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FELL ON BLACK DAYS

I miss Chris Cornell. I miss him being in the world a lot. Some of you will miss Bowie, Prince or George Michael being around... then, just last week, Chester from Linkin Park signed out too. If those people meant the whole world to you, but you didn't know them personally, I get it and you have my every sympathy. I miss Chris Cornell like he was part of my immediate family and it hurts.

Sometimes, people can speak to you in ways you didn't know they could.

Then this week, Scott Cole told me a story about a model he had worked with in the past who had also signed out. She was just at the start of her career—of her life even—and it touched him in the same way: straight through the heart and down to the bone.

There's a myth out in the world that people in the tattoo world are brick walls with skin that's impenetrable to anything but the needle and ink—this is very far from the truth indeed. I think the process of letting something else live under your skin other than what you were born with, is part of a much larger picture. A willingness to let a foreign object—hopefully of your own choosing—live out your days visibly with you, is not an act everybody is comfortable with.

We wear our hearts on our sleeves—or at least the hearts we want others to see. It's a willingness to enter into a discussion with others about the things going in your life... if only people would stop for long enough to look. From the simplest child's name across the board to any affinity we might have with an animal, a super-hero, the meaning of a mandala, all of it is possible.

We feel hurt and pain just the same as those who are not tattooed.

And you know, there are 'tattoos' and there are 'tattoos'. I have zero interest in the former—the ones where you turn up at the chair and hand over some money for the privilege of being able to say you're tattooed a couple of hours later. That's like buying a guitar to say you're in a band. It doesn't mean a thing. But show me how you've figured out a way to say



Will Dixon

THE PROCESS OF LETTING SOMETHING ELSE LIVE UNDER YOUR SKIN OTHER THAN WHAT YOU WERE BORN WITH, IS PART OF A MUCH LARGER PICTURE



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

on the outside what you were thinking on the inside, and you have my full attention.

Tattoos are not a fashion statement. You're a fool if you think they are.

And life? Well, it's not a dress rehearsal for another day. It's happening now. If it gets too much, you are not alone. We all fall on black days but there are other people out there who feel the same and most of us are wearing artistic scars to prove it in the best way we know how.

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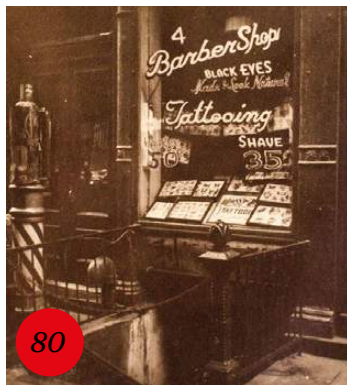
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sits very well indeed at The Family Business, producing highly creative and intricate tattoos that stand out from the crowd.

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Eight hours, three tattooists, two customers and one clear mission – to explore the relationship between tattooing and music. Brilliant.

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Perfectly preserved tattooed skin

presented in a 16th century palace in Lisbon, Portugal makes for the kind of exhibition that would catch anyone's attention - particularly ours.

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THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

Pascal Bagot
Kamila Burzymowska
Sean Herman
Steven Kenny
Christian Miles
Barbara Pavone
Beccy Rimmer
Wayne Simmons

COVER SHOT

Scott Cole

EDITOR

Sion Smith
editor@skindeep.co.uk
07841 999334

DESIGN

David Gamble
davidgamble@mac.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES

magazines@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Justine Hart
production@skindeep.co.uk
01244 881888

ACCOUNTS & ADMIN MANAGER

Emma McCrindle
accounts@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 886009

ADMINISTRATION

Jan Schofield
jan@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 886019

CREDIT CONTROL

Louise Chamberlain-Jones
louise@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 886012

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Mark McCarthy
mark@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 886022

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

David Arthur
david.arthur@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888

EVENTS DIRECTOR

Shelley Bond
shelley@jazzevents.co.uk
01244 881888

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Stuart Mears
stuart@jazzpublishing.co.uk
01244 881888

DISTRIBUTION

Susan Saunders
susan.saunders@seymour.co.uk
0207 429 4073

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BUCKLE UP, SUCKERS!

We've teamed up with LOWLIFE OF LONDON in a great competition

Here's a very cool competition for both artists and budding artists: Lowlife of London are offering you the opportunity to have your Skin Deep related design produced onto a limited edition leather belt—there are a few rules attached but for the winner, it's a very cool deal indeed. Here's what you need to know:

- You can interpret "Skin Deep related" in any way you choose.
- The design should fit a belt format and include either the Skin Deep logo in full or the "S" by itself and represent the Skin Deep brand. Once a winning design is chosen, we can help with that side of things.
- The belt will be a printed belt, made of leather with a heavy buckle and quality eyelets.
- By entering the competition the artist is giving Lowlife of London permission to use their design for commercial purposes. This means you may find it on sale in the future but will receive no royalties... just to be clear on that before you begin.
- The winner will be selected by both Skin Deep and Lowlife of London, so the winning design represents

the Skin Deep brand and will function well as a belt.

- The lead time from design sign off is approximately 4 months—basically, this means, it will be a work in progress for quite some time, so please be patient!
- The winner will receive 5 printed belts for personal use.
- Skin Deep will also receive 50 belts—we have no idea what we will do with them yet but we'll think of something great!
- If you're supplying digital artwork, the final file will need to be a high resolution 300dpi file. If you're working on paper (or any other medium), the final design will need to be scanned so please make sure your work is super clean!
- The closing date for entries is September 30, 2017
- If you have any questions, you can always send an email to editor@skindeep.co.uk where the boss will help you out as much as he can. In fact, you can email your entries into that address too. He will take good care of them!

Pictured here is an example of what you can expect at the end of the process and if you just can't wait and need to shop, you can find them online right here: lowlifeoflondon.com

by
Łukasz Żera



This image came in just as I was putting these last few pages to bed, so I know very little about it or the artist other than it was seen at the mighty TattooFest in Krakow (3-4 June) out in Poland by our ever vigilant photographer Kamila Burzymowska. But you know what, sometimes I figure you guys just need to see what I see and enjoy art for no other reason than

because it's great. That's what we're all here for right?

We'll be running a full force loving machine of a review from Krakow next issue with more images from the show and with the wind behind me, I'm hoping to catch up with Łukasz to find out more about his work... which frankly, is huge amounts of fun.

Go check him out...

DETAILS

📍 luk21_21
artforce.pl
artforce@artforce.pl
📱 artforcetattoo

ART FORCE TATTOO

Krochmalna
32a lok.U6 00-864
Warsaw
Tel: +48 664 606 606





CAMERA OBSCURA

In keeping with many things in this issue, here's a shot we thought you might like for no other reason that because it's great. What kind of person has SHOWTIME written across their knuckles?

There is actually an answer to that question: Martyna Bomba Luckiewicz is who. This shot came in as part of a stack of convention shots from Poland earlier in the year and

it stuck out as being a very cool moment in time more than anything.

A fun tattoo can speak for itself in the world and that's something we can never get enough of here. We got to thinking this would make a cool regular feature, so if you have some mighty fine knuckles you'd like to show the world, you know where we are.

Bring it. ▣





JUST BECAUSE

ROBERT BORBAS



Really, what's the point of being the editor of such a wonderful magazine as this if once in a while you can't just sweep everything off your desk and devote a couple of pages to publishing the work of one your favourite artists in the world. Thus, if you were not acquainted before, I lovingly present you with the work of Mr Robert Borbas...

 grindesign_tattoo
 rookletink
theartofgrindesign.com
rookletink@gmail.com





AFTER HOURS

What do tattoo artists do when they're not tattooing? In After Hours, Wayne Simmons talks to some of his favourite artists about the things they get up to when the studio lights go down. This month, he meets Davey Jebadiah Sewell, tattoo artist and guitarist/vocalist with The Sunrise Set

If there's one thing I've learned through this After Hours series it's this: creativity is not a gift, it's a well. The trick, then, is to learn how to draw from the well and, even more importantly, what you're going to do with all that good juice you manage to pull out of there. Some people choose to focus on one particular thing – be that writing or painting or music or tattooing. And then there other people, those who want a whole damn garden to water as opposed to one little flowerbed. Davey Jebadiah Sewell is one such person.

A prolific black & grey artist, Davey's well known on the UK convention scene and something of a regular at our own shows. He works at Beccs Williams' Needlework Tattoo, in Lightwater, Surrey, and does a great many guest spots across the country. But Davey's passion for ink sprung up alongside a passion for music that remains just as important to him today as tattooing. In fact, like many artists I've talked to over the years, it was a blend of the two from the get-go that got those creative juices flowing: the style and image of the band, the cover



artwork on record sleeves all being just as important as the music; everything forming the perfect collage in the fertile minds of these young artists-in-waiting. "I used to spend hours just looking at some of my favourite album sleeves," Davey tells me, citing some classics, modern as well as old favs. "I particularly love the work Pushead did for Metallica in the 80s. The sleeve for their single 'One' is truly an iconic piece of artwork. John Dyer Baizley's artwork for the Baroness records is incredible. And Paul Romano did some brilliant work for Mastodon's first few albums."

The list goes on and on. In fact, if there's one thing you can pretty much bank on when it comes to heavy metal, it's this: there's very little half-assin' when it comes to the cover art. It helped nurture an appetite within Davey for more of these darker tones, going well beyond the confines of music to sate such. "I love dark and epic imagery from literature, too. The Greek, Norse and Christian myths. Pagan, Satanic stuff and old folk tales."

This darkness is certainly something you hear right off the bat in the music of



I LOVE DARK AND EPIC IMAGERY FROM LITERATURE, TOO

his current band, The Sunrise Set. Formed in 2009 when Rob Taylor (vocals) and Davey bonded over a shared love of bands like Nick Cave and The Badseeds, 16 Horsepower, Neurosis and more, The Sunrise Set recorded their first album in 2012. "We've changed up a few times but our most recent line-up consists of myself and Rob, Ben Woodward on bass, Dave Balloch on lead guitar, Dan Wheeldon on drums and Alex Priest on cello." It's this line-up that played on the band's latest release, 2016's 'Cast A Crooked Shadow' EP, a perfect blend of melancholy both in look and feel - Davey designed the cover artwork as well as being the main songwriter within the band. The whole package reminds me of bands from the 70s like Blue Oyster Cult or more contemporary takes on that sound such as Ghost B.C., Year of the Goat and the late (and I'd say great) Selim Lemouchi. There's a Sabbathian groove in there, too, of course.

Davey agrees. "You're not the first to compare us to Blue Oyster Cult. That isn't a deliberate thing. I mean, I always thought we lacked the obligatory cowbell for that comparison," he laughs. "That intensity you're picking up on is probably more to our lyrics. We reference a lot of dark religious and historical stories and texts. For instance, I wrote the lyrics to 'Cottonmouth' based on Dante's Pur-





YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST TO COMPARE US TO BLUE OYSTER CULT. THAT ISN'T A DELIBERATE THING!



gatorio from *The Divine Comedy*. Rob based 'The Assumption of Hannele' on an old German play and 'Man Of The Spear' refers to the death of Methuselah. Rob has a great talent for writing." Within the music itself, Davey reckons it's his penchant for using minor chords and how it compliments those lyrics, and in particular Rob's delivery of them, that seals the deal. "I think a dark and sinister approach to lyric and vocal delivery can really change the feel of a song. It can make or break it."

Although Davey takes the lead on one track, vocally - 'Cottonmouth', which he penned the lyrics to - he wouldn't describe himself as a singer. "The first time I sang in front of people was in one of my old bands," he recalls. "I think I closed my eyes and pretended I wasn't in front of the seven people watching." In fact, Davey isn't so comfortable with being identified as a guitarist, either, although I'm beginning to think he's just being modest - the guy's a talented mofo whatever he tells you. One thing we can agree on, regardless, is that technical brilliance doth not great art make. "A good song is a good song," Davey says. "I admire so many guitarists for their simplicity; Tim Sult from Clutch writes some killer bluesy rock riffs; Sam Beam from Iron & Wine makes some beautiful southern



THE FIRST TIME I SANG IN FRONT OF PEOPLE WAS IN ONE OF MY OLD BANDS—I CLOSED MY EYES AND PRETENDED I WASN'T IN FRONT OF THE SEVEN PEOPLE WATCHING

gothic rock; same as Dan Barrett from Giles Corey.”

While drawing from the creative well might come easy, finding the time to use it is another thing entirely. As Davey says, inspiration isn't the problem, it's all those other demands on his life that can put a spanner in the works – and it's not just him who feels like that. “It can be difficult for all six of us, what with being in our mid-thirties and

working all the time, but we play when we can. We have a few shows and a festival coming up. We're always writing new stuff, too.”

With some studio time booked in August and September, there's plenty more juice left in that well yet. Not to mention all those badass tattoos Davey's putting out. Let's hope he leaves something in there for the rest of us...

'Cast A Crooked Shadow' is available now on iTunes and Spotify. The Sunrise Set tour regularly. □



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Folly Central

FORCE OF NATURE



Becca Rimmer chats to Holly Astral about what it's like juggling life as a tattooist, artist, photographer and vlogger...

Holly Astral has only been tattooing three years but, to me, she is SUPERWOMAN. When she's not creating innovative fashion product lines, she's taking inspirational photos of nature, filming informative tattoo videos for her followers and experimenting with art on different mediums. Oh yeah, and on top of all that she creates flawless tattoos.

Her background was in model making and product design—after running her own toy company for years, she was first exposed to tattoos after attending the annual Cardiff Tattoo and Toy Con. After being inspired, she taught herself how to draw, “drew every single day and then started looking for an apprenticeship”. The rest, shall we say, is history.

One of the things that draws us to particular tattooists as tattoo writers, is a desire to un-earth those inspira-



tions behind the art. After following Holly's photography hobby online for some time, I wanted to know if capturing the outdoors was ever an influence in her tattoo work. “I love being out in nature,” she says, “and I think that shows



FLOWERS SYMBOLISE CELEBRATION AND CAN MAKE US THINK OF LOVED ONES, OR OCCASIONS PAST—I THINK THEY MAKE WONDERFUL TATTOOS

in my work. I'll be out for a walk and notice the shapes of leaves, the way wildflowers spread their leaves." Flowers can be deeply personal tattoos to certain clients, "we have a strong connection with them", believes Holly, "as they symbolise celebration and can make us think of loved ones, or occasions past—I think they make wonderful tattoos."

Her love for flowers and foliage impacts many of her design choices, even the manner in which she approaches them as tattoos. Nature grows freely and so does the shape of the body. That's why Holly 'free-hands' (draws directly with no stencil) a lot of her floral work straight onto the body, to ensure that flow reels right. Even when creating original designs on paper she submits to an organic process much like the natural world: "I kind of just start drawing and go with it. Often those initial designs

are a mess!"

Anyone who follows Holly in the digital world can see her artistic process from start to finish. From initial nature photography, subsequent designs and art-works, and finally—the finished tattoo on human skin. Holly claims that regularly designing art off-skin is incredibly important for her job. With a tattoo, you have to wait for a canvas, but with art, there are no limitations: "when you're tattooing, you don't have time to go away and review the tattoo, re-approach it, you have to be decisive and confident, but with painting, I can sit for hours, leave the piece for a few days, come back to it."

