

# total tattoo

www.totaltattoo.co.uk



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March 2013

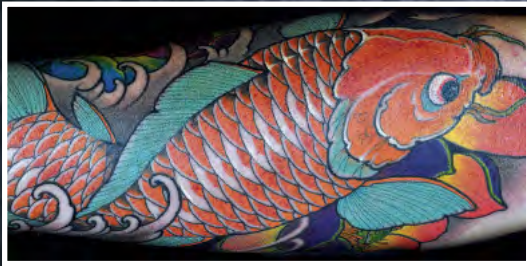
Artist Feature

## Robert Hernandez

Twenty years of darkness

## Federico Ferroni

Beautiful Japanese tattoos in the USA



Artist Interview

## Chris Lambert

Old school for a new generation

## Chris Cougar

Speaks as he finds

## Gallery Plus

Our massive picture library



Transforming the mundane  
**Daisuke Sakaguchi**

**Private View**  
Deno Tattoo

**Mel Noir**  
Always has something on her mind

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Tickets to the  
Tattoo  
Tea Party

**WIN**  
Tickets to the  
Scottish  
Convention

**Mugshot**  
John Fagan from  
Lost Cause in the chair

**Conventions**  
Berlin  
New Zealand  
The Jurassic Coast

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Pyramids  
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Southsea Seafront

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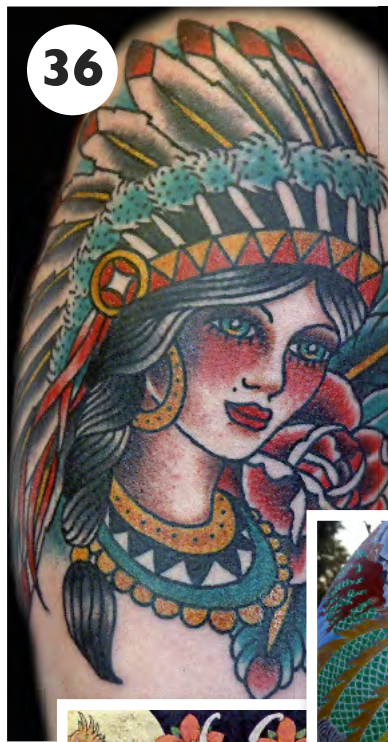
**www.totaltattoo.co.uk**

All prices include UK P&P • See website for overseas prices

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 Photo: Tina Korhonen

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#### SUBMITTING PHOTOS

We love to see the tattoos you do and the tattoos you wear. The images must be high resolution (at least 300 dpi) and sized at least 100mm by 150mm. You can send your photos on a disc to

**Gallery, Total Tattoo, PO Box 10038,  
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The disc must be labelled with the artist & studio name.

Or you can email your photos to  
[gallery@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:gallery@totaltattoo.co.uk)

Don't forget to include the artist & studio name in the email.

Please don't send photos to any of our other email addresses. Bear in mind that we receive hundreds of photos each week and not all them will make it into the magazine.

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UK TATTOO INDUSTRY AWARDS  
2013  
PRESENTED AT THE LIVERPOOL TATTOO CONVENTION



# EDITORIAL

It's never a bad idea to reflect on times gone by; after all, the chances are we did not get to where we are today by accident. Reaching our 100th issue last month, we've been looking back on all that has made us what we are today and the incredible changes that we've been through. There are some handy lessons to be learned, but spend too much time in the past and you might become a prisoner of it.

In the present we live for the now and plan for the future and both can be equally exciting. There is nothing like the buzz of a new beginning. The possibilities and the opportunities which suddenly seem within our grasp, if we just reach out a little further. The New Year seems to give us license to dream a little and I love that. Some people point out that it's "just another day". I'm familiar with the concept of time and how it's measured, of course, but I like the idea of the New Year being a great time for a fresh start. Many New Year resolutions don't last long and one hears so much about the failed diets or the quest for fitness which ended up with new running shoes gathering dust under the bed. What we don't hear so much about are the success stories, perhaps because those people are just too busy getting on with it.

When I started to edit Total Tattoo 14 months ago I had my first introduction to the concept of a wall planner. I remember filling out the first one: all the conventions, all the deadlines, the interview trips planned and all the rest of my commitments as editor. When I had finally filled in all those little boxes, I stuck it up on the wall in front of my desk and just sat there staring at it. For the first time in 44 years on this planet, my whole year was mapped out in front of me. It would be fair to say that up to that point I had lived in a fairly random sort of way; my wife might have a slightly different way of describing it, but that would be unprintable. Anyway there it was, in cold light of day. I had no place to hide and, to be truthful, I felt a little uneasy.

Fast forward 12 months and it was a very different experience at the start of this year. I hate to say it but I quite liked filling in my planner. I now acknowledge that my job

would be impossible without it plus it gives me a sense of perspective. I've gone from being a last-minute specialist to someone who has some semblance of knowledge about the future... though it's still doubtful that Rolex will ever sponsor me!

A monthly magazine like Total Tattoo has a lot of pages that must be filled and deadlines that have to be met and it would be a lie to say that doesn't present its challenges. But I was given a plan – one that I couldn't just leave under the bed and forget about – and boy, did it bring things into focus. In fact the whole wall planner thing worked so well I have bought a second one for 2013. Oh yes, this one is for some other things I'd like to achieve: getting the right hand side of my bodysuit finished, taking the kids to Disneyland and a whole bunch of other stuff that would make me very happy to tick off my list. I know that if it is on the wall in front of me, with a date attached to each event, there is a much greater chance of it happening than if I just pay lip service to it and then forget it because life got in the way. I also like the idea of knowing what 2013 might have in store for me.

I hope 2013 is a fantastic year for us all. Here at Total Tattoo we will be working our butts off to bring you the very best magazine we can every month. There are some fantastic shows to report on and so many talented artists to interview. Yes, we have a road map for the year; but there is nothing we love more than those unplanned, spontaneous moments of discovery which turn everything on its head and those you just can't plan for.

Until next month

**James**

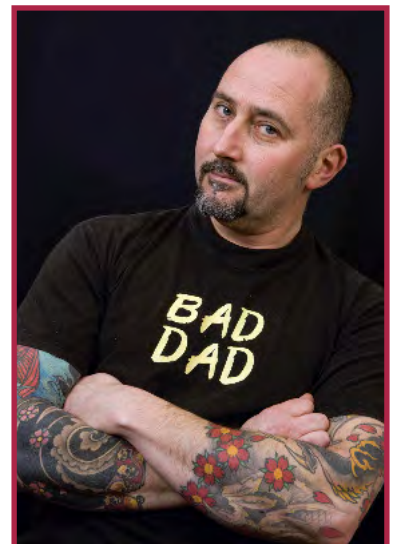
“  
If you don't  
know where you  
are going, you'll  
end up someplace  
else  
”

'Yogi' Berra

**editor@totaltattoo.co.uk**

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# NEWSFLASH

## DVD REVIEW

**Ed Hardy, Tattoo the World**

Written and Directed by

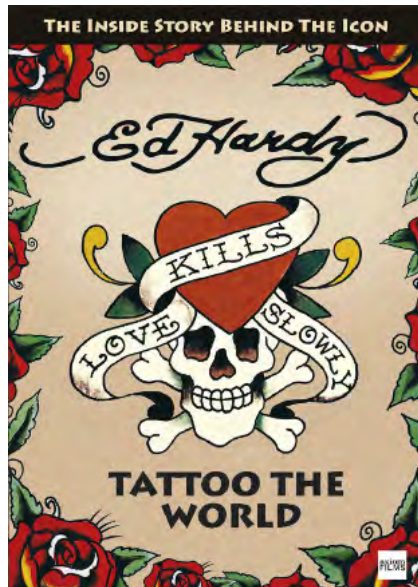
Emiko Omori

Price: £15.99

It really was only a matter of time, but it has finally happened: a film about Ed Hardy has been made and it could not have come at a better time. With the massive growth of tattooing in recent years, it's only right and proper that the new generation of artists who have benefitted so much from Hardy's vision and pioneering ways can hear about it from the horse's mouth. In many ways he was the blueprint for the art school generation of tattooists and he paved their way for a smooth passage into the world of skin and ink.



I have to say I hit play with no small sense of trepidation. If this production turned out to be just cashing in on his name then I was ready to throw my toys out of the pram. The film starts



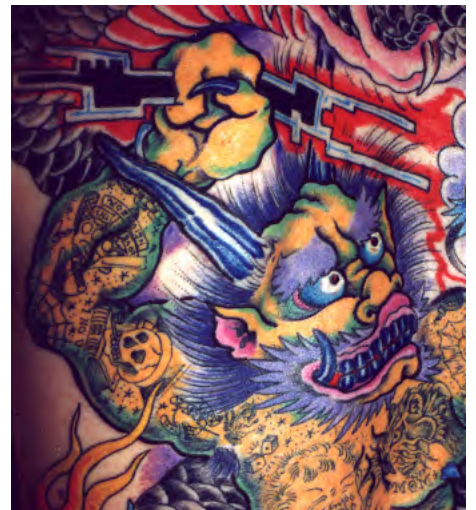
with a softly-spoken American woman telling the story of how, during a visit to hospital, a nurse looked at her heavy tattoo coverage and said "I hope the man who did that to you is dead. I hope you killed him!" Shocked and taken aback the woman replied "No. Actually I married him." And with that, all my fears disappeared. Writer and director Emiko Omori was given unprecedented access to Hardy and for most of the time it is Hardy himself walking you through his life story.

Like anyone who is interested in Ed Hardy, I have read books and seen clips of film but, watching *Tattoo the World*, for the first time I really felt that I had gained

access to the man and it was a fascinating and absorbing watch. From his early obsession with tattooing when still at school, through to his time at art college and beyond, the film depicts his energy and desire constantly to break new ground. That sort of energy only has a limited lifespan within one sphere, and the last 15 minutes or so deal with Hardy's forays into the art world, outside of tattooing. This led to his realisation that it was OK to bring the tattoo images that had been so good to him onto canvas and let them live in another way.

It would be great to think that at some point this film might reach a wider audience than the tattoo cognoscenti, and that people might realise who was behind the name on their pants. *Ed Hardy: Tattoo the World* is a quite simply a must see.

**James**



## IN THE EYES OF THE LAW

Many of you may well remember the legal wrangles last year over the reproduction of Mike Tyson's facial tattoo in the film *Hangover II*. Warner Brothers settled out of court for an undisclosed fee with the artist Victor Whitmill who designed and executed it. The case would appear to have got some folk thinking and the latest example of this has taken things into a different realm altogether: EA Games are now facing a challenge regarding their 2004 title *NFL Street*. The artwork for the game's box features the work of tattoo artist Stephen Allen, on the arm of American football player Ricky Williams. Mr Allen feels this is an infringement on his copyright. Has the world gone crazy, or is this one in the eye for the corporates? We'll have to wait and see...



Tattoo news and reviews for your delectation and delight. If it goes on in the tattoo world, it goes in here. Send us your news items, books or products for review and items of general curiosity and intrigue for the tattoo cognoscenti. News Flash, Total Tattoo Magazine, PO Box 10038, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 7WL.

## ANYONE FOR TEA?

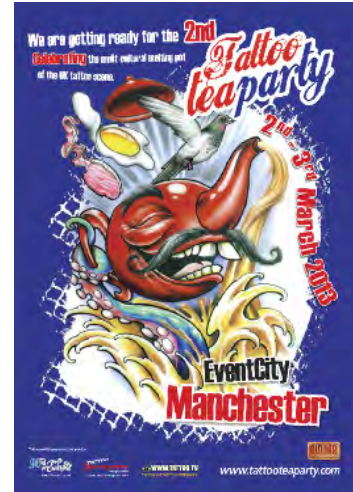
### Win tickets for the Tattoo Tea Party!

As the crazy fairground ride that is the convention circuit seems to whirl ever faster, shows seem to come round quicker than ever. And so it is that the Tattoo Tea Party is once again looming on the horizon. But that's just fine because last year it was spiffing, a very friendly affair and a welcome addition to the calendar.

This year it is once again to be held at Event City in Manchester on the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd March. Entertainment is as quirky as ever with fortune tellers reading the tea leaves, the return of the last year's peculiar but popular Gentleman's Death Match and there will also be dodgems... Yessss! What's not to love? And guess what? We have five sets of weekend tickets to give away. But you can't hang around with this one... entries must be in by Saturday February 23rd. If you

fancy coming to the party just drop us an email with your name and address to [comps@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:comps@totaltattoo.co.uk) putting Earl Grey in the subject line. The first five entries picked at random after the closing date will each win a pair of tickets. One entry per person, please. Winners will be responsible for their own transport and accommodation. All the info about the convention can be found at

[www.tattooteaparty.co.uk](http://www.tattooteaparty.co.uk)



## BOOK REVIEW

**Forever: The New Tattoo**

**Publisher: Gestalten**

**Price: £37.95**

In early 2012 Berlin-based publisher Gestalten enlisted the services of American author Nick Schonberger (previously responsible for *Hori Smoku*, the excellent book about Sailor Jerry) to conduct a series of interviews with tattooists around the world for a book project they wanted to put together. Gestalten are primarily a publisher of books about design and design history. Their commissioning editor had noticed what he perceived to be a particular tattoo aesthetic emerging (especially amongst Berlin's most fashion-conscious citizens) which seemed to be quite closely aligned with several more general trends in design, including an increasing simplicity of form and a move towards what might broadly be called 'the graphic'.

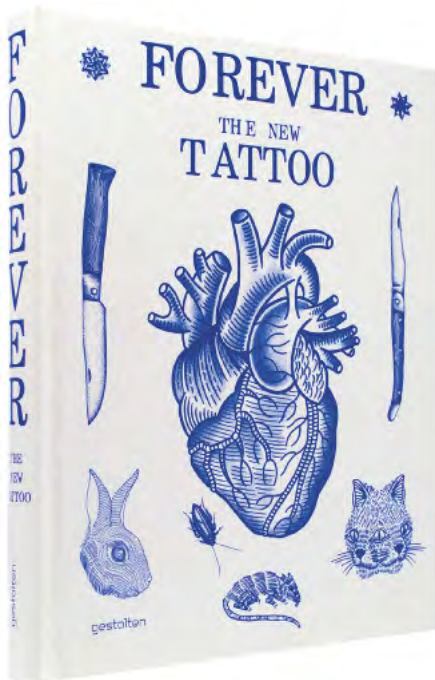
Alongside itinerant Swiss tattoo artist Maxim Buchi, Nick helped Gestalten assemble a portfolio of artists working in what could be described as a graphic style. These included such vastly disparate tattooers as El Monga, Curly, Mike Giant, Scott Campbell, Yann Black, Duncan X, Robert Ryan, Amanda Wachob and Thomas Hooper. In *Forever*, innovative heavy black work, which is currently extraordinarily popular in Europe, sits alongside the rough, stripped-down 'prison' tattooing style that Duncan X has been making his own for a decade or more; and Ryan and Monga's esoteric, abstracted traditional work is



juxtaposed with the always-controversial 'art brut' work coming out of France. The book also features some historical contextualisation from me, Dr Matt Lodder for the book's preface. Despite the title, there's nothing really "new", of course, about tattooists reflecting the aesthetic trends of wider culture, nor of tattooing and fashion being intertwined.

This heavy, gorgeously designed and beautifully produced hardback book features a mix of photography, flash, drawings and paintings, as well as revealing interviews with the contributing artists. It's an excellent snapshot of a moment in time for tattoo culture and a fascinating attempt to pull so many varied artists into a coherent, comprehensible whole.

**Matt Lodder**



# NEWSFLASH

## SHOP TALK

**Opened a new studio? Got a guest artist? Do you have a job vacancy? This is the place to spread the word! E-mail [editor@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:editor@totaltattoo.co.uk) putting 'Shop Talk' as the subject. Please note we do not print 'Jobs wanted' adverts. Items may be edited for clarity and length.**

**Tattoo artist required:** We are a busy, established custom studio in the north west. We are looking for a reliable, professional, full time artist with a current and consistent portfolio and a strong work ethic to join our friendly team. If you are interested, or know of anyone that may be, please email [tattooartistenquiries@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tattooartistenquiries@hotmail.co.uk) for more information.

**Tattooists wanted:** Cutthroat Tattoos in Camberley is looking for two experienced tattooists for their new tattoo studio. Must be willing to work hard and build up the reputation to make this a successful studio. Must have previous shop experience. To apply please contact 01635 48060 or email [cutthroat-tattoos@live.co.uk](mailto:cutthroat-tattoos@live.co.uk)

**Tattoo artist required:** Infinite Ink in Coventry is looking for an experienced artist to join their team. An up-to-date portfolio and sketch books/artwork will be required. They are also looking for a regular guest artist. If you wish to be considered for either position email [infinite.ink@hotmail.com](mailto:infinite.ink@hotmail.com) or call the studio on 02479 714454 and ask for Donna or Adam.

## WIN TICKETS FOR THE SCOTTISH TATTOO CONVENTION

Edinburgh is one of those cities that once you have been there, you are always happy to return. It also happens to be the home of The Scottish Tattoo Convention, a show which commands the same affection as its home base. The convention, taking place on 30th and 31st March, is renowned for its high quality line-up of fantastic artists drawn from round the globe and this year is no exception. For all the info about who will be working there and other such things, keep your eyes on their page at [www.facebook.com/The-Scottish-Tattoo-Convention](http://www.facebook.com/The-Scottish-Tattoo-Convention) and their website at [www.scottishtattooconvention.com](http://www.scottishtattooconvention.com)

We have five pairs of weekend tickets to give away for this unmissable event. No question to answer, just send email your name and address to [comps@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:comps@totaltattoo.co.uk) using the subject line Haggis. The closing date is Friday 8th March.

The first five entries picked at random after the closing date will each win a pair of tickets.

One entry per person, please. Winners will be responsible for their own transport and accommodation at the show.



## LINKYS

Here is this month's selection of web links, containing a wide range of tattoo snippets for you to enjoy. If you know of a good Linky that you think our readers would like, drop us a line to [editor@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:editor@totaltattoo.co.uk) putting Linkys as your subject.

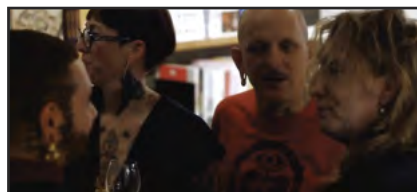
### A teaser for Mondial du Tatouage 2013

<http://vimeo.com/54939689#>



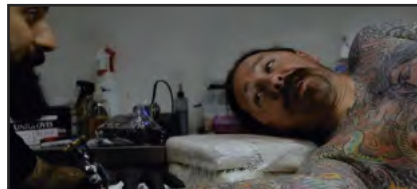
### Forever: The New Tattoo book launch party

[vimeo.com/50360812](http://vimeo.com/50360812)



### Thomas Hooper vs Oliver Peck

<http://vimeo.com/53926415>



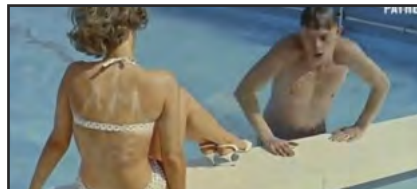
### Paco Garcia of Secret Sidewalk Tattoo creating a sketch

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-daxefSZ40>



### The craze of tattoo sun signs

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0mcrybLin4>



## BOOK REVIEW

**Samurai Ghost  
and Monster Wars:  
Supernatural Art by  
Kuniyoshi**  
Publisher: Shinbaku  
Price: £24.95

Utawaga Kuniyoshi (1797-1861) is regarded as one of the true masters of *ukiyo-e*, the art of the Edo period in Japan. Kuniyoshi produced thousands of prints and designs during his lifetime, but perhaps is best-known for his series *108 Heroes of the Suikoden*, a massive inspiration to Japanese tattoo art and a foundation for any reference library. *Samurai Ghost and Monster Wars* collects together 100 of Kuniyoshi's most vivid and complex images of warriors, spectres, demons and monstrous beasts. The book is presented in large-format and is in glorious full colour throughout. Page after page reveals the dark inspiration of this prolific artist and the twisted nature of Japanese folklore and legend. If you're planning your next large scale Japanese tattoo or are just looking to expand your vision of what is possible, this is a fantastic place to start.

