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**THE PORTRAIT OF
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**NAKED ATTRACTION:
THE ANATOMICAL MAN**



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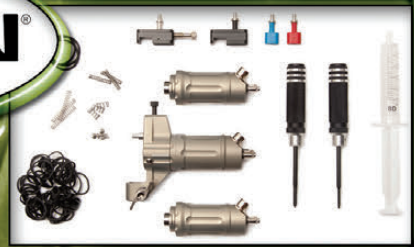
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SATURDAY NIGHT
& SUNDAY MORNING

OBJECTS IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR ARE OFTEN CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

Summer 2016. The time of year in which people forget to put all of their clothes on and hope you will forgive them for it later.

I took the dog down to the beach for a few games in the surf and found a group of these forgetful people firing up a barbecue in a box. Curious as always about what they had chosen to decorate themselves with, we wandered towards them pretending not to be interested but Hector can only contain himself for a limited period of time and it wasn't long before he had crashed the party and I got a good look at the guy with the back-piece that had intrigued me.

In an ideal world, all Japanese back-pieces should slay giants. There are rules to follow, decades of great examples to call upon for reference and more stories to tell than fall out of my mouth after too many bottles of Desperado. To my eternal disappointment, from 30 feet away, it looked like a tattoo that needed to be seen up close but up close, it was a tattoo best seen from 30 feet away.

I dropped all of the questions I had lined up for him in the sand, the sea took them away to a watery grave and that was the end of that line of enquiry. The tattoo was reasonably new too which is more than likely what left the bad taste in my mouth. A lot of people I cross paths with are always keen to point out that art is subjective and I agree, but they are never quite so keen on agreeing in return when I say that being able to draw properly is not subjective in the slightest.

Some seconds later, the sun came out from behind the cloud and I spotted a beautiful little seahorse on the guy's friend. Maybe four inches long, immaculate lines with nothing but black ink holding it together. A beautiful tattoo and this one we did talk about. We talked about the story behind it, how far he had gone to have it worked up by the person he always wanted it done by and together we breathed new life into a tattoo that was more than four years old.

There's no point to this story other than the obvious. The barbecue in a box was hot,



Miss Jo Black

FROM 30 FEET AWAY, IT LOOKED LIKE A TATTOO THAT NEEDED TO BE SEEN UP CLOSE. FROM UP CLOSE, IT WAS A TATTOO BEST SEEN FROM 30 FEET AWAY



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we both got a share of meat from the grill and left them to it because nobody likes a couple of dogs outstaying their welcome at a party.

When we had gotten far enough away, I looked back over my shoulder at them and sure enough, the dragon I had originally been drawn to no longer looked like it had been reversed into by a truck.

There's a lesson in this for all of us but I'm not sure what it is. ▣

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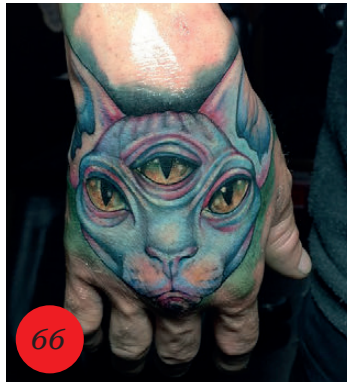
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22 THE ANATOMICAL MAN

A few weeks ago we put a call out for new writers who might have something different to offer the world. Amongst the submissions came this great piece from Steven Kenny—a medical photographer currently studying for an MA in the

History of Art and Photography and Birkbeck, University of London—and we liked it very much.

28 WENDY PHAM

Tattooers like Wendy Pham are so refreshing. They are the kind of people you definitely want to spend some time with to talk about things that matters to them. So we did....

38 THE TRANSFORMATIVE TATTOO

In the next instalment of *The Transformative Tattoo* with Sean Herman, we check in with Sean and his buddy London and find that a single tattoo changed both of them. Forever.

66 PICASSO DULAR

An Ink Master alum who splits his

time between three of America's finest tattoo cities, is equally passionate about fine art and music and has inked Rita Ora live on TV is just the kind of artist we like to interrogate!

74 CITIES OF THE DEAD

This issue, the boss visits Copenhagen, finds magic at the riverside and finds some grade A artists working in the city.

82 BEHIND THE INK

In the issue's instalment of *Behind The Ink*, Wayne Simmons gets himself tattooed and in the spirit of things—and perhaps for the first time—thought about this one harder than the others. Getting your throat tattooed will do that to a man.

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DIVINE: THE EXHIBITION

Commissioned by The New Art Gallery Walsall, the 'Divine' exhibition from our buddy Oliver Jones is now well and truly open and will remain that way until 20th November.

Oliver Jones is known for his photorealist chalk drawings, which consider how the media advertises, manipulates and exploits imagery of flesh. However, for this solo exhibition at The New Art Gallery Walsall, Oliver has created a new large-scale multi-panel work called 'Divine' taking the studio of the tattoo artist as its subject and developing it into something else entirely. Rather topically this month, the image is set at Divine Canvas (Xed LeHead's studio) and there's quite the story behind the piece which we'll dig into next issue.

If you're in the area (or, even if you're not), you should drop by and see it in person. It's quite something in the flesh.

If you're interested in finding out more about the man and his work, you can find him here: olivercjones.com. You can find the gallery here: The New Art Gallery Walsall, Gallery Square, Walsall WS2 8LG • thenewartgallerywalsall.org.uk

Manchester Tattoo Show

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manchestertattooshow.com
Tickets: 01244 881895



WIN TICKETS TO THE MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL TATTOO SHOW

Not so far away on the calendar now is the Manchester International Tattoo Show. The artist list is already live at manchestertattooshow.com (and we're still booking them in) so come join us from 29-30 October for one of the longest established and most loved UK tattoo shows of the year in one of its greatest cities! With awesome international tattoo artists, a great variety of vendors, traders and amazing live entertainment to keep you busy all weekend, it'll be a blast. The show is dedicated to showcasing the very best International and UK tattooists with incredible styles from across the globe, right in the heart of Manchester.

Fancy your chances at winning one of three pairs of tickets? Head on out to skindeep.co.uk/competitions, drop in your details and the competition answer "Manchester" and we'll do the rest. See you there!



FALLEN ANGEL

Here's something that will be of interest to more than a few of us: Fallen Angel is a new drink about to be launched onto the market... and yet, it's more than just a 'drink' because the entire branding for the company is based on tattoo art—check out this bottle design and you'll be hooked too. You can find out more about the company at fallenangeldrinks.com and let's face it, who wouldn't want one of those in their Christmas stocking? (Oh no—we used the 'C' word.... in September!)

Stay tuned. Good things will come....



FROM A JACK

Diamond Jacks in Soho (London) are actively seeking out a realism/black & grey artist to join the crew. Usual rules of 'no idiots' applies but if you're serious about the commitment, drop an email to Daryl Gates at info@diamond-jacks.co.uk with some examples of work and your availability and let destiny take its course...

COMPETITION: WIN A HARLEY

That's right... you could indeed win a custom built Harley by getting in on the act at the Halloween Bash this year. They're aiming to raise £2000 for the Wolverhampton Homeless Outreach charity and the odds on winning it are massively high. 1 in a 100 in fact. For more info, email htb2016harleyraffle@yahoo.com

Tickets are on sale right now. Mean-time, this years Halloween Bash (their tenth!) is not so far away either.

halloweentattoobash.co.uk.



CONVENTIONS

LONDON TATTOO CONVENTION

23 - 25 September 2016

Tobacco Dock, 50 Porters Walk
London E1W 2SF
thelondontattooconvention.com

KATOWICE TATTOO KONWENT

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Galeria Szyb Wilson
Oswobodzenia 1,
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Poland
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24TH RICHMOND TATTOO ARTS FESTIVAL

30 September - 02 October 2016

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Richmond
1021 Koger Center Blvd
Richmond, VA 23235
United States
rvatattooarts.com

19TH BARCELONA TATTOO EXPO

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Plaza de España
Av de Isabel la Católica
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BOURNEMOUTH INK 'N' ART TATTOO FEST

01 - 02 October 2016

Bournemouth Pavilion
Theatre and Ballroom
Westover Road
Bournemouth BH1 2BU
bournemouth.tattoo

HALLOWEEN TATTOO BASH

08 - 09 October 2016

Wolverhampton Racecourse
Gorsebrook Rd
Wolverhampton WV6 0PE
halloweentattoobash.co.uk

CONVENTION TATTOO NANTES

07 - 09 October 2016

Exponantes
Parc des Expositions
Route de Saint-Joseph
44300 Nantes, France
convention-tattoo.com

4TH WARSAW TATTOO CONVENTION

08 - 09 October 2016

Stadion Legil Warsaw
Łazienkowska 3
00-449 Warszawa, Poland
warsawtattooconvention.com

PARADISE TATTOO GATHERING

20 - 23 October 2016

Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort
37 Corey Rd
Hancock, MA 01237
United States
paradisetattooagathering.com

JURASSIC COAST TATTOO CONVENTION

28 - 30 October 2016

Premier Inn Hotel Bournemouth Central
Westover Rd, Bournemouth,
Dorset BH1 2BZ
jurassiccoasttattooconvention.co.uk

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Windmill St, Manchester M2 3GX
manchestertattooshow.com

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SECRET DIARY OF A TALL GIRL

And so we reach the end of the line. Paula Castle's last stop on her road trip is the Amsterdam Tattoo Convention. Did she learn much about herself? Did travel broaden the horizons? Or is it simply good to be home? There's only one way to find out:



Amsterdam, capital city of debauchery, madness and mischief. Another city that never sleeps, well apart from cannabis induced naps I presume.

There was a huge group of us going over to work the Amsterdam Tattoo Convention and as ever, we are all based UK wide and had to meet at our rented house boat (yep, it was as cool as it sounds!) once our individual flights had arrived.

I got there first with Amy Savage (@amyvsavage) and we collected the keys and started to explore our new home for the next few days. The boat was huge, right on the river, two floors and a deck to sit on outside and watch

the rowers, and boating tourists pass by.

Gradually the other girls arrived, Lucy O'Connell (@lucylucyhorsehead), Ruth Rollin (@ruthredtattoo), Sarah Tee (@guerilla_needles), Rosie Evans (@rosieevans), Hannah Von Farren (@hvftattoo), Kerry-Anne Richardson (@littlekezz) and Hayley White (@hayley_wgw). Told you there were loads of us! Girls on Tour!

We all settled in, picked our sleeping arrangements, got all the gossip and life updates out of the way and Amy, Kezz and I decided to get dolled up and go out and meet up with some locals Amy knew. Well, it ended up being a proper night out in an absolutely heaving bar full of

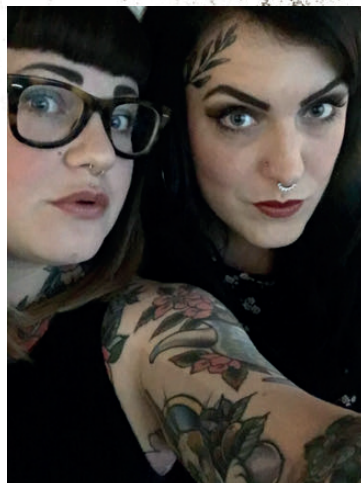


locals. Huge fun, and we came home happy and tipsy ready to set up at the convention the next day.

We bundled into taxis the next morning with our kit and arrived at the enormous convention centre, which was a little intimidating as a venue. I'd never worked somewhere so big before, and it was really really busy with people setting up and getting ready for the doors to open later that day. We had been put together in one row of booths at the convention. Brilliant! I was next to Rosie, and we got set up as quickly as we could.

I had a few bookings this weekend, but I was taking walk ups too, which did prove interesting with the language barrier! I was lucky enough to be pretty much busy all weekend—we all were. The show was busy, there were some amazing artists from all over the world, including the USA. Which brings me onto the subject I want to broach with this month's column really.

Us Brits are spoilt in the extreme. I've touched on the pricing thing in the UK before and how much cheaper tattoos are here, but what I also want to touch on is the number of



incredible home grown talents we have on the British tattoo scene. Not just the big names, or the people with thousands of followers, or the people who win every award, but the number of amazing and talented artists we have per head compared to the size of our tiny, tiny island.

More or less every week I come across an apprentice whose talent is astounding, or someone absolutely killing it who doesn't use social media! I know—ridiculous! Yet people in general still equate awards, followers and such like with quality tattooing. Sadly, it isn't always the case. Followers can be bought, awards can be coerced, egos can be over inflated.

Rosie Evans is a prime example. Her tattoos and her paintings are outstanding. She is funny, humble, clever and kind, another person tattooing for all the right reasons. I love her work, and watching her tattoo was a pleasure.

Judging what makes a good tattoo artist is difficult unless you know what you're looking for, and as we all know art is subjective. With that in mind, there are some fundamentals to look out for. Healed work should be looked at to

form an opinion—it's no use if your tattoo looks great for a photo before you're wrapped and shown out the door a few hundred quid lighter, but

Every week I come across an apprentice whose talent is astounding, or someone absolutely killing it who doesn't use social media



People in general still equate awards, followers and such like with quality tattooing. Sadly, it isn't always the case

looks 20 years old in six months.

Don't go to someone who isn't right for the job you want. I get countless emails asking me for black and grey realism. I'm not proud, I'm happy to tattoo anything, but why come to me for that when Joe Bloggs in the next city over specialises in that style and would do it way more justice? When an artist tells you that, don't think they're arrogant or stuck up. They're more interested in you getting a great tattoo than lining their wallet. I know which one I'd prefer.

Line work should be solid and consistent, if it looks like someone did it on the back of a tour bus, please keep looking. In fact, run, as far away as possible.

And I cannot stress this last point enough. Do not shop on price. Just don't. The sweetness of a bargain price is far outweighed by the bitterness of a bad decision. Ask yourself why X down the road can do it £30 cheaper? We all have the same costs, providing they aren't buying the cheapest equipment possible. A good artist knows the value of their

work and skill. Remember you aren't just paying for the time in the chair, you're paying for the research, sketching, design work and other things we do to prepare for your tattoo, because (and I genuinely believe this) we care far more about your tattoo than you do.

You see, Amsterdam is my last stop on my tour. I'm getting ready to settle down in Swansea (@broadsidetattoo) and I suppose it's making me re-evaluate a few things in the industry, how better I can serve my clients, and my art. I want to push boundaries and I want to have a positive impact. I don't think I have all the answers, good grief, when I think I do it's time to hang up the tattoo machine and turn to knitting or jam making or whatever it is you do when you retire. I am, however, confident that on my travels I have learned a great deal, I've soaked up as much as I can from as many people as I can in an attempt to grow, evolve and prepare for my new resident artist position. I'm not an apprentice anymore, I'm not a junior artist anymore, I'm on my own and it's all down to me. □



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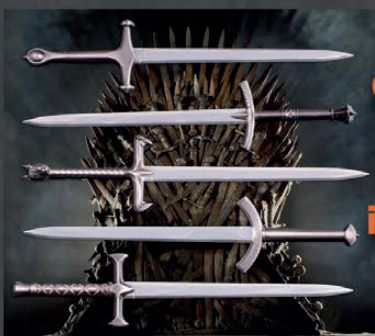
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XED'S NOT DEAD BABY!

Tattoo Jam threw us an unexpected curveball this year. Amongst the many pockets of activity, there was somebody who many thought we would never see tattooing again—but it ain't over 'til it's over right?



