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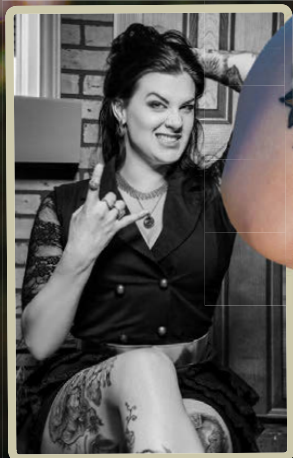
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SARAH MILLER



**MAX McCARTNEY**

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BEST KEPT SECRET

**PART 2 OF  
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AN AMERICAN  
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**DUNCAN X  
VS THE WORLD**

SEAN HERMAN'S  
**SERPENTS OF  
BIENVILLE**

**STRANGE  
TALES FROM  
FLORENCE**

**BEHIND  
THE INK  
MONEY TALKS**

**SCENES FROM  
KRAKOW  
TATTOOFEST**



ISSUE 267 · SEPTEMBER 2016 · £3.95

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# OH MY GOD, HE'S RIPPED HIS OWN EYES OUT!

“Wow. That guy has got a lot of tattoos.”  
“Which one?”  
“Duh—the one with all the tattoos!”

I looked at the TV screen again and still couldn't pick him out and there were only four people in the damn room. Eventually, I saw through the magic curtain that half the nation has hanging across its eyes and there he was—the man with the tattooed arms. It was like being the stupid person in a spy novel for children because everybody knows to read the invisible ink written with lemon juice, you simply need to hold the page over a candle.

Everybody but me. I didn't see it.

Not seeing what everybody else sees was quite something. It was like having the lemon juice thing explained to you for the very first time and quite magical. I felt special. Luckily, this doesn't happen all the time and I very much enjoyed the first season of *Blindspot*.

(That would be the worst show in the world if you went totally tattoo blind right?)

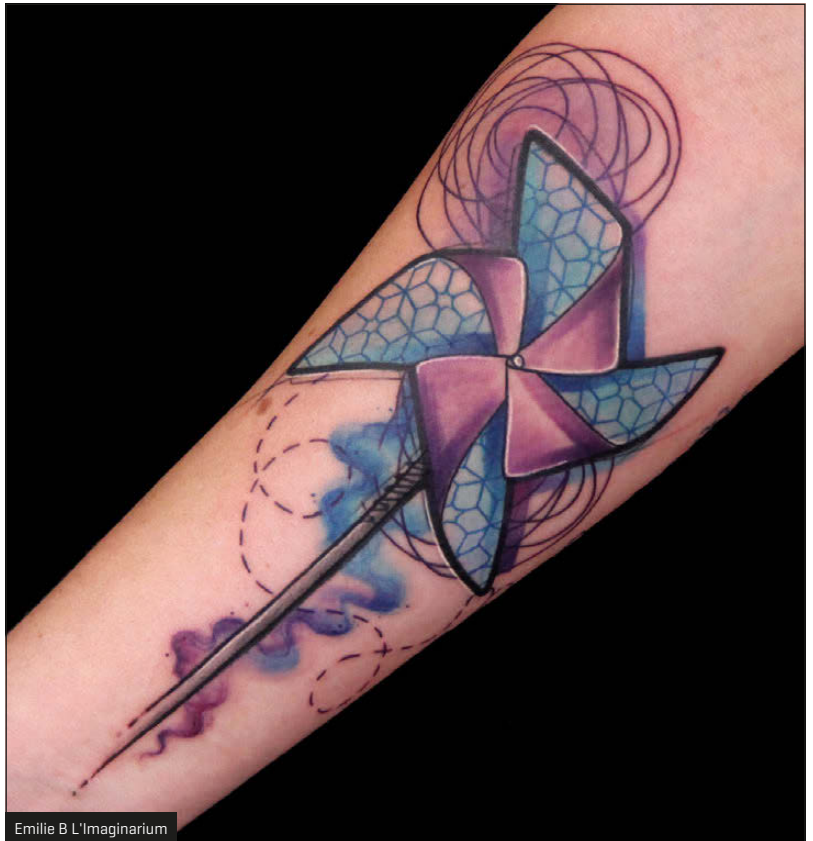
Anyway, this last couple of weeks, I've been approached by four... that's four... different production companies looking for assistance in making their television shows.

Having run the entire 'reality' race filming the obvious, the desperate and the wannabes, we seem to have moved on to digging a little further beneath the surface for bigger stories with juice inside them. Dinosaur bones!

I'm still not going to help though. I've not looked super closely but to the best of my knowledge, these people are not tattooed themselves—not enough to have the authority to portray a whole industry to a nation. The use of the word 'tats' is a dead giveaway on that front.

In fact, it would be like you—yeah, you with the glasses—and me grabbing a couple of cameras and making a show about how reality TV production people make reality TV shows. It would obviously be brilliantly fascinating for all the wrong reasons, but like we should give a damn if anyone is pissed about it.

We have become coin making machines of the highest calibre and women fall at our feet



Emilie B L'Imaginarium

**IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE BRILLIANTLY FASCINATING FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS, BUT LIKE WE SHOULD GIVE A DAMN IF ANYONE IS PISSED ABOUT IT**



**SION SMITH · EDITOR**  
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@skindeep\_uk  
skindeepmag

like leaves from a tree in the middle of autumn.

Such an attitude (and a public one at that) will probably do me no favours in the long run but I've seen what happens in the long run. You get tired, your legs start to shake, people throw water at you and when the race is over, people only remember those who came first, those who came last and the one that did it in a Papa Smurf costume.

It took me years and a lot of coffee to get this smart. ☐

*Footnote: If there's anybody reading who didn't know about the lemon juice secret writing thing, I'm truly sorry. That blank sheet of paper your wife left on the table before you never saw her again that smelled a little zesty? Yeah...*



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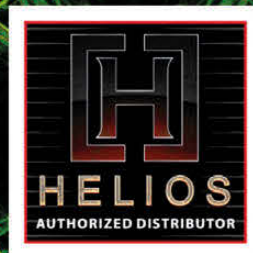
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**14 SECRET DIARY OF A TALL GIRL**  
This month, Paula Castle finds herself in Brooklyn... with a snow globe.

**18 DUNCAN X**  
When he took on the machines in the 90's, Duncan X could not have imagined the popularity of the medium to come. Far from his first anti-social reasonings - like his band Sheep On Drugs - he finally grew to accept it

**26 SERPENTS OF BIENVILLE**  
Sean Herman is an artist on a mission and much like we have here, realised a long time ago that tattoos can transform us in ways we never thought they could. Recently, Sean has begun to write about this and here (and for the foreseeable future) we'll be serialising

his pieces, but first, an introduction is in order.

**36 CITIES OF THE DEAD**  
The boss wrote this piece whilst at the Florence Tattoo Convention last year and with the Florence 2016 show is not so far away, we delve into the inner working of his head and illustrate accordingly. Make of it what you will.

**64 SARAH MILLER**  
Sometimes life throws unexpected surprises your way and you just have to embrace them. A fact that Sarah Miller, who you may recognise as the runner up of Ink Master Season 2, knows all too well...

**72 MAX McCARTNEY**  
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hidden himself away on the UK peninsula known as the Wirral - and then we walked in on his talent and got all excited.

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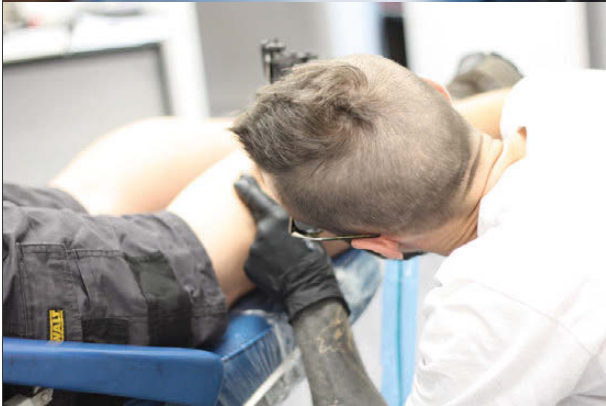
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## PIGMENTS: NEW LIVERPOOL STUDIO

**Pigments Tattoo is a friendly studio that has just moved into new premises in central Liverpool.**

Alex Trowell enjoys a mix of styles, using bright colours for some of his work, and creating grittier tattoos with dotwork and fine lines. He will soon be joined by a second artist sometime in the near future, after working Tattoo Jam at the start of August. If you want to see what he does out there, you can find a page of his work in this month's supplement.

Pigments Backstreet Tattoo, 15 Cases Street, Liverpool, L1 1HW • [pigmentstattoo.com](http://pigmentstattoo.com) • [instagram.com/alextrowell](https://www.instagram.com/alextrowell)



## MICHAEL ROSE: STUDIO MOVE

**As indicated by the title here, Michael Rose Tattoos & Piercing has moved** lock, stock and two smoking barrels to a new studio that you can now find at, 25 Cranborne Parade, Mutton Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, EN6 3BA.

With over nine months of renovating under the belt, the studio now also boasts an artwork area to the rear which is around 800 square feet and will comfortably hold 12 students. To kickstart the area and new direction, May 2017 will see the airbrush master Dru Blair hosting his classes there and there are also plans for other airbrush, oil and water colour classes as he pushes forwards. If you're an artist and want to use the space for creative use, simply make some contact.

If you have any questions—you can find him here: [mroseart@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mroseart@hotmail.co.uk), here: 01707 663055 and here: [michaelrosearts.com](http://michaelrosearts.com). You can also find recent examples from Mr Rose in the supplement this issue.







## CARL & JOHAN AFTERCARE

A relative newcomer to the aftercare world are Carl & Johan and we can testify that their products are great. Not only that, but they look like they mean business too. You can find out just about everything you need to know about them at [carlandjohan.com](http://carlandjohan.com) - but meanwhile, we have two very nice gift boxes to give away. In the first box you'll find Bodymilk Rocking Roses and Stick Rocking Roses and in the second box, we have Stick Blackwood + 2 Pocket-balms (standard and limited edition). If you want to stockpile some great new products to try out following your next appointment, head on over to [skindeep.co.uk/competitions](http://skindeep.co.uk/competitions) and where you need to enter a Competition Answer, simply put Carl/Johan and we'll do the rest.

## CONVENTIONS

### DUBLIN TATTOO CONVENTION

**12-14 August 2016**

Dublin Convention Centre  
Spencer Dock  
N Wall Quay, Dublin 1  
Ireland

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

### 26TH BERLIN TATTOO CONVENTION

**12-14 August 2016**

Arena Berlin  
Eichenstraße 4  
12435 Berlin, Germany  
[tattoo-convention.de](http://tattoo-convention.de)

### TATCON BLACKPOOL

**19-21 August 2016**

Norbreck Castle Hotel  
Queen's Promenade  
Blackpool, Lancashire FY2 9AA  
[tatconblackpool.co.uk](http://tatconblackpool.co.uk)

### MAIDEN CITY INK

**26-28 August 2016**

Everglades Hotel  
Prehen Rd, Derry BT47 2NS  
[maidencityink.com](http://maidencityink.com)

### INK 'N' ROLL TATTOO FESTIVAL CHATEAUROUX

**27-28 August 2016**

Salle des Fetes  
Avenue Daniel Bernadet  
36000 Châteauroux,  
France

### LONDON TATTOO CONVENTION

**23-25 September 2016**

Tobacco Dock  
50 Porters Walk  
London E1W 2SF  
[thelondontattooconvention.com](http://thelondontattooconvention.com)

### 19TH BARCELONA TATTOO EXPO

**30 September-02 October 2016**

Plaza de España  
Av de Isabel la Católica  
41004 Sevilla, Spain  
[barcelonatattooexpo.com](http://barcelonatattooexpo.com)

### BOURNEMOUTH INK 'N' ART TATTOO FEST

**01-02 October 2016**

Bournemouth Pavilion  
Theatre and Ballroom  
Westover Road  
Bournemouth BH1 2BU  
[bournemouth.tattoo](http://bournemouth.tattoo)

### HALLOWEEN TATTOO BASH

**08-09 October 2016**

Wolverhampton Racecourse  
Gorsebrook Rd  
Wolverhampton WV6 0PE  
[halloweentattoobash.co.uk](http://halloweentattoobash.co.uk)

### 4TH WARSAW TATTOO CONVENTION

**08-09 October 2016**

Stadion Legil Warsaw  
Łazienkowska 3  
00-449 Warszawa  
Poland  
[warsawtattooconvention.com](http://warsawtattooconvention.com)

### MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL TATTOO SHOW

**29-30 October 2016**

Manchester Central Convention Complex  
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[manchestertattooshow.com](http://manchestertattooshow.com)



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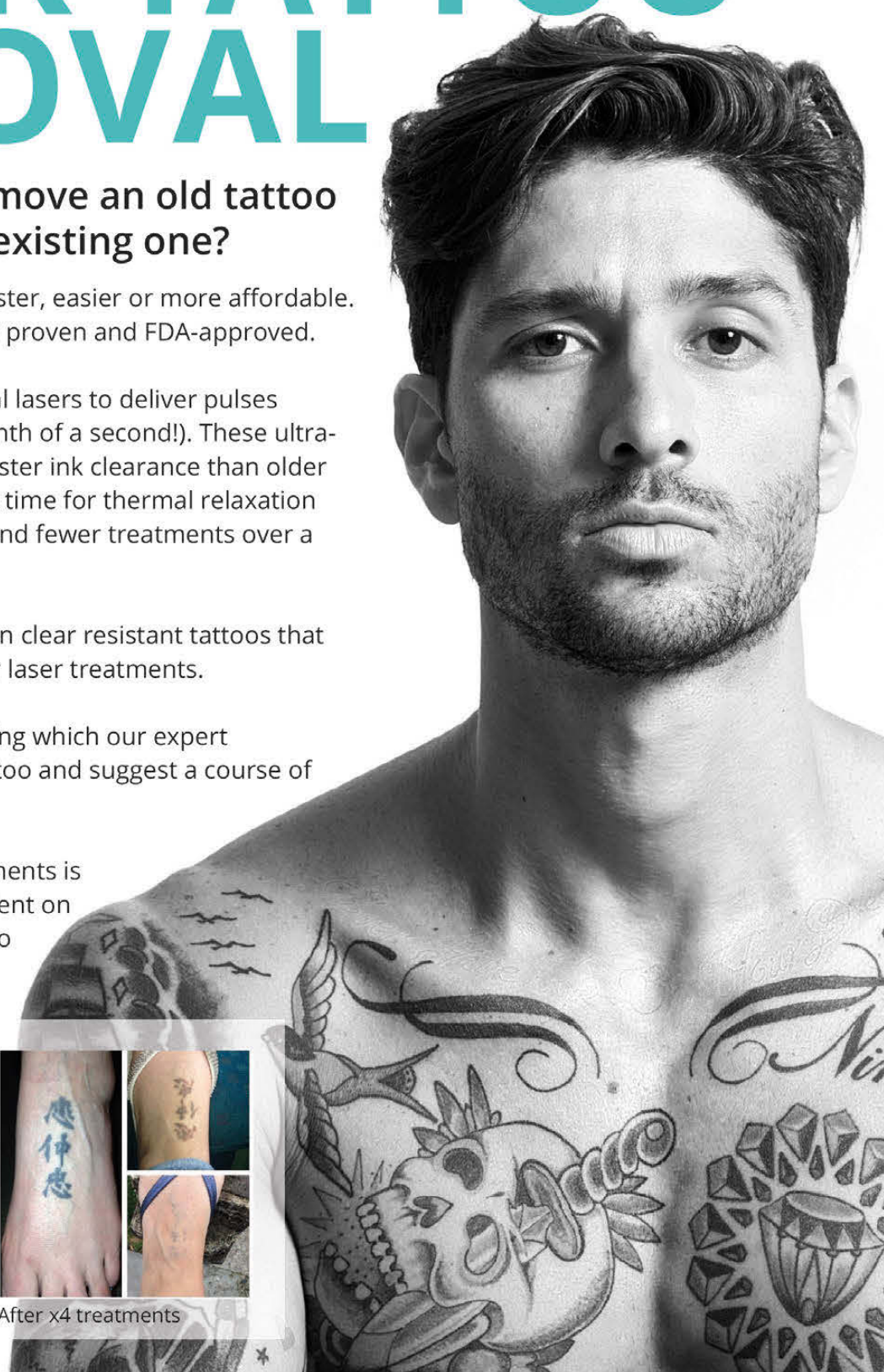
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After x4 treatments



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## THE ART OF WAR

*These beautiful, beautiful things came to our attention...  
and now they have come to yours. Let's find out more:*

### **Introduce yourself please and tell the people what you do:**

I'm Liam Scriven aka 2Petalrose from London England. I design and produce limited edition resin toys / figurines heavily inspired by Japanese culture.

### **The guy that invented The Smurfs said that the idea came to him fully formed when he was out to dinner and somebody asked him to pass the salt. He then needed to go home immediately and get on with it. Can you match that as an origin story?**

I think I need to go out for dinner more—the next Smurfs could be just a condiment away!

My “Maiko” figure is named after an apprentice Geisha but comes with some additions. The piece was originally going to be a glorified helmet stand with very little character detail but I soon got carried away. The current model is the 3rd version and has been that way for the last 2 years or so.

I do get those moments where I have to get ideas down immediately in fear of it being forgotten though.

### **What's your interest in samurai? Do you come at it as a practitioner of an art or from a love of cartoons or ... or ... what?**

I've always been fascinated with them but since the first time I customised a toy into a samurai I've been hooked. From an art toy point of view, the samurai is perfect. I can make a tonne of accessories and the armour can be re-imagined in so many ways.

I like using different materials in my work: resin / custom designed fabrics / Wood / Metal—the Samurai enables me to use them all (as a samurai should).

### **According to my research (aka: looking at your website) you started in 2008 with the resin—did you dabble in the figures before that with clay or anything? Whittling them out of a piece of wood perhaps?**

2008 I think was my first resin release. My very first toys were called Boids and were made from ABS plastic parts and scraps. My dad had a small engineering business and they produced injection moulded pieces for stage show





pyrotechnics. I had a box of all these unusual shapes and built some little characters from it. They actually helped fund my first resin release.

I also dabbled in the DIY blank figure platform but knew pretty quickly that original designs was where my interest was.

I don't whittle as much as I should haha... but I have made baseball bats and bow staffs for my figures. I also make custom wooden stands bases and sashimonos.

**How many variants have you worked your way through so far... and where to next?**

Of my latest "Hondo" character there have been around 10 variants but only 1 released version. Next up will be a couple of small releases of him and then onto the next character. He is the first in a series I'm working on dubbed "Shogun Rebels" that will feature a series of blade wielding characters.

There have been many more variants of Maiko. She's become more of a commission only piece really, shops and companies have asked for their logos and names to be added into the obi fabric and helmet crests which works great. Coincidentally, I'm working on a piece for my mate who owns Dor Stocker Tattoos (dorstockertattoos.com) so there will be one on show in there soon if anyone is near.

**It's only a matter of time before you develop a Kiss range. You know that don't you.**

Funny you should say this—the idea of a Kiss samurai has already crossed my thoughts. It's probably the one thing the band have yet to make? I might be wrong.

**Being as people who are likely to love your work (and who wouldn't) will also like many similar objects, can you point the finger at somebody else quietly creating magic that you think such people would also like that they may not normally come across?**

The Designer Toy scene here in the UK is small but there are incredibly talented artists producing limited edition pieces. Here's a few to check out—RUN DMB (Dave Bishop)—has a great unique graffiti style. Jon-Paul Kaiser—the master of 2 tone customs and self-produced toys and SQUINK (Chris Booker) unique weathered style customs and original toys.



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by  
Inky Joe



**This firecracker turned up online a couple of weeks back and had us forwarding it to each other at a rate of knots.** The back-piece is a Secretary Bird (you all knew that anyway, right) and was pulled together at Fivekeys (in Norwich) by Inky Joe. With over 30 hours of work across four sessions, as it presently stands—on Abbie Morphew who works at Illustrated Primate—there are some vague plans to also take it down the thighs... but for now, everybody is more than content to call it complete and we agree. That's one hell of a piece to sit through and word has it that two of those sessions were over ten hours too.

Kudos in the extreme.

For those of you into the science behind the tech, the whole tattoo was created with black ink, a little bit of distilled water and trusty coils.

Beautiful. The End. ▣

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# SECRET DIARY OF A TALL GIRL

*Last issue, Paula Castle hit Philly... now on her way home, this month we find her in Brooklyn. Should she stay or should she go?*

**W**hen I left Philadelphia, I got the Greyhound bus to New York City. Cliched, and absolutely had to be done. I felt like a country singer bound for the big lights. I suppose it was just another part of my adventure, and I wanted to see the roads and open highways.

It didn't disappoint—there is nothing quite like reaching the bridges and seeing the Manhattan skyline looming in front of you. New York is one place in the world I feel like I'm at home whenever I'm there. It's incredible, if you haven't been, put it on your list. I beg of you. (I concur. Do it now. Ed.)

I was staying in the happening and hip borough of Williamsburg, which is in Brooklyn, and where all the artists, musicians and generally cool kids live. I got dropped off in central Manhattan and took the subway, then the L train to my stop. This is The Moment in my life where I felt



the weather was glorious and the twenty five minute walk to work was thoroughly enjoyable. I was working for a few days with Adam (@adamcobra), Woody (@woodzart), Kati (@kativaughn), Doug (@douglasgrady) and Ash (@oLash). All solid all round tattooers, with great attitudes and who really made me feel like part of the family. The shop was small (it's New York remember!) but decorated

with great hand painted signs, prints and lots of wood. I loved it immediately. Oddly I was tattooing a British guy on holiday in New York

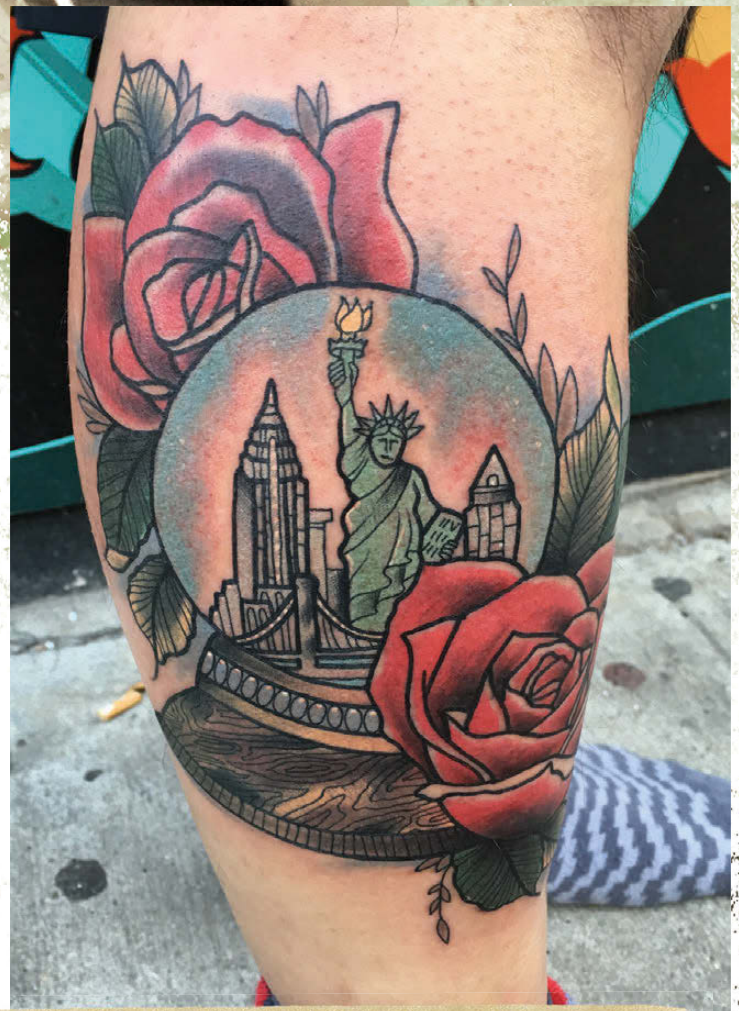
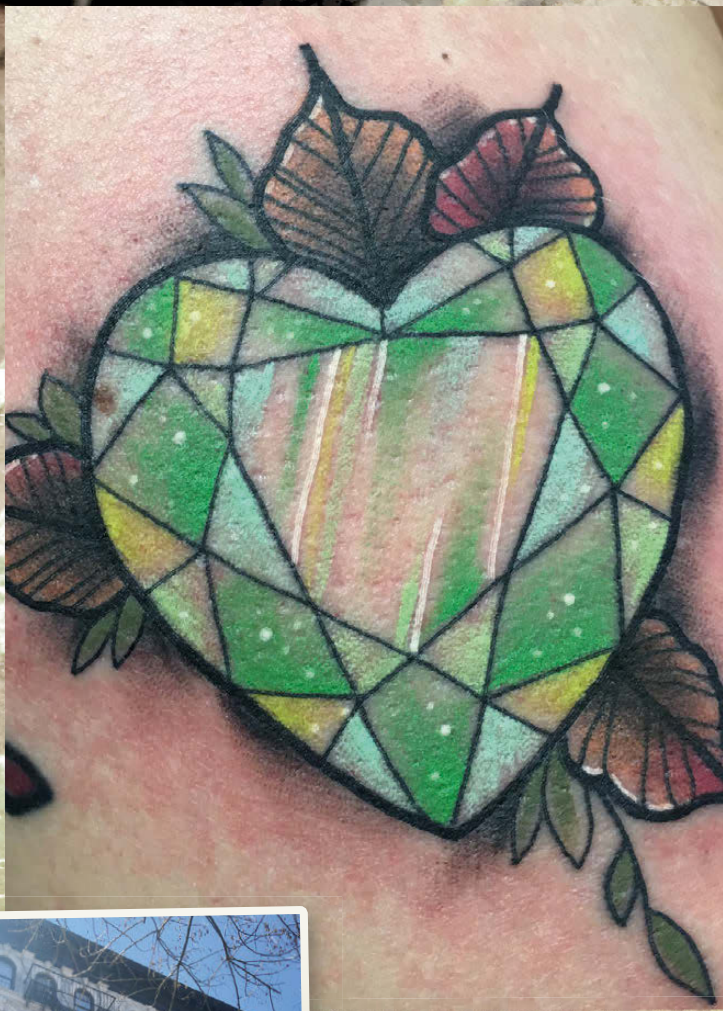
Brave. So incredibly Brave and Fierce and I knew if I could do all of this on my own, I could probably do pretty much anything I ever wanted to do. I had a couple of days to myself before my guest spot started at Magic Cobra, so I spent them walking round the neighbourhood, eating at Champs entirely Vegan diner and spent a whole day in the New York Metropolitan Museum, which was absolutely mind blowing. I saw sculpture, oil paintings, and incredible historical artefacts.

It was soon time to get myself off to Magic Cobra for my first day working,

ed with great hand painted signs, prints and lots of wood. I loved it immediately. Oddly I was tattooing a British guy on holiday in New York

*New York is one place in the world I feel like I'm at home whenever I'm there. It's incredible*





*Clients with amazing tattoos always make you feel both nervous and honoured. Especially when it's work by people on your own list of people to get tattooed by*

whilst I was here. His name was Baz and he had a very impressive tattoo collection. Clients with amazing tattoos always make you feel both nervous and honoured. Especially when it's work by people on your own list of people to get tattooed by, but Baz had asked me to do him a snow globe with the New York skyline in it and I was so excited! I think it turned out great and he really loved it, and we have stayed in touch since which is lovely.

The thing about working in America, and this is definitely accurate about working in Brooklyn, the culture is just so, so different. Not only with the tipping and cost as I mentioned in my last diary entry, but also with the social aspect of going out after work with the people you work with. Don't get me wrong, I am very fortunate at the studio I'm now working in full time in Swansea (@broadsidetattoo) in that we do socialise, and we go to gigs, and go for dinner often, but that is absolutely not my previous experience in the UK.

Anyway, Brooklyn: so you work until around 11pm, then food arrives at the shop, and there are SO MANY OPTIONS FOR VEGANS! I ate sushi, Mexican, Thai... so much food and everywhere delivers and everywhere has vegan dishes. Once we've eaten and had a beer to end the day, we hit the bars—I was thankful for the long walks every day! It is so much fun, because all the bartenders know the artists, so we are welcomed everywhere and handed drinks before we can even order. I was home and in bed by around 2am every night, tipsy and happy as the proverbial pig.

We went to a few different gigs whilst I was there and Kati and I became best of friends during my trip, she's an incredible woman, she rides a motorcycle, has so much sass it radiates from her. I loved her. We hung out a lot and talked about life... and men... and tattooing, especially for a woman. I wanted to find out what her experience has been like

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paulacastletattoos  
paulacastletattoos





I wanted to find out what Kati's experience as a female tattooer has been like in comparison to mine. Even with a huge ocean between us, it hadn't been all that different



in comparison to mine. Even with a huge ocean between us, it hadn't been all that different. In a male dominated industry, both of us had faced the usual abuse and hassle you just come to expect, which obviously is NOT ok, but we can't change the world overnight—just our own little slice of it. Any amount of turbulence on the journey to tattoo is truly worth it, because we have the best job and lifestyle in the world.