**James**



## WEAR THE ART OF FILIP LEU

Ama Leu has been designing ethically produced, tattoo inspired, organic clothing for some time now. In her new range she blends her knowledge and experience of art, tattoo and fashion together. She also focuses on the use of eco-friendly materials. Once again her brother Filip has supplied some exclusive artwork. These items are not mass produced and only a limited number are made, so you won't be finding them in the discount stores.

Ama has kindly given us a black hoodie with a tiger design by Filip on the back to bestow on one lucky reader. The hoodie comes in sizes medium, large, x-large and xx-large and retails at £80. To be in with a chance of winning, just let us know why you should be the lucky recipient. The closing date is Friday 8th March. Email your entry to [comps@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:comps@totaltattoo.co.uk) with the subject line Golden Tiger. Please include your name, address and size. Our favourite entry will win the hoodie. You will find all of Ama's beautiful clothing for adults and children on her website at [www.amaleu.com](http://www.amaleu.com)



## ELECTRIC BUDDHA PAYING IT BACK

This year Electric Buddha Tattoo Studio in Kent is 10 years old and to celebrate they are giving something back by doing a charity event on Saturday 23rd February in aid of MIND. Dan, Nicky and Elliott will spend the day tattooing from a set of flash specially created for the event. All tattoos will cost £40 and the proceeds will go to the charity. In addition there will also be a cake sale, also in aid of MIND. Tea and coffee will be served throughout the day to keep everyone refreshed. For a charity tattoo or a variety of yummys visit Electric Buddha at 32 - 36 Plains of Waterloo, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 8HX.

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Call our subscriptions hotline on **0800 917 8794** to set up a direct debit for £10.50 per quarter (£42.00 per year) and receive 12 issues for the price of 10 (UK residents only)

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# CALENDAR



## UK CONVENTIONS

**February 16 – 17  
Brighton Tattoo Convention**  
The Hilton Metropole Hotel, Brighton, East Sussex  
www.brightontattoo.com

**March 2 – 3  
Tattoo Tea Party**  
Event City, Manchester  
www.tattooteaparty.com

**March 24  
Peterlee Tattoo Arts Festival**  
Peterlee Leisure Centre, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8  
www.facebook.com/eddiehardiman  
eddiehardimanstudio@yahoo.co.uk  
Info: Study at Eddie's Tattoo Studio, 0191 587 1787

**March 30 – 31  
The Scottish Tattoo Convention**  
Corn Exchange, Edinburgh, EH14 1RJ  
www.scottishtattooconvention.com

**April 7  
Ink & Iron Tattoo Convention**  
The Tower, Reservoir Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 9EE  
www.inkandiron.co.uk  
info@inkandiron.co.uk

**April 13 – 14  
North Lakes Tattoo Show**  
Shepherds Inn, Carlisle, Cumbria  
info@northlaketattoooshow.com  
Tel: 01228 545156

**April 13 – 14  
Tattoo Extravaganza**  
The Pyramids Centre, The Seafrost, Southsea, Hampshire  
www.tattooextravaganza.co.uk

**May 3 – 5  
Liverpool Tattoo Convention**  
Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool  
www.tattooconvention.co.uk

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Milton Keynes Tattoo Convention**  
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info@mktattooconvention.com  
www.mktattooconvention.com

**June 1 – 2  
Northampton International Tattoo Convention**  
The Saints Rugby Ground, Weedon Road, Northampton  
www.northamptoninternationaltattooconvention.com  
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sunsandrosetattoo@hotmail.com

**June 9  
Reading Tattoo Show**  
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www.readingtattoooshow.co.uk

**July 13 – 14  
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www.customcarnageuk.com

**July 20 – 21  
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Website to follow

**July 27 – 28  
International Portsmouth Tattoo Convention**  
The Portsmouth Guildhall, Portsmouth, Hampshire  
www.portsmouthtattooconvention.com

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www.skindeepbodyartexpo.com

**March 15 – 17  
Lake Havasu Tattoo Show**  
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Mondial du Tatouage**  
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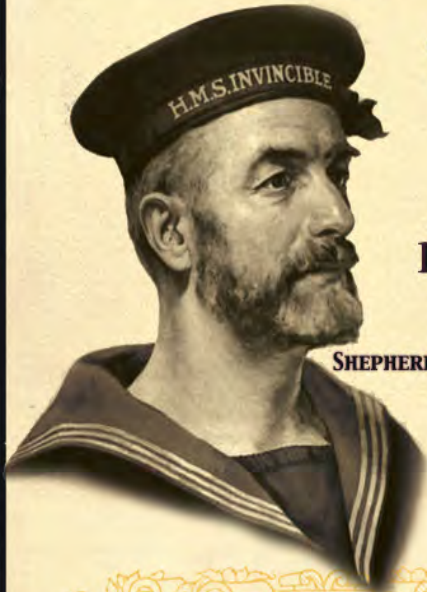
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# ROBERT HERNANDEZ

## 20 YEARS OF DARKNESS



**E**asily one of the most influential tattoo artists of all time, Robert Hernandez represents something of a benchmark when it comes to dark, finely crafted, black and grey work. After 20 years of tattooing, the prolific Polish-born, Spanish-based master has not slowed down one bit. Whenever he is not working on his faithful clients in his lair in Madrid, Robert travels the world to find more inspiration and spread the gospel of rock 'n' roll!

Despite his love of rock music, Robert Hernandez is not a loud person. At times he seems a bit aloof, but it is his natural shyness and reluctance to push himself into the foreground that makes him seem remote. Once you get to know him and chat over a bottle of wine (or two), Robert quickly warms up and becomes a gentle, outspoken man who loves to talk about his art and his inspiration.

It is hard to overstate the influence that Robert Hernandez has had over the modern tattoo scene. During the 1990s, he and Paul Booth singlehandedly changed the way modern black and grey tattooing looked. Tattooists, and soon clients, realised that creativity, art and a dark imagination play a vital role in tattoo design... and that tattoos can actually induce nightmares!



While Paul Booth lived and worked in New Jersey and later New York, Robert Hernandez was a distinctly European person and therefore artist. Having been born in Poland into a family with Spanish roots, Robert grew up surrounded by the grey remains of what was soon to be an ex-communist country. When he was 18, his parents returned to Spain, the place they had escaped from during the Spanish Civil War. This was a difficult time for Robert; everything was different and a bigger contrast between the two countries is hard to imagine. He was suddenly surrounded by endless opportunities, but he was unsure what he wanted to do with his life. He loved drawing and excelled at it. He met Mao of Mao y Cathy Tatuajes in Madrid, who immediately saw a special talent in the young Polish artist and took him under his wing.

Mao y Cathy Tatuajes was one of the first really serious tattoo studios in Spain. Whereas in other places tattooists simply





did flash designs in order to make money, Mao encouraged his co-workers to draw their own designs. Success was almost immediate for Robert: the tattoo world – in Madrid and beyond – seemed to have been waiting for an artist like him.

He had no fixed view about what a tattoo should look like, and wanted to tattoo in his own style. Luckily for him, friends started asking him to tattoo exactly the way he drew... the crazy stuff that sprung from his imagination and from the influence of a Polish painter called Zdzislaw Beksinski. Beksinski was one of the first dark surrealists in Eastern Europe who created a post-apocalyptic style of oil painting which appealed to Robert and many of his contemporaries. At the same time, Swiss artist HR Giger was becoming a role model among tattooists throughout Europe, with many of them trying their hand at tattooed versions of his extremely detailed paintings and duplicating his work from the 'Alien' film series.

Robert, who did do a few Giger-inspired pieces in his early years, now has his own take on the strong impact the artist had: "It was nice art, but too much copying went on among tattooists. Everybody wanted it at the time, and everyone tried doing it. It became almost too popular." Robert wanted to move his work further on than this. There was a huge demand for his designs that was almost unprecedented. Robert's unique quality at the time was that he tattooed in the same way that he drew; he sketched tattoos as if his machine was a pencil or a piece of chalk. This may not sound like much but, 20 or even 10 years ago, it was







revolutionary. However it was a steep learning curve: the tattoos looked perfect when they were just done but once healed, some of the delicate details, the fine shadings, the tiny highlights, disappeared.

Robert realised that his artwork couldn't simply be transferred on to skin like that. He needed to cut down the water content of his inks, go darker in his shading, add more contrast and highlights to his designs and, where possible, work bigger. In short, the only way was to "go black, black, black and play with the contrast" as he now puts it. His trademark became so-called 'wet look' areas: making eyes and lips look temptingly moist and inking fresh flesh wounds seeping with blood. The images didn't look like tattoos or paintings – they just looked real.

Sometimes it took years to discover what worked and what didn't. Seeing a piece long after it had healed taught him a lot. "If you look at what I did 15 years ago and what I do now, there is quite a difference in the details,

the execution. Themes have changed too, because clients develop and change. Also equipment and supplies have become radically better during the past ten years or so. It is easier to execute fine detail with more precise tools." Plus, of course, the exchange of knowledge between artists has become a widespread and essential way to improve one's skills.

Robert's time at Mao y Cathy's was crucial to the development of his work. Early on he was introduced to masters like Tin-Tin (who did his first tattoo and was a major early influence on him) and the Leu Family, who worked at Mao's studio as guests. Robert even got to tattoo Filip's chest with a portrait of his wife Titine! Through the connections he built up and his consummate skill, Robert was able to gain access to the best studios and work at the most prestigious conventions. His big breakthrough came at Hanky Panky's Amsterdam convention in 1994 when, out of the blue and up against the best in the world, he won one of the

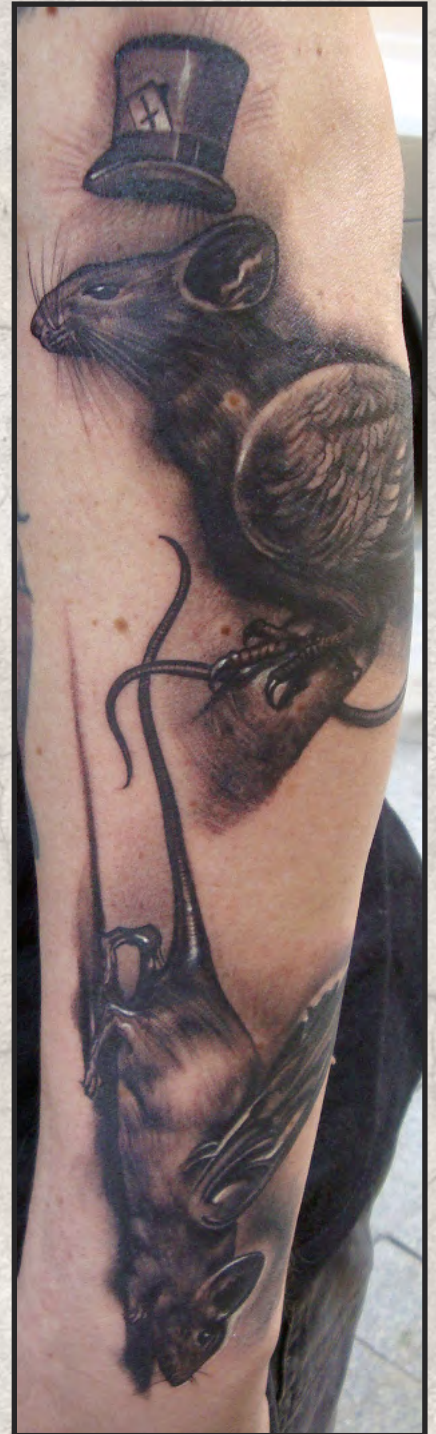


coveted trophies. From that point on there was no turning back. Instantly Robert Hernandez was one of the hottest names on the scene. He continued working at Mao y Cathy Tattoo for a few more years, until he finally opened his own private studio, Vitamin Tattoo, in the centre of Madrid in 2000.

Over the years, Robert has never deliberately manipulated his style, consciously changed course or gone in a new direction. He prefers to let his work find its own way and develop naturally. When you look at his most recent demonic faces, portraits and humorous depictions of not-so-funny images, and compare it with what he did almost two decades ago, the similarity is still quite striking. It doesn't mean that he has stood still, but rather it shows continuity in his work as well as development.

If Robert has any regrets, it is that at least ninety per cent of his clients go for small, individual designs, rather than letting him compose a large tattoo that covers an entire





sleeve or back. He has only ever done about ten backpieces and of those only a few have an overall concept. He blames this on the inherently conservative nature of his Spanish clientele, while his international customers are hindered by the need to travel for each appointment. He also does a lot of conventions, where tattoo work tends to be of the more manageable kind.

Whenever he travels, be it somewhere in Europe, Asia or the US, he makes sure he spends some time visiting galleries, churches, catacombs and so on, to find inspiration and to feed his love for the fine and dark arts. No matter how gruelling his



travel schedule or how busy his days in his tattoo studio, painting and drawing are still a passion that Robert will never give up. He is known for painting striking convention posters or for doing a custom backdrop design for his booth at a show, often making clever use of the images of local attractions.

One of Robert's great passions is rock 'n' roll music and he is something of a walking rock encyclopaedia. Some of the first iconic tattoos he did were insanely realistic, action-packed portraits of all the members of KISS in their stage make-up. The images captured the full impact and excitement of the band. He is often asked to do similar portraits and is more than happy to oblige. Other rock legends he has portrayed repeatedly include various members of the Rolling Stones, as well as Frank Zappa and Jimi Hendrix. In fact, many of today's rock stars (and other celebrities, for that matter) are now among his clients, something

that Robert discreetly refuses to talk about.

With all his portrait work, he doesn't merely copy a photograph. He loves to manipulate or mutate the images, making them disturbingly surreal and quintessentially Hernandez. This instant recognisability of his work is probably what makes Robert Hernandez such an important part of the modern tattoo world. Happy 20th anniversary, Robert, and here's to many more years in the business!

**Robert Hernandez's websites**  
[www.rhernandeztattoos.com](http://www.rhernandeztattoos.com)  
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# MISS TONNII COVER MODEL PROFILE

**Our cover this month is model, performer and mother of two, Miss Tonnii. Ever since she was five years old she's wanted to be heavily tattooed, and she hasn't finished collecting them yet!**

**Miss Tonnii, tell us a bit about yourself.**

I'm a model, burlesque performer and mother of two. I have been modelling since I was 13. I'm now 20 and there is still a lot more that I want to achieve. However, right now I'm enjoying being young, listening to bad music and hanging with some of the most amazing people in the South West.

**How did you first get interested in tattoos?**

I was brought up around tattoos, as my mum and her friends had them. They fascinated me from a really early age. Aged five or six I gave myself a bodysuit with transfer tattoos and loved how it looked! I'm not sure what it is about them that I love so much, but I decided at a young age that this is who I wanted to be. I insisted I was going to get heavily tattooed, grow a beard and join the circus – and become a tattooist. Unfortunately it would seem I can't grow a beard, but I'm still working on finding an apprenticeship and, if I can't, the circus still might be an option.

**What was your first tattoo?**

I got my first tattoos when I was 13, by my stepsister who had a kit. I went to stay with her during the summer holidays and came back with what looked like strange blobs, but were meant to be fairies. I loved them back then, but have since had them covered. It didn't take me long to realise how bad they were and what a stupid idea it was.

**And what came next?**

I then met my kids' father. He is quite talented at art and he was also learning to tattoo so he ended up using me as practice skin. My tattoo count went up very fast when we were together – most of them being very questionable, but that's what you get for letting someone inexperienced tattoo you. Fair play to him, three years on and he's not doing too badly for himself. He is working as a full time tattooist, and he worked at his first convention this year.

I then met Verity Turner, who started out as an

apprentice at the studio where my ex worked, and I became her practice skin as well. The zombies around the top of my left leg were her fifth tattoo. She was a natural. When my relationship broke down and Verity moved to a different studio called The Black Rose in Plymouth to become a fully-fledged artist, I stuck with her. So far she's reworked and covered all my more shamefully bad tattoos. Now I can look forward to getting tattooed by someone who knows what she's doing and can do it well. I couldn't trust her more.

**You are so covered with tattoos; there must be a few cool, fun, painful stories about them. Could you share some of them?**

One morning I got a message from Paul Davies, who is the owner and main artist at Loki in Plymouth, asking me if I had ever considered having the soles of my feet tattooed. He went on to tell me that he was trying to find someone brave enough to get the soles of their feet tattooed in a bid to raise money for cancer research. I went along with it and had it done. As soon as I told everyone what we were planning I was swamped with horror stories and people trying to scare me, telling me how much it was going to hurt. I worked myself up for it to really hurt, but as soon as he started to tattoo me I cracked up and started laughing. It really tickled! This isn't the first time I've had this reaction to being tattooed; a mixture of having a very high pain tolerance and being very ticklish makes me look like a crazy sadist when being tattooed. We raised just over £200 for charity with that tattoo.

**When did you have your head tattooed? Was it a difficult decision and did it hurt?**

At the end of 2011 I won Dolly Rocker (Miss Alternative Cornwall) and one of my prizes was a day session with Ash Harrison at Electric Om in Falmouth, who is without doubt one of the best tattoo artists in Cornwall. I phoned up as soon as I could and got my session booked in for August 2012, as

he has a long waiting list.

Originally we were going to do a cover up on my chest but, due to the amount of work that it needed and the timeframe we had, we went with doing my head.

It helped that I had a rough design in mind for it already as it was something I had already planned to have done. I wanted a snake in the eternity knot with dot work. In under an hour Ash had drawn up my design, based on my brief and a picture of my baby Burmese Python (Derek). It took just over five hours from start to finish with a cigarette break at the three-hour mark. It wasn't too painful.

**Do you ever feel the need to cover your tattoos?**

Never. They are a part of me, I know a few of my tattoos aren't great but I'm not ashamed of them, so why should I have to cover them?

**Which is your favourite or most meaningful tattoo?**

My most meaningful tattoo is the lioness on my ribs, which is a recreation of a design my mum had on her back. I had it done after she died in November 2011. But my favourite tattoo is the ram skull on my tummy. I love how it's both delicate and feminine but fierce and in your face. A bit like me really! [Laughing]

**What does your family think about your tattoos?**

It's a mixed review! The younger lot (my brothers, sister and cousin) all seem fascinated by them. The older lot are not so impressed. My aunt nearly cried the last time she saw me. I thought she was going to have a heart attack. My gran, who I live with, wasn't too impressed at the start, but has come to deal with the fact that I will get them regardless of what anyone thinks. She has learnt to appreciate them as an art form.

**And how about your children?**

My eldest, who is three, loves them. I had a really funny conversation with him not too long ago that resulted in him telling me about how when he's old enough he wants loads of tattoos like his daddy and mummy. My youngest is only one and is

too young to understand. She spends ages staring and trying to pull them off. I think she's a little confused as to what they are and how they stay on.

**You have done modelling since you were 13. How did you start?**

My mother was a photographer. She used me to build her portfolio, took me to castings, and pretty much pushed me into it. I took it up professionally when I was 17. I have done a little bit of everything from editorial, art nudes and fashion, to fetish and glamour, and even catwalk work.

My favourite part of modelling is all the people I've met through it. The latex designer Allura Fox of Lady Allura's Latex has become one of my dearest friends, as have some of the models I have met and worked with. Modelling has also done a lot for my confidence. I find myself able to do things I could have never dreamed of before.

**What is coming next tattoo-wise?**

I've now nearly completed the cover-up on my chest and started connecting it into my back. We also worked out all my tattoos and my whole body could be completed in just 13 day sessions, which is a lot sooner than I had thought. I don't like to give too much away about my new designs, but my zombie leg sleeve has some amazing stuff to be added to it.

**What advice would you give about having tattoos?**

Do your research, go to an artist not a scratcher (someone who does grotty work at home) and you won't end up having so much cover work like me. Tattoos are for life, not just for Christmas.



