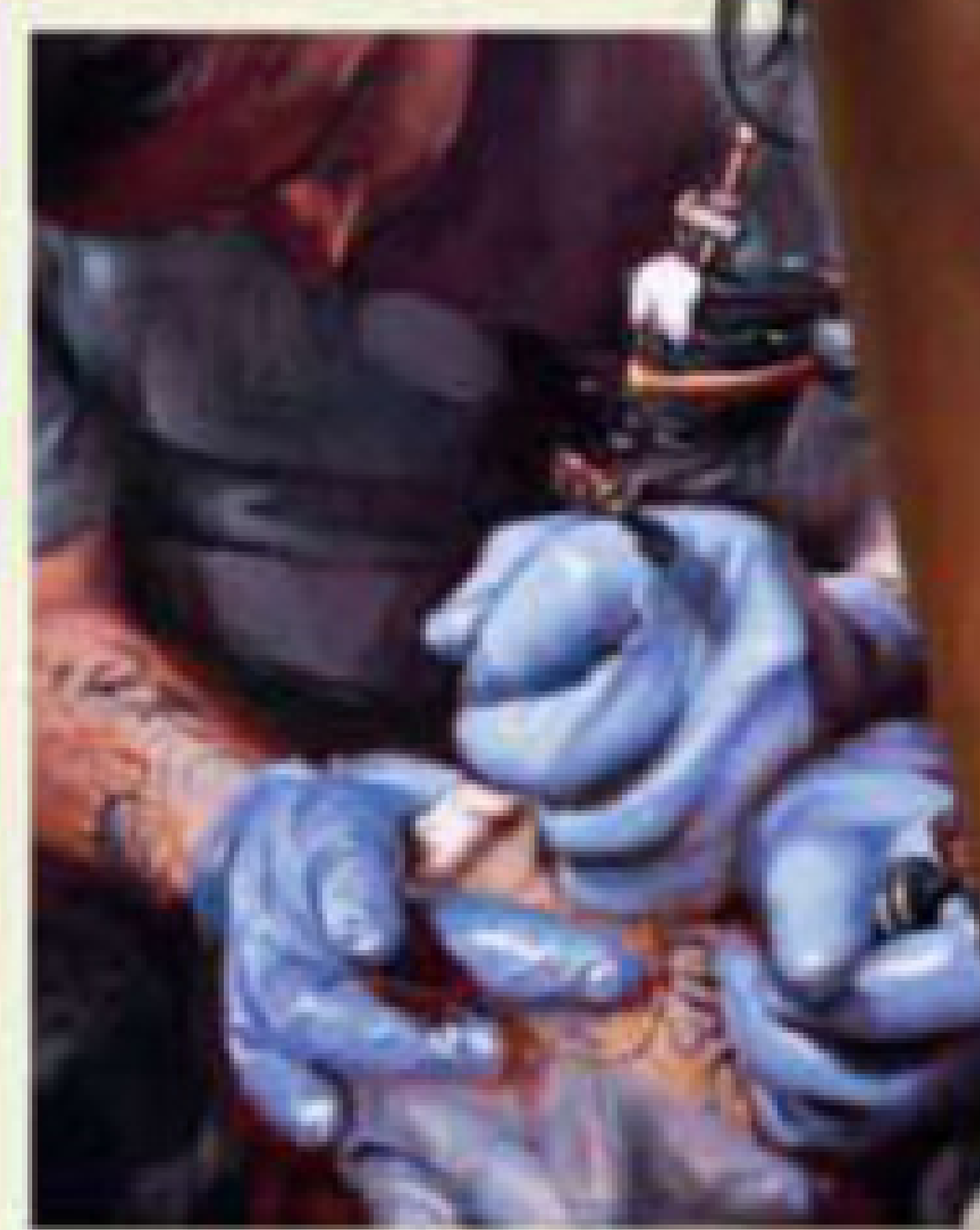
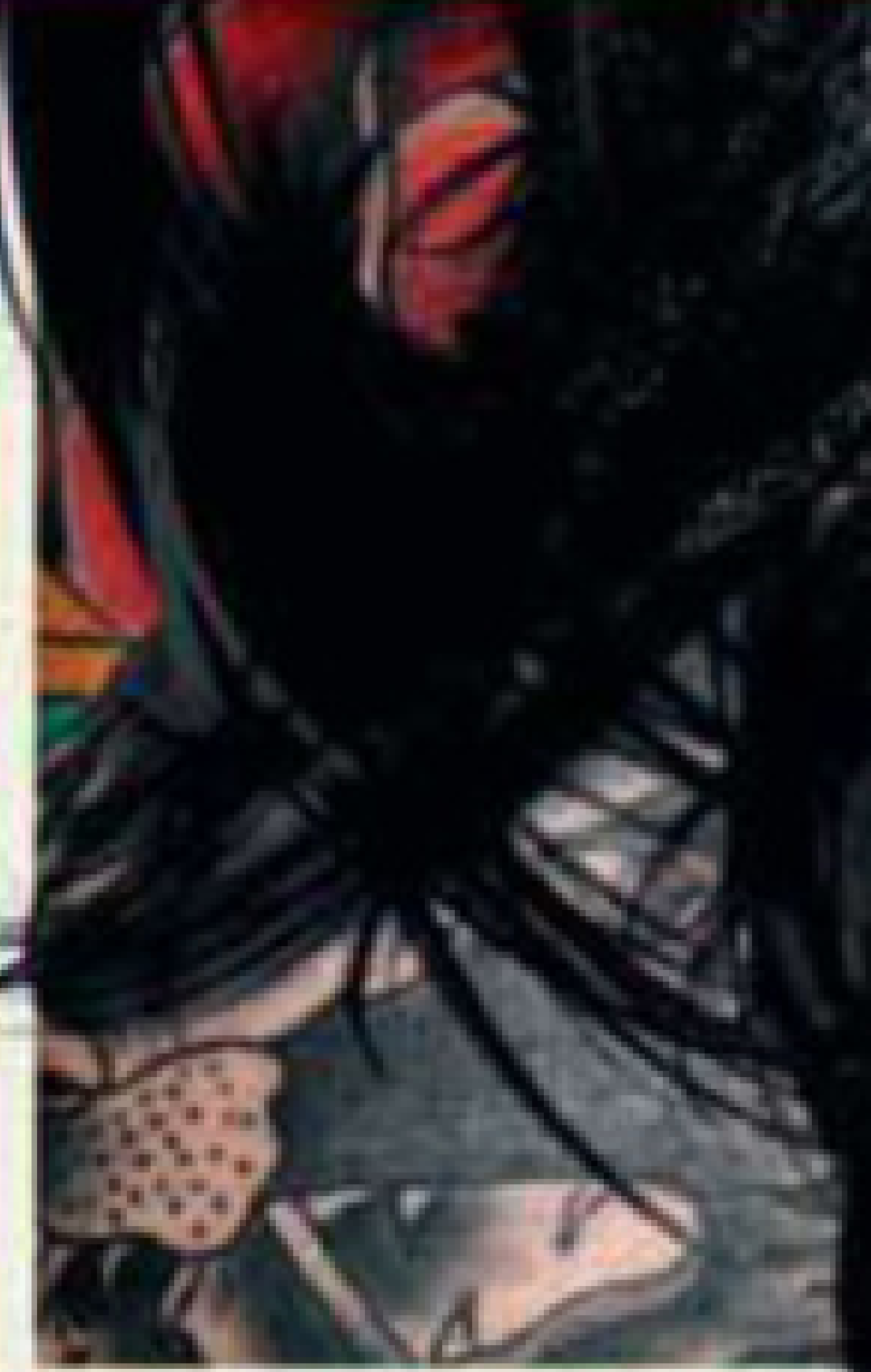


A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR THE TATTOO ENTHUSIAST

FROM THE  
PUBLISHERS OF  
**skin Deep**

# Tattoo Bible 2

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The Tattoo Bible





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# the **Tattoo Bible 2**

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF

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Fiona Bergson

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Front cover grid. Clockwise from top left: Bit Ethno Tattoo, Davide @ Plastic Surgery, Shawn Barber, Jake Grainger, Mirella door Gerrit Tattoo Mania.

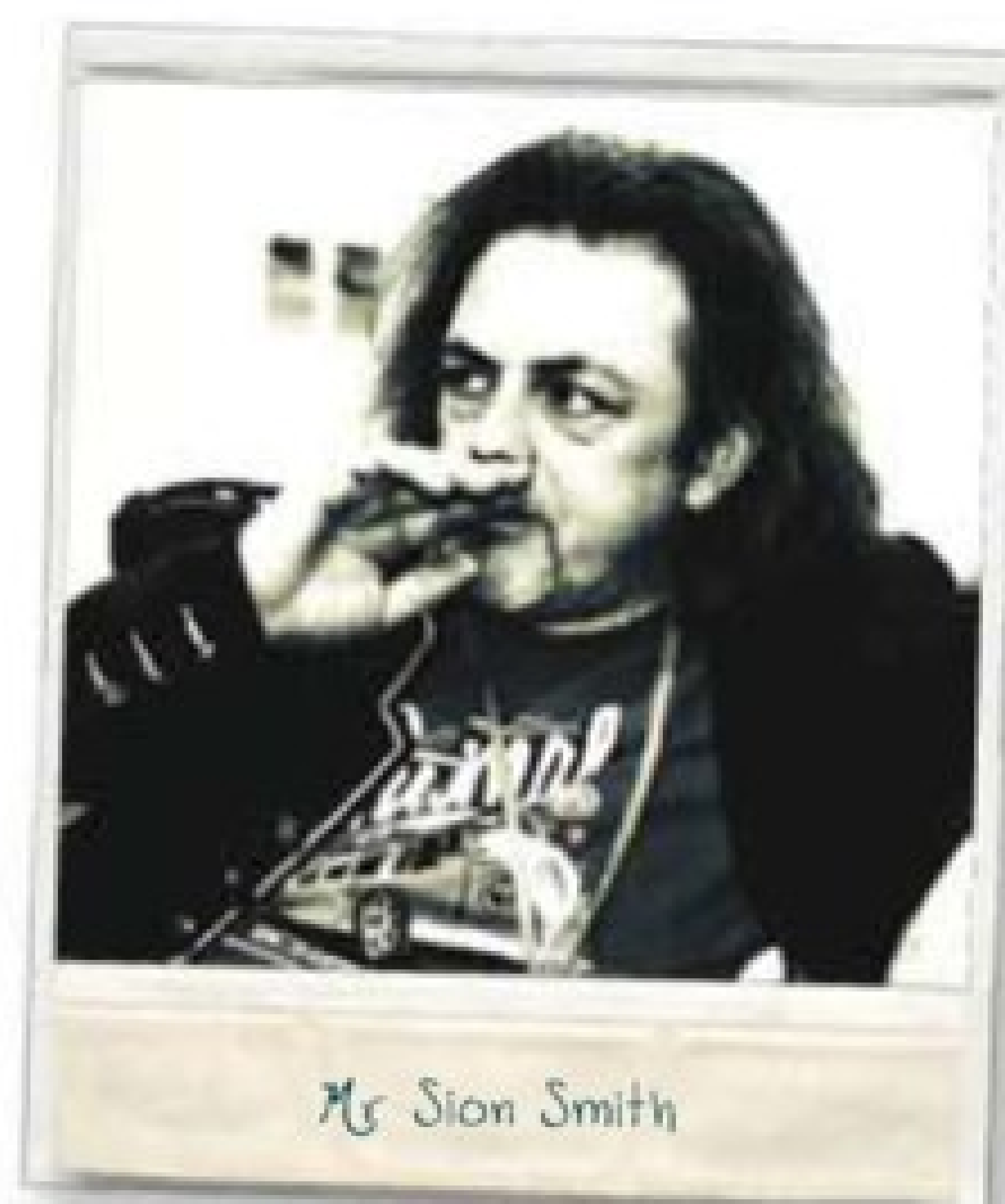
**SPECIAL THANKS**

As always, I find it best to point out that no man is an island when putting a book together - thus, as always, thanks must go to Gareth Evans, Owen Moran, Carly Rowe, David Gamble and James Marks for being the team behind the scream at Jazz. On the other side of my fence, much of this would not have happened without having Barbara Pavone and Trent Aitken-Smith around and at whom I like to throw random assignments at with little or no explanation. Fear not troopers, get your catchers mitt at the ready, there is more to come.

Thanks also to all of the tattooists and tattoo artists who took the time out to speak to us - we appreciate your time very much in these busy and insane times we find ourselves in!

Finally, on the home front.. you know who you are. I'll make up for it at Christmas.

**SION SMITH** - EDITOR





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**Model:** Franzz

**Photographer:** P-mod

**Inked by:** Swastika, Frantz,  
Cya & Igor (France)







# Introduction

ARE WE SITTING COMFORTABLY? REALLY COMFORTABLY? BECAUSE WHEN THE NEEDLES START TO HUM, YOU WON'T BE ALLOWED OUT OF THE CHAIR.

From the day you commit to your first, it's probably safe to say that the desire for more will never leave. You'll surround yourself with magazines from which to pull inspiration and toy with designs that may look incredible but in truth probably won't...

Since the first volume of *The Tattoo Bible* was published, many things have changed in those short twelve months - not least the editorial staff at *Skin Deep* magazine itself. I mention this only because you will find a slightly different stance in this volume. Whereas our previous *Tattoo Bible* author was more of a traditionalist, this author is more of a popularist.

Neither is wrong, they're simply different ways of looking at things - such is the beauty of the tattoo world. Here's a great illustration of that for you: one school of thought, as mentioned in volume one, is that television shows such as *LA Ink* have thrown tattooing into a bad light, giving a false impression of what a tattooist's life and working day is actually like. While that may be true in part, the other school of thought - my school of thought - is that shows such as these opened the doors to the public and gave them an education they had otherwise not asked for but sorely needed.

They educated the public about what it was possible to have tattooed on you, showed that the art form had long ago risen out of the backstreets; that doctors, teachers, fire-fighters and zoo keepers (you name it) were wearing their hearts on their sleeves alongside rock stars, cage fighters and movie actors. It didn't matter who you were - you all got treated the same and left with a smile on your face. In opening their doors, they also raised the bar in what the

public should expect from a studio in every department you can think of.

In my mind, these were all good things, but as I say, these are just opposing trains of thought about the same thing. Both valid, both important. The education is out there now and that's what education is all about. Being able to make decisions for yourself.

Thankfully, there are more points that we agree on than disagree. The diversity among us is spectacular and this is what makes it the multi-cultural melting pot that it is.

With this second volume of *The Tattoo Bible*, what we hope to achieve is even more education - when it comes to tattoos, you can never be informed enough but that's not to say we won't have some fun along the way. Far from it. The very fact that you've picked up this book means you are interested enough to want to know more (or at the very least, disagree and mail in angry letters). To back ourselves up, we'll also be calling on some big guns in the industry to help us along the way and share their knowledge, after all, they are the ones who have gained it on the coal-face.

There's another point from the previous volume that bears repeating here as well. No tattoo is perfect. Some come pretty close (and more often than not, perfect for the collectors who brought it on in the first place), but each and every tattooist who is proud to call themselves one, will continually strive for

*Who knows what may happen next. As a community we equally embrace and reject advancements in the art-form every day.*





***Ultimately though, all any of us want from a tattoo is a great piece of work that we are proud to show those interested, proud to add to our own personal collections.***

that perfection nonetheless.

Tattooing is indeed an organic beast and even though it has been millennia in the making, we have come a long way in a very short time - within some tattooists lifetimes, templates were still being made up using lamp dust and acetates. No doubt we will move further still in the coming years. As my friend and tattooist Victor Policheri said to me recently "we are living in an age of information and technology in which we're constantly expanding, learning and truly finding new dimensions to existence" - and he is right. Who knows what may happen next. As a community we equally embrace and reject advancements in the art-form every day.

Ultimately though, all any of us want from a tattoo is a great piece of work that we are proud to show those interested, proud to add to our own personal collections. We can be elitist about it, we can be traditionalist about it but none of it really matters in isolation. Tattoos are to enjoy. Tattoos are to make statements - even if that statement is only to yourself. They are tribal, personal, seen by millions and sometimes, seen by none bar those who created them.

By the end of the book, if we have raised your game to want better, made you pause for just one second before you commit for a lifetime, then both myself and the book have done their job.

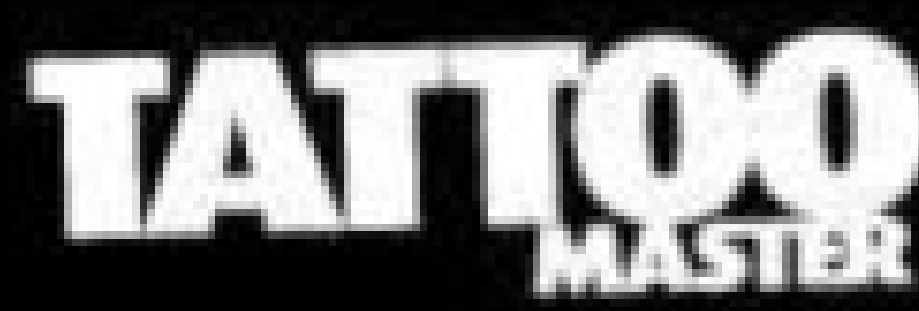
More importantly though, with some pride, a nod to the past and an eye on the future, enjoy your art. Walk tall and bring it on! ★

Sion Smith



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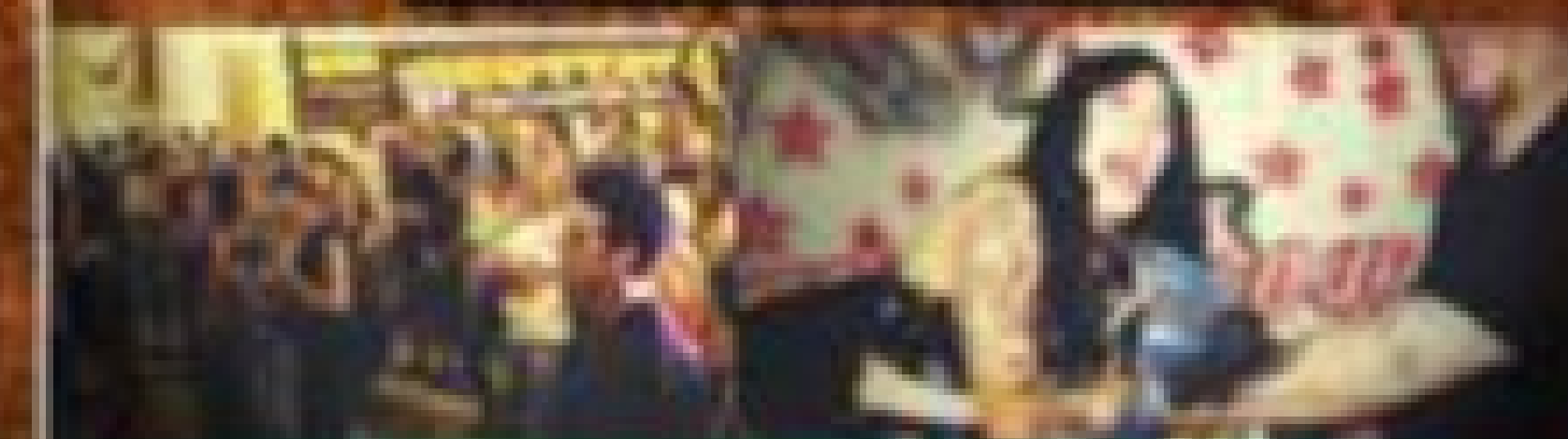
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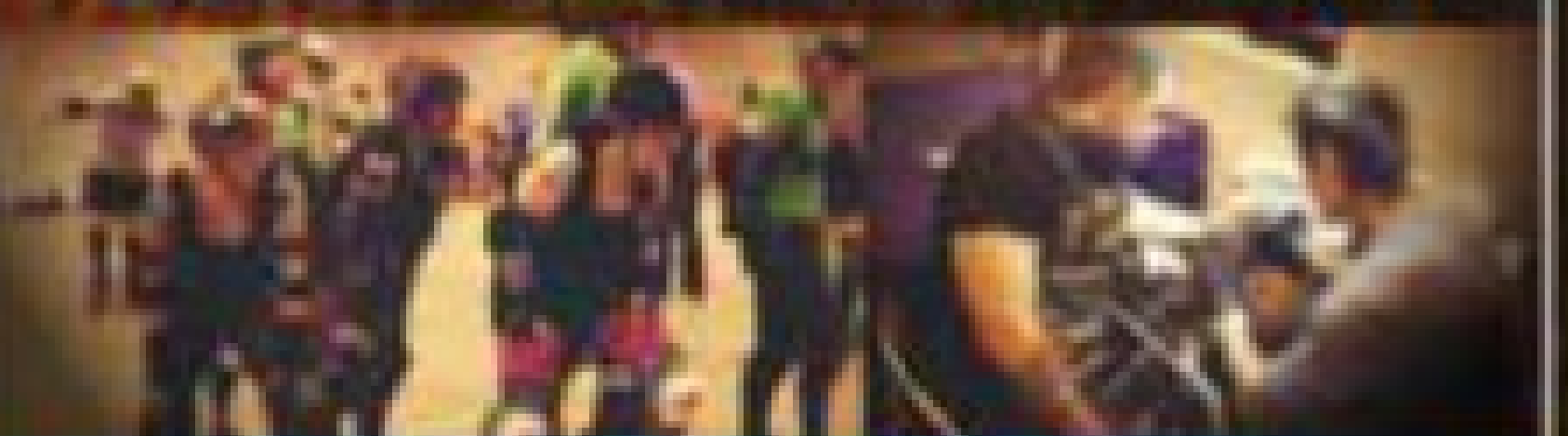
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# A History of TATTOOING

Pictures throughout this section courtesy the Tattoo Museum, Southport.

FROM YEAR DOT, PEOPLE HAVE DRAWN ON THEMSELVES FOR VARIOUS REASONS. THEY HAVE DONE IT TO SCARE THEIR ENEMIES IN BATTLE, TO TELL THEIR LIFE STORIES AND TO DISPLAY THEIR RESPECT FOR THEIR ANCESTORS AND THEIR TRIBAL TRADITIONS.

Every manner of substance has been used to make the marks permanent and every manner of instrument has been used to make those marks. Body modification is as old as cave paintings - with the first recorded tattoo hailing from around 3300 B.C. in the form of a chap called Otzi...

### THE ICEMAN COMETH

'Otzi the Iceman' was found on the border between Austria and Italy around 1990. This ice age 'collector' was found to have around fifty-seven tattoos in total. Not bad going even by today's standards. Some of these included a cross on the inside of the left knee, six straight lines about fifteen



Otzi the iceman



centimetres long above the kidneys and numerous small parallel lines along the lumbar, legs and the ankles. Some of the tattoos have been theorised as being used for possible therapeutic reasons such as the treatment of arthritis, though of course without speaking to the man, this cannot be proven.

**IT'S A SMALL WORLD**

Besides Otzi, many other tattooed mummies have been found to support the ancient world's love of



**TATTOOING WAS POPULAR AMONG MANY ETHNIC MINORITIES IN CHINA SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, ALTHOUGH AMONG THE HAN CHINESE (THE MAJOR ETHNIC GROUP) TATTOOS WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THE BARBARIC, CRIMINALS, GANGSTERS AND BANDITS.**

getting some ink. In the Tarim Basin, in West China, several tattooed mummies have been found, another tattooed mummy (c. 300 BC) was extracted from the permafrost of Altai and during the 1990s one female mummy and one male on the Ukok plateau. The Ukok mummy's tattoos had various animal designs, while the Altai mummy was tattooed with an extensive and detailed range of fish, monsters and a series of dots that lined up along the spinal column and around the right ankle.

**CHINA**

Tattooing has been popular among many ethnic minorities in China since

ancient times, although among the Han Chinese (the major ethnic group) tattoos were associated with the barbaric, criminals, gangsters and bandits. The traditional Han Chinese believe that the body is a gift of parents and a continuation of the bloodline of the ancestors. Damaging the body is a grave offence. Tattooing and piercing (except women's ear piercing) are generally not accepted by the community.

**PHILLIPINES**

Tattooing has been a part of Filipino tribal life since pre-Hispanic colonisation of the Philippine Islands. When the Spanish first landed in the Philippine Islands, they were



**APO ANNO**

Here's a fine example of a classic tattooed mummy. Apo Anno is (now) a famous 12th century mighty hunter and warrior of Benguet. It is thought that his body was stolen from his cave and sold to different "handlers" until he eventually wound up in the National Museum in Manila, although he has since been moved back "home". Those passing by his cave these days have to pay courtesy to Apo by leaving tobacco, coins and wine to encourage good weather. Quite an adventure for a man thought to be the son of a mortal and the goddess Kuyapon (protector of the woods, forest and mountains).

met by the tribal people who had full body tattooing. The Spanish called the islands, 'Islas De Los Pintados' or 'The Islands of the Painted Ones'. Tattooing in the Philippines is a tribal form of accomplishment and some tribes believed that tattoos had magical qualities. Tattoos were a sign of rank and power in the tribal community and many tattoos could only be attained by accomplishing a task or as a rite of passage. Women in Filipino tribal society also traditionally tattooed themselves and tattooing was seen as a form of beauty among women. As for the infamous head-hunters, a tribal member received a



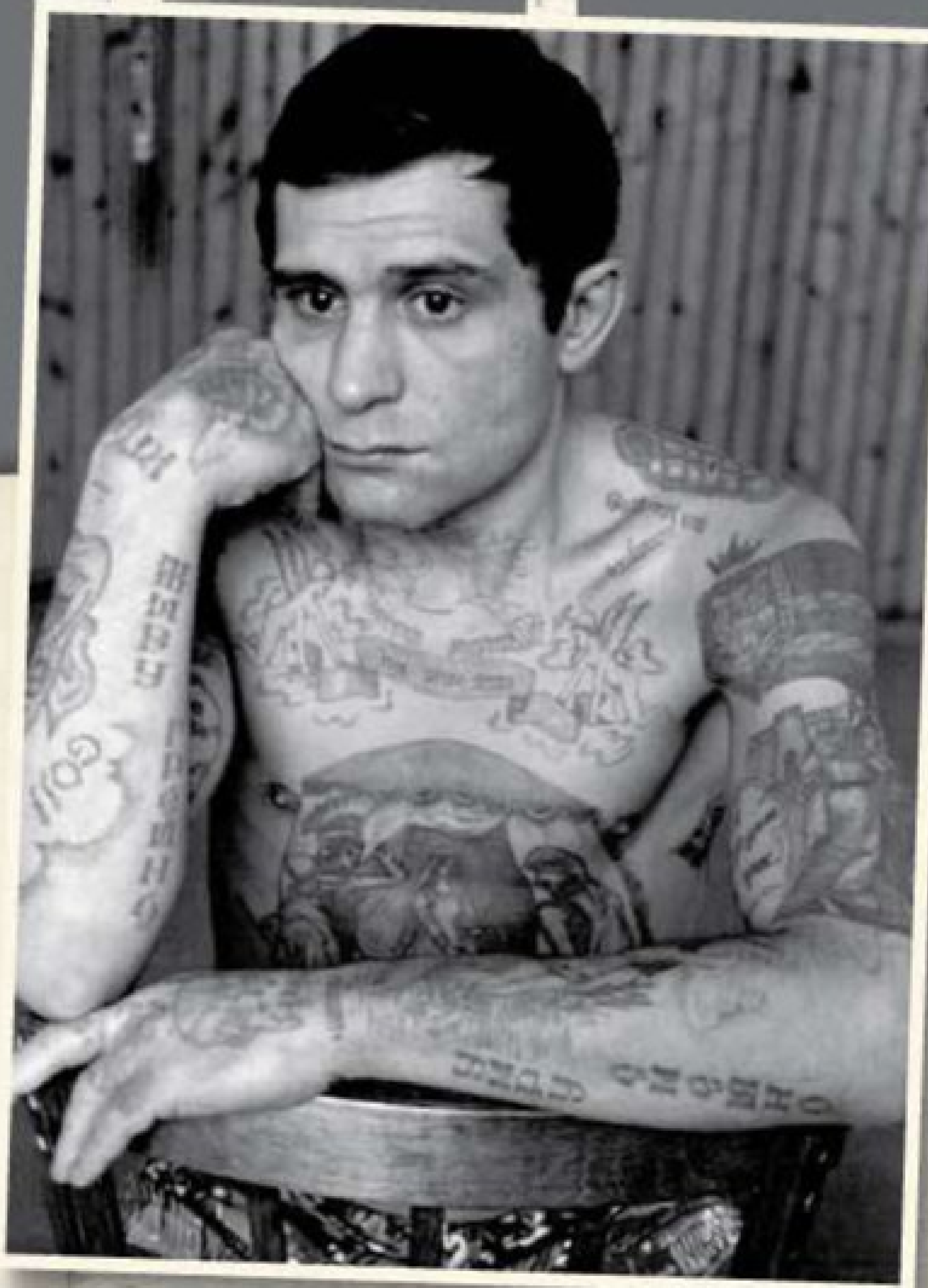
## RUSSIAN PRISON TATTOOS

Russian criminal tattoos have a complex system of symbols which can give quite detailed information about the wearer. Not only do the symbols carry meaning but the area of the body on which they are placed is meaningful also. Wearing false or "unearned" tattoos is punishable in the underworld. Interestingly, tattoos can be voluntarily removed (for loss of rank, new affiliation, life style change, etc) by bandaging

magnesium powder onto the surface of the skin, which dissolves the skin bearing the marks with painful caustic burns and is totally not recommended. This powder is gained by filing down any light alloy materials such as lawnmower casings and is a popular jailhouse commodity. "Russian prison tattoo" has almost become a generic

phrase in its own right and is given to many tattoos that have a distinct bluish color and appear somewhat blurred because of the lack of instruments to draw fine lines. In reality, the ink is

often created from burning the heel of a shoe and mixing the soot with urine and injected into the skin utilizing a sharpened guitar string attached to an electric shaver. There's a lesson here somewhere.



tattoo, known as a 'Chaklag', which meant they had taken the head of an enemy tribe or warrior.

### EUROPE

Pre-Christian Germanic, Celtic and other central and northern European tribes were often heavily tattooed. The Picts were famously tattooed (or scarified) with elaborate dark blue woad or possibly copper for the blue tone designs. Of the

Scandinavians, they have been described as, 'tattooed from fingernails to neck with dark blue tree patterns and other figures'. During the gradual process of Christianization in Europe, tattoos were often considered remaining elements of paganism and generally legally prohibited.

Tattooing was also common amongst certain religious groups in the ancient Mediterranean world but

during the classic Greek period, tattooing was only common among slaves.

### JAPAN

In the past, criminals were tattooed as a visible mark of punishment and this actually replaced having ears and noses removed. A criminal would often receive a single ring on their arm for each crime committed which easily conveyed their criminality. This practice was eventually abolished by the government who banned the art of tattooing altogether, viewing it as barbaric and unrespectable. Of course, this just forced a sub culture of criminals and outcasts, many of whom were the old Samurai warriors, the 'Ronin'. These people had no place in 'decent society' and were frowned upon. They were kept separate and simply could not integrate into mainstream society because of their obvious visible tattoos. This in turn forced them into criminal activities which ultimately formed the roots for the modern Japanese mafia, the 'Yakuza', for which tattoos in Japan have almost become synonymous.

### SAMOA

The word tattoo is believed to have originated from the Samoan word 'tatau'. When the Samoans were first seen by Europeans, one of the Dutch party commented, 'They do not paint themselves, as do the natives of some other islands, but on the lower part of the body they wear artfully woven silk tights or knee breeches.' These woven silk tights or leggings were in



fact full leg tattoos.

In Samoa, the tradition of applying a tattoo by hand has been unbroken for over two thousand years. Tools and techniques have changed little. The skill is often passed from father to son, each tattoo artist learning the craft over many years of serving as his father's apprentice.

It was not just the men who received tattoos but the women too. Their designs are of a much lighter nature rather than having the large areas of solid dye which are frequently seen in men's tattoos.

Christian missionaries from the west attempted to purge tattooing among the Samoans, thinking it barbaric and inhumane. Many young Samoans resisted mission schools since they forbade them to wear tattoos. But, thankfully, over time attitudes relaxed toward this cultural tradition and tattooing began to re-emerge in Samoan culture.

And there are many more examples of tattooing in the ancient world. Egypt, India, Indonesia, South America and the Middle East all have a rich tattooing history.

#### **SAILING THE SEVEN SEAS**

When Sir Martin Frobisher set out on his second voyage from England in 1577, to find a north west passage to China and the promise of gold ore, the captain took prisoner a native Inuit woman. Upon his return to England the woman, who had tattoos on her chin and forehead, was a great attraction at the court of Elizabeth I.

Between 1766 and 1779,



**WHEN THE SPANISH FIRST LANDED IN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, THEY WERE MET BY THE TRIBAL PEOPLE WHO HAD FULL BODY TATTOOING. THE SPANISH CALLED THE ISLANDS, 'ISLAS DE LOS PINTADOS' OR 'THE ISLANDS OF THE PAINTED ONES'.**

Captain James Cook made three voyages to the South Pacific. When Cook and his crew returned home to Europe from their voyages to Polynesia, they told tales of the 'tattooed savages' they had seen.

In fact Cook's Science Officer, Sir Joseph Banks, returned to England with a tattoo. Banks was a highly regarded member of the English aristocracy. Many of Cook's men, ordinary seamen and sailors, came back with tattoos, a tradition that would soon become associated with men of the sea in the public's mind and the press of the day. In the process sailors and seamen re-introduced the practice of tattooing in Europe and it spread rapidly to seaports around the globe. It was during these visits that



Cook first noted his observations about the indigenous body modification and is the first recorded use of the word tattoo. In the ship's log, he writes, 'Both sexes paint their Bodies, Tattow, as it is called in their Language. This is





MOVING INTO THE 1900S, TATTOOING WAS ON THE DECLINE. MOST TATTOO ARTISTS WERE NOW FOUND IN THE DODGIER AREAS OF CITIES AND HEAVILY TATTOOED FOLK WERE ONLY FINDING WORK WITH THE TRAVELLING CIRCUSES AS 'FREAKS'.

done by inlaying the Colour of Black under their skins, in such a manner as to be indelible.'

On a more amusing side-track, he also states, '...this is a painful operation, especially the Tattowing of their Buttocks, it is performed but once in their Lifetimes.' The British Royal Court must have been fascinated with Omai's tattoos because the future King George V had himself inked with the 'Cross of Jerusalem' when he travelled to the Middle East. During a visit to Japan he also received a dragon on the forearm from the needles of Hori Chiyo, an acclaimed tattoo master. George's sons, the Dukes of Clarence and York were also tattooed in Japan while serving in the British Admiralty, solidifying what would become a family tradition. Tattooing spread among the upper classes all over Europe in the 19th century but particularly in Britain where it was estimated that as many as one in five members of the gentry were tattooed. At the time, it was not uncommon for members of the social elite to gather in the drawing rooms and libraries of the great country estate homes after dinner and partially disrobe in order to show off their tattoos.

#### GOING UNDERGROUND

Of course, not everyone was a sailor or had the money to travel so tattooing was still not huge at the time. Another reason was that it was a slow and painstaking procedure. Each puncture of the skin was done by hand. But in 1891,

along came Samuel O'Reilly who patented the first electric tattooing machine. It was based on Thomas Edison's electric pen which punctured paper with a needle point. The basic design with moving coils, a tube and a needle bar, are the components of today's tattoo machine. The electric tattoo machine allowed anyone to obtain a reasonably priced and readily available tattoo. As the average person could easily get a tattoo, the upper classes turned away from it. Moving into the 1900s, tattooing was on the decline. Most tattoo artists were now found in the dodgier areas of cities and heavily tattooed folk were only finding work with the travelling circuses as 'freaks'. Betty Broadbent travelled with Ringling Brothers Circus in the 1930s and was a star attraction for years. It was these views and attitude towards tattoos that slowly pushed tattooing underground. This in turn led fewer people into the 'secret society' of artists and there were no schools to study the craft; let alone magazines like we have today. Tattoo suppliers rarely advertised their products and you had to know the right people to find out where to go and who to see for quality tattoos.

#### CHATHAM SQUARE & CONEY ISLAND

The birthplace of the American style tattoo was Chatham Square in New York City. At the beginning of the 1900s, it was a seaport and entertainment area attracting working-class







## Betty Broadbent

The original tattooed vixen! Betty was born in 1909 and was always rather innocent. At 14, she was working as a nanny in Atlantic City and a chance encounter brought her into contact with tattooist Jack Red

Cloud where she fell in love with the art. By 1927, she had almost completed an entire bodysuit with over 350 designs from the likes of Charlie Wagner, Joe Van Hart, Tony Rhineager and Red Gibbons. Her first job

was with Ringling Brothers (Barnam & Bailey) and she spent the next 40 years of her life in and around the scene. She retired from 'exhibition' in 1967 and fell out of the public eye for a long time until she

was rediscovered by Lyle Tuttle who found she had retired to Florida and actually become a tattooist herself. Betty, who died peacefully in 1983 was the first person to be inducted into the Tattoo Hall of Fame.

people with a bit of spare cash. Even Samuel O'Reilly came in from Boston to set up shop in Chatham Square and it was here that he took on an apprentice named Charlie Wagner. After O'Reilly's death, Wagner opened a supply business with Lew Alberts, who had trained as a wallpaper designer. Alberts transferred his skills to the design of tattoos and is now noted for redesigning a large portion of early tattoo flash art. So while tattooing was losing popularity across the country, in Chatham Square it was starting to take off in a big way. One of the practices during these times was that husbands would tattoo their wives with examples of their best work, who would then walk around 'advertising' their skills. It was also during this time that cosmetic tattooing became popular; blush for cheeks, coloured lips and eyeliner. But it wasn't to last. In the 1920s, with prohibition and then the depression, Chatham Square started

losing its appeal. Not to be outdone, the artists and their entourage up sticks and headed off across the country to Coney Island. Across the country, tattooists opened shops in areas that would support them; cities with military bases close by, particularly naval bases. After World War II, tattoos became further 'criminalised' by their associations with Marlon Brando type bikers and young upstarts. Tattooing had little respect in American culture and worse was to come in 1961 when an outbreak of hepatitis brought the tattoo world to its knees. Though most tattoo shops had sterilization machines, few used them. Newspapers reported stories of blood poisoning, hepatitis, and other diseases.

At first, the New York City government gave the tattoos an opportunity to form an association and self-regulate but for some reason, they were not able to organize themselves. A health code violation went into effect and the tattoo shops at Times Square and Coney Island were shut down. For a time, it was difficult to get a tattoo in New York. It was in fact illegal and tattoos had a terrible reputation. Few people wanted a tattoo.

**BETTY BROADBENT TRAVELLED WITH RINGLING BROTHERS CIRCUS IN THE 1930S AND WAS A STAR ATTRACTION FOR YEARS. IT WAS THESE VIEWS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS TATTOOS THAT SLOWLY PUSHED TATTOOING UNDERGROUND.**

### TIME FOR CHANGE

As time rolled on, tattooing started to take a turn for the better. This can be attributed to many causes but it is generally believed that it was men like Lyle Tuttle who changed the face of tattooing. Tuttle had been working hard on changing artists views on health and safety and general cleanliness in the studio. Things needed changing in the tattoo world and Tuttle stood up and became a spokesperson for the industry. Tuttle's work became so popular, that he started appearing in magazines, on television and even started attracting celebrity clients; all of which was pulling the tattoo world out of its dark corners and though not making it mainstream, was certainly making it a better world to be in. ✨

### NEXT UP

We take a closer look at two of the leading figures who predate even Sailor Jerry in their quest for taking tattoo art to the masses...



# AUGUST "CAP" COLEMAN & FRANKLIN PAUL ROGERS

BEFORE ED HARDY AND EVEN SAILOR JERRY, CAME A COUPLE OF GUYS WHO ARE WIDELY CONSIDERED THE FOREFATHERS OF AMERICAN TATTOOING - AUGUST "CAP" COLEMAN AND THE YOUNGLING HE HEAVILY INFLUENCED AND MENTORED, FRANKLIN PAUL ROGERS.

Words: Jon Patrick, The Selvedge Yard

When you trace the history of tattooing, a good chunk of the great flash icons can be linked directly back to these American masters. They blazed a counterculture trail back when the only guys and gals that sported body ink were either in the service, criminals or circus and sideshow freaks...

Not much is known about August "Cap" Coleman's early years other than he was born in 1884, somewhere near Cincinnati, Ohio. He likes to boast that his father

was a tattooist as well but it's not known for sure and even Paul Rogers doubted the story. It's not even clear who was responsible for the handiwork displayed on Coleman himself but some of it was more than likely done by his hand. What is known without a doubt is that around 1918, Coleman, dropped anchor in the navy town of Norfolk and set-up shop. He chose a particularly salty spot on Main Street well known for strip clubs and

sailors. There was no shortage of action or customers. The rest as they say is history. Coleman wasted no time in becoming a living tattoo legend. At one time, the shop was so well known, he didn't even bother to list the address on his business card.







ROGERS STARTED WORK IN THE MILLS AT 13 AND CONTINUED UP UNTIL 1942. IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, HE STATES, "IT WAS NOTHING BUT HARDSHIP. IT WAS HARD FOR EVERYBODY." FORTUNATELY FOR ROGERS, HE DISCOVERED TATTOOING AND A WAY OUT OF THE STIFLING CONDITIONS OF THE MILLS.

In 1950, tattooing in Norfolk was declared illegal, so after thirty-two years in Norfolk, Coleman relocated across the Elizabeth River to Portsmouth. Here he opened up a shop and continued his practice until his death in 1973 when his body was discovered in the Elizabeth River.

Rogers was born 1905 in the mountains of North Carolina. The family of five children lived in a log cabin in the woods. His father earned a living as a timber cutter. Rogers describes his first seven years as filled with hardship and poverty, "but a way of life and what life is all about." He spent much of his childhood moving from one cotton town to the next, as the family sought employment in the dehumanizing

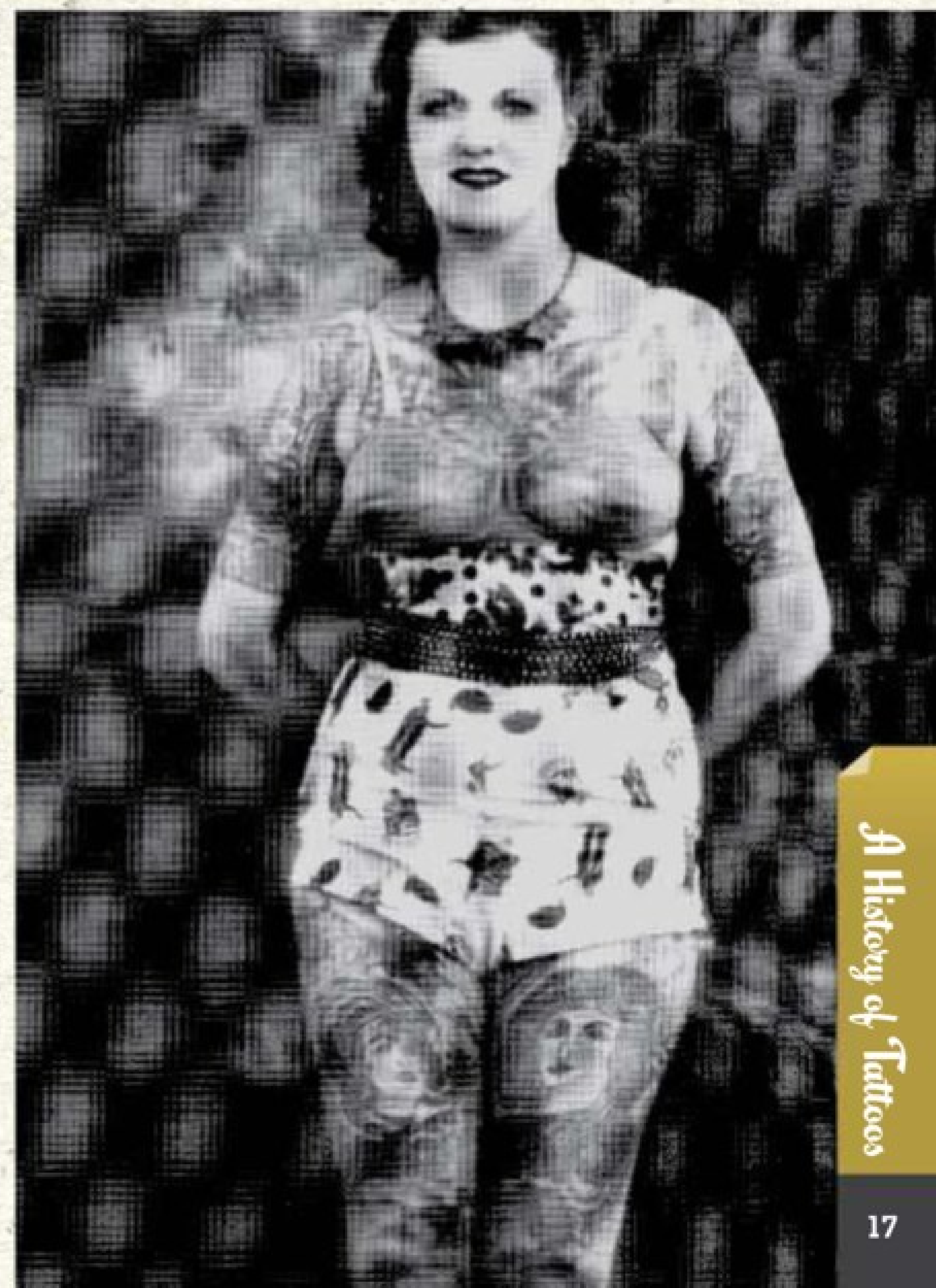
conditions of the cotton mills. This was a period of totally unregulated capitalism, and child labour laws didn't exist. Rogers started work in the mills at 13 and continued up until 1942. On average, Paul earned \$3.50 a week. In his autobiography, he states, "It was nothing but hardship. It was hard for everybody." Fortunately for Rogers, he discovered tattooing and a way out of the stifling conditions of the mills.

Rogers' first got interested in tattooing when a travelling salesman visited the log cabin, when he was still a child. He was struck by the design and the tall tales the man told of his time in the army during the Spanish-American war. In 1926, aged twenty-one, Rogers got his

first tattoo from Chet Cain, a tattooist who worked with one of the travelling circuses. It was through Cain that he first heard about Cap Coleman, the tattooist who he was later to work with and who had such an influence on his life. Cain gave Rogers some advice on tattooing, and two years later he began to tattoo. "I bought a tattoo kit in 1928," he writes in his autobiography. "It was a kit from E.J. Miller. He had a supply place in Norfolk, Virginia. It ran off dry-cell batteries." Rogers found out about the tattoo supplier through his interest in the travelling circuses. He had seen an advert for it in Billboard, the well known U.S. entertainment magazine. "I always wanted to travel with a circus," he stated in a 1982 interview with Ed Hardy in

**LITTLE KNOWN HISTORICAL TATTOO FACT 1:**

A pig tattooed on one foot and a rooster on the other were said to protect a seaman from drowning. Neither animal can swim but it was thought they would help get the sailor swiftly to shore if he fell into the water.





**LITTLE KNOWN HISTORICAL TATTOO FACT 2:**

The 5th century BC Greek historian, Herodotus, records how Histiaeus of Miletus, who was being held against his will by King Darius of Susa, sent a tattooed secret message to his son-

in-law, Aristagoras. Histiaeus shaved the hair of his slave and tattooed the message on to the man's head. The slave was told that the procedure would cure his failing eyesight. When the slave's

hair had grown back sufficiently to hide the tattoo, he was sent to Aristagoras, who shaved

his head and read the hidden message. The message instructed Aristagoras to begin a rebellion.

met his wife, Helen, who was working as a snake charmer. Rogers spent seven months of that year travelling around in a Model T Ford and living in an "umbrella" tent. "I had a ball," he told Ed

**ROGERS FIRST GOT INTERESTED IN TATTOOING WHEN A TRAVELLING SALESMAN VISITED THE LOG CABIN, WHEN HE WAS STILL A CHILD.**

Tattootime. "I decided to learn how to tattoo and travel with the carnival and work on the sideshow."

