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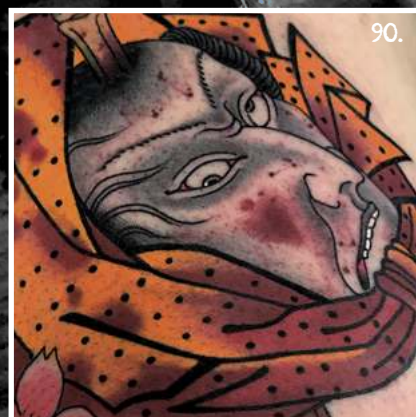
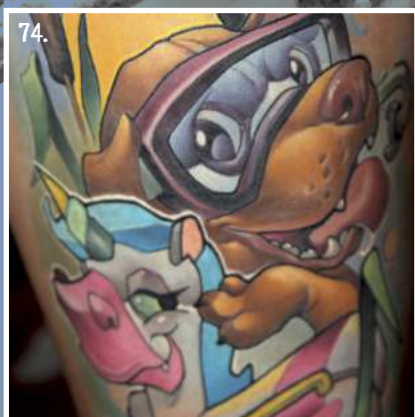
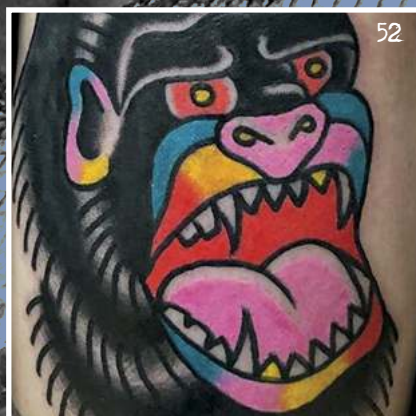
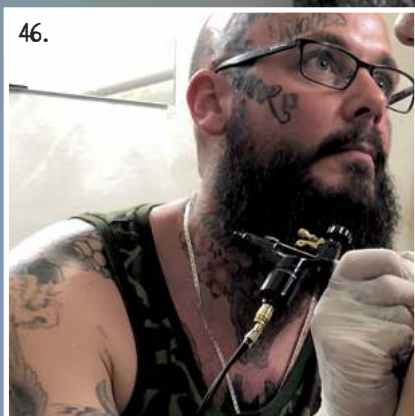
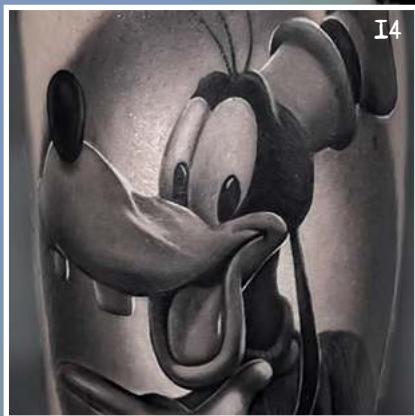
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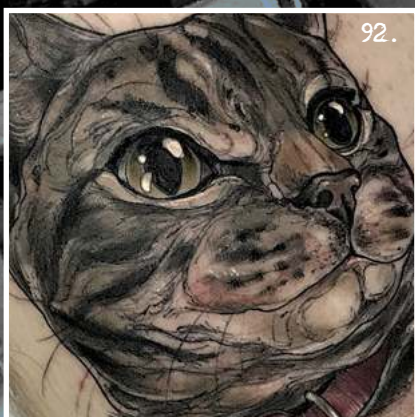
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WELCOME to 172

How did it ever get to be 2019?! Even writing 2-0-1-9 feels surreal. Nevertheless, "New Year, New Me", as they say. But what about the tattoo world? If the tattoo industry was making its own New Year resolutions, what might they be?

A couple of months ago, Lizzy returned from the very first World Tattoo Industry Trade Show, held in Las Vegas. You can read her report later in this issue, and from what I heard it sounded inspiring, exciting, and completely different in its approach to what is happening elsewhere.

The show focused heavily on the sharing of information, and the busy teaching programme (which tattooists had to pay to attend) attracted a truly impressive turn-out. But would this approach really work here? I've seen tattooists turn around and walk away as soon as they're asked to pay to go into a seminar. Equally, there was a time when artists would turn their noses up at the mere mention of any kind of educational activity – be it workshops, tutorials or DVDs. It seems the American way is more proud: "I invested my time and effort to attend a course run by a world-renowned artist!"

It makes me wonder: in our ever-evolving world, where technology helps us in every aspect of our lives, why are we still balking at the idea of sharing our knowledge in order to enhance and accelerate that evolutionary process? Don't get me wrong, I think there is something noble in preserving the culture of the craft of tattooing. (In fact, in this age of snap-chats and online posting, I think there's actually a danger that we are going to lose a whole chunk of modern history to the worldwide web.) My concern is that a good proportion of tattooists seem to have their heads in the sand about moving forward.

We've frowned on tattoo schools and workshops for so long now that we could be in danger of missing the boat. When organised and delivered properly, they present an opportunity for artists to learn and grow – not only professionally but also as a whole person. It's not necessarily 'selling out' or 'going mainstream', as some would have it. Tattooing is already mainstream. But it's because of this attitude that we've allowed so many people to pick up machines willy-nilly and call themselves tattooists. Why should we expect people to wait around for an apprenticeship that won't be certified – and may well be unpaid and of questionable quality – if there is literally a world of information at their fingertips?

Maybe it is time to give the future of the industry some serious consideration. I certainly don't know what the answers are, or even if there is an answer. There's no way of getting the genie back into the bottle (and in all honesty, I'm not sure things were better back then anyway) but what I do know is that if we ourselves don't start thinking about how tattooing is taught and regulated, the likelihood is that someone else – outside our industry – will.



Perry
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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.

News, Total Tattoo Magazine, 111 Furze Road, Norwich NR7 0AU

ZZZZZZZAPPPP!

Tattoo removal technology continues to develop. Soliton have recently announced their RAP (Rapid Acoustic Pulse) device, which makes multiple laser passes possible in a single treatment session – thereby greatly speeding up the whole tattoo removal process. What might have taken months can now be done in one go. The project has been five years in the pipeline and extensive trials have been taking place. So how does it work?

In conventional tattoo removal, short-pulse lasers target agglomerations of ink within the skin and break them down so that they can be dealt with by the body's immune system. But the laser can only hit what it can 'see', so it can only destroy one layer of ink at a time. One pass of the laser destroys one layer of ink. The problem is the intense heat generated, which causes steam vacuoles to form within the skin. These are visible as blisters on the skin's surface but are also present deeper down. The surface blisters disappear in a matter of hours, but the deeper vacuoles can take days or even weeks to dissipate. And that is why clients currently have to wait so long between laser sessions. The skin needs to recover – because the vacuoles create a shield, preventing the laser reaching any more ink.



So what are the claims for this new device? Used immediately after the first pass of the laser, the Soliton RAP will, according to their website, dissipate the steam vacuoles and also help to disperse the ink – making it possible to do another laser pass right away. The device can then be used again, followed by another pass of the laser, and so on, all within the same session.

Soliton are looking at other clinical applications for this technology too, and they're seeking investors to help them bring the technology into the marketplace as a commercial product. Check out www.soliton.com/technology for the details of the project.



DANG! THAT'S GOOD



Central St Martins graduate Hannah Dang is wowing the fashion world with her unique tattoo-inspired designs. She decided to showcase her passion for Japanese-style tattooing with a collection inspired by traditional Irezumi imagery – hand-painted on to latex, which mimics human skin. We hear her custom pieces (which are just as much art as fashion) are now becoming highly sought-after. Hannah is based in London and her family comes from Vietnam, and she has described her approach as a contemporary 'repurposing' of the traditional Asian aesthetic. Check out

www.instagram.com/hannah.dang



BRIGHTON TICKET GIVEAWAY

It's the beginning of a brand new year, and that means it will soon be time for the Brighton Tattoo Convention! So if you fancy a February trip to the south coast for one of the country's top tattoo events, why not enter our competition – and you could win yourself a ticket, courtesy of the generous organisers. We have 6 day tickets to give away. All you have to do is email us the answer to the following question, and keep your fingers crossed that you're one of the first names out of the hat.

Who, or what, are you guaranteed to find very close to the Brighton Tattoo Convention?

- A. Brighton Pier
- B. Piers Morgan
- C. Pierce Brosnan

Email your answer to comps@totaltattoo.co.uk with the subject line BRIGHTON. Closing date is 31 January and usual terms and conditions apply (see p4/5).

UNCLE IN A MILLION

Our news radar has picked up a touching story from Shropshire. According to reports in the local press and on social media, Wayne Bowen from Broseley decided to get a spectacular portrait tattoo to show his support and fondness for his young nephew Zac, who has an extremely rare form of leukaemia. Wolverhampton Wanderers supporter Zac recently returned from the USA, where he underwent specialist life-saving therapy not available in the UK. Treatment is set to continue, and the costs are ongoing. If you would like to donate or follow Zac's progress, head to www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/zac-oliver or [@ZacAttacksBigC](https://twitter.com/ZacAttacksBigC) on Twitter.



SCORES ON THE DOORS

We hear that the local council in Swindon is pushing to introduce a 'scores on the doors' rating system for tattoo studios in the area. Tattooists are keen to get involved at an early stage in devising how the scheme will work because they are obviously the people who know their business best! There are concerns that if the rating system focuses only on hygiene and safe working practices, potential customers might be misled into thinking that it is actually a measure of the tattooist's skill or the quality of the tattoos created in the shop. Watch this space for news about further developments or check for information on the council's website: www.swindon.gov.uk



YOUR STORY ISN'T OVER YET

We've picked up a great story about a tattoo shop in Michigan, USA, who decided to use the power of ink to raise awareness of issues around suicide. In December, the All-Star Tattoo Co in Brownstown Charter Township (www.allstartattooco.com) held a charity day, with one hundred percent of the profits going to mental health and suicide prevention organisation Project Semicolon (www.projectsemicolon.com). For a suggested donation of \$50, customers could choose from a selection of special designs with particular meanings – including the semicolon itself (for those dealing with issues around mental health and suicide), the stock flower (representing optimism, positive changes and a love of life), rose quartz (for inner healing), a yellow flag (remembering student lives lost through suicide) and the number 22 (as a memorial for veterans who have committed suicide). If you'd like to add your support, you can get Project Semicolon temporary tattoos and other merchandise here:

<https://engage.projectsemicolon.com/product/semicolon-temporary-tattoos>

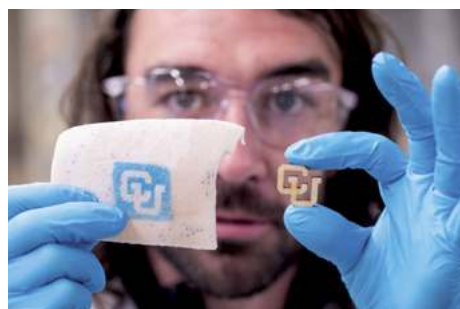
YOUR STORY ISN'T OVER YET

STAYING WARM

The Total Tattoo news radar has picked up another heartwarming story about a tattoo shop giving back to its local community. The Ink Link Tattoo Co in Nebraska (USA) has been collecting clothing for the homeless and others in need - in exchange for vouchers that can be used in part payment for tattoos. It's been a fantastically successful campaign, and the shop has been inundated with thousands of donations of winter clothes, hats, scarves, gloves, boots, socks... and even warm underwear! Shop owner Mark Hennant's kind and generous idea means lots of people will definitely have a much more comfortable winter.



KARMACHAMELEON



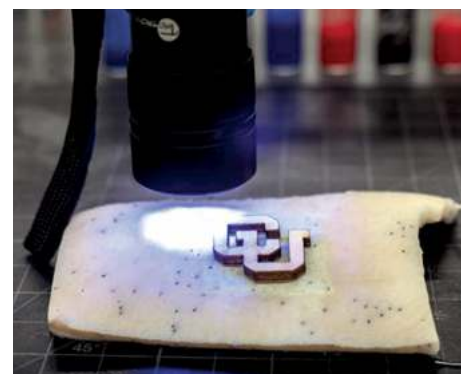
This innovation is all about nanotechnology – designing molecules that will do exactly what you want them to do. The secret of these tattoos is the way the tattoo ink is contained within plastic microcapsules (far smaller than the width of a human hair) so that the dye stays in place at the designated site without being broken down by the body. Several years of development and testing are required before this idea becomes a marketable product, but it's clearly going to have many interesting applications.

Researchers at the University of Colorado (Boulder) in the States are developing a new kind of tattoo ink. This 'chameleon' ink changes colour in response to various environmental factors such as ultraviolet light and heat – meaning that it has many potential medical uses as well as adding a whole new creative dimension to tattooing.

Researcher Carson Bruns is a tattoo fan himself. He's passionate about the chemistry of paints and dyes and the science of colour. One of the first prototypes that he and graduate student Jesse Butterfield developed is a tattoo they describe as a 'solar freckle' that becomes visible only in response to sunlight. So you can put your sunscreen on (slathering it all over the tattoo as well, which will then disappear)... sit in the sun... and as soon as the tattoo reappears, you'll know it's time to apply more sunscreen! The team have also experimented with a tattoo that responds to body temperature, and can therefore indicate when somebody has a fever. Similar technology could be used to monitor blood alcohol levels, blood glucose, and so on.