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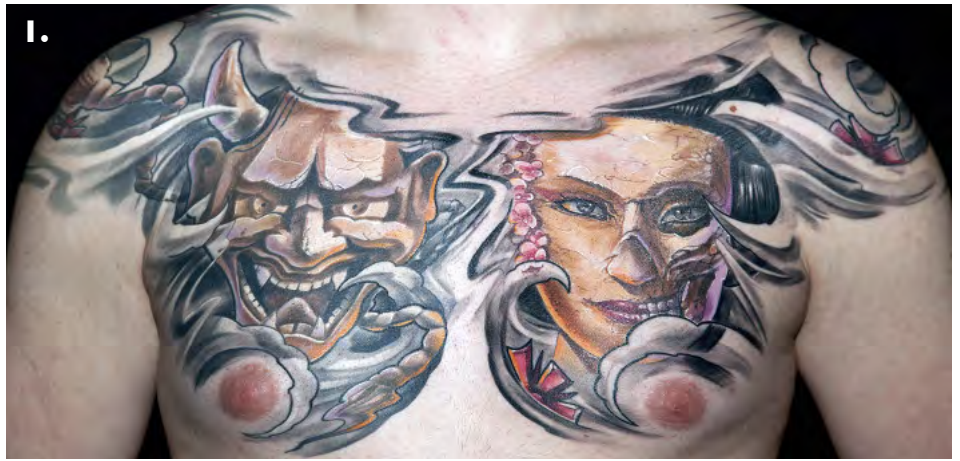
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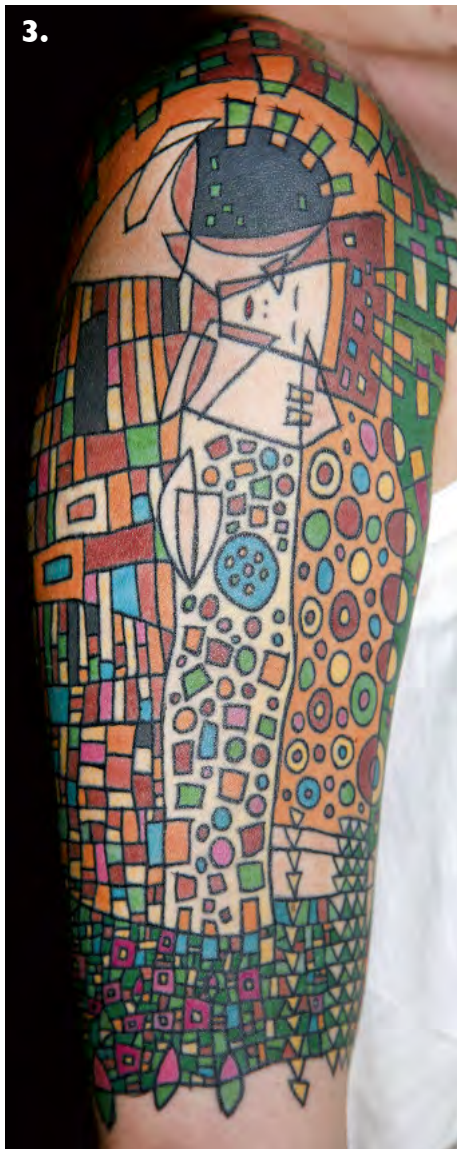
1. matthew by kosa, rybnik (poland)
2. alessandro by michele agostini, tribal tattoo (italy)
3. ewa by gepas, gepas tattoo (poland)



# berlin

## tattoo convention

Report & photos by Doralba Picerno



**A** snow-covered Berlin welcomed tattoo artists and collectors alike to the 22nd incarnation of its hugely popular tattoo convention. It was a very fitting backdrop as Berlin is a city that somehow feels very Christmassy in winter and the snow made it feel even more festive than usual. Despite the weather and the icy conditions, the show was incredibly well attended, with a dazzling international line-up of tattooists which attracted a lot of visitors.

The show offered entertainment, competitions and seminars, which were spread out over the course of the three days. An intensive three-day piercing course, which covered everything from basic anatomy to sub-dermal implants, was the most popular seminar, along with specialist tattoo-related events with Mike De Vries and Buena Vista's Volko Merschky, among others.

A varied and creative roster of artists contained excellent names like Noon, Jessi Manchester, Fabio Moro, Endless Pain, Miguel Bohigues, Tahiti Tatau, Andy Engel, Robert Hernandez, Liorcifer, Javier Acero, Night Action, Alexander Pashkov, Tatau Obscur and Jondix. They all worked solidly for the three days and produced – as you would imagine – some wonderful, world class tattoo work. The Berlin show organisers are always very generous with their awards to the public and artists and typically every tattoo category in the competitions was given 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes. This made it very busy on stage for the prize giving, but also very exciting for the variety of quality work one got to see under the spotlight. This is also the expo that launched the idea of the 'Tattoo Queen' a few

years ago. And, whilst in the first year only about five tattooed ladies entered, this has now become almost a pageant in its own right, with dozens of entrants and where looks, charm and tattoos are judged to choose the winner. A special prize was also given to Berlin studio Tatau Obscur who pulled out all the stops for their fairy-tale inspired stall.

In terms of tattoo work, I am seeing a shift towards large ornamental pieces; some have a photographic quality to them; others are quite surreal; and a lot are what we would have called 'tribal' a few years ago. Even the category that attracts the most black work pieces in various patterns is now defined as 'ornamental', and in truth, it is the one where one gets to see black tribal patterns, as sophisticated, sleek and bold as ever.

In the past few years the Berlin convention has seen a lot of input from eastern European tattoo artists, who are traditionally very creative and innovative. Tattooists like Anabi and Tofi from Poland have become familiar faces to regulars, for instance. This year we also saw a lot of creativity coming from Russia: the borders are perhaps less forbidding



now and gifted artists are showcasing their work much more in the West, whereas before they were only accessible to those who could travel to Russia or who could read Cyrillic and check them out online.

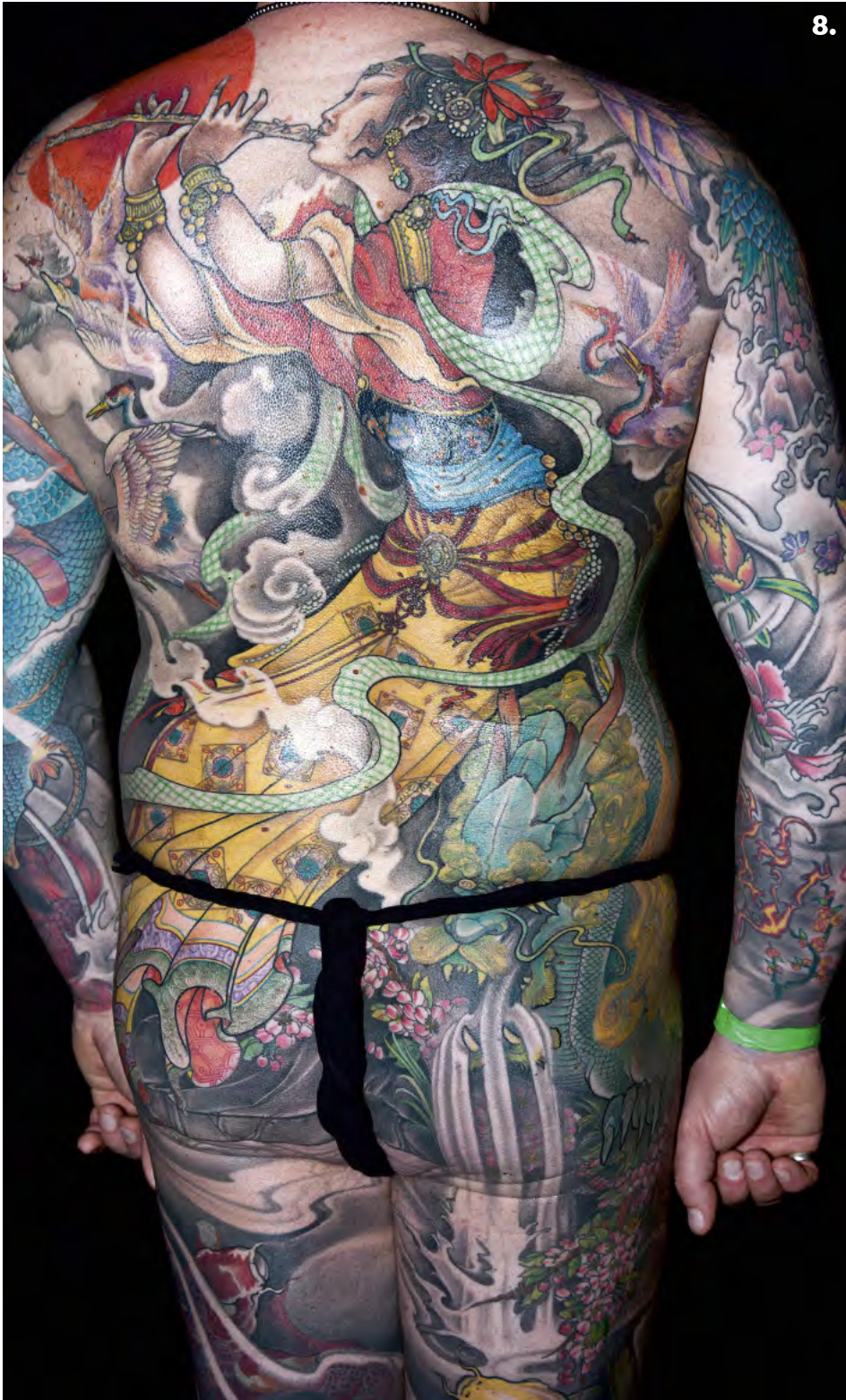
The entertainment offered at the Berlin convention ranged from circus-style sideshows to ethnic dance performances and from bands to suspensions. Tattoo-inspired art was on the walls in a dedicated gallery space and some of the stallholders had exceptional artwork for sale, such as the striking metal sculptures by Metal Wonder.

Three-day shows like Berlin are great for business: people who are booked with artists can get large pieces, and it shows a commitment on everybody's part. There aren't many of them on the European calendar – London, Berlin, Milan, Paris – but these are serious tattoo weekends and visitors return to them year after year. Some come for the experience, some for the tattoos and some simply to hang out in this creative atmosphere and, of course, have fun for the maximum time possible.

4. luna by chippe, corpse painter (germany)
5. lorenzo by silvano fiato, eternal tattoo (italy)
6. chang by wu, night action tattoo (taiwan)
7. katia by kreuzstich (germany)
8. benny by ueo, ueo tattoo (italy)
9. gunner by anabi tattoo (poland)
10. sven by miss nico, all style tattoo (germany)



7.



8.



9.



10.



11.



12.



13.

- 11. beata by piti, kult tattoo (poland)
- 12. paul by tofi, inkognito (poland)
- 13. marek by fabian, 3rd eye (poland)
- 14. samu by miguel angel bohigues, v tattoo (spain)
- 15. aleksandr by dmitri chikaev (russia)
- 16. cihan by humberto silvestre, golden dragon (portugal)
- 17. nastya by roma lis, ink heart (russia)









18.



19.



20.



21.

- 18. jan by noi siamese, 1969 tattoo (norway)
- 19. elena by pashkov aleksandr, tattoo-x (russia)
- 20. kris by chris, aebens art (germany)
- 21. vitas by wu, night action tattoo (taiwan)

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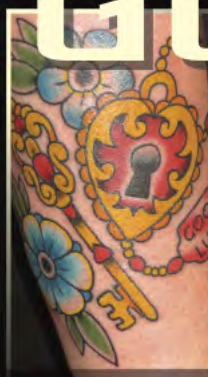
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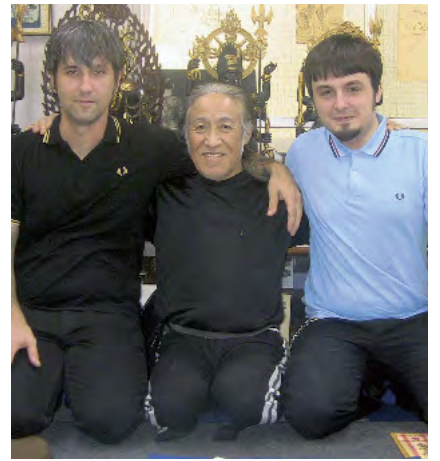
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l to r: dave voegeli from ancient art (usa), horyoshi III & chris lambert

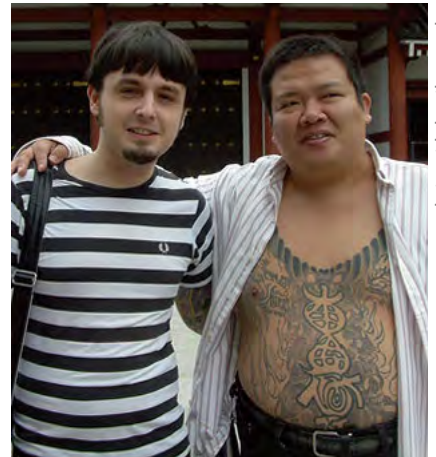


# Chris Lambert

## Gentleman Tattooer

**In** 2003 Chris Lambert graduated from Leeds University with a degree in fine art under his belt and a solid work ethic to back it up. Unlike many art graduates, he managed to make a living within his chosen field, working as a freelance community artist in schools. 2003 was also the year of another life changing event for him: he travelled to Japan. “My friend was teaching English there, so I went out to see him. That place changed everything for me: my whole life and the way I thought about everything. I didn’t realise at the time what an effect it was having until I came home and thought about the experiences I’d had. It was a little like ‘Alice through the Looking Glass’... Japan was like England in terms of the standard of living that people had, but everything was turned on its head.” The lasting impressions of this trip resonated so strongly with Chris that in 2005 he moved there. “Living in Japan was almost like becoming a child; I had to learn to live again. I had appreciated Japanese culture for years through my karate but living there was very different.”

At this point Chris didn’t have any tattoos, having been warned off them by doctors when he was young. He suffered badly from eczema and at one point he had seen a specialist who told him “You can never get tattooed. It won’t heal and it will get infected.” So Chris hadn’t considered tattooing as an outlet for his creativity. That was until a trip to a convenience store below where he lived in Tokyo. “I was browsing through the magazines and there was a tattoo mag. I think it was the Japanese one called Tattoo Burst. I bought it and started to do drawings from it. That was the point when I thought ‘Do you know what? I could do this.’ ” I wondered what had made Chris pick up that magazine at that exact moment. “It was just the fact that it had Japanese imagery in it and I have always been into that,” he says. I think that counts as a ‘sliding door’ moment.

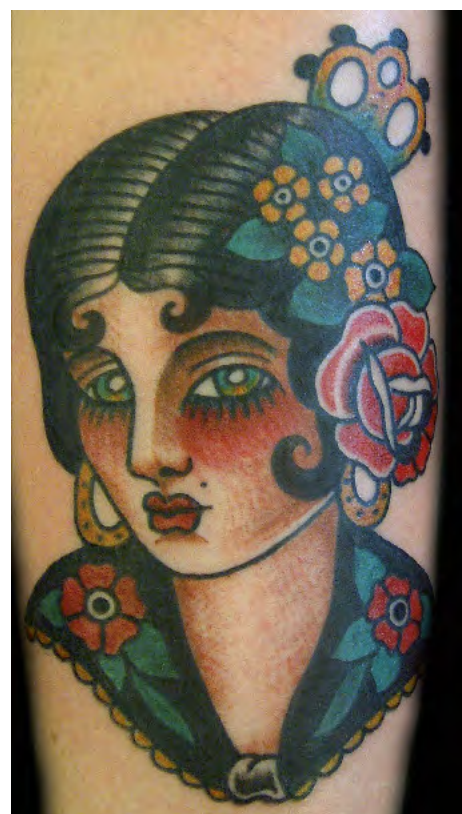


chris with horikazuwaka



Upon his return to the UK there was only one thing on Chris's mind and that was to get a tattoo apprenticeship. However there was the elephant in the room to consider: his lack of tattoos. A small swallow on his ankle later – with no healing issues – and the floodgates were opened, albeit slowly at first. "I didn't want to apprentice just anywhere so I applied to Ultimate Skin in Leeds as I knew a lot of great artists had come out of there, such as Diego, Steve Byrne and Alison Manners. The rest is history, really. I did a fairly traditional apprenticeship: swept the floor and cleaned the toilets as well as the tubes and I'm proud of that fact."

Eventually the inevitable happened and Chris found himself with a machine in his hand. "It was hard because, for me to be successful at tattooing, the first thing I had to do was accept failure. I had to accept that my early stuff was going to be rubbish. I remember that I was so nervous doing my first tattoo, my hand just would not stop shaking. I cared so much about what I was doing it was almost a hindrance. I should have gone in with more of a free mind, but I wanted to do it perfectly. Now I can tattoo neater than I can draw, and do a smoother colour blend on skin than I can do with watercolours." It was a burden for Chris knowing that he had made mistakes on friends and, at the time, he was wracked with guilt but thankfully his friends saw a bigger picture. "They just felt that those tattoos marked a moment in time and a point in our friendship, and were happy knowing that they were helping me with my dream to become a tattooist." The fact is everybody fails on their way to success and Chris recognised that from the beginning.

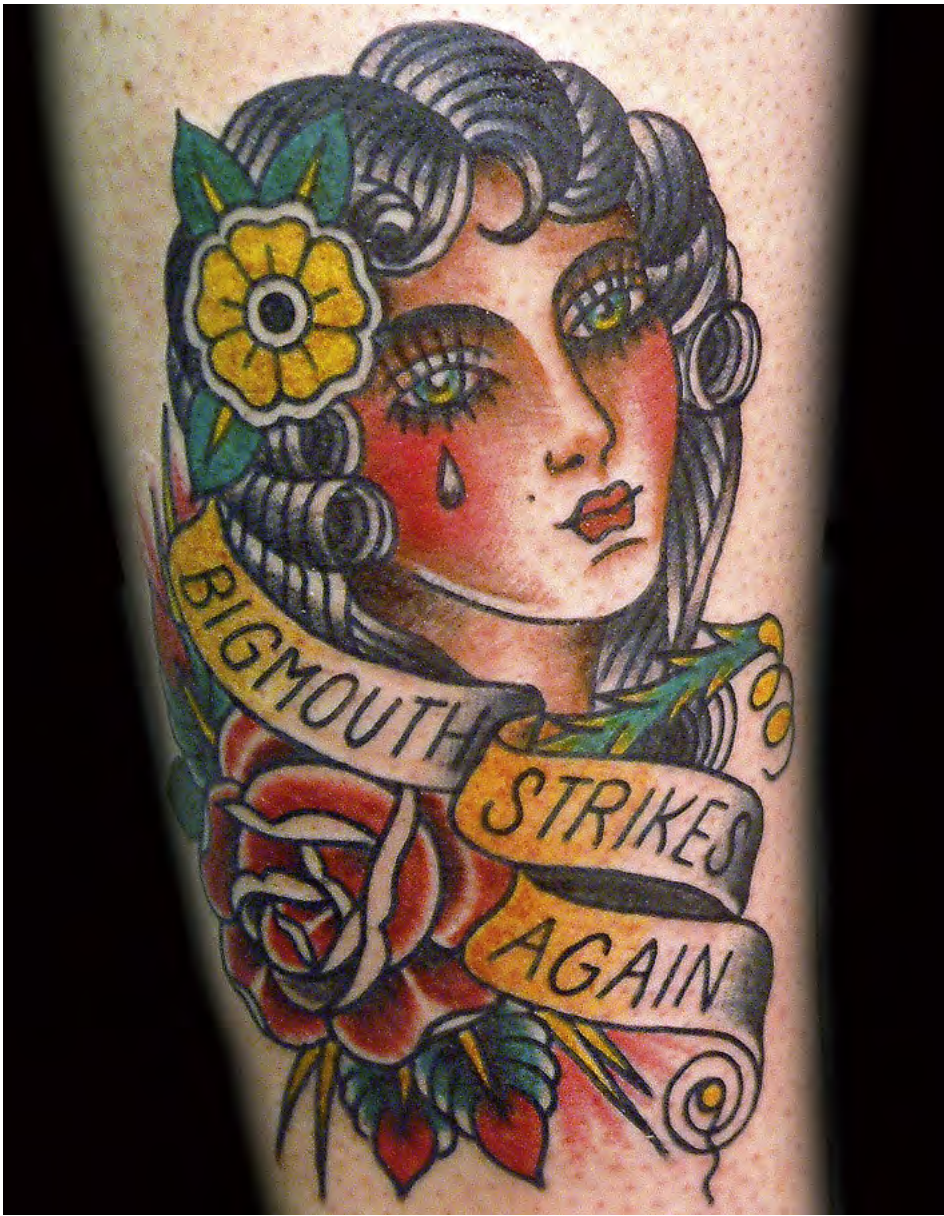




Another pivotal moment for Chris came in 2007: the start of his bodysuit and his friendship with Horikitsune (aka Alex Reinke of The Horiyoshi III family). "The fact that I had spent so much time in Japan helped the connection between us. I had become so obsessed with Japanese culture we could perhaps talk about Japan on a deeper level." If it wasn't for Alex, one of Chris' highly treasured tattoo experiences might never have happened: "I was heading over to Japan for a visit and Alex asked me if I would deliver a book to Horiyoshi III. I still consider it was Alex who was doing me the favour rather than the other way round. It was a huge point in my career as I had idolised Horiyoshi for so long. When I met him it was a brilliant experience. Part of me wanted to run out of the studio because I couldn't handle it, the other part just felt so privileged to be there."

