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# DOG EAT DOG EAT DOG EAT DOG...

**T**he global interest in tattooing appears to continue to grow with not much indication of slowing down—but the angle of that interest has also radically changed. With so much information pasted on the walls of the internet now, sites like buzzfeed are treating the information they hold as though it's general knowledge and you're a fool for not knowing it. I didn't know people actually used buzzfeed in real life but I guess if what you're looking for are some words that fell out of the sky with no logical train of thought behind them, that's the very place to demean yourself on a daily basis.

Anyway, a few days back, somebody sent me some facts (not actually from buzzfeed—I just wanted to point at them and make them look dumb) about tattoos thinking I might be interested in them. They thought wrong... well, not so much wrong as I actually became interested for all the wrong reasons. Let me run a couple of these by you:

**Fact 1:** Often misspelled 'tatoo', the word tattoo is one of the most misspelled words in the English language.

**Truth 1:** No it's not. I see a fair old whack of instances of the word 'tattoo' and sure, some are misspelled but there are hundreds—thousands—of far worse culprits than this simple word that only has three bloody letters in it. Who on earth has the time to spend figuring that out anyway?

**Fact 2:** Receiving a tattoo has been described as similar to getting stung by a bee or getting a sunburn.

**Truth 2:** Pestered by a swarm of bees repeatedly for three or four hours maybe, but one bee? I don't think so. I got stung by a bee last year—it was hidden in my shirt that was hanging up by the window and didn't much appreciate the disruption. It may have smarted a little but honestly... it was not in the slightest like being tattooed.

Having said that, a tattoo doesn't hurt half as much as sunburn but that serves you right. It's not like we haven't been told a million times not to lie around in the stuff. Even



Niklas Wong

## WOULD IT BE TOO MUCH EFFORT TO HAVE GREAT TATTOOS TO ILLUSTRATE THESE RANDOM FACTS?



**SION SMITH • EDITOR**  
editor@skindeep.co.uk  
@skindeepmag  
@skindeep\_uk

more when you have ink.

**Fact 3:** Pamela Anderson's barbed wire armband tattoo was so instantly famous that it was largely responsible for the huge rise in popularity of tattoo armbands through the late 90s

**Truth 3:** Yeah, OK. I'll give you that one. That's pretty bang on the money.

In the real world, all of this is just noise. It doesn't matter to anybody. At best, I guess it might be mildly entertaining but would it be too much effort to have great tattoos to illustrate these random facts? Surely it's just as easy to steal images of great tattoos as it is to steal crappy/average ones—or are they worried that those who are prepared to put in the work to be great might have something to say about it? ▣

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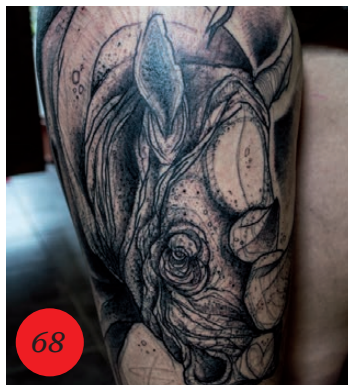
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*A catch-up up with a Las Vegas-based artist who is making a name for herself and her passion for tattoos, people and diversity. Ladies and Gents, Lil Guz.*

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*'All Involved' is the latest novel written by Ryan Gattis, describing six days of chaos as riots started in Los Angeles in 1992 - the novel has been a redemption for Gattis, who found in the streets of Los Angeles, in street art and tattooing, the inspiration to transcend himself.*

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*Cuzen prefer the standard tattoo machine. Behind The Ink with Wayne Simmons continues...*

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*The 8th Australian Tattoo and Body Art Expo was held on the weekend of March 13th - 15th at Moore Park, Sydney, Australia. Tracey Brodin reports back on Australia's large tattoo event.*

**PLUS:**

*A look at the latest book release from the 'man with the pen', Ramon Maider; Craigy Lee tattoos his buddy in the departure lounge of Auckland airport, Ade Stacey reveals what he's been doing in his spare time and have we discovered the next queen of pop? Maybe! Read on...*

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Illustration by Ollie Tye

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## WINTER IS COMING

Not super fast, but it sure is creeping in. For those who are paid monthly, it's now only two pay days to Christmas! What better time to throw in some tickets for Tattoo Freeze to look forward to something after you been on lockdown with your family.

It's a little early to know exactly what will be happening at the show, but it sure as hell isn't too early to throw some tickets into the arena. What we have is five pairs up for grabs to random entries pulled out of the hat before the end of October (we shall revisit this in the following two issues of the mag as well—you may of course, enter more than once)—all you need to do is send an email to [editor@skindeep.co.uk](mailto:editor@skindeep.co.uk) with the subject line WINTER IS COMING and we'll take care of the rest.

Good luck!



## CLEAN AS A WHISTLE

Custom Coast Tattoos in Whitley Road, [Whitley Bay], has been awarded a rating of five—the highest mark in the new North East England Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme. The voluntary programme aims to raise standards as well as help the public decide which studios to use.

Similar to the Food Standards Agency's food hygiene rating scheme, businesses are inspected by an environmental health officer and then allocated a rating award of between one and five—one represents unsatisfactory and five is excellent.

The scheme was developed jointly by the region's seven local authorities and all of the region's 250 registered tattoo parlours are invited to join in.

Gary Rowley, tattooist manager at Custom Coast Tattoos, says he is pleased the studio received the highest mark:

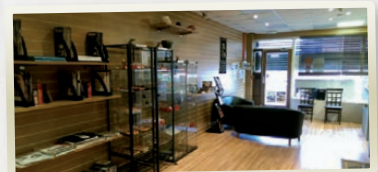
"I think the scheme is a brilliant idea. I've felt for some time that there should be this form of accreditation scheme to raise standards across the industry and ensure customers are better informed. You'll find that some people's studios may look good but that doesn't necessarily mean their hygiene standards are as high as they could be.

"I pride myself on being as hygienic as possible. We wear masks and gloves, use fully disposable kit and everything in the studio has protective covers to the extreme. I'm really proud that we're the first studio in the North East to receive the five rating. I'll be displaying it on our window."

Good work!

## STUDIO MOVE

Formerly known as 'Point Made', Rendition Tattoo studio is a friendly studio full of talented award winning artists based in the small town of Nuneaton. "Rendition has been going through a few changes in the past couple of months and business has never been better, with brand new artists on-board and guest artists popping in, we can accommodate any style of artwork to suit our clients needs." You can find them here: 120 Queens Road, Nuneaton CV11 5IG [renditionnuneaton.co.uk](http://renditionnuneaton.co.uk) [facebook/instagram](https://www.facebook.com/renditionnuneaton).



Bushman Ink have recently moved a few doors down but it's bigger and better. They are now at 4 West Main Street, Whitburn, West Lothian, EH47 0QX tel: 0783 4535 665.



## CONVENTIONS

### FLORENCE TATTOO CONVENTION

**09–11 October 2015**

Fortezza Da Basso  
Viale Filippo Strozzi, 1  
50129 Florence,  
Italy

[florencetattooconvention.com](http://florencetattooconvention.com)

### EVIAN TATTOO SHOW

**23–25 October 2015**

Palais des Congrès d'Evian-les-Bains  
Place Peintre Charles Cottet  
74500 Evian-Les-Bains  
France

[eviantattoo.com](http://eviantattoo.com)

### JURASSIC COAST TATTOO CONVENTION

**30 October–01 November 2015**

Premier Inn Hotel Bournemouth Central  
Westover Rd,  
Bournemouth,  
Dorset BH1 2BZ,

[jurassiccoasttattooconvention.co.uk](http://jurassiccoasttattooconvention.co.uk)

### DUBLIN TATTOO CONVENTION

**30 October–01 November 2015**

Red Cow Moran Hotel Dublin  
22 Naas Rd  
Dublin 22,  
Co. Dublin

[dublintattooconvention.com](http://dublintattooconvention.com)

### ROCK'N INK FESTIVAL

#### LUXEMBOURG

**30 October–01 November 2015**

Luxexpo  
10 Circuit de La Foire Internationale  
1347 Luxembourg  
Luxembourg

[facebook.com/rockninkfestivalluxembourg](https://facebook.com/rockninkfestivalluxembourg)

### HALLOWEEN TATTOO BASH

**07–08 November 2015**

Holiday Inn Garden Court  
Dunstable Park Lodge  
Wolverhampton WV6 0PE  
[halloweentattoobash.co.uk](http://halloweentattoobash.co.uk)

### BRUSSELS TATTOO CONVENTION

**13–15 November 2015**

Tour & Taxis  
Avenue du Port 86,  
1000 Brussels,  
Belgium

[brusselstattooconvention.be](http://brusselstattooconvention.be)

### SHEFFIELD TATTOO SHOW

**14–15 November 2015**

Magna Science Adventure Centre  
Sheffield Road,  
Templeborough  
Rotherham S60 1DX  
[sheffielddtattooshow.co.uk](http://sheffielddtattooshow.co.uk)

### AUSTRALIAN TATTOO & BODY ART EXPO

**04–06 December 2015**

Melbourne Convention and  
Exhibition Centre  
1 Convention Centre Place,  
South Wharf Victoria 3006,  
Australia  
[tattooexpo.com.au](http://tattooexpo.com.au)

### TATTOO FESTIVAL BERLIN

**05–06 December 2015**

Huxleys Neue Welt  
Hasenheide 107  
10967 Berlin  
Germany  
[tattoofestivalberlin.de](http://tattoofestivalberlin.de)



## EQUADOR IN EXTREMIS

Just when you think you've seen it all... you probably haven't. Word on the street is that the tattoo show in Ecuador (Quito Tattoo Convention) this past July was so full on, it was hard to evaluate the actual quality of the tattooing—so much so, that we haven't got any coverage if it. However, if you were looking for grand displays of body modification, it was totally the place to be.

In attendance was Maria Jose Christerna from Mexico, also known as The Vampire Woman, who took centre stage at the fair. Christina is covered

head-to-toe, but not satisfied with the ink, she also had dental work to create fangs, a forked tongue, dozens of piercings and sub-dermal 'horn' implants.

Also in attendance was Matt Gone, who has had over 95 per cent of his body covered in ink, including his tongue and genitals. Originally from Portland and also known as 'The Chequered Man', Matt claims to have begun tattooing his body 25 years ago to disguise physical deformities—which is as good a reason as any to be extreme.

## FIRST HOME TATTOOING — NOW HOME REMOVALS?

**This is a scary story—even more so than DIY tattoos in a dark kitchen: home tattoo removal. Here's what the BBC made of it:**

People are pouring chemicals containing banned acids over their skin in a bid to remove unwanted tattoos, a BBC investigation has found. The do-it-yourself tattoo removal kits are being sold online for £15.

One dermatologist said the products were "highly likely to cause severe burns" and "quite possibly result in permanent scarring". The Trading Standards Institute admitted it has not done enough to warn people about the dangers.

Jess Hardy, 23, from Leominster, Herefordshire, said she was left with a "hole" in her arm and without feeling in that area after using the kit.

"It felt like someone had poured like something flammable on my arm, lit it then poured a kettle on it," she said.

Tests conducted at the University of Birmingham found it contained two banned products: hexachloroethane, once used in smoke grenades, and trichloroacetic acid (TCA), used for wart removal.

Clinical dermatologist Sean Lanigan advised people not to use the products and said they do not work. "It's very unlikely to remove the tattoo," he said. "People are not only wasting their money, they're exposing themselves to a significant risk of damage."

Christine Heemskerck, vice chairman of the Trading Standards Institute, said the findings of the BBC Inside Out investigation would be discussed with other trading standards bosses and industry experts on 14 October.

She said it would then be up to individual trading standards bodies to issue advice.

"This is a really serious risk and consumers should definitely not be using this," she said.

"I have to admit at the moment Trading Standards hasn't really done enough to raise awareness for consumers because this is a fairly new product, but now we know that there are issues out there—hopefully we can get the message out there to consumers that they should not be buying these products, especially over the internet."

Sigh. If he says put your hand in the fire...



## THE NEW QUEEN OF POP ELLE KING

*We know a thing or two about pop culture around here, so believe us when we tell you that Elle King and her song Ex's & Oh's is highly likely to take up residence in a corner of your brain more or less at first listen. Reason for appearance here? Well we always have room for those who make room for tattoos...*

**Frank and fearless, tender** and rowdy, Elle King's debut album *Love Stuff* is widely available right now where all good music is sold and it's a peach. Her breakthrough single *Ex's & Oh's* is up online to download now and sees Elle become only the second woman to top the Billboard Alternative Songs Chart in over two decades—following Lorde, who broke an 18-year streak of male and group leaders when her debut hit *Royals* lead the chart.

Elle has worked with a plethora of acclaimed collaborators on *Love Stuff*

including Mark Ronson, Jeff Bhasker, Eg White (Adele, Sam Smith), Jacknife Lee (R.E.M., U2, Crystal Castles), Martin Johnson, and Dave Bassett.

But all that backstory aside, we found Elle King a complete breath of fresh air—kind of like chewing on a whole packet of *Airwaves*. A couple of plays in the office on *The Big Machine* and people were soon passing by to see who it was—which is always a good sign when you're generally surrounded by musical heathens.

You can go directly here to watch *Ex's & Oh's*: [vevo.com/artist/elle-king](http://vevo.com/artist/elle-king)



Having already toured with the likes of Ed Sheeran, Modest Mouse and Of Monsters of Men, Elle has also been out with James Bay this month—if you're fast from magazine stand to ticket sale, you can catch the end of that tour here:

08.10 Birmingham O2 Academy  
09.10 Swindon Oasis Leisure Centre  
11.10 Belfast Ulster Hall  
14.10 Dublin Olympia Theatre  
15.10 Dublin Olympia Theatre

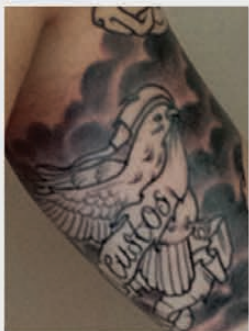
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## BLINDSPOT

*Just what we need right? A TV show with an extensively tattooed hero that looks like it might be some kind of cross between Memento and Prison Break. Actually... yeah! Bring that to the table.*

That's right—just as silly season is about to explode on TV again (like we all didn't have enough shows to watch)—the Gods of Remote Controls decided to throw us a big juicy bone. So far as we can figure out, *Blindspot* is both exciting, intelligent and is using tattoos as a large part of the plot that we're hoping won't be as easy to laser of as Michael Scofield's were. (Remember that, or are you preferring to forget!)

### Here's what we know:

A woman, with no memories of her past, is found naked in Times Square with her body fully covered in intricate tattoos. Her discovery sets off a vast and complex mystery that immediately ignites the attention of the FBI, which begins to follow the road map on her body into a larger

conspiracy of crime, while bringing her closer to discovering the truth about her identity... so far so good huh?

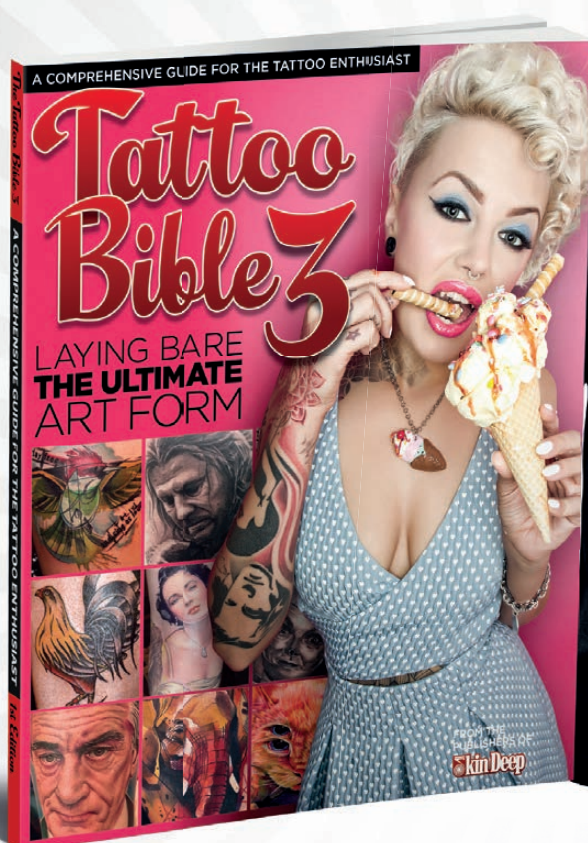
The cast includes Sullivan Stapleton (*300: Rise of an Empire*, *Strike Back*), Jaimie Alexander (*Thor: The Dark World*, *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*) and Marianne Jean-Baptiste (*Broadchurch*, *Without a Trace*)

It starts today (21 September as I write this) so do what you gotta do but it looks good to us. Meanwhile, the people with too much time and money have developed a mini-site to back up *Blindspot* where you can see what you will look like with your whole body covered in ink—not that it isn't already but you could run it by your folks or your friends I guess. That's right here: [blindspottattoo.nbc-campaign.com](http://blindspottattoo.nbc-campaign.com)

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by  
Rakhee Shah



**This month, we're going slightly left of field with this bear delivered to the calf of the Ed. Roll with it...**

"This was a long time in the making. A couple of years ago, I started a project to free bears that are kept in vile conditions—holes drilled through their snouts, that kind of thing. I'll be honest—it's been tougher than I thought to get people interested but one day, I mentioned it to Rakhee and as time passed, we came up with a plan—or rather she did:

For every bear I actually had a real hand in liberating—financially or otherwise—I would mark the event with ink. Thus, this is the first of what I hope is many.

