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MODEL: GEMMA KAHLLA PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT COLE

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# TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN

When I can't be found in a studio or in front of a fifteen inch screen wondering either a) how somebody got so damn good at putting ink into skin and remains largely unaware of how good they are or b) how somebody didn't get so damn good but thinks they did, I can be found in one of two places. Either a bookshop (not fussy which—the more varied the better) or a coffee shop. There used to be 'the record shop' in this list too but that kind of died a death big time a million years ago.

There was a time when I would have imagined hanging out in a coffee shop was so far beneath me that Dante Alighieri wrote a large book about it but over the years, that's where I've found myself anyway.

Given a choice, Starbucks is where it's at. In the absence of the authority of the mermaid, Caffè Nero is no slouch when it comes to whipping up a great cup of Joe but in the great coffee scandal of the decade, I avoid Costa at every twist of the knife. It's nothing personal but they serve up a latte in a glass mug designed some time in the mid 70s and it tastes like crap. The second of these is probably a better reason not to go there but it's the first one that annoys me. Go figure.

Anyway, last week I ended up in a part of London I've never been in before (it happens to the best of us) and my long search for a coffee shop was finally rewarded with a Starbucks. The beauty of hitting these joints is you get what you want—which while it might not seem very supportive of the nice looking cafe down the street with orange chairs—I at least got what I was expecting: A latte is a latte and not some hot milk in a mug that came free with an easter egg.

Sometimes I feel guilty about my approach to coffee but for me, coffee belongs in the same category as your car or television—and I don't see any of you driving around in a car manufactured by Jack Barrowboy and I definitely don't see anybody lounging around in their pants excited to watch Daredevil in front of a 40 inch screen hammered together



CHARLOTTE CHADEAU



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

## A LATTE IS A LATTE AND NOT SOME HOT MILK IN A MUG THAT CAME FREE WITH AN EASTER EGG

by Cynthia Bolthead, so please...

Realistic coffee in hand, I took a seat, whipped a book out of my pocket and kicked back for a half hour. The shop got busy and eventually, I was joined by an overly fat man in a suit because there was nowhere else left to sit. He kept himself to himself until I got comfortably numb and rolled up my sleeves—at which exact same time, he very visibly decided he didn't want to sit at the same table as somebody with tattoos and chose to stand with his lunch instead.

Killer. Starbucks should advertise this may happen occasionally, because that right there is a win in my book. ☐

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Those of us who attend tattoo conventions know they can come equipped with a lot of the same attributes but there are some conventions that stand alone, placed prominently upon a white pedestal, dripping with candy paint...

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It's always a kick around here to be able to wrap up a cover model feature when she's also a tattooer. This one goes deep.

**28 GENERATION TATTOO**

There's nothing else in the world that's quite like getting a tattoo. Becca Rimmer spoke to three different tattoo artists this month who, like her, had been contemplating the process and its challenges.

**34 IT'S A DOG'S LIFE**

As soon as we laid eyes on Nashville, Tennessee-based photographer Brian Batista's *Tattoos & Rescues* series, starring rescue dogs and their tattooed owners, there was one thing we knew for certain: We had to track him down.

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It's only natural that a tattoo artist should feel a need to turn their hand to other artistic endeavours once in a while - but out in the real world, making it work commercially is perhaps not as simple as you may think. Mike Moses takes the boss to the nearest bar to discuss.

**70 BEHIND THE INK**

What makes a tattoo artist tick? In

this brand new series, Wayne Simmons unpacks the pieces that make up some of his favourite artists working today, looking at the things outside of tattooing that inspire them.

**76 THE PEN**

Who never got to see one of the striking images done by Ramon Maiden? Since 2003, he has never stopped bringing us pictures from the past and transforming them with his pens. You will dig it.

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We all have beliefs that we feel strongly about, just trawl through Facebook for twenty minutes and you will be bombarded with peoples views on what they believe in. Just ask Tom.

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**THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS**

Pascal Bagot  
Paula Hammond  
Paula Hardy Kangelos  
Barbara Pavone  
Amanda Peukert  
Wayne Simmons  
Trent Aitken-Smith

**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

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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## TATTOO ON THE GO

**You can stick your chocolate fountains and Dirty Dancing moves.** Australian couple Marlee and Jordan Follman recently celebrated their wedding day with something much more fun for their guests. A mobile tattoo van.

The Brisbane couple, for whom tattoos are a massive part of their life, wanted guests to have the option to remember their special day forever, by getting inked there and then.

Luke Bishop, of Bishop's Mobile Tattooing ([facebook.com/bishopsmobiletattoo parlour](https://facebook.com/bishopsmobiletattoo parlour)) was on hand to offer love-themed tattoos from a pre-designed flash sheet.

Chatting to the Australian Daily Mail, the couple said: 'it was nice to be brought back down to Earth and remember that even though it was our special day—the world keeps turning for everyone else.'

15 people got tattooed in total and the couple got matching swans. The wedding guests they predicted would be the most conservative on the day, were the ones who stepped forward to get inked, including the bride's mum.

Looks like their day brought out the best in everyone. I haven't heard of a wedding tattoo van in the UK... yet!



## SHORT SLEEVES



### MODERN VINTAGE

Emma Garner ([emmagarner.co.uk](https://emmagarner.co.uk)) is a Bristol-based artist who makes funky, quirky jewellery.

She encases her illustrations and lettering in a smooth bubble of glass. Red roses, vintage lettering and the feel of something oozing with delicate quality and originality.

We just couldn't wait to order our BADASS pendants from Emma but don't want you guys missing out. That's why we're offering one of you one of Emma's handmade pieces from her folksy range. Pretty good, eh?

Email [news@skindeep.co.uk](mailto:news@skindeep.co.uk) with the subject BADASS and we'll pick a winner.



### BODY GARDEN

Body Garden Tattoo in Birmingham have moved! Their new details are:

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26-38 Sheepcote Street  
Birmingham B16 8JB  
0121 643 2505  
[info@bodygardentattoo.co.uk](mailto:info@bodygardentattoo.co.uk)  
[WWW.BODYGARDENTATTOO.CO.UK](http://WWW.BODYGARDENTATTOO.CO.UK)

### OPENING TIMES:

MON: 10AM - 5PM  
TUE: 12PM - 8PM  
WED - FRI: 10AM - 5PM  
SATURDAY: 12PM - 5PM  
SUNDAY: CLOSED





THE BATTLE CONTINUES

**Tattooist Kevin Paul continues his** efforts to raise awareness of the need for safe tattooing. Back in 2013, he appeared in the media discussing his campaign to get new tattooing regulations put into place.

In the last year he's met with MPs and has now launched an online petition to get support from the public. The main aim of the campaign is to freshen up regulations and educate everyone on the risks of unprofessional tattooing.

As a side note, another story doing the rounds this year is that of Tony Newlands, who was jailed in February for illegally tattooing in unsanitary conditions and damaging people's skin as a result. The woman who eventually reported him, who has been left scarred, was being criticised by people online, sometimes more so than the artist.

The comments on social media sites were those of shock that the client didn't know better. People asking: when she entered his dirty kitchen, saw he

was drinking alcohol and that he didn't have clean equipment or a portfolio of good tattooed work, why did she still chose to be tattooed by him?

Whether that was the case, or whether she was just unlucky, the online comments reflected the public view that, despite rules and regulations, sometimes it's the client's good old-fashioned common sense that is missing.

It raises the question of whether we will ever be able to police illegal tattooing. If bad decisions are made despite the warning signs, sadly the questions is, will much ever change? Even if we raise awareness, will illegal tattooists find a way, and will certain people always chose to be tattooed illegally to save money?

All questions aside, that's not to say the battle shouldn't be fought, and that Kevin's efforts aren't worth the time. You know what to do:

The petition can be signed online at [epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/75246](http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/75246)

NOT THOSE HORRIBLE TATTOOS AGAIN



**We spotted an article on New York website bustle.com recently**, by fashion journalist Kristin Collins Jackson. The article was called '7 horrible things that happen if you get a tattoo, so be prepared if you decide to go under the needle'. What now, we asked ourselves...

The article begins by talking about how popular getting inked has become, and really, people need to know just how awful the consequences are, but the seven reasons Kristin then goes on to list, have really put a smile on our faces, so we wanted to share them with you.

1. You'll have to talk to new people at parties
  2. You'll have to deal with the sound of annoying alerts on your phone when you get more Instagram likes
  3. People may think you're a badass
  4. You'll never run late because you were spending an extra 30 minutes picking out accessories for your outfit ever again
  5. Your confidence level will be too much for anyone to match
  6. People will constantly be harassing you with compliments
  7. You'll have to start having more adventures, because you already did something daring
- They're 7 good enough reasons for us for us too. Read the full article at [bustle.com/articles/71470-7](http://bustle.com/articles/71470-7)

**Waterford City Tattoo Convention**

**05 June-07 June 2015**

Crystal Sports & Leisure Centre  
Cork Road, Waterford 00353 IRELAND  
[facebook.com/Waterfordcitytattoo](http://facebook.com/Waterfordcitytattoo)

**Tattooofest Krakow**

**06 June-07 June 2015**

The International Congress  
Centre EXPO Kraków  
Ul. Galician 9, Krakow, POLAND  
[tattooofest.pl/convention](http://tattooofest.pl/convention)

**Leeds International Tattoo Expo**

**06 June-07 June 2015**

New Dock Hall  
Royal Armouries Museum  
Armouries Dr, Leeds LS10 1LT UK  
[leedstattoexpo.com](http://leedstattoexpo.com)

**International Tattoo Convention de Rennes**

**06 June-07 June 2015**

Stade de la Route de Lorient  
111 Rue de Lorient,  
35000 Rennes, FRANCE  
[facebook.com/rennes.tattoo.convention](http://facebook.com/rennes.tattoo.convention)

**Northampton International Tattoo Convention**

**06 June-07 June 2015**

Saints Rugby Ground  
Franklins Gardens, Weedon Road  
Northampton NN5 5BG UK  
[northamptoninternationaltattooconvention.com/](http://northamptoninternationaltattooconvention.com/)

**Israel Tattoo Convention**

**06 June-06 June 2015**

Abarbanel 88, Tel Aviv, ISRAEL  
[israeltattoocon.com/](http://israeltattoocon.com/)

**NYC Tattoo Convention**

**12 June-14 June 2015**

Metropolitan Pavilion  
125 W 18th St, New York  
NY 10011, USA  
[nycattooconvention.com](http://nycattooconvention.com)

**Ink-N-Iron - Long Beach**

**12 June-14 June 2015**

The Queen Mary,  
1126 Queens Highway  
Long Beach, CA 90802, USA  
[ink-n-iron.com](http://ink-n-iron.com)

**St. Petersburg Tattoo Festival**

**12 June-14 June 2015**

Aurora, Naberezhnaya Pirogovskaya, 5/2  
St Petersburg, 194044 RUSSIA  
[tattoo-festival.ru](http://tattoo-festival.ru)

**Ink Vibrations**

**19 June-21 June 2015**

Meo Arena, Rossio dos Olivais  
lote 2.13.01 A, Lisbon, PORTUGAL  
[inkvibrations.com](http://inkvibrations.com)

**Campinas Tattoo Fest**

**19 June-21 June 2015**

EXPO Dom Pedro, Avenida  
Guilherme Campos  
500 - Bloco B - Jardim Santa Genebra  
Campinas - SP 13087-635 BRAZIL  
[campinatattooofest.jimdo.com](http://campinatattooofest.jimdo.com)

**Croydon Tattoo Convention**

**20 June-21 June 2015**

Fairfield Halls, Park Lane  
Croydon, Surrey CR9 1DG, UK  
[croydontattooconvention.com](http://croydontattooconvention.com)



## THE POISON APPLE

*It certainly didn't take long for the tattooed community of the world to respond to this slice of Apple Watch tech-hell. If you happened to have buried your head in the sand for the last few weeks, here's what we've got:*

**It's an annoying problem for an unlucky few:** the Apple Watch's heart rate monitor and possibly some other features might not work if you have a tattoo on your wrist.

Dubbed 'TattooGate' in the media for its potential to bring down the giant (which is 99.99999% extremely unlikely in all honesty), Apple, for its part, acknowledged the issue on its support website.

"Permanent or temporary changes to your skin, such as some tattoos, can also impact heart rate sensor performance. The ink, pattern, and saturation of some tattoos can block light from the sensor, making it difficult to get reliable readings."

Tattooed watch owners complained about the problem when the watch launched and some even posted videos around the web that show the watch working well on an

un-inked wrist, but repeatedly locking or pausing when worn on an arm with a tattoo.

Some said it appeared the watch's screen-lock feature was triggering because the sensors thought the watch was not sitting on their wrist.

Which was rather frustrating and "a bit embarrassing" for Graham Edgell, a Los Angeles printing broker who loves Apple products and was eager to show off his new watch to friends after his wife bought it for him.

Edgell said he thought a software glitch was interfering with the watch's message notifications and other features, until he heard about others having trouble with their tattoos. Edgell solved his problem by moving the watch further down on his wrist, away from the dark floral tattoo that stops just above the cuff of his shirt sleeve.





“When it was on the tattoo, it was as if it had lost connection with my skin,” he said. “Now it’s absolutely fine.”

The Apple website further explains: “Apple Watch uses green LED lights paired with light-sensitive photodiodes to detect the amount of blood flowing through your wrist at any given moment. When your heart beats, the blood flow in your wrist — and the green light absorption — is greater.”

It doesn’t appear to be a problem with all tattoos and seems more likely to affect people with dark red or black ink on the side of the wrist where they wear the watch.

The tech industry has confronted problems with skin colouring in the past. Both Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard fielded complaints several years ago about facial recognition sensors in gaming consoles and computers that struggled to detect people with dark skin. Both companies came up with the suggestion that poor lighting interfered with the sensors’ ability to measure the contrast between eyes and other facial features.

As for the Apple Watch, some social media users have mocked it as a complaint from spoiled hipsters. Others wondered how it happened that Apple didn’t have a single designer or tester with a wrist tattoo who would have noticed the problem.

No doubt by the time you read this, there will be an app to fix that.

On the flip side of the coin, for those who thinks it’s quite amusing, there’s a classy spoof article up on the Scoopertino website:

1. Go to [apple.com/tattoo](http://apple.com/tattoo).
2. Select an Apple-certified tattoo removal facility near you.
3. Make an appointment to have an expert burn away a small part of your tattoo in the shape of Apple Watch. You can read the whole piece here: [scoopertino.com/apple-eases-watch-tattoo-fears](http://scoopertino.com/apple-eases-watch-tattoo-fears)



by  
*Josh Peacock*



**It's always reassuring when your customer places complete trust in you.** So when he asked me to tattoo a xenomorph from the the Alien films, I was pretty excited. Not only have I loved those films forever, but I'm an even bigger fan of the artist responsible for their concept: the mighty H.R Giger.

The alien was to be in an abstract angular style and bio-mechanical is organic in form. So I decided that I had to focus on the face and especially the mouth, which is definitely their business end.

I enjoyed trying to describe rounded shapes and forms with hard straight edges, crystalline structures and light refraction and I was really happy with how it came out. Especially the sneering upper lip and the suggestion of drool in negative space.

They say 'purple and green should never be seen', but it's the home kit for horror and I had loads of fun giving this tattoo its creepy atmosphere. This is the kind of tattoo that makes you feel lucky to have customers that are willing to let you run riot.

@joshpeacockobe1

facebook.com/josh.Obe1.peacock  
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# BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

*It's been said more than once before and I have no qualms over saying it again: sometimes, a portfolio can stop you in your tracks, have you inspect it a little closer and declare to anybody that will listen that it's the best thing you've seen all week. On those grounds, we fired out a QA session to Matthew Pettis to see what he was made of. Enjoy...*

[matt\\_pettis@outlook.com](mailto:matt_pettis@outlook.com)





**I'M A BIG FAN OF SOLID BLACK. I THINK IT HAS WAY MORE EXPRESSION THAN COLOUR DOES—IT LEAVES NOTHING AND EVERYTHING OPEN TO INTERPRETATION. ARE YOU OF THE SAME OPINION?**

Totally. I think it's a real statement. It's like telling a story with very few words. I think that's why I like it more than other styles. People tend to want my work because a lot of the imagery is based in traditional meanings but at the same time, it speaks to everyone—even if it's not the style you like.

**WHEN YOU CREATE THE ARTWORK, IS THE INTENTION FOR THEM TO REMAIN BLACK WHEN THEY'RE TATTOOS OR CAN YOU BE TALKED INTO GIVING THEM COLOUR ALONG THE WAY?**

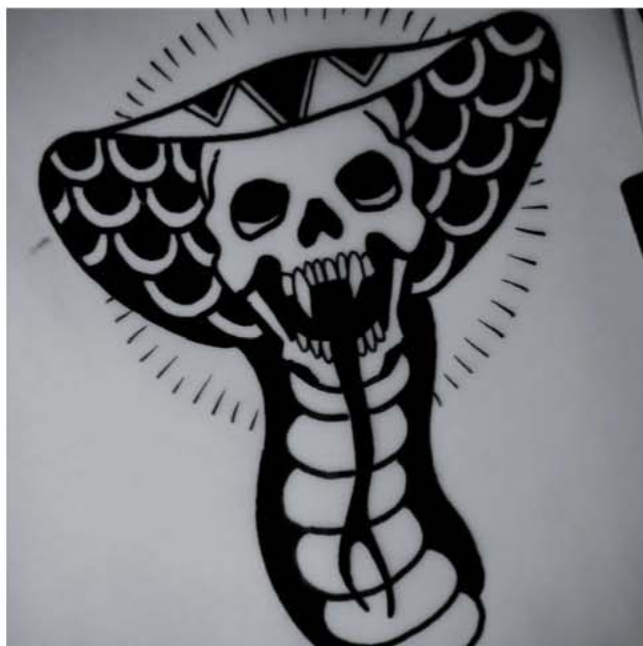
When I create this specific artwork, it is intended to be black from the beginning. Even when I'm roughing it out in pencil, I have in mind what's going to be solid black or

line shaded or just left empty. The negative space is just as important as the positive with work like this. I could be persuaded to do some colour on them but ideally it works better black. The blacker the better!

