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## REBEL, REBEL—YOU’VE TORN YOUR DRESS

got an email this week—today in fact—from a guy who told me he had great ink and maybe I would like to check out his inspiring video clip. This is not unusual—this kind of thing comes in from all over the world every single day of the week, but this one, I happened to click on. This is how I came to meet Christopher.

Good ink. Check. Professionally shot video. Check. Watching it with the sound muted, I actually got quite far into it before I figured out the point. Following a horrendous car crash, Christopher only has one arm. As time rolled by, people told him he couldn’t ride a bike anymore.

Christopher told the world to go fuck itself. He also practices mixed martial arts. For him, the opinion of the world can indeed go spin on a stick.

I won’t relate the whole story here because we’re working on something bigger behind the scenes together, but if you want to check it out for yourself, it’s here: [vimeo.com/m/34844377](https://vimeo.com/m/34844377)

You gotta love a fighter right? There are always ways to get things done if you think about it enough and are smart about it, but sometimes it takes something serious to shock us out of ourselves to be inclined

to do anything about it—which is just about the time that you wish you had done something about it before the serious thing happened.

Life can be such an ironic bitch.

I know for a fact that the story Chris told me is not unique to the world. Over the last few years, I’ve heard more than my share... but it got me thinking.

Not so long ago, the tattooed people of the world were viewed as the rebels.

### IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE TO REBEL IN THAT WAY ANYMORE AND HAVE ANYBODY PAY ATTENTION TO YOU?

Let me use Nikki Sixx as a good example here. He’s one of the few men in the world that I keep up with—mostly because he went to the edge, looked down, and came back again. But at one point in time, heavily tattooed when the rest of the world wasn’t and with an attitude that would worry a pack of lions, he was even the outsiders’ outsider.

Now, he has cleaned up his life, cleaned up his tattoos, got a great new band as well as his old band, writes books that are readable, hosts a radio show, and has so many side projects that are proactively

worked on, I figure he must sleep even less than me. Nikki has become one of the good guys who wear black—so where did all the rebels go? Is it even possible to rebel in that way anymore and have anybody pay attention to you? That is, after all, the whole point of rebellion, right?

Let me shine the spotlight in a few other directions for you. Behind the scenes here, we have discovered not one, but two men of the cloth (look it up) bearing much

ink—and I know they’re not the only ones. That right there. That’s tattoo-rebellion in 2015. Pastors, lawyers, teachers, doctors, politicians and surgeons... there’s great stories to be told here and I want to dig them up because we all know the reaction we get to our ink on a daily basis, but what happens when that ink turns up inside a niche of a niche?

How far have they gone with it? Does it tell secrets about them they don’t otherwise speak about? A priest with a full Japanese body suit under the robes? Please bring me

this man to talk to and I will take you both out for a meal that would shame the Gods.

#### POSTSCRIPT:

*I was going to write a whole editorial this month titled ‘I Am Charlie’ and make a valiant attempt at that whole ‘freedom of speech/political’ scenario, but I couldn’t do it. It’s too complicated and I haven’t got enough space. I actually got quite far into it before I decided that nobody wants to hear about it, not here anyway.*

*I can’t let it go that easily though. Is it enough to say we should all appreciate how freely we live, but never take it for granted? There’s a line in a My Chemical Romance song that runs: “Everybody wants to change the world, but no one wants to die”, and that is likely to be the sum total of my sentiment.*

*Be careful out there—whatever it is you’ve got going on in your head.*

*Sen*



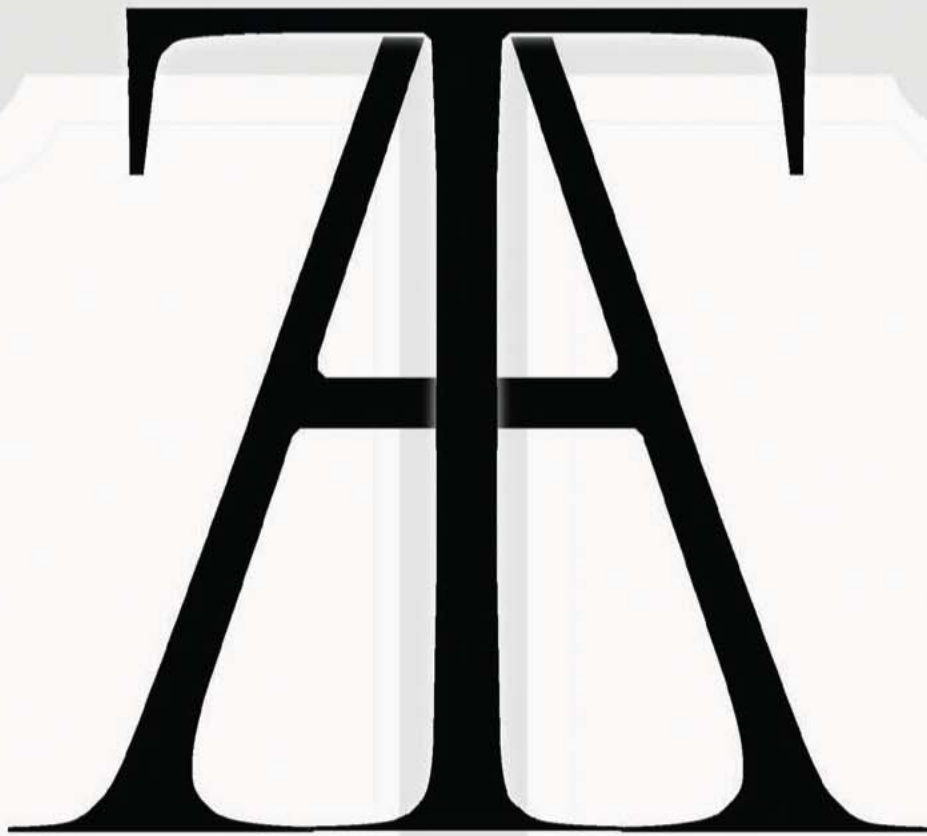
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**12 MONKEY PAW TATTOO**  
 What happened when a couple of rogue visual artists joined forces with tattooing? A tattoo of Hitler's dog, among others, that's what. Here's the story of an unusual collaboration...

**20 JOE JACKSON**  
 Hard rocking York outfit, The Bastard Sons, fronted by artist and studio owner, Joe 'JJ' Jackson, are about to embark on their first UK tour ahead of releasing a debut album. Seemed like a good excuse to catch up and talk music and tattoos...

**26 THE COVER GIRL: SIAN DAVIES**  
 The last time we graced the front cover with Sian Davies, it was with a bare back—so to speak. We had mail—lots of it asking to see it, so we saved up and boarded a train to the

land of the druids and came back with this.

**32 BACK IN THE DAY**  
 In this modern world there is nothing we consumers like better than 'ready made'. We're a quick fix generation that love our products ready to roll right off the shelf. Or do we?

**58 BERND MUSS**  
 Welcome to the land of diverse designs and illustrations—some jaws dropped around here we can tell you. Strap up.

**66 JIMMY HO**  
 To say that the opportunities to publish an interview with a Japanese legend are few and far between would be a huge understatement. So when this crack in the door appeared to spend time with Jimmy Ho, well... let's get it on.

**70 AMY SAVAGE**  
 Sometimes in the tattoo industry you are given the chance to watch an artist really blossom in their work, from a bud to a rose. Let's see how this rose is getting along.

**76 VON DUTCH**  
 Sometimes the 'truth' can be a wispy, insubstantial thing that dissolves under too much scrutiny...



## JIMMY HO

LEGENDS NEVER DIE

**82 GENTLE JAY**  
 Jay Blondel AKA Gentle Jay will forever be known as one of Ink Master's most outspoken and provocative contestants. After all, not many tattooers would have the balls to call out the judges for being wrong.

**86 TATTOO FREEZE**  
 At this, our first show of the year, as always, the biting cold made an appearance and as luck would have it, so did an excess of new talent.



## BASTARD SONS

JOE JACKSON: A TATTOOED ROCK ODYSSEY



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# Sleeve Notes

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

## LATE VACANCY

### THE FORCE IS STRONG...

Over in the city that never sleeps—that would be Cardiff—Chris Jones is looking for new artists to join him. The official Death Star line looks like this:

"We are looking for a couple of new artists to join us at Physical Graffiti in Cardiff. Must have a few years shop experience, a strong portfolio and not be a dick. Someone based in South Wales with an existing client base preferred. Email [chris@chrisjonestattoos.com](mailto:chris@chrisjonestattoos.com) with a link to your portfolio."

You know what to do.



### SHORT SLEEVES



### NEEDLEWORK

Surrey's Needlework Studio has just opened up a second location where artists, Dannii Tyler and Lucy Pidgeon, will be making their art at 25 Church Street, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1EL or call 01483 410000.

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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](mailto: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

## READING TATTOO SHOW

Dates for the Reading Show this year have been announced. They look like this:

Reading Tattoo Show  
28 June 2015, Rivermead  
Leisure Complex, Richfeild  
Avenue, Reading, RG1 8ER  
[readingtattooshow@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:readingtattooshow@hotmail.co.uk)  
[nolimitstattooing@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nolimitstattooing@hotmail.co.uk)  
01189 590700/ 01189 598616  
[www.readingtattooshow.co.uk](http://www.readingtattooshow.co.uk)

## THE MISFITS

Tattooist Tony Gallon and his partner, Shelley, are opening their new custom studio, Misfits Tattoo Collective, for discerning collectors, miscellaneous misfits and other odd fellows. The new studio is situated in the heart of the seaside town of Paignton, on the English Riviera. Drop by and check it out if you're in town.

1 Torbay Road, Paignton, TQ46AA, Devon  
[misfitstattoouk@gmail.com](mailto:misfitstattoouk@gmail.com)  
Tel: 07932 044694



## BREDA 2015

Another convention unleashes its dates for your calendar—this one will need a plane ride! The Needle Art Convention started in 1998 and is now the longest running tattoo event in The Netherlands. Good show. Get on it.

16th International Needle Art Convention  
16–17 May 2015  
Bress Sportcenter, Breda,  
The Netherlands  
[www.tattoo-beurs.com](http://www.tattoo-beurs.com)  
[info@tattoo-beurs.com](mailto:info@tattoo-beurs.com)

## TRIPLESIX HOODIE GIVEAWAY



Over at TripleSix, Bez sneaked a nice hoodie and beanie in the mail to us. Now that he's taken to dressing like Peter Pan every day (see last issue) maybe he doesn't need them anymore...

We however, tend to dress like the cast of *Cats* during the week, so we thought we'd give 'em away instead. We'll fish around for a winner by Feb 10 and have them to you by Valentine's Day if you win... because we love you and so does Bez.

Send an email with the subject line of '666' to [editor@skindeep.co.uk](mailto:editor@skindeep.co.uk) and get lucky.

## STICK AND POKE

Rather alarmingly, the *Lincolnshire Echo* ran a story this week (13 January) stating that: 'DIY tattoo kits are predicted to be one of 2015's most popular cosmetic trends'

The topic rears its ugly head every now and again around here, but it's nowhere near the state it was in a few of years ago. Sadly, instead of running a good story that got to grips with the issue, it instead chooses to host a Youtube clip of step-by-step instructions of how to do it—which when we looked had already been viewed 485,122 times, which to be fair is probably about 1,000 times the newspaper's circulation—gave a tip of how much you could get them for on eBay and brushed it all off at the end of the piece with a standard warning from the FDA (USA). Hopefully, it's just a writer looking



for a story where there is none but still... it's like doing a world tour about road safety and then somebody coming along and painting over zebra crossings.

# Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

## MILANO TATTOO CONVENTION

**6-8 February 2015**

Hotel Quark  
Via Lampedusa, 11/3  
20141 Milano,  
Italy  
[milanotattooconvention.it](http://milanotattooconvention.it)

## LYON TATTOO CONVENTION

**7-8 February 2015**

Mixed Doubles  
19 Avenue Gaston Berger,  
69100 Villeurbanne,  
France  
[lyontattooconvention.com](http://lyontattooconvention.com)

## TATTOO CONVENTION DRESDEN

**7-8 February 2015**

Eventwerk Dresden  
Hermann-Mende-Straße 1  
01099 Dresden,  
Germany  
[tattoo-convention-dresden.de](http://tattoo-convention-dresden.de)

## LAPLAND TATTOO WEEKEND

**13-14 February 2015**

Tornio City Hotel Oy  
Hallituskatu 15  
95400 Tornio  
Finland  
[laplandtattoo.com](http://laplandtattoo.com)

## BUDAPEST TATTOO CONVENTION

**14-15 February 2015**

Lurdy Ház  
Könyves Kálmán Avenue 12-14  
1097-Budapest,  
Hungary  
[budapesttattooconvention.com](http://budapesttattooconvention.com)

## NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL TATTOO & ART EXPO

**21-22 February 2015**

Claudlands Events Centre  
2 Brooklyn Road  
Claudlands, 3214,  
New Zealand  
[tattooart.co.nz](http://tattooart.co.nz)

## TATTOO MELTDOWN

**27-28 February 2015**

Folkets Hus Kulturhuset  
Kungsgatan 25  
461 30 Trollhättan,  
Sweden  
[tattoo-meltdown.com](http://tattoo-meltdown.com)



## TATTOOING IN KOREA

We don't hear a lot about South Korea in the news over here but 'sources' tell us (always wanted to say that phrase) tattoos are going mainstream...

The law, however, is lagging behind, leaving the growing number of tattoo artists vulnerable to prosecution on the whim of local authorities. Tattooing itself is not illegal in, but the law states that it can "only be carried out by a licensed medical doctor".

"So if you want to get a tattoo, you're supposed to go to a hospital? It's just absurd," said Jang Jun-Hyuk, the owner of Tattooism, a tattoo parlour in central Seoul.

Officials say the law is justified by health considerations, including the risk of hepatitis or HIV from improperly sterilised needles: "It's invasive. The skin is punctured and it bleeds. That's why we look at it as a medical procedure," said a spokeswoman from the Korea Medical Association. However the government appears to be considering change, commissioning a study in October on permitting legal tattoo parlours.

Meanwhile, tattoo artists continue to inhabit a professional world not dissimilar to sex workers; technically illegal but largely ignored by the authorities as long as they stay under the radar. Most Korean parlours, like Jang's Tattooism, are quite literally underground—basement studios with unmarked doors whose locations are spread by word-of-mouth.

After several years in Mexico, Jang returned and set up his first illicit tattoo studio in a faceless office building in Seoul. With no sign, and advertising not an option, he tried



to drum up customers by posting pictures of his work on the internet, along with a mobile phone number. "In the first three months, I probably got about ten customers. But it was a good time. There were only about ten parlours in Seoul, and we all knew and encouraged each other."

There's no real consensus on when attitudes began to change, but a pivotal moment in 2003 involved footballer, Ahn Jung-Hwan, a national hero following the South Korean team's World Cup heroics. After scoring in a match against Japan, Ahn peeled off his shirt to reveal a shoulder tattoo declaring his love for his wife. "He was a big name and that started things off," Jung said. "Suddenly there were all these other sportsmen, as well as movie stars and K-pop singers getting tattoos as well."

Business increased and the number of parlours mushroomed, but the legal issue remained: five years ago, Jung's parlour was targeted in a random raid and he ended up in court, where he was fined \$3,000 and given a one-year suspended jail sentence for violating public health codes.



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# Conventions

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## MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL TATTOO SHOW

**28 February–1 March 2015**

Manchester Central Convention Complex  
Windmill Street, Petersfield,  
Manchester M2 3GX,  
United Kingdom  
[manchestertattooshow.com](http://manchestertattooshow.com)

## MONDIAL DU TATOUAGE

**6–8 March 2015**

LA GRANDE HALLE DE LA VILLETTE  
211 Avenue Jean Jaurès  
75019 Paris  
France  
[mondialdutatouage.com](http://mondialdutatouage.com)

## EVERGREEN TATTOO INVITATIONAL

**6–8 March 2015**

Willamalane Center  
250 South 32nd Street  
Springfield, OR 97478,  
United States  
[evergreentattoo.com](http://evergreentattoo.com)

## ROTTERDAM TATTOO CONVENTION

**14–15 March 2015**

Ahoy Rotterdam  
Ahoyweg 10,  
3084 BA Rotterdam  
The Netherlands  
[unitedconventions.com](http://unitedconventions.com)

## THE GREAT BRITISH TATTOO SHOW

**23–24 May 2015**

Alexandra Palace  
Alexandra Palace Way  
London N22 7AY  
[greatbritishtattooshow.com](http://greatbritishtattooshow.com)

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## MAKING THINGS RIGHT

Over in Poland, there's a new project called Freedom Tattoos whose sole existence is to erase bad tattoos that are throwing bricks at your current life



The Freedom Tattoos project is handled on behalf of Pedagogium, The College of Social Sciences, by ISOBAR Poland who are a communication agency. The project's goal is to transform crude, hideous amateur tattoos made in prisons and juvenile detention centres into professional, socially well-perceived artistic tattoos.

Fixing up the mistakes of the past—and there are many across the whole of the world, not just in Poland—enables juvenile delinquents and ex-convicts to start all over again on their lives without a stigma to constantly remind them of the mistakes they made in the past.

The cover-ups as you would expect are done properly and totally eradicate any trace of past mistakes. The official line looks like this:

“If you have an old hideous or offensive tattoo from the times of your juvenile or criminal sentence and want to alter it by transforming it into a new one—contact us at [freedomtattoos@pedagogium.pl](mailto:freedomtattoos@pedagogium.pl). Your application should consist of: a) at least two photos of tattooed parts of your body; b) description of how, where and when the tattoo was made; c) description of your current

IF YOU HAVE AN OLD HIDEOUS OR OFFENSIVE  
TATTOO FROM THE TIMES OF YOUR JUVENILE OR  
CRIMINAL SENTENCE AND WANT TO ALTER IT BY  
TRANSFORMING IT INTO A NEW ONE - CONTACT US

life situation. If you are a tattoo artist or own a tattoo parlour and would like to participate in the project, contact us at [freedomtattoos@pedagogium.pl](mailto:freedomtattoos@pedagogium.pl). The participation of tattoo artists in the project is crucial—you have the talent, skills and equipment that can positively alter the lives of those in need.”

As you'd expect, they're trying to help out as many people as possible out there—if your reach stretches that far, you can find more information at: [tatuazewolnosci.pedagogium.pl](http://tatuazewolnosci.pedagogium.pl) and there's a good looking YouTube clip here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJWhe33EviU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJWhe33EviU)

It's an interesting train of thought that's for sure. Would a similar movement work here in the UK? Is there any need or would it simply be taken advantage of? Reader and artist thoughts on the idea are more than welcome as always.

**Pro.**  
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# WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

What happened when a couple of rogue visual artists joined forces with tattooing? A tattoo of Hitler's dog, among others, that's what. Here's the story of an unusual collaboration...



**MONKEY PAW TATTOO PARLOUR**

Web: [monkeypawtattoo parlour.com](http://monkeypawtattoo parlour.com)

Jake and Dinos Chapman, sometime dastardly duo of the British visual art scene, have an unusual portfolio.

It includes two sex dolls in the 69 position and many existing works (including watercolours attributed to Adolf Hitler) that the pair have 'enhanced', usually by painting, scrawling and scratching over the top.

So far, so much good, clean fun. But for their 'In the Realm of the Unmentionable' exhibition at the Jerwood Gallery in Hastings at the end of 2014, the brothers wanted to include some live tattooing of their original work at the opening. Step up, artist Michelle Taylor. After three-and-a-half years in the industry and with her new studio, Monkey Paw, barely a month old, she was chosen to act as tattooing consultant and artist for the event. Once the dust settled she told Skin Deep all about it, Hitler's dog and all...

