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MODEL: BECKY HOLT PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT COLE

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GET IN THE RING

As you may have noticed from the cover, it's our 250th issue. What it doesn't tell you on the cover is it's also our 21st birthday. There should be a badge. A badge about four inches wide that says "21 AND INKED UP"... or similar. I should have pushed for a badge with every issue but it occurred to me that maybe, just maybe, not all of our readers are 21.

There's a bagful of inking years between 18 and 21. I wouldn't want anybody to fall in the cracks. It's a tricky business being 21 that's for sure... then again, the rest of us might appreciate it.

Anyway, to mark our official growing up year, as discussed last issue, we flicked the off switch on the internet and sat around by candlelight with a box of Sharpies for a redesign. Not a whole lot, but enough so that when it goes out in public, it looks like it means business... and I for one am more than pleased with the results—and we haven't finished yet.

In spite (or should that be despite? I can never remember) of the rest of the world treating tattooing like some Easter Island statues just turned up on the bank of the Thames, we have a fantastic readership. Smart, sassy and a whole bunch of other things that make it worth getting up in the morning.

Things are changing. The pressure for your attention is unbelievable but one of the things that makes tattooing a successful renegade outsider amongst the noise, is it's a truly analogue art. Over the years, we've all seen 'advances' in technology that will 'help' you choose what you want to put into your skin and where, but it all fades to insignificant grey when you enter a studio to find an artist hunkering down to prep a design for the real world. I get a kick out of it every single time—sometimes even more than the tattoo itself because it's uninterrupted by time and blood. It triggers something inside of me that recognises a person doing real work. When you get that far, it's no longer just noise, it's not posturing. It's a real world item with a purpose.

What we need around our lives is more shit that uses time and attention properly other-



MIKE BOYD @ THE CIRCLE



SION SMITH • EDITOR
editor@skindeep.co.uk
@mrsionsmith

**THE LAST TIME YOU WANT
TO FIND OUT YOU'RE NOT
IN SHAPE IS WHEN THE
BELL RINGS**

wise, we're in danger of losing any sense of anticipation and magic. Sometimes, it's like we live in a world in which all of your Christmas presents have a label on them telling you what's inside.

To bring it full circle, if I got most of my ducks in a straight line here, this new approach will bring you some of that magic on a four weekly basis. Things are changing fast out there. The last time you want to find out you're not in shape is when the bell rings. ▣

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This issue, it's an absolute pleasure to clash heads with the one and only, the inimitable, Becky Holt.

22 ROAD TRIP

On the road, you can meet some cool people—and then we met Sailor Jerry Rum National Brand Ambassadors Daniel 'Gravy' Thomas and Paul Monahan. It was then we realised there was another job out there that's pretty damn cool too.

32 STEAFANO ALCANTARA

Tracing the trajectory of a star as it pilots itself through the sky is no easy task but it has to be easier than trying to keep pace with Stefano Alcantara: The Man Who Never Stops Moving.

60 REBEL YELL

With their carefully primped Mohawks, studded jackets and elaborate tattoos Kyaw Kyaw and his mates look like any other fashion conscious guys getting ready for a night on the town. But for Yangon's punks, the hair, the clothes, and the ink are more than just a fashion statement—they're a declaration of war.

66 JAY FREESTYLE

One glance at Jay Freestyle and the work falling out of his head will be more than enough to convince you that you're in the presence of an 'anything is possible' artist. Fact of the matter is, what Jay has going on is simply magical.

72 SOHO ROCKS

London's vibrant district of Soho is considered to be one of the most creative places in the world. Becca Rimmer was itching to explore whether Soho's tattoo scene played any part in its bustling identity, so we gave her some bus fare...

80 DAVID TEJERO

Already an accomplished tattooer in Barcelona, Tejero is known for his black and grey style and isn't a follower of industry trends. Let's see what he's made of.

86 CAMERA OBSCURA

That guy—the one that shoots a lot of our covers around here—he put out a book and boy, is it ever good!

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THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

Pascal Bagot
Nicky Connor
Paula Hammond
Paula Hardy Kangelos
Wayne Joyce
Barbara Pavone
Becca Rimmer

COVER PHOTO
Scott Cole

EDITOR

Sion Smith
editor@skindeep.co.uk
07841 999334

DESIGN

David Gamble
david@jazzpublishing.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES

Katy Cuffin
magazines@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 501

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Justine Hart
production@skindeep.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 235

ACCOUNTS & ADMIN MANAGER

Emma McCrindle
accounts@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 207

ADMINISTRATION

Jan Schafield
jan@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 219

ADMINISTRATION

Asher Lloyd
asher.lloyd@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 275

CREDIT CONTROL

Pam Coleman
pam@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 215

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Mark McCarthy
mark@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 304

SKIN DEEP SALES EXECUTIVE

Dee Lewis
advertising@skindeep.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 214

DIGITAL CONTENT

Gareth Williams
gareth.williams@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 302

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

David Arthur
david.arthur@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 208

EVENTS DIRECTOR

Shelley Bond
shelley@jazzevents.co.uk
01244 881888 ext. 303

DEPUTY PUBLISHER

Fergus McShane
fergus@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Stuart Mears
stuart@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888

DISTRIBUTION

Susan Saunders
susan.saunders@seymour.co.uk
0207 429 4073

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U.S. ARMY RELAXES RULES

The U.S. Army has revised its policy on tattoos on soldiers to make it less restrictive, paving the way for some men and women to enlist who previously couldn't. "The Army adjusted the tattoo policy based on feedback from leaders and soldiers," a spokesperson confirmed, adding that the update will go into effect when it is officially published as an Army regulation "in the very near future."

Under the revised policy, there will no longer be a limit on the size or number of tattoos permitted on a soldier's arms and legs, provided they aren't racist, extremist or vulgar and aren't visible when the person is in uniform. Tattoos will still be prohibited above the t-shirt neckline, on the head, face, wrists and hands. The only exception will be a single ring tattoo on each hand—so we'll expect an explosion in the department shall we?



THAT DRAGON GIRL

Not entirely on point for a news item, but the very fact that Lisbeth Salander had a tattoo at all made 'The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo' a hot property in the ink community. The next book in the acclaimed 'Millennium' series by the late Stieg Larsson will be called 'The Girl in the Spider's Web,' and will continue the story of Lisbeth Salander and Mikael Blomqvist.

The book, written by Swedish author and journalist David Lagercrantz, is now complete and will be released worldwide on 27 August, and is expected to be published in 38 different languages - because that's what happens when you shift over 80 million copies of a book about a tattooed hacker.



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20 PAIRS OF TICKETS TO THE GREAT BRITISH TATTOO SHOW!

This issue, we're giving away 20 pairs of tickets to the Great British Tattoo Show. For 2015, we have more artists, more events and more sideshows than ever! To enter, simply send a blank email to editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject LONDON PLEASE and we'll take care of the rest and notify you in good time. If you're wondering what might be in store, here's a few images from last year's show. Who knows what 2015 will bring!

For more information, ticket prices and just about anything else you might need: www.greatbritishtattooshow.com

CONVENTIONS

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Parc des Expositions 6
6700 Arlon, Belgium
arelattoooshowbelgium.com

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Le Zénith
2733 Avenue Albert Einstein
34000 Montpellier, France
bikinink-tattoo.com

Bergen Tattoo Convention

08 May-10 May 2015

Logen Teater AS
Øvre Ole Bulls plass 6,
5012 Bergen, Norway
bergentattooconvention.no

Maiden City Ink

08 May-10 May 2015

Everglades Hotel, Prehen Road BT47 2NS
Northern Ireland, United Kingdom

Somerset Tattoo Convention

10 May-10 May 2015

Blake Hall, 9 Saviours Avenue,
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United Kingdom
facebook.com/somersetattoocon/info?ta

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TAP1, Ny Carlsberg Vej 91
1760 Copenhagen, Denmark
facebook.com/copenhageninkfestival

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15 May-17 May 2015

Peppermill Casino
2707 South Virginia Street
Reno, NV 89502, United States
silverstatetattoo.com

Alchemy Tattoo Expo

16 May-17 May 2015

Salle Polyvalente, Rue des Industries 11
1964 Conthey, Switzerland
alchemy-tattoo-expo.ch



Great British Tattoo Show

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Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace Way
London N22 7AY United Kingdom
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Amsterdam Tattoo Convention

29 May-31 May 2015

Amsterdam RAI Exhibition
and Convention Centre
Europaplein, 1078 GZ Amsterdam,
Netherlands
tattooexpo.eu/en/amsterdam/2015

Paradise Tattoo Convention

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Centro de Eventos Pedregal
La Asunción, Belén, Costa Rica
paradisetattooconvention.com



DOCTOR WOO

Brian Woo [aka Doctor Woo] is globally recognised for his signature single-needle, black and grey works of art, as well as his personal style. Breaking into the tattoo scene in 2008 when Mark Mahoney invited him to apprentice at Shamrock Social Club in Hollywood, after a three-year apprenticeship, Dr. Woo spent another six years tattooing some of the worlds most sought after influencers alive. The Los Angeles native has captured the attention of cult leaders in fashion and entertainment including: The New York Times, GQ, Elle, The Guardian, Burberry, Apple, Drake, Miley Cyrus, Cara Delevingne, Ellie Goulding, Chiara Ferragni, Hypebeast, Complex, Into The Gloss, The Coveteur—which is quite a hit list in any camp.

Shot by photographer Anthony Crook for Mr Porter [mrporter.com] this is simply a great piece of film that shows a whole career in around three minutes—you can find it here:

mrporter.com/journal/a-saturday-with/dr-woo/248

NEW TERRY BRADLEY PRINTS

News just in that our buddy Terry Bradley has this week released two new prints for sale. Titled 'The Men' and 'Honour', if you can't wait until next issue and a bigger debrief than this, head on over to terrybradley.com and find out for yourselves. Meanwhile: check out this Dark Knight project he's been working on!



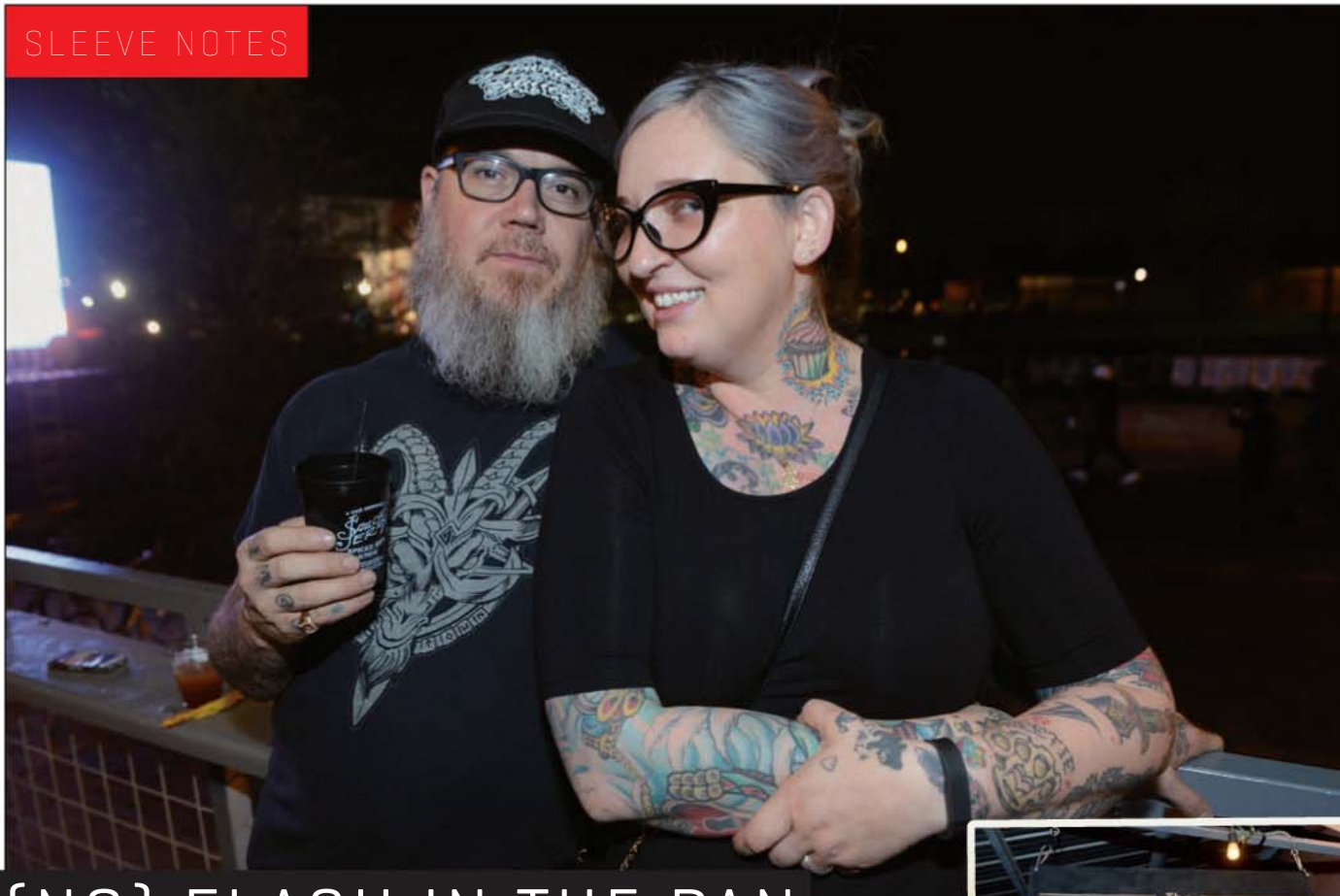
WIN A CUSTOM SKULL RING

This week, we got our heads together with our friends at Aphotic Jewellery to bring one reader a unique handcrafted custom ring featuring this very skull pictured here—pictured here not as a ring because it's not been made to your finger size yet.