The friendship and respect between Chris and Alex grew and in time, if he had a Japanese piece to do, he would take his drawing down to Alex and let him critique it. Now Chris is working with Alex once a month in London – another example of his fastidious nature and attention to detail being rewarded.

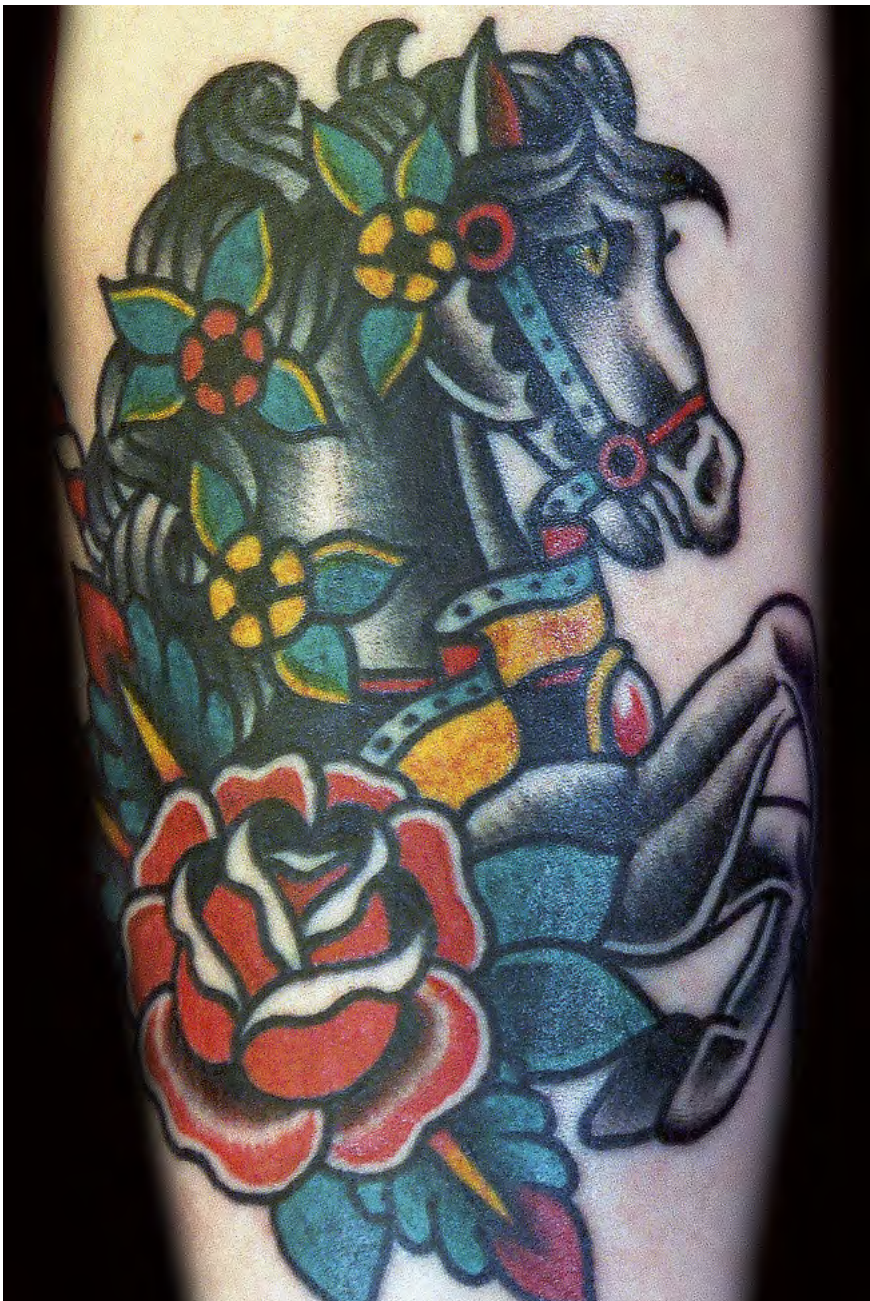




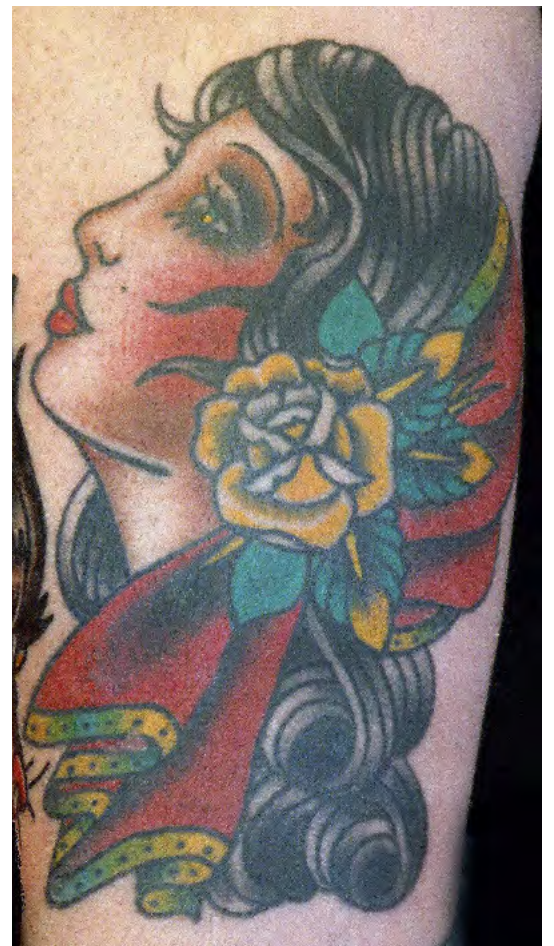
Although it was Japan that led Chris into tattooing, his first love when it comes to images on skin is actually traditional and not just any version of traditional either: he tries to adhere strictly to the Cap Coleman school. You can see from the images on these pages that the colour pallet Chris uses for this style of work is black, red and green – how Coleman did it way back in the early years of the 20th century in Norfolk, Virginia.

Chris told me “While I was working at Ultimate Skin a number of American guest artists came over. I became very good friends with them and I eventually headed over to the States to visit. It was a real education for me; we hired a car and drove around, staying with different tattooers.” Chris met a number of artists on this trip who played their part in his development but perhaps the most influential was Krooked Ken from Black Anchor Tattoo in Maryland, who introduced him to that part of tattoo history he now loves and the Coleman way of doing things. “That’s really when I started to develop my traditional work into what you see today.” Chris also freely admits that his love for *ukiyo-e* (Japanese woodblock prints) has also played its part in the development of his traditional work. “I think in an odd way it has made my work more solid and given it a more authentic feel.”





Customers coming to Chris for traditional work always get an explanation as to why he sticks to such a limited range of colours. "To me it just gives a tattoo that traditional 1930/40s look to it, which is what I'm trying to go for, and within that restriction I find it very interesting to find what I can do with those three colours. I think sometimes in tattooing today you have too many options. I tend to look at old flash and old line drawings. The same with Japanese work, I look at old woodblock prints. I always try and go to the source."





The recent renaissance of traditional tattoos has seen more people coming through the door for this style of work but the imagery that many artists use has strayed away from Chris' idea of what the style really is. "It's a bit like the Western version of Japanese that was done when the reference material wasn't available: people didn't understand the images and the meanings behind them and I think the same has happened with traditional. It doesn't surprise me that it has made a come-back though. It's a fashion thing for some people, of course, but others know that it's a style that will really last and will still look good when they are much older. To me, the perfect tattoo is a rose, a dagger or an eagle. I could tattoo those images all day. I never get bored of that stuff. I think a lot of the new imagery that is being done in the traditional way, in ten years could end up looking very 2013."

When all is said and done, Chris is a jobbing tattooist and proud of it. He is currently working at Black Crown Tattoo in Leeds. This is essentially a street shop so, in many ways, he is at the mercy of what comes through the door. "With all my tattooing, even if I am doing tribal or black and grey, I try to make it look as classic as possible. Then it will age well and never look dated. I will tattoo whatever comes in, as long as I feel I can make it work. I'm not snobbish about that sort of thing. I plan to be in this business until I can't tattoo any more. In order to survive I think you have to be well versed in all styles. For me the four main styles are traditional, Japanese, black and grey and tribal. My friend Joel said once "If you put all four styles in your portfolio you will always be busy" and I think he was right.

**Chris' website**  
[www.chrislamberttattoo.com](http://www.chrislamberttattoo.com)

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1. by matt jordan, blue lotus (new zealand)
2. by patrick hüttlinger, sakrosankt
3. paul booth
4. by steve ma ching, western tattoo studio (new zealand)
5. daveee and adrian edek, kult tattoo (poland)



# new zealand tattoo & art festival

Report & photos by Bret Taylor

**On 24th and 25th November over 250 of the world's best tattoo artists converged on New Plymouth, a small seaside town on the North Island of New Zealand. With the sun shining all weekend and a snow-capped Mount Taranaki providing the perfect backdrop, the New Zealand Tattoo & Art Festival once again proved why it's the premiere tattoo event down under.**

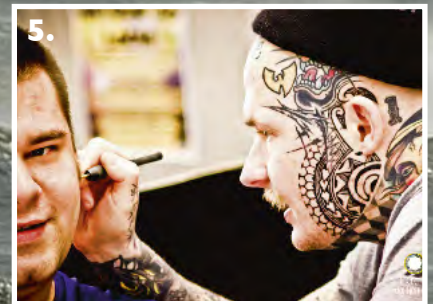
The festival was held at the TSB Stadium, located five minutes from the central business district of New Plymouth and a mere seven minutes from the nearest surf beach. The stadium has hosted big concerts such as Slash, Motorhead and INXS in the past, plus international netball and basketball matches, making it the perfect location to hold the two-day international tattoo event.

With the success of the first New Zealand Tattoo & Art Festival in 2010 the demand for tattoo booths this time round was so high that at one point there was a 50-strong waiting list! There were over 100 more tattoo artists than the previous festival, with over 170 of the 250 artists coming from overseas. As well as the tattoo booths, there was a handful of retail stalls stocking leather goods, jewellery and clothing.

Public attendance was up on the 2010 festival too, with tattoo collectors from around New Zealand and Australia ensuring the artists were busy all weekend long. The queue extended around the building before opening, with over 1000 people streaming through the doors in the first 45 minutes!

The Friday before the convention was an opportunity for artists to learn and network with a full day of seminars, including one by American legend, Paul Booth, making his first trip to New Zealand. The weekend's festivities kicked off that evening with cheap drinks and free food at the opening party. The *powhiri* (traditional Maori welcome) on Saturday morning set the tone for the weekend and gave the international artists a further insight into Maori culture and the history that makes New Zealand such a special and unique place to visit.

The artists list was stacked with some of the biggest names from around the globe. Dan Smith returned to the festival with his buddies Chris Stuart & Josh Arment; Boog was busy laying down script tattoos; and New Zealander Nicole Lowe from Good Times Tattoo in London



made the trip home for the festival and did an oriental sleeve over the two days. *Tebori* masters Horimasa and Horitsuna pulled massive crowds of interested onlookers, keen to see the ancient hand poked tattoo method for the first time. Sabado and Hori Benny attended from Japan; Daveee and Adrian Edek came from Kult Tattoo in Poland; and Niccuhori from Singapore turned heads by bringing some clients who had amazing oriental back pieces.

The festival also hosted a large Australian contingent including Mick Squires, Nathan Puata and the Lighthouse Tattoo team, the entire Third Eye Tattoo crew from Melbourne, Clint Steele and Alison Manners (Black Throne), Anna Day and Ben Rorke (Westside Tattoo) and many more. New Zealand's very best was headed by Dean Sacred and Dan Anderson (Sacred Tattoo), Adam Craft (The Tattooed Heart), Andy Swarbrick (Left Hand Path) and Matt Jordan (Blue Lotus).

New Zealand's rich Maori tattoo tradition makes it a special place to have a festival and some great *Ta Moko* exponents including Rangi Kipa, Hohua Mohi and Thomas Clark were in attendance. New Zealand's link with the Pacific also meant that some of the best Polynesian tattooers came, including Steve Ma Ching (Western Tattoo) who is well known for his tattoo work on Sonny Bill Williams from the All Blacks rugby team.

Aside from world class tattooing there was also entertainment in the form of the ALC Ramp Jam, a mini ramp skate competition with skaters battling head to head and the winner walking away with a \$2000 cash prize. Venus Starr and Bonita Danger Doll were fan favourites on the outdoor burlesque stage, with Venus Starr in particular wowing the crowds with her blindfolded aerial silk routines to Rob Zombie's music. Eleven bands played over the two days in the outdoor entertainment marquee. Saturday was headlined by rock bands Bleeders, Kitsch and Beastwars. Sunday had a more laid-back feel with loop artist Mihirangi and ska band The Skitz hitting the stage.



As well as making the festival a fun event, the organisers like to give back to the community by raising money for the Taranaki Base Hospital's children and neo-natal wards. During the weekend The Joe's Garage Charity Art Auction was held with over 40 artworks by tattoo artists being sold by silent auction and the proceeds given to the hospital. The entry fee for the tattoo competition and the sale of graffiti art walls was also given to this great cause.

The tattoo competition was extremely popular and the judges Kent Smith and Fabz had a tough time sorting out the winners due to the high quality of work on display. All winners took away a unique tiki trophy designed by Dan Smith from LA Ink.

There was a great party atmosphere throughout the entire weekend from both the artists and the public. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to hang out with like-minded individuals and take in the beautiful scenery and the unique culture New Zealand has to offer. Local tattoo enthusiasts also relished the chance to get tattooed by the world's best in their own backyard.

At the close of play on Sunday, everyone headed back to local bar Our Place for the after-party that went on into the wee hours of the morning and wound up with a bonfire on the beach till the sun came up.

The 2012 show was so successful that the organisers have decided that the New Zealand Tattoo & Art Festival will now be an annual event. The next one will be held on the 23rd and 24th November 2013 at the same venue, the TSB Stadium in New Plymouth. Names already confirmed for 2013 include Tim Hendricks and Chad Koeplinger, and Dan Smith will be coming back for a third time, with many more to be announced soon. All the details will be at [www.nztattooart.com](http://www.nztattooart.com)

- 6. by matt jordan, blue lotus (new zealand)
- 7. by andy swarbrick, left hand path (new zealand)
- 8. by erin chance, on the road



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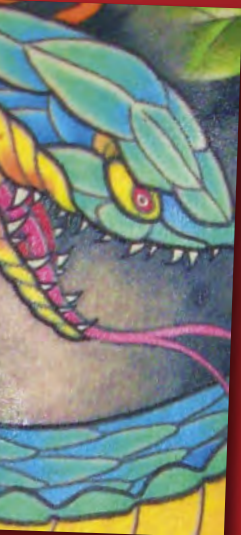




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# SILVER SCREEN



anrijs straume, portside tattoo



sean drumm, the razors edge (ireland)



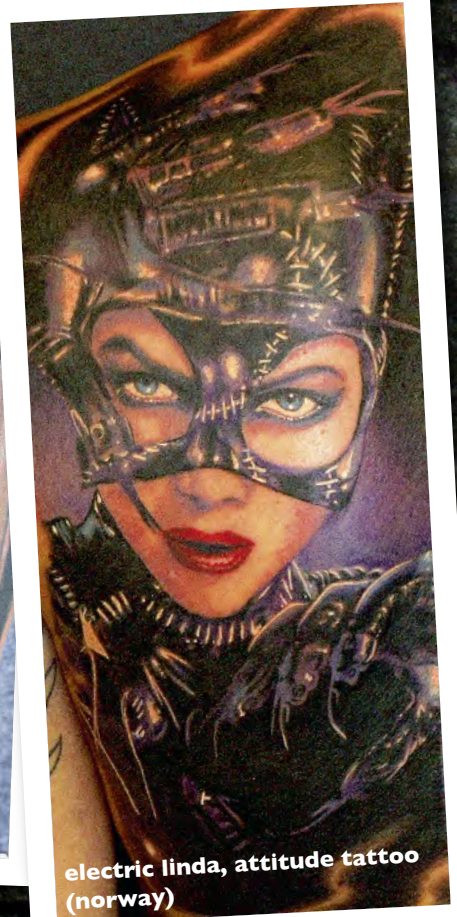
mark cummins, tnt



mark gibson, monki do



todo, abt tattoo (usa)

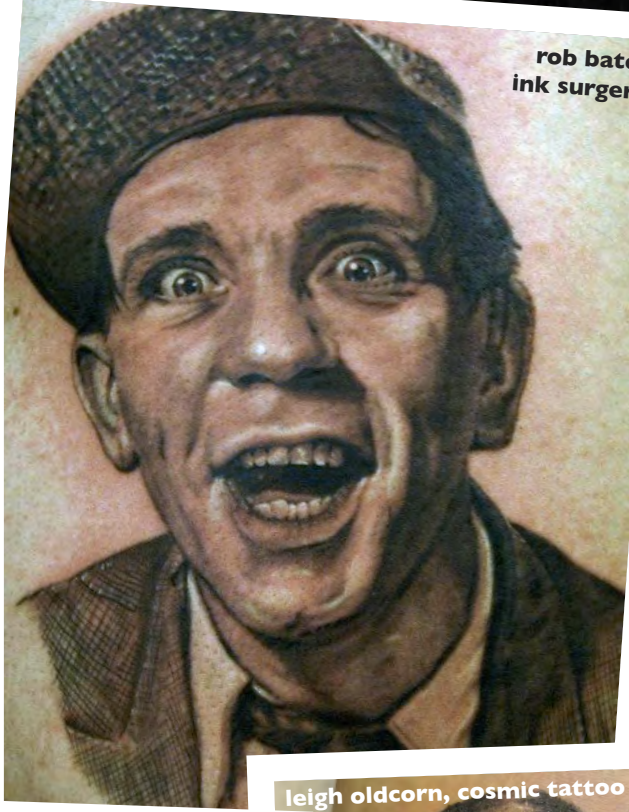


electric linda, attitude tattoo (norway)

mirek, stotker tattoo



rob bates  
ink surgery



leigh oldcorn, cosmic tattoo



nigel kurt, funhouse tattoo



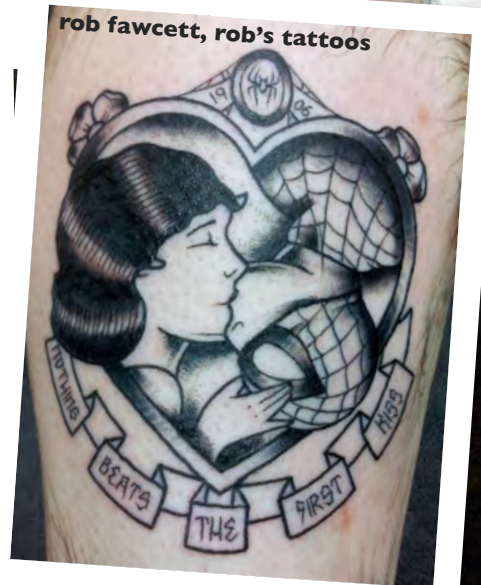
max pniewski, southmead tattoo



jammes, woody's tattoo studio



rob fawcett, rob's tattoos



# NEW SCHOOL

cesar de cesaro, body garden tattoo



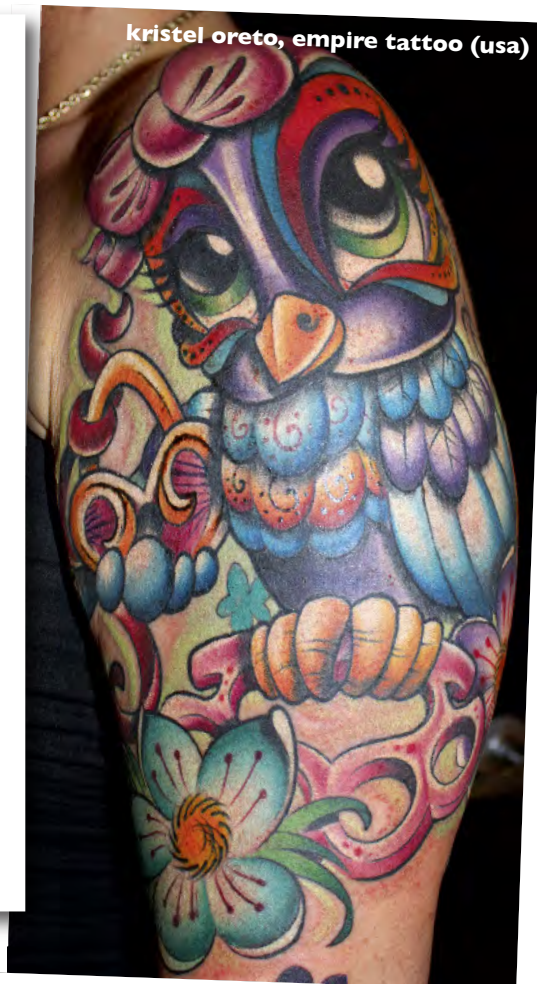
luk, totoototam (poland)