Not so long ago, Xed LeHead suffered a severe medical condition that left him unable to use his arms and legs and forcing him to retire from tattooing. Make no mistake, there's still a long road stretching out in front of him, but just a few short weeks ago, Xed rather surprisingly turned up at Tattoo Jam to sell a few prints.

So far, so good to see him again... and then the unthinkable but very amazing happened:

First of all, Nicky Connor—who spent three whole days behind a camera and racked up close on 3000 shots—found herself in the right place at the right time. Let's see what she made of the return of Xed:

“One of the main highlights for me from Tattoo Jam was seeing revolutionary tattoo artist Xed Le Head tattoo his partner after a long absence from the trade due to illness.

“I count myself extremely lucky to be part of a small



crowd that witnessed him tattoo the slogan 'Xed's not dead baby, Xed's not dead' on his wife's arm. It was really beautiful to watch someone with a true passion and love for their craft returning after enforced time away. It actually brought home my respect for the artform of tattooing and the understanding that—like all creative fields—tattooing has many great artists who truly love and respect their work and the relationship with their clients.

"Although it was clear doing the tattoo was not easy, the happiness shared by both Xed in creating the tattoo and his wife for wearing the piece was clear to see on both of their faces and really emotional to watch.

"I know it sounds like a real cliché, but you could see the love and respect between them both as the tattoo was being done. It was a real privilege to watch and something that will stay with me for a long time. Xed LeHead is far from dead!"

A small amount of time later, Gareth Way (Beards Ink) got himself involved in something he hadn't planned for when he turned up to tattoo and certainly didn't see coming either. Here it is from the horse's mouth:

"I have only worked 5 tattoo conventions but somehow myself and Sarah (the Mrs. and all round saviour) get involved in some unexpected situations. From allowing Damien Wickham to tattoo anything he wants on me 10 minutes after meeting him, to planning a script for a TV show with a fellow tattooist I'd met that day whose jokes are as bad as mine. Seemingly our convention weekends away are getting stranger and more unexpected but definitely more fun with each one we do. With that in mind I'd like to explain how I came to be at the beginning of something special and what is now affectionately being dubbed 'The 108 Club'.

"At Tattoo Jam, minding my own business and tattooing a client on Artist Friday, my attention is taken by a flash of orange draped with geometric psychedelia. Xed Le Head in his luminous wheelchair being pushed by Wiggy—his Mrs. and all round saviour. After 15 minutes of staring at them wondering how to approach such a leg-



end of our industry, we took our opportunity and jumped in as soon as they had put enough prints out to consider it a stall, which in my opinion was three.

"Turns out, Xed hasn't been able to tattoo for so long that fun tokens (cash to normal human beings) are a little scarce and the time has come to sell the prints they had on their walls at home. With a book planned, the proceeds of the weekend print sales would go towards the bill. So, how much were the prints? You may well ask. Funnily enough they were £108, which for prints of their size, quality and lineage would be cheap enough let alone that they have spent time hung up above the sofa of this industry's leading geometric artist. If walls could talk and all that....

"The print we picked was inscribed: 'My copy for in my

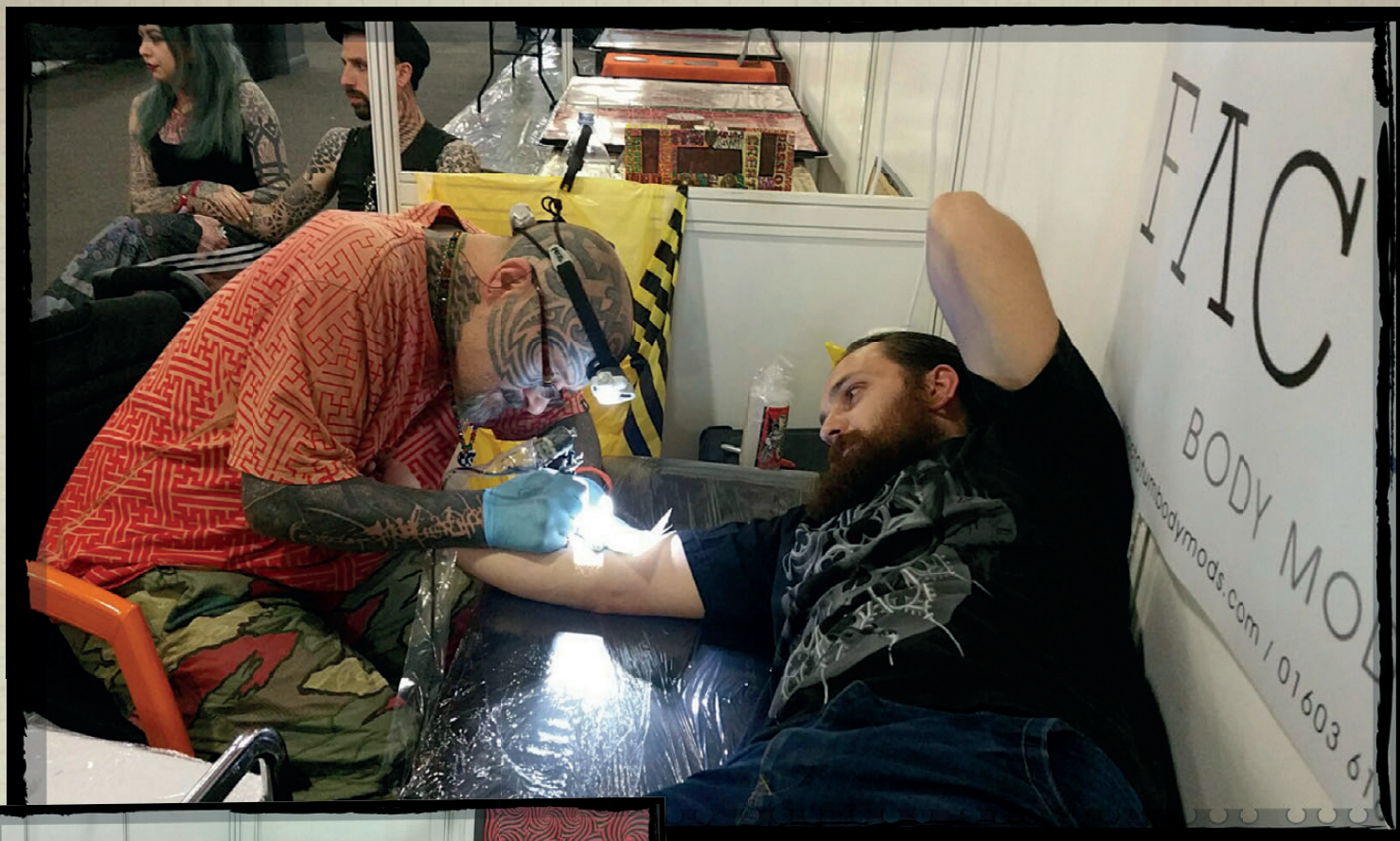


home, love always and all ways Xed’—and as our friendship blossomed over the next few days, gained an all-new personalised inscription of our own. Then, one promise made to Wiggy to hang it in our home before the studio and we really were friends.

“Many speculations as to whether Xed would ever tattoo again have been made. At the darkest of these times, speculation as to continuation of life has also reared its ugly head but on the back of a new found friendship, two people’s ability to be in the right place at the right time and my own inquisitiveness it seems tattooing needs to look over its shoulder at the lame horse gaining speed from the rear because ‘XEDS NOT DEAD BABY, Xeds not dead.’

“The time had come for Xed to try out what capabilities a slow/arduous and fledgling recovery had afforded him so far. A burning desire inside? A built in reflex? A need to tattoo? Call it what you want. From somewhere in that brilliant mind, when asked “What would you like to tattoo?” the reply came thus: “Xeds not dead baby”. A little banter back and forth about the rewards for such an honour to wear a piece like that and the price was set. £108. A drop in the ocean but a donation towards the book fund none the less.

“As luck would have it a friend of Xed’s—Josh Fisher, author of the insane Oriental piece winner (see Tattoo Jam review) was in the booth next to him. He jumped at the chance to see his friend tattoo and offered to set up



a machine he had brought from Xed previously. A little rotary that had been used by Xed on a selection of the worlds most tattooed people. Wiggy was ready to receive the first ink he had laid down since falling ill. An inevitable crowd was gathering and cameras were at the ready. Nobody was expecting anything, some just there to see what the buzz was about, with reactions varying from “Who is that guy?” all the way up to “Oh my God! Is Xed about to tattoo?”

“When he began it was awkward and laboured, but a moment here and there to adjust positions and they were off. He was doing it! Wearing a head torch, grinning as he went, he didn’t much need the light at all as he was bathed in the warm glow from Wiggy whose gaze didn’t shift focus from the eyes of the man she had nursed tirelessly through an illness akin to torture.

“It was a little rough around the edges perhaps but this was more than a tattoo and with it came the feeling that

recovery just became Xed’s bitch.

“With the crowd died down and Xed refreshed, somehow it became my turn. By the time he was halfway through, he had found his stride. Sharing stories about a lifetime in the industry, laughing and joking, my imagination made short work of conjuring fabled late night sessions at Divine Canvas and Into You. Once the last dot was done, the machine put down neatly on the side, it happened: He sat back in his chair and pinged his gloves off, left first, right immediately after and launched them into the waste like he had never been away. For that briefest of moments, he was back tattooing at Divine Canvas owning his profession like a pimp in Amsterdam on a Saturday night.

“To be part of this tiny moment is something I will hold dear forever. Being relatively new to this industry, I have few true inspirations of my time with not enough understanding of the greats in this industry from before my time, but one thing is for sure; Xed is more than an inspiration. He is now my friend.

“Sitting here, trying not to scratch as the hairs grow back through, I smile as one window on my computer is open to Facebook where I’m looking at pictures of others who have since been lucky enough to join the 108 Club as Xed pushes through small amounts of time back in the chair at Divine Canvas.

“This tattoo is many things to me, a memory, a statement, an exclusive club membership but most of all, a sign that those two beautiful gentle people have turned a corner on a journey bridled by uncertainty and are now heading into sunnier times.

“Welcome back Xed. The world has missed you—even though it didn’t know it.” ▣

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THE ANATOMICAL MAN

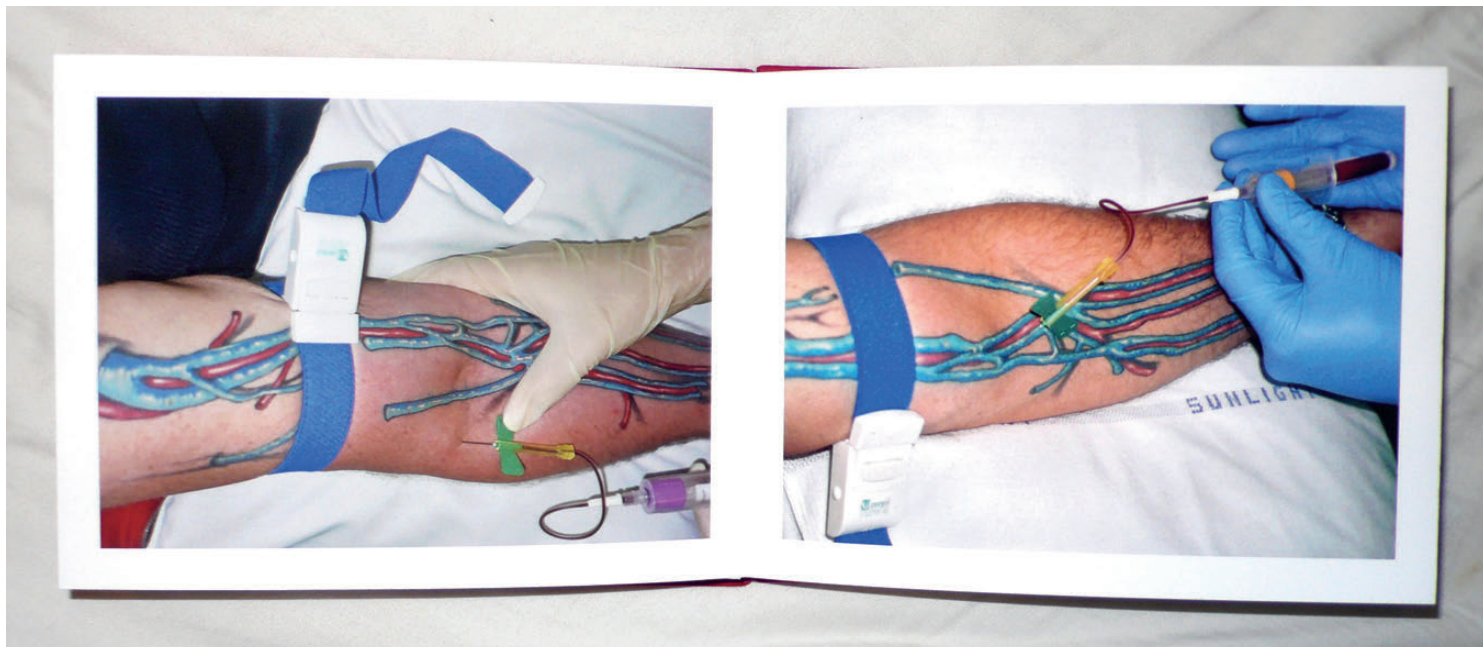
A few weeks ago we put a call out for new writers who might have something different to offer the world. Amongst the submissions came this great piece from Steven Kenny—a medical photographer currently studying for an MA in the History of Art and Photography and Birkbeck, University of London—and we liked it very much



Seeing gore, blood, puss, and open wounds does not faze me. Working as a medical photographer for the last five years, I have seen pretty much everything. From complex surgery cases to the internal cavity of a human mouth, I have photographed it all. My strange obsession with the morbid began at university where I became fascinated with representations of the body, specifically how disease and trauma can affect outward appearances and inner psychological states. I would obsessively research literature on anatomical drawings, examining the beauty of an illustration from

Grey's Anatomy of the Human Body to the surreal self-reflexive work of Andreas Vesalius in his *De humani corporis fabrica*. The latter would illustrate the dead animated, skeletons holding their flayed flesh whilst contemplating their own mortality and existence.

At this time I also examined the internal and external relationship of how artists pictured their own body, many of which created art from their blood, sick and shit—matter that would be deemed as 'abject'. I was introduced to performance and live art, artists such as Franko B and Ron Athey, who have explored themes of the body in



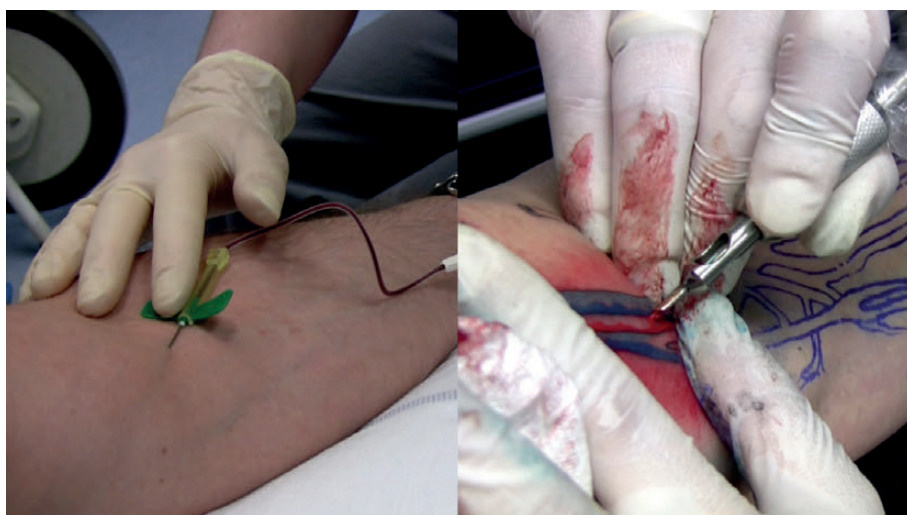
pain, often using blood as a prop or by-product of an action or performative event. I started to connect the thematic dots, recognising that the anatomical illustration and medical photograph did not seem too distant to the art being produced by performance artists. Both of these subjects attempt to create a picture of the anatomical body and the body living with ill health.