I read something this week and it really resonated with me, because if you've been following my travels, or follow me online (@paulacastletattoos) you'll know I am all about trying to live positively and without any negativity towards my fellow sentient beings. The saying read: "When people ask, 'what do you do?' Tell them, 'whatever it takes'". This is pretty much a way to sum up my working life so far. Actually, scrap that, my life, full stop. The pace of life in Brooklyn is crazy, if I lived there, I'd be dead in six months at that

rate, I don't know how those guys do it. I really don't, but they do it so godamn well. The work at Magic Cobra is solid, it's a really busy shop, walk in trade is great and the kind of work people want when they walk in for a random tattoo is usually cool traditional or blackwork.

Being in such a cool city, at such a fun shop, with such amazing people really made my time to go home the worst moment of all time. I just didn't want to go. There were tears. And group photos, and number swapping and promises to return. The guys took a polaroid of me working to put up in the shop next to the other guests they'd had. I didn't know any of these guys before my arrival, but I left with an even bigger tattoo family than I had before.

New York City. This place stole my heart ten years ago when I first visited, but Brooklyn stole my heart more than Manhattan ever did. ▣







# A Q&A with

When he took on the machines in the 90's, Duncan X could not have imagined the popularity of the medium to come. Far from his first anti-social reasonings that already motivated previous artistic projects—like his band Sheep On Drugs—he finally accepted it...

Words & Images: Pascal Bagot & Duncan X











**THE FIRST TATTOO I GOT WAS JUST A STAR ON MY SHOULDER. IT WAS NOT ABOUT THE PICTURE, IT WAS ABOUT THE EFFECT IT WAS GOING TO HAVE ON THE PEOPLE AROUND ME**

**How did you get in touch with tattooing?**

I grew up in South London and at that time, there weren't any tattoo shops at all. No people had tattoos. I went to public school, and we were not even experimenting with the needle and ink business. I don't know why, it never crossed my mind to do that. But I was taking drugs. It became a big thing to also break the law in petty ways, just causing a lot of vandalism, being very anti-social from quite a young age. When I decided to get tattooed, I was about 19-20 years old and for me, it was simply going to increase my anti-socialness.

**What did tattoos portray to the outside world at that time?**

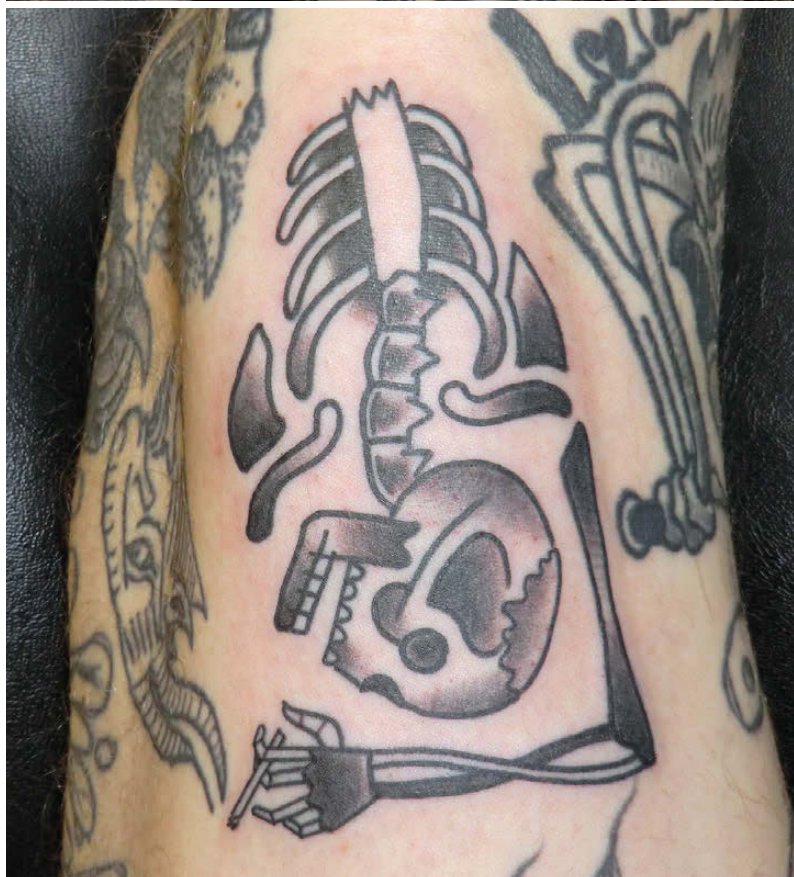
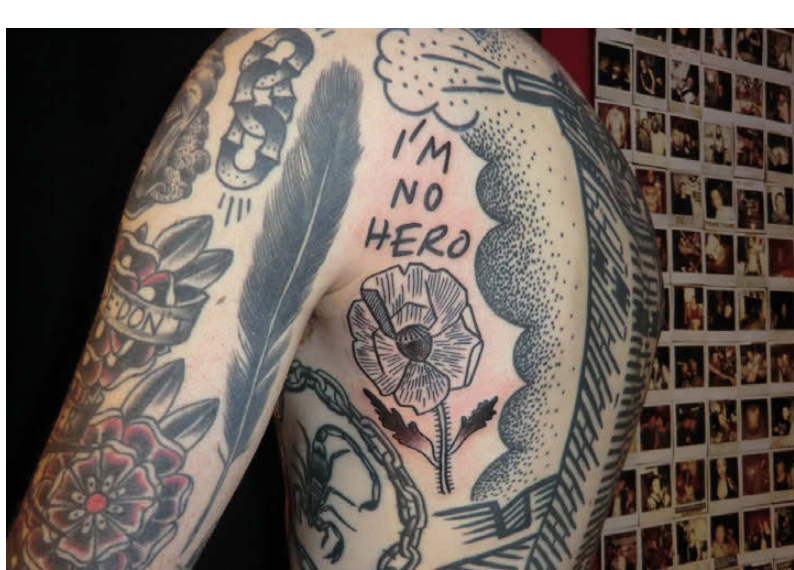
They were still very antisocial, very much so. Coming from my background, very few people got tattooed, nobody in my family, no one that I knew at all apart from certain drug people and the concept was attractive to me

because of it. The first tattoo I got was just a star on my shoulder. It was not about the picture, it was about the effect it was going to have on the people around me. Even with something so small, I was crossing the line and doing something I was not supposed to do. It has been the main influence for the run of my career: to cross the line. Not to necessarily be anti-social but I like tattooing to stand out and I like it to be a visual punch in the face. This (Duncan points his tattooed skin), to me, is like a suit of armour. When I walk out there, I'm unbeatable.

**Did you get the reactions you expected?**

Well, not as much as I wanted (laughs). I chose the star because I saw a kid at a music festival—he must have been around 11 or 12 years old—and he had a tattoo on the shoulder, he must have been from a travelling family. This kid really impressed me. I thought it was unbelievable and lawless, I should get one. Then, getting tattooed wasn't really a pressing thing, at that time I was more involved with drugs. Around 24, I met this girl in rehab, she got tattooed by Dennis Cockell. I told her I wanted to get tattooed again and she replied: 'Oh, you'll really like him'. So I went there, had a good laugh and instantly decided to get both arms done with pictures that I drew with madness. My idea was not even to get pictures that I liked.





It was a brutal form of taking the piss out of myself. You can't get more punk than that!

**How did it work out when you met Dennis?**

At that time, I was in a band called Sheep On Drugs (3 albums, 7 years), another experimental antisocial project. The idea was to get on TV, become famous and tell the people how stupid they were. You can tell from the pictures of the band that I kept on going to see Dennis. At the beginning, there are no tattoos, maybe one or two, and then you can see I'm covering both arms, bit by bit. He said to me one day, not as a joke: 'When you finish the band, I'll teach you to tattoo'. I thought it was a good idea but I never took it too seriously.

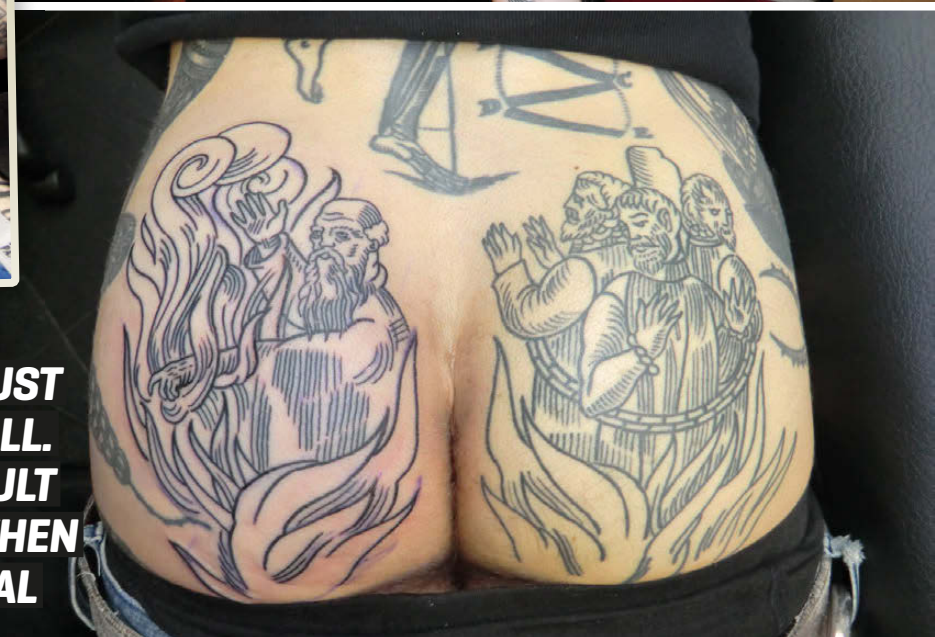
One day the band did finish. I didn't do anything for about six months, I was totally depressed, and thought: 'What am I gonna do?'. I went back to see Dennis and asked him if he would teach me to tattoo.

**You kept drawing while you were still in the band right?**

Yeah, I've always drawn but I never found a medium that I liked. I used to do some kind of engraving—where you burn metal plates with acid—and sold them in a gallery in London for quite a few years, but I was very slow at drawing. The band was a reaction against drawing, performance art. So, when I got back to see Dennis it really made sense because drawing is what I do. I got really inspired by tattooing. It got to the point where I just drew continuously. Now I draw all the time.

**MY IDEA WAS NOT EVEN TO GET PICTURES THAT I LIKED. IT WAS A BRUTAL FORM OF TAKING THE PISS OUT OF MYSELF. YOU CAN'T GET MORE PUNK THAN THAT**





**I DIDN'T WANT TO WORK IN A NORMAL SHOP TATTOO SHOP JUST DOING PICTURES FROM THE WALL. I THOUGHT IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO CHANGE PEOPLE'S MINDS WHEN THEY WOULD COME TO A NORMAL SHOP TO GET A FLASH**

**How was your apprenticeship with Dennis?**

Dennis just closed down the shop he had in Soho and he was working privately in a flat, doing appointments only. I would go along once every week and it went like that for six months. I would show him what I'd tattooed on myself—I worked a lot on my legs before tattooing people. Dennis thought I would make a really good tattooist and gave me the confidence to believe that I was right and to go with my own drawings in the way that I had designed my own arms. I'm so pleased I found this because it released this artistic pressure I had in me, I needed to find a medium.

**Did you already know the direction you wanted to give to your work?**

When I was learning from Dennis, I wasn't interested in tattoo magazines and what other tattooists were doing, I had a very clear idea of what I wanted to do, which was to create this brutal looking, mad, over the top, almost prison style. In my mind tattooing is a very brutal thing. The rea-

son why my tattoos are black is actually a mistake. Because I was drawing from prison photos from a long time ago and they were black and white, I just thought people had black tattoos! I thought it was really good! The pictures were brutal but they were powerful and that power interested me, rather than any kind of prettiness or decoration.

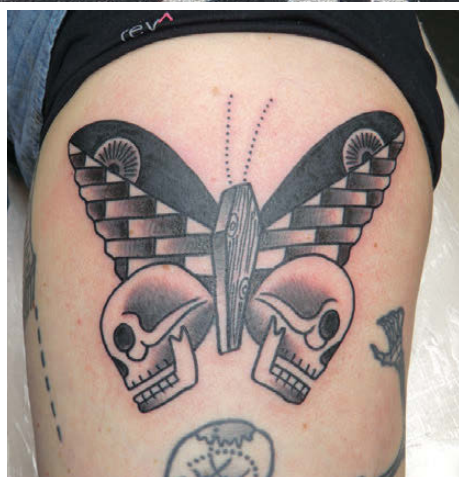
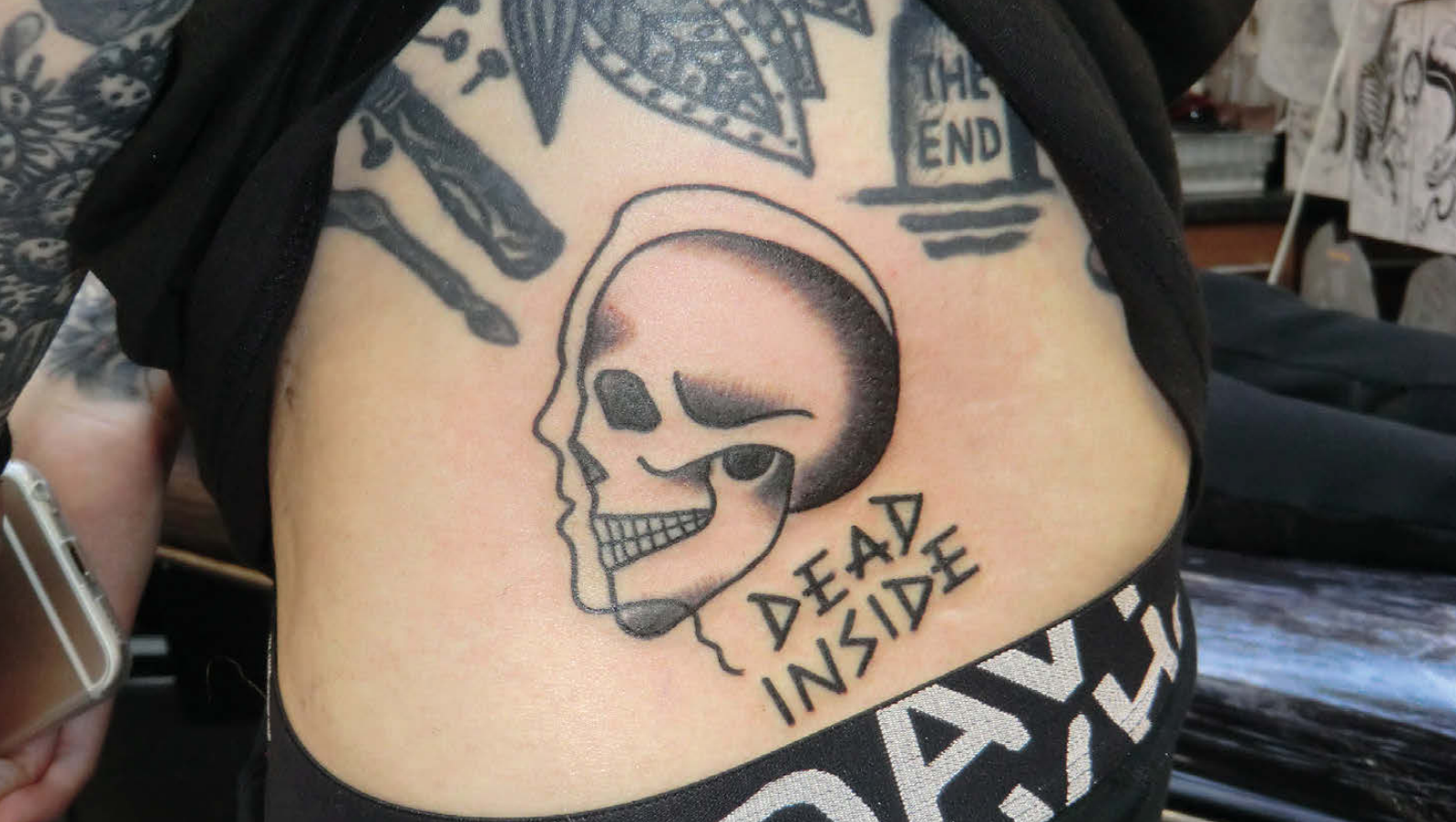
**Did your drawing style change because of tattooing?**

My drawings are exactly the same as they were in my late teens when I was at school, with hard lines and dizzy cross-hatching, but the major thing that changed is now I draw compulsively. I get to do hundreds of pictures and it really refines my drawings—they come very quick and I really enjoy the fact that every week I come up with new ones. The only thing I learned in tattooing is shading, I never used to shade before.

**How did you come to join Into You with Alex Binnie?**

I didn't want to work in a normal shop tattoo shop just doing pictures from the wall. I thought it was very diffi-





cult to change people's mind when they would come to a normal shop to get a flash. I wanted to do my own stuff. So I started from home, which was close to Into You. I knew people that knew Alex. So I knew he would hear about me being there because of the band I was in.

So I thought I'd better go in to be sure it was OK. When I went in, I couldn't believe it. I didn't know how the young people like Alex were going for it and I was amazed. I got on really well with everybody and six months later I was working there.

#### How do you work on an image?

I try to think deeply and also lightly about it. I try to think on a couple of levels too. If I can hit them with an image it makes me happy. And then it comes to how I can make the drawing look really good. Tattoos have to be powerful, like a visual punch. In a way I'm trying to be a little more confusing in provocation, not so obvious. I think the right image on the right person in the right place, can make that sense of power without being deliberately pro-

vocative. The context in which you put a certain picture onto somebody's skin makes it more than just the picture. It creates an immediate first impression on the viewer.

#### What are your inspirations?

I get really excited by pictures and ideas from the books I look at. It's difficult to explain how it works but one of the things that inspires me is starting to really understand composing. Artistically it's just the same old thing: old medieval paintings, german expressionism, artists from the 1920's, Egon Schiele and Gustav Klimt, propaganda posters for the power they carry... I don't really like that much modern art. One of my favourite painters is Pieter Bruegel and Francis Bacon is one of my greatest inspira-

**THE CONTEXT IN WHICH YOU PUT A CERTAIN PICTURE ONTO SOMEBODY'S SKIN MAKES IT MORE THAN JUST THE PICTURE**





**BEING MORE POPULAR, IT LOST AN EDGE THAT IT HAD. AND I DON'T KNOW IF I'M INTERESTED IN THAT EDGE ANYMORE**

tions even if it's completely different from what I do, but he tries to produce the same effect as I do in the viewer. It's almost deliberately shocking but at the same time, you want to look at it.

**Do you think tattooing is still provocative today?**

Not very. People just turned to like this. It's not very provocative at all... yeah (laughs).

**The idea of tattoo today then, is far from the original idea you liked, how do you feel about it?**

Well in a way, I'm glad it's more widely accepted. I'm glad for a number of reasons. It would be difficult to work like this if it wasn't so accepted. On a professional level, it means I can carry on doing what I'm doing. But being more popular, it lost an edge that it had. And I don't know if I'm interested in that

edge anymore. I've been growing up a bit and become less angry. I don't wanna be as anti-social as I used to be. The old me would have said it is terrible, it should be illegal!

**Do you still feel comfortable with your tattoos then?**

Yeah, totally, it's entirely me.

**Finally, just to wrap up, why did you chose your name Mr. X?**

Basically, I wanted to get rid of my family name. I just changed it into an other name. I was in a band at the time and I just wanted to be M.X. Solicitors and lawyers managed to sort it out, for me. Then, legally, I'm M.X. That's the name on my passport. It's a little bit of a asshole booking planes, because they need two digits. So I had to put Duncan XX, even it's a different name on the boarding pass than in the passport.

I've got a son—he's called Joe Cool X. He was born with that name. □

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**BIENVILLE**

*The Transformative Tattoo*

Sean Herman is an artist on a mission and much like we have here, realised a long time ago that tattoos can transform us in ways we never thought they could. Recently, Sean has begun to write about this at his alternative online home—The Serpents of Bienville—and here (and for the foreseeable future) we'll be serialising his pieces, but first, an introduction is in order:

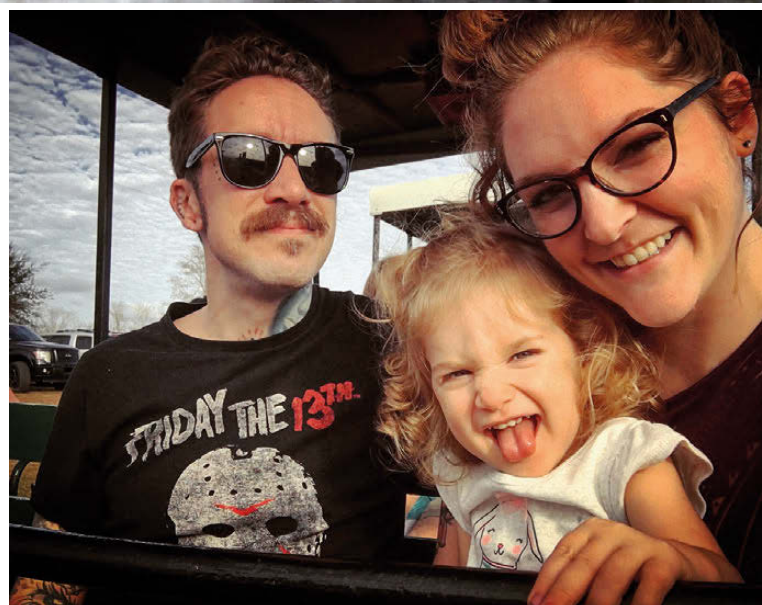


In this series we are going to cover different stories of people's tattoo experience, my experience with them, and the change that this living amulet of a tattoo has created in their varied lives. To learn more about this and our project, make sure to visit [www.serpentsofbienville.com](http://www.serpentsofbienville.com) and [www.seanherman.com](http://www.seanherman.com).



**T**attooing is a sacred act: opening the skin that guards people, inducing vulnerability, creating trust. As tattooist we get to put something back into that wound, positive or negative. We have the ability to give people something, during that time of vulnerability, that their body will heal over, and the skin that guarded them will wear as armour for their journeys to come. Tattoo needles, made in various groupings, are pushed through the skin by small, precise machines, pushing through the epidermis at some 50 to 3000 times per minute, and distributing ink into the dermis, the deeper layer of skin housing our nerves and blood cells. Our nerves produce triggers, declaring that a break has occurred. These triggers tell our immune system to get to work, and attempt to fix the break has occurred on skin, creating inflammation. The pain is a signal of repair. Job specific cells (macrophages) rush to the triggered area and begin to consume the ink that has been pushed through the puncture wounds. What ink that is left is then soaked up by skin cells called fibroblasts. Much of the macrophages and fibroblasts are then trapped there, suspended in the dermis, in perpetuity. This suspension of the ink in the cells is why we see tattoos as they are, but the slow dispersion back into the body is why they appear to fade over time.

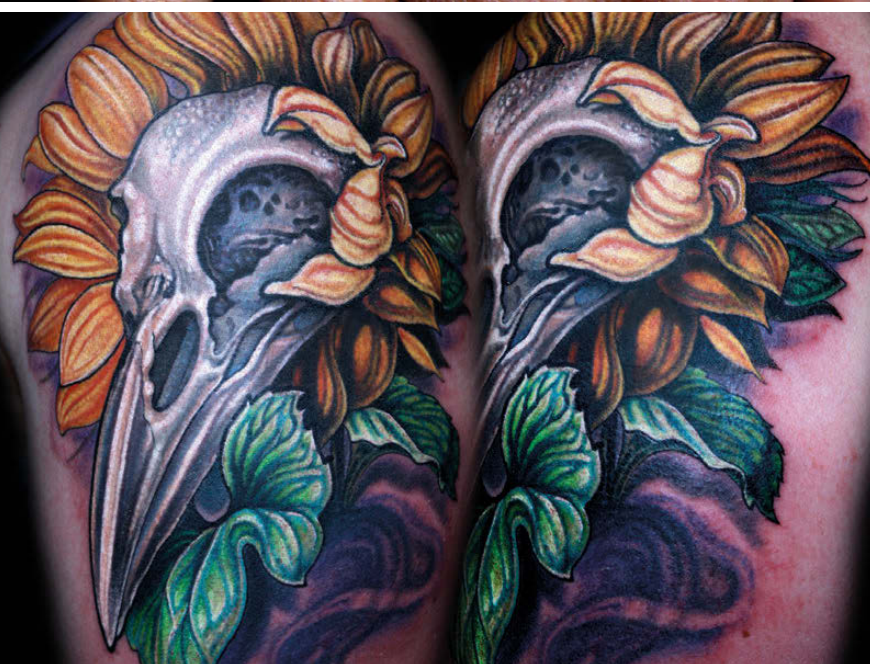
Tattoos are a living thing, existing symbiotically with us, in the cells created to protect us. Their rapid change demonstrate their true impermanence. The maximum



life span for most tattoos is 70 years or so, aside from cases like Otzi the Iceman, whose lifetime was around 3300 BCE <sup>(1)</sup>, yet you can still see his preserved tattoos today. Most people will not have Otzi's cryogenic fate, in death their tattoos are left behind. In essence, a tattoo's life parallels our own: in constant motion, evolution, gone in the blink of an eye.

*"These ornaments or marks of honour are not printed without pain; for a start they draw the pattern on the skin; then, with a needle or a small well-sharpened*





*bone, they prick to blood, following the pattern; after which, they rub on the pricked place with a powder of the colour asked by the one who gets that mark.”<sup>(2)</sup>*  
-Henri de Tonti (1600’s French explorer)

The stories of why civilisations have been tattooed are as varied as the cultures. In the Middle East mourners rubbed the ash from funeral pyres into self-inflicted wounds, thereby carrying a piece of the departed with them forever.<sup>(3)</sup> Daniel Bouquet, a medical doctor in

Cairo, wrote on the “medical tattooing” practices in Ancient Egypt. Describing the white and blue tattoo scars on female mummies found at the Deir el-Bahari site, he reveals, “they are not, in essence, ornament, but an established treatment...”<sup>(4)</sup>

Many question the motivations of the namesake for our project, “Serpents of Bienville”.

Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville was just sixteen years old when he and his brother Le Moyne d’Iberville saw the ominous mountain of bones, glisten-





ing on the slick, misty water, that would be darkly dubbed “Massacre Island,” present day Dauphin Island, Alabama. After exploring the area for some years, d’Iberville went back to France to be a voice for the colonies, leaving Bienville as the leader of French Louisiana.

In becoming the founder of Mobile, New Orleans, and other surrounding cities, Bienville became an icon. He became the subject of hero mythology and folklore, though some truth definitely could be found in these stories. “Bienville had the reputation of knowing the Indians well. Mastering the lingua franca of the lower Mississippi, called *mobilien*, he was without doubt the only governor of a colony in New France to speak to the Indians without an interpreter. He pushed indianisation so far as to tattoo himself with a serpent, which wrapped around his body.”<sup>(5)</sup>

According to several sources, Bienville had been heavily tattooed by the legendary lost Mauville Indians, showing his alliance with the natives. He and his armies fought in war after war, allying with native tribes against

the English. The English made alliances with other native tribes as well, causing a warring between natives that had never happened in such a way before, permanently mutating that native landscape. When the warring subsided, Bienville was left tired, worn, and alone.

