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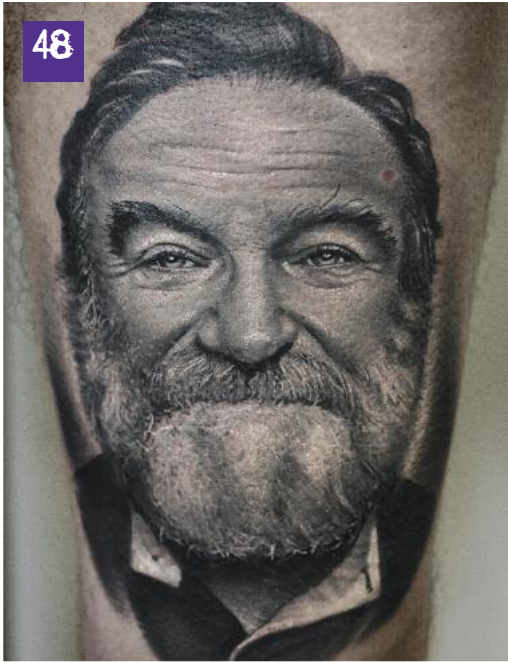
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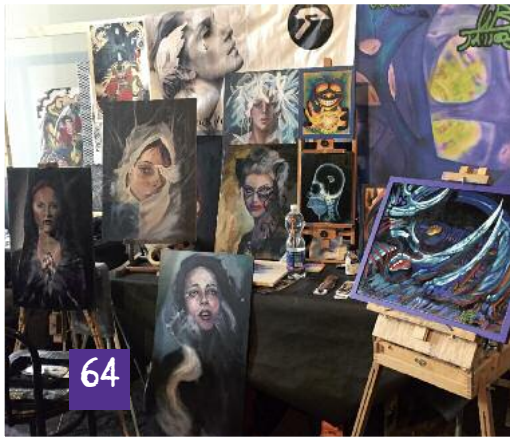


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Images must be high resolution (300) and sized at 100mm by 150mm. The disc needs to be labelled with the artist & studio name. Or email them to galler@totaltattoo.co.uk

COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

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WELCOME to 143

It is undeniable that the whole world seems to be locked into some crazy period of unstable flux. Politically, nationally and globally, everything is up in the air and an unclear vision of the future awaits. While uncertainty often gives way to fear, it is also worth remembering that with change comes the opportunity for things to improve. The collective way of thinking frequently views the world from a negative standpoint – the glass is half empty – yet if you stop, step back and take a moment to look at your own life, usually very little changes. At least not in an instant.

It's the same for tattooing. Over the last few years we have witnessed it moving from a craft to an art, with university graduates picking up machines and taking their seats alongside skilled craftspeople in the noble art of inking. I remember a time when tattooists couldn't really draw; they were merely practitioners in the application of ink. Then came the skin illustrators, followed by the computer artists (who once again can no longer draw, but who amaze us with their ability to apply super-realistic two-dimensional designs to three-dimensional beings). The wheel rotates for another revolution.

The tattoo world has always looked far and wide for influence and inspiration, never hemmed in by borders or boundaries, and I see absolutely no reason why this should change. One of tattooing's greatest attributes is its ability to adapt and remain outside of the status quo, operating just below the surface of complete acceptability. For many, this is the very appeal of tattoos in the first place.

Here at Total Tattoo Magazine we are experiencing changes of our own. James has moved away from the Editor's desk and I, rather gingerly, have moved into that position. Unlike our political ruling class however, we do have a vague plan in place for the future: to continue bringing you the very best features from the very best artists, while continuing to support the industry that supports us.

Next year we are branching out with our first ever convention (in Newcastle) and at present we are busy securing the very best line-up of artists available, coupled with some top entertainment, with a view to offering great value for money. As with all things Total, quality will be our watchword. And you – our tattoo family – are always very much at the forefront of our minds.

One thing's for certain: the future is uncertain! But to be honest it has always been that way. No one really knows for sure what will happen tomorrow. But as long as we are willing to embrace it without the fear of change, then surely there will always be a bright and positive time waiting up ahead; or maybe that's just me and my half-full glass.

Part of my view for the magazine is that Total Tattoo is at least part-owned by you: the tattooists, readers and traders. You are part of the Total Tattoo family and I invite you all to take an active role within it. We are always on the look-out for anything interesting or different, and if you have any ideas about what you would like to see featured in Total Tattoo (or any feedback about the magazine) you can get in touch with me directly, via the email address below.



Perry
editor@totaltattoo.co.uk

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.

John F Kennedy

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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

BOOK REVIEW



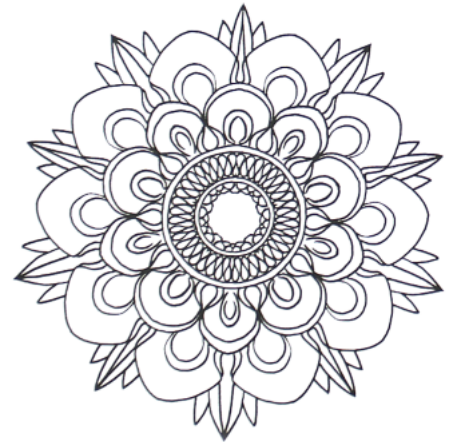
'Illustrative Rose' is available through the Canadian East Coast Artist Society, a "society run by tattooers for tattoo artists" whose aim is to help artists get their products easily and economically to market. (Other reference books on their website include 'Biomechdallas' and 'Blackwork Mandala' and they also sell prints, shirts and flash.) The rose designs within this book are all printed in black and white, with the exception of the wonderful multi-layer "educational" front cover, which

illustrative Rose - Tattoo Artist's Reference Book (Vol 1)

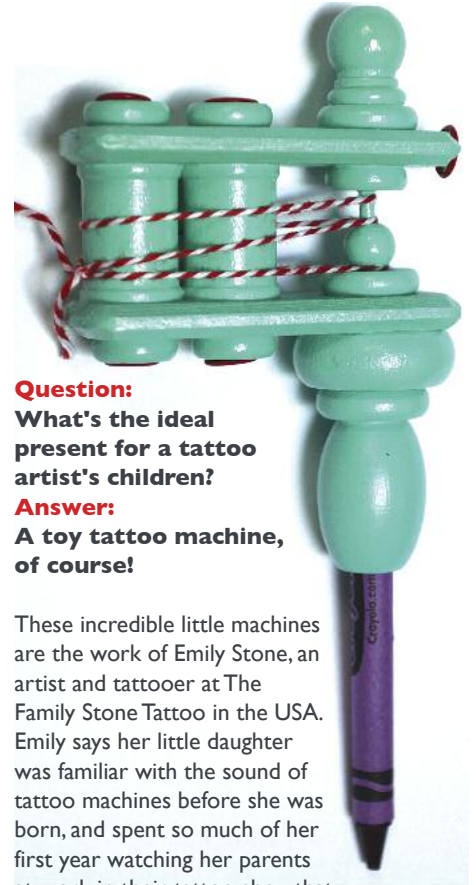
By Charles Murray
70 pages
Available from
www.eastcoastartistsociety.ca



can be peeled back to reveal its hidden depths. Although the designs can be used straight from the book, they can also be easily adapted to suit customer requests, which is perfect if you're in a busy shop, and the thick black lines make them easy to copy or transfer. At the end of the book there is also a handy twelve-step guide detailing the lifecycle of a rose from bud to bloom, accompanied by four black and grey studies to give ideas for shading and colouring. For a tattooer or apprentice, this is a book that will easily pay for itself many times over (it even has a heavy-duty cover to resist wear and tear, and coil binding to open flat for ease of use). The two hundred designs are in a wide variety of styles and, as Charles Murray says, "If someone cannot find a rose that they like after flipping through this book, then they do not want a rose!"



THIS IS A TOY!



Question:

What's the ideal present for a tattoo artist's children?

Answer:

A toy tattoo machine, of course!

These incredible little machines are the work of Emily Stone, an artist and tattooer at The Family Stone Tattoo in the USA. Emily says her little daughter was familiar with the sound of tattoo machines before she was born, and spent so much of her first year watching her parents at work in their tattoo shop that "one day she just started pretending to tattoo things - stuffed animals, her friends, her own arms and legs..." And that's how Emily came up with the idea. Each 'machine' is handcrafted using wood, twine and brass, and the 'tubes' have a wide hole in the end, so that a pencil or pen can be put in. They come in a variety of bright colours (custom orders are available) and arrive in a gift box complete with stickers, crayons and temporary tattoos. To purchase a mini tattoo machine and start your own tattoo family, visit www.etsy.com/uk/shop/TheFamilyStoneTattoo

ARTIST WANTED

Rampant Ink, Nottingham are looking for a new tattoo artist to join their happy little family! If you'd like to apply please forward your cv and a link to your portfolio to info@rampantink.com



WIN A SET OF CHAMELEON PENS!

Chameleon Color Tone Pens combine the bold permanence of a marker pen with the smooth blend of watercolour paint. They're double-ended – with a Japanese SuperSoft Brush Nib at one end and a Japanese Bullet Nib at the other – and the special mixing chamber (containing colourless toning medium) enables you to achieve seamless blends and colour gradation. One pen creates multiple tones! Chameleon pens work with other alcohol-based marker pens, are non-toxic, low-odour and permanent on most surfaces. In addition, the ink and mixing chambers are refillable, and the nibs are replaceable. We have been generously provided with three deluxe sets of Chameleon pens (worth £89.99 each) to give away to three ink-redibly lucky readers! To be in with a chance of winning, all you need to do is email the answer to the following question to comps@totaltattoo.co.uk by 31st August 2016, with the subject line PENS. First three correct answers out of the hat will win.

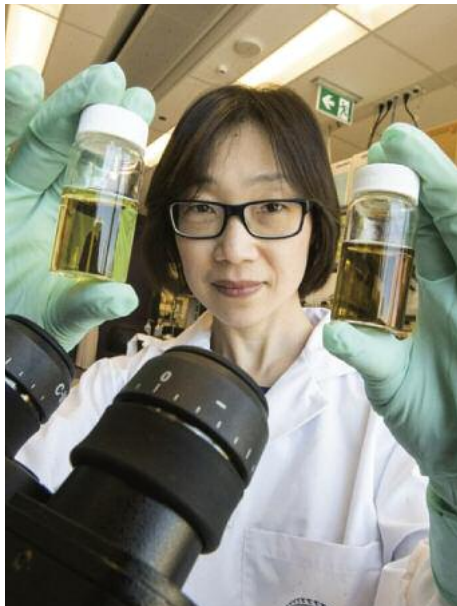
A chameleon is an animal that is known for what?

- A. Changing its colour**
- B. Changing its smell**
- C. Changing its mind**

Usual terms and conditions apply (see page 5). UK entries only.



'TATTOOING' STEM CELLS



A recent news item in The Toronto Star began with the intriguing sentence, "As if body art couldn't get any more extreme, University of Toronto biomedical engineers have created a way to get inked at a cellular level..." The article went on to describe how researchers have developed an innovative tracer 'ink' that enables the detailed monitoring of stem cells once they've been injected into the body. Dubbed 'tattooing for stem cells', the 'ink' penetrates the cell membrane and a chemical reaction within the cell then prevents it seeping out. And that's the important development. The 'ink' stays put. The 'tattooed' cells can then be tracked non-invasively with an MRI scan – whereas, previously, surgery would have been necessary in order to take a look at what was happening inside the body. It's early days, but the new technique is likely to be of immense benefit in this revolutionary therapy.

PROSTHETIC TATTOOING ARM

Here's something cool that we picked up on the Total Tattoo news radar. Created by JC Sheitan Tenet, a tattooist from Lyon in France, and Jean-Louis Gonzalez (Gonzal), an artist and engineer known for his mechanised taxidermy, this incredible-looking machine is thought to be the world's first custom-built prosthetic tattooing arm. Tenet lost his lower right arm in childhood and consequently has always tattooed left-handed, but being naturally right-handed he wanted to find a way to work with that arm. The project began when he asked Gonzal about the possibility of mechanising an old prosthetic he happened to have at home. The resulting prototype was a resounding success. Initially billed as a "kinetic sculpture" when it was first demonstrated at a convention, Tenet and Gonzal soon realised that it could be developed into a very practical piece of kit that would function extremely well for serious tattooing. It's lightweight and comfortable to use, and can be rotated a full 360 degrees; and despite its rusty-looking steampunk aesthetic it's as hygienic as any other tattoo machine. The current model is operated from the shoulder, but the pair hope to develop a more refined version that will have the capability of wrist-like or even finger-like movements.

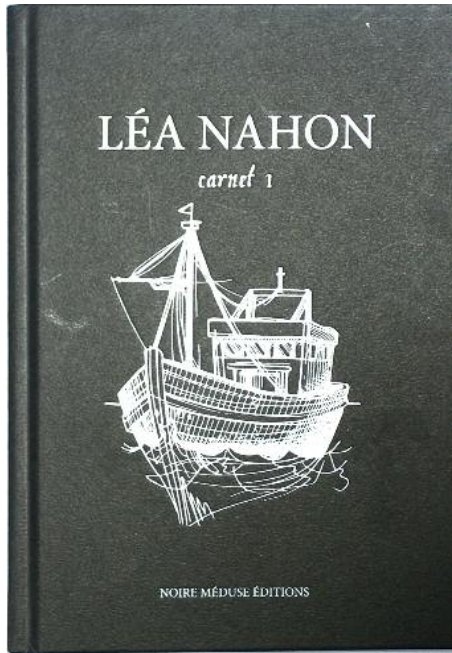


BOOK REVIEW



Léa Nahon: Carnét I
Editions Noire Méduse
 64 pages
 Available from www.noire-meduse.com

Quite simply, this small book is an absolute delight. And it's quite a sexy book too, with its minimalist matt black cover tempting you to flick through its pages. Léa's drawings are presented on cream paper, and the quality is superb – both in terms of the production, and the sketches themselves. There's a wonderful mix of portraiture, surrealism, sea life and nude studies. Each piece is unique, and shows Léa's intricate use of linework that translates so effortlessly into her tattoos. The book is an absolute steal at just €25. Whether you're lucky enough to have a tattoo by Léa or you're just an admirer of her beautiful style of art, you'll need to snap this book up quickly before it's sold out!



ARTIST WANTED

Tanuki Tattoo are looking for a new artist to join their busy, award winning studio. The successful candidate must have a minimum of three years experience (this is not an apprenticeship). Please email examples of your work to



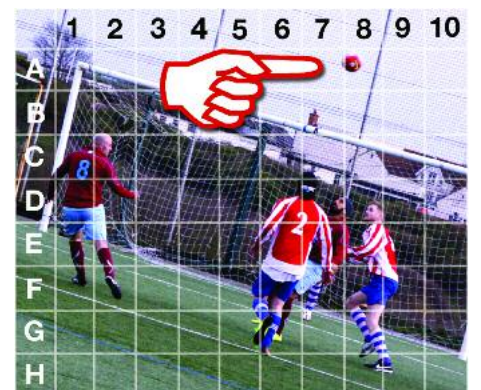
TRAVEL WARNING

According to recent press reports, a Spanish tourist visiting Myanmar has been asked to leave the country because of his Buddha tattoo. Monks in the ancient temple town of Bagan reportedly noticed the tattoo on his right calf and alerted the authorities. In Myanmar – and other countries too, such as Thailand – it is believed that the body becomes less sacred from the head down, and that's partly why this particular Buddha tattoo, on a lower leg, was deemed to be so inappropriate and why it caused such offence. This is not the first time that we've heard of this kind of thing happening – so if you're planning a trip, do make sure you're aware of local sensitivities.



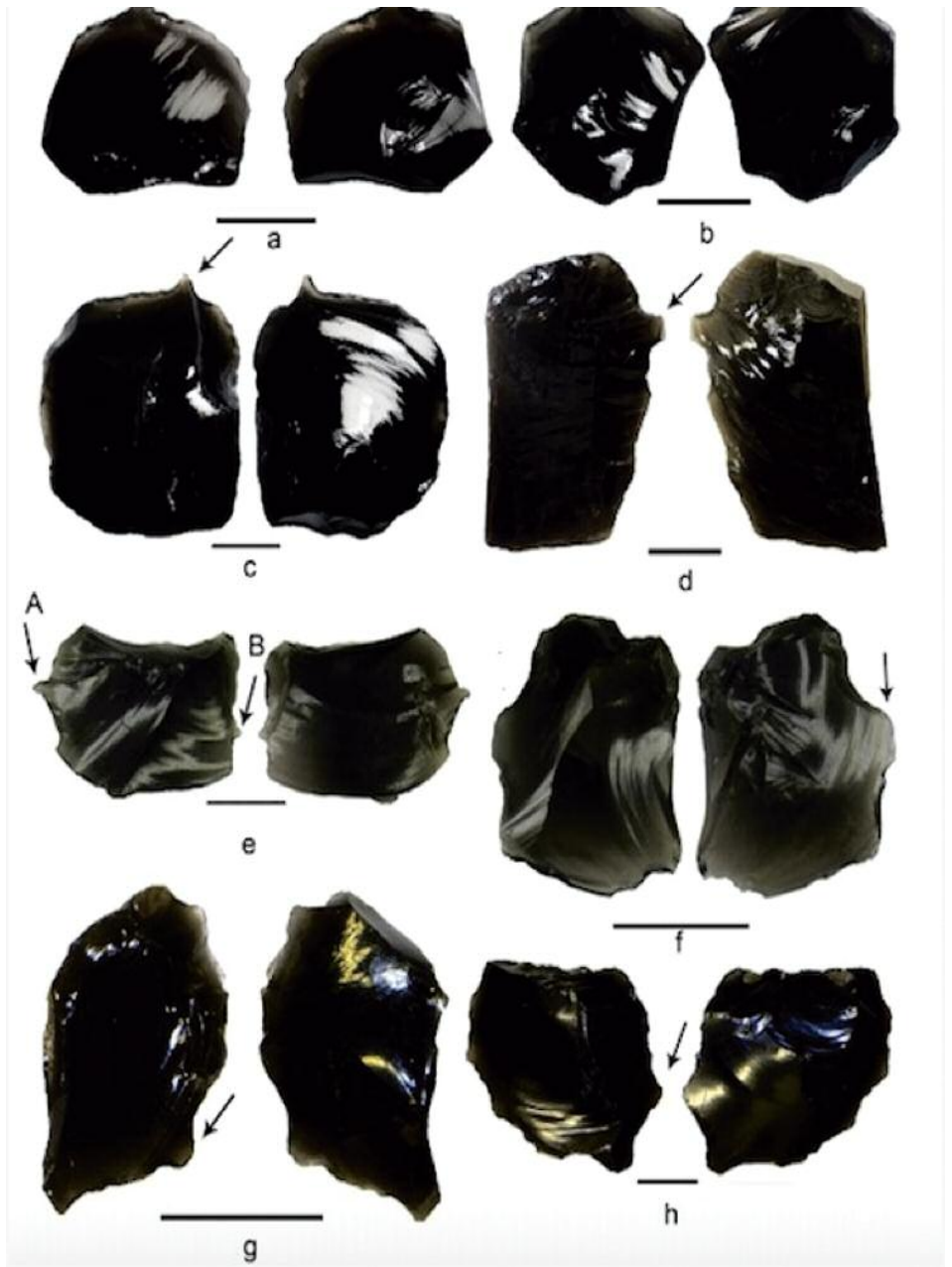
BALL SPOTTED!

In Issue 141 we ran a Spot The Ball competition. Congratulations to Steve Elam, who wins a year's subscription to Total Tattoo. (The correct answer was A8.)



OLDEST TOOLS OF THE TRADE?

We hear that a team of Australian archaeologists may have found the world's most ancient surviving tattoo tools – which are believed to be more than 3,000 years old. These tools are made from flakes of obsidian, a glassy stone, which is why they have survived (unlike tools made of biodegradable materials such as wood or bone). They come from the Nanggu site in the Solomon Islands. It was initially thought that they were used in the preparation of animal skins and hides, but the Solomon Islands don't really have any large animals so such tools wouldn't have been needed, and this led researchers to debate whether the tools might have been used for tattooing. They tested their theory by making similar obsidian tools and creating tattoos on pigskin with charcoal and red ochre (traces of blood, charcoal and red ochre had been detected on the original tools). They then looked at their tools under a microscope and compared what they saw with the marks on the 3,000 year old artefacts. It was found that both sets of tools had similar scratches and chipping, leading to the conclusion that the ancient tools were likely to have been used for tattooing.



TATCON SUPPORTS RNLI

The organisers of Tatcon Blackpool are going all-out to raise money for the RNLI (the lifeboat charity) at this year's show. Various artists are decorating skulls to be auctioned during the weekend, and they're also holding an exciting raffle with a difference... where the prize is the chance to sit on the judging panel for the tattoo competitions! Tickets for the draw are only £1. Tatcon takes place at the Norbreck Castle Hotel on 19th, 20th and 21st August (artists only on 19th). And if you have anything interesting you'd like to donate to the auction, they'd love to hear from you!



ARTIST WANTED

Due to increasing demand, Fudoshin Tattoos are looking for an experienced black and grey / realism artist to join the award winning team at their busy studio. Please email examples of your work to fudoshintattoos@hotmail.com (Fudoshin have asked us to point out that this is not an apprentice position.)



