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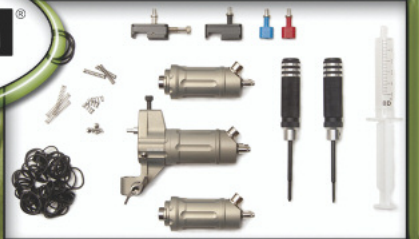


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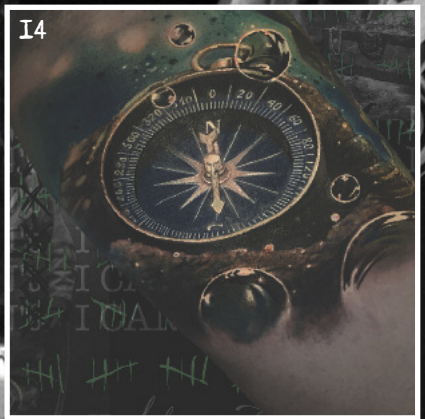
Harriet Heath blows away the cobwebs and steps out of her comfort zone

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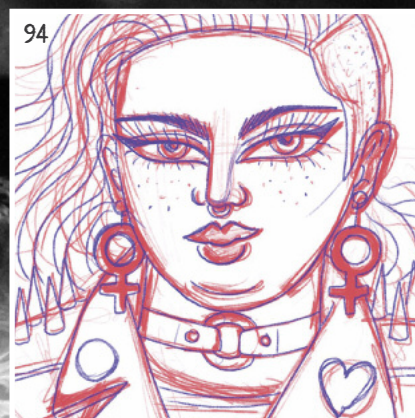
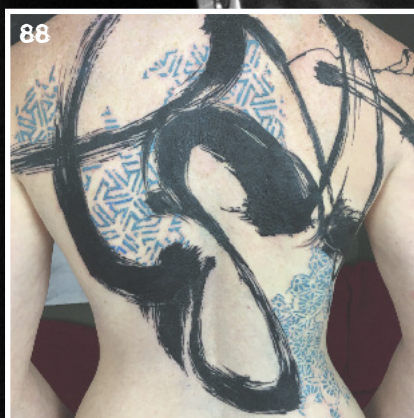
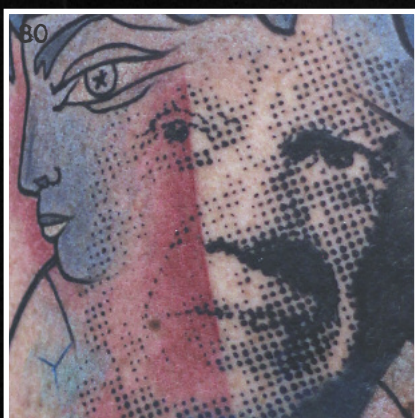
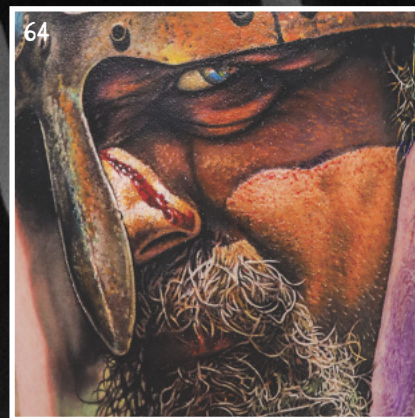
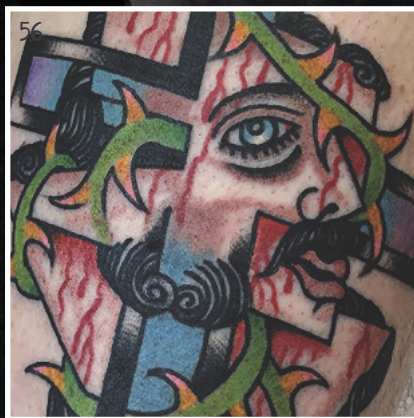
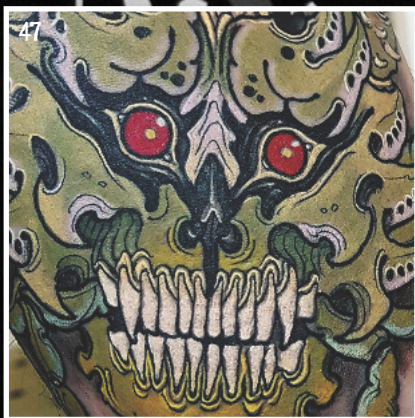
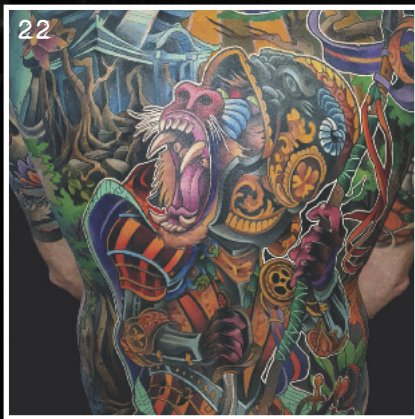


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Total Tattoo magazine No. 163 May 2018
Published monthly by KMT Publishing Ltd. All rights reserved.
Printed in England on re-cycled paper by Buxton Press Ltd
Distributed by Seymour Distribution

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WELCOME to 163

We've all said, "The bubble is going to burst for tattooing soon" and it seems as though it's starting to happen. It's not so much of a burst, more of a slow puncture. And it's not the 'industry' itself that's suffering, but the people involved...

I'm noticing a complete divide between tattooists with regard to their bookings. Whilst some artists struggle to get booked up, others boast about how they're booked up for months in advance. And it isn't a reflection of their abilities either – it's just how it is, down to their presence or popularity.

And neither is better off than the other.

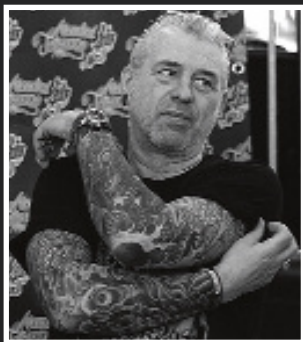
Let's take the artist who is struggling. They're producing enough flash to decorate the walls of a studio, they're offering deals and listing their availability. But they're in a mass market and fighting to be seen. In this situation, it's difficult not to feel pessimistic – tattooists are self-employed after all, so they're relying on that income. It's also a difficult pill to swallow if you're an established tattooer and you're watching a younger, less experienced artist snap up bookings.

So the booked-up artist is in a better situation? Not necessarily. If you've carved out a style for yourself, then you've got the pressure of doing what you're known for – even if you want to push yourself in new artistic directions. You'll have a list of excited clients who want to see their designs weeks, or sometimes months, before their appointment (and although 'the customer is always right', you might be struggling to get those ideas down quick enough). And what happens if life throws a spanner in the works and you have to re-arrange all your bookings because of illness or some other unavoidable personal circumstance?

Both groups have similarities, which I'm sure many of you reading this can relate to. Ever gotten an email or message on your phone in the middle of the night, asking for a quote? How about the sinking feeling when you're told your design isn't what the client wanted, or that they've changed their mind at the last minute? Then there's the dreaded no-shows. And on top of all this, the guilt of taking time off and the struggle to maintain relationships and some sort of 'normal' life outside of tattooing.

When you take all this into consideration, it's no wonder tattooists get completely fed up of it all and burn out. The amalgamation of all these factors can get too much for a person to cope with. The sad thing is, whilst friends and peers may try to express concern, you might not necessarily notice that it's happening to you until it's too late. It's happened to a lot of tattooists I know. It's even happened to me!

I don't have the answers unfortunately. The only thing I can stress is the importance of being kind to yourself. Although the tattoo world is a wonderful place, you must remember that it is just a job at the end of the day and that money won't buy you happiness.



Perry
Total Tattoo Editorial Team
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**I agree with what Mark Twain said
- we're all mad at night.**

Ruth Rendell

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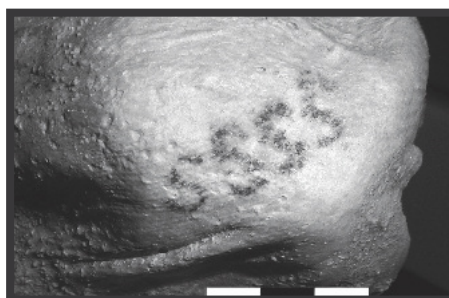
NEWS AND REVIEWS

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.

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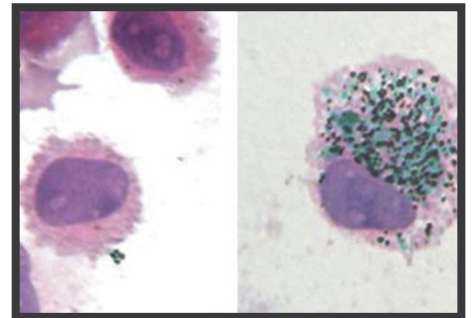
MUM'S THE WORD

The British Museum has recently announced the discovery of the world's oldest figural tattoos – and the earliest known tattoos on a woman. They are on the upper arms and shoulder of two Egyptian mummies in the museum's collection known as Gebelein Man A and Gebelein Woman (after the place where they were found). The discovery was unexpected. The tattoos were previously thought to be just slightly darker smudges on the mummies' skin, but during a conservation project the marks were examined under infra-red light and found to be symbols and pictures of animals. Gebelein Man A's tattoos have been tentatively identified as a wild bull and a Barbary sheep, perhaps denoting power or strength. Gebelein woman has several S-shaped and linear motifs whose meanings are as yet unknown, although they are thought to have ceremonial significance. Because her tattoos would have been so visible, it is conjectured that they may have denoted status, bravery or protection, or may perhaps have had some magical purpose. The tattoos are carbon-based it is possible they were made from soot. Both of these tattooed people would have lived in Egypt around 3000 BCE.



THE DARK SIDE OF IMMUNE

According to an article published on the Scientific American website, a French research team have discovered a surprising way to aid tattoo removal – in which the body's own immune system could be harnessed to rid itself of the unwanted ink. The idea was stumbled upon almost by accident, because tattoos weren't the original focus of the research.



Scientists have long been puzzled by the way tattoo ink stays in the skin. Surely it should be 'cleaned up' by the immune system, along with all the other foreign intruders and cellular debris that the body deals with in its day-to-day functioning? It turns out that because the pigment particles in tattoo ink are so large, they can't be flushed out of the system in the same way. Which is good if you like your tattoo, but not so good if you want to get rid of it!

Now the science bit. The special cells that deal with the process of 'rubbish collection' are called Macrophages. (The word comes from the Greek and actually means 'big eaters'.) These cells identify and digest all the unwanted and harmful stuff that the body needs to dispose of, which is then flushed out through the lymph system. Pigment particles, however, remain trapped inside the macrophages – in the skin in other words – because of their unwieldy size. And it's been found that when a macrophage dies, the pigment particles within it are simply absorbed into a new macrophage... so the ink never gets removed from the body.

The new idea is to temporarily block the functioning of the macrophages so that, during laser removal, the pigment particles that are blasted out and released would not immediately be recaptured – but would, instead, drain into the lymph system. It's a drastic and risky approach that needs more research (macrophages have many vital roles, including wound healing) but in the future it could mean dramatic improvements in the effectiveness of laser tattoo removal.

WIN CLOTHING FROM OFFEND MY EYES!

Offend My Eyes is a clothing company that was started by Jack and Nick, who describe themselves as a “couple of social outcasts from Doncaster, UK”. They are a small, independent business who pride themselves on gender-neutral and size-inclusive clothing (in a range from XXS to 4XL).

Jack and Nick take colour seriously. If you’ve ever seen their stalls at events, or you already wear their stuff, you’ll know what we mean. Their commitment to their brand and endless research has resulted in garments that are printed using a sublimation printing method, producing graphics that are simply PACKED with saturation. This is clothing that is designed to stand out from the crowd and look outright awesome.

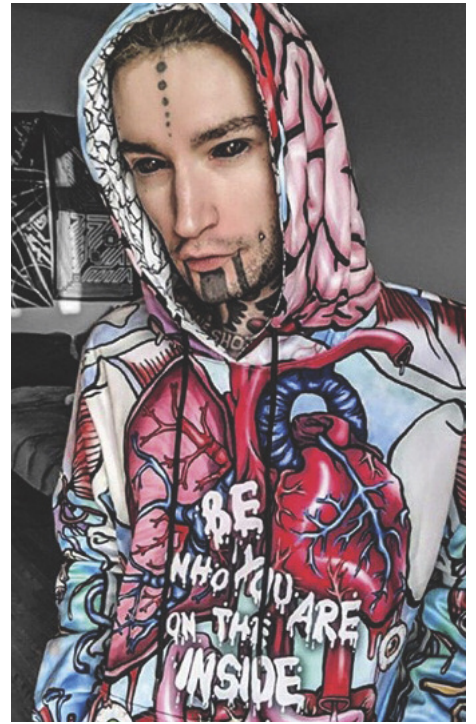
The lovely Jack and Nick have kindly given us a £50 voucher that can be used on their website. Only the bold and cool need apply for this one!

To be in with a chance of winning, just answer this question:

What printing method do Jack and Nick use for their garments?

- 1) Sublimation
- 2) Elimination
- 3) Procrastination

Email your answer to comps@totaltattoo.co.uk with the subject line ‘Offend My Eyes’ to arrive no later than 29th April. Remember to include your contact details. T&Cs apply (see page 5). Good luck!



LIZZIE R COVER-UPS

Our news radar has picked up another story in what has now, sadly, become a continuing theme. More and more people are seeking cover-ups of once-important tattoos – often song lyrics – that have now lost their personal meaning and, worse, become the source of considerable distress due to the fall from grace of the person who inspired them. This latest story relates to lyrics by Jacob Hoggard of Hedley who, according to press reports, was accused of sexual misconduct earlier this year. Lizzie Renaud of Speakeasy Tattoo in Toronto, Canada, is offering cover-ups to Hedley fans (or ex-fans) for a nominal fee, or even free of charge if they cannot afford to pay. According to one interview we read, the story is given an extra dimension by the fact that ten years ago Lizzie worked as a make-up artist (creating fake tattoos) on a Hedley music video.



RUN LIZZY RUN!

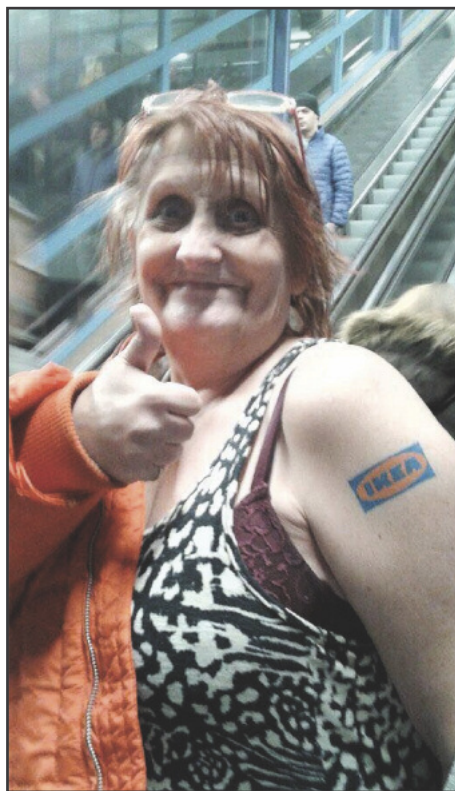
Total Tattoo’s co-editor Lizzy decided to take up running last year. After the first day, she hated it. By the end of the second week, however, she started to vaguely enjoy it. Now she’s signed up to do The Great North Run and is fundraising for the Samaritans! Head to her fundraising link:

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lizzy-guy to sponsor her, read her story and support the vital work that the Samaritans do. Any amount you can give will make a difference.



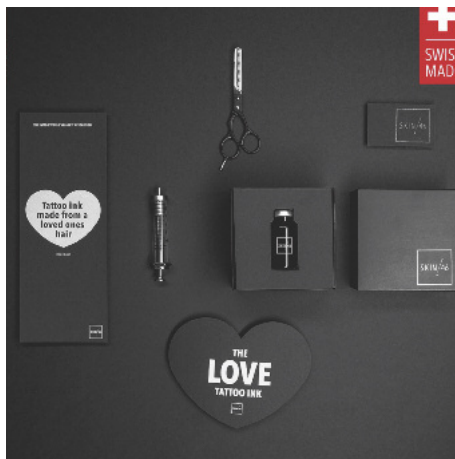
THIS TATTOO IDEA IS SOFA-KING CRAZY

In case you didn't know, Ikea is a worldwide chain of furniture and homeware stores. Known for their meatballs, maze-like layouts and of course the Billy Bookcase, they have something for everyone. One woman has set the 'Ikea admiration bar' even higher however, by getting a tattoo of their logo. Retiree Hjärdís Wrede visits the Ikea store in Helsingborg, Sweden, almost every day. She loves the products, the prices and the staff, and she told her local paper she enjoys people-watching and having a cup of coffee and a bite to eat. Some may say she is missing some screws, but we think it's a great way to spend retirement!



FUR CATS' SAKE!

We've brought you stories about pets' ashes being mixed into tattoo ink before, but this is something different – and here in the office, it's had us all itching. Apparently you can now have your pet's HAIR mixed into the ultimate tattooed portrait. But before you start putting pet hair into a bottle of tattoo ink and shaking it about, you need to know a bit more. There's some science here. The company behind the concept is Swiss start-up SKIN46, and the product itself is a new ink – made on demand for each client – that incorporates your pet's hair broken down into medically clean carbon. Of course the same process can be applied to a human loved one's hair too. According to SKIN46's website, producing the individualised tattoo ink (which costs several hundred pounds) involves 65 different steps, with no less than 22 control points. Check out



www.skin46.com for more details, including videos, the current crowdfunding campaign, and a 50% off promotion.

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Tattoo ink
made from a
loved ones
hair



POPA DO PREACH



It's official, the Pope is into tattoos! OK, not quite... but he approves of them at least. Speaking at a gathering of young Catholics in Rome (to which delegates from other religious backgrounds, and non-believers too, were also invited) Pope Francis talked about preaching the Gospel with enthusiasm, daring and hope, and shared his thoughts on how to respond to the kinds of questions and issues that concern the younger generation – including how to judge which aspects of contemporary culture are 'good' and which are 'bad'. "Don't be afraid of tattoos," he is widely quoted as saying, noting the centuries-old tradition of Christian religious tattooing. He went on to describe tattoos as a sign of "belonging" and said that talking to someone about their tattoos was often a wonderful way to open a dialogue.

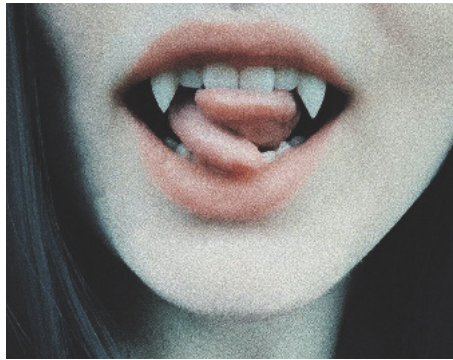
WORLD CULTURE FESTIVAL UPDATE

We were sad to hear that, due to unforeseen personal circumstances, the next Traditional World Tattoo and Culture Festival has been postponed until 2020. In a statement the organisers apologised for the disappointment caused and have promised to make the 2020 edition of the show even bigger and better than before. Anyone with artist/booth/accommodation enquiries should email traditionaltattoofestival@gmail.com



LUXEMBOURG STICKS THEIR TONGUE OUT TO TATTOO LAWS

New legislation could be introduced in Luxembourg that will set the minimum age for getting a tattoo at just sixteen years old (with parental consent required up to the age of eighteen). The introduction of mandatory training for tattooists is also being mooted, with tattooists themselves proposing a professional code of ethics and charter of good practice. Legislators are also debating a ban on extreme body modification procedures (such as tongue-splitting or teeth-filing) unless they are carried out by a medical professional.



ABYS-MALL DISPLAY AT THAI CONVENTION

It's quite normal to see half-dressed people at tattoo conventions, especially when the competitions are being judged. But one show in Thailand caused a bit of a stir recently when participants showed up naked... especially as the event was taking place in full view of the general public in a shopping mall! The Rayong Tattoo Convention attracted hordes of tattoo fans, but shoppers and weekend visitors to the mall saw the displays of flesh as unacceptable and against the cultural norms and traditional values of Thai society, and those with young children certainly did not appreciate the public nudity. The police were called, the organisers were fined, and all kinds of questions were asked.



ARTIST WANTED

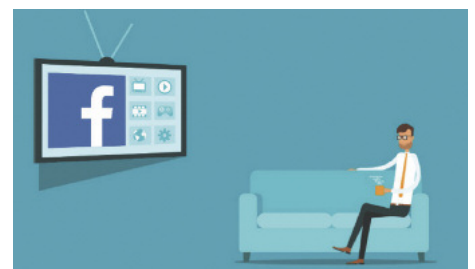
Mad Tatters Ink are looking for a full/part time good all round artist to work in the studio in Aylsham, Norwich, Norfolk. (Please note, this is not an apprenticeship.) Existing client base and studio experience essential. Portfolio required. Please contact Mark on 07787763218 or email [mادتattersink@btinternet.com](mailto:madtattersink@btinternet.com)



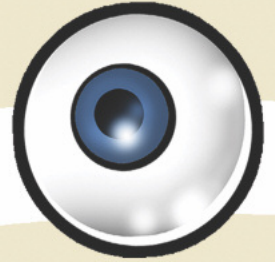
LIKE SHARE COMMENT... INK



Currently available only in the US, Facebook Watch is a new on-demand TV service available through the ubiquitous social media platform. And now, thanks to its new series called 'The Tattoo Shop', viewers will be able to decide what tattoos people are going to get! The series features American TV veterans Chris Garver, Ami James, Darren Brass, Chris Nunez and Tommy Montoya (it's been described as a kind of 'Miami Ink' and 'NY Ink' reunion). In a segment called 'Street Stories', people share their tattoo experiences and reasons for getting tattooed. And every Friday night, in the 'Mystery Tattoo' slot, a client receives a tattoo sight unseen – with the design and placement determined by the votes of Facebook Watch viewers...