Aphotic Jewellery is owned and crafted by the very talented Freddie Grove and if you head on over to the Aphotic site—aphoticjewellery.com—and take a look at their blog, you'll find some wonderful images of the jewellery created there. You can also hook up with them on instagram at [@aphoticjewellery](https://instagram.com/aphoticjewellery)

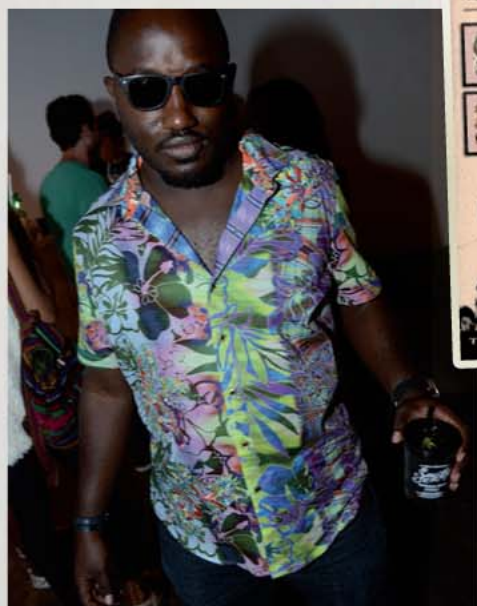
Onto the competition. Simply send a blank email to editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line of APHOTIC and we'll make a collection of contenders and fish one of you out of the hat—at which point, we'll put you in direct contact for sizing.

For the rest who know their luck ran out long ago, you can contact Freddie at aphoticjewellery@gmail.com



[NO] FLASH IN THE PAN

For the first time ever, the largest flash art collection from the Godfather of American Tattooing himself, Norman 'Sailor Jerry' Collins, was put on display on U.S. soil for all to enjoy.



CREDITS

Photos: Nate 'Igor' Smith

DETAILS

www.SailorJerry.com
www.instagram.com/SailorJerry

Open for just three days in Austin, Texas during the famed South by Southwest [SXSW] music festival, the Sailor Jerry Gallery housed Collins' entire collection of original flash, art and sketches – impressed yet? The exhibit included 70 framed pieces, namely, 14 drawings/rubbings on tracing paper, 20 sheets of flash and 36 groups of acetate stencils.

"Norman's designs go to show that his influence is present throughout today's culture and we feel it's our duty to make sure the designs he left behind remain celebrated and preserved for everyone to see," explained Paul Monahan, Sailor Jerry Rum's West Coast National Brand Ambassador.

In addition to being surrounded by unbelievable art, guests were also treated to Sailor Jerry Rum cocktails – hello, pink flamingo straws!—and DJ sets from the likes of Thee Oh Sees' John Dwyer. Also spotted: comedian Hannibal Buress, Melbourne street artist RONE and of course plenty of musicians, including King Tuff, Steve Gunn, Cheetah Chrome, Andy Animal and more.

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THE FROG IN L.A.

The Great Frog, originators of the skull ring, are celebrating in rock 'n' roll style with a pop-up tattoo studio and exclusive giveaways from Biltwell Inc and Kat Von D



Los Angeles, April 2014: In celebration of a successful first year at their flagship store in Los Angeles (7955 Melrose Avenue if you're passing), London based rock 'n' roll jewellers The Great Frog hosted a party to launch their latest ring, 'L.A Bones'. This is their third store that sits very comfortably alongside the original 1972 London store and 2011 opening of the store in New York.

Handmade by The Great Frog owner, Reino Lehtonen-Riley, whose unique creations have amassed fans across the globe including Kat Von D, Lady Gaga, Damien Hirst and Jay Z, has created the ring as homage to the city he loves. "We've been made to feel so welcome in L.A, we want to give something back to our loyal customers by hosting a rad party! The L.A Bones ring is my dedication to the city I've fallen in love with."

Every ring is hand carved and handmade in solid sterling silver, retailing at \$250. Requests for solid gold or gold plated can be accommodated. Nikki Sixx from Mötley Crüe has already placed his order for a bespoke solid 18-carat gold L.A Bones ring.

As you can see from our coverage here, Nate Fierro and Mikey Carrasco from Kat Von D's High Voltage Tattoo ran the pop-up tattoo studio for the night. With a choice of three unique designs, created by Reino, customers got a free tattoo with every purchase of the L.A Bones ring on the night.

There was also a raffle with some generous and unique prizes; Biltwell Inc donated a bespoke painted helmet, Kat Von D threw in a surprise autographed bundle and The Great Frog themselves threw in an 'L.A Bones' ring for good measure. You should have been there... ☐

Words: Mr Smith
Photos: Larry Niehues
thegreatfroglondon.com

THE GREAT FROG
 10 Ganton Street,
 London W1F 7QR
 T: 0207 439 9357





by
 Matthew 'Henbo' Henning



"I always love tattooing skulls of any type, human or animal, even better if it's a huge beast like this one. When I'm designing a tattoo of an animal skull, I normally search old reference books, internet and etchings—anything I can get my hands on and hopefully I'll find something interesting or at a strange angle with lots of cracks, marks and interesting textures. I like my animal skulls to be anatomically correct so I always use reference for drawings like this. Once I have a drawing, I mark out a light source and the crosshatch/etching I do freehand as if it was shading. I always try to tattoo skulls as dynamically as I can, as if they are slightly moving. I appreciate the texture of bone matter—it's fun to embellish on a tattoo. The diagram reference points here were inspired by an illustration of a heart from a scientific journal that was sent to me by my client. It turned out to be a great idea and really worked with this tattoo, so I'm more than happy the client wanted these."

"Overall, this was a really fun tattoo to do. I would tattoo skulls all day if I could."

@henbohenning

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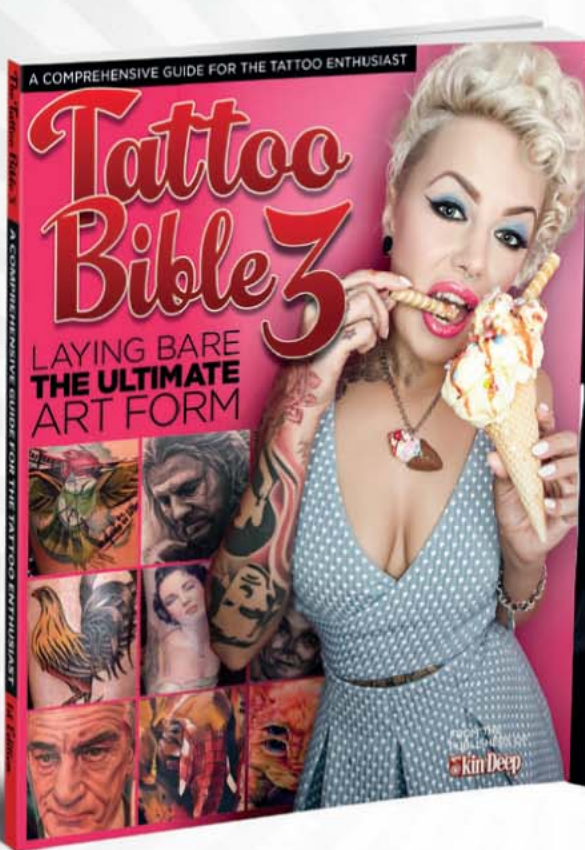
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This issue, it's an absolute pleasure to clash heads with the one and only, the inimitable Becky Holt

Let's start at the beginning here for those who have been sleeping in caves. How long have you been modelling now—it seems like forever but I also heard on the grapevine you were thinking of hanging up your guns—true fact?

Yep it's true. I've modelled for seven years now which still shocks me and it's been an absolute blast but I'm so focused on my new venture that I'm putting all my focus into that. I will still do bits and bobs of modelling—the odd magazine shoot if it's offered but right now I'm onto bigger and better things.

I suspect the list of magazines you've graced the cover of is umm... shall we say extensive? Got any favourites along the way? Gotta be worth a namecheck because a lot of them aren't with us anymore.

I've certainly had a few and there's still more to come! My favourite was my Bizarre cover. It was always my dream to be on there so I was chuffed to get my feature in before they closed. Last month, I was on Tattoo Spirit, a German tattoo magazine which was pretty cool! I'd like to grace as many tattoo magazines as I can.

Serious question for those who fancy following your trail through the woods: is it a much different landscape now from when you started? Would you hand out any advice or is the best advice 'find out for yourself'?

The industry is absolute balls right now and that's pretty

much why I'm leaving it behind. Lack of paid work and a growing amount of girls willing to shoot for free means getting paid is difficult. Plus, there's so many lives on social networking sites and free pages to see cool shit on with crazy videos, that magazines have kinda fallen behind as far as modelling goes now.

So then, you went and opened a shop! Big step. Tell me about it, the crew and all that jazz. Was it harder than it looks and is still hard somedays now?

Loco Tattoo Lounge! Its been mental. Honestly, I never thought it would kick off as well as it did. From day one business has been booming but I'm not going to lie to you. It's been so stressful. I've always managed myself as a business but having actual members of staff to manage and ensuring the shop runs smoothly is hard work—we still have a good laugh though. We have two tattoo artists at the moment and another starting in May. We also have a girl who does laser removal and a semi-permanent make up artist which has been a massive hit. We've already attended our first convention (Tattoo Freeze) which was awe-

some and since then, I've done a piercing course which at first seemed like a really good idea but since then, I realised it's actually shit scary. I'm kinda used to it and have started to master it now though! Business is good enough that we're planning on opening another Loco Lounge very soon—that probably answers your question better!

I'VE MODELLED FOR SEVEN YEARS NOW WHICH STILL SHOCKS ME AND IT'S BEEN AN ABSOLUTE BLAST



I'VE ALWAYS MANAGED MYSELF AS A BUSINESS BUT HAVING ACTUAL MEMBERS OF STAFF TO MANAGE AND ENSURING THE SHOP RUNS SMOOTHLY IS HARD WORK

Were there some things you were totally unprepared for? Things like customers being more interested in you being there than the work itself and does that annoy you?

Ha! I have all my front covers proudly displayed on the wall of my shop. People ask if it's me and then persist to tell me that it

doesn't look like me. That's a little annoying! I rarely wear make up and have three instagram filters on while I'm at work so I'm kinda unrecognisable. A few people have been in with magazines for me to sign which I think is really sweet but to be honest, no. I think they come because the shop looks badass!

While we're on the subject—can you give me a list of artists that have worked on you? Are there actually that many or did you get so far with it and then commit to just the one?

My main artist is Tommi Crazy from Middleton Tattoo Studio. We met at a convention a couple of years back. He's done all my leg and stomach work. He is very talented and has put in so much time with me to ensure we get the best results for my tattoos. I honestly can't thank him enough. I love being tattooed by him! I've had my script pieces done by the boss himself—Boz DeNiro! He's a good friend and his script work is insane. My black and grey sleeve was done by Marcus Tippetts (Ragga) who again is one of the most talented artists I know and I'm privileged to have got my sleeve done by him. Then my artists at the shop, Nik Cox and Amy Victoria, have done a few bits here and there for me too. I'm in the process of having some work removed so I can start again.





I'M IN THE PROCESS OF HAVING SOME WORK REMOVED SO I CAN START AGAIN. MY WHOLE BACK IS BEING LASERED SO I CAN HAVE A JAPANESE BACK PIECE

My whole back is being lasered so I can have a Japanese back piece instead—that's going to be fun.

I saw a little while back that you had your nose fixed up. The pics look brutally sore but more than that, I saw your Facebook post about what people were saying [equally brutal]. How thick is your skin these days? This stuff still hurts when it comes in huh.

Yeah, I always hated my nose, so I went to Poland and had the full works. Looked sore, actually didn't feel a thing and it's been an absolute joy! I'm just so happy I finally got it done as I honestly wanted it fixed my whole life. People were dicks though. One guy said I was evil and I should die because I got a new nose instead of trying to help the poor children of Africa. It used to annoy me when people said hurtful things but I've found it's easier to delete and block the idiots. They're not worth my time.

What next for you? Got some plans for the next few years or are you taking everything as it comes these days?

Just focusing on Loco Lounge, expanding the business and taking over the tattoo industry I guess. So hopefully you will all see me again very soon! ▣

Whats New?



Sophie Sharp

is our new apprentice

She has been shadowing James Robinson for the last six months to learn and gain experience in the world of tattooing, and to start building up her own portfolio.

Her work will involve an etching style illustration with a muted colour pallet. Her designs will be over sized on the body and open areas exposed where skin will be allowed to be the canvas

Instagram details are @sophie_j_sharp
if interested please contact the shop.



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James Robinson

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Now available to buy from the shop website. check out the whole collection on his instagram : JR_tattoo



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SAILOR JERRY LIFE

I've met my fair share of badass folks while traveling, most of them linked to the world of tattoos, and during a recent trip to Miami I added to that list when I crossed paths with two especially intriguing dudes: Sailor Jerry Rum National Brand Ambassadors Daniel 'Gravy' Thomas and Paul Monahan. It was then I realised there might be another job out there that's as sweet as mine.





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★ THE ORIGINAL ★
★ SAILOR JERRY ★
★ 1911 ★ 1973 ★



Right as a giant hollowed out pineapple filled with a delicious Sailor Jerry concoction mysteriously found its way into my hands, I sat down with Daniel ‘Gravy’ Thomas and Paul Monahan at the Gale Hotel’s Regent Cocktail Club in South Beach, a lounge best described as a place James Bond wouldn’t mind relaxing in.