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Peter malmö Classic Lagergren

Words by Perry • Pictures by Peter Lagergren

Whether it's a wonderfully balanced and well-crafted western Japanese bodysuit, a neo-traditional half sleeve, or even a palm-sized new school banger, Peter Lagergren is your man. Whilst chatting with him for this feature, I watched in amazement as he sketched out his next tattoo with no reference apart from what he held inside his head. And it was a beauty!





Peter started Malmö Classic back in 2012. Although it's officially his own shop, everything is shared between him and his fellow tattooer Jacob. He makes it quite clear that he is definitely *not* a boss. "When my second child was born, I decided that I wanted to focus purely on my drawing, my tattooing, and my family. I didn't want the hassle of managing people. So I run my own thing, and Jacob takes care of his clients, and we split the bills and that's it. Nice and simple, which is how I like it."



Originally from Linköping, a small student town four hours north of Malmö, Peter has also spent some time working in America. He was drawn to tattooing very early in his life. In fact he began his apprenticeship at the tender age of just 14. "When I started to tattoo there were just forty five tattooists in the whole of Sweden. Now we have at least that number in every city. I didn't even really know what tattooing was when I began my apprenticeship. I just knew I wanted to be doing something to do with drawing, and I'd always been good at making money from my art. When I was a kid, the older boys used to pay me to draw naked pictures of their girlfriends! With tattooing, I just saw that there was a chance to make money from art without having to wait until you were dead."

"I was stupid and naïve enough to walk into the local tattoo shop and ask 'So how do you do this?' and I was promptly told to fuck off," Peter recalls, "but I kept coming back and kept showing him the drawings I was doing and slowly he softened until I was working there helping out in the summer. He could certainly tattoo, but he really wasn't great at drawing, so I think he felt it was kind of golden to have me in the shop because he could just say 'Hey kid, draw this' - and then he could provide all these custom tattoos. Of course he never paid me, but at least I was getting into the business, so it was a win-win situation."



So it was all part of a master plan? "Sure," continues Peter. "I could see the money coming into the shop, and - although it sounds egotistical - I did kind of feel 'I could do this well, and I could make a living at it'. There wasn't too much competition in those days. If you were into drawing and had some ambition, you could make it. Nowadays it's a lot easier to get into tattooing because there are so many shops - but once you're in, it's so much harder to become established. I had years and years of doing crappy shit tattoos and got away with it. I was doing tribal and hardcore punk logos solidly for more than two years and it's during that time that you build up your technical skills." Peter admits that he never really reached the point where he could pick and choose his clients (or the work they got) until he had been working for about ten years. "Like a lot of people, I just did whatever came through the door, and that's how you learn."





We talk about how some tattooists take a lifetime to achieve greatness, whereas for others it seems to happen overnight. Peter shares his own particular observation. "In tattooing, or anything else for that matter, I can see this ten-year limit type thing - where if someone has really stuck at it and focused on it for a decade or so, they develop a different sort of confidence. Even if they're someone who was great already, a smooth calmness kind of happens."

For most artists, the place where they grew up has a major influence on their work and their approach to life, and for Peter it's no different. He has a theory about this too. "In Sweden the weather is crap a lot of the time, so we have a habit of staying indoors. This contributes to our





artistic development, but not only that. It also means that people tend to be very focused, because this is easier if you haven't got the opportunity of doing lots of things outside. Britain is kind of the same. Eight months of shitty dark weather where you have to do things inside. I reckon it must be harder somewhere like Spain where you would just want to be outside drinking wine all day in the sun, not sitting indoors grinding away for hours and hours perfecting your ability to do something... unless of course it's drinking wine!"

When I ask him how he would describe his work, Peter simply answers, "I am a tattooist." He then elaborates. "Everything I do is based on illustrative traditional tattoos with lines and colour. I used to do a lot of Japanese, but whatever I'm doing my work is always based on drawing and composition. I never want to do anything in a tattoo that isn't necessary or interesting. With the wolf that I am drawing at the moment, for instance, I am concentrating on the face and the paws. The rest of the body is essentially just fur and not very interesting. I try not to over-think it. I just want to create a striking image that sits well and looks balanced and engaging."





I ask Peter what he really feels about social media. "I have always done well through it," he tells me. "In fact I wouldn't be able to do the work I do if it wasn't for social media. Pretty much all of my clients are travelling customers from all over the world. That was unheard of even ten years ago. Then again, you can get a little over-exposed to information and become jaded. Too much exposure is not always a good thing. Sometimes it's better to hold a little back, otherwise people get desensitised and you can become fashionable for a short time and then you're history. And the level of work that you have to produce to impress anybody these days is colossal! People follow thousands of tattooists and see thousands of pictures everyday. They're endlessly scrolling, but are they really looking? Are they really seeing?"

For all his amazing work, Peter has remained fairly unknown. I wondered if this was some kind of deliberate plan? "Nah. I just don't really have the time for self-promotion. I have a family and I'm busy enough. I'm always trying to be professional and achieve a better balance in my life - to work hard when I'm at work, and to be at home when I'm at home. If you want to do this job long term, you pretty much have to get that balance right. There are a lot younger guys who get it wrong and start to

identify with the person they've become on social media. They stop existing outside of that world. It's always good to remember that at the end of the day you are still just a tattooer."

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BRISTOL TATTOO CONVENTION

Last year, the city of Bristol stormed onto the convention scene with a faultless debut show. It was a resounding success. This year, giddy with excitement, artists and traders returned for a second helping. Expectations were high, and everyone was anticipating a fantastic weekend. Could this year's Bristol show be even better?

The venue, Brunel's Passenger Shed, is perfect for a convention. For artists and traders, there is ample room to manoeuvre and a great team to help with loading and unloading. The crew greet everyone with a smile, and they were on hand throughout the whole weekend. Nothing was too much trouble. The space itself is large and open plan, with lots of natural light from skylights. Traders were along one side of the building, the artists were housed in roomy booths, and there was a bar and seating area too. Everything was within reach.

The doors opened to advance ticket holders at 10.30 each morning, with door ticket sales opening at noon. From the start it was apparent that the convention was going to

be busy, as the public were queuing all along the building and right around the corner! Luckily the sun was out, and the admission process was quick. For just £10 on the door for a day ticket, it was excellent value for money. And the location was obviously convenient for rail passengers, as people came in waves throughout the day, hopping off the trains and straight into the venue.

The artists (and the traders too) were hand-selected by the organisers. This is one of the reasons why this convention featured some of the best tattooists in the world – and there was certainly no need for any additional entertainment. With standards so impeccably high, the competitions for Best of Day on both the Saturday and Sunday



2.



3.



4.



5.

1. a very impressive queue
2. amy savage, the warren
3. duncan x working
4. jean le roux, black garden
5. harriet heath, crooked claw



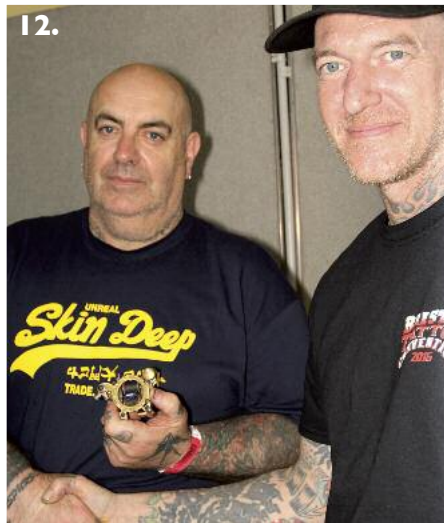
- 6. ian flower, nu skool tattoo
- 7. paul scarrott, magnum circus
- 8. croc tattoo working away
- 9. gavin rose, stronghold tattoo
- 10. melissa szeto, love hate social club
- 11. martin, avon tattoo
- 12. lal hardy and carson
- 13. sam boyce, timeless ink
- 14. dalmiro, black garden
- 15. bristol tattoo club display

were extremely hard to judge! It was also touching to see Lal Hardy presented with a Lifetime Achievement award, and given a handmade tattoo machine by Carson from the USA (Vester Manufacturing).

There was a mixture of pre-booked appointments and walk-ups, and every single artist seemed busy throughout the weekend, working solidly until the 8pm cut-off time. This deadline left the tattooists able to attend the after-show party on the Saturday night. Located in one of the underground 'tunnel bars' near the venue, artists, assistants and traders gathered for drinks and a barbecue that lasted long into the night. It was one of the busiest and most friendly social events that we've ever attended!

It was really apparent that organiser Fil had taken absolutely everything into consideration when planning this convention. As well as the generous booth spaces and overall helpfulness of the staff, there were lots of little touches that really made the show special to those who came to work there. For example, each tattooist was given a 'Bristol Tattoo Convention' embroidered patch. In addition, Fil had a strong presence; he was constantly walking around, checking that the artists were OK and seeing if they needed anything. Many of the tattooists we spoke to said this was one of the many reasons they were more than happy to return to Bristol this year. This may only be the second year of this show, but a friendly feel has already been established amongst the tattoo community, which can only continue to grow.

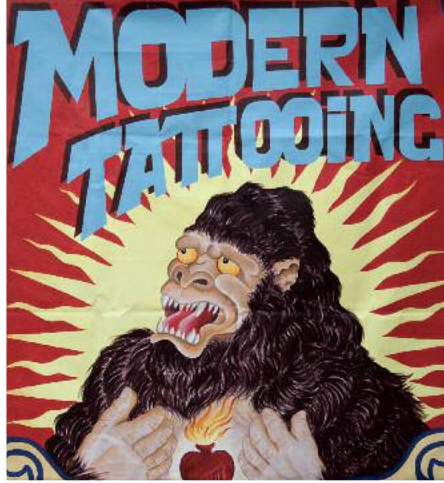
I measure the excellence of a convention by how sad I am to leave. For all of us at Total Tattoo Magazine, the weekend went far too quickly and nobody wanted to go home! When you've got the perfect venue, top class tattooing, and an organiser who truly cares, you really do have a recipe for success.





- 16. dapper signs
- 17. curly tattooing jason zig zag
- 18. ben parry, avon tattoo
- 19. croc tattooing
- 20. marcus kuhn tattooing
- 21. stewart robson, modern classic
- 22 & 23. ben boston, the tattoo studio
- 24. yutaro, seven doors
- 25. rodrigo souto, black garden
- 26. woody, eightfold tattoo
- 27. jason corbett, red hot & blue
- 28. unknown artist
- 29. tiny miss becca, jayne doe

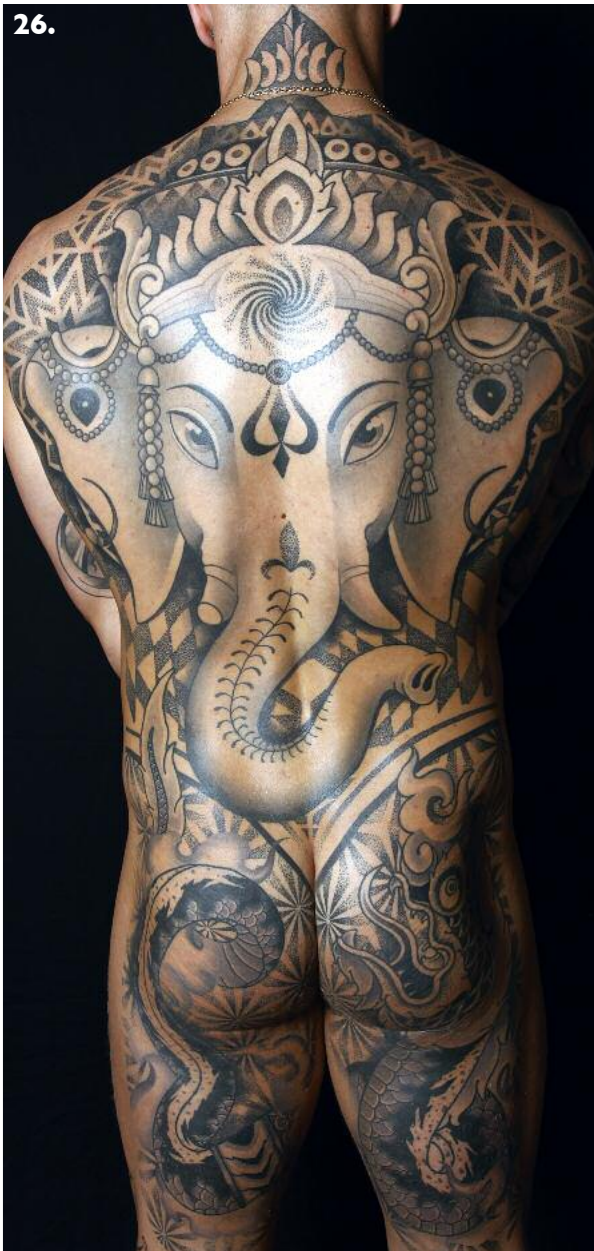
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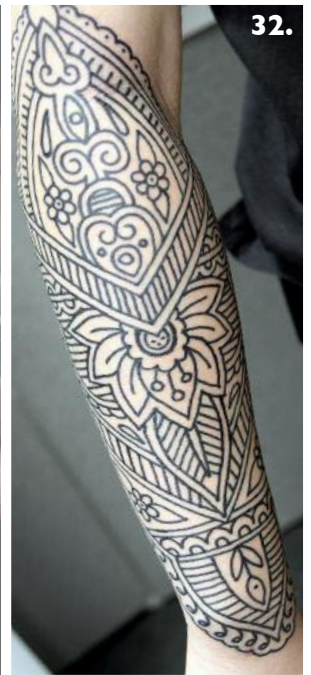


28.



29.





30. steve morante, fudoshin tattoo
 31. ozzy, skin deep tattoo
 32. dan frye, angelic hell
 33. george torrington, avon tattoo
 34. jason zig zag, red hot and blue
 35. marcos attwood, broad street tattoo
 36. gavin rose, strong hold tattoo
 37. dr martens project

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BEN STONE

PAINTS TRADITIONAL FLASH

A tattooist of long standing, Ben Stone is one of the most well-known artists in the UK. Formerly of Temple Tatu in Brighton, and Tradition 180 and Lifetime in Derby, he now works out of his own private studio. Ben makes beautiful dynamic paintings of his tattoo designs. Here, he presents his own personal tutorial on how he does it. He's also kindly provided an exclusive cut-out-and-keep limited edition print of the finished piece!

STEP 1. Let's get started

Okee dokee! I don't claim to be amazing at this – I've only been painting for a couple of years – but I do find it very relaxing and rewarding. And you end up with something more than just a line drawing to show your client. It's a nice thing to do. The first step is to make sure you've got everything you need easily to hand. Here's what I used for this painting:

- Pencils
- Drawing paper
- Lightbox
- Copic pens (they must be waterproof and they can be whatever size you would like your line width to be – I used a 1.0 for this particular drawing)
- Masking tape
- Watercolour paper
- Few sheets of kitchen roll
- Daler-Rowney 'Paynes Grey' waterproof ink (I used this for all the black in the painting)
- Small ceramic palette (of course you can use a plastic one, or even a plate!)
- Two cups of water
- Two brushes (I like to use Size 2)
- Two teabags
- Boiling water
- Small bowl
- Dr Ph Martin's watercolour ink (for the colours)
- Scrap paper



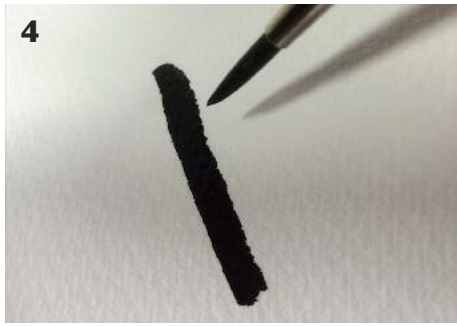
STEP 2. The sketch

If you're doing this for the first time, keep it simple and don't do anything massive. For the purposes of this tutorial, you want to focus on your painting technique rather than thinking about all the tricky details of a design, so choose something familiar. When you're happy with your sketch, pop it on to the lightbox, stick another piece of paper over it, and make a nice bold single-line pen drawing of it. You need to do this because the next stage will be to transfer your design onto the watercolour paper – which is a lot thicker, so it can be difficult to trace pencil marks through it.

STEP 3. Tracing the design on to the watercolour paper

Now get your watercolour paper and place it over the drawing on the lightbox. The image should be positioned exactly where you want it to be in the finished piece. Add a faint pencil border (2H for instance) if you wish. Fix the watercolour paper in place with a little bit of masking tape so that it doesn't move around when you're tracing it. (Here's a useful tip: Stick the masking tape to any old bit of paper first, then tear it off. This removes some of the stickiness of the tape so that it won't damage your watercolour paper.) Now this is where you need to be careful. Make sure your hands are very clean, because any grease or dirt





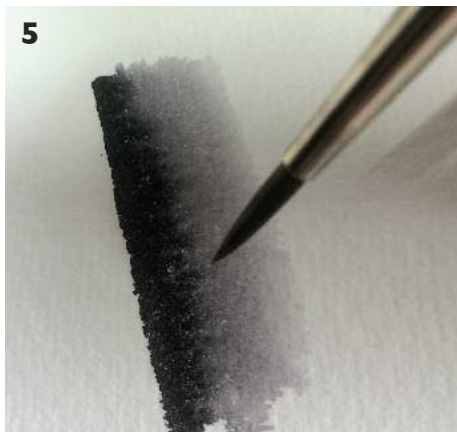
from your skin can mess up the painting process later on. I usually put kitchen roll under my wrists while I'm tracing the design. And remember that ink behaves very differently on watercolour paper. It won't feel the same as your usual drawing paper. But don't get too disheartened – you can go back afterwards and tidy any mistakes on the line work.

STEP 4. Getting ready to paint

So now you've got your design in front of you, on the watercolour paper, and you're ready to paint it. Put a small amount of black or grey waterproof ink on your palette, and get your two brushes. One will be for applying the ink; the other will be for blending the ink. Try not to mix them up! Have your two cups of clean water to hand too. One will be to wash your brushes in (the dirty cup); the other will be to put water onto your blending brush (this should always be clean). Don't mix them up either!

STEP 5. Trying out blending

I recommend trying this out on scrap paper before you attempt your final painting. Using your first brush, apply a line with a nice even amount of black or grey ink. If there's too little ink, it will dry straight into the paper and won't blend; if there's too much, it will go everywhere. You may need to try this a few times to get it right. Now get your second brush and load it with water from the clean cup. Dab it on a piece of kitchen roll so that it's not completely waterlogged. Use this wet brush to gently tease the ink out of the line with a small but steady back and forth motion. The ink will run into the water. Go back for more water if you need to. The ink can dry quite quickly, so speed is of the essence. Keep doing the back and forth blending until the



right look is achieved; like I said, it takes practice. You should end up with a dark edge and a light edge, and that's really the whole principle of watercolour painting for flash. You're now a master at blending!

STEP 6. The painting starts to come together

As you can see from the photo, I'm now working on the watercolour paper and I'm starting to do all the edges that I want to shade. So far, I've just done the neck. You'll notice that in all three blended areas there's a nice black edge to one side and a nice faded edge to the other side, and I've put more shading at the bottom of the neck than in the middle.

STEP 7. Completing the blending

The photo shows what it will look like when you've shaded all the edges that you want to shade. It looks quite weird at this stage.

STEP 8. Filling in the gaps

Steps 5 to 7 were probably the most difficult of the whole process. The next bit is simple! Just use ink to fill in all the areas that need to be solid black.

STEP 9. Masking off for the background

I'm going to put a tea-stained background on this particular painting. (This will involve getting the painting wet, so we need to do it at this stage because the coloured inks we're going to apply later are not waterproof.) I want a nice straight edge all around, so I'm going to temporarily frame the picture area with some masking tape. As suggested before, stick the masking tape to any old piece of



paper first so that it loses some of its stickiness. Make sure you press the masking tape on to the watercolour paper really firmly; you don't want the tea bleeding under the edges. Here's another tip: Fold over one end of the masking tape so that it's easier to remove and you're not scrabbling around trying to un-stick it later on, and potentially making marks on your finished painting.



STEP 10. The tea stain background

People can get a bit daunted by this, but creating a tea-stained background is very simple. (Yes, we're going to be putting water on to the painting – but don't worry, nothing is going to run, because we've been using waterproof ink for everything we've done so far.) Put two teabags into a small bowl, add boiling water and leave for two minutes. Then, using a clean brush, paint tea onto the areas where you want a tinted background. I find it works best to put the tea onto my palette, then paint the whole of the background with the same batch; otherwise, by the time you've finished, the tea becomes '7-minute brew' and it's a lot darker than it was at the start. Now you can have fun and splodge! The tea is actually quite nice to use, and you'll find you can blend it in the same way as ink. You can make it look aged, or like skin. When you've achieved your desired effect, it's important to let it dry. If you take the masking tape off too soon, and the paper is still wet, your borders might seep and spread.



STEP 11. Applying colour

As mentioned in the previous steps, you don't need to worry about the black ink smudging because it's waterproof – but the coloured inks aren't, so you need to take extra special care not to get any water on them after the painting is finished. In the photo, you can see that I've applied red to various areas. I like to go completely over the adjacent black too, to make sure any little gaps are solidly filled (on the dagger handle and tongue for instance). You can also see in the photo that I've got some grey tones. This was done in the same way as the black; all I did was load my brush with black and mix it with water on my palette to create a simple grey. You can still blend and soften the edges, with a clean brush, if you need to. Similarly, the nose, lips and inside of the ear are done with the same coloured ink as the dagger handle, diluted with water to create a lighter tone. Try everything out on your scrap paper first, and you can't go wrong.

