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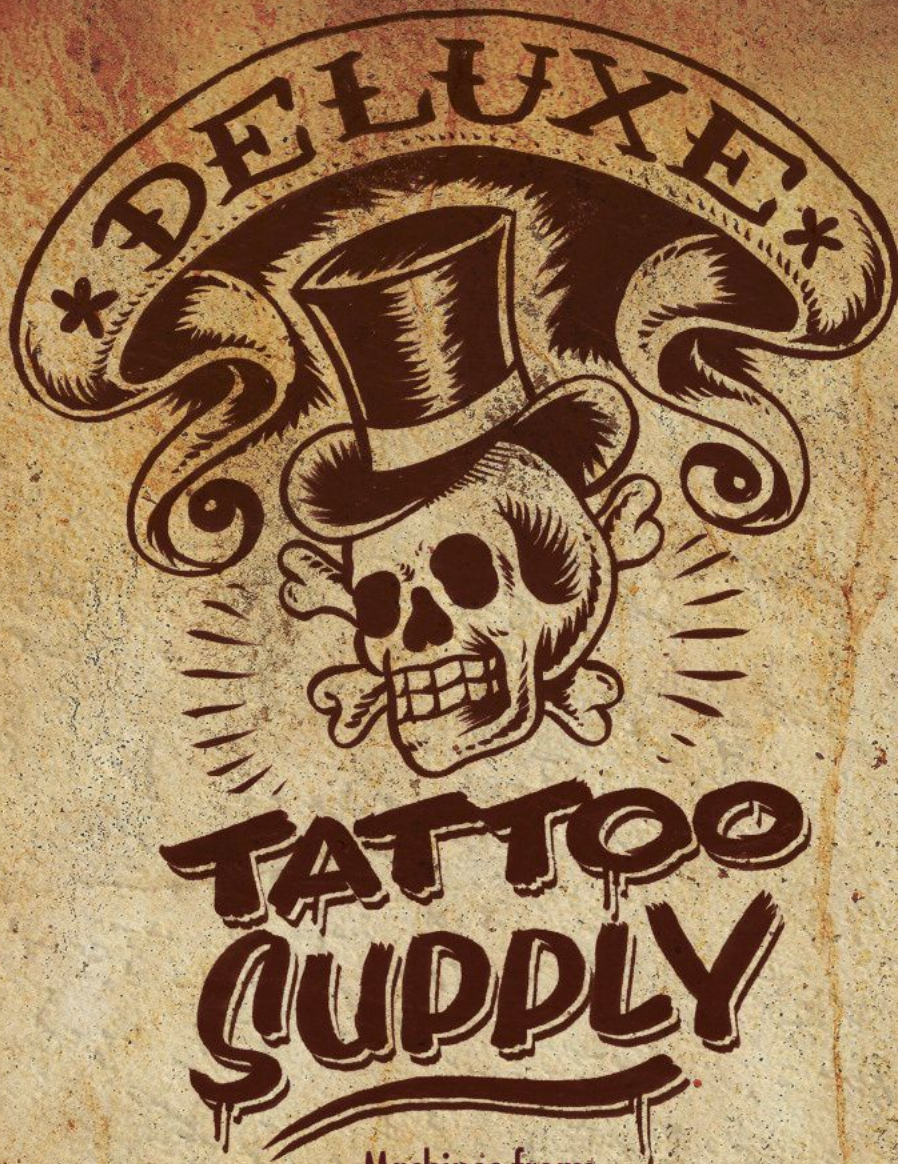


The official 'King of Tattoo'
His life and the birth of
The Bristol Tattoo Club

Plus - CONVENTIONS: TAIWAN TATTOO CONVENTION, TATTOO EXTRAVAGANZA, TATTOO KULTURE, SCOTTISH TATTOO CONVENTION IN FOCUS - TOKYO TATTOO • CONVENTION CALENDAR • BACKPIECE-GRAY SILVA SHARES HIS VIEWS • NEWS AND REVIEWS • PLUS LOTS MORE

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7 EDITORIAL

James's view on the world of ink

8 NEWS & REVIEWS

All the news that's fit to print

14 KATHMANDU

When the world collapses

18 CROOKED MOON

The Pedersen brothers

29 TAIWAN TATTOO CONVENTION

Super Asian art

38 BRISTOL TATTOO CLUB

LES SKUSE

His life story and the birth of the most famous club in the world

44 ADRIAN WILLARD

A life in perfect harmony

50 GALLERY

Be inspired with our bumper gallery

63 TATTOO EXTRAVAGANZA

Party central on the south coast

70 PORTFOLIO

Two great folders from Enzo Barbareschi and Neil Dransfield

74 TATTOO KULTURE

Weston Super Mare's first show

78 MIKE GIANT

Legendary US graffiti artist turned tattooist

86 THE SCOTTISH TATTOO CONVENTION

A great convention north of the border

94 IN FOCUS

This month we shine the spotlight on Tokyo Tattoo

96 CONVENTION CALENDAR

Plan your social diary with the help of our convention calendar

97 NEXT MONTH

The future is looking bright

98 BACK PIECE

Gray Silva from Rampant Ink discusses Tattoo Voodoo

Cover Model: Cervena Fox
Tattoos: Various artists
Photo: Jenna Krazek

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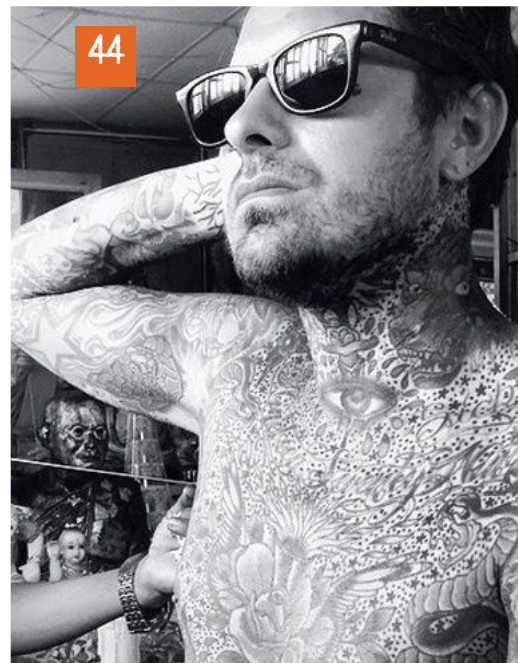
Images must be high resolution (300) and sized at 100mm by 150mm. The disc needs to be labelled with the artist & studio name. Or email them to galler@totaltattoo.co.uk

COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All winners will be picked at random (or on merit if applicable) after the closing date. Entries received after the closing date will not be considered. The editor's decision is final. Only one entry per person please, and remember to include your name and address. Winners of convention tickets will be responsible for their own transport and accommodation unless stated otherwise. Total Tattoo is not responsible for items lost or damaged in transit – though of course we will try to help if we can.



44



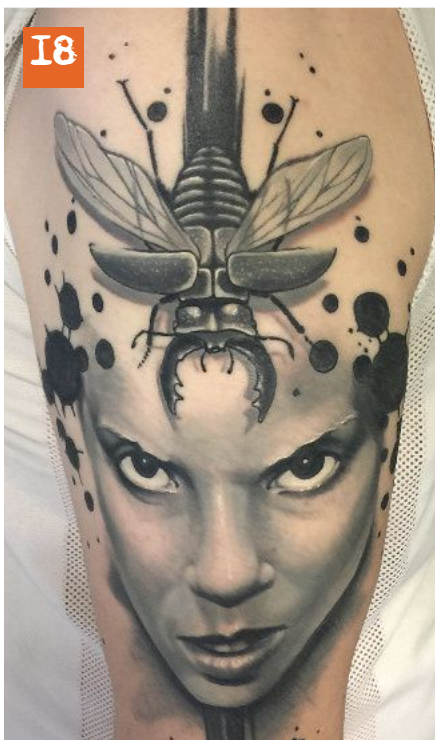
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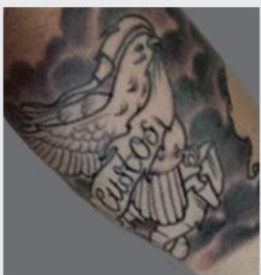
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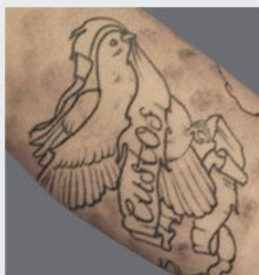
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During the last few weeks, the news has been dominated by just one thing. And I'm not talking about our farcical UK election. I'm talking about something of global significance: the devastating earthquake that hit Nepal on Saturday 25th April, the second day of the Nepal Tattoo Convention. Like many people, I had friends from the tattoo world who were in Kathmandu at the time. In fact only days before, I'd been chatting to Travellin' Mick about his crazy workload and he'd told me this show always has a special place in his heart.

When we first heard about the earthquake, it was an agonising few hours before we were able to make contact with anyone we knew. However we eventually learned that Mick and his wife Sana were OK, along with everyone else who'd been at the convention. They'd made it through what must have been a truly terrifying experience. Reading Mick's description of events made me feel drained and grateful that I was sat comfortably at home drinking fancy coffee and eating overpriced biscuits. But along with that came the uncomfortable feeling that usually accompanies news reports from the poorer countries of the world – the pang of guilt I always feel when the media spotlight is shone on the poverty that exists outside our Euro bubble of excess and waste.

More sad news came our way just before we went to print, about the passing of tattoo icon Isobel Varley. The outpouring of love for her also reminded me that one person can touch many lives with good grace and a smile – qualities that are thankfully in abundance within the tattoo community. Those who choose not to celebrate our differences and judge others by them will always miss out on that.

Right now, I'm sitting here with a sense of humble gratitude. The fact is, I'm privileged to be involved with a creative community that has given me so much and continues to give the longer I am in involved with it. Of course it's always easy to lose sight of what really matters as life's stresses and pressures weigh me down, or deadlines begin to feel like they're kicking my arse from pillar to post, but the facts are indisputable. Really, I'm one lucky bastard.

James

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'The greatness of a man is not in how much wealth he acquires, but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively.'

Bob Marley

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NEWS & REVIEWS

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, Total Tattoo Magazine, 111 Furze Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 0AU

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Logos for: Tattoo, Killer Ink, Britannia Hotels, etc.

Blackpool's three-day Tatcon will be on the weekend of August 14th to 16th, bigger and better than ever. It's being held at the impressive Norbreck Castle Grand Entertainment Hotel, which is quite a venue. We have 5 pairs of weekend passes to give away, and all you need to do is email comps@totaltattoo.co.uk with the subject line TATCON, and the first names out of the hat will be the lucky winners. Closing date is **2nd July**, and for terms and conditions see page 5. Check out www.tatconblackpool.co.uk for all the latest news.

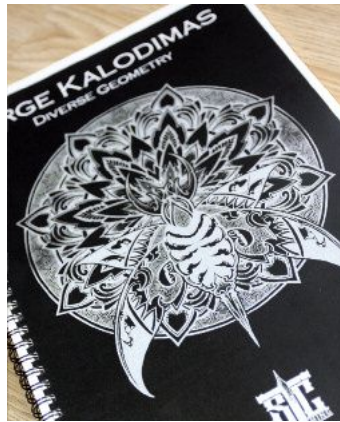
INK AND THE APPLE WATCH



Not long after Apple hit the world with their latest must-have gadget, the Apple Watch, reports began to appear in the media (and information came from Apple themselves) that it was not entirely tattoo-friendly. The Apple Watch features a heart rate monitor, and it's this that can be adversely affected by ink in the skin. But why? Here's the science bit. We see blood as "red" because it reflects red light and absorbs green light. Each time your heart beats, the blood flow in your wrist is momentarily greater, which means the absorption of green light will also be momentarily greater - and this is what the Apple Watch is measuring with its flashing green LED lights. As Apple explain on

their website, "The ink, pattern, and saturation of some tattoos can block light from the sensor, making it difficult to get reliable readings." To overcome this, they suggest connecting your Apple Watch wirelessly to an external heart rate monitor instead. Read the details at support.apple.com/en-gb/HT204666

BOOK REVIEW



**Orge Kalodimas:
Diverse Geometry
A4, Spiralbound, £45
Available from Gentleman's
Tattoo Flash**

This is a sketchbook of designs that Orge Kalodimas has made for his clients, and it's been published as a reference guide for artists who create geometric work. From skulls and abstract butterflies to mandalas and symmetrical filigree, there is a varied mix of beautiful, perfectly executed imagery here. With

astounding attention to detail, Kalodimas demonstrates how external influences such as Tibetan art and organic forms can be successfully incorporated into structural patterns, and how textures can be built using the contrast between dotwork and linear shading. For those who are interested in the composition of meticulous blackwork and geometric tattoos, this is a book that is definitely worth purchasing.

Lizzy Longstaff

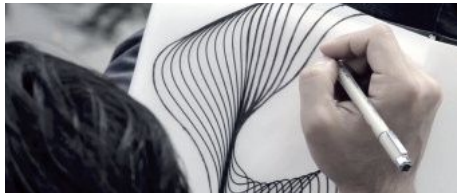


NEPAL EARTHQUAKE APPEAL

Within days of the recent catastrophic earthquake in Nepal, tattoo artists and studios all over the world were responding by organising dedicated fundraising events. We've heard of many UK studios reaching out to help, including Adorn in Shrewsbury, Blue Dragon and Into You in Brighton, Higgins & Co in Hove and Blue Fire in London to name but a few. If you would like us to spread the word about your fundraiser, email editor@totaltattoo.co.uk and we'll try our best to put it on our Facebook page. In Denmark, Phil and Joanna of The Antahkarana, sacred tattoo specialists, have created a tattoo design that can be downloaded free of charge and they suggest that anyone wishing to use it makes a donation to the Nepal earthquake appeal. (The *antahkarana* is a healing symbol, which seems particularly appropriate right now.) For more details of this project and Phil and Joanna's work, check out theantahkarana.wordpress.com The official Disasters Emergency Committee website for donations to the Nepal Earthquake Appeal is www.dec.org.uk/appeals/nepal-earthquake-appeal



DOTS TO LINES



In Total Tattoo Issue 114 we featured innovative and enigmatic artist Chaim Machlev. We also posted the trailer for 'Dots To Lines', a short film about Chaim by Nikita Luennemann and Lukas Muganga. This is now available for the whole world to see, and it's a fascinating insight into Chaim's work and his philosophy of life. There's a lot of short films about tattooists around at the moment, but this one is certainly worth a few minutes of your time. Follow the link and enjoy.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7inP8t_ZsM#t=13

BRISTOL TATTOO CONVENTION 13-14 JUNE

The Bristol Tattoo Convention really is going to be an event for the tattoo enthusiast. There will be screenings of Marcus Kuhn's excellent 'Gypsy Gentleman' films, Jimmie Skuse will be there (in his home town!) with the Bristol Tattoo Club museum, and Dr Matt Lodder will be giving talks on tattoo history. Sailor Jerry rum will also be doing giveaways throughout the weekend, and of course it's all underpinned by some of the best tattoo artists from the UK, Europe and the USA. And all of this for the princely sum of just £10. There is also an after party at The Tunnels with live music from Vince Ray and a BBQ. Check out www.bristoltattooconvention.com



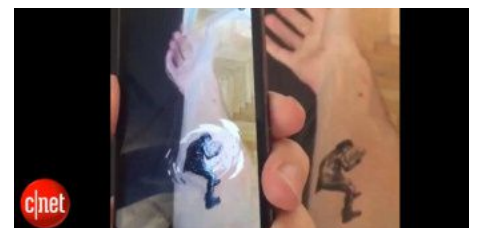
TATTOOLLERY

If you're looking for something special, and you want the design of your jewellery to have real personal meaning, check out Tattoollery (www.tattoollery.co.uk). They make fine tattoo-inspired custom jewellery, and a brief look at their impressive website will set your mind racing with possibilities! Drawings, sketches, tattoo designs, shop logos or any other ideas... they can bring them all to life in gold or silver.



AR BRINGS TATTOO TO LIFE

Any tech geeks and comic book heads out there may well have come across Modern Polaxis. Sutū, its creator, has now combined it with an Augmented Reality companion app. View the pages of the comic through the app on your smartphone and they come alive! But that's not all. Sutū has taken the idea one step further and had one of the characters tattooed on his arm. Since the tattoo design is lifted straight out of the pages of the comic, the AR companion app works on it in just the same way and animates it, with amazing results. Take a look at the video here: www.cnet.com/news/modern-polaxis-animated-tattoo-comic-book-augmented-reality-ar/ and find out more about Sutū and Modern Polaxis here: www.sutueatsflies.com/modern-polaxis/





RIP ISOBEL VARLEY

1937-2015

We were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Isobel Varley and our thoughts are with her family and her many friends. A regular on the convention scene, there was never a dull moment when Isobel was around. She was an amazing character with a wonderful infectious laugh. Crowned the Most Tattooed Female Senior Citizen by the Guinness World Records, she actually came to tattooing relatively late in life. It wasn't until she was in her 40s that the needle first touched her skin, but from that point on there was no holding her back. Always the centre of attention wherever she went, the media loved her and she loved them just as much. Rest in peace, Isobel. You were a true one-off.

- James, Perry, and the Total Tattoo team

Isobel was one of life's true characters. I first met her many years ago when she was getting tattooed by Brent in Dunstable. A bubbly lady, she attended many of the legendary Dunstable Tattoo Expos, always drawing attention from admirers and onlookers (heavily tattooed ladies were a rarity back in those days). With her partner Mac, she travelled to numerous tattoo shows over the years. She was instantly recognisable and always had time to chat or have a photo. She really embraced the tattoo scene and it in turn embraced her. With the passing of Isobel, the tattoo world has really lost one of its most celebrated characters. She will be deeply missed.

- Lal Hardy,
New Wave Tattoo



Iam so proud to have met Isobel, on a number of occasions. She was a great and colourful lady. Isobel came up to Carlisle to the first North Lakes show and we had such a laugh with her and Mac. I know she didn't do many shows in the last year or so, and she will be missed as a friend and a character of tattooing and tattoo people. RIP Isobel.

- Colin Fell,
Mikes Tattoos, organiser of the North Lakes Tattoo Convention

Iam truly saddened to find out that the beautiful, wonderful Isobel Varley has departed this earth. I've known her through the tattoo scene for over 25 years, from the early Dunstable days when she began her tattoo collection. She has always only ever been friendly, warm, smiling, full of life. I find it hard to realise I'll never get to hug her again.

I know that there will be a whole huge community of people who will mourn her passing. Mourn, yes, but only briefly. Remember her colourful, vivacious nature and laughter and celebrate the rainbow of love this woman was. She would want us all to remember her that way I'm sure. Isobel may you fly true on wings of light and colour!

- Theresa Gordon-Wade,
Epona Art and Tattoo



BOOK REVIEW

**Year of the Snake:
Art by Kevin Stress**
A4, Softback
Available from:
Gentleman's Tattoo Flash



Year of the Snake started as a personal project for tattoo artist Kevin Stress and has evolved into one of the most beautiful, informative books we have ever seen. Kevin set himself the challenge of drawing a snake every day for a year, which might sound repetitive to some but has turned out to be far from that. As you flick through the pages you see ever-changing styles, from *Shunga* (Japanese erotic art) to

Sumi-e (a brush painting technique deriving from Zen Buddhism) and much more besides. The book is packed with a huge number of full-page colour images, including rough sketches and line drawings as well as finished paintings and tattoos. There are plenty of hints and tips, and even a fantastic step-by-step guide to drawing a snake which covers every last detail (including the different options for choice of scales). Kevin has decided that the time is right to pass on everything he has learnt from his circle of friends over the years, and this volume is designed to encourage and inspire. As Kevin himself says, "Tracing is for fake people and there isn't room for that nonsense in this industry". A wonderful insight into the life of a dedicated artist, and highly recommended.

Luke Wilson



Bells and Whistles have moved from Exmouth to Exeter. They are now located inside Gentry and Partner, a long established barber shop on Fore Street (a thriving area of specialist independent shops). They specialise in traditional tattoos and the studio still maintains its cosy, welcoming atmosphere. Contact them on info@bellsandwhistlestudio.co.uk



Second Skin in Newmarket, Suffolk, are looking for an experienced all round tattooist to join them. Initially on a part time basis, the lucky candidate should have 3 to 5 years studio experience with no drink or drug issues, a strong portfolio and a sensible down to earth attitude.
Tel 01638 669227
Email a1214@hotmail.co.uk

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 putting Linkys as your subject.



Bristol Tattoo Club
www.youtube.com/watch?v=luRqgcRkeXs



Off the Map Tattoo – Looking for artists
www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2dN4N6203g



The Joker's new Tattoo
www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPJ8b7zwa98



Are Tattoos Vegan?
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qyp4wop1IKM



KATHMANDU

The Nepal Tattoo Convention is one of the most charming tattoo events in the world, and it's a popular meeting point for travelling fans of skin art. But on April 25th, the second day of this year's convention, proceedings came to an abrupt halt as a devastating earthquake shook Kathmandu and the surrounding area. Tattoo journalist Travellin' Mick found himself in the midst of the chaos and sent us this report.