Thomas was in town from New Jersey, while Boston native Monahan flew in from his new home base of California, to make sure the launch of the esteemed Sailor Jerry Flash Collection by Iggy Pop went off without a hitch.

Yes, there were some great parties and a lot of rum to be enjoyed, but all one had to do was look around at the two days’ worth of activities the guys helped coordinate to see that being a Sailor Jerry Rum

National Brand Ambassador is tougher than it seems.

As much creativity as it takes, the gig requires a lot of hard work, too, and more plane rides than anyone with a sane mind would ever agree to. Which made me wonder: What does it really take to keep the Normal “Sailor Jerry” Collins heritage alive and well?

PLANES, TRAINS & AUTOMOBILES

“I always wanted to do something unconventional in the spirits industry, as opposed to a lot of brand ambassador roles where there’s a lot of

tastings and guest bartending jobs—it’s just plug and play,” starts Monahan, recounting his Sailor Jerry journey, which began four years ago. “Here I get to wake up in the morning and make Piña Coladas in pineapples and hang with cool people and not feel like I’m at work, which is very important when you travel 150,000 miles a year, change beds every couple of days and deal with many different audiences.”

If you’re wondering how the hell a person spends 300 days out of each year on the road, it’s all rather simple. “I have three flights a week,” explains

Here I get to wake up in the morning and make Piña Coladas in pineapples and hang with cool people and not feel like I’m at work

www.sailorjerry.com
 @ThePaulMonahan
 @GravyOnTheRocks



Monahan to my utter horror. “Last week I went to the booming town of Indianapolis where I hosted a seminar on the history of rum in America for half an hour at a trade show, judged a cocktail competition, did a morning TV segment and went out to dinner. I flew home for two days, then I flew here overnight, then I’ll go home for two days and Sunday I fly to San Francisco to host a bowling party in East Bay Stockton, California. It’s a city that went bankrupt—very Sons of Anarchy. Next day I’ll wake up and drive to San Jose and host the same bowling party half an hour away.”

“It’s funny: When you don’t travel as much, the idea of travel is a big thing, but the big things that used to be important aren’t anymore. What’s important now is if I packed my shaving cream, toothbrush and phone charger. It’s like a role reversal in life.”

When you don’t travel as much, the idea of travel is a big thing, but the big things that used to be important aren’t anymore

Thankfully, there are upsides to the harsh realities of living out of a suitcase on a regular basis. “To have this kind of effortless, non-contrived working environment makes the days very enjoyable for someone who never thought they’d be doing anything along these lines,” admits Monahan. “It’s been a privilege to travel to the dying American cities throughout the U.S. and see some amazingly shitty bars in cool cities and some amazingly cool bars in shitty cities.”

Perhaps most surprising of all, as Gravy points out, is how easily one can adapt to such a fast-paced lifestyle, which doesn’t allow much time for

over-thinking. “You don’t realise the clicking of the switch,” he says. “You need to be in front of some suits who are key investors to your product, distributing partners, then you have to go out with some bartenders. At the same time, we work for a brand that wants to see the True Blue, so we don’t have to go into a corporate office meeting with a suit. We come in Vans, jeans and a T-shirt.”

So how did this self-described “old school Philly punk rock kid” get into the world of spirits anyway? “I had a music and lifestyle marketing background and I was known as the man who brings brands to life,”

Paul Monahan On • The Best American City
Seattle and Portland. Great music scenes, fashion, tattoo artists, hiking and domestic spirits. There are restaurants in Seattle that don’t procure any food or drink outside of 300 miles!



explains Gravy. “Back before social media and different ad agencies were doing 360 experiential marketing, I was a gun for hire, running around the country, doing big events.”

“I came back home to visit one of my homeboys working at Gyro, now called Quaker City Mercantile, and these guys saw

me, my resume, my tattoos... I was like, ‘Here’s my resume’ and they’re like, ‘Nah, we like your tattoos!’” he laughs. “It was the late ‘90s, it was the marketing of tobacco products boom, so I was working on Camel, Marlboro, things of that nature, and they were also doing work for Hendrick’s. That’s when we started conceptualising a Sailor Jerry brand and making things happens with T-shirts and hats, bringing the brand to life, growing it from a grassroots standpoint. If you were an artist, DJ,

punk rock musician coming through Philly, you’d get a T-shirt and bottle.”

A DAY IN THE LIFE

“A process of checks and balances,” as Gravy puts it, occurs regularly enough, but don’t be fooled, even admin days are carried out in true rock ‘n’ roll style. “They might be from a strip club from behind my laptop,” laughs Gravy.

“The best thing is going to the strip club and asking what the Wi-Fi password is,” laughs Monahan. “That’s the game-changer. You know you’ve made a few good decisions when you got the laptop open, going, ‘What’s the password here?’ They say ‘Fuzzy caterpillar’ and you’re like, ‘One word or two?’”

Bringing things back down for a moment, Gravy adds, “What I pride myself on, and

The best thing is going to the strip club and asking what the Wi-Fi password is



Jerry loved money—he was always tattooing—he would not be upset

Paul does as well, is being on calls with people who aren't out on the road 300 days a year, who don't get to see the living, breathing brand, and taking ideas that may look good on paper and giving them the reality of the situation. Asking, 'Hey Paul, do you think this is gonna be a good idea, ACTUALLY? Do you think this is gonna work, ACTUALLY?'

As epic as their day-to-day lives sound, the gig doesn't come without criticism, whether it be from the tattoo, spirits or fashion industry, but as Monahan points out, "We're pretty good friends with Keith Underwood who's kind of our last living lineage guy and he'll talk to us straight up about everything. He's like, 'Jerry loved money—he was always tattooing—he would not be upset.'"

That said, negativity often sparks opportunities to educate

others, something Monahan is passionate about, regardless of circumstance. "For me, what I really enjoy is the one-on-one conversations about the education of drinks," he says. "We could sit at the bar and I could torture you about how many botanicals are in an Italian liqueur and you might be like, 'Wow, that kid's really strange, but I learned something.'"

TRAVELLING TATTOOS

Not surprisingly, seeing as they work for Sailor Jerry Rum and all, Gravy and Monahan have amassed some pretty impressive tattoo collections over the years.

Gravy gets the ball rolling by citing Philadelphia Eddie, Troy Timpel and Jay Goldberg as some of his favourite artists, but asked about the one standout tattoo that's closest to his heart, he holds out his hands. "Travelling so much, I have to pay hom-

age to my family, so I got 'Love Home' on my knuckles. The 'M' is where my wedding ring would be—my wife's name is Michelle."

There's also 'U.S. Gravy' instead of 'U.S. Navy' and some more special family ink: "My kid's half Irish and the first fucking words out of his mouth were 'No way'. True story. I'm like, 'You want your bottle?' and he says 'No way'. I'm like, 'Where the fuck did you get no way from?'" he laughs.

If you're looking for even wilder anecdotes, Monahan's your man. "I started to have a list of tattoo artists that we've worked with sign my back and Oliver Peck was my first one. He didn't tell me he wrote 'Pecker!'" he laughs.

The top favourite, however, is his now infamous 'You're a Hooker' tattoo. "I'm not gonna name any names, but we were at SXSW this past year and we

Gravy On • The Best American City
Charleston, South Carolina - the bubbling South. They're growing and their palettes are changing!





Traveling so much, I have to pay homage to my family, so I got 'Love Home' on my knuckles

did a wheel of fortune for tattoos. This very young girl wanted an ass tattoo, so she took off her pants, took everything off, and just bent over in front of everybody. Naturally, everybody took out their phones.”

“We had a few PR people who thought it would be a total nightmare having photos of a very young-looking girl with no pants on in front of a Sailor Jerry banner. A few of them went and yelled at her, called her a hooker, then screamed at Keith Underwood, so it caused a little uproar.”

“Being the boosters of morale, the recovery guys, we’re kind of like, ‘This sucks, it ruined the mood’. The only thing I could do was tell Keith, ‘Why don’t you draw ‘I’m a Hooker’ on me and

I’ll show everybody? They’ll laugh and forget how bent out of shape grown men and women get when people yell.”

“One day I’ll grow up and do something phenomenal with my life, but I’ll have ‘Hooker’, ‘Oliver Pecker’ and amazing stories of this one time when I had a really strange job where I traveled around the world, drank and educated everybody on the history of Norman Collins,” says Monahan and if that doesn’t sound pretty darn amazing to you, there’s something utterly wrong.

BELOVED SPIRITS

With my pineapple starting to run dry and another bash to get ready for, it was time to wind down, but no Sailor Jerry

Rum-related interview could ever be complete without some cocktail suggestions.

“To get the day started, if I gotta do bartender training or a day out on the road, I’ll have me a nice Sailor Jerry Pickleback,” says Gravy, starting things off on a bold note. “That’s a shot of Jerry followed by a nice, lovely, hopefully as grainy as possible, shot of pickle juice.”

“If you wanna thin the lining of your stomach, is what Gravy is saying, then rip some pickle juice post a shot of Sailor,” laughs Monahan. “I think my favourite drink to relax with and sip on while I figure out what direction my night wants to go in, would be a classic Sailor punch. Basically sugar, citrus, base spirit.”

“My afternoon drink is a Shave and a Haircut,” adds Gravy. “It’s based on the old school \$2 shave and a haircut the Navy guys used to get. It’s basically a beer cocktail with Sailor Jerry, a dash of cola and your favourite stout in a pint glass.”

As for the last order of business, yes, “sometimes people will call us out on other white and black figures in pop culture, like Crockett and Tubbs. I was gonna wear a teal button-up last night and Gravy was gonna wear his white linen suit to play off a little Miami Vice, but we decided not to,” laughs Monahan.

Lesson: Even Sailor Jerry Brand Ambassadors have their limits. ▣

Paul Monahan On - The Worst American City

Boston. I’m privileged to be from there, but I will endlessly say that because of how transient the city is, 300K students come and go every four months, it’s not a fun place if you have any sense of culture.



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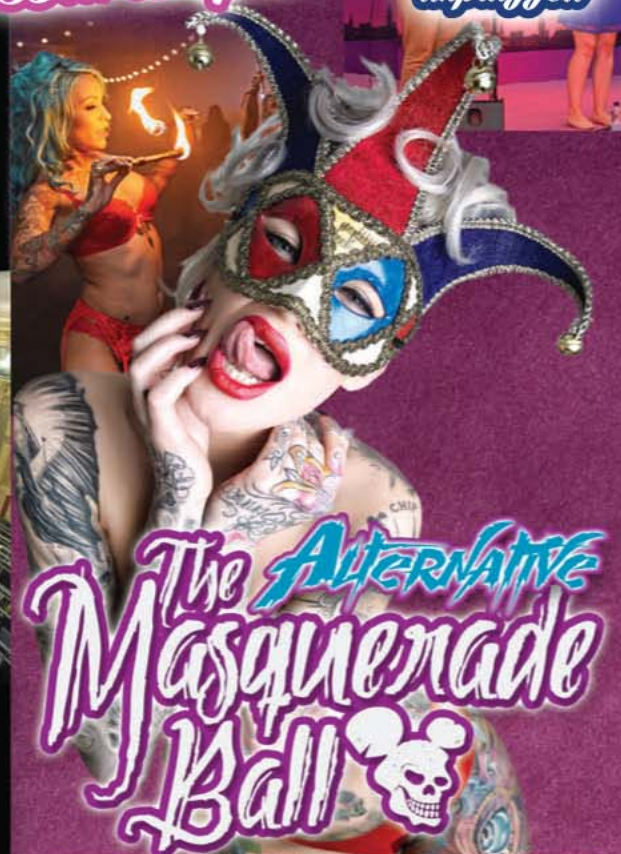
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P ERPETUAL MOTION

Tracing the trajectory of a star as it pilots itself through the sky is no easy task but it has to be easier than trying to keep pace with Stefano Alcantara: The Man Who Never Stops Moving...

stefanoalcantara.com twitter.com/stefanostattoos [instagram.com/stefanoalcantara](https://www.instagram.com/stefanoalcantara)

A good few years back, Kevin Wilson at Sacred Tattoo in New York pointed me in the direction of Stefano Alcantara as a name to watch out for. At the time, Stefano was knee deep at Last Rites with Paul Booth and although he may not have known it, he was laying serious foundations for what was to come. Between then and now, our paths have crossed innumerable times – mostly on purpose, but sometimes by accident, including a trip down the side of a mountain in a bus that was like a panel from a Freak Brothers comic.

Over those years, I've mostly been content to observe, admire and share a few laughs along the way when opportunity has presented itself but a few short weeks back, we found ourselves (accidentally on purpose) sitting on opposite sides of a table with a few hours on the clock until his next flight and nothing but a pizza between us...

It's been a little over three weeks since we both came back from the Milan show, and as usual, life on Stefano's autobahn has been pedal to the metal:

"When the Milan show was over, I took a week out to go to Florence, Venice and then back to Milan again. It wasn't a holiday as such but it wasn't tattooing either. While I was in Italy, I wanted the opportunity to shoot some photographs of statues and be able to take some inspiration back home with me. I'd never been to

Florence before, so it would have been stupid not to take the chance to reference some of this great work."

"After that I went back to New York, but before that I was in New Hampshire, Brussels and Germany...

Stefano's backtracking on exactly where his travels have taken him in this few short weeks are backed up by his Instagram timeline. He scrolls through it to see if it matches his memory and to our amusement, finds that he left something out.