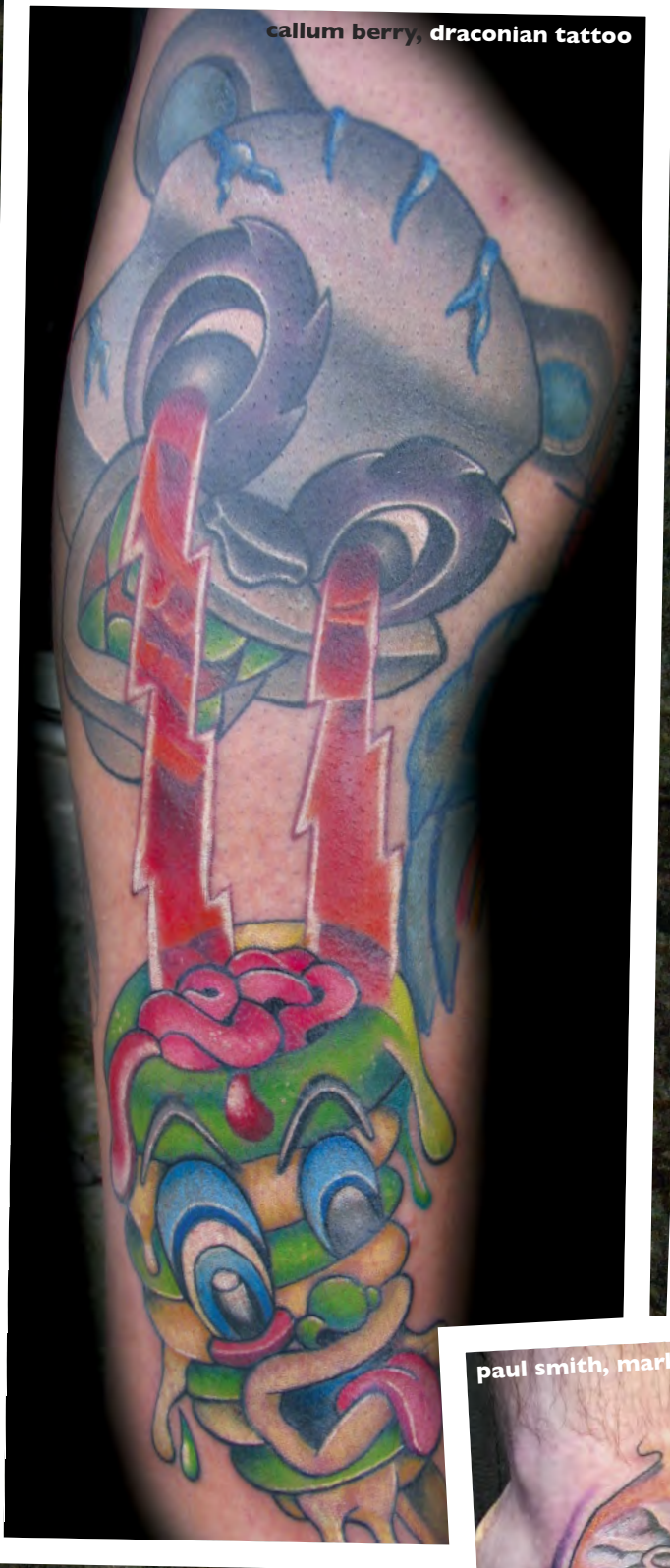
chris 51, area 51 tattoo (usa)



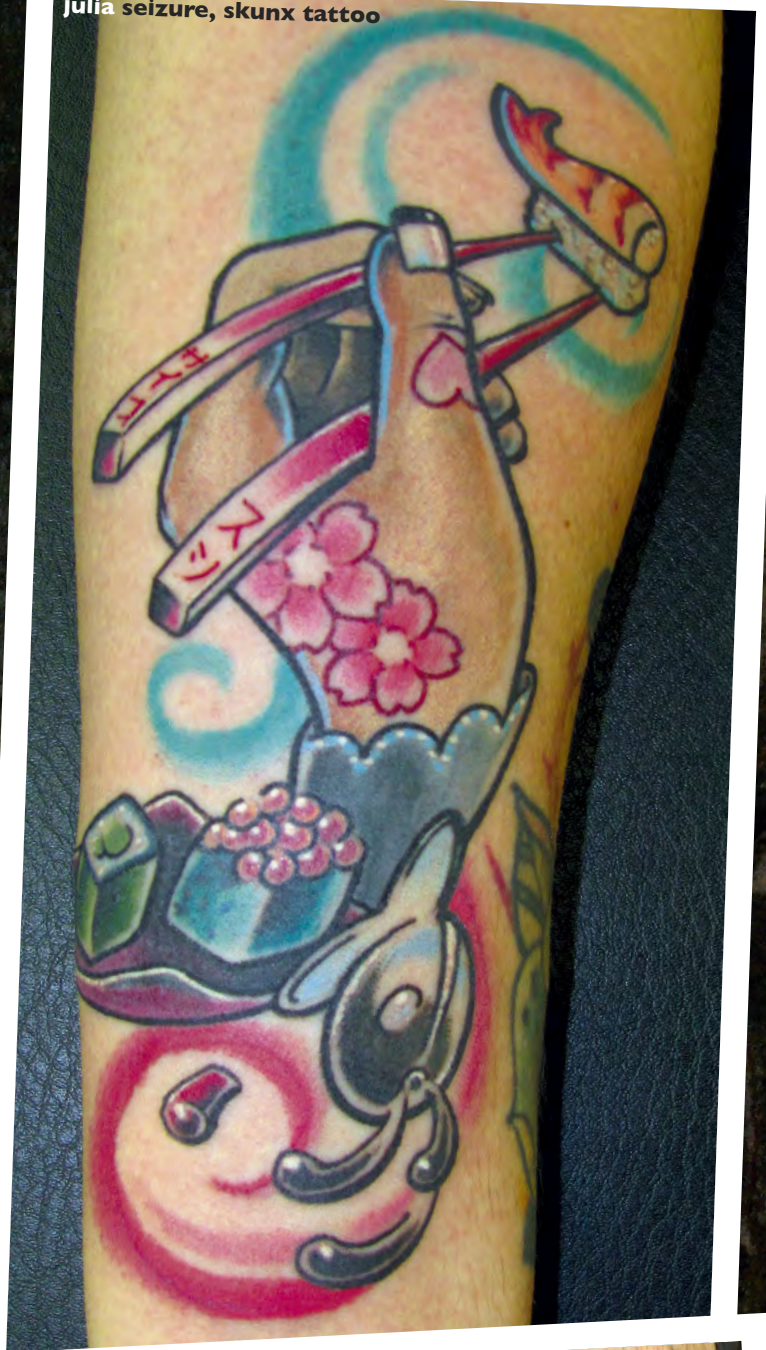
kristel oreto, empire tattoo (usa)



callum berry, draconian tattoo



julia seizure, skunx tattoo



paul smith, marked for life



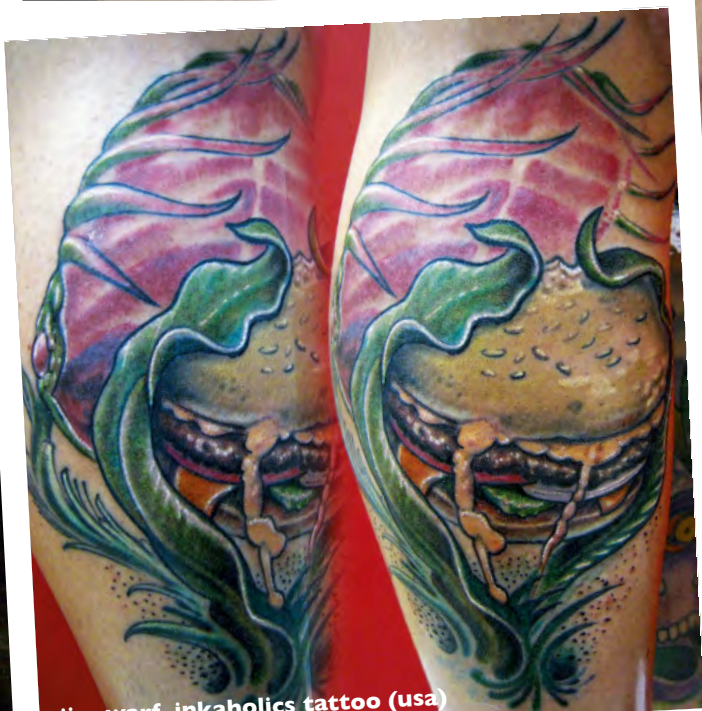
david swambo, studio one



nick morte, nick morte art (norway)

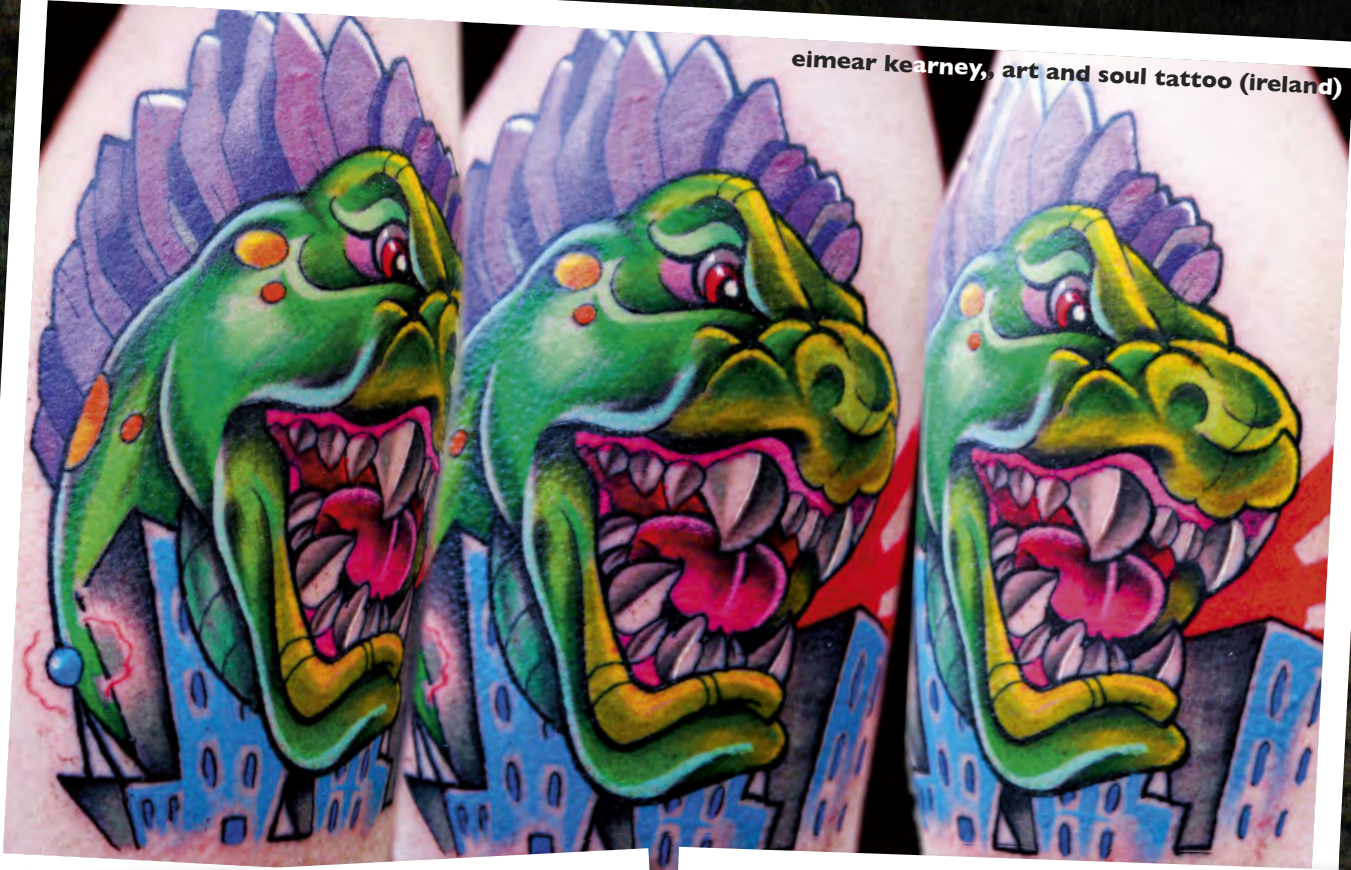


justin rodriguez, voodoo tattoo (usa)



jim warf, inkaholics tattoo (usa)

eimear kearney, art and soul tattoo (ireland)



travis litke, sacred chao (usa)



ben harris, art machine (usa)



# ALL AT SEA

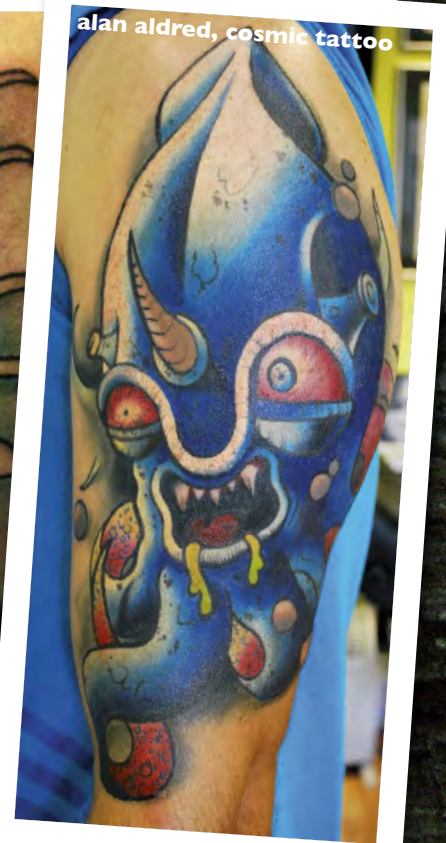
oddboy, real art tattoo



oddboy, real art tattoo



alan aldred, cosmic tattoo



sneaky mitch, inspirations





**matt adamson, triplesix studios**



**dane, inkamatic (italy)**



**kirk heppard, rain city tattoo (canada)**



**mark bester, marked for life**



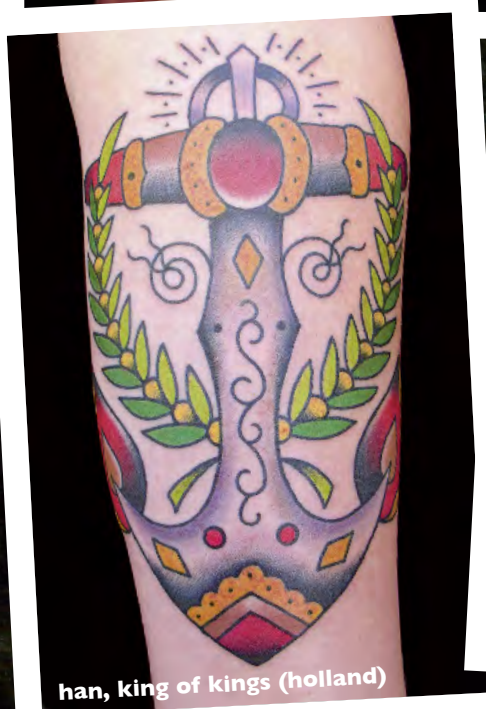
christian jacobsen,  
frontline tattoo (australia)



darcy nutt, chalice tattoo (usa)



han, king of kings (holland)



sandra, tattoo village (germany)



stacie jascott, lit fuse tattoo (usa)



josh lindley, all or nothing tattoo (usa)



deno, circus tattoo (spain)

# JAPANESE

max pniewski, southmead tattoo



matt adamson, triplesix studios



hayley hayes, self preservation custom tattoo studio



andy bowler, monki do



stewart francis, tattoo workshop

andy bowler, monki do



henrik, henrik tattoo (france)



hades mccullough, tattoo hades (new zealand)

gao bing, lion king tattoo (taiwan)



adam sky, rose gold's tattoo (usa)



kiwi matt, slave to the needle (usa)



gao bing, lion king tattoo (taiwan)

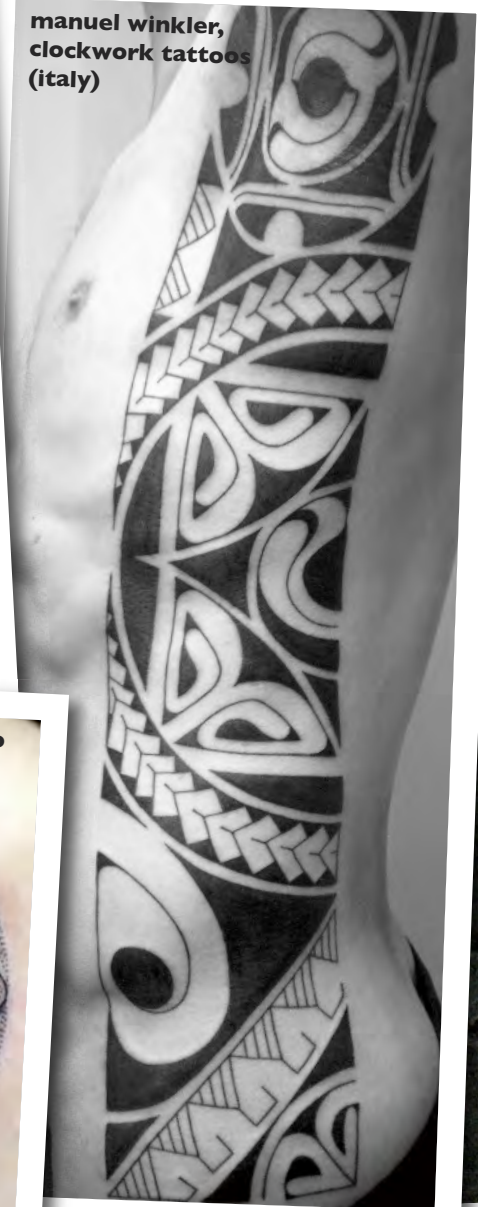


# BLACKWORK

mike boyd, indigo



manuel winkler,  
clockwork tattoos  
(italy)



karl, kreuzstich  
tattoo (germany)