She claims that painting is very helpful in terms of an artist developing an ability to "always think a few steps ahead" in terms of artistic decisions. Holly's watched her entire approach to both forms change over the last three years: "I used to paint and think—how can I apply that to tattooing?—but now, I tattoo much more than I paint so I take the principles of tattooing into my painting. Like—



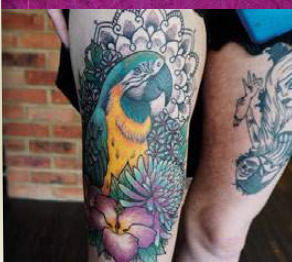
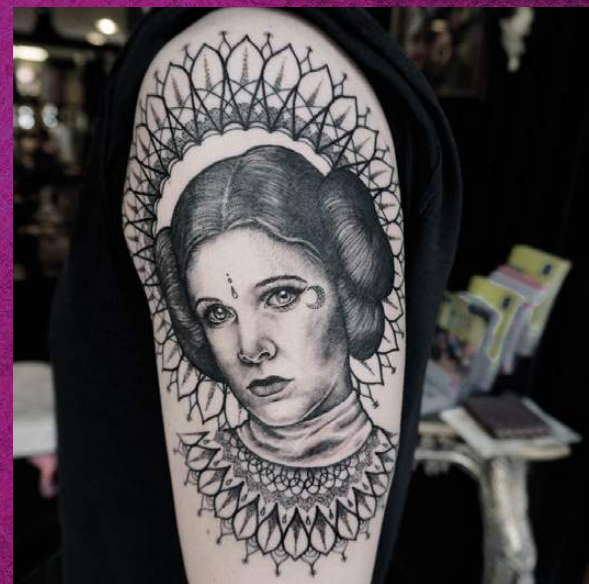
black paint! Before I tattooed I never used black lines in my painting work but now it's my favourite part of composing any piece. It makes the colours stand out."

Tattooing, painting, photography... last but by no means least, Holly is an accomplished and well-respected tattoo vlogger who creates interesting and helpful videos for her potential and existing clients and tattoo collectors all around the world. "I started making YouTube videos because I find there's a lot of mis-information out there about tattooing. I'd seen some videos that included the wrong facts and I thought—I'll give making videos a go!" Despite finding it terrifying to begin with, she's now received over 80,000 hours of watch time on her videos and over 5,000 subscribers. Holly believes, and I agree, that there is a real need for these videos in the industry today: "as a tattoo artist you get asked the same questions over and over, so there MUST be the want for these videos, made by tattoo artists, that have REAL information."

As well as tattoo guides and advice, Holly's videos reflect a tattooist's processes—she shares time-lapse videos that show just what goes into one tattoo: "to a customer it's a bit of a mystery what goes on behind the scenes," she says, "so it's fun to let people in on that side of things." Often as tattoo wearers, we can underestimate how much work goes in to our new tattoo outside of the tattoo studio. Holly's videos educate the public about how tattoos are really made from start to finish.

Where one creative project ends, another begins—I wondered, how does Holly Astral find the time to fit everything in?! "I am a master of 'To-Do' lists," she replies, "I've always been a productive person." At the same time, finding time to rest is of just as much importance to Holly

WHEN YOU'RE TATTOOING, YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO GO AWAY AND REVIEW THE TATTOO—YOU HAVE TO BE DECISIVE AND CONFIDENT



I DEFINITELY BELIEVE IN MANIFESTATION AND CREATING ONE'S OWN FUTURE— BUT NOT IN A FLOWERY CASTING SPELLS KIND OF WAY, I'M A BIT MORE PRACTICAL THAN THAT

and she admits that's completely counter-productive for any creative: "the best ideas come when you're not constantly thinking about what you're doing next. I make sure I include self-care time on that 'To-Do' list." Meditation and yoga is part of her daily routine and is often when the best ideas surface: "sometimes a little breather from the business of the everyday helps ideas come."

She doesn't subscribe to one spiritual belief but allows spirituality and mindfulness

to play a part in her focuses. She collects crystals and these have inspired some of her most beautiful tattoo designs. Many of those interested in crystal 'magic' believe in the power of outside forces. Like Holly, I believe that those objects are in fact devices for finding your own inner strength: "I definitely believe in manifestation and creating one's own future—but not in a flowery casting spells kind of way, I'm a bit more practical than that."

I think that Holly does cast some form of spell each day, by creating these thoughtful and fascinatingly beautiful pieces on skin. I'm receiving a crystal tattoo myself off her in a couple of month's time and I can't wait. There is a type of magic at work—an artistic energy that makes a journey... from the natural world, through her eyes, videos, photos, pens, paintbrushes, hands, and ultimately... rests and lives on the skin forever. □

@ holly_astral
 you.tube/pHcqpYmESwc
 hollyastral@gmail.com

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SINNERS INC. PART TWO

Earlier this year, Kyle Patrick, Chris Toler and Zach Decker of Seventh Sin Tattoo in Charlotte, NC set off on their first international tattoo tour. Wayne Simmons gets the lowdown in this second instalment of our two-part special

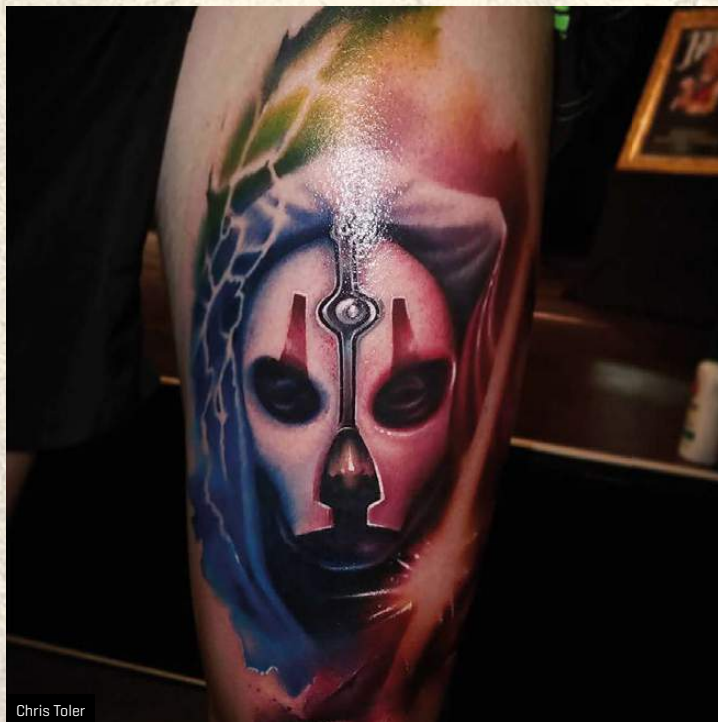
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The sheer elegance of Bergen, Norway was almost too much to handle for Kyle Patrick, Chris Toler and Zach Decker of Seventh Sin Tattoo in Charlotte, NC. They'd already been through the German countryside as part of their international tattoo tour, having travelled from Munich to Nuremberg. They'd been bowled over by the gothic brilliance that is Prague. But Bergen was something else, "too beautiful to describe" Zach's exact words.

They were there for the Bergen Tattoo Convention, fresh off their first international award at the Nuremberg show and on something of a high. The convention was fun, the host studio, Leading Light, treating their American guests like family. "They were beyond welcoming, in fact," Chris says, "and the show was by far the most hospitable to its artists than any other show I have ever attended."

Kyle agrees. "Bjorn and the Leading Light crew showed us around the private artists' area, complete with a stocked fridge, with more food than you could dream of, a full-service workstation and stencil area, and a lounge

AN ENTIRE BODY SUIT, NONE OF WHICH WAS DONE AT THE CONVENTION AND WHERE THE ARTIST WASN'T EVEN IN ATTENDANCE, WON BEST OF SHOW



THE TRUE AWARD IS THE PEOPLE YOU MEET. THE CLIENTS THAT RESPECT AND TRUST YOU ENOUGH TO CARRY YOUR ART ON THEM FOREVER

to boot,” he tells me. “I got to do a rad skeleton piece the first day, a large-scale memorial cat tattoo, and finished off the weekend tapping into my occult side for a badass virgin sacrifice piece. I met some great people along the way; plenty of talks about hockey and black metal ensued. Definitely one to remember.”

Chris had some concerns about the competition rules

for the event. “An entire body suit, none of which was done at the convention and where the artist wasn’t even in attendance, won Best of Show!” It didn’t spoil things in the slightest for him though, awards are not everything. “Sure, it’s great to bring some hardware home to affirm that you were on your A-game that day and show it off to friends and family. But the true award is the people you meet. The clients that respect and trust you enough to carry your art on them forever. And the artists that are all there for a common cause: to ensure we are all pushing each other to be a better version of ourselves, and to guarantee our craft lives on for generations to come.”

Speaking of camaraderie, up next for the guys was a flight to good ol’ Blighty and a guest spot at Cult XIII in Dorset. Danny Edwards and the gang are well known to both the mag and this very hack and it was no surprise to learn they were good friends of Zach & co. – their vibe



WE WERE THERE TO BE A PART OF THE CULTURE AND TO BRING OUR ENERGY TO THE ART AND TATTOOS WE DO, AND I THINK WE DID JUST THAT

eral, perhaps, after the recent terror attacks. I was interested to know if this affected the guys in any way. “You know I will tell you the same thing I told my girlfriend, Byrn, when she asked that,” Zach says. “When we travel in a group, it’s a lot of black clothes, swearing, and visible tattoos. Honestly, people just tend to leave that alone and cross to the other side of the street. I am never really scared anywhere we go. We were there to be a part of the culture and to bring our energy to the art and tattoos we do, and I think we did just that.”

A chance encounter here led to another of the tour’s highlights for Chris. “I was contacted by a friend from the states on the second day of the show. He just so happened to be close to London, not sure what the odds of that are.” So they hooked up and started sketching out a tattoo idea. In the end, Chris decided to go for black and grey instead of his usual colour style, which – unknown to him at the time but well known to myself, having helped judge this year’s Tattoo Freeze – is often the most competitive category at tattoo shows. For Chris to win best of category during his first time working a show like GBTS is an incredible achievement, not least given the uncanny circumstances leading to up to it. “It was a dream come true,” he beams. “To get a second international award on the tour was nothing short of amazing. I was humbled and honoured. It definitely allowed me to believe a bit more in my abilities as an artist.”

With a studio so young, not only in terms of how long it has been running, but also the age of the team working there – Zach turned twenty six while on tour, the guys stopping off at Reykjavik on the way home to celebrate – it’s incredible what’s been achieved here. Seventh Sin, this home-grown brand from Charlotte, NC,



Kyle Patrick

and positivity and sheer bad-assery seems to mirror that of the Seventh Sin boys. “We love those guys,” Chris says. “This trip was the first time for us meeting some of their crew but our relationship began a couple of years ago when Cult leader, Danny, was boothed next to us at the Nashville Tattoo and Horror Fest. We went out for drinks after and it was as if we had known each other forever. The passion for tattooing. Common interests in music, movies and lifestyle. We considered them friends from the start and family now.”

Refreshed and reinvigorated, it was onto The Great British Show for the final stop of the tour. Of course, it was a strange time to be in London, and the UK in gen-



Kyle Patrick

truly spread its wings to become an international act. “I will never forget Chris and I sat around a small-town dive bar in Blacksburg Virginia, planning our first show,” Zach smiles. “It was Derby Ink in the middle of nowhere Pennsylvania, only done once because nobody came. And yet when we got accepted, we felt like we were on top of the world.” And now, back home after their first international tattoo tour, they’ve had an adventure in every sense of the word. “We put in over twelve thousand miles in thirty days. We saw the tops of mountains and put our feet in the sand. We ate food we couldn’t pronounce, rode subways through cities we have only ever read about, and met people who couldn’t have been more different from us. And yet, somehow, we felt at home on the road.”

Listening to these guys share their story is not just inspirational to other artists, I’m sure, but just about everyone, no matter what their dreams are. Maybe it’s in the wake of those terror attacks in Manchester and London, but I’ve found myself thinking more and more about how short life can be and how we should make the best of what we’ve got. We all want to achieve something, to reach for our respective stars, and Zach, Chris and Kyle are out there right now showing us how it should be done.

“I feel like in a lot of ways we’re still chasing the feeling we had in that dive bar in Blacksburg, back when we got

TO GET A SECOND INTERNATIONAL AWARD ON THE TOUR WAS NOTHING SHORT OF AMAZING



that first convention acceptance,” Zach reflects. “We’re always trying to push ourselves to be better and do better, and fly this boat to the moon somehow.” □

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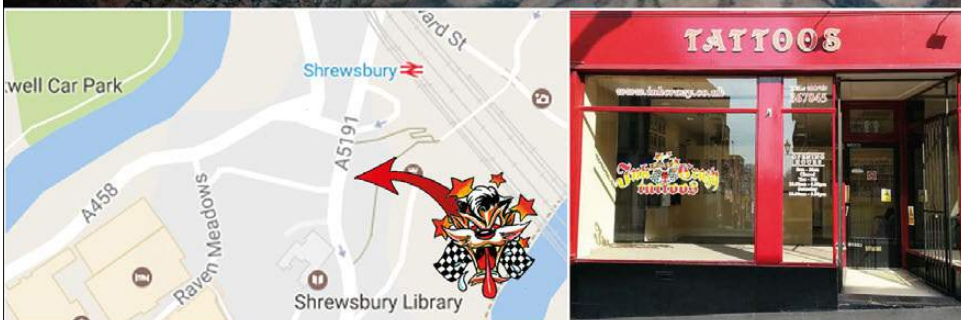


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Family Ties

Established in 2003 The Family Business Tattoo parlour opened its doors to a wide-eyed general public wanting the best in tattoo design and craftsmanship. People haven't stopped visiting the East London shop since, making it one of the hottest in the capital and adding to the legacy of the Family Business as being one of the best in the industry...

Matt Stopps' iconic tattoo work fits in to the overall ethos of the shop, producing highly creative and intricate tattoos that stand out from the crowd. His designs range from icons of historic Americana to furious beasts and gentle flora. Using various techniques like confident line work to the use of stippling, Stopps' fractal and geometric designs are some of the best in the business. But it is the artist's keen eye for placement that really amazes, each design fits and moulds to the body's various contours like a glove, ensuring every tattoo is perfectly suited to his flocking clientele.

So what's it like working at The Family Business Tattoo?

The Family Business is fucking cool. I get to work with sixteen great artists, prank each other and eat pizza. There are regular guest artists so there's always new faces to meet, techniques and styles to watch. The studio is super busy, it can get pretty crazy on a full day but it's a great vibe and I've learnt a lot since I started.

Why did you first become interested in tattoos?

I think I've been fascinated by tattoos since I was a little kid. I got my first tattoo as soon as I was legally old enough to do so, and I've been collecting ever since. I



guess I watched music television and skate sections etc. and saw tattoos on people and thought it looked cool.

How did you get into tattooing? Did you learn there or somewhere else?