**THERE'S OBVIOUSLY A LOT OF TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUE HERE—THOUGH I ACTUALLY THINK IT'S GONE FAR BEYOND THIS—IS THAT WHERE YOUR BACKGROUND IS?**

My background training was quite generalised but this gave me the grounding to evolve into what I wanted to do. When I was younger, it was the film 'Chopper' where tattoos first caught my eye. I think it was the raw prison style that I had not seen before.

When I started tattooing, I was really interested in more old school designs and peeled most of my drawing back to very simple lines and themes, which is what made



me realise that with so few lines in a design, every one of them had to be perfect. Over the last few years, I've built on that and arrived at what I do now, but I still have a hell of a long way to go.

**HAVE YOU REACHED THAT 'HOLY' POINT AT WHICH YOU CAN STAND YOUR GROUND AND ONLY TATTOO YOUR OWN DESIGNS?**

No, I'm not there yet. I do a lot of different pieces at the moment. However I always design my own. I never do something that gets brought in to me. If someone has found a picture they like, I'll do my own take on it or at least mix it up a little, this way everyone leaves with their own tattoo and not a copy. I would love to have mountains of my own flash

one day and spend most my time working through that, but I'm very happy where I am.

**YOUR WORK IS SOME OF THE CLEANEST AND PRECISE I'VE SEEN IN A LONG TIME. IT'S ALMOST PRIMAL IN ITS DELIVERY. IS THAT SOMETHING YOU'RE APPRECIATED FOR OUT THERE BECAUSE NOT ALL THAT I SEE HAS THIS MUCH CARE TAKEN WITH IT.**

I do hope so! The feedback I get on my work is positive which makes me happy and I guess that's all I have to go on. As I see it, I'm dealing with someone's skin and they have come to me for my art, so it's my job to make sure I've considered every line and carry my work out properly. For me, permanent means looking good forever.



**ARE YOU THE HALF ARTIST YOU WANT TO BE OR IS THERE A VERSION OF WHAT YOU CAN DO IN YOUR HEAD THAT HASN'T QUITE MADE IT INTO REALITY YET? WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF HEADING OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS?**

No! I'm definitely not the artist I want to be, but I also think that's what pushes me forward. I'm pretty hard on myself when it comes to drawing and designing. A few of my pictures end up in the bin if I don't feel they're going how I think they should look. If I was happy with everything I drew, I'd become complacent, I'd struggle to improve and I sure don't want to go down that road—and that's how every artist should feel, every day.

I don't know where I see myself in the next few years though—hopefully improving and

evolving my work and that people will still be appreciating it.

**FINALLY—FOR NOW—IS TATTOOING ALL YOU DO? THERE'S CERTAINLY A MARKET FOR ILLUSTRATION WORK OUT THERE WITH A STANDARD SUCH AS YOURS. IS THAT SOMETHING YOU DO OR HAVE CONSIDERED?**

At the moment, I've got a full time job in the week but I'm tattooing in the evening and weekends so I'm pretty busy. I'm working hard on building my portfolio and would love to go full time. I have thought about illustration and graphic design in the past because this style is quite transferable into different areas, so yeah, I would definitely be interested in branching out at some point in the future. □



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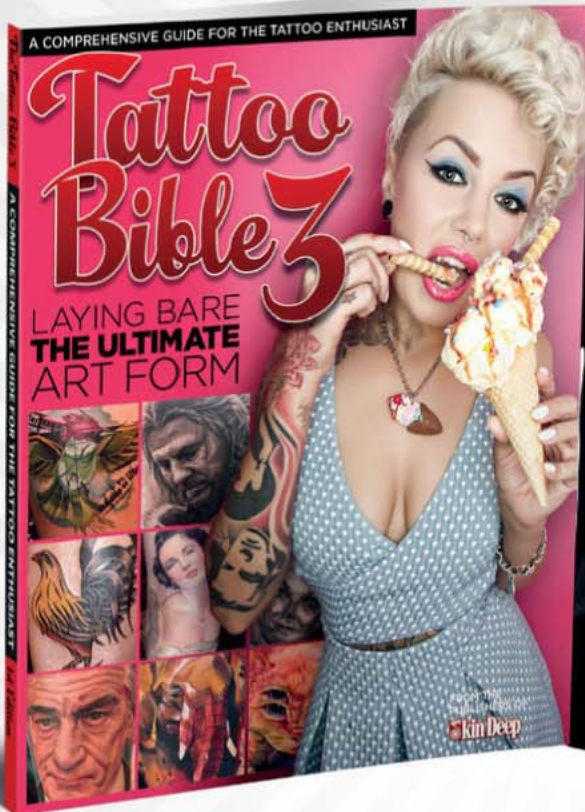
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# BUBBLEGUM FACTORY

*Those of us who attend tattoo conventions know they can come equipped with a lot of the same attributes—art, artists, the faint buzzing of machines, and the hissing chit-chat that swirls through the venue like smoke. But there are some conventions that stand alone, placed prominently upon a white pedestal, dripping with candy paint. Ladies and Gentlemen, we give you Musink.*

**Y**es, in those instances, the convention is transformed into something a little more eccentric, a little more unconventional, if you will. But first things first: A little backstory about the convention/festival. Musink was curated by a lovely lady named Katherine von Drachenberg, also known as tattoo artist & TV personality, Kat Von D. You might have seen the birthing of the event back in 2007 when the first season of her show *LA Ink* premiered. The three-day fest, that usually goes down in mid March, took its first breath in 2008, and has been maturing into a fine, young adult ever since. In 2013, Travis Barker—famed drummer for a little band named Blink 182—took over the event, and the rest, my friends, is hard rock history.

This year, Travis Barker's 8th Annual Musink took place March 20th-22nd at the Orange County Fair & Exposition Center. Walking through the gates each year is always a new experience. It's reminiscent of what I think it might have been like had Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory actually existed. The buildings are monstrous, the music is blaring, the people are swarming as if they've just tasted snozberries; unfortunately, there are none of those—just lots and lots of beer. So where, you



**IT'S REMINISCENT OF WHAT I THINK IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN LIKE HAD WILLY WONKA'S CHOCOLATE FACTORY ACTUALLY EXISTED**

might ask, does one begin in a place where a life-sized portrait of Clint Eastwood is being plastered to some guy's thigh, while ten tattooed babes are bouncing down a runway somewhere nearby. Well, you start with the classic car show of course.

Cadillacs, Impalas, pick-up trucks: Oh my! An entire dome-like hall, dressed end to end in nothing but chrome covered cars, picked & plucked from the finest decades. The automobiles looked so delicious—and here I go again with the Wonka references—one might lick them just to see if each owner's attentiveness extended as far as flavor. Several of the vehicles belonged to Travis Barker himself, the primary reason I refrained from the taste test.

The next spot you might wander toward whilst touring the madness of Musink is the inescapable sound of music—it seems to be blaring from all sides. Each year, the event

comes equipped with more than a few big names meant to perform on an echoing stage. In its first year, Musink saw the likes of Tiger Army and The Used. In its second year, Reverend Horton Heat and Danzig played the stage. Now, six successful years later, the festival continues to impress listeners by combining genres that can only be so smoothly merged through the widespread love of tattoos;







Bad Religion, Yelawolf, and Blink 182 were some of this year's stage-bangers.

If you're still stuck on the babes I mentioned earlier, rest assured: they have not been left behind. Along with the seemingly six-million other things happening at the event, there is also a contest meant to crown 'Miss Musink.' The competition goes a little something like this: Sullen Clothing has a brigade of babes that they call Angels. These Angels, as instructed by Musink, are on a mission to find the most beautiful, tattooed women around town. Said women are then entered into a competition against each other—hosted by Bernadette Macias, a judge from CMT's Tattoo Titans—wherein one is crowned Miss Musink, and thus becomes Sullen's newest Angel. This year's winner was co-owner of Saints Ink Tattoo, JayLynn. The competition likely sucks something fierce for the losers, but everyone in the audience has a pretty good time—it doesn't get much better than beer, boobs, and tattoos.

So, being that this is indeed considered a tattoo convention, I'm sure by now you're probably wondering where the hell all the tattooing actually takes place. Hold on, it's going to be a bumpy ride. Upon entering this portion of Musink, you might notice that it's almost impossible to do just that. The hall is filled to the brim with onlookers, rubber-neckers, and portfolio page-flippers. There are bodies bumping, shots of spiced rum sloshing, and inexplicably intricate details amidst every booth. There are arms and thighs exposed, tiny caps full of ink eager to meet their owners, fluorescent lights overhead beaming with the promise of perfect line-work. And then there is the grand sea of artists, most of which are making the most impeccable tattoos my—or your eyes—may ever see up close. Nikko Hurtado, Robert Atkinson, Luke Wessman, Chuy Quintenar, and the list goes on (and on); the biggest names in the game all come together for three days to absolutely sink the city in ink.

This year, just outside the hall, host of Tattoo

**THEN THERE IS THE GRAND SEA OF ARTISTS, MOST OF WHOM ARE MAKING THE MOST IMPECCABLE TATTOOS MY EYES MAY EVER SEE UP CLOSE**

Titans Jamye Foxx (not to be confused with Jamie Foxx) emceed the tattoo contest for the weekend. She presented each still-dripping tattoo on stage, while three panelists—including the historical Rick Walters—judged away. The categories ranged from small, traditional tattoos to entire back pieces. Aside from ones freshly made, there were committed collectors roaming about as well—entire bodies covered scalp to pinky-toe in ink of all shades. The ring leader, he could be called, was a man named Richie the Barber, whose clown makeup can only be removed my means of laser beam. Musink is—in the most affectionate form of the phrase—a fucking circus.

The name of the "convention" is obviously generated through the combination of the words 'music' and 'ink.' It is a perfectly simplistic formula for success. Music, although arguably intangible, has the same lasting permanence as a tattoo. Tattoos, although inarguably ever-changing, have the same curative quality as your favourite song. The essentiality of both is transposable and thus makes the magic of Musink inevitable. All in all, despite what can seem a kaleidoscope of chaos, it's quite heartwarming to find lines formed—sometimes fifteen yards long—in hopes of meeting artists like Carlos Torres and Cleo Wattenström. In a world where media mishaps like Kim Kardashian are worshiped for mysterious reasons, it is nothing less than refreshing to enter a place where heavily tattooed individuals with whiskey breath become the icons. So, with that said, cheers to this year's Musink and the many more to come! ▣





VIXEN

# Gemma

facebook.com/gemmakahlua @gemmabunny

*It's always a kick around here to be able to wrap up a cover model feature when she's also a tattooer—and it's even more of a pleasure when her name is Gemma and you get along like a house on fire—though it did get a little heavy along the way. Please, join us in flogging ourselves to death...*

**So far as I remember, the last time you graced the cover of Skin Deep, you weren't tattooing then—but I may well be very wrong! So to clear that up... How long have you been tattooing?**

Yeah, you're wrong! I started tattooing in May 2007 at 21, I did my apprenticeship in Surrey and continued to work at the same shop for around seven years. So, whatever mathematical equation that involves.... umm... I've been tattooing since 2007 sometime. You do the math!

**Is it everything you thought it would be? I know it's a lot tougher than most people think when they're starting out but what have you made of it all? I reckon seven years is long enough to have figured it out.**

I kinda wrote off tattooing as a career after years of wondering what the hell to do with myself and not focusing so much on art since school, but luckily for me it was like riding a bike—not that I'm so sure I could actually do that to be honest—as they say and I fell straight back into drawing, I've always believed if it's meant to be, it will be. There were some tough times and I found confidence was very much the key. It was similar to learning to drive for me: confidence, intuition and passion and after stress, trial and error, they become the things in life I enjoy most and enjoyment I hope, is reflected in the outcome.

**You said your life was like the movie Click. I've never seen that (must have been washing my hair that day) and I had to look it up. Assuming everybody else knows what you're talking about...er, why?**

I am a massive movie fan—I turn most conversations into philosophy and need to avoid going on too much like that right now but I think that movie is kind of a metaphor for modern day life. It's on fast forward, people are rushing around like crazy working, producing and creating as much as possible with no time to sit back and enjoy it. I'm in the process of trying to slow down, remembering how to relax and not feel guilty when relaxing, it can be difficult though when you feel pressured to meet expectations but those are usually my own anyway.

In a long winded way, that's kinda what I meant in relation to Click.

Ironically I complain I don't get enough time to watch all of the movies I want to watch or I can't sit and switch off and focus when I do.

**...BOTH INDUSTRIES SEEMS TO HAVE COME TOGETHER WHETHER THAT'S A GOOD OR A BAD THING IS ENTIRELY UP TO THE OBSERVER**

**I think we've established that that you work hard. You must do something other than work that you can surprise me with... don't you?**

I'm a workaholic to be totally honest purely because I can't stand being bored and not being productive. I won't go into psychoanalysing that but I realise why, which is a start I guess. I hate not feeling as though I have a purpose and creating something combats that. Tattooing has

always been my priority and full time job—modelling is something that is very secondary to me and is more of a hobby. It's something where I can sit back and let someone else be in control of and create with me. Kind of like being tattooed as opposed to tattooing. Right now, both industries seems to have come together whether that's a good or

WORDS: Mr Smith · PHOTOS: Mr Cole  
MODEL: Gemma Kahlua · MAKEUP: Eve-Marie Parry · HAIR: Nathan Pitlers



## **I'M A WORKAHOLIC TO BE TOTALLY HONEST PURELY BECAUSE I CAN'T STAND BEING BORED AND NOT BEING PRODUCTIVE**

a bad thing is entirely up to the observer.

I'm sure some people may criticise, but ignorance is bliss and I'm quite happy enjoying and creating in both worlds.

**Let's jump into the psych of slowing down. I'm pretty much the same—if I'm awake I'm doing something but over the last few months, I've been trying to detox from tech. The more I get off it, the more I can see the person I used to be. I felt like I was drowning in a sea of communication—and almost all of it was pointless in the real world. Has it affected you in the same way? Modern life is freaking tough.**

Oops—what have I done! No, I am the same and I think it's pretty common nowadays. Everyone is on that fast forward I was talking about—constantly worrying about the future and what they should be doing to be living to their full potential yet not able to actually relax and enjoy the moment.

I can't switch off because I'm so used to the pressures I put on myself. It's easy for me to blame pressures from others but it's even easier to forget I am in control of how pressured I feel and how much I take on. I panic and feel unable

to switch off and focus when I want to. I want to spend more time drawing random shit that springs into my mind to express

my own feelings again.

Like we used to do in school or when we were young and naive and life was simple.

It then gets to the point when you stop working, you (a general 'you' not you particularly but if the cap fits...) feel guilty and lazy for lying in until 7am or watching a movie I enjoy in bed in the evening whilst not drawing for clients/replying to emails/etc. If I'm not producing something for someone else, I feel guilty.

So I'm trying to retrain my brain into relaxing and being able to switch off. It's obvious that's healthy and we need that balance in order to really create to the full potential anyway. Maybe after some time out, my work and art will even improve. That's what I'm hoping for but these last few decades, life has changed so much, so quickly. It's almost become too much for the human brain to handle anymore—the amount we have created for ourselves. Maybe that's why the western world is so high on anxiety/depression and is over medicated.

Or maybe I think far too much!

**On which note, if you had the power to turn off the internet for the rest of time, would you?**







## I WANT TO SPEND MORE TIME DRAWING RANDOM SHIT THAT SPRINGS INTO MY MIND TO EXPRESS MY OWN FEELINGS AGAIN

Fuck that's so rough. I think gut/human instinct tells me the answer is yes, but I would have to do it quick without second guessing myself. The other side of me, my 2015 modern day brain would end up reasoning and manipulating and I'd find myself going with my head not my heart! Now I'm curious what your answers would be!

**Jeez. That's a tough one to get handed back. There are things I would miss for sure—like watching all of Daredevil on Netflix in a single sitting—but yep... I would flick it off too.**

**Or I think I would. At least it would give me something to regret for the rest of my life.**

Funnily enough I was just going to butt in and ask if I could keep Amazon Prime! I can live without Netflix easy (I've emptied that out) but now Amazon have Prime I can watch pretty much anything and if not, I can just order the DVD! Some things about 2105 are pretty cool really.

**Backtracking here for a moment, I get what you mean about expectation. I figured out that the worst expectation comes from myself. I'm a hard master and I can never wholly get away from myself. In some odd version of an ideal modern world, I'd like all shops to shut on a Sunday and for Xmas to last just a week or so... enforced downtime would not be a bad thing that's for sure.**

Balance is the key. I would be using getting rid of the web as the easy option—ideally I would cut down my usage but it's difficult because being a little bit involved can lead to being completely involved and caught up without even realising.