As well as learning how to tattoo, Rogers trained hard in acrobatics. "I used to train religiously," he stated. "Even when I started tattooing, I still trained. I have always been interested in the physical end of things." He was also very careful how he treated his body. He never smoked, drank coffee or touched alcohol.

Rogers began tattooing from his bedroom, experimenting on himself and any willing neighbours. But he soon ran out of flesh and, in his search for new customers and experience,



joined one of the travelling circuses. In 1932, he worked on his first sideshow in Greenville, South Carolina, where he vividly recalls striking up a friendship with the three-legged man. "He was fun to be around," mused Rogers in Tattootime. "He used to kick a football with that third leg. He said that, when the streetcar was crowded, he would use that extra leg for a seat. He could sit on it like a stool." Later that year, Rogers joined the John T. Ræ Happyland Show where he

Hardy. "But I only grossed \$247. So, I guess I ate a lot of peanuts that year," he recalled, laughing.

Rogers explained that during that period many tattooists made their living working with the travelling shows. This was during the great depression and times were extremely hard. Throughout the 1930s, to make ends meet and to help support his wife and two children, Rogers would spend his winters working in the Cotton Mills and the summers tattooing with the circus. Helen's stepfather owned the Happyland show, so the family worked together.

Rogers recalled that, initially, the circus owners wanted the tattooists to double as the tattooed man and be on display, but later Paul was able to work purely as a tattooist. As well as working out of a mobile tattoo studio, Rogers also worked in an assortment of poolrooms as well as army boot camps. "In Spartanburg, South Carolina, I worked in a combination shooting gallery and shoeshine place with a jukebox," he



recalled. "They sold hot dogs and bootleg whisky and had card games going on. They had it all covered."

In 1942, Rogers got a chance to get off the road and set up his own shop in Charleston, South Carolina. A friend and fellow mill worker FA Myers, who had taken up tattooing, invited Rogers to go into a partnership. Up until that time, Rogers' largest pay packet from millwork was \$42 for a 40-hour week. Once he got his shop up and running, Rogers was able to make up to \$200 a week. At last he was able to forever turn his back on the exploitation and slave wages of the mills. It was during this time that Rogers saw many examples of Cap Coleman's tattooing on the sailors who came through the shop. Rogers immediately recognized Coleman's work, as it was far superior to any of the other tattooists working at the time. "I patterned myself after him," he explained to Ed Hardy. "I used to copy any tattoo I could off the sailors." Rogers would use celluloid sanded on one side, so the rough surface would grab a pencil lead. This way he could make a copy of Coleman's tattoos. "I got a copy of a Panther head that way. A panther climbing an arm, that was a new thing back then. I would try and duplicate it. Shade it the same way Coleman had."

Cap Coleman first became aware of Rogers' tattooing from a sailor. Rogers explains the story. "Coleman would always say to the sailors, 'You haven't got a good one on



## HE WAS STRUCK BY THE DESIGN AND THE TALL TALES THE MAN TOLD OF HIS TIME IN THE ARMY DURING THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR.

you.' It was his way of getting them to get one of his tattoos. So, he twisted this guy's arm saying, "There's one I did and there's another." But the sailor told him, "This isn't one you did." Coleman was amazed that anyone could tattoo well enough for him to confuse it with one of his own.

Later Rogers wrote to Coleman and then visited his shop in Norfolk, Virginia. Coleman then offered him a job in his shop, once the war was over. "It was the job offer from heaven," explains Chuck Eldridge. "You have to remember that Coleman was considered one of the best tattooists in the world at that time. It's like Ed Hardy offering a job to some 20-year old, hotshot tattooist. Who would turn that down, given all the fantastic things one could learn?"

In 1945, Rogers began



a five-year association with Coleman.

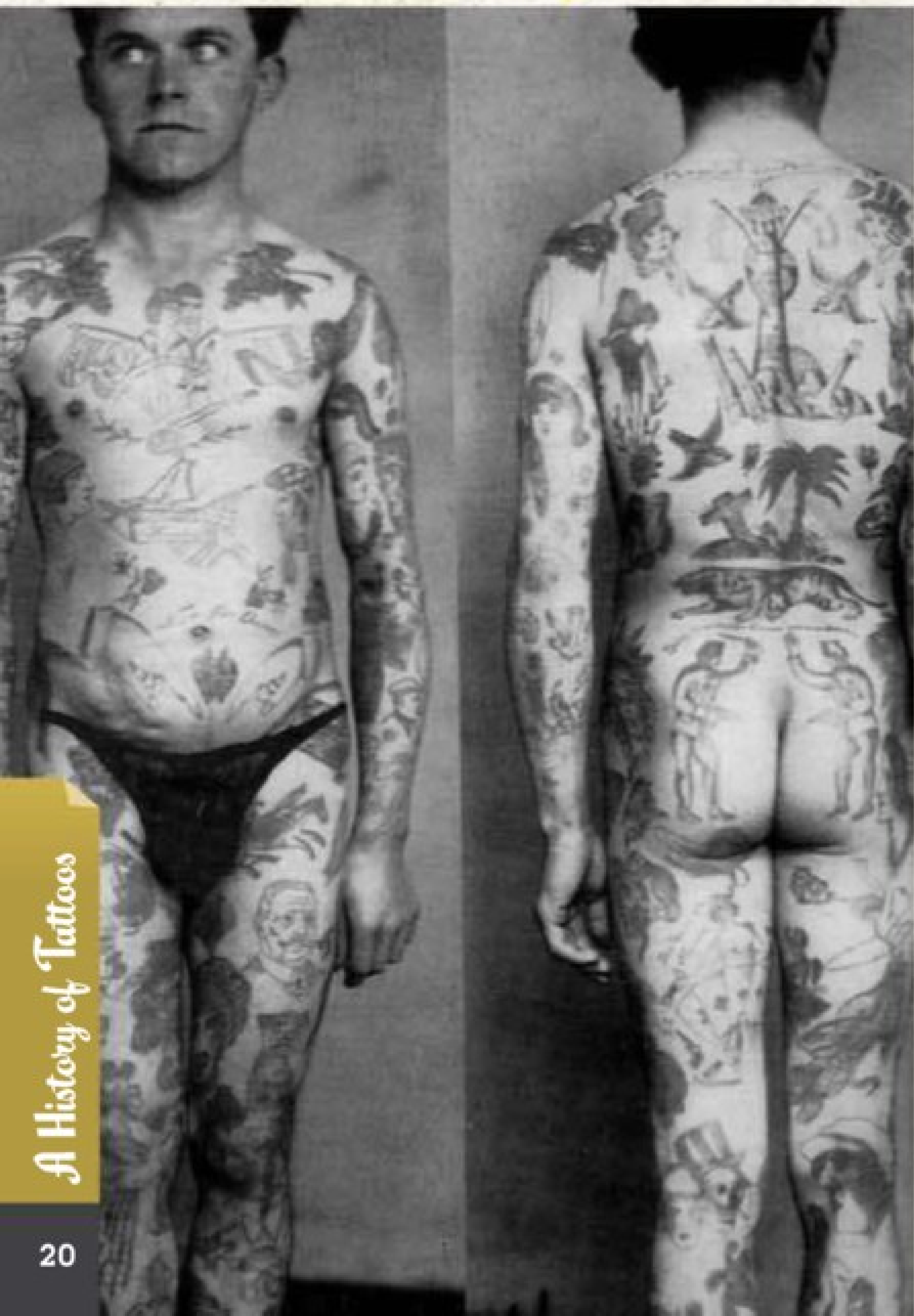
Rogers recalls Coleman with mixed feelings. He was in no doubt that Coleman was one of the greatest tattooists in the world, but he was certainly not in awe of his personality. "He was a very selfish guy." 🐦



remembered Rogers. "He would never give anyone the time of day. Coleman was a people hater. Quite the opposite of me, I was everybody's friend. He was sort of a hermit and practically lived in the shop. He kept canned food there, so he wouldn't have to go out. And he would have a can of tinned spinach for breakfast!"

In order to save money, Coleman would tell service men that he couldn't use brown or green inks in the

**COLEMAN WOULD ALWAYS SAY TO THE SAILORS, 'YOU HAVEN'T GOT A GOOD ONE ON YOU.' IT WAS HIS WAY OF GETTING THEM TO GET ONE OF HIS TATTOOS.**



tattoos, if they had been vaccinated. He told them it would make them sick. "That way he got by using just black and red all the time," recalled Rogers. "Black and red, black and red." Despite these sly tricks Coleman was able to apply high quality work. His work was clear and well shaded. Consequently, his tattoo designs epitomized what came to be known as the classic American-style tattooing that dominated the 1920s to the 1940s.

Despite Coleman's eccentric personality, Rogers learned a great deal about tattooing from him, especially about machines. Prior to working with Coleman, Rogers had to learn everything the hard way, through trial and error. While working for Coleman, Rogers began fixing the machines for all the tattooists working in Norfolk. "There were 11 of them at one point," he stated. "And you could count the good ones on three fingers."

In 1950, Rogers' association with Coleman came to an abrupt end. The city of Norfolk decided to ban tattooing. This forced most of the Norfolk tattooists across the Elizabeth River to Portsmouth. Rogers eventually formed a partnership with R.L. Connelly, a talented tattooist who worked briefly with Coleman. The two set up shops in Petersburg, Virginia and Jacksonville, North Carolina, with Rogers eventually owning the Jacksonville shop.

While working in the Jacksonville shop, Rogers

met Huck Spaulding. Rogers described Spaulding as "a real scratch artist," a tattooist with very limited experience who had worked a little in the travelling sideshows. Rogers helped Spaulding improve his technique and when, in 1955, the studio Rogers and Connelly used was torn down, Rogers moved into Spaulding's shop half a block away on Court Street, giving birth to the now famous name of Spaulding and Rogers. This shop became home to the famous supply business that is known worldwide.

What immediately distinguished this mail order supply business from its competitors was a commitment to high quality. Ed Hardy first noticed the company when he saw an advert in the back of the magazine - Popular Mechanics. Most of the best tattooists of that time started ordering through Spaulding and Rogers. A trend that continues to this day.

Rogers only worked in the supply business for two years. He continued tattooing with Spaulding for four, but then in 1963, he moved to Jacksonville, Florida to tattoo with Bill Williamson. In 1970, Rogers and his wife, Helen, bought a mobile home and it was there that Rogers found much more time to focus on what he wanted to do most: improve existing tattoo machines and design new ones. In a portable 12-by-12-foot tin shack affectionately called "the Iron Factory," Rogers spent all his time making unstylish but

STORE/KEGG.COM





incredibly dependable machines. The now popular slang for calling tattoo machines "irons" derives from Rogers, who first coined the word.

During the 1970s, Chuck Eldridge befriended Rogers and spent much of this time with him at his home in Jacksonville. "Paul was from the old school," states Eldridge. "His machines were built almost entirely with hand tools. Machine heads from around the world would gather in that small shed and hang on every word, hoping to gain some of Paul's understanding." Eldridge is keen to emphasize just how important the working of a tattoo machine is. "It's a very subtle device. And it's vital for a good tattooist to have a machine that is properly designed and balanced. It's impossible to execute high quality work without this. It's an absolute prerequisite. Why do Ferraris have such a great reputation in car racing? Because they win races, and you can't do that without fantastic equipment.

It's exactly the same with Paul's machines."

Ed Hardy is equally enthusiastic about emphasizing the impact Rogers' machines have had on the development of tattooing. "I think it would be amazing to see a catalogue of all the different styles of tattooing that are being done with the machines Paul made or re-worked," he states. "That way, you could actually get an idea of how important Paul's contribution has been."

In 1988, when Rogers was working on his autobiography, he had a stroke and was rushed to hospital. Later he suffered another stroke that paralyzed his right side and deprived him of his ability to speak. Ironically, the stroke occurred on the 60th anniversary of the day he began tattooing. He died two years later in a nursing home aged 84.

In 1993, Chuck Eldridge formed a non-profit corporation along with Ed Hardy, Alan Govenar and Henk Schiffmacher (Hanky

IN ORDER TO SAVE MONEY, COLEMAN WOULD TELL SERVICE MEN THAT HE COULDN'T USE BROWN OR GREEN INKS IN THE TATTOOS, IF THEY HAD BEEN VACCINATED. HE TOLD THEM IT WOULD MAKE THEM SICK. "THAT WAY HE GOT BY USING JUST BLACK AND RED ALL THE TIME," RECALLED ROGERS.

Panky), the Paul Rogers Tattoo Research Center (PRTRC). This organization was the recipient of Rogers' entire collection of tattoo memorabilia, flash and photographs. Unlike many tattooists who buy collections and keep them to themselves, the aim of the PRTRC is to raise money to establish a museum and research centre. This centre will then house the complete Rogers collection. "So far we have raised around \$30,000," states Eldridge. "The target amount is, of course, limitless but, initially, we need enough to put a down payment on a property, so we can create this landmark."

Unfortunately, property in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Eldridge's studio is located, commands some of the highest prices in America. "If we can't find a building here," states Eldridge, "we'll take the collection back to North Carolina. It's where Paul came from and would be the right thing to do. It would be like taking Paul home."★

### LITTLE KNOWN HISTORICAL TATTOO FACT 3:

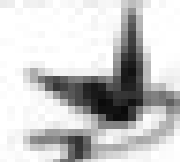
The word 'tattaw' - obviously where the word tattoo originates from - was first used in the published account of Captain Cook's first voyage, which appeared in 1769. It has been suggested that 'tatau' is an onomatopoeic word. 'Tat' refers to tapping the tattooing instrument into the skin; 'au' to the cry of pain from the person being tattooed.

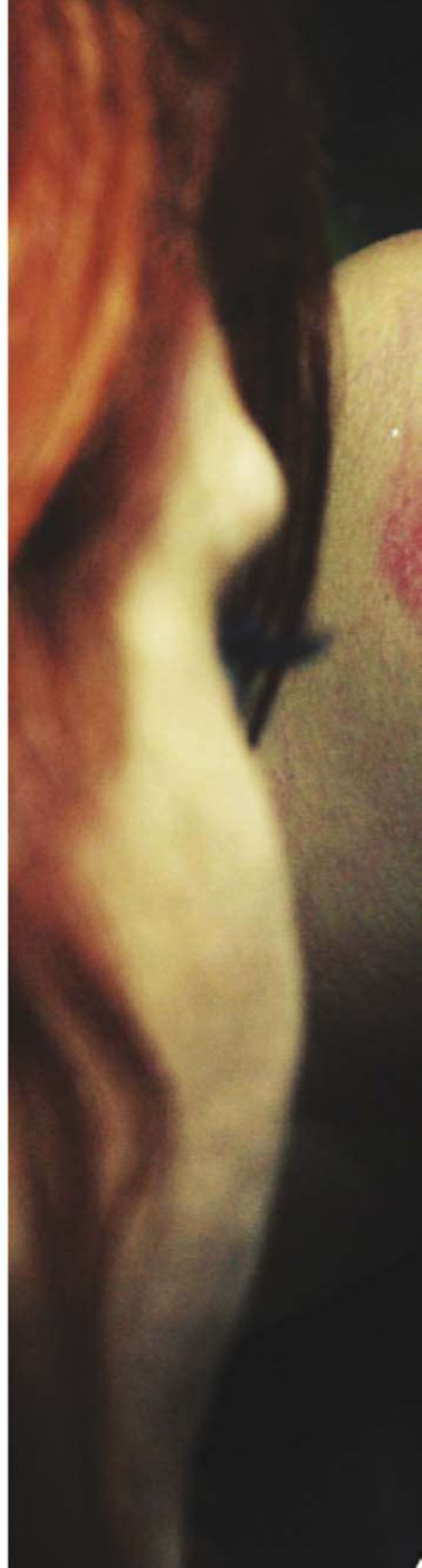


# Schools of Tattooing

"WE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION..." THE WORDS OF PINK FLOYD RING IN EVERYBODY'S HEAD BUT IN THIS INSTANCE, JUST A LITTLE OF THE HARD STUFF WILL GIVE YOU A GREAT HEAD START IN THE YEARS TO COME. THE "SCHOOLS" ARE VERY LOOSE GENRE TAGS THAT WILL ACTUALLY SERVE A PURPOSE AS YOU TRAVEL THE ROCKY ROAD OF TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S WHAT.

As old school meets new school to bring us yet another "school" of tattooing, it's no wonder many get confused as to what's what - and there are two schools of thought (apologies for unintentional pun) at play here. Some people like to have a tag to hang their art on: "Hey, look at my new Japanese" may give those who like the order of organisation a place to be and a feeling of comfort that they got what they wanted. Others much prefer to take a piece of art for what it is. Whereas a truly Japanese piece can be easily categorised, over time, other influences have crept in to create neo-Japanese, but "Hey, look at my new neo-Japanese" is not a phrase you're likely to hear very often at all. On top of this, if we look

at the art of Buena Vista Tattoo Club (for instance) - can you hand on heart really put it under the umbrella of blackwork? Where are you going to put the work of the likes of Yann Black and La Boucherie Modeme? The term "art-brut" has been laid at their door but that doesn't really mean anything to anybody outside of the art world - and even within those circles it's misinterpreted. As time moves on, more and more cross-over occurs, but to be fair to those who are beginning to get involved in the tattoo scene, the "schools" do serve a very useful purpose, albeit a very loose one, with which to get your head around your choices in the big wide world, so over the following pages, let's take a look at some of the favourites. Dig in... 









# Biomechanical

BIOMECHANICAL IS UNDERGOING SOMETHING OF A RENAISSANCE IN RECENT TIMES. THE ART OF BRINGING THE TERMINATOR LIKE MACHINES WE ALL HAVE LIVING BENEATH OUR SKIN TO THE FORE HAS EXPANDED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS TO LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED.

The combination of organic body elements and Giger inspired imagery developed into something quite special during the early eighties following the release of Ridley Scott's epic Alien saga. These surreal and futuristic creations fuelled both a new generation of fans of the artform and tattooists all too willing to bring sub-cutaneous life into the spotlight as muscle met steel.

Come the nineties, the movement took on a different slant when Guy Aitchison and Aaron Cain got their hands on it and pioneered a more organic style that developed out of "metal and muscle" into a more mainstream approach that featured floral elements, extremities of light and shade and a bucketload more colour than the style is renowned for.

The style continues to grow to this day with artists such as Ron Earhart, Nick Baxter, Carson Hill and Nathan

Kostechko all bringing different slants to the table. Traditionally, the biomechanical tattoo was done in black and grey which allowed the artist to better blend the machinery into human flesh and thus more realistic. However, as with all schools, as the artists behind them simply get better and better, this is no longer the case with the added colour bringing some seriously brilliant artwork to the table. ✎

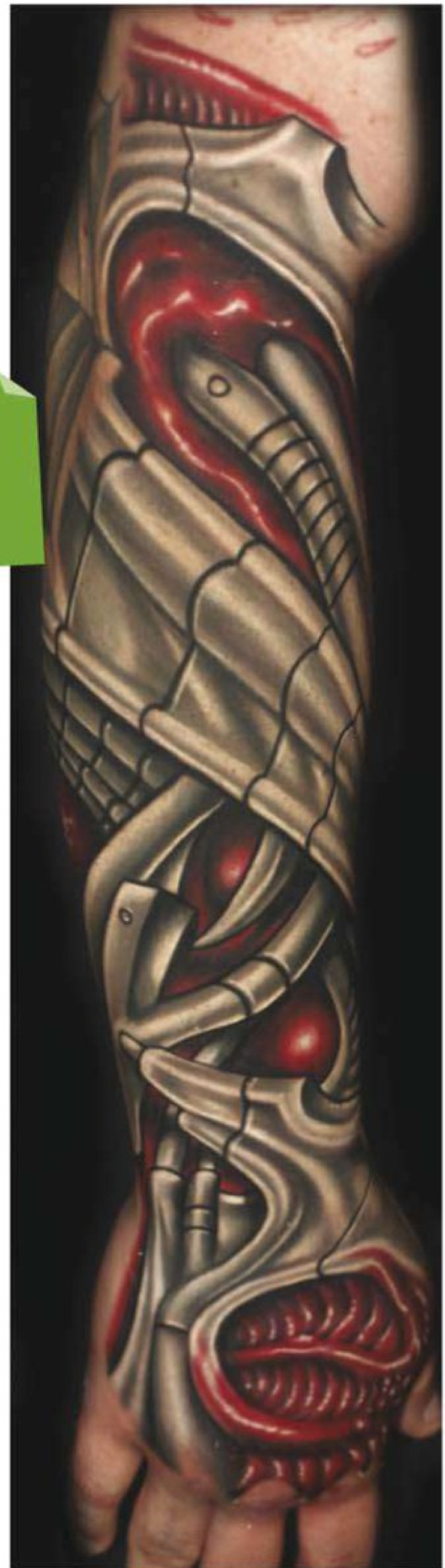
## Masters of Biomechanical

**Roman Abrego**  
[www.facebook.com/artisticement](http://www.facebook.com/artisticement)

**Guy Aitchison**  
[www.hyperspacestudios.com](http://www.hyperspacestudios.com)

**Ron Earhart**  
[www.ronearhart.blogspot.com](http://www.ronearhart.blogspot.com)

**Nick Baxter**  
[www.nickbaxter.com](http://www.nickbaxter.com)



Roman Abrego





Roman Abrego



Rock n Roll Tattoo





Roman Abrego



Simon Smith, Paradise Tattoo, High Wycombe

Tattoo mechanika by Michael Kozlenko Kipod Studio





Ray Hunt, Diablo Tattoo



Simon Smith, Paradise Tattoo, High Wycombe



Simon Smith, Paradise Tattoo, High Wycombe



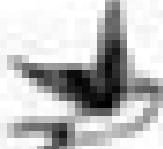
Simon Smith, Paradise Tattoo, High Wycombe



# Black and Grey

BLACK AND GREY IS WHAT IT IS - THEY ARE BASICALLY MONOCHROME IMAGES RENDERED USING BLACK INK DILUTED WITH DISTILLED WATER CREATING A 'WASH' FOR LIGHTER SHADES...

**S**ome artists like to mix white ink with the black to achieve a similar effect, but this is not the traditional method. To give it some background, black and grey work is thought to have originated from within the prison system where there was no access to coloured ink but people like Jack Rudy and Charlie Cartwright soon brought it out into the mainstream - and also introduced the single-needle machine to the world to produce realistic shading, something that works particularly well with portraits. This plays to the strengths of the italian-termed technique of *chiaroscuro*, whereby contrasts between light and dark establish volume and give tattoos a three-dimensional appearance.

The key to a great black and grey tattoo is in the gradations between the tones - a great tattooist makes this look easy to the point that when done properly, it's hardly even noticeable. Across the following pages, you'll find many different examples of what can be achieved... 

## Masters of Black & Grey

Bob Tyrell - Night Gallery  
[www.bobtyrell.com](http://www.bobtyrell.com)

Jose Lopes - Lowrider Tattoo  
[www.lowridertattoostudios.com](http://www.lowridertattoostudios.com)

Zsolt Sarkozy - Dark Arts  
[www.darkart.hu](http://www.darkart.hu)



Merry Tattoo





L'aiguille Tattouage



Mystery Tattoo Club



Lea Nahon, La boucherie Moderne



Sarkozi Zsoit Dark Art Tattoo, Hungary





Krise



Al Williams, Shaded Lady, Falmouth



James Robinson, Nine Boyces St, Brighton



Andy Bowler, Monki Do





Gareth Unwin, Trucolour, NYC



Gareth Unwin, Trucolour, NYC



Victor Policheri



Invictus Tattoo



Joao Bosco, The Family Business



# Blackwork

SOME PEOPLE LIKE NOTHING ELSE AND SOME PEOPLE WON'T LET IT NEAR THEM! WHATEVER YOUR OPINION ON BLACKWORK, IT IS ONE OF THE MOST DIVERSE CATEGORIES OF ANY ARTFORM:

**W**ith blackwork, some would say it's not what you put in but what you leave out. Indeed, the secret to blackwork is in being aware of the space around it that won't have any colour at all in order to offset it properly (otherwise known as negative space). The big divides come into play where some do not think huge swathes of black to be "art" but those people will find no quarter on these pages.

"Working with minimalistic and purified line work doesn't leave a single margin for error - be it the clean, straight lines or the dirty, ephemeral sketchy lines, both are as technically demanding as each other." That's a quote from Yann Black (Glamort) one of the finest proponents of the art today.

Also within this genre is the fine work of those who

practice 'dotwork' - some incredible effects are possible using this method and it's one of the most visually stimulating uses of black ink.

Most traditional tribal work also comes under this heading and there are some fine examples out in the world where a single black colour has said more than the rest of the colour palette could ever say. ✈

## Masters of Blackwork

**Yann Black**  
www.yourmeatismine.com

**Xoil**  
www.needles-side.com

**Xed LeHead**  
www.xedtattoo.com

**Noon**  
boucherie-traditionnelle.com

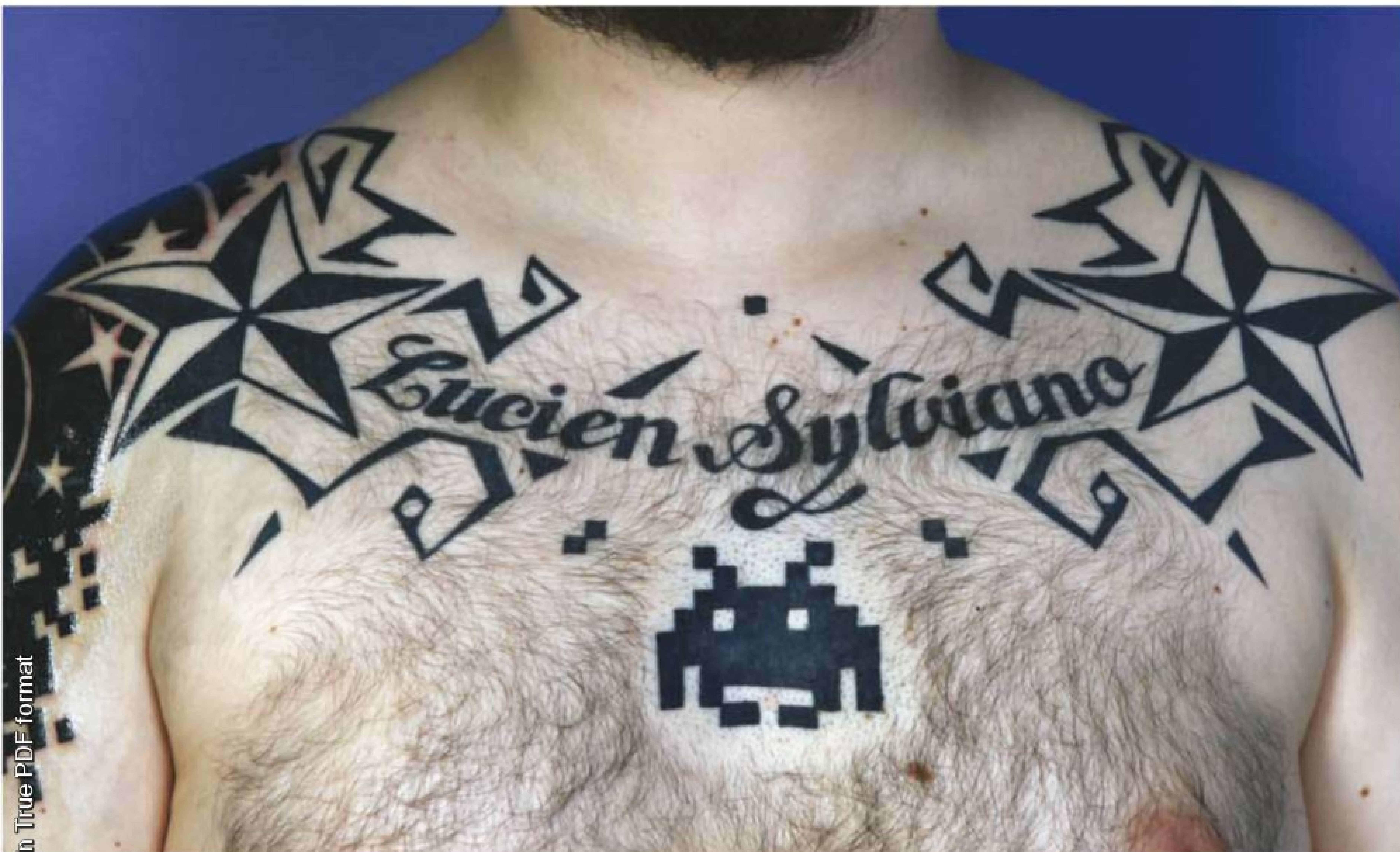


Alexei Zamotevski, Kipod Tattoo

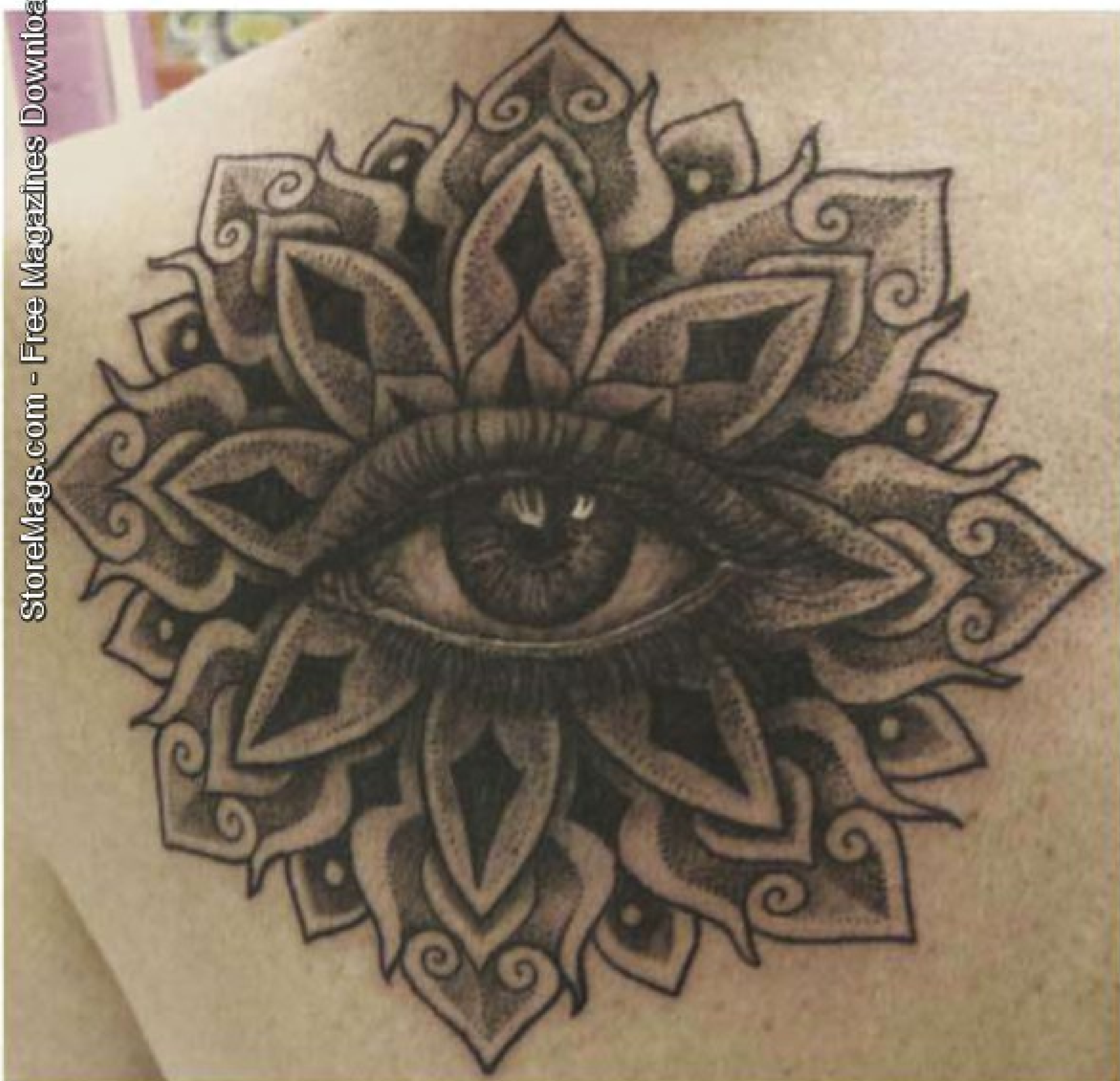


Xoil





Spike's Hell



Amanda Ruby, Squidink



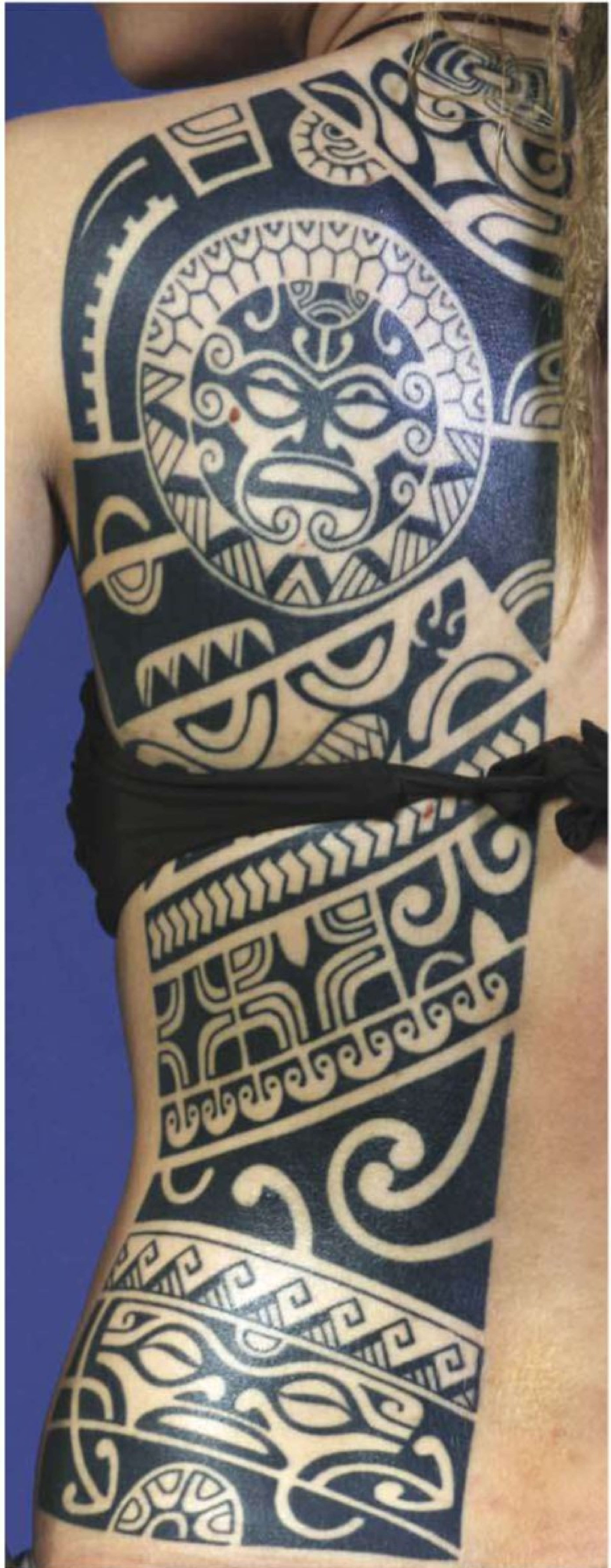
Xoil

Release: StoreMags & FantaMag





Asa Aleksandar, Orca Sun, Croatia



Rosco Rebel Tattoo



Levi, Ohmygod, London

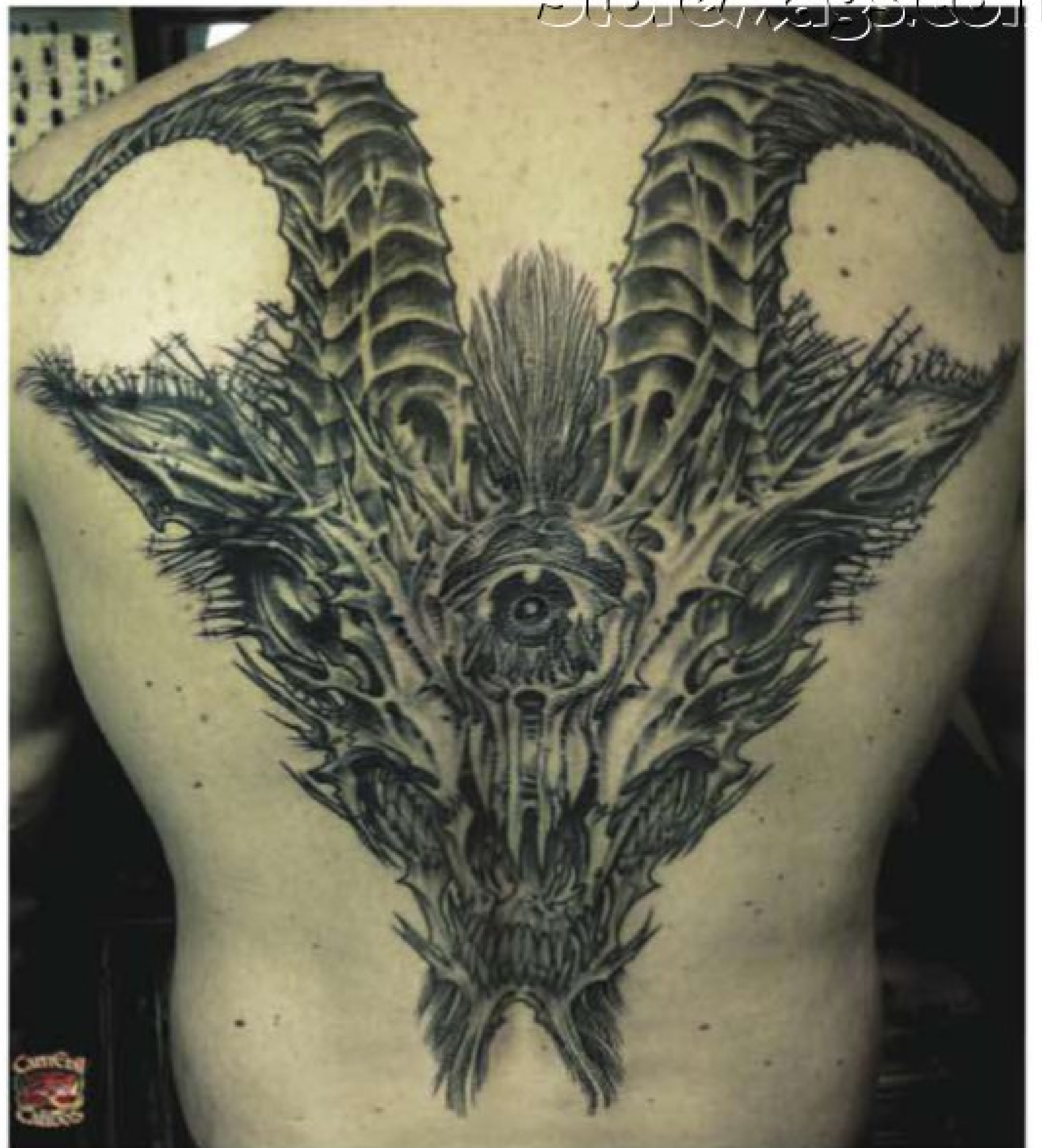


Maohi Tattoo, Canaris Island





Spike's Hell



D-GRRR, Carnevil Tattoo



Asa Aleksandar, Orca Sun, Croatia



Lucy Lou, Magnum Opus Tattoo



Henrik Gallon, Porky Royale Tattoo



# Japanese

TRADITIONALLY, JAPANESE TATTOOS DEPICTED HEROES AND THEIR STORIES - ONE 'SINGLE' TATTOO WAS CAPABLE OF TELLING A WHOLE TALE IN ITS DEVELOPMENT. AS YOU WOULD EXPECT, THESE 'SINGLE' TATTOOS ARE NOT SMALL:

**B**etter known as Irezumi - a Japanese word that defines the process of ink being inserted under the skin - the history behind it is epic and strong. It is thought to extend back to around 10,000 BC. Most 'recently', the Yayoi period (300BC - 300AD) saw tattoo designs consisting mostly of spiritual connotations and status symbols before moving, as these things tend to, into the slightly negative Kofun period in which tattoos began to be marked onto criminals as a punishment - an act that was later mirrored in ancient Rome.

For many years, and still to this day, the Japanese style is mainly associated with the Yakuza, but it has also seeped out of Japan and into the West where there are many fine artists capable of replicating the style. However, for the true Irezumi tattoo, one must travel to the land of the rising sun and find a master - something many people choose to do as the story, which becomes part of the tattoo.

The technique synonymous with Irezumi is ink being inserted via needles mounted on a stick. It is a time-consuming process but one that yields fantastic results.

Sitting high in the upper echelons is Horiyoshi III - for those seriously interested in Japanese styles, it is worth following this fascinating master's story from its inception but those thinking of seeking him out will be out of luck as he is currently finishing work on existing clients and no longer accepts new clients.

As with all aspects of tattooing, the Japanese style continues to develop into ever more fascinating places.

## Them's The Rules...

We enter a rather tricky element of Japanese tattoo here; horimono is governed by a strict set of rules that dictate what elements may be paired with others and those wishing to create an authentic Japanese piece of art will no doubt want to observe these rules rigorously. Problems don't arise from combining certain creatures or characters incorrectly, but when they are out of season and at odds with the surrounding fauna, the tattoo doesn't conform to Japanese sensibilities. For example, cherry blossoms and peonies are both spring/summer flowers, whilst chrysanthemums and maple leaves are representative of the autumn and winter seasons, so flowers from the wrong seasons can appear 'wrong' when lumped together.



Dark Art Tattoo



Matteo Cascetti





Mike Thompson-Hill from Tantrix Body Art



Fortag Tattoo



Matt Hunt, Modern Body Art

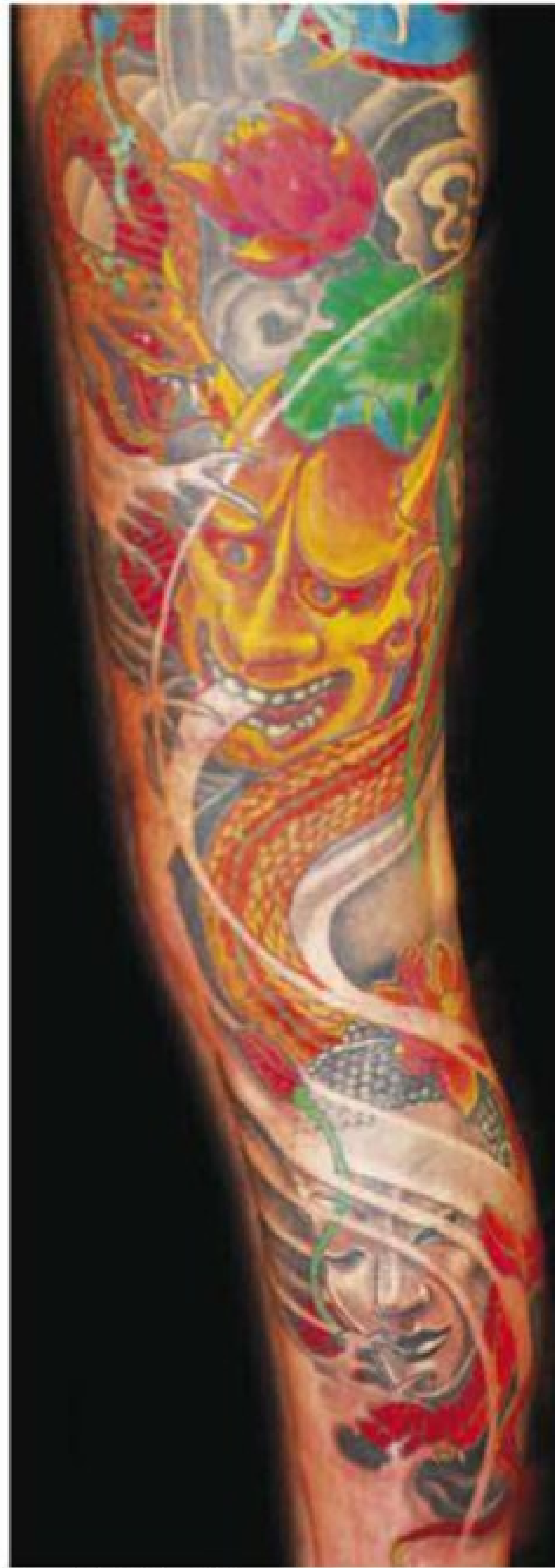
Release: StoreMags & FantaMag



# Japanese



Matt Hunt, Modern Body Art



Hamdi, Tattoo Village



3rd Eye Tattoo



King Carlos Tattoo, Stockholm



Luca Ortis





King Carlos Tattoo, Stockholm



Sabado



Bit Ethno Tattoo



Hamdi, Tattoo Village



# School

UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF NEW SCHOOL COMES ALL MANNER OF STYLES AS THE TERM TENDS TO BE USED TO DESCRIBE ALL PROGRESSIONS IN TATTOOING WHICH ARE NOT TAKEN CARE OF BY ANY OF THE OTHER CATEGORIES.

**A**s a rule, new school designs are very bold and "in your face" - seemingly, within these terms, nothing is impossible! Using big, thick lines (powerlines) and bright colours to bring about the desired result, they often have a more graphic and 'cartoonish' effect than other styles, but that's not the whole story.

New school developed predominantly during the late 80s and early 90s and as the artwork became more public and information was shared, artists gathered around the same pot as they shared influences from tribal, Americana, Japanese... you name it - it was brought on board.

Technical expertise aside, any rules have long since been thrown out of the window. Artists such as Adrian Lee at Analog Tattoo in San Jose is possibly the finest proponent of this as he

takes the art and sculpts it to match the body it will live on. What happens next is anybody's guess, but we're looking forward to it all the same.

It can be a little hard to pin down sometimes but if you ever see what appears to be a traditional design that looks like it has spent a weekend in the desert with Jim Morrison - that's new school for you. 