**FIRST, LET'S TALK ABOUT MONKEY PAW. WHAT'S THE SETUP AND HOW'S IT ALL GOING?**

The shop is in an old stable yard—I'm in a former hay loft, and I have the original loading doors and winch in my pitched ceiling. It's a really beautiful, unusual building. I tried to create a comfortable, inclusive studio, where people can come, have a cup of tea and talk through their ideas. I have very little flash as I tend to draw up all the work I do. It's a slower, more personal way of working and it suits me and the customers I have. My particular style seems to be evolving into quite delicate work and I love using colour. My dragons and tigers seem to be in demand!

**SO HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH THE CHAPMAN BROTHERS?**

I saw that they were crowdfunding for the Jerwood show, which would include tattooing. I spoke with the gallery and was ultimately





asked to run the tattooing side of the event—liaising with environmental health, devising the cleaning procedures and running two tattooing sessions.

#### TELL US HOW IT WENT..

We wanted to tattoo as many people as we could, so I set up two tattooing stations and had three good friends helping me with all the set ups and break downs. The designs were decided in advance and we had carbons ready to go for each of them.

The day started slowly, with a couple of girls who were bunking off work for an hour turning up! The Chapmans came in at the very beginning of the day. Jake had his family with him; we had to point out to one of the daughters that she wasn't old enough for the tattoo of Hitler's dog, Blondie!

I tattooed from 11am 'til 3pm. It was non-stop, but working in a busy seaside studio previously

had taught me how to handle fast turnover walk-ins. My friends were brilliant, talking to the customers, choosing the designs with them and in some cases—such as Hitler's dog—making them aware of what they were getting. We only did one of those!

#### WAS IT AN UNUSUAL ENVIRONMENT TO WORK IN?

It was very strange tattooing with TV crews and photographers all around me. At one point Dinos came into the room, followed by an entourage of cameras—he was going to draw a tattoo onto Rollo Ros, a reporter from [news agency] Reuters and then I was going to tattoo it over the drawing. Rollo was incredibly nervous; it was his first tattoo and he had been thoroughly wound up by the Chapmans.

The weirdest bit was sitting down to do the tattoo and seeing all the cameras and 🌻

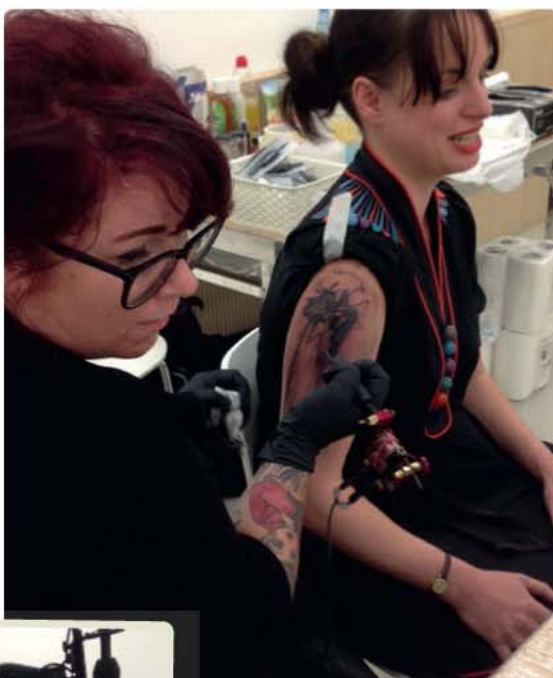
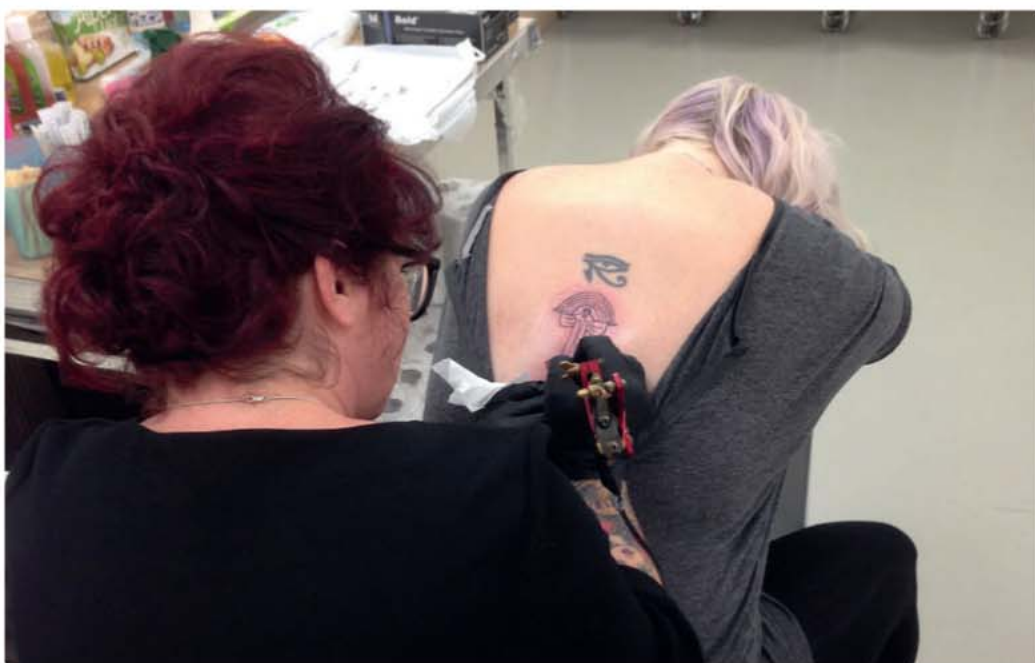
sound equipment swinging round towards me. I could feel people right behind me, leaning over and taking photographs.

**AND THEN YOU DID ANOTHER SHIFT IN THE EVENING AT A PRIVATE VIEWING OF THE EXHIBITION. WAS IT A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE?**

Yes, it was much more intense! The atmosphere was completely different—there was a lot of wine flowing and people were much more excitable. My team had to work hard at keeping people away from the tattooing area and calm while they were waiting.

During the evening, Dinos was in the tattoo room talking to the people who were waiting. He drew a little sketch there and then of a skull and crossbones for one guy... with a swastika on the forehead. We tattooed it on the guy's ankle, minus the swastika!

Jake popped in and out all night with various friends too, trying to get tattoos for them, asking if he could tattoo them and generally playing up to his mischievous reputation. He was told 'no' every time, but it became a running joke! By the end of the night I was in danger of having a sense of humour failure, though—I was knackered,



everyone else was partying, my back was hurting and I wanted some of the wine! Also, the tattoos were all taken from watercolours, so they needed concentration to replicate the actual designs; my eyes were hurting!

But it was great. I loved organising it and everyone was brilliant and fun to work with. I would definitely do it again. And at the end of the night I put a carbon of Hitler's dog onto Jake's daughter... so she got her tattoo.

**BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE, DO YOU THINK THIS CROSSOVER BETWEEN TATTOO ARTISTS AND THOSE WORKING IN OTHER MEDIUMS SHOULD HAPPEN MORE?**

I think it's already happening. Mo Coppoletta [of London's The Family Business studio] tattooed a Damien Hirst image for the cover of Gallery magazine, and a load of other artists were asked to design tattoos for the edition. There's more interest now in the other sides of tattoo artists—tattooing was traditionally a closed art form, but as it opens up, I think it's a natural avenue to explore for artists [from other mediums] who are interested in the longevity of work and the impact that art has on an individual. People are naturally protective of tattooing, as they should be, but I think that respectful collaborations can only move it forward as an art form. 🐾

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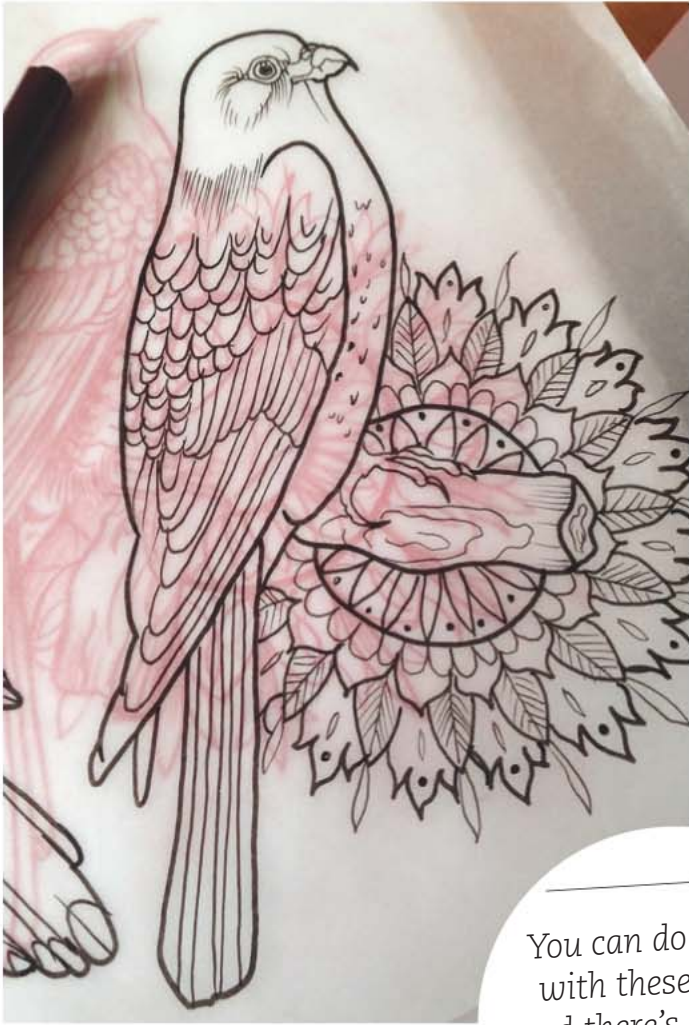


# BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Beynurs Tattoo Studio • beynurstattoos.co.uk • Tel: 01353 860552  
E: wellertattoos@aol.com • facebook.com/wellertattoos • Instagram: @wellertattoos

*This issue, we happened across Laura Weller, who is a couple of months away from finishing her apprenticeship down at Beynur's Tattoo Studio. With a selection of her work spread out across the desk here and drawing positive comments from those who passed by, it was time to commit her to print for all the world to see...*





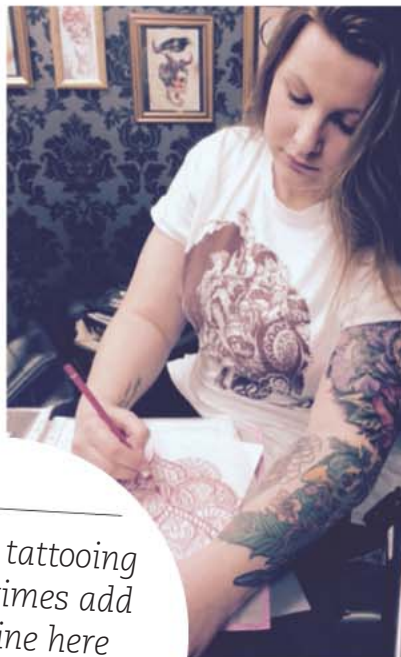
You can do so much with these designs and there's a lot I still would like to try and experiment with



"My parents always tell me I never went anywhere without a notepad and a pencil. I've always been artistic and loved drawing, I've done it through school, college, sixth form and also tried university. My favourite type of art was printmaking because it was such a risky type of art and you never knew how things would turn out. My tattoo story is a bit of a funny one if I'm honest. I always get asked 'what made you do this' or 'how did you become a tattoo artist'. I always find it hard to answer as I didn't actually know I wanted to be a tattoo artist.

"I knew I wanted to be an artist, but who would have known I'd be one! I was found by my boss, Beynur Kaptan, and his wife, Cindy, on Facebook. They came across some of my realistic artwork on there, then messaged me about an apprenticeship and how I felt about joining their team. At first I was unsure, as believe it or not I'm petrified of needles (but let's not go into that) and I only had one script tattoo. I was at university at the time, and I wasn't enjoying it at all. After Beynur and Cindy came to my rescue, I've never 🙌





*When I'm tattooing I do sometimes add the odd line here and there like little freehand details*

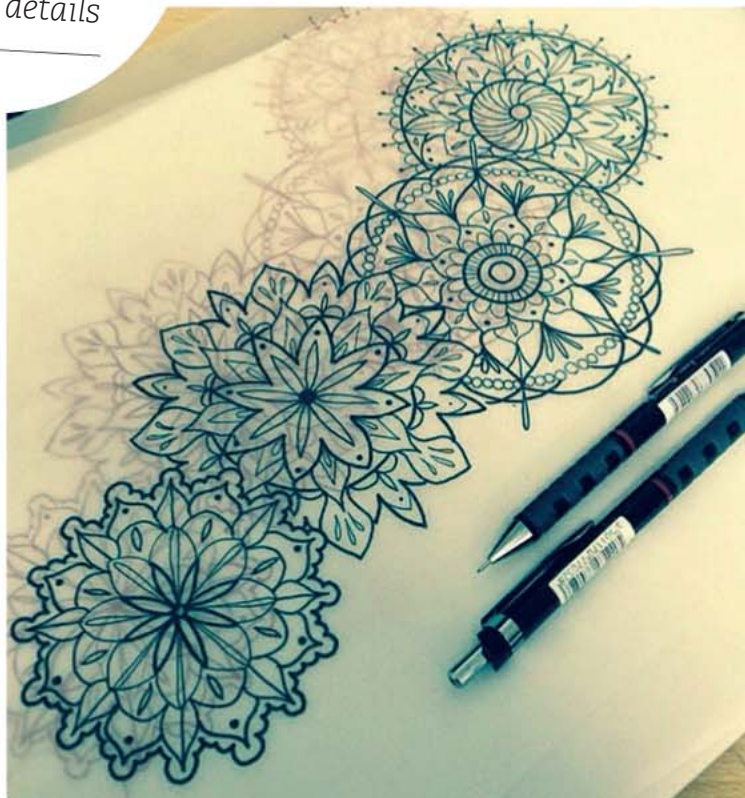


looked back. It was fate, I believe in the saying 'Everything happens for a reason', I love my job (you can't really call it a job). I'm actually angry at myself for never thinking I could be a tattoo artist!

"My designs tend to end up being very feminine, mostly because I really love pretty, detailed drawings/tattoos. I always put loads of little details in my drawings even if it's one dot. I never intended for them to be so girly, but it's just kind of happened that way! I do have two male geometric sleeves coming up and I am very excited to be more bold and big with my designs."

"When I first started tattooing I was very much into my realistic portraits of people and pets, I was actually unable to draw a perfect circle—honest! So I was very scared of doing a lot of outlines and I was relieved when I got to the shading part of my tattoos. I was so used to being sketchy rather than neat that I did find it hard to start with, but I got more confident with my outlines and have ended up enjoying outline work the most and cramming in as much detail as I possibly can! I would still like to go the extra mile with my details though, I still feel like there could be more, but it will come."

"This year is going to be a good year, I can feel it. I hopefully finish my apprenticeship at the end of March. Scary stuff! I feel like the past year and a half have gone past so quick! I'm looking forward to my first convention this year which is the Great British Tattoo Convention in May. I'm very, very nervous but I think it's going to be an amazing experience and I can't wait to work alongside some amazing artists." 🐾



Model: Becky Holt | Tattoo Artist: Marcus Tippets | Photographer: Rama Knight



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# BASTARD SONS

Hard rocking York outfit, The Bastard Sons, fronted by artist and studio owner, Joe 'JJ' Jackson, are about to embark on their first UK tour ahead of releasing a debut album. Seemed like a good excuse to catch up and talk music and tattoos...

 Russ Thorne  JJ/Bastard Sons



“WE ALL BROUGHT DIFFERENT INFLUENCES TO THE TABLE,” SAYS OLLY. “WE WEREN’T THINKING ‘LET’S JUST MESS ABOUT’”

little Facebooking they soon assembled a band. After a couple of lineup changes they arrived at their current incarnation and started jamming, which can be either enlightening or excruciating; why do they think it came together?

“We all brought different influences to the table,” said Oly. “We weren’t thinking ‘let’s just mess about’, we got in a room and didn’t know each other that well. So we got to know each other through playing music.”

“The music came first,” JJ adds. “And it turns out we all tolerate each other!”

This year (February 9) will see the launch of their debut album, which they’re in the process of recording at York’s Innerspace studios with Joe Graves and Mike Kingswood. It follows a couple of EPs, which acted almost as weather balloons to test audience reactions. “If people don’t like an EP it’s not 🙄

**T**he last time I sat down with JJ, his studio, York’s ‘Awake Arise’, was so new the plastic wrapping was still on. A few years down the line and it’s all going well, with the artist moving into black and grey realism alongside his signature new school style.

When we meet in the band’s rehearsal space, joined by some of his bandmates, it’s apparent that a willingness to adapt and be flexible has been part of the key to

both the studio’s, and the band’s, success. “When you’re establishing your business you kind of do everything—you start taking on new things and get better at them,” says JJ.

It was the same with The Bastard Sons, the thundering operation that JJ and friends are about to take on the road. JJ and guitarist, Oly, had been in bands for years, so when the former returned to York from uni it seemed natural to form a new group, and with a



**The Bastard Sons**

Rich Hardy: Drums  
 Ollie Dykes: Guitar  
 Alex Mcnair: Guitar  
 JJ Jackson: Vocals  
 Nath Wright: Bass  
 The band is touring throughout February—see [thebastardsons.co.uk](http://thebastardsons.co.uk) for full dates!



as heartbreaking as recording a full album and them not liking it," says JJ, "but luckily enough people have liked them!"