First there is a slight shaking and wobbling. You feel like you've got up too fast after a heavy night out. Is that a train rattling by? A plane flying too low overhead? There are several sudden thuds. Then you realise the ground is moving vertically beneath you. And as you lose your footing the realisation comes. It's an earthquake.

Your first thought is Get Out Of Here. Will the Yak & Yeti Hotel stand these shocks? Or will its venerable old walls just crumble and collapse? What about all those heavy statues and grand chandeliers overhead? The electricity's failed, so everything is dark. You can hear screams. Panic spreads. Everyone's running, falling, tripping over each other, trying to get through the half-open glass doors. I duck into an arched passageway on the first floor, alongside New Zealand-born artist Brent McCown. We crouch in a doorframe (always a relatively safe place in an earthquake because they don't collapse so easily as the surrounding walls). We see plaster falling off the ceilings, pillars toppling and marble stairs cracking right through.

After the first wave of shocks has subsided, we make our way to the outside. We have to tread carefully through the wreckage as the lobby is full of broken glass and twisted metal from the tattoo booths. Tables and chairs are scattered all over the place. And another aftershock could still bring everything down on top of us.

Text and Photos: Travellin' Mick



5.

Safely out in the courtyard, we can begin to get a sense of what has happened to everyone else. Dotwork specialist Marco Galdo from Italy has injured his foot; a Japanese couple and their two month old baby are all safe and sound; someone who fell from a window and was at first thought to have hurt his back turns out to be OK. There are cuts and bruises here and there, but otherwise everybody who was at the convention seems to have escaped pretty much unscathed.

We were
incredibly lucky.

Just a mile down the road
in Kathmandu's historic centre,
Durbar Square has collapsed entirely
and hundreds of people are buried under the
rubble.



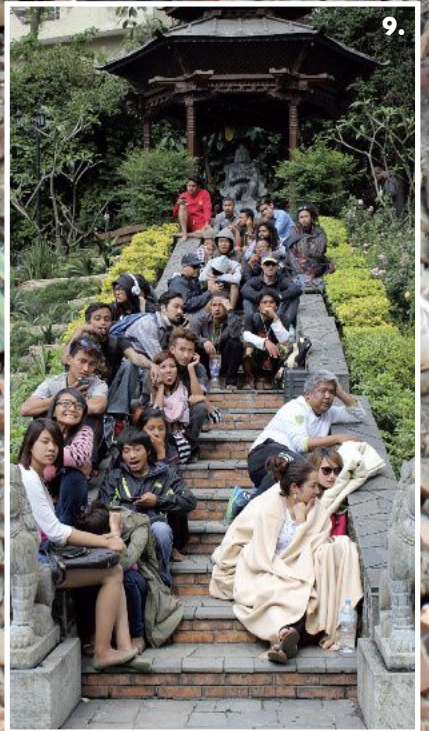
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7.

- 1. cultural show
- 2. by jason tyler grace (usa)
- 3. by colin dale, skin & bone (denmark)
- 4. goldilox
- 5. brent mccown and colin dale
swapping sacred unalome tattoos
- 6. daan, dice tattoo (holland)
- 7. organiser mohan with the lion king crew

8.



9.

8 & 10. by lokesh, devilz tattooz (india)
9. a safe haven: the evacuation zone



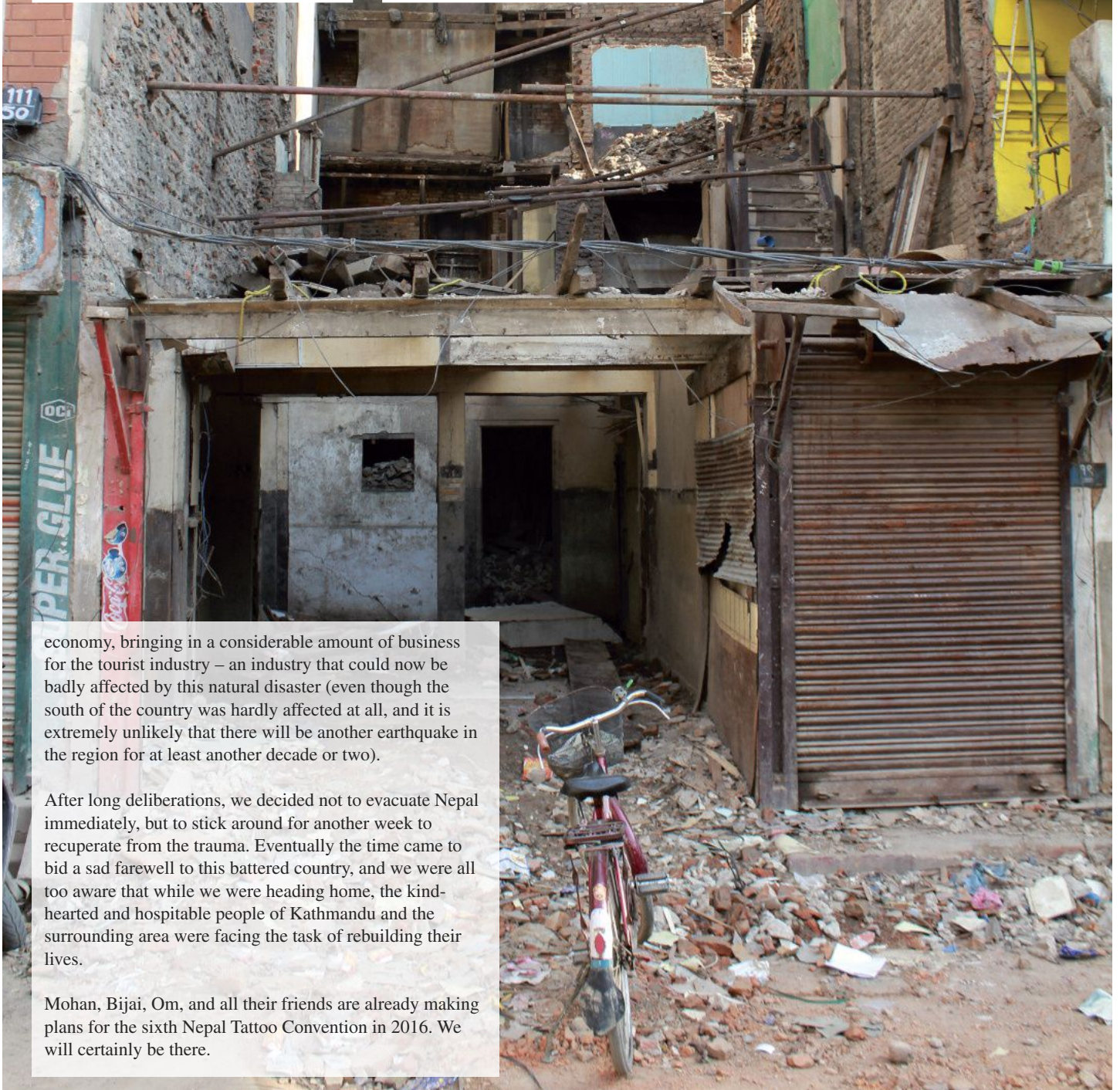
Thousands have been crushed to death in homes that were unable to withstand the quake. Countless avalanches and landslides have been triggered in the Himalayan mountains, killing many more in the outlying villages. This was Nepal's strongest earthquake since 1934, and it caused the entire Kathmandu Valley to shift some three metres to the south, resulting in heartbreaking devastation and loss of life on an immense scale.

On the Friday, the convention hall at the Yak & Yeti had been brimming with tattoo friends from all over the world. Some great ink was already being spread and the evening had seen some good parties. The appointment books for the Saturday were full, and the doors opened early in response to the huge demand. The Nepal Tattoo Convention is now in its fifth year and it's enjoying a real cult following. It began life as a small gathering for the Asian tattoo industry and a bunch of travel-happy artists, but it soon gained enormous momentum. The crowds started coming, and so did the international stars – artists such as Chad Koeplinger, Jondix and Lion King from Taiwan, who love coming here to meet like-minded souls. And everyone likes to support the popular organiser, Mohan, too. The Nepal Tattoo Convention has grown steadily each year and has now become a significant factor in the Nepalese





2015 04 25
Earthquake.



economy, bringing in a considerable amount of business for the tourist industry – an industry that could now be badly affected by this natural disaster (even though the south of the country was hardly affected at all, and it is extremely unlikely that there will be another earthquake in the region for at least another decade or two).

After long deliberations, we decided not to evacuate Nepal immediately, but to stick around for another week to recuperate from the trauma. Eventually the time came to bid a sad farewell to this battered country, and we were all too aware that while we were heading home, the kind-hearted and hospitable people of Kathmandu and the surrounding area were facing the task of rebuilding their lives.

Mohan, Bijai, Om, and all their friends are already making plans for the sixth Nepal Tattoo Convention in 2016. We will certainly be there.



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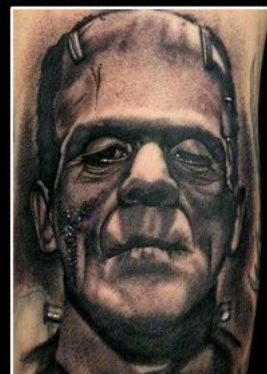
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JONAS JACOB

PEDERSEN

CROOKED MOON



jacob



jonas



Chalk and cheese is the only way to describe the Pedersen brothers. They both tattoo (rather well, as it happens!) and they co-own Crooked Moon in Helsingborg, but the similarities end there. Their contrasting styles of work reflect their wildly different, yet perfectly complementary, personalities.

Jacob's graphic realism is precise and organised, but with a strong creative edge. It's not tethered to exact representation; it allows itself the freedom to roam. He requires little customer input, except perhaps a few key words. A long email packed with personal meaning is not required.

Likewise, Jonas's psychedelic traditionalism is an extension of the man himself. When you meet and talk with him, you realise it couldn't be any other way. Of course his style has developed over the years, and will continue to evolve, but this is an artist with absolutely no preconceived agenda. I enjoyed spending time with the brothers and getting to know them beyond a nod and a smile. It kind of seemed right to interview them separately, so first I sat down with Jacob...

Jacob...

"Both our parents are Danish, but moved to Sweden in 1975," Jacob tells me. "I was born the next year. Growing up, I think I was a little bit lonely. All my classmates could speak perfect Swedish of course, but I was struggling to get into the language because my parents had

been told they shouldn't teach me Swedish as well as Danish in case I ended up with a strange mix of the two. So at kindergarten I was almost constantly drawing and this continued as I was growing up. My grandfather did oil painting, and I was always in his studio helping him out, mixing his colours. Then as I got older I stopped drawing and got

jonas

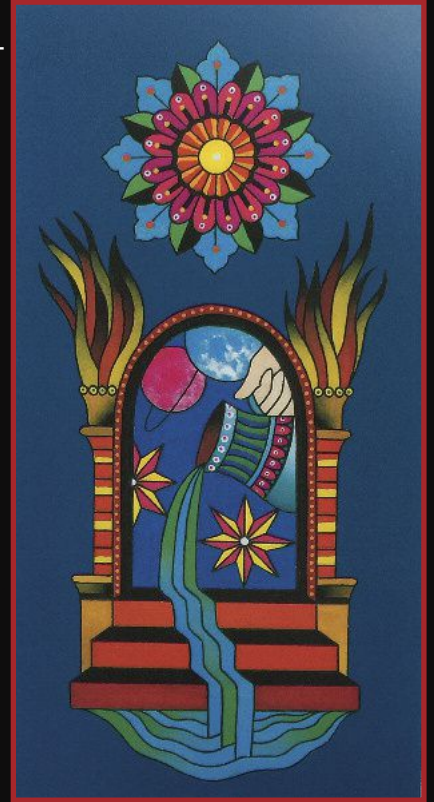




heavily into film making. I wanted to be a director, so I started making short movies and did some photography. I became more interested in capturing reality. I won a couple of awards at film festivals but of course it did not pay, so I ended up working in restaurants to make ends meet, doing long shifts waiting tables and working in bars. I started to draw some comic art but the business was eating me up and it seemed like I had no time for anything else."



"I had been doing the odd tattoo design for friends now and then," Jacob continues. "and the studio that they went to asked if I was interested in getting a portfolio together and showing it to them. So I did. Three months later I quit my day job and started working at Evil Twins tattoo shop. The shop owner was teaching me, but everything I learned came from Johan Finné, who tattoos out of that shop. I have never met anybody so devoted to technique. He is amazing."



"At that point I really just wanted to be able to make some kind of living out of my art. I was working in the established genres, because that is what was making me money. For my first four years of tattooing I didn't produce a single piece of work that came out of my own head. My apprenticeship was very strict. It was for three years. Everything had to be signed off before I could move on – lines, shading, dragons, script... everything you would need on a every day basis – and there was a lot of drawing. I would have to draw at home every night, then in the morning too, and bring my drawings into into the studio and explain to the owner how I would tattoo them. I really began to question whether this was something I could do for the rest of my life. I felt like there must be something else."

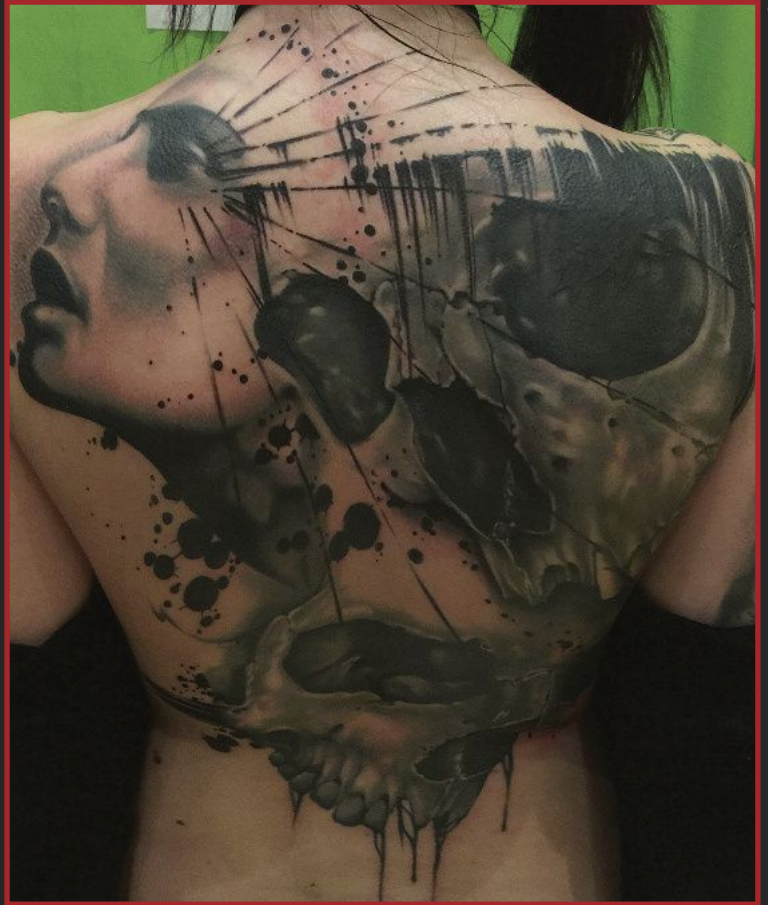
"It was only when I went to my first international convention and talked with Lionel Fahy from Out of Step Tattoo in France, and Peter Bobek and Musa from Tribo Tattoo in Prague, that I saw something different. A year later Lionel took me on a trip through Belgium, France and the Czech Republic. We went to a lot of cool studios and I met artists who worked differently, in a more graphic style. It blew my mind what these people were doing on other people's bodies – and the fact that people *wanted* this kind of work. That's when I started trying to develop my own style. It's taken me a long time to reach where I am at today. Of course another big influence has been Volko and Simone of Buena Vista Tattoo Club. Volko has taught me so much. But I am also a bit afraid of them! I make a point of not looking at any of their work on the internet because I know I will be totally influenced by what I see."



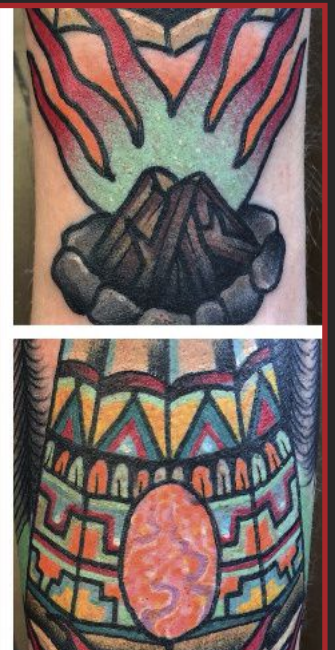
jones

jacob





"Crooked Moon has been open for around three and a half years now. We've got a good thing here, but sometimes I wish I didn't have the responsibility of the shop, so that I could travel and do more guest spots. But at the same time it's nice to have your own home base where everything is the way you want it. When we first opened Crooked Moon we had a lot of luck. We found a perfect location, and an assistant for the shop who helped us out a great deal at the start. Opening our own studio together seemed like the only option for us at the time. Jonas had started apprenticing at Evil Twins about a year and a half after me, but - unlike me - when he finished his apprenticeship he wasn't happy doing all the stuff that came through the door. He wanted to do his traditional and neo-traditional thing. He and the owner just weren't getting on at all, and everything just started to crack and fall apart. It was a really difficult time. In the end, we just had to leave and open our our place."



jacob



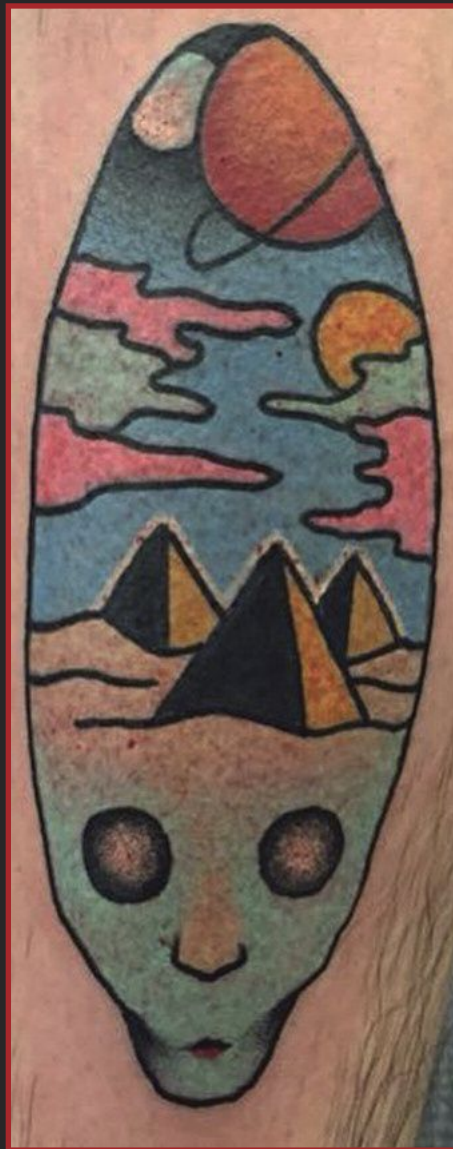
"We know each other incredible well, of course. We know each other's strengths and weaknesses. I take care of the finances and Jonas does the advertising and social media. Sometimes we get fed up with each other. We do still have fights, but the biggest ones were when we were working at the other studio. The very worst time in our relationship was when I'd finished my apprenticeship and Jonas was still doing his. Until then we'd both been doing the shitty jobs," Jacob says with a wry smile, "but suddenly he had to do them on his own."

And what of the future? Jacob tells me he's getting into screen printing, which makes perfect sense as his style just cries out to be executed in that medium. He is currently building a print shop in a barn that he owns, and the whole project will be called Crooked Prints. Both brothers will be contributing to it, but it's predominantly Jacob's venture. As with anything these brothers do, I can't imagine it being anything other than a creative storm!

jonas



jacob



jonas

jonas

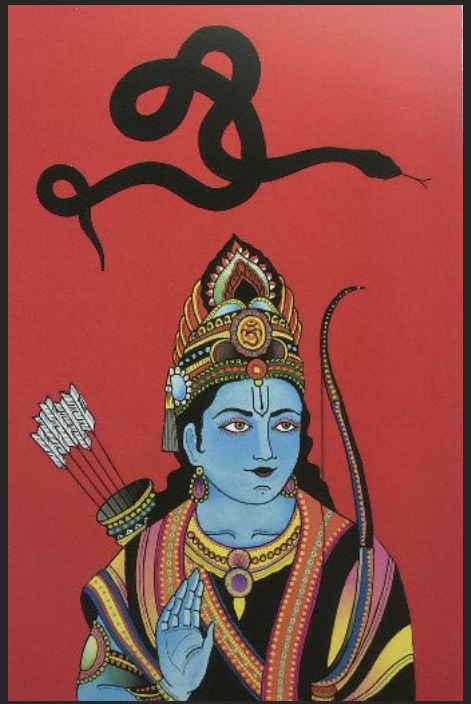




Jonas...

