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**FADE FX &
JEREMY LO**

THE BLACKEST
BLACK ON EARTH
LAURA YAHNA

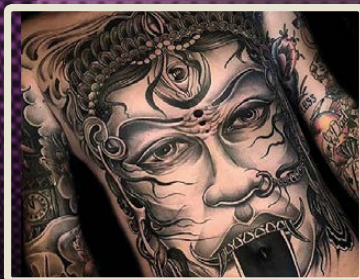
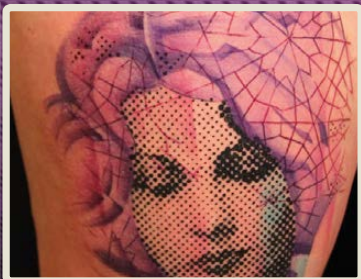
ON THE ROAD WITH
PHIL TWORAVENS

BEHIND THE INK:
**WHAT IS
IT ABOUT
ANIMAL
TATTOOS?**

MAN ON THE EDGE
**CHARLES
HUURMAN**

SHOW ROUND-UP:
**TATTOO
FREEZE
& TOX CIT' INK**

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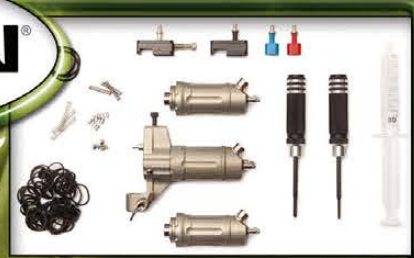
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NOBODY WEARS EYEPATCHES ANYMORE

I booked myself in for an eye-test last week—yeah, yeah, I can hear the jokes from here you know. Anyway, it turns out I need a pair of bins for seeing things very far away. (For our non-domestic readers and those who don't get out much, 'bins' = 'binoculars'. It may be a phrase from the '70s for which I apologise). Important things like: cars coming towards you at speed or for being able to tell in a split second that the thing you just swerved to avoid was a plastic bag and not a fox.

I've put this off for years having been quite content knowing that trees consist of leaves even though what I actually see is a green shade with no definition, so kind of like Fuzzy-Felts. Remember those? It was what you got as a kid when your folks couldn't afford Lego or Meccano.

So much like Daredevil, I've always relied on my other senses to fill this gap in my abilities. For instance, sooner or later you just 'know' if it was a plastic bag or a fox.

I jest. Honest.

What I actually want to get at this month is how we're all super busy looking at tattoos with our eyes doing all of the work but over recent months, I've also got into the habit of listening to a tattoo... though obviously not with my ears. That would be stupid.

See, once a tattoo is in place, if it's done properly, it will either a: sit there like a tattoo does or b: become part of the person it's on. Both are equally valid—of course they are, it depends what you want from it—but as time has rolled on its merry way, I've seen a huge difference between what I consider to be good tattooing and great tattooing.

The tattoo itself as 'art', stands alone and that's fine and dandy (that's what it's supposed to do) but when you see a tattoo become part of the wearer, that's worth its weight in chocolate bars. I've likely said it before around here but there are two types of tattooed people in the world.

There are those who find their tattoos own them and then there are those whom you don't even notice are tattooed because they



Tiggy

WHEN YOU SEE A TATTOO BECOME PART OF THE WEARER, THAT'S WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN CHOCOLATE BARS



SION SMITH • EDITOR
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wear, and own, their ink so completely.

Check it out for yourself. Take a look around at your own work and your friends work—see where it is and what it contributes to the body. Look closely at the tattoos you notice and closer at the ones you don't... there's a dark art to placement and visibility that's getting lost in the mix as we bludgeon our way forwards into instagram oblivion.

You can create a great tattoo anywhere but for it to really spring to life, it should be right in the skin and not sitting on top of it.

I know you know what I'm talking about.

Interestingly, up at the other end of the magazine, totally independent of my thoughts, Paula brings up the same train of thought in her column.

We can't both be wrong. Can we? ☐

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12 TATTOO FREEZE

A warm *Tattoo Freeze*? The most successful, well attended *Tattoo Freeze* of all time? A *Tattoo Freeze* that threw up exciting new talent and some raised eyebrows over where some people have been hiding? And there were Stormtroopers everywhere....

18 CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION

With Oscar fever beginning to sweep in, accompanied by the justified criticism over their complete lack of diversity, I feel its only right that we turn our gaze to the big screen and its portrayal of tattoos.

24 THE BLACK PARADE

It's no secret that the bossman appreciates blackwork as much as a morning coffee—and when he finds an

artist that rattles his cage more than others, he makes sure we all know about it. Thus, we are mighty pleased to bring you the meeting between Mr Smith and the wonderful Laura Yahna.

30 JEREMY LO

Fade FX is the only tattooist in the UK trained in the ancient art of Borneo tribal hand tap tattooing. In the autumn of 2015 she went back to the jungles of Borneo with film maker Tom J. Kelly to document the last of the Iban head hunter tattooists.

58 POP LIFE

A swift tour around any convention will reveal a fairly high percentage of bodies geared up for characters from popular culture to be inked. Beccy Rimmer

chats to three UK artists about why we choose to ink icons onto our skin.

66 PHIL TWORAVENS

There's something special about traveling tattoo artists like Phil Tworavens. Yes, they help the great old school traditions live on, but more importantly, they have the balls to do what most artists only dare dream about: Pack up and hit the road.

74 BEHIND THE INK

Whether it's an old school panther or a portrait of someone's cat, animals have been the muse of tattoo artists for many years now, and will be for many more to come. So what is it about our furry (and scaly) brothers and sisters that has led so many of us to immortalise them in ink?

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

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GREAT BRITISH TATTOO SHOW

GIVEAWAY

Shows sure come around fast these days, huh? Over the next three issues, we'll be giving away 15 pairs of tickets for the Great British Tattoo Show—five in each. It's still a couple of months away but already the artist list is online (greatbritishtattooshow.com) and we're not finished yet. As we write this, the wonderful Moni Marino has just confirmed but we'll dig into what's going on at the show as we go forwards.

If you want to be thrown into a hat and ruffled around until your hair is a mess and hope your name comes out on the other side, send a blank email to editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line: LET ME IN. We'll make regular draws so you can make arrangements for kids and dogs—or whatever else you have at home that needs taking care of.

Good luck. Let's get it on.



VIP PASSES

Remember a while back we held a competition in which subscribers could win a lifetime pass to a Skin Deep show of their choice? Well, the deeds are now complete and those people's names look like this: Paul Higgins, Sophie Moss, Robert Foster, Jodie Moore. Don't blame us if you have a sudden influx of friends...

DRAWING NIGHT

Inkling tattoo are regularly hosting life model drawing nights for their 4 artists and guests. With increasing popularity and a kind offer from the Sound House to host the event, Inkling want to give something back to local and aspiring artists to draw a life model in an informal setting. With a suggested donation of £2 for attendance—with all the monies going to the Charity Mind, a charity close to a lot of hearts, as we've all expected some problems directly and indirectly—it sounds like a blast.

For more information, dates and anything else you can think of contact:

Aidan O'Brien · [@inklingtattoo](https://www.instagram.com/inklingtattoo) · Inkling Tattoo Studio, 6 Burton Street, Leicester LE1 1TB · [facebook.com/LeicesterDrinkandDraw](https://www.facebook.com/LeicesterDrinkandDraw)

SAK YANT MASTER: A VISIT

Happy Sailor Tattoo Studio will be playing host to Master Ajarn Ohr from 2nd of June to 16th June. You can find Happy Sailor at 17 Hackney Rd, London E2 7NX · 020 7033 9222 but for bookings, email: james@thaitattoosakyant.co.uk. Stay tuned—we'll try and bring you some more on this as we get closer to the dates.

OPEN FOR BIZ

Award winning Rendition Tattoo Studio in Nuneaton have reopened their books to take on new clients. With 3 resident artists, an up and coming apprentice and a talented piercer, there is also room for guest artists all year round so if you're passing through, contact them at renditionnuneaton@gmail.com. Find them at 120 Queens Road, Nuneaton CV115LG nuneatontattoostudio.co.uk



TATTOO LONDON

As many of you will already know, an exhibition at Museum of London [museumoflondon.org.uk] is currently celebrating our most favourite of arts. Tattoo London — which is open now until 8 May — delves into the history of London's tattoo pioneers, by way of historic photos and interviews.

The exhibition also calls on four of London's most prominent artists and their studios — Lal Hardy at New Wave, Alex Binnie at Into You, Claudia de Sabe at Seven Doors and Mo Coppoletta at The Family Business.

Jen Kavanagh, curator for Tattoo London at the Museum of London, said: "We hope that this exhibition will appeal to existing and new visitors to the museum, offering them a rare glimpse into the fas-

inating life of a tattooist in the capital."

Admission is free and as it pushes forwards, there's also a chance to explore the tattooed body with an Art Macabre life drawing salon on Wednesday 4 May.

It would be remiss of us in the extreme to not give coverage to this. Starting next month, we delve deep with some nice exclusives from the exhibit. Stay tuned... and get your asses down there. It's very cool indeed.



ALEX BINNIE

Alex Binnie was born in Oxford in 1959. Alex got his first tattoo at the age of 17, went to art school in the late 1970s and later got a job as a medical illustrator at St Thomas' Hospital in London. It was during this time that he started experimenting with tattooing, and by the late 1980s he was tattooing full time. Watching his friends in the art scene struggle to make a living, Alex loved the directness of tattooing and decided to make this the focus of his art. After spending a couple of years in Los Angeles, Alex moved back to London in 1993 and opened Into You. Inspired by strong graphic design and traditional tribal iconography, Alex's style is bold and graphic.

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rotterdam.unitedconventions.com

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tattooshow-regensburg.de

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Birmingham B18 5PP United Kingdom
inkandiron.co.uk

NORTH LAKES TATTOO SHOW

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northlaketattoooshow.co.uk

STARFIRE TATTOO WEEKEND

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9TH BRIGHTON TATTOO CONVENTION

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blog.brightontattoo.com

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liverpooltattooconvention.com

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NATIONAL TATTOO PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

Every year at Tattoo Freeze, we exhibit the shortlisted entries of our National Tattoo Photography Award. The brief couldn't be simpler—produce an outstanding tattoo themed photograph—and there are always a stack of great entires. However, the results of this particular competition are left to the visiting guests at Tattoo Freeze to choose the best of the best.

This year that honour—and a fistful of amazon vouchers to the value of £350—went to Neil 'Muz' Murray for “The Fix” who also happens to tattoo out of Double K Tattoos in Shropshire.

Nice work Sir!

Footnote: *The competition runs every year, so take this as fair warning—if you fancy your chances at Tattoo Freeze 2017, you've got something like ten months to get your act together!*

“The Fix”

Photo by: Neil 'Muz' Murray
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by
Robert Kane



Out of a huge stash of simply incredible work that we got in from Robert Kane, this dog ticked a lot of boxes around the desks in the office - for a whole host of reasons.

“The client gave me some photographs of her dog and wanted something fun to represent her. So I looked at the photos and chose some specific features to exaggerate—because that’s what I do—and after about 3 or 4 hours, this was the end result. Simple as that!”

Subject matter aside (because nobody gets to argue with a dog tattoo), this is incredibly clean and ‘exact’ in its execution. A smart use of colour and shading lift it off the skin more than your average inking session too - something that tells tales on Kane’s one time dream to work as a concept artist for Disney.

There’s not much else to say about this one. Simply, a fun, super-smart tattoo which we shall file under something like ‘illustrative story-telling’.

Nice!

Robert Kane

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Tattoo

FREEZE

A warm Tattoo Freeze? The most successful, well attended Tattoo Freeze of all time? A Tattoo Freeze that threw up exciting new talent and some raised eyebrows over where some people have been hiding? Yes: Tattoo Freeze was all of these things—and there were even Stormtroopers everywhere...



This year, I thought I would visit our own show as a customer—at least for the purposes of this review—and see if it felt different... or maybe to see if I could approach it differently when it came to writing the show up.

I didn't tell anybody I was going to do this, consequently, at the end of the day all I heard was "Where have you been all day?" to which my best reply was: "I've been busy."

Which is fair.

Having decided to go down this road of experience, I queued up with everybody else but found myself standing on a corner where the biting wind liked to whip across the Midlands administering some kind of medieval punishment on all who chose to stand there. At which point, I had a change of heart and used my pass to slip in through a side door.

You would have done exactly the same thing.
And so we get down to it:

Walking around to see who was on board, it was kind of odd to only personally know maybe a dozen studios out of the couple of hundred working. Going around again just to make sure I wasn't asleep revealed I was indeed wide awake and this was the case... time to pay attention instead of coasting then.

Having caught up with those I do know well... Mac, Richie Guy, Dek and Sam at Electric Kicks, Kat Wilson... it's time to get my head into some portfolios—and there are some great studios turning up out there. On my tour I am accompanied by Wayne (Simmons) because such a tour is always more fun when you can bounce an opinion around.

Stallions & Galleons is a studio I've been watching for a while—there's some damn nice work coming from that quarter. We haven't seen the best of them yet by a long shot but it was heartening to see Ali Burke (from said studio, obviously) take home a Best of Convention award for her swan delivered to a shin. In fact, it always warms the







heart when an artist has been working hard and long and gets some 'award recognition'—Tony Evans at Opulent Ink being one of them. If memory serves, he swanned off (no pun intended) with the award for Best Portrait which was supercool in my book (and if pun was intended, it was thoroughly out of place).

Along the trek, we found reason to stop at Matt King's booth, where, amongst other things, Matt has a nice line going in Star Wars tattoos that are a little different from the norm. You can find Matt online at [instagram.com/tattmattoo](https://www.instagram.com/tattmattoo)—go check him out. Nice, talented guy who I hope we'll hear a lot more from in the future.

Another name to watch as we blast into 2016 is Josie Sexton—[instagram.com/josie-sextton](https://www.instagram.com/josie-sextton)—who is a fine art graduate and has

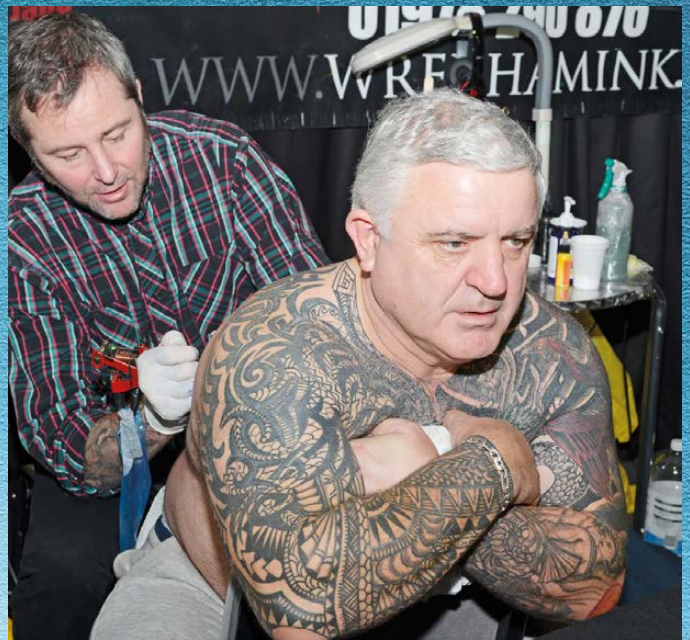
been able to translate her skills into being able to work them on skin. With a nice line in sweet creatures who might bite and an eye for making them pop when they shouldn't, we're going to keep a close eye on her too even if you're too lazy to.

Hats off must go to Miss Shiv who is back on the circuit seemingly not five seconds after giving birth (well, maybe a bit longer than that, but still...) and also to Craig James at New Ink who for some reason was more than a little nervous about entering his piece into the competitions and happened to win a little something. You never know what can happen out here that's for sure.

Looking at the show as a whole—which we are now able to do much more easily as we've kicked the red booths into touch in favour of

TATTOO FREEZE WINNERS

- Best Oriental**
Marc Nutley at Studio Ink
- Best Portrait**
Tony Evans at Opulent Ink
- Best Black & Grey**
Nipper at Bridgend Tattoo
- Best Colour**
Craig Cardwell at Retro Ink
- Best Black & Dotwork**
Rikki Baird at Retro Ink
- Best Realism**
Craig James at New Ink Tattoo Studio
- Best Avant Garde**
Lee McMahon at Midlands Tattoo Centre
- Best Star Wars Tattoo**
Steve Wade at All Seeing Eye Tattoo Lounge
- Best of Convention**
Ali Burke at Stallions & Galleons



a more wide-open European style—I can safely say that realism is still a big deal out there. I thought it might be a ‘thing’ but if it is, then people are still wanting that ‘thing’ and it looks as though it’s here to stay. Having said that—and I throw this into the ring as a personal observation, not a fact—I’m seeing a wave starting to form behind the traditional side of tattooing again... not that it ever went away, but there’s certainly a re-surge in appreciation for it, or maybe that should be a re-surge in tattooers wanting to work with it. We’ll see how that pans out as we go forwards. That’s the beauty of watching this hurricane form. You can never predict what’s going to happen next because no matter what the national press will have you believe, there’s no such thing as fashion trends when it comes to tattooing. It changes daily, weekly, monthly... always has, always will.

With a strong line-up this year, it was good to hear that

Mr Simmons had booked himself in for some work later in the year based on what he had found—and he wasn’t the only one. More than a few people on staff had the same idea too, so it looks like it will be a busy year in-house!

Seriously looking at the show this way from the outside, I could have taken another day of tattooing easily. It flashed by in the blink of an eye and was over all too quickly. Then again, maybe that’s why it was so intense. Those things are not for me to decide.

Overall, this show was a real winner this year—much as it was last year only busier—which leads me to only one conclusion: the hunger for tattooing never goes away. It might come and go in waves occasionally but such is the nature of absolutely everything in life.

Next stop? Alexandra Palace in May for the Great British Tattoo Show. May it be every bit as successful as Tattoo Freeze... but slightly warmer. □

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Santa Perpetua

CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION

With Oscar fever beginning to sweep in, accompanied by the justified criticism over their complete lack of diversity, I feel its only right that we turn our gaze to the big screen and its portrayal of tattoos



Santa Perpetua

Though both online and on the small screen tattoos are the focus for many shows, Hollywood's glamour does not seem so keen to embrace the topic.