The EP also helped them develop and find their sound, saving them a lot of studio fiddling and time when it came to starting the album proper. Plus, as anyone who's ever heard a recording of themselves in any context will know, it's

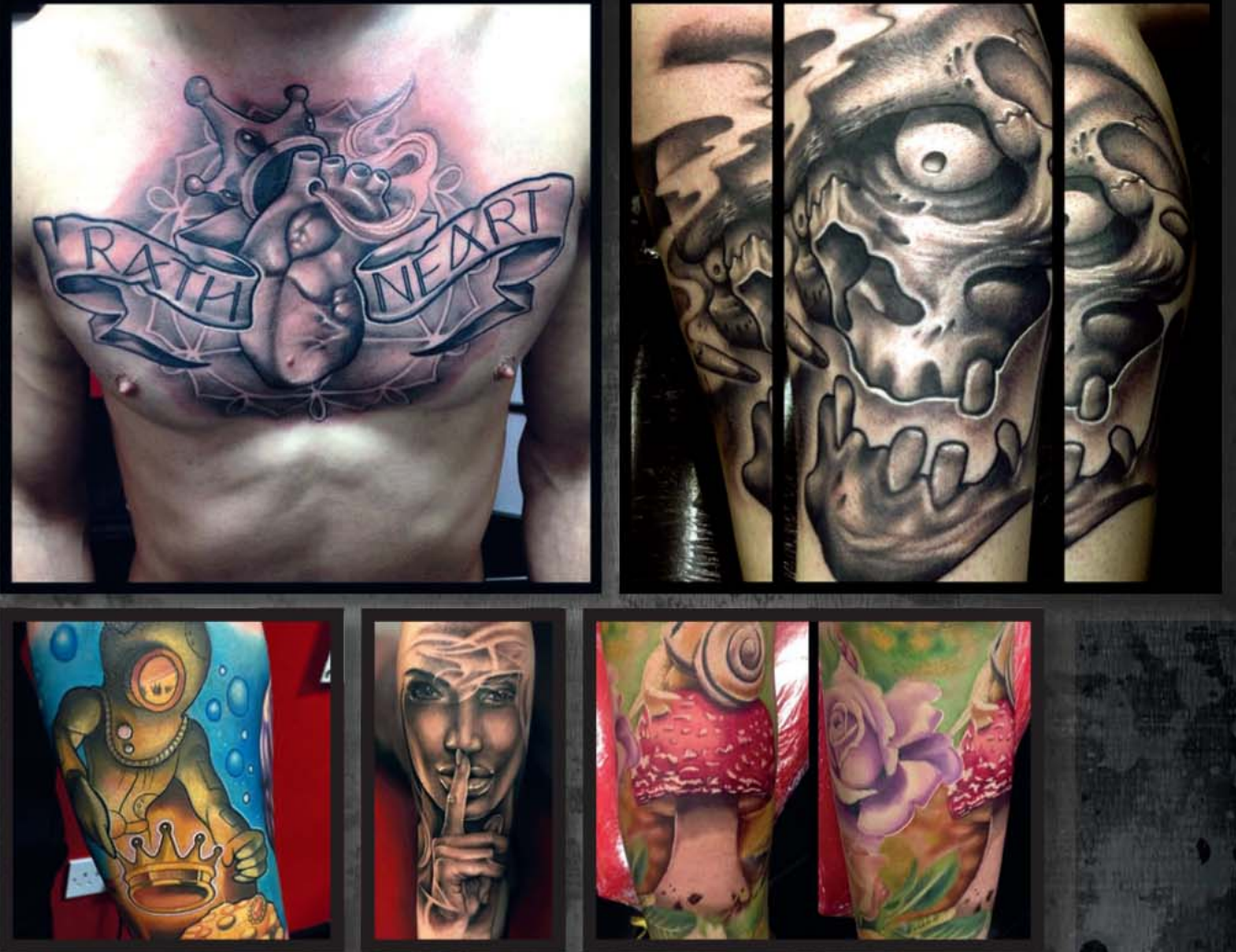
difficult to be objective about the way you sound; so having producers and engineers outside the band has helped push things even further. "You think you've exhausted every possibility and then you play it to some new ears," says JJ, "and they say 'try this', and you're like 'wow'. They've really brought out the best in what we've written."

Some of the band members are sporting early JJ artwork, and like many artists his views on it have changed over time. Is it the same

with songs? Have their views on them changed as they've lived with them for a few years?

"Definitely," says Olly. "The first tracks we recorded for the album were among the first we ever wrote, and you can get sick of playing them over time. But having new light shed on them through the recording process is great—and it inspires us to improve the new material, too."

Original Bastard Sons songs begin with ear-snagging hooks,



crafted by Olly and fellow guitarist Alex, to which Nathan (bass) and Rich (drums) add the power train of the rhythm track. "It all evolves from there," says Olly.

"It starts from the smallest seed and grows," agrees JJ. "I think we've found our sound now after the first EPs."

That sound has elements of Southern rock buried deep in the DNA code, but there's a lot more going on. Harder elements ripple under lead single *Release the Hounds'* approachable veneer like a bull under a matador's cape—the appealing sheen on top conceals something brutish below. That's my first impression, anyway, but they're gathering more influences as they go, according to Olly. "We've got our 'singles' sound," adds JJ, "the ones that mums and dads can listen too, but we've still got our heavy songs. The singles get you more exposure and hopefully it reels people in, but I wouldn't want everything to sound the same."

"We don't ever set out to write a single," says drummer Rich. "But

THE INKED MEMBERS OF THE GROUP SHARE THE BAND'S BONES LOGO, BUT THAT'S AS FAR AS THE COORDINATED INK GOES. "I EVEN TATTOOED THE LOGO ON A GIRL WHO HAD NEVER HEARD US BEFORE," SAYS JJ

you can tell if a song is going to be catchy as soon as you start out. Some are more punky and harder and some are more radio friendly, with a memorable chorus."

"That's because I'm a lyrical genius," JJ opines.

"Yeah, with the voice of Duncan from *Blue*," Olly shoots back.

This seems like a good point to switch to tattoos, as both Olly and Rich have plenty of coverage courtesy of Mr Jackson (and also from Gareth 'G' Unwin, another York stalwart). Does having the band members 'styled' by JJ make any kind of difference?

"It does seem important for

some bands—not for us—to have a look, and tattoos can definitely be a part of that," says JJ. The Bastard Sons use going under the needle for other things though, such as non-band related chat. "It gives us time to talk about other stuff."

It's also a common interest and a way of bonding, as well as providing a rich seam of post-gig conversation, Rich explains, with drunken tattoo brainstorms a regular fixture. That explains the origins of the send-up of a traditional Japanese tattoo on his leg: he's sporting a battered Koi carp with chips. "These are the kind of stupid tattoos we end up getting!" says JJ. 🍣

“WHAT STICKS WITH ME THE MOST IS THAT WHEN WE STARTED, WE ALL AGREED THAT THIS WOULD BE A BAND WE GREW OLD WITH” SAID JJ



“They’ll kick your sorry ass. They’ll hurt your ears. They’ll rock your tiny little world and make your cousin your lover. They are quite simply the most excruciatingly exciting band you’re going to squeeze down your throat. In frontman, JJ, exists some sort of wild beast, a mountain man, a bourbon brute. SOMEONE WHO SHOULD NOT BE FUCKED WITH.”

**Tim Hornsby,**  
legendary York  
gig promoter/ club  
owner/ band booker

The inked members of the group share the band’s bones logo, but that’s as far as the co-ordinated ink goes. “I even tattooed the logo on a girl who had never heard us before,” says JJ.

Olly: “And then she heard us, and hated us!”

That part may not be true, of course. One thing that’s for certain though—wildest-dreams scenario though it is—is their forthcoming tour with hardcore legends, Snot. “It’s not sunk in properly yet,” says Rich. “When we arrive on the first

day I’ll realise that we’ve got to play—with them watching us!”

Not only that, but it will be their first tour in Blighty. Their debut outing was to the US, which introduced them—among other things—to the sights of Venice Beach. “It was fucking frightening,” is Olly’s assessment, describing standing outside one venue with only a pistol-toting, drinking, teenager for company.

Hopefully roaming the less gun-happy UK will be a more relaxing experience, with opportunities to get new ink along the way. It’s doubtful anything will match the few hours following JJ’s face tattoo, though, which entailed drinking and wandering around a fancy department store in Leeds with blood streaming down his face. “We got followed around, a lot,” Olly recalls. JJ laughs. “Security guards everywhere!”

Like their music, their tattoo tastes have evolved as they’ve spent more time together. “When I first joined I only had black and grey work and never thought I’d have colour,” Rich explains. “But seeing more of JJ’s work made me change—hanging around with a tattoo artist gives you more inspiration to get something different.”

There’s a tour to prepare for, so it’s time to release everyone back

into the rehearsal room (York’s cavernous White Room is already clattering to the sound of multiple bands in different studios). As a final thought, what are their hopes for the tour and the road ahead?

“When we all started in bands we wanted to be famous,” says Rich. “As you get older you realise that might not happen; but that you’re having fun the way you are. As long as we’re having fun we’ll keep doing it.”

“What sticks with me the most is that when we started, we all agreed that this would be a band we grew old with,” says JJ. “I wouldn’t want to say we’re going to do one thing or another; I think we’re just going to take each day as it comes.”

It’s the same relaxed approach that has seen Awake Arise evolve and remain successful. There’s probably a convoluted comparison to be made here between living with your tattoo art and becoming comfortable with your music and musical aspirations over time, but really, these guys just want to play—and sometimes the simplest things are the best.

“We’re proud of the music,” says Olly. “We just want to get it out there and play for people.”

Cry havoc, and release those hounds... 🐾



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# Siân

The last time we graced the front cover with Siân Davies, it was with a bare back—so to speak. We had mail—lots of it asking to see it, so we saved up and boarded a train to the land of the druids and came back with this...

■ Mr Smith ■ Mr Cole

**Model:** Sian • **Hair:** Nathan Pithers •

**Peacock hairpiece:** Allie Brock **Makeup:** Eve-Marie Parry

**SO... THE PEACOCK IS COMPLETE! IT LOOKS WONDERFUL! PETE WHIPPED THROUGH THAT PRETTY FAST (OR AT LEAST IT SEEMS LIKE IT!)—I'M GOING TO ASK IF YOU'RE HAPPY WITH IT EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THAT'S THE MOST POINTLESS QUESTION I HAVE EVER ASKED.**

Thank you! And for once this is not a pointless question. The peacock is perfect and is chilling on my back as I type. As you know for an outline on piece of paper to become a solid piece of tattoo art on the skin, it takes serious skills and commitment—and trust. I am extremely lucky to have such a talented artist in Shakey Pete and I knew it would look amazing!

**FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE MASSES—WHAT'S THE TIME SCALE ON A PIECE THAT BIG? MORE THAN**

**YOU THOUGHT? LESS? WHAT SORT OF AFTERCARE ARE YOU USING THESE DAYS TOO? I'M COMPILING A LIST! I GUESS YOU'D NEED SOME HELP WITH THAT SIDE OF THINGS.**

I knew getting a back piece was a major commitment so I prepared myself for it as I pride myself on being very strong mentally and physically, but I have to say this pushed me to the limit of what I can endure and beyond. So let's start at the beginning

I drove 400 miles to Newquay where Shakey Pete works; slept, ate sweets and fruit then started on the outline the very next day! We did this for three days back to back (see what I did there...) then I drove home.

I let my back heal for a few weeks then I headed back to Newquay on the tattoo road trip

to start on the colour! Again I drove 400 miles, slept, ate sweets, fruits, a cream cake and some iced coffee. Never tried iced coffee before, but I actually really liked it and since it was reduced to 50p, I just went for it. After three days of colour I was buzzing to see them pop off my back as the tattoo started to take shape. I then drove home again.

I rested for a few weeks until it had healed, then I drove back down thinking about 'The Chair—That Chair' whilst negotiating the heavy M5 traffic. 'The Chair' is where I had been face down in agony for what seemed like an eternity—I was driving towards it again and it was my choice!

I had to keep telling myself "It's not an electric chair—that would be horrible—so get a grip and get 🍌"



on with it!" And with that little pep talk to myself, I was ready for the final sessions. After two days it was finished and I now have a peacock on my back in the moonlight and I love it

In short (thought I'd take you the long way round first for fun):  
Total time = 55 hours  
Total miles = 2,400

## The Welsh media have been very forward thinking and ground breaking in their attitude towards tattoos and tattooing

Would I do it again if I had two backs = YES

Aftercare consisted of washing three times a day (used carex anti-bac handwash) a thin layer of bepanthen and wrapping in cling film—which was a feat in itself! This process was repeated robot-like after each session and for a while after to ensure that the tattoo remained moist. This is what worked best for me and my skin. Yes, it will drive you nuts, but it's a small price really for something that is going to be on you for life.

**WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOUR MOVIE CAREER THESE DAYS? CAN WE CALL IT A CAREER? I THINK WE CAN. HOW MANY IS THAT IN THE BAG NOW? TWO? THREE?**

**AND IF I KNOW YOU AT ALL LIKE I THINK I DO, TELL ME WHAT'S NEXT BECAUSE THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER PROJECT NOT TOO FAR AWAY ISN'T THERE.**

I've just finished shooting in an old Victorian mansion for a new horror/comic called *Dorian and Drama*. It's about a disgraced magician that stalks me around for a bit—it's actually quite cool. It's available now, published by Hellbound Media.

I have heard that *Zombies From Ireland* (which I star in) is going to be released on DVD soon which is pretty exciting. Also, the new horror I'm in called *Mermaids From Mars* have just had a breakthrough with the British Sub-Aqua club agreeing to supply divers/location for a very cool scene involving a mutant fish and a power station!

Recently though, I've been in a new comedy here in Wales on prime-time called *Gwlad Yr Astra Gwyn* (translated: 'Land of the White Astra'. Don't ask!) The show is extremely popular. I play the role of a sex maniac party girl who specialises in kissing girls! 🌸





## Yes, it will drive you nuts, but it's a small price really for something that is going to be on you for life

Now where did they get that from?! Oh I did kiss a girl once on *The Charlotte Church Show*, but that's another story...

**WE'RE GOOD AT THIS 'OTHER STORY' THING AREN'T WE? ANYWAY, WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT, IS THERE GROWING TRACTION? WITH A COUPLE OF MOVIES UNDER THE BELT—AND GOD KNOWS YOU'VE BEEN BUSY PUSHING THEM OUT THERE—CAN YOU SEE DIFFERENT THINGS COMING DOWN THE LINE FOR YOU?**

I can see myself presenting next... maybe. You know the ones I mean, tattooTV *LA Ink* type of thing, except instead of sob stories like "I got this symbol because my parrot flew off", it will be more like "I got this bad ass tattoo cause I'm a bad ass and I just wanted one". You need someone who is obsessed with the industry and tattoos, someone who will look cool on telly... someone like me?

**FOR MY OWN EDUCATION HERE... YOUR BOYFRIEND IS THE WRITER/DIRECTOR? IS THAT RIGHT? LET'S GIVE THE MAN SOME PROPS HERE.**

His name is Ryan Kift. He is rock solid and an extremely talented writer/director/songwriter. Oh and he carries my bags.

**ONE THING THAT'S BEEN PRETTY COOL OVER THE LAST YEAR OR SO HAS BEEN THE MEDIA PICK UP ON YOU PERSONALLY. I KNOW WE KIND OF TOUCHED ON THIS LAST TIME WE SPOKE, BUT THERE'S BEEN MORE SINCE THEN—I HAVE TO TAKE MY HAT OFF TO THE WELSH MEDIA FOR NOT TREATING IT LIKE A HIT 'N' RUN 'SHOCK' STORY. WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THEY APPEAR TO TAKE A REAL INTEREST AND NOT SOME PASSING FANCY WHICH THEY THEN USE TO MAKE THEMSELVES LOOK SMART. IS THAT A PRETTY REASONABLE STATEMENT TO MAKE?**

The Welsh media have been very forward thinking and ground breaking in their attitude towards tattoos and tattooing. They see it as it should be seen, a skilled form

of high end art with a scene all of its own, and it makes me proud. From afternoon magazine shows to kids' TV, I have been treated with the utmost respect. I have found that here in Wales, there's a growing genuine curiosity—a true fascination with tattoos and it's spreading. It's like it's etched underneath all of our skins here as soon as we're born, here in the land of cool, here in Wales.

**FINALLY... AND I THINK THIS IS AN ABSOLUTELY REASONABLE QUESTION GIVEN THE JAPANESE THEMED SHOOT HERE: CAN YOU REALLY USE THOSE CHOPSTICKS? YOU WOULD HAVE THOUGHT SOMEBODY WOULD HAVE EXPORTED THE CONCEPT OF THE SPOON BY NOW...**

I used them to make the shoot look cool as I don't think that spoons would have looked right somehow. The chopsticks came extremely handy to relieve the insane itchiness that I couldn't quite reach with my own hands—and who told you I eat Chinese with a spoon? 🍴

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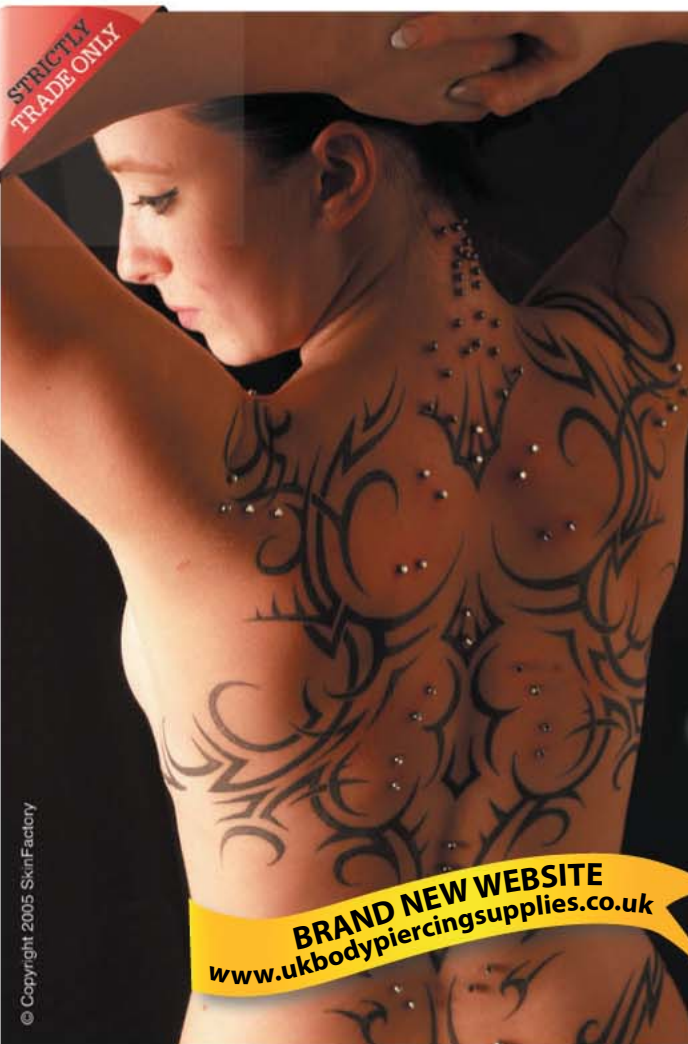
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With every second of our lives at a supposed premium, our desire to have everything 'plug 'n' play' is inevitable. Add to this the ever onward march of technology and we are living in a disposable, pre-packaged society. And the tattoo world is no different!

But it wasn't always that way. In the days of yore, when a tattooist had finished a busy day in the studio, they would shut up shop and begin the long, arduous and often hazardous task of preparing their equipment for the following day's work. You have to remember, back then needles didn't come in neat little sterilised packets like they do today. Ink didn't come in snazzy looking bottles with catchy names; thermal copiers were

non-existent; and transfer paper and stay fast stencil products were a dream. It was a case of make everything yourself, or if you were savvy enough, take on an apprentice to do it for you.

Like everything else today, modern tattooing is all about lock and load. And why not? When you have these technological shortcuts at your fingertips, who actually wants to sit all night burning their fingers soldering needle groups? Or inhaling enough ink pigment powder that you sneeze rainbows! Never mind the mess all that powder makes. Apprentices these days moan enough about sweeping floors and brewing coffee, imagine what they would be like if you were allowed to torture them with soldering irons and forced







them to inhale toxic powder!

But still, having said that, there is some truth in the argument that the heart has gone out of everything. Products mass produced in a factory don't have that same 'feel' as something handmade with (one hopes) a little care, whether you are making it for yourself or a customer. You also have to worry that we are creating a generation who won't know how to do anything for themselves.

But more than anything, like everything from music to, well, tattooing, there is still the appeal of going back to 'old school'. Seeing how it was done by the old guard, even if it is just to get an idea of how bad it could be.

This is where Marc Nutley steps into the story. Marc has

## MOST OF MY COLLECTION IS FROM THE '70S THROUGH TILL ABOUT THE LATE '90S, COVERING MACHINES THROUGH TO CONSUMABLES AND FLASH

been tattooing since 2009 and is the owner of Studio Ink in Westbury, Wiltshire. Not one to limit himself to one particular style, over the last few years he has won ten awards over four different styles including oriental, realistic, large colour work and portraits. In his words he "just loves tattooing everything".

Marc and I met a few months back when he approached me about a project he was working on, the True Traditional Project. The idea came about from Marc's love of collecting vintage tattoo equipment: "Most of

my collection is from the '70s through till about the late '90s, covering machines through to consumables and flash. The pride of my collection are my two C.M. & Davis machines, one from the '40s and the other from the '60s.