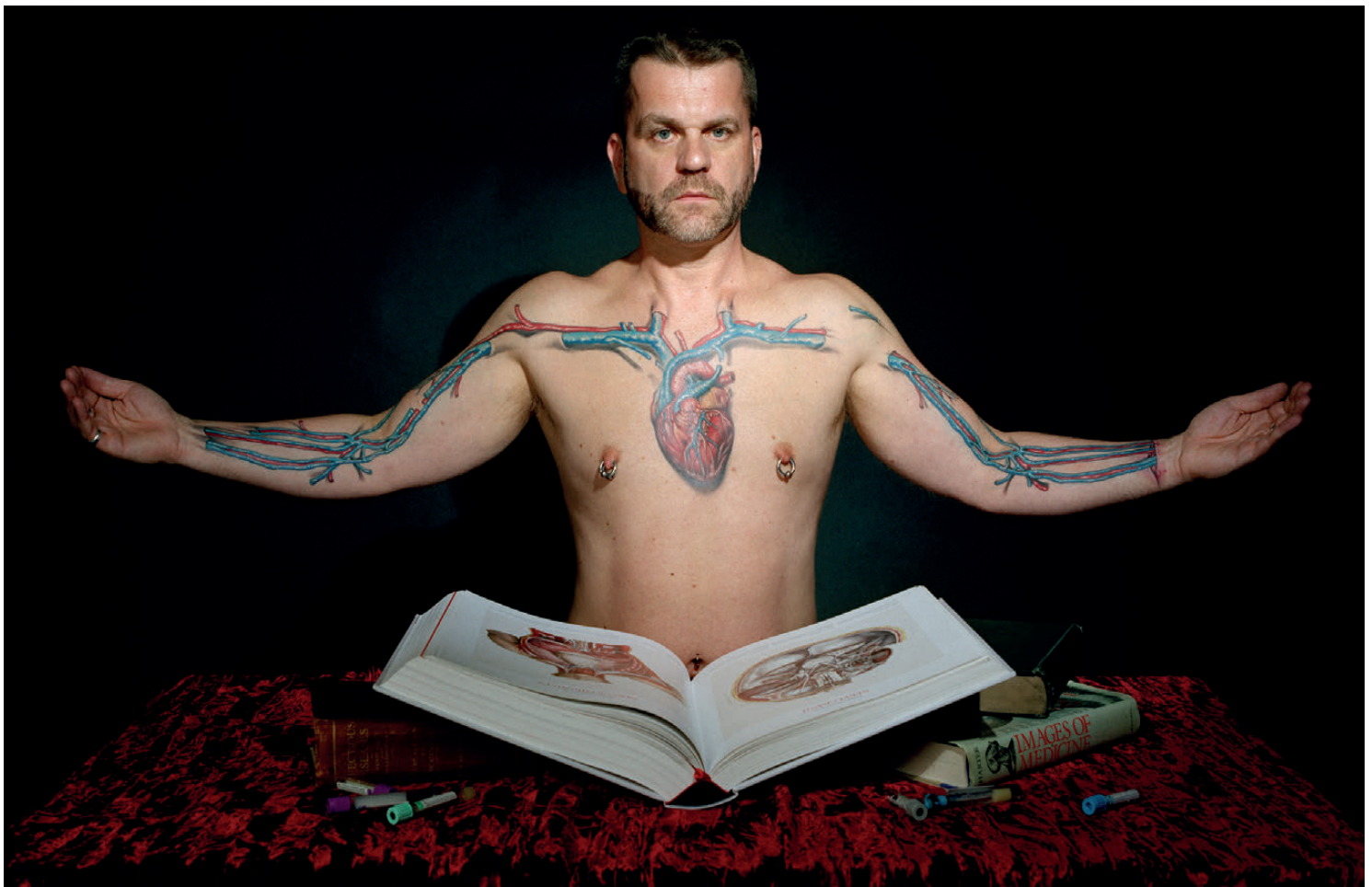
And then everything changed. A photographic assistant post to the prolific artist Richard Sawdon Smith became available; seeing that the artist was exploring the body and its representations towards illness via performing to the camera, I leapt at the chance. Sawdon Smith stepped into the photographic limelight so to speak when he won the prestigious John Kobal Award (now the National Portrait Gallery Photographic Portrait Award) 1997 with his touching and beautiful work 'Simon', a portrait of the artist's friend suffering from the affects of the HIV virus. Being inspired by the iconography of medical photography, Sawdon Smith pictured Simon as a medical photographer would, documenting the body from a clinical gaze. The subject's undressed body was captured in full, drawing reference to the affected anatomy caused by symptoms of the disease. Yet there is a humanity captured in the image, the ill body of Simon draws reference to the fragility of the human condition and the transient nature of our time spent here on earth. Sawdon Smith made a number of works after Simon in regards to his own ill body, and continues to make self-portrait photographs today. I was asked to assist the artist in his construction of a new body-challenging series, a project whereby the artist figuratively, and quite literally, became the anatomical man.

From complex surgery cases to the internal cavity of a human mouth, I have photographed it all

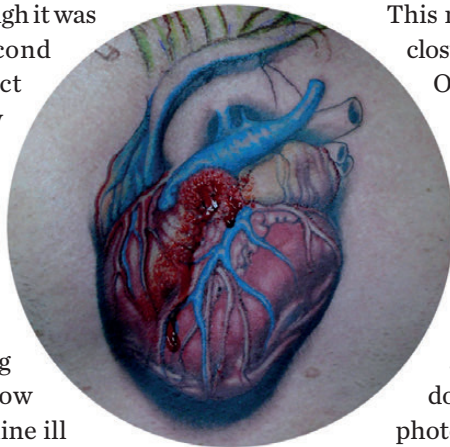
Meeting the artist on the first day in a well-equipped photographic studio, we quickly set to work, building a set reminiscent of an eighteenth-century dissection room table. Lights were put into position and a blood red velvet fabric was draped over a nearby table creating ripples in its luxurious material. Various illustrative anatomical books held the fabric in place; the scene was set. Sitting behind the table Sawdon Smith opened one of the larger books, and contemplated the illustrations inside. The shutter clicked, piercing the deathly silence of the room. The first image of the series was formed.

I met the artist one month later, this time with a noticeable difference, the inclusion of a tattooed anatomical





heart, still bleeding as though it was pumping with life. A second photograph for the project was taken, the artist now listening to his own heart-beat surrounded by empty vials and an anatomical skull. Tattooed by the artist Piotrek Taton of Good Times Tattoo, the internal life-supporting organ was made flesh, now a feature to visually examine ill health. Slowly Sawdon Smith began to double as the image of the anatomical illustrated man, although his transformation was not yet complete.



For the third and final visit to the studio Sawdon Smith's skin had been illustrated like a human canvas, the hidden veins and arteries found beneath now visible to the naked eye. Using the historical anatomical illustration as inspiration, the tattooist Piotrek Taton, had externalised the internal, the artist now a scientific model and body to be clinically inspected. The triptych was complete; the stages of being tattooed over time now documented and materialised as three interconnecting photographs. Sawdon Smith's body was transformed forever, his project realised by the tattooist's hand.

This now complete body drew a closure to another body of work, *Observe* (1994-2011), a series of photographs taken since 1994 when the artist was diagnosed with an incurable, life altering disease. The act of being tattooed became part of the performative process for the artist. Over the years Sawdon Smith would obsessively photograph each routine blood test attended; these tests needed for monitoring and ensuring good health. The final image of the series documents the nurse's hand puncturing both the illustrated and hidden vein for withdrawing blood. This is ac-



Inspired by the iconography of medical photography, Sawdon Smith pictured Simon as a medical photographer would, documenting the body from a clinical gaze



The triptych was complete; the stages of being tattooed over time now documented and materialised as three interconnecting photographs



cented in the video art piece *Blood Test*, which depicts two screens of the artist's arm. In one a blood test is being performed, and in the other the tattooist's machine can be seen piercing the skin with ink, similarly drawing blood to the surface. The two screens cross pictorially, the sound of the tattoo machine reverberating over the image of a blood test being performed. There is an immediate visual reference between the two acts, with the needle being used as a tool to draw (blood/ink).

Sawdon Smith's relationship to the act of being tattooed intensified with further work being completed with his anatomical man project, the artist now presenting two kidneys and the largest artery of the body, the aorta, being permanently marked on the skin. The artist's series *Death of Youth*

depicts the artist confronting the camera's gaze, an anatomical skull also positioned to confront the viewer's look. The body can now be likened to the illustrations found in historical anatomy atlases, presenting a figure that can be examined both inside and out.

After visiting the exhibition *Skin* (2010) at the Wellcome Collection, London the artist became fascinated with the texture and malleability of its form. He visited the tattoo studio again, this time being inked with a large autopsy scar running from his shoulders to his lower back. The large scar is suggestive of the body being opened, examined, internal organs dissected and closed with stitches. From being tattooed Sawdon Smith preempts the medical examiner's knife, and in the same light as his *The Anatomical Man Project* illustrates his body with a visual reminder of the internal.

The artist has continued to make work on the theme of the Anatomical Man, commissioning the artist Patrick Ian Hartley to make a 'Face Corset'; a mask constructed of fabric depicting the muscle tissue beneath. In this series the artist takes "his body out of the studio and on location—to a simulacrum of the hospital. Not the 'real' medical environment but a teaching space. A place of perceived wisdom, knowledge and understanding; a place to learn about the body". This examination of the hospital as an institution of knowledge is further explored in the artist's current work *The Anatomical Man 3D*, whereby Sawdon Smith has been photographed with human mapping technology, creating a three-dimensional digital model of his body. This interactive image can be scientifically examined and measured, the skin removed and visual markings applied. This body is reminiscent of contemporary medical illustration practice today, whereby artists are exploring digital sculpting techniques to represent hard to reach cavities, and create models of minute anatomy.

Sawdon Smith has tattooed his body to draw the internal outwards, to mark his skin for representing the organs beneath. The tattoo machine is here utilised as a medical illustration tool, to map the body and provide a surface that can be scientifically examined. The machine's needle punctures the skin, permanently marking it with a visual reminder of the body's limited temporality. We all made from flesh, yet we forget about the blood and guts beneath. Sometimes we just need a little reminder, and Sawdon Smith's work shockingly prompts us to reconsider our own anatomy. □

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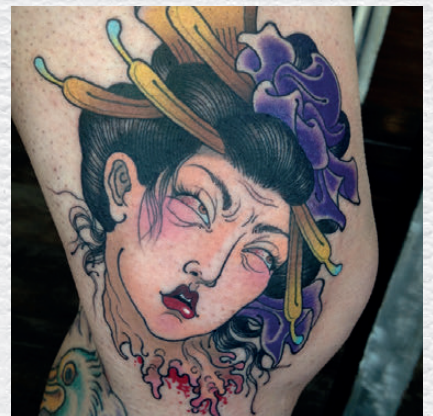
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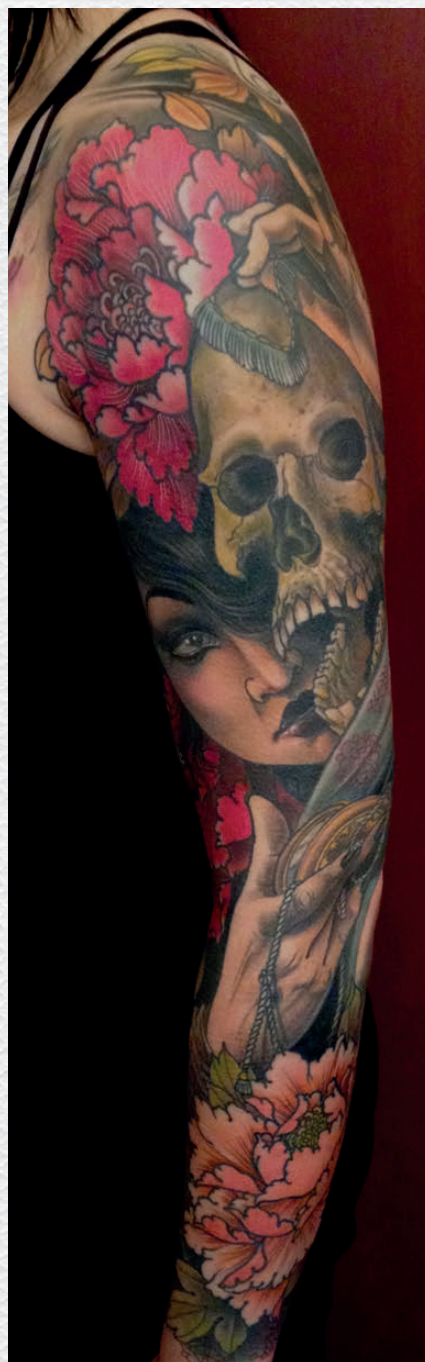
WENDY PHAM

Tattooers like Wendy Pham are so refreshing. They are the kind of people you definitely want to spend some time with to talk about things that matters to them. They're not only open to discussion and friendly, they're also able to find the words to talk about their work which open your perspectives too...



WORDS: PASCAL BAGOT · IMAGES: WENDY PHAM

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OUR BOOTH WAS NEXT TO SHIGE. I DIDN'T KNOW WHO HE WAS, OR HOW IMPORTANT HE WAS IN THE INDUSTRY

These artists know where they are going and you quickly get this feeling they have the determination required to go all the way. At 30 years old, it's even more impressive and Wendy Pham is the consummate professional. She has already been tattooing for ten years and she's now running her own shop in Berlin—the Taiko Gallery. Passionate, humble, open-minded and productive, Wendy is also very talented. Someone you should keep a

really close eye on in the future. Let's see what the fuss is about:

HOW DID YOU FIRST CONNECT TO TATTOOING?

I was 15, still in Australia, and my friend was getting a bellybutton piercing at a tattoo studio in Melbourne. I thought all the flash on the walls was really cool. I was into drawing a lot, so I asked about how to become a tattoo artist. There was a woman there who gave me some tips, and wanted

me to show her some of my drawings. I worked very hard for weeks, drawing all the time after school, and eventually she opened her own shop and I became her apprentice. The first time I ever really saw tattoos was on music videos, I saw one video of Linkin Park, and the guy had lots of tattoos, I knew then I wanted some. But it was when my friend got her bellybutton pierced that I realised I wanted to make tattoos for a job. It was very lucky that I knew what I wanted early on, and pursued it.



JUST LIKE THE CARTOONS I WATCHED AS A CHILD, I WANTED EVERY CHARACTER TO HAVE A PURPOSE, OR A LIFE BEHIND IT

So when I was 16, I started the apprenticeship, I mainly cleaned the shop, sat at the front desk to talk to customers and do small drawings for my boss. I did this for about a year and a half, still going to school, and working on the weekend. Then I got to do small free tattoos on my bosses friends for practice. I also tattooed pig skins from the butchers, and fruits.