## Masters of New School

D-GRRR - Carnevil Tattoo  
[www.d-grrr.com/carnevil/](http://www.d-grrr.com/carnevil/)

King Carlos Tattoo  
[www.kingcarlostatattoo.com](http://www.kingcarlostatattoo.com)

Victor Policheri  
[www.viptattoo.com](http://www.viptattoo.com)

Mr Greg - Rock n Roll Tattoo  
[www.myspace.com/tattooedinburgh](http://www.myspace.com/tattooedinburgh)



Rafael Plaisant, Vienna Electric, Rio de Janeiro

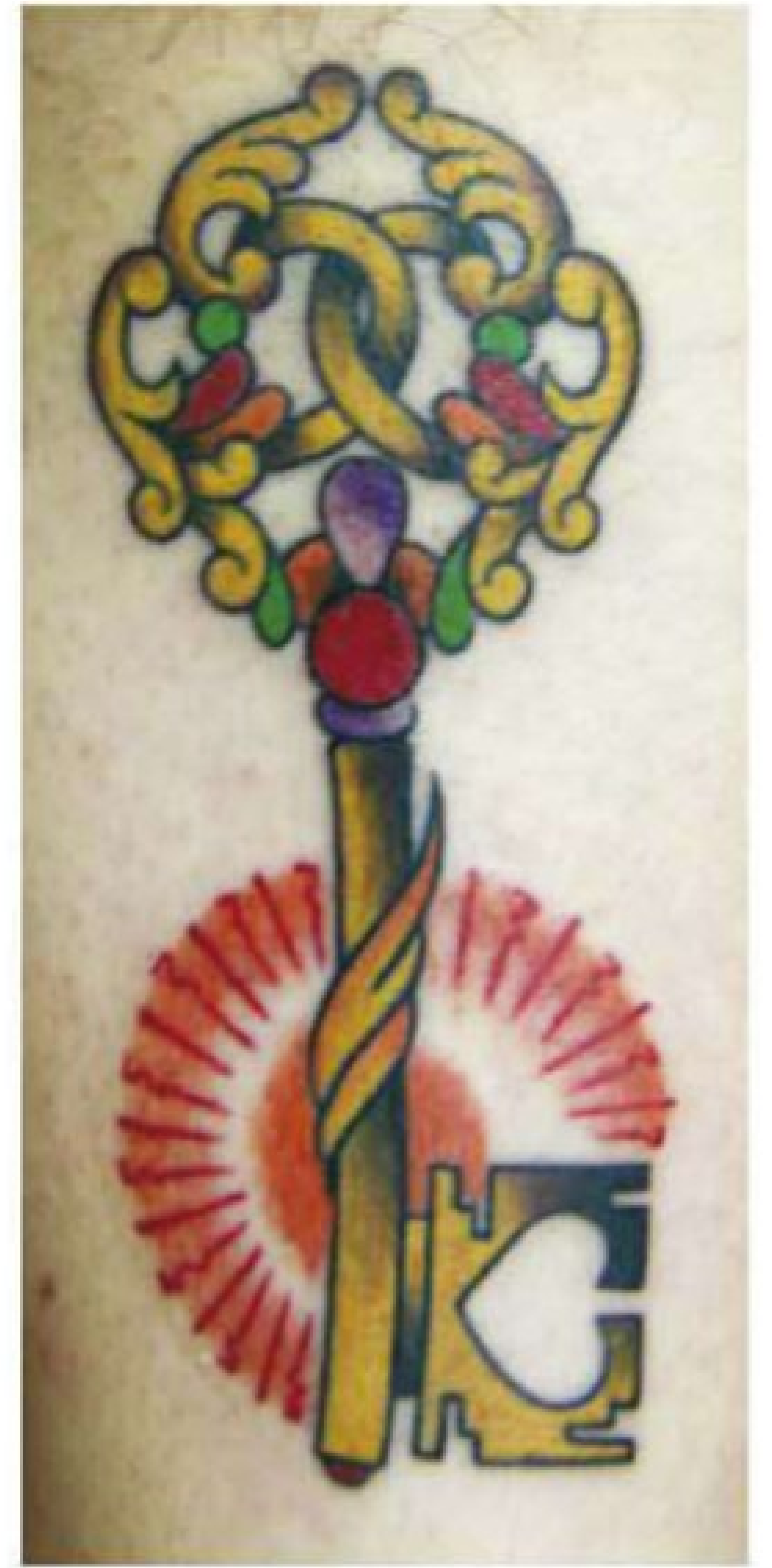


Sasa Aleksandar, Orca Sun Tattoo Studio, Croatia





Mr.Greg-Rock'n'roll Tattoo Edinburgh



Alexei Zamotevski, Kipod Tattoo



Nick Baldwin, Infinite Ink, Coventry

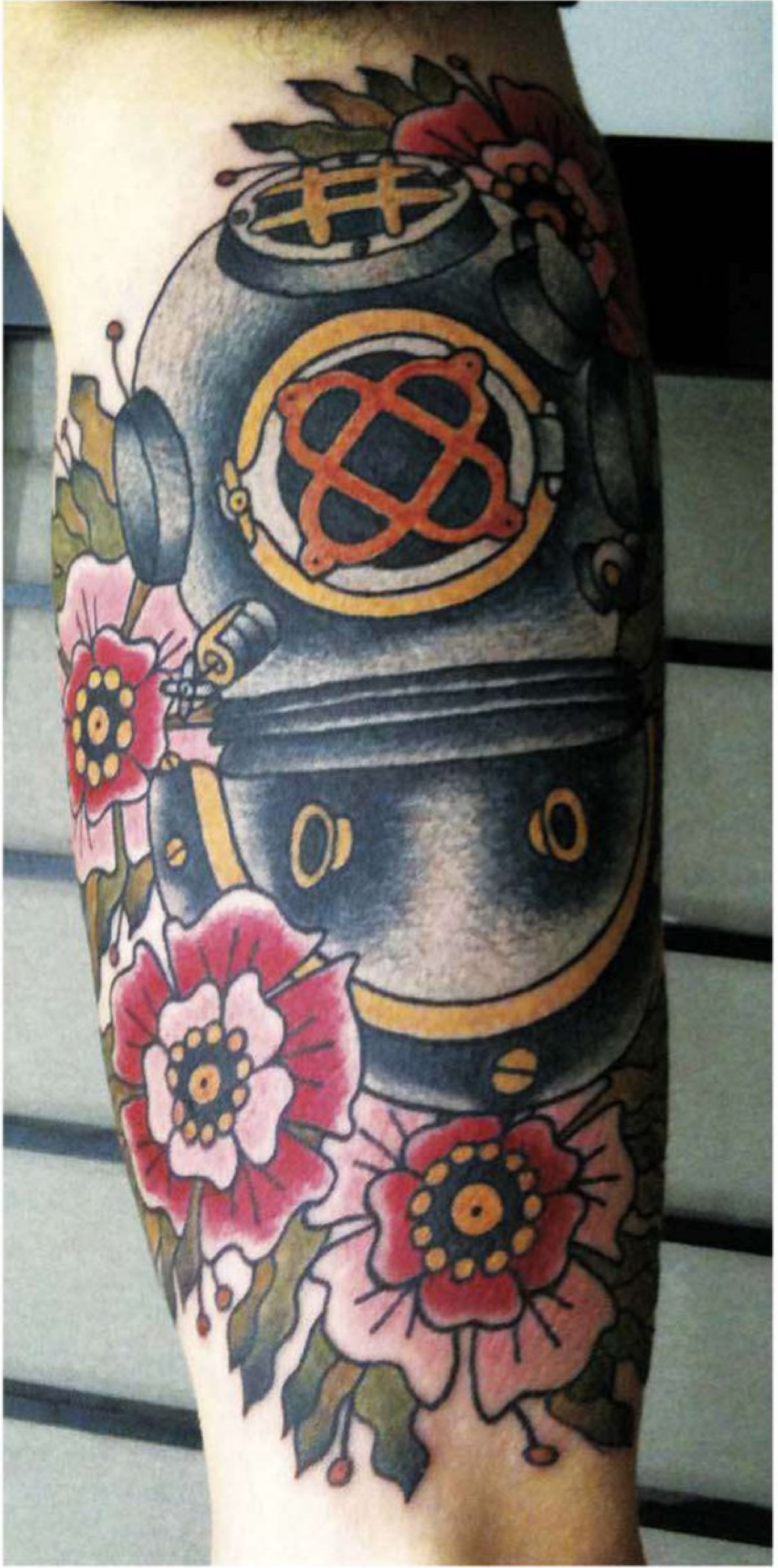


Jake X





Rich Smith Five Magics



Rafael Plaisant, Vienna Electric, Rio De Janeiro



Hexa, Precious Tattoo

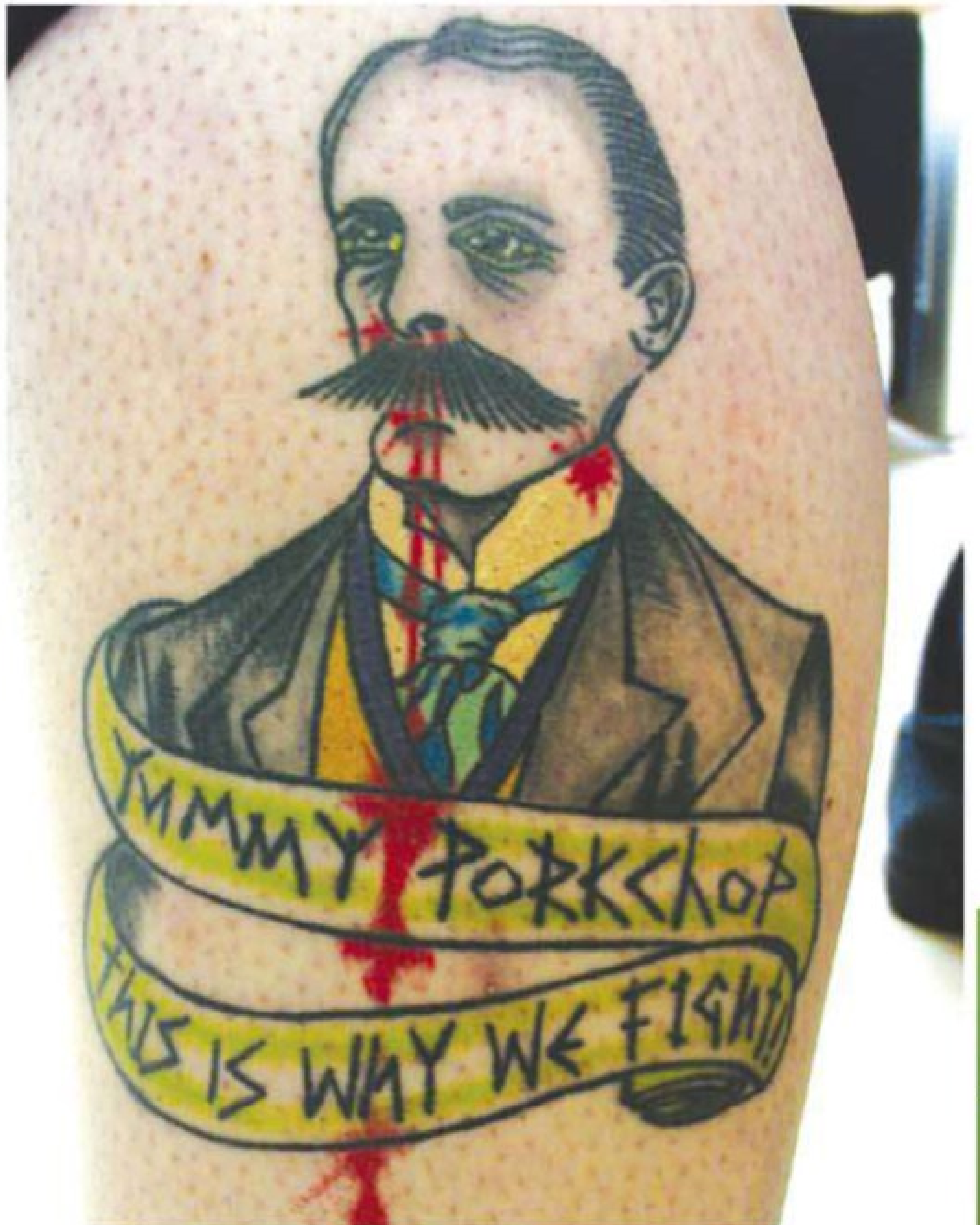




Rachel McCarthy



James Robinson, Nine Boyces St, Brighton



Sarkozi Zsoit Dark Art Tattoo, Hungary



# Realism

A REASONABLY NEW TERM IN THE BIG SCHEME OF THINGS, REALISM HAS BECOME IMMENSELY POPULAR OVER RECENT YEARS AS MORE AND MORE COLLECTORS SEEK OUT THE ULTIMATE IN NEAR PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION...

The aim of the game here is to produce the most lifelike representation of the subject as is humanly possible. From faces, to flowers and entire beasts, reference material is the key to getting the best work done. While some like to work from photographs, there are others who prefer to work from life - which can be quite stunning to watch for those that can't even draw with a pencil! It's a style that has been encouraged to grow and developed by those who have a good grounding in fine art and are able to approach the subject with a superior knowledge of colour theory and its application.

A well versed artist in colour theory has an unlimited box of tricks at their disposal here as what the eye sees isn't always what's there. Also into this domain comes a great command of the old

photography favourite 'depth of field' which uses items in the background to make the items in the foreground more prominent.

The phrase is obviously closely associated with the term photorealism which means "looks as real as a photograph".

If there's one field in which we have yet to even scratch the surface, realism is surely it! ✈

## Masters of Realism

Mike DeVries - MD Studios  
[www.mdtattoos.com](http://www.mdtattoos.com)

Cecil Porter  
[www.cecilportertattoos.com](http://www.cecilportertattoos.com)

Jo Harrison - Modern Body Art  
[www.modernbodyart.co.uk](http://www.modernbodyart.co.uk)

Hexa - Precious Tattoo  
[www.hexa666.com](http://www.hexa666.com)

Andy Engel - Andy's Tattoo  
[www.andys-tattoo.com](http://www.andys-tattoo.com)

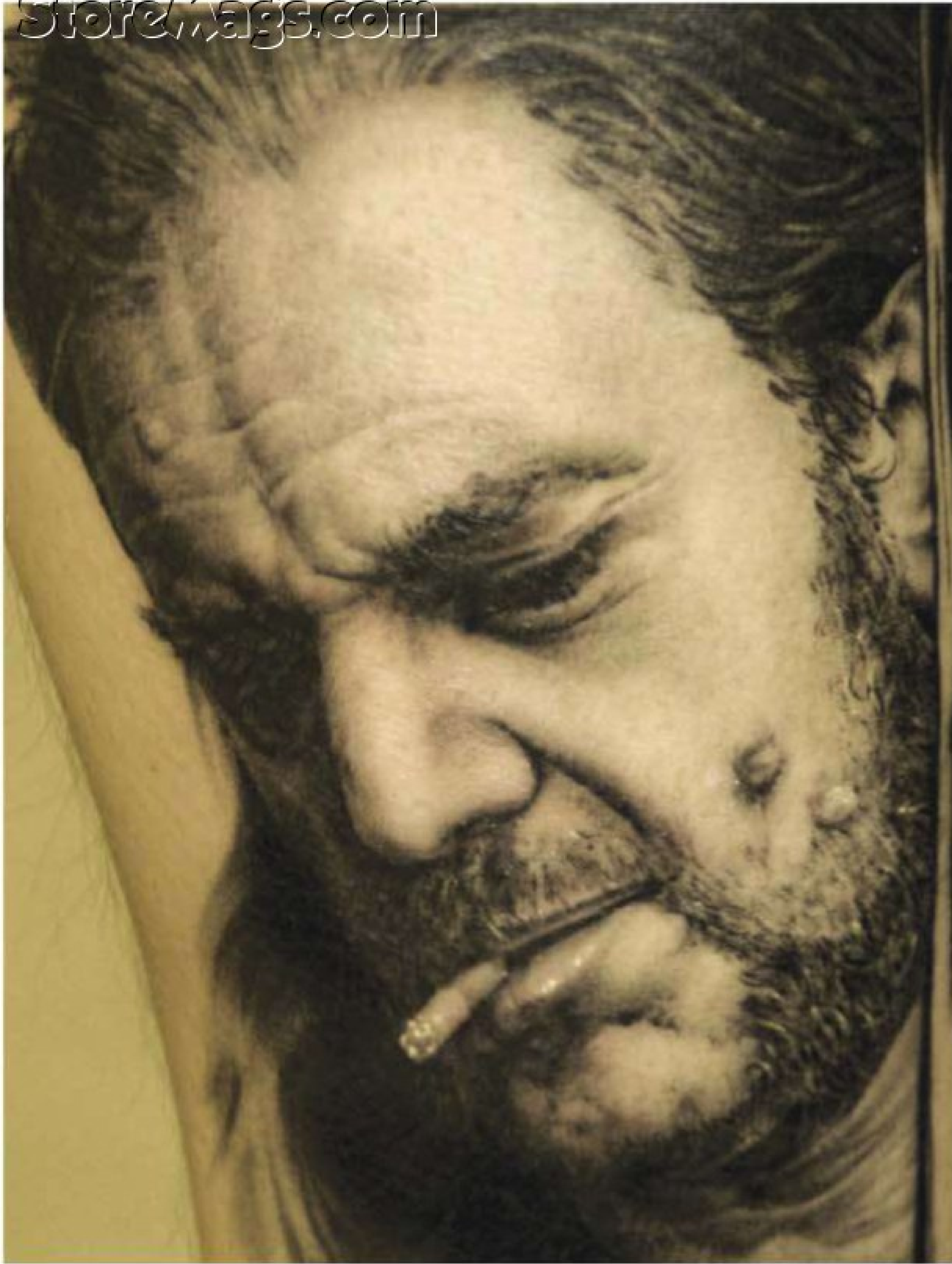


Locomotiv Tattoo



Hexa, Precious Tattoo





Andy Engel, Andys Tattoo, Kitzingen



Khan, Kids Love Ink



Gareth Unwin, Trucolour, NYC



Anabi



Ettore Bechis, Cantu, Italy





Matt Hunt, Modern Body Art



Milano City Ink



Ettore Bechis



Sarkozi Zsoit Dark Art Tattoo, Hungary



Piero La Cour des Miracles





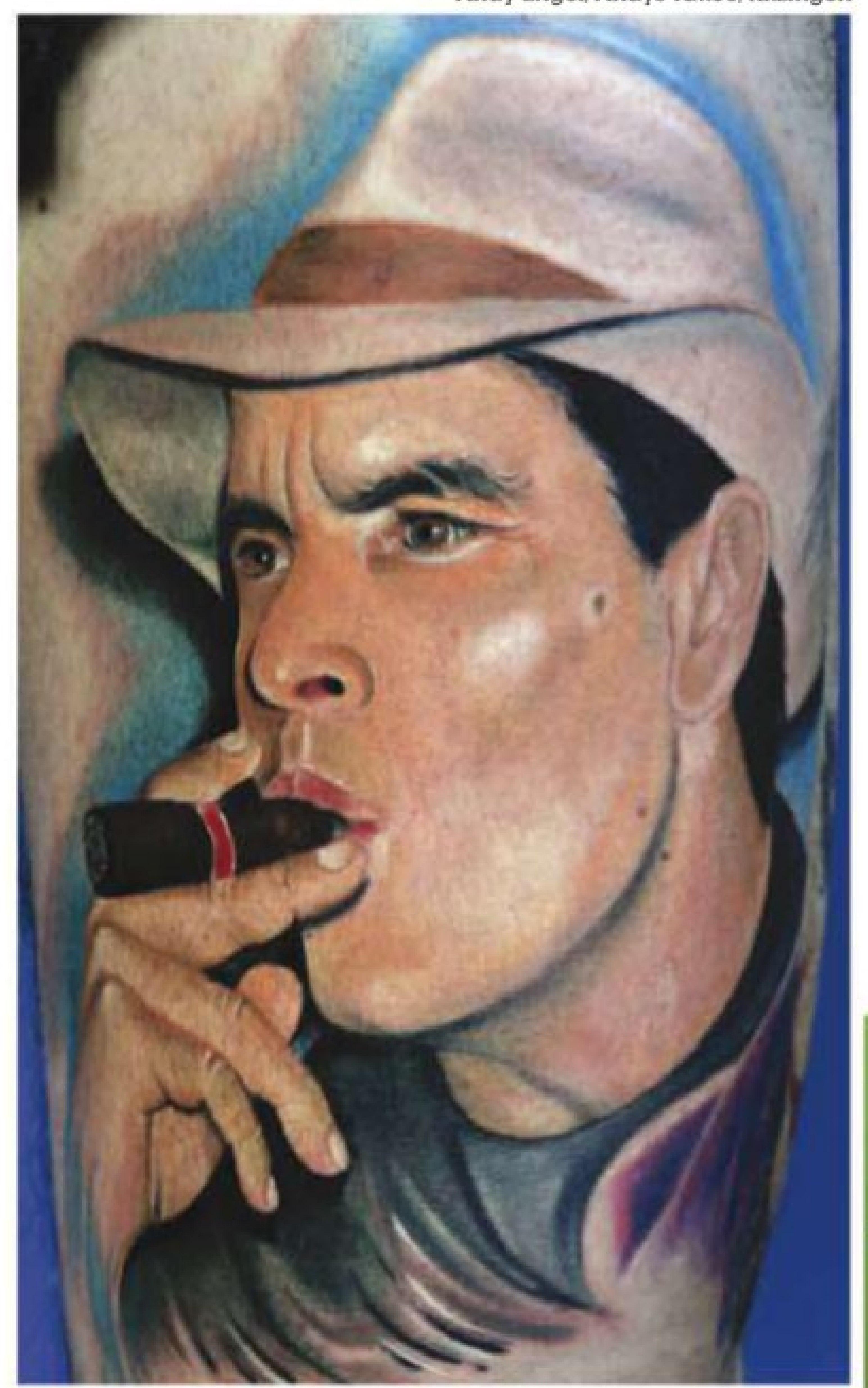
Gareth Unwin, Trucolour, NYC



Andy Engel, Andys Tattoo, Kitzingen



James Robinson, Nine Boyces St, Brighton



XTattoo



# Traditional

ALSO KNOWN AS OLD SCHOOL OR AMERICANA, TRADITIONAL TATTOOING IS EXACTLY WHAT IT SAYS IT IS. AS IT CALLS ON THE TRIED AND TESTED METHOD OF "LOOKING LIKE A TATTOO", IN WHICH IMAGES ABOUND THAT HARK BACK TO A LIFE AT SEA.

The history of the traditional tattoo can be read anywhere and is the style of art that most would imagine with the skin when the word tattoo is mentioned. It drifts into the pop culture sensibilities of entire nations during and after the two big world wars as men came home adorned with anchors, eagles, ships, love-hearts and swallows.

The name Sailor Jerry pops up a lot when talking traditional. The man almost single-handedly established the standard of tattooing back in the day, so that's hardly surprising, but he is far from the only one to do this - just the most famous.

Old school tattooing is made up of simple designs that are created using a limited colour palette (due to the fact that there weren't many colours available during the early years) and relies on a steady hand to get it right. It is in this simplicity that the secret lies as it leaves absolutely no margin of error.

The newer (or neo-) traditional approach is to take the ethics of traditional and push them further by incorporating the full range of colour that is available on the market today whilst further embellishments can be made by the liberal use of black shading to make the images "pop-out".



Knuckle



Lucy Lou, Magnum Opus Tattoo



Davide, Plastic Surgery Tattoo





Tyler Alderson Tantrix Body Art Saskatoon Canada



Memento Tattoo



Robert Fraser, On The Road, Scotland



Hexa, Precious Tattoo



Nick Baldwin, Infinite Ink



Traditional



Tracy Demetriou, Haunted Tattoo, London



Tracy Demetriou, Haunted Tattoo



Samez, Cherry Tattoo, Italy



Mil Martinez, Diamond Jacks





Samez, Cherry Tattoo, Italy



Robert Fraser, On The Road, Scotland



Jakub Seltgast Esoteric Gentlemans Club Berlin



Pedro Soos



Lee Masters, Penkrigde Tattoo Studio, Staffs



# Getting Tattooed

YOU'VE MADE THE DECISION THAT YOU WANT TO GET A TATTOO AND NO ONE IS GOING TO STOP YOU GETTING IN THE BIG CHAIR AND GOING UNDER THE NEEDLE, SO WHAT NEXT? THERE ARE A HUNDRED AND ONE LITTLE QUESTIONS SITTING IN THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD - DOES IT HURT, HOW MUCH SHOULD I EXPECT TO PAY, WHERE SHOULD I HAVE THE TATTOO DONE? THE LIST GOES ON. LET'S HAVE A CLOSER LOOK AT SOME OF THOSE QUESTIONS AND SEE HOW THE FINAL STAGES ALL COME TOGETHER.

## WHAT IS A TATTOO?

**B**esides an ace piece of art work, what actually is a tattoo? To get that ink under your skin, a tattooist will use a tattoo machine, loaded with a tube and, depending on what part of the tattoo he/she is working on, a certain grouping of needles to push the ink into your skin. The needles are what gets the ink about a millimetre under the top layer of your skin, in an area called the dermis.

This process, of drawing the ink up the tube and then pushing it out through the needles, is then repeated as many times as it takes, to create the lines, colour and





shading that will result in your killer tattoo.

Though, this is in no way a detailed explanation or the only method used (many tattooists hand prick their tattoos) it is, in the most simplest of terms, the procedure that is followed to get the ink into your skin. But don't think that because it sounds easy, that it is an easy thing to do! While it might be easy to tattoo, it is very hard to tattoo well. There are many people walking the streets with terrible tattoos that prove just that point and there are many factors to take into account when thinking of getting a tattoo - whether it is your first tattoo or your tenth.

## LINES, SHADING AND SATURATION

The holy trinity of creating an outstanding looking tattoo because a tattooist who masters these three, will be creating tattoos that pop right out of the skin and smack you across the face.

A powerful line will be solid, straight, have the correct thickness and show no signs of going off course. Just look at the traditional work of people like Chad Koeplinger to see what creating a perfect line can do for a tattoo. Bare in mind, many tattooists are creating 'uneven' or 'shaky' lines for effect these days but these are easily identifiable as their work is still world class. 'Blown' lines are when a tattooist has pushed the needles too deep into the skin and the ink spreads away from the intended line. This sure sign of poor quality

workmanship will make a tattoo look like you have drawn it on with marker pen and then sat in the rain for a few hours!

Shading has come a long way since the early days of tattooing, especially within the style of realism. Good shading will have smooth blends and gradient shifts across the tattoo. Even when a tattooist uses a 'wash' to create an effect in their tattoo, you will instantly see the difference between the effect and a poorly shaded piece.

Like shading, poor saturation can make a tattoo look patchy and uneven - whether it is a colour tattoo or a black and grey one.

Getting the right amount of ink into the skin is crucial in getting a nice even look to a tattoo. 'Bleeding', where one colour unintentionally spills over into another, is an indication of poor shading and saturation techniques.

## DESIGN

Quite often, the stuff of nightmares for tattooists. There are many a poor tattooist left at a loss for words when a customer walks in with a picture, with so much detail it would need to be a back piece, only to be told they want it on a tiny section on their upper arm! Where their Mum won't spot it. Oh 🐦

*A powerful line will be solid, straight, have the correct thickness and show no signs of going off course.*



Alex de Pose Tattoo Studio, Italy

## GET IT OFF ME!

Tattoos last and sometimes a tattoo can become an embarrassment in later life. Because tattoos lie in the deep layer of skin known as the dermis, they are very difficult to remove. Early forms of tattoo removal included the injection or application of wine, lime, garlic or pigeon excrement.

Unsurprisingly, none of these methods was effective.

Later removal techniques include dermabrasion, when the skin is effectively 'sanded down', and excision, in which the tattoo is surgically removed. Both methods result in scarring.



## PRINCE JOELY

The first tattooed man to be shown publicly in England was a Pacific islander known as Prince Joely.

Prince Joely, also known as Giolo, was brought to England in 1691 by William Dampier, a famous buccaneer and author of a *Voyage Around the World*, an account of his travels with privateers and pirates. Dampier explained to those who came to view Prince Joely that his tattoos were done in the same manner as the crosses and arms of visitors to Jerusalem, but using the sap of a certain tree instead of gunpowder.

Sadly, Prince Joely never returned home to the Pacific. He died in England of smallpox.

and another big no-no; walking into a studio with a picture of another artist's work and saying, 'I would like this please!' If you like that artist's work, go to them!

Design is so important in creating a good tattoo and the best course of action is to sit with your chosen tattooist and come up with something together. You might really want a Prince Charles portrait on your neck but a tattooist will be able to tell you whether it is going to work or not. And give them their due credit, no matter how much you love your idea, only a good tattooist is going to know whether it really will work.

Along with design, placement of a tattoo is very important. Look out for someone with a portrait on their upper arm that when they put a t-shirt on, cuts the top of the portrait off and you'll understand. Or when a tattoo has been placed in an area that when the wearer moves in a certain way, their precious dog loses a leg or two!

Your body is a three dimensional object, with

muscles, moving parts and bits that stick out and sink in. A good tattooist will know where all these places are and how best to place a tattoo to use your body to its full effect. Have a look at a tattooist who specialises in biomechanical and your jaw will drop at how a great tattooist, who knows about design and placement, will make the difference between an average tattoo and an awesome tattoo.

*Design is so important in creating a good tattoo and the best course of action is to sit with your chosen tattooist and come up with something together.*



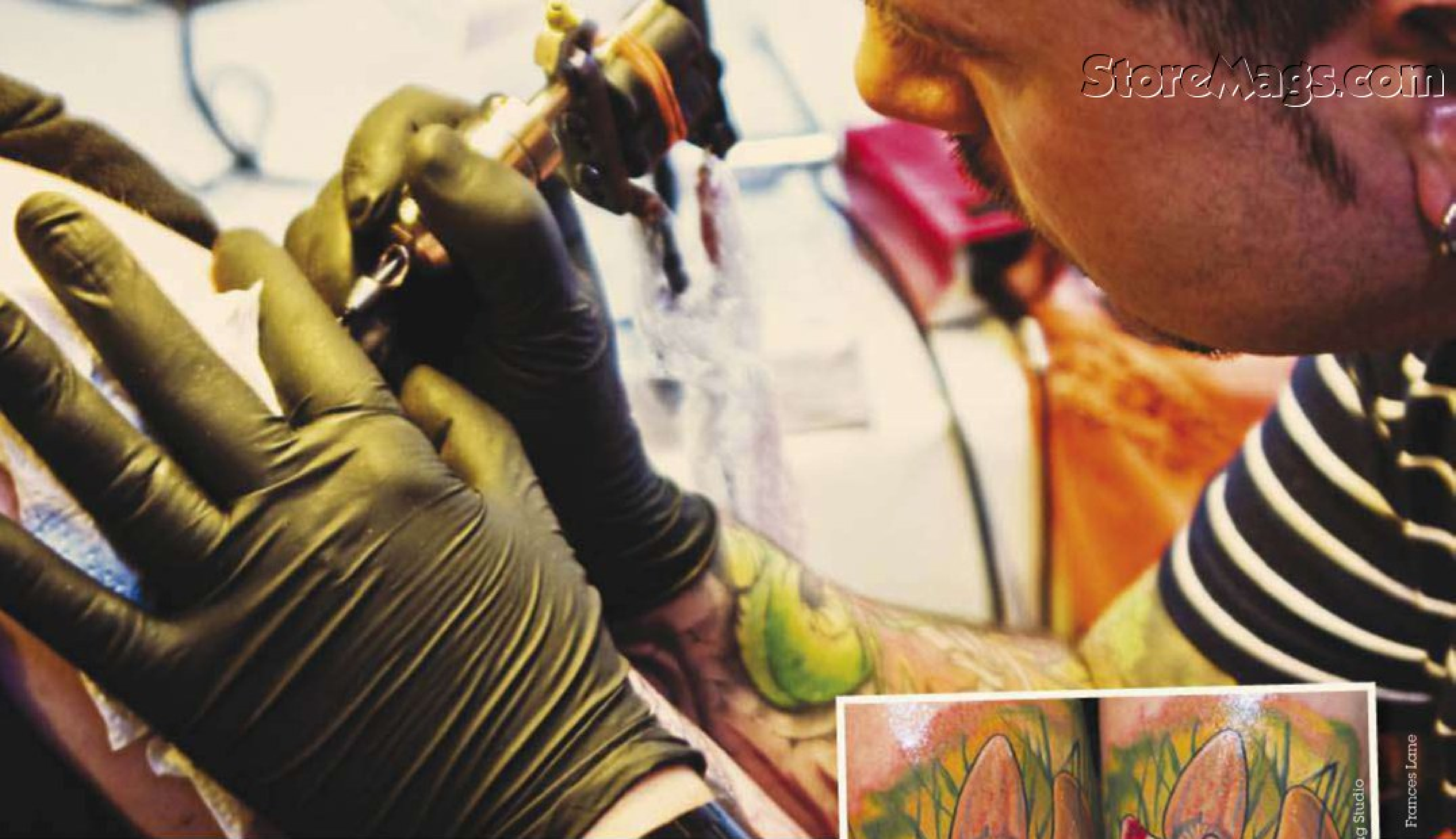
## NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS

Once you're tattooed, it's on you until you shuffle off this mortal coil. So be aware, from the off, what your end game is. Whether you're just after a couple of small pieces or want an entire bodysuit, have a plan in place from the beginning. If you don't, you'll be spending more money on cover-ups and laser removal treatment - which is notoriously painful.

As much as that 'I need a tattoo now' feeling will pop up every now and then, and boy does it, think before you rush into the nearest studio and get inked. Another area where people can slip up is the 'phase' tattoo. You might be a metal head now and absolutely love KISS but will you still be happy in twenty years time, with Gene Simmons' tongue down your arm when your music taste

[Store/Kiss.com](http://Store/Kiss.com)





Frances Lane

has moved to the softer stuff? (Have you lost your mind man! Softer? Ed.)

And this is why it is so important to choose the right artist because even though Scratcher Jim is free today and cheap, you will have that tattoo for the rest of your life. So choose the right artist for the job and you will be walking proud for years to come.

## PRICE

The cost of tattoos can vary from city to city and even from street to street but a general rule of thumb is - the less you pay, the poorer quality tattoo you are going to get! Tattoos are not cheap. Most studios charge between £60-£100 an hour, with the big guns in the industry charging more for their time. When you get a tattoo, you

are paying for an artist's experience and skill. You are paying for their years spent behind a tattoo machine, their eye for detail and design and their ability to produce the perfect tattoo for you that is going to last a lifetime looking good.

If it is flash work you're after, studios usually price according to size and detail, which are normally displayed on the flash racks.

## CHOOSING YOUR TATTOOIST

Once you have done all your research and have come up with the design idea you want, the next step is to choose the artist you think will be best suited for the job. The first stage is easy enough, narrowing down your list to the tattooists who excel in the style you are interested in.



Marek Skalny - Inkdependent Tattoo&amp;Piercing Studio

*There is no use going to an artist that specialises in Japanese pieces and asking them to do a traditional design for you.*

There is no use going to an artist that specialises in Japanese pieces and asking them to do a traditional design for you. Sure, many artists can work across a number of styles but most of them will be known for a specific style they excel in. Thankfully, a lot of artists



## CLOSE TO THE BONE

The severity of pain experienced when being tattooed depends on the location of the tattoo. The most painful areas are those where the skin is very close to the bone, such as the ankles, elbows and knees. It is less painful to be tattooed on more fleshy areas such as the chest or upper arms. Pain was an important part of tattooing for Polynesian societies.

In Tahiti, the chief's son was watched closely as he was tattooed for signs of pain. In Samoa, it was often said that tattooing was the equivalent for men of the great pain a woman endured when giving birth.



Frances Lane

these days will recommend a fellow artist if they feel the style you are after can be produced somewhere else at a higher quality.

Once you have chosen your artist and you sit down to discuss the design, don't approach it with the idea that it is your way or the highway. No matter how great your design may be, at the end of the day, a tattooist is going to have a better idea of whether it is going to work on you than you are.

And if you really want to make a tattoo artist's day, come up with something that is going to inspire and challenge them. Something that is new and fresh. There is nothing that a tattooist likes more than a design that blows them away. And if you're up for something special, give your artist the opportunity to come up with something for you. There is no better feeling, for a customer or a tattooist, than to go to them with a blank piece of skin and say, 'I love your work, can you design something for me in your particular style'.

## THE TIME HAS COME

So you have ticked all the boxes. You have done all your research. You know what you want and it is time to get something sorted. It is time to contact the studio and make an appointment. The best approach to take now is to call the studio and speak to some one. Nearly all studios these days will have a website or a MySpace and Facebook presence but many of them prefer to be contacted by telephone to arrange bookings. Don't be surprised if you don't get a reply when posting something on their blog or website! The old fashioned means of communicating by phone is still the best. At least this way, you have a chance to ask any questions that may be on your mind!

Usually you will be asked to come in and have a consultation where you can sit and thrash out a design before you get the tattoo - if you do, go prepared. Turning up and saying you would like an angel on your

butt cheek rather than turning up with a few pictures and illustrations for ideas, is not going to go down well.


And don't be disappointed if you are told your artist has a few months or even a year waiting list. There is a reason for this - their tattoos are killer. Yeah you can go to Billy No Mates down the road because he'll tattoo you tomorrow but it isn't going to be anywhere as good as a top class artist's work.

## HOW LONG?

The biggest mistake most customers make when going for their first tattoo is thinking that no matter how big or intricate a tattoo is - it only takes 40 minutes from start to finish. Because, of course, that is how long an episode of Miami Ink is...and they always do it in one episode.

Those programmes are edited to show only highlights! A tattoo can take as long as this and as short as that. There are so many factors to take into consideration it is impossible to tell until an artist sees the final design and even then it could take longer or even shorter to get it done.

## WHERE SHOULD I HAVE IT?

Placement is a huge factor that good tattoo artist takes into consideration when tattooing. Where they place it can make or break your tattoo. This is something that you must discuss with the tattooist when you are in the design stage. 





*If you really want to make a tattoo artist's day, come up with something that is going to inspire and challenge them. Something that is new and fresh.*





*Don't go for knuckle or neck tattoos as your first tattoo or if you are still in college or you aren't in the industry yourself because you will regret it at some point.*

But, and this is very important, as much as you love tattoos and people shouldn't be judged because of how they like to decorate their bodies - you will be! If you walk into a bank asking for a loan or you go to apply

for a job and you have neck or hand tattoos, you will be treated differently!

There is no getting away from the fact that even though tattooing has become hugely popular in the last five or so years, it still has negative connotations for many, many people. The majority of customer facing companies will only hire you if you can cover your tattoos with long sleeves or if they are not visible.

So don't go for knuckle or

neck tattoos as your first tattoo or if you are still in college or you aren't in the industry yourself because you will regret it at some point.

## FEED ME SEYMOUR

So you have got your first tattoo and you're hooked. It looks great, makes you feel on top of the world and you had a blast while you were in the studio. You want more of the same but what next? Do you stick with your artist or go to another for something different, do you get some old school flash or do you really step out and get something done at the convention?

## FLASH & WALK-IN STUDIOS

In days gone by, flash was generally the only thing available in tattoo studios. You would walk into a shop, flick through the flash sheets (or racks that a lot of studios have these days), pick a piece that jumped out at you and get some ink. The tattoo artist would not design a tattoo specifically for you; it was a case of 'what you see is what you get'.

Things have changed drastically over the last ten or so years and now a customer is no longer limited to what they can find on a flash sheet. Many studios offer custom work and many more will only do custom work. This is not to say that there is no longer a place for flash in the modern tattoo studio. Customers still like to get flash done, especially work of the old tattoo greats like Sailor



Jerry and Ed Hardy.

When flash was the way things worked, the majority of studios were walk-in studios. That is, you turned up on the day, picked your design and got a tattoo. There were no waiting lists or set appointments. Now that studios do custom work and many artists are becoming hugely popular, some studios are appointment only and 'private rooms'. All this means is, you can't walk-in off the street and have a browse around the studio. You only go in if you are getting tattooed or you want to set up time for a tattoo.

Other studios opt for a mix of both. Some of the artists will be working custom designs whilst others will be offering a walk-in or quick design service. It is important to remember that even though studios are moving away from flash towards custom work, studios that do offer flash or are willing to tattoo you on the day, are no less better than custom shops who work by appointment only!

## TATTOO CONVENTIONS

There is no better place to see your favourite artist in action than at a tattoo convention, especially if the artist doesn't normally work in the country you live in. A good convention will pull in artists from all over the world, giving punters a chance to get that elusive tattoo or just to see them work their magic. But be warned, a top flight international tattooist is going to get booked up

within seconds of their name being released as appearing at a convention - so be quick to make that appointment.

Though most artists will have ensured they are booked up for the convention they are appearing at, if you are lucky, a last minute cancellation can provide you with the perfect window to get a tattoo done. But bear in mind that if you are thinking of getting work done at a

convention, it may be wise to approach the artist first to get the design and placement out of the way, so that on the day you can get straight down to business. In retrospect, if you are lucky enough to pull a space with your favourite artist on the day, the chances are they will want to do their own design as they will not have the time to sit and discuss a design for hours instead of tattooing. ★

*A good convention will pull in artists from all over the world, giving punters a chance to get that elusive tattoo or just to see them work their magic.*



John Anderton, Nemesis Tattoo, County Durham

## SIGNS OF FAITH

Early Christians often had the sign of the cross tattooed on their bodies, particularly their face or arms.

Such tattoos were seen as a permanent mark of the believer's faith. However, around AD 325 the Emperor Constantine outlawed tattooing of the face because he believed that the face was in God's image and should not be disfigured. In AD 787, a council of churches renounced all forms of tattooing and sealed the fate of the practice in the eyes of the Christian church once and for all.

Much later, a representation of the crucifixion tattooed on a slave's back was said to preserve the bearer from a whipping. It was thought that no Christian, however cruel, would lash the image of Christ. Documentary evidence of this 'thought' is rather sparse.





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Getting Tattooed

# Finding your way around the studio

YOUR BIG DAY HAS ARRIVED AND IT IS TIME TO GET INTO THAT CHAIR AND GO UNDER THE NEEDLE. BUT WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT WHEN YOU WALK THROUGH THOSE HALLOWED DOORS?

What surprises await the unsuspecting first timer? That first visit can be daunting. Technical terms you are unfamiliar with are being thrown around, strange looking equipment sits at every turn and that buzzing sound, usually associated with dentists' drills, makes you want to question why you are actually here. But once you get familiar with this new world, it is a great place to be.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Saying that all tattoo studios are the same is like saying all bands are the same. Within a city, you will find every variation of studio that is available and the variations are mind-blowing. You can get one room or

multiple room studios, light and airy or dark and mysterious studios. Some will be designed to be minimalist and others will have the artist's life long collected mementos plastered all over the walls.

But what is it you are actually looking for when you step inside a studio? What are the signs that this one is better than the one down the road?

Like everything in life, first impressions still count the most. The moment your head is in the door, you should be able to get a fair impression of what kind of studio, and therefore what kind of tattoo artist, you are dealing with.

Though flash on the wall is a good indicator of a walk-in shop, it is not always the case. Many artists will display flash







## TATTOO MEANINGS

- A full-rigged ship shows the seaman has sailed round Cape Horn
- An anchor indicates he has sailed the Atlantic Ocean
- A dragon denotes that the bearer has served on a China station
- A shellback turtle shows the sailor has crossed the Equator
- 'Hold' tattooed on the knuckles of one hand and 'fast' on the other were said to allow the bearer to grip the rigging better.

sheets of their favourite tattooists but still only do custom work. The general feeling you pick up from a studio will usually stand you in good stead. A clean, fresh looking studio with friendly helpful staff is going to be far more appealing than dealing with some miserable bastard in dirt stained, windowless shop.

And first impressions count for you as the customer as well. Waxing lyrical about 'tattoo guns', 'tats' and 'loving the pain of a tattoo' is not going to do you any favours! Neither is relaying stories about how hard you are because you are getting a tattoo or telling the tattooist that Billy Bob down the road can do the same tattoo for £20 cheaper. Walking in with an attitude is going to get you thrown out the door quicker than a fox on a rabbit.

Once in the chair, you'll find yourself surrounded by a bewildering assortment of equipment and the first

thing that will pop into your head is, what the hell does that do? So let's find out.

First off, health and safety is extremely important for a tattooist. Besides looking good, keeping a studio and 'booth' clean is law! Even more so keeping the equipment that they use to tattoo clean is vital.

### ULTRASONIC CLEANER

All items that a tattooist re-uses have to go through an ultrasonic cleaner. What this process will do is, loosen material attached to instruments (grips, tubes etc) by covering them with a special solution and then make them vibrate very fast via high speed sound waves.

Do not accept needles that are 're-used' after going through an ultrasonic cleaner or an autoclave. There is no reason, what so ever, to reuse needles and a tattooist who does this is endangering your

*There is no reason, what so ever, to reuse needles and a tattooist who does this is endangering your life as well as being a tight arse! Refuse to get tattooed unless you see a needle come out of sealed packaging!*

life as well as being a tight arse! Refuse to get tattooed unless you see a needle come out of sealed packaging!

### AUTOCLAVE

Once the equipment has had a spin in the ultrasonic cleaner, it is time for a sauna in the autoclave. Autoclaves produce very high temperatures which kill off any blood-borne pathogens and sterilise the equipment. Vacuum autoclaves are even better, as they draw air inside the chamber out, which ensures a better clean. 🐦



## GLOVES

Tattooists should always wear gloves. End of story. And anything that they (or you) touch should be wrapped in cling film or some other protective barrier. And if you decide to stop for a bit of fresh air, the tattooist should always dispose of his gloves and put on a new pair when they are ready to start tattooing again.

## METAL MACHINES

Yes it looks like a gun but chances are, if you call it a gun, you are going to get a cuff around the head. Not only do these beautiful looking pieces of art take

machine builders hours to make, they are also a tattooist's pride and joy. So don't annoy them by calling them guns. You'll only make yourself look stupid.

## THE COIL TATTOO MACHINE

Following on from Thomas Edison's playing about with an altogether different device, Samuel O'Reilly patented the first tattoo machine back in the late 1800s. At the heart of it, a coil machine is pretty much the same as a common old doorbell. A metal frame provides the base and encases two coils of wire wrapped around an iron core. At the top of the mechanism is a set of silver contact points (like the end of a wire), one usually on a spring

mechanism, the other usually on the end of a screw. The spring connects to the base and a bar, which is connected to the needle arm, which in turn is connected to the needles and moves up and down inside the tube. Through the contact points, the current flows via the coils and the base of the machine. This causes the coils to become electromagnetic which pulls down the bar. This does two things; it pulls down the needles and it opens the points. Once the points are open, the magnet turns off and the spring assembly brings the bar back, which causes the needles to move up and make contact with the points. This causes the whole cycle to happen again making the needles go up and down. Job done!



*If you decide to stop for a bit of fresh air, the tattooist should always dispose of his gloves and put on a new pair when they are ready to start tattooing again.*



## NEEDLES

There is a huge array of different needles available and what needles a tattooist uses will be down to their own personal choice and what part of the tattoo they are working on.

For lining, a tattooist may use a small grouping of needles ranging from three through to eighteen. The needles are usually grouped in a rounded configuration and are sometimes referred to as 'rounds'. Single needles are hardly ever used anymore for lining. How the needles are soldered together affects a round's use with some tattooists using a tight round for lining and a looser one for confined areas that require shading.

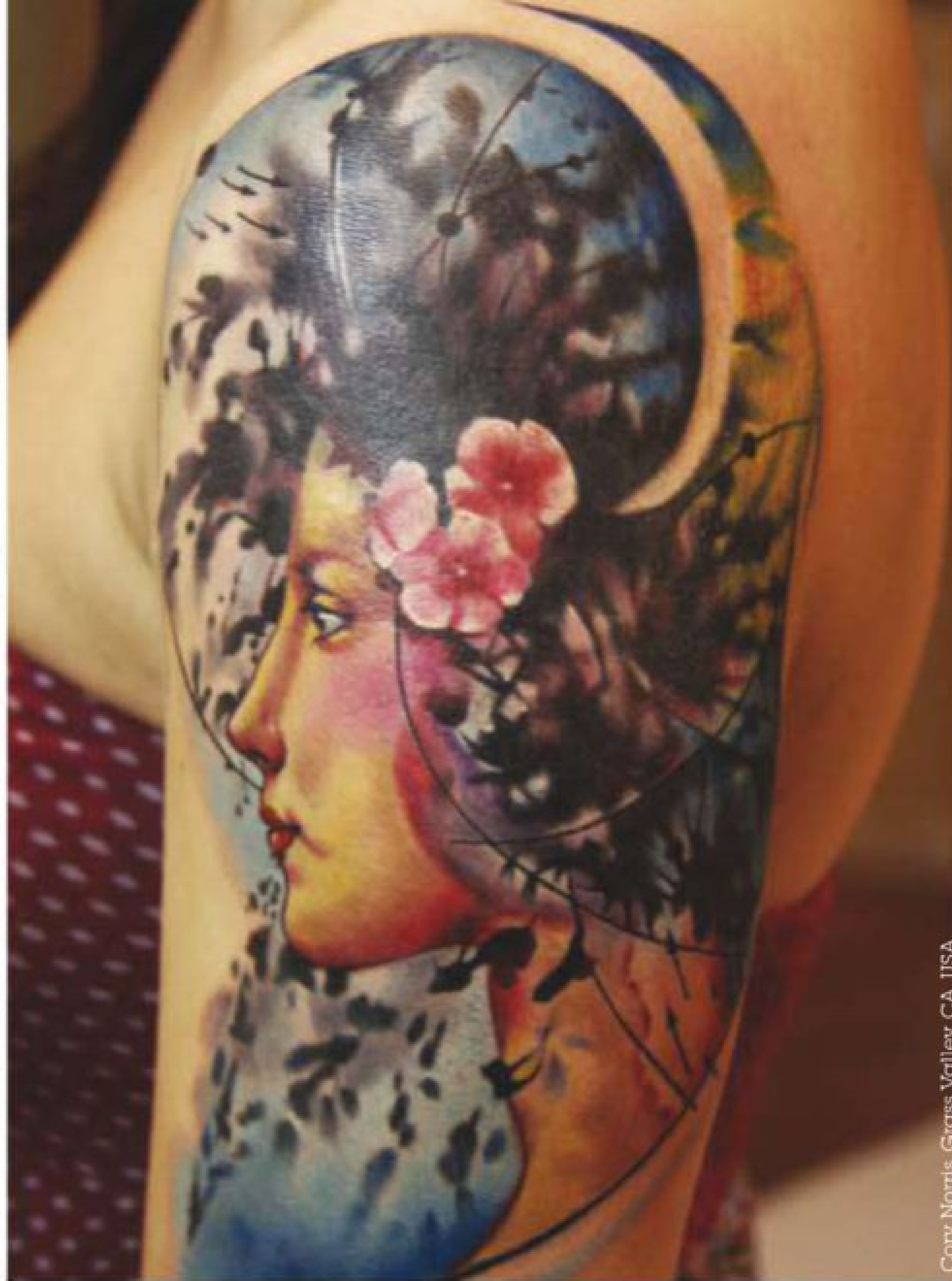
*There is a huge array of different needles available and what needles a tattooist uses will be down to their own personal choice and what part of the tattoo they are working on.*

Moving onto shading and the needle count can range from four to forty grouped together, depending on the scale of the tattoo. Shaders are aligned in either a flush level setting (flats) or stacked in two or more rows, one on top of the other and are called magnums. Magnums can also be curved to allow for smoother edges and flats are often used for shading or small areas of colour. Magnums also provide a great means of covering large areas very quickly.