STEP 12. Finishing touches

To complete the painting, I've added yellow and some lighter tones of red. Smashing! I'm quite pleased with it! And here's a print of the finished piece for you to frame up and keep.

Ben Stone

[instagram.com/benstonetattoo](https://www.instagram.com/benstonetattoo)
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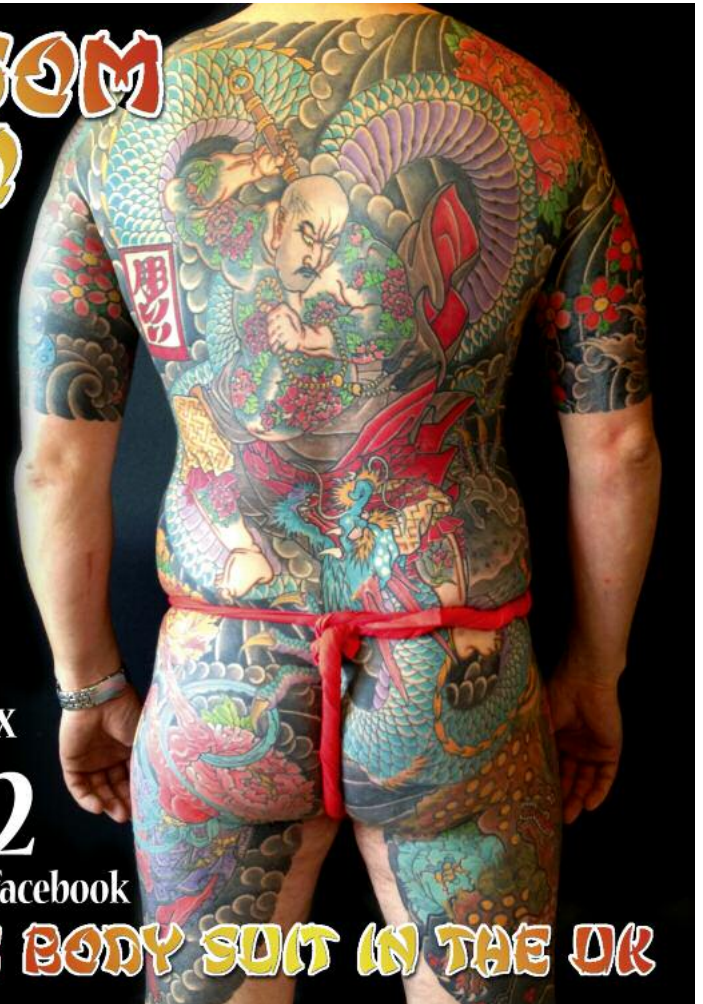
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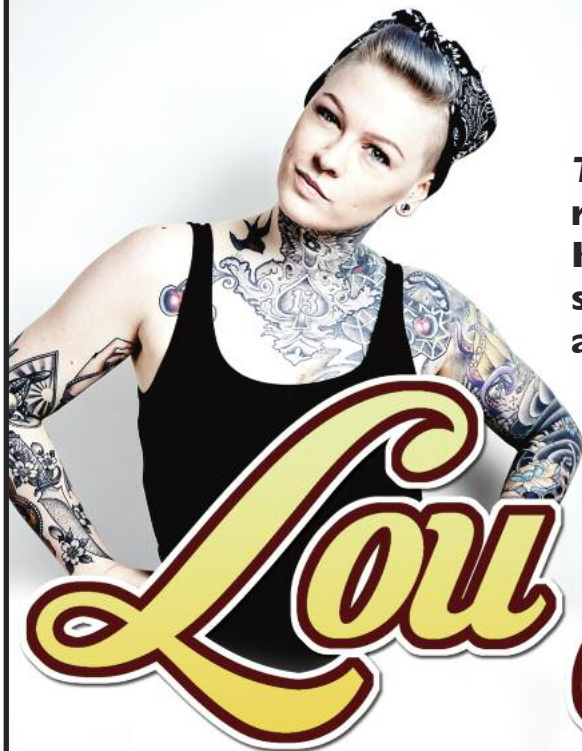
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HOME OF THE JAPANESE BODY SUIT IN THE UK





It's been a whirlwind year for Lou Hopper. She first caught the public's attention when she starred in the controversial *Tattoo Fixers* TV series in 2015, and now she's rapidly establishing a name for herself at Phil Kyle's Magnum Opus studio in Brighton. We spoke to her about tattooing, 'that show', and her plans for the future...

Lou Hopper

words by lizzy guy • pictures by lou hopper

Lou was born and raised in a small town in the West Country. She describes her parents as 'traditional' – with not a tattoo or piercing in sight – and she was eager to move away. (She tells me they still think her career choice is 'just a phase!') So what was Lou's first tattoo memory? "I've always loved the look of heavily-tattooed skin," she says with a smile. "Visually, there's something so appealing and sexy about it. I remember camping when I was a kid – we were at a holiday park and I was about seven or eight – and I saw a lady with a massive old school Japanese dragon all over her back. It was the first time I'd seen a big tattoo and the fact that it was on a woman was incredible. She was fuckin' rocking it! That was the turning point for me. I was obviously far too young to think 'I can do that when I grow up', but it was certainly a case of 'That's SO COOL!'"

"After that, I came into contact with tattoos through music," Lou continues. "Punk shouted out to me from an early age – the angst and the whole anti-society thing. I was like, 'Everything's shit but that's OK because I'm angry about it'. I was going to a lot of gigs and getting sucked into the music scene, which kinda started it for me in a big way. I was designing stuff for friends, like band t-shirts and posters, and I began thinking, 'Why the fuck am I not doing this for a living?!' At the time, I was paying my way around the world with a crappy job, and I'd been away for a month backpacking. I'd had a really heavy night partying and I was on a bit of a crash the next day... and I just remember being sat on a beach and thinking, 'I don't wanna go back to my shit life and my shit job. I wanna do something fun.' You spend all of your time and effort, well most of it anyway, on where you work, and doing something you enjoy is going to lead to a happier lifestyle. So I decided then that I had to jack in my job and do something I wanted to do. It took me about two seconds to figure out that going back to art would make me happy. And suddenly tattooing seemed like the obvious thing."





With a hungry attitude, and keen to learn, Lou found an apprenticeship as quickly as she could. And within just six months, she was tattooing paying customers – although she admits that, looking back, she would have rather waited. “There’s no way I should have been let loose on the public back then,” she confides, “but I’d already learnt everything I could from the people who were teaching me. Knowing what I know now, I wish I’d looked around for another studio that could have offered me a lot more training or at least would have taught me the right way to do things. I was pretty much left to my own devices and had to figure it all out for myself. I was over the moon to be tattooing so quickly though.”



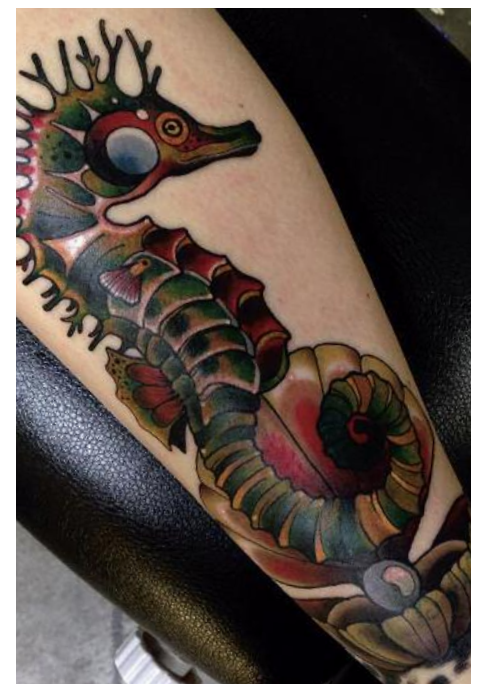
“When I first started, all I wanted to do was grey shade portraits. Then I realised there’s only so far you can take that. I still love that style – I love the way it looks and I think it ages really well – but I needed to branch out. I got a bit lost with what I wanted to do style wise, so I took the advice of another tattooist who said to me, ‘If you’re stuck, just go back to basics. Nail the basics and then it’ll feel easy from there.’ So I concentrated on doing traditional tattoos until I had a really good grasp of that. But because I’d taught myself to draw in a realistic style when I was a kid, I found it a real struggle to do old school. Trying to do something that basic, but precise, was hard for me.”





Talking to Lou, I get the impression that she is very driven. She's only been tattooing for five years, but her style has already progressed into incredible fusions of neo-traditional and Japanese style designs. She attributes this to working alongside other inspirational artists, and the easy accessibility of images online. "With such amazing reference and photography available now, it's easier to see good artwork and raise your expectations, so you can see where the bar is and aim higher. It's difficult to see where tattooing can go from here and how it can get better! And that's exactly why I don't feel that I'm there yet. It's very intimidating, but rather than looking at other artists as competition I see the work they've done and feel inspired to discover how it has been achieved. I feel like I'm dragging my heels, although I suppose that's the pressure I put on myself. It's what fires me. I don't think of myself as competitive, but if I want to achieve something, I will try my hardest to do it. Otherwise you just end up stagnant and doing a 'job'. And who wants to do 'a job'? Fuck that!"

Many tattooists encounter a pivotal moment in their career, which shapes them both as an artist and as a person. For Lou, this moment came when she was working in London and the shop received a generic email looking for applicants for a new TV show, *Tattoo Fixers*. "The shop had actually received the email more than once. Originally, I wasn't interested. Then I was having a drink and a chat with our receptionist, and she said, 'At least give them a call and see what it's all about. You've got nothing to lose...' I'm always the first person to slag off those shows, and I don't watch them. So much TV is deliberately dumbed down. But I did give them a call, and I ended up chatting for half an hour with the recruiter – and this show sounded like it was a format that could work. A few months later I was invited to do a video interview, and it kind of snowballed from there."

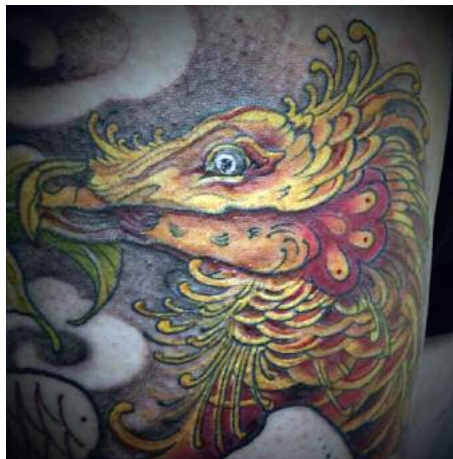




On June 23rd 2015, *Tattoo Fixers* was aired for the first time on TV screens across the country. Viewer opinion was divided. But Lou had already decided that she wouldn't be doing another series. "I didn't enjoy it. We were given the impression that we would have a lot more input and could shape what was being made. It was very important to me that the tattoo scene was represented accurately – it's what I do and it's what I love. It was a bit like working on a film set. The interview process was staged, and I'd be tattooing with a camera on one side of me and a light on the other. It was hard for the clients as well, because you'd have to keep stopping and starting; it made it a long day for them. I knew I was gonna hate it before I started, but it was a gamble I was willing to take for my career long term."



“I had a massive freak out at the beginning of filming,” Lou continues, “and I had to say to myself 'I'm just going to do what I do, to the best of my ability, and it will hopefully speak for itself. If anyone doesn't get that, they can fuck off.' That attitude is in my bones! We were all kept in the dark as to who we would be working with, and we only met the night before we started filming. And then we were kinda thrown in at the deep end for six weeks of solid filming and yeah, it was like trial by fire. We thought we'd have more time to prep designs – but when it came to it, we only got told on the morning what our clients wanted, and we didn't get the chance to meet them beforehand. We were drawing on the spot. It was a lot of work to be expected to do in that short space of time, especially when you knew that it would be on film for the rest of your life, and that hundreds of thousands of people would see it... The amount of stress that came from that show, that fucking show! I had six weeks of anxiety overload! I was aware that I had to be really professional because things could be taken out of context, so I was like, 'Don't say anything stupid... Don't make any bad jokes...' I was very aware of what I was saying and I knew not to give away too much about myself. I didn't go in blind or stupid.”

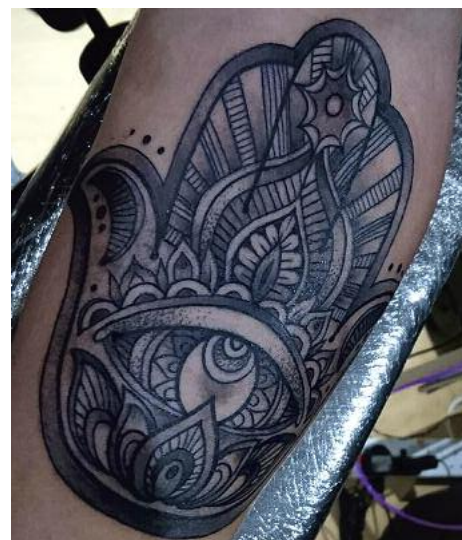


Overnight fame brought new pressures, and some unwelcome attention too. Usually a confident and assertive person, Lou found herself ‘retreating inwards’ as she tried to avoid unwanted interactions when she was out and about. “I was very conscious that I was in the public eye and that I needed to buckle down and constantly do amazing work. And if a client or fan was being intense, I had to take that and deal with it and be nice even if I was freaking out about how they were acting. It's strange to suddenly have fans. Things like waiting to get a train home and then someone comes screaming and running at you down the platform... Obviously it's really nice, but it's weird too! All of last summer, even though it was sunny I'd be dressed in a beanie, scarf, etc, and totally covered. I was trying not to be noticed. Before I did the show, when nobody knew me, I'd walk down the street with my tattoos out, head shaved – I didn't give a fuck what people thought. But when the show was going out, and the number of viewers was increasing so drastically, I became conscious of being exposed to everyone. I massively retreated back into myself. I didn't realise just how many people would watch the show. All your privacy goes out the window.”

“Since I quit the show the pressure has eased off, but it’s taken me a while to get back to being myself,” Lou confides. “After being so stressed and busy, I got a bit down. And with that comes forgetting who you are. The show knocked my confidence. But I’m now concentrating on my tattooing again, and hearing what my peers are saying in terms of positive feedback makes me feel better than anything. It’s good to get my balls back!”



Tattoo Fixers came under a lot of fire within the industry, so I asked Lou whether she'd personally had any disparaging comments from other tattooists. "I didn't have a single piece of negative feedback from the public or from other tattoo artists. I was expecting at least a couple of nasty comments like 'What the hell were you doing!?' You can't keep everybody happy, and I was really expecting some shit like that... but, nothing. I think it was because I'd been involved in the scene and people knew me already, and they could see that I hadn't just come from out of nowhere. The public were really positive too. There was a lot of love, which I actually found a bit intense – maybe more so than if people had been mean about me."





After *Tattoo Fixers* had finished filming, Lou was introduced to Phil Kyle via a mutual friend. With *London Ink*, he'd experienced at first hand the pressures of being on a TV tattoo show and his support was therefore invaluable. And he also offered Lou a job at his Magnum Opus studio. So Lou made the move to Brighton and, having become famous for cover-ups, is now pushing her own style of tattooing. "My clients are now more long term, and they're mostly experienced tattoo collectors rather than people who have made a bad decision or just got a tattoo for the novelty. The requests I'm getting are serious. It's not like, 'Oh my god I saw you on telly for five minutes, I love you!' It means a lot to me that people like my work."

"In terms of my style, I feel like I've got the technical side of tattooing, but my designs still aren't as good as I want them to be. I want to specialise in Japanese, but with neo-traditional and realistic elements. I'd really like to focus on ancient Japanese demons. There's such a rich culture behind them, which I'd love to explore. I can see these pieces in my head, but I'm just not there yet! It's frustrating, but it's also what keeps driving me. I don't want to hit a level and stay stuck. When you're working alongside great artists, you have all this beautiful inspiration around you, with people at the top of their game, killing it. It makes you want to be as good as you can be."

Lou is reaping the benefits of all her efforts (as she says, "Work on the work, and the work will speak for itself!") She has established a great client base, for which she is very appreciative. "Thankfully my clients trust me and allow me the freedom to push myself. The best pieces I've done are when clients have said, 'Do what you want.' I started a backpiece today and I asked the client, 'What colours were you thinking of having?' He responded with, 'I don't know. What do you think?' and I was like, 'I love you!' I want to thank all of my clients, because if it wasn't for them I wouldn't be able to pay my bills, or be in a position to do what I do and further my craft. Also, thank you to everybody who gives me support, especially Phil. I hope he knows how much I appreciate everything that he's done for me. A massive thank you!"



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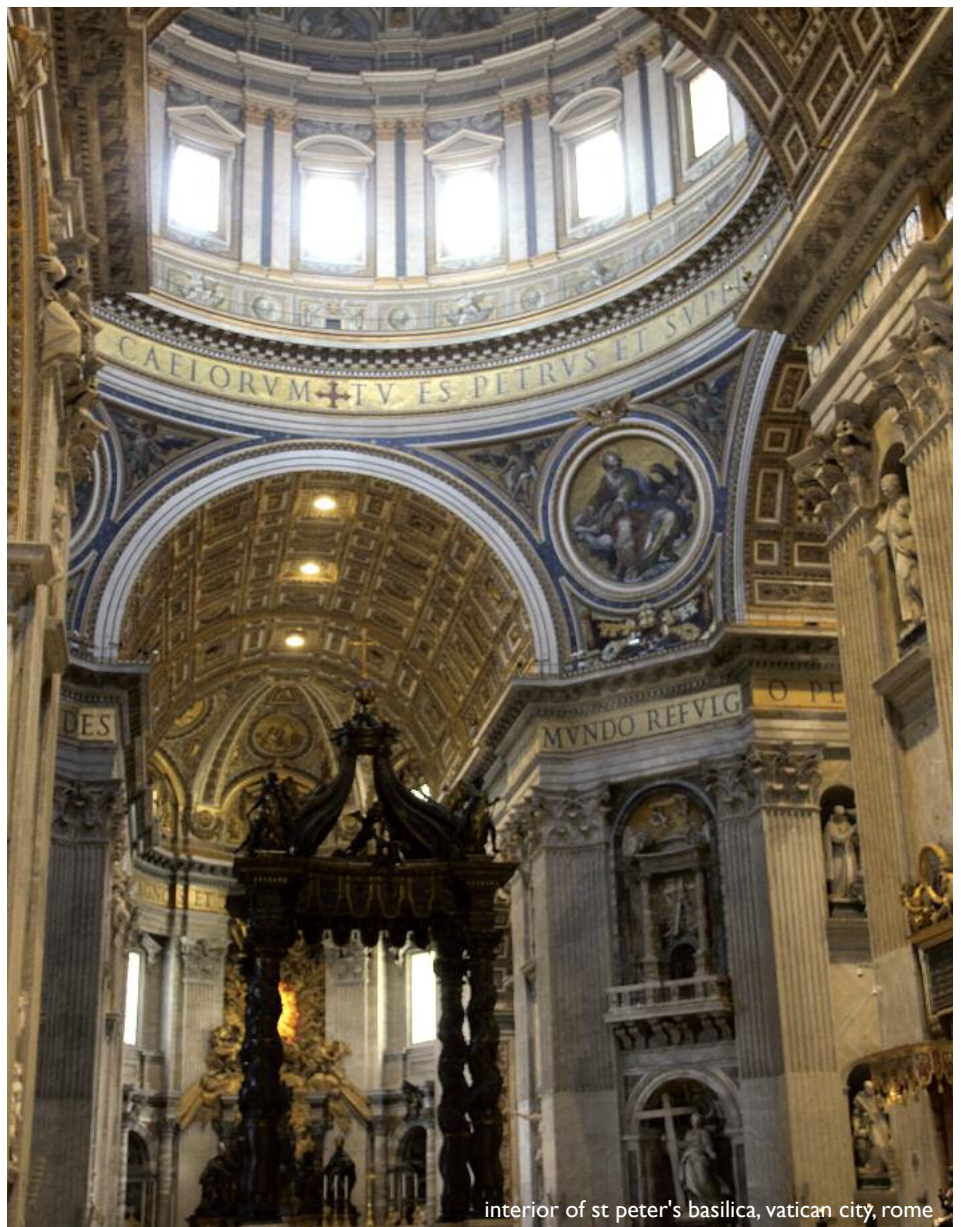
forever

Words: Travellin' Mick • Photos: Travellin' Mick and Artur Czerwinski



Are tattoos art? Most serious tattooists and collectors would surely answer YES, but what does the fine arts establishment say? Marco Manzo of Tribal Tattoo Studio in Rome found his own way to challenge everyone's pre-conceptions and contribute to the debate by organising an exhibition at the renowned MACRO (Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma) in the Italian capital.

