





FEEL THE HEAT

ast week, everybody in the house went off to see *The Last Jedi* while I stayed home with the dog. I figured this was the good end of the stick because in the fridge was cold pizza and lined up on TV was Woody Allen's *Purple Rose Of Cairo*—the other end of the stick was a film I've probably already sat through across 242 other movies in some form, alongside of hundreds of other people that can't open a bag quietly to save their life.

Anyway, I almost ended up at the hospital and would have gone if the dog could drive, but instead I dealt with my emergency alone.

There's a line in the movie (*Purple Rose*, not *Jedi*) that goes like this:

"I just met a wonderful new man. He's fictional, but you can't have everything."

My soul thought this was hilarious and made me snort close on a whole slice of Venetian Volcano up (or possibly, down) my nose. Do you know how hard it is to remove large items of food from the part of your nose that's inside your head?

Anyway, what characters inevitably end up doing in Woody Allen movies is falling in love with versions of the person they want as opposed to the one that actually exists. Armed with a pair of pliers from the toolbox, a mirror, a large bowl and a curious dog, I got to thinking about this as I tried to remove a jalapeño covered in cheese from somewhere between the bridge of my nose and my eyeball.

This kind of thing happens a lot with tattoos... kind of.

You decide you want a tattoo. You take to the internet in search of one, and inevitably, 70 billion of them turn up all at once, so you just look at the first ten or twenty and choose from those.

Which is what 60 billion other people did too and out there in the world are 60 billion tattooers who will give you exactly what you wanted. They don't have think about it, but you thought about it even less and you got fed an algorithm for your trouble.

What's it like being the proud owner of a tattoo brought to your table on a silver platter by a machine that bases its entire reason for being on what people who have come be-



DON'T PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD UNLESS YOU'VE EATEN ALL YOUR TOYS



SION SMITH · EDITOR editor@skindeep.co.uk

@ @mrsionsmith
@ @skindeep_uk

fore thought was a good idea?

Somewhere along your tattooed journey, you will have to decide to get the tattoo you want and not a version of it that exists inside a head that's not yours.

Do it right and your tattoo will become a part of you, enhance you in fantastic ways and not own your ass for eternity in the worst way you can ever imagine.

Life is simple if you let it be that way. Put down the pen someone else gave you. Don't play with your food unless you've eaten all your toys. Get Good Ink.



Tattoo Art by Jess Yen

Why Eternal Ink is so important.

Tattoo art can't be wedged into a gilt frame and hung on a museum wall.

Tattoo art is a living, breathing, walking, talking flesh masterpiece of creativity.

Tattoo art is about life. It is about dreams, hopes, desires and loss. It is a one-of-kind treasure — baptized in blood, and earned through dedication and achievement. Tattoo art is your commitment to life.

So, the next time ... and every time ... be sure your tattoo art is a life-long tattoo masterpiece. Rely on Eternal Ink.



Made for artists by artists.

















8 REBEL INK

Wayne Simmons talks with some of his favourite rebels within tattooing, artists doing something different with their inks. This month he meets Anrijs Straume of Bold as Brass Tattoo Company in Liverpool.

14 BEING FRANK

Former Gallows/Pure Love frontman, Frank Carter is in the middle of a world tour with Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes. Last night, they roared out their set under Brixton Academy's iconic art deco dome. Belfast, Perth, Brussels, Paris, Berlin, and London still lie ahead...

20 THE BLACK PARADE

Paul Hill's traditional tattoos strike a fine balance between understated minimalist design and experimental blackwork. Shapes and characters are not burdened by the limitations of



accurate proportions or realism, instead flourishing in the unexpected.

28 TATTOO FREEZE

A round-up of all that was good and wholesome about this year's edition of Tattoo Freeze.

36 UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Comic books have a lot to answer for. Could our parents ever have known when picking up some Marvel, DC or Fleetway title from the local newsagents and dropping them into our curious little hands that they might one day be cited as the biggest influence of tattooed skin the world over. I think not...

42 FIFTY FIRST STATES

What would you expect from someone elected by his friends "the most travelled tattooer in the world"? In 2016, Chad Koeplinger decided to be the first tattooer to tattoo in the fifty states of the United States. For four months, he threw himself at the mercy of the road, with just his Toyota and one book of flash as his only companions.

50 RIDE A WHITE SCHWAN

Alter Schwan is a studio hidden in the centre of Berlin is made up of four artists: Jukan, Sven Von Kratz, Carlo Sohl & Chrizzzn and provides a chilled and creative space for the guys to work and play.

58 SKULL ISLAND

Originally from France, Judicael Vales started his artistic journey with a tattoo apprenticeship in Goa, India. He then embarked on a nomadic quest that took him to Europe, Bali, Indonesia, Nepal and, eventually, California where he opened his own studio: Sacred Skulls Art Gallery & Tattoo.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

6 WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

Pascal Bagot Nicky Connor Paula Hammond Sean Herman Steven Kenny 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 ISSN 0966-4351 Can't find Skin Deep magazine in your newsagent?

Please contact our distribution company for your nearest outlet 0207 429 4073

> Printed by Precision Colour Printing Ltd



Jazz Publishing • The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ • Tel: 01244 881888 • www.jazzpublishing.co.uk • info@jazzpublishing.co.uk

The views expressed in this magazine by the contributors are not necessarily those of the publishers. All articles are written in good faith and are based on information provided by owners. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of all material, the contributors, magazine and the publishers cannot accept liability for loss resulting from error, mis-statement, inaccuracy, or omission contained herein. Reproduction of any material printed or depicted in Skin Deep magazine is prohibited without prior permission. Some words, names, and designations are trademarked and are the property of the trademark. Holder and have only been used for identification purposes only.

What do our tattoos mean to us, and others? Is it any of their business?

egularly, we colourfully-decorated tattooed humans go out into the big wide world and interact with other less-decorated beings. Sometimes these interactions leave us with interesting observations and compelling stories to tell in the pages of this magazine. The following evening, for me, was one of these occurrences.

I was returning from London on the 20:39, sitting opposite a gentleman who had consumed one too many red wines. It took around 10 minutes of staring before he decided to reach over and grab my hands: "what do those tattoos mean?!" I glanced down at the 20 individual symbols on my fingers—different symbols, by four different tattooists, created at different points in time, using different methods.

"Um..."

At the time I was fairly confident that he wouldn't remember my response in the morning so I instinctively mumbled something defensive about "not wanting to explain right now" and stuffed my hands into my pockets. I didn't have the time, energy or inclination to reel off any tattoo stories.

Suddenly, a family joined our table and he started to quiz them instead. They obliged. I was off the hook. The five of them then entered into a wonderful 90-minute life-affirming conversation that I instantly regretted opting-out of. They reflected on the year gone by, shared enlightening anecdotes and the man emotionally admitted to struggling over Christmas due to the recent loss of his father. They philosophised over the importance of human interaction and keeping your family close, at any time of year. Life's short, and it's the people by your side that truly make it what it is.

As a contemplative storyteller, a compassionate, chatty and generally un-shit (no, really, I promise) person, I left the train feeling pretty crap and admittedly quite teary about being so rude to this chap. He was just trying to break down the cold barrier between lonely strangers on a silently depressing commuter train and start a conversation with someone about the important things in life—one of my favourite pastimes.



HE WAS JUST TRYING TO BREAK DOWN THE BARRIER AND START A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE



BECCY RIMMER

BeccyRimmer

Well, thank you Skin Deep for providing me with this canvas each month, a canvas that today shall play the role of my redeemer...

Sir, if you're reading—yes, these are my hand tattoos. They're a variety of different symbols and runes, including various to represent the interests and passions of my parents because—as I heard you quite rightly describe to the lady sat next to me—"family, and the people around you, are more important than anything in the world".

It sounds like, from your recent loss, you don't need a tattoo to remind you of that. I know that moment will hit me one day too, but in the meantime, I will continue to look down and promise not take one person, second, one finger, for granted. •

WWW.TATTOOPRIME.EU



NEXT DAY DELIVERY FROM €6.15 FREE SHIPPING FOR ORDERS OVER € 150 ROL+ NI (€200 MAINLAND UK)





TATTOO EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES



CHEYENNÊ





VERBACK INK



KUROSUM



REBEL INC.

Wayne Simmons talks with some of his favourite rebels within tattooing, artists doing something different with their inks. This month he meets Anrijs Straume of Bold as Brass Tattoo Company in Liverpool

@ @anrijsstraume f facebook.com/anrijsstraume Youtube: youtube.com/user/anrijspow

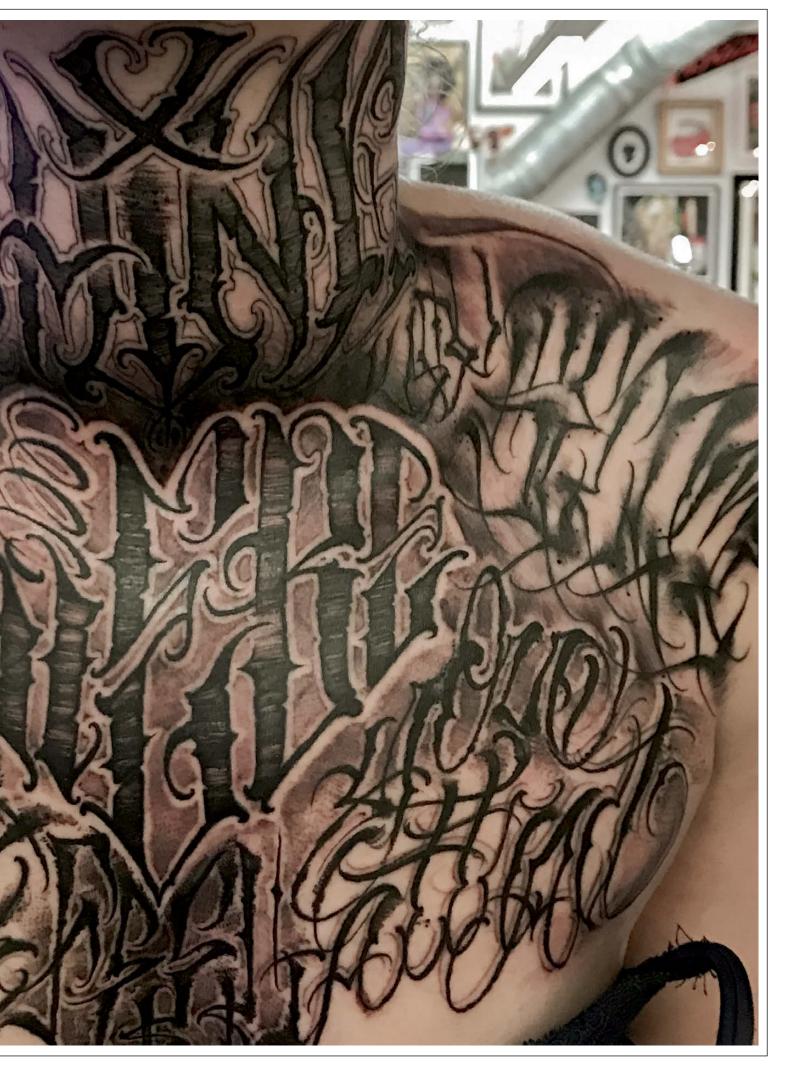
've always been fascinated by how art reflects the artist, acting as a window to their soul, showing their core values and views of the world around them. With tattoos, there's a different dynamic going on, the wearer of the art having most of the say in terms of what message said art is conveying, the artist's job simply to act as a conductor of sorts, realising the client's vision as effectively as possible. But increasingly, we're seeing tattoo artists themselves actively promoting a message, artists like Anrijs Straume.

Born in Riga, Latvia, Anrijs now works out of Bold as Brass Tattoo Company in Liverpool. A straightedge vegan, he feels his sober and clean lifestyle has helped give him the necessary clarity of mind and focus to raise his game when it comes to his art. But, with his latest flash set, 'Seven Deadly Sins', there's a much more direct message being relayed.

"The more I learned about life," he tells me, "the more I understood that most of the problems that we see in the world are from human activity. Sins, if you like." Anrijs isn't religious—or anti-religious for that matter—but he truly believes the world would be a better place if people stopped committing these sins. "Lies, anger, jealousy, sloth, gluttony and greed. That's what is wrong with the world and it's not rocket science to understand that none of these things are positive in any way. We destroy

THE MORE I LEARNED ABOUT LIFE, THE MORE I UNDERSTOOD THAT MOST OF THE PROBLEMS THAT WE SEE IN THE WORLD ARE FROM HUMAN ACTIVITY









nature, the earth, animals. We even destroy each other, and it's been that way since the beginning of humanity." It's not all bad, of course. Anrijs is quick to point out the progress we've made as a species, how advanced we are in science, how we can travel through space. Yet surely a race as intelligent as ours, he argues, should have learned how to get along by now. "Unfortunately, sin has gripped all of humanity and everyone suffers because of it."

Each flash set, then, covers one of the seven deadly sins and pride of place—quite literally—is a certain Mr Donald Trump. "I used Trump as a reference for 'pride'," Anrijs explains. "Pride is the most serious of the seven deadly sins, believing that one is essentially better, superior or more important than others." The sheet includes a range of images, from the American flag to the legs of a race



PRIDE IS THE MOST SERIOUS OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS, BELIEVING THAT ONE IS ESSENTIALLY BETTER, SUPERIOR OR MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS

horse. "With each design, I try to show more of what's wrong with the world and how human activity—the sins we commit on a daily basis—forms the basis for that."

It's not just this project which tackles the darker side of life. All of Anrijs' art carries a sombre quality, a melancholic tone resonating through everything he does. For Anrijs, it's been a journey to arrive at where he is today. "I guess my art is just a mix of everything that I've seen and experienced," he tells me. "I've always been into horror. I love ghost stories, horror movies, thrillers as well as music and photography with darker themes." And yet, when he started out, he worked more with colour. New school and graffiti were his bag, cartoon zombies something of a signature. "When I moved to Liverpool, I started work at Portside Tattoo, a really cool custom studio. I was new in town, didn't know anyone, didn't have a lot of customers to tattoo. In fact, it was really quiet for the first year. But that led me to draw more and try harder." Studio owner, Simon, allowed Anrijs to tattoo out of hours, something







I WANT TO SHOW AN EERINESS. I WANT SADNESS, DEPRESSION AND PAIN IN MY WORK

which he feels really helped him up his game. "My wife asked me to do some realism and lettering pieces on her. Back then, I didn't know how to do either of those. I always really loved lettering, but I wasn't really good at it and I didn't know any artists here in UK who were doing lettering, so I thought I needed to learn that just so I can tattoo her. I was researching and practicing non-stop. Then it occurred to me that I haven't really seen anything like realism and lettering done together."

And so Anrijs made the connections, blending these two somewhat polar styles together, introducing some horror elements to create the kind of lettering that he is known for today. "I want to show an eeriness. I want sadness, depression and pain in my work. In my opinion, darkness is really beautiful as an art form." He sees music as a big catalyst in terms of bringing this out in his

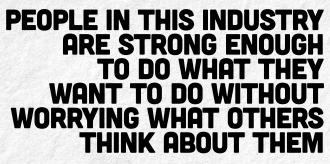
art. "Post metal, experimental doom, the darker ambient stuff," he explains. "In fact, music is a huge part of why I even got into tattoos in the first place and I still feel it gives me a lot of ideas in terms of my own creativity."

