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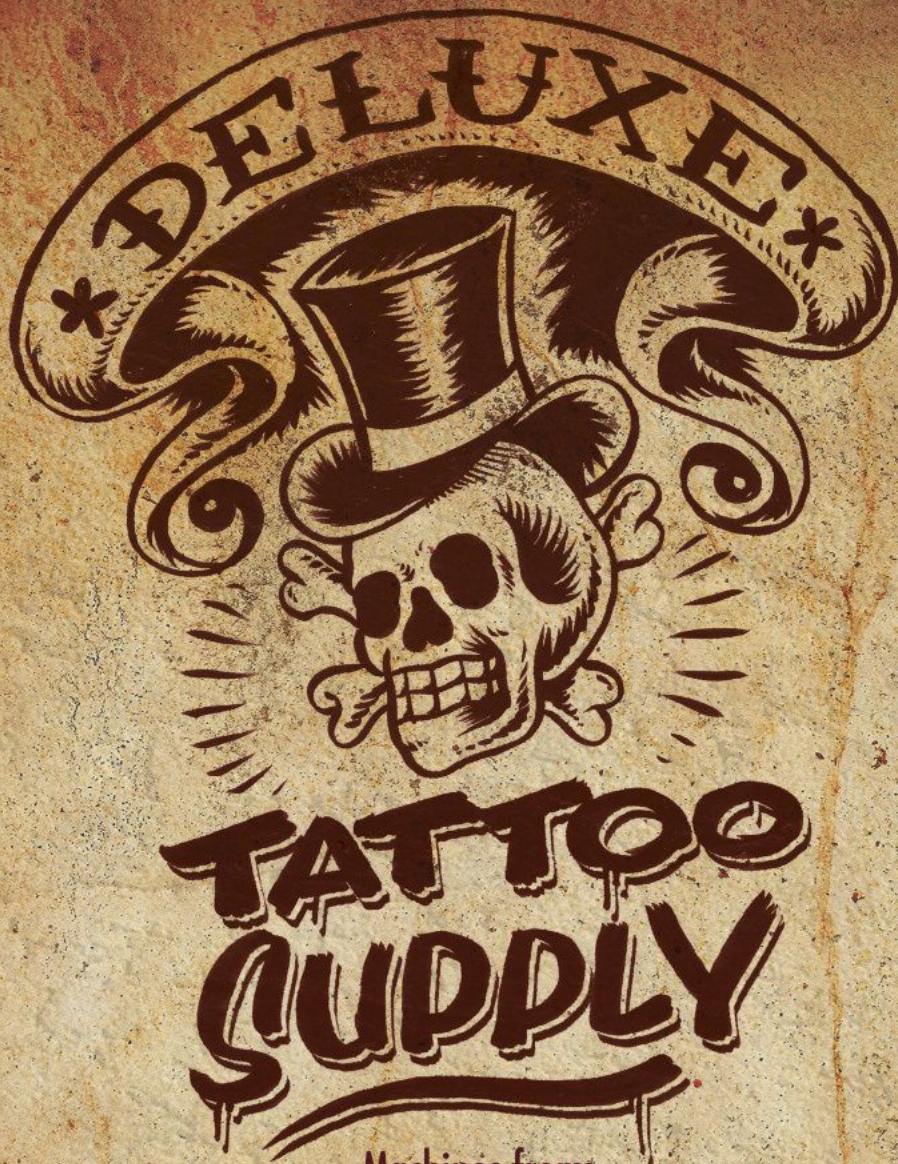


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Images must be high resolution (300) and sized at 100mm by 150mm. The disc needs to be labelled with the artist & studio name. Or email them to galler@totaltattoo.co.uk

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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.

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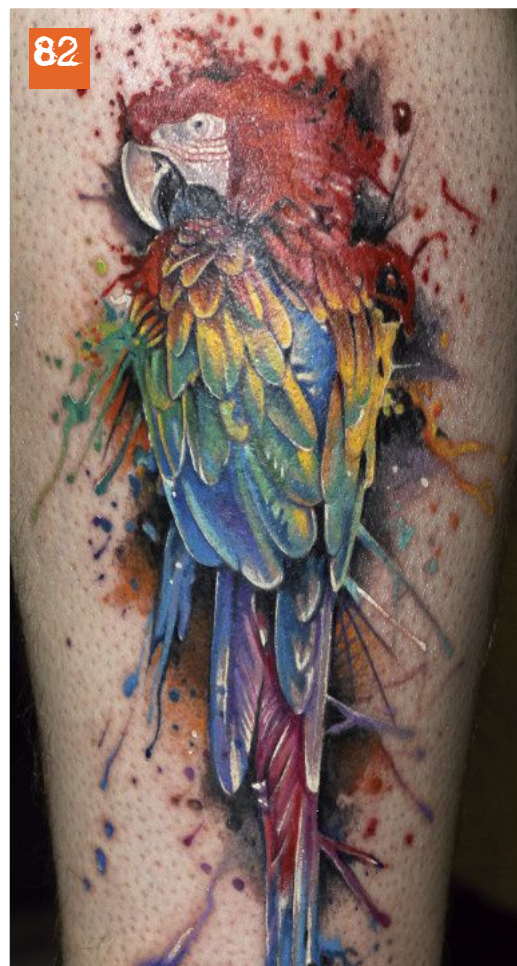
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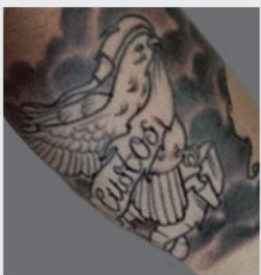
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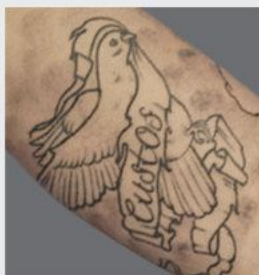
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EDITORIAL 131

When you've got writer's block, and you've been staring at a screen or a blank piece of paper for a prolonged period of time, the rule of thumb is just write something, *anything*... just do it! After all, what's the worst that can happen? So that's what this Editorial is: the result of me 'just doing it'.

When you've recorded an interview with an artist, you have a great framework to hang your words off; when you're writing an article about something, you have the indisputable facts to weave your warbling around; but when you have nothing but a blank piece of paper in front of you and there is no map follow, things can get a little tricky.

I can now imagine why a tattoo artist might dread those five little words: "Just do whatever you want". Of course, what that phrase really means is "I don't know what I want, but I sure as hell know what I don't want". There is no trap more booby for a young or inexperienced artist to fall into.

More often than not creativity needs a nudge, a muse, something to fire it up. That is the job of the customer. It is their part of the deal. Oh, and to sit still and shut up, of course. So give your artist some ideas and you will soon have your expectations exceeded, if you have chosen your artist wisely. Mind you, if I actually got what's in my mind's eye tattooed on me, I wouldn't go out in the daylight hours... seriously!

Of course, giving your artist an idea is one thing, but the other end of the spectrum won't be appreciated: a seven-page email with exact instructions, containing all the elements that must be included in said tattoo; the approximate size they need to be; the GPS co-ordinates of each one of them; and, of course, the all-important meaning behind them. Want to crush any creativity out of an artist? This is the approach you want to be taking.

So this is what you get when you 'just do it'... random thoughts. You don't want a tattoo like this, do you? No, I didn't think so. I have a deadline, but thankfully there isn't one when you decide to get tattooed. Take your time, trust your artist and remember, all good things come to those who wait. After all, 'Just Do It' is merely an advertising slogan.

James



'Just play. Have fun. Enjoy the game'

Michael Jordan

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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

↻ TATTOO HISTORY FINDS A HOME IN NEW YORK

Over 150 years ago in lower Manhattan, a German sailor named Martin Hildebrandt opened the first permanent tattoo premises in the United States. Thirty two years, later in 1891, the first electric tattoo machine was patented by Samuel O'Reilly, also in New York City, and the first generation of modern era tattooists made its home on Chatham Square and the infamous Bowery. Tattooing was banned in NYC in 1961 and wasn't re-legalised in the city until 1997... the same year that Daredevil Tattoo opened its doors for business.



The museum is open during regular shop hours, noon until 10pm every day. Co-owner of Daredevil Tattoo, Michelle Myles says "We're hoping to be a global destination for the tattoo community and anybody else who is interested in the history of the Lower East Side of Manhattan and the Bowery."

For more about the museum, and the fascinating history of tattooing in New York, check out this cool short film.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ml2AeL-awUE



In 2013 Daredevil Tattoo relocated to a new space at 141 Division Street, just a couple of blocks from Chatham Square and the Bowery. Their new studio is also home to the collection of historic tattoo artefacts amassed by co-owner Brad Fink over the 27 years of his tattoo career. Among the gems in his collection are a Thomas Edison engraving pen (the invention on which the first tattoo machine patent was based), various antique machines and a large collection of flash including work by Samuel O'Reilly himself.



↻ RIDE WITH SAILOR JERRY

It's summer! Here at Total Tattoo we can think of nothing better than hitting the open road on a motorcycle or enjoying a spiced rum cocktail (just not at the same time of course!) so when Sailor Jerry, purveyors of the finest rum, got in touch and told us all about The Ride 2015, we felt compelled to share. This is a 16-day road trip that runs from August 16th through to September 6th. Sailor Jerry has teamed up with London-based bike builders Kingdom of Kicks to build a totally badass 1950s Panhead Harley Davidson to munch the miles. The crew, consisting of James Jordon from Kingdom of Kicks, BMX rider Nathan Williams and tattooist Simon Erl, will take to the road, going to London, Brighton, Cornwall, Edinburgh, Leeds and Cardiff. Along the way they will stop off at various points for a spot of surfing, skateboarding, barbecuing and live music. You can join them on any of the legs, hang out with the crew, or head to one of the events. If you want to be part of it, head to www.housepr.com/sailor-jerry-presents-the-ride/ and find out where you can jump on board. It's what summer was made for!



Shoptalk

ARTIST WANTED - 10 Volt

Tattoo in Coventry are looking for a Black and Grey/Realistic tattooer to join their busy team. The lucky applicant will have a strong portfolio and three years minimum shop experience. Contact them at 10voltcoventry@gmail.com and send a few examples of your work.

ARTIST WANTED - Electric

Punch Tattoo are looking for another custom artist to join the team at their studio in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire (30 mins from London Liverpool Street Station). The position is for an excellent artist with a strong preference for Black and Grey and Realism. Initially 2 days a week, possibly leading to full time. You must have a minimum of 3 years studio experience, be clean, tidy and punctual, and have a good attitude towards your work and your customers (no egos!) Email your contact details, with a brief description of your previous experience and 5 examples of your most recent work, to electricpunchtattoo@hotmail.com or via electricpunchtattoo.co.uk

↻ MIND THE GAP REMIX

Strange bedfellows perhaps, but French tattooist Loïc Lavenu (better known as Xoil) has teamed up with clothing giant Gap to produce a limited edition t-shirt for their Remix Project. Eleven cutting-edge artists were chosen in all, and their brief was to recreate the Gap logo through their own mind's eye. Eleven cool t's were created and are available from www.gap.co.uk for the princely sum of £22.95.



BIOMETRIC INK RECOGNITION?

With one in five Americans having a tattoo these days, it's not really surprising that the FBI is looking at developing a computer program with the ability to identify people based on their body art. And if Uncle Sam gets the technology, you can bet your bottom dollar it will soon make its way across the pond. There is a lot of research going on into tattoo matching technology, and it's getting very accurate apparently. Not a particularly comforting thought perhaps, but having said that, tattoos have long been used as a way of identifying both the perpetrators and the victims of crime. So is there really anything sinister about using computer technology instead of good old-fashioned human eyesight? Let us know what you think by emailing editor@totaltattoo.co.uk

↻ VATICAN, TATICAN

Lynton Lasers from Manchester have landed quite possibly the strangest gig a tattoo removal company could get. They have been hired to remove dirt from priceless artworks in and around St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. As chairman of the company Andy Charlton explains, "The laser light heats up the dirt and blasts it off, but it's self-limiting, so it doesn't also heat up the paint underneath. It's similar to removing a tattoo, where you want to blast away the ink without damaging the skin."

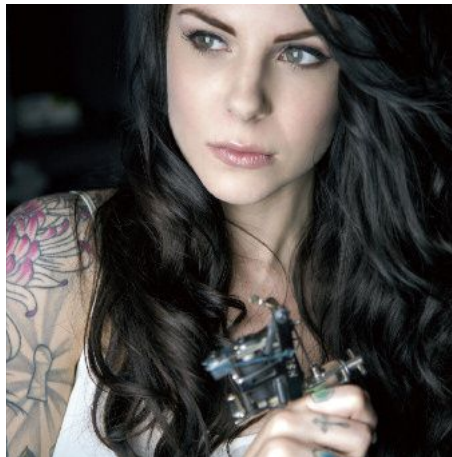


↻ THE POWER OF THE SEMICOLON

You may have seen a trend emerging for tattoos of semicolons. Project Semicolon aims to help and support those who suffer from depression, suicidal thoughts or self harm. This particular punctuation mark was chosen as the symbol of the campaign because it symbolises where a writer could have ended a sentence, but chose not to. As the campaign's website www.projectsemicolon.com puts it, "The author is you and the sentence is your life."

Even if mental illness has not affected you directly, there is every chance that it has touched someone you know. The fact it has no physical symptoms means it can be almost undetectable, and people who suffer from it can be very good at concealing it from friends and family. Project Semicolon encourages anyone who is suffering from mental illness to draw a semicolon on their wrist. It doesn't have to be a tattoo, but many people have chosen to ink it permanently – which only goes to show the power and depth of the emotions associated with these difficult illnesses.

↻ HTC INK PROJECT



Mobile phone manufacturer HTC are launching a series of limited edition phones "celebrating art, design, and individuality". The tattoo-inspired HTC One M9, with its mirror-polished dual-tone body, is a collaboration between super model Jourdan Dunn and British tattoo artist Cally-Jo (who is based at New York's Grit & Glory studio). Those interested can register their interest at www.htc.com/uk/ink/



Shoptalk

ARTIST WANTED - Sword and Sparrow Tattoo in Manchester are looking for a tattoo artist to share the busy workload in their modern studio. The successful applicant must have a portfolio of good clean work - nothing less! Get in touch, with some examples of your recent work, via swordandsparrow@gmail.com or www.swordandsparrow.com



BOOK REVIEW

ABC - Tattoo Artists Illustrate the Alphabet

US\$ 12.99 (in a child-friendly padded cover!)
Available from www.oosbooks.com

For this book, 26 tattooists from around the world were each commissioned to illustrate a letter of the alphabet. The result is a volume of brilliantly executed artworks, all in a different style. Every piece is imaginative, and every one of them successfully showcases the artist's talent whilst appealing to children too. It's difficult to single out any favourites... but I have to mention the Vegetables by Kelly Violet, which are reminiscent of a Rorschach test, and the quirky composition of a Bullfrog sat on a Brain by Andrea 'Antikorpo' Lanzi. The publishers say that they want this book to be "a special tribute to kids, parents and families who are loyal to loving ink and loving art", and I think it is exactly that. I bought it for my daughter... but if I'm honest, she won't be getting her grubby little hands on it for a little while yet!

Lizzy Longstaff



Correction corner

The portrait of Winston Churchill in our Tattoo Tea Party feature in **Issue 128** should have been credited to **Ollie Tye** of Cosmic Monsters Inc. Ollie also fell foul of the caption gremlins in our Liverpool Tattoo Convention coverage in **Issue 130** Sorry Ollie...



In our coverage of Ink & Oil in **Issue 130** we featured a portrait of Beetlejuice. It was captioned as 'artist unknown' - but not any longer! It was done by **Jamie Wilson** of Inked and Pretty. Credit where credit's due

Our Liverpool Tattoo Convention in **Issue 130** contained some incorrect information. We've been asked to point out that Banana Tattoo was not a tattoo school but a tattoo experience with instruction, the idea being that the general public could have a go and get some idea of how it feels to tattoo (on a banana skin, that is...)

SO NEAR, YET SO SPA



As the global growth of tattooing continues, and more and more people get themselves some ink, it seems even the staunchest of adversaries are feeling compelled to review their anti-tattoo stance. The Japan Tourism Agency has begun a nationwide survey looking into the reasons why hot springs and spas around the country have a 'no tattoos' policy. Many tourists visiting Japan are caught out by this and find the restrictions hard to understand. 3700 inns, hotels and public baths have been quizzed as to why they turn away the tattoo wearer. One major hotel group in Japan recently announced that they would be supplying patches so that their guests could cover up their body art. Japan Tourism Agency commissioner Shigeto Kubo was reported as saying, "Many foreign tourists have tattoos for fashion and ethnic reasons. *Onsen* (hot springs and the resorts that have developed around them) are an important resource and a place where visitors can learn about Japanese culture and the Japanese way of life. We would like to get a better grasp of the situation and deal with it."



TOGETHER FOR ART, TOGETHER FOR NEPAL

The organisers of the Nepal Tattoo Convention have decided to offer for sale the statues that were originally intended as competition trophies. The money raised will go towards the charity Tattoois and Toilets (www.facebook.com/tattooistsfornepal) which aims to provide much-needed sanitation for villages in this catastrophically earthquake-damaged country. The 20cm tall statues, which are being sold for just £50 each, were hand carved by a Nepali Artist and there are of course only a limited number available. Check out www.facebook.com/NepalTattoo for more details. Email info@nepaltattooconvention.com to place an order or find out about postage costs and options. This is a unique opportunity to help Nepal and at the same time acquire a beautiful piece of art and history.

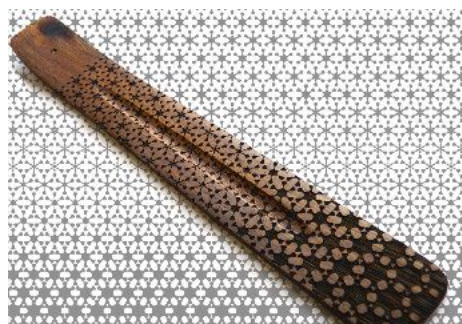
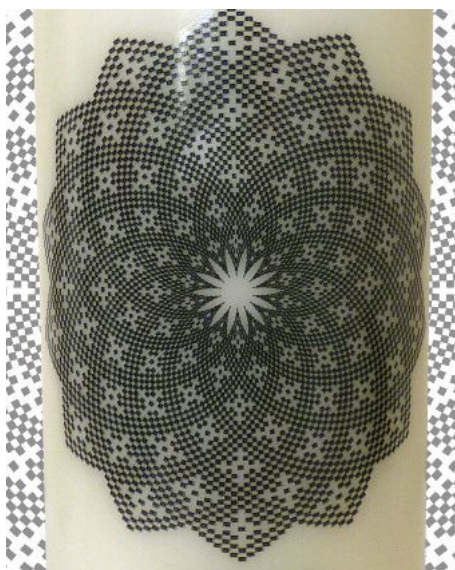
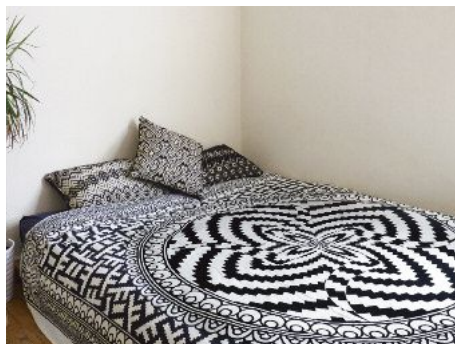
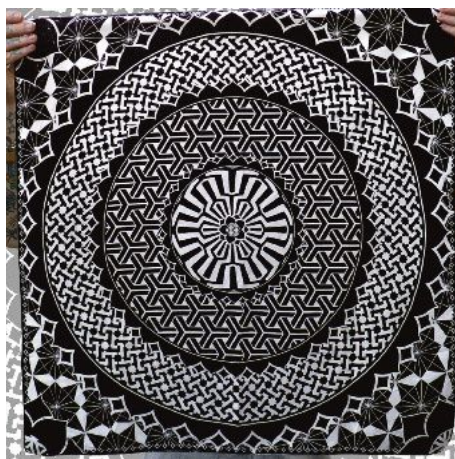


OBJECTS OF DESIRE

The last seven years have been something of a whirlwind for 27-year old artist and designer Matt Manson. It all began when, aged 20, he moved to London to study surface pattern design and screen printing. "I got very interested in the craft of screen printing and the socialist politics of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement," he explains. "Whilst I was still studying, I contacted Flavor Paper in New York. They make screen printed wallpaper by hand and I was lucky enough to get offered work with them. I dropped out of uni and moved to Brooklyn to work as a printer, hand-printing wallpaper for clients such as Jay Z and Lenny Kravitz. It was a lot to take in at quite an impressionable age." When Matt's visa ran out, he returned to the UK but soon relocated to Amsterdam to work as a designer at Marcel Wanders, a prestigious interior design company. Matt says, "It was while I was in Amsterdam that I had the idea of combining my love of geometric art with well-made bespoke products, to start producing my own collection of items."

From that point on it was a voyage of discovery into the world of repeating patterns – starting with the swastika, though perhaps for different reasons than you might think. "My first reason for using the swastika within my work was actually a very practical one. I needed to hide the seams in my pattern! I found I kept using it, and this led me to research its true meaning. I discovered Moorish patterns, Native American quilts, Celtic knots and so on. Through this I found a similar ideology going on in the tattoo world and I started to see parallels in design ideas."