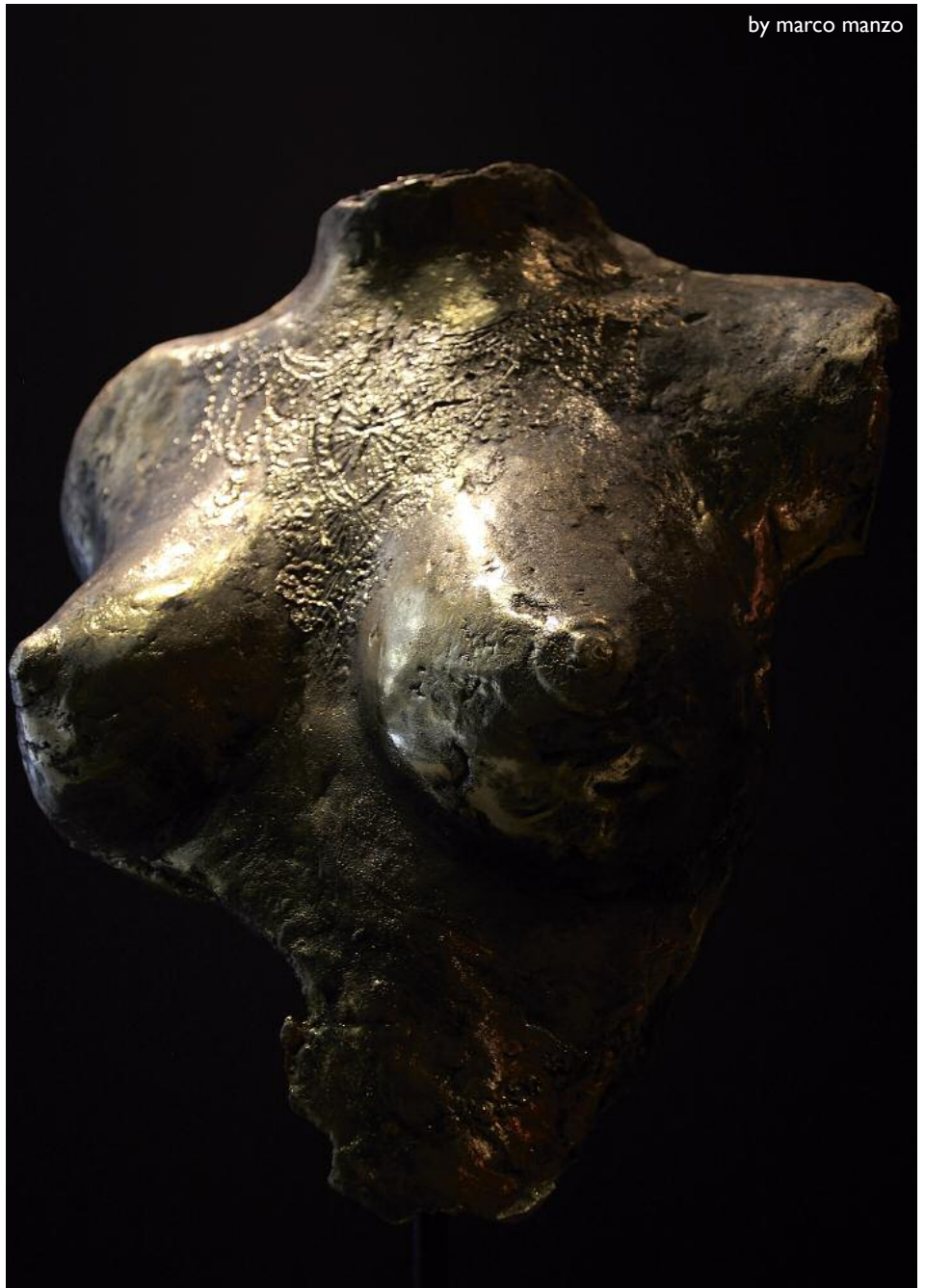
MACRO is located in Rome's fashionably hip Testaccio district and the exhibition's opening attracted an arty celebrity crowd. It was a balmy evening, the champagne was flowing and the press photographers were out in force – not least because of TV star Asia Argento, daughter of cult film director Dario Argento, with her graceful lacework tattoos by Marco Manzo. It's work like hers that has brought him to prominence in Italian mainstream culture, but Marco is a quiet, hard-working artist who, in addition to creating his beautifully intricate tattoos, pursues many other art-related projects on the side. And that's how he came up with the idea of organising this exhibition at Rome's prestigious contemporary art museum.



interior of st peter's basilica, vatican city, rome



MACRO is a renowned cultural institution, and it's only artists of international acclaim who are invited to exhibit here – so this event, supported by the City of Rome and sponsored by Cheyenne amongst others, is quite a coup. And Marco Manzo has pulled out all the stops. He's brought in heavyweight names such as Volko Merschky and Simone Pfaff of Buena Vista Tattoo Club (with their sinister Death Polka Crypt), David Rinklin (aka Neon Judas), Paul Booth, Nick Baxter, Stefano Alcantara and Alex de Pase – all of them displaying art of the finest quality. A highlight for me were the awesome large-scale 'negative' photographs by Ben Hopper of Chaim Machlev's Dots to Lines clients. A section of the show is devoted to ethnographic photography, and there were some intriguing images of ancient tattooed mummies as well. The exhibition also featured high-end designer clothing, performance art from Japan, comic book art, some eerie surrealist sculptures, and of course Marco Manzo's own pieces too.





This museum is an atmospheric space – it's in an old industrial building – and it suited the theme of the show perfectly. Where better to ponder the tension between the transience of the human body and the assumed permanence of a tattoo? And of course it's a theme that is particularly appropriate for art produced by tattooists. We're forced to consider our own mortality... whilst at the same time enjoying designs that are inked for eternity.

As soon as the exhibition opened it was packed. Art lovers came from far and wide, keen to experience this significant milestone in the representation of the eclectic creativity of tattoo artists. The organisers are predicting more than 100,000 visitors during its two month run. 'Tattoo Forever' will be on display in Rome until 24th July 2016, and the plan is then to take the exhibition to other venues in Italy and around the world.



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GALLERY

luke somerville, jacks tattoos



marie cox, folklore tattoo



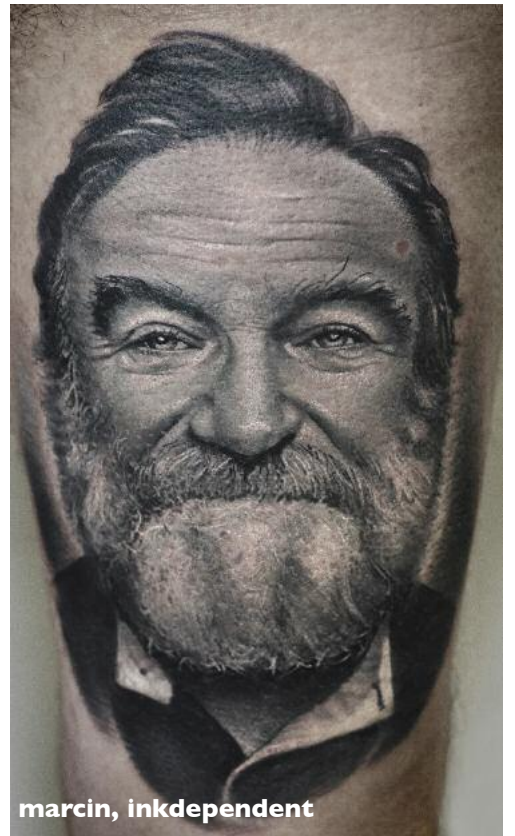
tallulah belle, kustom kulture



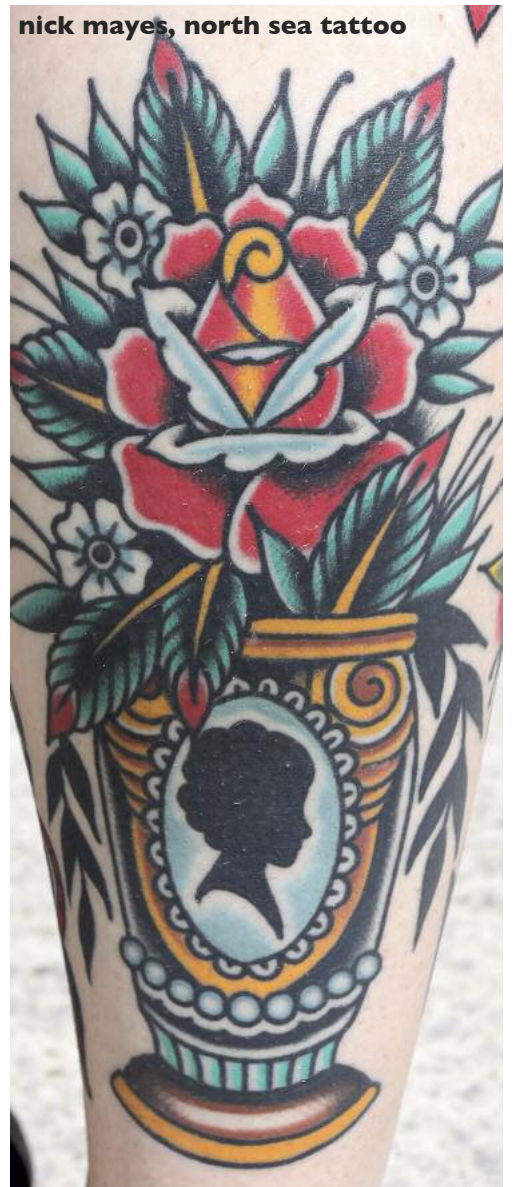
alan hindes, tattoo house



guan xiao peng, d-snake (china)



marcin, inkdependent



nick mayes, north sea tattoo

luke bolton, madam butterflys



kyle egg williams, grindhouse tattoo



bryn holman
human canvas
tattoo studio



ballsy, factotum tattoo



patrick mcfarlane, black freighter tattoo

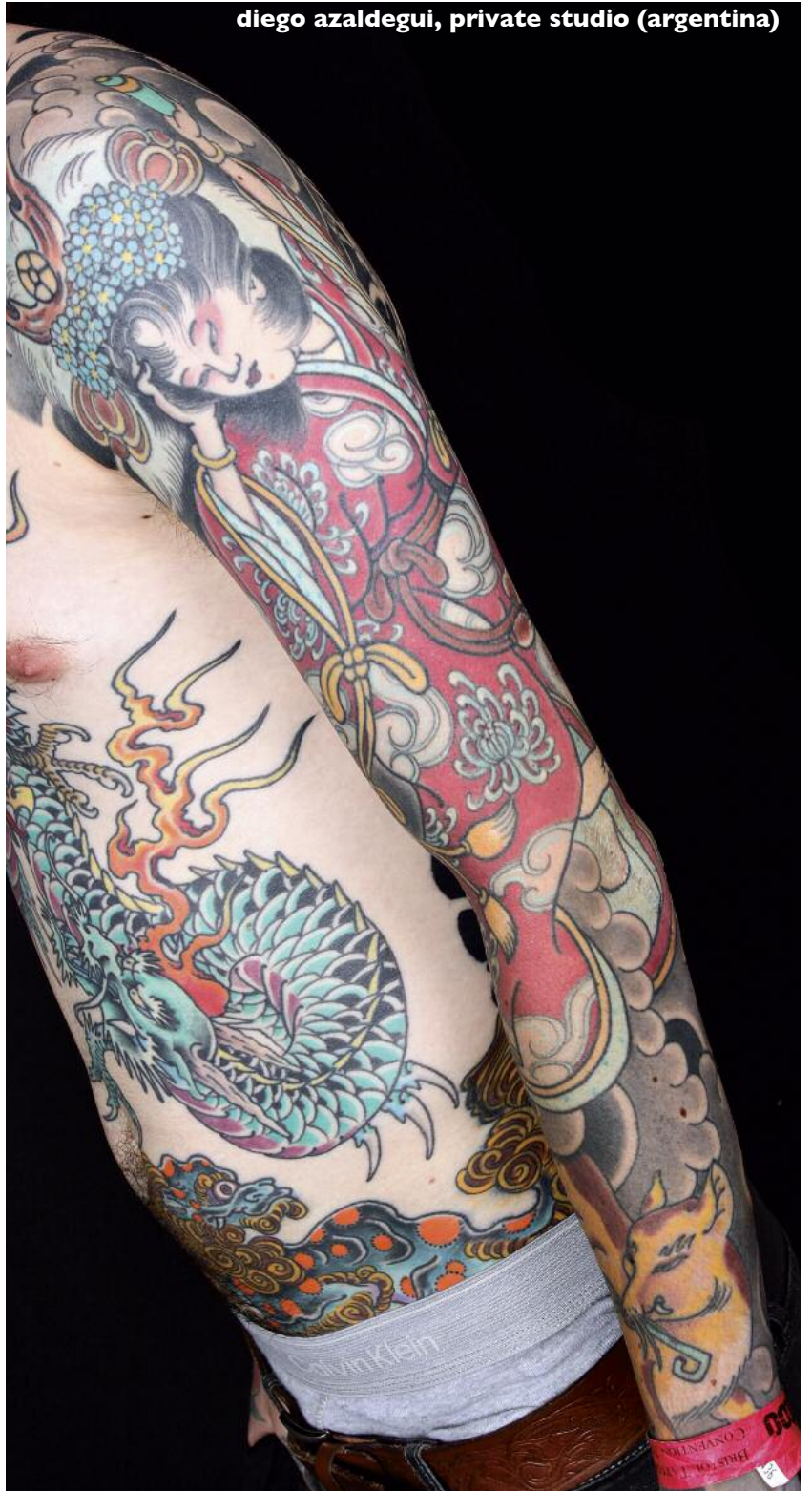
doug fawkes, flaming gun



woody, eightfold tattoo



diego azaldegui, private studio (argentina)



luke sayer, samsara custom tattoo



kat wilson, hello sailor



bailey, sacred electric



will barbour brown, blue dragon tattoo

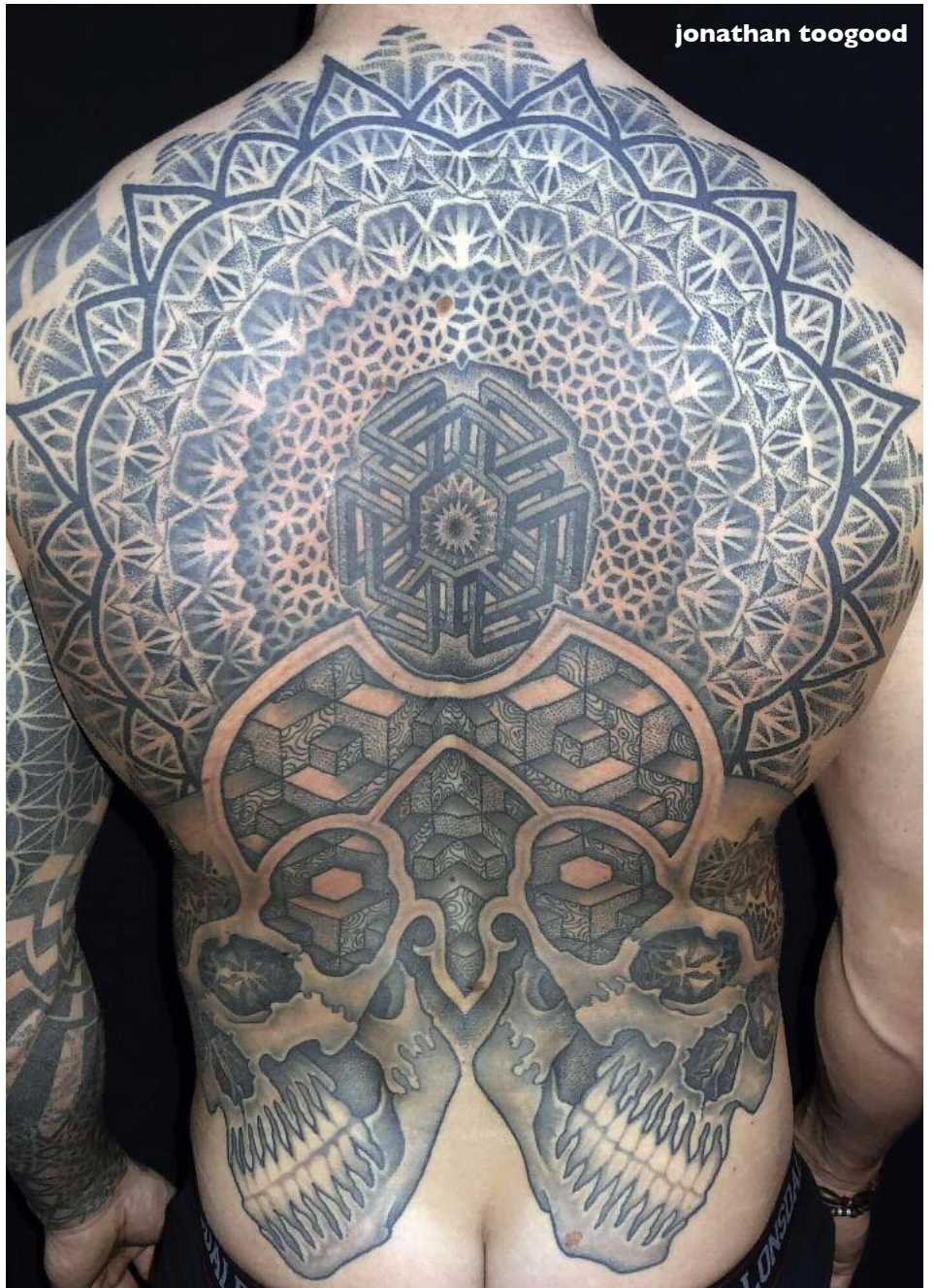


mark richards, think tattoo





kris wlodarski,
never say die



jonathan toogood



jonathan toogood
imperial tattoo company



kristian richards, two rivers tattoo





Kanae, nine tails tattoo



**kurt marlow,
goodall street tattoo parlour**



**josh foulds,
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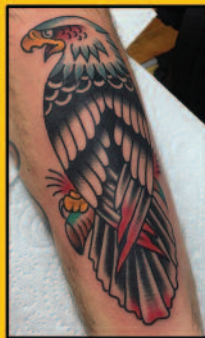
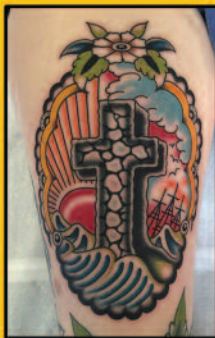