Anrijs is an interesting character. Incredibly positive and friendly to a fault, it's almost surprising to find his art cloaked in such darkness. It certainly hasn't made him reclusive. Quite the opposite, in fact, Anrijs incredibly keen to connect with people, including aspiring artists. "Every week, I would receive a lot of emails and messages from people asking about all kinds of stuff: what inks I use, what needles, what machine is best for this and that and so on. I was spending hours just replying individually to the same questions. So I decided to make a You-Tube channel, to film videos about almost everything I do and use, and that way, every time I get another of the same question, I can just tell them to go check out this video." He was worried about how it might go down, not least due to how with English being his second language, explaining technical details might be something of a challenge. "But the feedback from people watching, including other artists, has been mind-blowing." Not to mention the views he's getting, which are very impressive. "Yes, I'm really grateful people take their time to watch. The love and support I've got back has been a definite highlight of my career. At conventions, so many people come to say hi and thank me for making the videos, saying they were really helpful and made them better artists. It means so much and really inspires me to try harder and help even more!"









important. I noticed while looking through Anrijs' Instagram that a number of people felt so inspired by his tattoo art, particularly his portrait work, that they applied make-up so as to emulate the same effect he achieved. "Yes, that's another mind-blowing thing for me. I had this idea for a long time to film a short experimental movie about one of my tattoo characters come to life, like some kind of possession that occurs after the tattoo of a demon is done on someone. So, we filmed a video, 'Ink Stays with you', where I tattooed a portrait of my wife on a friend. We added makeup, a moon and horns, and filmed the video where I was actually tattooing the character we created. I think a few weeks before that one or two people had already posted some makeup inspirations done from some of my characters on Instagram and I was mega-happy to see that, but I remember thinking, 'Dammit, they were first, and now everyone will think I stole this Idea after I've seen those makeup pieces.' Still, I shared some of them on Instagram. Now I see it more and more, especially around Halloween time. It's crazy to see people take





the time to do these things. I couldn't ever have dreamed I would create something what would inspire people."

Anrijs likes to travel with his work, future appearances including the Milano Tattoo Convention, a guest spot at The London Collective and Edmonton Tattoo & Arts Expo in Canada. In general, he just wants to continue doing what he's doing and do it better. He's all about living in the now, taking one day at a time rather than planning miles ahead, and only takes bookings three or four months in advance. In short, Anrijs does his own thing in his own way and is all the better for it. But he feels there's a lot of other artists out there with a similar approach to life. "People in this industry are strong enough to do what they want to do without worrying what others think about them."

Amen to that.



Ellen

W.BRIGHTONTATTOO.COM

Being FRANK

"It's important to be vulnerable, to question who you are at all times. To try and be the best person you can be. There's real strength in that..."











IT'S OK FOR THE GUY IN THE PUB TO SCREAM ABOUT SELF DOUBT, IF HE HAS A MICROPHONE AND A BAND WITH HIM. REMOVE THE BAND AND MICROPHONE AND YOU ARE TREATED LIKE A WEAK MAN HAVING A BREAK DOWN.

ormer Gallows/Pure Love frontman, Frank Carter is in the middle of a world tour with Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes. Last night, they roared out their set under Brixton Academy's iconic art deco dome. Belfast, Perth, Brussels, Paris, Berlin, and London still lie ahead.

Right now, though, Frank is talking about his latest project with the Lynx Street Pulse content series. The short film, made for International Men's Day, follows hot on the heels of the grooming brand's previous 'Is It Ok for Guys' campaign. The campaign found that 57 percent of men had been told that 'real man' should behave a certain

way—based on Google research, which revealed the questions guys were asking the online search engine.

The new film includes interviews with Frank, along with James Veck Gilodi of Deaf Havana and the lead singer of Lower Than Atlantis, Mike Duce. This time, the focus is on 'what masculinity means', with the aim of encouraging guys to discuss their ideas about masculinity and its impact on mental health.

"It's so important to talk", says Frank. There is a real strength in vulnerability,

but vulnerability has been conditioned out of the male ego. [This project is] about questioning everything you know, everything you have been taught, and following what helps you to feel healthy and happy. I have found that talking to people is an integral part of the process of happiness. Because happiness is a process, it can't be caught. It has to be earned and then maintained through hard work."

Traditionally Western society has promoted the toxic mantra that 'big boys don't cry'. Music, though, remains one of the few acceptable ways for men to explore their emotions. It's OK for a punk singer to scream about frus-















tration, doubt, and self-loathing-but not the guy in the pub. Frank:

"I think it has a lot to do with environment. It's ok for the guy in the pub to scream about self doubt, if he has a microphone and a band with him. Remove the band and microphone and you are treated like a weak man having a break down–even though that's probably exactly what's happening. Weakness is important to understand, because once we understand our weaknesses we can learn how to come to terms with them and make ourselves stronger."

Perhaps statements like that aren't so surprising from a guy who writes and sings about lost love, night terrors, death, and the devil inside. But, in a world where mental health is still stigmatised, and male sui-

cide rates are soaring, it's refreshing to hear all the same.

Keeping Balance

Music and the tattoo scene have always been inexorably linked. But for Frank, who tattoos with the legendary Sang Bleu studio by day, the connections run deep.

Frank has spent his life juggling his art and music. As a teenager, he was always sketching, and that passion took

him to art college. But music and performance was in his DNA too. Dad had been a DJ when he was younger. His mum was a dance teacher. "So," Frank explains, "we had a huge wealth of music in the house. I think that definitely helped ignite a passion in music. But art and music feed my soul in very different ways and every time I have pushed one aside the desire only grows stronger until it dominates all the others aspects of my life. So, now I have learned to balance all the important loves in my life."

Frank's tattoos channel traditional imagery. And, given that he previously co-owned a tattoo parlour in the US with Keith Underwood, his old school credentials are the real deal. Frank's music is, in stark contrast, all wide-

ART AND MUSIC FEED MY SOUL IN VERY DIFFERENT WAYS AND EVERY TIME I HAVE PUSHED ONE ASIDE THE DESIRE ONLY GROWS STRONGER UNTIL IT DOMINATES ALL THE OTHERS ASPECTS OF MY LIFE.









WE ARE SO MUCH MORE COMPLICATED THAN JUST A FURY. THERE'S A FLOOD OF EMOTIONS IN OUR MUSIC. AND IT'S INSPIRED BY ALL THE BEAUTIFUL, TERRIFYING, DANGEROUS, WONDERFUL MOMENTS THE WORLD HAS BESTOWED UPON ME

eyed, hot fury. However Frank is keen to emphasise that there's more going with here than rage. "I think there's definitely an element of fury to it", he says. "But we are so much more complicated than just a fury. There's a flood of emotions in our music. And it's inspired by all the beautiful, terrifying, dangerous, wonderful moments the world has bestowed upon me.'

For those with a interest in such things, the first tattoo Frank had was three daggers on his forearm—one for each of his brothers. It was covered up long ago but you can still see it hidden under the layers of inky black and blue that adorn his flesh. The first tattoo he created as a artist

was three initials on his ankle, which he still has. "It was absolutely nerve wracking and I remember that it hurt way more than it should have, ha!"

A recent study said that both men and women consider guys with tattoos to be more masculine, dominant, and aggressive. So, given his work with Sang Bleu and Lynx, does he think that tattoos help men feel more confident and express themselves in macho cultures? "Definitely. I think tattoos can be empowering for both sexes. I think they can help people feel more confident and express themselvesyes. Tattooing is a beautiful thing, it has

gone through so many drastic changes over hundreds of years and I think now it's a recognised form of artistic expression. We're at a time where it is truly appreciated as art."

Whether he's making music or creating tattoos, being true to yourself is a message that lies at the heart of Frank's work But which comes first? And if he could have taken a different path in life, where would he be now?

"Art comes first, but I count all of my music as art. I could never choose one to do for the rest of my life. And I try not to think about the past too much. There have been too many turning points in my life. I'm right where I should be." •



S8 - THE INNOVATIVE TATTOO SUSTEM





Paul Hill's traditional tattoos strike a fine balance between understated minimalist design and experimental blackwork. Shapes and characters are not burdened by the limitations of accurate proportions or realism, instead flourishing in the unexpected

@paulhilltattooer

here is a biting comic edge to the work of Hill, and many of his tattoos freely experiment with the boundaries of composition—buildings rise from the heads of pin-up girls and the Playboy logo is transformed, now echoing a sailor cobweb aesthetic. The tattooist is obviously having fun, which is particularly refreshing at a time whereby tattoos are hampered by heavy context and emotional gravitas.

In one of Hill's tattoos the grim reaper wields his sickle dressed in a sleeveless denim jacket; a satirical comment on society's constant, long-enduring need for keeping on point. Yet his work never feels like it is conforming to a particular trend or popular design and that's what makes his work so appealing. Hill digs deeper into what makes an excellent tattoo design, drawing reference from the traditions of tattooing whilst remaining resolutely current.

Your work puts a spin on the three-dimensional, flattening objects into two-dimensional designs that are very illustrative in nature. What led you to work in this way?

This is the aesthetic that I am drawn towards. I connect more with artwork broken down to its simplest form. No fuss, no embellishment, no colour. I really like naive almost crude images inspired by folk art and vintage tattoo designs-anatomically incorrect, ignoring rules of scale, light source and any other restrictions.

What tattooists are you inspired by?

The new blackwork movement is really inspiring. Very graphic sim-



This is the nesthetic that I am drawn towards. No fuss, no embellishment, no colour.

ple work, I love the way some of these artists work with just lines and solid black. Having said that I have, and always will, be drawn towards true traditional tattoo styles, both in colour and just black. I try to combine these





two aesthetics in my work. Strong lines and bold solid blacks, combined with traditional influences and whip shading.

Do artists with a similar type of style influence your practice? Or do you take inspiration from anyone and any genre?

Absolutely. There are many artists I aspire to, and I'm sure influence the direction of my work. I'm inspired by the people I work with and have worked with in the past. Regardless of the style that each person works in I think we can all learn a lot from each other both in technique and styling.

Have any books or films been significant in developing your tattooing style?

Not so much film or books, I take inspiration from what is around me: the city, the people and the objects. I love going on missions to





reclamation yards, vintage markets, ceramic fairs, car boots, the weird and wonderful things you can find there are great inspiration, also the way one object from one era is muddled in with another can

organically force two things together.

Many of your tattoos feature skulls, the grim reaper, and demon caricatures. Are you fascinated with the iconography of death? Why do you work with these types of images?

Anything that evokes a powerful emotion in people is perfect subject matter. Death, romance, religion, and dark humour resonate with me. I find it easier to draw/express myself through darker imagery rather than prettier work. I don't know what that says about me!

Working with tattoos that are symbolic of death allows one to understand that death is inevitable and a part of life, which in some ways is quite therapeutic. The process of tattooing allows the artist to explore themes, concepts and ideas that are often unspoken. Which leads me to ask, do you find tattooing therapeutic?

It can be a therapeutic process. For me tattooing allows me to express a darker side—but my work is always a little tongue in cheek. I poke fun at death, people can find that insensitive but I think that the more at ease we are with the reality that death is just a part of life the easier it will be when it comes for us. Death and what happens after will always fascinate us—the great unknown!













Tattooing allows me to express a darker side - but my work is always a little tongue in cheek. I poke fun at death

Do you think your clients get tattooed to reclaim some element of control over their body?

Absolutely, a tattoo allows you to say the things on your mind or in your personality that you may have no other way to express. The same way writing something down takes it off your mind, hav-

ing a tattoo can be a release. I think ultimately we are all in control of our own body and what we do with it is our choice to make. I don't think I have a right to stand in the way of that choice. I will tattoo anyone of sound mind, wherever they choose, they are in control.

What tattoos do you have on your body? Are they dealing with similar types of emotions that can be found in your own work?

I have tattoos that deal in death, love, and the occult. I also have softer tattoos, my body strikes a balance showing all sides of my personality.

What mash-up do you think has been your strangest yet?

I like to combine a lot of weird/mismatched imagery, whether its fantasy animals, devils eating sharks or dragons, skulls, and cities. Correct scale is not important to me, it just creates boundaries. I like to draw dream or nightmare scenes that risk being too weird for anybody to claim. Then I wait for the right person.

Is there a reason why you don't use colour in your work?

I prefer stripped back, simple forms, for me that means bold lines,

hard black, and hard shading. I like tattoos that work from across the room and always will. Negative space is just as, if not more, important than shading. I prefer to use textures over colour to create the contrast I need, things such as dot textures, flat black, bare skin or whip shades.

Do you work with flash, or are your tattoos one-offs, tailored for each individual client?

I am constantly drawing flash, often putting my own spin on traditional designs. I only do each piece once. I will work with my client's idea for sure, sometimes that's where the best ideas come from. People will often choose a piece of my flash and choose to make it their own through additions or changes—I'm cool with that.







Correct scale is not important to me, it just creates boundaries. I like to draw dream or night mare scenes... Then I wait for the right person

What has been the most shocking request for a tattoo idea?

I am yet to hear one. I'm humbled when people trust me with their head or face but never shocked. More shocking is other people's reactions to some tattoos, and the right to express negativity towards the owner. I totally get freedom of speech is important but the anger you sometimes see from random people over what someone chooses to do with their body is amazing.

You own and work from your own shop Vagabond Tattoo in London. What's it like owning and working from your shop?

I love having a space where I can express myself and I can have all the things that inspire me around me as I work. I have in my mind an idea of how each client's tattoo experience should be, it's not always just about the tat-









I like tattoos that work from across the room and always will

too, we have a relationship and I'm lucky

to have made many great regular customers who have trusted me to make a lot or all of their tattoos. It also means I can pick who I work with and have a great bunch of people around me.

How do you go about getting cool tattooists to work there?

We've managed to surround ourselves with likeminded people who all do work that I really respect. I've learnt that it is really important to wait for the right person to join such an intimate environment. I like my place to have a family feel, everybody gets on and looks out for each other, shares advice, and ideas to help us all move forward together.

What do you think of tattooing trends? How do you try to avoid these?

I think trends will always be a part of tattooing as they mark a moment in time. Trends inspire me to move with the times and keep my style developing to adapt to new potential audiences. Having said that trad tattooing has proven to stand the test of time and that's why I choose to steer my work in that direction. There are certain trends that from a technical aspect don't have the longevity but I don't judge the people who get them. I just don't use it myself.

What do you hope to do in the future with tattooing? Is there anything you haven't tried that you want to have a go at?

I'm hoping to do a lot more guesting both in the UK and abroad over the coming year. Meeting new clients and getting inspired by different shops and artists is really important to me and my growth as a tattooist. When I first started tattooing I spent years working in all styles and techniques before I settled on working in the way I do now. I'll always have an open mind but I'm more interested in refining what I do than trying anything else.

What does tattooing mean to you?

Tattooing means a lot of things to me. It gives me the freedom to make a living being creative. It has been good to me. I'm lucky enough to enjoy my own studio, the ability to travel and the choice that I may not have had otherwise. \blacksquare

TATTOO IT.





INTRODUCING TATTOO BREW CO.

BORN OUT OF A COLLABORATION BETWEEN A TATTOO ARTIST WITH A LOVE OF CRAFT BEER AND A NORTH YORKSHIRE BREWERY, TATTOO BREW CO. IS A TESTAMENT TO OUR TWO GREATEST PASSIONS — CRAFT BEER AND TATTOO ART.

Our launch range artist 'Hobbsy' has been tattooing since 2009. He was approached by brewers Phil Lee, Stuart Neilson and Chris Spencer to help design and brand a new range of craft drinks.

Hobbsy believes that there is huge scope to develop the range into other styles and look



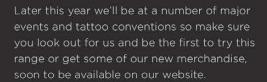
to collaborate with artists and brewers from all over the world.

The first range follows a traditional nautical theme. Products include a clean and crisp session lager, hoppy American pale ale and a stunning black lager with roasted barley and black malt.

It's already available in selected outlets and will be formally launched early in 2018.