Outside the nanotechnology lab, Carson Bruns is an artist. He teaches courses on the science and culture of colour at the ATLAS interdisciplinary institute for radical creativity, and he recently painted a series of wonderfully colourful portraits of spirit animals, including the buffalo shown here. Carson also courageously gave himself a 'chameleon' tattoo – a solar freckle consisting of two blue dots on his forearm – just to make sure his idea would work!



BOOK REVIEW



Craig Ridley Drawings
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£35

Available via www.gentlemanstatooflash.com
and from Atonement Publishing at
www.bestintentionsmagazine.bigcartel.com/category/books

Craig Ridley is an incredibly underrated tattooist. You just need to glance at any tattoo he's done to appreciate the technical perfection and sheer artistry in his work. So it's about time he got the recognition he truly deserves. This publication contains images from his sketchbooks over the past ten years. He excels in Japanese tattooing with a modern European twist, but the collection also includes custom designs in various other styles and incorporating a variety of different subjects. As more and more tattooists abandon pen and paper for iPads, seeing a body of work such as this in printed form is inspiring and somewhat nostalgic! At £35 the book is an absolute steal, even when the purse strings are tight after Christmas. And let's hope another volume of Craig's work comes out soon because we're definitely keen to see more of it.





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Owen Paulls



The first time I came across Owen Paulls was at a convention. "Come and look at this guy," one of the organisers said. "He's really young and he's doing some amazing black and grey Disney portraits." I'm not sure what I expected, but I sure as hell wasn't ready for what I saw. Owen was working on a portrait of Officer Judy Hopps from Zootopia. The depth and darkness of it was mind-blowing. His tattoos look REAL – which is not an easy task when the subject matter doesn't exist in real life! Owen recently left the UK for Los Angeles and we figured we'd better catch him before he went anywhere else...

Owen, you're in America now!

Yes, I feel very lucky. I'm very goal-oriented, and once I decide to do something I just focus on it and push for it. I think that's really helped me get where I want to be. I set myself five, ten and fifteen year goals. I believe that if you can picture a situation in your mind and imagine yourself in it, you can create that universe.





Have you always been like that?

Yes, I have. Before I started tattooing, I used to play music for a living. Climbing that ladder, aspiring to get to the top, gave me a real sense of push. And it meant I had a kind of 'business model' that I could take from the music industry and apply to tattooing. I think tattooists who have only known tattooing (and haven't worked in any other industry) can sometimes struggle to get anywhere without that kind of structure.

Why did you make the move into tattooing? Had you had enough of the music industry?

We knew that punk rock was only going to last so long. Bands definitely have a shelf life. And the music industry was becoming so much more focused on looks, and on how marketable you were as a person, rather than the music you were playing.





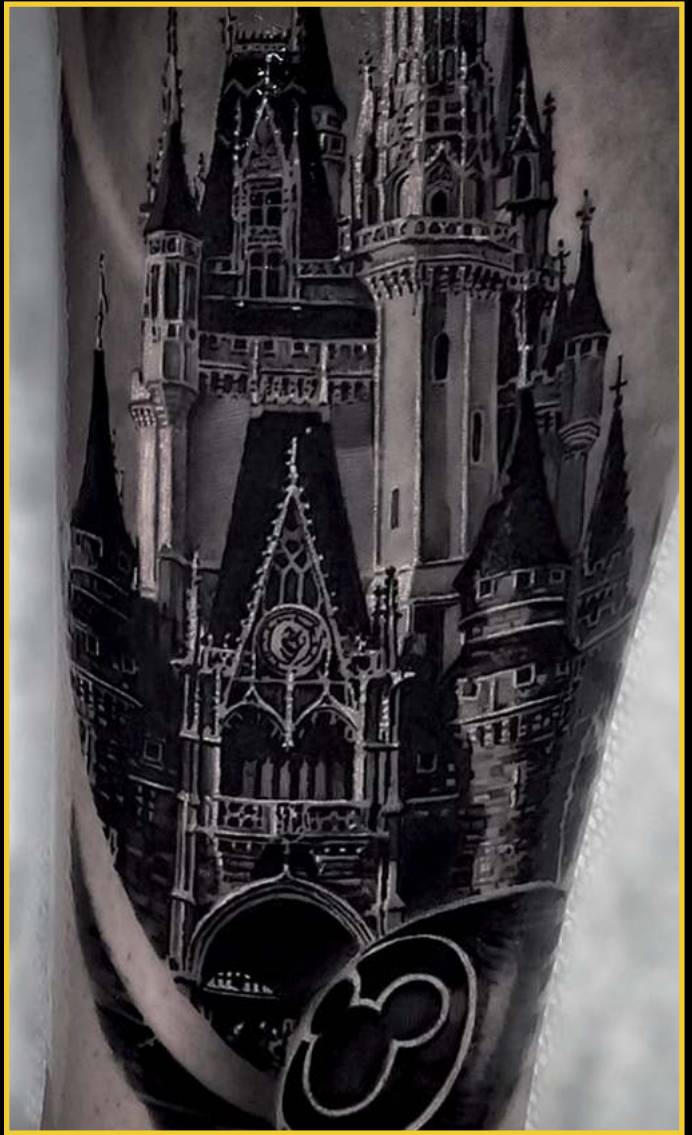
How did the move into tattooing come about?

I was doing all the merch designing for the band. Even at that time, I had it in my head that I really wanted to learn Photoshop because when the end did come I wanted something to transition into. I didn't imagine it would be tattooing though! I was getting tattooed myself, and I knew the same imagery would appeal to our target audience, so I was already creating designs that looked a little bit like tattoos. Then people started saying, "I'd love to get one of those as a tattoo." But I didn't really want someone else tattooing what I'd created, so I figured I should teach myself to do it! As soon as things slowed down in the music business, I went straight into a tattoo apprenticeship in Portsmouth.

Planning for the future like that involves considerable insight and courage.

You should embrace the future. Right now, I'm learning to oil paint, and taking as many oil painting classes as I can (including seminars with Shawn Barber, who is amazing) - because I reckon if you can get twenty or thirty years out of tattooing that's awesome, but you don't want to be in your seventies and relying on a name on a wrist to pay the rent. And the thing is, as I build myself as a painter, my tattooing is evolving as well. If you're not bringing something new and creative to the table, then you're only going to be a hometown hero and you won't be on the main stage. People don't realise the amount of work artists have to put in nowadays, outside the studio. It's phenomenal.





Do you have an art background? Would you say you're naturally talented?

I don't believe in natural talent. I just believe in hard work. I didn't have a formal art education, but when I was playing music I had a lot of time off in the day so I was able to teach myself the skills I needed to transition into the art world. I was lucky in that respect. A lot of people with more conventional jobs don't have that kind of time to learn a new medium.

What was your goal when you first began tattooing?

I wanted to be like Oliver Peck! I was determined to be a great tattooer in the UK. Especially in Portsmouth, with its tattoo history and heritage. I was at a seminar with Bob Tyrell and I was amazed when he mentioned Darren Stares's name. He was saying how much of an influence he was, and I was like, "He was two streets away from me!" He was an absolute pioneer.

How did the move to LA come about?

The main reason was that I was offered a job by Mike DeVries. As far as I'm concerned he's one of the founding fathers of the colour realism movement worldwide, so when he offered me a position there was no way I was going to turn it down. I'm based in Northridge and I couldn't be happier. I've got great customers, I've got the sunshine, I've got an amazing mentor. It's just a dream situation.

Do you plan on staying here?

Now that I'm here, this feels like I'm in my ten year goal. My five year goal was to be one of the top fifty black-and-grey artists in the UK; it depends on who you ask, but I feel that I achieved that. My next goal is to get into the top fifty in the US and finally the top ten. You've got to set yourself high targets to aim for. I'd rather have an impossible dream and chase it wholeheartedly than a mediocre dream that I achieve without feeling fulfilled.

Do you think Americans have a different attitude to tattooing and tattooists?

Good question. Yes, I think they do. It's one of the reasons I like being here. If you're a creative here, you're respected, even celebrated. If you're a creative in the UK, you're 'waiting for a real job'. People wonder when you're going to start taking things seriously.





Do you see tattooing as an art or a craft?

Tattooing isn't the art, it's the dedication that someone puts behind the craft that makes it artistic. Tattooing is just a medium. If you can paint and draw, you can tattoo.

And, conversely, is it important for tattooists to be able to draw well?

Not necessarily. Not if they're comfortable with staying where they are forever. If you just want to tattoo in one shop, with a steady client base, and that's enough for you, then go for it.



Shops like that keep the industry going. It's raw tattooing. Those guys are able to tattoo anything, which to me is amazing. I can't do that! But if you want to turn heads and be the guy who does something new, then yes, you do need to be able to draw well.

Tell us how you developed your 'USP'.

I'd like to say that one day I had an epiphany, but actually it was very deliberately thought out. We had a whole bunch of people who were doing great realism in Portsmouth and they really inspired me to try it. I was pushing to get into the portrait world, but I was hunting for that one thing that I could do that other people weren't doing; something I could do that was unique and individual to me. I was already into animation, especially Disney, and pencil drawing is very much my thing, so I'm definitely a black-and-grey guy. I just knew that if I could do realism, I could do anything. If you can copy a picture, you can translate anything from paper to skin. So that's the approach I took. I turned Disney into a black-and-grey style and went from there. I guess people liked what I was doing, and I'm very happy about that. I remember reading an interview with Megan Jean Morris, where she talked about the importance of finding something new and bringing it to the tattoo industry. In other words, don't try to be somebody else. Be your own person - very VERY well.



Tell us more about how your style has been received.

It's a niche, of a niche, of a niche! You're going into cartoon territory, then Disney territory, then you're changing it slightly. I would say the majority of Disney fans will most likely want brighter coloured tattoos, and there are a lot of people doing that very well. You definitely don't see many people doing black-and-grey realistic Disney! But having said that, it's going to have a shelf life, like everything else. How long will it be popular and how long will it be relevant? I think in ten years' time, I will most likely be a general realism artist, but I'm more than happy to be riding this Disney train right now.

It's clearly something both you and your clients enjoy.

Oh, we'll chat Disney all day! Depending on what they're having I'll try to play the film whilst I tattoo, or we'll at least play the soundtrack. It's cool until I start quoting every line of the dialogue...

And there's clearly a demand for your work.

I'm always on the hunt for big Disney projects. Finding the person who wants a full scale Disney Princess backpiece - that's the problem! Finding people prepared to make the commitment. I won't take an appointment on unless there are multiple sessions booked. If they can't afford it that's cool, but I always advise them to save up and book in when they can; that way they're getting the best of my work and getting my style at that exact moment.



Do your clients generally give you free rein?

I ask for free rein actually. Clients usually present me with an idea of the sort of image they want, and mostly it's a smiling face or it's from the poster shot - cheesy Disney in other words. If you want to capture a movie, whether it's Disney or something else, you have to tell the story of that movie. There is no point in doing the poster shot. It's been done a million times, and you're not trying to sell somebody a ticket. I like to find the most emotional scenes and use those.

How do you build the design?

It depends on the movie and the reference that's available. The older the film, the more drawing I'll have to do. If it's a very old movie, such as *Bambi*, *Alice In Wonderland* or *Snow White*, I'll usually have to do a repaint, where I take the film still that I want to use and make it into a Pixar-style 3D image. That takes about six to eight hours for each piece. So when people book characters from those particular films, I have to be careful to factor in that time; at the end of the day, they're getting an original one-off piece by me. The newer Pixar movies are pretty much pre-made; everything's smooth, everything's done. As long as I can find the perfect screenshot, we're good to go. I will make my own collage, maybe using the body from one film still and the outfit from another, or a made-up scene that represents what we're communicating.

How on earth do you make something that doesn't actually exist look so real?

I like playing around with depth. I use a lot of black... If your black-and-grey isn't dark enough, then good luck in twenty years! That was always drilled into me from the start: "How much black can you put into this piece, without it losing its contrast?" But there's been so many advancements in inks and needles, I can pack white into a piece now and know that it's gonna stick in, unlike twenty years ago!

Do you use any particular techniques to help your tattoos heal and last?

I think the fewer passes, the better. The best tattoos I've seen healed have been done top to bottom, and never revisited. You get in, you get out. Overworking is a huge problem because you can't see close up what the skin's doing. It might look great on the surface, but underneath it'll be chewed. I try to do every tattoo the same way: I'll do a first pass of all of my black and greys, and a second pass of slight greys and what I call rendering - sharpening up and smoothing out, that sort of thing. Then I'll do a third pass of minimal whites, then finish. I don't like to revisit too often. But I strongly believe healing is about application and aftercare in equal measure. If the customer is given bad aftercare advice, then they're not gonna get a good heal. Everybody needs to



work out their heal according to their style of tattooing; a traditional tattoo, for example, will heal differently to a realistic one. I'm very specific with the instructions I give my clients. And I know that if it wasn't for Dermalize and Saniderm I would be spending an extra 25% of my time putting in extra black and compensating for ink loss.



And how about working with different skin types?