## INKS & INKPOTS

Inks come in big bottles which a tattooist will usually pour into smaller pots as and when he needs them. There are many different makes of inks and some tattooists are even making their own inks these days. All the larger bottles will be marked with batch numbers and use-by dates etc. as are most products around today.

If a tattooist does not use all the ink they poured into the smaller pots, they will throw it away with the other waste used whilst tattooing.



Cory Norris, Grass Valley, CA, USA

## SAMOAN TATTOOING

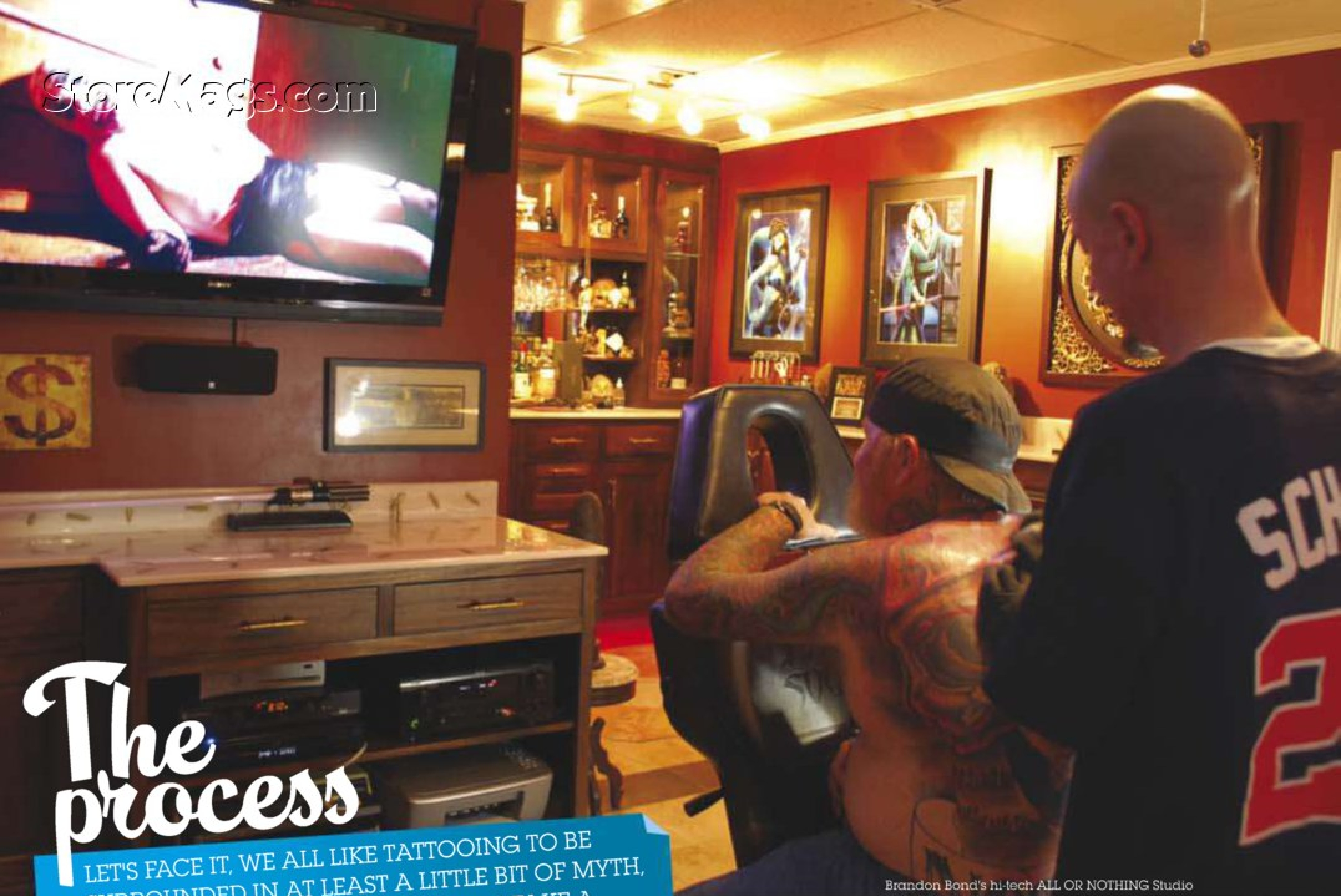
Samoa tattoo artists used combs to apply their designs.

On the Pacific island of Samoa, tattooists carried out their art by dipping the pointed teeth of combs into ink and placing them on the surface of the skin. The comb was then tapped so that the teeth punctured the skin, inserting the ink. Both men and women had their bodies tattooed and elaborate designs could take several months to complete. In Samoan tradition, tattoos were restricted to the lower part of the body.



Satwan, Imago Studio





Brandon Bond's hi-tech ALL OR NOTHING Studio

# The process

LET'S FACE IT, WE ALL LIKE TATTOOING TO BE SURROUNDED IN AT LEAST A LITTLE BIT OF MYTH, SO WITHOUT BLOWING SMOKE, LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS TO YOU.

**B**y now you have probably heard a hundred and one different stories about the experience you are about to undergo and although there will be an element of truth in some of them, there will be even more 'tall tales' and exaggeration. The thing to bear in mind is that everyone's experience is different and no matter what your friends have told you, or what you have researched - your experience won't be the same as theirs. So sit back and relax and let's take a journey through the big day.

## DOES IT REALLY HURT?

This is always the first question you are asked if you have tattoos and the short answer is - YES. But then as most things go, it is not as simple as that! Everyone has a different pain threshold and everyone has places on their bodies that are more sensitive than others. If you were to sit a bunch of tattooed folk down in a room and asked them which tattoos they have had were the worst, each person would give you a different answer.

No matter where on your

body you are getting tattooed, the process is the same. The tattooist is taking a machine loaded with needles and pushing ink into the top layers of your skin. You aren't going to fall asleep while this is being done, no matter what that 'hard' guy at the pub told you!

So what does it feel like? Well, like being scratched with needles. It isn't a pain that is going to make you want to chew through your arm to stop it but it isn't easy going either.

One thing you can guarantee, is that some parts of your body are easier to

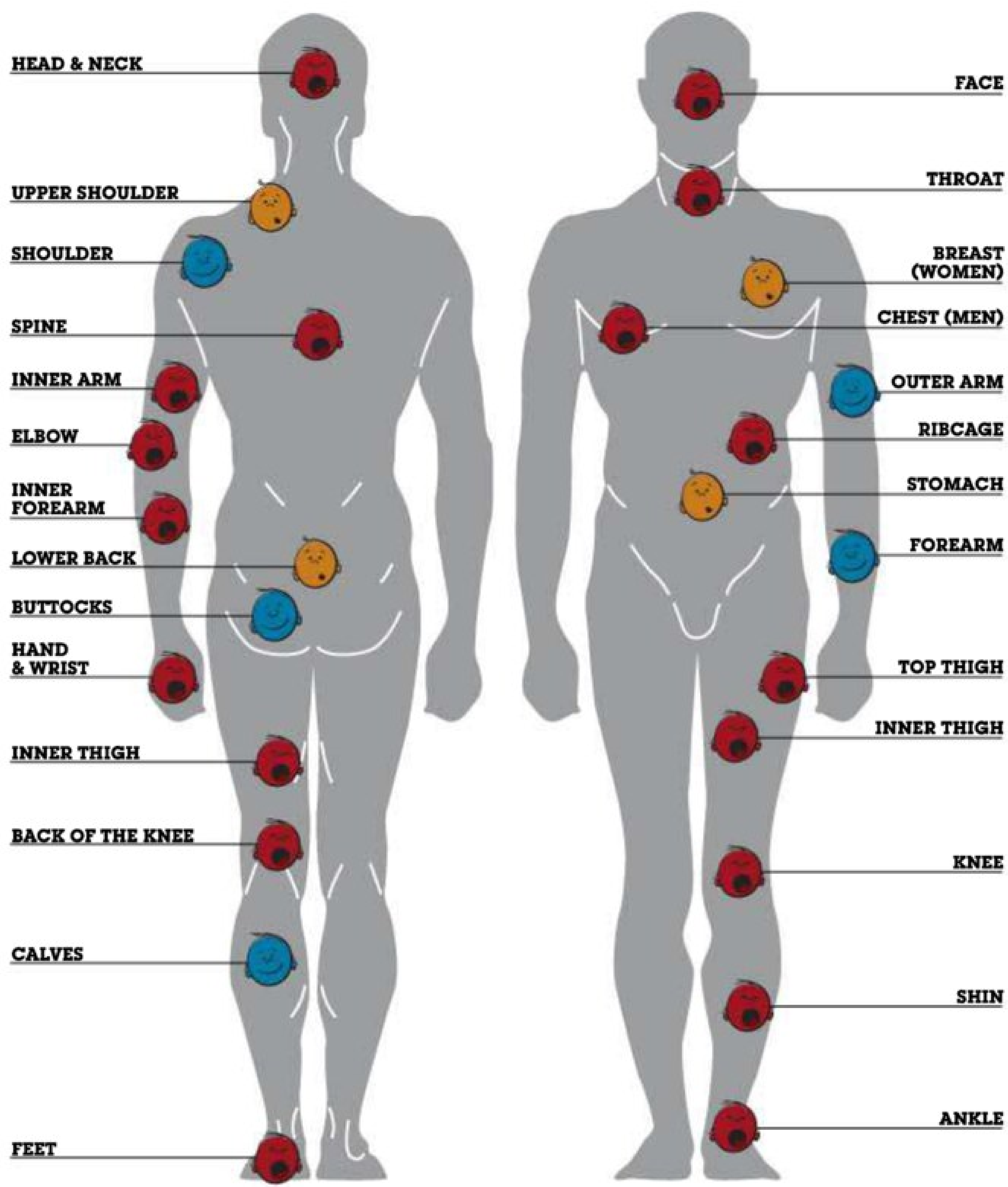


handle than others. The general rule of thumb is, the fleshier the area that you are getting tattooed, the less painful it is. Places that aren't often exposed to daily wear and tear; like the inner thigh, behind the knees and inner bicep; can up the pain stakes.

Bony areas can be problematic as well. Many people will tell you that having your elbows and ribs tattooed can be torture but once again, others will tell you it was a breeze. The consensus here is that it is more of an odd experience, than painful, as it feels like the needles are hitting the bones. This is not the case as the needles are not long enough to do this. This goes for tendons as well. Having your wrists tattooed might make your fingers dance like a mad puppet but the needles are not doing any damage.

People will also talk about how a tattooist has 'heavy hands' or if a particular tattooist has a 'light touch'. Some tattooists do go in hard and some areas need more coverage (shading or packing in colours) which can make it feel worse.

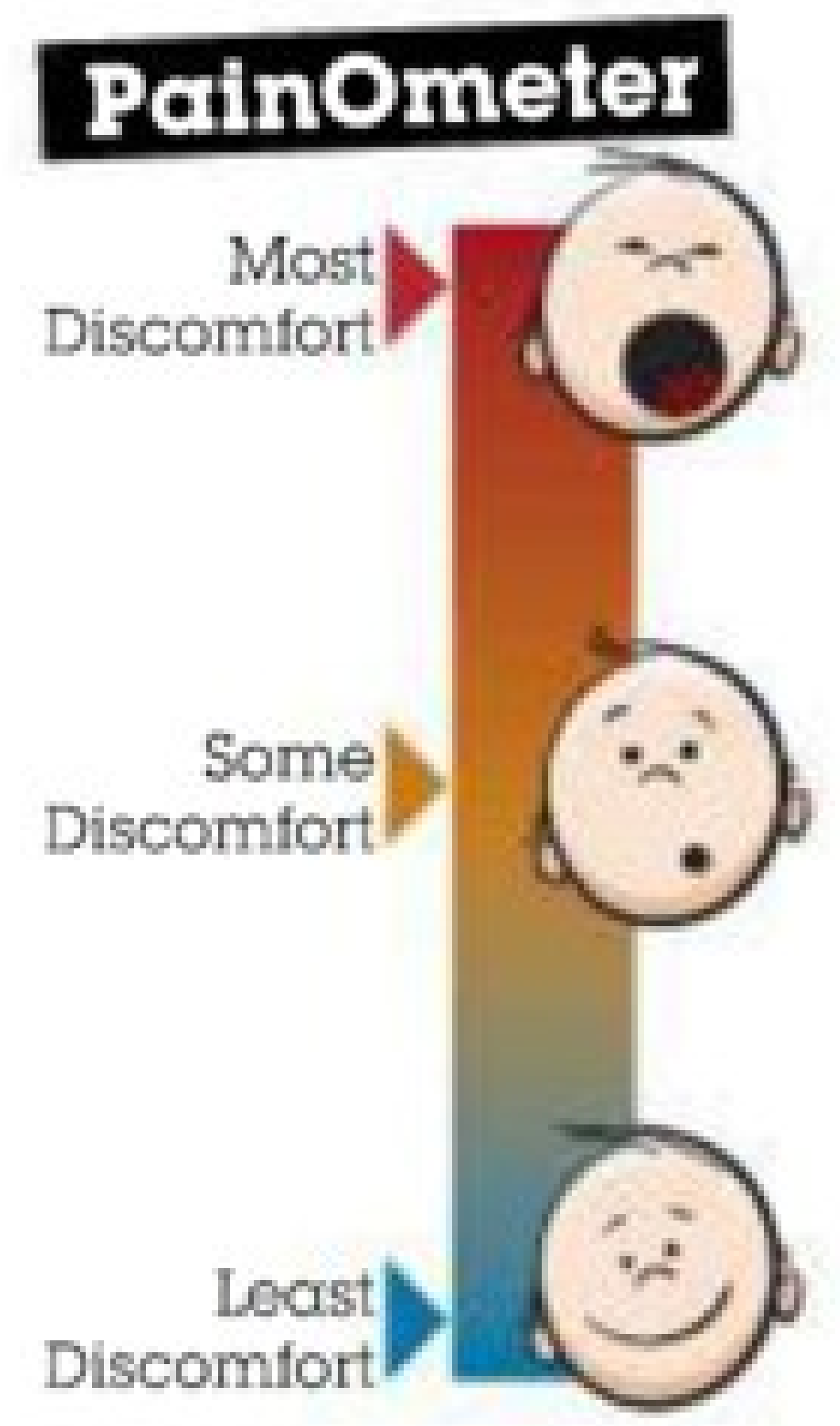
And finally, one day your body could take a five hour sitting on your ribs and another it won't make an hour sitting on your upper arm. Or your body could be up for the work and your head is not playing along. These factors, as frustrating as they are, will only let themselves be know on the day. So the best advice is to sit back and enjoy the ride, it will be well worth it in the end.



**LIFT OFF**

It's all systems go and you're ready to get your ink on but there is still a few more things that can make your experience a blast or something you will never do again. Before you turn up for your appointment consider this, it is very likely that you are

going to get a fair amount of tattoo ink on more than just your skin. As careful as a tattooist is, ink gets everywhere. It just can't be helped. So whatever you do, don't wear your favourite Ben Sherman shirt when you go to get your upper arm tattooed cause you will come home with a new





## WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED!

Winston Churchill's mother, Lady Randolph Churchill, had a tattoo of a snake on her wrist. They were popular for rich aristocrats during that period. She chose a snake because it could be easily covered by a bracelet.

multi-coloured design on it.

Where possible, wear clothing appropriate to where you are getting tattooed. If you are getting your thigh done, you might find it more comfortable sitting in a pair of shorts rather than having to whip your jeans off because the tattooist just can't reach your leg through your Levi's! And don't worry if you are shy about getting your clothes off for those more private areas, most studios will have private booths if you would prefer to be a bit more discreet. And remember, a tattooist sees all shapes and sizes and bits and pieces everyday, to them your body is a canvas and they will respect it!

By the time you are in the chair, you will have signed a legal disclaimer, a standard procedure, and you will

have seen your design. Don't worry if it doesn't sport any colour, the tattooist needs to make a stencil that includes just the outlines, the colour will come later.


If nerves are getting to you a bit at this stage, this is normal as well. You are about to undergo a lifelong body changing experience... who wouldn't be nervous. Or a little excited. And that adrenaline pumping through your veins will help you in the long run, so all is good.

Before you get your tattoo, the tattooist will need to shave the area. This is standard procedure as they will need a nice smooth area to work their magic. Disposable razors are usually used for this and don't accept a razor that isn't brand new or is blunt, or else you will end up with

more than just a tattoo! And if you are on the hairy side, you might want to trim the area you are getting inked beforehand to save the tattooist going through a dozen razors on the day.

A bit of a wipe down with some rubbing alcohol to make sure that the surface area is completely clean and then it is the moment you have been waiting for, time for the design to be laid down on your skin and your first clue as to how your tattoo is going to look on you.

There are two routes a tattooist can take from here. They can either place a stencil on the area you are getting tattooed or draw a design freehand with a marker pen. If it is a stencil, they will place it the area you have decided on and you will get a chance to



*If you are on the hairy side, you might want to trim the area you are getting inked beforehand to save the tattooist going through a dozen razors on the day.*

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## POPULAR?

The word "tattoo" has been in the top ten searched terms since Lycos started tracking search engines.

work with the tattooist to see you are happy with placement and size. This is your last chance to make any major changes because as soon as the machine is up and running, very little can change in the design. If the tattooist is free handing, he will draw straight onto the area but the same applies, now is the time to discuss last minute changes. And once again, the tattooist knows what they are doing so defer to their experience as much as possible.

A quick note, you might hear the term 'free-needled' bandied about. This is when an artist tattoos you without a stencil or any markings. It sounds crazy but some artists will do it from time to time and it an absolutely amazing thing to see.

Finally everything is in place, you're in the chair and the tattooist is ready to go, so let's go through the equipment you will see on their tray.

### TATTOO MACHINE -

remember, there may be more than one depending on what they have to do

**NEEDLES** - they should all be sealed in packs ready to use

**TUBES** - will also be sealed if they are single-use or have done their time in the ultrasonic cleaner and the autoclave

**VASELINE** - the tattooist will use Vaseline or something similar to help the needle do their work

**INK POTS** - with the colours that will be used

**DISTILLED WATER** - to clean the needles between colours

**KITCHEN ROLL** - used to wipe the tattooed area during the tattoo

**GLOVES** - to protect you and the tattooist

**POWER PACK** - a little box the tattooist will fiddle with every now and then to ensure the correct amount of voltage is going through the tattoo machine. ✂

*If the tattooist is free handing, he will draw straight onto the area but the same applies, now is the time to discuss last minute changes.*



Day of the Dead Portrait - by Martin Couley  
Couley Tattoo Studio - Newcastle



## IN THE CHAIR

You've made it. Everything is in place, all checks are complete and it is time to get going. You have been preparing for this for months and it is finally coming about but there are some things to remember when you are finally at this point.

You're going to be excited and nervous; you name it and you will probably go through it in the next couple of hours. There are a couple of steps you can take to make sure this is the ace experience you have been hoping it will be.

First off, make sure you eat before your big day. Pumping your body full of helpful carbohydrates and protein is going to make it a hell of a lot easier for your body to cope with what is ahead. But don't eat too much either because you don't want to be sitting in the chair, sick to the gills, because you're nervous and your stomach is packed full of food!

Take some sugar based drinks with you on the day. Your body is going to start losing sugar during the tattoo and there is few things better than an energy drink or Lucozade to get you going again. Do not drink alcohol before your tattoo! Not only does it thin your blood which will make you bleed more but it is quite likely that the tattooist will turn you away.

If you start feeling nauseous or faint during the tattoo - take a break. A tattooist would rather you have five minutes outside in the fresh air, sipping on a Coke than you crashing to the studio floor



and busting up your nose as well as his equipment. There is nothing wrong with calling time for a break - even a tattooist needs to take five every now and then!

While you are getting tattooed, try and keep still as much as possible. Yes, you will flinch every now and then and you might even need to move to a more comfortable position but doing so while the needle is moving across your skin is not going to help things one bit.

Finally, the whole pain thing again. Some people say lining hurts more than shading, or that black hurts more than white. Once again, this is all subjective. Lining should be less painful for many reasons; less needles, the first thing to be done when you're still fresh, not so many multiple passes to complete (as in shading where you might get tattooed over and over in the same area to get the desired effect) but there is no set measurement and each person will have a different experience of it all.

And remember to breathe and relax. Getting tattooed is one of those odd things where you find you can handle the pain because you know it will stop soon or move onto another area. Breathe through the difficult bits and relax and enjoy the parts you find you don't take strain on. Chat with the tattooist, watch a DVD or listen to some music to help take your mind off the pain if you feel you are tapping out and most of all - enjoy yourself!

## FINISHING UP

Once the tattooist is finished, he will usually wipe down the tattoo to clean up the excess ink and then he will make a final check to see that he is completely happy with the tattoo. When they are happy that everything is where it should be and your new tattoo is looking killer he will then, most likely, put some healing cream on and wrap it in cling-film. Now the next important step is all in your hands - aftercare.

## What Next?

Well, the artist's job is done and the quality of the healed tattoo is firmly in your hands. Provided you nurture this wound and assist its healing as best you can, the need for another trip to your artist to tidy up any patches or dropouts is minimal.



# Aftercare

AS YOU SHOULD HAVE REALISED BY NOW, ONCE THE INK IS IN YOUR SKIN, IT'S NO LONGER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUR TATTOOIST. IT'S YOURS. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IS TOTALLY IN YOUR HANDS, SO LET'S WEIGH UP AND LOOK AT THE OPTIONS THAT WILL GET YOU THROUGH THE NEXT WEEK OR SO.

**W**e've said it once, but it bears saying again. Don't pick at the scab. Simple. Also worth mentioning up front here is that whenever you've washed your tattoo, don't go giving it a good rub with a towel to dry it. Dab it a few times with a clean towel and let it dry off by itself. Those two things alone will put you streets ahead in the healing game.

With that said, let's start back at the beginning. Poor - even worse, no - aftercare can destroy your tattoo. When you're done in the Big Chair, your tattooist will (or should) give you an aftercare sheet that details exactly how they want you to look after your tattoo. This may differ from studio to studio, but that's OK as the principle will be the same.

Healing will vary depending on your genetics, the size of the tattoo and whereabouts you applied it and can take anything from four to seven days. This is obviously dictated by exactly how intense the working area has been inked. A strange rule of thumb is that tattoos below

the waist appear to take slightly longer than those on the upper body. This may be due to how the blood flows around the body and that old devil called gravity. I'm no medical student and much like TV, we don't need to know how it works, it just does.

## WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE?

Well, your skin has been broken and alien bodies have been put beneath it. As with any cut/open wound, blood will flow to that point and begin one of the jobs it thrives upon. Thus, in the days following the tattoo, the body will set about fixing the damage. First port of call? A protective layer over the area in question. Once this protective layer begins to fall away, much like the effect of sunburnt skin, you will notice that the tattoo looks perhaps a little lifeless - even in the greatest of circumstances this will happen but this is as it should be. As soon as this protective layer has done its job and falls away, it will be back to its former self.

## DECISIONS, DECISIONS....

There are many trains of thought when it comes to healing a fresh tattoo. None of this is set in stone and it all rather depends on how your tattooist was "brought up" and their own opinions on the matter. The options range from doing practically nothing right across the board to keeping it under wraps for the duration of the body's healing process. At first, you should keep to your tattooists guidelines but maybe by the time your on your fourth or fifth and have spoken to dozens and dozens of other collectors, you might begin to form your own ideas on the matter. Let's take a look at your options but as we said previously, you won't go far wrong if you follow the instructions given in the first place...

## LITFA

A nice acronym for "leave it the fuck alone", which as it suggests, means doing nothing. Your tattoo will dry out and become itchy using

## The Serious Bit

If you have any doubts whatsoever about the care of your tattoo, give your tattooist a call. Seriously - one simple telephone call could save you a world of hurt and nobody will mind. Better a phone call than having to get some bits of it reworked.





this method so it's not for the faint of heart or anybody that can't resist the last biscuit in the packet. It's a traditional approach, works well but you have been warned.

## WRAP HER UP

Most tattooists will wrap your tattoo in clingfilm and advise of varying amounts of time that it should be left on for. Keeping it wrapped for the first few days involves cleaning the tattoo three times a day with soap and water, applying the aftercare ointment of choice and recovering with clean clingfilm again. This should be repeated for three or for days until all the tattoo will need is some serious moisturising.



Nikko Hurtado at Ignition Tattoo

## THE MOIST APPROACH

Coming in to occupy the middle ground, the moist approach means keeping the tattoo clean and moist with a good aftercare product with no clingfilm at all. This allows the tattoo to breathe without drying out and is a sensible option for those trying to get on with pretty much normal day to day living.

## AFTERCARE PRODUCTS

There are rather a lot of aftercare products on the market. Much like the methods of healing, your tattooist will perhaps suggest whatever has worked for them and that's good. As with dying your hair and those times in your life when you need to apply a cream to the skin, you should probably do a patch test somewhere like your wrist to make sure you're not allergic. Alternatively, you could do what we all do and just get on with it, but don't say we didn't warn you...

Should you use products that aren't specifically

manufactured for healing tattoos? They often contain petroleum or lanolin which can negate the healing process somewhat - it's as much down to personal taste as your tattoo itself, but common sense rules. At the first sign of anything not being quite as it should, discontinue use and if you need to do "something" before you see your tattooist for advice, simply keep it clean with soap and water.

The list of products available is not exhaustive, but some of the brand names you may hear bandied about include Tattoo Goo, Tattoo Aftercare, After Inked and the newcomer to the market, Ink Slinger. Bepanthen (strictly speaking, a nappy rash cream) and Palmer's Cocoa Butter (an advanced moisturiser) are also extremely popular. Ask me, and I will recommend one thing, ask somebody else, they will tell you another. It's just one of the joys of getting into a tattooed life, but at the end of the day, all of these products are well used in and around the industry. Why not discuss while you're sitting in the Big Chair...



James Robinson from Nine Tattoos, Brighton



The Aftercare Company  
Committed to Quality

## THE AFTERCARE COMPANY

Tattoo Aftercare is 100% natural, being a mix of beeswax, olive oil, Calendula oil and vitamins that allow the skin to breathe freely. THC can be applied immediately after tattooing which instantly starts to soothe the skin and can help to reduce the swelling that you might encounter after the tattooing process. This is the only aftercare product approved by the Humane Cosmetics Standard. It's available from many tattoo studios or direct from the manufacturers, and The Aftercare Company have produced a very informative aftercare brochure giving guidelines to the aftercare of your new ink and what's more, it's free! [www.tattooaftercare.co.uk](http://www.tattooaftercare.co.uk)

## TATTOO GOO



A unique formula designed exclusively for the treatment of new tattoos.

Eight different herbs, oils, and vitamins known for their natural healing properties allows the skin to breathe and helps to "soothe" the tattoo as it heals. Tattoo Goo has been used on thousands of new tattoos with positive results and faster healing times.

For further information on these products go to: [www.tattoogoo.co.uk](http://www.tattoogoo.co.uk)



## AFTER INKED GOO

From the USA comes After Inked, and it contains no parabens or petroleum, is suitable for vegans, and is enriched with the natural antioxidant grape seed oil. It is claimed that the product heals tattoos in record time and reduces trans-epidermal water loss whilst preserving the skin's natural moisture. After Inked retails in 50ml containers in the UK and is available from [www.body4real.co.uk](http://www.body4real.co.uk).



## MEDICAL BODY ART

In the aftercare kit there is a bottle of Easytattoo, a mild cleansing gel to keep your new tattoo clean. The Gel is hypoallergenic, bactericidal, fragrance-free and has a neutral PH, so should be fine for all skin types helping your new ink to heal. It also has moisturisers included to help the colours in the tattoo stay bright and vibrant. The gel has a shelf life of 29 months after opening. [www.medicalbodyart.com](http://www.medicalbodyart.com) UK distributors are the Wildcat Collection Limited [www.wildcat.co.uk](http://www.wildcat.co.uk) and the Belly Bar: [easypiercing@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:easypiercing@yahoo.co.uk)

## PALMER'S COCOA BUTTER

Formula with Vitamin E This is an advanced moisturiser that softens, smoothes and relieves dry skin so is pretty good at revitalising older tattoos. It also tones skin and apparently helps to remove stretch marks. I have applied this to a ten year-old tattoo and over a period of time and it has brought some of the faded colour back to the tattoo. It is very good for healing fresh tattoos, and it also smells of cocoa - which is always nice. Available from: FUEL, 3 The Cloisters, 8 Battersea Park Road, London. SW8 4BG Email: [info@fuelrefuel.com](mailto:info@fuelrefuel.com)



## INK SLINGER

A brand new product called 'Ink Slinger', formulated specifically for those who have a new tattoo or piercing to care for is now available in the UK. Ink Slinger sinks without a trace into the deepest layers of your skin where it not only re-hydrates your collagen; it also enhances colours of your tattoo. It is free of odour so it won't clash with your perfume or aftershave choice, and it's crystal clear. A tiny drop of Ink Slinger goes a long way, so it's only supplied in small quantities of 60mls and best stored at body temperature.

## BEPANTHEN

Not strictly a tattoo emollient, Bepanthen is marketed as a nappy rash cream and a cure for chapped nipples. I don't know who came up with the idea to use this cream on fresh ink, but boy, does it work well. Apply this sparingly to your freshly worked tattoo and Bepanthen keeps the scabbing to an absolute minimum, which allows your skin to hold more of the ink. It also stops the annoying itching sensation some people get whilst their tattoo is healing. Available from branches of Boots, Tesco's and other large supermarkets. ★





# Cover-Ups

I COULD PERSONALLY SAY A LOT OF THINGS ABOUT COVER-UPS. I HAVE ONE MYSELF BUT TO REALLY GET INTO WHAT THEY ARE, WHY THEY WORK - OR DON'T WORK AS THE CASE MAY BE - LET'S GO STRAIGHT TO THE HORSES MOUTH AND SEE WHAT SOMEBODY WHO ACTUALLY HAS TO DEAL WITH THEM HAS TO SAY. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE TAKE YOUR SEATS:

Words: Woody @ Woody's Tattoo Studio

**R**iddle me this, riddle me that; who wants rid of an unwanted tat? Actually there is an army of people out there who given the chance of an easy change would grab for it. But surely it cannot be possible to just lose a tattoo or find another one to simply easily replace it, can it?

A coverup, whereby a new tattoo replaces an older one is so entrenched in the tattoo world that

"industry standard" doesn't really come close to describing how much the idea is revered. So much so, that the pitfalls are often dismissed as inconsequential until well after the new tattoo has become a nightmare.

Over the years, I've seen a great deal of heartache associated with poor tattooing and poor coverup work which for various reasons doesn't get discussed with any degree





BEFORE



AFTER

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of equanimity relative to the superb artwork that fills the magazines on the news stand shelves. This article is aimed at getting you a great coverup by describing the mechanics of working over an unwanted tattoo and by showing the horrors that befall the unwary. There is no reason why any tattoo cannot successfully be covered when approached with the right mindset.

My credentials for talking

***Do you want a quick job with less cost and less hassle or do you want the best. Coverups nearly always have a shadowy or muddy look about them no matter how artistic your tattooist is.***

about coverups are that I have tattooed professionally for twenty two years and have done a great many workshops about coverups and lasering at tattoo conventions for magazines, for a top laser company, for the Environmental Health Department during CQC

deregulation and even at the National Science Museum in front of top doctors and surgeons. I am also a member of The British Medical Lasers Association. In circumstances where coverup is not immediately achievable I have at my disposal a full range of medical grade lasers that can weaken a problem to the point that a coverup works. (Being as Woody was kind enough to give up his time for this article, we'll let him have that blatant plug!)

Before embarking on a coverup, work out your values. Do you want a quick job with less cost and less hassle or do you want the best. Coverups nearly always have a shadowy or muddy look about them no matter how artistic your tattooist is. There is usually too much compromise







BEFORE



***The new tattoo has to be so dense in pigment relative to the old one, that it intimidates the old one into submission.***

whereby the customer discovers that in order to get anything to come close to a working image, they end up with something that they would ordinarily never have chosen. If you are prepared to spend more time and money on pre-lasering, you will always get a much better coverup for

the same reason that if you rub out poor work on paper first you will always get a better drawing afterwards.

This is so obvious that it beggars belief that anything else could be considered. You might not need a lot of laser work but any amount will be better in the long run.

But back to coverups, the first thing to understand is that a coverup is not a coverup, it is a mixup. You are not painting over the top of the old tattoo, you are mixing a new tattoo into it. It is not like painting the walls. The new tattoo

has to be so dense in pigment relative to the old one, that it intimidates the old one into submission. But no matter how thick the new tattoo is, over several months it will thin out and what do you think will happen then?

A tattoo is usually coverable only if it is very old and weak. If you ignore this fact you will get a superposition of two tattoos which compete for the same space and together look ugly. If your old tattoo is not really old and weak you will need to create this situation with a laser



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*The next thing to understand is that black cannot be covered by anything. Full stop. Do not deceive yourself here.*

or have a tattoo which is obviously two tattoos mixed up. Simple as that.

The next thing to understand is that black cannot be covered by anything. Full stop. Do not deceive yourself here. Bizarrely a great deal of tattooists actually don't know this simple fact. Come to my shop and I will show you reams of photos to prove this. And it doesn't matter how superb an artist is either. What causes so much confusion is that colours, when first applied are thick and appear to do the job for a few weeks until the colours thin out. Look at colours in tattoos that you see on people in the pub because they are real. Here you will see



that colours even a few months old are transparent while black is opaque.

When tattooists perform a tattoo, it is usually with black in first and colour last and if colours could cover black it would mean that the black would disappear during this process which clearly doesn't happen. What also confuses the





*It is exactly the same as rubbing out a picture on a piece of paper first before redrawing. And beware of believing photos.*

a few coverups in real life before you have one. If a tattooist promises that they can do you a coverup ask to see photos of coverups after they have had many months of ageing. The most deceptive photos are the ones which are taken when the tattoo is fresh and imply that pastel tones will cover black which they won't. In



issue is that an older tattoo is no longer black but grey. But the grey will come back through colour eventually because it is fundamentally a thinned out black. This is exactly why coverups have a particular look about

them which is often seen as a large shadowy centre within the tattoo.

This makes a coverup plain to see which shows it wasn't a great coverup really, doesn't it? Make sure you see



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summary if you have black in your old tattoo, even old blacks (think grey), it is likely that lasering (not cheap lasers either) will be necessary. It is exactly the same as rubbing out a picture on a piece of paper first before redrawing. And beware of believing photos.

The next thing to understand is that white does not cover anything. I regularly hear people telling me that some tattooists suggest smothering the old tattoo in white first to "white-out" the old tattoo. This simply does not work and is something that you will find out at your pain and cost eventually. If you ever see white in older tattoos you will see that it is weak relative to other colours which is counter to what you would want from cover up colours. Again time will out the truth. In summary,

instead of packing in more colour which will pancake the image and create mud, consider

*If you are not getting what you want in order to get a coverup it defeats the point of free choice doesn't it?*

taking some colour out.

The next point is that tribals do not usually make good coverups. Tribals are usually black enough to bully out the old image but for the sake of the aesthetic there will inevitably be gaps which won't get touched by the coverup and where the old tattoo will clearly show through. This leads to two ugly scenarios: big grotesque slabs of black with spikes added to pretend that it is art, or gaps infilled with dark colours which make the tribal look, again like a muddy dark slab. What I have described here is very, very common. In summary, look at the design before it is

committed to skin and ask yourself whether you would really choose that image if it weren't necessary for

coverup. If you are not getting what you want in order to get a coverup it defeats the point of

free choice doesn't it?

So now we get to how to get a great coverup. Firstly if you are having a small, old and weak tattoo covered by a big, new and strong tattoo you are well set up for it all to work. But these circumstances are rare. If you have lots of black in your tattoo I would strongly recommend you weaken it all with a laser first (medical grade not eBay grade).

The position of your old tattoo is

### Anna's Arm

This awful rose had already had a few sessions of layering. The cover up is part of an unfinished and ongoing glam rock sleeve.



Cover-Ups



## Anna's Arm

This is the top section of Anna's arm before lasering and after retattooing.



BEFORE



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*Coverups only stand a reasonable chance of working when they are disproportionately bigger than what they are covering.*

significant because the coverup, unless weakened by lasering, is likely to be muddy and if this is peripherally placed in, say, an armpit, no one will notice as the arty bit extends down the arm and draws attention from the coverup with attractive imagery. Unfortunately though ninety percent of coverups will be centrally placed and it is not uncommon to

see really nice artwork hidden under a t-shirt with the muddy coverup clearly extending from the sleeve and on full view.

Be realistic about sizes. It is usual for people to ask if a coverup can be the same size as the old tattoo. Coverups only stand a reasonable chance of working when they are disproportionately bigger than what they are covering. This is because







### Richard's Arm

Richard's arm is not complete yet and is ongoing but the new work is already working nicely.

**AFTER**

any picture will usually have a balance between dark and light stuff and a small pocket of dark stuff in the right place has to be made big enough to sit on the old tattoo. These days, what with eBay kits, readily available information on how tattooing is done and magazines showing huge, desirable tattooing, coverup work is getting more necessary. But because the choice these days is for big stuff it can be clearly seen that coverups are not working anymore without lasering. Tattooists know this but it will take a long time for the public to realise this.

Finally, there will always be exceptions to the rules that I have made but you will have to find a tattooist experienced in feasible coverups to advise you here. No offence to anyone in particular, but customers are usually so desperate to rid themselves of a tattoo that they are dreadful at seeing what is commonsensical and will dismiss good advice.

Therefore if you are looking for a coverup I would suggest that you shop around, not for the best price, but so that you get lots of well rounded guidance.



**BEFORE**



# Collectors



THERE'S A FINE LINE BETWEEN HAVING TATTOOS AND BEING A COLLECTOR. ARE YOU PREPARED TO TRAVEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH TO FIND THE ONLY ARTIST IN THE WORLD YOU WANT TO OFFER YOUR ENTIRE BODY TO? THERE'S THE LINE:

**P**atience is the key word when it comes to being a true collector. Patience and more patience. As we stated above, there are some who will give up their entire body to one single artist in a unique statement of what cannot be described as anything but 'trust and love', but there are also those who will go in search of multiple tattoos by multiple artists and these are equally valid if we're looking to nail down the term correctly.

Such extensive coverage is not for the weak hearted. It will change your life forever and define you beyond what

goes on in your head and how others will look upon you. There is little doubt though that the tenacity of collectors is worth it from a tattoo enthusiasts perspective. Just as an art collector will want to purchase the best art possible, so the same rules apply to the tattoo collector - and along those same lines, it all rather depends what appeals to you as an individual as to which road you choose to go down. One thing is for sure

- it will change every aspect of you as your memories, feelings and opinions et al are made physical - with the entire story only known by you and your artist.

In this section, we take a look at Lepa and Geoff Ostling who both have superb stories to tell about their collections. Along with this, we deemed featuring Edgar Hoill as a worthy addition, if not slightly left of field as he has dedicated his career to collecting the collectors in a fascinating array of photographs. Read on: 









# THE Illustrated MAN

WITH HIS CLOTHES ON GEOFF OSTLING DOESN'T STAND OUT. HIS GRAYISH, THIN HAIR, GREY BEARD AND IMPRESSIVE BEER GUT MAKES HIM LOOK EXACTLY LIKE WHAT HE IS, A 63 YEAR OLD RETIRED HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER FROM SYDNEY. IT'S NOT UNTIL THE CLOTHES COME OFF THAT YOU REALISE HE'S JUST A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT FROM EVERYONE ELSE.

From head to toe, including his genitals, he's covered in tattoos of mostly native Australian flowers - and when he dies, he's donating his skin to the National Museum of Australia. There's even a whole film about that.

When The National Museum of Australia asked Geoff Ostling to donate his skin after his death a whole bunch of judicial and moral questions were raised. Who owns the right to his skin after his death? Is it legal and even do-able at all? Is it morally correct?

All these questions awoke the interest of the Australian film company Big Little Films, and the documentary Skin became the first out of four in their series about anatomy. The film is built around these questions, Geoff explains:

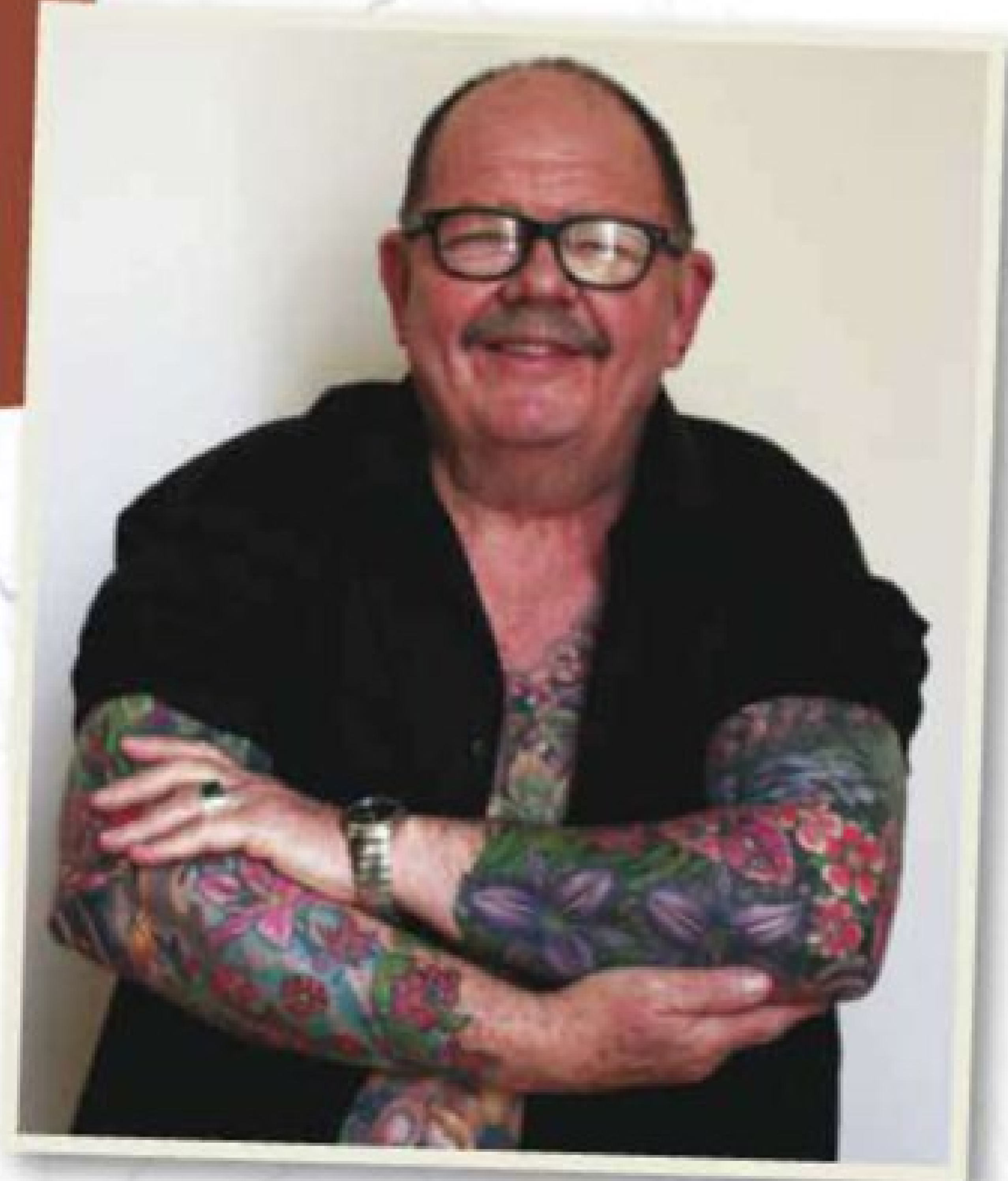
"I was showing my tattoos at this seminar at the museum and afterwards one of the curators asked me if I wanted to donate my skin. I said I had to talk to my partner first, but he agreed to it, so that was

one of the main hurdles over. In the documentary they interview a doctor about how to go through with it, the curators about the moral aspects and the mortician about how to treat a body without skin. We also go to Japan to look at some preserved Samurai skins..."

The film became a hit and it's won prizes at a couple of international film festivals, like Sydney, Amsterdam and Toronto. It was also screened three times at the Tribeca film festival where it was 'strongly recommended', and it's about to be sold to both American and European networks to be aired on TV."

Geoff started getting tattoos at the age of 42, after having met a corporate executive with a full body suit he'd never shown to his colleagues or clients.

The interest was already there, but this made him realize his long awaited dream of a body suit actually could come true.



"Ever since my parents told me I couldn't have one, I've wanted one, but I didn't know anyone who had tattoos. Meeting the executive was the starting point."

He refers to himself as "a heavily tattooed bear", and that pretty much sums it up. He's a gentle, kind and laid back person with a grayish beard, glasses, and an "unusual" hobby, and I feel nothing but relaxed when I talk to him. He's at ease with himself and his life choices and he's still planning new tattoos. There is still some space on his body, mainly on his right arm, but the next project is his neck and scalp. As with the majority of Geoff's body, they will probably be covered in flowers: 







A LOT OF PEOPLE LIKE TO PUT SYMBOLS OF DEATH, LIKE SKULLS, ON THEIR BODY. INSTEAD I HAVE SYMBOLS OF LIFE. WHY FLOWERS? IT'S SIMPLE, THEY'RE THE BODY'S SEX ORGANS







"A lot of people like to put symbols of death, like skulls, on their body. Instead I have symbols of life. Why flowers? It's simple, they're the body's sex organs, and I just like plants and things that grow!"

His tattoos have been inked all over the world, but most of them have been created by one of the biggest artists in Australia. She calls herself eX de Medici.

"Her dad was a highly appointed politician in Canberra and he made her use a different name if she was to become a tattoo artist. When I saw her work I was speechless. Sadly she's not tattooing anymore since her paintings are now sold for 120,000 dollars..."

