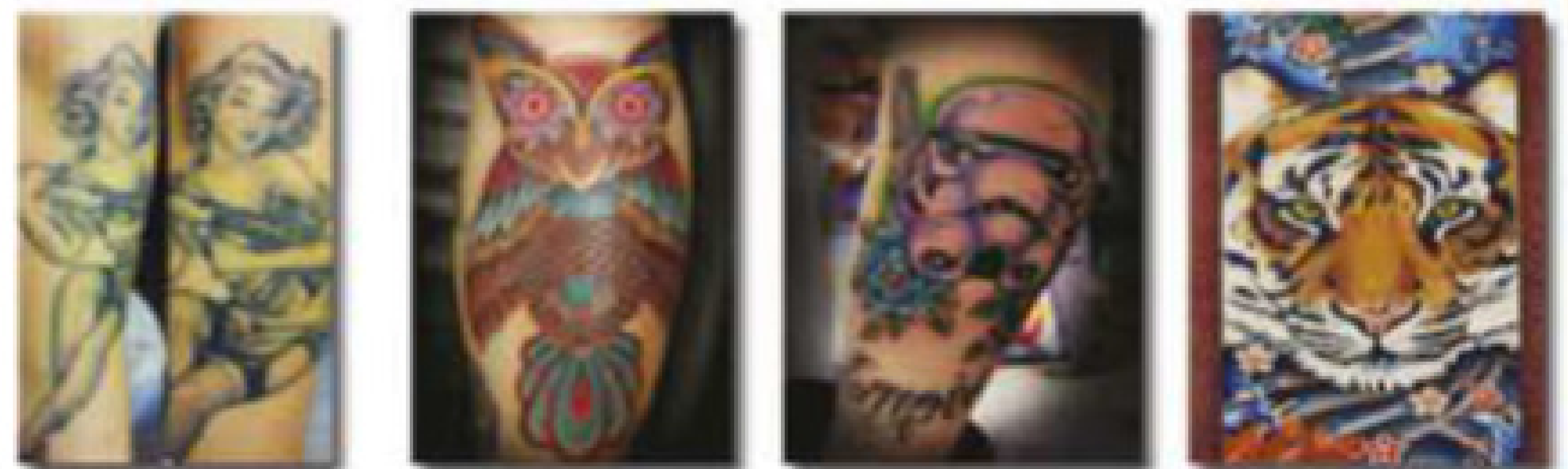


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Soapbox

CRAIGY LEE

📍 Craigy Lee 📍 Ash Springle

Getting the creative juices flowing and having constant inspiration is a problem most artists face on a weekly basis. When you have to be creative every single day for work - even on days when you're sick, tired or simply just feeling a bit down - is pretty hard.

When I was constantly travelling I found it pretty easy. New cities, new surroundings and environments seemed to do the trick in getting me motivated. Now however, I'm settled down and working five days a week in one shop, in one city, in one tiny country - I face the same daily routine as most other artists around the world.

So here are a few things I find very helpful in keeping my creative juices flowing:

Visit museums and art galleries. Get inspired by other artists, by history and the amazing ornate buildings that house them. People have been creating art since forever, so go and admire some of the old masters in the flesh. Most are free, so arrange a day off and take a trip together with the other artists in your studio, it will be a fun day out.

Have guest artists come and work at your studio. It's great to have a new vibe come into your workspace. The dynamics in the studio change with a new personality, you can talk about techniques and how you each do different things. Don't be afraid, talk learn and share. Working with a new artist - even for a short time - always motivates me to try something new or just simply to pull my finger out and draw or paint more.

Get out to tattoo conventions! You know the old saying "a change is as good as a rest", well working in a new environment is both exciting and challenging, plus you'll get to meet lots of awesome like minded people. Even if you aren't a fan of working them, just go anyway, walk around, take it all in, watch some other artists working, check out their artwork and absorb it to take it back to work with you.



Seeing all the new talent out there always makes me want to up my game or simply try something new. Lots of the bigger shows around the country have amazing national and international artists working at them. It's a rare chance to watch some of the best artists all in one place. It may also be the chance you get to meet that overseas artist you have been admiring online for a long time. So don't be shy, get over there and ask them some questions. Try and learn how they get their grey shading so smooth, or their colours so vibrant. If you're friendly and polite, you'll be surprised that most will be more than happy to chat with you and maybe share a secret or two about how they tattoo.

