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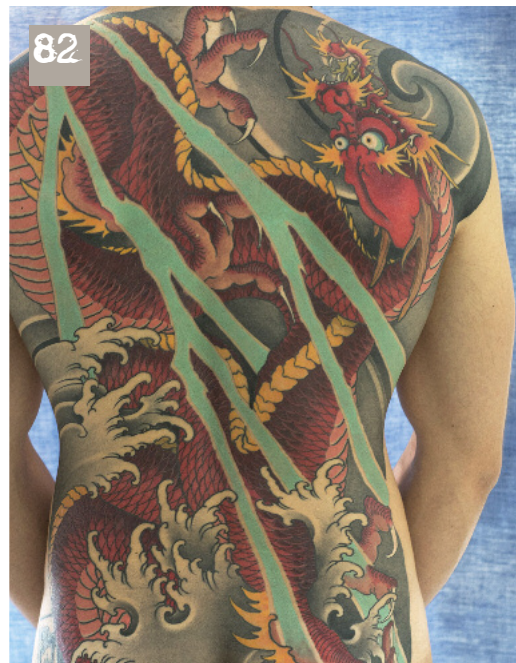
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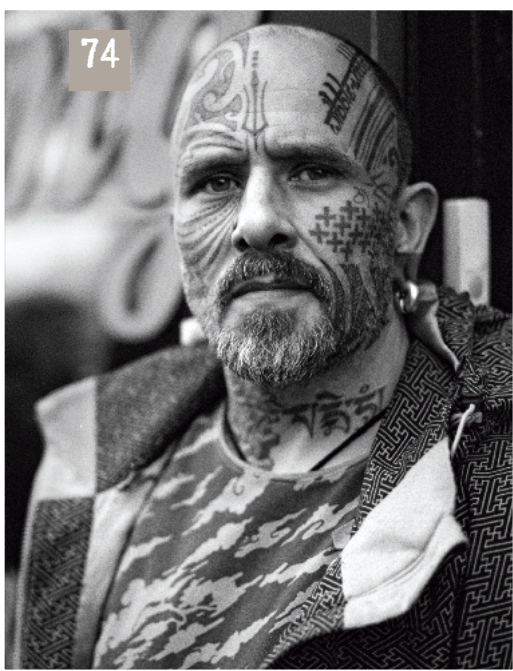




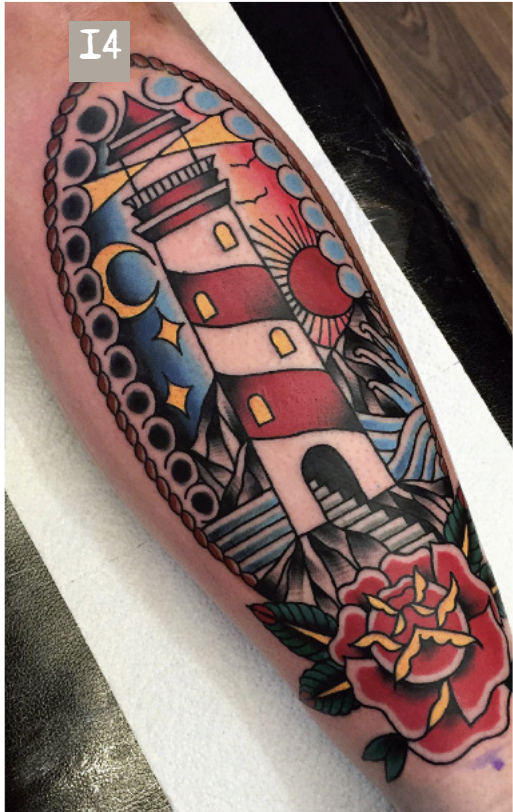


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Cover Model Amber Brauner  
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All winners will be picked at random (or on merit if applicable) after the closing date. Entries received after the closing date will not be considered. The editor's decision 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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# EDITORIAL 132

This month we have been looking at, talking about and pontificating over the evolution of tattoo magazines and where they fit into tattooing in 2015. Of course we have been focusing on Total Tattoo, but you can't get a well-rounded idea of what's going on without taking a squint at what the other players in your market place are doing. In general, bar some differences in design and visual style, no one has torn up the blueprint that we have all been working from for the last 10 or even 20 years.

There have been some changes of course. Perhaps the major one has been the infiltration of the tattoo media by professional journalists and photographers. Previously, the magazine industry was driven predominantly by people with a passion for tattooing who did it simply for the love of it, regardless of whether or not it made them a living (a little like the tattooers of old, in many ways). These publishing pioneers did a great job and created a springboard from which the rest of us could dive in.

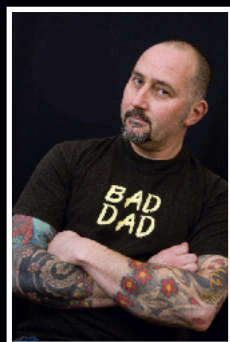
Some of them are still in the game and others have moved on. A few who are worthy of a mention include Total Tattoo's original editor and co-founder, Sally Feldt, who spearheaded the magazine movement (and was, quite frankly, an impossible act to follow); Perry Rule, Total Tattoo's designer and also co-founder; Miki Vialetto, editor of Tattoo Life and Tattoo Energy (and organiser of the Milan and London Tattoo Conventions); and globe-trotting journalist Travellin' Mick, whose work often appears in the pages of Total Tattoo. This paragraph would be incomplete without mentioning the hugely respected Bob Baxter, editor of Skin & Ink for many years, who sadly passed away this year; and there's also the person who first got me thinking 'Hey, I think I want to take a crack at doing that', the late Chris Pfouts, who was the editor of International Tattoo Art magazine when I started reading it.

All these people had the skills and the desire to portray tattooing in the best possible light not only to fans, artists and collectors, but also to the general public. Apologies if I have missed anyone out, but you know how I feel about long lists of names.

So that brings me back to 2015 and the question 'Where does Total Tattoo sit within tattooing?' That's a hard one. Like it or not, tattooing has become an industry - or perhaps it's fairer to say that an industry has sprung up around it. It's become a lifestyle, something you can buy into, like so many other previously 'underground' or 'alternative' things. Just a few hours in the tattooist's chair in the shopping mall, and you can join the party. And who's to say there's anything wrong with that.

As a magazine, do we need to promote and embrace those changes? Should we evolve into a lifestyle magazine, full of loads of much ado about nothing? Do we need to embrace the cult of celebrity and appeal to the lowest common denominator? Or do we become more selective and exclusive at the risk of disappearing up our own butt?

Plenty of food for thought! We rolled that ball around and around again, but our conclusion was the same as ever: we can only do our best, we can only produce a magazine we are proud of, a magazine that we would hand over our own hard-earned pennies for, and we can only hope that you feel the same way about it as we do.



**James**

**'There are no shortcuts in evolution'**

Louise D Brandeis

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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

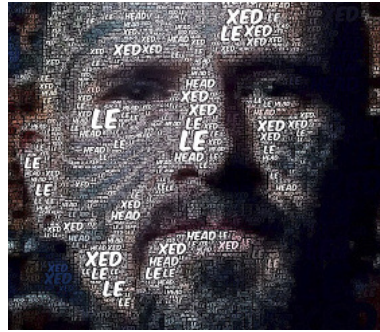
## ↻ PAYING IT BACK... XED NEEDS YOU

Many of you will be aware that pioneering dotwork tattooist Xed Le Head is suffering from a life-changing condition which has left him more or less paralysed from the neck down.

In March this year Xed found his right hand gradually going numb; within three months this had spread across his body, leaving him with only partial movement in his left arm and no movement in either hand.

Doctors discovered that a vertebrae at the base of his skull had collapsed sometime previously, and become jagged and rough. Over the past three months it had been slowly cutting through his spinal column, causing the paralysis. During emergency surgery, Xed's oesophagus (the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach) collapsed. Fortunately a specialist team were on hand and, after nine hours on the operating table, they managed to put him back together again and save his life.

Xed is currently unable to tattoo and therefore has no income. Tattooists and tattoo collectors from around



the world have united to support him, and raise funds to pay for much-needed specialist equipment and modifications to his home, in the hope of giving him some independence.

If you would like to help, a Gofundme page has been set up by Xed's close friends, and can be found at [www.gofundme.com/z8kvk4](http://www.gofundme.com/z8kvk4)

## ↻ INK KEEPING

Here's the science bit: Why are tattoos permanent? A question that is often asked but seldom answered satisfactorily is 'If our skin cells regenerate every two to three weeks, why do tattoos last a lifetime?' This very cool little film takes a straightforward, easy-to-understand approach to answering this. Watch it here:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fs9rR4W0Ea](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fs9rR4W0Ea)



## ↻ RISE UP FOR NEPAL

Tattooists and Toilets, or TNT for short, is a charitable organisation set up by Quentin and Ami from Kalima Emporium and Karma Webb from Karma Collective to provide safe, sanitary toilets for the people of Nepal affected by the earthquake earlier this year. Body modification artist Quentin was working at the tattoo convention in Nepal when the earthquake hit. He had been planning to stay on for a while and trek through the country, but after the quake he decided to help with the relief effort instead. He got involved building compost toilets with the organisation To Da Loo; a simple thing but one that makes a huge difference to people whose lives and homes were devastated by the disaster. Quentin was inspired to give something back to the country and its people who have been such an inspiration for tattooists in the West. So he is asking the tattoo community to help by buying an original convention t-shirt or one from the charity Nepal Rise Nepal. The funds raised will be used at ground level, building schools as well as toilets, and Quentin hopes to return once or twice a year to help with construction work. The convention t-shirts are only available in large and x-large sizes. The Rise t-shirts are available in all sizes. Both are £20 each plus postage.

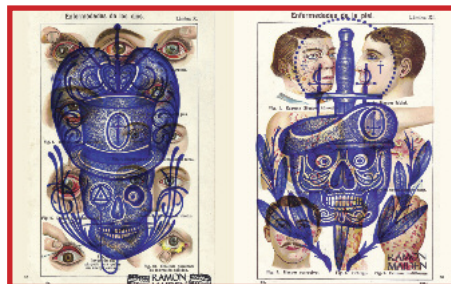
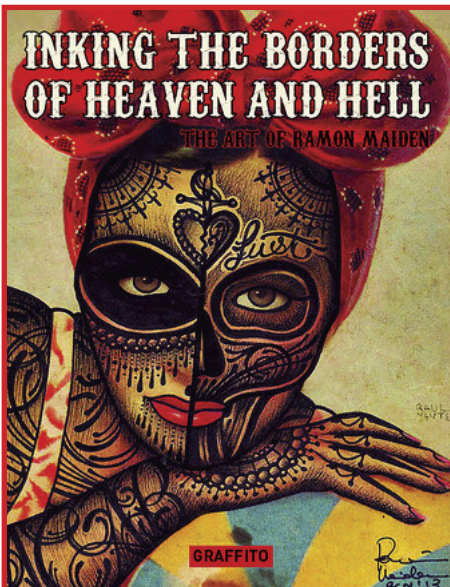
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## ↻ BOOK REVIEW



### Inking the Borders of Heaven and Hell The Art of Ramon Maiden 160 pages £24.99

Last month we brought you the incredible art of Ramon Maiden. No sooner had the issue hit the shelves than we got word of a new book showcasing Ramon's work. 'Inking the Borders of Heaven and Hell' is the ultimate collection of his art and a truly wonderful book to own. With page after page of Ramon's unique and unmistakable creations, once you have travelled from cover to cover you will want to start from the beginning and relish it all over again. An awesome volume, and highly recommended.





## CHARITY FUN DAY

Painted Lady Tattoo Parlour, run by tattooist Dawnii, is holding a fund-raising day in aid of local charity The Primrose Hospice. The event is on Sunday 20th September. It promises to be a fun-filled day with tattoos being done, a hair stylist, artwork for sale, cakes, a bouncy castle, raffles and lots more. Painted Lady is at 6 West Heath Road, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 3TG. All the details of the event can be found at [www.paintedladytattoo parlour.com](http://www.paintedladytattoo parlour.com)



**-SUNDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2015-**  
**PAINTED LADY TATTOO CHARITY DAY**  
**RAISING FUNDS FOR PRIMROSE HOSPICE**  
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FOR MORE INFO VISIT  
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## T SHIRT GIVEAWAY



Redmoth are a young company with big plans and a cool brand. They have been popping up at tattoo conventions around Europe and will be at this year's London International Tattoo Convention. The company collaborates with some awesome international artists to bring unique designs on to cotton. They are based in Belgium but say they are "Ready to take on the world."

Visit [www.redmothclothing.com](http://www.redmothclothing.com) and check out the good stuff on offer. Fantastically, Redmoth are giving three readers the chance to win a t-shirt of their choice. Just email [comps@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:comps@totaltattoo.co.uk) with the subject line MOTH and the first three names out of the hat on 1st November 2015 will be the lucky winners! Terms and conditions apply (see page 5).

## NEEDLE GANGSTAS RIDE AGAIN

The Needle Gangstas are at it again! This time they are taking their Annual Beano Tattoo Expo to the Derby County Football Club, iPro Stadium, Pride Parkway, Derby DE24 8XL on 6th-7th February 2016. About 60 old-time tattooists will be gathering there, along with a smattering of selected younger guests, to celebrate all that was great about tattooing from yesteryear. No under 18's at this particular show; it's very much an adults-only affair. Guinness World Records will be in attendance to witness a very special world record attempt, and there will be all the fun and frolicks you have come to expect from this crowd of bad old boys. Further information can be found on their website as it becomes available: [www.needlegangstasbeanoannualtattooexpo.com](http://www.needlegangstasbeanoannualtattooexpo.com)



## THE GREAT GRAN ESCAPE

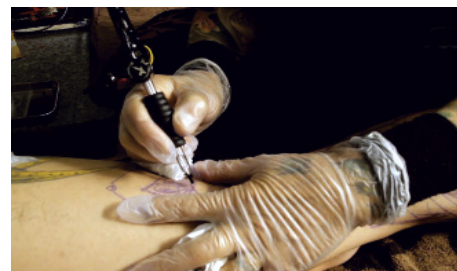
Who doesn't love a renegade gran story? 79-year-old great-grandmother Sadie Sellers recently snuck out of the old people's home in Londonderry where she lives, and headed off to Studio 76 tattoo studio. There, accompanied by her granddaughter Samantha, Sadie got her first tattoo – a heart on her arm. When asked about what her family might think of her new ink, Sadie replied "I don't f\*\*king care. When you get to my age, you just have to live life to the full every day." Sadie, we salute you!



## A CONVERSATION WITH HORIYOSHI III



If you have a few minutes to spare, why not treat yourself to watching a rare interview with Japanese tattoo master Horiyoshi III. It's a great opportunity to hear him talk about his tattoo work, as well as his philosophy about the practice known as Shisei Method. This brings the posture of the body, mind and spirit into harmony with nature's rhythm. An enlightening and spiritual little film. [www.vice.com/en\\_uk/video/the-sacred-art-of-the-japanese-tattoo-151](http://www.vice.com/en_uk/video/the-sacred-art-of-the-japanese-tattoo-151)



## INKANTATIONS WELCOMES A NEW ARRIVAL

Massive congrats to Miss Terri and Oliver, the owners of Inkantations Tattoo in Towcester, on the birth of their daughter Phoenix Laine. Miss Terri tattooed right up to the last minute, so the buzzing of a tattoo machine should be very natural to little Phoenix's ears. Total Tattoo Magazine wishes the family all the very best for the future.





## REGRETS? I HAVE TATTOO...

This one's for those of you who love a good number crunch. Five Thirty Eight is a website that publishes podcasts about all things statistical. In a recent issue they talk tattoos: who has them, how many, and who regrets them. It's not the total appliance of science, but it is interesting nonetheless. They let the numbers do the talking, so the information is solid and not merely based upon hearsay or speculation. [www.fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/podcast-how-many-people-regret-their-tattoo/](http://www.fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/podcast-how-many-people-regret-their-tattoo/)

**Table IIA.** Position and size of tattoos

	Tattoo site and size		P value
	Male (n = 64)	Female (n = 56)	
Face	0 (0)*	2 (4)	NS
Neck	5 (8)	2 (4)	NS
Chest	11 (17)	11 (20)	NS
Arms	48 (75)	4 (7)	<.001
Hands, fingers	9 (14)	1 (2)	NS
Abdomen	3 (5)	7 (13)	NS
Upper back, shoulder	22 (34)	14 (25)	NS
Lower back	3 (5)	10 (18)	.03
Buttocks	2 (3)	3 (5)	NS
Hips	1 (2)	5 (9)	NS
Legs	13 (20)	8 (14)	NS
Ankle	1 (2)	15 (27)	<.001
Feet, toes	1 (2)	2 (4)	NS
At least one exposed†	57 (89)	27 (48)	<.001
Only covered tattoos	7 (11)	29 (52)	<.001
Size is a palm or less	35 (56)	45 (80)	.003
More than a palm	28 (44)	11 (20)	.003

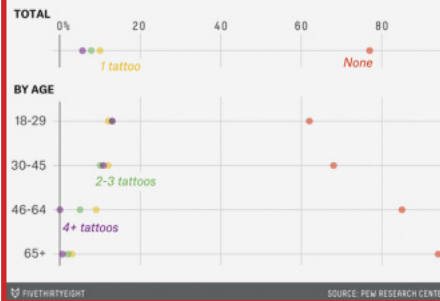
NS, Not statistically significant.

\*Number (%) in category.

†Exposed tattoos are on the face, neck, arms, hands, fingers, legs, ankles, feet, and toes. These percentages did not vary by race.

### How Many Tattoos Do People Have?

Percentages based on 2,020 U.S. survey respondents, 2010



## BOOK REVIEW

### The Pinup Project

Publisher: Graffito Books

Price: £24.99

Available from: [www.graffitobooks.com](http://www.graffitobooks.com)

The Pinup Project features stunning artwork from an unrivalled list of huge names and extraordinary talents working in the pin-up world today, including David Vicente, Enric Badia Romero, Leviathan (Manuel LaVey), Natalie Chau, Andrew Hickinbottom, Jasmine Becket-Griffith, Carlos Cartagena, Jim Silke and David Nakayama, to name just a few. The book represents the wide range of pin-up styles currently enjoying enormous popularity worldwide. As well as classic American 'cheesecake' girls, The Pinup Project features the best cartoon, comic art, kustom, tattoo, retro, hot rod, dominatrix, bad ass, sci-fi, fantasy and neo-surreal pin-ups from around the globe. The book also traces the history of each style, explaining how the art evolved and identifying the most important artists of each genre.





## NEW ARRIVAL AT ELECTRIC PUNCH



It has obviously been a very busy month for the Stork! We would like to send huge congratulations to Terry Frank and his good lady Gemma from Electric Punch Tattoo on the arrival of their son, Charlie Edison Frank, born at 5.32am on 15th August and weighing in at 7lb 11oz.

Total Tattoo Magazine wishes all the family the very best for the future.

## HYGIENE SCHEMES GAIN MOMENTUM

It's so good to see that individual councils across the country are at last beginning to deal with the thorny issue of tattoo shop regulation. One of the most innovative schemes is a hygiene rating for studios similar to those awarded to restaurants and takeaways. The latest local authority to adopt the scheme is Blackpool in Lancashire. Councillor Gillian Campbell, Deputy Leader of Blackpool Council, said "We have a duty to protect people, particularly young people and, as such, we want to make sure all tattooing and piercing premises are clean and fully compliant with the law." You can now head to the council's website at [www.blackpool.gov.uk/tattoo](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/tattoo) and check out any local studio's hygiene rating. Of course, this rating has nothing to do with the standard of work produced by the artists working at the studios, but it's a case of controlling the controllable. Mark Richardson from Revival Tattoos has welcomed the move: "We think this will help to stop inexperienced people opening up tattoo studios in Blackpool, putting people's health at risk."

## IVANA PRINTS



Fans of tattooist Ivana's beautiful artwork will not be disappointed with her new set of limited edition prints. The set comprises The Owl, The Deer, The Elephant, The Matrioska Doll and The Blue Whale. Each beautiful image is produced in a run of only 50 prints, on 290g fine art paper, using archival inks. Each one is then hand numbered, signed and embossed with her logo. To add these superb prints to your collection, visit

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



## BOOK REVIEW



### Built on Tradition – 100 Back Tattoo Designs

Price: \$150.00 + postage

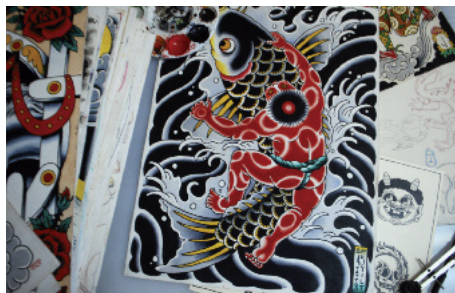
Hardcover with hard slipcase

100 pages

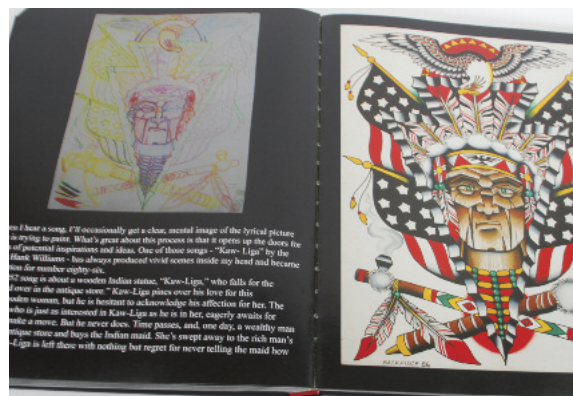
Available from: [www.100backpieces.com](http://www.100backpieces.com)



We're pleased to announce that tattooist Jeromey 'Tilt' McCullough's long-awaited project 'Built on Tradition – 100 Back Tattoo Designs' is now available. This truly is a labour of love, with each design painstakingly created by Jeromey. The idea of the



project was to enable him to better understand what makes a great tattoo backpiece. Each design is published as a full page and comes with an explanation of what inspired him to produce it. If you are an artist thinking of progressing to larger scale work or a collector wanting to get your back tattooed, this book will help you understand how to look at that epic space and fill it with the best design possible.





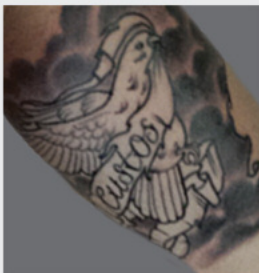
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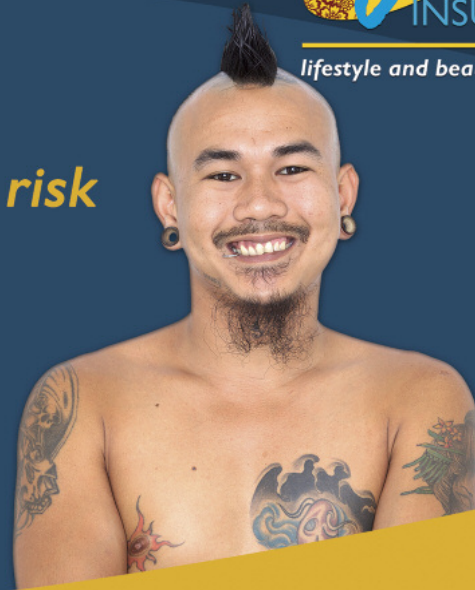




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# Jolie

Words by Perry  
Pictures by Jolie Rouge

## ROUGE TATTOO

raquel



A long time ago in a tattoo studio far far away (well, King's Cross actually) a young Matt Difa brought together his rebel alliance. Jolie Rouge has now become one of London's most well-respected and successful shops. Several of the artists originally worked at Tusk Tattoo in Covent Garden before leaving to support Matt in his solo adventure, and over the years they have all steadily grown together to create a talented team with a strong family bond. It's no secret that Matt is a complete Star Wars nut, and he recently received the immense accolade of being recognised as an official Star Wars artist, something that makes him very very happy indeed!