The film also follows Geoff around for a couple of months after he decided to go through with the donation. He himself didn't have any moral issues with the donation and medically speaking it was doable, but there were other elements that made him hesitate, if

only for a second or two.

"Since the parents of all my former students would see it, I was a bit worried over the outcome. A lot of them would probably think: 'No wonder my kid's in jail'"

"It was no secret though, I just didn't say anything. I could have lost my job if they found out. I'm also gay. I would probably not have lost my job if that came out, but that's another thing you just don't tell people. At the end of the day it wasn't that hard though. I just kept my private life and my job separated. Of course there was always the risk of the shirt coming up a bit and revealing the tattoos, but that never happened and since the film came out I've received almost nothing but positive comments, except the occasional asshole of course!"

"One teacher came up to me and told me about his tattoos. He'd never shown his either, and some of them were really big." The documentary has made

**GEOFF STARTED GETTING TATTOOS AT THE AGE OF 42, AFTER HAVING MET A CORPORATE EXECUTIVE WITH A FULL BODY SUIT HE'D NEVER SHOWN TO HIS COLLEAGUES OR CLIENTS.**

Geoff into something of a celebrity. He got invited to the international tattoo convention in Berlin, he gets recognized in his everyday life in Australia and the photos The Sydney Morning Herald took of him didn't just make the paper's own Top 100 Photos of the year. One of them also made it into the LA Times equivalent. "It's incredible how many people have seen the movie, so we'll see, maybe there will be a sequel. They have 80 hours material altogether and I've already been asked once about it, but they didn't have the 60,000 dollars they needed for it then!"



THE STORY  
OF A

# Bodysuit

LEPA CAUSED QUITE A STIR WHEN SHE FIRST CAME TO OUR ATTENTION - IN FACT, AT THE TIME, IT WAS INCREDIBLY HARD TO GET NEAR HER FOR THE GAGGLE OF PHOTOGRAPHERS GATHERED. PATIENCE WON OUT IN THE END AS YOU CAN SEE IN THIS BRILLIANT SHOOT WHEN WE ALSO LET HER TELL HER OWN STORY:

**M**y heritage is quite mixed as my dad is Nepalese and my mum is Bengali.

I have always loved tattoos, especially the traditional Japanese styles. Initially, my dad introduced me to tattoos. He used to love watching the old school Samurai movies and we

would often end up watching them together.

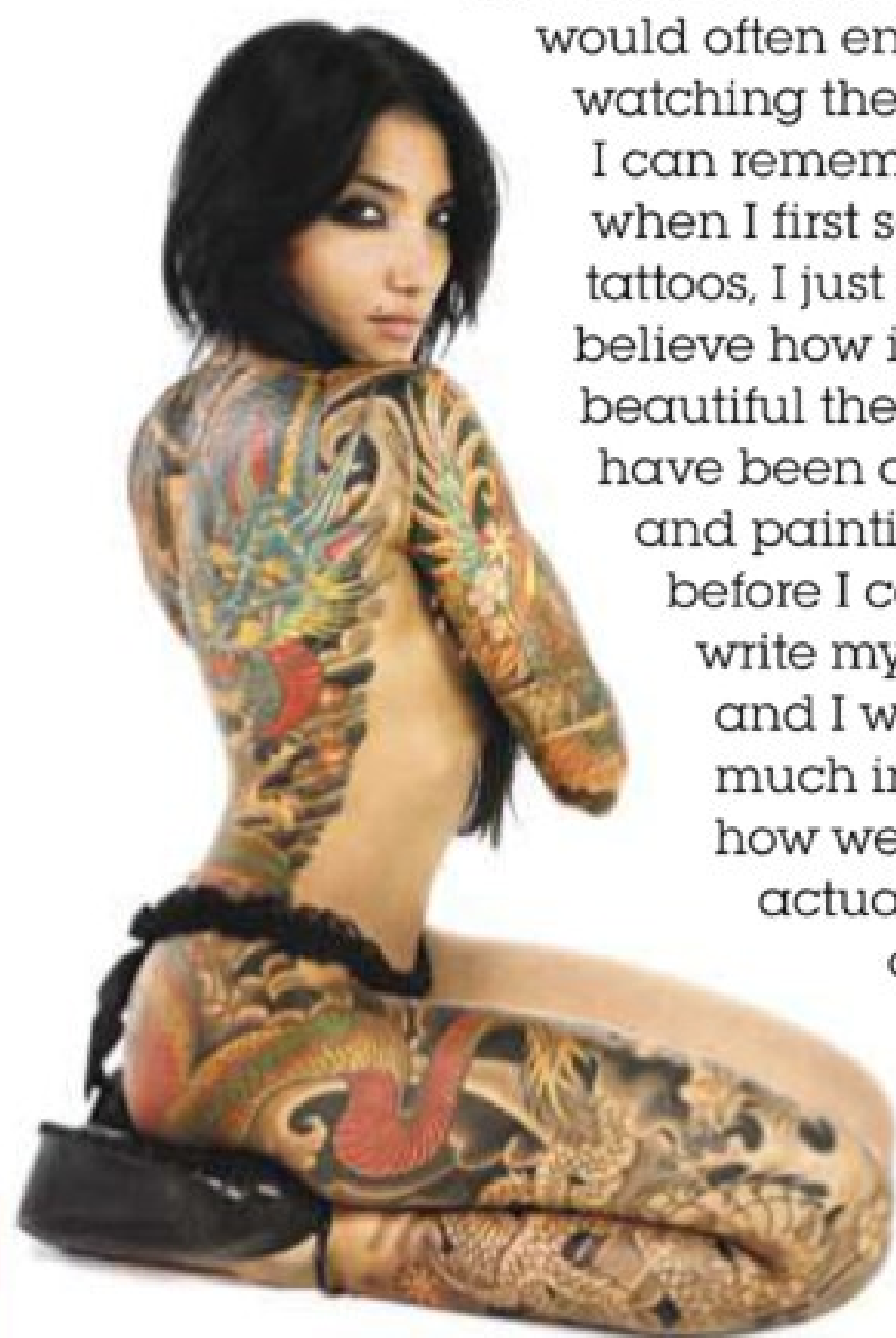
I can remember that when I first saw those tattoos, I just could not believe how incredibly beautiful they were. I

have been drawing and painting since before I could even write my own name and I was very much in awe of how we could actually adorn

our bodies with tattoos in a way that is such a unique

medium for expressing art. In terms of my own artwork, I love drawing things that inspire me and I get a lot of that inspiration from the work of H.R. Giger who designed the Aliens in the movie of that name starring, Sigourney Weaver. Giger has influenced my artwork no end, what more can I say, except that he is pure genius.

When deciding to get tattooed, I always knew that I was going to get a full bodysuit; there was no question about it. I didn't want random tattoos here and there; I had made up my mind from an early age that a full-scale bodysuit was what I wanted. It was much harder to convince George Bone, the tattooist, that I was serious about this. In fact, when I first went into his studio and explained my plan to him, I don't think he actually believed me. In order that he could see just how committed I was, I just kept going back to the







THIS MAY SOUND MASOCHISTIC,  
BUT I DO ACTUALLY LOVE THE  
PROCESS OF GETTING TATTOOED AS  
MUCH AS I LOVE THE END RESULT!

studio, but even so, George still made me wait about eight months before allowing me to undertake my first sitting. George told me that he just wanted to make doubly sure that I was really serious and understood the implications of what I was doing.

I have had some work done by Horiyoshi Souryou, (kazuyoshi), Horiyoshi III's son, he tattooed some Sakura's, (blossoms), on my lower left leg at

the London  
Tattoo  
Convention  
in 2009.  
That was a  
very special  
experience for

me as I adore his father's work and I have also modelled Horiyoshi III clothing for them at the convention too. The rest of my tattoo work was and is, being done exclusively by George Bone. George is not only an incredible artist, he is a legend in his own right,

and as the years have gone by, I now consider him to be a close friend. He is the most patient and humble person you could ever meet, he listens to your ideas, then offers his own input so that everything he produces is unique, I just love his style. I do try to pop into the studio whenever I get the chance and it seems that old friends always surround him. George has a charisma that causes people to gravitate towards him and it seems to me as an observer that all of the people that he has tattooed over many years are still very close to him. I can honestly say that I love the man; I just cannot say enough good things about him.

This may sound masochistic, but I do actually love the process of getting tattooed as much as I love the end result! There are a few spots that always seem to catch me unguarded, like the ribs, but I think I'm addicted or immune to the pain of the needles. I





WHEN DECIDING TO GET TATTOOED, I ALWAYS KNEW THAT I WAS GOING TO GET A FULL BODYSUIT; THERE WAS NO QUESTION ABOUT IT.

generally sit for six hour sessions and the after effects are often worse than the actual tattooing as I get really bruised after such long sittings, but no pain, no gain, right?

Regarding my tattoos, I get mixed reactions from my family, but I have to say that we are not the most 'traditional' family in the world. We all have our own likes and dislikes, we are all very different and tend to accept each other for who we are as unique individuals and on top of that my family knows how

art is a very big part of who I am. I imagine that they see it as an external extension of my inner self, maybe not everybody's cup of tea, but it is what it is.

I also get mixed reactions from the general public; they either look at me and tut or shake their heads, silently disapproving, or on the other hand look at me with interest and enthusiasm and ask me lots of questions about my tattoos. Either way it's cool, I know what I have done is not for everyone.

As far as the modelling goes, it isn't something I actively sought out; it just kind of found me! It really took off after the London Convention 2009, as that was where I got the most exposure. Since then I have had a lot of offers from talented and established photographers and I am trying to get around to working with some of these. I have already modelled for some amazing photographers, real artists in their own right. People like Ashley from Savageskin photography, who did this shoot, also Doralba Picerno and Craig Burton, to name but a few. Working with these individuals has given me a good basic introduction, as well as direction and experience, in terms of modelling. In some ways it's been like a whirlwind, which I have to admit I wasn't expecting. Apart from that I haven't done anything 'serious' just yet; I'm just trying to keep my feet on the ground for the time being. Modelling



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I'M ACTUALLY MORE CONFIDENT IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA WITHOUT ANY CLOTHES, MUCH MORE SO THAN WHEN I AM WEARING THEM.

has been an altogether pleasant surprise, albeit unexpected, so I'm just waiting to see where it carries me.

I love the way the camera seems to capture my essence and what I find fascinating is that's something that other people often notice and point out to me too. The strange thing is that I'm actually more confident in front of the camera without any clothes, much more so than when I am wearing them.

As for the future, I want to get into tattooing, there's really nothing more that I would rather do with the rest of my life. I have fallen in love with everything about it, what more can I say? 🐦



# One Shot One Kill

AT THE 2010 LONDON TATTOO CONVENTION, I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO FINALLY BUMP INTO EDGAR HOILL AFTER A GOOD TWO YEARS OF FOLLOWING HIS WORK FROM AFAR. THE ONE SHOT ONE KILL EXHIBITION WAS PARTICULARLY WELL ATTENDED AND HOILL MADE HIMSELF A LOT OF NEW FANS OVER THE THREE DAY SPECTACULAR:



## Jack Rudy

This is something you won't find anywhere else. This is a picture of Jack Rudy tattooing Brian Everett and is monumental. Jack became a mentor to me - he inspires me totally and I love this so much because I don't think anybody will ever get the chance to capture this ever again. Afterwards, I also took this picture of Jack's machine in close-up.

Edgar Hoill's story is a triumph of success in the face of adversity. If ever you were looking for a life-story that illustrated what equal parts of hard work, luck, loyalty and respect could get you, this has to be it. As we squirrel ourselves away in a corner of the exhibition complete with TV camera crew and the tribal rhythm of those Fuel Girls drums, he begins to tell me his story:

"I went to a high school in Texas that was about 80% white American rich kids and not very many of us Latinos and every time you looked at the school newspaper or the yearbook it was really noticeable that everybody in them was white and I was always saying: "I want to be in the yearbook" but when I asked them why they wouldn't take my picture to be in it, the only response I ever got was "we only want to

see our friends in the yearbook" - which really pissed me off.

"So one day, I went to see the head teacher and I was like "what's up with this - they won't take pictures of the Chicanos?" and he gave me the same answer that they did, that they just wanted their friends in there. I didn't think that was right and I told them so. But one day, one of the teachers says to me "well why don't you do something about it?"

"So the following semester, I started taking pictures - this is like '93/'94 - I started taking pictures of all the homies, the gangsters, all the punks - everybody that wasn't your typical white person. I took pictures of the janitors and the lunch ladies as well and all of these people I started putting in the yearbook myself. Did you ever take pictures of the white kids as well?"

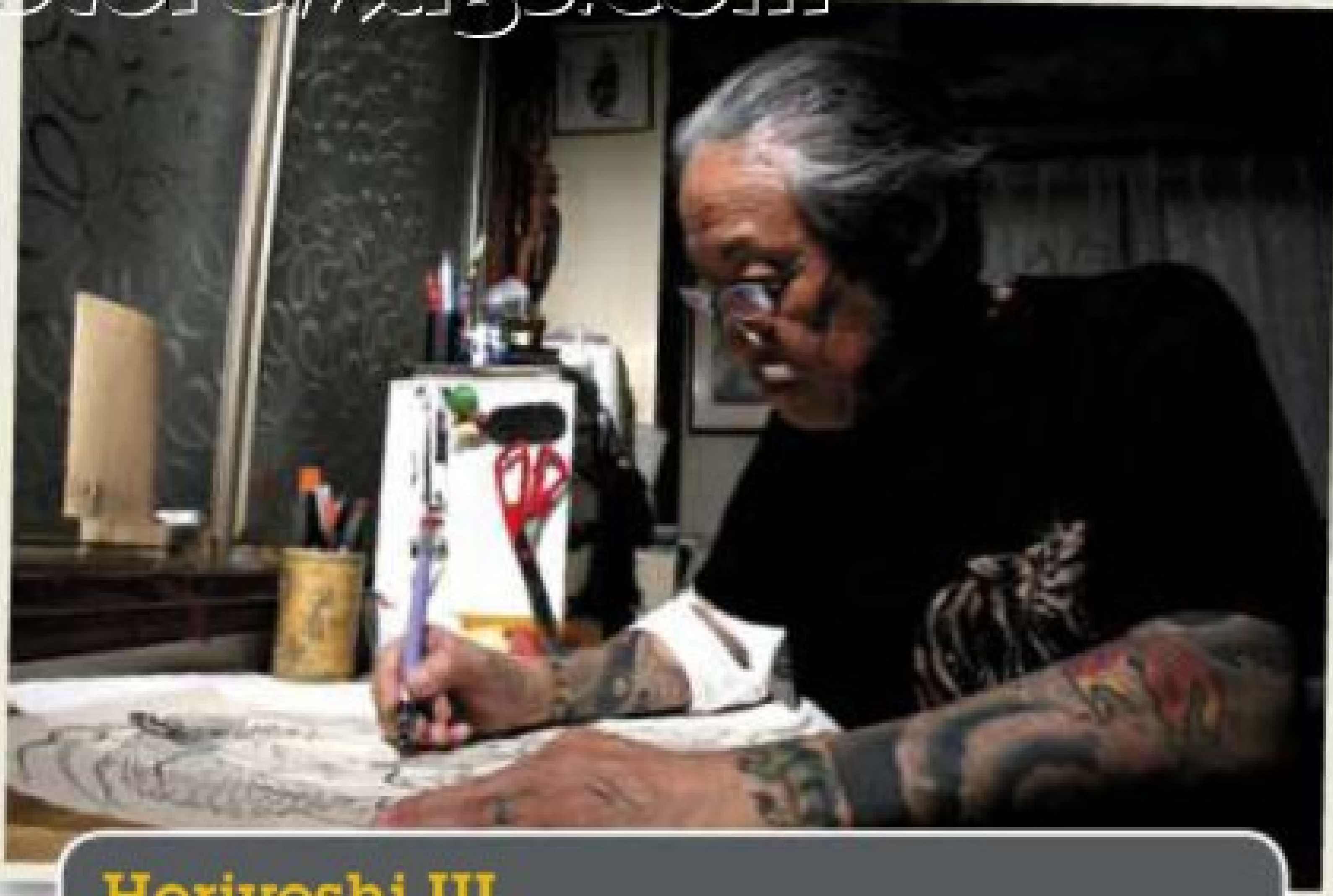
"No, but the thing about it was that I started getting really popular from doing this and everybody - even those white kids - really liked my pictures and I would get hit up by them to take their pictures as well, but you know, I had to say "Fuck you - when I wanted you to take our pictures you blew us off, so now I'm blowing you". So basically I was fighting for my people because the Chicanos and the Latinos - we were always looked down on. For instance, our soccer team was the best in the school but they would never do articles on them - they would feature their soccer team who sucked. 🐦



### This is Chico

Chico opened a lot of doors not only for the tattoo community with his black and grey work, but for me personally. He was always pushing me to do better and showing people my work - I owe him so much. Sadly, he passed away and he was my friend y'know. I like to remember him like this whenever I can.





### Horiyoshi III

I took a lot of pictures of him doing various things. They are part of a set I have of him doing the four different elements that he specialises in: tattooing with a machine, Tebori, drawing and Kanji. Together, they capture the real essence of who he is and what he does.

So, the more I did this, the more people would identify themselves with me and they really liked that I was doing something for them. This was Houston – it was really racist and the rich kids lived on one side of the freeway and the poor kids lived on the other. So anyway, I got pretty close with a lot of my teachers and they always supported me because – even though I was always in trouble – they knew I was doing it for the right reasons and they were always supportive.

“Eventually, I started working in a camera store after school and I was meeting a lot of photographers and I would go out and assist them on jobs and that’s how it really all started off. Then I started working for some local newspapers and I would shoot underground concerts and stuff. Then one day I met a guy who came into the store looking for some equipment and he was really stressing out because he needed to take some pictures and his photographer had let him down.



“So I said something like ‘Well, I’ll help you out – there’s no need to buy a camera because I have my own equipment’ and then we used the store equipment anyway and then just took it back - I used to do that all the time. He was actually the owner of Lowrider magazine – so I shot some things for his magazine and that was when I started getting recognised by Lowrider which is who I work for now. After a couple of interviews, they hired me as regular freelancer and after a couple of years of all of this, I was doing OK for myself. I had regular freelancing work and I was the manager of the camera store and everything

was working out great.

“Then one day, one of the hurricanes – I forget what its name was - it wiped out the camera store. Some trees came down and took out the whole drainage system. They had hurricane insurance but they didn’t have flood insurance because it wasn’t in a flood area and the store ended up 18 feet under water, so and they went bankrupt meaning I was shit out of luck. Luckily, the guys at the magazine said that they wanted me full time and I was hired on the Wednesday.

“I had my first job to do on the Saturday, so I packed everything I could in my car and drove on the Thursday and Friday and got to work.





### Black & Grey

These are part of a set that comes from a black and grey documentary that I worked on for the History channel. A lot of people stop and look at this I think because it's a classic example of what a black and grey backpiece should be like.



So, you know, I always remind myself to stay grounded and treat everybody with respect because you never know what kind of shit can happen..." ..and it's easy to end up back on the street too, right? "Oh yeah - my family is always real supportive though and anytime I ever start to slide backwards, they kick my ass and remind me that I'm fucking up stuff that's important. People like and respect my work now. I'm one of the very few people that are allowed in some of these places to do my work. It's an honour to be able to do things like this and the only reason I'm able to do it is because they like what I do and we respect each other - I

take care of them and they take care of me. Lowrider opened a lot of doors for me."

When did you start to take it to the exhibition stage? "One of my friends, invited me to be a judge at a Lowrider show and he saw the stuff I was doing and he said that he really wanted me to bring some stuff out to exhibit to see what people thought of it - and people were loving it. That was really the first time that I realised people could be into my work not only in my town,

but internationally as well. It opened other doors too - I never thought I would have shot Snoop Dog, or worked closely with the big Mexican bands I have."

The drums in the background begin to die out, which is a good time to make ourselves mobile and get the story behind each of the display items. They say that every picture tells a story, but somehow, every picture doesn't seem to tell quite as much of a story of Edgar Hoill's do. ★



# ARTISTS

THE VERY NATURE OF PRODUCING A MAGAZINE LIKE SKIN DEEP BRINGS US INTO CONTACT WITH SOME INCREDIBLE PEOPLE WORKING WITHIN THE ART. WITHOUT QUESTION, THEY HAVE ALL INFLUENCED THE FUTURE IN SOME WAY, WHETHER IT BE WITH A FEW WISE WORDS OR A SINGLE PICTURE.


Sometimes - an awful lot of the time - it makes you stop and wonder just how an artist can have gotten that good. The answer is inevitably a combination of developed talent and a lot of hard work. An awful lot of hard work. Even when you've looked at a thousand tattoos in a single day, there are always occasions when an image will stop you in your tracks and force you to inspect it just a little bit closer, provoking the eternal question "how in the world did they get that on there?"

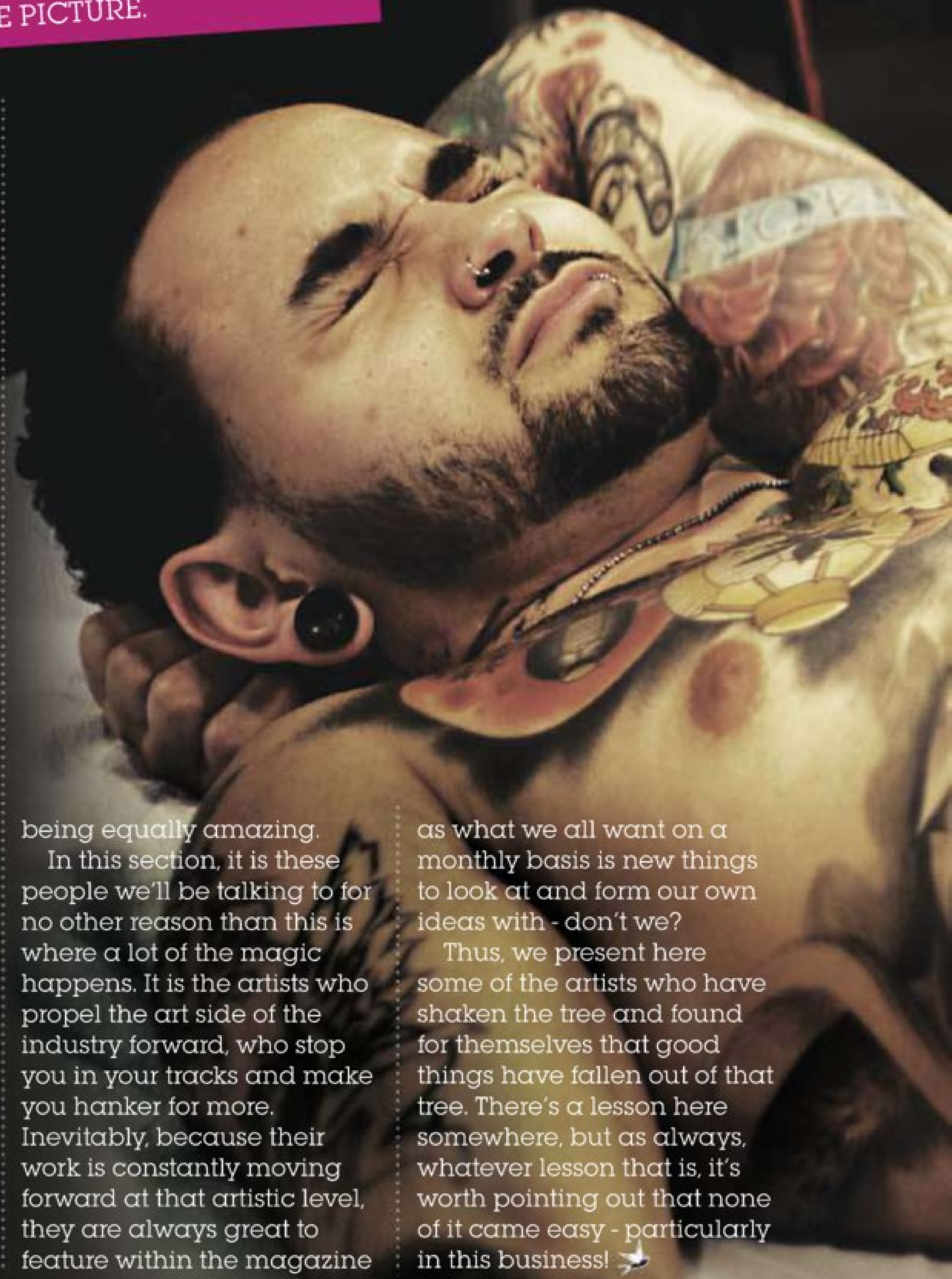
This is a good place to point out what I feel is an important divide to make within the 'industry' - there are tattooists and there are tattoo artists. Both equally important. A tattooist is one whose understanding of the technical aspect of the art is second to none, who will work from a template or flash and bring about the most amazing piece of work for you. A tattoo artist on the other hand, is capable of producing custom work seemingly straight out of their head, using your skin for a canvas - the end result

being equally amazing.

In this section, it is these people we'll be talking to for no other reason than this is where a lot of the magic happens. It is the artists who propel the art side of the industry forward, who stop you in your tracks and make you hanker for more. Inevitably, because their work is constantly moving forward at that artistic level, they are always great to feature within the magazine

as what we all want on a monthly basis is new things to look at and form our own ideas with - don't we?

Thus, we present here some of the artists who have shaken the tree and found for themselves that good things have fallen out of that tree. There's a lesson here somewhere, but as always, whatever lesson that is, it's worth pointing out that none of it came easy - particularly in this business! 









A MAN CALLED

# GRIME

TATTOOING FOR 17 YEARS NOW, GRIME FIRST MADE THE MOVE TO SAN FRANCISCO FROM HIS NATIVE COLORADO IN 1996, STRICTLY TO PURSUE HIS PASSION. "IN MY OPINION, SAN FRANCISCO WAS THE MOST PROGRESSIVE TATTOO CITY IN THE WHOLE WORLD AND I WANTED TO BE PART OF THAT, I WANTED TO EXPERIENCE AND LEARN FROM THEM." RECOUNTS GRIME.



## Contact

**SKULL & SWORD**  
3415 CESAR CHAVEZ,  
SAN FRANCISCO,  
CA 94110

Involvement with a variety of shops throughout the years, it seems Grime finally struck tattoo gold with Skull and Sword. Talented guest artists aside, the studio's three permanent artists, in addition to Grime, help elevate Skull and

Sword to a level of artistry well above most shops. Yutaro Sakai, Henry Lewis and Lango, who joined forces with Grime in that order, are the distinct and masterful artists at the shop's core.

But even with a portfolio as strong as this, it seems the greatest criticisms on Grime's work stem from within himself. "I'm hyper-critical," he admits. "I think in the past, I would say, 99 per cent of my work I didn't like at all. Now, I'm a little less critical of my work, and work in general, because I just see it looser - and some things I figure, you know, that's fine for now, or that's as good as you're gonna do for the moment."

However, where most would consider a critical eye a curse, Grime focuses on its upside; "I think I'm fortunate to have that because it's really pushed my work and it's helped these guys see things, and it's helped me

understand when other people are discussing my own work, or other people's work, so I think it really aids in our ability to look at design and to determine subtle things like, you know, move this and change that because it's going to have a different look, and it will make your eye move across the piece."

"I'd wanted to tattoo professionally since I was 14, even though it wasn't a burning desire per se, but it was something that was in my head. I had mentioned it to friends and thought about it, so it was definitely something that was on my radar. But I didn't portray myself like 'Oh, I'm going to be this thing', or 'I'm going to do this when I get older.' I was young, I was stuck in the moment and I didn't know what I was going to do but it kept pursuing me, so it came







"I THINK I'M FORTUNATE TO HAVE THAT BECAUSE IT'S REALLY PUSHED MY WORK AND IT'S HELPED THESE GUYS SEE THINGS, AND IT'S HELPED ME UNDERSTAND WHEN OTHER PEOPLE ARE DISCUSSING MY OWN WORK

to the point where I had to do it."

Following his first ever job, "a graffiti piece on a friend's calf," tattoos soon become the art that overpowered all. "I do other things, but tattooing is by far the thing I do the most and it's the medium that I'm most comfortable with. I know how to get my desired effects with tattooing easier than I even know how to with a pencil or a paint or anything else."

Even so, the most surprising aspect still remains "how hard it is," says Grime. "The

difficulty of making really good tattoos is pretty staggering. I've been tattooing 17 years and it's still really hard to do even a decent tattoo. A really, really good tattoo is really fucking hard. And that's what amazes me about people who think that they're good, it just blows my mind."

From this modesty comes a truly standout point about Grime; you can trust him. Trust him to be honest and to deliver. "There's some stuff I don't do," he says. "My number one goal in tattooing



is to make really strong tattoos, so if it's something that I feel is like, 'Man, I don't know how to get that to even be a decent tattoo,' I'll just turn it down."✈



# KAT VON D

WHAT KAT DID NEXT ...



MANY HAVE WATCHED HER TELEVISION SHOW, BROWSED THROUGH HER BOOKS, READ ABOUT HER IN THE TABLOIDS AND CREATED A PERSONA OF KAT VON D IN THEIR MINDS, BUT FEW KNOW THE REAL KATHERINE VON DRACHENBERG:

## Contact

**High Voltage Tattoo**  
1259 N. La Brea  
Avenue  
Hollywood, CA 90038

[www.highvoltage  
tattoo.com](http://www.highvoltage<br/>tattoo.com)

A passionate, at times self-conscious, self-professed workaholic, she's one hell of an artist in any medium she tackles and maybe that's because she never rests. Before Kat Von D became the master of black and grey portraiture that she is today, Katherine von Drachenberg was a tattoo-enamoured teenager with no one to apprentice under, but remained convinced that she had found her calling.

"The first second I started tattooing I knew that I was in

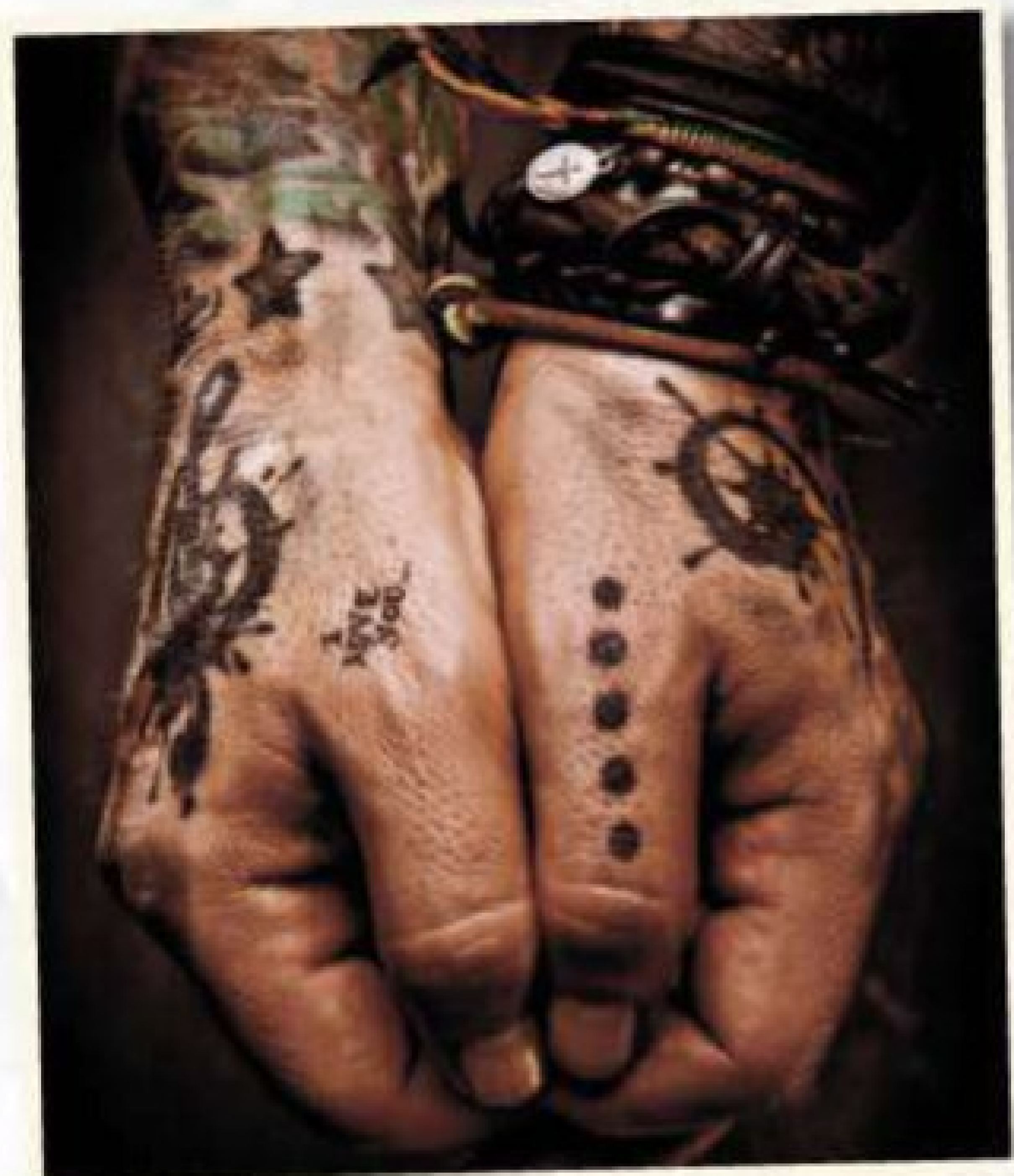
love with this and I was like, 'I need to do this. I'm not even sure exactly what I'm doing, but I know that I want to do this.'" Landing her first job at a tattoo shop at the age of 16, it was all uphill from there. Yes, uphill: "Most people go through an apprenticeship where somebody more experienced guides you through and it's a learning process. I was doing everything unprofessionally and had to learn everything the hard way, I guess."

The creation of High Voltage Tattoo and the shop's inner workings are well documented on the hit television show *LA Ink*. Not having owned a television herself in almost 14 years, Von

D relies on rough cuts to keep up with the show. Although she doesn't have a final say in the editing process, she admits, "There's been plenty of times where I was like, 'What the fuck? You can't do that. I wasn't even in the room and you edited it that way!'"

"I like to believe that people are smarter than that and don't believe everything they see - especially when editors splice up certain sentences or there's no continuity. Like if my hair is a different shade of red in every scene, I can't dye my hair in ten minutes! I've had to learn to really let go of a lot of that stuff."

When I bring up the term "reality TV star" to ask about misconceptions the public







may have of Kat Von D, I can almost hear her cringe. "Ugh, I hate that term. We used to be under a Doc Series format where it wasn't about drama and then the network decided to change it. That's why I have such a hard time with the show, because I absolutely hate drama."

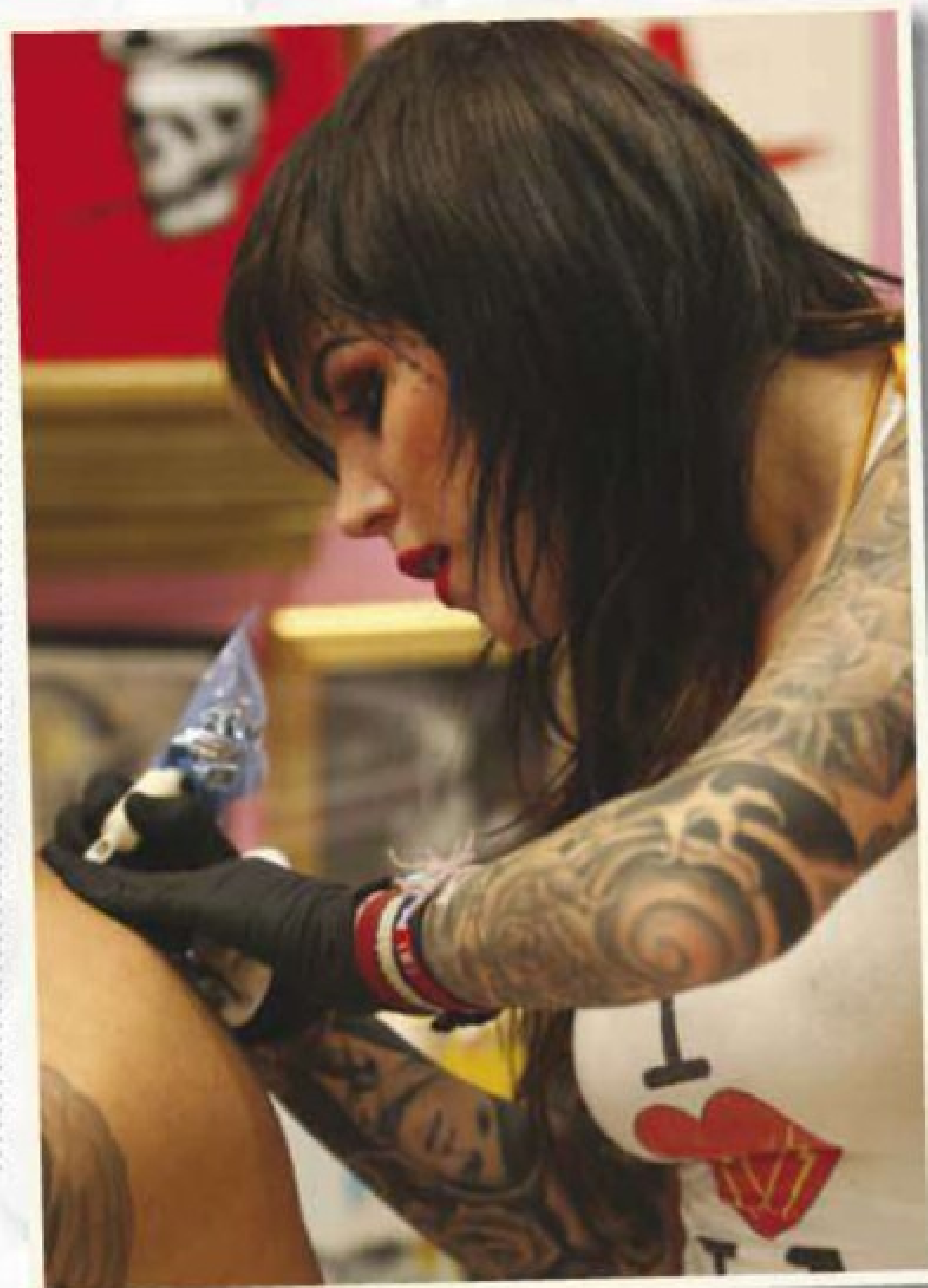
And that really plays into her personality. "I'm semi-reclusive and shy and at times self-conscious," she admits. "I'm definitely not perfect. I think if people just remembered that everybody is either somebody's daughter or mother or son, brother, father, we'd probably treat each other a lot better and give each other a lot more breaks. I think any preconceived perception is a misconception."

One of the biggest mistakes made may be in assuming just how hard it is to get tattooed by Von D. "I think a lot of people have exaggerated things and because of the show a lot of people think I'm inaccessible." In reality, Von D says she and

"I ONLY BOOK OUT TWO MONTHS IN ADVANCE BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN IN TWO MONTHS. PEOPLE THINK I CHARGE A MILLION DOLLARS TO TALK OR SOMETHING. I ALSO DON'T TATTOO YOU ON A THRONE OF GOLD!"

her assistant answer every request that's submitted and adds, "I only book out two months because you don't know what's gonna happen in two months. People think I charge a million dollars to talk or something. I also don't tattoo you on a throne of gold!" she laughs. "High Voltage is a real tattoo shop and everyone who comes through gets a real experience."

So how would this tattoo artist extraordinaire sum herself up? Finishing the sentence 'Kat Von D is...' quickly becomes the toughest challenge of our conversation. "Is at a loss of words?" laughs Von D. "I don't know, I think I would leave it blank and add a period." 🐦





# A BREED APART

BUENA VISTA  
TATTOO CLUB



VOLKO MERSCHKY AND SIMONE PFAFF ARE THE MOST UNASSUMING ARTISTS I HAVE EVER HAD THE PLEASURE OF MEETING. BOTH ARE SOFTLY SPOKEN, HUMBLE IN THEIR ESTIMATION OF THEIR OWN WORK AND PROFESSIONAL TO THE CORE. THIS, COMBINED WITH THEIR FAR SUPERIOR COMMAND OF ENGLISH THAN MY GERMAN, MAKES IT AN ABSOLUTE THRILL TO BE IN THEIR COMPANY.

## Contact

**Buena Vista  
Tattoo Club**

Peterstr. 1  
97070 Würzburg  
Germany  
0049 931 702656

[www.buena  
vistatattooclub.com](http://www.buena<br/>vistatattooclub.com)

**Y**ou may look at their creations and decide they're not for you. You may also look and not get what's going on. You too may also fall in love. This is what true art does - it evokes a response at the emotional level that demands either taking part or moving on. They have branded their unique style as Realistic Trash Polka. It's an obvious question to start the

ball rolling - one that causes much hushed conversation in their mother tongue wanting nothing more than to get this right for the record:

"Well, the tattoo designs we create don't fit into any known or common styles, so we made up our minds to think of a term that would describe it best. We came up with Realistic Trash Polka because all in all, it's a mixture of realistic elements combined with abstract or sometimes, graphic parts which represent the 'trash' part of the phrase. While this may be an unusual combination, it's familiar from music, as a polka. So, the term polka comes from our inspiration from the music - especially from our own music and songwriting. Basically, Realistic Trash Polka is all of those things combined with what happens when we come together to create. It's simply the two of us, our name, our

brand and our style."

"You see, when you come to us, you have two opportunities. The first is to give us total freedom to create the art freehand - but the customer can also give a certain theme if they wish, maybe some keywords in combination with a song, poem or a quote. Out of this, the design will be created by us from our understanding of the theme. By doing it this way, we can always be sure to develop our style and create completely unique designs that are one of a kind."

Surely then, along with giving some clues as to what sort of person you are and the kind of design you're looking for in the Trash Polka style, it's just as important to mention any imagery you particularly don't want as well?

"Yes, of course, but you mustn't confuse that with telling us exactly what you want in the design, that's not how we work. It is more an







abstract way of working - working with moods - desperate, happiness etcetera - that kind of input lets us work to our best." "You see, before we became tattoo artists, we went to art school and through this we learned a lot. It may be that the Trash Polka style came about from our paintings and drawings. Step by step, we got more ideas to design tattoos in this way and over time, we found we had many customers who were open minded enough and trusted us. Without them, we wouldn't have had a chance to tattoo this style at all!"

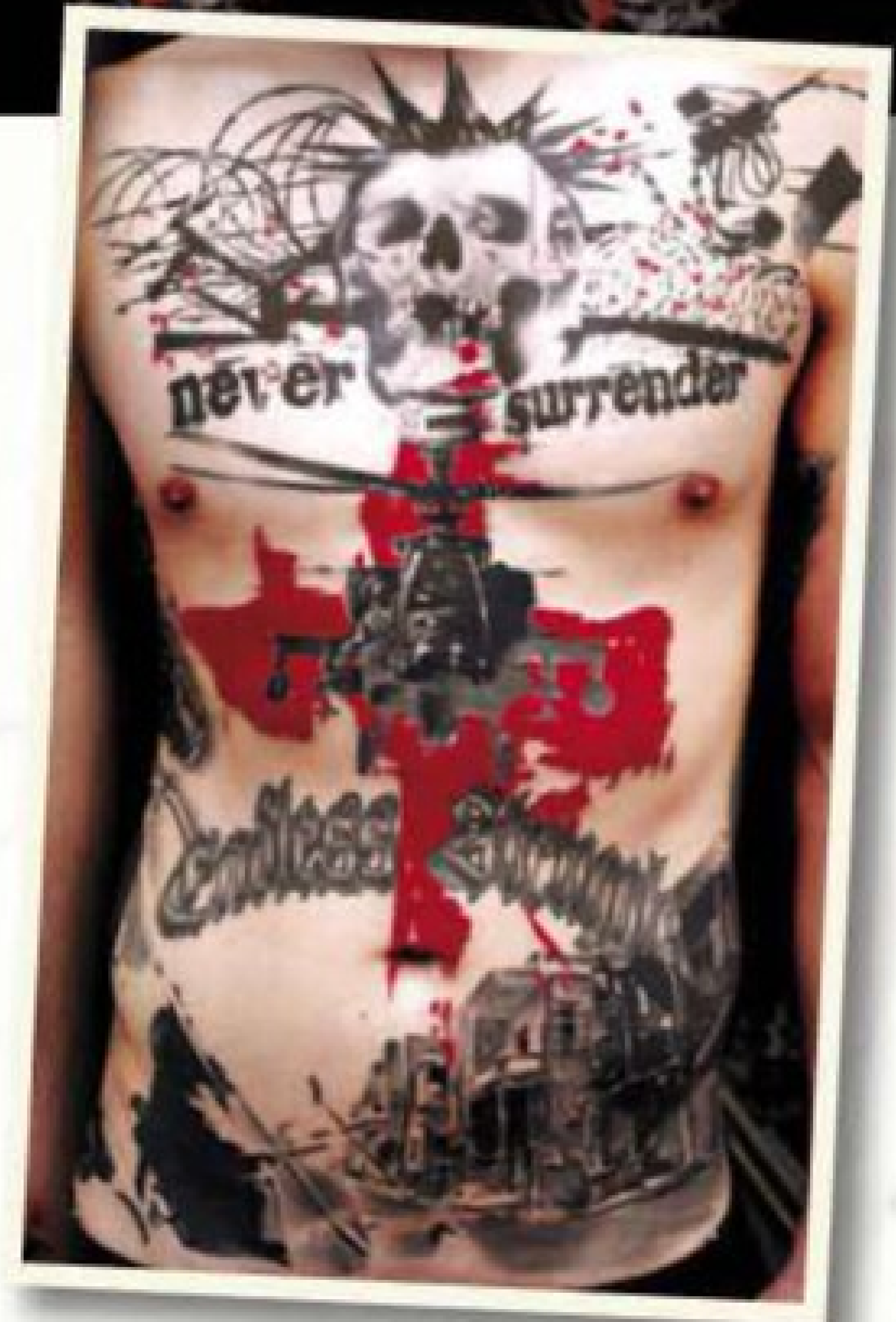
"We are at our best when we work together, getting inspiration from each other and discussing our ideas - it is only out of this environment that the style and the tattoo designs develop. In fact, we work so closely and have so much the same style, that there is virtually no difference in the

## WE ARE AT OUR BEST WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER, GETTING INSPIRATION FROM EACH OTHER AND DISCUSSING OUR IDEAS

way of working our creations. We don't have to explain our ideas in detail to each other, each of us gives an idea or proposal for the design that can be an inspiration for the other and so on."