Rakhee is wonderful—as an artist and a friend. You can check out her work at the links on the right. As for this one, we batted around some images from many different sources but it was she who found this one of a bear pounding through water.

The only 'rule' I had, was that the bear had to keep its sense of power and freedom. Job done—because Rakhee knows her stuff. The sitting took about five, maybe six hours and for the record, this pic was taken about five minutes after she had wrapped it up.

As for the bears... next year we go to Romania to see how things are panning out first-hand. If you're of a mind, you can read more and help me out at [bigbearrescue.com](http://bigbearrescue.com).

...and yeah, it does feel odd writing this about myself, but all I did was lie there—it's not my work—go hit your web browser."

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*Continuing our series based around just how wonderful photography can be when hooked into premium tattooing... this month, D3LiRiUm:*

This great shot of D3LiRiUm taken by Jill Hart is just one in a fine series from both camps. We have nothing else to say—is it not enough to simply adore a great image for its own sake and let it do all of the work? Of course it is.

WAMISLEKCHIKOMIE

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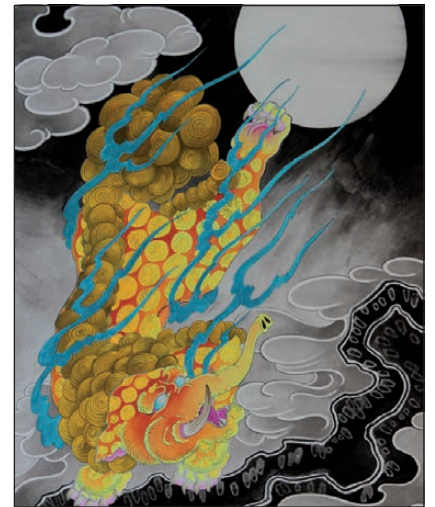


# BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

*This issue, we came by the nifty side-work of Ade Stacey who tattoos out of Axios in Hove, Sussex. Now you too have come across it, we hope you feel the same— sometimes, there's nothing like some Japanese influenced artwork to bring a smile to your face.*

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Japanese imagery has been a part of my life since my early teens. A slow but constant stream of anime, manga, Kurosawa movies—and later on Ukiyo-e prints—have fuelled my imagination. I think it was only natural that when I eventually came to tattooing after my art degree in painting, I would gravitate towards making Japanese style work.

Since opening Axios in November 2014 I've found more time to dedicate to my studies and the paintings are part of that process.

I normally sketch up all my ideas using pencil on a different sheet of paper to the one I will be painting on. I find that it keeps the surface of the painting surface smooth.

It also allows me the chance to try out different compositions and how the image is cropped.

I stretch all of my paper—300gsm HP watercolour—before carrying out any painting. Once the drawing is committed to the surface, using Frisk Tracedown, I fix the outline with a weak grey ink using a brush. Then begins the process of laying down all the black and grey tones. Most of my grey is built from several layers and it can often reach as high as 10 before I'm happy with the tonal blend.

Colour is then laid down using a similar method i.e. multiple layers. Any details are added as I go and I've recently started using non-watercolour pencils for some of the finer areas, as it gives me a much greater control over the end results.



#### COMMISSIONS/BUYING ORIGINALS AND PRINTS

This year I've begun accepting commissions. All is work is on paper so shipping costs can be kept pretty low. If you're interested in having a painting done you can contact me for a price via Axios Tattoo's email which is: [info@axiostatattoo.com](mailto:info@axiostatattoo.com) with 'painting commission' as the message title. Please be aware that I juggle this work alongside my tattooing and family life so wait times can be 'a while'. Not forever... just 'a while'!"

**Materials frequently used:**  
Mechanical pencil for sketching  
Frisk Tracedown  
Pelican Black Ink  
Dr. Ph. Martins watercolours  
Daler-Rowney liquid acrylics



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# VANITY UNFAIR

*It is important to remember that not everything we see was designed purely for our own gaze. Though many things may appear aesthetically pleasing, this may not be their sole purpose*

**C**ars can look nice, but even if they don't—I am looking at you Fiat Multipla—they can still function and adequately carry out their intended purpose; to get a person from A to B.

The same can be said of umbrellas, some are designer, some are styled really nicely, and some are ludicrous cat-like monstrosities with fake ears, but first and foremost, no matter how they look, they must perform their function of keeping someone dry. If it achieves that, the looks are secondary.

Too often we take the aesthetics and the image as the primary driver, the main role, or the most important function. Shoes have to look good rather than be comfortable, musicians have to be attractive rather than talented, and our food has to be served artistically on slate boards with decorative leaves and gratings, who cares if it only hits a five on the taste Richter scale.

It is this almost constant appeal to our most dominant

of senses that seems to have led us to believe that anything in sight is designed for us to look at. The mere fact that our eyes can see it then means that it was meant to be seen by our eyes.

**SHOES HAVE TO  
LOOK GOOD  
RATHER THAN BE  
COMFORTABLE,  
MUSICIANS HAVE  
TO BE ATTRACTIVE  
RATHER THAN  
TALENTED**

Having only just met Izzy, I did not want to interrogate her position too forcefully, but it got me thinking, was she right? Are tattoos simply a vanity issue?

To be vain is to "have or show an excessively high opin-

This belief, as I am sure you are aware, is illogical. It designates a purpose after the fact and is a narrow and naive way of seeking meaning from things.

The reason I am writing about this is because I recently met a talented young (non-tattoo) artist and illustrator named Izzy Hodge (check out her work, foxes and badgers galore, and who doesn't love them right). Being the creative arty type that she is, I was surprised to hear Izzy voice her opinion that tattoos are essentially down to vanity.



Diyan Ivanov

## THE MERE FACT THAT OUR EYES CAN SEE IT THEN MEANS THAT IT WAS MEANT TO BE SEEN BY OUR EYES

ion of one's appearance, abilities, or worth", at least that is the definition that I found online. Immediately I am aware that this definition does not sound like me and neither does it sound much like any of my tattooed friends. If anything my friends are quite the opposite, they are unhappy with their appearance and lacking in self-confidence, perhaps going some way to explaining the desire for ever more ink.

I would also fall in to this category; not entirely content with how I look, forever chas-

ing that final piece of art, always looking to add to the collection. Rather than getting ink because I have a high opinion of my appearance, I get ink precisely because that high opinion is absent. I do not speak for everyone, but personally, I am still on a journey to become comfortable with my own body. Each new piece of art is a little step towards acceptance, each session is a necessary addition in order to reach my goal.

To say that tattoos are vain is to suggest that the art on someone's skin is not for that individual, but for the public. The fact that the public can see it then somehow transforms a tattoo from being an individual's choice with its own personal meaning into a display of vanity, power, or beauty, for the

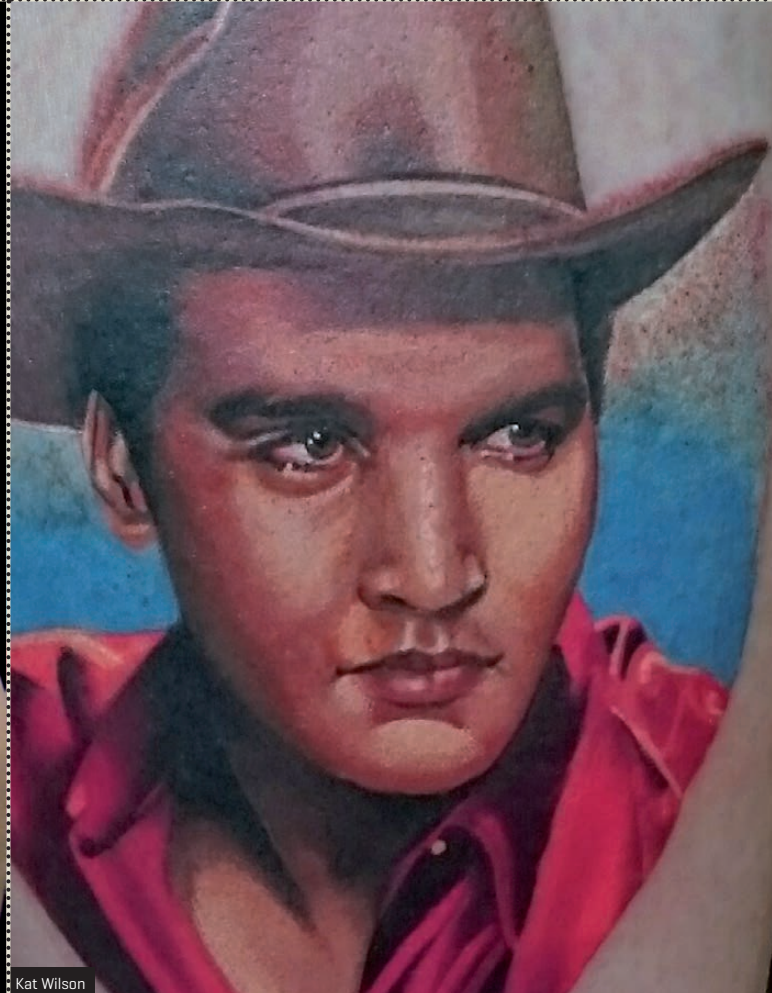




Santa perpetua



Sanne Vaghi



Kat Wilson

world to marvel at and comment on.

The body may be a canvas, but tattoos are not designed for public viewing. Tattoos are a private collection of art that just so happen to get public attention on a semi-regular basis.

I imagine many tattoo enthusiasts and addicts would get ink regardless of the potential future audience. For example, if you were to work your whole life with blind people would you stop getting tattoos because nobody would ever see them? I very much doubt you would. Or if you lived in a cold climate where you had to wear many layers in order to keep warm, thus covering your skin from sight, would you stop getting tattoos? Again, I think the answer would be no.

Iceland, for example, is one of the coldest

countries to live in the world. Temperatures in the summer are said to peak at 13 degrees Celsius and winter sees average temperatures of around -2 degrees Celsius. Yet despite these near Arctic conditions, Iceland has a thriving tattoo scene, with Reykjavik, its capital, playing host to its 10th successive tattoo convention in June of this year.

I do understand why people believe tattoos to be a vanity issue, and undoubtedly there

**I AM AWARE THAT THIS DEFINITION DOES NOT SOUND LIKE ME AND NEITHER DOES IT SOUND MUCH LIKE ANY OF MY TATTOOED FRIENDS**



Jen Danger



Ladislav Hacíl

## IF YOU LIVED IN A COLD CLIMATE WHERE YOU HAD TO WEAR MANY LAYERS IN ORDER TO KEEP WARM, THUS COVERING YOUR SKIN FROM SIGHT, WOULD YOU STOP GETTING TATTOOS?

are some people who choose tattoos based on how they will be perceived by others. Not so much wanting a tattoo themselves, but wanting to be seen as having a tattoo. In this former instance, Izzy, and others like her, may be correct in linking the ink to a sense of vanity. But to say that across the board tattoos are due to vanity is to over-simplify the issue and paint everyone with a brush that is only suitable for a very small percentage.

Izzy's belief that you get tattoos for others to look at may be a case of the false-consensus effect; a psychological term for when people assume that their own opinions are normal and that others think the same way as they do. The fact that Izzy believes tattoos to be vain tells us more about her than it does

about tattoos, and explains why Izzy has no tattoos of her own—she does not want ink, because she does not want to appear as vain.

I have been guilty of following this false-consensus effect as well. Recently I commented on someone applying make-up before going to meet their boyfriend. I believed that she was applying the make-up for the benefit of her boyfriend, but it did not occur to me that she could just as easily have been applying the make-up for her own benefit, which in fact she was. In this example, I was not only guilty of the false-consensus effect, but I was also guilty of the stereotypical patriarchal thought that make-up, nice clothes and jewellery were for the sole benefit of a man's eyes.

If make-up is not an issue of vanity then other adornments which we add to our bodies surely can't be considered as vain either. Our hairstyles, our clothes, our ear and nose piercings, and of course, our tattoos.

On the issue of vanity and tattoos, I believe that the importance lies not in how you look, but how you see. ▣

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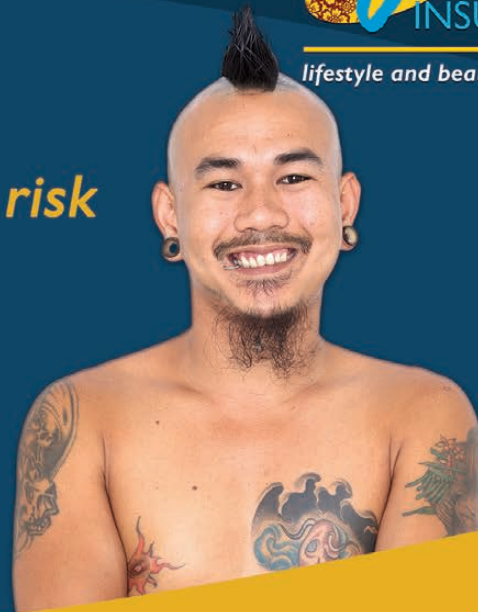


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# Dariness Falls

*Whilst at the Empire State Tattoo Expo in New York, we came across some fine, fine artwork from the mind and hands of Matt Mworka. Here, we look closely at what makes him tick and work the way he does...*

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#### **Rusted Iron & Wood Rot**

I was originally born in Long Beach, California, but raised in Saratoga Springs, a rural area of upstate New York. I'm inherently inspired by the abandoned farm land in my area and the local agricultural struggle. No hippie stuff, just rusted out iron and wood rot against big sky. My day care happened to be on a farm and the daily stress of it was palpable. Very memorable for me. A lot of my work is pivoted on those first visceral memories on the farm. It was the first bit of discomfort I can remember.

#### **All Humans Are Artists**

I've always been interested in art and my family was incredibly supportive. That's the whole trick. Humans are all artists, but with proper specific encouragement and a 'fire in the belly', one can make a humble living at it. Making pictures for money that is.

#### **Learning the Trade**

My apprenticeship was brief and intense. I was taught by the monolithic Steve North, at Needlewurks in New York. I'd drawn a few tattoos for friends in the '90s, that Steve had to apply, and I now realise what a dipshit-pain-in-the-ass I was. My drawings were over detailed, too dark, cluttered, corny and just all round really bad! Steve was sick of copying them and was gracious enough to accept my sloppy plea for a chance to learn some of his craft. That dude is a prodigious mastermind. The type of dude that's just automatically gifted at everything he does; automotive, photography, tattoo, survivalism, anything. Everyday was building needles, draw, fix a machine, rip machines apart, draw draw and listen carefully. Observe. Report back tomorrow. It was a crash course. Six months in and I was already working on skin. We had a bunch of bad ass punk

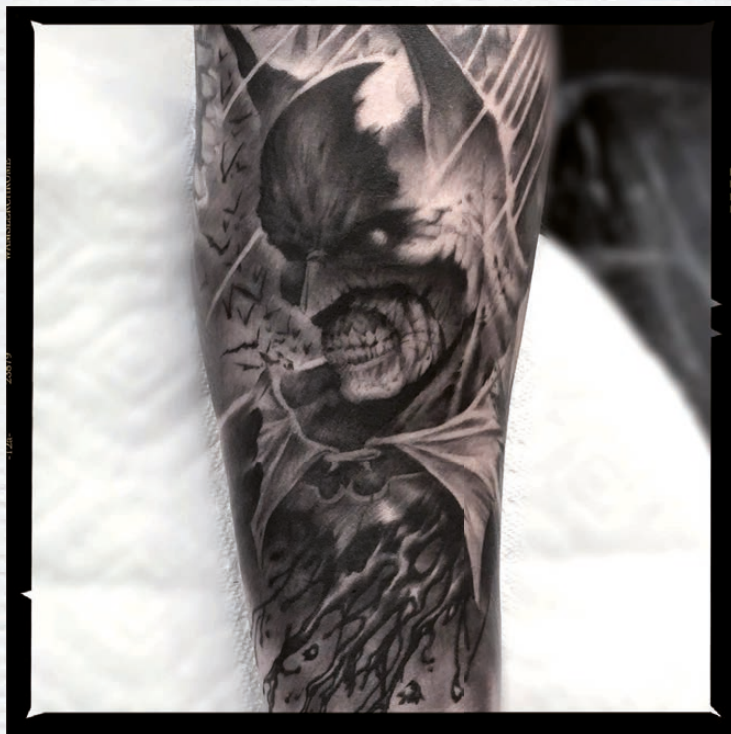


rock demons in the area at the time that I apprenticed, so there was no shortage of rad people looking for bad tattoos. That saved my ass. I thank all the brave irreverent martyrs who let me fuck their skin up for progress.