What started with Miami Ink, "the gold standard" of tattoo shows as AV Club labels it, has now grown, for better or worse, into a multi-million pound industry of tattoo-related output for television audiences.

Ami James, Chris Nunez and Co. pioneered the standard format for tattoo television and paved the way for a host of other artists to make their mark on their clients, and the public, with AV Club stating that Miami Ink "spawned the whole subgenre".

Following the show's launch, audiences have been treated to the sensual delights of LA Ink, London Ink, Madrid Ink, NY Ink, Tattoo Fixers,

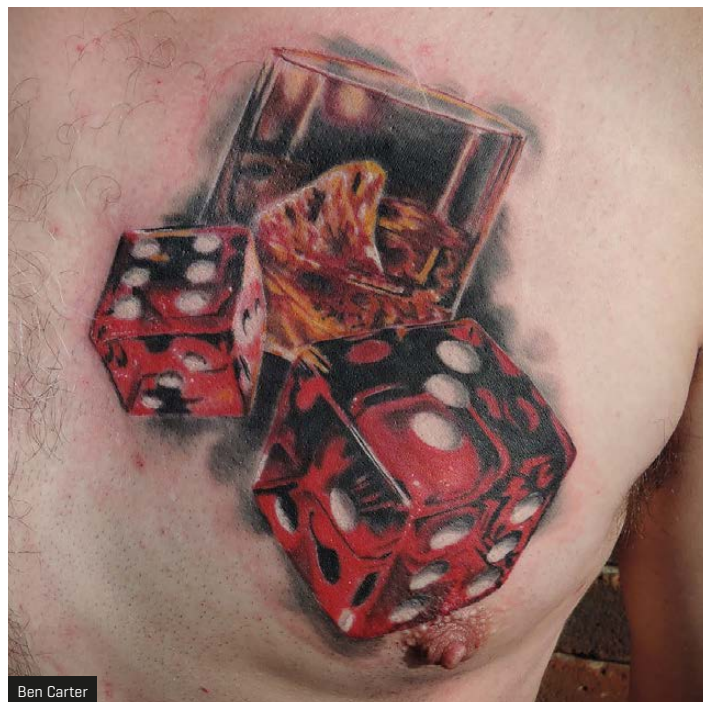
Tattoo Nightmares, Inked, Ink Master, My Tattoo Addiction, America's Worst Tattoos and many more.

As Margaret Lyons explains in an article for Vulture, tattoo shows seem to have settled into four main categories. There are The Contest Shows where artists pit their skills against a panel of judges or fellow artists; The Workplace Shows focusing on one studio and their steady stream of tribute tattoos; The Bad Tattoos Shows that provide emergency services to those tattoo disasters; and finally the Kitchen Nightmares where the audience visits problematic parlours, sketchy studios, and barely believable businesses.

Personally, I feel the format is already in need of a

shake up with the tried and tested method gradually becoming monotonous and formulaic. But as fans of body art we should not be too downbeat, as tattoo television

THE FORMAT IS ALREADY IN NEED OF A SHAKE UP WITH THE TRIED AND TESTED METHOD GRADUALLY BECOMING MONOTONOUS AND FORMULAIC



IN SOME CASES TATTOOS HAVE BEEN THEMSELVES THE UNIQUE SELLING POINT OF THE ENTIRE SHOW

is not the only area where we are able to witness ink on the small screen.

As tattoos have become more popular with the public, they have increasingly been incorporated into the mainstream shows that we watch on TV. In some cases tattoos have been themselves the unique selling point of the entire show as producers seek to tap into the tattoo-mania sweeping society.

Prison Break is the most obvious example of this with character Michael Scofield, played by Wentworth Miller, covering himself in the elaborate blueprint of a prison so that he can escape with his brother.

More recently *Blindspot* has hit the screens with its heavily inked heroine raking in ten million viewers in the US for its opening episode. In the words of *The Guardian's* Graeme

Virtue, "It's just the latest and most bombastic example of the mainstreaming of tattoos".

Even the fast food giants McDonalds have attempted, and failed, to get in on the act recently with an ad featuring an alternative punk looking pork wrapper. And though they fail in their attempt to seduce me to visit the less-than golden arches, they at least seem more accepting of her body art than they were of mine when I spent three (regrettable) shifts working there as a teen.

Despite the growing popularity of tattoos on the small screen, there are still those who are opposed to the phenomenon. Dawn Cooke, a tattoo artist from Detroit, USA, and blog writer for *Tattoo Artist*, is one such critic.

Cooke, who appears to be somewhat of a purist and is a self-confessed "traditionalist" when it comes to tattoos, has written for *The Huffington Post* in the past about why it is she has come to hate tattoo television. Among her "ten reasons the tattoo community doesn't respect tattoo reality TV shows"



Craig Bartlett



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is that the topic has been beaten to death, watching tattooing is boring, and that “these shows and people who make them are missing the point altogether”.

Despite its critics, surely the growth and acceptance of tattoo television can only be a positive phenomenon for those of us who appreciate and admire the art form.

And though tattoos are becoming more widely used and seen on television, they are still yet to break the mainstream barrier of Hollywood.

Some may question why I consider this important, but with almost 172 million cinema admissions in the UK in 2015, how things are portrayed on the big screen can have a dramatic impact on public opinion.

Such a huge figure—almost three times the entire population of the UK—does not even take into account movies downloaded,

streamed, or bought on DVD, and with the rise of services like Netflix, movies are only going to become more frequently watched.

To be blunt, the impact of the big screen can be hugely powerful and its influence over public opinion should not be underestimated. Take the 1975 Spielberg classic *Jaws* for example, which not only made audiences think twice about swimming in the sea, it also led to a huge growth in shark-hunting, because as the film wrongly suggested, sharks were nothing but man eaters.

Now whilst people with tattoos are not quite being portrayed in the same light as 25-foot Great White Sharks, they, or should I say we, are being portrayed in a light that is less than flattering, or indeed accurate.

The stars of *Memento*, *Red Dragon*, *Eastern Promises*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*,

EVEN THE FAST FOOD GIANTS MCDONALDS HAVE ATTEMPTED, AND FAILED, TO GET IN ON THE ACT RECENTLY



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Tattoo Crew Production



Leasha Jacques

WITH ALMOST 172 MILLION CINEMA ADMISSIONS IN THE UK IN 2015, HOW THINGS ARE PORTRAYED ON THE BIG SCREEN CAN HAVE A DRAMATIC IMPACT ON PUBLIC OPINION

American History X, Snatch, and Wanted are all memorable due to their body art, but their characters play into the stereotype of tattoos belonging only to certain members of society. These being, essentially, the undesirables.

In Memento, the protagonist suffers from severe memory loss and is responsible for the deaths of a number of people. In Red Dragon, the protagonist is a serial killer and a cannibal. In Eastern Promises he is posing as a Russian gangster. In Pirates of the Caribbean, the protagonist is a pirate—as the name suggests. In American History X he is a murderous Nazi. In Snatch he is a bare-knuckle boxing champion. And in Wanted, the protagonist is an assassin.

It's hardly a line up that is going to instil trust and respect from the public for those of us who choose to cover our bodies similarly.

With one in five Brits being tattooed, and one in three young British adults adorning themselves in permanent art, with similar figures occurring across the pond in the US, how is it that there are so few tattooed people being seen on the big screen? And more importantly, when they do appear on the big screen, why are they not being shown in a more positive light?

I am preaching to the converted here I know, but could somebody please have a word with the Hollywood directors and screenwriters, and tell them that not all tattooed people are criminals, murderers, or racists. Some of us are teachers who are busy educating the next generation, some of us are nurses who save lives every day, and some of us are scientists pushing the boundaries of human knowledge and looking for solutions to the biggest problems.

Bring on the Hollywood tattoo revolution. □

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The black parade

It's no secret that the bossman appreciates blackwork as much as a morning coffee—and when he finds an artist that rattles his cage more than others, he makes sure we all know about it. Thus, we are mighty pleased to bring you the meeting between Mr Smith and the wonderful work of Laura Yahna...



I detest social media so much, most days I want to douse it in petrol and throw the back-end of a cigarette on it, but occasionally—usually when I'm in the mood to delete all my accounts and look at the world through my own eyes—I find magical beings loitering there and am forced to change my mind in case it happens again.

Such was the case a month or so back—this time with Instagram—when I stumbled upon the work of Laura Yahna and fell head over heels in love with her blackened point of view on the world. I guess social media might have an upside after all, but let's keep that just between us.

I'm a sucker when it comes to tattoos of animals. Show me an animal tattoo and you will

have my attention. Show me an animal tattoo in nothing but black ink and you will have my full attention. It's the primal thing that does it to me. If something works with very little effort using nothing but one colour and the influence of Mother Nature, what more can you ask for?

Laura Yahna can most often be found working at Pech & Sulfur Tattoo in Berlin and if she happens to not be there when you go knocking, she'll be on the road... a lot. Her specialty, if you haven't figured it out by now is darkness:

The machine is not the thing that gives you good results. You need quality and a machine that fits your personal needs

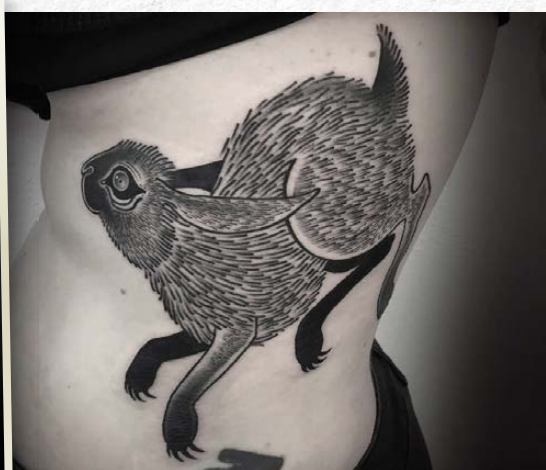
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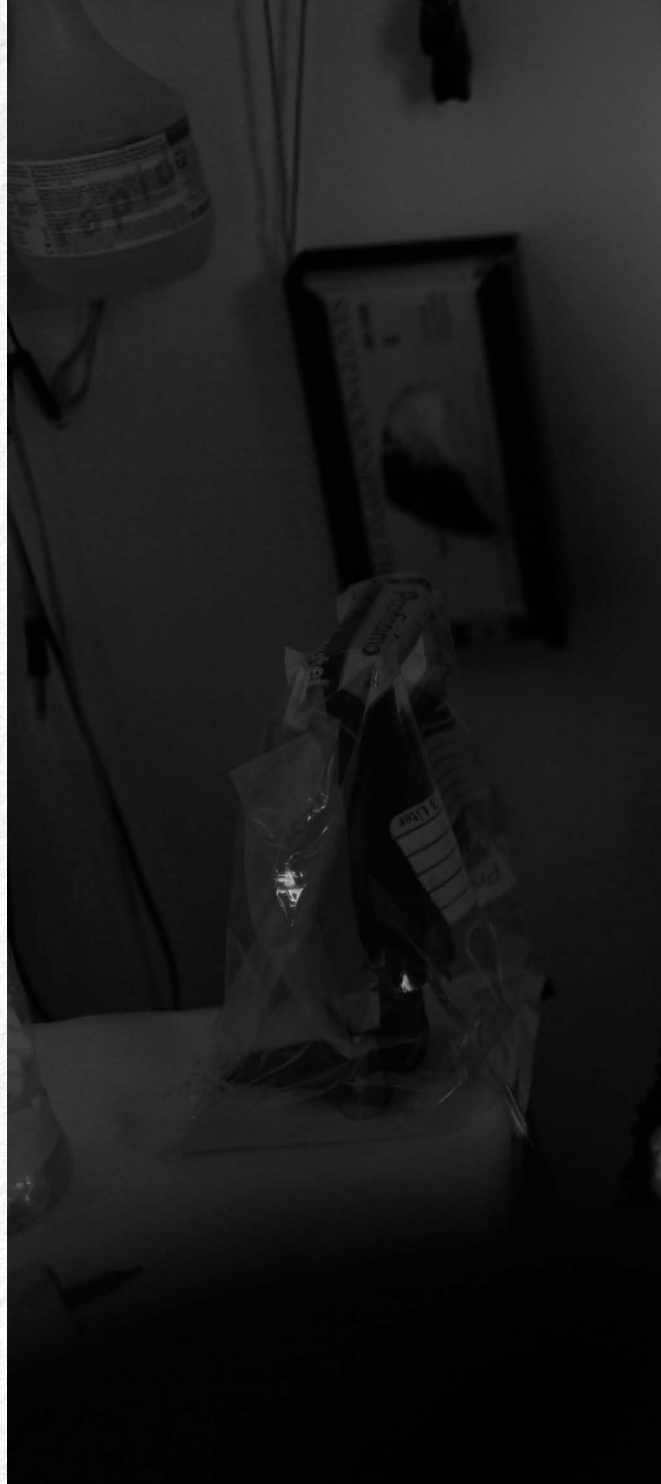
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I'm influenced by a lot of stuff. It's super hard to tell you what exactly though. My subconscious does most of the hard work



Crows, ravens, demons, black cats, semi-humanistic creatures up to no good... the list goes on and what's not to love about any of that. Laura started tattooing with an 'internet machine'—a cardinal sin as ever—and yet time and time again, we see artists who started this way rising far and above those who go



down a more traditional route:

"I did—and the results were horrible! I discovered that a tattoo machine is really nothing more than something you buy somewhere. The machine is not the thing that gives you good results. You need quality and a machine that fits your personal needs. I learned something from this but I think it's probably that like in every business."

This is a good point. Nothing good should come easy or be handed out on a plate either. I wonder if Laura has much of an art background to work with as she moved forwards?

"I was into drawing when I was young but I stopped for years. I got kind of desperate about it because I had the feeling I couldn't express myself, but when I began to study



graphic design, I got more and more interested in illustrating stuff again.”

One of the more interesting aspects about ‘simple’ blackwork for me is how freaking hard it is to get right. I see people dismiss it offhand because of its simplicity, I see artists who don’t normally play in that sand-pit

thinking its easy and finding that it’s very far from it. Does Laura find it hard to get it right and also have it hold up over time?

“Absolutely! Everything I tattooed was something I needed to learn from—and I am still learning with every single tattoo I do. I haven’t reached anything like perfection in my own head and I don’t think I ever will!

“I started doing walk in and colour stuff though and I think that’s super important for anybody who is learning to tattoo out there. I think it’s weird that people start to tattoo and



Everything I tattooed was something I had to learn from—and I’m still learning with every tattoo I do



I have a lot of 'wanna-dos' on my wish list and it's cool that the people are interested in that

just do their own stuff from the very start. To get a good foundation at the beginning, it's all about the technique and how to have a great relationship with your customer.

"I still do some small stuff that people don't expect from me anymore if I need to, but at the moment, I can fill my organiser with my own work and that makes me super happy. I have a lot of great customers now that let me do what I want—more or less! I have a lot of 'wanna-dos' on my wish list and it's cool that the people are interested in that. I also draw some stuff on the day of the tattoo with

my customer next to me. It's nice when that kind of thing works out and when people are spontaneous and easy going."

If you want to catch up with Laura and get your own slice of her dark magic, right now, the road ahead looks like this:

"I am in Australia at the moment to escape the winter in Germany. I will plan all my guest spots and appointments in March, but I will be in Amsterdam at Salon Serpent from May 17th to the 21st with my friend Esther de Miguel. Afterwards, I will be guesting in Switzerland, England, Spain and some other places (including Tattoo Jam!) Most of the time though, you can find in me in Berlin—thats my home-base!"

Which just leave me to say... get in the line. I was here first. ▣

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JEREMY LO: HAND TAP TATTOO MASTER

Fade FX is the only tattooist in the UK trained in the ancient art of Borneo tribal hand tap tattooing. In the autumn of 2015 she went back to the jungles of Borneo with film maker Tom J. Kelly to document the last of the Iban head hunter tattooists. While there she met up with her former teacher and tattoo master Jeremy Lo to discuss the technicalities of hand tap tattooing

“Two sticks that’s all the equipment you need to tattoo by hand.”
It was day 2 of filming and we were sat out on the terrace of a traditional long house overlooking the Borneo rainforest chatting with world renowned hand tap tattooist Jeremy Lo.

“You have two sticks one with needles tied at the end the other works as a hammer. The size and length of the sticks depends on which part of the body you are tattooing. Different parts need different sizes. It’s like using a machine with different needles, different tubes and different throw depending on what and where you are tattooing.”

I first went to Borneo in 2008 where I trained under Jeremy learning the techniques and procedures of hand tap tattooing. I’ve been returning on a regular basis ever since each time learning a bit more and perfecting my technique. I’ve spent time with members of the Iban tribe living with them in their rainforest home and learning about their culture and tattooing heritage. Jeremy paved the way for tattooists like me by getting the Iban tribal elders to open up to outsiders and to encourage them to share their secrets. The process of gaining their trust was at times painfully slow and Jeremy



that dates back to the Stone Age. In Europe the knowledge of tattooing was lost for centuries until sailors brought it back from their long voyages to the Far East. In the jungles of Borneo, tattooing has an unbroken lineage dating back to humanity’s earliest forays into art were beautiful geometric lines, curves and pictograms where all achieved with two hard sticks, organic inks and improvised needles.

