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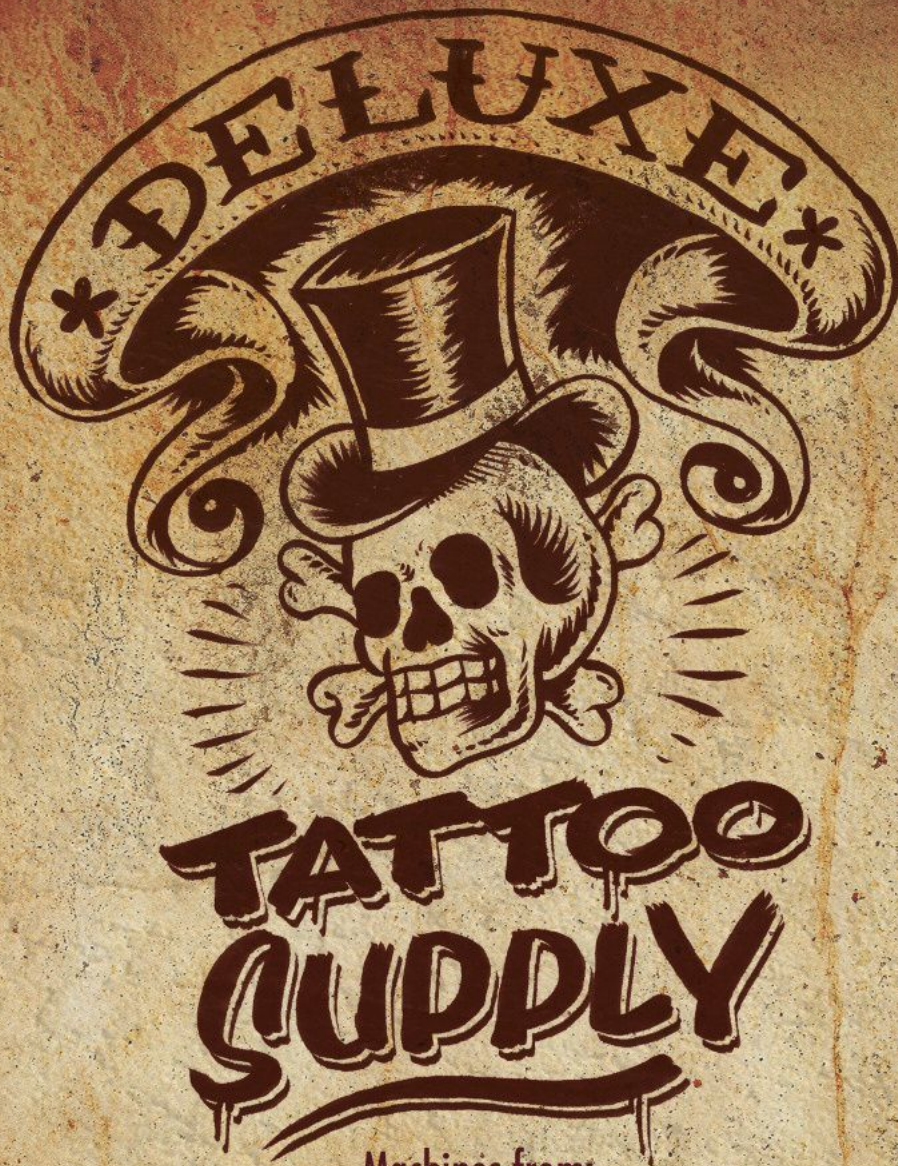
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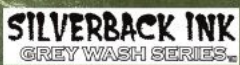


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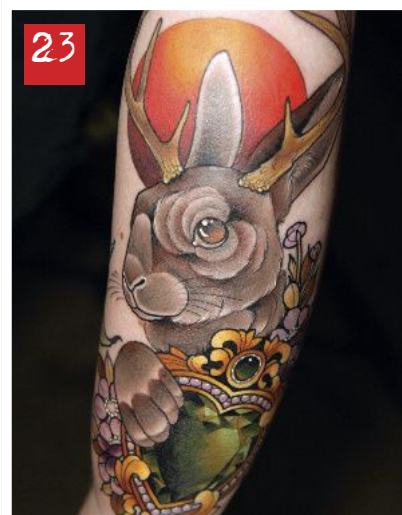
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# WELCOME to 156

Those of you older than twenty will probably remember a time before smartphones and the information superhighway (more familiarly known as the internet). Communication was primarily carried out over the telephone or even face-to-face.

The digital age promised so much and we welcomed it with open arms. The whole world at your fingertips! And in many ways it has delivered just that. Search engines that offer endless images and facts, and apps that can do anything. A new streamlined existence where we all have equal access to everything we could possibly wish for. You can do your shopping, pay your bills and be endlessly entertained without leaving your chair.

During the last month I've been trying to communicate with various official bodies regarding a car I no longer own. It started with the letters I received. Nothing exciting, and I won't bore you with the details, but because some crucial information was incorrect I decided my best course of action was to call and explain. That's where it all began to go wrong...

After being offered endless multiple options on my keypad and having pulled out what remains of my hair, I finally got through to a human being who reliably informed me that I needed to call a different number. Twenty minutes on the phone listening to lift music while 'My call is important to them' and the next person I speak to tells me I need to write a letter. They couldn't accept an email or a phone call. They have to have an old-fashioned letter to confirm that my situation has changed! What happened to the future, I asked myself?

This prolonged and exhausting process – a vain attempt just to communicate in a useful way with another human being – was bad enough, but it also made me think about a much larger problem...

I often work from home. It's quiet and I can focus because I have no one here to distract me. But I've started to realise that, without really knowing it, I am participating in a progressive removal of myself from society. We all are. We are all slowly and voluntarily moving towards an isolated future. It's not just officialdom that's becoming so far removed from human interaction. It's banks and supermarkets and all sorts of other services. And now, I'm even starting to see it within tattooing.

With the ever-growing popularity of some artists, it's becoming increasingly difficult to make contact with them – or even to find a telephone number, email address or website in many cases. And if you do manage to get through to someone, it's often their 'agent' who responds. Actual, professional agents! (Not studio receptionists or assistants.) When did tattooing become so elitist? OK, maybe I'm being a bit too negative. I know that many artists are incredibly busy and no doubt inundated with emails and messages, and I can understand the need for extra help. I also know that it's a very different matter when you meet artists and watch them work at conventions, or pop into a studio for a friendly chat.



When one-to-one communication is impossible, and everything is surrounded by red tape, things get frustrating. It definitely seems to me that in all our modern-day 'services' (and I think tattooing falls into this category) we are in danger of becoming more and more isolated from each other, and that can only be a sad thing.

**Perry**  
Total Tattoo Editorial Team  
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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

## NO SWEAT

The Total Tattoo news radar is picking up various press reports about scientific research into sweating – and, in particular, the way tattoos can affect this vital bodily function. We sweat to cool down (because when the sweat evaporates the temperature of the skin drops) and if we didn't sweat we would overheat. In really hot conditions the body can sweat several litres an hour, which is why it's important to keep well hydrated. The research seems to indicate that heavily tattooed skin might sweat less – perhaps only half as much as non-tattooed skin – and it appears that the sweat it produces is much more salty, which could contribute to faster dehydration. Of course the overall effect will depend on what percentage of your skin is inked. If you're heavily tattooed already, or considering a bodysuit, it might be worth looking into this a bit further, especially if you enjoy a serious workout in the gym or working up a sweat in other ways... The research was carried out in the Department of Integrative Physiology and Health Science at Alma College, Michigan, in the US. Check out the details here

[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28240705](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28240705)



## BLUE HEART FOR JAMES

Tattoos By J Cutler, a studio in Shrewsbury, has been offering a free tattoo to anyone who would like to show their support in remembrance of local teenager James Corfield (who was found dead after going missing at the Royal Welsh Show). James was wearing blue clothing when he disappeared, so blue hearts have been adopted as a fitting symbol with which to honour him. On Sunday August 13th the studio waived its usual fees and, in return for a tattoo, simply asked for a donation to help James's family with funeral costs.

## ARTIST WANTED

**Blue Dragon Tattoo** are looking for an all-rounder in their busy shop in Brighton – someone with a flair for dotwork, geometric or Japanese tattooing, and a minimum of three years' experience. It's a friendly crew, so they want a team player and no drama. Email your portfolio to [info@bluedragontattoo.co.uk](mailto:info@bluedragontattoo.co.uk)



## WHAT YOU GET IS WHAT YOU GET

You pay your money and you take your choice... or at least that's how it usually works when you're deciding on a tattoo design. But how about leaving it to chance instead? How about simply putting your money in the slot, turning the crank, and getting tattooed with whatever design happens to pop out? We've read in the news about a tattoo shop in Texas that's installed a vending machine that lets you do just that. It's a retro bubble gum machine, and it's filled with little plastic capsules of old-school flash – cool classics, like snakes, skulls and daggers. It costs \$100 to get your design dispensed, and if you don't like what you get first time round you can have another go for \$20. But basically, what you get is what you get. The shop owners at Elm Street Tattoos in Dallas say that all the designs would usually cost between \$160 and \$250 to get tattooed, so it's quite a bargain if you're happy to leave your tattoo choice to fate. We've also seen a couple of UK studios doing this at conventions recently. Let us know if you've chosen your tattoo this way or if you're doing a similar thing in your studio.





## WIN A MATT MANSON THROWS!

Matt Manson ([www.mattmanson.co.uk](http://www.mattmanson.co.uk)) creates extraordinary geometric designs inspired, amongst other things, by sacred mandalas and the architecture of India's Mughal emperors. He channels his obsessive pattern-making into a collection of beautiful products – such as these very special throws. Want it? To be in with a chance of winning, simply email us the answer to this question:

**Who or what is a Mughal?**

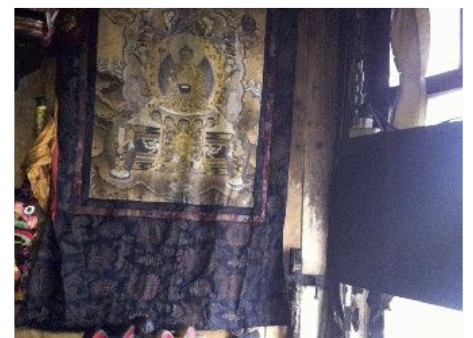
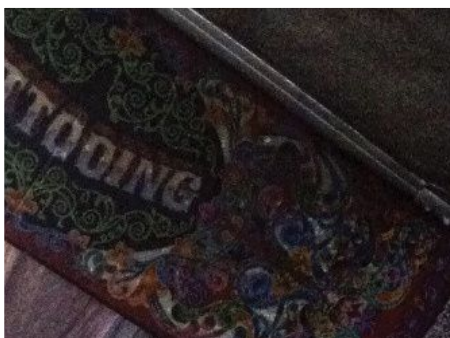
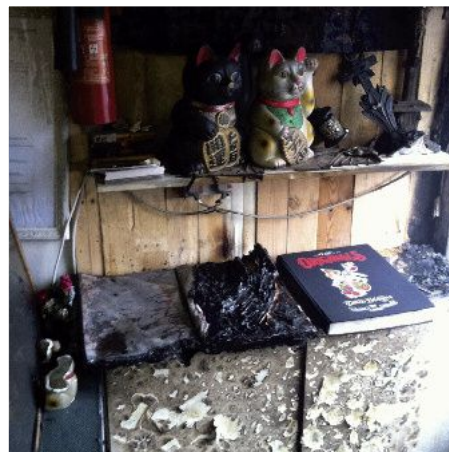
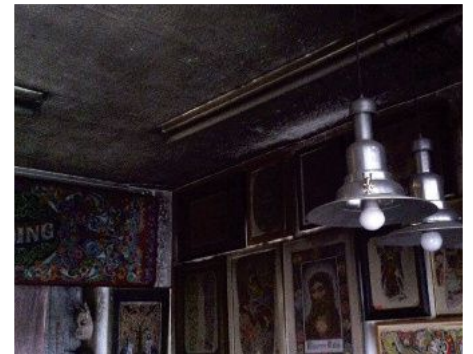
- A. Historic emperors of India famed for their architecture**
- B. People without any wizardry in their blood**
- C. Potters' shorthand for "mug handle"**

Email your answer to [comps@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:comps@totaltattoo.co.uk) with THROW as your subject line. Please include your postal address. Closing date 30th September 2017 and usual T&Cs apply (see p5).

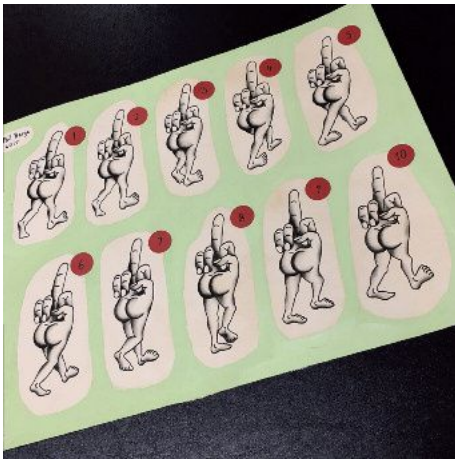


## FIRE DESTROYS BATH TATTOO STUDIO

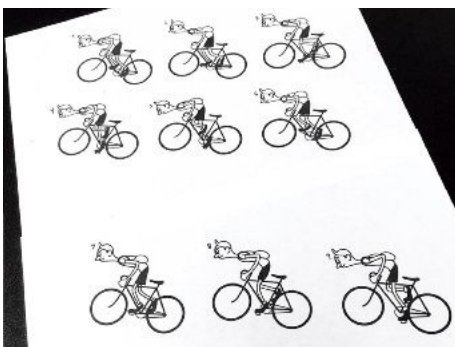
Marcus Kuhn, the Gypsy Gentleman (check out his awesome videos at [vimeo.com/gypsygentlemanseries](http://vimeo.com/gypsygentlemanseries)), has suffered a devastating fire at his brand new studio in Bath, Just Good Tattoos. Marcus has only recently moved back to the UK from the States, in order to be with his father who is unwell, and he used his life savings to create the studio. It had been open for just eleven days. Police are treating the fire as arson; according to news reports, petrol was poured through the letterbox, the windows were smashed and more petrol was poured in, then the shop was set on fire. The damage is extensive. Marcus is a wonderfully positive and spiritual person, but says that financially he's lost everything. A GoFundMe page has been set up for anyone who would like to help him: [www.gofundme.com/help-just-good-tattoos-after-arson](http://www.gofundme.com/help-just-good-tattoos-after-arson)



## STOP MOTION TATTOOS



Remember flip books? And stop-motion animation? Canadian tattooist Phil Berge is recreating this nostalgic art in the form of amazing animated tattoo videos. But here's the really clever part... each separate frame of the video is a finished tattoo worn by a different person. So how does it work? First, Phil decides on an image he wants to animate and posts it on Instagram. People get in touch if they are interested, and Phil sets up an appointment with them. (Most of the time, the people who respond don't know each other.) Then once all the tattoos are completed and photographed, Phil strings them together in a looped sequence to create an awesome animation. The whole process – from drawing the designs to inking the tattoos and then editing the video – can take several months. And that's just for a three or four second loop! Phil says he loves the vibe of togetherness that the videos create and hopes to include as many people as possible from all over the world in forthcoming animations. Take a look at [www.instagram.com/philberge](http://www.instagram.com/philberge)



## AWESOME DAD ALERT!

Here's a heartwarming story we recently read in the news. Having already been tattooed with a picture of his daughter's cochlear implant, Gareth Hickenbottom-Marriot has

now been inked with an image of her brain shunt, which helps to drain excess fluid inside her head. It's his way of showing Briar she's not alone, and proudly giving her his love and support. Ten year old Briar has Goldenhar Syndrome, a rare congenital condition that means her hearing has not developed as it should and also affects many other aspects of her life.



## SAVE TATTOO OLE

Nyhavn 17 is a very famous address in Copenhagen. It's the building that houses Tattoo Ole, reputedly the world's oldest tattoo shop. But Tattoo Ole is facing closure because the building's owners want to use the space for a new restaurant kitchen. Everyone is up in arms – Copenhagen residents who love their city's history and tattoo fans who want to preserve the shop's precious legacy – and an online petition has been launched by Majbritt Petersen (Tattoo Ole's owner) and Frank Rosenkilde (veteran tattooist and tattoo museum owner). Tattoo Ole has often been described as the birthplace of Danish tattooing. Danish tattoo legend Ole Hansen bought the shop in 1947 and worked there for forty years, but it's believed that tattooists have been working continuously in the premises since 1884.

You can watch an interview with current owner Majbritt Petersen here:

[www.facebook.com/lille.ole/videos/vb.837849024/10155646471034025](https://www.facebook.com/lille.ole/videos/vb.837849024/10155646471034025)

And if you want to join the thousands of people who have already signed the online petition in support of this irreplaceable piece of tattoo history, head to

[www.ipetitions.com/petition/save-the-worlds-oldest-tattoo-shop](http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/save-the-worlds-oldest-tattoo-shop)

Time is of the essence. A fierce legal battle is underway, and the court case is scheduled for 14th September.

## COVER MY SCARS PLEASE!

Many people accept their scars as part of their life story; some even choose to wear them with pride. But for others, there is an overwhelming need to cover their scars in order to move on. US tattooist Rob Hulvey (of Exquisite Tattoo Studio in Yale, Michigan) has set up a scheme to help those who wish to do this with ink – whether the scars are the result of self-harm, surgery or an accident. He is initially offering to do one free-of-charge tattoo per week (at his own expense) but says that if enough funding comes in, he can expand the program to meet the demand and perhaps even bring in other tattooists to help. Currently, he is receiving large numbers of requests from people in their late teens or mid-twenties who want to cover scars that are the result of self-harm, and his aim is to be able to tattoo anyone who requests his services without having to ask them to wait too long. For more information or to make a donation, head to [www.gofundme.com/covermyscars](http://www.gofundme.com/covermyscars) or [covermyscarsplease.com](http://covermyscarsplease.com)

## ARTIST WANTED

**Electric Punch Tattoo** have a vacancy for an experienced tattooist, starting mid-September. They want someone who is capable of doing both custom work and walk-ins – and preferably experienced with script and traditional style tattoos, although all styles will be considered. You need to be able to work well in a busy studio, with a friendly team. This is not an apprenticeship. Email your CV and examples of your work to Terry at [electricpunchtattoo@gmail.com](mailto:electricpunchtattoo@gmail.com)



## ARTIST WANTED

**Rampant Ink** are looking for a part-time tattooist to take on some of their black and grey work. They want someone honest, reliable, hard-working and motivated. If you are interested, email

[info@rampantink.com](mailto:info@rampantink.com) with a link to your portfolio. The team are happy to take applications from artists who may need some subtle help advancing their skill set, but this is not an apprenticeship position.