I'd been searching for an apprenticeship for a long time, and every door seemed to be closed. But eventually I

I believe you're only as good as your surroundings so I knew I had to move...



I don't feel as though I am in a position to teach, I am just happy to share information and trade skills. Tattooing isn't something you can learn overnight

wormed my way into a small local studio. It was awful but a foot in the door essentially. I believe you're only as good as your surroundings so I knew I had to move into a reputable studio. Over time I built up a solid client base and watched every good artist I could to improve my technique. Once I gained confidence I began working in London and things took off from there.

There are some amazing tattoos coming out of the shop, is there a community like vibe working there?

Yeah it's so fun, the studio is pretty big and busy. So there's never a dull moment, I like being able to check out everyone's work and show them progress on a piece I'm working on. We share ideas and the stuff we like, there is a real creative vibe going on all the time. It's a great place to work, I feel at home!

What was your first day like working in the shop?

The first was nerve wracking, I wanted to prove that I was busy so I booked myself like crazy and worked like a dog. We all went for drinks after work, I had a few too many and left my laptop and earnings on the train on the way home.

What are your thoughts about some tattooists themselves not being tattooed? Do you think it is an important process for the tattooist to feel the same sensation of what it's like to be tattooed?

Yeah I do think it is a little strange, if that's the industry you work in. However, a colleague of mine hasn't any tattoos and is an amazing artist, so each to their own I suppose.

Which leads me to ask, what tattoos do you like getting yourself? Are there specific themes/ideas for the tattoos you get?

I've been collecting tattoos from colleagues, doing guest spots and conventions for a while. I have mostly colour tattoos but have recently picked up some fine line black and grey. So I have a mixture of styles really!



I've heard you were the mentor to the awesome tattoo-ist Loz Thomas whilst he was an apprentice, what are the key things you teach to new people starting a career in tattooing?

To be honest, I don't feel as though I am in a position to teach, I am just happy to share information and trade skills. Tattooing isn't something you can learn over night and if I could give any advice to anyone starting a career in tattooing, it would be to surround yourself with good artists and collect work yourself, things will work themselves out.

When you learnt how to tattoo how long did it take until you felt confident?

I don't really know, mainly because confidence isn't something that you suddenly feel like you've gained I suppose. It takes time and it's a slow process!

Where do you take your influences from for your work?

Usually my client gives me a brief and I will do research into the subject matter, and try and keep the design as authentic and true to the genre as possible. I'll then add my own touches in terms of line weight, shading etc. I like to watch other artists working

so I can pick up tips and advice, watching another artist produce outstanding work inspires me.

I see you work mainly in black and grey, do you dislike using colour? If so, why?

I used to tattoo in colour, but I now really enjoy working with black. I like to use a lot of stipple and dot work, and these techniques don't always suit colour tattoos. The stipple technique looks great as it creates a cool dot texture within the shading whilst still being consistent and almost smooth looking. But I appreciate the skill that goes into getting the right mix of perfect colours, the process of mixing is an art form in itself!

What part of the body do you enjoy tattooing the most?

That's a tricky one, I mean any part of the body can be really cool to tattoo. The neck is pretty challenging, like making sure the tattoo doesn't warp in a way you don't want it to. With the neck it's about placement and making the tattoo work. But to be honest it's all about the design, looking at what works and what doesn't, and finding the best part of the client's body to place it.

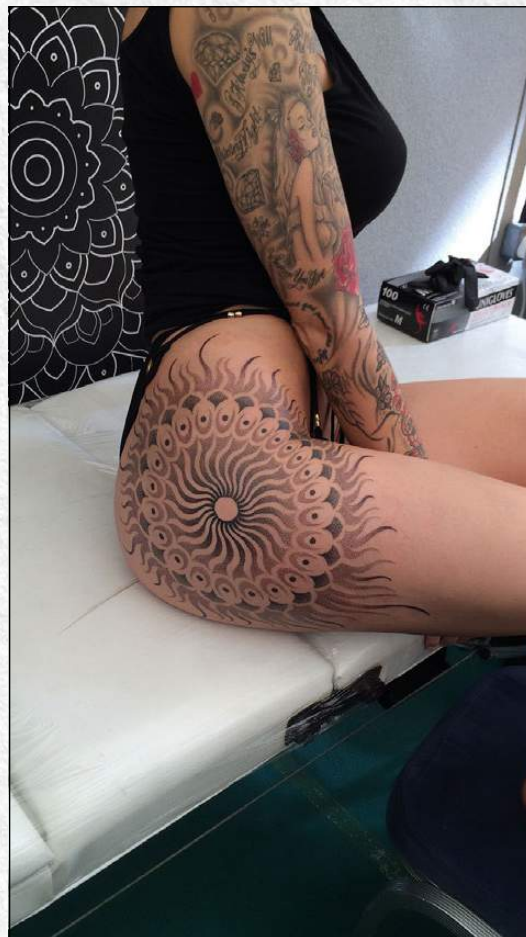
As a tattoo artist where your artwork readily leaves the shop and wonders the world, how do you go about creating an archive of your work?

Photography is an essential for any tattooist; it's the perfect way of archiving your work. It allows potential clients to see your tattoo style, your influences and line work. But really once I've done a tattoo, it belongs to the client and not me anymore!

What tattoos do you enjoy doing the most?

I really like tattooing smaller intricate pieces, as well as on-going or long-term projects. Smaller work really challenges me as a tattooist, I've got to ensure that every detail adds

Once I've done a tattoo, it belongs to the client and not me anymore



¶ I feel blessed to be able to do something which doesn't actually feel like work. ¶ It's great to make people happy on a day-to-day basis

to the overall effect and things don't get lost in the process. Whilst larger long-term projects gives me the creative freedom to build up a tattoo over time, it's amazing to get to the end of a piece and lookback and see the work that's gone into it. It's a real labour of love, blood and sweat.

What machine do you use? What's good about this machine over others?

I have a variety of coils that I use to line with and all of my shading is done with machines from the guys at Rotary Works, for me their machines are great value and reliable. Recently I've been using a Dan Kubin Sidewinder, the machine is fantastic! I can line, shade and stipple a design just with that machine, it's great.

What's the longest piece you have created? What is complex/intricate?

The most intricate piece I've done is probably a stomach tattoo I did for a fellow tattooist called Paris. It's a geometric design that covers her hips, stomach and onto her neck. It's an ongoing project but it's been lots of fun and I'm pleased with the outcome.

What's your most memorable tattoo you have done?

I tattooed a lady called Helen, she flew from abroad to have her breast tattooed with an ornamental dot work design. She had battled breast cancer and after chemo surgeons had to remove her breast and reconstruct it. It felt good being able to help her out and feel positive about how she looked post operation.

Do you like to tattoo you mates? Or is this too personal a move for you?

There is an added pressure when tattooing a mate/colleague/family member. I definitely talk a lot less when tattooing on people I know, that's for certain.

What does tattooing mean to you?

I feel blessed to be able to do something which doesn't actually feel like work. It's great to make people happy on a day-to-day basis. □

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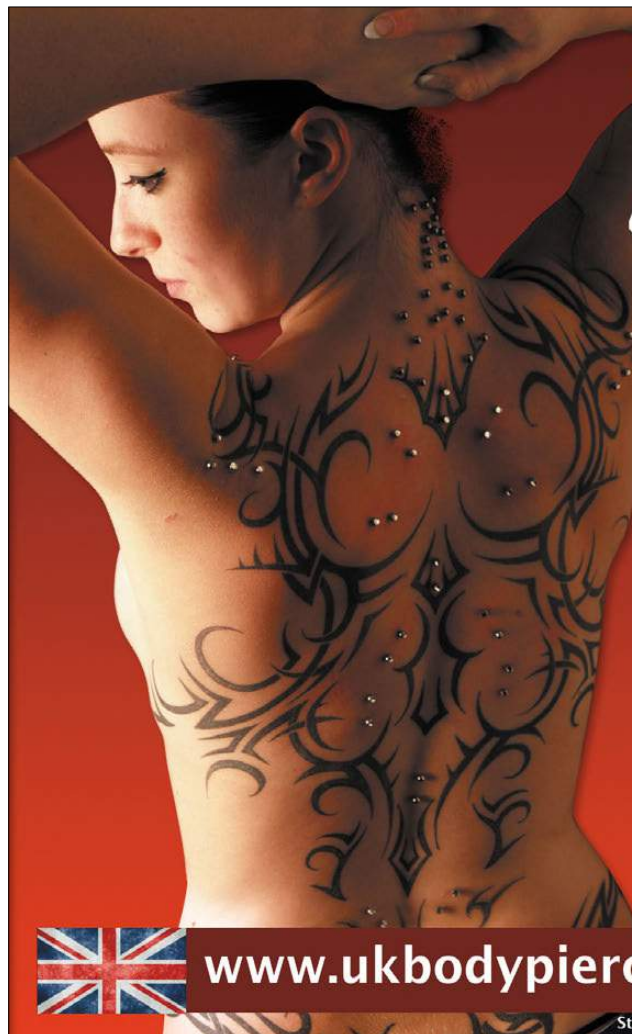
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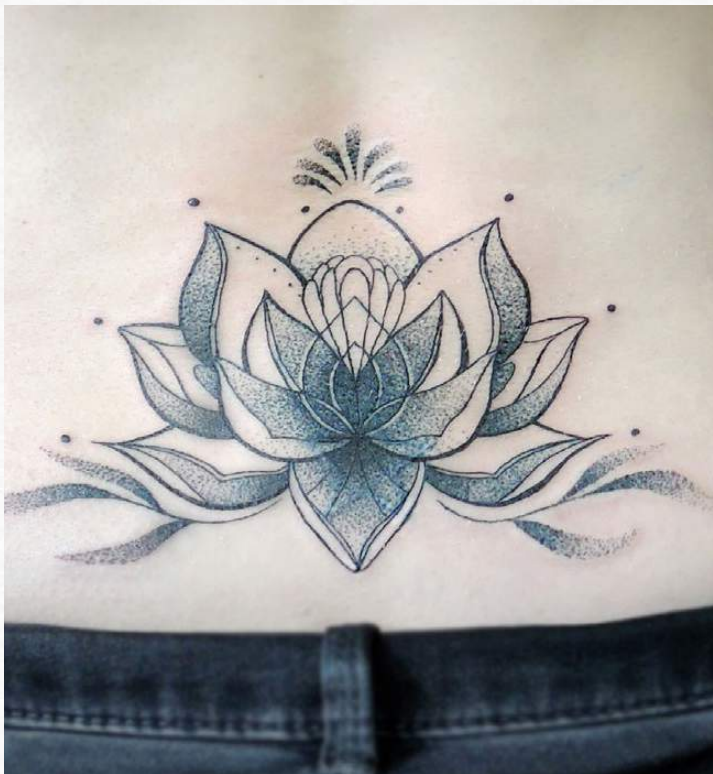
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INSTAGRAM.COM/MC_FLY

DARREN BRIDGWOOD

DARRENBRIDGWOOD@GOOGLEMAIL.COM
FACEBOOK.COM/MANEMAN.NE23





GEORGIA HUNTE

INSTAGRAM.COM/GEORGIAJAY_
ADORNEDTATTOO.COM

HANNYA JAYNE

HANNYAJAYNETATTOOING.CO.UK
INSTAGRAM.COM/HANNYAJAYNE





HOLLY ASTRAL

[INSTAGRAM.COM/HOLLY_ASTRAL](https://www.instagram.com/holly_astral)
HOLLYASTRAL@GMAIL.COM

JAMES BRENNAN

INSTAGRAM.COM/JAMESBRENNANTATTOOS
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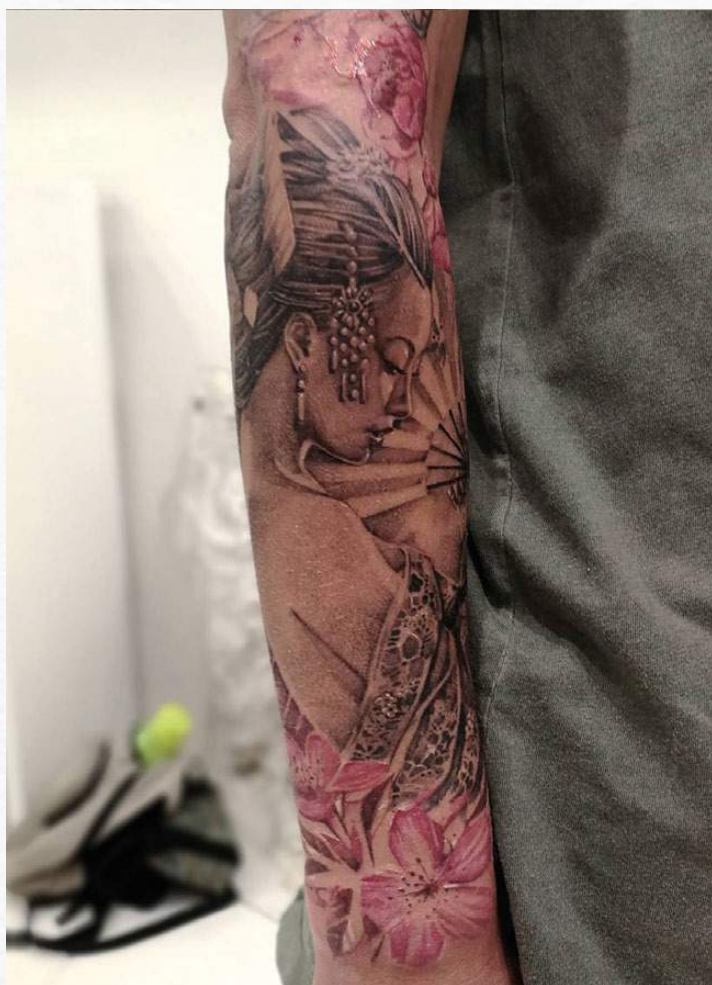