IS DRAWING SOMETHING THAT FOUND ITS WAY TO YOU EARLY ON?

Ever since I was a small child I loved drawing. My dad was really great at drawing, and would replicate pictures of animals and do paintings for Lunar New Year for my mum to put in the house. I was inspired by him. He never worked as an artist professionally, because he could see no good income from it. He worked in a jacket factory. I loved cartoons, just like every kid, and would copy pictures of my favourite cartoons, like Sailor Moon—so Japanese but more 1980's-1990's period-

and Disney animations. I guess you learn by copying at the start, then develop your own style from it.

Then I went on to learn to draw professionally when I was 17.

YOU WORK WITH A LOT OF ORIENTAL IMAGERY. WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

The shop I apprenticed in, my boss mainly did Japanese influenced tattoos. So our clients wanted this sort of style, and basically I had to do them, it



**IT'S FUN TO TRY TO CREATE SOMETHING SCARY, BUT BEAUTIFUL...
IT'S CONFUSING TO THE BRAIN**

wasn't something I chose. I explored many different types of styles, but Japanese was what I was the best at I guess, probably because I had to do so much of it. I was very terrible at it to begin with, I didn't know anything about the tradition—I still don't know a lot, but I learnt from my mistakes.

My teacher was not traditional either, so I mainly did custom Japanese style, not traditional style. I didn't stick to the rules of Japanese tattooing—the subjects were changed to my interpretation. I didn't think it was important to stick to non-traditional as I

didn't study it from a Japanese artist and I myself am not Japanese. I felt like it wasn't right for me to pretend I was Japanese, except to pull what I thought looked beautiful into the artwork and use it as an influence.

MORE SPECIFICALLY THEN, JAPANESE ART IS A BIG INFLUENCE IN YOUR WORK, HOW DID YOU GET EXPOSED TO JAPANESE CULTURE?

When I was still an apprentice, I went to a tattoo convention with my boss in Tahiti. Our booth was next to Shige. I didn't know who he was, or how im-

portant he was in the industry. I asked if he had some time to tattoo me, and he did, not knowing how lucky I was at the time. His portfolio amazed me. His style is not traditional, it's his style, but representing Japanese stories and characters. I wanted to be like him.

HOW INSPIRING IS JAPANESE ART FOR YOU?

It has many stories behind it. Everything means something. I try to do the same with my own work: to give a story behind every piece. Some of course I do just for fun and without meaning,



AS AN ARTIST, DOING ONE THING AND DOING ONLY WHAT YOU'RE GOOD AT DOESN'T HELP YOU GROW OR BECOME A BETTER ARTIST

but just like the cartoons I watched as a child, I wanted every character to have a purpose, or a life behind it.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR INFLUENCES?

Goujin Ishihara I like because his style is not traditional, it's a little more realistic, and he mainly did movie posters and horror style, which I really like. I saw his work while browsing random things on the internet when I was a teenager. Again the stories and the life behind these characters really inspired me. His paintings for movies are very creepy—

his imagination and how he paints these characters is really inspiring. Kyosai is a huge influence on the tattoo community. Again it's the characters and stories that make people excited and want to copy them. I never copied any of the pieces exactly, I always try to make my own version. I don't see a point in copying, it's already been done by that artist. You don't need to replicate it, but it's important to be influenced and grow from your influences.

Another artist I love is Miyazaki, also not a tattoo artist, but the animations are so beautiful and creative.

YOUR WORK SPANS FROM CUTE THINGS TO HORROR INSPIRED MOTIFS, IS IT A CONSCIOUS BALANCE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

If I do too much of one thing it drives me crazy. I like to have a bit of everything to feel complete and happy. I get bored if I stick to one style or one thing. I need to challenge myself all the time, and try things that I'm not good at. I like experimenting with how illustrations can make you feel. Sometimes it's great to make something really cute and make people smile but sometimes I just want to get weird and



AS AN ARTIST YOU SHOULD NEVER BE COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH YOUR WORK. FEELING LIKE YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT PUSHES YOU TO WORK HARDER.

creepy with my designs and make the viewer uncomfortable. It's fun to try to create something scary, but beautiful... it's confusing to the brain. I don't like comfort. I like that feeling of intrigue when it comes to art. Perfection and joy all the time is boring. I think as humans we like some discomfort as well. I guess that's why balance is so important in every part of life.

YOU DON'T ONLY STICK TO THE ORIENTAL STYLE BUT EXPERIMENT IN OTHER FIELDS. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU?

As an artist, doing one thing and doing only what you're good at doesn't help you grow or become a better artist. I see many artists trap themselves this

way. It's like cooking. If you only have the same ingredients, then yes, you will be really good at cooking that one thing. Eventually you and everybody else will grow tired of this thing. If you try new things, you open your mind to more possibilities and excitement for yourself and others experiencing it. A lot of people worry about consistency in their art. So they can become famous for that consistent work. Art for me is not about being famous, it's about growing for my own sake. As an artist you should never be completely satisfied with your work. Feeling like you're not good enough is important because it pushes you to work harder.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE CUSTOMERS TO

PUSH YOU FORWARD?

In tattooing, obviously people see your work and they want something they know you're good at, so you end up doing a lot of the same thing over and over because that's what the client wants. It's not a bad thing, it's just the way it is. I get a lot of clients who are really open minded though and that's when I have the most fun with a piece. I have the most freedom when I paint things for myself, because no one is there to direct me. Every tattoo artist should paint or do something outside of tattooing, to remind you that art is not all about technique or perfection. When you paint you can get messy and experiment and make mistakes, which you can't with tattooing. ▣

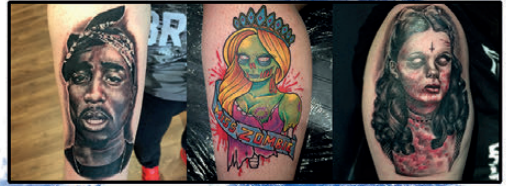


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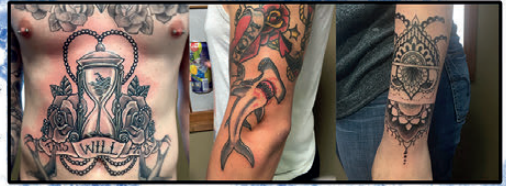


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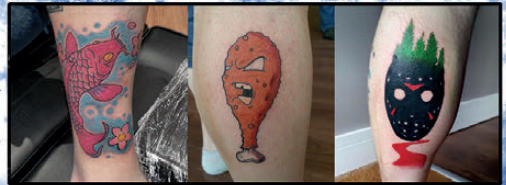
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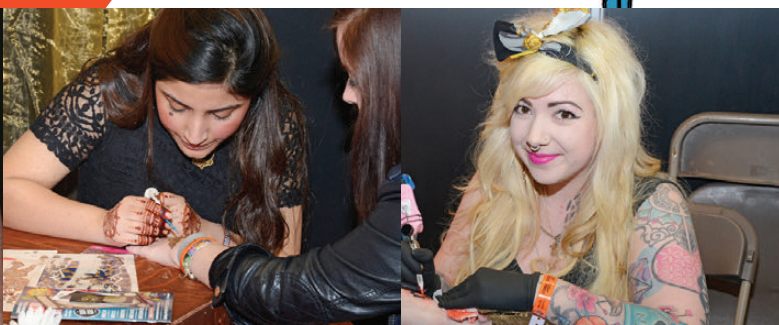
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The Transformative Tattoo

I am what some call an “over-planner”. Preparation is extremely fulfilling to me, it makes me breathe easy. If I can plan a schedule down to the minute, I will. This is not the most popular viewpoint to have in the tattoo and arts community, causing me to typically be viewed as an uptight parent by my peers.

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. In this second part of the series from *The Serpents Of Bienville*, Sean digs deep to share his experiences:



I don't mean to do it, but my brain fills with obscure ideas, and the best way to get them done is to write them in the book of life... I mean, my schedule. Those spur of the moment occasions, those are the ones that end up throwing a much needed wrench in my system. This was one of those times.

Through the years working tattoo conventions, I find that I enjoy booking my schedule ahead of time, having my drawings ready, and being first on the convention floor. Most conventions you can find me on the floor early in the morning, slowly setting up, enjoying the quiet before the chaos. This was exactly where I was, years ago, when I first met London Reese. I was setting up, fighting the usual anxiety from a spinning brain. My head was in a bit of a panic because my appointment had just canceled last minute, throwing my schedule off. Out of the corner of my eye I saw someone approaching. I took my deep breaths, preparing to hopefully not sound completely insane, smiled and shook his hand. London introduced himself, mentioned a few mutual friends, and then asked about possibly getting tattooed. The more we spoke, I found those commonalities that make you feel like you already know the other's personality. We spoke at length about punk rock, hardcore, and skateboarding, but it was in the subject of the tattoo he wanted to get that I truly found a common bond with him. London's mother had found herself in the path of addiction, and it was tearing her apart, along with her family. He wanted to get a



piece to signify this pain, yet to give hope that she will get through it, and that they will come together in her overcoming of addiction, and embracing a new sobriety.

The effects of addiction were an all too real thing for me growing up. My mother also struggled with addiction, along with manic depression, and I knew that feeling London spoke of, but I wasn't in the same positive place as he was, I was still angry and resentful. My mother and I barely spoke at that point in my life. He and I had so much in common, but I just couldn't understand where this hope he had came from. The tattoo he wanted was



THE TATTOO HE WANTED WAS A WOMAN ON HIS NECK, LOOKING UPWARD, WITH TEARS IN HER EYES. THAT HOPEFUL GLANCE UPWARD AT HIM, THAT WAS THE POWER IN THAT PIECE.

a woman on his neck, looking upward, with tears in her eyes. That hopeful glance upward at him, that was the power in that piece. As we spoke, I began to see that this hope came from an unconditional love for a mother in need. We set up the appointment, and sometime later he came by the booth and got tattooed. The conversation was enlightening and encouraging. That tattoo, that day, changed my life forever.

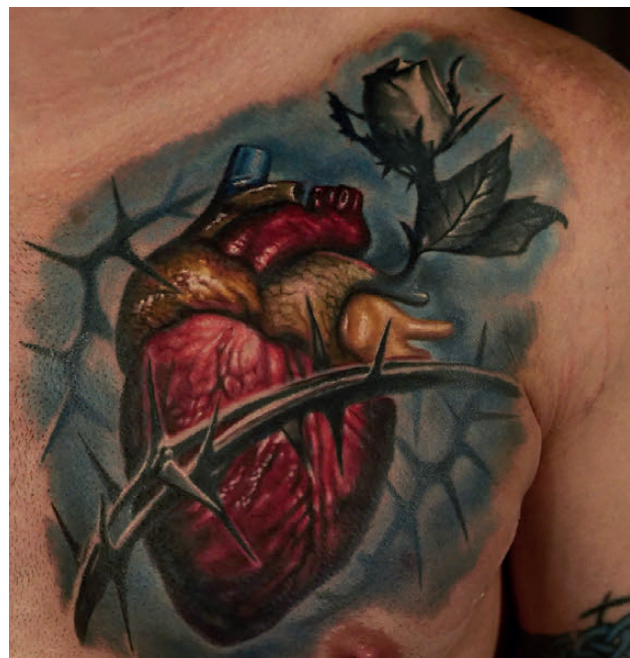
I saw London again at that same convention the next year. As we spoke about his tattoo, he told me about his strong, positive feelings towards the piece, especially be-

thankfully last for years to come. He very generously gave me a painting that he did for me as thanks, a painting that still hangs in my home to this day. Every time I look at that, I am reminded of that hope, that unconditional love.

When I started coming up with the idea's for the "Transformative Tattoo" series, I knew London was the first person I wanted to talk to. We started an email conversation back and forth, reconnecting, and finally delving into the topic of that tattoo I had done on his neck years ago, and what it means to him today.

London:

cause of his mother's current sobriety. She had made it out of the storm, and was working at a sobriety that would



“My mom and I have always had a special relationship. She is one of the smartest and kindest women I know. We bumped heads through my formative teenage years, quite a bit, but I was shrouded with love and support. My parents urged me to pursue art and I even went to study fine art at California Baptist University, where she worked. I always knew I wanted to get a tattoo for her. I could never decide what that was, though. I assumed it would come to me someday so I let it stew.

My mom and I lost her mother (my dear grandmother, whom I have two tattoos for) to complications related to Alzheimer’s. It broke us all, but mostly my mom. She began drinking heavily, and due to other health issues, it became a problem rather quickly. It was a mess for a couple years. Interventions from myself and the family weren’t helping. It was difficult to grasp that the strongest woman I know could be dragged down so swiftly. Her addiction finally came to a halt when she hit her proverbial ‘rock bottom’. She reached out to me and my wife and we helped her. She went to a recovery program and got the support she needed from everyone around her. She has been sober for over five years and doing wonderfully. She’s healthy and positive and back to the strong, beautiful woman I know and love and respect. Upon her recovery, we grew very close.

I ALWAYS KNEW I WANTED TO GET A TATTOO FOR HER. I COULD NEVER DECIDE WHAT THAT WAS, THOUGH. I ASSUMED IT WOULD COME TO ME SOMEDAY SO I LET IT STEW

It finally hit me. I wanted a tattoo that would represent her journey and transformation and my upmost admiration for her. I knew I wanted this important piece on my neck, an important piece of real estate. I planned to wait to find the right artist for this project.

“It wasn’t too long, before I found myself at the Detroit Motor City convention and met with the incomparable Sean Herman. I have wanted a tattoo from him since I was a kid, before I even began my tattoo career. I explained my ideas to him, and my mother’s journey. We



connected instantly. He immediately made it clear, to me, that he was the artist for the job. He took my ideas and designed something perfect, that same evening. We did it that Sunday, at the convention. We talked about our moms, music, tattoos, and art. It was the best tattoo experience of my life and it is, still, my favourite tattoo on my body. I told my mom, a year later, what it was and what it meant to me. She loves it and is very proud of it and that is something pretty sacred to me. “

Reading London's email, I began to think about how I couldn't imagine my mother any other way. I grew up with her struggles with mental stability and addiction, causing me to never really have that foundation of how she 'used' to be before all of this. I couldn't imagine having a different image of her to compare to, an image to feel like all was lost. That loss can be painful and all too common in this day and age, but his hope is a strength that changed my life. After many years I finally accepted

that all that mattered was that this woman that gave birth to me knew that I loved her. We still struggled with her addictions, but that love became the focus of my time with her, making sure she knew she was loved, and that she wasn't alone.

At 7:45am, on April 20th 2016,

EVEN THOUGH MY STORY AND LONDON'S ENDED VERY DIFFERENTLY, OUR FUTURE AND FOCUS REMAINED THE SAME, THE LOVE OF FAMILY, TATTOOING, AND A POSITIVE CHANGE



as I held her hand, my mother passed away, and no longer had to struggle with this world. We played the sound of birds singing, mornings were her favourite, and we held her hand, telling her she was loved. Addiction, cancer, and a difficult life had taken a toll, and her body couldn't keep up once an infection occurred. That love for her became my strength as we went through the funeral and the following weeks of mourning. I am still mourning, but I am so grateful that I set my resentments aside when I did. Even though my story and London's ended very differently, our future and focus remained the same, the love of family, tattooing, and a positive change. Hope in love is what creates growth and change.

