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## BARNY WATTS

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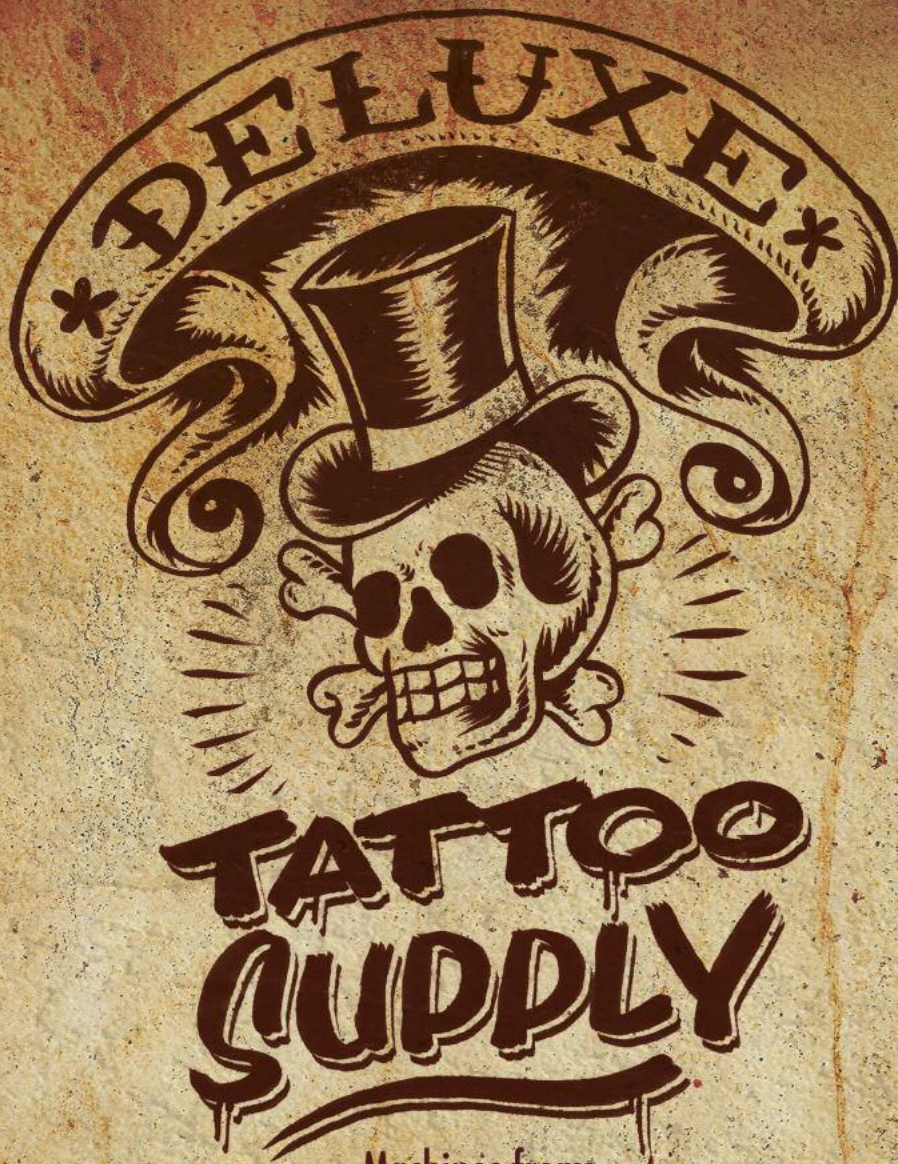
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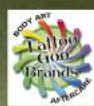


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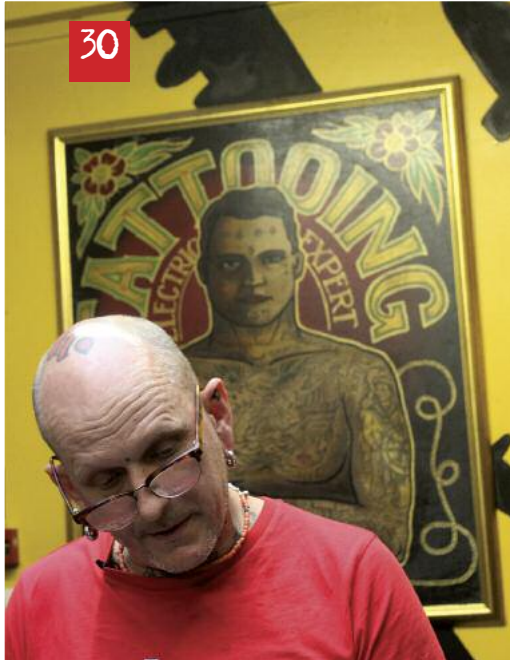
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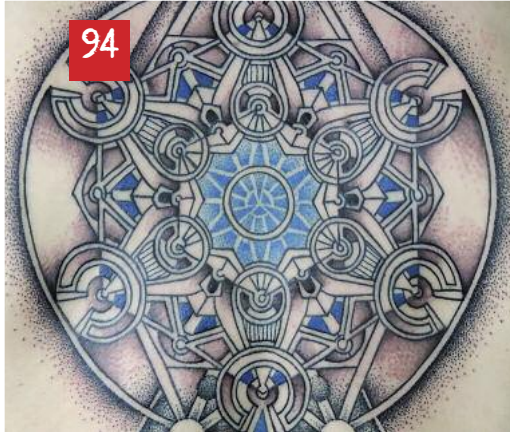
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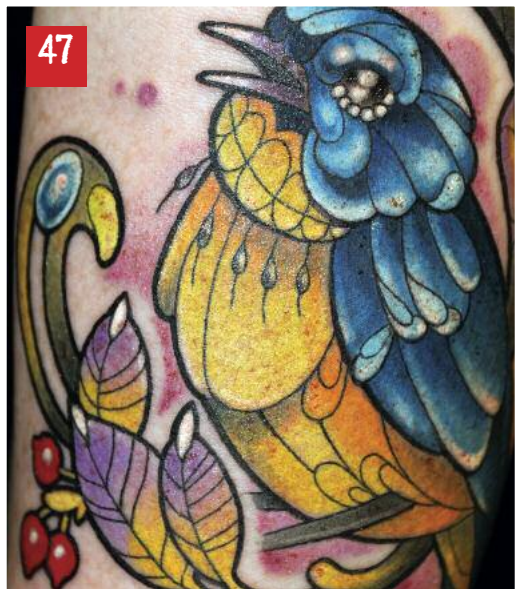
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# WELCOME to 147

December is here again! Woo hoo! But I'm not going to talk about Christmas. Instead, I'm going to focus on the New Year. And, specifically, on New Year's resolutions. You've eaten all the leftovers, drunk all the booze, and watched all the cheesy TV known to man. You're feeling bloated, partied out, in debt and ready to escape the family and head back to work. You've probably put on weight (but then again it's so goddamn cold you need the body fat) and you're feeling ill from all those drinks... In other words, it's the perfect scenario for making those dreaded resolutions as we all plan how we to massively improve ourselves in the coming twelve months.

I read somewhere that 2015's top ten New Year's resolutions were: Lose weight, get organised, spend less (and save more), enjoy life to the full, get fit, learn something exciting, quit smoking, help others achieve their dreams, fall in love and spend more time with family... which, on the whole, sounds promising. Come January 1st, we'll have bought our running shoes, signed up to crochet classes, binned the cigarettes and called our second cousin's husband's sister. Great. But by the second week, we're munching to curb the cravings, tangled up in the wool, nursing our sprained ankles and remembering that we actually really hate our second cousin's husband's sister. Then we feel rubbish, give in, eat the rejected parts of the selection box and light a roll-up. As for finding love and living life to the full? That's a bit vague – and anyway, we're too depressed.

It's no surprise that most people fail in their New Year's resolutions. If you think about it, we're still on a post-celebration come-down. In addition, we're hit by winter (in the Northern Hemisphere at least), which makes us feel even more miserable. And if we're in a negative frame of mind when thinking about how we 'should' change in the pursuit of happiness, are we really likely to focus successfully on doing it?

Perhaps New Year's resolutions should be given a more positive spin. Instead of thinking about what we need to change about ourselves, or things we want to stop doing, perhaps we should focus on our virtues – the things we want to do more of. Are you a good listener? Maybe your resolution could be that you will continue to be at the end of the phone to your friends. Are you great at cooking? Hold a get-together. Do you make people laugh? Then continue to do so, because we could all do with it. (And if you're all these things, then you could also consider signing up to Tinder.)

As for the stuff we don't like about ourselves, well I suggest you pop another segment of that chocolate orange in your mouth and wait until the January blues have passed. By then, you'll feel more motivated – instead of the motivation being forced upon you.

Be kind to yourself. You survived the horror of 2016. You're doing great.



**Lizzy**  
Total Tattoo Editorial Team  
[totaltattoo@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:totaltattoo@totaltattoo.co.uk)

**“We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day.”**

Edith Lovejoy Pierce

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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

**The Art of Mr Charles Burchett Davis**  
**Barnaby Titchener**  
**Hardcover**

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[www.tattoobarny.bigcartel.co](http://www.tattoobarny.bigcartel.co)



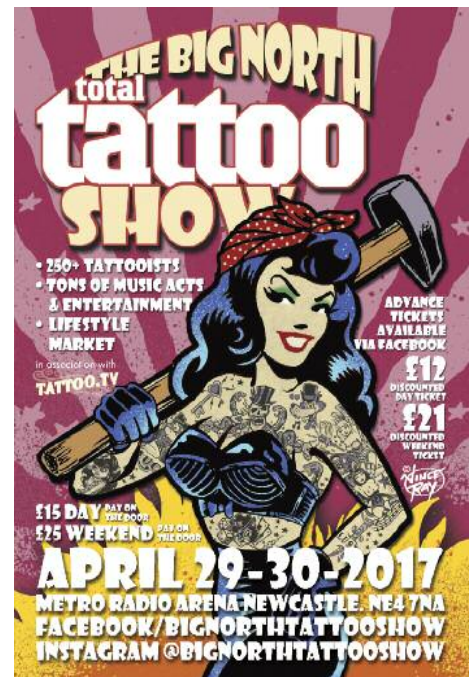
When you hear the name “Burchett”, it’s the King of Tattooists, George Burchett, who comes to mind. It’s all too easy to forget that he had a brother, Charles, who was also a gifted tattooist. In addition to tattooing, Charles Burchett Davis also sold kits and supplies, and even invented a tattoo removal solution. Yet very little is known about him.

At the time of writing, over 75% of these limited edition box sets had been sold. It’s not hard to see why. Presented in an A4 matt black box, the set also contains stickers, a bookmark, an introduction sheet and A4/A5 colour prints. The book itself is just as immaculately presented. Barnaby Titchener has chosen to keep the words to a minimum, the only text being a letter from Charles’s granddaughter, who gives us a glimpse into her personal memories of her grandfather, as well as his life story. The rest of the book contains over 140 digital colour images of Burchett’s work, ranging from coloured flash sheets to pencil drawings. The images themselves are now part of Barnaby’s own collection, and we can all feel privileged that he’s chosen to share them with us. If you’re a collector of tattoo history, this box set is an absolute must-have (if it’s not already sold out...).

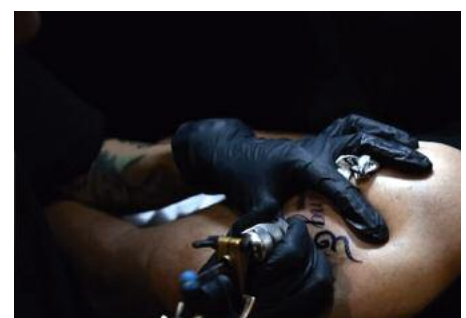


## THE BIG NORTH

Plans are coming together for our first tattoo convention at the Metro Radio Arena, Newcastle Upon Tyne in April next year. Advance tickets have gone on sale and are priced at just £12 for a day and £21 for the weekend. They’re available from [facebook.com/bignorthtattooshow](https://www.facebook.com/bignorthtattooshow) where you’ll also find the latest information about who is coming to join the party!



## TATTOOS FIT FOR A KING



Thailand is currently deep in mourning for the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who died on 13th October. According to news reports, men and women of all ages (some of whom have never been tattooed before) are paying tribute to their revered monarch by getting inked. Popular designs include royal portraits, statements about doing good deeds in the name of the King, and declarations that the wearer was born during the King’s 70-year reign.



## WIN! INTO YOU GOODIES!

This October, the iconic ground-breaking tattoo studio Into You tattoo closed its doors for the last time, bringing to an end an astonishing twenty three year period of creativity and innovation. To mark this historic event we have been given a limited edition print by the studio's founder and owner, Alex Binnie, along with possibly the last ever Into You family hoody! To be in with a chance of winning these collectables, simply email us the answer to the following question:

**In which decade did Into You first open its doors?**

- A 1890s**
- B 1990s**
- C 1950s**

Email your answer to [comps@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:comps@totaltattoo.co.uk) with Into You as the subject line. Terms and conditions apply (see page 5) and closing date is January 31st 2017



## LATEST LASER TECH

There's a huge demand for laser tattoo removal now, and the technology itself is steaming ahead too. We're hear that the new PicoSure laser is reportedly twice as fast as its predecessors and can also give better results, even removing blue and green ink (which can be tricky for traditional lasers).



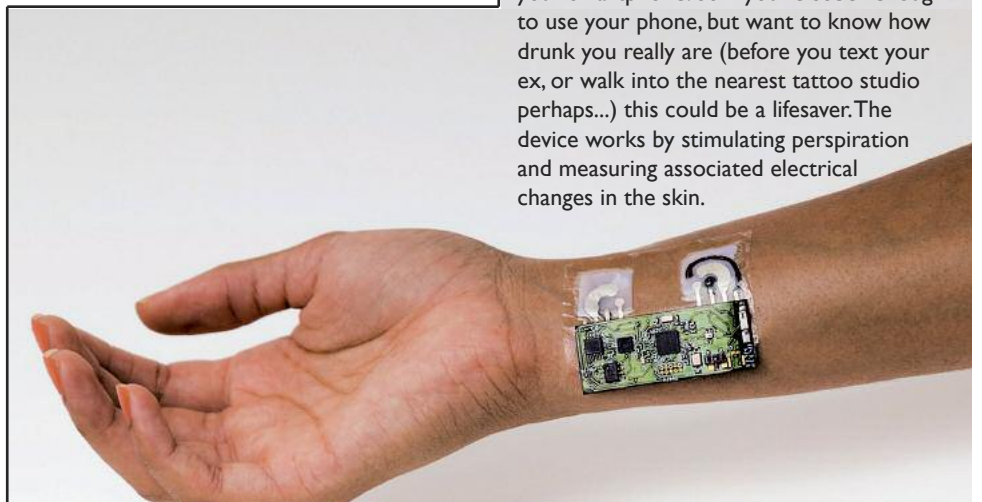
## WISH FOR GOLD

Tattooist Dan Gold has teamed up with furniture makers Wish Interiors to offer what is described on their website as "rock star luxury" that will shake up the upholstery world. With edgy street graphics, and features such as snake-skin detailing and silver studding, these hand-made designs are unlike anything else on the market. The Union Skull chair is the first in the range. Visit [www.monstersofart.co.uk](http://www.monstersofart.co.uk) and [www.wishinteriors.com](http://www.wishinteriors.com) to find out more.



## ONE TOO MANY

We've heard about an invention that could rescue your night out. It's a bit like a temporary tattoo, but it's actually a 'smart' patch that measures the amount of alcohol in your body and sends the information to your smartphone. So if you're sober enough to use your phone, but want to know how drunk you really are (before you text your ex, or walk into the nearest tattoo studio perhaps...) this could be a lifesaver. The device works by stimulating perspiration and measuring associated electrical changes in the skin.



## BOOK REVIEW

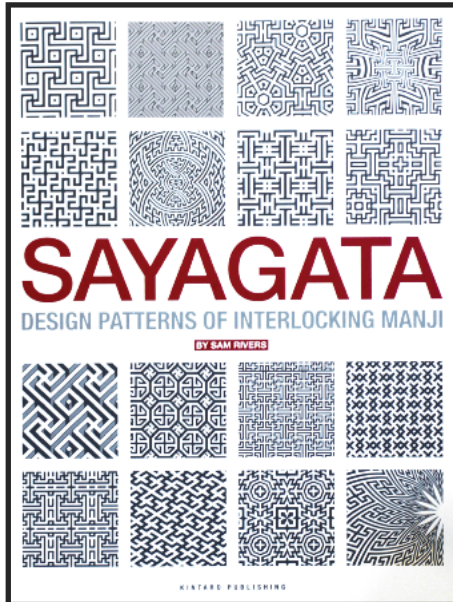
### Sayagata: Design Patterns of Interlocking Manji

Sam Rivers

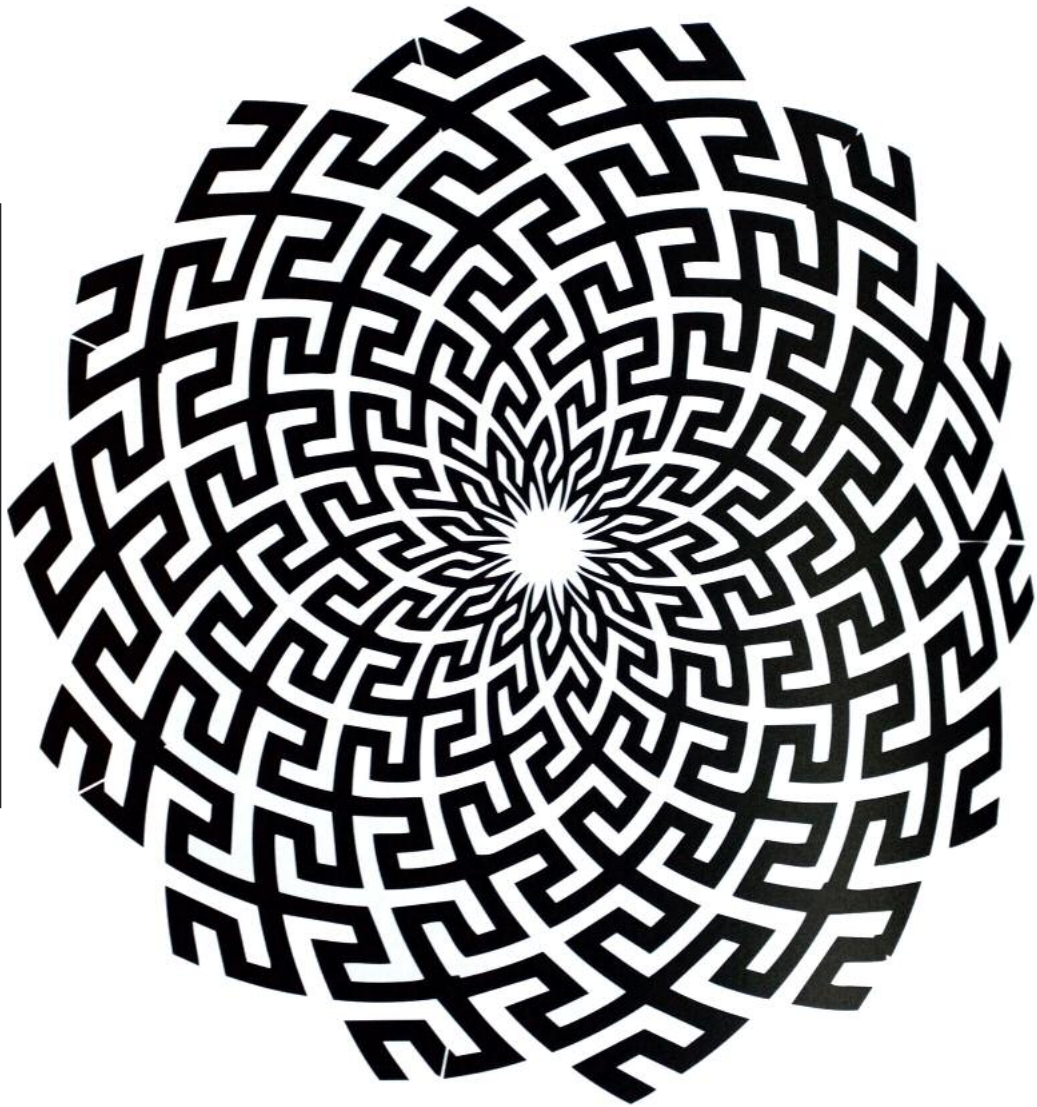
Softcover, 256 pages

£57.86

[www.kintaro-publishing.com](http://www.kintaro-publishing.com)



Sam Rivers is a master of dotwork tattooing, and this book celebrates his attention to design detail. It's crammed full of patterns from all around the world, ranging from simple repeating swastikas to trippy warped manji (across a double-page spread) and motifs more commonly associated with architecture. Produced mainly in stark black and white, it's a valuable reference for artist looking for inspiration.