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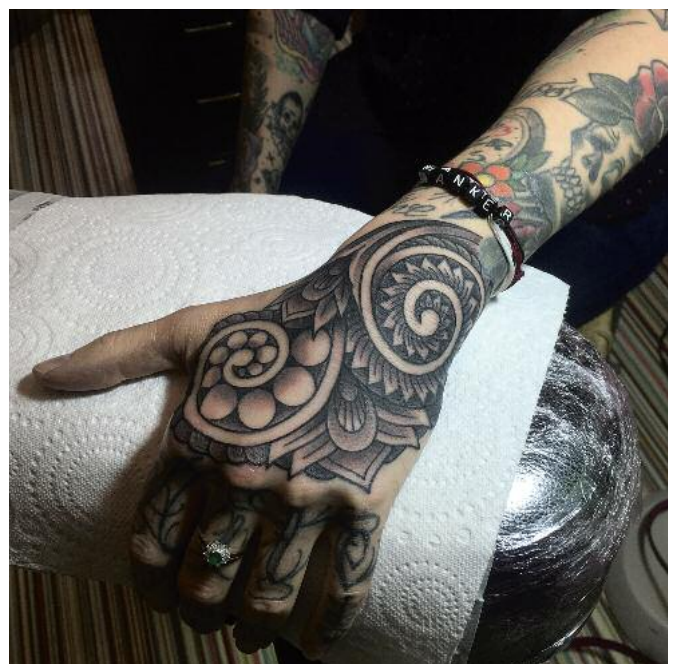
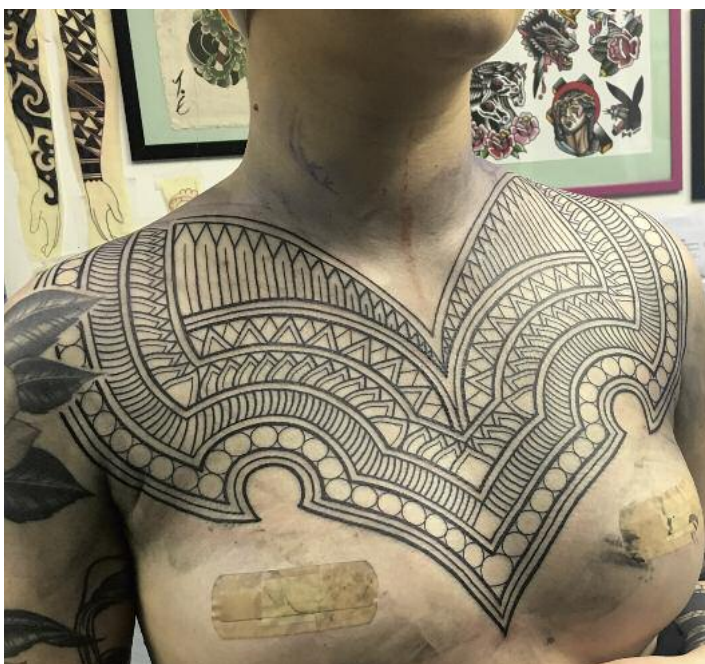
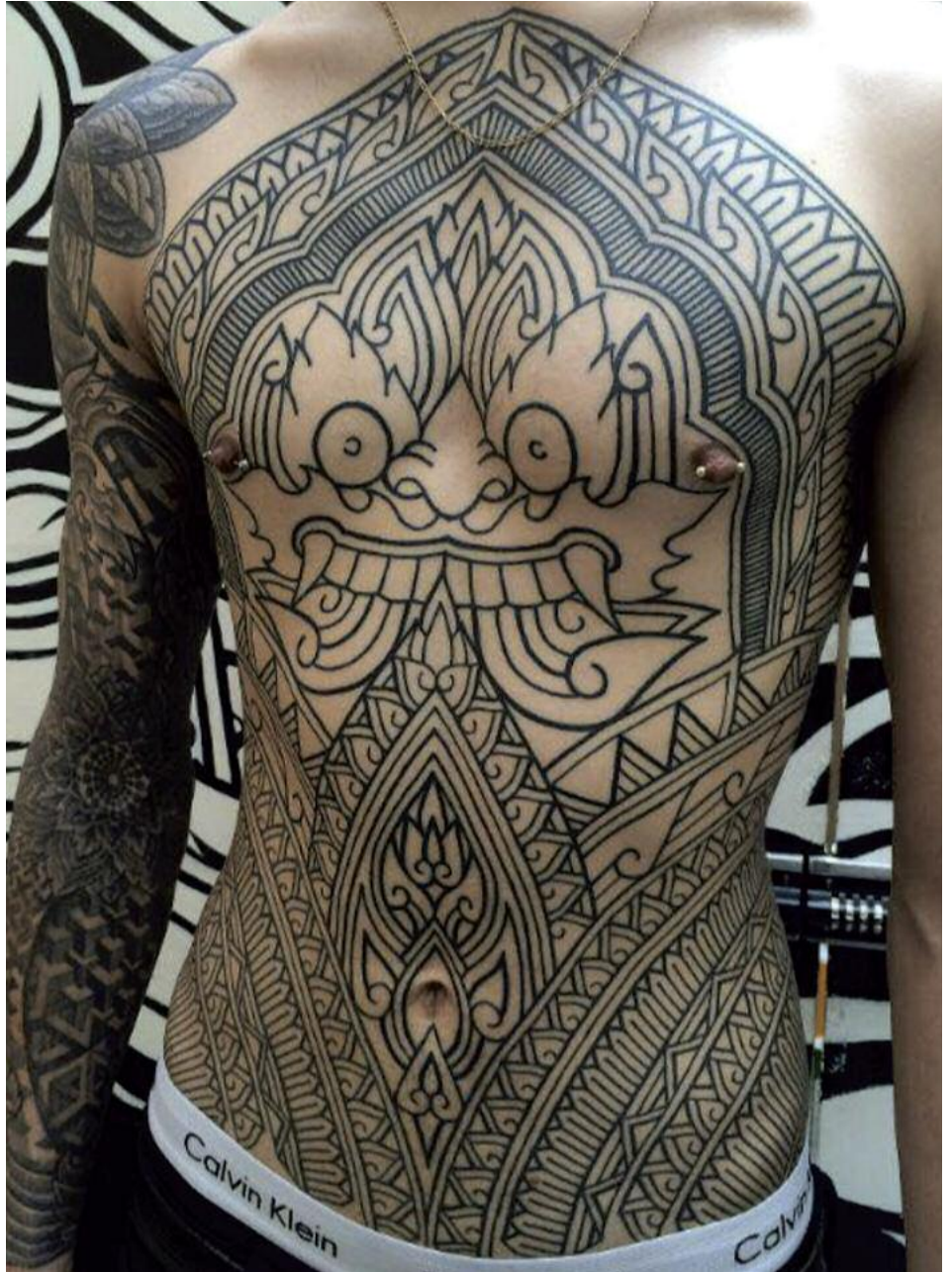
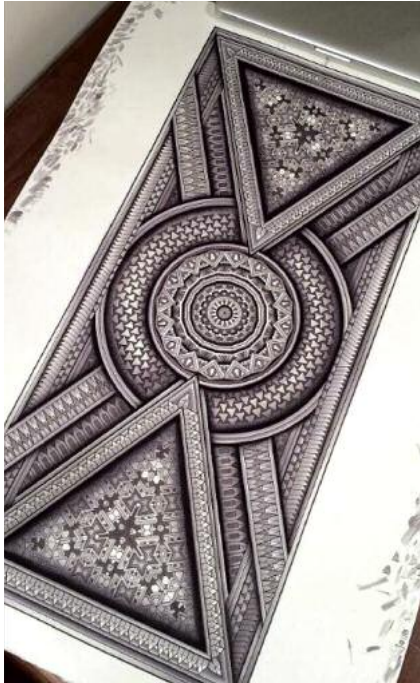
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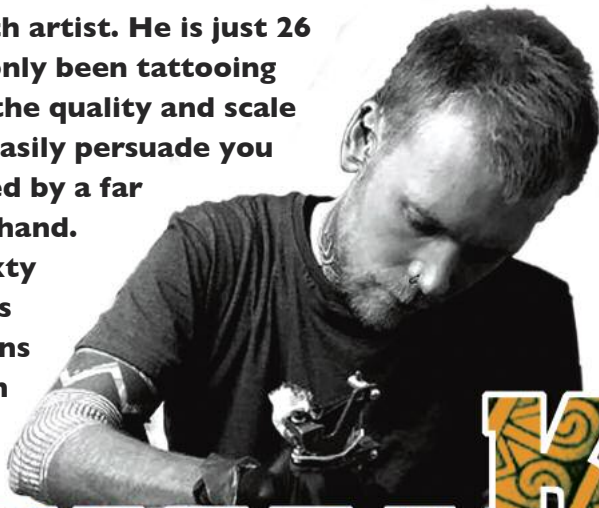
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Contemporary tattooing can be split into many genres and sub-genres but blackwork/tribal, call it what you will, is one of the fundamental stylistic cornerstones. It's simple and powerful without any need for explanation, yet it's often saturated with meaning. The tattooists who are drawn to it seem to have a particular kind of connection with their clients, who often travel from far and wide. Kieran Williams is one such artist. He is just 26 years old and has only been tattooing for five years, but the quality and scale of his work could easily persuade you that it was executed by a far more experienced hand. Kieran co-owns Sixty Six Tattoo (with his friends Ped Simmons and Ben Hansen) in Deal, Kent.



WILLIAMS, KIERAN

Sixty Six Tattoo

Interview James Sandercock
Photos Kieran Williams



Kieran, have you always been a creative person?

I grew up in Folkestone, which is a small town by the sea. I still live there now. It's nice and chilled out, which I like. To be honest I had no interest in any sort of artistic or creative activities while I was growing up. I was more interested in playing football! I suppose I only really started drawing when I was about 18 or 19. I had a job in a call centre and I used to draw stuff in my book when I was meant to be working. I eventually started designing tattoos for people (badly), which led me to meet others who were looking for tattoo apprenticeships, including Ben [Hansen], who is now one of my best friends and colleagues. We helped each other out a lot in the early days with painting and drawing, so it's great that we work together now.

What was your first tattoo encounter?

My Dad had a few tattoos which I thought were cool. I definitely didn't want to get



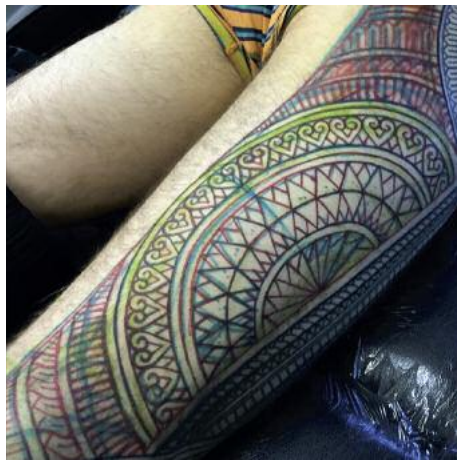
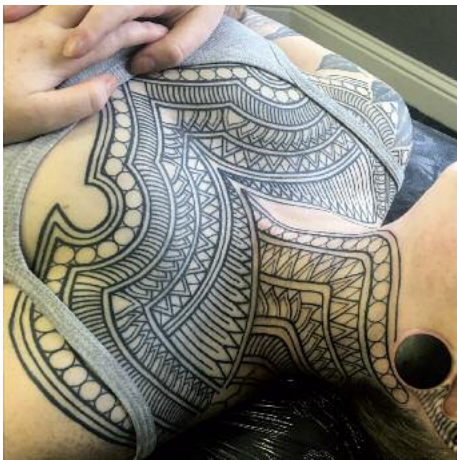
any myself though. In fact at school I did an English project centred around the reasons why people shouldn't get tattooed! I guess I had a fairly negative view of tattoos at that time. I thought people would always eventually regret anything tattooed on them. When I was 18 my friend and I got our A level results and they were pretty awful, and for some reason we decided to go out in Canterbury and get tattooed, just a spur of the moment thing. I picked some nautical stars out of a book and got them on my arm. I showed my Dad and he wasn't angry or anything – he was annoyed that I hadn't researched it properly and just gone into the first shop I'd found. He took me to a shop in Folkestone and introduced me to Steve Graves, who did my first proper tattoos and eventually taught me how to tattoo.



Tell us more...

I worked in Steve's shop for about a year and a half on the desk, getting food, answering the phone, etc. I never actually asked him to teach me to tattoo. I just kept trying to make it obvious that I wanted to learn. I kept turning up at the shop whenever I wasn't working at the call centre. One day Steve rang me and told me to come to the shop after work. When I got there he told me to draw a butterfly and tattoo it on my leg, which was pretty nerve-racking. But I'm glad I got thrown in at the deep end! I tattooed a lot of my friends and did a lot on myself, and when I cocked up Steve and Ped would help me out and tell me what I was doing wrong. Obviously there were ups and downs but I had a really great apprenticeship. I will always be grateful to Steve and Ped.



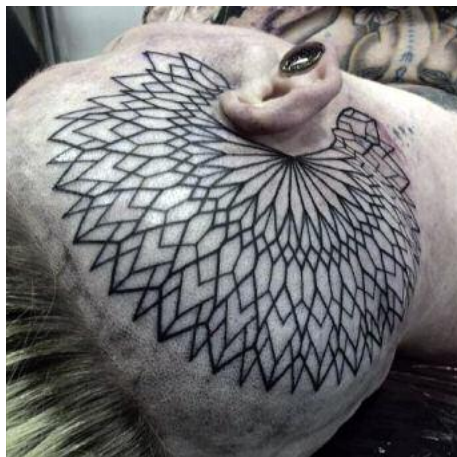


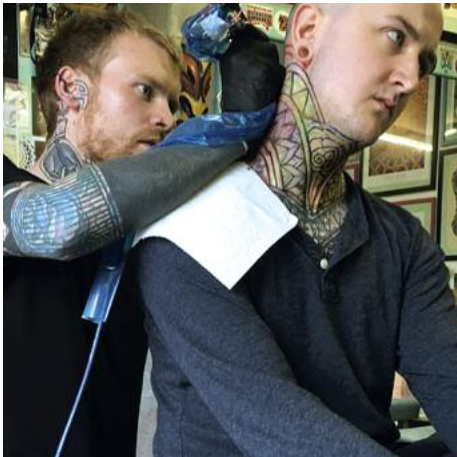
What sort of work were you doing when you first started to tattoo?

My main interest when I first started tattooing was traditional. I loved doing Sailor Jerry designs on people. I found it very difficult to pick up at first, and none of the tattoos I did would come out the way I hoped they would. Gradually I got more comfortable with things, but I'm still always learning every day.

What is it about blackwork that fascinates you?

I started working in a more blackwork style about two years after I started tattooing. I would try to make things as complicated as possible, because I thought at the time that was the key to working in that particular style. I did a lot of tattoos that are probably better on paper than they are on skin! After researching the history a little, I realised that the simpler designs are much more effective. They have a greater impact. Over the last two or three years I have tried to simplify my work as much as possible, but still keep some elements of intricacy. The blackwork style lends itself to the shape of the body; you can make each tattoo fit the person's form in the best way possible, which I find very interesting.



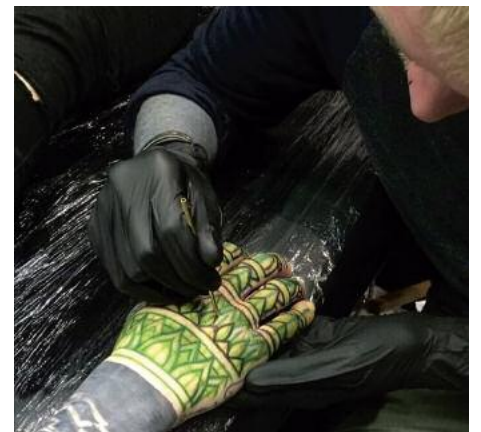


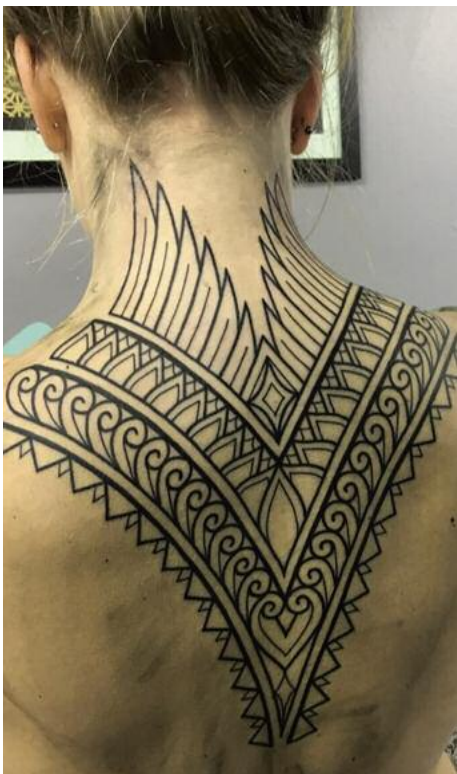
Where does your inspiration come from?

Outside of tattooing, I'm hugely inspired by different types of religious architecture, and I think this is probably apparent in my work. I try to draw inspiration from many sources. I look at a lot of tattoos and I'm inspired by lots of tattooers – not just those who do blackwork. I find artists with a good work ethic the most inspiring – people who are always trying to push the work and fully devote themselves to tattooing, like Adrian Lee, Mike Rubendall, Alex Binnie, Curly, Gakkin, Filip Leu, Guy Le Tatooeer, Grime and Valerie Vargas to name just a few. I would love to travel more to seek out the sources of the patterns in my work, to see where it all originated from. Maybe in a couple of years I'll be able to plan some trips.

Your line work is strong and true. Was that something that came naturally to you?

I found it easier to get to grips with outlining designs than I did with shading techniques, but it still took a long time to figure out. And I'm still learning, using different machines and needle groupings to find out what works best for me.







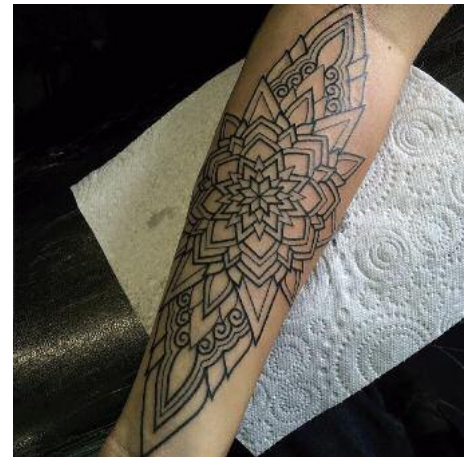
How do you see the industry today?

In the very short amount of time that I have been involved in the industry it has changed a lot. Tattooing is so popular now, which I suppose has both pros and cons. Everyone has different opinions on the current state of tattooing, whether positive or negative. I just feel very lucky that I get to tattoo every day with my friends and make a living from it. I owe a lot to tattooing so I'm not going to start complaining about it!

How do you see your work developing?

I'd like to keep doing big pieces. I feel that the work I do comes across best when on a larger scale. Since we opened the shop last year I have started three bodysuits, and that has been so much fun. I'm very grateful for the trust and commitment. I have a lot to learn both technically and artistically so I'll keep pushing myself to work harder and harder, and doing the best work I can. Over the last five years I've become totally obsessed with tattooing. I think it's such a powerful medium and it fascinates me. It can be so painful to get done, but you're always drawn back to it. I can't imagine myself doing anything other than tattooing now.

[@kieran](http://sixtysixtattoo.co.uk/page/kieran)





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The Venetian Tattoo Gathering is no ordinary convention. It's a unique event focused on education and learning, and it brings together some of the very finest artists and tattooers on the planet (Jeff Gogue, Bob Tyrrell, Paul Booth and Alex De Pase to name a few). It takes place in a very beautiful setting, and attendance is strictly limited to just 500 tickets. I couldn't wait!

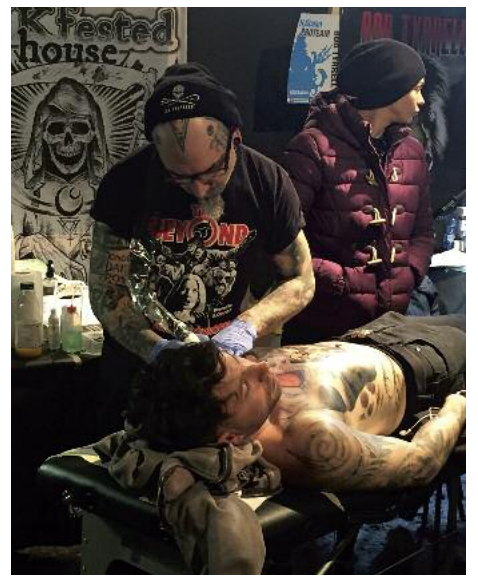
Words and pictures by
Freddy Hedger of Needle & Fred Tattoo Parlour

Venetian Tattoo Gathering



As I landed at Venice's Marco Polo Airport my mind was filled with the wonders that lay before me. What a prospect. I was going to be in the company of some of the best tattoo artists in the world. I decided to arrive a day early so that I could do some sightseeing – and I wasn't the only one. As I wandered around this most beautifully romantic of places, my eye was caught by some very colourful characters. It takes one to know one they say, and of course these delightful people were here for the main event too. I kept hearing “Hi! See you at the Gathering!” and it made it all feel like a very personable experience already.





The Gathering was put on by Durb Morrison (also responsible for the Hell City Tattoo Festival) and Gabe Ripley (founder of Off The Map Tattoo). It took place in the historic Palazzo Ca' Zenobio, with its high ceilings, quaint rooms and stunning renaissance artwork. The main room was upstairs, and seminars were taking place throughout the building. There were nearly sixty tattooers and artists from all over the world in various halls and side rooms, plus a few trade stands. There was also a large courtyard area complete with bar... and boy did we use that!





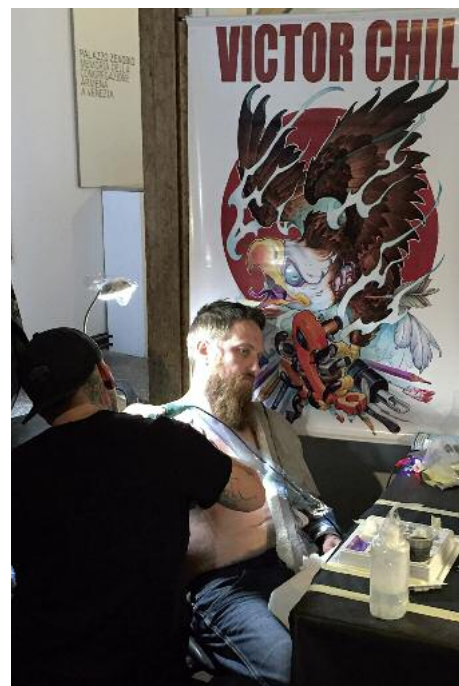
Most of the seminars were free, but some had an entrance fee. They weren't cheap, but I figure you need to invest in yourself. There were about thirty seminars taking place over the three day period of the Gathering, and some of them overlapped, so I had to carefully check my programme and pick out what I felt would be of most benefit to me.

First stop was Jeff Gogue's two-and-a-half hour seminar entitled 'Hold Fast'. This was actually my first ever seminar, and I found it most insightful. We were all tattooers already, so it wasn't a how-to session. Far from it! Jeff has a way of making you think more deeply into the concepts of tattooing and I was literally writing stuff down that he was provoking out of me. You walked away with a much more profound understanding of your own personal path in tattooing. It was deep. Real deep.



As this was going on, a fellow by the name of Murran Billi was doing a seminar about the importance of family structure and what it means to a successful journey in tattooing. A few of my friends went to this and they were astounded by his very emotional speech. A must for any artist was the friendly Q&A session given by Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell, and the first day ended with a seminar by Gabe about business essentials. So not only were you expanding your artistic horizons at the Gathering, you were reinforcing this with motivational talks on personal and business topics to help you on your path to success. I walked away from the first day feeling positive and vastly more motivated.

On the second day, I found myself delighting in the company of one David Corden. He was giving a seminar entitled 'Ethics to Epics' in which he gave advice on the practicalities of producing fine works of art. I found this very informative and helpful; David is very approachable, and he's the kind of guy for whom nothing is too much trouble. The day also included a seminar by the great David Kassan, a drawing workshop, a fantasy art fusion which was fantastic to watch, and a thought-provoking session by Mario Barth on how to stay on top in the tattoo business (delivered in his inimitable comic yet straight-talking style).



There was plenty of time to walk about, network, and get to know everyone over drinks before we all sauntered off to get ready for the Masquerade party that evening. Mingling with top artists in such beautiful surroundings... you couldn't ask for more. And there was still one more day to go!

On Sunday morning we were woken by church bells at 7.30am and with fuzzy heads after a cracking night we made our way back to the Gathering. The day began with Durb Morrison taking us through some physical exercises geared towards the longevity of the tattoo artist – making sure you don't fall off your perch too early in your career! The rest of the day was spent in a more relaxed fashion, watching painters and tattooers working and finding that beautiful common thread that artists truly share once you scratch the surface. No bravado or bullshit, just a nice flow that we can all appreciate. The last seminar was by Bob Tyrrell and Steve Butcher on the ways of black and grey tattooing. I unfortunately missed this, but I've sat in on Bob's seminars before and I know it would have been of the same high calibre as his work.