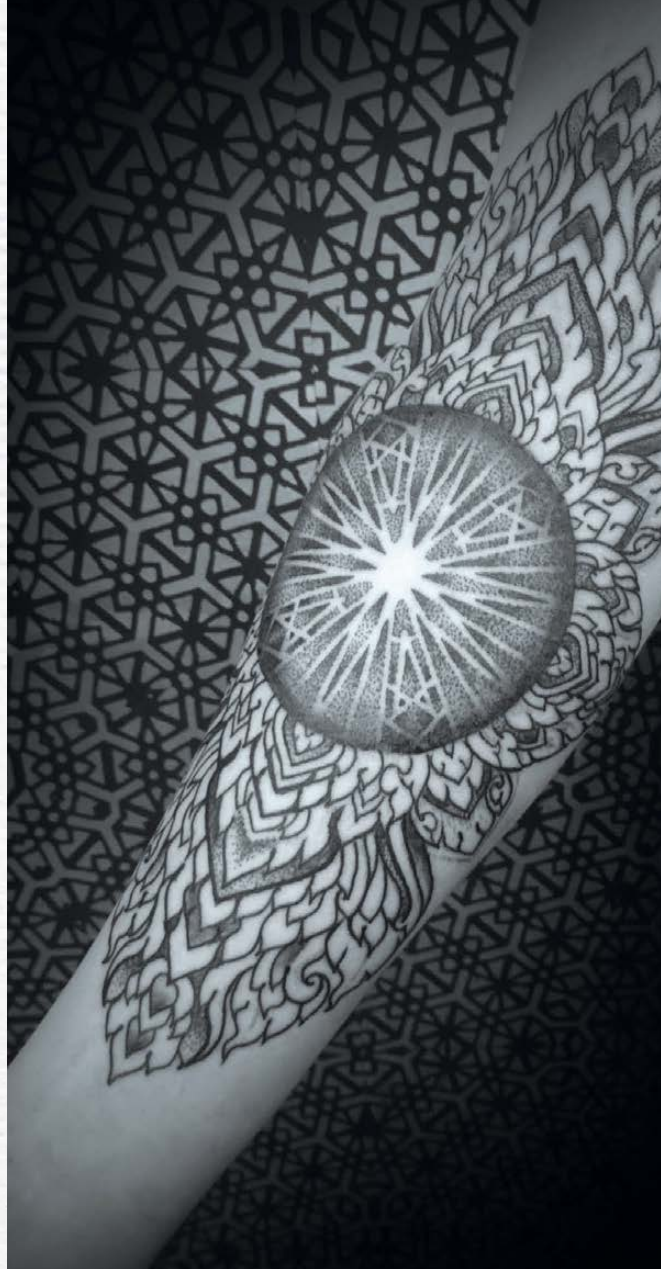
would spend days with them and get in return snippets of information.

Jeremy holds the two sticks up. To the untrained eye the tools look dangerously archaic but in the hands of a master they can execute the most beautiful tattoos.

“One holds the needles, one is the hammer and the voltage is your hands. That’s it and the rest is preference on weight and feel of the tools. You can use any hard wood but not bamboo as it’s too soft. You could use it for smaller tattoos but for bigger tattoos you need a hard stick and a big hammer.”

Jeremy smiles his warm wry smile. “For me it’s simple. Just two sticks cut from any tree where the wood looks hard enough. That’s it and that’s how they did it in the past too.”

Hand tap tattooing has a heritage



The Point of no Return

The Point of No Return is a film directed by Tom J Kelly and co-directed/presented by Fade 'FX' Manning. Here Fade explains the goals of the film and how important it was to go to Borneo and make this ground breaking documentary.

"The goal of the documentary was to capture the unique tattoo history and culture of the Iban tribe. We interviewed the last tattooed elders at several longhouses deep in the heart of the jungle. We explored the distinct position that tattooing holds in Iban tribal culture, deciphering the past and looking to the future and asking if the tattoo traditions can survive in a world where accelerating change is eroding Iban heritage. Globalisation, deforestation and a cultural shift towards Catholicism are having a devastating effect on the tattoo traditions."

"We talked with some of the most knowledgeable people about the mythology and fables that infuse the tattoo designs. We also heard about how hand-tapped tattooing was revived by a select few when all around them abandoned its practice."

"The aim of the film is to document Iban hand tapped tattooing and its rich heritage before it is lost to history. The elder generation are no longer passing on their knowledge and traditions due to their conversion to Christianity. Each time I return to Borneo, the tattooed elders are becoming fewer. It was an honour to hear the elder's stories and learn of a time before the cross and chainsaw changed their way of life forever. I only hope that Iban tattooing can survive and that we can preserve its heritage before we reach the point of no return."

'The Point Of No Return' will be premiered at the Brighton Tattoo Convention on 30 April with a subsequent showing at Great British Tattoo Show on 28/29 May. The film will be available to buy from 1 May—check in at fadefxtattoo.com for more details closer to the time.

GLOBALISATION, DEFORESTATION AND A CULTURAL SHIFT TOWARDS CATHOLICISM ARE HAVING A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON THE TATTOO TRADITIONS

"Before there were modern needles, they would use different things. Very hard wood would be cut and sharpened to form needles. I've seen bones, hardwood and thorns used as needles. When people started being able to get hold of metal needles they would use that one needle on everybody. They wouldn't change it—just sharpen it between tattoos. For big patches they would use three to five needles together but that was it, basically anything that was sharp could be used and sometimes was."

The inks used by Iban hand tap tattooists



were as DIY as the tattoo tools and sourced directly from the environment around them.

“Tattoo ink was based on ash or burnt carbon scraped off the bottom of a cooking pot. This was mixed with sugar cane water and boiled down to a thicker texture that is easy to tattoo with. It was as simple as that.”

“I’ve never used that traditional kind of ink. I tried it once on myself but wasn’t happy with the results. I tried to make the ash base but the problem is it’s hard to make in large amounts. These days it’s easier and more consistent to use commercial inks.”

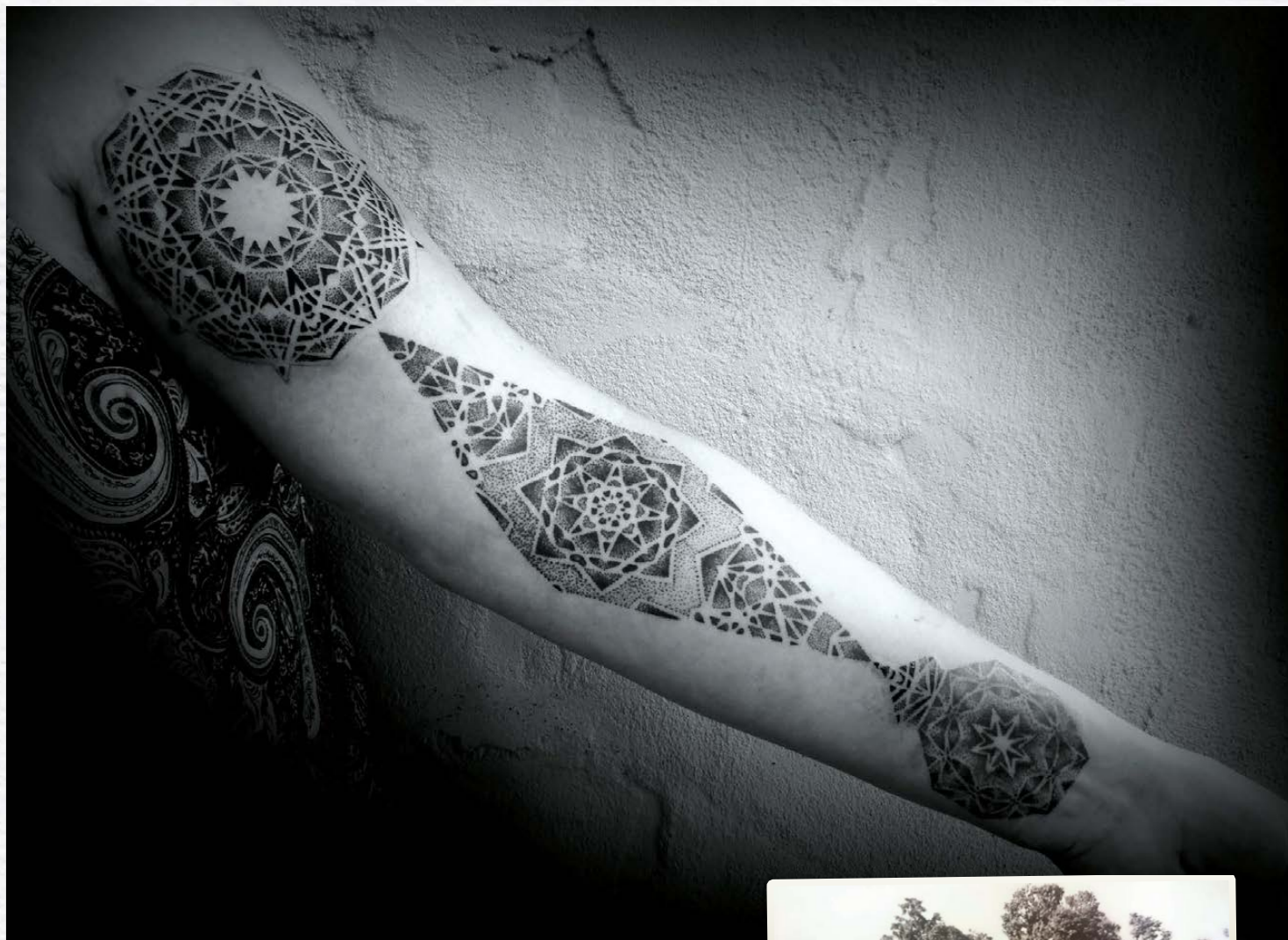
We turn to the tools and how these influence the designs. Indigenous Borneo tattoo designs were linked to the rainforest and its rivers. Animals that both sustained and threatened the tribes feature heavily



in the artwork from fish to crabs and crocodiles. The plants and trees of the jungle also played a major role and the designs often focussed on seeds and vines. Male tattoos were traditionally big, bold and black to make them easily visible to convey the wearer’s status and bravery as a warrior. Both genders wore tattoos, with designs for



TO THE UNTRAINED EYE THE TWO STICKS LOOK DANGEROUSLY ARCHAIC BUT IN THE HANDS OF A MASTER THEY CAN EXECUTE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL TATTOOS



"... I TRIED IT ONCE ON MYSELF BUT WASN'T HAPPY WITH THE RESULTS. I TRIED TO MAKE THE ASH BASE BUT THE PROBLEM IS IT'S HARD TO MAKE IN LARGE AMOUNTS"



women being more delicate and subtle.

"Hand tap tools are made to do certain patterns. The Borneo tattoo isn't intricately detailed like machines can do. The Iban tattoos are all black. Back in the day there were just two people hammering it in—basically doing a lot of dot work to fill in the black. Compared to modern tattooing where you use a magnum (shading needle) to black everything in, it was just rounds (another type of needle) making lots of dots. The result is a dotted texture that you can see if you look closely."

"For smaller details a shorter stick and less needles. It was also dotted and after years the tattoo will spread but this depends on how deep the ink is in the skin. Hand tapping is what it is. You can't do what you can do now with two sticks and a few needles."

The materials, methods and tattoo designs evolved together to create an art

form that is unique in its style and execution. Borneo hand tap tattooing is unlike any other manual method used around the world. The tools, technique and ink give a very different finish compared to electric machine tattoos and this is part of appeal of hand tap tattoos. You couldn't do portraiture with a hand tap tool kit but then, a machine couldn't authentically produce a Borneo hand tap tattoo.

"Hand tap tattoos look very different to machine tattoos. A good machine tattoo will have perfect lines but a hand tap tattoo you will always get the dots. But if you hand tap using modern inks you can get the same intense black as a machine tattoo. Hand tapping has a unique texture. It's like the difference between water colour and oil paints. Both can make beautiful pictures but the feel is very different." ▣



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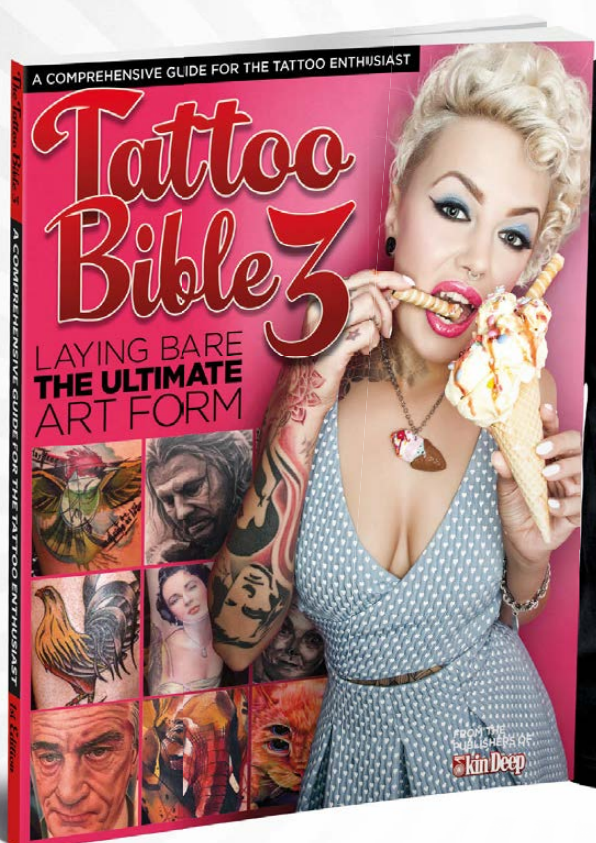
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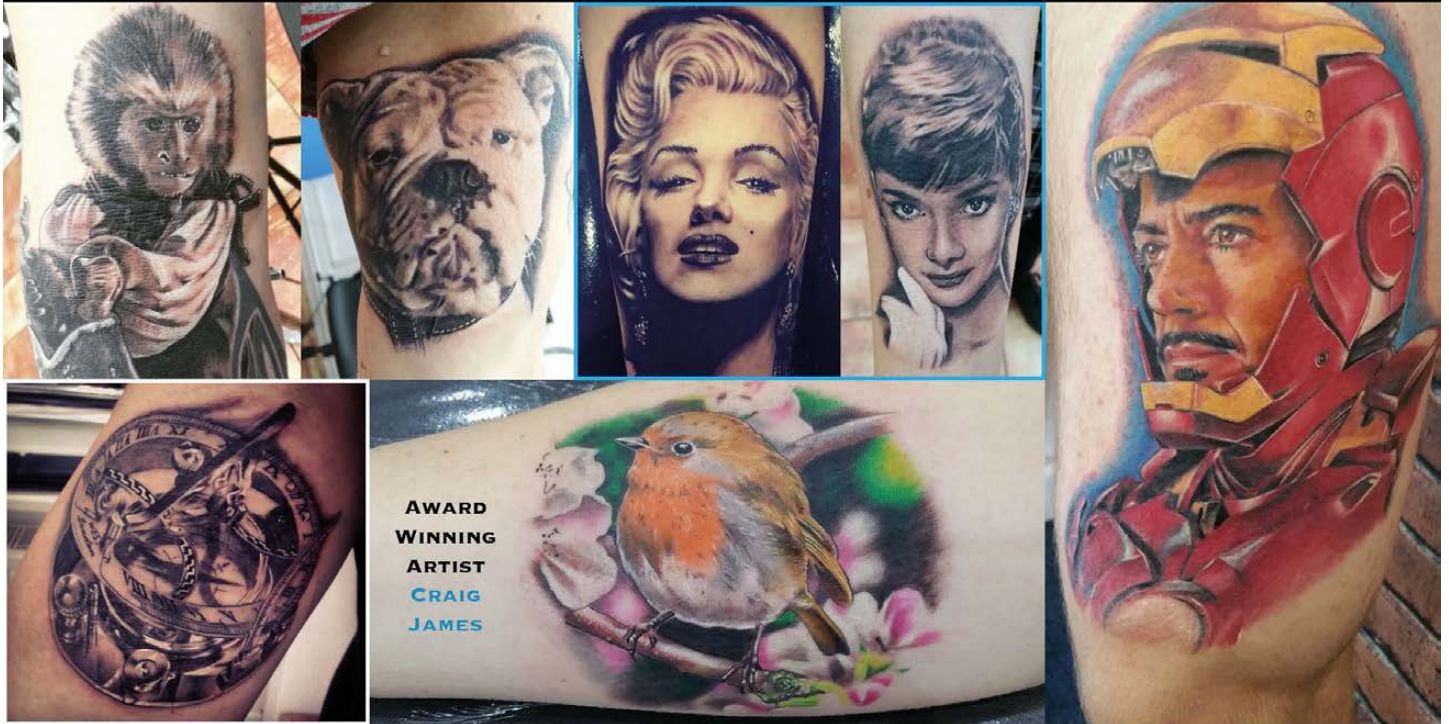
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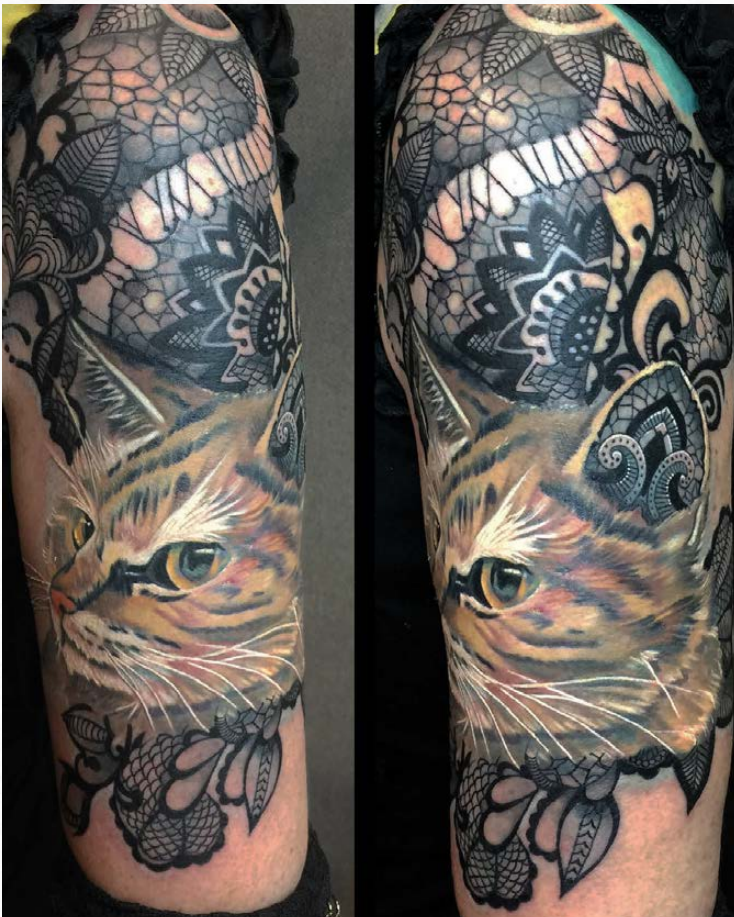
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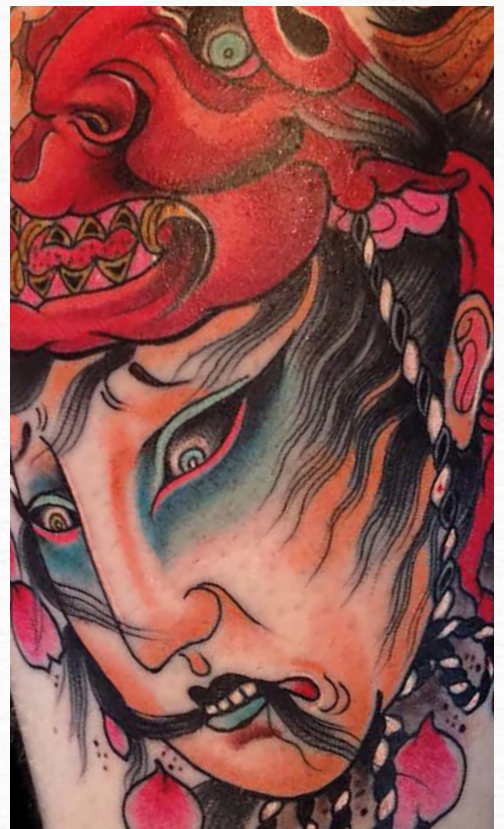