There was never a choice for Matt. He was always into tattoos, and he was covered from an early age. He made his first connections into the trade when he met Danny D, now the owner of Frith Street Tattoo, who was at that time selling bootleg videos from a stall on London's Camden Market (where, incidentally, Ian from Lucky 7 Supplies was the local road sweeper). Danny D put Matt in touch with the late Jason Saga at Evil from the Needle, and Jason agreed to teach him. It all fell into place, as if tattoo and Matt had finally found each other, and a few years later, in 2006, Matt and his business partner opened Jolie Rouge in premises recently vacated by Dan Gold on London's Caledonian Road.

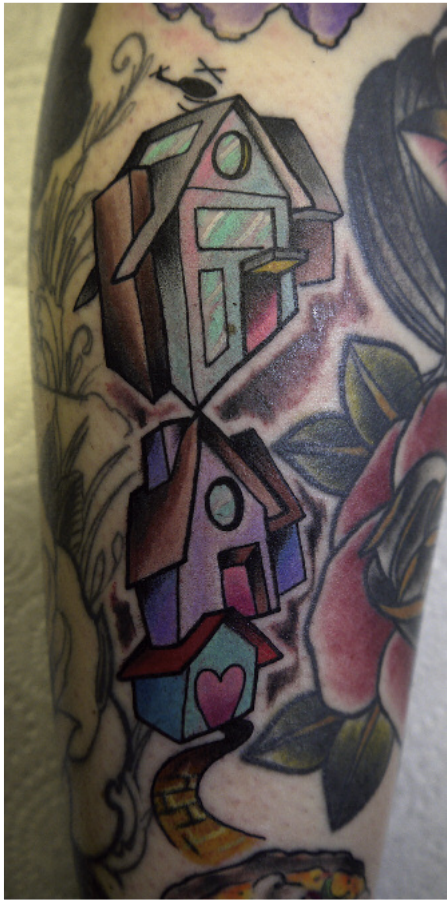
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keely, lord, clara, matt, raquel, javi



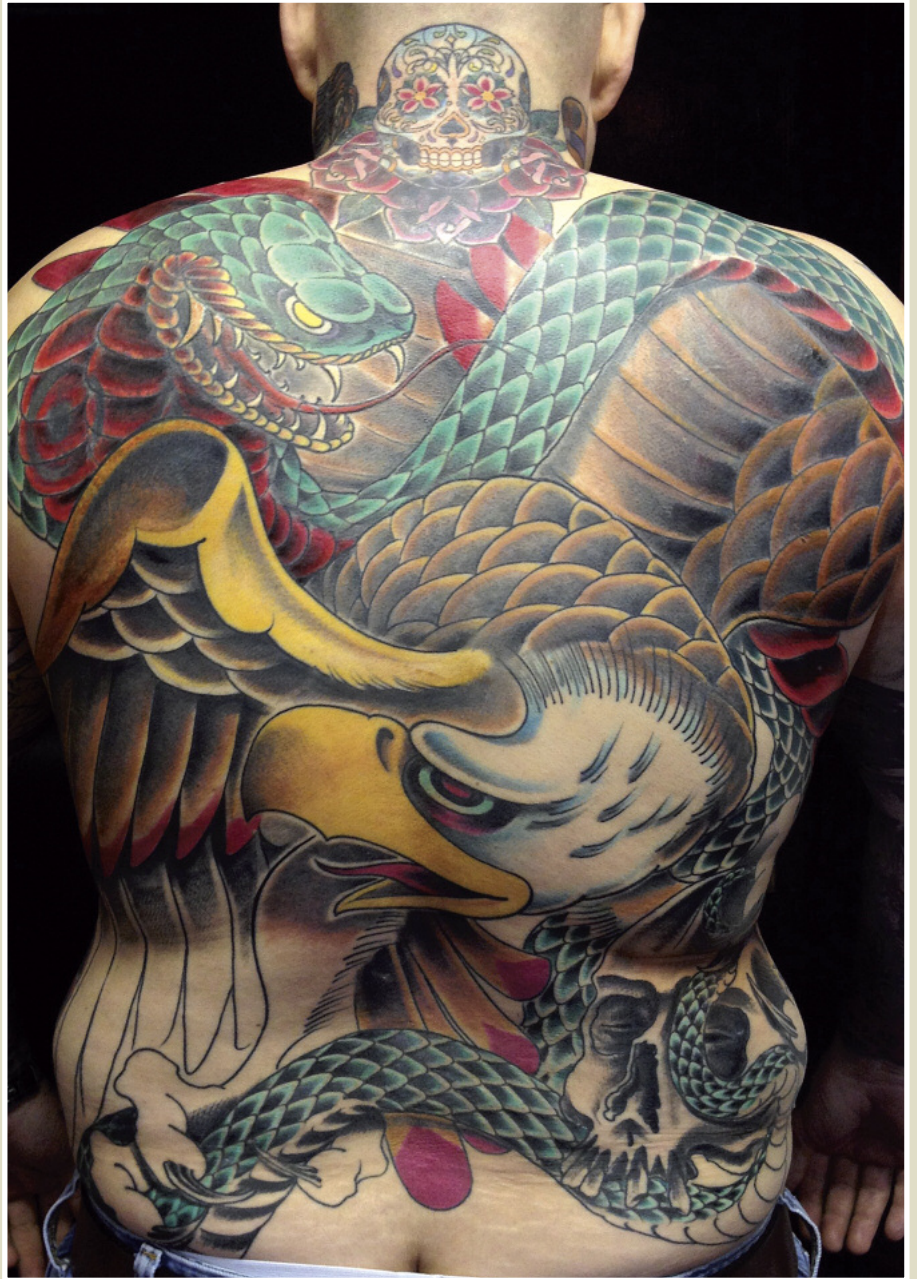
lord



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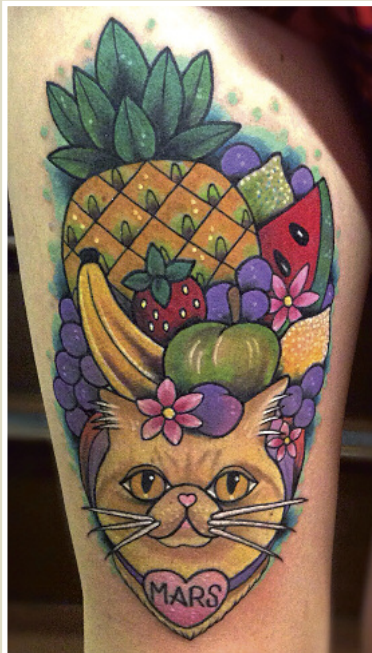


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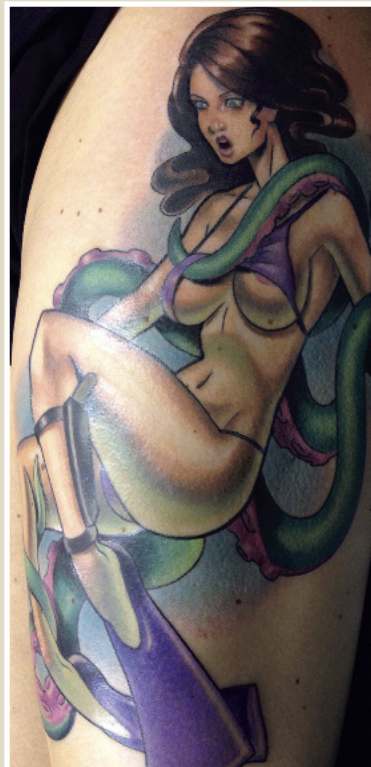
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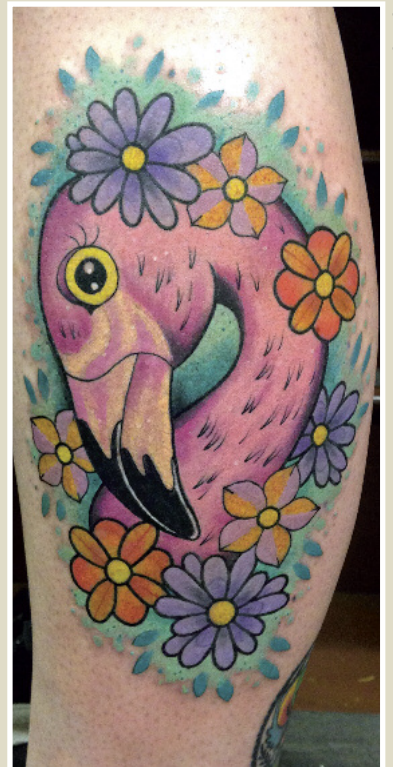
Matt was one of the very first tattooists officially licensed to work the gigantic four-day 'Star Wars Celebrations' in the States, where more than fifty thousand fans gather (along with many of the actors from the films). "The quality of the tattoo artists at these conventions just gets better every year, and the work is amazing. This year we had Nikko Hurtado, Adam Hay, Carlos Torres..." Matt tells me. "The scale is ridiculous. Tens of thousands of people, and only about 30 tattooists. I was booked up two years ahead for this year's convention, and I'm already booked up for the convention in two years' time. Star Wars tattoos for four days solid!" Matt grins from ear to ear.

Aside from his tattooing, Matt also has the honour of being contracted as an official Star Wars artist with Lucasfilm Ltd (now owned by The Walt Disney Company). I asked him how that came about. "I submitted a Star Wars skateboard to the charity auction at the first Comic Con," he tells me. "George Lucas's art buyer got it, and it ended up on the wall at Industrial Light and Magic, the special effects division of Lucasfilm. Kathleen Kennedy, the new President of Lucasfilm, saw it and liked it, and her people got in touch with me to commission a painting. I wanted to do the painting for nothing, but I was told I had to charge for it, and that I could charge whatever I liked. So when it was finished I asked if I could deliver it in person to George Lucas's Skywalker Ranch. Usually *nobody* gets to visit there, but I got an email back inviting me for a full tour, including Industrial Light and Magic and George Lucas's massive private museum of Star Wars artefacts. It was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I just loved it."

lord



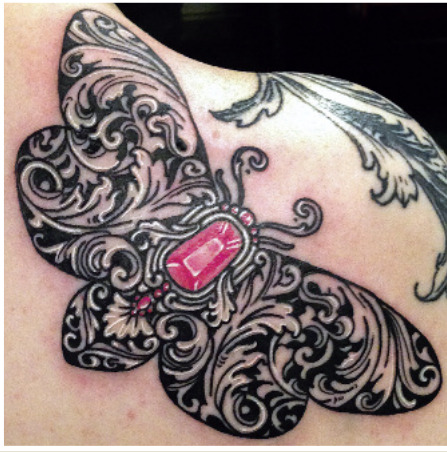
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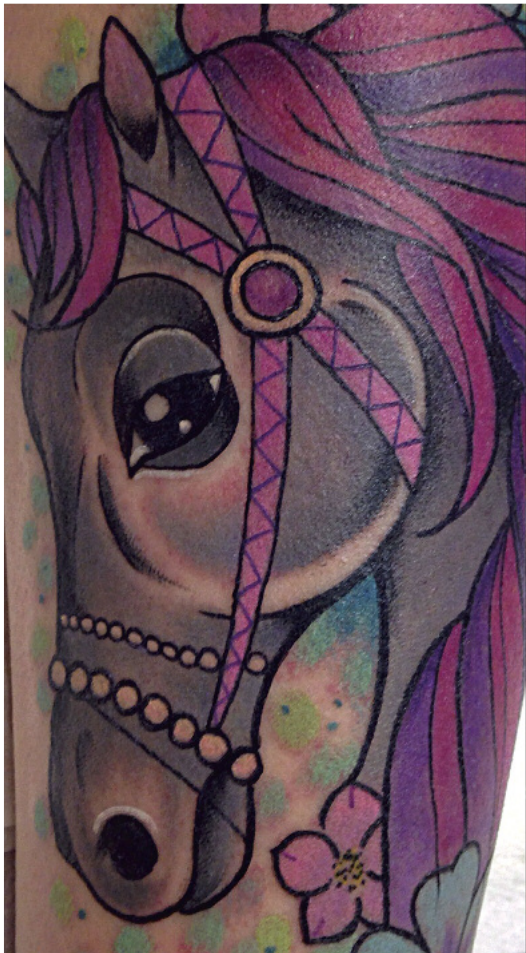
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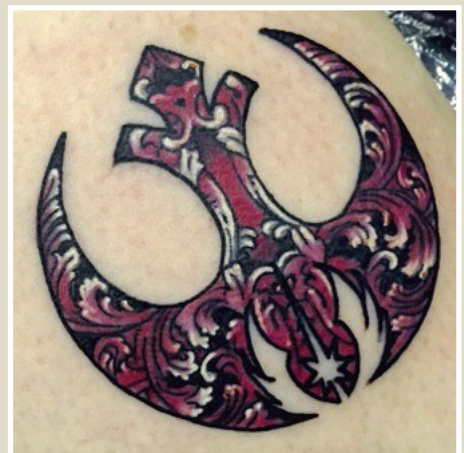
keely



raquel

By all accounts, Matt's a very special kind of boss and he's brought together a great team. Javi, Raquel and Lord all worked with him at Tusk in Covent Garden and have been with him at Jolie Rouge since it began. I wondered what it is about this shop that makes people stay for so many years? "Whenever anyone's left, it's only ever been because some unmissable opportunity has come along for them," Javi tells me. "It's always been on good terms. This place is like a family. You can do your own thing. You can see what everyone else is doing. We share opinions and advice but it's always friendly and always supportive. I think this comes from Matt, because he's very open and we're treated with respect, as mature artists. We run our own schedules, but we look to the shop as our home and we all take responsibility for it."

clara





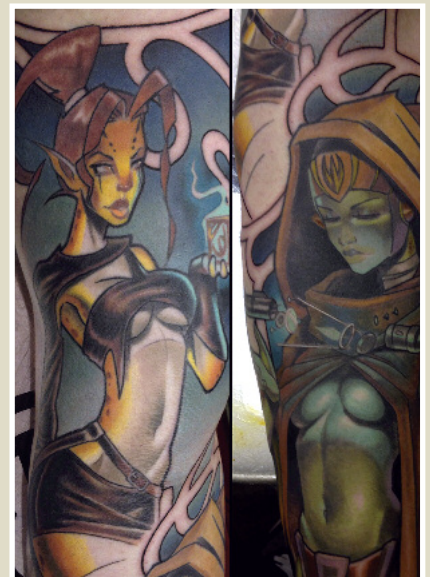
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raquel



javi



matt

The shop itself is unique. As you enter, the ground floor is small with a staircase heading down to a much larger basement that spreads out under the road and under the neighbouring property too. With only five stations it looks pretty cosy. Javi continues, "We don't all work on the same days, and we can always make a bit of space for guest artists. It's nice to be able to see how other people work, even when they're doing the same kinds of things as you. They will position the client differently, or employ different techniques on different parts of the body. It's good to learn from each other in this way." Clara adds, "I love the atmosphere it creates. Everyone is involved in all the conversations, and ideas are buzzing about. The size of the shop and the closeness means it doesn't really feel like work. It just feels like you're going to visit your mates and create some cool tattoos! And it never feels like you're on a treadmill. It's very relaxed. If my customer wants to hang out after getting tattooed, that's fine. It's important for the customers to be welcomed as part of the family and have a great time because they will remember every bit of their day. It's a special day for them, so it can never be just another day at the office for you."

I ask what makes Matt such a great boss. Lord tells me, "Because he's such a fine tattooist in his own right. He earns his own money and he's never relied on the shop for his income. It's not a meal ticket. He just wants it to be a good place to work with good people who are worth working with. And that in itself creates a strong form of loyalty."

lord



raquel

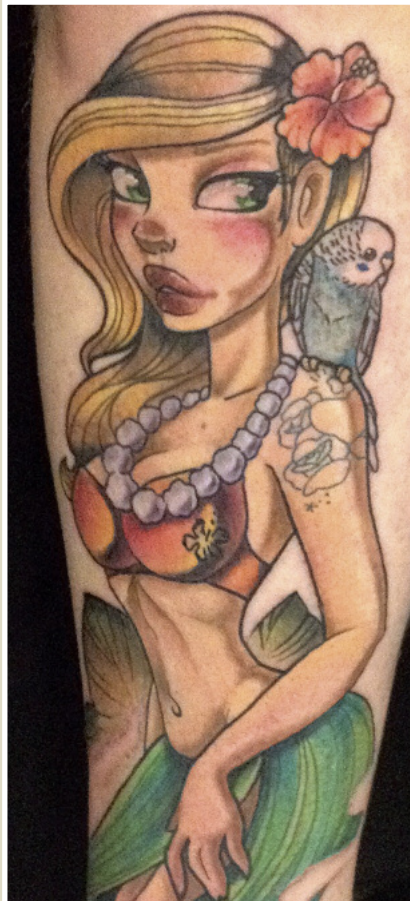




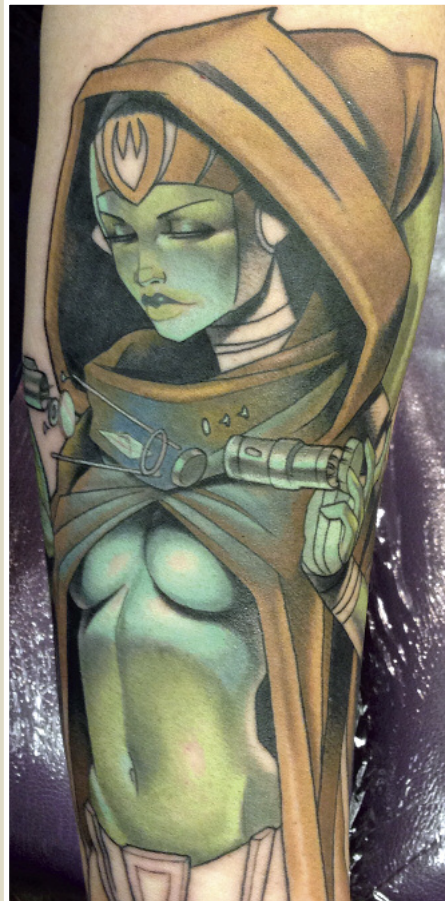
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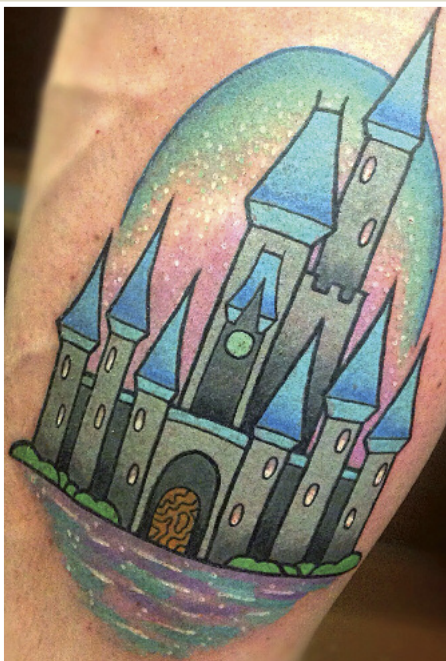
raquel



matt



keely



lord



matt



Keely is the newest member of the Jolie Rouge team. She came here after meeting Matt at the Brighton Tattoo Convention in 2014 and for her, the big attraction was working with so many great artists. "I've learnt so much since joining the shop," she tells me. "Having people around you to bounce ideas off helps open your mind to other possibilities. It forces you not to repeat the tried and tested formulas that you're comfortable with. I've always looked for improvements in my work and I've noticed how much faster this is happening now. Even my drawing ability has improved. Working alongside a tattooist like Matt is so inspiring. He's so generous with his knowledge and he's really keen to help you along. Working here has really opened doors for me, and I'm guesting in Europe for the first time this year. I think I'm going to be at Jolie Rouge for a long time yet!"



clara



lord



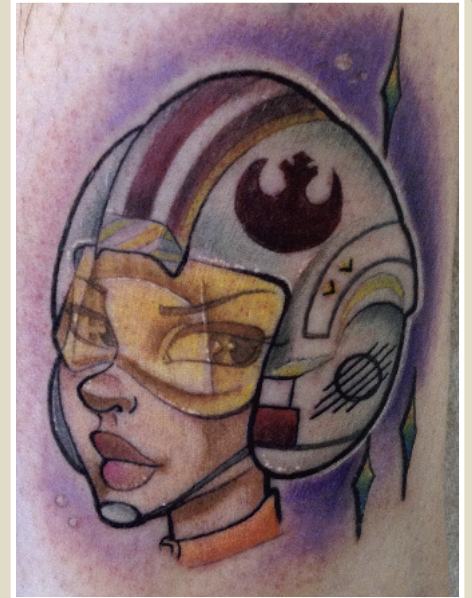
keely



lord



raquel



So what are Matt's own theories about the shop's success? "I think it's just that we all like each other," he tells me. "I couldn't have artists in the shop who didn't get along." Was the original team hand-picked from Matt's friends, I wondered? "No. It was a mutiny! We were all working together at Tusk and we decided to leave. Lord was our apprentice. After that, anyone who came along just had to fit in with us. For me it's always been about getting the right vibe. It's less of a business and more a bunch of mates doing the same job. Keely's just joined and she has fitted straight in. We all went out together on Valentine's Day, and you can't get more lovey than that."

clara

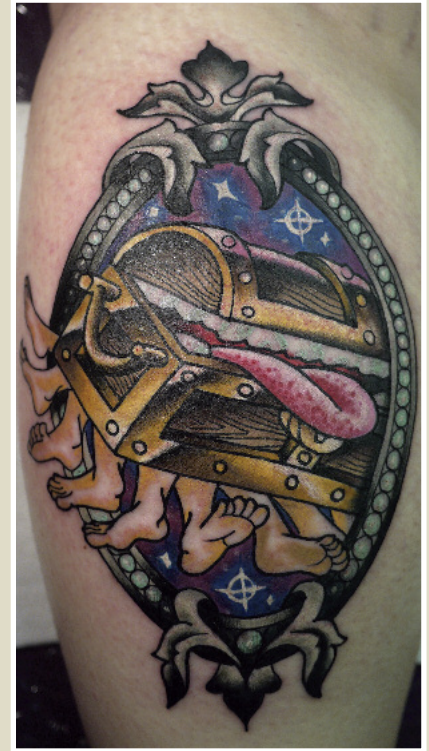




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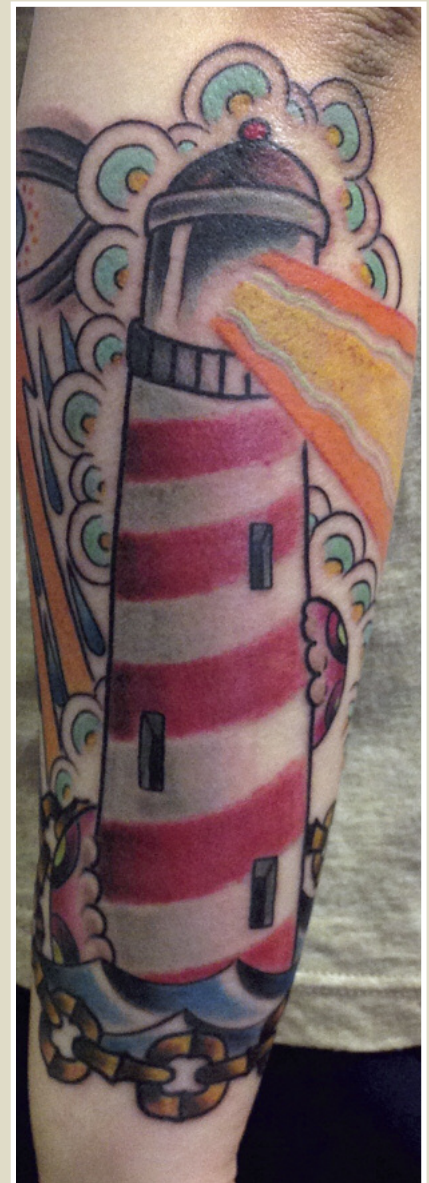


lord

lord



javi



Does Jolie Rouge have a 'house style'? "Before I came to work here I kind of viewed it as a New School shop and I thought you had to do New School to fit in," Clara confesses. "But now I realise it's not the style of work that matters. It's the personalities that create the shop." Javi continues the theme. He tells me he started with Black and Grey then progressed through Old School and on to New School. "Now I am trying to specialise in traditional Japanese with a twist," he continues, "but that kind of shift is not easy." Keely describes herself as a "girly traditionalist" with a mainly female clientele. "I did a cutesy Donald Duck and Daffy Duck on a guy," she explains, "and when the girls saw it they all started asking for more of the same and it just kind of developed into my style!" Lord describes himself as an all-rounder and makes an interesting, if controversial, point. "I remember when

tattooists did everything – tribal, script, portrait, whatever – almost like a one-stop shop. In tattooing at the moment we have lots of artists who have pushed the boundaries, but I do fear for those who specialised early in their careers. What will they do when things move on from their particular style?"