Bienville’s brother d’Iberville died suddenly in 1706 after contracting malaria during the Gulf Coast exploration. After his death, questions began to arise about his estate, many rumouring d’Iberville had acquired a large fortune by uncertain means. Due to these claims and actions, France had lost trust in the younger

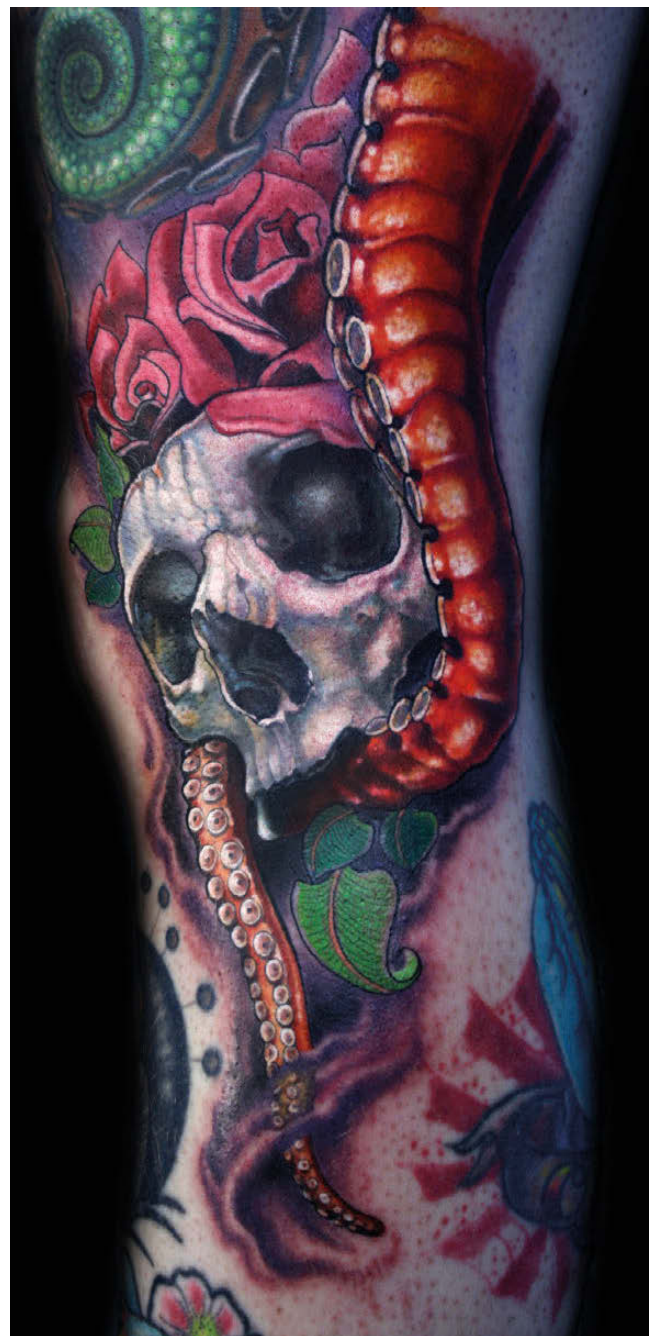
LeMoyne brother. Bienville was broken and forlorn. By 1740, Bienville’s health declined, and he had made political enemies with other administrators in Mobile, creating animosity amongst the Louisiana colonies. Years of unreliable troops, faulty timing, and mishaps in planning had taken its toll over the past four decades on Bienville. When looking back on his life, Bienville exhaustedly reflected, “a sort of fatality [has been] set for sometime upon wrecking most of











my best-planned projects.”<sup>(6)</sup> Bienville never became the head of a new nation, the trophy he always craved. He lived to see his Louisiana pass under Spanish rule in 1766, dying the next year in Paris, at the age of 88. Records of his funeral and burial were lost through pillage and fire, thus depriving his mortal remains of honoured recognition to this day. In my research for this piece, I found almost the exact same statement made about the Native American’s from this area, that their nation was lost through pillage and fire, depriving their culture of honoured recognition to this day. Were the tattoos of serpents an unknown oath, binding Bienville’s fate to the fate of the Natives? Could we still today long to belong to the culture’s we find truth in?

Punk rock saved my soul. I’m not the first person to say it, but it is still as true for me. Growing up, punk rock was an outlet, something that told me I wasn’t alone, something that told me other people felt the way I did. Screaming along words that meant everything to me, to us, something you can never really explain how it felt,

but you know you loved it. With Ian Mackaye I said I was “out of step with the world”, with Henry Rollins I said I was “tired of your abuse, try to stop us, it’s no use”, and with Milo Aukerman I said, “my day will come, some day I’ll be the only one”. They spoke everything I thought and couldn’t find the words to say, giving a voice to a kid that didn’t know how to use his own yet. Punk rock found me, and it saved my life. That was my first exposure to tattoos. I became enthralled with the idea of marking your progression through life. A way to visually account for where you have been, and where you are going. Marks of progression, progression that unified a group and created a culture.

Years passed, and my interest in punk rock grew to a passionate love. Matching tattoos, demonstrating ideals and energies, covering the bands I eagerly watched. Those symbols became ingrained in my mind, and I would just sit and draw them, over and over. I was hungry to have more, more history of tattooing, more images, everything. I remember one day reading a life-





changing piece on Paulo Sulu'ape, and I fell down the rabbit hole of the magic of tattoo, something that was even larger than the symbols I saw on the heroes of my youth.

The magical, spiritual connection in tattooing that Paulo spoke of enthralled me. The way he spoke about a connection to the person receiving the tattoo, and the power that it gave, it was amazing, it was inspiring, it was what I wanted to do with my life. From that moment I knew what I wanted in life: to connect. Years after I was affected by Paulo, I found myself working as a tattooist under the watchful eye of an amazing woman in Sweden. I went out there for a guest spot, and she became a person I held in high admiration. She had been in the industry, had seen the world, and had fought for tattooing. She was tough, and I respected her immensely. One night, while eating, she asked



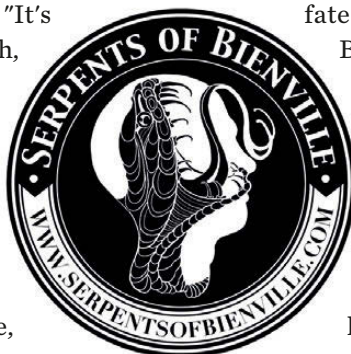




me how I got into tattooing. I began by telling her about Paulo Sulu'ape, and how his words changed my life. She looked at me, smiled, and I noticed tears started rolling from her eyes. "Paulo", she said, "was the love of my life". I sat in awe and listened to a story of them falling in love, getting ready to spend a life together, and his untimely death that forever changed her life. I listened, and was amazed. I told her how his words changed everything I thought, to which she smiled at me, and softly said, "It's tattooers like you that Paulo lives on through, forever." We sat, in silence, with tears in our eyes, forever connected. To me, that is tattooing. Connection. A magical connection that can be therapeutic, that can tie you to someone, good or bad, forever.

With 'The Transformative Tattoo' I want to share stories on a more intimate and personal level of the tattoo experience,

and the life after. We will also be working with openoureyes.org, an amazing organisation, encouraging all people to reach out and share their stories. Since the dawn of time, tattooing has been a form of connection, a tie to a group or culture. Some find a home in these connections, like the energy of a crowd singing along the same words of acceptance to a punk rock band. Others have had a connection that may have changed their fate after receiving the tattoo, like our friend Bienville. Tattoos live with us, changing with us, and creating a new story with every year that passes. Tattooing opens people up and gives a chance to present them something positive to hold onto, and to heal with. A person's reasons for getting tattooed vary, from marking accomplishments, to redefining the self image they have, to creating an idea of hope. ▣



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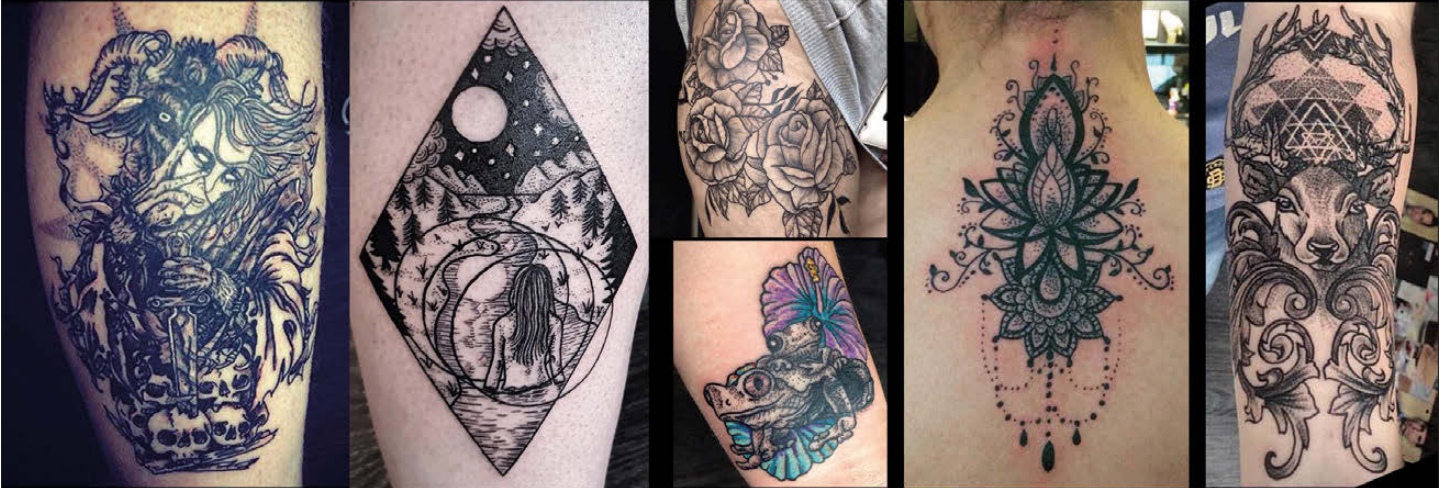
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# Tattoo Show







DANTE ALLIGHIERI



# CITIES OF THE DEAD: FLORENCE

*Last year, Sion Smith [the boss type person around here] headed out to Italy for the Florence Tattoo Convention. This article forms part of his much larger personal project called Cities of the Dead [natch] that has never seen the light of day until now and here, along with some work from the class acts discovered at the show [who are also working at Tattoo Jam] we present the first instalment simply because we wanted to do something different to see how it pans out. You know where he is if you care to comment.*

**P**isa airport is yet another bus station in disguise. There is no reason for it to be other than to allow planes to land or take off and so, that's about as much effort as anybody put into building it. I find this highly acceptable because if there's one place on earth that doesn't need to answer to anybody when it comes to building—or creating just about anything at all—it's anywhere in Italy. The fact that I couldn't fly straight into Florence is appreciated. I like the idea of keeping the air traffic away from one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen.

I take a two hour bus ride to Florence which passes without incident. Outside of the windows, there's nothing but fields and traffic. Take away the traffic and you can easily be in any year you care to choose. I can't imagine a whole lot having changed out there for the longest of times and yet I am the only person who



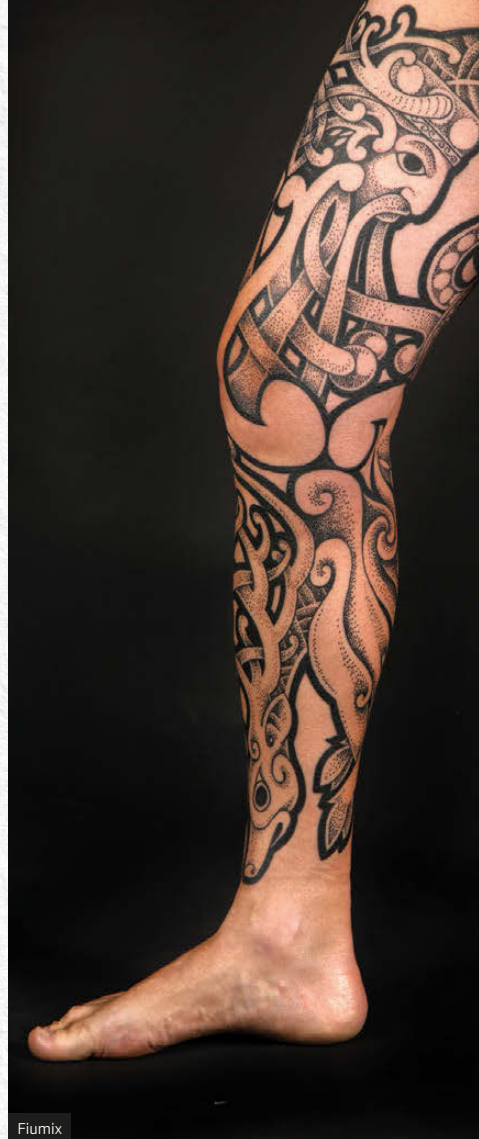
will have noticed this. The same cannot be said for everybody else on the bus who happen to be Japanese, all of whom have their faces buried in phones and huge tablets. How is it they are able to video-talk across the airwaves with people back home whilst I can't even get enough of a connection to send a simple message back home to say I have landed?

Approaching Florence itself, the traffic builds up fast. It's early on a Friday evening and I would guess that this is people going home from work. You can't escape The Race no matter where you are if you choose to be part of it, even in the city that gave birth to everything that's worth a damn in this world.

You may have gathered by now that I like Florence. A lot.

Milan is a shadow city compared to Florence—and whilst Rome may be the first name to slip off a map of Italy for you, it is nothing compared to Florence. Unlike Copen-





hagen however, I don't feel at home here—not yet. I simply feel like a visitor. Florence doesn't welcome you with open arms because it knows you have nothing of value to contribute compared to what it has already coughed up in the past. It's a city resting on its haunches, never having to prove anything. It died young and left a finely preserved corpse on permanent display for the rest of eternity.

We have established by now how much I like to wander but my idle sauntering has taken me very far away from the direction of my hotel. It takes me until it is properly dark to realise this and twice as long to backtrack again. By the time I get to where I'm supposed to be, it's what's known in the trade as Very Dark Indeed. On the plus side, my hotel is a peach. Two friendly desk clerks squabble like slapstick comics to give me my keys and point me in the direction of the back door.

Thinking it's some kind of running joke between them, I stay right where I am and wait. The tag on the key-ring says '4'. I'm pretty sure I could find it myself if I tried hard enough but as I'm about to scope the joint and figure it out, one of them comes out from behind the desk, takes me by the elbow and actually walks me to the back door.

Outside, set back in the breakfast courtyard, is what looks like a mini hotel. Two or three rooms at most in the quaintest little villa type thing. After struggling with a huge brass key to the front door that originates from

somewhere back in the 1730s and having to straighten out the key to my room with the heel of my boot, I am in.

One of the best things about travelling with no luggage is that I don't have to unpack. There's even a toothbrush in the bathroom which means I don't have to go shopping... and before I know it, I've convinced myself that I am now John Robie (Cary Grant's character in *To Catch A Thief*). It's the shutters on the windows that make me feel like this. It's no bad thing for a writer to occasionally slip into nonsensical fantasies about themselves. It's the loneliness of the hunter that pushes you to those far reaching corners of the mind.

This particular retired cat burglar now happens to be quite hungry. I take a shower in a room that's bigger than all of the rooms in my own home, leaning with my hands pressed up against the wall as powerful jets strip me of the grime of travelling. No matter what your station is in life, the dirt will always find you when you hit the road.

The dirt also has a habit of finding you when you least expect it.

An hour or so later, I walk through a thoroughly graffitied underpass, along streets I half recognise from my long walk to the hotel until I find myself in a civilisation where it may be possible for a man to eat in relative peace. I take a short cut through a park, and perhaps because of how I look, I'm approached by dark figures I didn't see





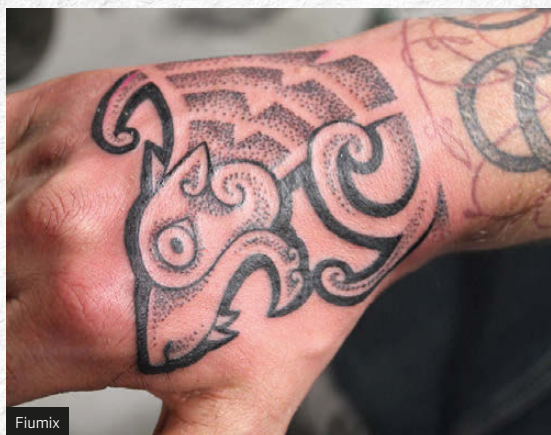
Carlotta E Cawa



Giovanni Despair



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hiding in the darkness. I've been to a lot of places in which people of colour are not welcomed and for all its glory, Florence appears to be one of them. I wouldn't say it was an obviously racist city by any means—certainly not by the standards of some places I have been—but some animals are more equal than others around here.

I assume they are asking me if I want to buy drugs. I've never been one to take cocaine with my breakfast in any city, so they're using words I have no comprehension of—none of which sound anything like 'croissant'. I say a few things in English and they nod in understanding. There is no threat here. Just business and we all move along with what we have planned for the remaining hours of the night.

There are some people—and maybe I am one of them—that seem to get away with being in places they shouldn't be and even fit in where you are not wanted. Somehow it is possible to cultivate the aura of a wanderer. It's an aura that suggests you are not here to take anything and neither do you want anything. Those people who report from war zones have this aura. It's not only the fact that they're followed around by a crew with a camera that give them the air. It's a self-containment that says you're just passing through and taking a look. I think it has to do with judgement—or rather the lack of it. Or perhaps even an instant judgement and then a total acceptance that people do whatever they have to do to make it through the night but

the minute you stop being an observer, your cover is blown.

I settle on a pizza restaurant simply because I can't think out of the box imaginatively enough to be wind-swept and interesting now. The pizza comes, I eat the pizza and kick back for a little while to watch the creatures of the night come and go. Idly, I wonder to myself where all the interesting people are these days. Where are all the writers—poets, authors, songwriters—hiding out? I can't be 'it' can I? But it appears that I may be. Apparently, there are far more important things to do than write poetry on the back of a napkin in a city of culture.

Leaving the money for my bill on the saucer, I head back to my temporary John Robie existence where I shall sleep and hope that tomorrow brings the flotsam and jetsam to the surface.

There are some things I must see while I am here so I head out towards the Duomo—which I don't want to see at all. That would be like heading into London and peering through the gates at Buckingham Palace. There are thousands of people who do want to see it however and they have lined up wherever there is space in the street to await their turn at entering the doors.

What I have come to see is something entirely different. I flip through some back streets towards Piazza della Signoria and Palazzo Vecchio (which takes quite some time





Fiumix

due to my refusal to look at a map) and finally find what I seek: a statue of Dante Alighieri.

There are two to choose from (that I know of) and they seem to have both been created on a day when he was in a foul mood. The face of Dante is the face of a man who has looked Death in the face and come to an agreement with the entity that his time on earth is punishment enough. A little research on my return home shows the younger Dante to appear much softer than in later life.

He takes breakfast one morning, wipes his mouth on his sleeve and takes to the streets in search of inspiration for whatever his next project is. Maybe he will sit by the river for a little while and see what may surface but gliding through the streets he knows so well, he rounds a corner and bumps into a figure who is known immediately by its aura and nothing else. He enters into a bargain with the entity. In exchange for some extra years on the surface of the earth, he will write—in no uncertain terms—the most detailed description of what sinners have to look forward to when it is also their time.

This is the day his face changes forever and his beloved Beatrice no longer recognises the features that stare back



Diego Brandi

at her at supper that evening. Dante Alighieri has aged fifty years in a single day.

He is not the only man immortalised here (and boy, did it used to be a man's world—men, horses, children and lions are everywhere, whilst women are nowhere to be seen) but for me, he is the most important. You'll also find Benvenuto Cellini's statue Perseus With the Head of Medusa, a reproduction of Michelangelo's statue David (the original is housed in the Accademia di Belle Arti Firenze), The Fountain Of Neptune... the list makes a mockery of any city that has attempted to accomplish the same.

The truth of the matter is, Florence is a place where a man can set fire to his brain, send it sailing into the sky and wait with good cup of coffee until it sails back down to earth bearing gifts from the heavens—once upon a time he could anyway. I'm not sure anything great comes out of Florence anymore. It must be tough living in the shadows of giants.

This is the beautiful side of Florence—the Florence that is meant to be. The ugly side of the city comes from the tourists and none of them are paying attention to anything important. At a swift count, in the air at any single moment I see more than two hundred selfie-sticks. Tourists taking pictures of themselves in front of statues and buildings they haven't even stopped to look at. The aim of the game is to be seen in a Place Of Importance.

The photo is taken and magically loaded up for likes and discussion in their social media timelines. There are thousands of people here all doing the same thing and it makes me feel sick. I light a cigarette to see if they will disperse but the locals are nowhere to be seen and everybody else is too consumed with themselves to notice. Turning three-sixty looking for anybody with a real camera, I see none. This same ritual must happen every hour of every day here, every month of the year.





Diego Brandi

Once upon a time, this square would have been full of those with sketch-books and pencils. I think that's the part I find saddest of all.

I stand beneath Neptune hoping that if I wish hard enough and throw enough cash in the fountain, a tidal wave might spring out of the river and send the crowds running for the hills. But no, here more than anywhere I see proof that the dead are more alive than the living. They have histories worth speaking of, sweeping contributions to the advancement and enjoyment of the human race, legacies etched in the annals of time. The living are simply acting out the plot of a Philip K. Dick story in which humans are composed of nothing but a stream of data endlessly meandering through the modern age for no reason at all other than they can think of nothing better to do.

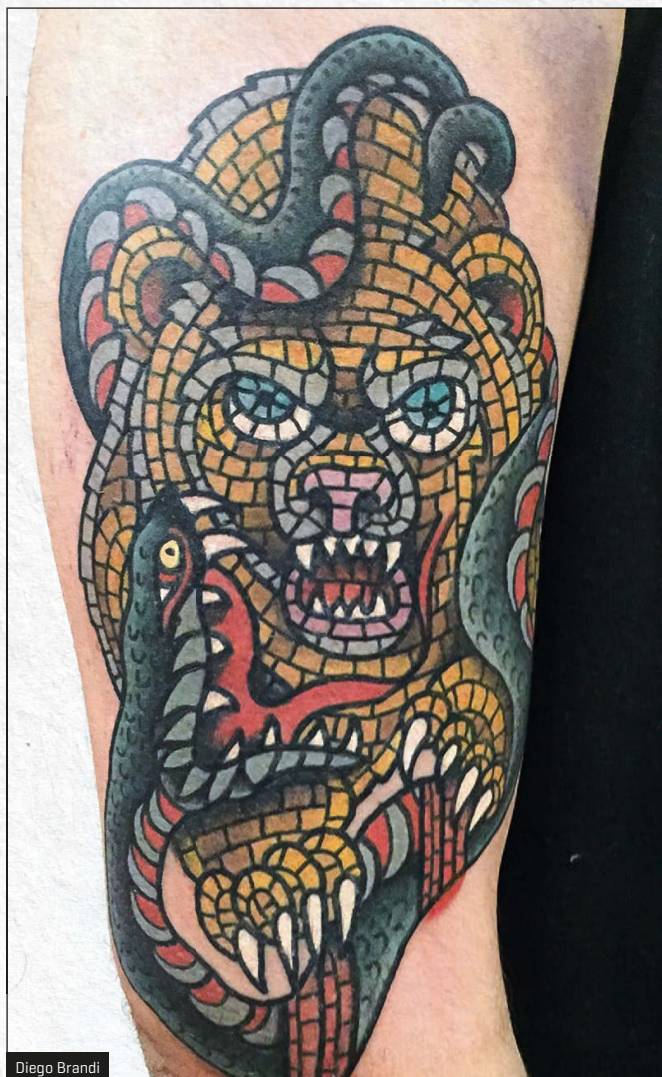
Reluctantly, I walk away from history and find a restaurant with a table outside to watch in further amazement

at the tricks of the human circus ponies. It almost seems like torture to become so preoccupied with the inanity of the people here but I rubberneck it all the same and realise I am falling into bad habits.

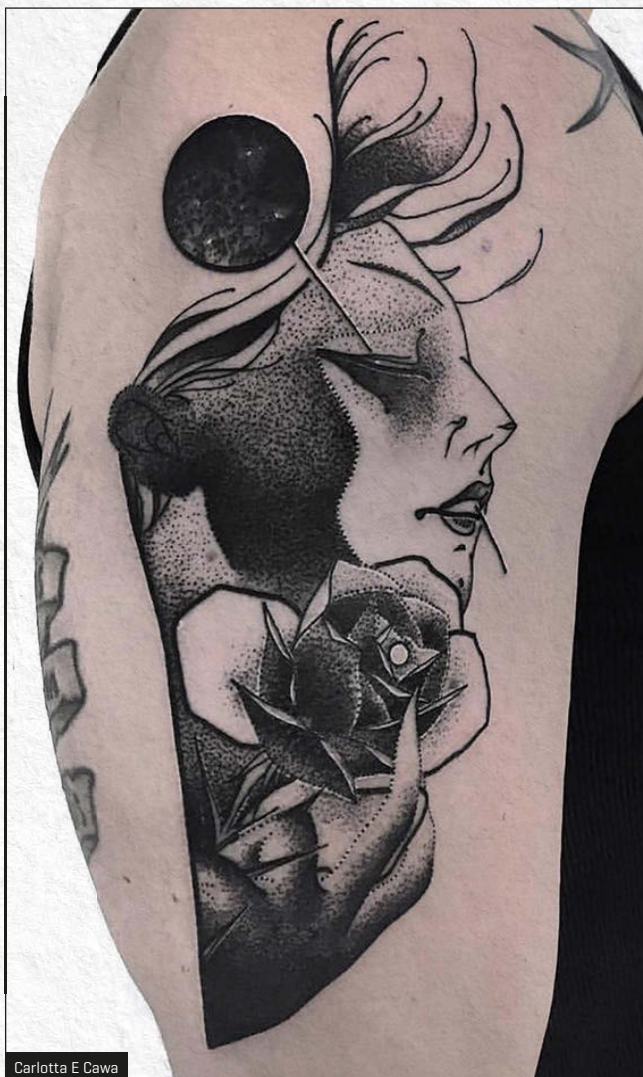
It does however, give me time to reflect in the midday sun, on a peculiar chain of events. In all of the time I have spent waiting at airports, chewing over my own philosophies, I have often wondered (and I know I have said this before elsewhere) if my personality is actually created by pop culture as opposed to what must surely and more properly be the other way around.

My entire existence seems to be a self-fulfilling prophecy of my favourite Disney songs from my childhood. Thomas O'Malley's autobiographical swing in *The Aristocats* became my theme tune, Baloo's 'Bear Necessities' became the song that showed me how to live a good life and as I sit here, 'I've Got No Strings' springs into my head as a mental flag reveals itself, reminding me that





Diego Brandi



Carlotta E. Cawa

I once said if I ever came here, I would investigate the background of Carlo Collodi—the man who wrote *Le Avventure Di Pinocchio* (*The Adventures of Pinocchio*) or *Storia di un Burattino* (*The Story of a Marionette*) as it's sometimes known.

A lot of my childhood revolved around puppets of some kind. They were quite glamorous toys in the seventies but it wasn't until much later I realised their cultural influence—and just how watered down and bastardised everything had become.

Collodi's original story (first published back in the late 1800's—and if my research proves correct, was knocked together to pay off a gambling debt), is vastly different (natch) from what you may think is Pinocchio's story thanks to Uncle Walt. Back then, the first ending our little wooden hero had was being hung from a tree by a cat and a fox—in fact the whole story is a dirty tale of poverty and scratching out a living right from the very beginning. It's also a tale with origins as old as the hills in which our 'hero' descends into hell and is reborn a better person.

Much to my satisfaction, the original story also has great characters such as The Terrible Dog-Fish (who is a mile-long and five-stories high), The Tuna Fish (who is as large as a two year old horse), The Talking Cricket (who Pinocchio kills for handing out advice where it's not

wanted) and The Fairy With The Turquoise Hair (which sounds like a story I would write but perhaps not about the same kind of thing). All of which leads me to believe that folk tales have also lost their mojo.

I wander until I find the resting place of Collodi in the Lorenzini tomb at San Miniato al Monte. I salute the building but that's all. There is nothing else to see here of the man that could add any more to his story than he has already revealed of himself. I smile along with the salute though and surely that's the best tribute one man can give another?

I wander in reverse back to my hotel, through more crowds cataloguing their own lives for posterity, stopping only to stroke a St. Bernard sitting on the pavement outside of a newspaper shop.

Following another shower to shake off my confusing train of thought about Pinocchio being exactly the same story as *Divine Comedy*, I flop onto my cat burglar bed and write in my notebook about how I have come to see Florence as a city in which the Gods are constantly at war with a mechanised society actively pursuing science, but neither really matters when you're A Watcher.