## NOT SO NASTY

US President Elect Donald Trump famously accused Hillary Clinton of being a “nasty woman” during a pre-election debate. This insult has now been turned into an inspiring message for female empowerment by Inkbox, a temporary tattoo company. According to co-founder of the company Tyler Handley, the design emerged from the disgust they felt at the negativity of the whole election campaign and their desire to turn it into something positive. The temporary tattoo design has become a bestseller, joining the many other 'Nasty Woman' products – t-shirts, stickers, and so on – that can be found on the internet. After all, any woman who can become the first female US presidential candidate can't be that nasty! Check out [getinkbox.com/products/nasty-woman](http://getinkbox.com/products/nasty-woman)



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**THE BIG NORTH TATTOO SHOW IS NOW ON INSTAGRAM**

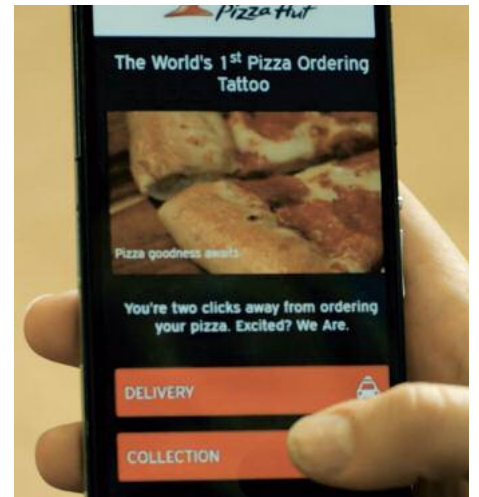
We'll be posting updates of who is working plus competitions to win tickets and prizes. Follow us on [@bignorthtattooshow](https://www.instagram.com/bignorthtattooshow)

## EXIT VIA THE GIFT SHOP

The Field Museum in Chicago is offering visitors to its 'Tattoo' exhibition more than just an insight into the history of tattooing. They can also leave with a permanent reminder of their visit in the form of an actual tattoo. The museum has opened its own tattoo studio for the duration, showcasing some of the city's most talented tattoo artists, including Zach Stuka (Deluxe Tattoo), Stephanie Brown (Butterfat Studios), Tine DeFiore (Black Oak Tattoo), Jennifer Trok (Speakeasy Tattoo) and Lance Lloyd (Taylor Street Tattoo) – all of whom usually have substantial waiting lists for conventional studio appointments. Tattoos cost \$250 each (which includes admission to the museum) and must be selected from the artist's flash sheet. The exhibition runs until April 30th 2017. For more information, and to book an appointment for the tattoo shop, visit [www.fieldmuseum.org/discover/on-exhibit/tattoo](http://www.fieldmuseum.org/discover/on-exhibit/tattoo) As we go to print, we understand that most of the tattoo appointment slots at the museum are already filled, but you will still be able to watch the artists working.



## TATTOOS WITH TOPPINGS



Pizza Hut has brought together three good things – tattoos, technology and takeaways – by offering a unique way of ordering your meal. Special temporary tattoos, that you can stick anywhere on your body, contain all the data necessary to get your favourite pizza delivered to you (or prepared ready for you to collect). All you need to do is scan the design with your smartphone whenever you get that craving. Find out more on the Pizza Hut Facebook pages.

## BOOK REVIEW

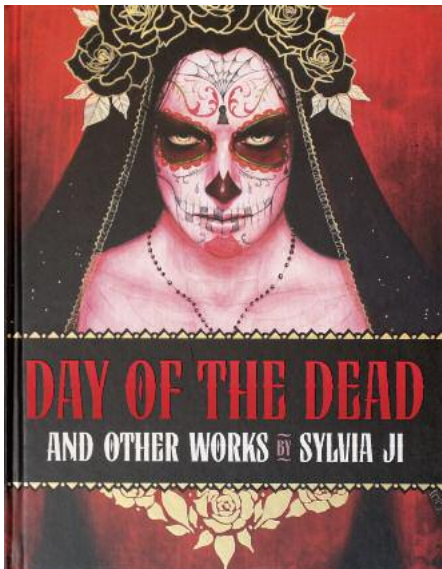
### Day of the Dead and Other Works

By Sylvia Ji

Hardback, 112 pages

£19.99

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



Sylvia Ji is a truly fantastic painter whose timeless works echo the old masters. This book guides us through her output from the early 2000s to 2015, and clearly shows her honing her techniques whilst creating one beautiful artwork after another. Although the

portraits are mainly themed around sugar skulls, there are nods to other genres – such as the art nouveau influenced 'Coral Snake' and the surreal 'Spring Bonnet'. Whether you are into realistic Day of the Dead portraits, or just looking for fresh inspiration for your own painting, this book is an absolute steal.



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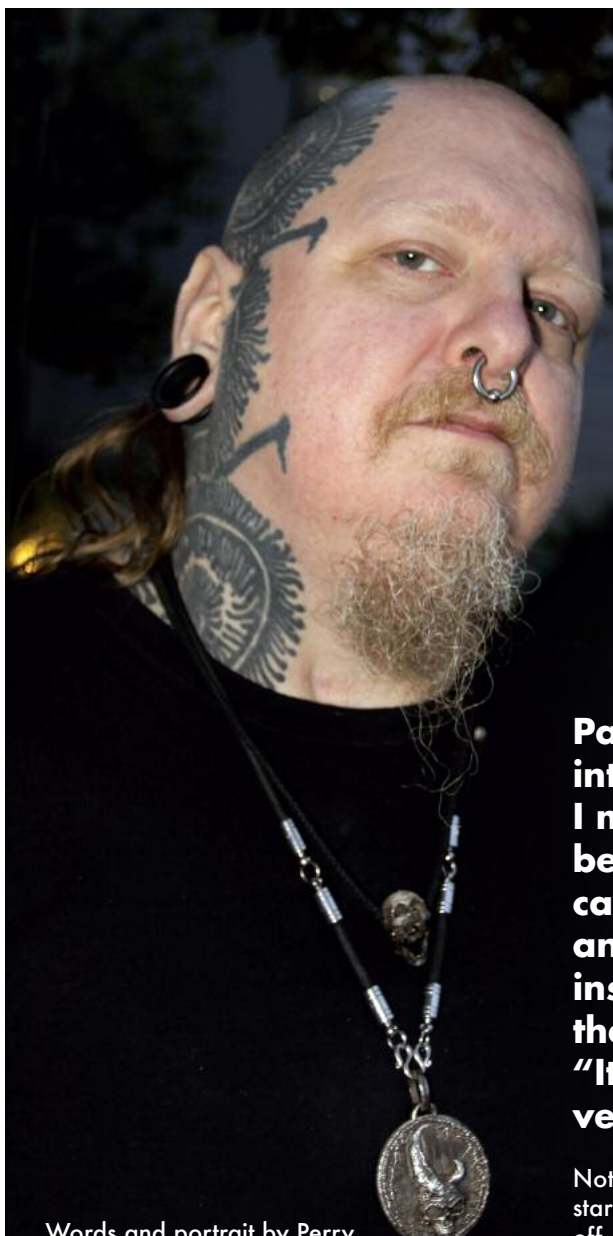
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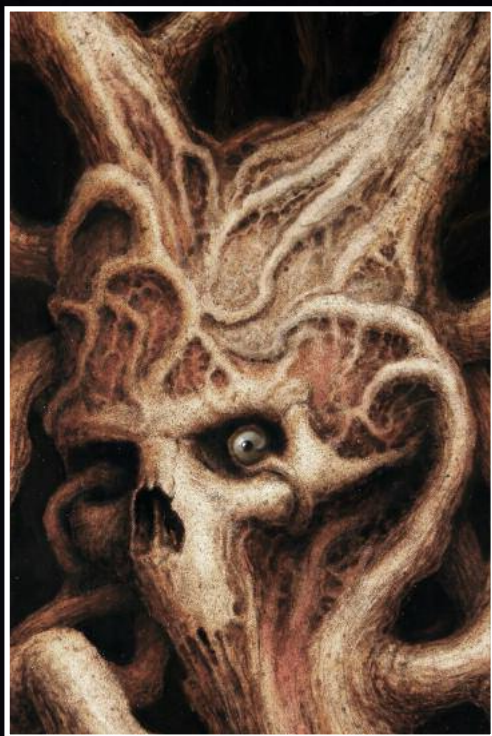
# PAUL BOOTH



Words and portrait by Perry  
Photos by Paul Booth

**Paul Booth is an artist who needs no introduction. He's a legend in his own lifetime. I met him at the Dublin convention, and as we began our conversation three tattooist fans came over to have their photos taken with him and thank him for his contribution and inspiration to their own work. Paul tells me it's the kind of attention he's become used to. "It's been like this for nearly 25 years now. I'm very humbled by it."**

Not having seen Paul at any shows for a while, I wondered where he'd been. "I started travelling again a couple of years ago, but I did take six or seven years off. I kind of needed to stay at home and get my head straight. Plus at home I can work on multiple-sitting projects rather than one-shot pieces. I don't really start big pieces on the road because it can be years between appointments and things tend to take so long that it's not good for me, my work or the customer. At home I work in a real chilled out, mellow environment, so I can focus on larger projects. I like a balance of the two." I asked Paul if the break from travelling had injected a new enthusiasm for being back on the road? "Yeah, I'm trying to get to places I've not been, or at least not been for a while. I'm heading to Bucharest soon, and I'm looking forward to visiting Transylvania, which will be cool! The opportunity for travelling is one of the special things about being a tattooist. Thanks to tattooing I've managed to see three quarters of the world in the last twenty five years."



Taking time out from the 'scene' has also given Paul a unique viewpoint from which to observe tattooing's recent evolution. "Quite a bit has changed... Tattoo television is now a global plague, and I can see how this has affected people. I'm not a fan of these shows. I have no issues with any of the artists themselves; it's just the way television represents the industry, and the fact that the public really don't know any better. I don't like competitions. I think artists should be comrades, and not made to feel jealous of each other, or portrayed as being better or worse than each other. It's like there's a new breed of tattooist who is less educated - either by choice or because there's a lack of old timers around - and they have no knowledge of the history. I know that makes me sound like an old timer myself, but somehow I've become one! These artists don't seem to have any idea of what went before. I'm seeing some really exciting work, and some of the artists are super cool, but some of them have egos bigger than anything I have ever seen in this industry before!"





We talk about the importance of keeping your feet on the ground. "I've seen guys actually cry when they haven't won an award at a convention," Paul tells me. "Contests are good for promoting your career, but they're more for your client to have fun and play a part in the show. They don't really mean anything for the artist because sometimes stuff wins that shouldn't and vice versa. If you take it too seriously you will always be the loser. It's better to compete with yourself, and just try to be the best you can be."



"But I guess we really only have ourselves to blame," Paul continues. "Tattooing got glamorised. A bunch of us are responsible for that – including myself. We all helped to make it commercial. The music industry is pretty much dead, and tattooists are now the new rock stars. So everyone wants to be a tattooist, except they don't really want to pay their dues and learn to do the whole job properly. What they forget is that with tattooing there is an artistic side that needs to be very strong, and a technical side that needs to be very strong too. You have to be able to put in a solid line, and pack colour in a way that means it will stay. It's no good floating some colour over at the end for the sake of a good photo. You need to think about the effects ten years from now. Contrast, construction, placement and application are all vital and you can't learn that without the investment of time."

We talk about the new wave of artists who often seem too impatient to put the time into diligently learning their craft (fuelled perhaps by the ease with which equipment is now available) and the tendency for the younger generation to







specialise in a particular tattoo style very early on rather than developing all-round ability. Paul picks up this point. "Half the stuff you see on Instagram is going to fall out in a year or two. The saturation is pumped up in Photoshop, or it's a fresh tattoo and you don't see how it's going to be after a year when the skin has grown back over the top. Some of the realism is amazing, and truly impressive artistically, but it won't have the longevity. Without that, for me it's just not a tattoo".

I wondered what Paul felt about the current popularity of lasering. "Each to their own. It does suck to make such a painful mistake, and people should be able to change their minds if they really want to. Things change, and our lives change. Lightening prior to a cover-up can be very useful... although that does mean we are losing the art of the cover-up which used to be a unique skill in itself".

As our conversation moved towards the technical aspects of tattooing, I asked Paul to tell me a little about his own set-up. "I use Inkjecta rotaries a lot. FK Irons are cool. I've got a Bishop that I use. I don't really solidify myself with any one particular manufacturer or group. I like



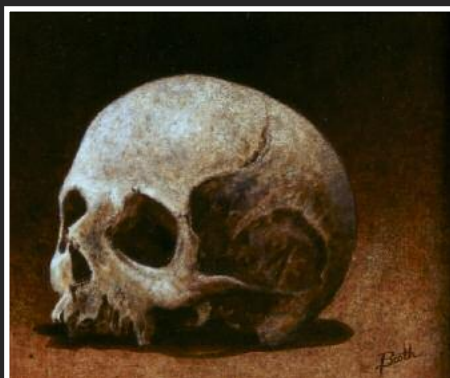


to try new things as they come out. I've been off coils for about six years as I find I work faster with rotaries. I get a lot done in a short period of time, partly because my style lends itself to speed. Over the years I've developed my work to become as efficient as possible to cater to the demands of my customers. I have to work fast because what I do is like sketching on the skin, building up layers, like charcoal on paper. The way I create textures requires speed to pull it off, and the more I refine my technique the faster I become. But I do need to slow down a little as sometimes it kind of gets out of control."





I wondered if Paul ever felt trapped by his well-known tattoo style. "No. In fact it's the opposite. I believe people need to pigeonhole you and put you in a category in order to remember you. It's human nature. Back in the early 90s, when I'd come out of nowhere and the magazines all wanted to know about me, I decided that if I was going to get recognised then I wanted it to be for doing the things I loved. My heart is in the macabre and demonic stuff - my demons and monsters - so that was all I ever sent to the magazines. I deliberately pigeonholed myself into the place I knew I wanted to be."



With such a strong individual style, I asked Paul how he sees his art developing. How is he taking things forward? "Well, when I am home I can experiment much more. On the road it's more freehand and I whip up whatever comes into my head... but actually I'm always experimenting in subtle ways that people probably don't even notice! The big thing for me is doing my painting in conjunction with the tattooing. I just finished a new painting last week and already I'm finding myself incorporating things from that directly into my tattooing. For me it's all about balance. The painting inspires the tattooing, and vice versa".



"I'm still involved in the ArtFusion project," he continues, "which takes me to galleries and museums all around the world as well as to tattoo conventions. We've just done a collaborative exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, which was a lot of fun. The project has kind of died down a bit because I don't have the manpower to run it properly, but I'm very proud of it as a movement. It was always about collaborative art and getting artists to work together, to teach and learn from one another." My own first encounter with the ArtFusion project was back in 2003 at the inaugural London convention, and I put it to Paul that this event was an important catalyst - encouraging tattooists to open up to each other creatively, and share information in a way they hadn't done before. "Yes. I don't want to toot my own horn, but at that first London convention everyone just got it! They were all jumping into each other's booths, collaborating on the art fusion stage, all over the place. At one point we had twelve artists on four victims, rotating every fifteen minutes! Filip Leu and myself did a collaborative tattoo back in 2000 - which wasn't the first by any stretch, but was almost certainly the first to be done so publicly."

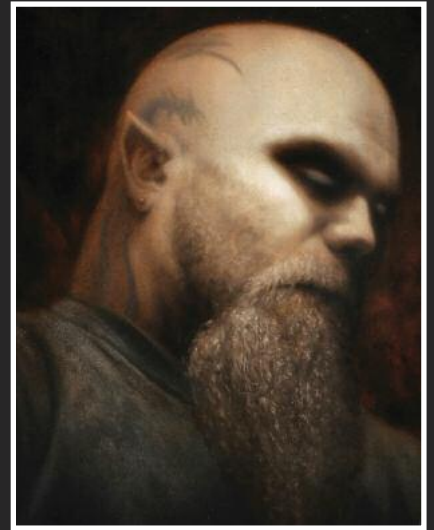


At this point we are interrupted by yet more fans wanting to have their photos taken with Paul...

Paul then returns to the point he was making. "ArtFusion was hugely successful at conventions all over the world. It was a little like Burlesque is now! The problem was getting the right balance of artists. If you get a good team that vibe off each other, the magic will happen; if there are a couple of guys who have never painted before, it can get messy. But it's always about learning and teaching at the same time, and it's not always important to create a pretty picture. If it's on a public stage you need talent, but if it's in a closed environment everyone can jump in and have a go."



Paul is very much part of the New York art world, and even owns two galleries himself (although he never shows his own work there, as he feels this would be "tacky"). "I guess I'm known more as a gallery owner than a painter," he tells me, "but I do get a lot of respect from fellow painters. I'm a huge fan, and many of them give me tips and advice which I love. For me, the hard part is finding the time to put together a big enough body of work to fill an exhibition. I have commissions for paintings that I need to get finished, and then maybe I will start to put together a show." Is the pressure of living and working in New York part of the driving force behind Paul's creativity? "I thrive on hatred!" he laughs. "Actually New York is really cool. It's an intense, congested place with a lot of energy - which many people can find overwhelming. My studio, Last Rites, is a bit like an island in a sea of crazy. Once you're inside, you kind of forget that you're in New York. There are a lot of tattoo studios around, but it's different from say the West Coast where you get groups of artists hanging out, collaborating, intertwined. On the East Coast, shops know each other and some are friends, but there isn't as much camaraderie. Where we are, studios tend to keep to themselves. It's just the New York way. Instead of Hello, we say Fuck You."





I ask Paul to tell me more about his team. "The present line-up at Last Rites is Logan Aguilar, Darwin Enriquez, Yarico Enrico and Jose Conteres. My entire staff is Latino. All I need now is a good assistant. I go through so many of them, because I'm a very difficult person to deal with on that level. At the moment I have to do all my own emails and scheduling, which actually makes sense because no one really knows when I'm ready to tattoo apart from me... but it means that if I get it wrong I have no one to yell at apart from myself!"

At the Dublin convention, Total Tattoo Magazine had the booth just along from Paul's and all through the weekend people kept mentioning how scary Paul was as they crept past in silence. I asked Paul how that felt. "I love scaring people," he tells me. "It's like a hobby for me. There are two kinds of scared - people who are afraid to talk to you because they are shy, and people who think you're going to bite their head off and kill their baby. Both of which are true! It all depends on my mood. I do enjoy being out in the 'real' world, going into the grocery store and having all the little old ladies look at me with fear and disgust... And sometimes I meet fans who are trembling with excitement and simply don't know what to say. That can be quite cute. But I don't take it very seriously. As far as I'm concerned, I'm just a fat guy from New Jersey who is riding a wave and having the best time for as long as he can. If you take yourself too seriously, you become just another asshole."



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# STOCKHOLM INKBASH 2016

**20 years of the Stockholm Inkbash! Two decades of top tattoos at one of Europe's best conventions. And two decades of coming to this beautiful city to spend an August weekend at the spectacularly situated old brewery building, the Münchenbryggeriet.**

Tumpi and his organising team from House of Pain have always managed to lure the world's top tattoo brass to the Inkbash. It's not just the atmospheric location that brings them here; it's also the appreciative crowds who attend the convention, who know a good tattoo when they see one (and are prepared to pay accordingly). The peaceful vibe helps too, as well as the good food, the great parties, and the way all the artists are so well looked after.

The last two decades have flown by, and a lot has happened on the tattoo scene. The widespread acceptance of inked skin is now a reality: football matches on television look like Best Sleeve contests, professionals in all walks of life have visible tattoos on display, and in many families we are seeing a third generation of tattoo clients growing up. And of course we've also seen the rise of social media and all kinds of creative technology. Unfettered access to information, coupled with a rapidly evolving tattoo supplies industry, mean we now have a much younger tattoo elite (and even the average artists aren't doing too badly). Back in 1997, who would have thought it would be like this? Tattoo styles have come and gone too. Twenty years ago, tribal designs, sinister skulls, colourful tigers, 'realistic' black-and-grey wolves and 'ass antlers' were the latest thing; cartoon tattoos were making their first appearance, and a dragon crawling up one's arm was seen as the epitome of fine tattoo art. All old hat, right? But hang on a minute...

As I walk round this year's Inkbash I see the dragons that have never gone out of style in Japan-crazy Sweden... and over there Stizzo and Capex from Italy, Sweden's Drew Horner, and several others too, are doing a whole string of old school designs... Right next to them, Julian Corpsepainter from Germany is working on a cartoon sleeve... and American Tim Kern is inking a (truly) realistic wolf into someone's armpit. The underboob, a pretty adaptation of ornamental tribal, is now the latest fashion accessory, and there's still plenty of script and lots of portraits to be seen. So maybe not so much has changed after all – or you could say that it's all changed for the better! But the old tattoo rules still apply: bold will hold, details will disappear, and contrast is what makes a tattoo design readable. Not just today, or for a few moments on Instagram, but for ever.

So I don't think the Stockholm Inkbash is going to start doing things differently any time soon. A great convention is like a great tattoo: a statement for eternity! Times may change, but quality remains.



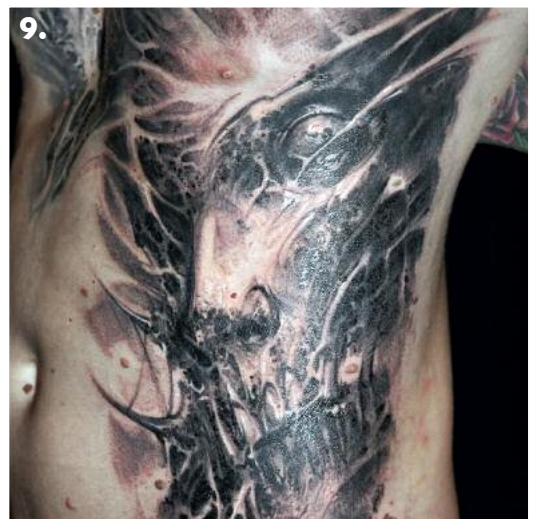
1. **emil edge, buzzstop 28 (sweden)**
2. **mankan, rough stuff (sweden)**
- 3 & 4. **timur lysenko (on the road)**
5. **mr dist, big slick tattoo (sweden) and unknown artist**







- 6. erik svensson, stockholm classic tattoo (sweden)
- 7. all artists were busy
- 8. tim kern, tribulation (usa)
- 9. mr. dist, big slick tattoo (sweden) and unknown artist
- 10. eric svensson, stockholm classic tattoo (sweden)
- 11. levgen knysh, red berry tattoo (poland)
- 12. by matt curzon, empire tattoo (australia)



10.