"In 2009, Dave Warman, passed away and I was lucky enough to acquire the last bits and pieces from his studio in Reading. Dave had tattooed for over 35 years and some of the items that were given to me included over 20 framed flash sheets from the late '70s and early '80s. It was these that got me to thinking, how long had 🍌

## I NEEDED TO LEARN TO MAKE NEEDLES, MIX POWDER PIGMENTS AND USE ACETATE STENCILS

### MARC NUTLEY

“The tattoo artists that paved the way for our generation are all legends in my eyes. They were not only artists and business people but also engineers (building machines), chemists (mixing pigments), and production line workers (making needles). They had none of the luxuries that we have; like loads of supply companies, premade everything under the sun, or the internet. These guys worked hard during the day and then non-stop in the evenings making their own equipment. We have got it so easy, having the luxury of just creating art within tattooing. But saying that, we still need to keep these skills alive. It is our duty for all they did before.”

they been on the wall? How many people have had that exact same tattoo? But most of all, what was it like to tattoo at that time?”

With that question niggling at the back of his mind, Marc began a journey that would take him back to the good old days of tattooing. His goal was simple, the Portsmouth Tattoo Convention was fast approaching and with the Sunday free, Marc wanted to tattoo a client using only old school methods. This might sound easy, but the next four weeks were going to prove a steep learning curve in what is was like to create a tattoo without the modern techniques we take for granted every day.

“Within a week of beginning the project things were already moving fast. I needed to learn to make needles, mix powder pigments and use acetate stencils. The hard bit was learning all about these dying arts. It is not easy in these days with most artists having been brought



up on premade inks, premade needles and thermo copiers. But I was lucky as I happened to know four great tattoo artists who, combined, had over 100 years of tattooing knowledge between them. The help that I received from Jon Meiling, Jimmie Skuse, Sam Boyce and Lal Hardy proved to be invaluable in getting the project running.”

So with a goldmine of tattoo history at his fingertips, Marc set out to make needles, mix his own ink and create acetates (the old school version of stencil transfers). First up was needle making and powder pigments, both that were to test Marc's patience, and in some cases pain threshold, to the limit.

“I have to say that I have the utmost respect for any artist who still makes their own needles for



## SOME OF THE ITEMS THAT WERE GIVEN TO ME INCLUDED OVER 20 FRAMED FLASH SHEETS FROM THE LATE SEVENTIES AND EARLY '80S

every tattoo. Tattooers in the early years before premade needles, those guys had it hard. When you're not endlessly counting out the amount of needles for your chosen grouping, or checking all the points are the right way round through an eyelooop, you're more than likely burning your fingers or inhaling flux fumes. Out of everything this was the most time-consuming element for me, but in the end, over three nights, with the help of one other tattooist, Ryan Smith, we made about 50 needle groupings, covering liners, shaders and mags.

"Next I turned my hand to pigments, which seemed fairly

straight forward to begin with. Power pigment, plus holding solution... and then a bloody good shake. Well, it did kind of go like that. I just underestimated the mess. Powder pigment goes everywhere and just opening the tub you can see it in the air. By the time I finished mixing enough pigment for the project it was on the floor, work surfaces, tiles and me! You try cleaning it up and it just gets worse because now it's gone from dry pigment to ink. But eventually the colours were sorted and I was ready to go."

And then there were the acetate stencils. Bear in mind there is hardly any information on how



**WITH TRADITIONAL, EVERYTHING IS DOWN TO THE PREP WORK THAT YOU HAVE PUT IN BEFORE THE ACTUAL TATTOO**

to make them, let alone how to use them, or even someone who has used them. But Marc persevered and after finding bits of information here and there, four different thicknesses of acetate and ten or more scribes and cutters were ordered.

“Making acetates is so hard on the hand, therefore, it used to be an apprentices job... to gain a steady hand and thereby getting their hands ready for tattooing. To make an acetate you engrave your design onto a clear acetate sheet with a scribe. It’s the groove that you’re engraving that will hold the stencil powder that is then transferred to the skin. If it’s too shallow then you’ll not hold enough powder; too deep and you’ll distort the acetate or go through it!

“Applying one is even more fun, the stencil powder is just as fine as powder pigment, it gets everywhere. You need to shave the area as normal, apply the thinnest layer of Vaseline, shake powder onto the stencil, then rub it into the grooves of the design and brush off the excess. Once

the stencil is placed onto the skin, the powder sticks to the Vaseline on the skin. To be honest it’s tricky, I’ve practised loads of times on myself and it normally takes me two or three goes to get a good one. Nowadays we have a whole range of products to hold a stencil on the skin for hours, but with acetates, it’s just a thin, faint, line that will come off with just one wipe.”

And so, finally, Marc was there. He had his needles, his ink and the dreaded acetates. All that was left to do was choose a couple of designs and give it ago. Roll on Portsmouth Tattoo Convention and Sunday had Marc facing one of the hardest tattoo experiences he has had to face in his career.

“They were the hardest and most nerve-racking tattoos I have ever done. With traditional, everything is down to the prep work that you have put in before the actual tattoo. You’ve mixed the inks, you’ve made the needles and you’ve cut the stencils. As for the tattoo, as I said before, acetate stencils are damn tricky, not only to put on the skin but also to work



# BRISTOL TATTOO CLUB



with. You can't wipe them at all or else the stencil is gone! If the customer touches the stencil, you touch it, or you get a splatter on it, it's gone. This was the hardest part to get into my head. I knew if I messed up a few lines in the beginning, I was screwed. But all in all, it was an amazing experience. It was like the first time I ever tattooed all over again."

At the end of the day, the tattoos were done and Marc had two very happy customers. The True Traditional Project was a success. But then, ever the trouble maker, I stepped in. You see, Marc made the mistake of making the following comment to me which got my mind ticking over and making plans.

"I'd like to tattoo with some early stencils. I can't think of another way of getting closer to history than using someone's

## SUNDAY HAD MARC FACING ONE OF THE HARDEST TATTOO EXPERIENCES HE HAS HAD TO FACE IN HIS CAREER

acetate, someone like Les Skuse; he has been an inspiration for so long. Imagine using a stencil that he cut and used over a long career; following the exact lines he did. You can't get closer to him than that."

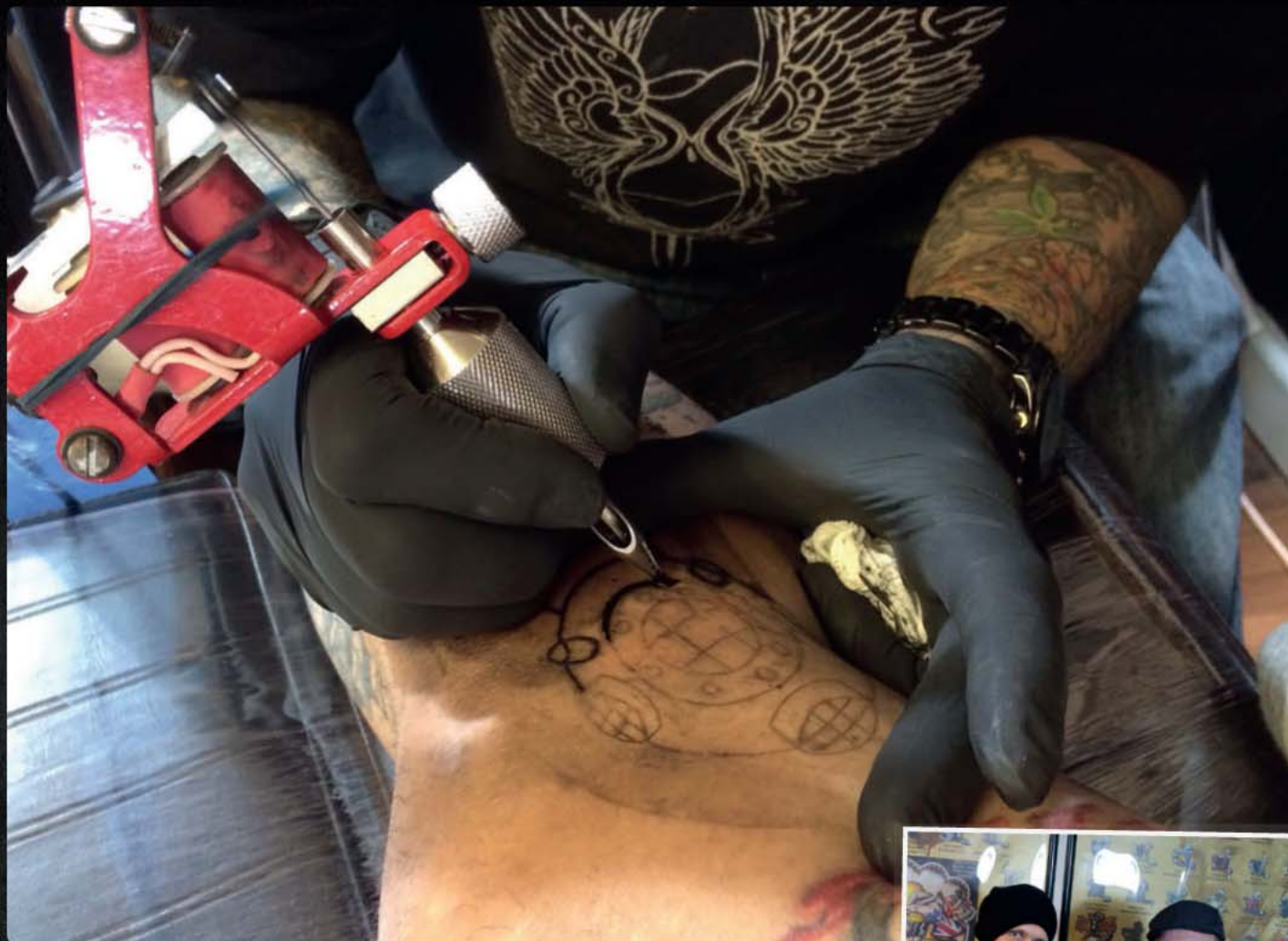
A few emails later and the True Traditional Project MK II began. My suggestion to Marc was simple, let's do it. Let's see if we can get hold of some of Les Skuse's original acetates and make this happen. Luckily for us Marc was a member of the Bristol Tattoo Club, whose president was Jimmie Skuse, Les's grandson. Now all we had to do was get Jimmie onboard, a task I left Marc to handle. A few more emails and

a plan was beginning to form. Jimmie had original acetates and even more importantly, some of Les Skuse's original machines. We had now moved from not only using old school traditional methods, we were also going to use one of tattoo history's most renowned tattoo artist's personal equipment. For Marc and myself, this was a dream come true.

It doesn't take long chatting with Jimmie Skuse to realise how much this man loves his proud tattooing history, never mind the wealth of information he knows about it. Not only is Jimmie the president of the Bristol Tattoo Club, but he also runs a mobile tattoo history museum that he 🍀

### BRISTOL TATTOO CLUB

The Bristol Tattoo Club was formed in 1953 by Les Skuse as a means of bringing together tattoo artists and fans, as well as raising the awareness of the good in tattooing and in the process getting away from the general misconception that only 'bad people' or armed forces wore tattoos. Les ran the BTC until his death in 1973, when his son, Danny (Les Skuse Jr), took over the presidency. In 2009, Danny handed the over the reigns to the club's latest president, Les' grandson, Jimmie Skuse, who has been running it ever since, transforming the Bristol Tattoo Club back to its glory days.



**LES SKUSE**

Les Skuse was born in 1912 in the port town of Bristol, England. He fast became the town, and England's, most famous tattooist and was well known throughout the world. Les started his tattoo career in 1928 at Joseph Hartley's shop near Stoke Croft, Bristol. At the outbreak of World War II, Les enlisted in the Royal Artillery and after five years of tattooing the troops, he was back in civilian life where he opened his first shop in Bristol. Two of Les' major contributions to the tattoo world were the formation of the British Guild of Tattooing and the Bristol Tattoo Club, and in 1955 he was voted the Champion Tattoo Artist of All England. In 1973 Les Skuse passed away, leaving behind his legacy in the tattoo history books and a surname that will be forever associated with tattooing.

**I HAVE TO SAY THAT I HAVE THE UTMOST RESPECT FOR ANY ARTIST WHO STILL MAKES THEIR OWN NEEDLES FOR EVERY TATTOO**

travels to various conventions worldwide with. And it wasn't long before Marc and I had Jimmie going through his grandfather's designs, showing us a few of Les's amazing acetates. Originally we had decided on tattooing swallows, a true traditional tattoo design, but while going through the acetates we came across one called 'Hands Across the Sea', and both Marc and I were drawn to it as soon as we laid eyes on it.

With Jimmie's backing and a design to hand, we were go and Marc was back to prepping equipment for round two.

"The second round of needle making was just as hard as the first, except for the five flats. They are so much easier than making weaved mag needles. I also took the opportunity to show Matt King, my other artist at the studio, the basics of

needle making. All in all, I still threw away more needles than what I kept. For the project I'm keeping with the traditional needle groupings of the era: 4 liners, 7 round shaders, 14 round shaders and 5 flats.

As for the ink, all of the pigments will be hand mixed using the same methods as the last time, although I'm spending more time mixing powders to achieve as close as possible colour match to Les's original colour pallet; taking reference from photos and flash from around the time."

With everything planned and Marc and Jimmie working out the finer details, all that is left now is the day of the tattoo... and by the time you are reading this, it will be upon us. Sunday 11 January, at Tattoo Freeze 2015, is the big day Marc gets to tattoo

true and traditional once again. And just to make it a little more fun, and to thank him for all the help he has given us getting this project rolling again, we have invited Jimmie along to share the booth with Marc... who is feeling the pressure all over again.

"I'm excited and nervous at the same time. Let's be honest here... I'm tattooing the editor of *Tattoo Master* magazine, in the style of one of the greatest tattooists from our history. And if that is not enough... at a convention, with Jimmie there. And don't forget the dreaded acetate stencils."

Maybe this isn't the right time to tell him we will be filming it as well! 📹

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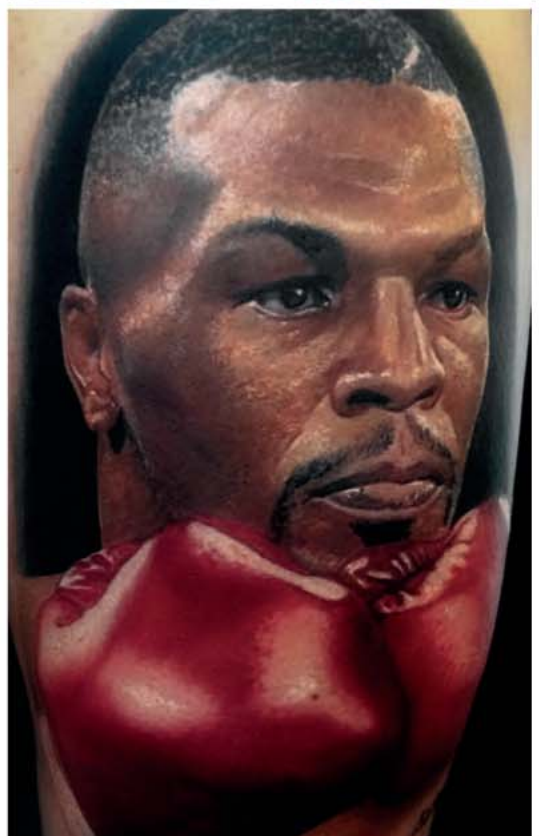


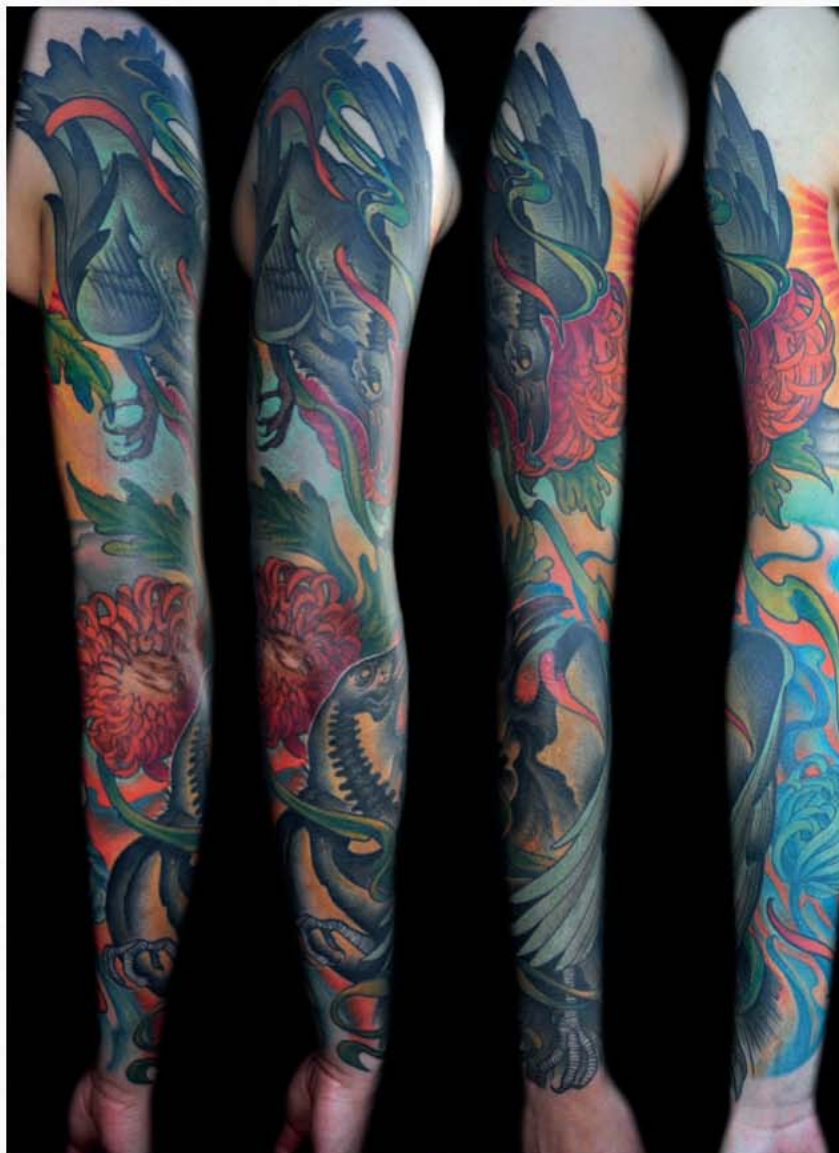
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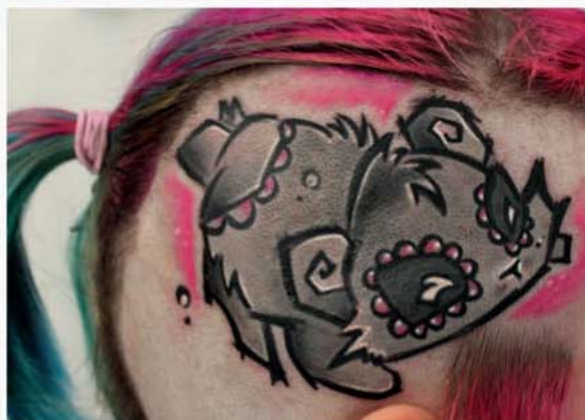