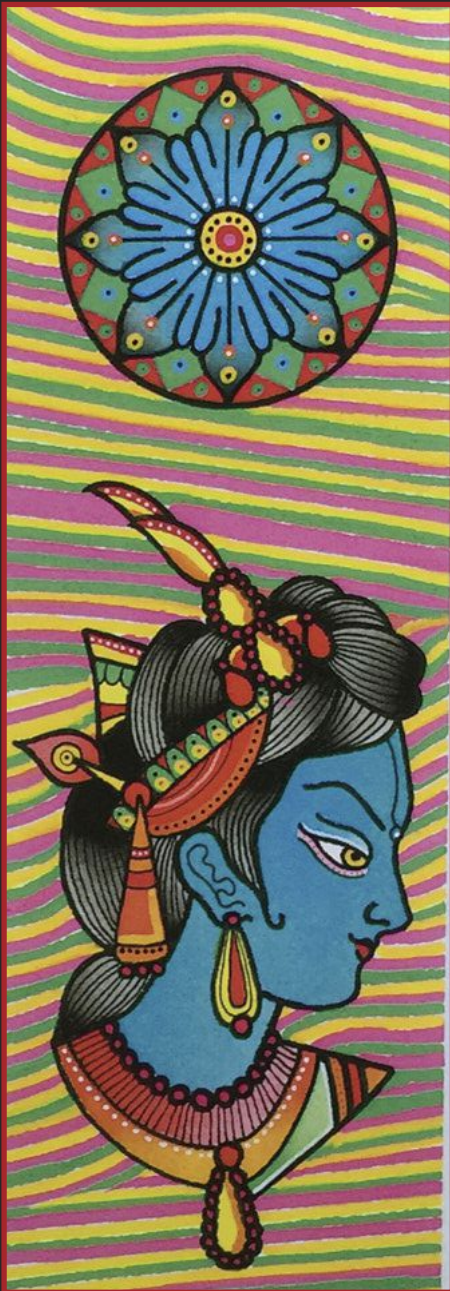
"First of all I would like to say I never had any plans to become a tattooer," Jonas states at the beginning of our conversation. "I never drew when I was little. From the age of twelve I played in punk and hardcore bands and I was totally music orientated as I was growing up. We had a fantastic youth centre in the area; as soon as you got there they put an electric guitar in your hands. I still play as much music today as I tattoo."

"Jacob started tattooing around one and a half years before me. When he started to tattoo humans, I was first in line. So I'm covered in all this ugly shit," Jonas tells me, laughing out loud. "I was unemployed at the time and hung around the shop. The boss probably knew I wanted to tattoo as well, but I didn't dare ask him. So he ended up asking me. I was super honest with him and told him I'd never drawn in my life. Maybe he thought 'the apple doesn't fall far from the tree' and if Jacob had a talent then I might have one too. He told me to take a month, and draw a rose, a skull, and a tribal and really try to get them right. I wish I still had those drawings because I'm pretty sure they were super shitty, but he could see that that I had tried and he thought he could teach me, so he said 'let's give it six months and see what happens'. That was seven years ago, and since that day I have drawn every night. So I guess it worked out OK. Nobody at the shop was doing traditional at that point, and it was what I was into, so that probably didn't hurt either."

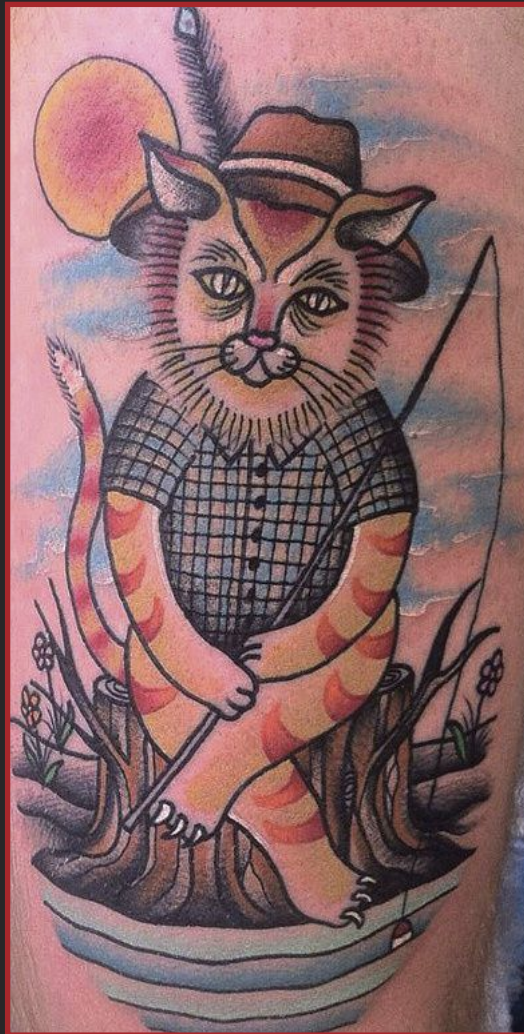


"At first I was doing all the little stuff that came in through the door. Kids starting off nowadays don't do that kind of thing, which I think is sad. You really need to do that stuff. I know that my kind of style won't be popular for ever, so I need to be able to go back to doing basic bread and butter tattooing. Even though it's basic that doesn't mean it's easy. It's super fucking hard to do a perfect Times New Roman text. I was guest spotting at some place - I can't remember where now - and I had nobody booked in one day, so I was just doing walk-ins. A girl came in and wanted a tiny five-point star on her wrist... I never sweated so much! It was horrible."

jones



jacob



jones



jacob



jacob



"I was doing a lot of re-draws of the old masters – Sailor Jerry, Doc King, Amund Dietzel, and so on – but I just felt there were so many guys who were doing perfect versions of that kind of thing. So I started doing a girl's face, with flowers in her hair, and suddenly there were mushrooms growing out of her throat, or something... I'm not sure when that happened though. My timeline is a bit blurry. It feels like I've been tattooing for just three years, not seven! All I know is I'm trying to do more and more strange, psychedelic work. I love psychedelic music. I listen to it when I draw. And I do other psychedelic stuff too. It all feeds in. Put it like this, there are many ways to open up your mind and I'm not afraid to use them... but not when I'm tattooing of course!"



jacob



jonas



"When Jacob and I left the old shop, we decided to stick together. I don't think we could ever split up and go to work in different shops. We have definitely had our battles, though. The worst of them took place when we were apprentices. But I could never see myself not working with my brother. I think we inspire each other, even though our styles are so different. Every day we critique each other's work and ask for advice, and that's important for both of us. We both want to evolve, and we know talking to each other about our work will help us do that. As brothers there is total honesty with no ego."

jonas



jonas



jacob



"Jacob runs the shop, because I'm super busy with music as well. He knows and respects that, and I think that's beautiful. I could not have that kind of relationship if I was working in another shop. I might go touring for a month with the band [Black Temple, formerly known as Odyssey] and be completely focused on my music for that period of time, but when I get home I am super inspired to tattoo. My fingers almost ache to hold a tattoo machine! And it works the other way round as well. It's that kind of balance. I will make music for a few hours in my studio in town, then go home and draw. Both of them fuel me, and they each give the other perspective. I'm not sure if I could do one without the other."

...which, in many ways, seems a good way to describe the Pedersen brothers' own very special relationship too.

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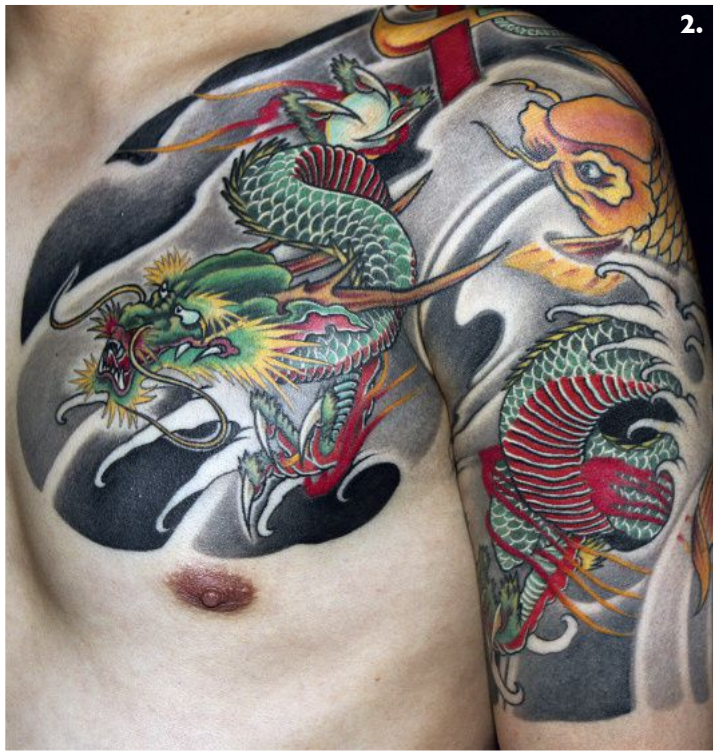
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TAIWAN TATTOO CONVENTION

Spectacular, glamorous and full of beautiful people, the Taiwan Tattoo Convention in Kaohsiung is probably the largest event of its kind in Asia. A new city centre venue made it even more attractive this year, and talented organiser A-Tai and his Top Tattoo team made it all run smoothly. Taiwan isn't just about cheap mass-produced goods and a long-running territorial dispute with China (its much larger neighbour). It's about excellent food, world-beating tech expertise, and extreme hospitality – as anyone visiting this convention soon found out!

Taiwanese artists have a reputation for hard work and enthusiastic self-promotion. They started coming to the attention of the international scene about a decade ago, displaying their considerable skills at tattoo conventions worldwide. Crews like Night Action Tattoo, East Tattoo, Horihui, Hwakwe, Diau Farn and Lion King usually bring several artists and arrive with an entire entourage of fully tattooed customers in tow, who dutifully line up in front of the booth to show off what their masters are able to do. And these guys *always* take home considerable numbers of prestigious trophies.

It was a similar scenario at the Kaohsiung convention. To win a contest here is the highest honour Taiwanese artists can achieve on their home turf, so most tattooists in the country tend to prepare their best work for

this one weekend in April. Backpieces, sleeves and entire bodysuits are timed just right to be finished a few weeks before the event, then touched up all over again ready to be revealed on stage at the crucial moment.

There are no less than twenty two different competition categories here, and everything happens with military precision. It's an amazing sight to see a parade of several dozen mind-blowing backpieces on the stage at the same time. The venerable judges take their work very seriously and browse along the full line-up of finalists in order to decide who will walk away with one of the coveted trophies. And in between competitions, the crowds enjoy a highly professional entertainment programme of numerous girl bands and dance troupes, who all happily pose for selfies and group photos.



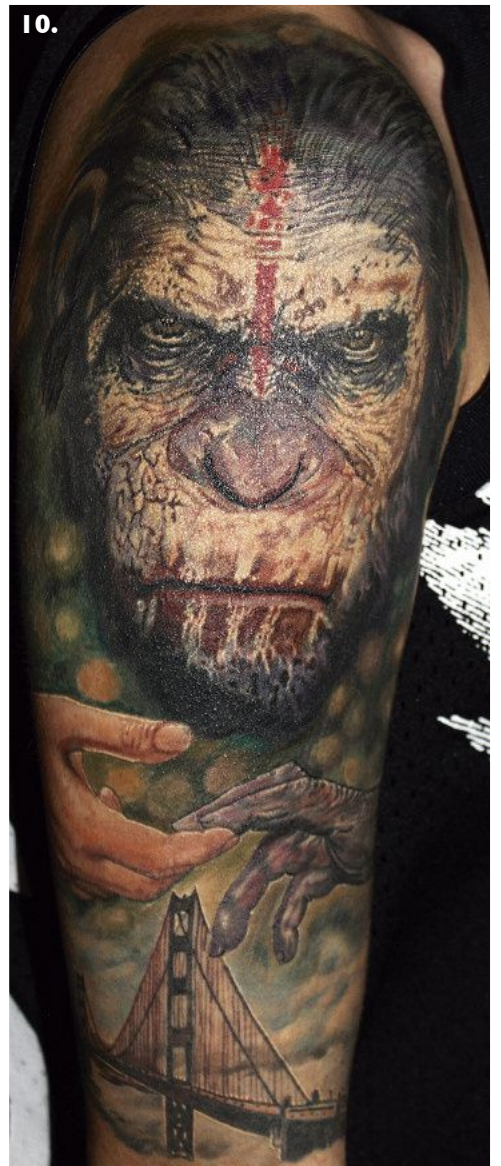
**1 & 2. by a-tai, top tattoo (taiwan)
3. the venue**



More and more international star tattooists are discovering the attractiveness of Taiwan's booming tattoo market. This year, even Bob Tyrrell made it here. Tommy Lee Wendtner (who used to live in Taiwan) and Jess Yen of My Tattoo in California (who emigrated from Taiwan many years ago) are treated like local heroes and warmly greeted by old friends wherever they go. And there were also about two dozen Japanese guest artists, with Souryou Kazuyoshi, the son of tattoo legend Horiyoshi III, probably the most prominent among them.

Year by year, increasing numbers of foreign tattoo fans and collectors are flying in for the Taiwan Tattoo Convention. They simply want to be part of a truly great show – to look around, soak up the exotic atmosphere and maybe even get some ink done, which is not a bad idea at all!





4. horihui tattoo
 5-7. by hwakwe tattoo (taiwan)
 8. by jin tattoo (taiwan)
 9. by lain, endless tattoo (taiwan)
 10. by dean ink (taiwan)
 11. by tommy lee wendtner,
 monsters under my bed (germany)
 12 & 13. by vj tattoo (taiwan)



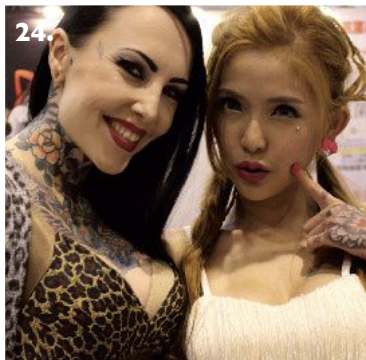


14. by sam kuok (malaysia)
15. by michael, hk ink
16. by zake ink (taiwan)
17. by sam kuok (malaysia)
18. bob tyrrell tattooing katsuta, organiser of the tokyo convention
19. by endless tattoo (taiwan)





20. by bond chan, horihui tattoo (taiwan)
 21. artist unknown
 22. by ji zhi diao (taiwan)
 23. by bond chan, horihui tattoo (taiwan)
 24. poster pin-ups
 25. by nic prettyink (hong kong)





26-28. by kim wu, top tattoo (taiwan)
29. by yang fu zen (taiwan)
30. by cheong ho (korea)





31. by horihui (taiwan)
32 & 33. by lynn lin (taiwan)
34. artist unknown
35. by allan, endless tattoo (taiwan)
36. by sam kuok (malaysia)

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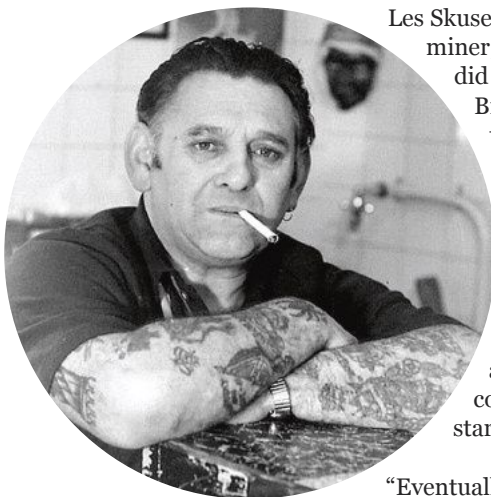
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Some names and characters stand out in the history of tattooing, but few have had as big an influence as the three generations of the Skuse family – and in particular Les Skuse, grandfather of British tattooing and founder of the legendary Bristol Tattoo Club. I met up with his grandson Jimmie Skuse to hear the story of one of tattooing's most famous dynasties.

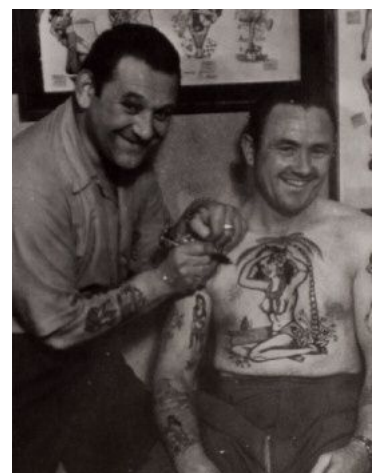
BRISTOL TATTOO CLUB

PART 1: THE LES SKUSE STORY

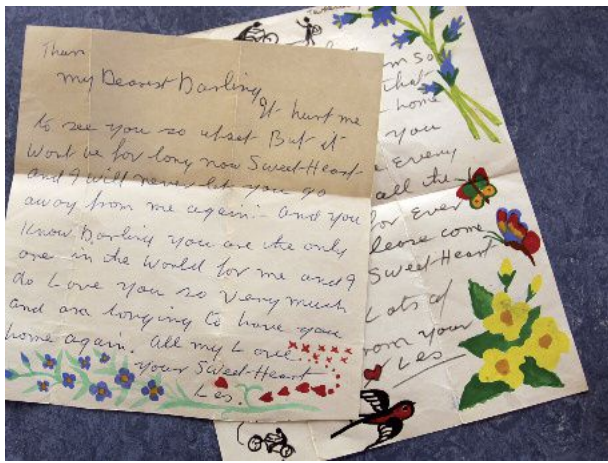


Les Skuse was born in 1912 just outside Bristol, in Yate. His father was a coal miner, and that's also how young Les started his working life. But where did his interest in tattoos come from? "One day my granddad was in Bristol city centre and he bumped into a couple of sailors with tattoos," Jimmie tells me. "He was amazed just looking at them, and he asked the sailors where they got them from, and they said 'We're going there now. Why don't you come along?' It was Joe Hartley's shop. The sailors went in, and at first my granddad just looked in at the window, then he plucked up the courage to go in too. He had a good look around, but then he legged it in case he was asked if he was having a tattoo! The following weekend he cycled all the way from Kendleshire to have another look, and Joe Hartley shouts at him 'Are you getting a tattoo this time or just hiding from the cold?' So he got his first tattoo, a little bluebird, and after that he started going regularly."

"Eventually my granddad showed Joe some of his drawings," Jimmie continues, "and that led to him helping out in the shop, sweeping up and mixing colours. If it was a quiet day Joe would pop down the pub and he would be left to watch the shop. Then if a customer came in, he would run down and let Joe know. One day he was watching the shop for Joe and some young lads he knew came in and asked if he was the tattooist there. 'Yeah, I work here now', replied my granddad. And so he tattooed them. Halfway through, Joe returned, saw what was going on, inspected the work and said, 'Right, I'll have the money'. With a few pointers from Joe, that's how Les Skuse started tattooing".



Text: Perry
Photos and memorabilia
courtesy Jimmie Skuse



Illustrated letters from Les to his future wife



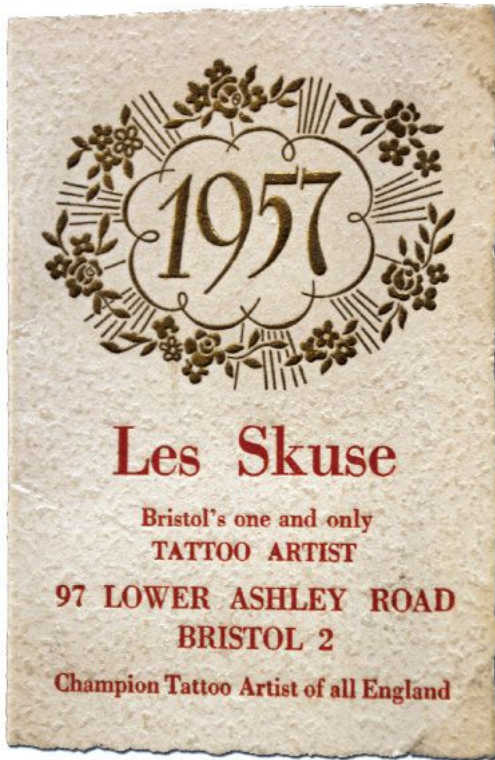
Original Les Skuse letterhead

Young Les split his time between the coal mine and Joe Hartley's. Cycling to the tattoo shop one day, he came across a couple of gypsy caravans in the pub car park, and living in one of them was Amdine, the girl who would eventually become his wife. She was a member of the Butler family, who used travel between Bristol and Tewkesbury hop-picking and pea-picking.

Les would sometimes cycle all the way to Tewkesbury on a Friday night (some 50 miles!) to sleep under the vardo and go courting.

Les worked at Joe Hartley's until 1939, when Joe closed the shop and moved his busy supply company to his house. With the outbreak of war, Les was conscripted to work in the Royal Artillery and Joe set him up with a travelling kit so he could continue tattooing while he was away. Jimmie describes how Les would take the batteries out of the artillery guns to run his tattoo machine, "and more often than not they would be flat when he put them back!" Joe continued to supply ink and equipment to the

Les Skuse's business card



likes of George Burchett and the Rhodes family, and his machines were reputed to be far superior to many brands being made even twenty or thirty years later. He died in 1945.