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Amy Savage
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Anastasia Grichina
Heartache & Heartbreak
Andrew John Smith
Jolie Rouge
Andrew McNally
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Crow Quill
Jessie Foakes
On the road
Jessica v
Love Hate Social Club
Jimi Jugio
La Maisons des tanneurs (France)
Joanne Baker
Semper Tattoo
Joe Carpenter
Five Keys
Joe Farrell
Kilburn Original
John Anderton
Nemesis
John Philip
Aberdeen Tattoo Collective
Johnny Taylor
Northside (WB)
Johnny Wemmenstedt
King Carlos (Sweden)
Jordan Baxter
Frith Str
Jordan Croke
Second Skin
Jordan Oterski
North OfWinter
Jordan Reay
Northern Glory
Josh Fisher
Five Keys
Josie Sexton
Gothika Tattoo
Justin Rockett
Ultimate Skin
Kaja Novsak
Rock & Roll
Kara Chambers
Northside Tattoo
Kate Shaw
Tattoo Station
Kathryn Ursula
Dharma
Kayley Henderson
Masamune Tattoos

Keely Rutherford
Jolie Rouge
Keira Kirkpatrick
Semper Tattoo
Kevin Reid
Aberdeen Tattoo Collective
Kirsten Pettitt
Dark Horse Collective
Ky Killjoy
Nine Tails
Kyle Shields
Empire Ink
Laura Hinshaw
Brick Club
Laura Lenihan
Kilburn Original
Laura Penman
Empire Ink
Lauren Houlihan
Embody
Lauren Spoons
Cock A Snook
Lauren Stephens
Cock A Snook
Lea Snoeflinga
Northside Tattoo
Lee Armstrong
Northern Glory
Leigh Harris
King Carlos (Sweden)
Leo D-T
Wolf & Arrows
Leon Calvert
Tattoo Station
Lewis McKechnie
Red Hot and Blue
Lewis Parkin
Iron Hand
Liam Jackson
Studio 31
Lindsey Thomas
Tattoo Station
Little Andy
The Church
Lord Montana
Blue
Jolie Rouge
Lou Hopper
Death's Door
Lucy O'Connell
Reds
Luis Loureiro
Luis Loureiro Tattoo (Portugal)
Maidstone John
The Warren
Malin Thulin
King Carlos (Sweden)
Manni K
Jolie Rouge
Marcin Ptak
Inkdependent
Marco Galdo
Trafficcanti d'arte (Italy)
Maria Eriksson
King Carlos (Sweden)
Marianne Odino
Good Changes (Russia)
Marie Cox
Folklore
Mark Bester
Marked for Life
Mark Ford
Jolie Rouge
Mark Jelliman
Moth and Flame
Mark Love
Santa Cruz Kustom Club
Mark Murray
Studio XIII
Martin Couley
Couleys Tattoo
Marv Woods
FHT
Mathew James
Private Studio

Matt Back
High Bridge Tattoo
Matt Charles
Fudoshin
Matt Difa
Jolie Rouge
Michelle Maddison
Semper Tattoo
Mick Shipley
Helter Skelter
Mira Paramonova
Fat Fugu
Mosh
Tattoo Art (Spain)
Mowgli
Through My Third Eye
Mr Hyde
Mr Hyde
Myles Vear
Fudoshin
Nathan Hague (Piercer)
Sailor Max
Neil Dransfield
Private Studio
Nick Devine
Helter Skelter
Nick Imms
The Church
Nicola Cry
Dark Horse Collective
Niorkz
Creative Vandals
Noon
Private Studio (France)
Oli Sugars
Magnum Opus
Olivia Chell
Insider
Ollie Wallace
Blackfriars Tattoo House
Otto
White Elephant
Owen Pauls
On The Road
Patryk Mazur
Surrealistic Sanctuary
Paul La Vey
Art La Vey
Paul Smith
Marked for Life
Paul Vander Johnson
Private Studio
Pedro Mendoca
Grey Area
Peter Hall
Evil Needle
Phatt German
Irie Ites
Rachel Honeywell
Gothika Tattoo
Rafael Cavicchioli
Studio XIII Gallery
Remis
Remis Tattoo
Rich Harris
Dark Horse Collective
Richard Lazenby
True til Death
Richard Leighton
Triplesix
Rigzi
Bath St Tattoo Collective
Rio
Adrenalink (Spain)
Rizza Boo
Bath St Tattoo Collective
Rob Fielder
Viking
Rob Mulligan
Life's Too Short Tattoo
Rob Richardson
Blackfriars Tattoo House
Roberto Poliri
Land Ahoy
Rory Craig
Northern Glory

Rudi Ridgewell
Carousel Tattoo
Ryan Evans
Kamil Tattoo
Sam Barber
North OfWinter
Sam Butler
Vintage Inx
Sam Rivers
Curiosities
Sammy Surjay
Vintage Inx
Scott Grozier
Triplesix
Sean Guthrie
Sailor Max
Shaun Pattinson
Borderline Tattoo Collective
Sicko Black
Good Changes (Russia)
Simon Gunn
Northern Glory
Sophie Cahill
Nemesis
Soydan
Yakuza
Stacey Green
Triplesix
Stef Bastian
Royal Tattoo
Stefano C
Frith Street
Steph White
Cock A Snook
Stephanie Melbourne
Brass Heart
Stephen Kelly
Bath St Tattoo Collective
Steve Morante
Fudoshin
Szidonia Gergely
Kamil Tattoo
Tacho
Follow Your Dreams
Tanis Biazus
On The Road
Tasha Pollendine
Physical Graffiti
Te Rangitu Netana
Private Studio
Terry Frank
Electric Punch
Tim Kingsbury
Triplesix
TJ
Private Studio
Tom Bates
Five Keys
Tom Farrow
Exile Tattoo
Tom Grosz
Eightfold
Tom Maggot
Second City Tattoo Club
Tom Sorn
SMB Tattoo
Tony Booth
Dabs Tattoo
Troy Slater
Blackfriars Tattoo House
Wes Vaughn
Insider
Whiley
Wolf & Arrows
Willem Jansen
13 (Netherlands)
Wojtek Przychodzki
Inkdependent
Wolfgang Paradisio
Blind Tiger
Woodfarm
Irie Ites
Woody
Eightfold
Yarson
Yarson Tattoo
Yeshe
Dharma

Interview by Perry • Pictures courtesy of Jorge Becerra

JORGE BECERRA

Jorge Becerra is quite possibly the first true polymath I have ever met.

His knowledge and creativity encompass not only tattoos, sculpture, painting and music, but also plumbing, electrics, magic, mind-reading and hypnosis... and his positive energy is captivating. Originally from Spain, Jorge is now based in the UK and is married to fellow tattooist Kat Abdy. His studio is the Abrakadavra Tattoo Art Club in Ipswich (Suffolk) and it was here that we recently met up for a chat.







hope that when it all becomes more regulated, the rules are made by people who know how tattooing works. (Most of the time, the people who make the rules don't have a clue.) I think Mark Bester's tattoo academy, for example, is a really good idea. As well as all the obvious technical and clinical stuff, tattooists need to study anatomy (because you're putting your art on someone's body) and other aspects such as how to promote yourself and your business, and how to communicate well with your clients.



Tell us about coming to the UK and opening your studio.

Eight years ago, I moved to Edinburgh with my ex-partner. She was pregnant with our daughter at the time and her family lived in Scotland. I'd already learnt to tattoo in Spain and I found work in a studio in Edinburgh. Then I moved south to work with Jason and Lianne at Immortal Ink in Chelmsford. When I decided to open my own studio a couple of years later, I didn't want it to be too near to them because I thought that would be disrespectful, especially after all they'd done for me. So I chose Ipswich. It's a small town that has everything. There are a lot of studios here, but I went round all of them to introduce myself and make sure everyone knew I wasn't going to steal their clients. Any new business in the vicinity can affect everybody else's income; I don't think many people think about that, but they should.

So you had a place you could make your own.

Yes. When I first took it on, it was a total mess. But I wanted to get my hands dirty. To really feel it. And I conquered it – cleaned it, remodelled it, decorated it. That was three years ago. I changed the name last year. It used to be called Carpe Somnium, but that was the name that my ex-partner and I had given it. After she moved out (on good terms!) it didn't feel right to continue with our original adventure, so I re-named it. I think Abrakadavra suits the studio and represents me. We shall see what the future holds.

How did you learn to tattoo?

I'd wanted to tattoo ever since I was a small child. In fact my mum used to buy me tattoo magazines when I was seven or eight years old so I could draw from them. I was seventeen when I went to get my first tattoo. The guy in the studio saw my paintings and asked me if I wanted to learn. It was a very weird apprenticeship because he needed an extra artist in the shop straight away, so I was thrown in at the deep end. I had to wait until I was eighteen before I could tattoo my first client... but that was only a couple of weeks after I started! My mentor was like, "Alright, I'll be out of the studio for the whole day. Look after yourself." It was terrifying! To be honest, though, I look back at it now and feel very lucky with how I learned. It was all really old school and I was right into it. I learned to build my own machines, make my own needles, make pigments. All my mates wanted tattoos, so I had no problem finding people to practice on. I feel gratitude towards the guy who taught me. He was a cool dude.

How do you see the future of tattooing?

There will always be a market for tattoos. It doesn't matter how many tattooists there are; if you're good at what you do, and you believe in it, you will always have work. I think in the future tattooing will become a 'proper' career – not that it isn't now, but what I mean is that it will be a profession that requires official qualifications. I just



Communication is so important.

Yes. It's so easy to forget that clients don't see us do our job every day, and that's why they tend to ask obvious questions. But as an artist, your livelihood is based on their trust so it doesn't matter how many questions they ask, or how simple those questions are. Be grateful for that trust. Be clear, and be honest. If people don't know how tattooing works, they will often grab images they see online and want things done in an unrealistic time frame. It's my responsibility to say, "This is my approach, this is how it works, these are my ideas, what do you think?" Some of my clients will just tell me where they want the tattoo and suggest a loose theme; others prefer to have no input at all – and I must admit that's my favourite way to work!

Let's talk about your own particular specialism – fine line/detailed work.

I learned to do micro tattooing about seven years ago, when I was in Edinburgh. There was an artist there who was doing that single-needle style and he taught me so much. Then I developed my own technique. But I haven't done it for a long time. I proved my point (there are many pieces from back then that are still sharp) but it doesn't interest me so much now. I do like pieces with lots of detail though. And if you know how to do them, they will hold. Any tattoo will lose some of its original sharpness with age, but you can adapt the details of a design so that it works with the skin. You need to understand how the skin heals, how to work with the gaps in the design – the negative space – and how the pigment will distribute. But I'm not going to lie and say I've never had to do a touch up. Skin type is also very important, and how people look after their skin.



No two clients are the same.

That's right. When I was doing micro tattoos on fingers, I would look at how a person used their hands. If they worked in construction or some other manual job, for instance, I would advise against a micro tattoo. By contrast, if someone came in who had smooth hands, I'd feel OK about it because the healing would inevitably be better. Skin type is one of the most crucial factors when artists are working with detail. Mediterranean skin is more difficult to work with because it's tougher, whereas lots of skin in the UK is amazing to work with. The colours tend to heal brighter. Tattooing is like painting. Different techniques are required for different skin types, just as different painting techniques are required for paper, canvas and board.

What machines do you use?

I use FK Irons, and I'm very happy to be sponsored by them. Their new machines are incredible. I use the Xion, which is a super versatile machine that gives me the same strength as a coil machine for lines and the smoothness of a rotary for blending shading and colours.

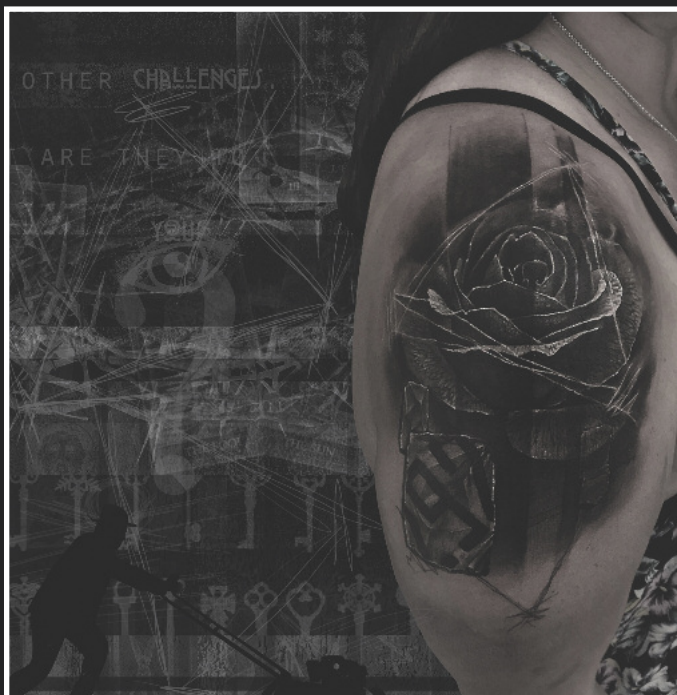
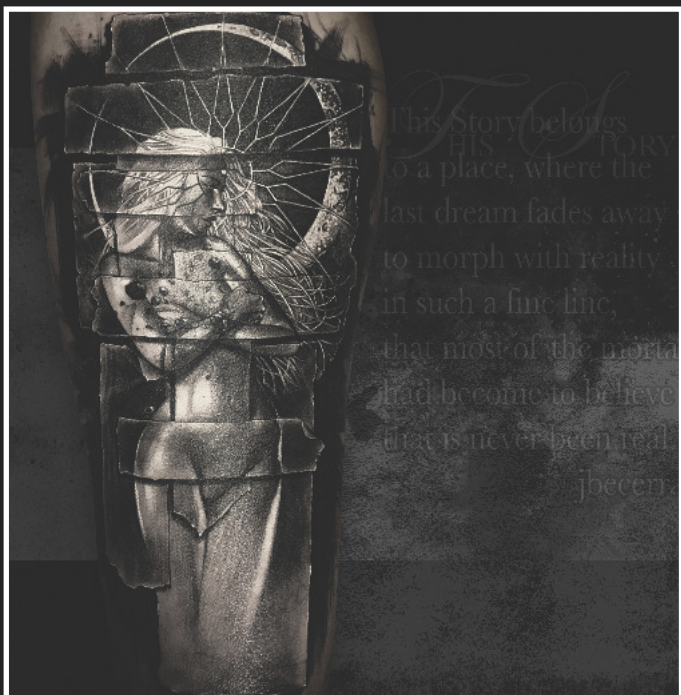
And your inks?

I only use World Famous inks. They're the best I've tried and I've been working with them for four or five years now. Their black is solid and stays that way. And I've never used colours that heal so well! They're easy to apply too.



What does sponsorship mean to you?

One of the things people that say about being a tattooist is that you gather family and friends – and that's certainly true when you're in a pro team. You travel with them and you feel supported. If you're using a product that you're happy with, then being sponsored by the company is a great opportunity. But if it's a product that you don't like, then obviously you need to be honest. I've been sponsored by companies before but stopped when the product stopped working for me. I'm still friends with them though, and I see them at conventions regularly! Sponsorship can be a great motivator. You push yourself because you want to get sponsored by a good company, and then when you achieve that, it makes you feel proud. I guess the bad thing about sponsorship is the bitterness from other people. (But that's more about them. If you have a bitter mind, everything tends to look like shit.)



Tell us more about your tattoo style.

I've always loved realism. I define 'realism' as representing a reality, no matter how many other elements you add. Because I've always been into comics and stories, the personal style that I've developed is closer to illustrative work. Getting purely realistic designs to look right on the body can be really difficult. There are artists who can get it spot on, and make it look amazing, but that's not the case for me. I like to add extra elements and textures to help with the anatomy, and I think this makes the tattoo more aesthetically interesting too. I'm an artist and I want to create. There are no boundaries. When I'm preparing a design I want to play with it. I want to have fun. That's what gives it energy and makes me want to tattoo it. Tattooing is a bit like having a games console. You have two or three genres that you like playing, but within those genres there are many games, so you may need to find many different techniques and approaches to have fun. If you have a games console with only one game – which you play for twenty years – then sure, you'll become an expert, but it would be pretty boring.

You've recently been doing some collaborative tattoos as part of the Kaos Theory Project at No Regrets in London.

Yes, it's been fascinating. I did collaborations with Benjamin Laukis, Ryan 'The Scientist' Smith, and Jay Freestyle. Sharing space and ideas like that was amazing. You're out of your comfort zone and you're trying to understand how the other person approaches their work. Even down to the needles they use. You need to be open-minded and you soon learn to problem solve. It gives you confidence and you bring back new techniques into your own work too.

How important is technology to you in tattooing?

Technology is a shortcut. My iPad has increased my productivity so much. In fact I couldn't work efficiently without it. I would feel so limited, and everything would take so much longer. I could certainly draw everything I tattoo by hand, but it would take me ages. And with the iPad it's no problem if the client wants to change something. Technology opens the doors to so many possibilities.

With tattooing, the past and the future are both here in the present!

Yes, because when you do the tattoo, it doesn't matter how the design was created, the end product is still made with your own hands in the traditional way. That's where the human aspect comes back in. Paintings are different. They are their own end product. My paintings have no digital content.

You often manipulate your tattoo photos when you post them on social media.

Yes, for instance I choose backgrounds that complement the tattoo and reflect its meaning. So you might see the arm, and the background will have paper pieces and lots of words. Some people think I'm cheating with Photoshop... but what does that mean? Everyone knows how a tattoo looks when it's freshly done. It's red as fuck. I like to desaturate the pictures a bit so that you can see more of the design and less of the trauma. I studied photography just so I could take good pictures of my work. It's another form of self-expression. And it shows you really like the piece – which is nice for the client (who has, after all, paid for it).

Changing the subject completely, I can't resist asking you about your magic...

I first got into it to force myself to stop being shy. When I was a kid, my friend's grandfather was a traditional magician – doing card tricks and all sorts – and my friend stole a book from him and gave it to me. That's how I started, learning how you handle the cards and the coins, and how you work with the maths. When you become a magician, you also realise that psychology is very important. It's all about reading people, seeing their reactions, getting their attention and distracting them from seeing how you do the trick. Adults take their masks off and become kids again. For me, it's about people enjoying themselves. It's not about showing off.



How did you get into hypnosis?

I first tried to learn when I was in Spain, but the place I went to was a complete scam and I just thought, "Fuck it, this doesn't work, it's just for television!" But then while I was in Edinburgh someone I knew went to get hypnotherapy treatment at a medical centre, and that changed my view. I realised that it wasn't all bullshit, and I ended up training in it for three years. Hypnosis is just a different way of communicating. You can really help people. I was also interested in combining it with my magic, and I began trying it out at tattoo conventions. Last year at the Tea Party, I got a girl to put a needle through her arm and she felt nothing. I believe anybody can be hypnotised, but some people are more open to it than others. I would never do anything that would endanger anyone, or make them do anything they wouldn't want to do.

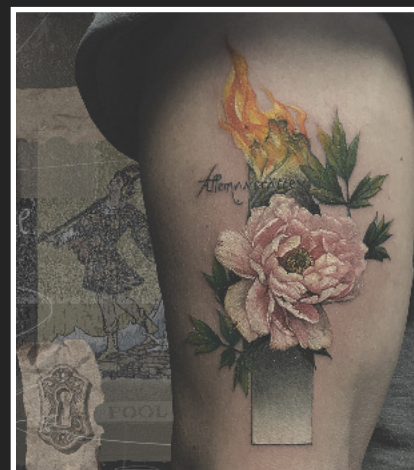
Can you make use of these skills in your tattooing?

I'm a big fan of Derren Brown and I saw him doing pain suppression in one of his shows. I thought, "Wow, that would be amazing for tattooing", so I started learning how to do it. There was a laser removal service at the studio and one particular client would always have to get super high in order to get his neck lasered. So I tried it on him – and he did forty minutes without flinching. I thought, "Fuck! This is real!" I couldn't believe it. So yes, I do use it with my tattoo clients if they're struggling. A few years ago I was planning to do a seminar to teach other tattooists all about it – but the techniques for controlling pain are very similar to the techniques for controlling people in other ways, and I decided I didn't want to be responsible for anything that might go wrong.



Finally, can you tell us about your facial tattoo?

Two years ago I had a life-changing experience. I was overworked and I had ulcers in my brain which got infected. I almost didn't make it. Although some people might see this as a negative thing, for me it was actually the best thing that could have happened and I've looked at life differently ever since. Now, I'm preparing myself for the next stage in my journey and I see my facial tattoo as a kind of armour for that purpose. It's something that's intensely personal to me. Last year when I was in Barcelona, the guys from the team painted their faces to match... and then people at the convention started doing the same... not realising that mine was an actual tattoo! *[Laughs]* I get very few negative reactions. In fact I believe we are the last generation that is going to suffer judgement for having facial tattoos. I don't think our kids will have to explain themselves, or their choices, in the way that we sometimes do. We are going to be the old people with facial tattoos. We ARE the change.



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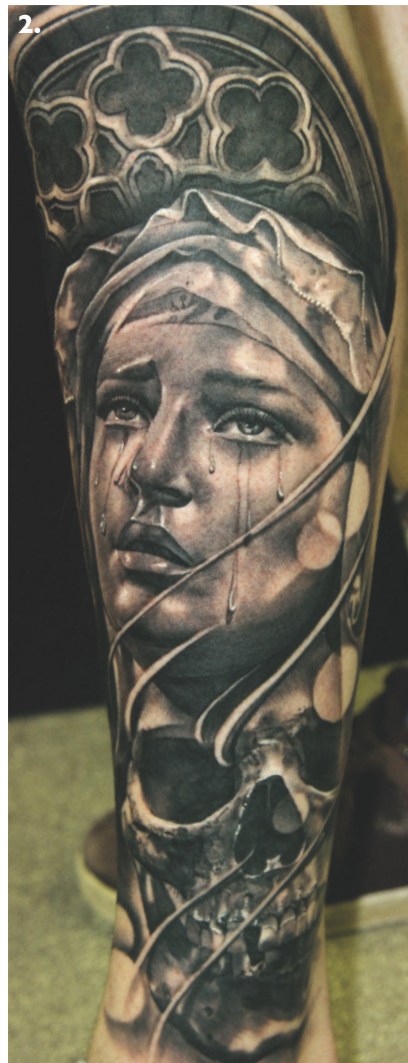
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BRIGHTON TATTOO CONVENTION

I couldn't wait for the 2018 convention season to get started. For me the first major show of the year was going to be Brighton, and on a bright sunny February morning I headed to the south coast for my inky fix.

In common with many towns and cities over recent years, Brighton has seen a massive upsurge in the number of tattoo shops and studios that have opened. There's a large and dedicated tattoo community flourishing here, making it the perfect place for a major convention. For the third successive year the show was taking place at The Brighton Centre. Smack bang in the middle of the seafront, this is a venue that is more used to hosting the annual conferences of political parties than gatherings of the tattooed tribes!

I arrived to find the ground floor's large glass facade emblazoned with the words KEEP BRIGHTON BEAUTIFUL... GET TATTOOED. This is a building in the concrete brutalist style, and as you enter it you are very aware of its utilitarian functionality. Whilst this kind of architecture may not win any 21st century design awards – and may not win over many hearts either – it makes for an ideal convention venue by allowing areas to be easily designated for visitors and exhibitors to go about their business. The show is split over two floors, with traders and artists mixed together. This was a vast improvement over previous years and helped to create a steady flow of movement which kept the show feeling buzzy and lively throughout the whole weekend.

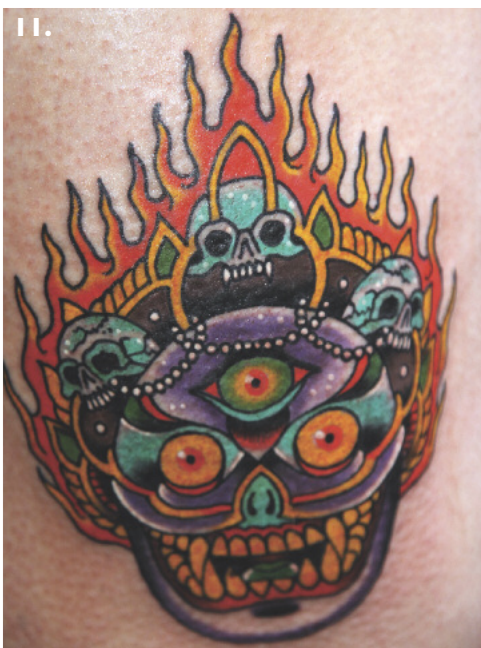
Through the main doors, the first thing you encountered was a pop-up barbershop and a large seating area with Jim Sanders's imposing Totem sculptures [see separate feature in this issue for more about Jim's work]. Beyond this was the first block of traders and tattooists. All manner of delights were there to tempt you – from Tessa Metcalfe's high-end jewellery and the usual selection of previously-alive animals on the Cranfield's Curiosity Cabinet taxidermy stall to Kerry Evans's original tattoo-inspired oil paintings and Alex Binnie's 'Truth & Beauty' print exhibition (and the chance to acquire a very limited edition piece made by Alex right here at the convention).

One of the downstairs rooms featured a selection of traditional hand-poking and hand-tapping artists representing different cultures from around the world, who sat comfortably alongside conventional machine tattooists producing Polynesian and tribal-style pieces for all. But upstairs in the large auditorium is where the real beating heart of this show was to be found. This was where the vast majority of the tattooists were housed and, as is the case every year, there was some amazing work going on. Most European countries were represented, with some world-class names that really made this jewel of a show glitter and shine. Everyone looked busy. Most styles of tattooing were to be found here, and the strong line-up of artists included some cracking international names. Guen Douglas shared a booth with Wendy Pham and as was to be expected they were both stacked out the whole weekend. Neo-trad powerhouse La Main Bleu from Belgium came over with a group of friends. Jondix and Deno were there, along with the team from Seven Doors in London. And of course most of the major Brighton studios supported the show.



- 1. sam butler, vintage inx
- 2. andy blair, quality ink
- 3. happy karl, suspiria tattoo (sweden)
- 4. kerry irvine, modern electric tattoo co
- 5. roberto pena, old capital (switzerland)
- 6. alex binnie print retrospective
- 7. little andy, the church





The room adjacent to the main auditorium was set up as the bar / stage area, and with all the windows blacked out it really was dark! Over the weekend the crowd were entertained by a variety of different performances, including a couple of very special shows by tattooists. On the Saturday night we were treated to a special audiovisual collaboration from Jondix, Tomas Tomas and Raf. It was described as "Eclectic sounds and eye candy providing food for the mind" and I couldn't have put it better myself. And on Sunday, Matt from Evil from the Needle treated us to a set of his industrial electronic melodies.