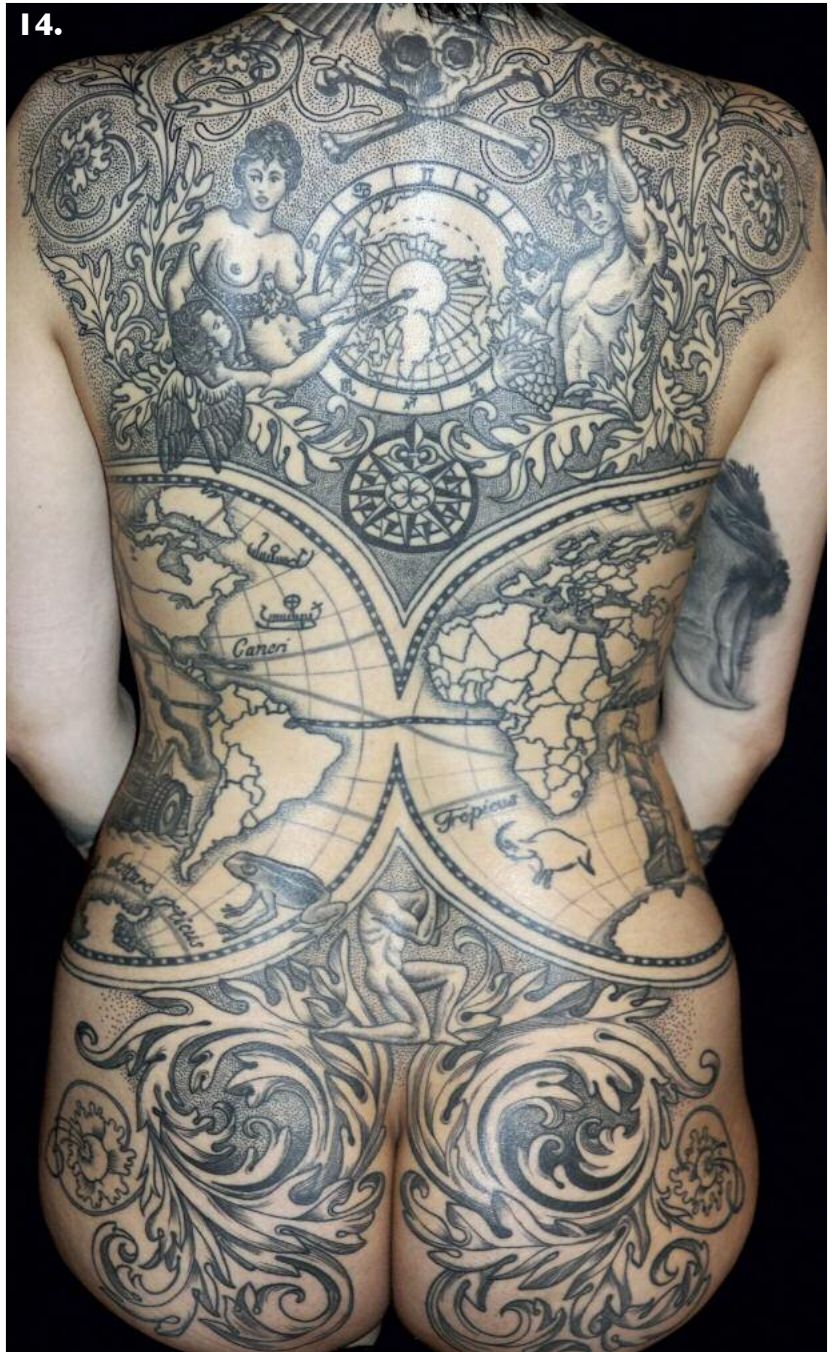


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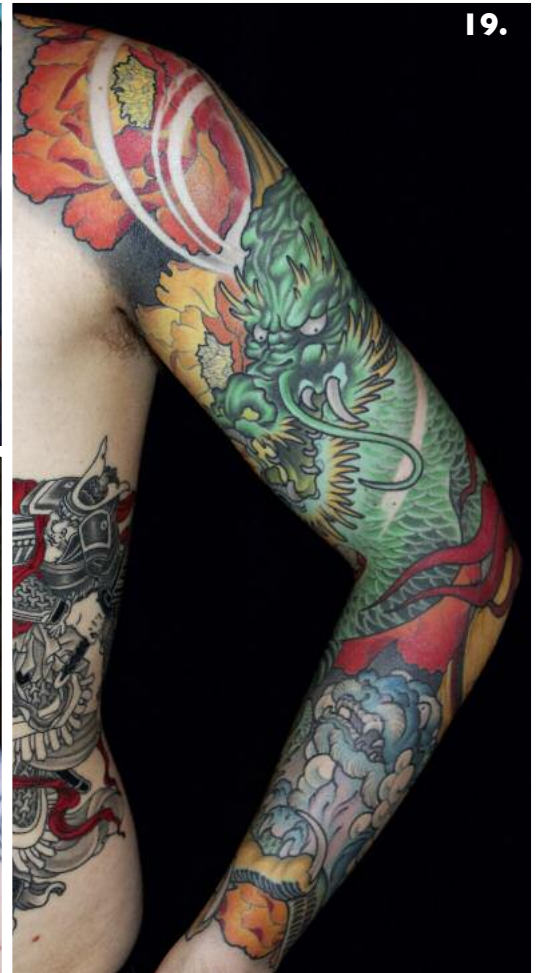


12.





- 13. ben kaye, ship shape tattoo (new zealand)
- 14. peter svensson, porky royale (sweden)
- 15. trevor mcstay, dynamic tattoo (australia)
- 16. julian siebert, corpsepainter tattoo (germany)
- 17. iwan yug (russia)
- 18, 19 & 20. johan losand, imperial tattoo (sweden)
- 21. jordan croke, second skin





# the end of into you

London's legendary Into You tattoo studio has closed its doors for the last time, after 23 years of astounding innovation and creativity. It's one of those studios – perhaps *the* UK studio – whose story is the story of contemporary tattooing, and its closure marks the end of an era. The last weekend was really special, with Saturday as the last day of tattooing and an auction of shop artefacts on the Sunday. Total Tattoo Magazine was honoured to be invited to the farewell party and we couldn't let this occasion pass without hearing from the people who have made Into You so much more than just a place to go and get a very fine tattoo. Here's what they told us...



## Alex Binnie (Owner and tattooist)

Alex told us he felt both sadness and relief about the end of Into You. "I'm obviously sad, of course, but we did a good job. Without wishing to sound like an arrogant prick, I feel we did it properly. We had a great laugh. It's not me choosing to close the shop; a natural end was presented to me when the lease came to an end. It's something that was always going to be inevitable. We couldn't carry on forever. And I'm just going along with it. I'm happy to have a change in my life. I never planned to be tattooing this long and I never dreamt the shop would keep going as long as it did." (At this point it feels important to point out that Into You certainly didn't close due to a lack of demand!)

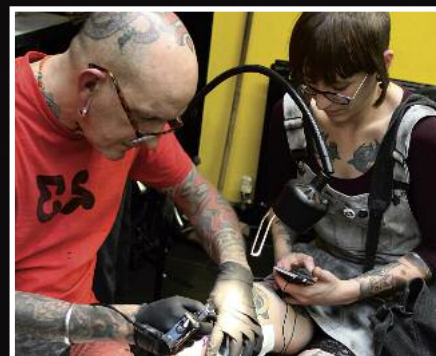


Alex then pauses to focus on applying a tattoo to our very own Lizzy Guy. It's a special one-off design produced for this last day at Into You. Alex then tells us that he started the shop because, back then, nobody

had a shop like it – a shop that he wanted to visit. So he decided he would just have to create his own. "I started with a business partner, body piercer Teena Marie, in October 1993," he continues. "In fact it was Teena who found and named the shop. She worked at one end behind screens, and I worked at the other."

Over the years, Into you has played host to a huge list of influential tattooists including literally hundreds of guest artists (Horiyoshi III, Henk Schiffmacher, Filip Leu and Freddy Corbin to name but a few...) The shop's influence has reached far and wide.

"It's been a fabulous journey," Alex admits. "We've never viewed tattooing as a job. It's a vocation, a calling, a path. And the shop was more a life raft, a meeting place, a safe haven for people like us. We never saw it as just a business. Goodness knows how we kept it together for so long – it was pretty crazy at times – but we did. It was great, and I want to say thanks to everyone who came and trusted us to tattoo them. Thank you all, it has been beautiful."





**Zoe Binnie  
(former receptionist, tattooist,  
and Alex's wife)**

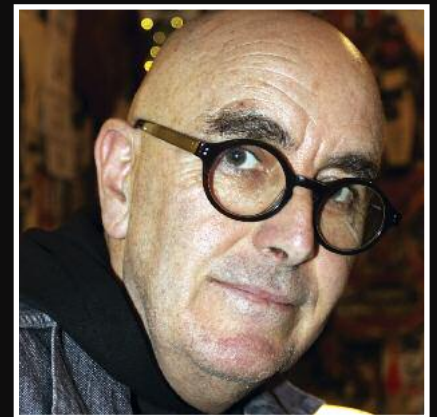
"Into you has played a massive part in my life, both socially and professionally. I started by coming here and getting tattooed by Mo Coppoletta. I met Alex and we got talking, and soon after that I got a job working on reception. Five years ago Alex and I got married and so my relationship with Into You changed and moved on again. No matter what's happened in my life, Into You has always been there in the background. When Alex told me he was thinking of allowing Into You to close – retiring, and not looking for another premises – my first reaction was 'No!' you can't do that. But we forget that it's someone else's stress, time and effort to keep it all going. And London has changed so much in 23 years. Round here, it's slowly become gentrified to the point where it's not such an interesting area to be any more. This final weekend has been looming for both of us for a quite a while now – but strangely, things came full circle last night when, out of the blue, Teena Marie got back in touch. We hadn't heard from her for years." We asked Zoe if there was anything else she would like to put 'on the record'. "The first thing I heard about Into You was all the crazy parties and drug problems... but what Alex has allowed people to do is develop creatively in their own ways. Each artist has discovered their own originality in a supportive environment. Into You has never really been a business. It has always be more of a collective, a bit like an art school."



**Matt Lodder (tattoo historian)**

"I remember coming to Into You before I ever got tattooed – and walking straight out again because I thought the place was too scary. In those days, all tattoo shops had a bit of an edge. It's what made tattooing exciting. I think Into You somehow managed to maintain that edge. This shop represent a real turning point in tattoo history, where we moved away from sheets of flash on the walls to include the art school educated tattooists. Tattooists who were looking to advance in directions that had not been seen in this country before. If you look at the names of some of the artists that have passed through these doors – Curly, Jason Saga, Xed le Head, Duncan X, Nikole Lowe, Mo Coppoletta, Tomas Tomas, Lucy Prior, the list goes on and on... – they have all have been massively influential around the world. All from this shop in East London." Matt has clearly put a lot of thought into the question of whether Into You should have relocated instead of closing. "I totally understand Alex's decision. It would be impossible to recreate the atmosphere of a shop like this. It would be a parody of its former glory. The history held within these walls would take another 23 years

to build, and the new shop would always be compared with the original. I completely understand the need to draw a line under the past and let it lie."



**Jim MacAirt  
(former tattooist at Into You)**

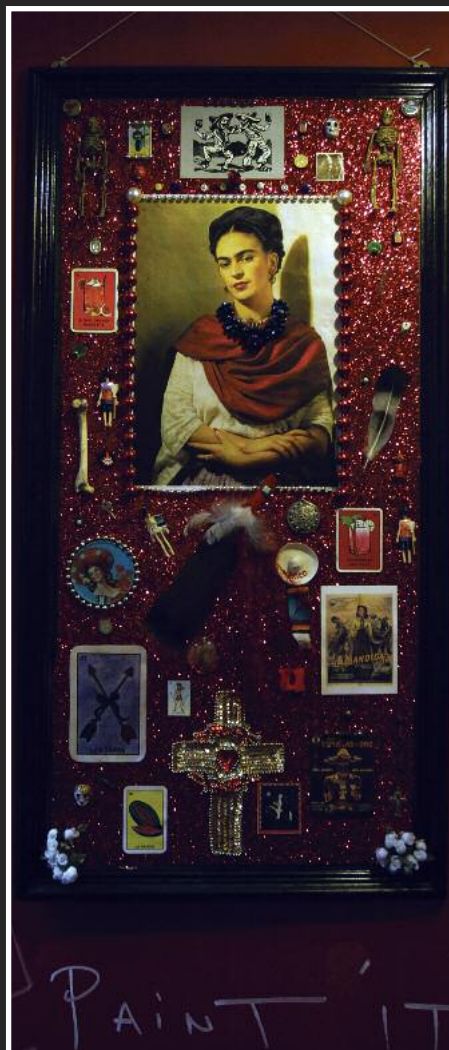
"I worked at Into You right at the beginning. Alex put an advert in the tattoo trade journal 'The Buzz' asking for someone to join him, and I applied. But he had already found someone – that was Curly. Three months later he called me and said he was going travelling and would I cover while he was away, so I worked from September to Christmas. Into You has always been a ground-breaking shop, for art-based tattooing from arts school educated tattooists. It was a power shop. There had never been anything like before. The time is right for it to close now though. Hopefully the demise of Into You will create a vacuum that will get filled by a new creative force. As Into You grew it attracted like-minded clients that were brave and enthusiastic enough to travel along with the artists on a creative journey. It would never have happened outside of

London. There was a strong underground scene going on in London at the time. This was an underground shop, and people were willing to take chances. There has probably never been another shop with such a great range of artists who have gone on to influence tattooing all around the world. That's partly down to Alex and his laid back attitude, allowing and encouraging each artist to develop their own style in their own time. My only hope is that someone comes along to continue what has been developed here and take tattooing forward on the next leg of its journey."



**James Lovegrove**  
(tattooist at Into You)

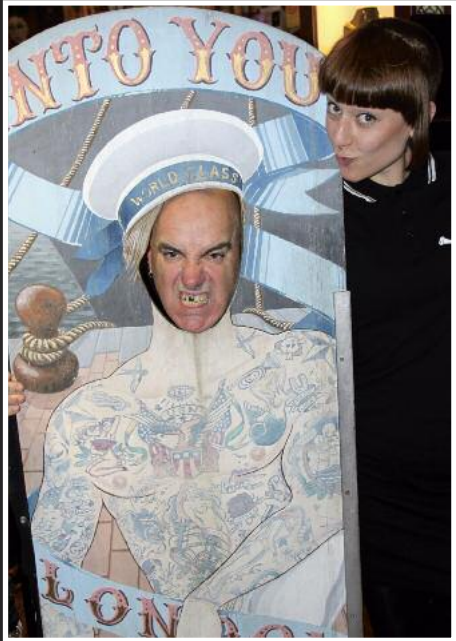
James has been working at Into You for seven years. "Into You has been my extended family. It's been the place that I've been allowed to develop my work the way I want to do it. It changed tattooing for everybody; it changed the format of what a tattoo shop should be; and it changed people's expectations of what a tattoo could be! I loved to hang out here, and so did many of the customers. I'm sure people ended up with more tattoos than they'd initially intended to have, just because they wanted to hang out in the shop. They came in for a small tattoo and left years later with a sleeve and a hangover!" James is moving on to work at Jayne Doe in Hornchurch. "It's close to where I live. I didn't feel I could work at another London tattoo shop after leaving Into You. I would be forever making comparisons. So I've gone for a different style of shop with a different pace to it." So how did James come to be at Into You in the first place? "I just kind of hung about enough to be a pain," he told us, "and when an opening appeared, I was there ready. I'd been tattooed by Dan Gold when he was at the shop, and I was friends with the late Jason Saga. Everyone who worked at Into You had been about for a long time, and we all looked out for each other and supported each other. It's very much a family thing."



**Lucy Prior**  
(tattooist at Into You)

Lucy moved to Into You (from Nottingham) thirteen years ago. She'd been getting tattooed by Alex, and one day he suddenly rang to say the shop needed a female tattooist to do walk-ins. "At that time, there weren't many female tattooists about. Alex said to me 'You can either continue doing walk-ins or you can develop your tattooing to do whatever you want.' There's a lot of sadness around the closing of one of the world's greatest tattoo shops," Lucy continues, "but I understand why Alex is doing it. By stopping Into You now, the shop will always remain true to what it was supposed to be. If it had been taken over, it may have deteriorated and damaged the reputation it has established – so we all understand that this had to come, and I know we can all evolve and move on. I've had a great time here. I'm very proud to have been part of Into You." Lucy's plans are to move abroad, work guest spots, semi-retire, and see where the future takes her.







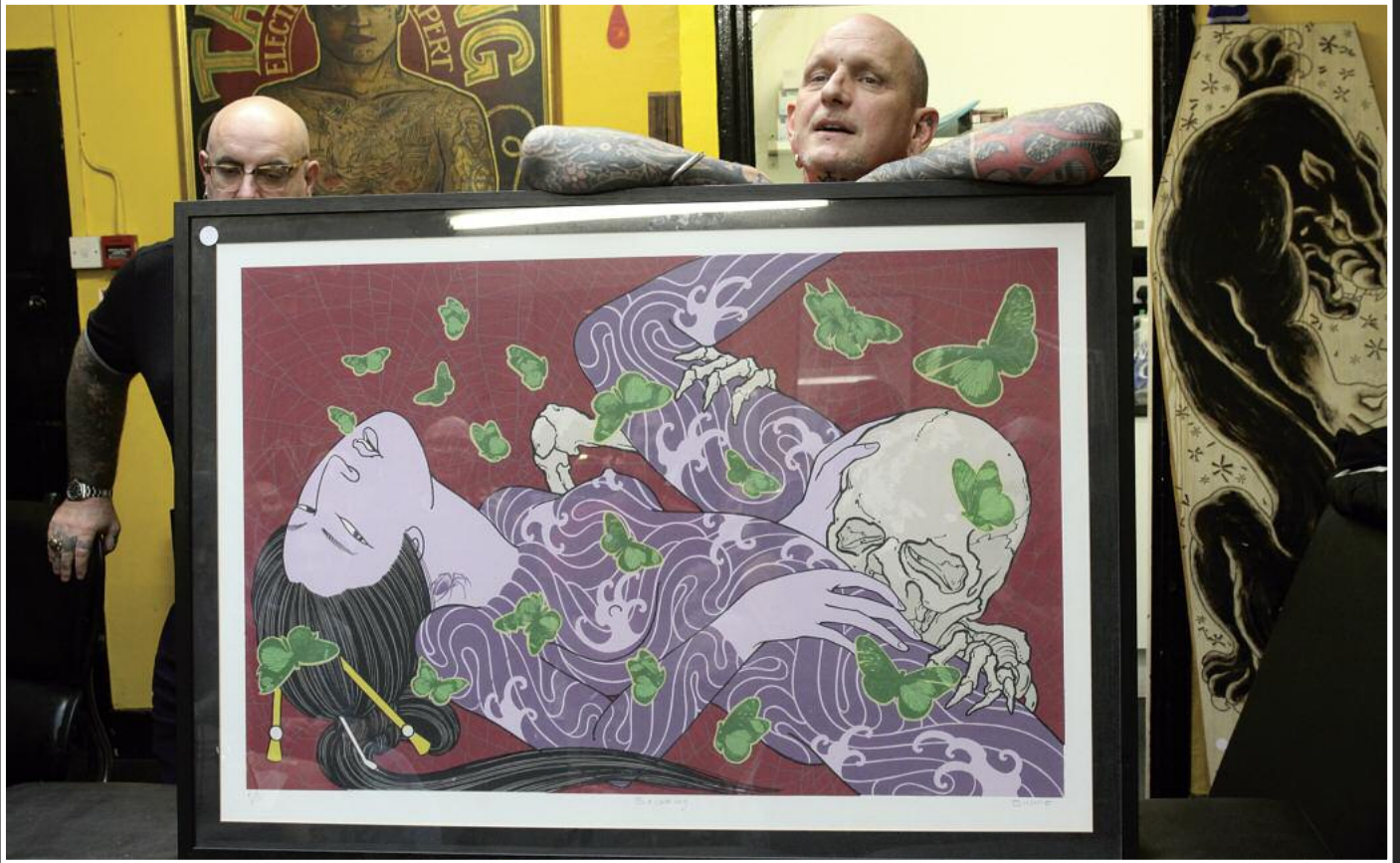
### Curly (former tattooist at Into You)

“In the late 80s, while I was living in a caravan in Wales, I went on my chopped Moto Guzzi to a party in London where Malcom McLaren and Zandra Rhodes and other trendy people were, and I met Alex Binnie, who had a couple of tattoos. This was the first time I had seen tattoos as anything other than a slight embarrassment, and the seed was sown. I was 23 years old. A few years later I started tattooing, and I met Alex again. While I was getting tattooed by him, he asked me if I wanted to work with him at Into You, which had just opened. At first it was just the two of us tattooing and



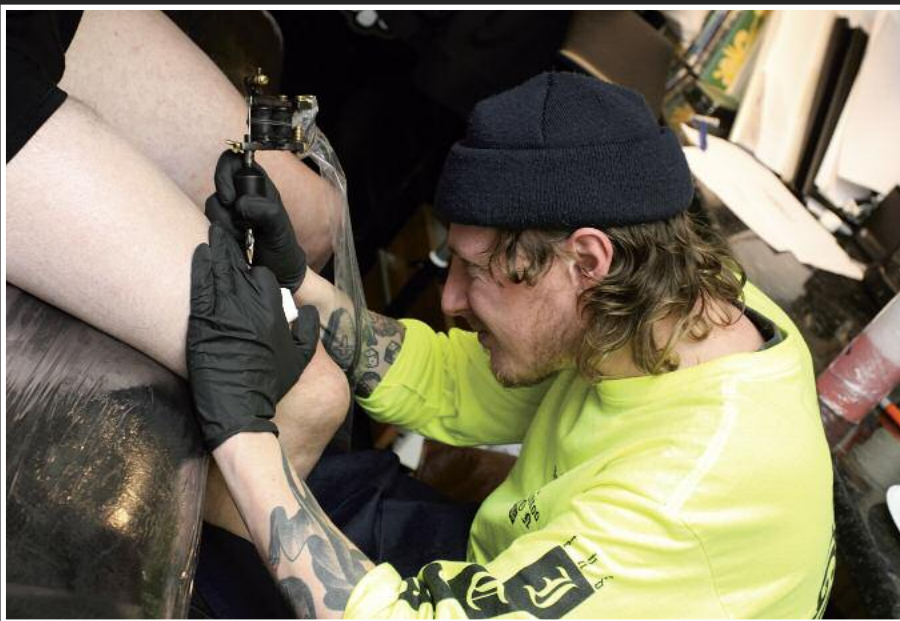
the set-up felt well removed from the tattoo shop norm of the time (which I personally had no interest in). Tattooing intensely filled my mind, and still does, and we worked steadily and gradually. I guess I developed a bit of a style, from what was initially rather naive work. I worked for the first six years of the shop's existence and I was able to spend time with some of the top tattooists of the time, many of whom worked as guests in the shop. Alex and I went to New Zealand and worked at two big conventions there, as well as the biggest one in England (Dunstable), and also the Amsterdam convention a number of times. Looking back it seems odd, but at the time it was normal to be drinking (etc!) with people like Horiyoshi III, Filip Leu, Freddy Corbin, Hanky Panky and numerous other tattoo heroes and nutters. It seemed to me that tattooing had stagnated – like a lot of other things – but Into You was different in so many ways. We, and definitely I, had absolutely no interest whatsoever in flash or any of the traditions of western tattooing. In fact I hated it all. It was critical to me that the work was individual. I still hate the mass production of art. It cancels out everything that tattooing is supposed to do and be. Into You was a place that felt separate and different from the staid traditional tattoo world. It was also a melting pot for madmen and madwomen with all their various behaviours! It is of course hard to know what my contribution to the first quarter of Into You's history was, but it shaped me as a human being and tattooist – and now, after twenty four years in the field, I feel enormously grateful to Alex Binnie and all the other interesting individuals I met at Into You. I am still obsessed with the artform. I tattooed myself last night, and I'm getting more from a friend in a minute when I finish this. Tattooing should not be dabbled with. It's not 'fun'. It hurts and it's savage, as the world is.”