"I remember now. When I went back to New York, I went to Last Rites and worked on some painting..."

I hold up my hand to stop him here—this is something we talked about yesterday over a brief coffee and I was ill-prepared for what he was about to show me. On the following pages, you'll find a photograph of a bearded gentleman, which was taken in the street on a whim. The results



Words: Sion Smith
Photos: Stefano Alcantara/Images of Stefano: Neil Gavin @neilgavinphoto



I SWITCH OFF WHEN I'M VISITING OR HAVING A MEAL WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, BUT AS SOON AS THAT'S OVER, I SNAP RIGHT BACK INTO IT

of the painting he made of the man floored me. I was about to offer fistfuls of cash—cash I don't necessarily have—to own it but I missed my chance.

It was the first item that sold at his recent exhibition and I blew it, but it's good to know a piece of art still has the ability to make me want to screw over the mortgage payment on the house in exchange for a one-time-only art deal.

We make light of a lot this evening, but the fact remains, this is actually work. No matter how easy he makes it look along the way, it's very much work.

"Sometimes when I go home

to Peru, I kick back a little and relax but even then it's never 100%. I switch off when I'm visiting or having a meal with family and friends, but as soon as that's over, I snap right back into it. I check in on my shops and I'm opening a gallery there in a month..."

A frown drifts across Stefano's face.

"Wait. What's the date today? I think it's less than a month now. Twenty eight days! I open a gallery in twenty eight days! Wow, that went fast. I also have a new studio opening in Florida soon..."

As you'll have gathered, things move pretty fast around

here. I did know this and forgot all about it because that damn painting distracted me.

"This is a second shot at Florida. The first time was back in 2008. We were in the building, working on the space, really moving with it and were about to open, then the day I was getting ready for our inspection by the fire department, a guy came in and told me the authorities didn't allow for two tattoo shops to be open in that section of the city. I had the papers and everything but all he said to me was 'that guy who gave you the information—he was wrong. You cannot open.'

"I had \$200 in my pocket be-



cause I had spent all my savings from my tattoo shop in Peru (Stefano's Tattoo Studio—still in business today), it wasn't the same economy then. It took a lot to save that money and build it. So instead of going back to Peru with my tail between my legs, I decided to invest what I had in doing some conventions, get my name out there and at least do something for me.

So I tried to make some noise about myself and that was when Paul (Booth) checked out my work, offered me a guest spot and later, I become a permanent artist at Last Rites.”

At one time, when people spoke Stefano's name, in the same sentence you would always find it with 'Last Rites' or 'Paul Booth', but that doesn't happen so much anymore. I wonder if he himself has noticed it.

“Oh yes. I don't really think that this newer generation of tattoo artists know a lot about the history of tattooing. They know who is current and who is kicking ass right now, but they don't know where a lot of things come from—but artists from my generation really feel it strongly. That historical value of



SOUTH AMERICAN CULTURE

The Olmec, Mayan, Incan, and Aztec civilisations are some of the greatest ancient civilisations in history, and yet we know very little about them compared to other parts of the world. Should you be confused as you read through certain parts of this feature, here's a [very] potted history of the different cultures.

The Olmecs are frequently forgotten entirely, and the rest are often lumped together or confused, but they were all completely distinct. In short, the Maya came first [around 2600 B.C.], and settled in modern-day Mexico. Next came the Olmecs [around 1400 B.C.], who also settled Mexico. They didn't build any major cities, but they were widespread and prosperous. They were followed by the Inca [who can be traced back to about A.D. 1200] in modern-day Peru, and finally the Aztecs [A.D. 1325], also in modern-day Mexico.



THAT HISTORICAL VALUE OF THINGS, IT DOESN'T SEEM TO MEAN ANYTHING TO ANYBODY ANYMORE

things, it doesn't seem to mean anything to anybody anymore.

“I can't say what my life will be like in ten years but I don't think anybody will be remembered from the instagram posts they made that's for sure. It's a great tool but to think it's any more than that is not seeing the big picture at all.”

I'm curious as to how he works, not only in the short term but also perhaps in the

long. I ask him if he can go back to when he first opened his studio and think to himself 'what this place needs is a gallery—and one day I could be the man to do it...'

“When I moved to New York, I never closed my shop in Peru. All the time, it was always my plan to bring things back to Peru. It's the place I'm from and I have a lot of love for my country, so I wanted—in my own

way—to bring something back.”

And while Peru is perhaps not the first place on earth whose name drips off your tongue when talking about tattooing, it's more popular than you would think. In jest, I blame him for making it that way but I may not be that far from the truth. It even has its own style. Maybe not so well known as, say, Japanese but a style nonetheless:

“As you'd expect—a lot of people ask for Inca designs but here's a little side-story for you—maybe about ten years ago, they found the oldest civilisation in America and changed the history books because of it. In amongst that, they found a new community, a city and also a woman with two full sleeve tattoos—this was really rare because a man was always king in those times. She was a really important woman way before the Inca empire and that's the first tattoo found in the whole of the Americas—North, South and Central America. (See page 39).



THE INCA IN PERU

The Inca lived in the mountains of Peru, far removed from the Olmecs, Maya, and Aztecs, and at the peak of their power, the civilisation extended for 4,000 kilometers and included 16 million people. They were extremely advanced and had an army, laws, roads, bridges, tunnels, and a complicated irrigation system far ahead of its time. However, they never invented a system of writing, instead using knotted ropes for record-keeping. A civil war over the rightful heir to the throne meant that when the Spanish invaded, the Inca were too easily defeated. The empire fell in 1533. So lest you get confused, the Inca are associated with Peru and everybody else with Mexico. That's about as simple as I can make it.

**I NEVER CLOSED MY SHOP IN PERU.
ALL THE TIME, IT WAS ALWAYS MY PLAN
TO BRING THINGS BACK TO PERU.**



So walking into a street shop now, are they still working with flash-racks?

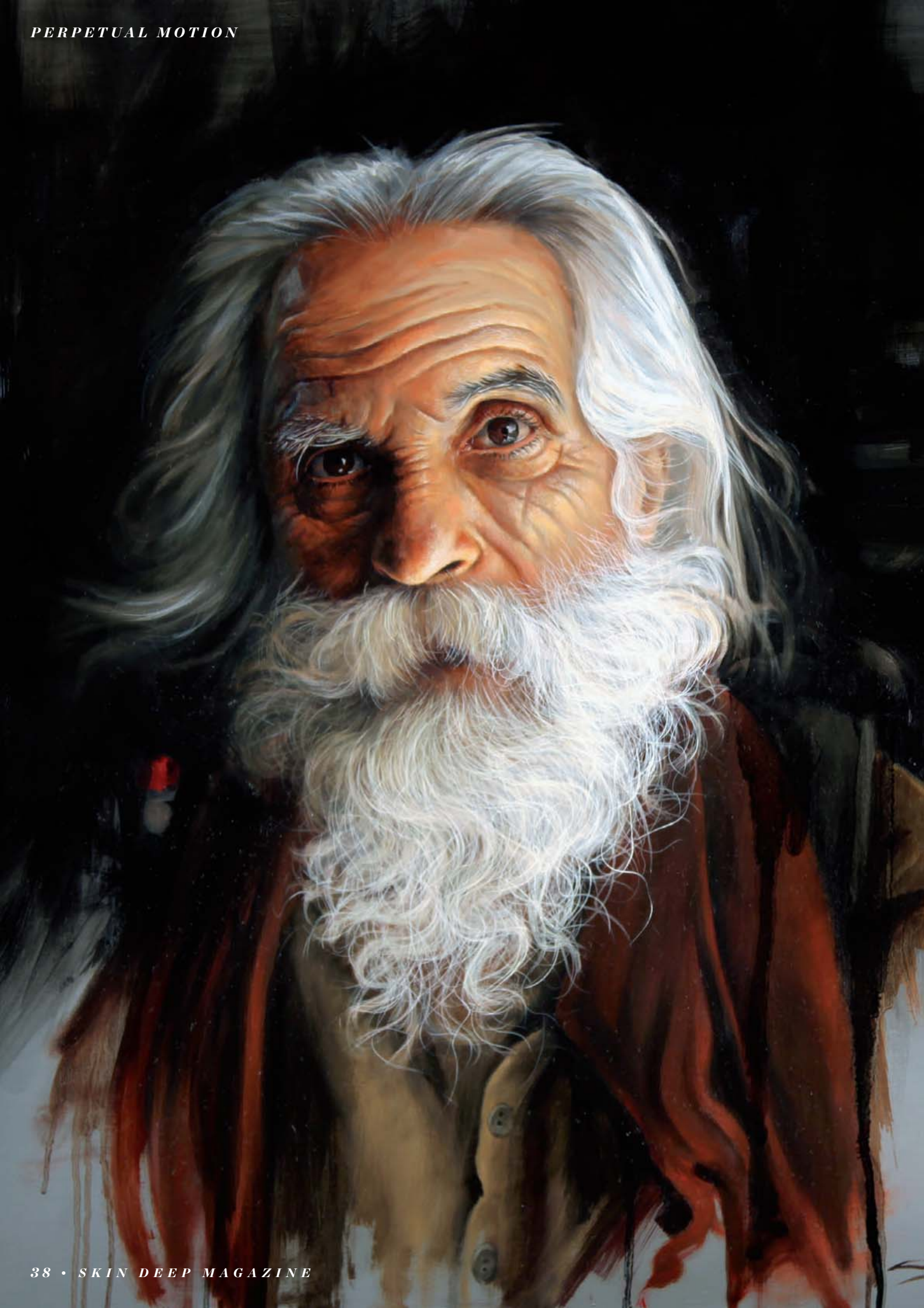
“Yes, but that's one of the things I really wanted to change with my studio. When I opened we had one but I wanted it to be different so it has a big mural to one side and when you visit now you get to see tattoos and art in a gallery. That's everything I ever wanted to do. To combine the two is very exciting for me and that's actually what I learned from being at Last Rites. That's pretty much what my life is all about.”

This is a big business model by anybody's standards. Florida, Peru and New York sounds—and is—a pretty damn big chunk of geography to be playing with, particularly when you're not there all the time. Is it possible to run such a sprawling business and stay out on the road or are there plans to reel it in a little?

“I want to get it out of my system to be in every country that I can possibly get to.









Once I've done that, I'm going to slow down for sure but I see myself being on the road for another year at least. One more year like this and I really want to slow down, but it will only be slowing down to prepare another show, have time to paint, produce commissioned artwork for conventions—lots of different things but I want to really relax and get into painting.

"Painting for me is the therapy. All the time I'm painting, I'm looking for ideas. I find many different meanings while I'm in a painting. While I'm in there, it's like I'm confessing my sins to the oil and the canvas.

"When you're tattooing, there are still the constraints of either what the customer wants or what you think will work best for them. I'm not the kind of artist who... well, some tattoo artists will do whatever they please when they're working on somebody and they don't care if you like it or not but I'm really not that kind of artist at all. I like the person I'm working with to have input—it's a two way relationship.

"There's nothing actually wrong with doing it the other way. If you want a piece of art by a certain artist, then I understand that but I think—particularly at conventions—



THE PERUVIAN MUMMY

The 1,500-year-old mummy may shed new light on the mysterious Moche culture, which occupied Peru's northern coastal valleys from about A.D. 100 to 800. In addition to the heavily tattooed body, the tomb yielded a rich array of funeral objects, from gold sewing needles and weaving tools to masterfully worked metal jewellery. The grave also contained numerous weapons, including two massive war clubs and 23 spear throwers.

"The war clubs are clear symbols not only of combat but of power," said John Verano, an anthropologist at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, who is part of the research team. Verano said the finding is the first of its kind in Peru, and he likens it to the discovery of King Tut's tomb in Egypt.

The size of the mummy alone told investigators it was a member of the Moche elite, but the full richness of the tomb's contents did not become apparent until the bundle was unwrapped, a process that took months.

"Every layer, every twist of cloth was recorded," Verano said. "It was hundreds of yards of cotton in thin strips, and there were hundreds of objects inside the bundle."

When the investigators pulled back the last layers of wrapping, a final surprise awaited. The woman, thought to have been in her late 20s when she died, had long braided hair and a series of intricate tattoos covering much of her arms, legs, and feet. Verano said the tattoos were probably done using charcoal pigment inserted beneath the skin with a needle or cactus spine. The tattoos included both geometric designs and images of spiders and mythical animals.

[With thanks to National Geographic]

ALL THE TIME I'M PAINTING, I'M LOOKING FOR IDEAS. I FIND MANY DIFFERENT MEANINGS WHILE I'M IN A PAINTING

the average customer can be pulled in to agreeing with a piece of work an artist has already done when it's not really what they wanted before they walked in the door. A tattoo is not the kind of art you can simply hang in another room or give it away when you get home because it doesn't work as well as you thought it would."

"What I do know is that, everything you surround yourself with counts. You learn from every life experience you have not just from looking at art. Sometimes you are more driven to create afresh and other days, you have to lean back on what you already know but the



IT'S NOT ABOUT IT BEING 'MY' SHOW, IT'S ABOUT GIVING SOMETHING BACK AND DOING THE SHOW THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE TO MAKE IT A COOL SHOW FOR EVERYBODY.



ing 'my' show, it's about giving something back and doing the show the best way possible to make it a cool show for everybody. I don't want it to be 'one more convention', I want it to be "The Convention".

"I spoke to them about joining forces in some way and everybody is happy. They're two amazing artists, they're my friends and also two people I admire—I'm more than happy to share my years of working with them, so it's more like a collaboration.

"It's very exciting—not least because it's a great time to be away from the cold of New York!"