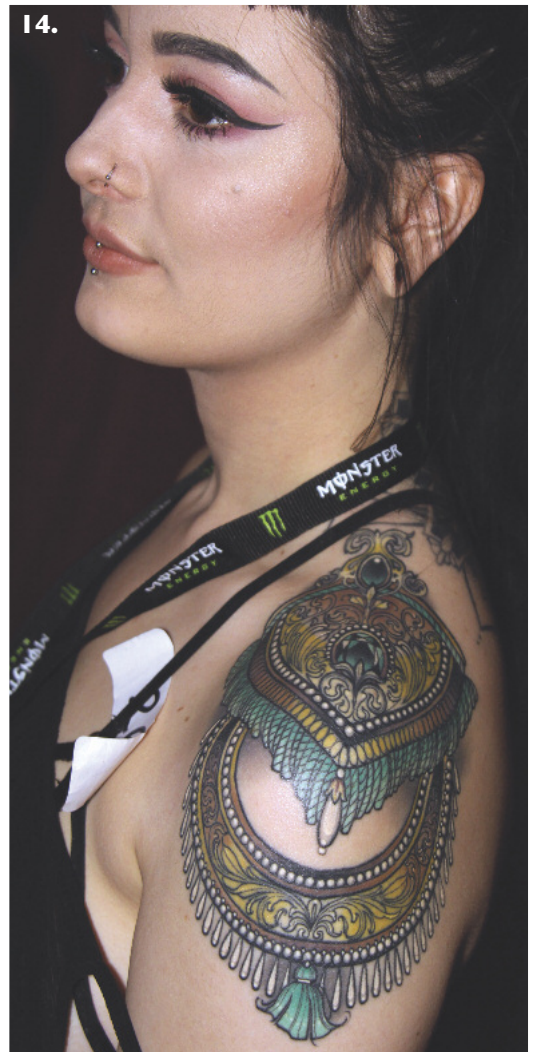
This side room was also where the tattoo competitions took place at the end of each day. Never afraid to try something new, this year organiser Woody opted for a fresh approach to the traditional competition categories. Five entries at a time came on to the stage and were marked; the next five entries then took their place; and so on until every tattoo had been seen. Then after the three judges had made their decision, three people would get called back and they would be the joint winners for that day.



12.



13.



14.



15.



16.

- 8. nick devine, helter skelter
- 9. warren braid, tattoo fx
- 10. gunnar v, element tattoo (norway)
- 11. miguel lepage, saving grace tattoo (canada)
- 12. terry frank, electric punch
- 13. daniels bauti, holy hand (spain)
- 14. chrissey hills, inkination

Throughout its eleven year history, this show has morphed and changed, grown and shrunk. It moved from its original home at Brighton Racecourse to the Hilton Brighton Metropole hotel, and now it's come here to the Brighton Centre. It's gone from having big name bands playing one year, to being a music-free zone the following year. It's tried out every format of tattoo competition (and even experimented with having no competitions at all). Last year it took place in May, and this year it moved back to its familiar February slot (to do battle with the Brighton Half Marathon that effectively locks down traffic on the Sunday morning, filling the car parks and making the show rather hard to get to!) Maybe it's this ability to evolve and adjust that gives the show its strength. People certainly keep coming back. Many conventions hit a bit of a lull after their tenth year, but I was pleased to see that Brighton has bucked that trend. We'll just have to wait and see what next year has to offer!

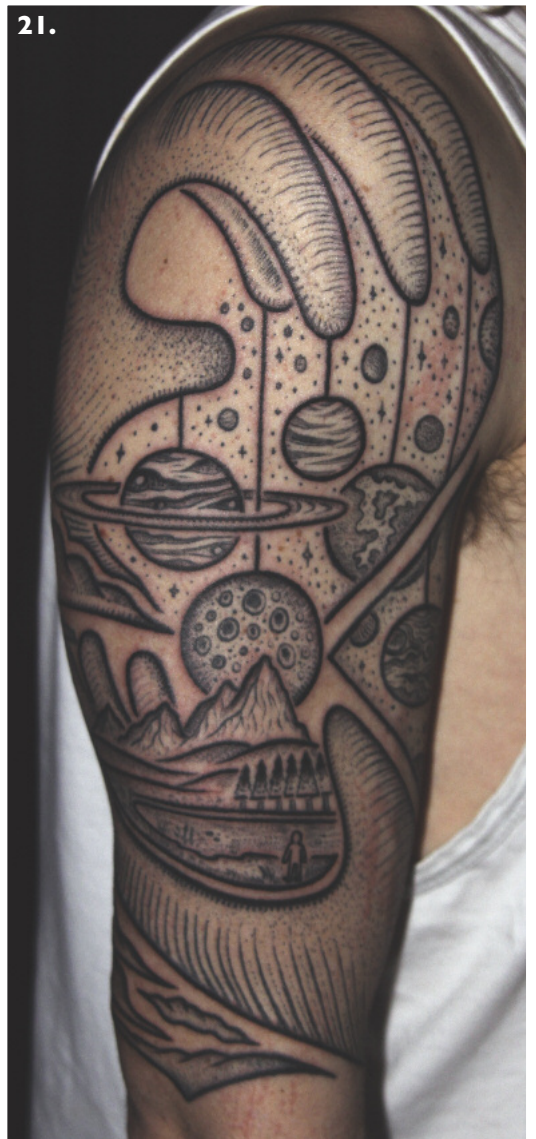
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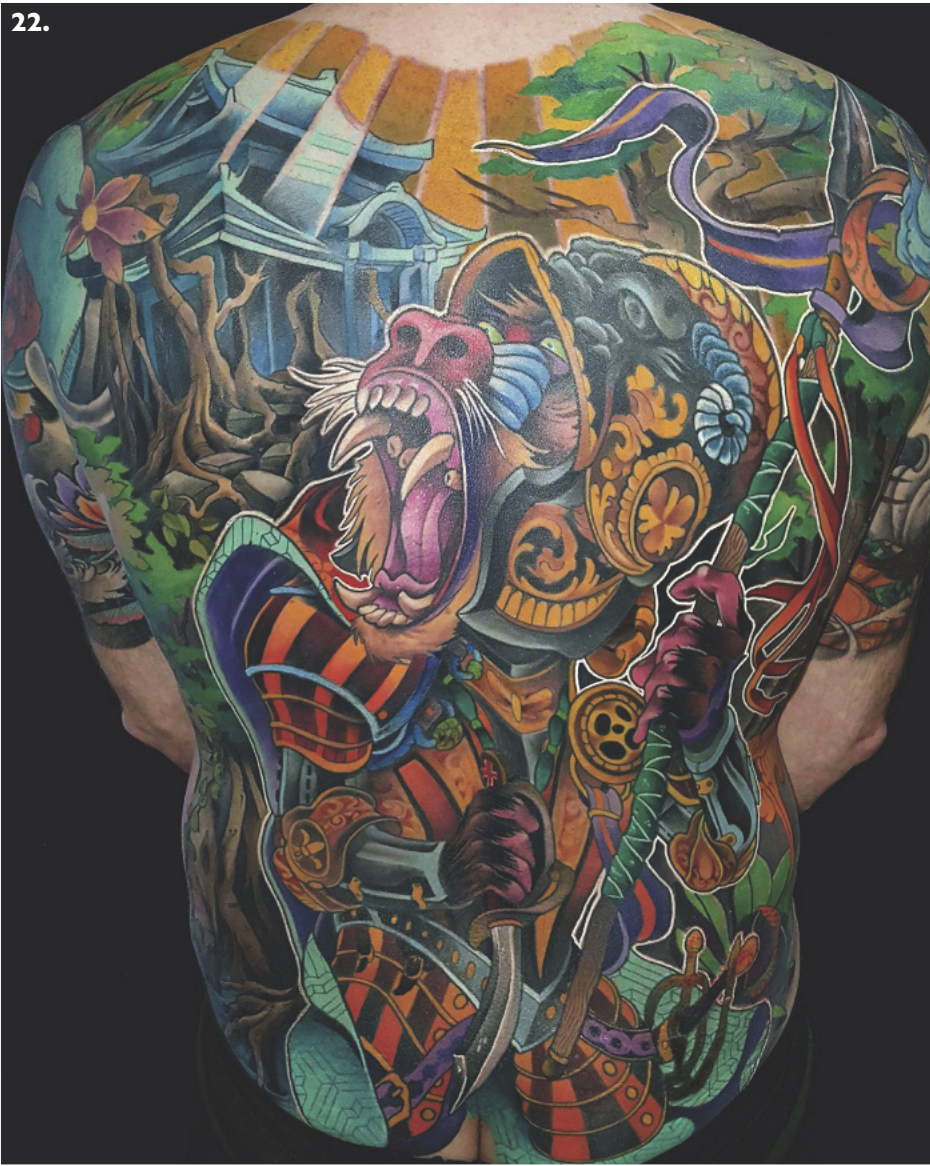
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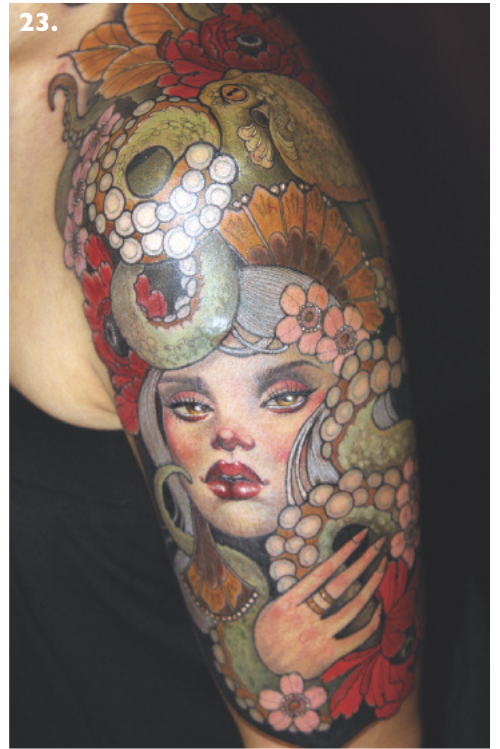
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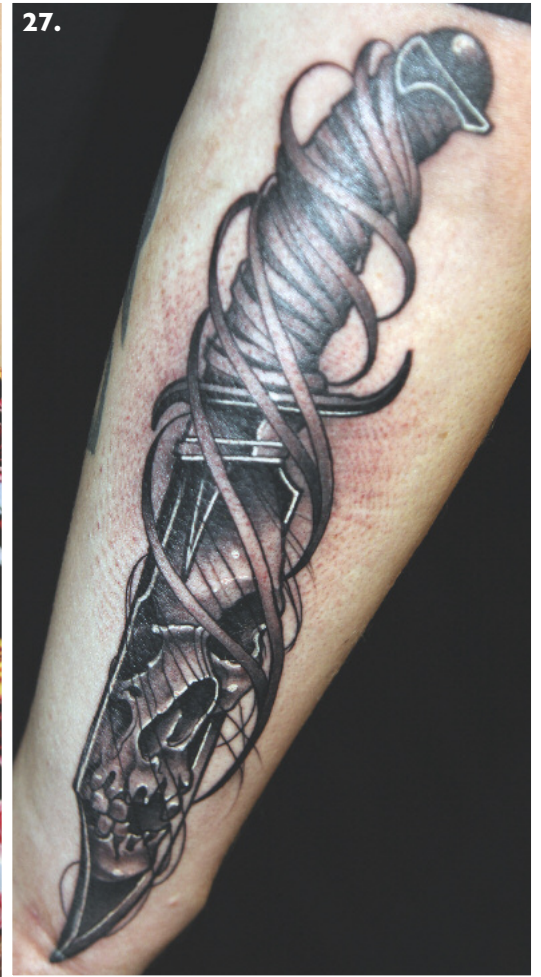
- 17. phil kyle, magnum opus
- 18. jim sanders totem
- 19. josh peacock, dead slow
- 20. igor puente,
10 thousand foxes (usa)
- 21. mike stout, skinned alive
- 22. tattoo nicky (holland)
- 23. andres botero,
addinktion tattoo
- 24. pablo de, tattoo lifestyle (italy)
- 25. josh fouldes, old time tattoo

24.



25.





26.

27.

28.

29.

30.

26. phatt german, irie ites
 27. jason james smith, moth and flame
 28. ollie, quality ink
 29. monika boo, true tattoo (lithuania)
 30. little andy, the church

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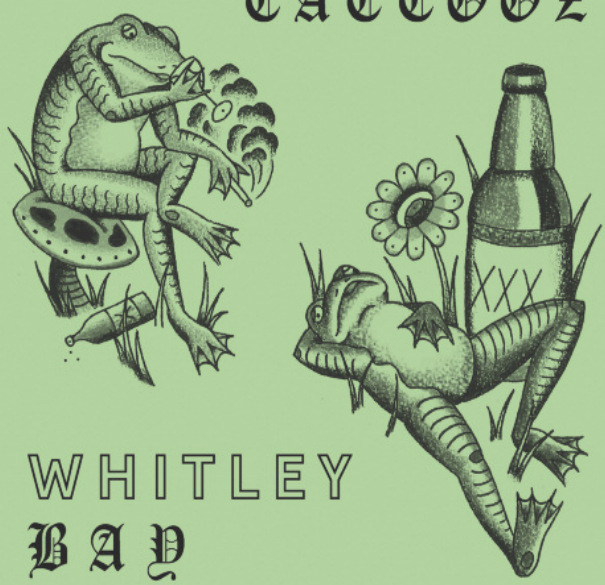
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TEMPLE COFFEE AND DONUTS

Coffee and donuts. It's a classic combination. But here at Temple they've elevated it to a new level – more delicious, and a whole lot more badass. This über hip café, with its urban industrial décor, oozes cool like the donuts on its counter ooze delicious fillings... oh, and there's a licensed tattoo room on the premises too. Temple Coffee & Donuts, just outside Leeds city centre, is run by Nadine Oxley of clothing and homewares brand Red Temple Prayer (which is based upstairs) and Leeds tattooist Simon Erl.

Although Temple has made its home in an industrial unit in a fairly tucked-away location, the fact that it's not in the city centre is actually a real plus, because it makes parking easy and the whole experience of coming here totally stress-free – which fits the vibe of the place perfectly. Social media is of course playing a crucial part in spreading the word. Everything on the menu is beautifully crafted and utterly delicious – not to mention extremely photogenic – and there are plenty of vegan options too (but be warned, they sell out fast).





Nadine and Simon are Temple's co-owners. Nadine runs the successful online emporium Red Temple Prayer from upstairs in the same building, and there's a very tempting selection of homewares and clothing from her range on sale in the café. Simon is a full-time tattooist and has no plans to change that any time soon. For him, Temple is something interesting and exciting to do alongside his tattooing, and a new space in which to work. When I ask each of

them to describe their roles in the coffee and donut business, Nadine laughs and tells me for her it's "endless"; Simon tells me, with a smile, that his role is simply to do what Nadine says. That of course includes all of Temple's graphics.

The menu is inspired by many things – including Nadine and Simon's taste in music. "We're both into heavy metal," Simon tells me,

"and Nadine has done some great collaborations with metal bands for Red Temple Prayer, so it just felt natural for that to cross over into the naming of some of our drinks and donuts." In fact the menu is full of amusing and clever references to band names and lyrics. Simon and Nadine tell me that if they hadn't both been part of that music scene, they probably wouldn't have met and Temple would never have happened.



Nothing goes on the menu here unless it's something that Nadine and Simon are excited about trying. Initially they wanted Temple to be all-vegan, but that proved impossible at the start because products simply couldn't be sourced in the quantities they needed. "However, we've now reached the stage where 90% of our donuts are vegan," Nadine tells me, "It's important to both of us, because we're vegan ourselves. Luckily we found some really skilled, enthusiastic bakers who were keen to work with us. We don't do any baking on-site, and it was tricky to find good quality and nice-tasting donuts that we would be happy to serve to our customers."



At this point in our conversation, there was one burning question that needed to be answered. Of all the items on their fabulous menu, which are Simon's and Nadine's own personal favourites? If they themselves were Temple customers, what would they order? Simon tells me he loves a Boston cream donut, and Nadine's combination of choice is always a signature Sabbath latte with a delicious vanilla galaxy-glazed donut.

We talk at some length about the rise in popularity of the vegan lifestyle and Nadine makes an interesting point. "It's great to see the growth in demand for vegan options, and there are obviously more and more vegan products on the market now. However, I'm not

sure that all new vegans fully understand just how much hard work goes into offering a high quality vegan menu – and not just a few crappy, dry vegan choices!” Rumour has it there’ll be vegan ice cream available at Temple when the weather gets warmer...

Nadine and Simon took a gamble on the concept of Temple. When I ask them if they encountered any particular problems in setting up the business they laugh. “Yes, lots, but we overcame them all by selling off our personal possessions!” they tell me. Yet Nadine happily acknowledges that it’s probably far easier to get people to try a new coffee than it is to get them to try a new tattooist in town. With the success of Temple now far exceeding the pair’s hopes and expectations, I wonder if there any plans to branch out into additional premises and become a coffee shop chain? “Haha. We’ll see...” is all they will say. But, in truth, the special thing about Temple is its quirky, individual independence – and that’s something that can’t be replicated.



So what makes Temple Coffee & Donuts so special? Nadine and Simon have certainly achieved their dream of creating “a cool space to hang out and have great coffee and fun donuts, whether you’re vegan or not.”

Everyone feels welcome here. The place has a lovely atmosphere. It’s a multi-purpose spot, with its retail wall and facilities for hosting events and occasional tattooing as well. The tattoo room is available for flash days, and Sam Layzell tattoos there with Simon, along with various guests.

In our fast-paced world, it’s good – and perhaps important – to have a place like Temple to sit down, chill, and take some time out.





And what did I eat while I was there? Well, making my choice was extremely difficult but I eventually opted for an intriguing cinnamon and turmeric donut accompanied by the famous Sabbath latte. This is a coffee that not only packs a heavy metal punch, but also contains activated charcoal for pure black gothic styling and health benefits too. Because I was feeling both thirsty and curious, I also treated myself to a Pink Floyd a pink coloured hot chocolate. Lee the barista described this as liquid marshmallow and boy was he right. It was warm and sweet, and perfect for a cold day. The donuts were beautifully fresh, covered in a sticky glaze and gold glitter, and

so much larger and tastier than their sad supermarket counterparts! I left Temple with a big box of them in various flavours to ease my long journey home...

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This month's cover model is Harmony Nigh, whose modelling career took off when she became Miss Musink 2012. She plays roller derby with the LA Renegades and she longs to drink wine beneath the Eiffel Tower...

Tell us about yourself...

I'm a huge homebody who loves camping, spending time with my family (and dogs) and riding on the back of my boyfriend's Harley. I play roller derby with the LA Renegades, and I'm just getting back into that after some time off for injuries. I do research on scripts and storyboards for TV and movies. My life is busy!

How would you describe your personal style?

I don't think there's really a way to describe it. It's influenced by so many things... art, music and most importantly, how much time I have to get ready!

Are there any models who inspire you?

I am inspired by beautiful women in general!

How did you get involved with the Sullen Angels brand?

I became a Sullen Angel by winning a tattooed model search at Musink 2012. Musink is my favourite convention. I love the combination of tattoo art and music. It was an amazing experience.

What's your advice for new or upcoming models?

Make sure you have your priorities straight and don't let anyone change that. Don't be afraid to be yourself.

What was your first tattoo?

My first tattoo was inspired by a quote I loved in high school that helped me get through some hard times. The clouds are swirling around stars. It still reminds me that I can reach for the sky, and I mustn't be afraid to grab onto the stars.

What was your most painful tattoo?

No tattoo feels good, but the most painful tattoo I have was on my ribs up near my underarm.

What inspired your sleeve?

It was initially inspired by my mom and it blossomed from there.

Who is your favourite tattoo artist?

I've been very fortunate in that respect. I've had work done by some amazing artists who have been able to see my vision and bring my ideas to life. My current go-to artist is "Little" Dave Parker. He gets me, and has always been able to take even my simplest concept and make it into more than I could ever imagine.

Any plans for more ink?

I have a lot of prime real estate on me, but I haven't been able to decide on anything specific for it yet. I'm not in any real rush. All in good time.

What's on your bucket list?

I have so many things on my bucket list! I want to travel - anywhere! - sky dive, drink wine and nibble on some fantastic cheese under the Eiffel Tower, roam the beautiful cemeteries in New Orleans, and generally experience all that this beautiful world has to offer. I would also love to own or work in an animal sanctuary.

What are you passionate about?

I'm very passionate about personal growth. I believe that you should never settle. There's always room to better yourself.

How do we get in touch?

The best way to get in touch with me is my Instagram @harmonynigh



Model: Harmony Nigh
Make-up: Victor Baltazar-Gonzalez
Jenna Kraczek Photography

Cover
Model Profile
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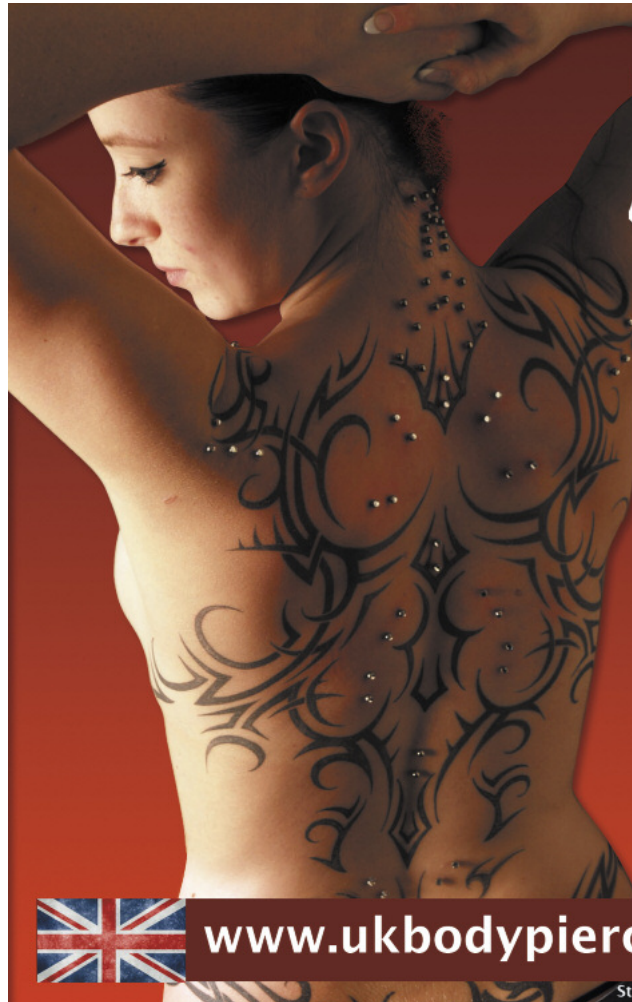
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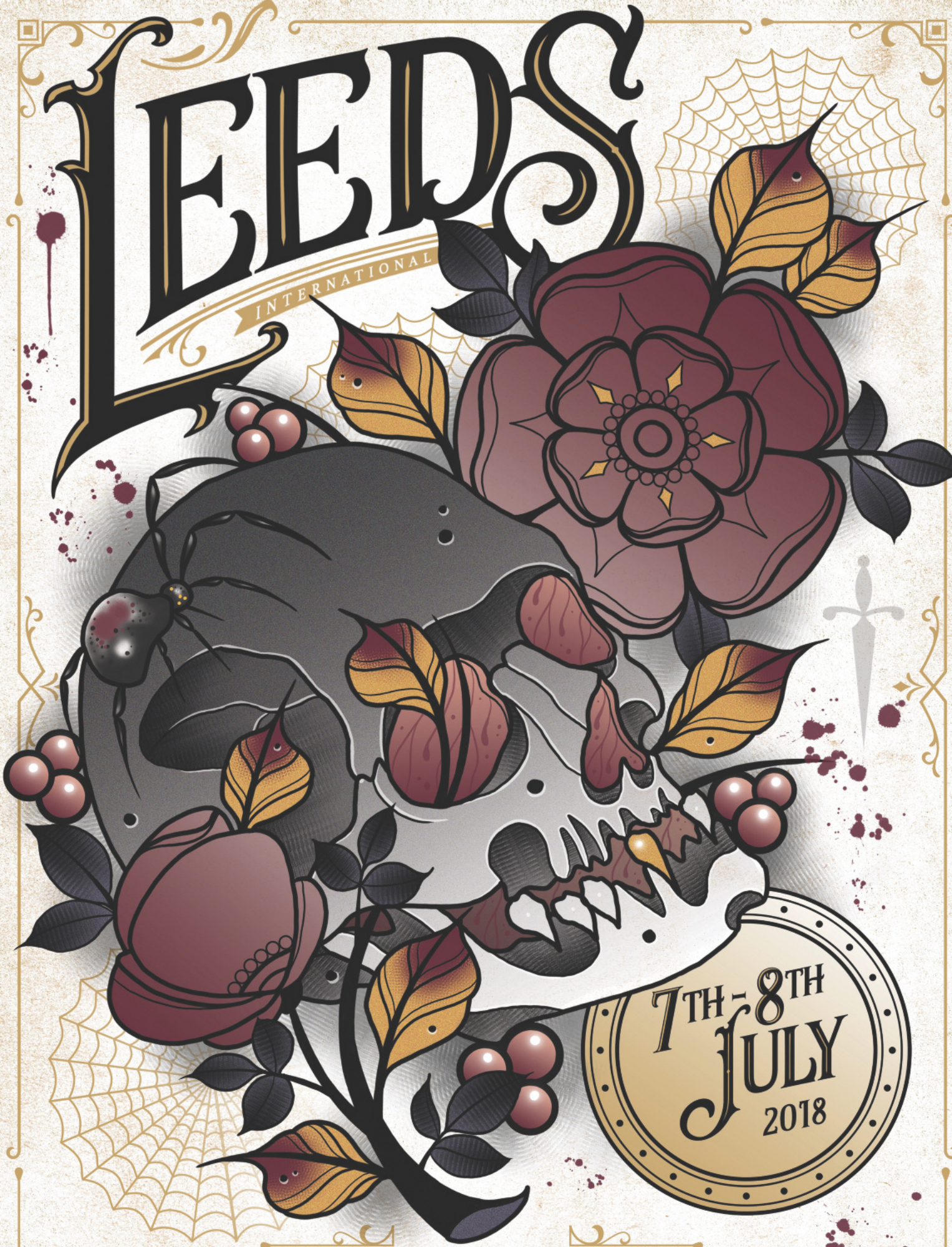
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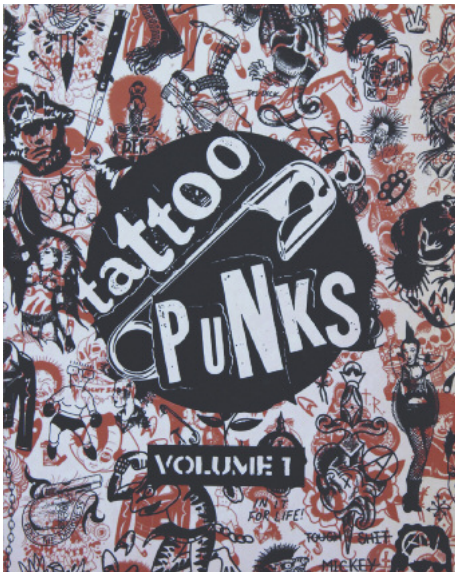
Tattoo Punks is an exciting new volume that everyone who was a punk (or IS a punk, or wishes they'd been a punk) needs to own. Curated by Josh Howard, partly as a result of his phenomenally successful Instagram page, it's a 60-page collection of original art by 41 punk tattooers from around the world.