As the Gathering came to an end, it was all quite emotional. I'd met and bonded with so many artists from all over the world who I can now call friends. This event gave me so much more than I ever expected, mentally and physically, on both an artistic and a business level. All the other artists had made me feel so welcome; it was as though they knew you'd made a kind of pilgrimage to Venice. And the warmth of the Gathering made the whole thing an absolute pleasure. As I boarded the plane to come home I felt sad that it was over, but I know the friendships that I made will last for ever.

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Artists

Matt Difa - Antonio Gabriele - Clara Sinclair
Lord Montana Blue - Keely Rutherford
Maharanii

LEEDS

INTERNATIONAL TATTOO EXPO



I'd never been to the Leeds Expo, but I was keen to visit for its third year because I'd always heard such positive feedback and I wanted to find out for myself what it was like.

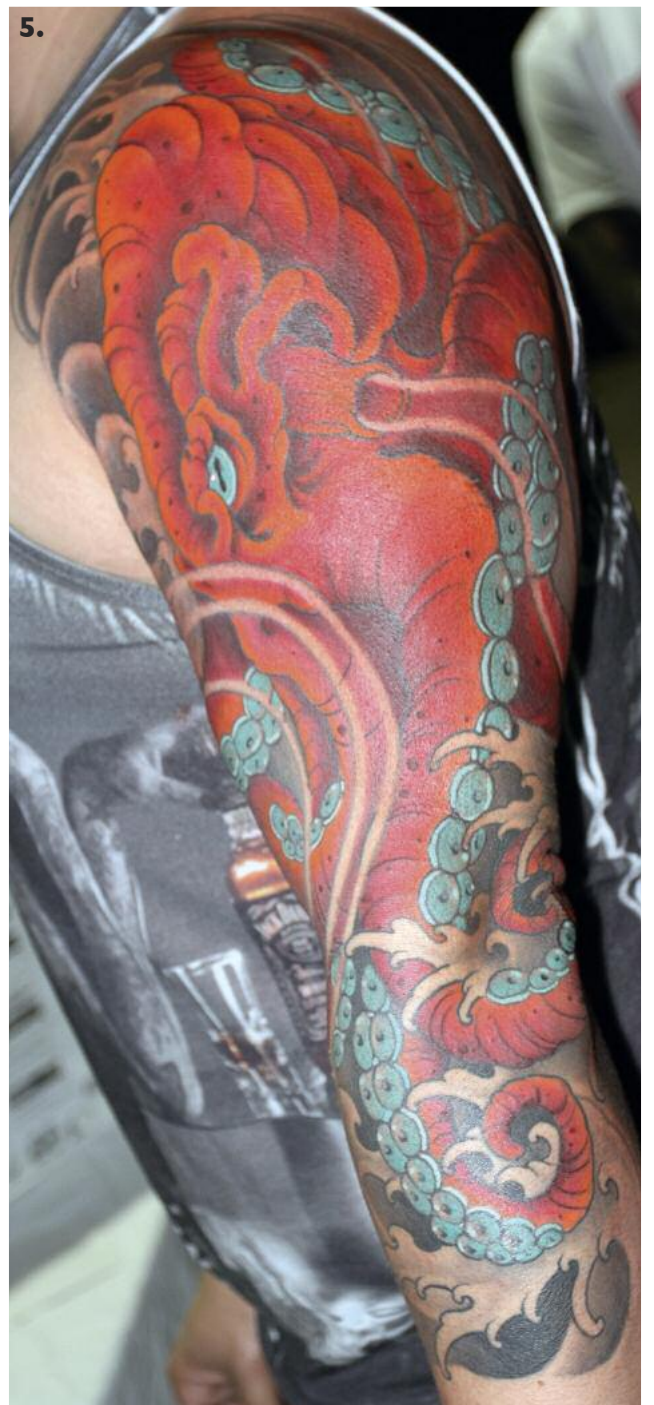
Leeds is a bustling, student-filled city, and the New Dock Hall is a great location – with riverside views and the Royal Armouries and various restaurants nearby. It was a well-dressed, airy convention venue, with spacious aisles to navigate through. Entry cost £15 per day, or £25 for the entire weekend, and a student discount was available. There did seem to be some disgruntled visitors who felt the tickets were too pricey, but most were happy to pay. Convention attendees were treated to a range of entertainment including burlesque, Dr Sketchy's Art Class, bands, and piercing demos. Local IPA was on tap, as well as the usual beverages, and there was even a cocktail bar housed in a renovated ice cream van! On-site catering provided a variety of affordable options to tickle the taste buds.

The main tattoo style of the Expo was noticeably traditional, although there were some excellent realism, abstract and Japanese artists present. It was great to see a balance between local support and international studios, who were mixed together in such a way that nobody felt segregated. Holding the convention in one single space, without dividing it into sections, also ensured that nobody was overlooked.



1. **matt curzon, empire tattoo(australia)**
2. **freddy b, inside (switzerland)**

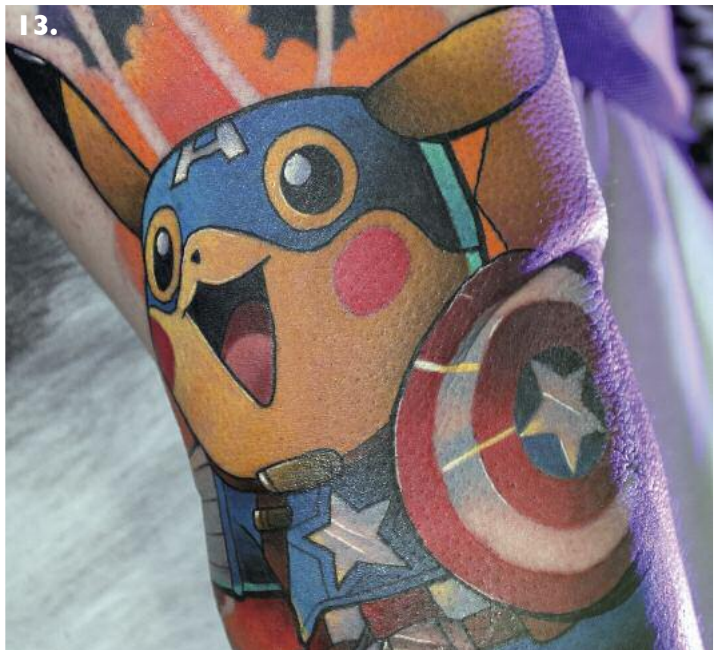






Looking around the convention, it was sometimes difficult to gauge whether it was 'busy'. Although some artists appeared to be available, most of them seemed fully booked and were producing tattoos one after the other. With that in mind, I was very surprised when it came to the competitions at the end of the day, as there was a distinct lack of entrants in comparison to other shows. However, the standard of work was consistently excellent, which made judging incredibly hard! I don't think the lack of entrants was anything to do with the convention itself; most likely it was because the weather was so glorious during the weekend, especially on the Sunday, that by late afternoon everyone wanted to go outside and soak up the rays!

One thing that was evident throughout was the incredible atmosphere amongst the 120 artists. Everybody seemed happy to be working here. This show has a family feel, and this comes from organiser Silvia (Ultimate Skin). She didn't stop all weekend – greeting artists and providing food upon arrival, distributing stickers and lollies to those who were under the needle, and generally helping out. As a result, the studios felt welcomed and respected, and many of those I spoke to were eager to work the show again next year. The same goes for the convention attendees, who were treated to a most enjoyable weekend.



3. adam knowles, studio ix
4. michelle m, lifestyle tattoo (sweden)
5. matt hart, inspirations
6. toni donaire, sacrifice (spain)
7. juan pardo, ride on tattoo (luxembourg)
8. ky killjoy, nine tails
9. ross lee, inkaddiction
10. marcus ribero, the circle
11. mike harris, churchyard
12. judging
13. andy walker, creative vandals
14. chris jenko, ultimate skin
15. sophie gibbons, dust n bones



16.



17.



18.

- 16. matt adamson, northside tattooz
- 17. lighting up the stage
- 18. tj, follow your dreams
- 19. johnny gilbert, new mind
- 20. danny light & johnny gilbert, new mind
- 21. joshy hislop, blind eye
- 22. matt curzon, empire tattoo (australia)
- 23. dennis greer, inkaddiction
- 24. tacho franch, follow your dreams



19.



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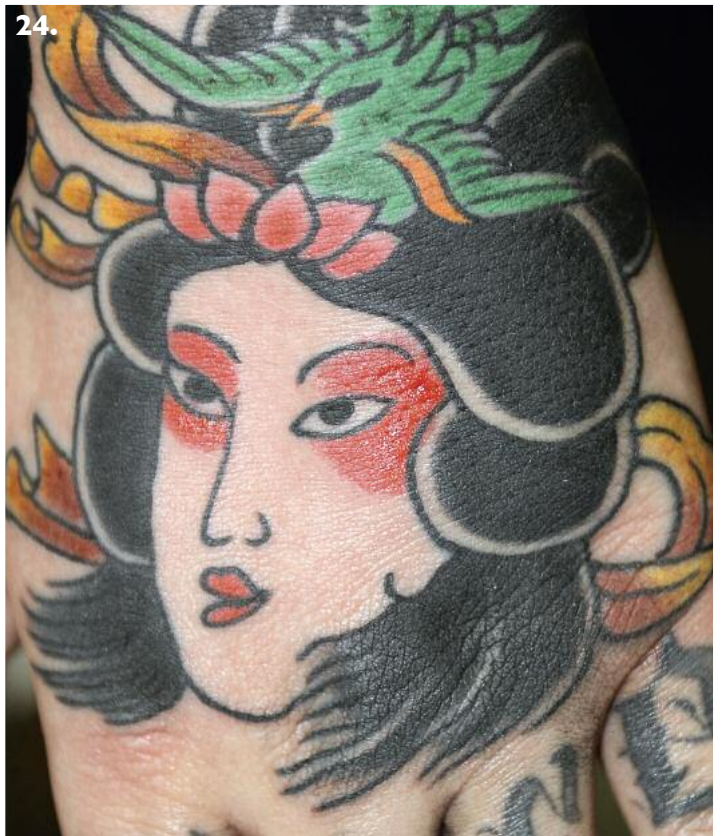
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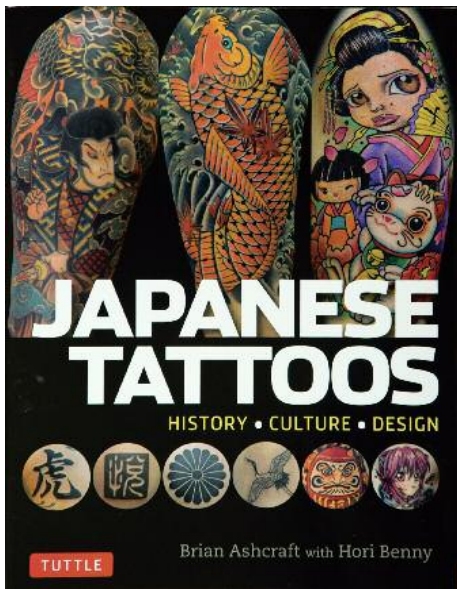
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Of all the tattooing genres, it is perhaps Japanese Irezumi that commands the most sophisticated cultural heritage. Its influence is truly global, weaving its magic and majesty over countless disciples. For many, it becomes an obsession. A secret language full of mythical beasts, beautiful blossoms and crashing waves, where warriors fight demons and beautiful goddesses draped in breathtaking silk kimonos look down from the heavens. It is powerful and elegant and the reference material seems to be limitless and overwhelming. A great place to start (or continue) your education in deciphering this code is the appropriately titled 'Japanese Tattoo: History, Culture, Design.' Over its 160 pages it takes you through Japanese tattooing from its origins to the presents day. In bite-sized chunks it explains the meanings behind many of the most popular motifs and characters as well as the elements that surround them, all backed up with examples of work by some of the finest practitioners of the style. The bottom line is this is a fantastic book. The perfect tool for a collector who wants to begin to understand the world of Irezumi or an artist who plans to follow that road.

Japanese Tattoos

Book Review • James Sandercock.

Tattoos

History, Culture, Design

We asked the authors to tell us a little about themselves and the inspiration for the book.

Brian Ashcraft

I'm originally from Texas. After studying Art History at Cornell, I moved to Osaka, Japan, in 2001 and I've lived there ever since. I work at a writer. I'm a columnist at The Japan Times and a Senior Contributing Editor at Kotaku.com This is my fourth book.



A few years ago, I interviewed Hori Benny for an article. I was fascinated by his *otaku*-influenced work and his traditional Japanese-style flower motifs. [*'Otaku'* is a Japanese word used to describe someone who is deeply obsessed with tech or other aspects of popular culture – ed] We seemed to hit it off and we kept in touch. We have similar takes on culture and Japan, so when I started mulling over the idea of a tattoo book, I immediately approached him to work with me on the project. Thankfully, he agreed, and we got to work.



BODYSUIT LAYOUTS

Tattoo enthusiasts outside Japan commonly assume that in a full bodysuit, wearers' designs should be confined to the legs. The torso should be covered in oshichi or hento designs, while the arms and upper body should be reserved for cloud motifs. It's the classic earth, man, and heaven motif, much as seen through-out Japanese art.

This isn't the only layout, however. Entire bodysuits can be made "shimada," with the upper body in the back, the back being a dragon in the waves or "kizuna" marking the giant carp. It's also possible to add an entire bodysuit in the reverse, with a deity like a dragon or torii in the cloud design. The important thing in matters like this: the bodysuit design makes sense, both thematically and as a reflection of reality.

SHUDAI
The tattoo "shimada" or "shimada" is usually seen in a god, an animal (usually an owl, phoenix, or crane) or element from nature, such as a flower.

KESHOUBORI
Often called "torii" or "torii" or "torii" in English, this is the motif that supports the entire design. Typical associations include cherry blossoms, maple leaves, peonies—anything that falls under the "earth" or "man" category.

Left: The back of the bodysuit design is a right-sided "shimada" motif. Right: The bodysuit design is a left-sided "shimada" motif. The design is a right-sided "shimada" motif. The design is a left-sided "shimada" motif. The design is a right-sided "shimada" motif. The design is a left-sided "shimada" motif.



We really wanted to show how Japanese tattoos have evolved, and examine what they mean. Japanese tattooing, like Japanese culture, is not static. It's developing and changing, and yet there are themes and threads that connect the work throughout the centuries. That's what we hoped to highlight in the book. We wanted to celebrate Japanese tattoos, the artists who create them and the clients who wear them.

I felt that developing a greater understanding of Japanese tattooing – for which I have a deep respect – would give me a richer understanding of Japan itself. Personally, that was one of the goals I had for this book. I hope that if you read it, you'll not only have a greater appreciation of Japanese tattooing, but also of the country itself. It's been a privilege to work on this project.

CHAPTER 6

CONTEMPORARY DESIGNS AND GEEK TATTOOS

From anime girls to abstract shapes, Japanese tattooing has changed. Or has it? Throughout this book, a wide variety of classic motifs are presented. Some of them are well over a thousand years old, while others are much newer. Japan's visual vocabulary is not static. *Irezumi* aren't, either. They're as alive as the skin on which they breathe.

Right: Tattoos are a way of life. In the past, they were a way of life. In the past, they were a way of life. In the past, they were a way of life.

CHAPTER 7

CONTEMPORARY DESIGNS AND GEEK TATTOOS

EAST MEETS WEST

Can a tattoo design be a mix of East and West? Following World War II, more and more American tattooists started taking clients from Japan. In 1951, the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet's 1st Mobile Field Hospital, which was based in Japan, was responsible for creating the first "American" tattoo design in Japan. The design was a mix of East and West. The design was a mix of East and West. The design was a mix of East and West.

Right: A tattoo design featuring a girl in a polka-dot outfit. The design is a mix of East and West. The design is a mix of East and West. The design is a mix of East and West.



74 JAPANESE TATTOOS

Fishy Puns

Large-Scale Wordplay

Featured in "Fish" in Japanese, the carp is (魚) in Chinese, which sounds like (財), the word for profit. Because of the auspicious connotations of making money, the carp is often depicted in Japanese tattooing with the peony, a heraldic flower that represents high rank and was used for medicinal purposes. Other puns are used in tattooing to refer to wealth, such as "goldfish" (金魚), (魚), (魚), making the obvious reference to "gold" or "money" (財).

The sea bream, (鯛), typically shows up in tattooing as an attribute of the lucky god Ebisu, the Japanese god of fishermen and a protector of small children. Ebisu (see page 74) is depicted with the sea bream because the Japanese name of the fish, "tai," is a homophone on the word *modori* (鯛), which means "return." This is why even today the first meal cooked for babies consists of a large sea bream, a fish often used to mark happy celebrations. The sea bream's reddish color evokes comparisons to cherry blossoms, a flower paired with the fish.

Left to the coming dawn, a carp is shown in the water. Above left: The carp is shown in the water. Above right: The carp is shown in the water. Below left: The carp is shown in the water. Below right: The carp is shown in the water.

Hori Benny

I was born in Minneapolis and I studied Japanese at the University of Minnesota. I moved to Japan in 2002, initially just to try my hand at living abroad, but the lure of Japan's culture got the better of me and I ended up expatting. I was teaching English at the time, but I felt a very deep yearning to make art for a living. Through a series of introductions I moved to Osaka and began a traditional tattoo apprenticeship. Eventually in 2014, after a ten year tenure, I left to form my own studio – Invasion Club near Osaka's *otaku* cultural centre, Nipponbashi.

As I'm really an *otaku* at heart, I began to push more and more of those motifs in my portfolio. This caught Brian's attention and he asked to interview me for Kotaku.com I was very impressed with his passion for detail when dealing with the subjects of his writing, so when he approached me about the book project, I gladly accepted.

CHAPTER 6

THE FULL BODYSUIT

The bodysuit is the fullest expression of irezumi. Everything comes together in one cohesive whole. For tattooers, the bodysuit can represent a singular vision—and the ultimate artistic challenge, with a thematic work created in real, living three-dimensional space. For clients, it represents hours, days, and years of pain, endurance, and, yes, money.

Right: The artist Hori Benny, who has tattooed over 100,000 people in Osaka, Japan, is shown here in a full-body tattoo.



Like many, bodysuits did not quickly overtake irezumi. It is believed that large-scale tattoos were originally given as a way of covering up painful tattoos that were applied as a penalty for breaking the law. Over time, it came to mean increasing popularity. It was all in a matter of time as the tattoo industry exploded. In the 1950s, people who did physical labor were likely to get tattoos as a form of protection for the body. And it was during the period that the Japanese bodysuit reached a golden age of expression that continues to influence modern-day tattooing.

There isn't one set type of bodysuit—each can have its own patterns. From an array of styles in time, respect, respect are similar to tattooed clothing, but not to one thing. Of course, the difference is that, in a garment, you can get it back. In a tattoo, it's permanent. Most families it was not who would get bodysuits, women would get

Most families it was not who would get bodysuits, women would get

Most families it was not who would get bodysuits, women would get

Exposed Flesh
Tattoos for All to See

In Japan, there is a caveat for tattooing. Most people do not get tattoos on areas of flesh that are exposed when clothes are worn. This means that, in order to avoid being discriminated against for having tattoos, the neck, the face, and the hands must be left untouched. The top of the head, however, can be covered by hair and thereby hidden, so tattoos there are OK. Many tattooists won't tattoo people's faces, and might be reluctant to ink the backs of heads without a serious discussion first. Such visible tattoos can affect daily life in Japan, making things like getting a regular job, a bank loan, or even an apartment difficult. That being said, tattoos in Japan are known to have inked these exposed areas, although the face is typically left untouched.



Left: Though beautiful, a tattoo that extends the way around the neck can contribute to the risk of infection. Some women also have neck tattoos. Tattoos above the neck are hidden.

82 JAPANESE TATTOOS

BUTTERFLIES


One of the most popular motifs in modern Japanese irezumi, butterflies are popular with women. They're seen as feminine and their winged bodies are associated with rebirth. In the past, however, many women would wear butterfly designs into battle. They even became a popular wartime emblem. This could be because the insects were a direct contrast to the blood on the battlefield, but also because the butterfly was associated with longevity and the souls of both the living and the dead. Butterflies make an ideal choice for tattoos, as they can be incorporated into a larger design.

Left: This is an elegant design of a blue butterfly. Below left: A butterfly tattoo on a woman's shoulder. Below right: A butterfly tattoo on a man's chest. The butterfly motif is also used in a tattoo on a woman's hand.

CHAPTER 7 CREATURES LIVING AND MYTHICAL

SPIDERS

In Japan, spiders have a variety of meanings. They're seen as both scary and in the country of the spider, because the spider is a symbol of life. In the past, they were used as a metaphor for the spider's web, which is a symbol of life. In the past, they were used as a metaphor for the spider's web, which is a symbol of life. In the past, they were used as a metaphor for the spider's web, which is a symbol of life.



Below left: A tattoo of a spider on a person's back. Below right: A tattoo of a spider on a person's hand.

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THE RITE OF THE 'DARKNESS' TATTOO

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Below: A tattoo of a spider on a person's hand.