Through these emails, I learned about how the birth of his daughter changed his life, and found us both talking about that amazing experience of getting to raise a daughter. London began to speak about where he found his attitude about tattooing today, years after our experience,

"...I just want to create cool tattoos for my clients. I always want to change things up. I try all sorts of mediums of art and styles of tattooing so I feel like

THAT TATTOO, THAT DAY, CHANGED MY LIFE FOREVER

I'm constantly learning and pushing myself. I tried the reality television tattoo competition thing because that was different—in the beginning—and I thought it could be cool. I think the shows are pretty ridiculous, but I tried to do good tattoos and show the world what those look like."

I was excited to see that after London won a tattoo competition on television, he used his winnings to start a website that's purpose is to spotlight and bring attention to other artists, tattooists, and musicians. Prophets and Poets (www.prophetsandpoets.com) started in 2011 and has grown into a thriving art community, focused on bringing positive attention to a world and subculture that is foreign to many.

When speaking about Prophets and Poets and new projects with the site, London says,

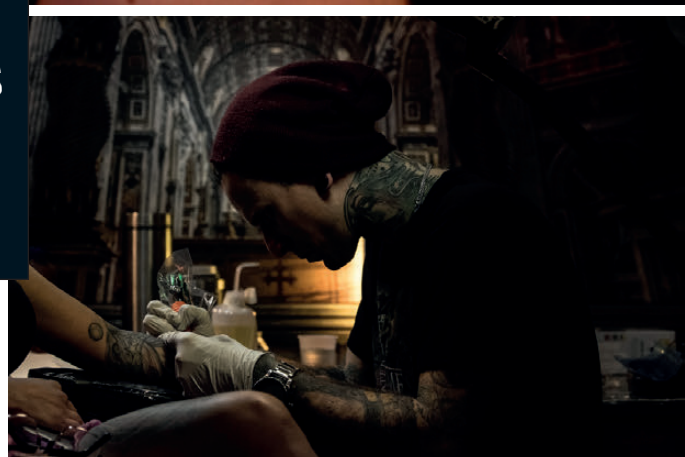
"A lot of my time outside of my daily work goes toward my new documentary style web series where I tattoo



I TRIED THE REALITY TELEVISION TATTOO COMPETITION THING BECAUSE THAT WAS DIFFERENT... BUT I TRIED TO DO GOOD TATTOOS AND SHOW THE WORLD WHAT THOSE LOOK LIKE

some of my clients who are well known musicians, athletes, or celebrities. It's called 'Backstage Ink'. We go behind the scenes with them and learn about their lives, their jobs, their day to day routines, their current projects, and I get to tattoo them and ask them why they get tattoos and what they mean to them. It's a pretty special experience that I get to have and I'm stoked to share it with the world. I'm working on a few more right now so stay tuned for sure."

You can learn more about London, his work, and how to get tattooed by him by visiting him



at www.theartoflondon.com.

I am so grateful to get to create tattoos on people, and I find that these clients change my life. After many years tattooing, I realise that I am the one who leaves changed with every tattoo I do. Another facet of the "Transformative Tattoo". ▣

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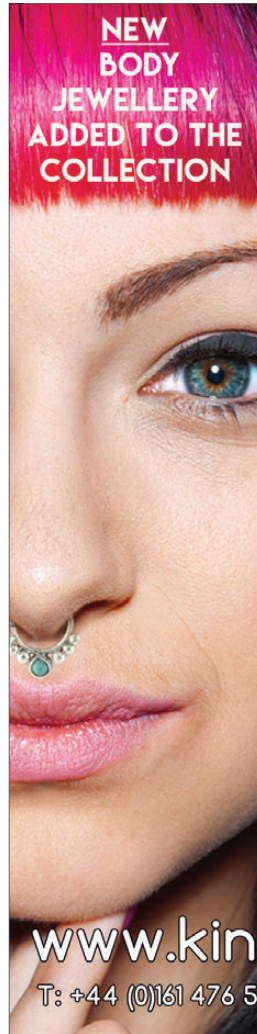


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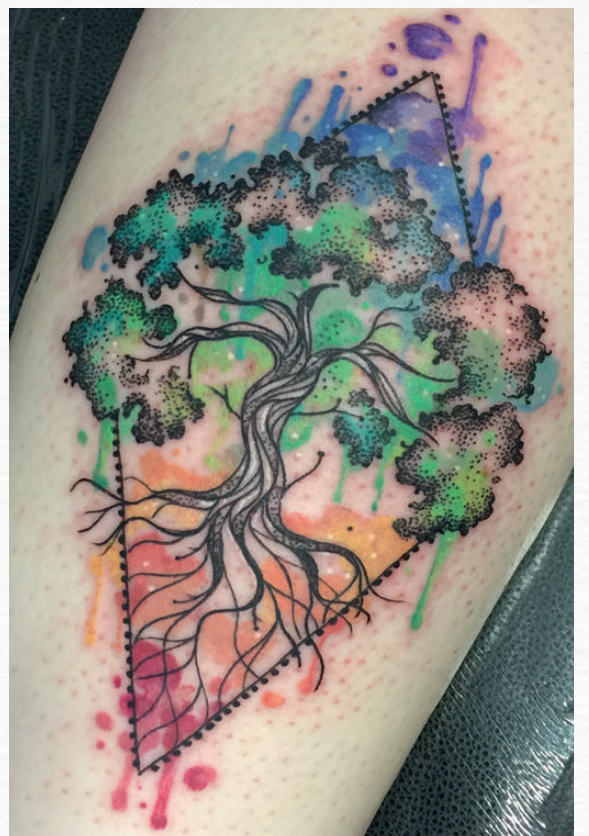
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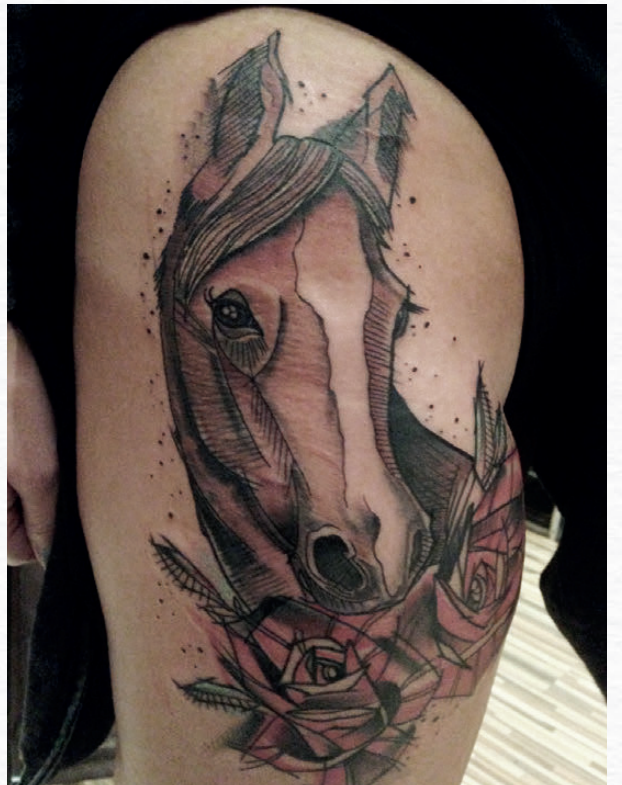


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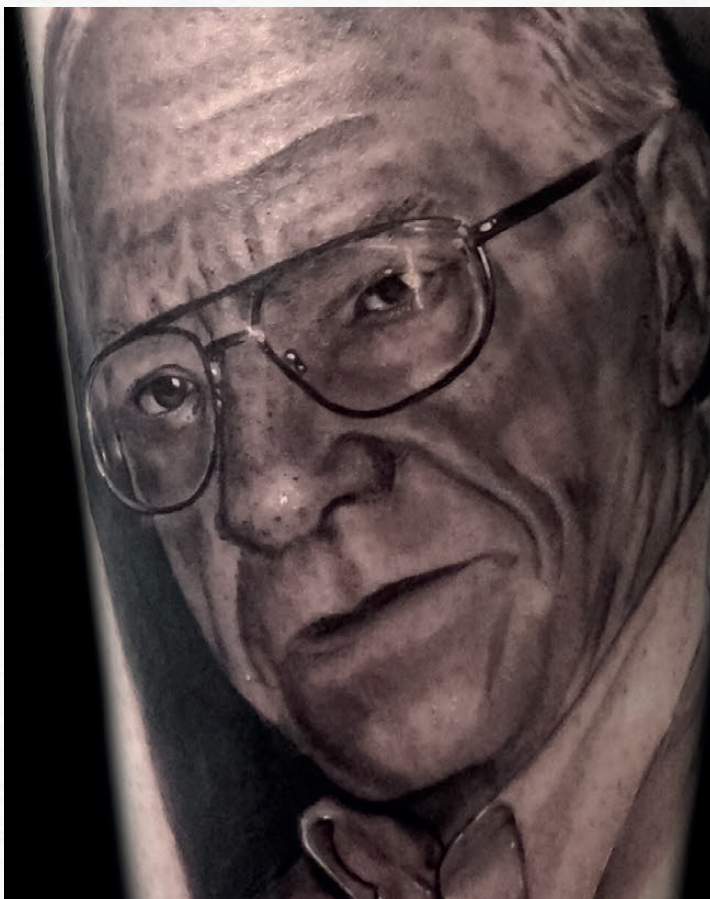



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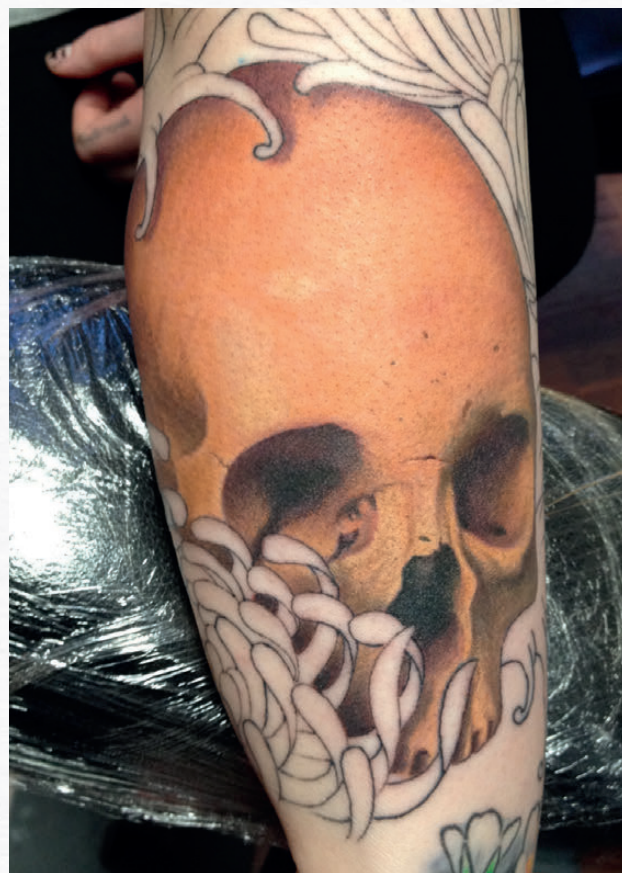
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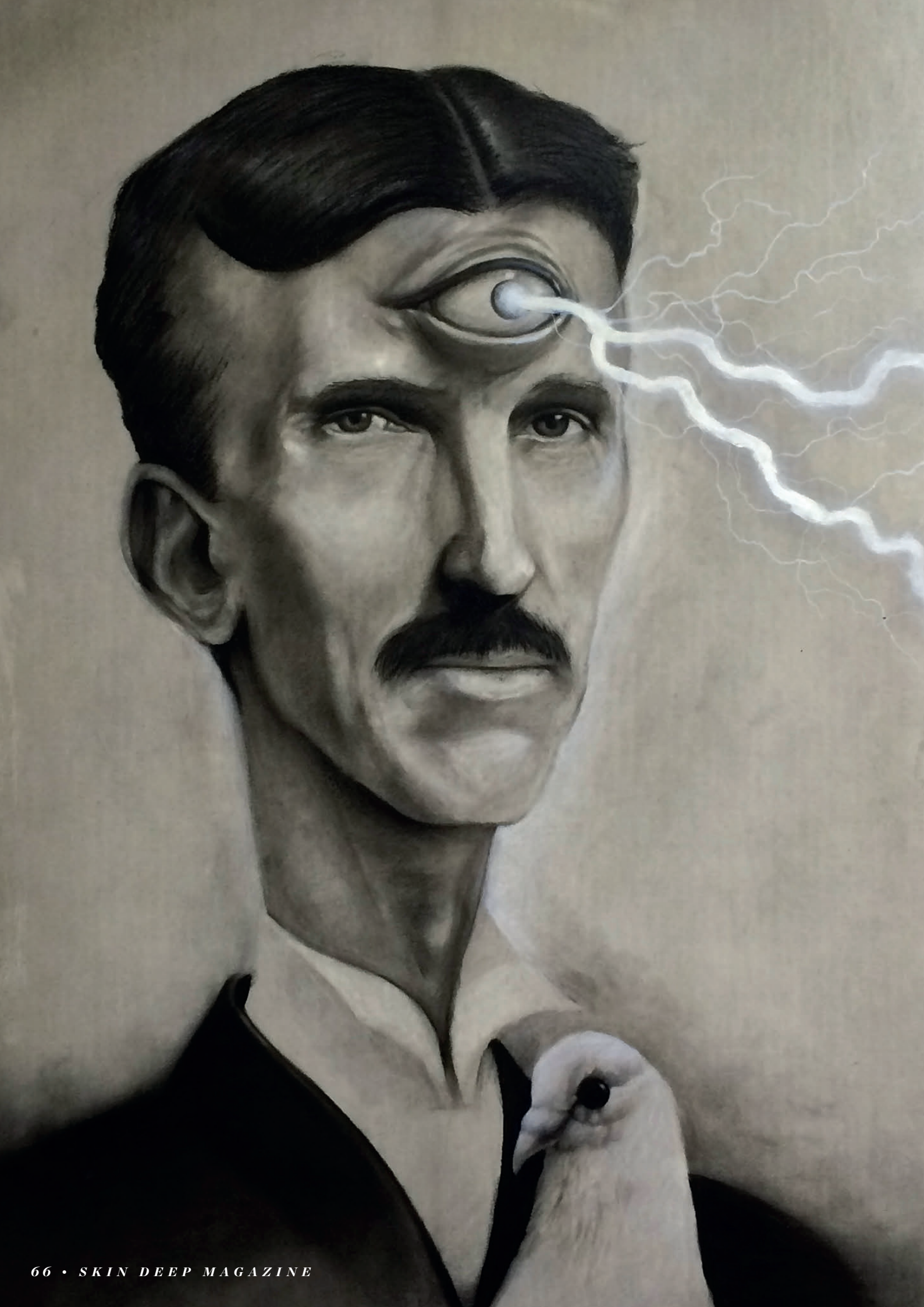


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Picasso - The new Picasso

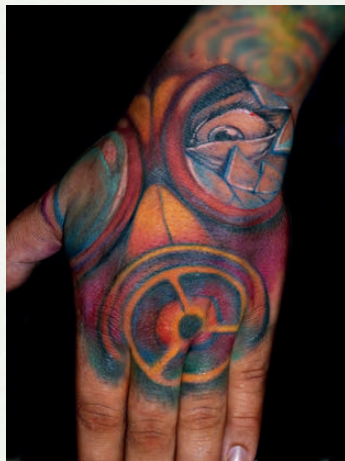
An Ink Master alum who splits his time between three of America's finest tattoo cities, is equally passionate about fine art and music and has inked Rita Ora live on TV is just the kind of artist we like to interrogate... err, interview. And with a name like Picasso, how could he be anything but fascinating?