After the war Les returned to Bristol. In 1947 he opened his first tattoo shop, at 95 Lower Ashley Road. However, the immediate post-war years were a time of austerity and tattooing was not a lucrative profession. So the shop sold garden ornaments too, which Les used to make with his young sons, Billy and Danny. This was a sideline that would provide a useful income for the family when Les was away travelling.



In the 1950s there were plenty of tattooists but very few professional tattoo studios. As Jimmie explains, "In those days tattooing was really only a hobby. People used to tattoo in their front rooms - the parlour, the best room that was only used on Sundays - and that's the reason they're called 'tattoo parlours'. You wouldn't have flash on the walls. You would have designs in a book, hand-drawn and painted, for your customers to choose from. It wasn't until much later that shops started putting designs on their walls, and even then everything would still be hand done. When I started in 1975, my father Danny would draw the designs and I would do all the colouring."



Jimmie peppers our conversation with fascinating historical insights. "Before the First World War," he tells me, "tattooing was an upper class thing. It was royalty and the rich who would have been tattooed. But during the First World War, with so many soldiers not making it

home, wives would get a tattoo of their husband's name or army crest. And men would get their sweethearts' names tattooed, or something that would identify them if they were killed or injured. Then after the First World War tattooing became more of a working class thing."

So what made Les such an important figure in the story of tattooing? "He was a prolific collector of tattoo memorabilia," Jimmie tells me, "and he was incredibly well organised. He had a news agency send him any snippet of news with the word 'tattoo' in it and he catalogued it all. In the 1970s he had a plan to start a museum above the shop." Jimmie remembers Les as



a likeable, funny character who was always telling jokes. People would come into his shop just to hang out and listen to his stories. "It was his magnetic personality that led to the success of the shop and set Bristol apart as the tattooing capital of the world. All the great artists of the day would beat a path to his door. Al Schiffley, Huck Spalding, Tattoo Peter, Ron Ackers, George Bone and many, many more would come to visit my grandfather, just to get the knowledge."

Les formed the legendary Bristol Tattoo Club in 1953. He wanted to introduce the world to tattooing as an art form and promote all that was good about it. As Jimmie explains, "The club was set up for tattooists and tattoo fans alike. Some of the members weren't even tattooed. They just loved tattoos. And they enjoyed the social side, hanging out with my granddad. Every Wednesday night he would have a meeting at the shop, and people would just turn up. That's how the community really began to grow. People would travel from all over the world to attend. There was an annual meeting with a guest of honour – people like Huck Spalding, Milton Zeis, Pam Nash. I suppose these were really the first ever tattoo conventions. You had tattooists, customers and fans... just no bands or burlesque!"



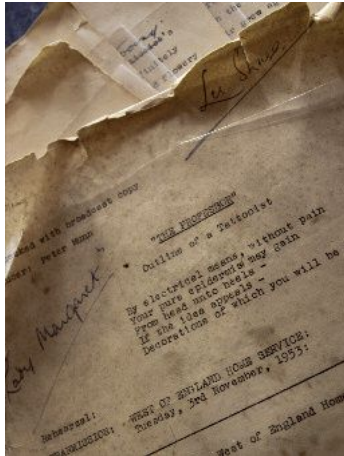
News clipping of Les winning Champion Tattoo Artist of All England



Certificates and photos of BTC members Ivor Hollier and wife Marion Tyler

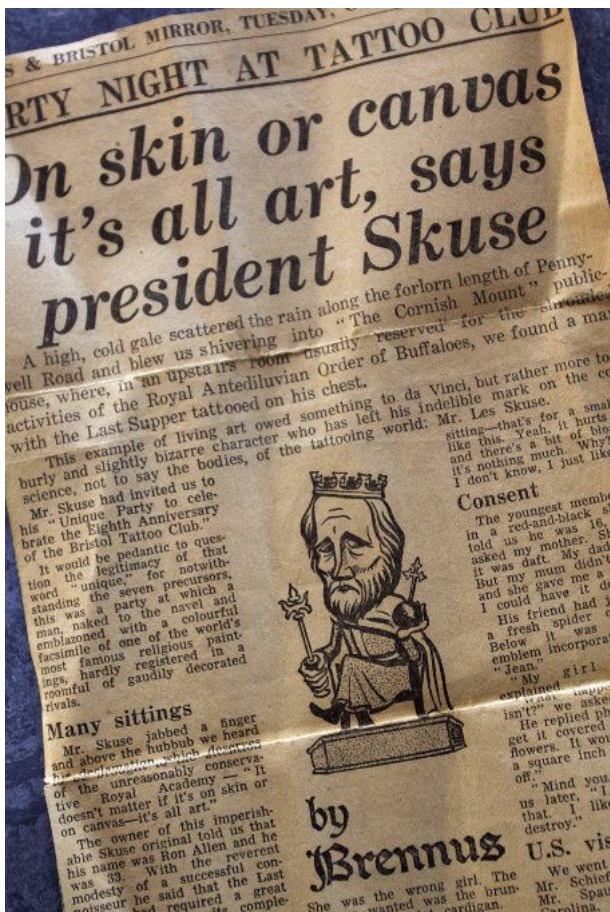


Script for radio play acted by Les and broadcast in 1953



Jimmy tells me that in 1955 Al Schiffley was the Bristol Tattoo Club's guest of honour, en route to visiting Cash Cooper at his London Tattoo Society. "Cash put on a competition to find the Champion Tattooist of All England. Each artist would bring along some customers to show off their tattoos and a London newspaper would judge who was best. My granddad was crowned the winner, with Jessie Knight in second place. And then in 1956 my granddad flew to Ohio in America to attend the first ever US tattoo gathering as a guest of Al Schiffley."

When Les returned from America he brought with him new influences from the likes of Paul Rogers and Huck Spalding, who used big bold lines full of bright colours. Jimmie tells me, "Before that, all UK artists were using single needle lines. That's why old flash looks so scratchy – because that's how the tattoo would look. What my granddad learnt from that trip was to simplify the designs and use needle clusters to get thicker, bolder lines that made the tattoos really jump out."



Mrs Amdine Skuse (Les's wife) (L) and Jessie Knight from Aldershot (R)

Jimmie feels that one of the most influential people – someone who had a major impact on the development of the Bristol Tattoo Club and tattooing in general – was amateur photographer (and unsung hero) Harold Smart. "He took all those famous black and white pictures of the early club members. My granddad would choose from the contact sheet and get three copies of this one, five of that one, which he would then send to Huck Spalding, Doc Forbes, and Milton Zeis. And that was what helped to establish both him and Harold on the global stage. I don't think my granddad would have considered himself famous or important. It was just that Harold Smart came along and helped him become well known."

Jimmie continues, "As time went on, because of all the various newspaper articles and his connections around the world, my granddad became a bit of a spokesperson for tattooing. And as the Bristol Tattoo Club got bigger, lots of people all over the world wanted to join. It was one of the few places you could ask a question or learn about tattooing, because it was all so top secret in those days."

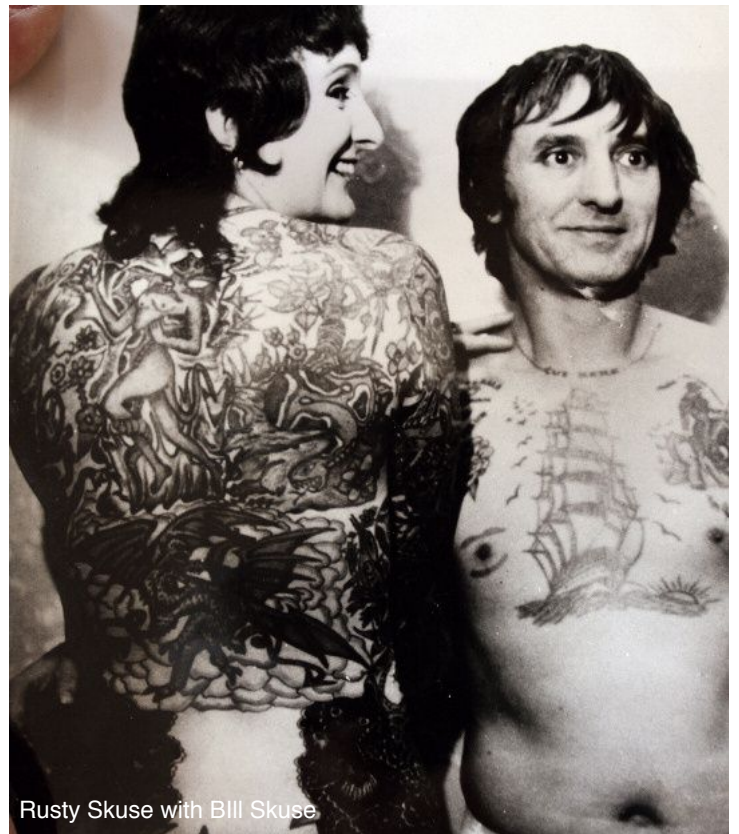
Les certainly put Bristol firmly on the tattoo map. It became a 'Mecca' for tattooists and tattoo fans alike. It seemed that everyone wanted to join the Bristol Tattoo Club and be a part of this unique slice of history in the making. "My granddad basically became the king of tattooing," says Jimmie. "Some people say it was Burchett who was king, but for me, Burchett catered for a different class, in a different time. My granddad has had a greater influence on tattooing today than any other tattooist of that time. He never wanted to be a supplier or a distributor and he turned down lots of lucrative offers. He was more interested in developing the art and changing people's perceptions of tattooing."



Original sketchbooks before flash sheets



Original heart design by Les and tattooed on his own chest



Rusty Skuse with Bill Skuse



Les's love of the industry was paramount. "He would often tattoo for next to nothing just because he loved it," recalls Jimmie. "But nobody ever made any money back then. All the old boys – who had names like The Professor, The Doctor, The Baron – would have two or three other jobs to support the family. During the 50s and 60s my granddad worked for the Post Office. He'd go early in the morning and sort the post, then come home around midday, open the shop about one o'clock, and tattoo through to ten or eleven at night. Tattooing did have a kind of magic. His shop was like a forbidden kingdom full of stuffed animals and skulls." And it was one of these stuffed animals that

inspired the Bristol Tattoo Club's iconic bat emblem. "My dad, Danny, was doing an animal project at school and he'd taken my granddad's stuffed bat to have on display in the classroom. So my granddad had to ask the school if they'd mind swapping it for the stuffed squirrel so that he could draw the bat. Otherwise the club would have had a stuffed squirrel for its emblem."



By the 1970s the popularity of the Bristol Tattoo Club had begun to wane. The original hardcore members were getting older and many had moved on. Marion Holliers (whose husband Ivor had one of Les's three 'fox-and-hounds' scenes in which the tail of the fox can be seen being chased up the backside of the wearer) was the new tattooed pin-up on the scene, and Tony Aldham was now taking the photographs. Les continued to tattoo until '71 or '72, but he was in poor health. He was invited to participate in the Camden Arts Festival and took along some paintings, drawings and human canvases that generated a lot of interest. Peter Blake (creator of the famous Beatles Sergeant Pepper album cover) purchased some of his work, and it was shown on television on The South Bank Show. The grandfather of British tattooing was making an impact right up to the end of his life.



Les Skuse died of lung cancer in 1973. A few days before his death he told his son Danny to "Get some cards printed with Les Skuse Jr and keep the name alive." The Bristol Tattoo Club survives to this day, and although it was less active during the Danny Skuse years, Jimmie's interest in preserving the knowledge has seen a resurgence in interest all around the world and membership is once again growing.



Replica machines available from www.bristoltattooclub.co.uk



Les at Camden Arts Festival 1972

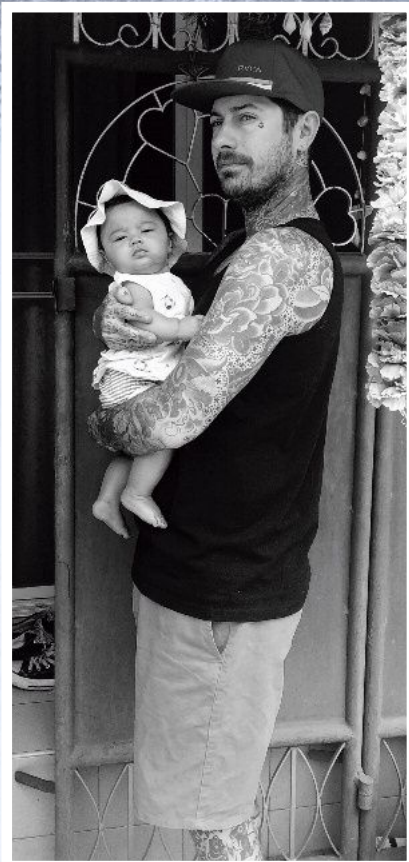


Les with son Danny

Jimmy brings the story to a close. "My granddad Les had five children. Four boys and a girl. Two of the boys followed him into tattooing – my uncle Bill and my dad Danny. Les was a larger-than-life character. He was the captain of the ship and everyone wanted to talk to him. Then after he passed on, everyone wanted to talk to my dad Danny and he became the captain. Now that my dad has passed, people want to talk to me. I have a saying, 'I walk in taller men's shadows'. And I think we all still have a duty to keep educating the world about tattooing as an art form."

Next Month we will be bringing you Part 2 of the Skuse story, in which we focus on Les's sons Danny and Bill, and his wife Rusty. And in Part 3, Jimmie talks about the Bristol Tattoo Club today.

Anyone interested in joining the Bristol Tattoo Club should contact Jimmie through the website at www.bristoltattooclub.co.uk



Adrian Willard



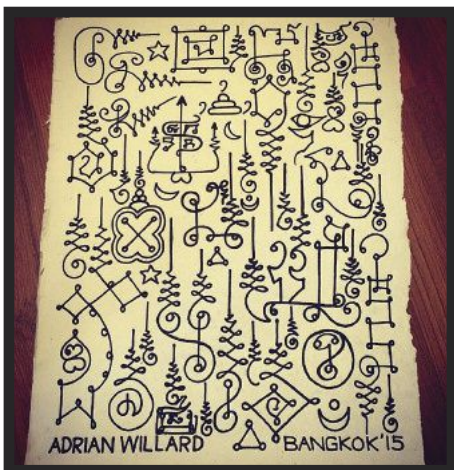
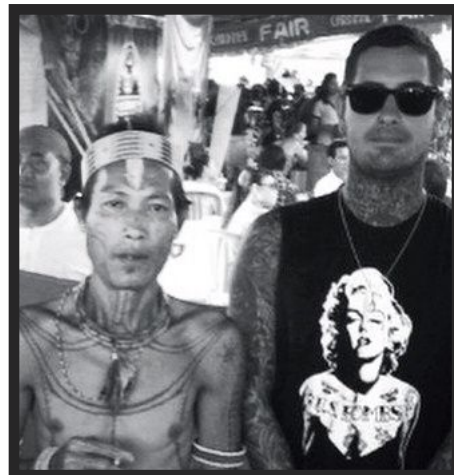
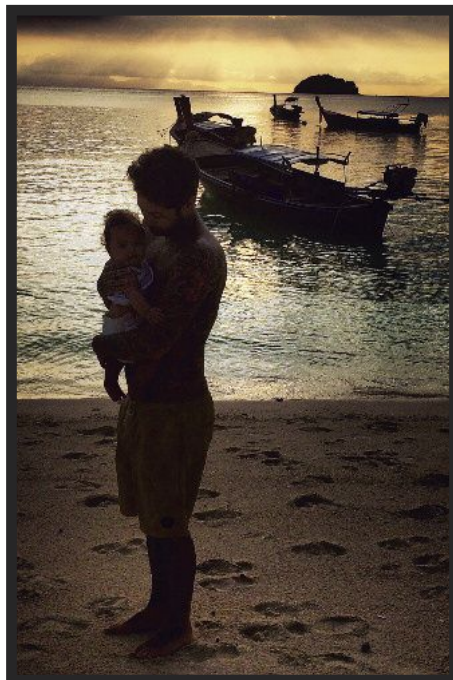
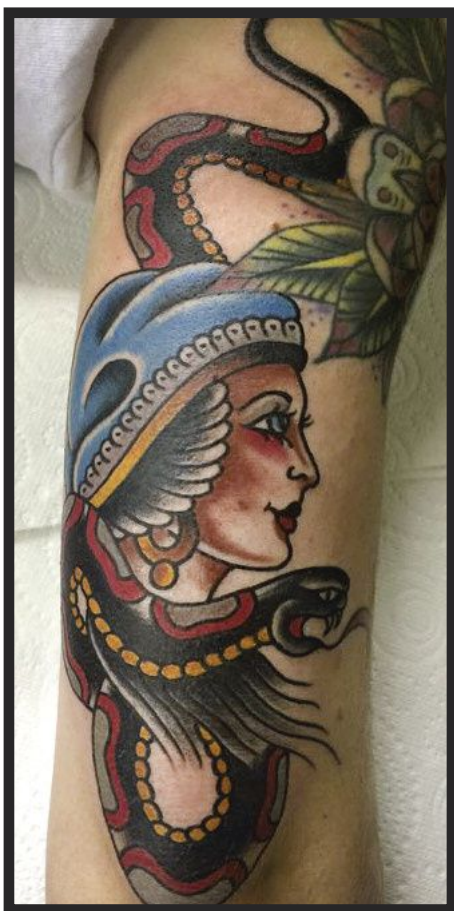
Based at Phil Kyle's Magnum Opus in Brighton, Adrian Willard has always been a go-to guy for cool traditional work. He's super chilled and fun to hang out with, and his laid back approach to life is infectious. We'd been talking about doing a proper interview for a while, and the recent arrival of his little baby daughter made it seem like the perfect time to get something down for the record. He told us about why he is so drawn to traditional tattoos, why surfing and skateboarding are so important to him, and how Bali has become like a second home.

So how did it all begin? "I guess it's the same for most people in this industry," he tells me, "but I've always been into art, even when I was a little kid. I went to art college and did graphic design for a couple of years, but I flunked out. I was too busy skateboarding, surfing and partying! It was around that time that I got interested in tattoos. I started to draw tattoo flash and I used that as my way in, just going round all the shops in Plymouth trying to flog my sketchy little designs." As you might imagine, young Willard wasn't always given the warmest of welcomes. "Doc Price pretty much threw me out of his shop," he recalls, "though we are friends now. That was thirteen years ago, and so much has changed. There were maybe five shops in town back then, but now there's more like forty five. It was unusual for a young guy to be trying to get in on the scene. One shop – a good one – said they would take me on, but not until the next year. A dodgy shop said I could start straight away. I was desperate to tattoo, so I took the job."

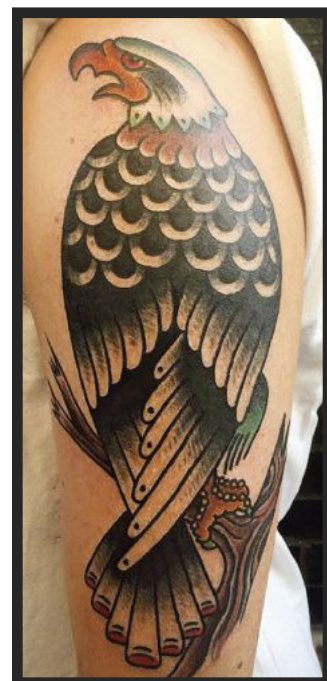
"I knew I wanted to make a living doing art, but graphic design wasn't for me because I'm not into computers. I wanted to do handmade art, something more traditional. Tattooing just appealed to me. It seemed like a free and easy lifestyle, just doing what you want, and of course there was the rebel aspect of it too. But that's completely gone now. Tattooing's so mainstream – which in a way is good, but there's so much competition, so many shops. Here in Brighton I think there's been five opened since the New Year! There must be at least forty shops in town now. You have to feel the effect of that."



So how did Adrian end up in Brighton? "I used to talk to Phil Kyle on Myspace back in the day about tattoos and whatnot," he tells me, "so I knew he was opening a shop in Brighton. I didn't think he'd take me on, but if you don't ask you don't get... and he said 'Fuck Yes' straight away. He was a hero of mine, and this was really my big break. Magnum Opus opened in late 2007 and I have been here ever since. Working with Phil has really helped me get to the next level with my tattooing. His use of colours, and the speed with which he can put on a tattoo, was a revelation to me. And being at Magnum Opus has opened a lot of doors in terms of guest spots and conventions. I've had so many good times with Phil. He's one of the nicest guys around."



Adrian has never deviated from his love of the traditional style. For him, it's the epitome of what tattooing should be, and it's what got him hooked in the first place. "It just has classic appeal. The look of it, everything about it. The way it ages, it's always going to look like a great tattoo. And I find it easy to do. I like being able to sit down and in one or two hours end up with a nice, clean, readable design. I'm pretty lazy, so it's good not having to draw too much. I can do most of my drawing in the morning before the client comes in. That works for me. I don't draw at night or at weekends because I want to be with my friends and family." Adrian also has a massive appreciation for Japanese work, as it shares many of the same traditional values, but it is not a style in which he would want to specialise. "I do some one-hit Japanese pieces," he tells me, "but I don't want to start working out entire sleeves. That's just not for me."