Stuart Neilson, head brewer says he hopes that the launch range will give drinkers a good feel for the quality and depth of flavour we are looking to bring to the market with our products.

We're just getting started and plans are already in place for two ciders to launch in the spring.



On the back of this, we are also underway with looking for partners to assist on an international basis. Keep an eye out for further updates in the next few issues of skin deep (along with more offers and exciting competitions).



For further enquiries on partnership and collaboration opportunities, including trade interest in the range, email info@tattoobrewco.com

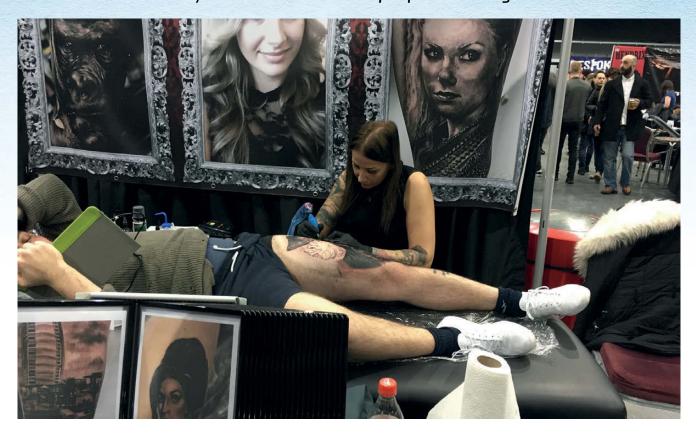
In celebration of our first issue in Skin Deep, we'd like to thank the readers for being at the forefront in joining us on this exciting journey.



GO TO TATTOOBREWCO.COM AND USE VOUCHER CODE SKINDEEP25 TO CLAIM YOUR EXCLUSIVE 25% OFF BEERS FROM OUR ONLINE STORE.



Here we go again. First show of the year and for some of us, the first time out of the house since the holiday season. I swear some people still had glitter in their beards...

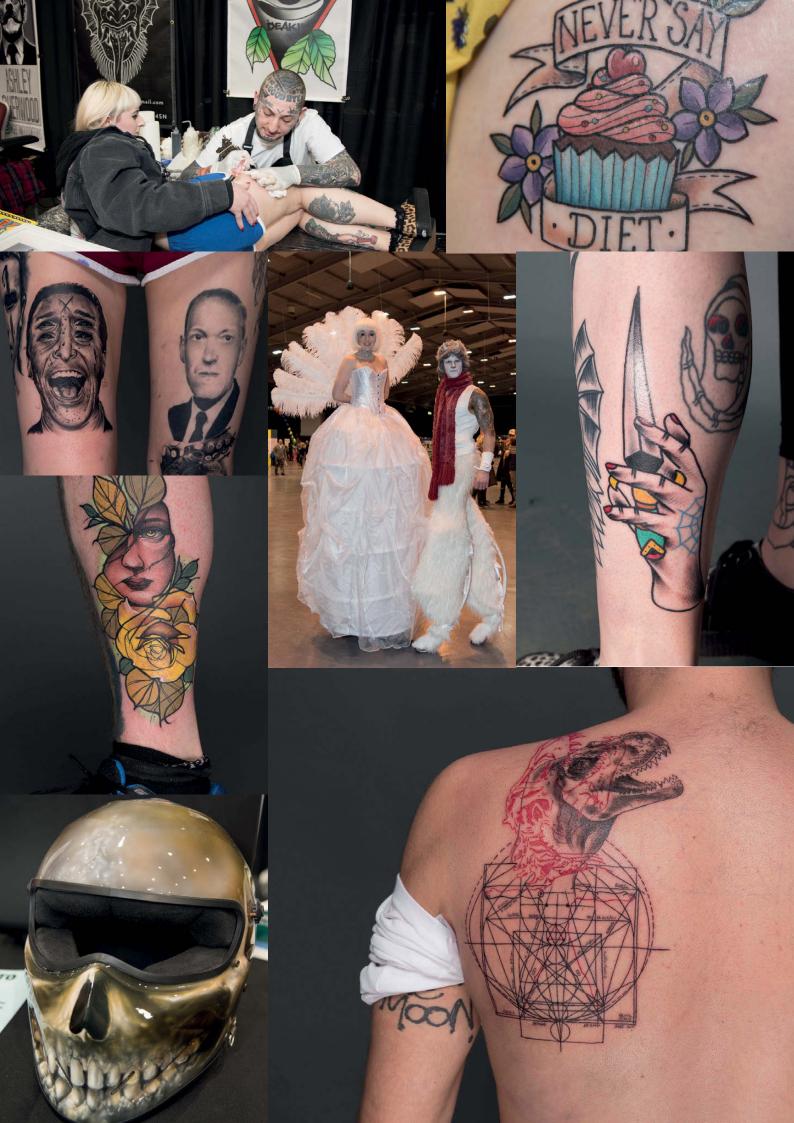


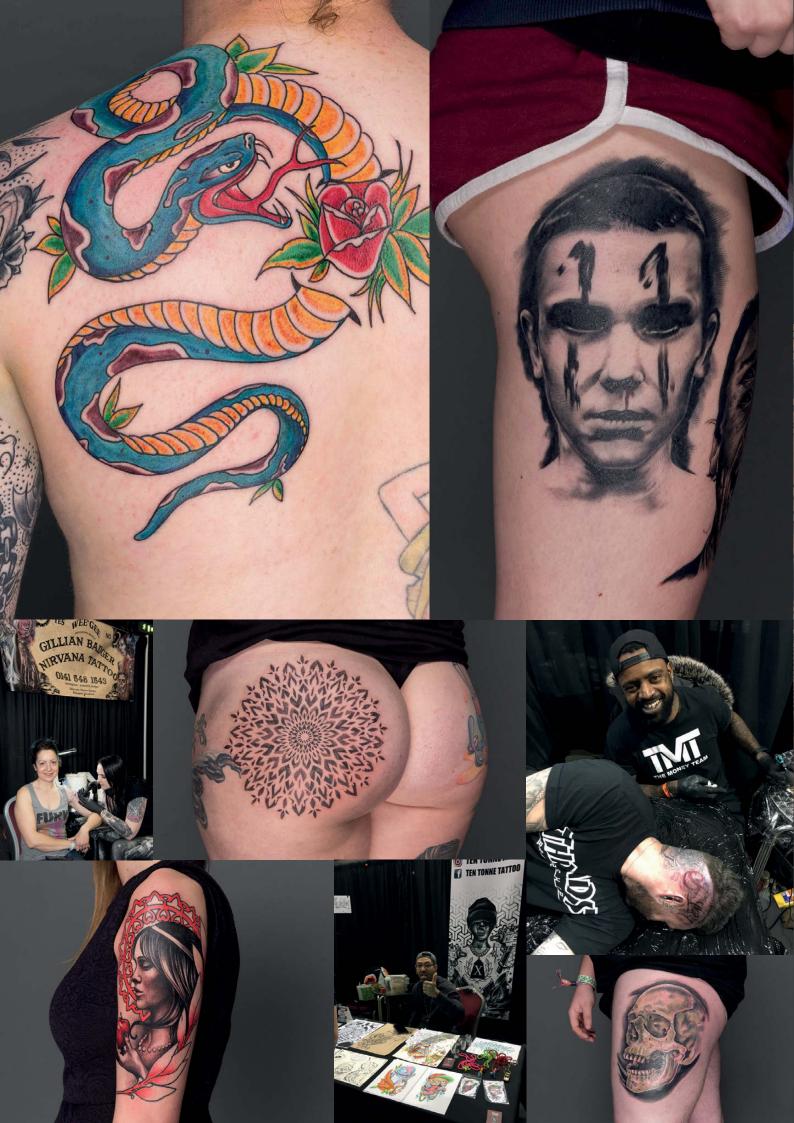
attoo Freeze opted for a different stance this year. You can sit around behind your desk for months on end talking about things, but the only way you'll ever really find out if your ideas are good or not are to put them into action. Thus, we move back to a two day show—after maybe four years, maybe five, of just the Sunday—in 2018 with the Saturday being a no frills 'suck it and see' kind of affair. No sideshows. No extra rooms. No nothing at all. Just tattooing and tattoo fans. Sunday however did see the shutters roll

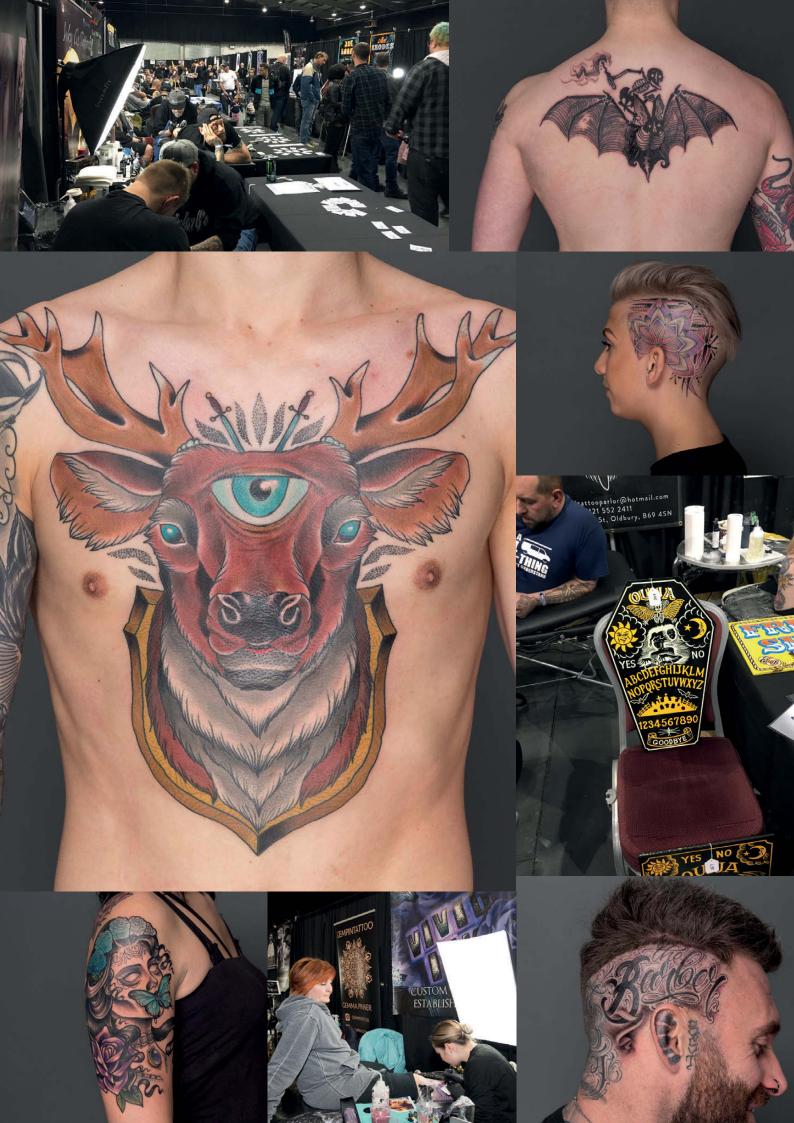
up on a whole extra exhibition space full of good wholesome events for families to get involved in.

It will be interesting to hear the feedback from both artists and guests on what it's like to have a show with no entertainment for a whole day. From my point of view—and as far as I can make out so far—it's a great plan. So long as everybody has their head down with a client, well—that's the whole point right? The rest is just noise. Sometimes nice noise, but still noise.

Also interesting this year was the amount of artists















who came out after Christmas just to hang around and see what was going on in the world. I could name at least ten and while it's not unusual to find some people hanging around for no reason... ten as a minimum number suggests that more than a few are doing a smart thing and taking the time to see what's going in the world from a customer point of view. It's always the little things-a new idea for a back-drop, a new way to present your portfolio... most artists are generally too busy to pay attention to this kind of thing so it's good to see—and also great to be able to talk to them without interrupting the work flow.

I'm all about The Observation this year: If you put your faith in the numbers game out there, I can also pretty safely say from the flight deck of the judging table, black and grey is more popular than ever. I don't think I've ever seen so much of it at one single show. Not only small pieces

but huge acts of commitment to legs, arms and chests too. Blackwork entries are also up, but that was no big surprise—you only have to look at instagram to figure that out. Maybe an ever increasing number of artists out there just want to carry one ink around.

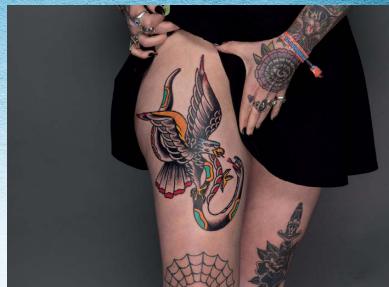
In all seriousness, while we're on the subject of ink, despite a surprisingly low amount of colour tattoos entered into the competition (compared to any other show, not the world in general) colour inks appear to be the best they have ever been right now. There's a couple of companies out there who have brought magic to the table recently and it shows in the repeated viewing of both fresh tattoos and healed alike.

Out on the floor, there's also a fair number of tattooers who have started working in the last couple of years who have decided to come out from behind the curtain and work in pub-

















TATTOO FREEZE 2018 SATURDAY

Avant GardeRunner Up - Max Longhurst by
Paul Terry of Bold St Tattoo

Winner - Keeley Smith by Mim Hennessey-Mann of Just Add Ink

Blackwork Runner Up - Simon Pretty by Rikki Baird of On Point Ink

Winner - Caitlin Morgan by Rachelle Downs of Adorn Body Art

TraditionalRunner Up - Jamie Lee by Mikey
Black of Pigments Tattoo

Winner - Heather Pearson by James Deakin of Illuminati Tattoo Parlour

Runner Up - John Wood by Craig James of New Ink

Winner - Jamie Dobbs by Bryn Gray of Inwerx

Best of Saturday Best Colour - Bryn Gray of Inkwerx













SUNDAY

Neo Traditional

Runner Up - Madison by Anthony Pullin of Black Friars

Winner - Neil by Danny Edwards of Bold Street Tattoo

Oriental

Runner up - Mark by Andrew Curzon-Berners of White Heart Tattoo Collective

Winner - Wayne by Jason Gray of Serenity Arts Tattoo

Realism

Runner Up - Evdokiya by Johanna Tavetkova of Vivid Ink

Winner - Jade by Craig James of New Ink

Black & Grey

Runner Up - Adam by Jonny Firth of Sorry Mum Tattoo Studio

Winner - Viacheslav by Victoria Boaghi of Artistic Crew Tattoo

Best of Sunday

Realism - Craig James of New Ink

Best of CONVENTION

Bryn Gray of Inkwerx for Best Colour (Saturday). You can also find this at the back of the mag as Tattoo of the Month

Special thanks from me to my co-judges this year, Nick Devine on the Saturday and Wayne Simmons on the Sunday. And no... it doesn't get any easier no matter how many times you do it.





lic. From the conversations I've been part of, that's a scary thing for them. To be out there on the same floor as the people you've admired since the day you first became interested in tattooing can rattle your soul—and yet, here you all are regardless. Fighting the good fight.

What's interesting about this is that the skills are certainly out there. It's kind of like being in a band now vs being a band in the 1970s. Once upon a time, you had five years to get better with the full support of those who believed in you in the first place but

in 2018, you need to be coming to the party fully loaded with potential and no excuses. Without naming names (because I have my personal favourites on that front) the talent is definitely out there and the next year or so will see some of them start to shine very brightly indeed.