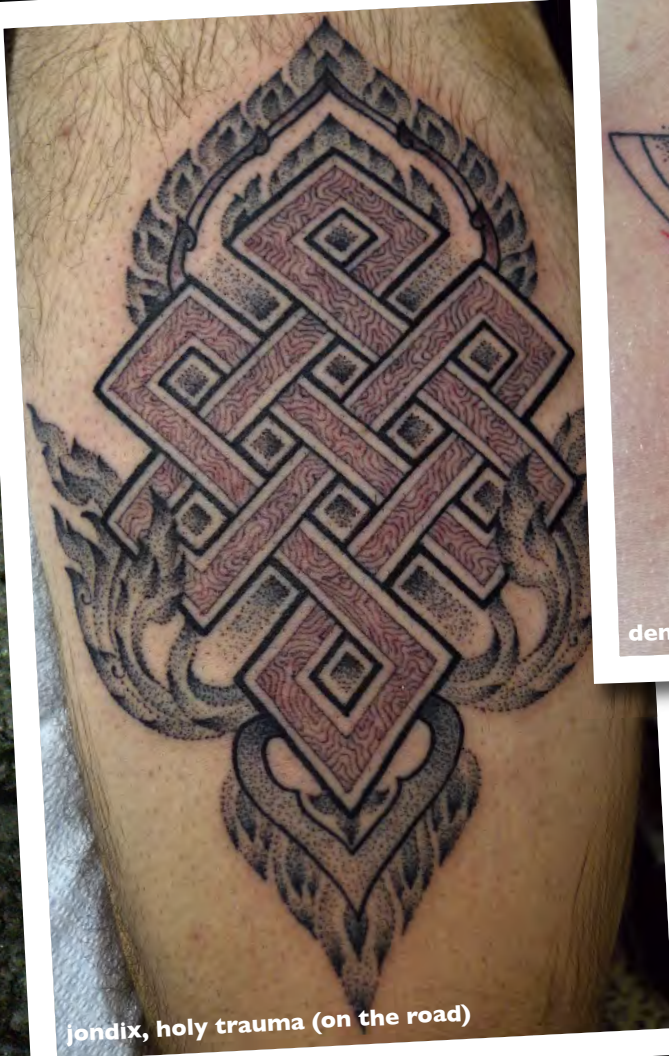
mulie addecoat, thinking tree tattoo  
(indonesia)



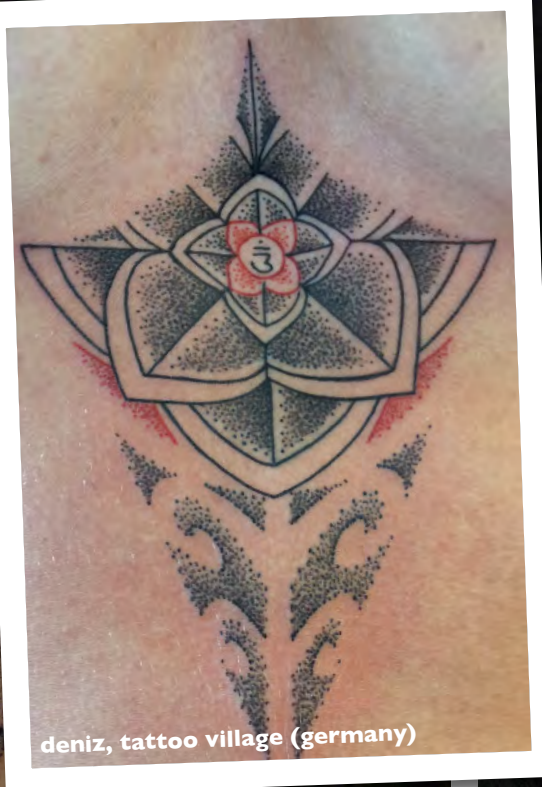
marco galdo, trafficanti d'arte (italy)



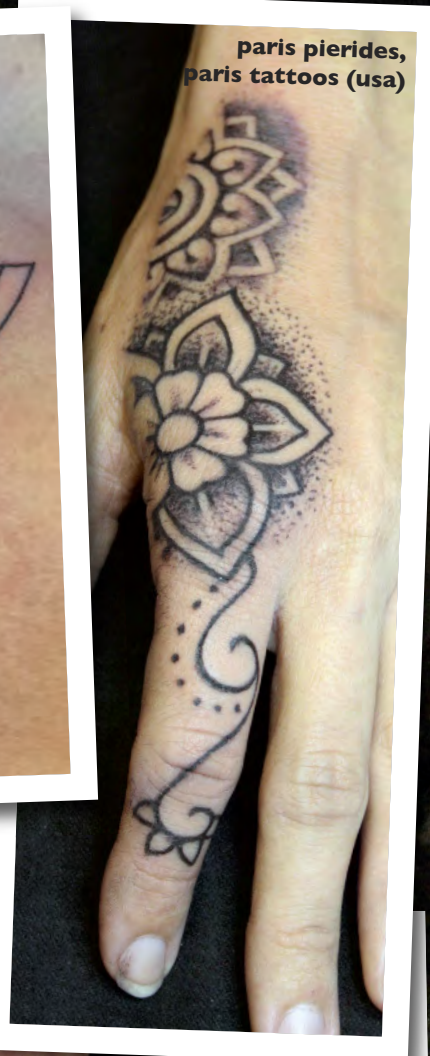




jondix, holy trauma (on the road)



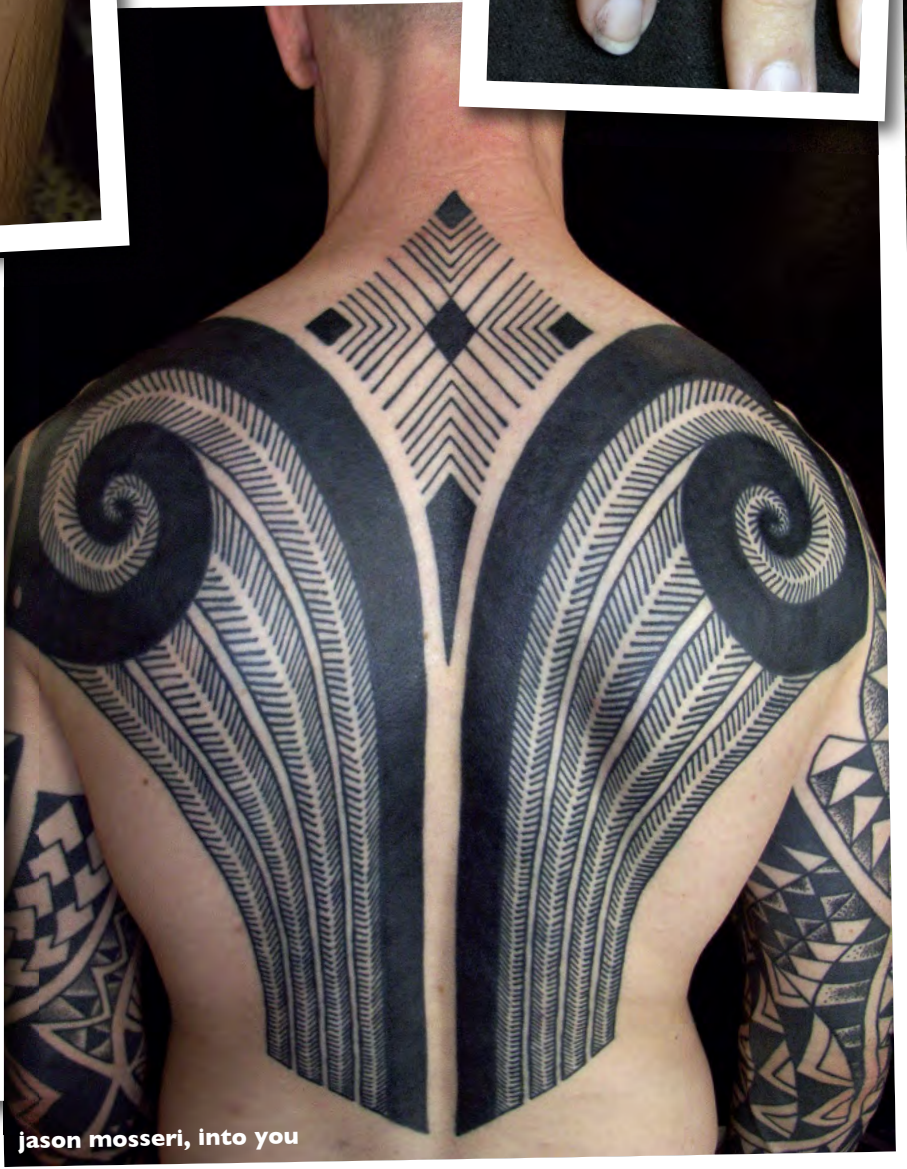
deniz, tattoo village (germany)



paris pierides,  
paris tattoos (usa)



lila way, true grit tattoos (usa)



jason mosseri, into you

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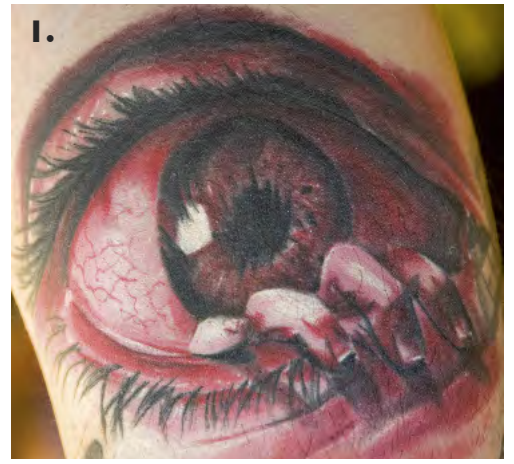
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# the jurassic coast tattoo convention

Report & photos by James Sandercock



**T**he moment the word went out that somebody had the audacity to put on a convention in December, tongues began to wag; well they did at Total Tattoo Towers at least. Could a show taking place so close to Christmas really work? The unspoken Santa amnesty was broken and the Jurassic Coast Tattoo Convention was confirmed.

The organisers, Carl and Kerry from Urban Image in Poole, came at the show from a super positive place; they just wanted to shine the spotlight on tattooing in Dorset, and bring the studios in the area together under one roof. In their words, "It would be great if all the studios starting mixing together more and stopped feeling they need to be in competition... To get together once a year and embrace our wonderful heritage and fascinating work." This is a noble sentiment indeed and, with nigh on twenty years working in the industry, it was odds on that at the very least they would have a good go at making that happen.

The day of reckoning finally arrived and I set off for Dorset. It wasn't quite freezing, so it seemed like a great idea to jump on my bike to head south. Two and half hours later, and with somewhat less vigour, I staggered numbly into the Lighthouse Centre in Poole with only one thing on my mind... hot coffee. It was as if my hosts were psychic; I was instantly whisked off to the backstage area, where an artists' and traders' green room awaited me which was quite simply a sight for sore eyes... an Aladdin's cave of snacks and beverages. As I gorged myself on croissants and coffee, it struck me that this was a rather excellent start to this pre-Christmas ink gathering.

Once I had thawed out a bit I headed off for a quick look about and to get my bearings. The Lighthouse Centre is billed as 'Poole's centre for the arts'. It's a big, purpose-built building

which has all the facilities needed to put on a modern tattoo convention. The artists were housed in one large hall, which always works well for me, and the traders were in another large room, which tattooists would also be very comfortable in if the show expands in the future.

In terms of the spread of artists, it was a nice mix of the old guard and the young bucks from around the area, and once again it demonstrated to me that the south coast has got plenty of talent, both established and up-and-coming. It's always good to meet new studios and there is definitely no lack of ambition among the ones that I encountered here. The more they communicate with each other, the better for everyone involved and that seemed to be exactly what was going on. With the unfortunate demise of the Bournemouth Convention it would appear that the Jurassic Coast show may well have come along at just the right time for the region. It does seem as though tattoo conventions are a little like sweets in a Pez dispenser; the moment one disappears, another pops up to take its place.

One minor point I would make is that there was a distinct lack of festive frills, or anything 'Jurassic' to add a bit of sparkle to the event. Having seen the great efforts that artists have gone to over the years at the Halloween Bash, I think the Jurassic Tattoo Convention could have some fun in the future with two possible themes for the show: Christmas or,

1. alex by max pniewski, southmead tattoo
2. lewy by matt casey, urban image
3. baking aces



4.



6.



5.

everybody's favourite – dinosaurs. A bit of tinsel and some baubles, or a couple of inflatable T-rex and a pterodactyl or two would have brightened up the place. These final touches are by no means essential, but they would have complemented an already great atmosphere. Maybe next year, and I'm sure there will be a next year because nobody could argue that for its first outing this show was a great success. Who knows whether it will stay as a one day event, but there is certainly plenty of room for expansion.

- 4. hailey montague, urban image
- 5 & 6. rod by rudy, family ink
- 7. shane by ben carter, adorned
- 8. peter by kali, never say die!
- 9. darren by troy, family ink
- 10. dolls of sorrow
- 11. ash by danny stoner, poison ink
- 12. clara by snappy gomez, kings cross tattoo
- 13. kit by kye stacey, exclusive tattoos



7.





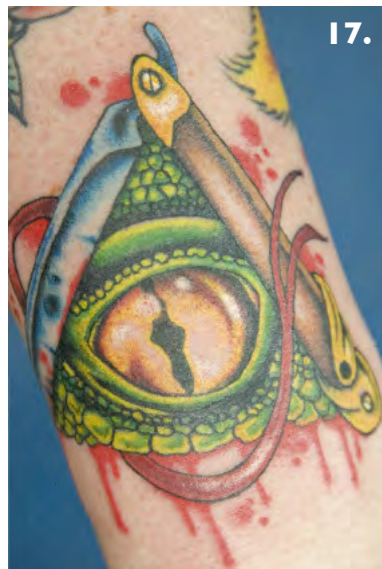
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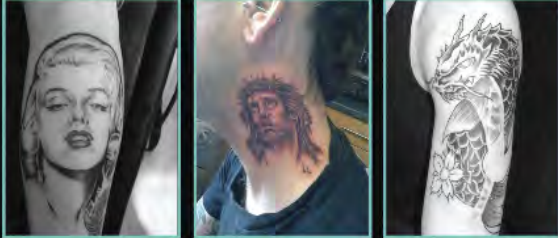


18.

14. richard by danny edwards, black pearl  
 15. ayshe by ben carter, adorned  
 16. ash by skeleton man  
 17. matt by chris byrne, true ink  
 18. by ben doran, imperial tattoo company

Pic by Mark Crawford

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# CHRIS COUGAR

**Chris Cougar has been around the tattoo world for longer than he cares to remember. Originally a jack-of-all-trades working at Pinewood film studios, he's also been a welder and a milkman, then tattooing took him under its wing back in the 1960s. He's had tattoo shops all over the south of England. In recent years, since retiring, Chris has been on a mission to educate government departments and local authorities on the rights and wrongs within the tattoo industry and he's never been one to shy away from ruffling a few feathers. I was told he wanted a word, so I went to have my fortune told and here's what he had to say...**

I started by asking Chris that somewhat predictable question: how did it all begin?

“When I was twenty, I went and got my first tattoo. I'd always wanted one, but I'd never got around to it. Once I started, though, I was instantly bitten by the bug. I went back the following week and got another one. I started talking to the guy who was tattooing me and I told him I wanted to have a go. He warned me 'It's not that easy' but he showed me how he made his needles and how his rotary machine worked. I went home and put one together. Simple as that.”

Chris happily admits that he didn't even know how to draw at that point, but he was determined to learn. He found a book in his local library, *Pierced Hearts and True Love [by Hanns Ebensten]*, and in the middle were two glossy pages of traditional tattoo designs which he copied over and over again until he could draw them in his sleep.

After two years of hassling his tattooist, he finally managed to convince him that he was serious. He was taken to meet Jack Zeek, from whom he bought his first kit – for the very substantial sum of £30 (which, in late 1960s Britain, was just about the average weekly wage!) From then on,



Chris would visit Jack at his shop in Dawley Road above Cliffo's Odds 'n' Sods, and Jack would offer him all sorts of hints and tips.

Now, according to Chris, while making his machines Jack used to discard his used drill bits rather than bothering to re-sharpen them. But one day Chris decided to take them away and sort them out for him. Jack's response was to give Chris a lathe and tell him “You've obviously got the engineering skills so you go away and make your own equipment from now on”. Chris went on, “After that I made all my

own tubes, tips, frames, everything. But in them days, we had to. Everyone had a basic knowledge of engineering and there was no way of ordering stuff and getting it delivered from China!

“Then I moved into developing coloured inks for tattooing – it's just the way I am, I can't just use something, I have to know everything about it. So I started testing inks to find out what was in them, and then I began making my own. I've got an old snake and eagle design on my arm but you can't really see it anymore because I would tattoo myself here with every ink I ever made to see how it worked before tattooing it on anyone else. At first I wouldn't let anyone else use any of my inks, unless it was someone like Jack of course. But I wouldn't charge him; I used to give them to him. You see I've never been in it for the money, it's not like that with me.

“When I first had my studio, and people came in and picked a bit of flash off the wall that was say £10, if they tried to knock me down on the price, I would put it up to £15. They soon learned that the price was the price. You wouldn't walk into a paper shop and try and knock down the price of a paper or a packet of fags, so why do it with a tattooist? But of course if a tattooist is charging £80 an hour and takes



five hours to do something that should take two hours, that's not right either. In my day it was much simpler. Each design had a price and you paid the price regardless of it taking one hour or ten hours, then it was up to the tattooist to get quicker if he wanted to earn more money. Things were so different. You never went visiting other people's studios in those days. If you did, as pleasant as they were to your face, as soon as you left the shop you were all the no-good bastards under the sun, just because you worked a hundred miles down the road!

"When I first started, I used to only tattoo at the weekends. I had to work during the week, because you never earned enough just from tattooing. And if you did want to buy stuff, there was only one official tattoo supply company. Nowadays everyone seems to be selling everything. At shows you see artists selling machines, inks, how-to-do-it DVDs... But nine out of ten of them don't know how to make their machines. They get them made in China and just slap their name on them. There are only a few of us old school tattooists about now and I think we all feel the same – the industry is ruined. The only difference is that I stand up and say it."

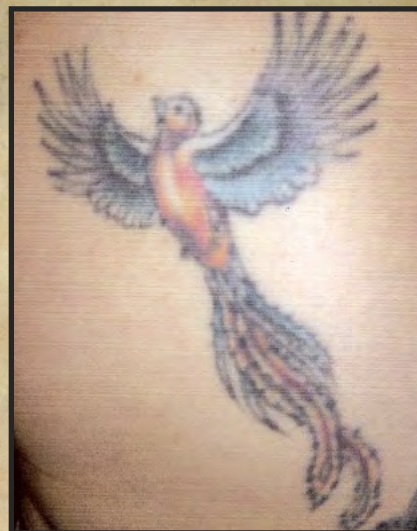
With his outspoken views, Chris can rub people up the wrong way. I asked him if this had always been the case. "I started off with a bad reputation because if someone asked me how to do something I would tell 'em. I always felt it was better to teach people the right way to do something than stitch them up with bullshit. I always thought that if they did a bad tattoo because they didn't know how to do a good one, it would reflect on the whole industry and make us all look bad."

I wondered what Chris felt about the current trend for hand, neck and facial tattoos, especially since he himself has no tattoos on 'public' skin. "I don't agree with it at all. A few years down the line I think they are all going to regret it. I had one on my hand years ago. I did it myself and regretted it straight away and removed it using chemicals."