"As artists it is important to develop, work on new ideas and never stand still. It is bad for the soul to work on the same designs for years and never create something new. This is also what we tell our customers - we encourage them to get a unique design. We never do anything twice and because of this we are forced to create new things all the time. When we look back at a design - something we did maybe a year ago - there is always a big

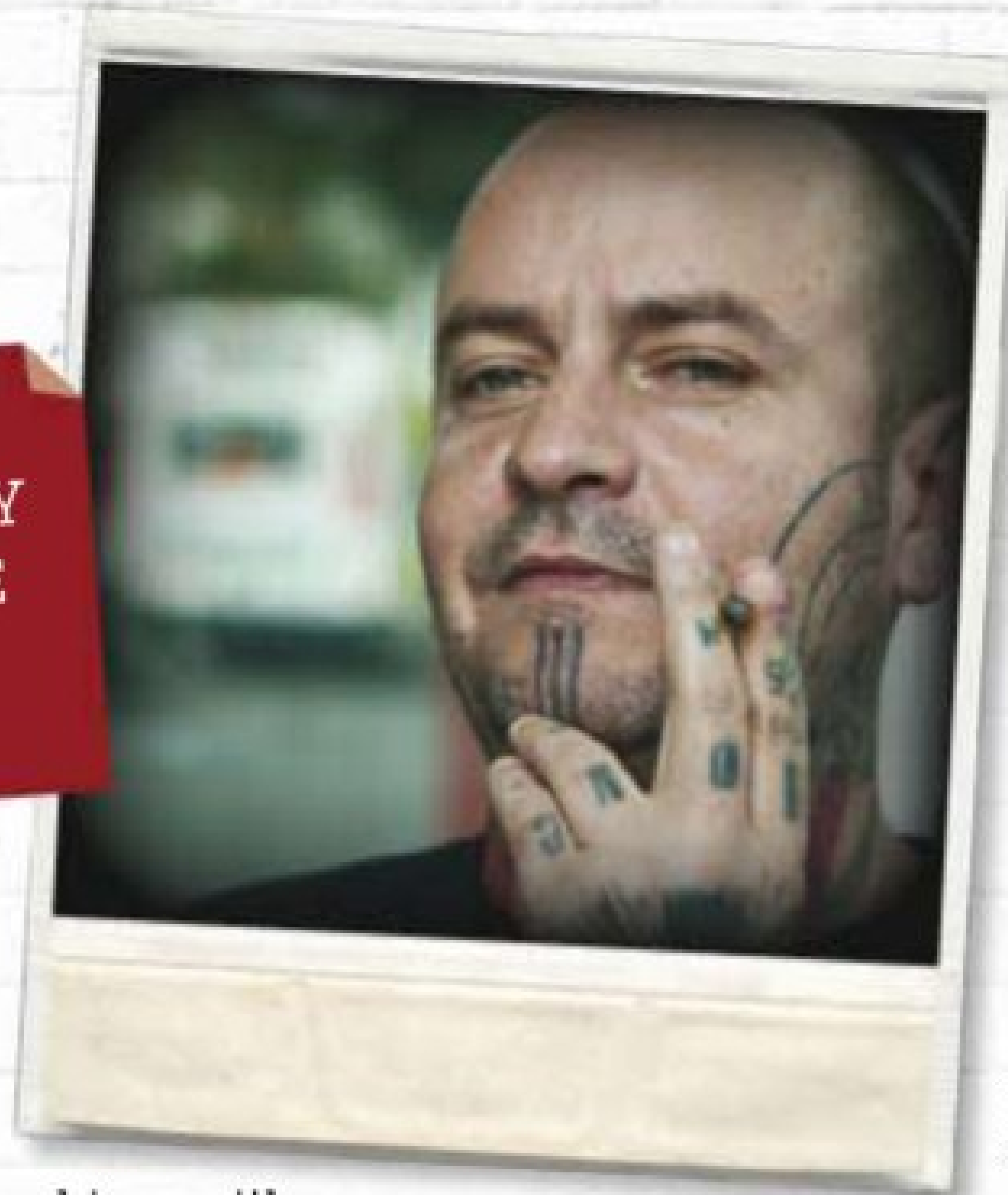
difference to where we are now and we continually get new ideas for upcoming tattoos, so we are pretty sure that the designs will change! As this is an evolutionary process, we cannot prophesise how our designs will look when the customer turns up for the work! We hope though, that our customers will like it and are as much interested in this type of art as we are. Years ago, we both did all kinds of styles in our tattooing but now we both only work in Trash Polka."





# THE BLACK KNIGHT

YANN BLACK IS A MAN FOREVER AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF ART. HIS TOTALLY UNIQUE STYLE IS INSTANTLY RECOGNISABLE 'ART BRUT' STYLE BUT STILL THERE ARE THOSE WHO AREN'T SURE WHERE IT FITS WITHIN THE BIG SCHEME OF THINGS.



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The first thing that needs addressing is why there is so much confusion in the public acceptance of Black's work, although why the general populace feel a need to have to categorise things has always been beyond me:

"Me too, but it doesn't really bother me. I do my own thing and people make what they want of it - and I wouldn't say other tattoo artists have really influenced me, but people like Alex Binnie and Xed Le Hed definitely made me want to start tattooing and I think the same things were said about them also."

And I've heard those very same confused people often describe your work as being simple or even child-like - which is really just a simple lack of understanding, yes?

"Compared to more traditional tattoos, my work could I suppose, be

considered too simplistic or 'naif', but working with minimalistic and purified line work doesn't leave a single margin for error. I like to think that my work is constantly progressing, technically and graphically speaking."

"Although some clients come to me asking for

dabbled in, it's actually when people bring new ideas to me that I've never worked with before that allows me to push my work forwards."

With a customer waiting list consistently booked up at least six months in advance,

designs I've already



[Store/kegg.com](http://Store/kegg.com)





## ART BRUT

Art Brut (raw art or rough art) is a term plucked out of thin air by the French artist Jean Dubuffet to describe art that is created outside of the norm. Dubuffet's original statement was actually made with regards to inmates of insane asylums and the art they produced but later, as the phrase was brought into the mainstream and newly termed 'outsider art' by Roger Cardinal, it came to describe any art that was outside of the mainstream and without formal qualification - which let's face it, isn't half as cool to be associated with.

The best example of true Art Brut seeping into pop culture is the work of William Kurelek whose madness induced "The Maze" (1953) was used for the cover of Van Halen's 1981 album Fair Warning.



if you like what you see here, you'd better get your name added to it pretty quickly. In this relatively new world of preparing the tattoo as art and not strictly as a tattoo, how much input can the customer put in before Black takes over?


"The customer input is vital. Without the exchange between the artist and the client, there wouldn't be a tattoo. People come to me because they like the graphic style, so they know what to expect. They come with an idea and I adapt it with my style, but if one of us isn't happy, we simply don't do the tattoo."

Although the form itself seems simple, it's far from it - especially trying to create the illusion of mess out of

very clean lines - and while we're on the subject, is that something that others have ever tried to replicate?

"Definitely. Be it the clean, straight lines, or the dirty, ephemeral, sketchy lines, both are technically as demanding as each other - and it's all freehand, except

for the occasional reproduction of a work of art. The black and red that I use have become synonymous with my work - I've tried other colour combinations, but it doesn't really work for me.

"Occasionally, I have seen 'copies' of my art and generally it doesn't work because of that lack of understanding, but effectively, I guess it has opened the doors for other artists to try out new ideas. Some artists have even adapted the style, and have brought something new to the table, exploring terrain that I would have never ventured into." 

**"ALTHOUGH SOME CLIENTS COME TO ME ASKING FOR DESIGNS I'VE ALREADY DABBLED IN, IT'S ACTUALLY WHEN PEOPLE BRING NEW IDEAS TO ME THAT I'VE NEVER WORKED WITH BEFORE THAT ALLOWS ME TO PUSH MY WORK FORWARDS."**



# MASTER OF REALITY

MIKE DEVRIES

RENOWNED FOR HIS STUNNING REALISM WORK AND PUTTING INK INTO THE SKIN OF SYLVESTER STALLONE AND CHRIS DAUGHTRY, MIKE DEVRIES IS RIGHTLY RANKED AMONG THE WORLD'S BEST. WITH MD TATTOO STUDIO GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH IN JUST A FEW SHORT YEARS, WE THOUGHT IT WAS HIGH TIME WE CHECKED IN TO SURVEY OUT THE LAY OF THE LAND.



## Contact

**MD Tattoo Studio**  
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Unit 2 Northridge  
CA 91324

[www.mdttattoo.com](http://www.mdttattoo.com)

Tel: 818 700 2818

I opened MD Tattoo Studio in July of 2008, so we're a fairly new shop in the big scheme of things. Most tattoo artists have a goal of opening their own shop one day and of course, that was one goal of mine too, but opening and running a shop is not easy and at times I question if it's worth it, but after some time, a lot of dedication and hard work, it has turned out to be a positive experience."

That's not a statement that

everybody who owns and runs their own shop can attest to. With the public perception of tattoo shop management most likely being what they have picked up from LA Ink and suchlike shows - editing aside - is that how things pan out in the real world too?

"In the beginning, the shop went through a few artists that didn't work out, but after spending some time sorting things out and learning as I went along, the shop is going well for us. I have a crew that I'm very thankful for - they're not only people that I work with, but to me they are family: Jeff Johnson, Katelyn Crane, Josh Duffy, London, and my up-and-coming apprentice, Jamie Parker. I

love going to work not only to tattoo and create art, but also to hang out with my crew all day. We have a good time. MD Tattoos is an open environment where we are working together and having a blast doing so. We all feed artistically from each other, no one has an ego, and we all take tattooing very seriously while having fun doing it."

"The vibe in the shop is totally geared towards artistic creativity and all of the artists are encouraged to express themselves as such but I also feel that in order to run a successful shop, there needs to be a balance between being creative and being business-minded. Being creative in artwork and design, but also being business-minded in the sense of having a good work ethic, keeping things neat







and organised and ultimately making sure the customer is satisfied."

"Personally speaking, when I look back to when I started tattooing, I was doing all sorts of different styles, just to learn how to tattoo and trying to figure out my niche. My mentor Jim Hayek did a lot of amazing new skool, bright, colourful work with solid outlines. He also dabbled in pin-ups and realism himself, so early on in my career I tried the same type of work and ended up tattooing some pin-ups as well - and then a couple of animals and portraits of people, and it just started to escalate. More and

more people wanted portraits from me and I wasn't complaining because I loved doing it! I remember tattooing a couple of lions in colour that people saw and liked and those were a couple of pieces that helped get the ball rolling."

"I believe just having animals growing up and loving them as pets has influenced my tattoo work, but like I said earlier, when I went into tattooing I didn't know I was going to be a wildlife animal portraiture artist, I kind of fell into it while viewing some of Tom Renshaw's work during my apprenticeship. I asked my

## WHEN I LOOK BACK TO WHEN I STARTED TATTOOING, I WAS DOING ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT STYLES, JUST TO LEARN HOW TO TATTOO AND TRYING TO FIGURE OUT MY NICHE

mentor, 'How the heck is he doing this? These animal portraits are amazing!' That had a lot of influence on me as well. I love all sorts of art and even though I have a name in the realism tattoo world, that isn't all I appreciate. I love it all!"





# THE TATTOO REPUBLIC

THE FALL OF COMMUNISM MEANT THE UPRISING OF AN EXCITING COUNTERCULTURE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC. ONE PARTICULAR PRAGUE-BASED TATTOO STUDIO WAS THERE FROM THE BEGINNING AND HELPED LEAD THE WAY FOR A TATTOO REPUBLIC...



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Like the outbreak of Punk during '77 in the UK, the tattoo counterculture arrived and took Prague by storm, sending it into a whirlwind of frenzied excitement and creative flair - and Michal Burda, Tribo's founder, trail-blazed his way to notoriety when he set up the tattoo

studio during 1996, kick-starting the tattoo republic revolution. Initially focusing on the production and distribution of piercing jewellery, Tribo opened up its first tattoo parlour during the mid-90s and hasn't looked back since.

"We opened our first shop in 1996 with a friend and tattoo artist from a small city outside of Prague. We were one of the first body art shops in the Czech Republic, so the general attitude was that we were total freaks. It was really unusual at that time - things like stretched earlobes and multiple piercings, people mainly associated tattoos with criminals."

Burda's tattoo shop wasn't exactly welcomed with open arms when it first dared to take Prague and its frustrated counterculture disciples in scary new directions. With the authorities breathing down their necks, sceptical and resistant to the burgeoning tattoo scene, it wasn't easy

for Burda and his band of rebel artists to pioneer a new tattoo movement.

"You could count the shops on one hand, and now there are hundreds of them, but very few are good enough to compete on an international level. It was really hard with the authorities while opening the shop. They put a close eye on us and it took lot of energy and paperwork to prove to them that we could do it in a clean and safe way, and that we weren't planning on killing someone or spreading some deadly infection throughout Prague."

"It was really hard to get useful information in the Czech Republic in that time. There was no internet and no books published. From time to time a truck driver friend of ours brought us tattoo magazines bought at petrol stations in Western Europe. I was travelling also.



Release: StoreMags & FantaMag





Berlin was always a big source for information and inspiration for me."

Situated and hard at work behind the doors of the Tribo studio is super-versatile Peter Bobek, an artist who has become renowned for his realism and black and grey, and has since brought colour to the mix which has taken his work to a whole new level. Musa, Peter's apprentice, is a young-gun who has been working professionally for just one and half year.

"Musa came out with his really unique abstract aquarelle style, which has attracted many people from all over the world", says Michal. "After attending a few conventions in Western Europe, his work is now becoming very popular and there are many people travelling from abroad to Prague just to be tattooed by him."

Emerging from a former communist state and beating out all odds to successfully help to launch

## WE WERE ONE OF THE FIRST BODY ART SHOPS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC, SO THE GENERAL ATTITUDE WAS THAT WE WERE TOTAL FREAKS

a tattoo uprising and managing to stay on top in such a competitive and packed market has been no easy feat for Tribo, but the studio's success is a result of Tribo's simple but effective philosophy: a philosophy that will inevitably see them tattooing productively and successfully for another 15 years and beyond:

"We aim to keep our work at the highest possible level and to educate the new generation of tattoo artists in our shop. I am not talking just about artistic skills but also about personal integrity, loyalty, respect and friendship. We will continue to do the best tattoos that we can as always."★



# Becoming a Tattooist

THESE DAYS, THE VARIOUS PATHS TO BECOMING A TATTOOIST ARE AS DIFFERENT AS THE MULTITUDE OF STYLES AVAILABLE TO US TODAY. WITH TATTOOING BECOMING A MAJOR INDUSTRY, EVERY DOG AND HIS MARKER PEN WANT A PIECE OF THE ACTION. BUT WHAT IS THE CORRECT WAY TO GO ABOUT IT? AND IS THERE EVEN A CORRECT WAY?

**I**ncreasingly, apprenticeships seem to be on the wane with a lot of newcomers opting in favour of the many self-taught methods and the hype surrounding the tattoo world attracting people in it for a fast buck - artistic talent or not! Words like 'scratcher' and 'backroom' artist are regularly bandied about to cover anyone and everyone not taught by a fellow professional. But there are also many fine tattooists born of a desire so strong, that starting in less than desirable conditions was the only way to begin their careers. So let's take a closer look at these two routes and see what each has to offer.

## APPRENTICESHIPS

Historically, tattoo apprenticeships have been

the correct and accepted door into the world of becoming a tattooer. Some young gun, eager to learn the way of the ink, would find a willing teacher, bug him enough with his eagerness to learn and his extensive portfolio and would hopefully in the end, be accepted into the studio. There would then follow months, often years, of hard graft before they were finally allowed to pick up a tattoo machine and start tattooing for real.

Apprenticeships are not new, to tattooing or to any other profession. The idea is as old as time and in many other crafts; this was the only way in. All the great painters, sculptor, scholars of the past served apprenticeships. It was the done thing. It was a way for a 'master' to pass on his knowledge and expertise to one whom he thought would be suitable to fill his

position. It was also a way to 'test' the students desire to work in his chosen profession. So the apprentice would often find himself not only watching his teacher and learning his craft but also doing all the dirty work around the shop. This is known as "paying your dues".

So how do you become a tattoo apprentice? Well, this question is as difficult to answer as the meaning of life because more and more tattoo artists these days are not taking on apprentices.







There are many reasons for this but the two main ones seem to be, lack of dedication on the part of the proposed apprentice and more importantly, lack of any artistic skill whatsoever.

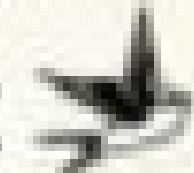
With the tattoo industry becoming so 'mainstream' recently, seemingly everybody wants to be a tattooist and they want to become one now.

Established artists are seeing wannabes walking into their studios, without a portfolio, unable to draw and

asking to be given a chance. The precious few that can actually draw, don't realise that tattooing skin is a lot harder than drawing on a flat piece of paper that doesn't move about or jump when in pain. They also don't seem to cotton on to the fact that it takes months to learn to use a tattoo machine properly, to use an autoclave and learn how to keep your station sterile as well as learning how to shade, line, colour and all the other ins and outs of

*It was also a way to 'test' the students desire to work in his chosen profession. So the apprentice would often find himself not only watching his teacher and learning his craft but also doing all the dirty work around the shop.*

being a successful tattooer.

You don't become a great tattooist just by purchasing a tattoo machine and having watched Miami Ink. It takes dedication and this is what 







*All the great painters, sculptor, scholars of the past served apprenticeships. It was the done thing. It was a way for a 'master' to pass on his knowledge and expertise to one whom he thought would be suitable to fill his position.*



an apprenticeship teaches you more than anything.

Back to the question of how do you become an apprentice? Well, probably the best answer, would be to draw. Then draw and draw some more. Create a stunning portfolio that nobody would be able to look at and then turn you away. Don't worry about how to tattoo or any of the other technical bits because that's what the apprenticeship is all about, but you must have the initial talent and artistic flair! Don't just fill your portfolio with tattoo designs either - throw in a few paintings, illustrations and anything else that is visually appealing because a good tattoo artist will want to see your full range of experience.

Once you have your portfolio, start knocking on doors - and boy, are there many doors (file under 'paying your dues'). No established artist is going to come looking for you, they're too busy keeping their customers happy. You need to hit the street and sell yourself.

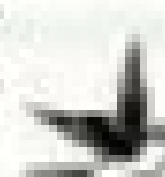
Another important point when trying to snag yourself an apprenticeship is don't

come across too cocky and full of yourself. You might be the best artist that has walked the streets of your chosen city but any decent tattooist will show you the door if you think you're better than everyone else who has been walking their path for years.

Finally, study your chosen field. It is not all important to know the great tattoo masters of the past, or the current trend-setters and big guns but it will help if you do! Like all other professions, tattooists like to wax lyrical about their heroes and the history of the craft they love

to be a part of and being able to join in and talk intelligently about 'the greats' will do you no harm.

A great example of how to gain an apprenticeship is Liam White, who is currently apprenticing at Slawit Ink in Huddersfield. Liam started off on his road to tattooing by studying games design at Huddersfield University and doing a little bit of concept art on the side to make some extra cash.

"I really wanted a tattoo and after saving and scrimping for sometime, I was told to go and see PJ 

#### **USELESS FACT:**

Esquire Magazine estimated in March 2002 that 1 in 8 Americans was tattooed. Presumably with the boom in recent years, this number could possibly be even larger assuming their research was solid in the first place.





(Paul Joyce) who was working out of a studio in Huddersfield. I ended up getting to my appointment a little early and so I sat in the studio drawing, while I waited for him to finish. After my tattoo he wanted to see my work and he really liked it. He asked me to do some big artwork on the walls of the studio for some free tattoo time. Of course, this deal was perfect for me! A few weeks went by and me and PJ ended up bumping into each other in our local on my graduation night. After a few beers, he asked me if tattooing was something I would like to get into. I'd always had an

interest but not enough balls to go for it. It turned out he was setting up his own studio, Slawit Ink, and wanted me to be his apprentice. Since then, I have never looked back."

A little bit of luck you might say, a case of being in the right place at the right time but not necessarily so. Liam was interested in tattoos, was getting tattooed and drew all the time - even in a studio waiting for a tattoo appointment! He proved himself by doing the artwork on the studio walls, instead of flaking out and never getting it done. Maybe, luck is just another word for hard work!

Another example of putting everything into getting your apprenticeship is Mike Gibson, who is apprenticing at Rude Studios in Headingley.

Apprenticeships are not easy to come by at all! I'd say I've have been lucky and landed on my feet! After I'd completed, what courses I wanted to do within art and design, I started

making progress with my portfolio in the preparation for interviews at studios! I started by e-mailing studio after studio in the hope that one would get back to me about an interview! After about 6-8 months of exchanging emails with various studios I managed to land myself an interview! To cut a long story short they ripped apart my portfolio from cover to cover to gain a greater knowledge of me and my ability with art!"

And finally, one last bit of advice, take your time when choosing the tattoo studio or tattooist you want to apprentice under. Learning your trade under a great tattoo artist gives you more than his knowledge, passion and tradition - it gives you his name! Choose a less than desirable 'master' and you will get a less than desirable reputation.

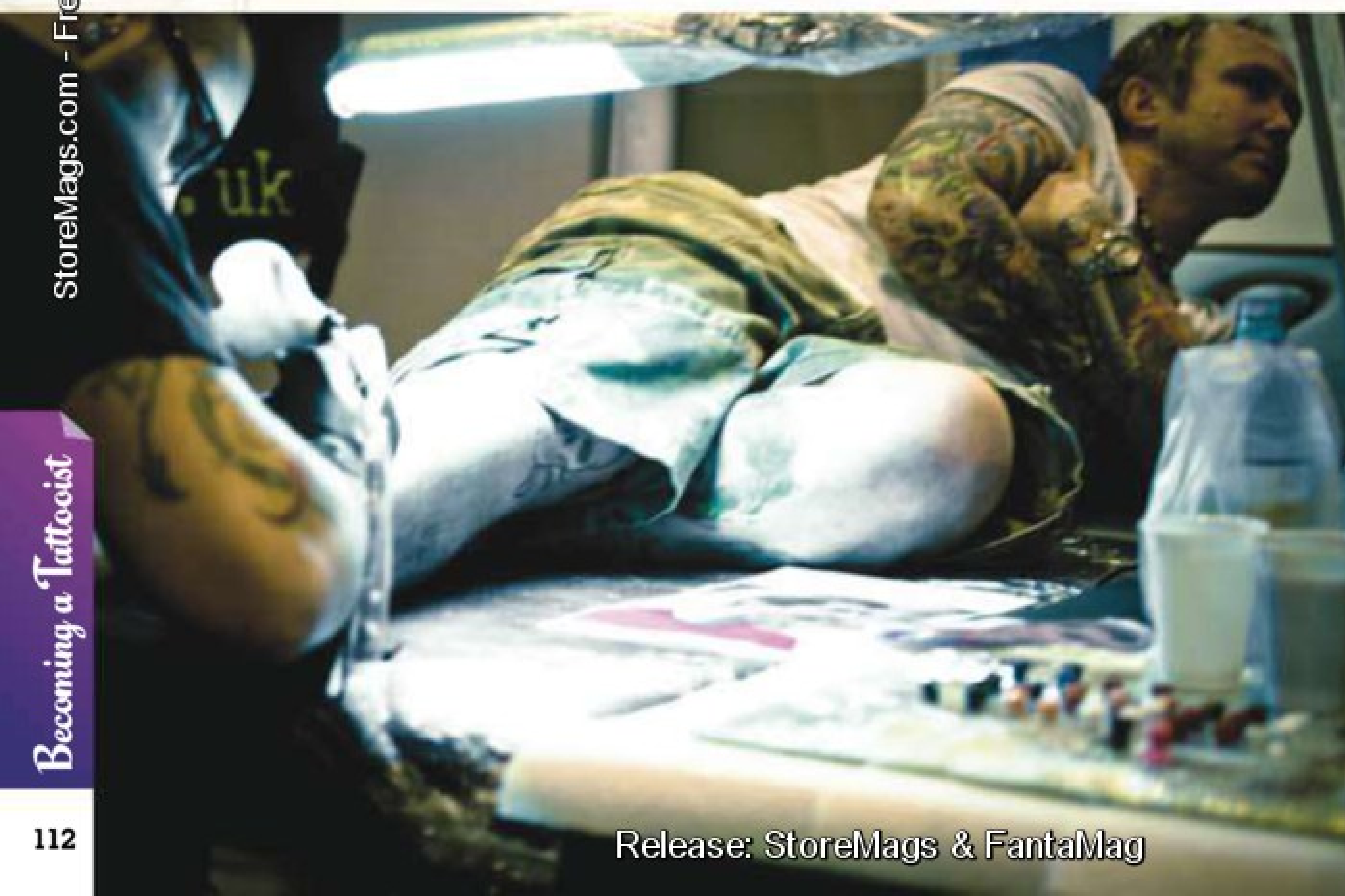
## PAYING YOUR DUES

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN APPRENTICE

So, your artwork is banging and has caught an artist's eye. You have met and you have the integrity and passion needed to succeed and you're prepared to do anything to gain the knowledge of a master tattooist - you're in the door but what now? What is it actually like working day-to-day as a tattoo apprentice?

Hell would be the answer most people give because it is. You have just become the studio's new lackey and you

*Once you have your portfolio, start knocking on doors - and boy, are there many doors. No established artist is going to come looking for you, they're too busy keeping their customers happy. You need to hit the street and sell yourself.*







are going to learn what hard work is all about. The time has come to show the studio what you're made of.

Back to Liam, who has been apprenticing for nine months now. How is life treating him? "It is all going really well. Every day, I learn new skills and techniques. On top of this, I also learn everything that goes on behind the needle. I work with a top set of lads, which is always a great help, as well as a great set of customers. On a day to day

basis, I will do all the bookings, reappointing, manning the phone, emails, Facebook and the diary. As we are a strictly a custom studio and have no flash on the walls, unless we are free handing or it is a pre-done graphic, I'll also do the majority of the art. Other than that there is also keeping the studio clean, food runs, ordering stock and stock checking, all outside promotional work such as flyers, sorting out art for magazines, clothing, you





name it I generally do it! Oh and serving customers."

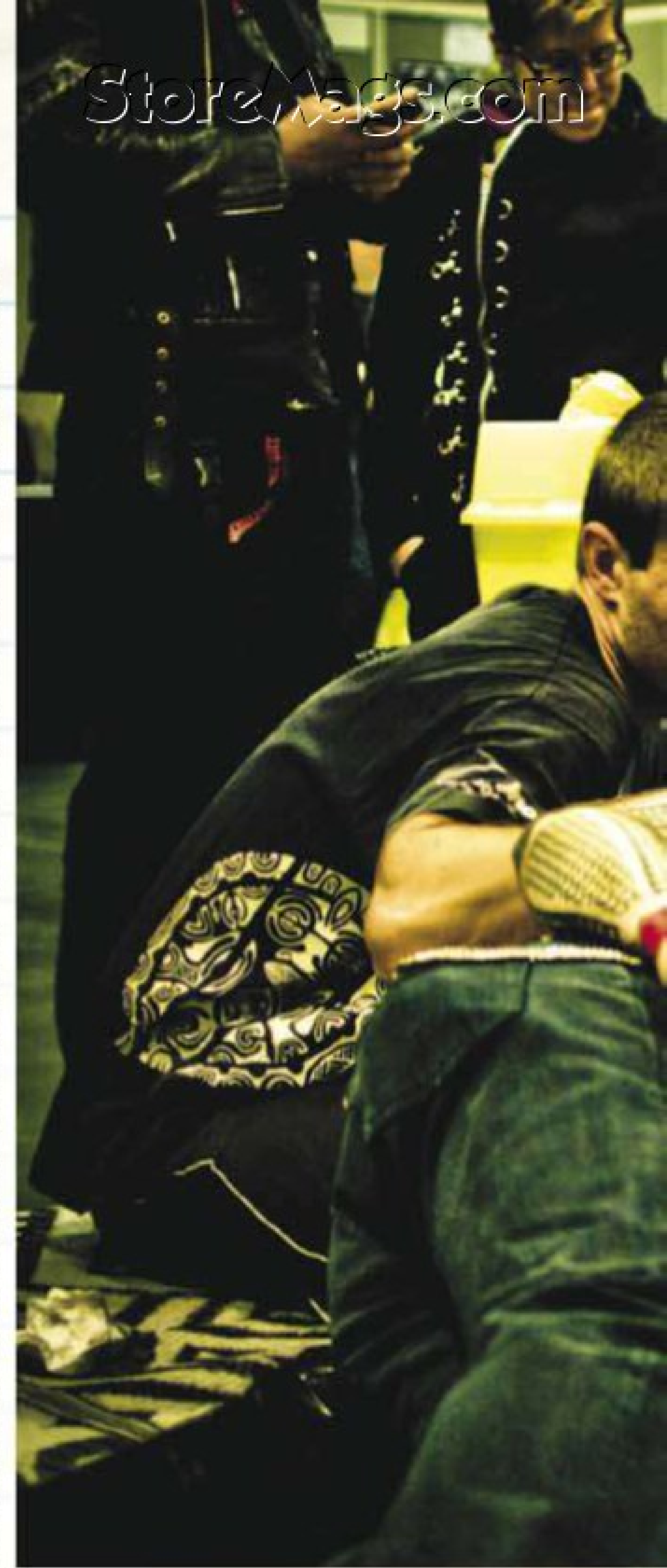
"It has become more than a job, it's my way of life. Whether I like it or not. I can't go for a meal or a drink without someone asking me to take a look at what they've got, or to knock them up a design. Or usually, if we've got any spaces free coming up. But, I love it!"

And Michael?

"The first few months were the absolute hardest, I am not even kidding! Literally making tea and sweeping the floor was all I did and it got me the nickname of 'Brew Monkey'. I would go in six days a week, two hours before we open just to clean the entire shop. All the artist's areas needed cleaning and I had to deal with all the sterilization of the equipment. Basically making sure the artists have everything they need and everything is sterile and ready for before we open for the day. It was tough having to do so much everyday, as well as working another job just so I had some sort of

money. People forget the majority of apprenticeships aren't paid, so get used to working 70-75 hours a week for nothing! Like I said, it is tough but I knew it would be worth it in the long run."

"Slowly but surely, day by day, I got slightly more accepted into the 'Rude Boy tattoo family'. I was now becoming apart of it. I would say the first three months the kettle and mop were my best friends but in the following months, I got to know more about the reception side of things. I learnt how to book people in for tattoos, how to organise all the piercings that came through the door and more importantly, the handling of the money in and out of the till. The feeling of been trusted with money was a great feeling at the time. I started to feel a part of the team and it was really great! Working the reception was at times hard, as it could get busy and I had to run it on my own if the piercer was busy. And been allowed upstairs to watch the tattooists tattoo was a luxury!



*I started by e-mailing studio after studio in the hope that one would get back to me about an interview! After about 6-8 months of exchanging emails with various studios I managed to land myself an interview! To cut a long story short they ripped apart my portfolio from cover to cover to gain a greater knowledge of me and my ability with art!"*

MIKE GIBSON, AT RUDE STUDIOS IN HEADINGLY.





## MORE USELESS FACTS!

King Harold II of England had a number of tattoos. After his death at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, his tattoos were used to identify his body. Many other royals throughout history have been tattooed. In 1862 the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, had a Jerusalem Cross tattooed on his arm on a visit to the Holy Land. When his sons, the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of York (later King George V) visited Japan in 1882 they both had dragons tattooed on their arms. Amongst the Russian royal family, Peter the Great, Catherine the Great and Nicholas II all bore tattoos. Archduke Franz Ferdinand, whose assassination sparked the First World War, was also tattooed. Rather unsurprisingly, royal tattoos are less common today.

The buzz of the environment was brilliant, I really enjoyed it when I got to sit and watch them tattoo. "As time passed, I learnt more about the setting up and breaking down of the tattoo areas, which means I started looking after, more specifically, the tattooist on a day to day basis. I would run to the shops for supplies, grab them dinner, clean round after them and when I had the time, I watched them. This is a massive step and so important as you get

a chance to take in as much information as possible- without distracting them too much from what they are doing! This went on for some months before it was time to have a go and my mentor, Lee 'Rude Boy' Reynolds, let me do a few lines on a grapefruit."

"My first initial thought was how freaking hard it was! The lines had wobbles, gaps, you name it. Everything that could have gone wrong went wrong in that line. I wasn't expecting









it to be easy but didn't expect it to be as hard as it was! Lee and Jon Tolley did that for me, to show me that it takes time to get to the position he is in. The greatest lesson I have learnt from been an apprentice is patience. You definitely need a lot of it! After months of watching, observing and asking questions, the time came when Lee told me to set up a station and to get ready to tattoo myself. I was nervous, excited, anxious and happy all at the same time. I started by tattooing an outline of a diamond on my ankle. Something small and simple but that was my first ever tattoo. How ever small, wonky, uneven and sketchy it was - it was still my first and I was proud of it!"

"After this Lee started letting me tattoo a couple of friend's legs a week. This was good because it let me choose what I wanted to do as long as it was simple stuff. I went on from here and progressed up to the day I was allowed to do a tiny tattoo on a paying client. This was a huge step as it was on someone I didn't know. I was nervous, sweaty and a bit of a mess but all in all it went cool. I knew I wasn't getting thrown too much in the deep end, with it been my first tattoo. From here I just progressed and progressed up to the stage I am at now."

A long hard slog and Michael is nearly where he wants to be, a paid tattooist with an apprenticeship behind him but as he says, "Every last bit of it is worth it!" "I would say to all

apprentices who are thinking about getting into a studio - stick with it, show you are determined and be thick skinned! Expect to be ripped to pieces and made fun of but above all be patient and don't give up!"


## SACRIFICING YOUR LEGS

### THE SELF-TAUGHT ROUTE

And here is where we start swimming in muddy water. Over the years, with the rise in popularity of tattooing as a career, more and more wannabe tattooists are choosing the self-taught method of gaining access to the tattoo world. With tattoo kits so freely available on the internet and no real governing body looking out for the welfare of future customers, self-taught tattooists are springing up everywhere.

The initial, knee-jerk, response to this trend is to



classify them all as 'scratchers' but this is unfair on many an artist who has started their career in this manner. Yes, there is no denying that there are many, many, people out there, who have picked up a tattoo machine, found an electricity outlet and with little or no artistic ability or idea of health and safety, have started tattooing. And it is also true that these 'scratchers' are also harming the tattoo industry but not all self-taught tattooists fall into this camp! 





## RANDOM STATS FROM 2008

Most people with a tattoo do not regret getting it (84%). As to the remaining regretful ones, one in five (20%) say it's because they were too young when they got the tattoo while 19 percent say "it's because it is permanent and they are marked for life" - funny how something so obvious can be skipped over by the truly stupid. Others say they regret the tattoo because they "don't like it" (18%) while 16 percent regret their tattoo because they fade over time.

Harris Poll of 2,302 adults surveyed online between January 15 and 22, 2008 by Harris Interactive.

Footnote: Don't sit there and add these percentages up to see if the math is good. It's not our poll!

There are many that have started out by teaching themselves and because of their passion and love for tattoos, have grown and progressed to become well established and respected tattoo artists.

Take for example, Simon Cooke, an ace tattooist who works out of Ink Spot Tattoo Studio in Silverdale, just outside of Newcastle. "The only thing I was ever good at, at school, was art. It's been a massive part of my life from an early age, whether it was graffiti on walls, painting lead army figures or sitting in a field doing a watercolour...it has always been with me. I really wanted to be either a concept character designer for films or a fantasy illustrator for magazines. That was my dream. Around ten years ago, I picked up on airbrushing and started doing custom airbrush work on motorbikes and helmets. I did this for about three years and even got a bike featured in a magazine. So I thought, 'I can draw with a pencil, I



*What is it actually like working day-to-day as a tattoo apprentice? Hell would be the answer most people give because it is. You have just become the studio's new lackey and you are going to learn what hard work is all about. The time has come to show the studio what you're made of.*

can create with an airbrush so how difficult can it be to tattoo?" Now my wife will vouch for me on this, my saying whenever I tried something new was, 'how hard can it be?' And that's exactly what I thought with regards to tattooing."

"I plagued my wife for around two months about buying a tattoo kit off of eBay but she wouldn't let me. So the battle of wits began. I read books, downloaded info of the internet, looked at forums,

read up on all sorts of stuff like anatomy, how the body works, blood-borne disease etc. and so I sat and taught myself (on paper) all I thought I needed to know about tattooing. Eventually my wife cracked and I went and bought a kit off of eBay. Now I know it is a bad thing to do but I had been around studios getting tattooed since the age of eighteen and I knew I could create great art."

"So machine in hand, I tried tattooing on practice





skin which is just rubbish. I also tried tattooing pig's ears, melons, oranges and then mandarins. Finally I thought I was ready to have a go...so I set the machine on to my leg. Now as most tattooists know, it's not an easy thing to teach and it sure as hell is not easy to learn to tattoo, it takes time, patience and a whole lot of talent. I have been tattooing for seven years and don't get me wrong, the way I tattoo is so different to the way I started but things evolve and

that's what it's all about... evolving. I am a firm believer of doing something, in a creative sense, at least once a month that challenges or even scares you, so you push your skills forward."

And looking at Simon's work, you will understand completely why not all self-taught tattooists are 'scratchers'. Simon's work is amazing. He started as a talented and multi-skilled artist and followed the next natural step in his career. He researched and studied the









*You will need patience. You are going to get many a customer who, no matter how much you draw for them and spend time with them, are going to want more. And what about those customers who can't sit still in the big chair?*

tattooing world as much as he could and kept his first steps to 'artificial' skin, like melons, instead of destroying someone else's skin.

All the steps he would have followed in an apprenticeship, he followed on his own and ultimately proved, to himself and the industry, that he had made the right decision.

## WHAT MAKES A GREAT TATTOOIST?

As subjective as this question is, with personal tastes drawing you to a particular tattoo artist, there are a few things that do make a tattooist truly great. Besides the ability to create a single beautiful image from a pile of print outs and a lengthy discussion with a customer, there are a few more skills that will help you reach the top of your game.

**Patience.** You are going to get many a customer who, no matter how much you draw for them and spend time with them, are going to want more. And what about those customers who can't sit still in the big chair, or who like to have a break every five minutes? Yes, patience is definitely on the list.

**Integrity.** Just as important as the tattoos you do decide to take on, are the one's that

you don't! There is no disrespect from walking away from a customer who wants a tattoo that you don't believe is right for them or is not what you would be happy producing.

**Originality.** Why copy someone else's work when you have the ability within you to produce something of your own? All the great tattoo artists of the past had their own style, even if it was within a set style e.g. traditional. Some of the best work has come about by artists being original and coming up with mixes of old styles and new ideas.

**Personality.** This might seem an odd one but it is important. Gone are the days when you and your customer



said two words to each other. When people walk into a studio, they want banter and a good time. They are parting with their hard earned cash for a world class tattoo; the last thing they want is a shirty tattooist giving them a hard time.

And the list could go on but at the end of the day, you and your work are going to be your biggest advertisement, so if you want to establish yourself as one of the 'masters' put your heart and soul into it and you shouldn't go too wrong. ★

## BEST TATTOO QUOTE EVER

"Show me a man with a tattoo and I'll show you a man with an interesting past."

Jack London (author of White Fang and Call of the Wild)







# Tattoo Conventions

THEY'VE GOT IT ALL. REALLY. JUST IMAGINE A MEDLEY OF SOME OF THE WORLD'S FINEST TATTOO ARTISTS, PIERCERS, VENDORS AND PERFORMERS, ALL HOUSED UNDER ONE ROOF. NOW ADD TO THAT INTERESTING (AND EDUCATIONAL) WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS, FINE ART EXHIBITS AND DAILY CONTESTS. SEE, THEY DO HAVE IT ALL. BUT WHAT DO I SPEAK OF? WHY, TATTOO CONVENTIONS, OF COURSE.

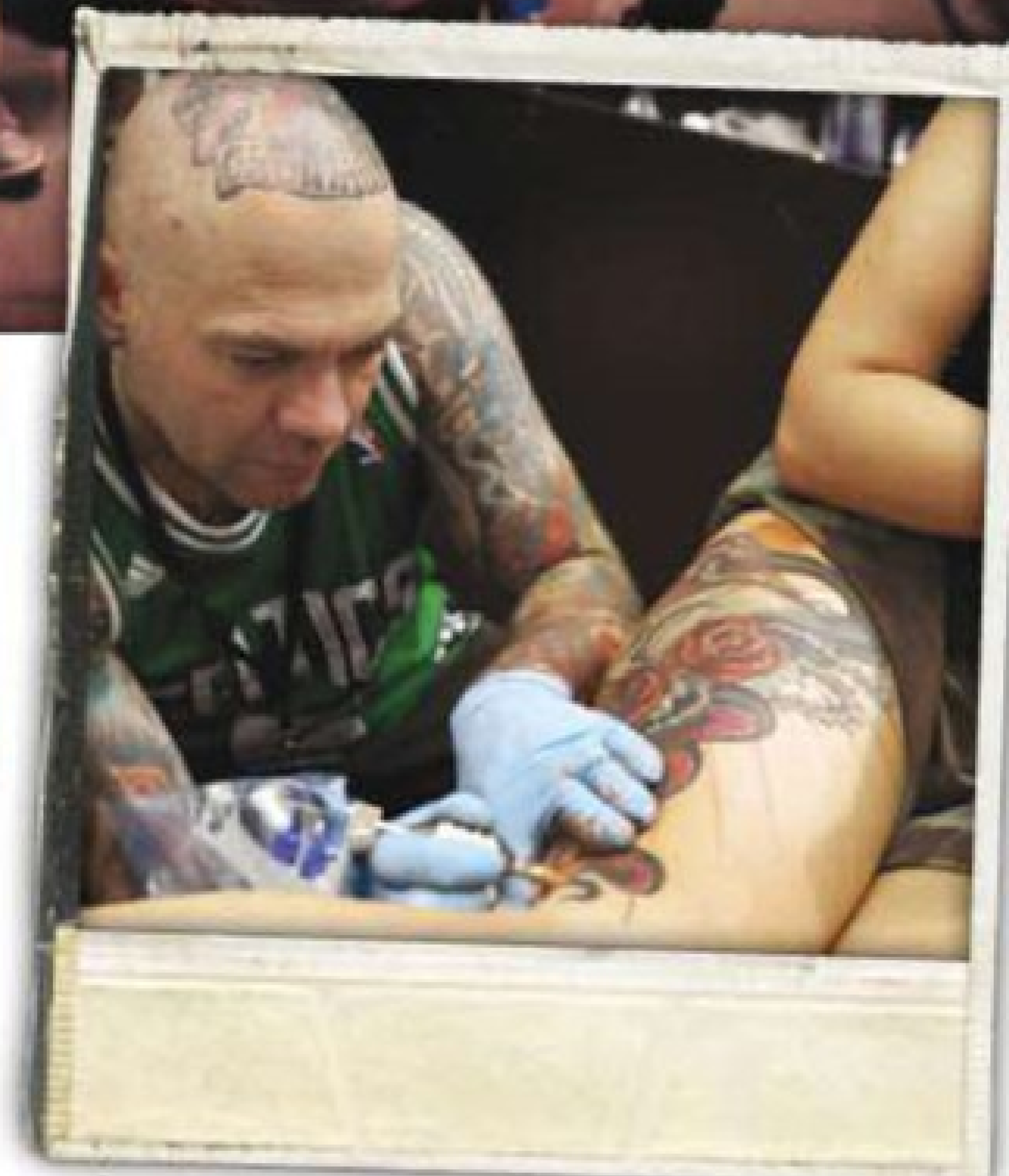
**A**round since the 1970s, tattoo conventions have gotten bigger, bolder and more action-packed over the years. With the popularity of tattoos on the rise, it's no real surprise that more and more conventions have been popping up in all corners of the world. With stigmas slowly drifting away thanks to the current cultural shift surrounding the industry, tattoo conventions

are also increasingly being welcomed into more conservative, exotic countries. With the right budget, one could easily spend an entire year traveling the globe, attending a different convention every week, and never get bored. Sure, all tattoo conventions have some of the same core characteristics, but they also each have qualities that make them unique and

attractive in their own ways. (Kind of like tattoo artists.)

## WHAT IS A TATTOO CONVENTION?

It may sound like an overly simple question, but it does seem to present a logical starting point for this







### AN (ALMOST) GENUINELY BRILLIANT IDEA

The Braille Tattoo, designed by Klara Jirkova (a student at the University of the Arts Berlin), is a series of implantable surgical steel, titanium, or medical plastic that's placed under the skin. The tattoo can then be read via touch. Subdermal implants are nothing new, but using them to create body art for the visually impaired is an interesting idea. Jirkova thinks the implants could be used in the divet between thumb and pointer finger, so when people shake hands they can "read" each other's names and info.

Whilst the idea behind this is certainly interesting, as far as we are aware, blind people are still able to speak to each other thus making the concept a little redundant. With some more thought behind it however, this idea might actually turn into something special.

**Simply put, a tattoo convention is a gathering of artists looking to tattoo, collectors looking to get tattooed and individuals who simply want to spend some time fully immersed in the art and culture that they so love.**

particular section. Simply put, a tattoo convention is a gathering of artists looking to tattoo, collectors looking to get tattooed and individuals who simply want to spend some time fully immersed in the art and culture that they so love.

Tattoo conventions were first held in the 1970s and the first ever American National Convention took place in Denver, Colorado in 1979. Don Ed Hardy, Bob Shaw, Big Walt

Kilkucki and Painless Jeff Baker were just some of the great artists in attendance.

### HOW TATTOO CONVENTIONS ARE CHANGING...

With every decade that passes, tattoo conventions are becoming more popular, and more accessible. While some remain small and may only last one day, others are absolute extravaganzas that







span multiple days and boast talent flown in from even the most remote parts of the world.

This year alone will see hundreds of tattoo conventions taking place in a variety of countries, and almost 30 of those will call the U.K. home. 2011 is also the year that can forever proudly claim it was the one that saw the launch of two very impressive conventions in two very impressive cities. The first of those was Edinburgh's premiere tattoo convention, which took place in March and was a prime example of an unforgettable gathering happening in an unforgettable setting. (Edinburgh has a reputation

for being a World Heritage site, you know.)

The second historic launch took place in April when Nepal decided to take an innovative approach towards boosting tourism and promoting the art of tattooing by throwing a three-day international convention in Kathmandu. The move really shone a light on just how much attitudes towards tattooing are changing in all areas of the world, and how open the public is really becoming towards the notion of tattooing.

## WHAT TO DO AT TATTOO CONVENTIONS...

Getting tattooed at a convention is, of course, a fantastic opportunity because it offers the possibility to hook up with an artist who might not usually be available to put some fine work on your skin. But if you aren't in the mood to get tattooed, don't worry; there is no need to stay home! Don't dismiss the other equally memorable activities offered at conventions like art exhibits, seminars, workshops





and even book launches and signings (Crazy Philadelphia Eddie, for example, took his book tour for *Tattooing: The Life and Times of Crazy Philadelphia Eddie* to several conventions this past year). There are also the great afterparties that a growing number of conventions are putting extra time and effort into organizing.