Tell you what though... if all the shows this year (regardless of who is running them) are as positive, fun and flushed with talent as this one, we'll all be in a good place. 2018 could well be a hot one. ■





Comicbooks have a lot to answer for. I mean, could our parents ever have known when picking up some Marvel or DC or (for those of an age) Fleetway title from the local newsagents and dropping them into our curious little hands that they might one day be cited as the biggest influence of tattooed skin the world over. I think not...

iainmacarthur.com @ @iain.macarthur f @iainmacarthur

nd yet, the more tattooists I interview, the more I hear this very story. Some, the Chris Joneses and Alex Rattrays of this world for example, even carve out a bit of a niche for themelves, tattooing many of the characters today that first got them into art in the first place. And this is a good thing.

Iain Macarthur is not a tattoo artist but, for me at least, much of his work has the vibe and spirit of tattoo art. An early influence for the Swindon-born surrealist was Oriental ink. "I was fascinated by how elegant those tattoos

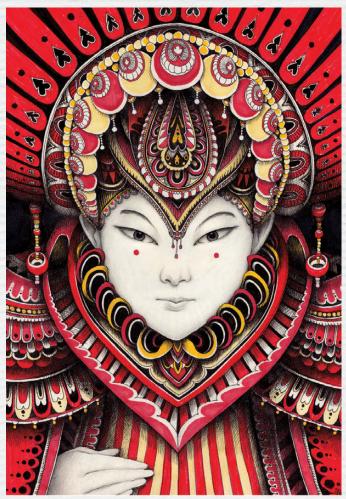
looked, how they have so much movement in the designs," he tells me. Traditional old school also spoke to him, particularly bird tattoos. "Mostly the wings." But get him talking about comics and it's clear that is where it all began. "I don't remember if I ever drew any characters or scenes," he



reflects, "but I loved flicking through them. Batman was a favourite when I was a kid. I was so drawn to the dark and eerie look of the character, and the villains were so interesting with their flamboyance and unusual backstories."

Cartoons grabbed him in a similar way and growing up in the 90s, there were plenty on the box. "The animated Batman series and X-men were a couple of my favourites. I remember wanting to dress up as Wolverine for Halloween with the yellow tights and claws. Unfortunately, I couldn't find the costume, but my mum managed to make cardboard claws and a paper Wolverine mask for me. It looked pretty badass, I have to say." It was Ren and Stimpy, though, that spoke the most to young Iain. "I loved that show, although my parents would sometimes stop me from watching it as it was too much of a mindfuck, I guess.

SOMETIMES I PLAN IT OUT, IF IT'S COMMISSIONED BY A CLIENT, BUT USUALLY I IMPROVISE I MEAN, I'VE BEEN DRAWING THIS WAY FOR SO LONG





It definitely took me down the surreal art path."

Iain would still cite many of those influences as part of his journey to putting out the kind of art he's known for today. He talks of being drawn to the more offbeat contemporary artists. "Especially Jean Giraud," he says. "Giraud creates a lot of surreal sci-fi pieces that are very intricately drawn and his linework is mesmerising." He has since moved through other styles such as Art nouveau, geometrical and, most recently, '60s psychedelia. And yet, despite his leanings to the more surreal side of art, his own portfolio includes clients as commercial and mainstream as Nike, MTV and All Saints. And then there's a little company by the name of HBO and some show they run called Game Of Thrones. "They invited me and several other artists to create designs to carve into a number of doors in pubs and restaurants throughout Northern Ireland. It was to promote Season 6 of the show," he tells me. Each design was meant to represent a particular episode from that season and for the uninitiated, which I have to admit includes me, Iain points out that such

included the horse clan Dothraki and one of Daenerys Targaryen's dragons—both of which educated his designs. "In the end, I created three doors for them. It was a fun and interesting project to be a part of."

Despite his impressive portfolio, Iain is still keen to take on work from smaller companies. "I actually prefer working for the indies," he tells me. "That work's a lot more enjoyable." Some clients, including RSI Apparel, a UK-based label on whose garments I first noticed Iain's work, were particularly fun to work with because they allow a lot of creative freedom. "Whereas working for the bigger clients, while it can citing to do it can be stressful too. Todious skatches

be exciting to do, it can be stressful, too. Tedious sketches and deadlines can all get overwhelming."

Pattern work is something that seems to run through much of what Iain does. It's a particularly popular style within tattooing right now and most of the artists I have

THEY (HBO) INVITED ME AND SEVERAL OTHER ARTISTS TO CREATE DESIGNS TO CARVE INTO A NUMBER OF DOORS IN PUBS AND RESTAURANTS THROUGHOUT NORTHERN IRELAND





WORKING FOR THE BIGGER CLIENTS, WHILE IT CAN BE EXCITING TO DO, IT CAN BE STRESSFUL, TOO. TEDIOUS SKETCHES AND DEADLINES CAN ALL GET OVERWHELMING

spoken to that specialise in it tell me it's the attention to detail that appeals the most. I'm wondering if that's true for Iain, too. "Yes, the detail definitely catches my attention and motivates me to draw in that style." And how does he approach such an intricate design? Is there any kind of brainstorming involved or is it mostly freehanding? "Sometimes I plan it out, if it's commissioned by a client, but usually I improvise. I mean, I've been drawing this way for so long it's become like a natural reflex for me."

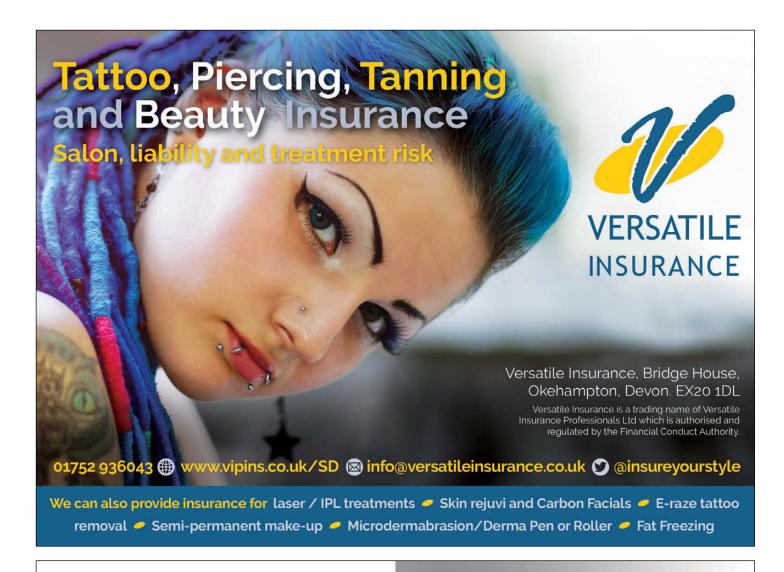
When it comes to his own tattoos, he tends to go for similar things to what he draws and what's inspired his art over the years. "I've got a lot of black and grey pieces done by Joel Blake. He tattooed some birds and an all-seeing eye on my left arm. I've got another bird tattoo on my right arm done by Sadee Johnston. She mostly does amazing colour pieces and I think mine was one of her first black and grey pieces. One of my favour-

ite tattoos is an old school tarantula tattooed by Matty D'Arienzo. His work is very traditional, which I like."

Like Matty, Iain now lives and works in London although he still feels a bond with his home town of Swindon, creatively as well as personally. He credits his parents among some of the earliest cheerleaders of his art, buying him art books and equipment for Christmas. "My art teacher in secondary school was also supportive, helping me to develop my drawing skills and furthering my knowledge of art and illustration." And it's not just lip service he's paying here. Perhaps even more than the comics and the cartoons and those first tattoos that

spoke to him, these people that he looked up to were the most instrumental in helping to get him where he is today. "Yeah, they all definitely helped push me in the direction of the creative industry. In fact, if it wasn't for them, I would probably be working at some boring office job."

Perish the thought.





Original Thermal Copier

Instant image transfer - no more tracing Complies with full EU Safety regulations UK Warranty from Unigraph



Delivery and product demonstration can be arranged at no extra cost.

For all further information please contact Unigraph Telephone: 0114 275 2801 Email: sales@unigraph.co.uk

Unigraph (UK) Limited, Unigraph House Pitsmoor Road, Sheffield S3 9AS

Unigraph is the sole UK importer and distributor of this German made product

S8 TATTOO INNOVATIVE TATTOO SYSTEM BRIDGING ART & TECHNOLOGY

We are proud to distribute the new S8 stencil range of products.

S8's Red Stencil Paper is the first impact and thermal-ready red stencil paper made specifically for tattooing.

Combine Red Tattoo Stencil Paper with other S8 products, such as the Red Tattooing Gel and Red Tattoo Stencil Transfer Solution, for impeccable results and optimal longevity.

VISIBLE

Red - Better Visibility When Lining Means Increased Speed and Precision

DURABLE

Gels - Longer Lasting Stencils and Protection for Your Client's Skin

SATURATION

Gels - Faster and More Uniform Ink Saturation



www.thermalcopier.co.uk

50 FIRST STATES

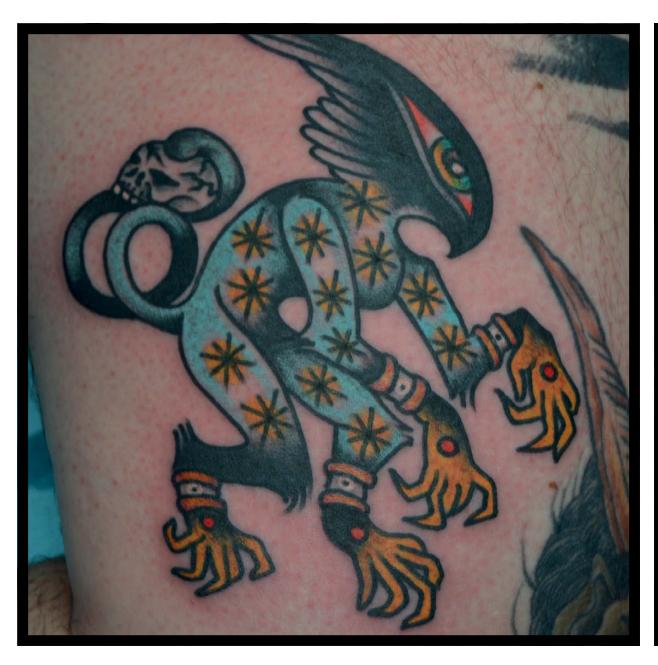
What would you expect from someone elected by his friends "the most travelled tattooer in the world"? Don't say it, American tattooer Chad Koeplinger set the bar higher than you would have thought anyway. In 2016, he decided to be the first tattooer to tattoo in the fifty states of the United States. For four months, he threw himself at the mercy of the road, with just his Toyota and one book of flash as his only companions

ctually, on that trip there were also some kidney stones too, but you'll have to go through this interview to know more about it and perhaps also read the 350 page travelogue documenting the trip recently published by Raking Light Projects called, fittingly, '50 States'. Do you want to know what's at the end of the road? Get in!

How did that idea come about?

I'd thought about for years and years. Thought it would be kind of a fun thing to do, but always when looking at the prospect of doing it, it just seemed like a real big undertaking. Like it'd take a year or more, blah, blah, blah. In late 2015, just right around New Years, I had a life change where I suddenly found myself with a lot more personal freedom and time than I had had for several years. I thought: 'Well, I don't really have anything else to do this year, why don't I do that?' I thought I kind of had a small three and a half month window of nothing to do. I didn't live anywhere, so I thought 'let's see if I can route this to where I can do it as a tour'. Almost as a band does. I think I was at a convention somewhere and it was in a place where a lot of bands would play. They had all these tour things on the wall in the bathroom, you know? Looking at these tour dates, I thought I could do that around America. I was in Bali, and one morning I just started







mapping out what shops, and where it would be, and how it would work. It all kind of fell together quickly and easily actually.

What difficulties did you face when preparing for the trip and looking for places to work?

Not many. I'm very fortunate to have met a lot of people around the world and in America that have shops in different places. Between people I already knew, or people that when I announced the intention of doing the trip that reached out to me to invite me to work in their place, Wyoming was the only one state where I had to find somewhere to work! I didn't know anybody there. And I was recommended to someone who turned out to be a really great person, and had a really great experience at their tattoo shop. Overall, I've got no complaints. I didn't really have too many obstacles.

During the course of the trip you had to change your plans because of health issues. You had a kidney stone problem. Considering how serious it was you could have cancelled and your customers would have understood, but you didn't. What kept you going?

The whole thought with doing the trip, if you think about cool movies and stuff like that, there's always some sort of adversity along the

way. I kind of anticipated that there would be something. And so, to some degree I think it made the entire trip more interesting for myself. To have some sort of struggle to overcome other than just sitting in a car, you know what I mean? I didn't cancel on my customers because I set a goal, and I wanted to accomplish it. Furthermore, I didn't live anywhere, so there was nowhere to go to convalesce; and there was nothing else to do... plus, I had a really good deal on my rental car that I wouldn't be able to get again, probably, to be able to continue the journey another day. So for me it was like: well, what else am I gonna do? Maybe I'm stupid or maybe I'm just not weak. I don't know. Did I answer that?

I think so.

I mean I could just say I'm not a pussy. But I don't want to be that arrogant. In the end it was a combination of: I had nowhere to go; I said I was gonna do it; the rental car was







cheap; people were at certain places coming from far away to go there; I had built a lot of hype on it and I didn't want to fail. You know what I mean? As much as I don't care what other people think, at the same time you are doing something in the public eye, and I want to be seen as a person that makes things happen. Not a person that has a little bump in the road and backs off. I guess what I had was a little more than a bump in a road, but... whatever.

When did you start the trip?

April of 2016. It was supposed to end in July of 2016, I believe the 16th but I had some setbacks so it ended in August of 2016.

Is there anything that you learned from tattooing in the U.S. that you didn't know before visiting all the studios?

I don't know. I'm not really sure. I think I just met a lot of nice people I didn't know before or was able to kind of reacquaint myself with some people I hadn't seen in a long time. I met a lot of nice people. In the end, for the most part tattooing is just tattooing. It's a beautiful thing in that way that no matter where you're at, it's kind of the same thing. I think whether you're in a fucking cave on a cliff in Nepal or you're in a street shop in St. Louis, or you're at a convention in Paris, you're still just doing the tattoo. The people connect in the same way.

$Tattooing \ and \ traveling \ came \ together \ at \ an \ early \ stage \ in \ your \ carrier.$

When I started to tattoo, or before I started to tattoo, I was a tattoo collector and a tattoo fan. I was working at a shop as a shop helper. We were having a conversation with my teacher about traveling the world, and he told me that, for someone with no education and no family money like myself, the best ways to do it would be a tattooer or a merchant mariner. I said I'd always wanted to be a tattooer. So, to some degree the idea of traveling and tattooing always was in the mix, it was kind of born from each other in a way. So, the ultimate goal besides being the best tattooer I could be was to also see the world. When the opportunities finally arose, I kinda took the ball and ran with it.

In the intro of the book, both Takahiro Kitamura and Greg Cristian refer to you as the most traveled tattooer of all time.

I've been to 80 countries. I've tattooed in, I don't even know how many,







probably 40 or 50 of them. I started tattooing in '97 and I went on my first overseas tattoo trip in 2003, and from probably 2006 to 2015 or more. Honestly I had, maybe almost 10 years, 10 to 12 years I wasn't anywhere for more than two weeks at a time. I would leave every weekend to go somewhere. Whether it was just like: 'Oh, I'm in New York, but I'm gonna go to D.C.' or 'I'm gonna go to Austin' or 'Perhaps I'm gonna go put all my things in storage for a year and just go from shop to shop around the world for whatever how many years'. Most of the time I was only staying three or four days anywhere, but every once in a while I'd stay two weeks. I don't really know too many tattoo artists who did it that way for as long as I did. I've been to Australia almost 50 times, to England probably same 50 to 60 times, Italy and all these other countries a lot. Air miles-wise I probably have at least 2 million. It's not a competition anyway, I don't really care if somebody travelled more or less. I can only say that I, not in like an asshole way, I'm interested to hear about other people's experiences, but I only actually care about my own.