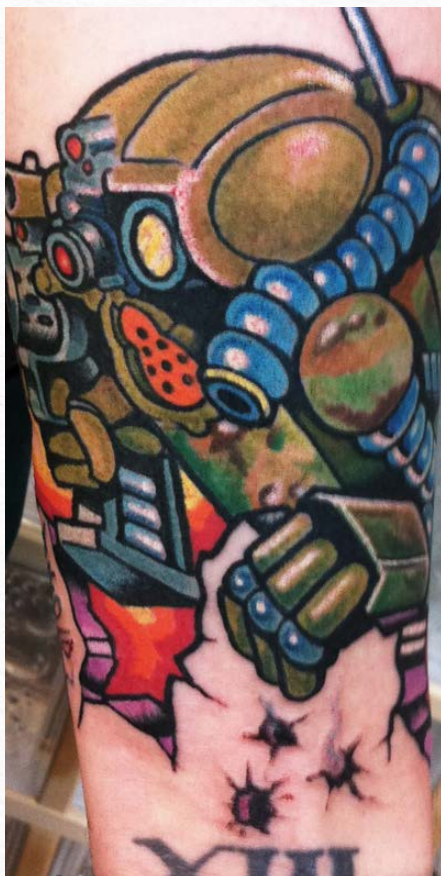
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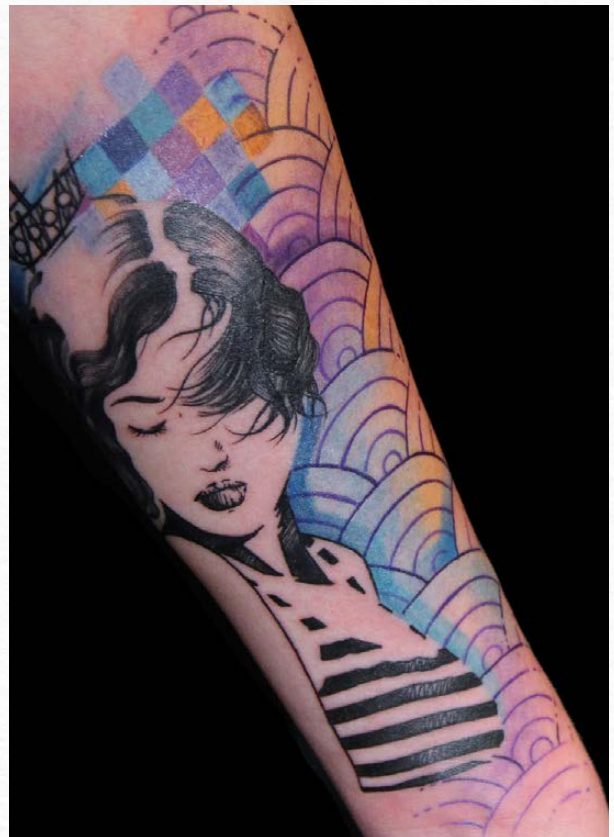
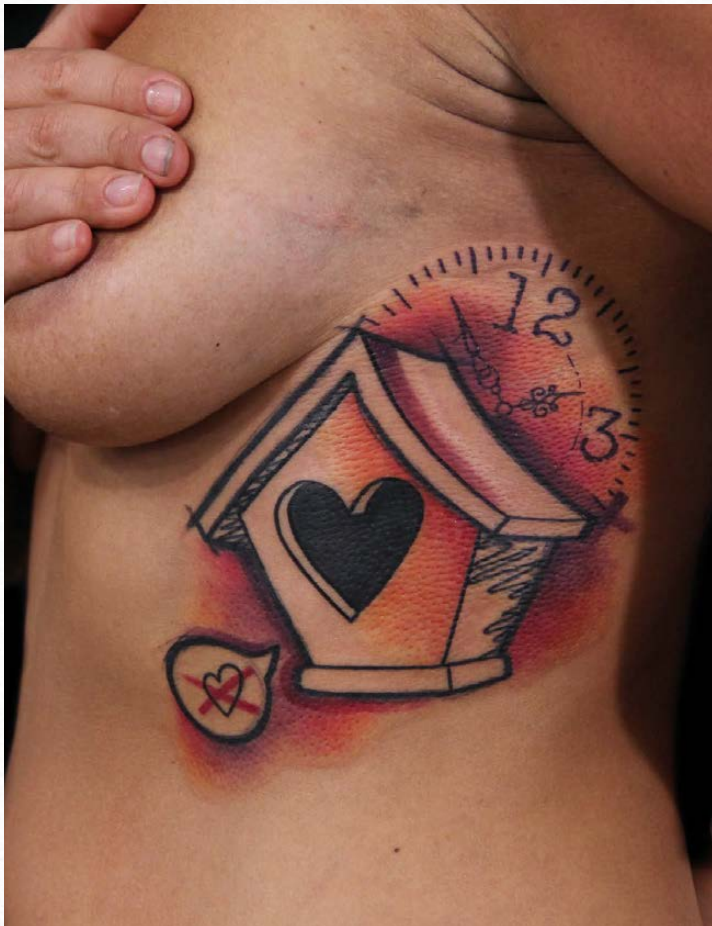
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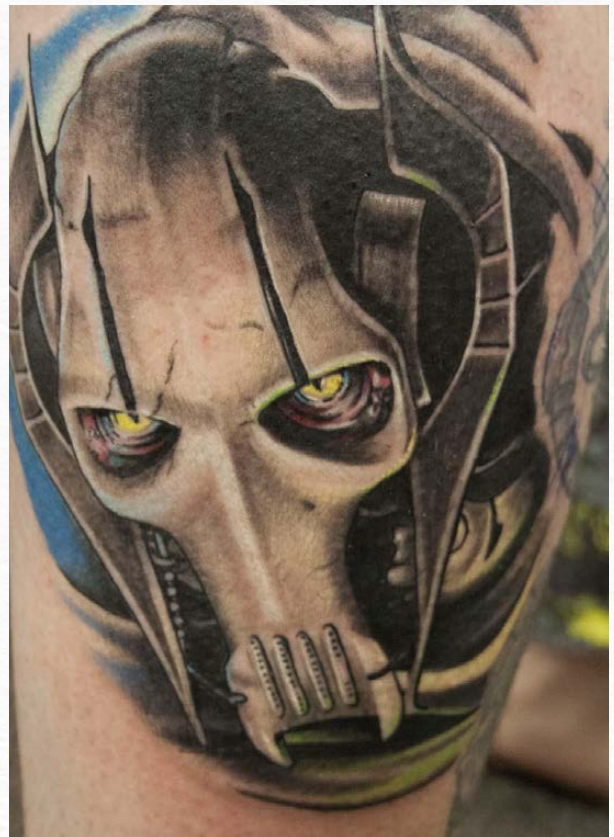
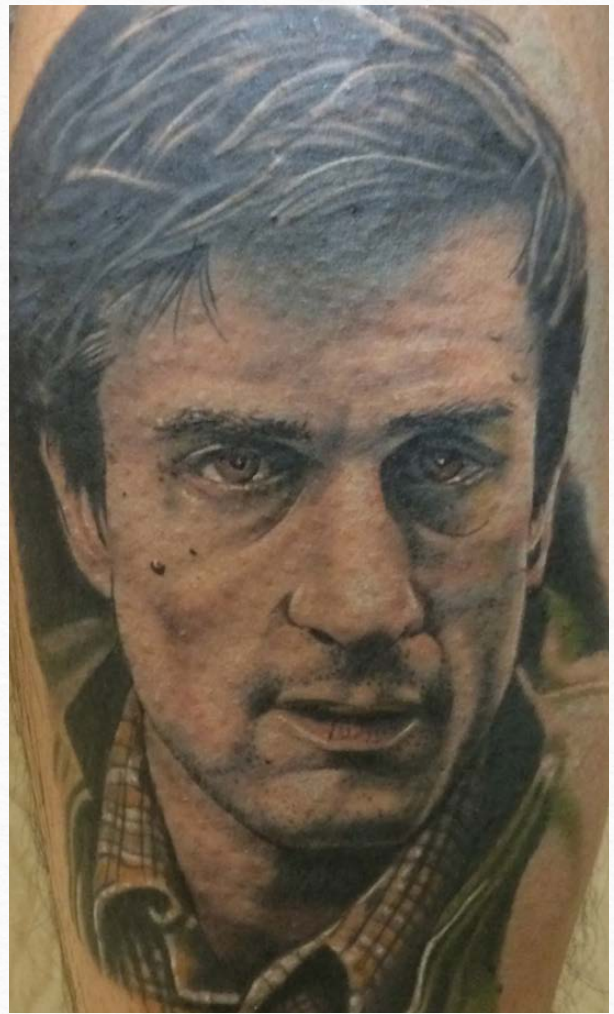
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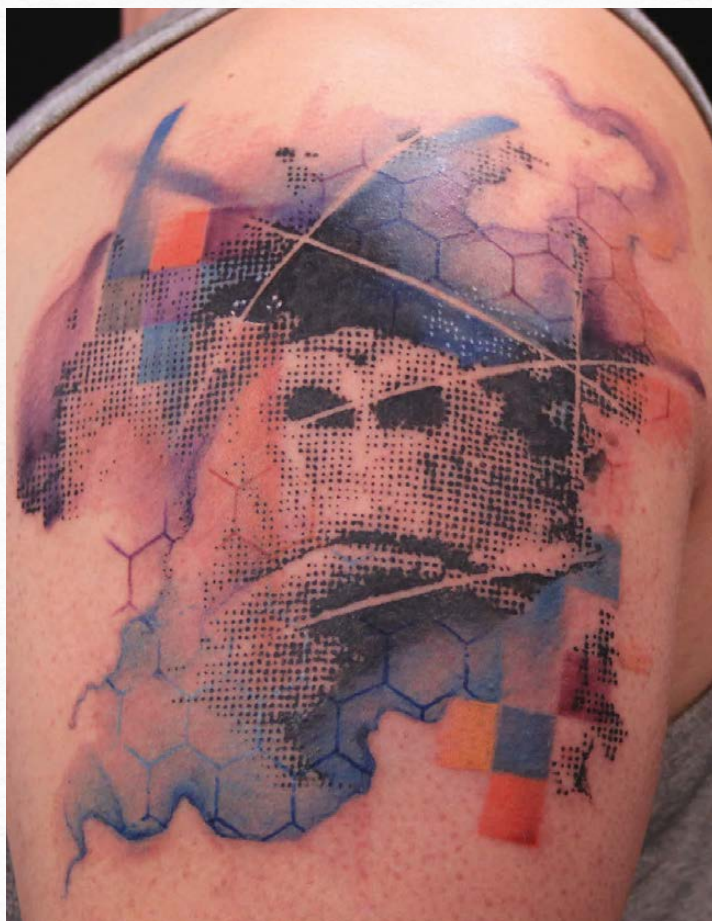
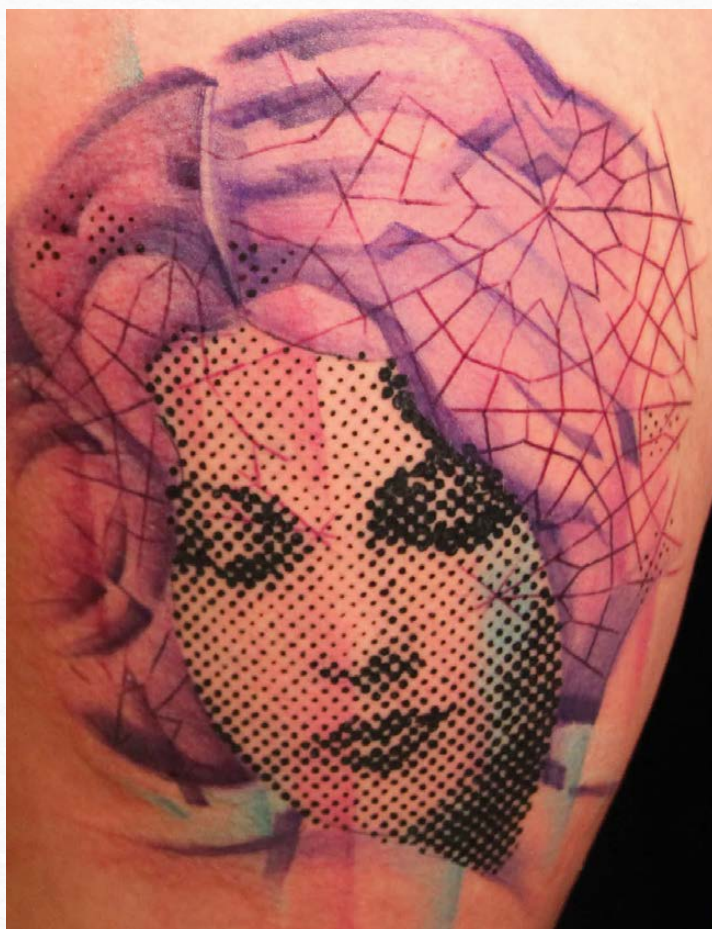


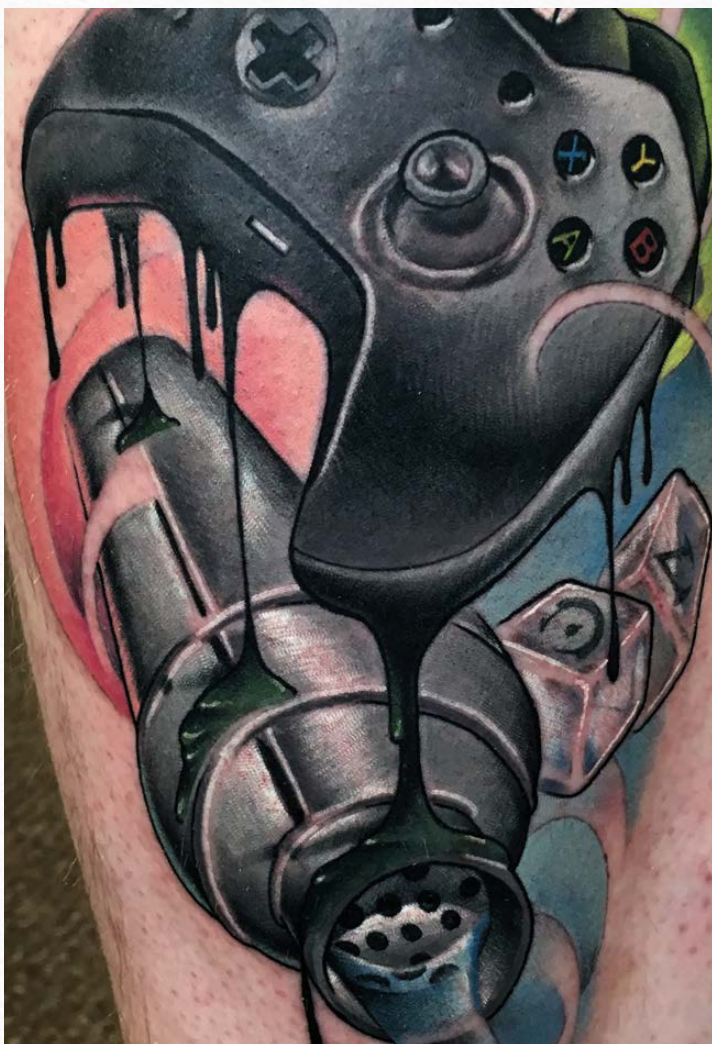
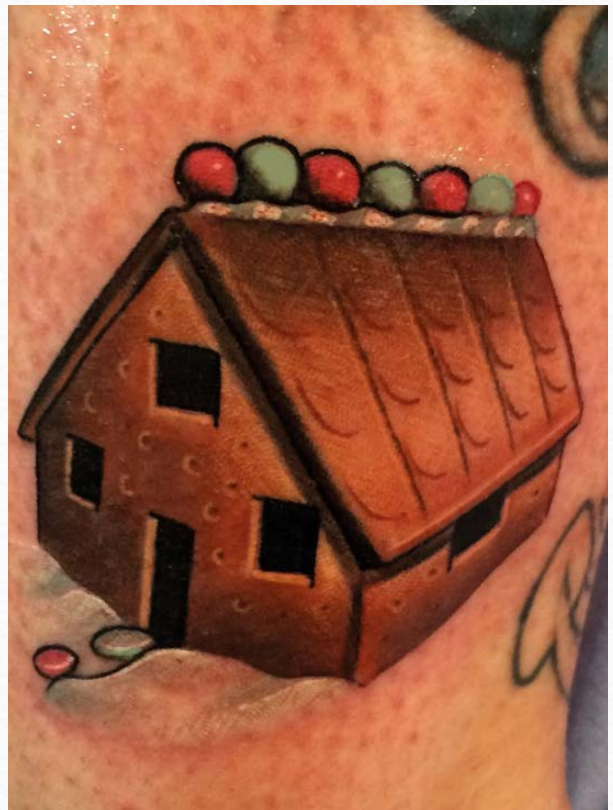
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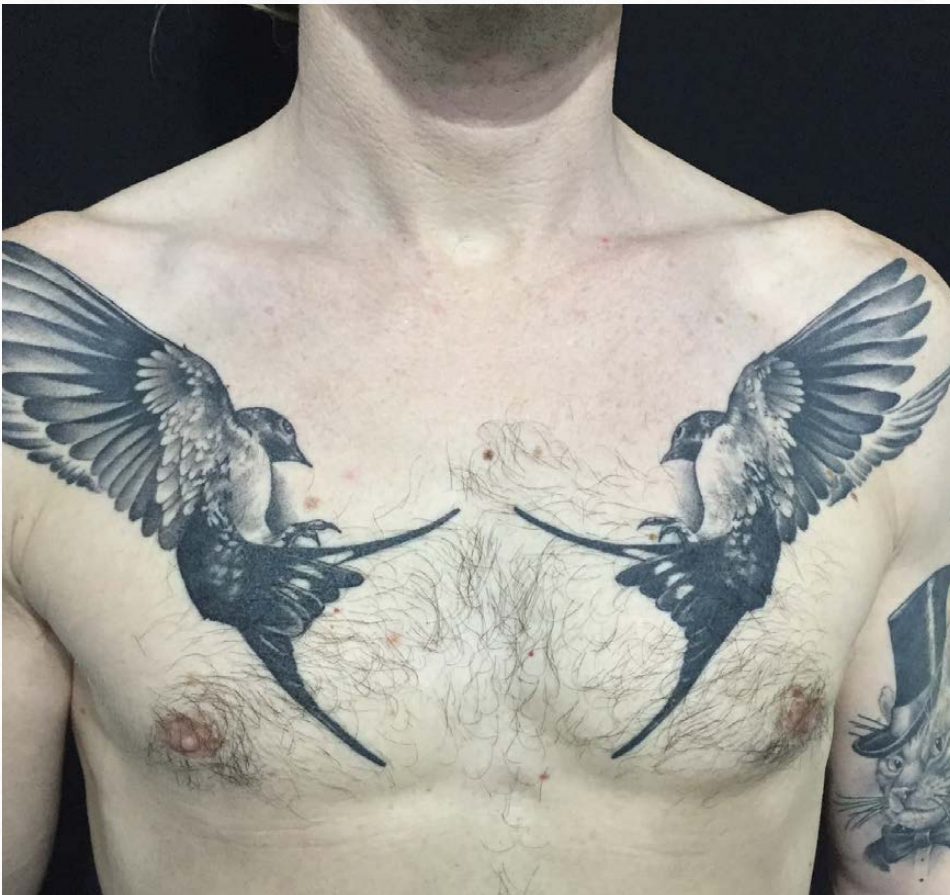


