

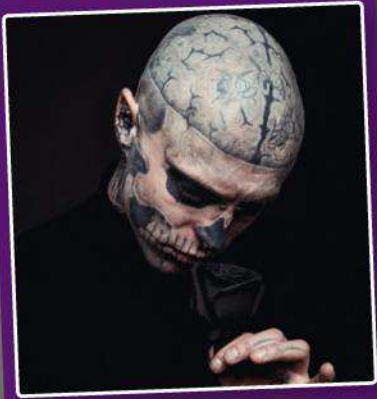
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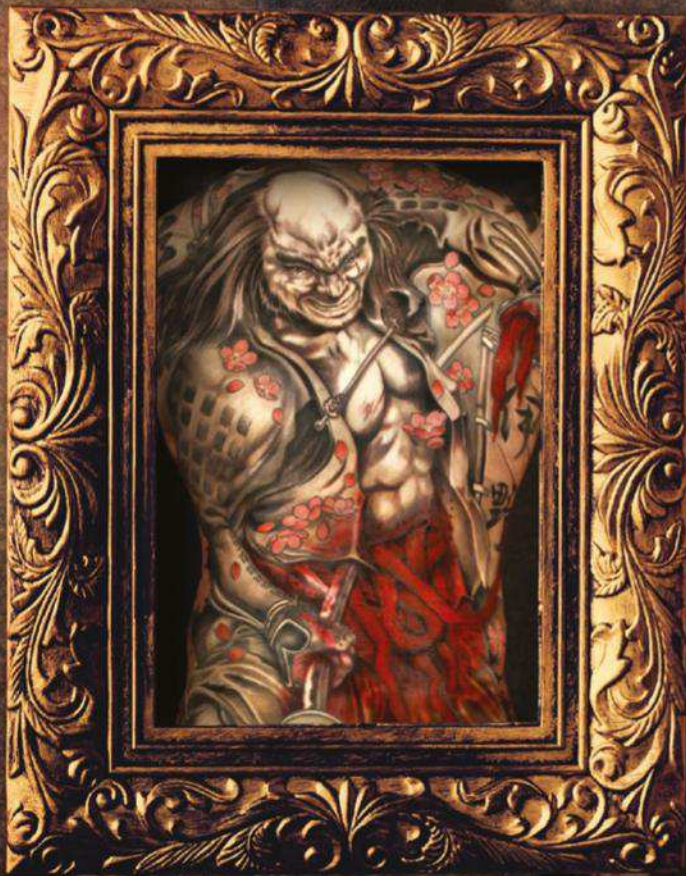
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The Museum of Tattoo Art?

Tattoo Art by Jess Yen

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The Hits Just Keep On Coming

Time just keeps passing by no matter how much I try to slow it down. This issue marks exactly 100 issues of me driving the Skin Deep car. To 'celebrate', I thought I'd share some of the things I've learned along the way—mostly about tattooing but sometimes also about the human race.

Read, weep, Get Good Ink:

1. Everybody thinks their tattoo is the greatest. Which is as it should be otherwise, why would you have get it tattooed in the first place. Sometimes they're right, sometimes they're wrong. I guess that's just the way of the world... after all, some people buy Coldplay albums. Free will, huh. It's a strange thing.

2. Judging at competitions is hard work...

THESE PEOPLE ARE GENERALLY THOSE WHO ARE NOT ALLOWED ONTO THE JEREMY KYLE SHOW AFTER THEIR AUDITION



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but one thing I have noticed is that around Europe, tattooers are pleased for the tattooers that won something—they applaud and give props over the whole affair. In the UK, other tattooers generally think the whole thing is rigged and go back to their booths to pack up and go home before having the last word by posting about it on social media. In America, nobody knows what's going on because there's so many shows on Netflix. In some of the poorer countries on the planet,

they generally tend to celebrate being alive.

3. It may seem dumb if you've been around a while—but there are people out there who are under the impression that when they buy a ticket for a convention, they will get tattooed whenever they want with whatever image they want and not part with any more money than they already have. I blame the internet, but then, I blame the internet for most things.

4. Celebrities don't get to decide who the best tattooers around are. It's entirely plausible that they could but they don't. There are exceptions to the rule, but not enough for it to be entirely comfortable. That Bieber guy is a good example of what happens when you're used to getting your own way just because you have a Platinum Card. The Gods gave you a brain and two eyes for One Reason Alone... to make sure your tattoo is a jaw-dropper and not to suffer that thing known as 'regret'. I've always found the best way to avoid regret is not to do something stupid in the first place. In some circles this is also known as lasering.

5. Umm. At this point, read point 1 again.

6. Sometimes, blank people like to contribute to newspaper columns online and leave comments such as: "Have you ever seen a tattoo after five years? They all look like shit." I think there's a place where such types copy and paste the text from because I've seen it so often. These people are generally those who are not allowed onto the Jeremy Kyle show after their audition. Again, I blame the internet for giving everybody on the planet a keyboard and a camera.

7. Social media (all of it without exception) is the new Beta-Max and this time I blame the human race. Imagine walking into a room in which there are 10,000 images stuck on the wall. You have 5 seconds to look at each one, to stick a yellow star on the ones you like and in half an hour you'll be quizzed on what you just looked at and asked to list all of those you stuck a star on. Don't put your trust in social media. If you're a tattooer, put it in your talent—that's the only place for it. Much like the use of plastic in the world today, we need to find a better way.

8. I wish Kat Von D was back on TV but I also wish Kiss had never taken their make-



THAT BIEBER GUY IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE USED TO GETTING YOUR OWN WAY BECAUSE YOU HAVE A PLATINUM CARD...

up off, David Tenant had never hung up his coat on Doctor Who and that the creators of LOST had never tried to find an ending for it. Things have a natural life-span and if you're lucky, they will find that end-point before it gets tired and becomes a parody of itself. Say what you like about Kat, others may have loosened the hinges but she was the one who took the doors off and is most of the reason you can still hold down a job with a tattoo of Godzilla on the back of your hand.

9. You can't teach some people anything at all. I bumped into a woman I used to work with one day who asked me why I had a giraffe tattooed on my arm. The item in question is actually a raven and does indeed look like one. Then again, she is still running a BlackBerry as her go-to phone of choice and in all likelihood, thinks Coldplay rule the world.

I love my job. Here's to the next 100... ▣



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Artistic copyright is a hot topic at the moment

This week, graffiti artists are speaking out. A recent lawsuit filed by fashion giant H&M has posed a potential threat to their rights. The brand have asked courts to rule that street art featured in the background of marketing photoshoots and videos should be free from having any copyright protection. After focusing on a particular piece of graffiti in a recent ad of theirs, the artist who wasn't aware of this spoke up and in return, H&M approached the legal system to fight back. From their perspective, public murals can't technically be copyrighted (as they're illegal, in most cases) and therefore can be used in advertising campaigns without payment to or permission from the artist.

This has got me thinking about tattoo copyright. Sadly, once something is put out into the public domain, in 2018 that often means it's up for grabs. I don't need to talk to you about the huge issue of tattoo design imitation that happens every minute of every day, because it's something almost every tattoo enthusiast is familiar with – what a sad story. Most well-known tattoo artists will have experienced seeing their work on the body of another person, often half-way across the globe. Whether your art finds a new home on a wall in a busy city or on the arm of a famous model, from the moment it leaves your tattoo machine or spray can, it can and in some cases will be featured elsewhere, whether that's in the background of a photograph or the focus of the photograph itself. The artist has no control over the message or tone of the photo and could soon have their art associated with a brand, campaign or statement that doesn't align with their own values.

This is scary stuff and would freak me out if I was a creator myself. I'm not a copyright lawyer so can't offer any explicit information about what technically is or isn't allowed but I can see one possible solution. As this particular new item gained momentum this week, H&M have since apologised publicly, withdrawn their court summons and are now talking directly to the artist. Payment or no payment, I am sure this acknowledge-



Arienne Ashman

...ONCE SOMETHING IS PUT OUT INTO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN, IN 2018 THAT OFTEN MEANS IT'S UP FOR GRABS



BECCY RIMMER
BeccyRimmer

ment and conversation was all he was after. I bet the big dogs at H&M are wishing they'd taken this approach to begin with, as threatening legal action probably didn't help keep the whole thing quiet.

Evidence that sometimes just talking to each other is enough to get us through the hurdles of this growingly complicated and confusing world. Could simple decency, respect and discussion with the original artist solve all, not just in this street art debate but in the tattoo industry in general? Whether it's booking an appointment, featuring someone's work or taking inspiration from a design – I think we've gotten ourselves into a muddle and somehow, good old fashioned talking to each other may just do the trick. ▣

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TIME OF DEATH

The Camden Watch Company are quite something. They are an independent British brand living in the heart of Camden but from what we've seen so far, they are so much more than that. They care—at the level that makes you think you are their only customer and that's no mean feat around here.

Their watches are something to behold. Sitting on the desk in front of me here is their latest creation—the **Memento Mori** edition—and frankly, its skull emblazoned face is beautiful.

Its design is based on a Victorian tradition and designed

as a reminder that death is inevitable. Contrary to the morose name, it serves as an inspiration to live each day as it comes and not get caught up in the stress of daily life.

The watch itself sits great on your wrist—the leather strap has no less care taken with it than the watch itself. A glance down at the sweeping white second hand will confirm that the seconds of your life are indeed ticking away and you should probably do something important. Now.

Damn, even the tiny screws that attach the strap to the watch have got skulls on them.

Go see what they've got... ▣

Footnote: Each of The Camden Watch Company models is inspired by Camden itself. From the Victorian pocket watch inspired No. 29, taken from Camden's strong railway heritage, to the turquoise-blue seconds hand of the No. 88, based on the iconic 'Camden Lock' bridge. The watches, No. 24, No. 27, No. 29, No. 88 and No. 253, are named after bus routes that run through Camden Town, with the No. 24 being the oldest unchanged route in the whole of London. Wonderful.

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RURAL REVOLUTION

We may be in the 21st century but geeking out about tattoos still doesn't come without its challenges

Email: tjueptner@gmx.net
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Words: Rebecca Rimmer • Photography: Thomas Juptner

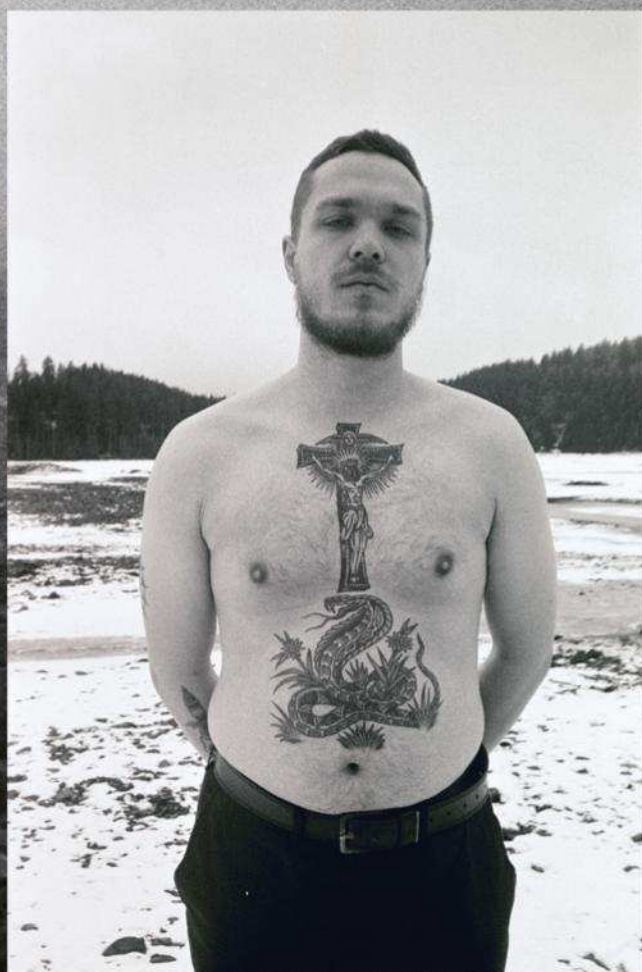
German tattoo enthusiast Thomas Jüptner has been exploring his connection to tattoos from a beautiful corner of the world. The setting may be picturesque but that doesn't mean that communicating his passion for tattoos has been easy.

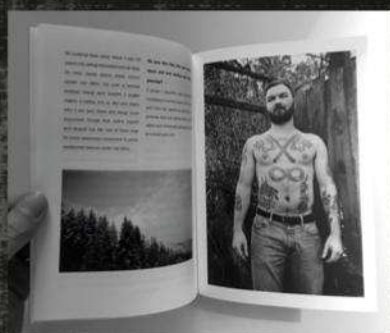
Home to quaint medieval villages, handsome mountains and huge forests is the state of Thuringia. To Thomas, it's a place where "time stands still" and "change is avoided at any cost". That's why he decided to investigate and document the thoughts and experiences of the tattoo collectors residing in this stunning but still area of Germany.

Despite loving the beautiful area he was raised in, Thomas increasingly felt its limitations and restrictions as he began to reach adulthood. "During the last couple of years I've had to leave some people behind," he explains, "mostly because I was never fully accepted."

Thomas says that "people over here tend to have a specific idea of how you should be if you want to fit in - you have to accept a set of standards that they want you to live by". After following these standards and concealing his tattoos for years, getting his hands tattooed was eventually the turning point for change: "I finally felt a huge relief because I couldn't hide my hands, and so couldn't hide my tattoos anymore... from then on, I started to live in accordance with my own needs."

After having now broken free from the old-fashioned ideals of those in his area, Thomas has decided to explore this concept in his new self-published work 'Rural Dis/Comfort' - a zine about the disconnection between the countryside and tattooing. After learning that his experiences weren't unique to him, the zine features other local tattooed men that have dealt with similar issues: "my intention is to show you what it can feel like for young men who don't fit into the common standards of rural surroundings."