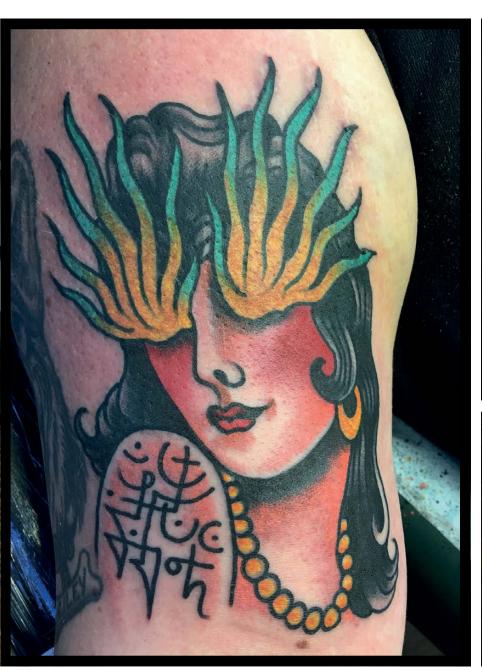
Did you tattoo on all continents?

No, I've tattooed on six of seven continents. I'd like to tattoo on all of them. That would have probably been cool to have done it before anyone else did, but there's a couple guys who have done it. I guess in

some weird way, I was, as far as I know, the first person to tattoo in all 50 states and there is some pride in that, and I do enjoy that. But at the same time, if I found out somebody did it before me, I don't think I'd be crushed. It is what it is. I'm not trying to make that my entire life's mission. Life is continuously changing thing until like set your feet in to dig your heels into the dirt and be like 'This Is This'. That's just silly.

How many customers and tattoos, approximately, did you do during the US trip?

I believe when we counted it was something to the effect of 284-ish? Give or take three or four. On the whole trip I had a book of designs that I had tattooed out of. I would say that 98% of the designs I tattooed were picked from the book. That was the idea to keep it like where I could accommodate as many people as I could and enjoy the trip in a way.







Is there one tattoo you did on the trip that has a good, or the best story that you'd want to share with people?

I'll tell you, the very last was very interesting because it was on guy I hadn't seen in probably close to 25 years: a friend of mine from Michigan when I was a kid. Michigan is shaped like a mitten. So when people show each other where their city is from, you hold your hand up like a mitten and point to a section of your hand. The tattoo I did on him was a star for the city that he grew up in-Flint-which is a little south of where I grew up. We all used to hang out there when I was a kid. It was somebody that I really had a good affinity for when I was young, I hadn't seen in a long time, tattooing something that was from my roots, and it also in some way it's geography and all this kind of thing. That aspect of it, especially it being the final tattoo of the trip, totally by happenstance was really cool to me. That was the one I said, man this was neat.

Looking at the tattoos you did there is a strong recurrent design in your work and I was wondering if there was a specific reason for that?

A long time ago I got tattooed by Ed Hardy and he did a gorilla head on me with a dagger through its head. It had these big titties coming out of a rose and it said: "Reborn". It was really significant in the sense that the moment I got that tattoo, my entire life changed: Ed introduced me to my friend Taki (Takahiro Kitamura, owner of State of Grace in San Jose, California) who pretty much gave me the world. Ed showed me many things on that trip that completely changed my outlook and my ideas and my everything. Ed really changed my life when he did this gorilla on me. Later on, I had done a few and somehow people liked them and they kept getting them. I enjoy doing them, and I feel a connection to it.

In the end, the trip was an eye opener, and while having travelled everywhere in the world: you fell in love with your country. How did you come to realise that?

Look. America, it's what I'm used to, so it's easy. There's places in it that are difficult for people that care about the way they feel; places where it's impossible to find healthy food. I'm sure if I were to inter-







act with local people more, I would find a lot are narrow minded but overall America is the most geographically diverse country on Earth. It has every single climate and geographical detail there is. So, to be able to do—obviously with the exception of Alaska and Hawaii—to see all that by land really shows you how it changes, how it all works together, how it's cohesive, how it makes sense—or not. And it's pretty vast. There's something about just being on the road and not being crowded which that just really makes you feel great. Yeah, I totally fell back in love with being here and realised there's so much to offer here, it's not all just everywhere else.

After all these travels, the conclusion of this trip is that you decide to settle down in Nashville, Tennessee. Isn't it ironical? I knew that it was a nice town, it just seemed like a good place to live. It wasn't completely overrun with people that I knew having their own tattoo shops there. In fact, someone that was working at a tattoo shop there invited me to open a shop there, so it got my curiosity and

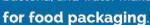
it just felt right. My brother Josh was moving there to tattoo and I wanted to be close to him. So, I was like: "Yeah, let's do it". I did and everything kind of really fell together: I have a shop, I met the woman of my dreams that I married. Unfortunately, recently my brother passed away—that part sucks—but overall, sometimes you have to listen to the voice that tells you what to do, you know? And for the last 15 years or something, I haven't really had one. The voice was telling me to go everywhere. Then now the voice said: 'This is the spot'. And it truly has been. Every single aspect of it is falling together really lovely. You just gotta keep your eyes open and pay attention to what's going on. Then the world will tell you what's best for you. ■

#protectyourart

Cellophane

(/tfel'lofane/)

Cellophane is a thin, transparent sheet made of regenerated cellulose. Its low permeability to air, oils, greases, bacteria, and water makes it useful





Dermalize®

(/'də:məlʌɪz/)

DermalizePro is a medical

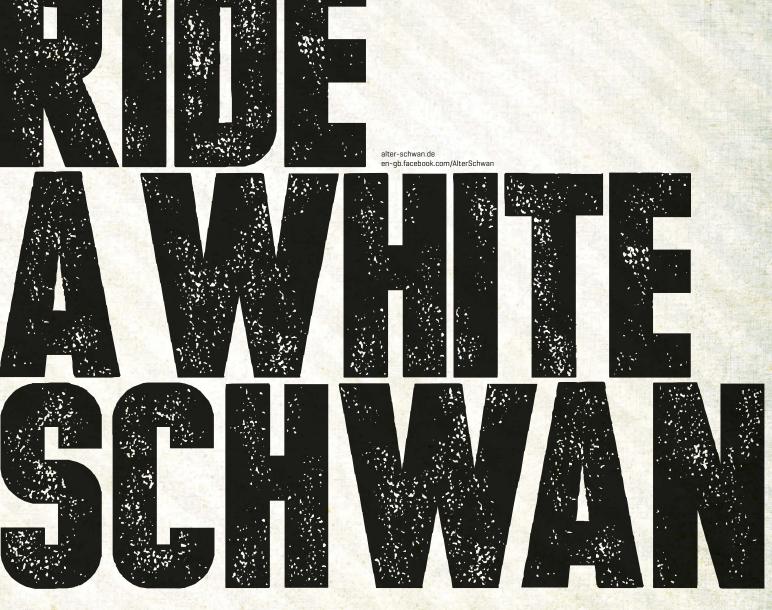
device, a thin self-adhesive polyurethane film, the ideal product that provides a moist healing environment during the initial, and most critical, healing stage of a tattoo wound.



...is not the same!

The only tattoo medicament approved by the Ministry of Health





Alter Schwan is a studio hidden in the centre of Berlin is made up of four artists: Jukan, Sven Von Kratz, Carlo Sohl & Chrizzzn, a chilled and creative space for the guys to work and play

IN THE BEGINNING

Chrizzin: Jukan, Carlo and I worked in the old shop together and because of that we were already good friends. Various disagreements in the old shop led us all to the idea of the three of us opening something of our own.

Jukan: We decided to leave our old shops in December 2015 to do something on our own.

Carlo: That was Jukan, Chrizzzn and I, who were at Stilbruch and Sven came from his old shop.

Sven: I was guest working at Sash's shop and I was looking for something on my own as well. I knew Jukan a little bit from the internet and I knew they were looking so I was like ok, let's meet these guys and see if it works. Work wise

we were doing kind of similar stuff and so we just met.

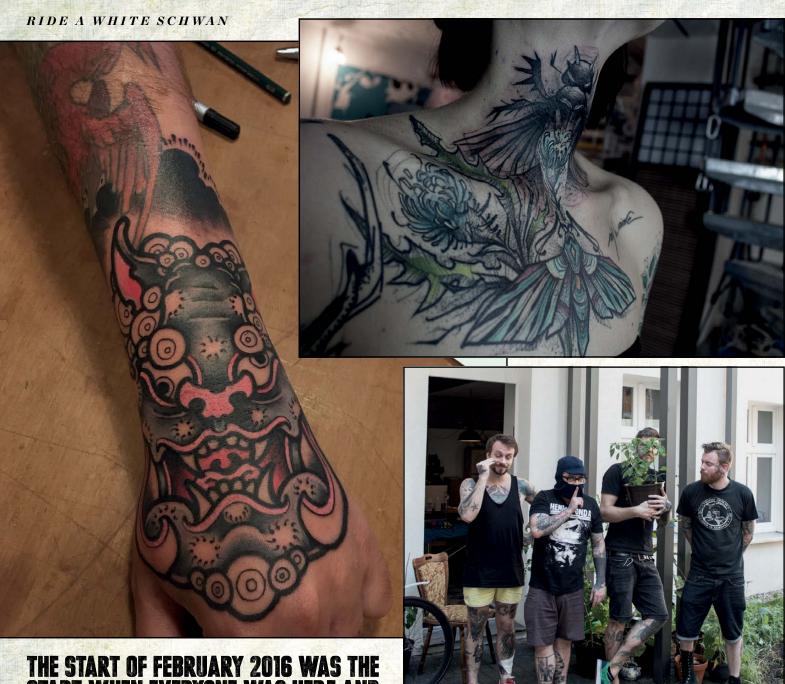
Carlo: So, we met to see if we could sit in a room for quite a while together!

Jukan: And had a lot of beers

Carlo: And it worked pretty well.

Jukan: We did a post on Facebook as we were looking to find a place. Here in Berlin, it is quite difficult to find a place that you can afford. We wanted to have something hidden, like in a back-yard because they are so many tattoo studios here that there is always another studio in your way.

We also wanted to have a studio without walks-ins as we already had or own clients from working for so many



THE START OF FEBRUARY 2016 WAS THE START WHEN EVERYONE WAS HERE AND WE STARTED WORKING

years. We just wanted to have a quiet place that was very private and we could do whatever we wanted to do.

Carlo: Also, every once in a while, we have some sensitive clients who do not want the public to see them or artists. One time we had an artist who was playing in a hardcore band and many people came just to look at him, there was a queue outside the door just to take a photo and have an autograph so we tried to avoid that.

Jukan: I also wanted to do something new so I was like yeah, let's meet as we already knew our work would fit together. Then we met for an evening full of beer and talking about what we wanted to do with a shop, what it means, to us and how we would like to run it. I wanted to leave Stilbruch and open my own place but I realised when it came to the planning I really did not want to run a shop with artists paying percentages so we thought let's do this differently and everyone is equal, everyone can do

what they want and show up or not... and it is working really well.

Chrizzin: If you own your own shop, you don't need to ask anyone for permission to realise your own ideas or to customise the shop to your own liking. This is very important to me personally, because I feel like your own artistic style of your tattoos also gets represented through the shop.

Carlo: It's a very fair deal and everyone is happy with it. Sven: We met and talked about what we wanted and I wanted to have a room where I could shut the door, these guys were like we are happy all sitting in one room and tattooing together as that is what we did before, so then we looked at some adverts.

CREATION

Sven: So it was like October-ish when we first met and talked about it then this space showed up and we could









WE JUST LIKE BUILT AND CRAFTED EVERYTHING STEP BY STEP, THE UNIT WAS STANDING IN MY DAD'S GARAGE FOR 30 YEARS

have it in December. But I could not just leave my old place. **Carlo:** We were the same with Stilbruch, we had contracts and needed to give three months so we had time to model the shop and find stuff to put in here and set things up. The start of February 2016 was the start when everyone was here and we started working.

Sven: We were all just working as you don't need much stuff to work and part by part we were just gathering stuff as we did not want the shop to be modelled from something.

Jukan: Not like an Ikea shop.

Carlo: Everything you see was either gifts or we found it or we traded it. The only thing we really brought is the kitchen (from Ikea) to hide the sterilisation stuff.

Jukan: We just like built and crafted everything step by step, the unit was standing in my dad's garage for 30 years looking ugly so I had two days off and sanded it until it looked like the right kind of ugly.

Sven: This is the typical tattoo studio thing, you are given stuff, you are gathering stuff getting more and more, people started bringing really ugly taxidermy.

Jukan: I thought I had the ugliest fox and then Sven showed up with his one!

Carlo: And we traded the couch for a small tattoo. The shop here is very comfortable, sometimes the guest artists can stay here if they do not find somewhere nice to stay.

GUESTS

Jukan: The great thing with guest artists is now we can invite our (tattooist) friends and all have a good time in the shop. This was not possible in the shops we worked in before as there was not so much space.

Carlo: We are lucky as we have a social area where we can get together and eat together. On Tuesday nights, we invite friends over and we draw here or watch videos. Or



I THOUGHT I HAD THE UGLIEST FOX AND THEN SVEN SHOWED UP WITH HIS ONE

hang out with the guest artists.

Jukan: That's the point here everyone can do what they want to do, we did not feel that we could do all of these social things with the guest artists in our other shops, there was not the space or the time. There was an owner who told you what to do.

But now you have a lot of free space in your head because everything is simple.

This is also great for the many guest artists we have.

Sven: When I worked in Scratchers Paradise guest artists never paid a percentage as we saw it more as an exchange of ideas. It's cool to pay for what you use but I also did not want a percentage thing here.

Jukan: Also, because the guest artist usually has to pay a lot of money to travel and stay here and then they have to work. It costs us nothing to make a post on Facebook, the guest artists have to do all the work so why do we want

to take a load of their money. The guest artists we have here are always friends and we really want them to come here so we do not want to make money from them. We can have friends here and learn from them and see their skills which is very good for us and much more useful than money.

Carlo: This makes the artists more relaxed as the money is not the issue and the art and the social aspects and visiting the city are more important. We all feel the same about this. All of the guest artists we invite we know before and know we get along with them.

TEAM SWAN

Carlo: Our idea in the beginning was as there are four of us we all make the decisions together and if one of us is not happy with something it does not happen. We have a one veto rule, but this has never happened – luckily.









HERE WE HAVE A VERY COOL ATMOSPHERE, EVERYONE IS VERY CHILLED AND OUR CLIENTS ARE VERY HAPPY TO BE HERE AND SPEND TIME HERE

Jukan: We have four people who are very different, Sven is like the critical guy.

Sven: I'm a hater!

Jukan: Carlo is very optimistic and full of energy. I'm kind of medium in the middle and Chrizzzn is like I don't care, you decide.

Carlo: You must know that myself, Jukan and Chrizzen all have kids and our girls are working full time and we are working part time so we leave early. This is not because we want to have free time but we need to take care of the peeky meenies!

Sven: This is also a nice thing because I have worked with a lot of tattooists over time and some flake a lot, and disappear but with these guys they all have kids and can't run away. But now I'm doing it – I hope to go to Australia and New Zealand in December. But I will miss this place and come back, the good thing is this shop is affordable

and we are not dependent on each other and if there is a space we know other artists who can work here.

Jukan: Here we have a very cool atmosphere, everyone is very chilled and our clients are very happy to be here and spend time here.