Check-in times at international airports prevent me from rummaging further in this suitcase. That, and the arrival of more food, but if I must stop, I'll offer this as a closing observation:

My life is actually richer simply from having shared time (and pizza) with Stefano. We have talked art, culture, shoes, hair, martial arts, past, present, future and a dozen other things that space prevents me from including here (such as watching the whole season of *True Detective* in one sitting)—and if you asked me to paint you a picture of all that's great about being a tattoo artist in 2015, this is exactly what it would look like. ▣



aim is always to be better today than I was yesterday and better tomorrow than I was today. It's a good way to live.

"I still love to do portraits and those are the days I enjoy running on auto-pilot—because I have done so many, most of the hard work of doing it well

is engrained in me. It's not even something I need to think consciously about and sometimes that's as good as it gets—but sometimes, I like to challenge myself a little more and really leave a bigger fingerprint on a piece. As an artist, no two days will ever be exactly the same."

Finally, the road warrior is putting on a show in California early next year. If any of you have the time, opportunity or money to do so, then this one is a no-brainer. It's called Golden State Tattoo Expo (29-31 January, 2016) and the list of artists working it, reads like a who's who of sheer class...

"Right now, Nikko (Hurta-do) and Carlos (Torres) are in charge and hosting the whole event because they are from the area. I'm not a California guy so it makes sense to leave them to do what they are able to do best. It's not about it be-

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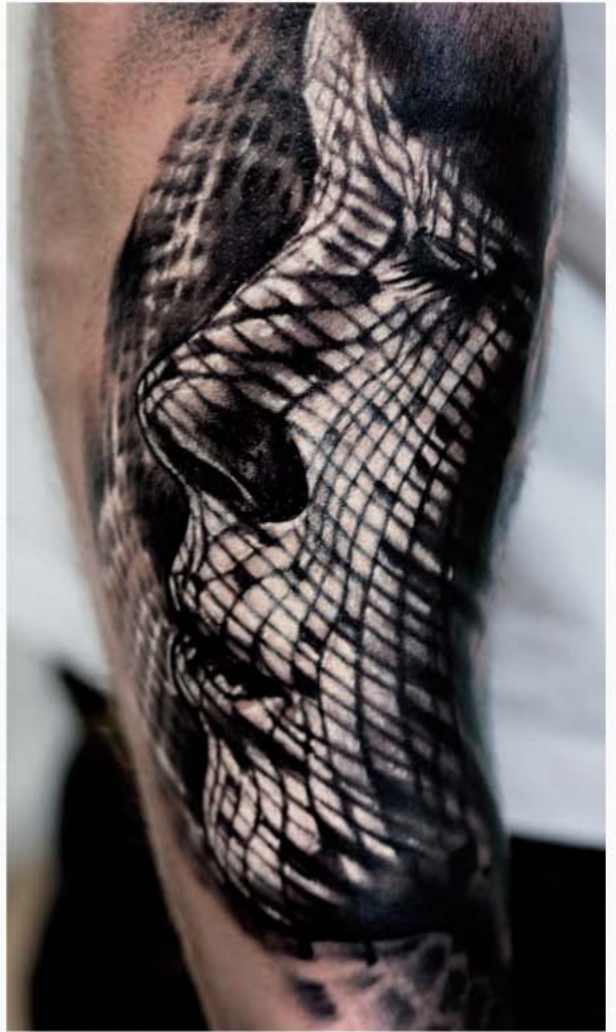


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REBELL YELL

With their carefully primped Mohawks, studded jackets and elaborate tattoos Kyaw Kyaw and his mates look like any other fashion conscious guys getting ready for a night on the town. But for Yangon's punks, the hair, the clothes, and the ink are more than just a fashion statement—they're a declaration of war.

In 1970s Britain, unemployment and social unrest was the fuel for punk's great, radical rebellion. In Burma, 40 years on, Yangon's youth are now rallying to the same, raw nihilistic cries that shook post-war Britain out of its comfort zone.

Filmed secretly in the former military dictatorship using hidden cameras, "Yangon Calling: Punk in Myanmar" tells the remarkable story of Burma's underground punk scene. This startling documentary provides a rare portrait of the rebels who really do have a cause, introducing us to their homes, their friends, their families, and their hidden world of illicit concerts and politically charged tattoos.

"I was born in '76 and I remember the punk around my home town of Hamburg," says documentary Director Alexander Dluzak. "I never was a punk myself but I have a

kind of idea of how it might have been in the early '80s—that feeling of passion and rebellion. In the West punk is still here of course, but in Yangon, it has a powerful voice ... these guys have so many issues... and they consider themselves freedom fighters."

FARAWAY TOWNS

Once known as the 'garden city of the East', Yangon today is a crumbling echo of past glories. For 50 years, the ruling junta squatted like a corpulent toad on the national spirit, turning Burma's largest city into a melancholic hub of poverty and paranoia. The average wage here is 30 euros a month, and 'home time' is when you've earned enough for the day's meal. Crime rates are spiralling, corruption is endemic and crystal meth is one of the nation's biggest exports.



Punk arrived on the streets in the mid-'90s, on tapes blagged from Burmese sailors. Later, when cheap CD and DVD players arrived from China, fans could make their own bootleg mix tapes to share with friends. More recently the country's stuttering Internet has opened up the world of YouTube and Spotify. Kyaw Kyaw's first taste of punk came in an Internet café, where he spent an hour downloading a three-minute Sex Pistol track.

The Stooges, The Strokes, The Ramones, 999, Nirvana, The White Stripes. To kids who had only ever heard state

approved pop and generic 'copy' (cover) songs, punk was a seriously mind-altering drug. Burma's fledgling punks and punk bands soaked it up and gave it their own anti-authoritarian spin.

Even before the State Law and Order Restoration Council took control, Burma was a culturally conservative nation. Teens in western clothes weren't unusual, but Yangon's punks run a gauntlet of abuse every time they step out the door. Some of the group have been beaten up. Others have been jailed. Jarmani—Yangon's only female punk singer—gave up performing when her parents threatened to evict her from the family home. Throw politics into the mix and things get really dangerous.

Kyaw Kyaw and his band The Rebel Riot may look like Piccadilly Circus postcard punks but they played their first gig on the streets, during the 2007 Saffron



Revolution and they continue to push the envelope. It's no surprise that they feel safest in the places that society frowns on—the bars and tattoo studios.

Ink is an important part of the 'look' of course but when these guys have words like Freedom and Hatred (of the system) tattooed on their torsos it really means something.

COME OUT OF THE CUPBOARD

Darko C, lead singer of Side Effect, is very much the Pete Shelley of the Yangon punk scene. Eschewing piercings and genre labels, he talks with equal passion about indie, rock, and punk, while kicking out licks on a Fender copy bought for him by his aunt. The band's drummer learned

THESE GUYS HAVE SO MANY ISSUES AND THEY CONSIDER THEMSELVES FREEDOM FIGHTERS



his trade by playing stacks of books—a crowd-funder in 2011, which raised over \$3,000 to buy the drummer his own kit, was later impounded by the US Government under Presidential Executive Order 13310. Ironically, the aim of 13310 was to block financial transactions “purporting to act on behalf” of Burma’s repressive régime.

Paid gigs are few and far between so the band practice, practice, practice. In the past it was tough to get lyrics passed by censors looking for perceived criticism or hidden political messages. Even in the post-dictatorship world, all art has to be approved by the state and cuts can be demanded for “any damned thing”.

Music remains a “tool to separate your mind from your surroundings. We think differently, we want to live differently and we want to prove that it’s okay” Darko says. Despite

WE THINK DIFFERENTLY—WE WANT TO LIVE DIFFERENTLY AND WE WANT TO PROVE THAT IT’S OKAY

the positive spin, Side Effect’s songs depict a life of angst and anger: “shattered dreams”, “small victories” and losing the lust for life. “Forget the hurt... pour down the drinks”, the lyrics of the irrepressibly upbeat “Ye Wai Wai” (“Evenings Under the Influence”) cry.

Buddhism, Darko says with a tincture of irony, teaches you to be patient with your lot.

BATTLE COME DOWN

When German documentary makers Alexander Dluzak and Carsten Piefke traveled to Burma in 2011 in search of Yangon’s punk spirit, the hardest part was dodging the spies and secret police. “There weren’t many tourists and most peo-

ple stayed there for just two or three nights and then left for another destination in Myanmar. We stayed there for two months and every morning we would go to the reception guy and say ‘it’s so lovely here that we would like to stay for one additional night’. He was really suspicious and we were always afraid because the punks had told us that most of the receptionists and taxi drivers were snitches. Fortunately nothing happened but there were a lot of situations that were a bit weird. “We used small cameras so we looked like tourists but people would still stop us and ask us what we were doing and what we thought about the Government. All that could have hap-

I'M SURE THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE MAKING A LOT OF MONEY HERE NOW BUT I'M ALSO SURE THAT'S NOT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE



Peewee & Alex Kopie

Yangon Calling—Punk in Myanmar

Alexander Dluzak and Carsten Piefke are the guys who brought you "Dragon style: Hip Hop in China". Yangon Calling is their latest collaboration—focusing on the sometimes surprising world of Asian youth culture. "Of course" says Alexander, "I loved working on this because it was so interesting. You don't expect that something like punk might exist in Burma... but punk is really the door opener into the wider world of what it's like to be a 20-something in this part of the world." The DVD is available to buy now and comes with a bilingual [German and English] book on subculture and politics in Myanmar called "Yangon Calling—Music, Subculture and Politics in Myanmar".

pened to us was maybe they would confiscate our material or take our cameras, maybe put us in jail for the night and put us on the next plane to Bangkok. That was the hardest consequence that we would probably have to face, but I think that the guys were in real danger – and we were always a bit afraid that something might happen to them."

Recent liberalisation has brought a rush of overseas investors and speculators to Burma. High-end restaurants and coffee shops are springing up. The ex head of the secret service is now a gallery owner. So have things really changed for Burma and Yangon's punks?

"The situation now seems to be very relaxed compared to 2011", Alexander says, "but I think for the average Burmese the situation hasn't changed

that much to be honest. The people are very poor and many of the people who sit in parliament are former members of the military junta. Most of them have just changed their dress—they wear a suit now not a uniform. I'm sure there are a lot of people making a lot of money now but I'm also sure that's not the majority of people. I'm not a political expert but I'm afraid that for the average Burmese there hasn't been that many changes."

The Rebel Riot and Side Effect now have followers on Facebook. They're on Twitter and My Space. They play honest to God live gigs and release albums with provocative titles like "Puppet Society" and "Fuck Religious Rules".

It's a house of cards at best.

Last year, the day after The Rebel Riot played a gig at Let-

padan, images of the police brutally beating students were broadcast around the world to horrified viewers. The students had been marching from Mandalay to Yangon in protest to new government controls over education. No one knows what's next for Myanmar but—just as in Britain in the '70s—Burma's punk inspired sub-culture finds itself at the forefront of protest and social change. ▣

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THE OUTER LIMITS: **DUTCH COURAGE**

One glance at Jay Freestyle and the work falling out of his head will be more than enough to convince you that you're in the presence of an 'anything is possible' artist. Fact of the matter is, what Jay has going on is simply magical

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As a self taught tattoo artist, Jay's techniques and style may not follow the traditional conventions, his work is however both fluid and varied maybe due to his liberation from the traditional path of learning to tattoo. He began tattooing in 2009 after originally working as a piercer and his mentor encouraged him to try tattooing. Gradually building his skills and knowledge he first practised on pigs skin, before his confidence grew to working on colleagues and friends. He built his skills in many different styles of tattooing to have the ability and flexibility to mix them together in his own unique way. He also feels his own collection of ink is a big influence on both his work as an artist and how he became involved with the trade in their own ways they are quite varied in style.

He has a Buddhist themed Japanese sleeve by Claudia and Amar, a skull and pinup Chest piece by Yuri, a skull on his stomach by Alvin Chong and finally a Saraswati goddess on his ribs also by Claudia.

Originally from South Africa, tattoo artist and painter Jay moved to Amsterdam about ten years ago in search of a greater creative scene. From then on he has made it his



**GIVE ME A PIECE OF
YOUR SKIN AND I
WILL GIVE YOU A
PART OF MY SOUL**

he takes elements of styles that inspired and inform his work and combines them to create a style of his own. The beauty of this eclectic mix is the varied combination and flexibility to be eternally changed, added to and expanded creating endless possibilities and creative options for his artistic imagination. When sketching the tattoo he creates unique on the spot designs by combining a number

home, living and working there ever since. Jay uses his extensive travels and his other artistic outputs as inspirations in his work that has his own unique look and feel, but does not feel follows a particular style. He feels that work does not need to be categorised, that labelling it or putting it in a box may be limiting. "People are always asking me what my style is because they want to categorise it, so it's easier to understand, so I just term it water colour so they can understand, but I don't like to categorise my art because then it creates certain boundaries that people expect."

His artwork was developed by focusing on creating a visual language of his own, that would be both artistically unique and recognisable. The continual aim is to produce work that is unique but also had the fluidity to continually evolve. To do this



of details that work together to create something that is spontaneous and beautiful. Artistic inspiration usually comes from other artists, but he can be inspired and see art everywhere. The inspiration and initial ideas can also come from the client or collector—some will bring really interesting concepts to the table and Jay loves

the challenge of a concept or idea that is intriguing, or to put into Jay's own words "My style is simply a combination of elements that I feel work well together and create something that is aesthetically pleasing."