Exposed to tattoos from a young age, Picasso Dular fondly remembers the days when his parents were in a band and he was “surrounded by a lot of cool musicians with cool tattoos. A lot of it was traditional work or old military tattoos,” he recalls. “But I didn’t become truly interested in tattoos until later in life, in the late ‘90s. It was around my dancing years when I finally got my first tattoo at 19.”

“The guy used a homemade machine—total jailhouse style—and the experience was interesting. It hurt so bad!” he laughs.

“It was then that I started to notice how tattoos were becoming a bigger art form. I began to pick up tattoo magazines and, being an artist, it piqued my interest. I thought I was going to go the comic book and animation route—I never saw myself as a tattooer,” he admits. “Then I got into music and wanted to follow in my parents’ footsteps.”

“But holding down a normal job just wasn’t working. I was too much of a free-thinker and just irresponsible in my early twenties,” he continues. “Since I was always drawing, someone told me I should look into tattooing. I really didn’t think I could do it at first, but



after getting turned away from comic houses and animation studios because of my lack of education, I gave it a shot.”

Deciding to transition from collector to creator, Dular soon discovered that tattooing catered perfectly to his nomadic personality. “I’m the kind of person that likes to be behind the wheel,” he explains. “I can only speculate for so long before I want to feel that rush from creating. After getting a couple of really bad tattoos, both of which I tried to design—yes, they were tribal!—I really got into how free most

of the artists were.”

“Artists were like bandits or pirates of art, living outside normal society. It wasn’t as accepted as it is now and me being the nomad that I am, I thought it would fit me and that maybe it was the thing I needed in my life to ground me.”

His mind made up, locking down an apprenticeship

I thought I was going to go the comic book and animation route — I never saw myself as a tattooer



The hardest part of becoming a professional tattoo artist is sticking it out during the times when you're not making money

**Picasso Dular On...
Tattooing Rita
Ora Live On MTV**

I was working at Sacred Tattoo in New York and they asked the shop if they had any available artists. I was like, 'Hey, I'll do it!' and that was my first time getting a little taste of tattooing on television. She was really cool and it was an exciting experience!

soon proved to be the real challenge. "At the time, tattooing was still in its transition phase from biker tattoos and street shops to a new super expressive thing," he recalls. "I think a lot of guys were intimidated by someone new who was trying to do something artistic and expressive and they just didn't want a new artist to come in and learn what they knew and take business away from them. At least, that's how it seemed at the time."

"It was really hard getting a break in Chicago, but I stayed persistent. Then I met Derek Mullins and he wanted to teach me, but the shop he was at was like, 'It's winter, it's slow,

we don't need any extra help!', so I got to apprentice there for one day!" he laughs.

"Months passed and I met Rob Hixon in the Flat Iron Building in pre-gentrified Wicker Park when it was still a little sketch but artsy. He was in this little one-man shop surrounded by three floors of visual artists. I even remember Kim Saigh and Patrick Cornolo working in the same building. When I saw all three of their styles of tattooing, I was blown away and really wanted to be a part of this culture."

Soon, he found his persistence paying off and his wish coming true. "I popped my head into Rob's shop, told him my deal and came by to watch him work," he remembers. "I loved that he would do these amazing, super clean, elegant traditional designs, but also oil paint and draw all the time. He had a no-bullshit kind of approach to practical application and dealing with clients and man, I was really digging it."



“After watching him work for a couple of months, he took me under his wing and showed me everything, from preparing needles to how to talk to clients to how to build machines. I never was that great at the machine building, though,” he laughs. “He made my first set of machines and I used them all the way up until I switched to rotary ten years later!”

Taking a year off in the middle of his apprenticeship to tour with his band, Crash Poet, Dular used his time away from tattooing to “figure out if it was really what I wanted to do when I got back.” As you’ve probably figured out by now, he decided that yes, it definitely was, despite the obstacles that kept popping up along the way.

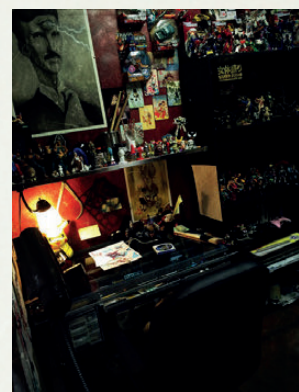
“The hardest part of becoming a professional tattoo artist is sticking it out during the times when you’re not making money and learning the foundation and fundamentals,” he says. What’s more, “almost every other artist is against you coming in with your wild ideas and crazy art, which really isn’t that great at the start, but I wasn’t going to let anything get in my way. It was a very tough community to become a part of” but worth every struggle.

“I always remember Derek telling me when I first met him that if I really wanted to learn,

I needed to either go all in or just walk away,” so that’s exactly what he did. “The only thing I had to sacrifice was my indecisiveness and really commit to doing this. In between my music and working, I focused on my art more and left my waiting job behind to tattoo. I’m so glad I did!”

Under The Spotlight

Earlier this year, Dular had the chance to compete on Ink Master Season 7, but his reality TV journey began way before then. In fact, it required almost as much determination as his career. Answering the New York casting call for the very first season, Dular “went down and did the live audition and got a second audition, but I didn’t get the third callback. From there on out, I kept getting emails whenever they were casting, so every year I sent in the email and/or went in for auditions. I had a couple of Skype interviews,



Picasso Dular On... Traveling The World

I’m kind of looking around for a place to settle down, but I really want to see Europe and other countries first. I’m in the process of using Ink Master as a catalyst for more opportunities and to grow as an artist and do more conventions while finding myself in the process.

The only thing I had to sacrifice was my indecisiveness



For most of my career I had stayed away from the popularity contest and I didn't even do conventions until a few years ago



**Picasso Dular
On... The Perfect
California Day**

I'd take you to Animal in Los Angeles to eat because that place is bomb! I really like the hotels in Laguna Beach, so I would get a room that faces the beach and paint with a bottle of wine. Or maybe drive along the coast, blasting music and hitting up some of the cool medicinal spots for that fine California green.

but nothing ever really happened."

"I gave up and then for fun I tried again for Season 6 and it almost looked like I was going to get a shot, then boom! Silence. Nada. I was convinced it wasn't going to happen." Fast forward a few months and when "I came across an old email about Ink Master, I was like, 'I'm going to try one more time and if I don't get it, I'm done'. Then it happened—everything just lined up and I got my shot."

"I definitely had some reservations about putting myself out there on television," he adds. "I was starting to question if this was the right thing. Even though I had tried to audition a few times and it was what I had asked for, I wondered if I was going to come out of this whole televised tattoo thing looking like an idiot. Or if my peers would consider me to be a part of the machine that's changing the way people see tattoos and tattooers."

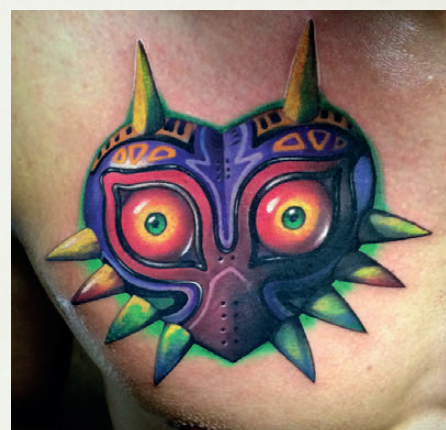
Struggling with his inner self, Dular went back and forth on the decision. "For most of my career I had stayed away from the popu-

larity contest and I didn't even do conventions until a few years ago. To me, it's all about clients and the outcome of the tattoos—no distractions, no ego, no bullshit—and having your client trust you to mark them permanently and safely," he declares.

Finally taking the jump, Dular took part in Ink Master and experienced his fair share of small screen magic, and deception. "The show had a lot of elements that actually worked against you and I was not used to that at all," he reveals. "What surprised me the most was the lack of freedom. I'm not used to being told what to do so much and it irks me when I lose control over what I can do."

Despite that, he did walk away with some invaluable lessons. "I learned that I have a lot of work to do on myself as a person and an artist and a tattooer," he starts. "Even after everything I think I know and have learned, I can't get comfortable. I need to constantly absorb and learn and push even harder, but also not forget my fundamentals and where it all came from. I really need to find my niche and become a shark with a freakin' laser beam attached to my head!" he laughs.

Which is why he, somewhat surprisingly, would totally jump on board for another season. "I kind of see now how it works and where I could have pulled back and had fun with it,"



he says. “I think I didn’t really have as much fun as I should have. I needed to be like water and I feel like I was the only thing standing in my own way. I got caught up in my own head, so next time I would silence those voices and just do what I do naturally. Laser shark!”

Return To Reality

Splitting his time between Brooklyn, Orange County and Chicago, Dular admits the nomadic lifestyle doesn’t work for everyone, but he can’t imagine pursuing his love of tattooing any other way.

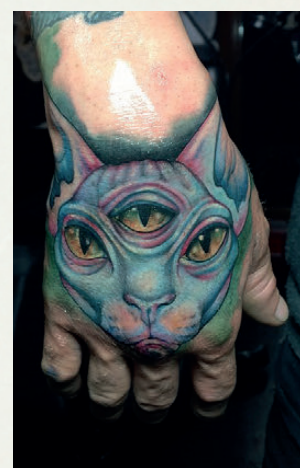
“I don’t necessarily think it’s the best thing to do for some artists—it works best to have roots somewhere, so people can find you—but I have always been a man on the go. I like the change of scenery and I love doing work in other places, living on the road and meeting new artists. It keeps me inspired and it’s good for me to be able to travel between

these three cities. When one place is slow, I just change it up.”

“I do keep an eye open and an ear to the ground on how things are changing and what everyone’s getting, but I like working with real collectors,” he says when asked how the cities compare in terms of tattoo trends. “Each one is different in what style most people are getting—I may see more black and grey in one and more colour in another—but it’s all the same thing, no matter where you go.”

The only real difference “is the way some value the artist or the tattoo more or less than others. In some places, customers let you go nuts and do what you want as an artist. In other places, they don’t care about who you are or what you’ve done, they just want a good tattoo and can’t afford the luxury of a huge piece.”

Despite the constant travel, Dular does have a home base at California’s Vatican Tat-





I really need to find my niche and become a shark with a freakin' laser beam attached to my head!

too. "I met London Reese in New York when he did a guest spot at Sacred Tattoo and he was the coolest guy! We really hit it off, so he invited me to California for a guest spot," he explains. "I ended up getting a new car and driving across the country from New York to California and when I got there, the shop was too cool. All the artists were really down-to-earth and the environment was very conducive for art and I didn't want to leave. I decided to stay and they took me in!"

Outsider Influences

Looking at his personal collection of ink, the first piece Dular points out is "my half sleeve done by my mentor Rob Hixon. He had this painting of a geisha walking through a tomato field and one was alive and angry and I would stare at it all the time. It was the story of me throughout my entire apprenticeship and I really wanted it, but it was already spoken for, so



I thought, 'How about a tattoo version?' That's when he gave me my first colour tattoo."

"My second favourite is my awful, self-designed back tribal raven. Not because of the shitty design—yes, I was that client who was like, 'I drew this myself and I want it as is'—but because it was my first tattoo done in a real shop by Derek Mullins. He traded me for a piece of my art and that blew me away. That's when I realized how awesome it was that you can barter in the tattoo world."

"When I'm not tattooing, I really like to paint and make music—anything creative," continues Dular. "I'm constantly working on something—I can't turn it off—but yeah, music is my other lover and when I'm not being an art nerd or geeking out on anime and video games, I'm making some kind of music."

With his clientele growing and reputation solidified, Dular now hopes to be able to devote some time to his other passions. "I want to finally make that solo album I've been putting off for years," he says, looking to the year ahead. "And to get deeper in my painting and branch off into developing my graphic novels and animation ideas. Then maybe take a break from art and tour in a band. The world is mine and I plan to explore it while being inspired by everyone I meet!" □



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CITIES OF THE DEAD: COPENHAGEN

Following the first piece on the magical city of Florence last issue, Cities of the Dead continues here with the boss diving into his notebooks to douse you with his impressions of Copenhagen. Accompanied by work from three of his favourite artists in the city, if you ever go, we're not sure you'll see it quite the same way as he does, but still...

Falling in love can be so very hard on the knees. When you fall for a city however, you can be looking down the barrel of a lifetime of surgery to put yourself back on the road. I didn't fall for it at first sight. I had enough respect for myself to wait for the cab ride from the airport to be over, but I still can't get my fingers inside the noose that it threw around my neck the second I slammed the door behind me.

Inspired by the multitude of Scandinavian crime thrillers I've been driving myself through in recent years, Copenhagen is my first city in this neck of the woods and as I've already indicated, I love it. I may say it again a few more times before we are through. It has to be said though, that I didn't reckon on this wind that's blowing directly in from Siberia. I have to break my own 'travel light' rules immediately to find a shop that will garnish me with a scarf, gloves and a hat. I know this is the right decision to make because on the canal next to my hotel, there are ice blocks the size of small cars floating by. Closer inspection will reveal them to



contain the remains of small animals from the jurassic era.

My hotel is just about perfect—a converted warehouse called The Admiral that sits on the waterfront. My room is small and for once, I am glad of the air conditioning pumping artificial heat into the place. There is enough room for the bed and myself, but if anybody else wanted to come in, it would officially be a crush. Satisfied that there is nothing else to said about this, I hit the road.

I have come to learn that of the many things people tell you to visit when you announce you're about to visit somewhere, are nothing but laziness. The Little Mermaid is a great example of this.

“I hope you're going to see The Little Mermaid...”

It's not top of my list but I'm sure I can pass by and see what the Edvard Eriksen was really made of—and there she is. 'Little' is a good description—she is maybe a few feet high and, as bronze tends to do, has turned that horrible shade of dirty green.

As wonderful as Hans Christian Andersen may be, he doesn't need a tiny green statue sitting on a rock as proof



Colin Dale



of life. I'm about to walk away, but as I turn, I find a man with an unruly beard standing directly behind me. He asks me if I have a cigarette and I make a snap judgement that this man is a Good Man. He has that air about him that says he is a watcher too.

"What do you think of her?"

His English is impeccable.

"The Mermaid? She's umm... small. Not what I expected, but then, not a lot of things are when you get close up."

"She looks good for one who has been at war don't you think?"

"War?"

"Yes! War!"

Without prompting, the man begins to tell me some of her history.

Apparently, back in the sixties, her head was sawn off and never recovered. Rather than start a new folk-tale

about a Headless Mermaid (which I may have to write myself now I have heard this), a new head was made for her and reattached to the body. If having your head sawn off is not insult enough, twenty years later, she had her right arm removed by the same means—only this time, the arm was handed in to the authorities. Just a few years after this, she suffered another attempt at decapitation but was left with a non life-threatening seven inch wound to the neck. Fast forward another couple of years and this time, her head comes off again—only for it to be handed in at a television station and once more reattached.