Carlo: You can talk like you are talking to friends.

Sven: I have some clients that I have been tattooing for years so everyone is on the same level.

This is great as now my style has developed I feel more of a connection to the work. Now I have less clients but I have clients that I can connect a little bit with.

Chrizzen: Three of us have families and small children, so our time is pretty tight. But we still manage to find the time to meet to go to the movies or party together, and we all feel like family to each other.

Sounds like one cool family to me.

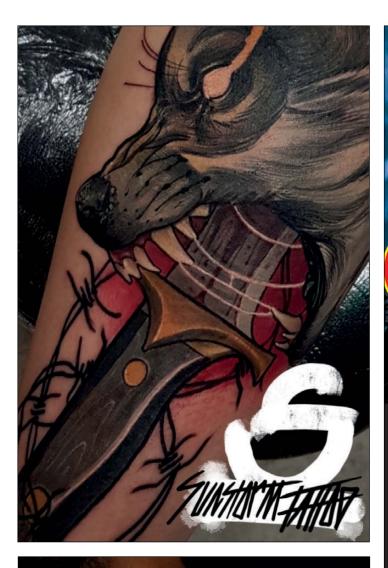
FROM £9.99

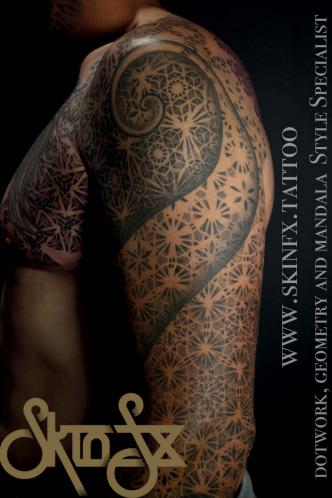


IT'S EASY TO SUBSCRIBE!

CALL: 01244 881888
OR VISIT: WWW.SKINDEEP.CO.UK

See website for terms and conditions





BLOODY GOOD FUN! SHOCKING & SEXY! BLOODY MARVELLOUS! ★ ★ Bizarre ★ ★ ★ Time Out Edinburgh Evening News -FOR send an SAE to: CIRCUS OF HORRORS PO BOX 4538 LONDON CRAWLEY, Hawth Theatre 01293 553636 BILLINGHAM Forum 01642 552 663 10 Jan parkwoodtheatres.co.uk/The-Hawth **T** 26 Feb forumtheatrebillingham.co.uk BRIGHTON Theatre Royal 16 Jan 0844 871 7650 **SCARBOROUGH** Spa http://bit.ly/2AlcLcL **T** 5 Mar 01723 821 888 scarboroughspa.co.uk ** SWANSEA Grand Theatre 01792 475715 17 Jan swansea.gov.uk/swanseagrandtheatre BARNSLEY Metrodome 6 Mar 01226 730 060 bpl.org.uk/metrodome

YEOVIL Octagon Theatre 19 Jan CHELTENHAM Town Hall 0844 576 2210 20 Jan cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk 7 HEREFORD Courtyard NEWPORT Riverfront 01633 656757 23 Jan tickets.newportlive.co.uk T CAMBRIDGE Corn Exchange 01223 357 851 29 Jan cambridgelivetrust.co.uk T SOUTHAMPTON 02 Guildhall 023 8063 2601 2 Feb livenation.co.uk/southampton F YORK Grand Opera House 0844 871 3024 BIRMINGHAM Alexandra 6 Feb http://bit.ly/2B0EBkS **T** 25 Mar KILMARNOCK Palace Theatre 01563 554 900 ELGIN Town Hall 18 Feb eastayrshireleisure.com 7 19 Apr | GLENROTHES | Rothes Hall | 01592 611 101 | NORWICH | 20 Feb | onlife.com/venues/rothes-halls | T | N THE BIG TOP | INVERNESS Eden Court | 01463 234 234 21 Apr INVERNESS Eden Court 21 Feb 01463 234 234 eden-court.co.uk ***** PITLOCHRY Festival Theatre 01796 484 626 23 Feb pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com **T** DUNDEE Whitehall Theatre 01382 434 940 24 Feb http://www.whitehalltheatre.com/ **T** MOTHERWELL Concert Hall 01698 403120 25 Feb https://culturenl.co.uk/ \$\forall \]

01935 422884 FELIXSTOWE Spa Pavilion 01394 284 962 octagon-theatre.co.uk 7 7 Mar http://spapavilion.uk 7 GT YARMOUTH Hippodrome 01493 844 172 8 & 9 Mar hippodromecircus.co.uk T 23 Jan tickets.newportlive.co.uk **T** 13 & 14 Mar http://bit.iy/zbwsws
WELLINGBOROUGH Castle Theatre 01933 270 007 STEVENAGE Gordon Craig Theatre 01433 363 202.5

STOKE Victoria Hall castletheatre.co.uk **T** 15 Mar gordon-craig.co.uk
STOKE Victoria Hall 0844 871 7627 HARLOW Playhouse
26 Jan atgtickets.com/venues/victoria-hall **T** 16 Mar harlowplayhouse.co.uk **T**READING Hexagon 0118 960 6060 KETTERING Lighthouse ilighthousetheatre.co.uk **T**SWINDON Wyvern theatre 01793 524 481 CARDIFF St Davids Hall 029 2087 8444
SWINDON Wyvern theatre 01793 524 481 CARDIFF St Davids Hall 029 2087 8444
01293 357 851 WARRINGTON Parr Hall 01925 442 345 WARRINGTON Parr Hall 21 Mar 01925 442 345 pyramidparrhall.com 01772 80 44 44 prestonguildhall.co.uk ** PRESTON Guild Hall 22 Mar EASTBOURNE Royal Hippodrome 01323 80 20 20 TELFORD Oakengates Theatre 01952 382 382 3 Feb royalhippodrome.com T 23 Mar theplacetelford.com T LINCOLN New Theatre Royal 01522 519 999 FROME Memorial Theatre 01373 462 795 Feb newtheatreroyallincoln.co.uk T 24 Mar 01373 462 795 fmt.website T 0844 871 3011 bit.ly/2BoPGsD **
 COLNE Muni
 01282 661 234
 BRECON Theatr Brycheiniog
 01874 611 622

 7 Feb
 themuni.co.uk †
 26 Mar
 brycheiniog.co.uk †

 LIVERPOOL Empire
 0844 871 3017
 BOURNEMOUTH Pavilion
 0844 576 3000

 8 Feb
 atgtickets.com/venues/liverpool-empire †
 27 Mar
 bournemouthpavilion.co.uk †
 08444 993 666 bit.ly/2i3HUwo **†** 01553 764864 01343 543778 skiddle.com ***** KIRKCALDY Adam Smith Theatre 01592 583 302 WREXHAM, Glyndwr University 0844 888 9991 19 Feb onfife.com/venues/adam-smith-theatre **f** 20 Apr glyndwr.ac.uk/en/Events Royal Norfolk Show Ground 08444 993 666 ticketmaster.co.uk/artist/26960 MILTON KEYNES Theatre 22 Apr 0844 871 7652 bit.ly/2iqXqGJ ** DERBY Bass Recreation Ground 01332 255 800 26 Apr IN THE BIG TOP derbylive.co.uk T

ticketmaster.co.uk

08444 993 666

WARNING: The Circus of Horrors contains some nudity and language of an adult nature, it is not suitable for children, sissies or chavs. This show contains nuts! The dangerous nature of our performances means individual acts may sometimes change.

Originally from France, Judicael Vales started his artistic journey with a tattoo apprenticeship in Goa, India. He then embarked on a nomadic quest that took him to Europe, Bali, Indonesia, Nepal and, eventually, California where he opened his own studio: Sacred Skulls Art Gallery & Tattoo. It was during a 2007 trip to Mexico that he was inspired to create his first sacred skull talisman and today, his stunning handcrafted pendants continue to be a beloved artistic output of which Aquaman himself, Jason Momoa, is a fan...



t all began with a trip to India. Or, rather, two trips. "I had heard about Andy Smith through travel friends in India and when I returned to France, I designed my first tattoo—a guardian angel for my travels—and later returned to Goa to have Andy tattoo it," remembers Judicael Vales of his life-changing encounter with Smith.

"The next day, as I watched him tattooing a friend, I thought, 'I can do that!' I asked him immediately if

I could apprentice with him, he gave me a list of materials to buy and told me to show up with drawings at the beginning of the next season in Goa to start my tattoo apprenticeship."

"I had moved around as a child with my gypsy artist family through France and Spain, so moving to Goa was rather an exciting, creative adventure," he recalls. "It didn't phase me at all. I began by buying a Royal Enfield motorcycle in New Delhi and driving six days down to Goa."

During his time with Smith, "the greatest lesson I took away was to be versatile in my artistic expression," says Vales. "Andy was a very unique artist with over 20 years of experience when I started. He would take on anything with his own touch and, to this day, I try not to pigeonhole myself in one style. I learned to be meticulous in my setup and cleaning and Andy really taught me to trust in myself, as both an artist and tattooer."

But it wasn't just Smith who inspired and educated him—Goa also played a key role. "The opportunity of being in Goa, surrounded by freaks, artists and travellers, gave me so much freedom

Vords: Barhara Payone









TRANCE PARTIES AND MIND-ALTERING EXPERIENCES IN GOA WERE AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN MY EARLY TWENTIES



"They both feel satisfying, but I also feel I could do a little more to make them better," admits Vales, comparing his major artistic outlets to one another. "With the skulls, it's a personal creative process, as I am alone. With tattoos, it's a social interaction and collaboration. I feel it's a good balance to go back and forth between those two art forms."

and inspiration in my artistic vision and expression," he reveals. "Trance parties and mind-altering experiences in Goa were an important part of my growth and development in my early twenties. The richness and depth of the Indian culture and spirituality marked me forever."

A NOMAD'S QUEST

Following the end of his apprenticeship, Vales embarked on another major journey: "A nomadic quest to 'find myself' through the challenges of the unknown. I wanted to meet amazing people and infuse myself with as many artistic and cultural influences that would inspire greater vision in me and give me more tools, insights and experiences."

"Being on the road affected my career by exposing me to a lot of different kinds of artists and styles and it shaped me as a person by giving me greater self-confidence, as well as the ability to adapt to anything and any place," he continues. During his quest, Vales landed in London where he met two major influences, Xed Le-Head and Tomas Tomas at Into You Tattoo, "who were pioneers in dotwork. Also, working at Avinit Tattoo in Orpington and Evil From the Needle in Camden Town gave me lots of experience. Meanwhile, in Mexico, I was influenced by Mayan and Aztec art."

"One of the most memorable experiences, however, was a motorcycle trip in Ladakh," he recalls. "After tattooing for a couple of months in the Manali Valley in northern India, I embarked on a motorcycle trip with two friends to the high plateau of Ladakh. It was a total adventure, driving through snow and rain, 1,800 feet up, staying with nomadic tribes. It was an out of this world experience with Mars-like views and 375-year-old monasteries."

"Egypt was also a major life initiation for me and my family," he adds. "Doing rituals at all of the temples along the Nile and inside the Great Pyramid for the winter solstice of 2012."

Today, he's settled down in California where he runs his own studio, Sacred Skulls Art Gallery & Tattoo. "After many seasons in Goa, I was inspired to go to Bali by the artistic culture and community," he explains. "In Bali, I tattooed and met many Californians and was encouraged to go to Burning Man. I met my muse, and now wife, who was also a



SACRED GEOMETRY IS THE CREATIVE PATTERN OF THE UNIVERSE. IT'S A PROPORTION IN NATURE THAT GIVES SYMBOLIC AND SACRED MEANINGS TO CERTAIN GEOMETRIC SHAPES

traveler and based in San Francisco. We fell in love and were called to move to Nevada City by its nature, quality of life and creative, alternative community."

SACRED SKULLS + TALISMANS

"Sacred geometry is the creative pattern of the universe," starts Vales, offering a crash course in the basis of most of his designs. "It's a proportion in nature that gives symbolic and sacred meanings to certain geometric shapes. It creates natural beauty and harmony and has been used throughout history by builders of the pyramids, ancient sacred sites, temples and cathedrals."

In 2007, he expanded his creative output to include gorgeous sacred skull talismans crafted completely by hand from natural materials. "Skulls have always been a deep passion of mine since I was a child, for reasons I cannot explain," he admits. "I was especially fascinated by

the Tibetan kapala skulls that are elaborately carved and ornamented and used in Tibetan rituals. Chris Morton and Ceri Louise Thomas' book, The Mystery of the Crystal Skulls, activated something deep in me."

"Elongated skulls found in ancient Egypt and Peru also motivated my creative process," he elaborates. "Skulls shock people by their very nature, as they represent the vessel of the soul and make us question life and death. I try to make them as beautiful as I can in or-



AT SACRED SKULLS, I HAVE VINTAGE JAPANESE SAMURAI ARMOR FROM THE LATE 1800S DISPLAYED IN THE WINDOW. WHICH EVOKES THE DISCIPLINE AND WARRIOR IN YOU THAT YOU NEED TO ACCESS TO GET TATTOOED

TIBETAN KAPALA SKULLS

'Kapala' is a Sanskrit word meaning 'skull', 'bowl' or 'vessel'. Traditionally crafted from real human skulls, kapalas are used by worshippers to offer wine and dough cakes (shaped like human eves and ears) to their deities in both Hindu and Buddhist Tantra. Kapalas come in two forms — a full skull and skull cap - are elaborately carved with religious imagery and often feature precious stones, jewels and silver.

der to change our perception of them and especially the view of skulls as evil."

"I want people to find their own meaning and make it their own personal talisman with whatever they choose to encode it with," he says of his unique pendants. "They can signify the ancient human or extraterrestrial that walked among us in previous times and challenge the classic view of mainstream archeology and history."

"Each skull has its own life and meaning and comes through me in a different way in the creative process," he says. "They each evoke a different race and are inspired by a different culture, such as ancient Egypt, Africa, China and Peru. Meanwhile, some others are inspired by inner Earth and off-planet beings."

"When someone wears one of the pieces, I

hope it inspires them and activates their creativity," he says. "And that they may become motivated and stimulated to act on it. People can encode the skulls themselves with their own intentions and wear them as talismans of their own activation."

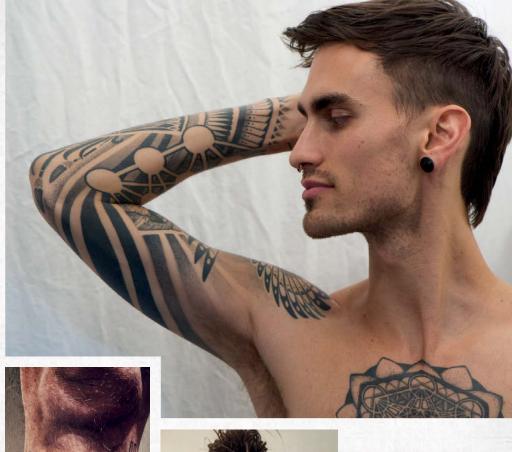
Delving deeper into his creative process, Vales reveals, "Most of my gemstones and exotic woods come from trades or traveling. Such as the alexandrite that's on the Ancient King skull that I exchanged for a sleeve tattoo. I've traded skulls for gemstones at the



Tucson Gem Show where I exhibit with the Crown Collection Gallery. One time, a friend who was repairing boats in the little port of Chapora in Goa gifted me a rare piece of purple padauk wood from the Andaman Islands in India. I try to keep the gold local since I live in Gold Country."

As for how the designs themselves come about, "I usually get a flash vision of the piece I want to create and I try to hang onto what I've seen and bring it to life, but things change and evolve along the way as I get inspired. It's a very organic process. I allow for my imagination and inner vision to guide the creative process and I never really know what the end result is going to be."