The tattoo zine combines Thomas' black and white film photography and interviews with four other tattoo collectors: "their stories focus on how they felt about growing up in the countryside and how they feel about their tattoos." His natural imagery aims to "capture the honest emotion in a certain moment". As well as creating the new zine, he's been travelling all over Germany to meet, talk to and photograph many influential tattooists—his photo series captures the intimate moments experienced

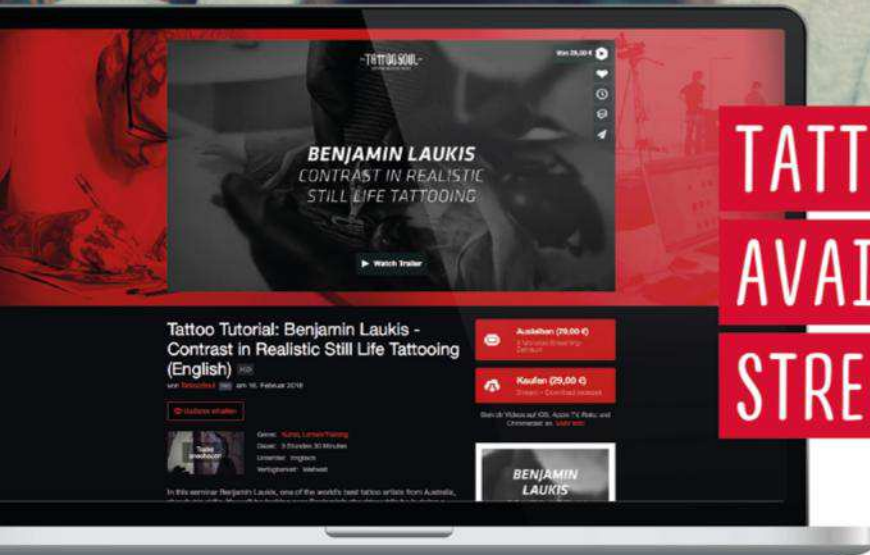
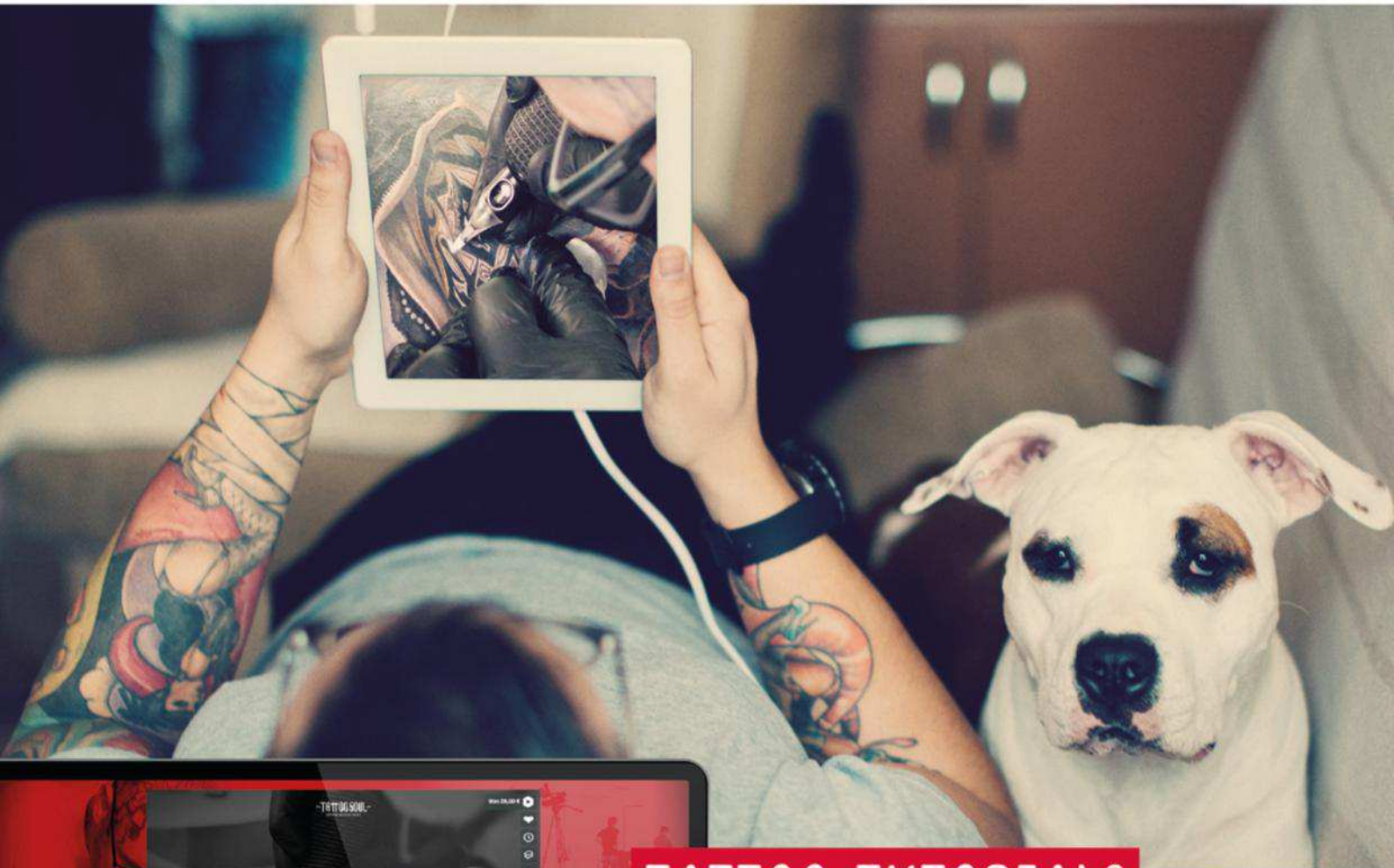
in tattoo studios.

The last few years have been a journey of self-discovery for Thomas and have led to him having what he calls "a better understanding of myself and my experiences"... something I am sure most tattoo collectors reading this can relate to. He refers to these challenges he's encountered as results of "the fear of letting new influences in." We say bring in as much influence as we can possibly cram into these pages, and are honoured to share his story with you all.

The A5 zine has 28 pages and is matte printed. The first run of 50 copies has sold-out but Thomas is taking requests for re-prints – you can send him a direct message on Instagram or get in touch via email. He ships worldwide.

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REBEL INC.

Wayne Simmons talks with some of his favourite rebels within tattooing, artists doing something different with their inks. This month he meets Adam Willett from Santo Cuervo in London

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I've long been a fan of traditional tattoos, particularly the really authentic stuff. That clean and simple execution of an old-school tattoo really works for me and, in a way, blackwork appeals for similar reasons.

Blackwork is a relatively new term to me and yet it seems to have sprung up really quickly as this huge movement. New artists working the style are filling convention halls like you wouldn't believe. Guys like Adam Willett.

"It's something I'm pretty new to as well," Adam admits as we catch up after Tattoo Freeze. "When I started working at Santo Cuervo in 2016 I met two great blackworkers, Lucy Frost and Adrian De Largue. Over the last year or so they have really inspired me and helped mould my style. Having others to discuss techniques with and bounce ideas off really helps you grow as an artist." Like me, Adam's always had a soft spot for old-school traditional tattooing, spending most of his apprenticeship honing his skills in that area. But with Lucy and Adrian's help, he started to seek out more blackwork on social media and the deal was done. "Pieces by Demon Dance and Johnny Gloom in particular. I was amazed by the use of negative space and how it makes a design really stand out on somebody's skin. I was always a fan of sneaking some script into my designs too, and found

**I WAS AMAZED BY
THE USE OF NEGATIVE
SPACE AND HOW IT
MAKES A DESIGN
REALLY STAND OUT ON
SOMEBODY'S SKIN**



ADAM WILKETT

@adamwilkett_tattoos





that artists such as Daniel Kickflip and Anrijs Straume displayed a really elegant way of doing this.”

Adam began to create his own take on blackwork, throwing some of that old school traditional foundation he'd built into the mix - those big, bold lines of his as well as his love of flash. “On the face of it, flash does seem a bit old fashioned, but I think it's actually a really important part of my job,” he explains. “Finding time to draw the things that I want to draw really helps me improve and refine my own style. It also guarantees that I always have designs available that reflect my current work. Designing custom tattoos for people is amazing, don't get me wrong, but I've always been an advocate of giving anyone who tattoos me as much creative freedom as possible, because you always end up with a better piece of work. In my eyes,

IN MY EYES, TATTOO FLASH IS GIVING THE ARTIST ALL OF THE CREATIVE FREEDOM



tattoo flash is giving the artist all of the creative freedom.”

Adam sees flash as a good thing for the punter as well as the tattooer, then. “It’s really bloody hard to decide what you want tattooed and I think a lot of people end up blindly following current trends and making Pinterest mood boards (please stop). I’ve ended up with so many amazing tattoos that I wouldn’t have ever thought of, if not for the artist having it available as flash, and it’s a great feeling when you discover a design you love.”

He may favour the old-school way of doing things but, design-wise, Adam goes for a more contemporary approach. He takes traditional imagery, such as Jesus, the praying hands, the snake and what have you, and he basically - for want of a better word - fucks with them a little. “I just really got sick of seeing everyone walking around with exactly the same tattoo,” he laughs. “I suppose fucking

I’VE ENDED UP WITH SO MANY AMAZING TATTOOS THAT I WOULDN’T HAVE EVER THOUGHT OF, IF NOT FOR THE ARTIST HAVING IT AVAILABLE AS FLASH

with them is my middle finger to their lack of originality.”

That’s not to say he doesn’t have respect for those old motifs. He describes that kind of iconography within tattooing as classic, in fact, and sees his own take as simply building upon its legacy. “When I first start tattooing, I was interested in the history behind traditional, how sailors would effectively turn their bodies into passports, collecting ‘stamps’ from the different places they’d travelled. I think I approach my designs in a similar way. They tend to all be palm sized and self-contained with a super bold outline, giving them a stamp-like feel and lending to the idea that I’m adding to somebody’s ‘collection’.”

Moving away from traditional, and even blackwork, I see something else permeating Adam’s work - a sinister quality, maybe. I’m reminded of some of the surrealist artists like Dali as well as some of the new wave of fantasy horror films such as Pan’s Labyrinth. “I’ve always been attracted to things that are slightly odd or macabre so I’d say that I’m more inspired by artists like Hieronymus Bosch,” Adam tells me. “Bosch painted massive, strange, creepy scenes packed with unbelievable detail. They are often themed around demons or the occult, and I think that sort of imagery is definitely present in some of my designs. I’m definitely a huge fan of anything that Guillermo Del Toro is involved with, though. I’ve always been a fan of the fantasy genre, but I prefer the dark and gritty approach he takes in his films. There isn’t always a happy



I WOULDN'T NECESSARILY SAY THAT WORLD EVENTS DIRECTLY INFLUENCE MY WORK, BUT IT'S DEFINITELY AFFECTED THE CHOICES OF VOCABULARY I USE IN CERTAIN DESIGNS

ending to the story, and I think a lot of my work also has this underlying sadness to it.”

I’m guessing, like many other artists, real life has a role to play in inspiring Adam. Looking around the world today, it seems like there’s a lot going on that is, frankly, terrifying. And with social media and Youtube, it can seem closer to us than ever before. I’m reminded of my recent interview with Anrijs Straume and his flash mega-project focusing on the seven deadly sins and, talking with Adam now, I wonder how much of what’s going on out there he soaks up and spills out through his work.

“You’re right, the world is a pretty scary place! It sounds bad but I think that, because it’s SO prevalent, I’ve become a bit desensitised to it all! I wouldn’t necessarily say that world events directly influence my work, but it’s definitely affected the choices of vocabulary I use in certain

designs. Words such as ‘forgive’, ‘broken’ and ‘save us’ to name a few, pretty much sum up my outlook of the world.”

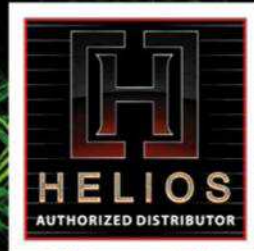
Not that he lets any of what’s going on hold him back. Travel is an important part of tattooing for Adam, getting out there and seeing the world. It was at Tattoo Freeze in sunny Telford where I first saw him but Adam gets further afield than that, having worked a show in Costa Rica just before Freeze. Like most working artists, he doesn’t see any financial return from shows, sometimes ending up a couple of hundred quid down. “I don’t think that’s the point of conventions though,” he says. “It’s a great networking opportunity and you get to meet loads of other amazing artists from around the world. Being a tattoo artist that works a lot from my own flash, it’s also a great chance for me to showcase my work to people who may have never discovered it.” ▣

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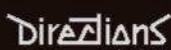
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TO THE BATCAVE

Rebecca Rimmer interviews one of her favourite UK artists. Arienette Ashman presents one woman's journey into the big (and not so bad at times) tattoo world

Get good ink. You know our magazine motto well, I'm sure. There's a damn good reason why we push this sentence down your throat and it is because the tattoo world is jam-packed with creative people making stuff that is on fire (in a good way). It's our job here at Skin Deep to make sure that fire spreads.

Our process as writers in the digital age goes a little like this: we see an online portfolio of an artist, we gaze at photo after photo after photo, we become increasingly giddy and restless as we discover awesome tattoo after awesome tattoo from this artist. Lastly, once we've calmed down, we thank God - that'd be your lovely editor, Si n Smith, in this instance, (I'll let that comment stand. Ed.) that we get to share this—often previously undiscovered—work with a wide audience (that'd be you guys).

The lady getting my knickers in a giddy twist this month is the (also lovely) Arienette Ashman who is going to tell you today about HER process (which is without a doubt much more interesting and complex than mine)...

Let's kick things off with this gorgeous corner of the world. What's it like where you live? Give us a snapshot of Bournemouth, useful for anyone who hopefully will read this and visit you in the future.

I actually live on the edge of the New Forest which is about 45 minutes from work (Stolen Space) because I'm an antisocial hermit! But Bournemouth itself is beautiful. Our studio is out of the town centre, which is nice, but a short



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5-10 min bus journey or drive would spit you out right on the beach—in summer it's a blessing to be so close! We also have the Oceanarium on the seafront which does a lot of conservation work and is a really lovely place to visit.

One of the words that has always come to mind when I see your tattoos is 'custom'—so many of your pieces are designed for your customers specifically, with their themes in mind. Can you tell me a bit about this process and way of working?

I love working on custom pieces. A lot of people will come to me for something based on a film or band and often say “but I'm not sure how to put it together.” I will ask them what they like about the subject specifically, if they have favourite quotes, lyrics, objects, imagery, etc. and once I have a feel of these things I take inspiration and start working on composition.

Sometimes people are very clear on what they want to include, and that can sometimes be difficult, if someone insisted on including a very long quote that didn't fit, for example. But most of the time once I speak to my customers about what does and doesn't work, they are really receptive and happy for me to decide what is best.

When someone sees their finished design or tattoo for the first time and says something like “this is so much better than I ever imag-

ined!”—THAT is the big reward. Seeing them leave with a smile makes me feel like I am actually OK at what I do!

Your work is also very versatile and you've accomplished so many different styles—why did you decide to work in this way?

My apprenticeship was in a very busy street shop with a good reputation so it was instilled in me right from the get-go to be able to do almost anything to a good standard. As we were always busy I had to get good at drawing different things right off the bat. I think the industry has changed now and artists can do just fine specialising in one particular style. I think that's a good progression—there isn't that pressure to be such a 'jack of all trades'.

I'm definitely grateful for having learnt so many things artistically. I'd much rather be capable of several subject matters AND get good at what I love to do than only be able to do one thing that is fashionable at the time. Now I tend to focus more of a traditional and neo-traditional path if I can, but at the end of the day the customer is the focus for everything. If I can create something for someone to a high standard that we both love, that is the most important thing.

What are some of your favourite things to tattoo? I love your bats and moths!

Thank you! I ADORE tattooing animals, particularly bats! When I draw, I always give my animals weird names and backstories and share them online by 'putting them up for adoption', so people sometimes email me asking to 'join The Battooo Club'—it's become an ongoing joke that I'm often 'recruiting'!

Anything spooky is also such a great subject matter to me, I love including tarot cards, Ouija planchettes and things like that. Anything from the occult is really interesting to me—when I tattoo bunches of herbs and crystals for example I'm very aware of which herbs and what the crystals represent.

I also love doing subtle music, film, TV show and wrestling tattoos, the kind that you wouldn't necessarily recognise unless you were a fan yourself. I've had people email me saying they've made new friends due to their tattoo starting a conversation—the thought of something I made forging friendships and getting people talking together fills me with happiness.

That's awesome! I definitely want to hear more about your occult tattoos and interests

Meet The Artist

Who: Ariennette Ashman

Where: Stolen Space, Bournemouth, UK [Private Studio] + Guest Spots

Tattooing: 8 Years

Instagram: @AATattooer

Favourite Food: Chocolate

Favourite Film: ANYTHING Tarantino [and/or Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind]

Spirit Animal: Pangolin

Favourite Place: A cliff top I know near Margaret River, Australia



[some of this I know myself already as we've geeked out together before about tarot].