What kind of thinking can make a mermaid who never harmed anybody such a target of hate? In 2003, the forces of evil—still not satisfied—decide that decapitation is not enough and she is blown up using explosives and found some distance away drowning in the harbour. In more recent times, evil found that she could not be killed and so it



Zooki



Tony, Brightside Tattoo

resorted to humiliation as a suitable alternative. She has also had paint tipped on her and had a sex-toy attached to her hand.

That's a pretty exciting life for a statue.

Apparently, there are also some stories lurking that she is not the original statue at all—that one being kept at a secure location by Eriksen's heirs, though the man doesn't know if this true or not.

Sharing my cigarettes freely now, I look out across the water and see her in a totally different light. She is quite beautiful in her own damaged way. Sometimes you need to know the background of somebody to kiss goodbye to your first impressions of them. The man says something else, but I am hardly listening. Inside my head, I have created a scenario in which the never recovered head from *The Little Mermaid* is sitting on a shelf in an apartment somewhere in Paris next to the missing head of Jim Morrison (all will be revealed on that front in the Paris instalment—natch). There is a story to be told here as well, but that might be a tale too off kilter for even me to think it through properly.

Half an hour later I find myself in the city centre proper and find Copenhagen to be clean and relatively quiet for a big city. None of the shops seem particularly desperate in any way to sell you their wares either—they are there if you want them and that's enough. More than any of this,

the people who live here seem to be more than satisfied with their lives. There's no attitude, no pushing, no adrenalin fuelled crisis to get anywhere or be somebody they don't need to be. All of these things have made me feel like I belong and of all the places on earth I have ever been, Copenhagen was not somewhere I expected to feel this.

I drift into a department store called Magasin. I find they sell great coffee as soon as I walk in through the door and I stay for two cups before wandering around inside to reheat myself. Down in the basement, there is a huge international stock of magazines. I browse through some titles I have never heard of and think it would be a real kick to buy a copy of my own magazine here. On doing the math however, I find the cost of it is something like five times the cover price. Further investigation reveals the same is true of all of the magazines. Now I come to think about it, the coffee was pretty expensive too—as was my room and the taxi. I leave the magazine where it is (having seen it something like fifty times already) and finding nothing of value I want to spend a lot of money on, leave the store behind.

One thing I can't leave without doing though is check in with that old rogue Hans Christian Andersen—creator of rather well-known fairy tales but also little known travel writer. Whilst I wouldn't say his travel writing was an influence, it certainly isn't not an influence. There are times when he drifts in and out of what is acceptable—or



Tony, Brightside Tattoo



Zooki



Zooki

maybe expected is a better word—with the end result being work that is far from the norm. He began in his twenties to travel Europe after receiving a “small grant” from the King of Denmark (note to self: don’t forget to send that letter to Elizabeth) journaling and sketching along the way which culminated in *The Diaries Of Hans Christian Andersen*.

Titles were not something he liked to dwell over for too long.

The sketches themselves are historical if nothing else, their subject matter containing scenes that you could drop a fairy tale or two into that’s for sure. Here’s a short sample of the kind of thing he would drop in:

“Went for a short walk in a black jacket, vest and trousers. The farmers probably took me for a cleric, because they stood still and tipped their hats. All of a sudden an old fellow came toward me and fell on his knees; then I got really scared and turned back. This is the first time anyone has knelt in front of me.”

All of which says nothing at all about where he is—he could be anywhere—but that works for me in huge amounts. There are also entire that detail a visit to Bee-

thoven’s grave, Michelangelo’s house and this extract from a visit to a Turkish cemetery (so maybe we are not so different after all):

“We went to the cemetery, which was very extensive. The graves of dervishes have dervish turbans; there are green turbans on the graves of those who themselves, or one of whose forefathers, have been to the Prophet’s grave. We walked so far that we could see the town Chalcedon and the Sea of Marmara. (In Scrutari we saw Ali Pasha’s grave, which had something like a wire birdcage over it and fountains.) Carved in the burial stones by the graves there is one big hole or two small ones for water, so that dogs can quench their thirst — this is a blessing for the dead.”

In many of the pictures I have seen of Hans (we are on first name terms now) he is also wearing a big coat, thus proving that Copenhagen hasn’t changed all that much in the last hundred years. As is right and correct, Copenhagen has not forgotten one of its finest sons—he is everywhere you choose to find him. My favourite memorial to him is the one I sit next to right at this moment and that is the sculpture of him on Hans Christian Andersen Street



Colin Dale

(natch) simply because he looks like Gene Wilder's stylised Willie Wonka.

I learn he also had rooms in Magasin at one point—when it was still the Hotel du Nord—so I return to the fine coffee house inside the department store and sit with my eyes shut and nostrils wide open trying to find even the faintest trace of him to stamp onto my own soul.

•••

During the night, outside in the corridor, there is a man—a German man—walking up and down while talking on his phone. He must be talking to somebody very far away because he's shouting to accommodate the miles like my Grandmother used to whenever I called her up. You can handle such things for a little while but I am not the first to break. Some way along the corridor, I hear a door open

with force and the voice of an Englishman letting the wandering gentleman know where he will need to fish his phone out from if he doesn't go somewhere else to talk.

I look at my watch. It's 3.30am.

When I wake again, it looks glorious outside, but I'm mistaken because despite the sun, it's still damn near freezing. I opt to spend the morning at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. It's something of a walk but no big deal. Most things are within some kind of striking distance here. It seems to be hip to cycle everywhere but I would rather walk.

The Glyptotek is an art gallery with some serious sculptures in the house and it is here I have come for my fill of the dead today. The building itself looks exactly how a gallery should look and has more than its fair share of botany scattered throughout. Unlike many galleries I've



Tony, Brightside Tattoo



Tony, Brightside Tattoo



Tony, Brightside Tattoo

wandered, the Glyptotek is more than welcoming. I don't feel like I need to keep moving along, eager for the next thing. In fact, I am welcome to loiter as long as I wish. Such appears to be the Danish way.

I guess I could have found the ancient dead anywhere in the world if I had looked hard enough, but perhaps I wasn't ready for them until now. These faces that look back at me from the longest time ago tell me just one thing... allow me to explain:

There's a head here set in marble (which is a copy of a bronze original) of Pompeius the Great who was a sworn enemy of Gaius Julius Caesar (yep—that Caesar) and he has exactly the same face as a man I see most mornings when I walk the dog. I don't know the guy's name but his dog is called Henry. Which tells us only one thing. At some unspecified point in time, God/The Gods (whatever takes your fancy) ran out of faces and began to recycle. There are a lot of faces in circulation though, so some from the past have yet to be used.

There's another head in here which I think is called 'Head of a Young Man'. May the Gods have mercy on the soul that finds himself in line for this one though because it looks like a direct reproduction of Abe Sapien from the Hellboy series.

The point being, somebody made the effort to cast these people (important people or otherwise) because they had the time and the motivation to do so. There's a little part of me that says social media in the modern age is society's way of doing the exact same thing. While that may be true and the people of the streets might believe it to be so, it's still like telling Marco Pierre White you're

a chef when the best you can manage is putting boiling water into a plastic cup with a foil lid.

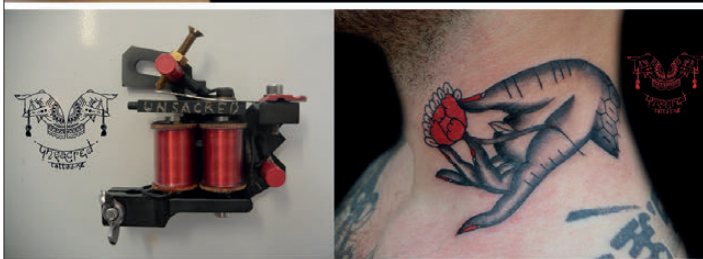
After having my credit card mugged in the Glyptotek restaurant (they have a unique piece of scanning equipment at the cash register that knows exactly how much money you have in your pocket and will leave you with just enough small change to hire a bicycle to get home) I wander the streets some more, this time looking for landmarks I recognise from *Forbrydelsen* (*The Killing*) of which I find many. It says more about me than I would like that I am equally as pleased with these discoveries as I was at looking upon original work from the hands of Rodin inside the Glyptotek.

If all flights were delayed for eternity, I would be quite happy to find myself spending the rest of my days here. A man who truly knows himself could rent an apartment here and lose himself until his dying days in the quiet satisfaction that he has missed nothing of much importance.

Hungry, I track back to my hotel for food and more reading. As I stand from a bench I have been resting on, a dog comes hurtling across the park chasing a ball and takes my legs out from under me. I land horizontally on the grass with my eyes wide open, sucking for air and gazing up at the sky which I immediately recognise as the same one all humans have looked upon, regardless of whose face they have stolen.

A bearded man looms over me, takes the still burning cigarette from my mouth and places it in his own before asking me if I'm hurt and offers me his hand in assistance.

I stay right where I fell, trying to figure out where I have seen his face before. ▣



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BEHIND THE INK

DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

In the issue's instalment of Behind The Ink, Wayne Simmons gets himself tattooed and in the spirit of things—and perhaps for the first time—thought about this one harder than the others. Getting your throat tattooed will do that to a man

I've never thought of myself as being heavily tattooed. Sure, I've a fair bit of ink on my skin; sleeves, chest, stomach and neck are all covered, and there's the odd splash on my legs and hands, too; but I still don't feel like someone your gran might point out on the street.

To be honest, it's just not something I give much thought to at all.

Maybe it's because, like most of you reading this, I've been collecting ink quite gradually, getting used to what I've got before I get any more. There's been time for it all to settle in. My ink has become a part of me and, as the boss once put it, I try to own my tattoos rather than let my tattoos own me. In that sense, then, having "public ink" is something that has crept up on me. When the chest was done, I moved onto the neck, and when both sides of my neck filled up, it only seemed right to get the throat done. There was a space that needed filling. I just needed to find an artist who would be up for the job.

Choosing an artist for any piece can be a complex process. Ask any seasoned ink collector and they'll

tell you that it's not just about the quality of work an artist puts out, whether you like and respect them as a person is just as important. And then there's their skillset: every tattooist can't do every tattoo. A portraitist may struggle with traditional work, and vice versa. And when it comes to the throat, things get even more complex: it's a tricky bit of skin to run a needle over and some artists, including very experienced and talented artists, will just outright refuse to do it.

Enter Joe Lombard. A relatively new face on the tattoo scene, I met Joe a few years back while doing a feature on Picture House Tattoo Studio in Chippenham. Joe had just come out of his apprenticeship there with studio owner Chantale Coady, one which he describes today as quite traditional ("reception work, emails, answering the phone, making tea, washing tubes and the toilet and cleaning down after the tattooist—all unpaid in trade for being taught to tattoo"), and was starting to build a client base. He seemed an unassuming sort of guy, not cocky and hip like some artists you meet, and his work—an inter-



Joe Lombard



esting blend of neo-trad, horror and pop culture—appealed to me right off the bat.

So, the following year, my girlfriend, Rebecca, and I both booked in with Joe at Tattoo Jam. What struck me, even then, was how much care he took to make sure everything was right—from the design to the placement to the execution of our tattoos. Such an approach was exactly what was needed for my throat piece. And the design I had settled on—a traditional diamond—would work brilliantly, I thought, in the style of which Joe excelled. In my mind, he was the right man for the job and, thankfully, he agreed to take the work on.

The day arrived and Rebecca and I trav-

CHOOSING AN ARTIST FOR ANY PIECE CAN BE A COMPLEX PROCESS

elled up to Picture House in Chippenham. We'd been there a year or so prior, adding some finishing touches to our pieces from Jam, and the vibe at the studio was always good. Joe was his usual amicable self. As always, he took his time with everything and, if he was nervous at all about doing the piece, it certainly didn't show during the tattoo. He was relaxed and so I, too, was relaxed. The pain was minimal—nothing like I expected—and despite it taking quite a while to hammer out, I found the whole process very manageable.

Not that there weren't some challenges.

"The throat is a really difficult place," Joe points out. "Getting a stencil on is almost impossible—a lot of the time, we just have to



freehand most of the design. Secondly, it's such a small area to get the machine where you want it to go, and to be able to stretch the skin, too. A lot of the time you end up with one hand in your client's face," he laughs.

And then there's the usual stuff like working with the client's breathing, he goes on to say, and, in the case of the throat, there's the pulse to think about, too. "Also, men with stubble," Joe adds, meaning my good self, of course, "it causes havoc when you're wiping excess ink off as it all gets stuck in the hair and the stubble just rips up the kitchen towel. The

WHEN IT COMES TO THE THROAT, THINGS GET EVEN MORE COMPLEX: IT'S A TRICKY BIT OF SKIN TO RUN A NEEDLE OVER AND SOME ARTISTS, INCLUDING VERY EXPERIENCED AND TALENTED ARTISTS, WILL JUST OUTRIGHT REFUSE TO DO IT

whole process is just awkward and takes time."

Interestingly, it's a process that Joe himself went through not too long before tattooing me—only this time he was at the other end of the needle.

"Yeah, I had some script to fill a gap at the front of my neck," he tells me. "I went to Toni Moore from Forever Bound, Bristol. I have other tattoos by Toni and trust her to create exactly what I want. The studio is very relaxed, which is exactly what you want when getting a painful area like your throat tattooed. I know Toni has a passion for lettering, too, so I



was going to get the best work from her as she's doing what she loves."

For Joe, getting tattooed regularly helps him remain grounded as an artist and improves not just his art, but other parts of his craft, too.

"It gives you a good idea of how people will react because you can feel their pain," he laughs. And then there's the bigger picture of knowing what it's like to live with tattoos, especially when they are in 'public' places. "How people judge you and react to the way you look in the real world," Joe explains. "Knowing that, you can advise clients what it's like to have tattoos in very visible places before they get them done—I think

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they are more likely to listen if you, yourself, are heavily tattooed."

As for my new throat piece? Well, it goes without saying that I am delighted with it. I think every tattoo becomes your favourite right after you have it done but several months in and I'm still loving this one a little more than all the others.

But what does Joe think?

"Yeah I was happy with the tattoo," he says. "I like that I managed to keep it neat on such an awkward

area. Of course, there is also a part of me that is never totally happy with my work: if you are 100% happy you will never try to push yourself, as an artist, and get better. But yeah I'm happy with it," he laughs. Modest to the end. ▣

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I've just got home from the 2016 Tattoo Jam—tired, drained, hungry and sore, but buzzing with the vibrations of an overwhelming experience that will stay with me for a long time

I had been looking forward to Jam this year, as it was my own personal chance to finally meet so many artists in person. After having followed some people's work online for years, I was crazy excited to see them in the flesh. For me, this is what tattoo conventions will always be about.

Let me backtrack, just for a second. A few months ago, I attended a tattoo talk in London, in which a panel debated whether the experience of attending tattoo conventions was losing its magic.

We can now see tattoo work from the other side of the globe through a simple tap on our phones. A never-ending stream of powerful art is now literally at our fingertips 24/7. At this discussion, there was a real concern from artists about the power of technology, and its detrimental impact on the attendance and enjoyment of real-life events.

If we have access to these artists online, what's the in-

centive to visit a tattoo convention? Decades ago, you'd head to an event to discover new tattooists because (apart from buying magazines) there was literally no other way of stumbling upon them.

Is the tattoo convention still an opportunity for the tattoo enthusiast to unearth never-before-seen art?

For me, absolutely.