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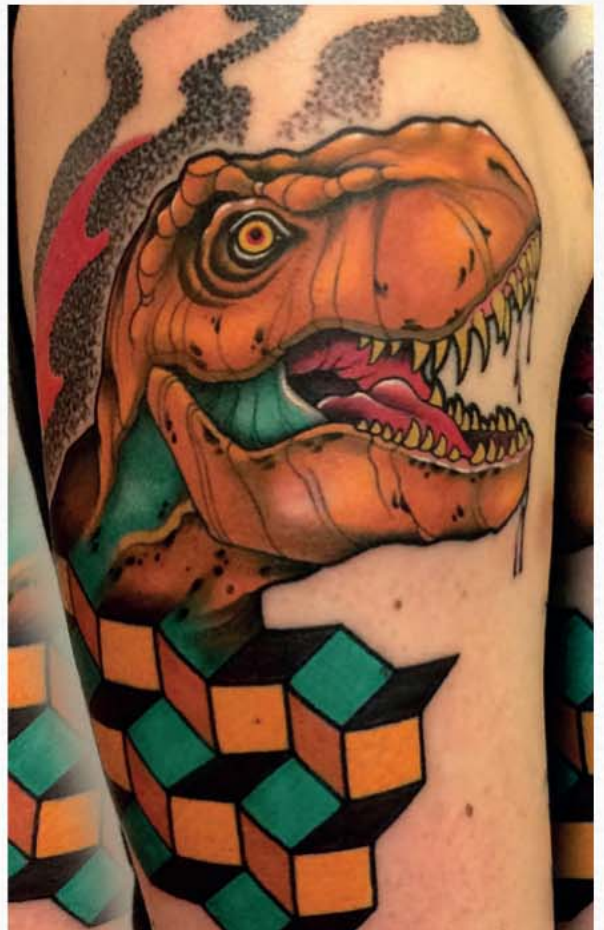
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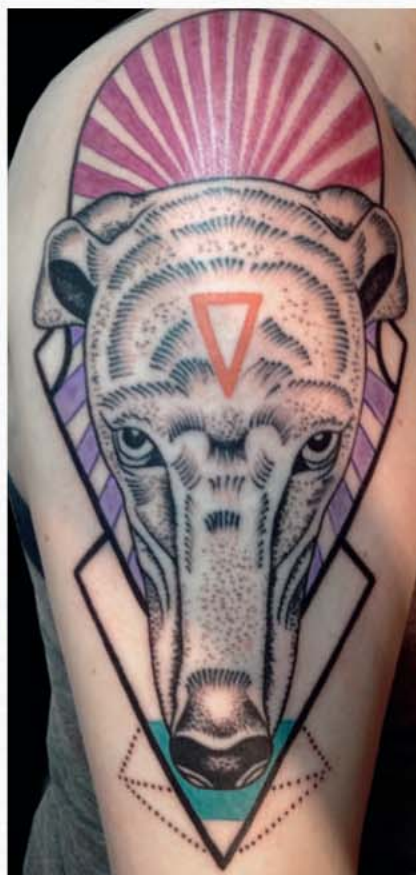
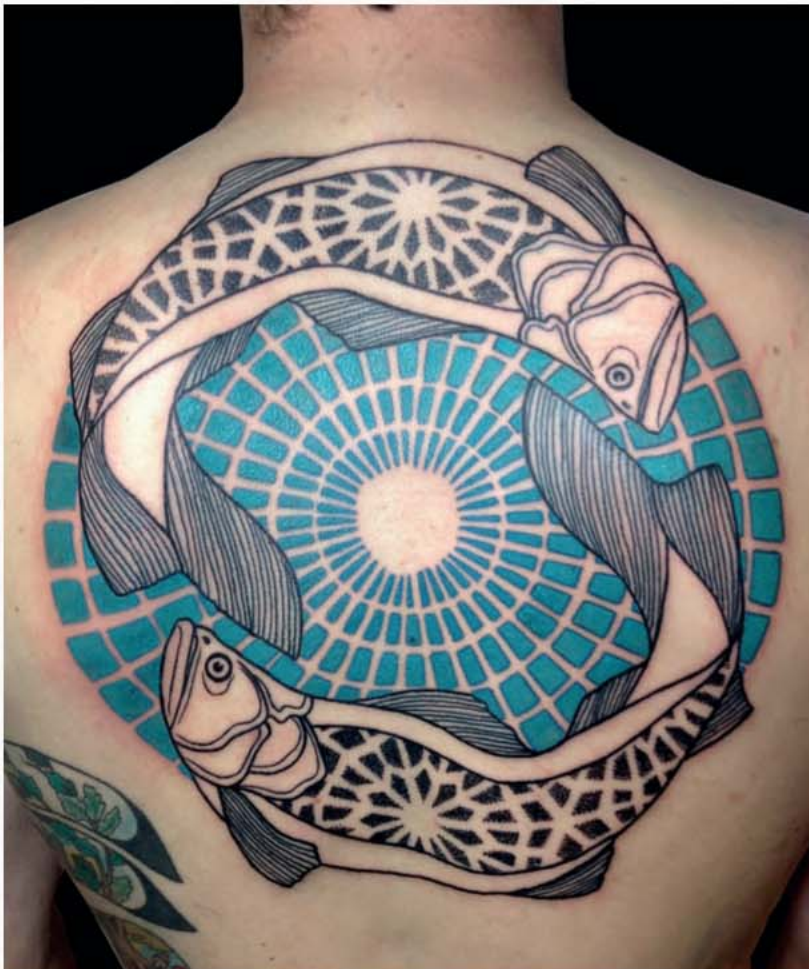
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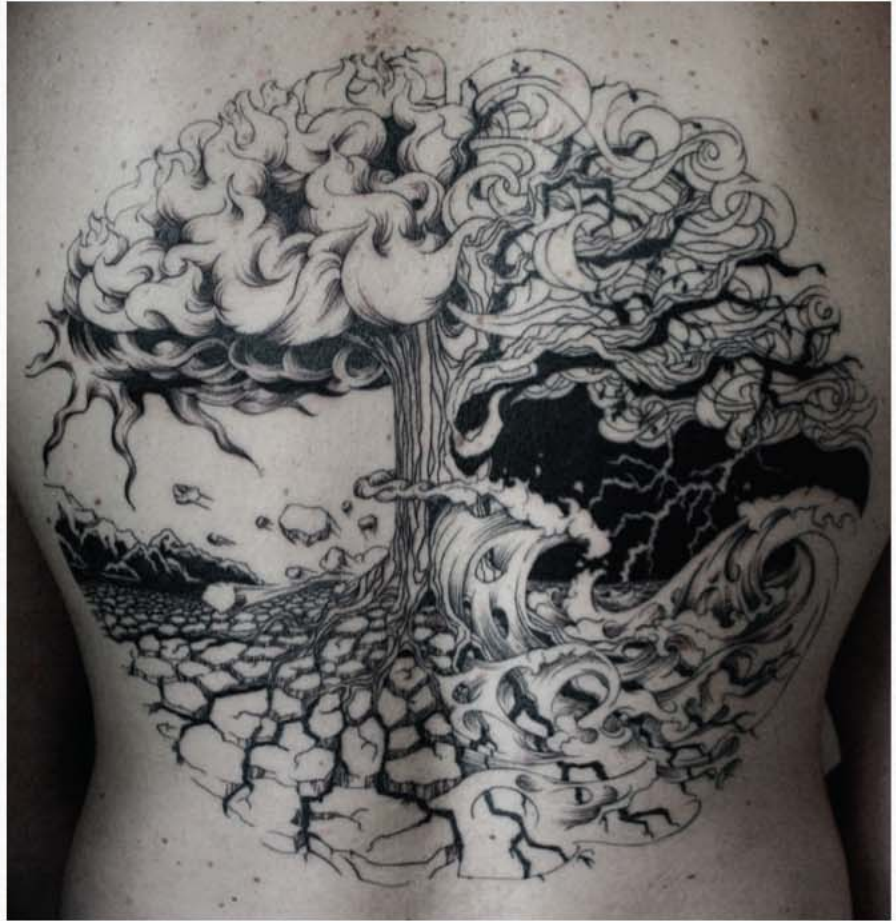




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# OFF THE WALL

Bernd Muss, artist of much worth and owner of the infamous ink&ride show, is once seen, never forgotten. Believe this: nothing brings us greater pleasure than to be flaunting his work.



Nicky Connor © Bernd Muss



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**B**ernd's studio, Tattoo Freestyle, is based in Hamburg, Germany. Born in the Czech Republic to a Czech mother and German father he moved to Hamburg—Germany's second largest city—when he was ten. He loves the hustle and bustle of Hamburg and as such, still lives and works there opening his first shop in 1994.

Over time things have expanded and he now works across two studios with many employees.

Bernd has enjoyed a long tattooing career, that brings his own surreal comic style of avant-garde illustration from the drawing board and onto the skin. Like some other artists, he never set out to be a tattooist. From the age of ten he grew up in the southern part of Hamburg, he was educated amongst graffiti

artists and developed a passion for graffiti, painting and illustration. At 19 he tried to make a living as a painter, painting the walls in domestic gardens. On one occasion he was working on the ugly back wall of a tattoo studio and the owner offered to teach him how to tattoo—this was the start of a long creative journey.

"From there it was still a long way of learning, failing and progressing but that is how it all began," Bernd explains.

After deciding to pursue tattooing, Bernd was an apprentice for several years. He found his apprenticeship both necessary and insightful. He had to learn the craft from the ground up, firstly only watching and listening, learning all about hygiene and sterilisation. Then how to handle the body,





physically working with the clients, their skin, different forms and different reactions to pain and being tattooed. Finally, he was taught how to handle the machine. Then Bernd and his business partner opened Tattoo Freestyle in Hamburg's southern borough, Harburg. Now running for 20 years, it was the first tattoo studio in Harburg. As with most creatives the artistic part of the business was instinctive, while the ability to run the mechanics of a business was acquired over time: "My crafting skills and ability to run a business grew with experience."

Bernd describes his business partner as "my stable background"—he looks after all financial elements and half the management of the shops. This leaves Bernd free to focus

## IF YOU HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT WHAT TO GET TATTOOED FOR A LIFETIME, YOU HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT YOUR LIFE

both on his artwork and also the artistic and creative development of the studios and the staff. Now working over the two studios—with Tattoo Freestyle Zwo opening 40 minutes away in Hamburg's downtown area—Bernd works with a team of about ten, including studio managers and artists, some full-time and some working as guest spots, including the likes of Carola Deutsch, Fronsaid Komtesse, Kati Berinkey and Frau Paint. As a team the studios pride themselves on their passion for art and tattoos, with great customer care and advice. All artwork at the studios is custom designed, offering a 🌸



THE WAY I SEE IT, TATTOOING HAS EVEN MORE BECOME AN INSPIRING ART FORM OVER THE LAST DECADE

range of tattoo styles. Both studio interiors are a bright, eclectic mix of old furniture, with pieces of original art work on the walls and many examples of the artists' amazing work, ranging from dark illustration to neo-traditional and then Bernd's own unique style. The studios also offer different custom items for sale, from printed T-shirts to postcards.

Like many studios, Facebook and the internet is a major channel for them to stay in touch with the clients, especially given their global audience. But clients can still make contact using the more traditional methods of telephone and walk-ins to discuss tattoo ideas. Waiting times for tattoos can vary depending the design and artist doing the work—Bernd's usual waiting time is about a year, although he also has many long-term ongoing projects. The process of designing and booking the tattoo is like most others: the client gives information about the design and placing; Bernd designs a sketch; they collaboratively agree on a blueprint for the design; then tattoo begins. I asked Bernd if he needs input from the client for a design and I like his response: "If you have no idea about what to get tattooed for a lifetime, you





## MY CRAFTING SKILLS AND ABILITY TO RUN A BUSINESS GREW WITH EXPERIENCE

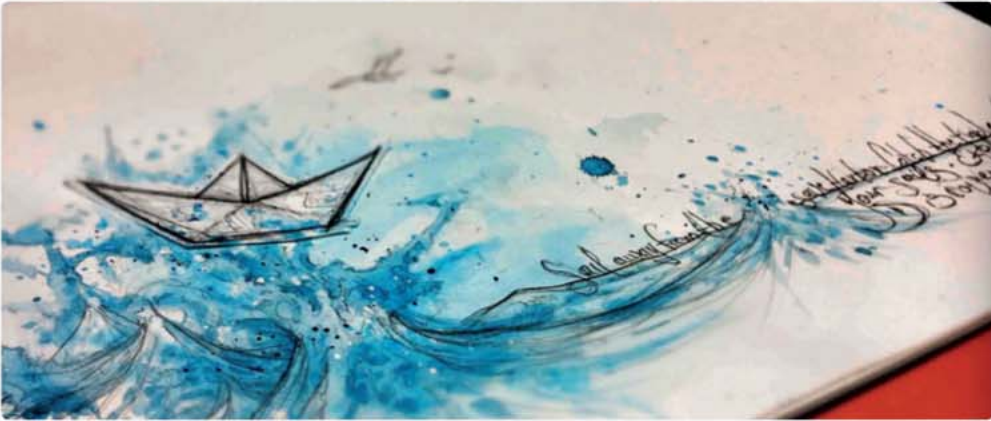
have no idea about your life.”

Describing his work as a “surreal comic style with graphic elements”, when Bernd first developed his tattoo work, aside from his skill in both graffiti and illustration, he also studied drawing. I really love the way in which Bernd constructs his tattoo designs from the drawing board, combining pencil sketches with ink and watercolour paint to produce pieces that have a tangibility and an organic quality, almost like he has sketched the design straight onto the skin. And although working for over 20 years now, you can still see the influence of graffiti and illustration in Bernd’s ever-evolving style: “I am still developing it. I look for inspiration in everything that surrounds me and then I just do. So it is constant learning by constantly doing and do not fear to start something.”

Inspiration for his work comes from many places—old masters of art like Picasso, historic artefacts like maps and paintings, music, people, comic books and the TV. More abstract ideas come from dreams, feelings and what Bernd describes as “mythical ancestors”.

And on inspiration, Bernd adds: “The way I see it, tattooing has even more become an 🌱







## AVA&BERND

Outside of the tattoo studio, Bernd also has many artistic interests. His daughter is a great inspiration and they work on a collaborative project (Ava&Bernd) designing both flash, tattoo designs, artwork and other collectables including badges and jewellery. Bernd also loves working in other artistic media from drawing and painting to sculpture and collage. [facebook.com/avaundbernd](https://www.facebook.com/avaundbernd)

I AM STILL DEVELOPING MY STYLE. I LOOK FOR INSPIRATION IN EVERYTHING THAT SURROUNDS ME AND THEN I JUST DO. SO IT IS CONSTANT LEARNING BY CONSTANTLY DOING AND DO NOT FEAR TO START SOMETHING

inspiring art form over the last decade.” Looking outward at the worldwide tattoo industry and other tattoo artists in the scene, Bernd feels Josh Peacock, working at Legacy Ink in Cambridge, is producing some great work.

In the last few years he has also found a way to bring his second passion, cycling, together with tattooing by launching his own tattoo convention, ink&ride, which enjoyed its second show last summer. So to finish our chat I wanted to talk about ink&ride and I think Bernd explains the motivation perfectly: “We were on one of those tattoo conventions where you just do not know which city

or even country it is—because they are all the same and seem to be full of stink, stickiness, expensive merch and bad chips... and draft, but with no soul. No magic. No artful expression. No expression at all. And it was there we decided to merge our passions to create a different kind of event. For a different kind of crowd. And that was it. That was the birth of ink&ride.”

The annual event, based in Hamburg in the summer, merges tattooing with street sports, and bike and skateboard displays. It also celebrates ‘Street Style’ culture with shopping, entertainment and good food. Hopefully I can go and see for myself in August. 🚲



# Jimmy Ho: Legend

To say that the opportunities to publish an interview with a Japanese legend are few and far between would be a huge understatement. So when this crack in the door appeared to spend time with Jimmy Ho, well, let's get it on...

**J**immy Ho is a legendary figure in the world of Hong Kong tattooing. The son of James Ho, he learnt his craft from his father, a Shanghai native who initially gained an interest in tattooing in India where he saw foreign military personnel adorned with ink. James Ho eventually opened Rose Tattoo in Hong Kong 1946, an institution of sorts, which churned out many of the local legends, such as Pinky Yun, Ricky and Swallow.

Jimmy Ho opened his first shop when he was still an early teen and the majority of his clientele were in the navy, tattooing up to 30–40 people a day during the Korean war, which started in 1950. Hong Kong's geopolitical importance as a port saw a steady stream of servicemen until the late '70s. A bar and vice scene flourished to cater to the military, all eager to get crude ships, anchors and flags etched onto their skin as souvenirs. Once they left, however, the Hong Kong



Maki Carmen Chan





*A bar and vice scene flourished to cater to the military, all eager to get crude ships, anchors, and flags etched onto their skin as souvenirs*

tattoo scene plummeted, and has only recently seen the rise of tattooing for fashion.

We visit the legendary Jimmy in his seedy, hole-in-the wall studio in Mong Kok. A dingy, dimly lit room with no windows, in a decrepit building, the walls are covered in hand-drawn flash, which is comprised of classic naval imagery, as well as simplistic tribal motifs, barbed wire, and other somewhat

'80s motifs. His albums are filled with photos of his crude work on hundreds of sailors, as well as local celebrities, all eager to get a piece of Hong Kong tattooing history.

**HOW DID YOU APPRENTICE, OR LEARN YOUR CRAFT IF YOUR FATHER WAS A TATTOO ARTIST?**

My dad is a tattoo artist, and I started tattooing people when I was 13 years old. My dad's step-

mum was always abusing me, so I moved to my dad's tattoo shop to live there.

Back then there were a lot of foreigners who were from the navy, and they usually get drunk and would come up and knock on his door, and I was brave enough to do tattoos for them. This was more than 40 years ago. I started my own shop when I was 14, independent from my father, but we 🍷



*Back then there were a lot of foreigners who were from the navy—I was brave enough to do tattoos for them*

were not competing. I first opened my shop on Ashley Rd. Back then I didn't get along with my family, so I asked my dad to get a set of tools and I started my own shop that way. I had the guts to open my own shop!

**WERE THE SAILORS SURPRISED THAT YOU WERE 14?**

They knew I was 14, because my dad was also a tattoo artist.

**WHAT WERE YOUR FATHER'S MACHINES?**

Very simple. They are handmade from door bells. I used thread to tie the needles together, and the needle is a sewing needle. Now we use American machines though.

**DID YOUR FATHER EVER RETIRE?**

No, he was tattooing until he died.

**WHAT WAS THE PERCENTAGE OF NAVY CLIENTS TO LOCALS?**

No locals, it was about 90% navy people from Australia, America, and Britain.

**WHERE ALL THE TATTOOS BASED ON FLASH?**

Yeah, it was all flash, but I draw the flash myself—I am known for tattooing dragons, eagles, fish and peonies.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY INFLUENCES?**

No. The sailors like water-related things, so that is why I came up with these ideas. It has meanings for them. I have flags, like the Denmark, Norway, and other national flags, so they choose a design based on that.

**WERE THERE EVER CRIMINAL CUSTOMERS—IS THERE A CONNECTION BETWEEN GANGS AND TATTOOS HERE, SIMILAR TO ELSEWHERE?**

I don't know if they had a criminal background, I would just help

them to get tattooed. However, in Hong Kong, there are no typical tattoos for the triads. There are no links between criminality and tattoos here; there are no connotations here like that. But a lot of the youngsters, when they get a tattoo, they hide it from their parents.

**WHAT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE RECENT HK TATTOO SCENE?**

It is based on what they like, but they have no culture. Now they choose patterns like tribal.

**WHEN DID YOU START TO SEE REGULAR YOUNG PEOPLE COME IN?**

Since Hong Kong returned to China's sovereignty, there are fewer navy servicemen coming in. There was more naval presence from the UK back then. Since Hong Kong returned to China, the government doesn't allow as many warships near Hong Kong waters.