I had actually wanted to do a book on Japanese tattooing since I felt many of the offerings available at the time didn't give it a thorough enough treatment. This provided the perfect opportunity. It's difficult to explain Japan's tattooing without also introducing other aspects of Japanese culture – everything from the seasons to clothing. In other words, this is more than a collection of photos. We did our best to delve into Japan's tattoo history and see where it is going.

86 JAPANESE TATTOOS

PLUM BLOSSOMS

Japan's favorite blossom isn't always the cherry blossom. In the north, the plum blossom is an important symbol of hope and life. It's also a symbol of hope and life. It's also a symbol of hope and life. It's also a symbol of hope and life.



Opposite page: A tattoo of a girl and a dog with plum blossoms. Below: A tattoo of a girl and a dog with plum blossoms.

most common. But by the tenth century, with Japan increasingly adopting the more national identity that cherry blossom, it had become the most popular. It's also a symbol of hope and life. It's also a symbol of hope and life. It's also a symbol of hope and life.



Opposite page: A tattoo of a girl and a dog with plum blossoms. Below: A tattoo of a girl and a dog with plum blossoms.

We really tried to make a book that would be as all-encompassing as possible, but of course each and every aspect of Japan's culture truly deserves its own book. My hope for the reader is that they will see that Japanese tattooing and its practitioners are constantly evolving, protecting tradition by adding to it as they continue to proliferate their art form.

Japanese Tattoos: History, Culture, Design
By Brian Ashcraft with Hori Benny
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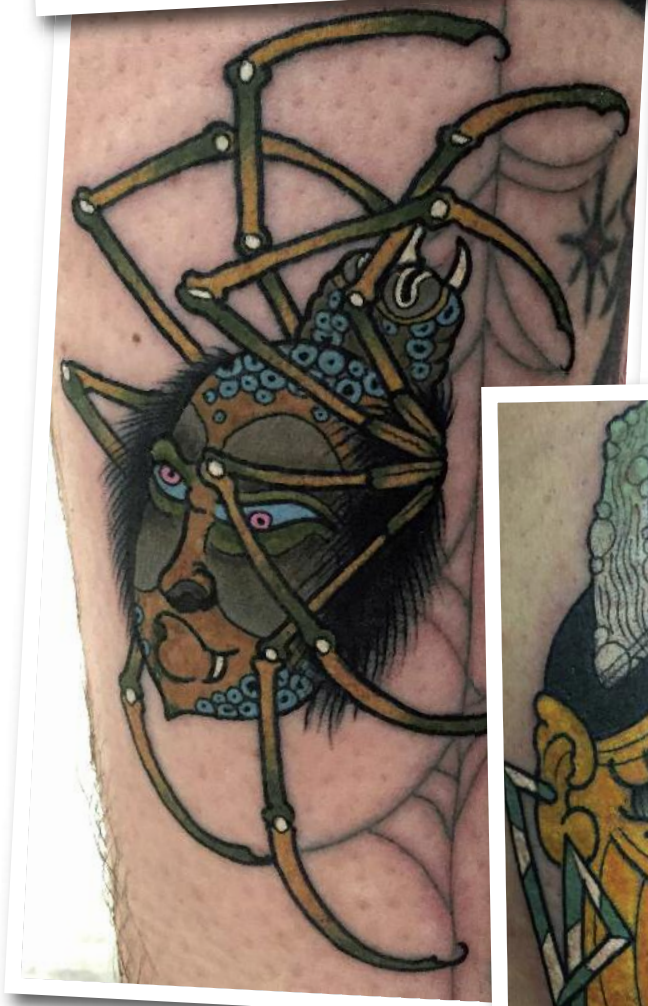
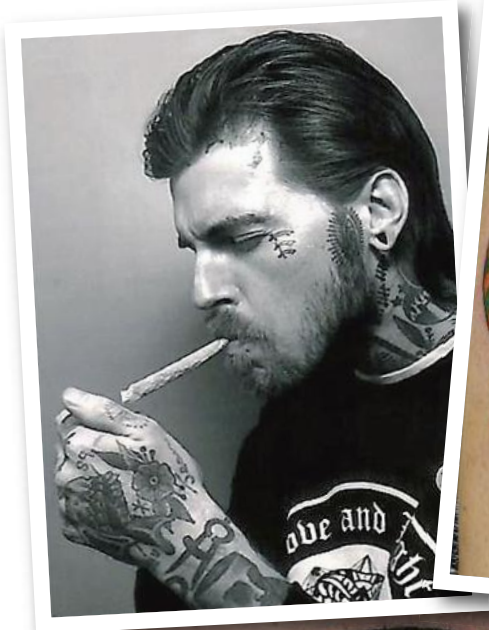
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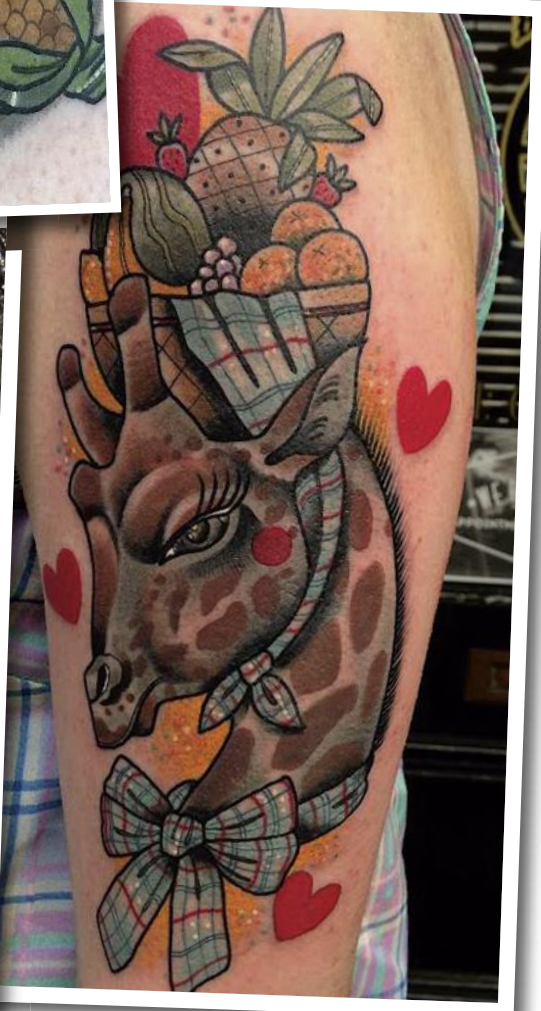
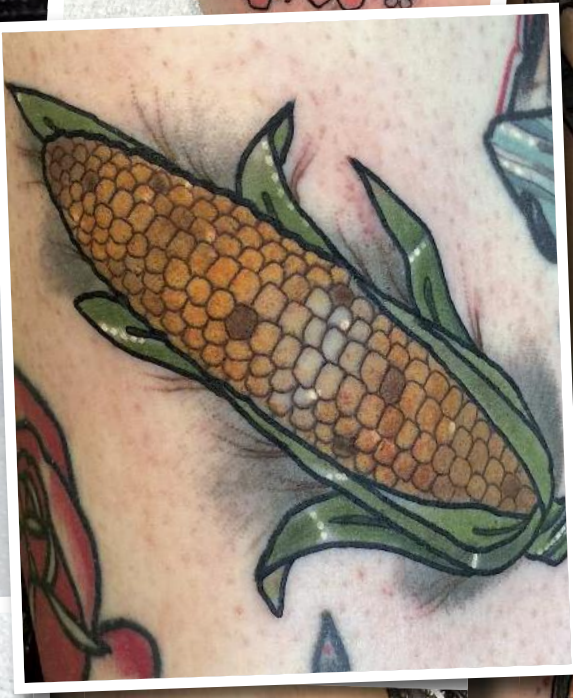
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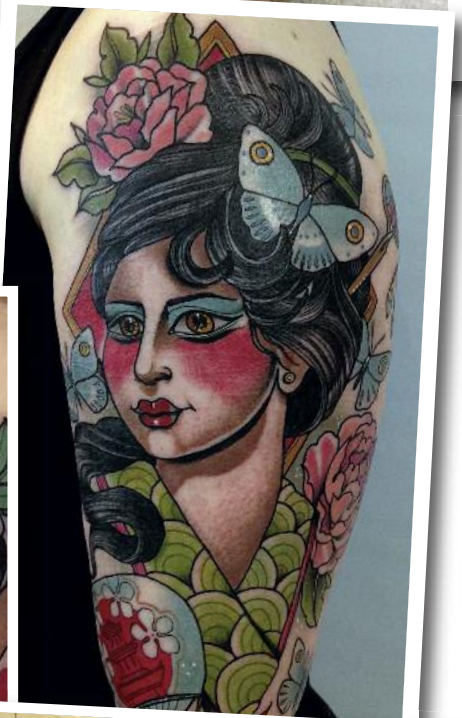
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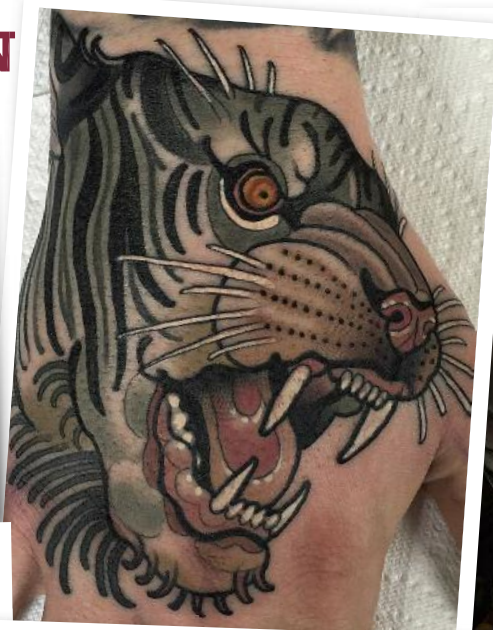


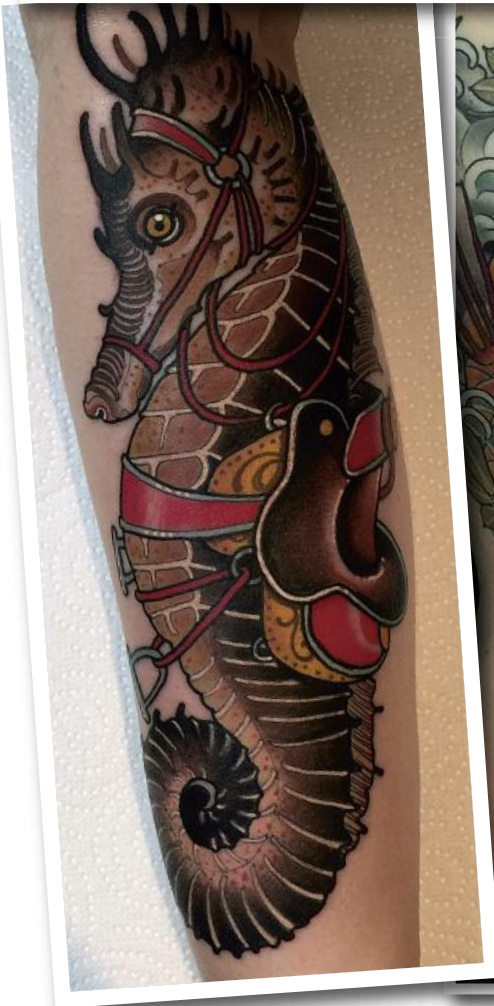
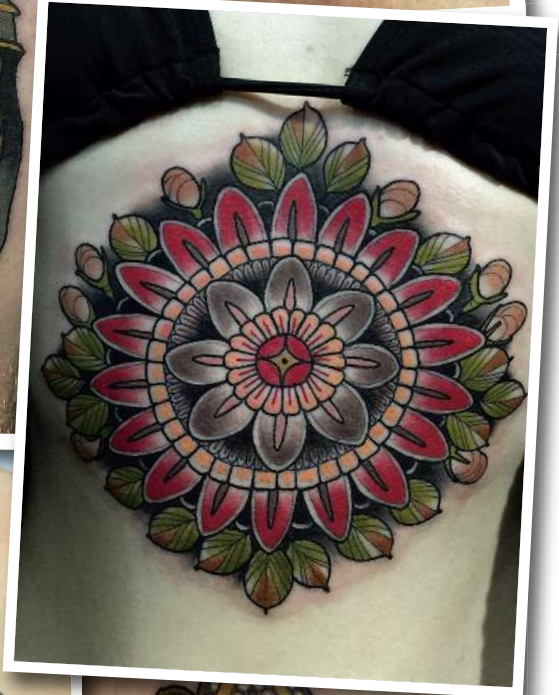
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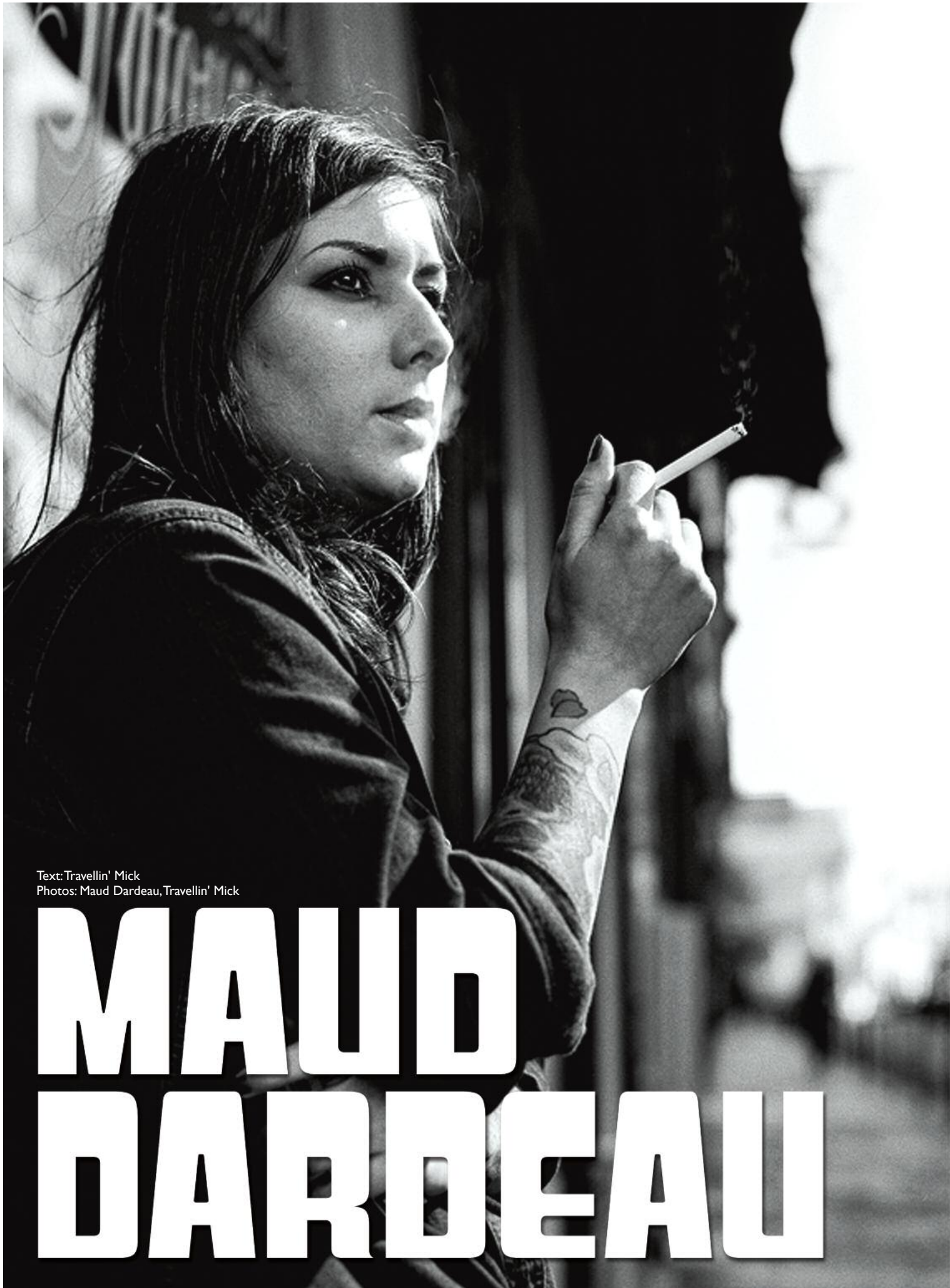
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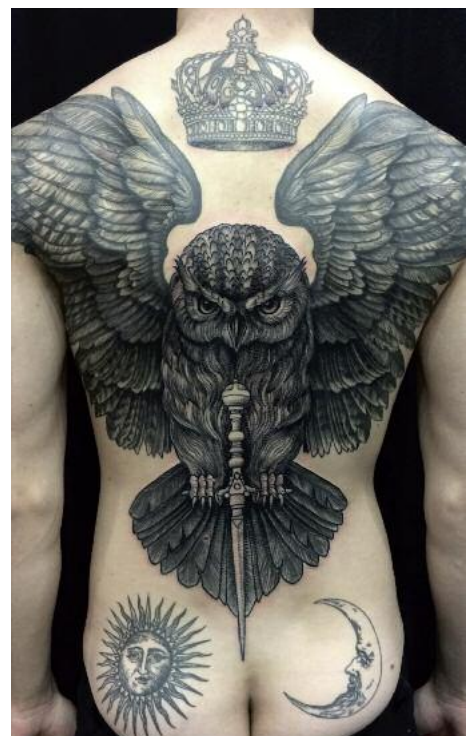
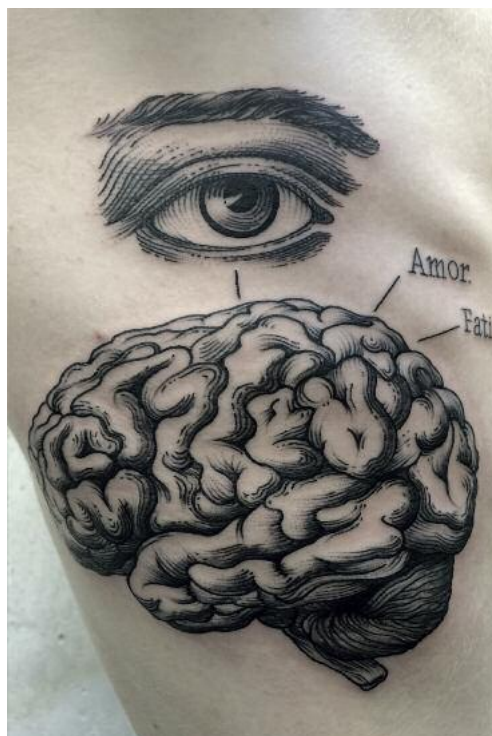
Maud Dardeau is a tattooist whose work seems to span the entirety of European art history – from medieval gothic to baroque exuberance, right through to sober nineteenth century industrial imagery. Both her parents were artists, which gave her a head start, and she's followed her creative muse in some astonishing directions. Her monochrome tattoos are inspired by antiquarian book illustrations; her surrealist paintings are full of vibrant colour. Based in Paris for a decade, Maud has been working at world-renowned studio Tin-Tin Tatouages for the past three years.

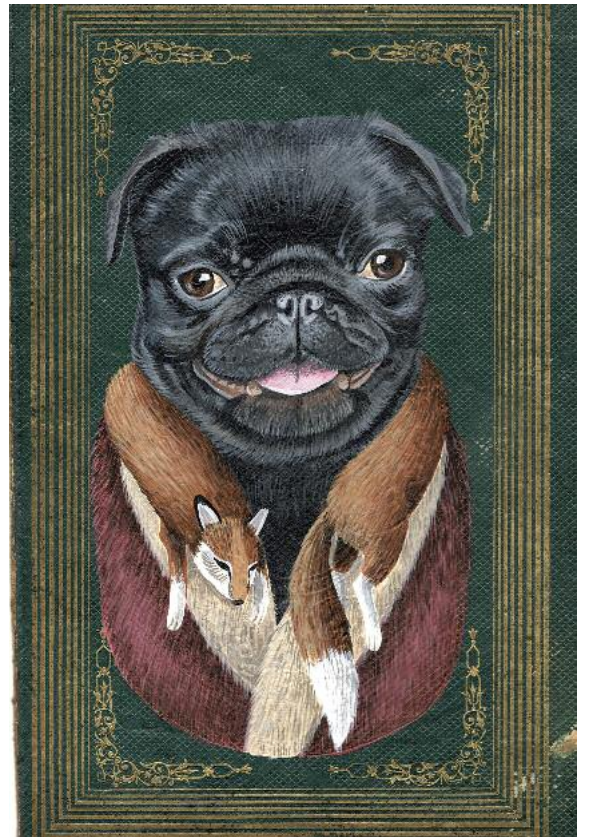
Total Tattoo: Maud, where do your ideas come from?

Maud: I'm always visiting museums, flea markets, bookshops – there's so many of them in Paris – and that's where I get a lot of my inspiration from. Of course, I do see on Instagram what other tattooists are doing, but I prefer to find my own sources. Books are top of the list, whatever their subject matter.

TTM: Wood engravings and woodcuts are obviously very important to you. Do you feel that it's a similar technique to tattooing? There's the bold line work, the finer shading, the dotwork and cross-hatching...

Maud: Yes, but more than that, it's a way of looking at things. Both tattoos and wood engravings invite you to view the work from two different perspectives. From a distance, you see the image as a whole, clear and easy to grasp. Then, when you go in closer, you see more and more detail.