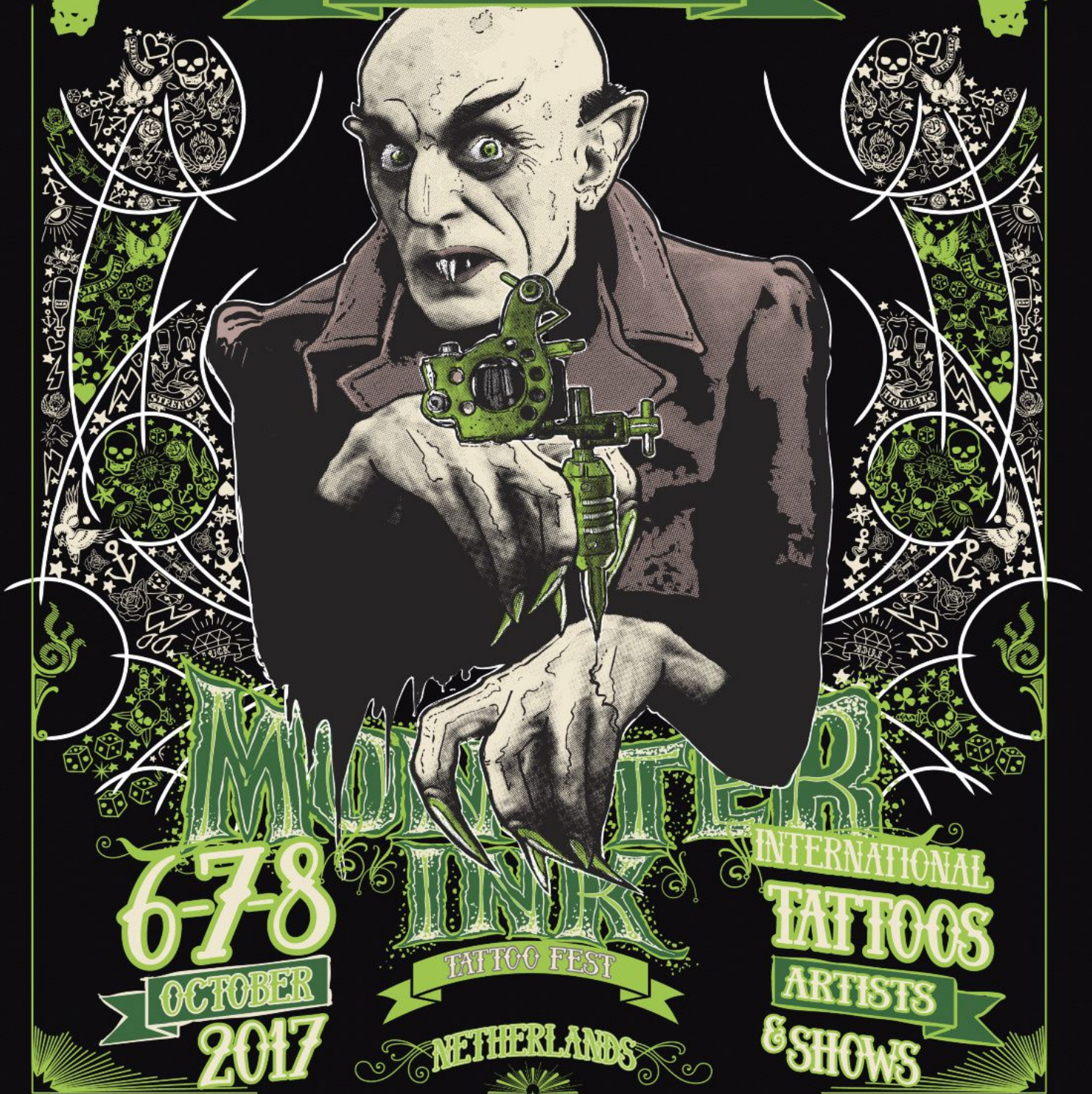
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# Dave Paulo

Interview by Perry  
Pictures courtesy of Dave Paulo



**D**ave Paulo is self-taught and only started tattooing five years ago, but has already established himself as an A-list artist in the realism field. He began his professional life as an architect but always knew that tattooing was where his true passion lay, and now he creates technically perfect tattooed portraits with his own unique graphic twist.

#### **Tell us a little about yourself...**

I was born in Philadelphia, in the US, but my parents are Portuguese so I have dual nationality. We returned to Portugal when I was eight years old, and I did all my schooling there. My degree was in architecture, but since 2012 I have dedicated myself completely to the world of tattoos. It's an addiction! I became a professional tattooist in 2013 and I currently work from a private studio near where I live in Portugal. I also regularly do guest spots in Germany, Switzerland and the US (in New York).

#### **What first attracted you to tattooing?**

I remember looking at tattoo magazines when I was young, and what I saw blew my mind. I thought to myself, "How is it possible to do this on skin?" That was what made me want to become a tattooist. I was already into art, especially realist painting – I used to spend school holidays in my parents' basement, drawing, painting and airbrushing – and I loved everything about the human figure. The challenge was doing realistic art on [t]at that would remain on their skin for ever.

#### **But architecture was your first profession?**

Yes. I tried to convince my parents that tattooing was the career I should pursue, but they didn't agree. They wanted me to get a college degree that would "provide for my future". I chose architecture because it was arts-related, and then I worked as an architect for twelve years.

#### **How did you get into tattooing?**

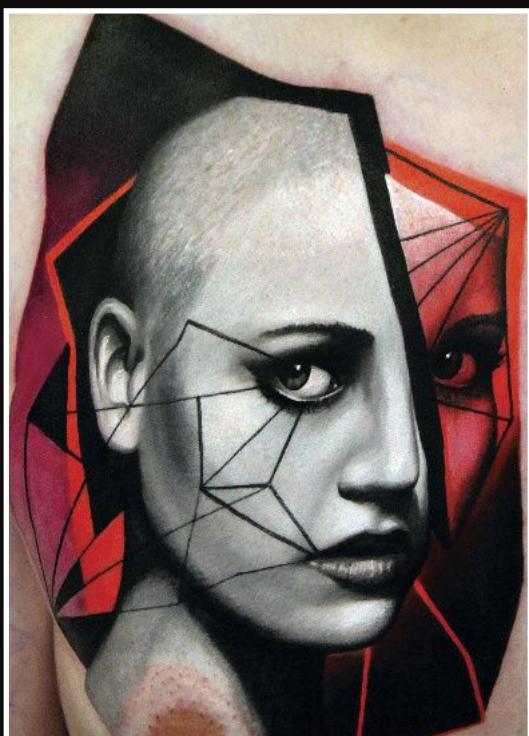
I got my first tattoo when I was thirty five. I was watching the tattooist work, and I thought to myself, "It's time to try this out." So the very next week I did a basic course, bought the necessary materials, and started. I spent a year learning, spending all my spare time on it, and



doing two or three tattoos a month on friends and acquaintances. But I didn't progress very much because my other job didn't give me enough free time. So in June 2013 I decided to quit architecture and dedicate myself to tattooing. That's when I bought my first rotary machine.

**So you didn't do an apprenticeship?**

No. Everything that I know I learned alone. I did that three-day course on the basics – including hygiene and how to set up a machine – and I watched dozens and dozens of videos. When I started working in studios, talking with other artists, and asking for tips on tattoo techniques, that was when I really started to develop and progress. I lived for tattooing, and I wanted to learn more and more. I travelled to conventions to meet the great artists and watch them work. I bought lots of machines and tried different types of needles and inks, and I didn't stop until I found a set-up I felt comfortable with. The equipment you use doesn't make you a better tattoo artist but it certainly does help!

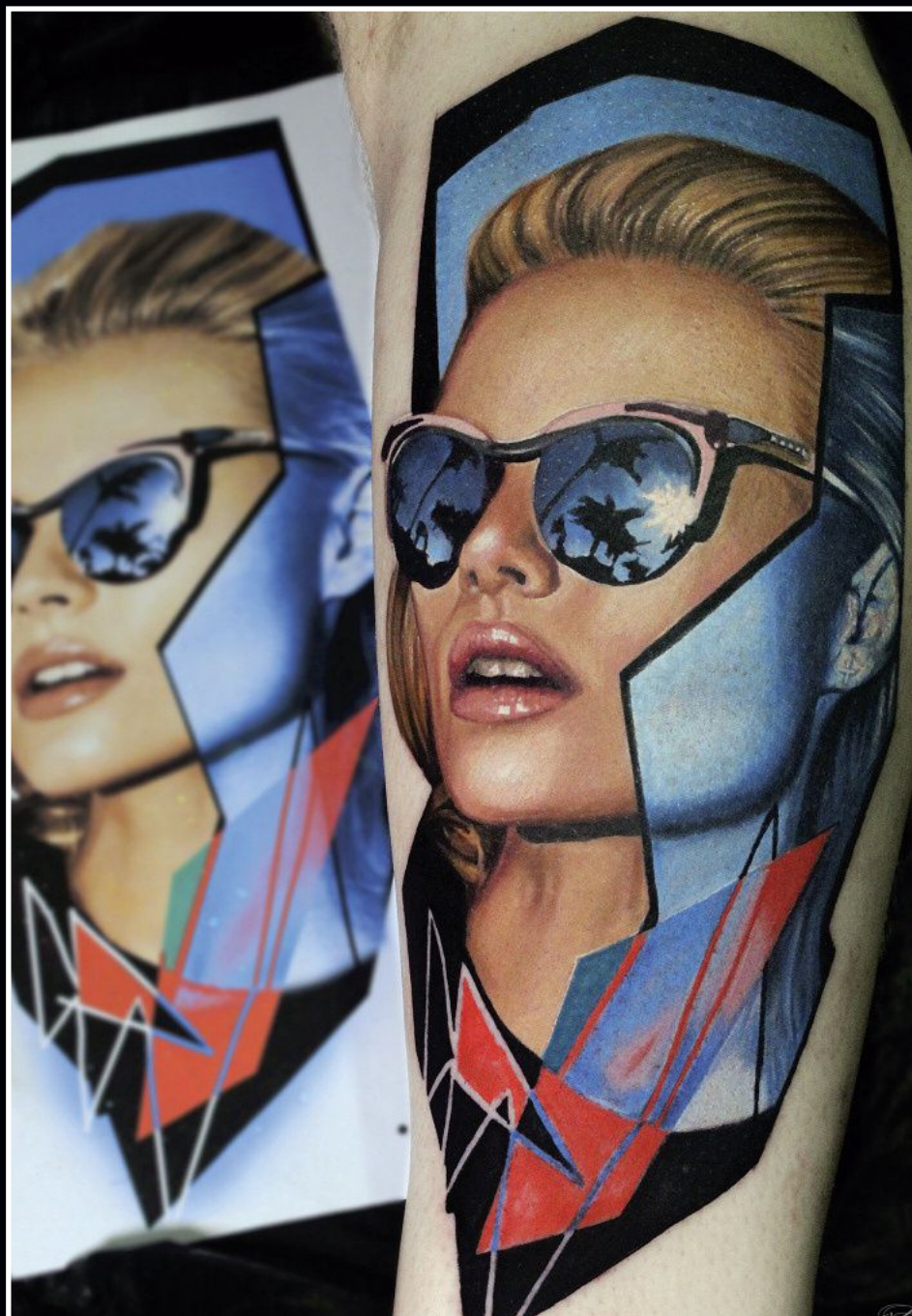


### Where do you find your inspiration?

Lots of artists inspire me. Renaissance painters such as Caravaggio, and modern masters such as Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele and Paula Rego. And hyperrealist painter Mike Dargas, who also tattoos. My main tattoo influences are Dmitriy Samohin, Led Coult, Alex de Pase, and Timur Lysenko. My architecture and graphic design background has certainly also influenced my style.

### How do you construct your designs?

It's just a combination of faces and high contrast backgrounds with a funky pop art twist. The designs are easy to create if I'm given a free rein, although not every theme is possible in my style. I knew right from the start that if I wanted to be successful, I had to find a unique, personal way of doing things that would make me stand out from the crowd. An individual trademark. I strive for that difference.







**In realistic tattoos, the same iconic images tend to be used over and over again. How can you make your work stand out?**

That's the problem for every realistic tattoo artist. We all use photos and internet references and, yes, you often see the same images repeated again and again. It's always a good idea to change the reference with Photoshop, or add different elements, change the colour, substitute another background, etc. Being creative is the hard part, the realism is the fun part.

**How do you achieve such smooth colour?**

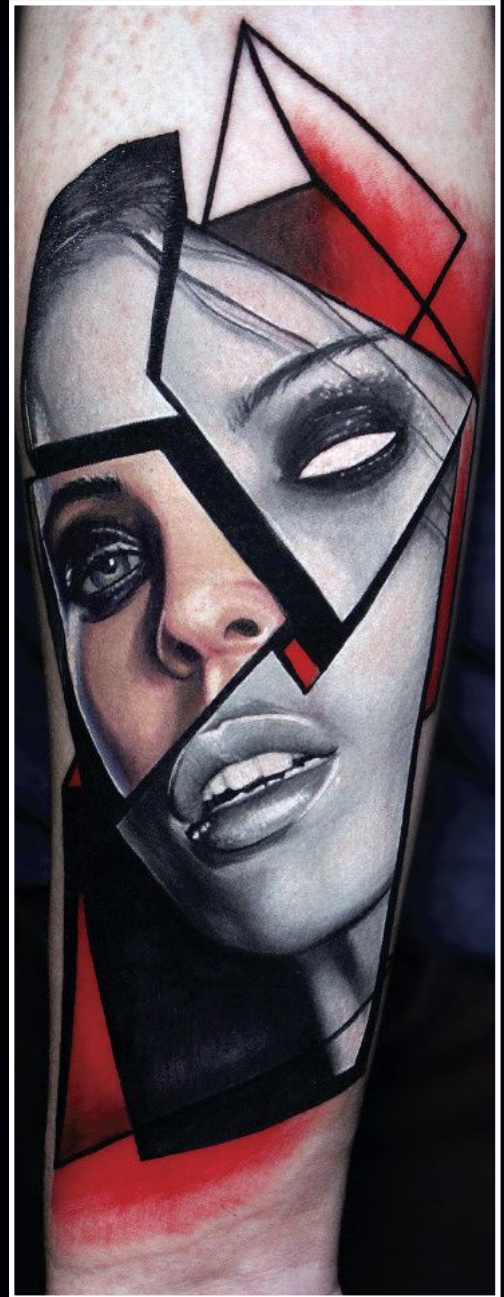
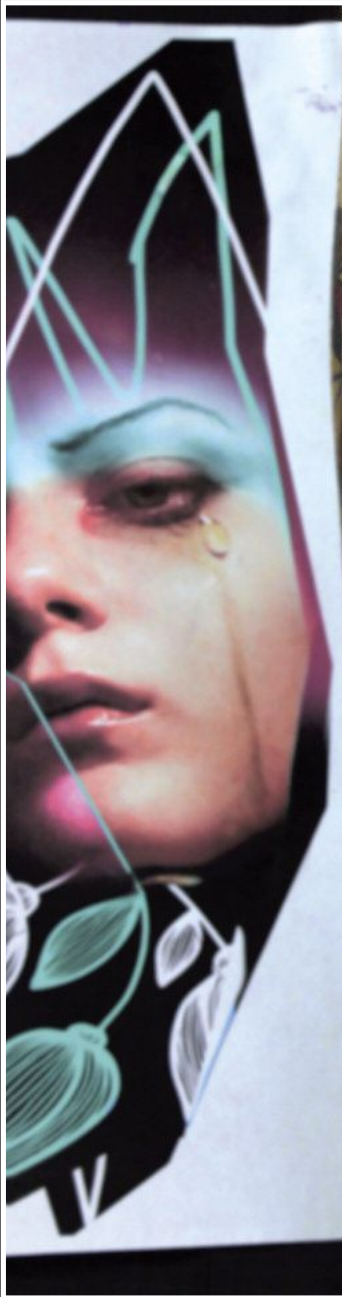
I work by areas from dark to light tones, and I work most of the areas with layers. I whip shade the edges whenever there's a colour transition, so I never create blocks of colour with hard edges.

**You use a lot of light tones in your work. How do you ensure the tattoo will heal well and have longevity?**

I don't have any special techniques, but I only use really light tones when my client has very pale skin – where there is less melanin – otherwise the white will heal darker. And my designs always have high contrast backgrounds or thick bloodlines to make them last.

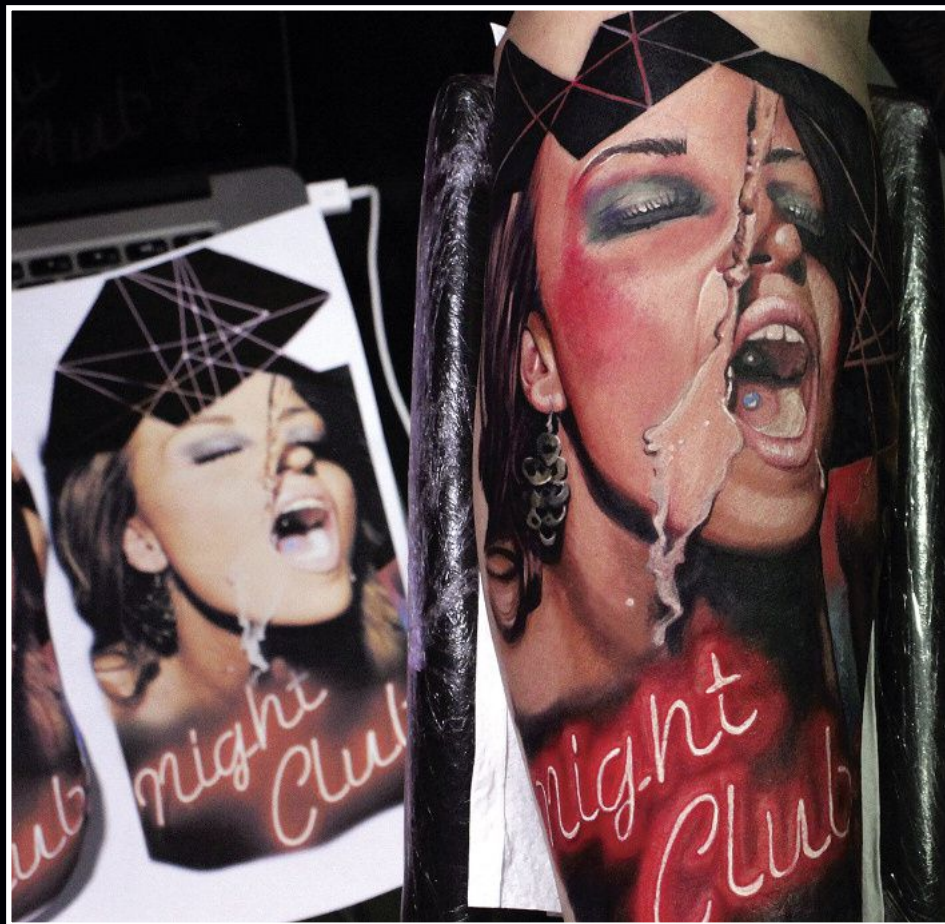
**Your work seems technically perfect...**

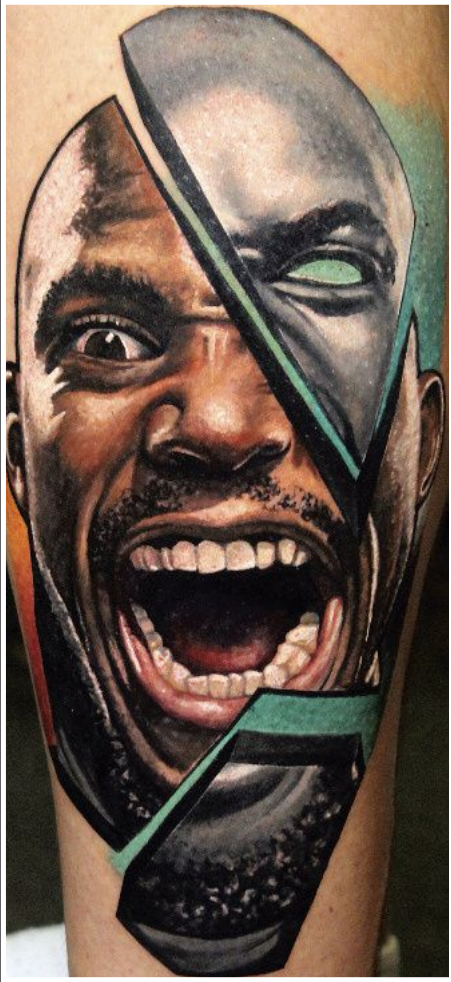
I wouldn't say it's perfect. It's far from that. I try to get there, but it's a never ending learning process. I do still struggle with not overworking the skin, but I'm better now because I've learned from my mistakes. I think the most important things in tattooing are patience and method. I'm a very focused person when I'm doing something I enjoy.