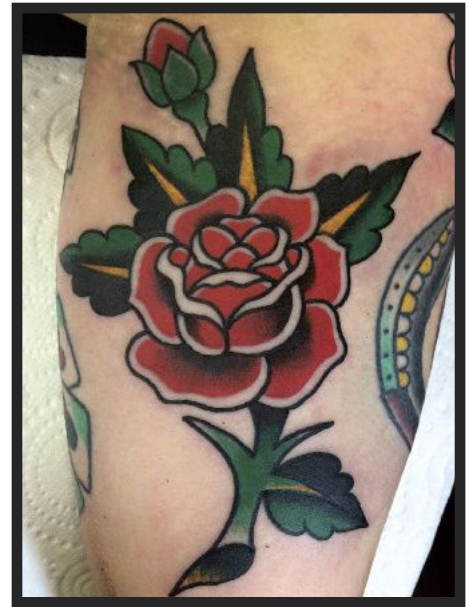


Tattooing really does seem to have given Adrian the lifestyle he wanted. He has travelled all over Europe and the US, working conventions and doing guest spots. He also finds plenty of opportunities to feed his surf and skate addictions. "In my free time I like to switch off from tattooing, and surfing and skateboarding enable me to do just that. When you are riding a board you are focused. You don't think of anything else."

Indonesia has become a regular destination for Adrian. "Bali is like my second home now. I first went there in 2001, and I've been there seventeen times now. Originally I went there just to surf – it's one of the best places in the world – but it's my network of friends that draws me back there now. I pay my way with tattooing. I surf in the morning, do a couple of tattoos in the afternoon, then surf again. Most of my customers are tourists. I also tattoo some local friends, but you just trade with them for beer or rice. Where I tattoo, in Kuta Beach, it's very westernised. It has about fifty tattoo shops, owned mainly by Australians, and it even has an M&S and a Boots. But if you drive half an hour out of the main hub you can see the rice paddies and temples and traditional Balinese life. It's a really lovely culture. I love to experience that side of it."

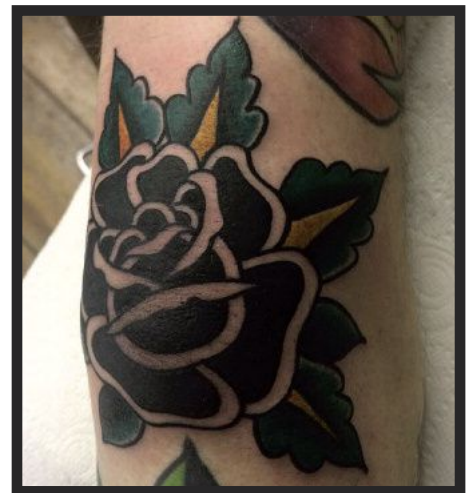
Adrian is a quiet, unassuming person and he lives very much for the present moment. In tattooing, he seems to have found the ideal vehicle for his laid back way of life. "I could never have been a nine-to-five office guy," he cheerfully admits. "My mind just doesn't work like that. I've known ever since I was a kid – I was always doing my homework at the last minute. I'm just not very organised. Tattooing is perfect for me. And it's given me these two!" he says with a big smile on his face, pointing to his fiancée and baby daughter.





“Tattooing and travelling have been the two big things in my life, and now I have my family as well. Having a baby is not going to stop me. My last trip to Bali was extra special, showing my little Amaya some of my favourite places – places I’ve been going to for years, such as Uluwatu Temple. We also spent some time in Thailand and I received my sacred Thai tattoo, which was an amazing and highly unhygienic experience that I will never forget!”

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GALLERY



jason birks,
akira tattoo (germany)



dask, sake tattoo (greece)



hanna novak,
die buntmacherei tattoo
(austria)



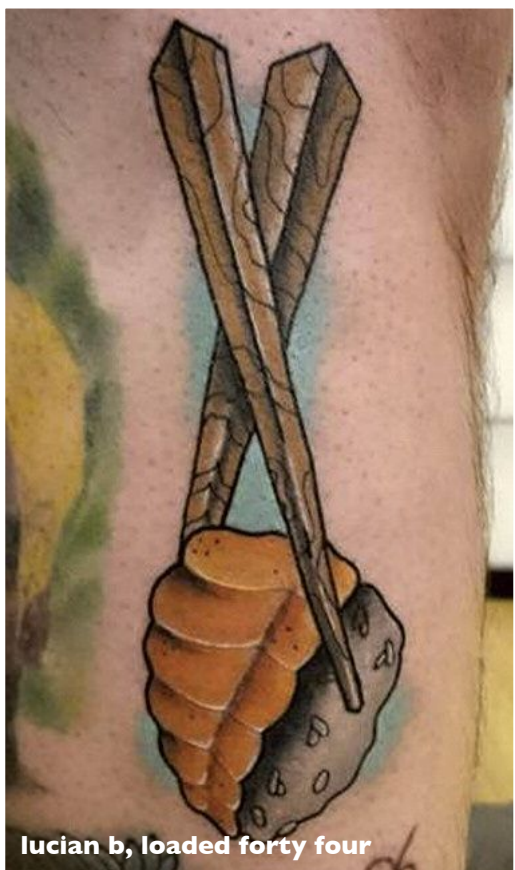
hanna novak,
three nails tattoo (austria)



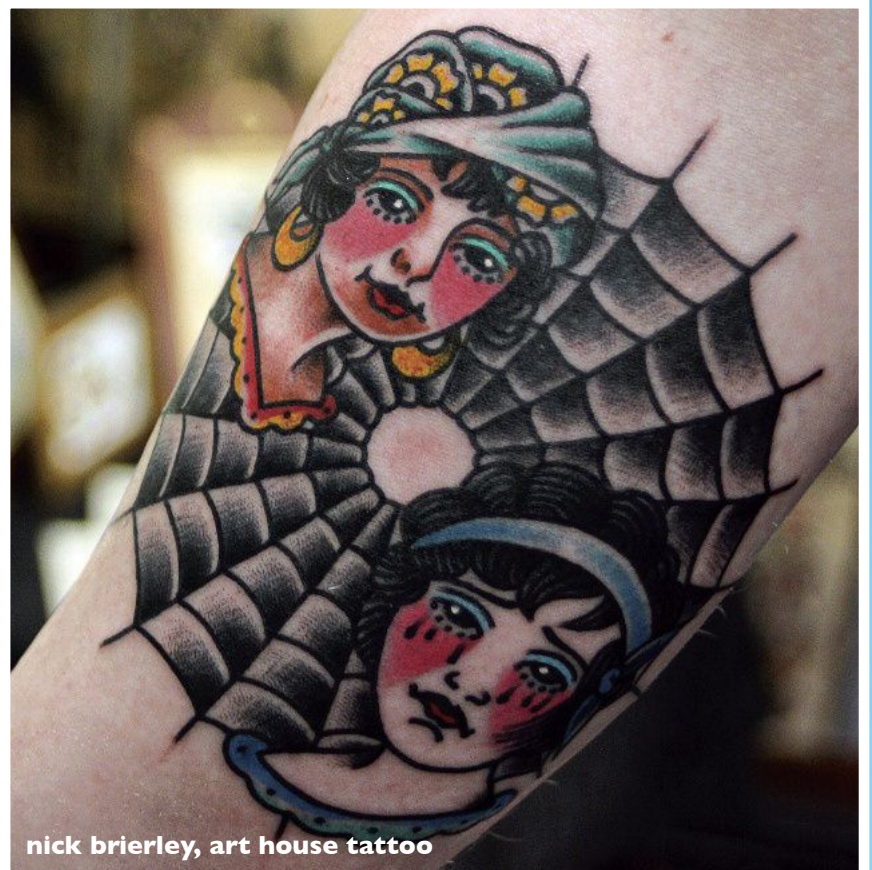
bart bastiaanse
tribal trading
(holland)



patrick mcfarlane, black freighter tattoo

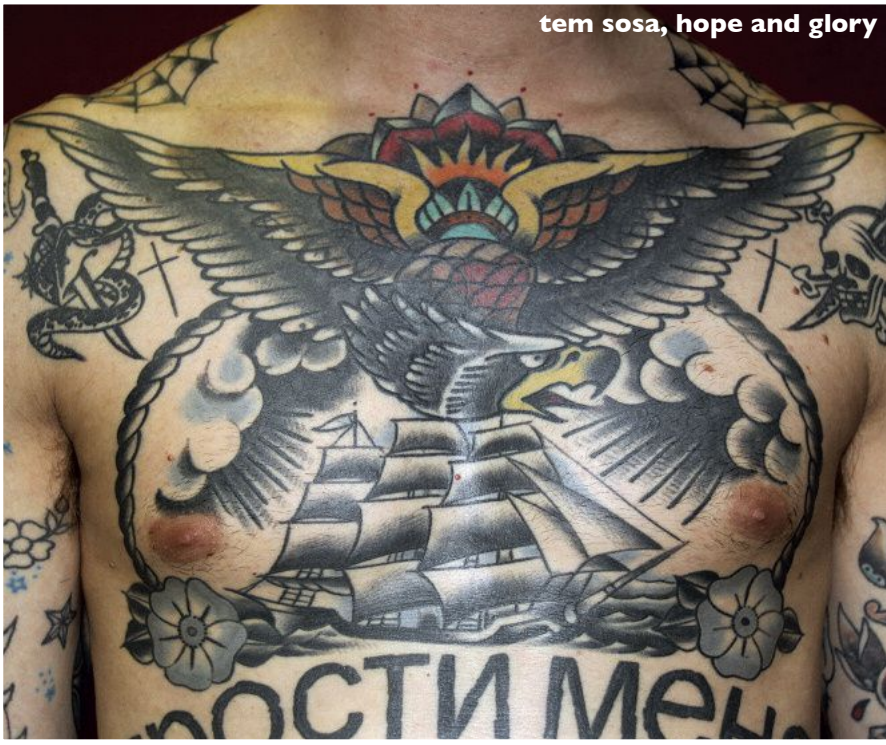


lucian b, loaded forty four



nick brierley, art house tattoo

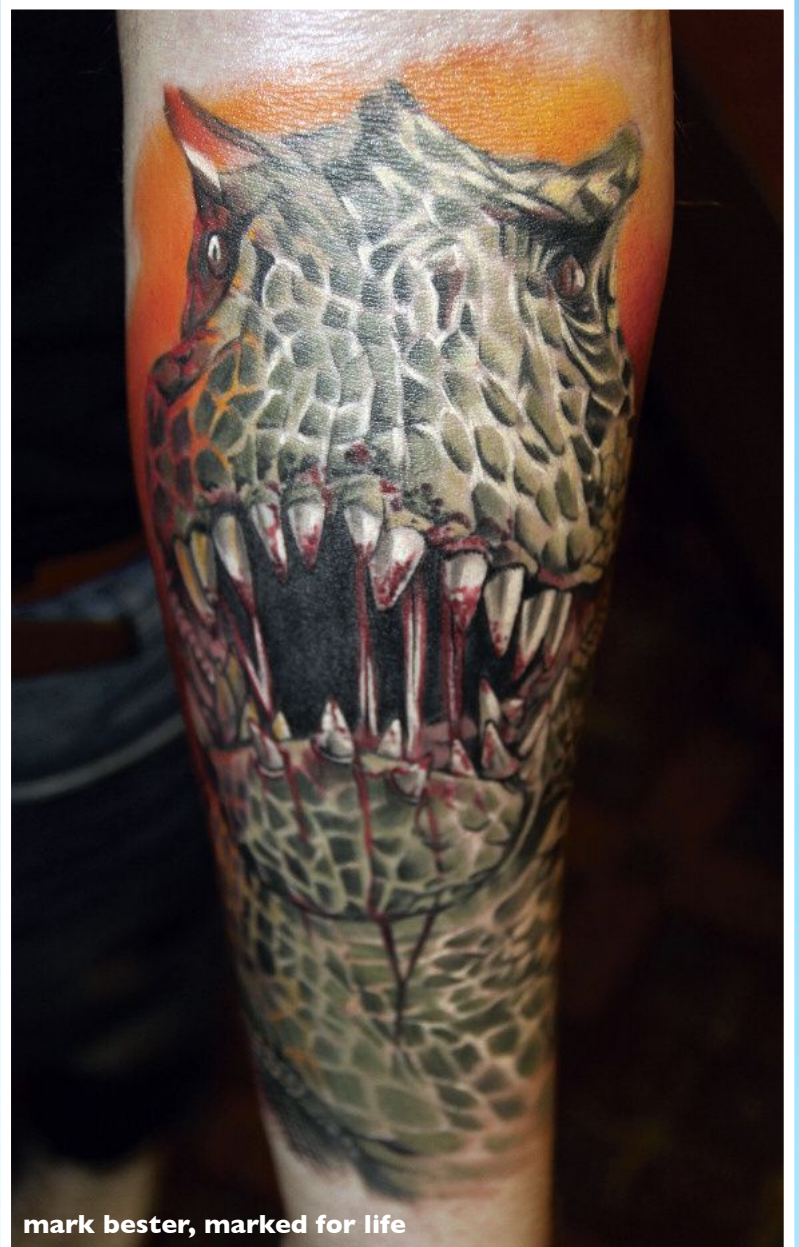
tem sosa, hope and glory



mike wall, cult classic



max pniewski, southmead tattoo

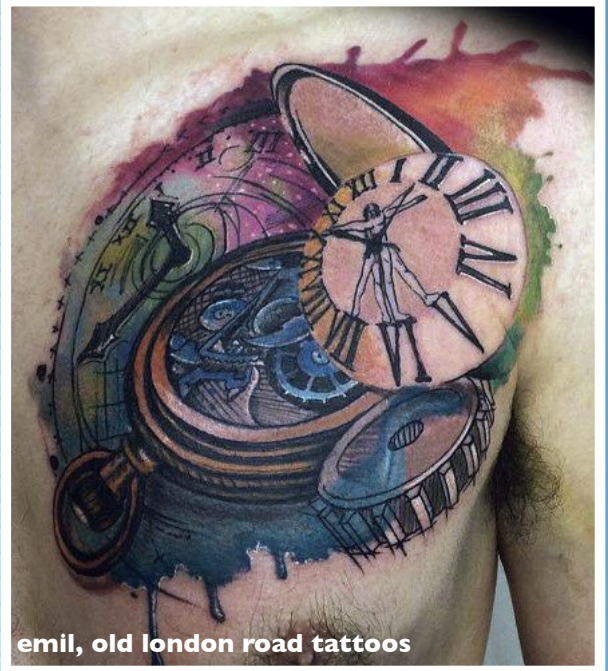


mark bester, marked for life



chelsea harrison, urban ink

john parker,
southsea tattoo



emil, old london road tattoos

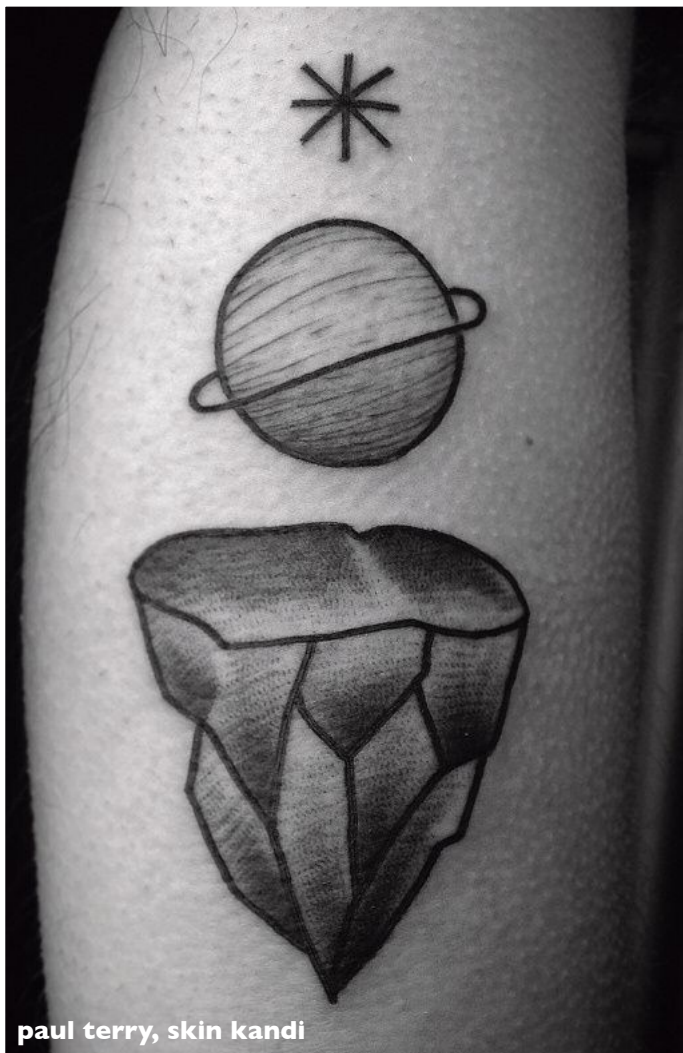
craig bartlett, adorned tattoo



ivana, ivana tattoo



tofi, inkognito tattoo



paul terry, skin kandi



alex rattray, red hot and blue



andy joss, k2



baker, sake tattoo (greece)



luca ortis, luca ortis tattoo

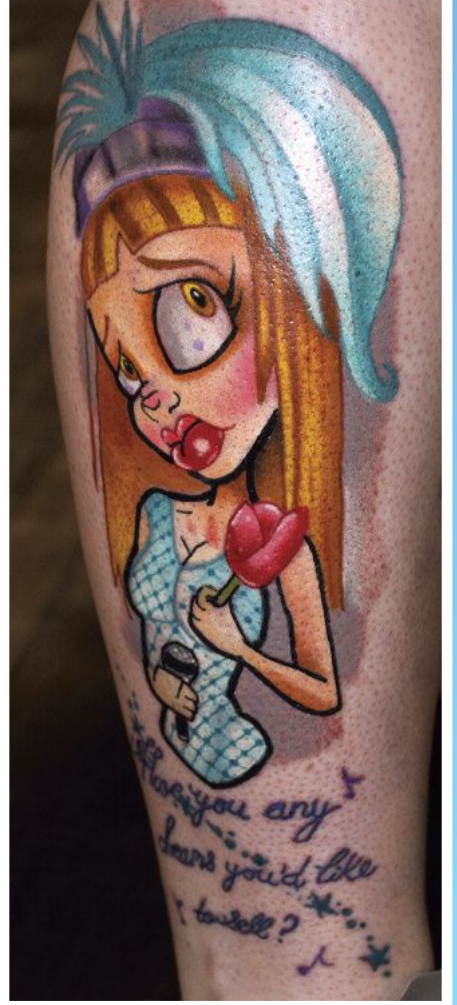
alan aldred, cosmic tattoo



elmo, catalyst arts collective (usa)



cathy sue, dexterity ink



lukasz, lucky 7s



laky, the old smithy tattoo



aston reynolds,
indigo tattoo



yun tattoo
(taiwan)



charlotte timmons, modern body art

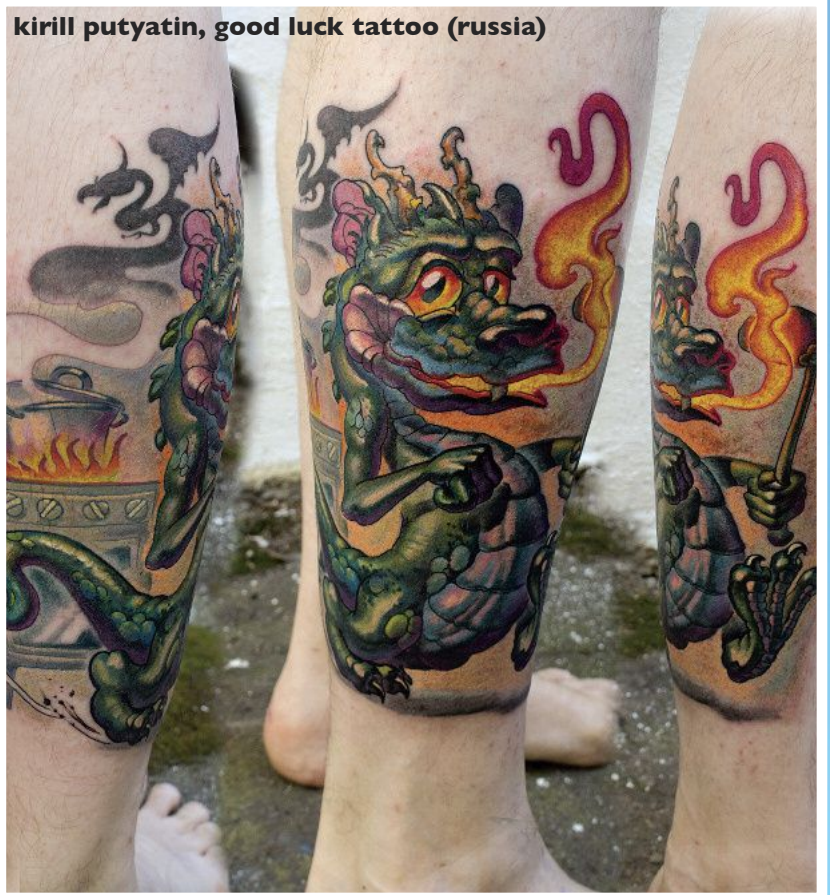


adrian finsterkram,
three nails tattoo (austria)