His unique way of constructing a design by literally 'freestyling' the idea onto the client just before and during the

MY STYLE IS SIMPLY A COMBINATION OF ELEMENTS THAT I FEEL WORK WELL TOGETHER AND CREATE SOMETHING THAT IS AESTHETICALLY PLEASING. I DON'T DO ANY SORT OF PREPARATION OR PRE-DESIGNS BEFORE MY APPOINTMENTS





tattoo, adds to the spontaneity and creativity of the piece. He usually works from ideas and concepts drafting straight onto the skin without an initial stencil. This is no mean feat due to the scale and complexity of some of Jay's work. Combining vivid contrasting colours with exquisite portraits, merging complex organic and geometric shapes into perfectly balanced works of art. He always enjoys surprising a client with the final outcome. In planning a tattoo, initial decisions will be made by the client, they will chose the placement and the ideas for subject matter but once these key elements are decided, it is up to Jay to work his magic and come up with a design and colour scheme: "I run

TO CREATE THE SAME EFFECT ON SKIN DOES NOT HAVE THE SAME SPONTANEOUS ACTION, IT HAS TO BE REPLICATED VERY PRECISELY, WHICH HAS A VERY DIFFERENT FEEL

briefly through with my collector what elements they would like to have incorporated in the design (geometric patterns, water colour effect, abstract shapes, etc) to get a feel of what they want the end result to resemble but I don't do any sort of preparation or pre designs before my appointments."

He likes the challenge of creating something different and is motivated by collectors mixing elements he would not have thought to naturally

combine. Jay particularly enjoys tattooing designs that include faces, figures and organic shapes that flow with the body, although as he is so skilled at realism, there are some elements he is asked to tattoo time and again. "In general, I like doing pin ups/girl faces and abstract work. I dislike doing inanimate objects and much prefer organic subject matters as they flow much better on the body."

Jay works from a custom

Reflecting on the tattoo industry and how it has changed in the time he has been working, he feels that standards are high now and as an artist you have to stand out with more than just quality work. "Artists are breaking the barrier of what is possible to do on skin more and more. Technology has played a huge role in not only the quality but tattoo designs as well."



ARTISTS ARE BREAKING THE BARRIERS OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE TO DO ON SKIN MORE AND MORE. TECHNOLOGY HAS PLAYED A HUGE ROLE IN NOT ONLY THE QUALITY BUT TATTOO DESIGNS AS WELL

He feels advances in image making and the equipment available to artists now (he uses Cheyenne tattoo machines) is also helping raise the bar. "There are a lot of artists now using Photoshop and other programs to come up with designs that ten years ago where never thought possible to create on the skin. Now that tattooing is so mainstream, there is much more experimenting with different styles and techniques."



studio situated in the heart of Amsterdam. The cosy shop also hosts three other artists; Rosana Jacob, Paulina Szoloch and Pawel Daniel. Clients usually visit in person or arrange work from Jay by email, although the quality of his work is in high demand currently with waiting times between nine to twelve months. Jay is always looking to learn something new, continually develop his own style and takes influence from all the brilliant work around. His work currently leans towards a more graphic look combining vivid colour and detail with geometric forms. His love of painting is clearly influential in his work evident bending of tones and the splashes of colour. Jay admires and respects the work of other artists including Jeff Gogue, Shige, Ivana, Tymer Lysenko, Dmitri Samohin, Claim, Ondrash. With a global client base and frequent trips to the U.S., Jay has much of experience of both European and

American clients. Apparently, us Europeans are more into abstract work but are fussy when it comes to designs. The US on the other hand, have a go big or go home attitude and are more trusting of their artist—but honestly, if you ask me, anyone lucky enough to have work tattooed by Jay should know that they will end up with a show stopper.

With an insane work schedule, Jay has little free time. He enjoys catching a movie and listening to a variety of music including metal, alternative rock and chill step. *[I don't even know what that is! Ed]* He also tries to spend as much time as possible either painting or drawing as "it is important to have at least one other artistic medium other than tattooing". "There is a lot more spontaneity in painting, where you can create 'happy accidents' with water colour just by letting the paint bleed out or into each other."

This is a beautiful effect and is very sought after in a tattoo,



but as ever, this process is not so fluid when replicated on skin. "To create the same effect on skin does not have the same spontaneous action, it has to be replicated very precisely, which then has a very different feel."

Future plans for Jay in 2015 are to do a lot of travelling and visiting places he has never been. These include guest spots and conventions in Europe in Cologne, Copenhagen and Italy, and travelling a little further to both Sydney and Toronto. ▣



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SEX, DRUGS & TATTOO SHOPS

London's vibrant district of Soho is considered to be one of the most creative places in the world. Beccy Rimmer was itching to explore whether Soho's tattoo scene played any part in its bustling identity, so we gave her some bus fare...

It goes without saying that good art can be found anywhere. Some of the world's best artists can be nestled in the most unexpected, un-artistic places.

Because of this, I used to think that there was no correlation between what an artist produces, and the place they work in. You've only got to spend 10 minutes in London's W1 district to realise this isn't the case at all.

Since the mid-19th century, Soho has had a reputation as a place of excess and artistry. It's buzzing with the creation of art and for the last 150 years has been a mecca for poets, musicians, artists, designers, dancers, directors and writers. But its creative mastery sits alongside its status as the infamous red-light district of London.

The combination of the sex and art industries means Soho has an extremely unique atmosphere. It's dripping with experimentation, creation, intoxication, hazy nights and living for the moment. The stench of pure craftsman-



ship is particularly strong in the dark corners of its tattoo-land.

Diamond Jacks Tattoo Parlour and Gypsy Stables Tattoo are both situated on the famous Berwick Street in Soho's red-light district.

Darryl Gates is Diamond Jack's current owner, but it was Dennis Cockell who opened the studio originally in the 1980s. Back then, and still today, it sits perfectly in the landscape of Soho. A tiny, dark entrance nestled amongst a sea of sex shop signs.

Back in the day, this is exactly where you would find your local tattooist, hidden away down an alleyway, out of sight from the rest of the community who didn't want a

tattoo shop visible on their streets.

Most studios I know today have an open front, a clearly visible entrance and clean walls. Now, every step is taken to make new clients see that the place is friendly, accessible and hygienic. Shops are keen to move away from



Diamond Jacks: Darryl Gates and Charles Wicks-Stephens



the way people used to think about them. All shops, that is, except for Diamond Jacks, which holds its title today as the longest running tattoo parlour in the West End.

As you enter, from the doorway down below, right up to the third floor, it's wall-to-wall completely covered in images, photos and flash from the last 30 years.

"The shop still has most of Dennis Cockell's original sheets from the '70s," says Diamond Jack artist Charles Wicks-Stephens. "We have always been an old-school street shop, and the nature of the area has definitely dictated this over the years."

"The old-school traditions of a tat-

too studio like walk-ups and flash sheets, are a massive part of our identity. Not a day goes by where we don't meet someone unusual or interesting." When I begin to dig deeper, Darryl laughs. "What happens in the studio, stays in the studio. Plus, there are far too many stories to tell."

It's because of these clients that the studio naturally specialises in smaller traditional pieces, walk-up business and quick turnaround tattoos. The ethos inside the shop comes directly from the vibe of Soho's streets and their atmosphere of opportunity and possibility. In Soho, whatever you're on the look out for—food, drink, gambling, sex, ink—it can be catered for 24/7. You can do anything. You can end up anywhere.

Living in a tattoo world where we are constantly urged to plan our decisions and book appointments as

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE STUDIO, STAYS IN THE STUDIO. PLUS, THERE ARE FAR TOO MANY STORIES TO TELL DARRYL GATES



THE SHOP STILL HAS MOST OF DENNIS COCKELL'S ORIGINAL SHEETS FROM THE '70S CHARLES WICKS-STEPHENS



far in advanced as possible, I'm completely exhilarated by the concept of making an impulsive decision as Diamond Jacks' clients so regularly do.

Working in the area for the last two years, I have made my own personal memories of Soho. To retain some of my dignity here I won't divulge the full details to you, but let's just say I have had many a sore-headed morning.

Wanting to mark my Soho nights, I make a decision there and then in the middle of our conversation. Charles rushes upstairs to design me something and within the hour I have a brand new tattoo of the word SOHO in a heart.

There's something about a creative area that can bring out the best in you. You can't say that the look and feel of the surroundings hasn't impacted on Darryl's designs. Take one look at his artwork—cosmic drawings of neon flashes, blazing lines and the glowing colour of Soho's streets. Streets that are loud, full of character and have something to say, just like Darryl's designs.

There's also a sense of community between the businesses and tattoo shops that I'm not sure you would find in every UK city or town. "We all get along great," says Charles. "We help each other out when we can."

Down at the other end of Berwick Street, past the fragrant food stalls and sparkling fabric shops, sits Gypsy Stables Tattoo. You guessed it: behind a dark black door, down a narrow staircase, in a gorgeously dingy Soho basement. Owner Bruno Jardim moved to London nine years ago and has been working in Soho for six. For him, Soho was an easy choice when it came to deciding where to open the shop. "Nothing is classed as weird in Soho," he tells me. "There's always a general air of acceptance."

He's right, no two people look the same around here. There isn't a tattoo scene, fashion or stereotype like there is in Camden or Hackney. There's just a load of people doing exactly what they want, dressing however they want, getting tattooed when they want.

"Soho is everyone," says Charles. "It's tourists, it's pimps, it's prostitutes, it's the guy that works in the sex shop, it's hipsters, it's rockers, it's anyone." Soho's renowned for it's LGBT scene *[I always thought that was a sandwich with bacon and tomato in it. Ed]* because it's always been seen as a place where you can be free to explore

your sexuality and identity away from any judgment. Isn't that just the perfect place for a tattoo scene to exist? That's what getting inked is. It's the decision to do whatever the hell you want, and look however the fuck you want, despite what society's impression might be of it.

That's why I'm yet to find a tattoo studio in Soho that won't tattoo partners' names, or particular parts of the body—rules that many studios elsewhere today are starting to put into place, in an attempt to protect their customers from any regrettable decisions. Soho's ethos: life is short, live it how you want, live it now.

Down at Gypsy Stables, things are less about impulse and more about courage. "We do get a few impulsive customers," ponders Bruno, "but mostly we get people who have been

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Darryl Gates – Owner
instagram.com/darrylscorpio

Charles Wicks-Stephens
instagram.com/charleswicks

Gino Angelov
twitter.com/angelovtattoo
instagram.com/ginoangelov

Rumen Angelov
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GYPSY STABLES



From left to right: Bruno Jardim, Stephen Spiers, Daniel Franco, Bodie O'Leary and Christina Putz

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MOSTLY WE GET PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN CONTEMPLATING THE TATTOO FOR YEARS, AND ONLY NOW HAVE THEY PLUCKED UP THE CONFIDENCE TO GET IT DONE BRUNO JARDIM

contemplating the tattoo for years, and only now have they plucked up the confidence to get it done.” By bringing out the passion in someone to do what they’ve always wanted, Soho works its magic once again.

So it’s all bright lights and happy memories, then? Sadly not. Soho is changing, and some of its creative businesses are disappearing at a fast pace.

The increasing cost of rent means closure of some of Soho’s most exciting buildings, and inevitable creation of new expensive (I would say unaffordable) homes. “They want Soho to look more like other parts of London,” says Charles.

As with so many areas of our capital city, the creative communities are being pushed out and Soho is at serious risk from losing its soul. A recent campaign, Save Soho (savesoho.com), intends to fight for Soho’s artistic identity.

I’d like to say that the passion and stubbornness of the people I have met during my time in Soho means that they aren’t going without a fight. Charles sets the record straight. “We aren’t going anywhere.”

Diamond Jacks has remained the same for the last 30 years. With the world moving fast around them, they’ve stood their ground.

“We have got to where we are by sticking to our guns,” smiles Darryl. “I never follow the trends in tattooing and this has paid off and kept the studio a reputable one.”

Darryl looks over at a Kiss themed flash sheet from 2010, and says, “to



quote Paul Stanley—credibility is someone else’s idea of what I should be doing.” [Now we’re talking. Ed]

Down the road, Bruno’s ethos is the complete opposite and there’s a focus on learning new techniques and trying new ideas. The artwork coming out of his studio is completely different from Darryl’s.

Two studios, almost next door to each other, running similar businesses in contrasting ways. One embracing the old, one embracing the new. Does this mean there is no solid link between the area and the artwork?

I’m pausing in the doorway as I enter Diamond Jacks for the final time—what have I learnt? Suddenly I notice that the flash in the hallway isn’t just from the ’70s... it’s being constantly added to with new designs. Old meets new, existing together.

It doesn’t really matter how the area is creatively influencing the tattoo studios within it, what matters is that it does, and they can all be free to form different identities from it.

All artists exist together in the same community with different styles, just as we do as inked (or non-inked) humans. Do what you want, create your own self, there’s no right or wrong. It doesn’t matter if your style is new or established, if you’re gay or straight, young or old, if your art is impulsive or planned.

That’s the spirit of Soho. ▣





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Spanish Fly

Only 29 years old, David Tejero Vale, is already an accomplished tattooer in Barcelona. He's known for his black and grey style and isn't a follower of industry trends. He seems to find endless inspiration for his work in European culture—especially in the graphic arts such heraldry and engraving. Let's see what he's made of

When did tattooing hook you in?

I was 14 when I went to the first Barcelona tattoo convention. It was pretty amazing to see artists there drawing live. The comic convention that runs in the city had a similar impact on me as I'm a huge fan of comic book art, but seeing it put on skin was another dimension. Up until then, tattoos were not a huge passion for me—it was the 'live art' aspect that made something really click inside of me.

Where does your technique come from?