That's one of the things that makes tattooing different every single day. Coming to LA and working with all the various skin types here has meant that I've had to change my technique - almost all of it, from how much black I'm using in my tattoos right through to the brand of ink! What you can do in the UK is mind-bending, because everyone has the most amazing skin; you can really do whatever you want and know that it's gonna be a great piece. But if you were to treat every customer in LA like that, you'd be doing a lot of tattoos that would look terrible in five years' time. I made a point of acquiring this kind of knowledge by talking to people before I even left the UK because I wasn't prepared to start working at Mike DeVries's studio and fuck people up! At the end of the day, these pieces have my name on them!

What equipment do you use?

I'm 100% rotary. For the style that I do, it's the perfect machine. I probably could go back to coils, but I'd have to relearn everything. I use Empire Inks. It's a great little company based in Wisconsin and Colt Brown, the owner, couldn't have been more hospitable. And I use FYT needles. Again, the quality is superb and they really care about their artists.

One final question. What's your philosophy of life?

I'm not naturally optimistic, but my life experiences have made me realise that the world is bigger than just me as a person, so I look at every situation and see what I can take away from it in a positive manner. I don't want to carry any negativity with me. I think humility is the biggest attribute you can have in this industry. You need to be humble, you need to realise that you don't know it all.



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AMSTERDAM TATTOO EXPO

It's been a few years since I last visited the Amsterdam Tattoo Convention. I'd heard that it was on its way back to being a great show, with some fine artists and lots of visitors. And so it was with a great sense of anticipation that I packed my bags and headed off to the land of tulips and windmills!

The show is held at the RAI Exhibition and Convention Centre, a little way out from the city centre. It's a large, purpose-built, multifunctional complex of several enormous hangar-style halls, with glass walls that allow in lots of natural light during the daytime. There is ample car parking and the RAI even has its own train and metro station alongside.

The show started on the Friday and ran until the Sunday. More than 400 tattooists from all over the world had made the journey, and within the line-up were some truly amazing names. (See www.tattooexpo.eu/en/amsterdam/2018/participants for the full list.) Horiyoshi V was there, and guest of honour Lyle Tuttle had come all the way from San Francisco. He was a popular attraction, tattooing his signature on fans and always happy to share a witty anecdote or joke. Body mod extremist Matt Gone was also over from the States, to chat with the public and do the thing that he does best. And two tattoo museums had been invited to exhibit at the show – Paul 'Rambo' Ramsbottom's collection and the Rome Tattoo Museum. This was a lovely touch to remind everyone of where tattooing has come from.

The Amsterdam convention had a very relaxed and friendly atmosphere. At the far end of the hall from the entrance was a seating area with a pop-up bar and permanent food outlets. A good choice was on offer – from hot dogs and chips to vegetables and rice – so most dietary requirements were catered for. A low scaffold-framed stage was positioned to the side of the refreshments area and throughout the weekend the sound of semi-acoustic entertainment floated around the large hall. There were plenty of staff around throughout the event to ensure that things ran smoothly and Gideon the organiser (owner of Coldskin tattoo supplies) was always on hand, with a smile, to solve any problems that people might have had.

Every night there were tattoo competitions. The various categories did occasionally seem a little confused – with a black and grey portrait of Charlie Chaplin appearing in the traditional section, for instance, which was somewhat odd – but the whole thing was extremely well supported and the queue to present work to the judges seemed to go on forever. The pieces on show covered the whole spectrum from truly amazing to terrible. Highlights for me were the bodysuits from the guys from Taiwan and a black and grey chest piece by Prokopis Athanasiou of Sins & Signs Tattoo (Cyprus).



1. great poster design 2. daniel luzardo, inknovae tattoo studio (argentina)

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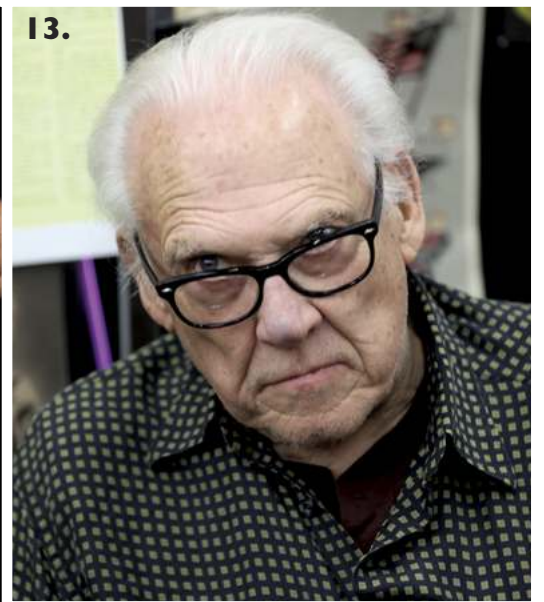
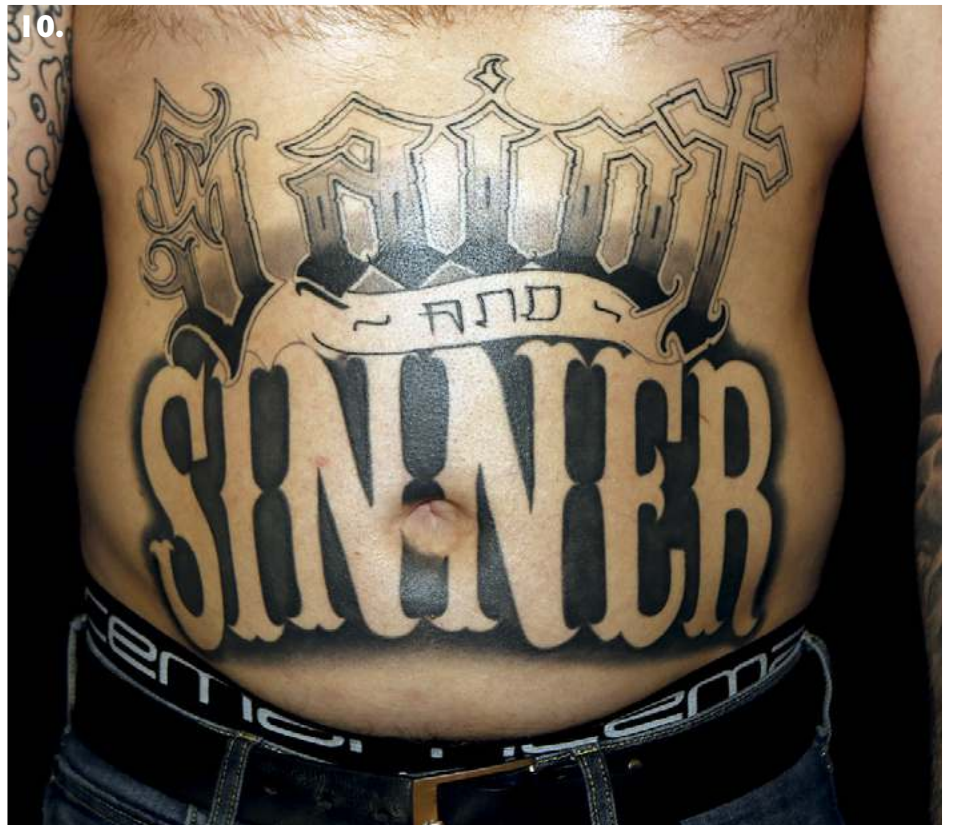


The days passed quickly for some, and slowly for others. Some traders spoke confidently of good sales and decent profits, whilst others were not so fortunate with the weekend's business. This is a big show in one Europe's most attractive tourist destination cities, but for some reason it just didn't seem to be popular with visitors – and that was a real shame. Attendance was definitely on the low side and many artists could be seen sitting looking forlornly at the passers-by, hoping for a customer. One very good tattooist friend of mine from China told me he had only managed two small pieces of Kanji script all weekend, making his trip a financial disaster. Surprisingly, none of the major Amsterdam tattoo studios were in attendance and it would appear that this show is not supported by the local tattoo community, all of which begs the question... why?

Years ago this was a truly great convention that everyone looked forward to attending. Somehow something has changed. The current organiser Gideon puts in a huge amount of effort, bringing over the likes of Lyle Tuttle and other special guests plus some outstanding artists. Maybe it's the uncertain economic situation throughout Europe playing a part? Without more visitors, this show is going to struggle – but it certainly won't be for lack of trying...



- 3. horitaru, (south korea)
- 4. nick limpens, royal ink (netherlands)
- 5. javhier estrada, italy
- 6. prokopis athanasiou, sins and signs (cyprus)
- 7. kalie, kalie art tattoo (france)
- 8. horiyoshi v - tenkiru



- 9. chris papadakis, moth and rose (greece)
- 10. david, bright ink (sweden)
- 11. artist unknown
- 12. dmitriy babahin (russia)
- 13. lyle tuttle
- 14. artist unknown
- 15. sebastian carvajal, carvajal Tattoo (colombia)
- 16. artist unknown
- 17. artist unknown
- 18. matt gone

14.



15.



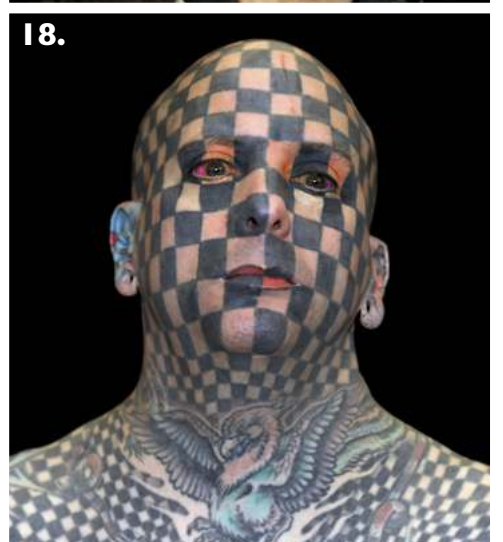
16.



17.



18.





19. smyku, deadbody tattoo (poland)
20. horitaru, south korea
21. dmitriy babahin (russia)
22. boris, poland juniorink (poland)
23. koji (japan)



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RECLAIM THE DOTS

A new book by Björn Lignell

It began as a surreal in-joke between friends... and it's turned into a stunning new book of tattooists' art. We talked to Swedish tattoo fan Björn Lignell about his intriguing project and the charity that is benefiting from the proceeds.

Hi Björn. Tell us a little about yourself.

Oh, what can I say? I'm 45. I live in Gothenburg, which is the second largest city in Sweden. I'm just an ordinary dude, with a wife and two children. In my work I support people living with mental health problems or addictions, helping them return to independence, be part of society and live the life they want to live.



Tell us about your passion for tattoos.

Oh man! I've always had an eye for a good tattoo. I got my first ink in 1989. I've never really earned enough to get all the tattoos I would want... but in 2001 I got an extra job just so that I could save up enough to get a piece from Filip Leu the following year. There's something about Japanese-style tattoos. And meeting that dude, with his humility and knowledge, was the coolest thing I think I've ever done. I probably average about one tattoo a year now. That's it. I wish it was more...

What is it about Japanese tattooing that you love so much?

All of it! The water, the rocks, the gods, the heroes, the animals, the myths, the imagination that goes into it, the colours, the overall composition of every tattoo... you name it.





So what is *Reclaim the Dots* all about?

Let me tell you a little story about how it all started. My buddy Kalle Nord was tattooing me one day, when all of a sudden this random thought popped into my head: What's happened to all the dots we used to see on Japanese rocks? Out of the blue, just like that. So I asked Kalle, "What's happened to all the dots on the rocks?" We didn't discuss it in any depth, but we both agreed they're pretty much gone – or at least there are a lot fewer of them than there used to be. And after that, I started searching for them! I found some, but not enough for my liking. So I started my Instagram account [@reclaimthedots](https://www.instagram.com/reclaimthedots) – Sick Art with Rocks 'n' Dots – partly as a joke with my friend, but also because I was genuinely interested in what the hell had happened to the dots. Some serious nerdy shit!