Matt's work is beautiful, and his product range is growing all the time. His latest collaboration is with 'Stronger Than All' hand-crafted leather in Cheltenham, to produce a range of wallets and lanyards. To check out the complete range head to www.mattmanson.co.uk



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Xed has recently been forced to retire from tattooing due to a serious medical condition which has left him currently unable to use his arms and legs. We, the tattoo family, are appealing for donations to enable Xed to fund his rehabilitation, because the specialist medical equipment and services that he needs are far beyond both his and the NHS's budgets. A gofundme account has been set up and further information can be found at...

www.facebook.com (and search for) **Xed Le Head fundraising page**

We thank you in advance.

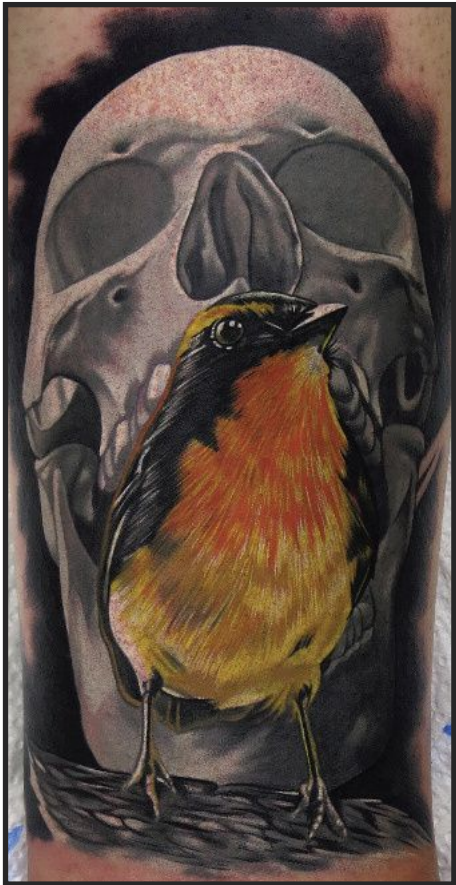
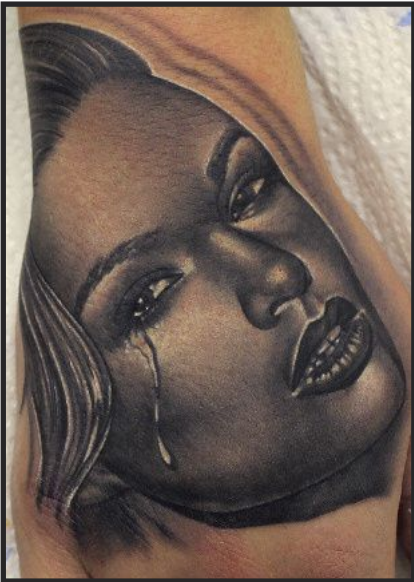
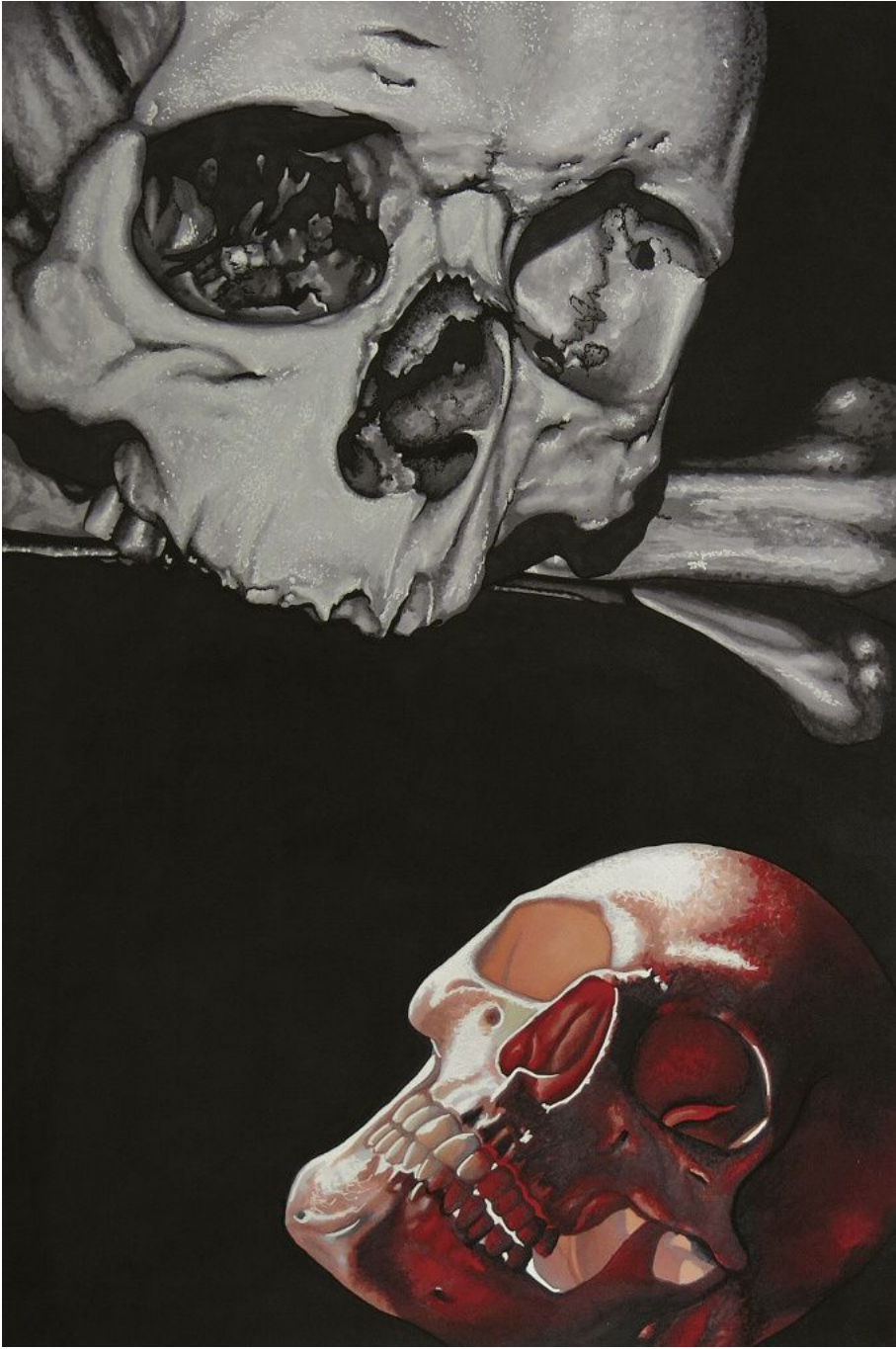
Xed
LeHead



Phatt German is neither fat nor German, as it happens. I guess that's why it took me so long to figure out who the hell he was when he first popped up on the convention circuit. All I knew was that so many times when a great piece of work won an award or came to be photographed it would be credited to this mystery artist. But eventually I put a face to the name. Alec Linsjo (Phatt's real name) is a man of few words, so it took a while to get to know him, but I was finally able to sit down with him at No Regrets Tattoo Studio in Cheltenham for a cup of tea and a chat.

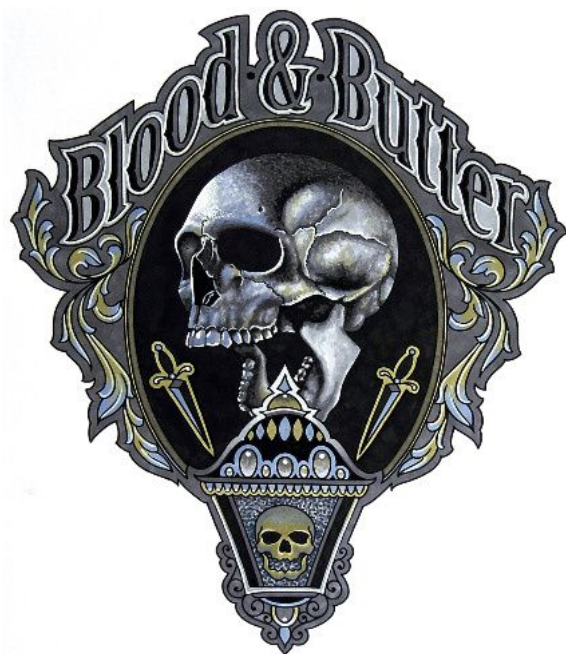
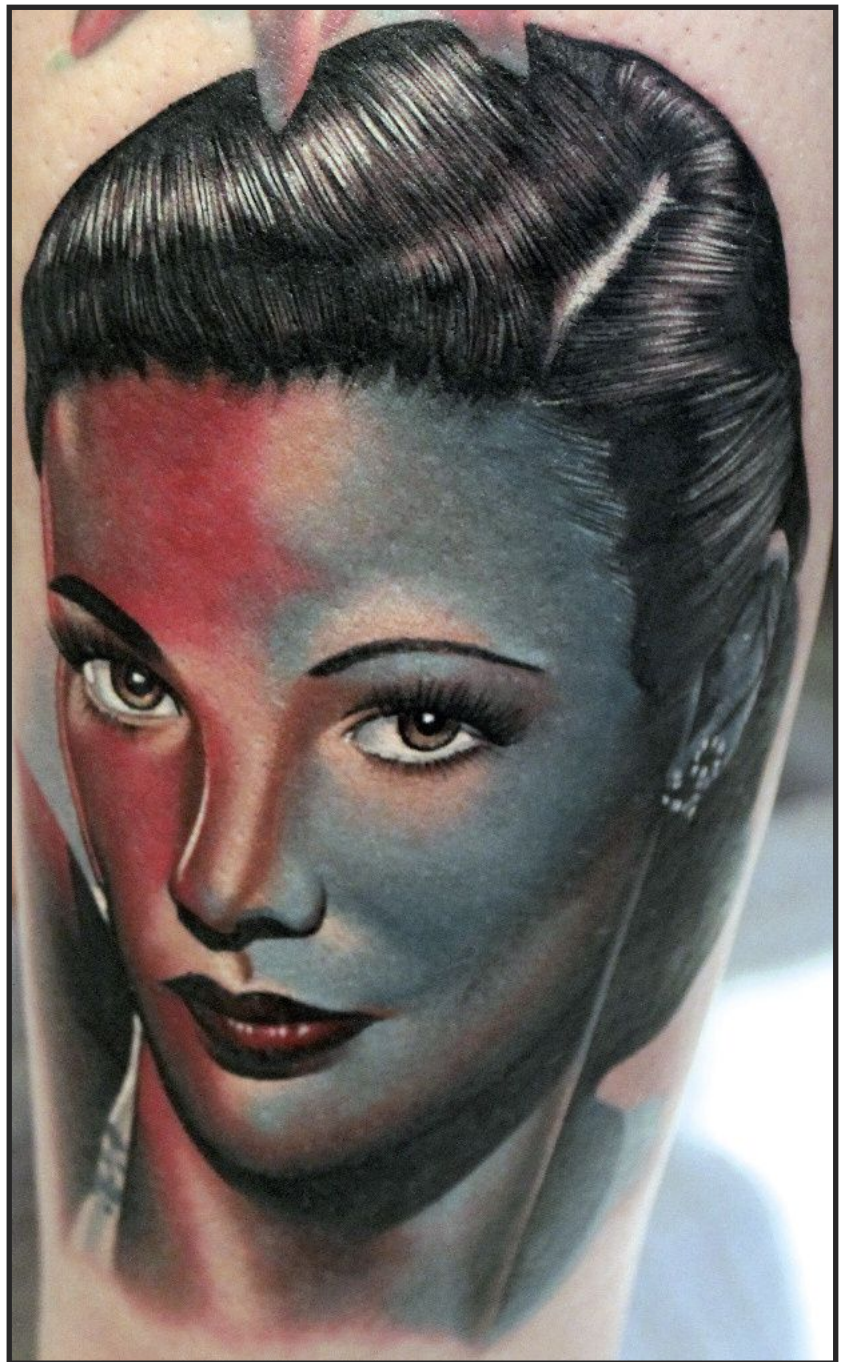
Alec was born in Sweden in 1984 and raised there by his mother. She was a sailor in the merchant navy and a lover of tattoos – a wild child, and a woman ahead of her time. Many of Alec's earliest memories feature tattooing, including a trip to Royal Tattoo in Denmark for his mum to get tattooed by Henning Jørgensen. (Years later, Alec got his own piece from Henning to celebrate his 30th birthday.)







“When I was very little, my mum already had four tattoos,” Alex recalls, “which was pretty unusual in Sweden at that time. There were no tattooists where we lived so we always had to go further afield. With most artists, you just had to turn up and wait in line, so we would travel, say, six hours and if we were lucky my mum would get a tattoo. At one point mum had a boyfriend who had a tattoo studio. I remember hanging out there. I was around 10 and they would have me run to the shops and buy beer, cigarettes and porn mags; the three essentials! I would sit in the studio and draw flash. I never thought I would become a tattooist but I was definitely interested in that style of art.”



At the grand old age of 13 Alec got his first real tattoo. “It was done by a guy called Yari. His shop was in a garage. It was full of bikers and I was shitting myself. I had around £50. I walked in and asked him what I could get for that. He told me to look in his folder. He didn’t ask my age or anything. I started to flick through and it had just what you might expect in a flash book from that time: a bit of tribal, some skulls, a scorpion and Donald Duck in a suit. You can guess which one the 13 year old went for!”





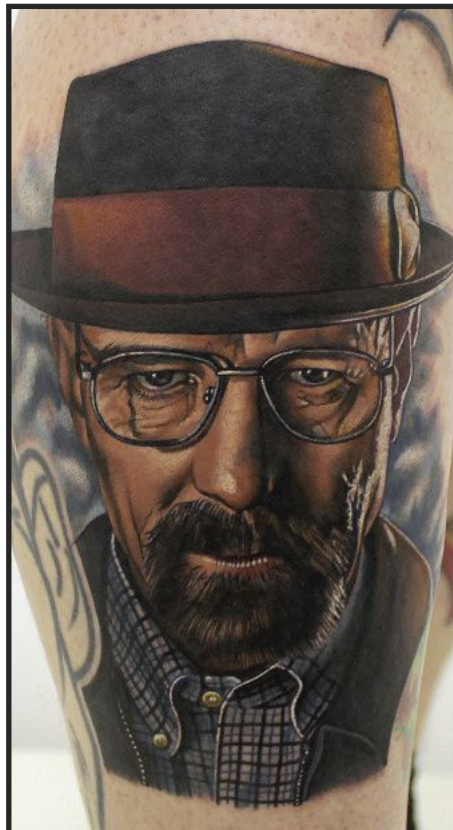
“Mum knew I was going to get a tattoo. I went with an older friend who was about 20 and covered in tattoos. I think mum may have said to him, ‘Make sure he doesn’t get anything stupid.’ It was really cool and not a bad tattoo for back then. I was king of the school.” I ask Alec what his teachers thought about it. “It was such a strange thing for them to have to deal with. Perhaps it didn’t seem like such a bad thing at the time. I didn’t live in a rough area and tattoos didn’t have any stigma attached to them. I never thought about the placement of it or getting a job. I don’t remember anybody saying anything negative. That came later, when I was more heavily covered.”

Despite his love of tattoo art, Alec didn’t see it as a potential career. It wasn’t until he took a break from his job as a DJ in Spain, and headed home to re-group after a year of wearing his finest party pants, that an opportunity presented itself. “I had planned on going back to Spain but my Mum told me about a tattoo studio looking for an apprentice. I thought you had to have some sort of special gene to become a tattooist; it never occurred to me that I could do it. Mum said I should show them my drawings. I said, ‘What drawings?’ as I hadn’t kept anything. So I drew a few things and headed down to the shop. The owner took one look and told me to come back on Monday. That was the start of my apprenticeship: 22nd January 2007.”





'A realistic tattoo will last as long as a traditional one if it's done properly'





Alec started tattooing full-time a year later and, after three years, he moved to the UK. He is a firm believer in learning to tattoo the basics well before you move on to any particular specialism, and this is a lesson that he is drumming into his own apprentice's head at the moment. "When and where I started tattooing, things were not labelled like they are today. Nobody asked for a traditional sleeve or a Japanese backpiece; people just saw something that looked cool and they got it. That's just the kind of shop it was. It was only when I moved to the UK that people seemed to be a lot more switched on to what they wanted and more educated with regard to what was available. That encouraged me to study a certain style. The UK has a great tattoo history and is really progressive. When I moved here I really started to understand tattooing."



Soon after settling here, Alec started to show up on the tattoo media's radar. "I was happy doing traditional tattooing. I always thought portraits were too complicated... But when I eventually did my first one and posted it on Facebook, I went from having 100 'likes' for a tattoo to 1000. And boom! The bookings came flooding in, based on that one tattoo."

"Once I'd realised I *could* do that kind of work, I just continued experimenting. Although people assume I specialise in realism, in a month I might only do three portraits. I find it really difficult to label my style. I envy people who have it all figured out, but I don't. I did a skull yesterday that was supposed to be realistic, but it ended up being a cross between a Victor Chil tattoo and a Dave Tevenal piece. I like to stay loose in the planning and see what happens. Sometimes you have the guts to go for something crazy and it usually works out. That's what I love about Victor Chil. He has all areas covered, he is so good."



As we chatted about adventures within tattooing, the conversation turned to what Alec is concentrating on now – and a subject that has become somewhat contentious over the last few years – namely longevity and how it can be achieved. “I want to do tattoos that look good forever,” Alec tells me. “As I get better, I get faster, and that means less trauma and easier healing. I use a lot of white and I have found a way to make that last longer. People say it’s only for the photo, but the way I do it now, almost in blocks, it keeps the ink in there. There are so many factors to longevity –




including the skin you are tattooing of course, and aftercare, both of which are out of the artist's control – but a realistic tattoo will last as long as a traditional one if it's done properly, with understanding. You'll have to ask me again in ten years to see if I'm right.” The process of refining his art is clearly very important to Alec. “I'm trying to simplify my tattoos but still keep that feeling of realism. Perfecting the quality of my work really interests me and that's a constant process, tattoo by tattoo. When I feel happy maybe I will take a course, watercolour painting or something like that, and then the process will


start all over again. But, for the time being, I'm really focusing on quality before I try to make any more changes artistically.”

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Jimmie Skuse is the grandson of Les Skuse, who founded The Bristol Tattoo Club and is surely one of the most famous names in British tattoo history. In the last two issues of Total Tattoo Magazine we brought you the Skuse family story, in exclusive and fascinating conversations with Jimmie. Now, in this third and final instalment, it's Jimmie's turn to talk about his own life, his unique travelling museum, and The Bristol Tattoo Club today.



BRISTOL TATTOO CLUB

PART 3: THE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Jimmie was born in January 1962. "Made in Brighton and born in Bristol," is how he describes it. "As a kid I was always aware of tattooing, because of my dad and my granddad. I remember walking down the alley past my granddad's shop. I would look in, and it was a very scary place for a small boy. In them days, tattoo shops were full of stuffed bats and skeletons. None of us had televisions, so we weren't used to seeing those kinds of things and it was really quite frightening. But of course I would brave it to get a ten bob note from my granddad for my birthday..." Jimmie had to go right through the shop to get to where Les was working, and Les had a silk-lined box with a plastic replica of a severed Maori head that terrified the life out of him. "I used to push my brother towards it" Jimmie recalls, "and he would scream!"

As he got older the shop became less daunting and Jimmie discovered much that was of interest to an adolescent boy. "Tattoo shops were still very much the domain of men, and in granddad's shop – like many others – there were men's magazines in the racks. So I grew up learning to read with Knave, Fiesta and Men Only," he tells me. We talk about how things have changed. Old-fashioned tattoo shops, with their covered-over windows, had a real air of mystery and foreboding. You needed to be brave to go in. Jimmie feels that with the arrival of the modern, welcoming, glass-fronted hairdresser / coffee shop style of studio much of that magic has been lost. As is often the way, progress is tinged with a sense of sadness.



Jimmie with Doc Forest



Jimmie with his father Danny

In 1973 Les Skuse died and Jimmie's father Danny took over the shop at 71 Mina Road. The whole family moved into the flat above, where they stayed for three years before moving to the house that Danny's widow Carol still lives in today.



Jimmie's father
Danny Skuse

I wanted to know if there was any pressure on Jimmie to follow in his father's footsteps and become a tattooist. "I was always interested in tattooing," he tells me, "so I was keen to learn. Towards the end of 1973 my dad started to teach me. At first all I did was cover up names. Back then, you'd do it with a flower and nine times out of ten it would look OK. When I was fourteen or fifteen, I was sent to work with Ronnie Ackers during the summer holidays – exactly the same as what my granddad did with my father."

I asked Jimmie what he learnt during this time. "I would watch customers choose their design from a sheet of flash, then they'd sit down and Ronnie would do the tattoo freehand. He'd send the guy over to me for the colouring in, and I would look at all flash on the wall to see what colours to use... and realise that this tattoo was nothing like any of the ones on the sheets! Once, I asked Ron about it and he told me, 'Jimmie, the guy wanted a bird with a heart and a scroll and that's just what he got'. That's how things were in them days. The guy spent ages picking a design and got nothing like it."



Jimmie Skuse age 11



Jimmie with other family members

"Dave Fleet [of *Abracadabra*] once told me a great story," Jimmie continues. "He was three quarters of the way through tattooing a black panther on the back of a bloke's arm when the bloke says to him, 'I've always wanted a tiger on my arm...' Quick as a flash Dave asks, 'When do you leave here to go home from your holiday?' 'Tomorrow,' comes the reply. 'Good,' says Dave. 'Well you keep this dressing on for twenty four hours and don't take it off until you get home'."