theo zinas, giah (switzerland)

kirill putyatin, good luck tattoo (russia)



david monster, monster family



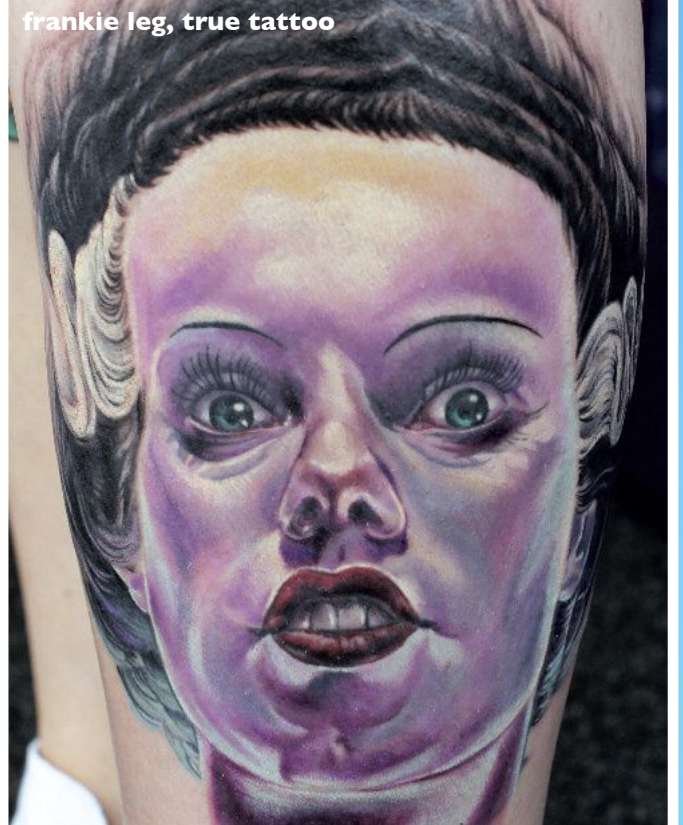
billy hay, bath street tattoo



diego moraes, familia moraes tattoo (france)



frankie leg, true tattoo



georg moser, die buntmacherei (austria)

andrea lanzi, Antikorpo (italy)



andrei chernoalov
(russia)



jack peppiette, studio XIII



chris, old london road tattoos



alexandra wilkey,
love hate social club

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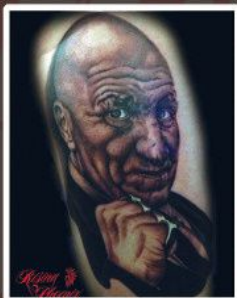
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PORTSMOUTH TATTOO EXTRAVAGANZA

My memory is not what it used to be, but I'm pretty sure that every time I've been to a tattoo convention in Portsmouth the weather has been good. And why am I so sure? Well I ride a motorbike, and being soaked to the skin or getting my crown jewels frozen off is always a memorable experience...

When this year's Extravaganza came round, it was a cracking day. So off I rode. But the brilliant spring sunshine had lulled me into a false sense of security and by the time I'd made it to Portsmouth and followed that familiar route through town to the Pyramids Centre, I was chilled to the bone. The welcome was warm though, and that was just what I needed.

The Pyramids Centre sits smack bang on the seafront and has hosted more than a few tattoo conventions. All the artists and stallholders were in the main hall, and it was packed. I don't think you could have squeezed another booth in! Many of the studios I had met last year were back for more; there is certainly no lack of support for tattoo shows down here on the South Coast.

Steeped in tattoo history, the naval city of Portsmouth was home to UK pioneers Ron Ackers and Jessie Knight – and these iconic figures would surely have gasped in amazement if they'd seen the work on display here. Like most shows these days,

the Extravaganza was awash with realism – both colour and black and grey – and the queue for that category was by far the longest at the competitions. It seems that both artists and collectors are still very much in love with portrait tattoos. There were of course other styles represented here, but there is no way you can deny the dominance of this particular style on the UK convention circuit.

The Extravaganza did pull in some artists from further afield, with Chris Torres from Red Legged Devils in New York taking home the Journeyman award, but it's very much a regional show, with most of the punters coming from the local area. This two-day event is very definitely not going head-to-head with the bigger shows – and by understanding that, it doesn't make the mistake of over-extending itself (or making too great a demand on the pockets of its clientele). I still felt that nice warm glow as the weekend drew to a close and I threw my leg over my bike, fired her up, and headed home.



1. pyramids centre
2. by alan gilby, abrasion tattoo
3. by alan gilby, abrasion tattoo
4. by ian hopkins, ian ink
5. by tiny miss becca, jayne doe tattoo





- 6. by mo lee, evolve tattoo
- 7. fune from vintage inktattoo studio
- 8. by chris lewis, lewis point
- 9. by steve hunter, touch of ink
- 10. by maria fleet, abracadabra
- 11. by chris lewis, lewis point
- 12. by mista meterz, family ink
- 13. by fred hedger, needle and fred
- 14. by craig bartlett, adorned
- 15. by toby harris, abracadabra
- 16. by andrew j, rising phoenix
- 17. and the band played on
- 18. by ash harris, unique tattoo
- 19. by martin morre, ian ink

20.



21.



22.



23.



24.

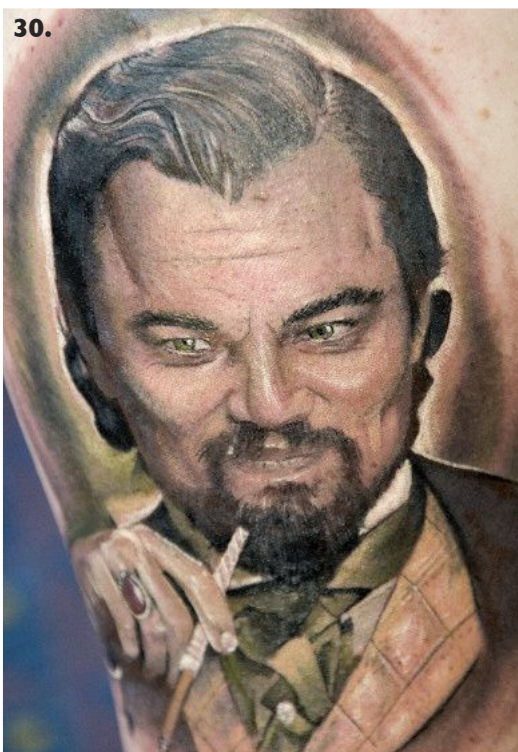


25.



26.





- 20. by aaron willett, king's ship tattoo
- 21. by darren stares, unique tattoo
- 22. by ben carter, adorned
- 23. by nick imms, painted lady tattoo parlour
- 24. by martin moore, ian ink
- 25 & 26. trophies
- 27. by thomas snatch (france)
- 28. by tony ciavarro (usa)
- 29. by pj, rising phoenix
- 30. by fune, vintage ink
- 31. by tim childs, southsea tattoo company
- 32. by ian hopkins, ian ink

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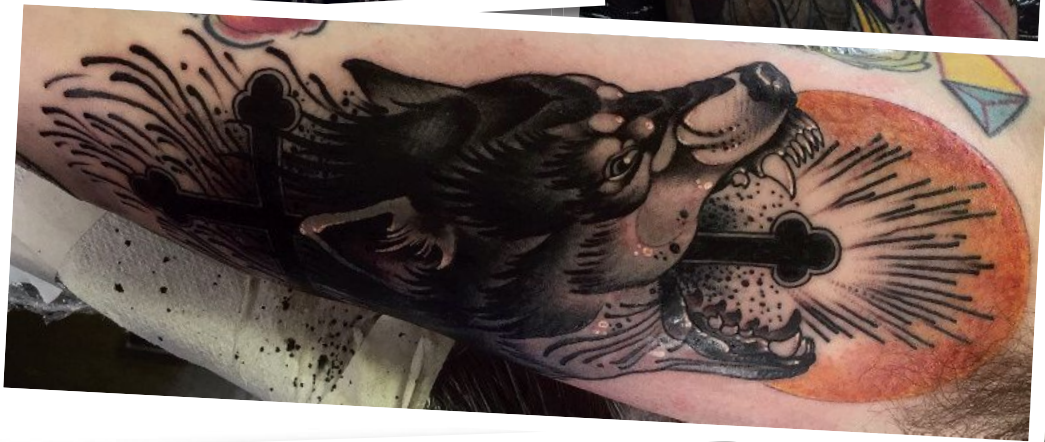
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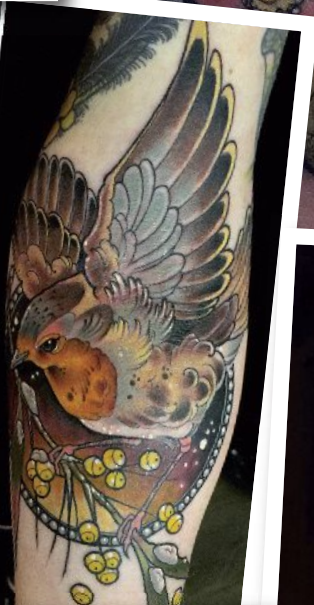
ENZO BARBARESCHI BLACK DOG TATTOO





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TATTOO KULTURE SEASIDE SHINDIG



Seaside tattoo shows tend to live or die according to the whims of the weather gods. It's just one of those things, and unfortunately the 2015 Kustom Kulture convention fell foul to some truly heinous conditions. A wickedly cold wind blasted along the seafront, whipping the sea up into a frenzy and ensuring that anyone who ventured out for a stroll got a good sandblasting.



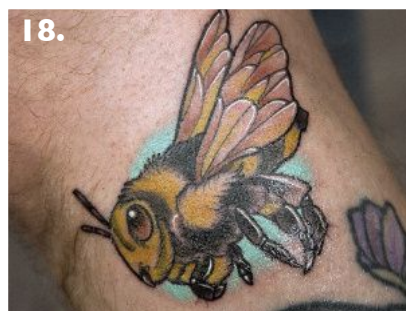
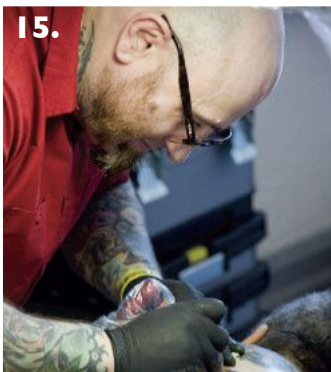
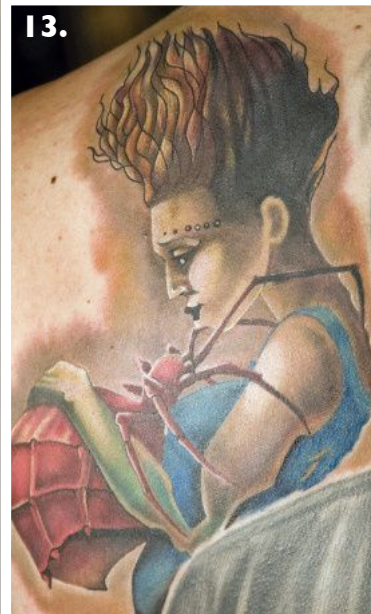
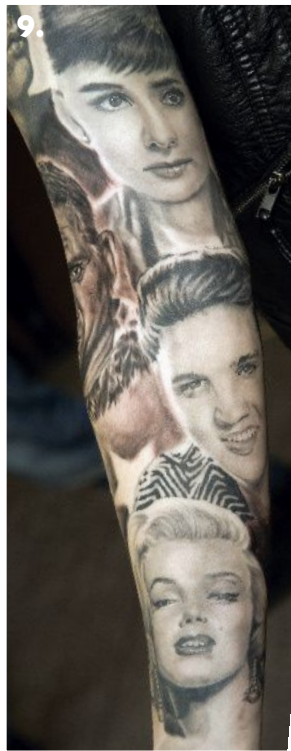
The show itself took place in the Winter Gardens (the irony of the name was not lost on me) on the Royal Parade. All the tattooists were working in the one oval shaped hall, which was a really nice space to spend time in. The Bristol Tattoo Club were here too. Bands and cabaret were to be found in a separate hall, along with the stallholders.

years) and for £10 on the door you certainly got your money's worth. The work produced at the show was obviously limited to a certain extent by the low number of visitors, but what was produced demonstrated once again that there is no lack of ambition in contemporary UK tattooing.

There was no getting away from the fact that this was a quiet show. The great British public just weren't in the mood to brave the elements. However, those who did choose to come were treated to everything that you would expect from a tattoo convention organised by someone as active on the scene as Wendy (who's been a constant presence on the UK convention circuit for many

It's impossible to say whether this show would have been packed if the sun had shone, but more favourable conditions outside certainly wouldn't have hurt. Perhaps it was also a victim of too much competition, with so many shows saturating the UK calendar at the moment. This show's heart is in the right place, and it has all the right ingredients. On the day, it just had an awful lot to contend with...





1. by max how, garth's tattoo
2. inside the winter gardens
3. lots of entertainment
4. a cold grey day
5. by giles twigg, inky g's
6. by lauren hanson, cosmic monsters incorporated
7. the fabulous winter gardens pavillion
8. by jurgis mikalauskas, hypnosis tattoo
9. by gavin clarke, obsession tattoo
10. by glen preece, jqt tattoo
11. by shaun von sleaze, keep the faith
12. by ghis melou, purple rose tattoo
13. by lee clements, chameleon tattoo
14. by jammes, paradise tattoo
15. gray silva tattooing
16. wendy (show organiser)
17. by gray silva, rampant ink
18. by ghis melou, purple rose tattoo

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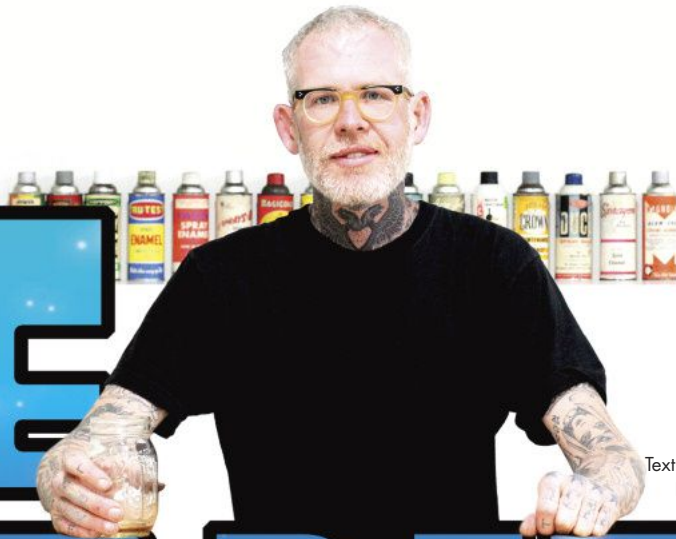


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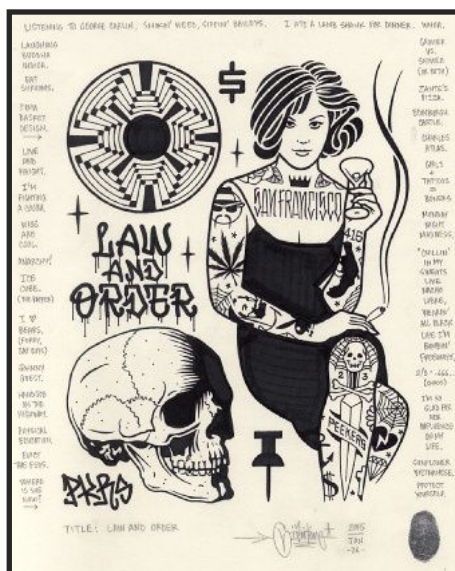
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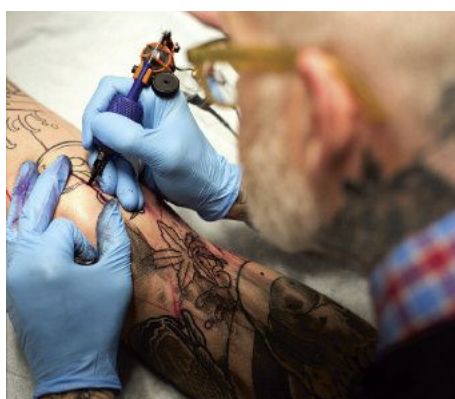
MIKE GIANT



Text: Marco Annunziata
Pictures: Mike Giant



Nowadays many street artists do great things with tattooing, but Mike Giant was one of the first. Along with Mister Cartoon of Los Angeles and Seen from the Bronx, he was part of the early wave of highly respected American graffiti artists who also became excellent tattooers. Black and grey single-needle Chicano style is Mike Giant's favourite way of tattooing. And his visual language includes skateboarding, tough girls, religion and spirituality, the movies, biking around San Francisco... basically everything he is familiar with and all the memories he loves to recall. Although he's slowed down on the tattooing and doesn't work in a shop anymore, his flash sheets are still a huge source of inspiration for many tattoo artists around the globe. We met for a chat at Rebel Eight in Los Angeles.

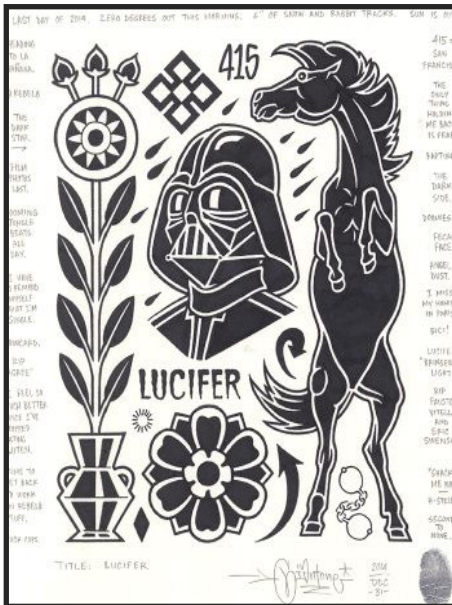


What are your first tattoo memories?

I grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico. My family moved there from upstate New York in 1979. I was 8 years old. Almost every weekend my dad would pack the family into his old 1949 Chevy delivery van and we'd visit the Albuquerque flea market. Folks from all over town were there. It was a great place for people watching and it was there that I started to see tattoos. Many of the older Cholo guys had fineline black and grey tattoos visible on their arms. My dad told me that most of their tattoos were done in prison. I immediately fell in love with them and to this day those are my favourite kinds of tattoos.

How did you learn to draw?

I've been drawing ever since I could hold a crayon. I had art lessons at school of course, and I also went to private art instruction on the weekends during my early teens. I drew at home a lot. In college I took the required art courses for my architecture degree but I had little academic interest in fine art otherwise. During my first year of college I started writing graffiti and that has continued to be a big part of my art practice to this day. Patrick Nagel, Charles Burns, Ed Roth, Ed Hardy, Jim Phillips and Vernon Courtland Johnson are some of the artists who have influenced me the most – but there are lots of others. You can check out what I like on originalgiantcontent.tumblr.com





Are drawing skills essential for a tattoo artist?

Not really. I've met many tattooers who can't draw but can apply a tattoo perfectly. Tattooing is both art and craft. It's art when the tattooer is an artist, and it's a craft when the tattooer is simply a craftsman. Both can make great tattoos.

How long did it take to develop the Giant style?

When I look back, I can see that my style was pretty well established by the time I left Think Skateboards in 1997. I worked there for 4 years and that's where the majority of my stylistic development occurred.