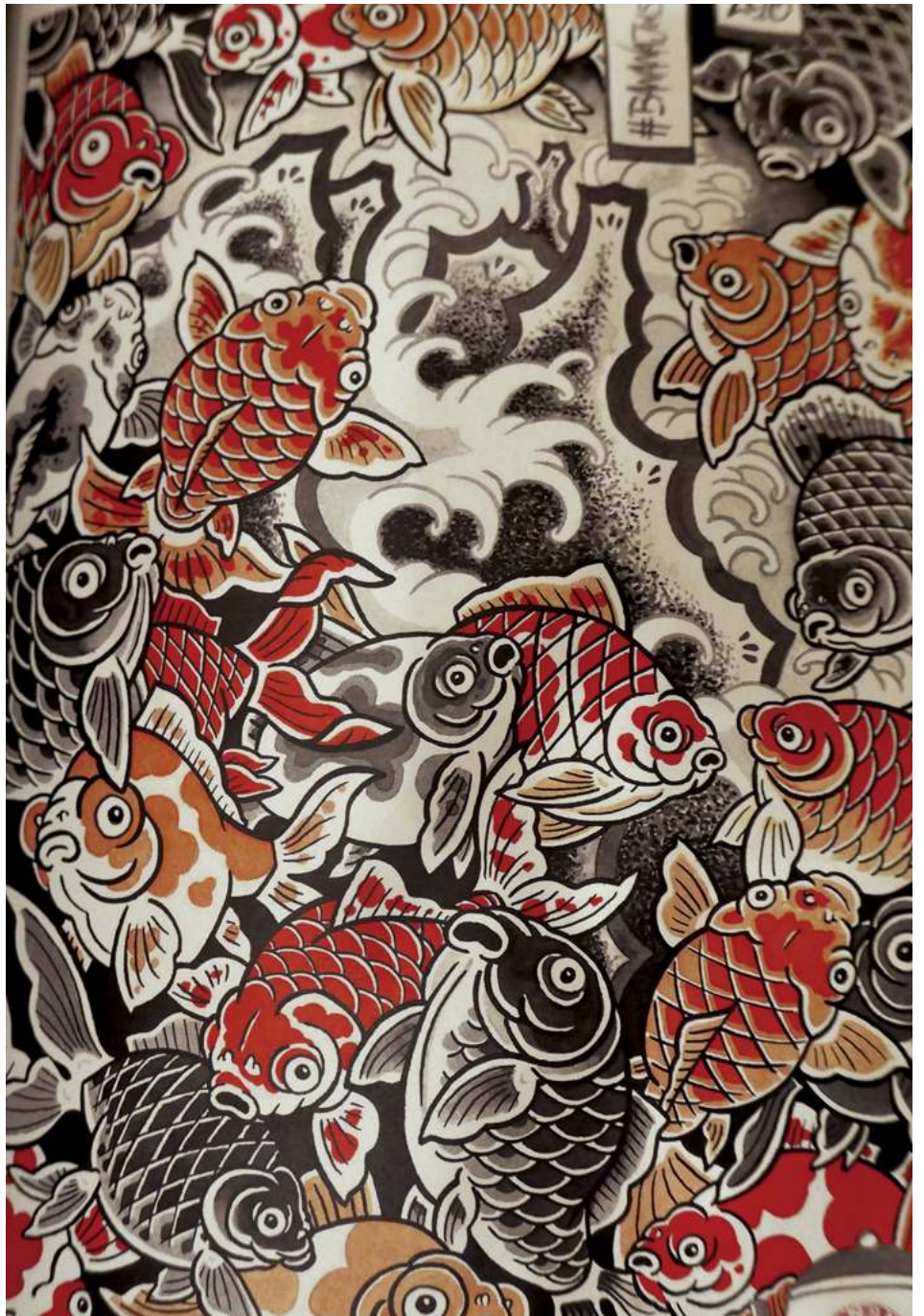


Do you know anything about the origin of the dots? Or why they are disappearing?

No man, I've haven't got a clue. I asked Alex Reinke [*specialist in Japanese tattooing – ed*] if he could tell me more about the whole thing, but even he didn't know. He said you'd have to go back to the woodblocks – to the source. Honestly mate, I don't know if they've really disappeared... Maybe I just haven't been looking hard enough. The dots are certainly there. In fact sometimes it seems like there are more of them than ever!

Ash 'Harry Potter' Davies collaborated with you on *Reclaim the Dots*...

Yeah. A very devoted, awesome and humble man, that dude. Real tattoo family. He asked me like it would be the most natural thing in the world to make a book together. Why? He probably just saw the number of followers I had, and the sick



stuff I was posting. I was sceptical about the idea at first. I thought it felt weird to make money out of other people's paintings. But genius that he is, he suggested it could be for charity.

Which charity have you chosen?

All the profits will be donated to Swedish charity Bröstkancer Förbundet, (www.brostkancerforbundet.se) Recently I lost two people to breast cancer – both my biological mother and the woman I call Mom (the person who made me who I am today). My biological mother had only just passed away when Ash suggested the idea of the charity. My Mom struggled for twenty years with the disease and its complications. She was involved in almost the whole process of creating the book but unfortunately she didn't quite live long enough to see the finished result.

How long did it take to compile the book?

About a year!

And how did you decide which artists to include?

Choosing the artists was easy! Instagram is full of talented tattooists with the right attitude. Of course I had a list of big names that I really wanted in the book, but at the same time I also wanted to include people who were not so famous. And I was keen to have contributions from both sexes. I asked half a dozen artists to begin with, then it rapidly grew. I asked Ash if he thought 50 was enough, but he said you need more. When I had 75, he said try for 100. Then suddenly I had 115, plus interest from even more, and he said just go for it. I then aimed for 138 (Misfits!) and ended up at 144.



What instructions did you give the tattooists?

"Do whatever you want, as long as it has stones, rocks or mountains with dots, and it's at least A4 in size."

Did you have any tattooists turn down the invitation?

Some artists didn't respond to my request, but only three gave me an outright no. They were actually people whose work I would have loved to have in the book. Dudes I've looked up to for ages. I talked with them for a long time about it, and tried to persuade them, but in the end they had to refuse because of a lack of time. But it wasn't a big problem for me, because there were so many others who had said yes.

We love the book cover.

The cover of the book is Ash, all Ash! The only thing I especially wanted was the font like the band Suicidal Tendencies, and I got that. The cover just shows that it's all about Rocks 'n' Dots.

How else did Ash support you during the making of this book?

When it comes to making books, I have no experience at all – I'd never done anything like this before – so you can imagine the number of questions I was having to ask him. But he supported me all the way. I do wonder if there were times when he might have regretted ever getting involved...!

How did you divide the tasks and responsibilities between you?

Easy! I was responsible for compiling the artist list, and it was my job to receive the paintings. I then scanned and photographed everything and sent it all to Ash. Everything else was in his hands. He worked the magic!

And what was the most difficult part of the whole project?

The waiting. And not being able to give anyone firm dates about anything. That was the hardest part for me.

You also run an account dedicated to Fudo Myoo. Are you planning a Fudo Myoo book too?

I'm just helping Roberto Borsi with that page. Unfortunately I haven't been so active on it since doing *Reclaim the Dots*. But a Fudo Myoo book would be really fun to get involved in. What about it, Ash? [Laughs] Gotta get me a Fudo Myoo tat. Love that dude!

Where can we buy your book?

At Ash "Harry Potter" Davies's awesome bookstore:

www.atonementbooks.com

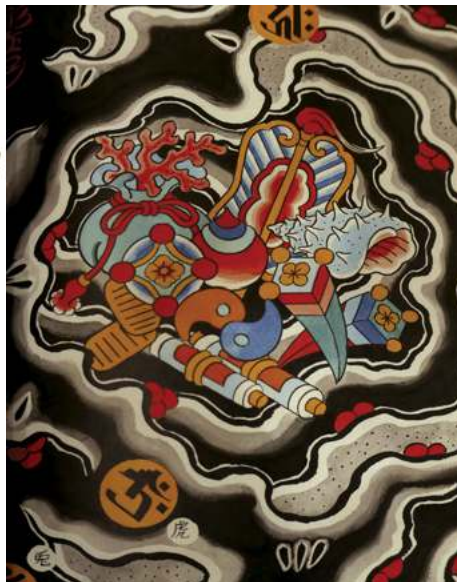
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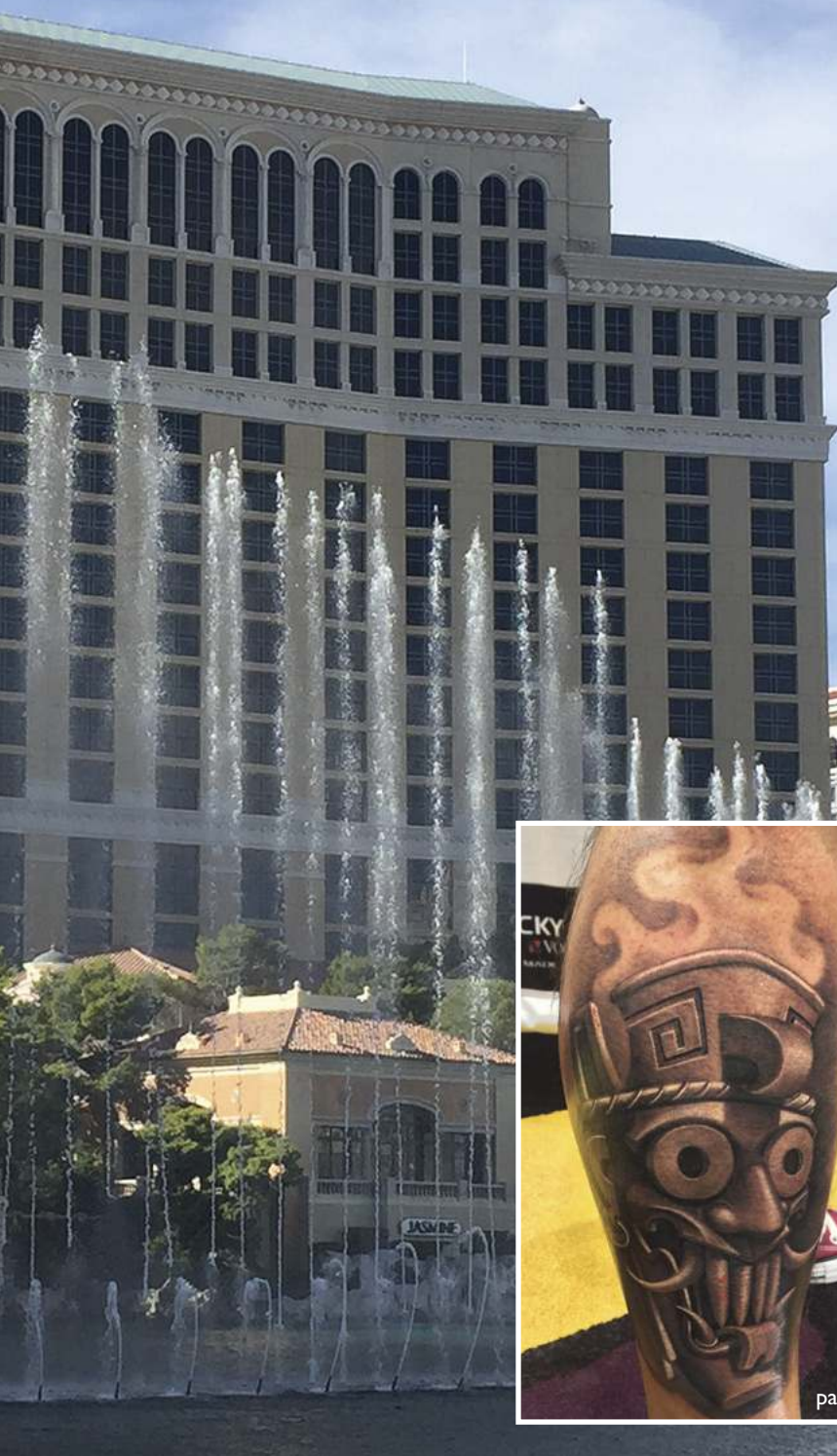


“Welcome to Disneyland for Grown-Ups,” the cab driver said, as I exhaustedly slumped into the passenger seat and we drove away from the airport. He wasn’t wrong; Las Vegas is a playground, an assault on the senses. It’s a city that doesn’t slow down. Non-stop gambling, shopping, eating, drinking and partying are never more than a dice’s throw away. There’s a 12-storey slot machine (the world’s largest) that doubles as a zip wire attraction, a restaurant that lets you eat free if you weigh over 350lbs and casinos that are designed to get lost in... **Was this REALLY the best place to host a professional tattoo convention? Read on to find out!**

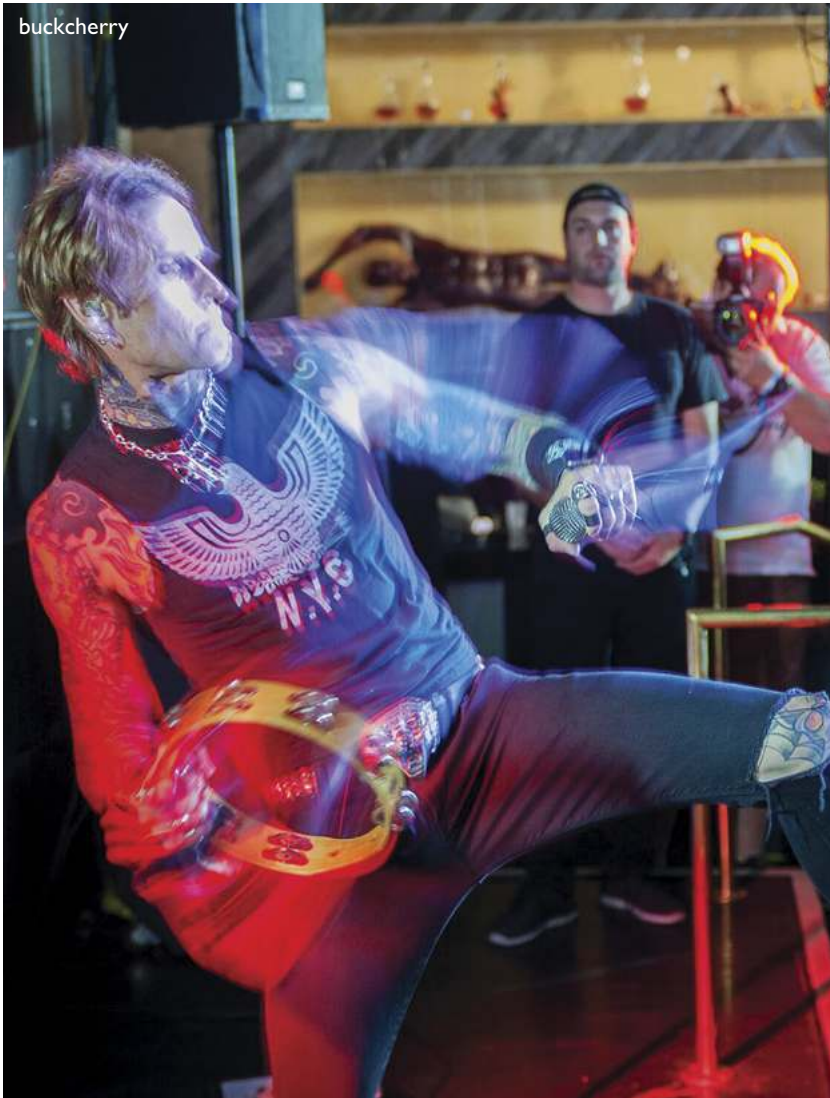
The World Tattoo Industry Trade Show is organised by the Coalition for Tattoo Safety (CTS), an industry body whose members comprise tattooists, manufacturers, suppliers and tattoo fans. The CTS’s mission is to bring the tattoo industry together with a unified voice so that common sense guidelines can be established to cover every aspect of professional practice. And that was the premise behind this show – to provide a forum for artists to network, learn and see the latest products. Tattooing was of course in the mix too, but this was to be an event like no other.