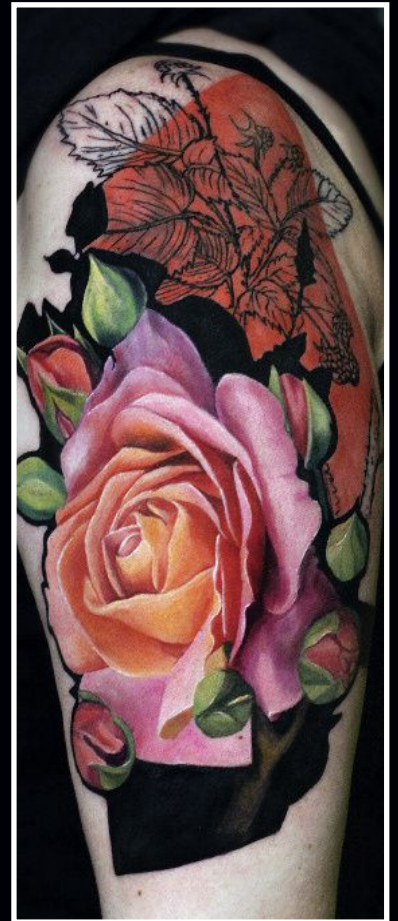
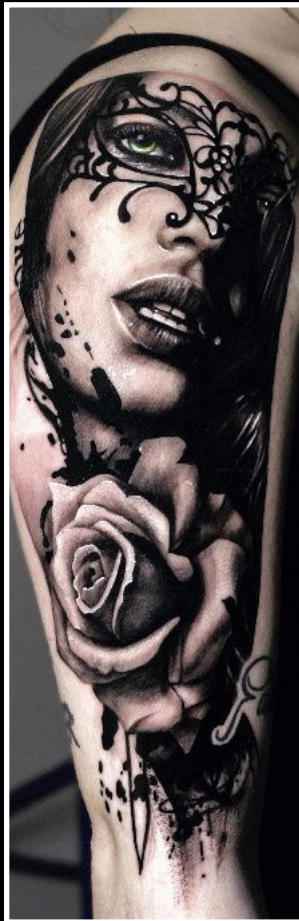
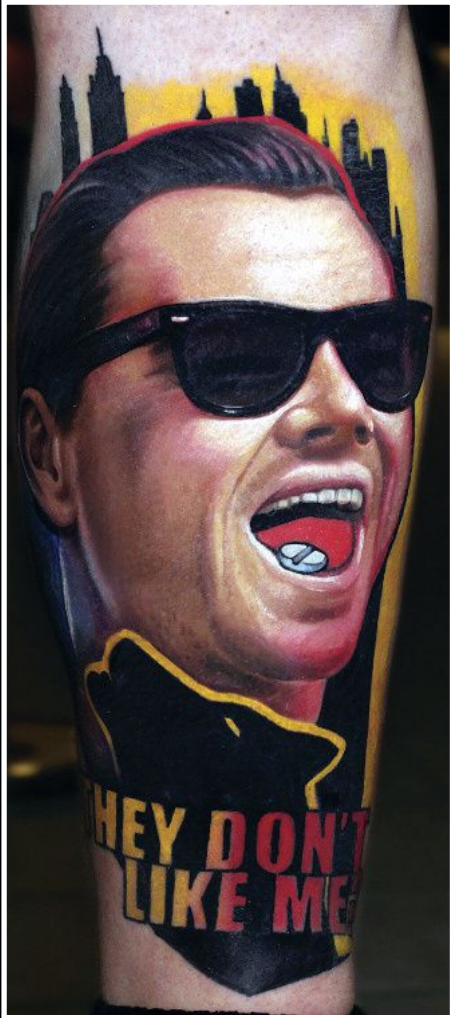


**What has been the highlight of your career so far?**

For me, the highlight came when I found I could combine my own creative style with almost perfect healing. Until that point, I'd been doing tattoos that looked good when they were fresh but didn't always look so good when they healed. It's only very recently that I've started to understand that, and I feel my tattoos are now really working.







**How do you see your work evolving?**

I just hope I don't run out of creativity!  
I imagine my work will always be realistic with a graphic art twist.

**Anything else to add?**

Yes. Follow the The Rat Pack on Facebook and instagram (@theratpacktattoo) to keep up with great collaborations between Yomico Moreno, Sam Barber, Jak Connolly, Benjamin Laukis, Matt Jordan, Steve Butcher, and myself.

[facebook.com/davepaulotattooartist/](https://www.facebook.com/davepaulotattooartist/)  
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232





# LEEDS INTERNATIONAL TATTOO EXPO

**A** few years ago I remember saying that Leeds was one city that really deserved a tattoo convention. With so many great studios and a strong tattoo history, it just seemed to make complete sense. The fantastically successful Leeds International Tattoo Expo, now in its third year, amply proves that point!

Previously located at the Royal Armouries Museum on the outskirts of town, this year the show moved to the much larger, purpose-built First Direct Arena in the city centre. Organiser Sylvia (of Ultimate Skin) has incredible connections within the tattoo world, so the artist line-up was second to none. There was a truly international cast, with not a mediocre tattooist among them.

About 150 artists filled the main hall, with every booth supplied with its own individual lighting to compensate for the low-level atmospheric ambience of the surrounding space. Wide aisles allowed easy access, and there was a nice relaxed flow of people between the booths.

A small stage hosted entertainment throughout the weekend – including Dr Sketchy live in action (with audience members invited to draw a model in exchange for prizes) and a sequined and masked burlesque performer who presented a light-hearted alternative to the more traditional format we are so used to seeing on the convention circuit. And there were tattoo competitions done in the real old-fashioned way, with a very impressive standard of work on display. In the main foyer, there was music on the stage, stalls to peruse, and the opportunity to grab a super cool haircut. You could even take your seats ringside and watch some wrestling. This is not something I would usually expect to see at a tattoo convention, but I have to be honest and say it drew the biggest crowds!

Due to the recent tragic events in Manchester, security was a high priority at this show and staff were on high alert, patrolling the venue and searching everyone as they entered the building. Some felt this was a little over-the-top, but personally I thought it was a reassuring precaution.



- 1. arran king, life family tattoo
- 2. nico brandini, empreinte body art (france)
- 3. amayra tattoo art (spain)
- 4. the first direct arena, leeds





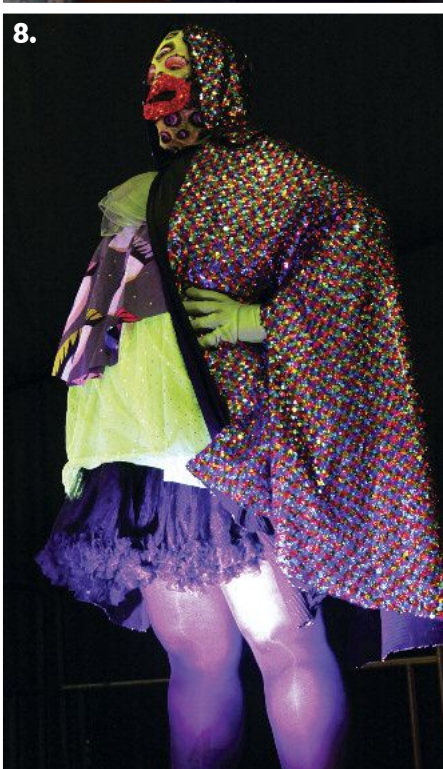
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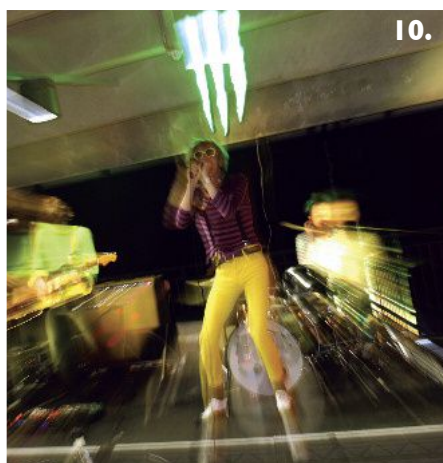
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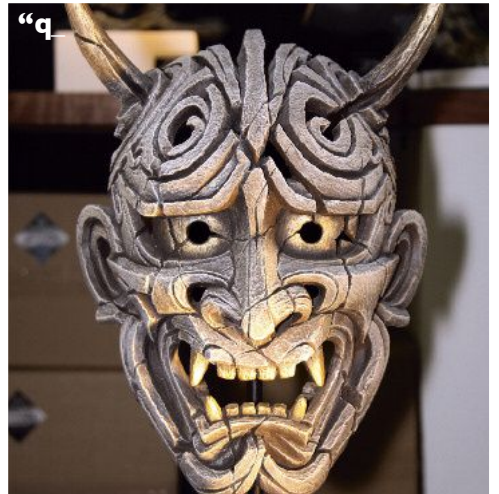
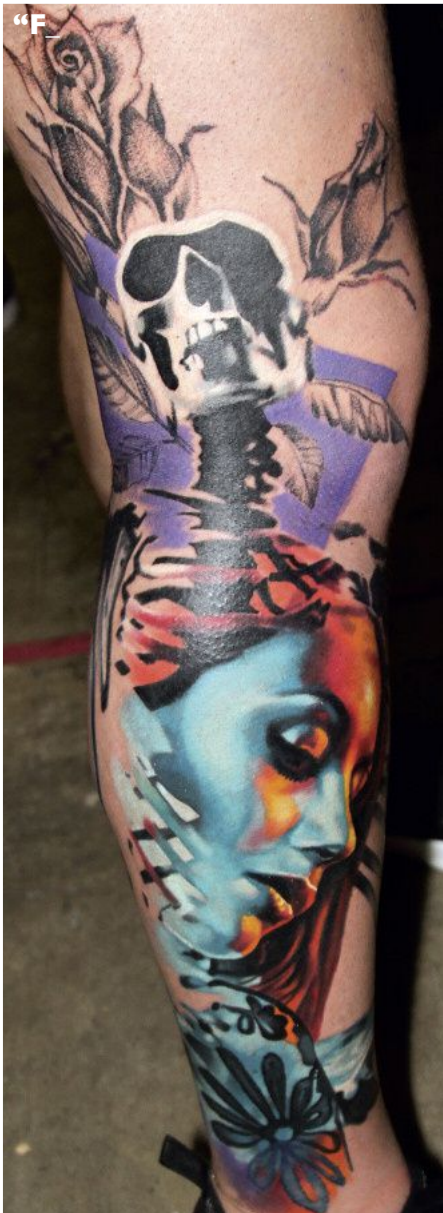
10.

- 5. matt craven, tenacious tattoo
- 6. tacho, follow your dreams
- 7. little andy, the church
- 8. kinky krayola performs for dr sketchys
- 9. free monster drinks from the monster truck
- 10. live music in the foyer
- 11. jack peppiette, insider tattoo
- 12. damien gorski, ushuaia tattoo
- 13. tahlia, hand of the ghost
- 14. julen, greyline tattoo (spain)
- 15. pop art print stall
- 16. handcraft sculptures



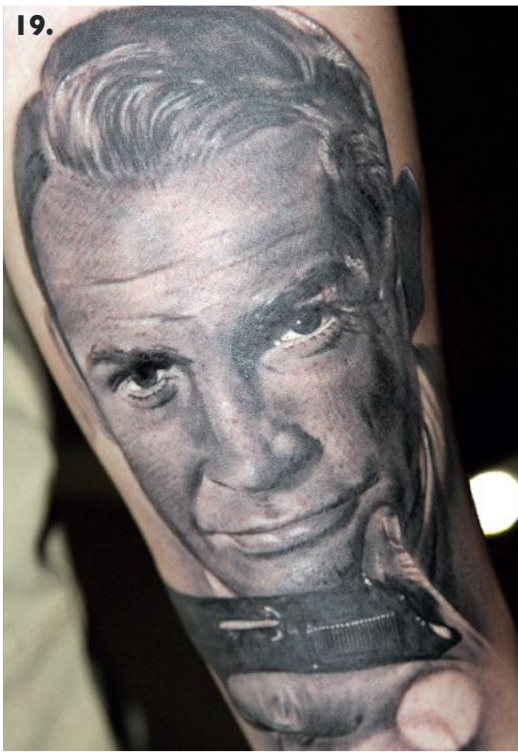
Convention food is usually a bit of a disaster but Sylvia had sourced a really good vegan company to provide wholesome fayre that catered to all tastes. However, beer prices in the Arena were astronomically high (a personal bugbear of mine) and with a pub just a hundred yards away offering drinks at less than half the price being charged in the venue, it was quite a problem to keep punters from straying. So many venues seem to be working against the interests of convention organisers in this respect, which will eventually force organisers to look elsewhere to find a home for their event.

But enough of the moaning. Leeds was fantastic. The city itself is beautiful, with some lovely architecture and numerous great places to eat. Everyone was friendly, and the Expo's entrance fee of just £10 was a bargain. With so much top quality tattoo art on show, you really can't go wrong. Leeds definitely has the world-class convention it deserves!

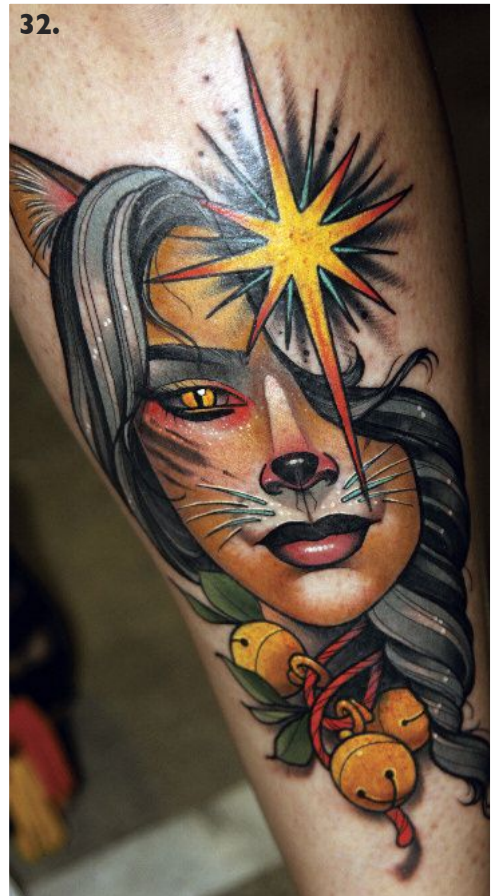
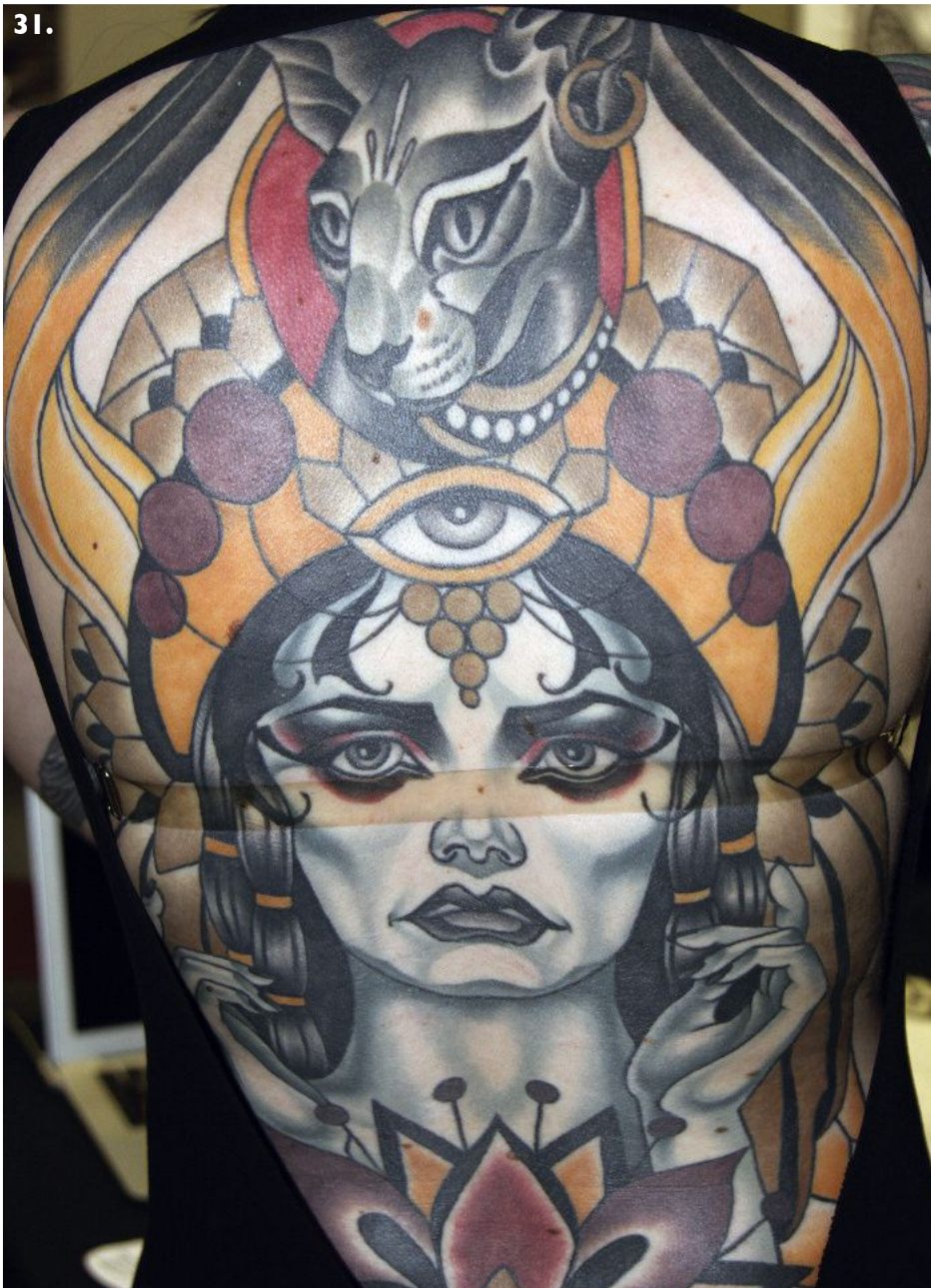




- 17. volkan demirci, ushuaia tattoo
- 18. daryl watson, painted lady tattoo parlour
- 19. bryn, brutal truth tattoo club
- 20. miriam olivia, circus of madness
- 21. owen yu, the circle
- 22. coreh lopez (spain)
- 23. tj fairfax, hollow crown
- 24. nick imms the church
- 25. daryl watson, painted lady tattoo parlour
- 26. aayrata, amayra tattoo art (spain)
- 27. adam pekr, inkversion







28. oash, la cosa nostra (spain)  
29. lydia madrid, madrid tattoo (spain)  
30. dave barry, follow your dreams  
31. kat abdy, cloak and dagger  
32. debora cherrys,  
la mujer barbuder (spain)

# LEEDS

INTERNATIONAL



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JULY  
2018

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# Wassim Razzouk

## AND THE PILGRIMAGE TATTOO TRADITION

Just inside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, on a side street near the Jaffa Gate, there's a tattoo shop where present-day visitors to the Holy Land can be inked with the very same designs that would have been offered to the pilgrims of old – using original wooden stencil blocks that have miraculously survived across the centuries. Wassim Razzouk proudly carries on the tradition that has been in his family for 700 years. His great grandfather Jirius brought Coptic Christian tattooing to Jerusalem from Egypt four generations ago; his grandfather Yacoub was the first tattooist in the country to use coloured inks and an electric tattoo machine; and his father Anton taught Wassim the craft, which he in turn hopes to pass on to his own sons. Here, as related by Wassim, is the fascinating story of pilgrimage tattooing at Razzouk Tattoo.



Interview by Rick and Ruth from Beadesaurus  
Pictures by Rick, Ruth and Wassim



“I am actually the first tattooist in the Razzouk family whose sole profession is tattooing. This is because pilgrimage tattooing was never a year-round thing. It peaked at Easter, and during the rest of the year there weren't enough customers to make a living from it. My grandfather Yacoub was also a carpenter and a coffin-maker. He was a great tattooist. Really artistic. Beautiful clear lines. People remember him – locals of course, but also the pilgrims who were tattooed by him. They still come here, and they usually ask me simply to tattoo a new date underneath their existing tattoo. They never want his work covered up.

“My grandfather used to make his own ink using the soot from an oil lamp. It's amazing how those tattoos still hold. Later, he started to acquire coloured inks from England, and was the first tattooist in this country to tattoo in colour. He also made a tattoo machine using an electric bell powered by a car battery – another first – and he covered it with a leather pouch so that nobody could see how it was made. He didn't want anyone to copy it. Everyone else was still tattooing by hand, and lots of customers were coming to him because he could tattoo so much faster. Lyle Tuttle has his original 'Electric Tattooing With Colour' sign on display in his shop; the one that we have here is a replica. Interestingly, my grandfather also used to receive requests to tattoo people who had problems with their bones and joints. They would ask him to tattoo them without ink – he used alcohol or various medicines instead – and they would keep coming back because somehow the tattoos helped them.