I love the 'zine' feel to the book. What was the thinking behind the design and layout?

I wanted something accessible to everyone, from tattooers to young punk kids who love the art. I grew up with punk, so the zine style just felt right. It was also the most cost-effective, to make the book affordable. Tattooist Ella Trick (who features in the book and is a close friend of mine) suggested it. I was over-thinking the project and this idea just hit home. It was perfect for what I wanted.

The layout itself is intended to focus on the art and the artist. Alex Hagan did it for me, and he did an amazing job. We've worked together on many projects and he has always somehow managed to pull off exactly what I envision. I wanted the focus of the book to be art, first and foremost, with an easy-to-use index of artists and their contact information. Tattoo Punks is about the community of punk tattooers around the world – a way to connect and share work with one another.





What relevance does punk have in modern society?

I can't speak for an entire movement or culture. I can only speak about its relevance for me and those whose lives have crossed mine. Punk gave me a mindset. It's about knowing that I can create and survive on my own terms. It's a DIY mentality. I see this in the businesses run by those who came up in punk. I see it in all the punk tattooers who stay true to themselves. I see it in the young punk kids making zines, booking shows and releasing records all on their own terms. This is the modern world and we are all still doing it our own way! I wanted to create a book with art from punk tattooers from around the world, so I did it. No publisher, no bankroll. Just my own free will, and the drive to make it happen.



What aspirations did you have for the book?

I wanted the book to inspire others and bring to light these artists within punk. My hope was that people would see the art on its pages and know that we exist as a community and that, as a community, we can create and work together. I feel these artists have been overlooked. Within punk there is more happening than just bands: the photographers, artists, writers and other creators just don't get the credit they deserve. In making the book, I wanted to give back to both communities – tattooing and punk – and not just take from them.

Has the book lived up to your expectations?

The book has already exceeded my expectations. It's only a few months since its release and the response so far has been overwhelming. Just seeing people connect and create relationships as a result of the book has made it all worthwhile. That's what this project was all about. Watching it happen has been a humbling and rewarding experience.

What was the most difficult aspect of putting the book together?

The whole project was quite challenging – although, walking into it, I'd just finished a very unconventional record release so I was ready to take on anything. Keeping everything organised was really tough. Getting 41 people to send me art and information, then keeping those files nice and neat to hand off to Alex, was a challenge for sure. I learned some things the hard way and I'll be ready for the next round. This is just Volume 1!





How did you decide which tattoo pictures to include and which to reject?

Inclusion in Volume 1 was by invitation only, so this wasn't really an issue. The art needed to be relevant to the project. I wasn't sure how the process of compiling the book would go, and this gave me a little bit more control over everything. I didn't reject any submissions.

How did you decide who to include in the book?

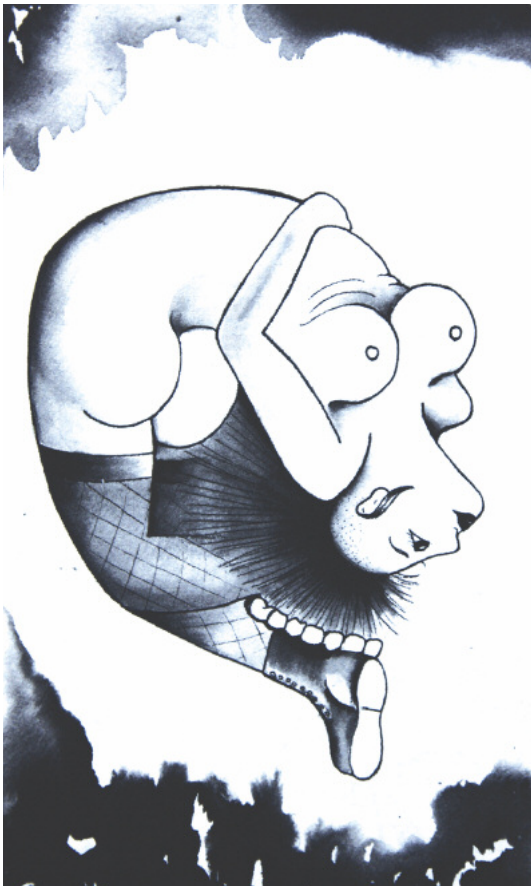
It was a pretty cut and dried. Do you tattoo? Are you a part of punk subculture? Yes? Cool, let's do this!

In your opinion, what constitutes a punk tattoo?

The visual ideals of the punk subculture are usually pretty clear: band art, lyric reference, what-have-you. I believe 'punk tattoos' are defined by the artist and the wearer.

Do you have a favourite punk symbology?

The entire topic of symbols and their cultural history is fascinating. Symbols can hold so much power in their imagery and convey so much meaning without the use of words. Symbology within punk seems to be something we hold very close and use to identify one another, or portray an emotion or a belief. When you see a symbol and immediately know what it is, that is powerful. Crass, Conflict and Black Flag have symbols that are, in my opinion, timeless. Those symbols have stuck with me since the first time I laid eyes on them.





I guess this project all began with your Instagram?

The popularity of the Instagram page still feels unreal to me. Tattoo Punks has become more than just a page. It's a community. And it brought many of these punk tattooers to light. That was exciting, and it's what made me want to put out a physical document to stamp this time within the history of these two communities – punk and tattooing. The digital age has its advantages, but things like records, zines, prints and books hold true forever. I was having a conversation with tattooist Prof Falcon about his recent book, and some of our friends also had books already released or coming out soon, and that's when it hit me that I needed to do a physical book.

What inspired you to put the Instagram page together in the first place?

I was meeting more and more punk tattooers in my travels with work and with the band. I thought there should be a meeting place for all these like-minded people. The question at the time was: how do I introduce everyone I had met from around the world to each other, and how do I find more of these like-minded people? Instagram seemed to be a common ground. The community of punk tattooers already existed; I just gave it a home with the Instagram page.



Does this strong online community have any similarities with the real-life punk communities of the past?

There are similarities with both past and present punk communities. Communities create inspiration and motivation. When you have a movement happening within two subcultures as strong as tattooing and punk, there is no difference between online and real life. Online is just a tool we now have to reach further into the world.

Can you see yourself curating similar collections in other genres or subcultures?

My life is consumed by the cultures of punk and tattooing. These places are my home and have taken me in. Could I do other genres? Sure, but it wouldn't be true of me to do that. I have been asked many times, but no, I won't be going into other genres or subcultures.

How do you see the future of punk?

We are a subculture that has had its time deep underground and its time in the spotlight – just like tattooing. Punk will always have relevance in our society as long as it keeps pushing the outsiders away.

How can people get hold of the book?

You can find the book at TattooPunks.com



CONTRIBUTORS TO TATTOO PUNKS VOLUME I

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Alex Holiday | Todd Cheat |
| Skuggan | Patt Whealan |
| James White | Miguel Pendenziro |
| Dave Conley | Prof. Falcon |
| Ella Trick | Phil Geck |
| Frenanda Maura | Dai Cann |
| Glenn Carvajal | Lal Hardy |
| Michael T. Hastings | Harrison Wellwood |
| Constantine Glinka | Steve Griffen |
| Ellen Goodrich | Mike Reed |
| Tom Chippendale | Josh Hayward |
| Beth Gould | Dani Ardila Escobar |
| James Holmes | Greg DeHoot |
| Joe Chatt | Joey Romona |
| Craig and Destroy | Maria Rocca |
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| Mike Klein | Adriana Maria de |
| Moira Ramone | Guadalupe |
| Mia Sublime | Cover and layout by |
| Nick Hall | Alex Hagan |

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Email pictures to gallery@totaltattoo.co.uk images need to be 300 resolution



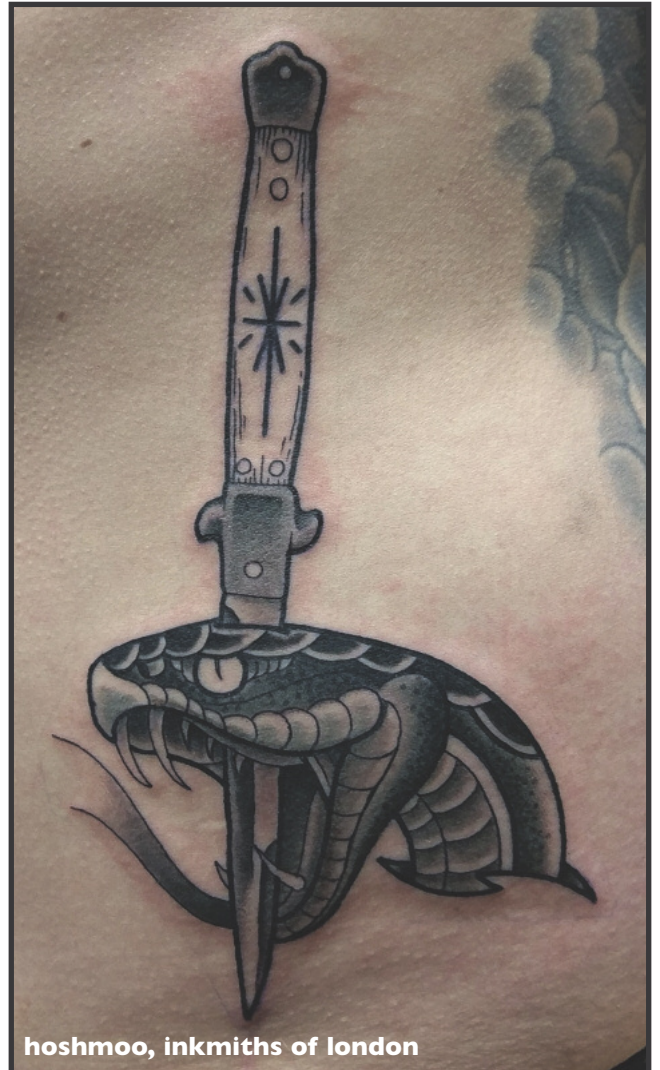
london slade,
weirdsville tattoo emporium
(canada)



mauro tampieri, raion tattoo (italy)



mike boyd, the circle



hoshmoo, inkmiths of london



kelly smith, cry baby tattoo



filipa silva, filipa silva's tattoo gallery (portugal)

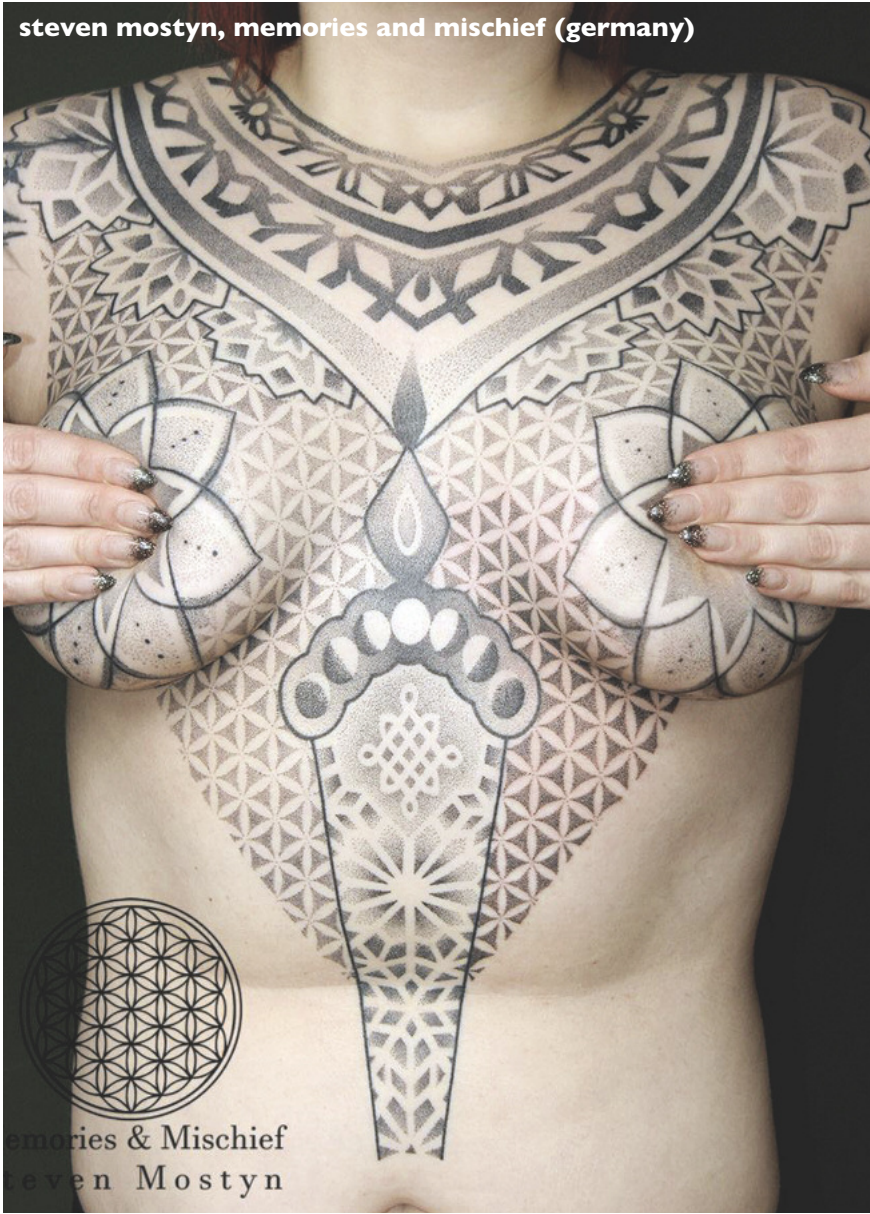


paul crowther, physical graffiti

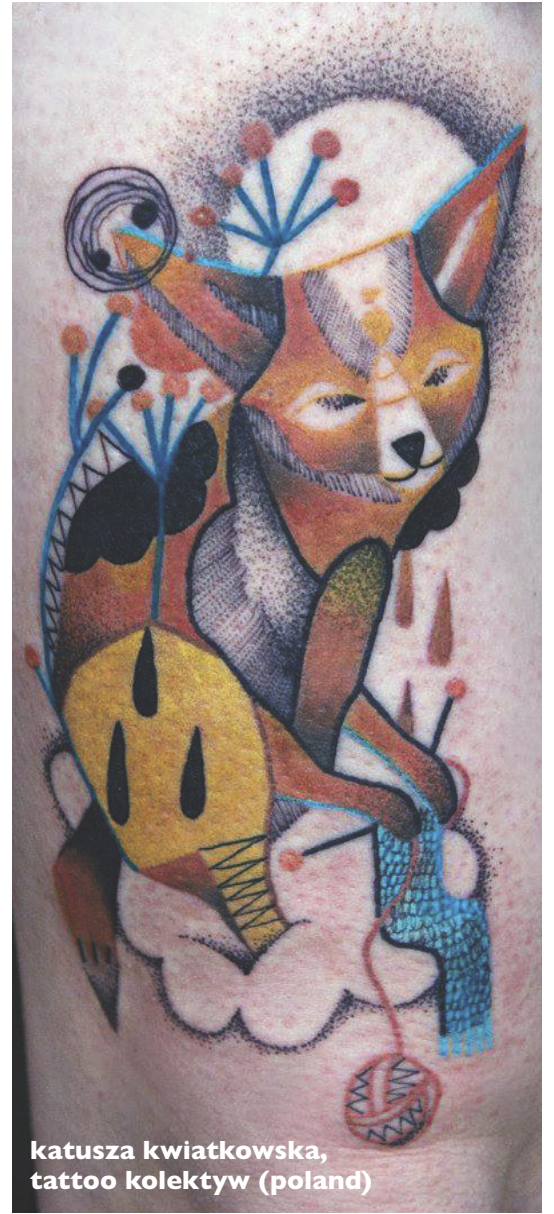


daryl watson, painted lady tattoo parlour

steven mostyn, memories and mischief (germany)



memories & Mischief
Steven Mostyn



katusza kwiatkowska,
tattoo kolektyw (poland)



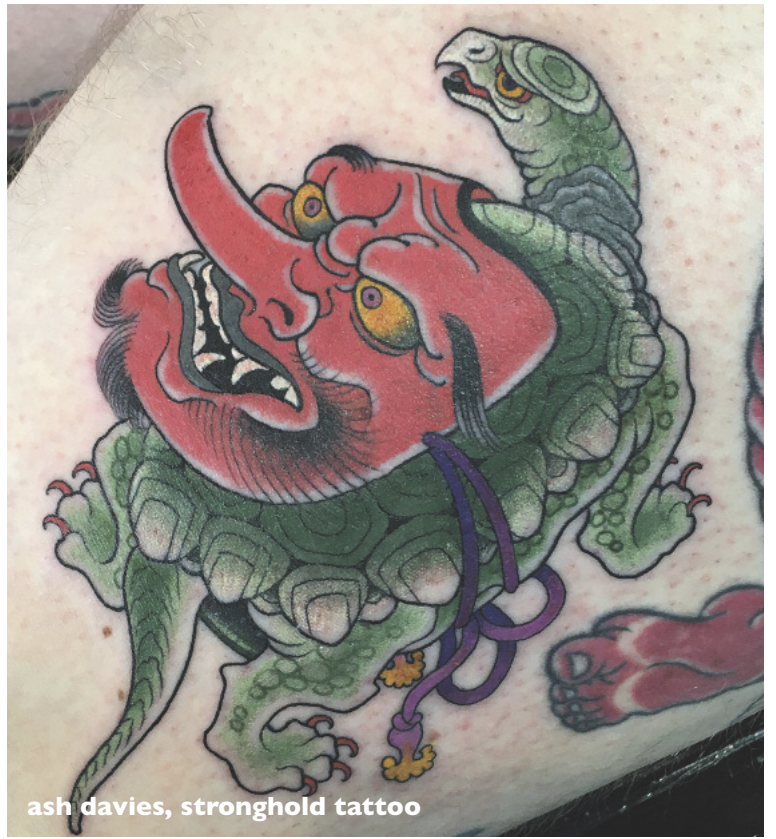
clarke dudley, rendition tattoo



tanya buxton, no regrets



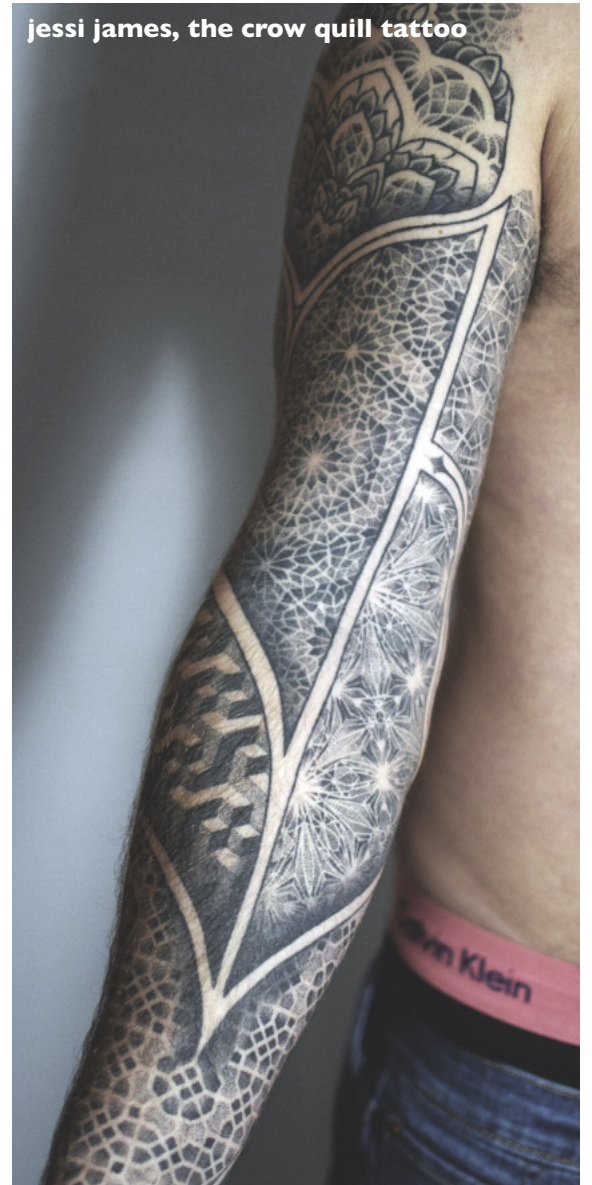
elliott wells, semper tattoo



ash davis, stronghold tattoo



mark murray, studio XIII



jessi james, the crow quill tattoo



anrijs straume, bold as brass



kayley henderson,
masamune tattoo



paul lavey, art la vey tattoo



inky joe, five keys tattoo



ballsy, factotum



kim walsh, the ink station



alan aldred, cosmic tattoo



RECOGNISE
THIS?

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Tattooist Jason Adelinia of Carousel Tattoo sent us this very eloquent post describing just how it feels to have your tattoo design copied – and what it can mean to your client too. We think he's making a very important point, so we've printed what he wrote in its entirety.

Words by Jason Adelinia
Picture courtesy of Jason Adelinia

Hey all.

I've recently been sent quite a few messages and tags of my work being ripped off again. This happens all the time, and mostly I will let it just fly over my head. It's a common problem, and it's not just me that it happens to. Many of us have experienced it, and many more will experience it in the future. I'm going to try to explain just why this has put a bee in my bonnet – and hopefully this will reach people and help educate a few of them along the way, because tattooing is a craft that I care for.

This CUSTOM design that I made for my client had so much meaning for her. Every single element had been thought about. The arrow wasn't just an arrow; it was a piece of jewellery that was significant to her. The colours weren't just pretty; they were chosen specifically, based on her own watercolour swatch. Each flower was meaningful. I even put thought into the number of leaves. Every single bit of the tattoo was personally relevant to her.

Now let me try to explain why I am so upset that this design has been stolen from me and from my client – and tattooed, PERMANENTLY, on somebody else. It's not that I'm mad that someone took something I'd spent hours working on. I'm not thinking of myself in this situation. I just feel one hundred percent terrible for my poor client, who had spent years thinking about each specific element of the tattoo. She then took the time and trouble to find the artist best suited to executing her ideas, booked in and waited a good six months for an appointment, and paid a lot of money for a design that was meant to be unique and special to her. To have that taken away – by someone who just showed a picture to their tattooist and asked them to copy it, with little or no thought about why you shouldn't do this – is heartbreaking. A unique piece is no longer unique.

I put my heart and soul into every design. Each one can take hours (or sometimes days) to



create, which to me is worth it as I want every single one of my clients to go away with the best possible piece. After all, this is for life. Therefore when someone lifts a photo from my page and takes it to another tattooist to copy, with so little effort, it's extremely upsetting.