Matt positively encourages his team to spend time away attending conventions and exploring the world (something that is often a source of unease for other studio owners). "Conventions are fun," Raquel tells me, "and they're a good way to meet people and make new friends within the industry." Javi agrees. "I love conventions because you can meet and see all the people that you admire. But there are so many of them, and that means not all of them are busy. Somewhere like Edinburgh is great. They don't have so many conventions there and people come from all over."



In recent years Matt has had trouble with his hands. A while back he lost the use of his thumbs and it looked as though he might have to stop tattooing. "My synovial tubes (through which the tendons run) 'went'. My thumbs stopped working and I couldn't even pick up a cup of coffee. For six months, the doctors were telling me that basically nothing could be done, then I went private and they fixed it in a month – although it did cost a few grand! I'm supposed to work one day on and one day off. I do try, but it's not always possible."

matt



Matt spends a lot of time working in the States now, splitting his time between tattooing and painting. And as long as everyone at Jolie Rouge is happy, Matt is happy too. However, things have recently turned sour with his landlord, so Matt is on the look-out for new premises. "Every now and then I think oh fuck it, I'll go and live in America – especially when we have loads of aggro with this building – but I never would, because I want to look after all the friends I work with here. I'm not massively organised, so I have a shop manager to keep things running smoothly. There are never any squabbles and everyone is more than OK with sharing the responsibility. It's so good to know that I can go away for a month and everything back home will be fine. I have always just let things roll along."

keely



matt



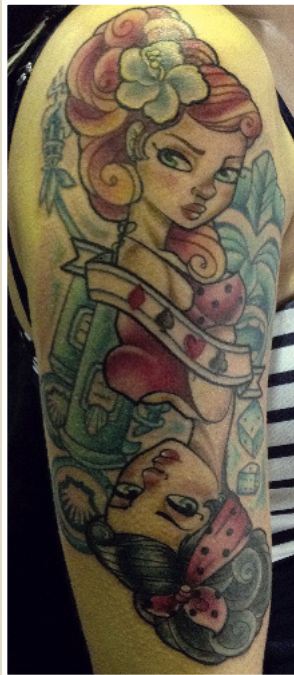
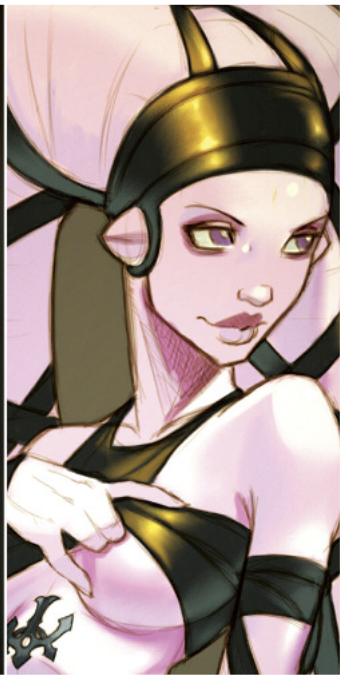
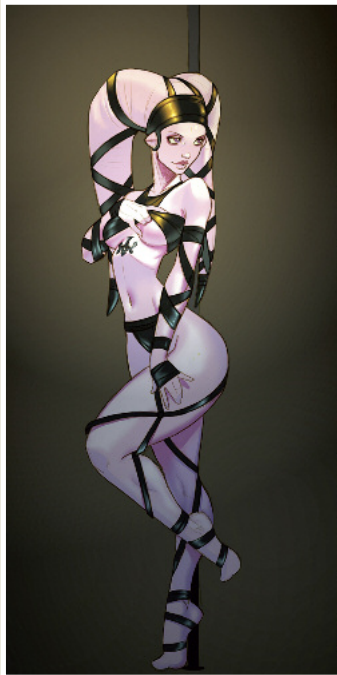
javi



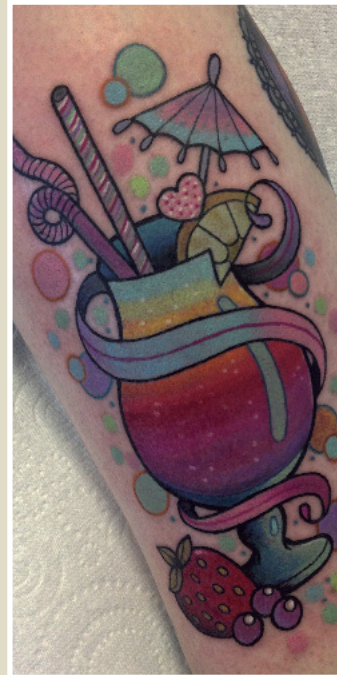
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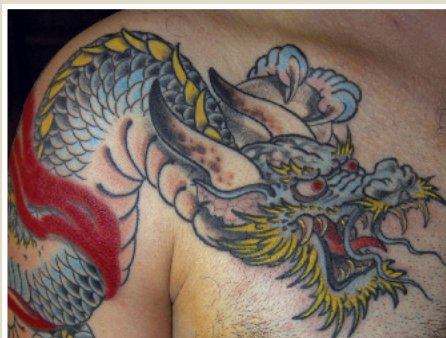


raquel



keely

clara



javi



lord

I get the impression that the whole crew are pretty laid back, and happy just to wait and see what the future will bring. Raquel sums it up: "I don't plan much, even though I'm getting older. I love to tattoo and I enjoy my life. Every day I strive to be a little better. I want to travel more, and see more. These are the things that help me improve my tattooing. I think Jolie Rouge works for us because we're a family who all share the same goals – to produce great tattoos and support each other to be the best we can. Tattooing is a challenging job. It pushes you, and that's the beauty of it. It should never be easy." Lord adds, "It's the energy within the shop that's the secret to its success. And that has to be down to all the people involved." Not least Matt, as everyone would agree.

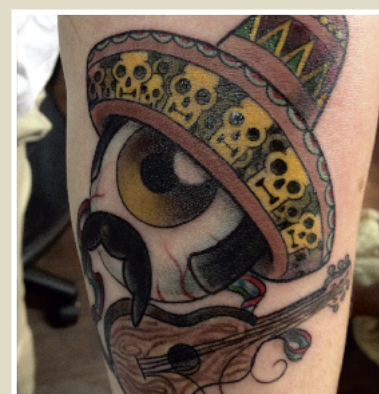
Passion, loyalty and extraordinary talent are the ingredients that glue this tattoo family together. There are very few studios where artists work so comfortably in such close proximity. They seem to feed off each other's drive and enthusiasm, and their collective creative energy is fuelled by their desire to just get better and better at what they do. *May the Force be with them.*

**Jolie Rouge are:**

- Matt Difa**
- Lord Montana Blue**
- Javi Bermudez**
- Raquel CT**
- Clara Sinclair**
- Keely Rutherford**

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raquel



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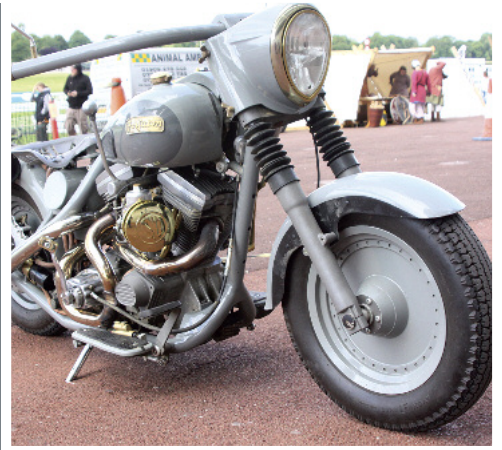
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# YORK TATTOO CONVENTION

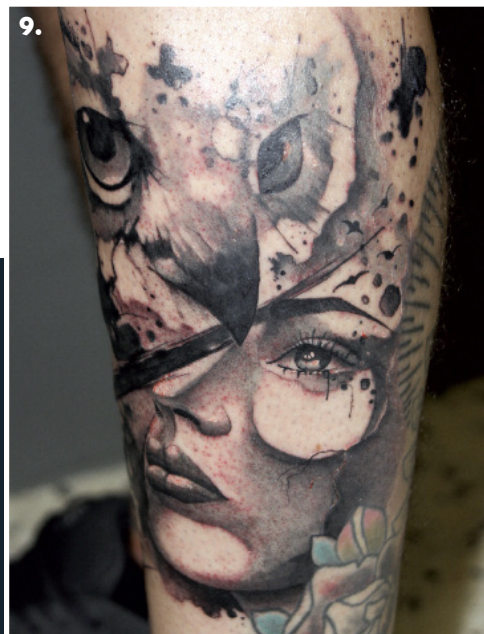
The show previously known as 'Ink for Heroes' has been renamed the York Tattoo Convention. It took place in June this year at York Racecourse, on the outskirts of the city. The venue was clearly signposted and easy to find, which was handy because I am famously rubbish with directions. Once at the venue however, the way in to the show was a little trickier to locate, partly because there were multiple entrances but also because there were cars parked in front of the signs...



- 1. by lauren roberts, true colour
- 2. by guy fletcher, north star
- 3. by jimmie scribble, twisted ink
- 4. by liam freeman, wet paint collective
- 5. by craig cardwell, retro ink







But once inside, I was very impressed with the space. The show took place in the ground floor function room, under the racecourse grandstand. Entering via a central lobby, doors on either side took you into the main room. With white marble floors throughout, a whole wall of plate glass and high ceilings, the room was flooded with natural light making it perfect for tattooing.

More than fifty studios made the journey to York, many bringing several tattooists to work at the event. This created a lively atmosphere and provided a showcase for some artists I hadn't come across at conventions before. The guys from Retro Ink in Blackpool stood out, along with Jimmy Scribble from Barnsley – who is carving a name for himself as a script specialist – and the young and very talented Dan Rooke, who seems able to turn his hand to any style with ease. It was also good to see exceptional work being done by old friends like Gari Henderson at Northside Tattooz and the lovely Lawrence Ah Ching. In contrast to this, I have to confess to seeing some of the worst tattoos ever put on at a show, but probably the less said about those the better!

Lots of excellent tattoos came forward for the competitions, and the trophies looked fantastic and well worth winning. The black and grey category was particularly hard fought. It was great to see the artists enthusiastically supporting the competitions.

Outside, there was a small selection of custom bikes and a display of rescued birds of prey. The city of York is proud of its history as the Viking settlement of Jorvik and this was reflected in the theme of the show: a group of Vikings demonstrated traditional Viking games and polished their helmets, and there was a Viking colouring competition and face painting for the children. For the sweet-toothed, every stall had a plastic Viking helmet filled with chewy, sugary delights provided by show organisers Wayne and Pam from ABH Tattooing.

During the weekend a good selection of bands played on the upper mezzanine floor, where the food was also being served. Being a bit of an old fogey, I found the volume of the music a little too high; the marble floors and the glass wall made the sound echo around the venue, making conversation somewhere between difficult and impossible.

So much effort had gone into creating a very well run and superbly organised show. However the major and undeniable problem was a lack of people through the door. A lot of artists were busy but many weren't, and none of the traders I spoke to were boasting huge profits. This was a real shame as it was a family-friendly event and, with tickets priced at just £10 (and ample free parking), I feel it should have busier. I really enjoyed the weekend and just wish more people had come along to do the same. I would like to invite you all to join me there next year, but don't forget to bring your swords!

- 6. by jason bird, jays inks
- 7. by woz, hales street studios
- 8. by emilio winter, on the road
- 9. by lauren roberts, true colour
- 10. volsung vikings

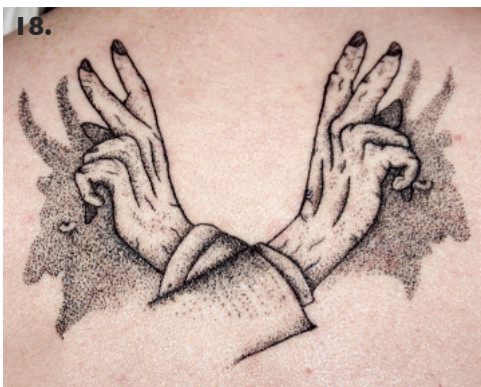




11. richie guy,  
lucky 13  
12. york bird of prey  
rescue centre  
13. by dan rooke,  
rookstar tattoo  
14. by rikki,  
retro ink







15. by teo, on the road  
 16. pinstripping paradise  
 17. by kayley south,  
 northside tattooz  
 18. by rich amphlett, body mods  
 19. by liam freeman,  
 wet paint collective  
 20. very impressive trophies  
 21. thor steiner's viking supplies







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# gray silva

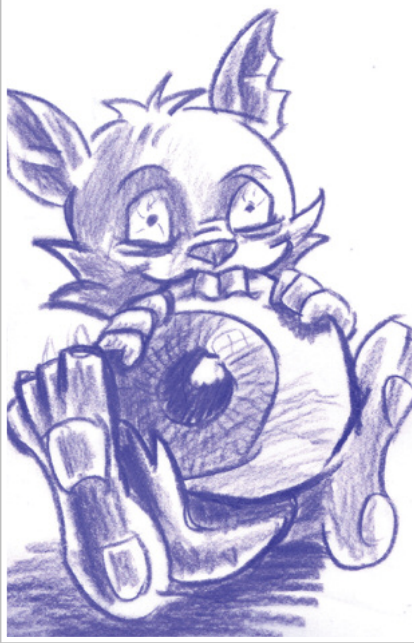


**G**ray Silva has been surrounded by hard graft and creativity all his life. His family has always embraced these qualities and valued them equally, and they were instilled into Gray from an early age. Throw in his passion for music and his insatiable curiosity about how things work, and you'll know why Gray has the kind of mind that is seldom at rest. When he's not tattooing or drawing, he is gigging with one of his bands, singing with a barber shop quartet, or building up his fledgling custom bike business. Plus he always finds time to spend with his young children, as he knows they will grow up in the blink of an eye. We headed up to Gray's studio, Rampant Ink in Nottingham, for a chat about tattoos, bikes and music.

"When I got my first tattoo," Gray recalls, "I asked Bobby the tattooist about everything in the shop. But it wasn't because I wanted to tattoo at that point, I was just interested in the mechanics of it all. I had taken our doorbell apart at home years before and I recognised the technology. Bobby's lifestyle fascinated me. He worked when he wanted, closed the studio when he wanted, and still made a living. You might turn up one day and find the shop was shut because it was sunny and he'd gone out with his family. I just thought it was a brilliant way to live and that stuck with me."

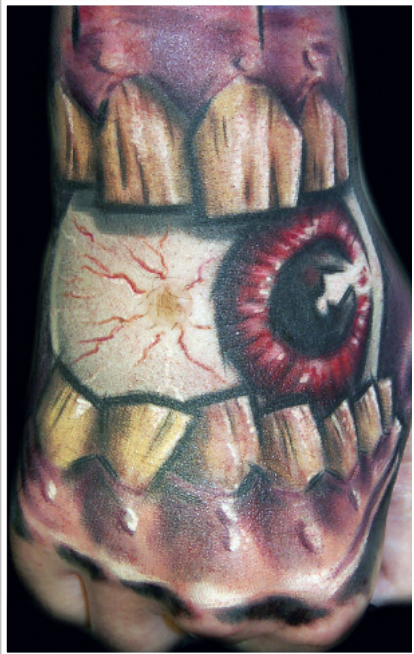






After obtaining a degree in design, Gray initially became a teacher but there was one slight hitch: he didn't like teaching. So he repeatedly asked a reluctant Bobby to teach him tattooing. "And eventually he agreed," Gray tells me. "He brought out a hundred sheets of old yellowed, dog-eared flash and said 'Can you draw stuff like this?' I put my slant on it, and he liked it, but it wasn't yet really my thing. It wasn't until I saw Bugs' work in Skin Art magazine that I realised I could do what I wanted. And that was exactly the advice Bugs gave me when I first got tattooed by him.

"I never considered myself to have a style. It's just the way I simplify things. All through school, university and my first few years of tattooing people kept saying 'You can't do that'. When I was learning to draw at school. I was told to do a still life - you know, a bottle and an orange, that sort of thing. I'd seen some graffiti on a Blondie video and the big thick lines hooked me, so I brought them into my drawing. It got me into trouble because I wasn't doing what they wanted. For the rest of my time at school it was pretty much beaten out of me, but it was how I saw things. Then my brother introduced me to Franz Marc, the German painter and printmaker, one of the key figures of the German Expressionist movement. And that was it, I was gone. Cubism is just incredible. I've been accused of copying Bugs many times. His work is proper Cubism, but I just mess around with lines and shapes. I know it's not to everyone's taste, but I'm not bothered. I've been tattooing for 18 years but my career didn't get going until I started doing it my way."



So where do motorcycles fit into all this? Gray explains, "Ever since I was a kid I've always taken things apart. Christmas morning I would be playing with my new toys and by the afternoon they would all be in bits. I needed to see how things worked and that has never left me. Cars, bikes, tattoo machines... I need to know how they all work. So the bike thing just developed from those early days.



"I just appreciate engineering so much. Taking a gearbox or an engine to pieces really appeals to me. I marvel at how it's made. Who thought of this? Why did they do that? If I had all the time in the world I would read everything I could get my hands on about engineering. Matt, who builds the bikes with me, will do that. He'll pick up a manual and read it cover-to-cover. He's an encyclopedia of car and bike knowledge. But ask him to switch on his computer and he will give you a blank stare!" [laughs]





Biking runs in Gray's family. His dad rode scooters as a young man but had a crash with Gray's mum on the back so bikes were blacklisted. "The minute I showed any interest in bikes, my mum would just say no. And what does a kid do when someone says no? You get *really* interested. There was a biker who lived down the street. He always had choppers and a car that was in bits in the yard, and that just fascinated me. So I would go round there without mum knowing. He was a bit roughy-toughy and didn't want some kid hanging around, but I would ask him questions. The first bike I bought was a custom one and I instantly took it to bits. Not long after that I met Matt. I've learned everything I know about bikes from him."

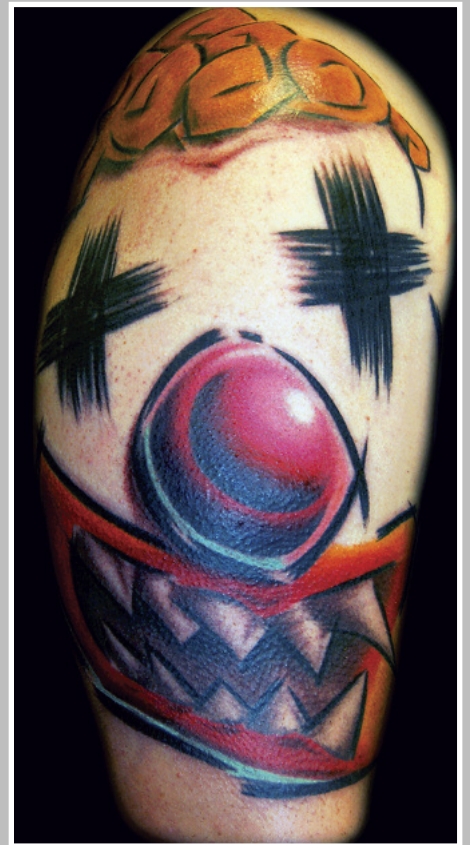




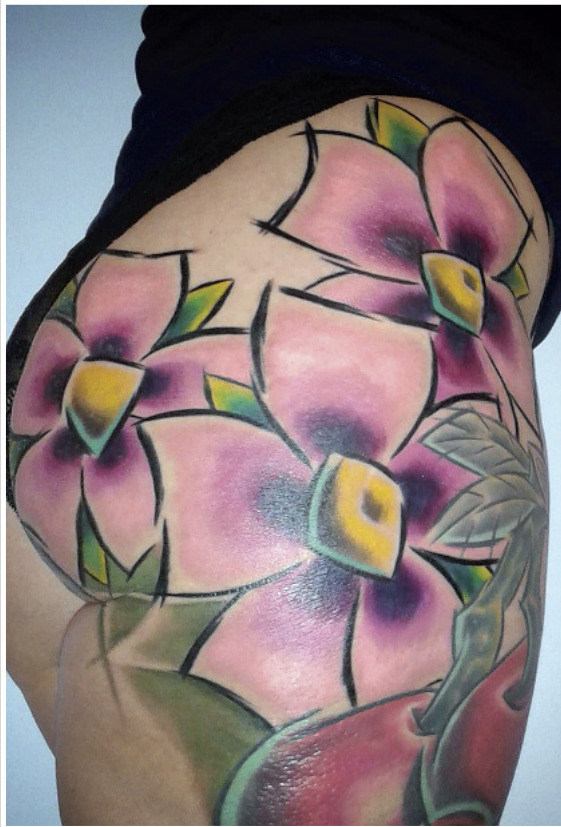


When Gray heard that Matt was starting to build bikes again a few years ago, his ears pricked up and he instantly volunteered his services. He could see the potential as soon as Matt started working on their first Enfield, and a fledgling business was born.