"I do a rough sketch, then I gather the appropriate materials, like exotic woods, precious metals and gemstones, and I sit in front of my workbench and let the magic happen," he laughs. "I start carving the wood with ma-







chine and hand tools. After, I move to placing the precious metal inlays and gems, as I am intuitively called. I keep coming back night after night, changing, adding and perfecting until it feels right."

"Whatever I create I do it for me at first because I am inspired and they just pour through my hands," he continues and admits to falling "in love with each piece through the creative process, but eventually, I let them go." Which isn't to say he doesn't have his own impressive collection of art.

"At Sacred Skulls, I have vintage Japanese samurai armour from the late 1800s displayed

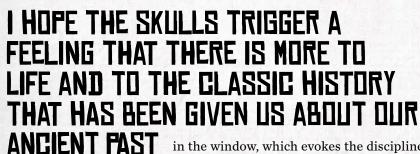


JASON MOMOA

Game of Thrones. Conan the Barbarian. Justice League. Hawaiian actor Joseph Jason Namakaeha Momoa has appeared in some of the biggest films and TV shows of the past decade. In 2014, he added writer, director and producer to his long list of successes with the release of Road to Paloma (in which he also starred) and, later this year, he'll be back in the DC Extended Universe, reprising his role as Aquaman in a full-length feature of the same name.







JudicaelSacredSkulls.com

Judicael_Sacred_Skulls

Sacred Skulls Tattoo Studio & Gallery 423 Broad Street Nevada City, CA 95959 in the window, which evokes the discipline and warrior in you that you need to access to get tattooed," he says. "I also have a vintage Japanese ancestors' shrine that was used for honouring ancestors. At the studio, we use it to burn incense that clears the energy and calls in a smooth, easy session. The tattoo studio has a temple-museum feel to it. The front half is an art gallery that also displays my skulls and the tattoo studio is in the back."





"I hope the skulls trigger a feeling that there is more to life and to the classic history that has been given us about our ancient past," he declares. "As well as a deeper inquiry on a soul level about advanced offplanet civilisations and their technologies that have been kept secret from us. Things such as anti-gravity, free energy, time travel, the inner earth, etc."

Next up on the list is "a new line of elaborate skulls that will have strong off-world features. I am also working on some more skulls for Jason Momoa from Game of Thrones," he teases before concluding, "I wanna shake the worlds!"



sales@metalmafia.com

@metalmafiabodyjewelry

866-696-2342 Toll Free

● @Metalmafia1

■ @MetalMafiaBodyJewelry

fax: 212-279-4653

www.metalmafia.com

NIPPLE CLICKER SHIELDS FOR

-VIXENS=

SAFE FOR INITIAL PIERCINGS.

THE MOST USER-FRIENDLY JEWELRY ON THE MARKET.

14G, 9/16"















NPCCAT



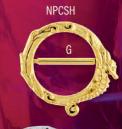
















NPC21

Model: Kelsey Iverson Photo by:

TRAGICGLAMOUR.COM

Metal Mafia ® 248 West 35th St., #601, New York, NY, 10001 © Metal Mafia 2018

Stab it, Poke it, Stick it, Pierce it,

Share it. #metalmafialove





SERPENTS of BIENVILLE The Transformative Tattoo

What do you do when life changes and the achievements you worked so hard to accomplish no longer produce what you had grown used to? A generation ago our parents were working hard for one employer their entire lives, chasing the carrot of retirement...

PART TWO



he first time I remember sitting down and doing a serious drawing, I was 8 or 9 and I was just getting into 80s metal. The first tape I ever bought myself was Poison's, 'Every Rose Have Its Thorn' Maxi Single. It had a pictures of Bret Michaels on the cover and his tattoo of a rose with a dagger threw it. I was like TATTOO. That tattoo is amazing. So I sat there and drew a picture of that it. I probably drew it 20 times so it would look exactly like that tattoo. It's funny because the first drawing I remember doing, not the kind in school that you have to draw, but the first one I sat down and wanted to draw was a tattoo..."

Jeff Ensminger is known around the world as an incredible tattooist and artist, but as his friend I know him more for

his perseverance and willingness to learn. Last month we spoke with Jeff about his first exposure to tattooing, and how his tattooing career flourished. This month we want to delve deeper into the idea of change, and what do you do when the career you worked so hard to create changes before your eyes, in a way that you can't control. Tattooing has always been, and will always be at the

centre of his life. I think for true tattooists, the spirit of tattooing will eventually guide us into everything we do. That being said, if we look back into Jeff's experiences in tattooing, I think one can find that perseverance I mentioned earlier, and how that eventually led him down a road to a new career in print making.

Last month I talked to Jeff about his first tattoo he did, which led to an incredible and hilarious story about him as a child with a syringe injecting ink into his hand. (If you missed it, make sure to pick up last month's issue and catch up). Storytelling and tattooing go hand in hand, every good tattooist has to be a good story teller, it is part of the skills

needed to get a client to sit still for hours while you are hurting them. Jeff is one of my favourite story tellers, so this go around, I asked Jeff to continue this story and talk about his next tattoo experiences. Jeff talks about how he got/did his second tattoo. He mentions picking up tattoo magazines, how that created even more of a tattoo obsession for him, and that it was a Paul Booth







MAYBE I HAD JUST ENOUGH SENSE TO STOP BEFORE I HAD TATTOOED GUNS N ROSES STUFF ALL OVER ME. BELIEVE ME, I WANTED TO.

back piece that made him think, "Holy crap, I gotta start jamming out these death angels."

Jeff continues his story, "I was like, 'I'm doing it, I'm gonna tattoo!' There was a guy I went to school with, I would talk to him about tattoos, all the ones I had seen in magazines, and all the tattoos I had seen on my Uncle at the time. Somebody had shown this guy how to make a prison tattoo machine, I don't know who it was, maybe the Anarchist Cookbook or something, I really think it might have been that." (laughs)

This is where I would like to pause to add in this little safety message. Kids, don't try this at home, and anyone who is wanting to learn how to tattoo, make sure to a proper education on blood borne pathogens and an apprenticeship. Jeff wanted to also make sure that this message is stated, and that this story is more for entertainment purposes. Now, back to Jeff's story.

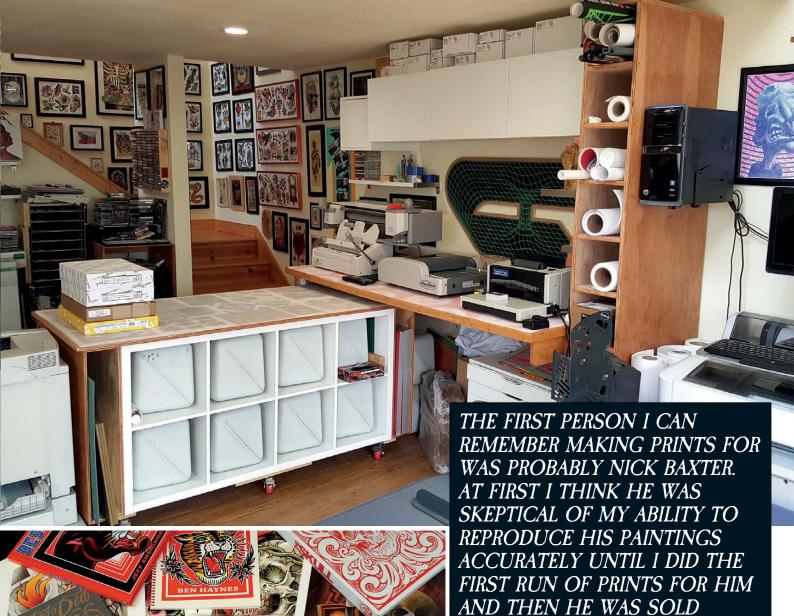
"So we did it, we made a homemade tattoo machine, used a lighter to bend the tooth brush, mechanical pencil as a tube, the guitar string, sharpened it up... the RC car motor, we used a little cam on the motor that popped your needle into, we used an eraser chunk, you would pop that piece of eraser on there, then poke a hole in one side, ya bend your guitar string, put it in there, then that spins around and causes the...whatever, you know, it's a little tattoo machine.

The first thing that I did was start going over that dot on my hand, made it into a star, and added some other little

stars. That was really my first actual tattoo. I was 13. I pulled a couple other lines here and there, but nothing really stuck. That was about it, I decided that that was it for tattooing for me at the time. I don't know why I didn't run with it. Maybe I had just enough sense to stop before I had tattooed Guns n Roses stuff all over me. Believe me, I wanted to. I had already gotten arrested, I had to move out of state, I didn't want to get in too much trouble at the time. So it stopped there, but I was definitely interested in tattooing, the whole time. I thought it was the raddest thing ever."

One reason I love Jeff is because he isn't one to let anything be a mystery for him. When I was a kid and interested in tattooing, I just dreamed of one day being involved in this mystical craft. Instead, Jeff learns how to create what he wanted, though it is a bit dangerous, and pursue his passion. I use this story as a transition into Jeff's new career of printmaking. Jeff's love for printmaking has a similar feeling, hair metal, teenage rebellion and all. I asked Jeff how he got into printmaking, he said,

"I've always been an artist and interested in artistic things and the idea of printing artwork on a large format always fascinated me. When I was around 16 years old I had a friend that worked at kinko's and I would spend hours in there photocopying and enlarging some of my favourite pieces of artwork. Things like album art, movie covers and random things from magazines. I can remember taking VHS covers and blowing them up huge and printing them out on multi-



ple sheets of paper and taping them together to make a really large poster. I had one that covered probably half the wall in my bedroom. So I guess I'm going to call that my first large format print."

One problem developing right now in our culture is that loss of curiosity and ability to learn how to do something that we either need or are interested in. One thing that I've always loved about tattooing is the punk rock attitude of "do it yourself". Do you want to see a band in your home town? Book them! Do you want to see your subculture grow? Make a zine! Do you want to see more music in your town? Start a band! I was fortunate to work with Zeke Owen for a short time, and one point he drove home was that a tattooist should know how to build everything he needs from materials you can find at Radio Shack. He would say that losing that ability was a loss to the craft of tattooing, and that keeping it was vital to keeping tattooing alive. Jeff is one those tattooers who is

keeping that needed spirit alive.

When I had finally began creating illustrations for what became our project, The Serpents of Bienville, I knew I wanted to get prints made. I asked around and came to the conclusion that I had no idea how to get that done with quality, within the tattoo community. Thankfully Jeff had just begun his printing career and we were able to get those through him. When Jeff was presented with the same problem years earlier, he decided to take it into his own hands and start doing the printing himself.

Jeff says, "It wasn't until about 2007 that I bought my first wide format inkjet printer. I bought a bunch of books and scoured the internet, teaching myself everything I could about making art reproductions. I did a bunch of printing for myself over the first year until I started to get it dialled in. A few of my coworkers and friends that tattoo saw what I was doing and asked me to do some printing for them. The first person I can remember making prints for was probably Nick Baxter. At first I think he was skeptical of my ability to reproduce his paintings accurately until I did the first run of prints for him and then he was sold. That was when I first had the idea













WHEN I WAS AROUND 16 YEARS
OLD I HAD A FRIEND THAT
WORKED AT KINKO'S AND I
WOULD SPEND HOURS IN THERE
PHOTOCOPYING AND ENLARGING
SOME OF MY FAVOURITE PIECES
OF ARTWORK

that this could be more than just a tool for myself and could be a viable source of income."

"In 2008, Nick and I both moved to Austin, TX. Our original idea was to open a tattoo shop, but we quickly realised that the Austin area was pretty saturated and the last thing it needed was another tattoo shop. So we both decided to do a joint private studio together. Around this time I had the idea of making this a legit printing company that catered to tattooers, but it had to go on the back burner because of how busy I was with tattooing. I was booked out about a year in advance and it was just too much to try to do both, so printing stayed something that I did for myself and close friends. There was a lack of quality print shops in Austin and word eventually got out in the tattoo community that I was a tattooer who was also making giclee prints and artists started hitting me up. Having more print clients in town gave me the opportunity to hone my skills further and to really develop an eye for detail."



IF YOU ARE GOOD TO TATTOOING, TATTOOING WILL BE GOOD TO YOU AND THAT IS TRUE NOW MORE THAN EVER

Since the beginning of my career I have heard stories from the tattooers before me that our community was quickly getting saturated, and that it would create a problem for future generations. I can now see what these forefathers in tattooing were talking about, and the repercussions for tattooers worldwide. As corporations and businesses try to dip cup into tattooing, we are losing some of what this craft holds so dear. This is where my respect and admiration for Jeff grows, because instead of looking for someone to blame in this situation, he only focused on forward momentum and a way he could continue in the tattoo community, and give back to it.

"Fast forward to 2015 and the tattoo market in Austin is so over saturated that I fear I won't be able to support myself with tattooing alone. There's probably four times as many tattooers here now than there was when I moved here in 2008 and my schedule has slowed, I'm still booking, but I'm able to see the direction it's going. I now had the time to commit to making this an actual company. I gave it a name, created a website, and started advertising my services. We're regularly adding/updating equipment and offering new services. The services we currently offer include large format printing and scanning, archival giclee printing, banner printing, business cards and book printing/binding. Our goal is to continue to grow and to provide tattooers with a one stop shop for all printing needs. We're adding garment printing and silk screening to our services in early 2018. We'd also like to focus more on book projects including publishing."