This kind of thing is now happening every day, to thousands of tattooists. I'm hoping that by speaking out I will at least educate a few people on why you should research your artist properly and choose them with care. A good tattooist won't replicate another's tattoo. They would explain why, and perhaps make a drawing based on that design (or something very similar) so that you can still have a tattoo that you LOVE,

but without upsetting others in the process.

This craft is based on respect and there are so many amazing people involved in it. It's just such a shame there are still these other people who simply don't care.

Who wants to walk down the street and bump into someone wearing exactly the same outfit? It's embarrassing, right? Well a tattoo doesn't just last for a day, like an outfit. It lasts for a lifetime!

Let's spread this message and educate as many people as we can.

**Thanks.
Jason**



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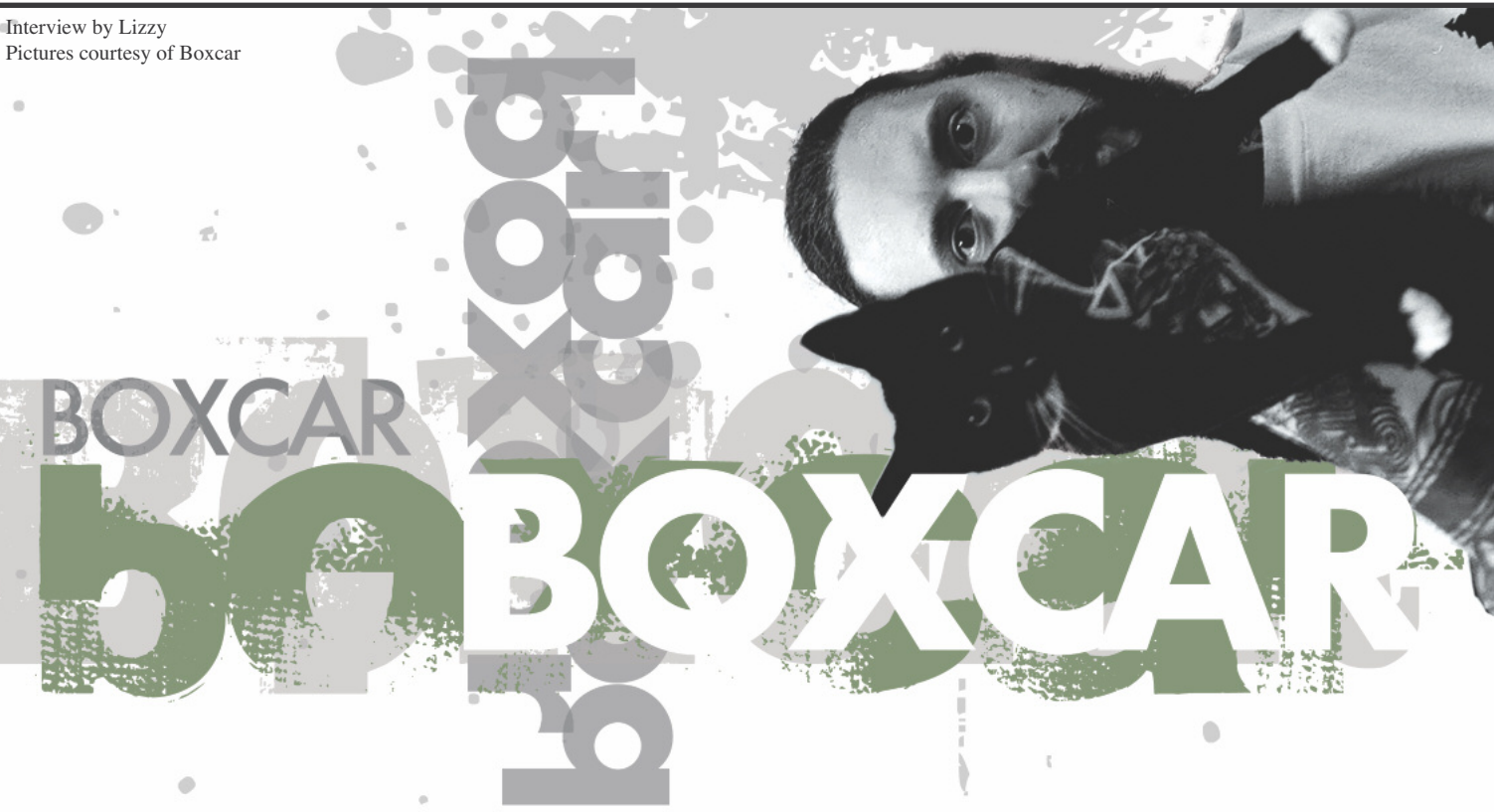
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Based at Rose Tattoo Parlour in Brooklyn, New York City, Boxcar is known for his quirky and surreal takes on traditional tattoo designs. He's also a photographer and a collage artist. We asked him where he gets his ideas from, how he creates his designs, and just what makes a tattoo 'traditional'.

You've been tattooing for eleven years now. Did you do an apprenticeship?

I did. I had to pay for it, which is normal here. The money covers things like your supplies and your mentor's time. Any asshole can walk into a shop and say 'I wanna tattoo', so it's a way of showing you're committed. I mean, the amount of stuff I learnt – the money was totally worth it. I apprenticed for about two years, and I was working in a factory at the same time to pay for it. In the mornings I had to go across town to do that shitty job, then I'd be back at the shop... It was hard, doing all those hours. Eventually I had to quit to try to save up some money. I left and moved to Tennessee to drive trucks professionally, which I did for almost a year. But the first time I had to bring a load into New York, I visited the shop I'd been learning in and I was like, 'Please take me back. I can't do this any longer!' [Laughs] So we worked out a payment plan, with a percentage of my income going to the shop. At the time I was a crusty punk kid who was fucking around, so any amount of money was a lot to me!



What are your earliest tattoo memories?

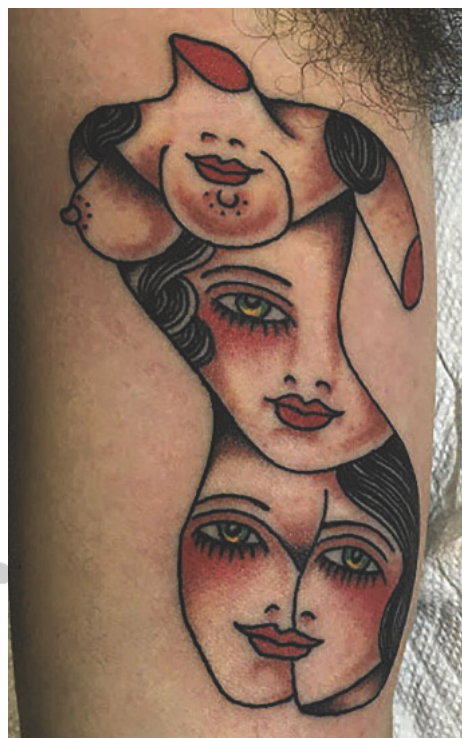
My Mom dated some biker dudes. Those guys were scumbags, but their tattoos were cool! I also remember watching one of them tattooing. Tattoos were certainly a constant 'thing' in my life when I was very young, but I wasn't that interested at the time. Now, though, I can look back on those memories and romanticise about it all. Years later, when I got into different music scenes, I saw more and more people with tattoos and I was like, 'Damn, they look cool and tough and they probably get girls!' And of course I wanted to look cool and tough too.

There was a magic to it back then...

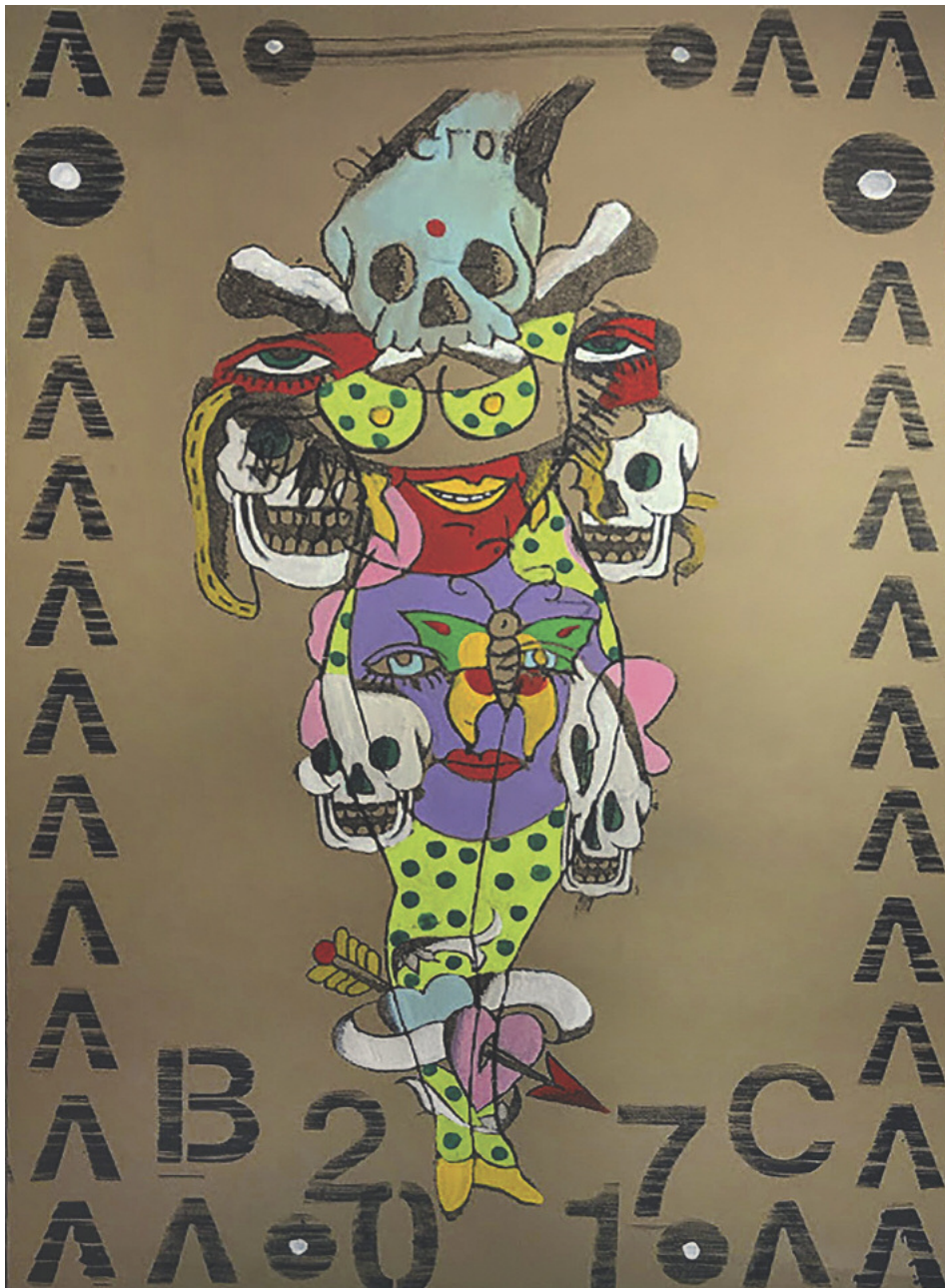
Yeah, totally. But it's watered down now. Or maybe it's just saturated? I didn't understand that magic though – I just saw designs that had power to them, and I knew I wanted that power. And I got covered in some stupid ass tattoos! Still, we all learn as we go along...

Do you think flash goes in and out of fashion?

It can do. Here, for a city that seems so liberating and wild, people can be quite tame. They have specific styles they go to, and they tend not to venture out. The preferred style for many, especially the fashion-conscious, is 'New York Traditional' – and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. It's a style that I'll always love. I tend to do a combination of walk-ins and my 'own' designs, but when I travel I do more of my own work. The kinds of tattoos I do, there may be a time frame on them, but there's a timeframe on life in general! How do you know if somebody's gonna last another year or another thirty years? It's perfectly OK if your tattoos 'date' and age with you.



'In our generation, everyone wants everything quickly. They want that crazy thick tough tattoo now. They're not letting it age like it should. Time creates the vintage look!'



To do what you do requires imagination as well as an eye for design and construction. Have you always been creative?

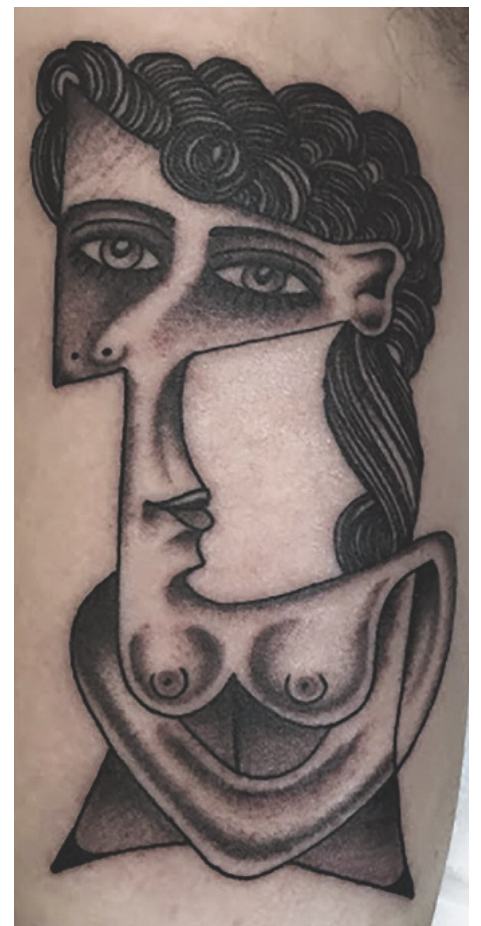
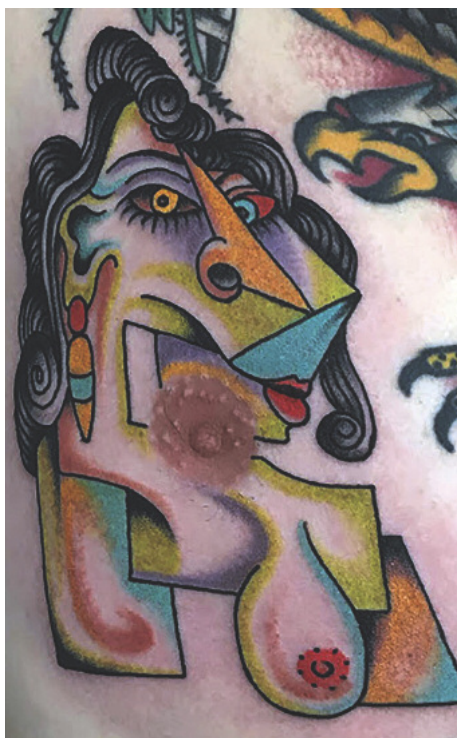
When I was a kid, I didn't read my comic books, I just re-drew them! I was into photography and graffiti too. I went to art classes, but I didn't want to draw what the tutors told me to draw – a bowl of fruit, stuff like that – because to me, that whole concept was boring. When I started tattooing, so many ideas opened up to me. I was looking at so many artists, and the ways they interpreted things. As I gained confidence, and built up a network of friends in tattooing, people started recommending things to me. I started looking further afield and I started to read more. I began trying to tell stories within my tattoos. I guess that's where the creativity comes in.

Is it your story, or the client's?

It's normally my story. But obviously if the client has a specific concept in mind then I can do whatever they want. At the end of the day, they're paying for it and they're the ones who will be wearing it. Usually, though, somebody wanting a tattoo will look through my book of drawings. I think it makes it easier having something to dig through like that, even if they have a vague thought of what they might like. But I love taking on new ideas too.

Do you find that you'll get the odd difficult client? Or one who can't visualise it?

Yeah. I think it's the same for all tattooists. And my drawings can be very minimal or have random sketch lines, so I can understand why a client might struggle to read them. They need to have faith in me. *[Laughs]*





I guess it's all about keeping an open mind.

Yeah, I think everyone has to keep an open mind in tattooing, whether they're the tattooer or the client. Mutual respect is essential. It's easy to get offended if people don't like your designs, but we need to accept that it's OK if that happens. It can be difficult to hear, and we can all feel a bit disappointed, but it's the business we're in. We're hired to perform a duty. If you fix your thoughts too much on a particular design, you're just gonna be bummed if the client doesn't like it. You have to be flexible. I don't ever want people to feel forced into having something they don't want, and I always try to make that clear.

And it can take a lot for a client to say something...

Definitely, and I totally respect that. Some tattooers think they're God's gift, when all we're really doing is doodling on people! Once we leave the shop, we're regular people too! We're not doctors saving lives. What gives us the right to think we're above others?

What do you particularly like about traditional?

I was originally attracted to it because it's so simplistic and easy to understand. When you look at a traditional tattoo, you can see the image for what it is. And it's a style you can keep nurturing and changing. You can't do that with other styles. Take Japanese, for example. There are strict rules about how things should be constructed. I remember doing a koi on somebody and patting myself on the back, thinking, 'I've done a really good job!' Then I showed it to a friend who proceeded to tell me everything that was wrong with it – it had too many scales, it wouldn't be going in that direction because there was a maple leaf, that sort of thing! For me, that's too rigid. I think the tattooers who do it, and do it correctly, are amazing because they have the patience and diligence to keep working at it.





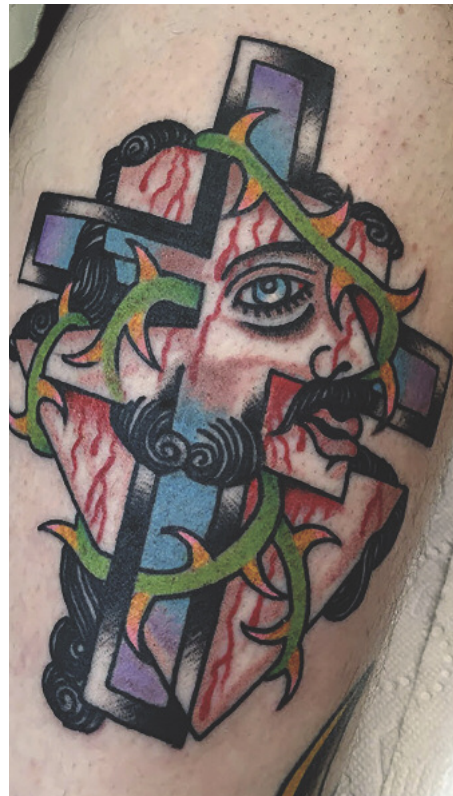
What makes a tattoo 'traditional'?

It's not in the design; it's in the way the design is created. You have your line work, your colour, your black and your skin tone (the 'air' in between). There's a structure to that. Just because a tattoo isn't a panther head or a swallow, it doesn't mean it's not traditional. People get too caught up thinking about the design itself. They consider that to be what makes a tattoo 'traditional', but it's not. It's the execution. In my work, the line structure is there, and the block shading and the colour, and that's why I would say it's traditional.

Line weights are crucial of course.

Yeah, I have a hard time with line weights. I tend to use a thinner line now, but I did spend many years using a very thick outline. I didn't like how they were turning out. You need a balance. With traditional, if you're using a thick outline you can't use as much black, because the outline itself creates more black. And if it's a palm-sized tattoo that you did a couple of years ago and you used a massive outline, you really don't wanna see it now because it'll look like crap. It's the job of the tattooer to know these things. People pay a lot of money to get tattooed, and they want their tattoos to look good for a long time. One of the guys here has a beautiful Scott Harrison tattoo on his leg and the line weight is perfect. It

looks like it was only done a year ago, and not as long ago as it was. Scott would have known to use a thinner line for it to age well. Apparently he even told the guy, 'It looks thin now, but trust me, it will spread out.' In our generation, everyone wants everything quickly. They want that crazy thick tough tattoo now. They're not letting it age like it should. Time creates the vintage look!



Are you very critical of your own work?

Every tattoo I do, I'll always look at it and think, 'Maybe I could've done it this way, or that way', even though I like the finished result! It doesn't mean that it's not good; it's just a learning curve. You have to be self-critical to gain understanding. I don't beat myself up over anything anymore – I mean, I used to for sure. I would have sleepless nights sometimes! Now, I'll figure things out through trial and error. I'll do something, and go, 'Cool. That looks great,' or 'That doesn't look so great,' and I'll move forward. It used to be that whenever someone gave me a compliment, I'd just feel bad and point out to them what was wrong! But maybe that's just human nature? I know for certain that the person giving the compliment doesn't wanna hear you say, 'Oh, it's just a mess...' [Laughs]



Do you think of tattooing as an art form, a craft or a business?

I don't think the art world believes that tattooing is an art form. It still has that weird stigma. But that's just my opinion. Yeah, it's definitely a business, because that's how my rent is paid – but I didn't get into it assuming I was gonna make lots of money. If I'd wanted to be a business person, I'd be in a different job. Tattooing's certainly a craft, in the sense that anybody can do it if they work hard enough. For some people, 90% of it is just tracing! I have friends who are awful artists but great tattooers. They put designs onto people but don't think beyond that. Just like cutting hair, or fixing plumbing, it's a skilled trade. There are people who kill it at walk-ins, but don't create anything else. It differs from person to person. For me personally, it's both a craft and an art form. But for a long time, I didn't wanna believe in the artistic aspects of tattooing. I was raised amongst a lot of heavy traditional tattooers. They were very much of their time. If I made something that was a little more artistic, they would totally rip it apart – and rip me apart too! It was like they were trying to keep me down, and you gotta push through that. Now I'm much more comfortable saying 'tattooer/artist.'





And what about the other art that you create?

I keep everything quite separate, with two separate social media accounts. The same person, just wearing a different hat. But the collage work that I do definitely influences my tattooing. I've been doing it a long time.

And your photographs?

Right now, there doesn't seem to be much interest in photos of people tattooing, or getting tattooed, but the theory is that in thirty years' time those pictures might find a market. Not many people are doing this kind of thing – just with their phones.

You've been tattooing for eleven years. Where do you see tattooing eleven years from now?

I don't know. I think it's at this weird stage where nobody knows what 'the new style' is gonna be – because everything keeps coming round again. It's just like fashion; you know, 70s, 80s, 90s retro. I think that could happen in tattooing. Somehow it'll end up at fine line again, and the barbed wire stuff and jail-house style, then it will go to tribal... But I think traditional will always ride that wave. But actually, I'm pretty sure it's just gonna kind of stay the same. Then again, maybe it will die out because it will become fashionable NOT to have tattoos. But I'll tell you what I HOPE will happen. The government will keep telling everybody what to do, with more and more laws and regulations. Then when everyone refuses to conform, they'll try to shut everything down and it will all go underground. And THAT would make tattooing cool and rebellious again! [Laughs]

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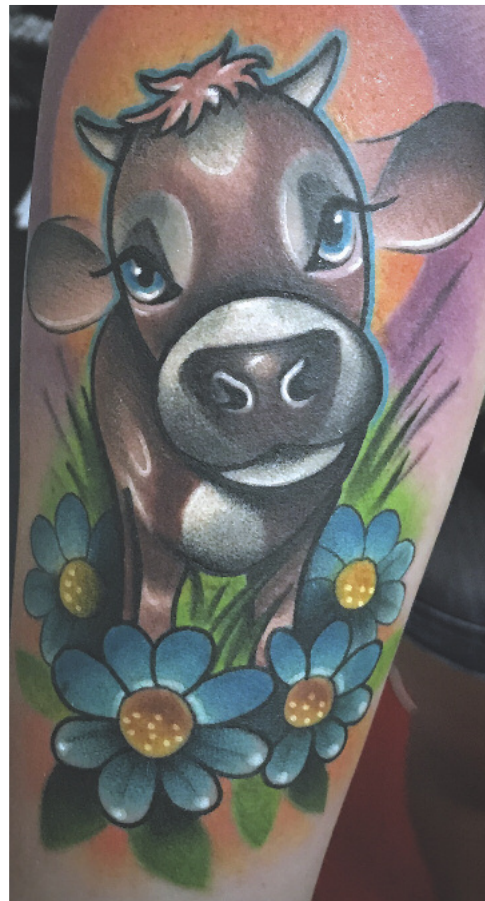
GOA TATTOO FESTIVAL

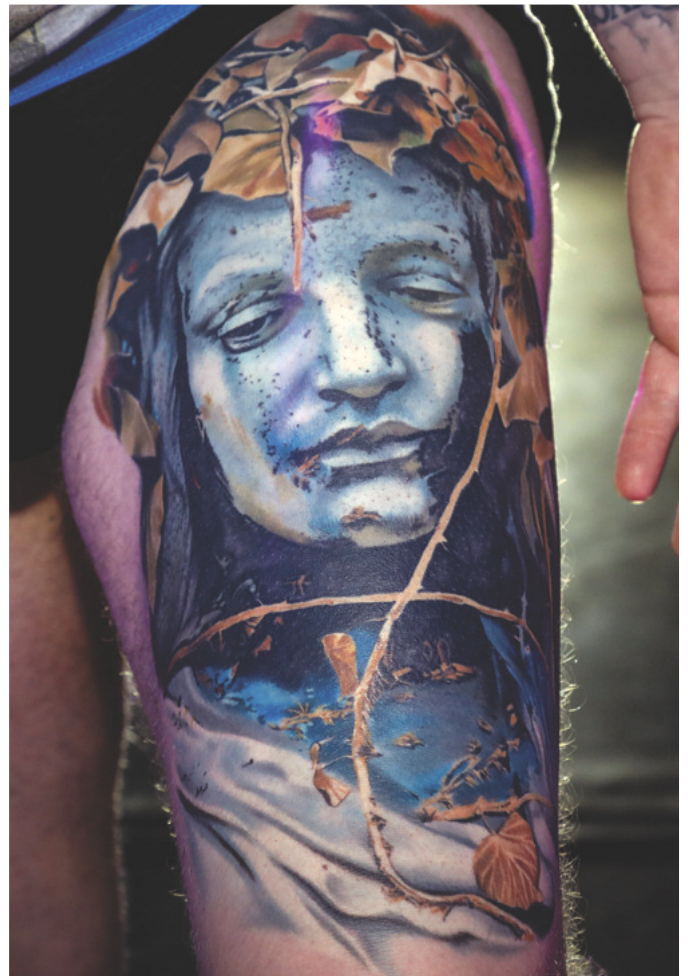
Just as winter is at its bleakest back home in the UK, somewhere in India Martin McIver is putting on one of the planet's most interesting tattoo conventions... and for those of us fortunate enough to be working at the Goa Tattoo Festival, it's a convention unlike any other – with its artist events, dinner parties, motorbike ride-out days, and lots of beach time!