Between the two of them they seem to have had every bike under the sun but the 500cc Royal Enfield caught both their imaginations. These machines look cool, don't cost the earth and certainly stand out at any bike event. The whole endeavour is just a part-time thing at present, and that suits Gray. "We both have other things going on, so we are just doing it weekends and evening at the moment. But it's going well and people seem to like the bikes."



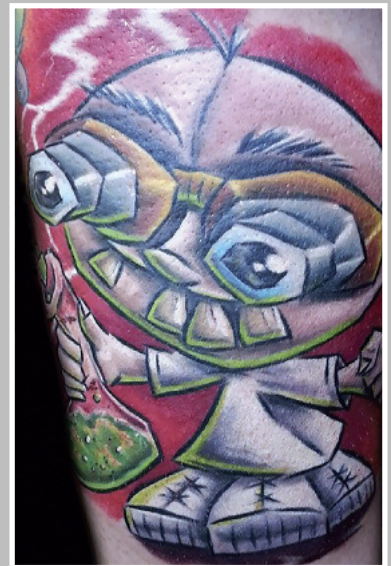




Aside from bikes and tattoos, music is Gray's longest lasting love. It's been part of him for ever; it's in his DNA. "My love of music comes from my family. As a kid I was always in school shows. My brother is a trained opera singer and we sang in various choirs. When I was at university I learned to play the drums. The minute I started playing I was hooked." For the next few years, it was all about bands for Gray. "I played drums for ten or eleven years but, to be honest, I got fed up trying to find places that I could practice. In the end I switched to the bass." At the last count, Gray can play at least eight musical instruments. He is also extremely committed to his barber shop quartet. "I find making music even more rewarding than tattooing," he confesses. "You write a song, take it to the other guys and they all jump on it and add harmonies; then you take it out and gig it and the crowd loves it. That's better than getting 1000 likes on a tattoo photo."


It's clear that whenever Gray makes the decision to do anything, he really commits to it. So does he ever take things easy? "Resting is a bit boring," he says. Somehow, I could have guessed that would be his reply!

**Gray's website**  
[www.rampantink.co.uk](http://www.rampantink.co.uk)

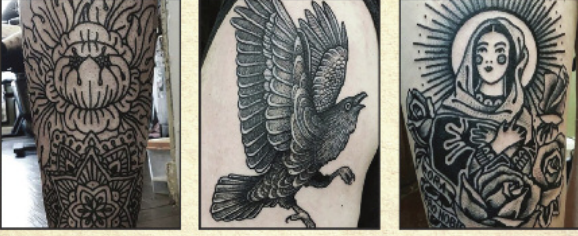




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## Cover Model Profile

# AMBER BRAUNER



**This month's cover model is SAMCRO Crow Eater Amber Brauner, who tells us she is no longer a boring cook...**

### **Tell us a little about Amber Brauner...**

Here's a few words to sum me up: fun, crazy, real and a go-getter. Never a dull moment. And I'm a very proud mom of four.

### **What are you most passionate about?**

Living life to the full and making my time here count.

### **You recently won the TV show 'Worst Cooks in America'. Congratulations! Be honest... how bad a cook were you before you went on the programme? How has the experience changed you and your culinary skills?**

I guess anyone would seem like a bad cook when you come up against amazing chefs like Bobby Flay and Anne Burrell. I was a boring cook. If you have to have salt and pepper on your table, you're not doing it right; food should arrive full of flavour. Winning the show means my family will never eat boring food again.

### **What new projects do you have in the pipeline? More reality shows?**

Yes, I hope to do lots more TV work in the future. And acting is always going to be a passion of mine too. I love it.

### **You have appeared in 'Sons of Anarchy'. What was that like?**

What an amazing show, with such a talented cast and crew to work with. I was grateful to do three seasons as a SAMCRO Crow Eater. It was such a learning experience.

### **Tell us about your modelling work.**

I have been modelling since I was eleven years old. I did print and catalogue work until I started to get heavily tattooed. Now I do a lot of alt-modelling and fashion work.

### **What's your personal style?**

That's a good question. I could wake up one day and put on sneakers, jeans and my hat backwards... then that night I'll wear stiletto heels and a leather dress to walk down a red carpet... then the next day I'll put on comfy pants, a tank top and throw my hair in a bun... so I guess the answer is "a little of everything".

### **I hear you were a tattoo artist at one time. Do you still tattoo?**

Yes, I still tattoo once in a blue moon, but I'm 'salad and a glass of water' compared to some artists out there. There are so many talented people. I'm a woman who likes to accomplish all kinds of things and tattooing was one of them, but I'm no master. I hope to have time to do more in the future though.

### **What was the first tattoo that you did and how do you feel about it now?**

It was a butterfly on one of my friends. I recently ran into her and it looks just as good as the day I did it. For a first tattoo, I was happy with it.

### **What was your most painful tattoo?**

My knee was the winner in the pain thing. I'm not looking forward to having the other one done.

### **Tell me about your "Crazy Lady" leg tattoo. You are super-grounded, easy-going, and kind... you don't really fit that label. What am I missing?**

The name Crazy Lady has stuck with me forever, not because I need to be locked up though. It's because I say what's on my mind. It's like verbal vomit... a little too real at times, but in a good way. At least you know what I'm thinking. There are no hidden messages here.

### **What inspired your own tattoos? Did you always want to be a heavily tattooed woman?**

I have been around tattoos all my life but I didn't get really into them until the death of my parents. I think I mourned them with the art I put on my skin.

### **Any future plans for more ink?**

Yes, tons more ink. I'm going to cover myself everywhere but my face.

### **Have you had any negative experiences from the number of tattoos you have?**

A long time ago I would say this amount of ink was rare on women, but now it never crosses my mind.

### **Do you feel the tattoo industry is changing?**

Yes, it's changing all the time and for the better. The industry has come a long way. I recommend everyone watches the movie 'Tattoo Nation'. It will give you a new love for tattoos, even if you don't have any.

### **What advice would you give to prospective models or actors? Any tips for looking fabulous?**

You can do anything you put your mind to. It's all about working hard on your goals and following through with them. You don't know until you try, and trying is living. My advice is to love yourself, no matter what shape or size you are. I am just blessed to keep active and fit.

### **What should we expect from Amber Brauner in the future?**

Everything! I have my hands in all the cookie jars: TV, modelling, fashion, books, music and cooking. You will see Crazy Lady everywhere!

### **Is there anything else we should know about Amber?**

Yes, I believe in ghosts.





I HAD JUST SPENT A  
WHOLE YEAR BEING  
PUNCHED IN THE DICK! I  
WAS GONNA SHOW THEM  
I CAN TAKE IT, AND  
THAT IS WHAT I HAVE  
BEEN DOING  
EVER  
SINCE!



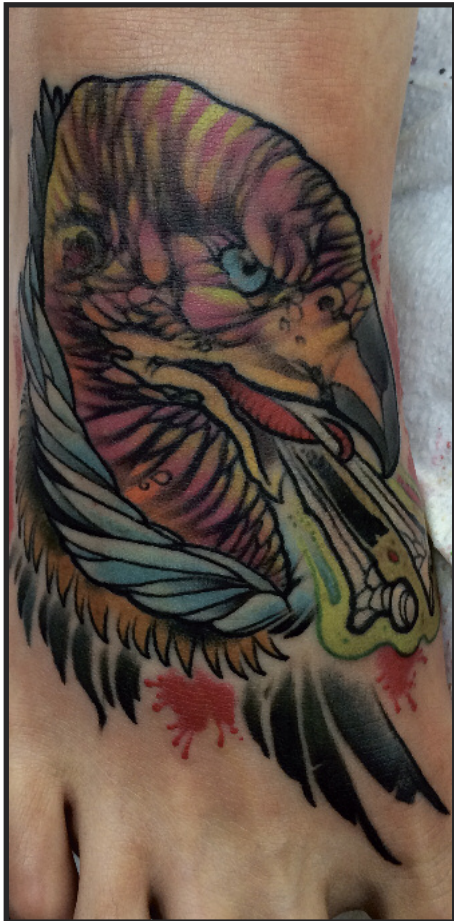


# TURK



The first thing you notice about Turk is that he is really fucking big! He's about 10 feet tall (honest!) and his mere presence makes you feel like a small child. Not only does he stand out physically but his work is outstanding too. He is one of the new breed of tattooers producing illustrative, well-composed designs that give a respectful nod to what has gone before while still pushing things forward.

Turk is originally from San Bernardino in California, which used to be known as the murder capital of the States. He tells me, "Every school yearbook has four or five memorial pages, mostly to do with gang-related stuff. When I was a kid, my mom would keep me indoors and that's what led to me constantly sketching and doodling. Being a big, gangly white kid in a predominantly black and Mexican suburb, I'd have had no chance. I never go back there now. Even my mom has moved out."



As with many tattooers, there were early signs of Turk's artistic talents. He tells me that as a baby he had hearing problems and didn't speak until he was three years old, but he was always drawing. The pictures he drew were intricate, with minute details such as fingernails on hands, and he also made clever use of perspective. This led to his teachers thinking he may have some kind of autism. Turk actually thinks his lack of hearing may have increased his ability to observe, a skill he still employs today.

He also showed an aptitude for business at a very young age, charging school friends for drawings on their exercise books. "America has always thrived on capitalism. When you look at the early tattoo artists, they figured out that there was money in tattooing. They would do simple



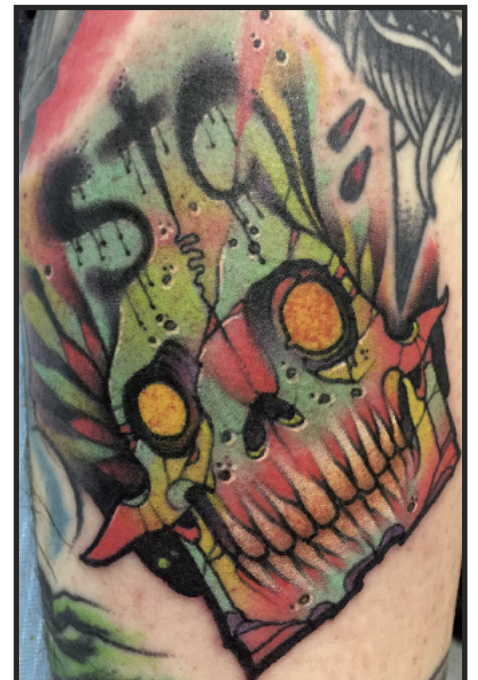
designs they could crank out quickly; good work in high volumes equals large returns." Then he makes an interesting aside. "I've noticed a slight trend amongst modern day tattooists. They are producing old school tattoos in a 'dirty' fashion, to look like they were done quickly, with shading outside of the lines, not quite joining the lines. I'm struggling to get my head around that. I tattoo real fast but I try to be as sharp and clean as possible. I am always looking for perfection."





One of the exciting things about Turk's work is the colour palette that he uses. "I always make my colour choices to complement each design. I usually put a lot of dark colours around the edge to draw your eye to the main elements inside. I try to keep the colour as dynamic as the drawing itself. As for my design choices, I get bored quickly so I'm always happy to do different crazy ideas. Most of my tattoos incorporate some form of decay because that's the way I see things going. I'll give you a new tattoo but it's already starting to break down. Everything terminates in the grave, which is probably why I love doing skulls. That is our ultimate destination, just a big old pile of bones."

Many tattooists have certain tattoos they always shy away from. I asked Turk if there are any subjects he avoids. "I like to do all styles, as long as you are prepared to let me play with it. If you look through my work, you can see I don't do a lot of the realistic portrait thing but, if you want a realistic portrait with a bit of a twist and some weird shit thrown in, then maybe I'm your man. I've become a little choosier about the tattoos I do these days. If I've designed something and it's not right, I'll change it; but if I feel it's too much of a compromise, I'll pass you on to one of the other guys in the shop."

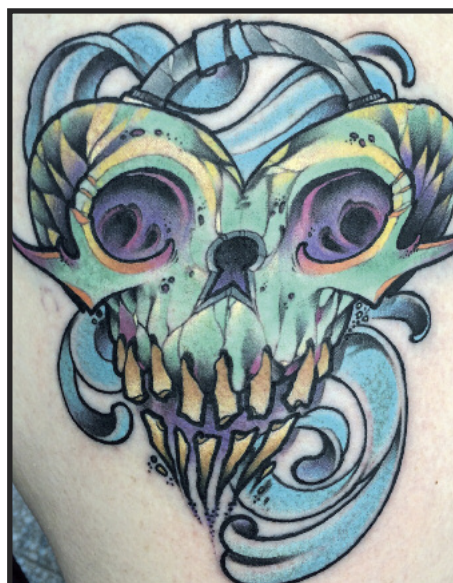






“I worked street shops for nine years and, with my apprenticeship, the deal was simple: you pay your fuckin’ dues before you show how bad-ass you *think* you are. So if you wanted tribal, sit right on down. Kanji, that’s cool. But all the time I would be experimenting with my technique. My brain would be whirring, always thinking how that design could be so much better. When the reins finally came off, I was ready to fly and I have been busy making things weird ever since.”

Like a lot of tattooists starting out, Turk’s road was not a simple one. He moved from his home town to San Francisco where he was fortunate enough to meet Karen Roze (now of Sacred Rose Tattoo) who was then working at the world famous Picture Machine Tattoo. Turk explains, “I was working in a photo lab and Karen would come by to get her pictures done. We got talking and I decided I wanted her to tattoo me. After that I would just go to her shop and hang out. She was real busy and I started helping out. Then I took my sketch books in and I would draw when things were quiet.







"Eventually I got the sack from the photo job and I started hanging out at the studio all the time. I had to do the shitty jobs, so I was making hundreds of needles and breaking down equipment, and I was never allowed to even touch a tattoo machine. The shop was full of hand-painted flash by Pat Martynuik. I was told, 'Do this drawing 100 times, do that drawing 100 times, copy this entire wall of flash'. I had no idea that this was an apprenticeship! It was a year of working in a coffee shop from 6am to 11am, and the tattoo shop from 12 noon until midnight every day, seven days a week. On my last day they gave me two bags filled with coils, frames and all the bits needed to make machines. They said, 'Make these work and they're yours.' I got 'em going and they said, 'That's great, now get the fuck out of here. Go find the world.' I never got to work a single day in that shop!"



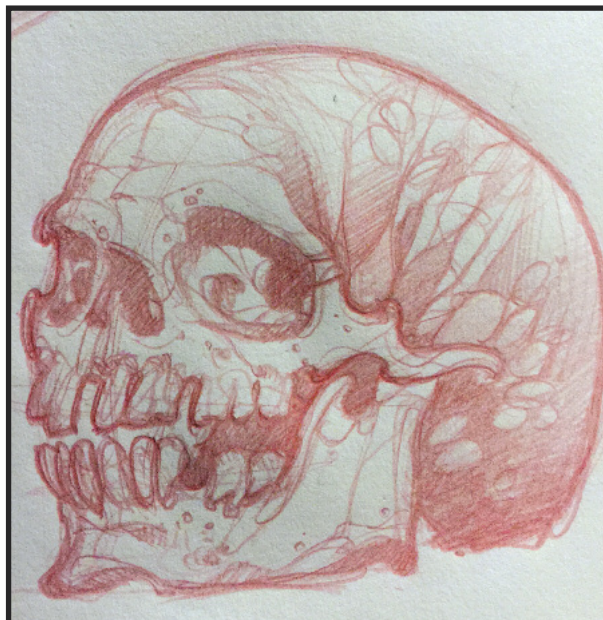
Turk reckons Karen and the Picture Machine crew weren't really expecting him to carry on tattooing at that point. But for Turk, quitting wasn't an option. "Are you joking? I had just spent a whole year being punched in the dick! I needed to prove I could take it, and that's what I've been doing ever since. Damn, you can punch me in the dick right now if you like, but you'd better bring a big ol' step ladder!"





Turk was too young and too green to work at any of the established shops in the Bay area so he went back to southern California. Still no-one gave him a job and he ended up moving to Maryland, on the other side of America, to gain some solid shop experience. Then, armed with a portfolio of tattoos, the young Turk returned west and eventually opened Left Hand Black, a private studio in San Diego, followed by his street shop in 2012.

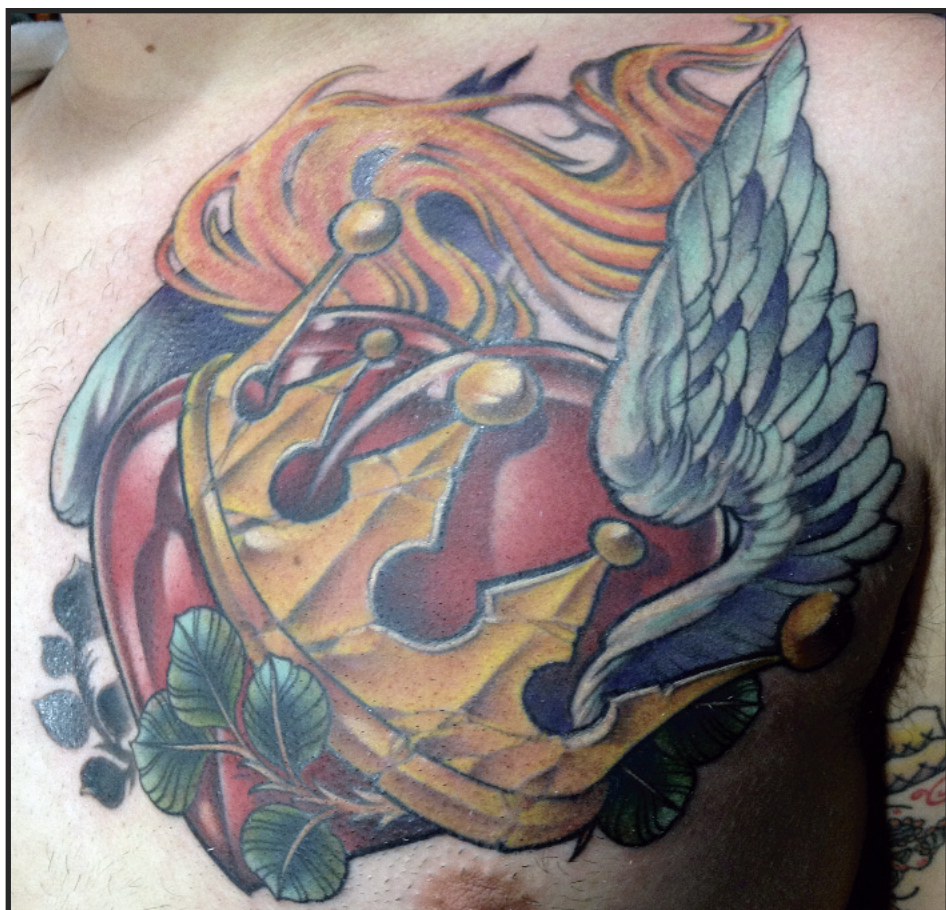
Turk now employs four artists and he is learning the finer points of shop management. "I try to set a good example. I don't party, don't smoke, don't drink. I'm working all the time and I make sure I get all my shit done in time. I try to get us all working in one direction and pulling together. I love it but God, it can be so hard. The human temperament is this amazing crazy beast and everyone's so different. It's teaching me a lot about myself."





“When I opened the shop I had the booths all set up, but I didn’t hire anybody for eight months because it was important to get the right guys for the shop. I’m glad I waited because you only have one chance to make that good impression. In the States there is a website called Yelp, where people leave reviews of your business. I warned my guys if we get bad reviews I’ll fall on them heavy! So far, things are good.”

Turk sees tattooing as a collaborative process between artist and customer but, although he likes people to bring some ideas to the table, he is not a fan of the ‘art director’ client. “If you want me to do a big piece for you, I say give me two things you want in it and leave the rest to me, or you’ll suck all the creativity out of the project. All I need is a couple of bits and I’ll blow your pants right off!



“I had a guy come in wanting some girl, three quarter turned, with water and stuff. I did the drawing, he looked at it and said, ‘That’s great but could we just turn her face another few degrees?’ Sure, I said. I took the sketch round the back, put it down, then went and chatted with the guys for a while. After a suitable amount of time I came back out. ‘More like this?’ I asked. ‘That’s perfect’, he said!”

It’s vital for clients to choose the right tattooist for the work they want, of course, but Turk believes the process should happen the other way round too. “When you work on big pieces, you spend a lot of time with that person. I’ve worked on one of my clients for so long and was so close to him that I went to his dad’s funeral. I always want to know if I can actually communicate with a client; you don’t want to be dreading every appointment. Am I going to want to have regular dates with this person for the next few years?”



Turk is a fun, easy-going guy and it's not surprising that he is well-liked in his home town. "I don't really compete with anyone when it comes to the weird, brightly-coloured skull shit. There are guys doing amazing Japanese tattoos but we don't clash. I'm not so friendly with the black and grey Chicano studios, but they're usually busy being bad-ass. Most of those guys are happy to stay home in their safety bubble, surrounded by their friends telling them how great they are. I prefer to travel to a conventions like London or Montreal, where I am humbled to share the space with legends like Steve Moore, Henning Jørgensen, Tin Tin and the like.

"The first convention I did was The Inkslingers Ball in LA back in '98. It was put on by Fred Saunders and Gil Montie, who is a larger than life character. I had just finished my apprenticeship. I totally believed in the art of tattoo and, when I found all these freaks with coloured contact lenses and multi-coloured hair treating tattooing like some kind of sideshow, I used to get pretty offended. I felt that for each step forward we took, they were putting us ten steps back.



"Over here in the UK, I've noticed that everyone takes it seriously and is pushing the artform forward. In the States it's split into thirds: there's the people who take it seriously, the people who take it to extremes and are freak-showish, and then there are the bikers. They take it seriously, but it's a whole different kind of serious."

Turk has come a long way in his 17 years in the tattoo world, so what's next? "I've often thought of opening another shop, but it would need to be close to my existing one. I don't want to be the Starbucks of tattooing though, and I don't want to be spending my whole time dealing with people's problems. I do like the idea of building a great core of great tattooers who work together and create something special. I say to all my guys, 'This is not where you end up. Take what you can from me and go on and find some more. You don't die here. This is *my* final resting place and *my* thing. You guys have got to find your own place to die.'"