Ever since I was a kid I've always been super curious about everything and for some reason the occult along with Paganism and Wicca really interested me. There's just something about that side of things that really speaks to me. I'm not overly influenced by a particular line of religion or spirituality but I like to take little pieces of information from all over. I feel tarot cards for example are not to be taken literally but act as a channel for signs perhaps you aren't paying attention to. Sometimes when a client comes to me asking for a tattoo including tarot cards and crystals but isn't sure which cards or which crystals they want to include, I'll ask them what their favourites are and pick out what I think represents them best.

If you could tattoo anything on me right now, what would it be?

Something cute but creepy. I'd recruit you into The Battoo Club!

What makes a good tattoo?

Good line-work. Working in traditional and neo-traditional styles, I always think that a tattoo is made by good line-work so I encourage people to look at that when deciding if a tattoo artist is for them. This wouldn't neces-

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sarily be the case for a portrait artist for example but I've seen good traditional tattoos that have been let down by bad line-work and it's such a shame.

And what makes a bad tattoo?!

Bad line-work! Also known as, tattoos that haven't been designed with the years to come in mind. There are a lot of tattoos being made now that look great fresh but when they heal, they don't live up to looking good in 6 months (never mind 10 years!) down the line. It's important to tattoo with an idea of how you want your tattoo to look for years to come because the person you're putting it on will be wearing it for the rest of the time they're around!

What is the biggest challenge for a tattooist working in the 21st century?

I'd have to say the over-saturation of the tattoo industry is the biggest challenge. There are so many people barely into an apprenticeship

Ariennette's Tattoo Inspirations

Justin Morris (@justinsst) and **Amy Billing** (@amybillingtattoo), colleagues at Stolen Space, Bournemouth

Jo Black (@missjoblacktattoos), owner of Black Moon Tattoos, Frome (plus the whole of the Black Moon family)

Arran Victory (@arranv.tattoos), Asgard, Southampton

Sydney Dyer (@sydneydyertattooer), Canada

Jean Le Roux (@jeanleroux), Black Garden, London



I OWE A LOT OF WHO I AM AS A PERSON PURELY TO TATTOOING, IT HAS MADE ME A BETTER PERSON AS WELL AS A BETTER ARTIST

who throw their toys out the pram—the next thing you know they’ve opened a studio and have their own apprentice. These occurrences are watering down the industry in a big way because these people will undercut other artists every which-way. They’re happy to put shit on people for pennies and unfortunately people still hold onto that “it was only a tenner!” mind-set. Good tattoos aren’t cheap and cheap tattoos aren’t good! It cannot be said enough. A good tattoo doesn’t have to cost the earth but you should be willing to invest in a good artist as much as you are a new pair of Nike trainers. The tattoo will last longer, I promise.

Social media is also such a blessing and a curse. It’s great for reaching new people but also it adds to the “I want it now” mentality. Some people can be really demanding and rude online. I miss people picking up the phone and calling the studio.



Which one word would you use to describe your journey in the tattoo world so far?

HARD. Tattooing has been the biggest learning curve of my life. It has taught me so much more than just how to tattoo—it has quite literally redefined every aspect of my life in a very positive way. I owe a lot of who I am as a person purely to tattooing, it has made me a better person as well as a better artist. ☐

Ariennette's Non-Tattoo Inspirations

- DIY punk scene and hand-drawn flyers
- Webcomic artists such as Mitch Clem (who created NN2S)
- Graphic Designer
- Rockets are Red
- Caravaggio
- Rembrandt

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FAMOUS LAST WORDS

I've been thinking a lot about tattooing culture and music culture, lately, and how similar they are. I remember, when I first got into ink, having that same fervour for it that I had for the first songs I heard that spoke to me, the bands I got into as a kid. I guess there's the same kind of identity politics at play:

You don't just listen to music, you assimilate it. Music lives and breathes within you, permeating through every aspect of your life – how you think, how you act, how you dress, what you feel about the world around you. Music is the very epitome of wearing your heart on your sleeve. And it's the same with tattooing. Only with tattooing, you actually get to wear a heart on your sleeve.

Felix Seele gets this and so do his clients. As one of a new wave of artists putting out script tattoos, the twenty seven year old Berliner is often thinking about music.

"Music was my first true love," he tells me. "It influences you in all kinds of ways. It teaches you, becoming part of your personality. It lifts you up, helps when you're down. I think everyone who feels music like I do knows this."

Lots of Felix's clients want their favourite lyrics tattooed and he can relate to that – he has many lyric tattoos, himself. "I like to meet people that are passionate about something and want to put that in their tattoo. I'm vegan and have a lot of vegan customers and this shared passion brings us together. You know what the other thinks and it makes you feel more convicted in your choice, more



@youngheartedtattoo felix.seele

Words: Wayne Simmons



I CAN'T HIDE HOW I FEEL ABOUT A TATTOO OR HOW I FEEL ABOUT THE TEXT SOMEONE WANTS TO GET TATTOOED, AND THAT INFLUENCES THE DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF THE TATTOO FOR SURE

comfortable; I love that. It's the same with protest tattoos: tattoos against racism, homophobia, sexism and all that other shit I hate."

For Felix, most of us rebels just want to feel a connection, a sense of community, and there's nothing better than ink for achieving that. With tattooing, there's an iconoclastic vibe that's similar to music culture, particularly within the punk rock, metal and hardcore scenes — many of whose fans Felix tattoos. And of course, as with music, it's a two-way street. "My mood definitely plays a

role. I can't hide how I feel about a tattoo or how I feel about the text someone wants to get tattooed, and that influences the design and execution of the tattoo for sure."

The strength of this feeling, the intensity of it, is evident within Felix's work. Aesthetically, I'm reminded of the Nordic black metal scene. There's a thicker, heavier feel to much of his script that echoes what's used within that genre of music; it looks chaotic, aggressive. At other times, we see more of an elegant, calligraphy vibe: lots of highlights, using the space in between the text as much as the text itself to create an effect. For Felix, it's all about how the ink works with the skin. "I don't care, really, if someone can read a script tattoo or not. The placement



and how it flows with the body, how it works with the person wearing the tattoo, is more important.”

This sense of collaboration flows through everything Felix does. And not just the artist to the client, it's in how he relates to other artists, too, the respect he has for his peers. He's reluctant to name the artists who inspire him lest he leave someone out. But when we get talking about collaborations – surely the most intimate way of showing respect for a fellow artist – a couple of names in particular come up. “I would work with Prokas Lampas on painting some stuff because this guy is just doing an amazing job. Or guys like

Anrijs Straume, who's a kind of idol to me.” He waves his hand. “There are too many.”

For Felix, collaborations are important because they open an artist up to other things. This is something that appeals to him as he's keen to mix in a variety of styles and genres to his own work. He doesn't want to be the script

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guy. He doesn't even just want to be the blackwork guy, he's open to everything – recently he's started working on neo-traditional and mandala designs. For me, much of his wider tattoo work, the non-script stuff, has an almost medieval vibe to it. I'm reminded of the Rider Waite tarot deck designs, the quietly and beautifully sinister look and feel of those illustrations on the cards, and wonder if this is the kind of thing he gets inspired by.

"I always love to draw something occult and dark," he tells me. "Something that is evil on one hand but beautiful on the other. I also like to draw stuff which is not so super typical within its style or to combine things that make the tattoo unique. I get inspired by mystic animals or old fairy tales, by costume builders for fantasy movies and also, of course, Mother Nature herself."

Again, I'm reminded of music. Bands like Zeppelin or Sabbath dabbling in the occult. Robert Leroy Johnson, the guitar player who sold his soul to the devil at the Mississippi crossroads. This morbid curiosity, this pursuit of the darker forms of muse out there, is as much a part of tattooing as it is within music. That chasing of the dream, hitting the road, going from convention to convention, city to city. The comparison goes on and on.

It's a romantic lifestyle, that of the musician and the artist, but it's far from easy. "I just wanted to tattoo because that's what I love to do the most," Felix says. "Honestly, I started with small dreams in tattooing. Sure, I wanted to see the world and this job gives me the perfect base for that. But it was and still is hard work. I've learned that nothing is handed to you in life, you have to earn it."

And he's sure as hell earned it. ▣

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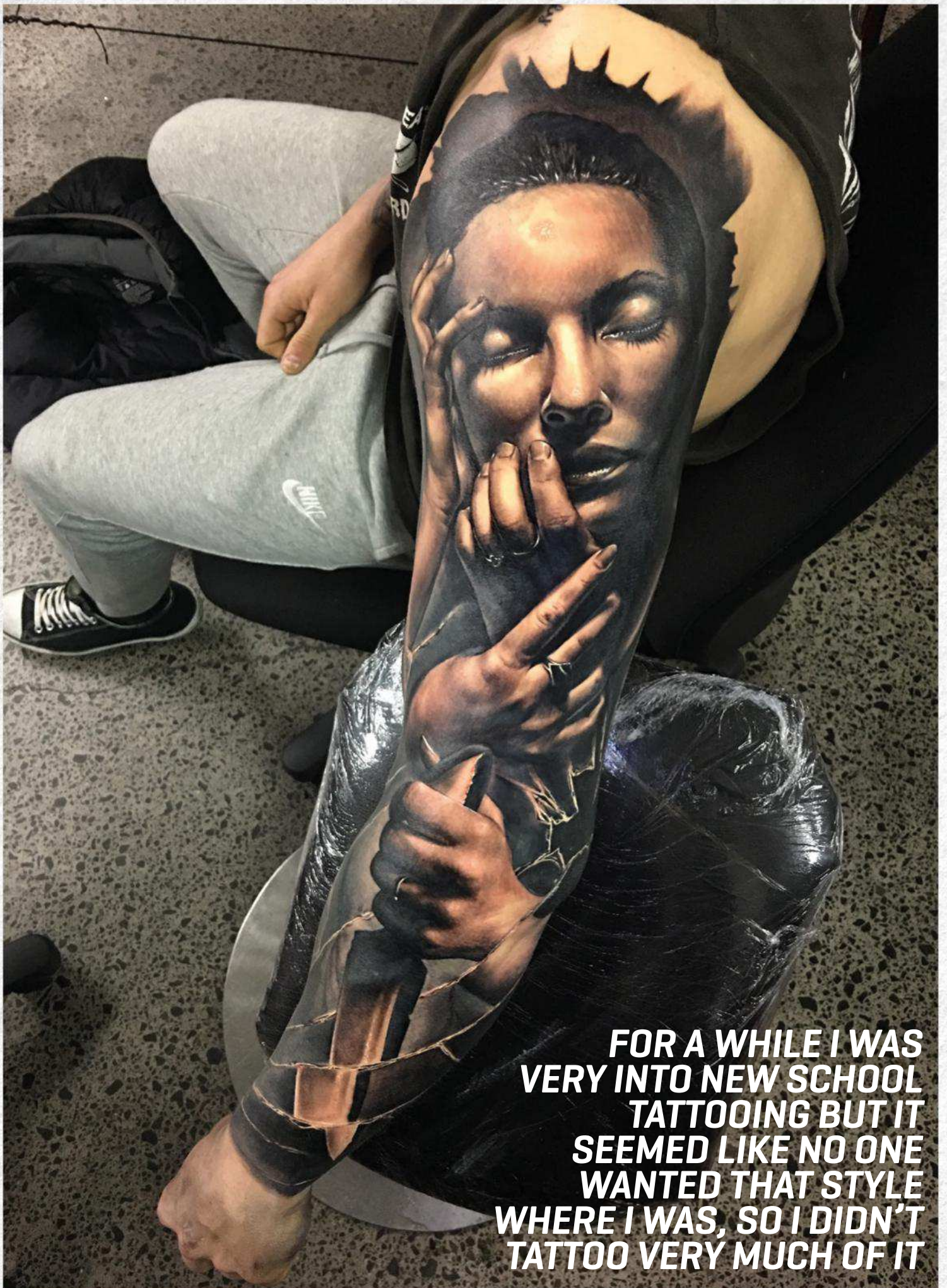
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SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Photographic representations of the past haunt our current consciousness. We stare longingly at photographs, hoping to take in as much intricate detail as possible. In doing so we attempt to study each line and shape, to realise every texture, to consume every displayed emotion available...

In turn, subtle gestures and nuances can be picked apart; leading us to know more about the subject than we ever did before. Ben Kaye's realistic tattoos are so detailed, so photographically accurate, that we mimic our process of photographic observation in reading his work. His attention to rendering small details and his realisation of compositional depth brings life to each portrait on the skin. We unknowingly compare his subjects to their real life counterparts or their appearance in a film, looking for specific features that might somehow belie their authenticity. But we cannot; Kaye's tattoos are flawless. The tattooist's artistry ensures that his clients' skin acts as a flawless mirror, reflecting back a visual representation that will catch anyone off guard.

YOU WORK IN A REALISTIC STYLE, WHAT LED YOU TO FOLLOW THIS PATH OF TATTOOING?

Realistic tattoos always blow my mind, I enjoy looking at them and trying to work out how someone did that, I still do. I remember when I first saw some of Mike DeVries (@mikedevries) work in a magazine, he tattooed this insane cow portrait, and it was so impressive. Not long after that I got hold of his book 'Let's Be Realistic' and it made realism feel a lot more achievable for me. At the time I had only been in the trade a few years, not around anyone who



tattooed like that or even close. I started slipping small realistic elements into cherry creek flash, realistic roses into tribal bands, and it's built over the years into what I do today.

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIMENTED WITH OTHER FORMS OF TATTOOING? WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO NOT FOLLOW THESE TATTOOING STYLES?

I tattooed almost every style, some better than others! I've only really specialised in realism for three to four years, before that I worked in street shops and tattooed what walked in. I feel like everything I

did had a little bit of a realistic tint to it, a bit more rounded and three-dimensional than if someone who did that style for a living would do. For a while I was very into New School tattooing but it seemed like no one wanted that style where I was, so I didn't tattoo very much of it. Because of the outlines and neon under lighting I add into the more custom work (snake hand, tattoo machine hands, knife hand) I've been told I'm a New School artist masquerading as a realistic artist, I kind of like that.

ARE YOU TATTOOED WITH REALISTIC TATTOOS? OR DO YOU ENJOY BEING TATTOOED WITH DIFFERENT STYLES?

I've got a few realistic portraits, Lana Del Rey by Mick Squires (@micksquires), Javier Bardem from 'No Country for old Men' by Carlos Rojas (@crojasart), an old man



smoking a cigar by Matt Jordan (@mattjordantattoo). Hopefully this year Matt's going to do my front piece. One style I haven't tattooed is Traditional. It's a style I just can't draw; it's deceptively complex, all the rules and the cool things people do that make it their own. I really enjoy it so I get more traditional tattoos than realistic ones.

WAS THE TRANSITION OF DRAWING PORTRAITS ON PAPER TO THE SKIN AN EASY ONE? WHAT DIFFERENCES ARE THERE BETWEEN THE TWO WHEN MAKING REALISTIC PORTRAITS?

I did some art in college back in England but not portraits. I haven't actually done a portrait either in painting or drawing for as long as I can remember. The paintings I have done are tattooed related and not portraits. I feel like that's something I should correct.