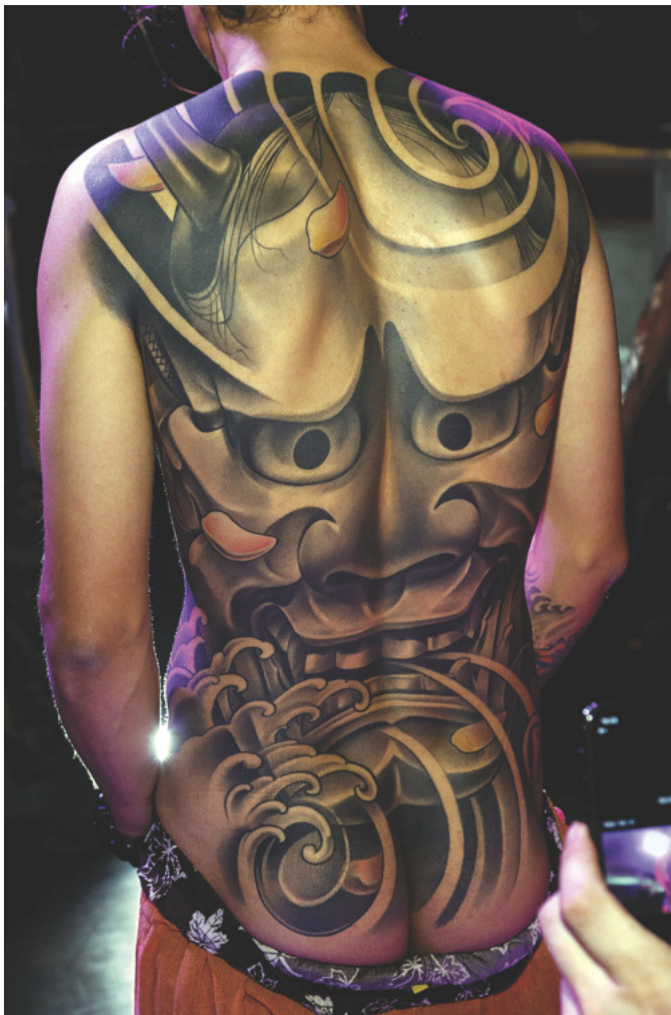
This year's venue was a new one for all of us. The convention had moved from its former home to Tito's Arena in Baga, just down the coast. Four different levels housed tattoo artists, musicians, tightrope walkers, contemporary art, local street artists, and some of the most incredible organic jewellery I've seen in a long time... Goa really brings out the bohemian in everyone.

The show began on the Friday night with an artist gathering at the Tamarind Hotel in Anjuna. Even the stragglers who'd flown in late had recovered from their jet lag by this time, and it seemed that the entire staff of the hotel had been drafted in to look after our enormous group, with food and drink orders coming from all directions, and all sixty five of us occupying the Tamarind's patio. The energy at this pre-party set the tone for the weekend ahead.

We'd set up on the Friday morning, and it was a beautiful scene, with artists from every corner of the globe raising their banners and getting their booths ready. Check out www.goatattooofestival.com for the full list. Our particular spot was on the ground floor (near a huge stage that was being made ready for musical performances) and in our street there were a few fellow artists from our part of the world – Jessi James, Adem Senturk, Soydan and Mira Paramonova – as well as two of the top Indian studios, Inkfidel Tattoo and Ink Baba, both representing Goan tattooing at its finest. By noon, the whole venue was abuzz, quite literally! The heat of the day was rising, customers were flocking in, photographers and journalists were setting up makeshift studios for interviews, and the







performers were already doing their thing on the stage. The competition pieces for the day were already beginning to take shape, with Rob Mulligan of Life's Too Short Tattoo (Ireland) winning Friday's Best of Day with a vibrant neo-trad cow tattoo on his partner, Ali.

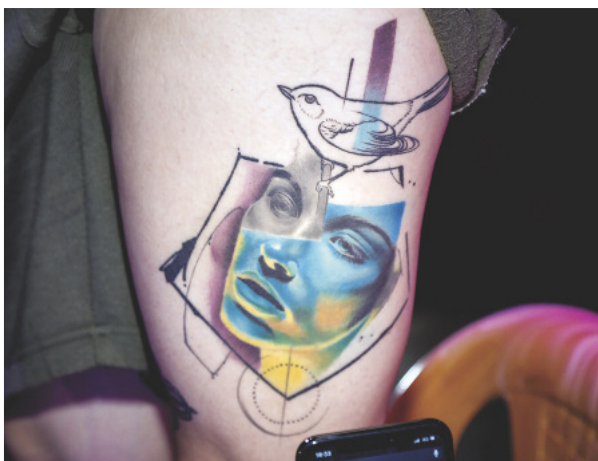
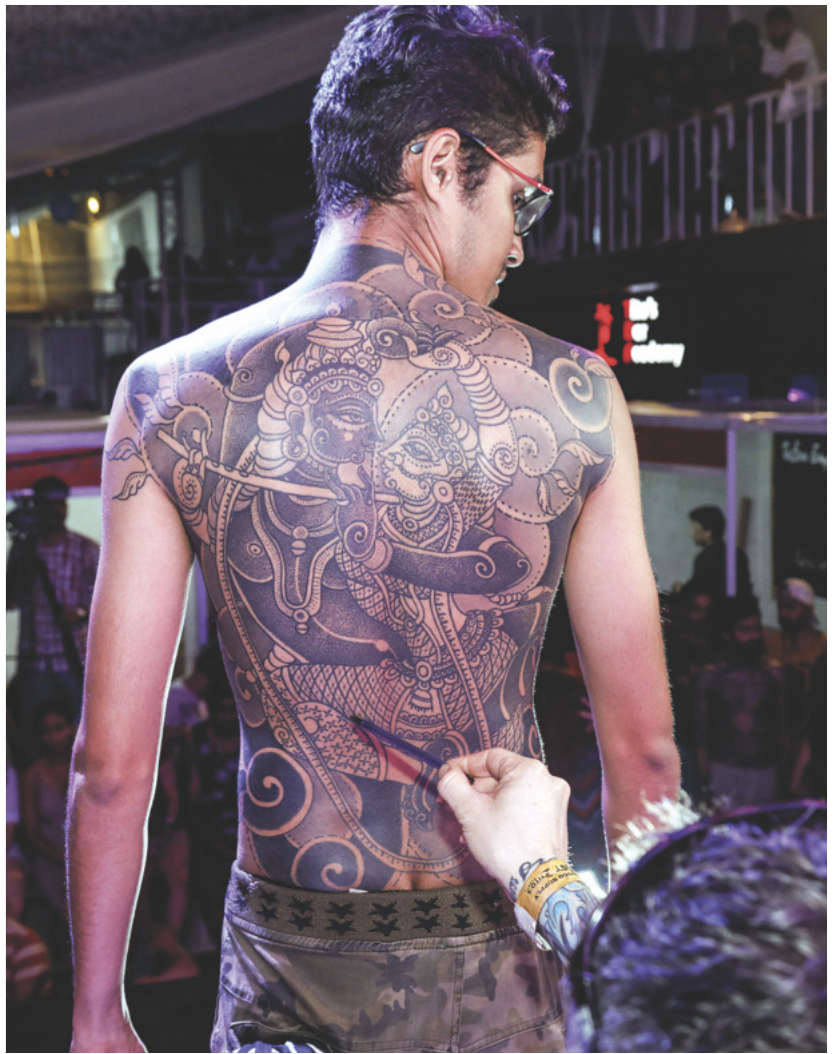
As the weekend progressed into Saturday, the competition emphasis shifted to traditional eastern pieces. And, this being India, the competition was pretty tight! The winner of the day was Mukesh Waghela of Goa's Moksha Tattoo Studio, who also picked up the award for Best Black and Grey Realism. It was a spectacular weekend for him. He has one client, named Warren, who has sat for all three days of the Goa Festival every year it's been running. Kudos to both artist and customer. (Mukesh also organises seminars with some of the finest tattooists in India – so if you're planning a trip, check out the details and book yourself a place if you can.) Mention should also be made of the extraordinary front piece by Yogesh Waghmare that won Best Oriental. Saturday's post-show activities continued with a trip to the night market, one of the biggest I've ever seen, bouncing with live music on three stages, with bars in each corner and a food court to die for!

The convention rolled on through the weekend into Sunday. The top floor of artists (which included Guido Schmitz from Germany, John Ma from Nepal and India's own Sameer Patange) was a hive of activity, with collaborations and huge pieces being started at each corner of their elevated tattoo room. And Sunday was the big awards day, with Jurgis Mikaluskas taking home Best in Show for an absolutely stunning three-day colour Viking piece.

As we were all packing up, everyone's mind was definitely on the unofficial fourth day of the show – the famous artists' ride-out day – with a trip to Fort Tiracol, a luxury heritage hotel where Martin treated us all to an incredible gastronomic feast. The day ended with a visit to a Royal Enfield showroom, followed by pizzas and beer! It's these special events around the show weekend that make this convention SO perfect.

I do unfortunately need to end this report with the sad news that one of our Goa tattoo family, Vishal Aarote of Ink Baba Tattoo Studio in Arambol, passed away very suddenly during the festival. Everyone who worked at the show was in shock; Vishal was an inspirational figure to us all. Martin dedicated the entire show weekend to the Ink Baba family; Sachin and everyone who knew and loved Vishal are very much in our thoughts.





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JIM SANDERS

If you were at the recent Brighton Tattoo Convention you will have seen the astounding Totems made by Jim Sanders. These mind-blowing primitive assemblages of found objects – visceral, disturbing, appealing – were a powerful presence at the show. We just had to meet their creator.





What would be your own description of your artistic style?

Primitive, instinctive, intuitive, singular.

Do you see a link between your work and the world of tattoos?

I suppose there is a link in the imagery that I use. Religious iconography, symbols, numerology, references to sex and death, and the influence of tribal and primitive art – all of these frequently appear in tattoos.





Are you religious?

I do have a belief in some sort of higher energy and I am interested in various spiritualities and religions across cultures and times. I find the intricacy of imagery associated with these beliefs very inspiring and powerful.

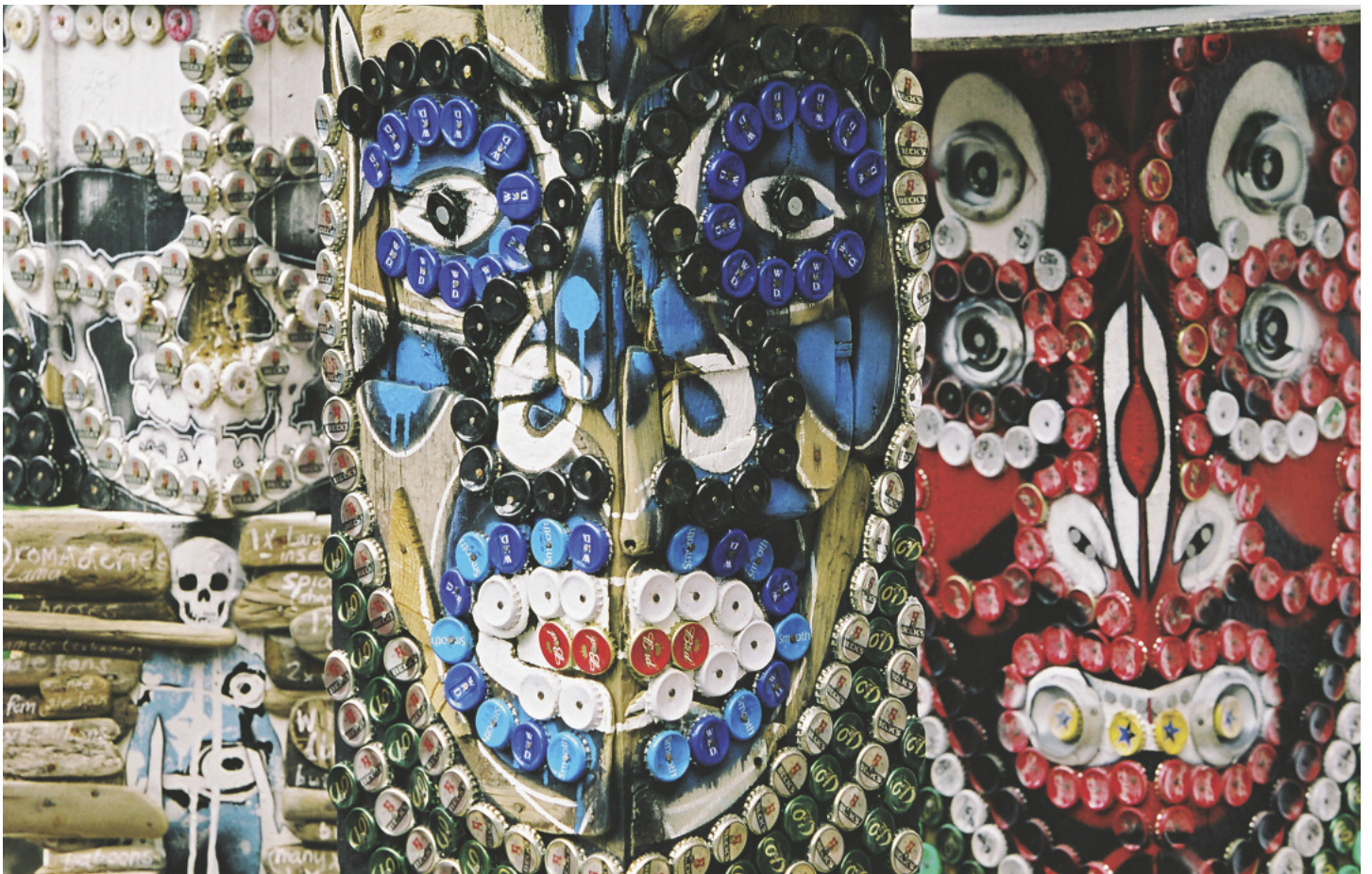
Your work is very folk-like and reminds of me of macabre South American death art...

Yes, I am very much influenced by any art that is created as part of ritual and magic, and by tribal and primitive art from many different cultures – especially that of South America and Africa. The fact I use a lot of Christian iconography (due to my Catholic upbringing) combined with

skulls and skeletons makes people associate my work with Central and South America, and the art of Mexico in particular.

What was the inspiration behind the Totems?

The Totems were originally inspired by a visit to the British Museum where I saw the African Nkondi fetish statues. I found them incredibly powerful. The use of nails and found objects was inspiring. I created my first Totem from a piece of sea defence wood, then decided to make another nineteen of them so they could be exhibited as a forest of figures to dominate the space in which they appeared. It took me a year to complete all twenty of them and they were first exhibited at the Phoenix Gallery in Brighton in 2007.



Is it important to you to use found objects and 'recycled' elements?

I love using found objects because they come with their own story and their own history. My house is full of piles of these things. They're interesting even before they're arranged into sculptural form.

Where do you source the materials that you use?

Recently I've been mudlarking on the banks of the Thames just in front of Tate Modern – gathering rusty nails, bones, horses' teeth, driftwood and medieval roof tiles. I also find materials by beachcombing along the Sussex coast. Other sources are the countryside around Brighton, French car boot sales, charity shops, flea markets and the street.



Does your work have a narrative?

No, I don't have a narrative in mind when I create my pieces. I make things quite intuitively and instinctively. I feel the workings of the subconscious are more likely to be revealed in this way. But I often discover narratives and messages in the finished work when I look at it afterwards.







How important is the space in which the piece is to be displayed?

Location and environment are very important, especially when I'm creating an installation. A room with character – signs of age and life – is vastly preferable to a 'white cube' gallery space. Although I don't usually create the work with the exhibition environment in mind, when I'm installing the work it inevitably has an influence. Recently, I showed some pieces in an Italian villa and also in The Regency Town House in Hove. These expansive, old spaces really complement my work and show it off at its best. Actually, my ambition is to get hold of

a redundant church which I can then spend the rest of my days decorating and turning into a single art work. (If anyone can help with this, please get in touch!)

You created the foyer of Into You [Alex Binnie's legendary London tattoo studio, now sadly closed]. How did that project come about?

I met Alex in Brighton, as we shared the same framer. We became friends and he asked me to decorate the London shop for its final year of trading. I am now doing a little work on 1770, his Brighton shop.





In general, what do you identify as your main artistic influences?

I am particularly fond of Outsider Art, Art Brut, and the art of children, the mentally ill, and those who have no formal training. Art made by anyone who is compelled to create and who cannot help doing so.

Did you yourself have any artistic training?

I did foundation courses in graphics and illustration, which covered a variety of useful skills, but I would like to think I am more self-taught and still learning. I did a degree in graphic design, but it wasn't for me. Any job in that field is almost entirely computer-based and I wanted to work with my hands. I've got no regrets about not pursuing that career. I don't chase money; just creative freedom.

Can you say more about what that freedom means in your artistic practice?

I like to work in a variety of styles and media to sustain my enthusiasm and freshness. No work should be forced. It should be almost compulsive, created instinctively as and when the muse demands. In the winter I draw, collage and paint; in the summer I like to work outside creating sculpture and installations. Although I have worked with theatre and performance groups, I will not accept private commissions as such, as I can only create the work I am compelled to make. Having to follow a brief is not my natural way of working. I believe the most important thing about being an artist is the passion, commitment and spirit in which the work is created. And you must accept it is a lifelong

journey, disregarding financial success or security.

Talking of which, how do you price your work?

That's a continuous headache. It seems almost impossible to put a value on it. I would rather receive a reasonable daily wage and forget about that side of things!

And what is your relationship to technology?

I begrudge the fact that even with my kind of creative work, I have to spend a certain amount of time staring at a screen. Computers can never replace the physical. I am sure we're going to see a lot more use of virtual reality in art, but there will always be a place for texture and material.

Your art seems timeless. How do you achieve that?

I don't put any contemporary references into my work, such as politics or popular culture. The fundamental human concerns – birth, sex, reproduction, death and the spirit – are my subject matter.

What are your artistic ambitions?

I am currently exploring larger scale works and installations, and I am experimenting with less figurative work. And I want to get my hands on that church I mentioned...

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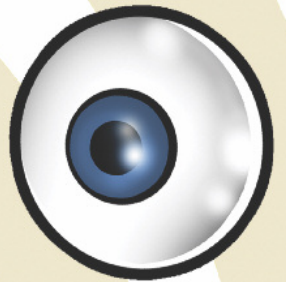


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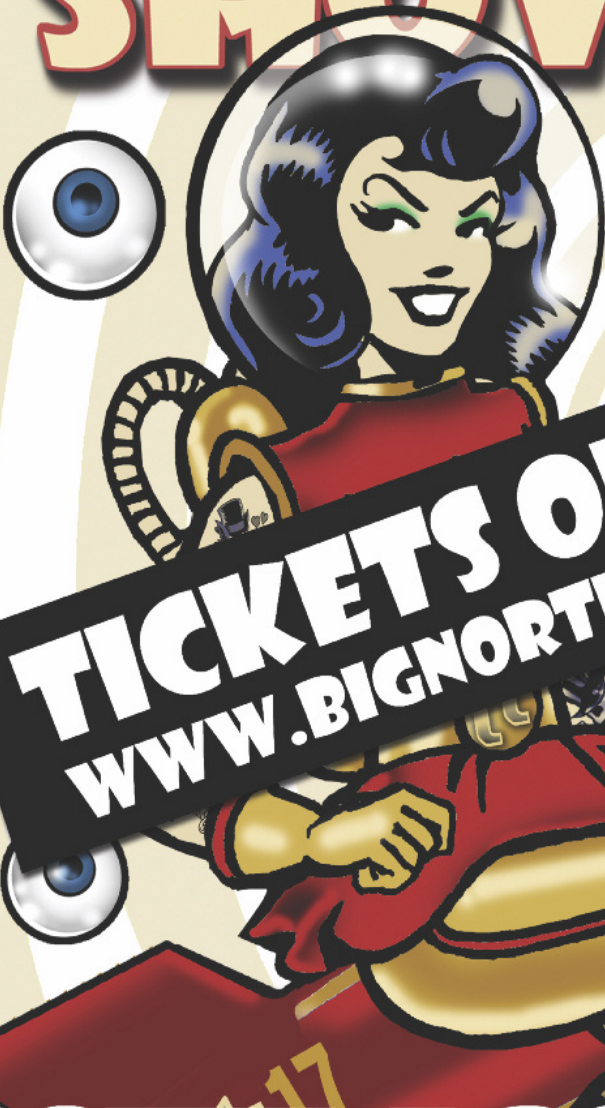
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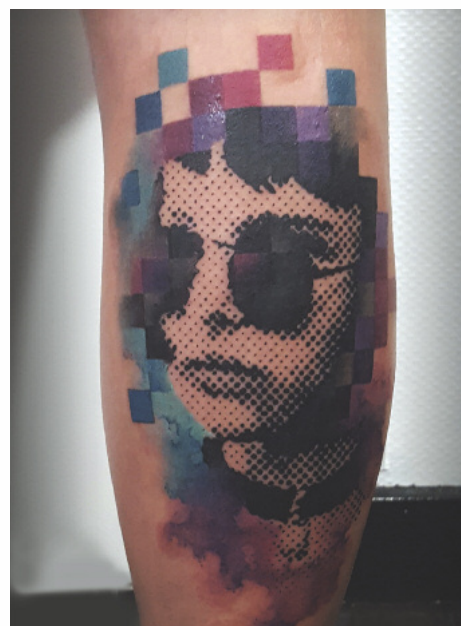
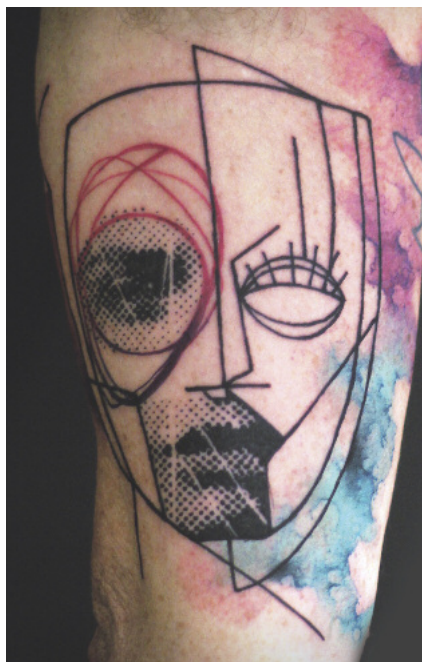
EMILIE B & GUILLAUME SMASH



L'Imaginarium is the coming together of two masterminds of artistic tattooing: Emilie B and Guillaume Smash. Emilie is known for her block colour and pop culture pieces and Guillaume for his pixellated imagery and textures. Both artists work freely and spontaneously to make some of the most refreshing, exciting portraiture that we've come across. They met through tattooing, became friends then co-workers, and are now a couple.

An imaginarium is a place whose sole purpose is to allow the imagination to thrive. For Emilie and Guillaume this 'place' is on the road, because their Imaginarium is a travelling concept. They don't have a permanent base. Instead, they work all around Europe alongside artists in some of the tattoo world's most renowned and inspiring studios.