**DID THE CLIENTELE NUMBERS JUST DROP THEN?**

Yes, a lot. I only have Chinese clients now. I used to be in Tsim Sha Tsui, I started there but the building got knocked down, so I 🙄



*One day the apprentice turns up one day and says, "I am just going to start my own shop," and then I say, "OK go." I don't really care.*

*This Japanese guy really likes tattoos, and he would even pay for someone to get a tattoo, if the other person doesn't have money*



moved to Jordan, but that building got knocked down as well, so now I am in Mong Kok. But since I have moved here, I have had no foreign clients, because there are few foreigners that come to this area.

**DID YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH PINKY AND RICKY?**

Pinky is my dad's apprentice, his first apprentice, and Ricky is Pinky's apprentice. Pinky learnt from my dad, and once he had learnt everything, he started his own shop. I had no connection with him though. I have an apprentice though, who has a shop in Central (British artist Johnny D at the Dragon's Lair).

**WHAT IS THE SYSTEM HERE, DO YOUR APPRENTICES HAVE TO PAY YOU?**

They have to do general cleaning. There is no such thing as having to give money, it is just that one day the apprentice turns up one day and says, "I am just going to start my own shop," and then I say, "OK, go." I don't really care. My apprentice who is in Central was with me a year-and-a-half. I have had seven

apprentices and three have their own shops now. One or two went abroad, one is in Mexico, and one is in New York.

**DO THEY JUST CALL YOU OUT OF THE BLUE?**

Yes. I have another lady coming in from Sweden in two days!

**DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF AN ARTIST OR AN ARTISAN?**

An artisan. I am not an artist. There are others who can draw better than I do, so I don't consider myself an artist.

**YOU HAVE A LOT OF INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATES ALL OVER YOUR WALLS, HOW DID YOU GET CONNECTED IN THE ERA BEFORE FACEBOOK?**

I would travel a lot and I would get introduced by other tattoo artists. Then, when they would go back to their hometown, they would mail me a certificate. I never did conventions though, just studio visits.

**HOW DID YOU MEET HORIYOSHI III?**

I went to Japan to do tattoos; I

was invited by a Japanese person to tattoo there. One day, this Japanese guy came to my shop in Hong Kong and he invited me to go to Japan. This guy really likes tattoos, and he would even pay for someone to get a tattoo, if the other person doesn't have money. I don't know who he is! He got me over there, he paid for me and my girlfriend to go to Japan, and let me stay in a house in Yokohama, and also helped me to find clients.

**WHEN WAS THIS?**

It was in the '70s.

**SO THAT WAS WHEN YOU MET HORIYOSHI?**

Yes, he took me around to different tattoo parlours.

**WHAT IS THE APPEAL OF DOING TATTOOS FOR SO LONG?**

I started when I was 13 or 14, and I am now 69 years old. I just do it for a living. 🐉

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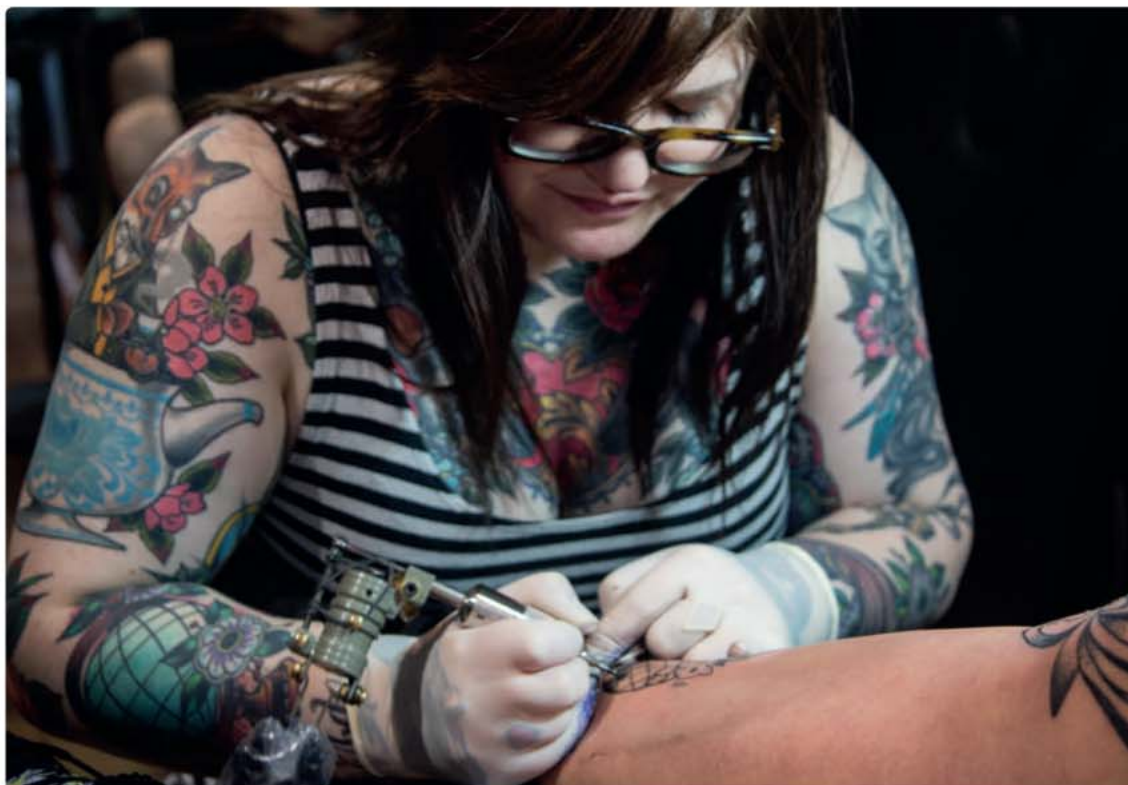
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## A SAVAGE GARDEN

Sometimes in the tattoo industry you are given the chance to watch an artist really blossom in their work, from a bud to a rose. Amy Victoria Savage first came to my attention two years ago, and was the one I trusted enough with my first tattoo...

**JAYNE DOE**, 60 Station Lane, Hornchurch RM12 6NB  
 Tel: 01708 479366 **Facebook:** facebook.com/Jaynedoetattoo

In the four years that Amy Savage has been a tattooist, she has built an online following of over 25,000, worked some of the nation's biggest conventions, as well as working guest spots in Europe. The 27-year-old is currently working at Jayne Doe, Essex, where she has been based for the last three years, working alongside Tiny Miss Becca, Matt Adamson, Nick Whybrow, and soon, Jody Dawber...

**SO AMY, WHERE DID YOUR TATTOO CAREER BEGIN? HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A TATTOOIST? DID YOU GO THROUGH AN APPRENTICESHIP?**

The start of my career was a little rocky, I ended up being messed

around by several studios and when I did get my apprenticeship, it wasn't perfect, however many aren't. I did learn all the important things about hygiene and was able to work from the clean environment of a shop, which really is essential! However, I would consider myself pretty self-taught, and four years later, I am still learning every day!

**I HEAR YOU'RE ORIGINALLY FROM THANET—WHAT'S IT LIKE THERE FOR AN ARTIST? INSPIRING? DO YOU GO BACK OFTEN?**

Haha, wow, you know so much! I did live in Kent before moving to Essex. I have previously lived in Brighton and Dorset also, so have always been on the southern

coast. The sea is endlessly beautiful and calming and inspiring for so many artists—being inland just doesn't feel like home. When I visit my family, I always sneak off to the beach or to the City of Canterbury, whether it's the sea or the City's architecture, I can't help but be inspired by my surroundings.

**WHAT LEAD YOU TO WORKING AT JAYNE DOE?**

I did my first guest spot at Jayne Doe about a year into my career. I was offered a job during my few days here and couldn't turn down the offer of working in such an established and well-known shop.

**PEOPLE OFTEN REFER TO A TATTOO SHOP AS 'FAMILY', HOW DOES** 🍷











**THE CREW AT JAYNE DOE WORK TOGETHER? ARE YOUR WORK ETHICS/STYLES THE SAME?**

I definitely agree with the term 'family'. All shops have dynamics and when you spend so much time together, it becomes a family. We all fight, have a laugh, listen to awful music... we seem to be known as a bit of an animal shop which isn't a bad thing—we can pretty much cater for animals in every style between us all!

**TAKE US THROUGH A TYPICAL WORK DAY, WHAT'S A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AMY SAVAGE LIKE?**

A typical day at work generally involves a lot of tattooing, listening to various '80s and '90s classics, chatting about nonsense with my clients, being generally excitable and squeaky... then going home to wrestle my naughty kitten, draw, and watch some rubbish TV!

**HAVE YOU ALWAYS HAD A FEMININE TOUCH TO YOUR NEO-TRADITIONAL STYLE OR IS IT SOMETHING YOU INTENTIONALLY DEVELOPED?**

I sometimes try to do more masculine tattoos and it just doesn't seem to work! I never

THE SEA IS ENDLESSLY BEAUTIFUL AND CALMING AND INSPIRING FOR SO MANY ARTISTS, BEING INLAND JUST DOESN'T FEEL LIKE HOME

intended to be so feminine in my work, but it seems I can't help it.

**WHAT'S INSPIRED YOU TO START BRANCHING INTO DOT WORK RECENTLY?**

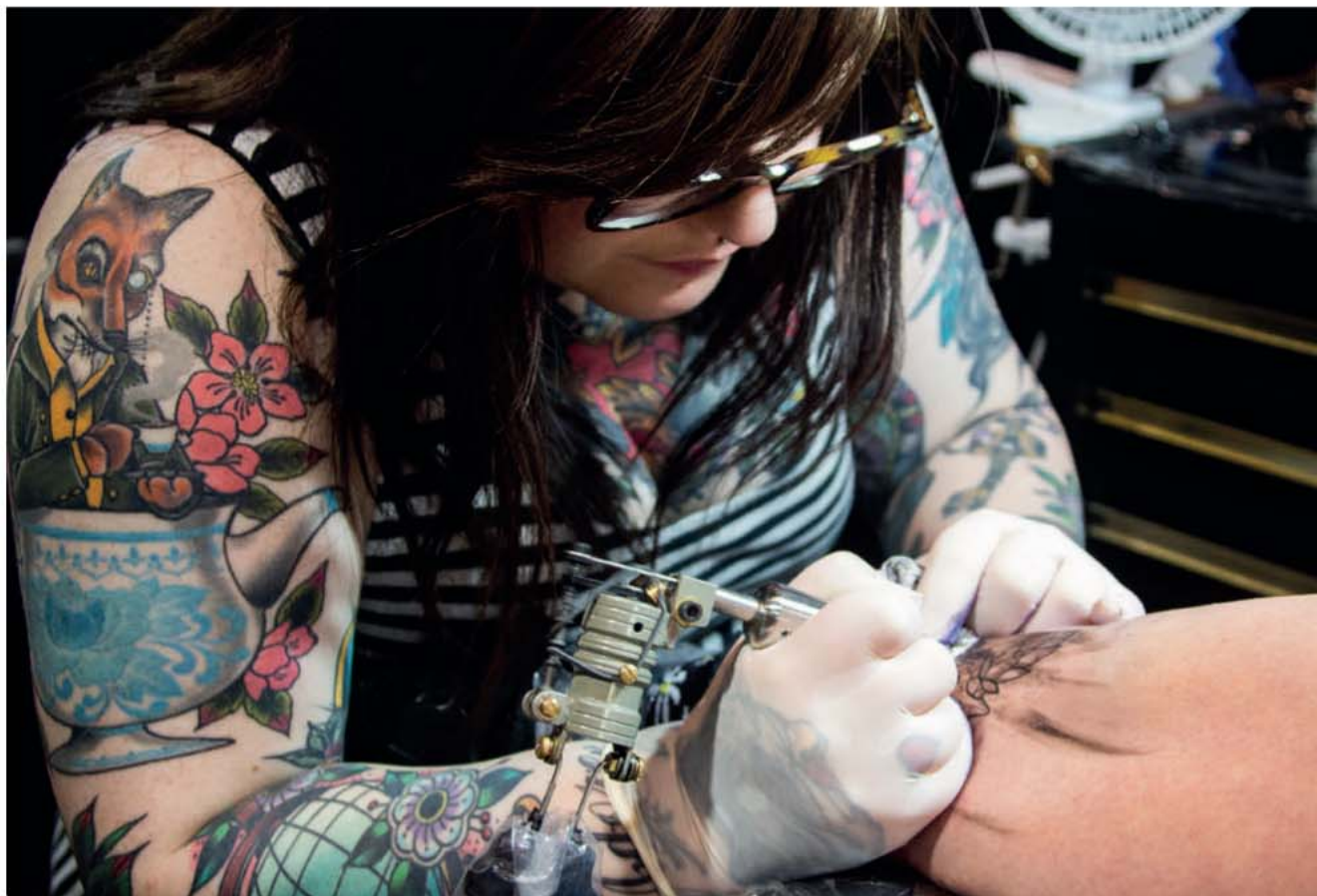
Well most tattooers paint in their spare time, but I've never been able to get to grips with it and have always given up after about five minutes. And bored of pencils, I started dotting... and dotting... until my arms wanted to drop off. I have been creating stippled pieces for so long on paper, however it didn't even cross my mind to tattoo that way until a colleague suggested it. I practiced some techniques (on his poor skin!) and in no time at all I was filling all my diary gaps with dotted creature tattoos. I really do enjoy doing it. I am really happy my career is heading in this direction as I find it very fulfilling to finally be putting these designs onto skin.

**YOUR LOVE FOR ANIMALS IS**

**CLEAR IN YOUR WORK AND THE CHARITY WORK THE SHOP DOES, TELL ME HOW THAT BEGAN?**

I have always been very aware of my admiration for animals; it started at a very young age. I spent all my teens volunteering at various establishments in an attempt to spread awareness and care for animals. I even have a degree in Animal Behavioural Science. However, I have always been torn between this and my love for drawing, and after completing my degree, I decided that being creative was what I needed to do. I am so happy that my tattoos display my love and respect for animals, however you all know rabbits are my favourite, right? Even better, I get to arrange charity days for the local wildlife hospital so we can give something back to such a great cause.

**DO I REMEMBER RIGHTLY THAT YOU'VE SAVED A FEW ANIMALS BEFORE? 🐾**



WE SEEM TO BE KNOWN AS A BIT OF AN ANIMAL SHOP WHICH ISN'T A BAD THING, WE CAN PRETTY MUCH CATER FOR ANIMALS IN EVERY STYLE BETWEEN US ALL!

When I was younger, I spent every Saturday volunteering at a garden centre, trying to enrich the lives of the poor rabbits that were kept there in bad conditions (as an attraction for mums and toddlers). I made sure they were at least able to leave their small hutches, be cleaned out and eat well once a week. Over the years of being there, I definitely re-homed a few... I guess I was 'saving' them. Luckily my mum was a soft touch when it came to adopting needy animals. My parents also recently bought a couple of lambs at a meat market, a matter of hours old, it was like having new born babies—three nightly feeds, so much love and a sheer lack of sleep. The first weeks were really touch and go. They were orphans being sold off cheap (one was £2) for meat. They are now living a lovely life

with a handful of wooly friends. They really were the lucky ones! They have such amazing personalities, I wish everyone could meet them and realise that each animal has a personality—whether it is bred for the sad purpose of human food, or not.

**25K FOLLOWERS ON INSTAGRAM! DOES THIS POPULARITY POSE ANY WORK PROBLEMS? FLAKY CLIENTS, COPYCAT TATTOOS?**

I think any amount of internet exposure can pose problems when it comes to copycats. However, copying is the greatest form of flattery, right? Haha. With negatives come positives and the exposure is endlessly useful when it comes to getting your work out there. It makes the world so much smaller—people can easily search for the right tattooist for

them and appreciate all the great work from around the globe!

**ARE THERE ANY OTHER ARTISTS YOU LOOK UP TO/ WHO INSPIRE YOUR WORK?**

This list is endless, I can appreciate an array of different artists working in different styles, including Claudia de Sabe, Xam, Seth Wood, Joao Bosco, Ryan Evans, to name a few, however my greatest inspiration has to be the natural world and the changing seasons!

**WHAT DOES THE NEXT YEAR HOLD FOR YOU? ANY GUEST SPOTS?**

Next year will be very exciting! I will be working part time at Jayne Doe which will leave me more time for guest spotting—around the UK and Europe! So keep your eyes peeled, I may be visiting near you :) 🐾

*Amy will be posting dates and locations of guest spots on her instagram, @amysavage*



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# DOUBLE DUTCH

Sometimes the 'truth' can be a wispy, insubstantial thing that dissolves under too much scrutiny...



Paula Hammond Car Tech

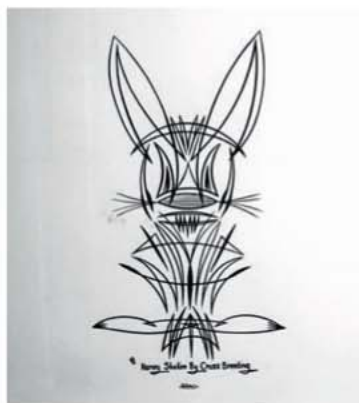
**L**isten to the tales told about Von Dutch and you'll hear that he was the first man to ever paint flames on a hot rod. That he single handedly inspired Kustom Culture. That he once pinstriped for ten days straight while sucking wine from a douche bag strung from the rafters. That he had to flee California after shooting a police helicopter. That he hung out with Steve McQueen. That he drank himself to death, having never made a penny from his art.

Some of these things—his impact on pop culture, his friendship with McQueen and tragic death—are

true. Some, well, who knows? Despite a legacy that includes sculptures, oils, handmade guns, knives and custom cars, Von Dutch spent his life studiously avoiding the limelight. Even Ed 'Big Daddy' Roth, who knew him better than most, called him a complete mystery.

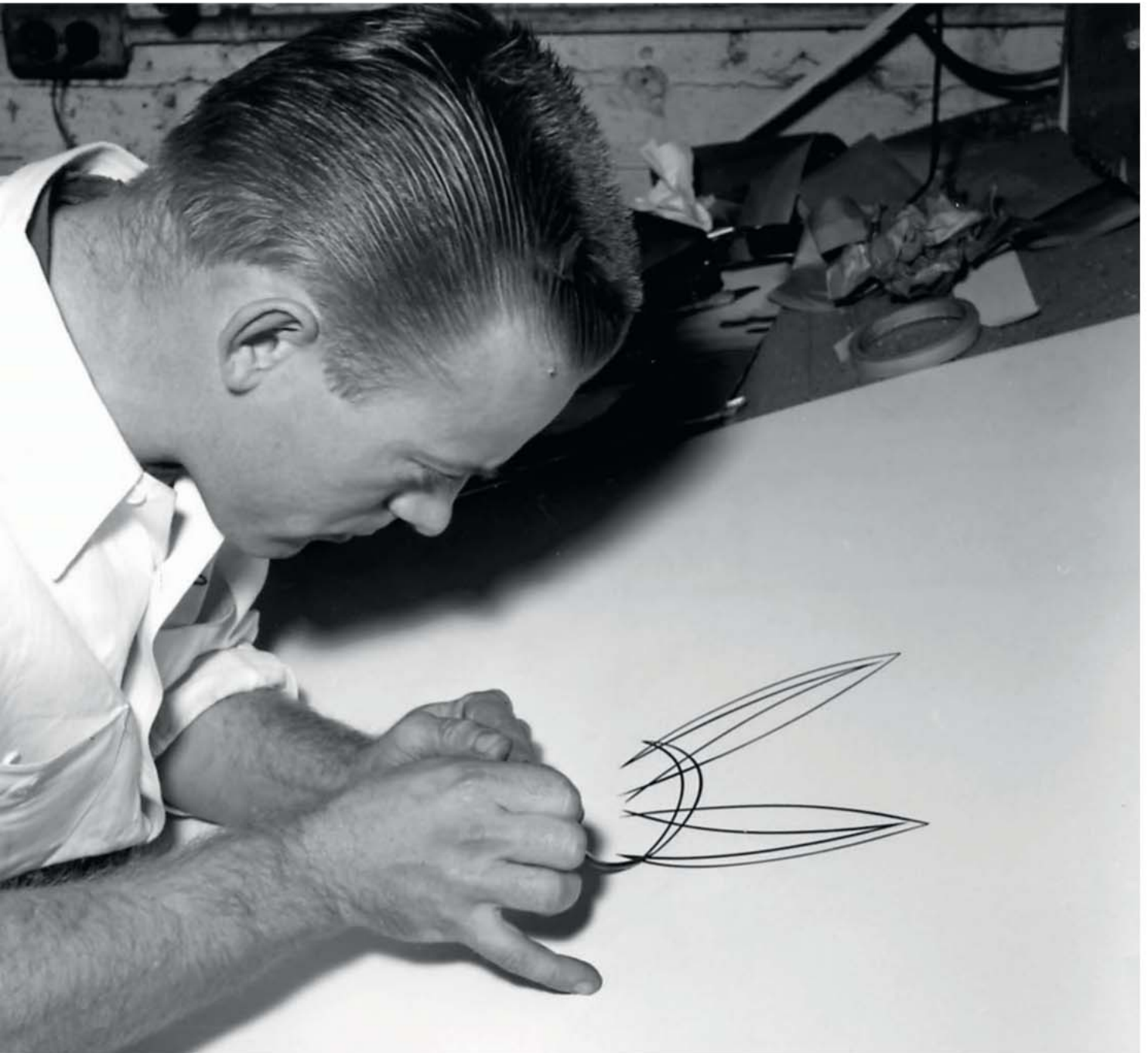
However, when picking through the myths that surround the man who called himself Von Dutch, it's easy to see why he still inspires tattooists and hot rodders. Von Dutch is about more than pinstriping and custom cars. He's about art and attitude.