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FACEBOOK.COM/DARKHORSECOLLECTIVE
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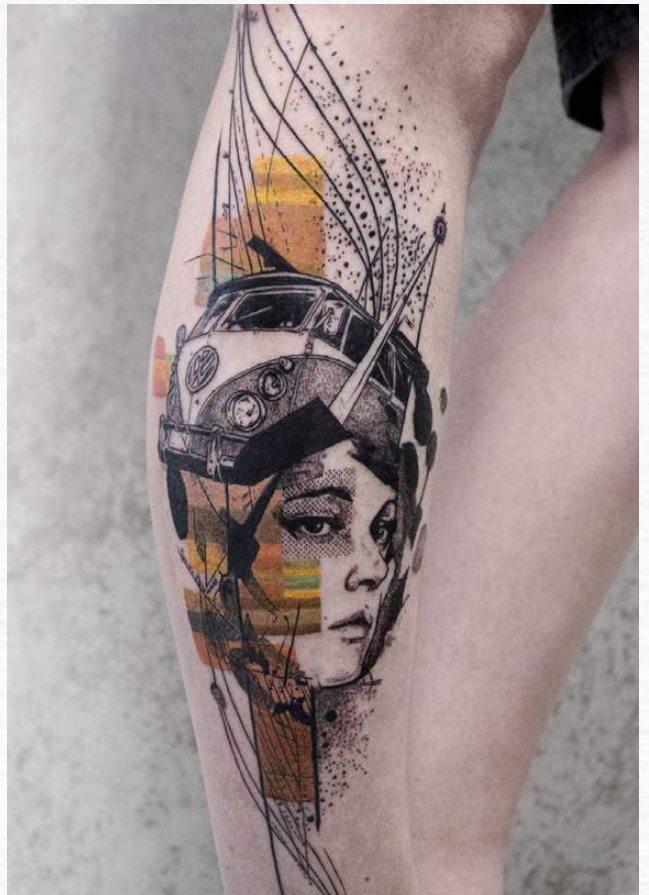
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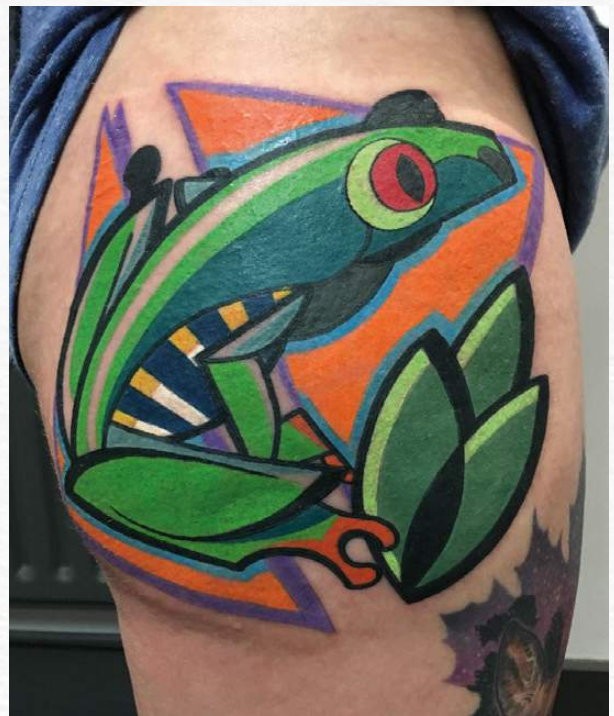




KALI

INSTAGRAM.COM/KALITATTOO
MAIL@KALITATTOO.COM





MIKE BOYD

MIKEBOYDTATTOOS.COM
INFO@MIKEBOYDTATTOOS.COM

PETE MINNEY

FACEBOOK.COM/ROYSTONINK
ROYSTONINK2015@GMAIL.COM





PICASSO DULAR

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THE NEEDLE AND THE GROOVE

*Eight hours, three tattooists, two customers and one clear mission
—to explore the relationship between tattooing and music*

What happens when three different tattooists' styles fuse together as one? Olivier Poinsignon was keen to find out.

One Saturday back in April, he invited fellow tattoo artists Guillaume Smash and Emilie B to his private studio in Clermont-Ferrand (France) to take part in a unique project... this is *Aiguilles Musicales* or, 'Musical Needles' if your French is not so hot:

How would you describe 'Musical Needles'?

A one-day tattoo collaboration between three artists and two customers who were tattooed at the same time. These customers, Adam and Lucas, I prefer to call them 'patrons of the arts'—they gave us such space and trust as part of this. The tattooists that took part were Emilie B and Guillaume Smash (from *l'Imaginarium*) and Olivier Poinsignon—that's me!

Musical Needles is a creative project, a process in which we collaborated on the skin as artists. We wanted to achieve a true fusion of our styles, something that was a mix of influence from each participant. Music was our meeting point and we used it as a joint inspiration to help us create work that went in the same direction.



Tattooists:

Olivier Poinsignon:

@ olivierpoinsignon

Guillaume Smash:

@ guillaume_smashattoo

Emilie B: @ emiliebtattoo

Tattoo canvases:

Adam and Lucas

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WE WANTED TO ACHIEVE A TRUE FUSION OF OUR STYLES, SOMETHING THAT WAS A MIX OF INFLUENCE FROM EACH PARTICIPANT

You mentioned that there were set 'rules' that you followed throughout the day. What were these?

We only tattooed when music was playing. We sat around the customers and each time a new track played, we switched chairs and moved on to another section or tattoo—obviously cleaning hands and swapping gloves, etc. in between the changes.

All work was completely improvised during the process, responding to the music we heard. We each contrib-

uted tracks to the playlist listened to.

We also didn't speak to each other at all during the entire day—the focus was the music and the art. It was a creative game in which we wanted to explore our ability to work automatically. We wanted to create images that came out of the moment. A lot of my creative projects aim to explore communication and creativity—I think it's such an interesting thing to look at.

No physical spectators were allowed to be present in



Emilie B



Olivier Poinsignon



Guillaume Smash



Guillaume Smash

IT WAS A CREATIVE GAME IN WHICH WE WANTED TO EXPLORE OUR ABILITY TO WORK AUTOMATICALLY

the room but the whole experience was filmed and live streamed to Instagram. Capturing the project digitally was a large part of it—this is my second video collaboration with Adi Bessac who was also invited to do whatever he wanted creatively to tell our story. He knows how to put into perspective action on paper and action on skin. In the video, the tattooing process is captured as a total fusion of artists and styles—watching the clip, if you don't pay attention, you could think that there's just one person tattooing.

How many single tattoos were created in total?

There were two tattoos and a few drawings including one large painting. The big drawing (pictured here behind all the participants) was important in the process because it helped us free ourselves to begin with. There was a pressure working like this on the skin without a stencil or without even communicating with each other or the customers.

I have already worked previously with Emilie B and Guillaume Smash, we are creative friends. We are all very different but know how to fuse our work together and have done so before on paper.



Emilie B



Olivier Poinsignon



Emilie B



Guillaume Smash

What were some of the biggest challenges?

The most difficult thing was to just start something and let it grow—like a seed. Also working on other drawings and tattoos at the same time. It was amazing watching the whole thing progress and grow.

Why did you choose to explore tattoos and music? How can music influence a tattoo?

Music was our meeting point. We all contributed to the playlist and it was our master. It gave us a consistent rhythm. We actually changed one of the rules as we went

along and changed every two songs rather than after every single song—it just made it slightly easier with the repetitive cleaning.

Music is my tempo, it definitely influenced my lines and I tried to focus on the textures of the sounds as I was tattooing. As I said, no communication was allowed between us, we were keen to focus on just the music and what was consequently happening on the skin. We weren't speaking but all understood each other.

I like music without words as I think it evokes something more primitive. If someone is singing, my brain tries to un-



MUSIC IS MY TEMPO, IT DEFINITELY INFLUENCED MY LINES AND I TRIED TO FOCUS ON THE TEXTURES OF THE SOUNDS AS I WAS TATTOOING

derstand it, which makes the listening a different experience. I never listen to songs with lyrics when I am working.

How did the customers feel about their tattoos when you were finished?

They told us they loved them and thought it was an amazing experience. This wouldn't have happened without them. To begin with, they only wanted tattoos on the

forearm and the calf but during the day they decided to give us more space—a full back and a full arm. Physically they were so strong and sat like champions! The end of the day was emotional.

For me, this project showed that, in an artist's creative process, sometimes you have to design and experiment with the way you tattoo in order to discover something that you could never have imagined beforehand. ▣



The
SERPENTS
of
BIENVILLE

The Transformative Tattoo
PART 2

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In our last issue I told you about an incredible client of mine, Brandon Buchalter, and his tie with the Ywalapiti people. To refresh you, Brandon had been a client of mine for years and now found himself working in the jungles of the Amazon with the indigenous tribe of the Ywalapitit people...



WHAT IS THIS "PROGRESS" THAT DESTROYS BEAUTY IN ITS WAKE, COULD IT BE DESTROYING US TOO?

In working with them Brandon formed a bond, one he wanted to signify with a tattoo of a tiger whose stripes were that of the ceremonial markings of the Ywalapiti. After much research, information that led me down a rabbit hole of how modern industrialisation is choking out the natural ideals that we as humans have, I was finally ready to tattoo Brandon. We decided that we would do the piece in two sessions. The first session was intense, and informative. I learned about how Brandon was introduced to these incredible people, and why his life would never be the same. As we finished he let me know he was going to be traveling down to the Amazon in between our sessions, and that the tribe would get to see his piece in progress. You know, no pressure or anything.

Our second sitting came around and Brandon returned with a beautiful beaded necklace, a huge tiger head created with tiny beads, something that obviously took more hours to make by hand than I could ever imagine. He said that a woman in the tribe had made that for me in appreciation of the piece I was tattooing on him. "It took her a month

to make", he informed me. My mind spins imagining a woman sitting in a hut for 30 days making this piece of art. No electricity, no screens, no technology, literally nothing but her hands putting beautiful, dedicated energy into this piece that I'm now holding in my hands. The amount of love and dedication we can direct via creating with our hands is astounding. Part of me envied her ability to sit and spend time totally devoted to creating one beautiful thing. As I sat in amazement I began to think about her culture, her society, her life that has

been threatened by industrialisation and the constant forward-driving machine of cultural "progress". What is this "progress" that destroys beauty in its wake, could it be destroying us too? My head swirls with thoughts and questions, and I feel like I am brought back to that scene in "A Clockwork Orange" and I am watching our culture destroy these beautiful people





The three brothers: Mathayus [far left], Tumin [center], and Matt Simeone. These guys are even tougher and stronger than they look. Their family contains a long line of Huka Huka champions, raising each generation to be even better fighters than the last. Their family and I have become very close over the years and I am very grateful for their hospitality and friendship. They kept trying to get me to fight in Huka Huka against them but I told them that it would be best for me to just leave it to the professionals.

THEIR DESIRE FOR JUSTICE WAS MET WITH PEPPER SPRAY, FLASH GRENADES, AND ARMED RIOT OFFICERS THAT MERCILESSLY CLASHED WITH THEM

that have created this work of art for me. Sitting, looking at that beautiful beaded tiger, I am left to question what in progressive culture is actually sacred. Through all of this chaos of modern culture, could the sacred still exist?

I find some answers in more messages from Brandon. During our back and forth for this piece, Brandon reached out to the indigenous leader from the Ywalapiti Tribe and answers began to solidify. I started to feel as if there was something I could do, and change just may be able to come. Here continues that message in Brandon's words,

"I reached out to my dear friend and influential indigenous leader Tumin Ywalapiti from the Ywalapiti Tribe in the Xingu when I found out that I would have this opportunity to share any message they felt the world needed to hear. When I finally got ahold of him, he was in the midst of one of the largest indigenous protests in history, as thousands descended upon the capitol of Brasilia to speak out on the injustices and violence they have faced trying to maintain their rights to live and their sovereignty. Their desire for justice was met with pepper spray, flash grenades, and armed riot officers that mercilessly clashed with them, preventing them from reaching the building of the congress. As Tumin reflected on the events and his life in the Xingu, he had many feelings and desires to find ways to fight for the rights of the people of Xingu and to recruit help for their cause. He grew up in the village when times were much different and the out-

side world didn't make its way into the village as it does now.

He is raising a family with two little girls and helps support his community, and he hopes that they all can live a full, happy life in their village surrounded by the nature that has nurtured them for thousands of years. Being a man of a few, yet powerful words, he had this to say:

"The government of Brazil wants to end the indigenous people. They want to dismantle the nature of the Xingu and hand it over to the farmers, corporations, and loggers who want to do away with the tribes. The government suffocates our river with dams and is trying to ruin the health of our people and the land. We do not want the destruction of the forest here inside the Xingu Indigenous Park. We don't want to see the destruction of the trees anymore. Disclose our concerns to the world and to your country my friend. Tell your government that we need their help and the help of the world to protect our culture and the nature.'

"I returned from the Xingu with a new understanding of what it means to be a community, to live in nature, and to live with nature. The sacredness of nature, community, the spirit of the forest, and the present moment can never be forgotten. As I embarked on further along on my spiritual journey to the remote island of Bali, Indonesia, my transition from this realm to a world beyond occurred. I met a woman named Kerry Clancey who had once died during a surgery and came back with the gift of divine healing. I met her while doing my 200-hour yoga teacher



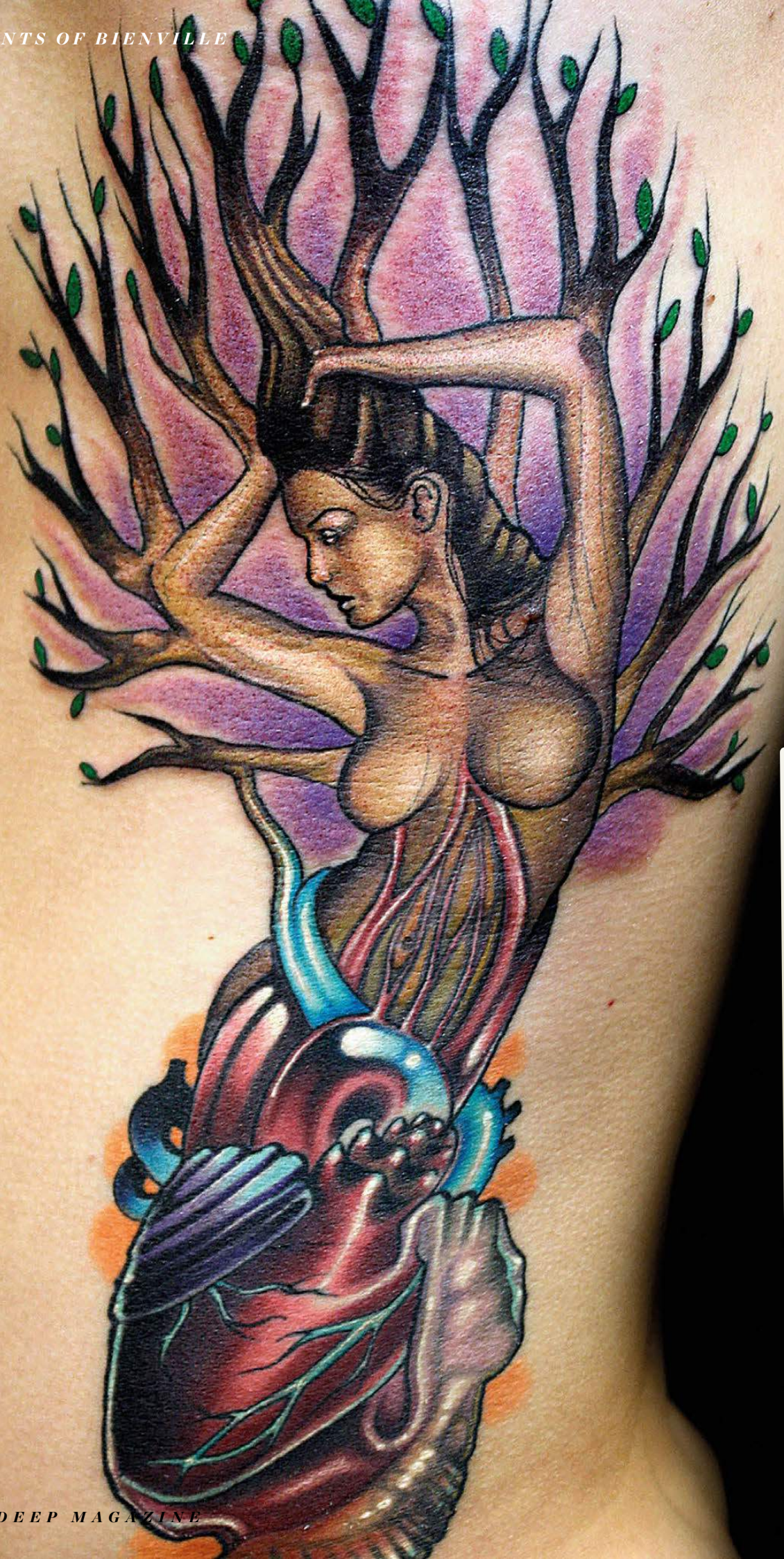
This photo is of a young man from the Ywalapiti who is about to participate a traditional indigenous fighting competition known as the Huka Huka. This ritualistic fight is famous in the Xingu and is held at the conclusion of a ceremony known as the Kuarup. The boys begin training at a very young age and dedicate their lives to the sacred ritual of the Huka Huka. Fighters from all over the world, including world renowned MMA fighter Anderson Silva, come to train with these fierce warriors to learn from them.