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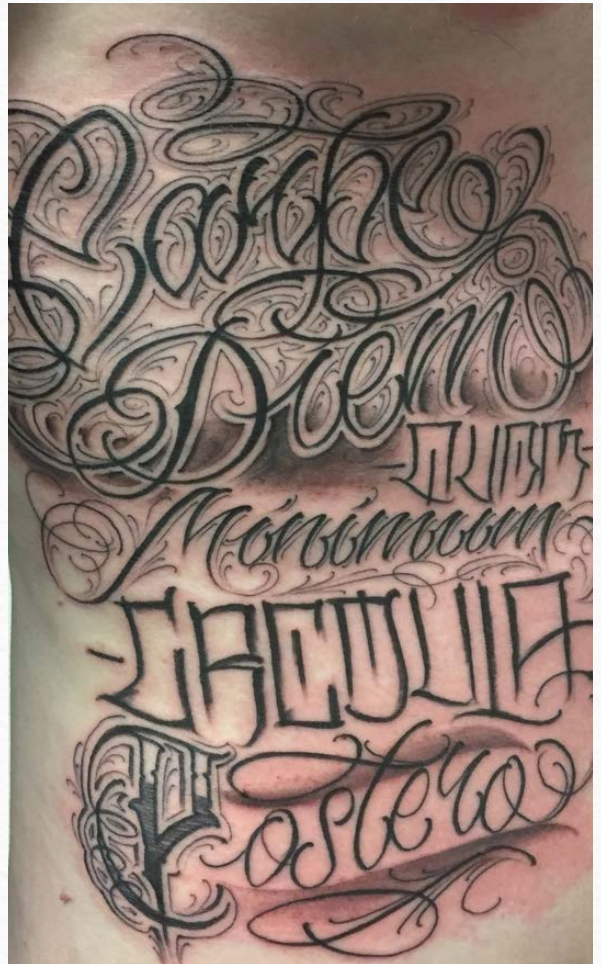




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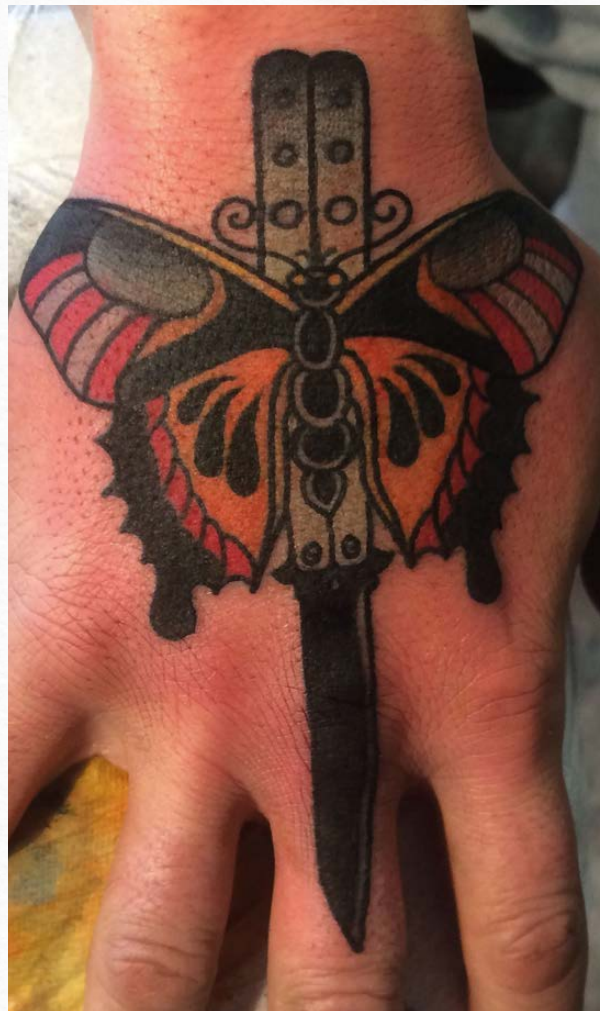
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All work on this page Ryan Ousley

POP LIFE

*A swift tour around any convention will reveal a fairly high percentage of bodies geared up for characters from popular culture to be inked. **Beccy Rimmer** chats to three UK artists about why we choose to ink icons onto our skin*

This time next month I will be getting my first ‘popular culture tattoo’. When we say ‘pop culture tattoos’ we are of course, referring to imagery that directly relates to mainstream culture, so: modern films, TV, music, news and suchlike.

Pop culture tattoos are not timeless symbols, they are clearly representative of a certain point in time.

There are three UK tattoo artists who have endured my stalking and admiring of their pop culture styles—Matt Daniels (aka Sticky-pop) from Studio IX in Manchester, Lucy Hawkins (aka Lucy Blue) based at Blue Car-

dinal Tattoo, Greater Manchester and Ryan Ousley from Songbird Tattoo Studio, Devon.

I wanted to pick their brains about this style of tattoo art and delve into why it’s proving so popular. For Ryan, starting to focus on pop culture tattoos helped him make some decisions.

“Until a couple years ago, I wasn’t sure what direction I wanted to take with regards to my tattooing or even the career itself,” he says. “I wasn’t happy with what I was doing, so I made the decision to focus on the things I enjoy tattooing, and it seems to be working.”

Lucy tells me that pop culture is her favourite kind of tattoos to do... “along with

Ryan Ousley

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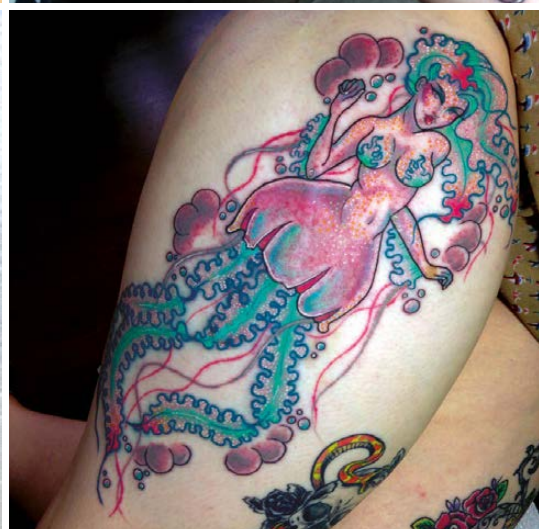
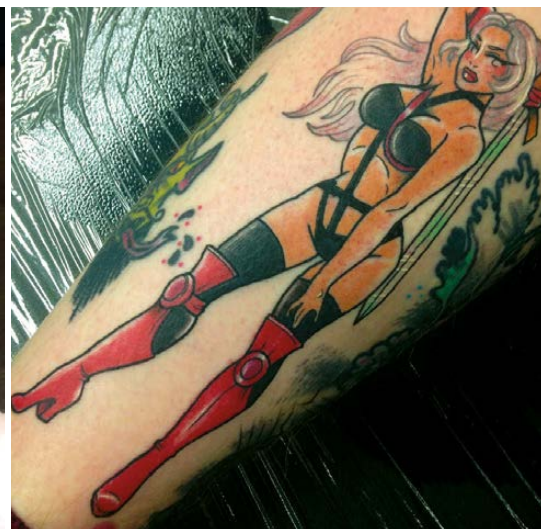
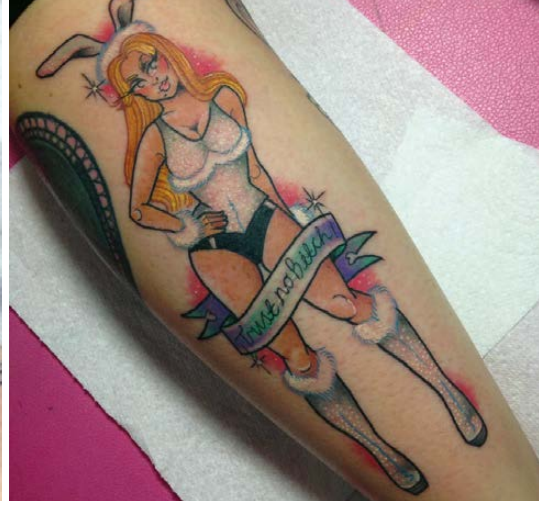
What’s been your favourite pop culture tattoo that you’ve worked on?

I have a long list of favourite pieces from last year, but a few stand out pieces have to be *Edward Scissorhands*, *The Fresh Prince*, Daryl Dixon [*The Walking Dead*], and Sloth [*The Goonies*].

Do you have any pop culture tattoos yourself?

I have Edward Scissorhands, Kurt Cobain, Michael Jackson, Bruce Campbell as Elvis from *Bubba Ho-Tep*, Michael Myers [*Halloween*], The Crow, George A. Romero, *The Last Boys*, Harry Potter, Jaws, Jane Doe [*Converge*], *V for Vendetta* quote, and *Death Note* among others.

Now that tattoos are more socially acceptable, it’s a base for people to express their passion



All work on this spread Lucy Hawkins



Lucy Hawkins (Lucy Blue)

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What's been your favourite pop culture tattoo that you've worked on?

My favourites have been the Drag Race designs, unsurprisingly... drag queens and drag imagery really lend themselves to being tattooed, so much scope for colour! I've loved doing film-based designs like the *Mad Max*, *Heathers*, and *Clueless* designs—there seems to be a real interest in 90s nostalgia designs at the moment and I'm all over that!

Do you have any pop culture tattoos yourself?

I have a couple and about a million plans for a more. I've got a Buffy tattoo by Dom Wiley, it's pretty much my favourite show ever and as lame as it may sound, it's got a special place in my heart, why not get it tattooed? I've also got a 'YAS QUEEN' tattoo by Luke Downing based on the girls from *Broad City*, they're basically my spirit animals. I've also got a Marge Simpson in a thong tattoo [also by Dom Wiley] imitating Nicki Minaj's infamous Anaconda pose—it pays homage to three of my favourite things... *The Simpsons*, Nicki Minaj & butts.

The reality of the world we live in, often doesn't cut it. The fictional worlds we travel to are just infinitely better

food and animal tattoos!" she adds. "It's such a fun subject matter and for me, and means both of us are going to have plenty to talk about while I'm tattooing them!"

This is another one of the main pulls for getting a tattoo of this kind, from an artist with similar passions—the tattoo can bring client and tattooist together and allow two people to spend serious time geeking out about a particular subject.

"I'm itching to do some Parks & Recreation, The Office and Buffy-based stuff," Lucy adds. "Mainly so that I can find someone who wants to spend a good few hours endlessly quoting these shows with me."

I'm in total agreement with her. The tattoo I'm personally planning for next month is to represent a TV programme I've had an obsession with for over ten years. UK tattoo artist Paula Castle is working on the design and when I first broached the subject with her, her reaction was "Oh my God! Yes!"

It makes a real difference having your pop culture tattoo designed by an artist who knows the subject matter well already and gets excited about it. If they are as passionate about the reference as you, you're destined for a tattoo of epic proportions.

Ryan backs this up: "I absolutely love doing pop culture tattoos. It's why I tattoo. Watching a movie or listening to music is my favourite pastime and I've been lucky enough to meet some lovely people and design some awesome pieces thanks to all of their imaginative ideas."

For Matt, specialising in designing pop culture tattoos is a no brainer: "I think I'm just ridiculously lucky. I get to research, draw and tattoo my favourite cartoons, movies and TV shows. Keep it coming!"

Aside from the shared experience with your tattoo artist, a person may also choose a particular cultural icon because they feel a connection to it. Often this is the form of a character they can relate to.

"I think pop culture tattoos are popular because it's something personal to the individual," says Ryan. "Everyone has their own reasons for loving a certain film, TV show, actor or actress, and I find a lot of people get them for nostalgic reasons."

This nostalgic fulfilment is why there are currently a lot of '80s and '90s tattoos being created. This is the case for my own planned tattoo—I am paying homage to a '90s TV show that in hindsight, has had a huge influence on my own personality and interests.

But why is that feeling strong enough to warrant a tattoo? "Now that tattoos are more acceptable, it's a new base for people to express their passion," says Matt. "Some people have posters of their favourite movies... some people have tattoos."

So with a subject matter so personal to the individual,



All work on this spread Matt Daniels

There seems to be a real interest in 90s nostalgia designs at the moment

are we quite versatile with allowing artists to interpret our imagery? When I booked in for my own tattoo, my email to Paula was huge, with the final sentence “sorry to be so specific—the one thing I always tell people not to do! Right, I am going to go away now and stop talking!”

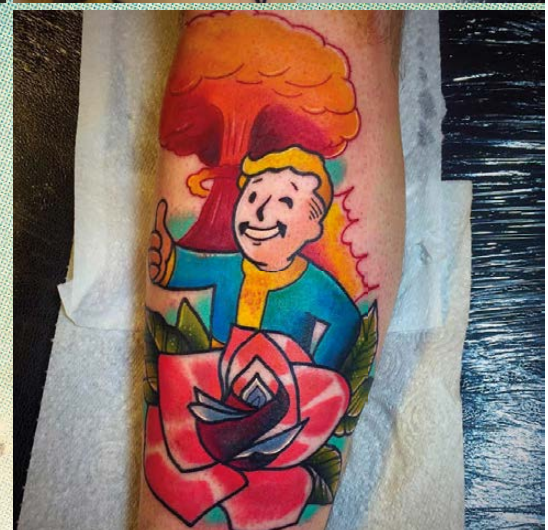
It’s difficult to not get excited about ideas and specifics when planning a tattoo of something you’re so enthusiastic about. Are all other clients as annoying as I was?

“Clients are usually pretty versatile,” says Lucy. “I’ll usually use TV or film stills as reference then try to work off them into my own style.”

Matt’s experiences are similar: “Most of the time I get a lot of freedom to do what I like—it’s pretty awesome to be trusted with something that’s so personal. I usually just ask for a few pieces of reference from the client and just draw from there, or I’ll sit and watch the show/movie to get some inspiration—another perk of the job!”

Ryan explains how the process can work perfectly: “I usually do a small very roughly sketched idea of what I’d like the final piece to look like and use that as my guide.

“Once the client is happy with what I’ve drawn for them, I always put some colours down on the sketch. Everything needs to be 100% ready for the day, down to what colours I’m using. I like to know that both me and the client are totally happy with the piece.”



Stickypop (Matt Daniels)
www.stickypop.co.uk
www.instagram.com/stickypop

What’s been your favourite pop culture tattoo that you’ve worked on?

I honestly have so many favourites. If I had to choose, I had a really fun Deadpool recently, a few BB-8s from the new *Star Wars* movie which I’ve loved doing but I also have to mention the Randy Marsh tattoo I got to do, if you’ve seen the image you’ll know why it was hilarious!

Do you have any pop culture tattoos yourself?

I have a few actually but two favourites have to be my Dwight Schrute (*The Office US*) on my calf by Adam Knowles and my Bart Simpson piece by Gibbo. Both great artists and both absolute gentlemen.