World Tattoo Industry Trade Show

Report and photos by Lizzy



buckcherry



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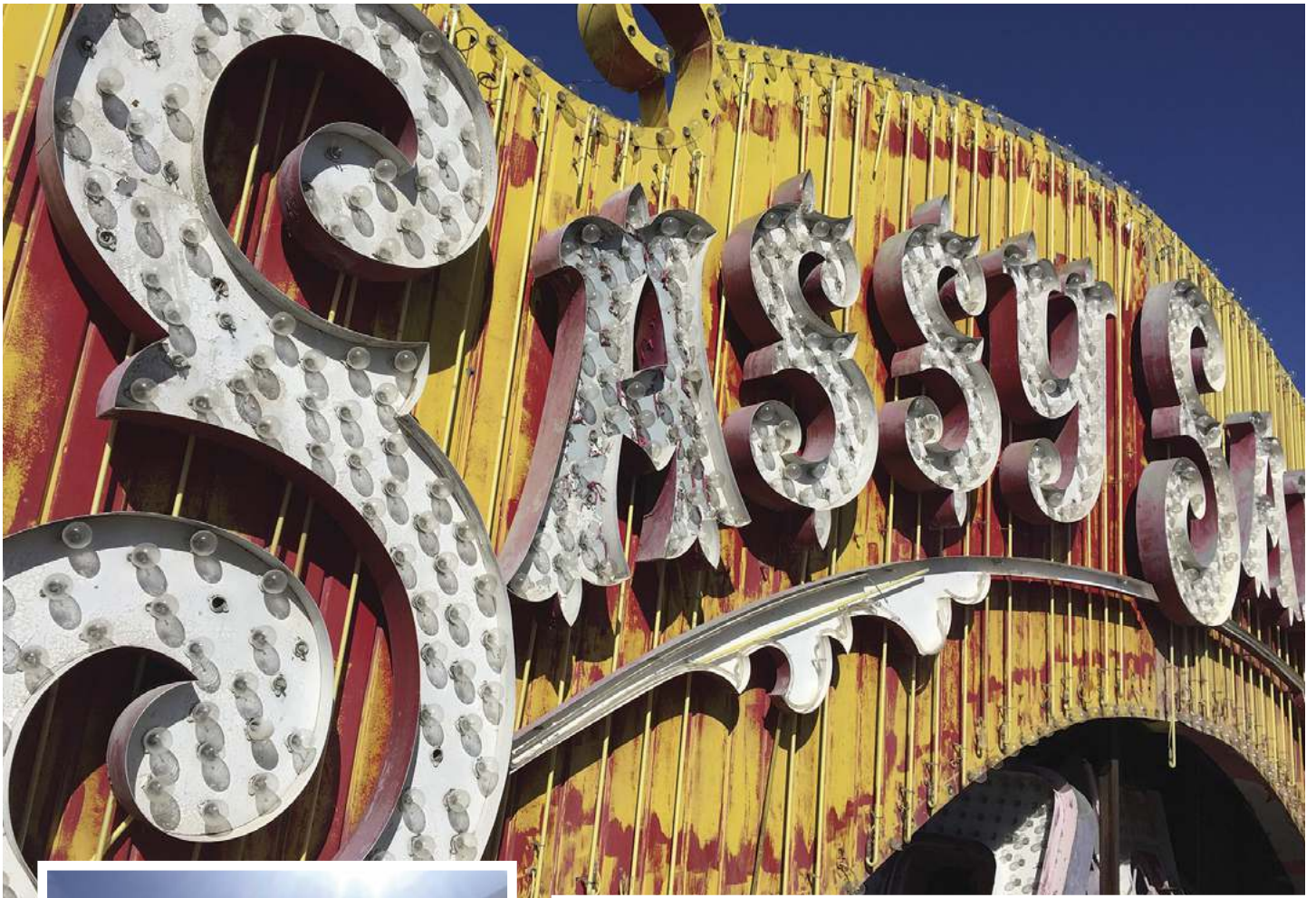


igor mitrenga



The four-day extravaganza started with the fancy dress opening night on Wednesday October 31st (Tatt2ween!) hosted by CTS president Mario Barth, who certainly knows how to put on a great party. Tattooists, traders, the public and other CTS members gathered in the bar for free drinks before heading into an adjacent club room for live music courtesy of Tommy Lee and Buckcherry. But as the party got going my jet-lag kicked in, so regrettably I had to be sensible and skulk back, still in fancy dress, to my hotel.

The trade show was held on a mezzanine level of the Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, in the heart of the Las Vegas Strip. The first two days of the show were solely for industry professionals; the remaining two days were solid tattooing. And if you fancied a break from all things tattoo-related, the casino was just an escalator ride away and there were many eateries, attractions and shops nearby.



On the Thursday and Friday, there was a very full schedule of tattooist seminars. With respected peers such as Jeff Gogue, Steve Butcher, Jess Yen and Shawn Barber taking the stage, the turnout was high (and all participants received a certificate of

jesse levitt



attendance to display on their studio wall). The seminars themselves were varied and interesting, covering everything from tattoo design and tattooing techniques to first aid and business management. I couldn't help noticing a difference between the enthusiastic participation here and the sometimes lacklustre attendance at similar seminars at UK conventions. Is it a cultural thing? A difference in the American business mindset? Whatever the reason, the tattooists at this show were more than happy to seize the opportunity to learn tricks of the trade from artists they look up to.



rodrigo catuaba



jess yen seminar

On Saturday, the doors of the tattooing area opened to the public. The space itself was well lit and the layout of the booths was interesting and really rather unique: as well as the traditional length of divided booths, there were tables with no dividers that spanned the whole width of the room, plus a further set of concentric squares of tables (which housed the Intenze Ink pro team). It was certainly different – and the sponsored-artist banners hanging from the ceiling made it all look like a rather amazing combination of the New York Stock Exchange and the Great Hall at Hogwarts! It's so refreshing when conventions think outside the box in terms of their layout, and the wide walkways of this particular format also ensured there were no bottlenecks or overly crowded spaces – essential for everyone's comfort, with the desert temperatures outside soaring into the high twenties (even in November). It was also nice not to be swamped with entertainment – after all, how could anything compete with the sights and sounds (and musical fountains!) of the Las Vegas Strip? The buzz of tattoo needles was excitement enough.



bob tyrrell



matt brown



There were around three hundred tattooists present, both local and international names. As was to be expected from a show organised by some of the best in the business, the standard of work was incredibly high. Surprisingly, there were only three very straightforward competition categories – Best Black and Grey, Best Colour, and Best of Day – but predictably, each of them attracted a very large number of entries. It was so good to see a show focus on the tattooing instead of the trinkets.



matteus lewinsky



anjelika kartasheva



tuzinho tattoo



marco close



Another pleasant change was seeing this show give support to traders and tattooists in equal measure. The traders' stands were completely separate from the artists' booths, and positioned in an open area that greeted the public as they soon as they entered the show. Unlike the tattooing area, the traders' area could be accessed free of charge. Giving these companies the chance to showcase their products in this way was a great acknowledgement of their role and importance – something that doesn't always seem to get recognised at other tattoo conventions. And on a personal note, it was so nice for me to be able to meet US business contacts I've talked to on the phone or emailed across the pond!

As with everything in Vegas, this show came and went all too quickly. For the CTS it was the first venture of its kind, and it was a brave move that definitely paid off. The whole concept worked really well. We're certainly looking forward to next year's event, which promises to be even bigger and brighter! If you're a tattooist eager to develop your professional practice, be more closely involved in the industry and network with some of the best, then the World Tattoo Industry Trade Show is a must for you.

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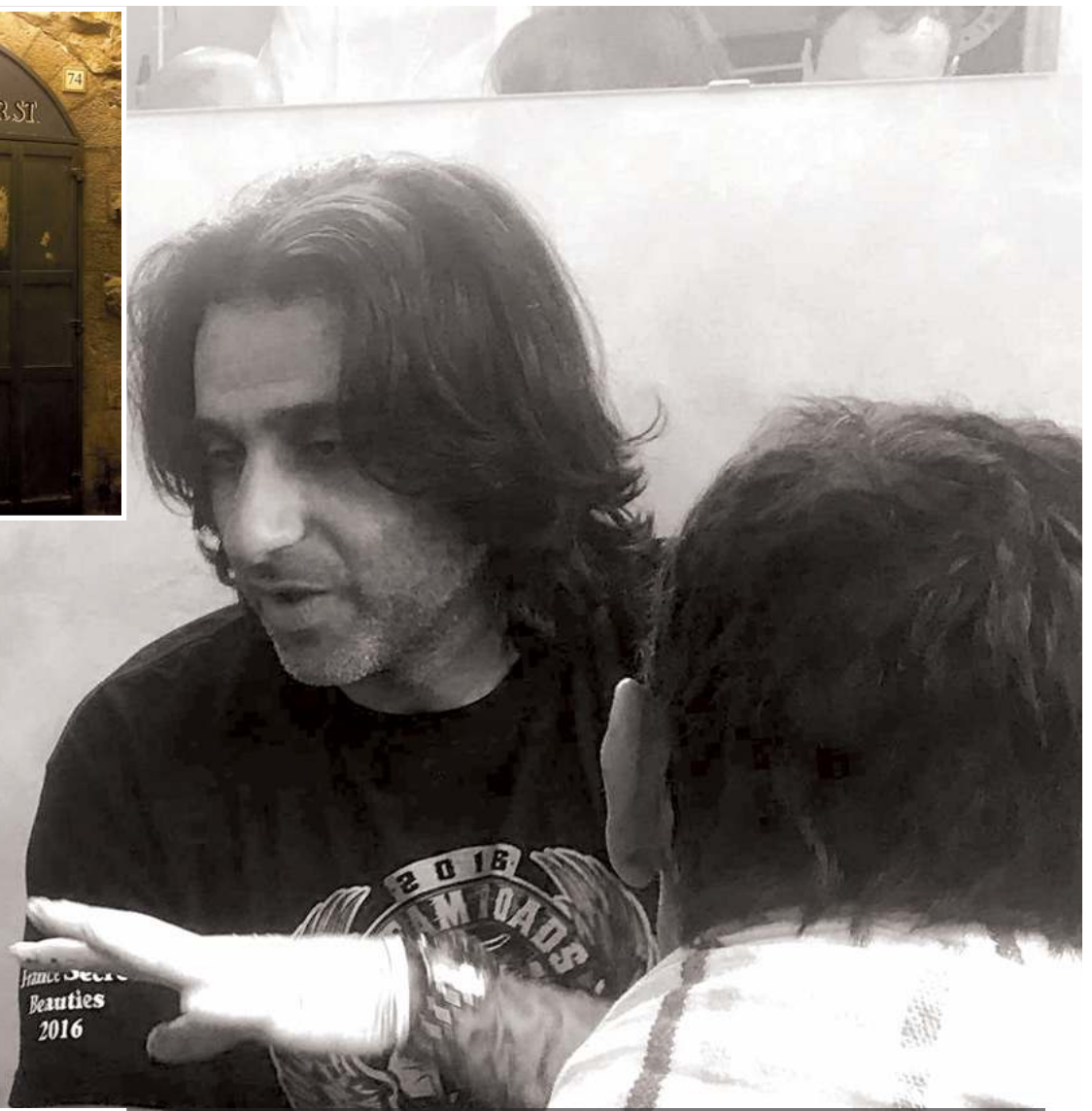
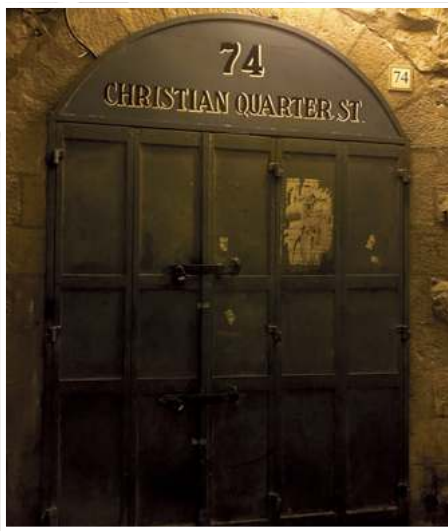
Interview by Perry • Pictures courtesy of Marc Newton

COPTIC TATTOOS IN ESSEX

Marc Newton brings Jerusalem pilgrimage tattoos to the UK

A little piece of Jerusalem has come to Essex. After striking up a friendship with pilgrimage tattooist Wassim Razzouk in the Holy Land, Marc Newton of Skin Sorcerer in Maldon is tattooing eager customers with the same traditional Christian emblems here in the UK. He's even using the Razzouk family's original centuries-old wooden stencil blocks. This isn't just a 'heritage' project; it's living tattoo history.