While I was still attending my regular school in the mornings, I began studying drawing at a school that focused on comic art in Barcelona. After high-school, I went to the city's University of Fine Arts, where I spent 4–5 years perfecting my technique. During the second year of university, when I was 19 years old,



I dropped into the tattoo shop, Nahkoé Tattoos and Piercing, near where I lived in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat. From that point on, my life was organised like this: university in the morning and tattooing in the afternoon. I spent six years there.

How did your education influence your work?

My way of understanding tattoos has been heavily influenced by illustrations, comics, and art, rather than by the history of tattooing as such. Of course, I was interested in it, but initially I was more interested in contemporary tattooers than in the roots of the craft.

In the studio in L'Hospitalet, I learned a lot from the other tattooers, especially Sergi Besa (my master) and Rafa de Blas—my black and grey technique is a gift from him—as well as Dejan Furlan and Neco



MY WAY OF UNDERSTANDING TATTOOS HAS BEEN HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY ILLUSTRATIONS, COMICS, AND ART, RATHER THAN BY THE HISTORY OF TATTOOING AS SUCH

Dias. One of the other great things about being there was that we worked on custom tattoos, not with flash or prepared drawings. People would come up with ideas and then I would come back home to work on the designs—doing illustrations and transforming them into tattoos. I then started to tattoo with an illustrator’s mindset.

Was it an appropriate approach do you think?

Well, it worked at the time, but now I like to work the other way round. I’m getting a lot more into thinking with a tattooer’s brain, asking things like “how many years do I want this tattoo to last?”

This is the thing I’m constantly trying to do better—although I have to say thinking like that is very hard for me, as it’s not my natural state of being. Even though I think I’ve done good tattoos in the past, my approach was probably more about reproducing a design with immaculate detail, instead of a creating an amazing tattoo.

How has working at Aloha Tattoos change things for you?

The technical skills I have learned at Aloha are too many to list, endless in fact. I’ve also been heavily influenced by the artists I’ve worked alongside for

the last four years. Since 2014, I’ve started to use bolder lines and make my tattoos simpler. I try to be powerful, without getting lost in small details. I also now understand about being more respectful of the way tattoos were done in the past, or at least I appreciate going back to the roots of the art.

After all, traditional tattooers did know an awful lot about doing it properly. When they thought about tattooing it was very direct, because they were tattooers, not illustrators. Those old flash sheets, when you look at them, they work. You can change something here and there, but basically it works. Right now, I’m trying to focus more on that. Not that I’m tattooing old designs, but I am learning a lot from that world.

Also, I realise now that one of the most important things about tattooing is understanding the concept itself. What is a tattoo? Are you aware of what is tattooing is? I feel much more connected to that way of thinking since I’ve been here in Aloha and surrounded by people like El Monga and El Carlo.

What is your cultural background?

As I mentioned, I’ve been into comics and super-hero stuff for long time. But the ornamental tradition, and specifically the Art nouveau style



**WE'RE LIVING IN INTERESTING TIMES
BECAUSE TATTOOERS ARE TAKING MORE
CARE OF HOW THEIR ART IS BEING
PRODUCED AND SOLD**

of architecture, has always been something I've found impressive and you can see a lot of it right here in the city of Barcelona. Also, illustrators from this period, like Aubrey Beardsley and Anton Seder, are a big source of inspiration for me. I also have a huge affinity with the engraving art and the culture seen in Europe from the Middle-Ages to the Renaissance; it's very pure illustration work, like Dührer, and this kind of aesthetic is something I feel closely connected with. What is really interesting, though, is drawing from your own culture and putting that into your tattooing. I'm very linked to my roots, from Europe, Spain and of course Catalonia, and I think that shows in my work.

We hear you have a specific interest in heraldry, can you tell us about it?

I love to work with heraldic influences. It's an art form that's been around for many hundreds of years in Europe and yet it has remained relatively untouched. For instance, there are symbolic icons taken from the European tradition which are linked to a very remote past, but that are still in use today. I studied heraldic symbolism at university and it's possibly the best thing I did at fine arts school.

I frequently use these symbols as a base for my work. When I'm drawing a lion or a bull, I always think about the symbolic meaning and try to transmit that to my customers. As a European tattooer who looks to his own symbolic tradition, I envy Japanese tattooers who have a very deep understanding of their own tradition. In Europe, I think we're losing the link.

Why are you working mainly in black and grey?

In the first shop I worked in, a lot of people asked me for it, and really, it became force of habit. Black and grey has always been popular in Spain. It's been around for many years and is the most common interpretation of tattooing here. Col-

ours are a relatively new thing in Spain, and at that time, they were not very good, and therefore less impressive. Especially when the old-school artists were doing very cool black and grey work. For me, it simply feels right and comfortable as a style. Somehow, I always felt that black and grey was more related to dark styles, which suits my personal taste and iconography. It's related to the music I'm listening to as well, it's a reflection of it. And although I like different things, the bands I tend to listen to are heavy, doom, stoner etc. I get inspiration from them and try to pick things up from the lyrics.

I'd find it very hard to tattoo happy things, like new-school or whatever. I could do it, but it's not natural for me.



THE DESIGN MUST BE WORTHY OF YOU AND WHAT THE TATTOO IS. FOLLOWING TATTOO INDUSTRY TRENDS IS NOT WHAT WE DO.



Any preference about the size of the tattoos you like to do?

Doing big pieces is pretty daunting and stressful because I don't have the experience at these that the Japanese do, for example. So, my work is mostly based on medium and small tattoos. Besides, these allow me to achieve a good balance between size and details. I'm obsessed with this equation.

That said, right now, I'm super amazed by the work of Alexander Grim. I feel very connected with the things he likes and I think we share a common base for his visual culture. When I see his crows, among the other amazing birds he does, I often feel that 'this is the way', because he works in a huge space. Even though he is Russian, you can feel that he has a Japanese background; he has this eye for taking anatomy into consideration when tattooing. That is why his work amazes a lot of people, including me, because it blends the Japanese understanding of tattooing with European inspiration. That's very, very cool.

In addition to tattooing in Aloha Studio, you're also in charge of printing the artworks for the Cobra Negra Gallery. What's the deal there?

One day, I felt frustrated with the print quality I was buying from another tattooer. It was fucking photocopy stuff, it was shit. When I was in L'Hospitalet, I started to investigate how to make the print quality better myself. I learnt by doing it. I've spent a lot of money, and made some mistakes along the way.

When I started to make my own prints, before I joined Aloha Tattoos, El Carlo and El Monga saw them and said they wanted the same quality, so we started to collaborate together. I connected them with the printers. With time and effort, I got some knowledge, and now when I meet a

new printer I can talk in the same language and that's important.

I think we're living in interesting times because tattooers are taking more care of how their art is being produced and sold. The quality of a print you buy from a tattooer speaks volumes about the care he takes in tattooing.

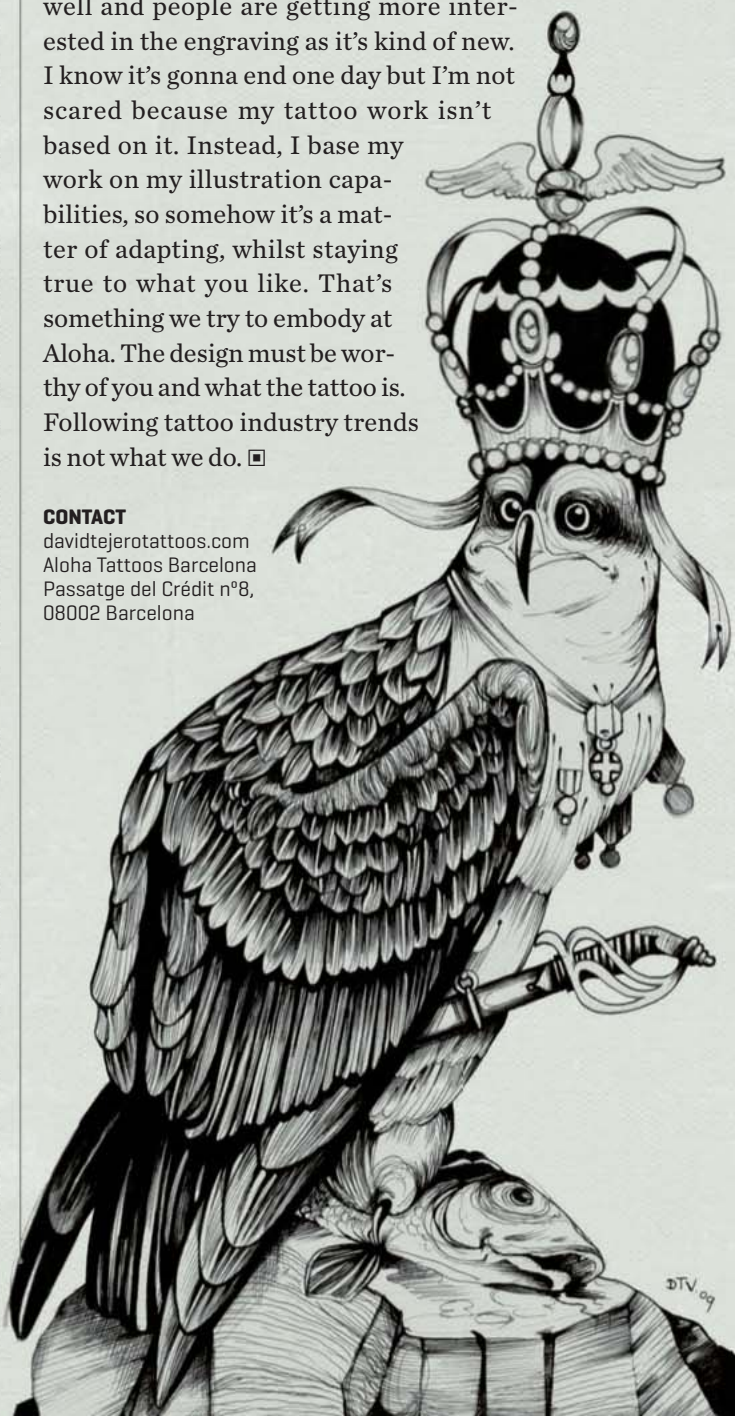
How does Barcelona, being a trendy city, impact your work?

Here in Barcelona, it's fucking trendy and if you're not 'in the moment', you'll get left behind. I've seen tattooers that had been successfully working here a lot for a number of years go down because of Instagram, Tumblr, Facebook etc. They have been riding too high for too long, and people are getting tired of them. It's awful because they're still working at a very high level.

Right now, the black and grey style is doing well and people are getting more interested in the engraving as it's kind of new. I know it's gonna end one day but I'm not scared because my tattoo work isn't based on it. Instead, I base my work on my illustration capabilities, so somehow it's a matter of adapting, whilst staying true to what you like. That's something we try to embody at Aloha. The design must be worthy of you and what the tattoo is. Following tattoo industry trends is not what we do. □

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CAMERA OBSCURA

A few months ago, I sat down with Scott to look at some shots of the cover image we were working on at the time and I flippantly said something along the lines of "Jesus—how much of this stuff have you got"...

Words: Sion Smith
Photos: Scott Cole



Not many days later, the flag went up. “I’m going to release a photo book.”
 “It’s about time!”
 “How do you even start with something like this?”

That’s pretty much how the whole thing began, but the stumbling idea didn’t stumble for long as the content process took shape very quickly—anybody can choose their best images out of a cast of thousands, right? How hard can that be?

You would be surprised, but from the other end of an iPhone, we talked through a few tech publishing foibles and then one day, Cole simply disappeared for 10 days.

“I’ve been battling with InDesign—that’s one steep learning curve!”

And so it continued - the detail is irrelevant now but I like to mention it simply because *IntoXicated* went from nothing but a spark to a beautiful quality product in the (reasonable) blink of an eye—though it didn’t seem that way at the time.

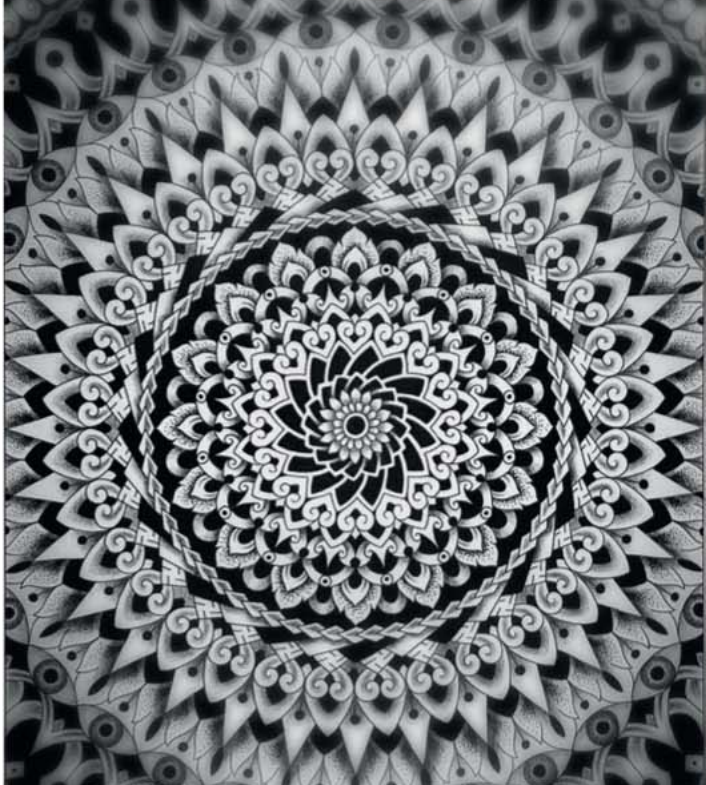
Anyway—for fans of Scott’s cover work and tattooed models in general, this is about as good as it gets out there.