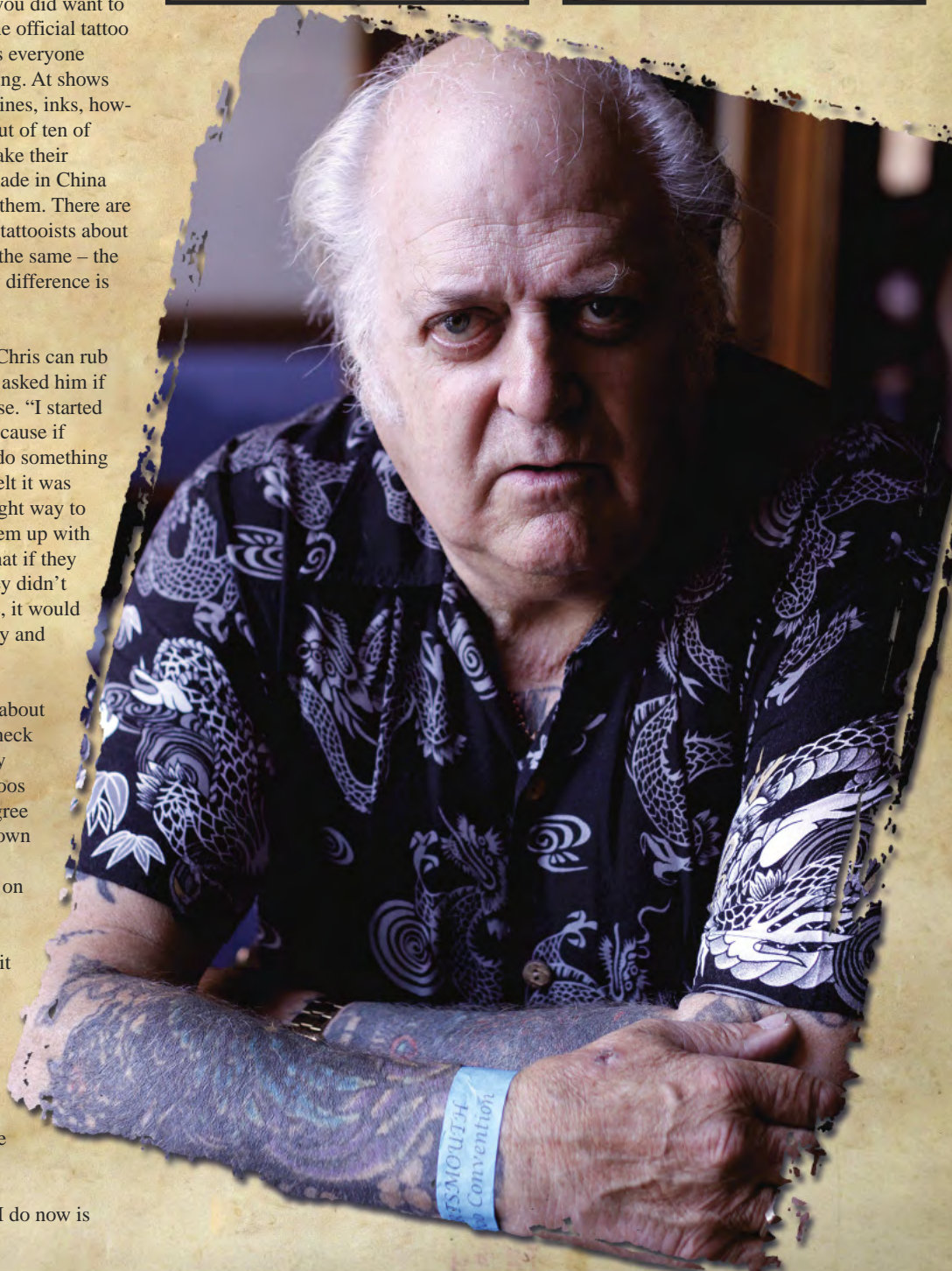
With so much information and history locked away in Chris's head, I wondered what role he saw for himself in the future of tattooing. "None!" was his answer. "As far as I'm concerned, I'm retired. All I do now is



35 years ago



20 years ago



offer advice. If someone wants technical information and I know they are professional, I will always do my best to help. Environmental Health often come to me if there is a complaint about a studio or the ink they have used.

“The problem is that there are not a lot of positives in tattooing now. Generally I think it’s finished. Things will only get positive again if the Government get it under control and bring in laws to stop tattooing being done at home, but they’re just not interested. I really have tried to do my bit to get involved politically. I’ve written to four ministers in the Department of Health in London. Only one responded and he was not allowed to talk on the phone with me.”

I reminded Chris of a conversation we’d had a year or so ago when he told me of his work with the Welsh National Assembly and his discussions with the Health Minister for Wales regarding the regulation of the tattoo industry. I wondered how this was going. “I got fed up with that lot. It was a lot of talking. They started off keen, but it got caught up in red tape. But at least in Wales they are trying to change the law and sort out the problem of home tattooing. I only hope that if Wales can do it then London may be forced to follow.



4 years ago

I asked Chris what achievement he was most proud of in his long career. “Probably the research and development I have done with tattoo inks, because a lot of the colour that people use today is based on the work that I did back then. Some with subtle changes of course, though I don’t know why. If something works and has been used for dozens of years why mess with it? But that’s what’s happening today. They think they’re being clever, but it’s people who don’t know what they’re talking about. You only need a tiny amount of pure pigment to cover a whole body. And the pigment in tattoo ink is the same pigment that’s used in car paint. It’s been used all these years and been proved safe, so why change it? All these laboratories are making a fortune and European legislation is banning inks that we’ve been using for years and it’s not because the ink is bad; it’s just all about making money. When you get a visit from the environmental health officer and he looks at your inks, if they haven’t got the right cosmetic logo on the bottle they think it’s bad ink. But tattoo ink isn’t a cosmetic product! And if you mix two inks from different manufacturers, you are mixing two sets of chemicals so you might get an adverse reaction. The old inks using pure pigments didn’t have all the shit mixed in. And in my day I would only have a choice of, say, two reds. Now there are over 400 on the market! It’s gone mad.”

“The truth is that most environmental health officers know nothing about tattooing and if the Government were serious about dealing with the health issues around tattooing they should look into stopping all the people tattooing from home and charging £60 an hour in bad conditions, who are probably signing on as well! If every registered studio refused to do cover-ups of tattoos done in people’s homes then everyone would think twice before getting this rubbish all over them. There is no excuse for people starting to tattoo at home. There are thousands of studios. If you want it bad enough, work for it. Most people today only come into tattooing because they think they will earn big money. It was never like that before. It’s only because of all the TV shows. They’ve killed this industry.”

I asked Chris what role he felt the media would – or should – play in the future of tattooing. “I don’t think they should be doing anything! They are just making it worse. There are a lot of magazines about now and it’s all because of money. Your magazine’s different, but I won’t have anything to do with the ones that take supply ads. It’s absolute greed. They are not interested in the industry, only in what they can get out of it.

“For me the best time for tattooing was in the early eighties. You could earn a good living, there weren’t that many of us about and we all got on with each other. Nowadays there are so many tattooists that everyone is struggling and I dread to think how many suppliers there are. Nine out of ten are not even tattooists. It’s out of control and things will only get better when the Government steps in and stops the sale of equipment to every Tom, Dick and Harry.”

I finish our conversation by asking Chris if he is going to pass any of this lifetime’s knowledge on to the next generation. He answers in characteristic fashion. “I don’t know. I’m not sure. Because of the way everyone just wants to make money out of everything today, I’m not sure that I should.”



5 years ago

35 years ago



Artists : Roy & Paul Priestley



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# DAISUKE SAKAGUCHI

Interview by  
Perry Rule

photo by emma houston



photo by ben harries

**A** lot has happened for London born, Japanese artist Daisuke Sakaguchi in the past 12 months. Since completing a degree at St Martins School of Art, he has turned his attention to painting and urban street art in particular. Since producing a piece for the great Fabergé egg hunt around London in 2012, he has gone on to work on other exciting art projects, raising huge sums of money for various charities along the way. His infectious, energetic lust for life and art, along with his tattoo-inspired designs, meant that our paths were destined to cross, and so on a rainy night in London's Notting Hill we met for a cup of tea...

**Much of your work features the number 27. Can you tell me the significance of this number?**

'The 27 Life' is my brand name for all my creative work. 27 is my lucky number; I love the shape and it comes up at key times in my life. Once I was aware of it I noticed that major events seem to happen on that day each month, and so the first tattoo I ever got was the number 27 on my hand.

**So what is your history? Were you born in Japan?**

Both my parents are Japanese. I am the only member of my family born outside of Japan. I was born in Hammersmith and I am fortunate that at home my parents spoke to me in Japanese, and so I am fluent in both languages. I went to St Martins School of Art, and my work is a combination of my Japanese heritage combined with the culture of my life here in England. It is very inspired by my musical influences such as 90s rock, as well as graffiti and street art, mixed with traditional Japanese ukiyo-e prints [a type of Japanese woodblock



photo by nicola saint marc

prints produced between the 17th and 20th century] and Manga all blended together. In our house we had many traditional Japanese designs on vases, fabric designs and ceramics and all of this stuff has had an influence on me.

**Were your parents creative or artistic?**

Only as a pastime; they didn't have the opportunities that someone of my generation has had. They can both draw and make things but they never had a chance to take it to a professional level.

**You have done designs for many illustrious clients including Fabergé. Can you tell me how that came about?**

It was early in 2012, and there was a street exhibition of decorated elephants placed in different locations around London. They were auctioned off to raise money for 'The Elephant Family Foundation', a charity run by author Mark Shand. When I saw those elephants, I was really keen to do one but I had missed that particular opportunity. Then I found out that Fabergé was sponsoring a



similar exhibition using eggs. I called up the Elephant Foundation and told them I really wanted to paint one and they asked me to submit some designs. Lots of famous people applied: Zaha Hadid who designed the Olympic swimming stadium, Sir Peter Blake and the film director Sir Ridley Scott. I was really determined to be chosen. I called the



design I did Mirai, which means 'future' in Japanese. The concept was to base it on traditional Japanese tattoo designs with breastplates incorporating elephants with a phoenix on the back. They loved the design and I got the approval.

I picked up the fibreglass egg in London. I undercoated it in a gel gloss primer and then hand painted it in artist quality acrylic paints. Then I layered it with an isolation coat to seal it. One of my passions is American hotrods and I love the high gloss, polished finish of the cars, so I took the egg to a local car paint shop and had it coated with a two part polyurethane lacquer. This was then blasted down, re-coated and re-blasted then re-coated again to give it a really deep rich sheen. This also helped to protect it while on display along with over 200 other eggs outside around London for six weeks. The idea behind the exhibition was that the eggs were placed all over London and people could get a map showing roughly where they were. People would find them, text in the location and the more they found the higher the chance they had winning a diamond-encrusted, solid gold Fabergé egg. The money from the texts went to the foundation as well as the money raised from auctioning the eggs at the end.



photo by nicola saint marc

photo by nicola saint marc

**You seem to be successfully establishing yourself and becoming recognised within the mainstream art world: how conscious is that intention?**

For me the Fabergé experience was more about promotion and to see how much people were prepared to pay for a piece of my work. This gave me an idea of where to position myself. I am already established as a jewellery designer and I have had some success in that field. One of my bracelet pieces was displayed at Dover Street art market, and I was fortunate enough that on the first day Elton John came in and bought it; this led to me doing a custom belt buckle for Elton John's partner, David Furnish. I have also designed jewellery for Nike, and silver products for Vauxhall Motors and others. But with jewellery, it's a very long-winded process; you need to start with drawing, then carving, moulding, finishing and finally polishing. I find that painting has a far more instant satisfaction. The egg was the first real painting piece I had done, and I really enjoyed doing it.

photo by abdul yusufu



**Your designs are very inspired by traditional Japanese tattoo designs.**

Symbolism and iconography are important to me. My family are quite spiritual, although not really religious. My parents have unconsciously instilled in me an understanding of Japanese symbolic meaning through design and colour, which is so present within the tattoo world, and I think that is why my designs are so tattoo-related.

**You did another egg for Fabergé. Was that a spin-off from the original project?**

Fabergé decided to ask 20 artists from the original 200 to create limited edition, customised African ostrich eggs to be sold in Selfridges. I did 10 that all sold really well.



photo by emma houston

**After the eggs you created another street art project using an old British Telecom phone box. Can you tell us about that project?**

It was a similar concept and it came straight after the egg hunt. BT got together 100 artists to customise a fibreglass mould of the old Sir Giles Gilbert Scott K6 phone box, to raise money for the charity ChildLine. I approached it very much as a sleeve design with four panels. The plan was to tell a story in the same way a bodysuit would. 2012 was the year of the dragon and the box was sited in London's China Town so on the front panel I had the dragon symbolising courage, holding the crystal ball and flowing around all four sides. I used the image of the octopus for mystery and magic, the lion cub to ward off evil spirits, the thunder bolt, leading on to the koi for hope and prosperity. The basic concept was four creatures working in unison. Again I used acrylic paints, and I discovered through looking at older traditional tattooed body suits that the designs are much simpler and slightly less detailed, which worked better for a large object like a telephone box!

**Your third major commission for 2012 was a customised cycle helmet. Who commissioned that from you?**

The Legacy List is a charity based in East London [dedicated to making creative connections between people and the Olympic park]. Last year they did a project in which they invited Damien Hirst, Mark Quinn and London's Mayor Boris Johnson, along with 12 other artists, to customise a cycle helmet. The organisers saw my phone box in China Town



photo by abdul yusufu

and invited me to take part. When they went to auction they were displayed in the Sotheby's Gallery in central London. They had chosen my design to be placed in the centre, which was a great honour. The piece is called 'Chikara' which means strength and power. The design is of two cranes circling around. The crane represents long life. In Japan natural woods are often seen in conjunction with more artificial materials, and so I mounted my design on a pine plinth with the kanji for 'Life' on the front.



**So how do you see your future and what plans do you have?**

Well, after the success of the major pieces I have done this year, I have recently finished a set of canvases from which I have made a set of 27 prints. I have priced the prints competitively to encourage sales. I would also like to develop a clothing range incorporating limited edition t-shirt prints. The aesthetics will be in line with the style of work I am concentrating on at the moment. I think it is important to have a distinctive style; if I go to a tattooist I like to have an idea of their own individual style. It is what makes them stand out and I would like it to be the same with my art.

**You seem adept at applying yourself to many artistic media. Do you see yourself tattooing in the future?**

I would love to, because of the tattoos that I wear and the style of the work that I am doing at the moment, I am always being asked 'Are you a tattooist?' I would love to learn to tattoo but I am very aware of how long it would take to be good, and I would not be



happy with not being really good. It is important to me that I am proud of everything I do and that it works for me and promotes me, and that would be my hesitation with becoming a tattooist. Also I feel I am just on the cusp of financial rewards and I know that to tattoo would mean a long time of financial insecurity. I would have to divide my time, and that may not be so good. But the ultimate answer is yes!

You can see more of Daisuke's work and contact him at:  
[www.the27life.com](http://www.the27life.com)  
[www.facebook.com/daisukesakaguchi](https://www.facebook.com/daisukesakaguchi)

Daisuke will also be exhibiting a customised skateboard deck art in an exhibition called "BOARD S#!TL£\$S" starting from the 31st January 2013 at "The Circle" Tattoo Gallery, 21 Noel Street, London, W1F 8GP



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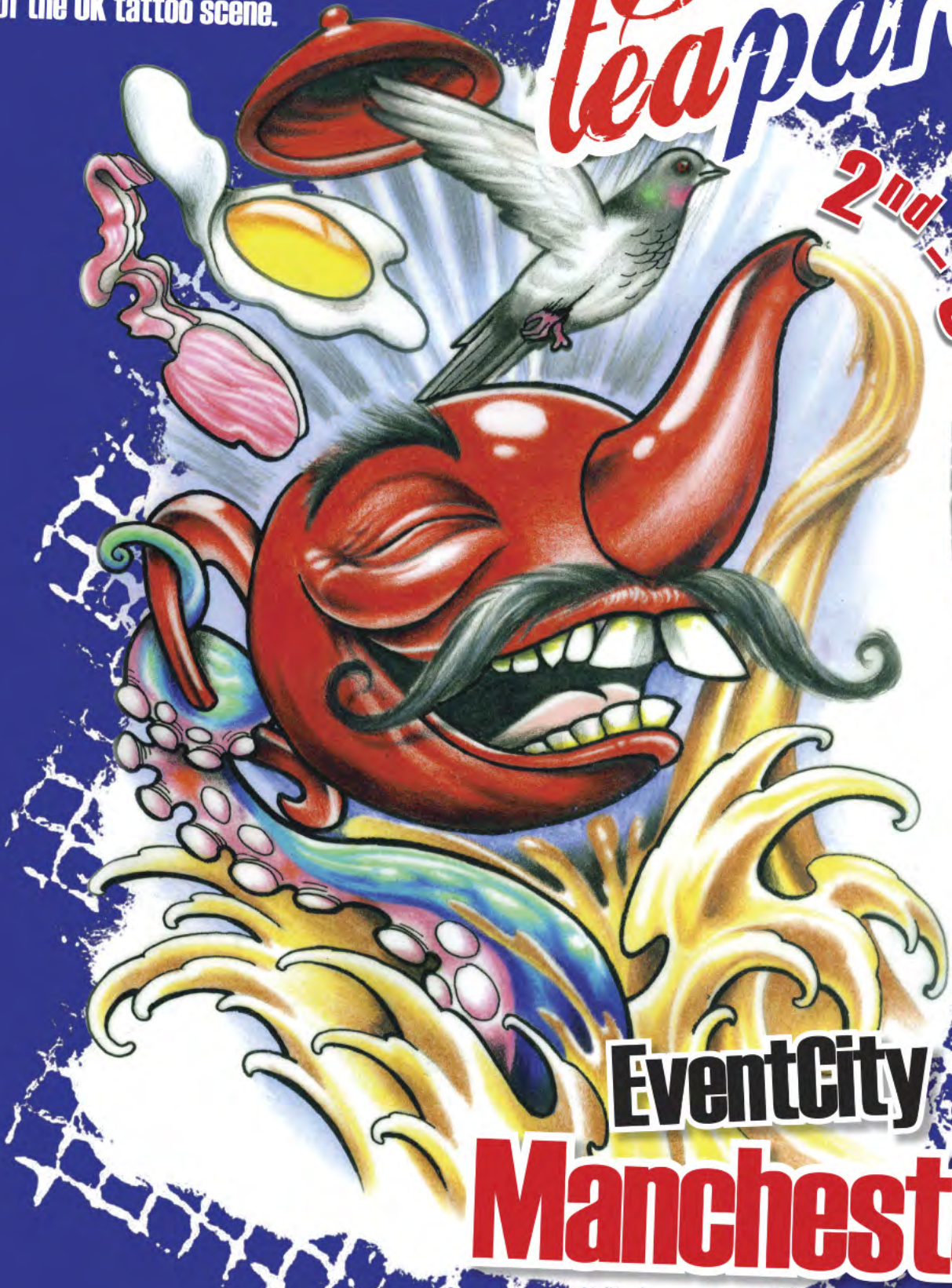


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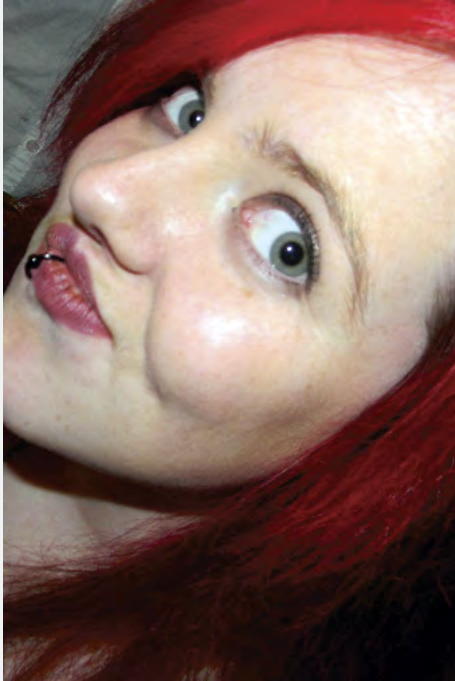
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# *Cleaner versus Floor Hygiene Technician*

What's in a name? asks Mel Noir



**J**ob titles are funny things. Some people use them to define their identity or as a status symbol, whereas others just use them when they fill in a form at the bank. It's amazing how a 'cleaner' can become a 'floor technician' depending on the situation. This isn't something you'd really expect to see in tattooing, but it's there. Some 'tattooers' hate those who call themselves 'artists', and some people cringe at the word 'tattooist'. It's all semantics, really. Strictly speaking, there are only two roles for those who tattoo – you're either a tattooer (or whatever version of that you may call yourself!) or you're an apprentice. But how do you define yourself in a role where formal promotion doesn't really exist? When do you stop being an apprentice and start being a tattoo artist? In fact, do you ever stop being an apprentice?