On which note, I'm going to look through Netflix for half an hour, decide there is nothing I want to watch and then fall asleep as I haven't started watching Daredevil yet. I'm scared it will be a commitment! I've heard loads of good things.... ▣



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# Generation TATTOO

*There's nothing else in the world that's quite like getting a tattoo. Beccy Rimmer spoke to three different tattoo artists this month who, like her, had been contemplating the process and its challenges.*

**T**attooing. It's not really comparable to anything else in the world, and can be such a complicated and emotionally charged event for all involved. It's a collaboration between two people, client and artist, who have completely different motives yet both care deeply about the final result.

The three artists I've been chatting to this month are all from different backgrounds, with varying artistic styles.

I was keen to see if they encountered similar aspects in their working days, specifically surrounding the behaviour of their clients.

As the UK tattoo generation of today, do we make things difficult for our artists, and how? What can we learn about tattooing today that can aid the collaborative journey in the future? AKA, are we a bit shit sometimes, and how can we be less so?

According to César De Cesaro, owner of Body Garden Tattoo in Birmingham, we're currently in the 'golden age of tattooing' and he's spent the last 17 years attempting to develop an understanding of why people get tattooed. He says, 'I love to explore the waves of thought that influence people to go and get a tattoo.'

He's tattooed all over the world and spent significant



**I LOVE TO EXPLORE  
THE WAVES OF  
THOUGHT THAT  
INFLUENCE PEOPLE TO  
GO AND GET A TATTOO**

César de Cesaro

is—how much would it be for you to tattoo this?'

I've observed this myself whilst spending time in studio receptions. Nine times out of ten, price is the first question on someone's lips when they enter the door.

Understandably, we're all financially conscious, but it's got to be hugely frustrating for any artist when we ask

periods of his life in Holland, Italy and Brazil, meaning he's seen how the client's motives can change both over time, and overseas. César has specialised in many different styles over the years and aims to never turn a customer away. With a shop of many different artistic personalities, it's easy for the team to decide which artist best fits what the customer is looking for.

But things aren't so simple for Kat Winifred, who tattoos solo at her studio in South Wales. She hasn't got other artists in the room to pass clients to if their desires don't click with hers.

Kat has worked as a henna artist for 8 years and a tattoo artist for 2. I was keen for her to give me an insight into the typical artist/customer relationship.

'The most common situation you encounter as a tattoo artist is someone bringing a photo of someone else's tattoo to you,' begins Kat. 'Most of the time, the first question I get asked



César de Cesaro

## THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS TRYING TO CREATE SOMETHING FOR A CUSTOMER THAT DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THEY WANT

César De Cesaro

about price before we've even discussed size, colour, placement, style, or anything else.

There's a generation of people wanting to buy a tattoo in the same way they'd buy a new pair of shoes. They want it now. They want it fast. They want it as cheap as possible.

Some of them want it because they believe that they should want it. Paula Castle, from Nevermore Tattoo Parlour in Daventry, knows this all too well. A huge portion of tattoo customers ask for something that's either in fashion, or because they've seen it on someone else.

Paula says, 'there are BuzzFeed and Pinterest boards with names such as 10 Tattoos You Must Get In 2015. Tattoos aren't stickers, they can't be discarded like last season's boots.'

Once price has been discussed the next biggest challenge for the artist is creating something that both parties are happy with. César

would say, 'the biggest challenge is trying to create something for a customer that doesn't know what they want.' As tattoo-purchasers, we know what we want to pay, but not necessarily what we actually want.

Consumer behaviour is now firmly engrained in our DNA. We can buy whatever we want, whenever we want. We can impulse buy, at the click of a button and it appears some of us have the same ethos when putting something on our bodies forever. At César's studio, they still get handfuls of customers whose first question is can I look through the flash sheets?

The big bad internet has its place in all of this too, as you'd expect. Kat says, 'lots of clients want an exact replica of something they have found online. I explain that I can use the photos as a reference but that it will always be my spin on that idea, in my style.'

César sets the record straight. 'Something can't go directly from an image reference, onto someone's skin. An idea has to go through a process of distortion—from a customer's mind, to the artist's mind, and then to paper. Like a guitar sound goes through a





Kat Winifred



distortion pedal and comes out as something similar, but different.'

I've also been privy to those awkward conversations between customer and artist before, when a client is dead set on an idea that the artist doesn't agree will work. I've heard clients put their arguments across in lots of different ways, one of the most common: it's on my body for life, so surely it's my decision.

Exactly. You've said it yourself. It's there for life, and this is the driving factor behind every decision your artist makes.

It was interesting to hear Kat's different approaches to both henna and tattoo art. She has different conversations with these two different client groups—she can be more free and flexible with henna art 'because it washes off'.

'Don't get me wrong. No less love goes into my henna work, but obviously I have a different approach to it. My tattoo art has a completely different level of planning, perfection

and involvement. It's there forever.'

For Paula Castle, the internet hasn't so much caused problems with referencing ideas, but opened her eyes to a whole world of copy-cats.

'Social media means I can reach clients nationally and internationally, but sadly it opens you up as an artist to plagiarism on a global scale. It's happened to me a lot of times and is devastating.'

Paula's upset, not for herself, but for the original client who has spent money and time to get a custom design from her. 'Custom designs are such an important part of tattooing, and to see artists in the world that haven't got the same respect for this, is just heart-wrenching.'

Most artists today are like Paula, and they will create one-off designs for their customers, but not all artists follow the same methods. Flash artists repeat the same designs on multiple clients and say that these old-school

#### TATTOO VIRGIN?

"If it's your first tattoo, you might be feeling like you don't know where to start. Gather lots of references for your tattoo artist. Think about what you like about each tattoo or photo, and include what you don't like too. Have a look at what your artists has done already and let them know which things you like in their tattoos. Then book a consultation in person so that you and the tattoo artist can go through ideas together and get on the same page about your design. You want a tattoo you will love for years to come, and your tattoo artists wants you to love your tattoo for years to come too!"

**KAT WINIFRED**

## THE MOST COMMON SITUATION YOU ENCOUNTER AS A TATTOO ARTIST IS SOMEONE BRINGING A PHOTO OF SOMEONE ELSE'S TATTOO TO YOU

Kat Winifred



Paula Castle

## TATTOOS AREN'T STICKERS, THEY CAN'T BE DISCARDED LIKE LAST SEASON'S BOOTS

Paula Castle



### KAT WINIFRED COMPETITION

Kat would like to give one lucky Skin Deep reader the chance to win a free t-shirt. To enter, email [editor@skindeep.co.uk](mailto:editor@skindeep.co.uk) with the email subject KAT and we'll do that thing we do.

roots are the beauty of tattooing.

Knowing that a design can have meaning on the body of more than one person, restores faith in the fact that humans experience the same emotions throughout their lives. Tattoo flash can bring us closer together. Tattoos are replication.

But for César, artists that work in this way will get left behind. 'If you tattoo the same flash over and over again, you'll never get anywhere, unless you change your principles. Those artists are happy just making money, rather than creating new custom designs, and that's all they want to achieve.'

If you're new to tattoos you'll be reading this thinking, so I shouldn't pick a design from the internet and ask for that, and I shouldn't ask to see the flash sheets—what on earth should I do then? It can be really difficult to know where to start if you're a tattoo virgin.

I think we'd all agree that if you have respect and appreciation, for art and artist,

that's all you need to know. Talking to Paula about her frequent experience of artwork theft, she pleas for 'morals and artistic integrity' overall. Let's extend this integrity to ourselves, as clients, as well as our artists.

César admits, 'it's taken me over a decade to develop my own idea of what tattoo art is. For me, it's something that elevates your conscience in relation to how you see the world.' In other words, your tattoo art should enhance your personal understanding of an idea. If you're wearing a copied design, you'll never achieve that. If you pick from a pre-existing design that you haven't had input on, you'll never achieve that either.

So who is the main culprit in the golden age of tattooing? The ignorant client? The imitating artist? The world wide web? Probably all of us, and that may never change. If there's going to be any motivation for human beings to act differently and embrace respect, it's César's final words in our interview together.

'Golden ages don't last forever and this one will end at some point. The best tattooists of the modern era are alive and putting out amazing pieces everyday, now. We should open our eyes and appreciate where we are now, and where we've come from.' ▣



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# IT'S A **DOG'S LIFE**

Words: Barbara Pavone  
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*As soon as we laid eyes on Nashville, Tennessee-based photographer Brian Batista's Tattoos & Rescues series, starring—you guessed it—rescue dogs and their tattooed owners, there was one thing we knew for certain... we had to track him down. Barbara Pavone gets all sentimental...*



**W**ith an ever-present passion for photography and unconditional love and respect for animals, it was just a matter of time before Brian Batista found the inspiration needed to start his ongoing Tattoos & Rescues series in September 2012.

The project, which seeks to combat stereotypes and prejudice surrounding the adoption of animals, focuses on highly misunderstood breeds, especially pit bulls. But

## **ANIMALS TELL YOU WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND**

it's much more than your average rescue advocacy project. Tattoos & Rescues is out to smash misconceptions about the tattooed community, too.

During our interview, I made sure to bombard Batista with questions about the ups and downs of being a self-taught photographer (who actually went on to attend the Birmingham School of Photography in Alabama), his motto—"Get Educated. Get Involved. Make A Difference."—and why he has yet to get a darn tattoo himself.

### **CAMERA LOVE**

"It started when my grandmother let me use her Polaroid instant camera one Thanksgiving when I was maybe 10 years old," remembers Batista, reminiscing about the first time he got a taste of photography. "Of course everyone in the family wasn't very happy because I would take photos of them eating, not really knowing any proper photo etiquette, but the regular photos I took came to be really cool keepsakes once my grandmother passed away."

Thanking his mom, a lover of dance, for his

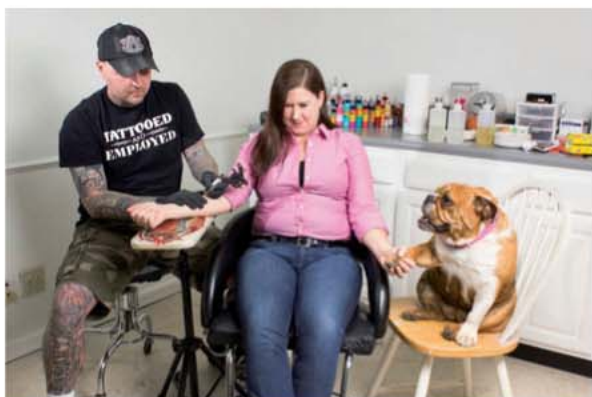




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## THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE IS THINKING THAT YOUR WORK IS GOOD AND OVERCOMING THE NEGATIVITY OF OTHERS AROUND YOU



creative expression and his dad, who would always let him play records and listen to the stereo, for his passion for gadgets, Batista surprisingly didn't get the nudge he needed to fully pursue his dream until much later on in life.

"Once I made my first dollar in photography in early 2009 was when I started thinking about it more and more. I had a career in information technology for 17 years and one day I just grew tired of working in that high-stress environment and I wanted to do something more creative," he says. "Photography was Number 1 to Number 10 on the list and in November 2013, I left technology and started concentrating on photography full-time."

"I am the owner, operator, accountant, sales person, creative director, marketing

director, technology director, web and social media director, oh, and I also shoot photos, too!" he laughs, explaining, "For a typical one hour photo shoot with pets, I will put in 20 to 25 hours' worth of work."

"The biggest obstacle is thinking that your work is good and overcoming the negativity of others around you," he adds. "Misery loves company, as they say, and some people just don't understand that when you chase a dream, it's LOADS of work. I thought I worked a lot when I was in technology, but that was nothing compared to the hours you put in when you have your own business."

### DOG SNAPS

We can all probably agree that animals will always trump humans in the cute—and photogenic—department, but they're not exactly the easiest to work with. After all, humans are difficult enough to shoot and you can (sort of) boss them around.

"Animals tell you what's going to happen, not the other way around," says Batista. "In any genre of photography, you always have to be on your toes, but pets will give you 10,000 looks in two seconds and you best be ready."

"You will also get really dirty rolling

### Brian Batista On... Making Clients Happy

I recently did a shoot of five dogs. My client wanted a book as a Valentine's gift and when I delivered the finished product—a glossy photo book with color and black and white photos of her dog, and text inserts that sort of explained what her dog might be thinking—she cried.



**ONE DAY I JUST GREW TIRED OF WORKING IN THAT HIGH-STRESS ENVIRONMENT AND I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING MORE CREATIVE**



**Brian Batista On... Clients From Hell**

There was a shoot I did at a local pet store and this man brought in a beautiful female golden retriever. She didn't want to sit, so after a few minutes of unheeded commands, he hit the dog on top of her head. I told him he had five seconds to get out of the store or I would be calling the police. You just don't do things like that, no matter what the circumstances.

around on the ground, getting kisses and treat breath, but what a great way to spend an afternoon," he laughs. "There is something incredibly freeing about letting your subject bring out their personality for you to see and they do it unconditionally."

At this point, you're likely wondering how any of this ties into the world of tattoos. Well, Batista was particularly touched and inspired by a friend who lost his job after commemorating his late son with a memorial tattoo on his neck. That's when the light bulb flickered and suddenly lit up and Tattoos & Rescues was born.

"People who have a lot of tattoos have always been sort of castigated by society, and I don't mean the small butterfly tattoos," he says. "For some reason, people think it's OK to judge someone based on their appearance and nothing could be further from the truth. I noticed a correlation between judging people on appearance and laws judging animals, like pit bulls, based on appearance."

"Breed-specific legislation gives certain law enforcement organisations power to retrieve these 'banned breeds' regardless of temperament, no questions asked. This is in the guise of keeping the public safe and it doesn't work. Why is it OK to kill a dog because they might be aggressive, but it's not OK to arrest a certain kind of person because they might rob you?"

"Pit bulls are no different than any other dogs," he elaborates, citing some pretty unbelievable statistics. "In 2013, there were 32 dog-related human deaths in the entire United States, that's across all breeds. Alternatively, conservative estimates are 1,000,000 pit bulls are euthanised every year because of prejudice, irresponsible breeding and breed-specific legislation, not to mention because of how



**IN ANY GENRE OF PHOTOGRAPHY, YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE ON YOUR TOES, BUT PETS WILL GIVE YOU 10,000 LOOKS IN TWO SECONDS AND YOU BEST BE READY**

they are portrayed in mainstream media.”

The first duo to pose for the Tattoos & Rescues series was comprised of rescue advocate Ty and his oh, so sweet pit bull Sarge. Since then, Batista has been reaching out to people who catch his eye—“I asked Richard Burgess of Save Them to be in the project when I saw he was fostering a puppy with stitches in his head”—and has had many a dog parent approach him with an incredible story he just couldn’t say ‘No’ to.

“Steffen Baldwin, who runs the Animal Cruelty Task Force of Ohio, has a rescued pit bull named Chesty. He was a homeless dog and a police officer found him resting under a bush in the summer. He thought the dog was dead, so he kicked him. The dog jumped and the cop shot him in the shoulder. The dog had to have 53 bone fragments removed [but] now he goes with Steffen on road trips in rural Ohio for his Task Force duties. I think that is one of the saddest yet best rescue stories I have shot to this day.”

Funnily enough, Batista has no ink of his own, but for very good reason. “Some tattooed people will disagree with this, but I think it makes me the perfect advocate for the art form because I don’t want to judge anyone based on appearance,” he says. “It’s not that I haven’t wanted to get tattooed, I’m just creatively bipolar! I haven’t had that one thing that sticks in my mind that I just HAVE

to have. There is an emotional connection and commitment required for a tattoo and I just haven’t found it yet.”

#### **ODDS & ENDS**

“I honestly started this project for me, that other people dig it is more than I could have ever expected,” admits Batista, looking at the media storm that has surrounded his photos. “I hope the images evoke a call to action because local rescues and shelters always need help. Adopt, foster, donate, volunteer, fundraise, walk dogs, pet cats—everyone can do something!”

Which takes us back to his teenage years and the moment when he first became seriously passionate about helping animals.

“When I was 15, I saw someone abusing a dog,” he remembers. “The guy was kicking his dog in the face just because he could. I remember I wanted to smash his face in with a boat ore because he was bullying this animal who didn’t do anything to him. At that point I knew I had to do something or else those





## I HOPE THE IMAGES EVOKE A CALL TO ACTION BECAUSE LOCAL RESCUES AND SHELTERS ALWAYS NEED HELP - EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING

### Brian Batista On... Rescue Workers

They see the worst in humanity on a daily basis, yet they are some of the most caring and compassionate people you will ever meet. When I see people with animal advocacy tattoos or memorial tattoos of their pets, I get chills. They are telling their story for anyone willing to listen.

memories would haunt me. Until I got involved in rescue, they did.”

A parent to three rescues—a boxer named Chewie Zoltan, an English bulldog named Abigail Kylesa, and a flame point cat named Shelby—Batista also volunteers his time photographing animals in shelters because “the images’ effect on finding them homes is immense, as shelters typically don’t have enough resources to devote to the marketing of their adoptable pets.”

On the rare occasion he’s not busy with his

camera, Batista is all about “music, without a doubt”, crediting his parents with introducing him to everyone from Pink Floyd to Deep Purple, John Coltrane, Eric Clapton, Marvin Gaye and The Delfonics.

Traveling could be on the horizon, too, but that would, not surprisingly, involve some work on expanding his portfolio. “I’m looking for more of a gritty urban city background for Tattoos & Rescues, so I would consider any city that fits that description,” he says and yes, London does fit the bill. “India, Sri Lanka, places like that would be very cool, too. There are tons of great tattoo artists in those cultures and I’d love to explore their work and the rescue efforts that occur over there.”