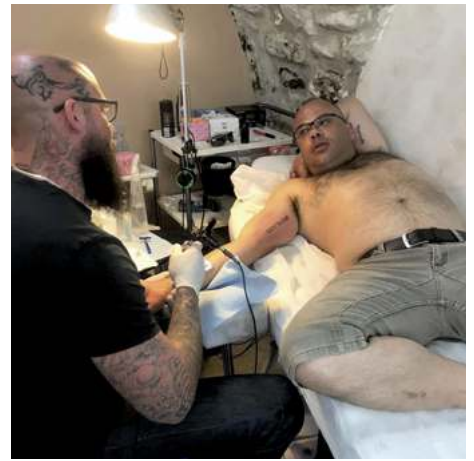


We featured an in-depth interview with Wassim Razzouk in Total Tattoo Issue 156. Modern-day pilgrims flock to his historic shop near Jerusalem's Jaffa Gate to get inked with the very same designs that would have been offered to the pilgrims of old. At busy times, such as Easter, more than a hundred people can be tattooed in one day. Tattooing in the Razzouk family goes back seven hundred years, originating with the simple tiny crosses that were (and still are) inked on to the wrists of Egyptian Copts as a mark of their Christianity.

Today, Wassim tattoos pilgrims with religious imagery ranging from crosses of various types (often with pilgrimage dates alongside) to intricately detailed Christian iconography. Many of the designs are transferred to the skin using beautiful hand-carved olive-wood stencil blocks that have been in use for centuries and were brought to Jerusalem from Egypt by his great grandfather.

As Wassim explained to Total Tattoo, "Pilgrim tattoos don't make you a 'real' Christian or a 'real' pilgrim, but they can give you a sense of belonging and protection, and they have the power to change you. As with any tattoo, they remind you of something that is inside you; something that you also want to show to other people. For our clients, these tattoos have a value not because they're created by a particular tattooist or because the design is especially artistic, but because of the special history and meaning that comes with them."

It's an immense privilege for Marc to have been offered the opportunity to become a representative of the Razzouk family here in the UK. I asked him how it came about. "I'd heard about the Razzouk studio and its history, and I wanted us make a trip to Israel as a family and all get tattooed. So we waited until the kids were old enough, and planned our trip. Wassim and I got on really well. He actually has a really 'English' sense of humour! While he was tattooing me we talked about his idea of getting other tattooists to work with him. He told me he wanted people eventually to be able to take blocks back home with them and continue his work around the world."



stage. And to be fair, neither had I. But there it was. Wassim had decided it was going to be me, and I ended up coming home with a certificate from him and one of his blocks. I did that one block on almost everyone I know! Wassim was amazed that I'd done so many in such a short space of time. And because I gave him a cut of every tattoo, he realised I was trustworthy."

I ask Marc to describe his agreement with Wassim. "The deal is that he still owns the blocks. They're ancient, and they belong to his family; they're just entrusted to me. We don't have a written contract as such. We're doing it on the basis of being friends. To be honest it's not about the money. It's about the honour of continuing the tradition."

"Wassim has sent me some modern blocks too. These are made from the same olive wood and hand-finished by a craftsman in Bethlehem. I can change the designs slightly, and maybe even leave out an element or two, but obviously I can't alter the sizes or add to the designs, although I can sometimes combine a couple of blocks. Anything I'm not sure of, I shoot Wassim a quick message and he gets straight back with a yes or no. I respect whatever he says."

Once Marc got more blocks, things really began to take off. The smaller Jerusalem Cross and the St George and the Dragon design proved especially popular. After a while a call came through from Wassim asking if Marc would like to come to Jerusalem to cover for him and keep the Razzouk studio running while he went away travelling. This was an incredible honour. Marc told me, "My sons came with me to help me out, but we were



"I've always been quite impulsive," Marc continues, "and if I want to do something I just kind of jump straight on it... so the second I got back from Israel I started messaging Wassim and asking when I could go and work with him. My wife Tanya and I went over initially for about ten days, staying in a basic apartment above the Razzouk studio."

So what was it like working as a pilgrimage tattooist in Jerusalem? "Working in Wassim's shop was exactly like working in my shop twenty years ago. Non-stop bangers! So Wassim was really happy that I'd been tattooing forever and had done all that street shop stuff – bang, next one, bang, next one. And I can still do it. I can set up and break down really quickly. It was actually during that trip that he decided he wanted me to be the one to bring the blocks back to the UK and start the process of carrying on his work in other countries."

"But to be honest," Marc admits, "I don't think he had really thought it all through at that





knackered! It was never ending. An onslaught. We were open from 11am to 7pm, and there'd often be about ten people coming in together all wanting to be tattooed. Customers were coming from all over the world and most of them didn't speak any English. Also, it's traditional to get your tattoo on the last day of your pilgrimage so we'd often get half a dozen people rushing in to get tattooed an hour before their coach was due to leave!"

I was curious to know whether Marc himself is a religious person. "No, I'm not," he tells me. "But I find it all extremely interesting. Wassim is a Coptic Christian [the Coptic Orthodox Church is the main Christian religion in Egypt and one of the oldest Christian Churches outside the Holy Land - ed]. When I was working in Jerusalem I reckon about 90% of the customers were religious or getting tattooed for religious reasons - whereas here at the moment I think 90% of my customers are tattoo collectors wanting to collect a cool tattoo with a meaning. I have, however, been able to tattoo a number of people who desperately wanted a religious tattoo using the original imagery but for whatever reason were unable to make the trip to Jerusalem - which is of course exactly what Wassim had in mind." Marc has tattooed non-Christians with these designs; he's also aware that for some people, there is a conflict between their religious faith and the whole idea of getting tattooed. I ask him for his own take on this. "Basically," he says, "I think it comes down to your own personal beliefs and the culture that you choose to adopt as your own."

So what is it like to tattoo using these blocks? "I do it in exactly the same way as at Wassim's," Marc explains. "It's not easy. We use a traditional ink pad to get the ink onto the block. The block doesn't bend like stencil paper though, so you are limited as to where the tattoo can be placed on the body. And because it's not proper stencil ink you can't get the stencil to stay. One wipe and it's gone! So you have to learn to tattoo without cleaning the area until the whole thing is finished. At first I found it really difficult, trying to get everything



exact, but the more you do it the more relaxed you become, and the easier it is."

I ask Marc if there are any machines that suit the process particularly well? "Because these are quite simple designs," he explains, "anything that can put in a decent line is suitable. When I go to Jerusalem I don't usually take much in the way of equipment with me. I just use whatever Wassim has there. I can pretty much tattoo with anything. These tattoos are quick to do and quick to heal."



The big question in my mind is about hygiene. Is this an issue, with the blocks being used over and over again? "You never use the blocks on any open skin," Marc is quick to point out. "It's obviously unavoidable that the blocks are going to be pressed on to one person's skin and then on to someone else, but as for the tattooing itself, it's exactly the same procedure - with exactly the same hygiene safeguards - as it would be for any other tattoo. For me, this is like going back to what tattooing was originally all about. It's making a mark with lots of symbolism and meaning. And if you change anything about it, it will no longer be authentic."

Authenticity in tattooing is very important to Marc. He tells me there have been times, looking back, when he has felt resentful about the general over-commercialisation of the tattoo industry. But now he's philosophical about it. "It is what it is. I used to be angry about all the TV shows and the big business side of things, but nothing's going to change that now."



I ask Marc how he first got into tattooing. He recalls being fascinated by all the tattoos that his stepfather, uncles and family friends had. One of his uncles even possessed some tattoo equipment and dabbled a bit himself. "I enjoyed drawing and art as a child," he tells me, "and as soon as I saw those tattoos I knew they were something I liked!" Marc was going to become a carpenter, following in the family tradition, but this was during the 90s and halfway through his carpentry apprenticeship the recession hit. "Carpentry work was thin on the ground, so I decided this was my opportunity to move into tattooing. I actually swapped my woodworking tools for the tattoo machines my uncle had. I messed about on myself and played around at home for a while. Then Peter Palmer opened up a shop in Chelmsford and the guy helping him was looking to move on but didn't want to leave Peter in the lurch... so I got kind of pushed into his place! I started helping out between odd carpentry jobs."

Marc stayed with Peter for about a year before moving to the seaside town of Southend, to work alongside Tom Spence next to the football ground. It was here that he really cut his teeth, building up speed and turning out the tattoos. "I was thrown in at the deep end. Tom would be off wheeling and



dealing and I would be left to run the shop and do everything. I did loads of tattoos every day, seven days a week. I really loved it, but eventually it was time to move on so I decided to open my own place here in Maldon. I started in a small shop at the top of the high street. When this bigger shop became available and I took the chance and I've been here twenty five years now." I ask Marc why he chose Maldon. "There was Peter in Chelmsford and Dave Ross was in Colchester... In those days nobody opened within ten miles of another studio," he explains, "so I checked and made sure I didn't tread on anyone's toes."



"For the first ten years of my working life," Marc continues, "I kept my head down and just focussed on being the best I could. I went to the Dunstable shows but apart from that I kept myself to myself. Then after a while I started to go to more conventions. It was like I got a second wind. I saw what other people





very happy with the way I have developed the project here and I think he may well get future ambassadors to come and work with me so that I can show them this side of the process. There is now also a female tattooist in America who has started tattooing customers with the blocks, but I think she's doing far fewer tattoos than me. But it's not a competition. And after all, I've got a very large clientele going back twenty five years!"

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If you are interested in getting an authentic religious tattoo from Marc, he will be attending The Brighton Tattoo Convention and Total Tattoo's Big North Tattoo Show in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



were doing and that enthused me to really push to get better. Before, I think I was just happy to be in a street shop in my own little bubble. Tattooists starting today have all that influence readily available all the time. There is so much more information and equipment out there nowadays. In the past, if you wanted to earn more money you just had to tattoo quicker. We would maybe make it a little smaller or miss out a bit of detail... anything to make it faster. Tattoos were just tattoos. Nowadays people are prepared to pay for quality!"



Marc feels proud to be rooted in the old traditions of tattooing as well as being very much part of today's scene. "I feel I have a foot in both camps. But I am also wise enough to know that I can't keep up with the standard of what some of the young kids are doing now. They're amazing artists and I have never been at that level. But I'm still here! To be fair, when I think back to my tattoo apprenticeship, I was really told fuck all. I felt lucky if I got to look at an old Spaulding and Rogers catalogue."