**Blue  
(Into You's "shop mother")**

"I was the first receptionist at Into You back in 1993. I knew Teena Marie, the piercer who started the shop with Alex, and she asked me if I wanted to come and work there. (I'd also been tattooed by Alex in the early 90s.) I worked at Into You for a couple of years, then I left to do other things, but a few years later I was asked back. That's when it all kinda really started for me. I had more responsibility within my role - I was a bit more than just a receptionist - and the shop was always busy. There was so much amazing work coming out of it, and so many amazing artists working there. I somehow became the 'shop mother'. It was more like a family, and a home, rather than just a job. I'm so proud to have been part of this great history. I'm not sure what else to say. It's a bit difficult. Yesterday I closed the door for the last time... Into You really changed the world of tattooing. I still can't believe I was amongst it all. The next chapter for me is to open a new tattoo studio with Nikole Lowe and work again with my friends. You never know, Alex Binnie well may to a guest appearance!"



# THE FORCE IN THE FLESH

When Shane Turgeon's *The Force in the Flesh* Volume I came out in 2007, this incredible collection of Star Wars inspired body art sent ripples of excitement right across the galaxy, and it's still a highly sought-after book today. The beautifully produced and eagerly-anticipated Volume II is now available, containing more than a thousand photos documenting Star Wars tattoos (and the stories behind them) by some of the best artists on this planet. A tattoo collector himself, we met Shane at the recent Star Wars Celebration in London to talk about the project.

**Tell us about your connection to the tattoo world and your relationship with Star Wars...**

I have to say right out of the gate that despite owning a shop and writing books and articles about the industry, I'm not a tattoo artist. A lot of folks automatically assume that I am, so I like to clear that up right at the start! My initial connection to the tattoo world came from my relationship with Star Wars, and that's a relationship that's been lifelong. I was born in '77, so I was the perfect age to get sucked into the hype around *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. I grew up with the toys, and starting collecting them on a more serious level back in 1991. Over the years I've built a fairly large collection of vintage toys and made a lot of connections within the Star Wars fan community. When I was growing up, heavy metal and punk music were also a big part of my life, and that's where my appreciation of tattoos first came from. Then in 1994 *Star Wars Insider* magazine ran an article on Star Wars tattoos... and I knew what my first tattoo would be.



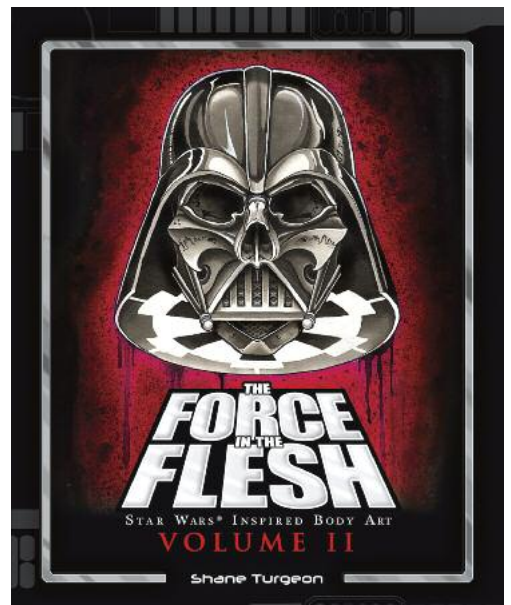
shane turgeon

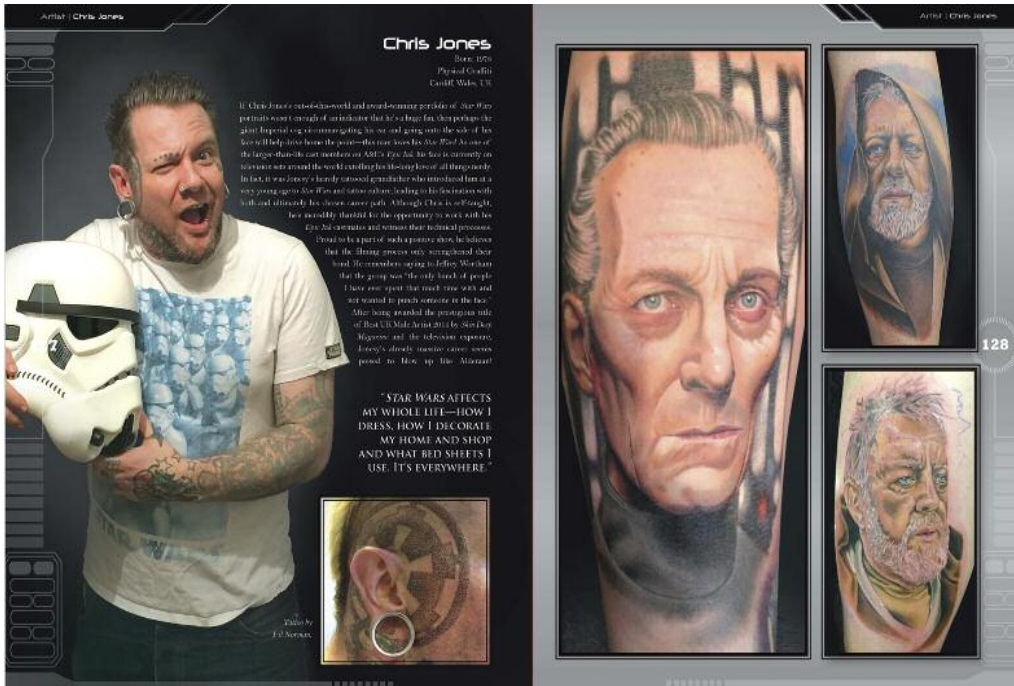


jordan croke



jordan croke





**What was that first tattoo?**

I got it in 1998, and it was an abbreviation of Straightedge done in the Star Wars Aurebesh lettering. Very soon, I followed that up with a realistic Yoda based on a well known Tsuneo Sanda painting. The Star Wars fan community was burgeoning online and I noticed a few other folks getting Star Wars tattoos as well, so I decided to build a central place for everyone to share their tattoos with one another. That website ([www.tattoosandtoys.com](http://www.tattoosandtoys.com)) became the first home for geeky tattoos on the Web. It grew quite quickly and attracted a lot of attention.



max pniewski



cecil porter



cecil porter



**And where did it all go from there?**

In 2002 I went to the Star Wars Celebration II in Indianapolis and met a lot of other like-minded fans, as well as some folks from Lucasfilm who opened a few doors for me. I wrote a follow-up article for Star Wars Insider in 2003 and in 2005 started working with Celebration organizers to include more tattoo programming for Celebration III, including the first Star Wars tattoo competition and a gallery of Star Wars-inspired paintings and art done by a number of well-known tattoo artists such as Guy Aitchison. Also at that event I started the photography for Volume I of The Force in the Flesh. Then in 2010 I opened my shop Shades of Grey in Edmonton, Alberta [Canada] – a tattoo, toy and comic shop with an accompanying art gallery as well. Since then I've continued to work with Lucasfilm bringing tattoo programming to their Celebration shows all over the world. I've also coordinated a large Star Wars-inspired art show, with thirty artists, that toured four cities in three countries. It was called Portraits from a Galaxy Far, Far Away and we published an exhibition catalogue for that event as well.



cecil porter

**Is 'The Force In The Flesh' totally your own project?**

Yessir! It's 100% my baby. Self-financed, self-published, and self-distributed. To say it's a labour of love would be an understatement! I interviewed all of the artists myself, and wrote all of the bios. An incredibly talented designer named Jeff Correll was the visionary behind the look of the series. He and I worked together on how everything would come together. Once the book was ready it was printed by Palace Press, who were fantastic.

**What made you decide to do the first volume?**

I've always loved big, beautiful art books. And you have to keep in mind that when Volume I was published, social media was not the beast that it is today. Art books were still flourishing, and in many cases they were the only way you could see some of this stuff. I felt that it was important to document not only the collectors and the artists and their art, but their stories as well. A lot of people don't realise that the books are more than just photos. There are some pretty wonderful stories about each of the people featured that you don't necessarily get anywhere else. For me, the stories are the most important part of the books.

**How did you decide on who to include and who to leave out?**

For Volume I it was pretty easy. Back then, there wasn't anywhere near the amount of people specialising in Star Wars or other geeky tattoos that there is now. Neither the tattoo or geek communities were anywhere near as supportive of this as they are today. While I may have missed a few folks, the artists that are featured in that volume were really the only guys out there doing it at the time and they were all people that I had personal relationships with. Fast-forward to 2013 when I started laying the groundwork for Volume II and there were a ton of people I'd never even heard of doing Star Wars tattoos. After I'd set the line-up for that one, I kept meeting more and more people that I would have loved to have featured but I had to stick to what I had. It was a shame to leave out so many talented folks but I guess that's what a *potential* Volume III would cover.



thom tijdink



thom Tijdink



luis vella gomez



max pniewski

**What were the most difficult aspects of the project?**

To be honest, I think the hardest part of self-publishing comes right after the book has been released. By the time the book gets printed, you're already so exhausted from the process of writing itself, and dealing with all the logistics and the various curve balls that get thrown your way, that the monumental task of marketing, promotion, sales and shipping becomes a bit of a monster. It takes all the excitement away from the accomplishment of seeing your book in print.

**You've visited lots of international conventions. Do you notice any difference between Star Wars fans around the world or are they all fanatical?**

I'm always loathe to use the word fanatical. To me that's something extreme and unhealthy. What Star Wars fans are is passionate, [===== 'passionate' in italics, followed by comma=====] and that passion runs the world over. One of the great things about Star Wars is that it bonds people together across continents and language barriers. Star Wars fans are generally some of the warmest, kindest, most welcoming people I've ever met – no matter where in the world I'm meeting them.

**Are there any future plans for The Force in The Flesh?**

Right now I'm toying with the idea of doing a Kickstarter campaign to reprint Volume I. One of the biggest complaints we get is that the first one has been out of print for so long and people want the pair. So I'm trying to put together an enticing campaign that would allow the first one to see print again and be released some time in 2017.

**What do you see as the cultural significance of the Star Wars franchise?**

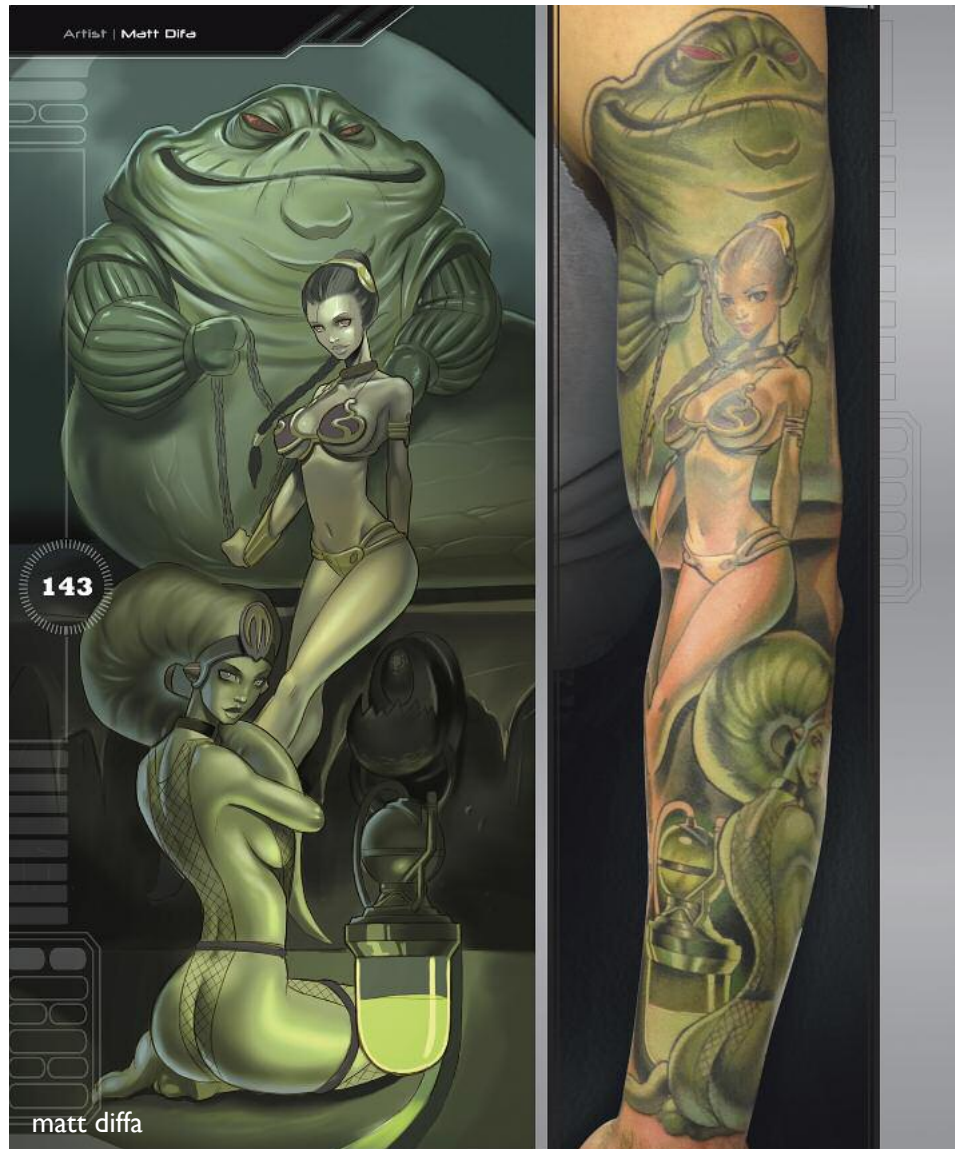
That's a pretty broad question that could be answered in a number of ways. For me, the ultimate significance of the Star Wars franchise is not the tattoos or the merchandise or even the movies themselves – it's the community. It's something I write about in depth in the introduction to Volume II. In a nutshell, the Star Wars community is global, it's far-reaching and it has the power to bring people together in the most extraordinary ways. Fan groups become online neighbourhoods, conventions replace church, charity drives raise millions of dollars a year and lifelong friendships are formed in the process of it all. It's quite an extraordinary thing to be part of!



cecil porter



javi antunez



matt diffa



cecil porter

**If someone wanted to join the Star Wars tattoo world what should they do?**

Research, research, research! It hurts my heart day-in and day-out to see so many people still getting really bad Star Wars tattoos. There are incredible artists the world over who are chomping at the bit to do Star Wars tattoos and your first step would be to find them. Sit down with them and discuss what you're looking for, listen to their input, and work together to come up with a cool design. The nice thing about finding a fellow Star Wars fan to do your tattoo is that they're going to get it. They're going to put the same amount of love and passion for the franchise into your tattoo that made you want to get that tattoo in the first place.

**You have many other strings to your bow...**

Yes, and everything that I've done in my career is in some way related to everything else. I started organising comic conventions around the same time the website started to grow, which led to making it much easier to coordinate organizing things with Lucasfilm. Working in management in my previous career in television gave me a lot of the tools I needed to write my books and publish them – to bring those projects to fruition. And I guess all of the experiences I've had in both my career and personal life have helped me keep a level head through it all.

**Are there any artists you would like to work with in the future?**

Definitely! Too many to name! It seems like every time I turn around there are new people out there doing incredibly innovative things in the Star Wars tattoo world. If (and it's a very big if!) there is ever a Volume III of the series, I have a long list of folks I'd like to include.

**Do you have a favourite Star Wars moment?**

There have been so many amazing moments! I wouldn't even know where to begin to



jordan croke



adam guy hayes

choose a favourite but here are a few...Visiting the Skywalker Ranch is always pretty special. And I toured the ancient Mayan city of Tikal in Guatemala, which was used as a filming location in A New Hope, with Lorne Peterson who was a model maker on the original films and who oversaw the original shoot there in 1976. Knowing that Robin Williams received a copy of Volume I a few months before his death and loved the book (something I write about in Volume II) was profoundly surreal and definitely one of the most special moments I've had in doing this project. And honestly, just being able to travel the world with a like-minded group of friends, numerous times over, and share in those life-changing experiences that travel brings, all because we share a mutual love of some silly sci-fi movies, man, those will forever be the some of the best experiences of my life.

**If you could change anything about The Force in the Flesh what would it be?**

I'd like better distribution for this volume, to be honest. I think that's the one and only thing I've struggled with and would like to change. I'm incredibly proud of how the second volume came together and I love the response it gets from those who purchase it. I would really love to get it into more hands. If anyone is interested in purchasing wholesale copies of the book or carrying them in their stores, I can be reached through our website [www.theforceintheflesh.com](http://www.theforceintheflesh.com)



pawel jankowzki



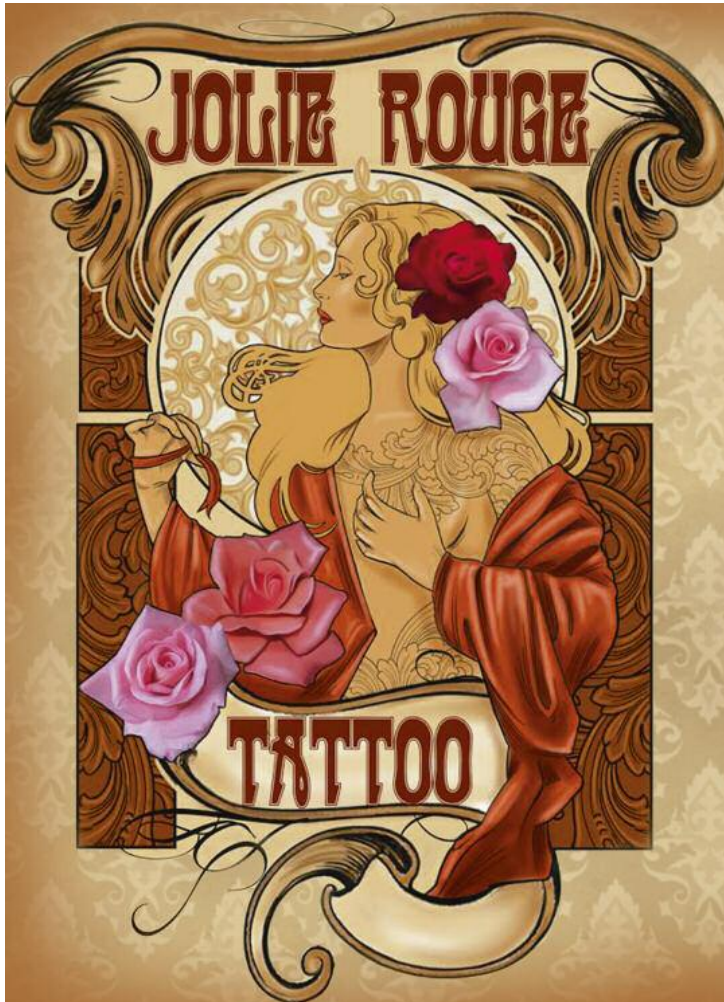
chris 51



thom



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### Artists

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

**R**ese Hilburn is a tattooist and fine artist who shot to fame in the hit US television show 'Tattoo Nightmares'. Since then, she's been gallivanting around the world, tattoo machine in hand, and currently she can be found at Luckys Tattoo Parlor in downtown San Diego, California.