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**alex bawn, penny black tattoo**



**john parker, southsea tattoo co**



**kelly smith, five magics**



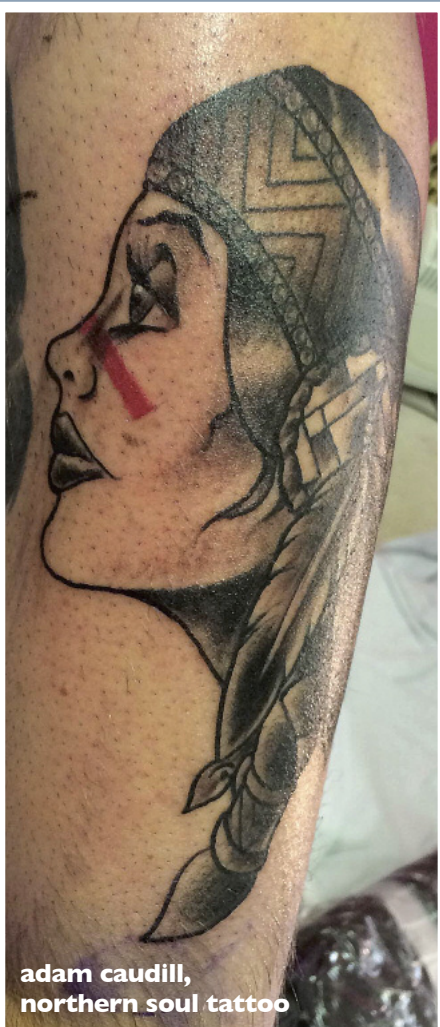
**valerie vargas, modern classic tattoo**





jenna macaleese,  
skullduggery tatu

mattlock lopes, studio evolve (usa)



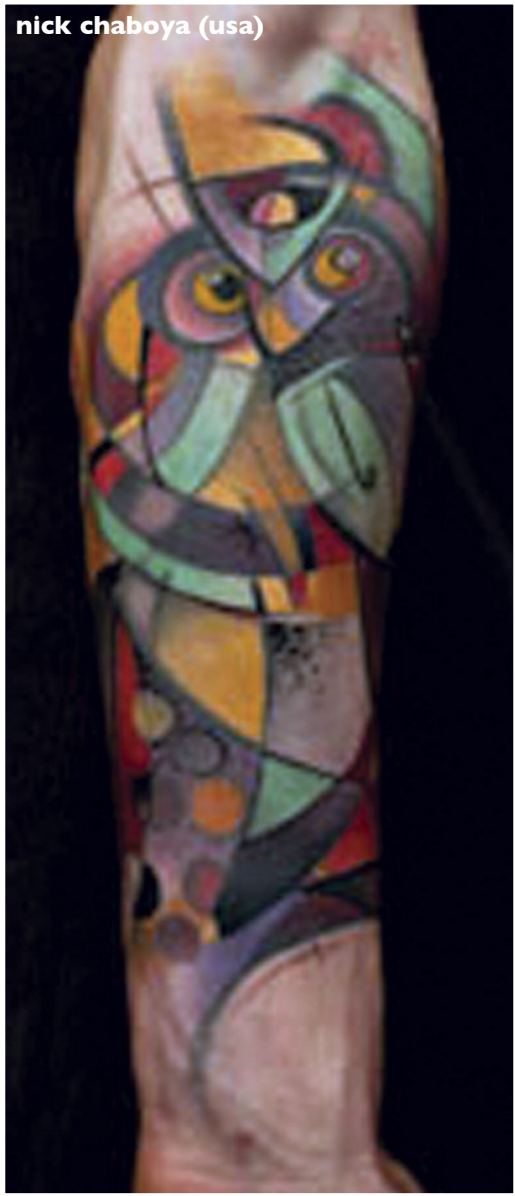
adam caudill,  
northern soul tattoo



alex hennerley, adorned tattoo



nick chaboya (usa)



math, even more black tattoo



marie, folklore tattoo



alan hindes, tatt house



patrick mcfarlane, the black freighter tattoo company



josh watson,  
adorn body art gallery



max pniewski, southmead tattoo



ben nuthink,  
aching soul dermagraphix

steven mostyn, memories and  
mischeif custom tattoo (germany)



lee wagner, lucky 777







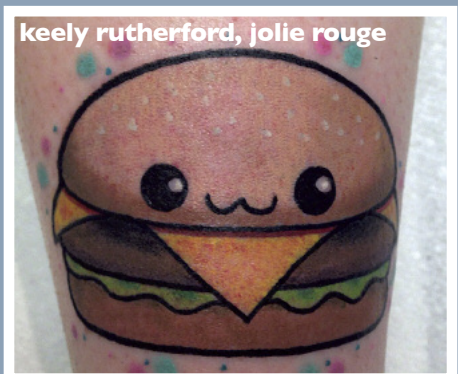
paul tipping, o' happy dagger



lee ganley, buzzin guns



santa perpetua, black sails tattoo



keely rutherford, jolie rouge



zele, zagreb tattoo and piercing (croatia)



betti, boris tattoo (austria)



andrew mirfin, end times tattoo

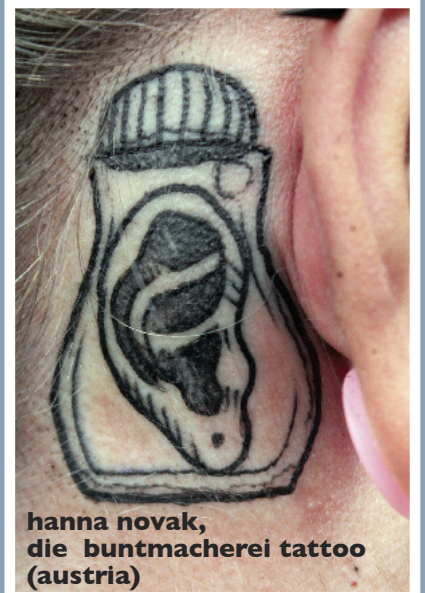


alan aldred, cosmic tattoo





niorkz, creative vandals



hanna novak,  
die buntmacherei tattoo  
(austria)



james davies, colt 45 tattoo



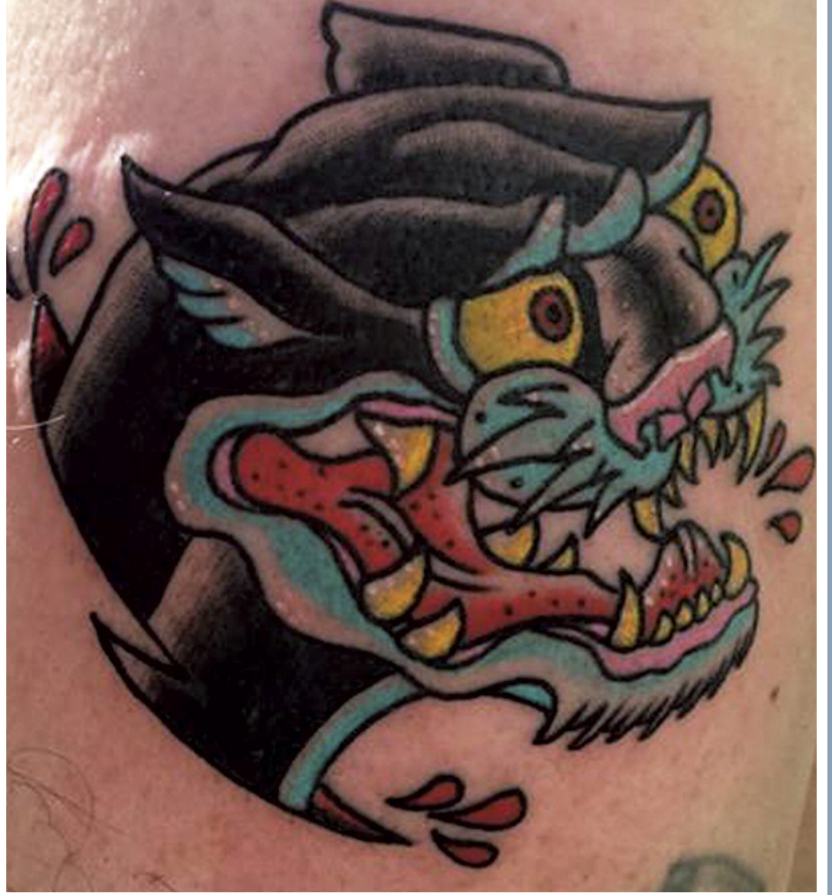
stewart robson, modern classic tattoo



cesar de cesaro, body garden tattoo



craig smart, shamanic tattoo studio



taylor williams, nu tat2



hanan qattan, infinite ink



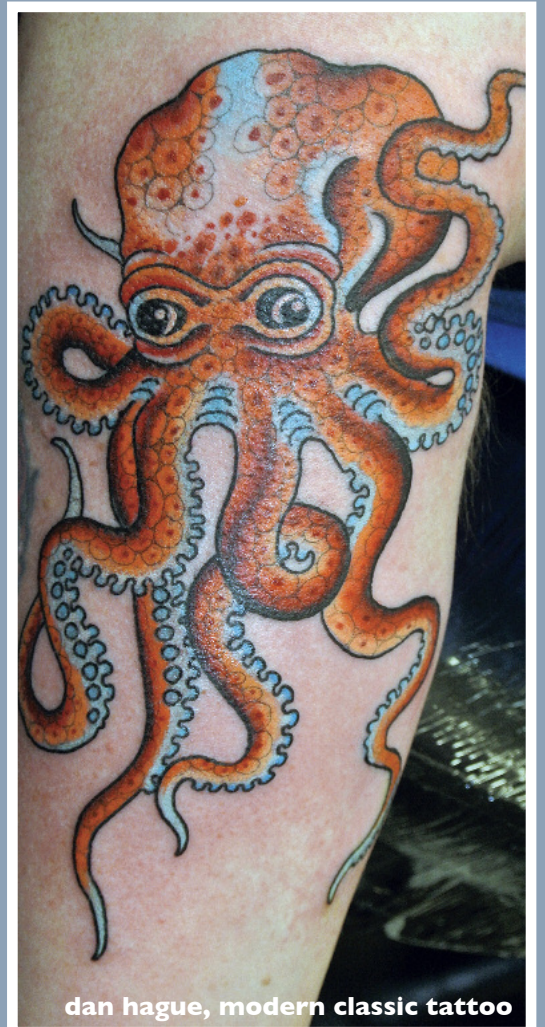




luca ortis

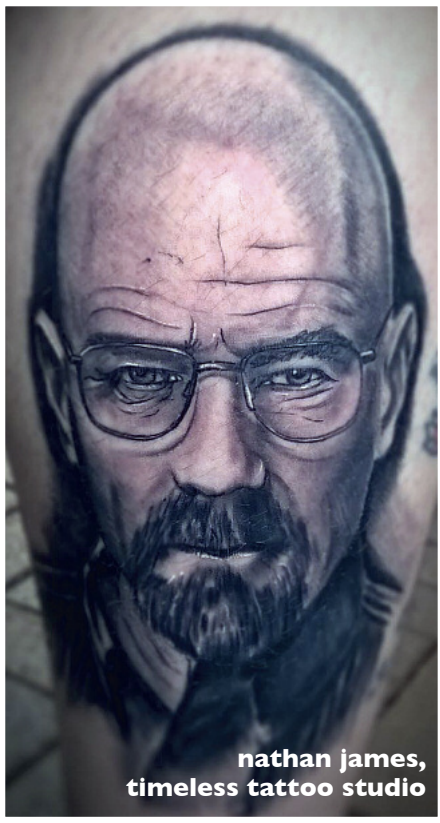


gary helyar, helyar tattoos



dan Hague, modern classic tattoo

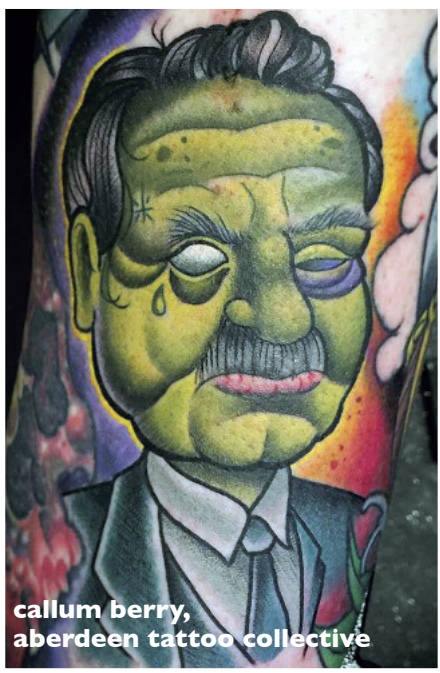




nathan james,  
timeless tattoo studio



toni moore, hungry for moore



callum berry,  
aberdeen tattoo collective



jack peppiette,  
studio xiii

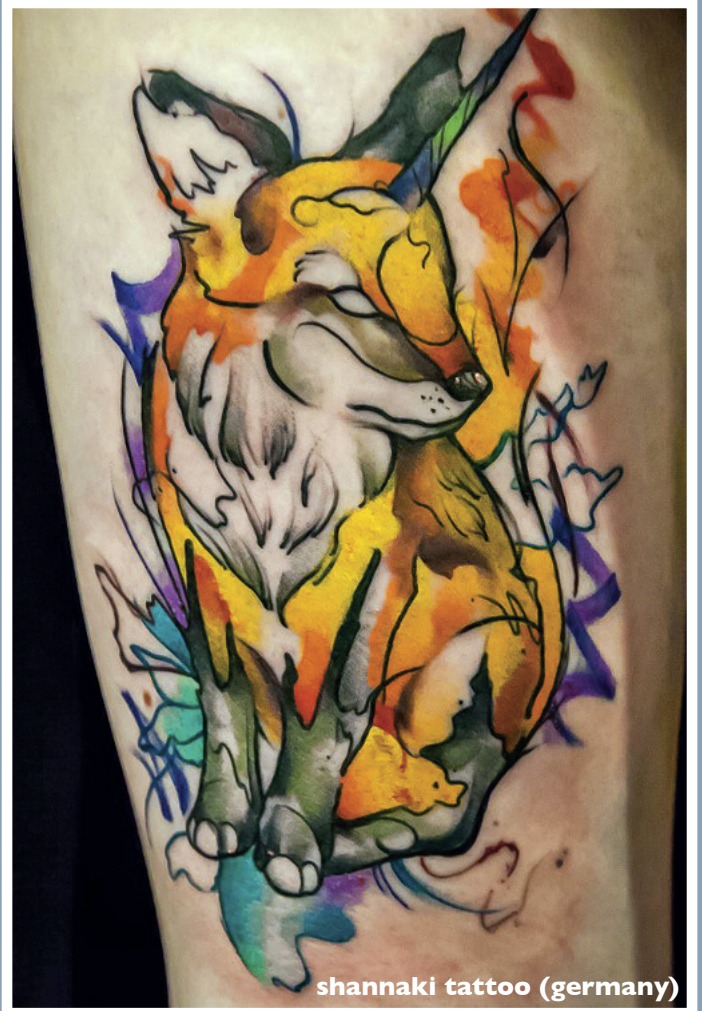


boris, boris tattoo (austria)





**guy tinsley, wiseguys ink**



**shannaki tattoo (germany)**



**max pniewski, southmead tattoo**



**adam, folklore tattoo**

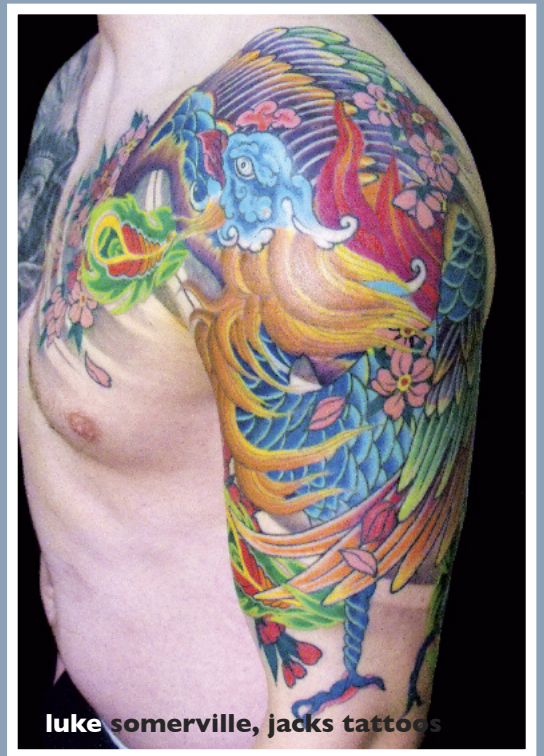




**andrew mirfin, end times**



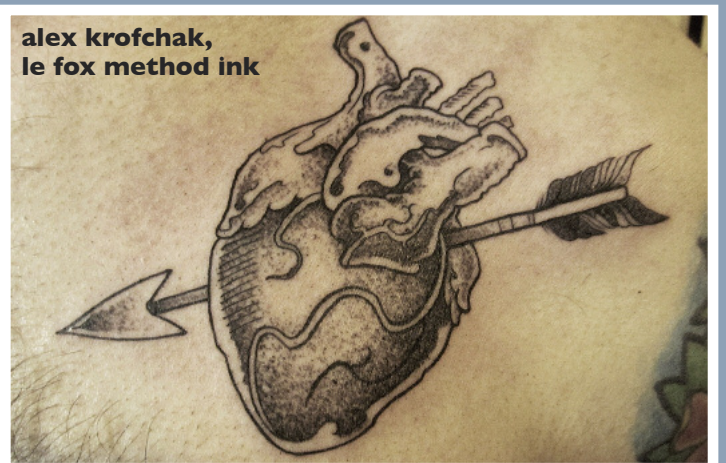
**josh taylor, adorn body art gallery**



**luke somerville, jacks tattoos**



**craig bartlett, adorned tattoo**



**alex krofchak,  
le fox method ink**





**sion firth, limited edition**



**mark richards, think tattoo**



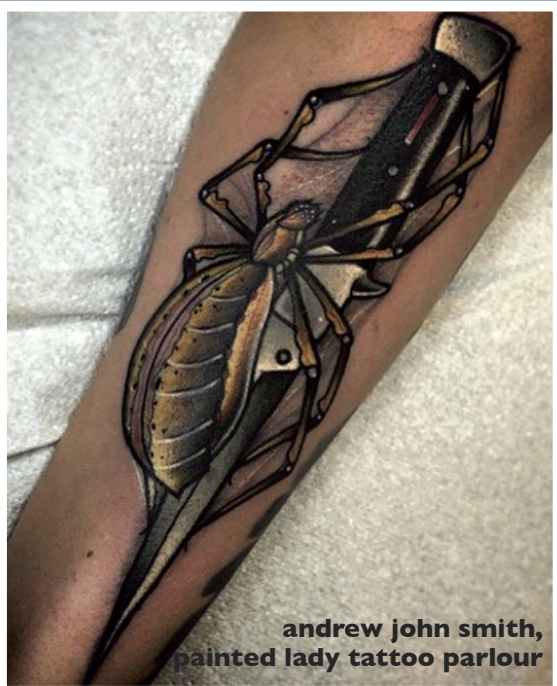
**gareth woody sones, eightfold tattoo**



**danny brown, tanuki tattoo**



**luco, o' happy dagger**



**andrew john smith, painted lady tattoo parlour**



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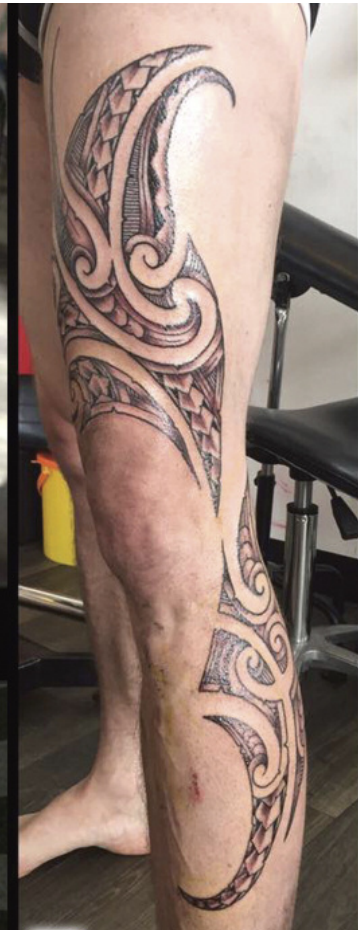
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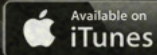
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**In** recent years public awareness of veganism has grown, helped in part by the advent of the 'Straight Edge' movement. There is also an increasing desire amongst some tattooists and their clients to use non-animal supplies, aftercare and equipment. Here's our guide to keeping your tattoos as cruelty-free as possible.

# VEGAN TATTOOS

by Lizzy Longstaff

## KEEPING IT CRUELTY-FREE



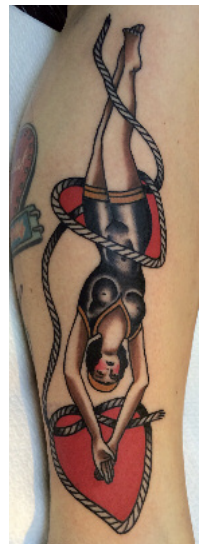
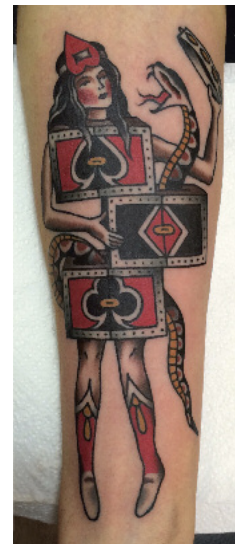
Someone who is vegan seeks to avoid the exploitation of animals, not just in the food they eat but in every area of their life. It soon becomes second nature to read ingredients labels and check materials for any animal by-products. However, when getting a tattoo, this isn't always straightforward; without knowing *every* product a studio uses, finding the right artist can be tricky.

From talking to other vegans on social media (we have our own secret groups, you know, where we talk about vitamin B12!) it seems that most people would choose a studio based on the quality of their work, and would then enquire about their ethical stance and the products they use. If the tattooist isn't vegan, their materials might not be either. From preparing the stencils to aftercare, there is a lot of potentially non-vegan stuff involved in tattooing!



In this article we have only listed confirmed vegan-friendly products, which contain no animal by-products, are not tested on animals and are not produced by companies who test on animals. However, this list is not exhaustive as we didn't hear back from every manufacturer we contacted, so don't worry if we haven't included something which you believe to be vegan. (Email [editor@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:editor@totaltattoo.co.uk) and let us know and we'll try to include an updated list in a future issue of the magazine.)

Our guide is divided into two parts: Part One is a checklist for the professional tattooist and Part Two is for the client. Hopefully this should serve as a handy information source for those new to getting tattooed or new to being vegan, as well as for studios looking to cater for vegan customers.





amy savage



ryan cooper

“Maybe companies are more transparent these days so it’s easier to find out what is in their products, which happen to be vegan in a lot of cases. Whether they market that or not is a different thing, but it’s not a change I’ve noticed.”

James Kiley, Cult Classic

## PART ONE: STUDIO SUPPLIES

### Stencil Paper

Most stencil paper contains lanolin, a wax derived from sheep’s wool. Luckily, Spirit have produced the vegan ReproFX paper which uses vegetable fats, thus replacing the need for the ovine equivalent. According to Brian T Wilson of Scapegoat Tattoos in Portland, Oregon, the introduction of this was “The biggest news in vegan tattooing in a long time!” Please note however, this paper is only suitable for thermal copiers and is not to be confused with ReproFX’s ‘Green’ paper.