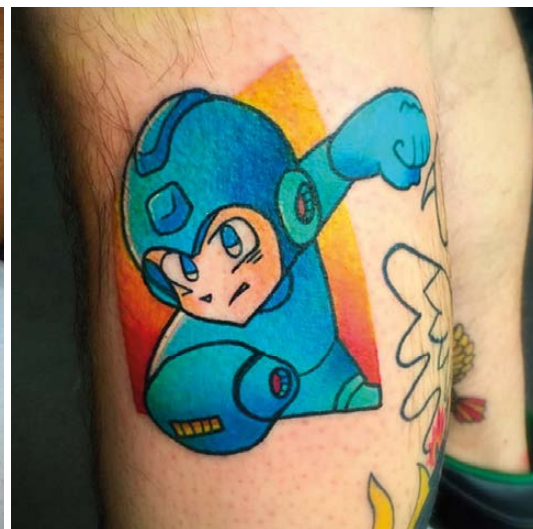
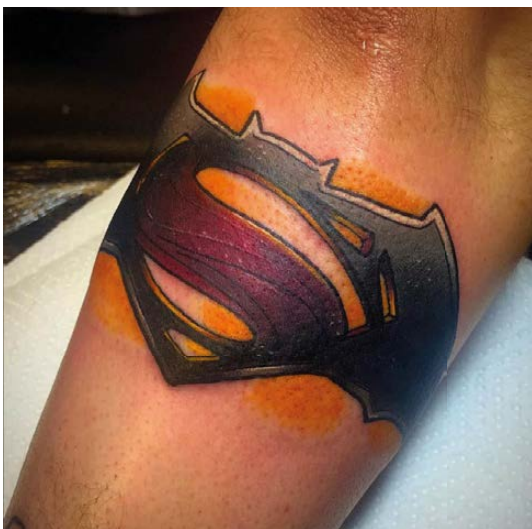
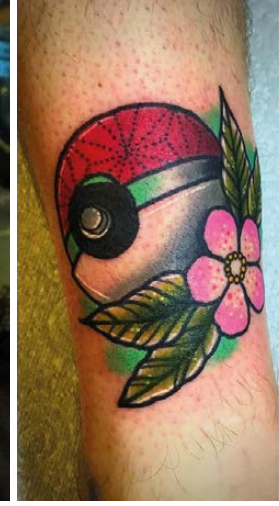
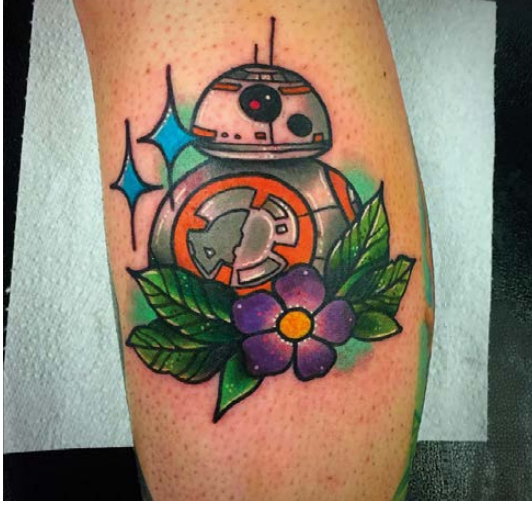
With the recent rise in pop culture tattoos, do we think they are here to stay? For Lucy Blue, this type of tattoo is definitely a sign of present times: “With tattoos being more popular and fashionable than ever, with an ever-growing younger and more modern audience, people are wanting more fun, frivolous and relatable ideas.”

“I think due to sites and apps like Instagram and Tumblr, tattoos are becoming a lot more trend driven. The ’90s trend is everywhere at the moment and it definitely seeps into tattoo culture!”

As always, we’re left with many different interpretations as to why people choose to get tattoos, in this case, of popular cultural images. Are they a passing trend, or something deep rooted in each individual’s life passions? I’m certainly campaigning for the latter. The decision to get my ’90s TV show tattoo has been years overdue.

Reality and the world we live in, often doesn’t cut it. For me, the fictional worlds we travel to are infinitely better, and can bring more enlightenment and discovery than our real-life experiences.

No matter what decade you live in, why not have a reminder of that sensation on your body forever? ▣



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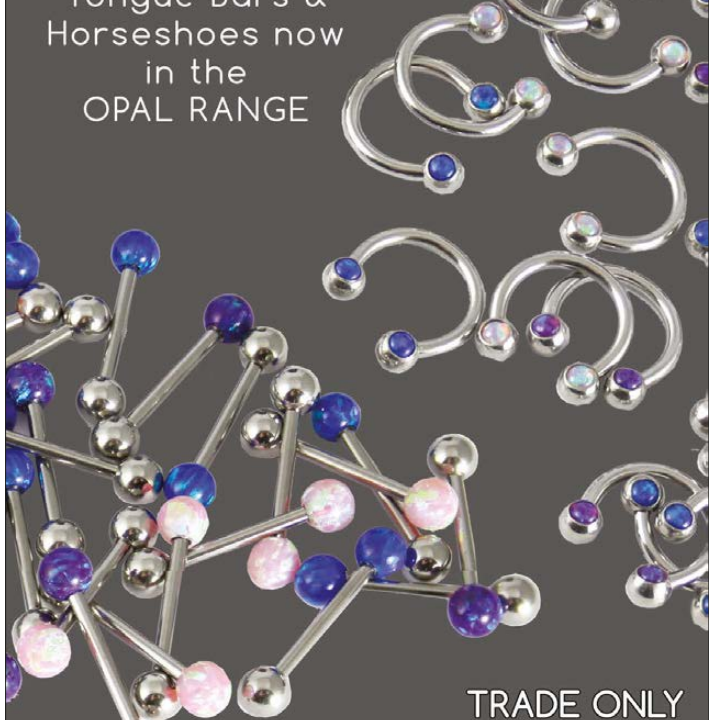
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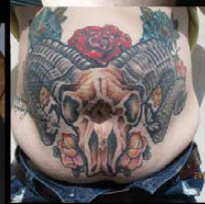
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LUST & CONSUME

There's something special about traveling tattoo artists. Yes, they help the great old school traditions live on, but more importantly, they have the balls to do what most artists only dare dream about: Pack up and hit the road. Phil Tworavens is one of these rare tattooers who's always on the move—obviously we just had to track him down

Spot one of Phil Tworavens' blackwork tattoos and you'll likely find yourself looking like a bit of a schmuck, staring at it, mouth agape, unable to vocalise the effect it's having on you. Or maybe that's just me.

Either way, there's no denying that every single line and point in Tworavens' intricate work is packed with artistic merit. The fact that he has "only been on the grind for less than two years" blows my freaking mind, but it's not all that surprising, seeing as he's never been one to "think any sacrifice is too big for finding your calling in life." Not even "giv-

ing up painting and putting my masters degree to no use." Somewhere in between his guesting stops at Blackbird Electric in Calgary, Canada and Daredevil Tattoo in New York City (be sure to check his Instagram for UK dates!), I tracked Tworavens down to get a better sense of what makes him tick and found pretty solid proof that true talent is born, not made.

WAS THERE A PARTICULAR TATTOO ARTIST WHO PEAKED YOUR INTEREST AND DREW YOU INTO THIS WORLD? Sailor Jerry's tattoos are definitely a traditional classic, but



Robert Borbas

Robert Borbas AKA Grindesign can be found tattooing at Dark Art Tattoo, a shop founded by Zsolt Sárközi in 1992 in Budapest, Hungary. There, he creates intricate black and grey pieces in a neo-traditional style. When he's not in the studio, he works as a freelance illustrator and designer who has a penchant for collaborating with rad bands, including Gwar and Cancer Bats.

it wasn't until I saw the work of Alexander Grim and Robert Borbas that my mind exploded. The intricacy and flow of the designs were a true milestone, showing me the possibilities in terms of line quality and contrast.

TAKE ME BACK TO THE FIRST TIME YOU GOT TATTOOED.

WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH YOUR MIND, AND WHAT DESIGN DID YOU CHOOSE?

It was quite pleasant, actually. I must have been 21 and found this place in Los Angeles called Broken Art Tattoo. I got a very traditional tattoo: A bold rose on top of a revolver chamber and barbed wire. I already had a design in mind and the artist, Justin Dion, adapted it, so it would fit better on my shoulder/tricep area. The whole experience was calming and full of adrenaline. I have been hooked since!

WHEN DID THAT PASSION MORPH INTO A DESIRE TO ACTUALLY LEARN TO TATTOO?

That was the first time I picked up a tattoo machine and started tattooing my ankle. That must have been about three years ago.

DID AN APPRENTICESHIP FOLLOW THAT FATEFUL ANKLE TATTOO?

I respect the tradition and history of tattooing and I feel there is a lot to learn from it. I understand the importance of going through a true apprenticeship, but my path was different — I am self-taught.

I tried starting the traditional way, looking for an apprenticeship and wanting to train under a mentor, but the truth is I wasn't able to find one in which I wasn't going to be exploited for free labour. Being pushed around like a slave for two or three years — minimum — without pay and not being allowed to touch a machine during that time didn't feel right for me.



So I just picked up a machine and tried it on myself. I decided not to practice on fake skin or fruit because, even though it might be good practice to understand your machine, it doesn't teach you how to stretch the skin, how the body breathes and moves or when the endorphins kick in. And foremost, if I am going to do this on someone else, I better know how my own hand feels. Every now and then, even until this day, I tattoo myself, so that I can keep myself in check. Plus, I think it is a very good way to get to know yourself.

YOU'RE A FREAKING MASTER OF BLACK AND GREY. DID YOU KNOW YOU WANTED TO STICK TO THAT FROM DAY 1?

I am no master at all. I have so much more to learn, explore and experiment. There is a lot that only years of experience can teach you.

FAIR POINT! LET ME ASK YOU THIS THEN: WHY DO YOU HATE COLOUR? [LAUGHS]

I actually love colour! All of my oil paintings were in colour, but tattooing feels closer to drawing and the essence of draftsmanship and I have always admired the old engravings and woodcuts of Albert Durer, Francisco Goya, Gustav Dore and Franz Von Bayros. Their line quality and contrast are so remarkably exquisite, so since day 1, I have been trying to translate on skin what those masters did on paper, wood and plates.

WHAT HAS SURPRISED YOU MOST ABOUT LEARNING TO TATTOO THUS FAR?

"Surprised" wouldn't be the word. More like "intrigued". Intrigued by the fact that every single person has a different energy during the session and their own way of accepting the pain.

YOU OBVIOUSLY LOVE TO TRAVEL, WHICH MAKES ME THINK OF THE OLD SCHOOL TRADITION OF TATTOOING. IS BEING ON THE ROAD PART OF PAYING HOMAGE TO THE PAST?



Definitely. As a matter of fact, on my first travels while guesting, I spent two to three weeks living in a boat. So yes, traveling is the most exciting part of it. I love exploring different places and delving into new experiences while meeting new people. I am quite addicted to the exchange of energy that happens in the ritual of tattooing—it's thrilling. Although I do have to say that sailing can get very lonesome from time to time.

DESPITE THE FACT THAT YOU'RE CONSTANTLY MOVING AROUND THE GLOBE, IS THERE ONE SPECIAL PLACE YOU CALL HOME?

I don't have a specific place I could call home. I have never actually felt at home anywhere. I've been used to moving around since I was a kid. My parents are Korean and I

was born and raised in Chile and wandered around South America until I was 19. So the closest thing to home would be where my deepest connections with people are held.

AS SOMEONE WHO ISN'T TIED TO A SPECIFIC SHOP, HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY PERKS THAT OTHER TATTOO ARTISTS MAY NOT GET TO ENJOY?

The best thing by far is that I get to work alongside so many talented artists. I have been lucky enough that people have found me through social media and invited me to their shops. It is a great honour for me to be received with welcoming arms to their beloved space. I am so thankful to have that exchange of energy and ink.

That is the best thing about traveling and tattooing: Trading and collecting permanent memories from some of the awesomest souls I have met. Whenever I get to chose a location, I look for someone I really admire, shoot them an email and wait with my fingers crossed.

HAVE YOU EVER WALKED INTO A STUDIO AS A GUEST ARTIST AND DISCOVERED THAT IT WASN'T QUITE WHAT YOU



WERE EXPECTING, FOR BETTER OR WORSE?

I have to say that all the places so far have been amazing! They all have such different energies and are unique, warm and full of kind-hearted people.

The only places I have ever had my second thoughts about were a couple of shops here in Los Angeles that ended up not being what I was hoping for.

IF YOU LOOK DOWN AT YOUR INK COLLECTION RIGHT NOW, WHICH PIECES CATCH YOUR EYE FIRST? WHETHER BECAUSE OF THEIR DESIGN, THE MEANING BEHIND THEM OR ANY REASON AT ALL.

A long time ago, when I didn't even know I was going to be a tattoo artist, my brother tattooed a small Om sign on my forearm. Later on that night, I tattooed myself for the first time and that is when this all started.

A few months later, a very close friend of mine wanted to learn how to tattoo, so he did a skeleton owl in flight on the side of my thigh.

On my first trip to New York, I got to meet John and Anka who now own Black Iris Tattoo. They were the sweetest, kindest people ever, so I felt honoured to have their work on me. I have a bone dagger and flowers on my right forearm by John and a woman spirit with skulls on my sternum by Anka.

Ghent, Belgium is a very dear place to me. That was the very first city I traveled to and guested in. I got to meet some amazing people, so I get some new pieces every time I go visit them. I got a Polynesian piece done by Tanne

Alexander Grim
Based in Saint Petersburg, Russia, Alexander Grim creates big, bold black and grey tattoos that flawlessly mix influences and aesthetics. More often than not, his designs showcase a big dose of gothic inspiration, but although he's drawn to grim imagery, his work always manages to showcase undeniable beauty.



Sailor Jerry

Norman Keith Collins, more commonly known as Sailor Jerry, learned to tattoo as a child while hopping freight trains across his native U.S. At 19, he joined the Navy before settling down and opening a tattoo shop in Honolulu, Hawaii. He passed away in 1973, but his influence on the tattooing will be felt for generations to come.

and a roaring head of a tiger from my bro Julian. I met them both at Bodydesign in Ghent and they are like family to me.

I'M CURIOUS: AS A TATTOOER, DOES IT EVER FEEL STRANGE GETTING TATTOOED BY OTHER ARTISTS?

It doesn't feel strange at all. It is

actually an awesome experience. I feel thrilled every time I get to trade with someone.

THERE'S NOT A LOT OF INFO ABOUT YOU ON THE INTERNET — I'M GUESSING THIS IS INTENTIONAL? AND THAT WE WON'T BE SEEING YOU ON A REALITY TV SHOW ANY TIME SOON? [LAUGHS]

Yes! Not a lot of info about me out there, just the inks for the most part. I am still digesting the evolution of my practice and career. Everything has been so fast, surreal and amazing that I am trying to keep my head straight and my feet on the ground. And you are absolutely right: No shows for me, please!

SAY YOU WAKE UP ONE MORNING AND FIND YOURSELF IN DIRE NEED OF INSPIRATION — WHERE DO YOU TURN?

I have a vast collection of images that I go through every once in a while, but for the most part I keep scrolling on Instagram, getting inspired by all the people putting awesome work out there. That always kicks me off in the right direction. I also get a good dose of inspiration trying to come up with a visual solution to the challenges I get from some clients!

WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST, MOST AMAZING THING YOU OWN?

[laughs] I have no idea! Maybe my harmonica collection?

ANY PLANS TO SETTLE DOWN IN ONE CITY OR OPEN YOUR OWN SHOP?

Yes, probably have a double home base in Los Angeles and New York, but I am not quite sure yet. I will be on the road until the time comes.

PLEASE FINISH THIS SENTENCE: PHIL TWORAVENS IS...

... just a sailor looking for a port to play the blues. ▣

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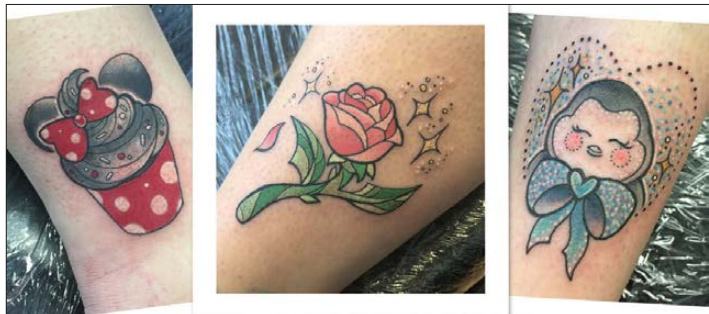


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BEHIND THE INK

ANIMALS

Whether it's an old school panther or a portrait of someone's cat, animals have been the muse of tattoo artists for many years now, and will be for many more to come. So what is it about our furry (and scaly) brothers and sisters that has led so many of us to immortalise them in ink? Wayne Simmons invokes his inner beast to find out in this month's Behind the Ink

When I approached Liam Jackson, who works out of Studio 31 in Hull, about being involved with this month's feature, he had only one question for me: 'Would dinosaurs

count as animals?' I had to think about it for a while as, well, with dinosaurs being extinct for a few (million) years now, it's kind of hard to think of them as being anything, really. But of course they count. In fact, when it all boils down to it (as The Rakes once sang): we are all animals.

Perhaps that's why we're so drawn to them, then. Animals appeal to us because we can relate to them. Because we are them. And, in many cases, because we form very human attachments to them. For Liam, as is the case for many of you reading, no doubt, dogs are where it's at. 'They're 110% better than people,' he laughs, also citing birds of prey as something of an obsession.

'I think my love for animals shows in how much time and effort I put into creating my tattoos. I try to take everything into account: look at photographs, try not to over-exaggerate anything. Animals definitely lend themselves to a vibe. In fact, it's difficult not to capture their natural expressions when designing tattoos.'