**What was your first memory of tattoos?**

Living on the beach you are exposed to tattoos early on because, well, we beach dwellers don't wear much clothing! I always found the designs intriguing, like a child seeing something shiny; just mesmerising. In high school I had Surf PE, and our surf instructor had tattoos. I was hooked on the idea of being tattooed. Not just one or two - I wanted to be heavily tattooed.

**And did you always want to be a model or an actor?**

No, I never planned it all. My father wanted my brother and myself to be child actors, but we didn't like it. I chose sports at school and for a long time I told myself I would never get in front of a camera again. I wanted a stable desk job, so I pursued a career as an accountant. I actually already had my sleeve at that time. I loved the idea of becoming a tattoo artist, but it wasn't until I was in my 20s that I found out I could draw!

**How did you get into tattooing?**

A flyer for a 'wine and paint' night came through my door - and I love wine, so I thought "What the hell, why not?" even though I'd never painted before. I ended up selling my first painting for a pretty penny... pretty enough to think that maybe I had a talent for it. So I quit accountancy, went back to school to study Fine Art, and became a full time artist. At one of my gallery shows a guy came up to me and asked if I'd ever thought about tattooing. I said yes! I'd tried getting an apprenticeship, but either the artists

didn't have time or they didn't want a female working in the shop, so when this opportunity came along I jumped at it and held on tight.

**As a tattooist, how would you describe your style?**

I love to mix styles. At the moment I particularly enjoy dotwork geometry and mandalas mixed with realistic elements. I am mostly known for my black and grey realism, my portraits and my painterly colour tattoos.

**And your own tattoos...?**

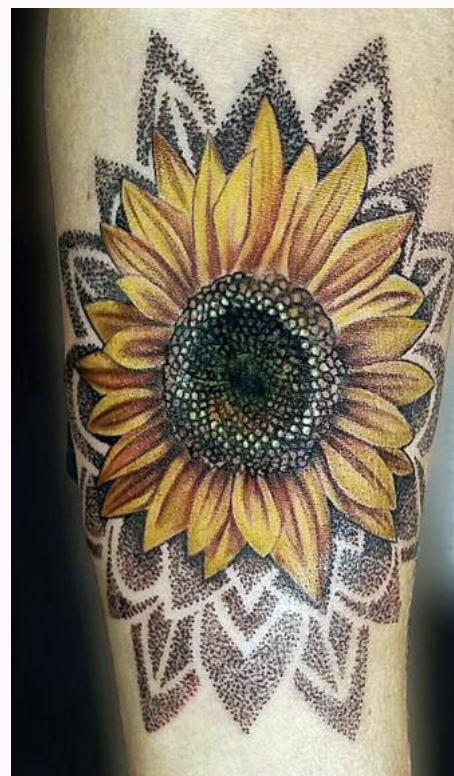
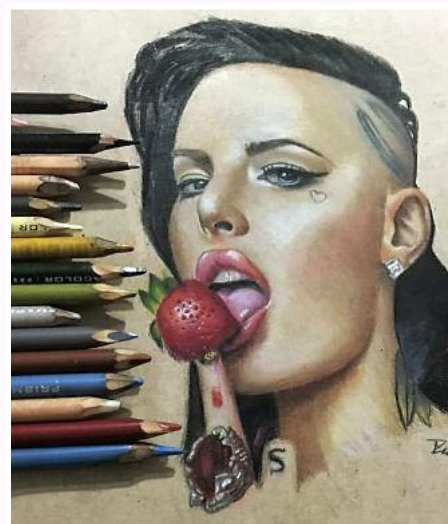
My body will always be a work in progress. There's no rhyme or reason to my ink. I get tattoos to remember an experience, and not really for the content of the design. They're like a souvenir of a place I've been to, or a memory of an amazing time I'd like to remember forever.

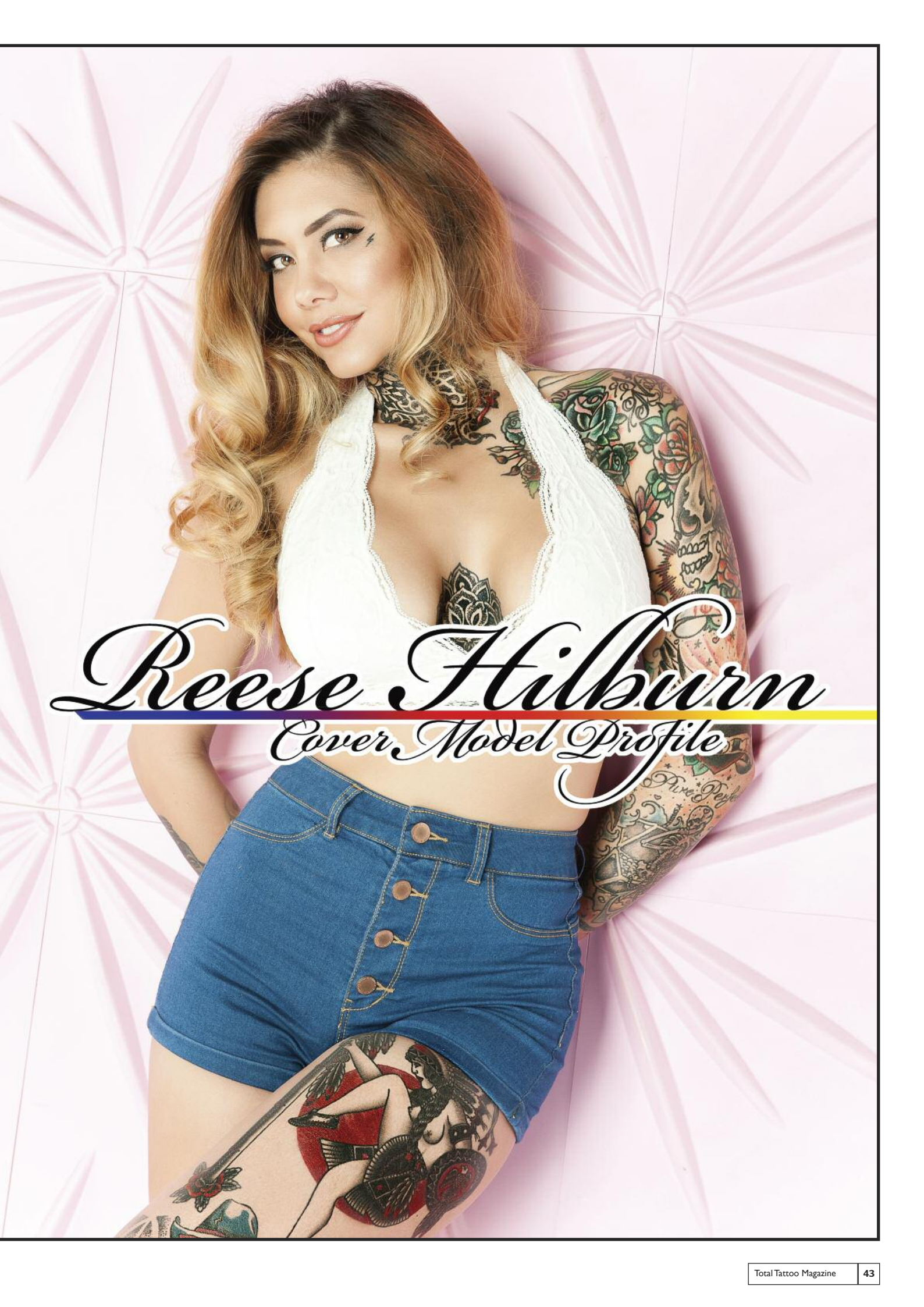
**What do you look for in a tattooist?**

Drive. I can admire even a mediocre tattoo artist if they work hard for what they want and constantly push themselves to do better.

**Do you feel that tattooing is still a very male-dominated industry?**

Females are on the up and up these days, but I think this is a very recent thing. On my travels this year, I met some of the top female tattoo artists who I've looked up to in the past (and who I can now call friends!) but in previous years I didn't come across so many female artists. It's nice to see that we're getting out there and pushing creativity to its limits.





*Reese Hilburn*  
*Cover Model Profile*

### How did your role in the TV show come about?

Actually I was contacted through Facebook. I thought it was a scam at first, because they kept sending a copy-and-paste style message, and I asked them to stop messaging me. But someone got back to me asking me to call their number so that they could explain... and suddenly I was booked in for an audition. I can't believe I actually accepted (remembering that moment when I was younger, and how I'd decided I would never get back in front of a camera again). I was cast for a different show at first, and I actually turned it down. I wondered whether I'd done the right thing at the time, but I always listen to my instincts and I stuck to my decision. A few months later they called me and offered me 'Tattoo Nightmares'.



### How do you feel you were represented on the show?

I got really lucky. The makers of 'Tattoo Nightmares' considered us (the artists) to be the heroes of the story, so they were always trying to make sure that we were shown in the best possible light. The drama was the messed-up tattoo on the client. My personality on the show (hyper, happy, optimistic) is me in a nutshell!

### What have been the reactions from others within the industry?

So far I've only had really great feedback from my fellow artists. One or two have lashed out via social media, but that doesn't count - because if you don't have the balls to say it to my face, then you're just making yourself look silly.



### Do you get recognised in the street?

Yes, it used to happen all the time. But not so much now that I've gone blonde. (On the show I had long black hair.) I get recognised the most in South America, where the show re-runs year round. I take it in my stride. It doesn't bother me too much. I don't think I'm that famous.

### What have been the best and worst things about being on a tattoo TV show?

The best part is all the travelling I get to do - while spreading my love of art through tattoos! I do what I love and I make a living doing it, and the show only helped boost my career. I can't help but be grateful for it. The only bad thing about it is the creepier fanatics. The letters and gifts I receive are sometimes a bit sketchy... but they do make for great stories...





**Tell us about your other artistic activities.**

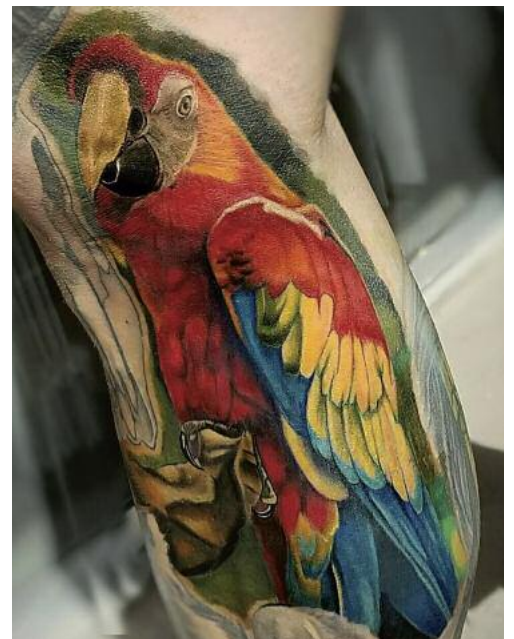
I like to paint with oils and draw with coloured pencils. I usually draw in airport bars and lounges... It's a great way to pass the time on layovers. Painting, well, I do that in the comfort of my own home, with a glass of whiskey and some good tunes.

**Any new projects coming up?**

Right now I'm opening up my own shop in Carlsbad CA. It's called The Anatomist and I'm very excited about it. I'm also going to be picking up my travels again. I'll be going to Rio in January and Bologna in March. So if you're going to be there too, be sure to say hello!

**How do we connect with you?**

I have all of the social media - Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc - and they're all under the username **TheArtOfReese**. My website is [www.itsreese.com](http://www.itsreese.com) and if you'd like to get tattooed, email me at [reese@itsreese.com](mailto:reese@itsreese.com)



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# GALWAY TATTOO SHOW

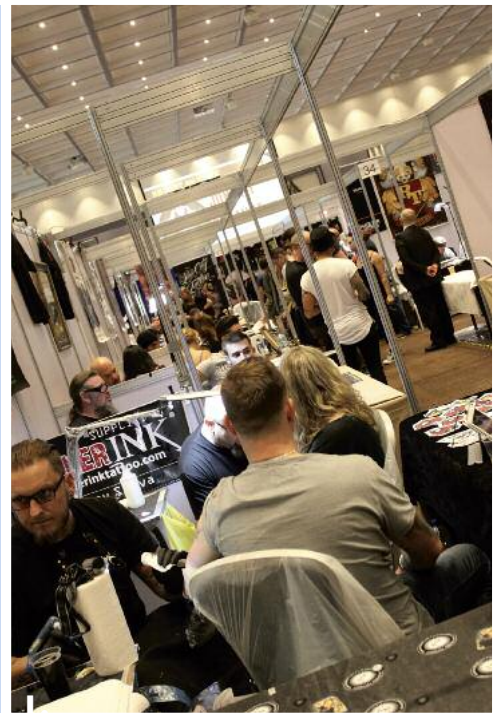
I had the great privilege of visiting the first Galway Tattoo Convention a couple of years ago. I remember having an amazing time, so accepting the invitation to return for this year's show was a bit of a no-brainer. Once again it was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel near the centre of town. After the typical Friday night set up, it was off to O'Connell's Bar for the pre-show welcome party, which soon established the tone for the weekend. Lots of people turned up, including artists, traders and visitors, and everyone had a chance to hang out and make friends.

The convention opened early on the Saturday morning and it was pretty evident from the off that it would be a busy weekend. Around one hundred and twenty tattooists came to ply their trade. Naturally there was a strong representation from Ireland including some excellent artists: Remis, Willy G, Angus from Awol, Isaiah from Fat Cat Tattoo, and dotwork master Dave Barry. From the UK came Chris Jones from Physical Graffiti, Will Sparling from Black Dog Tattoos, Sam Ford of Silver Needles and relative newcomer Alex Whiley. There were many more and I would urge you to visit the website ([www.galwaytattooshow.ie](http://www.galwaytattooshow.ie)) for a more complete list.

The show took place in the hotel's large function suite, which has a line of columns through the centre making a natural divide between the artist booths and the entertainment area with its stage and bar. Over the weekend the stage played host to a myriad of performances from bands, plus a hula hoop artist, a body painting contest, and the judging for the tattoo competitions but without doubt the highlight for me was tattooist Jorge Becerra's display of mind reading and magic, which was... well... magic!

The after-show party on the Saturday night took place in the hotel and was open to all – customers, artists and traders alike – and Sunday was a re-run of the previous day with the added extra of slight blurriness and a strange pain in the head region! The tattoo competitions were well attended and, as you would expect, there was some really great pieces to choose from. Best of Show was a traditional eagle by Stephen Daly from Ravenstooth Tattoo.

Galway is one of the most relaxed and fun shows you could wish to visit. The super friendly Irish hospitality is evident everywhere, both at the convention and around the town. Many of the people I spoke to mentioned how much they were enjoying themselves and how much they wanted to return. Judging by the sore heads on the coach on the way home the weekend had been an amazing success. If you've not been and you want a true Irish experience, I suggest

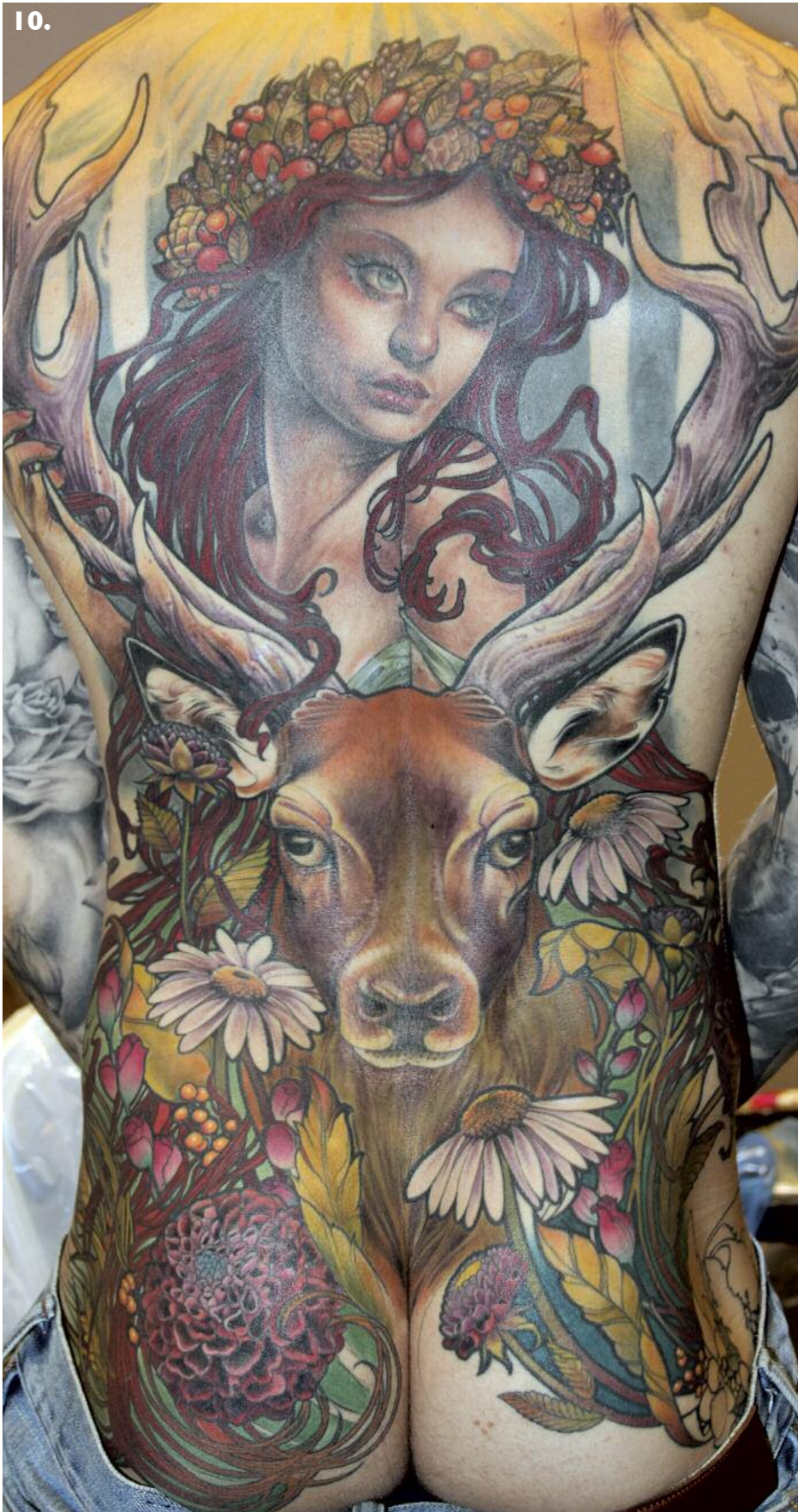


1. the venue, the radisson blu hotel
2. isaiah cummings, fatcat tattoo (ireland)
3. will sparling, black dog tattoo









- 4. lewis king, crooked rook
- 5. stephen daly, ravenstooth (ireland)
- 6. unknown artist
- 7. endre szabo, tattoo end
- 8. dave barry
- 9. chris jones, physical graffiti

- 10. sam ford, silver needles
- 11. rich harris, dark horse collective
- 12. jorge becerra, carpe somnium art
- 13. the cannonball run came to town





14. abbie williams, lost time  
 15. unknown artist  
 16. peppe gallá, adhd tattoo  
 17. maja bohemiën, the ink factory  
 18. edel walsh, eden art tattoo  
 19. state of the arts, body painting

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# GALLERY

anrijs straume,  
bold as brass tattoo company



max rathbone, second city tattoo club



anna garvey, adorned tattoo



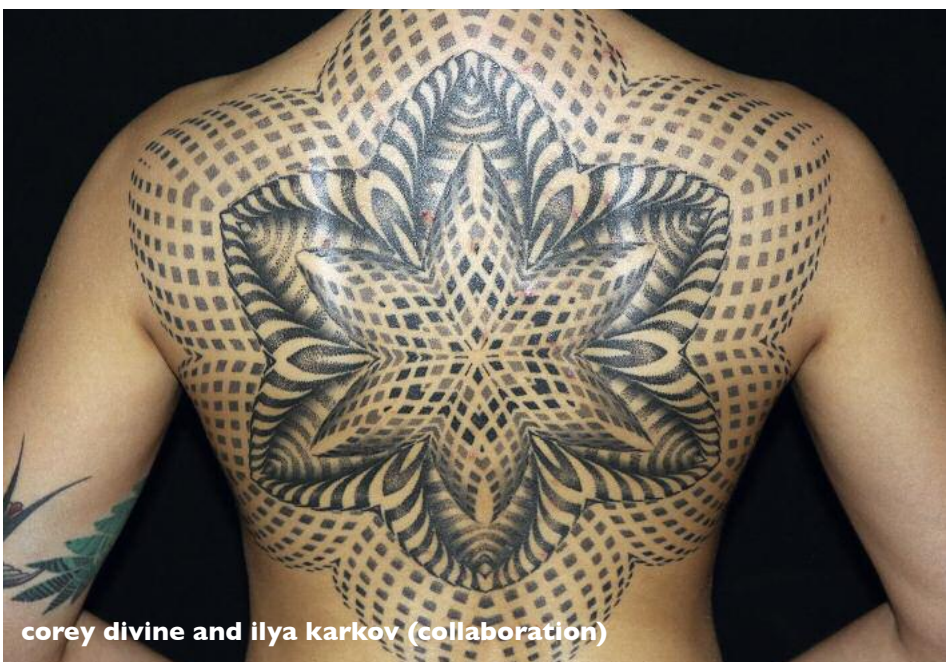
dan frye, angelic hell



**mathieu varga, varga's ink (france)**



**max pniewski,  
southmead tattoo**



**corey divine and ilya karkov (collaboration)**



**bob tyrrell,  
night gallery (usa)**



**jak connolly**



yarda , mystic eye tattoo (spain)



mark ford, jolie rouge



alex rattray,  
red hot and blue



dave barry,  
follow your dreams



natalie petals puppet  
angelic hell



**benjamin iaukis,  
the black mark (australia)**



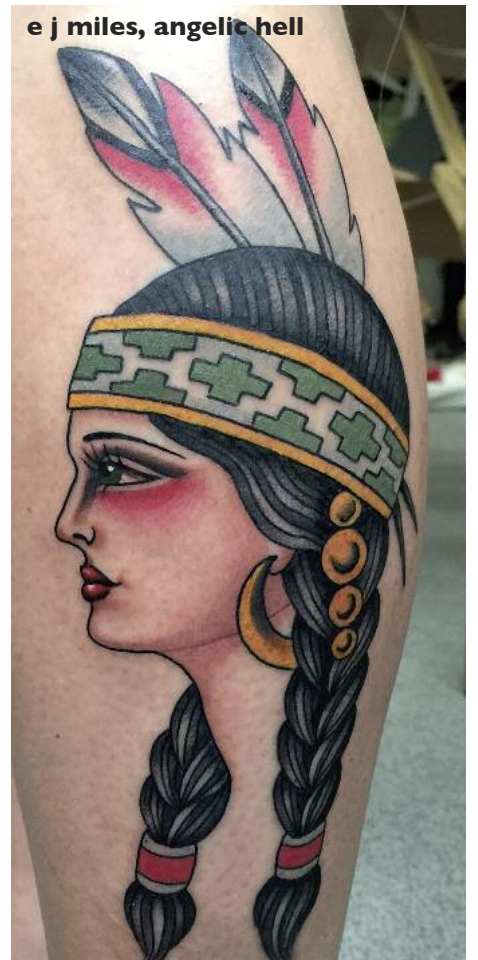
**patrick mcfarlane, black freighter tattoo company**