Jimmie also did a stint with Doc Price, another good friend of Les and Danny's. Knowing he could do colours and basic line work, Doc gave Jimmie a design of Casper the Friendly Ghost to tattoo. "It was easy, because the lines are wobbly anyway," Jimmie tells me. "And that was it. Suddenly I became the king of Casper the Ghost tattoos. I came back to Bristol, drew up a sheet of Casper flash and put it on the wall in between my dad's and granddad's designs. I was only a teenager, and I felt right proud. I was convinced it was the best flash ever. But next thing I know my dad's booked me in a customer for a Casper tattoo the following Saturday. I'm shitting myself! The bloke comes in, I do the tattoo, Dad takes a look at it and says, 'Yeah, that'll do', and from then on I help out in the shop every school holiday. My dad would do the lines and I would finish them. Late-night Fridays and all day Sundays I would open the shop on my own, and I would do anything that came through the door."



Jimmie with his brother and sister

Jimmie admits to being a workaholic. As a youngster he would always work weekends and he never really went down the drinking and partying route, and when he finally opened his own shop it was strictly seven days a week. I asked Jimmie if he'd ever wished for another career? "Back then tattooing was never very busy, so we all had second jobs. Even artists like Ian of Reading stacked shelves for a while. When I was seventeen a friend of mine started a business and for a while I helped him out during the week and tattooed on Friday nights and at weekends. Then Bristol got lots of tattoo shops and the young guys would slag off the older guys – as they always do until they themselves have been around a while and learn to respect the old timers. Dad's shop got quiet and eventually he decided to knock it on the head. I got out of tattooing altogether for a while."



Jimmie, Ken Rivers, Rambo and Willie Robinson



Doc Price with Jimmie

“Then one day, about ten years later, I visited Chris Williams' studio in Cheddar. We got chatting, and next thing I know I'm working there Fridays and weekends. I was still doing my sales rep job during the week. Then dad decides – out of the blue – that he's going to be working the Mantra Tattoo Convention in Cheltenham! I drove us there and went along to help out. Dad starts tattooing this guy's leg, and the bloke jumps about three feet in the air screaming. In those days you dipped the needle in the ink once, and lined really fast until the ink ran out, so I had to step in and take over. The bloke says, 'Thank God you're doing it. Can you finish it?' Next thing, dad's saying, 'Got

another one for you here, boy. And another... and another...' – so that's me back into tattooing. I worked in other people's shops until 2003, then I opened my own shop in Keynsham where I worked until 2012.”



Jimmie tattooing

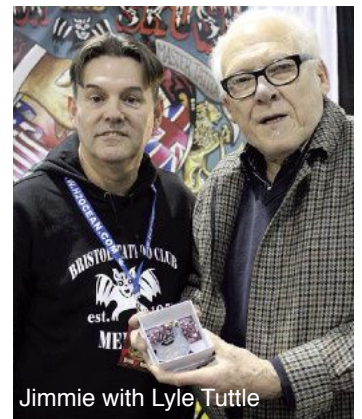
It was early in 2012 that Jimmie had his first heart attack, and this signalled the need for him to slow down. “I don't really tattoo any more,” he tells me. “I miss the banter with the customers, but I don't regret stopping tattooing because my passion for history is much stronger and I prefer to focus on that. I do ink the occasional Bristol Tattoo Club bat logo on people who really want it (and who I feel really deserve it). But I never go anywhere with the intention of tattooing. I just do it when get collared! I visited Paul 'Rambo' Ramsbottom's private museum in Manchester and ended up doing the bat logo on a young lad while I was there, sometimes it just happens like that”

Jimmie is well known as a collector of tattoo artefacts and memorabilia. He takes his travelling museum round the convention circuit, showing different selections of items



Danny Bullman, Andy Morris, Jimmie and Micky Bee

each time. It's hard work and it requires immense dedication on his part. “Every convention I go to, I have to pack everything in the van, drive to the venue and set it all up, then sit there all weekend explaining things to people. I really appreciate it when a convention organiser gives me space for free – or even pays for my hotel room – but I still have to pay the petrol and feed myself... and that's after I've paid out to buy all the stuff in the first place.”

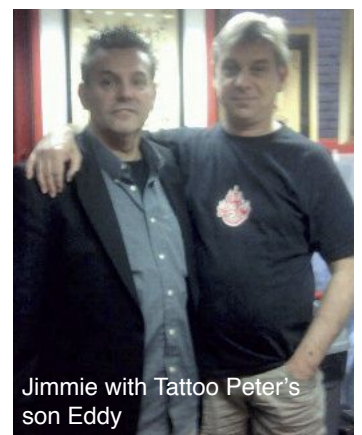


Jimmie with Lyle Tuttle

“I sacrifice a lot to keep this going, but I can't stop because it's my passion. I think it's more important to have this museum at a tattoo convention than, say, a five minute burlesque show.

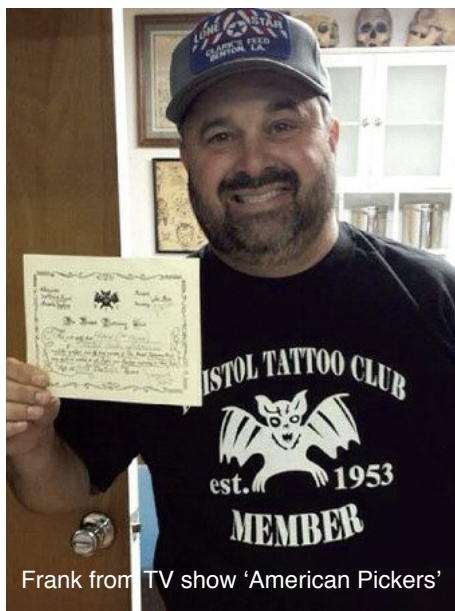


Jimmie tattooing Iain Trudgill



Jimmie with Tattoo Peter's son Eddy

The first convention I ever did was the North Lakes show and we have a lot of Bristol Tattoo Club members in Cumbria because of that. Rambo has gathered together a huge collection of fabulous stuff, and I understand and appreciate what he's done, but he keeps his museum private and I'm not like that. I believe our history needs to be seen and shared with everyone, so that people can understand how we came to be at this point in tattooing. Say a convention gets a thousand visitors; that's a thousand people who could come and take a look at the museum and learn something of our history. If it was kept in one place, like a traditional museum, the cost of the premises plus the staff and security would make it financially impossible. And how many people would come to see it each day?"



Frank from TV show 'American Pickers'



Charlie Sheen, Bristol Tattoo Club member

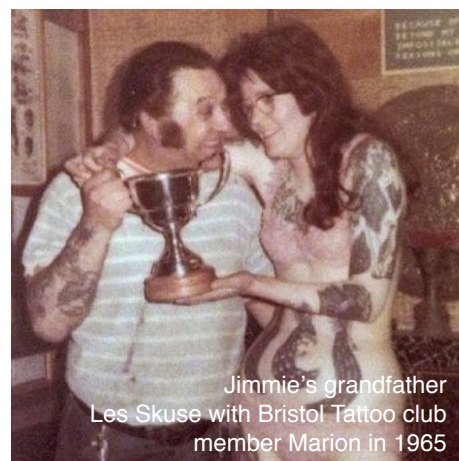


Jimmie with Bristol Tattoo Club members

Building a collection takes time. The internet is a great source of old tattoo equipment, and social media provides valuable contacts, but as Jimmie explains, "You do have to keep going on about it" (something he is well known for!) "It can take literally years to get hold of this stuff," he tells me. "and it's taken a while for people to realise that I'm not in it for financial gain. It's much more of an obsessive passion. I've been working on a book about Joseph Hartley. My granddad used his machines, and I obtained one from Derek Campbell, and then years later I managed to get hold of a couple more. I had one sheet of Joseph Hartley flash, then suddenly someone heard I was putting this book together and now I have seven sheets. At the moment I am trying to find anything to do with the company Ultra who were big suppliers in the seventies."

So which item from his vast collection does Jimmie treasure most? "Well obviously I have personal stuff to do with my granddad," he says, "but I do also have an original 1876 Thomas Edison Electric Pen, the machine famous for starting modern electric tattooing. For me, it's the Holy Grail. There are only three in the country – mine, Rambo's, and the one in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London."

Jimmie recalls being aware of the importance of the Skuse family name very early on in life and regrets not gathering more historical pieces as a young man. "We went everywhere and everyone came to meet my granddad and my dad. I wish I had picked up more business cards. There were all these people coming to visit us from miles around. People like George Bone, Dennis Cockell, King Arthur, Jeff Baker... Once, in 1975, Lyle Tuttle came all the way from California to see us and we were out fishing!"



Jimmie's grandfather Les Skuse with Bristol Tattoo club member Marion in 1965



Jimmie with club members in Denmark



Jimmie with Marion in 2013

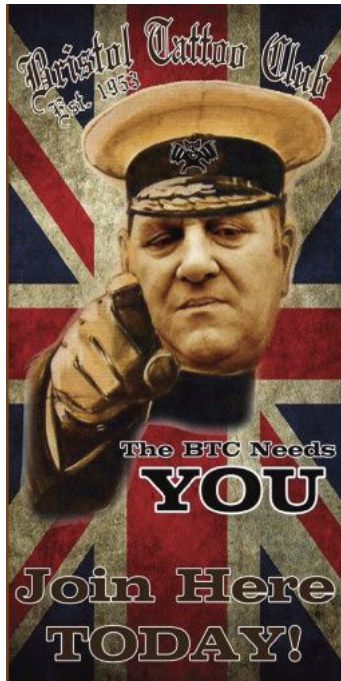
In talking about his own tattooing career, Jimmie has a humble opinion of himself. "I walk in taller men's shadows," he says. "I follow my granddad, who was a giant in tattooing, and my father, who was a huge character and did such a lot for the industry. They lead the way for me. Everyone who is here now owes so much to those who have gone before. I was bought up to respect my elders and I've never really promoted myself. I feel lucky to be a Skuse, but I believe everybody has to make their own way in life. I can never be a better tattooist than my father. Even if technically I was, people will always hold him in higher regard. And I am very happy with that. Maybe my niche will be in the history side of things and maybe people will remember me for that."



Four generations of the Skuse family (Danny with Jimmie and his son and grandson) pictured two weeks before Danny passed



Jimmie, Danny
Derek Hingham and Lyle Tuttle



What of the future? Jimmie has two sons, Ashley and Daniel. Ashley is doing very well for himself in the building trade; Daniel, the younger of the two, often accompanies his mum and dad to conventions and has already tried his hand at tattooing. The time isn't yet right for him to commit completely but Jimmie is happy to be patient. He's confident that Daniel will carry the Skuse name forward in the world of ink.



Jimmie with Crazy Philadelphia Eddie and Lyle Tuttle



And the Bristol Tattoo Club? Jimmie admits it can be a bit of a monster. "The Club took over my tattooing. You have to be organised and look after everybody. I am constantly being emailed for information by people doing college projects, or researching books, or trying to track down old pictures of their relatives. In time, I think Daniel will take over from me, and I will make sure it is all set up for an easy transition. I see myself as simply a custodian. My role is to safeguard our history to pass it on."

membership to the Club is buying direct from me and supporting the Club. Their money goes towards buying more artefacts and ensuring that our history has a strong future."

Only time will tell how much longer Jimmie will be able to bring his museum to conventions. His unique philosophy and dedication to keeping the past alive is very special and something to be treasured, and I would personally like to thank him for all his time and effort in collaborating on this series of features. Anyone wishing to join the Bristol Tattoo Club (the oldest tattoo club in the world) or support the museum can contact Jimmie through the website: www.bristoltattooclub.co.uk

Keeping this history alive requires funding. "Obviously anyone who buys a t-shirt, a tattoo machine or



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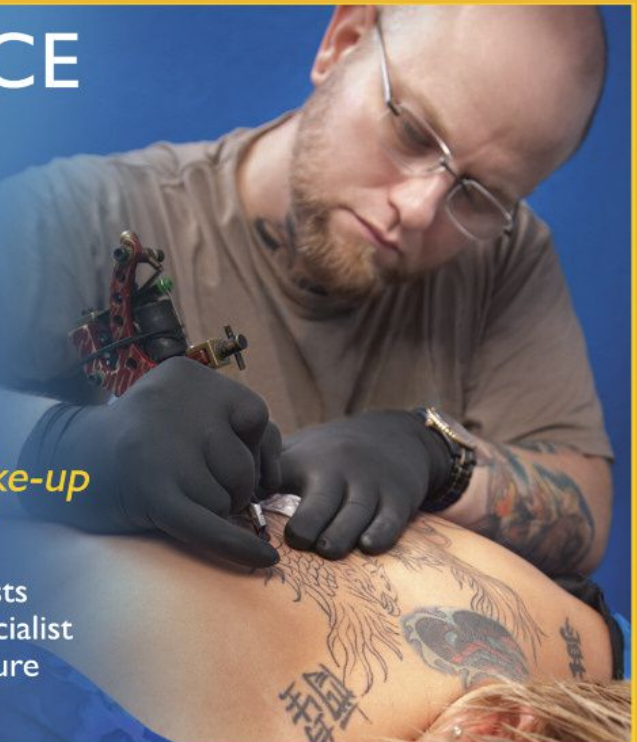
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BRISTOL TATTOO CONVENTION

In my editorial in *Total Tattoo* issue 127, I wrote about a fork in the road regarding ‘tattoo conventions’ and ‘tattoo shows’. A show could perhaps be defined as an event that revolves around tattooing but has loads of other good stuff to entertain the punters too (the Tattoo Tea Party is a great example). At the other end of the spectrum you have the pure tattoo convention, which exists for the sole purpose of bringing lovers of tattoo together to celebrate the art. That is exactly what the 1st Bristol Tattoo Convention was all about.

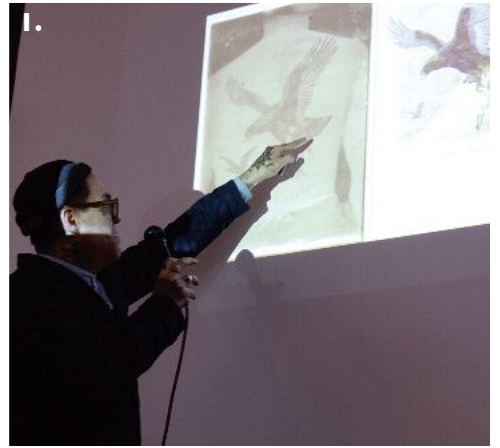
The city of Bristol has a special place in tattoo history. If you have been reading our three-part series on the Skuse family and the Bristol Tattoo Club, you will be up to speed on that. However it’s been a very long time since the city has hosted any kind of tattoo event, so whoever took the bull by the horns would be under pressure to make a ‘proper job’ of it, as we say in the West Country. That person was Fil from Broad Street Studio in Bath, and he certainly did Bristol proud.

His first job was to find the right venue, one that reflected Bristol’s unique flavour. The Passenger Shed in Brunel’s Old Station was perfect; it’s an outstanding Grade 1 listed Victorian building and part of one of the oldest railway stations in the world. The shed has 1,500 square meters of floor space so there was plenty of room. To Fil’s credit, he used every inch, but didn’t get greedy; the artists had spacious booths and the aisles were wide enough to allow people to stop

and chat, check out an artist working and flick through their portfolio without the whole convention grinding to a halt.

The intention was always to keep this event pure, and to shine the spotlight firmly on the artists and highlight their individual skills. Yes, there were traders but a lot of care was taken to make sure that they also brought their own unique brand of creativity to the event. If you are going to have a room full of the finest and most innovative tattoo artists in the country, your traders also need to be on song and, for me, they were.

Whether it was Alex Binnie selling his beautiful woodblock prints, Dapper Signs hand painting on site or Jackknife Posters’ incredible array of lo-fi loveliness (including their fantastic convention print, which simply flew out of the door), each trader had something different to offer and nobody seemed to be treading on anybody else’s toes.





1. matt lodder giving his talk
2. limited edition hand silk-screened poster
3. by bradley tompkins, frith st tattoo
4. by joe farrell, kilburn originals
5. by che crook, lowrider tattoo
6. by chad koeplinger (usa)
7. by mike wall, cult classic
8. by ozzy, dave ayres' skin deep
9. 'always outnumbered never outgunned'
10. alex binnie woodcut exhibition



11.



12.



13.



14.



15.



16.



- 11. by henrik g (france)
- 12. by teide, seven doors
- 13. by capex (italy)
- 14. by cesar, black garden tattoo
- 15. by marcus kuhn (holland)
- 16. unknown artist
- 17. by valerie vargas, modern classic tattoo
- 18. by max pniewski, southmead tattoo

The very gentle entertainment was all tattoo-related and had an educational theme. Dr Matt Lodder gave his talk about Sutherland Macdonald, the man at the forefront of tattooing at the end of the 1800s, whilst Jimmie Skuse was there with the Bristol Tattoo Club's museum and his own wealth of knowledge. All you had to do was ask. In the bar area Marcus Kuhn's excellent 'Gypsy Gentleman' film was showing, along with the fascinating movie 'Hori Smoku Sailor Jerry - The Life of Norman K. Collins'.

After the machines had stopped buzzing, it was party time at the Old Station's Tunnels venue; there was a cracking hog roast outside and Vince Ray's Loser Machine and Sicknote Steve supplied the musical entertainment.

There were many things that made the Bristol Tattoo Convention work so well but, at the heart of it, were the artists. When you have the likes of Duncan X working next to Curly, with Lal Hardy a couple of booths up from George Bone, and Ian Flower tattooing next to Marcus Kuhn, you know something a bit special is happening. People really wanted to be part of this show. Seven Doors Tattoo was there, as were Black Garden and Frith Street Tattoo; Jo Harrison, Matt Hunt and Hanumantra Lamar represented Modern Body Art; Higgins and Co were in the house, as were Southmead Tattoo, Matt Oddboy, Sam Ricketts, Nipper and Nick Baldwin. Capex travelled from Italy and was just one of many international guests. Even Ozzy from Dave Ayres' legendary Skin Deep Tattoo in Bristol came out of convention retirement for the occasion.

18.



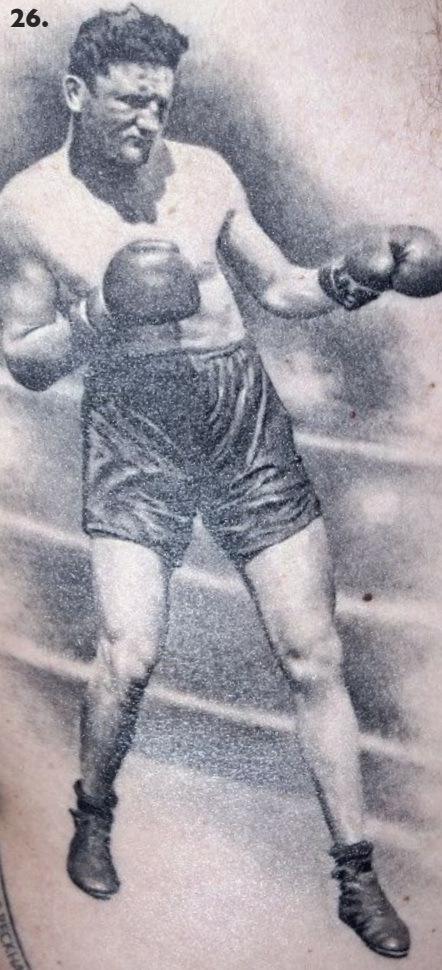
17.






- 19. by ben boston, the tattoo studio
- 20. by miss jo black, black inc tattoo studio
- 21. by ben parry, avon tattoo
- 22. the venue, brunel's old station
- 23. by ryan evans, new wave
- 24. by ethan jones, nala tattoo
- 25. by martin, avon tattoo
- 26. by george torrington, avon tattoo
- 27. by nipper, bridgend tattoo
- 28. by chris higgins, higgins & co
- 29. by martin, avon tattoo


By now I guess you're getting the message that I think this was a great tattoo convention. I talked with punters and artists and everybody seemed genuinely pleased to be there. Of course it wasn't perfect but no convention is on its first outing. It needs tweaks, but I take my hat off to Fil and his team for creating the tattoo event that they wanted, with love and respect. Long may it run.