Outside, beneath my shuttered windows, I light a cigarette and take a photograph of myself just to make sure I have been here. ▣



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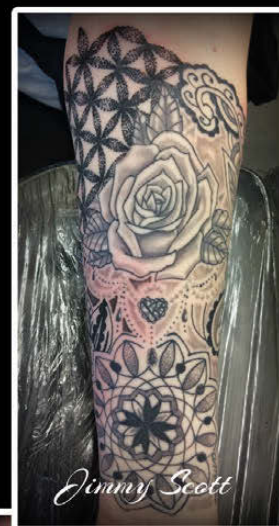
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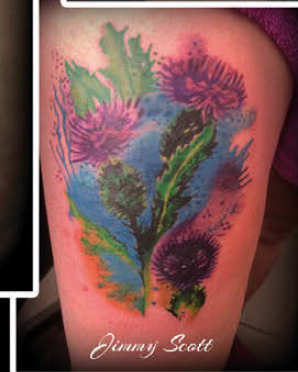
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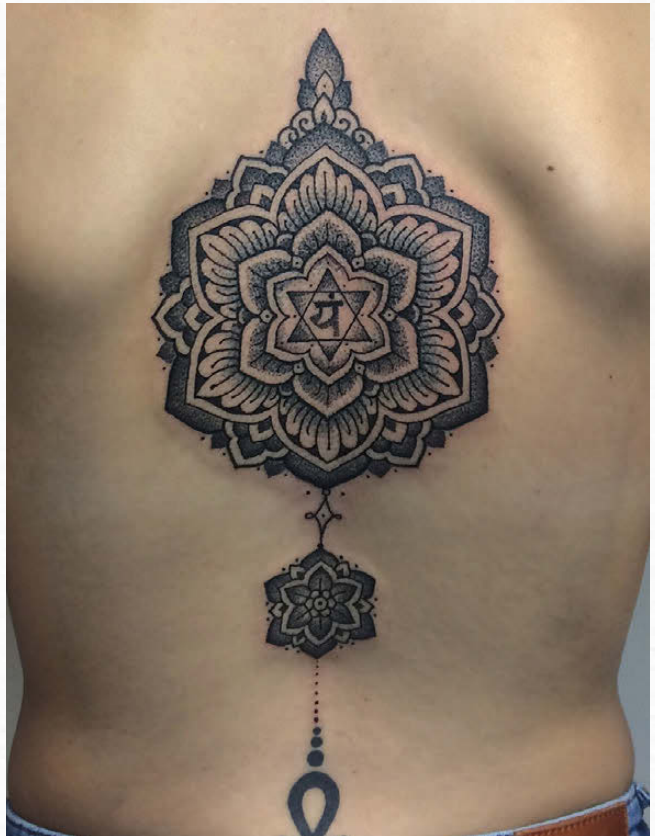
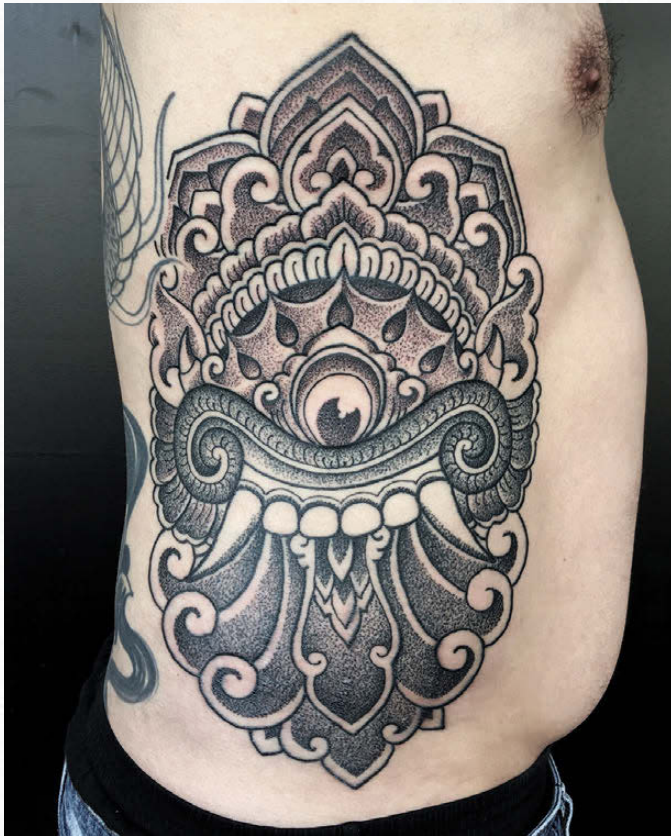
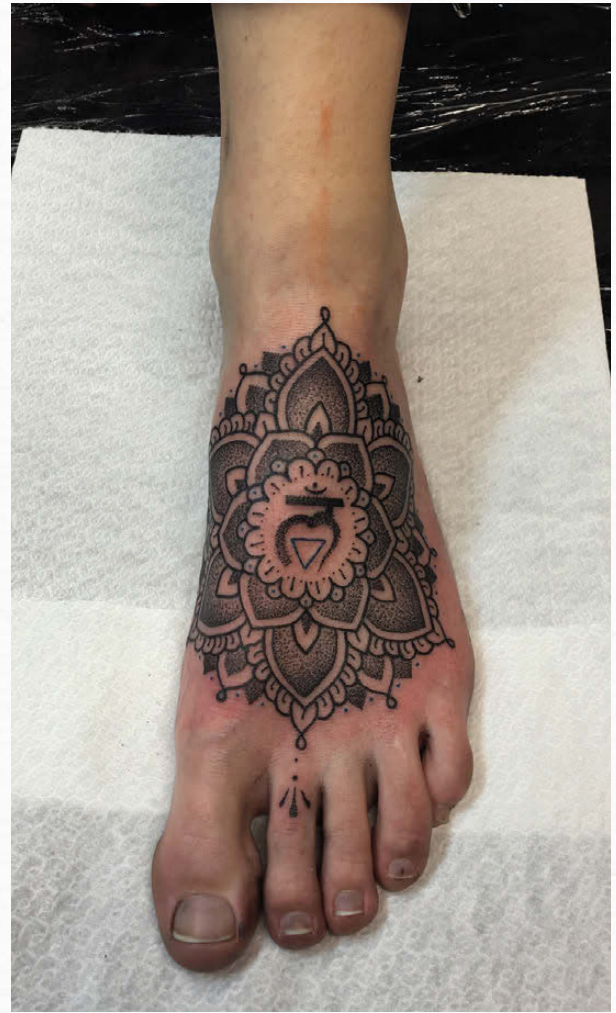
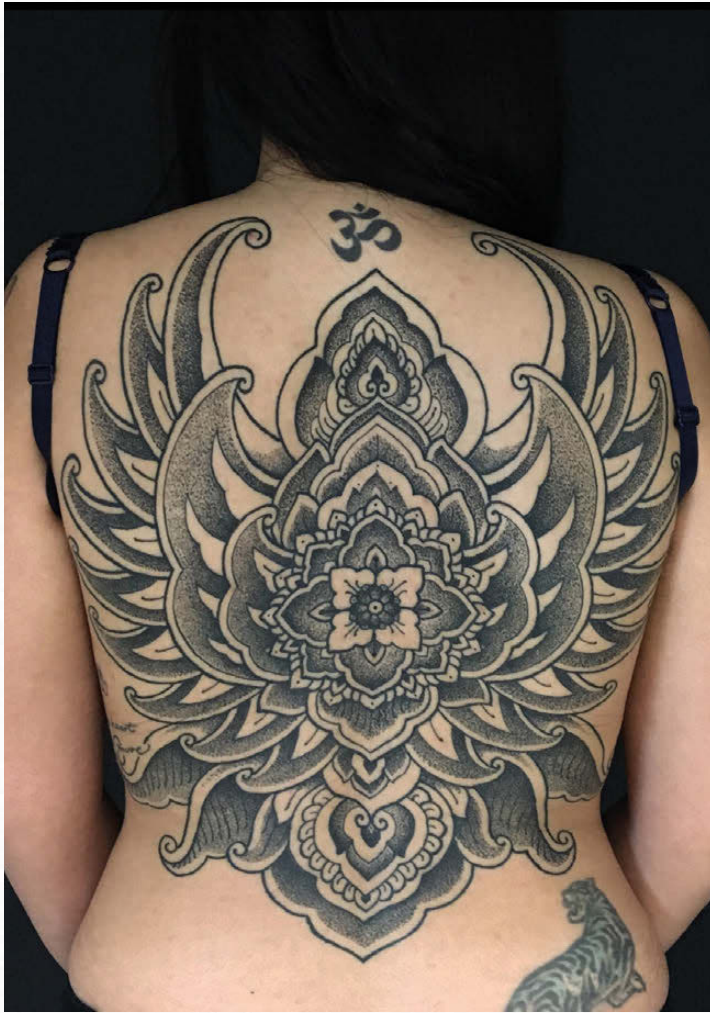




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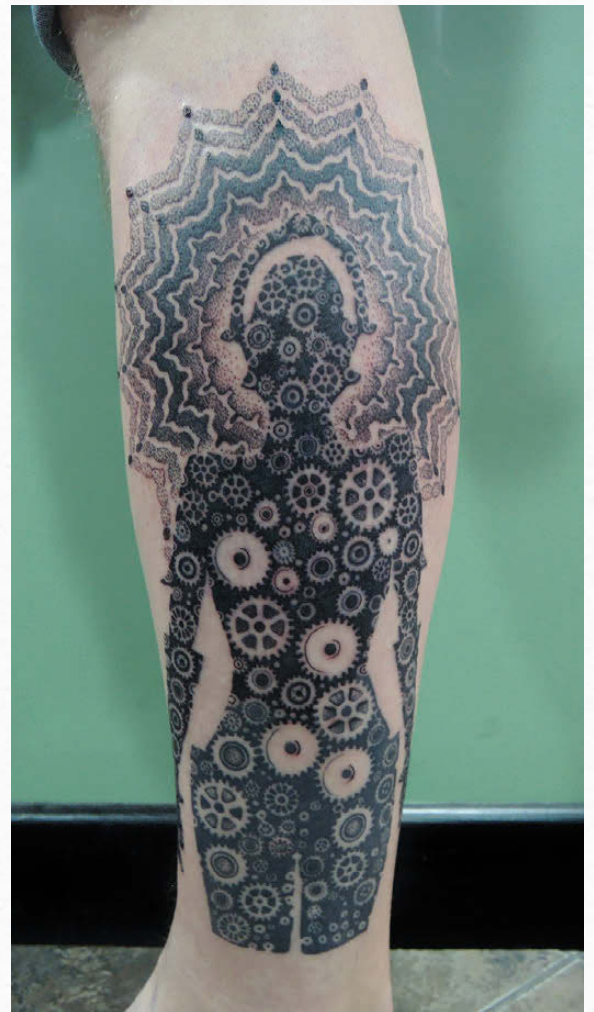
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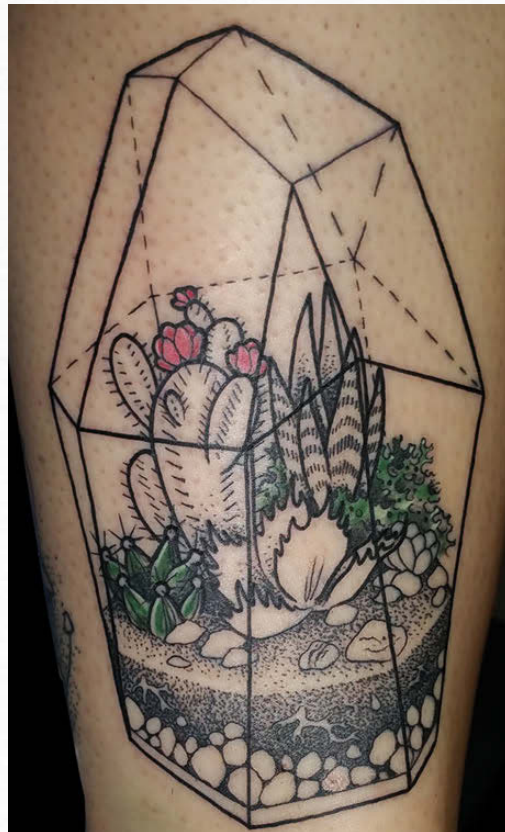
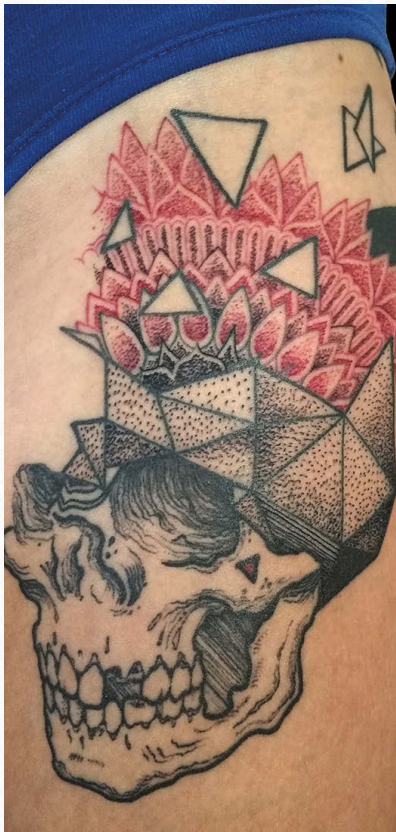
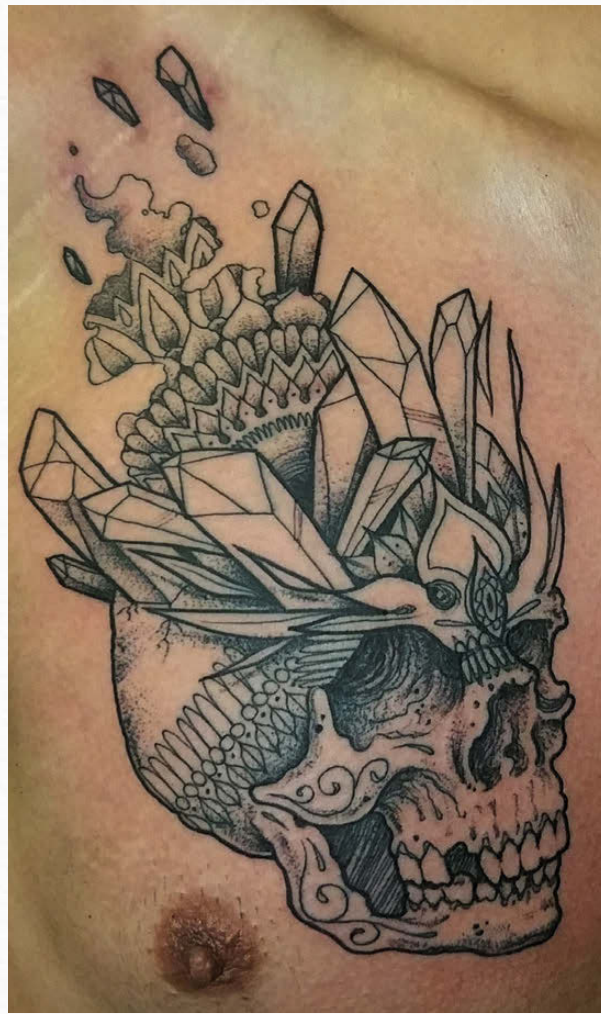
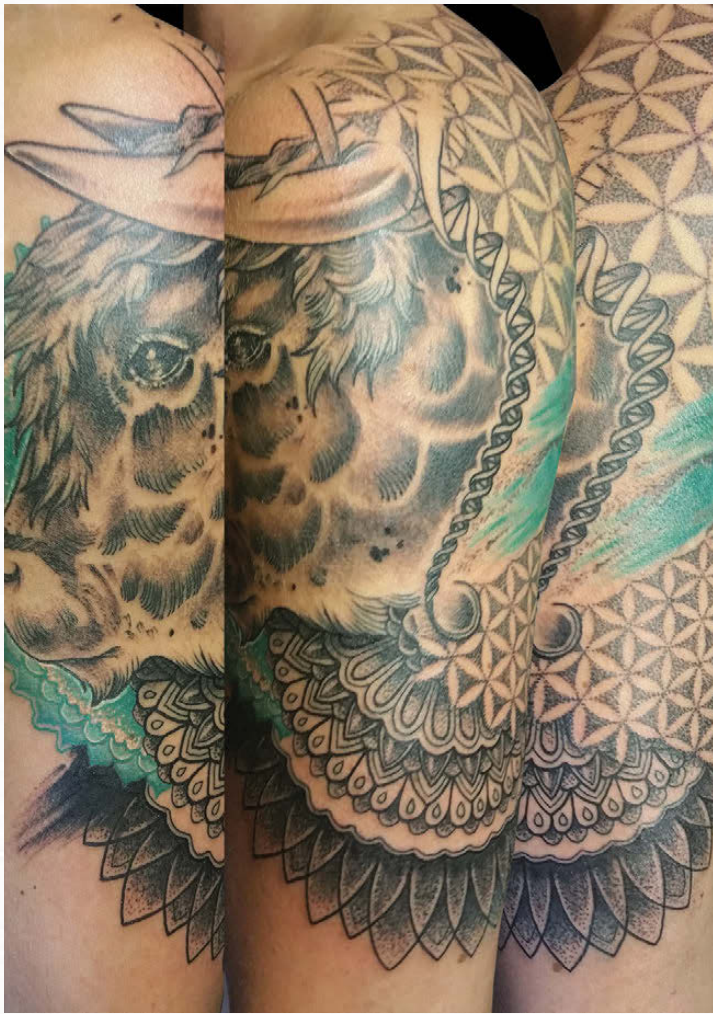


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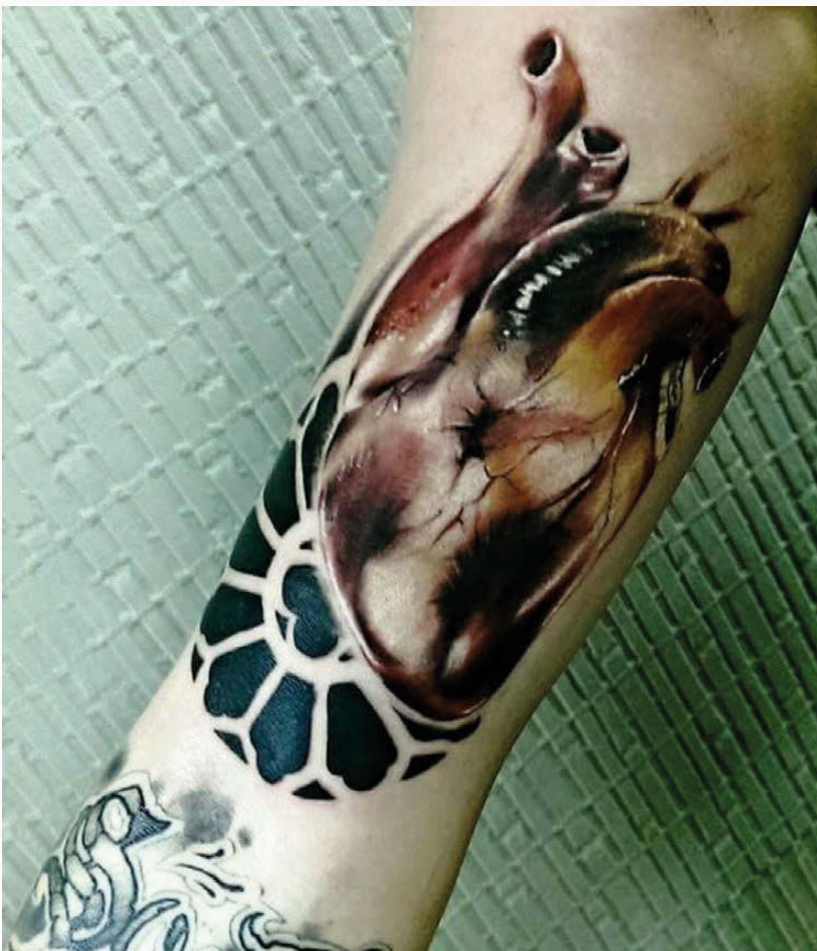


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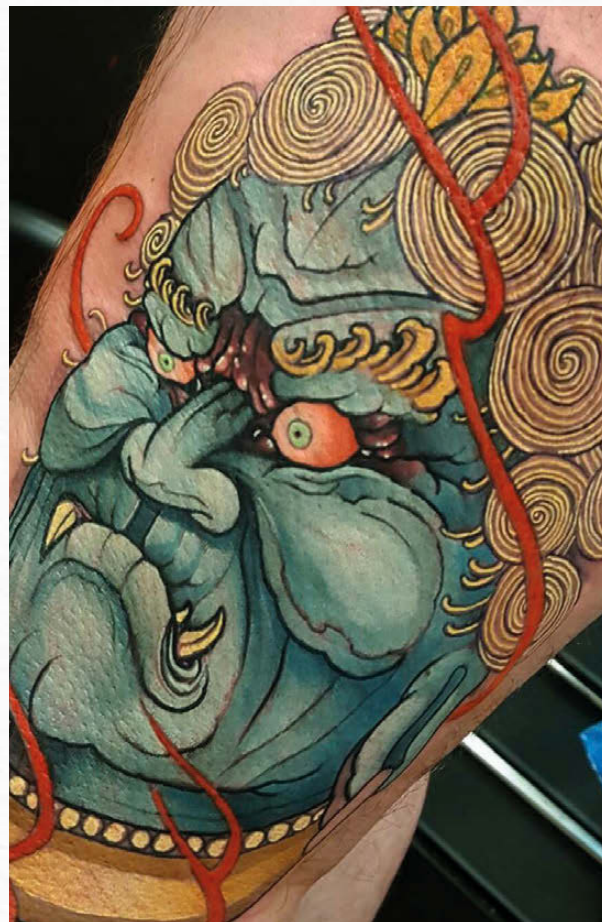
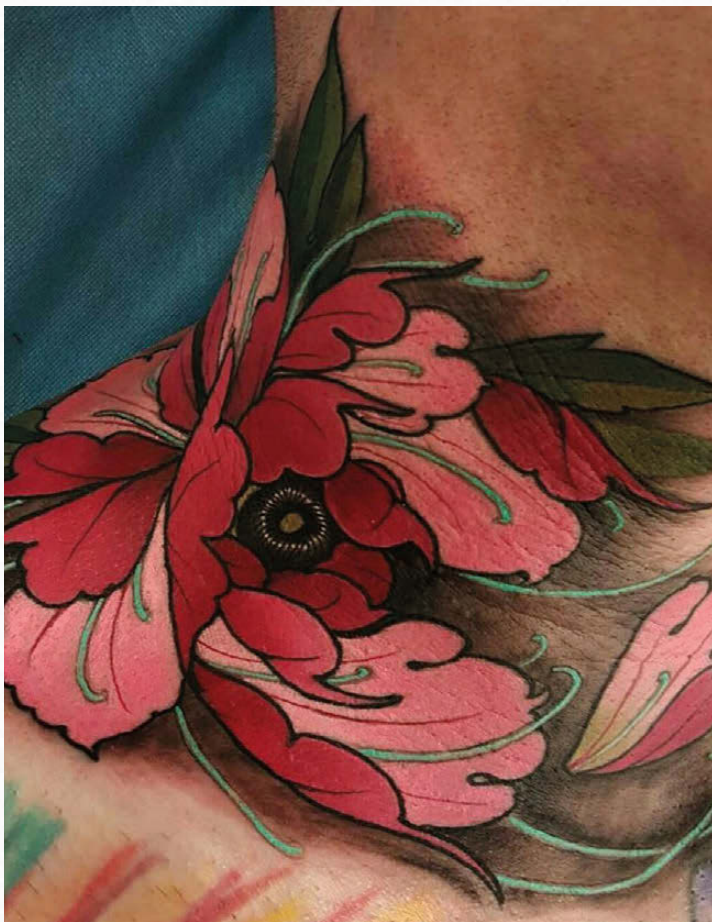
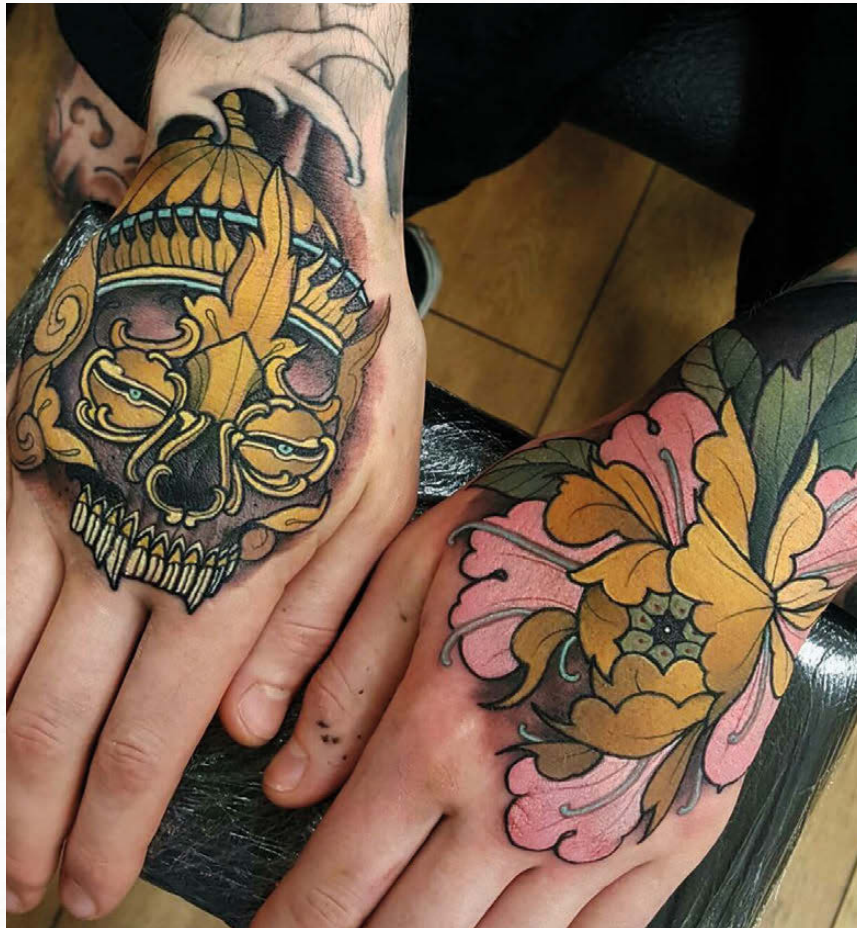
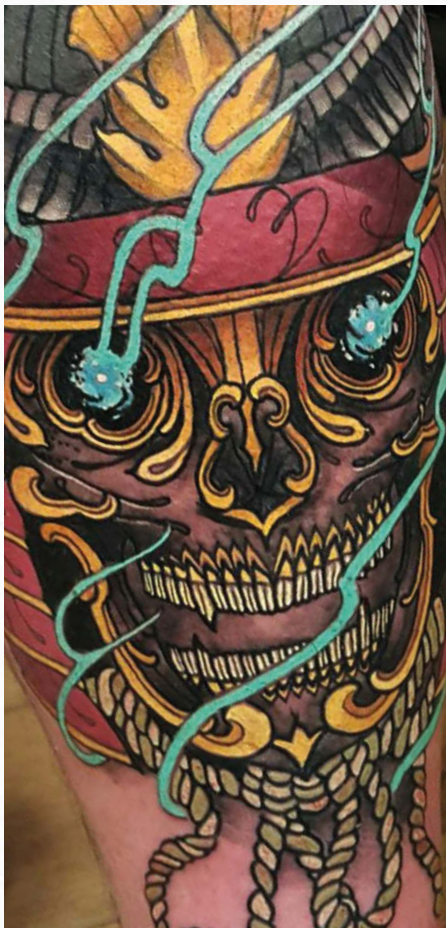
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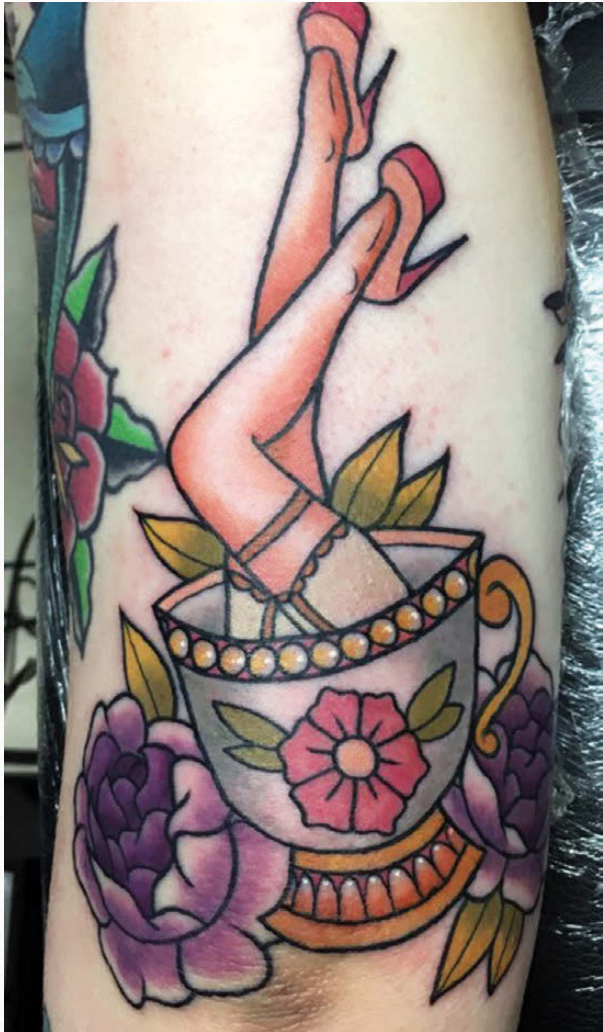
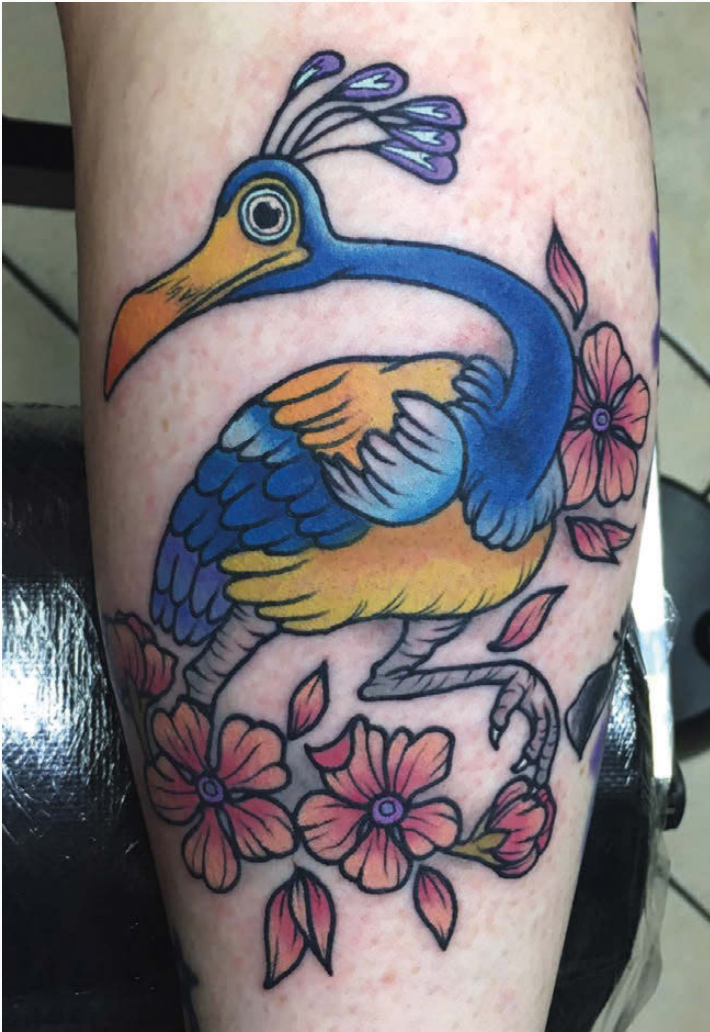
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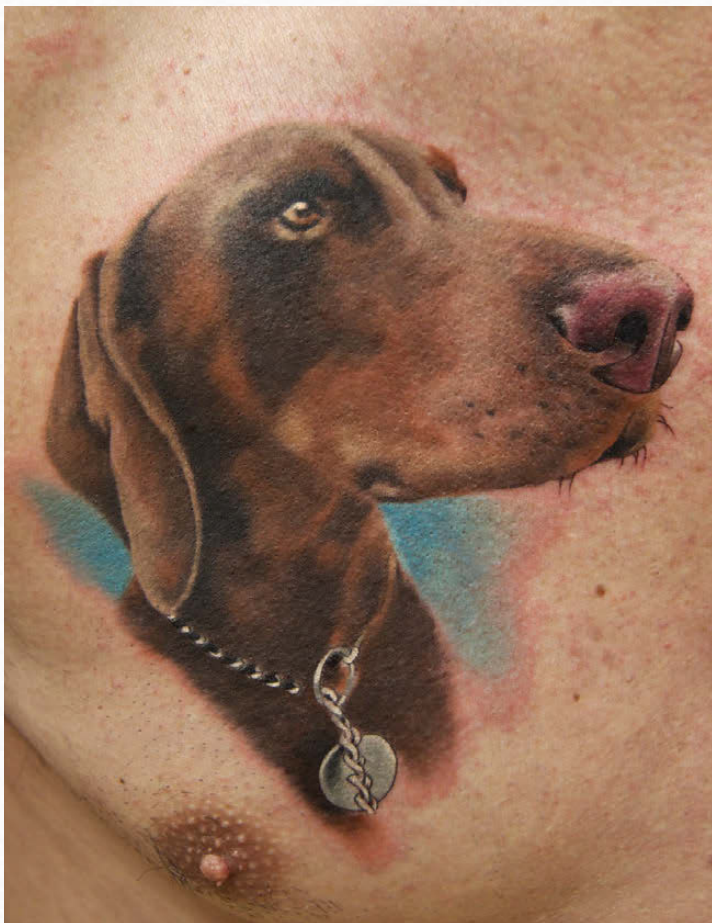
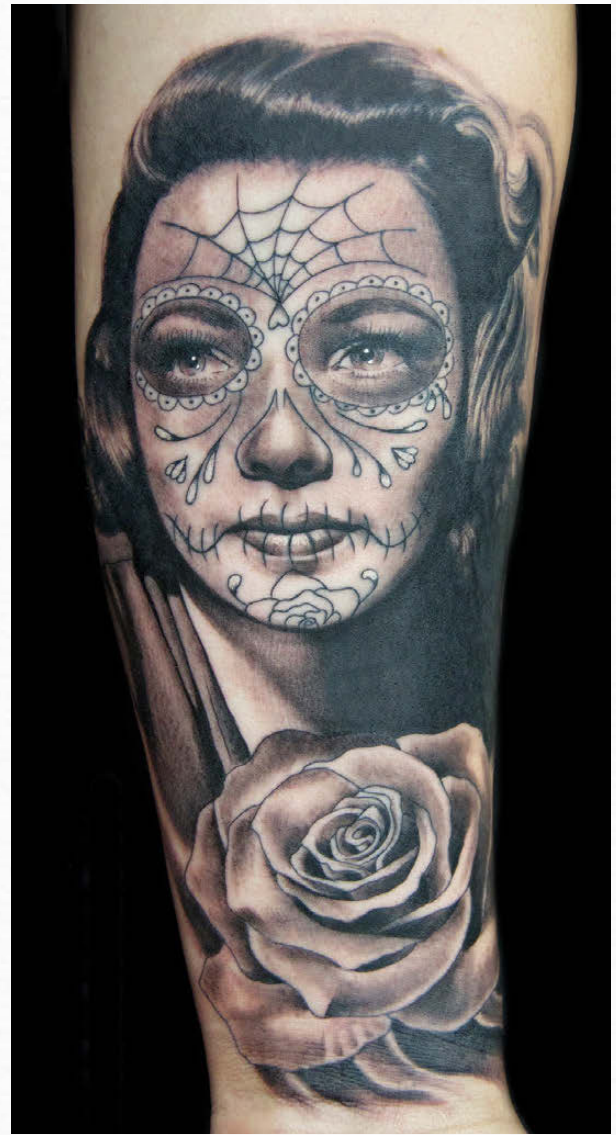