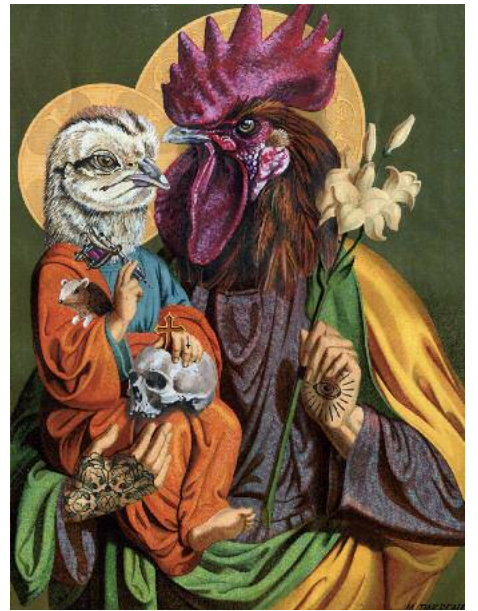
TTM: One of your major inspirations is the nineteenth century printmaker and illustrator Gustave Doré, who produced iconic illustrations for many well-known works of poetry and fiction. His dark images of working class life in Paris and London were instrumental in bringing to everyone's attention the atrocious living conditions suffered by the poor...

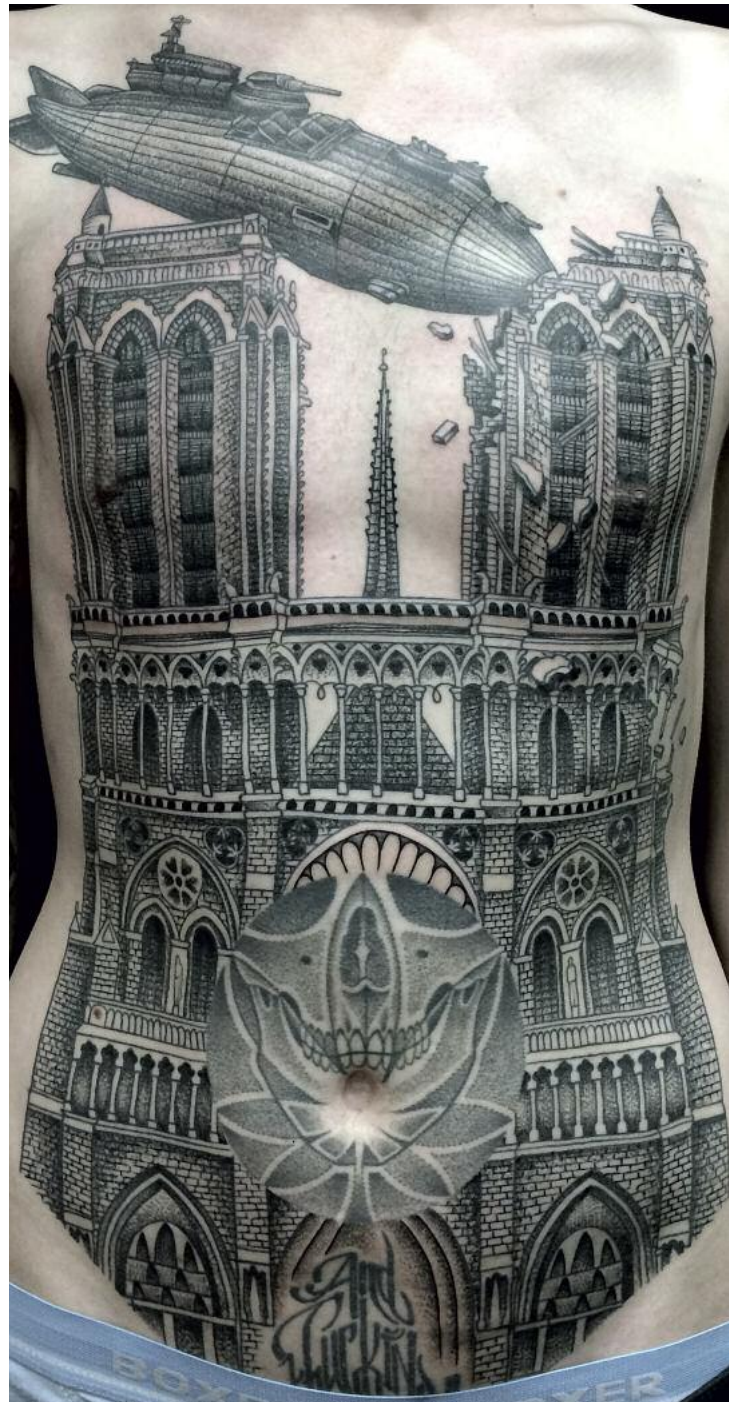
Maud: Yes. Last year there was an exhibition of his work, and I bought about ten books! He's buried in the famous Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris.

TTM: Just as in prints from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there seems to be a lot of symbolism in your tattoos. Is this intentional?

Maud: The symbols don't reflect my own beliefs – it's completely up to each client how they wish to interpret them. I just blend different sources and references to build something that is aesthetically pleasing.







TTM: The impact of many of your tattoos comes from their size. You haven't been tattooing that long, but already you're choosing to work on a vast scale!

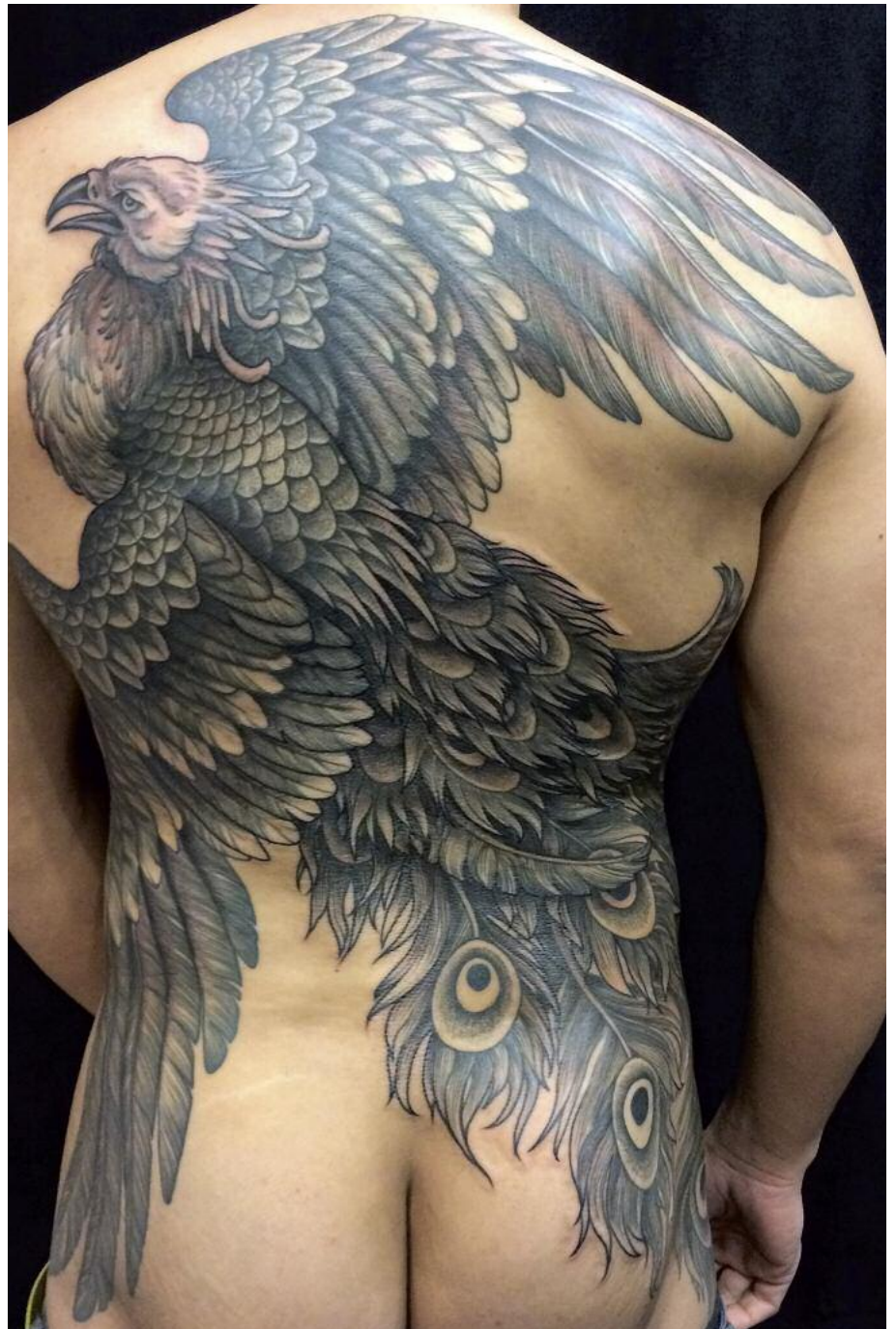
Maud: Yes, I love to go as big as possible. Often when I talk to a prospective client, I suggest a lot of details – and that automatically means a large concept. Luckily my clients understand this, and trust me enough! They point me in a general direction, and let me interpret the idea from there. I follow my emotions, and the entire project unfolds as we move towards completion.

TTM: And your Japanese pieces...?

Maud: Yes! Japanese tattoos are the perfect example of how a tattoo with a concept should look. I love that style. They are so efficient and precise. A great source of inspiration for me.

TTM: I'm struck by how different your paintings are from your tattoos – they're vibrantly coloured and naturalistic, full of weird twists. Would you like to tattoo in this style?

Maud: No. I deliberately keep my painting and my tattooing completely separate. They're totally different media. I don't have any plans to use colours in tattooing at the moment.



TTM: How do you like working in Paris? Tattooing with a legend like Tin-Tin must be very special!

Maud: Paris is a hard place to live, but the work is good. And tattooing next to Tin-Tin is an honour. He motivates me a lot. And he's such a funny guy too!

TTM: How important is social media to you? Do you think it helps or hinders real cooperation between artists?

Maud: The fact that everybody can see everything any time on the net – almost immediately – certainly helps the rapid spread of creativity. I don't think real interaction will die because of that. But to see artwork live with your own eyes is still the best thing. Just look at the recent resurgence in popularity of museums and art galleries!

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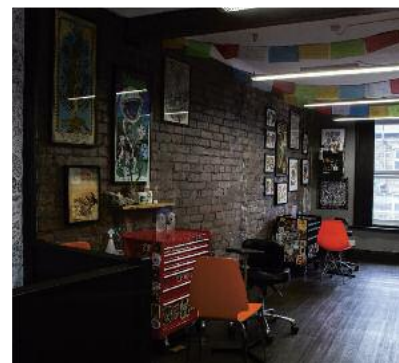
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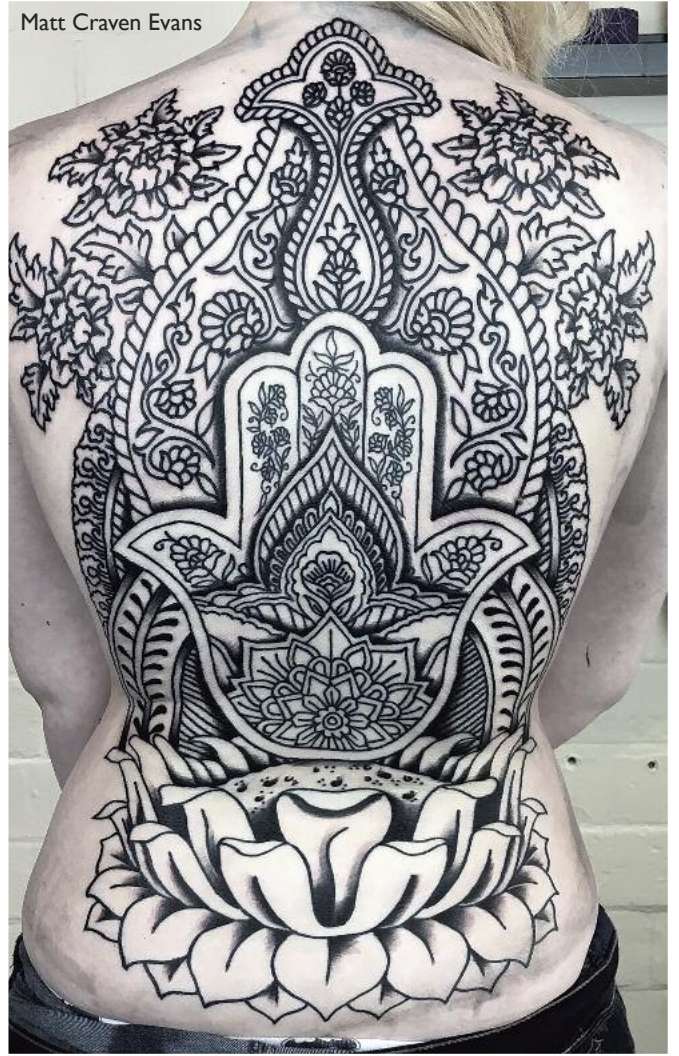
Richard Lazenby



Oliver White



Matt Craven Evans



Richard Lazenby



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TALES FROM THE NAUGHTY STEP

by Paul Talbot

This month's column has a higher-than-average nipple count. They are all reconstructive tattoos done by Modern Electrics' very own Kerry Irvine. It goes without saying that this is life-changing, positive, emotional ink, and I'm immensely proud that these tattoos were done in my studio by such a talented artist...



In fact I would have loved to share them with you via my Instagram and Facebook pages – to show other women, the NHS and the world in general what an amazing thing an actual artist can do when faced with such a sensitive subject – but I couldn't. Why? Because these images are apparently deemed to be 'offensive' and 'disturbing' by the aforementioned social networks. And there is nothing I can do about that. Contrary to what you might think, I don't own my social media channels. I never have, and I never will. And you don't own yours either. That's the subject of this month's column.

Like electricity, social media is a miracle. Unknown voices get discovered. Corrupt governments get exposed. The gap between the producer and the consumer is bridged. Everyone can be an artist and share their work publicly. These are all very beautiful things. But are you a social media landlord or are you a tenant? Do you own your Twitter or Instagram account or your Facebook page? The answer is simple. You don't. Chances are, most of your social media activity happens in rented environments and someone else is making the rules.

Ask yourself, "What would happen to my business if Facebook and/or Instagram banned all tattoo images tomorrow?" If that's a scary thought, then maybe you should be looking at turning your social media marketing (yes, sharing your tattoo pictures is 'marketing' and

it's not a dirty word!) into something that you truly own. As recent examples have shown, Facebook pages can, and do, disappear. You don't own your page, or your fans. If your page goes, you could lose contact with all these people.

Nothing is constant in the world of social media (anyone remember MySpace?) and it seems likely that tools that were once free might one day become expensive, at least for smaller organisations. Or a site or group that you participate in might suddenly change its policies. Any social media channel to which we dedicate our focus, energy and money might change, sometimes radically, or possibly even go away. And, obviously, you have no say whatsoever in these private companies' decisions. So you need a back-up plan.

You may not own the social media channels, but you do own things like your website and your email list. So the best plan is to build your presence wherever your fans reside – LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or anywhere else – and once you have some momentum, start moving crucial information to environments that you can control, such as the mailing list on your own website. Make sure your online efforts are directed towards building your assets. Sure, be on Facebook, but don't become so dependent on it that it can hold you virtual hostage. Same with Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and all the rest. Use them while they are

working for you, but be ready to say "See ya" if they push you too far or don't give you the kind of exposure you want. You might be better off investing in the social features that exist on your own website, or in smaller niche social networks. In my opinion, it's time for us to start building social relationship strategies around sites that can deliver value.

On all of your social media channels, it's imperative that you build a community that is yours. Cultivate that community, and direct them to your website, your blog and your email newsletter sign-up box so that you can continue the online engagement and remain in dialogue with them.

Here are a few of my own personal tips to help you get your Facebook fans on to your mailing list:

• **Put an opt-in form on your website.**

This means that when you post your blog on your Facebook page and readers get taken to your site, they have the option to sign up to get future news and information delivered directly to their inbox. Put an opt-in form in the sidebar and at the top or bottom of your blog posts too, so that people can easily subscribe.

• **Offer an incentive.**

A freebie or tattoo discount will encourage people to sign up!

• **Post links to your opt-in form.**

Make sure you put links to your opt-in form anywhere you can. Use Facebook apps to add one to your business page and include the link at the bottom of your Facebook posts.

• **Request email addresses in groups.**

If you're in a Facebook group and someone asks a question that you take the time to answer, ask them for their email address so that you can send them some further information. When you email the extra information to them, let them know that you will add them to your mailing list (with the option to unsubscribe).

• **Ask interactive fans for their email address.**

When someone comments on one of your posts, you now have the option to send them a message (see pic below). Use this to thank them for their comment and invite them to join your mailing list (remembering to send them the link).

The key lesson here is not to rely on social media platforms for all your marketing. If we truly owned our social media, we would have full control of the content and the experience, and proper access to all our fans. Let's be honest, the reality is quite different. So always make sure that you list build, so that whatever happens to the sites and channels that are outside of your control, you have your own database of email addresses that will enable you to retain contact with your fans. Don't put all your eggs in somebody else's basket!

**Until next time - Paul
talesfromthenaughtystep@gmail.com**

CONVENTION CALENDAR

UK CONVENTIONS

August 12-14

Dublin International Tattoo Convention

The Convention Centre,
Spencer Dock, N Wall Quay, Dublin 1, Ireland
www.dublintattooconvention.com

August 19-21

Tatcon Blackpool

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

August 20-21

Robin Hood Tattoo Show

Cotgrave Welfare Club, Woodview, Cotgrave,
Nottinghamshire NG12 3PJ
www.robinhoodtattoofestival.com

August 26-28

Maiden City

Everglades Hotel, Prehen Rd, Derry BT47 2NS
maidencityink.com

September 23-25

London Tattoo Convention

Tobacco Quay, Wapping Lane, London E1W 2SF
www.thelondontattooconvention.com

October 1-2

Ink 'n' art Bournemouth

Pier Approach, Bournemouth,
Dorset BH2 5AA
www.bournemouth.tattoo

October 15-16

Oxford Tattoo Convention

Exeter Hall, Oxford Rd, Kidlington OX5 1AB
www.facebook.com/oxfordtattooconvention

October 15

Halloween Tattoo Bash

Wolverhampton Racecourse, Dunstall Park,
Gorsebrook Rd, Wolverhampton WV6 0PE
www.halloweentattoobash.co.uk

October 28-30

Jurassic Coast Tattoo Convention

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

October 29-30

Cambridge Tattoo Convention

Hilton Cambridge City Centre, Grand Arcade,
20 Downing St, Cambridge CB2 3DT
www.cambridgetattoocon.com

Nov 12-13

East Coast Tattoo Expo

Highfield Holiday Park, London Road,
Clacton-On-Sea, Essex CO16 9QY
www.eastcoastexpo.co.uk

December 3

Cariad Ink Tattoo Festival

Venue Cymru, The Promenade,
Llandudno LL30 1BB
www.facebook.com/CariadInk

UK 2017

April 15-16

Maidstone Tattoo Extravaganza

The John Hendry Pavilion, Detling Showground,
Maidstone, Kent ME14 3JF
www.maidstonetattooextravaganza.co.uk

April 29-30

The Big North Tattoo Show

The Metro Radio Arena, Arena Way,
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE4 7NA
www.maidstonetattooextravaganza.co.uk

May 5-7

Liverpool Tattoo Convention

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

July 8-9

Leeds International Tattoo Expo

First Direct Arena
Arena Way, Leeds LS2 8BY,
leedstattoexpo.com/

OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

August 26-28

Stockholm Inkbash

Torkel Knutssonsgatan 2
118 25 Stockholm, Sweden
www.stockholminkbash.com

September 2-4

Trondheim Tattoo Convention

Quality Hotel Panorama
Ivar Lykkes veg 1, 7492 Trondheim, Norway
www.trondheimtattoo.no/

September 9-11

Montreal Art & Tattoo Show

Place Bonaventure
Montreal, QC H3C 1A6, Canada
news.arttattoomontreal.com

September 10-11

Galway Tattoo Show

Lough Atalia Rd, Galway, Ireland
www.galwaytattooshow.ie

September 16-18

Kaiserstadt Tattoo Expo Aachen

Hubert-Wienen-Straße 8, Aachen, Germany
www.kaiserstadt-tattoo-expo-aachen.com

September 30-2 October

Montreal Art & Tattoo Show

Plaza de España
Av de Isabel la Católica
41004 Sevilla, Spain
barcelonatattooexpo.com

Oct 21-23

Evian Tattoo Show

Palais Des Festivités, Evian, France
www.eviantattoo.com

October 21-13

Evian Tattoo Show

Charles Cottet 74500, Evian, France
Tel: +33.450.71.51.05
www.evian.tattoo

October 30

Tattoo Sunday

Studio Hall, Boogschutterslaan 41,
Sint-Kruis, Brugge, Brussels
www.facebook.com/tattoosundaybrugge

November 11-13

International Brussels Tattoo Convention

Tour and Taxis, Brussels Belgium
www.brusselstattooconvention.be

Tattoo convention listings on this page are **free**. Send your details to

Convention Calendar, Total Tattoo Magazine, 111 Furze Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR7 0AU, UK
or e-mail editor@totaltattoo.co.uk All details correct at time of going to press. E&OE.