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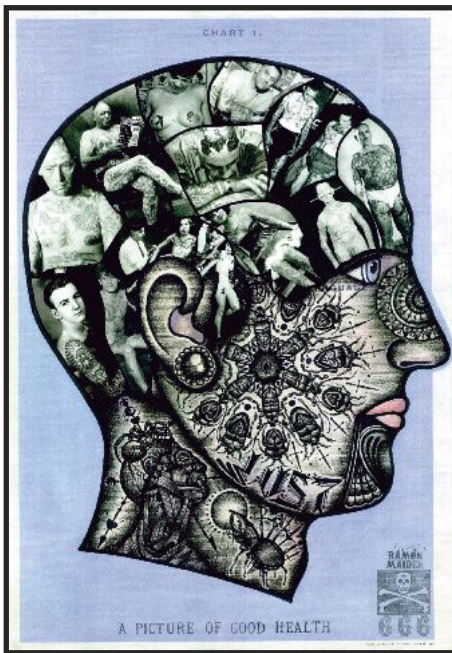
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Ramon Maiden

Interview by James Sandercock • Pictures by Ramon Maiden

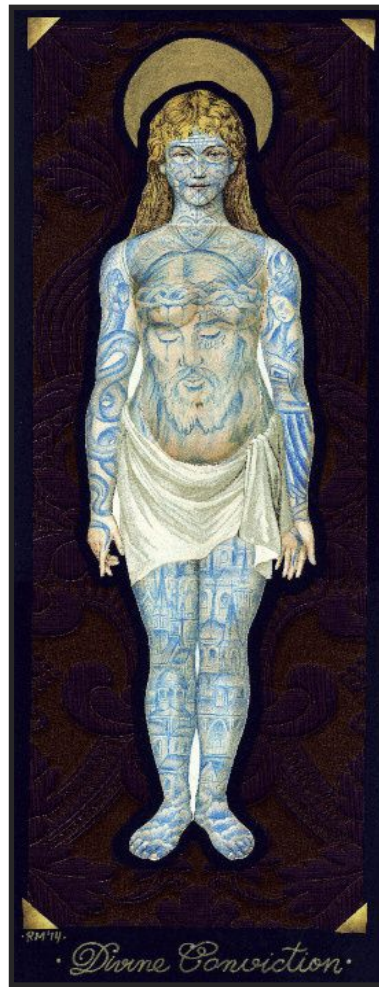
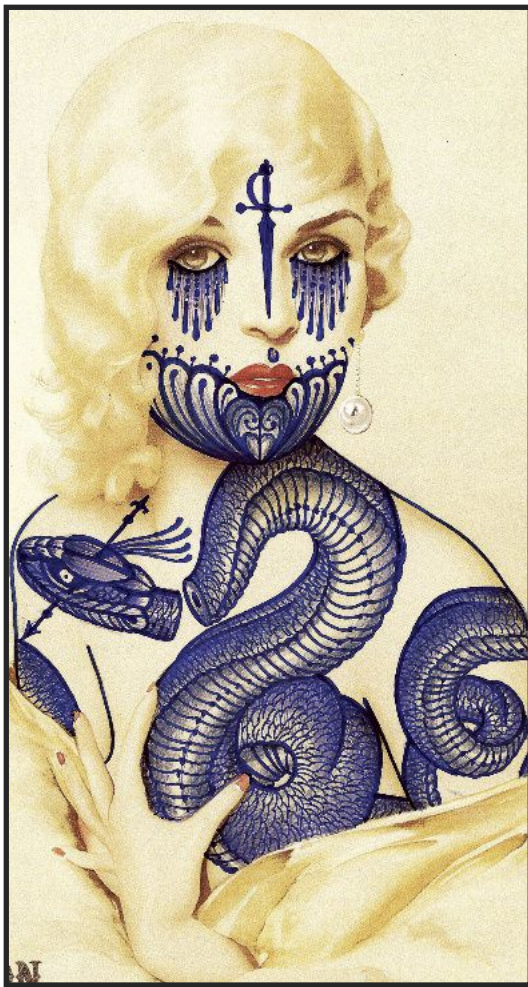


Spanish-born Ramon Maiden is very much a citizen of the world. His global wanderlust is matched only by his visual curiosity. Combine these two vital elements with his interest in history, politics and ancient religions – and his love for tattoo imagery – and you have a fantastic cocktail. The art he creates works on so many different levels. You can delve into his images as deep as you wish or simply marvel at the stunning graphic impact they have. We needed to know a little more about the artist who calls himself the Wanderlust King.

Ramon, can you tell us how you first discovered your creativity and was there any particular catalyst for it?

I've got distant childhood memories of doodling tattoos on famous historical figures... my textbooks and school materials were all covered in drawings. I still have some of them. I also used to draw on my own skin. I don't know why but ever since childhood I have felt strongly attracted to the tattoo scene. Back then it was nowhere near as popular as it is today. My mom is an artist and my dad was a musician so I've been around art since I was a kid. Creativity has always been highly prized in my family.



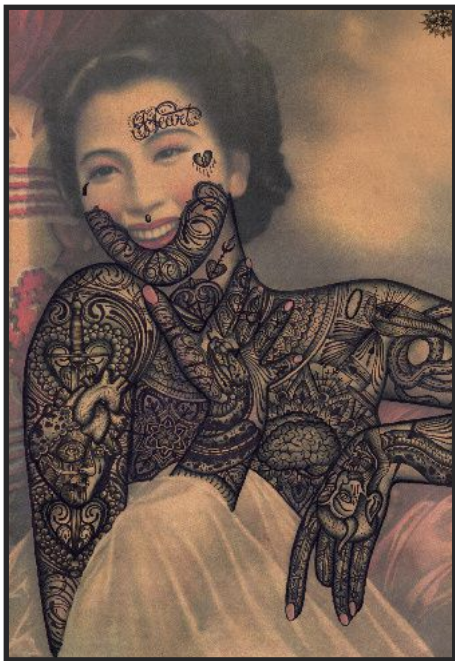


My training as a social worker, my passion for travelling, my family history and my experience with visual arts... all these diverse things enable me to be very creative. It is impossible to name one thing or one person that inspired me or acted as a catalyst, but if we talk about influence, my mother is the greatest one. My mother is highly creative and, since I was little, she has encouraged me and supported my passion for art. I've been involved with the art and tattoo community for a long time. A lot of my friends are either tattoo artists or are involved in the arts. Because of its meaning and reference, my art has always been well received on the tattoo scene. I have been fortunate enough to collaborate with many tattoo artists, studios, conventions and publications, and I suppose all this permeates through my work. I see tattoos as a true form of artistic expression. Many of the artists I follow not only create tattoos, but they are also very good at other types of art: Seth Wood, Cris Cleen, Annie Frenzel, Sebastian Domaschke, Matthias Boechtter or Amina Charai, Inma, Rodrigo Kalaka, Dr Lakra, El Monga... they are all excellent tattooists and great artists.

Do you have any formal training and, if so, was it a help or a hindrance?

I have never studied art and so I am entirely self-taught. Luckily I always had the support of my family which has allowed me to devote



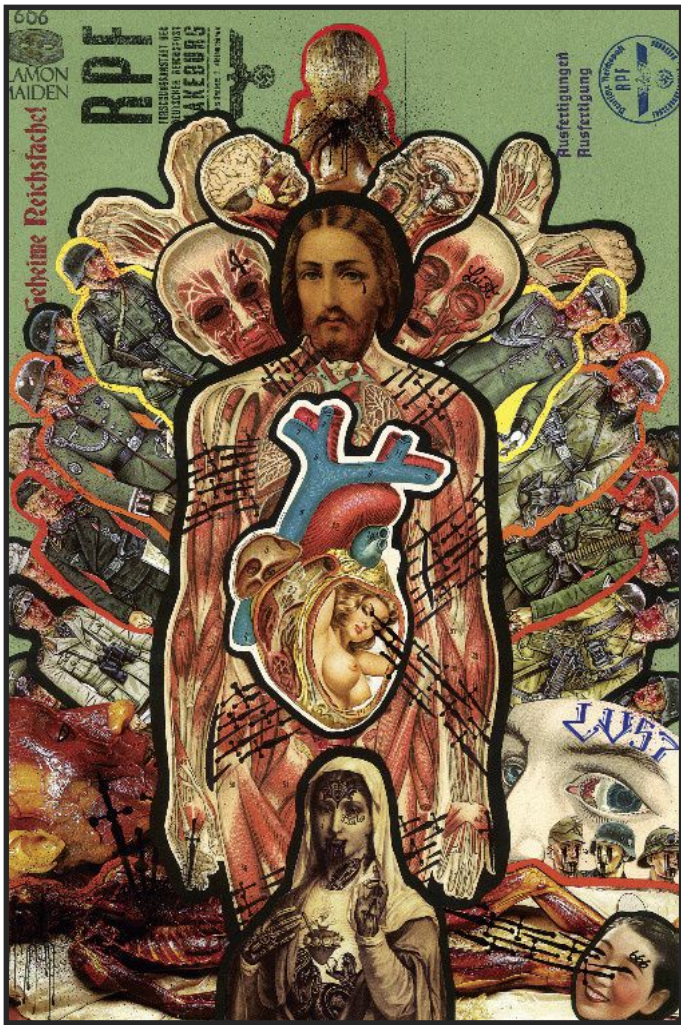


myself to what pleases me most. My way of becoming an artist has been slow, but very rewarding.

You say that you were fascinated by tattoo art even as a child. Why did it appeal to you so much?

When I was a kid I used to draw with pens on my own skin. I also used to tattoo my sister's dolls. I don't know why! The tattoo has a strong aesthetic and symbolic meaning. In my case, I consider my body to be the map of my life and it shows all the moments that have marked me as a person, in one way or another. My passion for art and tattooing allows me to be part of the two scenes I love: tattooers, tattooed people and images on real skin, and also artistic images on paper and other surfaces. They are not the same obviously, but they have something in common.

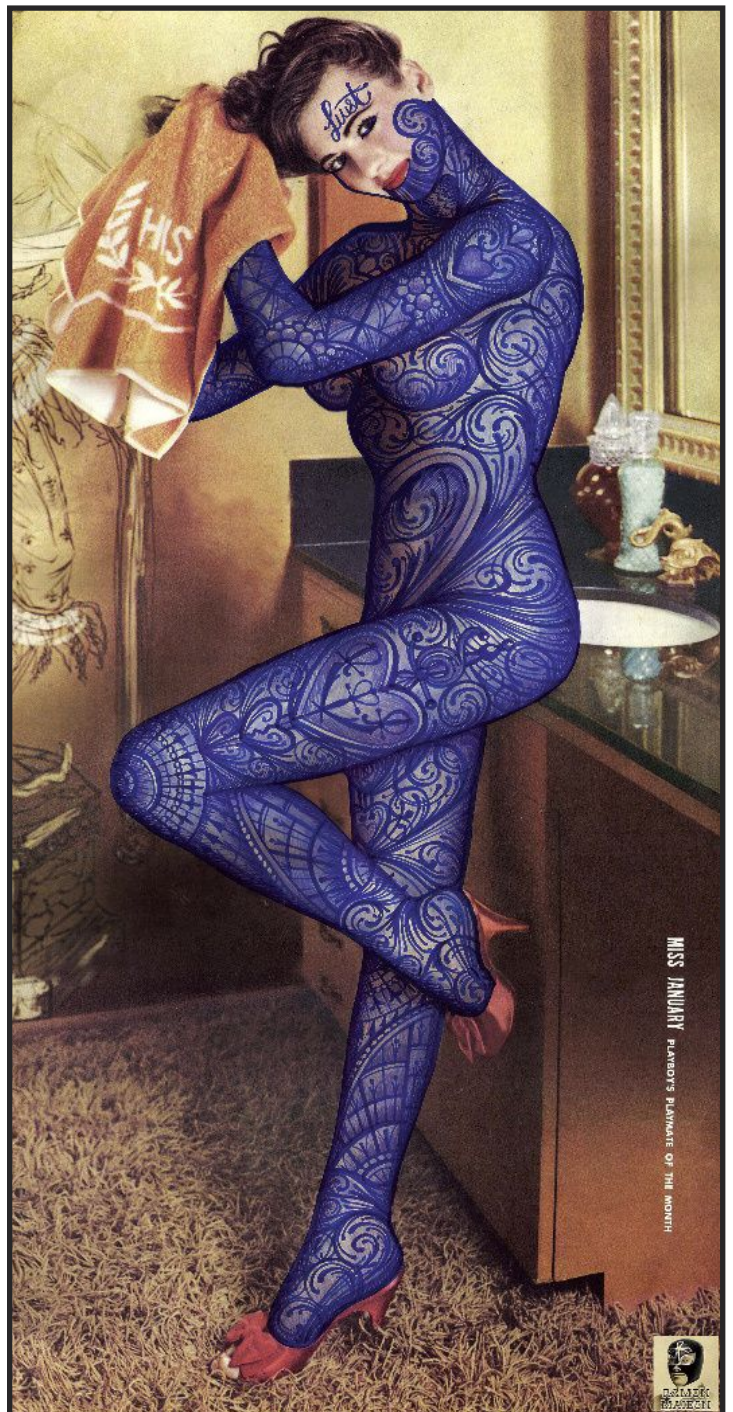


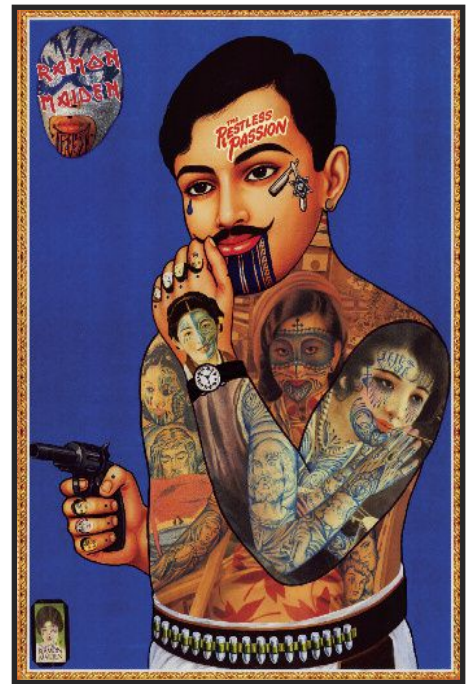
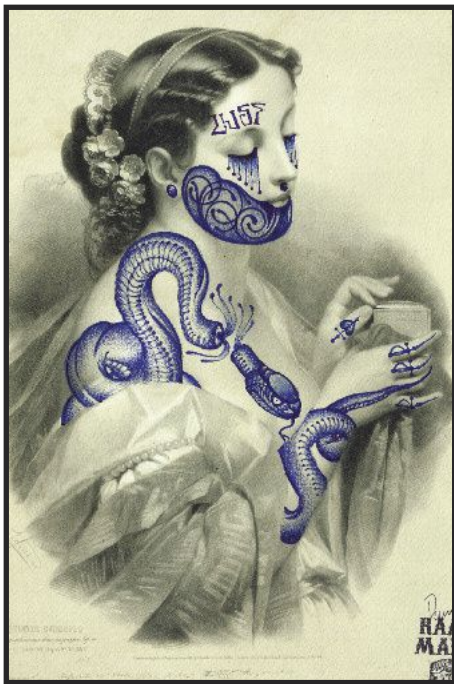


I've come close to starting to actually tattoo many times, but the energy required for tattooing is very different from the one needed for other artistic disciplines. Tattooing requires a special attitude and commitment to the clients, the appointments, the shop. Working as an illustrator gives me so much more freedom to work when and where I choose. It also allows me to avoid creative clichés and to draw and paint what I want

What has attracted you to your current style of work and the imagery you use?

I always try to experiment with different methods and techniques. Lately, I've been working a lot with watercolours and felt-tip pens. Mixing them has produced some powerful and solid results. I'm also very interested in experimenting with new methods. In my last work I used plant pigments which I picked myself and mixed with water. I also used octopus and cuttlefish ink, and acid to treat the paper. Visually, the results were very interesting. Some time ago I started painting on wood too. It's a laborious but very rewarding technique.





I'm also drawn to everything involving recycling, giving a second life to different objects that for some reason have fallen into oblivion: magazines, old posters, obsolete religious and military imagery...

I describe myself as a 'Wanderlust King' because one of my many passions is travelling. I'm a restless ass, so I couldn't exist without moving around. Knowing, understanding and exploring the world is one of the best ways to grow as a person and as an artist. When I am travelling I collect so many images – virtual or physical – and afterwards I'm able to use them in my creations. There's nothing more nourishing and inspiring than mixing with other cultures, artists and places.

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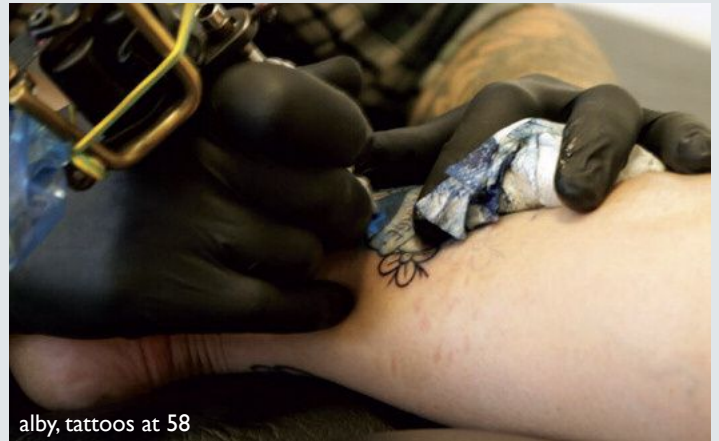
Further info www.tattooethetaboo.co.uk

TATTOO THE TABOO

Helping to break down the stigma surrounding mental illness

by Lizzy Longstaff

If you have a tattoo, chances are that you have been driven or influenced to have it by an event or an emotion. You see it every day – parents have their children’s portraits proudly tattooed; lovers bear their partner’s names, adorned in hearts and significant dates; others might have a tattoo simply to celebrate the moment when they are legally allowed to do so. The list is endless. I am no exception; I have always loved tattoos and art, and was driven to get my first one because I needed to commemorate the slow demise of the eating disorder that had plagued me for so many years. I’m a recovering anorexic and I am over the worst of my depression.



alby, tattoos at 58

I feel compelled to write this because the stigma surrounding mental illness needs to be stopped. Trust me, it’s bad enough hating yourself, without worrying whether others see you as ‘unstable’ or fearing that you won’t get a job because of health questions during the interview process.



kasi firefly painted lady tattoo parlour

I’ve always thought that there was a relationship between tattoos and emotion. I’m not a psychologist but, through being tattooed and working in tattoo shops, I’ve noticed that the tattooist and the client can develop a bond. In that very close setting, the customer will sometimes talk very frankly about their life, especially when their tattoo has a meaning.

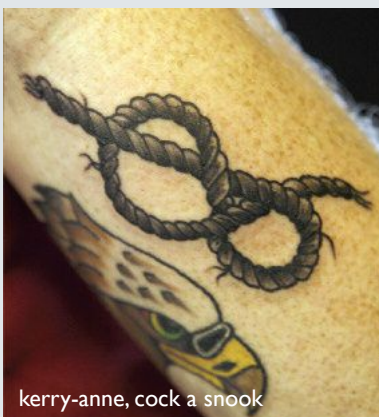
I spoke to Kerry-Anne about the concept behind the event. She explained “I decided to challenge the stigma surrounding mental health, so more people will feel comfortable asking for support. If there were so many people like me, why did everybody feel the need to keep quiet? It felt like a complete injustice and I wanted to change it in any way I could. It seemed natural to call upon our huge network of tattooists for help. We are a community and we have so many resources at our fingertips. Why not incorporate the two!”

When referring to “people like me...”, Kerry-Anne is alluding to how her personal experience gave her the idea to raise money for Mind; she suffers from a severe anxiety

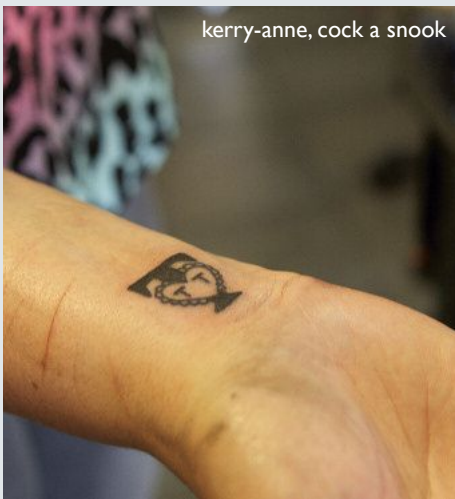


gemma b,
fat anchor tattoo club

disorder, clinical depression and agoraphobia. “It took me a long time to figure out how unwell I was. From a young age, I was constantly worrying, over-thinking, over-analysing, avoiding situations and letting others down. I felt that I was completely on my own and completely isolated. I’ve always had an underlying sadness that often overwhelmed me. In fact, I felt so desperately alone that my illness was the only constant thing in my life. Somewhere along the line



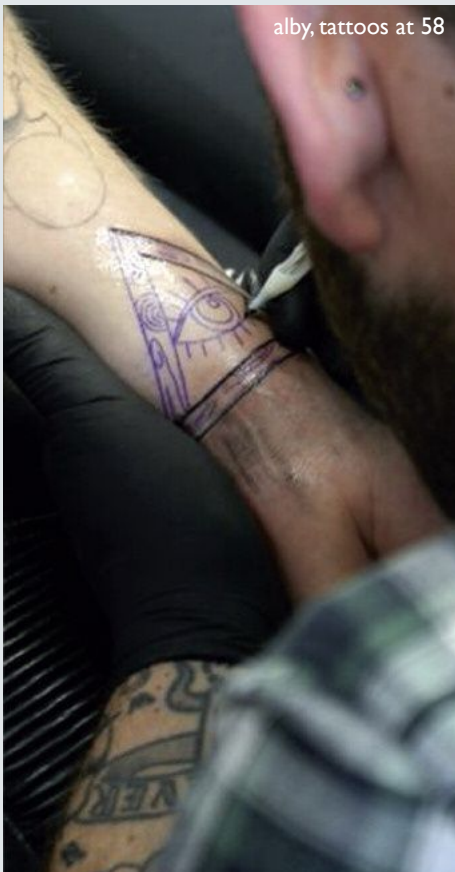
kerry-anne, cock a snook



kerry-anne, cock a snook

I had just accepted it as part of me. I had convinced myself that I was shit at life and that my 'neurosis' was perfectly normal. It came as a complete shock to realise this perspective was really skewed."

"Meeting my fiancé forced my hand, so to speak, and I had to really challenge the way I felt about myself. He encouraged me to look at things from a more positive perspective. Without him I would still hate myself and assume everybody else did too. Deciding to ask for professional help was very hard as the stigma is so great. If I asked for help was I admitting I was weak? Would it change how people saw me? The prospect was terrifying. Unfortunately the first step wasn't the hardest; I found the support system in this country to be completely flawed and, upon sharing my



alby, tattoos at 58

experiences with others, it was apparent that many others were being let down in the same way. I can't bear the thought of others going through similar problems and having to fight for support when there might be no fight left."