#### **Working for the Needle**

I think I've been tattooing for ten years now and I've always stayed loyal to Needlewurks. They brought me in and invested in me. It's a family. Paul Brumley, who owns Needlewurks, is an incredible boss/friend/mentor. He's one of the most brilliant piercers in the States and an

Words & images: Matt Mworka



inspired tattoo collector. Everyone who's passed through, or is currently working at Needlewurks will always be family to me.

#### **Nightmare Landscapes**

I've had an affinity for Zdzislaw Beksinski for twenty years. That man somehow tapped into the most visceral, instinctual, waking nightmare-scapes the world has ever seen. I've read so much about his life and his work and his family, and I feel so much relativity. I would never put myself near his level, but I feel like I may understand his work better than I understand anyone else's...especially my own.

#### **Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark**

As a child, again, when most impressionable memories are forged, Stephen Gammell changed the game of fear. He somehow leaked his demon-forged illustrations past any and all art directors for those books... *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*, Volume 1 through 3). He scarred my entire generation, like a god damn boss. (Circa 1981-1991).

#### **Funny Smelling Chemicals**

My great uncle Lou Marchetti and I have no blood relation, but he was definitely the best painter I've ever known. I've studied his work for hundreds of hours and will never comprehend his ability to relate humans





composition, atmosphere...they all play an equal role. But they will also apply very differently depending on art forms. For example; tattoos need high contrast and bold, form-fitted, composition to work best, while paint can rely more on nuance, temperature control and 'window' framing. I have to say, canvas is more well-behaved but less appreciative.

#### **A Mutual Trust**

I just want my client to care as much as I do. That's not to say I want to be micromanaged, but I love for a client to be inspired by their own concept...and I can automatically tell if that's the case or not. Even in email. A tattoo should always be a collaborative effort! No artist should ever tell you that your idea sucks. It's not our job to be the ambassadors of 'cool', but we can guide you in making good aesthetic choices. That being said, I'm definitely more effective when I can make most of the compositional choices myself. Provide me with 'what' and I'll figure out 'how'. I like a client to bring me a concept and say, "Have fun, do it your way". We all do. I feel that I can work at full capacity that way and I will always do my best work when uninhibited. Any tattooer would feel this way. We can better serve our clients and do our best work when there's a mutual trust between artist and collector... and between humans in general. ▣





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# Not Dying NAKED

Beccy Rimmer interviews an artist who is spending her life making sure that she doesn't die naked...

I'm all about sharing the stories of interesting and artistic people. This month, I caught up with a Las Vegas-based artist who is making a name for herself and her passion for tattoos, people and diversity. Ladies and Gents, Lil Guz:

## Introduce yourself please!

People call me Guz! It's a nickname that stemmed from my last name "Guzman". I do many things, but I am an artist first and foremost and everything I do stems from that.

I am originally from North Carolina and am now based in Las Vegas. Me and my husband moved out there about 2 years ago, after graduating from Campbell University. I double majored there and received a BA in Studio Art and Graphic Design.

Art has always been my number one passion and I have always created things on my own, but after finishing school I focused even more on branding me and my personal art into the art brand I now call "GuzDesigns". I also own and created the tattoo themed streetwear brand, "NO TATTOOS DIE NAKED".

## When did you first realise you had a passion for tattoos?

I first took interest in tattoos probably at about the age of 16. That's when I knew I wanted to get a tattoo. I got my first tattoo at 18 and from there my interest in tattoos and tattoo art grew and I wanted to know so much more about them, the art and the culture.

Tattoo art became my greatest passion and drove me to practice my art and create even more! Tattoos play a significant role in my life now, as most of my art is "tattoo art" inspired. I love and appreciate all styles of tattoo



art, but personally I feel traditional American and blackwork styles have been a huge inspiration for my art in the recent years. Over the past few years I have been getting tattooed once or twice a month, so getting tattoos is definitely part of my regular routine!

## Why did you create the NO TATTOOS DIE NAKED (NTDN) brand?

It was during my Senior year of college, in November 2012. NTDN is a streetwear brand created to show the beauty and diversity behind people and their tattoos. I wanted to create a style and a fashion whilst also promoting an open-mindedness to everyone and their unique qualities. Not to mention the name is just fun! "NO TATTOOS? DIE NAKED!"

## Your own personal design brand, and the NTDN brand, you must be super busy. How do you prioritise and what do you enjoy working on most?

I like to think I have gotten pretty good at multi-tasking! But I am a pretty antsy person so I like to stay busy and feel productive. I enjoy creating. Anytime I am painting or drawing is my favourite time.

I enjoy being able to do many different things. I like diversity in my work. So getting to use my graphic design skills to create designs, banners, business cards etc., is also fun!

I also love the interaction with the people who support my brands. There's a sense of community with people who share similar interests and believe and understand in the messages I am sharing.

## Time to tell us about your own ink!

So many things to say! I have some with very in depth



## *There's a sense of community with people who share similar interests*

meaning and also some that just spoke to me artistically. My tattoos are based on my faith, my family, my life experiences, my interests and my passion for art.

Over 10 different artists have tattooed me. But there are about 3-4 artists who have done the majority of my work.

When in North Carolina, Neal Scoggins at Oak City Tattoo, did most of my work, such as my left arm sleeve and right thigh sleeve, he was also who did my first tattoo. He was someone who I appreciate greatly, not just for the great work he has done on me, but for leading me in the right direction to getting great tattoos and learning about tattoos and the tattoo culture.

The summer after my second year of college, I went up to Massachusetts and did a tattoo Internship with Holly Azzara. Not an apprenticeship! No machines involved, just studying the art. She was another person who I learned a lot from about tattoo art and who I appreciate for pushing me artistically. She is another artist who has done several of my tattoos, such as my shin and knee.

After college, now currently living in Las Vegas, Nico Roussin and James Ferreira at Bad Apple Tattoo have done the majority of my recent work. James did my amazing traditional American back piece! Nico has been tattooing me most recently and has done a ton of amazing work on me in the blackwork style, including my whole chest piece, neck and head and more.

### **You have a strong Christian faith—do you feel there is a connection between faith and tattoo art?**

My faith is very important to me and it does influence my art and tattoos. You will see a lot of faith-based artwork in my GuzDesigns work. For example, my bible sketches, which I originally started doing because illustrating a verse was a positive way for me to reflect on my bible studies or a specific verse. People have really seemed to appreciate me sharing these drawings with them, and I am humbled when one of my drawings seems to uplift someone or speak to them on a spiritual level.

I have a lot of tattoos that are based on my faith and certain scriptures that have spoken to me throughout my life. Not only do I feel that these pieces help encourage and remind me of my faith, but they have also helped me share my faith with others.

The art on my body helps me open up about what it means to me and I enjoy sharing that with others. Art has always been something that helps me better express myself and communicate my feelings and beliefs with others. I believe art is one of my spiritual gifts that God gave me, and I only hope I can use it to inspire and create some happiness for others.

Just to name a few of the tattoos on me that are inspired by my faith: the Jesus portrait on my hand; the birds on my neck that represent verses Isaiah 40:31 & Luke 12:24-25; mustard seed on my thumb for Mt. 17:20; and the peace sign on my foot for Jn. 14:27; and giant praying hands back piece symbolising importance of prayer but that I also think often of the scripture Phil 4:6-7 when looking at it.





*Art helps me better express myself and communicate my feelings and beliefs*

**Do you have a favourite?**

I really couldn't pick one favourite because I am obsessed with them all for so many reasons!

**Have you designed any of them yourself?**

I have gotten a few of my small designs tattooed on me, but I usually like to take an idea and bring it to the artist to create their own version. As an artist I am constantly critiquing my own art and I like having different kinds of art on my body from other artists whose art I appreciate.

**What are your future plans for new ink?**

Mainly me continuing to work on my "body suit". The next areas I will be working on is finishing my legs and feet and then finishing my stomach. My armpits still need filling too!

**Do you follow a lot of tattoo artists?**

I follow many tattoo artists on social media and I feature a lot of these great artists on the NTDN social media pages because I love sharing quality work with others who are interested in tattoos.

My hope in doing that is to connect people who have a passion for tattoos with quality artists they may not have heard of before in every style of tattoo, so they can add quality work to their collections!

**What does the future hold for Lil Guz?**

Well, as for my personal art brand, the cooler seasons are coming up here, so I will be creating a lot of my ever-popular hand-painted "GuzMoccasins" (custom hand-painted moccasins). I just want to keep drawing and painting everyday to continue growing and expanding my art skills.

I also plan on creating some more YouTube videos about my art and my tattoos, so stay tuned for those! I am just working to better myself and my brands everyday, and there will only be better and better things I hope to share with you in the future. ☐

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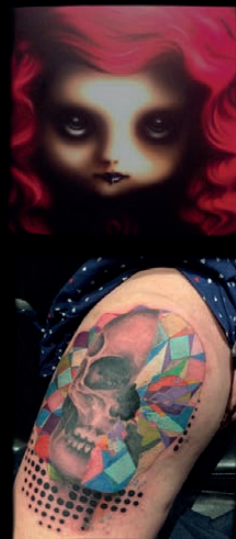
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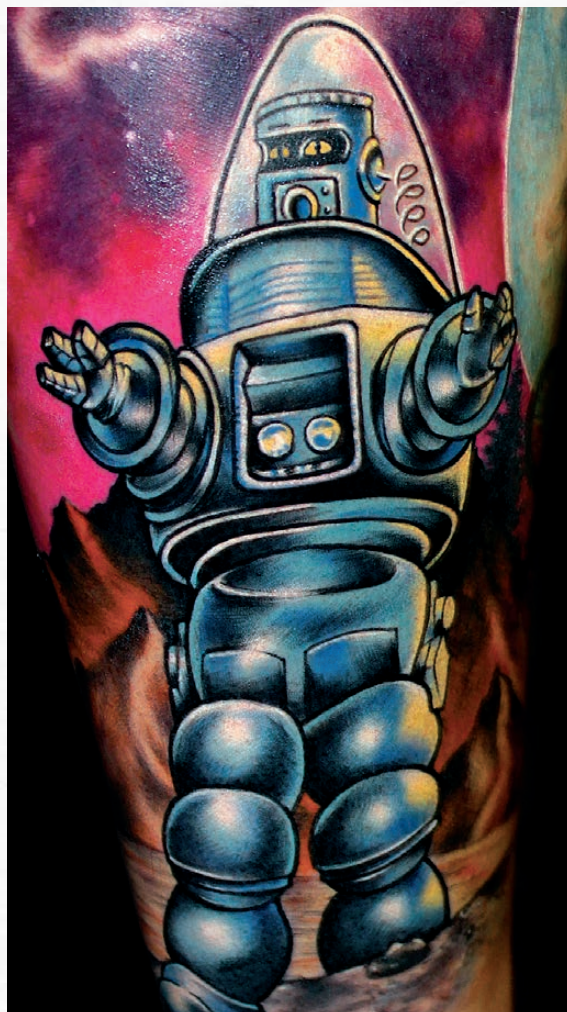
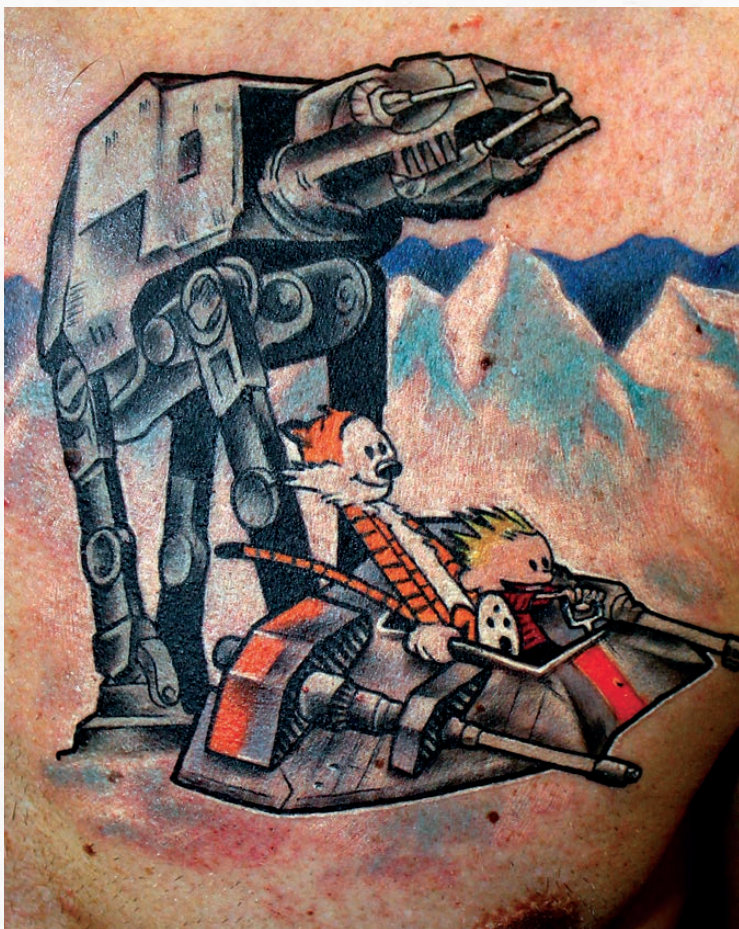