I've met people who will *always* consider themselves to be an apprentice. They see this as a sign of respect for the trade and a way to keep themselves grounded enough to keep learning. On the other hand, I've also met one or two apprentices who thought they were above the word and wanted to run before they could walk. Unfortunately they ended up running into a brick wall.

That isn't to say that everyone should call himself or herself an apprentice forever, of course. It's good to have a sense of accomplishment and it's great to be able to let the world know that you've mastered the basic skills that you need to give someone a good tattoo. I asked Mike Stratton from Studio 59 Tattoos for his thoughts on the matter. He said that, simply put, a person goes from being an apprentice to being a tattooer when their mentor says so. "However" he added, "it largely depends on the knowledge of the tutor, and their ability to pass on that knowledge properly, so it's fully understood by their pupil. And of course, the work and the learning don't stop there... far from it!"

Nigel Kurt from Funhouse Tattoo holds very similar sentiments. He told me "There is no set timeline for tattoo apprenticeships and nor should there be. People take to tattooing at

different speeds. A tiny, tiny handful of people take to it quite naturally but 99.9% have to work their arses off to get anywhere. The vast majority will fail to get anywhere at all. The length of an apprenticeship should always be determined by the apprentice's aptitude for the job."

If you're an apprentice and all you want to do is be a great tattooer, you may get frustrated at times because you're not Bob Roberts yet, but it isn't a race. Who cares if you're not a tattooer yet? You may work towards your goal at your own pace, or you may drive yourself mad from time to time. That's half the fun of an apprenticeship.

Nigel, ever the philosopher, stated, "Tattooing is an ever-evolving art form, so the second you feel like you know what it's all about is the moment you start getting left behind." Like any creative job, once you think you're great, you're un-teachable. Mike shares Nigel's opinion on this, saying, "Being great at one aspect of tattooing and crap at everything else doesn't a tattooist make! And 'figuring it out for yourself' is the hard way of doing it – hard on the customers too."

There's no specific way to measure talent at tattooing; there are no tests, no grades and no

qualifications. This is exactly how it should be, of course. After all no one can really measure something like art. Because of this, as the art of tattooing changes, tattooers need to be constantly learning, developing their skills and moving with the times. If they didn't, half the older tattooers could well still be working on your skin without any gloves on! Whatever word they may use to describe themselves, they're learning and changing. The humble tattooist is the one who isn't afraid to ask questions or learn from others.

And finally, whatever you call yourself, wherever you are in your career, and however you feel about it, don't forget to love what you do. That's the real key to success.

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Mel Noir writes the news & views blog site [www.tattoosdayuk.com](http://www.tattoosdayuk.com)

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# Federico Ferroni

**Federico Ferroni is one of those artists whose work simply speaks for itself. There is no need to wax lyrical about it because a quick glance across these pages will show that these are the tattoos of an artist who is dedicated to creating the most exquisite Japanese interpretive tattoos.**

This 34 year-old Argentinean, who has now made his home in Miami, has progressed from the bars and backstreets of the Buenos Aires punk rock scene to working alongside Chris Garver in Ami James' Love Hate Tattoos on South Beach. It's no doubt been a hell of a journey with more than a few moments of enlightenment along the way but, like most artists who really excel at what they do, the realisation that consistent hard work was the key that would unlock real excellence was a pivotal moment for Federico.

"I got into the whole tattoo thing by coincidence. A friend of mine was getting tattooed, we were part of a punk rock band. He knew I was into drawing and painting... I was some sort of artist, I suppose. He said I should come and meet this guy who was doing his tattoos and see whether I could get a machine off him. I didn't know what a tattoo machine was and I hadn't even seen anybody getting tattooed at that point. I had no money but my friend said 'Don't worry, I'll buy it then you can tattoo me for free!' I said OK, I'm down with that."

The next step was very much sink or swim for Federico. "When we got there the guy was tattooing away; he just looked up at me and said 'So you want to buy a tattoo machine? OK, you got to tattoo your friend right now in front of me.' We're not talking about a tattoo shop here; this was in the ghetto. I did the tattoo and it looked alright but it all fell out eventually because it was not deep enough, but that's how it started." Federico describes this first effort as 'Jailhouse Bio-Mech'!

At that point Federico may well have started tattooing, but he was still far from hooked. He had got himself a bar in his small home town and continued to run that with his machine set up at the end of the counter. Occasionally he would tattoo friends there, and so it was for the next few years, but eventually word got around that Federico was the only guy in town with a tattoo machine and soon he was tattooing during the day and running the bar at night. "After about three years of playing around with it, I was tattooing on a regular basis. That summer I decided to open a little street shop and that was when I started to take it a little bit more seriously. I realised I was marking people for life."



Over the next couple of years Federico really began to work at his tattooing. He started to do some research and spend time with other tattooers, but he was still light years away from the beautiful Japanese work he creates today. "I hadn't even started to use colour at this point. I was working in black and grey, but I did manage to build a little portfolio which helped me move to the States." It was at this point that he was first introduced to the style that was to become his passion. In 2000 he began working for Ken Cameron at the legendary South Beach Tattoo in Miami. Federico saw the high quality Japanese work that one of the artists there was turning out, and he realised where his future lay: "Don't get me wrong, I still loved black and grey but with Japanese style you can create something way more interesting; the placement and the flow, the backgrounds and the way the colours work together, as well as the story behind the tattoo. You can't just do whatever you want. You have to stick to some rules, but you can do your own interpretation of the classic imagery."



From a young age Federico was involved with martial arts training in Kung Fu and then Ju Jitsu, even fighting in the MMA at one point, and ending up with a broken cheekbone for his trouble. He was always inspired by the warrior mentality which those practices instil. When he began to learn about Japanese tattooing he realised the same discipline applied to that as well.

Federico has been tattooed by two of the great modern Japanese tattoo masters, Shige and Horiyoshi III. As you can imagine, both these experiences left their impression on him in more than just the obvious way. "I think perhaps it was my destiny to find Japanese tattooing. For me it's the greatest style, the granddaddy of them all. After getting tattooed





by those two masters I realised that it was all about conviction; if you want to specialise in a style you have to give 100% of yourself to it. It comes down to one thing – hard work. Some people think that these guys are gifted but I don't believe that. I just believe they work harder than everybody else. You may have some talent but you have to work your ass off if you want to be good at something. That's the most valuable lesson. I think you can apply that to life as a whole. I really believe in hard work and in the cycles of life. You need to learn, then practise, then apply it, then you master it. Then you learn some more and you practise that and so on."





It's now 12 years since Federico left Argentina and moved to Miami, which is very much his home town these days. For the last three years he has been based at Love Hate Tattoos. "It's been fun. I've learnt a lot just from being next to Garver. I like to work fast with a lot of energy but next to me is this guy who is so precise and so technical, it's made me slow down and think. It's a constant learning process. I'm very lucky to be working next to a big ass tattooer, someone who has been tattooing for years. Some people talk shit about Miami Ink but I work with these guys and I know they are good people who love tattooing."

Those two words 'Miami Ink' have a place in tattoo history, and the TV show has had a massive impact globally, but I had to ask what sort of effect it's had on the local tattoo scene. "I was not working in the shop when the show started but I would drive by on my way to work and there would be a line of fifty people outside before they opened every day. For the first few years there was a mix of locals and tourists. Nowadays I would say that 70% of the walk-in customers are from out of the country. I think the effect of the TV shows is now greater outside America." The UK has its own Love Hate Tattoos, recently opened in Notting Hill. I wondered if that meant Federico would be spending some time in London, and he confirmed that he would: "I'll be coming over in March 2013 and then heading over to Tin Tin's convention in Paris."





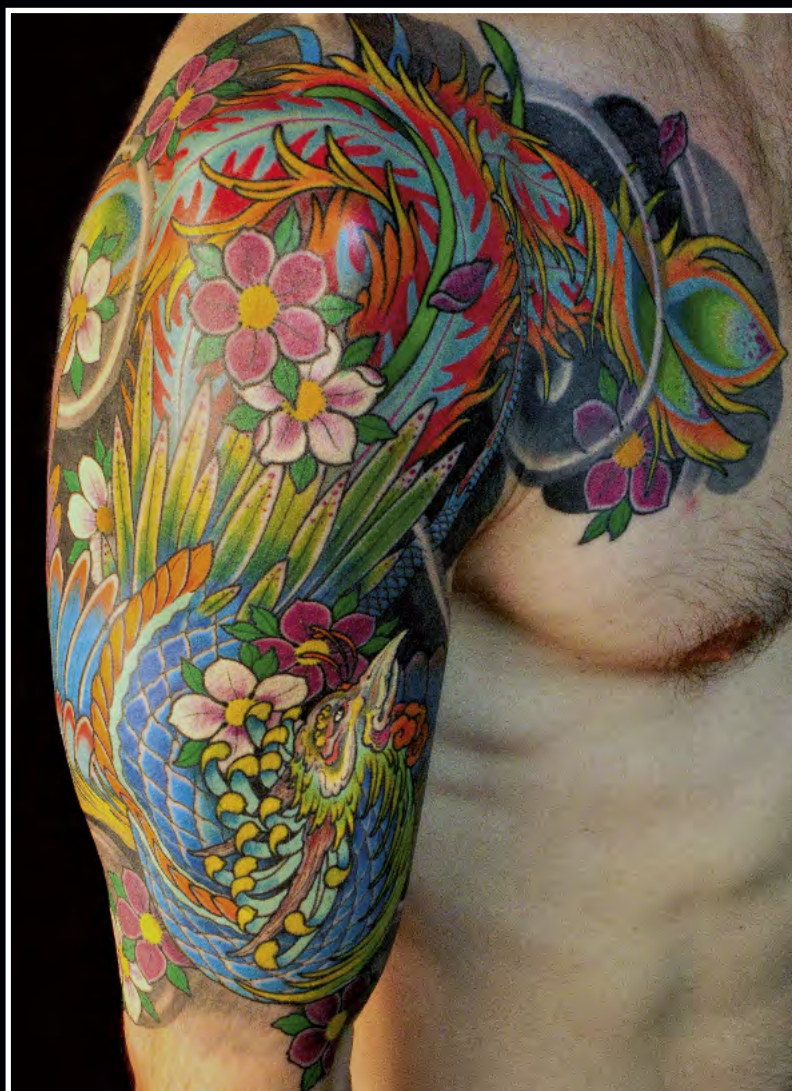
One might imagine it's hard to get an appointment with a tattooist of Federico's ability and talent but that's actually not the case and he has his own personal reasons for that: "I never make appointments more than two months in advance. I don't want to overcomplicate things. I deal with everything myself and that's the way I like it. Back in the day I used to think 'Oh man, look at this guy, he has a two year waiting list! How do you get that busy? And then I got to that point, and I realised I didn't want it to be like that. So, once a week now I just do walk-ins. It's fun and it's very different after so many years of working by appointment only. It's definitely a challenge but it keeps me fresh, and I get to meet some new people that day."



Miami has definitely got its own thing going on; it's a party town and the sun shines all year round, which is not great news for tattoos and especially for the colour work that Federico does. I wondered if he sees a day when he would move elsewhere. "I think this is a good place, perhaps not for everybody but I love it. Let me show you..." We are chatting on Skype and at this point he takes the laptop over to his balcony and shows me the bay below, drenched in sun, with a beautiful clear blue sky. "Down there I see dolphins every single day. I believe there are places you could go and do much better work, and perhaps build a better portfolio. And I know sometimes I will be doing a great piece of work but perhaps the skin is not so good because of exposure to the sun and perhaps the tattoo will suffer a little for that. In Scandinavia I can use four different shades of yellow and each one will show up. Not so here in Florida. I got to work with Henning Jorgenson at Royal Tattoo in Denmark and that was amazing, but, all things considered, I have everything I want and a great quality of life. I have the whole package here... at least for now."

Federico believes in a very simple philosophy that is a vital part of his work ethic and really leaves nowhere to hide. "What is most important for me is to feel happy with myself and the work I am doing, and take responsibility for the end product. No excuses, such as bad skin or the customer won't stay still. Sometimes it's easy to please people but it's not so easy to please yourself. I believe if you can do that, then you will have happy customers for a long time to come."

**Federico's website**  
**[www.fedtattoos.com](http://www.fedtattoos.com)**



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The ZIPHEADS



After the massive success of the first Inkfest event a festival of tattoo art and alternative music we have been listening to peoples opinions and have now moved to a bigger venue at SAND BAY LEISURE RESORT in Kewstoke two miles North of Weston-super-Mare. As with last year the bands and over 50 tattooists will all play and work on site at the holiday park giving an amazing atmosphere and holiday vibe.

**TICKETS:** Weekend tickets are by far the best value option and are available to cover all 3 days at an amazing cost of only **£50 in advance** or **£60 OTD**. Day passes will be available OTD Friday £25, Saturday £30, Sunday £30. Advance tickets are available through the website or at local outlets.

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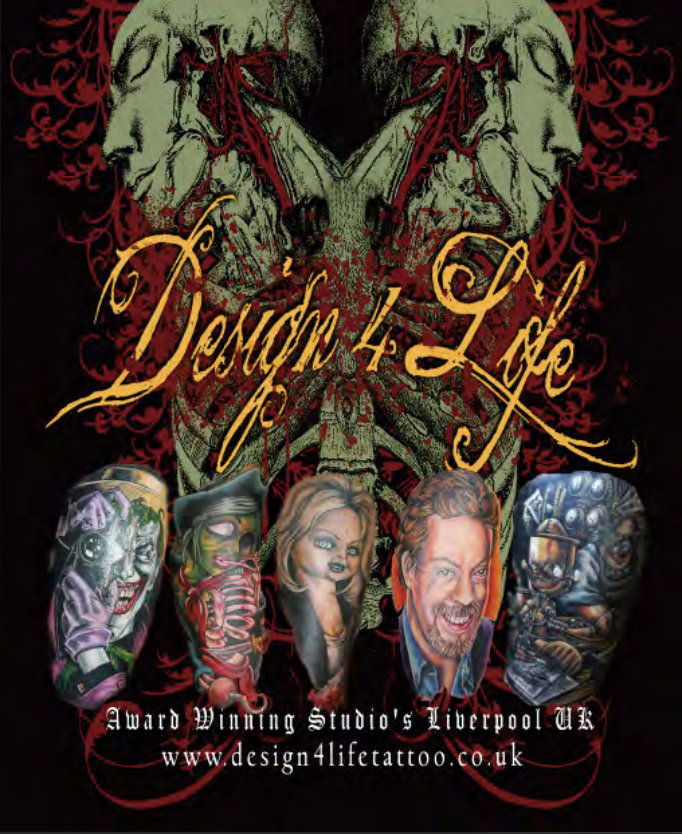
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# NEXT MONTH

in **Total Tattoo** issue 102  
on sale **Thursday 7th March**

## Interviews

- **Claudia de Sabe**  
Italian elegance in London
- **Washun of Last Gate**  
Progressive Japanese tattoos
- **Kali**  
Dark inspiration from Never Say Die!

## Features

- **Cherry Blossom Tattoo Studio**  
Japanese Diary
- **Private View** – Mike Wall, Cult Classic
- **Mugshot** – Gary from Phat Robot
- **Gallery Plus** – Fanning the flames of inspiration

## Conventions

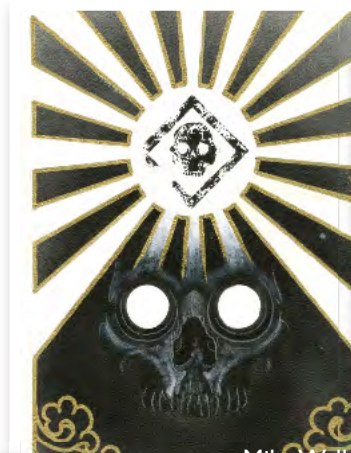
- Calgary Tattoo and Arts Festival
- Cebu, Philippines
- Milan Tattoo Convention

All details correct at time of going to press

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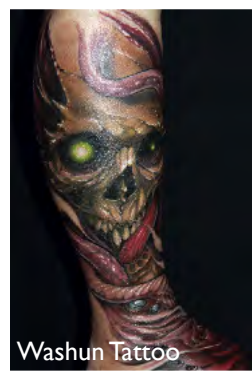
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Mike Wall



Kali



Washun Tattoo



Claudia de Sabe

# mugshot

We ask tattooists some probing questions and encourage them to reveal a different side of themselves!

This month

## John Fagan

### Lost Cause Tattoo Studio

#### What makes you happy?

A good strong cup of coffee and my granddaughter's laugh.

#### What makes you angry?

A lack of imagination, lazy people and tribal tattoos!

#### What was the last book you read?

The Conqueror series by Conn Iggulden.

#### What was the last movie you saw?

Ice Age 4.

#### What pets do you have?

The mutt Cookie and some fish.



#### What would you eat for your last meal on earth?

The wife's shepherd's pie with peas and Worcester sauce and, for afters, lamingtons (again, the wife's).

#### If you won the lottery what is the first thing you would buy?

I don't think I'd have any left – the wife's already spent it in her head!

#### Who would play you in the movie of your life?

I'd like to say Robert De Niro but it would probably be more like Richard Wilson who played Victor Meldrew.

#### What song would be the soundtrack to your life?

Ride On by AC/DC.

#### What would your super power be?

The Jedi Mind Trick. (Sometimes you need it, especially on people who come in wanting tribal!)

#### What achievement are you most proud of?

Being alive.

#### What is your biggest regret?

Not starting to tattoo earlier in life.

#### What keeps you awake at night?

Nothing much, I can sleep anywhere.

#### What is your favourite tattoo that you have done and why?

Tazio Nuvolari backpiece, because the feedback has been awesome and it turned out fantastic!



#### What is the best lesson life has taught you?

Don't take things for granted

#### How would you like to be remembered?

For doing the right thing by people.

#### Finish this sentence:

**Jon Fagan is...** a workaholic and can be a grumpy old git!

## Next Month

Gary  
Phat Robot

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# Golden Dragon Tattoos

Mark Bailey



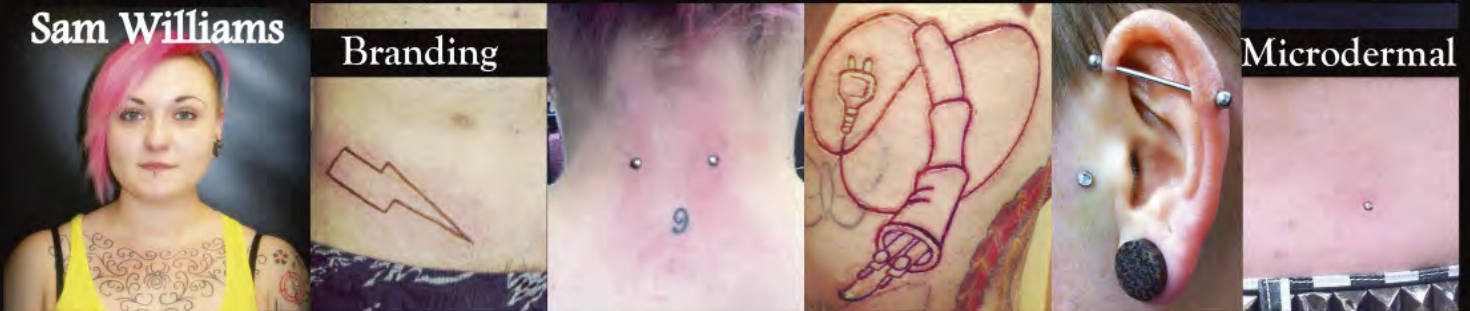
Jane Mosley



Craig Measures




Sam Williams



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