What about shooting something completely different, like food, or trees, or absolutely anything else, and throwing fans a curveball?

“Wow, fans?” Batista laughs. “They are awesome, but it seems weird to say! I’m just a freakin’ pet photographer.”

“I love all different kinds of photography, so there is no telling from one minute to the next what I’m going to be into. There are some interesting shoots I have in mind for Tattoos & Rescues, but also for other projects, so definitely stay tuned.”

After all, Brian Batista is “a work in progress.” □





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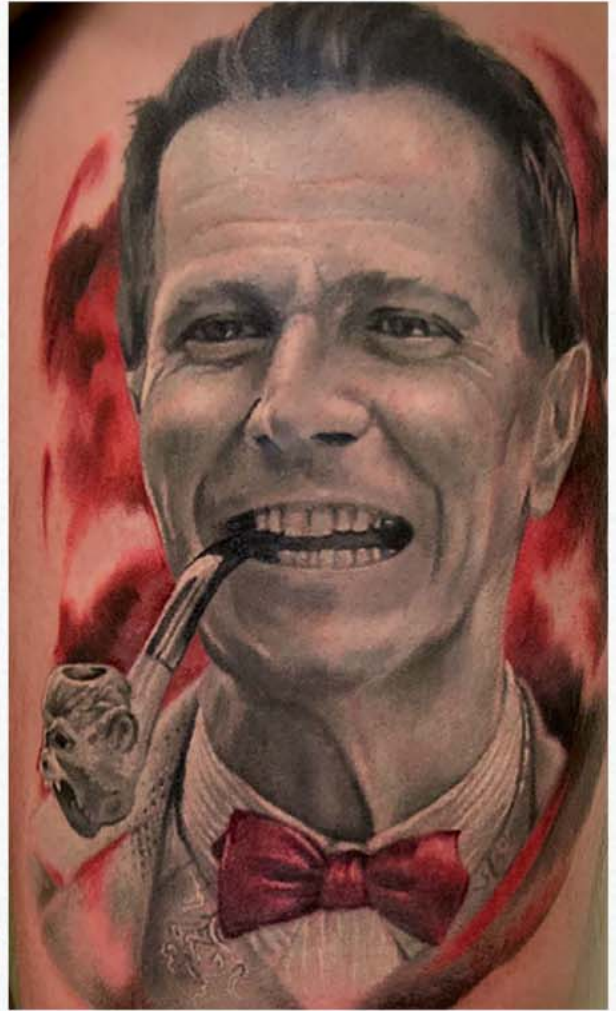
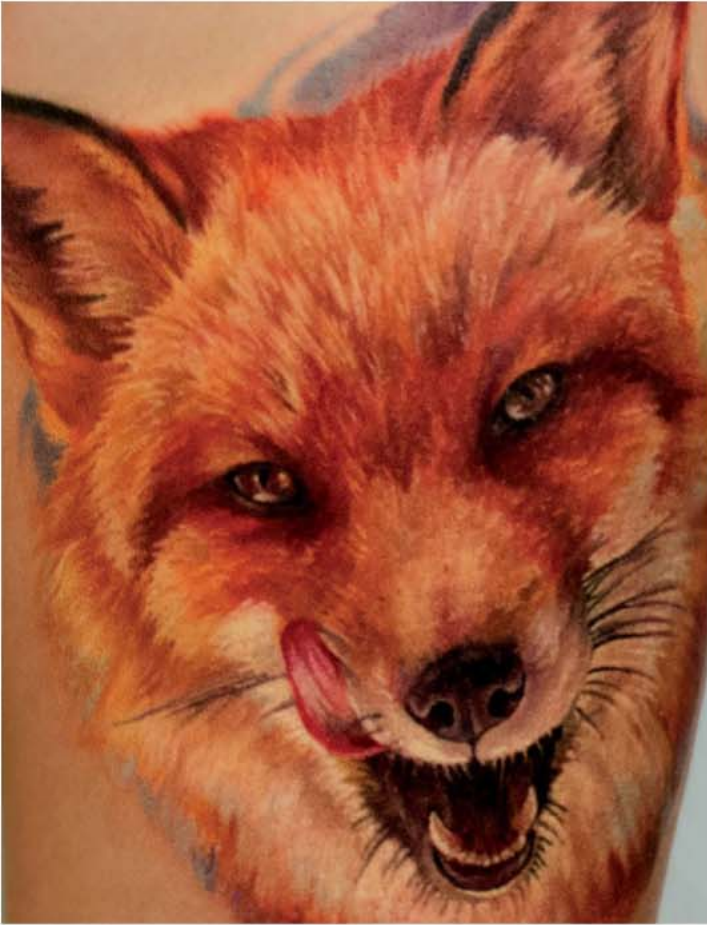
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# ALEXANDRA WILKEY

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ALEXANDRAWILKEY@GMAIL.COM  
INSTAGRAM: @WILKEY4





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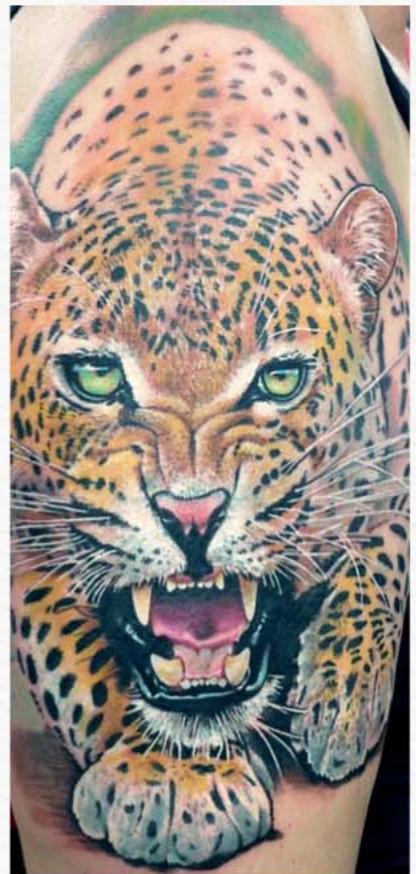
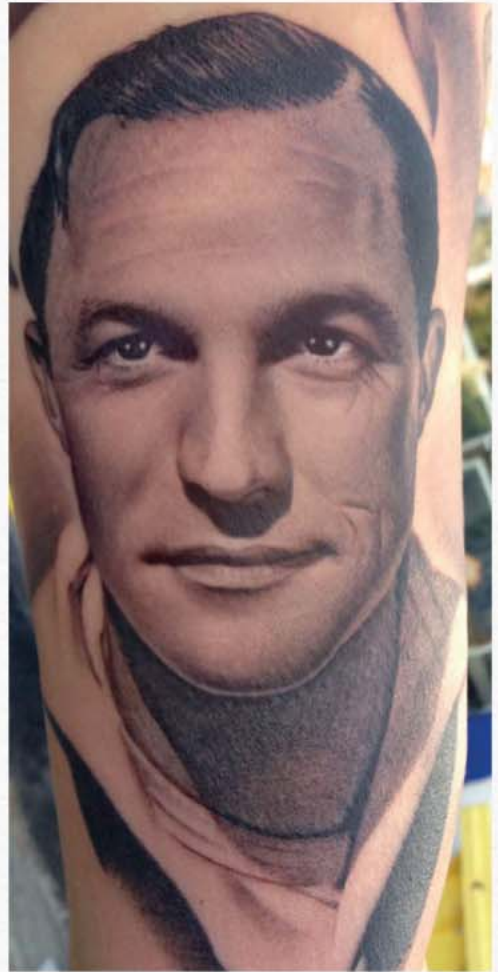
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PRINZZECHEN@GMAIL.COM  
INSTAGRAM.COM/NASTYA\_VILKS

# CHARLOTTE CHADEAU

CHADEAUCHARLOTTE@BBOX.FR  
FACEBOOK.COM/CHA.TATTOO





---

# DAVID CORDEN

---

DAVIDCORDENTATTOOS@GMAIL.COM  
DAVIDCORDENTATTOOS.COM



# DAWNII FANTANA

PAINTEDLADYTATTOOSTUDIO.COM  
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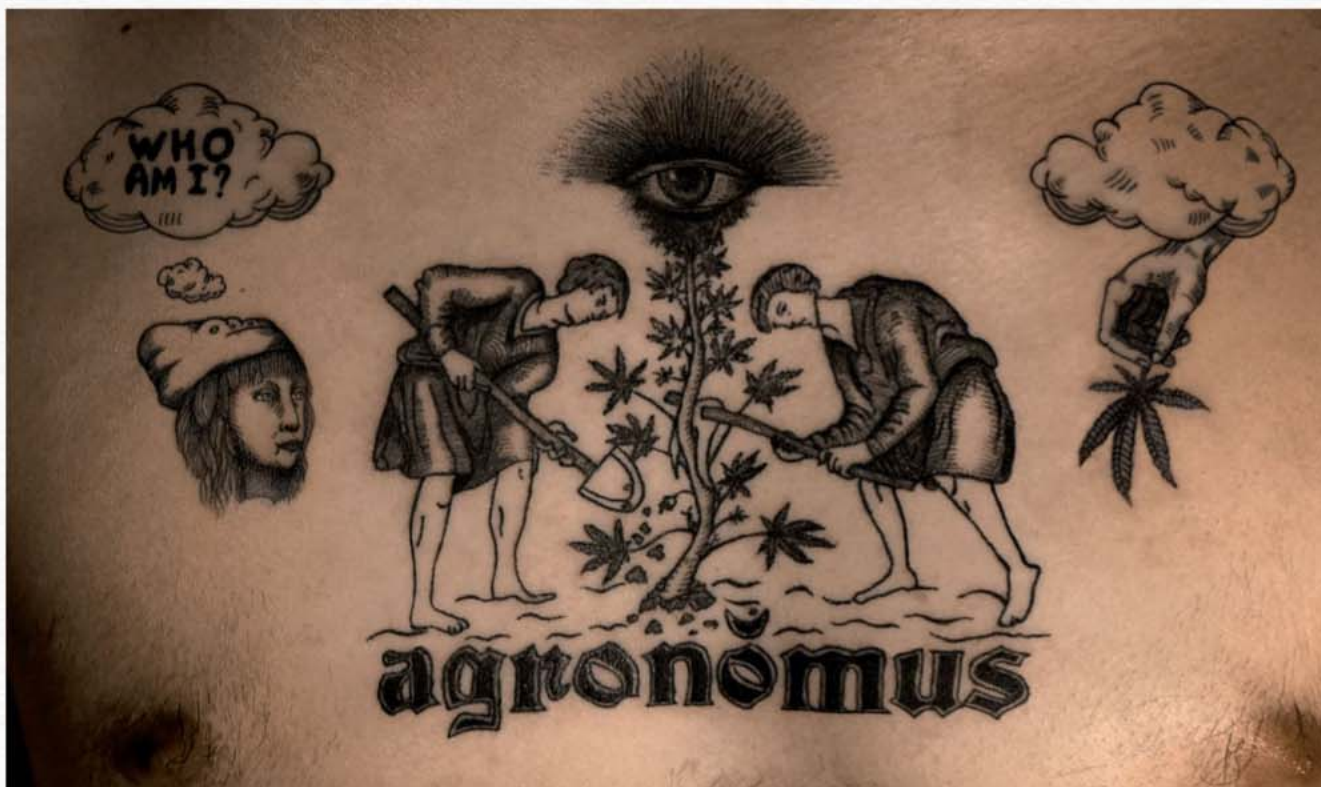


JACK PEPIETTE

JACKPEPIETTE57@HOTMAIL.COM  
INSTAGRAM: @JACKPEPIETTE

# JAMIE LUNA

JAMIE.LUNA.TATTOOS@GMAIL.COM  
JAMIE-LUNA.TUMBLR.COM





---

# JOSH PEACOCK

---

OBE\_OBE1@YAHOO.CO.UK  
INSTAGRAM.COM/JOSHPEACOCKOBE1

---

# JAY WATSON

---

@JAYWATSONTATTOO  
JAYWATSONTATTOO@OUTLOOK.COM





---

KAT WILSON

---

HELLO-SAILOR@HOTMAIL.CO.UK  
HELLO-SAILOR.ORG

# MIKE BOYD

MIKEBOYDTATTOOS@HOTMAIL.COM  
INSTAGRAM.COM/MIKEBOYDTATTOOS





# NICKLAS WONG

INSTAGRAM: TATTOOSBYNICKLASWONGK  
TATTOOSBYNICKLAS@GMAIL.COM



# PETRA HLAVACKOVA

BOBEKTATTOO.CZ  
TATTOO.BOBEK@GMAIL.COM





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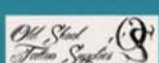
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# BEAUTIFUL CREATURES

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*It's only natural that a tattoo artist should feel a need to turn their hand to other artistic endeavours once in a while—but out in the real world, making it work commercially is perhaps not as simple as you may think. Mike Moses takes the boss to the nearest bar to discuss...*

At least once a week, Mike Moses flashes his latest work in front of my eyes. If I'm honest, I could sit here and pull together a magazine out of his monthly output and never get bored of it. The fact that it would be mighty unprofessional of me is besides the point. We only miss a digital catch-up when he's heading out on a camping trip. I have no idea what he does out there in the wilderness though. Sketching mushrooms in the wild would not surprise me. Making friends with bears and getting them to sit still for a portrait wouldn't raise my eyebrows either. Then again, if he told me he had made contact with creatures from another world, my eyebrows may flicker but you would have to look hard to find the surprise in them.

I'm saying 'they' broke the mould once Mike got here.

Today however, we sit around an altogether different project he has been working on. Labels for beer? You bet. Thus, to begin... how exactly do you land what might appear to be a dream job for some?

"When I first moved to Columbus and was gathering a new clientele, one of those people just happened to be Colin Vent—the head brewer at Seventh Son Brewing Co. We did a beer-themed sleeve on him, which took about a year to complete, but in the course of that we discussed many things—not the least of which being craft brew and art. During our talks, it was proposed that as soon as they got around to bottling some of their fine swill, maybe I could do a label for them. After the first one, which thankfully they

liked, I got asked to do another... and another... a poster for an event and then it became a regular thing. I've heard people have come into the bar and asked for "that Mike Moses beer", which is flattering as all hell! Job security!

"While I have done a lot of commission work before, the jobs were usually few and far between as most people don't like to pay much for things. There are always people willing to work for free, which honestly kind of fucks it up for everyone. Would-be clients feel overly entitled and it devalues the hard work of artists everywhere. Fortunately for me, Colin is a great guy, and has fought for me the whole time. Every time I have any sort of a problem or conflict, he's been there and done all he could to keep me happy. I'm very lucky to have that guy as a friend."

All of which is to say, the landscape has been soiled by those willing to get their work out there for free for the sake of getting their work out there. Sadly, the hard lesson to learn here is that when you do it for free once, the same is expected time and time again in a downward spiral of a hiding to nothing.

It's weird out there when it comes to illustration work. Hardly anybody chooses to commission illustration any



WORDS: Mr Smith IMAGES: Mike Moses



ARTWORK BY MIKE MOSES / WWW.THEDROWNTOWN.COM

# CHESTER COPPERPOT

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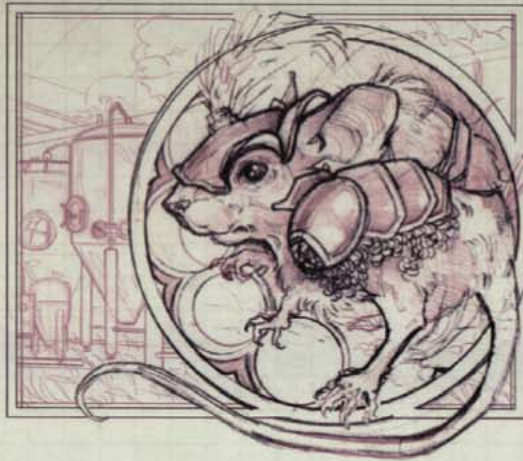
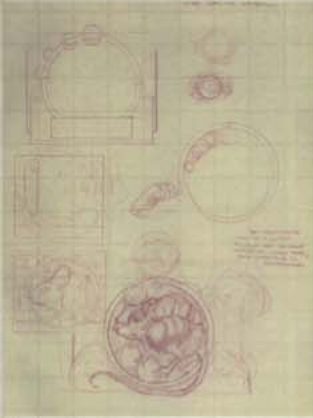
THESE PEOPLE ARE ALL DEAD  
MEN WALKIN' IN THE BUKOWSKIAN  
SENSE. THEY FOUND WHAT THEY  
LOVE AND IT'S TERMINAL

more—maybe the magazines at the top end who still have mega-budgets from where I'm standing do—I guess with image banks, you can get away without it but it's certainly dying out as a commercial option that will put food on the table for artists. Maybe it's the same view from wherever you happen to be standing.

“Man, weird is a good word. I wish I could say I was a veteran and had fought the “good fight” and “remember way back when” but the truth is I can't. I've never had much of this work come my way. It's so incredibly difficult to get jobs—real paying jobs where you're actually compensated for the amount of time that these processes take.