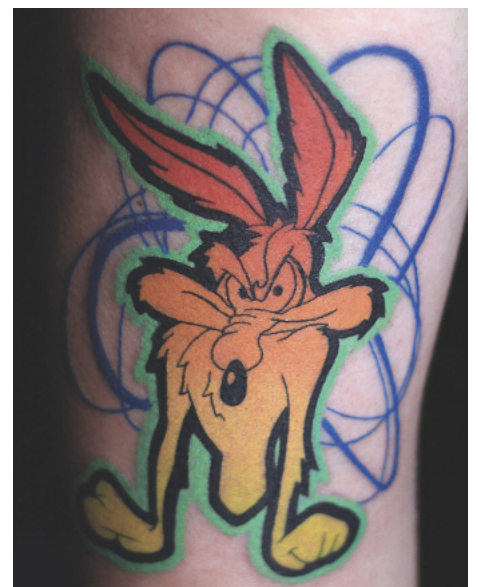
"In terms of tattoo styles and preferences, we've found a lot of contrast between different countries, and even between different regions within those countries," comments Guillaume. "And every country we arrive in, it feels like we have to re-establish ourselves, which is a lot of work," adds Emilie. "but it's what we like doing. People are so different everywhere we go. It's interesting to see what kinds of subjects they want us to tattoo. In the south of France, where we're from, they're really into realism and black and grey, but if you head north, nearer to Germany, they like a more graphic and artistic style. Generally, we find that abstract tattoos take a lot more explaining; even if people like the idea, they're not used to seeing this kind of tattoo. Out of all the countries we've been to, it's definitely France and Germany where abstract tattoos are the most popular."





One thing I love about Emilie and Guillaume's work is their unconventional subject matter. Their tattoos are playful and exciting, injecting new life into familiar images. "We especially enjoy doing portraits of pioneering scientists, writers, political activists and other people who have made a significant contribution to society. We try to make them look like celebrity icons," explains Guillaume. "It can be difficult though," says Emilie, "because it's not everybody who wants to have that kind of portrait on their body. It's easy to find people who want a portrait of a movie star or a rock musician – and we still enjoy doing those of course – but it's much harder to find someone who wants a tattoo of a Nobel prizewinner or a campaigner for women's rights! We want to put those heroes and heroines back in the spotlight. I've noticed that there are a lot of Frida Kahlo tattoos around at the moment, which I think is great – even if it's just a fashion. I love her art, but what's more interesting to me is what she stood for."

Emilie and Guillaume combine stencilled portraits with freehand flourishes – a way of working that requires a degree of trust from their clients. "Obviously we have to make a stencil for the portrait aspect," explains Guillaume, "but the surrounding areas are done in a much more spontaneous way. The patterns and watercolour textures are completely improvised. When we start, we don't know exactly what the end result will be. We don't set our designs in stone. Obviously we have an idea about what we're going to do, and we think about it a lot beforehand (and perhaps do a drawing the day before), but by not putting the



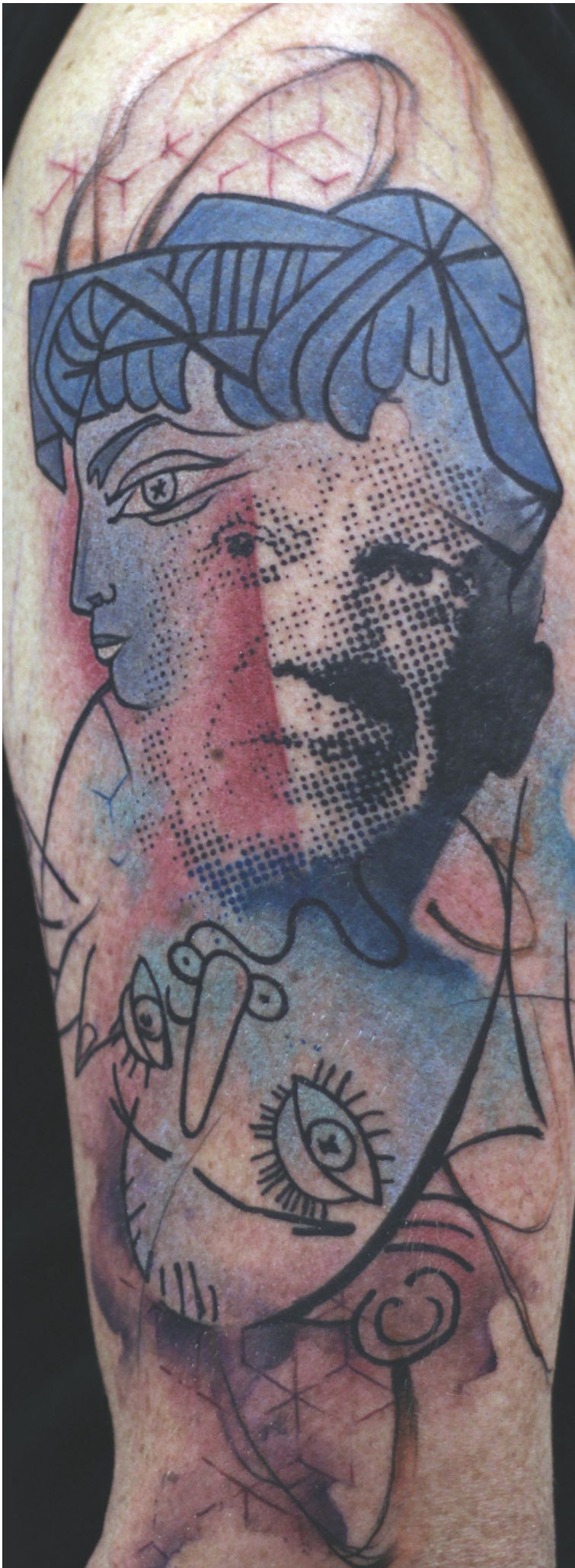


whole concept down on paper it means we are more open to that spontaneity. I think if we were more rigid with the designs before tattooing them, the end results wouldn't be as good." "People do put their trust in us, and we feel very blessed. Some customers do need to see a complete design though," adds Emilie, "and we try our best to accommodate that, but it makes it harder for us. It's not arrogance on our part. It's just how we work."

"Because we've been doing tattoos like this for some time, it's become second nature to us," continues Guillaume. "We know what will work and what won't. When we add a texture, there's always a reason for it. It's not just there for the sake of it. And we like using the energy of accidents. For example, you might get some ink where you weren't expecting it... and it looks cool... so you tattoo it! Likewise, with the pixellated portraits, there might be an area where the stencil hasn't transferred properly but the resulting negative space actually works really well."

Both Emilie and Guillaume's work is so complex in execution and so individual in style it goes way beyond the conventional definitions of 'abstraction' or 'portraiture'. "Our style is constantly changing," says Guillaume. "People ask us to give it a name, but it's not up to us to define it. We don't do the same stuff all the time. That would become monotonous. We love trying different things, and we keep pushing ourselves to execute our designs in new ways. Of course we like what we do, but we don't want to become complacent. That's why we also enjoy working with unfamiliar equipment and different inks. All inks have different properties, even if they're the same colour."

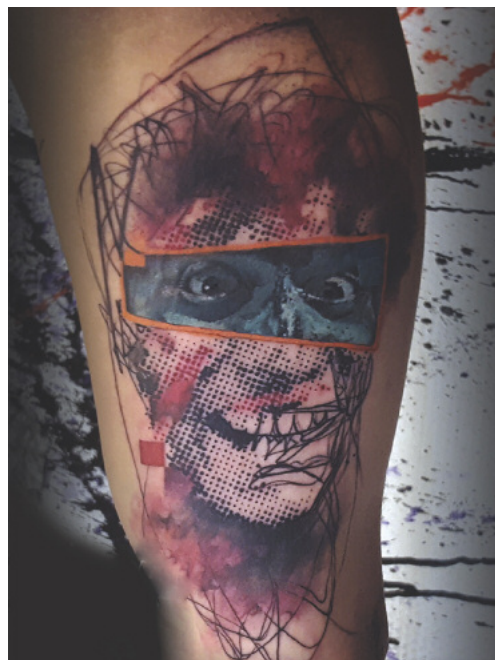


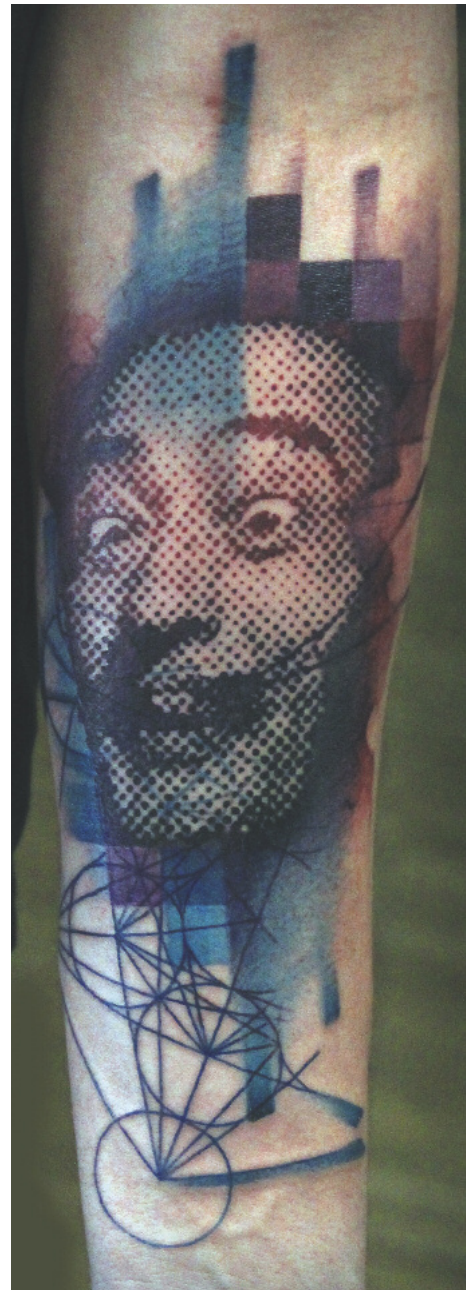


“People sometimes think what we do is easy,” continues Emilie. “It’s a bit like Picasso – you look at his work and you think it’s simple, but it’s really not. Our work has a precision as well as a spontaneity. Needle sizes and machine speeds are important. To do what we do, you have to have that kind of knowledge – and that’s the problem with a lot of graphic tattooing. Many tattooists just don’t have the necessary technique. For me, it’s a bit like cooking. You have to know which ingredients will go together to make it taste perfect.” “And you can’t hide mistakes!” adds Guillaume. “Creating a tattoo that looks deliberately ‘messy’ is not a straightforward thing to do. That’s one reason we use such a wide range of needles.”



A level of confidence is required to achieve these effects. "I think Guillaume is much more confident than I am," admits Emilie, laughing. "He knows that the more fun you have with the tattoo, the better it will be. And the happier the client will be too. My problem is that I worry the client won't be happy with the finished result! I try to push myself, but I hold back at the same time. It's hard to give myself the permission to do exactly what I want on people..." "Yes, I'm definitely a bit more 'free' than Emilie," says Guillaume, smiling, "especially with the crazy stuff."





“My ambition is to work on a much larger scale,” continues Emilie, “because then I could put so much more into it. But at the moment I can't find anybody who has the time or the money – or an open enough mind.” Is constantly being on the road also an obstacle to this ambition? “Not necessarily,” replies Emilie, “because we can always go back to the same shop for returning customers. So it could be done. To be honest, I think the main problem is that people are unable to visualise what the piece could look like. That's OK though, and understandable. Usually, I find people only want my work on their bodies after they've seen it on other clients.”

Customer expectations can be a challenge for Emilie and Guillaume. “We simply can't tattoo something we don't like,” explains Guillaume. “Also, we sometimes get asked for things that aren't really our area of expertise. Black and grey, for example. We could certainly do it, but we wouldn't be as good as somebody who does it all the time. Often, we get asked for tiny tattoos with splashes of watercolour – and that's not something we particularly enjoy doing either. We want to work bigger and put in lots of detail and lots of colours. For us, a request like that is too limiting. You put a great deal of yourself into your tattoos. If you're doing something that's too basic you find yourself working on a purely technical level. It takes all the love and emotion out of it. When we do things we enjoy, we get more out of the process and that rubs off on the customer too. The finished result is definitely better.” “It's like painting,” adds Emilie. “If you tell an artist exactly how you want them to use their brushes, you probably won't get the kind of painting you want. The problem is, people seem to think they need to explain our job to us. I've even had people emailing to apologise for not emailing their drawing to us yet... until I explain to them that the design is our responsibility! You don't call a restaurant to book a table, then come and cook your own dinner...”





“We each use very different techniques,” continues Guillaume. “In the graphic universe, what we produce is sometimes quite similar, but when you watch us tattoo, you can see that what we’re doing is actually completely different. Every individual tattoo artist has their own technique – and that’s why we like going to all these different shops, talking to other artists and watching them work. It’s another thing we love about being on the road!”

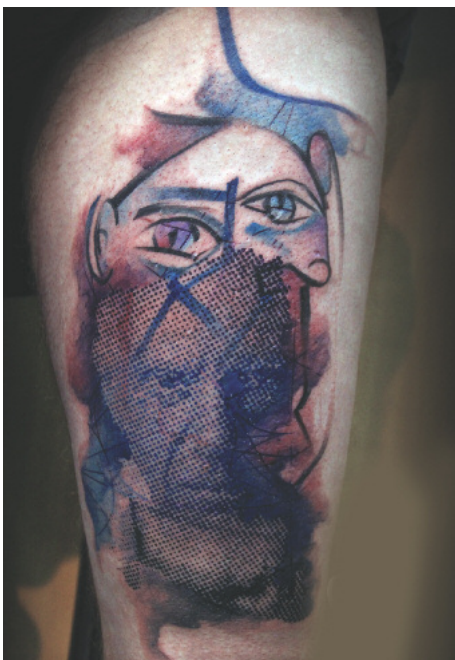
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I wonder if Emilie and Guillaume ever suffer from artists' block. “Not so much any more – now that we’re together,” replies Emilie. “I think it’s more difficult to find solutions when you’re on your own. If we get stuck or have doubts, we’re able to ask each other, and discuss things.” So does being a couple mean that they work differently? “No, it hasn’t really changed anything in that way,” continues Emilie. “When we are at work, we are co-workers. We keep our private lives separate from our tattooing. Working together is good though, because when one of us discovers something new, or improves on something, then the other one feels motivated to move forward too. If Guillaume makes something great, then I feel the pressure to do something great too!” “Yes, we definitely inspire each other,” says Guillaume. “We work well together. We always ask each other’s opinions. We can be honest and tell each other what works and what doesn’t and we usually take the criticism well.” Usually? “Sometimes I don’t!” says Emilie, laughing. “But now that I’m becoming more confident in my work, it’s getting easier to hear the criticism too...”



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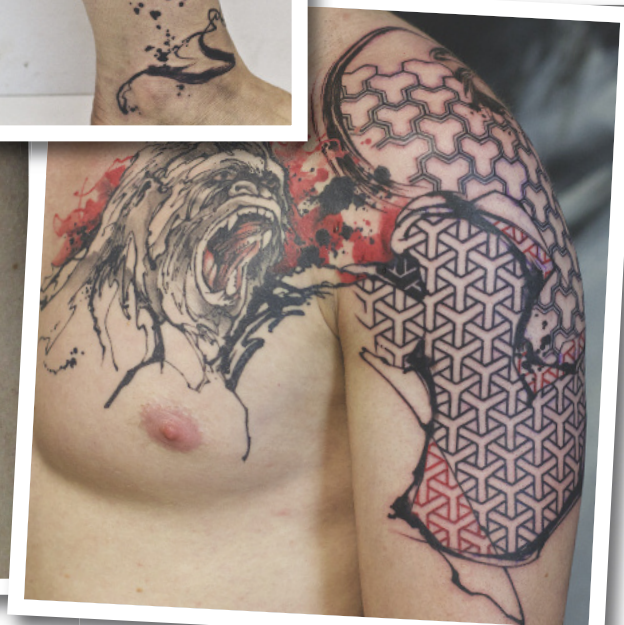
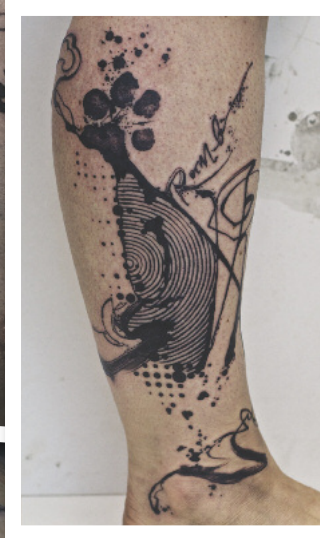
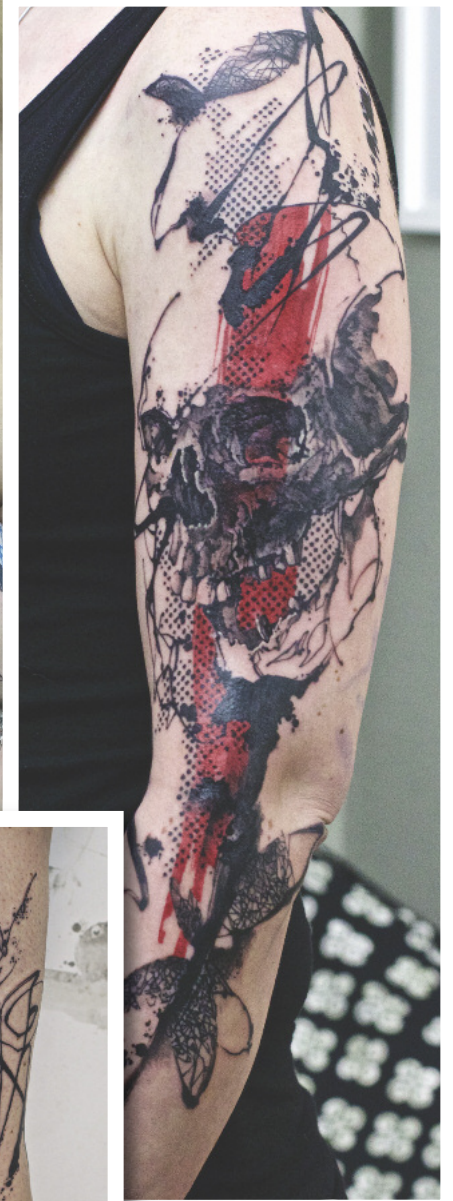
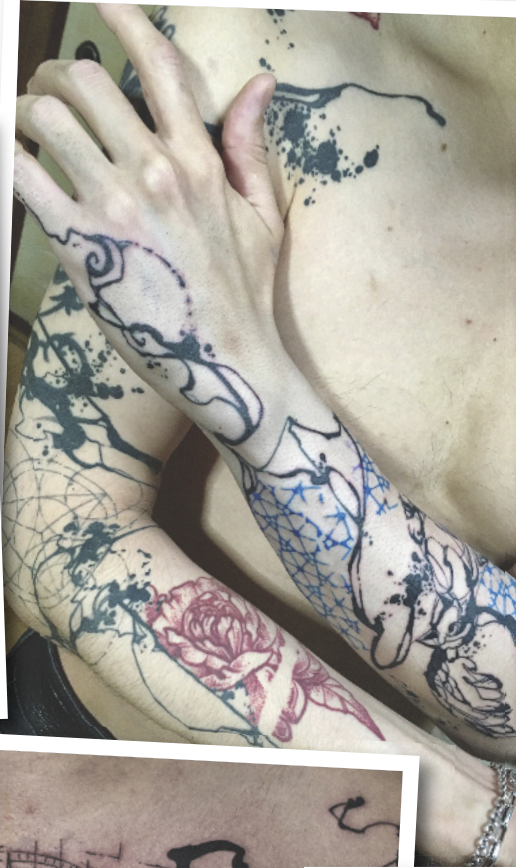
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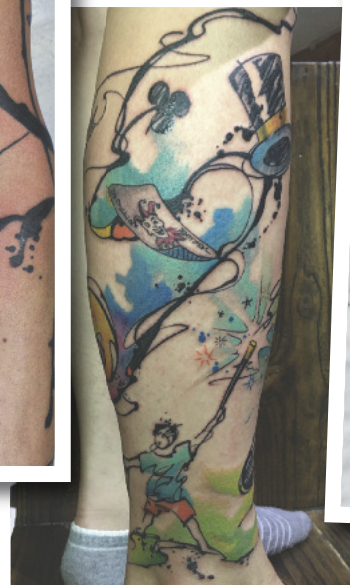
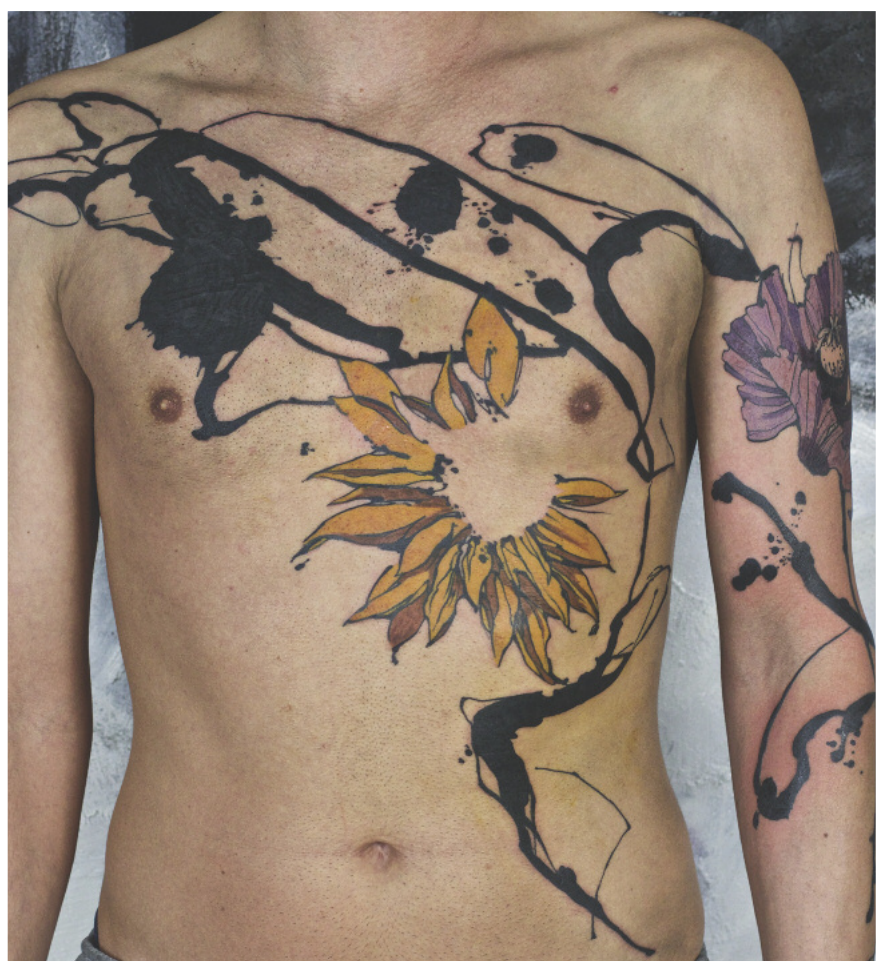
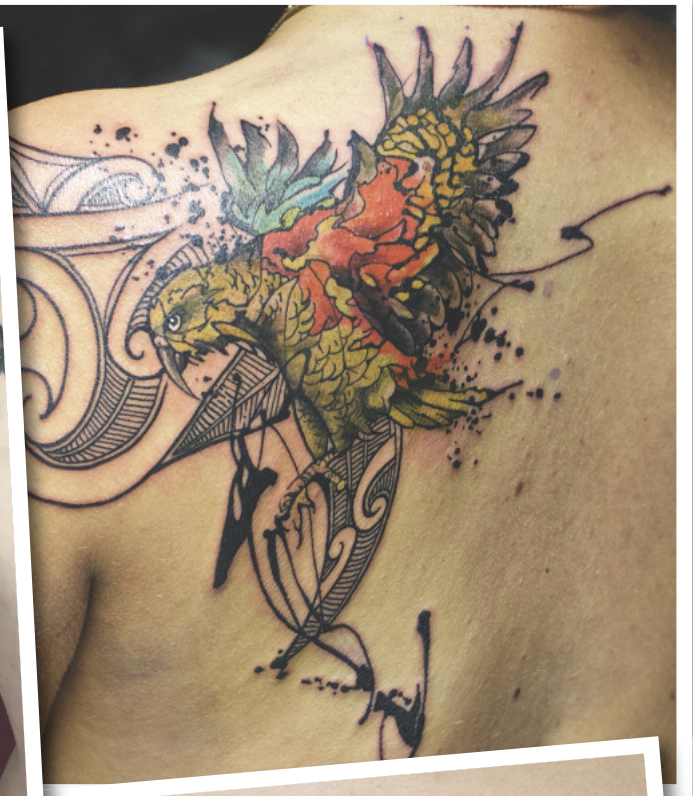
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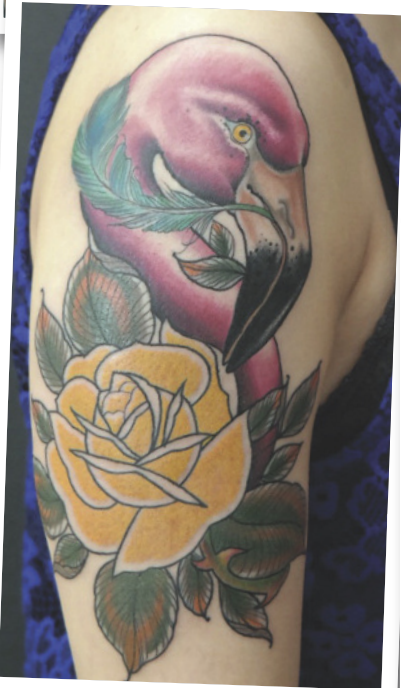
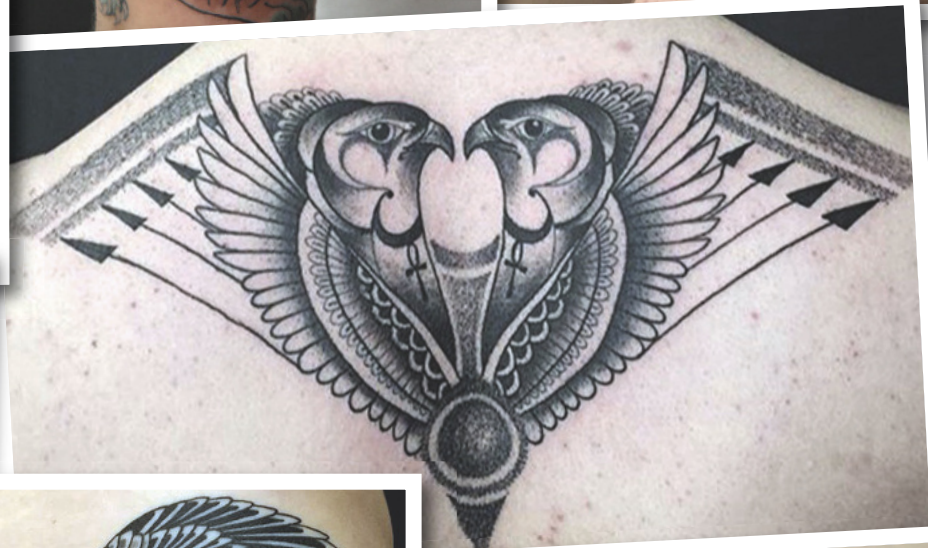
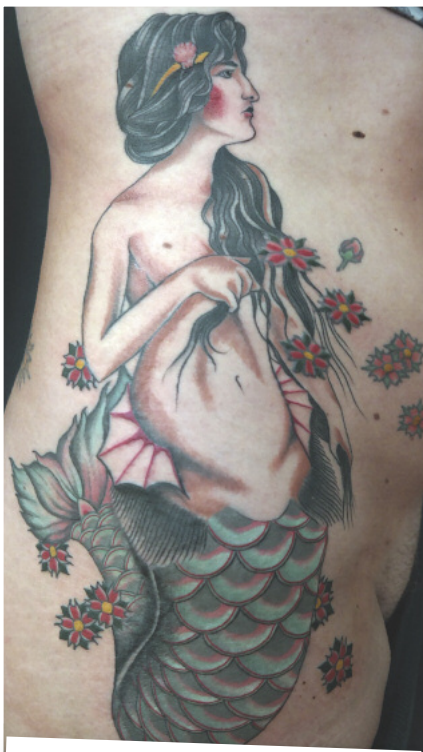
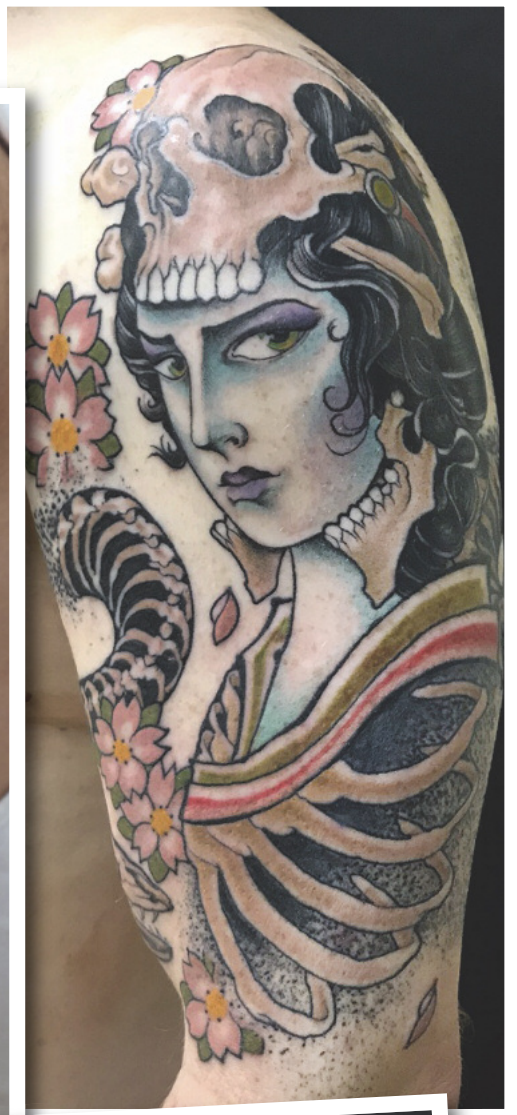
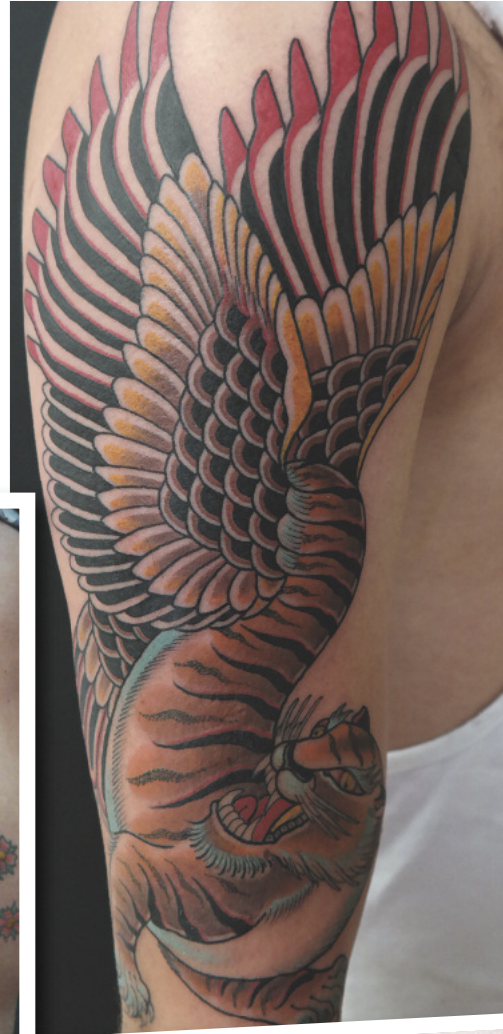
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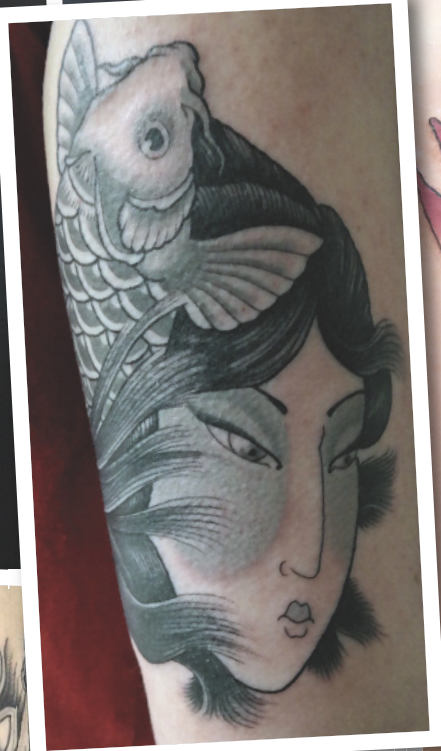