The legend began in 1929, in a part of LA called Firestone where



Created as a piece of art for 'Car Crafts' magazine, in 1955. This whiskered, pinstriped rabbit was called Harvey after the giant invisible rabbit from the 1950 film of the same name. Von Dutch would incorporate small rabbits and cats in many of his pinstriping jobs as an unofficial signature.





the young Von Dutch—then simply called Kenny Howard—was born. Needless to say, you won't find Firestone on any map, if it ever actually existed. After school, he spent time in the army, but was eventually discharged for insubordination. The one thing we definitely know about Von Dutch is that he was an intransigent SOB.

Even the name 'Von Dutch' is a puzzle. Although it's widely believed that it came from his reputation for being as "stubborn as a Dutchman", it was Mausers and Messerschmitts that floated the young Kenny's boat, not clogs and cheese. The self-applied moni-

ker meant simply, 'from Germany'. Despite the fact that he had no German heritage, in interviews he would often claim to have arrived in the US after the war on a German U-Boat. In other tales, he was piloting a UFO. Von Dutch wasn't the type of guy to let truth get in the way of a good story.

#### WHADDYA GOT?

1950s Los Angeles was a melting pot of counter-cultures. The place surf bums, bikers, and beatniks came to play. For those teenage rebels, fast cars, bikes, and custom rods were part of a scene. What were they rebelling against?

Whaddya got?

How or when exactly Kenny Howard transformed himself into Von Dutch is hard to pin down. If there was some Robert Johnson crossroads moment, where the young Kenny traded his soul for demonic inspiration, then it isn't recorded. Chances are he learnt at least some of his formidable skills from his dad, Wally, who was a professional sign painter.

Certainly, by the early 1950s he was working out of the back of custom rod shops such as Christman's Garage on Atlantic Avenue. This was LA's great custom car corridor and Christman's was a 🍌



Dutch's oil paintings may not have been as refined as his striping, but his imagery and humour very much capture the spirit of the man. Today it seems oddly significant that in his 1964 'Goodbye Cruel World', only the flying eyeball comes through the grinder undamaged. Is this how Dutch viewed fame and his own legacy?

NOTHING IS ORIGINAL. EVERYTHING IS IN THE SUBCONSCIOUS. WE JUST TAP IT SOMETIMES AND THINK WE HAVE ORIGINATED SOMETHING... COPYRIGHT AND PATENTS ARE MOSTLY AN EGO TRIP

hub for those who loved speed and great looking rods.

If you wanted a car built, lettered, striped or painted, then you went to Christman's. It was there that Dutch gained his reputation as a man with talent, flair and just the right amount of crazy. Pinstriping was nothing new, but the combination of Christman's custom builds and Von Dutch's art won Christman's Garage star spots at car shows and spreads in must-read magazines like *Hot Rod*.

Ultimately fame found Dutch. He never really went looking for it. Nor, oddly, was he ever really that into cars. Bikes were more his scene. He didn't even really consider himself to be a pinstriper. "I'm good for about a year at a time with [pinstriping] then I go back to my regular job," he said. "I'm a sign writer and a gunsmith by trade. I do action modifications and re-caliber guns. I also make metal

engraving on shotguns and that sort of thing." It's probably the only time Dutch ever offered up anything like the truth in an interview.

**ART FOR ART'S SAKE**

So what was it about Dutch's work that led friends and colleagues to use words like 'genius'? Some of the imagery was pretty standard stuff for the time—faded flames, natty pinstripes and curlicues. The rest was pure Von Dutch. There were the enigmatic 'weirdoes'—quirky characters that he painted as graphics on hoods, interiors and louvers. His trademark pinstriped rabbit, named Harvey after Jimmy Stewart's invisible palooka. Not to forget his much used, abused and ripped off flying eye. But what first grabbed the public was his sensational pinstriping.

Pinstriping is the application of thin lines of paint to trucks, cars, bikes, and surfboards to create a

custom look. It can be done with decals but the real deal is done freehand. And Dutch wasn't just an innovator, he was a master of the art.

Imagine working on a car-body sized, curved canvas without templates and no preparatory sketches—where the slightest hesitation or twitch could ruin the whole piece. Imagine painting not just graphics but perfectly parallel stripes, 16 feet long, on either side of the car, by hand, without making a single mistake. Then imagine keeping that level of precision and control up for four hours straight and you'll appreciate the sheer technical skill involved.

It's also a reflection of the awe he inspired in his customers that there was little point requesting a specific image or colour. You got what Von Dutch wanted to paint—or rather what the car 'told' him to paint—or nothing at all. In a 1955 *Hot Rod* magazine feature, Dutch talked about adapting his style to suit each vehicle's vibes. "I call them amoeba designs because they are constantly changing their shape as I go along, blending to the 🍌"

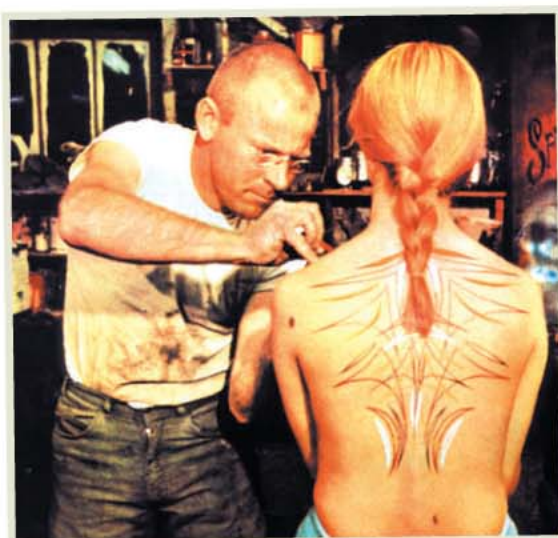


Dutch's famous flying eyeball, seen here painted on a T-shirt, went back to 1947. Much copied, especially by tattooists, this remains the quintessential Von Dutch image. Psychedelic poster guru, Rick Griffin, famously reworked it into a bloodshot figure with serpent-like tentacles.





A three-page article in the teen magazine, 'DIG', in 1956 represented Von Dutch's leap from car culture magazines into the wider public consciousness. The pictorial feature shows Dutch at home, surrounded by his oils, lamps made from disused horns (each one converted only after he'd mastered the instrument), and his handmade, motorized roller skates.



environment and mood." He got away with it because, he was just that good.

**DUTCH IN THE VALLEY**

By the '60s, LA had a thriving local arts scene with the 'LA Look' taking its cue from car culture and in-

HE LIKED TO DO HIS OWN THING. AND HE DIDN'T GIVE A SHIT WHETHER ANYBODY LIKED IT OR NOT

novators like Von Dutch. It's been said that if he'd moved to New York, he'd have been hailed as the new Warhol. Yet Von Dutch stayed studiously out of the spotlight in California's Valley—officially the uncoolest place on planet Earth.

He carried on striping, off and on, until his death in 1992, but was increasingly frustrated by a world that seemed to value fashion and prestige over artistry. Especially

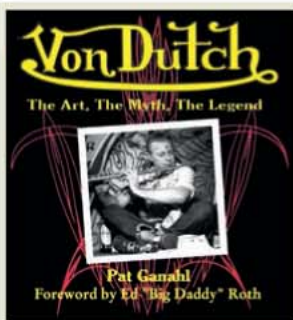
when so-called enthusiasts would rather have a lesser work carrying the Von Dutch label, than the unsigned pieces which he considered to be his very best.

Over the years, he had a few brushes with Hollywood, famously building the Winton Flyer for the movie, *The Reivers*. He worked with McQueen on *Le Mans* and appeared striping a naked girl in *You Are What You Eat*. Yet Von Dutch remained reclusive and elusive, preferring a life lived on his own terms to one where he was just

another cog in the fame factory.

Today, the Von Dutch brand is a multi-million dollar brand, owned by people who never even met the man. He never saw a penny of that money. But, you know, that's fine. He probably wouldn't have wanted it any other way. 🙄

*This article wouldn't have been possible without the guys at Car Tech and Pat Ganahl's wonderful book 'Von Dutch: The Art, The Myth, The Legend'. All images courtesy of Car Tech. Many thanks to all.*



**VON DUTCH: THE ART, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND**  
 Pat Ganahl  
 ISBN: 978-1-61325-158-4  
 Priced: \$29.95  
 Pages: 192  
 Publisher: CarTech

Acknowledged as the father of modern custom car pinstriping, Kenny Howard—who used the tag Von Dutch—was also a skilled painter, gunsmith, metal-worker, machinist, and legendary teller of tall tales. And therein lies the problem for any would-be biographer. Where do the tales end and reality begin?

In this heavily illustrated, wonderfully engaging book, Pat Ganahl tackles the unenviable task of attempting to uncover the man behind the myths. Yet, despite his tenacity, the real Von Dutch remains tantalisingly out of reach.

Like chasing an opium-fuelled Chinese Whisper, Ganahl catches just the occasional glimpse of the man who may or may not have been the 'real' Kenny Howard. Von Dutch as a schoolboy, bringing a German machine gun to show and tell. Von Dutch in a faded photo shooting the breeze, arms whirling like windmill blades. An older Von Dutch, wearing a wry smile and a pair of welding goggles to help his fading eyesight. These are memories battered by the tide swell of time. Memories of a man with talent and problems a-plenty who loved art, but hated artifice.

Using interviews, vintage photos, and the art that Von Dutch left behind, Ganahl produces a compelling portrait of a man who simply refused to play the game by anyone else's rules. It's an incomplete portrait, but it's the closest anyone will probably ever get to a 'life' of an artist who worked hard at being elusive.

Von Dutch was more than just the guy who drew the flying eye, and 'Von Dutch: The Art, The Myth, The Legend' more than just an homage to the man who drew it. It's an homage to the world of '50s American counter-culture that he helped shape.

As Ganahl comments, "I had no idea, no inkling, just how difficult this book would be to do... [and] yes much of Von Dutch's background will remain a mystery, and, yes, he will keep us wondering. But I do hope that this book has finally been able to capture the spirit of the man." It does. Kenny Howard may still lurk in the shadows, but thanks to Pat Ganahl's seminal volume, he's just come a little more in focus.

'Von Dutch: The Art, The Myth, The Legend' is now available in paperback. It can be ordered through PGUK in London by calling 01476 541000 or from CarTech's own website: [www.carttechbooks.com](http://www.carttechbooks.com).





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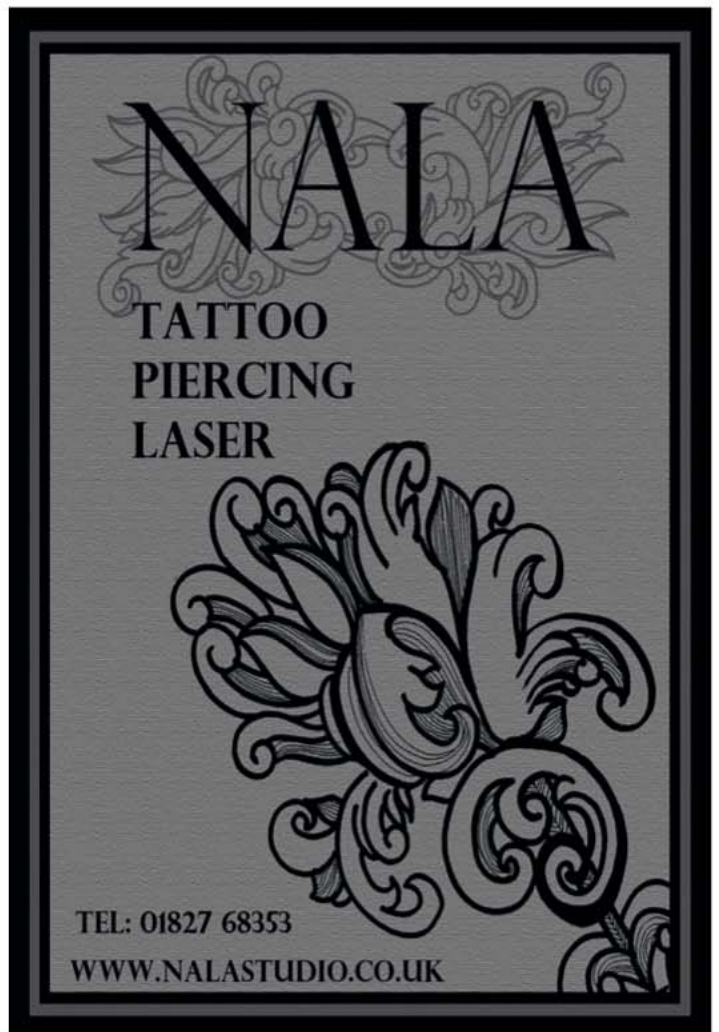
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# NOT SO GENTLE JAY

Jay Blondel, AKA Gentle Jay, will forever be known as one of Ink Master's most outspoken and provocative contestants. After all, not many tattooers would have the balls to call out the judges for being wrong, but this Brooklyn native is cut from a different cloth and everything he does shows massive respect for the "most hardcore art form there is"



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**D**on't let the nickname fool you; Gentle Jay is only gentle when he's tattooing. Otherwise, Jay Blondel, who started in the industry in 1999 and now works at Amity Irons Tattoo in New York, is brutally honest, which helped make him a standout star on *Ink Master* season 4.

Naturally, the opportunity to catch up with Blondel and ask him about his roots, why he accused a fellow contestant of tracing and, of course, the haters couldn't be passed up. Rest assured, Gentle Jay is as outspoken as ever...

**BLONDEL 101**

"I got the name when I tattooed a guy I used to work with,"

explains Blondel when asked about his seemingly unfitting moniker. "He, being a very old school heavy-handed tattooer, couldn't believe that he could barely feel me tattooing him.

"If you know tattoo artists, then you know we love to laugh, so of course there are jokes about absolutely anything and everything and he started calling me Feather Fingers and a bunch of other stuff. Gentle Jay popped out of his mouth and it just sort of stuck."

First introduced to ink when he saw his grandfather's shoulder tattoo, which was "done with bamboo during WWII when he was in the U.S. Navy in the Philippine Islands", as well as the pieces on his two uncles

"who had them from being in the service", Blondel "was amazed at how you couldn't rub them off. I knew I was going to be getting tattooed at a very young age!"

Fully aware of his passion for art, but uncertain how to monetize it, Blondel enrolled in Manhattan's School of Visual Arts, only to drop out after one semester. "For a long time I was just lost," he admits.

"I had asked some people about tattooing, but they all discouraged me, including the guy who did my first two tattoos. He said things like 'Nah, you don't wanna be a tattooer, kid, you would be better off with a real job.'

"I wish I would have known how wrong they all were, because it wasn't until five years later that 🙄"

Barbara Pavone

HE SAID THINGS LIKE 'NAH,  
YOU DON'T WANNA BE A  
TATTOOER, KID, YOU WOULD BE  
BETTER OFF WITH A REAL JOB'



**GENTLE JAY ON... INK MASTER AUDITIONS**

The audition process is weird because you never know what they want and they won't tell you. You're either 'it' or you're not—it's that simple. I don't even know what 'it' is, but evidently, I'm 'it'.



# KNOWLEDGE IS PRECIOUS AND EVERYONE IN THE WORLD KNOWS AT LEAST ONE THING THAT YOU DON'T, SO WHEN YOU MEET PEOPLE, DON'T BE A DICK

## GENTLE JAY ON... BEING ELIMINATED

The judges "got it WAY wrong. Melissa Monroe should have gone home on the mermaid she fucked up. But I didn't face Melissa that day - I faced Scott Marshall and Matti Hixson, with some quiet hints from Halo that he still thinks I don't know about. She made none of her own decisions, therefore, it was me versus four artists and they still barely got the victory."

tattooing found me. I was working in a pool hall and doing a bunch of other things that I shouldn't have been doing when a friend saw some things I had drawn and introduced me to people who could help me get me started. Long story short, the first time I ever held a tattoo machine, I knew immediately that was my calling."

Like with most things in life, "the beginning is usually the hardest part and once you build up some momentum, you move along nicely", but Blondel was faced with one exceptionally hard challenge. "Learning how to humble myself and ask another artist, who is better than me at something, to show me how to do it better and to take the criticism that I'm given as a gift, not an insult. Knowledge is precious and everyone in the world knows at least one thing that you don't, so when you meet people, don't be a dick. Free life lesson right there!" he laughs.

## TELEVISION JOURNEY

After "working at a shop that was completely mismanaged by an owner who lied about his experience and probably all of his other credentials", Blondel ended up at Alchemy Tattoo Arts in Long Island, New York, thanks to a pretty wild twist of fate.

"Alchemy is a custom shop that doesn't try to attract walk-ins, so I hadn't heard of it until it was open for over a year," he starts. "I heard they had a spot open, so I went. Remember I told you about the guy who did my first two tattoos and discouraged me from being a tattoo artist? Yeah, that's who I worked for! The universe has a funny way of working itself out."

Most recently, Blondel joined the team at Amity Irons Tattoo, but not before a highly successful (and memorable) stint on television.

After watching Ink Master on TV, Blondel dug the show so much, he decided to apply and was accepted

as a contestant on Season 4. But even though he was going in as a fan, facing off against fellow artists while being judged by Oliver Peck, Chris Núñez and Dave Navarro was nothing like he had expected.

"I was one of those guys on the couch talking about how I would have done this and that and told this guy off and so on and then I learned about the magic of TV and how none of that shit is as easy as it looks," explains Blondel and adds, "The lights, cameras, boom microphones and time limits can affect you and what you do and how you think. For anyone who thinks they can do better, my advice is: shut your mouth and show me."

As for the negative feedback his stint on reality TV has sparked, Blondel isn't exactly fazed by it. Not that anyone expected him to be.