### HOW TO CHOOSE AN ARTIST...

Conventions are packed with talent and choosing an

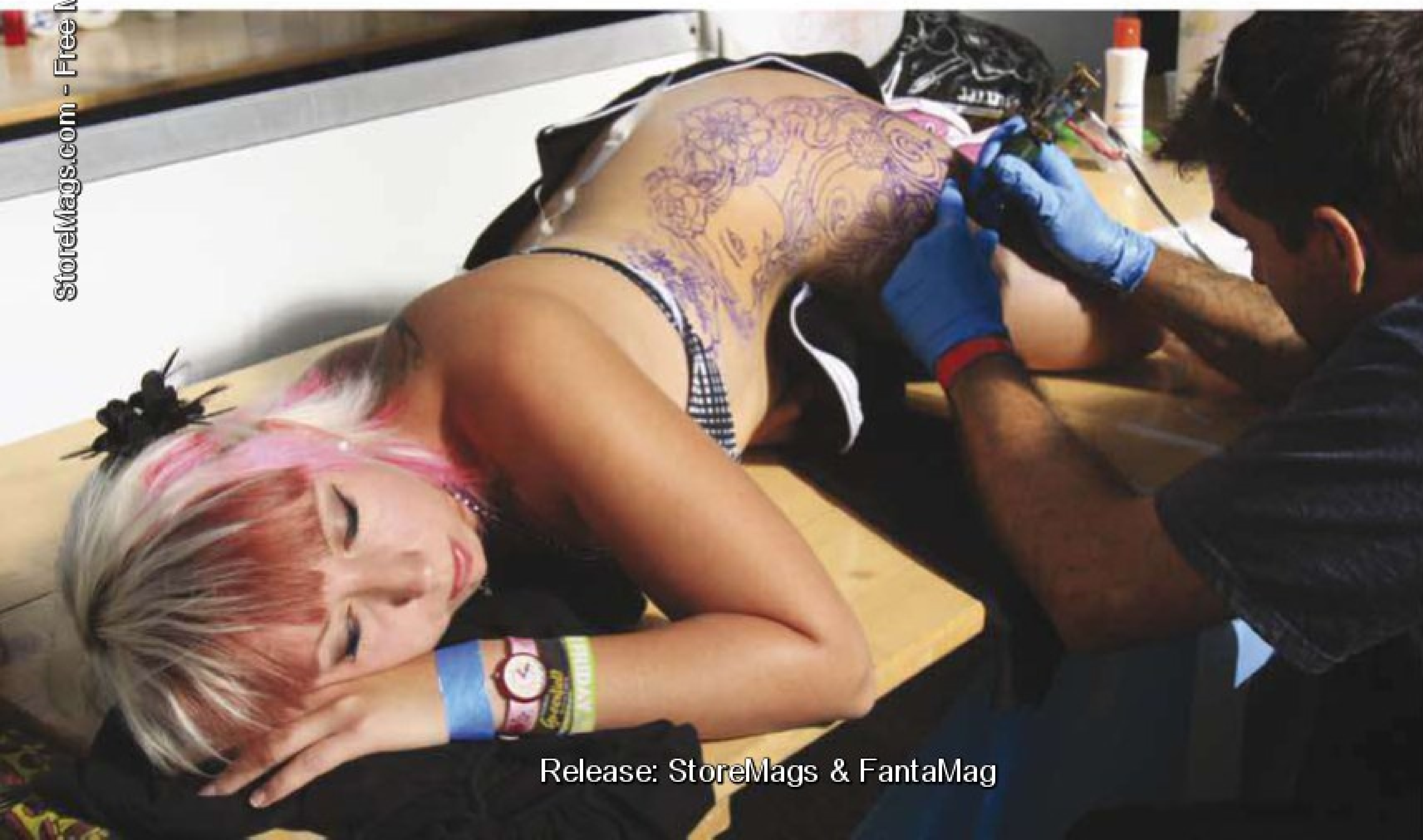
*With stigmas slowly drifting away thanks to the current cultural shift surrounding the industry, tattoo conventions are also increasingly being welcomed into more conservative, exotic countries.*

artist on the spot may prove harder than you think. If you know you definitely want to get tattooed, it's a good idea to do your homework and look up the list of artists attending on the convention's website. If no one particular tattooer strikes

you through the web, but you have your design in mind and references in hand, looking through portfolios at the convention is the way to go. Spend the time to peruse as many as you can and find the artist whose work and style best match what

### GIRLS WITH DRAGON TATTOOS

A dragon tattoo on a woman usually acknowledges "woman as the creator." Like the dragons of many mythologies, woman's true body form is that of life, the world and the universe. It is this superior form that allows her to be without equal. Dragon body art also represents a flowing, fluid grace that conceals a reserve of power just beneath the cool surface. Studies have shown that women who get dragon tattoos become more self-confident and assertive. For my money though, to be truly authentic, you had better know the subtle differences between your Mesopotamian, Babylonian and Sumerian dragons. You never know when you might be tested!





## MEN WITH DRAGON TATTOOS

Not such a snappy title for a movie but on a man, the dragon typically signifies raw power. Like dragons, men are the guardians of that which is sacred, such as women and objects of great wealth. But this must be tempered with wisdom, lest the greed of dragons overpower the man's soul and turn him into a ravenous creature with an insatiable appetite. Men who get dragon tattoos view themselves as being revered for their wisdom but feared for their tremendous power. Well - if they have done their research properly anyway.

you're in the market for. Remember, don't settle for an artist just because he/she is free at the time you are ready to get tattooed or just because they look friendly - the art is going to be staying with you, well, forever.

Once you've chosen your artist, it's time to talk. As long as they're not in the middle of a tattoo or busy getting ready for one, it's time to approach your tattooer of choice and tell him/her about your interests. Brainstorm, talk prices and set a time to get it done. If you're not feeling each other, part ways and don't take it personally. Hey, some people just don't vibe well together and there's nothing wrong with thanking an artist for their time and walking away if you're not feeling 100 percent.

If you don't know what you want, but do know that you



have a spot ready to get some ink, that's what flash and pre-made stencils are for. Some artists will have a variety of these laid out and ready go at their booths, which allows you to choose the design, size and price that best suit what you're looking for.

## GETTING TATTOOED AT A CONVENTION VS. IN A SHOP...

Contrary to what some may believe, getting tattooed at a convention is not the same as getting something done







inside a shop. First off, keep in mind that conventions are not, by any means, serene nor private spaces. If you choose to get tattooed at a convention, know that you will be on display, along with your artist, and passersby may regularly stop to take a look at the art that is going on your skin. If you want a quiet one-on-one session with your artist, this is not the place for you to get tattooed. (Note: Some tattooers who make the journey in from out of town will spend some time before or after a convention working as a guest artist at a local studio. Check out the artist's website to find out if this is the case.)

A second point to be aware of is that tricky placements may be completely off-limits given the fact that artists have limited space in which to set up and not as much room as they would usually have to contort and twist into a pretzel to place your art in

that perfect but hard to reach spot.

The golden rule that does remain the same in both scenarios is that of making an appointment to insure yourself against unpleasant surprises. Get in touch with the artist you're interested in collaborating with ahead of time and be sure to set a date and time if you know that they are the one and only match for you. Do so by going to the tattoo artist's personal website or to that of the convention.

***Conventions may have come a long way since the '70s, and they may constantly be evolving, but there's always been one constant – they're wicked fun.***

Appointments are especially important if the artist you're interested in is the convention's shining star and is bound to attract customers and spectators the way that honey attracts bees. (The artist in question being the sweet honey, of course.)







### SECOND BEST TATTOO QUOTE EVER

"The world is divided into two kinds of people: those who have tattoos, and those who are afraid of people with tattoos."  
*Unknown*

### TIPS FOR GETTING TATTOOED...

Here are some key basics and tips for getting tattooed in any setting, even on the moon (although things would probably get messy there, seeing as there's no gravity and all):

Have a good meal beforehand. The last thing you want is to be getting light-headed or, worse, fainting during your session.

Bring water or a sugary drink with you to stay hydrated and keep your energy up, especially if it's going to be a long sitting.

Make sure you're feeling physically fit for your appointment. In other words, if you're sick and coughing up your lungs all over the place, it's probably best to not be getting tattooed that day.

No alcohol or drugs beforehand, please. (No explanation needed here.)







Make sure you love your design, and the artist you're going with.

Remember, if you go into a convention thinking you're going to get particular artwork done by a particular artist and you change your mind, that's okay. Follow your gut.

## CONTESTS

Tattoo contests are often held at the end of each day to determine the best tattoos that were done at the convention in a variety of categories. There is sometimes a small fee to register, but you stand the chance of winning a shiny 🏆





## WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

"And this tattooing had been the work of a departed prophet and seer of his island, who, by those hieroglyphic marks, had written out on his body a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth; so that Queequeg in his own proper person was a riddle to unfold; a wondrous work in one volume, but whose mysteries not even himself could read, though his own live heart beat against them; and these mysteries were therefore destined in the end to moulder away with the living parchment whereon they were inscribed, and so be unsolved to the last."

*Herman Melville,  
Moby-Dick*

FOOTNOTE: Funny, we couldn't find anybody who had read Moby Dick either. Now we know why...



trophy that is sure to make your folks proud, and sure to look divine on your mantelpiece, right next to your Oscar. Judging may occur by vote or there may be a panel of experts doing the critiquing. Some of the categories often included look to find the best black and grey, colour, tribal, backpiece and half-sleeve.

## FOR THE ARTIST...

As great as tattoo conventions are for those looking to get work done, they also boast wonderful opportunities for artists themselves. Sure, you might be more cramped than you would be in your shop, and it's certainly more frantic and way louder, but who doesn't love some good times amidst the fast-paced, somewhat hectic, hustle and bustle? Some artists are at a point where they have bookings coming out of every pore and don't need/don't have time to attend conventions, thank you very much, but for every other artist out there, they're a great place to meet clients, connect with fellow artists and spend a few days outside of the shop. And maybe even enjoy some touristy moments in a foreign country. Think about it: thousands of people walking

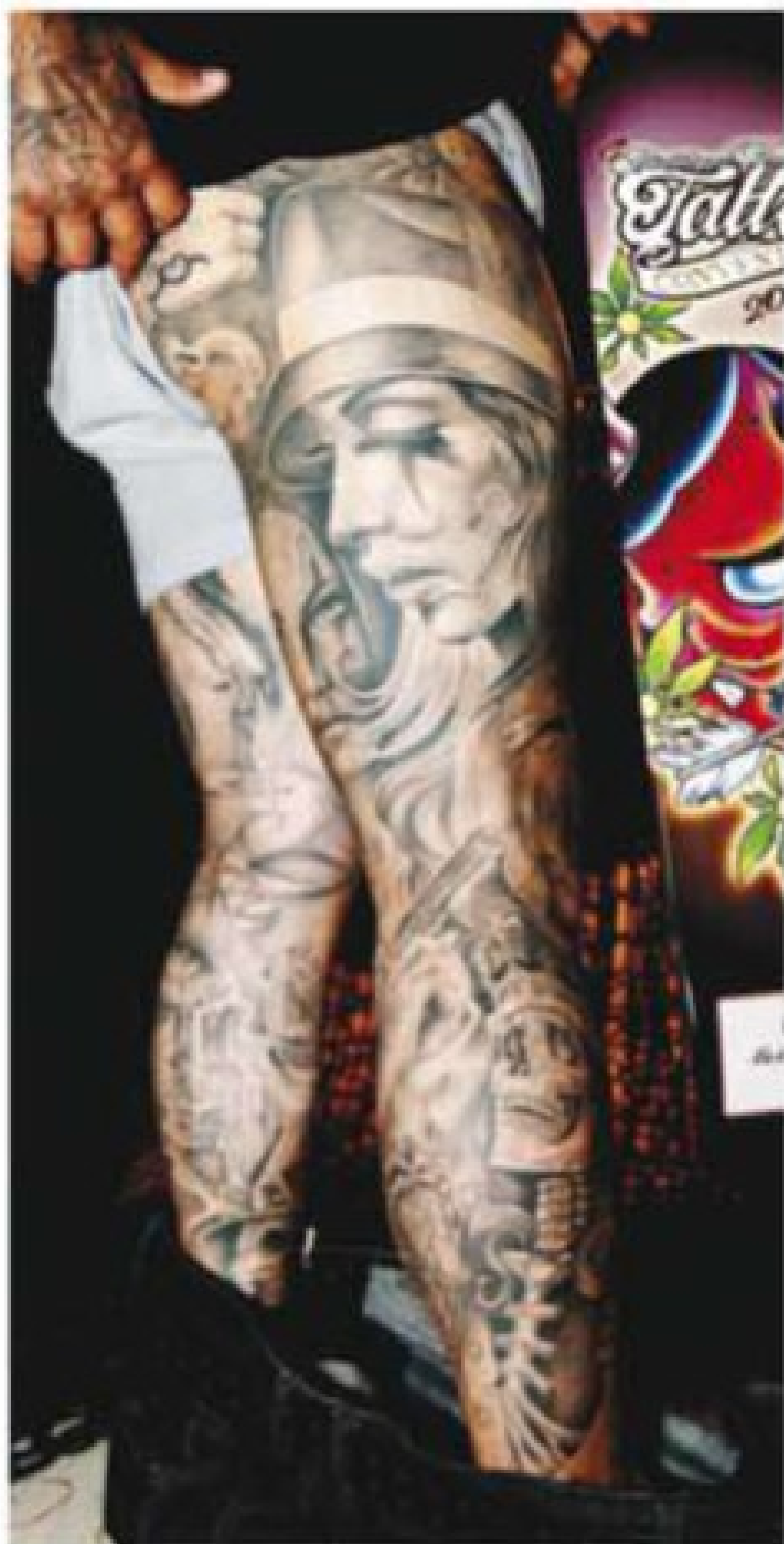


Release: StoreMags & FantaMag





*For anyone looking to get tattooed, or for anyone who wants to spend a day or two admiring tattoos and the culture that surrounds them, there's no better place to go.*





# HARRY POTTER

## AMBAGRAMS

While we're knee deep in media related facts, the ambigram was no doubt brought to the attention of the world in Dan Brown's Da Vinci Code precursor Angels and Demons. An ambigram is a word that contain words or names that are designed to either spell the same or different words when viewed upside down. Ambigram tattoo designs have become extremely popular because they rock! If you're still not sure what on earth I'm talking about, turn the book upside down.

Footnote: Yes it did come before the Da Vinci Code if you read the books in order. Nobody likes a smartarse...



*If you choose to get tattooed at a convention, know that you will be on display, along with your artist, and passersby may regularly stop to take a look at the art that is going on your skin.*

by your booth, looking at your portfolio. How can you go wrong? You'll also likely be sharing a relatively small space with fellow artists you might have never had the chance to meet otherwise. Some tattoo conventions even throw exclusive parties for the artists working the convention so that they can mingle and make connections that just might turn out to be extremely helpful down the line.

### FINAL WORDS...

Conventions may have come a long way since the '70s, and they may constantly be evolving, but there's always been one constant - they're wicked fun. For anyone looking to get tattooed, or for anyone who wants to spend a day or two admiring tattoos and the culture that surrounds them, there's no better place to go.





*If you want a quiet one-on-one session with your artist, this is not the place for you to get tattooed.*



### ONE FINAL POINT

If you're travelling to a convention from out of town, book a room! The last thing you want is to be stranded in a questionable hotel, unable to enjoy yourself and your brand new tattoo because you're too busy worrying about touching the carpet with your bare feet. (I'm pretty sure we've all been

there.) If the convention happens to be taking place in a hotel, they are almost guaranteed to offer special room rates for guests attending the tattoo convention, so be sure to call the hotel and inquire.

Why not check in at [hoteltattoo.com](http://hoteltattoo.com) - there's some great deals at large there with plenty of scope to get what you're after ★





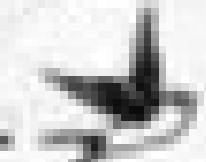
# Tattooing and the media

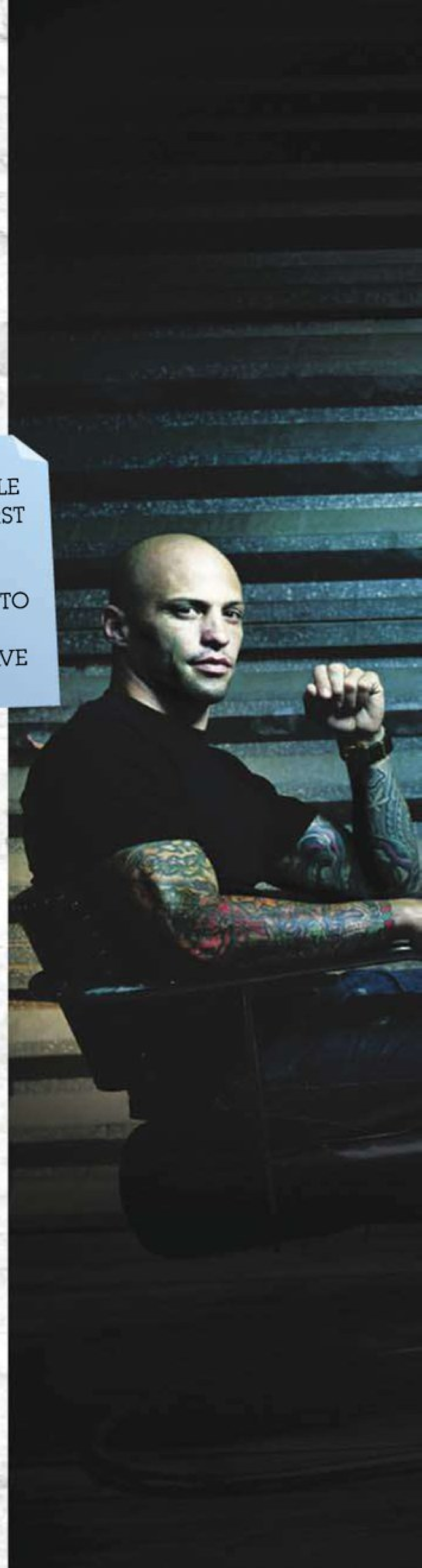
IT FEELS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY THAT THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENED. IN FACT, IT'S BEEN SIX YEARS SINCE A REMARKABLE TATTOO REVOLUTION BEGAN. YES, IT WAS 2005 WHEN THE FIRST TV SERIES SET INSIDE A TATTOO SHOP HIT THE NORTH AMERICAN AIRWAVES. TODAY, IT MAY SEEM LIKE NOTHING SPECIAL AT ALL, BUT THE DEBUT OF INK ON TV TRULY HELPED TO DRAG THE REBELLIOUS ART FORM FARTHER AWAY FROM THE PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS AND NEGATIVE STIGMAS THAT HAVE SURROUNDED IT FOR CENTURIES...

**A**s tattooing becomes increasingly accepted and mainstream, there are those who bow to the television and the changes it has brought on, while others can't shed their melancholy for the good old days and their hatred for the box. The question then becomes, can tattooing hold onto its integrity while becoming a cultural phenomenon? Let's take a journey through tattooed TV land:

In July 2005, A&E premiered *Inked* and brought viewers inside Hart & Huntington Tattoo Company. Located inside the Palms Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, the shop was a historic one, as it was the first ever to be located inside a Vegas casino. Sean Dowdell, who co-owns (along with Thora Dowdell and Chester Bennington of Linkin

Park) the famed Club Tattoo located inside Las Vegas's Planet Hollywood, notes what a truly landmark move it was. "Hats off to Carey Hart and those guys 'cause they completely opened a lot of doors for a lot of other people that they don't get credit for." The series, however, seemed to be less interested in the unique merits of Hart & Huntington and more in the drama the artists and customers could provide. After just two seasons, *Inked* was no more.

Meanwhile, a different, and more powerful, storm was brewing over at TLC. *Miami Ink*, which also premiered in 2005, stepped beyond the threshold of Miami's 305 Ink and featured the talents of owners Ami James and Chris Nuñez, as well as of Chris Garver, Darren Brass and apprentice Yoji Harada. 













Unlike *Inked*, this show was wholeheartedly dedicated to the art of tattooing, at least at the beginning, and viewers were drawn in at lightning speed. Running for a stellar six seasons, *Miami Ink*'s success cannot be argued, but for those who aren't impressed by the whopping 114 episodes that aired, or the fact that the show was a hit in numerous countries including Japan, Australia, Brazil and England, it's worth bearing in mind that the show also happened to lead to two successful spin-offs: *LA Ink* and *London Ink*.

Once *Miami Ink* brought a female tattooer on board, the face of tattooing began to change even more rapidly. As Kat Von D established herself as somewhat of an icon through the show, it was only logical that once she left the series, TLC would find a new way to continue bringing her to her countless fans every week. *LA Ink* premiered on August 7, 2007 and saw Von D return home to Los Angeles and begin work on her own tattoo shop, High Voltage. Joining Von D were Hannah



Aitchison and Kim Saigh, who further moulded misconceptions about tattooing simply by being fierce female artists, as well as the great Corey Miller.

Now about to premiere the second half of its fourth season, *LA Ink* has admittedly began moving away from the art and steering more towards the personal, like Von D's personal relationships, and following major artist changes, the show now includes a rival shop, Craig Jackman's *American Electric*.

But no matter the modifications, it seems that the show can do no wrong. In 2010, the season premiere

sucked in 1.5 million pairs of eyeballs and between June and December of 2010, *LA Ink*'s website attracted an average of 4.5 million page views per month. The astounding success of *Miami Ink* should also probably be mentioned here. During its peak run from 2005 to 2008, the show averaged 1.2 million viewers per episode and to this day, the show's fansite remains the third largest on TLC with 2.5 million page views per month from June to December 2010.

*London Ink*, although not as globally or commercially successful as *Miami Ink* and *LA Ink*, does deserve kudos for being the first to attempt

## LA INK

**SHOP:** High Voltage Tattoo

**ON AIR:** August 7, 2007 - Present

**SEASONS:** 4

**EPISODES:** 74

**TODAY:** There isn't really too much that can be surprisingly revealed about High Voltage, as the shop, artists and show are as hot as ever. (Must be all that high voltage.) A remarkable addition has however been the opening of Kat Von D's Wonderland Gallery, an exciting new artistic space right next door to the shop. The gallery features fantastic art in all of its conceivable forms, from the current breathtaking exhibit of new works by Kevin Llewellyn to books and fashion.

**ADDRESS:**

High Voltage Tattoo  
1259 N. La Brea avenue  
W. Hollywood, CA

*I think if you're in the industry you know when stuff is edited, especially when they splice up certain sentences and there's no continuity. Like my hair is a different shade of red in every scene. I can't dye my hair in ten minutes!*

KAT VON D







and bring the concept of tattoos on television out of the United States. Mashing together Louis Molloy, the man behind David Beckham's famed guardian angel tattoo, Dan Gold, Nikole Lowe and Phil Kyle, the British spin-off also debuted in 2007, around the same time as LA Ink, but only lasted for two seasons.

Today, for all those enamoured with tattooed television, there seem to be just as many who rag on all the shows mentioned above.

It would appear that critics are generally failing to look beyond the surface and are missing the positive effect the shows have had on the tattoo industry. The artists featured on Miami Ink, LA Ink etc. did not "sell out," rather they tried to raise awareness and destigmatise the art of tattooing.

Kat Von D, for example, has no final say in the editing room and is not always pleased with the final result herself. "There's been plenty of times where

I'm like, 'What the fuck? You can't do that. I wasn't even in the room and you edited it that way,'" she admits. "I like to believe that people are smarter than that and do not believe everything they see. I think if you're in the industry you know when stuff is edited, especially when they splice up certain sentences and there's no continuity. Like my hair is a different shade of red in every scene. I can't dye my hair in ten minutes! I've had to learn to just really let go of a lot of





## MIAMI INK

**SHOP:** 305 Ink  
**ON AIR:** July 19, 2005 – August 21, 2008  
**SEASONS:** 6  
**EPISODES:** 114  
**TODAY:** The team made famous by Miami Ink can now be found working away at Love Hate Tattoo Studio, joined by a myriad of other impeccable artists like James Hamilton and Tim Hendricks (who did in fact appear on Miami Ink in its later seasons). But if visiting/getting tattooed at Love Hate isn't enough to make your day absolutely unforgettable, the Love Hate Lounge, owned by Ami James and Chris Nuñez, is conveniently located nearby and ready to serve up drinks and good times.  
**ADDRESS:** Love Hate Tattoo Studio  
 1360 Washington Avenue  
 Miami Beach, FL

that stuff. I've definitely raised a flag when it's been too extreme or too negative and I'm like, 'You guys can't do that,' but pick your battles, you know?"

Dan Smith, who is also a part of the High Voltage team showcased on LA Ink, seconds that notion. "I'd love to say it's enjoyable; I'd love to say it's all real; I'd love to say the people behind the scenes care about what they're filming, but it's not the case," he says. "It's me doing something I love and handing it over to someone who has no idea about what it means to me, or other people who live tattooing once the cameras turn off." But it's all about looking further, past the drama, examining what really matters.

"I'm not unrealistic about what it is, and it seems that's where most people get confused," says Smith. "If people can take something positive away from watching

*It started with Inked, it still had to be the craziness of a show, it was people getting drunk and partying, yeah, but that's the stigmatism of tattooing you have. If [they] portrayed tattooing in a way like okay, there's some man sitting with a suit on and he's saying 'Hi madam, how can I help you?,' nobody would tune in."*

MARIO BARTH





## INKED

**SHOP:** Hart & Huntington Tattoo Company

**ON AIR:** July 20, 2005 - October 17, 2006

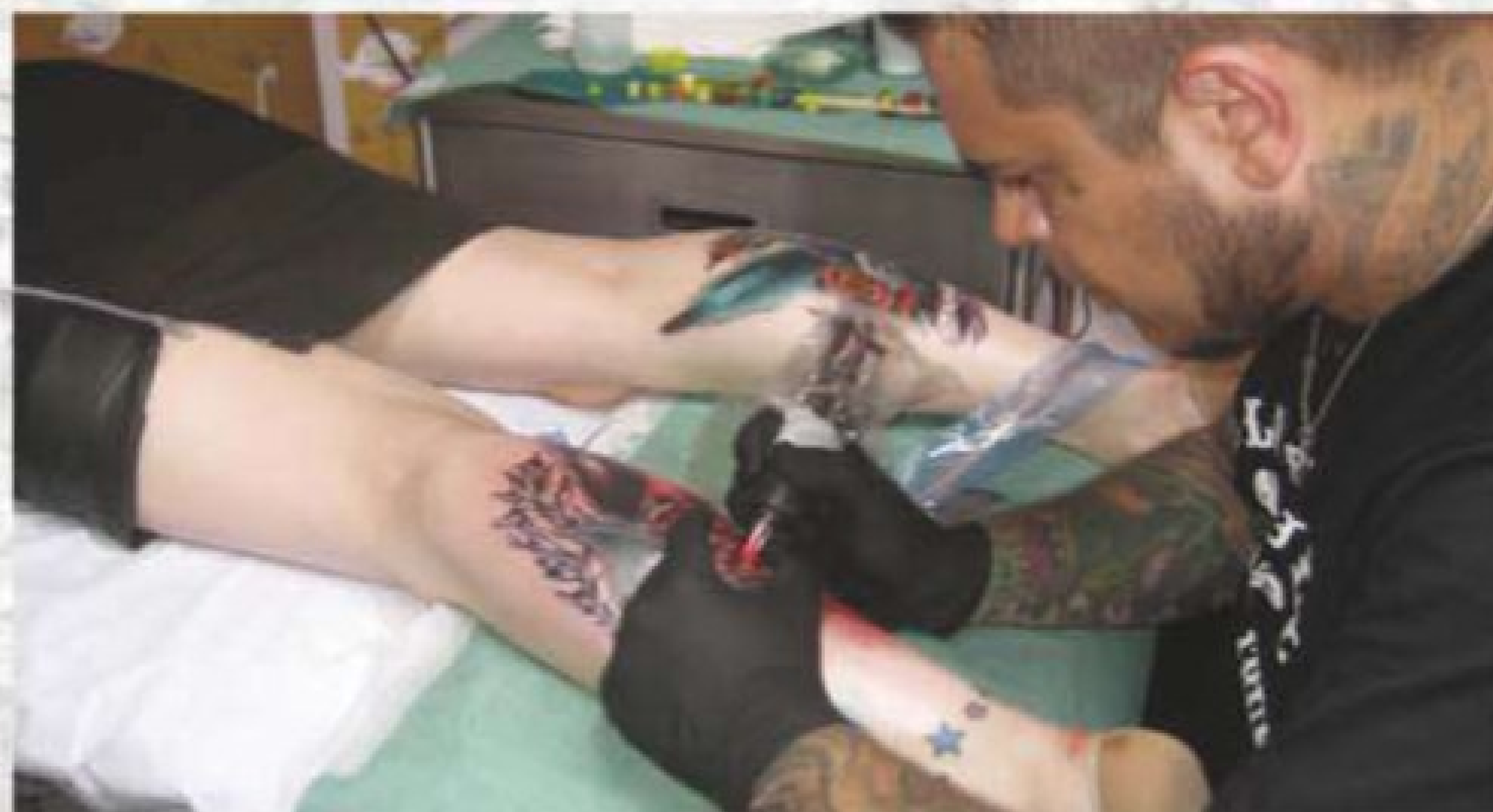
**SEASONS:** 2

**EPISODES:** 40

**TODAY:** Since the end of the show, Hart & Huntington Tattoo Company has moved out of the Palms Casino and Hotel and nestled into the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, alongside Carey Hart's rock club, Wasted Space. Two new Hart & Huntington shops have also opened up - one in Orlando, Florida and one in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada - and if that wasn't enough, Hart has launched a clothing line featuring designs created by the various artists working at Hart & Huntington.

**ADDRESS:**

Hart & Huntington  
Tattoo Company  
Hard Rock  
Hotel & Casino  
4455 Paradise Road  
Las Vegas, NV



the show, then that's great, but I am on there to tattoo and show what I do. I try to use whatever exposure it's given me to educate people about the things I feel are important or the artists who deserve it. I'm not fooled by the nonsense and I don't think this is the 'gateway to stardom' or anything as ridiculous. I'm no different from anyone because of this. Instead, I try to use it to tell people about the good guys: the honest, hardworking tattooers and artists that I would be nothing without. If I can give back to tattooing in a positive way at all, then it was worth it."

After all, without the cameras, the positive changes that have occurred in regard to tattooing may

never have been possible. "I think stylistically, tattooing can definitely be regional," begins Von D. "In Los Angeles, black and grey was something that was very prominent, it's kind of like the hometown for all the gangster portraits and lettering and all that stuff, but I think nowadays, especially after the success of shows like LA Ink, people are open to any kind of genre all over the place. You can kind of find every style of tattooing everywhere now." And as attitudes change, Von D laughs, "It's weird like, the lady at the bookstore, the guy at the gas station and the model or whatever, they all have tattoos, so it's kind of not a big deal." Can you imagine that a decade ago?



*I'm not unrealistic about what it is, and it seems that's where most people get confused, if people can take something positive away from watching the show, then that's great, but I am on there to tattoo and show what I do. I try to use whatever exposure it's given me to educate people about the things I feel are important or the artists who deserve it.*

DAN SMITH





## LONDON INK

**SHOP:** London Tattoo  
**ON AIR:**

September 23, 2007 –  
November 23, 2008

**SEASONS:** 2

**EPISODES:** 12

**TODAY:** Since the plug was pulled on the show, the four artists featured on London Ink have gone on to work at different shops across the country. Louis Molloy is the resident artist at Manchester's Middleton Tattoo Studio, Phil Kyle has introduced Magnum Opus Tattoo in Brighton, Nikole Lowe can be found at I Love Good Times in Shoreditch and Dan Gold is working at 13 Ink Tattoo in Liverpool. As for the shop itself, London Tattoo has been working on building its reputation as a great tattoo shop, despite being owned and run by someone other than a tattoo artist.

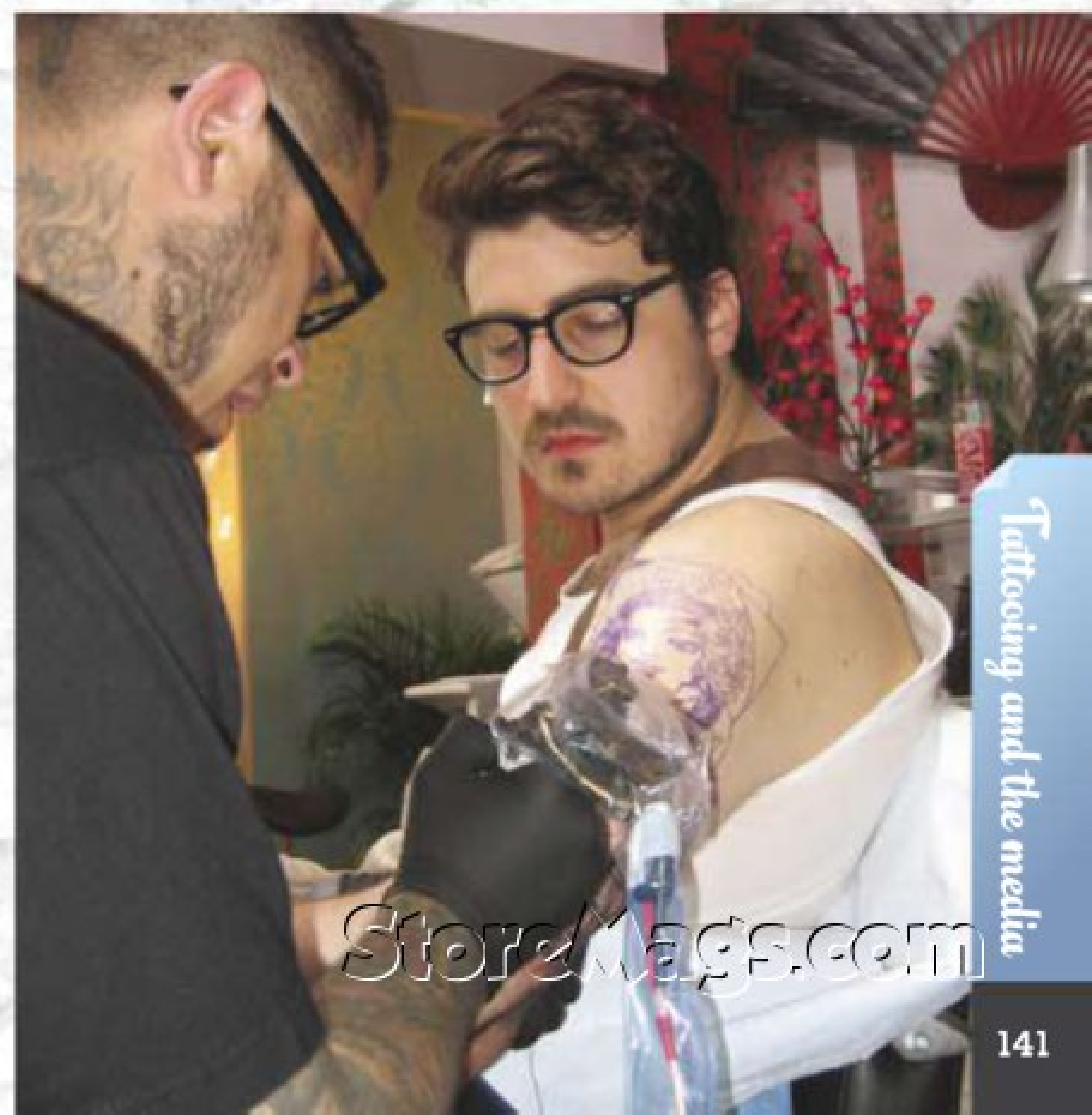
**ADDRESS:**

London Tattoo  
332 Goswell Road,  
Angel, Islington,  
London

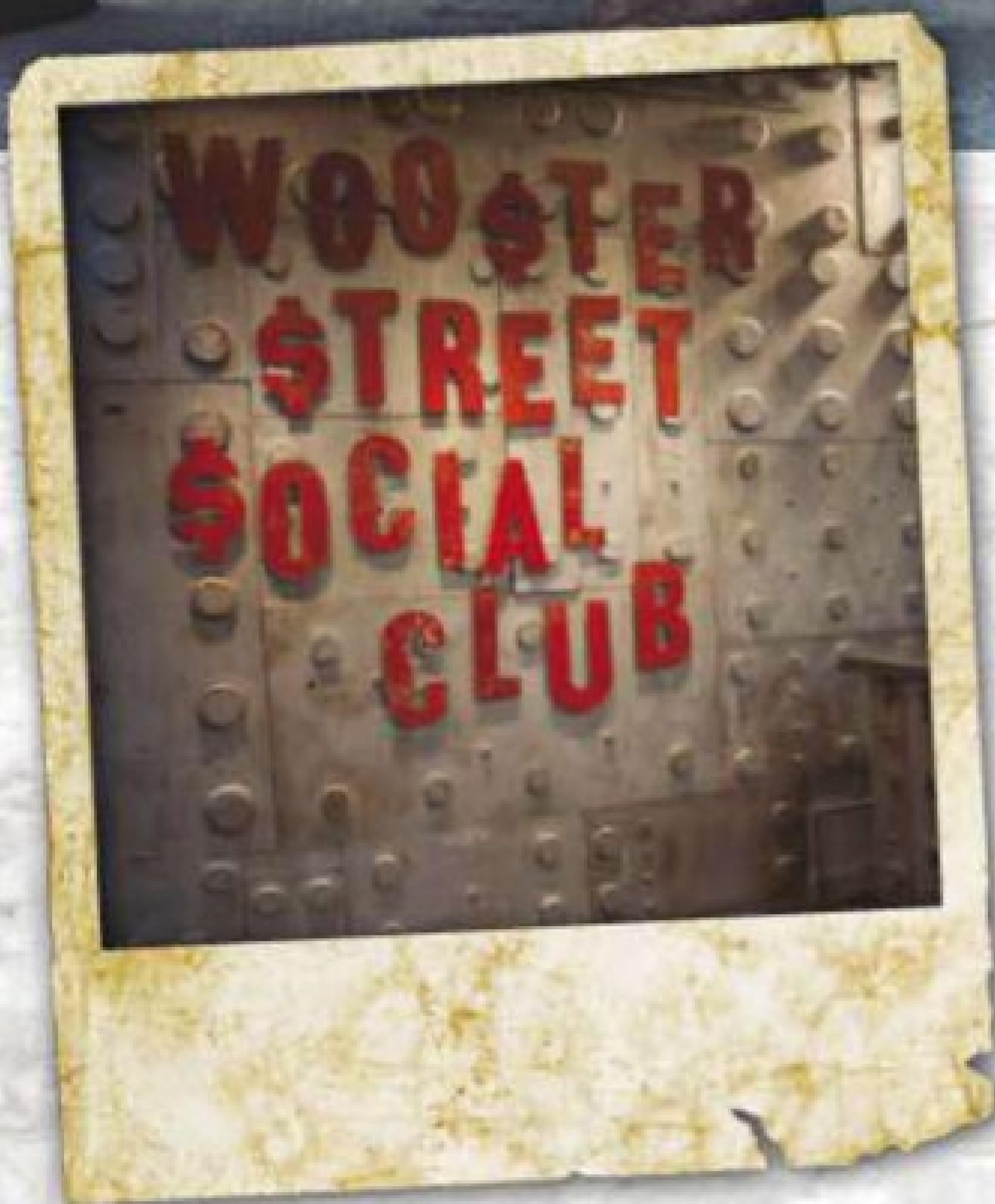
Legendary tattooer Mario Barth has gone as far as to say that the artists on TV "have changed the whole history of tattooing. Anybody who says different is lying to themselves." If you're shaking your head in disagreement right about now, consider that Barth has witnessed the evolution of the industry firsthand, beginning his career in Austria at a time when the craft was outright illegal. He also owns numerous successful shops, runs The Biggest Tattoo Show

on Earth, has created Intenze Products and, before retiring from the competitive circuit, he won over 200 international awards. You can continue doubting the man or you can bow to his greatness in agreement - your call.

As Barth further explains, he is proud of what the tattooers on TV have accomplished. "If I can give every single one of them a hug and say 'Great job,' I will. Think about it, it's like, how can you reach masses and send a message? It started







with *Inked*, it still had to be the craziness of a show, it was people getting drunk and partying, yeah, but that's the stigmatism of tattooing you have. If [they] portrayed tattooing in a way like okay, there's some man sitting with a suit on and he's saying 'Hi madam, how can I help you?,' nobody would tune in."

Barth also notes it was *Miami Ink* that drove tattooed television towards a more documentary format. "In *Miami Ink* the step up [from *Inked*] was that they

showed more artistry ... and the viewers doubled and tripled because of that, because now the interest factor came in. Then, of course, the magic thing, what makes this world go round? Women, right? Men are still cavemen, so when women came around and Kat Von D came round, she was the poster child and now [it was like,] 'What? There's a woman tattooing?'"

In addition to enlightening minds internationally, Barth believes the shows also





## NY INK

**SHOP:** Wooster Street Social Club  
**ON AIR:** June 2011 - Who knows?!  
**SEASONS:** Minimum 1  
**EPISODES:** Minimum 8  
**TODAY:** NY Ink will be premiering in June, 2011 as the latest member of the Ink family. Eight episodes have already been bought and confirmed, but judging by the success of Miami Ink and LA Ink, the network is sure to want more. The only hurdle will be keeping Ami James in New York City, away from Love Hate Tattoo Studio and the fabulous weather in Miami.  
**ADDRESS:** Wooster Street Social Club  
 43 Wooster  
 New York City, NY

brought about another epic change. "It opened our industry up to a way broader audience and not only to the audience, but our industry forgets this, it opened it up to a lot of better artists. People like the Nikkos, all those new people, which are out there to make enormous work, which nobody would have touched with a stick."

Now, for the shocker - TLC is at it again! The network has already ordered eight hour-long episodes of a brand new show that will join the Ink family: NY Ink. Set to premiere in June 2011, the show is bringing back Mr. Ami James himself. Moving from Miami to New York City, James will be opening up a brand new shop in SoHo, Wooster Street Social Club, and taking on a whole new crew.

It seems the bond between television and ink is destined to stay strong until death do them part. So cozy up on the couch with your favorite snack and beverage - may I suggest some Sailor Jerry rum or Ed Hardy wine? - and rather than focusing on the negative, it may be time to just enjoy the art and embrace all the good the television shows are doing for the industry. As Von D says, "any preconceived perception is a misconception. I think the most honest part of everything is my tattooing." After all, it is the real driver behind the magic and attraction of each of these television shows. Not to mention, as Dan Smith points out, "all of this is temporary, anyway. Life is temporary." ★





BALANCING ACT

# Fine Art & Tattooing

IT'S ALL ABOUT BALANCE. BALANCE BETWEEN WORKING WITH OTHERS AND WORKING SOLO; BALANCE BETWEEN PRODUCING ART ON A FLAT CANVAS AND PRODUCING ART ON SKIN; BALANCE BETWEEN BEING ALLOWED TO MAKE MISTAKES AND NEEDING TO BE PERFECT EVERY SINGLE TIME.

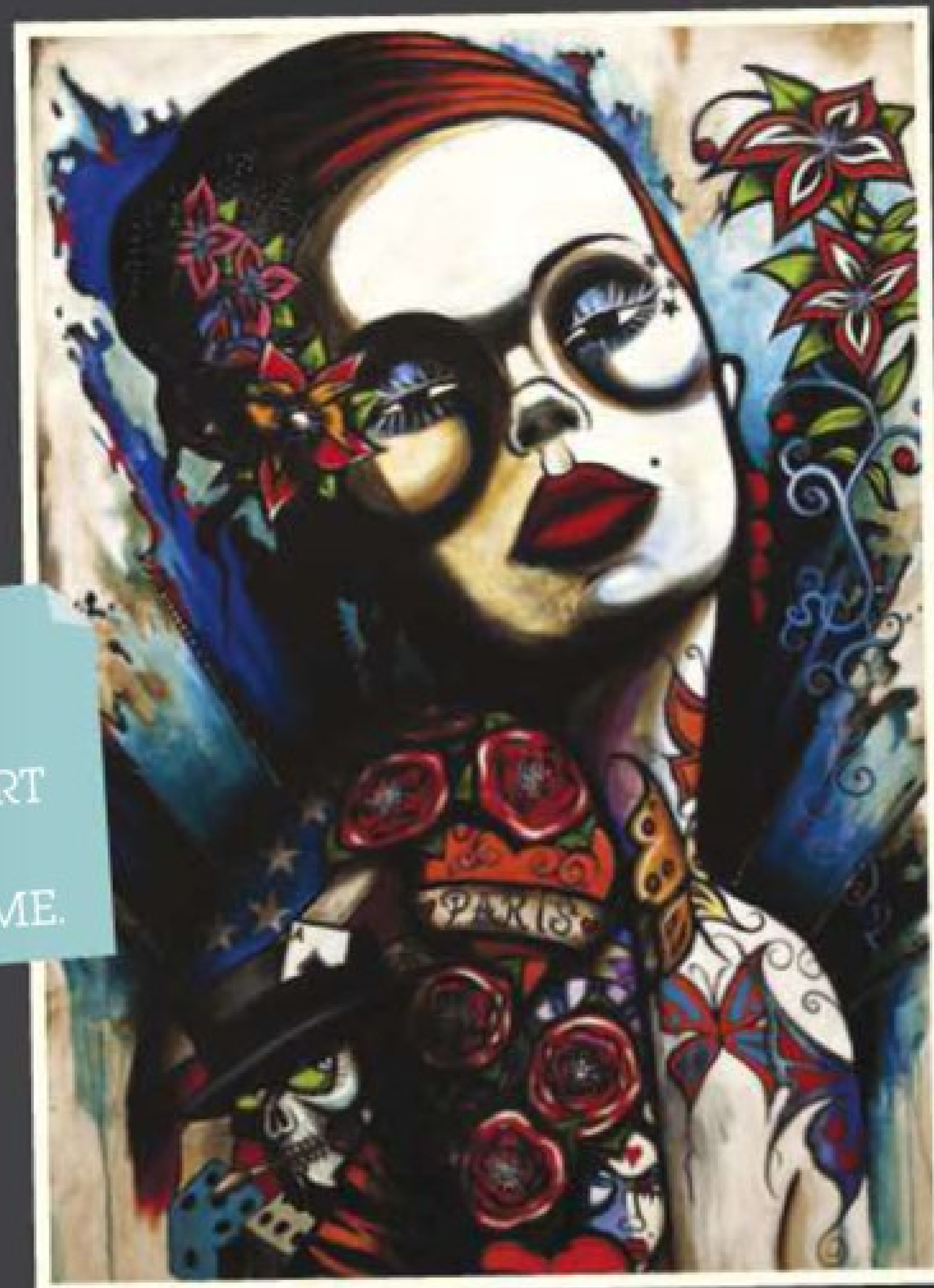
WORDS:  
BARBARA PAVONE  
IMAGES:  
AS CREDITED

Yes, it's clear: straddling the worlds of fine art and tattooing is no easy feat. And yet, countless talented artists continue to do so exceptionally. Some choose to begin with a fine arts education, others start by

playing around with pencils and paints at a young age and others still decide to pick up a tattoo machine first, but whatever the starting point, they all end up at the same finish line, in a world where fine art

and tattooing are blended together.

As you will soon discover from the five interviews that follow, the ability to go back and forth between making art on skin and on other, more easily handled surface is often a blessing, a retreat. When it comes to tattooing, dealing with customers isn't always easy, and creativity is often limited within the constraints of a client's references and ideas. When someone asks for a traditional koi fish, you can't very well offer them a graffiti-style rendition because you're in an experimental mood that day, now can you? No, the experimentation and expressionism need to be left for the canvas and without that release, who knows what the impact on an artist's tattooing would be?







SOME CHOOSE TO BEGIN WITH A FINE ARTS EDUCATION, OTHERS START BY PLAYING AROUND WITH PENCILS AND PAINTS AT A YOUNG AGE AND OTHERS STILL DECIDE TO PICK UP A TATTOO MACHINE FIRST

StoreMags.com



TECHNICAL BRILLIANCE

# Coulter Prehm

FOR RISING STAR COULTER PREHM, HIS SPIRAL DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE AND INTO THE WORLD OF FINE ART BEGAN WITH THE FIRST ART CLASS HE TOOK DURING HIS UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES. "I COULD TELL THE MOMENT THAT I PICKED UP A PENCIL AND A PAINTBRUSH THAT IT WAS WHAT I WAS GOING TO BE DOING FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE," SAYS PREHM. "FROM THE MOMENT I STARTED TO PAINT, I PAINTED A LOT. I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER PAINTED LESS THAN 40 HOURS A WEEK SINCE I DISCOVERED MAKING VISUAL ART."

[www.ColtPrehmArt.com](http://www.ColtPrehmArt.com)



Completing a BA at the Iowa State University College of Art and Design, as well as numerous drawing and painting workshops since, Prehm has experienced first-hand the differences between various methods of studying art. "A 'classical' art

education, in my mind, varies much from a university art program," he notes. "I feel that my training outside of the university setting was much more focused on technical development and understanding in comparison to art school, which seemed very much about self-expression, almost trapped in the expressionistic mindset. For art to have real substance and importance, I believe that whatever the medium, it must be created with a certain level of knowledge, care and technical competency. I do think that self-expression and individual voice is important, but it's more about learning to speak well with the language you are using."

Falling into the category of artist-turned-tattooer, Prehm first decided to push his skills

towards the tattoo world in 2005 when he began an apprenticeship with Robert Parr at Jaded Angel Tattoo in Iowa. As he explains, the fine arts background made the transition easier in some ways, but certainly trickier in others. "I think that painting, drawing and tattooing are the same thing, but using different media and surfaces. I wish that I could tattoo more how I paint and I am working hard to break myself of some old tattoo habits. There aren't really tricks to producing better art. I think that it just takes a ton of time, learning and practicing."

Moving to New Mexico in 2008, Prehm continued his tattoo work at Talisman Tattoo until, in early 2011, he opened up Prehm Studios.