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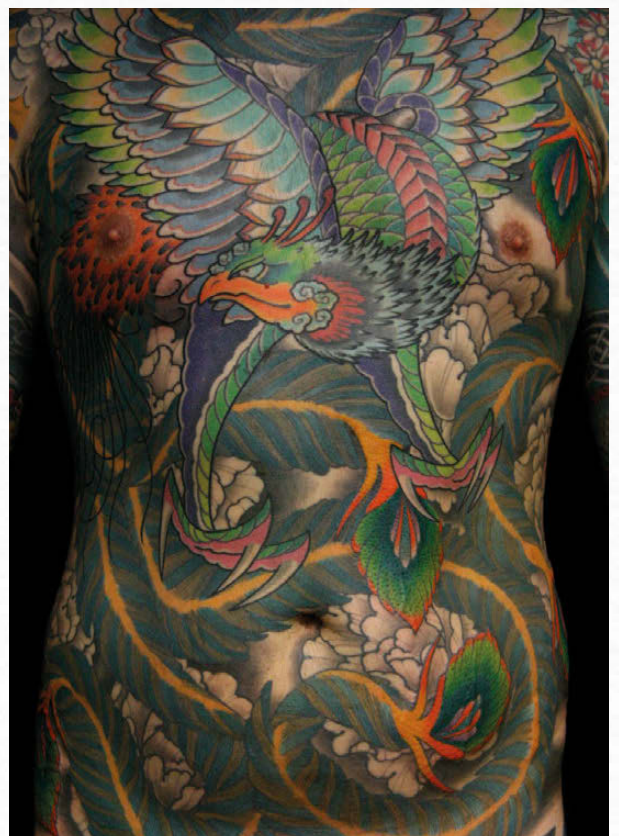
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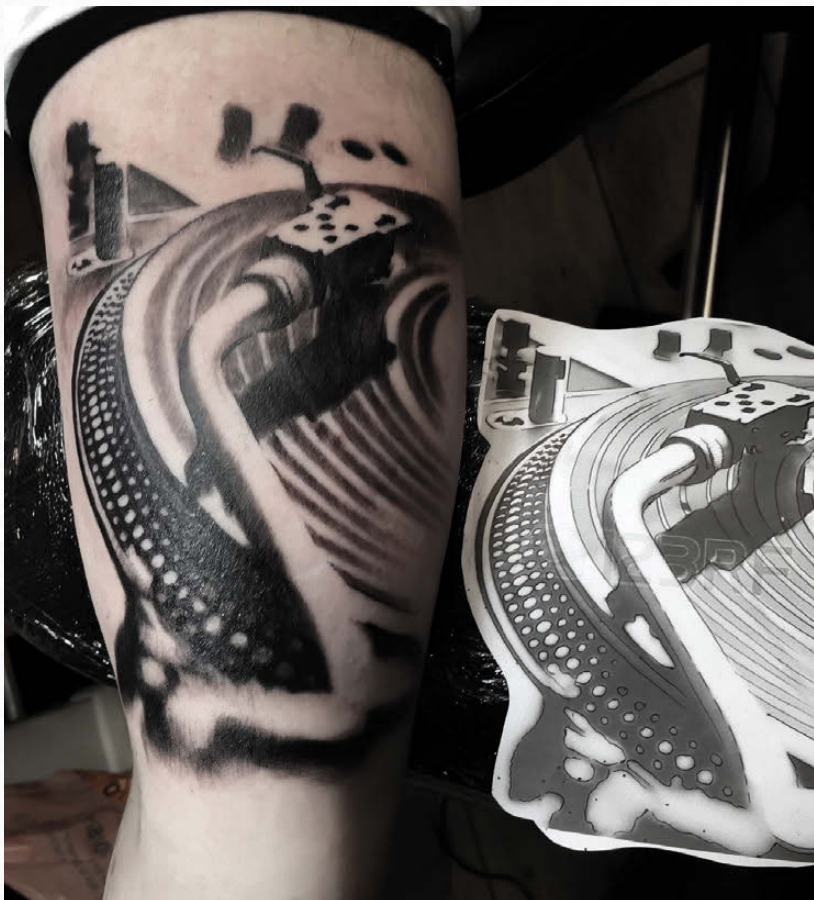


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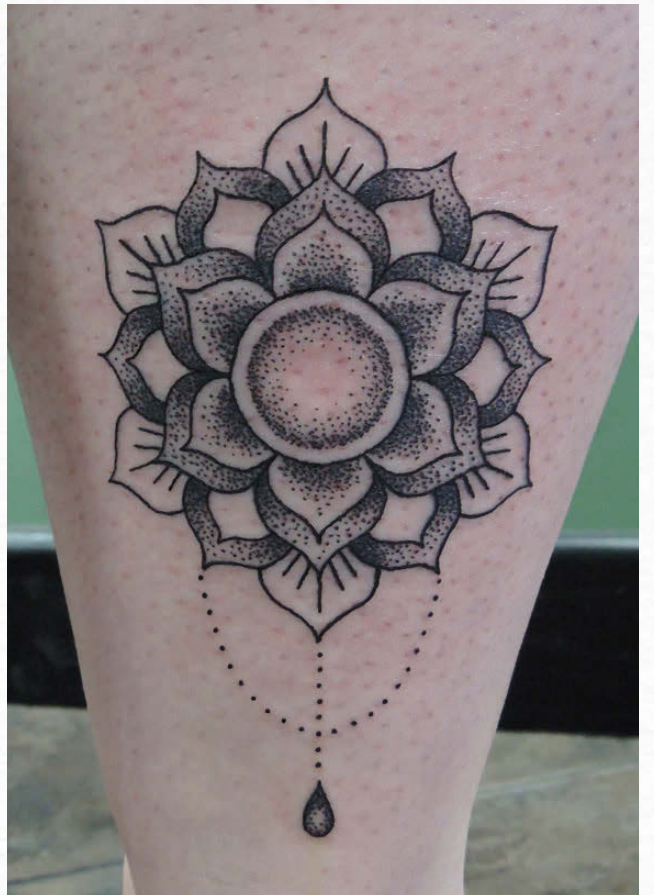
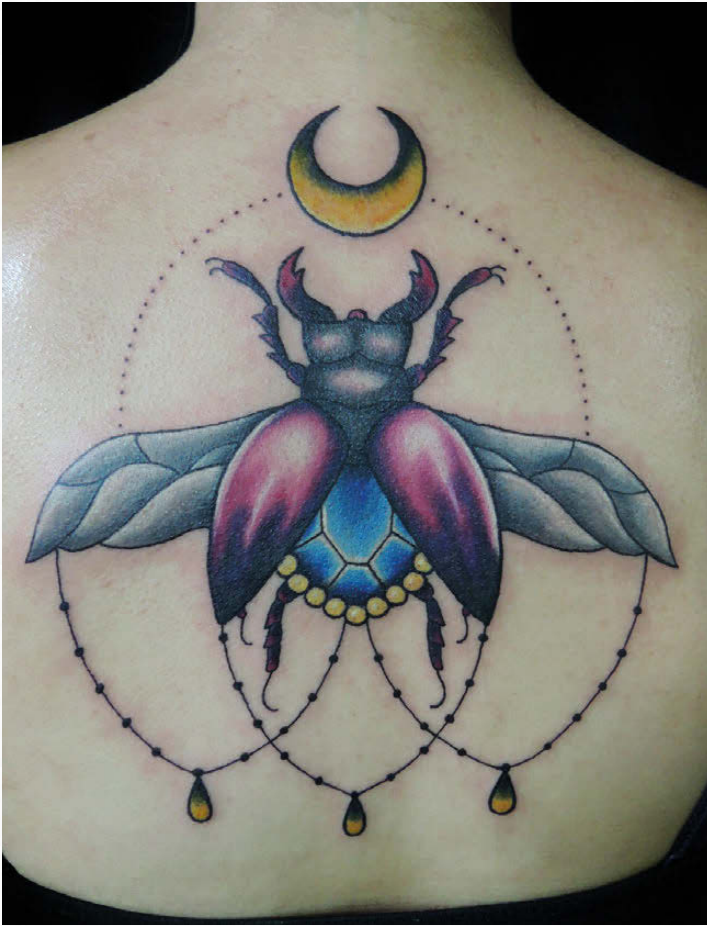
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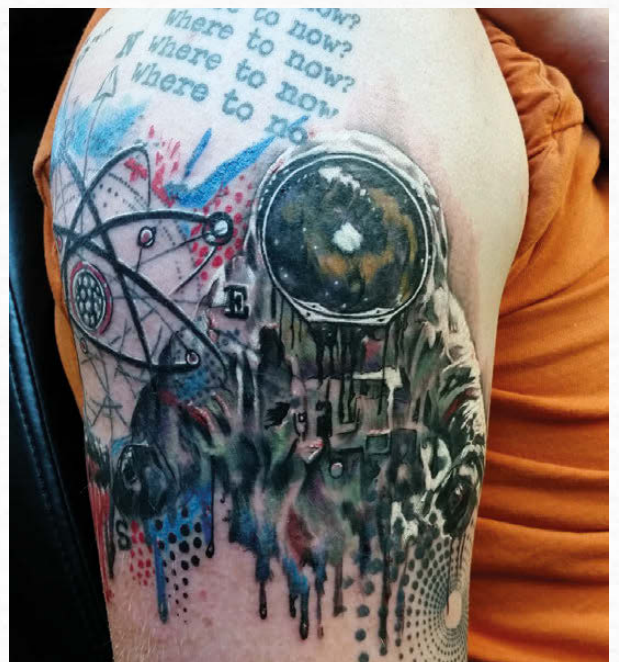
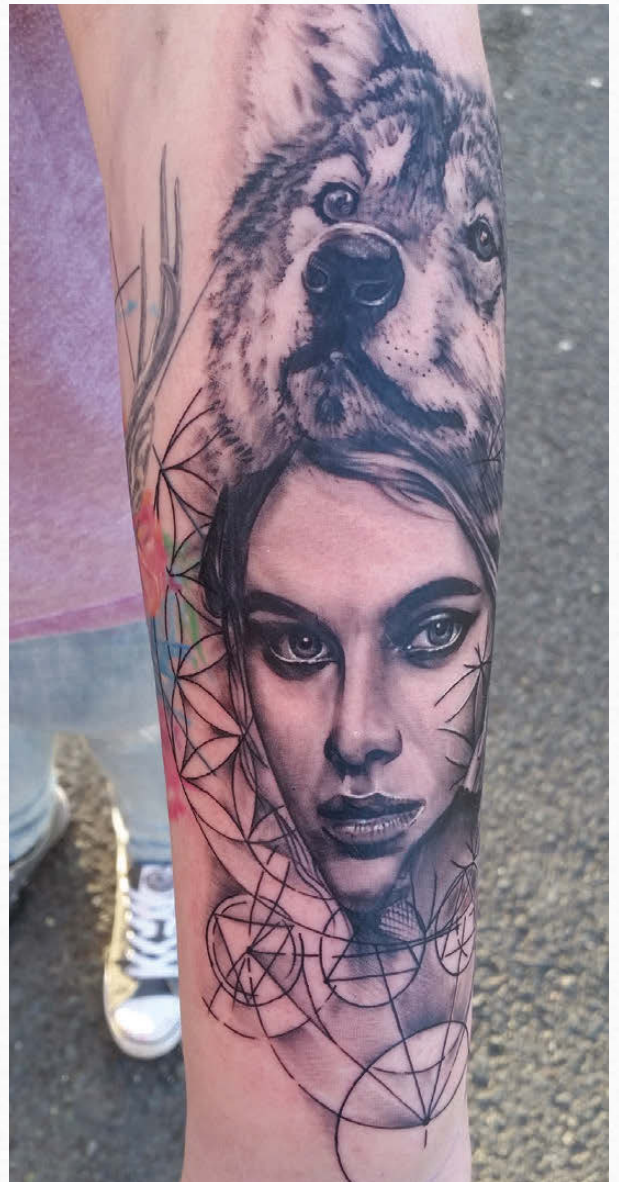
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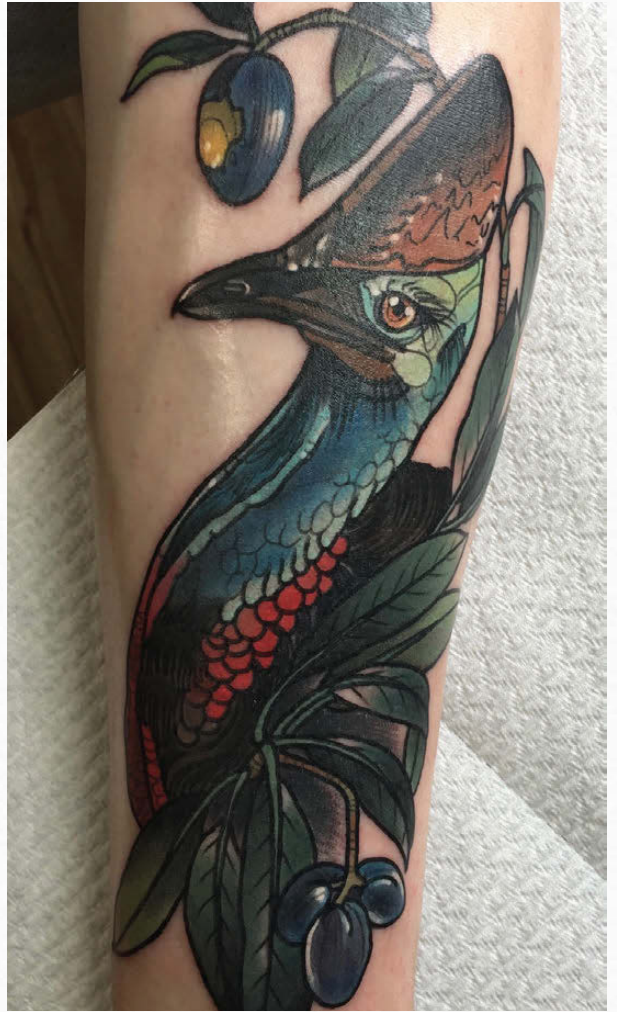


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# WYLD CHYLD

*Sometimes life throws unexpected surprises your way and you just have to embrace them. A fact that Sarah Miller, who you may recognise as the runner up of Ink Master Season 2, knows all too well. One moment she's working a corporate graphic design gig and the next, she's running her own tattoo studio in Pittsburgh, publishing comic books and appearing on the biggest tattoo TV show around... not once, but twice.*



**W**hile attending the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, Sarah Miller split her time between classes—she received her Bachelor of Science in Graphic Design in 2008—and a tattoo apprenticeship under her roommate, Alex Branwin. Several corporate graphic design gigs followed, but eventually, Miller decided to devote herself to her true love full-time.

Fast forward to 2012 and she was opening her own studio, Wyld Chyld Pittsburgh, and competing on the second season of Ink Master. Walking away as the runner up, she returned to redeem herself on Season 7, dubbed Ink Master: Revenge, earlier this year. Now, Miller is back at her shop, doing what she loves most—a great excuse for an interview, if you ask us.

#### **Fate And Passion**

“Before my roommate mentioned it, I didn’t even consider tattooing as a career,” admits Miller who, thanks to a stroke of fate, shared her university dorm room with a Game Art and Design student... who just so happened to be a tattoo artist, too.

“We were always painting and drawing together and she convinced me to apprentice under her. It took a few months to convince me because I was raised in a very conservative Christian household,” she continues. “But the first time I picked up a machine, it felt right. From the coils to how the machine was built and what the needles were doing, everything clicked and my apprenticeship was only five or six months. I felt like I should have pursued it earlier.”





Words: Barbara Pavone - Images: Sarah Miller





**I DIDN'T SEE MYSELF CONTINUING TO DESIGN GROCERY STORE CIRCULARS IN FIVE, TEN OR EVEN ONE YEAR. A PIECE OF MY SOUL WAS DYING EVERY TIME I WENT INTO THE OFFICE**

As she soon discovered, jumping into tattooing from graphic design wasn't about "re-learning any rules, it was about figuring out how to tattoo the skin, how deep, how to create something that has longevity. Plus, it's a 3D canvas instead of 2D, which is very different to think about. Like how to apply a stencil that looks like it is part of the person and not something they picked out from the wall and slapped on."

Despite learning quickly and feeling a deep connection with the art form, Miller confesses that, "at first, I thought it was just going to be fun and I'd be happy working party-time at a shop. In 2008, the job market tanked while I was working on multimillion dollar campaigns for a large corporate advertising agency. I was one of the 3/4 of the design team laid off, so I started tattooing more before landing another graphic design job. It

was for a smaller firm and I was designing grocery store circulars."

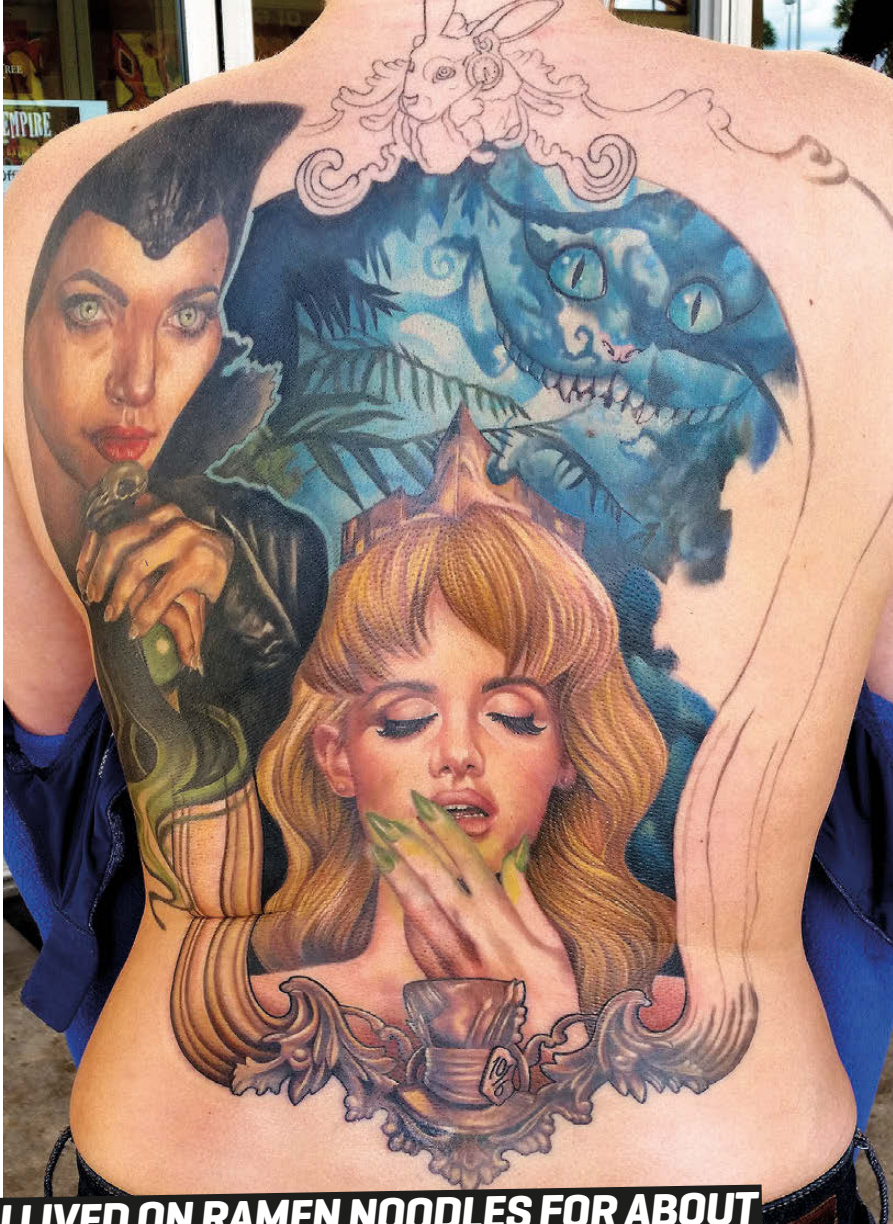
"That was not what I wanted to do, so I started tattooing while I was doing that job. About three months into the position, I started having a personal crisis because I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I didn't see myself continuing to design grocery store circulars in five, ten or even one year. A piece of my soul was dying every time I went into the office," she remembers.

"The only time I felt happy was at the tattoo shop, so I went to my graphic design job from 9 to 5 and then I would tattoo every night and I slowly started building my clientele. All of my friends and family told me I shouldn't quit my graphic design job because I had health insurance, retirement, etc. They said, 'If you tattoo, you will be a starving artist'. I was doing a lot of reflecting and soul searching trying to figure it out."

"Finally, it got to a point where I made the decision and I quit. I lived on ramen noodles for about eight months, but at least I felt hap-







**I LIVED ON RAMEN NOODLES FOR ABOUT EIGHT MONTHS, BUT AT LEAST I FELT HAPPY AND FINALLY SATISFIED**

py and finally satisfied.” Complete validation of her bold decision came soon after that at the 2010 Baltimore Tattoo Arts Convention, of all places.

“It was the first convention I ever tattooed at,” recalls Miller. “We got snowed in and this incredible artist and now friend, Halo, was right across from me, as were others, and they were doing these amazing tattoos—I was truly inspired. Plus, at that show, someone asked me ‘Where do you see yourself in five years?’ and that question really got me thinking.”

“That weekend something touched me because I got very hungry. I wanted to compete and produce the level of work I was seeing around me. I wanted to be remembered. I didn’t want to tattoo just for the job anymore, I wanted to do it because it became everything to me.”

**The Small Screen**

It was following this major turning point that Miller devoted herself to tattooing wholeheartedly. Then, come 2012, she experienced her second life-changing moment.

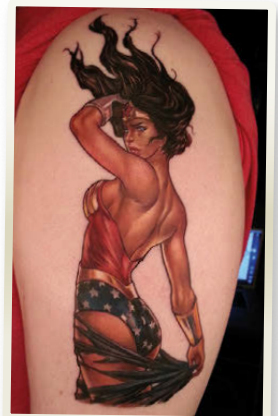
“Before Ink Master, tattooing had become my life, but after Ink Master, I internalised it,” she explains. “I will never stop tattooing.

If I don’t tattoo for a few weeks, I get itchy. I can find this mental zen when I tattoo. It seems stupid, but I become one with my client’s skin. I literally think of nothing else. It’s just about you and the artwork—it’s amazing.”

Making it all the way to the end of Season 2, Miller claimed second place after losing the Ink Master crown to Steve Tefft.

“Things I could have done differently would have been not doubting myself as much,” she says. “Looking back at the pieces I created, I think they were amazing and hold up over the years. With my finale piece, I was telling a story. I should have said something more about my thought process. It was not just a piece of art, it was a piece of everything involved in creating the art and I should have trusted myself more.”

That being said, the reality TV experience had a unique and everlasting impact on Miller, which she wouldn’t trade in for the world. “I



**Sarah Miller On... The National Technical Honor Society**

The NTHS is something I joined when in college. I was a straight-A student, graduated magna cum laude and was in consideration for valedictorian. Based on my grades and my work experience, I was offered the opportunity to join NTHS. It’s a fellowship of artists that get together and share what they are working on and come up with new ideas, helping each other with inspiration.



grew a lot as an artist during that season,” she starts. “Going into the competition, I felt like a small fish in a big pond. I was working in Pittsburg and I didn’t get out much to attend many conventions. It was a reality check for me. Remember, I was only four years out of college. When I received the critiques and when my fellow artists were talking about our tattoos, it was a bitter pill to swallow. I felt that I hadn’t grown as fast as I wanted to and wasn’t any closer to where I wanted to be.”