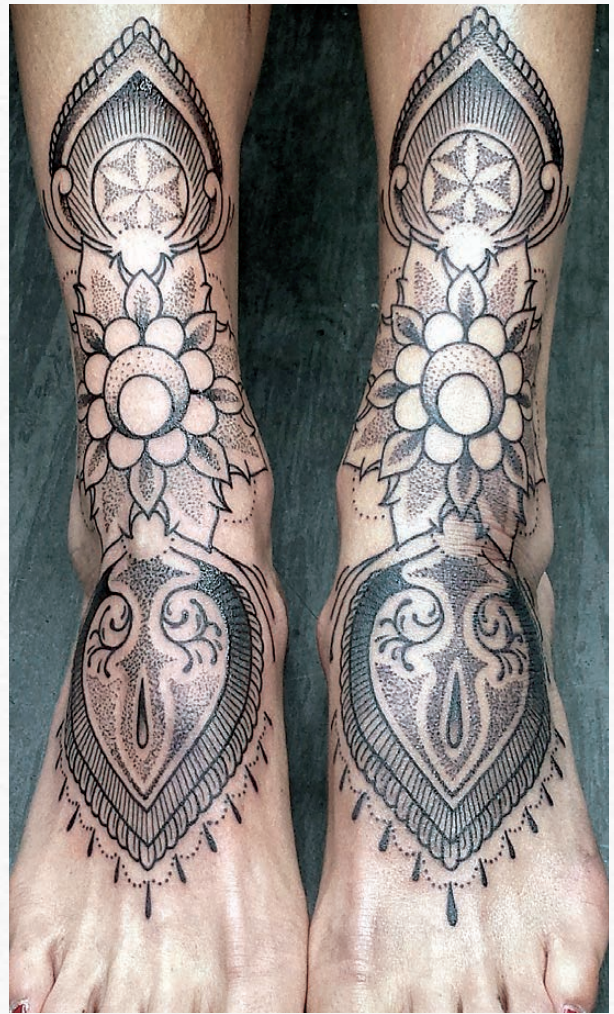
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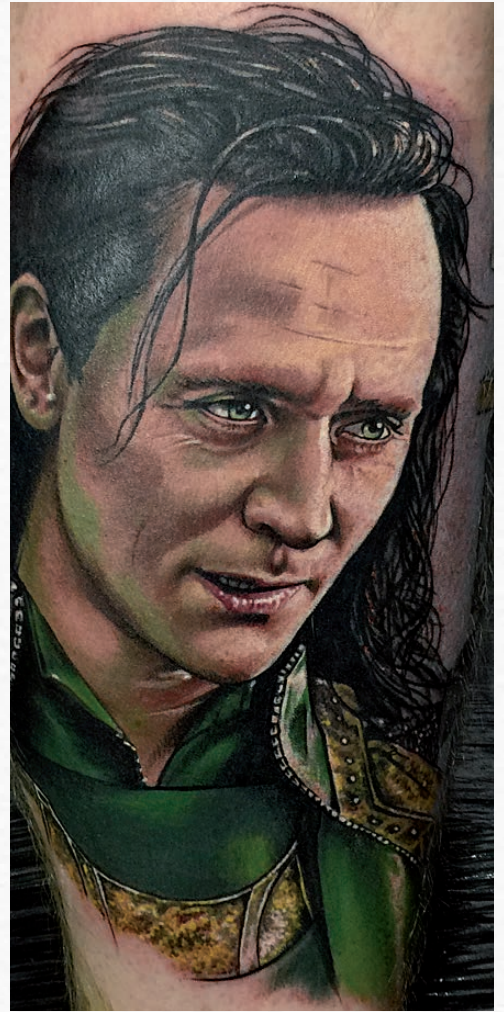
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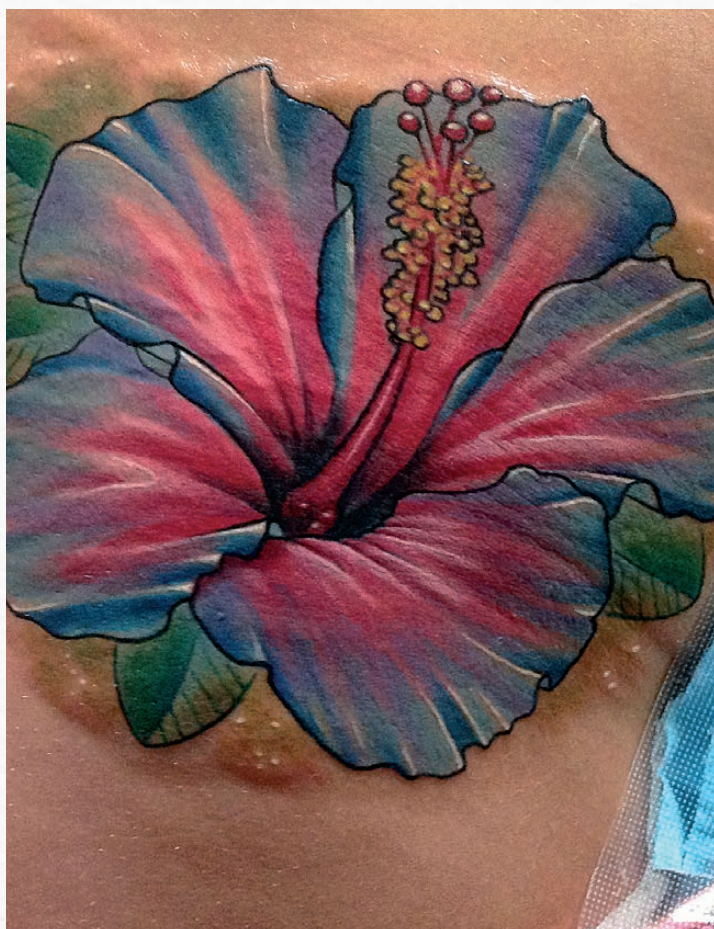
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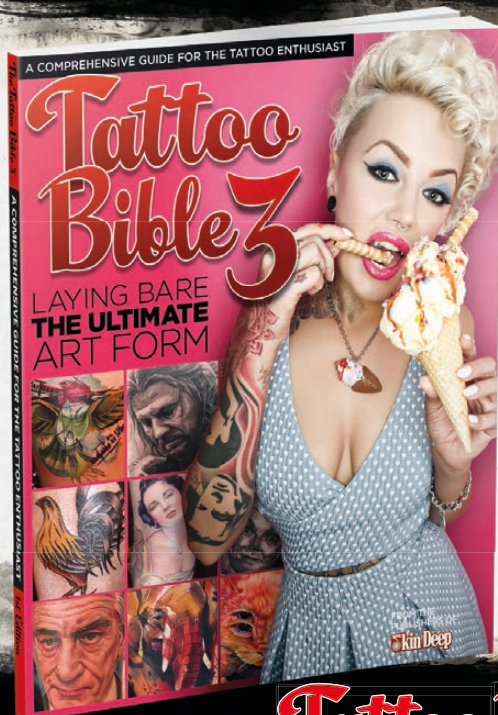
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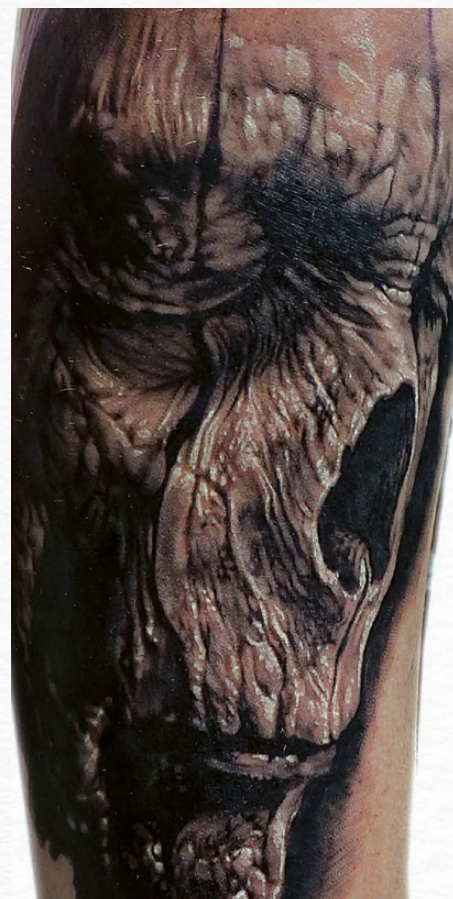
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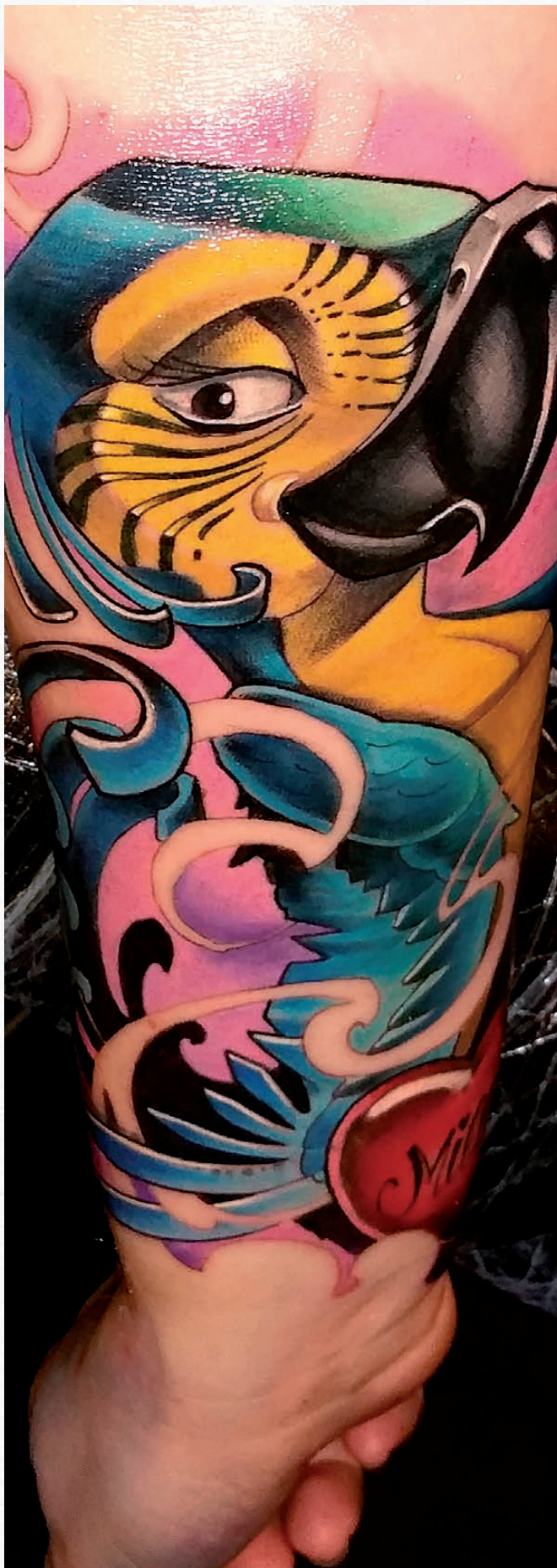
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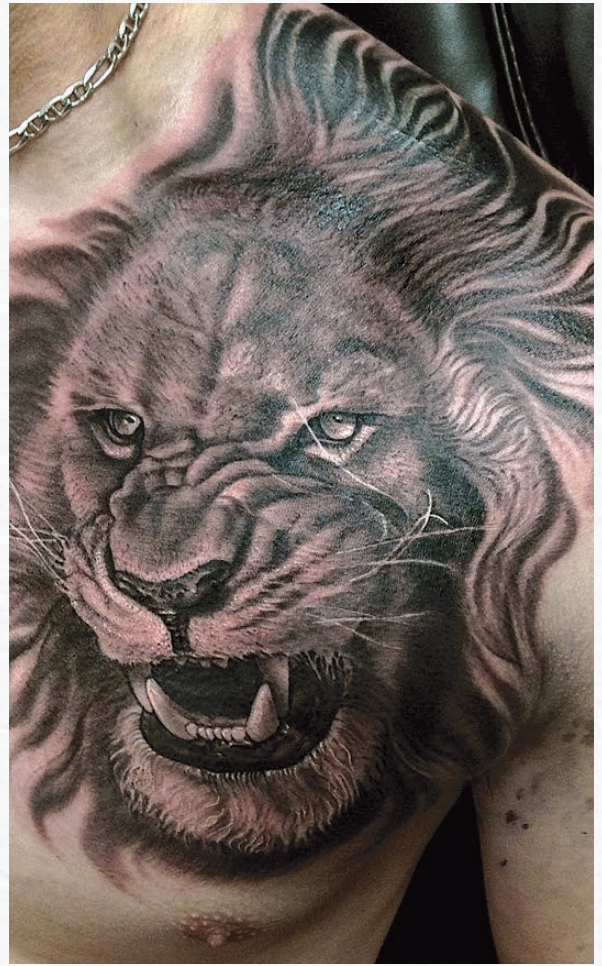
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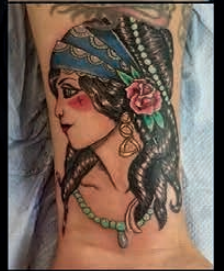
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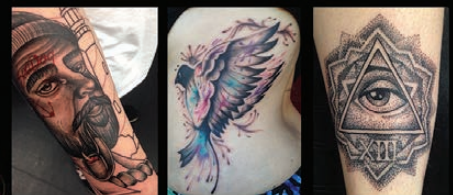
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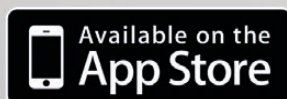


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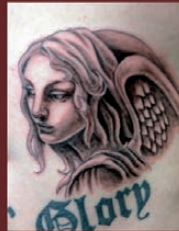
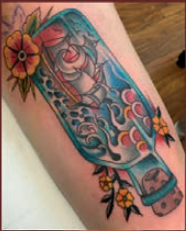
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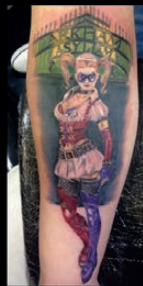
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*'All Involved', the latest novel written by Ryan Gattis describes six days of chaos as riots started in Los Angeles in 1992, after police officers had been acquitted of assault in the beating of Rodney King. Ambitious and electrifying, the novel has been a redemption for its author, who found in the streets of Los Angeles, in street art and tattooing, the inspiration to transcend himself..*

ryangattis.com · uglarworks.com

**I would have thought that writing a novel is painful enough so that you don't need to get tattooed at the same time...**

In retrospect, it was pretty stupid, My planning on a regular day would go like this: I would write the end of the book, then I would teach at University and then go to see Chris to work on my back. I was doing three things at once and I had these phenomenally long days. We did it so quickly. It took almost two months of 2 or 3 sessions per week, for over a 100 hours to finish my back piece. I think it helped focus though. There is something kind of special about that focus, once you know what it's like to be on the table for 6-7 hours, to just say, "You know what? The pain is coming and I'm just going to relax and do it, as much as I can, because it's not gonna stop."

**Would you find similarities between tattooing and writing?** There is definitely a similarity in terms of length, in terms of pain, of course more intellectual, emotional, almost psychological in writing a book, and far more physical and visceral in getting tattooed. You have to stay focused, and



you have to get to the end, you can't go half way. That's always the first bit of advice I give to my students: "Make sure you finish what you're working on." Because then you'll be able to move on.

**Did you, after finishing your back?** I think the purpose in writing a novel is to show change over time. You want to see the person change, through ups and downs, come through it. It doesn't mean it needs to be a happy ending but we need to see progression. In the case of tattoo, you literally see the progress: the ink taking on the skin and you see the pattern emerging, there is something really satisfying about that. I think tattoo has given me more self-confidence,

has helped me to view myself and my body in a better light, I had scars all along my spine. Now I look at my back and, the things that hurt me are not there anymore. I have literally transformed. This back piece allowed me to let go some difficult things from my past and it makes me lighter.

**What did you learn from this experience?**



**NOW I LOOK AT MY  
BACK AND, THE THINGS  
THAT HURT ME ARE  
NOT THERE ANYMORE.  
I HAVE LITERALLY  
TRANSFORMED**

The tattoo can transcend. If it's done with the right spirit, and if it's done with someone who has enough skill level, it can change your life—it can change everything. I firmly believe that you can't be the same person at the start of the tattoo as you'll be at the end of it. I still believe there is something about the process of pain and recovery that helps us grow, that helps us see the world in a certain way. I wouldn't trade it for anything. I view it as the most honest art form. You look at it and you can see someone paid for it through pain, patience, taking care of it and getting better... that's the power of it, you see it and it sends a message.

**What does your backpiece say about you do you think?**

The character is named Clever, he's a scholar. He's part of *108 Heroes of Los Angeles* Project by Chris 'Horishiki' Brand,. Occasionally the guys of Uglar (an LA street art crew Ryan



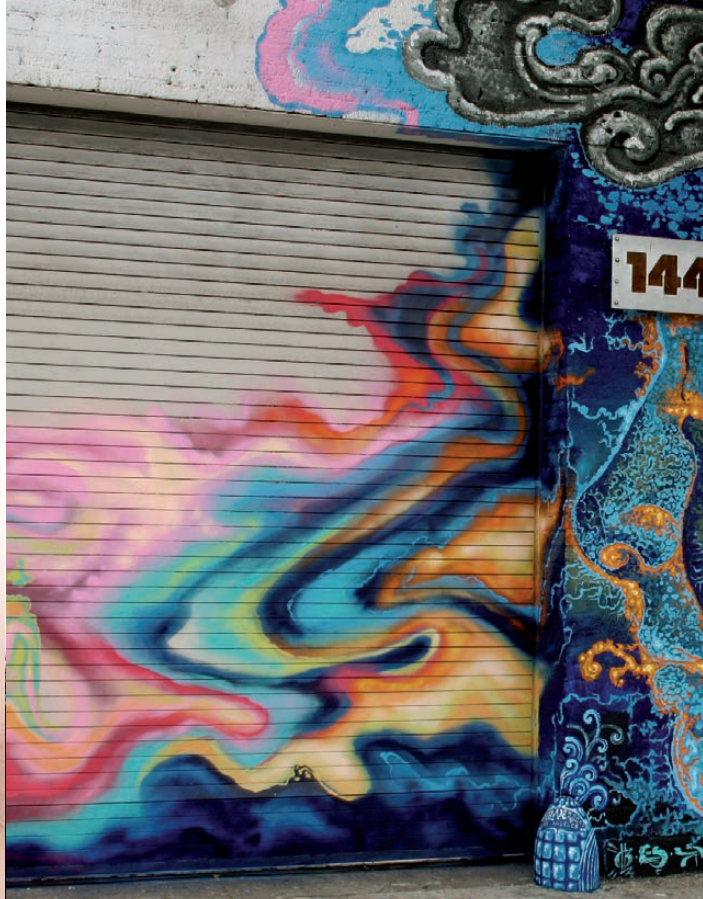
Gattis belongs to) joke that I'm the professor of the crew because I've been a University professor. It just felt right that the scholar is what I am, so that makes more sense for me to have that on my back. It's part of me and my value system. Education is important, reading too...