“In the pilgrimage season, my grandfather would tattoo around three hundred pilgrims. Other family members, including my father and my aunt, would have to help him out because the demand was so great. Pilgrims would flock here and sit on the steps waiting in line to get tattooed. Before he got his electric machine it was a very slow process. Not like nowadays! We tattoo three hundred pilgrims in three days! The Tuesday after Easter is the peak of our pilgrimage business, and it continues for a few months after that. March and April are pretty crazy. I don't do any other big tattoo projects at that time of year because I have to run things on a tight schedule. I have lots of groups coming in, and most of the work is walk-ins. But there are also appointments booked months ahead by people who are planning their pilgrimage visit and want to make sure they get tattooed. The tattoo is a big part of their trip.



“Pilgrims to the Holy Land have been tattooed with Christian symbols for at least five hundred years. A typical pilgrimage tattoo is the Jerusalem Cross [a cross with arms of equal length and a similar small cross in each of its quarters] which is a symbol that dates back to the time of the Crusades. We do various other types of crosses too – not just two lines, they're more complex than that, but they're not super elaborate. They're usually about two inches in size. The date of the pilgrimage is also included in the tattoo. This is very important; it's a proud commemoration. In the past, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem was a once-in-a-lifetime thing; nowadays you just click a button online and you're here next week – but for many pilgrims the tattoo is still an essential part of the pilgrimage. A pilgrimage tattoo is a forever reminder, a souvenir, a 'certificate' to prove that you were here. It's like stamping your passport, except you're stamping your skin instead. Pilgrims

who come more than once usually have the date of each trip added to their tattoo. My father knew a man who used to bring groups of pilgrims here every year for decades. He had a very long list of dates tattooed on his arm!





“The right inner forearm is the most common placement for a pilgrimage tattoo. When you extend your arm to shake hands, this is the part that is most visible, so people can see that you have done your pilgrimage. Men have always wanted to show their tattoos, but in times gone by women would often choose to conceal their pilgrimage tattoos by placing them on their inner upper arm or above their knee.

“Back in Egypt, generations ago, my ancestors were doing traditional identification tattoos for the Copts – a simple small cross on the wrist, as a mark of their Christianity. We still do these tattoos here. A lot of times, it's children who are being tattooed, when they are baptised. The youngest child I've tattooed was four years old. Her parents, grandparents, everybody came and they all wanted her to get tattooed, and she wanted it too. My grandfather once tattooed a baby who was only a week old. A group of Egyptian Copts were here on a pilgrimage, and among their group was a woman in the later stages of her pregnancy who actually gave birth while they were in Jerusalem. Everyone said that because her son was born during the pilgrimage, he must get tattooed. My grandfather initially refused, saying the baby was too young and too small, but the mother was crying and begging for him to tattoo her son, so he did.



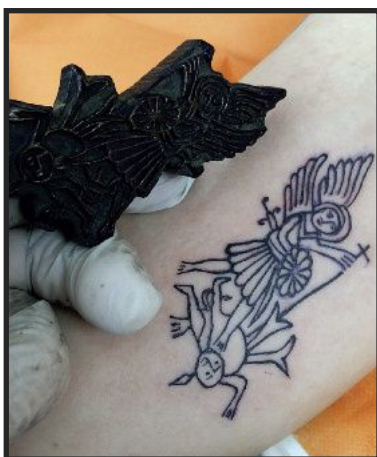


“When my great grandfather, Jirius, first came to Jerusalem he introduced the Coptic cross tattoos here. He also started offering more elaborate pilgrimage tattoos using a collection of hand-carved wooden blocks he'd brought with him from Egypt. These blocks were the forerunners of modern tattoo stencils. We still have many of them here, and some of them are hundreds of years old. We can't really trace their origins – where they came from, or who carved them – but we think they were probably made in Bethlehem, which is famous for its olive wood. Some of them are very intricate. Even using modern tools, to make something like this would be amazing. As well as being used as stencils, the blocks served as a catalogue from which the pilgrim could choose their design. Motifs such as the Resurrection, the Ascension or the Crucifixion were available if they didn't just want a cross. Some of the blocks have holes where they were strung up for people to look at more easily. Once the pilgrim had made their choice, the block would be dipped in ink and printed on to their skin for the tattooist to work on. Although the majority of the blocks are religious in their subject matter, some are purely decorative, such as the one with flowers, like a band. And the Angel of the Annunciation block is a sign of fertility that was usually tattooed on to unmarried women as a charm.



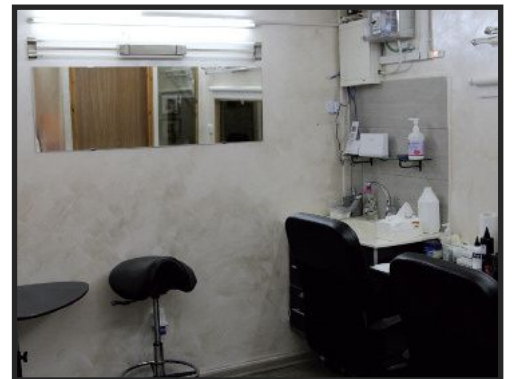


“After my grandfather died, the blocks were distributed between my father, my cousin and my aunt (who is still tattooing at the age of eighty!) Some of the blocks have also ended up in England. So they are spread out now. But we are lucky, because there is a book where all my grandfather's blocks were recorded: 'Coptic Tattoo Designs' by John Carswell. He was a historian staying in Jerusalem during the 1950s. I think he was researching the art and architecture of the churches. One day he was walking in the Old City when he came across my grandfather's shop. He saw the sign advertising 'Electric Tattooing With Colour', but when he looked through the door he saw all the coffins! He was very curious to know how the two were connected. So he stepped inside and started talking with my grandfather. My father was there too. My grandfather explained that he was a carpenter and coffin-maker as well as being part of a family who tattooed pilgrims, a practice that had been going on for hundreds of years. He was happy to show John his tools and also the wooden blocks. John was fascinated with these charming pieces of 'folk art'; he'd never seen anything like it. And that's why he decided to write his book and record all the designs (there were nearly two hundred of them). His research was sound and his historical descriptions were very accurate. The book is hard to come by now. It had a very limited print run, so it's become very valuable. I met him recently when he came to give a lecture here in Jerusalem. My father came too, and John recognised him straight away! “During the time when my father and grandfather were tattooing, all the Orthodox Christians wanted to be tattooed with the blocks. But nowadays they usually want something more modern. It's the Western clients – the Europeans and Americans – who ask for the blocks now... especially the Jerusalem cross. As soon as I bring out that block and tell them it's been used for tattooing pilgrims for hundreds of years, there's no question about it – they'll have that one. They could have any image they want, of course – any cross they've printed out from the internet – but they want the genuine thing, even if it isn't perfect.





“Ninety percent of the people I tattoo are first-timers. Tattoo virgins! For us, it's an honour to tattoo them. They never thought they would ever get tattooed. For most of them it will be their first and last tattoo. Sometimes they make a very spontaneous decision. It just feels like the right time and the right place. A lot of them are on the older side, at least in their forties or fifties, and sometimes much older. I have tattooed a lady who was a hundred and one, who was here with a pilgrimage group. Just like when my grandfather refused to tattoo the week-old baby, I was initially very reluctant to tattoo her. Her skin was so delicate; it was like cigarette paper. I was scared I would damage it. But her daughter, who was herself in her mid-eighties, said that her mother had been waiting to get this tattoo the entire trip. I had to do it in the end. It was something that I couldn't deny her; it was her right. She wanted to die knowing she had that pilgrimage tattoo on her. And it turned out to be a nice tattoo!



“People are amazed when they see our shop, and if they don't already know about it they are always fascinated by its history. We've had a lot of publicity online and on the television, with celebrities such as Fern Britton and Michael Portillo visiting us recently, and people are now coming to the Holy Land simply because of seeing these television programmes. We have even been named on one travel website as one of the top five destinations to get tattooed. I meet a lot of clients who get tattooed wherever they travel to. But even though tattoos are generally seen as much more socially acceptable now, this is not the case everywhere. I tattoo a lot of Americans with white ink because they want their tattoo but they can't have anything visible because of the work they do.

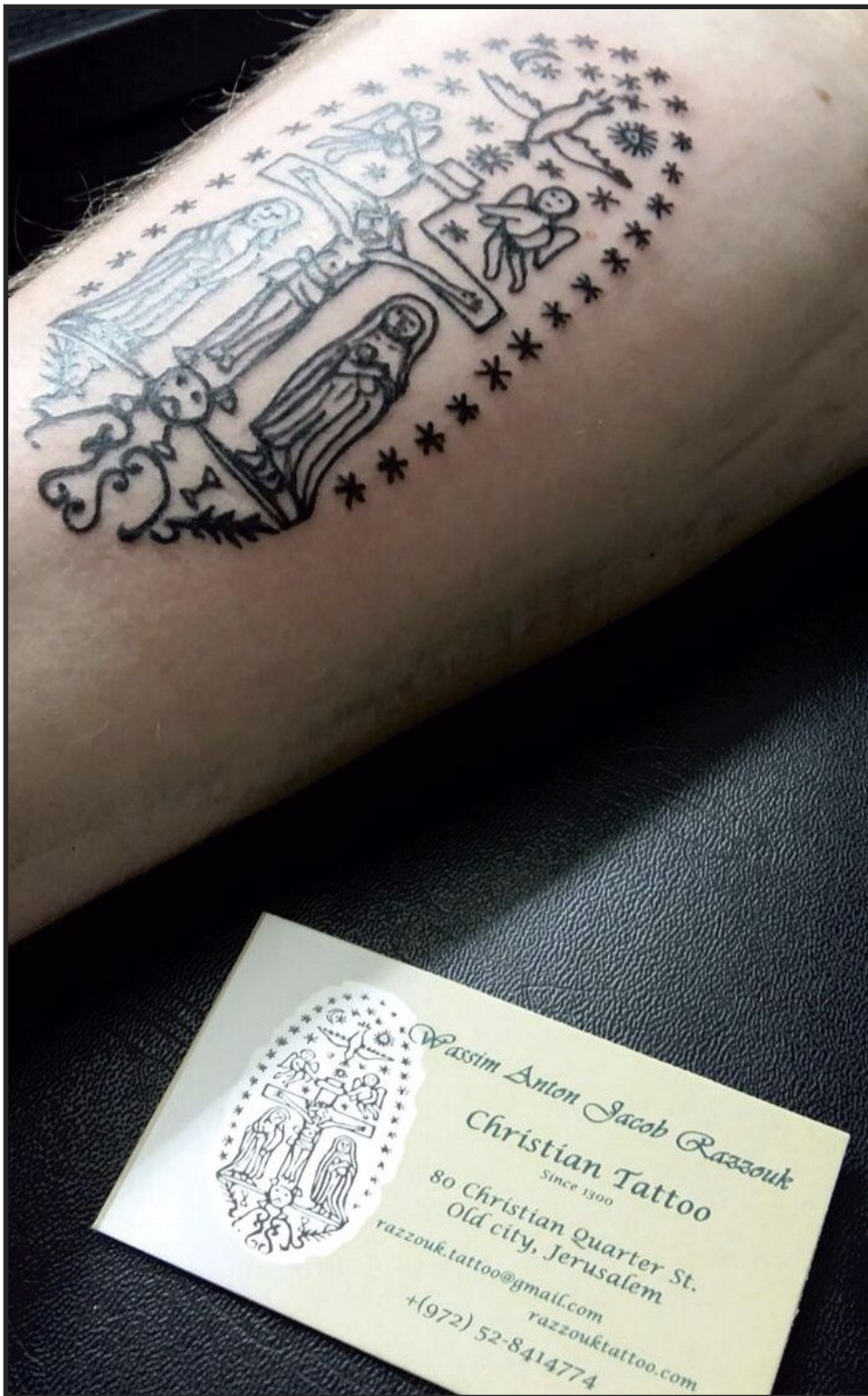


“People sometimes ask how can a tattoo make a pilgrim? A tattoo doesn't make you a 'real' Christian or a 'real' pilgrim. However somebody who is ready to accept a tattoo shows a commitment. The same can be said of people who get other types of tattoos – not just pilgrimage tattoos. It's a lifetime commitment. A tattoo reminds you of something that is inside you – something that you also want to show to other people. This morning I tattooed a man's inner wrist. He'd had a heart attack less than a year ago and he got 'It will be OK' tattooed in Hebrew. When a pilgrim gets a cross tattooed, that person will forever remember that they were a pilgrim. They've done their pilgrimage; they've walked on the soil that Jesus walked on. And now, in a way, they are holy and cannot do bad things. My father always says that if the tattoo is on your arm and you put your arm out to steal something, you'll see the cross and it will remind you that you're not supposed to do that!



“Pilgrimage tattoos are more than just proof that you're a pilgrim. Every new tattoo that you receive, whether as a pilgrim or not, has the power to change you as a person inside. I have religious tattoos; they give me a sense of belonging and protection. Personally, I like to think that Jesus himself might have had a tattoo. Of course we don't know for sure, but I believe there's a very good chance that He did! In Revelations (19:16), John says, 'On His thigh, a name was written: King of Kings, Lord of Lords'. And it's interesting to consider the possibility that Jesus's followers might have marked themselves with tattoos. I have researched this, and I think there are several passages in the Bible that could be interpreted in this way.

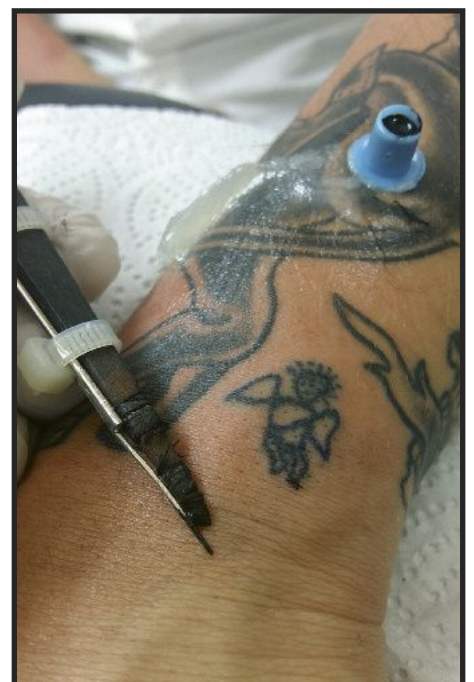




“The most beautiful thing about any job is that if you do it with passion and because you love it, you don't feel like you're working. I certainly don't feel like I'm working. I come here, I have fun, I talk to people and I do tattoos. It's not a money-making machine. I have four children – two boys and two girls – and one of my sons definitely wants to carry on the family tradition. He's fourteen now, and he often comes in and helps me out. I'm encouraging him, but I don't want to pressurise him.

“Nowadays tattoos have become a real art form, rather than just an expression of yourself. I've seen pieces on people that are amazing, and sometimes I even think, 'This shouldn't be a tattoo! One day this person will die and this work of art will disappear!' But because of all those television shows, so much of tattooing has become like Hollywood. This, in turn, means that people are now seeking tattoos that are more authentic, and my work is part of this culture – something that has history to it, even though it's just a simple outline of a beautiful design. For our clients, this is a piece of art that has value not because of the artist who made it, but because of the history that comes with it.

**Wassim Rassouk**  
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# Kelly Moon

COVER MODEL PROFILE



## This month's cover model is Kelly Moon, aka Moon Suicide, from Los Angeles. She loves satellites, smoking weed, and hanging out with friends in her babe cave...

### Were you born in LA?

I was born and raised in Sacramento. I moved to Long Beach in 2012 with a boy, then in 2014 I went back to Sacramento. I lived in Portland for a while before coming to live in LA at the beginning of this year.

### How did you get involved with the Suicide Girls?

My ex-boyfriend introduced me to Rambo Suicide in 2010. She asked me if I was interested in modelling. Initially I said no, but then when I moved to Long Beach I decided to get in touch. I got set up with a shoot... and the rest is history!

### What inspired your Suicide Girl name?

I love the moon. It's my favourite celestial body. Satellites in general are just super cool aspects of the cosmos.

### Any words of advice for aspiring models and Suicide Girls?

It's not for the weak!

### Any new projects coming up?

My roommate Milloux Suicide and I are working on a web series called 'Immaculate Spliff' (@immaculatespliff on Instagram) We're trying to channel a kind of women's 'Wayne's World' with a weed sort of vibe.

### What inspired your arm tattoos?

I love traditional style ink, especially dark lines and dark colours. And dark concepts! I have a double-headed snake, a seer, a joint...

### Are you planning any more ink?

I want so many more tattoos. I'm trying to go slowly, but I really want to finish my right arm.

### I hear you were the selfie master before it became a thing...

Yes, it's true. I've been taking selfies for wayyyy too long. Definitely pre-dating Myspace times. I'm talking ten year olds taking selfies on our parents' film cameras!

### Give us some tips about taking the perfect selfie. Some of us suck at it. There has to be a trick.

Lighting lighting lighting! That's what's important. Stand in front of a window, or prop your phone onto the window ledge in selfie mode and use your timer. And take a whole bunch of pictures. One of them is sure to turn out OK.

### Who do you look up to?

I look up to all my beautiful amazing friends. Without them I'd be nowhere.

### What do you get up to when you're not modelling?

I love smoking weed, walking my dog, wandering around Little Tokyo (the Japanese district in LA), chilling with my roommates in our babe cave, and lounging around my house naked. You could describe me as the most outgoing homebody in the world. It takes a lot to get me out into the night, but once I'm there I'm an unstoppable force of fun and craziness.

### Of all the places you've visited, which is your favourite?

One of my favourite cities is Prague. Beautiful architecture, cheap beer, and cheap cigarettes!

### What do you want to be when you grow up?

Happier.

### Any other goals and aspirations?

Truly, I aspire to live the best life I can. I just want to impact people positively. There's so much negativity in the world, so much pressure to conform. Who knows what our world is going to be like ten years from now.

### How do we connect with you?

My Instagram/Twitter/Tumblr/pretty much everything is @yourmoonbaby and my website (where I host exclusive content that isn't publicly posted anywhere else) is

[Connectpal.com/kellymoon](http://Connectpal.com/kellymoon)

Photos and interview by:  
Jenna Kraczek





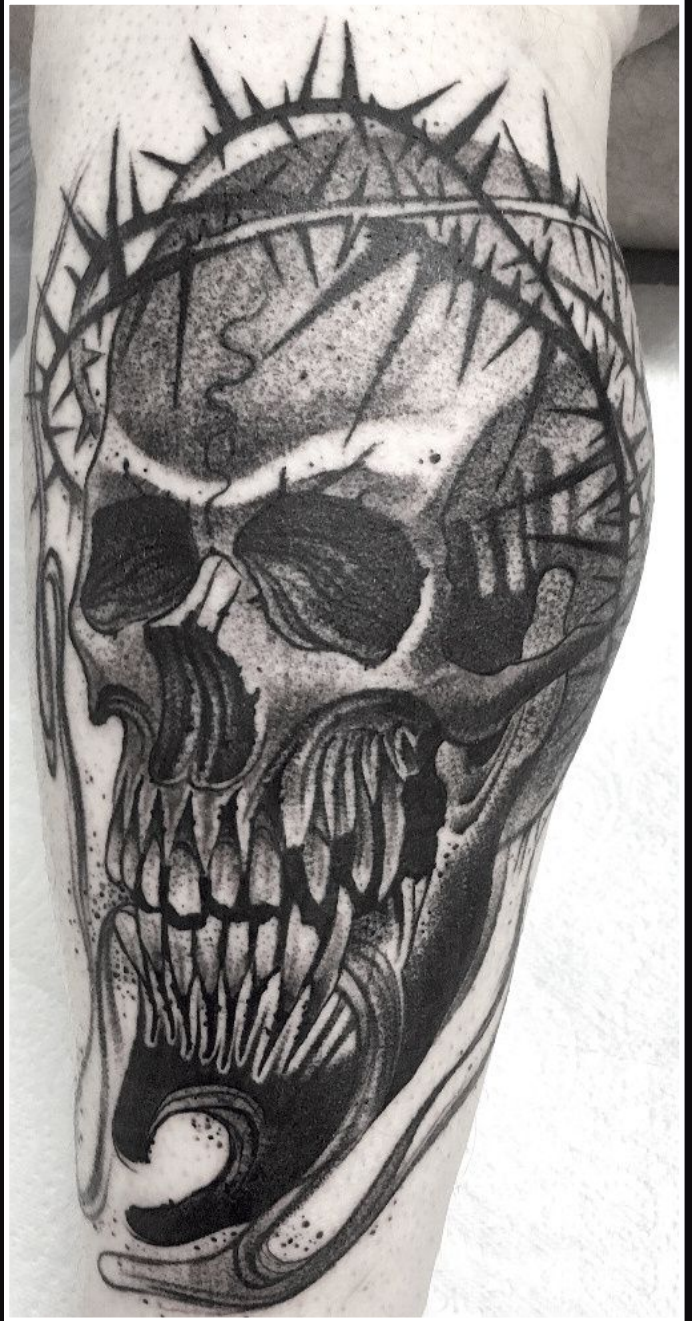
Interview by Lizzy  
Pictures courtesy of Sicko Black



**W**orking under the name of Sicko Black, Alex of Good Changes tattoo studio in Moscow is fast becoming an internationally renowned exponent of blackwork tattooing. His tattoos are beautiful, yet unnerving. He cleverly combines Japanese imagery with his own unique style of illustration, stripping out any trace of colour to create a nightmarish fairytale world where anything is possible.