**kurt marlow,  
goodall street  
tattoo parlour**



**steve butcher  
ship shape tattoo (new zealand)**



**e j miles, angelic hell**





joe carpenter, five keys



jason colley, dragonfly tattoo



elliott wells, triplesix studio



jim orie, dragon tattoo (holland)



leo, hope and glory

**matt adamson,  
northside tattooz**



**pioneer, (russia)**



**han maud, infinite ink**



**alan aldred, cosmic tattoo**



ben carter, adorn tattoo



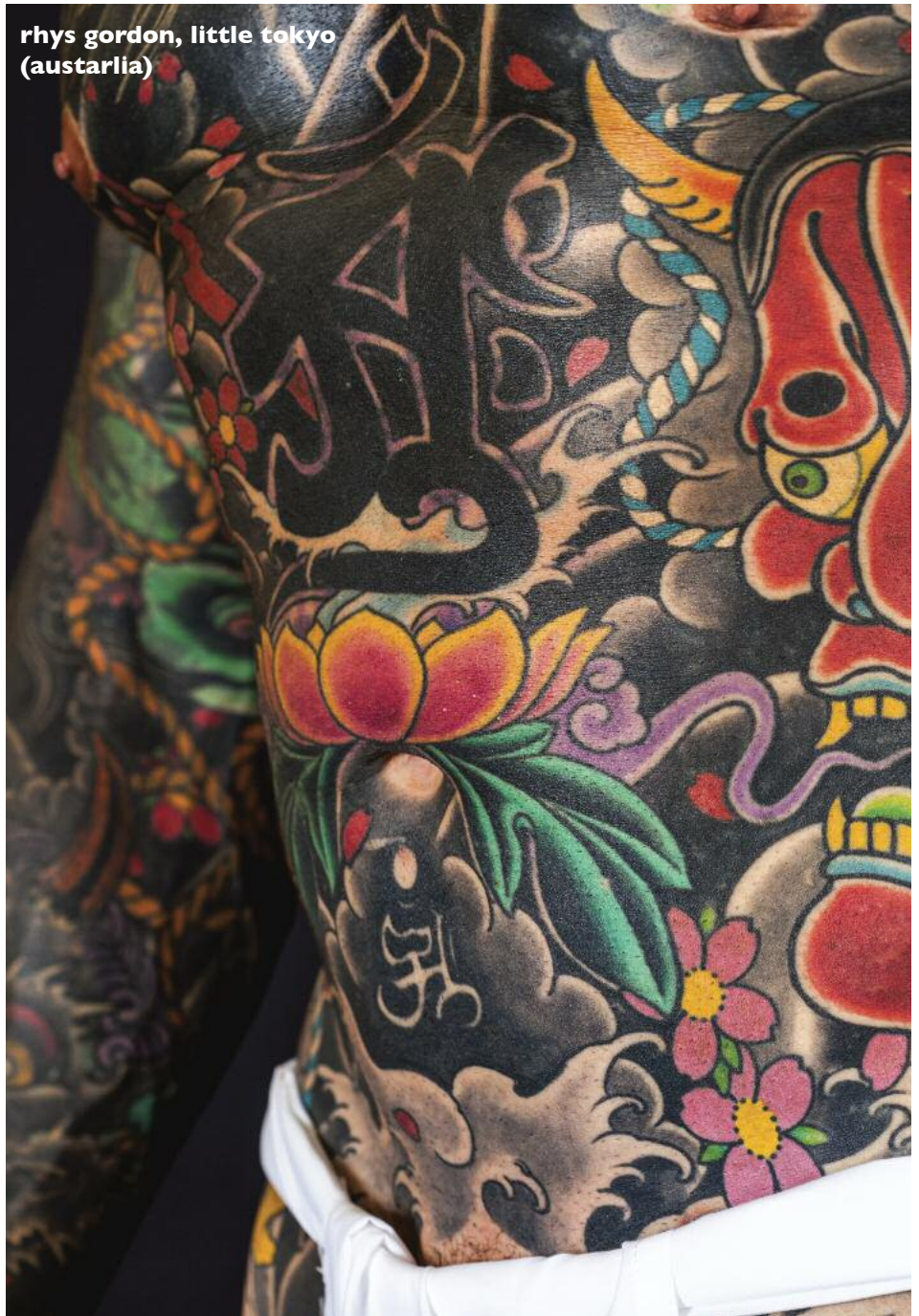
millie koh,  
utopia tattoo (singapore)



yves kreatvyes objects



jordan croke, second skin



rhys gordon, little tokyo  
(austarlia)



steve butcher,

**Nadia Alnassiri**  
**Abz Mills**  
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Words by Perry • Pictures by Mukesh

# Mukesh Waghela

## Moksha tattoo studio

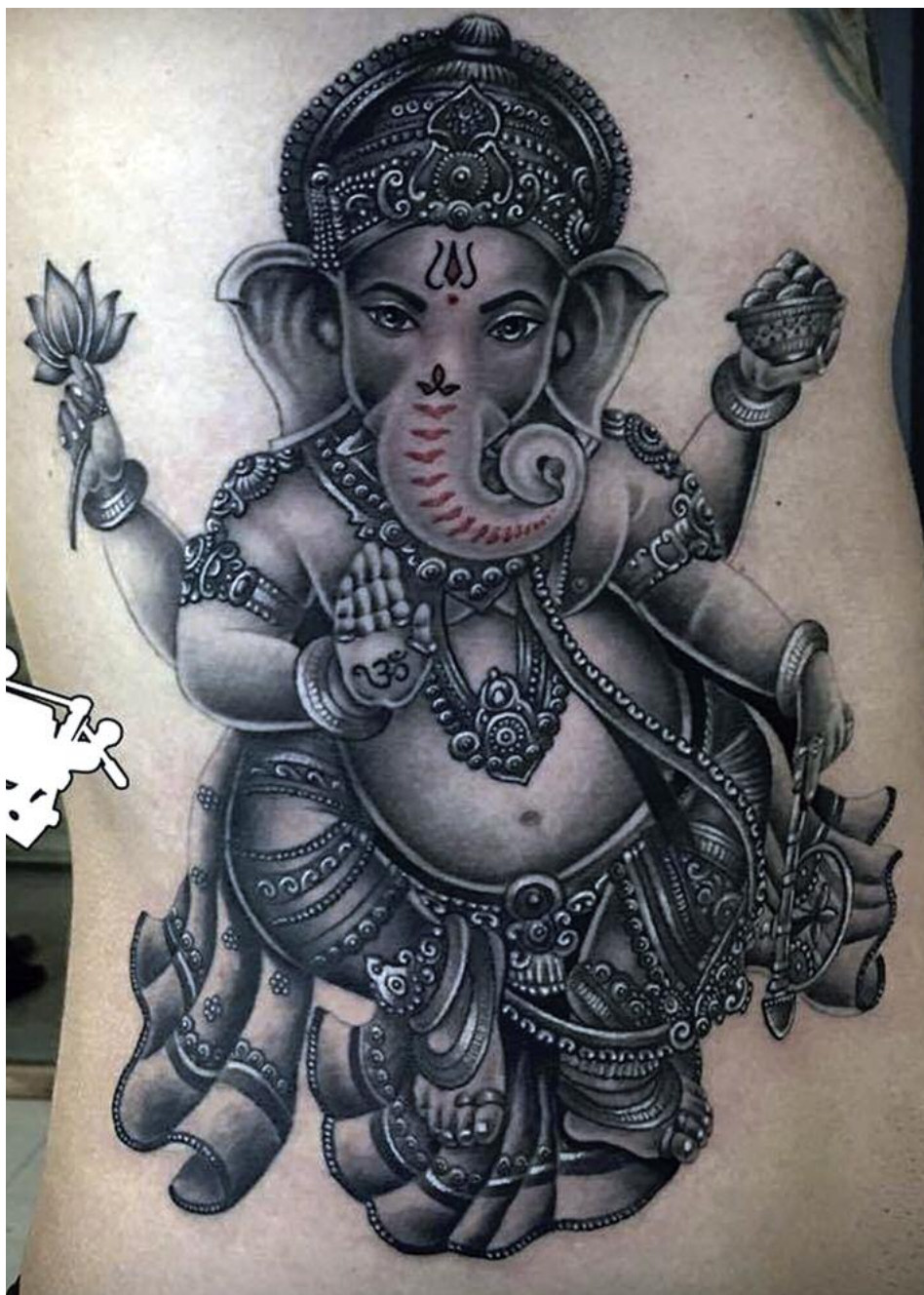
**W**estern style tattooing is still very much a new thing in India. It's incredible to see the advances being made, and to see the artists' insatiable ambition and positive drive. One of the pioneers of this new movement is Mukesh Waghela, who has been tattooing in the Goa region for about 12 years. He's a rare find, and he's established a reputation for super smooth black and grey realism that compares with anyone around the world.

I start our conversation by asking Mukesh whether he feels a bit like the leader of an artistic movement? "I've been tattooing for quite a long time now. There are obviously older tattooists, but among the 'new style' tattooists I am certainly considered a bit of an old-timer! Tattooing in India is in a good place right now. It's growing very fast and we're helping others to become better tattooists by teaching about hygiene and proper working practices. I also do my own workshops on black-and-grey. Tattooing is very young here and we can create a strong industry."



“I have four studios,” Mukesh continues, “and they are all in and around Goa.” Coming from the West, the idea of having four studios in one area seems rather alien to me, but as Mukesh explains, it’s a family thing. “I had two tattoo studios, and members of my family wanted to be tattooists as well. They’re good artists, and they have lots of passion, so I said OK, let’s do it together. We have a great partnership and they all do nice work. I’m helping my family, and I’m establishing my name at the same time.”

I ask Mukesh to tell me about how he became a tattooist. “I was fortunate to be really good at drawing whilst at school,” Mukesh tells me, “and I managed to win some prizes in art competitions. I love the creativity of tattooing. When I first started, I had such a great response. I knew I’d always love doing this.” Mukesh found drawing easy, but realised that the challenge would lie in mastering the technical aspects of tattooing. “There are so many things to learn. It’s not just the image. There’s the hygiene, the needles, the ink and the machines. I learnt a lot from my friends, then when I felt ready I searched online for a good tattoo school. I found one in Thailand that had won awards, and I emailed them telling them I wanted to learn how to tattoo properly. They asked to see my work and my drawings, then we made the arrangements for me to go there. It was a fifteen-day course, and it was very expensive – especially as I decided to pay for a friend to come with me. It was the first time I’d ever been outside of India, and I was too afraid to go on my own.”





I ask Mukesh if he feels he learnt enough in fifteen days to justify the expense? “They certainly taught me the practical aspects of tattooing, but of course the art has to come from the inside. I went back every year to do follow-up courses. I know now that I can always do a good job.” Tattoo schools are a very contentious issue in the UK, but it seems that around the world things are viewed very differently. Mukesh believes that they are a good thing – and that if the teachers are knowledgeable, then the training is worthwhile.

When I ask him about his preferred tattoo style, Mukesh becomes very animated. He tells me he is excited about every tattoo style. “I love Japanese, dotwork, realism, American traditional... I love learning how to do everything! I am very fortunate that my name is getting known and people are coming to get tattooed by me. Tattooing someone is a big responsibility and I am always trying to get better and better at it. I want my clients to come back and I want them to recommend me to their friends. If you are a skilled artist and you work hard, I believe you can have a good future tattooing in India. The bad tattooists will fail, because as clients become more educated, they will not go back to them.”



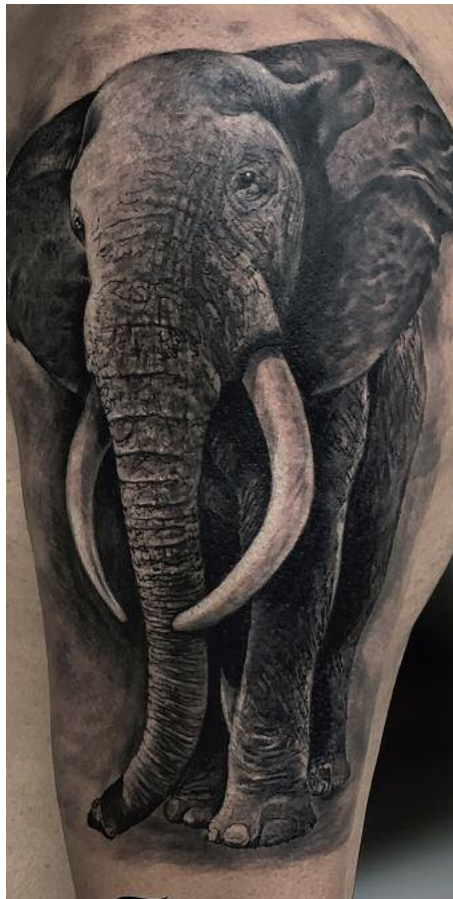
Technology is beginning to have more of an impact on Indian art, Mukesh tells me. “Before, I used to do a lot of sketching and a lot of drawing for my tattoos. Now it's easy to go on the computer and find an image - but still, as an artist, I like to draw and create original designs. If I see a great piece done by another artist, I always want to take that piece and do my own version of it,” Mukesh continues, “so my work changes as I allow myself to be influenced by the artists around me – people like my friend Sunny Bhanushali for instance. And the same thing happens in the other direction too. And now that we have tattoo conventions in India, we're able to meet so many more great artists. When I first started there were very few people who were interested in tattooing as a career. There are now many more, but it's still a very small number compared to the overall population. And unfortunately there are not many who are good artists as well as good tattooists. There are a lot of shit tattooists out there who are only interested in making money – and if you're only thinking of the money you'll never be a good artist.”





We talk for a bit about different skin types. “English people and other Europeans with lighter skin can usually be tattooed much more quickly. “Darker Indian skin needs two, three or even four sittings to build up the tones in the tattoo,” Mukesh tells me. “We have to touch up a lot. But of course it’s easy for our local Indian clients to come back to the studio.”

At the Goa tattoo convention earlier this year Mukesh spent his time working on just one piece on a Westerner with white skin. I ask him about the strategy behind this. “I wanted to really showcase my art,” he tells me, “so we worked solidly. It was a demonstration piece to show people my ability. My plan worked, because I took bookings for three new appointments right after the show. Having that piece photographed and published will also be good for me in the future I hope.” On a personal level, though, Mukesh is not looking to be a famous. He is not interested in getting caught up in some sort of league table of tattooists. What he loves most is the art of tattooing – working in his studio, creating a piece that makes his customer happy. From that he takes great joy and satisfaction.





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Like many of the artists we met in India, Mukesh is an incredibly warm, friendly person, and very appreciative of every opportunity to develop his art. I ask if one day he would like to travel to Europe to attend some conventions outside of India. "Yes, I love to travel and I love meeting new people. Every time I meet a new artist I learn a little more. I want to get the chance to work with lots of other artists, which is why I enjoy conventions. I see Indian art influencing tattoos in the West. The Ganesha that I did at the Goa convention was very important to me. I really wanted to use my own cultural reference to showcase my work here amongst all those international artists."

Fellow tattooist Sunny Bhanushali, who is sitting in on our conversation, speaks highly of Mukesh's achievements. "Mukesh has always been there, right from the beginning, and he's always been willing to help and share knowledge. He's a major influence on lots of younger tattooists. He has ten to fifteen students a month who come to him for advice and training. He teaches them about hygiene and the importance of good working practices. It's through this method of direct education that we can make tattooing in India better and safer for everyone. We are always pushing to be the best we can, especially with the hygiene issue, which was the biggest problem here. We all have families, so it's as important for us to protect ourselves as it is for us to protect our customers."





Mukesh is 33, and has five children with another on the way. "They are like gifts from God," he says. He goes on to tell me more of his personal philosophy. "For me, I don't want anything. I have no desire for material goods. I only ever want to tattoo. When I first meet my customer, we talk. I like to find out about their life, and I ask them what sort of tattoo they want. I really love to create something meaningful that is connected with who they are. If they want a butterfly, I ask why, and what sort of butterfly, and what does it mean to them. If it means nothing, I may talk more with them and find something that has a better connection to them – something that they will love for the rest of their lives. It is important for me that there is a spiritual and cultural significance in the work that I do."



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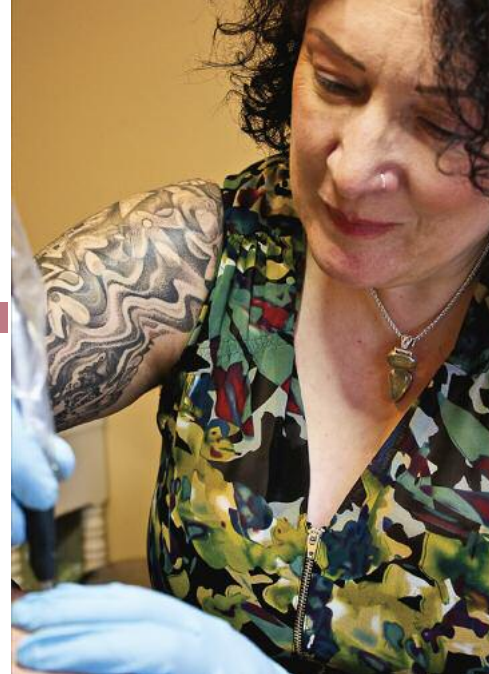
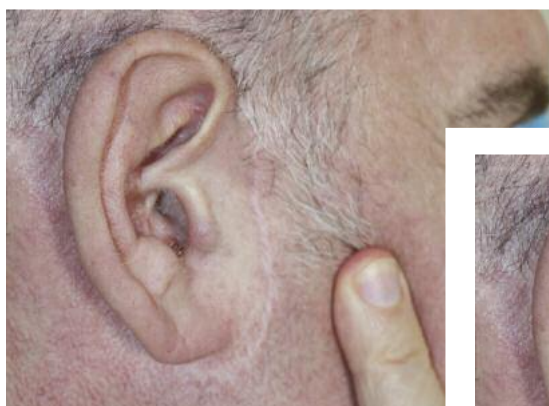
by Alice Snape

**Just like traditional tattooing, the idea of permanent make-up is steeped in history – from ancient Egyptian women staining their lips with plant extract to wartime women faking a stocking seam when hosiery was difficult to buy. Whether it's by enhancing eyebrows or improving the appearance of scars, cosmetic tattooists all over the country are helping people to reclaim their bodies and feel more confident. These really are therapeutic tattoos.**

**O**ver the last couple of years in the UK, there's been a huge surge in the popularity of cosmetic tattooing – particularly eyebrows. And the practice has certainly come along way from the thick, obvious block-shaped brows we have all seen in the horror stories that are rife on social media. If you choose an experienced practitioner, over-plucked and weak brows can be remedied, full eyebrows can be perfected, and the appearance of hairs can be re-created for clients who have lost their brows due to chemotherapy or conditions such as alopecia.

The eyebrow trend was catapulted into the mainstream by reality TV series 'The Only Way is Essex' and now permanent make-up artists are popping up all over the UK – to saturation point in some areas of the country. And it's not just eyebrows on their repertoire. There are nipples, eyeliner, lipstick, and treatments to hide scars. The incredible, empowering thing is that a person can choose the way they want to look – regardless of what their bodies have been through. Cosmetic tattooing can truly help people to regain lost confidence.

Tattoos are often seen as making the wearer stand out from the crowd – but here, the aim is to achieve exactly the opposite. I spoke to Campbell, 21, from London, who got micropigmentation on his eyebrows as he suffers from alopecia areata (which had caused him to lose his natural eyebrows and eyelashes). “It can be really upsetting when you have no control over a change in your appearance. But my new brows have really given me a huge boost of confidence. I like the feeling of knowing that my problem isn't noticeable now.”