**Can you tell us more about the 108 Heroes of Los Angeles Project your backpiece belongs to?**

It's an adaptation from a Chinese novel which was published in the 14th century called 'The Water Margin'. Later it was adapted in Japan where it is known as the Suikoden (it has been beautifully illustrated by different artists of the ukiyo-e during the 19th century

**THE TATTOO CAN TRANSCEND. IF IT'S DONE WITH THE RIGHT SPIRIT, AND IF IT'S DONE WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS ENOUGH SKILL LEVEL, IT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE**





**IN ANOTHER WAY, THE TATTOOED HEROIC FIGURE WATCHES MY BACK. HE'S WATCHING THE WORLD FOR ME**

and especially by the great Utagawa Kuniyoshi). Chris is taking these bandit stories to Los Angeles in the late '70s and early 80's, he's using chicano culture and finding this kind of nexus point where it meets a Japanese style of tattooing. According to Chris's narrative and vision, the character Clever is at home, it's late and he's still awake, re-reading his favourite book, 'Ask The Dust' by John Fante, which is for me the most important novel about LA. There is basically a bandit and a police inspector, fighting on the street, and eventually—they will all become allies down the road—but at that time this is kind of how they all meet. He is very calm, waiting to see what happens. In another way, the tattooed heroic figure watches my back. He's watching the world for me. It harkens back to that original idea of the Japanese tattoo as armour, like the firefighters used to get





armour to protect themselves from fires.

**How did you choose Chris?**

Very easily! In 2012, Chris was doing his series of backpieces and he just said: *'I'm gonna be in this museum show (Perseverance : Japanese tattoo tradition in a modern world, Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, from March 8- September 14, 2014) I'd love to have a few more done'*. I remember I told him: *'Well, my back's open'*. From there, we just started. It just flooded in a natural extension of what we were already doing at Uglar. We did it in six weeks, mainly because in order to have enough time to heal before the picture. Showing a new piece for the exhibition was very important for him. The arms

**WHEN YOU HAVE A  
SWORD, YOU CAN'T  
SHARPEN IT WITH  
WATER, YOU HAVE  
TO SHARPEN IT WITH  
SOMETHING HARD  
IN ORDER TO GIVE IT  
AN EDGE**





**I'VE SEEN THE WORLD, BUT BEING IN LOS ANGELES IT IS THE WORLD AND IT HAS EVERYTHING FROM THE MOST RIDICULOUS EXCESS TO THE ABSOLUTE LOWEST, MOST DIFFICULT CONDITIONS**

are brand new, they extend the story—it's like a neighbouring dog that barks at anything, reacting to the fight, and the sparrows are scarred by the scaffold and they are flying off. This is a group, as a group they are flying, there's freedom to it, there's support, there's a structure, there's a family so to speak. In a way that is what Uglar is to me and what Uglar has allowed me to do.

**Has being a member of Uglar, helped you write the book?**

I've never been so supported, so challenged, these guys are so sharp! It's vigorous, it's challenging, it keeps me sharp. When you have a sword, you can't sharpen it with water, you have to sharpen it with something hard in order to give it an edge. I think that in a way, that's what Uglar has done for me. I don't think it's possible to reach a potential unless you have people that support you no matter what

**When did you connect to them?**

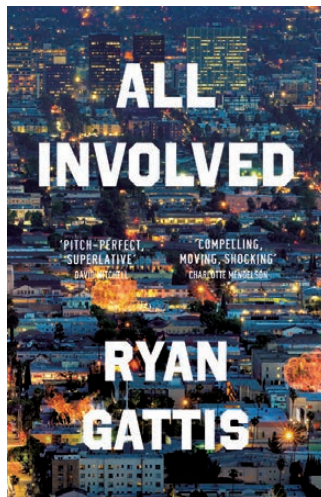
It was right around late 2008 that Evan (Skrederstu), Steve (Martinez) and Chris, asked me if I wanted to join Uglar (along with other members Espi and Jose A. Lopez). At

that time I thought my writing career was over. I spent almost eight years writing my next book and I got completely lost in the research. Because I was new to LA, they said: 'You need to be an intern. You need to do an internship on the streets'. They basically took me to sites where we did murals. Some of these places have been called the worst areas of Los Angeles, some of the poorest places. I had to do all the tough work, to carry the paint, had to document the progress of a mural, I had to clean up every night when we were done, I also had to do something called 'running interference', which is, anytime we go to a neighbourhood, people would come up, wanting to know who you are, why you're painting... Initially, that's really why they wanted me in the crew, making smalltalk to people so they can do the work, but in speaking with all kinds of different people from all different walks of life, I really learnt a lot about the city and I had this desire to tell stories about LA. That's how 'All Involved' came out.

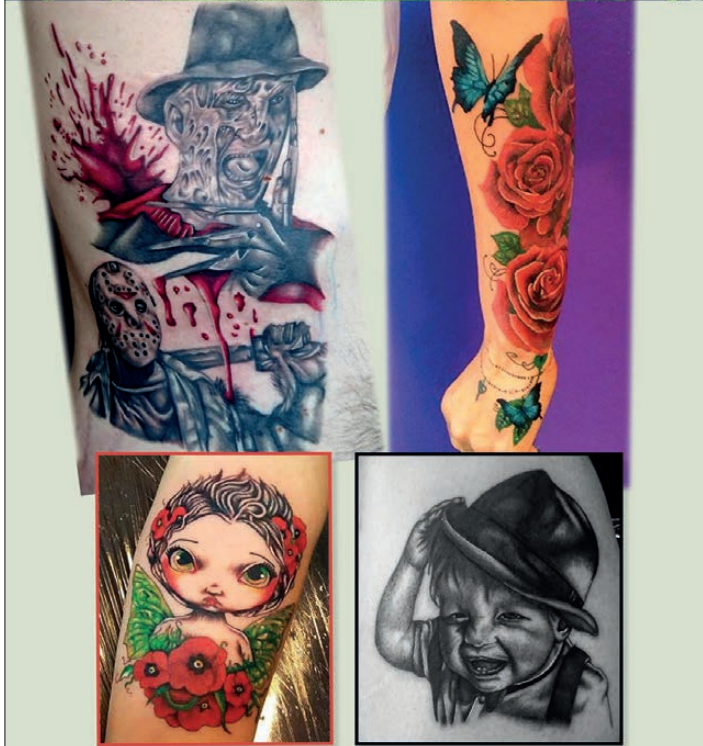
**Where does this fascination for Los Angeles come from?**

For me, LA is the greatest city on earth. There are so many cultures, so much diversity, so many opportunities and blending of culture in the most incredible human and beautiful way, and it just speaks to me. I've lived in England,

in Australia, I've done home-stays in Japan, I've seen the world, but being in Los Angeles it is the world and it has everything from the most ridiculous excess like say Beverly Hills and Hollywood to the absolute lowest, the most difficult conditions where you have people living in the LA river, in tunnels or maybe living in South Central and feeling that they are not even safe in their own neighbourhood. It's an incredible contrast. □



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# Scratcher's Paradise

*It's always welcoming for a Coventry girl when you walk in a shop and they're playing The Specials - even if they think you're from London. On a trip over to Berlin I went to see Sven von Kratz in his current guest spot in Friedrichshain. Over a beer we talk life, tattoos and techno...*

**S**ven had a passion for photography at school, this passion grew and he got into shooting fetish photography with his best friend. Photography then led him to move to Berlin a decade ago to pursue his career, but he became disillusioned with the whole scene. After falling out of love with photography, he got into tattooing after bumming around in tattoo shops, that's where he met Marco and the tattoo journey began, or as Sven would succinctly put it: "I am a trained carpenter, I also worked as a kindergarten teacher and at a call centre, then slid into photography and somehow ended up in tattooing."

Fellow tattooist Marco is quite a memorable character who creates amazing sculptures in addition to beautiful tattoos. Marco and Sven set up Scratchers Paradise together and it was open for about six years but while Marco is taking a break from tattooing at the moment, but Sven hopes he will come out of retirement to finish his back piece.

"I met Marco and we be-



*In the beginning of tattooing I had no idea of the work flow and of my work flow, now I know*



came friends. He has been a tattooer for 15 years, from East Germany. We hung out and at some point I wanted to try tattooing, just out of curiosity. Then I ended up helping him to set up the shop (Scratchers Paradise) in Berlin and in the beginning, I had no idea of the work flow and of my work flow. Now I know!"

Even though Sven found it testing to learn the process and techniques of tattooing, he travelled a lot and attended guest spots, and although these were challenging too, they helped him develop and have confidence in his craft,

Sven developed his own style over time, practicing and learning tips and tricks from the many great artists who guest spotted at his shop,

"I learned a lot from people guest spotting in our shop, I got a small piece from everybody. I just put together the things I liked and thought that they work well."

He feels the process of trial and error and finding your own approach to working is very important in his development, bending the rules and learning from errors, al-



*I don't know how to name my style. I think maybe dirty and chaotic fits*



After a busy few years travelling to shows and guest spots, Sven now plans to spend more time closer to home, with the next big plan to again have his own studio space to again be able to spend time working with international acquaintances, "I plan on focusing on Berlin and Europe right now. I spent the last one and a half years traveling between Europe and Australia, so now its time for some settling. My next goal is a little private spot for me to work. I miss inviting my friends over to come and work with me in Berlin.

though I think he plays down his own artistic talent a little:

"I think you should make mistakes, I see a lot of talented artists who can really draw but I don't think that tattooing is that hard, it is more like a craft."

Sven's tattoos have their own graphic charm - a mixture of strong outlines and grey shading with bright splashes of colour, tattoos that have an individual narrative. The work has a visceral quality that seems vibrant and reactionary, more akin to street art than the deliberate calculated lines of a tattoo machine.

Like some other artists Sven has trouble defining his style but I quite like the way he describes it,

"I don't know how to name my style. I think maybe dirty and chaot-

ic fits. For me the main problem is always getting to drawing because I need to have my shit, I have my stuff here my drawing board, my printer, my Internet and I have all the stuff that I need, as soon as I go somewhere I am like 'OK I need this and I need this' and you go to a shop and nobody draws in the shop! There is no drawing corner and I'm like 'fuck', and I was really nervous but that was the beginning of tattooing."

The Internet is a big source of inspiration for Sven, he sees it as a big library of information where he can source ideas.

"I need a lot of references when I draw. The world is so full of information, information that gives me ideas."

He also keenly follows the work of other artists but there is also a human element behind the







*I would not do what I do without social media that's for sure*



artists he respects, and he also builds up his own tattoo collection with the work of his friends in the industry,

"I wouldn't say I admire other artists, but I do like and respect a lot of artists for different reasons. Some namedropping - Marcin Suroviec, Sneaky Mitch, Piet du Congo, Xoil, Cellio from Motorink, Slawomir Nitschke, Ozone from Nico Tattoo, Gakkin, Gotch, Kenji, Miez Wars, The list

could go on, most of them are people I actually met and they impressed me also as human beings."

After the shop closed last year Sven spent some time in Australia before returning to Berlin and is now working in the shop of long term friend and fellow tattooist Sascha. Her shop is located in cool East Berlin - one of my favourite places, just a short tram ride outside the city's more commercial centre of Mitte,

"Our shop Scratchers Paradise closed at the beginning of last year due to problems with the landlord. I have to admit that Scratchers Paradise was a little bit eccentric and crazy though. Now I'm filling a guest spot in

my friend Sascha's studio called Drawink Nerds. It's still right in the heart of East Berlin. The shop itself is quite a change. Sascha has set up a really nice and cozy spot, very private, no walk-ins."

Sven's clients usually contact him by email, although he is not always so hot on the admin side of things as tattooing is his passion,

"They send me emails and I have a brief chat. I think I find out quickly if it is going to work or not. It's pretty chaotic. I don't mean to offend anyone but I mainly want to focus on tattooing and not office work. Also I just book for 3-4 months ahead and then close my book."

I ask Sven how the Internet and social media affects his work,

"I would not do what I do without social media that's for sure. Back in the day you had a shop and the shop would attract clients and they would see what was going on. You







Outside of tattooing Sven does not really have time for any other hobbies, "I don't really have any hobbies. I don't do much besides tattooing. I dig good food, beer...normal stuff". He likes a lot of different kinds of music and of course living in Berlin he has a passion for techno, "I dig experimental music, noise, doom/stoner, grind, breakcore. I love rough minimal techno when I go out." This was quite useful as he could recommend some cool places for me to check out during my stay.



also had the hard copy magazines, now you don't really need that anymore. I started with MySpace back then for the local area, Facebook and the next big thing Instagram. It is massively important and there are so many people who are so into tattooing, maybe even more that tattooists sometimes.

"They take all the stuff and post it on other places. I get so many emails with old pictures of my work, I am like 'where did they find that?' If you put it on the Internet it will nev-

er be gone! It is very different from the old school way with reference books and a client base built up over time."

"I would be nothing without the Internet! I love the Internet! Without the Internet I would have no clients and no interaction with other tattooists probably. I would have no references either because I don't have any books. I have stuff on the Internet and know where to find my reference pictures and stuff - I would be nothing without that." ▣



# TATTOOS IN PARADISE

*Roland Pacheco, owner of Xisle Custom Tattoo, which you'll find on the Big Island of Hawaii, is what you'd call an expert in traditional and modern Polynesian tattoo, having penned two books on the matter. He's also an Ink Master Season 4 alum and all-around great artist who worked with clients like Honda and Ford while living in California before ditching it all to pursue his true passion: Tattooing*

RolandPacheco.com XisleTattoo.com  
Xisle Custom Tattoo  
55-3409 Akoni Pule HwyHawi, Hawaii



**F**rom the moment Roland Pacheco first saw the “obligatory stick and poke that was popular back in the day in Hawaii” on his father and realised what it was at the age of six, tattoos have been a constant in his life.

Intrigued by the permanency of tattooing, Pacheco “accumulated an arm full of bangers” before walking “into an actual shop with a picture from my favourite fantasy artist, Frank Frazetta. I asked the scruffy dude behind the counter if he could replicate the picture on my arm. He laughed at me and said such things were impossible, tattoos were not like fine art.”

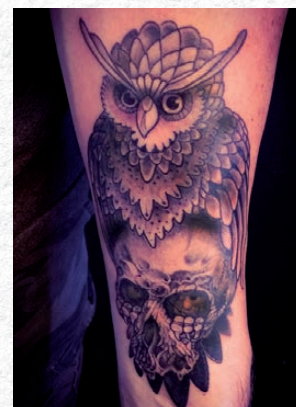
Setting his sights on automobile design, Pacheco admits being scared away from an aeronautical engineering degree by all of the math involved, so after receiving an electric guitar from his mom as an 18th birthday present, he decided to chase the rock star dream in California instead. Fast forward nine years and he took up a job as a production artist at a health supplement company. Then everything changed.

Despite the fact that he was

## *THE SKY SEEMED TO OPEN UP AND THE HAND OF THE TATTOO GODS REACHED DOWN AND SLAPPED ME UPSIDE THE HEAD*

constantly drawing and creating art, Pacheco never considered tattooing to be attainable because “it was just so exotic and mysterious. When the notion finally became clear to me, it was around 2004–2005 and as strange as it may sound, I did not decide or set out to become a tattoo artist. It was during a conversation I was having with a friend about tattoos that I had an epiphany. He was going on about how I should learn to tattoo because he would love to get work from me when the sky seemed to open up and the hand of the tattoo gods reached down and slapped me upside the head.”

“It was like learning that my purpose in life had been



### **Pacheco On... Tattoo Appeal**

I know that some people are frightened by the thought of permanently marking their bodies, but for me that was the attraction. The change, and the choice to make that change, is everlasting. To me that is an awesome power to contain in both the mind and on the skin.



WHAT I SOON REALISED WAS THAT NO ONE KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT THE POLYNESIAN SYMBOLS MEANT. NOT ENTIRELY, ANYWAY



with me the entire time, but I just had to have the proper perspective in order to see it clearly,” he continues. “I remember thinking to myself, ‘Why the hell am I not a tattoo artist?’ It’s part of my culture, had been an enduring fixture throughout my life and every artistic endeavour I had undertaken up to that point was leading me down that path. I just needed to wake up and accept that reality.”

“Learning to tattoo was, and still is, an evolutionary process for me. I practiced on tons of fruit: Papayas, bananas, oranges. I also went through a bunch of practice skin. I still use practice skin to this day to try out different ideas and techniques. I never want to stop learning. In fact, when and if that ever happens, I’ll stop tattooing and start something new. Maybe Moto GP racing!” he laughs.