The Huka Huka free for all. During the ceremonial fight, each village selects roughly 10 champions to represent them to face off against another tribe's champions. After the champions face off, there is a free for all where anyone can choose to battle it out with any other fighter. Some of these fights are used to settle conflicts and it has been used to settle intertribal differences in the past. There are very strict rules to the fight and it is all based on the honor system: no referees.

training and could not pass up the privilege of having her perform a healing on me. As I lay down on the table, closed my eyes, and had crystals placed along my energy centres (chakras); I was transported to another layer of the lasagna. Here I saw the spirits of animals that came to me in fleeting glimpses, guiding me further into portals of dimensions that seemed to be interwoven into the fabric of creation. During this experience, I was seemingly pulled through a tree stump portal to where I then saw all of my past lives. In one, I was an indigenous shaman in ancient Hawaii performing rituals in a sacred river, in

another I was a Native American running from a warrior on horse back only to be shot in the spine with an arrow (interestingly enough correlating with a back injury I have had in this lifetime), and finally arriving to another realm where all of the infinite versions of physical forms I had inhabited life time after life time were all seated completely motionless on seemingly planetary orbs in space. I had been shown that I had been an indigenous person in countless life times and it was for that reason I had been granted the experience with the Ywalapiti people of Xingu. The indigenous people of the world and I share a soul connection that would bring me continuously into direct realisation of the sacredness and profound infinite dimensions of the universe and the natural world. As the experience came to an end, the spirit of a tiger revealed itself to me as my spiritual guardian. It was with this guardian's help that I was able to return back to my "normal" residing layer of lasagna, protected with the unseen force of my spiritual tribal tiger. Because of the practice of yoga I was able to open not only my mind but also my heart to these experiences. It was yoga that brought me to Bali, guided me to Brazil, and it was yoga that created the union with the universe and myself. It was for this reason I placed the sacred "OM" symbol on the third eye of the tiger. The symbol "OM" representing the 4 aspects of life: the creative force (A), the sustaining force (U), the destructive



This sign marks the border of the Xingu National Park, the protected indigenous land where their sovereignty holds strong for now. You are not legally allowed to enter this land without their permission and are susceptible to being punished by whatever means they find necessary if trespassing. You can see there are bullet holes through the sign showing the local attitude towards the indigenous peoples' rights to their land.



This little lady is one of Tumin's daughter Ahilla. This picture was taken when she was around 2 years old during my first visit to the village as I was teaching her how to play guitar. Regardless of the fact that we couldn't understand each others' languages very well, whenever I started playing Bob Marley they all understood and thoroughly enjoyed the positive vibrations. Music is the true universal language.

THE GOVERNMENT OF BRAZIL WANTS TO END THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE. THEY WANT TO DISMANTLE THE NATURE OF THE XINGU AND HAND IT OVER TO THE FARMERS, CORPORATIONS, AND LOGGERS...

force (M), and the infinite or silence. This vibration, the sound of creation itself is and always will bring me back to this understanding. It is with this combined imagery that my life will be forever guided by not only my spiritual guardian and the practice of yoga, but the union with the sacred that only the people of Xingu could show me. The tiger tattoo is sacred.

“The gravity of the possibility of losing your home, your rights, and your culture that has survived for thousands of years despite all odds is something none of us in the modern world could fathom. As I learned more from Tumin and the rest of the various tribes around the world I have had the honour of befriending such as the Navajo People of the United States of America, the Maori People of New Zealand, the First Nation People of Canada, and many others; I realised that every indigenous tribe, past or present, shares an almost identical story: an invading force attempted to or is still attempting to destroy their people and all traces of their culture through war, disease,



I MET A WOMAN NAMED KERRY CLANCEY WHO HAD ONCE DIED DURING A SURGERY AND CAME BACK WITH THE GIFT OF DIVINE HEALING

dishonesty, legal manipulation, and religious persecution. Almost every tribe is still, and I mean as of this very moment, fighting for their right to exist and to have the world recognise the atrocities committed against them and the legitimacy of their sovereignty. In this day and age, one would think that we are beyond mindsets such as “manifest destiny” and labelling those who we don’t understand as “savages”, but unfortunately that is not the case. We like to think we are beyond behaviour such as violating treaties or committing genocide but actions such as the Dakota Pipeline, a violation of a long standing treaty on sacred land, and the continued slaughter of indigenous people in the Amazon prove otherwise. I urge you to reach out to your local tribal delegation (yes, there is a 99% chance there is an indigenous population where you live that you were unaware of) and try to connect with these beautiful people and offer your support in any way. They hold the knowledge of the Earth that we have lost touch with as we have moved into the industrial age and beyond. They hold the playful, innocent true nature of humanity that we have bastardised by building walls around it, forcing it into cubicles, and putting screens in-between ourselves to further distance ourselves from one another. They hold the wisdom of the sacred, the connection we all share with each other, our planet, the universe, and the worlds beyond. The indigenous people are sacred.”

In the end of his message I am brought back to my earlier question, Through all of this chaos of modern culture, could the sacred still exist? The answer is yes, and in Brandon’s words, “The indigenous people are sacred.” We as a people now have a responsibility to honour this, in whatever ways we can. Let it be through reaching out to our local indigenous population to help, to work within our local communities to unite against the forces of corporate oppression and destruction of sacred land, or to honour the gifts we have from this earth. We can do some-



Two young boys facing off during the Huka Huka free for all. During the beginning of the fight, they circle each other and chant noises that make the sound “huka huka huka huka”, thus leading to its name. Each part of the fight is symbolic and the only way you can win is by grabbing the back of your opponent’s thigh, putting them on their back, or they give up. A champion is not crowned at the end of each ceremony, rather it is acknowledged after years of continued victories.

thing. I am reminded all of this from doing this tattoo of a tiger, one that changed its stripes. The analogy could stand to say that maybe a tiger can change its stripes, and maybe we can change to create a better tomorrow. For the sake of this planet, we have to. ▣

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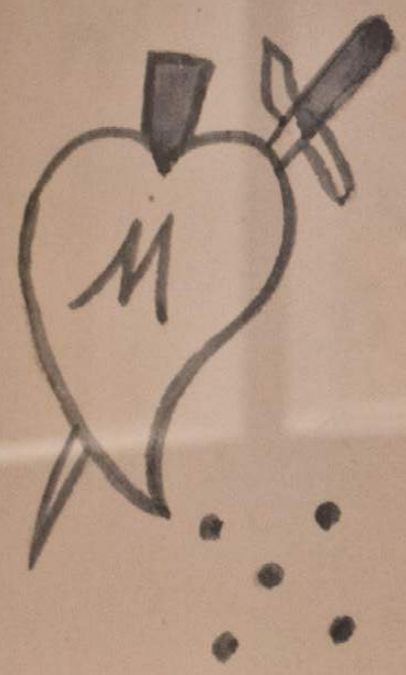
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SKIN AND INK



*Perfectly preserved tattooed skin presented in a 16th century palace in Lisbon, Portugal makes for the kind of exhibition that would catch anyone's attention, let alone a tattoo lover's. Dubbed *O mais profundo é a pele* or *The Most Profound Is the Skin*, the unique show in question centred around 60 historic specimens taken from the autopsied bodies of individuals who walked Lisbon's streets at the turn of the 20th century. How could we possibly resist digging deeper?*

Lisbon's Museu do Design e da Moda (MUDE), the city's prestigious design and fashion museum, is no stranger to hosting treasures of the highest calibre, ranging from the 19th century to today, but its latest show was an admittedly surprising step in a very new and very exciting direction.

Teaming up with the Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal e Ciências Forenses (i.e. the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences), MUDE put a truly unique collection on display: a collection of tattooed human skin that has been meticulously preserved, some of it for over a century.

Titled *O mais profundo é a pele* or *The Most Profound Is the Skin*, the show, which ran from March to June, was hosted in the

exposição exhibition

o mais profundo é a pele

Coleção de tatuagens 1910-40
Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal e Ciências Forenses

31.03 - 25.06.2017

Palácio Pombal / MUDE Fora de Portas

Palácio Pombal, rua de O Século 79, 1200-433 Lisboa
terça a domingo 10h00 - 18h00 encerrado segunda // tuesday to sunday 10am - 6pm closed monday



fundo é a pele?

The richness of the collection and its meaning for the urban, social and cultural characterisation of Lisbon's typical neighbourhoods during the first half of the 20th century in which the tattoo was mixed with marginality, prostitution, fado music and seafarers.

Where did the name for the exhibition come from?

The title was born from a Paul Valery statement made in 1969: "That which is most profound in the human being is the skin." To me, it tells us that, sometimes, it is in the obvious or in the visible that we can find more layers of information.

What was it like organising this atypical show? Were there any major challenges that came with handling real human skin?

The most specific thing was the ethical care we had to have due to the fact that we were dealing with real human skin. All the personal data about the women and the men to whom each skin fragment belongs was deleted in all the labels, photos and other information.

The skins come from the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences – what was their intended use? Why were they originally preserved?

At the end of the 19th century and first decades of

Pombal Palace, a regal mansion built in the sixteenth century by the Marquis of Pombal. An unexpected home, to say the least, for 60 glass jars containing fragments of preserved tattooed skin taken from autopsied bodies between 1910 and 1940, as well as 200 tattoo drawings. Accompanying each jar was documentation that included information on the location of the tattoo, its origins and more, all in an effort to paint a "socio-cultural portrait of each tattooed individual."

MUDE's mission in organising *O mais profundo é a pele* was to better examine the most popular motifs and techniques associated with tattooing at the start of the 20th century, as well as to better understand the tattooed population who walked the streets of Portugal at that time, calling popular neighbourhoods like Alfama, Bairro Alto and Mouraria home.

While the thrilling exhibition was in full swing, we caught up with Bárbara Coutinho, MUDE's founder, director and programmer, to learn about what it took to organise such a special show, get her take on how design, art and tattooing are intertwined and find out what the future holds for *O mais profundo é a pele*.

What first inspired you to organize *O mais pro-*





the 20th century, among the medical community, the practice of tattooing was believed to have a close relationship with the predisposition to crime. It's in this context that, at the beginning of the 20th century, the Lisbon morgue (and later the National Legal Medicine Institute of Lisbon) began studying, collecting and cataloguing tattoos. Some medical academies considered tattoos to be an expression of a psychopathological disorder, therefore, [they thought] tattoos could help in the identification of delinquents or even be a determining factor.

The skin fragments were collected from autopsied people. The drawings were marked in record books during the registration of corpses at autopsies or taken in living individuals during legal medical examinations. All this work was also done while keeping in mind the former museum of the National Legal Medicine Institute of Lisbon, which existed until the 1990s.

Each of the skins on display is accompanied by a description of the person who it belonged to. Do you think it's possible to get to know an individual just by looking at their tattoos?

Absolutely not. However, I believe the body is a map on which people record the expression of their life and iden-

Lisbon, Portugal

Located on the Tagus river, Lisbon is a picturesque coastal city that also happens to be Portugal's largest, and its capital. Lisbon boasts stunning historic architecture, including the majestic São Jorge Castle, world-renowned folk music known as fado, amazing wine and mouth-watering cuisine centred around the freshest seafood imaginable. In short, it's got everything you could ever dream of and more.

tity, distinguishing themselves from others or being integrated into a particular group. That's why the tattoo has a strong ritualistic and symbolic meaning, as well as a very particular social value.

What is the No. 1 goal of O mais profundo é a pele?

For MUDE, this exhibition had the particularity of giving insight into Portuguese tattoo design during the first half of the last century, particularly the main themes and motifs drawn, the lines, the techniques and the chromatic and formal characteristics of the drawings.

For anyone who visited the exhibition, what kind of message or impression do you hope they took away?

Two things. First, the recognition that the motivations that

lead someone to permanently inscribe a specific drawing, motif or painting on their skin are innumerable, but that they may not have changed so much over time. Second, the recognition of tattoos as an ancient tradition, assuming varied meanings in diverse cultures and times.

Many people still don't believe that tattoos, design and art go hand in hand. With MUDE being a fashion and design museum, what is your opinion on the link between tattoos and more traditional art forms?

As founder, director and programmer of MUDE, I have been trying to build a path that underlines the existence of design as a human and ancient practice. That's why, in 2010, we presented an exhibition about design and seeds and have organised shows about tools, crafts and other aspects of humanity to stress that design has existed since the Homo Sapiens first appeared and showed the capacity to think and to transform the environment with their hands and the tools they created.

Tattoos are an expression of mankind. Throughout history, the tradition of tattooing has been socially valued, repressed or used for different purposes. Having come to be considered by many authors as an ornamental practice of "primitive" and marginal people and criminals – therefore understood as an unacceptable act in "evolved societies" – today tattooing is democratised, affirming itself as a common expression, fashion and artistic practice. Over time, we can see its influence in photography, cinema, design and fashion. Therefore, it is an object of analysis by philosophy, art, medicine, sociology, psychology, anthropology and, also, design.

Some people might find the idea of displaying human skin in a museum macabre. How do you respond to such a point of view?

The exhibition presents a collection that is a mirror of a period in time and a medical theory that existed.

What is the tattoo scene like in Portugal today? Do any taboos still remain?

Tattooing is recognised as an artistic expression. That's why we started the exhibition with a brief foray into the present. We invited five artists based in Portugal to look at the INMLCF collection and reinterpret the motifs or themes that touched them the most. The result showed how the tattoo is also assumed as the signature of the artist who draws it. It also proved the numerous existing styles. Abstract or figurative; realistic or symbolic and fantastic; complex or simple; high-tech or using fine arts techniques (such as pointillism or watercolour) or more ritualistic.

Is there any chance this amazing exhibition will travel to other parts of the world in the future?