"I don't consider people talking shit to be backlash because people



## I DON'T WASTE MY TIME. LET THE HATERS HATE—IT'S WHAT THEY DO

are going to talk shit no matter what happens," he says. "I can't get upset about someone thinking that they hate me, because they don't know me. They aren't talking about me, they're talking about a three-second snip from a television show. If a person is dumb enough to think they know me from just that, then they aren't going to be smart enough to reason with, so I don't waste my time. Let the haters hate—it's what they do."

One of the most memorable moments in Ink Master history came when Blondel ruffled serious feathers by accusing Scott Marshall, who went on to win Season 4, of tracing.

"I don't believe in regrets and I stand by everything I said and did," he admits. "I won't bring up all the proof I had that never got shown because that argument is over and done. I will say that

after the show, Scott Marshall and I worked next to each other at a convention in Tampa, Florida and what started out a little tense ended with us burying the hatchet. As long as I don't ever have to live in a house again while competing against and bunking next to him, we will be just fine!"

### ONWARDS & UPWARDS

When he's not tattooing, travelling the country to attend conventions or meeting fans, Blondel tries to make time for his second passion: "Motorcycles, fast cars, jumping out of a perfectly functioning aircraft just because. I have always been a fan of adrenaline highs and anything that can cause them."

To balance that out, Blondel reveals "most people are surprised when they find out that I like to cook. I cook all kinds of food, but breakfast is my favorite. I can eat breakfast at any time of the day and I can make a serious omelet."

Now, Blondel has his sights set on travelling abroad—"I've always wanted to see some of the places that my family came from



in Europe"—and if there's one thing he's hoping to help educate people about, it's "the fact that this is the most hardcore art form there is".

"I've seen guys that can paint and sculpt and draw, and everything they do looks amazing. But then you hand them a tattoo machine and they're useless. Tattoo artists are a different breed. There is an ingredient that you can't quite identify, but you can tell who has it and who doesn't." 🐛

# Tattoo FREEZE

## 11 JANUARY 2015

As always, the biting cold made an appearance and as luck would have it, so did an excess of new talent. What a great start to 2015!

I always look forward to our shows, but Tattoo Freeze is the first gathering post Christmas and that always makes it a little bit special.

It's like reconnecting with the family after an enforced break.

This year was a little different. A look at the artist list before the show raised more than an eyebrow or two around here—who were all these new people who had not been seen at the shows before? More than anyone (I hope), I really thrive on meeting new and talented tattooers and artists for the simple reason that nothing gives me a bigger kick than giving them a bunk up over the wall.

Before we throw the blanket off though, it was great to see some friends and sink a few drinks the night before the big game. Jen and Paula from Triplesix, Sam Barber, Sonny Mitchell, Miss Jo Black, Ollie Tye and Chris Jones—but come the morning it was like a whole new landscape before us. The usual chain of events is for Trent and myself to wander the floor saying hello and checking out what's been going on in the world, but there were faces we didn't know, and many of them too. What's a man to do but start



**IT'S VERY SATISFYING TO SEE A TATTOO BEING WORKED IN THE OLD WAY. NOT SOMETHING YOU WOULD WANT TO DO EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK ANYMORE, BUT SATISFYING ALL THE SAME**

at the beginning with those you do and take in the others secretly on your way round.

I've met Cesar deCesaro from Body Garden a couple of times now, but today he had a real peach on the go in the shape of a full Muscha-inspired sleeve that was going to be really something when finished... which I assume it wasn't, otherwise I would have seen it. But all the same, it was looking hot on the various number of sweeps by his booth.

Dek Kent has also been

laying rubber recently and started the day with a great looking Odin piece on his brother—and if you can't tattoo your brother with the face of Anthony Hopkins, who can you tattoo?

Another man busy tearing up the streets right now is Glen Cuzen. I think he would be the first to admit that it took him a while to find his niche in tattooing, but now he has with some seriously off the scale dot work, he's sectioned it off with a big fence—the piece he finished off on the day was 🍌



Winner Best Avant Garde  
Lee McMahon, Midlands Tattoo Centre



Winner Best Colour  
Richy Price, Sutton Ink

Winner Best Realism  
Anita Riley, Custom Tattoos



Winner Best Black & Dotwork  
Glenn Cuzen, Top Gun Tattoo





Winner Best Oriental

Winner Best Black & Grey

Alan Turner, Big Al's Tattoo Studio

Craig Bartlett, Adorned Tattoo



Winner Best of Convention

Mim Hennessy-Mann, Just Add Ink







**IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR JAPANESE WORK WITHOUT GOING TO JAPAN, IT'S GOOD TO SEE THAT AUTHENTIC WORK IS AVAILABLE IF YOU WANT IT NOT SO FAR FROM HOME**

so very fine, it's quite scary to think where he might go in the next 12 months.

Since the last time we featured Hollie-May, she has also really found her feet with her own style. Today's contribution was one of the bigger pieces I've seen from Hollie and she's really pushing hard at what her illustrative style can do, so if you're a fan, keep your eyes firmly glued there for the future. I think it will throw up some interesting goodies.

At some point during the afternoon, I lost Trent to Marc Nutley who was tattooing him using "the old ways"—the prelude to that story is somewhere else in this issue and if you missed it, the conclusion will be in the next issue. It was a fine mini-event and we were all agreed that it's very satisfying to see a tattoo being worked in the old way; not something you would want to do every

day of the week anymore, but satisfying all the same.

You'll be surprised how fast a single day can go when you're trying to pack everything possible in, but sooner or later, personal plans are derailed by 'the phone call'. The one that calls you to the stage for judging. Despite wandering around and checking in on what people are doing, the aim of the game is to not really know who has tattooed anything when you're sitting at that big table on the stage. It's hard not to look actually. Hard not to be interested, but when you know the work of an artist at 20 paces, you may as well stop and pore over it. For example, if Hollie-May entered a tattoo into the competition, we would all know it was hers by the style anyway, so may as well say hi and give some props along the way.

And then they come... at a frightening rate and you blank!



Winner 'Hide' by Liam Crawley

**WINNERS LIST**

**BEST COLOUR**

Richy Price of Sutton Ink

**BEST PORTRAIT**

Tony Evans of Opulent Ink

**BEST ORIENTAL**

Alan Turner of Big Al's Tattoo Studio

**BEST AVANT GARDE**

Lee McMahon of Midlands Tattoo Centre

**BEST REALISM**

Anita Riley of Custom Tattoos

**BEST BLACK & GREY**

Craig Bartlett of Adorned Tattoo

**BEST BLACK & DOTWORK**

Glenn Cuzen of Top Gun Tattoo

**BEST OF CONVENTION**

Mim Hennessy-Mann of Just Add Ink

All there is, is what's in front of you at the time, followed by another and another—and so it continues into the hundreds. Notable amongst the throng—or at least in my head—were a fine realism piece from Anita Riley that I fell in love with even as I saw it coming onto the stage; a beautiful four eyed black and grey cat from Craig Bartlett; and the piece that Glenn had been working on all day as previously mentioned (which turned out just great)—all of which took awards home in unanimous decisions.

Some of the others were a little more evenly fought though—it always happens—arguing quietly on the stage, so quietly in fact that if you were looking you probably 🙄



Winner Best Portrait

Tony Evans, Opulent Ink

wouldn't notice. The Oriental category was tough. There were two pieces both worthy of note, but how do you call it sometimes? As it happens, Alan Turner tipped it, but if you're looking for Japanese work without going to Japan, it's good to see that authentic work is available if you want it not so far from home.

I think we made a little mistake having the realism category right after the portrait category—that made an incredibly long line of tattoos that didn't really deviate. That made it tough, but you're always learning around here and Tony Evans taking the gold for his portrait made me happy. Tony's a great guy who more people should check out if you want my heartfelt opinion on it.

Wrapping the whole thing up? Mim Hennessy-Mann—whose name or work I had never seen before in my life—walked home with the Best of Convention trophy. I say 'walked' but I saw her a couple of times after the show too and she was still shaking like she'd just had all her wisdom teeth taken out at once.

So, there you go. This year's show, was probably the most



## THIS YEAR'S SHOW, WAS PROBABLY THE MOST DIVERSE TATTOO FREEZE I'VE EVER JUDGED

diverse Tattoo Freeze I've ever judged. There was so much work that was marked highly and so much that I also didn't have a clue where it came from that it was invigorating. Seriously, it's wonderful to discover artists who you've never really paid attention to before.

Finally, one of the best things about Tattoo Freeze is that it's a family show. Seeing kids around the place and having a good time gives it a slightly different dimension than our other shows. There's some top flight face-painting on the boil (not exclusive to kids either)—but regulars to the convention circuit are also more inclined to bring their

friends and parents (you'd think they had seen enough of them over the holidays, but there you go), and all of these 'bolt-ons' to the show expose a lot of people to just how much fun tattooing is. I guess if you've never been before, the thought of a tattoo convention (any tattoo convention) could be pretty intimidating, but they're not and that's one of the things this show is great at. Next year... the only thing I can guarantee is that it will be cold again. Other than that, if you've never been, come along because it's a real blast.

Full photo coverage from the show is available in issue 97 of *Skin Shots*—which is available right now. 📷

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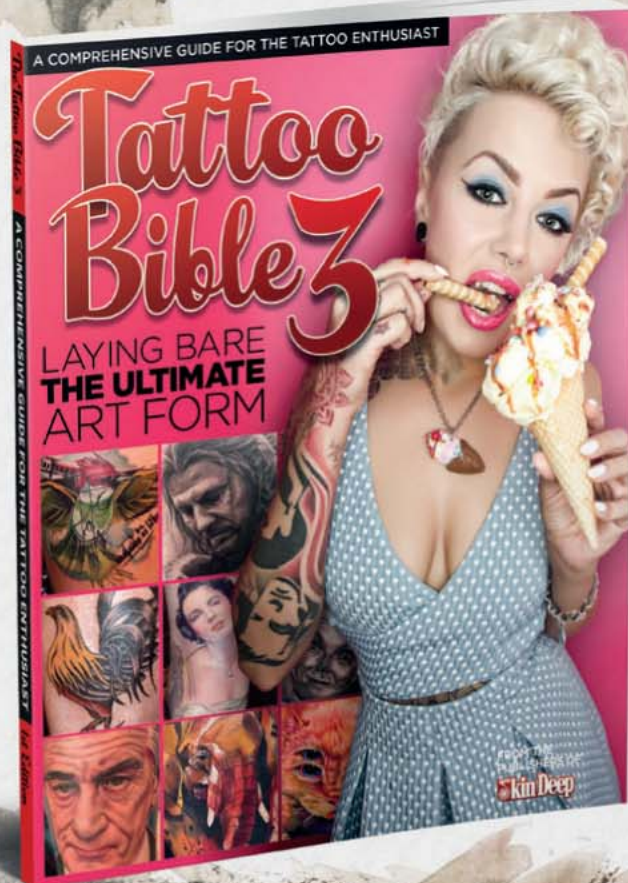
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# The Time Machine

WAYNE JOYCE

Here's a good question for you: what should you pay for your removal? Should the pricing be based on the quality of the equipment being used and the knowledge of your technician or do you think it should be for time spent in the chair?

**H**ow much your removal is going to cost is likely to be one of the very first questions you're going to ask that's for sure.

Lasering sessions are usually very quick and charging per hour is just not a viable option. Pricing should be, at least where I'm concerned, based on size and density of the tattoo. The bigger the tattoo, the more costly the removal no matter what technology you decide to use. So whether you're in my chair for ten minutes or for an hour, there are still overheads in order for that chair to be provided. It's the same basic principle as tattooing—whatever it is you're looking at working on, needles and preparation will still need to be take place and up to a certain point, that price will always be a constant.

With the better machines costing close on £200k and the not so good machines costing about £10k, is it not logical that the more expensive the overheads in providing the service, the more costly the treatments will be?

The nitty gritty of it is, the more expensive the machine, the more expensive the treatment—with the payoff being better results. Fact!

I'm not cheap here and that's because I've worked very hard to gain my knowledge and put my cock on the block with a lot of debt so that I can provide the best options for my clients. If you ask me why, I'll tell you it's because I love what I do. The highs are hard to beat. I have an awful lot

of clients who've spent a good chunk of their hard earned cash and gotten some amazing results but I do also have some clients who feel hard done by because they didn't get the results they expected—but we've talked about expectation before here.

In fact that's a life lesson whatever you happen to be talking about. Expectation can ruin everything if you let it. Let's not forget—up until a very short time ago, a tattoo was for life and none of us questioned it. Ever. Even though it can be expensive, there are never any guarantees with removal. Picking the

places with the better tech however will provide greater peace of mind when the results start showing. Choosing a service purely because they're cheaper, doesn't mean you'll get the results you want—again, this is much the same as when we're talking about putting the tattoos on—and you'll probably find yourself spending more in the long run because it'll take more sessions and not to mention all the aggravation of those extra sessions.

Weighing it up basically brings it back to cash. Cash will come and cash will go, that's why we call it cash flow, but your skin you'll have with you forever. Be pragmatic—there's that word again—and think about what price you'll put on the aesthetic condition of your skin at the end of all the treatments.

Is it worth risking a hit n run solution to save a bit of cash or is paying to get it done properly the right thing to do? Your choice. 🐼

As always, if you have any questions or want to discuss something, you can email me at: [wayne@resetroom.com](mailto:wayne@resetroom.com)



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

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# Soapbox

CRAIGY LEE

Craigy Lee Ash Springle

I was scrolling through facebook last week when a status popped up from Mat Lapping questioning the amount of artists that seem to be sponsored by new or unknown supply companies at the moment.

Maybe it's just a sign that our beloved craft is growing into a huge money making industry, where everyone is trying to get a piece of the cake, but it seems everyone from the gutters up to the heavens is pushing something. Every time I look at tattoos on my feed, there seem to be a million hashtags on every photo tagging everything from tattoo machines and ink to kitchen paper towel and razors.

A decade or so ago, it was only the top artists around the world that managed to get sponsorship deals with supply company's, inks, needles or whatever else they thought was good enough to use. The company got a push from that artist and other artists around the world saw what they were using, picked up on it and started to use the products themselves.

This is after all, how sponsorship works: these companys are not giving away products from the goodness of their heart, they are giving it to a select few in the hopes the rest will see—then want—said product and buy it: thus making the company money. So ultimately, this meant if you were sponsored you were top of your game, you were somebody that other artists looked up to.

It's one of the core principles of advertising and how it works. When people see Johnny Depp wearing Police sunglasses, others want them too. Did he pay for them? Maybe. Maybe not.

Where tattooing is concerned however, it was once a sure sign of quality work.

Similar to winning an award for tattooing: a decade or so ago, there were only a handful of tattoo conventions in the UK, so to be an



“award winning tattoo artist” actually meant something. Competition was stiff and there were only a few times a year you stood a chance of actually winning an award.

Fast forward ten years. Now there seems to be a tattoo show every weekend, I even worked a small tattoo show a few years ago where there was something in the region of 30 categories for tattoo styles and almost every single artist at the show won an award—either first or second place. So all of a sudden, it becomes pretty meaningless when we're all winners - it's like sports day at infant school.

If you can pick up an award for tattooing as easily as a first school swimming certificate, it isn't a sign of quality or being the best anymore but many can be easily fooled into thinking it is.

So be wary. Don't go to an artist just because they are advertising “award winning artist” or “sponsored artist” it's a minefield out there.

Always do your homework and check out their tattoo work in their portfolio in the shop or on the internet.

As Mr Smith is fond of saying about things such as this: “When you point at everything, you point at nothing.”

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

# An Eye is upon you

## 'IF YOU WANT TO BE A F\*\*KING INDIVIDUAL, DON'T GET A TATTOO' — Ozzy Osbourne

So there it is, that often paraphrased quote from the Brummie Prince of Darkness; Ozzy's futile attempt to dissuade his children from following his path, once emblazoned on billboards, now repeatedly regurgitated in the comments sections of online newspapers



■ Pam Van-Damned

Yet, it seems, his point stands—tattoos now appear to be ubiquitous. Tattoo-haters and tattoo-lovers rarely agree but both are seemingly united on one supposition, that tattoos are becoming 'too popular'. Why detractors find this problematic, is obvious - they consider the personal aesthetic choices of others to be a public assault on the eye, but why is it also problematic for those that do like tattoos? What, exactly, are tattoos too popular for?

Human beings seem to occupy a paradoxical place when it comes to the things we love, if we discover a new band, we want to share our discovery with others, but if the beloved band become successful, we can be left wistful for how it was before. Having or knowing something 'first' makes us feel special, and our love of nostalgia can be sufficiently strong that we can even push aside fact to make more room for ego.

That's not say that needing, or wanting to feel special is intrinsically bad. Each of us is a tiny speck in a vast universe, just one of 7 billion. So it's understandable that many of us find thinking of ourselves as 'snowflakes' entirely more palatable than, say 'dust'.

Tattoos have become part of this self-told narrative of individuality. Being a tattooed person makes one feel purposefully different in an increasingly homogenous Photoshop and cosmetic surgery driven world, a world where beauty and banality are more or less the same thing. It's understandable

then, that those of us invested in this ideology of difference are angered to find so many others in our wake, after all, lots of snowflakes? Just snow.

Yet tattoos haven't always been associated with difference, rather, many of the earliest examples were signs of the tribe, or physical traces of a shared spiritual understanding. Now, within modern diasporas there are those that seek to rediscover and reinstate the marks of their seemingly lost cultural heritage. Others tap into this ancient sense of belonging for entirely contemporary reasons, football fans, gang members, even One Direction-ers use tattoos to solidify their affinities and display their allegiances.

Tattoo art itself only began to prize originality in the relatively recent past. The three traditions of tattooing, Tribal, Japanese and Western, became traditional by dint of repetition and any variance was due to the nature of the hand made. In the East, Japanese tattooers laboriously hand poked over designs drawn onto the body by other artists, in the West, multiple editions of a single design were produced from the same acetate stencil. Custom tattoos, worn only by the commissioning collector, became viable when technology reduced the manual work of tattoo preparation, but still, not everyone wants an individual tattoo. Coveting what we see is what the multi million pound industry of advertising is based on. Adverts are so deliberate in the exploitation

of our urge to accumulate, and so commonplace, that it's no wonder that some of us became consumers of pre existing tattoos.

I've come across copies of my own tattoos, and have been surprised to find myself neither annoyed nor flattered, only saddened that an opportunity for something different had been missed. Yet this is yet another paradox, for many of my own tattoos are also not different, rather, they are reimaginings of traditional thematics. I can play games of skin-picture bingo with other enthusiasts, skull, rose, dagger - is this collecting in the everyday 'full set' sense, rather than the luxury 'art collection' sense? I like to think so.

I've come to think of those that have the same tattoos as me, whether through replication or tradition, as a kind of family. Parents, siblings, even twins. There are even real twins out there with tattoos as identical as their shared DNA - does this duplication make them less special, or more special?

In the David Lynch film, *Wild at Heart*, Nicolas Cage plays Sailor, a man who repeatedly asserts to onlookers that the snakeskin jacket he wears is a symbol of his 'originality and belief in personal freedom'. I ask you, what happens if everyone wears a snakeskin jacket? Is preventing the decline in one person's 'originality' more pressing than protecting everyone else's personal freedom? I hope not.

Tattoos can never be 'too popular', for they are the art of people, and if the people want them, they must have them. 🐉



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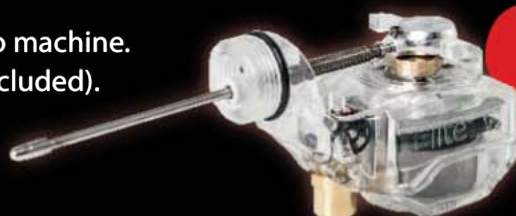
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