**Polynesian Appeal**

Specialising in Polynesian tattoo is not something Pacheco set out to do consciously. “When I first opened my shop and began tak-

ing clients, I liked doing Polynesian tattoo the least because it was so boring,” he confesses. “It was two-dimensional and utilised only black ink. I wanted to do big colour pieces with tons of detail. I wanted to do things that I was incapable of doing, quite frankly.”

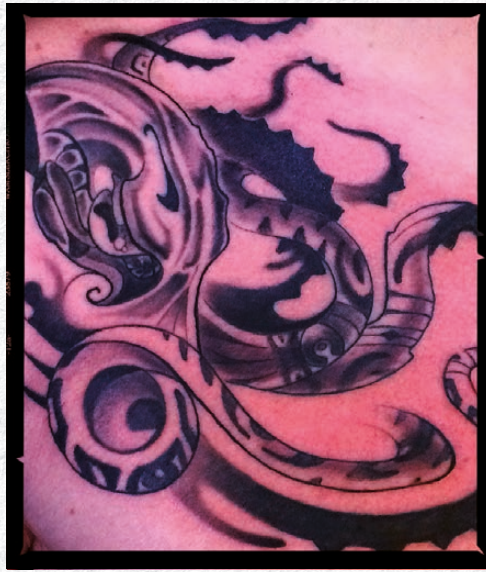
“What I soon realised was that no one knew anything about what the Polynesian symbols meant. Not entirely, anyway. Everyone had a different idea of what something was supposed to mean or what it was called—it was this uncertainty that appealed to me. I love to get to the bottom of things, to figure stuff out, so I took it upon myself to seek out that knowledge.”



**Pacheco On...**

**Inspirational Artists**

Back when I first saw [Guy Aitchison’s] work, I thought it was fake! My friends and I had arguments over it. Boris was also on the scene back then and did equally mind-blowing work. I also think that Don Ed Hardy doesn’t get enough credit for trying to push the boundaries of tattoo by combining black work and realism, not using an outline and so forth.



*I ASKED THE SCRUFFY DUDE BEHIND THE COUNTER IF HE COULD REPLICATE THE PICTURE ON MY ARM. HE LAUGHED AT ME AND SAID SUCH THINGS WERE IMPOSSIBLE, TATTOOS WERE NOT LIKE FINE ART*

“I had to learn more about my culture as a whole in order to understand the significance of tattoos. I had to admit to myself that there were certain things about my culture, things I had taken for granted up to that point, that I did not fully understand. That is something that most of us have trouble accepting because it is presumed that our culture is ingrained in us. To a greater degree that is true, but you only know as much as you need to know, and believe only what you can accept.”

What is it about Polynesian tattoo that makes it so appealing to the general public, too? “In my heart, I feel that the attraction to Polynesian tattoo transcends our neatly packaged, sterile and safe modern reality,”

says Pacheco. “We are fascinated by the wonder of what we cannot understand because in this modern day, so much is explained for us. When you look at a portrait piece, you know immediately that it is of a person’s likeness; you know immediately if it is good or bad. The mystery is lost because the intent has been processed and presented in a way that the observer’s role has been reduced to a binary reaction. The art draws you in because it exhibits technical prowess, not necessarily because it entrances and causes you to become lost in it. Polynesian tattoo does just that.”

“It is bewildering to behold, it is stark yet complicated, it transforms the body like no other style of tattoo can. One might not know



## THE ATTRACTION TO POLYNESIAN TATTOO TRANSCENDS OUR NEATLY PACKAGED, STERILE AND SAFE MODERN REALITY

what is going on in the piece, but that fact is irrelevant. It reminds us that we exist with one foot in the cave, no matter how modern we pretend to be.”

### Exile Becomes Xisle

Pacheco opened his own shop, Xisle Custom Tattoo, in Hawi, Hawaii in 2005, drawing inspiration for its name from Slayer’s ‘Exile’.

“When I moved back home to Hawaii from California, I pretty much shed my old life and got rid of all the crap I had amassed that I thought would bring me happiness,” he says. “It was more than just coming home for me, it was more like a self-imposed exile back to my roots. I really wanted to leave all of what California had indoctrinated in me behind.”

After listening to the track on repeat, the word ‘exile’ also “started to sound like ‘XL’ and then it hit me: XL equals extra large, the island that I am from is called the Big Island. Putting more thought into it, I was like, ‘Hey, I’m also from generation X!’ So that simple word explained my journey back to my roots, my home island and also my generation. Then I set the bong back down on the table and switched on *The Simpsons*,” he laughs.

In addition to changing continents and his

personal life, Pacheco also had to adapt to a very different approach to tattooing than what is found in North America. “Tattoo culture here in Hawi and in Hawaii in general is a strange beast,” he explains. “There is this pervasive notion that tattoos should be free, or cost next to nothing. A lot of people are not concerned with the artistry as much as just having something on their skin. The scratcher class is alive and well.”

“In fact, tattoo parties where an artist comes to someone’s house, is guaranteed a certain number of clients and is paid a flat fee happen almost on a weekly basis. These parties take place in some random garage and the ‘artists’ are not licensed or familiar with sterilisation. It’s a mess.”

“It’s funny because it is a lot like it was back in ancient Polynesia. Back then, those who could afford it, were tattooed by kahuna or tatau, i.e. tattoo masters, and the work was the best that it could be. Those that could not afford the quality work were tattooed by the kahuna’s apprentices and the work was never as good. The bottom line is that in Polynesia, being tattooed is somewhat obligatory, but paying for it is not.”

### Books & Television

Auditioning for Season 2 of *Ink Master*, Pacheco “decided that if I didn’t get a call back, I would take that as a sign that I should stop procrastinating and write my book on Polynesian tattoo. Well, I never got the call back, so I wrote my book” titled *Ana ‘Ole Polynesian Tattoo: Modern Interpretations of Traditional Polynesian Ta*.

Then came his second book, *Fundamentals of Traditional and Modern Polynesian Tattoo*, which he spent two and a half years researching.

“Much of the information written about ancient Polynesian society was from an outsider’s perspective, simply because Polynesians had no written language and all history was passed on orally. The problem that this presented was that someone from outside of the culture can only explain things they observe through their own lens of understanding. I had to ignore that information in order to figure out the true meaning behind a symbol or image. I found myself referencing things that I had been told as a child by my older relatives, delving into the mindset of how an ancient person might think or act — it was quite exciting.”



### Pacheco On... Reality TV Shockers

I was completely and totally taken aback by just how many people it took to make a television show. I think there were close to 200 people working behind the scenes to make it all happen. But the biggest surprise was how much time we spent just standing there, on our marks, doing nothing. It was hours and hours.

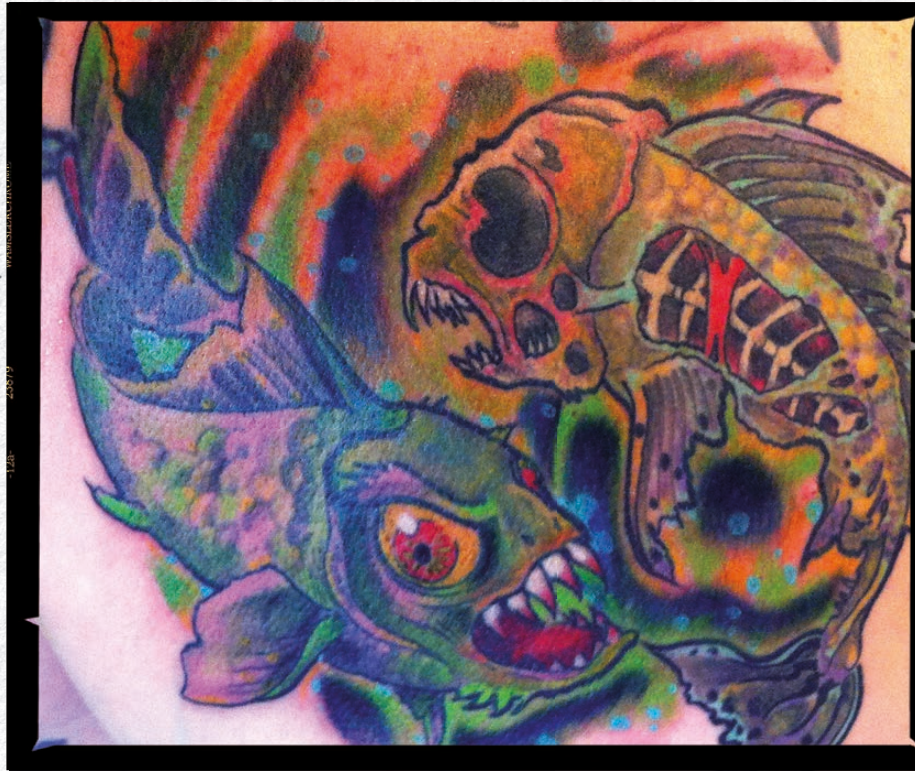


Asked to sum up the greatest lesson he's learned through his extensive hunt for knowledge, Pacheco explains, "Polynesian tattoo was meant to convey individual difference by referencing one's ancestral and cosmological ties. The act of 'cloaking' oneself in such imagery was a way of bringing that past into the present. It was armor, protective in its intent, but it was also a vehicle to transport the deeds and accomplishments of those who came before into the now. This continual connectivity with the past ensured that one always maintained the blessings and spiritual power of their predecessors. The darkness of the ink symbolised the blood of ancestors, as well as the darkness of the Po, which is the place where the gods resided."

Jump to early 2014 and the casting agency responsible for Ink Master Season 4 was looking to get him involved in the show, but it soon became clear that he was signing up for something he wasn't expecting. "Honestly, I hadn't seen any other seasons except for the first, so I didn't know that the show had changed direction and become more dramatic. When the vetting process began, I had no idea what I was getting into."

"The entire process took maybe eight weeks or so and during that time you're talking to various producers who are trying to figure out who you are and what you have to offer. They are also trying to develop your 'character'. During this time, I began to question my involvement," he admits.

"About a week before I was scheduled to fly to New York, I told my wife that I wanted to bow out. She sat me down, like a mother would a child, and told me that she knew me well enough to know that if I did opt out, I would regret it for the rest of my life. Ultimately, I knew that she was right. How I hate



*THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT IN POLYNESIA, BEING TATTOOED IS SOMEWHAT OBLIGATORY, BUT PAYING FOR IT IS NOT*

when that happens!" laughs Pacheco.

In case you yourself need a pep talk, pushing you to follow your gut and just visit Roland Pacheco already, allow him to tempt you with the beauty of Hawaii.

"The Big Island has a lot of history and we also have an active volcano, great beaches with white, black and green sand, tons of waterfalls and the hiking is epic. Just plan on never wanting to go back home again and you'll be fine!" ▣





Jay Watson



BEHIND THE INK

## DOT WORK

*Dotwork is as old as tattooing itself. The ancient practice of hand-tapping ink into the skin has been a staple among many tribal traditions as well as in Japan. Tools used for such have included sharpened sticks, bones and needles, but Joshua 'Jay' Watson and Glenn Cuzen prefer the standard tattoo machine. Behind The Ink with Wayne Simmons continues...*

**S**o many artists are doing so many different things with dotwork,' enthuses Jay. The Shrewsbury based artist is one of a growing number of mavericks peddling a kind of neo-

dotwork on the UK convention circuit, even scooping an award for his troubles at this year's Manchester International Tattoo Show. Jay works mostly in 'dotraiture' – often with a pop culture spin – but he's seen just about every style out there getting the dotwork makeover. 'Colour, Grey wash, Realism, Traditional. You name it I bet someone's tried it,' he reckons.

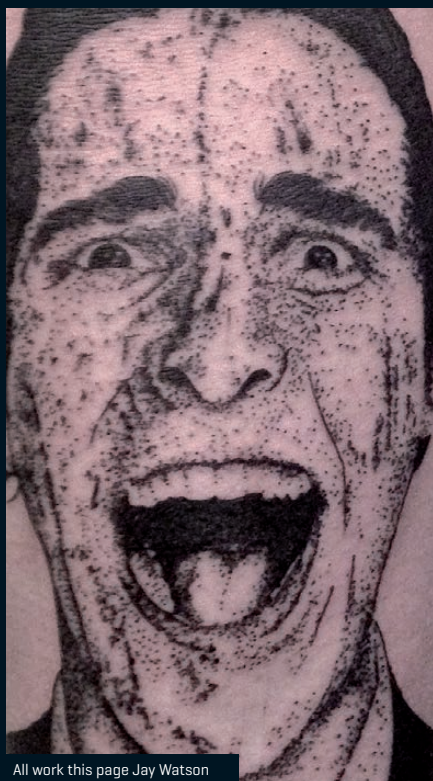
Becoming 'the dotwork guy' was never part of the plan. Jay's choice of apprenticeship was like that of many other artists; driven mostly by who would take him on as op-

posed to which guru he wanted to learn from. 'It didn't really last long,' he laughs, looking back at it with all the good humour that hindsight often lends us. 'Couple of months and then I was thrown in at the deep end with no real idea



of what kind of artist I wanted to be. I found a lot out for myself, just meeting new people and chatting about art.' Jay cites influences such as Jeff Gogue and Carl Grace but most of the work that speaks to him today is found simply from flicking through Instagram. 'Accounts like Blackworkers, BlackTattooArt and Blck\_Arts.' And then there's

Dmitry Zakharov. 'He's someone whose work I admire a lot. The consistency of dots throughout his portraits, which look amazing once healed, and the lines he uses



All work this page Jay Watson

in hair. He captures things really well using just black and grey.'

Glenn Cuzen's another dotwork artist who's caught my eye this year. Like Jay, he's been a player on the convention circuit, clocking up no less than eight awards internationally, the most recent being at the Empire State Tattoo Expo in New York (reviewed in issue 254), and our very own Tattoo Jam in Doncaster. Like Jay, there was never any real plan to become the go-to-guy for dotwork. In fact, the first time Glenn had even seen another dotwork artist tattooing in the flesh, so to speak, was at Tattoo Freeze back in January of this year. 'I'm not big on following other dotwork artists,' he

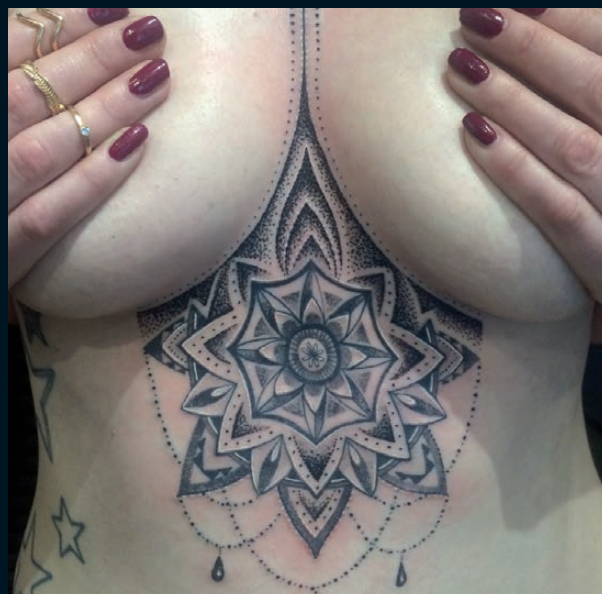
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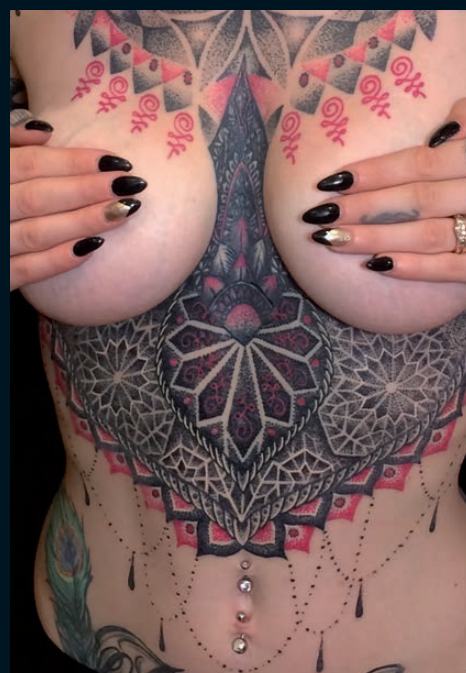
shrugs. 'The work I look to for my own personal enjoyment is hyper-realism and full colour portraits.'

That said, Glenn, who works out of his own studio, Top Gun in Reading, admits to being nudged somewhat by a Buddhist upbringing. 'Having a prayer room in the house and being taught the practice, I found it easy sourcing reference and knew where to look for patterns. But my tattoos are not religious. I look at them from an artist's point of view. I've made a conscious effort to pull away from sacred imagery to more modern optical illusions.'