“It made me very humble,” continues Miller. “When I was on the show, my biggest fault was in technical and everyone got to see that on their wide-screen TVs. I was faced with who I was and how I was perceived by others,

plus how my art was perceived. It let me see what I wanted to change about myself and also about my art. Going in, I thought my artwork was pretty fucking awesome. Coming out, I realised I had a lot more to learn.”

Returning to the show for Season 7 this past spring, Miller has one goal in mind: “Four years ago, I was a hothead and I had meltdowns. This time, I wanted to show I had grown as an artist and as a person. I wanted to show everyone how far I had come since the last time they’d seen me on TV.” No spoilers here—you’ll have to watch the show to see if she accomplished just that.

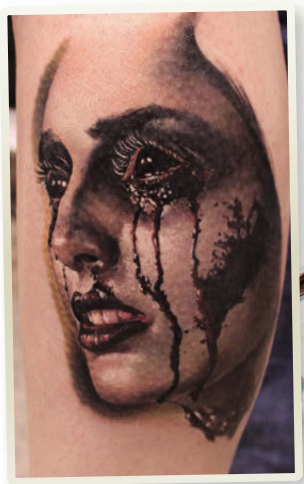
**Hello, Pittsburgh**

Moving from New York to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2004 for school, Miller planted deep roots in the picturesque city of 300 thousand, eventually deciding it was the perfect spot for her very own tattoo shop.

“It’s phenomenal! It’s better than a lot of other cities,” she gushes. “We have a ton of tattoo shops and people are open and accepting. It’s an art form people respect and admire here.”

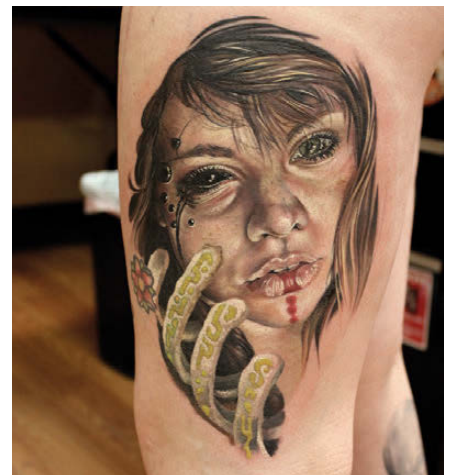
Teaming up with Bill Deluso, who owns Wyld Chyld in New York and Connecticut, Miller opened Wyld Chyld Pittsburgh. “The people I have working for me are family,” she says of the six talented and diverse artists tattooing alongside her. “Lu Sky Walker specialises in new school. Lauren Toohey finished her apprenticeship two years ago and has grown tremendously. Matt McKelvey does amazing fine line work. Ryan Clark produces black and grey and photorealism and he’s very zany. Bill Goldbach was one of my mentors when I was first getting into tattooing seriously seven years ago. Ty’Esha

**AT THAT SHOW, SOMEONE ASKED ME ‘WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?’ AND THAT QUESTION REALLY GOT ME THINKING**



**Sarah Miller On... The Realities Of Tattoo TV**  
It’s good for the public to see what tattoo artists are able to do. It’s enhancing what the public is expecting from tattoo artists and giving them a frame of reference. But people who are trying to get into [the industry] need to know it’s about hard work and dedication. I faced a lot adversity. A lot of times my art and my technique were put down. Becoming a tattoo artist is like any trade—you have to pay your dues.





Reels from Ink Master Season 5 specialises in cover-ups and realism and she started with us in November.”

But as smooth as everything is running these days, going from tattooer to shop owner didn't come without its fair share of obstacles. As Miller admits, “I was not the best business owner. I had to change my thinking and make it about earning some money and not just about producing awesome art. There are so many operating costs [and] every day I expect a new challenge. I had to take off the artist hat and put on the boss hat, but I wouldn't trade it for the world.”

Especially given how hard she's worked to get to where she is now without compromising her ideals.

“When I first started, my mentor was a female, which was great, but when I stated becoming more involved in the industry, a lot

**GOING INTO THE COMPETITION, I FELT LIKE A SMALL FISH IN A BIG POND. I WAS WORKING IN PITTSBURG... IT WAS A REALITY CHECK FOR ME**

the biases became clear,” she reveals. “Back in the day, it was definitely an industry run by men. In order to break into it, a lot of people made personal, physical sacrifices.”

“The lady I mentioned who interviewed me at my first convention, when she asked me where I wanted to be in five years, I told her I wanted other artists to look up to me and respect my work. She told me I had to sleep with people for that to happen. I was livid. I became leery of spending too much time with some people because I feared their misconceptions.”

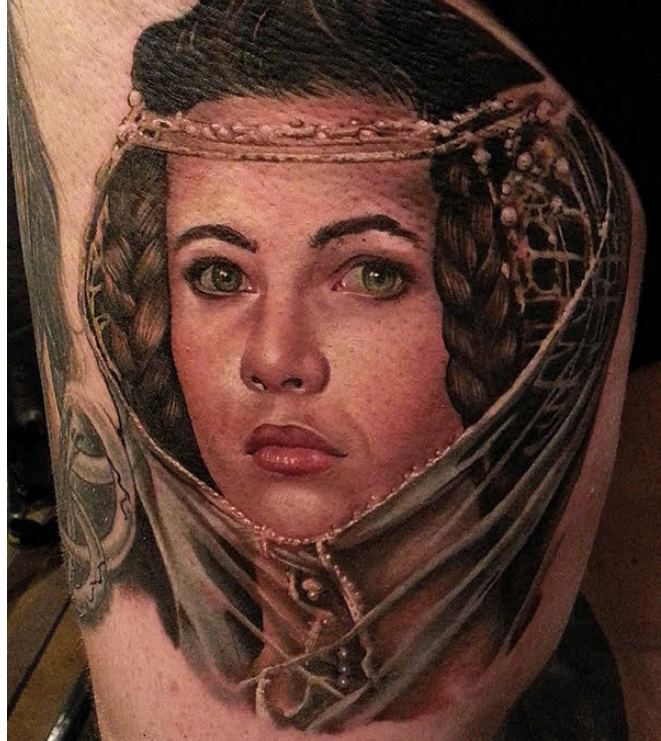
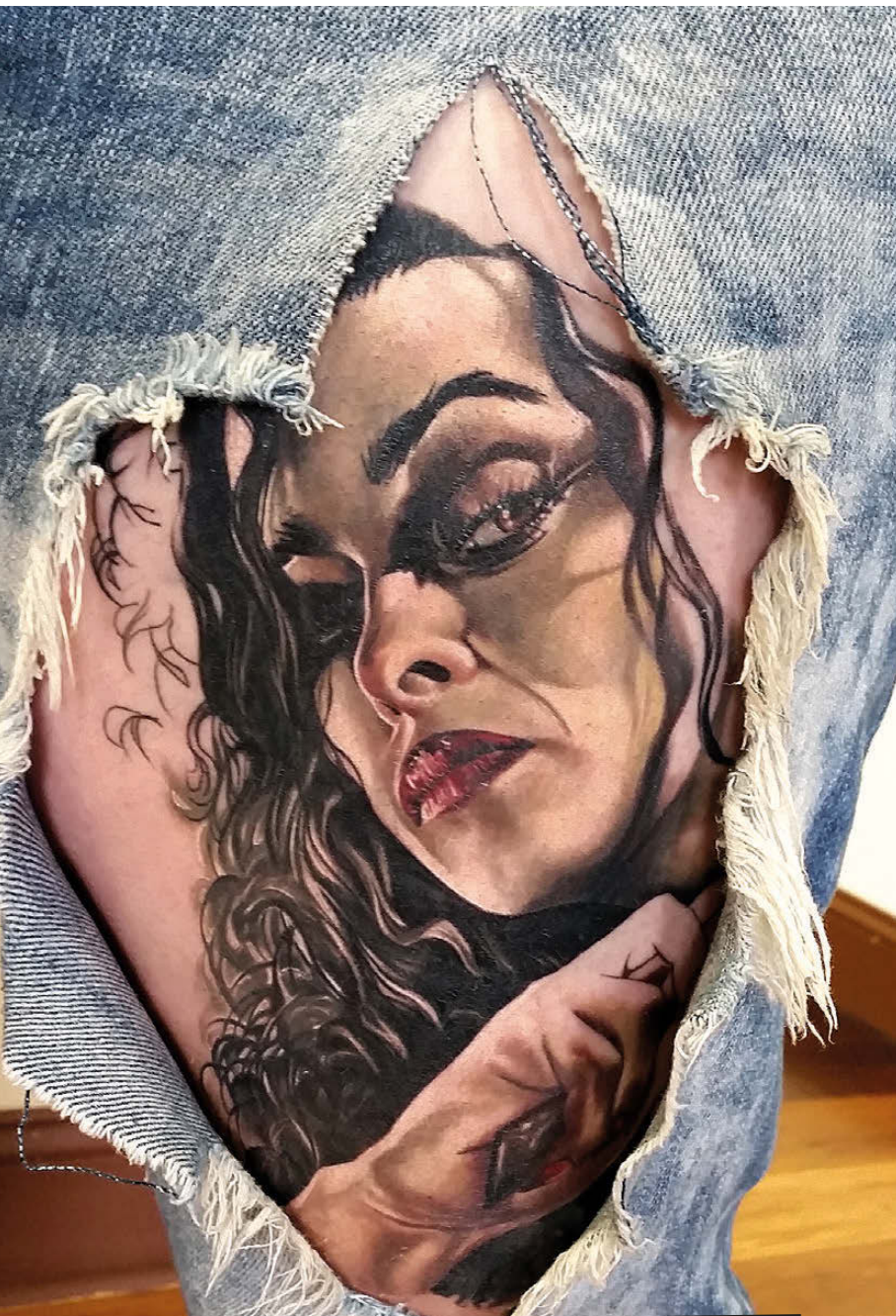
“When an attractive woman who tattoos has naked photoshoots to further her career,



**Sarah Miller On... The Magic Of Tattooing**

Having someone sitting with you for eight or nine hours, getting a tattoo, you start to share a connection. Sometimes you're a counsellor, a therapist or they just want something that makes them happy. You're the person making them happy—that's everything to me.





**I WANTED TO SHOW I HAD GROWN AS AN ARTIST AND AS A PERSON. I WANTED TO SHOW EVERYONE HOW FAR I HAD COME SINCE THE LAST TIME THEY'D SEEN ME ON TV**



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I'm like, 'What the fuck?'. At the end of the day, it's your art that speaks for itself. I stuck to my guns and right now I feel like I do have respect from a lot of people who I look up to based on just my work. Some of the people who inspired me were Jesse Smith, Halo and Nikko and to have that respect from them is amazing. To be recognised by them is what I wanted."

When she's not at Wyld Chyld, Miller is working on her second comic book (her first was 2014's *The Valkyries Wode*), which promises "magic and fighting" and a story following "characters as they learn and grow

and become more."

Other than art, there's little else Miller loves devoting her time to. "Honestly, I probably would be sleeping," she laughs when asked what she'd do given a week-long break. "If I had more than 24 hours off, I'd constantly be thinking about tattooing. I'm always on Instagram, looking at other people's work, thinking of how to improve my own—[tattooing] is not something I turn off."

Now, Miller has her sights set on "bigger pieces and I want to work on themed pieces. I want to create a story within the artwork. Like my idols have in fine art. I want to grow more and show more improvement in my technique. [I'm] a student of life—a student of art—and I just want to stay humble and hungry and continue to learn and grow. I never want to stop." □



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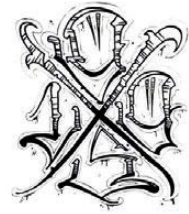
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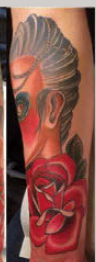
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# WAY OUT WEST

'Shit, this is weird, I've never done an interview before and my mind goes a bit billy-bongo when I talk about myself...' You can't get a much better start to an afternoon than that. Nicky Connor catches up with Max McCartney, a UK tattoo artist who has been tattooing on the Wirral for nearly 7 years.

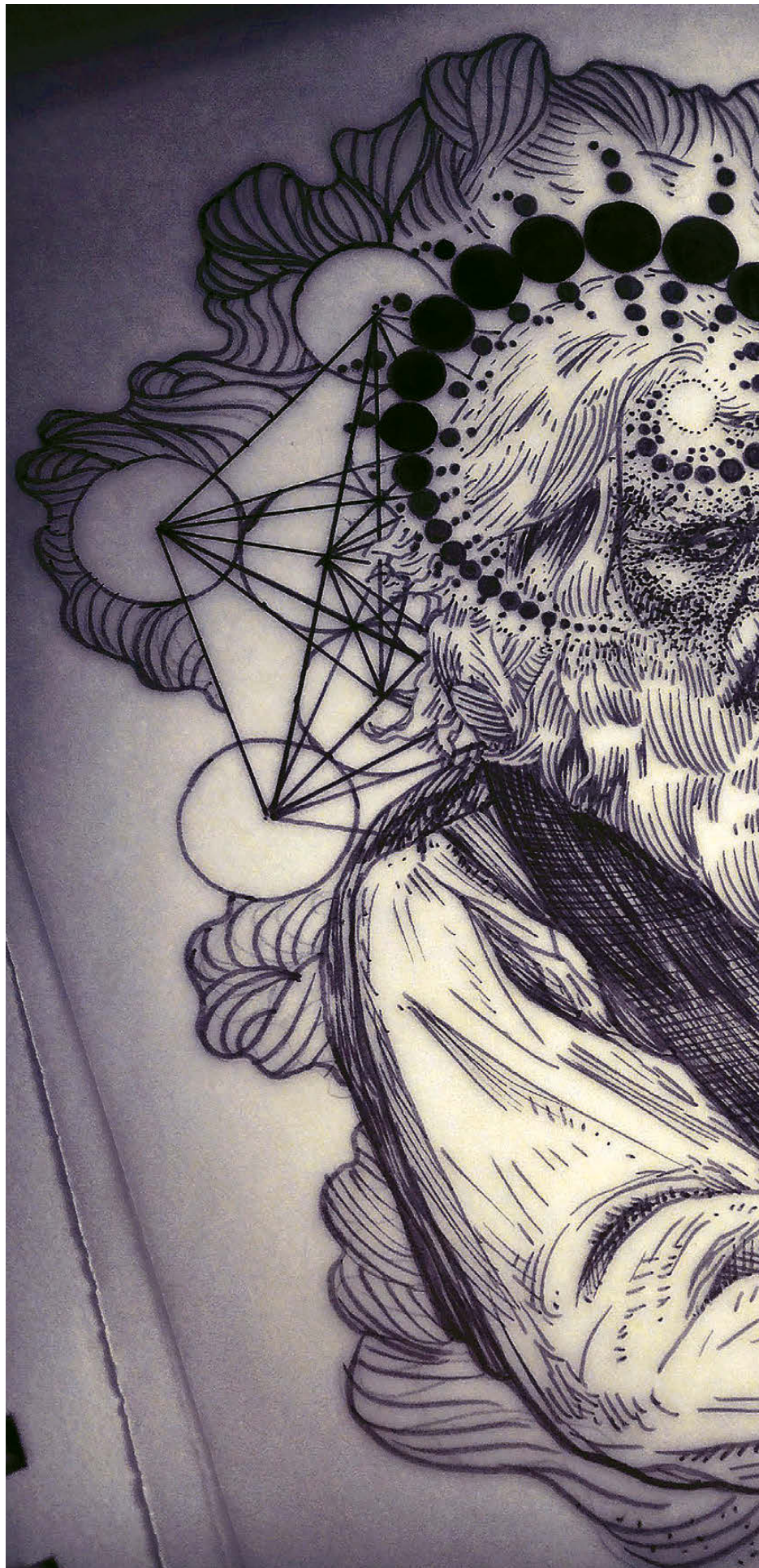
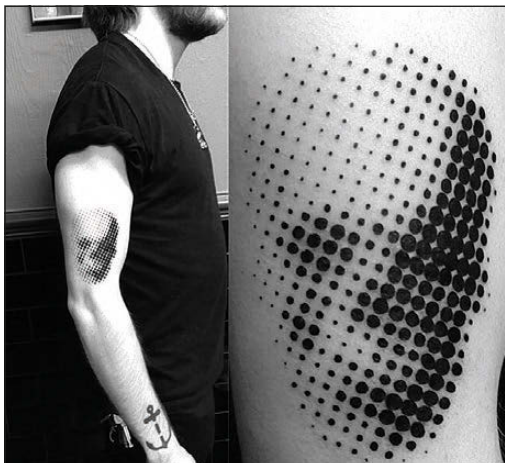
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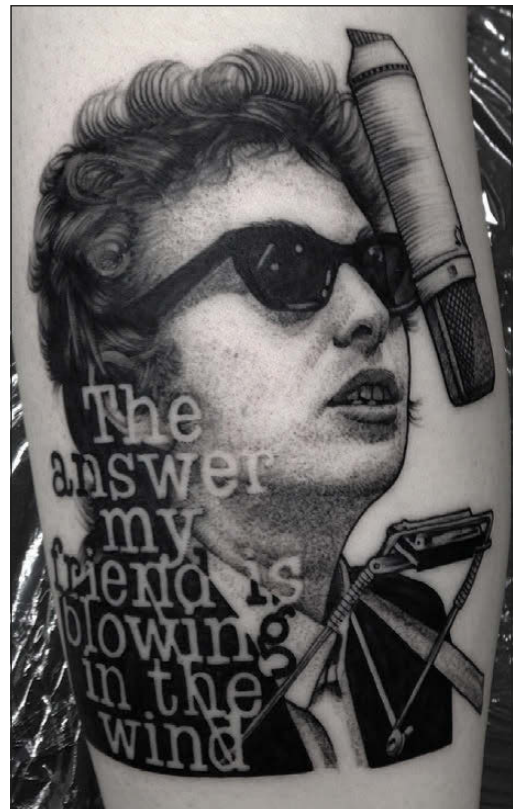
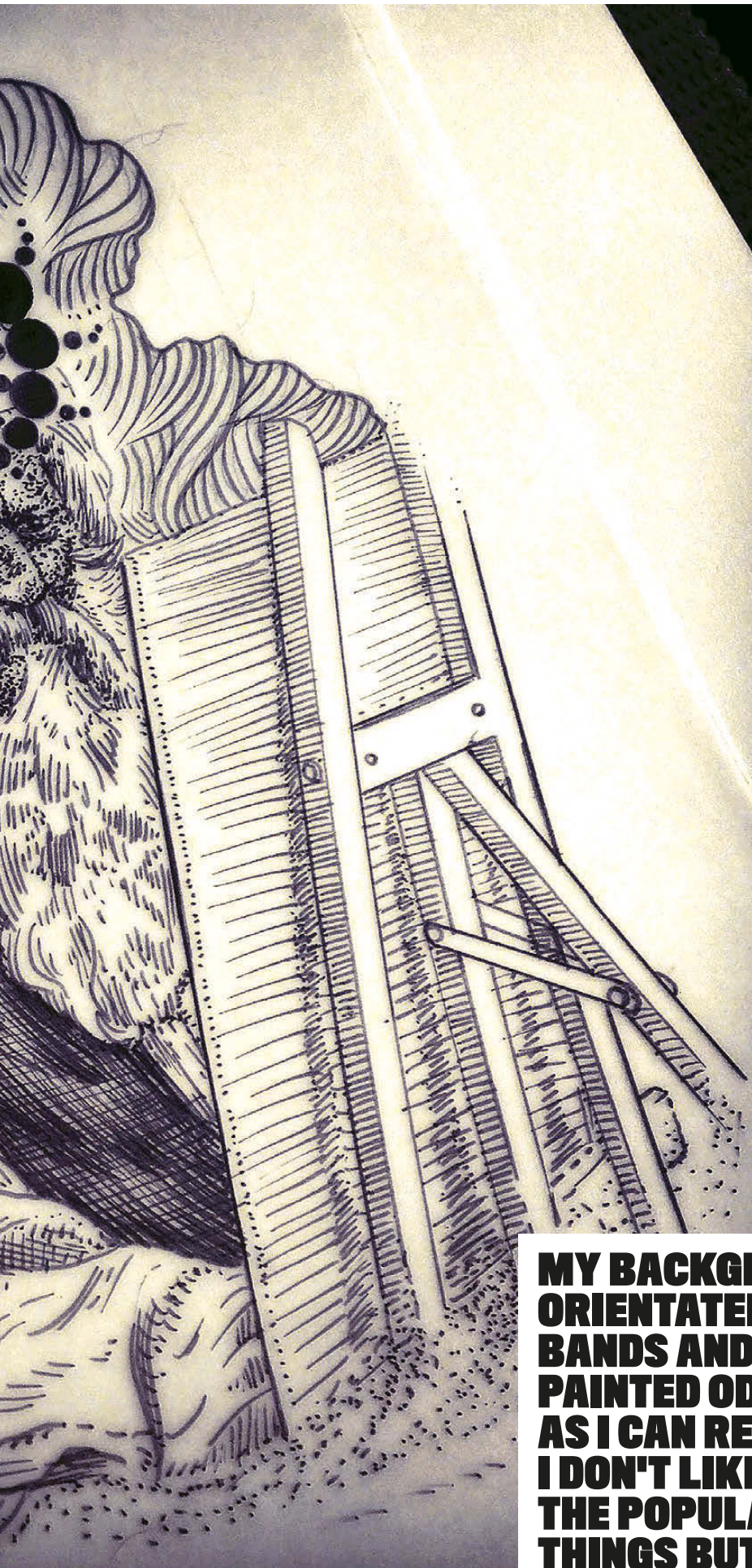
 MAXAMOS

**“M**y brain goes off in many different tangents. I'm sure it shows in my work. Oh and I love anything glitchy.”

Max has always had a creative spark, coming from a family of artists and photographers (I'm in good company here) and he feels it is something that is instinctive rather than learned: "Creativity is the one thing I've found easy in life. It comes to me without too much effort so I figured that is where I need to go. I'm terrible at maths and I scrape by







with my use of the English language but creative thinking comes naturally.”

And Max so far has lead a pretty creative life. “My background is art orientated. I mean I’ve been in bands and always drawn and painted odd things as far back as I can remember. One thing I don’t like is the norm and the popular. Well that’s two things but I see them as one.”

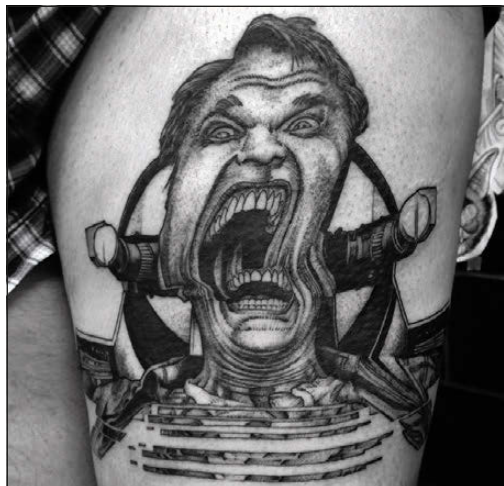
About 8 years ago when he was studying graphic design and focusing on illustration, Max saw the work of some artists who made him see that tattooing could be a potential career choice. Then he met Craig Robson whose tattoo orientated illustration style really inspired him. This sparked Max’s interest in tattoos and was partly his inspiration to get into the industry—apart from seeing tattoos on other people and thinking they were cool.

“You know, when I was younger, I was never

**MY BACKGROUND IS ART ORIENTATED. I MEAN I'VE BEEN IN BANDS AND ALWAYS DRAWN AND PAINTED ODD THINGS AS FAR BACK AS I CAN REMEMBER. ONE THING I DON'T LIKE IS THE NORM AND THE POPULAR. WELL THAT'S TWO THINGS BUT I SEE THEM AS ONE**



# I STARTED DOING THE GLITCH WORK AND THE GLITCHY STYLE AS THAT REALLY INSPIRES ME—A LOT OF THE POLISH AND RUSSIAN ARTISTS I SEE ARE AMAZING



really interested in tattoos but as I got older and saw the internet spewing out all these amazing tattoos, and seeing all these amazing artists, it got me going and made me want to draw again. University really killed my inspiration for all of it. Killed my creative flow and made it more mathematical and structured. Instead of producing what could be, you are just producing what has to be, it gets boring fast.”

When Max finished his studies he knew what he wanted to do.

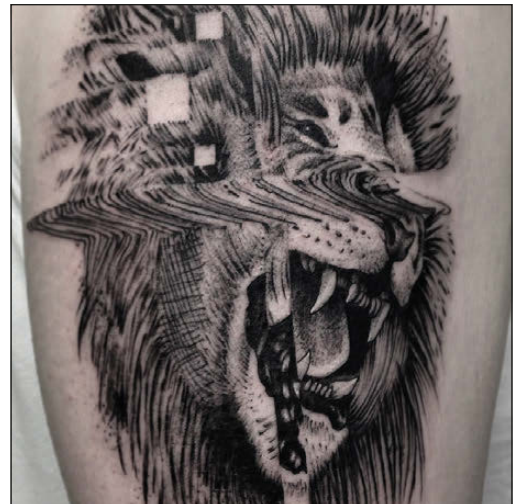
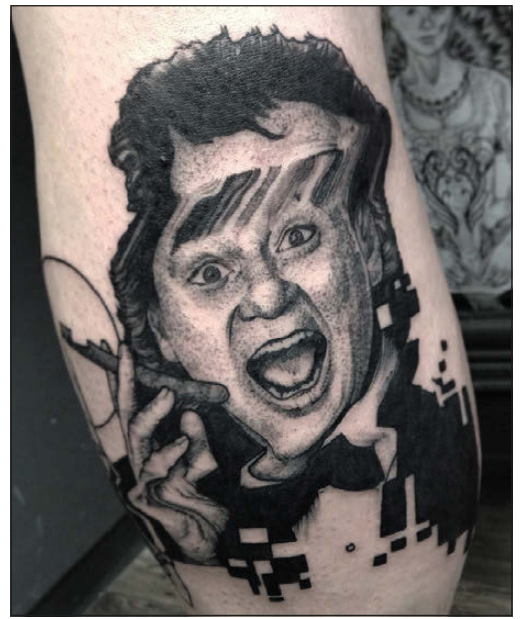
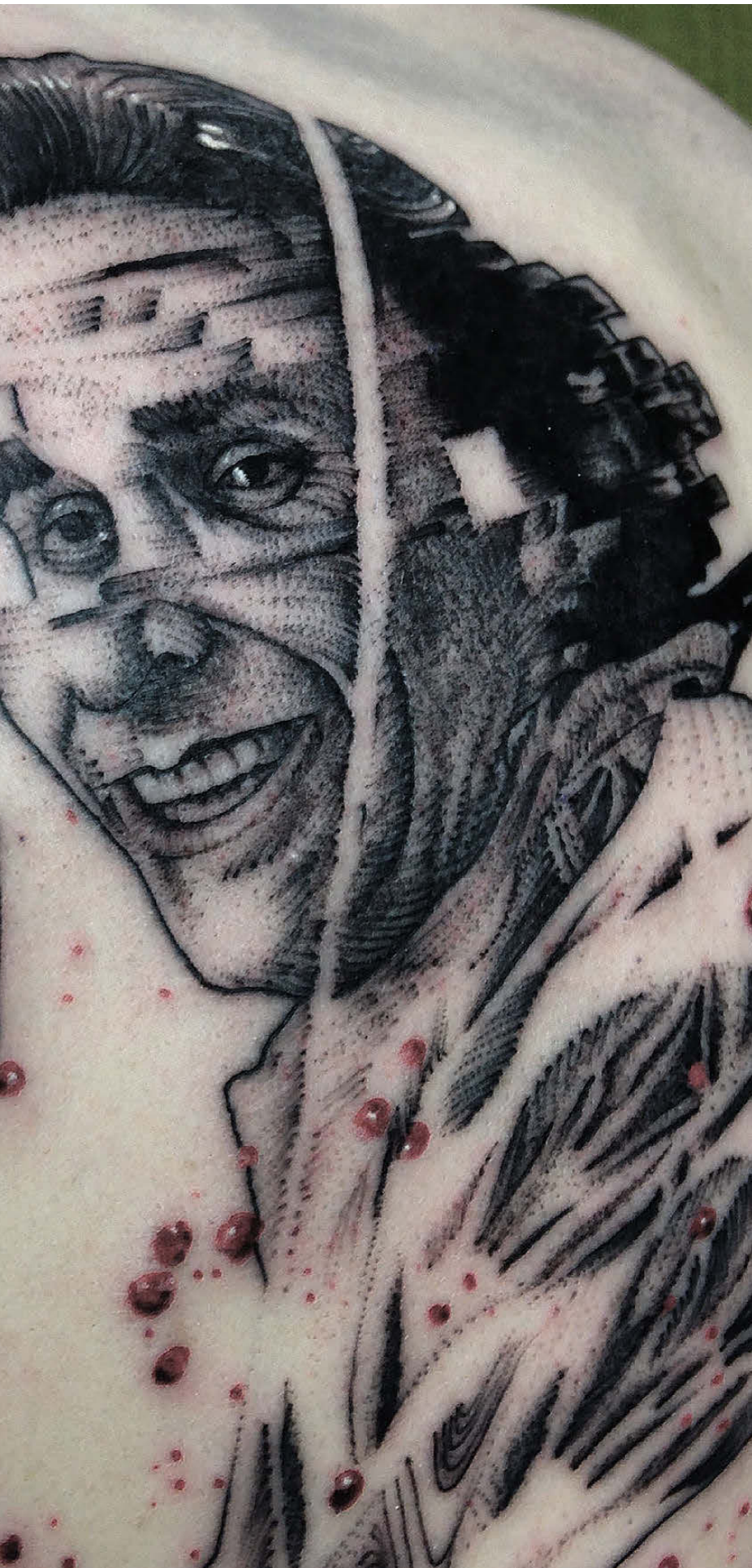
“I started tattooing back in... jeez, who knows! I left Uni and went straight into it. To be honest I didn’t know what I wanted to do. When I started studying, I had no interest in tattooing but after seeing Craig’s work I thought twice. The guy I’m talking about is Craig Robson (Daggers For Teeth), a brilliant guy and an excellent artist. From seeing his work and looking at others online I figured it was the way I need to go. Thank god Uni ended sooner than it should and I went out there and got into tattooing. As soon as I started looking for a job as a tattooist, I realised this was going to be the thing that occupied the rest of my creative existence and still does to this day.”