“You wouldn't believe how long you can work on something and then have people always expect more for less. My good friend Brian Ewing is a rock poster guy and one





**A PASSING COMMENT**

That 'warrior mouse' looks like it fell off the cover of a Philip Pullman book that he hasn't thought about writing yet. "You know, I've heard that a lot and I have no idea what people are talking about! I don't read much fiction and zero about militant rodentia. It was actually an ode to the mice that are killed by the brewery's mouser cat. Apparently the cat is super efficient and Colin was feeling a wee bit guilty..."

of the 'grey hairs' (sorry dude) that does remember when things were different and from what I gather from him, it's all kinda just falling out from over saturation of cheap artists.

"Combine that with the failings of print due to the accessibility (and disposability) of digital and you've got your doomsday meteor headed right for the small, peaceful world of illustration work. I'm sure that even larger magazines like this one have huge budget issues (did they ever not?) and a well-paid cover artist is a fatty luxury."

I'm no beer connoisseur but some of these labels suggest the product inside the bottle is definitely worth investigating. 'Enjoy Mr Owl with candy coated lollipops'. Now there's a beer I want to try out whenever you're ready. You have to hand it to Seventh Son—they've got a great handle on making their beer stand out from the crowd.

"Colin and all the people working there at Seventh Son really know their shit, and that's

**YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE HOW LONG YOU CAN WORK ON SOMETHING AND THEN HAVE PEOPLE ALWAYS EXPECT MORE FOR LESS**

part of the success right there. These people are all dead men walkin', in the Bukowskian sense they found what they love and it's terminal, man!

"I'm fairly sure that Colin is the web spinner for all of the verbiage that you'll read on the bottles and he spins it very well. He's had an idea for each brew in his head since the wort was being made, and it develops as each brewing process follows down its road. Hell, I wish I could say I came up with a lot of it. It's quite eloquent in a low brow sort of way and always something fun. He usually hits me with the idea for each beer I work on and gives me a loose feeling of what he's going for. After that I kind of get autonomy—visually



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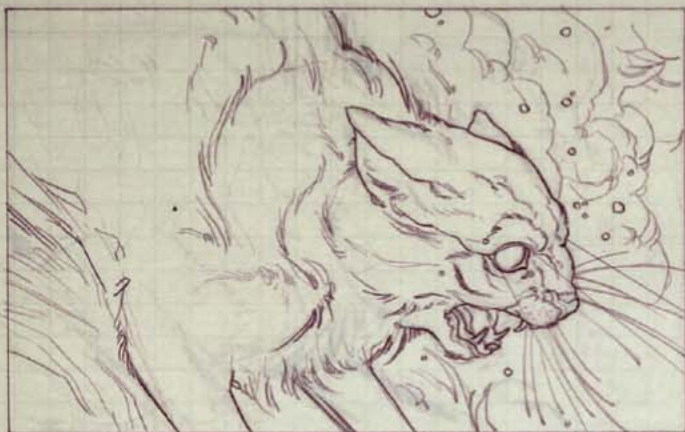
speaking—and that always works best for me. He trusts me, and that's always important for commercial work. Things get really irritating for everyone very quickly without that."

Beer aside, this is beautiful all round. I ask Mike if it's 'always art for art's sake' regardless of what it's for. I see people struggle with life and their careers by trying to force round art into a square hole far too often and that's not healthy for anybody.

"The type of artist I am—the type of person I am—I need problems to solve. That's how

I work best. I need some sort of dictation, even if it's ever so slight to jumpstart me in a direction. Think of a shiny vehicle. It needs a destination to really be useful. Even something as simple as 'north', and then you just sit back and let me mow down the bystanders on the way and really do some damage!

"That's not to say that I never come up with my own projects. I do. Just recently I did the artwork for the album 'Kill The Wolf' by B Dolan, an excellent underground hip hop artist. I had actually done the cover artwork



on my own as just art. A week or so after it hit the internet, he contacted me and told me he wanted to use it for his next release. We started talking and that became that, so it does happen, it's just not common."

That said, I suspect it's not going to be long before somebody shows their face at the studio with one of these bottles in hand wanting a tattoo of the same. In fact, the concept of the Wilderman label is so far up my street, it's in my house. I guess the reason some of this works as a branding is that people identify with various aspects of them according to their own animalistic tastes.

"Wildermann is where it all really started to make sense and has now become the template for the layout of the labels and the feel of the art. I love that one. Visually all of those designs are pretty much just my hands at work doing what I think would be cool, so I wouldn't be strongly opposed to making a tattoo-able version of them for someone. I don't think a direct translation would ever work though. Ink and paper is just so different from pigment and skin—and I enjoy that separation. I could never be as loose with tattooing as I am with illustration, it just doesn't work that way.

"That's part of what got me back into doing this type of illustration; before I ever learned how to tattoo I was mainly a pen and ink art-

THERE ARE ALWAYS PEOPLE  
WILLING TO WORK FOR FREE.  
WHICH HONESTLY KIND OF FUCKS  
IT UP FOR EVERYONE

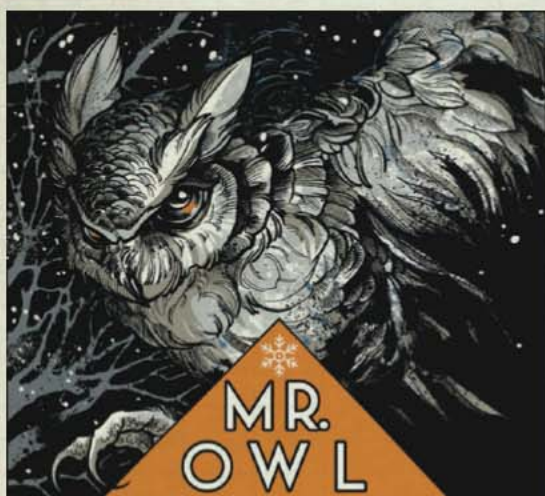
ist. The style was totally different but the materials were the same. I got a new sketchbook a year or so ago and decided I was going to commit as much of it as I could to pen and ink and trying to flesh that back out again because I hadn't touched it in years, and I always loved the vibe and versatility. As I got more comfortable with it, it's basically taken over and become my dominant medium again outside of tattooing. Not many other tattooers are doing ink work and it's always been important to me to do something else that's not part of the herd mentality. I don't want to do something that's common. Period."

So out in the real world of getting things done—for those interested in such things—what sort of time can a man find themselves spending on such things? Days? Weeks? Months?

"Depends on the deadline! I'm an artist and as such, a natural born procrastinator. I will stretch shit out to the bitter end, but usu-

#### ON THE RETURN OF MULDER AND SCULLY

"Man, I love that show and always have. Terrified me as a kid, cause it was genuinely spooky [pun] but it nurtured a lot of interests I already had. My question is: Why now? Is it money? Fandom? New and good ideas? Please guys—don't fuck it up. "I could go off on all sorts of tangents about the Control Group seeding us with information and slowly adapting us to things that they don't think most people will handle well, but honestly I think X Files has always been more something influenced by that cultural interest phenomenon and less by the people in charge."



INK AND PAPER IS JUST SO DIFFERENT FROM PIGMENT AND SKIN AND I ENJOY THAT SEPARATION. I COULD NEVER BE AS LOOSE WITH TATTOOING AS I AM WITH ILLUSTRATION. IT JUST DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY

ally because I'm still thinking about it and weighing decisions. A huge amount of what we do is cerebral. The idea itself is the tough part. The planning. Actually making it happen is simply a matter of making your hands do it and how many times you screw up before it's over. It's taken me a week or more on some designs, and then again if the hammer is coming down and I'm simply against a wall, then I've knocked one out in a straight (no joke... straight) 18 hours.

"With the 'Ragana Yaga' label for Seventh Son, something happened and I just couldn't get started in time. I ended up taking an entire waking Sunday and the majority of the wee hours of a Monday and just blew through it. That being said, I absolutely love that piece, though I don't care to work like that.

so it was much easier to get it done quickly."

"It's tough out there on the illustration front but for the foreseeable future, I have more labels for Seventh Son, and a couple of t-shirt designs, but that's all that's peeking it's head up at current time. I love doing this kind of work, and am always willing to entertain and kick around ideas with people that are serious about wanting me to do some work for them. I'd really love to have more of it to do. I'm an illustrator at heart. I love marketing. I find it all endlessly fascinating so if anyone out there in the world has something interesting or fun to run by me, shoot me an email!

"I get excited when I see other people being passionate about their idea—that gives me ideas and that makes things happen!" □



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Lewis Davies

BEHIND THE INK

# TRADITIONAL

*What makes a tattoo artist tick? In this brand new series, Wayne Simmons unpacks the pieces that make up some of his favourite artists working today, looking at the things outside of tattooing that inspire them. This month, he's talking with Lewis Davies from Gung Ho, Gemma B from The Fat Anchor and Jody Dawber from Jayne Doe, three artists with different takes on traditional who get worked up by everything from skateboarding stickers to pineapples in Tesco*

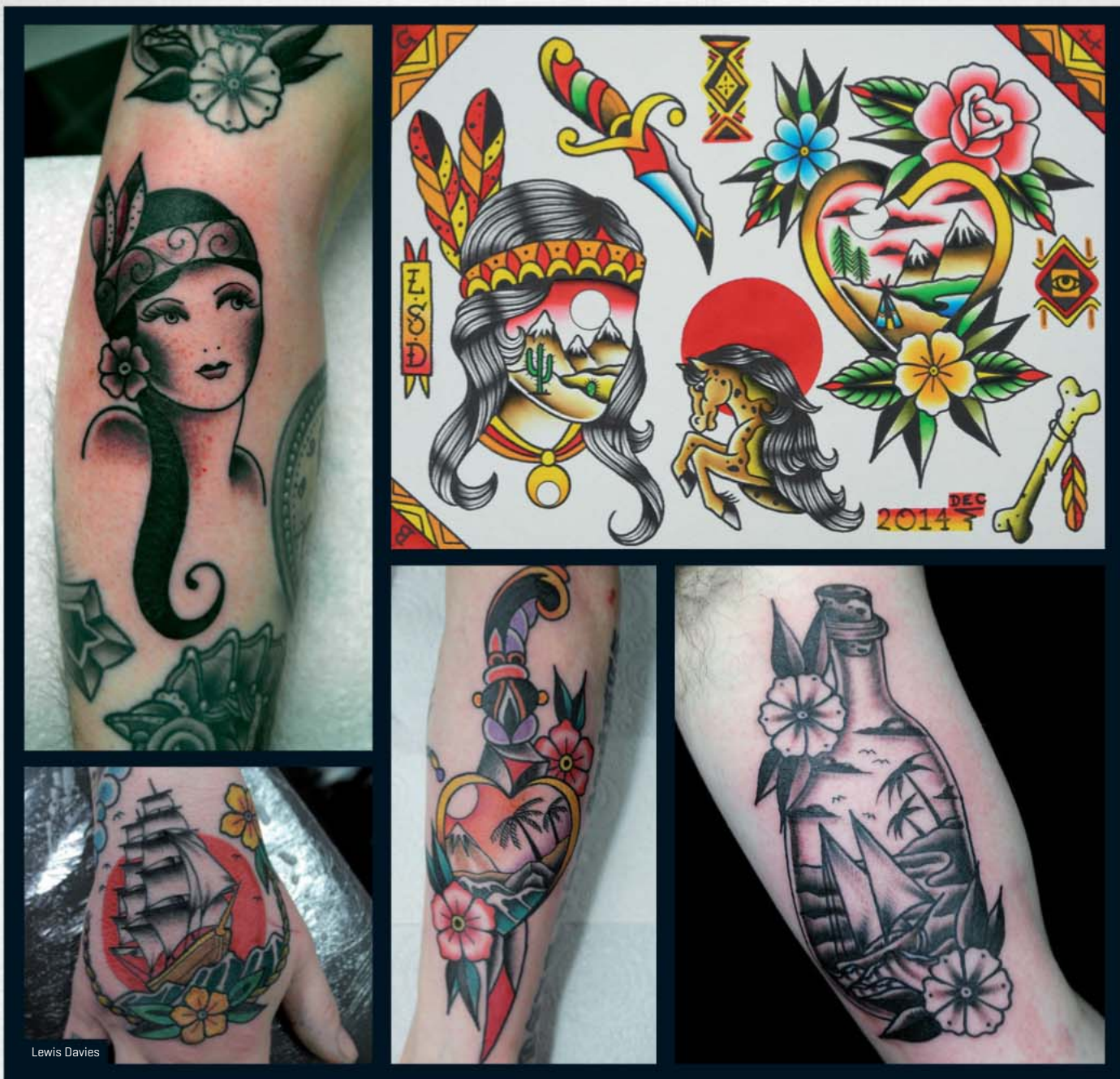
**L** first spotted Lewis Davies at last year's Cardiff Tattoo & Toy but it was through facebook that he really caught my eye. Lewis is putting out some of the cleanest looking tattoos I've ever seen, a very fresh riff on traditional. 'When I started to get tattooed, that was the stuff I loved,' he tells me. 'The clean simplistic style that lasts.' He cites the elder statesmen of the business as his main influences: Sailor Jerry, Ben Corday, George Burchett and Amund Dietzel, but it was something else entirely that first got Lewis down with art. 'Skateboarding. The boards, the stickers, the adverts. I love the work of Jim Phillips and Vernon Courtlandt Johnson which then got me into 60s/70s rock poster artists like Stan-



Gemma B

ley Mouse, Wes Wilson and Alton Kelley. The artwork they produced made me want to listen to the music they advertised.' This led to Lewis designing his own posters for Epic Skate Park in Birmingham along with the odd t-shirt and board graphic. Eventually, two worlds collided, Lewis scoring an apprenticeship at his old hang-out, Gung Ho in Birmingham, a shop he describes as 'custom with an old style feel.' It's a quality studio with the likes of Helen Brown, Rich Pearson and Kurt Marlow tending the chairs beside him. 'None of us are above tattooing a kanji or infinity symbol' which helps keep those spinning wheels of his nice and grounded.

Jody Dawber had a different jour-



Lewis Davies

Lewis Davies

ney. Like Lewis, she apprenticed the old fashioned way but her foray into art started not with tattoos but with shoes. 'It was always the plan to do a degree in fine art but I rather impulsively chose a course in footwear design,' she laughs.

Her tattooing is a little less old school. She'll accept neo-traditional as an umbrella term although she's quick to point out that it's quite a large umbrella. 'There are so many artists creating tattoos with strong line work and varying degrees of realism. Take Matt Adamson and Tiny Miss Becca, for example,' Jody's cohorts at Jayne Doe, 'we'd all be grouped as neo trad and yet our work is so different!'

Outside of tattooing, Jody can appreciate art by Paula Rego, Marion Peck, Camille Rose

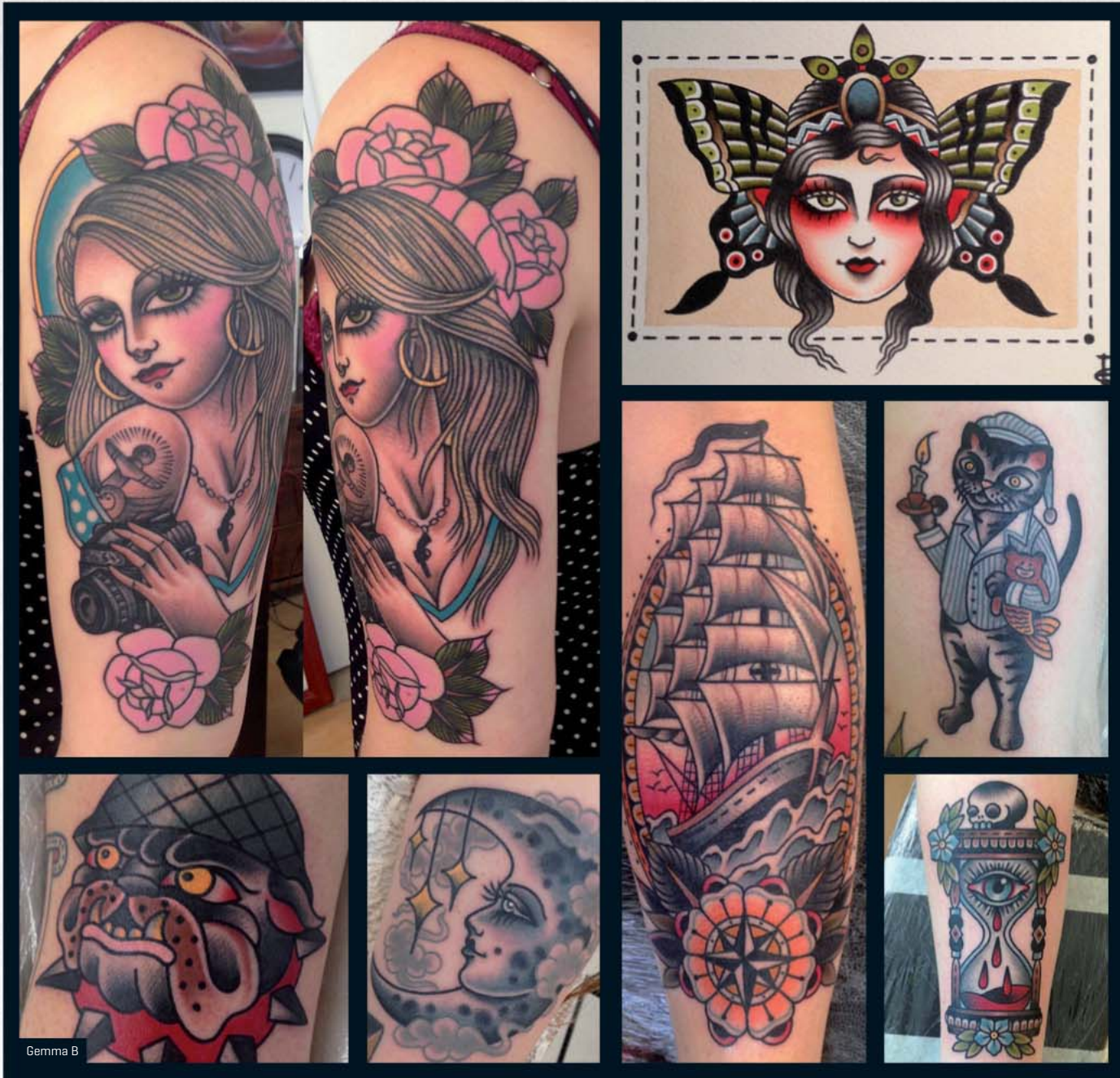
**THE ARTWORK THEY  
PRODUCED MADE  
ME WANT TO LISTEN  
TO THE MUSIC THEY  
ADVERTISED**

Garcia and Chuck Close. Oh, and then there's D\*Face. 'I get really inspired by shape and colour,' she tells me, but when it comes down to it, just about anything can move her. 'I could get more ideas from a pineapple at Tesco's, things you see all around you.'