When it comes to equipment, neither Glenn nor Jay have ventured outside of electrics for



All work this page Glenn Cuzen (pictured here)



their dotwork. Traditional hand-poking doesn't appeal. 'I've never tried it and I doubt I ever would,' Glenn tells me, citing pragmatic reasons: 'I want to get the maximum amount of skin coverage for the client's benefit. Dotwork takes long enough to do without making it a slower process.'

Jay feels similarly, keeping things nice and simple for himself with his rotary machines. 'I used the EGO V1 until making the switch to cartridges. I'm now using the InkJecta V2' and again it's about what works best; 'Rotary machines are fast and efficient.'

But it's not just the execution. Surely the

## I'M NOT BIG ON FOLLOWING OTHER DOTWORK ARTISTS. THE WORK I LOOK TO FOR MY OWN PERSONAL ENJOYMENT IS HYPERREALISM AND FULL COLOUR PORTRAITS

Glenn

preparation for dotwork tattoos can take up a lot of time, too. Glenn tries to limit such, preferring as much freedom as possible during the actual tattooing. 'I use a stencil for the patterns and Mandalas and do my mapping out with a Sharpie. But I like to keep my design process free to constantly evolve and therefore do minimal planning. This is to help me work in tune with the client's body as opposed to rigidly from a print.'

Jay falls back on IT to save himself time. 'Programs such as ArtRage have a symmetry and smoothing setting allowing you to design the perfect mandala in a matter of seconds.' With portraits, though,



Glenn Cuzen



Jay Watson



Jay Watson



Jay Watson



Glenn Cuzen



Glenn Cuzen

he points out, it's difficult to save time as the whole process revolves around adding time. 'I study the faces for long enough before, during and even after a tattoo,' he tells me, commenting on how most clients tap out before the piece is finished. 'As long as I get my stencil lined, I can come back to it whenever the client prefers. It's nice to get it finished in one sitting so that you get a nice fresh picture but if not, no problem. As long as the client's comfortable.'

And while we're on clients, just who's in the market for dotwork these days? Is there a certain type of person for whom the style holds particular appeal?

**I WANT TO GET THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF SKIN COVERAGE FOR THE CLIENT'S BENEFIT. DOTWORK TAKES LONG ENOUGH TO DO WITHOUT MAKING IT A SLOWER PROCESS**

Glenn

'Anyone who decides it's the technique for their tattoo,' Glenn reckons, highlighting the diversity of the style. 'For instance, it can be used in a feminine way, under the bust, or as a large Polynesian chest plate. Dotwork has become mainstream. More people are able to add their own particular techniques and styles, helping to push and evolve the art, taking the whole medium to another level. That can only be a good thing. There will always be a sacred side to dotwork and nothing will ever change that. But with this new evolution, anything is possible and that is so much more exciting and fulfilling.'

Best get in line, then... ▣

Wadia Gary Abz

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## 8th Australian Tattoo and Body Art Expo

*The 8th Australian Tattoo and Body Art Expo was held on the weekend of March 13th – 15th at Moore Park, Sydney, Australia. Tracey Brodin reports back on Australia's large tattoo event.*

**T**his expo is a must attend international event for people of all ages to enjoy, and it attracts artists from all around the world. With such a huge program of events, there is plenty to keep you entertained. Over 16,000 people who came to enjoy the expo this year—this statistic says it all.

The 8th Australian Tattoo and Body Art Expo was held over three amazingly packed days, and from fire breathing ladies to pin up pageants, something was happening on the main stage the whole time. Special VIP guests included Roman Abrego from Artistic Element Tattoo (Yucaipa, California) and the Fuel Girls, who sure brought some heat to the weekend.

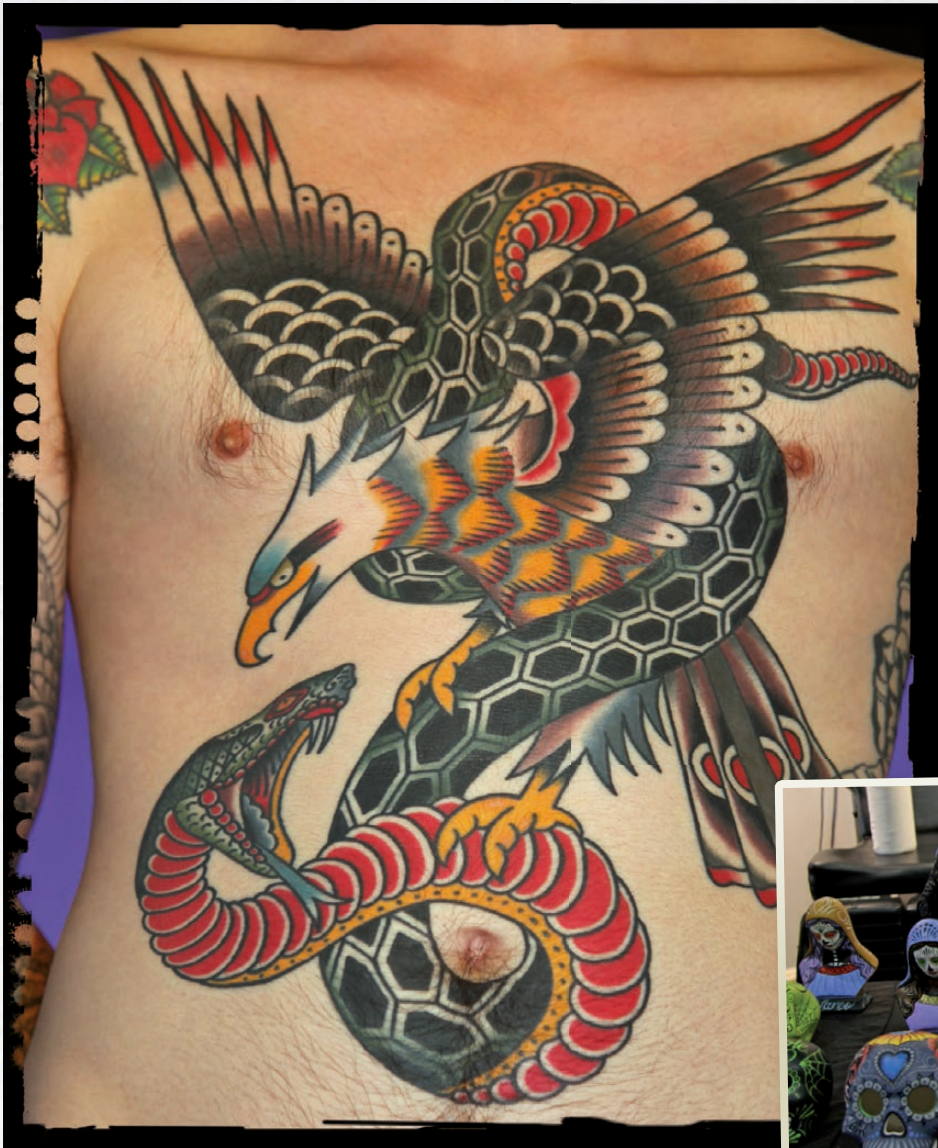
Along with burlesque performances, there were plenty of international and local tattoo artist and retails, and the most important tattoo contests. This year, there was over 200 extremely talented Australian tattoo and body

piercers from all around the country and over 140 International artists.

This included the renowned crew from New Zealand's Cambridge Body Art, and artists from Sweden's Swahili Bob's, Finger's Dead and Nicki Kelis, just to mention a few. They worked side-by-side with some of Australia's best tattoo artists. There were artists from all over the world that came together to share a passion for their trade.

There were more than 20 countries being represented, from Latvia, Sweden, New Zealand, Taiwan, UK, China, Malaysia and USA. Every year the event is growing in size and attracting more international artists and amazing entertainment.

Among the tattooists I found, was Halo from Black Lotus in Baltimore USA. He proved to be very popular all weekend and had all his appointments filled. Halo has appeared on the television show Ink Master and is renowned



## OVER 200 TALENTED AUSTRALIAN TATTOO AND BODY PIERCERS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY AND OVER 140 INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS

for portrait and freehand work. His other artwork includes auto-art, airbrushing, oil-art and digital-art.

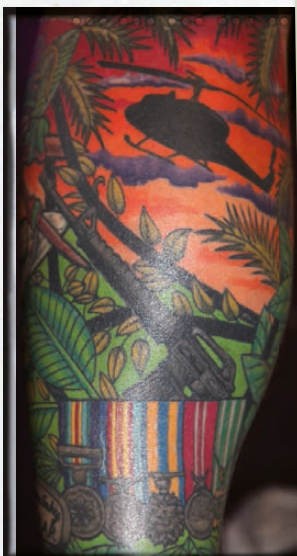
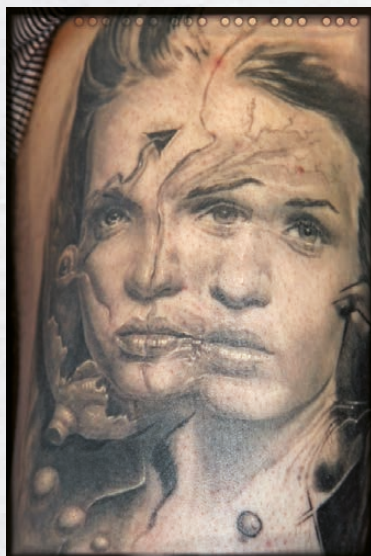
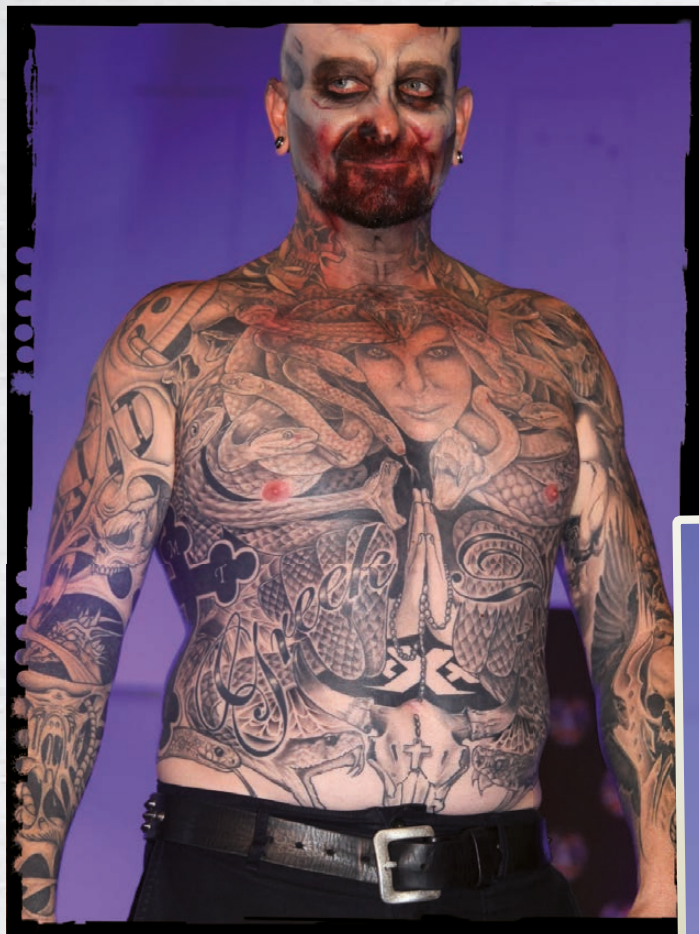
Nicki Kelis from The Illustrations Tattoo Studio, London, was kept busy tattooing over the weekend. Nicki mixes realism, neo-traditional and dot-work to create his amazing tattoos. They have a very dark feeling to them.

Roman Abrego was the VIP guest this year and proved to be very popular. Not only was he busy tattooing but also judging the contests, signing autographs and posing for photos with his fans both young and old. He is a

known for two styles of tattoos: bio-mechanical and colour realism, with 12 years' experience in the tattoo field, he has a real natural talent.

One of Australia's finest tattoo studios is The Illustrated Man. Tony Cohen has been in the tattoo industry for a lifetime and is the chosen artist of Angry Anderson, the frontman for Rose Tattoo, an iconic Australian rock band.

Next I came across Devine Gallery—the crowds were engulfing the stand and I can see why. They call him 'Jamie the Giant' as he is the world's smallest tattooist



**EVERY YEAR THE EVENT IS GROWING IN SIZE AND ATTRACTING MORE INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS AND AMAZING ENTERTAINMENT**

at around 1 meter in height. Don't let his size fool you though—he is a kick boxer and an actor!

Then there was a man by the name of Nick Cowan who was working on a Paul Walker tattoo all day. With crowds returning to see the progress throughout the day, the best way to describe Nick's work is that it's hard to tell the difference between the tattoo and the original photograph.

There were 28 retail stores having everything from tattoo aftercare creams, clothing and tattoo supplies. Some of the retailers included Ink Jecta, Tiger Tattoo Supplies,

Sullen Clothing, Sailor Jerry, Miracle Mist and Brut. Harley Davidson Australia was also displaying their new models along with their merchandise.

Cheyenne professional tattoo equipment from Germany was well stocked and ready to supply the best equipment to complement the professional artists.

A popular stop for the kids big and small alike was IPG International Paintball Group. With 115 paintball centres in 6 countries, they really know what is needed for a fun day out shooting your friends or family.





## **FUEL GIRLS AUSTRALIA WAS DEFINITELY A CROWD FAVOURITE, SHOWCASING A KICK-ASS, FIRE-BREATHING, SEXY SHOW**

Then you had the vendors which were selling adult clothing, jewellery, art, books and all things vintage mainly targeted towards the adult customers.

Urban streetwear had plenty of brand-named clothing for sale, from 187, Dyse One, Hustler, Sullen and Mafioso. They stock clothing you just cannot get in stores. You could spend a full day looking at what they had for sale. They had everything from men's and ladies clothing to wallets, hats and stickers.

One of the stands that stood out and was always full was

Martins Butterfly World who had different kinds of butterflies, beetles and bats that were preserved. The children especially enjoyed seeing a skeleton of a bat.

Fuel Girls Australia was definitely a crowd favourite, showcasing a kick-ass, fire-breathing, sexy show. Not only did they show off pole dancing talents but they performed amazing skills with fire. They played with fire wings, fans and swords. Then the angle grinders were brought out, spraying sparks into the crowd from the crotch.

For the second year, The Girls of Ink model search at-



**THERE WERE 19 DIFFERENT CATEGORIES IN TOTAL. THE QUALITY WAS VERY GOOD; THE JUDGES SURE HAD A TOUGH TIME**

tracted 20 of Sydney's hottest inked ladies, competing for the title of Sydney's #1 Girls of Ink. They strutted their stuff on the catwalk in tiny swimsuits showcasing some lovely ink work. The winners won money and a professional model portfolio.

As always, there were plenty of tattoo contests spread throughout the three days. Contests are an excellent opportunity to get a look at the quality work done by the very talented artists from around the world, and find the best artists for your new tattoo.

Normally you would have a parents' retreat with no children but the expo had created a kids corner where parents were able to leave the kids while they had a look

around knowing they were safe and being entertained with face painting and games.

The Pin Up pageant proved to be very popular. All the ladies were judged on evening wear, swimwear and lingerie, showcasing some amazing vintage glamour before the 2015 winner was announced. Not only did they look lovely but they had to perform a talent. Some of their talents included roller-skating, circus tricks and fire-breathing.

On Sunday, the weekend was wrapping up—the artists had been working hard over the three days, and were now packing up ready for the next tattoo expo but I'm look forward to next year's event already... which will be 11th–13th March 2016 at Moore Park. ☐










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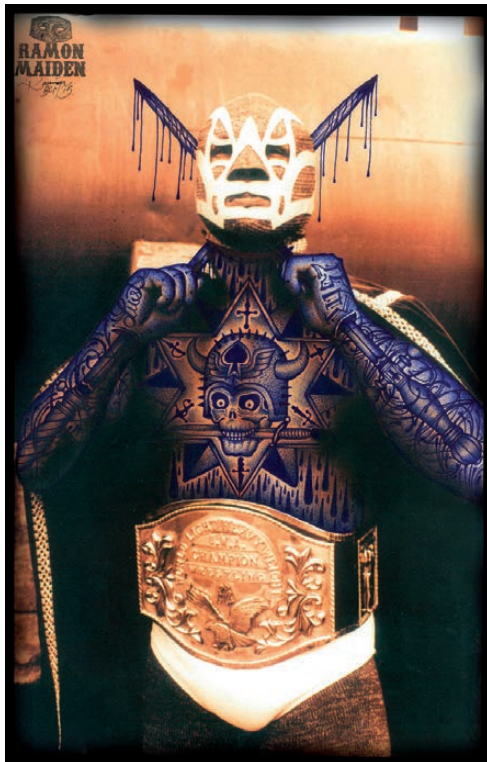
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REVIEW

## Inking The Borders of Heaven And Hell: *The Art of Ramon Maiden*

Graffito Books  
£29.99 [Release date TBA]  
ISBN: 978-1909051171  
Published by Taschen.