### Stencil Application

Spirit Transfer Creams: all of them are suitable, but their website states that their Vegan Stencil Cream will work best with the corresponding stencil paper.

### Stencil Sundries

Electrum Stencil Primer and Premium Stencil Remover/Skin Preparation. Stencil Stuff stencil application cream

### Inks

If you have watched Emily Bewick’s YouTube video ‘Are Tattoos Vegan?’ you will have heard her talk about the ingredients in tattoo ink which aren’t vegan friendly, the main ones being glycerine (derived from animal fat or tallow) and bone char (from charred animal bones) in black ink. Whilst some companies still use these ingredients, the great news is that a lot of companies use cruelty-free alternatives and have done for a long time:

- |              |            |              |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Eternal      | Moms       | National     |
| Panthera     | Bloodline  | Danny’s      |
| Alla Prima   | Fusion     | Stable       |
| Arcane       | Chetyenne  | Electric Ink |
| Skin Candy   | Dermaglo   |              |
| Intenze      | Waverley   |              |
| World Famous | Silverback |              |
| Kuro Sumi    | Quantum    |              |
| Dynamic      | Atomic     |              |



harriet heath



**Green Soap**  
Panthera  
Dr Bronner’s Castille Soap

**Petroleum Jelly Alternatives**  
Although most petroleum jelly is classed as vegan in terms of ingredients, a lot of the main brands are tested on animals, which obviously makes it a big no-no.

El Gato Nero Tattooist Lube  
Ink-eeze Green Glide



harriet heath





*“I do find that vegan tattooing products have become more accessible and available over the past couple of years. Some research is still required to find the online stores that stock them, however there are so many vegan-friendly alternatives available for inks, petroleum jelly etc. Once you’ve located the stockists, you’re all set!”*

*Amy Savage, The Warren*

## PART TWO: INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS

Here we’ve focused on tattoo numbing and aftercare. Most of the numbing products are only available through supply companies, and will have to be ordered by your chosen studio.

### Tattoo Numbing Products

Vegan or not, everybody has a different tolerance to pain and, no matter what some people say, getting tattooed hurts. The tattoo world seems divided when it comes to numbing products. Some tattooists don’t like their customers to use them, not because they’re meanies but because some ingredients can affect the texture of the skin, making the tattoo more difficult to execute. However, if an artist is happy to use them, it can make the process much easier for them, as well as the customer. At the moment the market has two great vegan brands, Hush and Ink-Eeze. Both companies sell numbing ointments, which are used an hour before the tattoo, and anaesthetic sprays, which are applied to broken skin for immediate relief during the tattooing process.

### Tattoo Aftercare

There are two main things you need to know about vegan tattoo aftercare. First, they all smell fantastic; and second, there’s a lot of them about now, as more and more people are looking for natural products. We’ve narrowed down the options and have gone on recommendations, as well as reviewing samples sent to us at the office.

#### Tattoo Goo -

This is a lotion containing Healix Gold (a moisturising ingredient) and panthenol. It’s a great product to use if you have nut allergies, as it is olive oil based. It’s not only moisturising, but is also good for brightening the colours of older tattoos.



amy savage

#### Hustle Butter -

This is a lotion containing Healix Gold (a moisturising ingredient) and panthenol. It’s a great product to use if you have nut allergies, as it is olive oil based. It’s not only moisturising, but is also good for brightening the colours of older tattoos.



#### Hustle Butter Deluxe -

One of the leading brands in tattoo aftercare. It’s also multi-functional, as it can be used in place of petroleum jelly during the tattooing process. The combination of coconut oil and shea butter mean that it literally glides and melts onto the skin.

#### Ink-Eeze Aftercare Cream & Tattoo Moisturiser -

With ingredients such as green tea, pomegranate and sunflower extracts, you could easily mistake this for a detox diet plan. The ointments are easy to apply and can be bought in different pack sizes, which is great if you’re only getting a small tattoo.



#### El Gato Negro Tattoo Healing Balm -

A relatively new company, based in the UK, using a combination of shea butters, coconut oil and essential oils, their products contain no harsh chemicals. Their healing balm uses 100% organic ingredients; there is also a sensitive version, without the citrus bergamia fruit oil that is in their original balm.



ryan cooper

### Other things to consider bringing to the studio

Antibacterial wipes, which can be used to clean the skin before the stencil is applied. Razors which don’t have a gelatine strip.

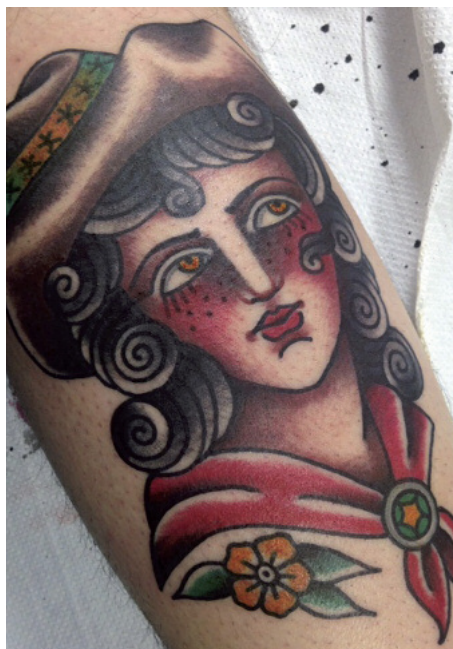




*“A lot of big brands are accidentally vegan, so most tattooists are using them without even realising. There is a lot of debate over black ink, though, as some of the ones considered the best aren't vegan. However there are some great brands on the market that I don't feel lack in quality at all. I think some stubbornness at not wanting to use vegan inks is based on bias against veganism as a whole, rather than the quality of products themselves. It's the same as the people who refuse to try tofu and class it as 'that weird vegan stuff' despite it being delicious!”*

*Harriet Heath,  
On the road - formerly Higgins and Co*

harriet heath



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## FINAL WORD

Ultimately, as long as the client and artist communicate well, it's easy to find vegan products that everyone will be happy to use – products that don't compromise the quality of tattoo work and cater for a cruelty-free lifestyle too.





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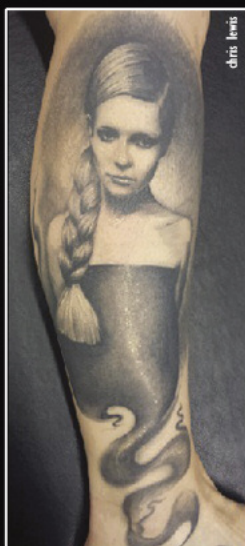
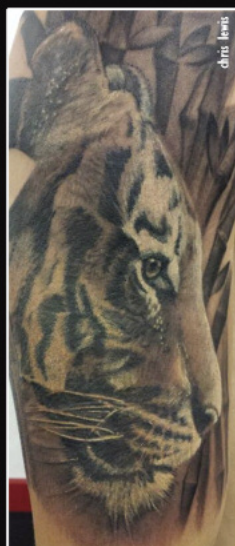
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# NORTHAMPTON TATTOO CONVENTION

Saturday 6th June saw the start of Northampton's fourth tattoo convention. As I arrived at the Northampton Saints Rugby Ground, I noticed that the car park was almost full, as both artists and customers alike were heading to the entrance. The sun was out, which was fortunate for the display of classic cars, catering vans and wrestling booth, as they were located outside. I entered the convention through a marquee. This acted as a linking hallway between the entertainment and tattooing area, and hosted two more refreshment stands. It was a great set-up, as it meant that weary convention-goers had a large area to rest, away from the crowds. I ordered my first fix of caffeine from Monkshood Coffee, and proceeded to check out the stands.

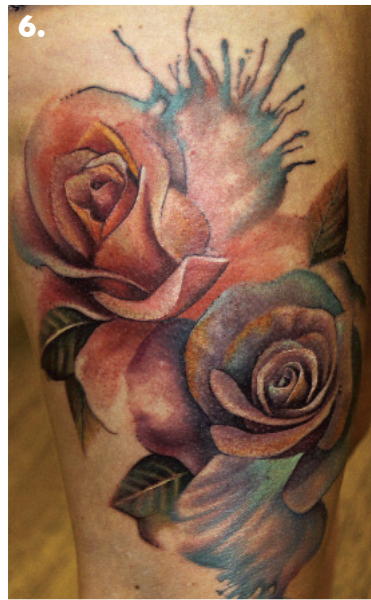
The great thing about this convention is the local support – both from those working and those attending the show. The organisers, Nigel and Sue, are really lovely; they are passionate about tattooing and generous to the attending studios. Although some artists brought clients with them, most were doing walk-ups. There were some great palm-sized designs available, such as Han Maude's pieces in the style of Japanese animators Studio Ghibli, or Davide Marazzina's bold, clean and traditional flash.

As far as conventions go, this one is smaller than most. However, the size of a convention doesn't necessarily detract from the standard of work. 'Quality, not quantity!' as the old saying goes! The high standard of work here was definitely reflected during the competitions; as I made a nuisance of myself with my camera, I could see that the judges were finding it difficult to choose the overall winners. Not only were the tattoos incredible, but the trophies themselves were a work of art. Hell, I even considered trying to enter, just for a chance of winning one of those beauties!

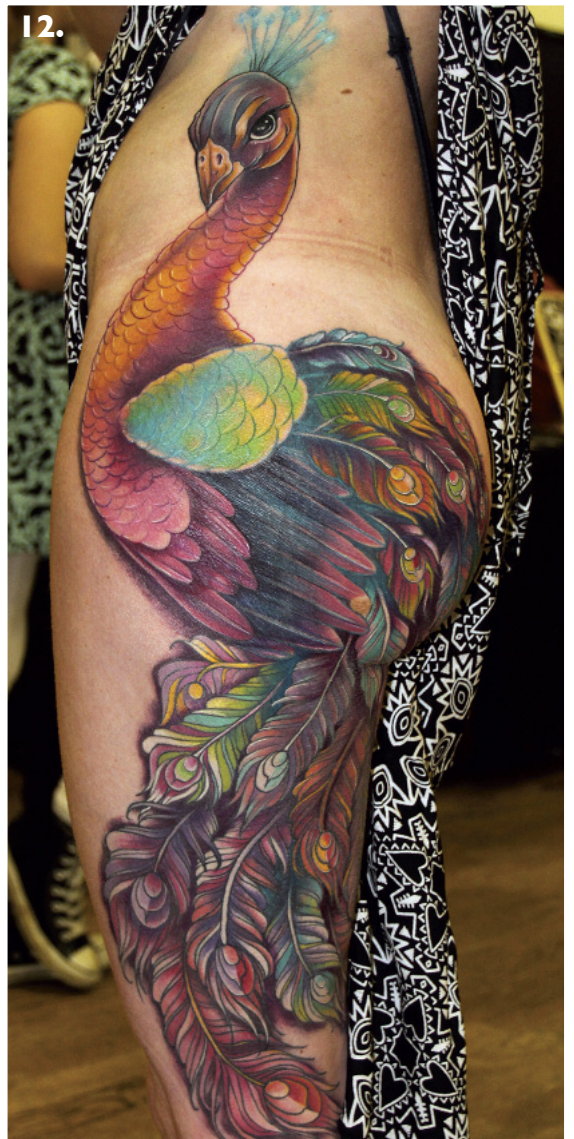
In addition to the usual categories there was the Joe Willis Kent Award, which was open to any style of tattooing. I was moved to hear the story behind this: Joe was a young tattooist who was tragically murdered in 2013, shortly before his 25th birthday. As a tribute to him, and to honour his support for the show, an award was created in his name. The winning tattooist receives a machine and their name is engraved onto a trophy, which is returned the following year.







5. ben labrum, alternative art  
6. natalie rogers, alternative art  
7. amazing trophies  
8. by nathan smith, fat fugu – one he made earlier  
9. by dave wood, artifact tattoo  
10. by pj reynolds, rising phoenix tattoo  
11. by pj reynolds, rising phoenix tattoo  
12. by esme, alternative art





As well as tattooists, the convention featured vendors selling a wide range of goods – unique clothing, hand-crafted pyrography and beautiful screen-printed artworks, to mention but a few. Sam's Reptiles had brought some of their rescue animals as an interactive display and charity fundraiser. Jimmie and Jackie Skuse had brought along the Bristol Tattoo Museum, showcasing important ephemera from the history of tattooing.

There was a bar, and a stage opposite, which served as a point for playing music and for judging. The music itself was great – not too loud or distracting, and varied, which resulted in me fighting my urge to burst into song most of the time. As with previous years, The Circus of Horrors was a big crowd pleaser, and perhaps a stomach turner for some. (I'd never seen a Henry Hoover used THAT way before!) I really liked the mix of live bands, too. Sergeant Bilko's Krazy Combo had some rocking tunes, Gunslingers covered the classics and The Jellyheads headlined in the evening as things began to wind down. When one takes these elements into consideration, the price of an advance ticket (£10 for the day, £15 for the weekend) is justifiable.

The success of tattoo events depends almost entirely on the public. Although there was a good turnout (advance tickets were sold out for both days), I did feel that there was a lack of footfall. This, I believe, was purely down to the gorgeous weather over the weekend. After all, it is a well-known fact that as soon as a UK resident sees a glimpse of sunshine, they are likely to unbutton their shirt, lather the sun cream on their beer bellies and lie back in their gardens, with a four pack of Special Brew.

Although this was my first time at Northampton, it was clear that not only is the show well organised in terms of entertainment and stalls, but there is also a really strong community feel, which is often lacking in larger conventions. I look forward to attending again.



**13. by tom, lewis point**  
**14. christopher lewis, lewis point**  
**15. dan dwight, fat fugu**  
**16. by adem, fat fugu**  
**17. by james pitt, clarity 11**  
**18. alan turner, big al's**





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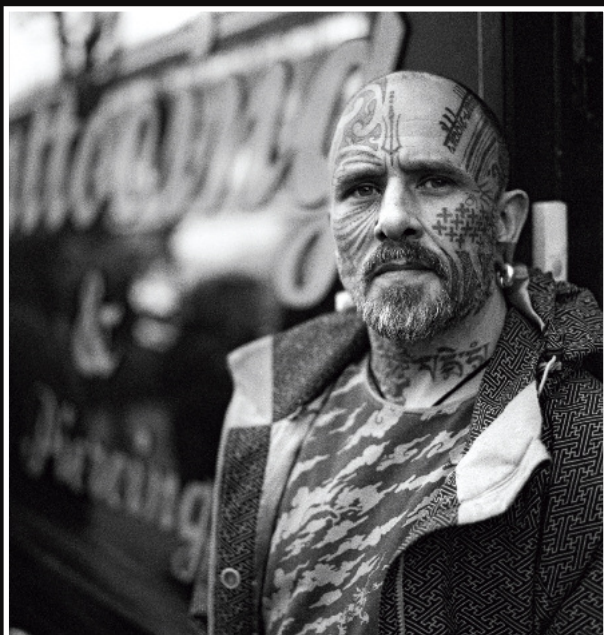
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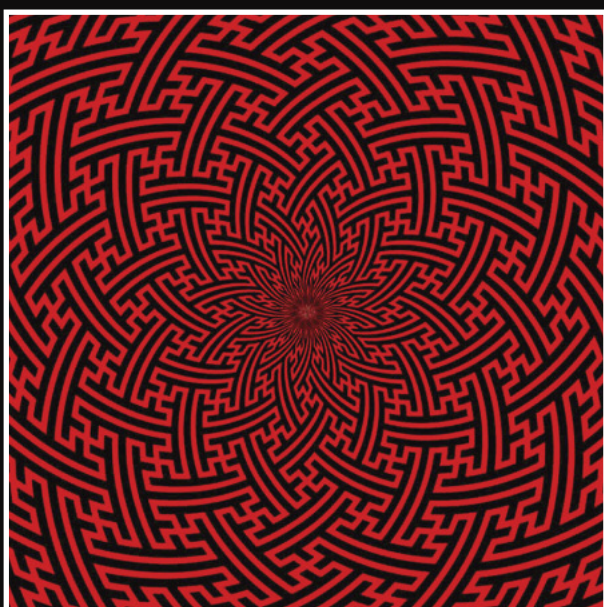






# XED LE HEAD

Intro: Perry • Words and images: Xed Le Head



**X**ed Le Head is without doubt one of the most inspirational and influential tattooists of our time. From the moment he first inked himself at the age of 13, tattooing has been his life. In the 1990s he almost single-handedly pioneered the geometric dotwork style that has inspired generations of tattooists around the world.

The last few years have seen Xed go through immense personal tragedy and trauma, including the loss of his parents, and a complex medical condition which left him paralysed from the neck down, and consequently unable to tattoo.

His 'disappearance' from his profession left many fellow tattooists and fans puzzled and concerned. Here, in Part 1 of our exclusive two-part feature, Xed begins to explain in his own eloquent, free-flowing words what he has been through...

## Greetings, Earthlings.

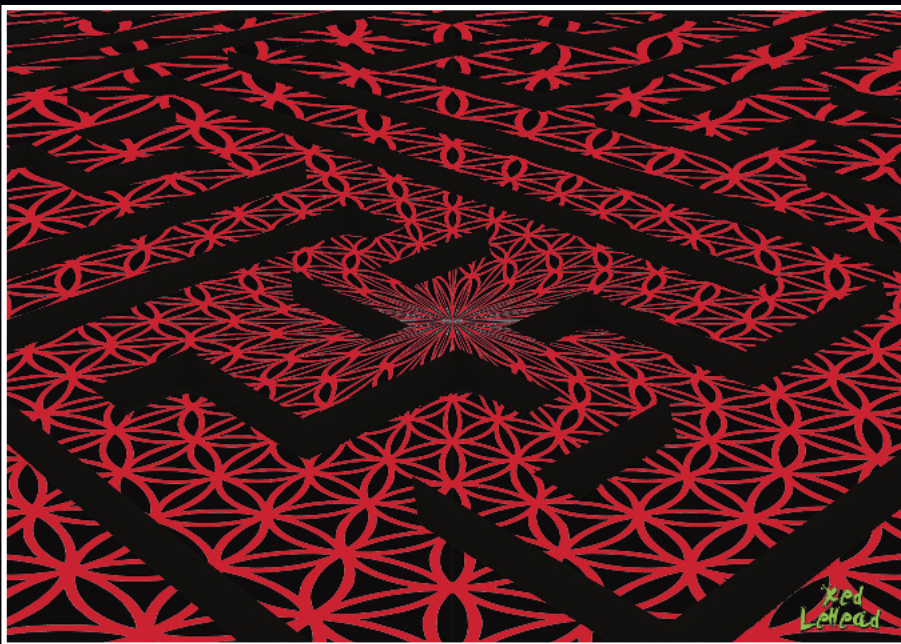
During my recent conversations with Perry, owner and writer of this magazine, while he visited me in hospital after my spinal surgery, he felt that some of the tattoo community would be interested to know what caused my disappearance from the tattoo world two and a half years ago, and what have I been up to since then...

On 2nd December 2012, while I was on a train returning to Barcelona after a visit to the Salvador Dali museum, I received a phone call from my sister that would change my life forever. She had found my mother very unwell in her flat and had taken her straight to hospital, where an MRI scan revealed a cluster of tumours in her brain. I flew home the next day, went to the studio and told my tattoo family 'That's it. I'm off to spend every day with my parents until they are gone. It's up to you lot to run the studio. My job now is seeing my parents to their graves. Xed's dead, baby. Xed's dead.'

My dad had been in a care home for some time, slowly dying, and my mum used to spend hours with him each day. I immediately took on her role with him. The next day she was diagnosed with incurable brain cancer and given approximately three months to live. I have always been very close with my parents and, unless I was out of the country, would visit them every week. They had been there for me, ever since my difficult birth, and now it was time for me to be there for them.

And so began a new, dark era for me that was going to get darker than I could have imagined in those first days. The effect on my artwork would be profound.





Basically, for the last 25 years, everything I did creatively was all to do with tattooing. Any patterns I made, I worked purely with the incentive that they would be tattooed. I had no intention of having them printed and never considered presenting them as art pieces. Everything was purely about application to skin, and my obsession with attempting to better myself in that field, and that field alone. The only canvas I was interested in was the Divine Canvas of human skin.

I moved into my mum's flat, which was like a mausoleum: no art work on the walls, the living room like an office, and an atmosphere throughout the flat of sadness and bitterness which her overpowering negativity had imbued into the very fabric of the building. My days were spent at my mother's hospice, watching her fade away, and the evenings with my father at his care home, a ten minute walk away, watching him disappearing; just a husk of the man I had admired and loved my whole life.

I feel it's important at this juncture to paint a full and correct picture of the pains I was beginning to bear. As the months passed, my very own tattoo family, the members of my studio, were not communicating with me at all. No phone calls. No texts. Nothing. I felt more isolated than I could ever have known. At the same time, my marriage was failing, and failing fast. This was down to me almost one hundred per cent, and the guilt was piling up inside me. In my mind I shut the world off and concentrated only on my parents, and feeling the complex emotions of watching them die. My only companions during this period were my partner Wiggy and my friend Monty. Every night we would eat together, when I arrived home around 11pm after a long day watching my beloved folks slowly dying.

I never have worked out why my tiny tribe, my 'tattoo family', which I had spent years cultivating, left me in isolation during this period. Their excuses later made no sense and I have never really recovered the sense of belonging I once had at my own studio, and that I had also once enjoyed at the gargantuan studio Into You.

My world became grey; my view became bleak. I needed to colour the walls of my mother's flat, which I now knew I would inherit and would be my first real home. For more than 20 years I had visited and stayed at this seafront flat, never considering for a second that it would one day become the cave where I would die and live again and again.

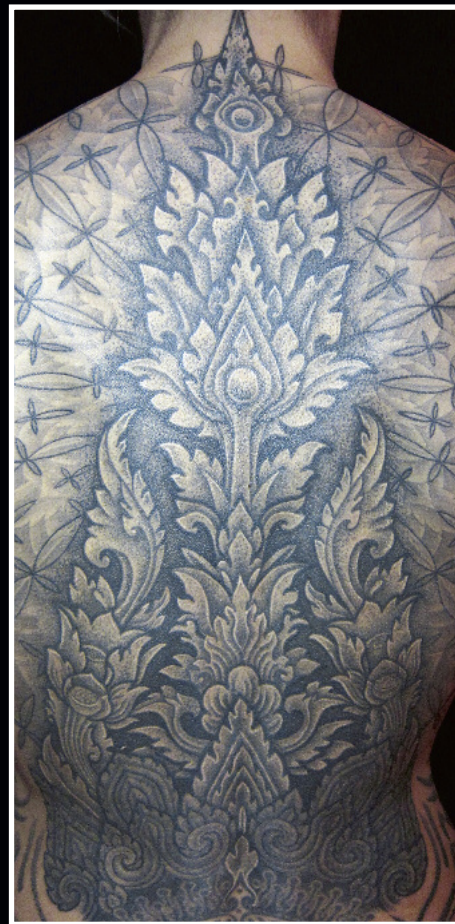




Does this all sound over dramatic? I am a passionate person who doesn't try to dampen his emotions, but rather chooses to explore them to their fullest, however sad the quagmire of tragedy may seem. And so, Photoshop became my personal rainbow machine. But, where would I begin? The only thing I knew was how to manipulate black and white patterns. Removed from the tattoo world so suddenly and painfully, I didn't have any desire to surround myself with the very patterns I could no longer tattoo.