THE ATTENTION TO DETAIL IN YOUR WORK IS STUNNINGLY AUTHENTIC; SKIN TEXTURES LOOK UNCANNILY REAL AND EYES STARE OUT OF YOUR DESIGNS AS THOUGH THEY ARE TRANSFIXED IN ANOTHER'S GAZE, WHAT GOES INTO MAKING SUCH REALISTIC TATTOOS?

Thank you that's a great compliment, I try to think a lot about not just tattooing but also the shape and structure of what I'm tattooing. For example, how eyes sit in their sockets and the muscle structures of the surrounding area. Studying the reference image before and during tattooing is a big part of tattooing anything from nature.

DO YOU ATTEND GALLERIES OR RESEARCH IN ART BOOKS TO FIND CREATIVE INSPIRATION FOR YOUR TATTOO WORK?

I love galleries and museums for inspiration. I just fin-

ished a brilliant book about the life of Caravaggio. It was amazing going into all the surrounding religious, economic and social elements of the time that directly influenced his work. I didn't think an artist's biography could be so captivating and also so inspiring!

WHAT OTHER TATTOOISTS THAT WORK WITH REALISM DO YOU PARTICULARLY ADMIRE?

So many, I'll just name a few. I've been a big fan of Boris Tatoo (@boristattoo) for years. The way he thinks is insane, he's always doing something new and interesting, it's very inspiring. Dmitriy Samohin's (@dmitirysamohin) work is always a pleasure to look at, and just as much fun to try and work out how he technically creates his work. Jacob Sheffield's (@jacobsheffieldtattoos) produces some awesome work with an insane amount of attention to detail.

YOUR PORTRAITS RANGE FROM SUPERHEROES AND HORROR ICONS TO POPSTARS AND TV CHARACTERS, WHICH ONES DO YOU THINK MAKE THE MOST CAPTIVATING TATTOOS?

I'd say the cult classics that we all grew up with are the ones that really resonate with people. I wish I did more horror related portraits. The blood, texture and lighting of these sort of tattoos is always the best.

REALISM REQUIRES ARTISTRY PRECISION, HOW DO YOU ENSURE YOU DO NOT MAKE MISTAKES IN YOUR WORK?

Realism has a lot to do with precision; there are certain steps I take to ensure accuracy, like having a good solid stencil. Also a great high quality reference image is super important. The tattoo will only ever be as good as the reference image.

I IMAGINE THERE IS A GREATER AMOUNT OF PRESSURE TO ENSURE REALISTIC TATTOOS ARE AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE AS THEY CAN BE VISUALLY COMPARED TO THEIR LIVING COUNTERPARTS, HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THIS PRESSURE?

When I started tattooing portraits I found that kind of pressure immense and often too much but with time I've relaxed a lot. I'm trying to get as close to the original image as I can in my style. I'm not trying to get it 100% accurate, that's never going to happen. It's never going to be perfect, it's handmade.

ARE THERE CERTAIN INKS YOU USE THAT GIVE YOU THAT LIFELIKE SKIN TONE YOU REQUIRE?

I use the Fusion Ink brand because their range is insane, they're easy to work with and heal so well. The Fusion Ink Flesh Tones set is good if you're looking for a base to start with. Also Nikko Hurtado's Blush, Bone and Red Velvet are great. I go through phases; I was super into the Dark Skin Tone ink a while back, using Foundation Flesh as a base to mix up and down, which was a lot of fun!

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HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT MIXING INKS TO ENSURE THAT CORRECT HUMAN SKIN TONE CAN BE ACHIEVED?

The few above are a great start but skin tones are just like any other colours. I start with a mid-tone that matches close enough to the photo, tinting and mixing it in whichever way it needs to go. Whether it's a nice grey to dark purple or into a blush or cantaloupe. A lot of people I talk to think there's a set formula I stick to or a list I live by but there's not. Every face is different, I think my palette should be too; it's good to experiment and see what happens.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE YOUR TATTOOS CONTAIN AN ELEMENT OF DEPTH?

First I study my reference a lot and pay close attention to the blacks making sure that the basic black structure is solid and in the right place. Secondly, I pay just as much attention to the shape and tones within the larger shadows. Sounds silly but concentrating specifically on the shadows within a shadow. That's where so much of the depth can be found. Lastly, I focus on the lighter half of the tattoo making sure that's boosted and that the whole piece has a good level of contrast.

I NOTICE IN MANY OF YOUR TATTOOS THE PLACEMENT OF AN IMAGINED LIGHT SOURCE IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR CREATING TEXTURE AND DEPTH, HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHERE THIS LIGHT SOURCE SHOULD BE POSITIONED?

With portraits from movies, TV etc, you're kind of stuck with the lighting. Playing around with images like that normally doesn't work out great; they always end up looking a bit off. I do take my own reference photography for custom work. If I can get my hands on it I'll take the photos for the tattoo. It's super fun and very freeing. With lots of pieces I'm stuck with what movie posters I can find or whatever Google images has but taking my own photography reduces compositional limitations, it allows me to tailor images to an idea instead of the other way round. I've recently started a sleeve based on mental illness consisting of five faces showing different emotions. We hired a model so all the faces could be the same person. It was

a lot of fun playing with different lighting effects, mixed with extreme facial expressions. I've done a lot of skull photography in the last few months too, that's more to study the texture side of things but also playing around with different colour filters.

THERE IS A CERTAIN MAGICAL QUALITY IN SEEING A PORTRAIT THAT IS REALISTIC, WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR CLIENTS ENJOY GETTING TATTOOS SUCH AS THESE?

For the client it's all about the subject and who that person is and what they represent, whether it's the actual person or if it's a representation of a certain time in the client's life. Maybe they just want a super detailed Star Wars tattoo to show their affection for the franchise.

WHAT PORTRAITS DO YOU FIND PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING TO COMPLETE?

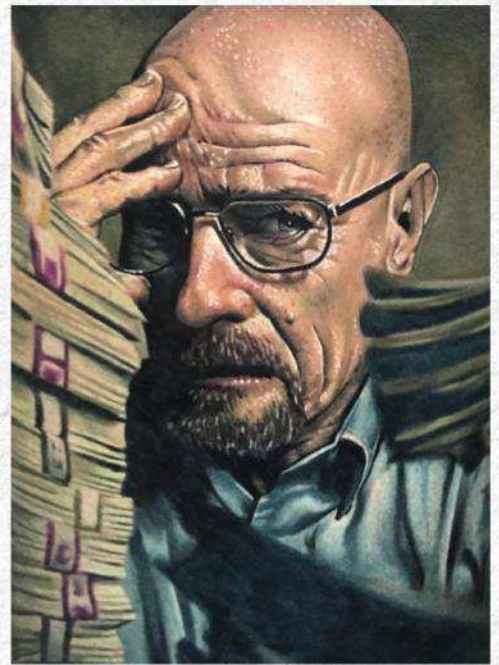
Deceased family members are the toughest and often the most rewarding, I'm a lot pickier about taking on family portraits. The image has to be perfect, and often that's one of the biggest challenges with family members. Good advice, take lots of good, well-lit photos of loved ones! All portraits have their own challenges but the most challenging one I've done from memory was the Walter White tattoo. The wrinkles around the eyes were difficult to tattoo, mixed in with the hand pushing up his forehead made it a super hard, long day. But it was definitely worth it in the end but a challenge to say the least.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC PORTRAITS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO TATTOO IN THE FUTURE?

Yeah I'd love to do a Terminator or any Arnold Schwarzenegger tattoo. There are so many 80's movie protagonists I would love to tattoo. The lighting and style of those movies are great and will make for a rad tattoo. Honestly I'm pretty open to suggestions apart from Batman's Joker, I've just about hit my limit on tattooing the Joker!

WHAT DOES TATTOOING MEAN TO YOU?

Tattooing for me is life, it's defined my journey the last ten years and if the Gods allow it, hopefully ten more.









Fell on Black Days

Nicky Connor travels into the mind of artist Gaston Tonus:

gaxtattoo@gmail.com  gaston_tonus  gastontonus

I have always liked to alter and transform the shape and feel of things around me. It was kind of a product of my environment as a teenager really. I wanted desperately to have my own tattoos, but in the late 1980s there weren't that many tattoo artists where I lived. So, to remedy this, I got together some essential materials and gave myself some very basic and primitive tattoos in the style that reflected the kind of stuff being worn by punk rockers or sailors of the time. Although I've now been tattooing for many years since that initially reckless decision.

I was certainly interested in art in during high school, and later I went on to study graphic design in Buenos Aires, which is incidentally, the city where I was born. Despite formally studying graphic design, I have somehow always felt more connected to the surreal side of art. I had a lot of jobs before I was a tattooist, you name it, I've done it. Of course, given my studies, I have worked as a graphic designer, but I've also had a lot of jobs not related to art.

This period of my life wasn't so memorable, but it did make me appreciate the importance of having a relationship with the real world beyond the bubble of art and perhaps the most notable thing I've done outside of tattooing was being in a quite prominent Argentina band called NoD, and I was the lead singer, guitarist and songwriter. NoD were a popular industrial rock band and we took a lot of influence from groups like Deftones, Tool, and A Perfect Circle, along with nods towards the darkwave of the 80s and the more alternative sound of the 90s. Today, I only really play music as a hobby, but I do miss singing.

Maybe in the future I will form a new band, who knows? I have so many musical influences and I enjoy tons of



different genres but some of my go-tos would be Tool, Deftones, The Cure, KSE, alternative 90's rock bands like Stone Temple Pilots, Alice in Chains, and contemporary bands like Cult of Luna, Karnivool, Chelsea Wolfe, Angelo Badalamenti, the list could go on and on.

I started tattooing 20 years ago, I taught myself during a time tattooing was still somewhat marginalised, easily-accessible supplies were almost non-existent and information was really poor. Back then, guiding influences were hard to come by in the industry and everything was much more primitive. I moved to Europe because there's so

I have always liked to alter and transform the shape and feel of things around me.



I moved to Europe because there's so much more inspiration all around me, both in Germany and across Europe, it's everywhere.

much more inspiration all around me, both in Germany and across Europe, it's everywhere. Sadly, back in Argentina, I think the culture has changed too much in recent times, and not in a good way.

You can clearly see how interest in music and all kinds of art has taken a general downturn. Plus, prior to leaving, I always felt a little bit like I didn't belong. With regard to tattooing, I also think clients in Europe are much more open to new ideas and creative challenges. I currently have a private studio based in Wiesbaden, Germany, but I also really enjoy the independence of being my own boss, so I often travel around Europe guesting at notable studios. Also, these days I can enjoy the benefits of artistic inspiration and modern technology while trying to maintain that primitive essence through my designs.'

CHAOS & STYLE

I suppose I would describe my style as 'chaotic', but it's a chaos that couldn't exist without a both a mental and a structural order in my work

environment. I think my style can be viewed as graphic, but it also has elements of primitivism and surrealism and of course, we can also simply call it blackwork. I've never really thought of labelling my work, but if pressed I'd probably go with something like 'graphic chaos'.

Working in my style, I really love to create a mixture of strong, accurate linework and more loose, energetic sketchy lines, which both balance in the design through a chaotic harmony. I also like to combine the modern elements with the old too, mixing human faces with animals or more organic natural elements. Usually, my outlines are bold, while internal aspects have a lot of details and are formed with a variety of different textures, sketchy lines, etching, stippling and dotwork. The predominantly blackwork choice is totally intentional. It's not that I



don't appreciate seeing colour good tattoos, but I genuinely love working with just black due to the extreme contrast it always provides. Also, on those occasions when I do use colour in my work I tend to feel that the final piece loses the 'classical vintage look' I'm often looking to achieve.

My design work is directly inspired by the creative power of giants like Picasso, Max Ernst, Dali, Odilon Redon, Francis Bacon, and many more. But it's not limited to just abstract expressionism, symbolism, and surrealism, I also find plenty of inspiration in modern art too. For example, the work of artists like Marion Peck, Mark Ryden, Robert Williams, but, I really don't like some of the variants of modern minimalist art - art that creates a picture with only two lines. Personally speaking, as an

I would describe my style as 'chaotic', but it's a chaos that couldn't exist without a both a mental and a structural order in my work environment.

artist, that approach represents a meaningless and fake idea of what art is, from my point of view, art has to somehow be an exaltation of beauty.

My first influence is nature I think, in nature, I find perfection. Beyond that classic art and I take many influences from the land of music and I'm also a big fan of movie aesthetics and visionary directors such as David Lynch, David Cronenberg, Stanley Kubrick and others, I'm also drawn to photography and European post-war era posters, back when art was used to influence the minds of people and shape their behaviour. During that time colour and graphics were used in a rough and direct way, today



My design work is directly inspired by the creative power of giants like Picasso, Max Ernst, Dali, Odilon Redon, Francis Bacon, and many more.

everything is more subtle.

There are thousands of artists who inspire me, Hieronymus Bosch, Alberto Breccia, Gustave Dore, Francis Bacon, Mark Ryden, M.C. Escher, Caravaggio, Adam Jones (Tool guitarist and video clip director), a lot of the illustrators from Fierro (an 80's Argentinian magazine). Then there's Kafka, Baudelaire, Poe, so many. I'm always curious and I keep on searching for further inspiration everywhere.

I usually draw compulsively, and I have literally thousands of want to do, designs that are available for my clients to choose from. However, sometimes they offer up their own personal ideas and I'll take on those projects too if I they fit with my style. Like most passionate artists I'm working constantly to be better every day. I'm not a conformist by nature and I'm always thinking about how I can hone and develop my skills to help improve both my tattoo style and my work as an artist in general.

I dedicate a lot of time to meditating and visualising my designs before I take them to paper (or iPad) and I think this is the perfect way to think about what you're doing in many aspects of life. I think, the key to almost everything is always related to taking the time to gain the right perspective.

I also do lots of other things outside tattooing, for example, I still have a passion to create other types of art and I'm a natural-born researcher. I really enjoy examining the real shape of our planet, I love this enclosed system that we live in and how everything works synchronously inside the planet. I find the idea of Geocentrism fascinating (that the world is the fixed center of the universe), I love painting, reading dark poetry and making music too.