The skin fragments will return to the National Institute's storage. Regarding the possibility of it becoming a travelling exhibition, we didn't plan for that. □



Tattooed Skin On Show

Although preserving tattooed skin isn't a new practice [London's Wellcome Collection is home to over 300 specimens], exhibiting it sure is. The trend is a rapidly growing one, however, and individuals are beginning to donate their tattooed bodies to museums. Individuals like retired school teacher Geoff Ostling who has agreed to give his tattoos to the National Museum of Australia after his passing, Irish performance artist Sandra Ann Vita Minchin who plans to auction off her backpiece when the time comes and Tim Steiner who has already promised to donate the work on his back to a German collector.



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COME BITE THE APPLE

WITH ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE SHOWS—EMPIRE STATE—RECENTLY IN THE CAN, WE FIGURED IT WAS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO TAKE A LOOK AT NEW YORK CITY ACROSS THE DECADES. KICK BACK AND SUBMERGE YOURSELF IN THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

THE STUDIO WITHOUT FEAR

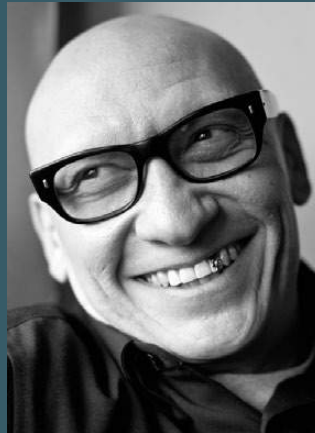
AFTER COLLECTING TATTOO RELATED ITEMS OVER A PERIOD OF 30 YEARS, BRAD FINK OPENED HIS OWN MUSEUM, A SPACE DEDICATED PERMANENTLY TO THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN TATTOOING IN HIS NEW YORK STUDIO, DAREDEVIL. LIKE OTHER TATTOOERS BEFORE HIM, BRAD IS PERPETUATING A TRADITION AMONG PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CAREFUL ABOUT TAKING CARE OF IT. ESPECIALLY WHEN TATTOOING DIDN'T HAVE THE ATTENTION IT HAS TODAY FROM CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS...

daredeviltattoo.com/museum

Thanks to people like Brad and Michelle Myles, (his business partner and tattooer at Daredevil), these little museums are a permanent window opened to the people curious about history, not only of tattooing in New-York but also in America. If today, cultural institutions are more and more interested in surfing on the popularity of tattooing and making up ambitious exhibitions like the one at the New-York Historical Society Museum, still, they are ephemeral. At the Daredevil Tattoo Museum, tattooed and non-tattooed people have the opportunity to see, whenever they want to, rare and precious pieces of the past like tattoo machines, flash from Bert Grimm, Samuel O'Reilly, Ace Harlyn, Cap Coleman, Sailor Jerry, the Moskowitz Brothers, photos of Charlie Wagner and Bowery tattooers... An exploration of the past with the timeless sound of the machines buzzing behind.

What does this collection represent to you?

These things are the soul of tattooing and the history that surrounds it and sums it up. When I started it was about the core and its origins, it felt really important to have stuff around me. My house is basically full of old stuff. My wife has a very different mentality, she doesn't understand why I need this. To me, it's like a security blanket, having it makes me feel comfortable. It embraces and it embodies what my life is, what Michelle's life is.



When did you start your collection?

My first machine was given to me by Mitch, my mentor who taught me tattooing, probably in 1989-90. It was a personal "Jonesy" machine and signed by Earl Brown from Saint Louis, Missouri. I come from there. Mitch was a collector of WWII memorabilia, like sort of german-nazi-war type, he had this taste for antique. At that time I was still in high-school and all of a sudden, as I was tattooing, I had money. All of this was new to me and I wanted stuff, I needed stuff and I became an incurable collector.

The collecting bug got me in general. Not only tattooing, whatever appealed to me, like sideshow banners. But tattooing stuff it is like anything else.

How did the idea of the museum come out?

When we first opened our shop in 1997 with Michelle, that neighbourhood was typical old New York - coffee shops, bars... Throughout the years we got pushed out because of gentrification and we moved here seven blocks south in the present location, 4 years ago. We knew that Chatham square was close from here and one day it really hit us, how significant emplacement that we are with tattooing. Martin Hildebrandt first set up his shop around 1858 several blocks from Chatham square, then O'Reilly came about. We're right in the myth of American tattooing. We thought: "Why don't we just put some display cases in here and display some of this collection?"



How important is it for you to share it?

All this stuff means nothing if it's stacked in trunks. Last week, we had a high-school class coming, and that's... huge! Can you imagine that? If I would have done this 20 years ago I guarantee you that we would not have the interest that we have today, because it was still looked at like an outsider thing, not even an art form; now it's "folk art or whatever", now it's this high outsider art in a sense. Michelle did a fantastic map of locations and significant people of early tattooing. Martin Hildebrandt does not any longer exist but you can go to that exact spot and stand there. After 30 years of collecting, I feel like Michelle and myself we're sort of keepers of this and now it's

become more important for us to be able to share it with other people.

Is this museum supposed to last?

We just got our museum status so now we're able to be looked upon as a museum. Because we are, really. A lot of these objects are now owned by this non-profit status, they're now protected. After I'm dead and gone, this museum is going to own these. Even though I'm not a museum curator, everything is documented, everything is archived; we're trying our best to do it properly, there's really no need for me to give or to sell this collection to what society thinks it's a more legitimate museum. I don't think it's any less legitimate for me to call this a museum than the MET or the New York Historical society.

There are mixed opinions among tattooers towards institutions doing exhibitions about the tattoo culture, what do you think about it?

I think it's great that they are doing exhibits. And is not a new thing, they already did in the past. I encourage it because it does nothing but publicise tattooing which is ultimately good for everybody, right now there's more tattooers than there's never been; it's good business bottom line. Tattooing's here, it's not fast fashion, it's way to permanent to be a fad. It has always found its place in society, even before the electric came about.

Which items hold a special place for you in your collection?





Each and every one of these things is so significant. Obviously the Edison pen is because, although he didn't make it as a tattoo machine, it was used by early tattooers as a tattoo machine. At that time, during the industrial revolution there were many things - dental pluggers and other types of machines - but there were people smart enough to figure these things out, making their life easier. I'm from Saint Louis, Missouri, so Bert Grimm who had a shop there, is very significant and this image you see on the wall, right there, the "Sun Dance", that's the original "Sun Dance" that hang in Bert Grimm's studio. Now, you see so many people that have that tattoo on them. I also have the original "Rock of Ages" from the same studio, and the original "garden of Eden"; I have original pigment cans that Bert used.

And the things you like the most?

The O'Reilly's. Those came from O'Reilly's sketchbooks, there's only been one known to exist. I have a painting that Lew the Jew Alberts did. I can look at each of these items and something may be visually stimulating. I'm just lucky that I was able to acquire very significant items that tell a story of our lives. It's my livelihood and it's such a deep art form. It's so fucking permanent but it's not, it really is such a huge heavy form of art. And that's what I don't get about these stuffy sort of conservative old white men that are on these boards of these high academic museums, I don't get their mentality. Because what else can you do that is so permanent, that's gonna be wherever you take it? It's gon-



na travel with you and nobody can take it from you, the IRS can't take it from you, nobody can steal it right? It's permanent but when you're dead it's gone. Unless you're in Japan and they make a fucking lamp out of you.

OUTLAWED!

HOW MANY CITIES IN THE WORLD CAN CLAIM TO BE AT THE CONVERGENCE OF TRIBAL TATTOOING, SAILORS, SIDE-SHOW WOMEN, BEING THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE FIRST PATENTED ELECTRIC TATTOO MACHINE AND AT THE SAME TIME BANNING TATTOOING FOR OVER 3 DECADES? SPANNING 300 YEARS OF THIS INCREDIBLE HISTORY, THE EXHIBITION "TATTOOED NEW-YORK" WHICH JUST OPENED AT THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY PAYS A CONSISTENT AND SINCERE TRIBUTE TO THE CRAFT. WITH A SELECTION OF 250 FINEST ITEMS EXHIBITED, ARTEFACTS RANGING FROM NATIVE AMERICAN WEAPONRY TO 20TH CENTURY FLASH DONE BY PRESTIGIOUS NEW-YORK PIONEERS SUCH AS SAMUEL O'REILLY, BOB WICKS, ARTWORKS MADE BY VISIONARY ARTISTS OF THE 70'S AND 80'S, THE EXHIBITION, EVEN THOUGH BUILD UP FOR A BROAD AUDIENCE, WOULD SATISFY ANY PASSIONATE. CRISTIAN PANAITO WHO CURATED THE SHOW, GIVES US A TOUR:

Before being the biggest city in the world in the beginning of the 20th century, New-York was a big port. How important was it for the development of tattooing?

It's a growing city and the port is the hub of the East coast dedicated to the trade. As far as we know, the first permanent tattoo shop in the US was established by Martin Hildebrandt in 1858-59. Martin was a sailor, he served on USS United States Frigate during the Civil War; he originally tattooed soldiers on both sides of the war and opened his shop in New-York, on the shores of the East River, what may be now south of Manhattan bridge. In the press, the shop is described as a tavern with artworks he painted himself on the wall, tattoos were done with trade needles tied to a bundle and done by hand. Hildebrandt was already known to be the best in town, he was not shy about saying he marked thousands and thousands of people throughout his life. He had a portfolio of designs he would show to his customers. The prices went to 50 cents to a 100 dollars – which, if accurate, is a huge sum.

Among the different sections, the exhibition focuses on the history of women and tattooing which connects to sailors and also Native Americans. Can you tell us about it?

Both the Native Americans and the sailor's stories -that we reach in the exhibition too- converge in their story, because of the sideshow attractions, which is where the story of women and tattoos begins. The sideshow tattooed ladies found inspiration in all these stories there were of sailors being captured by natives, like Captain Constantenus. Earlier in the 1800's, there's a specific context and a lot of anxiety in the USA. With people moving towards the West of the country, there's a common apprehension towards "the others", the Indians. There are stories of women being captured there. And some of



the early tattooed ladies use it for their own narratives; like Nora Hildebrandt, the first documented tattooed lady. Even though they tattooed their bodies with various symbols, mostly patriotic sailor imagery. In the story she constructed, Nora was captured along with her father by Native Americans

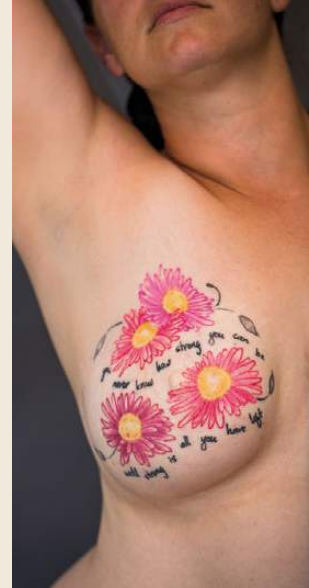
and the Indian chief forced the father, Martin, to put the tattoos on her during 365 days.

How important was tattooing for the Native American people?

For the North-East woodland tribes - the Iroquois Nation, made of 6 tribes, and the Algonquian - it seemed to be employed for therapeutic or medicinal purposes, mostly by women, for toothache for example. For men, it has to do with celebrating victories, ritualistic marks, having the protective spirit -usually an animal like a bird, a turtle, etc, both on their body and weaponry. They work also as identifying signatures, there would be tattoos recording the number of men one warrior would have killed too. This mix represents the life experience of the individual. Jack London has this wonderful quote: 'Show me a man with a tattoo and I'll show you a man with an interesting past'. It's beautiful.

In 1891, Samuel O'Reilly patented the first electric tattoo machine. How would you explain that it happened in New York?

The invention seems to just revolutionise the business like anything during the industrial revolution. It was a period of intense innovation and it reached also tattooing in this way. The machine is based on Thomas Edison's invention of electrical pen used for making stencils. Samuel O'Reilly, who was already a tattooer, pretty much took this pen, made a couple changes to it and realised



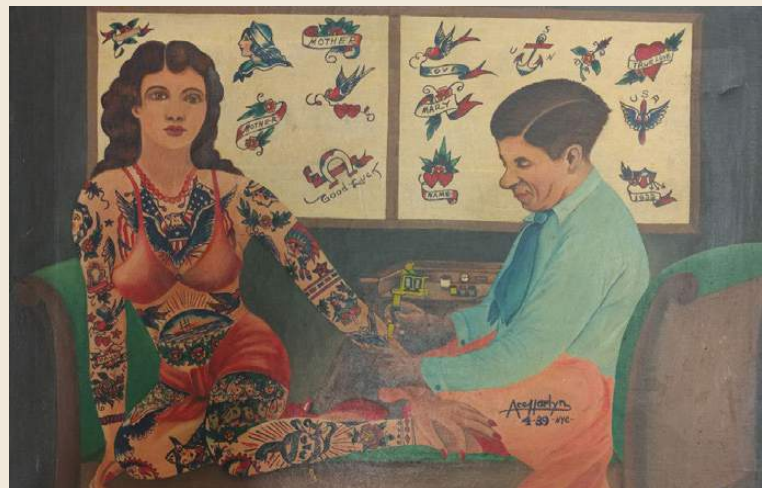
he could use it on skin. He is known to have also allegedly tried other ways to make tattooing faster, like this machine, the dental plug. A few weeks later Tomas Riley in London patents the tattoo machine based on electric coils like the mechanism used for telephone bell.

Who were getting tattooed at that time?

You have the sailors, the « lower-class » and then you have this fashion fad that comes out. It began because of the infatuation with the fashion of the British royalty getting tattoos - King Edward VII started in the 1860's, then King George V got tattooed in Japan in the 1890's. This infatuation with British royalty got to New-York in the 1920's-30's; it still exists here, people really love that. Charlie Wagner is known to have taken « private households », going to the residencies of upper-class women and tattooing them, the Moskowitz brothers are documented having tattooed Opera singers and Wall-Street bankers. There is this great quote from the Moskowitz, there was a banker on Wall Street in the 1950's on which they worked for weeks and was covered with tattoos. But in a business suit you couldn't tell. One of them asked him if he wasn't afraid that people from his rank would judge him and he replied something like: « When you have 2 million dollars in a bank, the world can kiss your ass! ». The Life magazine we have on display in the exhibition says that 1 out of 10 Americans is tattooed in 1936.

Where would the tattooers work in New-York?

In the centre in Manhattan, the Bowery area with Chatham square. This is where you would have Samuel O'Reilly, Charlie Wagner, and quite a few others like the Moskowitz. We have the Norman Rockwell painting in the show because it kind of bring together all these artists. It's been said that the artist borrowed the machine from one of the tattooers from the Bowery, he did some research there and really captured the scene. The Bowery is pretty close to the water so you have all the sailor clientele. You also have the flophouses, brothels, bars, the barber shops... A very dynamic and lively place with colourful characters. It's cheap to rent space, it's full of transit figures, you have bums, sailors, a lots of man who drink, day-labourers looking for a way to make a living for a day...



How would people look at tattoos at that time ?