Where to begin, I wondered. The only thing I had done that was not really tattoo-related was an image of Gandhi, which I had been driven by some inner feeling to produce. I'd never had an experience like this before but one morning, some months before my mother became ill, I awoke with an overpowering drive to create this image of Gandhi's face made out of the Hindu calligraphy *shanti*, meaning peace.

Using this as my only guideline for making something I believed in, I set about creating a series of portraits of famous vegetarians, whose influence had been so great in their lifetimes that they had changed the modern world. After Gandhi came an image of Einstein, but it was expressed in black and white, and I needed colour. Then came the breakthrough into my love of colour: a reworking of a portrait of Bridgette Bardot, and it was here that the psychedelic influences of 25 years exploded on my computer screen. It remains a milestone for me in my shift into the creation of colourful and non-tattoo based digital art. So far this series is only halfway through and I intend it to be



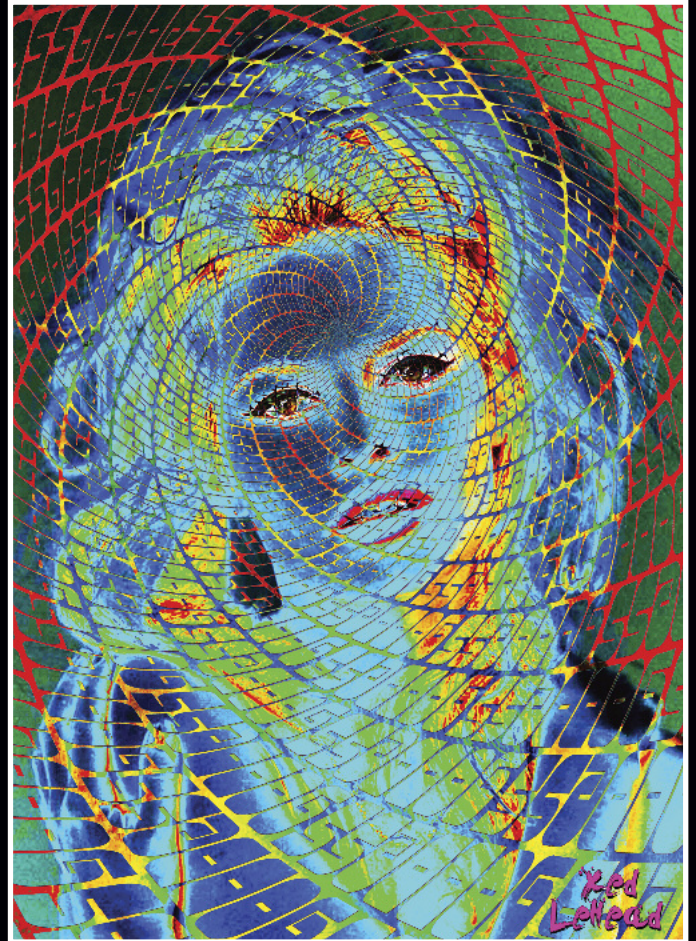
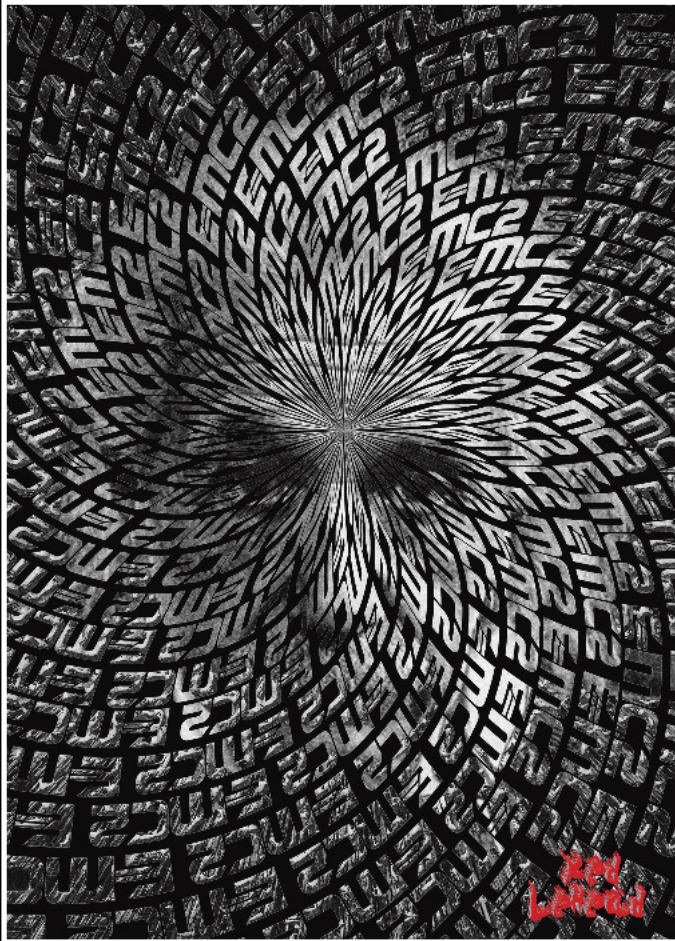
an exhibition in its own right at some point in the future. I have decided to publish the first three here.

Spurred on by the colour beginning to appear on the walls of my new abode, and pushed to new limits by Wiggy and her intense love of clashing colours and psychedelia, I began to explore the possibilities of colour-based layers of geometry. As my parents were fading, so my time sitting with them was spent creating ever-more complicated psychedelic rainbows to fill my mind and my new home with.

I began to live a profound duality of dark and light; deep sadness was producing these new ways of expressing the complications of my emotional struggles; my isolation from the world I had known for more than two decades; and I lost myself in Photoshop at every available moment.

Eventually, after ten unbelievably long weeks, my mother died peacefully, mercifully without any pain or discomfort, having just faded away. Now I could concentrate on my father alone, not that this was any easier. I guess I went into a kind of emotional stasis; the full weight of my mother's death was not to hit me until after dad died some three and a half months later.



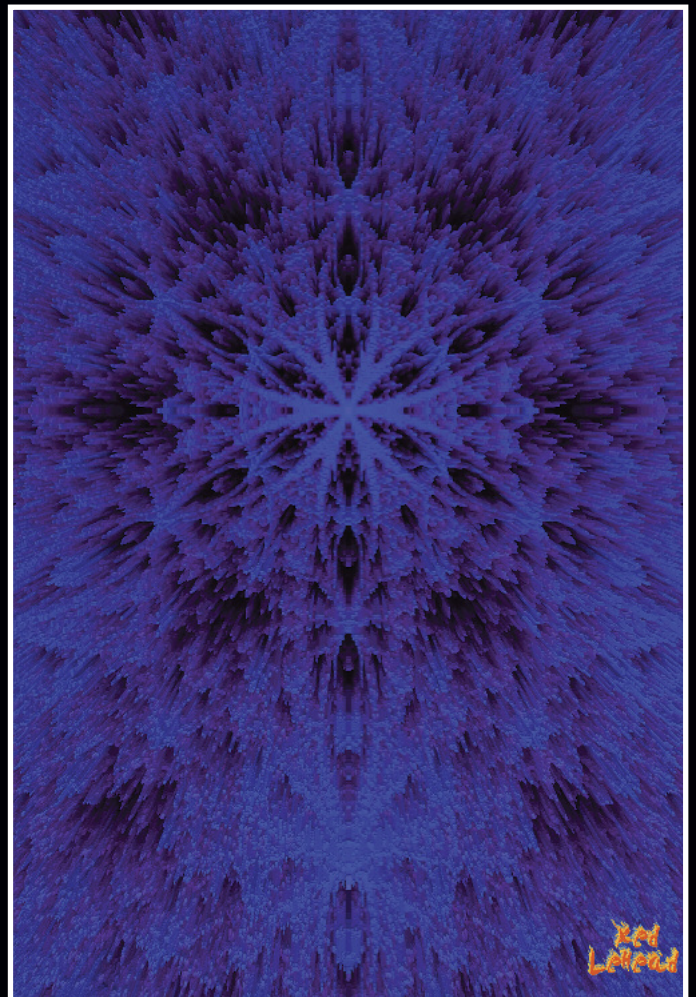


During this time I found myself doing hundreds of variants of the small discoveries I had made with Photoshop. I took time to walk the beach with Wiggy every day, regardless of the weather as we had invested in all-weather clothing. Having been obsessed with tattooing for so long, my blinkers were removed. I accepted the only place my tattoo family had existed was in my head. I began to see a new world, and observed the waves and the pebbles.

My evenings were spent with my dad and I began to recognise a new love. I never had children but, through observing my friends and their children, I realised there are loves far greater than any I had known. Now I was experiencing such a love for my dad. I had no idea that love could be so strong or deep. The final days of his death from kidney failure were the most horrific of my life. In between fighting bureaucracy and keeping a twenty four hour a day vigil with Wiggy, to try and ensure my dad had morphine for his final days, I managed to produce some mandalas in Photoshop that went beyond the simplicity of what I had previously been exploring.

After my dad's death came a period of intense mourning and the computer remained untouched for a length of time I cannot remember. Now came the time to feel the full weight of emotions, of loss, of accepting the things we cannot change and piling the crosses of sorrow on my back, without realising the weight that was accumulating.

During this strangest of period of my life, experiencing sadness beyond words, isolation in this new coastal paradise I had known so many years and yet had never fully appreciated, with these new eyes that were hungry to see beauty replacing tragedy, I began to look deeper than ever for the beauty in things.









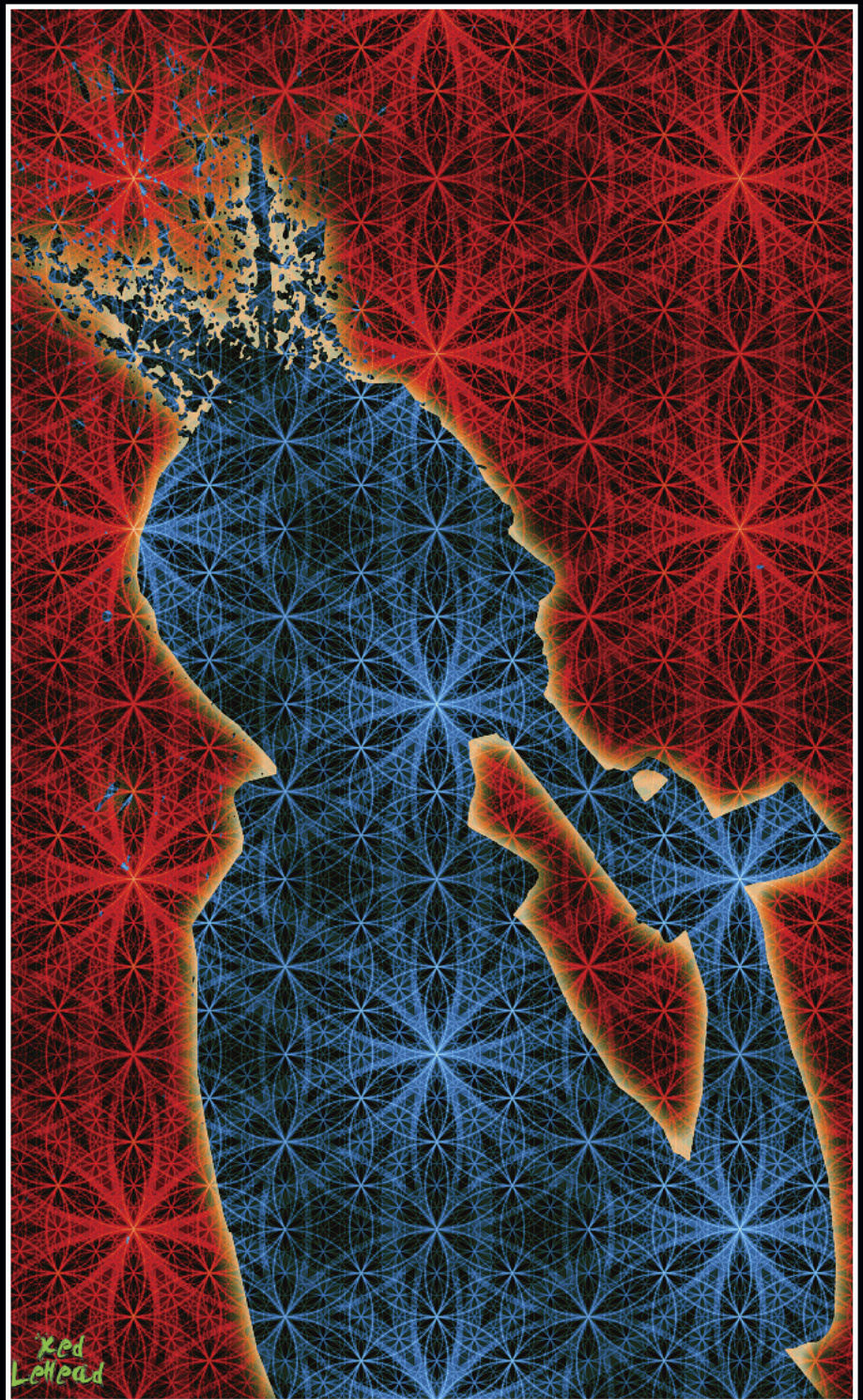
After several months I tried to return to work at the studio but after five days I realised I was empty and couldn't put my soul into my work; I had no idea if I even had a soul anymore. I returned home broken, and so began an even darker period of my life. The metaphorical suit of armour that I had so carefully constructed over two decades of tattooing, to deal with the pressures of being the man who never stopped tattooing, well, I took it off when I removed myself from tattooing when mother became ill, and now it disappeared.

This realisation, the distance I felt from the world I had once known, this emptiness where there had always been fullness, sadness and guilt accumulated over my lifetime without my knowledge... the weight of all of this caused me to implode. Breakdown. Meltdown. Disintegrate. However you wish to describe it. Everything I ever knew fell apart. It unravelled. It unwound. I felt dead yet somehow I was still alive. I was standing in a pile of ashes from a fire of my own creation. No-one to blame, no way back. I retreated into silence and isolation and soon found my hands reaching for my friend, my laptop.

My very adhesive partner moved with my mood swings and my day long silences and listened and listened, as I tried to make sense of life and death. I chose quite deliberately to begin an exploration of the Flower of Life pattern within the digital realm. I returned to pieces created months before and re-explored them, incorporating the Flower of Life and finding solace in the beauty of these explorations. But the Flower of Life was finite in what I was looking for.

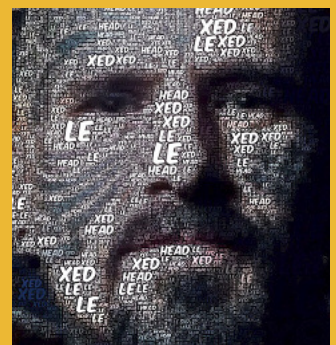
The suicide image (right) was another great turning point in the direction my digital art was about to take me. I doubt I will ever sell this image as a print because it contains so much emotion for me and I don't want it misconstrued. I was nowhere near suicidal, but life was fucking dark indeed. There was a need to kill off a part of myself and to step back into the light, but the light is always tainted with impending tragedy, hence the colours chosen to represent this; the self is always blue; the sadness accumulated through this life is ever present, just below the surface of the jokes we constantly tell to keep the blues at bay, but always knowing the laughter is just a mask hiding the true face of melancholy...

**Next month:** Xed continues the story of his artistic development. He also tells us about the medical condition that left him paralysed, and the effect this has had on his life and art.



Xed has recently been forced to retire from tattooing due to a severe medical condition that has left him without the full use of his arms and legs. He faces a long road to recovery and needs specialist medical equipment and rehabilitation services that are beyond both his own and the NHS's budgets. In recognition of all that he has given to our community, tattooers have set up a fund to support Xed.

To be part of this, please donate to the official Xed Le Head fundraising page. You can find out more by visiting



[www.gofundme.com/z8kvk4](http://www.gofundme.com/z8kvk4)



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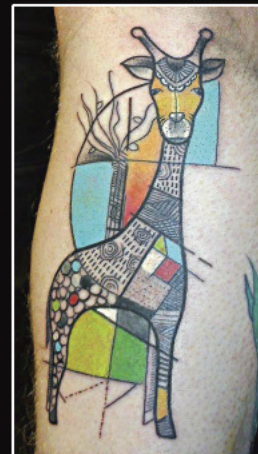
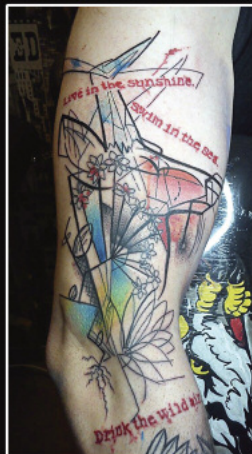
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# ROME TATTOO EXPO

It's always a little dangerous to admit that you were at the first tattoo convention somewhere, especially when that convention is approaching its second decade... so I won't mention that! But the Rome Tattoo Expo is now in its 16th year (where does the time go?) and this year it had a makeover and moved to the Palazzo dei Congressi. The new venue has given the show a boost. It's a classy place in a modern part of the city which is easy to reach by car and public transport. This is a huge improvement on the previous venue, which was beginning to feel a little bit dated, inaccessible, and rather too small for this expanding event.

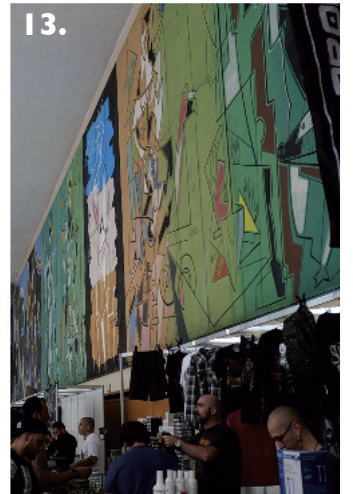
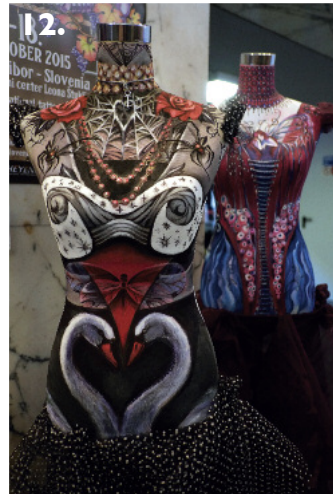
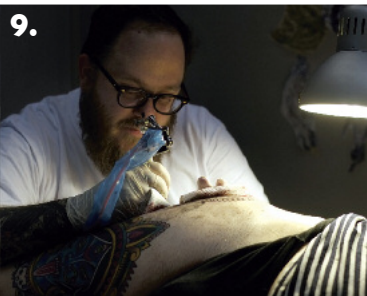
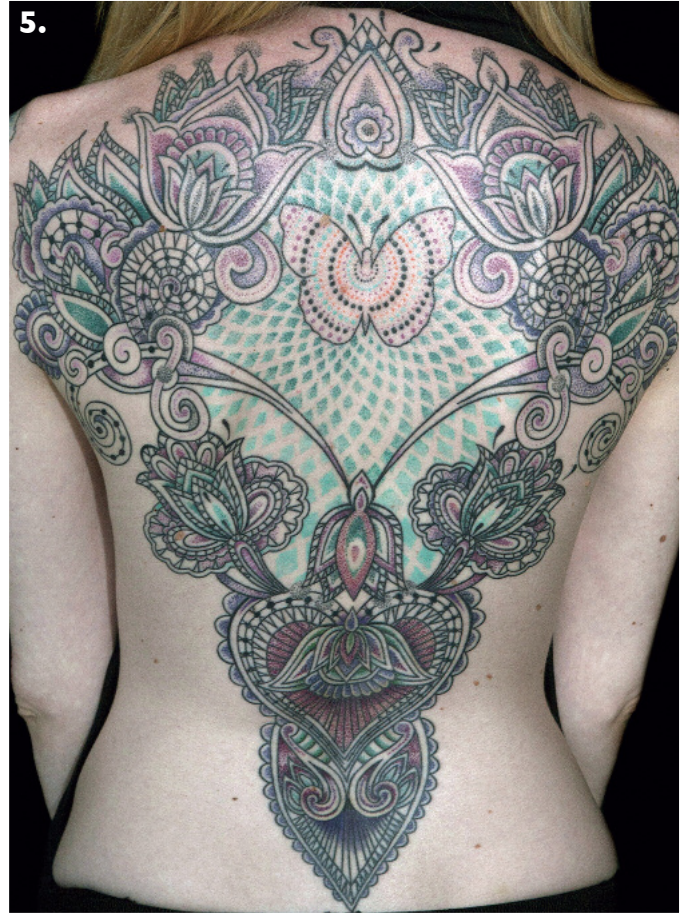
The Palazzo dei Congressi was built for the Esposizione Universale (World's Fair) in 1942 - but in the end it never actually hosted the event, due to Italy's involvement in World War II. The building was finally completed in the 1950s and was then used for the 1960 Olympic Games. Its transformation into a special events venue has been seamless, and whoever came up with the idea of relocating the Rome tattoo show here deserves a good pat on the back. Although essentially a large cement box clad in limestone, and a fine example of rationalist architecture, the Palazzo dei Congressi is actually rather pretty on the

inside, with high ceilings and plenty of art decorating the walls, competing for attention with the skin art.

The three days of the Expo were extremely busy. At times it felt very crowded and hot inside but luckily there were lots of open spaces and access to outdoor areas where people could chill out and cool down. The layout of the show was nicely done, spreading artists around all the available rooms, without grouping them too close together and causing overcrowding. Walking around could be done at a leisurely pace and there was plenty to see.

1. expo building
2. by adriano, mi vida loca (italy)
3. by peppe alisci, sicily ink (italy)
4. by gianni, a fior di pelle (italy)
5. by marco manzo, tribal tattoo (italy)
6. by disegnello, eternal city (italy)
7. by alessio lala, new skin tattoo (italy)
8. by mirco campioni, sundance (italy)
9. chad koepflinger
10. by mojo tattoo (italy)
11. isabo
12. artist unknown
13. inside the venue







14.



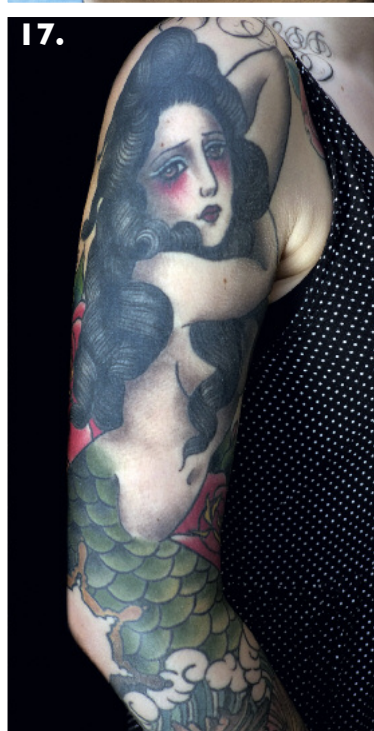
15.