I begin our interview by asking Alex how long he's been tattooing. "I've been into it for a long time," he replies, "but professionally I've only been doing it for around three years. Before that, I wasn't doing anything in particular - just trying to find my way really."

Growing up in Russia, Alex didn't get to see many tattoos; there certainly weren't as many visibly tattooed people as there are now. "My earliest tattoo memory is from when I was a teenager," he tells me. "My family had a summer house in the countryside, and there was a man living in the area who was completely covered in ink, from head to toe. He knew my parents, and even though he was much younger than them (and had only recently come out of jail) they all hung out together. Of course such a colourful person couldn't escape my attention either, and my friends and I would sit with him and drink beer and talk about tattoos and their meanings. It turned out he was a local tattooist who did authentic Russian criminal tattoos. It was really good fun spending time with him, and he told us a lot of interesting stuff."



Fast forward to the present day, and Alex now owns and runs Good Changes in Moscow. "It's a private studio," he tells me, "not a street shop. When I'm not travelling, I spend a lot of my time there - working, drawing, and just having fun with my tattoo team. Between us we cover a whole range of styles, including traditional and realism of course." I ask Alex how he feels about being a business owner as well as a tattooist. "Sometimes the business side of things takes up more time than I'd like it to, but I don't do it all myself. My girlfriend and colleagues from the studio help me a lot. I'm definitely more of an artist than a manager."





Alex tells me his girlfriend inspires him creatively too. "There are lots of artists I admire," he continues, "but I think I am influenced less by other tattooists than I was at the beginning of my career. I do, however, respect anyone who specialises in high quality blackwork, neo-traditional or Japanese."

Alex describes his style of tattooing very succinctly and idiosyncratically as "NO COLOUR INSIDE". But with so many pigments and inks available in the tattoo world, why use only black? "Black, together with all its gradations, is perfectly suited to conveying and expressing my ideas. It gives me more than enough 'colour'. I want to simplify the tattooing process as much as possible. Colour is for painting!"





And what about equipment? "In the past I was a big fan of coils," Alex tells me. "I even had a small collection of them. But I've recently moved on to working with rotaries. Personally, I find them easier to handle - but I know a lot of artists who tattoo with coil machines and get excellent results."

I ask Alex to tell me about his artistic background and education. "I've always been interested in art," he says, "but there have been two distinct periods in my personal artistic development: the time before I did my formal education at the art academy, and everything since then. They're like different worlds to me. I look back, and it feels like all the drawings I did before I attended the art academy were just a waste of time. It was actually tattooing that made me decide to study art, because I began to realise that without that background knowledge - without a *proper* education in the arts - even tattooing would become boring for me. It's definitely helped my career. I studied painting and drawing techniques, and art history too. All the basic disciplines of a formal academic art education. And I've brought everything I learnt at the academy into the work I do now. My in-depth knowledge helps me in all sorts of ways, but especially in sketching my designs and thinking about the composition of my tattoos. Before I attended the art academy, I really lacked those skills."





"I was never a tattoo apprentice," Alex continues, "so I guess I could be classed as self-taught. But I definitely can't say I figured it all out by myself! I've always tried to learn as much as I can from artists whose approach I admire. And of course I always want to get tattooed by those artists, so that I can watch them work and ask questions about what they do and how they do it. I believe the best way to learn is to get inked by the tattooists whose work most closely resembles your own style."

Alex tells me that his relationship with his wider family is somewhat strained because of his chosen profession. "Within my family, it's only my grandfather who has any tattoos. And all he's got is a couple of initials. In Russia, especially in earlier times, tattoos were always associated with criminals. My relatives are very disapproving of tattoos in general, probably because of all the old Soviet prejudices. I am definitely the black sheep of my family! They find my profession hard to accept and hard to understand. In fact they don't see tattooing as a reputable profession at all."





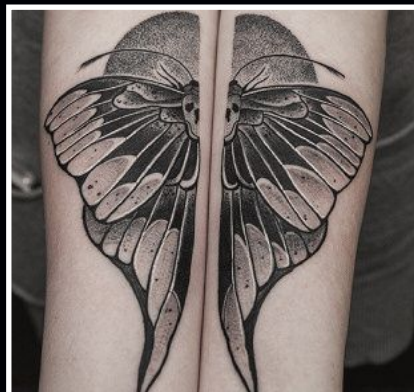
I ask Alex to tell me more about attitudes to tattooing in modern day Russia. There are misconceptions and judgements – the same as anywhere – but a more accepting climate is definitely emerging. “The days when everybody associated tattoos with criminality are long gone,” Alex explains. “Twenty years ago, when I was growing up, everyone seemed to believe that if you had any tattoos you must be a criminal of some kind. But nowadays it’s different. You do of course still hear those prejudices expressed occasionally, but for the most part things have moved on. And I think attitudes are changing partly because tattooing is changing. We’re not stuck in the past. The tattoo industry is developing. We have a lot of amazingly talented artists here who create fantastic work, and great tattoo conventions too. The industry is growing significantly. But you can’t really talk about a *Russian* tattoo scene as such. Russia is far too big a country to generalise.”



Alex now travels widely to guest spots and conventions abroad. His trips this year have included Brussels, Berlin, Brighton and Total Tattoo Magazine’s very own Big North Tattoo Show in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He tells me he finds the experience invaluable. “Travelling gives me the opportunity to streamline the tattoo process and make it all as simple and straightforward as possible. I can’t carry my whole studio in my luggage, so I have to get rid of everything that is unnecessary. I like that. And the communication with other artists is important too. I get a lot of inspiration from talking with colleagues at conventions and at the studios where I do guest spots. They’ve taught me a lot of things. It’s amazing how many different ways there are of getting ink into the skin; I’m astonished every time I get the chance to see something fresh and learn something new.”

As our conversation draws to a close, I ask Alex to define exactly what tattooing means to him. “It’s a job that’s become a way of life,” he tells me. “I can’t imagine how it could be anything else!”

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# GALLERY



alex batten,  
black dog tattoos



gemma kennedy,  
salt rose tattoo



colin whitfield,  
i4 tattooing

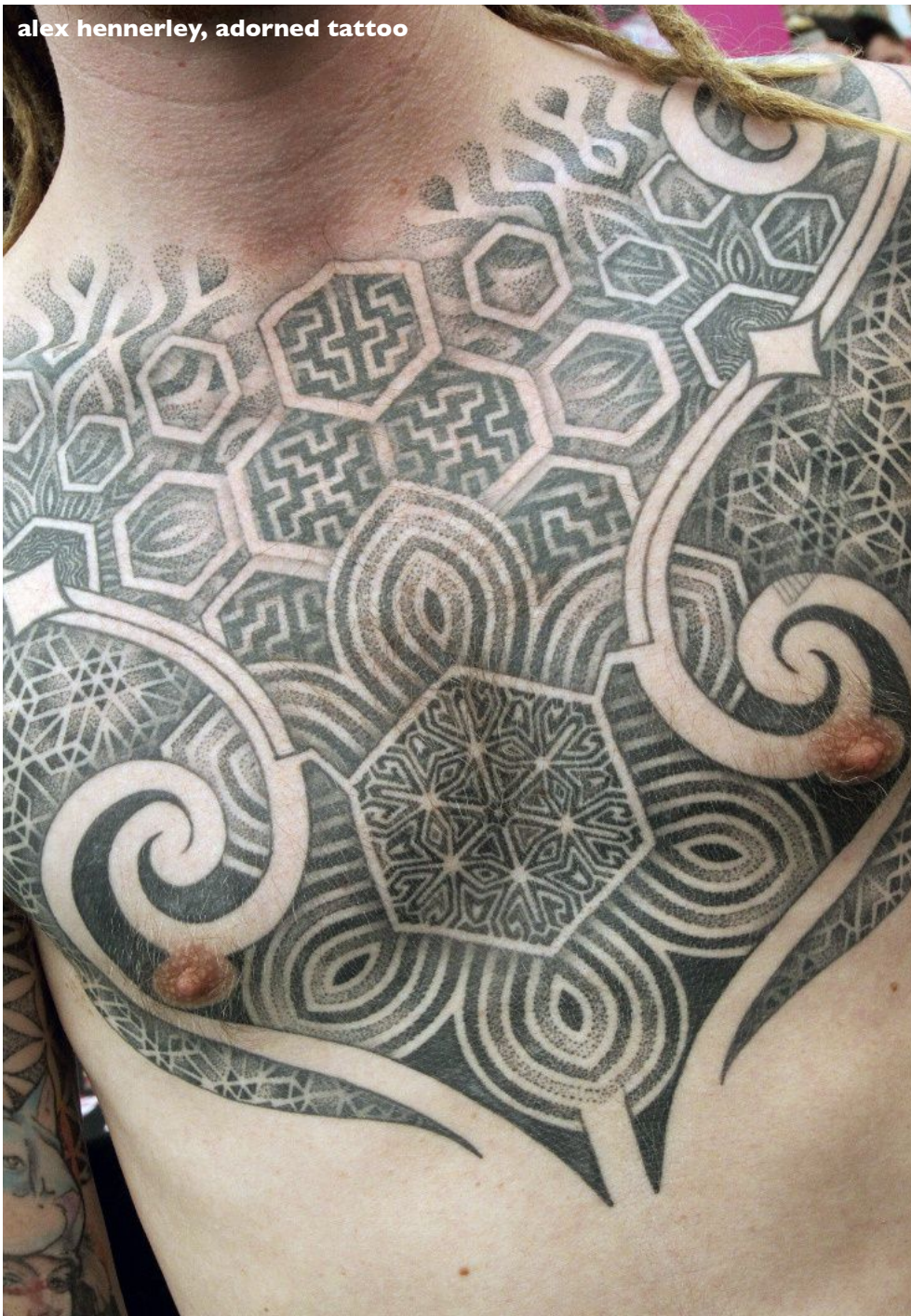


jurgis mikalauskas,  
ink island

jack peppiette, insider tattoo



alex hennerley, adorned tattoo



ben kaye, ship shape  
(new zealand)



**pete, royston ink**



**daniel baczewski,  
inkdependent**



**arran burton,  
fudoshin tattoos**





**matt charles, fudoshin tattoos**



**koen, grey area custom tattoos**

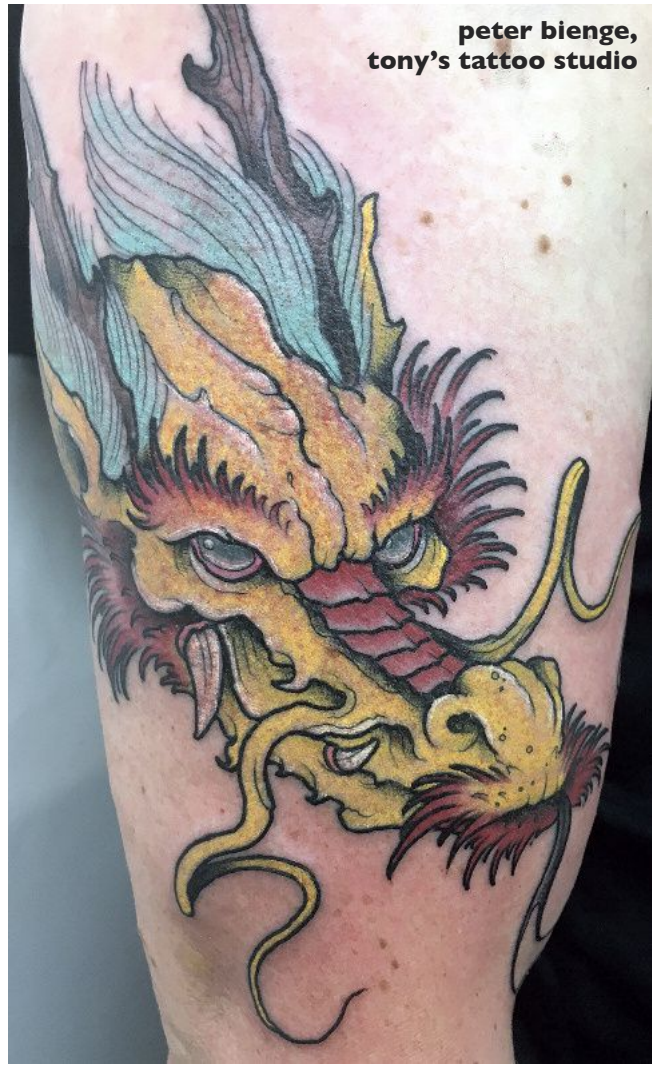


**lucian broughton, nine owls tattoo studio**

gzy ex silesia,  
flesh tattoo



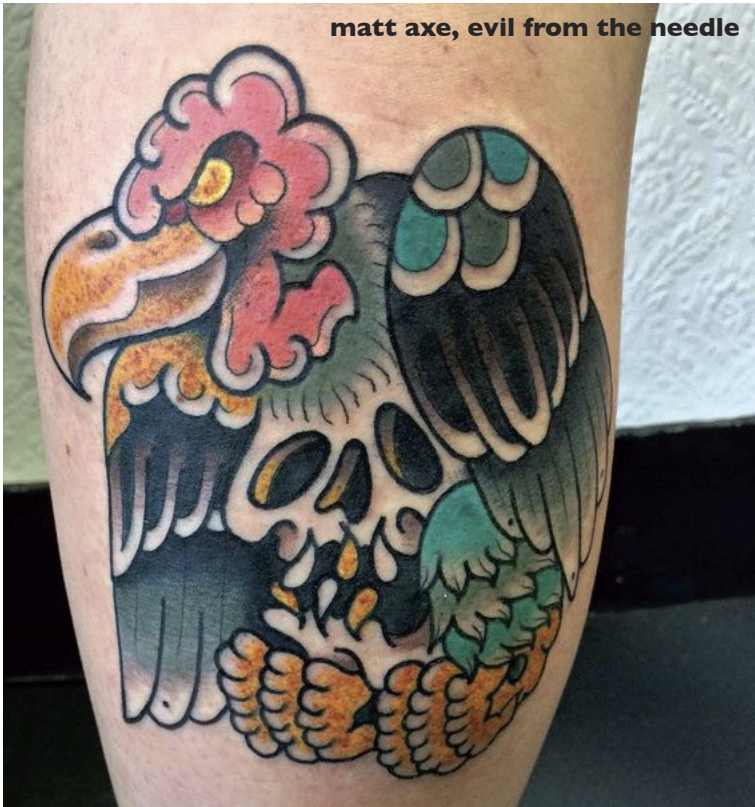
peter bienge,  
tony's tattoo studio



luke bond, phill bond's tattoo studio



matt axe, evil from the needle





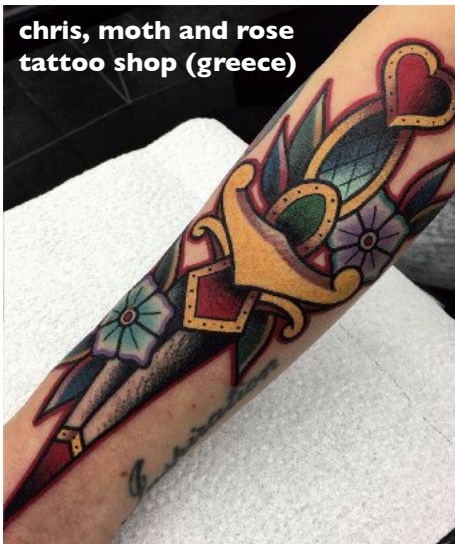
jim edwards, inspirations tattoo studio



ste cairns, red hot and blue



lea snoeflinga,  
northside tattooz



chris, moth and rose  
tattoo shop (greece)



chloe jane, tanuki tattoo

**samuel potucek  
(slovakia)**



**steven mostyn, memories and mischief (germany)**



**alexandra skarsgard, cult classic tattoo**



**gabri pais, elegant ink (italy)**



**christopher kenyon, true til' death**



**chris sutton,  
flaming art**



**jaysin burgess, northside tattooz**



**steve jarvis,  
88 miles per hour**



**jonathan toogood,  
imperial tattoo  
company**





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# HARRIET HEATH

Interview by Lizzy  
Pictures courtesy of Harriet Heath

## LONE ROSE TATTOO



**H**arriet Heath's beautiful work combines traditional design principles and line weights with contemporary subjects and colours. She is part of that new generation of female tattooists who no longer have to prove themselves in a "man's world", and her pieces often express a keen political edge. She works in Manchester and London, and lives in Sheffield with her partner SJ and their dog Toffee. Harriet also runs the Facebook group Take Up Space for plus size people of all genders.

### What was it that drew you into tattooing?

I'd always wanted to do something creative, but it wasn't until dropping out of fashion college and being made redundant from my retail job that I realised I needed to give tattooing a go. The more time I spent in tattoo shops, the more I felt like for once in my life I actually belonged somewhere. I had always felt so uncool and weird, but now people seemed to actually like me... My entire life, I've never felt as welcome as I do in tattooing.

### Did you do a traditional apprenticeship?

I honestly don't think I've ever met anyone who did one of these mythical "traditional apprenticeships"! I drew and painted tattoo designs for three years, went round the local studios, got turned down by them all... then heard about a spot at a streetshop (in Eastbourne, where I was living at the time), went to see them, ended up chatting for hours about tattoos and videogames, and was offered a place. I'm forever grateful for being given that foot in the door. Working at Pistols I was able to do tons of walk-ins in all styles of tattooing. Then after two and a half years, Chris Higgins offered me a spot at his new shop. I sort of feel like that's when my real apprenticeship began because I learnt so much about tattooing, machines, and how to be a tattooer. I owe Chris everything really. I couldn't have done it without him taking a chance on me.