Also on a final note Tattoo Jam is possibly the only convention in the world that has free seminars for artists on the Friday of the show. This is an awesome opportunity to sit down and listen to the ins and outs of some of the best artists in the business. In Australia, Boog's script seminar was \$150, at Tattoo Jam it was free for all artists, so don't be a chump, there's always something you can learn!

Got a burning issue or topic you want me to talk about? Want to get your voice heard? Well don't just sit there do something about it Drop me a line craigylee@skindeep.co.uk and find me on instagram @craigy_lee

**Editor's note: We also host free seminars at the Great British Tattoo Show - just drop us a line if you want to know more. 🐶*

An Eye is upon you

READ MY BODY

When I was 17 I wore nothing but pink for a whole year. From my spray painted DM boots to the hairs on my head, I displayed every rosy hue, fuchsia, cerise, salmon, powder, baby and hot, everything was all, and only pink.



Pam Van-Damned

I followed this self imposed rule so faithfully and with such commitment and fervour, that even now, 21 years on, some folk still refer to me as 'Pink Paula'. Back then, in my pink era, I embodied the forthright certainty that comes with being young. I knew who I was, where I was going, I was authentic, individual. I certainly didn't need 'old' women approaching me at gigs to tell me who they had once been pink-haired wild-teens too, I just couldn't imagine it, and I didn't really care anyway. They were killing my buzz.

Flash forward a couple of decades and I'm standing at the back of a gig, exercising the verbal equivalent of sitting on one's own hands, desperately trying not to accost young women to deliver the unwanted news that I had once looked just as they do now.

The pink hair is long gone, I've been back at the subtle end of the ginger spectrum for many years and I'm no longer compelled to wear Doctor Marten boots everyday for fear of losing my alternative community credentials. Still, the nineties are reportedly back and I can't help but think about how much I've changed, and how little I've altered.

Our past selves, like history proper, are subject to revision in the present. New sources, in depth study or even happy accidents can help us better understand what went before, but revisionism is not always motivated by truth, especially when it comes to personal narratives.

When we look back at ourselves, we unconsciously edit the memories that do not flatter us. It may seem inconsequential that people my age show off our old Nirvana records whilst neglecting to talk about the bands that seem so unfashionable now, Carter USM, Senseless Things, Ned's Atomic Dustbin - but when the faked-forgetfulness becomes collective and British music anthologies jump straight from to Madchester to Britpop, we're caught in a cultural lie. If we can conveniently convince ourselves that something slightly embarrassing didn't happen, are we exercising the relevant cerebral muscles until we are able to forget all uncomfortable truths?

The relative wisdom my of greater years has made it clear that my 17 year old self did not know everything and while I'd really rather pretend that bratty, pink haired me had never existed, I also get a kind of pleasurable pain from forcing myself to acknowledge her.

I didn't get my first tattoo until I was 21, so despite my misguided resolve I must've been at least subconsciously aware that I had not yet become fully formed. Instead, my first forays into tattoo studios were in search of a different kind of needle, body piercing didn't feel like a one way street, so for several years that was my focus. Yet many of my friends did get their first permanent marks back then, black armbands, Black Flag logos, black tribal (indefinably but somehow radically different from what we now term 'blackwork'), I must've been

protected by my bubble of pink.

Our earliest tattoos were once a permanent reminder of the selves we might otherwise wish to forget but now those mementos can be lasered off we can choose to forget. This is undoubtedly a wonderful thing for the minority of tattoo owners whose tattoos pull them backwards to a past they desperately wish to leave behind, but might we have made decisions with even less foresight if laser had already been an option? Is this what is happening now? That's not to say that young people have only recently begun to have their poor choices erased, a older friend of mine has four thin, pale scars on his forearms, traces of the tattoos he had cut out of his skin in the 1980s, but his experience was rare, and the procedure, brutal.

Now, tattoos are removed simply because another, better tattoo can go in it's place, but this is a living, growing, art form, and even the very best tattoos and tattooers of today will be eclipsed in 5, 10, 15 years. We're not lasering our tattoos to desperately forge new futures, we're looking for a more flattering personal history. We're allowing tattoos to become fashion accessories.

This week, rather than tell disinterested teens about my hair history, I went to a piercing shop and had three ancient, near-healed-over piercings stretched for new jewellery. Well, the nineties are back, Carter USM are playing again (their last gig, they swear) and my pink haired self never really went away. 🐼



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