Once knowing his direction, Max then had to get out there in the tattoo world—a pretty daunting task for some, but Max had a plan:

“I went to all the studios Google would give me in the area and gave out C.V.’s! A C.V. in a tattoo studio! Looking back on it now I’m very surprised I ever got a job. Luckily the guy who hired me didn’t care if I could draw and saw that my past experience of working







in a pub meant I could be trusted with money so I got the job.”

*(You can't make this stuff up sometimes. Ed.)*

“Now I've been tattooing for about six or seven years. I didn't have a real start date. I started in one place that's now closed down as some bikers tried to take it over as the owner owed them money, so I left that place and went to another shop nearby and had to start my apprenticeship all over again.

I went through a year-long apprenticeship to finally start tattooing mates then customers, but I left that place on bad terms which is something I'm sure happens a lot working with old school tattooers—it's just the way it is—but that shop was great for three things: lots of business, some great artists to learn from and I met my girlfriend there too. We recently bought a house together. Things are going well.”

Next Max went to join studio number three, The Inkwel in Oxtou. It is a lovely shop and Max has been there for about three years.



# I LOVE THE CUSTOMERS THAT ARE OPEN TO MY ARTWORK AND ARE WILLING TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF TATTOOS. I MEAN THIS STUFF IS PERMANENT

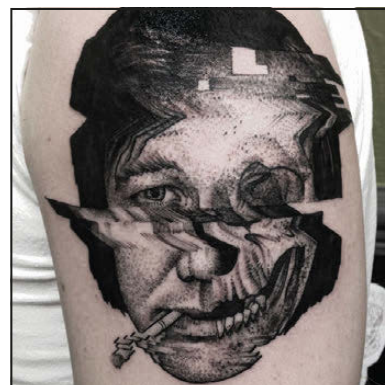
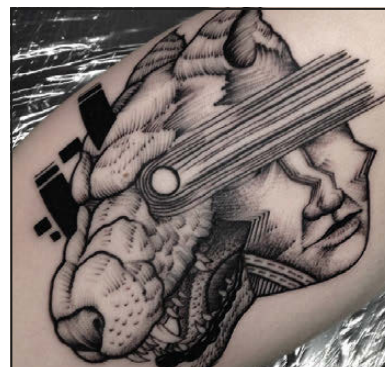
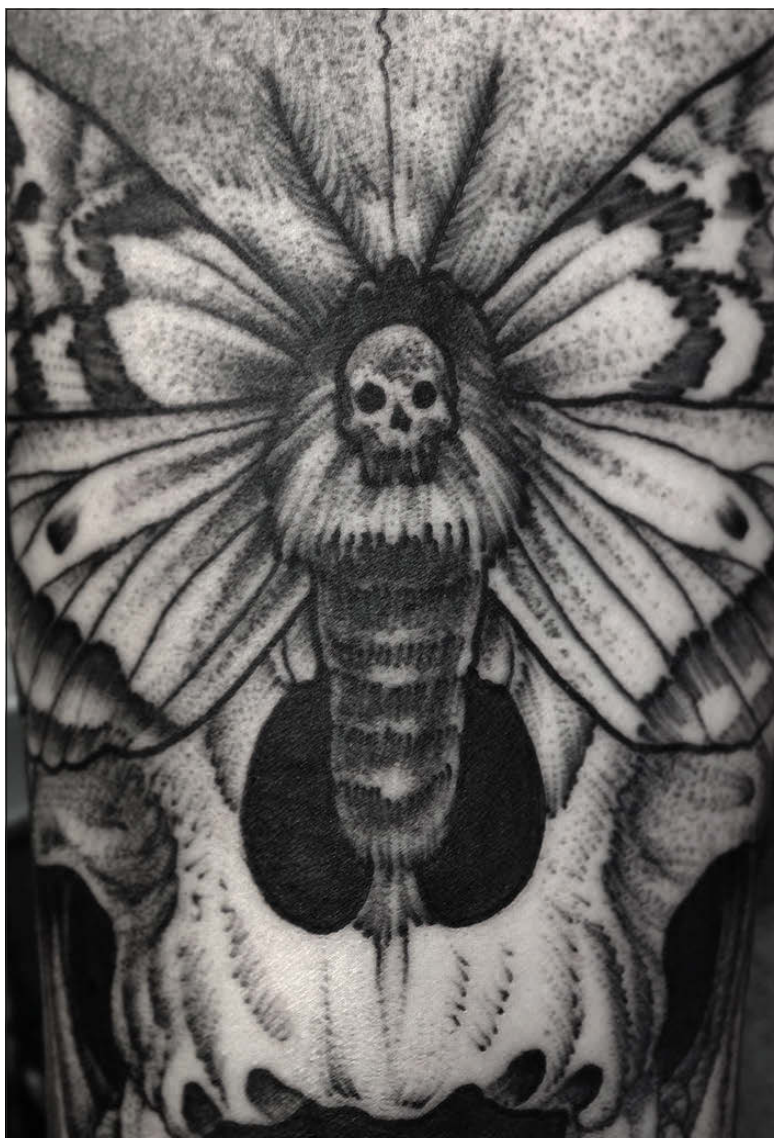
“It’s a much more creative space with some bloody brilliant artists and as importantly people. The shop manager, Stu Henry is great and check out Sam Reilly and Danny Taylor. What a bunch! All of my shops have been on the Wirral. It’s where I was born and raised, the brilliant peninsular between Wales and Liverpool. It’s the place to be I tell you!”

When he was younger Max was something of an inventor too, taking taking toys apart and circuit bending to see the possibilities of the results. This love of digital disruption is something that is very evident in his current work.

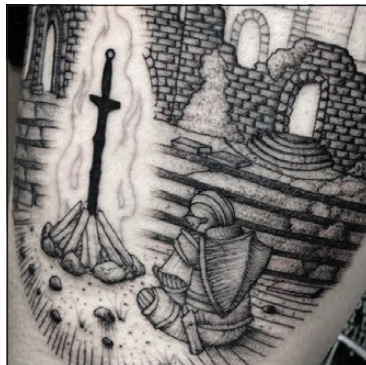
“I started doing the glitch work and the glitchy style as that really inspires me. A lot of the Polish and Russian artists I see are amazing and they have just come out of nowhere. My tattoo style is definitely from an illustrative background. I definitely think of it more like art work than a tattoo but I definitely want it to last as well as an old school tattoo. They are so effective—the boldness of them and the way they last. I am trying to create a mix between the fine art element and the old school, it is a fun challenge and I love a challenge. I have no idea how my style will develop and that is the challenge, it is very hard to say exactly where it’s going”

Ultimately though, finding tattooing led Max to a place where he is really satisfied with his career, and that’s not something every artist can say.

“I love almost everything about the tattoo industry. I love the community of artists who respect each other for the work they do. I mostly love the customers that are open to my artwork and are willing to push the boundaries of tattoos. I mean this stuff is permanent. It fills me with utter joy to know someone out there has my artwork on them for the rest of time. I like to see each tattoo I do as an original piece of artwork that will never be replicated and hopefully never be







messed with.”

The relationship with the client for Max is really important as a collaborative journey to design the tattoo—and to keep Max’s imagination on the leash.

“I like to make it more of a collaborative process with the customer, it is better when they have some kind of input. Without it they would have something crazy like a big glitched out tooth.”

Even though Max loves his home area, he knows that he has to venture further afield to explore the big tattoo world,

“I need to get out of the Wirral and travel more, my next guest spot is in London, I would like to go to some other countries and work with some more people and have some more like minded people come to me for my style. A way to develop my style I believe, is to travel.”

But life is not all about the day job—well not quite.

“Outside of tattooing I like to do a bit of everything I love creating stuff, like whether it is like building things for my house, I would love to have a workshop and build random stuff. I don’t just want to do tattooing. I get stir crazy doing the same things over and over. I love playing music, I play drums and bass, I have been in bands in the past but since I have started tattooing I don’t play anymore. I am a sucker for details with tattoos and music, the complexities of things really intrigue me.” □



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Kristian Richards



# MONEY TALK

*A couple of years back [Issue 234, to be precise], the inimitable Paula Hardy Kangelos dealt with the whole issue of money and tattoos in her excellent An Eye Is Upon You column. Some issues further down the line, Wayne Simmons picks up that very same shovel...*

I'm often asked, 'how much did all that cost?' or told, 'I'd love tattoos like yours but can't afford it,' she wrote, 'and it makes me defensive.' For Paula, as for pretty much all of us within the Skin Deep community—readers and writers alike—collecting tattoos is a passion, an obsession, even, and we're quite prepared to invest. That said, money is still something we need to consider. None of us are growing trees of the stuff in the backyard and, as Paula went on to say in her column, while the old adage of 'good tattoos aren't cheap and cheap tattoos aren't good' usually rings true, you 'cannot simply buy your way to a great tattoo.'

Pricing isn't straightforward when it comes to tattooing. As our very own Virgin's Guide to Tattoos (Issue 265) highlights, a new tattoo can run anywhere between £60 and £100 per hour's work and that's not factoring in the so-called celebrity tattoo artists of the world, many of whom will charge quite a bit more. For some people, even the lower end of that scale will seem expensive, but there's a lot to consider in terms of the time, skills and resources going into a new tattoo—even the ink itself has a price tag.

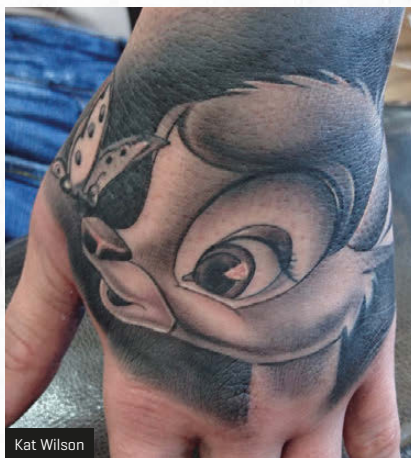
"It's not unheard of to pour out £40-£50 worth of colour for a big piece," portraiture artist, Tony Evans explains, before going on to point out other general running costs such as cleaning, sterilising etc. Tony's been working for over six years up at Opu- lent Ink in Wolverhampton, with a few awards under his belt. He's never been shy when it comes to investing in his craft, whether it be the ink, the tubes, the needles or the machine he uses. He tells me about a friend of his who's always struggling to get his machine running right. "A couple of days ago, he tried one of my Dringen- berg liners and now won't give it back

to me! Of course you can overpay for something,' Tony admits, 'but a great machine will repay you for years and years, a cheap machine will just break down repeatedly.'

Kat Wilson, no stranger to this mag or the UK conven- tion scene in general, agrees. For her, it's the time spent on a piece that's a bugbear. 'I think people can sometimes be unaware of the hours you put into this job,' she tells me. "There's the drawing up time, which sort of gets for- gotten about, and yet most of that is done at home until ridiculous hours of the night." Based at Hello Sailor in Blackpool, Kat says they are constantly getting haggled over price, but she tries to remain chilled about it all. "It must be really difficult for people who aren't familiar

with the industry to know who's re- liable and who's not," Kat says. "But I always think it's odd to walk into a studio that's clean and friendly, with portfolios of work on display, and then complain that you're a fiver dearer than the guy doing it in the market. Especially when they want to cover-up a cheap tattoo they al- ready hate!"

Which brings us nicely to another consideration. Sure, Scratchy Mc- Scratch (Damn that's a great name. Ed.) at the market might be happy picking up a machine he got off e-bay last week and running it over your skin, but any artist worth their salt will have invested years getting to the point where they can put that tattoo on you in a way that makes both of you proud. For many, like Kristian Rich- ards of Two Rivers in Penarth, that will have been through an apprentice- ship—which is usually unpaid or very lowly paid. "I started my apprentice- ship at Rock & Roller Tattoo in Cal- dicot, Monmouthshire in 2010 and worked there for three years," he tells me. "I tattooed myself a lot and some



Kat Wilson

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Kat Wilson





Kat Wilson



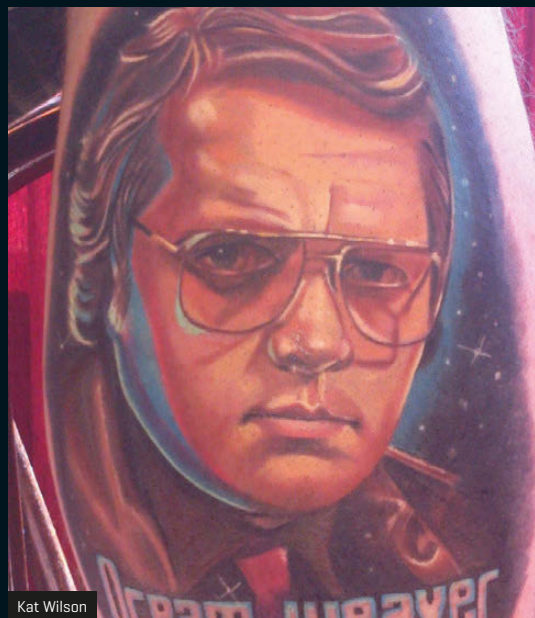
Tony Evans



Tony Evans



Kristian Richards



Kat Wilson

close friends for free. All of which I would hate to see again!" He remembers the first tattoo he charged for, a very different beast than the kickass neo-trad he's known for now. "It was a tribal tattoo on the top of the arm on some poor bloke. I was so nervous but had to try and put a professional face on. The lines were slightly feathered from stopping and starting. I believe he eventually came back and had it redone so all was OK in the end."

And that's not everything: there are other costs for artists to consider, such as appearing at conventions. They're an important part of the industry and yet cost a shedload to do when you factor in travel, hotel, food, drink, not to mention the cost of the table and losing

**A GREAT MACHINE  
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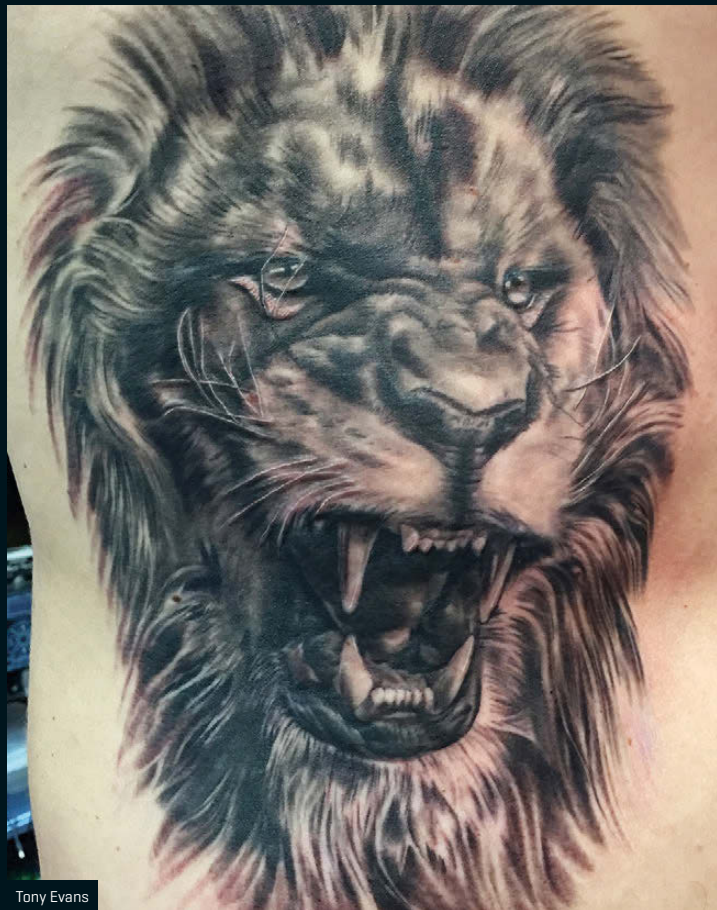
Tony Evans

out on a weekend's work at the studio. So, is it fair, then, to charge more for a convention tattoo or is it better to write those costs off in order to get your name out there, throw your hat in the ring for awards and network with other artists?

For Tony, it's definitely the latter. "Personally, it's definitely a write-off," he explains, "as I often tattoo a friend, or maybe my apprentice, and enter the competition. Saying that, though, most of my awards have been for healed tattoos so maybe not the best economics, eh?"

Kat feels the same, being a firm believer in the importance of conventions since working her first Tattoo Freeze back in 2010. "The way I look at it, it's no different than spending that money

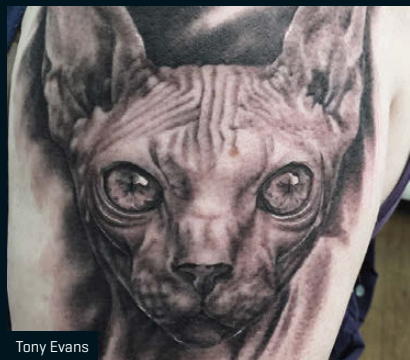




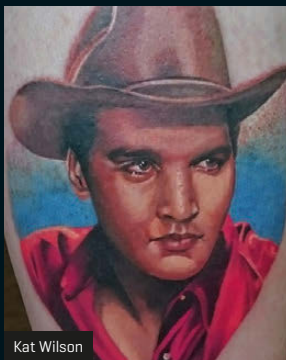
Tony Evans



Kristian Richards



Tony Evans



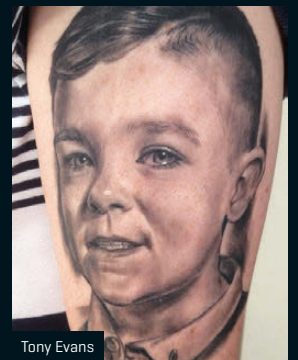
Kat Wilson



Kristian Richards



Tony Evans



Tony Evans

on an advert in a magazine, except people will remember you if they've actually seen you," she reasons. "The people you meet and the knowledge and friendships you come away with is worth every penny." Like Tony, she often works for free, usually on loyal clients. "That way, they're letting me do a piece I'm comfortable with and I know they're capable of sitting for the day." She's starting to see a return in the last year however as people—having seen her at other shows or in magazines—are starting to book in beforehand. "To be fair though, I usually end up tattooing my husband," she laughs, "as it's the only child-free time we have!"

For Kristian, too, it's all about the quality

**I AM QUITE A FAST  
WORKER NATURALLY  
SO THAT'S WHY I HAVE  
DECIDED ON THE  
RATES I HAVE, BUT IT  
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LARGER WORK**

Kristian Richards

time. "If it's somewhere overseas," he says, "you can get flights pretty cheap and Air BnB is pretty good." He and his fiancé, Martha, both enjoy travelling so it's just a case of making it a working holiday. "It's great to not only show people who I am and what I'm about but also what I represent now," which, for Kristian, is all part and parcel of the new leaf he's turned over in his career by opening Two Rivers.

So, money talk: not so difficult, is it? And yet I'm guessing we'll all still struggle with it: how to answer those annoying questions that Paula wrote about, or knowing when it's best to bring the whole question of price up with an artist. ▣

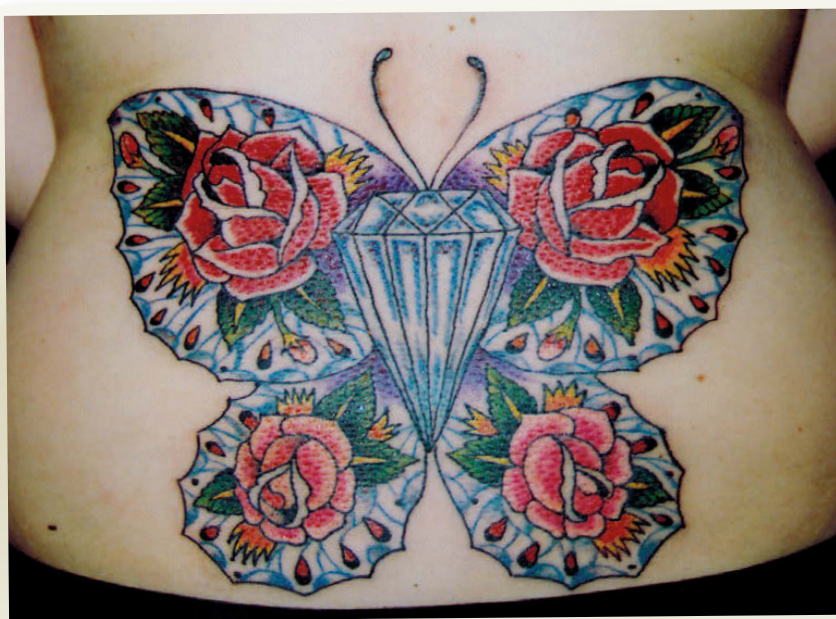






# ED HARDY AN AMERICAN LEGEND PART TWO

*The American tattooer Ed Hardy, retired totally from the profession several years ago, is a true legend of tattooing. In the second part of this classic interview, he shares with us some more of the anecdotes about the major changes tattooing had undergone since the 70's...*



**You keep publishing books about the tattoo culture through your publishing company Hardy Marks Publications and the latest one is called 'Drawings For Tattoos'. Can you tell us about it?**

I was in Hawaii in November 2015 and because I didn't have any painting ideas, I started going through all these portfolios with my drawings inside, going way back, until my student days. While taking them out, I thought they were pretty cool and we could do a book of these. Tattooers have been buying my drawings over the years and I thought that they may be interested in it, to see how things have developed. There are drawings that I was doing at three years old, student etchings, early Japanese style stuff and stages to show how they evolve... I realised they have a life on their own. I have hundreds of these drawings, I have enough to do 4 or 5 books.

**How important is it for you to document the tattoo culture?**

I've always been serious about keeping oral history because there were no books, nobody else kept formal historic things about tattooing. In 1991, when I first opened Tattoo City on Columbus Avenue, it was almost opposite where Lyle Tuttle's place is and I went up to see him a couple of times with a recorder. I tried to make him talk about things but he would just go off the subject.

In those days too he was doing a lot of speed, and finally I thought I can't just spend my whole life waiting to get these specific things I'm asking him about. He wasn't doing it in a mean way, he was just spacey. At the same time I would say that we would really need to do a book

of his life, it was really essential. And he would reply 'I lived it, I don't need to say it all again!'. It's really a shame because he's just got the oral histories, unlike anyone and it goes so far back. He started here in the 40's I think.

When I met him he was tattooing for Bert Grimm (famous American tattooer working at the Nu Pike—an

*I CAME TO REALISE  
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*WHEN HE GOT ON THE COVER OF ROLLING STONE IN OCTOBER 1970, HE WAS REALLY THE FIRST ONE TO BRING TATTOOING INTO THE MODERN WORLD, JUST POST-HIPPIE ERA LIKE 1970'S...*

amusement park in Long Beach, California—from the 50's to the end of the 60's), that would have been 1955-56. I think he is 12 years older than me. He was very young when he started, 16 or something like that, and then he went to the militaries and the Korean war.

**How important was Lyle for the time with all these social changes happening in San Francisco ?**

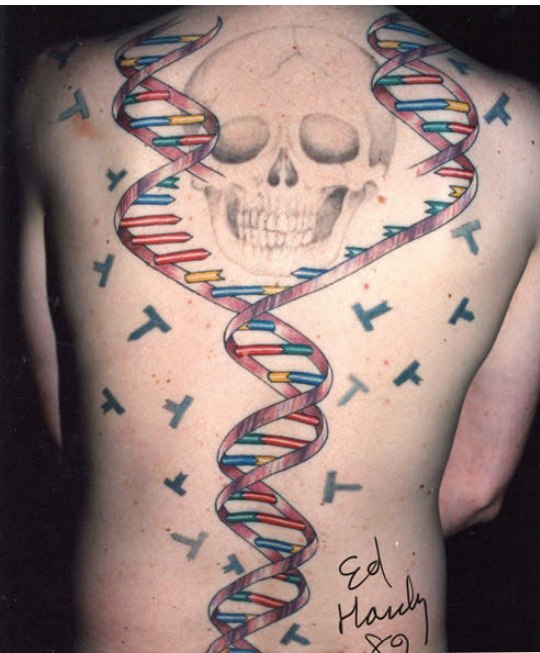
He never was a very good tattooer but he was important because he was very intelligent about media and using things. When he got on the cover of Rolling Stone in October 1970, he was really the first one to bring tattooing into the modern world, just post-hippie era like 1970's. I think Lyle realised the power of the media and he realised where he was, in this great spot in San Francisco. He probably realised that the social climate was right for tattooing, because even in the hippie days people really weren't getting tattoos, it was very unusual.

I remember in 1966 or something like that, I lived over



near the Haight-Ashbury (a district of San Francisco where the hippie movement started at the end of the 60's). I walked down the street and I had a couple of tattoos on the forearms, very short haircut, wearing these mirror shades, people would think I was a narc you know, they thought I was a cop! But Lyle, really, he just saw the





*I ALWAYS SORT OF HAD A FEELING THAT HE AND I WOULD HAVE A LOT IN COMMON IF WE EVER REALLY MET. IN THE END, THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED*

Hardy, the only son of Ed, works as a tattooer at Tattoo City studio) and I would drive up to see him and we would spend the afternoon, maybe take him to lunch. I love visiting with him. It's good to have him around.

**Lyle is also a huge collector and like you, passionate about the history of tattooing...**

Lyle is really an historian and he's been wonderful about collecting. He travelled around and he saw the virtue to collect this stuff. When Georges Burchett died in London, maybe early in the 50s, Lyle later found out that someone in the family had that whole collection. He flew to London and he bought it. I'm sure for very little money but it's incredible. Things going back to the 19th century, he has just an enormous collection of physical tattoo stuff.

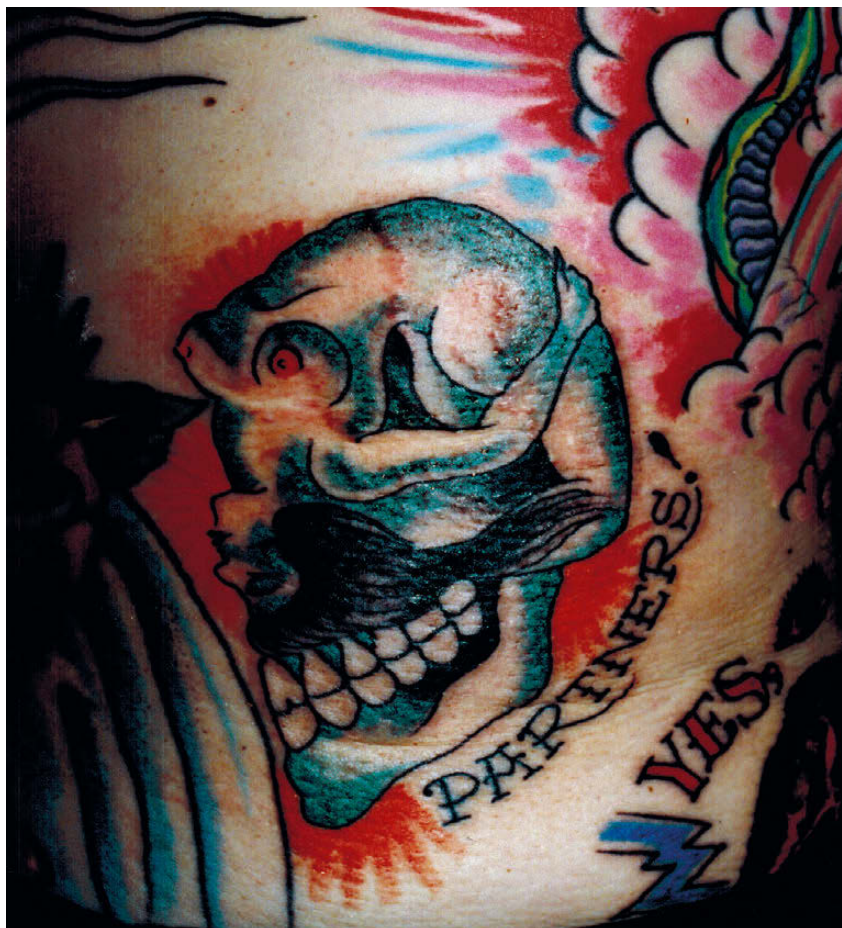
He was always trying in the 70's to get me to buy it: 'I'll sell it to you for a million dollars!'. It's not in great shape and it's not archived at all. It's like in a garage. He lives further up in North California, about two hours away from SF, it's very wet up there. He was passionate about Pacific Island tattooing when I was all about Japanese. He was the first guy to really recognise it and went to Samoa early on.

things that were right.