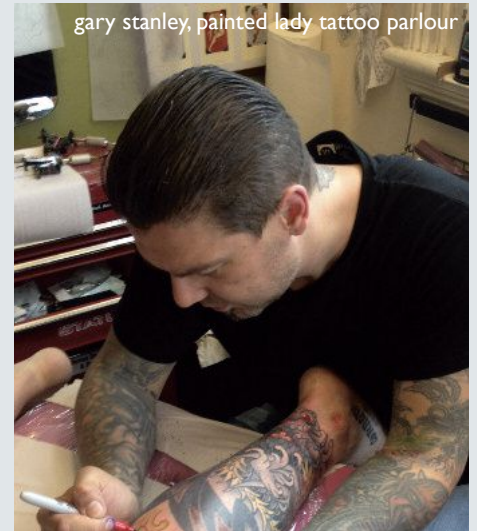
Kerry's openness and honesty is inspirational, especially to other sufferers. In conjunction with the event, she started a support group on Facebook where members can openly express their feelings. This continues to break down the barriers between mental health and everyday life. It seems that tattooists and tattoo collectors are united, not only by their love of body art, but by their experiences of being ill. I wondered if this was the driving force behind starting up the online group.

Kerry-Anne told me "I decided to start the group because I wanted to be open... and unapologetically so. I wanted to let everyone know there were reasons behind lots of my odd behaviours; I was sorry for letting down customers, colleagues and friends but not sorry for being poorly, as I have had very little control over that. I figured that if I felt that burden maybe others did too, and so the group came about. I had no idea so many people would join and want to share. I've had so many messages from people saying thank you, and sharing their own experiences with me. I was so grateful that people wanted to confide in me, mostly complete strangers. I'm not sure how much I helped but I like to think that, in my own little way, I have. Lots of people who haven't shared have said they still like to read the posts as it makes them feel less alone."



alby, tattoos at 58

"Only one person said we shouldn't be sharing personal stuff like that on Facebook, that it's to be shared only with family, and that anybody who tries to kill themselves is just selfish and wants attention. I think they completely missed the point and it shows how ignorant people can be. It's sad, but I guess they are the kind of people we are hoping to educate."



gary stanley, painted lady tattoo parlour



andrew john smith, painted lady tattoo parlour

"I'm trying my best to be completely unapologetic for the illness I have. Those who choose to judge us for something we have no control over, something that causes us daily pain... ..well that's on them, not us"

lauren stephens, cock-a-snook



The support for Tattoo the Taboo has been tremendous, with studios from across the UK participating. From pre-drawn themed flash, to baking cakes and contributing artwork for further projects, it's been quite moving to see other artists participating. I asked Kerry-Anne how she felt about this and what future plans she has for the event. "It's been an amazing response, quite overwhelming at times. It's harrowing to hear the things people have been through. It's been an emotional journey, discovering just how silent people are when it comes to mental health."

"We are making the fund-raiser an annual event, with lots more exciting things on the horizon. The more we can do the better. I always wanted it to be a national thing as I wanted to go for maximum awareness but we're aiming for international next year, as a lot of overseas artists have already made contact."

"I have to tell myself to accept compliments, be kinder to myself and remember that when people say negative things it's because they are unhappy with themselves or their own work"

From looking at her work, and from our conversation, I get the impression that Kerry-Anne has a perfectionist streak; the artists at Cock-A-Snook are certainly well respected in the industry. I wondered if this created extra stress for her and how she managed it. "We are still a relatively new studio. The six years that we have been open has gone really, really fast. I'm not sure how well-known we are but I do know we all try our best. My best might be managing to get out of bed that day, or it could be making a tattoo, it all depends. All the guys at the studio are so understanding and supportive as well as stupidly talented. I'm very lucky. As for pressure... I'm my own worst enemy. There have been times that I can't even draw or paint because I want so much for it to be perfect. I stress about every single line."



ian morgan, skullianz tattoo



kasi firefly, painted lady tattoo parlour



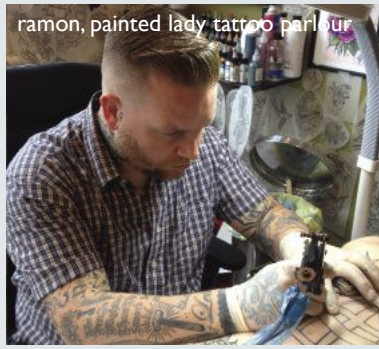
charlee, tattoos at 58



ian morgan, skullianz tattoo

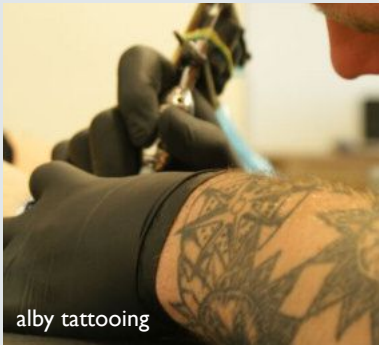


kerry-anne, cock a snook



ramon, painted lady tattoo parlour

“Then obviously there are other pressures. Being a studio owner has had its ups and downs and it’s so much harder than working for somebody else. I worry about everything. When I was working for somebody else I didn’t have to think about overheads or if everybody is happy. I’ve learned more about people these last six years than in the twenty-odd before that.”



alby tattooing



alan proctor, twit twoo



lal hardy, new wave tattoo



gre hale, rain city tattoo



dom holmes



nikki proctor, twit twoo

LATEST NEWS

At the time of going to print, the amount raised on the Tattoo the Taboo’s donation page stood at nearly £7000. The next fundraiser is an auction and raffle on August 15th.

There will be an auction and exhibition of original artworks donated by tattooers and artists at B&D Artist Studios in Newcastle. To get yourself on to the guest list, please donate £3 in advance to the event’s Justgiving page or alternatively, you can pay £5 on the door.

If you are unable to attend in person, head over to Instagram, and follow @Tattoothetaboo to bid online. It’s easy to do: just comment on the item that you want to bid on, with your maximum bid.


Coinciding with the auction is a raffle. A £5 ticket, bought at B&D or via the Justgiving page, gives you a chance to win one of the awesome items up for grabs, which include breakfast baps delivered to your door, jewellery, prints and even a tattoo worth £500 from Peter Hall at Evil Needle! With such generous prizes, as well as knowing that your money will be going to an excellent cause, there really is no excuse not to take part.

Whether you got tattooed on July the 4th, bought a wristband, or even shared your story in the online group, you have helped to break down the shame associated with suffering from mental health. Together, we can all destroy the negativity. In Kerry-Anne’s words “As hard as it is to be honest about this stuff, I think it’s important. One person on their own can’t do much but if you add all the voices together, the stigma can and will change.”

For more information, with links to the support group and how to be entered in the prize draws, please head over to www.justgiving.com/tattoothetaboo/ The website also contains links to **The Samaritans** and **Mind**.









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GALLERY

beany, secret society tattoo atelier



matt 'oddboy' barratt jones, real art



shennaki,
tribal trading (germany)



georg moser, die
buntmacherei tattoo (austria)



boris, boristattoo (austria)

lorenzo gentil, black garden tattoo



karol rybakowski,
ink-ognito (poland)



gareth 'woody' sones, eight fold tattoo



horihi, horihui tattoo (taiwan)



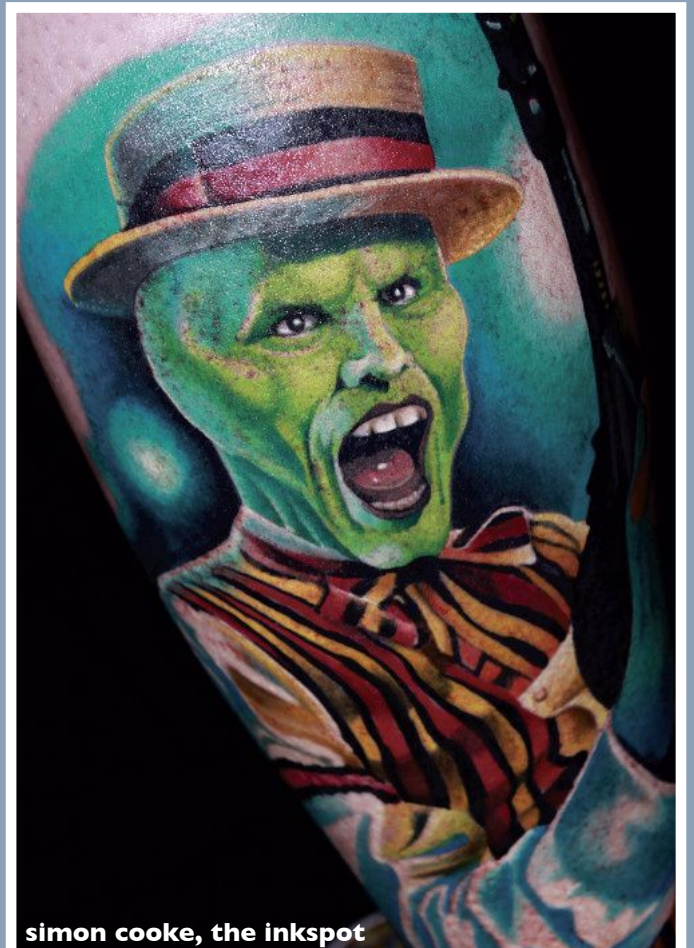
charlotte ross, aurora tattoo



gerry carnelly, octopus tattoo



simon cooke, the inkspot





gege boristattoo (austria)

mat bone, octopus tattoo



gishi (japan)



yomico moreno,
yomico art (venezuela)

xam, seven doors



toni moore, forever bound



patrick mcfarlane, the black freighter



ben nuthink, aching soul dermagraphix





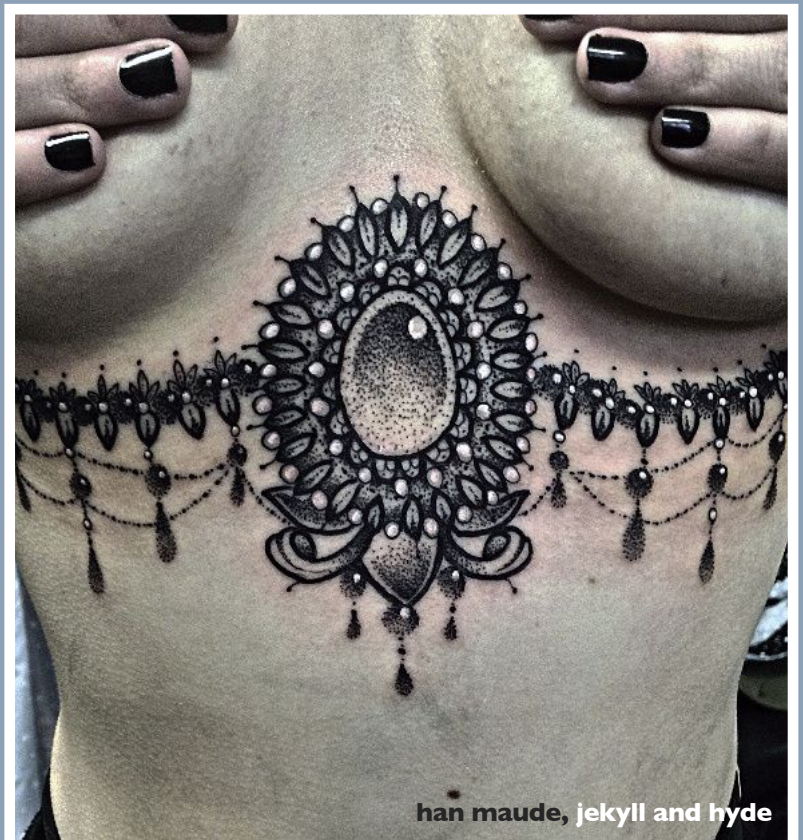
yun, yun tattoo (taiwan)



hollie sirena, inkantations



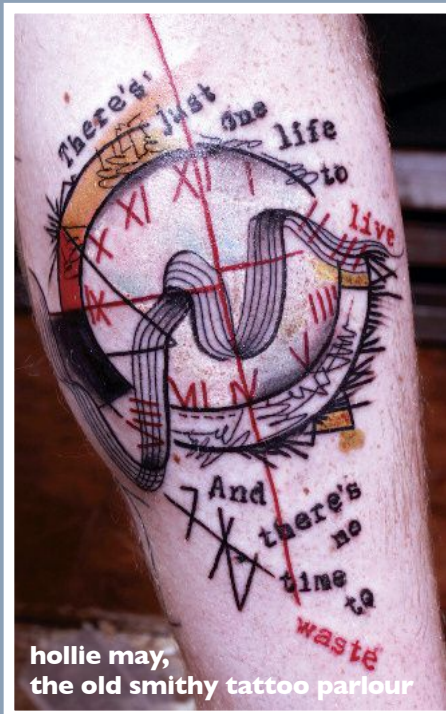
paul johnson, triplesix



han maude, jekyll and hyde



guil zekri, reinkarnation tattoo (germany)



hollie may, the old smithy tattoo parlour



andy wharton, octopus tattoo



fabrice koch, fabinkognito (germany)



scott pullin, broadside tattoo



theo zinas, giahi (switzerland)



steven, memories and mischief (germany)



nigel kurt, funhouse tattoo



joe talbot,
minerva lodge tattoo club



natalia borgia
beaver tattoo (usa)



jenna mcaleese
skulduggery tatu



emma kierzek,
aurora tattoo



norby kovak, true colours

paul tipping, o' happy dagger



georg moser, die buntmacherei tattoo (austria)



daniel hofer (austria)

kelly smith, five magics



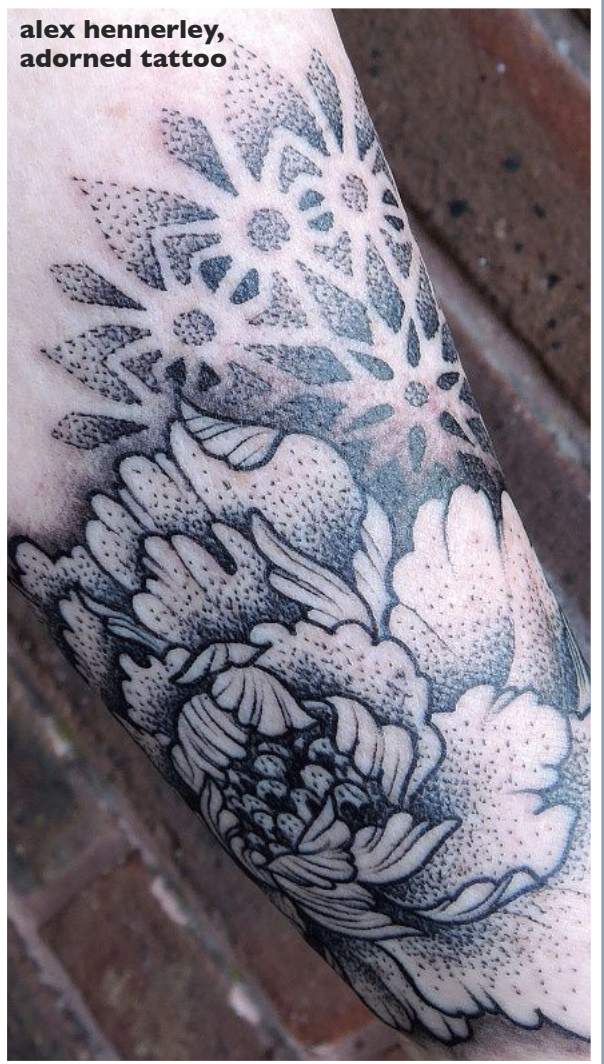
jordan croke, second skin



**adrian finsterkram,
three nails tattoo (austria)**



mike wall, cult classic



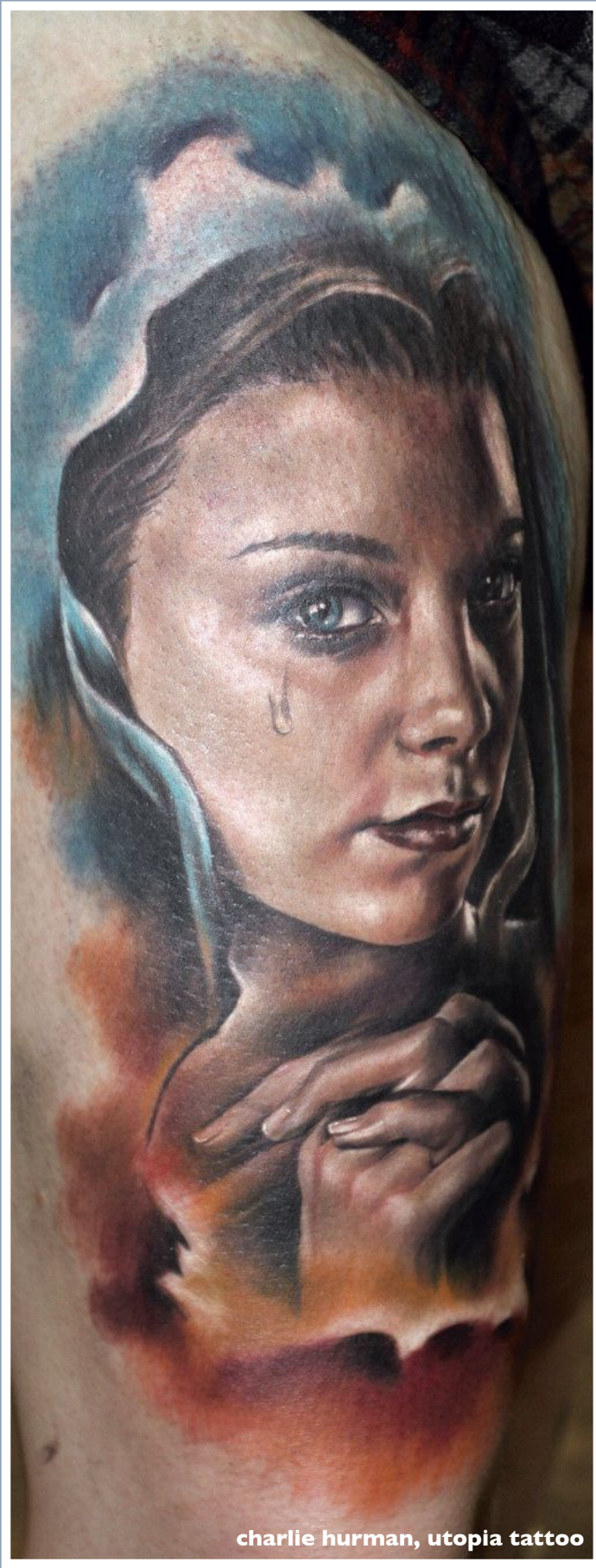
**alex hennerley,
adorned tattoo**



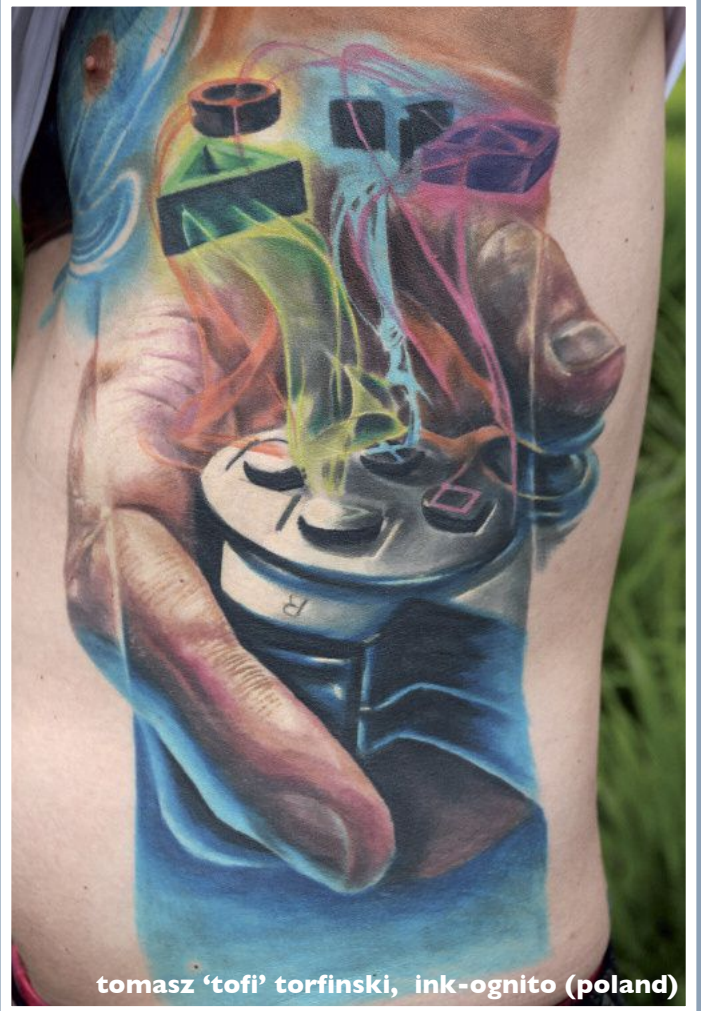
santa perpetua, black sails tattoo



joao bosco, black garden tattoo



charlie hurman, utopia tattoo



tomasz 'tofi' torfinski, ink-ognito (poland)



inky joe, illustrated primate



alan hines, tatt house



hayley hayes, o' happy dagger



alex m krofchak, le fox method ink



craig smart, shamanic tattoo



jack wolf, blood and honey tattoo

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nick chaboya (usa)



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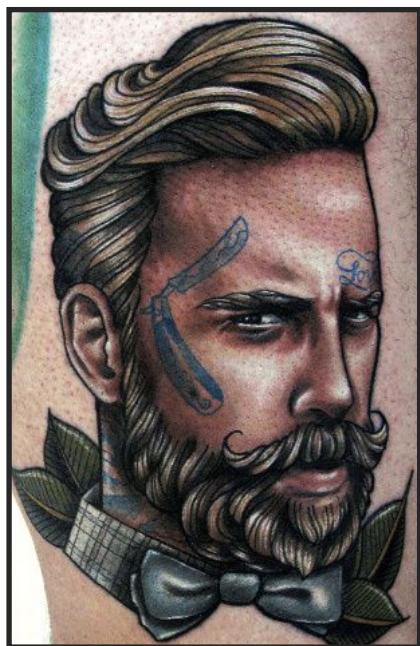
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Roza is one of a new breed of young artists who have only been tattooing for a few years. She was drawn to art from a young age but, like a lot of people, lacked confidence in her ability. So she opted for a completely different career path and trained to be a dentist. However, during her studies, Roza got tattooed at Sake Tattoo (in her home country of Greece). She showed the artists there some of her drawings and they were blown away. They could see her potential and immediately offered to help her fulfil her dream of becoming a tattooist.