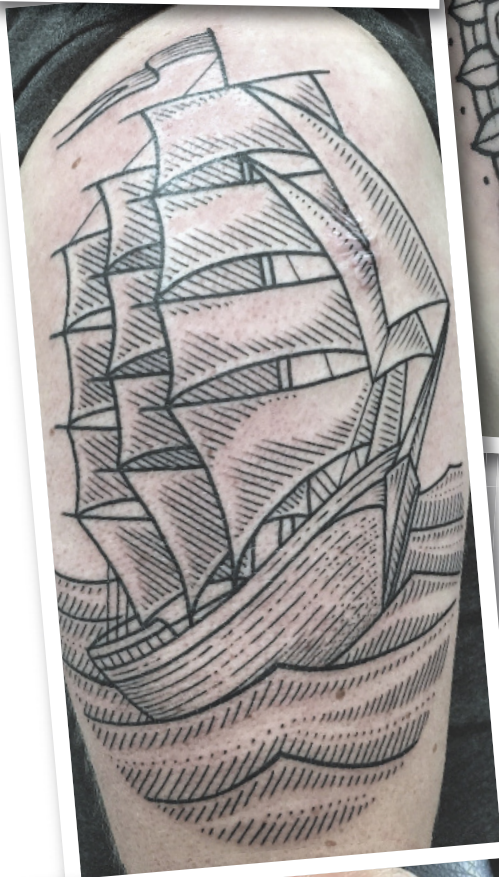
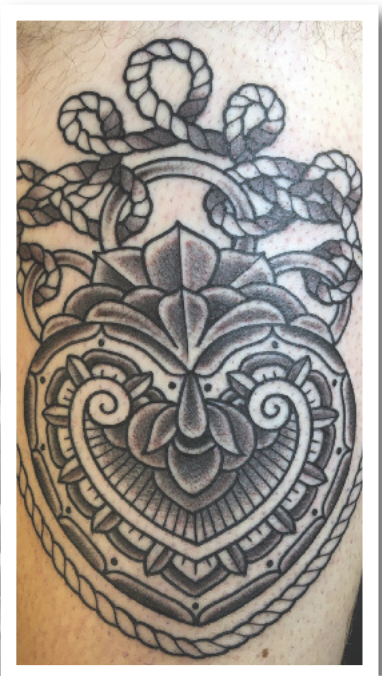
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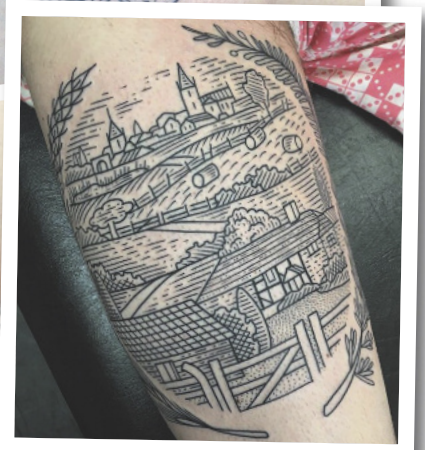
GOOD TIMES TATTOO





GARY BURNS TATTOO WORKSHOP





SPACING TAKING UP

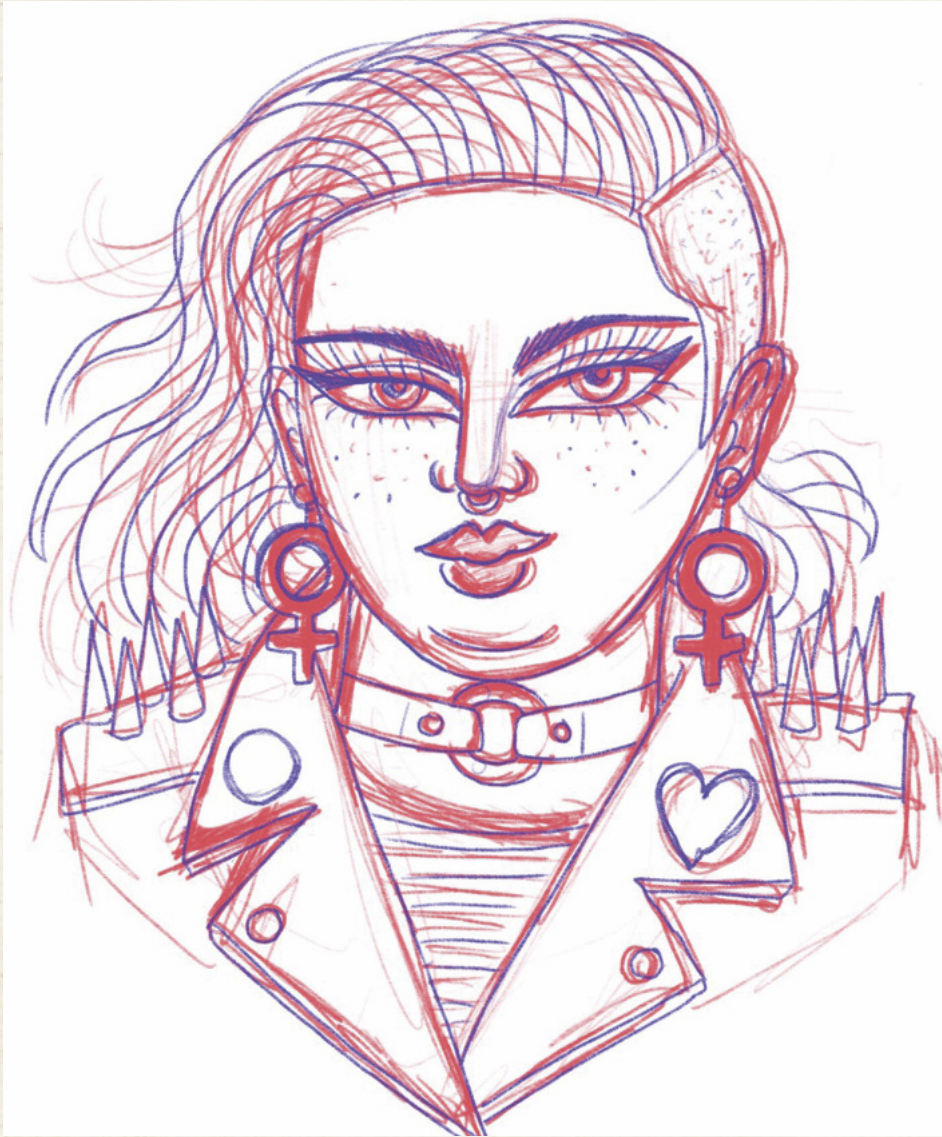
In any creative career it's easy to get stuck in a rut. We get used to doing things a certain way and we can become stagnant. I like to challenge myself, and I regularly step out of my comfort zone to keep things fresh and be inspired.



In the past, tattooers needed to be proficient in all styles to be able to cater to whoever walked in the door. Increasingly, we are specialising in one preferred style. Newer tattooers are sometimes only learning to tattoo in one genre. With social media, we are able to push our work further and reach more people. I think there's great value in being a master of one thing instead of a jack of all trades, but it's still important to be able to step outside your box now and again.

I began my career specialising in western traditional tattooing, known for its bold lines, restricted colour palette and classic imagery. Of course I'll never get tired of tattooing panthers and eagles, but as time went on I did find the style quite limiting artistically. I experimented with an extended palette and different subject matter, but I kept the elements I loved from traditional – such as the line sizes and the boldness of colour. Long gone are the days I can take just five colours with me on a guest spot! More recently I've branched out even further. I've started tattooing scenes from Anime and incorporating small lines into portraits. Using imagery that's familiar to me, and that I like, was a great way to push myself to do something new and it's been incredibly fulfilling! I never thought I'd enjoy using a 3 liner more than a loose 1! And I feel so much more well-rounded as a tattooer. I'm looking forward to experimenting more in the future.

Sometimes your comfort zone is less about what you tattoo and more about where you work. I apprenticed in Eastbourne and after five years working in a small seaside town I knew it was time to move on. Someone else might perhaps have moved to the big city, but not me. I don't do things by halves. My boyfriend and I handed in our notice on our flat, got rid of most of our possessions, packed everything into the back of our Nissan Micra and hit the road! We lived the nomadic life for seven months, working in a different city in the UK every week until we found somewhere we wanted to settle down. At times it was



would appear stiff, or that I would have to learn to use complex programs that didn't feel intuitive or natural. But after giving it a go I bought one the next day!

Using the iPad Pro is much more efficient. Any wobbled lines can simply be undone on the screen (instead of having the frustration of tearing off another layer of tracing paper from the roll and starting again). Similarly it's easy to resize the elements of a design and move them around to get the best composition. I still sketch everything in red and blue "pencil" and imitate the way I have always drawn naturally; it's just on a screen now.

Tattooing is an industry built on tradition. But to be the best we can be, I feel we should be open to new technology and new ways of working. I definitely stepped out of my comfort zone by switching to working digitally, but ironically I stepped into a far more comfortable zone as I can now do all my drawings in bed!

I hope this month's column may have inspired some of you to try something different. Whether it's a new colour palette in your work, emailing that studio you've always wanted to guest at, or trying to approach your design methods from a different angle, we could all do with brushing away the cobwebs in our brains every now and then!

Harriet Heath
Instagram: @lowroseltattoo

terrifying – not having any job security or anywhere to live – but the experience was so worthwhile. It helped me to become the independent person I am today.

During that time I tattooed at some amazing studios. I learnt so much from the other tattooers, and it helped me hugely in building up my own profile. We all have so much we can learn from each other and nothing inspires me more than going on a guest spot and seeing the way others work. I did a second stint on the road a year later. This was for six months, but it was a lower risk version – working away every weekend and returning home for half of the week. If you're feeling like you need a bit of a boost, I can highly recommend travelling for a while.

Lastly, a great way to mix things up is to try new ways of drawing. For all of my career I have sketched in red and blue pencils and used layers of tracing paper to get the final neat line drawing. I know many of you will roll your eyes, but I'm now one of those iPad Pro people. I was incredibly hesitant and protested for a long time, until a friend of mine bought one and I gave it a try. I worried that my work



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pgct@hotmail.co.uk
Instagram: @physicalgraffititattoos

Stronghold Tattoo
2nd floor Hugh St Chambers
Cardiff, CF10 1BD
Tel no: 07943 981671
www.strongholdtattoo.com

WEST MIDLANDS

Dark Horse Collective
33 Boldmere Rd,
Sutton Coldfield B73 5UY
Tel no: 01214061635
www.darkhorsecollective.com

Nala Tattoo & Piercing Studio
81 Bolebridge Street
B79 7PD Tamworth
Tel no: 01827 68353
contact@nalastudio.co.uk
www.nalastudio.co.uk

NORTH WEST

All Style Tattoos
28 Crellin Street
Barrow in Furness
LA14 1DU
Tel no: 01229 838946
Email: allstyletattoos@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/allstyletattoosbarrow

Aurora Tattoo
Sultan of Lancaster, Brock St,
The Old Church, Lancaster
LA1 1UU
auroratattoo@hotmail.co.uk
www.auroratattooostudio.co.uk

Bold As Brass Tattoo
Charleston House, 12 Rumford Pl,
Liverpool L3 9DG
Tel no: 0151 227 1814
boldasbrasstattoo@gmail.com
www.boldasbrasstattoo.com

Cosmic Monsters Incorporated
Mitre house, the courtyard
27 the strand, Bromsgrove
B61 8ab
Tel no: 07863135814
cmitattoo@gmail.com
www.cmi-tattoo.com

Marked for life
45 High Street, (Winpenny house)
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1SB
Tel no: 01642 641235
tattoomfl@gmail.com
www.marked-for-life.com

Sacred Art Tattoo
497 Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton,
Manchester. M21 8AG
Tel: 01618811530
tattoo@sacredarttattoo.co.uk
www.sacredarttattoo.co.uk

Skin Kandi Tattoo Studio
50a Westfield Street, St Helens
Merseyside WA10 1QF
Tel no: 01744734699
skinkandi@hotmail.co.uk
www.skinkandi.co.uk

True 'til Death
Address: 13 Whalley Road
BB5 1AD Accrington
Tel no: 01254 433760
Email: via Facebook – True 'Til
Death Tattoo
www.accringtontattoo.com

IRELAND

Yakuza Tattoo
41 michael street
Waterford, Ireland
Tel no: +353 51 852 621
Email: soydantattoo@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/
YakuzaTattooStudio

CONVENTION CALENDAR

UK CONVENTIONS

8th April

Ink and Iron

The New Bingley Hall | Hockley Circus
Birmingham B18 5PP
inkandiron.co.uk/

13th - 15th April

North Lakes Tattoo Show

The Shepherds Inn & Auctioneer
Wavell Dr, Rosehill Estate,
Carlisle CA1 2ST,
www.northlakestattooshow.co.uk

21st - 22nd April

Portsmouth Tattoo Fest

Portsmouth Pyramids Centre
Clarence Esplanade,
Portsmouth PO5 3ST,
www.tattoofest.co.uk

28th - 29th April

Big North Tattoo Show

Metro Radio Arena
Arena Way, NE4 7NA
Newcastle upon Tyne
www.thebignorthtattooshow.co.uk

4th-6th May

Liverpool Tattoo Convention

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

19th-20th May

Scarborough Tattoo Show

The Spa Scarborough South Bay,
Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO11 2HD
www.scarboroughtattooshow.com/

19th-20th May

Northern Ireland Tattoo Convention

Belfast Waterfront 2 Lanyon Pl
Belfast BT1 3WH
www.nitattoo.com

9th-10th June

Bristol Tattoo Convention

The Passenger Shed, Station Approach,
Bristol BS1 6QH
bristoltattooconvention.com

7th-8th July

Powys Charity Tattoo Convention

Community Centre, Mount Lane
Llanidloes, Powys SY18 6EZ
www.facebook.com/Powys-charity-tattoo-con-
vention-283437561802173

7th-8th July

Leeds Tattoo Expo

First Direct Arena, Arena Way,
Leeds LS2 8BY,
leedstattooexpo.com

24th-29th July

Cardiff International

Tattoo Convention
Mercurie Cardiff Holland House
24-26 Newport Rd, Cardiff CF24 0DD

1st - 2nd September

Oxford Tattoo Convention

The Oxford Academy, Sandy Lane West,
Littlemore, Oxford
www.facebook.com/oxfordtattooconvention

1st-3rd September

Kustom Kulture Blast Off

31st August - 2nd September
Lincolnshire Show Ground
Lincoln LN2 2NA
www.kustomkultureblastoff.com

28th-30th September

The International London Tattoo Convention

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

19th-21st October

Midlands Tattoo Industry Show

Athena Leicester, Athena, Queen Street
LE1 1QD Leicester
www.midlandstattooindustryshow.co.uk

27th-28th October

Cambridge International Tattoo Convention

Guildhall Place
1-6 Corn Exchange St, Cambridge, CB2 3QF
www.facebook.com/cambridgetattoocon

11th - 12th November

East Coast Tattoo Expo

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

OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

13th-15th April

Perugia Tattoo Convention

Hotel Gió Wine e Jazz area
V.le Ruggero D'Andreotto, 19
06124 Perugia, Italy
www.perugiatattooconvention.com

1st-3rd June

Amsterdam Tattoo Convention

Amsterdam RAI Exhibition and Convention
Centre. Europaplein, 1078 GZ Amsterdam,
Netherlands

29th June- 1st July

Ink Mania

Gouverneur Verwilghensingel
70 3500
Hasselt, Belgium
www.inkmania.be

13th - 15th June

Empire State tattoo Expo

The New York Midtown Hilton
NYC Manhattan. USA
www.empirestatetattooexpo.com

3th-5th August

Berlin Tattoo Convention

Arena Berlin, Germany
info@tattoo-convention.de
www.tattoo-convention.de

14th-15th September

Kaiserstadt Tattoo Expo

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

6th-8th October

Monster Ink Tattoo Fest

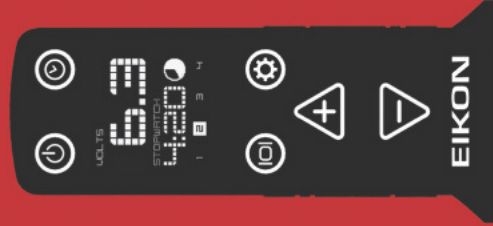
Evenementenhal Venray
De Voorde 30, 5807 EZ Venray,
The Netherlands
www.monsterinktattoofest.com

8th-9th November

Brussels Tattoo Convention

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

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