For the vast majority they were considered a bit unclean, provocative when it came to women. They may have been misunderstood, at the time understood as a sign of promiscuity. But the negative feeling is not something new, it seems to have always been there. Even sailor's and soldier's patriotic stuff, for the public at large provoked anxiety, tattooed people did provoked stress. The tattooed women, the sideshow ones, were seen as available. Albert Perry in his book "Tattoo: Secrets of a strange art" mentions the case ruled in the 1930's of two men who assailed a woman on the street, trying to rape her, because they saw a tattoo on her. The judge ruled in favour of them because they saw that as a sign of provocation.

In 1961, the city decides to ban tattooing, what happened?

The city's health department decided to ban tattooing on an account of hepatitis. According to it, tattooing could provoke and help the spread. That's the official line. Tattoo artists of the time said it was a lie and there was no hepatitis and there was nothing documenting it - even in 1997 when the ban was lifted nothing could confirm it: one tattooer said the ban might have been because the mayor wanted to clean the city before the 1964 World Fair that was the biggest world fair of the time. Another Bowery artist said that a tattooer had a love affair with the city official's wife and it was a personal vendetta. Sometimes you can't make this stuff up.

THE DEAD DECADE

BEFORE BEING A RENOWNED SCHOLAR FOR HIS WORK IN THE TATTOO FIELD INVITED AS A GUEST CURATOR FOR THE EXHIBITION "TATTOOED NEW-YORK", MIKE MC CABE TATTOOED IN NEW YORK WHEN IT WAS STILL ILLEGAL. HE RECOUNTS HOW IT WAS IN THE 80'S, FOR HIM AND OTHER REBELLIOUS CHARACTERS, TO INK AGAINST THE LAW.

When tattooing has been banned in New York in 1961, how did the tattooers react?

There were only a dozen or so people tattooing in tattoo shops in NYC in 1961. They all had to strategise about how to deal with this situation. Tony D'Annessa and Tony "The Pirate Cambria, and Dominic Chance tattooed on West 48th Street. D'Annessa closed his shop and relocated to the back of a cabinet makers shop a few doors away. He painted his tattoo designs on window shades that could be easily rolled up if the police were around. Tony "The Pirate" Cambria moved to New Jersey and so did other tattooers in different directions. Coney Island Freddie worked in Staten Island; Brooklyn Blackie who tattooed in Coney Island, Brooklyn, closed his shop and moved to upstate New York; Stanley and Walter Moskowitz used to tattoo with their father Willie in a shop on the Bowery, moved to Copiague, Long Island.

How did the ban shape the New York tattoo scene?

It became an "Underground" art form in New York City. The tattoo ban forced the identity of tattooing to adopt an "Underground" identity. The illegalisation reinforced many negative cultural stereotypes about tattooing. The whole ambiance of "You are doing something wrong and



bad" attached itself to tattooing in New York City. It added a sense of danger. A sense of outlaw. It made the process more outlaw, until the re-legalisation of tattooing in 1997.

In the 80's, what was it like to tattoo during the ban?

I realised the tattooing was called illegal but as an artist I didn't care. Tattoo is an art form and I am an artist. I started my apprenticeship with Richard Tyler in 1980. But tattooing was difficult. It was impossible to buy equipment. You had to make your own needles and mix up your own ink. Still, I tattooed 100% sterile procedure. But very few people got involved. Tattoo artists existed only by word of mouth. They had business cards with their phone numbers, no addresses. A customer would call and make an appointment. If a tattooer

did good tattoos his or her reputation would grow. Very similar to what happens today. But in the 1970s and 80s and 90s there was very little information about tattooing. Therefore, customers were not educated about good and bad. However, people could see the good graphics of a good tattoo. It looked better.

Have tattooers been arrested?

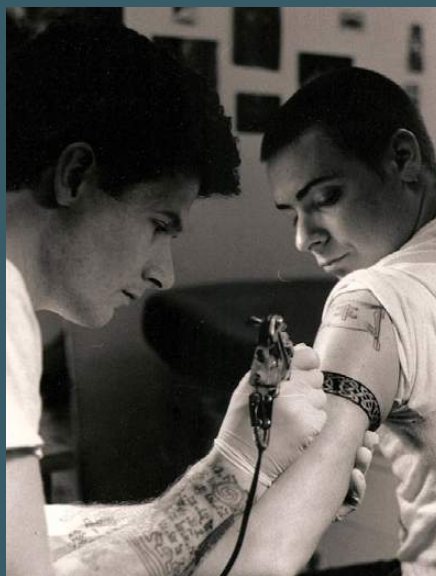
I don't think so. Not during my period of time. I had a few NYC police officers and firemen as clients. My cus-



tomers were fire marshals and detectives. They carried guns. They would come to my studio, take off their guns and then get tattooed. Several times I had customers in my studio and when these detectives would come and take off their guns the customers would get very nervous. It was funny and everyone would laugh.

The end of the 70's and the beginning of the 80's were also a very creative period with a new generation of people with an art background getting involved in tattooing. Did artists become tattoo artists?

Art critic Marcia Tucker and writer wrote an unprecedented ARTFORUM Magazine article in May 1981 titled TATTOO about the art form of tattooing. The article featured Ruth Marten, Jamie Summers and Mike Bakaty. This encouraged art people to explore tattooing and get tattooed. Ruth tattooed out of her artist loft in downtown Manhattan during the 1970s. Her clientele were mostly downtown artist people, as Jamie whose style was based on abstract spiritual power images. Mike, who had an art background, tattooed from his artist loft located at Bowery and Houston streets. His clientele was a mixture of downtown art, music, motorcycle, creative people. Legendary folk artist Thom deVita tattooed a rough clientele from his shop located between Avenue C and D on E. 4th Street. At the same time in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, Tony Polito tattooed a more traditional tattoo clientele. There were probably other people tattooing illegally in New York



City at the time but they never established reputations.

Who were also getting tattooed in the 80's?

The downtown New York City Punk Rock and Rock and Roll music scene got tattooed. Bob Roberts (now working in Los Angeles) developed a very good reputation as the leading tattooer of downtown musicians. He tattooed illegally above a pizza shop located at 23rd Street and 3rd Avenue. Mike Perfetto tattooed many hardcore punk musicians from his tattoo shop in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Besides, gangs have always used tattooing as a mark of identity and loyalty. Pete Giaquinto tattooed a traditional tattoo clientele in Ozone Park, Queens; Angelo Scotto tattooed traditional tattoo images and customers in the Bronx. I, Mike McCabe tattooed from my studio located on East 5th Street and the Bowery. I tattooed an artist clientele, like Cat, the woman from France I shared my studio with. She was doing abstract tribal type designs.

Even though tattooing was still illegal the tattoo community would bound through regular meetings organised by the Tattoo Society, can you tell us about that?

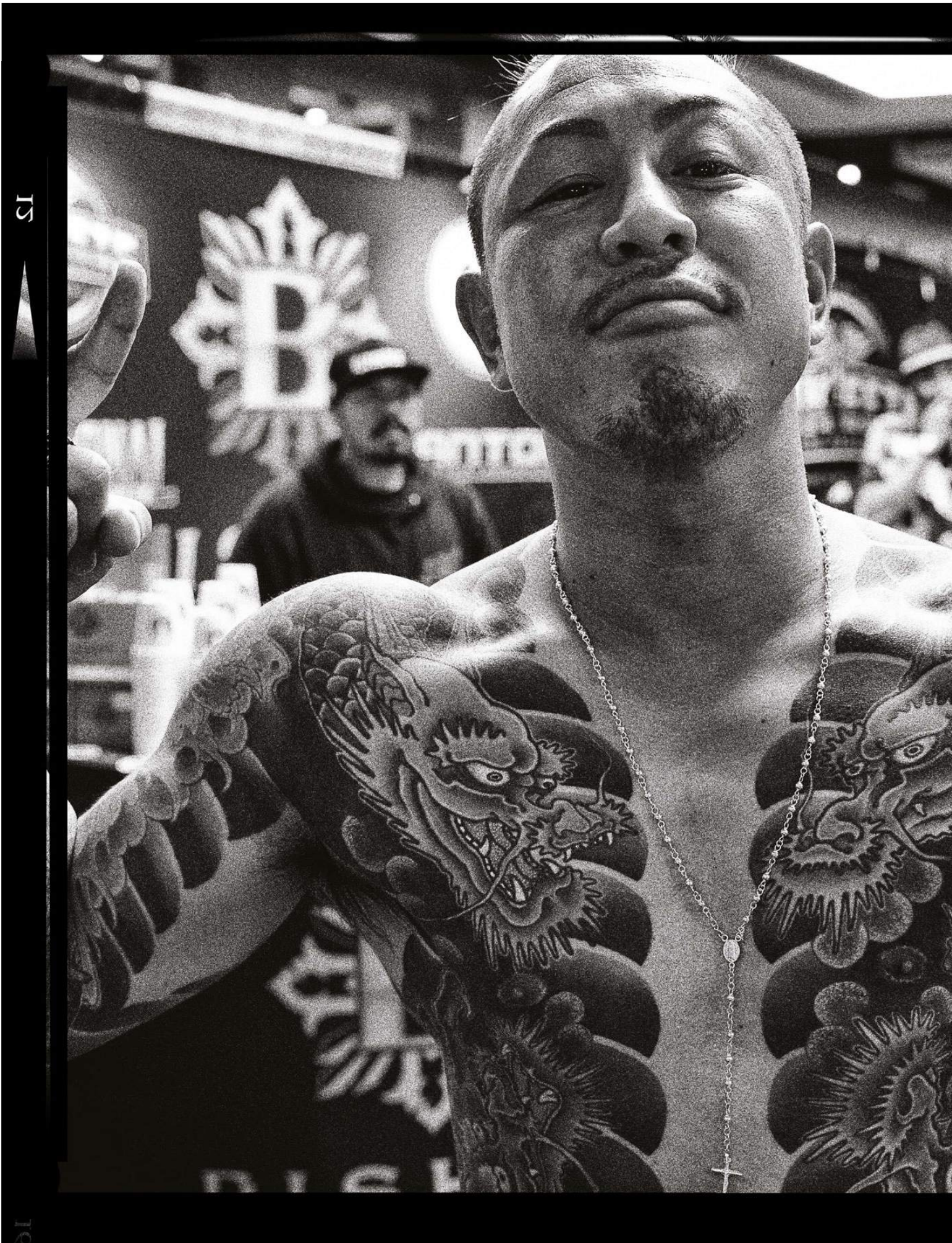
Clayton Patterson is an artist and documentarian. During the 1980s he organised a small event every month he called the Tattoo Society. The meeting was held at the Sixth Sense Gallery located on E. 6th Street and Avenue A. This informal meeting created a safe space for people who liked tattoos and tattooing. Every month 15 to 20 people would meet, talk, show off their tattoos, drink wine and beer. It was a very encouraging atmosphere. People would bring their art and everyone would discuss looking at the art.

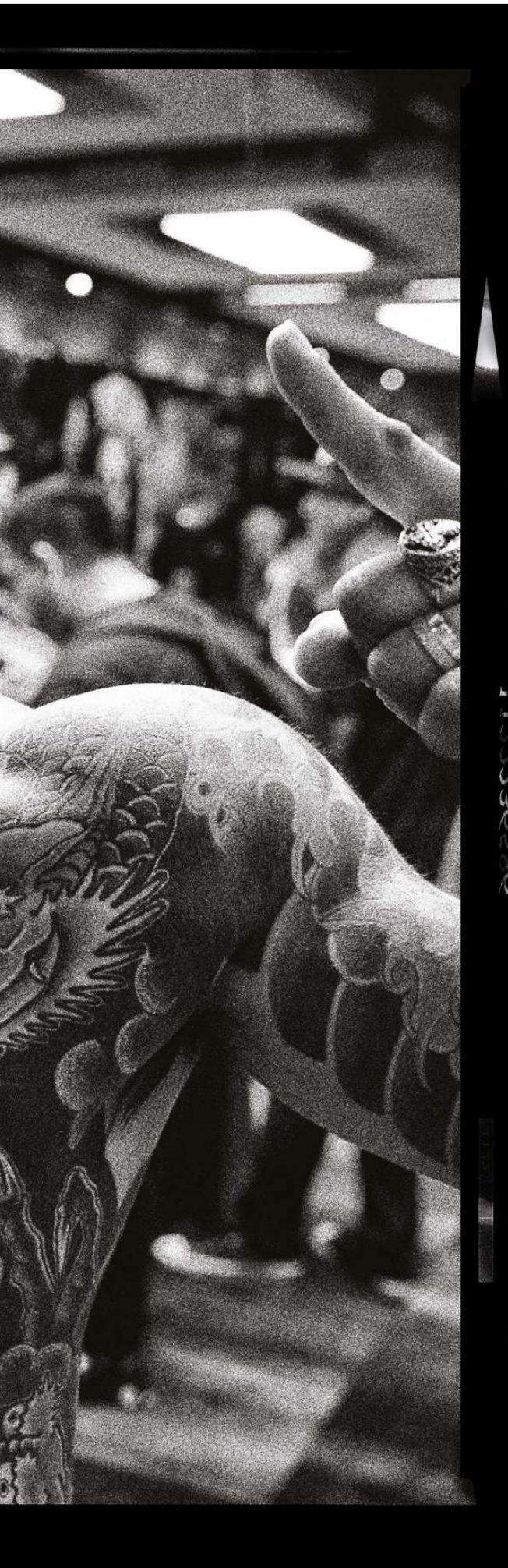
In 1997, the city lifts the ban, what was the motivation?

The city realised it was the responsible thing to do. There was a year long process of the city contacting illegal tattooers and inviting them to take part in the process. The city asked the tattooers opinions about how to legalise tattooing. There were open meeting at city hall with the health department and the tattoo community. The city developed a class about proper sterilisation. Tattoo artists had to take the class and pass the test to get their tattoo license. This made tattooing more professional.

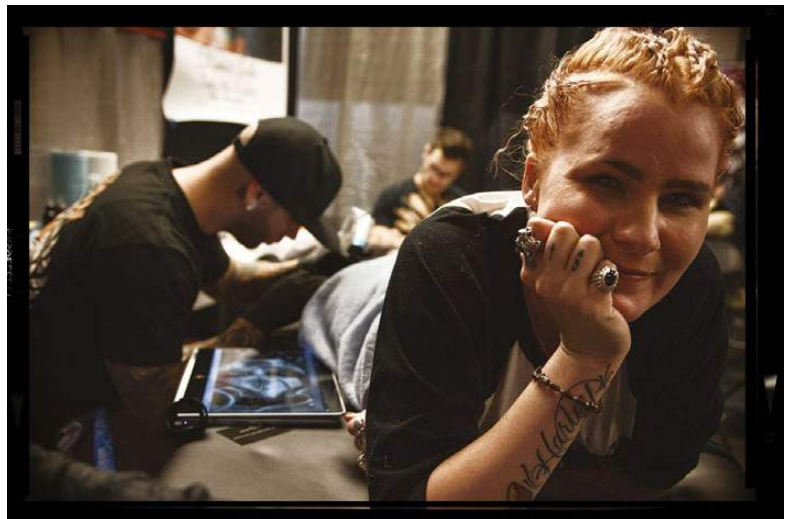
Some people tend to romanticise this ban period, what do you think about it?