THE FUTURE

To be honest, I really enjoy the way I'm able to work at the moment. There are loads of benefits connected with having a private studio, not least in that it allows me much more time to be creative at my own pace. Plus, I can focus more personally on each design, customer and tattoo session. I don't like to have more than one customer per day and this really enables me to dedicate all my energies to them. Having a private studio also allows me to travel and work guest spots in different studios, which means I can meet great artists and clients beyond my own studio space. ▣



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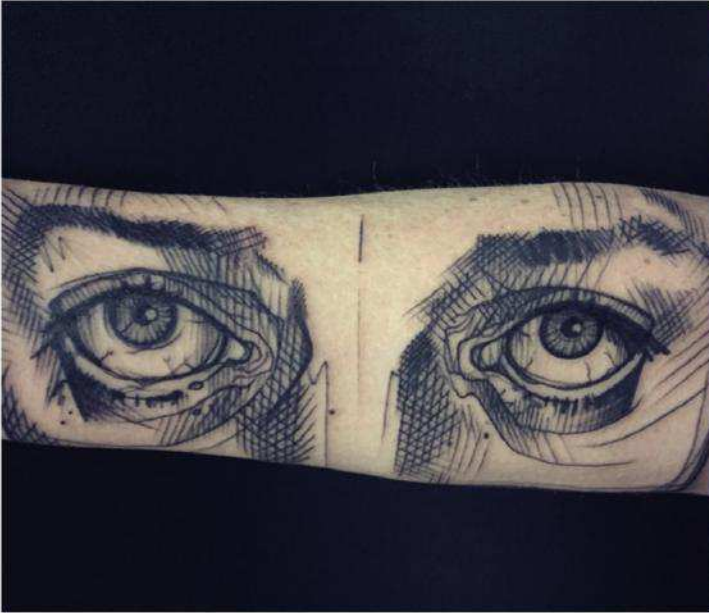




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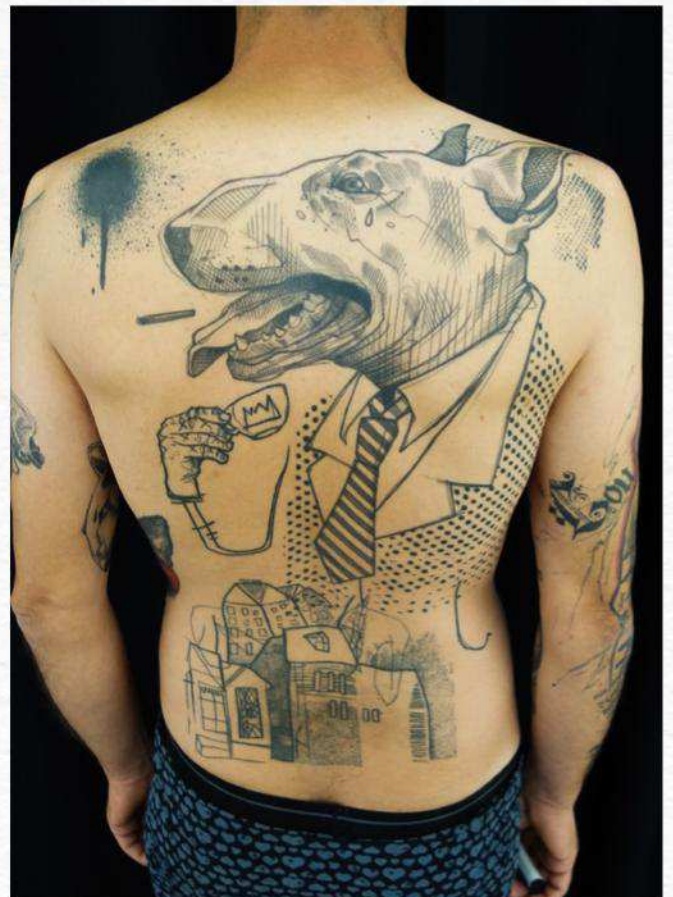


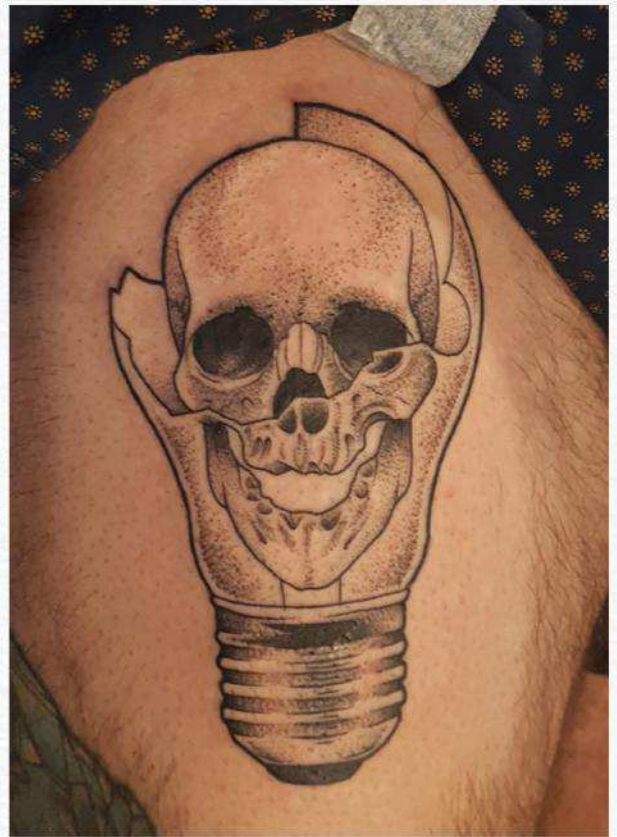


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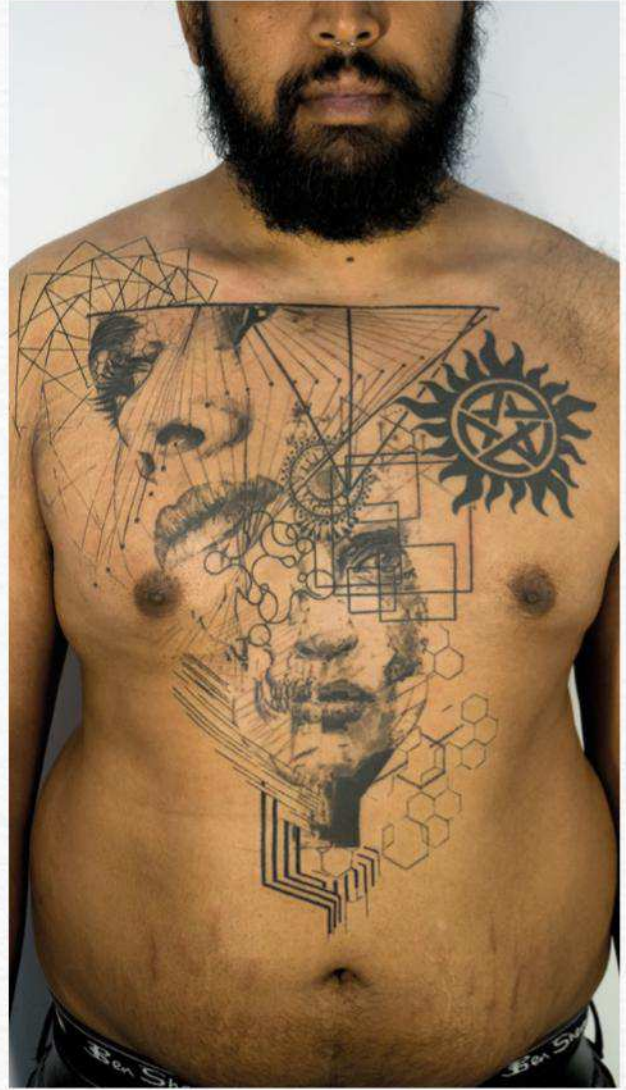
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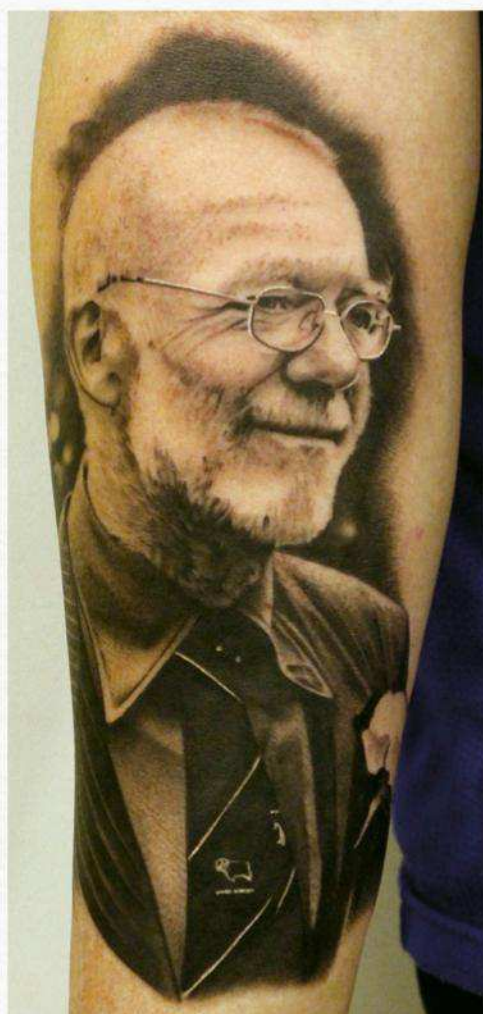


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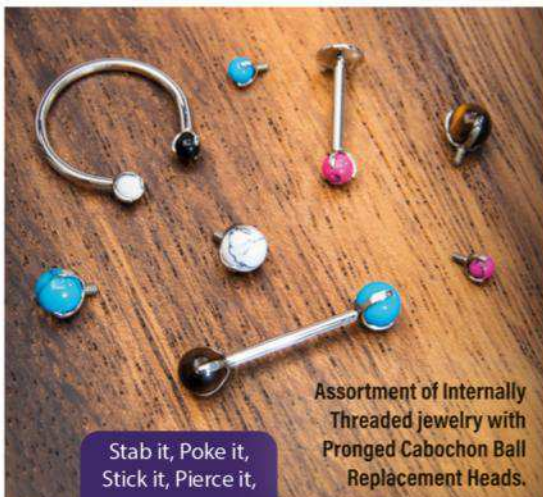
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The MUSE

Jordan Genigeski pays devotion to his muse Egon Schiele through lovingly playing with the stylistic techniques and aesthetics of the artist's work. Genigeski's tattooed women, wide-eyed with long unruly hair, seem transient in nature, their bodies caught in a brief flow of erotic movement...

Tattoos truly become fine art pieces in the hand/machine of Genigeski. With the recent revival of preserving tattooed skin for future generations (i.e. at the Wellcome Trust) to culturally revisit the historical practice of tattooing, it is essential that we now begin to archive the work of tattoo artists today. So that the tattoos of someone like Genigeski, who works within the traditions of a fine art practice, can be catalogued for prosperity. Predominately this proposed archive of flesh would demonstrate to future cultural historians how the practice of tattooing could be considered as one of fine art. A collection that would point to the masters of the fine art world, and how they have played a significant role in influencing and developing the work of tattoo artists today. Demonstrating how paint and canvas is no greater art form than that of skin and ink.

Your work exudes a romantic sensibility, what led you to tattoo in this way?

I believe romance to be a universal language. It spans across time and culture. Notably, the Romanticism era thrived on an emphasis on emotion and individualism. I take a lot from that period, in the sense that I strive to create artwork that touches people on an emotional level. I think people crave things they can relate to, something they can really understand. This leads me to the conclusion that romantic art is immensely powerful.

Did you draw on paper before moving to tattoos?

Yes. Starting from childhood, through University, to the present, pen and paper have always been my most important vehicles for personal sanity. It's given me a place to get my ideas down before they vanish. Whilst also allowing me the freedom to express myself through the subject, the process, the meaning, the emotion and seeing myself in every piece. I've always had a very illustrative touch to my art; very loose inking, I tend to remind myself almost everyday that I am an artist before I am a tattoo artist. It's always been apart

*i tend to remind myself almost
everyday that i am an artist before i
am a tattoo artist*



*create as much as you can
you can't truly master
any practice without
attempting 10,000 times*

of who I am. Transitioning to tattooing was just another medium. Pen turns to machine, paper turns to skin.

Do you still continue a drawing practice outside of your daily tattoo work? What are the benefits of keeping up a drawing practice outside of daily working commitments?

Every. Single. Day. I draw for personal and professional pleasure. I believe that it's extremely important to sharpen a skill such as art by creating every day. Create as much as you can. You can't truly master any practice without attempting 10,000 times. Keeping up on a drawing practice outside of my work commitments keeps me creating art for me and staying true to who I am as an artist.

Clearly you are inspired by the work of Egon Schiele, what is it about this artist's work that inspires you to work in a similar stylistic manner?

Schiele is obviously an important influence on so many artists, myself included. His work expresses the human body, the figure, in such a stylistic manner; it is so refreshing to see. The twisting nature and the expressive line quality is beautiful. His work displays raw sexuality expressed through nude figures and naked self-portraits. Figurative artists, including Schiele, are always artists that I regularly look to for inspiration and personal drive. Hands and feet are parts of the body that I absolutely admire. So subtle, such dire limbs, both physically and figuratively. Schiele portrays these in such a distinct manner, setting his work undeniably apart from other artists in a beautiful way.

You have even tattooed a Schiele work, was this a daunting experience tattooing a work by your muse?

Yes. Tattooing another person's artwork is always a very daunting process. However, comparing a fine artist's work to a strict tattoo artist's work is slightly different. I would never replicate another tattoo artist's work. That is their lively-hood and their hard work put into creating their own name and style. Translating Schiele's work



onto skin honestly wasn't very difficult technically, but was more mentally challenging than anything. I personally have a hard time replicating anything without putting my personal touch into it. I will do a hyper-realistic portrait, which is an exact copy, and people will still point out to me that they can tell it has my touch. So, I think it was more nerve-racking to be able to replicate his artwork and to do proper justice to him.

What other tattooists do you particularly admire that work with a similar aesthetic?

There are so many artists I am enthralled and inspired by. Ivan Golubev (@ioan_nkmy) is one person that immediately comes to mind stylistically. His work is marvellous and unsettling; abstraction and distortion between the body and the mind. Darkness with a beautiful arc. Korean tattoo artist, Ildo Oh (@ildo_tattoo) mixes monsters and skulls in a poetic demeanour. He brings the etching/engraving form of art into his own surrealist touch. Michele Servadio (@servadio_) has some of the most incredible work with a similar aesthetic to Schiele. Definitely someone worth looking into if you don't know who he is. He takes the world of tattooing and brings a whole new light to the industry, merging performance art with the tattoo-

ing process with the 'Body of Reverbs'.

When looking at your work I can't help but think of 1940s film noir and their devious femme fatales lurking in the shadows. Can film be an affective medium for influencing the practice of tattooing?

Of course. I think film plays a colossal influence on the practice of tattooing. In a broader sense, film genres from horror to romance and everything in between, people are constantly finding relatable content and connection in film. And that can so easily give someone the longing to dedicate a part of his or her body to the tattoos of an actor, character, scene, etc.

Translating Schiele's work onto skin honestly wasn't very difficult technically, but was more mentally challenging than anything



incorporating colour into my tattoos is a fairly new concept. i started off tattooing with only black ink. i didn't see colour as something i was very interested in

Your work is particularly refreshing for its stark display of raw sexuality. Each tattooed woman is subtly erotic, never falling into smut, how do you keep this fine balance in check?

I think there is a fairly fine line between smut and erotic art. The form, hand positioning, and facial expressions are

all important factors to keeping a pose naturally elegant and on that side of the line without breaking that barrier. There's something so intriguing about the figure implementing sexuality as well as a delicate, dignified poise.

Is there a spontaneous, freehand element to the way you tattoo hair? Or do you stick firmly to a stencil design?

I use very minimal stencils; pretty much the least amount of stencil as I can. Specifically in the hair that I tattoo. When I lay the stencil I am looking for a general placement, somewhere that fits naturally with the body and muscle definitions. When it comes to the hair, as well as all detail in my pieces, it's all freehand. The hair takes its own shape, flowing down where it needs to, and stopping where it has to. Working with the body and searching for those natural valleys to run down. The body is art in itself. Accenting it with a design is building on that art.

You use a variety of shading techniques in your tattoos, could you describe some of these and why you use them?

Using a variety of shading techniques to me is partially experimental and mostly for the aesthetic pleasure. Mixing pepper shading tattooing styles and etching/poin-



tillism printmaking styles. Line weight also plays an irreplaceable role, more like a comic artist. I feel that the difference in line weight gives your eyes something to follow along like a guide to get lost in.