Eyebrow treatments should enhance brows, rather than overpower them. A cosmetic brow should look as though it belongs on your face – like it was always there. But with some practitioners offering brow tattoos for as little as £100, that isn't always achieved. 'Good tattoos aren't cheap, cheap tattoos aren't good' is as true for cosmetic tattooing as it is for any other kind of ink. Lisa, of Beautiful Ink in Brighton, has chosen to specialise in eyebrow corrections and removals for exactly this reason. “I've seen some grim cases in my time,” she told me. “You won't believe the photos people send me asking if their brows can be fixed. It's a false economy if you go to someone cheap, as you will end up having to spend more trying to get them fixed!” Permanent make-up artist Helen Porter is in agreement. “When choosing an artist, don't go on price,” she says. “If it's too cheap there's a reason. Do your research. It costs a lot more to fix a bad job than it does to pay a skilled practitioner to do a great job the first time round.” “Make sure you look at experienced practitioners who have qualified with a reputable company,” advises Rachel Pitman, an elite

technician and artist working in London. “If you like the work in their portfolio, and the way they communicate with you, then you're probably in reliable hands. Ask all the questions you need answered, and choose someone you feel comfortable with.”



During the session, the artist will draw on the shape with pencil first. “This is very important, so that you know exactly what shape you'll be getting,” explains Helen. “The colour will be discussed and you will be given a choice of hairstrokes or powder finish. The effects will initially look bold and a little heavy for 5-7 days, but the skin will gently shed and leave a much softer colour. There is a huge selection of colours available so every hair colour can be catered for.”

Cosmetic tattoos can help to reclaim physical appearance after trauma, and one of the most important treatments is MediTatus, or as Lisa dubs it “dry tattooing” (because it's just like tattooing, but without the ink). Also known as MCA micro-needling, this technique has been used in medicine for almost three decades to improve improve the appearance – and feel – of scars and stretch marks. The action of the machine on the scar helps bring new cells to the surface, allowing new skin to grow and improving its appearance by making it smoother. The scar will still be there, it will just be less visible. Scarred skin is notoriously difficult to tattoo over, so a treatment can even prepare the skin ready for a traditional decorative tattoo.

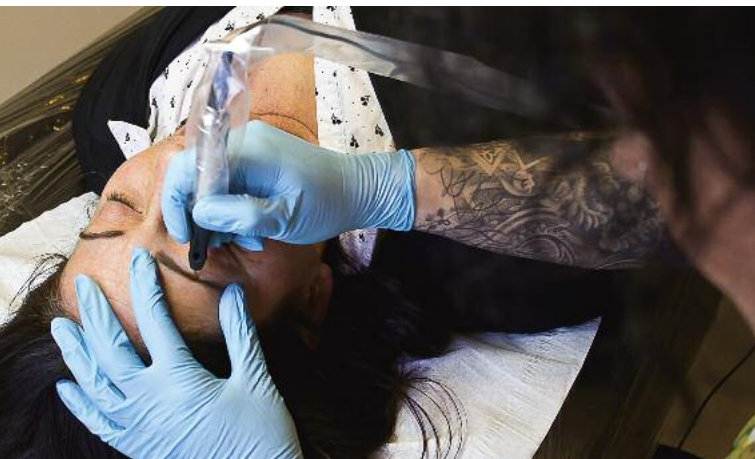
Luca, 22, a student from London, has scars from female-to-male surgery. Even a year after the procedure, the scars were still very tight, red and raised, so he decided to try dry tattooing at Beautiful Ink. Just four days after his first treatment, the scars felt better (“After feeling so restricted for so long, I'm amazed!” he told me) and now, more than six months later, he feels very happy. “The tenderness I felt in the scar tissue has completely disappeared and the redness has started to fade. The raised sections have flattened a great deal too – not completely, but a considerable amount. Lisa recommended three treatments, but I have only had one and I already feel so much more comfortable. Though my scars are still visible, I don't notice them any more and they aren't restricting me in the way they once did.”







Rachel, 32, from Surrey, also found incredible results after dry tattooing over a scar on her forehead. "It didn't hurt at all. It actually felt like a beauty treatment. There was calm music playing and Lisa used numbing cream on the area," explains Rachel. "I am so happy with the results. The scar was very visible before, even when I tried to cover it with make-up. It's almost completely flat now, with no redness. I've had two sessions and I believe after my next last session it will be practically invisible. I would recommend this treatment to anyone with scars affecting their confidence."



Anybody who receives this treatment must be prepared for the healing process. As with any other tattoo, and the results hinge on good aftercare. "People who have been tattooed know the score," says Lisa. "Wounds need cleaning regularly to avoid infection and they must also be kept moisturised. With correct care, the skin can keep on improving for several months afterwards." However, she cautions that the scar is also likely to look worse before it gets any better, and anyone who wants to get treated must be prepared for this. "I always like to manage my customers' expectations," Lisa continues, "and ensure they know what is achievable with the scar they have."



What's clear is that these treatments alter not just the body, but the mind too. And for those who have suffered an illness or a life-changing trauma, that boost of self-confidence can be something really special.



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Artist James Barny Watts was born and raised in New Zealand. He came to the UK in the late 80s with his band Static, but after landing a record deal and touring as a drummer, things petered out. He found himself drawn back to his first love, art, and a chance encounter led him into the world of tattoos, his major source of inspiration. We caught up with him in his studio space (conveniently located behind Lal Hardy's famous London shop New Wave Tattoo) where he makes his amazing tattoo-themed carved paintings and engravings.

# JAMES BARNY WATTS

## You're incredibly passionate about your art. Did you pursue any formal artistic training?

No, but I've always been an artist in one way or another. I'm from an artist background. My mum's an artist. She paints in oils. So I'm lucky – I've always been able to pick her brains. As a kid, I was always being taken to museums and art exhibitions by my parents. At the time, I was bored shitless, but obviously something must have stuck! When I first started on the UK arts scene in the late eighties I was making installation pieces. I used a lot of bio-industrial stuff. Then I started making fetish masks for parties and the clubbing scene, using circuit boards and stuff like that. It's always been really difficult for me to be taught by someone else; I have to just do it myself and make mistakes along the way, because that's the way I learn. When the band finished and I had to find something to do with my time I actually took a course in furniture restoration. I did a bit of that for a few years, then I got into full-time carpentry, laying flooring, etc.

## How did you go from installation art and carpentry into the work you produce now?

When I was a carpenter, I met Naresh (of Flamin' Eight) who'd just opened his first shop. I went down and got my first tattoo there, and we became





friends. He wanted some furniture for the shop, so I made a couple of carved tables for him to put his portfolios and flash sheets on. He could see that I had an interest in tattoo designs and he took me under his wing. I apprenticed as a tattooist with him for a while, then my father got really ill with Alzheimer's so I had to stop and look after him for eight years. While I was doing that, I was slowly developing everything that I'd learned in the past into what I'm doing now. I bought a cheap version of a Dremel and started messing about with it, seeing what I could do. I had a little bit of mirror hanging around and I tried etching onto it, and found it worked really well. It kind of blossomed from that really. So I was doing the engraving to start with, and the mirrors that I was using were just cheap and nasty things that didn't have frames. I began to make frames for them, and that's how the flash paintings started really – as a frame for the mirrors. It developed from there.





### So Naresh was a huge inspiration?

Yes, it's all down to him – big time. He taught me how to combine images and how to build up something that tells a story, to make it more interesting to look at, rather than having just one single image. Tattoo imagery is endless; there are endless possibilities. I'd have been lost without Naresh, really. I don't know what I'd be doing now if I hadn't gone into his shop! I could have gone down a totally different route and ended up doing carpentry for the rest of my life... but thank God I didn't!

### How did you meet Lal Hardy and end up working behind his studio?

I'd been hanging out with Naresh for about three months. We went out for a drink and Lal was there. I'd just got some flames done down my arm and I was sitting there nervous as hell because I was with Lal Hardy and all he was doing was staring at my fucking arm! I started using the workshop behind New Wave because I was moving house and had nowhere to work for about eighteen months, and Lal said I could make use of the space. Lal is Lal. He's an incredibly generous man. Very old school. Very traditional. If you show him respect, he'll show it back to you tenfold. He's very helpful and hugely knowledgeable. All the stories he tells, and the history he's got behind him... It's incredible. He's a dying breed.



### Where do your designs come from?

The majority of the time I make up the images myself. There are so many good artists out there, but I've always tried to avoid being influenced by anyone in particular because I've wanted to develop my own style. These days, you can just go on the internet and you're inundated with ideas. I usually pick an image that I want to do, then I add to it. I love traditional old school designs. Maybe three or four colours – I'm drawn to really bold primaries – and then some nice dark shading to make the colours pop out. I never think about the colour when I'm designing something. It's not until it's all cut out and primed up that I'll look at it and think 'I want red there'. So I'll put some red in, and once I've put one colour in, another colour bounces off that and I slowly fill it up. I hate whitening out things. I try to avoid that like the plague.



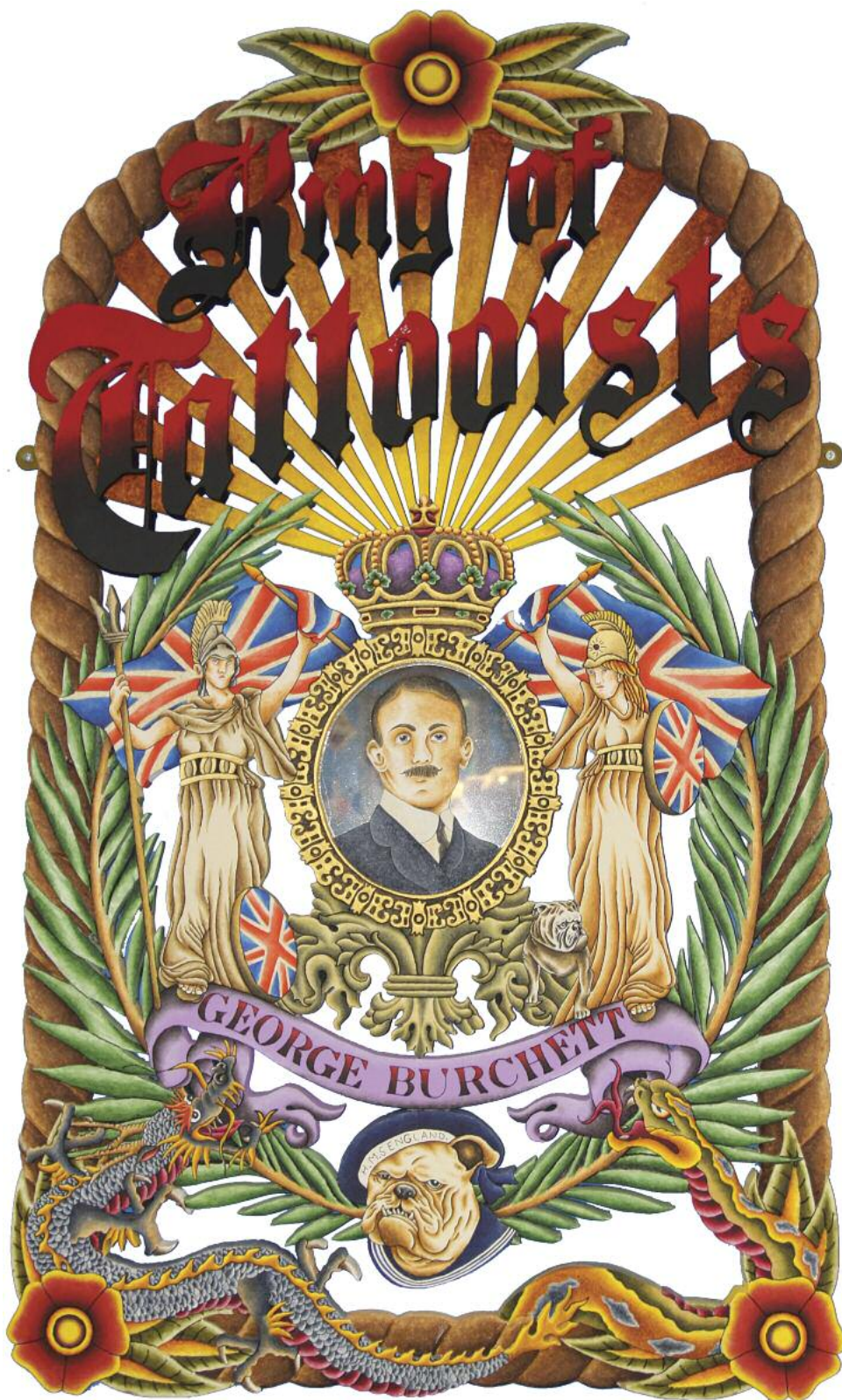


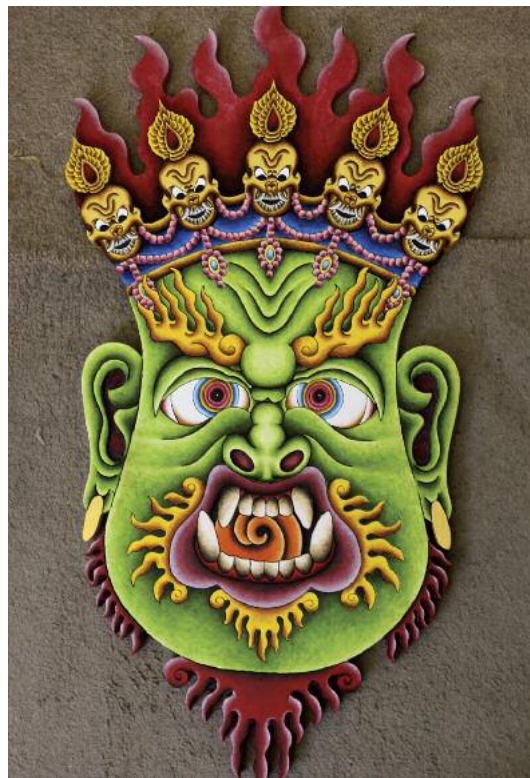
**Could you tell us a little about your process?**

The piece I'm working on at the moment is HMS Bounty, for an upcoming maritime exhibition. I'll be putting a frame on this engraving and adding to it, so the designs are very important to start off with. Everything is hand drawn, then I transfer it all on to a board (usually MDF, as it's easier to cut and paint). I cut out the design with a jigsaw, push things back with a router, then get my Dremel and cut out the lines. Then I prime it up by dropping in the black, wiping it back, and rolling on the white so the black comes out – so it's like a line tattoo. Then I fill in with colour. With the engravings, I transfer the designs over with carbon paper. In a way, the process is very similar to tattooing. Every piece I produce is individual. I never reproduce the same piece. If someone came to me and wanted a dozen of the same thing, I couldn't do it. I would inevitably start producing each one of them slightly differently... and the last one would be totally different from the first!

**Is it difficult to price your work?**

It goes by size and time now. Some things that are small can take forever, and some things that are really big you can just whack out really quick. Engravings tend not to take as long as the paintings. It's difficult to price pieces, because you don't want to scare people away – but then again some people value things on a monetary basis and they might say 'Why is it so cheap? Is it because it's crap?' Once, I had a commission where the customer paid me double because he thought I'd undervalued my work. That sort of thing does make you feel good! It boosts your confidence. But at the end of the day, you've got to believe in yourself and believe in your work.





**You're doing a lot of commissions at the moment. Do your clients always bring their own ideas?**

It varies. They come to me because I have a particular style and they want it. Nine times out of ten they have an idea in mind, but they always want me to put my own slant on it.

**Do you focus on one piece at a time?**

Ideally, yes, that's what I like to do. But normally I have two or three pieces on the go. It's nice to chop and change a wee bit. You can get bored if you're just sort of whacking them out. As the years go by, I get quicker at producing things. Some of my earlier pieces might have taken me about three months to produce, whereas now it's more likely to be three weeks. Then again, it all depends. Sometimes, you get really stuck – like writer's block. When that happens, I can always put a piece down, work on something else, and come back to it – although on the whole I try to avoid doing that because I've got things from ten or fifteen years ago that I still haven't gone back to... and probably never will now, because they're shit!

**What is your working day like?**

I usually work from 10am until about 3pm or 4pm, then paint at home for another three or four hours. It's constant. It's hard to switch off. Even when I'm watching the telly I'll still be working, looking at that piece... Someone said once that if you want to be an artist, you should throw away your telly!

**What drives you to keep producing piece after piece?**

Pure love. I'm pretty obsessed with these. I can't not do them. And I've seen them develop over time. Looking at my early pieces, compared to the stuff I'm doing now, they're very similar but I can see the progress. I just want to get better at what I do. And I have to do some form of art, especially with not tattooing. I'd like to think that in a hundred years' time my work will still be hanging up in tattoo studios... That would be cool.



To get in touch with James to enquire about commissions or pieces available for sale:

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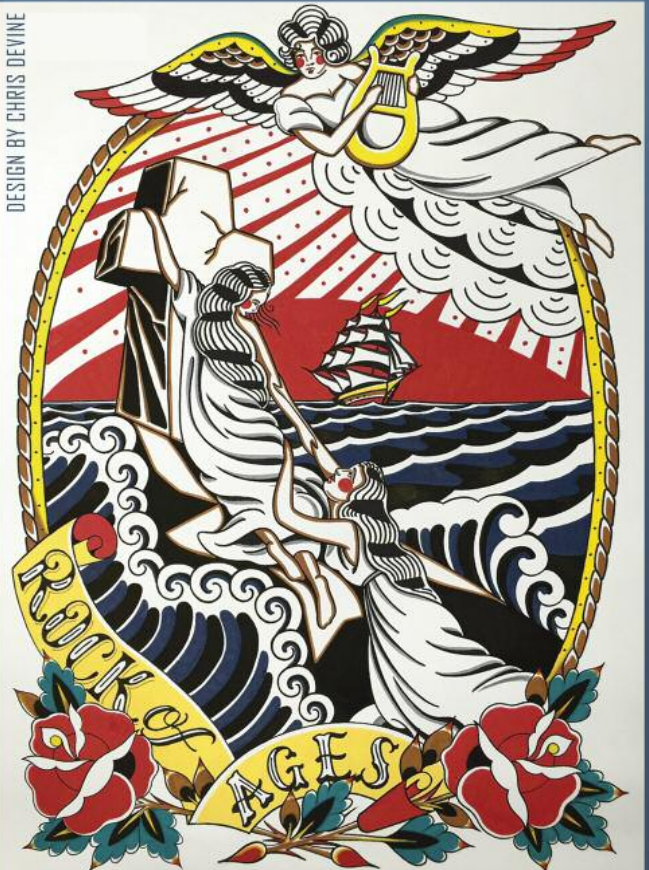
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By Lizzy Guy

# Flo Nuttall



Flo Nuttall's work clearly shows the influences of her travels and she's acquired a worldly-wise approach to her tattooing that is unusual in such a young artist. When we stumbled across pictures of her stunning pieces on the internet we knew that we had to feature her in Total Tattoo, so we arranged a rendezvous at the recent London International Tattoo Convention. In keeping with her careful and considered way of doing things, Flo didn't want to rush the interview process, so our conversation continued by email over the subsequent weeks...

## Flo, what first sparked your interest in tattooing?

I grew up in small Scottish villages. Not many tattoos around, and no tattoo shops. It was through a combination of art and music, when I was teenager, that I found my interest in tattoos. I was redrawing Freddy Corbin designs from books, sacred hearts with wings, roses with tribal... but it wasn't until I was around twenty that I even conceived of the possibility of learning to tattoo.





**Did you seek an apprenticeship or did you teach yourself?**

When I moved to Edinburgh, I started meeting people who had tattoos. That helped bring the dream a bit closer to reality. A friend of mine persuaded me to take a portfolio of my work from art school and a photo album (remember those?) of my paintings to one of the Edinburgh studios. The guy took one look, told me it was a yes, and said come back tomorrow. I was at that studio for around six months without tattooing any customers; I was terrified, shy and clueless. It didn't work out and I got fired. Two years later I tried again at another shop, and I worked with them (actually tattooing) for three and half years. I owe an enormous thank you to Love Hate Tattoo for giving me my first real job; it was working with Bradley George that kept me going through the rough days. So, in answer to your question, I didn't really apprentice under anyone, but I had guidance on what to do. The rest I'm still figuring out to this day. In my own mind, I'll never *not* be an apprentice!



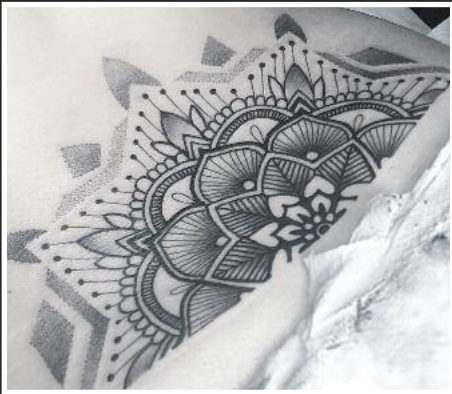
**Tell us more about your art school education.**

Art school was very different to what I imagined. I was hoping for a more relaxed and bohemian kind of experience, forgetting that the 'school' part of the term 'art school' is there for a reason! The day started early, no one stayed late, and it was just boring and deflating for me. At the same time, I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to go. It helped me develop my skills and it showed me that the art world is, in many ways, just like the rest of the world – it's about politics, money, and who you know. I had thought I wanted to be a painter, but I realised I wasn't cut out for it. Later, when I came to tattooing, I felt like I had discovered what I was looking for all along. It made sense to me.

**Who, and what, inspires your work?**

Classic tattoo styles, great tattooers, art, culture, travel, books... Artists like Ed Hardy, Bert Grimm, Ben Corday, Bob Roberts, Robert Crumb, Eric White, Thomas Hooper, Jondix, Claudia de Sabe, Chris Conn, Alvaro Flores, Kelly Violet, Valerie Vargas, Tamara Lee Dot... Tibetan art, Indian henna, geometry... and everyone I work with at Swan Song Tattoo and Psycho Tattoo Studio, whose dedication I find really invigorating. My guest spot at Black Garden Tattoo in London was a dream come true too; those guys are amazing.