I guess people did romanticise the ban era. It made the tattoo process more vital for people. People were defying western cultural norms by getting tattooed and in NYC they were actually breaking the law. This accentuated the challenging of cultural norms. □



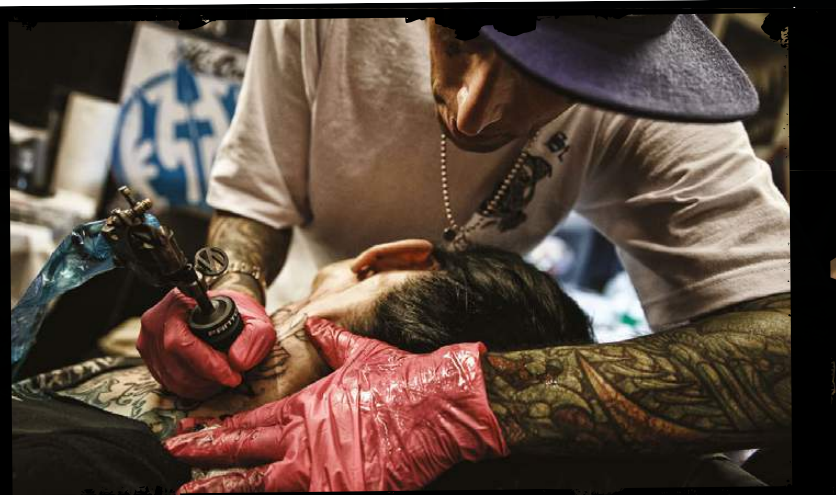
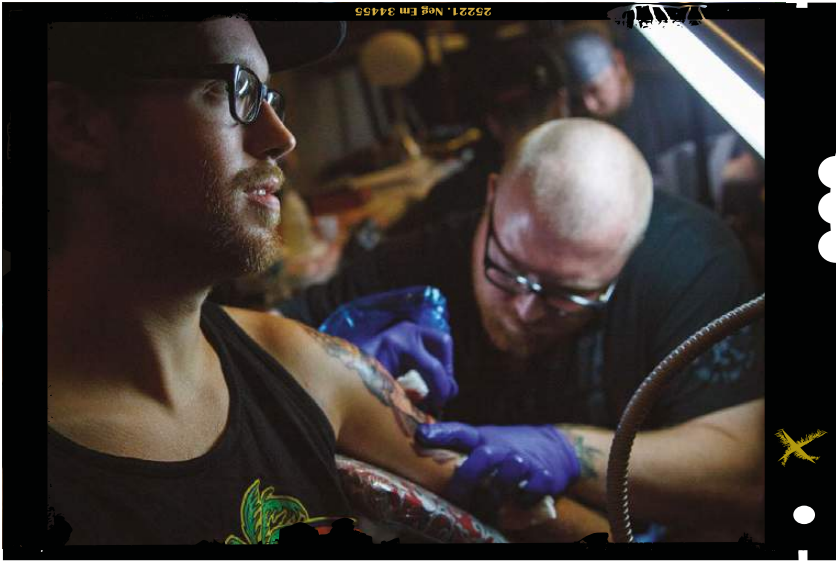


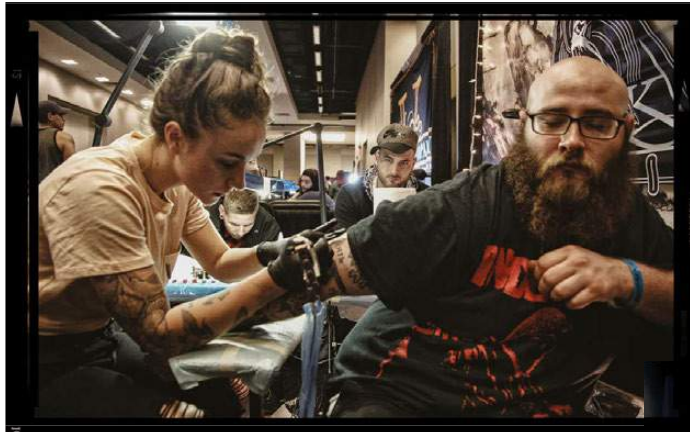
Scenes from
**EMPIRE
STATE
TATTOO
EXPO**



And so we come to the main event. Last month the Empire State Tattoo Expo took place at the Midtown Hilton and we have come to expect, it's become quite the place to hang out if you're looking to bump into the likes of Paul Booth, Nikko Hurtado, Stefano Alcantara, Carlos Torres, Robert Hernandez... hell, the list is long and impressive. If you've never been (and come on, you don't need any other reason than it's New York) make some time next year and get it on. Meantime, here's a look at what you missed a few weeks back, courtesy of Christian Miles.

SCENES FROM EMPIRE STATE TATTOO EXPO







BRISTOL TATTOO CONVENTION

Hosted at Brunel's Old Station, Bristol Tattoo Convention couldn't have been more accessible, situated right within the very grounds of Temple Meads train station just on the edge of the city centre...



The venue itself proved a perfect embodiment of the show with its authentic looking and beautifully preserved Victorian architecture. It radiated authenticity and a love of all things traditional and, for me at least, this was a tattoo show put on for those very reasons—to celebrate tattoo art across the board, but in particular its roots. On arriving, I met Fil, one of the artists at Broad Street who organise the event. Fil was keen to stress how the vibe of the show, and in particular the styles I would see pushed to the forefront, is very much a reflection of the team working over at the studio and what they love most about tattooing.



There was a lot of blackwork going on, for one thing, and that's something Fil himself would be known for and indeed has picked up awards for over the years. Artists such as Darryll Richards stood out for me within this genre as well as Sam Rivers of Curiosities Tattoo Studio, showcasing not only his super-clean pattern work but also his recently published book on the topic entitled Sayagata. And then there was Hanumantra of Unlty, working alongside partner-in-crime Jo Harrison. Not only did his tattooing stand out but also his collaborative oil paintings



Adam Sage



REBECCA

Overall impression of the show.

Fantastic location, just a stone throw from the train station. I arrived to queues outside, which is always a promising sign, and £10 for a day ticket is spot on. Really impressed by both the artists and the traders—definite quality over quantity. The event had a really good, chilled atmosphere.

Which artists impressed you the most?

Great to see some awesome women at work—Jo Harrison, Jody Dawber and Jenna Kerr were creating some beautiful tattoos.

Did you get any work done?

Not this time. It was my first time and I was there to see what it was like and to visit some of the traders who I know from other tattoo events. Kerry Evans Art is always a pitstop for me.

Will you be back next year?

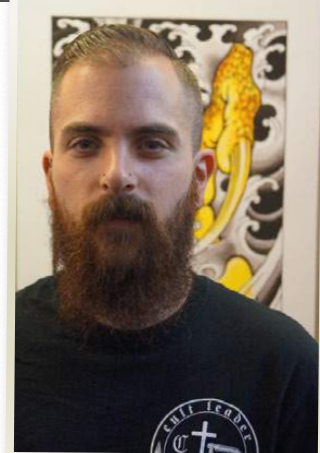
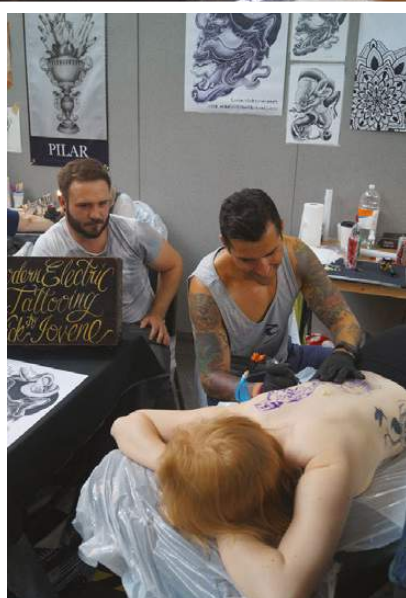
Definitely! And with plenty of spending money!

with Jo, on display as part of the show's art exhibition, perfectly merging the respective styles of the two artists to create dynamic and eye-catching portraits from pop culture. Believe me, Her Madge has never looked so happy and glorious!

Another style that was prolific at the show was traditional, again a fav of the Broad Street crew, not least Jimmie Tatts and Marcos. Flash sheet walk-ups are becoming increasingly popular across the entire convention circuit, of course, but I've yet to see it celebrated quite as enthusiastically as I witnessed at Bristol this weekend. Mattia Gaffo and Davide Andreoli of The Italian Rooster really stood out for me here, of course, alongside artists I was less familiar with, such as Jon Vasey, aka Sway Tattooer, from Sacred Electric Tattoo in Leeds. His super clean, fuss-free take on the style is right up my

street and very much on a par with other old school ink slingers I've been talking up in the mag lately such as Lewis Davies at Gung Ho! and Jack Wolf over at Blood & Honey. In a never-ending sea of neo-trad, it's great to see artists really getting back to their roots and doing it in a way which feels authentic not only in terms of execution, but presentation and process, too.

Other styles were available, of course, and it was great to run into Jody Dawber of Jayne Doe, pushing her definitely bright and colourful fusion of neo-trad and new school, as well as Chloe Black, whose darker take on realism has been on my radar for a number of years, now. Jo Harrison I've already mentioned, Queen of free-flowing colour work. Jenna Kerr was there, too, no stranger to this mag with her own brand of bright-and-bold, and, as you would expect, incredibly busy



TSAM

Overall impression of the show.

A welcoming, modern show with authentic nods to the old school of conventions and tattooing.

Which artists impressed you the most?

Seeing Stewart Robson tattooing was great. Awesome to see Xed back at work and in fine form. Italian trad artists amazingly represented, lots of inspiring work there.

Did you get any work done?

No work done at the show, though LOTS that I could happily have walked away with. Definitely plan to get a piece from Han Shinko after seeing his work in person.

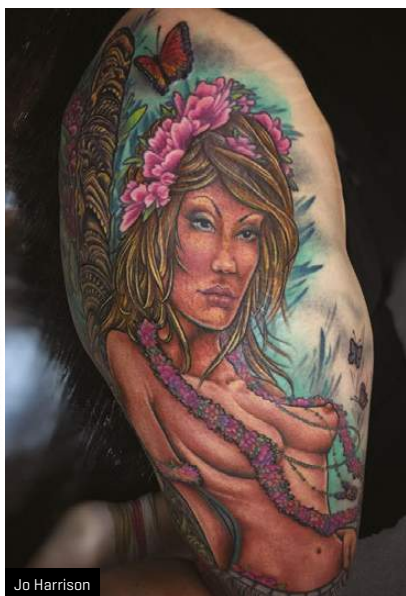
Will you be back next year?

100% going back, this time with a big fat wallet.

every time I passed by her table. In fact, the quality of work right across the board was really solid at this show and that's something you can't take for granted anymore—with an increasing number of conventions throughout the UK and beyond, one might expect standards to slip, artists able to pick and choose which shows they work. But that certainly wasn't the case here, punters very much spoilt for choice in terms of the sheer number of established and emerging artists working. This was clearly reflected in the

footfall, Bristol one of the busiest shows I've attended of recent.

Another draw was the vendors. The Broad Street crew nailed it there too, I felt, with an excellent selection of goodies to take away as souvenirs of the weekend. Our old friends from Cranfields Curiosity Cabinet were there, long-time convention pals, yet again convincing me to part with some cash. This time it was a dog skull I took home. Sourced from an animal shelter in Europe, I'm proud to give this little fellow a place to lay his head



Jo Harrison



Jody Dawber

GRACE

Overall impression of the show.

The atmosphere was welcoming and friendly, it was really busy and lively. I also liked how many European artists they had, it felt like a real mixture of people. And a great mix of vendors as well.

Which artists impressed you the most?

Hanumantra's stuff was stunning. There were a lot of artists I hadn't seen before who had interesting designs.

Did you get any work done?

Sadly not, although there were several designs I would have loved.

Will you be back next year?

100%! I think I'm going to start saving right away for it!

in death that eluded him in life. We also left with some artwork under the arm courtesy of Mary Evans, whose unique take on familiar tattoo tropes has graced the walls at Wayne Manor since running into her at last year's Tattoo & Toy. And then there was Dapper Signs, beavering away in his pop-up workshop, really adding to that authentic old-school vibe of the show, while Devon's National Maritime Museum showcased some of their early 20th century flash. It's part of an

exhibition they're running on British Tattoo Art, something we've already heartily talked up within the mag—and rightly so. Seeing this stuff in the flesh, so to speak, is a must for every serious tattoo collector.

Within a sea of convention dates, Bristol is one that really stands out. For me, this was a truly exceptional event, a tattoo show for tattoo enthusiasts by tattoo enthusiasts. In its third year now, it's a show really hitting its stride and is well worth both your time and your dollar. ▣

.Lou

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The hot topic on the industry’s lips this week has been schooling...

I struggled with both school and university. Yes, I’m sure they moulded me into the person I am today and gave me great skills, and so on, and so on, but—like many other tattooed people, I’m sure—I never felt like I ‘fit’ into the structured educational system and found it quite contradictory and hypocritical at times. For me, it prioritised the wrong missions.

Doing a degree in English opened me up to the fantastically imaginative world of literature—in these colourfully cover-bound worlds where anything can happen, often we find ourselves. But throughout the entirety of my three-year course, I itched to be out of the pages and finding myself through living. Consequently, I actually began working full-time whilst still studying in my final year. Analysing how themes in Milton’s Paradise Lost found significance in the 21st century is an interesting debate, sure, but actually meant fuck all in the context in which I found it. I started to see a degree as: paying someone to tell you to write, writing it, and receiving a number on a piece of paper in return. What was the point of that?

I think what I am trying to say, rather unsuccessfully (perhaps I should have actually gone to those lectures), is that no school system is perfect. We’re told growing up that it’s a great thing to learn within but perhaps some industries and topics are best explored in the living space that exists outside of an educational building. This is how I felt about writing, and perhaps what’s led me to now write for a real breathing readership (that’s you—hi guys). I yearned to grow in front of an audience, to learn through experience and a sea of experienced teachers, not just a select few.

This, is also how many tattooists feel about their craft. As tattoo ‘schools’ crop up all over the world, courses and companies that claim to teach tattooing, artists from different corners of the earth are opposing them with great force. They’re speaking with a mission to explain why these institutions are not to be trusted—you can go to notattooschool.com if you want to read more.

I left university with a numerical grade that I was told would define future opportunities.



J.R. Tolkien by Emilie B

TATTOOING IS A BEAUTIFUL RITUAL BETWEEN TWO PARTIES...



BECCY RIMMER
BeccyRimmer

It didn’t. And more importantly, it doesn’t even come close to doing justice to the infinite beautiful landscape of literature and how it can impact lives. Books can create us and the power of that can, ironically, not be summoned in any word count or percentage score.

Tattooing is a beautiful ritual between two parties that can never be communicated through any textbook. My goodness, if there was ever a thing that needed to exist and find purpose in the real world, it’s tattooing, surely? And if you’re reading this, haven’t been tattooed before and are struggling to understand this message through reading my words, I have proved my point. Don’t take my word for anything—go and have own first experience in one of our sacred spaces... then you will know what I mean. ▣



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