His shop was down by the Greyhound bus depot and in those days it was where a lot of people would travel cheap all over America. He just had a good sense for it, he can tell terrific stories, he's a terrific bullshitter. To be successful in tattooing, besides doing good tattoos, I came to realise just as important was your ability to talk to people, to tell stories and to interact with them, and Lyle was perfect.

He doesn't have a lot of formal education—Lyle maybe probably finished high-school and positively didn't go to college—but he's very smart, I'm sure he has a very high IQ, but I wish he would just let someone record all of this! I should see him more often. Once in a while Doug (Doug





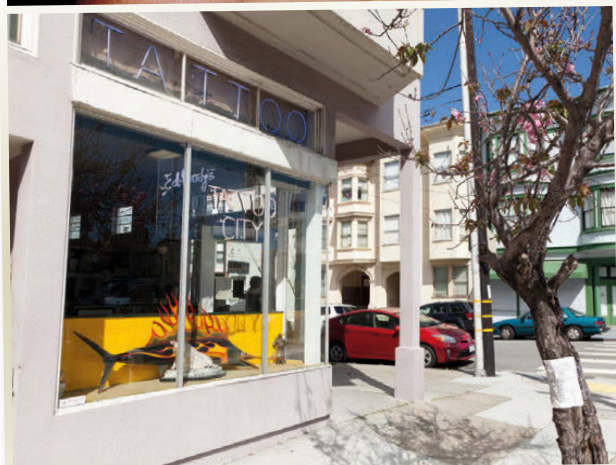
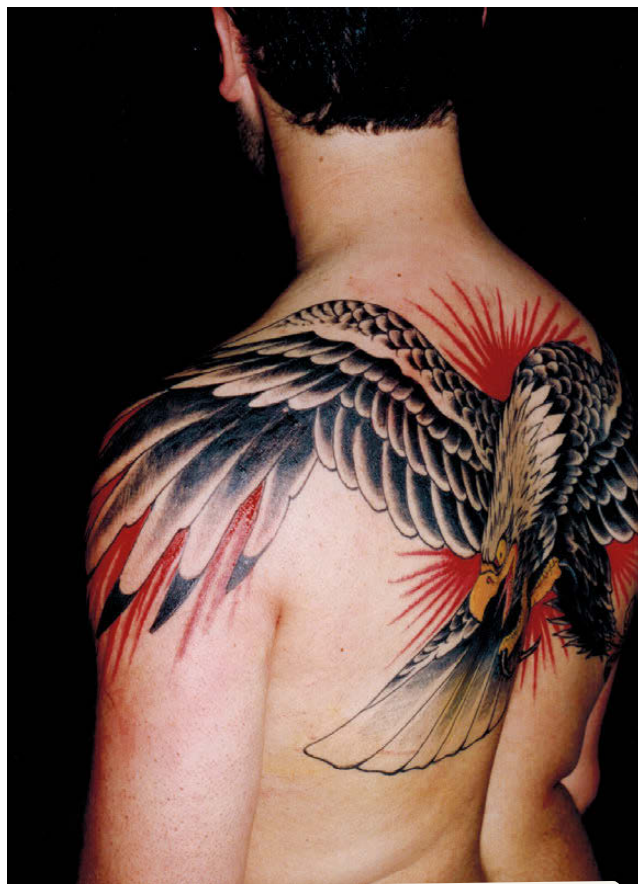
*WE WERE TOTAL RIVALS, I HAD NO RESPECT FOR HIM AS A TATTOOER. I WAS SO YOUNG AND MY EGO WAS SO BIG—AND SAILOR JERRY, WHO I WAS CLOSE TOO, HATED LYLE*

**When you arrived in San Francisco in 1974 you were very ambitious but Lyle Tuttle was already popular. What happened?**

We were total rivals, I had no respect for him as a tattooer. I was so young and my ego was so big—and Sailor Jerry, who I was close too, hated Lyle. In the old days, before real communications, tattooers wanted to hold onto what they had, even if it was just a spot in the town. The competition was rough and they would inherit vendettas from somebody: ‘OK, it’s his enemy so it will be my enemy!’ (Some things never change huh. Ed.)

Jerry helped me, knowing that I had intentions to maybe come back to San Francisco and as he put it: ‘Sink Lyle Tuttle!’, he just had this terrible competitive thing. So when I got here, I had this notion of Lyle, I thought: ‘that’s not right, he gets all the glory and he doesn’t even tattoo very well!’.

**How did your relationship changed over the years ?**



I always sort of had a feeling that he and I would have a lot in common if we ever really met. In the end, that’s what happened. I had customers, a couple from London in the late 70’s and they came to San Francisco. They were very friendly with Lyle and they got us together. During the evening, we realised we had all these incredible things in common and all these convergences. We were both born in the state of Iowa and I met Lyle when I was about 10 years old when he was tattooing in Long Beach for Bert Grimm. He was operating a shop for Bert that was just like a closet, this tiny, tiny shop, with a huge sign. And I’ll always remember it because he was the first young guy that I saw with the sleeves out. When I went there he kicked me out, saying: ‘Get out of here, you have to be 18!’.



**Hardy Marks Publications :**  
www.hardymarks.com

**Tattoo City:**  
700 Lombard St, San Francisco,  
CA 94133, United States  
www.tattoocitysf.com





### **Why did Jerry hate Lyle so much?**

Because he talked to the media. There never was an article about Sailor Jerry, nor an interview with him because he would throw people out. Because of the bad attitude people had about tattooers, they looked down on them so much, they really stuck to themselves. They didn't want to open up to anybody about anything. Jerry, who really investigated pigments, would lie to people about where he got his. It was all so secretive.

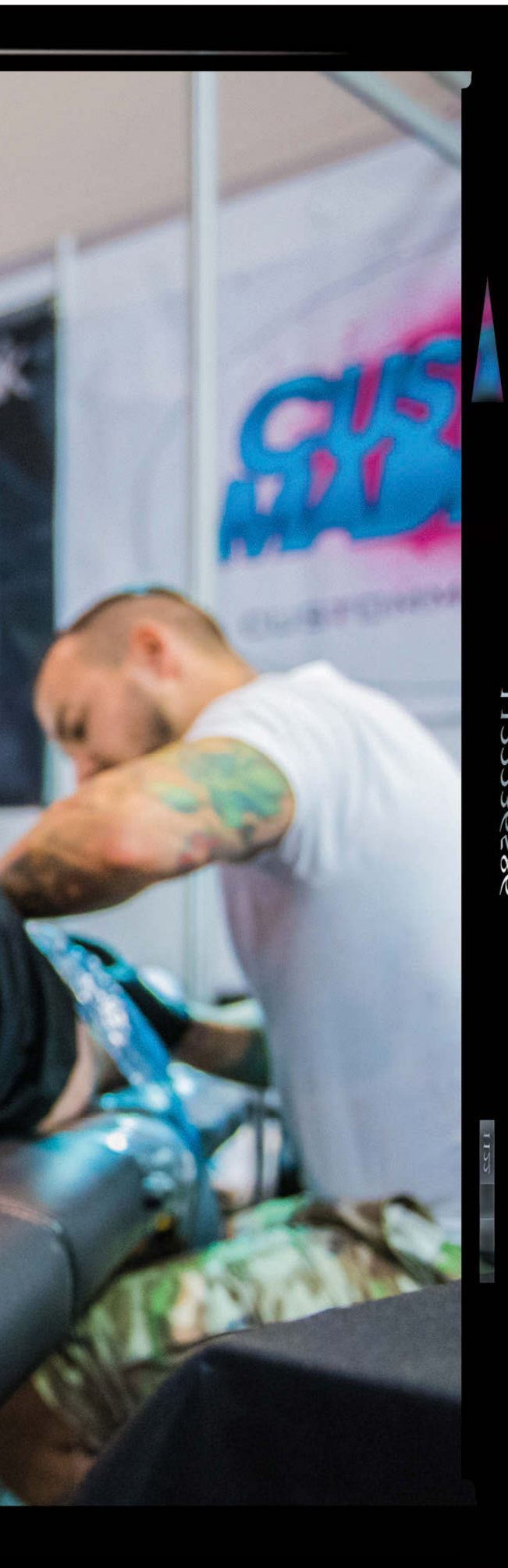
Chris Nelson, who had been a merchant seaman, tattooed in a penny arcade near where Lyle was working.

Nelson had this paper bag on the chair, next to him. Lyle got so curious about it he finally asked, 'Why do you have that bag there?'. Nelson answered: 'Well, if I start tattooing somebody and he starts asking a question, about anything like what's in the ink or how does the machine work, I'll tell him: "You can't ask any questions, I'm not going to answer about anything." If they ask a second question he would take the bag and put it over their head and finish the tattoo! That's one of the best images ever heard in tattooing, just the concept! It would be a great piece of art. (Laughs) ▣









# Scenes from **TATTOOFEST**

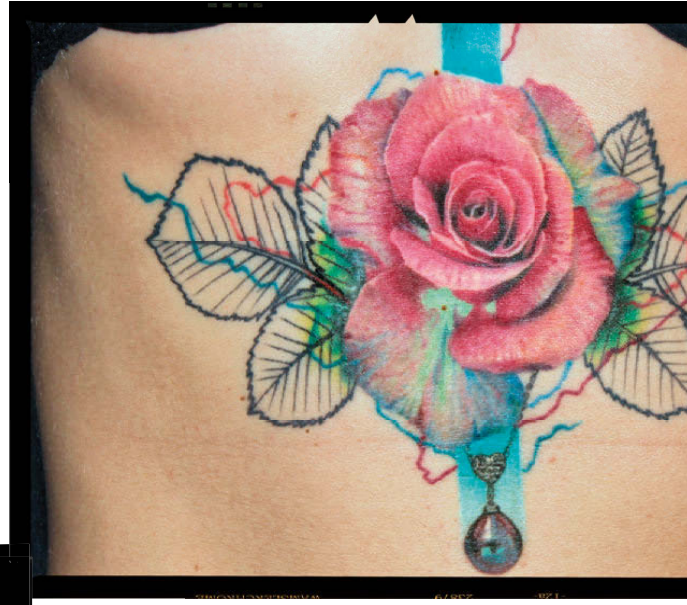
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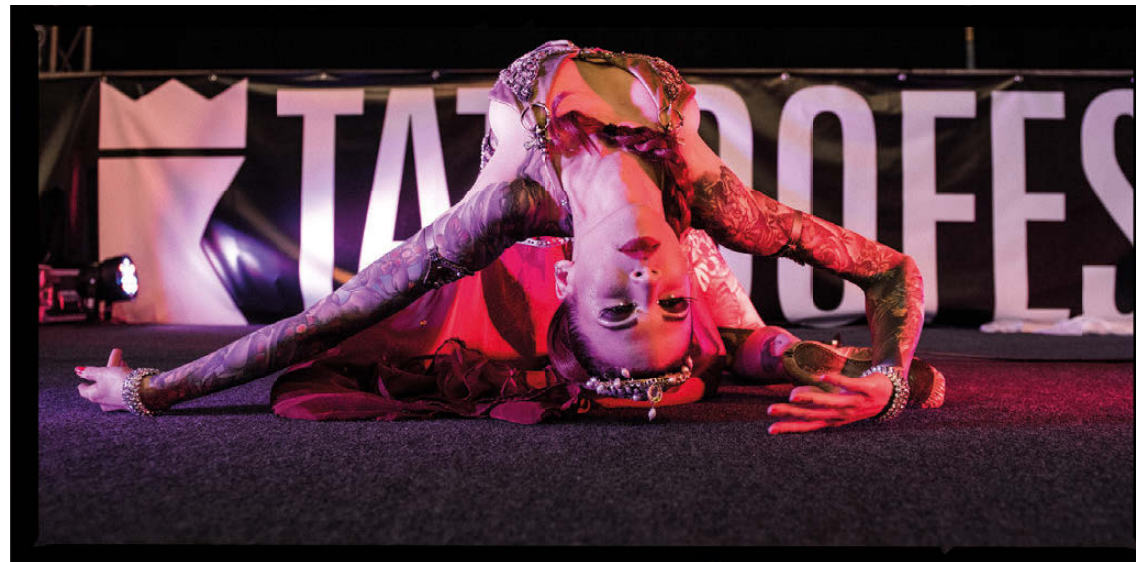
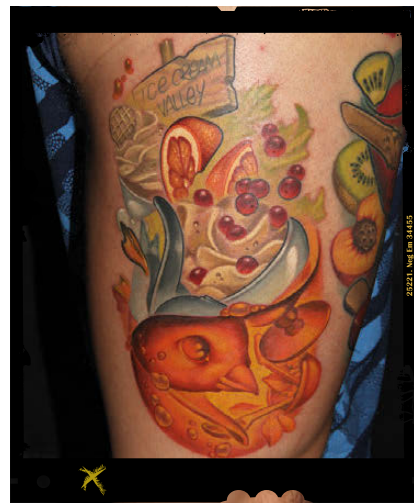
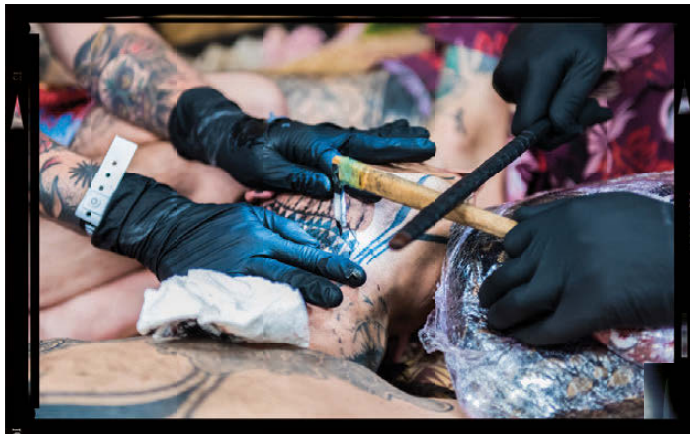
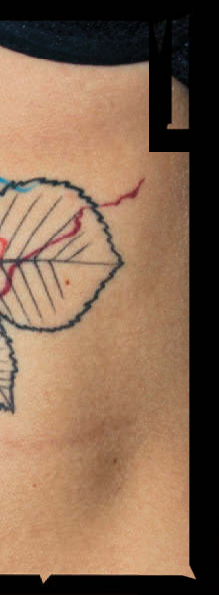
**K**rakow's Tattoofest is one of the biggest tattoo events in Eastern Europe and never disappoints. This year was their 11th edition and with over 6000 visitors, it just keeps getting better. Here, we are most pleased to show you what you missed if you didn't make it.

The 12th Tattoofest has already been nailed down to 3rd and 4th June 2017 and at flights for less than £30 and rooms even cheaper, if you've never been to a show outside of the UK, get working on it. You won't regret it.

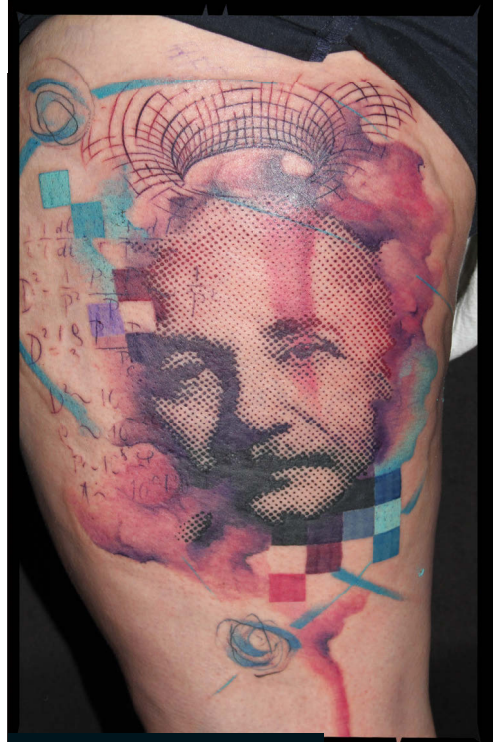
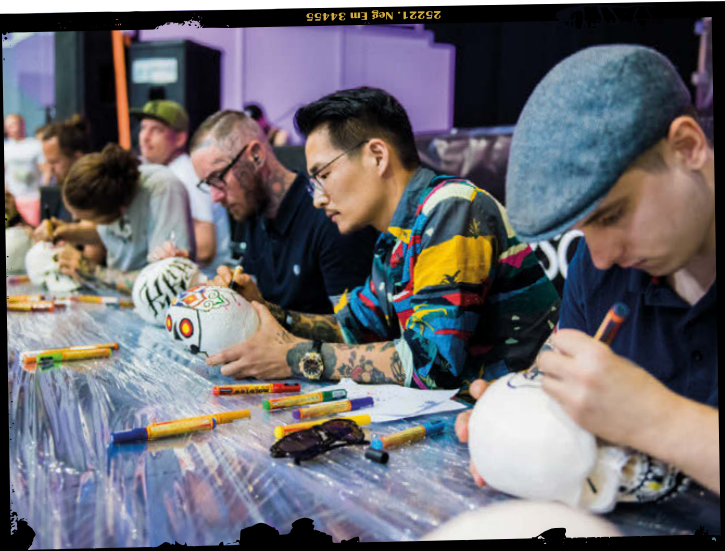












Best of Day Saturday - Jacob Wiman

Best of Day Saturday - Samuel Potuek, Sãowacja

Best of Saturday - Guillaume Smash, Francja



Best of Sunday - David Giersch, Niemcy

Best of Sunday - Judyta, Luckytattoo, Tychy

Best of Sunday - Levgen Knysh, Voice of Ink, Wrocław



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AN EYE IS UPON YOU

## EVERYDAY PEOPLE

*A couple of days ago, I, and 2000 other people went to hear Jeremy Corbyn speak about his vision for a fairer UK. He talked about the importance of the arts in our society, how they, along with sports and science contribute to a better quality of life for everyone and that universal access, starting in school is a vital part of creating the kind of world we want to live in*

**H**e urged those present not to separate politics and arts but to work towards a society where they sit side by side, informing and inspiring each other, to not allow the high brow to ignore the art of the everyday.

Tattoos are the ultimate art of the everyday, we carry them with us everywhere. The tattoo community, much like Jeremy Corbyn himself, has found ourselves misrepresented, even demonised by the media. Our diverse culture and many thousand years of history are often reduced to a short hand signifier for criminality, stupidity or naivety. Being shrunk in this way not only does us tattooed folk a disservice, it also limits the reach of our art, frightens off those that would otherwise be part of our community, 'you'll never get a proper job looking like that'.

So who are we, really? I'd propose we are sufficiently diverse that it's impossible to speak for everyone, but me, well, I still know all the words to Wham! Rap. I own 13 pairs of cowboy boots but no car. I live with a black cat that is now so elderly he looks and feels like a half stuffed cushion. I like charity shops, ride a bike with a basket on the front and feverishly grow plants in pots outside my little terraced house. I'm probably the best tap dancing, accordion playing, tattooed lady in Stretford. I really, really like Game of Thrones. (Winter really is coming. Ed.)

I don't think I'm a Trot, or a thug, or a militant, I'm certainly not a dog, or a yob, or a hooligan, although I am prone to occasional bouts of swearing. 4.30am on June 24th would've been a bad time to be standing under my bedroom window.

I dropped out of school at 14 but returned to education after my son was born, when it became clear that going back to my previous occupation, managing a bar, was no longer a



Steven Mostyn



PAULA HARDY KANGELOS  
DiamondBetty

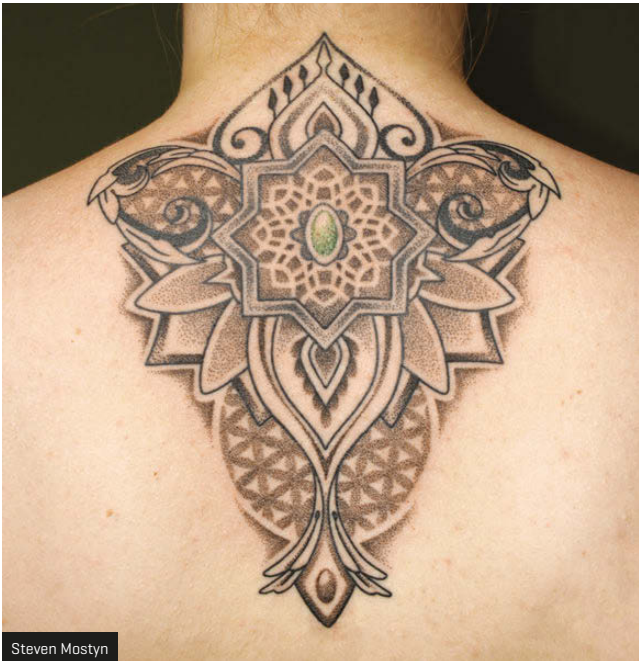
**OUR DIVERSE CULTURE AND MANY THOUSAND YEARS OF HISTORY ARE OFTEN REDUCED TO A SHORT HAND SIGNIFIER FOR CRIMINALITY, STUPIDITY OR NAIVETY**

viable option. Babies and beer aren't a great combination.

Mum was a dinner lady, the kind that every kid loves, she'd have ten kids hanging off her every playtime and when I inevitably felt jealous, she explained to me that our family had so much love, that it was our duty to share it with those that had less.

I was one of the children that Thatcher snatched milk from so to be first time voter





Steven Mostyn

## HOW DID WE END UP WITH KIM KARDASHIAN INSTEAD OF KURT COBAIN?

in 1997, part of the electorate that finally put Labour back into power was momentous. I wasn't yet three when the last Labour PM left office. Now I was 21. I lived in London. I had no money, but the city was vibrant and creative and we made the most of it.

The 90s were rich with politically engaged music, bands like Carter USM and the Levellers, political comedians like Mark Thomas, Anti Nazi League and Rock against the Right charity gigs. Where did it all go? How did we end up with Kim Kardashian instead of Kurt Cobain? We gave up daring to hope under Blair and tried to numb ourselves with vapid distraction under Cameron.

There are seemingly only two topics in the UK right now, Politics and Pokemon. Absolute Engagement or complete withdrawal from reality. I don't have time for Pikachu.

Jeremy Corbyn is inspiring hundreds of thousands of people because he is honest and consistent. You don't need to look up his voting record to figure out where he stands on a particular issue, because all his positions are logical in relation to one another. He's not a mystery, or an empty brand, or the entitled son of a former politician. He's a pacifist, left wing, former councillor with an allotment, no dress sense and a can of cold baked beans. It doesn't matter if you don't agree with him on every position, he doesn't expect you to, because the political process he defends is democratic. It's not his way or the highway, it's our way.

What's happening here in Britain is a small part of a worldwide phenomenon, a rising up of ordinary people clamouring to have their voices heard after years of apathy.

I will not allow the dominant narrative to shrink me, simplify or dismiss me as a 'Corbynista' any more than I will allow it to stereotype tattooed people as drunken louts on package holidays. I hope you won't either. ☐



## CLASSIFIEDS

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

**New studio in Dumfries, Scotland** area. I'm looking for someone to join me in my studio on a permanent basis. You must be an experienced Tattoo Artist. Full time/ Part Time hours are available. Must have a portfolio and be a good all-rounder with excellent customer service skills. Please email me on rejuvenation115@gmail.com or call 07495 808 366 or business number 01848 331313.

**Artist Wanted: Black Lotus tattoo studio Liverpool** are looking for an artist to work in our busy established studio. Applicants must have experience and a strong portfolio, able to handle appointments and walk in clientele, and no drink, drug or ego problems. For more information please send us an email with some examples of your work and some info about yourself to black.lotusta2@hotmail.co.uk

**Tattoo Artist Wanted at Ritual Art Tattoo**, Rainham, Kent. Applicants will be expected to have their own kit and a good tattoo portfolio with an individual style. You will be expected to begin tattooing immediately and work a 4 day week between 10:30-18:00 Tuesday-Saturday. TO APPLY: send an email titled 'ÁPICK ME!À to info@ritualarttattoo.com

**TATTOO ARTIST WANTED, WOLVERHAMPTON AREA.** Our busy, up and coming professional studio is looking for a full time tattoo artist to join the team! We are looking for committed and enthusiastic artists, ideally looking for a black and grey or realism specialist, but we will consider all applicants with strong portfolios. No Drink, Drug or attitude problems. Send your portfolio to chris@cultofthesphynx.com

**Established tattoo shop in central London** is up for sale due to relocation. The rent is very reasonable, the business rate is acceptable for Westminster, only downside is that the licence is needed to be renewed annually. Two stands, and if you really force it you might be able to put in a third, although two tattooist can sort out the work if they are efficient. Westbourne park tube station [Hammersmith and City, Central line] is 150 and bus stops are within 50 yards. Harrow rd is a busy high street with plenty of shops around. The shop has a good clientele, over 10k followers on Facebook, and comes up on the first pages of Google. As I am planning to leave the country you would benefit from this all. I leave my complete clientele,

all furniture and the website and fb page to the new owner. If interested call: 07525921360 or email: gaborzplan9@gmail.com

**Space to rent for an experienced Body Piercer** at Inkerrmans Tattoo Studio in Crystal Palace. Must be willing to do all the piercings that come into the studio, & have own Client base. Good opportunity to build your own business. Contact Steve - inkerrmans@hotmail.com - 07851867578

**The Black Rabbit Tattoo Collective - Artist Wanted:** We are a well established & busy studio in Newbury, Berkshire. Attractive rates for good artists. If you are interested, please email: blackrabbitcollective@live.com

**Artist wanted:** We are looking for a full or part time artist to join our very busy team, must have at least 2 years studio experience, must be hard working, reliable with a strong portfolio. Please contact : purplerosetattoo@hotmail.co.uk with examples of your work and info. This is not an apprentice position

**Part time artist required** for our busy studio in Pontefract, West Yorkshire. Our junior artist is moving on after 5 years and we need someone of similar experience to take on some of the walk in traffic and smaller one hit pieces. This is not an apprentice position. 2 years studio experience and a small work sample required. Please email electric.kicks@hotmail.com with enquiries.

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

**TATTOO ARTIST WANTED, WOLVERHAMPTON AREA.** Our busy, up and coming professional studio is looking for a full time tattoo artist to join the team! We are looking for committed and enthusiastic artists, ideally with a black and grey specialism, but we will consider all applicants with strong portfolios. No Drink, Drug or attitude problems. Send your portfolio to chris@cultofthesphynx.com

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.





Beccy Rimmer has been thinking about our tattoo decisions, and if they will ever cease being judged by others...

**M**y recent tattoo detox eventually turned into an indulgent tattoo binge. The last few months have seen multiple new tattoos from a variety of artists, including my first face tattoo (albeit small).

As a result of this, for the first time in years, I experienced the feeling of being challenged about my tattoo decisions, in the form of different remarks and statements from close friends and family.

Another tattoo, Beccy?! You don't have to keep getting so many, you know? Are you going to stop any time soon? Umm, I don't like it as much as your others. Etc, etc.

As we continue to get more heavily tattooed, do the disapproving opinions of those close to us get easier, or harder, to deal with?

Whilst I can be stubborn at times, I'm equally as impressionable. I listen to every word said to me, take it on board, and more often than not, it changes me in a certain way.

On hearing an even slightly negative remark about a current or future tattoos, I found myself feeling temporarily offended, guilty, upset or ashamed. You know those 'fuck the world, I'll do what I want and I don't care' people? Yeah... I'm not one of those.

Well, I sort of am, just without the not caring bit.

There are so many intricate reasons as to why I chose to get regularly tattooed—that's why I write about it. It's an infinitely deep river of processes and rituals that shapes us, inspires us and brings us closer to others.

Getting tattooed has become something quite special and unusual in my own life. Over the years it's manifested into something that, to me, is complex, interesting and actually... inexplicable.

I write these columns and my own blogs to explore this further, to keep searching for those meanings and motivations. But exploring decisions is very different to justifying them.

Often when someone who doesn't love tattoos asks why you're getting one... they're not asking for exploration, but justification. Why you are making this quick, expensive, permanent decision?



Max Pniewski

**AS WE CONTINUE TO GET TATTOOED, DO THE OPINIONS OF THOSE CLOSE TO US GET EASIER, OR HARDER, TO DEAL WITH?**



BECCY RIMMER  
BeccyRimmer

In order to avoid this in the last few months, I found myself either not telling anyone about my future appointments, or feeling I needed to justify them with different reasoning.

I mentioned this in my column last month—people either get tattoos, or they don't. Often we forget we live amongst those who don't understand our apparent insanity, and may never will.

Writing this, I wanted to come to some sort of conclusion about how to we handle these judgements... how I personally can handle that in the future.

I'm not sure I know the answer, but I will keep searching for it. ▣





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