**What is it about tattooing that appeals to you, as opposed to other artistic media?**

Tattooing is interesting to me for many reasons. Art exists and has a life outside of you...Tattoos travel with a person, become a conversation starter, intrigue people and offend people (as art often does)... For me, a tattoo is different from other types of art because it exists between two people – me and the customer – instead of just me and the paper or me and the canvas. It's a strange and physical ritual that changes every time.

**Which other media do you work in?**

I love to paint with acrylics. I do love oils, but they take too long to dry and I'm impatient. I don't paint as much as I used to, and I feel very guilty about this. I should push myself to do it more.

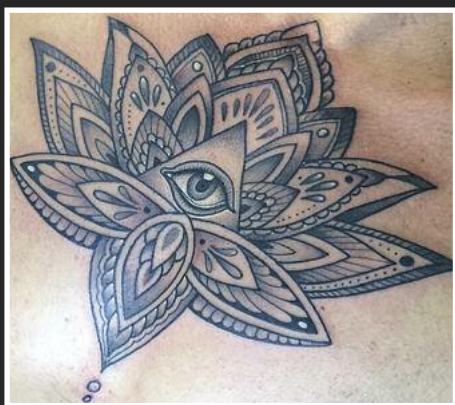
**With such a busy schedule and such a large client base, how do you maintain the enthusiasm for your craft?**

I really enjoy working. It gives me a sense of purpose. It's my focus and I think about it all day every day. When I take a holiday I find it difficult to switch off (which creates a few issues). I like being busy, although sometimes if I'm extremely tired it can feel a bit suffocating. But realistically, what a great thing to complain about! So even if I occasionally feel trapped, I do what I can to stay positive. I make sure I remember how lucky I am, because it won't last for ever. I try to work a lot and make the most of it because you never know when it will change.



**Your current tattoos are more mehndi-inspired and in black and grey. Was it a conscious decision to move away from colour?**

It was definitely not a conscious decision at all. It just started to drift that way, and I allowed it. I do miss colour sometimes. I love it and it's so cheery. Good colour is so satisfactory to look at in a tattoo. But at this point in time I feel my work suits black and grey more. It looks great on both darker and lighter skin tones, and I find it relaxing to do.



**You're incredibly talented and it seems that you can turn your hand to a wide variety of styles...**

Firstly, thank you, but I don't feel talented at all. I just love trying to create good tattoos – beautiful tattoos – that make people happy. My tattoos are more similar these days than they used to be. They are more repetitive. But I am still enjoying myself. I should experiment more, and in the future I plan to. At the beginning, I worked in a street shop so I've done every style you can think of, and walk-ins, for years. It's great practice and it's important to have that skill I think. Most apprentices don't go through that, and maybe they think they're lucky, or too good for 'that kind of tattoo', but I think they're missing out. I mean, that is tattooing, after all. You learn a lot about yourself – and what you can do under pressure – and you meet some really weird and funny characters, with some very random stories you can tell people about for the rest of your days. I'm not pretending that I've tattooed for a long time – I haven't! – but I got a lot of practice in the beginning because I was making four, five or six tattoos a day. And that was hard. The reason I occasionally turn down people's ideas these days is because I know what I'm comfortable doing, or what my natural drawing style suits, or what my imagination is capable of creating – and that stems from all that early experience. It's not because I think anything is below me. People who get tattooed from me now probably never even think about all the tribal with names and flowers, the stars and bows on the feet, or the full sleeves of football badges that I've made in the past!

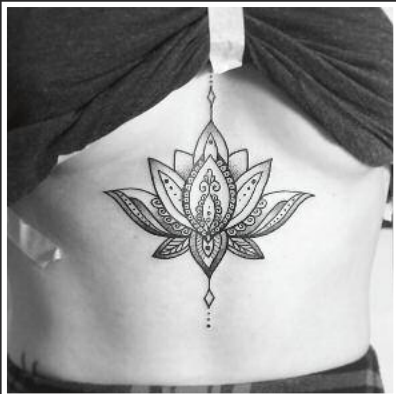






**Which aspect of your work do you feel that you excel at?**

Honestly, I don't really know. In the beginning people just wanted linework from me because they liked it so much, then my shading. No one really asks me for colour, but I feel I've learned how to pack it well enough, when it suits the tattoo. I just keep trying to improve everything I do all the time. I'll never stop. Every tattoo pushes me more, and that's why the fire is still burning – the yearning to make that perfect tattoo that you might never achieve. It's the carrot dangling at the end of the stick. I torture myself looking at photos of what I've done – the things I want to improve next time, the things I wish I'd tried instead. It's possibly a pointless exercise, but I just can't help myself! One day I hope to be a really good tattooer... If I keep pushing I might get there... and I would like to thank everyone who trusts me and gets tattooed by me.

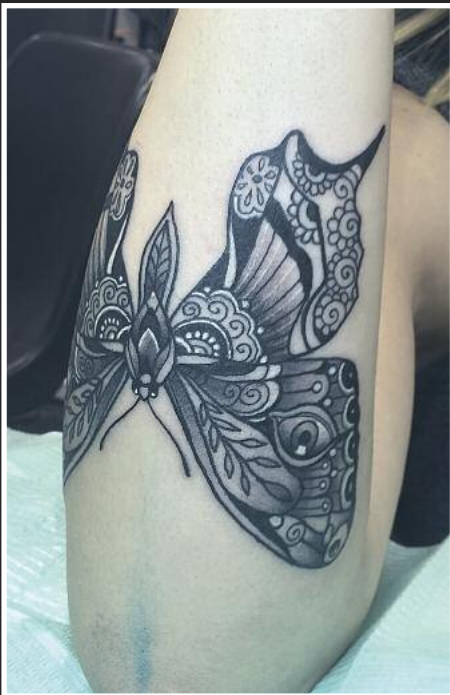




**Tell us about Rome.**

I moved to Rome for love and for a new job (enormous thanks to Heinz). I'd never really considered moving overseas but the timing seemed right and the opportunity was too good to miss. I'm glad I took the plunge. It's changed me, and it's changed my life in ways I could never have foreseen. I work in two shops – Swan Song Tattoo and Psycho Tattoo Studio – and the scene in Rome is fantastic. All the best shops (or most of them!) are connected with strong friendships and mutual respect; we dine together, we go on holiday together, we do conventions together. It's wonderful and very enriching. All my colleagues are very hard-working, friendly and creative. It's important to surround yourself with people who make you happy.

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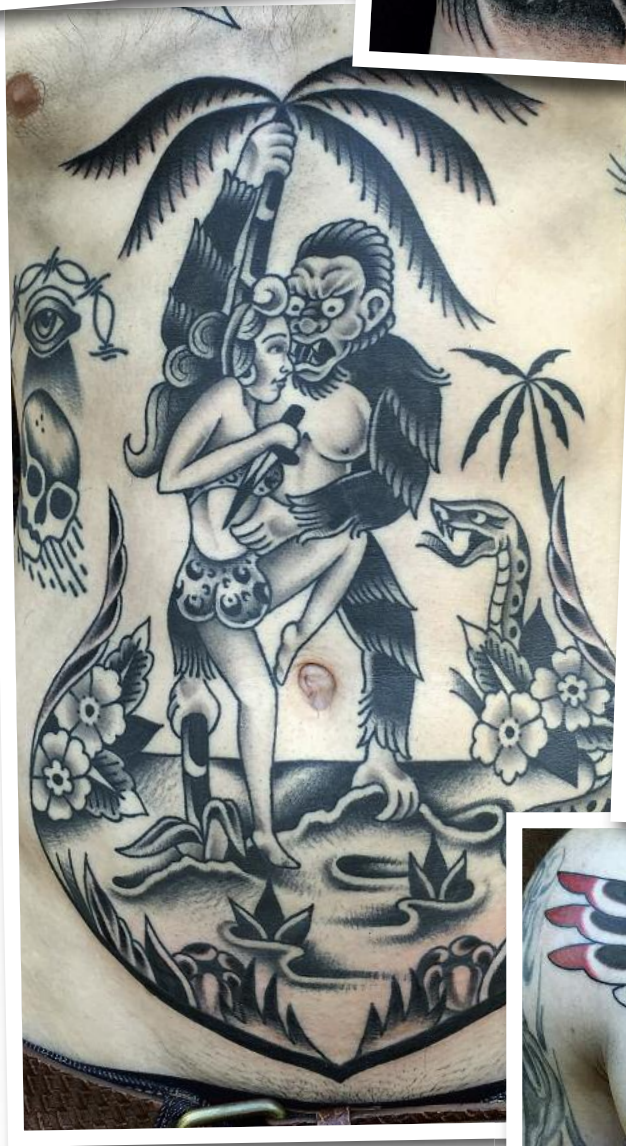


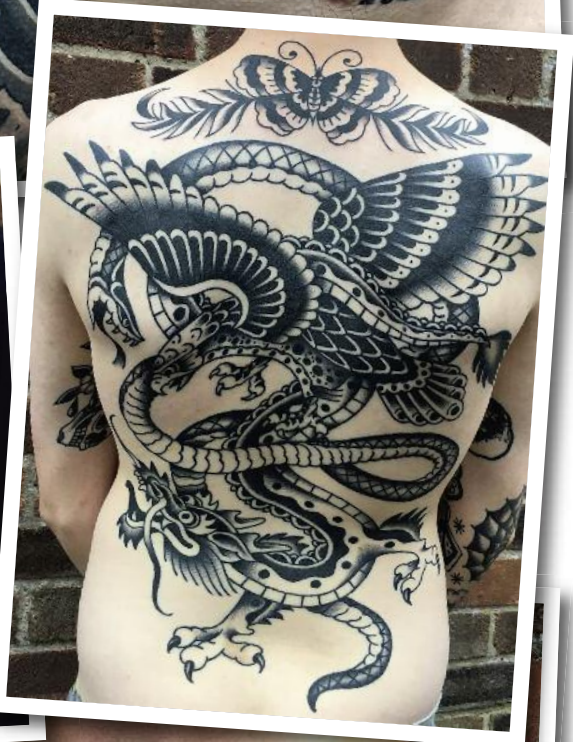
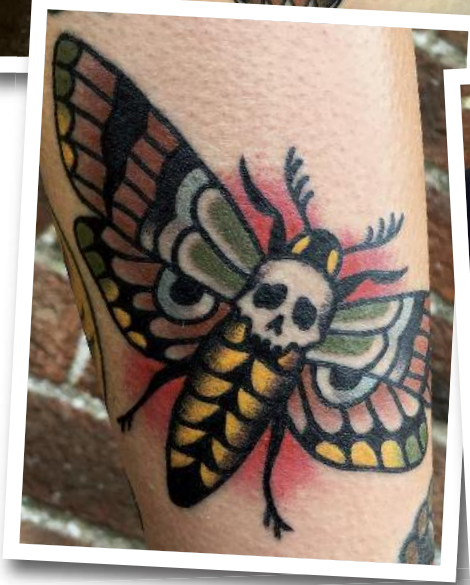
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# PORTFOLIO

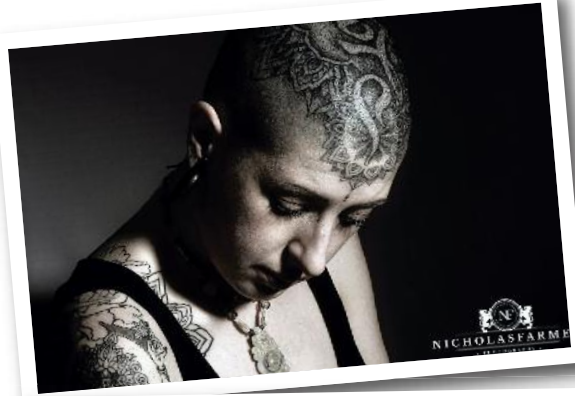
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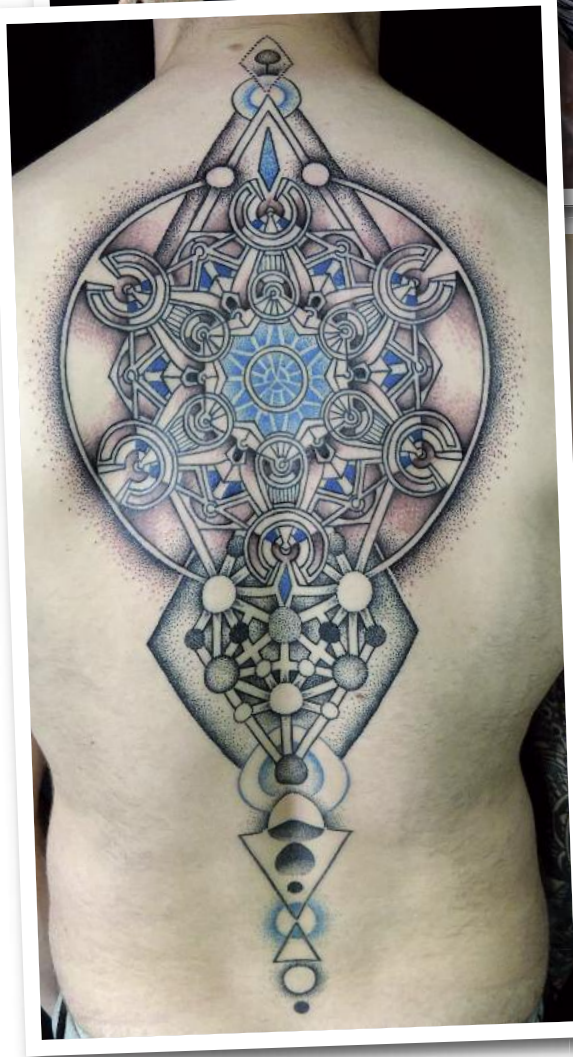
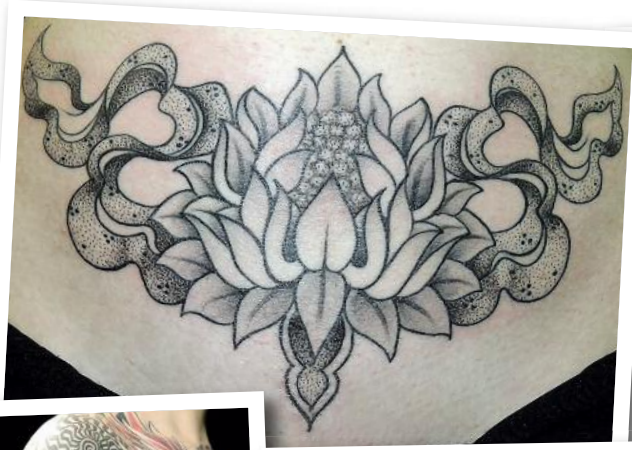
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# TALES FROM THE NAUGHTY STEP

by Paul Talbot

**Hello again dear readers. I've just come back from the Paradise Tattoo Gathering (a completely different type of tattoo convention, with much more of an emphasis on education and discussion) and I want to share with you a thought I had while I was there. Actually I had lots of thoughts, but there's only space for one of them here – plus, I'm currently sitting in a hotel room in New England typing as fast as I can to meet my deadline!**

During one of the Gathering's themed discussion evenings, someone referred to tattooing as a service industry. I thought, 'Hang on, no we're not'. Yes, we do offer good customer service – but that doesn't mean that we're a service industry. And I think this highlights one of the many problems facing tattooists right now.

We sell art for money. And from the beginning of our artistic journey, we're taught to strive for perfection. We're told that our technique must be flawless and our skills second to none. But ask any career artist and they will tell you that the key to getting clients isn't artistic perfection. It's artistic expression. They will say that it's far better to be a one-of-a-kind voice that shocks or wows, even if that voice is a little messy at times.

If we categorise ourselves as a 'service industry', then our portfolio is at the mercy of our clients. We will be forced constantly to regurgitate the same old tired designs until they (the clients) decide to move on to something else. The tattoo scene will be governed not by what is best but by what is most popular. Sound familiar? If it is this is you,

then maybe you should stop doing it and try a non-service industry based approach to tattooing.

You sell art for money. Speaking in your own voice is the smartest thing you can do. And let's be honest, it's much more fun. Imagine if Pablo Picasso had crowd-sourced his art, or Led Zeppelin their albums – creating only what was deemed to be the best according to the general consensus. Do you really think we would have the same incredible bodies of work by these artists if their output had been governed by the popular vote? I think it all would have been distinctly vanilla flavoured.

Thanks largely to what they've seen on the TV shows, clients now seem to be increasingly fascinated with the idea of theming themselves by cobbling together greetings card-type images and popular internet memes, or personalising their tattoos with times, dates, places, and all manner of things that can't really be described as artistic concepts and can so easily descend into cliché... whereas we, the tattooists, are dying to create something amazing and unique for them. Something nobody else has.

We're not a service industry. We're artists, and we're supposed to be pushing the boundaries. It's what we love doing, and if you let us do it, you'll find we're pretty bloody good at it.

As always, this is my own very personal view. Let me know what you think.

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



# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## UK CONVENTIONS

**December 3**

### **Cariad Ink Tattoo Festival**

Venue Cymru

The Promenade, Llandudno, LL30 1BB

[www.facebook.com/CariadInk](http://www.facebook.com/CariadInk)

**February 18-19**

### **Frome Tattoo Convention**

Cheese & Grain

Market Yard, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1BE

[www.facebook.com/frometattoocon/](http://www.facebook.com/frometattoocon/)

**March 4-5**

### **Tattoo Tea Party**

EventCity

Phoenix Way, off Barton Dock Rd, Urmston,

Manchester, M41 7TB

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

**March 25-26**

### **The Scottish Tattoo Convention**

Edinburgh Corn Exchange

10 New Market Rd, Edinburgh, EH14 1RJ

[www.scottishtattooconvention.net](http://www.scottishtattooconvention.net)

**April 15-16**

### **Portsmouth Tattoo Extravaganza**

Pyramids Centre

Clarence Esplanade, Portsmouth PO5 3ST

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

**April 15-16**

### **Maidstone Tattoo Extravaganza**

The John Hendry Pavilion

Detling Showground, Maidstone,

Kent, ME14 3JF

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

**April 29-30**

### **TOTAL TATTOO & TATTOO TV present: The Big North Tattoo Show**

The Metro Radio Arena

Arena Way, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 7NA

[www.facebook.com/bignorthtattooshow](http://www.facebook.com/bignorthtattooshow)

**April 29-30**

### **Lincs Ink Tattoo Convention**

Beachcomber Holiday Park &

Entertainment Centre

208 North Sea Lane, Humberston, Cleethorpes,

Lincolnshire, DN36 4ET,

[www.lincs-ink.co.uk](http://www.lincs-ink.co.uk)

**May 5-7**

### **Liverpool Tattoo Convention**

Adelphi Hotel

Ranelagh St, Liverpool, L3 5UL

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

**May 13-14**

### **Brighton Tattoo Convention**

Brighton Centre

King's Rd, Brighton, BN1 2GR

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

@brightontattoocon

**May 13-14**

### **Glasgow Tattoo Festival**

The Studio

8 Dixon St, Glasgow, G1 4AX

[www.facebook.com/GlasgowTattooFestival](http://www.facebook.com/GlasgowTattooFestival)

**May 27-28**

### **Scarborough Tattoo Show**

The Spa Scarborough

South Bay, Scarborough,

North Yorkshire, YO11 2HD

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

**June 10-11**

### **Bristol Tattoo Convention**

The Passenger Shed

Station Approach, Bristol, BS1 6QH

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

**June 24-25**

### **York International Tattoo Convention**

New Earswick & District Indoor Bowls Club

Huntington Rd, York, YO32 9PX

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

**July 1-2**

### **Cirque Du Tattoo Festival**

Bescot Stadium

Bescot Cres, Walsall, WS1 4SA,

[www.facebook.com/cirquedutattoo](http://www.facebook.com/cirquedutattoo)

**July 8-9**

### **Leeds International Tattoo Expo**

First Direct Arena

Arena Way, Leeds, LS2 8BY

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

**July 15-16**

### **Cardiff Tattoo and Toy Convention**

The Motorpoint Arena Cardiff

Mary Ann Street, Cardiff, CF10 2EQ,

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

**July 29-30**

### **Portsmouth Tattoo Convention**

Portsmouth Guildhall

Guildhall Square, Portsmouth,

Hampshire PO1 2AB

[www.portsmouthtattooconvention.co](http://www.portsmouthtattooconvention.co)

**September 29-October 1**

### **Midlands Tattoo Industry Show**

Leicester Athena

Queen Street, Leicester, LE1 1QD

[www.facebook.com/Midlands-Tattoo-industry-Show-980219155377587](http://www.facebook.com/Midlands-Tattoo-industry-Show-980219155377587)

## OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

**January 13-15**

### **Goa Tattoo Festival**

Tito's Whitehouse

Arpora-Siolim Road, Anjuna 403 509, India

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

**March 3-5**

### **Mondial du Tatouage**

Grande Halle de la Villette

211 Avenue Jean Jaurès, 75019 Paris, France

[www.mondialdutatouage.com/en](http://www.mondialdutatouage.com/en)

**March 18-19**

### **7th Rotterdam Tattoo Convention**

Ahoy Rotterdam

Ahoyweg 10, 3084 BA Rotterdam,

The Netherlands

[rotterdam.unitedconventions.com/](http://rotterdam.unitedconventions.com/)

**May 26-28**

### **13th Amsterdam Tattoo Convention**

Amsterdam RAI Exhibition and Convention Centre

Europaplein, 1078 GZ Amsterdam, Netherlands

[www.tattooexpo.eu/en/amsterdam/2017](http://www.tattooexpo.eu/en/amsterdam/2017)

**July 15-17**

### **NY Empire State Tattoo Expo**

New York Hilton Midtown

1335 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY

10019, USA

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

**August 4-6**

### **27th Berlin Tattoo Convention**

Arena Berlin

Eichenstrasse 4, 12435 Berlin, Germany

[www.tattoo-convention.de/tcb-final](http://www.tattoo-convention.de/tcb-final)

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