16.



17.



18.

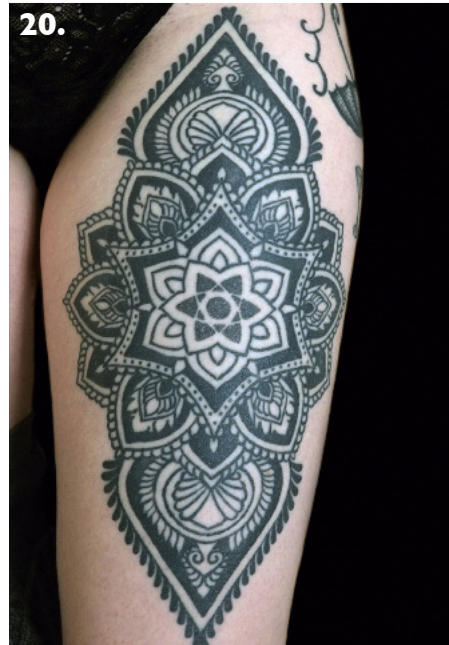




This family-friendly convention showcased the best of contemporary Italian tattooing. Other tattoo shows aim to host a who's who of international talent, and often the same artists are present at lots of different events, but here in Rome – despite a considerable and impressive foreign presence – I felt that the emphasis was firmly on local talent. There was a definite Italian flavour to the proceedings. Although the competitions didn't take place until the evening, there were performances all day to keep visitors entertained. These varied from traditional burlesque to circus acts to art performances – something for everyone.

I haven't attended the show for a few years and this meant that I could approach it with fresh eyes and see how far the event and the artists' work have come in the intervening time. It is not uncommon these days to find amazing artists who have only been tattooing for a year or two, and this was very much the case here: new names were brushing shoulders with more established artists, with not a hint of competitive edge, just a healthy love for the craft of tattooing.

Rome is a great city for a spring weekend break, and is even better with lots of great tattoos on display in a beautiful historic setting! The Rome Expo is a show that is firmly rooted in the past and yet unwaveringly looking to the future. After sixteen years it has entered a new stage in its life and long may it last.



- 14. by andrea pallocchini, four x (italy)
- 15. by fabio gargiulo, south ink tattoo (italy)
- 16. by giulia loconi, el rana tattoo (italy)
- 17. by alix ge (france)
- 18. by domenico acampora, wild boys (italy)
- 19. by marco manzo, tribal tattoo (italy)
- 20. by budda tattoo, aseptic (italy)
- 21. by michele agostini, tribal tattoo (italy)
- 22. by rodrigo calvez, sailor & saints (switzerland)
- 23. by rox hell, simone art tattoo (italy)
- 24. by kuba beggy bex (poland)





25.



26.



27.



28.



29.



30.



31.



- 25. by gianluca ferraro (italy)
- 26. by marta make, kiss me darling (italy)
- 27 & 28. by marco galdo, trafficanti d'arte (italy)
- 29. by panos georgoulas, salvation tattoo lounge (greece)
- 30. by matteo pasqualin (italy)
- 31. by fernando bisceglia, forever (italy)



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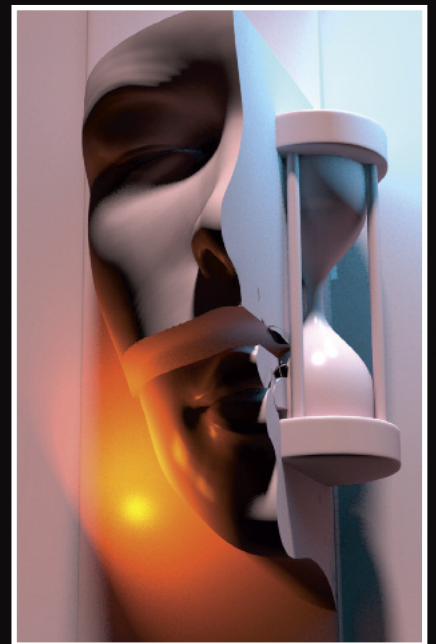
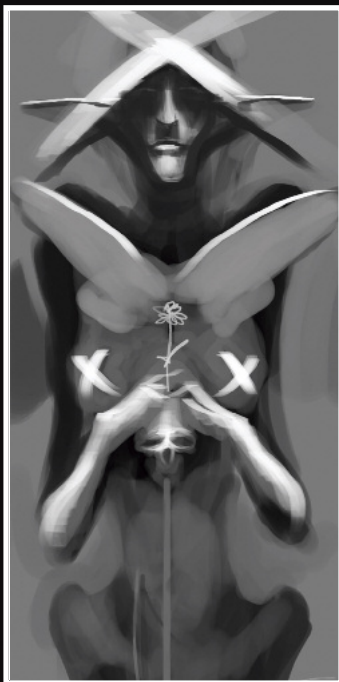
# 'TOFI'

## TOMASZ TORFINSKI

**Tomasz Torfinski, known to the tattoo world as Tofi, is one of the most innovative, creative and technically skilled tattoo artists working today. He is an idol in his native Poland and he is also at the very top of the international tattoo world, earning recognition from his peers and the public alike. In this interview Tofi reveals for the first time how he designs his tattoos. Step by step, he takes us on an illustrated journey along the digital highway that leads to his amazing finished artwork; a path he created for himself, but one he is happy to share.**

**Travellin' Mick: Tofi, in this interview we'd like to focus on the way you design a tattoo. Can you start by explaining the source of your creativity and how you put it into practice?**

**Tofi:** Sure. First, I use computer software to create a digital sculpture of whatever I want to tattoo – a heart, for example. Then I rotate it and view the result from various perspectives in 3D virtual reality. This process gives me endless possibilities. I can apply a realistic light source in any colour I like; I can blur the background to create the illusion of portrait photography; basically, I am able to create my own virtual scenery, with the main subject of the tattoo design dominating the final product.





**It's quite unusual for a tattoo artist to give such a detailed insight into his working methods. What has motivated you to do this?**

I think I might be the only person in the industry working in this particular way. 90% of my designs are now created like this. I'd like to show fellow tattooists my unique style and my methods, because I see a lot of potential for tattooing as a whole if other artists adopt this method. Recently, I was collating my work to create a summary of my 3D modelling, designing and tattooing. I have also taught seminars about the digital tools I use. All this has helped me clarify my vision of the design process, which is actually the essence of being a tattoo artist.

**What are the advantages of using software for designing tattoos, as opposed to drawings?**

The software doesn't limit my creativity. Actually it's the opposite: it gives me unlimited possibilities! For example, manipulating perspective and light sources are impossible in a standard drawing. The software helps me create realistic tattoos that are based on my imagination.



**A lot of tattooists use computers to create their tattoo designs. What makes your method different?**

What you are referring to is the simple manipulation of a random picture to merge it with another. A woman's face, for example, merged with a skull or an image of a clock, all sourced from Google Images in seconds. Anyone can do this after a weekend Photoshop course! I am a competition judge at most of the Polish tattoo conventions and I can see that custom tattoos have been diluted both by artists and customers. And you know why? It's because neither side expects much from the other. There are a lot of artists doing realistic style tattoos but they limit their own potential and don't go out of their comfort zone. They lack their own creativity; they need to go beyond using Google Gallery. What I do is transfer my own concept drawings into a 3D environment. This enables me to really express myself. I have been tattooing for around 13 years and I have worked through all the different ways of doing custom designs from hand-drawn illustrations, and in my experience none of them give the truly realistic feeling I get from this method.



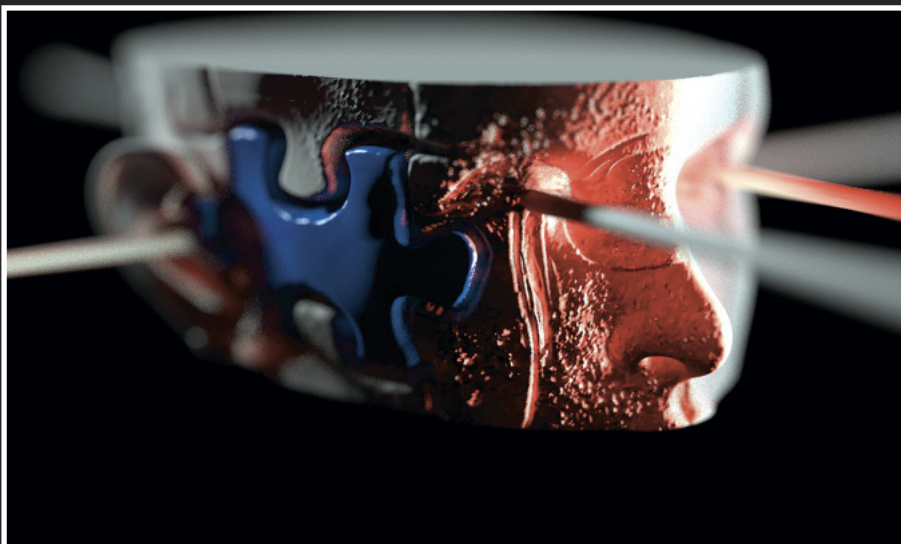


**What is your vision for your own tattooing? Where do you want to go with this method?**

Recently I have created a lot of concept designs that will be used for tattooing. I'll transfer them into large scale surrealistic pieces, creating a style that uses human anatomy, faces and things that don't even exist yet. They are my creations, and I will bring them to life as tattoos. I've drastically reduced the amount of purely realistic tattooing I do. Now I want to bring out the very essence of my surrealistic visions, and move tattooing to a higher level than ever before. I think tattooing is dying; I want to revive it and bring back what I love and appreciate: a tattoo with creativity, character and meaning.

**How much influence on your work does the client have? Is there some kind of collaboration?**

In tattooing nowadays the customer usually decides on the image, subject matter, colour scheme and so on. I'd like to reverse this. In the future most of my tattoos will be based on my own ideas. At the end of the process the client will own a unique and special tattoo that will have part of my personality in it. Of course, I will still interpret my customers' ideas, but I will execute them my way.







**You hold seminars in Poland, don't you? What are you aiming to teach the tattoo artists who come to them?**

I try to connect two worlds: how to create a surrealistic tattoo by combining realistic tattooing techniques with a unique concept. I demonstrate my workflow, from the beginning to the end of the design and tattoo process. I explain the tools I use, although I can't actually teach people how to use them, because that requires a lot of time, practice and a basic knowledge of 3D software. People like me, who are fond of realistic tattoos, should be able to create their own worlds, with no limits. This 3D design software allows you to do just that. And not only with the subjects that I like to use, such as puzzles, hourglasses, watches and faces. It also works with bio-mechanical or oriental designs too. You can transfer my design method to your own creations, and use it as a starting point for your own path.

**You have very impressive computer skills. Do people need a lot of technical knowledge to work the way you do?**

I use Macs, but all the software I'm using is available for PC as well. Currently I am using Maya (for hard surfaces modelling), Poser (for character and face modelling), Modo (for rendering) and Zbrush (for organic modelling).

**That sounds complicated and expensive!**

Most of those programs cost a few hundred dollars, but of course there are trial versions available. The 3D modelling industry is full of useful software, so there are lots of alternatives.

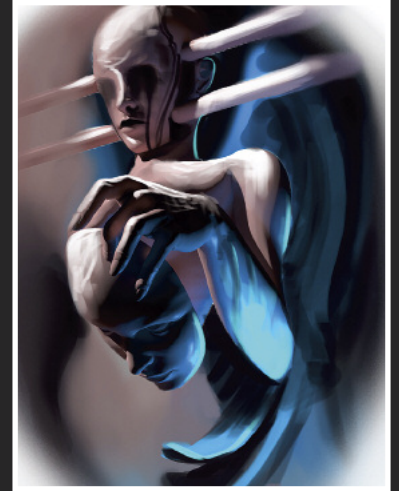






**Would you recommend people do a course to learn how to use the software?**

I usually recommend taking a specialist 3D course. I taught myself from YouTube tutorials but it took a long time. I've been using it for around five years now. However, if you studied full-time with a skilled teacher, you'd be able to use the software in a useful way within a few weeks. Teaching yourself takes longer of course.



**Can you tell us what tattoo equipment you use?**

For the past five years, I've been using Cheyenne equipment: Spirit, Thunder and now Pen machines. In my opinion, they are the best in the world, especially when it comes to the speed you can work, the blending of colours, the healing time and, of course, convenience when travelling. They are simple to use too. An artist still needs many years of practice, of course, and a lot of knowledge about the skin, to know what the limits are and prevent over-working it. For inks, I use Radiant colours. They suit me as they blend easily and their colour palette offers me a lot of different tones, particularly my preferred shades of blues, browns and reds.

**Tofi, thank you for giving us an insight into such a fascinating aspect of contemporary tattooing.**

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**Ricky Lopez**

**Mike Harper**



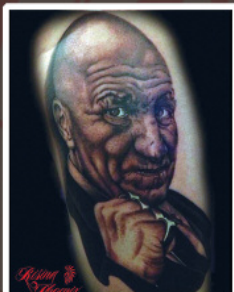
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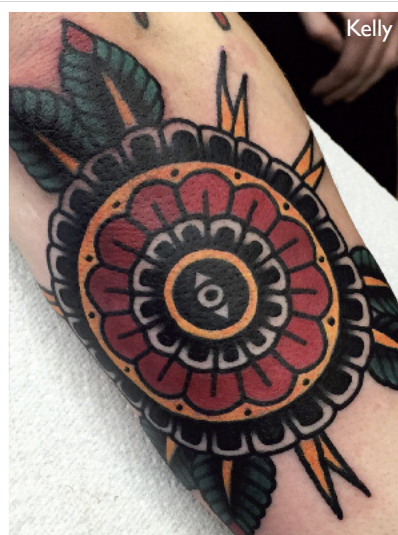
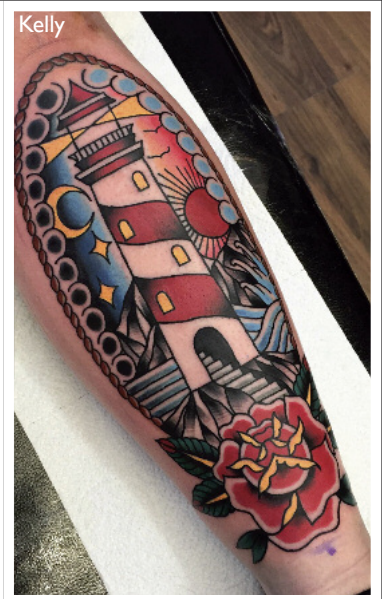
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# IN FOCUS

In these pages we showcase a small selection of work from a group of artists working together. This month **Five Magics, Aberdeen Court, Division Street (opp Frog and Parrot pub), Sheffield, S1 4GE. Tel: 07943 186901**  
We would love to feature your work, please send examples to:  
**In Focus, Total Tattoo Magazine, 111 Furze Road, Norwich, NR7 0AU, UK**





Rich



Miss Polly



Kelly



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# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## UK CONVENTIONS

### September 5 Ink and Art

The Ballroom, The pavillion Theatre  
Bournemouth  
[www.bournemouth.tattoo](http://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](http://www.thelondontattooconvention.com)

### October 10-11 Milton Keynes Tatroo 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](http://www.jurassiccoasttattooconvention.co.uk)

### Nov 7-8 Halloween Tatroo Bash

Wolverhampton Racecourse  
Holiday Inn Garden Court  
Dunstall Park Lodge, Wolverhampton WV6 0PE  
[www.halloweentattooobash.co.uk](http://www.halloweentattooobash.co.uk)

### Nov 14-15 East Coast Tatroo Expo

Highfield Grange Holiday Park, London Road  
Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO16 9QY,  
[www.eastcoastexpo.co.uk](http://www.eastcoastexpo.co.uk)

### November 14-15 Sheffield Tatroo Show

Magna Science Centre, Sheffield Road,  
Templeborough, Rotherham  
South Yorkshire S60 1DX  
[www.sheffieldtattoooshow.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldtattoooshow.co.uk)

### Nov 28-29 Cariad Ink Xmas tatroo Carnival

Venue Cymru, The Promenade  
Llandudno LL30 1BB  
[www.facebook.com/CariadInk](http://www.facebook.com/CariadInk)

## UK CONVENTIONS 2016

### February 5-6 Needle Gangstas Annual Beano

Pride Pkwy, Derby DE24 8XL  
[www.tattooteaparty.co.uk](http://www.tattooteaparty.co.uk)

### March 5-6 The Tatroo Tea Party

Phoenix Way, Off Barton Dock Road, Urmston  
Manchester. M41 7TB  
[www.facebook.com/needlegangstas](http://www.facebook.com/needlegangstas)

### April 3 Ink and Iron Tatroo Convention

The New Bingley Hall  
1 Hockley Circus, Birmingham, West Midlands  
B18 5PP  
[www.inkandiron.co.uk](http://www.inkandiron.co.uk)

### April 31 - 1 May The Brighton Centre

King's Rd, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 2GR  
[blog.brightontattoo.com](http://blog.brightontattoo.com)

### May 6-8 Liverpool Tatroo Convention

Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Ranelagh Place  
Liverpool. L3 5UL  
[www.liverpooltattooconvention.com](http://www.liverpooltattooconvention.com)

### June 4-5 Scarborough Tatroo Show

The Spa Scarborough  
South Bay, Scarborough,  
North Yorkshire YO11 2HD  
[www.facebook.com/scarboroughtattoooshow](http://www.facebook.com/scarboroughtattoooshow)

### June 4-5 Leeds International Tatroo Convention

Exhibition Centre Leeds  
Clarence Dock, Chadwick Street  
Leeds LS10 1LT  
[www.leedstattooexpo.com](http://www.leedstattooexpo.com)

## OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

### September 12-13 Galway Tatroo Show

Radisson Hotel, Lough Atalia Road, Galway, Ireland  
[www.facebook.com/galwaytattoooshow](http://www.facebook.com/galwaytattoooshow)

### September 18-20 3rd Annual Steel City Tatroo Convention

David L Lawrence Convention Center  
located at 1000 Ft Duquense Blvd  
Pittsburgh PA 15222 USA  
[www.shaneoneillproductions.com](http://www.shaneoneillproductions.com)

### Oct 9-11 Florence Tatroo Convention

Fortezza Da Basso  
Viale Filippo Strozzi, 1  
50129 Florence, Italy  
[www.florenceconvention.com](http://www.florenceconvention.com)

### Oct 30-Nov 1 Dublin Tatroo Convention

Red Cow Moran Hotel Dublin  
22 Naas Rd, Dublin 22, Co. Dublin, Ireland  
[www.dublintonlineconvention.com](http://www.dublintonlineconvention.com)

### November 1 Tatroo Sunday - Brugge

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### November 13-15 Brussels International Tatroo Convention

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# NEXT MONTH

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# mugshot

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

This month

## Sim Abbott Cosmic Tattoo

### What makes you happy?

Damn! That's a hell of an opener! Philosophical answer or real answer? Ha, this is where I say tattooing, right? Well, yeah, of course tattooing makes me happy. It's my life and it's amazing but also stressful as shit sometimes. So I guess at the moment what's making me happy are the possibilities in my future. The places tattooing is taking me and the people I'm meeting. Looking forward not backwards makes me happy. Hopefully there are good things on the horizon.

### What makes you angry?

Urghhh, fake people make me angry, but what makes me angrier than anything is people who cheat. Not like at Monopoly; if you wanna snaffle Mayfair, fill your boots. No, selfish people who screw people over and hurt people, with no consideration for others. That's a big thing that makes me angry. And when people walk super slowly in front of you... that fucks me off epically!

### What was the last book you read?

This is going to make me sound so pretentious but it genuinely was Sun Tzu's 'The Art of War'. I recommend it. Get the abridged version otherwise it's a bit samey and a hard read. Unless we're talking comics, which are books too. Then it was 'The Crossed'. I recommend everyone read those. You won't regret it, I promise.

### What was the last movie you saw?

The new Mad Max film. Seriously so good. I was a bit 'Na, don't touch the classics' but they have totally done the old ones justice and the character design is awesome. I'm all about that.

### What pets do you have?

I have two cats that are both rad as hell. A white one called Pod, with different coloured eyes, and a tabby called Speak that was a stray I took in. He is rather rotund but he carries it well.

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

Pad Thai. All day, every day. I can't get enough of that stuff. Now I want Pad Thai!

### If you won the lottery what's the first thing you would buy and why?

You'd think I'd have a sweet answer for this. People think of this stuff all the time but I know my answer will have changed in twenty

minutes. I'm trying to think of something really expensive, probably like an island somewhere away from everything or a mega house in a forest or a zombie proof bunker. Those are all legitimate ideas! A solid gold compound bow with diamond arrow tips? I don't even own a bow!



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

It's gonna have to be Angelina Jolie in Gone in 60 Seconds, isn't it?

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

Pretty much anything by The Misfits or The Hope Conspiracy, but let's go with The Misfits '1,000,000 Years BC' over and over again. Seriously though, just one song? You guys are mean.

### What would your super power be?

Ha ha! Ledge of a question. I guess the super power to read people's minds would be the best, but it's also the darkest super power you could have. I'm pretty sure that would mess you up eventually. I'll have that but only if you have the option to turn it on and off, instead of walking around listening to people spew their thoughts out everywhere. That would suck!

### What achievement are you most proud of?

This is tattooing, I think. Just sticking to it and working hard as hell at it. I feel really lucky and proud to be doing it and to have the opportunities it's given me. Everything about it really. Aside from tattooing, I don't know... waking up every morning? Gotta be proud of that.

### What is your biggest regret?

Wasted time. The gift of hindsight is an absolute killer. Regretting time not well spent. But everything that's happened has got me to where I am today so, given the chance, I don't think I'd change anything.

### What keeps you awake at night?

Me! I'm usually awake at night, for a multitude of reasons. That's why I look like a corpse during the day. I'm OK with that though.

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

Keep on keeping on. Keep going for as long as you can. When you can't go on, then it's OK to ask for help. Also elves live longer than humans.

### How would you like to be remembered?

Rogue elf that changed the landscape of human conscience. Or just a decent sort, I guess. It's only the lucky few who get truly remembered. Maybe I'll do something great for humanity one day. Watch this space.

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

There are quite a few that I like. I always think I'm lucky to be doing custom work. I find the newer stuff I'm doing really rewarding but I think my favourite is probably the back piece cover up I did on my good friend Lewis. I had a blast doing it and it's on a mate. Everything about it was good memories.

### Finish this sentence:

**Sim is...** probably not going to turn into a real adult until after I level up to past 80. Sim is also now wishing he had done this whole Mugshot in the third person. Sim also wants to thank tattooing, and everyone in the shop for making it what it is daily. You rock!



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