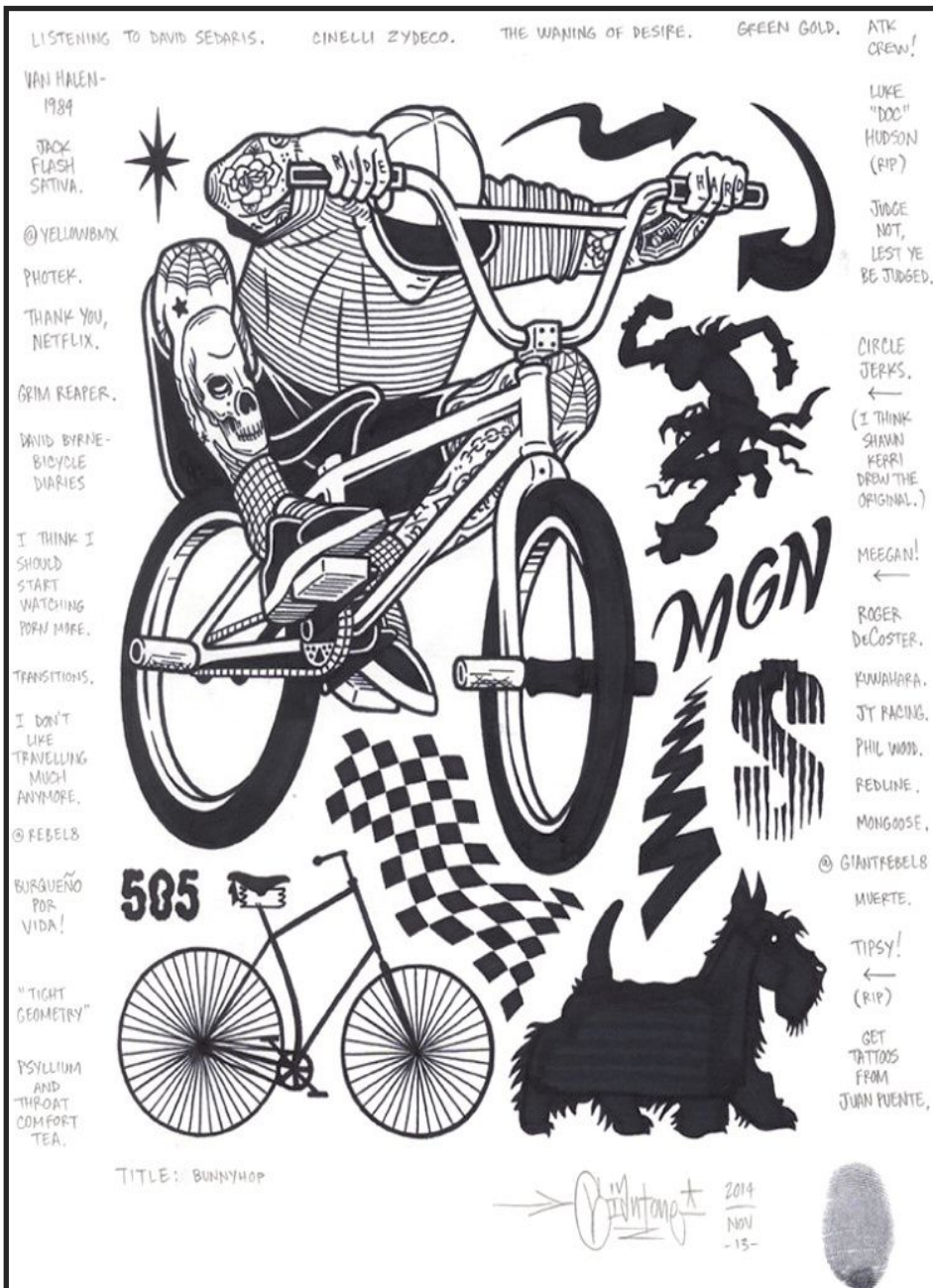


What do you say to those who try to copy your designs?

Find a good tattooer who can copy my designs well. That's all. Do some research. Don't assume your local tattooer can handle anything you throw at them, especially my stuff. I think my designs need a certain level of interpretation to make them last. And don't forget to send me a picture!

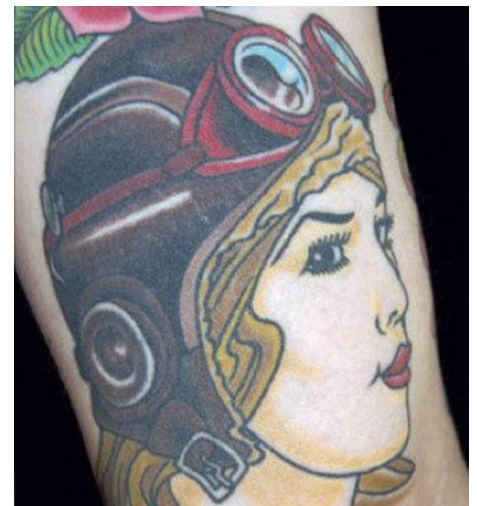
Are there any tattoos that you personally refuse to do?

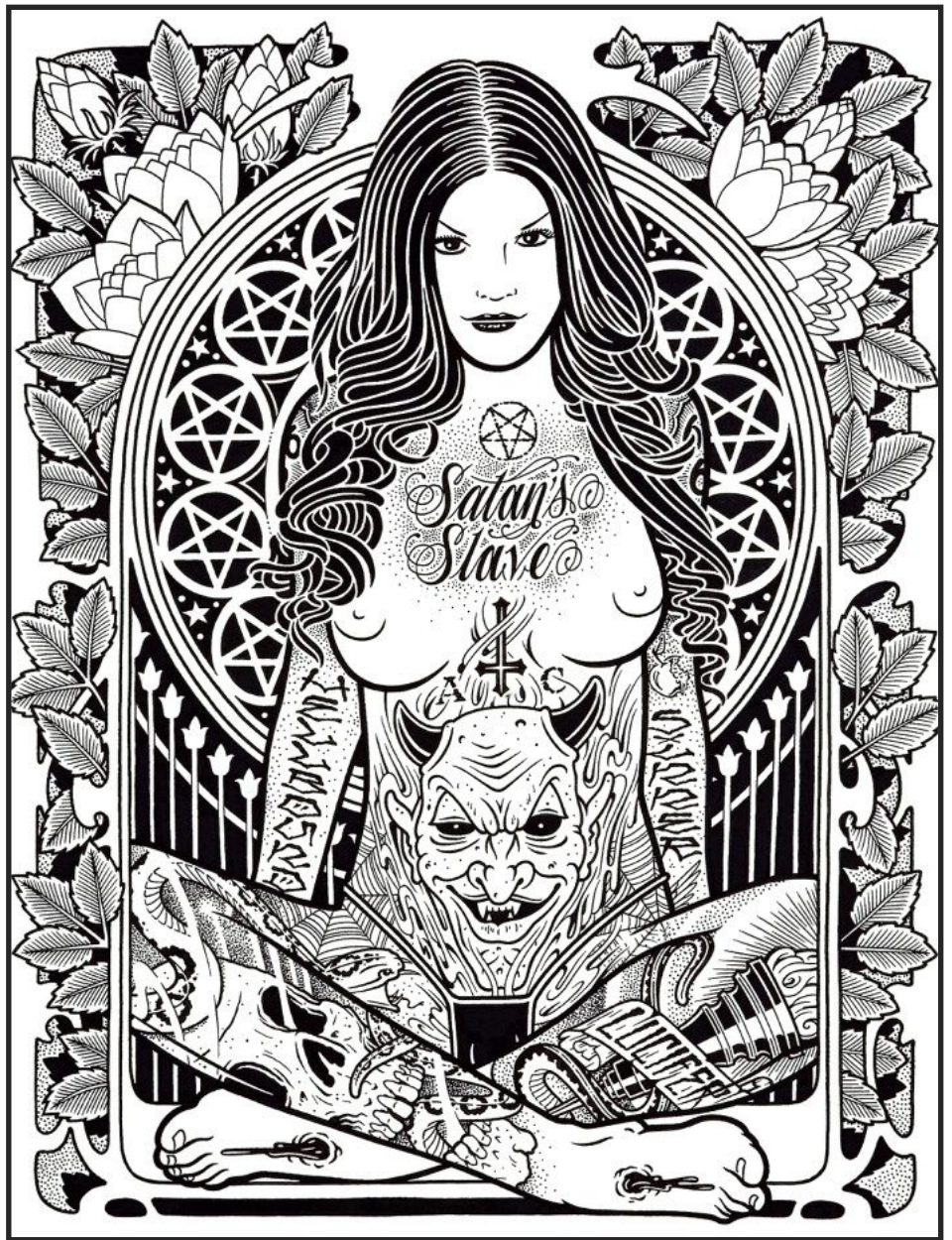
These days I refuse almost everything that gets thrown at me! But when I was working full-time in a shop I generally refused to tattoo hands, necks and faces unless the person was already heavily tattooed. The only subject matter I've consistently refused is portraits.



Did you ever wish somebody you tattooed was a wall?

Hmm, weird question... though I guess it would be nice if tattoo customers could sit as still and upright as a wall.



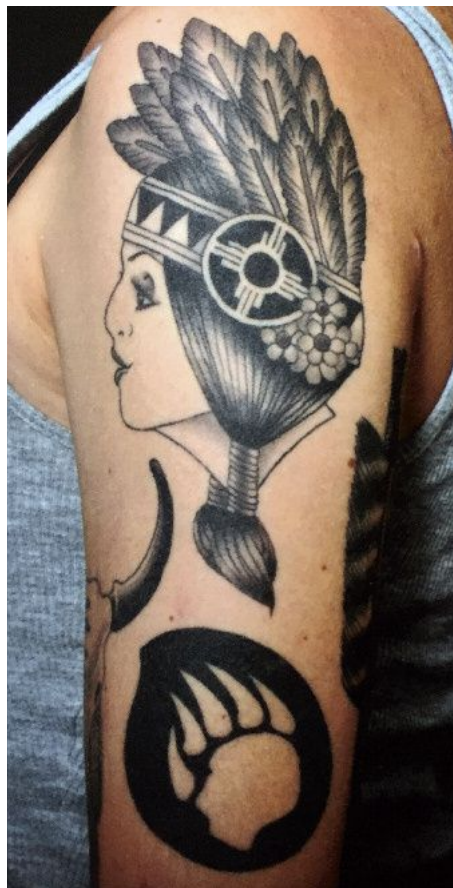


Tell us about your art shows...

There's a thriving arts scene here in Denver. I had a solo exhibition at Black Book Gallery last year and it was great. It sold out and I met lots of cool people. I hope to do more this year. I also show work with Antonio Colombo Arte Contemporanea in Milan on occasion, so you might see me out there someday, though I haven't been travelling so much lately as I'm trying to improve my health.

What do you like to do when you are not making art?

I'm an avid cyclist and I ride my bikes for a few hours every day. I read books, meditate and practice yoga. I shop at record stores, bookshops and thrift stores. And I like to cook and eat fine foods. I love hanging out with my friends. I love women and sex. And I like to paint on walls once in a while too. That's about it. I prefer to live simply.



Do you have any thoughts about tattooing TV reality shows?

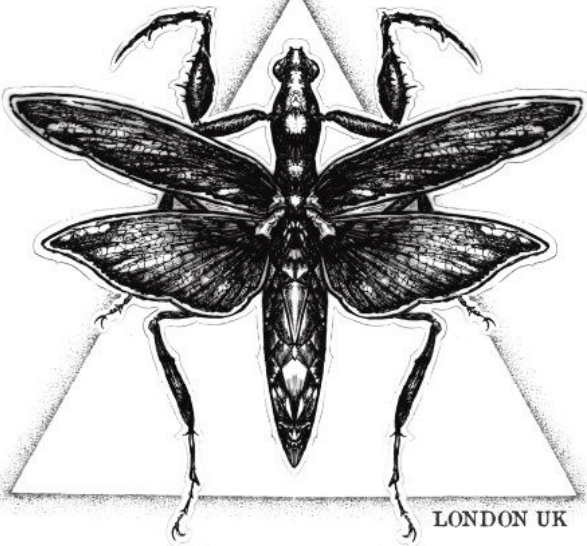
I don't watch TV, but I've seen a few episodes of Ink Master and I hated it. I really don't have anything to say about it. Fuck TV. Seriously!

And finally, do you have any advice for younger tattoo artists?

Just make tattoos! Try hard every time, improve every day. Don't just copy designs from big tattoo artists. Draw/redraw everything yourself. Also, be nice to your customers and share your work as much as you can.

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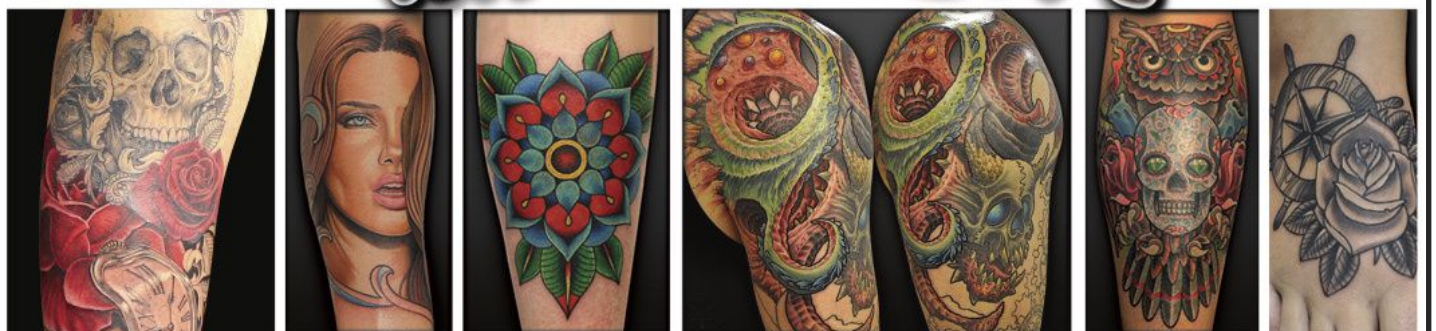
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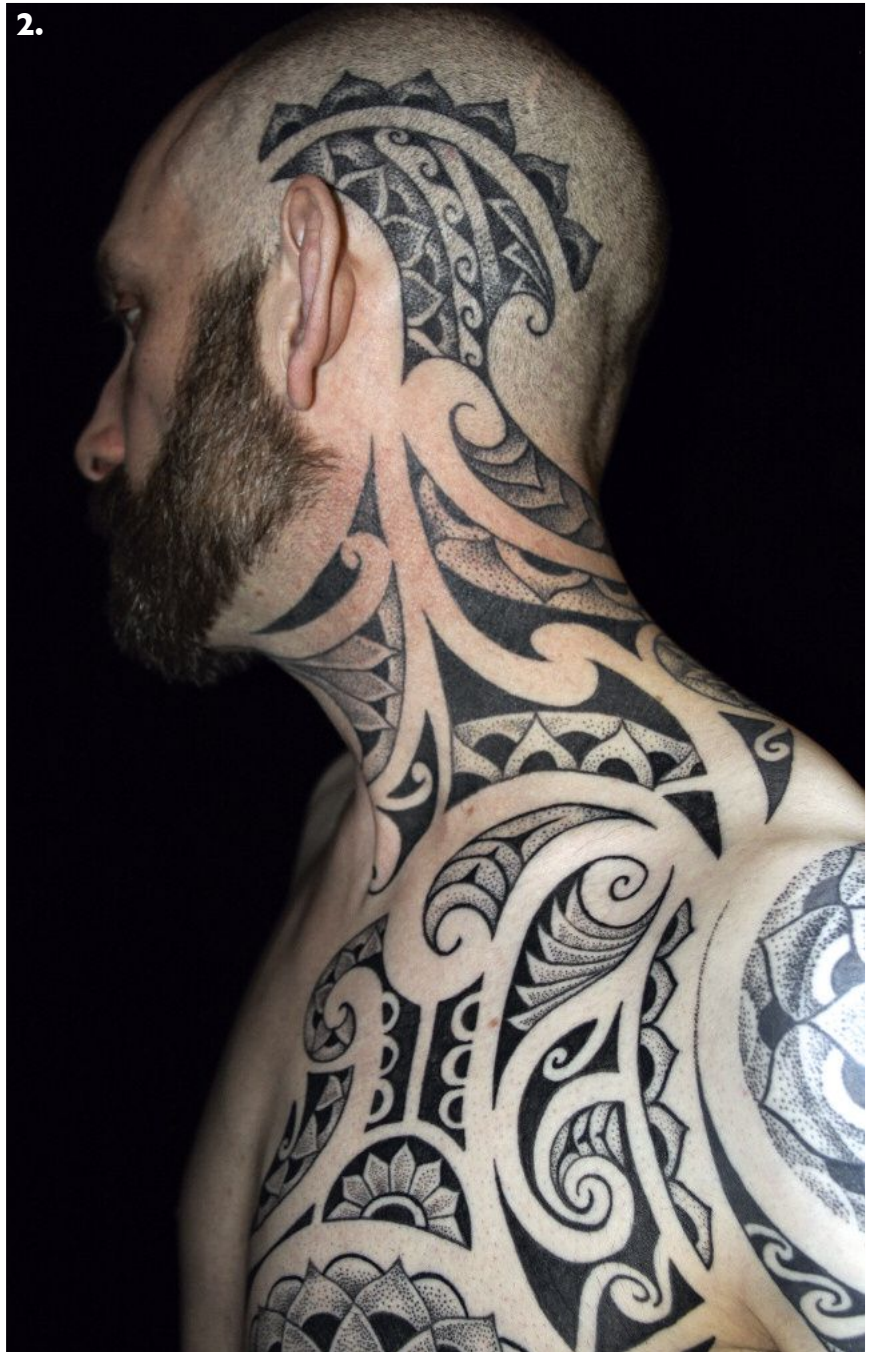
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SCOTTISH TATTOO CONVENTION

It seems unreal that the Scottish Tattoo Convention is already five years old! We've seen a number of other shows come and go in that time, but this perfectly formed north-of-the-border gem has gone from strength to strength.

The Edinburgh Corn Exchange, just west of the city centre, is a great venue. Its two halls are divided by a high-ceilinged glass corridor – bright and naturally lit – that housed traders, barbers and the all-important bar area. To the left, up a couple of steps, the smaller hall played host to around 50 tattooists and a few traders selling dead things, sweets and ear plugs. To the right was the larger hall, complete with stage and balcony, in which the remaining 120+ artists and a few more traders were to be found.

As has become the norm for this show, the artist list was exceptional. It just gets better every year. I wander around like a giddy child full of nervous excitement at the prospect of watching Rudi Fitch, Adam Turk, Dan Henk, Eva Mpatshi, Big Meas and a whole long list of other high class international tattooists ply their trade. Naturally there is also strong Scottish and North of England support, including Billy Hay and the Bath Street crew, Morag and her Tribe of merry workers, and the boyz from Northside Tattooz. From down south, Stewart Robson and Valerie Vargas are promoting their new London shop Modern Classic, and Miss Becca has brought her team from Jayne Doe in Essex.

For artists and convention visitors alike, the city of Edinburgh itself was a huge attraction, with its cosmopolitan mix of fine restaurants and late night drinking establishments set against a backdrop of cobbled streets and imposing historic buildings. And many of the artists I spoke to had chosen to arrive a few days before the show, or stay on afterwards, to enjoy the natural beauty that only Scotland can offer.

11am on Saturday, the doors opened and both halls filled quickly. The aisles between the stalls became very congested and the temperature inside the building began to rise in stark contrast to the cool Scottish air outside. Artists were busy from the get go, and it wasn't long before the non-stop stage entertainment got underway too. Once again this year, Jim and his crew had sourced something slightly more unusual to run alongside the traditional tattoo competitions. As well as the more usual burlesque, there was knife-throwing, WWF-style wrestling and the finals of the Miss Scotland Pin-Up Competition. Unfortunately, the over-excited female compère for this competition seemed unfamiliar with the concept of an amplified microphone and insisted on screaming at the top of her voice, causing several dogs in the



1. by red, tattoo rooms
2. by raffaella ricci, tribe tattoo
3. a great venue
4. by red, tattoo rooms
5. by adam turk, left hand black (usa)
6. by lus lips, loxodrom tattoo (berlin)
7. by marek, inkdependent tattoo





8.