**Where does your style come from?  
Who inspires you?**

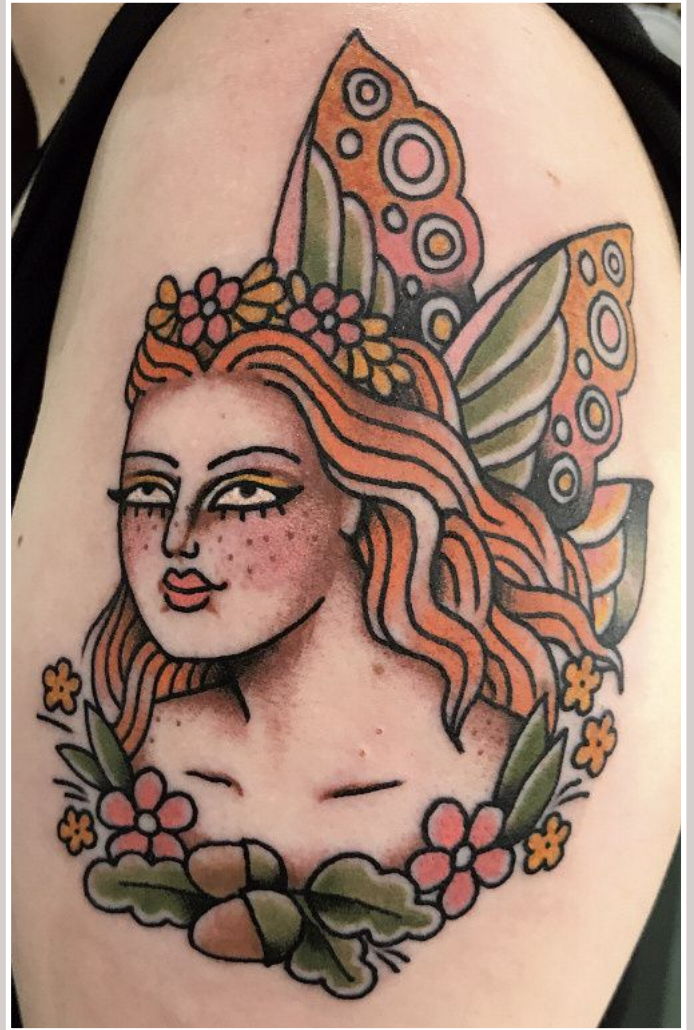
I grew up drawing Disney characters and Pokémon, then later I got into graphic novels (Daniel Clowes has been a huge influence on me ever since I picked up a copy of 'Ghost World'). So my artwork has always been quite bold and minimal, and traditional style tattoos have always made sense to me. I get a lot of inspiration from films, music, art, comics, drag queens, Japanese teen fashion... and any images of strong women. As for tattooists, when I was first starting out I always looked up to Valerie Vargas. She draws beautiful, strong, expressive women with character – not just your standard traditional flash. Some tattooists inspire me with their work alone, and others inspire me as people, or because of their approach to tattooing. There's a whole bunch of tattooists out there doing brilliant work and my influences come from all over the place. I try to keep things well-rounded. My current faves are Max Kuhn, Colo Lopez, Cecile Pages, Koji Ichimaru and Rion but my main influence will always be Chad Koeplinger.





**Tell us about some of the experiences that have made you the tattooist that you are today...**

There are so many that come to mind, it's hard to choose. When Max Kuhn guested with us in London and I tattooed him, that was a huge deal for me. I've always admired the character and emotion in his work, as well as his nomadic take on life, even though he tells people to "stay home". And working alongside Simon Erl and Joe Chatt at The Dungeon in London was one of the times in my career that I look back on with great fondness. I learnt so much from them both. Another important lesson came from Yeshe aka Miles Monaghan at Dharma, who taught me that a shop should feel like a family. But the most significant experience would probably have to be getting my backpiece by Chad Koeplinger. Spending thirty hours in pain and conversation with him over three years taught me so much about tattooing – and just how to be as a tattooer. He taught me to be confident in my work, and that's the reason I'm a fast tattooer. I went through so many highs and lows during that process, and it shaped me as a person. Although I never worked alongside Chad, the time we spent together was more important than any other experience I've had in tattooing so far.





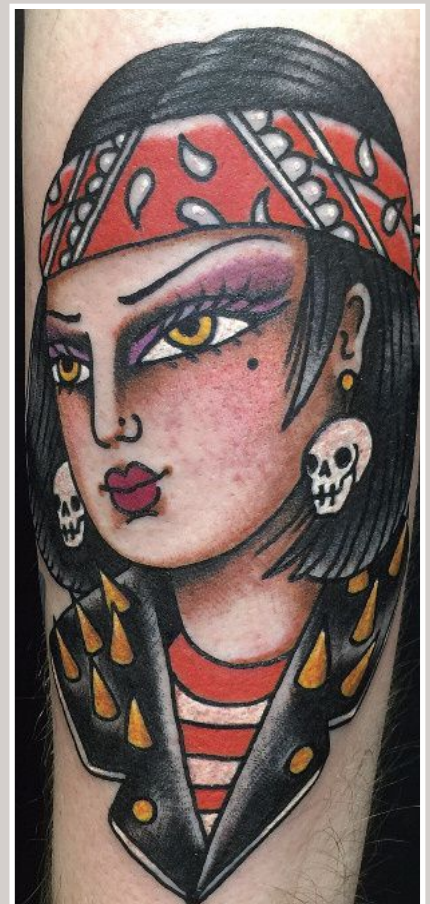
**Has your view of tattooing changed as you've become more involved in the industry?**

Originally I believed that custom work was the only work worth doing. I wasn't interested in flash. I wanted to create something new that nobody had done before. I think most tattooers start out like that. But as time went by I realised that many of the incredible pieces being created by my tattoo idols actually came from traditional designs they had redrawn (after all, they're human too!) and that inspired me to look into the vast depths of flash from the old guys. I plunged into old redraws for a while but then started to feel like I was just doing the same work as all my peers. I always joke that if I see that Bert Grimm tiger one more time... [Laughs] I think it's about balance. Being inspired by old work but also creating something new. You can't just take from tattooing, you have to give something back. However, it's also important to spend time learning all the rules before you start breaking them – and breaking rules is something I've been doing a lot more of this year.



**Your colour palette seems to have become brighter in your recent work. Was this a conscious artistic decision? Or something your clients have requested?**

A little of both. In the past, I tried to appeal to a certain demographic that I felt I *should* be tattooing, but who weren't coming to me, and not listening to the clients who were coming to me! My client base is 90% female – mostly queer, vegan, English Lit students... [Laughs] Every New Year I make resolutions to do with my work and this year I resolved to throw out the traditional tattoos rule book and listen to my heart. For me, colours are so emotive. I found the standard traditional palette quite restrictive. It held me back from letting my own personality into my work. I love pink, and I have a very cohesive colour scheme in my home, my wardrobe and life in general.



**Do you incorporate personal elements into your pin-ups and girl heads to suit the owner of the tattoo?**

Yes! Why do tattoos of women always have to have the same black hair and red lips and cheeks? About a year ago, I started making a lot of my pin-ups and girl heads blonde. I just found it so exciting. Then I thought, why can't they have coral lipstick, soft pink cheeks and green hair? Why can't they wear leather jackets with studs and pin badges? Why can't they wear glasses? *I do.* My clients do. So why can't the women my clients want portrayed on their bodies be the same? I took inspiration from fashion, make-up tutorials on YouTube, RuPaul's 'Drag Race' stars, Japanese teen magazines... and it's all spiralled into this amazing new fun style of work. When I tattoo a girl head on someone I am in my element. I love asking my clients what colour hair they want and if they have any specific imagery they would like to include. My clients enjoy this feeling of collaboration – and it means I get to try things I may not have thought of myself. Some of my designs are pre-drawn and some are done specifically for the client, but even if they are pre-drawn I will always ask for their input on colours.



**Do you have a favourite among the tattoos that you've done?**

Probably the tattoo of Trixie Mattel I did on my friend Hannah. That one was so much fun (and experimenting with the make-up actually changed how I now do my girl heads). When Hannah went to see Trixie perform she got me a photo of her next to the tattoo!

**Would you say your work is political?**

Yes, definitely. People will have seen my overtly vegan and feminist statement pieces, but my whole ethos is political. The media portrays women in so many ways that I cannot agree with and cannot relate to. And so many of the images you find in old flash are overly sexualized – women with giant watermelon tits and impossible bodies that don't make anatomical sense. I want to put out imagery of tough, strong and beautiful women to inspire. Women with chunky thighs who aren't there just to give someone a boner, but to make people think "I want to be her". It's important to me that each woman I create is an individual. I try to see them as more than just a picture, and I imagine personalities and backstories for them. I will never tattoo the same girl head or pin-up twice.

**Have your political views engendered any negativity?**

If anything my outspoken views have helped me get work. My veganism has attracted a lot of clients who know they don't have to worry about what's in my supplies. My feminist tattoos have attracted loads of brilliant intelligent powerful women who I love talking to and love tattooing. My strong opinions on body positivity have attracted clients who share those same opinions – and also mean that people feel comfortable around me and realise that they can get tattooed (and *wt Lt [ht* to get tattooed) no matter what their size or shape. Being open with my personal politics has done nothing but enhance and grow my client base. For so long I was afraid to be outspoken about things for fear of others in the community shunning me. I think something about turning thirty makes you care a lot less about other people's opinions...



**That personal encounter between tattooist and client is obviously very important to you.**

Yes, I think the experience is a very important part of getting tattooed. I've met so many people who have great tattoos they aren't keen on because every time they look at them they remember the awkward encounter they had with the tattooist. Or it felt like the tattooist didn't care about them. Tattooing is 50% a customer service job. A lot of people forget that. I used to work in retail, so I know the importance of helping even the most picky, annoying customer get through it without making it tense and awful for them. The majority of my clients are brilliant though! I like to talk a lot – I love meeting people and learning about their lives – and with most of my appointments we end up deep in conversation. I like to think that people come back to me not just because of my work, but also because of my hospitality. Speaking personally, I'm running very low on space on my own body, so when I do get tattooed I want it to be with people who make me feel comfortable, people I regard as friends – and that's the way I try to be with my own clients.



**At the moment you are based in both Manchester (at Tooth and Talon) and London (at Dharma Tattoo). Why did you choose to work in two shops?**

After doing a guest spot at Dharma Tattoo, I instantly knew I needed to work there. However, the house prices down south didn't really agree with me. So we have a place in Sheffield (where SJ works) and I travel down to London one week a month to be able to work at Dharma. I get all the benefits of keeping my southern client base, being around London and seeing all of my friends there, then I get to come home to the north where I can actually afford to live, and be with my family and friends here. I've known Dan Morris at Tooth and Talon in Manchester for a long time. It's a great shop. I have a compulsive need to travel (which SJ not only understands, but also supports and encourages) which is actually essential if I am to thrive in my job. I don't think I would get enough work if I was based full-time in just one city. Clients don't like to travel for work as much as they used to. Every city has so many brilliant artists, why would someone sit on a train for an hour or two when they can get someone local to do it instead? So now I'm the one who sits on the train! *i urp!!* I have pockets of loyal clientele all over the country. If I'm ever in a pickle, I know I can just shoot up to Glasgow or Stourbridge and get guaranteed work for a weekend – which is definitely useful in the winter months. I also think it's important to freshen up your surroundings and work with lots of different tattooers to keep your brain active and stop your own work going stale. And if you're in a place for just a short time, you make yourself a limited edition. If people know they can catch you for one week only, they're more likely to make it happen!



**You must be a very organised person?**

Organisation is the thing I struggle with the most. There's always a train to book, an Airbnb to organise, or supplies to order (including figuring out which shop I need them sent to). Not to mention replying to emails, which I try to do in bulk every three days, and the rise in direct messages on instagram which causes extra stress. I'm an artist, not a business woman! It gets on top of me a lot. But having a paper diary instead of it all being on my phone makes it easier to switch off when I need a break.

**What do you do in your spare time?**

I love going on big walks with my dog. Spending time outside in nature rejuvenates me. And I love sewing. I've recently been reading about Sashiko, which is a Japanese method of embroidering patterns, and I want to find a way to incorporate that into American-influenced quilt making. I love cooking and I'm very passionate about vegan food. I also spend a lot of time on a Facebook group I run called Take Up Space.







### **Tell us more about Take Up Space...**

TUS is a positive inclusive community for plus size people, of all genders, who take up a lot of physical space. We discuss topics such as plus size clothing (what we've bought, where to find it), the judgement we experience (including the pressure from others to lose weight), and the situations we find ourselves in because of our size. We have more than three hundred members. It's all about physically taking up space and allowing your confidence to take up as much space as your body does. We even name and shame restaurants that have small seats we can't fit into! Some TUS members have shared horror stories about being tattooed, but most just express concern that they never see bodies like their own represented on instagram or in tattooists' portfolios. I feel very passionate about this. I describe myself as aggressively body positive and I strongly believe that everybody at every size deserves to feel comfortable and confident without being told they need to shrink themselves.

### **You've given a lot to the world of tattooing. What has the world of tattooing given you?**

Everything. Literally. It's given me a way to make a living from something I love, and the opportunity to travel, and it's introduced me to almost all of my friends and the people most important to me. It gave me SJ and my life with him. (He's apprenticing in Sheffield at the moment – shameless instagram plug @tattoosbysjyoung – and the goal is for us to be able to tattoo together one day.) Tattooing has given me freedom, passion and love. I can't imagine another career for myself that would make me anywhere near as happy as I am.

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# PORTSMOUTH TATTOO CONVENTION

**E**very summer, tattoo lovers flock to Portsmouth's Guildhall for The Original Portsmouth Tattoo Convention, an action-packed, fun-filled stalwart of the tattoo calendar that turned eighteen this year!

Just £10 per day guaranteed visitors a wealth of entertainment, including live music, fire acts, burlesque and the Miss Tattooed Portsmouth contest. Having a naval dockyard in the heart of the town means that Portsmouth has a long and rich history of tattooing, and this was reflected in a fascinating display of tattoo artefacts. There was also a design sheet competition (which was very well received) and an art exhibition open to both tattooists and the visiting public. Ample refreshments were available in the café bar and outdoor area, where the sunshine even held out long enough for a barbecue.

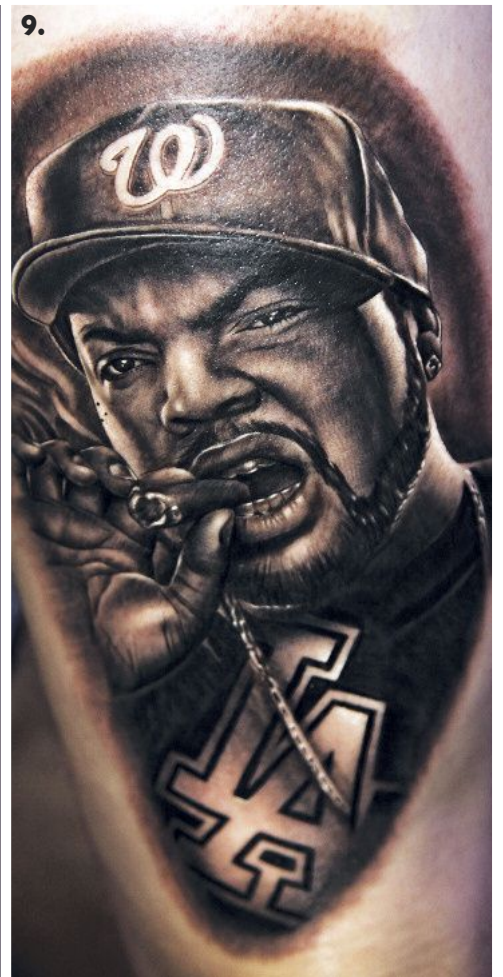
Around seventy tattooists were working at the convention. Although some had travelled from London and even as far away as Germany, the majority were local to the south of England (and of course the advantage of a 'local' show is that those in search of a tattooist can check out the talent that is available nearby if they don't want to travel too far for their ink). There was a relaxed and friendly vibe, with artists frequently stopping to chat to visitors and friends, but ultimately the goal was to win one of the amazing trophies up for grabs at the competitions on the Sunday. These were made by Steve Willett and were truly something to behold.

This long running show is professional without being intimidating. It's also incredibly friendly, with a great 'tattoo family' atmosphere. This was especially evident on the Sunday, when tributes were paid to one of its original organisers, Pete Lake, who sadly passed away earlier this year. After a slideshow and a presentation to his family, tattooists and visitors alike gave a round of applause as a mark of their appreciation.

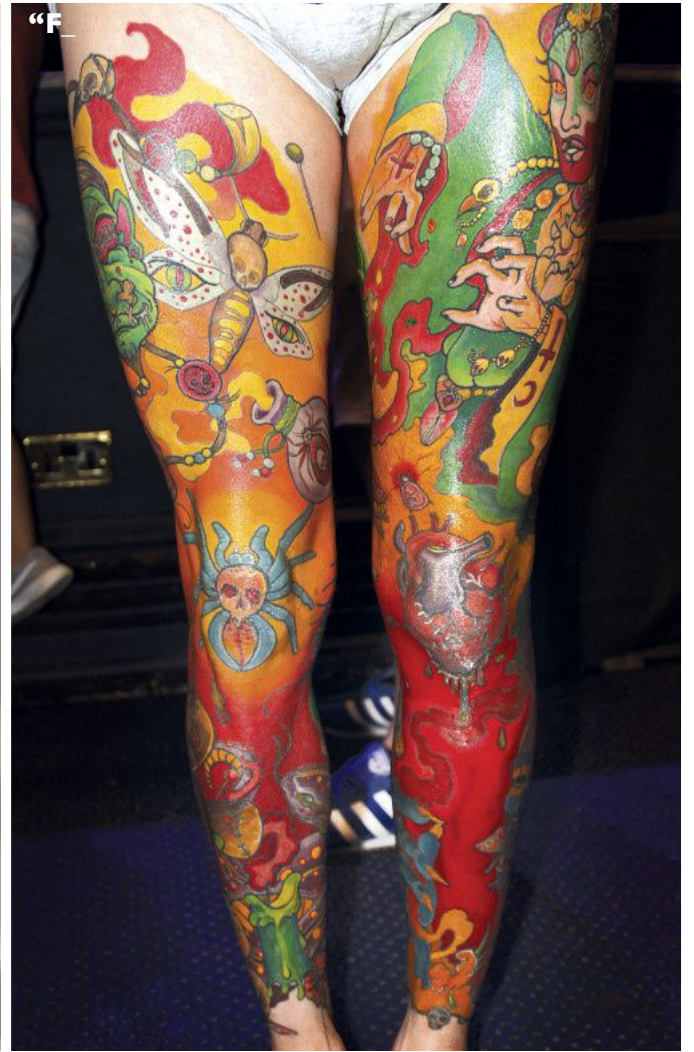
Although The Original Portsmouth Convention is relatively small, this doesn't mean it's lacking in any respect. It's a show with an old school, grass-roots feel, and a real heart.



1. phil gibbs, stand proud
2. artefacts from steve willett's private collection
3. artefacts from steve willett's private collection
4. zack chiswell, family ink
5. trouy tuck, embellished ink
6. robbie knight, rob's tattoos
7. great trophies made by steve willett



- 8. craig, embelished ink
- 9. donatas, inkedmoose
- 10. craig bartlett, dermaldelights
- 11. aaron willet, king's ship tattoo
- 12. fred, needle and fred
- 13. joss wilders, my last one



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# tenkiryu

of the Honke Horiyoshi tattoo family

In conversation with Lizzy, Perry and John Anderton (Nemesis Tattoo)  
Pictures courtesy of Tenkiryu

**W**e had the great pleasure of meeting Tenkiryu at the Traditional Tattoo and World Culture Festival earlier this year, where we watched him create his beautiful *tebori* tattoos, working on a raised wooden platform shaded from the hot Majorcan sun by overhanging trees. Tenkiryu is a member of one of the world's most renowned tattoo families: his master is Honke Horiyoshi (son of Horiyoshi I and brother of Horiyoshi II). We chatted late into the night, and Jon Anderton from Nemesis Tattoo also sat in on our conversation.

We began by asking Tenkiryu to tell us about *tebori*. "My master always tattoos by hand, and it's something I have always loved doing too," he tells us. "Tebori is the traditional Japanese hand-poking technique. I use an instrument known as the *sashibo*, which is a bundle of needles attached to a stick. Depending on the artist and the technique used, *tebori* should be about fifty percent less painful than a conventional machine tattoo, and the colour should never come out. The needles go in much deeper than with a tattoo machine, so the ink is packed into the skin more densely. But it does take a long time. There are many different *tebori* styles and techniques, and you'll find that different artists use different tools and inks too. *Tebori* is a simple process that's extremely hard to master!"