Whether you're completely new to tattoos or have been working solidly in the industry for decades, I defy anyone to go to a convention and not discover something or someone new.

Our technology is limited... firstly, in terms of what we discover through it. I've stolen this phrase from Mr S. (and now use it regularly), but in today's social media-obsessed society, it's impossible for any of us to 'drown out the noise'.

In other words, there's far too much information be-



Words: Beccy Rimmer. Images: Nisky Connor



Alex Crook



Lincoln Mcknuckles



Damela Degtiar



Liam Jackson

ing force-fed to us—so much so that we are not able to have a true, appreciative, understanding eye on the work of all tattoo artists working today.

No matter how much you check your Instagram daily, you can't possibly explore all of it, especially in an industry like ours, where talent is bubbling away in endless corners of the world.

Secondly, how you're absorbing this information is very limited. Glancing passively at an image on a glass screen for a couple of seconds will never be comparable to standing two feet away from it. Watching a tattoo in progress is invaluable—getting to know the artist, chatting to their client, experiencing the working environment, witness-

ing the entire process of art creation from start to finish. The glass screen doesn't even come close.

There were many individuals I was excited to meet in person this year, and they were all smashing out killer work over the weekend. It was great to see: Maddison Magick, Hollie-May Wall, Josie Sexton, Tropical Dan, Ryan Ousley, Toni Gwilliam, Adam Thomas (congratulations Ad!) Brownie, Lauren Hanson, Ollie Tye, Will Gee, Nicole Cairns and our very own Paula Castle.

Also, physically watching someone like Hannah Rose (Handpoke Hannah) at work supports my theory even more. The atmosphere around the booth of someone creating a hand-poked tattoo, is worlds apart from someone using a tattoo machine—and this atmosphere isn't translatable online.

In fact, every single booth has a different vibe—a creative aura given off by the tattooist's personality, their art, their own practices and knowledge. To walk around and encounter these little pockets of passionate energy is incomparable to any digital experience. At a convention, you get a true feel for who these artists really are, and how they differ from each other.

How can there be anything more valuable than this in helping you make a tattoo decision? Getting tattooed at a convention isn't spontaneous and care-free at all, because you're given the tool of a real-life encounter to aid you in deciding which artist is right for you.

On Sunday, I think myself and tattooist Ryan Ousley were the last ones standing.



Adam Williams



Adam Davey



Alex Crook



Dave Martin



Dominic Curtin



Mindaugas Lisauskas



Wayne Green





Tibor Labancz



Sorin Cacio



Vincent Dexter



Rory Dickie





Simona Borstnar



Simona Borstnar



Rachel Honeywell



Rikki Baird



Saso Dudic

Most of you had gone home and I was finally getting tattooed by an artist that I admired, and had met for the first time this weekend.

On the edge of the entire room, right by the exit, I was in a sweet spot to people-watch, as the crowd headed-off into the setting sun outside. Watching sweaty artists and bleeding but happy tattooed people embrace each other goodbye, I couldn't count on my tattooed hands (and feet) the number of people who said the phrase, "it was so nice to meet you!"

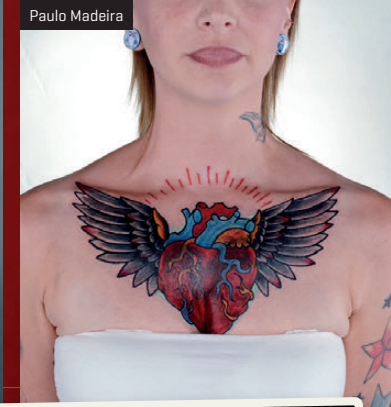
As I left Ryan's booth with a hug, imitating that ubiquitous phrase myself, I knew right then and there how I was going to 'review' this convention.

There's so much I've not had the chance to talk about—endless artists' names, entertainment, our amazing award-winners and event staff. Let's just say that in our expanding world of 'likes', 'comments', 'stories' and 'snapchats', I thought it was an important time for us to not forget about the 'meets'.

The tattoo industry has become something HUGE. You know when you try to think about where the universe ends, and it hurts your head, because the concept of something just growing and growing and having no end is something we can't even begin to grasp in our tiny human heads?

Well, we experience a similar sensation as tattoo writers and events organisers, when it comes to contemplating the amount of exceptional tattooists there are in the world that we want to showcase.

For me, there will never be too many artists, conventions, magazines or blogs... because the industry we work in is jam-packed (pun intended) with limitless talent and an endless energy and passion to-



THE COMPETITIONS

Best Colour/Winner

Liam Jackson at Studio 13

Best Colour/Runner Up:

Gabriel Jamorski at New Ink Order Tattoo

Best Realism/Winner:

Rachel Honeywell at Gothika Tattoo

Best Realism/Runner Up:

Sorin Cacio of Sorin Cacio Tattoos

Best Blackwork/Winner

Katt Robertson of Studio 9

Best Blackwork/Runner Up

Jonny Rayner at Ministry of Ink

Best Oriental/Winner:

Josh Fisher at Factotum

Best Oriental/Runner Up:

Craig Cardwell at Phat's Tattoo Studio

Best Avant Garde/Winner:

Dave Martin at Madhouse Tattoo

Best Avant Garde/Runner Up:

Saso Dudic at Tavci Tattoo

Best Chestpiece/Winner:

Adam Williams at Electric Lady

Best Chestpiece/Runner Up:

Paulo Madeira at Fallen Angels

Best Black & Grey/Winner:

Adam Thomas at Marked One Tattoo

Best Black & Grey/Runner Up:

Ash Lewis at Immaculate Chaos

Best of Saturday:

Liam Jackson at Studio 13

Best of Sunday:

Dave Martin at Madhouse Tattoo

Best of Convention:

Liam Jackson at Studio 13

TATTOO JAM INDUSTRY AWARDS

Best Newcomer

Liam Jackson

Best UK Male

Sonny Mitchell

Best UK Female

Wolfspit

Best International Female

Monika Boo

Best International Male

Robert Borbas



Jay - Portsmouth Ink

wards what we do.

There's always new art to explore, new topics to discuss and new people to meet in person. I think we need the

magic of conventions like Tattoo Jam more than ever.

I've spent a long time preaching about discovering new artists, without letting you know whom I personally discovered for the first time at Tattoo Jam 2016. Well, I was going to end with a list of names for you to research, but have stopped. I was going to tell you to search the #TattooJam hashtag, but have stopped that too. The pictures can do the talking for now.

All I will say now is... see you all for a hug in 2017. ☐

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AN EYE IS UPON YOU

LOVE & NATE

I'm writing this in August, the month of exam results, a time of worry for many parents and teenagers and of nostalgia for those that believe that school days are the best days of our lives

I am not one of those people, I hated high school and to be entirely fair, high school hated me, too. In hindsight, the trajectory of my future as a tattooed lady had already been plotted and I was simply marking time until I could be free, free to chose my own friends and decide my own rules. Mrs Scarborough, an archetypal PE teacher complete with Joan of Arc hairdo and whistle around neck cautioned 15 year old me of the perils of body piercing, implying it was some kind of bodily gateway drug, a precipice off which I would fall into the murky pit of tattoo art. Turns out, she was right.

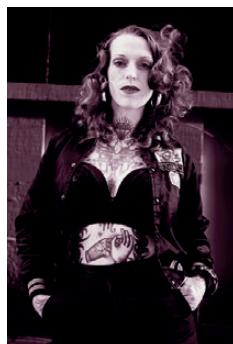
My son, Nate, has never really fitted in at school either. He's got 3 'labels' and has at times suffered such awful, merciless bullying that he was suicidal at 12 and spent the whole of school year 8 or if you prefer, secondary year 2 in old money (That's more like it. Ed.) at home or being taught 4 mornings a week at a hospital school unit. He got really good at playing the guitar that year.

By year 9, he was terrified at the idea of going back into a giant high school and way too far behind academically to sit an entrance exam for one of the grammar schools that weirdly persist in our area. I was concerned enough and desperate enough that I swallowed the bitter pill of my own hypocrisy and sent him to private school. Not a fancy-Royal-family-Oxbridge-boater-hats-and-boarding one, although it was still a lot fancier than anything I'd known growing up, but a school that had been founded in the 1950s as a school for posh failures, boys that had flunked their 11plus. These days they let girls in too.

Nate went from a school of 1500, and a class size of 30 to an entire 11-18 school of less than 300 and a class size of 16. Every staff member knew his name, from dinner lady to headteacher. He could no longer fall through the cracks.



Hans Heggum



PAULA HARDY KANGELOS
DiamondBetty

THE SCHOOL'S MOTTO MORE OR LESS TRANSLATES TO CHUMBAWAMBA'S 'I GET KNOCKED DOWN, BUT I GET UP AGAIN'

The school's motto, a fancy Latin one, more or less translates to Chumbawamba's 'I get knocked down, but I get up again' and they certainly took those words seriously. Not only did Nate manage to stick it out for three years, he also turned up, on time to sit every GCSE he was entered for. More than I managed at the same age. I was too busy hitchhiking around the country following bands on tour, dying my hair green and convincing myself I already knew everything.



HE ONCE STOLE A SMALL BOTTLE OF RUM FROM MY KITCHEN CUPBOARD AND SWIGGED IT DRAMATICALLY, LIKE A 15 YEAR OLD PIRATE, IN A 9AM ENGLISH CLASS

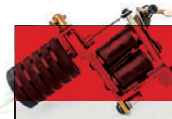
This isn't a story with a fairy tale ending, my funny, interesting, loving, little weirdo kid didn't do the 9 plus GCSEs that most kids do, and he didn't get an entire sweep of A grades. Heck, he didn't even finish most of the exam papers. His attendance was under 90% and he was suspended more times than I can count. He got a brand new school shoe stuck in a tree, was perpetually late and often sat in a favourite teacher's office rather than join the class. He once stole a small bottle of rum from my kitchen cupboard and swigged it dramatically, like a 15 year old pirate, in a 9am English class.

Yet, somehow, through talent and endeavour, this week, my boy was told he had exceeded the grades he needed.

I feel very proud, but I'm conscious of the feelings of others, especially those with children that are still falling down cracks. I'm thinking about parents of children are unlikely to ever sit any exams, due to illness or disability or just sheer bloody mindedness, but who are loved and make their families proud in millions of other ways. I'm thinking about everyone that feels like a square peg in a round hole, or perhaps, more properly, a rounded peg rattling around inside a needlessly square hole. To the weirdos, the oddballs, the freaks, misfits, mavericks and eccentrics, I'm so glad you exist in the world.

Don't ever get another person's name tattooed on you, people say. You'll live to regret it, you'll fall out, it's the kiss of death for a relationship, and even your children might turn out to be a disappointment. Well I've never been afraid of taking a leap of faith, just ask Mrs Scarborough.

It's very hard to take photos of one's own knuckles, so you'll have to take my word for it, my other hand reads 'LOVE'. ☐



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

Artist wanted Sacred Steel Tattoo. We are looking for a new tattoo artist to join our talented team. The right applicant must have a highly professional attitude, experience and a strong portfolio. If you are looking for a new studio get in touch on 0247 767 1150 or sacredsteeltattoo@gmail.com

The Tattooed Arms, Lincoln are looking for the right artist to join their busy team. Experienced artists only, to work 3/4 days a week (to be discussed). Guest artists would also be considered. Please contact us via www.TheTattooedArms.com or visit the shop to apply, must have a portfolio.

We are looking for an experienced tattooist to join us here at Infinite Ink in Coventry. You must be ambitious and hard working as we are a very busy custom studio. You must have a good portfolio of your most recent work, including photos and drawings. Please contact Donna at infinite.ink@hotmail.co.uk. Facebook- https://m.facebook.com/infiniteinkcoventry. Instagram- infiniteink_coventry

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 "PICK ME!" 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

Space to rent for an experienced Body Piercer at Inkermans 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 - inkermans@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

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Many [many] issues ago I wrote about popular culture tattoos and was lucky to interview three artists who also geek out about this particular style – Lucy Blue, Ryan Ousley and Stickypop (Matt Daniels)

In the article I'd concluded that pop culture tattoos are so special, and often necessary, because often the worlds of others are infinitely better than our own. I said something like that, anyway.

Well, this month the world has gone bonkers for new Netflix show *Stranger Things*. As I sit here and type, I am looking at two prints I snapped at this year's Tattoo Jam, both *ST*-themed.

But why has everyone got so obsessed with this new TV programme? What makes these environments on our screens, so exciting and addictive? (*Beccy is not lying. ST is the best thing to hit the TV in a long time. Promise. Ed.*)

Since writing my original article months ago, I've gone on to have various pop culture tattoos of my own to show my love of: *Back to the Future*, *Pocahontas* and *Sabrina The Teenage Witch*.

This has made me reflect upon my own theory—do we love these pop culture worlds more than our own? If we got the chance to physically transport ourselves to the towns from our favourite TV shows, and the strange universes from our most-loved films... would we? Or is the pop culture obsession actually just a 'grass is always greener' scenario?

In *Stranger Things*, the young characters get to experience what it feels like to actually enter the magical pop culture worlds that they love. Their endless play-time hours of imaginary encounters with demons, dragons and monsters, soon becomes a reality for them.

(Spoiler alert, don't continue reading if you haven't watched it yet and don't want me to ruin it for you!)

As a result of their games coming to life, the boys experience adventures, but also loss, danger, death, struggle, injury (the list goes on). Was it all worth it?

In the final episode, as they gather around the hospital bed of their now un-missing friend to recount the exciting happenings that he's missed (you know, from being captured by a grotesque demon, and all), the bliss on their faces is so memorable.

Despite all the pain and trauma, being able to recount their own real-life escapades, their



Sticky Pop



Sticky Pop



BECCY RIMMER
BeccyRimmer

SINCE WRITING MY ORIGINAL ARTICLE MONTHS AGO, I'VE GONE ON TO HAVE VARIOUS POP CULTURE TATTOOS OF MY OWN

accomplishments and lessons, brings them such a sense of joy. They've saved lives, chased beasts, made new friends and become closer.

Sometimes, the grass might not be greener... hell, it may even be jet black and shark-infested. What matters is that it may change us, and that is priceless. ▣



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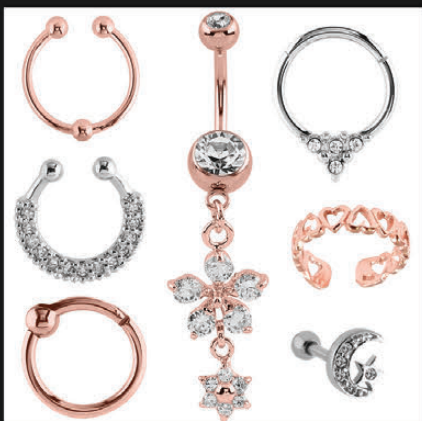
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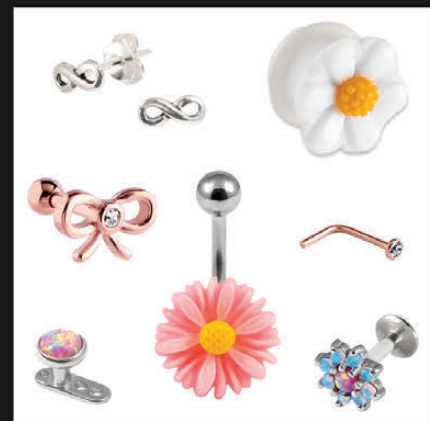
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