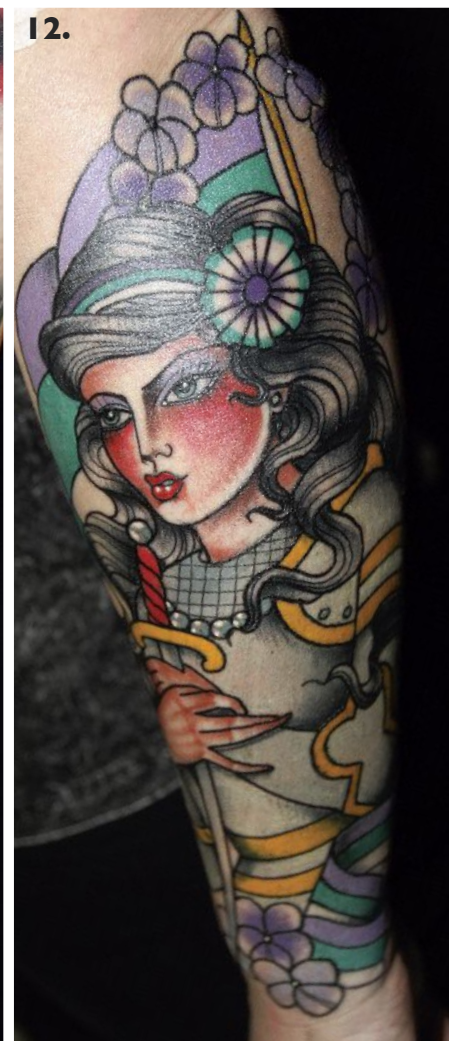
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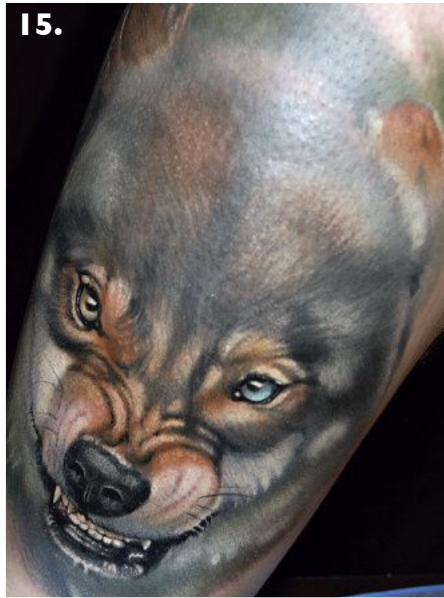
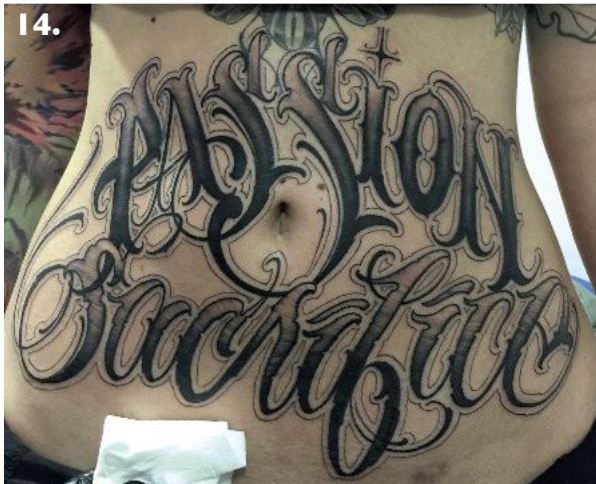


12.

vicinity to begin howling uncontrollably while the rest of us waited for our ears to stop bleeding!

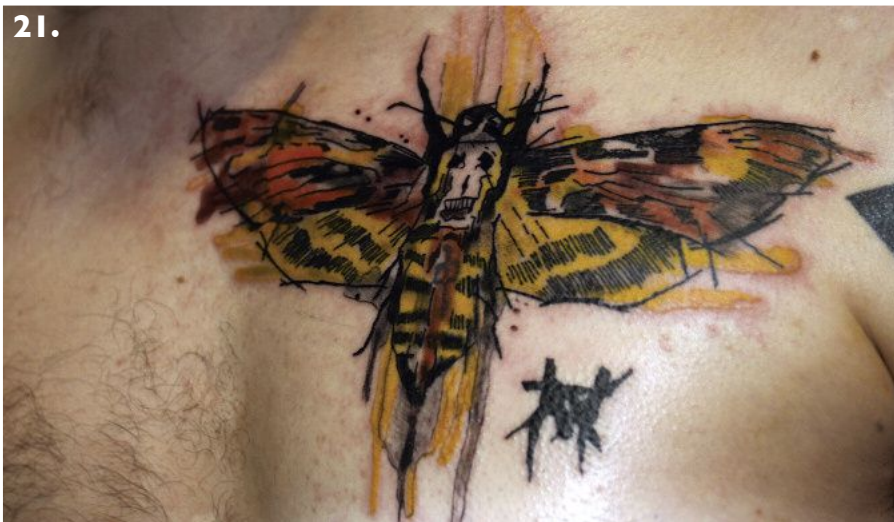
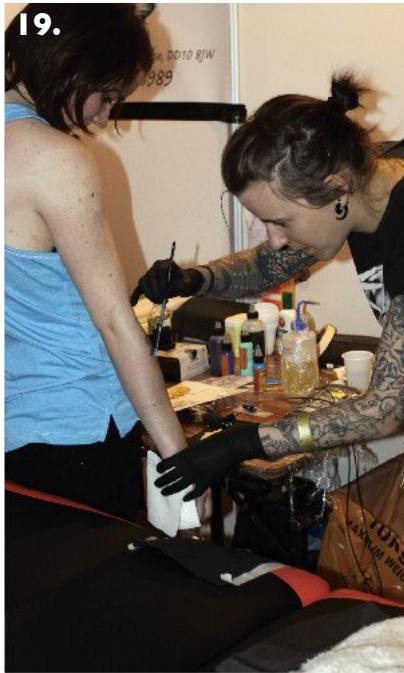
Many artists had opted not to book customers in advance, instead choosing to take 'walk-ups'. This can sometimes be a risky business, but happily this year's Edinburgh visitors came ready and willing to spend. I was unaware of any artists sitting around waiting to work. Sunday was very much a repeat of the Saturday. Numbers through the door were definitely up on previous years, and there were big smiles all around. Most of the traders were happy and reported good sales.

Some of the success of this show must surely be down to the fact that it is really the *only* convention of any size in Scotland. Strict rules and regulations mean putting on a tattoo event here requires a Herculean effort on behalf of the organisers, yet each year Jim and his crew manage to produce one of the highlights of the convention calendar. If you've never been, you really should treat yourself. The Scottish Tattoo Convention is a big top quality show, but with the feel of a local show where everyone seems to know each other. It's super-friendly, and it generates a real buzz. I'm already ironing me sporan ready for next year.



- 8. by bry prow, idle hands tattoo parlour
- 9. by bry prow, idle hands tattoo parlour
- 10. by bry prow, idle hands tattoo parlour
- 11. by rafael, rock n roll tattoo
- 12. by tracy d, kings cross tattoo
- 13. by big meas (usa)
- 14. by big meas (usa)
- 15. by marcin, inkdependent tattoo
- 16. miss pin-up competition
- 17. by bunshin horitoshi (japan)





18. by eva mpatshi (on the road)
 19. eva mptshi painting her design on
 20. by kerry hutchison,
 crossroads tattoo
 21. by kym munster, custom inc
 22. by dani green, dragstrip tattoo
 23. by kris, plus 48 tattoo
 24. by jason zigzag, red hot and blue
 25. by emma sweeney, bath street
 26. by adam turk, left hand black (usa)
 27. by soap, modern classic
 28. by alex rattray, red hot and blue
 29. by rudy fritsch, original classic (italy)
 30. by valerie vargas, modern classic



24.



25.



26.



27.



28.



29.



30.



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IN FOCUS

In these pages we showcase a small selection of work from a group of artists working together. This month **Tokyo Tattoo, 13 The Courtyard, Montpellier, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 1SR 01242 300165 www.tokyotattoo.co.uk** We would love to feature your work, please send examples to: **In Focus, Total Tattoo Magazine, 111 Furze Road, Norwich, NR7 0AU, UK**

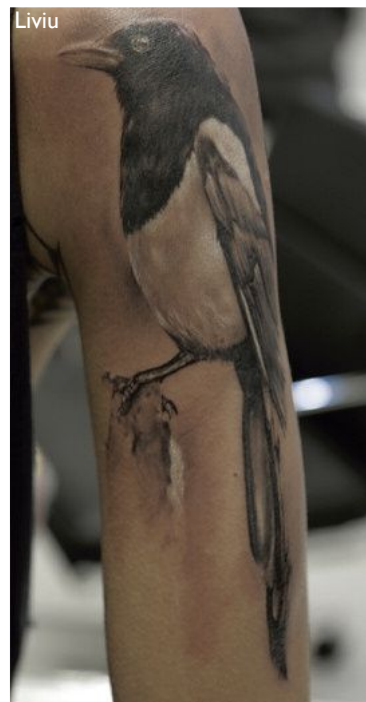
Russ Bishop



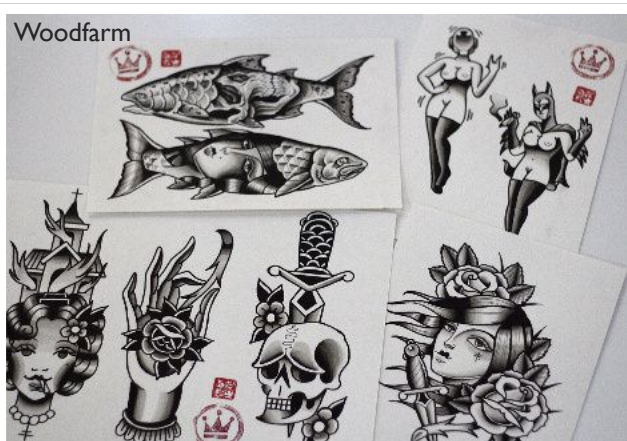
Tyler Payne



Liviu



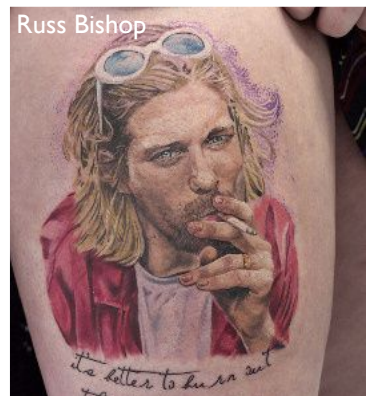
Woodfarm



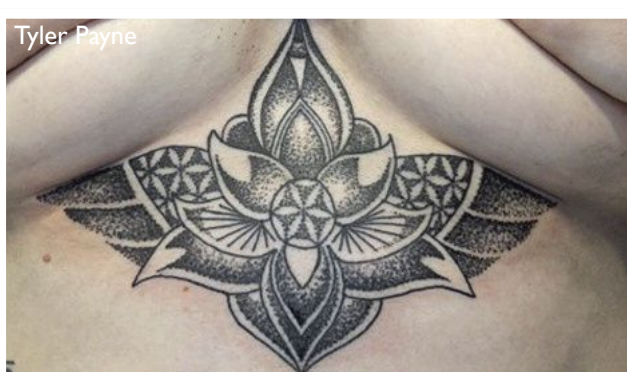
Tyler Payne



Russ Bishop



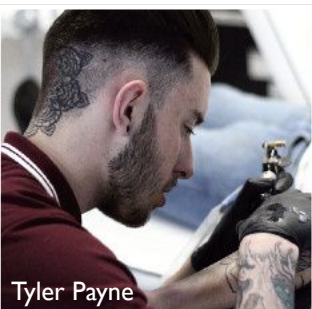
Tyler Payne



Woodfarm



Tyler Payne



Russ Bishop



Woodfarm



Russ Bishop



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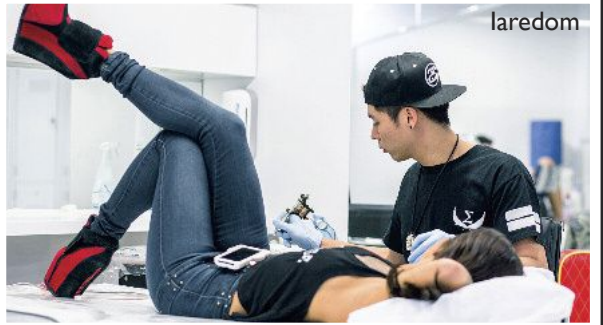
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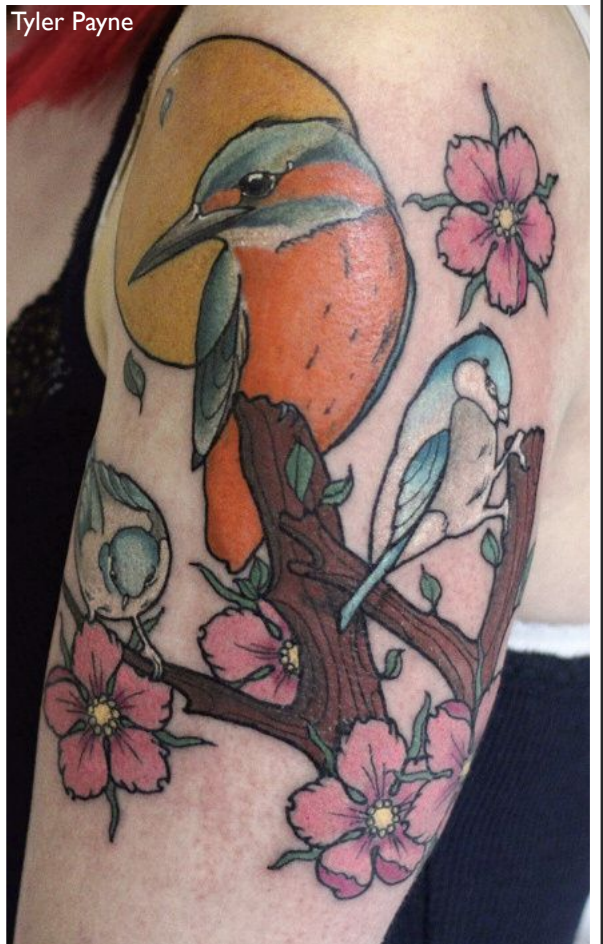
Woodfarm



laredom



Tyler Payne



Woodfarm



Russ Bishop



CONVENTION CALENDAR

UK CONVENTIONS

June 6-7

Leeds International Tattoo Expo

New Dock Hall - Royal Armouries Museum
Armouries Drive, Leeds LS10 1LT
www.leedstattooxpo.com

June 6-7

Northampton Tattoo Convention

Saints Rugby Ground, Weedon Road,
Northampton, NN5 5BG
www.northamptoninternationaltattooconvention.com
Tel: 01604949958

June 13-14

Bristol Tattoo Convention

Brunels Old Station
The Passenger Shed, Station Approach, Bristol
BS1 6QH
www.bristoltattooconvention.com

June 14

Reading Tattoo Show,

Rivermead Leisure Complex.
Richfeild Avenue, Reading, RG1 8ER
readingtattooshow@hotmail.co.uk
0118 9590700/01189598616
www.readingtattooshow.co.uk

June 20-21

Croydon Tattoo Convention

Park Lanen, Croydon, Surrey CR9 1DG
www.croydontattooconvention.com
Tel 07507914885

June 20-21

York Tattoo Convention

York Racecourse, YO23 1EX
www.yorlinternationaltattooconvention.co.uk

July 4-5

Southampton Tattoo Festival

The Ageas Bowl, Southampton
www.southamptontattooestival.co.uk

July 25-26

Portsmouth Tattoo Convention

Guildhall Square, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO1 2AB
www.portsmouthtattooconvention.com

July 31-Aug 2

2nd Titanic International Tattoo Convention

1 Olympic Way, Queens Rd, Titanic Quarter,
BT3 9EP Belfast
www.facebook.com/titanic.tattooconventionbel
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August 1-2

Bedford International Tattoo Convention

Bedford Corn Exchange, St Pauls Square,
Bedford MK40 1SL
Tel: 01234 930504

August 14-16

Tatcon Tattoo Convention

Norbreck Castle Hotel
Queen's Promenade, Blackpool,
Lancashire FY2 9AA
www.tatconblackpool.co.uk

August 15-16

Norwich Body Arts Festival

Open, 20 Bank Plain, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 4SF
www.norwichbodyartfestival.co.uk

August 22-23

Robin Hood Tattoo Festival

Cotgrave Welfare Club, Woodview, Cotgrave,
Nottinghamshire NG12 3PJ
www.robinhoodtattooestival.co.uk

September 13

Female Tattoo Show

The Assembly, Spencer Street, Leamington Spa
CV31 3NF

September 25-27

International London Tattoo Convention

Tobacco Dock, 50 Porters Walk, London E1W 2SF
www.thelondontattooconvention.com

November 14-15

Sheffield Tattoo Show

Magna Science Centre, Sheffield Road,
Templeborough, Rotherham
South Yorkshire S60 1DX
www.sheffieldtattooshow.co.uk

OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

June 6-7

Tattoofest

Kracow, Poland
www.tattoofest.pl/convention
www.facebook.com/TATTOOFEST

June 26-28

Midleton Tattoo Show

Midleton Rugby Club, Midleton, Co.Cork, Ireland
facebook.com/midletontattooshow

September 12-13

Galway Tattoo Show

Radisson Hotel, Lough Atalia Road, Galway, Ireland
www.facebook.com/galwaytattooshow

September 18-20

3rd Annual Steel City Tattoo Convention

David L Lawrence Convention Center
located at 1000 Ft Duquense Blvd
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www.shaneoneillproductions.com

November 1

Tattoo Sunday - Brugge

Studio Hall, Boogschutterslaan 41, Sint-Kruis
Brugge, Belgium
www.brusselstattooconvention.be

November 13-15

Brussels International Tattoo Convention

Tour & Taxis, Avenue du Port 86, 1000 Brussels
Belgium
www.brusselstattooconvention.be

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Backpiece

Gray Silva Rampant Ink discovers Tattoo Voodoo

Tattooing, it's all so very similar right now isn't it? So many tattooists look like carbon copies of each other. They're working shows and tattooing almost exactly the same designs (from their red pencil-sketch, table flash pieces) as the person next to them and all of them claiming to have a 'style', whatever that means these days.

Google, page 1, has a lot to answer for. How else do we explain the never ending face-a-gram updates of identical angels, cherubs and ass-crack clouds, or the relentless copies of pocket watches, compasses and Day of the Dead pieces? Don't even get me started on fishermen and lighthouses!

It seems that the less enlightened tattooed masses see very little difference in the subtleties of all our styles. They definitely do not see the difference in the quality of work between a piss poor tattooist in the latest fashionable high street meat market (with his or her own little piece of 'eyebrow wisdom') and the work of a seasoned professional at the top of his or her game. Instead, they're likely to settle on the former because, "It was a quarter of the price and it's nearly as good as [insert awesome tattooist's name here], don't you think?" Those of you who know me personally can imagine the guy's crestfallen face when I replied in my own honest, straightforward way.

I'm fortunate to spend a lot of time with some of the best tattoo artists in the UK, and indeed the world, and I've been inspired by all of them in one way or another. Not inspired to copy them or their style, but inspired to take from them a little bit of their work ethic and recently discovered professional artistic Voodoo!

You: "Huh? Voodoo. Whaddaya mean Jellybean?"

Me: "You know, Voodoo! You know what Voodoo is?"

You: "Yes I do, I'm an intelligent and articulate tattoo lover, but you're talking nonsense!"

Me: "OK, get comfy and let me explain."

Some of my tattooing pals have recognisable 'fringe' styles, much like me. But some of them have waiting lists that stretch on for aeons, unlike me. I had to wonder why this is. OK, I accept that what I do takes a very specific set of clients to get on board and jump in with both feet (and I respect, thank and cherish every single one of them, I really do). My style really isn't for the masses or faint of heart. So what do these other tattoo artists do that I don't? I told you, it's Voodoo. They hypnotise their clients, and their client's friends. They also subliminally turn their magic towards potential clients drifting past at conventions and the viewing internet crowd too. I've seen it happen. I watched one guy go from 'questioningly

bewildered' by a piece he was watching being tattooed, to being a full deposit-paid client in less than 15 minutes of chat (and the all-important Voodoo). The tattooist in question spoke to him in great and articulate detail about the reasons behind why he tattoos the way he does. I never really have, I've always kept it to a simple, "It's how I've always drawn stuff". He delved deeply into his artistic, spiritual and philosophical reasons behind his work and the bewildered guy quickly became enlightened and, subsequently, desperate for a piece of work with such meaning! That's the Voodoo I'm talking about! You get it now, right?

You: "Ah yes, I think I do".

Me: "Phew, I thought I was going bonkers!"

As with all art there is a level of faith required by the viewer. They can look at a blank canvas with a simple red dot on it and appreciate its simplicity. However, the little card from the artist underneath that canvas displaying a few lines of text explaining the artistic, spiritual and philosophical reasons behind it can potentially take it from being just appreciated to fetching millions of pounds. Voodoo, the power of suggestion.

I believe this approach (particularly now that so many tattooists, and their work, seem to be indistinguishable from one another) is something the distinguishable should consider. Our craft has grown in numbers very quickly in the last few years but it hasn't really grown in heart, passion or spirit. (Is this because clones don't have a soul?) So how do we combat this global lack of imagination and mediocrity? To start with, I think that we, as artists, have to be more selective with what we agree to tattoo. I'm happy to lose a potential client at the consultation stage if it means I don't have to tattoo the same tired google image again and again. Don't get me wrong, I'm not rolling in cash but my mental health will surely suffer if I don't look after it. I'm much happier turning that stuff down in order to concentrate on awesome pieces instead of doing whatever comes through the door just for the money.

I use my consultations to try and steer potential clients towards better choices, for me and for them. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't, but I'm always satisfied that



I tried to do my very best to help create something new and exciting for the benefit of myself, my studio and our craft.

Here's my attempt at the Voodoo. You should try it for yourselves. It's very therapeutic!

I believe that art, especially with regards to tattooing, should be an expression of the artist's passion. My work represents years of passionate, fascinating and surprising interpretations of how my eyes perceive the world and all things in it. I've always tried to share, through imagery, the world as I see it, through eyes which constantly try to simplify the immeasurably complex nature of things both animate and inanimate. Initial observers could encounter obstacles with the spontaneous nature of my art, mistaking both the imperfect lines and inexact intersections as something other than what was intended. Yet upon further investigation they satisfyingly become more aware of my straightforward intentions. This continued exploration to become more adept at dispatching the choking axioms of art is undeniably gratifying and I sincerely look forward to sharing that journey with you.

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