The sentience—or humanity, if you like—of animals is something that Henbo can relate to, as well. An illustrator by trade, he currently slings ink at three studios: Sacred Art in Manchester, Black Lotus in Liverpool and The Circle in London. The affinity he feels with animals is celebrated—glorified, even—in pretty much everything he does: 'Cats, rabbits and other domesticated animals really suit being dressed in regal and gentlemanly clothes,' he explains. 'Whereas falcons, eagles and wolves look great in amour, or as wizards or barbarians.' And



Liam Jackson



All work on this page Liam Jackson

yet, regardless of context, he reckons, the most important thing when designing a tattoo is to stay true to the animal. 'I'm a stickler for anatomy so things have to be correct. I think it helps to study the animals before you draw them. There are a lot of differences between a falcon and a sparrow, for example.'

As the surrealist of the pack, Hollie May Wall has perhaps more creative freedom when it comes to designing animal tattoos, and she damn well ain't afraid to use it. Hollie co-owns Old Smithy Tattoo Parlour in Staffordshire Moorlands, Leek, with her husband and shop manager, Matt, but despite working in a small town, she's known

I THINK MY LOVE FOR ANIMALS SHOWS IN HOW MUCH TIME AND EFFORT I PUT INTO CREATING MY TATTOOS

Liam Jackson

for thinking (and inking) outside of the box big-time. 'I like to use my imagination and not always opt for the obvious choice,' she tells me. 'You can manipulate a design to create a particular vibe, altering the features and shapes within an animal to create something cuter or more aggressive. My designs often have hidden meanings; I will take the client's ideas and put them into the tattoo in a unique way. I also freehand a lot during tattooing, so it's important that the design is quite loose and can be added to as I go.' For Hollie, relating to animals is a whole lifestyle, not just part of her work as an artist. 'I'm a vegetarian and animal welfare is important



All work this page Hollie-May Wall

to me. I think naturally it's what inspires my work. I have a fondness for nature and find the movement of trees and flowers really suits the movement of the body. Branches, leaves and animal markings suit my style of tattooing, I feel, as they lend themselves to a line-focused style.'

Of course, pet portraits are big business in today's tattoo market, especially within realism. While none of our BTI-ers this month are realism artists, per se, they still get asked to do portraits in their own unique styles. Is the approach any different, I wondered?

'They're actually the tattoos I get nervous about most because they have to look like

YOU CAN MANIPULATE A DESIGN TO CREATE A PARTICULAR VIBE... MY DESIGNS OFTEN HAVE HIDDEN MEANINGS

Hollie-May Wall



the animal the client has spent a large amount of time looking at,' Liam tells me. 'I try to get as much photo reference and colour/pattern reference as possible before I design the tattoo. Also I like to find out if they had a favourite toy or collar or just something cool I can add to make the piece a bit more fun.'

For Henbo, the approach is much the same for every tattoo. 'I recently did a pet cat for a customer and I approached it the same way as any portrait, working off a photo. I just use different techniques to make sure the tattoo is true to the original reference. The most important thing when designing any piece, though, is that it flows with the body and



All work on this page Henbo

looks good, and of course that the customer is happy.'

Hollie also gets asked a lot for pet portraits and, like Henbo, approaches them in much the same way as she approaches any piece. 'I have done tattoos of people's cats, dogs, hedgehogs and even a snail!' she laughs. 'I love doing portraits. I approach them using a photo of the animal and drawing out the shape, making sure it loosely resembles the animal. Then I add sketchy lines and colour.'

Talking with our artists this month, I'm starting to wonder if one of the main reasons so many of us get tattoos of animals is because we're jealous of them. Is their vi-

I'M A STICKLER FOR ANATOMY SO THINGS HAVE TO BE CORRECT. I THINK IT HELPS TO STUDY THE ANIMALS BEFORE YOU DRAW THEM

Henbo

tality and their colour and their beautiful recklessness something that we, in our humdrum nine-to-five lives, secretly envy? I mean, we talk about a dog's life like it's the worst thing in the world, but oh to be a dog some days; living each day in such a gloriously carefree way.

Liam's certainly rocking at bit of that colour and vitality in his new school work, that's for sure.

He tells me about a piece that won him 2nd place in the Best of Sunday at the Sheffield show last November. 'The tattoo involved a red panda and a buck toothed goldfish facing off,' he laughs.

And what's not to love about that! ▣

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TATTOO UTOPIA

*Splitting your time between Valencia and Ireland sounds like fun, especially when you get to make some amazing tattoos along the way—
Nicky Connor chats to artist Charles Hurman to find out more*

utopiantattoo.tribe.com [UtopianTribe](#) [utopiantattoo.tribe](#)



Charlie has always been a grafter. From a young age, he always wanted to work hard and be successful in what he did but a twist of fate led him to change his path:

“Since I was 17, I’ve worked in restaurants, real estate agencies, offices and in the port but nothing felt right. At 21, I decided to be an entrepreneur and I opened a spa centre and a real estate agency at the same time.

“Suddenly, it all collapsed and I lost everything. I was devastated. Then I realised that it was one of the best things that ever happened to me. The house, the car and the business all felt like such a heavy weight and none of them made me happy. So I decided to invest all my time and effort in doing things that I really enjoyed no matter the money involved—even if that meant being chased by banks forever.”

This change of course allowed him to focus on his passions and believe in himself in a different and more creative way,

“Drawing and painting are the only things I have ever done for fun, but I never thought about it as a career. So I started to believe in it. A friend made me realise that by getting into tattooing, I could draw for

a living. Then something clicked in my brain and ever since that day, my path has felt right.

“Once you see the path, messages come to you if you listen.”

That was about seven years ago and Charlie’s work and career have gone from strength to strength, but he recognises that it takes time and guidance to learn to tattoo well:

“I would say that the first two to three years were just scratching, this was the amount of time it took me to get other artists to teach me a bit. That’s why I tell people who are still learning to go for an apprenticeship or keep developing your drawing until you get a mentor.

“I would say I lost those two–three years of my life being a scratcher, I didn’t learn a thing from it and I fucked up many tattoos during that time. That still haunts me. Luck-



I DECIDED TO INVEST ALL MY TIME AND EFFORT DOING THINGS THAT I REALLY ENJOYED NO MATTER THE MONEY INVOLVED—EVEN IF THAT MEANT BEING CHASED BY BANKS FOREVER

ily I've had the chance to fix nearly all those tattoos."

As his confidence in his own work grew, Charlie started developing his own style:

"Creating realism is full of rules and methods, verses the abstract that seems crazy and spontaneous. I love how my brain jumps from the fixed methods of realism to the craziness of the abstract. It's like my Yin Yang.

"I started to label my style as 'abstract reality'. This is the closest I can get to summarising it. My style is based on realism photography mixed with abstract elements, like oils stains, splashes and similar additions."

With this understanding came a desire to produce work that not only developed his skills as an artist, but also pushed the boundaries between tattoo styles:

"I look at tattooing today and there are so many amazing realists, I want to push it to the next level like other in-

spiring artists. I want to do the 'reality-plus' much more."

Charlie has a commitment to his craft that drives him to continue to develop his work as much as possible while keeping it in tune with the body of his clients.

"The main reason is that I want my tattoos to be as solid and as adapted to the body as in other styles—like Japanese or neo-traditional. With the abstract, I can create movement and solidness however I want.

"I also want to incorporate energy into my work and allow it to flow with the body. The abstract can be deformed and used however I want. There are no rules for it, so I can add the extra energy, contrast and motion I want for my tattoos.

"There are so many good digital artists, painters and photographers out there. I like to combine them in to my work and add my own point of view. It's just crazy. I spend sleepless nights being amazed on the internet at all the



CREATING REALISM IS FULL OF RULES AND METHODS, WHEREAS THE ABSTRACT SEEMS CRAZY AND SPONTANEOUS. I LOVE HOW MY BRAIN JUMPS FROM THE FIXED METHODS OF REALISM TO THE CRAZINESS OF THE ABSTRACT

new artists emerging everyday in all mediums.'

Charlie works between two studios—one in Ireland and one in Spain that opened last year. Each studio is very different but has its own charm:

"We have two tattoo studios that have completely different systems. Utopian Tattoo Tribe in Valencia (Spain) is a big studio with many international artists. It's in a cool, sunny city on the beach with loads of life and there, it's easier to get an appointment.

"Utopian Tattoo Tribe in Kilkenny (Ireland) is basically in the middle of nowhere! It's appointments only and usually booked online, so if you are not pre-booked, you won't get past the door! We divert all clients to one point, which is our website www.utopiantattoo.com where they can use the contact form but within a few days, we

will answer any questions and price queries. I keep my waiting list short so I don't freak out with all the work—that's something that has happened to me in the past and I learned from it!"

Similar to other artists who work in an individual style, Charlie's clients have to understand his work and give him an amount of creative freedom with his work,

"The way I work is by taking clients who really trust me. That doesn't mean they can't choose a subject or tell me the things they like, but from there they have to trust that the information they have given me will result in a long lasting well-defined tattoo. If the waiting list gets longer then five months I close my books, so people never have to wait longer than that."

With painting being a passion of Charlie's, these form



I LOOK AT TATTOOING TODAY AND THERE ARE MANY AMAZING REALISTS THAT I WANT TO PUSH IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL LIKE OTHER INSPIRING ARTISTS. I WANT TO DO THE 'REALITY-PLUS' MUCH MORE


part of his downtime and hobbies. He uses both as a way of honing his observational skills and developing his designs. You can really see the link between the physical process of applying tones and oils with the layers and shading created in his tattoos.


"I tattoo like I paint—I make my brain work the same way and for me, it works great."

With two studios to split your time between, there is a

lot of travelling and researching, there is a constant hunger to develop skills and knowledge both from a personal and also on a professional level.

"I don't stop travelling and basically I like to go to new places the whole time. The reason for so much travelling is to learn and share information with other artists—I always come back with new inspiration and at the same time I can't help thinking, 'What else am I missing?'" □



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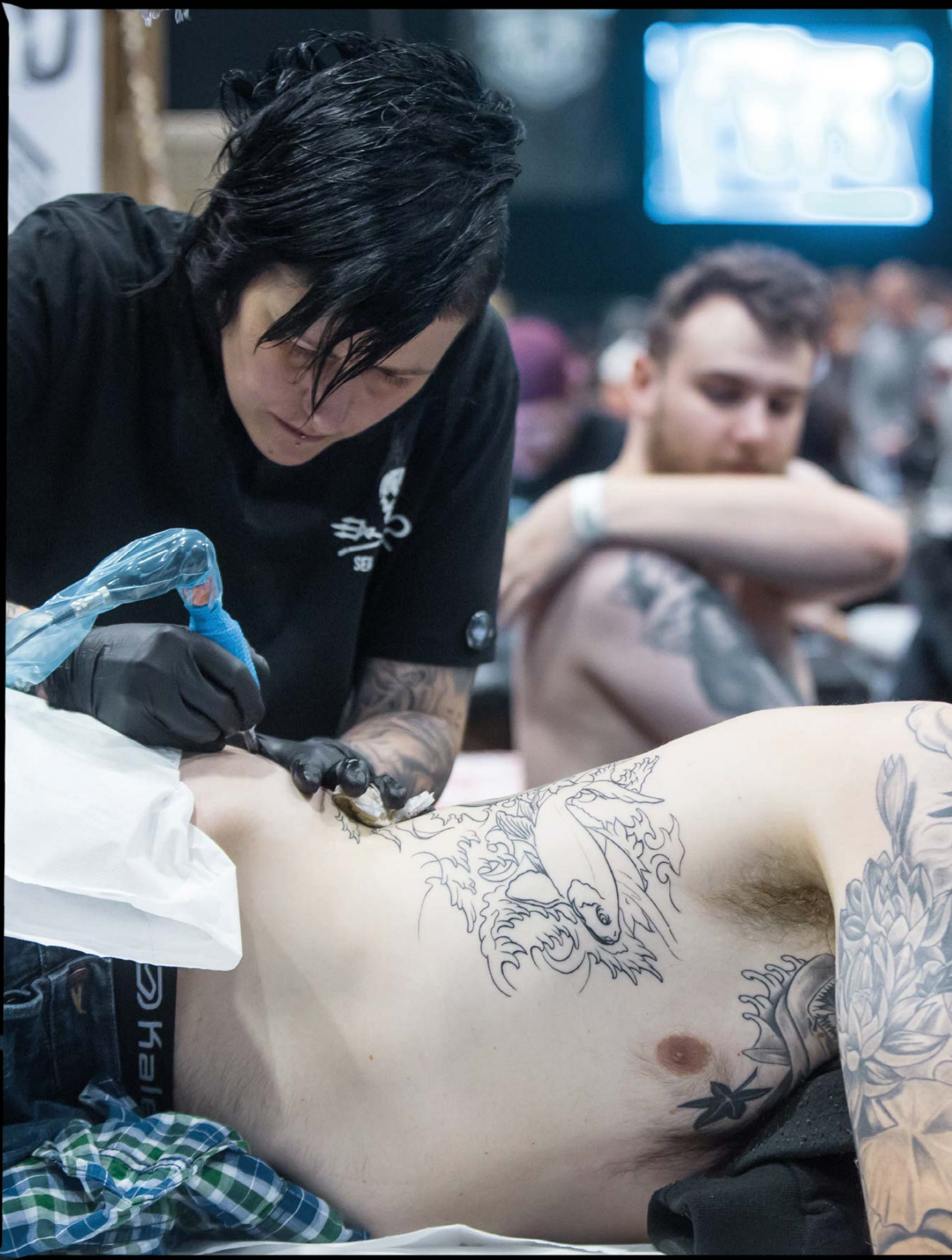
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TOX CIT'INK

Since its inception in 2013, the artists we've met at Tox Cit'Ink are always full of praise for the Liege tattoo convention. The Walloon city welcomed the third edition of the event on October 10 and 11, 2015 and it was time to see what was on offer this year

Initially organised by La Fabrik, the convention took place this year near the centre of Liege inside the Fonck barracks, which is an astonishing example of military architecture. Deserted by its cavalry regiment since 1998, the troops of future architects and art students—passionate about contemporary music—meet in the different shacks across the Meuse.

From the beginning, the convention starts fast and hard like Motörhead's Rock Out and the long line at the door along the brick walls of the barracks heralds an auspicious weekend throughout the crowded alleys.

All kinds of designs emerged from the crackling of the 120 artists' machines. Worth taking note of however is that the graphic style and other illustrative works are still on a roll in Belgium. Seven Echeke (Black Ship Tattoo Family, Malo-les-bains), L'Andro Gynette (on the road), Mika'Graph (Charleroi), Le Hégarat (ex Paupiette, Londres), Marco Slo (Tit for tat, Lille), Anaïs B (Spa) or Laurent Z (L'encre noire, Aix-en-Provence) all produced quite attractive designs in this field.

Other foreign artists such as the Canadians Bert Monster (Tatouage Royal, Montréal, QC), Valday (Imago, Montréal, QC), Myriam Bolduc



ALL KINDS OF DESIGNS EMERGED FROM THE 120 ARTISTS' MACHINES... THE GRAPHIC STYLE IS STILL ON A ROLL IN BELGIUM

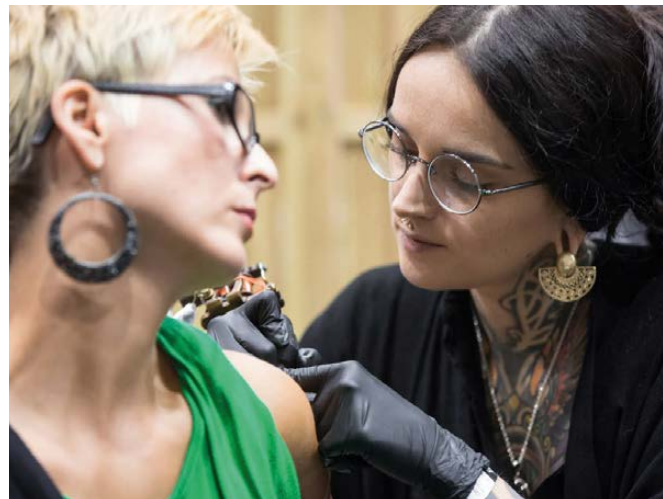
(Tattoo Shack, Québec) and the British-by-adoption Delphine NoizToy and Laurent Maina of Lacemakers Sweatshop also laid their signature styles on Belgian skins while they were around.

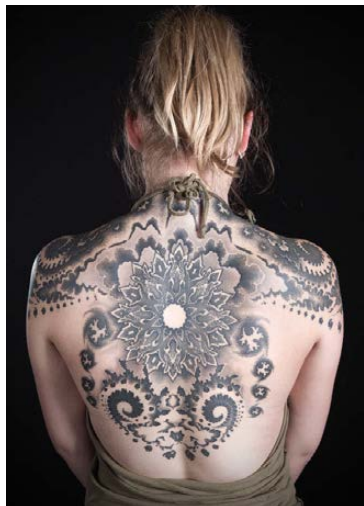
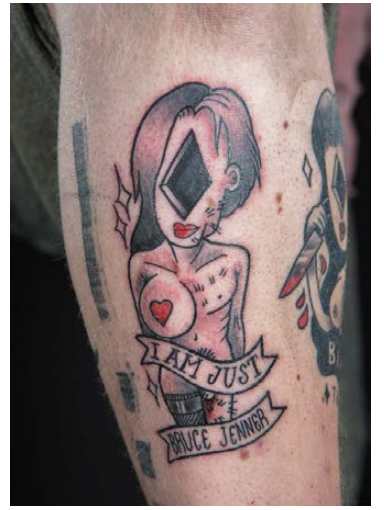
In fact, the billing remained predominantly Belgian. We all remember the designs coming out of the needles of Brussels team La Boucherie Moderne, La main bleue (Mons/St Ghislain), freshly arrived Amy Mymouse, Eva Mpatshi (Beautiful Freak), Fabian of Lucky 7 (Aywaille), Sky (L'art du point, Charleroi), le sang neuf of Deuil Merveilleux, Manouche Caravane (Brussels), Black Bird (Turnhout)

or Grizzly Ink, along with Miss Sucette who created the poster for the event.

But above all, the great force of this Belgian convention lies in the organisation and the quality of the reception of the artists. During an interview, Benoît Poelvoorde said about the Ardent City: "If you want to be happy and warmly welcomed, come to Liege!" Like Monsieur Manatane, JP, the organiser of the event and manager of the Liege boutique Grizzly In, is a great host.