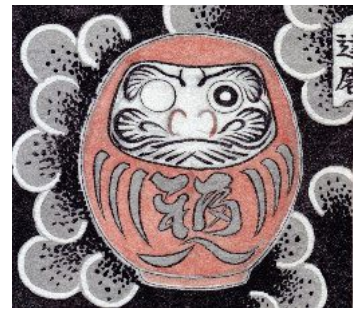


tenkiryu



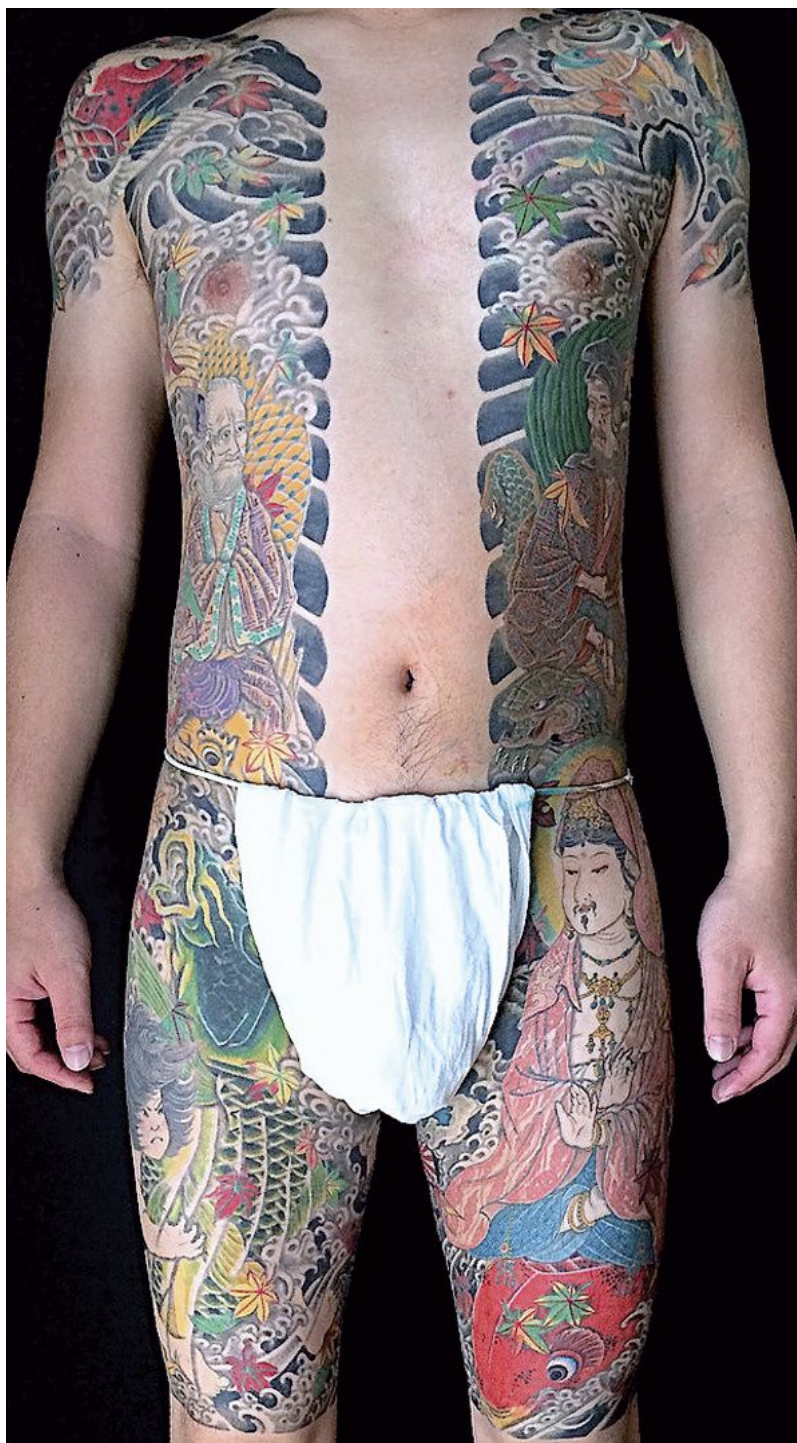


So how did Tenkiryu first get into tattooing? "I had older friends with tattoos and I always thought they looked cool. When I was nineteen I started to get tattooed myself, but it was almost impossible to find a good artist because we didn't have tattoo magazines or the internet in those days. And I was unlucky. My tattoos were done by a very bad artist. A friend of mine, who was already apprenticed to my master, introduced me to him and I asked if he would fix my tattoos. He said no! But then he wrote to me asking if I would like to learn to be a tattoo artist. I never really thought about what it might entail. I just followed the path that was presented to me. Obviously I'm very happy that I did!"



"I've been tattooing for thirteen years now," Tenkiryu continues. "A traditional Japanese apprenticeship never ends. I will always follow my master. My apprenticeship is very strict, and my master is always right. If my master says that black ink is white, then for me that ink is white. Because my master tattoos by hand, I must follow. I've watched many tattoo artists around the world using machines and I would like to try that too, but I think it's important, and also my duty, to preserve our Japanese traditions. Many senior Japanese artists now use machines, but tebori is my own personal preference."

"I make my own needles, my own ink, and my own sticks. I use bamboo for the handles of my tools. I apply a layer of lacquer (from the cashew tree), then gold leaf, followed by more lacquer and gold leaf and so on until I've built up twenty or so layers. This handle that I'm using here today will last for maybe a year or two, but the other handle I use was made for me by Horiyoshi II. Although it looks quite simple, it's actually the product of many years of skilled craftsmanship."





“The needles are attached using fishing wire. It’s tensioned to put just enough flex into the needles to get the perfect angle. Interestingly, I’ve noticed that I need to use different needles when I tattoo abroad. Japanese people tend to have very soft skin that takes the ink easily, but people in other countries seem to have much harder skin. Maybe this is because of the climate, or the food they eat.”





“Because I make my own tools and ink, it means I put a lot of myself into every single aspect of my tattooing,” Tenkiryu explains. “Over time, a tattooist’s tools will absorb ‘good’ energy from both the artist himself and his clients, and that positive energy is a very important part of the whole process of tebori.” Tenkiryu tells us that it’s crucial for him to connect with his clients and get a ‘feel’ for their emotional state before working on a design. “If my client is sad, for example, I might incorporate certain imagery to protect against evil spirits. But I always want my customers to be happy and have a positive experience, so generally I concentrate on using positive symbols and imagery. I don’t like to focus on demons.”

Jon Anderton adds a fascinating comment at this point. “Traditionally, tattooing has always been linked to shamanic practices. Looked at from that standpoint, what we do as tattooers can be seen as a form of healing. And if you think about a magician and his magic wand... hand tattoo tools are just like that. The tattooing process involves conversation and counselling, and there is pain and treatment, followed by satisfaction and achievement. If both the tattooist and the customer are giving out positive energy, it can be a remarkable thing. But we tattooists can also take on negative energy and we need to find a release for that.”





Tenkiryu tells us that sometimes after a tattoo session he can begin to feel sick. “Maybe it’s bad energy, or possibly bad spirits. Whenever it happens, I have to focus on cleansing my soul. I take time out to be calm and meditate, to clear my spirit. If you are truly connected with your customer you are always open to receiving both good and bad energy from them.”

Tattooing in Japan is going through a very strange time at the moment, with the Japanese government imposing a ban on tattooing and tattoo shops. “A few years ago cosmetic tattooing became very popular in Japan, but for the most part the standard of work was very poor and lots of the premises didn’t follow proper hygiene procedures,” explains Tenkiryu. “That was what led the government to introduce a blanket ban on all tattooing. Tattoos have actually been illegal in Japan for a couple of centuries, but it’s only recently that the law is being enforced. Tattoo shops are now in a very precarious position because if just a single person makes a complaint, the shop instantly gets closed down. There is one tattooist who is making a stand and challenging the legislation, but if he loses his case, we could all be arrested! Tattooists are continuing to work, and there are still visible shop fronts, but for how long? It’s a very uncertain situation. Many Japanese tattooists are choosing to leave and work abroad, heading for America and Europe. It’s sad for our country and our traditions. Myself, I work from a private studio and I travel to Europe a great deal. I’ve made many friends here.”



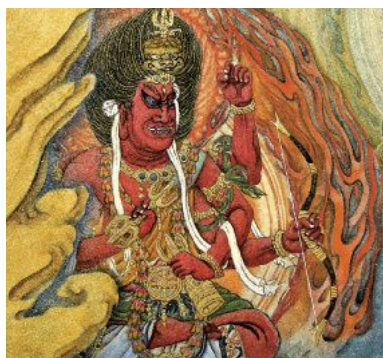


“Most Japanese people have been brainwashed by the mass media to think tattoos are a bad thing,” Tenkiryu continues. “I have a lot of tattoos now, and I even have my hands tattooed – which can be a big problem at home. If the police see my tattoos, they stop me and question me. With tattoos I can’t go to the swimming pool, the gym, or the beach. I knew it would cause problems to have them, but I couldn’t stop myself. I just love tattoos too much.”

For a travelling tattooist, conventions and social media are a must. Tenkiryu is working more than fifteen conventions this year, all over the world. Even though his overseas itinerary is interspersed with frequent trips back home, he tells us that he is not as booked up in Japan as he would like to be, because potential customers often mistakenly think he is permanently out of the country. Another problem is that there are limitations on what he can tattoo while he is on the road. Tebori is a very time-consuming process, which means large pieces are often out of the question. But there is another reason why most of Tenkiryu’s work for non-Japanese clients tends to be smaller in scale. “People see the physicality of the tebori technique and think it must be horribly painful. In fact it’s the opposite. It often hurts much less than machine tattooing.”



With its complex symbolism and formalised working practices, Japanese tattooing is a highly codified artform (there are, for example, certain subjects that should never appear together in a tattoo). Tenkiryu strictly adheres to these traditional principles in his work, but admits that he is happy for Western tattooists to 'break the rules'. "Speaking for myself, I am a traditional artist and I try to respect our heritage. But the most important thing is for people to enjoy their tattoos, and sometimes this means bending the rules a little. It's good that tattooing can evolve and develop."



We ask Tenkiryu how he sees his own work developing. "I live in the present moment," he tells us. "I don't make plans for the future. I wait to see where life takes me and I simply follow my destiny. Right now, I have no plans to take on an apprentice, because I have no desire to teach. But maybe in the future... Who can tell? In times gone by, Japanese tattooists would hide their techniques from each other and never share their skills or their styles, but it's different nowadays. The new generation of tattooists have more open minds. We're beginning to share our knowledge and culture, and that means we're becoming stronger together. This can only be a good thing."

[www.tenkiryu888.com](http://www.tenkiryu888.com)

Interview by Lizzy • Pictures courtesy of Jorge and Miriam

# godna

INDIAN TATTOO TEXTILE PROJECT

**‘Godna’ means ‘tattoo’ in Hindi. It’s also the name of a creative collaboration between tattooist Jorge Teran and textile artist Miriam Moreno, who produce exquisite artisanal fabric pieces with decorations inspired by traditional tattoos and other forms of body ornamentation. Jorge and Miriam share a deep-seated interest in ancient cultures and the abstract language of mark making, as well as a passion for wood carving and block printing.**





**What was the inspiration behind the GODNA project?**

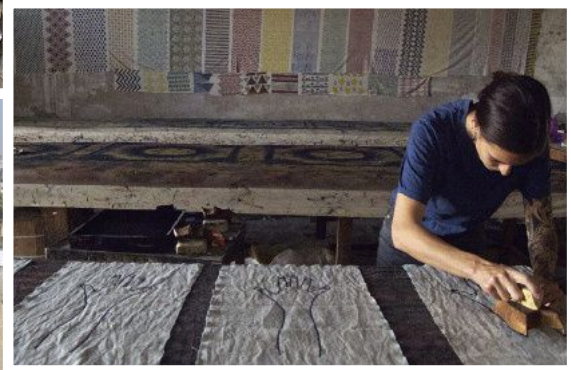
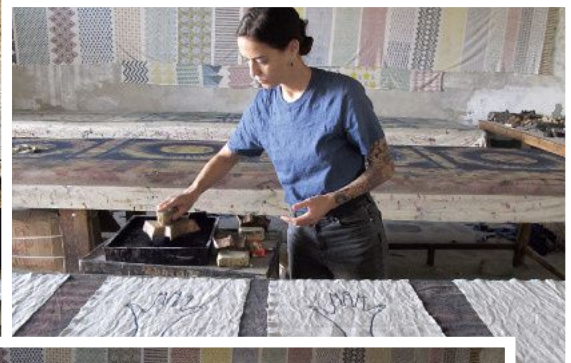
We were travelling around India for a few months, and we were completely overwhelmed by all the wonderful traditional arts and crafts. We came across so many antique textiles, with intricate designs and elaborate motifs, hand-made by nomadic tribespeople and rural communities. These ancient cultures, along with their beautiful textiles – and their tattoo traditions too – are now disappearing. That was our initial inspiration for the project.

**And how did your ideas develop from there?**

Jorge had previously carved a wooden hand with tattoo designs based on traditional designs from Borneo, which we'd printed together, with Miriam then working on the finished textile design. We decided to continue this project with what we were discovering during our Indian journey.

**Tell us about printing the textiles.**

Miriam already knew about a village in Rajasthan called Bagru, which is famous for its block printing, and this is where we started making our textile pieces. It's well known as a centre of expertise, with many master carvers based there creating the woodblocks which are used to stamp designs on the fabrics they produce. This is a centuries-old tradition and it's the Bagru artisans who are keeping it alive.





**And was it the Bagru carvers who made your blocks?**

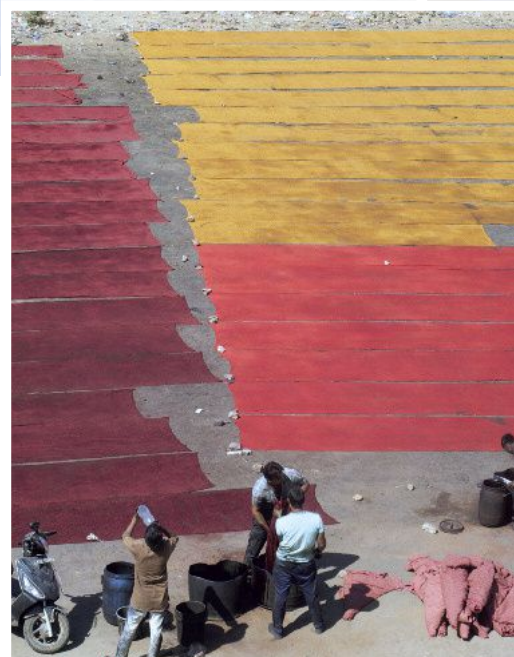
Yes. We created the designs for the blocks using various Indian tattoo symbols, and the blocks themselves were made by the wood carvers. We then printed a little collection of tattooed hands, using traditional fabric printing techniques.

**What did the carvers think of your work?**

They were very intrigued by what we were doing, and curious to find out more about the project. They found it interesting that we were working on such a small scale, because they are more used to producing metres and metres of printed fabric. They also asked a lot of questions about our blocks, such as why we had chosen to use the image of a hand. Overall they really liked the project and said we made beautiful work.

**How are your pieces finished?**

Each one is unique, partly because of the way they are printed, but also because we stitch different fabric details onto each of them, using the antique textiles that we've been collecting during our trip. We finish the wall hangings with a backing of 'Achara' cloth. This is actually the cloth that covers the block printers' workbenches, so it's saturated with all the ink and pigments they've been using. To give the pieces some weight and substance, we fill them with cotton and stitch them together in the traditional way, just as the tribespeople did when they were making their warm coats.



**Tell us more about traditional Indian fabrics.**

Fabrics, and fabric designs, have always played an important role in traditional Indian society. In parts of rural Rajasthan, clothing and body ornamentation had an elaborate social significance which, even today, is still in evidence in isolated parts of the region, with the block printed motifs that people wear serving as an aspect of their visual identity. Another

example is men's turbans which, throughout Rajasthan, vary in colour, size and shape according to geographical area, the wearer's caste, and the occasion on which the turban is being worn. The language of textiles (and traditional jewellery and tattoos) encompasses ethnicity, religion, social standing and even occupation. For women, what they wear can also communicate potentially taboo subjects such as marital status and widowhood.





**On your travels, did you see many women with traditional tattoos?**

Yes, you do still see this in many of the villages. But we did notice one interesting thing. As happens with traditional fabrics, many of the women who wear traditional tattoos don't know the meaning of the symbols. They get tattooed purely for the beauty of the designs. Tradition is never static. It's a living thing that evolves according to what is happening in the community (and this might well include outside influences such as being in contact with foreigners). Traditions disappear when a lifestyle ceases to be viable and a community is extinguished.

**So the tattoo symbols in your designs all have their own special meanings?**

Yes. Every single one. Peacocks and swastikas, for example, symbolise good luck, and scorpions signify protection. Tattoos are often linked with magic and spirituality, but many of their deeper meanings have been lost. Sadly, the local people we met weren't able to give us much information. We had to rely on the invaluable work that has been done by researchers such as tattoo anthropologist Lars Krutak. We're very grateful to him.

**What impact has the GODNA project had on the local people?**

It's had a very positive impact. Working with the wood carvers is mutually beneficial; we help each other in many different ways. As part of her Vjeera Chhippa project, Miriam has set up an Indian block printing facility in Andalusia, southern

Spain, with the idea of channelling a percentage of the profits back to Rajasthan to assist in the provision of local medical care. During our stay in India, one of the people who helped us right from the start was a taxi driver in Jaipur, and he said something that was really touching. He told us that although he himself never has the opportunity to travel, he is able to travel all over the world from the comfort of his taxi simply because of all the foreign tourists he meets. He said he felt very grateful to all the overseas visitors who come to India and appreciate Rajasthan's traditions because, through this, he has learned to value his own culture. And we feel part of this beautiful thought!

### Why it is important to preserve cultural traditions?

Traditions are living knowledge. They are the means by which shared values are transmitted from one generation to the next. It's through their traditions that societies create their collective identity, which in turn shapes people's individual identities. But traditions are dynamic. Over time they change and even disappear.

### Would you ever consider using computer technology to facilitate your work?

We don't use any computer technology ourselves, but it doesn't mean we're against it. We like the 100% hand-made results that we're achieving here, but we wouldn't rule out using a computer to save time in future projects. Technology is useful. But if we don't depend on it we feel a little bit more independent and free.

### What is the appeal of printing by hand?

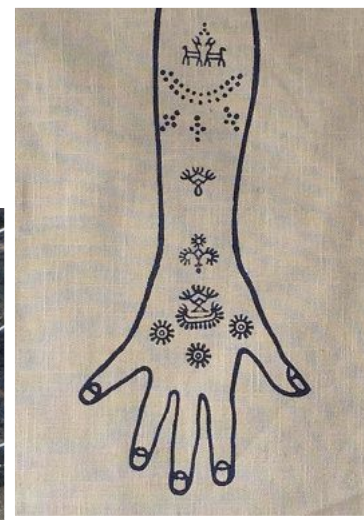
We love printing by hand. When you work with your hands, it comes from inside. We express ourselves through our hands. Anything you create with your hands – whether it's something you make or something you repair – gives you an instant sense of satisfaction and achievement. It makes you feel good. So our advice is, get your hands dirty!



### Where do you go from here? What's next?

We've learnt a lot from this collaboration and we feel very inspired. We have so many new ideas, and we want to expand the project – for example by making carvings of different parts of the body. We would also like to work with other traditional cultures. Immersing ourselves in another culture for a period of time changes us and helps us grow in every aspect of our lives and our art.

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# PERUGIA TATTOO CONVENTION

**P**erugia is right in the heart of Italy. The only landlocked province on the peninsula, it's full of medieval goodness, amazing architecture, lovely food and breathtaking scenery, but sadly it's also been in the news because of last year's earthquakes. The city of Perugia itself was the birthplace of Renaissance artist Pietro 'Perugino' Vannucci who taught Raphael to paint. It's home to one of the oldest universities in Italy and hosts a renowned jazz festival. On a more sombre note, you might also have heard of it as the place where Meredith Kercher was murdered.

The Perugia Tattoo Convention, now in its second year, is a show that harks back to the days before our lives were governed by social media – those simpler times when the sense of community was stronger, there was more respect for tattooing's roots, and artists across the generations truly felt like family. This back-to-basics ethos has been in evidence in several other recent shows, perhaps signalling a kind of fatigue with the newer, shinier, hipper aspects of contemporary tattooing?