Gemma B agrees. Unlike a lot of tattooists, she had no intention of becoming an artist at all until meeting friend of a friend, Cilla North, which led to an apprenticeship. In fact, the term 'artist' is something Gemma still shies away from today. 'I think it's because I never really did art at school or further education. It has always been a hobby. I just do what I do.'

What she does first grabbed my attention at 2013's Halloween Tattoo Bash, one of the





Gemma B

Gemma B

most colourful events on the UK convention calendar. Gemma was there hawking some horror themed flash while doused in corpse paint. Her clean and bold style really spoke to me and I've followed her work ever since. Like Jody, her traditional muse soon took on a life of its own with other influences bleeding in. Gemma's not fond of labels at all, however, even neo-trad proving an awkward fit. 'I don't tend to think or aim for any style or look to my work, it just kind of tumbles out of my brain.'

As a teenager she was into comics, 'the more weird, goth type stuff like Johnny the Homicidal Maniac, Roman Dirge's Lenore, that kind of thing' but again, like Jody, Gemma tends to be inspired more by the world

**I DON'T TEND TO  
THINK OR AIM FOR  
ANY STYLE OR LOOK  
TO MY WORK, IT JUST  
KIND OF TUMBLES  
OUT OF MY BRAIN**

around her than by art, per se, and this affects what she seeks out for tattoo reference. 'Either a real photo of something, a magpie, or vintage postcards and adverts. It was through collecting old postcards that I first came across the work of Louis Wain, master artist of cats. As a crazy cat lady myself, his work instantly appealed to me. I like its whimsical nature.'

Gemma does a little painting herself when she gets time as well as 'making dioramas, paper mache figures and traditional folk crafts.' Now she co-owns a studio, Newquay's The Fat Anchor with Iva Jones and Shakey Pete, it's not so easy to fit everything in that she wants to. 'I am finally learning to manage my time better so this year I should be able to get



back to creating again.'

Of course, when it comes to the ol' muse, nothing drains us like the two Ps: politics & posturing. The tattoo scene, like just about every other scene, has a bit of that: you get realism artists scoffing at traditional art for being too simple, traditional artists saying realism isn't true tattooing. Exhausting stuff. 'Realism is the people's favourite as they can relate to it even if they're not into tattooing,' Jody points out. 'I can appreciate it's good, but traditional and some neo-traditional pieces blow my mind. Unique, exciting ideas competently and boldly tattooed is where it's at for me.' She's no time for snobbery, though. 'We all do the same job, just differently, and you have to respect anyone that

UNIQUE,  
EXCITING IDEAS  
COMPETENTLY AND  
BOLDLY TATTOOED  
IS WHERE IT'S AT  
FOR ME

Jody Dawber

works hard to stay relevant in this field.'

Gemma takes a similar view. 'My main focus in tattooing is not the politics, the bitching, the time wasted on putting things into boxes, but my customers. When I get tattooed I feel amazing and can't stop smiling. If I can give that feeling to my clients and make them go away feeling proud, strong and happy then my job is done.'

For Lewis, it's about respecting the people who started it all, those elder statesmen he so rightly gives it up for. 'People can belittle the style but they wouldn't have any of the tools at their disposal if it were not for the old traditional artists. So get an eagle with a dagger through it people.'

Well, you heard the man... ▣

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# THE PEN: *Mightier than the sword?*

*Who never got to see one of the striking images done by Ramon Maiden? If his name doesn't spring to mind easily, the Spanish man from Barcelona is nonetheless a familiar figure in tattoo culture. Since 2003, he has never stopped bringing us pictures from the past and transforming them with his pens.*

**P**in-ups, models, religious figures: all get tattooed, often heavily, with a constant obsession for traditional styles and a taste for provocation. At 42 years old and a full-time artist since 2013, Ramon Maiden keeps feeding a contemporary fascination for the tattooed body.

## **WHEN DID YOU START INTRODUCING TATTOOS IN YOUR ART?**

I've got distant memories of my childhood when I was already drawing tattoos on historical icons. My textbooks and school materials were all covered with drawings. I still have some of these. I also used to draw with pens on my own skin. I don't know why, but since my childhood I felt strongly attracted to the tattoo scene. At that time I must say it was not something really popular.

## **WHERE DO YOU FIND YOUR PICTURES (FILM POSTERS, ILLUSTRATIONS, PHOTOS FROM MAGAZINES) AND HOW OR WHY DO YOU CHOOSE THEM?**

I describe myself as a 'Wanderlust King' because one of my many passions is travelling. I'm a restless ass. I couldn't exist without moving around. When I am, I collect all of my images – virtual or physical – and afterwards I am able to use them in my creations. Luckily, my job allows me to travel regularly and I try to get out of Spain at least twice a month. I regularly visit NYC, London, Berlin



*I like controversy and in almost all of my pieces, I try to express and transmit some sort of political or social message*

ink was clearly blue. I bet the ink was not the best but the result really interested me. Now I use a lot of black but also blue on my illustrations. It's like kinda a tribute to my childhood memories.

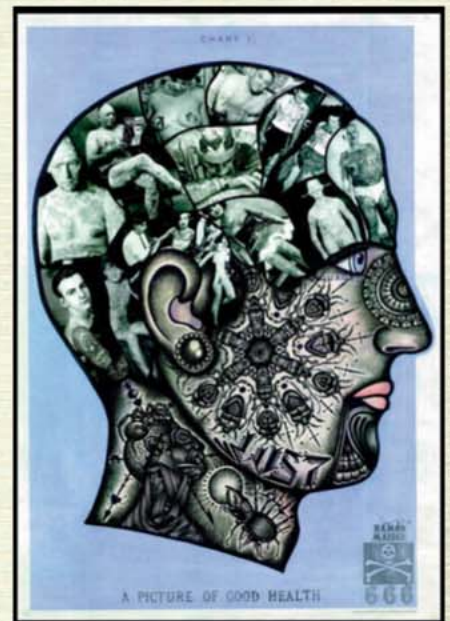
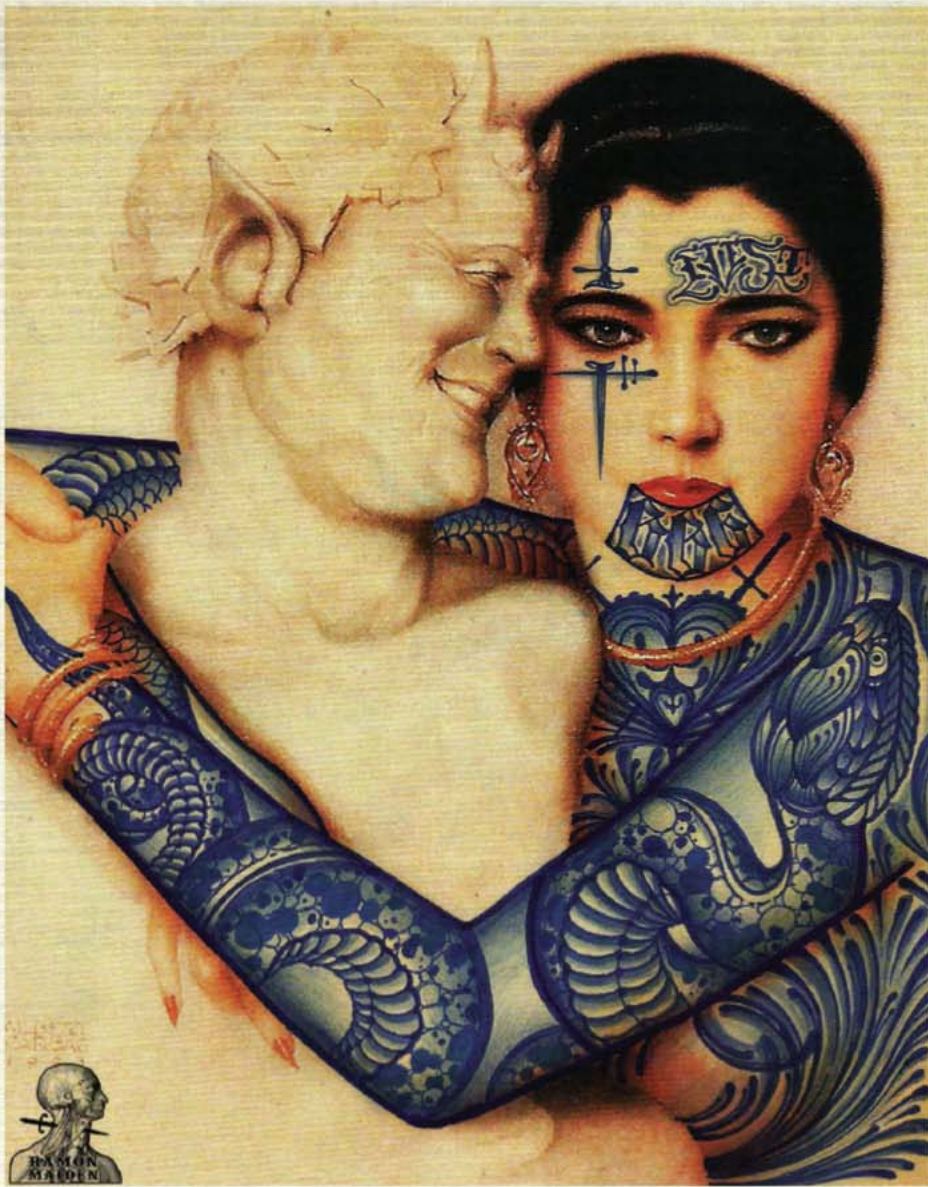
## **WHAT MESSAGES DO YOUR IMAGES CARRY?**

I like controversy and in almost all of my pieces, I try to express and transmit some sort of political or social message. So in many of my pieces you can see references to historical moments, religion, social injustices but also beauti-

and Copenhagen. I have got my 'places': book-shops, museums, markets and libraries, there. The scenery and the material I find there provides inspiration for new ideas. I'm also attracted to everything involving recycling, giving a second life to different objects that for some reason have fallen into oblivion. Magazines, old posters, obsolete religious and military imagery...

## **HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE TATTOOS TO APPLY?**

I don't have a specific way for that. Sometimes, when I buy the image I will use I see something that tells me what to put on it, but if not I follow my imagination and what I want to transmit at that moment. About my taste for blue ink, I remember when I saw my firsts tattoos, which had people in my neighbourhood who had been in jail. They were made with homemade machines and the



*I've got distant memories of my childhood when I was already drawing tattoos on historical icons*



ful filigrees, Victorian patterns or intricate gothic buildings. It should be a balance between the aesthetic result and the message I want to show.

**CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR INFLUENCES?**

My training, ideas and sources of inspiration are all dynamic and changing and so are the techniques and methods I employ. I try not to focus on anything too specific and progress

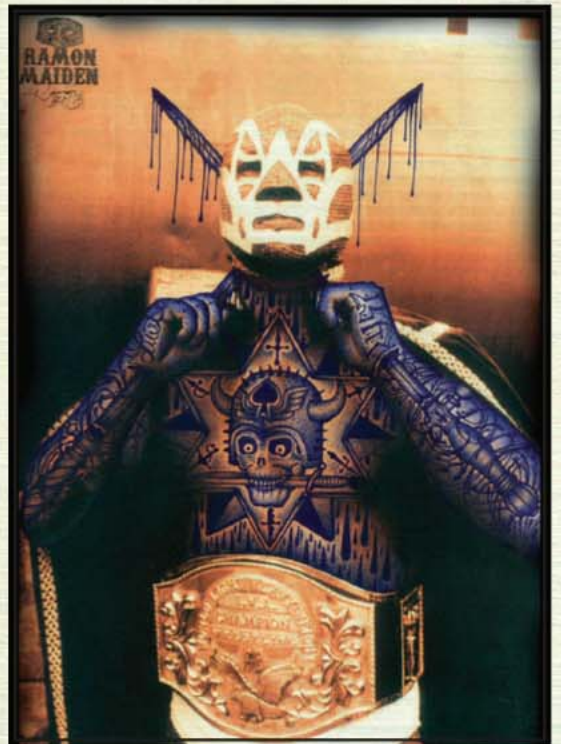
by using different sources and experimenting. My training as a social worker, my passion for traveling, my family history and my experience with visual arts are all very diverse and not at all uniform, which allows me to be very creative. It's impossible to say one name or one person that inspires me, but if we talk about influence, my moth-

er is the biggest one. She is highly creative and since I was little she encouraged me and supported my passion for art. From the dead artists, I feel special devotion for Alphonse Mucha and Dalí for all that their art has meant and for their special personal stories.

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO WORK ON DIFFERENT MEDIUMS?**

I always try to experiment with different techniques. Lately, I've been working a lot with watercolours and felt-tip pens. Mixing them has got powerful and solid results. I'm also very interested in experimenting with new methods. In my last works I used plant pigments which I picked myself and







#### ARE TATTOOS STILL PROVOCATIVE?

Tattoo has changed a lot. Since the time when it was something related to the marginal people, delinquents, sailors or outsiders in general—until now, when tattoos are something more trendy and easy to get. I'm sure tattoos are still provocative for some people but nobody can deny that the conception has changed so much. Now it's something more aesthetic I guess.

#### YOU'RE WORKING WITH THE AESTHETIC OF THE TATTOOED BODY, WHAT IS SO FASCINATING ABOUT IT?

Everything about tattooing fascinates me. The more ink I see on me, the more beautiful I see myself and that goes for my creations too. Ink pen body suits. I try not to draw plain illustrations and work with the body volume to create illustrations as similar to real tattoos as I can.

#### AND YOUR OWN TATTOOS?

The tattoo has a strong aesthetic and symbolic meaning. In my case, I consider my body to be the map of my life and it shows all of the moments, in one way or another, that have built me as a person. I have work from many artists, most done during my travels. I don't have any favourite piece as all of them have a special meaning and are connected to memories. I recently had my back done, depicting a fight between a fox and a swan, that was done by my friend Amina Charai from Brightside Tattoo in Copenhagen. I'm really happy with the result but I also have works from Chris Cleen, Ely Quinters, Annie Frenzel, El Monga, Derek Noble, Ross Nagle, Lola Garcia, or Seth Wood amongst others.

#### EVER BEEN TEMPTED TO GRAB A MACHINE?

I have been approached about it many times, but the energy required for tattooing is very different from the one that is necessary to create in other disciplines. It requires a special attitude and commitment—the clients, the appointments, the shop... to work as an illustrator grants me so much freedom to work when and where I want. It also allows me to draw and paint what really pleases me. Maybe some day though, but not at the moment. I have tattooed some of my friends. Nothing complicated but I wanted to know what it felt like! ▣

*In my last works I used plant pigments which I picked myself and mixed with water, octopus and cuttlefish ink, and acid to treat the paper*



mixed with water, octopus and cuttlefish ink, and acid to treat the paper; the results were very interesting visually. Some time ago I started painting on wood too; it is a laborious but very rewarding technique. The idea for me is to consolidate some techniques in order to perfect them.

#### WHEN DID YOU COME ACROSS THE TATTOO CULTURE?

I've been involved with the tattoo community for a long time. A lot of my friends are either tattoo artists or are involved in the artistic tattoo. I perceive the tattoo as a form of artistic expression. Many of the artists I follow not only deal with tattoos, but they are also very good at other types of art. Because of its meaning and reference, my art has always been well received on the tattoo scene. I have been fortunate enough to collaborate with many tattoo artists, studios, conventions, some publications and I suppose all this permeates part of my work.







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
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*We all have beliefs that we feel strongly about, just trawl through Facebook for twenty minutes and you will be bombarded with people's views on what they believe in... and invariably how we should go forth and take up these beliefs to make our, or someone else's, life better.*



**W**e live in the age where we all have a global voice, with an audience of thousands, so expressing an opinion seems like a given right these days. But the thing is, for all the hot air and armchair rioting, very few people make the move from preaching, to action. Hell, I am guilty of it myself!

But some people do decide to take action and sometimes, like with Tom Harris, these choices lead them onto their life paths. In Tom's case... the inky world of tattooing.

Tom was quite a late comer to the professional art world. Growing up in a small market town on the edge of the New Forest, Tom had to travel a fair way to buy music, or go to gigs and there was certainly no tattoo scene to speak of. As Tom puts it, "It's safe to say, I was the only punk in the village."