And what are the future plans for Marc's collaboration with Wassim? "Eventually I think Wassim would like to have more people around world doing the block tattoos," he tells me, "but he's said that I will be the only person in England. Finding the right tattooists is a slow process; he needs to 'vet' them, and they need to go and work with him so that they can both get to know each other. So he can only build it up gradually. But I know he's



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lindsay williams, kings tattoo



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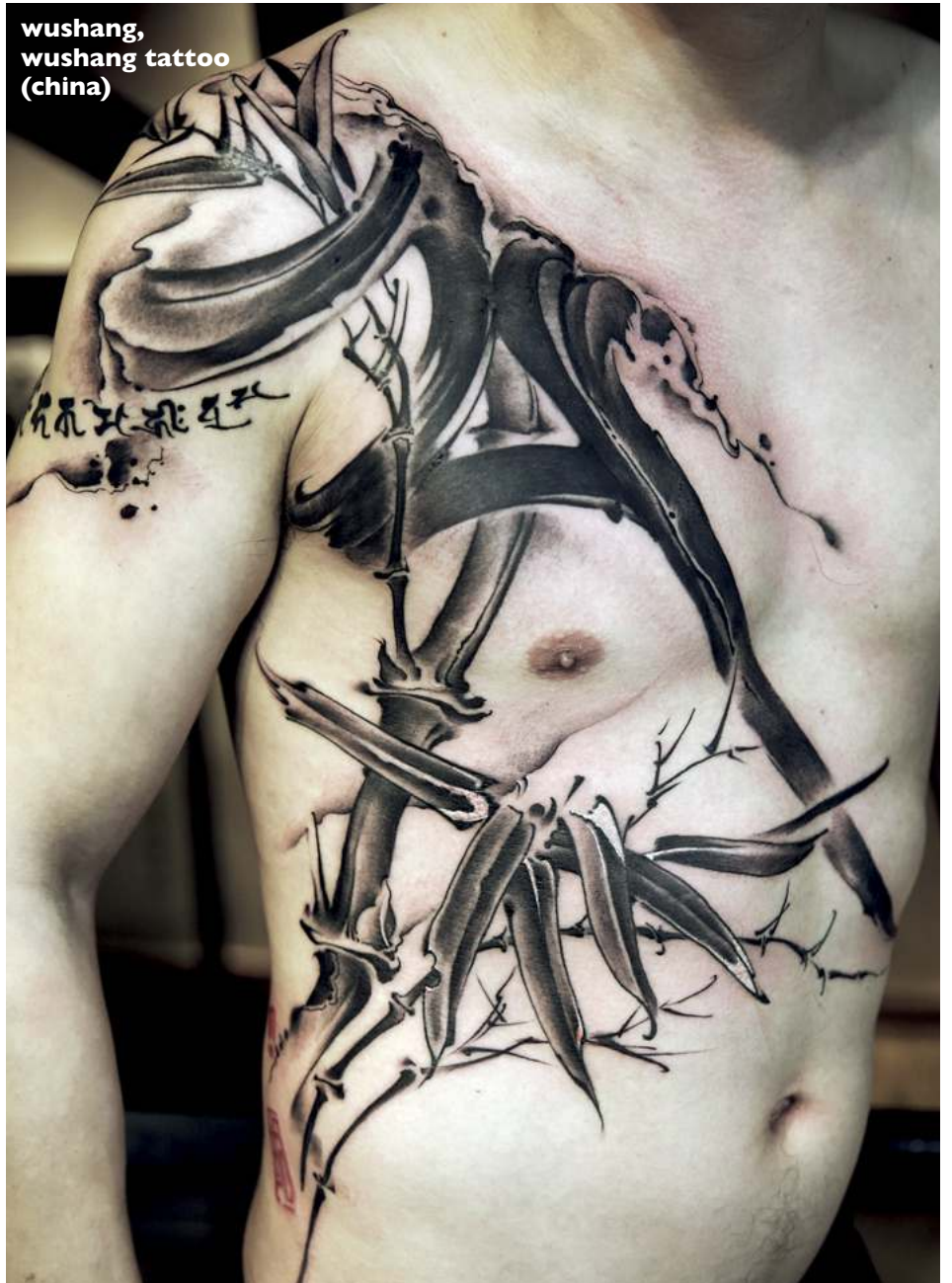
tiggy, briar rose



lady billie, sanctum tattoo studio



wushang,
wushang tattoo
(china)



kemsley whittie sea,
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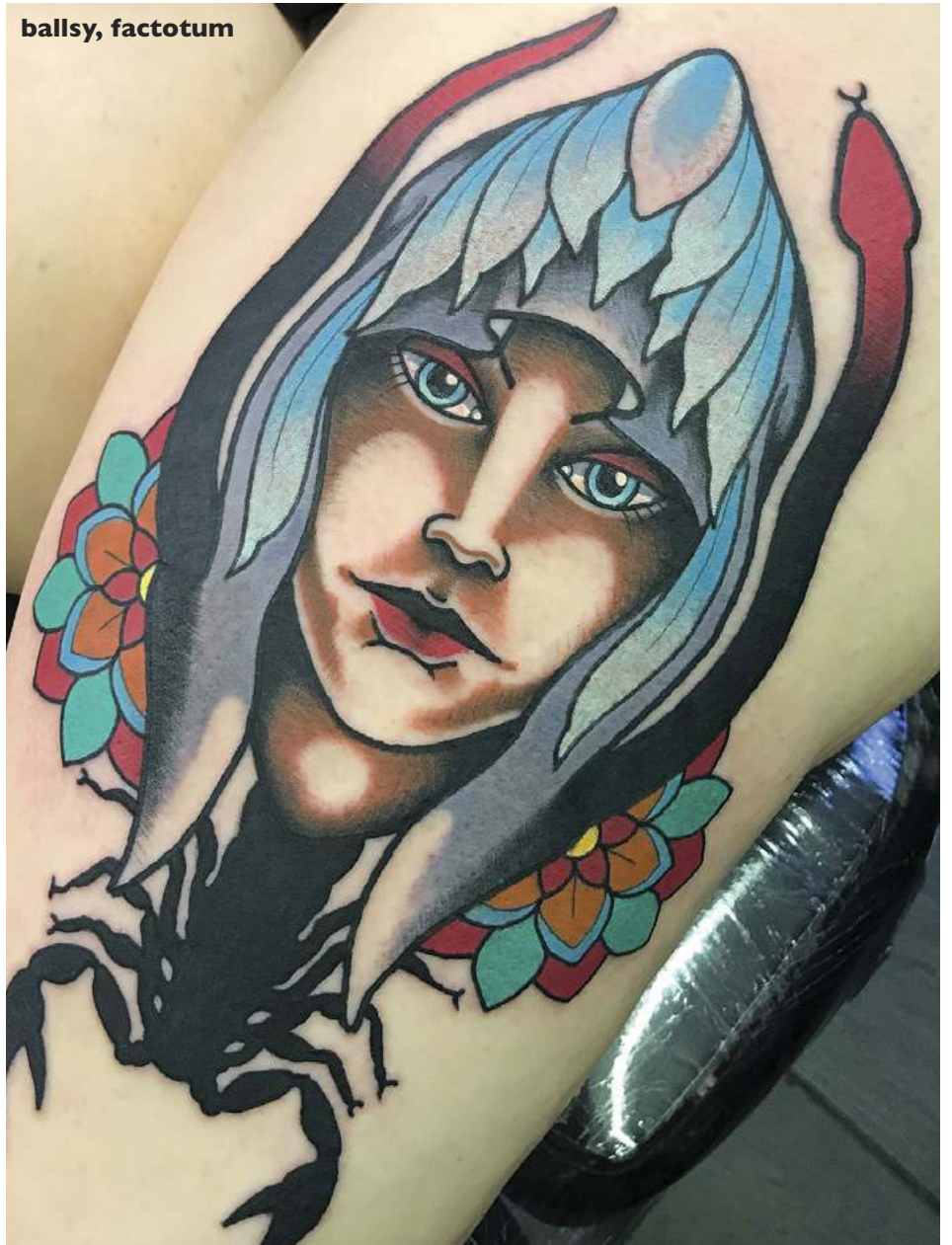


steven mostyn, memories and mischief (germany)



pete b, renaissance

ballsy, factotum



john paul, fine line tattoo



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trawa,
modern electric tattoo co



geezy, inkdependent



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kuldeni melok



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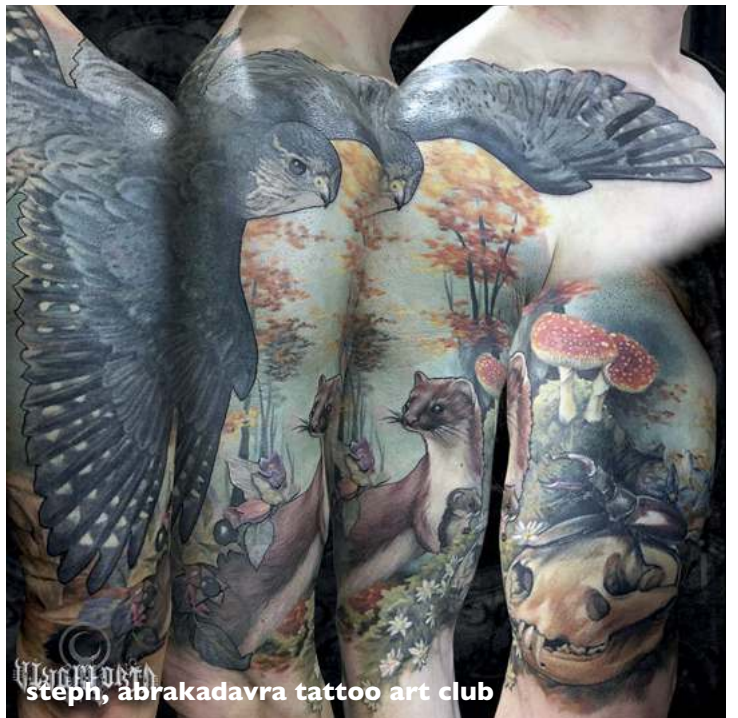
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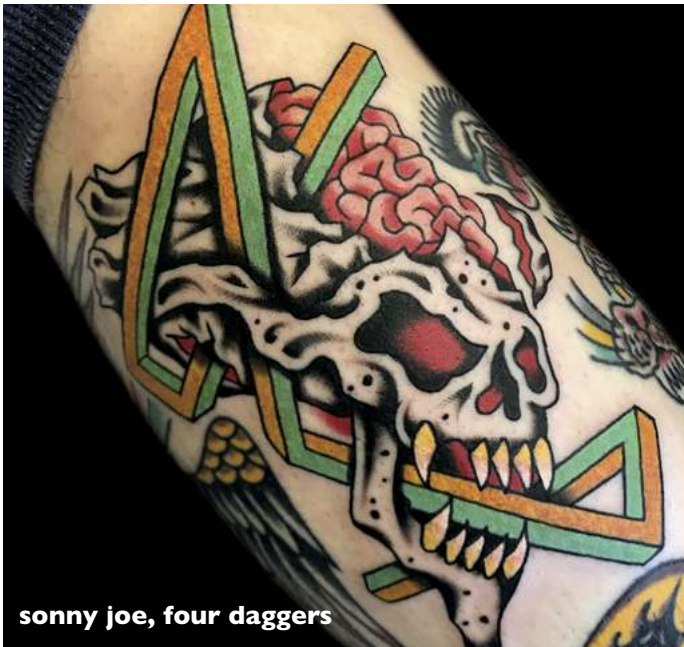
constanza ginelli



jamie eskdale, inksmiths of london



steph, abrakadavra tattoo art club



sonny joe, four daggers



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richard dyminski,
blood sweat and tattoos



chris, moth and rose tattoo (greece)

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VYVYN LAZONGA



Vyvyn Lazonga is a living legend. She's now in her forty sixth year of tattooing; her famous studio, Madame Lazonga's, opened its doors in 1972. Vyvyn was a tattoo pioneer at a time when men dominated the scene. She was the very first female tattooist in Seattle (where she is still based now) and, more recently, she was also at the forefront of promoting and celebrating the power of mastectomy tattoos. We first featured Vyvyn in Total Tattoo Magazine in 2005. Now, thirteen years later, we were delighted to meet up with her again for a conversation at the London Tattoo Convention.

So how did it all begin for Vyvyn? "I've always been an artist," she tells me. "It's in my blood. I was born that way, you know? But until I actually got into tattooing, I never really thought much about tattoos. I didn't think they were creative, and I never saw anything that I thought was good. And then it was like the tattoo muse just struck me one day!"



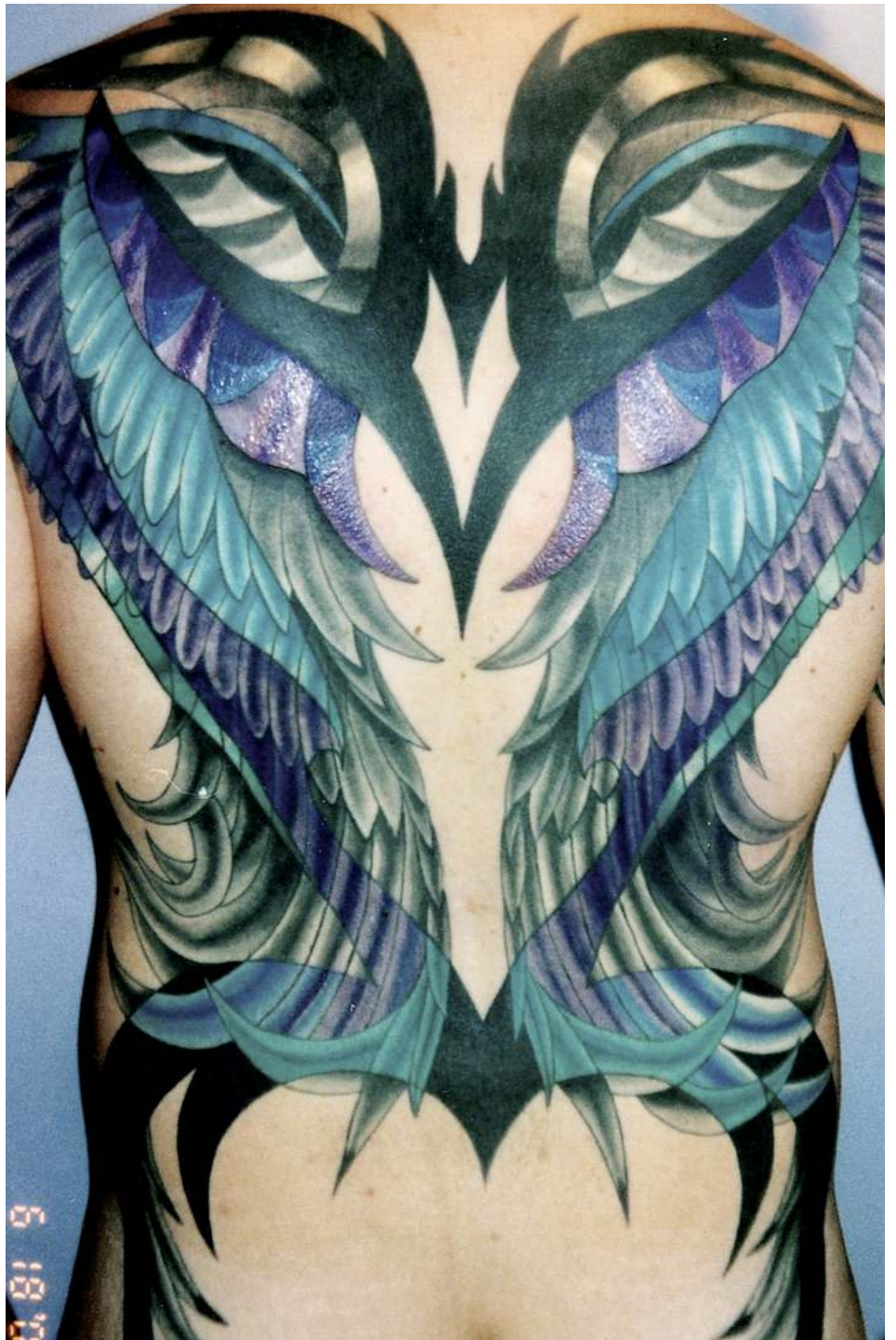


“At that time it was all old school sailor imagery,” Vyvyn continues, “but I used to rummage through magazines like *Easyriders* to see what was going on, and I suddenly found an article about Cliff Raven [one of the early Japanese-style tattooists in the US – ed]. Before that, the only tattooist I’d really known about was Lyle Tuttle – who was a bit of a phenomenon in San Francisco, tattooing all the rock stars and what not – but this piece showcased some very different, colourful, creative work. It was like a mural! Seeing Japanese work at that time was so rare (there was no internet, or anything like that). It was only later, when people would drift into the shop with photos of tattoos to show me, that I really started to find out about it.”