You use a limited colour palette for your work, what is the reasoning behind this?

Incorporating colour into my tattoos is a fairly new concept. I started off tattooing with only black ink. I didn't see colour as something I was very interested in. As time has progressed, the peach tone I use for all of my tattooed women gives a sense of subtle power and emphasis to the blacks. The peachy red is so soft and elegant; blushing, blood flowing and thin sickly eyelids.

Can the practice of tattooing be one of fine art?

I most certainly believe the process of tattooing can be one of fine art. Art is malleable and subjective. It can be bought and sold again and again, predominately due to the fact that it is a physical object. Something tangible you can hold or hang or do whatever you please with. Tattooing is a bit disparate. I think a tattoo is most interesting in this sense, being comparable to an accessory as well as art. A tattoo is one of a kind. I will not tattoo the same piece on two people. On the contrary with say a print that

can be reproduced an innumerable amount of times to be dispersed to an innumerable amount of people.

What other tattooists are looking to the masters of fine art to develop and inspire their practice?

When I think about this question, a few certain artists come to mind. Aimée Cornwell (@aimeecornwelltattoo) has an expressively beautiful and impressive take on a Renaissance painting semblance. She combines a use of slight Neo-traditional aspects into her work but still actually appear to look like an oil painting. Using a muted colour palette gives her work a very serene honesty. Jonathan Love (@jonald_juck) creates some tattoos I have been very interested in for quite some time now. His work primarily capitalises the practice of etching/engraving using a series of fine lines and dots to create depth and definition.

Where do you see the practice of tattooing going into the future?

As far as I see it, tattooing will not die off any time soon. There have been many advancements in the industry; constantly improving techniques, styles and artists themselves, there's only room to go up from here. It's just a practice that will consistently grow. Not to mention how far we've come in such a short amount of time with the 'stigma' of having a tattoo. Though it is still common for an employer to turn an applicant away or require tattoos to be covered in some fields of jobs, it is nowhere near what it used to be like years ago.

What does tattooing mean to you?

Tattooing has a plethora of meanings for me. It's an experience. Sure, getting to put my original artwork on someone's body for the rest of their natural life is humbling and monumentally wondrous. But when it comes down to it, the person on the other end of the needle is the most important part. Someone stands up and looks at themselves in the mirror with a new piece of art to wear, smiling and overjoyed with happiness or gratitude. It's amazing to give someone more confidence in his or her body and appearance. There are plenty of important things in this world but making another person happy is a feeling you don't forget. That's why I love it with everything in me. □



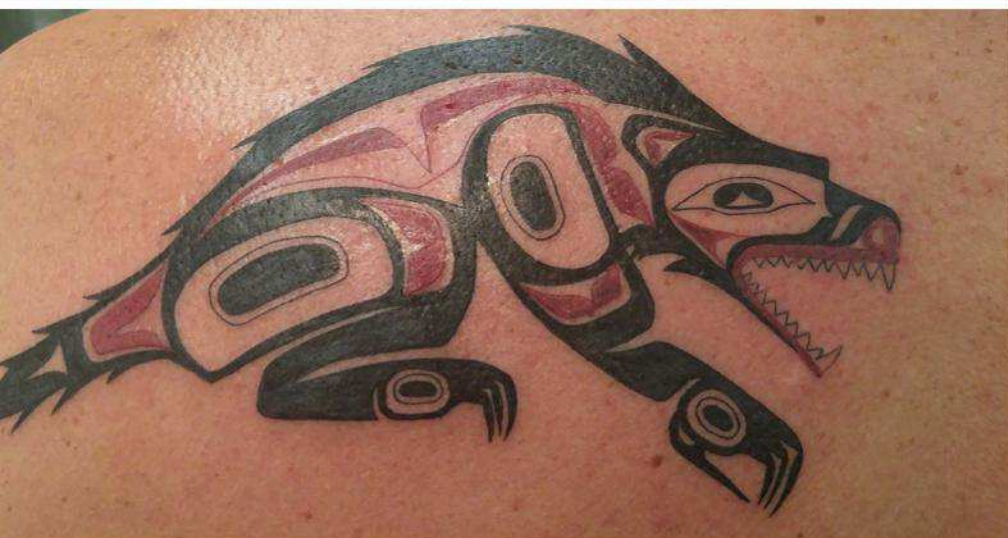


SKIN DIGENOUS

skindigenous.tv  skindigenous

No matter your preferred style, you've likely heard bits and pieces of Native tattoo history over the years, but say you wanted to learn more — where would you turn? There has never really been one all-encompassing source highlighting traditional tools, designs and techniques, as explained by Indigenous knowledge keepers. Until now. Enter Skindigenous: a 13-part documentary series (and accompanying app) from Canadian filmmaker Jason Brennan that will take you around the world and let you peer behind the curtain.

Words: Barbara Pavone



“I was working on a documentary in Thailand and our protagonist ended up wanting to get a Sak Yant—a traditional Thai tattoo—and it got me wondering about our own Indigenous tattooing traditions,” says producer/director Jason Brennan who himself belongs to Québec’s Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation.

“I started researching and that’s how I discovered Dion Kaszas, a traditional tattoo practitioner in British Columbia, Canada who’s Interior Salish,” he continues. “Dion is also a machine artist, but recently started a masters’ in Indigenous tattooing traditions. Discussions with Dion really opened the door for *Skindigenous*, as he filled me in on a bunch of different Nations and Indigenous tribes that tattoo their members and that have practiced tattooing throughout history.”

It was during those discussions that Dion began highlighting particular tattooers and the idea for a full-length series was born. Despite having produced over 200 hours of

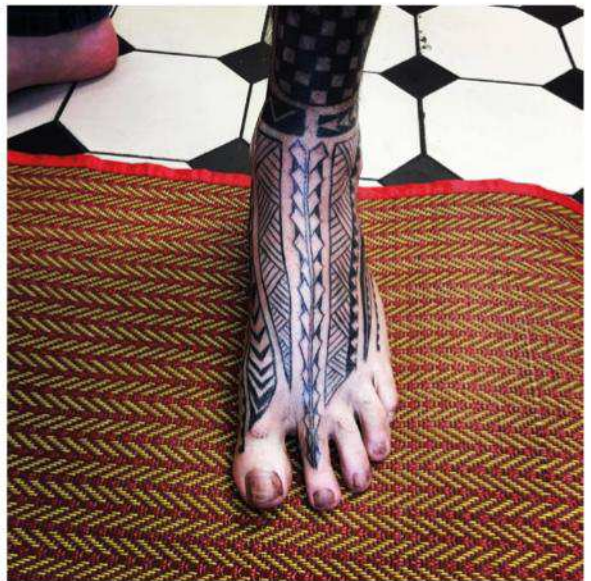
television, however, Brennan had never documented ink. “I’ve done sports, documentaries of all types and drama, but this was the first time [I focused on tattoos],” he admits. “Luckily, I was a tattoo enthusiast already and the topic was extremely interesting to me.”

The first step was shortlisting artists to be featured in the show’s 13 episodes. Brennan and his team set out to “try and cover different locations around the world” and decided that, “for our first run, we wanted to go with artists that have been around for quite some time and who are or were part of reviving their ancestral traditions. So we started with a lot of the better-known tattooers, like the Sulu’ape family, Keone Nunes, Whang-od, Dion Kaszas and Gordon Toi.”

Then came the logistics of tracking them all down. Connecting with some of the world’s most traditional and, therefore, most remote tattooers required more than a simple phone call or email. “We found extremely good fixers and THAT was actually the hard-

DION KASZAS

An artist of mixed Hungarian, Métis, Hawaiian and Interior Salish ancestry, Canada’s Dion Kaszas has made it his mission to master traditional tattooing techniques, including hand poke and skin stitch methods native to his Nlaka’pamux heritage. Based in the small town of Salmon Arm, British Columbia, Kaszas can be found working in its oldest studio, Vertigo Tattoos and Body Piercing.



est part,” Brennan reveals.

“Tracking down someone who could get us into those locations and having different directors that live for those types of shoots was essential. When you have to trek hundreds of miles in the jungle, you have to make sure your crew is pretty relaxed and easy to work with!”

Teaming up with four fellow directors, Brennan was able to cover numerous continents and film in some of the farthest reaches of the world.

“Everyone had their own flavour and way of working and everyone did a great job,” he starts. “Sonia Bonspille Boileau and Kim O’Bomsawin worked with the female artists and I think there’s a special bond that was created between them. Randy Kelly is one of those directors that loves to get dirty and explore, so he was a fabulous choice to travel to the remote locations. Meanwhile, J.F. Martel is very cerebral, so he was ideal for covering some of the elder tattoo artists and was able to get down to the philosophical aspects of tattooing.”

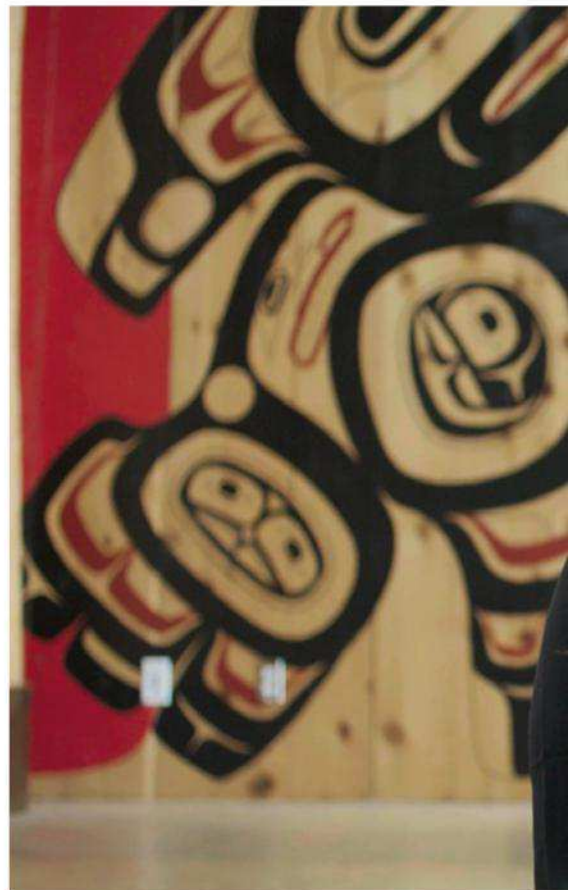
As for himself, Brennan directed a total of three episodes and decided to shoot in British Columbia, Mexico and Toronto. “British Columbia was with Dion Kaszas and it’s where it all started,” he says, revisiting his picks. “I think that the episode laid the framework for the rest of the series, as it showed us to what depth the series could go.”

“The Mexico episode with Samuel Olman was unique because he’s a pioneer when it comes to Mayan revival and the Toronto episode with Jay Soule was a great way to finish because he isn’t a traditional tattoo practitioner, but he does offer something special if you’re an Indigenous person wanting to get a tattoo from an Indigenous artist. His reasons for not wanting to change from a coil machine are also relatable.”

Common Threads

In addition to witnessing living history and unique traditions, one of the most magical aspects of shooting the series was “seeing how quickly the crew was practically adopted by the various Nations, artists and villages we visited. The tattooing aspect was one thing, but getting to know the artists and the people we profiled was unbelievable.”

Despite being separated by thousands of miles, many of said artists shared traits that transcended heritage and physical location. “If I were to say one of the things that binds them all is that no matter where the artists are from, all of their tattoos have a link to Mother Earth and symbolise our link to her,” says Brennan. “Obviously, while



every Nation or tribe has their own reasons for tattooing, all of them have a certain protocol or respect when it comes to blessings or paying homage to the Creator.”

Another similarity? “In most cases, there is a difference between how a traditional tattoo artist will tattoo one of his own versus how he will tattoo someone who isn’t from their tribe or Nation, so we start to look into the cultural appropriation aspect of it all.”

“These artists will often have a discussion with the people they are tattooing and get a sense of who they are and might turn them away if they don’t feel they should be getting a tattoo from them,” he reveals.

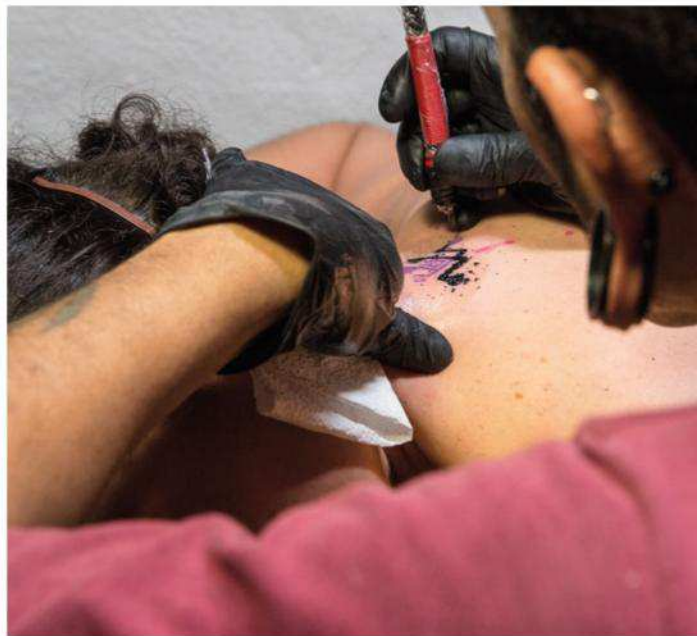
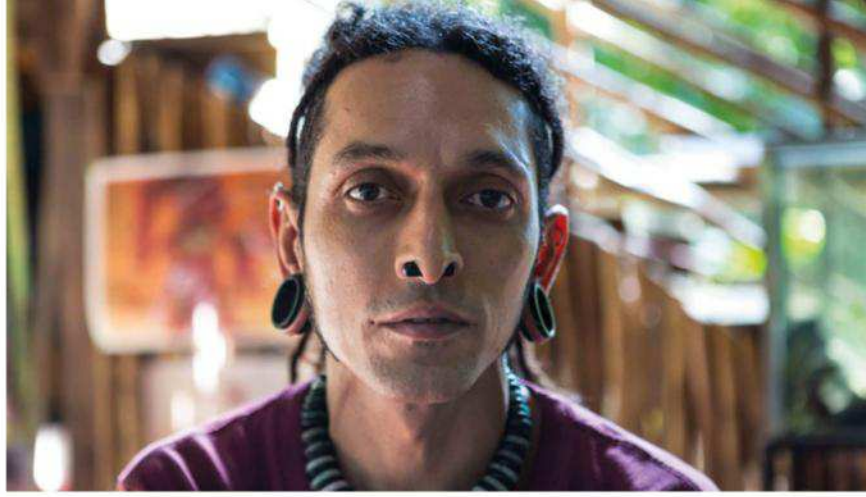
Although picking a favourite episode proves pretty much impossible—“I can’t pick just one, they are all so heartwarming and interesting!”—of the various individuals Brennan and his team encountered, “the Mentawai people of Indonesia and that episode hold a special place in my heart because there still exists a really unique ceremony before and after each tattoo,” he admits. “The whole process takes a few days and usually only Shamans get tattoos.”

Then there are “the chin tattoos on the Inuit women in Alaska, which are quite beautiful” and the opportunity to meet Māori artist

Gordon Toi who “talked about adapting and using the coil machine, but believes in protocol and the ceremonial aspect, and Dion who does both hand poke and skin stitch and really tries to combine everything from traditional to contemporary designs and even adapts art from some of his clients.”