Being tattoo freaks, we all love the darker side of art and it doesn't come much darker (or freakier, for that matter) than Ramon Maiden's 'Inking The Borders of Heaven And Hell.' For those of us who can't make his shows at hip arty joints such as Shoreditch's Stolenspace and Parlor Gallery in New Jersey, this book collects Ramon's finest work to date in a glossy, coffee table sized hardback.

And it's not just the art itself we get, but some insight into the man behind such, the book taking on a sort of scrapbook/journal approach with some scribbled words and camera snaps following Ramon's

wider adventures. "I perceive the tattoo as a form of artistic expression," he tells us. "I like to shake consciences, give some thought."

In other words, if you're the easily offended type, best look elsewhere. For the rest of us, though, there's a lot to enjoy here. The perfect xmas pressie, perhaps, for the discerning (and somewhat twisted) art lover in your life.

*Wayne Simmons*

**Mad Tatter**  
HANNAH RUTH

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AN EYE IS UPON YOU

# PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

*It feels rather frivolous to be writing about tattoos at present. Inspired by the unprecedented disruption to Britain's political status quo, I've spent recent weeks thinking more about the democratic than the decorative.*

Putting the topic aside and stepping back into a world of brightly coloured ink, international conventions, spin off products and tattoo-tv-stories seems churlish, and perhaps impossible, for now, at least. Normal service may resume shortly.

Most Skin Deep readers live in democratic countries, so we are likely well-acquainted with the term. Still, with so much changing all around us it seems worth reviewing the definition and etymology, if only to be sure. Originating from the Greek 'demos' (people) and 'kratos' (power, or rule), democracy literally means 'people power', a political system in which the supreme power rests with the people, or at least, with the elected representatives of the people.

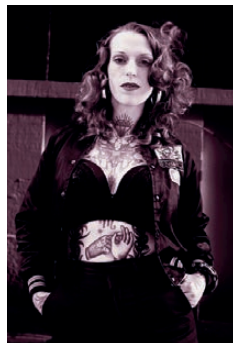
Theoretically, democracy's opposite is 'aristocracy' (aristos = best and kratos = rule), supreme power is reserved for solely for the elite. However, in reality these opposites are not well-defined and frequently appear within a single system, from the obvious (such as the denial of women's voting rights) to the insidious (when a particular society's complex structures of class, education, wealth and visibility, or even the voting system itself, favours the elite).

Nonetheless, democracy, compared with the alternatives of absolute monarchy, dictatorship or oligarchy, has to be the preferred political system, and within that system there must be an ongoing willingness to expose democracy's flaws and address them. This is why the right of ordinary people to critique, to protest, to mobilise and to strike must be enshrined. It's why we need a free press, and it's why social media is becoming increasingly important to the worldwide political arena.

The problem with any majority rules system, of course, is the seemingly unavoidable



Bonnie



PAULA HARDY KANGELOS  
DiamondBetty

**IT'S FORTUNATE FOR ME THAT TATTOOS ARE PROBABLY THE MOST DEMOCRATIC ART FORM OF ALL TIME**

quashing of minority voices. Just because at any given time most people take a particular viewpoint, there is no guarantee that their viewpoint it is the kindest, or most moral, or that actions inspired by that viewpoint will lead to desirable outcomes. We cannot follow the crowd unquestioningly, but instead must seek to educate and be educated. Through greater knowledge, through experience, through hindsight, opinions are revised. Anyone that has worked with a group will recognise that hearing everyone's ideas, even when most are destined for rejection, is conducive to an eventual unified conclusion. Court jurors



are sent out to debate evidence before returning a verdict, no matter how long it takes. Working as a committee may not be the fastest way to get things done, but it's undoubtedly the fairest.

Our elected members of Parliament are obligated to listen to all our individual concerns. but they cannot hear us if we don't speak. How will our leaders understand the electorate is a pluralistic society if we don't let them hear us? We must register to vote, and use that vote, even when our opinions are so far removed from the perceived majority that declaring them seems futile.

To be noticed we must wear our political hearts on our (tattooed) sleeves,

Wherever your own views sit on the political spectrum you probably already broadly agree that a democratic government should represent the ideals of the majority whilst still acknowledging and exploring the ideals of the remainder of the electorate. So I suspect that by now you are thinking something like, 'yes, yes, Paula, this is all very well, but I came here to read about actual tattoos, not politics-with-a-tattoo-reference-stuffed-inside-an-idiom.' So it's fortunate for me that tattoos are probably the most democratic art form of all time. Unlike fine art, which can escalate in market value until it is far beyond the financial reach of anyone bar the super-elite, or else become so wantonly obtuse it is no longer of any interest or relevance to most, tattoos are kept grounded by their very essence. Tattoos cannot exist without a person to wear them, so they can never become so outlandishly expensive that the people cannot afford them and they cannot become so self indulgent that people do not understand them. Tattoos cannot be mass produced, so every tattooer must receive direct recompense for their work, and every tattoo-owner must become a patron of the art. Every collector must endure the same process regardless of social status, as no one can sit for your tattoo but you.

The tattoo is as egalitarian as it is individual. Hopefully we'll soon be able to say this about our political system, too. ▣



Joe K Worrall

Whether you're looking for an additional artist for your studio, a house manager or are selling an established business, lock, stock and two smoking barrels, these free streamlined classifieds ought to get the ball rolling. Send your needs to Jazz Publishing, 1 Marcher Court, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 6BS, or email them into: editor@skindeep.co.uk

**Tattoo Studio 149 are looking** for a permanent experienced artist to join their studio on either a full or part time basis, must have a portfolio and be a good all rounder, with excellent customer skills. If interested please contact Lisa on 07515695595 or email for more details at studio149@outlook.com

- Studio 149. If interested please contact Lisa on 07515695595 or email studio149@outlook.com

**We are looking for a full time artist** to come join us in fallen angel tattoo in Liverpool, you will need at least 2 years experience and an up to date portfolio. no apprentices please. if you're interested please contact Carole on 0151 727 6779 or email fallenangeltattooostudio@yahoo.co.uk

**Ouch! Tattoo Studio is looking for a new apprentice.** Candidates must be 18+ and will be required to fill in an application form available from our reception and provide a varied portfolio of recent artwork. Please call 01992 711917 for any queries or ask at the shop. You need to provide 2 references.

**Rendition Tattoo Studio is here!** Formerly known as 'Point Made' Rendition Tattoo studio is a friendly studio full of talented award-winning artists based in the small town of Nuneaton. Rendition has been going through a few changes in the past couple of months and business has never been better, with brand new artists on board and guest artists popping in we can accommodate any style of artwork to suit our clients needs, find us 120 Queens Road, Nuneaton, CV11 5LG renditionnuneaton.co.uk

**Tattooist Wanted in Basingstoke.** 18 years established tattoo studio. Prime shop town center location. Great reputation. We are looking for a 4th artist to join our highly professional and motivated team. Please see www.area51.co.uk and email some examples of your work to info@area51.co.uk Tel 01256 335511.

**Experienced tattoo artist wanted.** We are looking for someone to come and join our team here at our busy studio in Dunstable Clarity 11 to work alongside our other tattoo artist James. Looking for somebody with a strong portfolio good people skills and no ego. Please contact 01582 965569.

**Sinister Inc are looking** to take on an apprentice. Swindon, Wilts. You must be able to work well in a team as well as on your own initiative, be highly motivated, artistic, hard working and have excellent communication skills. We will require a portfolio of artwork you have drawn. At the first instance please message our Facebook page with your details and a link to your portfolio. Over 18's only. Facebook.com/SinisterInc TattooStudio Tel:01793 976 626 F.A.O. Peter

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**Tattoo Artists Required** - At 'Hot Black Inc Tattoo & Piecing Studio'. We are looking for a full-time custom tattoo artist to join at our newly established studio in Wilsden, Bradford. Our studio is newly refurbished and kitted out with state of the art equipment. Applicants must have at least 3 years studio based experience and must present a strong portfolio. Please forward images of your work and information to Charlie at hot\_black\_inc@hotmail.co.uk

**Mid September, after 5 years at Woody's Tattoo Studio,** High Wycombe. Hannya Jayne is thrilled to be joining the awesome team at O' Happy Dagger, Amersham. The studio has an incredibly creative, welcoming & relaxed atmosphere. Largely due to the open layout, the array of trinkets & curiosities nestled in every available space & obviously the diverse artists.

**Tattooist Wanted in Basingstoke.** 18 years established tattoo studio. Prime shop town centre location. Great reputation. We are looking for a 4th artist to join our highly professional and motivated team. Please see www.area51.co.uk and email some examples of your work to info@area51.co.uk Tel 01256 335511

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*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?*

Over the last three years, I have had the pleasure of working with Sailor Jerry Rum on a number of occasions at various events and functions—they're always good fun, great for meeting people and I always get free rum!

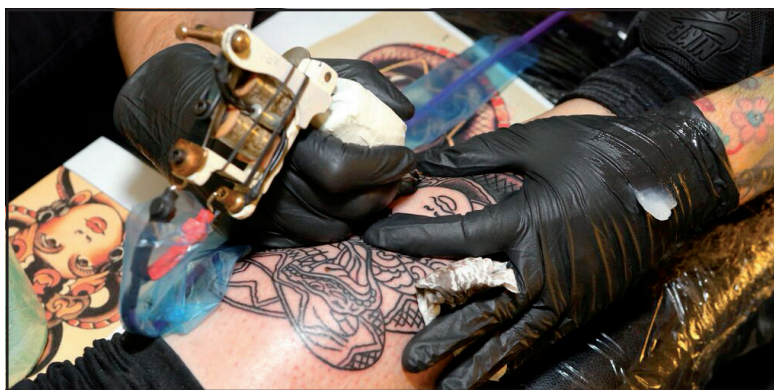
Last month, I received a call from Sailor Jerry that was a little different from normal. First up, it was the Australian distributors calling—not New Zealand—they wanted me to travel to Auckland to be part of something that would be a 'worlds first'. My ears were open.

They had a stand for two weeks in the duty free area of the international departure lounge at Auckland airport and wanted me to tattoo there on the final day. Apparently, there was a tattoo studio in an airport terminal in Sweden at one time, but this would be very different. It certainly seemed interesting so I jumped online... a booked a flight.

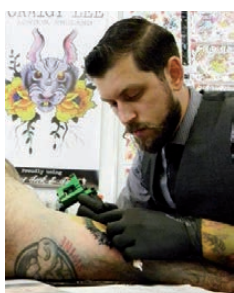
Further correspondence with Kristy—their rep—confirmed that to the best of their knowledge no one had ever tattooed in the international departures lounge—past the security—of an international airport. This itself brought with it a lot of hurdles: security clearance and council licensing for tattooing in the area were the main two. Kristy told me she had been planning the event for nearly two years, and finally after clearances were given, the council visited the site for an inspection and it was all go.

I left Wellington airport at 9.30am arriving in Auckland at 10.45am, I grabbed some lunch and had a beer while I waited for my barber friend Bundy whom I was tattooing. Bundy also brought a massage table lent to me by the guys at Til Death Tattoo in Auckland. Cheers chaps! Much appreciated.

We met with the airport duty free manager and the Sailor Jerry reps, and headed for security. We gave I.D, had name tags issued, then we went through my equipment giving a detailed list of



**TO THE BEST OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE  
NO ONE HAD EVER TATTOOED IN THE  
INTERNATIONAL DEPARTURES LOUNGE**



CRAIGY LEE  
electric\_gent

every item to be taken through—after that it was whisked away. It was an interesting part of the airport I'd never visited before. It was a kind of limbo, reps and airport staff scurried around through doors, while others waited with staff members for I.D badges. When it was all done, we went through security where all our belongings were waiting on the other side.

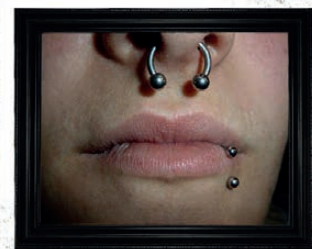
Bundy had picked a design beforehand and we did a mash up of two traditional Sailor Jerry pieces—a snake wrapped around a girls head. We set up and got to work. Bewildered passengers came through the metal detectors and x-ray machines and were quite interested to see what was going on—though I think it was the airport and duty free staff that found the whole event a lot more interesting. The directors and heads of Auckland Airport came down for some photos and to give some quotes to the press, then a few hours later we were done and it was finished up as quickly as it had all began. I wandered back over to the domestic terminal, had a beer and a burger then before I knew it, was back on a plane to Wellington and home by 9pm.

It was a very surreal day, which went by in the blink of an eye, but one I was happy to be a part of and doing something a little bit different! Thanks to Kristy at Sailor Jerry for all the planning and making it happen, and Bundy from Boar 'n Blade for coming along to get tattooed. ▣





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*Beccy Rimmer tells us why this year's Tattoo Jam made her realise something important...*

To say that I wasn't in the right frame of mind to appreciate a tattoo convention this weekend is somewhat of an understatement. You know what it's like when you're just having one of those weeks? You know the kind I mean. It seemed like recently, the powers of the universe were determined to make me re-evaluate my position in this industry as a writer.

Studio and artist conflicts, cold media individuals, unnecessary brand competition, silly industry politics... you get the picture. The attitudes of others were testing my patience—it seemed that someone, somewhere, was launching challenges my way and wanting to know how I'd deal with them.

I have always stubbornly believed that my naivety and innocence in the big bad tattoo world could manifest itself into some sort of positive movement that extends beyond any industry politics or cliques.

One day, will we stop looking back and all completely face forward together? Within 'that week', a tattoo artist had said to me, 'it's just that kind of industry, you know, you can never be friends with everyone.'

Yet, within the first ten minutes of walking around Tattoo Jam my faith was restored in the existence of a community where everyone is friends.

Maybe outside we could partake in argument and competition, but here, for three days straight, we can lock ourselves behind the glass doors of Doncaster Racecourse and humour the notion of a world with no drama.

I was riding this train of thought when I walked past the booth of tattoo artist Hannya Jayne. I've interviewed Hannya for this magazine, for my own blog and I'm always sharing how much I love both her work and lovely personality. As we exchanged hellos, I glanced down at her designs. There it was, poking out from under a sheet of paper... a little red heart that caught my eye.

Jagged lines that didn't meet, crazy splodges of colour—this abstract, unsymmetrical, unpredictable shape was exactly how a heart should be. Love doesn't always make sense, isn't always perfect, but it's always there.



BECCY RIMMER  
BeccyRimmer

**ONE DAY, WILL WE STOP LOOKING BACK AND ALL COMPLETELY FACE FORWARD TOGETHER?**

Like many of the artists I have been tattooed by before, Hannya's attitude towards the people she tattoos shines through as something special. You can't spend time with her and not leave with a grin on your face.

It's one thing to leave a studio with a beautiful new tattoo... it's another to leave with a beautiful tattoo and a newfound awareness. An awareness of a community of people trying to spread love and kindness in an industry that can (like any other) play host to negative vibes.

This spontaneous heart-shaped tattoo would become a symbol that would remind me of people like Hannya and her strong stance. A stance that I would mimic during weeks like the one I had just experienced—a head held high, a big smile, warmth for others and a love for what I do that would be not be disheartened by any external factors.

I walked away from Hannya's booth (and from Tattoo Jam 2015) with an open wound, open eyes, and an open heart. □



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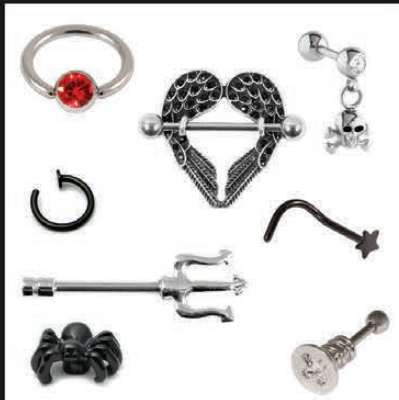
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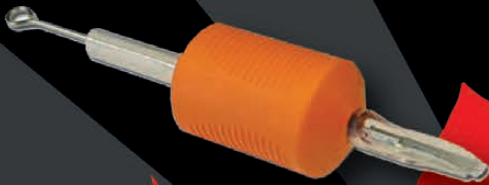
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