"I have always loved drawing and appreciated art as far back as I can remember. It was always my favourite subject at school, until I had a clash of styles with my art teacher and turned my back on the formal art route. I wanted to be a tattoo artist since I knew the job existed, aged about thirteen, but I had no idea how to pursue the dream."

In addition to his love of art, Tom always had a strong social conscience and by his mid teens, had placed any plans for a 'proper' job to one side as he threw himself into social justice campaigns, particularly animal liberation. As much as he wanted to be a tattooist, Tom felt there were more pressing issues he had to face first.

"My two over riding characteristics have always been



empathy and justice. My views regarding animal welfare, rights and liberation, are pretty straightforward and not particularly controversial—although some of my actions may have been. Essentially, I believe, any life that has the capacity to suffer should be respected and that suffering avoided, or prevented as far as possible. If I wouldn't like something done to me, I shouldn't do it to someone else, regardless of issues like race, gender, sexuality or species."

Tom recognises that he is "a very logical person" and therefore tends to follow an argument to its obvious conclu-

WORDS: Trent Aitken-Smith IMAGES: Tattoo Tom



## MY TWO OVER RIDING CHARACTERISTICS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN EMPATHY AND JUSTICE

sion. Therefore a question such as, "How would I want to be treated?" quickly became, "How would I want others to act if I was mistreated?" And soon, animal liberation became his life.

"To be fair, if I was locked in a laboratory undergoing invasive experiments without anaesthesia, I think I could only hope for something out of Taken, but I never went quite that far. I spent my days freeing minds and my nights freeing lives. It was a crazy lifestyle! Holding an animal in your hands

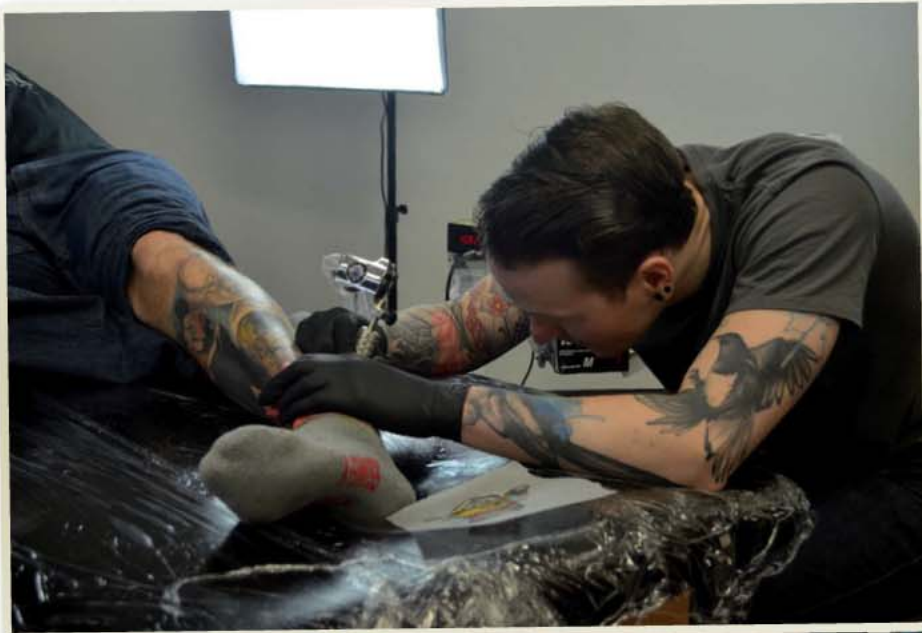


that was due to be violently killed and knowing that it will now live out its natural life in safety is a great feeling. There is certainly an adrenaline rush climbing across rooftops in black, with a bag full of tools and a heart full of fire. The flip side however, is being confronted on a daily basis with a sheer magnitude of suffering that it is virtually impossible to fully comprehend. For every life you save, there are billions left behind."

But as cool as it sounds, Tom is quick to point out it's not an easy life and maybe the reason a lot of keyboard warriors stick to shouting, rather than getting out and doing something more. Every single day Tom would wake up, wondering if this day was the day the police would kick down his front door—and after ten years of intense activity, that day finally came.

Over the following three years, Tom and his crew were raided and re-raided every six months and, eventually, the authorities had built up enough of a case to send him to jail for blackmailing a particularly notorious animal testing laboratory.

"I ended up spending two years in prison. People always seem to think that it's either some American style bang up, with regular



## I SPENT MY DAYS FREEING MINDS AND MY NIGHTS FREEING LIVES. IT WAS A CRAZY LIFESTYLE

sexual assaults and prison gangs, or the polar opposite with three hot meals a day and PlayStations on tap. The reality of British prisons is that they are really boring. If you're smart and mentally strong there isn't much to worry about, probably less than in the real world, but there also isn't much to do.

"I tried to make the most of my time in prison and use it constructively. I took an art class and spent most of the time I was locked in my cell drawing. There's quite a cottage industry in prison for arts and crafts; drawing family portraits and comic book characters for other prisoner's kids is a very good way to get a few extra luxuries. It was the first time I ever got to focus so much time on myself and my art and it really reignited my passion for it."

As is the protocol when "dealing with criminals" like Tom, on release from prison, Tom had some crazy restrictions placed on him by His Majesty's Prison Services. For starters, he wasn't allowed any contact with his old

friends, not to mention any opportunity to express his political views.

"Whilst the intention was clearly to frustrate me, I actually found myself in the very rare position of being able to start any life I wanted. For someone like me, it was an opportunity I intended to seize with both hands. Not long after my release, I bumped into a really good friend from my college days. He was working the desk at a local studio and after hanging out with him for a bit, I felt inspired to make the career I had dreamed of as a kid, a reality."

The opportunity to tattoo came in the shape of Diverse Arts, which went by the name of Black Sheep Tattoo when Tom joined back in 2013. Being friends with several of the artists working out of the studio, with a lot of hard work, Tom got taken on as their apprentice.

"Eighteen months on and I genuinely couldn't think of a better job. Creating some-





one's perfect tattoo is a really rewarding experience and I love the beauty of art that is so explicitly linked to life. When I'm not tattooing I'm drawing, constantly trying to improve my art and push my work

forward. I can't say I don't miss being an urban ninja, but on an entirely selfish level, I'm about as happy as I could be."

Forced out of his animal liberating ninja activities, Tom returned to his other passion, art—specifically geek art, that section of the art world that is getting stronger and stronger as we all are being allowed to legitimately embrace our inner kid, long after we were supposed to stick that box of comics in the attic and pretend we're grown up.

"Before I even knew what a tattoo was, cartoons and comics were my artistic draw. I am a huge geek and can't imagine how I could create art without reflecting that. When I read a comic book, beyond the story, I see page after page, cell after cell, of beautifully

constructed figure drawing and artistic rendering. It seriously blows my mind the consistency and sheer output of people like Mike Bagley, Jim Lee and Skottie Young (to name but a few), and I couldn't think of anything better than to pay homage to that on skin.

"Most tattoos, from Japanese to Traditional to Chicano, are based upon clear cultural reference points which serve as way markers in the bearer's life. If you are in the Yakuza, you know what the koi and dragon mean. If you're in a gulag you know what it is to have epaulettes on your shoulders. Don't get me wrong, I love all tattoo styles and find the legends and symbolism that surround them beautifully fascinating, but in 21st century Britain many of these meanings hold less direct significance than they once did. Whilst some may see a Batman tattoo as simply aesthetic, I actually see it as a natural progression in the uniquely personal annotations of tattoo art. Most of my customers want to be marked with their favourite video game, comic book hero, or cult movie because it reminds them of a specific point in their life.

"I don't think I have ever met anyone who didn't have a favourite super-hero, eighties film, or nineties cartoon. Who didn't love playing Mario Kart or Street Fighter as a kid? I guarantee that these memories make more than a few people smile, so why would you not want some, or all of these memories made permanent? Naturally the individual mean-



**THE REALITY OF BRITISH PRISONS IS THAT THEY ARE REALLY BORING... BUT IF YOU'RE SMART AND MENTALLY STRONG THERE ISN'T MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT**



**BEFORE I EVEN KNEW WHAT A TATTOO WAS, CARTOONS AND COMICS WERE MY ARTISTIC DRAW**

will be specialising in all things nerdy; from comic book art to movie portraits. It's such a diverse sub genre, covering everything from Japanese manga to American horror and we really do get the coolest customers; every day brings something completely new, but it's always something awesome. It's amazing for me to be able to combine my passions into a studio which is fun to work in and get tattooed in. With comics, toys and tattoos all under one roof, what more could anyone ask for?"

So it seems there is no stopping Tom. From animal liberation to a stretch inside, this self proclaimed urban ninja is on the move and it looks like it is onward and upward.

As that guy with the shiny black helmet and raspy voice once said, the force is strong with this one. ☐



ings behind all tattoos are entirely personal, but collectively, my tattoos are a pledge of allegiance to the comic book generation."

Never one to sit around letting life happen to him, Tom is once again setting out on a new adventure. Plans are being made and it won't be long before he is once again setting sail, moving shop and starting up his own studio—a homage to all things, well, geeky.

"I've been working on a new project, with my good friend Rich Knight, and I'm really excited to be bringing the ultimate geeky tattoo studio to the South Coast. Based in Poole, The Rising Tide, will be a collective of great artists. I've got together a really cool team of people with a great ethos and work ethic. We

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# THE BODY BEAUTIFUL?

*Pierced. Inked. Shaved. Unshaved. Painted. Plain. In today's viral world, fashions are as changeable as the weather. One day it's tattoos and top knots. The next it's spray tan and Scouse brows...*

**W**hat's sobering is that, as far as most of the media is concerned, beneath these external trappings, 'real beauty' is still defined by a very narrow set of parameters.

This spring, a new exhibition at the British Museum called "Defining Beauty", looks at the body in Ancient Greek art and how it influenced Western definitions of beauty.

The Greeks were not unique. Other cultures were richer. Other civilisations were more successful. Poe's "glory that was Greece" was a short-lived thing but as "Defining Beauty" shows, Greece still casts a long shadow.

## SHADOW LAND

When we think about Greek sculpture, we probably think of life size statues of athletic young men executed in pristine, white marble. But like all shadows, what we're seeing is just a faded, tantalising glimpse of a much bigger picture.

Few Greek statues have survived the passage of time. Those we find in museums are copies made by the Romans and while Rome preferred bare, unadorned stone, the real things were as colourful and as vibrant as any tattoo.

The Greeks were humanists who put man at the centre of their world and created gods in their own image. These gods may have looked human, but they had none of our physical imperfections. They were jealous and spiteful, but they were also young, athletic and impossibly beautiful.

Representing the gods in all their physical perfection was the biggest challenge for the ancient Greek sculptors. Working in wood, they used a variety of techniques to give their votive statues the appearance of life. Over time, stone and bronze replaced wood and paint but a sculptor's ability was judged on how well he could gild and stain the metal to produce realistic skin tones, how well he rouged lips and nipples, or rendered realistic curves and curls. Colour was intrinsic to Greek ideas of beauty. The white marble statues of Greek antiquity didn't really exist.

Then as now, realism was a touchstone of the artist's skill, and some votive statues were so lifelike that they attracted quite a different type of devotion from the one intended. One story, retold in Lucian's "Amores", tells of a young man who was so enamoured of a statue of Aphrodite that he locked himself in her shrine overnight. The next morning, he was discovered, along with the shameful telltale "stain" on the thigh of the goddess!



**Defining Beauty: The Body in Ancient Greek Art**

British Museum, Room 30  
Running from 26th March to 5th July, this year's big must-see exhibition doesn't come more epic than the British Museum's tribute to Greek art and ideas of physical beauty. Bringing together 150 artifacts, from abstract prehistoric figurines to the striking realism of the age of Alexander, "Defining Beauty" is an art lover's toybox.



WORDS: Paula Hammond IMAGES: BRITISH MUSEUM



**Defining Beauty: The Body in Ancient Greek Art**  
 Author: Ian Jenkins.  
 ISBN: 9780714122878.  
 Format: Hardback with jacket.  
 Price: £25.  
 Published: By the British Museum.

There are coffee table books and there are coffee table books and frankly no one does them better than the British Museum. "Defining Beauty" is their latest glossy tome—released in support of the Museum's new "Defining Beauty" exhibition. Featuring a selection of enlightening and thought provoking essays, the real appeal of this 256 pager is the full page, close up images of some of the ancient world's most famous and copied images. From the shock of the Picasso-esque prehistory statuettes, to the musculature and balance of the beautifully observed boy athletes, to the fierce challenging stare of the goddess Venus, caught bathing—page after page of this beautifully compiled volume delights and surprises. A chapter on colour in Greek art gives a thrilling glimpse of some of the original sculptures as they would have looked when painted, clothed and decked with jewels, in contrast to the pale, bare flesh of the Roman copies we have come to think of as 'the real thing'. A myth busting, visual delight that surely deserves a place in any art library.

**GREEK MYTHS**

Over time, Greek art moved out of the sacred spaces and into public places. As it did, it became less about ceremony and ritual and more about philosophy.

To modern eyes it may seem that the Greeks had a fascination bordering on obsession with naked young men. Take Myron's statue of a young discus thrower, Diskobolos. This muscular nude is the very model of manly homo erotica. Body taut, face a mask of concentration, Diskobolos prepares to throw his discus. One arm is raised, while the other hangs low. One leg takes his body weight, while the other is weight-free. Despite appearances, the whole thing is a study of tension and balance, echoing the Greek world-view in which harmony, balance and pleasing proportions, equaled beauty.

The sculptures which made Greek art the envy of the ancient and modern world rarely portray individuals. They're ideals designed to show the desired attributes of virtue. The figures are always broad shouldered. Their waists are waspish. Their thighs are muscular and powerful. Their faces are turned away, with eyes downcast, modestly. These sculptures are templates for the perfect Greek youth. Take a close look and the faces are the all the same. Some of them have distinctly feminine curves because female beauty needs to be incorporated into this 'ideal' model too. It's also why

the genitals are tiny. This art isn't intended as erotic titillation. It's moral education.

The thinking went something like this: The gods are perfect. If we can find a formula for that perfection and copy it, then we will become more like the gods.

**FACES AND SHIPS**

Many ancient cultures equated nakedness with dishonour. Not wearing clothes is what savages do after all. To the Greeks, a healthy, 'perfect' young body was a sign of virtue and could be displayed without shame. At least if you were male.

All early religions were focused on nature and fertility goddesses. The miracle of birth gave women in such societies power and status that only really began to wane with the advent of kings and kingdoms. With that came the need to ensure legitimate lines of succession, which meant controlling the behaviour of wayward women.

In 'civilised' city states like Athens, women lived invisible lives, hidden behind voluminous robes and veils. Greek slaves had more legal rights than the average Athenian woman who wasn't even legally

a person. Athens, though, was the outsider. Greek philosophy favoured equality of the sexes and in states like Sparta and Thessaly women enjoyed relative equality and privileges of citizenship.

In art, while male beauty was a measured, idealised

**THE GREEKS WERE HUMANISTS WHO PUT MAN AT THE CENTRE OF THEIR WORLD AND CREATED GODS IN THEIR OWN IMAGE**



and bland-ised thing, images of female beauty harked back to earlier times when it was goddesses, not gods, who were worshipped.

Occasionally Greek women appear in Greek art who are wild and a little scary—especially the tattooed Amazonians, Thracians and Maenads. But where Greek women are depicted, there’s an element of reverence, awe and raw sexuality in these portrayals. Fabric clings to bodies, hands try to hide, but actually draw attention to breasts and vagina, while eyes stare at the viewer, provocatively.

### **GREEKS BEARING GIFTS**

When in 1807 the sculptures from the Parthenon that Lord Elgin brought to Britain went on display, it was a culture bomb of epic proportions. The crowd went wild and interest in the ancient world, its literature and ideas flourished. Art and architecture went Greek. The British Museum itself, along with practically any British public building of the period, was a product of this Greek Revival.

The problem was that when 19th Century eyes first saw Greek sculptures they didn’t realise that they were seeing idealised images. They didn’t appreciate that the white marble copies were a Roman aesthetic choice and not an accurate representation of the originals.

What’s worse is that some believed that the Greeks embodied the perfection of original man, made in the image of God. Some even claimed that the Greeks belonged to what they called the superior Caucasian race, who they considered to possess the attributes of the mankind at its most developed.

Looking around “Developing Beauty” is a

**IN ITS DARKEST HOUR, GREEK ART HAS FUELLED RACISM AND CULTURAL SNOBBERY. EVEN TODAY, THESE EXCEPTIONAL WORKS DOMINATE OUR IDEAS OF WHAT ART IS AND WHAT BEAUTY IS**

fascinating and frustrating experience. For anyone seeped in the arts, there’s no denying the raw skill and power of the artists who made these remarkable works. They’re dynamic, inspirational and bloody great art. Equally, there’s no denying that the rediscovery of these treasures of the ancient world wasn’t all good news.