Jeff Ensminger is an incredible tattooist, artist, print maker, and an exemplar of forward momentum. We are in a culture that is changing and growing, sometimes in frightening directions, but Jeff reminds us that tattooing is always at the





centre of that culture. I have always heard the phrase, "If you are good to tattooing, tattooing will be good to you", and that is true now more than ever. With the ever expanding world of tattooing growing at an astronomical rate, we are seeing a change that is going to forever affect generations of tattooers. Jeff Ensminger is one that is making sure there is something positive for those tattooers to utilise, setting an example of creating forward progression, and reminding us that if we want to get something done, if we want to see change, it is up to us to do it. Our lives and careers may change course in this ever changing world, but the end result is always the same, stay true to our passions and never give up. \blacksquare

To learn more about Jeff visit www.jeffensminger.com, and to learn about his printing company, Southern Cross Press, visit www.southerncrosspress.com



THE BLACK STAG STUDIO

tattoo artist - Ad Wilson

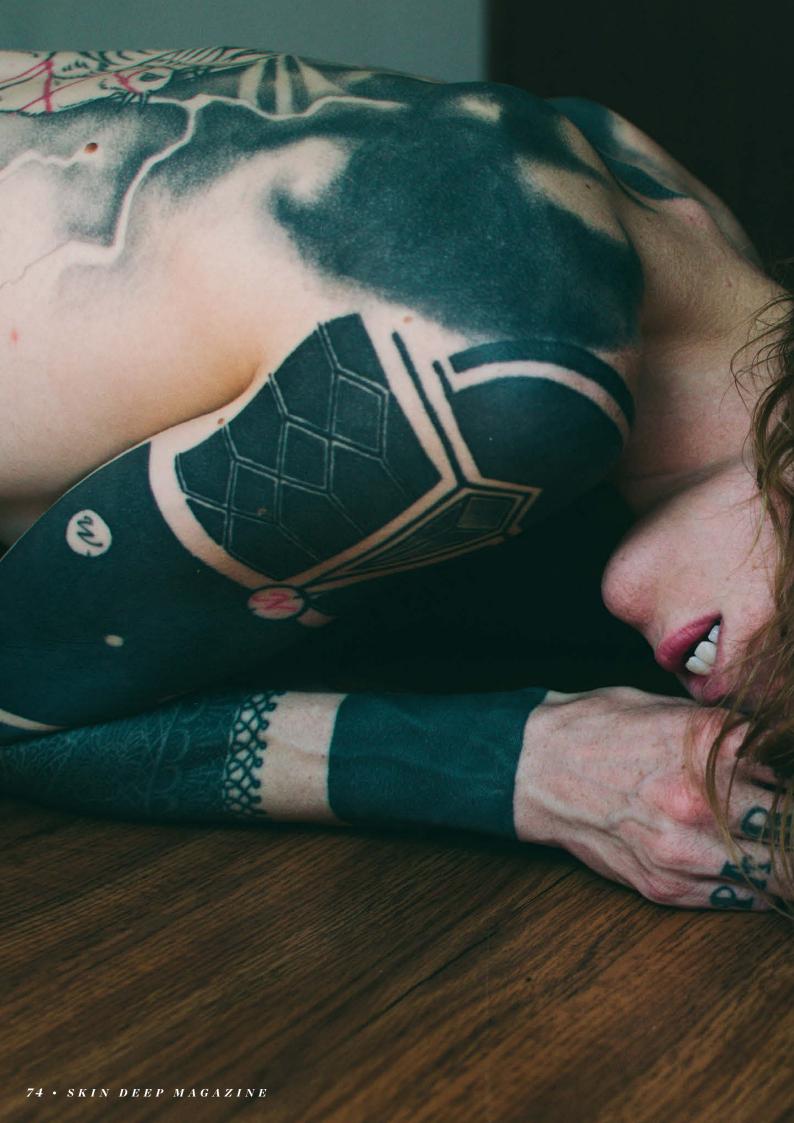




Email: theblackstagtattoos@gmail.com







sthe titule

Rebecca Rimmer talks to a photographer who showcases the beauty of inked skin with mystery and intrigue

amandaclara.format.com

mandydarling_

THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE













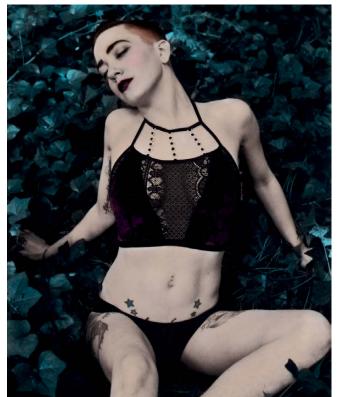
very day I see tattoo photography in the timeline of my social feeds. Whether it's quick selfies or professional model shoots, the beautiful tattooed people of the world are always sharing their skin to remind us of why we love our decorated bodies so much. Often, I am personally enlightened by a particular picture or photoshoot that passes me by. Once in a blue moon, a photographer drifts into my radar and their portraits of 'the tattooed' leave me with my jaw on the floor. At the moment, the powerful creative soul making this jaw-dropping happen, is Amanda Calquhoun.

Based in Olympia, Washington, she's only been photographing artistically for six years. Through various experimental methods, she creates stunning snaps that truly remind me of what it means to – not just be tattooed, but – wear tattoos that allow you to fall











in love with your body, sometimes, for the first time in your life. Her approaches include polaroid, soaked film and applying multiple exposures to present her subjects in a world drenched in a colourful haze. These are her beautiful people...

Do you have a specific focus for your work as a photographer? An aim for each time you take photos of someone with tattoos?

My shoots are a bit spontaneous, and light at heart. I focus on finding a place to work with good natural light, and develop the shoot as I go. Ultimately, I aim to capture something special with each subject. Tattoos can add another dimension of individuality to a photo. When I'm working with a subject that has tattoos, I want to showcase them. Is there something different about taking photos of those with

tattoos, in comparison to those without?

The additional colours, patterns, shapes, and sizes of tattoos are individual to each person. I like the effect that this has on the potential for a unique photo shoot. I have always loved tattoos, but I don't have any myself... yet!







Some of your work is analogue, or painted – there is such variety in what you do. $\,$

I always find myself experimenting with different cameras and different processes. I typically take a variety of cameras with me to a photoshoot, but I love analogue photography the most. I enjoy doing multiple exposures, soaking film, and using expired film.

I love seeing photos of tattooed women captured in interesting and delicate ways. Are you consciously trying to do something a little different with tattoo photography?

I would say that there's a mainstream demographic within every style of art. There's nothing wrong with it, it's just what's being done—and seen—the most. I like to experiment, and I always prefer natural lighting. I think these two things end up yielding something different, but it's not entirely conscious. I like to create in the moment.

















Does being photographed by you ever liberate your subjects, or change the way they feel about their bodies? I know it did for me when I have been photographed in the past.

I believe in body positivity and I can only hope that—as a photographer—I'm able to help people see their unique beauty.

KINGSLEY RYAN



TRADEONLY WWW.KINGSLEYRYAN.CO.UK

T:+44(0)1614765448

E: SALES@KINGSLEYRYAN.CO.UK



Supplies for Tattooists & Piercers

Free Carriage On All Website Orders Over £49 nett

Order Online 24 Hours A Day

Serious Savings, Why Pay More?

£0.90 £2.27 £2.20 £4.70 £17.99 £19.99
£2.20 £4.70 £17.99
£4.70 £17.99
£17.99
700 W W W W W W
£10 00
L13.33
£9.00
£10.00
£2.90
£3.40
£4.49
£5.08
£5.80
£8.20
£0.68
£19.50
£20.00
£0.55

Tel: 01225 707188 Fax: 01225 707199 info@mytattooandpiercingsupplies.com www.mytattooandpiercingsupplies.com

Follow us on Twitter @Mytattooandp

Add us on Facebook: Mytattooandpiercing supplies

Follow us on Pinterest: Mytattooandpiercing supplies





ALEX CROOK · CHRIS MORRIS · DANIEL SZOMBATHY HANZO · HOLLY ASTRAL · JON POTTER JOSH JEFFERY · LANNI DANLO · MONIKA BOO REECE MORTIBOYS · SAMI PICKETT SHAUN WAINWRIGHT · VETOE









ALEX CROOK

ALEXCROOKSTUDIO.COM ALEXCROOKTATTOOIST@YAHOO.CO.UK

CHRIS MORRIS

















DANIEL SZOMBATHY

INSTAGRAM.COM/DNIEL_SZOMBATHY SZOMBATHY.DANIEL@GMAIL.COM

HANZO











HOLLY ASTRAL

INSTAGRAM.COM/HOLLY_ASTRAL HOLLY@GRAVITYTATTOOSHOP.COM











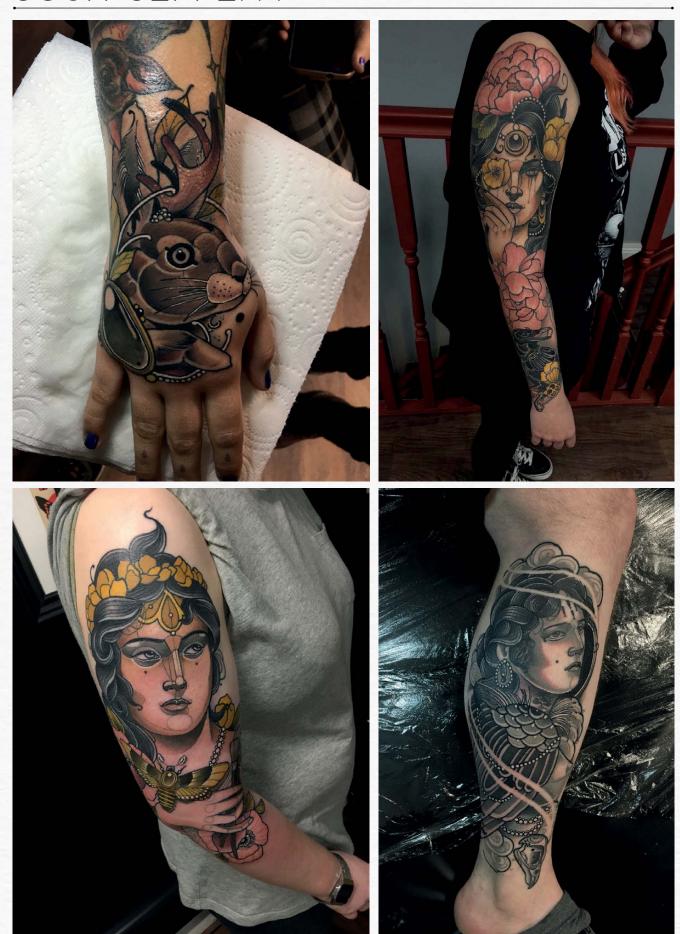




JON POTTER

INSTAGRAM.COM/JONPOTTER_TWISTEDIMAGE JONPOTTERTWISTEDIMAGE@GMAIL.COM

JOSH JEFFERY





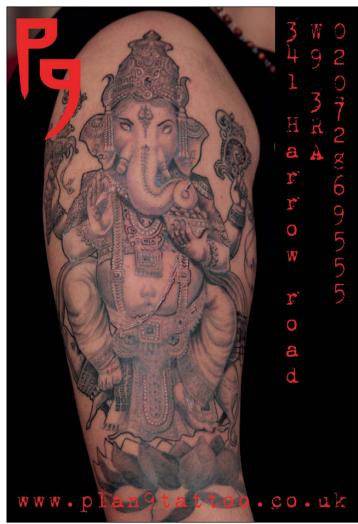




_ANNI DANLO

INSTAGRAM.COM/LANNIDANLO INFO@LOTUS-STUDIOS.DE









MONIKA BOO

INSTAGRAM.COM/MONIKABOOO MONIKA.BUTKUT@GMAIL.COM

INSTAGRAM.COM/REECE_TATTOOIST MEDUSAINK@OUTLOOK.COM

REECE MORTIBOYS

















SAMI PICKETT

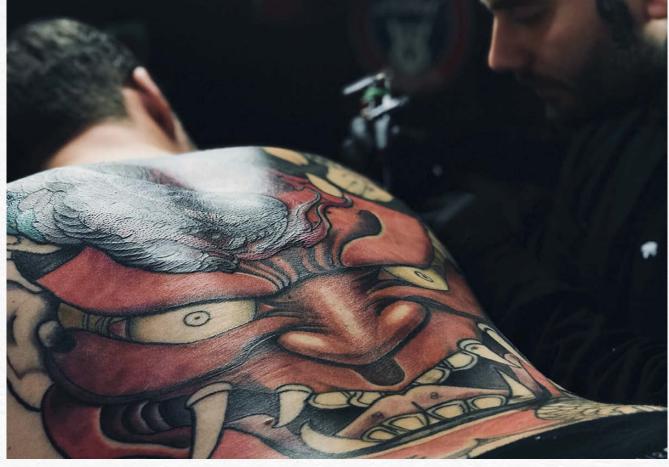
INSTAGRAM.COM/SAMIPICKETT SAMIPICKETTTATTOO@GMAIL.COM

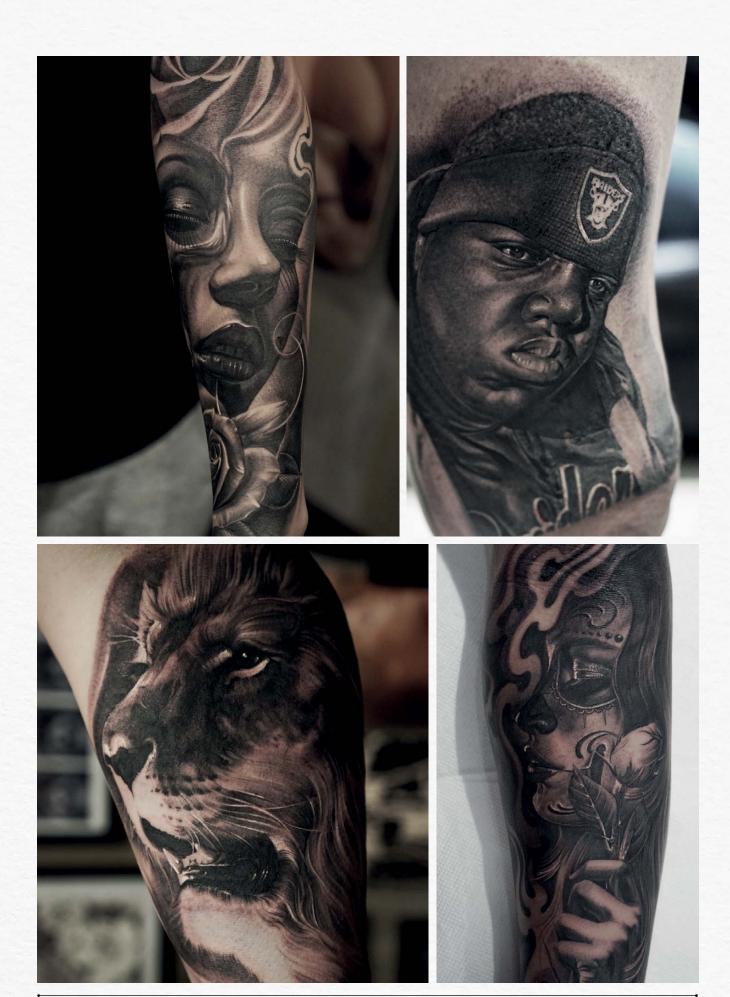
SHAUN WAINWRIGHT

INSTAGRAM.COM/SHAUN_COT CROWNOFTHORNSTATTOOS@GMAIL.COM



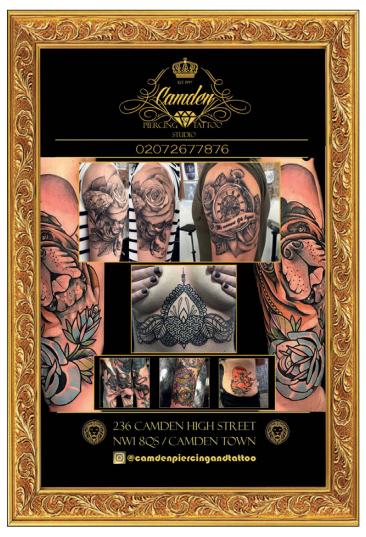






VETOE

TATTOOSBYVETOE@GMAIL.COM INSTAGRAM.COM/VETOE













TATTOO OF THE MONTH

by Bryn Gray of Inkwerx

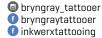


Pictured here is the image that took away all the glass at Tattoo Freeze just a couple of weeks ago. Reasons? All the right ones of course: Clean as a whistle. Lovely tones and shading. The frog doesn't look like it got hit by a bus or trodden on and most importantly for something like this, it's as simple as it needs to be. No need to make it com-

plicated with anything other than what needs to be in there and it's going to heal great.

What holds it all together though is those lines. Lines, Lines, Lines... without them, a design like this falls apart in your skin and before your very eyes.

That's a tattoo to be proud of. Top work Mr Gray.







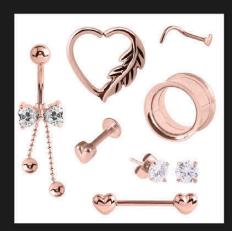
WHOLESALE JEWELLERY SPECIALIST

Trade Catalogue available

Call now for your FREE copy (trade customers only)



A wide range of sizes, designs and stretching jewellery up to 50mm.



The experts in Body Piercing Jewellery since 1997.



High quality body jewellery with fast, reliable and helpful service.

Our full product range and new products can be ordered from our website.

WWW.BODYJEWELLERY.CO.UK



51[ARR

5000+ PRODUCTS • FREE DELIVERY • STRICTLY PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS

Tel 0800 0851 216 Email sales@starrtattoo.com Starr Tattoo Supplies 1 Meir Road, Redditch, B98 7SY