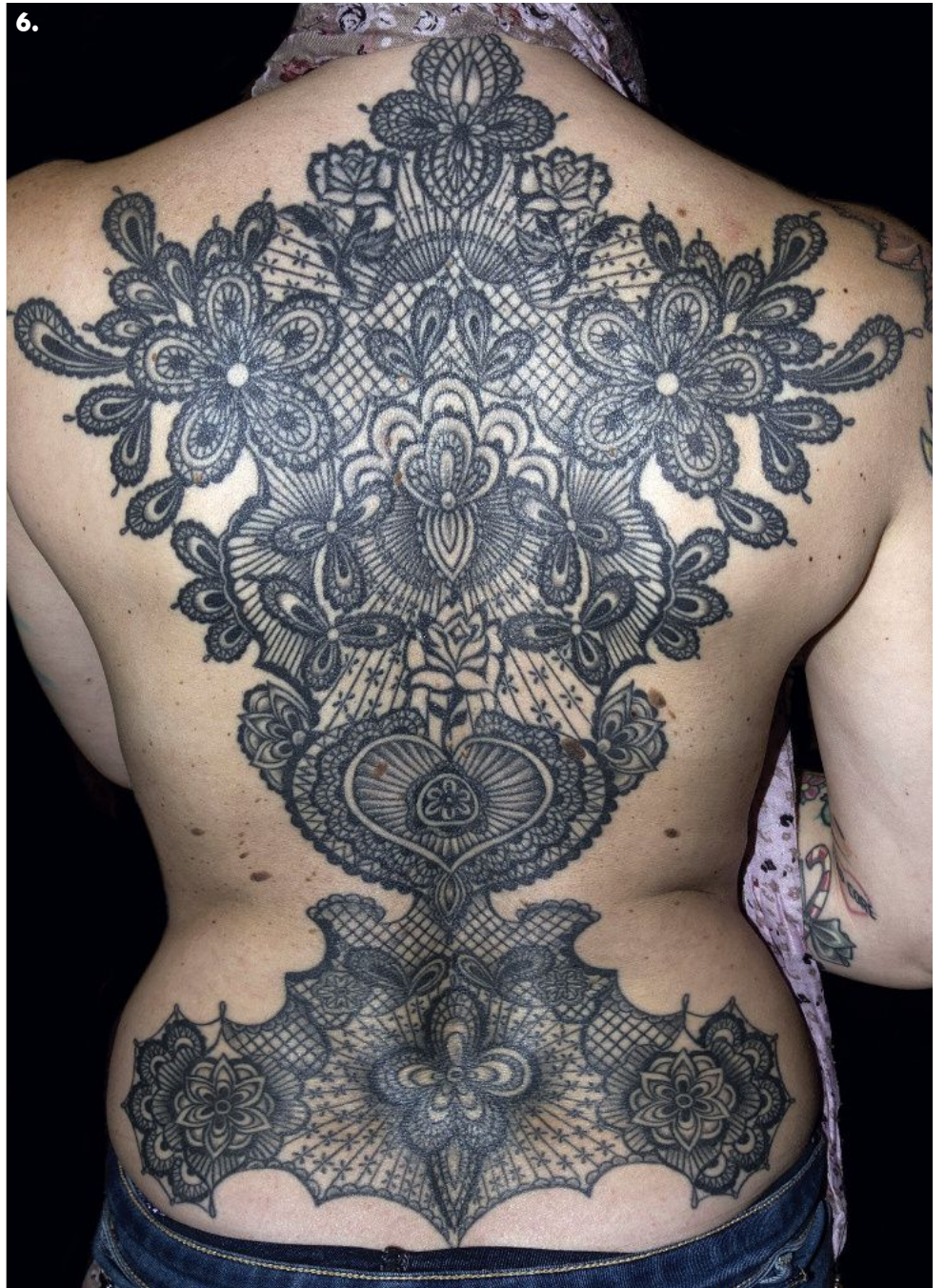
This trend was amply reflected in the convention's personally invited line-up, where old timers rubbed shoulders with the younger generation. Dino Casarin, Brent McCown, Gian Maurizio Fercioni, Chris Casas, Giorgio Marini, Colin Dale, Francesca Tenan, Imo Li'aifaiva Lavea Levi, Michele Agostini, Gogo Tabasko, Simona Devi Maha, Kubo, and Marco Leoni were just some of the names on the list, all of them with some kind of Italian connection. The idea was to create a show devoid of prima donnas and celebrities, gimmicks and egos, where the focus was on the art of tattooing itself.

Organiser Franco Cecconi (a veteran tattooist himself) is the founder of one of Rome's best known studios, La Bottega dei Tatuaggi. He told me that he chose Perugia because of his deep love for the region and its culture, and his longstanding links with this area and its people. The Perugia Tattoo Convention was small and intimate. Everyone knew everyone – or if you didn't, you soon would! And a hint of the sacred was brought to the proceedings when Franco officiated at an emotional symbolic wedding on the stage, tattooing the bride and groom with a Polynesian symbol that will protect them as a couple on their life journey together.

I am so glad the organisers stuck to their guns and went ahead with their plans despite the devastating earthquakes that shook the region last year. The sense of optimism was palpable. I look forward to more shows like this in years to come.



1. university for foreigners, perugia
2. by pomata, la mala suerte
3. ronnie and the midnight ramblers
4. effplume



- 5. andrea trementozzi,  
black sails tattoo (italy)
- 6. marco manzo,  
tribal tattoo (italy)
- 7. chris casas (italy)
- 8. capelli da matti
- 9. augusto de filippo (italy)
- 10. matteo gubbini,  
spaghetti ink (italy)
- 11. led tattoo (italy)
- 12. fabrizio caprithio (italy)









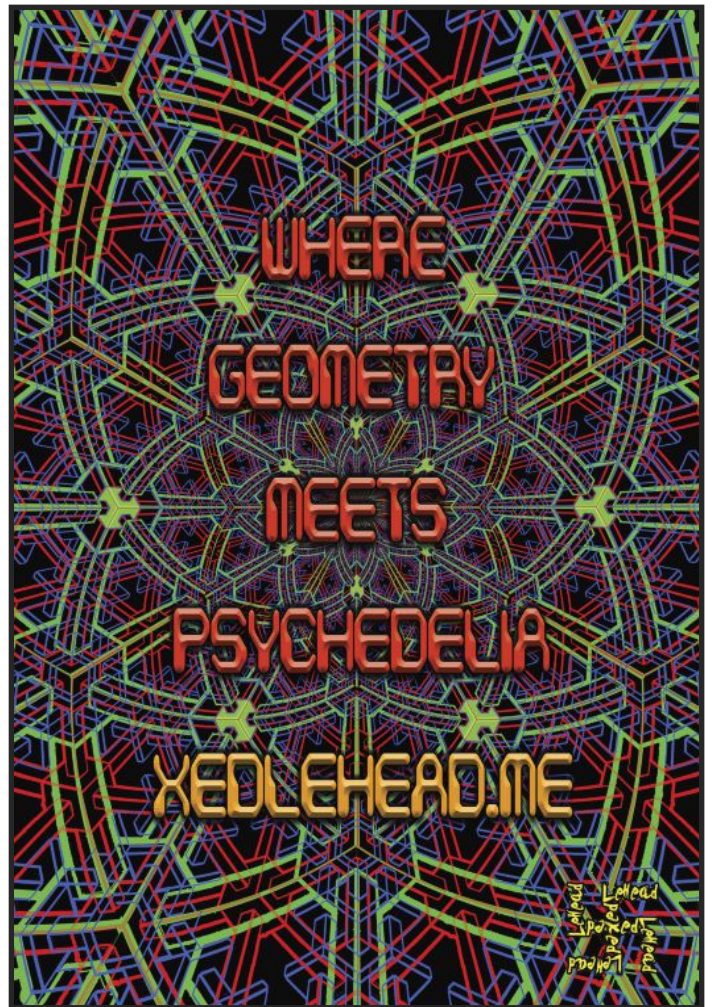
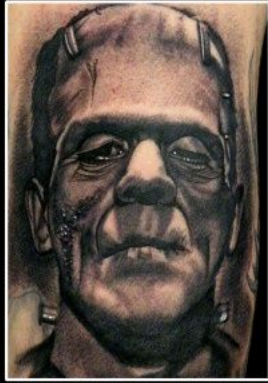
- 13. alle tattoo
- 14. andrea brusadin, cmyk tattoo (italy)
- 15. simone, magliana vice tattoo (italy)
- 16. brent mccown (austria)
- 17. gianluca altavela, generazione tattoo (italy)
- 18. brent mccown (austria)
- 19. valentina, la ruggine tattoo studio (italy)
- 20. andrea roseti, psycho circus (italy)
- 21. jon anderton, nemesis tattoo
- 22. diego censori, tribal tattoo (italy)

# FUN HOUSE TATTOOS

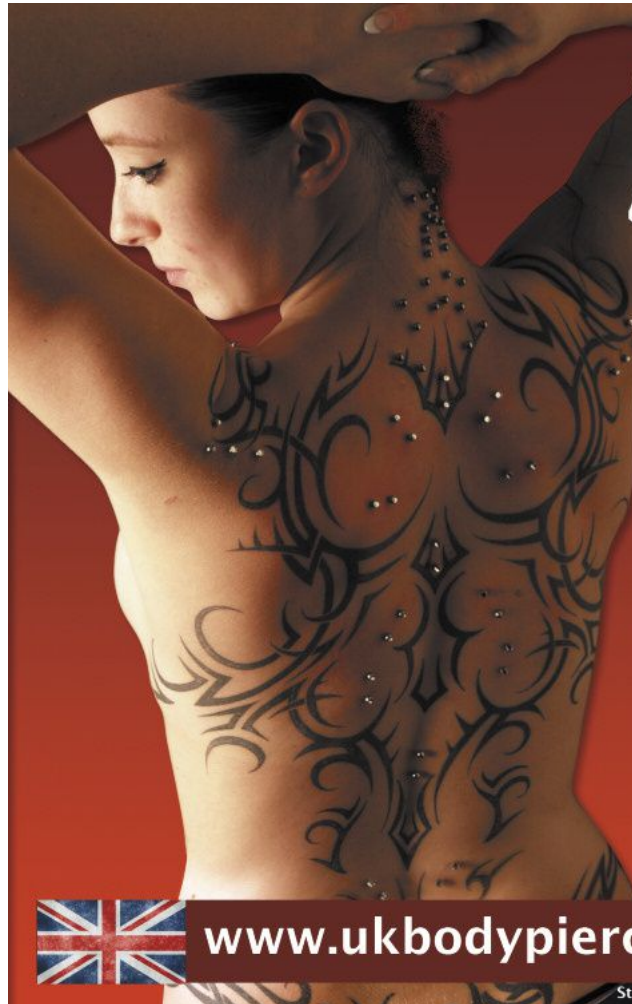
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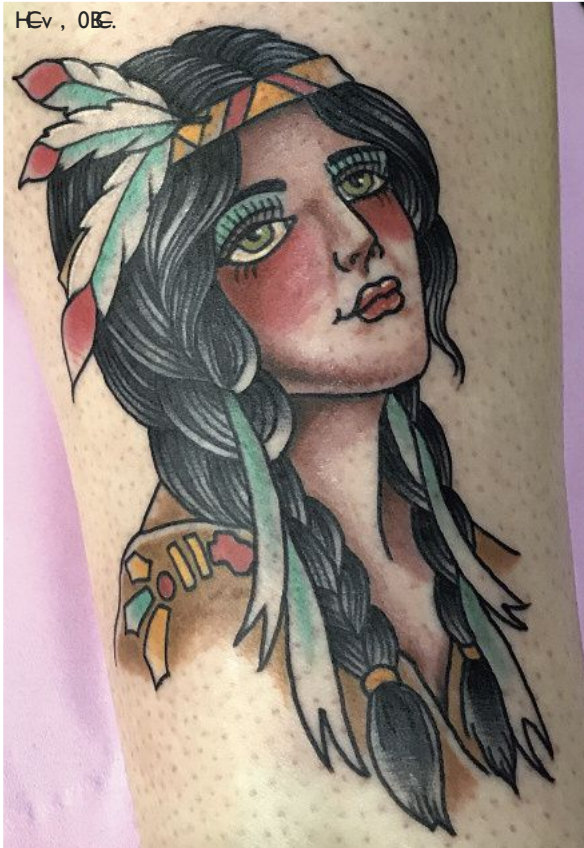
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H&xM(GA0HP



HEv , OBE.



Ex )i"



HEv , OBE.



Ex )i"



Ex )i"

Н5xM(ЕА0НР



НЕν , 0BE.



Еx )i'



НЕν , 0BE.



Н5xM(ЕА0НР

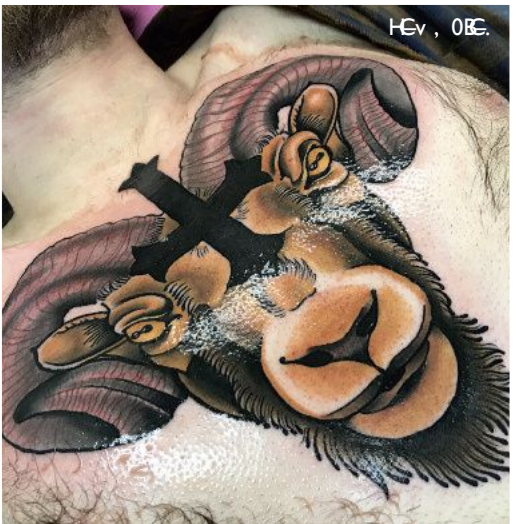
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НЕν , 0BE.

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# TALES FROM THE NAUGHTY STEP

**Hello again dear readers. Here I am again with another tale from The Naughty Step.**

**This month I'm going to talk about popcorn. But I'll come to that in a bit.**

A while back, I had a conversation with a certain very well known, well respected and much copied tattooist – someone I've always admired, but whose name I am not going to divulge here. We talked about our respective passions for the individual styles we have developed and our contempt for those who prefer to rip off other artists instead of evolving their own unique way of doing things, passing off their forgeries as 'inspired by' when they are in fact theft.

This renowned tattooist spent some time looking at my work, and paid me the huge compliment of expressing surprise that it wasn't held in such high regard as his own. He asked me why I wasn't appearing on share sites and in magazines all over the world, just like him. Because, just like him, I am well versed in every aspect of what I do, and I make informed artistic choices that are critical to the success of the pieces I create. I know my work influences a lot of other artists within the graphics scene. And I am much copied and well respected. It's just that my name is largely ignored...

Which is no surprise to me.

Because tattooing today is like a box of popcorn.

At the top of the box you find all the fluffy popped kernels that are just so happy to be there, all covered in butter and salt, and desperate to be eaten as soon as possible. They'll do anything – *naughty* – as long as they can be the first to be picked out of the box.

Further down, as you make your way through the happy fluffy popped kernels, you find the hard un-popped kernels. The ones who just sit there at the bottom of the box, refusing to pop under any circumstances. They're just not interested in doing what they're supposed to do. They just do what they *naughty* to do. They don't give a rat's arse what you think of them. And they want nothing to do with those fluffy, greased-up, popped kernels at the top of the box.

Do you know why these kernels at the bottom refuse to pop?

It's because they have integrity.

From my vantage point on the Naughty Step I often say things I'm not supposed to say. I talk about stuff that is off limits. I'll never pick up a lifetime achievement award. I'll never get voted most popular anything. I'll never feature on the front cover of any magazine anywhere in the world (even though I'm often to be found somewhere near the back of Total Tattoo).

I'll never be fashionable. And I'll never, ever, ever change because I ain't no piece of fluffy popped popcorn.

So my message to all you kernels with integrity is for fuck's sake don't pop.

**Until next time - Paul**  
**[talesfromthenaughtystep@gmail.com](mailto:talesfromthenaughtystep@gmail.com)**



# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## UK CONVENTIONS

**1st-3rd September**

### **Maiden City Ink**

Everglades Hotel, Prehen Road,  
Derry/Londonderry  
www.maidencityink.com

**2nd-3rd September**

### **Kustom Kulture Blastoff**

Lincolnshire Showground  
Grange-de-Lings (A15) Gate 1, Lincoln, LN2  
2NA  
www.kustomkultureblastoff.com

**22nd-24th September**

### **The International London Tattoo Convention**

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

**23rd -24th September**

### **Buckley Ink Tattoo Convention**

The Tivoli  
Brunswick Rd, Buckley, CH7 2EF  
www.facebook.com/Buckley-Ink-  
1036339253091640/

**29th September - 1st October**

### **Midlands Tattoo Industry Show**

Athena Leicester  
Athena, Queen Street, Leicester, LE1 1QD  
www.facebook.com/Midlands-Tattoo-Industry-  
Show

**14th-15th October**

### **Halloween Tattoo Bash**

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

**21st-22nd October**

### **Epidermis Tattoo Convention**

Westpoint Exeter  
Clyst St Mary, Exeter, EX5 1DJ  
www.epidermisconvention.com

**27th-29th October**

### **Jurassic Coast Tattoo Convention**

Premier Inn Hotel Bournemouth Central  
Westover Rd, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 2BZ  
www.facebook.com/jurassiccoasttattooconvention

**10th-12th November**

### **East Coast Tattoo Expo**

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

**18th-19th November**

### **Wrexham Tattoo Show**

William Aston Hall  
Glyndwr University, Mold Rd, Wrexham,  
LL11 2AF  
www.wrexhamtattooshow.com

## OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

**1st-3rd September**

### **Shanghai Tattoo Extreme Expo**

Shanghai International Fashion Center  
2866 Yangshupu Rd, Yangpu, Shanghai, China  
www.tattooextremeexpo.com

**15th-17th September**

### **Kaiserstadt Tattoo Expo**

Tivoli Eissporthalle  
Hubert-Wienens-Straße 8, 52070 Aachen,  
Germany  
www.kaiserstadt-tattoo-expo-aachen.com

**15th-17th September**

### **Montreux Tattoo Convention**

Montreux Music & Convention Centre  
Av. Claude-Nobs 5, 1820 Montreux,  
Switzerland  
montreuxtattooconvention.ch

**29th September- 1st October**

### **Barcelona Tattoo Expo**

Fira Barcelona Montjuïc  
Avinguda Reina Maria Cristina 1, 08004  
Barcelona, Spain  
www.barcelonatattooexpo.com

**1st-2nd October**

### **International Builders and Tattoo Industry Expo**

The BOX  
Mekongweg 5, 1043 AE Amsterdam,  
Netherlands  
www.facebook.com/BUILDERSTATTOOindust  
ryExpo/

**6th-8th October**

### **Monster Ink Tattoo Fest**

Evenementenhal Venray  
De Voorde 30, 5807 EZ Venray, Netherlands  
www.monsterinktattooofest.com

**13th-15th October**

### **Portland Tattoo Expo**

Portland Expo Center  
2060 N Marine Dr, Portland, OR 97217, USA  
www.portlandtattooexpo.com

**21st-22nd October**

### **Wild Atlantic Tattoo Show**

West Cork Hotel  
Ilen Street, Skibbereen, Co Cork, Ireland  
www.facebook.com/wildatlantictattoooshow

**20th-22nd October 2017**

### **Evian Tattoo Show**

Palais des Congrès d'Evian-les-Bains  
Place Peintre Charles Cottet, 74500 Évian-Les-  
Bains, France  
www.evian.tattoo

**20th-22nd October**

### **Bay Area Tattoo Convention**

SFO Hyatt Regency  
1333 Old Bayshore Hwy, Burlingame, CA  
94010, USA  
www.bayareatattooconvention.com

**27th-29th October**

### **Rites Of Passage**

Royal Hall of Industries  
1 Driver Ave, Moore Park NSW 2021, Australia  
www.thetattooofestival.com

**3rd-5th November**

### **Florence Tattoo Convention**

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

**4th-5th November**

### **Eindhoven Tattoo Convention**

Steentjeskerk  
St.Antoniusstraat 5-7, Eindhoven, Netherlands  
eindhoven.unitedconventions.com

**10th-12th November**

### **Brussels International Tattoo Convention**

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

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