When it comes to fusing longtime methods with modern-day aspects, Brennan sees the value of evolving and creating new traditions. “The big issue is how do we combine traditional techniques with sanitary techniques and make sure there isn’t an outbreak of blood-borne diseases?” he asks.

“Obviously, not all of our artists showed the same amount of knowledge or attention to this detail, but everyone was aware that it was an issue. It also comes back to why are we getting tattooed? In many ways, people



are getting tattooed as a form of self-discovery or reclaiming who they are and, for some, that requires combining both traditional and contemporary designs and methods.”

Living & Learning

Turning the spotlight on Brennan, I ask about his own upbringing. A proud member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, he says, “I consider myself lucky to be of mixed heritage because, in many ways, I got to see the best of both worlds.”

“My dad grew up on the reserve and I got to spend quite some time there in my younger days and have only fond memories of playing with my cousins, BBQs, fishing, spending time outdoors and just learning from my uncles and aunts,” he recalls. “Back then, to me, it seemed like the social issues that First Nations deal

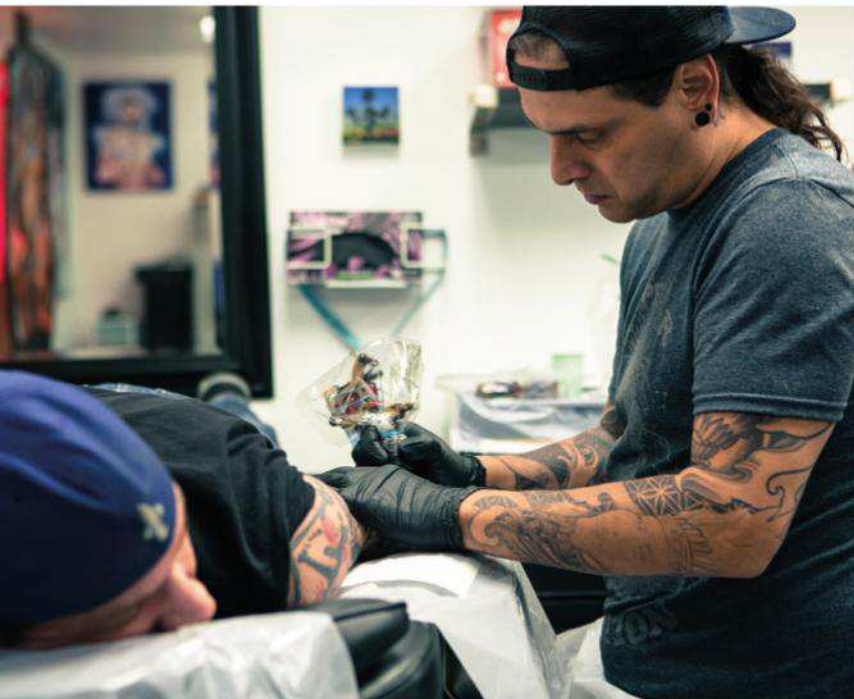
with today were not as bad. Yeah, there was the odd thing, but we took it in stride and it was part of life and the good outweighed the bad.”

“My mom was Québécois, so I also had a chance to experience that side growing up,” he adds. “I would alternate with spending my school year in the city and then go back to the reserve during the summer and on weekends. I did this even in college, but eventually, I started my TV and film career and, unfortunately, I couldn’t do it as much as before and city life become almost permanent.”

“But the reason I got into TV and film in the first place was to be able to share all of those good things I remember about growing up,” he explains. “The culture, the people, the sense of humour and the desire to show all the good things that exist in our communities is what I try to include in everything I do

SAMUEL OLMAN

Mexico’s Samuel Olman works in a truly unique environment. His studio, dubbed the Olman Project, is located in the jungle surrounding Palenque, Chiapas i.e. the gateway to ancient Mayan ruins, including the Temple of Inscriptions, which lay hidden under vegetation for centuries. Now, Olman is on a mission to resurrect the lost motifs, techniques and traditions of his pre-Hispanic ancestors.



JAY SOULE

Toronto-based Jay Soule is a tattooer, piercer and multimedia artist debunking stereotypes with his cultural appropriation-fighting alter ego, Chippewar. Despite being adopted by a non-Indigenous family at the age of five, he's a proud member of Chippewas of the Thames First Nation and creates work driven by one simple motto: End the divide and we prosper. Last December, he opened Chippewar Nation, a tattoo shop/art studio/store in the heart of downtown Toronto.

media-wise today.”

When it comes to his personal collection of ink, Brennan is currently sporting “a sleeve and a sad tattoo I got done 24 years ago,” he laughs, revealing the latter could use a touch-up. “It’s a band with feathers that simply represents my ancestry, which I wanted to make sure I presented publicly.”

“My sleeve is a totem and I love it because all of the pieces represent an animal that has its own meaning,” he continues. “It reminds me of things that are important to me, however, I wish I would have done the series first and would have gotten it done by an Indigenous tattoo artist with a coil machine. The artist that did mine designed it with his own style and did a great job, but I think it could have meant even more.”

Speaking of lessons, Brennan hopes viewers of *Skindigenous* will walk away with a bet-

ter understanding of “why tattoos are so important to the people getting them and why these artists have made it their life’s work to share their art and knowledge.”

An important mission that *Skindigenous*’ accompanying app will also help with. Designed to allow Indigenous artists to record and share their work, Brennan hopes the innovative platform will “allow people to connect with artists that might be from their own Nation. We also want new artists to display their work for potential clients,” he says. “It’s a connection tool, an encyclopaedia, and when people will scroll, it will help with sharing the many different cultures and designs that have existed for so long.”

As for what’s next, “hopefully another season” from the man who “is extremely proud of the *Skindigenous* series and is eternally grateful to everyone involved.” ▣



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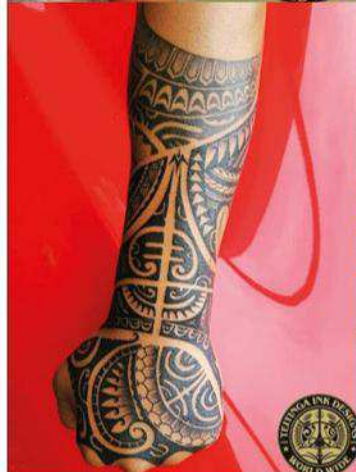
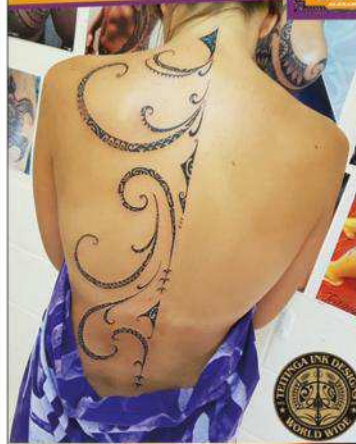
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Mondial du Tatouage

9-11 MARCH 2018

With over 30,000 visitors through the doors at Mondial du Tatouage this year, it's fairly safe to say that the iconic show has lost none of its magic over the years. With 420 world class artists at work alongside of a whole periphery

of associated extras, our intrepid Pascal Bagot roamed the floored armed with camera and here, we bring you some of the best from across the weekend.

For the record, next year's dates are already up and running: 15-17 February 2019.



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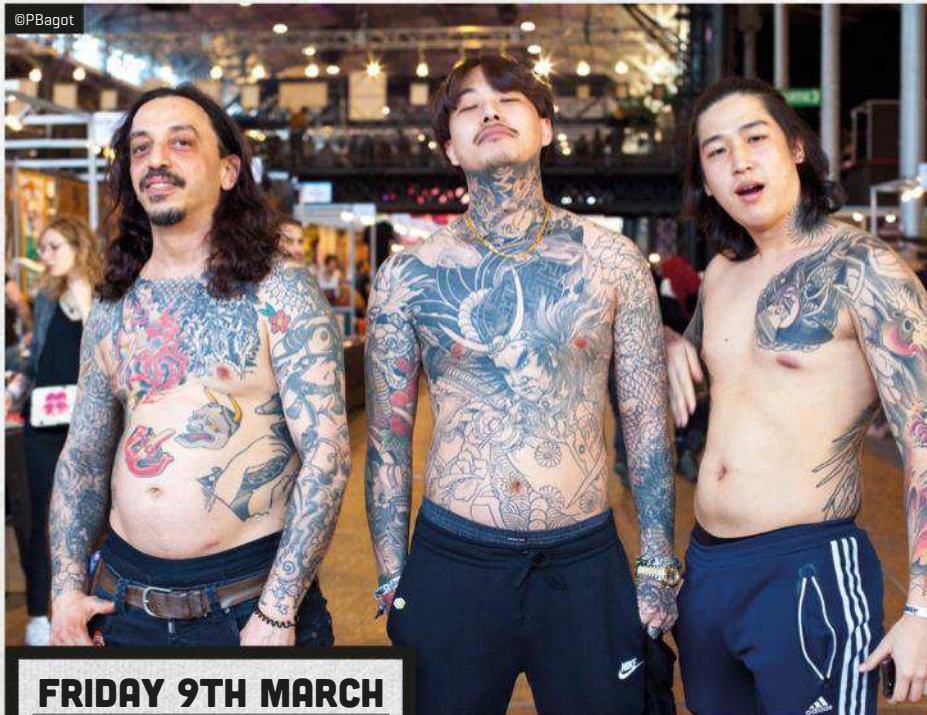




Augustine Nezumi



Dodie



@PBagot



Niko Kustom

FRIDAY 9TH MARCH

BEST SMALL BLACK & GREY

- 1 **NORMAN** [Shovel Tattoo Shop, France]
- 2 **SERGEY MURDOC** [Bang Bang Custom Tattoo Shop, Russia]
- 3 **NORMAN** [Shovel Tattoo Shop, France]

BEST SMALL COLOUR

- 1 **PIERRE OKED** [Tin-tin Tatouages, France]
- 2 **COSTANTINO SASSO** [Costattoo, Italy]
- 3 **SIEMOR** [Nico Tattoo, Greece]

BEST OF DAY (Friday)

- 1 **Combo MICKAËL TAGUET** [private studio, France] & **JEAN-PIERRE MOTTIN** [Grizzly Inc, Belgium]
- 2 **ALBERTO ESCOBAR** [Black Gallery Tattoo, Spain]
- 3 **DEBORA CHERRYS** [La Mujer Barbuda, Spain]



Issa Maoihbou



Niko Kustom



©PBagot



Yann Coutant



Gakkin



Shige



Rafel Delalande



Dong-Dong



Joao Morais



Kasasink

SATURDAY 10TH MARCH

BEST LARGE BLACK & GREY

1 **JOAO MORAIS** [Piranha

Tattoo, Portugal]

2 **LUPO HORIOKAMI**

[Mushin Tattoo, Italy]

3 **CRISTIAN CASAS** [Kasasink,
Switzerland]

BEST LARGE COLOUR

1 **ALEX RATTRAY** [Empire Ink, UK]

2 **TIRAF** [Knock on Wood, France]

3 **JORDAN CROKE** [Second Skin, UK]

BEST OF DAY [Saturday]

1 **FEDE GAS** [Gas Tattoo Studio, Spain]

2 **STEF BASTIAN** [on the road, Italy]

3 **ABER** [Moth and Rose
Tattoo Shop, Greece]



Robert Borbas



Shawn Barber



Shige



Vlady



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SUNDAY 11TH MARCH

BEST BACK PIECE OR BODY SUIT

- 1 CHING [Orient Ching, Taiwan]
- 2 CHEN WEI TSO [Diaozuotattoo, Taiwan]
- 3 JAVIER OBREGON [Family Art, Spain]

BEST OF SHOW

- 1 DAVID FERNANDEZ SERRANO [La Llorona Tattoo, Spain]
- 2 MICKAËL TAGUET [studio privé, France]
- 3 DAMIEN WICKHALM [Ink Attack Tattoo Company, Australia]



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“If you wanted me to tell you your tattoos suck, I could...they suck! And your breath smells like you just ate a pizza, get a pack of mints before you breathe that into your customer’s face.” With that sentence the legendary Zeke Owen put me in my much-deserved place just before teaching me how to draft hand drawn script



Tattooing has been passed down for generations from one person to the next, and this exchange is a beautiful facet of our trade, more valuable than the treasures we depict. I love reading the history of correspondence between tattooists who helped shape our modern landscape. In Ed Hardy's book *Wear Your Dreams: My Life in Tattoos*, he talks about that correspondence shaping his own knowledge of this beloved trade, especially exchanges with Norman Keith Collins, otherwise known as Sailor Jerry. Ed says of Jerry:

"He had the keys to the kingdom. His correspondence with tattooers around the globe amounted to the single biggest storehouse of information in the field. There were no books, no tattoo magazines. There was only a slender grapevine between tattooists, and his was the most important. He was a great tattooist- his work was smarter, more elegant, had a greater colour range, involved more sophisticated uses of the tattoo machines, and completely different imagery. He was inspiring the few of us who were paying attention. He was a fountainhead of knowledge."

Hardy was well aware of the idea that we are all standing on the shoulders of giants, and with that, he gave the respect to Sailor Jerry, and to the passing down of his information. In the documentary "Stoney Knows How" Ed Hardy continues this exchange of knowledge and respect: getting tattooing by Stoney St. Clair, learning about the ideology and methodology behind his tattooing. Our

EARLY ON, I REALISED THAT I WAS IN OVER MY HEAD, AND THAT WHAT I WAS LACKING WAS KNOWLEDGE...

trade is built by learning from that direct contact, passing down treasured information to those whom we connect with. These golden nuggets are incredibly valuable, not flyers freely doled about.

Ed Hardy says of working with Zeke:

"For me, working with Zeke the previous year had been electrifying. He had an inspired vision of modern tattooing, way ahead of his time..."

How did I get lucky enough to have the man who both Ed Hardy and Mike Malone worked for at one point, who helped bring Japanese tattooing to American shorelines, how did I get him to talk, and to give me the valuable hygiene advice? I had only been tattooing not quite two years and was offered my first chance to do a guest spot at a shop out of town. The shop owner was good friends with the owner of the shop that housed my apprenticeship and employment at that time. This was like a little field trip for the new kid. At this point Zeke Owen was traveling around trying to find that tattooer dream of the perfect residence, solitude, and paying clientele. I was fortunate to catch him while he was on this short residence in Atlanta. I was unfortunately ignorant to tat-



I LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON AT THAT REVIEW, KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT AND NEVER GIVE EXCUSES FOR YOUR WORK

too history, coming up in a time where there was limited books created about tattoo history, and getting them was a difficult process living in Alabama. I was still learning where our beautiful craft came from, and because of that, didn't know my fortune working with Zeke.

That week in Atlanta I was ready to get the chance to tattoo in a new environment. I brought all my equipment, going through all the pains of wrapping each ink bottle, overdoing every bit of packing. I was so ready, but in that week I didn't do a single tattoo, yet that week also changed my life and the course of my tattoo career. Early on, I realized that I was in over my head, and that what I was lacking was knowledge, so I made it my mission to learn from those around me in that shop. I had a small notebook that I took with me everywhere that week, listening to conversations, taking notes, recording everything. I would write down every bit of advice, every set up, what inks everyone used, what machines and why. I was hungry, a trait that is thankfully just as strong today.