In actual fact Sake Tattoo wasn't the first studio to offer Roza an apprenticeship, but she was smart and declined the others, knowing they weren't right for her. "When I first saw Sake's work, I thought, 'Wow! Is this in Greece?' I was shocked the first time I visited the studio because there was so much great work being done there. And the place was so clean! I decided that if I was ever going to work in the tattoo world, it would be here. So when they asked me to join the crew, I had to ask them three times if they were serious. Sake said 'Yeah, I have known you since you were little and I know you're a good kid. You will fit right in.'" That was only three years ago and, in that short space of time, the studio has grown both in size and reputation. Now there are ten resident artists working as one big family, with a constant flow of international guest artists too.

"I feel completely blessed to be doing this job, which is also my hobby," Roza tells me. "It gives me an enormous sense of satisfaction and fulfilment." Plus she has found an added bonus: "In Greece it's not cool to be a dentist with tattoos, so when I was doing that job I would only get tattoos on my stomach, thighs, back – anywhere they wouldn't show. But as soon as I started at Sake, I was getting them on my hands, forearms – everywhere that's visible!"



Roza is typically humble regarding her tattooing. "I haven't been doing it very long and I have so much to learn. I am never very happy with the work I do; I can always see room for improvement. I always look back at the previous month's work and the previous year's, to see where I could improve. If I can't see it, I stop what I am doing and focus on other aspects of my tattooing. I tend to specialise in realistic and neo-traditional. If one of those is not working so well, I focus on the other and allow myself time to clear my mind for a while, before coming back to start again with a new perspective. It always seems to work. Also, working with so many great artists, there is always a lot of support and advice. Anybody who gives you good advice is basically offering you a short cut, from their own time invested in making a discovery, so you should always listen."



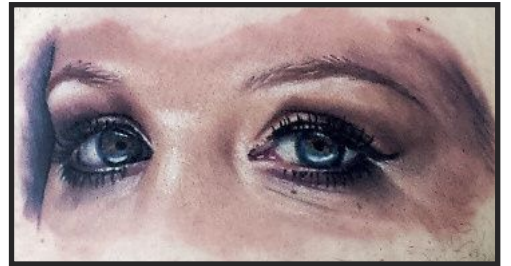


Another important ingredient in Roza's work are her Sunskin coil machines. "I am always open to trying new things. I have tried a lot of rotary machines, which I like because they are light, but whenever I come back to coils – and Sunskin in particular – I find they have just the right weight and the right vibration. I can shade smoothly with them and get a good line. I am always looking to develop but inevitably I come back to my trusted coils."

I ask Roza to talk me through the technique she uses when tattooing. "It all begins with the sketch. I don't tend to use a lot of flow in my designs. Each element is deliberately placed within the piece. The construction is very important, with elements lining up in such a way to create a hidden geometry and structure that helps the eye to move smoothly through the design."

"I have studied the tattoos that George at Sake does. He specialises in geometric designs and I am trying to unlock what it is about this style that work so well. So I have read a few books, learnt a bit about architecture and complementary shapes and, since incorporating some of this knowledge into my tattoos, I have found people are more receptive to my work. I think that it possibly works on a more subconscious level, tapping into a universal visual language."

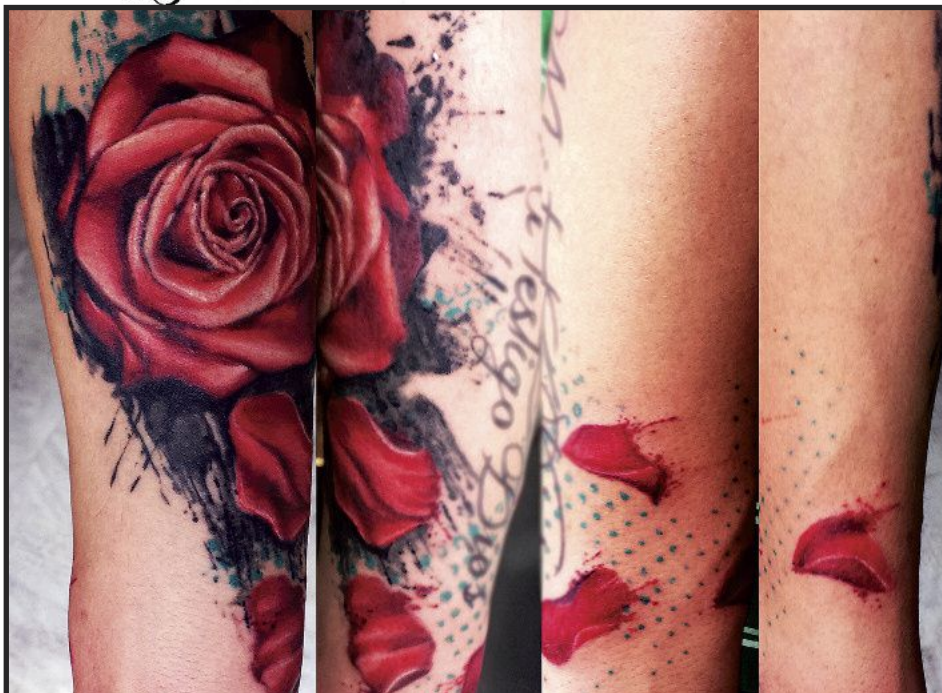


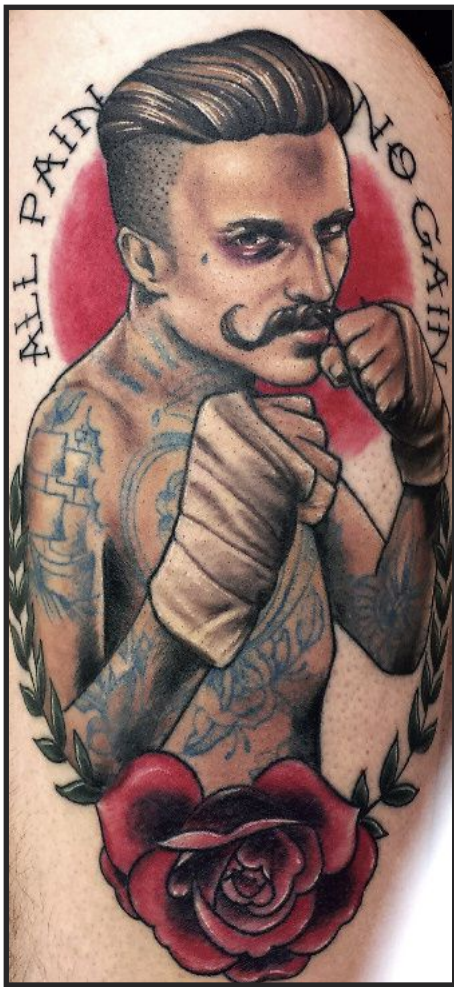




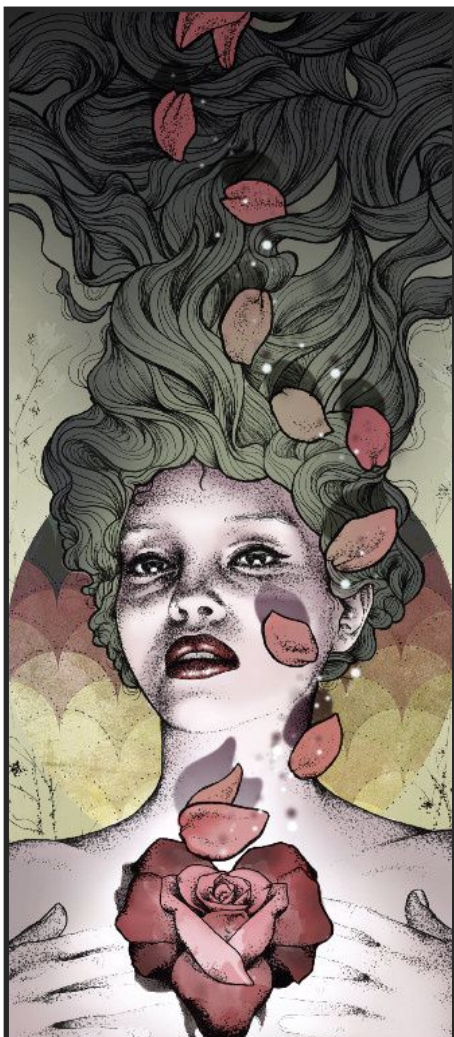
Roza is constantly looking at other artists' work for inspiration too, keen to unlock the secrets of their creations. "One of my idols is Nikko Hurtado. I love the way he translates images on to the skin, playing with the tones and structures in a way that enhances the image into more than just a carbon copy; it becomes an image with a life of its own. I also love a lot of neo-traditionalists, especially Eckel."

"With my own work, I aspire to find the right balance between representation, technique, light, and giving the image a life of its own. If you over-work the skin it will heal badly and won't last. It needs to be simple but look detailed, focusing on certain areas to give the tattoo dimension. If you look at a person's face, you focus on their eyes, and the hair is slightly blurred. If you tattoo everything in sharp focus it will look fake, even though it has taken more work."





It's impossible to write about a tattooist in Greece without mentioning the crisis in that country's economy, which is all over the news at the moment. I wondered if this has had an impact on tattooing. "I don't think so," Roza tells me. "For us at Sake Tattoo, because of the size of the shop and standard of work we produce, it has not been so bad, but I am aware of how it has affected my clients. Many have two jobs – one of them just to pay for their ink, which means I really have to do a cool-arse tattoo! Tattooing in Greece is amazing at the moment," Roza continues. "People seem to be getting bigger pieces, and the taboo that used to surround tattoos seems to have lifted. Greece is still a conservative country, but we now have a few conventions and the interest in tattooing seems to be growing really fast. We have tattoo shops opening on every corner. Many people think this is bad, but I think the more people getting tattooed the better. I love all aspects of tattooing and for me, the more the merrier."

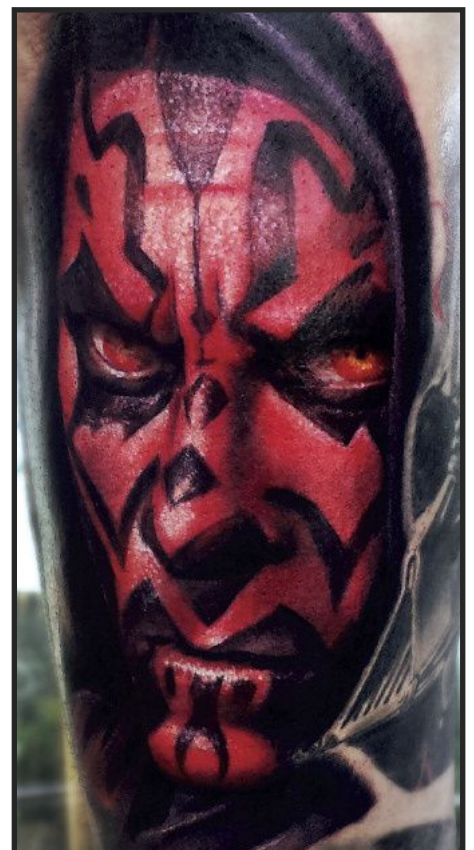


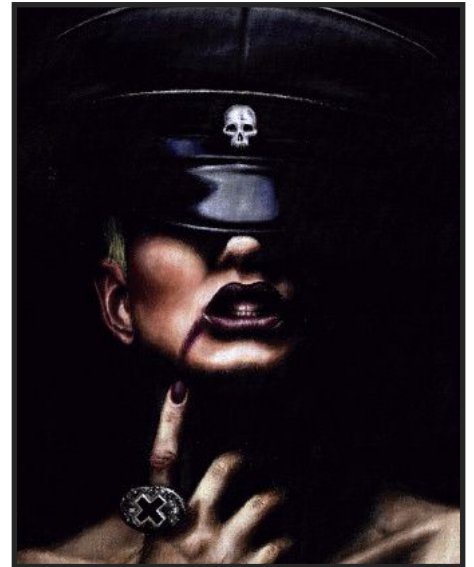


There is a disarming honesty around everything that Roza does; in fact, by her own admission, she is maybe a little too honest for her own good! "I would love to do some larger back pieces," she says, "but I still don't feel I'm ready. If a customer asks me, I always tell them, 'I need to do more research and feel totally confident that what I'm going to do will be my very best' and I guess this unnerves some people. The other thing I need to do is refresh my own ideas, which becomes harder when you become recognised for a particular style. My ultimate goal is to be able to influence the viewer and to gain the trust of my customers, to allow my work to develop, so that if I introduce a new set of sketches, people will have confidence in me, and not keep asking me for a design I did three years ago. That's something I am aspiring to." Artistic and technical developments play a big part in the development of a successful studio like Sake. All the tattooists have access to a separate place away from the shop where they can go to share drawing sessions, or to watch and analyse tattoo seminars. Roza admits to being completely immersed in tattooing, and having little time for friends or family outside of the shop. "I don't need more than tattooing. It's a choice to make your whole life revolve around tattooing, but it's born out of a total love for it. I feel lucky to have found something that fulfils me, artistically, emotionally and financially."



Roza loves travelling and sees the benefits it brings to her craft "I am planning to work more conventions over the next couple of years. I love sharing the connection of being around other tattooists. I've learnt so much just from spending time with other artists."





One of the most important aspects of tattooing for Roza is to remain professional at all times. "You have to put in the hours and strive to improve, and sometimes you have to deal with clients that you wouldn't normally choose to spend time with. But it's also the kind of job that requires a lot of focus and can be used as a way of clearing out the mind, similar to painting. This is what makes it stand out from other jobs, because it also helps me as an artist. It's very much a two-way street."

Despite landing a position in a world-class studio and beginning to make waves on the European convention scene, Roza is acutely aware of the challenges that lie ahead. "I really have so much work to do if I want to achieve all the goals I have in mind. I need to look at different styles of tattooing. I have noticed that when I return to what I love doing after trying a new style, I bring a little of what I have learnt back with me. This adds more character and helps to push my tattooing further."

Roza is keen to encourage people to follow their dreams. "I never imagined that I could ever become a tattooist. But now I am involved in this world, it makes me want to be a better person and it makes me want to be productive. Tattooing has taught me that if you are not fully devoted to something, you will never reach your full potential. I feel so blessed to be where I am and I feel so grateful to Sake for making me a better person."

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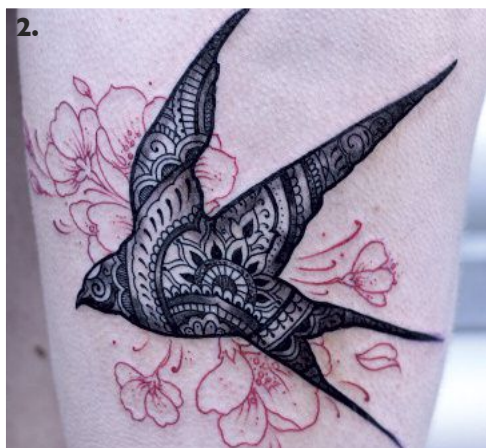
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LEEDS

INTERNATIONAL TATTOO EXPO

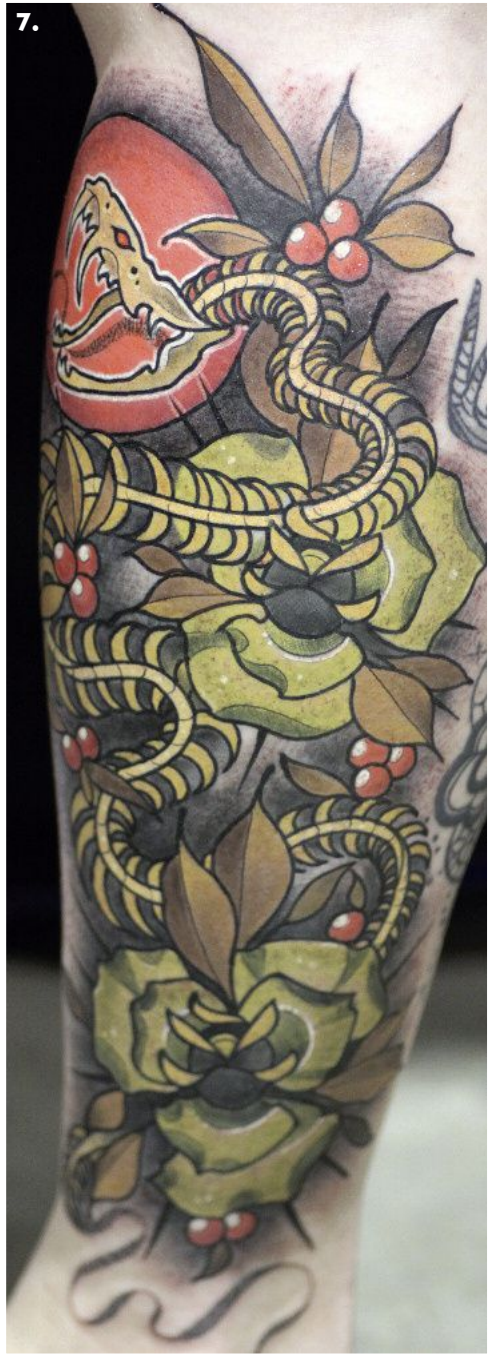


After the inaugural show last year, which saw the heavens open and rain fall in Biblical proportions, the sun shone brightly on the righteous for the second incarnation of the Leeds International Tattoo Exposition. The crowds of tattooed disciples descended on the New Dock Hall for another feast of great tattoos and entertainment. Last year was dominated by a very healthy proportion of new/old school and neo-traditional artists in attendance. This was still the overwhelming influence in 2015 but there was a better cross-section of other tattoo styles represented, creating a nice mix of work to choose from if you were in the market for some new ink.

Silvia and the Ultimate Skin team had amassed a collection of well-known names from the tattoo circuit but there were also some artists I'd not come across before, creating an interesting selection of styles and creativity. This didn't go unnoticed and a few others visiting the show also mentioned it to me. Alongside tattooing stalwarts like Valerie Vargas and Stewart Robson sat up-and-coming artists like a young lady called Eszter from London, whose graphical style was absolutely stunning. Her use of black and her ultra-precise line work were nothing short of amazing. In her portfolio were tattoos containing circles and straight lines that looked like they had been created using a ruler and compass, such was their precision. Drawing shapes like this on paper is difficult enough but to do it on skin is astonishing.



- 1. by victor del fueyo, tatau suite custom tattoo (spain)
- 2. by eszter, happy sailor
- 3. by paul owen, naughty needles
- 4. by justin burnout, ghost house collective



Just a bit further along from Eszter was Kiley, who'd come over from his Copenhagen home. He'd drawn some sheets of flash with small images that he'd hoped to tattoo at the show, but he was also offering hand-poked work. This proved to be an absolute winner and he tattooed close to twenty unique dotwork designs over the weekend. Others who were flat-out included Dave Barry from Follow Your Dreams in Sheffield. Dave does some great old school designs and, in between his main appointments, he was catering for lots of walk-up clients. But I think the busiest chap at the convention was Niorkz from Creative Vandals in Hull, with his ultra-clean freehand lettering. There was a queue at his booth literally all weekend.

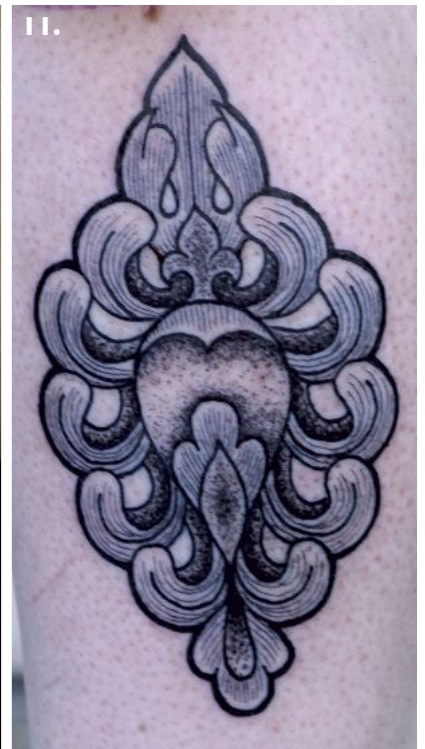
Once again there was a healthy selection of Spanish artists at the Expo, offering a range of styles – some old school, some new school, and some doing great portraits too. Two guys who stuck in my mind were Diogo Nunez and Samuel Sancho, both creating life-like indelible images.