Although continuously working on both his fine art





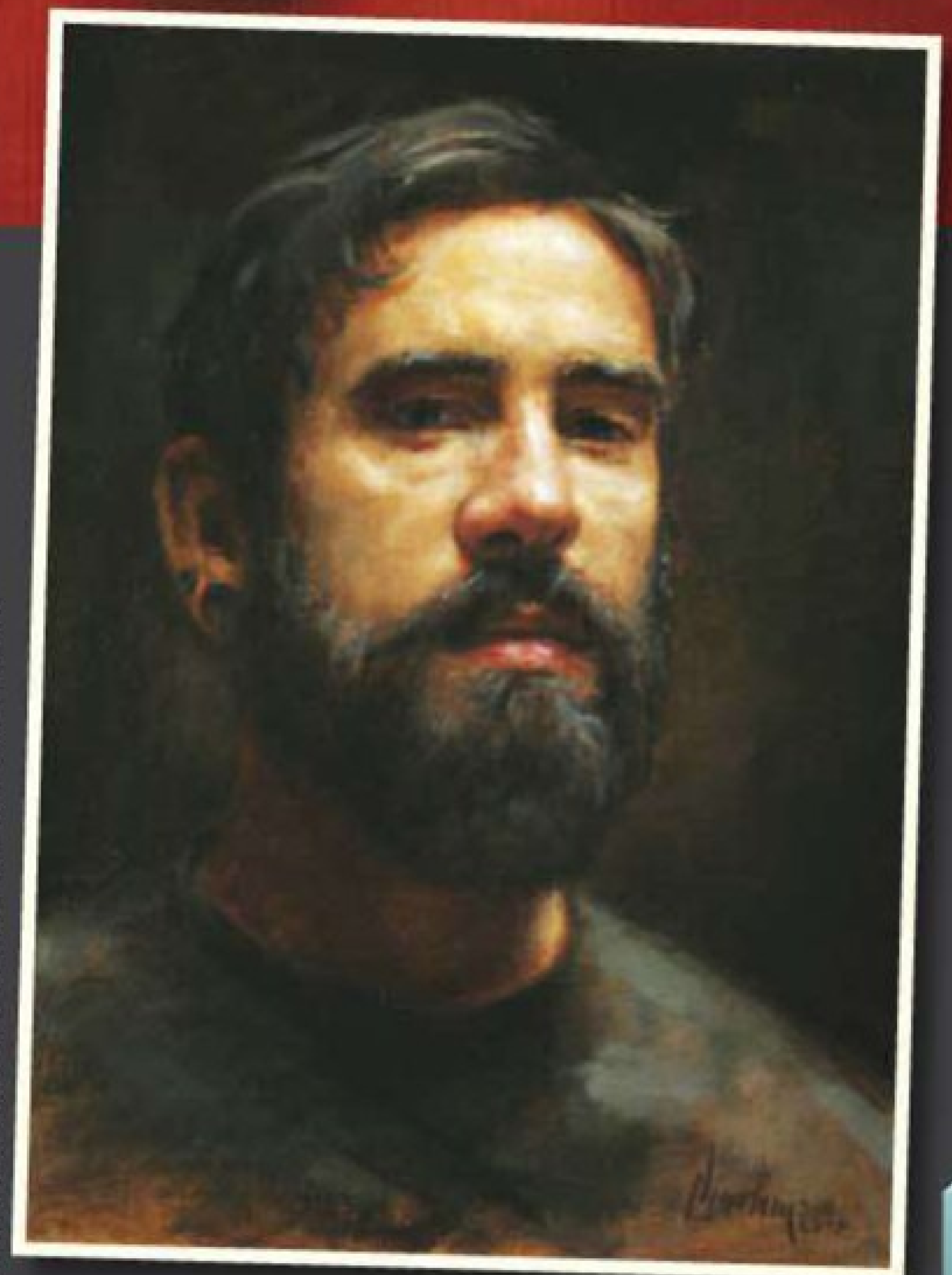



FOR INSTANCE, IN TATTOOING PEOPLE OFTEN THINK WATER SHOULD BE BLUE, HEARTS SHOULD BE RED, GRASS IS GREEN AND SO ON.

and tattooing means that the two undoubtedly influence each other, there is one lesson Prehm says the tattoo world could take away from, say, painting: "Tattooing often leads to symbolic usage of color and drawing. For instance, in tattooing people often think water should be blue, hearts should be red, grass is green and so on. In reality, water and grass are a multitude of colours and values and I think that becoming more aware of how colour and light really function would be a huge development in the tattoo community. I know that there

are tattooists that understand this concept, but in general, I think that drawing and painting more from life and studying nature would be beneficial for all the arts, tattooing included. And I am definitely not excluding myself from this need to learn more about these things either - we all have infinite room to improve."

As for his greatest piece of advice, which applies to the pursuit of any form of art, it's to be sure to "get a mentor. You need to be around people who are successful in the field you are trying to enter. My mom always used



to tell me that you can't fly with the eagles if you're running with the turkeys, so get some eagle in your life to teach you how to fly!" 



# Henry Lewis

DOUBLE TROUBLE

"I'VE BEEN PAINTING ALL MY LIFE," SAYS HENRY LEWIS WHEN ASKED ABOUT WHAT CAME FIRST, THE FINE ART OR THE TATTOOING. PLAYING WITH LIGHT, COLOUR AND SUBJECT MATTER LIKE ONLY HE CAN, THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NATIVE ISN'T ONE TO SHY AWAY FROM ANY SUBJECT MATTER OR INSPIRATION.

[www.TheSkullAndSword.com](http://www.TheSkullAndSword.com)




Nowadays both a greatly skilled painter and tattoo artist, his passion for the latter took some time to develop. "I used to work at a really shitty job, I worked at Kinko's, and the tattoo shop was a block down the street," he recalls. "My friends would go there and get tattooed, and I had no interest in tattooing at all. I didn't want any writing on me because, I don't know, I was ignorant. I thought tattooing was, when I first saw it, only for gangbangers and cats that got lettering, so I was not interested in it."

The turning point for Lewis came when one of his works of art showed up on a friend's skin. "Darryl got a tattoo of a drawing I did in color. I'd never seen a color tattoo and I was enamored by it. Since then, on my lunch breaks, I would take breaks and hang out at the tattoo shop."

Lewis went on to apprentice with Jason Schroder at Incognito Tattoo Co. in Pasadena and can now be found tattooing at Skull & Sword (alongside Grime), and he's sure as heck come a long way from his first tattooing experience at eighteen, which was actually brought about by his art. "I lied to this cat that I was the apprentice, when I was only a floor dude. I showed him my art book, 'cause I had a little black book I kept all my drawings in, and he was really into it. I used his equipment in a kitchen in San Luis Obispo and it was the worst piece of shit ever. If I met that dude again today I'd give him a free tattoo, apologize to him," he admits and can't help but laugh at the memory. "We did a shitty half-sleeve of a three-headed devil with piercings on it, it's so bad."

Regularly spending time in both the tattoo studio and

REGULARLY SPENDING TIME IN BOTH THE TATTOO STUDIO AND THE ART STUDIO, LEWIS POINTS OUT THAT, "ONE HAND WASHES THE OTHER."

the art studio, Lewis points out that, "One hand washes the other. I use the painting, that's the expressionistic part in my art, I believe. I can make a mistake and it's okay, and it kind of frees my mind up of that perfectionist mind space." But even so, it had to be asked: Forced to pick one, which would win over the other? "None of them, they'd both cancel each other out," he scrys in a flash. "I couldn't pick. I have to do both of 'em." 







# PAINTING TATTOOS Shawn Barber

SINCE SELLING HIS FIRST WORK AS A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST IN 1999 - "A LARGE-SCALE, LOOSE, BRUSHY PAINTING OF JOHN COLTRANE" - BARBER HAS BEEN MOLDING A PLACE FOR HIMSELF AS ONE OF AMERICA'S GREATEST CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS. HIS PORTFOLIO BOASTS AN ECLECTIC MIX OF EVERYTHING FROM PORTRAITS OF TATTOO ICONS TO AN ILLUSTRATION OF PRESIDENT OBAMA THAT LANDED ON THE COVER OF THE WALL STREET JOURNAL'S INAUGURATION ISSUE.

[www.SDBarber.com](http://www.SDBarber.com)



**I** always drew as a kid," says Barber, "I think that most people who have been doing art for several years, it's something they were impulsed to do growing

up." That may be so, but the notion to pursue art full-time didn't come until his mid-twenties when Barber found himself studying art in school and as a pastime. "Seeing rapid progression and seeing just the personal enthusiasm from the act of making something from nothing was very invigorating. It was pretty exciting and I think at that point I was 27 or 28 and I didn't work for anybody, so I was gonna do it no matter what." Through his Tattooed Portraits series, Barber has been capturing some of the tattoo world's greatest on canvas for several years now.

Painting sessions last anywhere from several hours to several weeks, but it all starts with a photography session (or two, or three) and trust. "I'm finding more and more that if I spend more than five minutes with the person and I'm patient, and not trying to force anything on the situation, it's usually a little bit more natural. I think the more of these paintings I do, when people see them, they're more likely to open up knowing that I'm not trying to exploit them."

THROUGH HIS TATTOOED PORTRAITS SERIES, BARBER HAS BEEN CAPTURING SOME OF THE TATTOO WORLD'S GREATEST ON CANVAS FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW.







In 2007, Barber began his metamorphoses, apprenticing under painter-tattooer extraordinaire Mike Davis. Now working with Kim Saigh in their private Los Angeles studio, Memoir Tattoo, Barber is becoming one of the contemporary greats juggling both worlds.

So does the work get any easier with time and experience? "I think feeling comfortable with my technique gets easier, but I'm always trying to play and try new things, so I don't know. It's the easiest job in the world, so it's not hard. You're alone doing your thing, unlike tattooing [where] you have to deal with another person. I think when people say like, you're being 'bold' or 'brave' with your work - it's a fucking painting. You're drawing a picture, it's not that big of a deal." 🐦





# Sacred Tattoo

THE PERFECT MARRIAGE

OKAY, SO THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT ONE PARTICULAR ARTIST, BUT IT IS ABOUT A GREAT NEW YORK CITY STUDIO THAT'S BLURRING THE LINE BETWEEN FINE ART AND TATTOOING. SACRED TATTOO FIRST OPENED ITS DOORS IN 1990, BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL THE SHOP'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY THAT A MAJOR CHANGE TOOK PLACE. PLANNING A MAJOR REVAMP FOR THE PLACE, OWNER WES WOOD AND MANAGER KEVIN WILSON DECIDED TO ADD SOMETHING SPECIAL TO THE SHOP'S BACK - AN ART GALLERY.

[www.SacredTattoo.com](http://www.SacredTattoo.com)



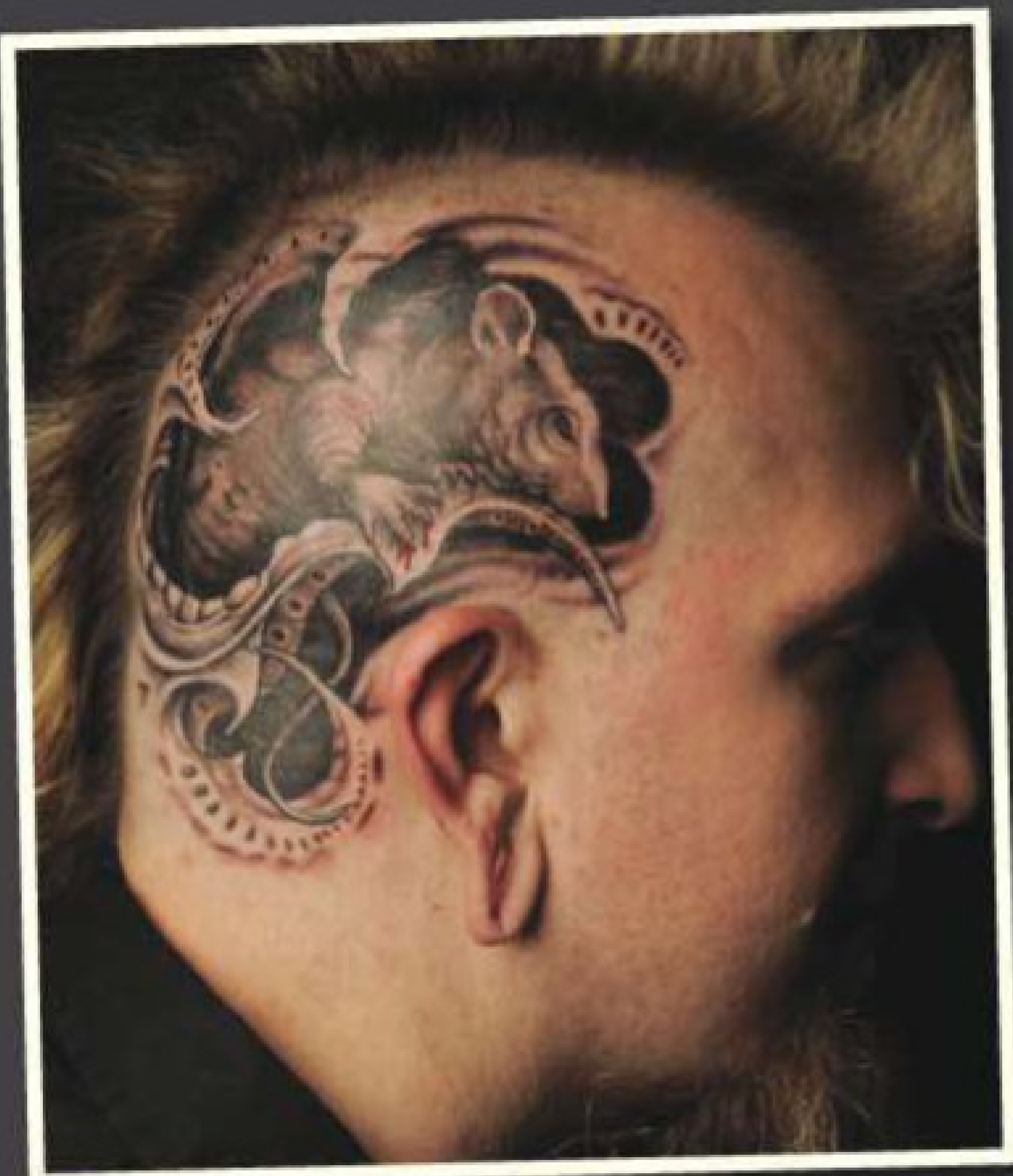
**D**escribed by Wilson as a fine arts gallery, Sacred Gallery NYC may be on the same floor as the tattoo studio, but "it's separate at the same time. It has its own separate entrance, it has its own

separate entity to the company," and although the two spaces do interact, they are not necessarily always in sync. "Every so often we'll show people who do tattoo, but for the most part we have people such as Shepard Fairey who has shown with us. He's the guy who did the iconic Obama "Hope" picture that everybody sees and he also does street art that's known as Obey Giant ... It's not necessarily just tattoo-inspired art." Although this notion may seem strange at first, it actually makes perfect strategic sense once Wilson explains it. "We don't really go after tattoo-inspired art per se because coming from a business standpoint, a lot of people will wind up, if it looks like flash or very tattoo-y type art, people will tend to just pay the money and get a tattoo. So we try to

IT IS ABOUT A GREAT NEW YORK CITY STUDIO THAT'S BLURRING THE LINE BETWEEN FINE ART AND TATTOOING.

go for things that are a little bit more fine-tuned, whether it be illustration or actual painting, or even digital work and photography."

Over the years, Wilson has however discovered the growth of an organic, unexpected and great interplay between the two areas. "The nice thing about having a gallery and a tattoo studio together is when people come in, especially like the fine arts community, you get a lot of people who would have never even wanted to come







near a tattoo studio because there's certain phobias and stigmas that could be attached with their thinking, like the old-school mindset. And then they come and they see how comfortable the atmosphere is and how we cater to a different type of clientele and then next thing you know, we find out that we've started tattooing a lot of these art people. So it's actually worked out pretty well for us," he says and adds, "That was one of the things we wanted to try to be able to do: pull both worlds together. We've had clients of ours who have been getting tattooed purchase from the gallery and then we've had people who have purchased from the gallery, and shown in the gallery, wind up getting their first tattoos from us."

Sounds like the perfect marriage indeed. 🐦





# TAMING THE Black Dog

IF IT WEREN'T SO CLOSE TO HOME, IT WOULD READ LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A U.S. SOAP OPERA. SIBLING RIVALRY, DEPRESSION, HATED BY THE CRITICS AND LOVED BY HIS FANS, TERRY BRADLEY, MUCH TO HIS BEMUSEMENT AS A MAN SIMPLY DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY, FINDS HIMSELF AT THE SHARP END OF THE PUBLIC STICK. BUT HERE, HE IS IN SAFE HANDS...

[www.terrybradley.com](http://www.terrybradley.com)



**I** haven't interviewed a good 'n' proper Irishman for years. I'd forgotten that once you get us Celts started on a good story, it's hard to slow the train down...

A native of Shankill Road in Belfast, his mother kept him inside for most of his childhood to shield him from the troubles that were going on outside their front door.

Finding solace in Herge's stories of Tintin, he also began nurturing talent through his own art.

To come full circle in his life story so far, Bradley - a successful full-time artist in his own right - now finds himself something of an inspiration to children, not so much in a similar situation, but

certainly at a loss for a way to navigate the future. Working with both local kids and prisoners, he has taken his "fuck the critics" approach and delivered it - as only a true artist can - into the hands of future generations:

"All that nonsense about which brush to use and what kind of hair the damn thing is made of - that's not art. Art is getting what's inside onto the canvas, or whatever it is you've got available to paint onto. "You know, to the critics, I don't exist. It bothered me for a long time - and sometimes, it still does. Once you start making a name for yourself doing something that you're good at and love doing, the assumption is that you're this confident person and that people can take potshots at you. But that's not me. I'm still just Terry Bradley, a guy that loves to paint who found a way to maybe take his

family on holiday once in a while without having to worry about it. That's not the same thing at all.

"I just don't understand art critics. When you're artistic, you're always, without exception, your own best and worst critic, so how can somebody who doesn't know anything about you judge what you're doing wrong? I have no time for them at all. The feedback from people is what matters. You shouldn't have to have a degree to like something - it's a visual thing that hits

**ALL THAT NONSENSE ABOUT WHICH BRUSH TO USE AND WHAT KIND OF HAIR THE DAMN THING IS MADE OF - THAT'S NOT ART.**





when you first see a piece and that's pretty much the end of it!"

"Working with kids, well, I just don't have the resources to sponsor them or anything, but what I have got is some time and some space and I'd really like it if we could get some of them coming here and being involved in art, hanging out on the beach and having a few laughs but also putting some work in and getting the job done. I've also been working with some prisoners out in McGillian.

"There's this one big guy there and he had copied some of my work and hung it on his wall, I spent some time with him and worked a lot with him and the guy ends up getting an A Level in art which is brilliant." Having once owned his own clothing shop, Bradley came up the hard way and it was only when a chance conversation with John Reynolds, the owner of the famous PoD club in Dublin, led to Bradley's first solo art exhibition, that he began to find his feet. The night was a huge success and Terry finally started to make some money from the one thing that had stayed with him all his life, but it's been no bed of roses. ★







timelessinktattooostudio.com

ROCK ROLL



# Glossary

COINED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES THE WHOLE WORLD OVER, HERE'S A LIST OF SOME TATTOO TERMS THAT YOU MIGHT FIND INTERESTING. IT'S BY NO MEANS COMPREHENSIVE BUT IT MIGHT ENLIGHTEN YOUR HEAD SOMEWHAT. A FEW WORDS OF WARNING: SOME OF THE TERMS ARE LEGITIMATE WHILST OTHERS ARE SLANG TERMS AND THEY'RE NOT ALL FAVOURABLE EITHER. WE'LL LEAVE IT IN YOUR CAPABLE AND SENSIBLE HANDS AS TO WHICH YOU CAN USE TO APPEAR INTELLIGENT AND WHICH NEVER TO USE LEST YOU APPEAR TO BE A TOTAL IDIOT.

**Aftercare** How you take care of your tattoo once you get home.

**Autoclave** Heat/pressure device for sterilisation.

**B-back** - A slang term for a customer who chickens-out during a tattoo session. The most commonly used excuse to leave is: "I gotta run to the cash machine, I'll be back." But they never return.

**Backpiece** a tattoo that covers the whole of the back and sometimes includes 'shorts' which flow down the back of the legs to the knee.

**Been needled** This is another way to say: "been tattooed."

**Blacklight tattoo** A tattoo done with special ink that glows in the dark. Also known as a 'reactive' or glow in the dark tattoo.

**Blackwork** A tattoo done only in shades of black and grey.

**Blowout** ink spread from tattooing gone too deep.

**Bodysuit** A single design or extensive collection that envelops the body. This can comprise the hands and neck too, but it more commonly used to describe Japanese-style tattoos that stop at the neck, wrists and ankles.

**Cadaver** This term refers to a customer who refuses to talk to the tattoo artist during the entire process of getting inked. It is likely that the customer is a noob or just too scared about the whole process to find the energy to speak.

**Carving** As in carving out some PHAT lines.

**Closers** This refers to those annoying customers who know fully well that you close at 10pm, and take your last customer at 9pm, but they walk in at 9:45pm anyway, expecting you to accommodate their 2-hour tattoo request.

**Cosmetic tattoos** To cover up blemishes, or after breast cancer surgery, for example.

**Cover Up** Covering an existing tattoo with a new one, or to hide one's ink from family members with large sweaters!

**Dealers** These are customers who haggle down the tattoo price like they are attending a body art auction. They intend to pay less than what regular customers normally pay.

**Dermis** The layer of skin that retains ink when a tattoo is applied. This sits below the epidermis and above the hypodermis.

**Devotion tattoo** Symbolises its owner's love for a significant other, parent, pet, favourite band, favourite food, etc.

**D.I.Y. tattoos** Do-it-yourself tattoos. Not recommended.

**Engraved** This is another term for "tattooed."

**Epidermis** The outermost layer of skin that acts as a 'window', because we look through it to see the tattoo. A tattoo needs to go a few layers into the epidermis, but not all the way through.

**Flash** Pre-designed tattoos and motifs that appear on the walls of many tattoo studios.

**Geeking** This refers to acting stupid, or ignorant, or out of place, without regard to how you appear to others. Tattoo artists tend to use this term to refer to their clients who do not know how to follow instructions, especially in matters related to taking care of their tattoos.

**Getting inked** Is another way of saying, "getting tattooed."

**Goo** This pertains to the cool, healing ointment tattoo artists apply to a new tattoo.

**Grinding** A term similar to "creating," as in what "grinding out some tribal tattoos" suggests.

**Gun** This is a general slang term for a tattoo machine. In some cases, this term may have a negative connotation in association with hackers or scratchers. A term for tattoo machine used primarily by scratchers and loathed by artists.

**Hacker** Beware of the hacker. No, he doesn't hack into computer systems; this term refers to an unskilled tattoo artist who tends to cause the client more pain and swelling than necessary. Also called a scratcher.

**Hori** in Japanese tattooing, hori is prefixed to an artist's name.

**Horimono** The word given to tattooing in Japan.



**Hyperrealism** A genre, usually cited in fine art but now frequently in tattooing too, as the rendering of a subject to look like a high-resolution photograph i.e. extremely detailed and lifelike.

**Inked** Refers to a person with many tattoos. It also pertains to the act of getting tattooed.

**Irons** A term of affection for tattoo machine used by artists.

**Jailhouse** Style of tattoo inspired by tattoos inmates would be able to get in jail. Were very crude due to materials (urine and soot for ink). Now refers to both style (Black and Gray only) and subject matter.

**Kanji** Japanese lettering.

**Kara-jishi** The proper placement and observance of rules for images used for Japanese tattoos.

**Kickin' it into third** A phrase used by tattoo artists that describes the way they pick up the speed on the fill, because they know you can handle it.

**Koi** The Japanese term for carp.

**Know you're getting a tattoo** A phrase used by tattoo artists to refer to the act of tattooing the underside of the arm. Ouch, that's going to hurt.

**Lady Luck** A traditionally popular tattoo at war time. The central figure in the design is always a beautiful woman surrounded by other signs of good fortune like a four leaf clover, a rabbit's foot, etc. The tattoo was thought to bring luck to the owner.

**Meat** A local tattoo enthusiast who always has a fresh tattoo healing always has meat. This type of collector frequents the tattoo shop, getting a tat or two in short intervals.

**Michaelangelo** Tattoo artists coined this ironic term out of frustration towards certain clients who think they know better. They are the ones who ask for "victory red" or "purple passion" and tell the artist where and how to shade. Think: back seat driver.

**Moku** Name for traditional New Zealand Maori tribe tattoos. Sometimes used to specifically refer to those designs on the face.

**New School** Bright, colourful, vivid style of modern tattooing, often cartoonish.

**Old English** A popular lettering font for tattoos.

**On The Road** when an artist travels often and doesn't have a fixed studio at which they work, we refer to them as being 'on the road'.

**Powerlines** term used to describe the thick, sculpted outlines surrounding a tattoo, most often used in new school pieces. Either inserting an initial outline and then filling it out, or simply putting a thick line on creates the effect.

**Pounding skin** Refers to "tattooing someone." To a virgin, this term can sound more brutal than necessary.

**Pussyball** Pertains to the "tennis ball" given to the customer who won't stop whining.

**Sailor (also known as Traditional, Americana, or Sailor Jerry):** Style of tattoos gotten by sailors from the turn of the century to the 1950s. Gotten in ports like Amsterdam, San Francisco, and Coney Island. Refers to both the style of drawing and subject matter (pinups, anchors, bluebirds, pirate ships)

**Scratcher** A shoddy tattooist who cares little for quality but loves to churn out cheap, nasty tattoos.

**Show your ink** Another way of saying "show your tattoo."

**Showcase** Refers to a collector who has a ton of tattoos inked by the same tattoo artist.

**Sleeve** Refers to either a full arm or leg tattoo. in the case of arms: half, three quarters and full are all prefixes that can describe how much of the limb the tattoo covers.

**Slinging ink** Similar to pounding

**Stencil** The outline of the tattoo design, treated and transferred to skin with alcohol, that acts as a guide for the tattoo artist while working.

**Suikoden** - A book of Chinese legend with tattooed heroes.

**Swastika** The culturally universal symbol of peace and love, and NOT a fascist symbol.

**Ta moko** A traditional Maori facial tattoo.

**Tatau** The traditional reference to the word 'tattoo' in Tahiti.

**Tattoo** An indelible mark or figure fixed upon the body by insertion of pigment under the skin. The name originates from the sound the sticks and needle would make during tattooing with traditional materials, "ta-tu ta-tu ta-tu"

**Tattoo shark** Someone who has a habit of stealing other people's tattoo ideas and designs.

**Tebori** The time-honoured practice of tattooing by hand in Japan.

**Tenderfoot** - Body art newbies.

**The Look** This describes the tell-all smile when the customer first sees his new tattoo.

**Tramp stamp** Derogatory term for a tattoo done on the lower back of women.

**Tribal** Heavy black graphic designs inspired by the traditional Polynesian tattooing of Tahiti, Hawaii, and New Zealand.

**Whip shading** term used to describe the method of pulling a large magnum needle configuration across the skin to create a 'peppered' effect for soft gradations. A hallmark of neotraditional tattooing but also used in other schools to create delicate backgrounds and subtle shading.

**Wrastler** This is a person who, after fainting in the tattoo chair, still decides to finish what he started.

**Yakuza** The famously (and often heavily) tattooed Japanese crime syndicate.







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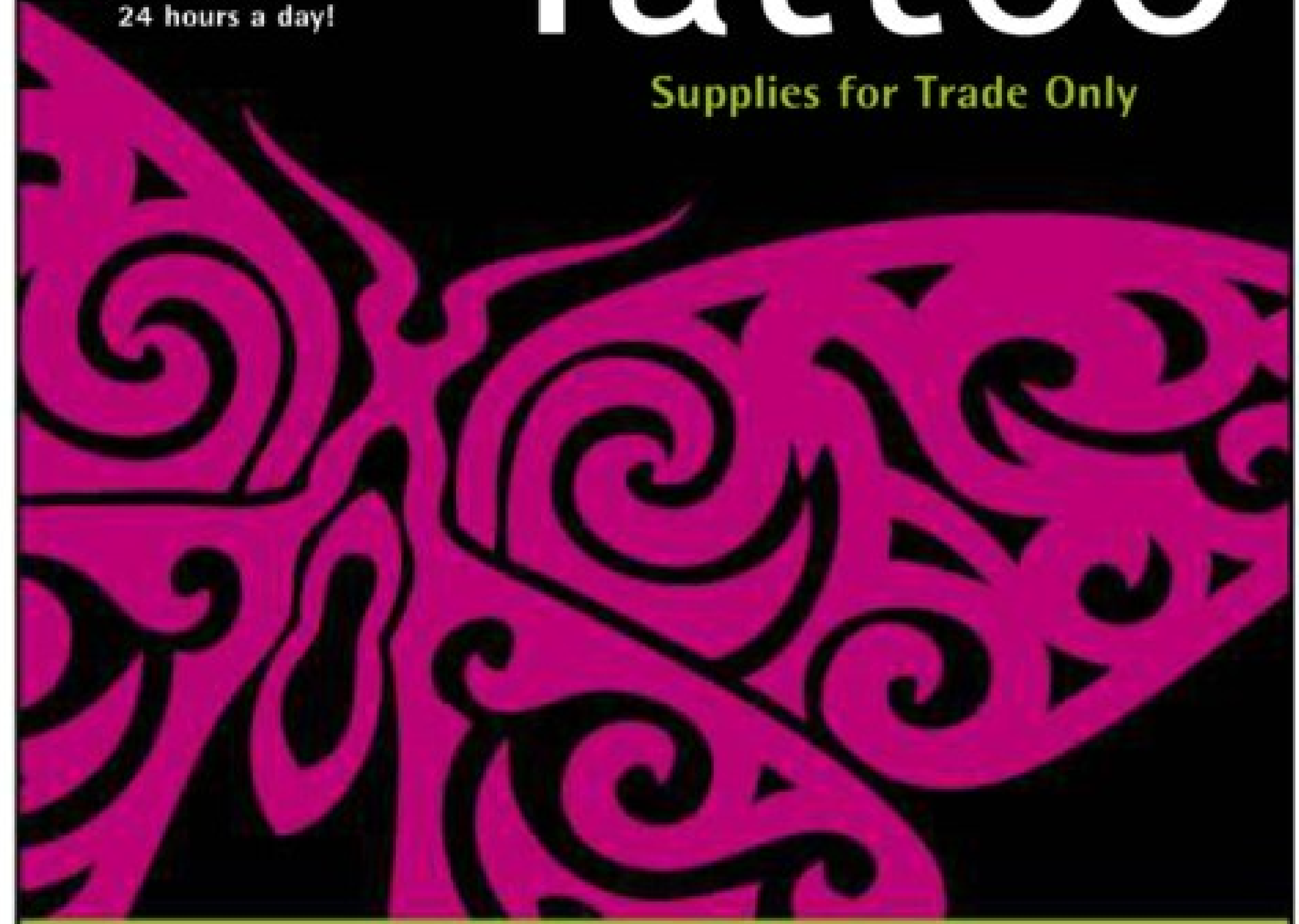
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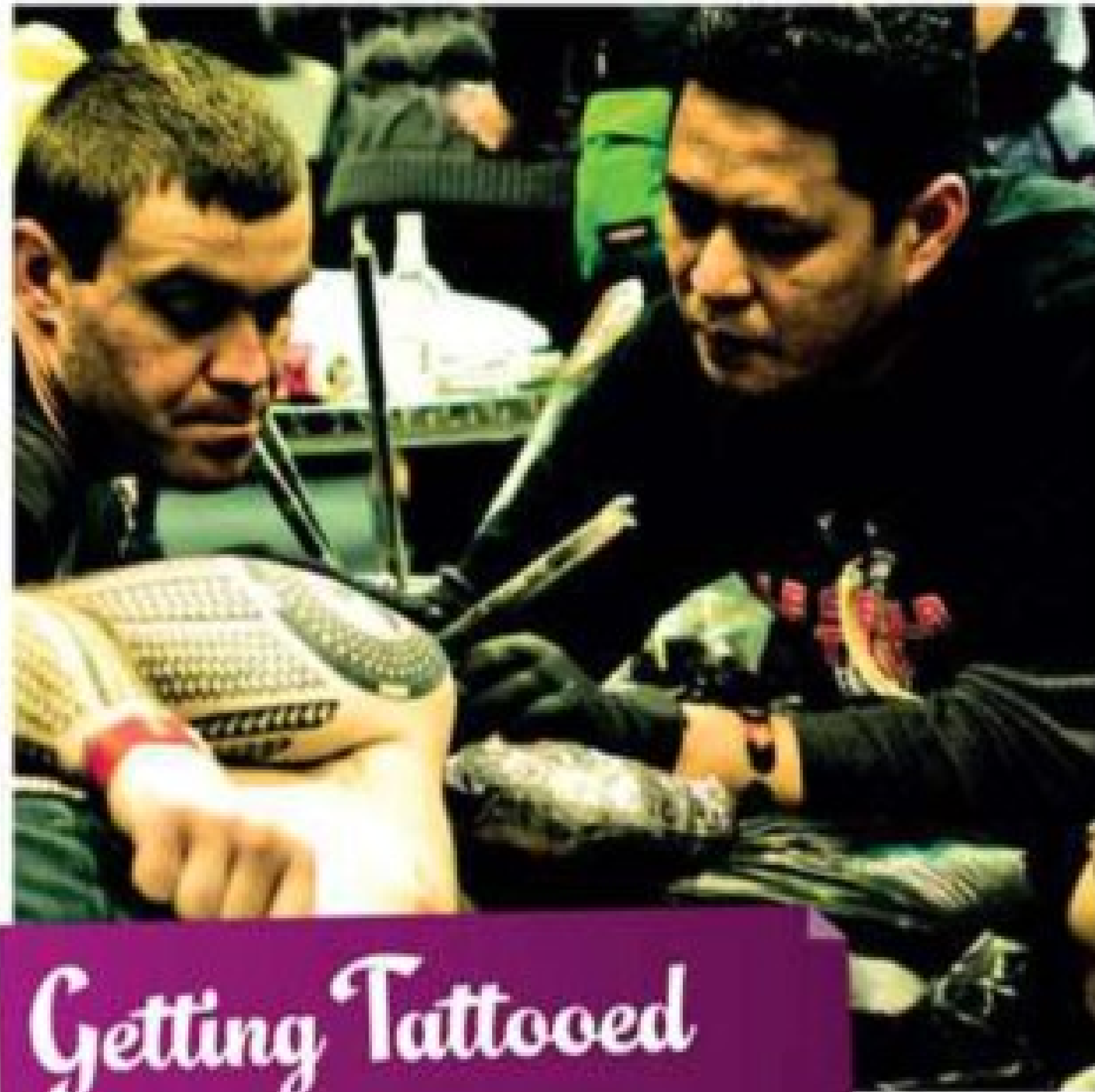
# Tattoo Bible 2

When we published Volume One of *The Tattoo Bible*, tattooing was at a point of immense popularity. Who would have thought twelve months on that its popularity would grow into an even bigger global phenomenon? It is as much a part of popular culture today as our favourite TV shows, films and musicians. Along with that popularity comes a thirst for knowledge and a need for a respected source to answer those questions.

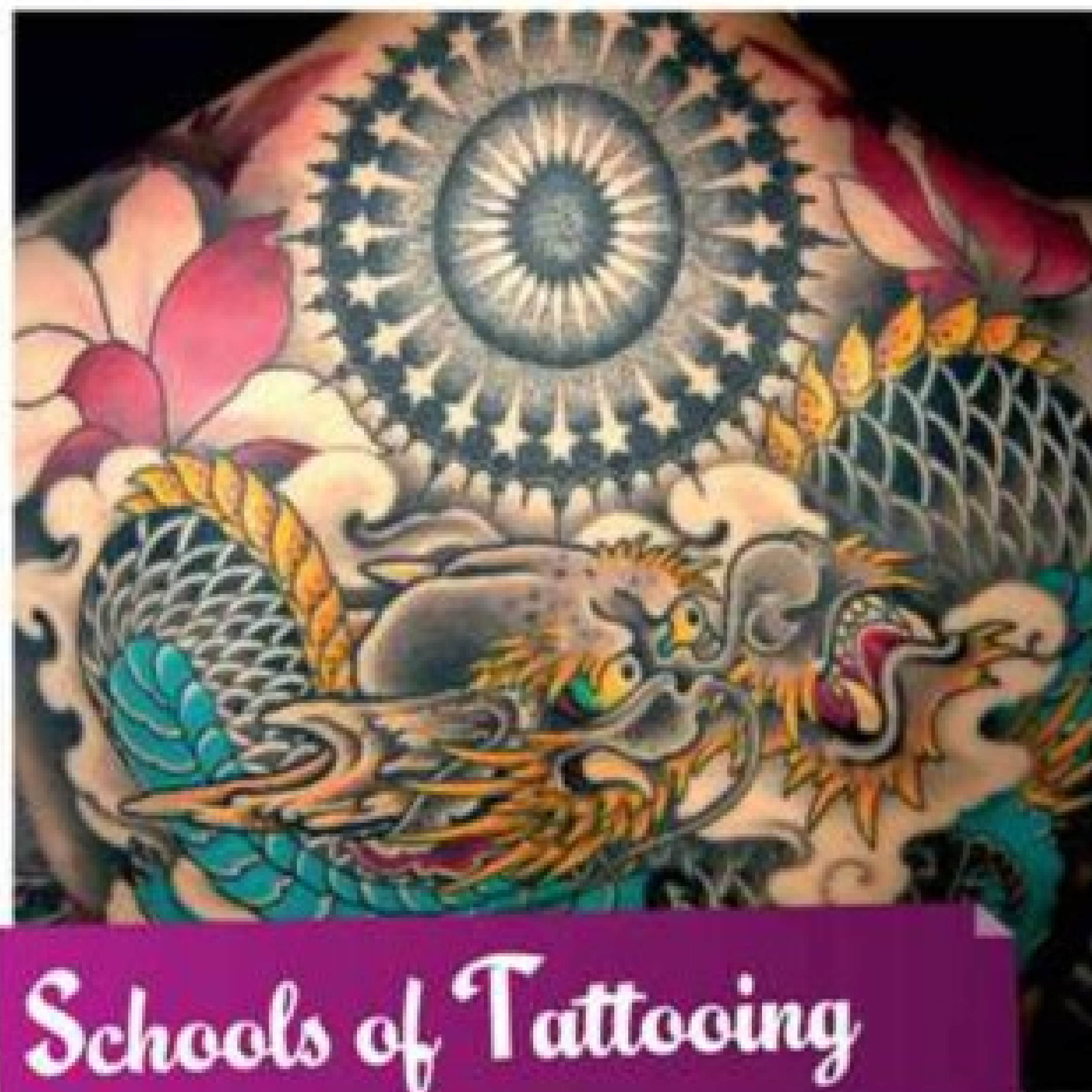
In this - *The Tattoo Bible 2* - we once again bring you the essential information you need to make good decisions when it comes to getting your first tattoo. You'll also find great advice from respected writers and tattoo artists. We look at everything you need to know if you're a tattoo virgin thinking about your first time, right across the board to how to get on the road to becoming a tattoo artist yourself and the right way to go about it.

We talk to respected international tattoo artists, look at the role the media has played in the sudden growth in popularity, arm you with a history of the art and discuss the different schools of tattooing. We look at the best in aftercare advice, give an overview of the international convention scene and how you can use it to your advantage and lift the lid on cover-ups. Of course - it wouldn't be a Skin Deep spin-off if we didn't lavish it with some outstanding photography and drop in a few of our best ever features to make this volume an even more collectible edition than the first.

Ultimately, *The Tattoo Bible 2* presents you with a fantastic worldview on the industry as it stands today. Just because we're having fun doesn't mean we're not taking it seriously!



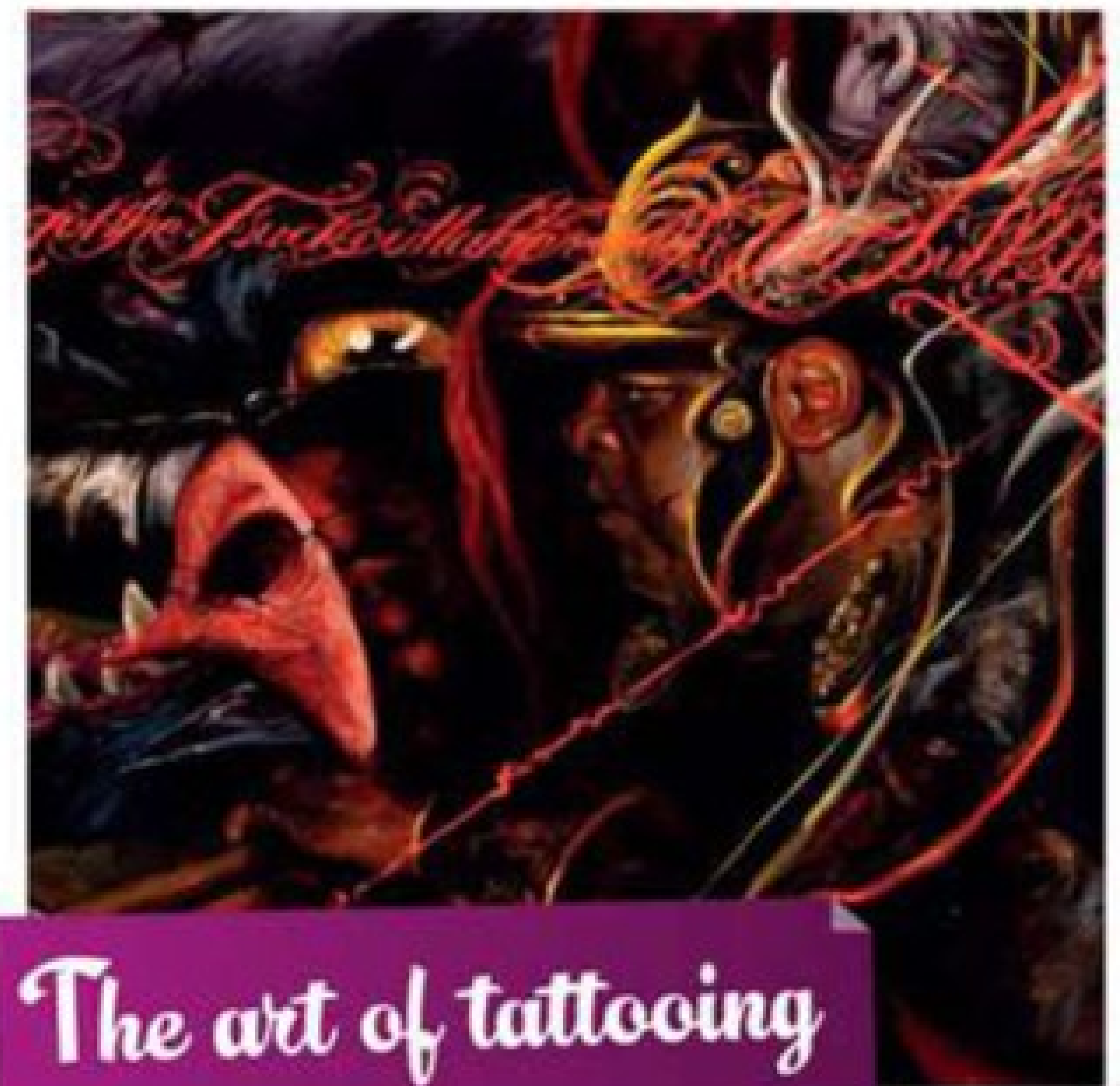
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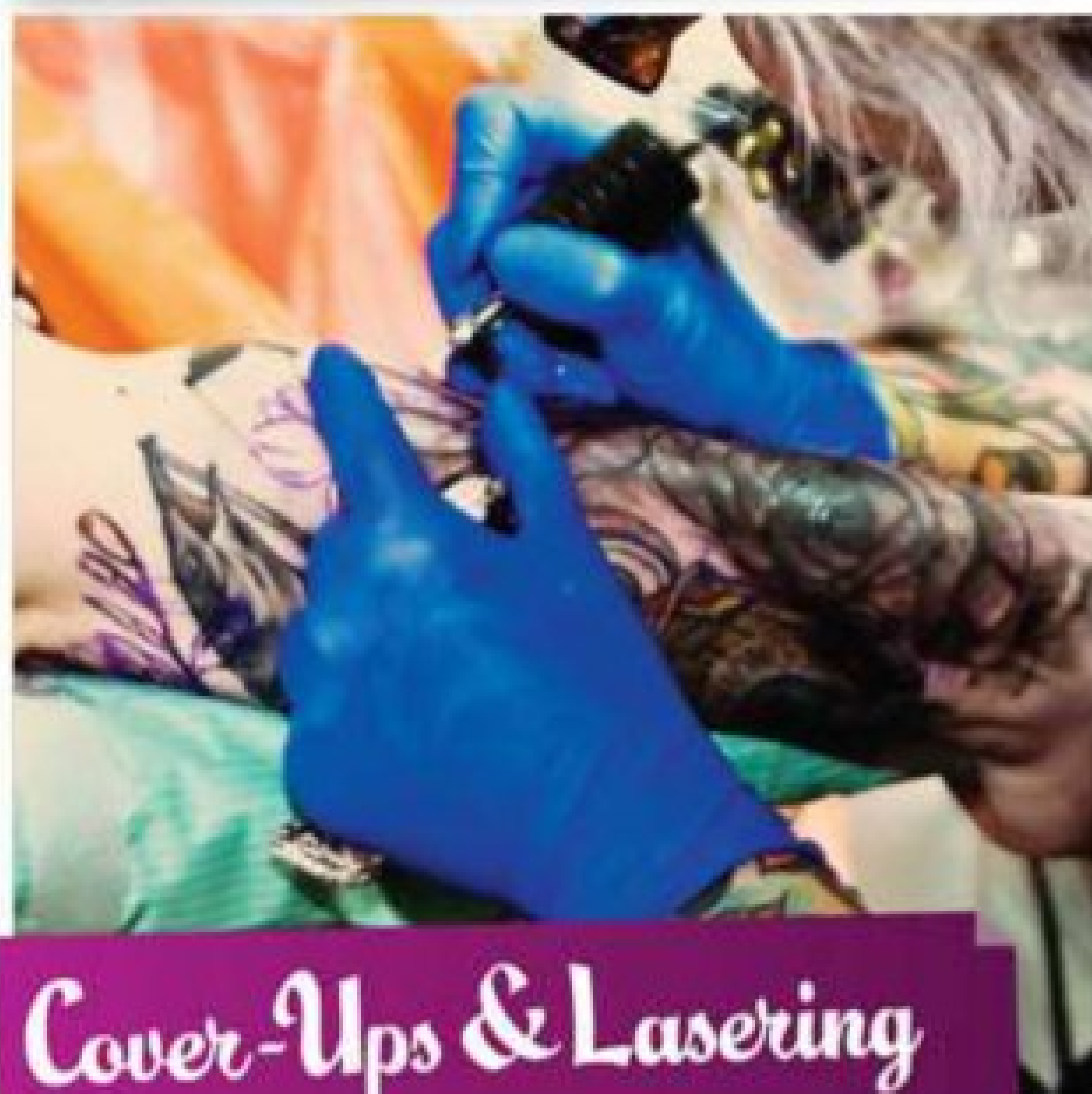
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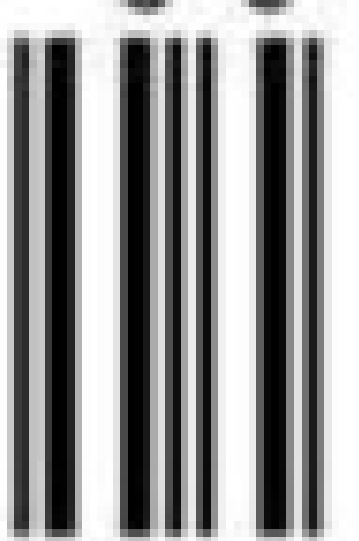
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