The whole history of Greek sculpture, from its rise in the sixth century to its decline in the third, was inspired by the desire to represent the divine. The Greeks believed that physical perfection was close to godliness. The concept of the body as a mirror for the soul—along with all the prejudices that come with such blinkers—was born in the their workshop. In its darkest hour, Greek art has fuelled racism and cultural snobbery. Even today, these exceptional works dominate our ideas of what art is and what beauty is. This stunning exhibition is sure to inspire artists and inflame debate in equal measure. ▣





*Craigy-Lee: No longer 'man about town', but 'man just about as far away from town as you could ever be'. Is life really so different on the other side of the world?*

**T**his month I thought it would be fun to share some of the questions that myself and every other tattoo artist around the world gets bombarded with on a daily basis. That's not to say you shouldn't ask questions, ask away... but for the record, here are the top ten most annoying questions to ask in a tattoo studio:

**1: DO YOU DO TATTOOS HERE?**

I'm not sure if this is just a nervous question to start with or if people just wander into random shops like lemmings without reading the sign and try and guess where they are. Regardless, we get asked it a lot! No, we don't do tattoos here, I just opened a fake tattoo shop to sit and draw in.

**2: HOW MUCH FOR A SLEEVE?**

How much is a car? How much is a house? I get asked this question weekly, and I'm sure our receptionist gets asked it daily, it's impossible to answer—there are so many variables when trying to price a tattoo, style, detail, colour...

**3: DOES IT HURT?**

Really? In this day and age people still ask this? Tattooing involves sticking a needle into your skin. Yes it fucking hurts!

**4: WHERE'S THE LEAST SORE PLACE TO GET IT?**

Don't decide where to get your tattoo based on how it's going to hurt for the short time it's going to take to tattoo it. Get it where it's gonna look awesome forever!

**5: WHERE DO YOU THINK I SHOULD GET IT?**

You know what, you're the one who's gonna look at it the rest of your life. Get it where you want it. Don't ask me, don't ask your friends. Get it where YOU want it!

**6: MY SON/DAUGHTER IS 16, CAN YOU TATTOO THEM WITH MY PERMISSION?**

We don't just tattoo over 18's because we fancy it. It is actually the law. So beg plead and offer all you want, it's not going to happen.

**7: WHAT CAN YOU TATTOO FOR \$20?**

Nothing. Absolutely nothing. We have a minimum charge for a reason, even if you want a dot tattooed. It's the same as a minimum charge for a plumber, electrician or other skilled trade person. We use fresh equipment



**CRAIGY LEE**  
electric\_gent

I just heard the sad news that Wellington tattoo icon Roger Ingerton passed away. Roger's studio is considered one of the oldest in New Zealand, he travelled widely working conventions in the states during the 80's and 90's. He is also the man who tattooed the cast of the Lord of the Rings back in 2000. He was a softly spoken gentleman who will be fondly remembered as a pioneer of the New Zealand tattoo industry.

**NO, WE DON'T DO TATTOOS HERE. I JUST OPENED A FAKE TATTOO SHOP TO SIT AND DRAW IN**

on every tattoo, which has to be set up, then broken down, then cleaned and sterilised—not to mention the years of learning it took me to get where I am today.

**8: CAN WE MAKE IT REALLY, REALLY SMALL?**

Now I know some people think a bigger tattoo is going to cost more, and that's why tattoo artists always say "go bigger", but with most of the little tattoos that come through our doors, making them as teenie-tiny as possible just means in ten years when the ink spreads a little, your tattoo will look like a blob. That tiny writing will be unreadable, so listen when your artists says go bigger.

**9: THE GUY DOWN THE ROAD SAID HE CAN DO IT FOR £XXX. CAN YOU DO IF FOR THAT?**

No, The guy down the road is a dick with the art skills of a five year old.

**10: DO YOU DO THOSE TATTOOS THAT LAST A YEAR THEN FADE AWAY?**

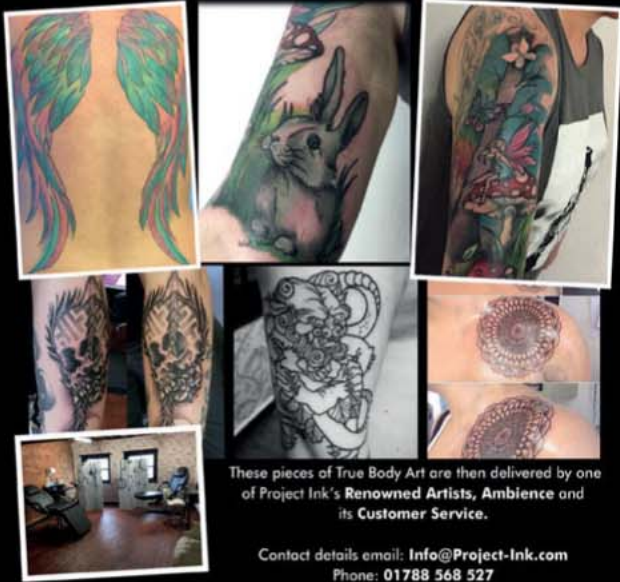
WTF? Really? ☐

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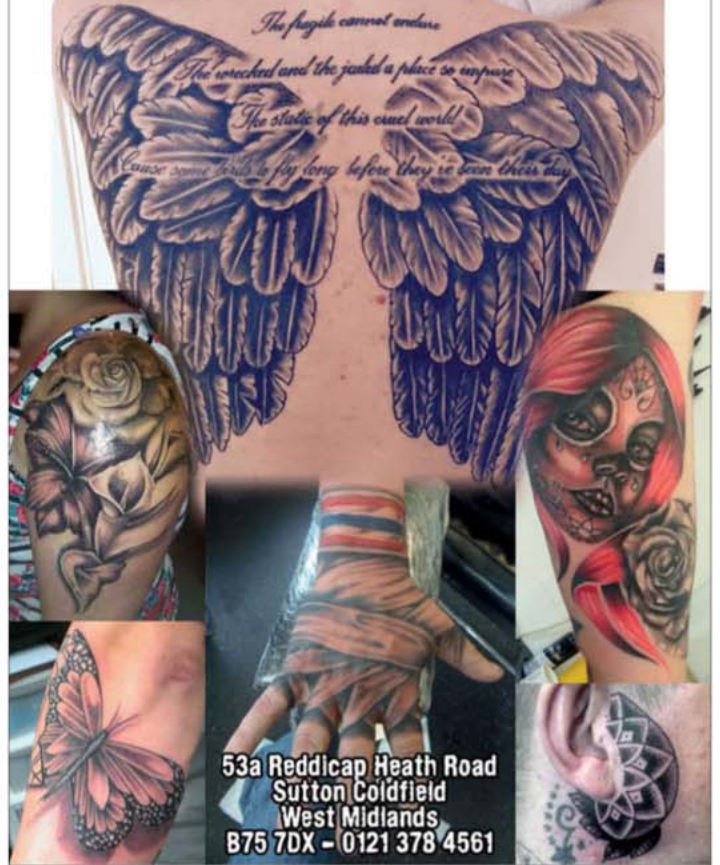
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*Last month I interviewed two tattoo studios in Soho and explored the concept of having a completely impulsive tattoo. I did this, by getting one myself*

I made a decision about something that would be on me for life, in about 30 seconds. In that time, you can't really put that much thought into anything - design, meaning, placement, colour, font, size.

It got me thinking, does all that stuff really matter? We're constantly bombarded with the message that we must plan our tattoos... it's with you for life, make sure it's in the right place, make sure the artists' style is right for you, make sure it won't look dated in the future blah, blah.

The message engrained in our heads is that those who make spontaneous ink decisions, come to regret it for the rest of their lives. Be safe, be sensible, consider the consequences of your actions. That's just the world we live in of good little citizens that follow the rules we are handcuffed to.

I was about to leave London after working there for a couple of memorable years and suddenly decided I wanted a tattoo. I just pressed my 'Fuck It' button. We've all got a Fuck It button (especially people in Soho), and some of us press it more than others. I think for people that get tattoos, some people will know what I'm talking about, and some won't.

Catching up with my old man this week, he reminded me of a story he's told me many times about his mate Bob:

Bob's in his late 80s, and in his navy days, he was very much the clown of the group. One day, he persuaded his shipmates that he had the words 'I love Jam Roly Poly Pudding' tattooed on his stomach.

I'm not quite sure how he did this, but he did. An elaborate story that ended with his persuasion that, as fellow friends, they should get the same permanent mark to symbolise their friendships and time at sea.

So one day, when they arrived on land, they did. They eventually returned to the ship with sticky, bloody bellies and were welcomed by a hysterical Bob, rolling on the floor laughing, and eventually revealing that it was all a big joke.

So in return, they dragged him kicking and screaming to the place from which they'd just returned and made him get the exact same tattoo, in the same place. The tattoo



Lewis McKechnie



BECCY RIMMER  
@RaRaRimmer

**WE'VE ALL GOT A 'FUCK IT' BUTTON AND SOME OF US PRESS IT MORE THAN OTHERS**

he'd managed to persuade them days ago that he already had.

And so, for the rest of their lives, those men wore this ridiculous tattoo upon their abdomens. A spontaneous, stupid, silly, embarrassing, pudding-related tattoo that did nothing but remind them of their experiences as part of that crew.

The most common question we get asked is, 'but what are your tattoos going to look like when you're older?!'

I can see from the expression on Bob's face, when he tells that story to my dad for the millionth time, that he couldn't care less about the font, style, design, placement or longevity of the wonky words *Jam Roly Poly* on his wrinkly skin.

Not an ounce of his thought is concerned with how it looks, because the memories are worth their weight in gold.



**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

**I'm looking for a tattooist** to work a season in the heart of Magaluf. I need someone to run and manage a studio on the main strip of Magaluf - must have 4/5 years experience for more info: 0034 649828057 or poolsroom@hotmail.com

**We're looking for a resident tattoo artist** to join our existing family at Basement Tattoo Parlour in Brighton. Good attitude and manners are essential qualities but we're more concerned with excellent tattooing skill because we have an educated clientele who want the very best. Contact: basementtattoos@outlook.com or 07470 293707 for more information

**Experienced tattoo artist wanted** for The Ink Captain's Tattorium, Exeter, Devon. Strong portfolio and the ability to do custom work is a must. We are looking for a reliable artist with a good work ethic. To arrange an interview or for more information please contact us by email theinkcaptain@gmail.com or via Facebook [Ink Captain].

**Space to rent** for an experienced Body Piercer at Inkermans Tattoo Studio in Crystal Palace. Must be willing to do all piercings that come into Studio & have own client base. Good opportunity to build your own business. Contact Steve at inkermans@hotmail.com

**We are looking for a new full time artist** at Noir Bizarre in Hull. Someone with experience in a tattoo studio, who is friendly and reliable. Email your portfolio to hollydosdale@gmail.com [note, this is not an apprentice position].

**Sideburns Barber Shop are looking** for a tattoo artist to join the gang. We have a fully licensed, sterile tattoo studio through the back of the shop ready to go! We are situated in the south of Edinburgh [postcode EH13 9LQ]. The artist must have a minimum of 4 years experience and be proficient in all aspects of the trade. Contact Keith Burns on 01314457468 or at burns201450@aol.com...

**Tattoo artist required** for new studio in Sheerness, Kent. Great opportunity for the right person, must have working studio experience. The studio is located at: Absolute Studios, 3 Victory St, Sheerness, Kent, ME1 1NZ. If interested please contact Mike at mike.prentice@btconnect.com or text 07412665338...

**We are looking for an experienced tattooist** to join our team in a studio in Shrewsbury. Full-time or part-time hours, working on a self-employed basis. All applicants please phone our studio [Tattoo You] on 01743 232106 between 10am and 4pm Tuesday to Saturday 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 of 7 years experience. Also looking for body piercer / receptionist, must be fully competent in all types of piercing and be willing to fulfill reception duties. For further details please contact Tam on 07787885902...

**PriZeMan / Eternal Art in Chelmsford**, Essex, is looking for 2 artists and also offering guest artist spots. Located at 42-43 Viaduct Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1TS. Contact eternal-art@hotmail.co.uk or call 01245 355166

**FOR SALE. Tattoo business** in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire. Established for 22 years, long lease, and a great regular clientele. Owner wanting to retire so any sensible offer considered. Call 01992 630313 or Mobile 07775 671551 or email us at black.scorpion@btconnect.com.

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**Resident Artist Required.** We're looking for a resident tattoo artist to join our existing family at Basement Tattoo Parlour in Brighton. Good attitude and manners are essential qualities but we're more concerned with excellent tattooing skill because we have an educated clientele who want the very best. Contact basementtattoos@outlook.com or call 07470 293707.

**Barry Louvaine Tattoo is looking** for a strong custom artist to join us in our long established

studio in London. Please email 5 recent images of work to: pink@barrylouvaine.com

**For Sale: Tattoo business** in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire. Established for 22 years. Long lease, and a great regular clientele. Owner wanting to retire so any sensible offer considered. Call 01992 630313 or Mobile 07775 671551 or email us at black.scorpion@btconnect.com.

**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

**Eternal Art are looking for 2 artists** and offering guest artist spots. Interested parties, please get in touch: eternal-art@hotmail.co.uk or PriZeMaN, Eternal Art, 42-43 Viaduct Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1TS

**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 : email:jacksoncooper113@gmail.com

**We are looking for an experienced tattooist** to join our team in a Shrewsbury town centre based studio. Full time or part time hours working on a self employed basis. All applicants 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.

**Sideburns barber shop are looking for a tattoo artist** to join the gang! We have a fully licensed, sterile tattoo studio through the back of the shop ready to go! This is a new adventure for us we think it would be fantastic opportunity for an artist to branch out by themselves. We are situated in

the south of Edinburgh close to Redford and Dregghorn army barracks. The artists must have a min of 4 years experience. Be proficient in all aspects of the trade. We can be contacted on 01314 457468

**Tattoo artist required for new studio in Sheerness Kent**, great opportunity for the right person, must have working studio experience, if interested please contact Mike at mike.prentice@btconnect.com or text me at 07412 665338

**Experienced tattoo artist wanted for The Ink Captain's Tattorium, Exeter, Devon.** Strong portfolio and the ability to do custom work is a must. We are looking for a reliable artist with a good work ethic. To arrange an interview or for more information please contact us by email - theinkcaptain@gmail.com or via facebook: 'Ink Captain'

**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. theoldsmithytattooparlour@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.

**Tattoo and Piercing Parlour for Sale.** Established shop set in Codsall good amenities. Food / drink etc/ close by We are set next to train station generates a good income. I am selling due to my run of ill health for more info email martin: heartsandanchors13@gmail.com

**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: theoldsmithytattooparlour@hotmail.co.uk for more information

All details correct at time of going to press. Adverts cannot be taken over the phone. Please include your full studio details even if they are not to accompany the wording.



AN EYE IS UPON YOU

# SEASONAL EXPOSURE

*All winter long, my tattoos are automatically concealed. Even those etched into 'public skin' are hidden under hats, scarves and gloves, and I am incognito*

**T**he long dark months on our grey island lull me into a falsehood, that 'it' finally happened, and tattoos have become so common place that no one bothers to look anymore. Every year, the spring sun melts that belief and the removal of a coat, swapping jeans for shorts—or dare I... a dress!—is to go from caterpillar to butterfly.

In spring, I am often complimented on my tattoos and asked for artist recommendations and for guidance on how to obtain custom or large scale work. Friends, acquaintances and strangers tell me their ideas, their hopes and share their tattoo-dreams. I always say the same things, save up, be patient, be prepared to travel, do plenty of research. Yet, somehow, researching a tattoo is becoming harder, even though the information is seemingly easier to access than ever.

After the electric machine, the invention that has most effected tattooing is probably the internet. No longer limited to the exposure provided by a small number of monthly magazines, artists now create their own advertising via social media sites. The convenience and accessibility has been positive for many but the proliferation of images (thousands are uploaded to Instagram every day) and the use of filters and Photoshop can make selecting the correct artist extremely difficult. New tattoo fans are left vulnerable to influence from less worthy factors, such as the apparent popularity of most-followed tattooers and the vagaries of fashion and celebrity, reality TV inclusive.

I'm also often approached by women of colour, and many of the women I speak to are disappointed when I explain that my tattoos look the way they do, not because of bright inks or specific techniques, but because I am a natural redhead with near-translucent skin. I suggest they seek out a tattooer who is confident about working with their par-



PAULA HARDY KANGELOS  
DiamondBetty

ticular skin tone and is happy to explain the naturally occurring limitations, including the increased risk of keloid scarring and the decreased viability of laser tattoo removal.

Sadly, the task of online research is even more confusing for those with highly pigmented complexions. Tattoos on dark skin are often much harder to photograph due to the subtleties in contrast, and this is especially so when tattoos are fresh and shiny. Tattooers who consistently produce excellent tattoos on dark skin are often indiscernible by portfolio.

Asabi Barner travelled almost 800 miles from her home in South Carolina to a New York tattoo shop that claimed to be expert in tattooing black skin. The shop, called 'Black Ink', even appears in a tattoo-reality show based entirely on this claimed specialisation. Barner tried to do everything the right way, she'd saved, she'd travelled, she'd selected an artist whom she believed was suited to her needs, and had chosen a design of appropriate scale. She now has extreme scarring, caused by an inadequately applied tattoo and adding insult to injury, has been criticised online for believing the hype and choosing a shop based on what she had seen on TV, instead of 'doing her own research'.

Barner starts her springtime with a legal process against the shop that left her disfigured and unable to enjoy the ink-shielded confidence many tattooed folk take for granted, but I hope her story inspires tattooers to display their work on dark skins—of all ethnicities—proudly. After all, those imperfect photographs may signpost the way to some near-perfect tattoos, tattoos that help us escape the body anxiety of contemporary culture, and make us happy in our skins. □

**SADLY, THE TASK OF ONLINE RESEARCH IS EVEN MORE CONFUSING FOR THOSE WITH HIGHLY PIGMENTED COMPLEXIONS**



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