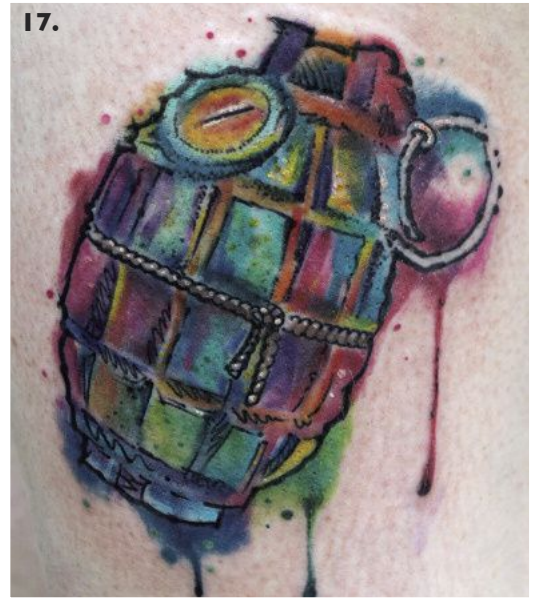
Last year the show clashed with a large music festival in Leeds and I felt that this had a direct effect on the number of folks coming through the doors. This year though the public came in their droves, filling the aisles but not to the point of over-crowding. You could still move around the venue and the crowds created a nice warm environment.

For those not lucky enough to get tattooed, there was some great entertainment laid on with live music – at a very acceptable volume level – and the Leeds Steel Cats, three ladies doing some interesting fire-eating and dancing. If shopping was your thing, Silvia had arranged for stalls selling some diverse goodies from jewellery and clothing to artwork.

Talking to visitors at the Leeds Expo, the overriding comments were that the event was very laid-back, well run, with a good layout, a very special artist line-up and a general feeling of friendliness. Everyone was just getting on and enjoying the art of tattooing. The organisers asked me if there was anything that I felt could be changed. Upon reflection, I can't think of one thing. Let's do it all again next year!

- 5. by jonny gilbert, new mind tattoo lounge
- 6. by ben carlisle, devil in the detail
- 7. by matt curzon, devil in the detail
- 8. by steve wade, all seeing eye
- 9. by jaysin burgess, northside tattooz
- 10. by lewis parkin, northside tattooz
- 11. by jesse sinclair, scratchline tattoo
- 12. by jota paint (spain)
- 13. by craig wilson, black craft
- 14. by brenden jones, tattoo hq





15. party, party
 16. by matt adamson, jayne doe
 17. by katriona macintosh
 18. by daryl watson, rock n roll tattoo
 19. by mope, renaissance tattoo (switzerland)
 20. by craig wilson, black craft



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Sex sells, and tattoo magazines have always been adorned with beautiful cover models. But with the closure of lads' mag Nuts in 2014 and technology magazine Stuff ceasing to use scantily-clad women on its cover, is it time tattoo publications changed their approach too? Is it sexist to use only female cover models? In the name of equality, should semi-naked men be featured too? And what does all this say about sexism in the tattoo industry as a whole?

Magazine Cover Models: Sexy or Sexist?

by Nacho Brown



gigi fair

The magazine publishing industry is rapidly evolving in the face of fierce competition from the internet. There's also growing pressure for change from various campaigning groups – such as 'No More Page 3', who are lobbying for an end to topless women in the UK's tabloid newspapers (with the support of celebrities, politicians and former glamour models). And the once-thriving lads' mag industry is a shadow of its former self, with declining sales and publication closures. So why do tattoo magazines continue to use female models on their covers to get readers' attention?

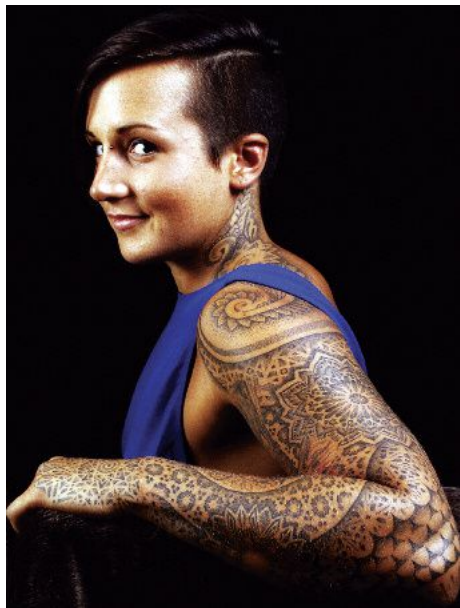
"You only have to look at the cover shots of some tattoo magazines to answer that question," says tattoo artist and business woman Fade FX. "I don't wish to sound crude, but women are represented as wank fodder. Cover girls usually have tattoos that I could critique all day. It seems that showing off your fake tits and sucking your finger, in your underwear, overrides any need to display quality tattoos."

Sexism in the tattoo industry is an issue many tattooists care passionately about and there is a growing movement, driven by young, progressive artists, to move away from the old clichés of how women are represented. Fade continues, "These over-sexualised images misrepresent tattooed women and make the magazines look like top-shelf material, not art publications. Many in the industry say they want to move away from the seedy image that tattooing once had. However, the industry is shooting itself in the foot by making magazines look cheap and using sex to sell them, as opposed to printing tasteful representations of the beauty of tattoos and tattooed people."

American-based artist Kali Amona Masters agrees with Fade that the industry is sexist. She feels that it is not the depiction of sexual imagery itself which is at fault, but the bias towards using images only of women. "If it's exclusively one gender that is being portrayed in a particular manner, then it can almost always be called sexist. Most tattoo magazines only use women for

their covers and they often present them in a sexualised way. Using sexuality isn't necessarily wrong, but when it is only women being viewed this way, it *is* sexist, plain and simple. Perhaps one day men will be viewed in the same manner. Of course sexism and any form of bigotry needs to be done away with."

fade fx



The issue of sexism in the tattoo industry is not simply a matter of magazine covers; both Fade and Kali have faced sexism in the workplace too. "I've had to deal with a lot of drama and crap for being a woman in this industry – from customers, bosses and co-workers," says Kali. "In the USA women are still not paid the same as men, and they continue to fight for everyday equality. Despite the laws focused around equality, women have a lot of negativity to handle. Many people still view us as sexual objects who are not worth being taken seriously. I've actually had clients say to me, 'You don't do tattoos. You're a woman, women don't do tattoos. You're lying and you must have taken photos of your boyfriend's work.' As for co-workers, I don't even want to get into that! Needless to say, having a shop split by gender isn't a fun environment. Nobody wins because it ruins friendships as well as the harmony of a business."

Fade has seen the same kind of attitude in the UK. "Tattooing is a male dominated industry and that directly affects the women working in it. I have faced prejudice for being female. If I am speaking with a male customer in the shop and another man walks in, they assume the male in the room is the one in charge and they direct their questions at him."

Fade sees the problem as stretching beyond the magazines' covers and into the content of the publications themselves. "Advertisements in the industry can be worse than the magazine covers. I saw an ad showing a female tattoo model wearing a PVC American flag, and sucking off a hot dog with mustard dripping on her breasts... I mean, c'mon! Who exactly does this appeal to?"



jenn

Gigi Fair is a tattoo and pin-up model whose passion for body arts equals that of any tattooist. She disagrees with Fade and Kali. "Most of the time, I don't think women are portrayed in a sexist way. There will always be those that cross the line, whether it's a magazine, a model or a brand, but in most cases I don't think it's sexist. Tattoos are sexy and personal. They can also be done in some intimate areas. Their placement can follow our curves and emphasise how we feel about ourselves. Tattooed models have a certain confidence and sex appeal that is very different from many other types of modelling. There's a common misconception in our society that women being sexy or comfortable in their skin is sexist, or that they are being objectified by men. I love seeing women being confident, powerful and sexy and nowhere is that more apparent than the tattoo community. To me, that couldn't be further from sexist."

gigi fair



Gigi doesn't see there being a major problem with the industry being male-dominated. "I think the tattoo community will always be more dominated by men, but I couldn't be happier to see more women take on the role. There are certainly more women tattooing and more acceptance of them doing so. I think this has been helped by the media. The tattoo TV shows and social media have brought a lot of attention to tattooing and especially to the females. I believe an artist is an artist. I'm happy to see anyone doing great work and whose passion shows through. My last two tattoos were done by a woman who I think is pretty badass, so this topic is right up my alley."

by fade fx





Kali and Gigi may have differing views on how women are portrayed in the industry but they do agree that more women are gaining influence in tattooing and that TV has helped this process. "I believe the industry is becoming less male-dominated for several reasons," explains Kali. "Since the sexual revolution of the 1960s, women have been fighting their way into every aspect of the workforce, including tattooing. I believe the change is due in part to social standards but TV has also played a role: tattoo shows have changed the way the public views us. Kat Von D is a big role model and that has changed how tattoo shop owners view women. So far I've only seen the changes in a shallow, money-making, gimmicky way but change is change, and one step ahead usually leads to another."

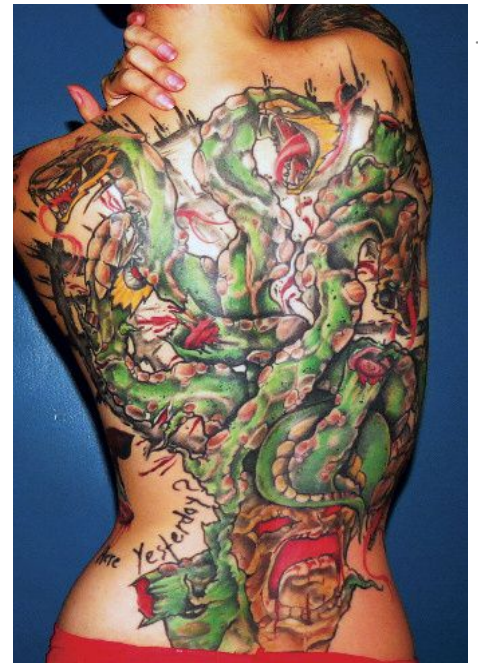


Laura Way is a feminist and teacher of social sciences in the further education sector (she's currently researching a PhD on how ageing women 'be' and 'do' punk). She believes the portrayal of tattooed women is part of a bigger picture. "Tattooed women being presented in a sexual way is just part of a culture that reinforces that view of women generally. A number of feminists would refer to the sexualisation of *culture*, with the focus being on women and their bodies. Magazine covers are just a reflection of the general view concerning the portrayal of women and men; tattooed women are presented as sexually alluring more often than tattooed men. I think there is more prejudice and judgement towards women with tattoos because women's bodies are 'policed' far more than men; they are constantly monitored and scrutinised and this is reinforced by the media. I believe societal attitudes towards tattooed women are part of that general policing."

And what of the future for the tattoo industry itself? Many artists believe the tide is turning and equality is gaining a better foothold; others see the industry changing only very slowly. "With veterans like Shanghai Kate Hellenbrand opening doors for my generation of female tattooists, things are moving forward," says Fade FX. But she thinks there is still a long way to go. "We are still far from an equal balance. With more women tattooists, there will be more female-run studios so naturally things will even out. But this won't be immediate."



Despite the movement towards equality, Fade believes that women in the industry need to push further and go beyond the stereotypes. She would like to see magazines, tattooists and models come together and fight to close the gender gap. "There should be greater demand for equality, with cover model genders matching the population balance of male and female. Entertainment at tattoo conventions



We'd love to feature a man on the cover of Total Tattoo now and then, but we know from past experience that it's a risky thing to do. Sales fall dramatically when a magazine that usually has a woman on its cover opts for a man instead, and with every penny of our sales revenue going towards producing the next issue of Total Tattoo that's a gamble we just couldn't take. You only have to look along the shelves of any newsagent to see that while it's OK for rock music and male fitness titles to feature men on their covers, most other categories still favour women – and that's because, in general, the magazine-buying public (both men and women) seem to be more strongly drawn towards female cover models. But maybe times are changing and you'd like to prove us wrong? Email editor@totaltattoo.co.uk and tell us what you think! Incidentally, we'd also love to hear what you thought of the painting on this month's cover.

Perry

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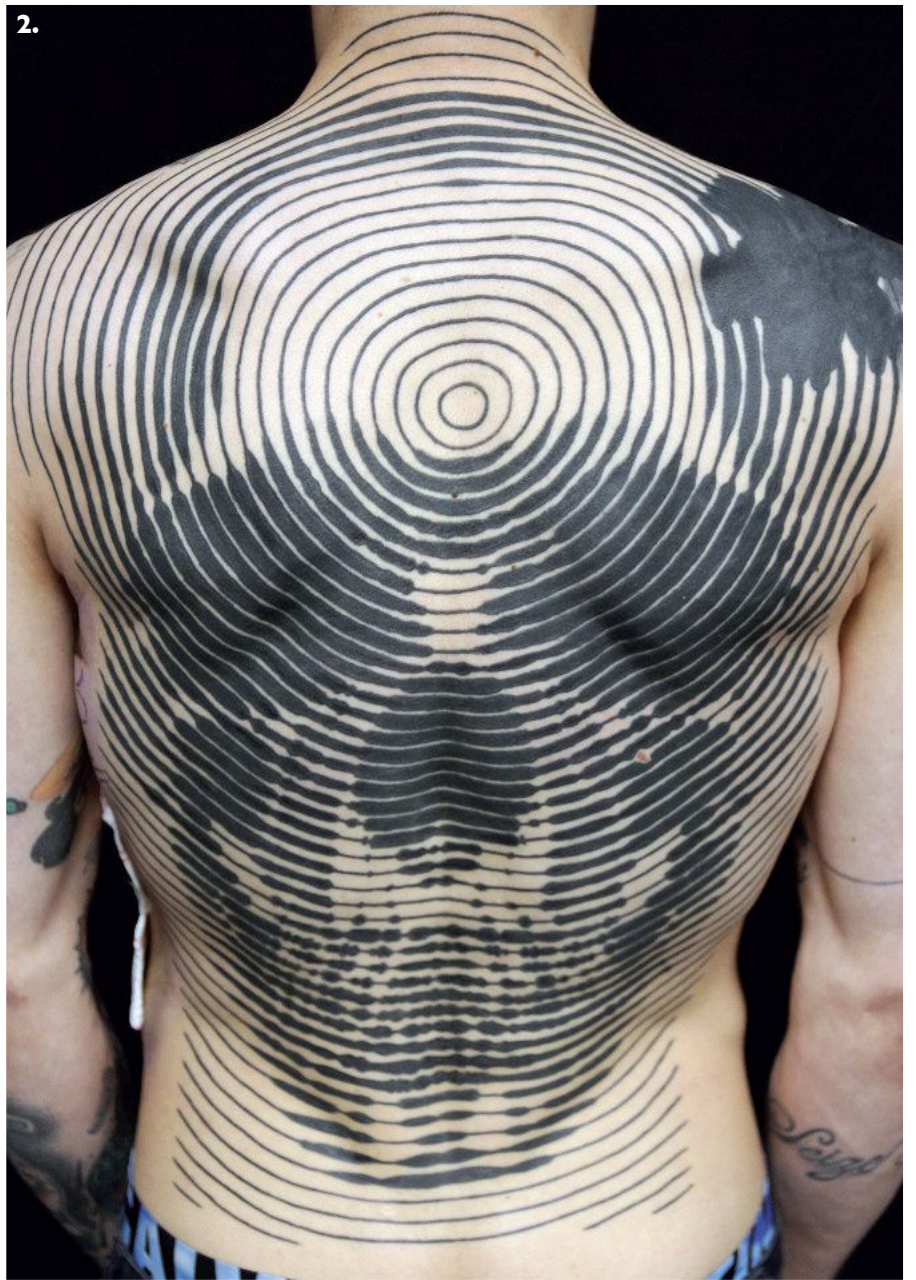
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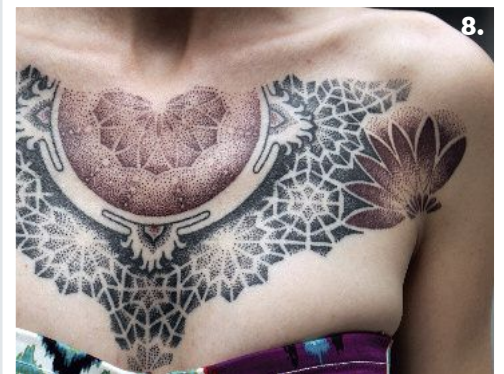
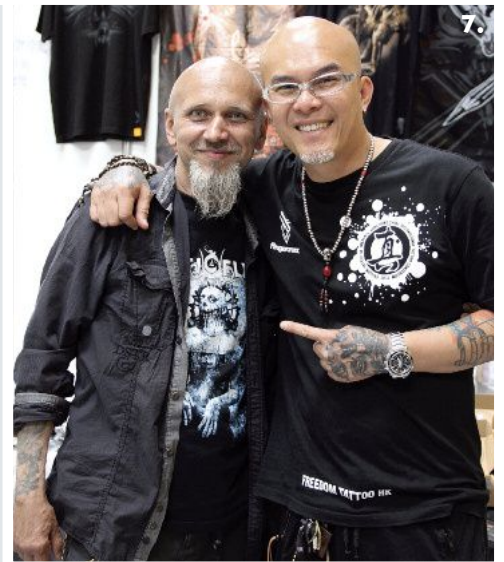


KRAKOW TATTOO FEST

For ten years the Krakow Tattoo Fest has been slowly climbing the ranks to become one of Europe's best tattoo conventions. For this special anniversary show, the organisers set the bar even higher. The tenth Tattoo Fest was not only bigger, more colourful and more successful than ever before, it was also much better than many other so-called top conventions!

Who would have thought that, a decade ago, a small meeting of tattoo lovers in this city in the south of Poland would one day set the standards for Europe's tattoo elite? But this is exactly what's happened, and Krakow is now mentioned in the same breath as mega-events like London and Paris. The event is organised by the hard-working team from Tattoo Kult studio in the centre of Krakow who, incidentally, are also behind the excellent magazine Tattoo Fest. Original team members Radek and Anja have now been joined by Aleksandra and Krisza, and they have a truly Europe-wide view.

Tattoo Fest has always been a medium-sized event, focusing on quality rather than quantity, but for the anniversary edition, the team pulled out all the stops. They finally left the cosy but creaking Centrum Targowe to relocate the convention to the much larger, brand new expo centre on the outskirts of the city. This was a risky move not only because of the higher cost, but also because nobody could predict how the tattoo artists and fans would feel about this shift away from tradition. However, these doubts proved unfounded once the show got underway. The modern hall, which is set against the slightly bizarre backdrop of a disused Communist-era power station, was brimming with visitors from the first minute; a stream of people which continued over the two days of the event.



1. by timur lysenko (on the road)
2. by max, freedom & pain (russia)
3. by bartosz panas, caffeine tattoo (poland)
4. by smee, smee machts (on the road)
5. by robert borbas, dark art tattoo (hungary)
6. by pjojr olejnik, evil tattoo (poland)
7. lenu and gabe
8. by karolina, primitive tattoo (poland)
9. by robert borbas, dark art tattoo (hungary)
10. by ad pancho, rock 'n' roll tattoo (poland)
11. by tom lennert (germany)



The Krakow show marks the beginning of summer and, as the tarmac around the venue melted in the heat, a large beer garden offered shade and refreshments, with excellent food to lure people outside. Inside, the air conditioning kept things at a very agreeable temperature, giving artists and their clients the very best conditions in which to work.

Krakow's strongest point has always been the line-up of artists: the organisers are fussy and only the best are good enough to take part. They stuck to their principles this year, and every one of the 260 artists was hand-picked and personally invited by Aleksandra and her team. She told me "80% to 90% of the artists are on the list because we know them, or their work, already. The rest are chosen from new applicants. Their work must be good, of course, but we are also looking for artists who fit in with the Tattoo Fest family."

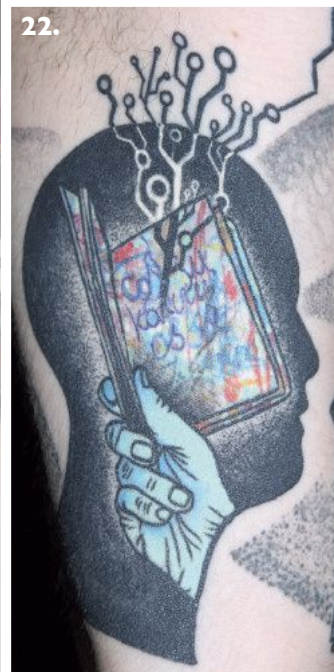
Tattoo Fest is casual and uncommercial. Nobody comes here to make money, but rather to show off their work, meet old friends, make new ones and exchange knowledge and thoughts about art and tattooing. It really does feel like a family gathering! This doesn't mean that Polish tattoo artists and their clients aren't competitive though. The fiercely fought contests are a highlight of the event, and dozens of entrants vied to be in the top three in each category.

An absolute highlight of the weekend was the presence of Polish tattoo pioneer Andrzej 'Lenu' Lenczuk from Tattoo Alien, who is enjoying a comeback on the convention circuit after three years away (fighting off a long illness). Other artists at the Krakow show who are highly respected in Poland included Robert Hernandez, who simply loves to return to his home soil, Zappa, who is now living in Poland again having spent decades in neighbouring Germany, and Sebastian Junior. These guys all serve as role models to the young guns, and happily share their valuable knowledge to help up-and-coming talented artists on the rocky path to success.



Other artists worth noting included Robert Borbas of Dark Art Tattoo in Budapest, whose style of work fully lives up to the sinister name of Zsolt Sarközi's shop; Zmierloki Tattoo, who showcased a more graphic approach to figurative tattooing; Kuba Kujawa, with his flamboyant decorative style; Karol Rybakowski, rising star of hyper-realism, and colleague Domin from Lucky Tattoo; the mighty neo-traditional work of Bartosz Panas; the nightmarish surrealist tattoos of Tofi and Lukasz Sokolowski; the humorous images of Luk from Artforce, and Miro from Skingrafix. All these artists confirmed just how versatile and multi-faceted the Polish tattoo scene has become.