With copious catering, comfortable booths, the competition broadcast on giant screens and vegan food trucks, the organis-







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ers put all their efforts in to please the artists and the public. It reminds us of its cousin, the Arlon convention, that seduced us with its great hosting qualities. This can be explained by the friendship between Lou (the brains behind the Arlon convention) and JP, who claims to be influenced by the border convention and the experience of its boss.

The activities got down to basics, giving concerts and tattoo contests top billing. The live stage welcomed seven rock bands and five hip hop artists on a side stage, a wise choice to give the tattoo artists the best possible comfort.

If the first contests could have been brightened up by a 'random' prize, given the unequal quality of the designs, we were pleasantly surprised by the large designs and Best of day contests. The prizes created by Laurent Viatour rewarded designs from Polynesian

by Julien (Te Mana Tattoo, Montpellier), strong old school by Mors (La Main Bleue, St Ghislain), to epileptic graphic by Jubs (Contraseptik, Strasbourg), who wheelbarrows back home prizes from the Liege convention since the first edition.

The weekend ended with the Best of Show where Inal Bersekov (B.R.O. Tattoo, Verviers) won the prize for best design of the weekend with a Ray Charles portrait, pulled off nicely by the Belgian who will remember his first participation in a convention.

The only blot perhaps was the anchorman of the show, whose little voice and coarse comments reminded of Jean Marie Bigard's performance at a sausage festival. But still, the organisation of Liege and Arlon conventions remain an example to follow for same-size events and absolutely one of our favourite conventions of 2015. □

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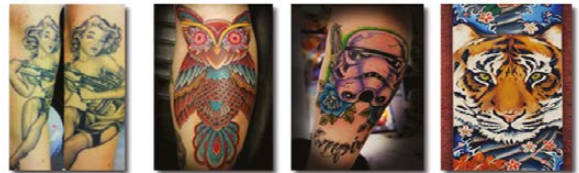
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REVIEW

HIERONYMUS BOSCH. COMPLETE WORKS

TASCHEN
ISBN 978-3-8365-2629-6



There's every chance you might consider the name Hieronymus Bosch to be attached to that of a hard-knock detective currently screening on Amazon Prime... and you would be right. Dig a little deeper though and you will find that his streetwalking mother stole the name from the man who is likely the most pessimistic surrealist of all time.

For artists looking for inspiration, you would be hard pushed not to be inspired by the way Bosch smashed contrasting ideas together. Populated with grotesque scenes of fantastical creatures succumbing to all manner of human desire, fantasy, and angst, his paintings have certainly stood the test of the 500 years since his death. One of his greatest inventions was possibly to take the figural and scenic representations (known as drolleries), which use the monstrous and the grotesque to illustrate sin and evil, and to transfer them from the marginalia of illuminated manuscripts into large-format panel paintings.

Bosch is one of the world's true originals and though copied widely (with many paintings once thought to have been his recently proved oth-

erwise), his style remains one you can grapple with for years and still not understand where he snatched his influences from. A quick glance online at *The Garden of Earthly Delights* or *The Last Judgment* will tell you more or less all you need to know about Bosch and this book.

On which note: £100 might seem expensive for some but damn, it is beautiful in every way. Presented in a solid hardcover, with production values you would expect from Taschen, I'm putting this forward as a book nobody will ever get tired of—and if it doesn't make you raise your game as an artist or a collector, you might need to check your head—or as Bosch would have it:

"Poor is the mind that always uses the ideas of others and invents none of its own."

Footnote: If you're game for a road trip in the next few months: bosch500.nl/en/the-event/2016-exhibition

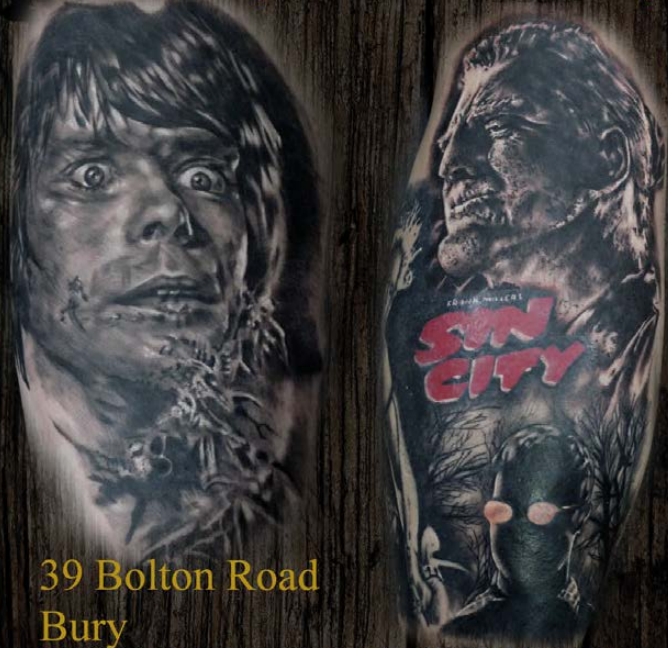
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AN EYE IS UPON YOU

COMPETITIVE EDGES, WELL WORN

On Sunday, I had the immense privilege of being a competition judge at the first convention of the year, Telford's Tattoo Freeze. On the following Monday, 75 miles away in Cheshire, I met three charming young chaps who recognised me from the show. On the Tuesday, a stranger in the street showed me his penis...

The third event is not related to the first two, but nonetheless, it feels like the universe is willing me to connect the dots.

I've been invited onto the judging panel at tattoo conventions for several years now and it's an honour that I take pretty seriously, but they are in some ways, a curious phenomenon and no doubt, somewhat of a mystery to the uninitiated. So for the benefit of show-virgins and those that would like to enter but are a bit shy, here's what happens: Competitors register throughout the day by filling out a form and handing it in to convention staff, who exchange it for a numbered ticket. The tattoo is given a category, usually determined by style or subject, and tattoos made at the show get a division to themselves. At a pre-arranged time, the competitors present their tickets and tattoos to the judging panel, and, via video camera/big screen, also to the assembled audience. The judges assign marks privately and these are collated by show staff, and a little later, the winners are announced.

In the interest of fairness, the panel are only privy to what they see in front of them and artist and studio names are not revealed (This is not the case at all shows. Knowledgeable Ed.). Preventing oneself from excitedly enquiring the origin of a interesting piece can be challenging, but we do our best to avoid discussing anything that might give it away. Still, it would be weird to sit in silent judgement while hundreds of tattooed folk file past, offering us close up looks at their skin, so we ask questions that can be answered without mentioning the artist, such as how long it took to complete, or where the inspiration came from, or if there are plans to continue growing a piece or adding to a collection.

I avoid attempting to identify the famous faces in the portrait category, having dis-



Lukasz Glenicki



PAULA HARDY KANGELOS
DiamondBetty

TIME CONSTRAINTS CAN MAKE CHATTING TO ALL ENTRANTS A CHALLENGE, BUT TRYING TO IS ALWAYS A PLEASURE, AS IS THE WHOLE JUDGING PROCESS

covered that I'm terrible at it (my excuse: I haven't had a TV for almost ten years) but whenever possible, ask to look at folk's other, much older, tattoos, the ones they mostly try to hide, their value as historical artefacts yet to be determined. Time constraints can make chatting to all entrants a challenge, but trying to is always a pleasure, as is the whole judging process. Not least because it affords an unusual insight into what's currently popular



Tiggy

out there in the wide tattoo landscape (Tattoo Top of the Pops at the beginning of 2016: Star Wars going up, Breaking Bad going down, Bob Marley, popular as ever). This is somewhat different to what you can glean from the internet and tattoo magazines. Magazines, of course, present a professionally curated selection (thank you Ma'am. Ed.) and following a tattoo artist on Instagram shows you only the tattoos that the artist is most proud of, and the kind of tattoos they'd like to do more of in the future.

Competition tattoos are more of a mash-up: show-goers themselves decide to enter their tattoos, so it's more akin to seeing just the tattoo related images posted on a couple of hundred personal Facebook profiles. It's not a perfect enough sample to qualify as actual research, but as we can safely assume that everyone that enters is interested in tattoos in general (because they've chosen to attend the show) and are happy with the tattoo they have (because they've chosen to show it off), it's a great way to take the metaphorical pulse of current tattoo phenomena.

You also get, and perhaps this is most interesting of all, a sense of the people that own the art. Glossy magazines and internet images are great for learning about an artist's style and technical ability, but the ubiquitous tattoo-only close up doesn't tell us anything about the defining difference of tattoos from other art forms: the body it sits on and the person that has chosen it for life. Seeing how well a tattoo complements a person's anatomy, how well it suits their personality and how delighted they are to have it, completes what is so often just a partial picture. Viewing it in the flesh, without photoshop edits or retro filters, and in many cases, already healed, we are able to witness the true tattoo, one that has settled into its canvas.

I feel very privileged indeed. ☐

Next month: *Mon and Tues's events get a very public outing.*

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

Experienced Tattoo Artist required to join the team at Electric Vintage Tattoo, Bath. Please provide a comprehensive portfolio of your work and examples of artwork. This is a very busy custom tattoo studio with an excellent regional reputation and long waiting lists. Preferable for applicants to be competent in most tattoo styles but all specialisms will be considered. We are also looking for a walk-in artist to cover the busy summer season on a 6 month initial contract. We also have opportunities available for regular guest artists throughout the year. Check out our work and studio at www.electricvintagetattoo.com and Facebook page 'Electric Vintage Tattoo'. No attitudes, drink or drug problems please. Must be honest and hardworking. Please contact sara@electricvintagetattoo.com in the first instance.

Black Tulip are looking for a strong all round artist to join them in their studio in Taunton, Somerset. Contact in the first instance: blacktuliptaunton@hotmail.com 01823 327016

Inkpot Galleria (Stafford, UK) is looking for another full-time member to join our busy studio. Realism, black/grey artist required. No drama or egos please. Professional portfolio must be shown. Contact Sarah Fox at inkpotgalleria@hotmail.co.uk for more details

Monumental Ink is looking for another great artist to join our team in Colchester, Essex! We are fast growing within the industry, boasting a professional, high quality 2,500 square foot purpose-built studio. We have a great customer base and friendly team. Applicants must have excellent skills. Also, a polite and friendly attitude is essential. Please send your portfolio to monumentalink@hotmail.co.uk

Gilded Cage tattoo studio in Brighton is looking for an experienced tattooist to work 3 days a week from February 2016. Please email portfolios and CVs to gildedcagetattooostudio@gmail.com

TATTOO ARTIST WANTED - HUDDERSFIELD We are looking for a full time tattoo

artist to join our team in our Huddersfield centre based studio. Artist must have a strong portfolio, no drink, drugs or attitude. For all inquiries please email diamondsndusters@gmail.com

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

TATTOO ARTIST WANTED - HUDDERSFIELD. We are looking for a full time tattoo artist to join our team in our Huddersfield centre based studio. Artist must have a strong portfolio, no drink, drugs or attitude. For all inquiries please email diamondsndusters@gmail.com

Big Dog Tattoos is offering a fantastic opportunity for a talented tattoo artist to join our team at our studio based in Harlow. This is a self-employed basis with a part-time or full-time position. At least two years experience in a tattoo studio. Must have own clientele. Excellent communication skills and customer service. Motivated and creative. Please get in contact for more information, call us on 01279 420388 or email us at bigdogtattoos@mail.com

PIERCER WANTED! To join the team at Alchemy Social Club (formerly Alchemy Tattoo Studio), high quality tattoo studio in the North West. Opening second studio, friendly and chilled vibe! Contact Chris on 01942 538418 or alchemy-socialuk@gmail.com

Dezired Inkz in Nottinghamshire are now looking for a third tattooist to join our busy studio. A Good understanding of the industry and an up to date portfolio is vital. Self employed & full time Permanent work. We would also consider an apprenticeship. Contact Adam at infodeziredinkz@yahoo.co.uk

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



This month, Beccy Rimmer has been debating tattoo placement...

It's Tuesday night and I'm in the pub with two friends. We've had a concoction of cocktails and the subject of tattoos is broached.

"The first tattoo I want is a world map," says free-spirit, Ryan, "it's my dream to travel and I want to fill each country with colour once I've visited it."

The colour-in map is a popular tattoo and I have seen many different versions of it, on many different parts of the body. We get talking about placement and I offer out little bits of advice. For instance, with a landscape tattoo, you want it on a landscape part of the body—body parts should always be carefully chosen to best compliment the shape of your design. I'm no expert, but I've seen a lot of tattoos done right—and maybe more done wrong.

My pal then drops the bomb that he wants the tattoo in a place where he can see it—so if on his leg, it should be positioned upright for his own eye-line, i.e. upside down.

This prompts a pretty long debate about 'the upside down tattoo', and allows all three of us to really question, who do we get tattooed for? If tattoos are for ourselves, not others, why on earth would they not face us?

In the heat of the moment, I couldn't have disagreed more with my friend:

"You definitely don't want it upside down, mate," I argued, "from the front it will look daft, and it's not tattoo best practice. You may even struggle to find an artist that will put it on like that."

The debate really got me thinking over the next week. It's an extremely hard balance—how do you adhere to correct and sensible etiquette that will stand the test of time, and at the same time make meaningful decisions for yourself that you'll be happy with forever?

More so, I got to thinking about my own reaction. I'm always preaching that you have to make tattoo decisions for yourself, that you can't fuss over the opinions of others and the possibilities of the future.

Each time, I end these columns with a call to action to live for the moment, go with spontaneous tattoo decisions and most of all, do the one thing that most tattooed peo-



ONE SIZE FITS ALL IS NOT SOMETHING YOU ENCOUNTER IN THE WORLD OF TATTOOS, AND I GUESS THAT'S THE TRUE BEAUTY OF WHAT WE DO



BECCY RIMMER
BeccyRimmer

ple do... throw the rule book out of the window. All of the things I hadn't said to Ryan, in hindsight, maybe I should have.

For once, I'm not going to offer up the answer, because I don't think there is one. For Ryan's personality, motivations and ambitions, his upside-down map couldn't fit him more perfectly.

Different advice for different people—there will never be one rulebook for everyone. One size fits all is not something you encounter in the world of tattoos, and I guess that's the true beauty of what we do.



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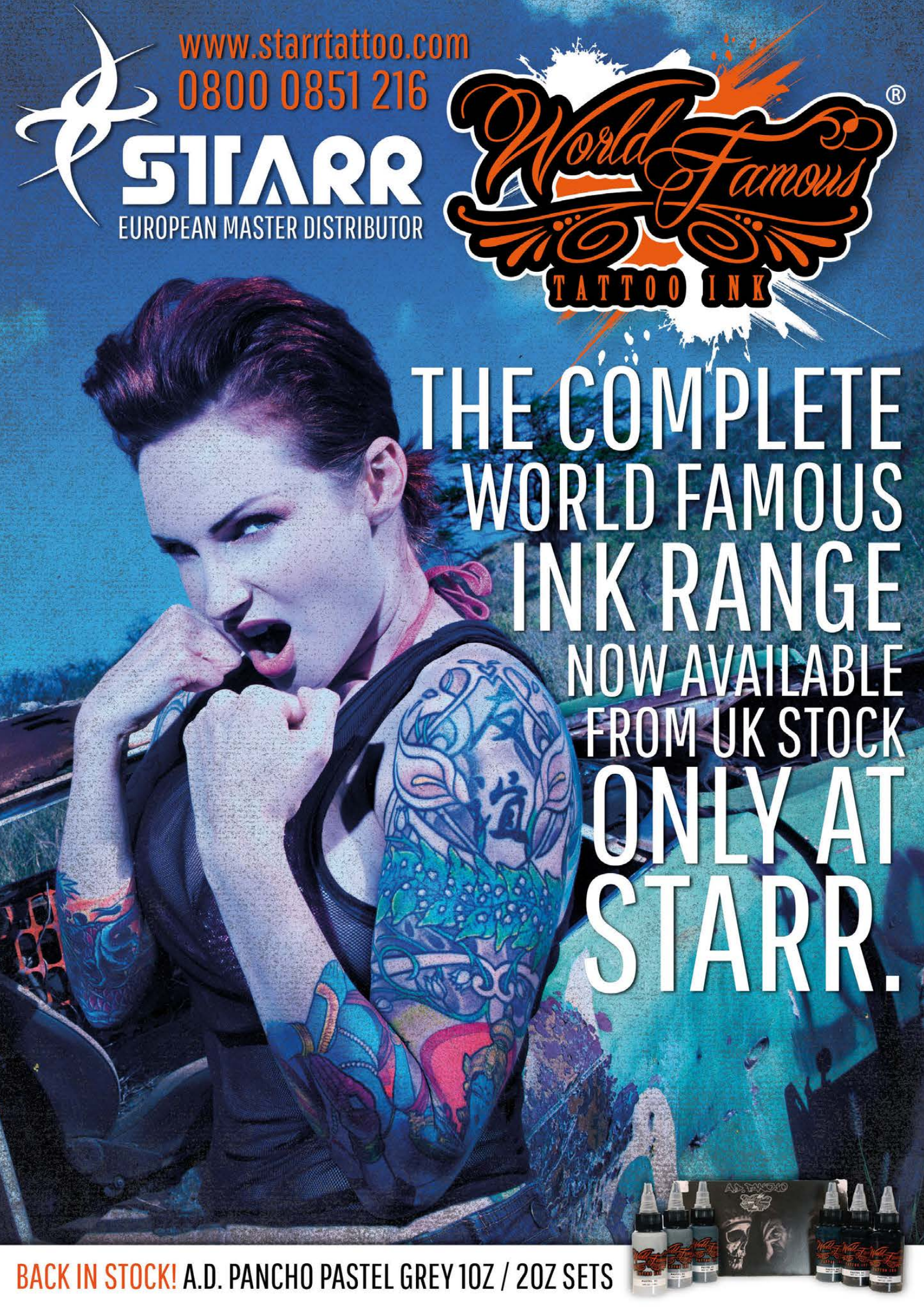
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