The quality of the book is top of the tree and showcases his work (along with that of his wingmen: make-up artist Eve-Marie Parry and hair-stylist Nathan Pithers), not only for Skin Deep but outside of that too. More than this, I love the fact Scott brought it in with no help from anybody. A truly independent product, produced how he wanted it and with the images looked after every step of the way.



IntoXicated is a large format landscape book (33 x 28 cm—it’s huge!) and features a selection of tattooed models shot across the past two years. There are 90 monochrome spreads (103 images) over 180 pages of ProLine uncoated paper with the whole project bound in a ProLine charcoal linen hard cover with dust jacket. You can, and should, order the book at scottcolephoto.co.uk

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Colour & Motion Creative are on the lookout for a tattoo artist. If you're committed and have a love for the job then send us an email with recent examples of your work. We're based in Castleford, West Yorkshire. Good rates of pay. Contact: Colourandmotion@live.com

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Steel Beauty is looking for a tattooist to join our friendly team in Gants hill, Essex 3-5 days a week. Minimum 5 years experience with a considerable up to date portfolio. Should be proficient in custom work as well as walk-in flash work. Must be reliable with a good attitude. To arrange an interview contact the team @ steelbeauty@hotmail.com

MALE TATTOO MODEL: Looking for tattoo modelling work, to represent, organisations, businesses, products in any capacity and promote events, tattoo conventions etc. Contact : jacksoncooper113@gmail.com

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please phone our studio "tattoo you" on [01743] 232106 between 10 and 4 Tues to Sat and ask to speak with Meg. Alternatively you can message us through our facebook page tattoo you Shrewsbury

Tams Tattoos, Willenhall, West Midlands. tattoo artist required. Must have good portfolio and minimum 7years experience. Also Body Piercer/receptionist required, must be fully competent in all types of piercing and be willing to fulfil reception duties. For further details please contact Tam 07787 885902.

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Tattoo artist, proficient in custom work as well as walk in, hard working and reliable, is looking for a part time position in

the London area and beyond. Contact To'ma on 07858567122

Full and part time artist wanted. Must be drug and drama free with 2 years studio experience, keen to work with a love for the job. Ideally an artist specialising in black and grey realism. theoldsmithytattoo parlour@hotmail.co.uk for more information

The Grasshopper Tattoo and Piercing studio, a busy shop in central Harrow, needs a full time professional registered tattoo artist and a part time body piercer or [can be separate roles or be combined into a single role] to join the team. Please email a CV and portfolio to info@thegrasshopper.co.uk to apply.

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EXPERIENCED TATTOOIST NEEDED WITH AT LEAST 3 YEARS EXPERIENCE. Must have strong portfolio to show work. Custom work a must. Can start ASAP. Black Rose Tattoo studio, Warsop, Nottinghamshire. Contact gill_nicholas@hotmail.com

Terrys Tattoo Studio in Glasgow are looking to take on a full time artist. We are a very well established, family ran, busy city centre studio who work on an appointment basis but also have a busy walk in trade. We are looking for someone who has 4 years minimum professional studio experience with a good portfolio to back this up. The right person will be fluent in all styles of tattooing from simple walk in flash designs to custom tattoos , sleeves, portraits etc. Someone who also has piercing experience would be a bonus—we can be contacted on 01415525740 or at hello@terrystattoo studio.com.

Steel Beauty is looking for a tattooist to join our friendly team in Gants hill, Essex 3-5 days a week.

Minimum 5 years experience with a considerable up to date portfolio. Should be proficient in custom work as well as walk-in flash work. Must be reliable with a good attitude. To arrange an interview contact the team @ steelbeauty@hotmail.com.

Madam Butterfly, Tattoo Parlour has a vacancy for a part-time position. Well established studio with a good reputation, founded 2001 in Hastings town centre, down on the South Coast. I am looking for a good all rounder. Must be able to show portfolio. Full time for the right person, but happy to be flexible! Email me Rebecca at madambutterfly@mac.com. Look forward to hearing from you!

FULL TIME TATTOOIST WANTED. Tattoo UK Uxbridge [London]. Must have 3+ years experience. Call: 01895 812112 or email: klarysa.tattoo_uk@yahoo.com

Full and part time artist wanted. Must be drug and drama free with 2 years studio experience, keen to work with a love for the job. Ideally looking for an artist specialising in black and grey realism. email: theoldsmithytattoo parlour@hotmail.co.uk for more information

Tattoo artist wanted for busy studio near Bognor Regis. Lots of work waiting for the right artist. You must be a bit of an all rounder, easy going with consistently tidy work. Please contact Lisa or Daz on 01243 829871 or email : tigerlilytattoos@yahoo.com

Steel Beauty is looking for a tattooist to join our friendly team in Gants hill, Essex 3-5 days a week. Minimum 5 years experience with a considerable up to date portfolio. Should be proficient in custom work as well as walk-in flash work. Must be reliable with a good attitude. To arrange an interview contact the team @ steelbeauty@hotmail.com.

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When I'm not doing this, I run a small tattoo blog—posting artwork and encouraging discussion, mainly on Facebook. There were a couple of stories doing the rounds this month worth talking about...

One of them was about a guy who fled a tattoo studio without paying. This sparked loads of debate, mainly about how the police should have reacted.

This incident was an awful thing, so when I shared it online, I anticipated lots of passionate and opinionated comments. What I didn't expect was the sheer volume, the quick judgment, the nasty name-calling and the aggression.

Some people slammed the artist for not taking a deposit and doing this as a publicity stunt, some slated our police force "lazy as fuck" and a load of people suggested someone teach this guy a lesson through acts such as "smashing his face in" and "taking the artwork back and hanging it on the studio wall".

I posted the story because I knew it would spark debate. Debate, I thought, that would bring to the surface the amazing passion there is for the tattoo industry and a positive message about community.

Instead, all I saw was "scumbag", "twat" and worse. Is this how people talk to each other? I expected expressions of shock, respect, not out of control aggressive suggestions of violence.

The other thing that caught my attention was the actual volume of response to the story. My blog is tiny—it gets between 0 and 10 Facebook comments on average but this story received 78 comments, 58 shares and reached 17,000 people.

As clients, collectors and lovers, we're always spouting about the frequency of TV programmes and media stories that report tattoos in a negative light. The UK's mainstream media is keen to delve into horror stories of regret or terrible tattoos, and we're always criticising that there's never just a focus on what's good about the tattoo world.

Well, there's why.

If statistics show that people respond online much more to negative stories than positive ones, of course they're going to create TV programmes about the bad shit, because they think that's what we want to see.



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So there's how we change the opinion of our industry. By altering our reactions to it on the inside. Let's shout about great stuff, let's put out good vibes and reel in the vitriol.

During a recent session on my sleeve with my artist Alex Rhoades, at Shakespeare Ink ([instagram.com/skegnasty](https://www.instagram.com/skegnasty)), we got chatting about some of the confrontation you can find out there. A small portion of people love drama, competition and the bad mouthing of people. In an alternate universe, they think that's how they'll get to the top.

Alex and I share the same view that competition and confrontation simply isn't necessary. The world would be a better place without it. We're all here to create and share good art. Simple as. Let's just get along, shall we?

How about we not slam each other so aggressively online for our decisions? It's just fueling the fire of opinion on exactly what the tattoo industry is not. ▣

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There was a mighty misleading story that ran on one of the daily papers websites recently. We thought we would take a look at some of the detail:

It was the Daily Mail Online that ran this story.

Allegedly, the NHS has been ‘slammed’ for the amount of money it has spent on tattoo removal (£330,000) while hospitals ‘struggle to stay afloat’. According to the report, more than 2,000 people have had tattoos removed by the NHS since 2010.

That’s a lot of people taking it to the NHS rather than a private clinic. A breakdown of the figures (if their sources are to be believed) means that over 2,000 people have been given free laser treatment in the past four years. Whilst not routinely provided by the NHS, guidance states that it can be carried out if it is ‘to protect a person’s health’ or if their doctor believes it is causing them ‘significant distress or serious mental health problems’. Treatment may also be considered if the dye had caused a ‘significant allergic reaction or infection’ or if someone had been tattooed against their will.

We thought this was worth mentioning in Time Machine this month as—regardless of the source of the ‘disguised stab at the heart of tattooing—there is some truth behind it. It is indeed possible to have tattoos removed by the NHS but you’re highly unlikely to qualify just because you changed your mind about that half sleeve you thought you wanted.

The report goes on to detail a story about a man called John (natch) who had a ‘large swastika removed from his chest’ (natch, again) so that he could ‘move abroad and take his top off while working out’ (we’re not sure if those two things are related). But this isn’t so much a public relations problem for tattooing or laser removal—if the story is true, it says more about the public relations nightmare that is the medical profession—though if I’m really honest, it probably says even more about the journalists who work at the Mail.

When it comes to laser removal, we (collectively here at The Reset Room and Skin Deep) wouldn’t even consider hitting a public service like the NHS for removal options. Aside from it being ‘wrong’ (regardless of your politics), they simply don’t have the ex-



Guil Zekri



WAYNE JOYCE
ResetRoom

WHEN IT COMES TO LASER REMOVAL, WE WOULDN'T EVEN CONSIDER HITTING A PUBLIC SERVICE LIKE THE NHS FOR REMOVAL OPTIONS

pertise of this level of removal treatment day in/day out, knowing the nature of ink, understanding the nature of what you may want to do afterwards.

There may be certain instances in which the NHS could perform a solid function in the removal game but we’re estimating that over 99% of those numbers stated above (again, if the figures are true) should be having private treatment simply to get it done properly.

In the name of research, if you do have an NHS tattoo removal story you’d like to share with us—good or bad—we’d love to hear it.

As always—if you have further questions or want to discuss something, you can email me here: wayne@resetroom.com or visit www.resetroom.com

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AN EYE IS UPON YOU

I found a large fish in my hallway, likely dropped by a heron and dragged in through the window by my Siamese cat. It lay on the rug, glistening, while I tipped out the contents of the kitchen bin and hastily filled it with water. Once the fish was swimming again, I was able to identify it. A koi.

In Chinese folklore, the Dragon's Gate is a tumultuous waterfall on the Yellow River, said to have been created by the God-Emperor Yu, who split the mountain that blocked the river's path and relieved a terrible flood. Each spring, when the peach blossoms flower and the river is fullest, the koi carp, legendary for their beautiful colours and great fortitude, must brave the perilous upriver swim to spawn, battling the fierce rushing water. And they do, gathering in great numbers in the pools at the foot of the mountain. Only the most determined, most visionary of the carp attempt to leap the crashing falls, and the few that succeed are said to bring about China's rainy season and are transformed from humble fish into great flying dragons, rewarded by the grateful gods.

I once had the great privilege of working as an assistant to the 'Grandmother of Performance Art', Marina Abramović. Familiarity with Marina's public works, once visceral and dangerous, now uncomfortable due to their long duration and awkward silences, did not adequately prepare me for the six weeks I spent in her company. She held meetings laying in the grass outside the gallery, her staff laying beside her, and rather than give direction, told stories. The following scenario is Abramović's, although the words are mine:

You are outside, you are running. You have been running for a long time and sweat drips from your brow, the sunlight and salt stings your eyes, but you barely notice. Your lungs are bursting, your throat is sore, scarred by your fast, ragged breaths and your legs are burning. You stop, spent, doubled over, knowing you can run no more. A person, unidentified, unseen, steps out from the shadows and cold, smooth metal displaces the hot brine pooling in the small of your back. A voice, whispers, harmo-



PAULA HARDY KANGELOS
DiamondBetty

nising with your laboured breathing. 'Run', it says, 'Run. Or Die'. So you do. You run and you run faster and harder than you've ever run before, your old limits long forgotten.

The fish in my hallway reminds me of Abramović's runner. The story is of course an allegory for her own performance work, art that happens only after the metaphorical gun is pressed into the exhausted back. The doubled over runner and the koi in the pool at the foot of the mountain are much the same, about to be pushed beyond imagined limitations, but the runner discovers new power because it must. The koi deliberately seeks to find it.

Becoming a tattooed person is also tantamount. Our exhausting run, or upstream swim, may begin with resisting naysayers and challenging the opinions our most-loved, our parents, friends and partners. Obstacles to be surmounted include the reconciliation of our work-lives with our desired bodily aesthetics, the saving of money, the patient wait for the chosen artist, and perhaps even thousand-mile journeys before we even begin the eventual endurance, the hours of tattoo process.

For us, attempting to leap the metaphorical waterfall is making a real-life leap of faith. We transform ourselves because we want to, and because we dare to. We may have been born looking like fish, but we know we are destined to be dragons.

My carp did not leap any gates. He died quietly, in a bucket unable to surmount the obstacles of his own epic journey, the hallway rugs of Manchester even more perilous than the raging waters of the Yellow River. My koi did not become a dragon, but he still inspired a story. □

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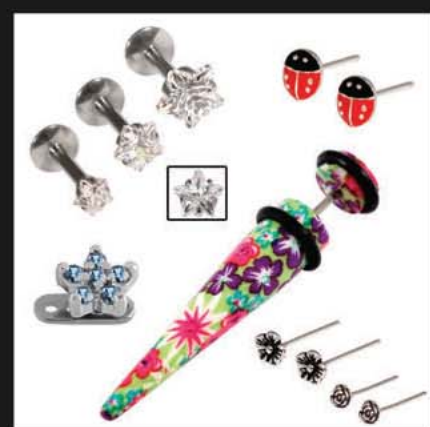
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