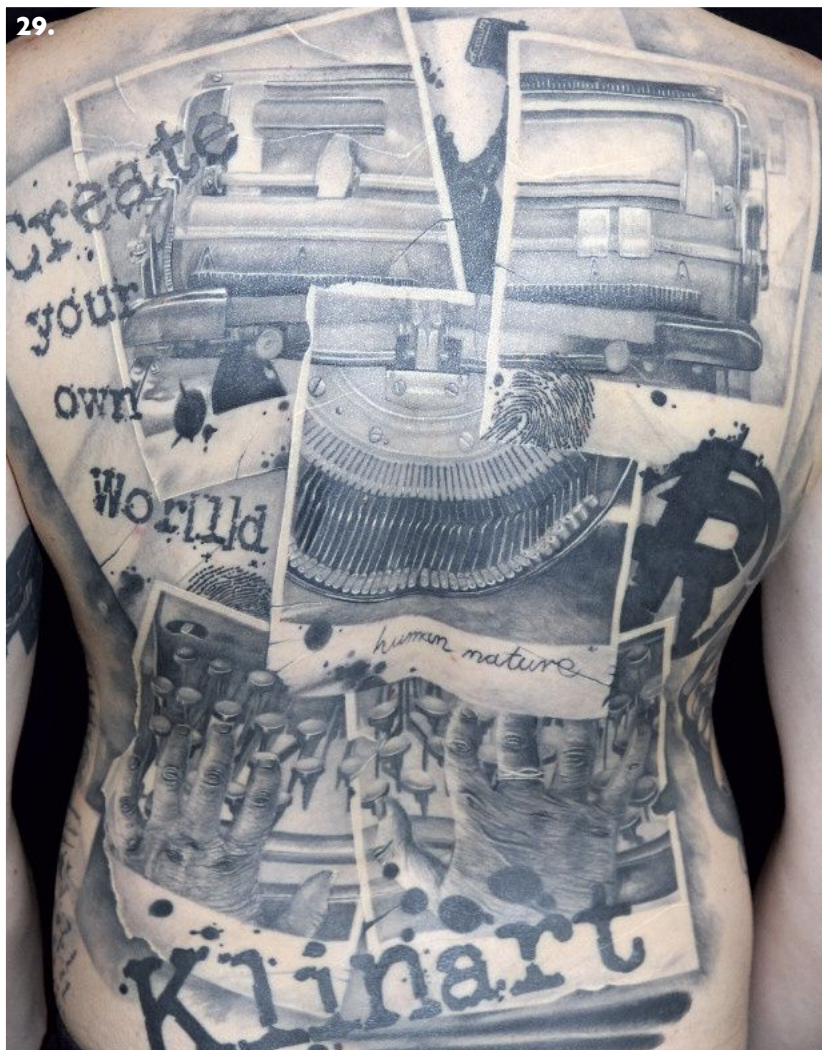
Poland has really found its place among the great tattoo nations of the world, and the outstanding Krakow Tattoo Fest has certainly played a major part in this. More information about the convention can be found on the event's website www.tattoofest.pl

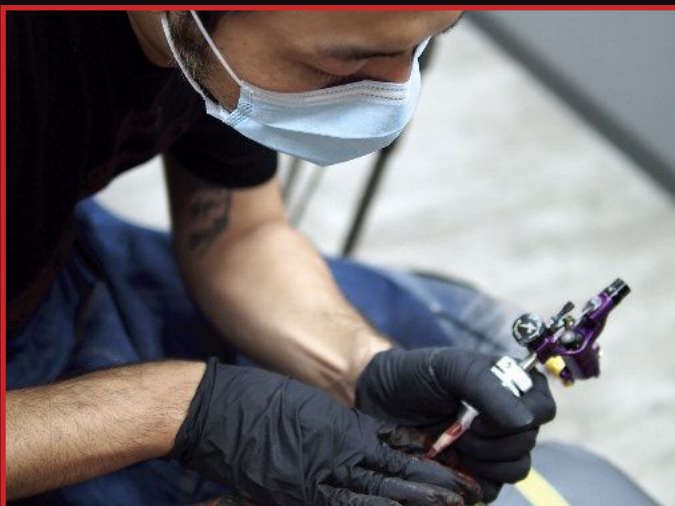


- 12 & 13. by zmierzloki tattoo (poland)
- 14. by david rudzinski, theatrum symbolica (poland)
- 15. by kuba kujawa, bright side tattoo (denmark)
- 16. by lipa, cikada tattoo (poland)
- 17. by alex, rock 'n' roll tattoo (poland)
- 18. tattooed by uncle paul (greece)
- 19. by miro, skingrafix (denmark)
- 20. by luk, artforce tattoo (poland)
- 21. by kosa, speak in colors (poland)
- 22. by lukasz sokolowski, totootatam (poland)
- 23. by domin, lucky tattoo (poland)



24. by enzo, ink-ognito (poland)
 25. by timur lysenko (on the road)
 26. by krzysztof wisniewski, theatrum symbolica (poland)
 27. by maya, artforce tattoo (poland)
 28. by victor portugal (poland)
 29. by dzikson, wildstyle (poland)
 30. by marcin, bloodline (poland)



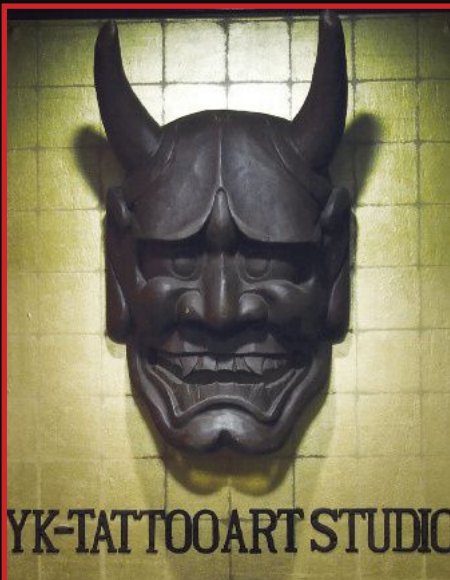


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Tattoo



Kenji and Yasuno, joint owners of YK Tattoo, have been together as a couple since junior high school; they have tattooed side by side for ten years and have co-owned their studio for seven years. In 2013 they relocated YK Tattoo to Omiya, in the northern suburbs of Tokyo. This was a clever move as this part of Tokyo is easily accessible from the city centre and the airport, making it convenient for their local as well as their worldwide tattoo clients.



Former tax accountant Kenji's early tattoo career was much the same as many western artists: acquiring a starter kit and trying it out on himself and friends. He was later joined by Yasuno and they began working towards becoming Japan's best tattooing couple. Initially, their only achievement was poverty, but soon their work improved and they became more and more successful in their new careers.

Yasuno started tattooing some time after Kenji, so she takes care of smaller designs and walk-in customers. Her speciality is incredibly graceful, feminine Asian-style work. Kenji's tattoos bring something new to Japanese tattooing, combining traditional Japanese motifs with designs from all over Asia, blended with western-style realistic elements. Like some of his contemporaries, especially those in Taiwan, Kenji brings new life and colour to an art form that had remained largely unchanged for 200 years.



Travellin' Mick: Tattooing is still not really a respectable profession in Japan, is it? With this in mind, was it difficult for you to find a studio to rent?

Kenji Shigehara: Very difficult. Landlords would assume that I was somehow connected to gangs. Some tattoo artists actually conceal their occupation so they can rent studios, but I wanted to run my business in the open and with dignity. Luckily, after a long search, we found premises with an understanding owner.

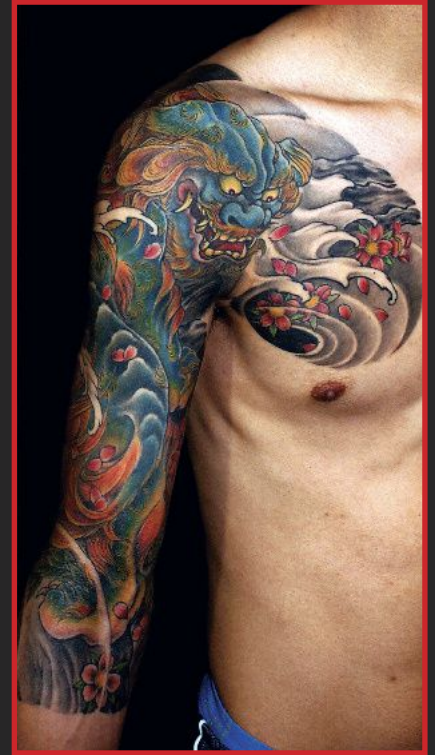
TM: What kind of clients do you have there?

KS: All different kinds, because we offer a variety of tattoo styles, from small one-point designs to large Japanese work. Amongst our clientele we have craftsmen, construction workers, business managers and even company bosses. Those who go for extensive work are mainly people who are self-employed. Recently we have started getting lots of foreign clients too.

TM: These days you hear a lot about the difficulties some Japanese tattoo artists are facing: too few clients, too much hassle and harassment from society. What do you think is the reason for this?

KS: The way Japanese society sees tattoos is very judgemental. There are 'No Tattoos' signs in swimming pools, hotels and golf courses. The media has a tendency to give tattooing a bad image too. Legislation is very vague; there is too much room for individual interpretation of the law, leading to more and more restrictions. If tattooing was recognised as a proper occupation, the situation might improve.





TM: Is there a chance this will happen?

KS: I really hope that the public will come to accept tattoos, at least a little bit. Perhaps things will change when the Olympic Games are held in Tokyo in 2020. Then Japan will have to welcome and accept more cultures and customs from overseas, and more tattoos will be on show.

TM: Can a tattoo artist make a living in Japan today? I hear some studios are going out of business...

KS: The balance of supply and demand is not that healthy in Japan. When I started posting my work on social media, I was pleased to see how many people from overseas were interested in tattoos. Conventions, the number of people wanting to tattoo and get tattooed... everything is bigger outside Japan. However, there are plenty of people within Japan who love tattoos. We are lucky at YK Tattoo as we have a constant flow of clients, so we never go hungry! I believe that as long as I tattoo with passion and work hard to improve and learn something every day, people will want my art work.

TM: I've hardly ever seen a portfolio containing as many different styles as yours. Do you think it's important to cater to every taste or is it that you just enjoy the variety?

KS: Every person has different skin, body shape, mind and way of thinking. That's why each tattoo design should be created to suit each client individually. I choose the image according to the client's character. Maybe this is why my portfolio seems to contain so many different styles.



TM: And you don't just do traditional Japanese styles, do you? There is a lot of influence from Western realism. Can you tell me how that came about?

KS: After I went to the London Tattoo Convention I was inspired to include some elements of colour realism in my tattooing. I don't really want to tattoo in a single style or genre. That would limit the flexibility and range of my work. I have to stay free to create. I am inspired by Japanese woodblock prints and paintings by artists like Hokusai, Kuniyoshi, Yoshitoshi, Kyosai, Jyakuchu and others, and recently I've become fascinated by Chinese paintings too. I can admire art without knowing who has done it. The most beautiful thing about Japanese painting is the subtle way it depicts expression, humour and grace. I try to put these qualities into my tattoos. Among Japanese tattooists, two in particular inspire me: One of them is the late Horiyoshi II (Tamotsu Kuronuma of Tokyo) with his bold but sensitive work. He invented many elements of modern traditional Japanese tattooing and his work had enormous vitality. The other is Horiyoshi III (Nakano Yoshihito from Yokohama, no relation to the former) whose work is highly expressive and strong, yet warm at the same time. I felt honoured when he told me that he appreciates my work because it combines the styles of Japanese tattooing with painting. Another tattooist I admire is Master Horiyasu from Asakusa, Tokyo for his technical skills at shading and for his professional attitude.

TM: When a client first comes to you, how do you decide what tattoo he or she will get?

KS: I start by talking about why they want to get tattooed. Large tattoo work takes time and money and is painful, so I have to make sure they are dedicated enough for the project. Then we talk about design, placement, style and also the meanings behind the images. A dragon can look rugged, craggy, tough, cool, friendly and so on. There are many ways to tattoo any design, so I need to grab the images that are in the client's head.

TM: You are travelling to overseas conventions more and more now. How do you prepare for these trips?

KS: Actually the 2014 London Convention was only my second overseas visit, so I did worry about the preparations. When I am at a convention I have to think in a different way to when I am at home. It's a great experience though. The next step would be to work as a guest artist, if the opportunity comes along.

TM: How do your overseas clients compare to those at home in Japan?

KS: Compared to Japanese clients, foreigners have strong personalities and voice their opinions very clearly! They obviously know themselves well. *[Laughing]* Japanese people are rather shy, but I think they have great mental strength. Foreign clients often want to get tattooed for fashion reasons, while for Japanese people it is more about their inner self rather than showing off. Remember: a



kimono is often more beautiful on the inside than on the outside.

TM: Yasuno-San, what's it like to be married to a tattoo artist in Japan?

Yasuna Shigehara: That's hard to answer because we have always tattooed together!

TM: Are there differences between the way you and your husband work?

YS: Probably. My husband is eager to study and I learn a lot from him. He can be very strict and sometimes reminds me to take every single tattoo seriously, even if it's just a little star.

TM: Is it difficult to work and live together, 24/7?

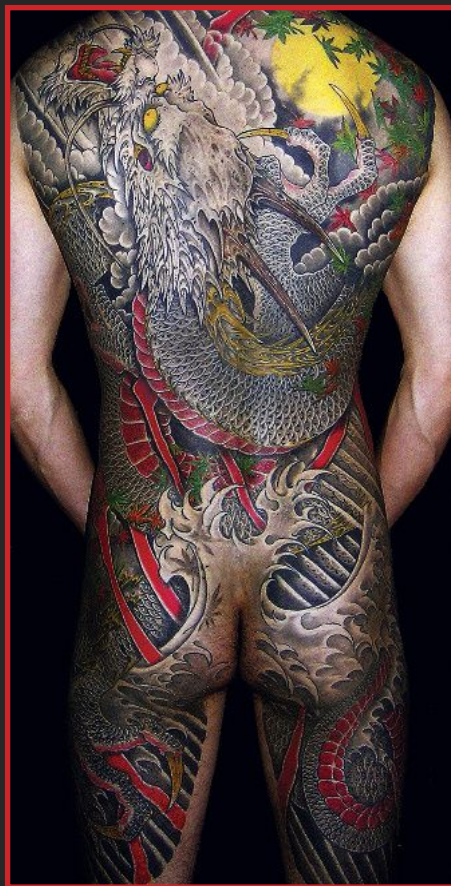
YS: We don't have an on-off switch between work and home. Sometimes we talk about tattooing until late into the night, but that's how we want it to be. It's a give-and-take relationship.

TM: And finally, who cooks and who does the dishes?

YS: Most of the time we eat out, so there's not much to do at home. Otherwise, well... I do it, I guess. He helps me out though... sometimes!

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Katou Bld. 2F
3-8, Dote-tyou
Omiya-ku
Saitama
Japan

Website: www.yktattoo.jp
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/YK-TATTOO-ART-STUDIO



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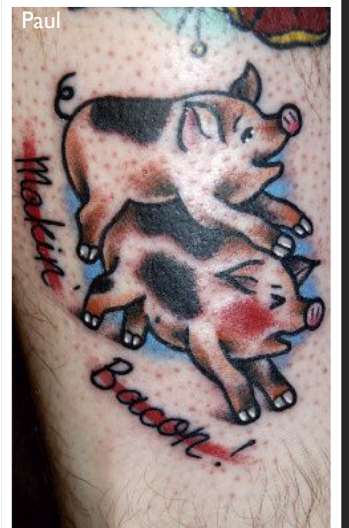
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IN FOCUS

In these pages we showcase a small selection of work from a group of artists working together. This month **O' Happy Dagger, Unit 17, 63-65 Woodside Road Chiltern Business Centre Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 6AA** www.ohappydagger.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



James



Paul



Hayley



Luko



Sophie



Luko



James



CONVENTION CALENDAR

UK CONVENTIONS

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.robinhoodtattoofestival.co.uk

September 5

Ink and Art

The Ballroom, The pavillion Theatre
Bournemouth
www.bournemouth.tattoo

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

October 10-11

Milton Keynes Tatoo Convention

Planet Ice Milton Keynes
Leisure Plaza, 1 South Row
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK9 1DL

Oct 30-Nov 1

Jurassic Coast Tattoo Convention

Premier Inn Hotel Bournemouth Central
Westover Rd, Bournemouth,
Dorset BH1 2BZ,
www.jurassiccoasttattooconvention.co.uk

Nov 7-8

Halloween Tattoo Bash

Wolverhampton Racecourse
Holiday Inn Garden Court
Dunstall Park Lodge, Wolverhampton WV6 0PE
www.halloweentattoobash.co.uk

November 14-15

Sheffield Tattoo Show

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

UK CONVENTIONS 2016

February 5-6

Needle Gangstas Annual Beano

Pride Pkwy, Derby DE24 8XL
www.tattooteaparty.co.uk

March 5-6

The Tattoo Tea Party

Phoenix Way, Off Barton Dock Road, Urmston
Manchester. M41 7TB
www.facebook.com/needlegangstsa

April 3

Ink and Iron Tattoo Convention

The New Bingley Hall
1 Hockley Circus, Birmingham, West Midlands
B18 5PP
www.inkandiron.co.uk

April 31-1 May

The Brighton Centre

King's Rd, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 2GR
blog.brightontattoo.com

May 6-8

Liverpool Tattoo Convention

Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Ranelagh Place
Liverpool. L3 5UL
www.liverpooltattooconvention.com

OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

August 7-9

Berlin Tattoo Convention

Arena Berlin, Eichen Strasse 4, 12435 Treptow,
Germany
www.tattoo-convention.de

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
Pittsburgh PA 15222 USA
www.shaneoneillproductions.com

Oct 9-11

Florence Tattoo Convention

Fortezza Da Basso
Viale Filippo Strozzi, 1
50129 Florence, Italy
www.florenceconvention.com

Oct 30-Nov 1

Dublin Tattoo Convention

Red Cow Moran Hotel Dublin
22 Naas Rd, Dublin 22, Co. Dublin, Ireland
www.dublintattooconvention.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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NEXT MONTH

XED LE HEAD

JOLIE ROUGE

TOFI

ADAM 'TURK'

GRAY SILVA

SHOWS - NORTHAMPTON - ROME - YORK

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mugshot

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

This month

Sean Fred Hedger Needle and Fred

What makes you happy?

Kittens, candy floss, puppies, poetry, gimp masks, flavoured lube and the smell of napalm in the morning.

What makes you angry?

Finding out some one has napalmed my back garden.

What was the last book you read?

Does the back of an air freshener count? The things you read whilst taking a shit! Apart from that, Chris Kyle's autobiography American Sniper. Great book.

What was the last movie you saw?

The new Mad Max. I loved the first two films, but this new one is more like Mildly Miffed Max.

What pets do you have?

I have two pythons called Slithery Steve and Conker Head Fred, after my very good friend Steve Hunter and me. I also have a British bulldog called Ernie, and a right little delinquent Jack Russell called Helmet.



What would you eat for your last meal on earth?

Why, where are we going??? Fillet steak, a bag of Chewits and a gnaw on my girlfriend's *)%@!

What's your funniest tattoo story?

Tattooing a guy's upper thigh, and when I say "upper thigh" I mean I could see the welcome mat... Welcome mat needs shaving, and I'm dry shaving it just as someone opens the back door, so I end up with a gob full of curly clock springs. Ginger yet tangy!

If you won the lottery what's the first thing you'd buy?

A highly trained attack ostrich who doesn't mind getting his beak dirty... Know what I mean...?

Who would play you in the movie of your life?

Sloth from The Goonies.

What would your super power be?

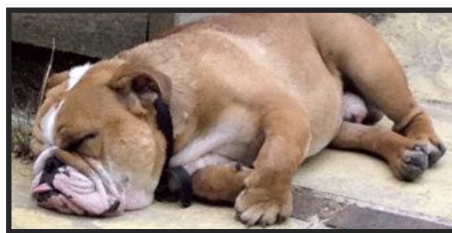
Jedi mind tricks, so when someone asks for tribal I can say "This is not the tattoo you're looking for!"

What achievement are you most proud of?

Deep breath. Serious answer. I lost both my parents at a young age and I'd like to think that I've made them proud by being half sensible at something. Have a deep belief in yourself and keep surging forward when everyone else says you'll fail. That comes from my mother's side. My father... well, he taught me to drink!

What's your biggest regret?

Not starting in this truly wonderful game a lot sooner. I didn't start properly until I was about 31 and it's now turned into a deep love affair.



What keeps you awake at night?

Both ends of my bulldog: his top end snores like a walrus and his arse end blasts off like Hiroshima.

What's the best lesson life has taught you?

That sometimes it's a hard day not a hard life. Keep rolling with the punches and moving forward, and don't ever listen to the doubters. Nothing is impossible.

How would you like to be remembered?

In the papers: MAN SHOT BY ZOOKEEPER. Zookeeper says "By fuck, I thought it was a rampaging gorilla!"



Your favourite tattoo?

The portrait of my mum when she was younger, done on my leg by my good friend Darren Stares. He's still got it!



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

My very good friend Ash Wheeler's tiger leg sleeve. We've struck up a great bond and he's one of the strongest people I know. We've won a couple of awards for it, which is nice. Sadly time isn't on our side and our tattooing journey together might be shorter than most but, fuck me, we are smashing it!

Any exciting news you'd like to share?

The crabs are migrating...

Finish this sentence: Fred is...

... still waiting for his Jim'll-Fix-It badge.

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