I met Zeke and knew immediately that I had to listen to him. I learned about the art of cock fighting, how to find good land for a homestead, and what to do if someone passes out and falls on you, though my stature didn't really have the same strengths that Zeke's did. I asked Zeke to look over my portfolio, something I am sure he had done a million times. As he looked, he didn't really have much to say. I think he was just trying to be polite to the nice

young kid, so he just nodded and said, "It's a good start." I then went to another artist with the same request and was rightly ripped apart when he reviewed it. I learned a valuable lesson at that review, keep your mouth shut and never give excuses for your work. Information regarding tattooing is gold, don't waste that time and air on something that doesn't matter.

As I came out from the review Zeke pulled me aside and asked me what he said. I smiled and said, "He told me that I sucked and that I needed to learn a laundry list of things." He gave me a puzzled look and said, "but your smiling about it," to which I replied, "Well yeah, now I've got somewhere to go and a jumping off point. This is the best day ever." Zeke looked at me and let out a grumble, saying, "If you wanted me to tell you your tattoos suck, I could...they suck! And your breath smells like you just ate a pizza, get a pack of mints before you breathe that into your customer's face." I smiled and thanked him for the advice. I suppose he could see that I wasn't fazed or worried about feelings, so he pulled me aside and like a coach knowing the work ahead of him, he said, "Well, first, your lettering is garbage, so let's try to fix that." Zeke spent hours with me, showing me how to build a template to create lettering from the ground up. With surprising patience and understanding he sat and drew with me, explaining correct spacing, pitch, and reasoning for patterns and repetitions in lettering. I saved every thing he





created for me, along with a stencil of an amazing panther he was kind enough to give to me, and they are some of my most treasured possessions that I have today. My one regret is that I wish I would have gotten tattooed by Zeke, so I could have something to mark that exchange. I know exactly what I wanted, a simple banner with the words, “Your tattoos suck, and you stink” in it.

Years later I found myself in the curious position of handing this information down to my close friend Jason Reeder. I gave him copies of the same papers Zeke had drawn on, and went over everything Zeke taught me with Jason. Jason knew the value of that communication, and he pursued it, getting tattooed by the tattooists he loved and looked up to. I was fortunate to tattoo Jason quite a bit. After Jason’s funeral, his wife Tasha gave me the greatest gift: it was a little note that Jason had scribbled in

his hotel room after that exchange of information. Just like I had written so much of what I learned that week in Atlanta, Jason wrote down this valuable information. Jason was hungry. That is tattooing, that is a craft that is bigger than all of us, a love that few people have, and one of the millions of reasons I will miss Jason forever.

A few years ago I found myself again in the position of tattooing a hungry tattooer, Jesse Huggins. Jesse was heavily tattooed by the time I first met him, feeling like he only had a few spots left open for select tattooers. I was honoured to be one of those, and it was obvious from the beginning how seriously he took that. There was a respect and reverence with our interactions, and it was only after booking several more appointments for extensive coverup work that the questions about tattooing started coming. After that first appointment, he mentioned having a few pieces he wanted to rework and cover, which has led to me still tattooing him regularly to this day, over 5 years later.

As a tattooist there is something about getting to watch another tattooist grow that is incredibly inspiring and challenging. It’s a constant reminder that you can’t slow down, you should always be learning, and that maybe we are adding something to this living book. With Jesse I was able to see advice and thoughts I had on tattooing get reflected in his work, but in a way that was uniquely him. We both had a mutual mentor in the incred-





***INFORMATION REGARDING
TATTOOING IS GOLD, DON'T
WASTE THAT TIME AND AIR ON
SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T
MATTER***

ible southern hurricane that is "Famous Gabe", so these combinations created fires under all of our asses that are still burning today, reminding me to never get comfortable. I have now found myself on the other side with Jesse, at times asking him what needle configuration he is using and why, or what colour palette, or illustration technique. Tattooing at its heart is an exchange of information, but it's not linear, it's cyclical. One lesson and informative session with one tattooist will open a door to a whole new experience, and a new challenge. Jerry found himself learning from Ed Hardy, with Ed trying to bring him to more of the forefront of arts and tattooing. Ed also learned from Jerry, including stories of the ever elusive "purple" pigment, the cycle ever continuing.



AS A TATTOOIST THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT GETTING TO WATCH ANOTHER TATTOOIST GROW THAT IS INCREDIBLY INSPIRING AND CHALLENGING

Just as getting a tattoo is earned, so is getting the knowledge about it. Years ago I wrote an article series, asking tattooists questions and diving into stories while I was getting tattooed by them. There is something in the ritual of tattooing that appeals to our most primitive senses. We are forced into a vulnerable state, and yet our true intentions can come out, and in that, we have a chance to learn more than we could ever imagine. Here are some of Jesse's thoughts on that process.

"When I was apprenticing I would hear stories about artists having to travel to get tattooed and being able to ask questions during the process, then bring home the knowledge they received and apply it to their own work. This began to resonate with me once I myself began getting extensively tattooed. Before that I would watch my mentors tattoo all day long and ask tons of questions and think I had it all figured out, but when I would get the opportunity to do a small tattoo everything I thought I knew fell apart. When I began to get tattooed I would feel the needle, the stretch on my skin, the pressure used, how different needle grouping felt and how hard or soft they would run their machines. I began to ask questions that correlated with what I was seeing and feeling in front of me and I gained a much deeper understanding of how tattooing worked. I realised that going this route to gain knowledge was more deliberate and meaningful,



and solely relying on dvd seminars sold for profit was arbitrary and only set me back from what I was trying to accomplish. I earned this knowledge, I didn't pay for it."

Next month we will dive more into the event of getting tattooed by those we view as mentors, and talk more to Jesse about his thoughts on tattooing, including the road he has taken to learn more about our valued craft. We will also hear from one of those tattooists Jesse was shaped by along the way: Jason Stephan.

Don't miss more great stories, hopefully with less reference to my bad breath. ▣

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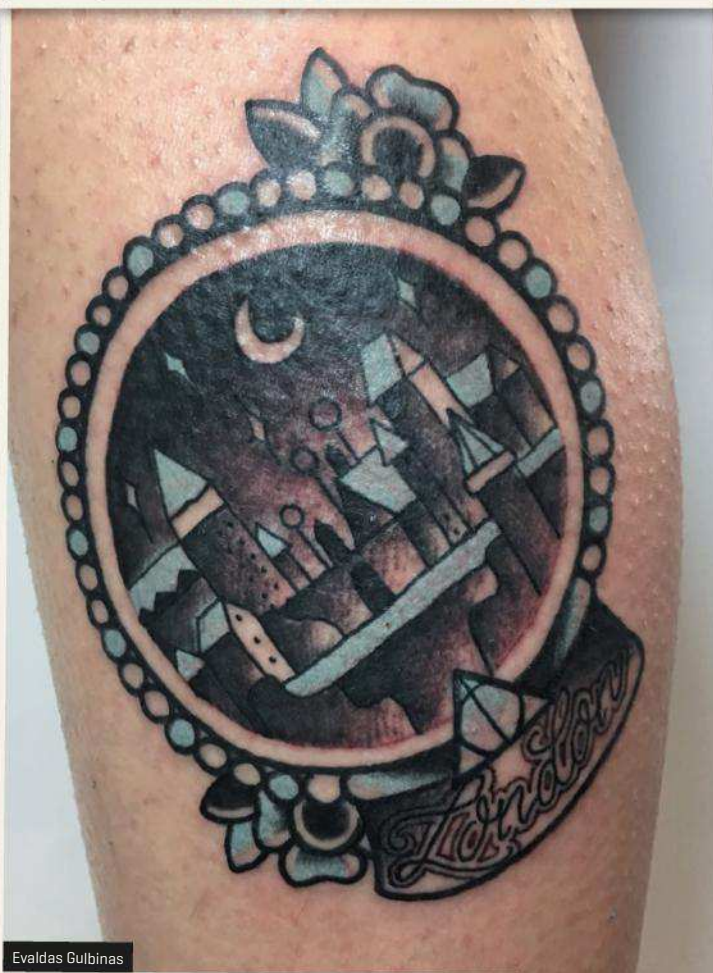
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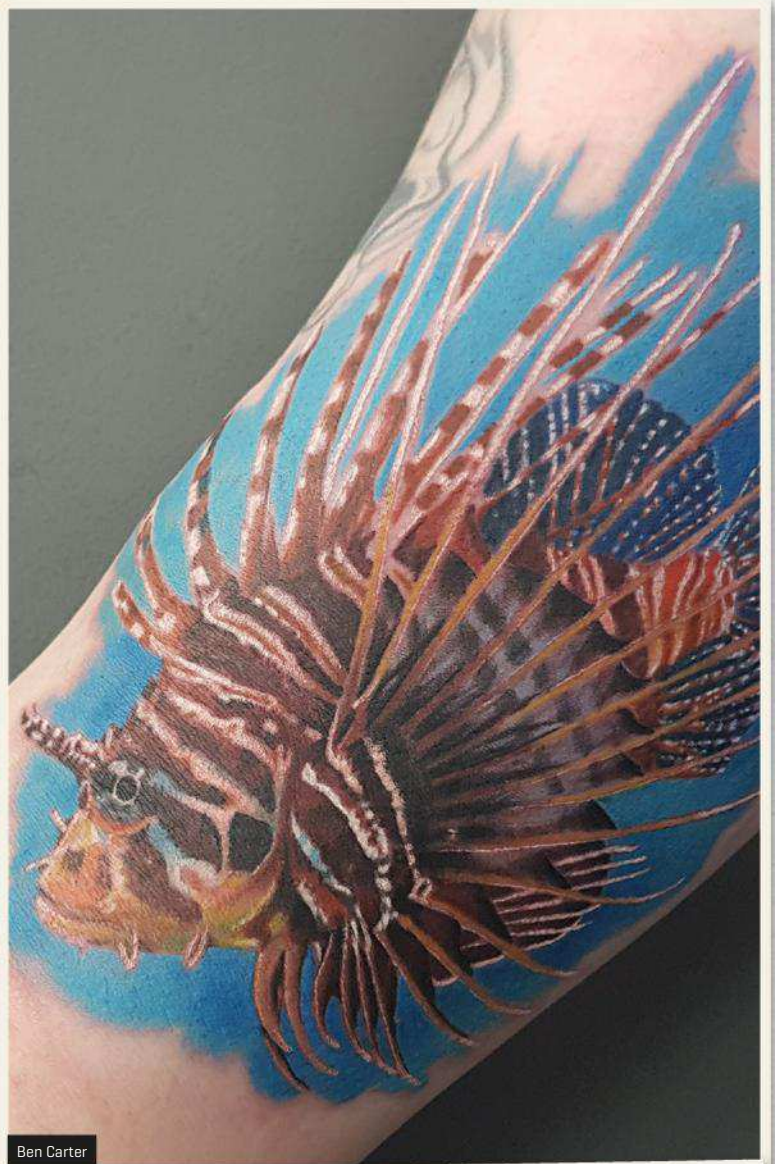
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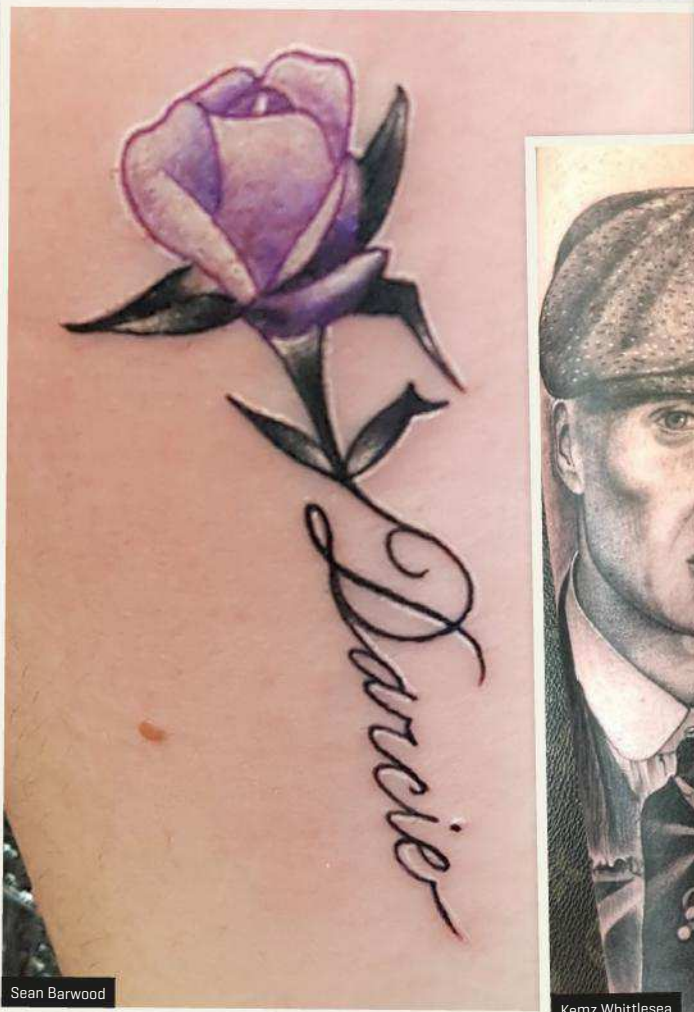
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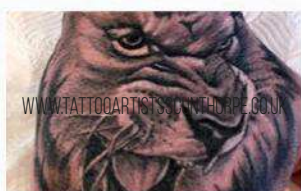
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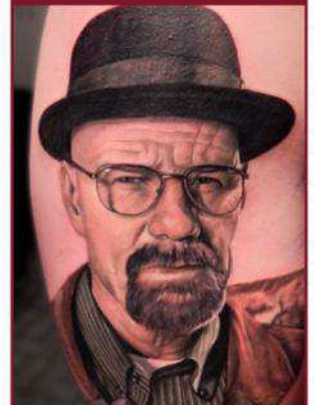


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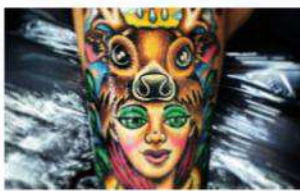
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by
Steven Mostyn



Steven Mostyn

So... as previously discussed somewhere in the past, the tattooing of the female torso has become a popular pastime out there. At first glance, much of it appears to be pulled together from the simplest trains of thought—for which you can read *'I saw this online and would like the same'*. It's not special anymore...a little beadwork and some string type effect in the position known as the 'underboob'.

And then you come across work like

this. Masses of thought, very carefully executed with time in the bag and patience galore. The symmetry here is top notch and there's just enough detail to make it sing... any more than this and it would start to swamp the skin and that would be a *Bad Thing*.

Instead, what we're left with here is a very, very classy tattoo the likes of which should stand as a line in the sand if your aiming for similar.

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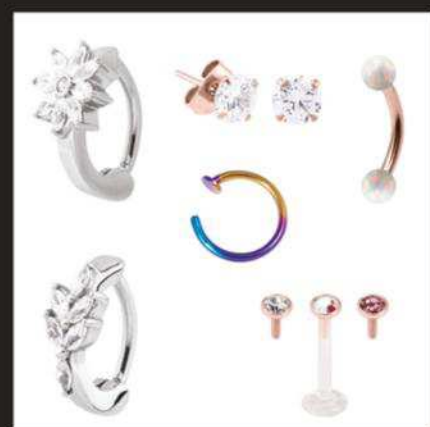
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- * Ethylene Oxide Sterilised
- * Smooth Comfortable Control
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GHOST CARTRIDGES

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