Vyvyn learned her trade with Danny Danzl. “My apprenticeship wasn’t at all formal,” she recalls. “I just went and did it. I started out as Danny’s helper. He didn’t even have a telephone at first – that’s how primitive it was. I had to talk him into getting one. And we didn’t have an autoclave... Can you imagine?! I only realised after a couple of months of working there that we really should have one. Back then, it was pretty much all word-of-mouth. That’s the way you found out about things.”

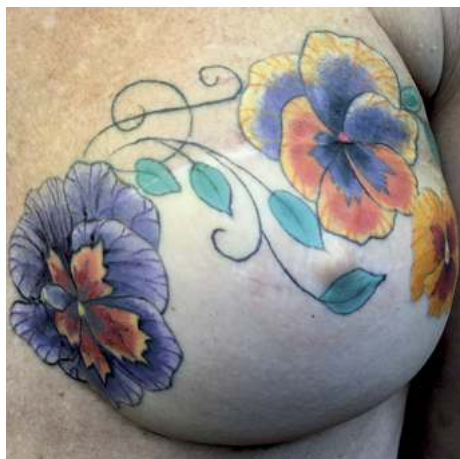




Today's tattoo culture is different in so many ways, with social media propelling things along at an unprecedented rate. And Vyvyn sees this as a reflection of what's happening in society as a whole. "It's a throwaway culture now. That's what we're dealing with. And there's too much money involved in everything. Maybe the younger generation will grow out of it... but I don't know. Right now it's like, 'Who's gonna be the next big thing?' But I believe it kinda has to go through this process before it can reach a new level of consciousness. It's up to us tattooers pave the way within our own subculture."

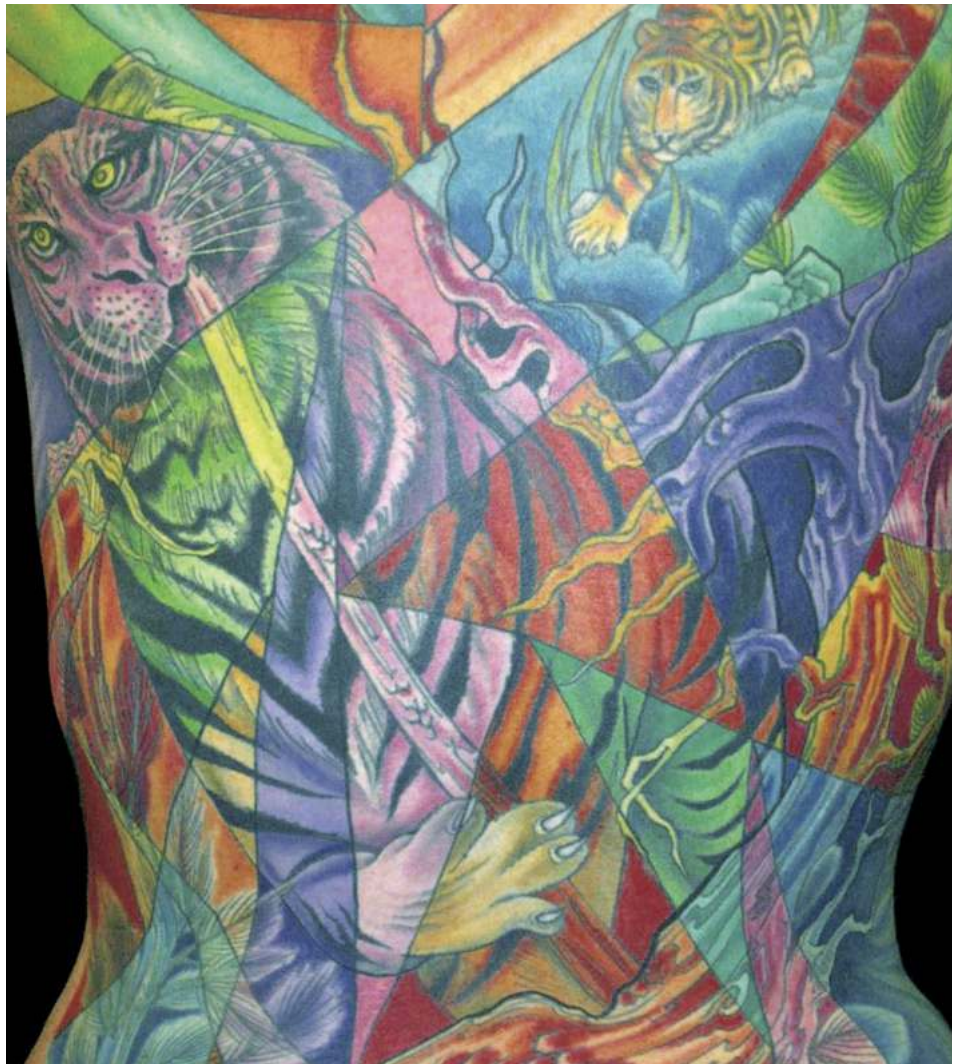
"For me, the internet is a bit like the Twilight Zone," Vyvyn continues. "I don't like it! Those new online businesses are a bunch of predators, all trying to make money out of us." And she feels that good old print still has a relevance and value. "You know, as artists we're very tactile. We're creating things with our hands all the time. I miss having so many magazines to look at. I love the feeling of having a book or a magazine in my hands. Of course in the 'olden days' that's how we used to do it all the time. We'd go to libraries and bookstores and create things in our imagination. We didn't have the tools that are available nowadays. But I think this is one of the reasons people are doing this amazing work now. Everything has been handed to them on a plate. It's so much easier to find out about things and try them out. And you don't even have to sit down and draw from scratch! What a concept, huh?" [Laughs]

So how was it for Vyvyn, being a young woman in the male-dominated world of old-school tattooing? "Being a lone woman, with no partner and no back-up, and having to do this for decades by myself... One of the biggest lessons for me was not to compare myself with the men in the trade. Or expect anything from them. It was just a given that they all networked, shared information and worked on projects together. I mean, there simply were no women tattooers back then!"



Looking back over her long career, I wondered if Vyvyn felt there was a 'golden decade' for tattooing. "I would definitely say the 90s," she tells me. "Tattooing was really taking off. When I first started out, it was so underground. But I think from the late 80s onwards it really picked up. It was like watching this flower blossom. All of a sudden, all these things kinda came out! And people were doing great magazines – like Ed Hardy's *Tattootime* and Shotsie Gorman's *Tattoo Advocate Journal*. So much of it was totally new. And what was nice about it was that a lot of us got to know each other, which previously hadn't been that easy. We would meet at conventions. Things didn't seem so overcrowded or overwhelming back then. I just wish I still had that same energy now!"





So what is it that keeps Vyvyn going in this tough industry? “That’s a hard one to answer!” she laughs. “I just keep going somehow. Maybe it’s just that I have a healthy sense of perspective. And I still want to tattoo. Even after all these years I feel I still have a long way to go. But running the shop for so many decades has taken a lot of emotional energy. I think guys are better at approaching that kind of thing in a more realistic manner! You have to know where to draw the line with the social stuff and keep it business-like. If someone in your shop doesn’t like you, you can’t take it personally. You just have to get on with your work. I see some younger tattooists having problems with this; they want everybody to like them and... well, you just need to get over that. I remember early on, every time somebody quit Madame Lazonga’s I would feel abandoned and hurt. But so many people have come and gone now... and somehow it doesn’t worry me so much any more. And I guess in the olden days people tended to stay in one shop for much longer. I mean, I apprenticed for seven or eight years!”

“I want to be creative,” Vyvyn continues, “and I’m focusing more on painting now as well. I’m finding it increasingly difficult to put up with all the bullshit around

running the shop. The more time I spend tied up with it, the harder it gets. I don’t know what I’ll be doing during the ‘last leg’ of my life... but I don’t know if I can still be running the shop. Keeping inspired so I can continue my artwork is very important for me. I was into a groove for so many years, designing and tattooing non-stop, and I’d be so tired when I got home! It’s always been a balancing act. I love tattooing and I love my clients, but I have to prioritise. And I have to be especially careful now because I have carpal tunnel syndrome. That’s why I don’t use heavy coils.”

I ask Vyvyn whether she finds it easy to switch off from tattooing. “I have a hard time going on holiday,” she admits. “I used to have a boyfriend and he would get... well, not exactly upset about it, but he would kinda wonder why I couldn’t ever calm down or relax. One time we went to the ocean, and it was good for five minutes, but then I was like, ‘Now what?’ I just feel like I always need to be creating and taking things in visually. In the same way that a musician needs to practice every day. It’s because they feel inspired, and it’s also because of the discipline. Well it’s the same with art and tattooing. And to be with somebody who doesn’t understand that is a challenge. It’s all-consuming. It’s your lifestyle.”



Vyvyn has lived and breathed tattooing for almost half a century. She's given an incredible amount to the industry; I wondered what she felt it had given her. "A lot!" she answers, without hesitating for a second. "There are so many lessons that I've learnt. It feels as though it's been my whole lifestyle for my whole adult life. Tattooing has been my journey, and I've been learning as I go along. I set out young, foolish and inspired and just kinda forged that pathway forward, without knowing anything. And I guess it's paid off! I want to say to all the younger people out there, be humble and don't be afraid. Fear seems to take over everything. Stay grounded. I wasn't when I was younger. I am now, but it took me forever to get there! I think the thing that helped me was being quiet and practising my craft. I think that helped me get over a lot of my fears. It still does. But yeah, don't be afraid, and don't be egotistical."

Our conversation took place at the London Tattoo Convention, where Vyvyn was a special guest. As the interview drew to a close, convention organiser Miki Vialetto (*Tattoo Life*) came over to chat. "You are a true legend," he told Vyvyn. "You're one of my heroes. You're one of the reasons I'm here, doing what I do! I remember, when I was 16, seeing the work you were doing on dancers and it really changed my life. Thank you for that. You will always be in my heart."

Vyvyn was noticeably moved by this. I asked her if she considered herself to be a 'legend'. She shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, I'm not sure about that. I guess I can see why people say it though, and it's always nice to hear. In my own hometown I'm just a familiar fixture, so it's only when I travel elsewhere that people say that kind of thing. Hearing it from my peers always makes me feel honoured. I guess the older I get, the more sentimental I am!"

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Born and raised in Ravenna, on Italy's Adriatic coast, Mauro Tampieri is known internationally for the fine quality of his Japanese style tattooing. Ravenna is famous for the jaw-dropping 5th and 6th century mosaics that cover the walls and floors of churches and historic buildings across the city, and it continues to be a pre-eminent centre of the craft today. Maybe this is partly what has influenced and inspired Mauro Tampieri's intricate and exquisite art?



RAV TATTOO

Tell us about your artistic background.

I studied at the Ravenna Art Institute. The course covered a very wide range of subjects – painting, sculpture, drawing, and mosaics too of course – but I always preferred to have the freedom to follow my own creative ideas and do my own thing. In truth, I've been much more influenced by the skate, metal and hardcore scene, and by the graphic styles that go along with this, on posters and so on.

And this stimulated your passion for tattoos?

Yes. During the 90s I was constantly excited by the graphic work of the various artists employed by skate companies. They used such great imagery. I was utterly captivated. Skulls, flames, mythical animals... both Japanese and non-Japanese... all of these were recurring elements in the skate and hardcore scene. And those Pushead skulls still drive me crazy thirty years later!



Interview by TTM & Luca Ortis
Pictures courtesy of Mauro

Mauro
Lampisieri



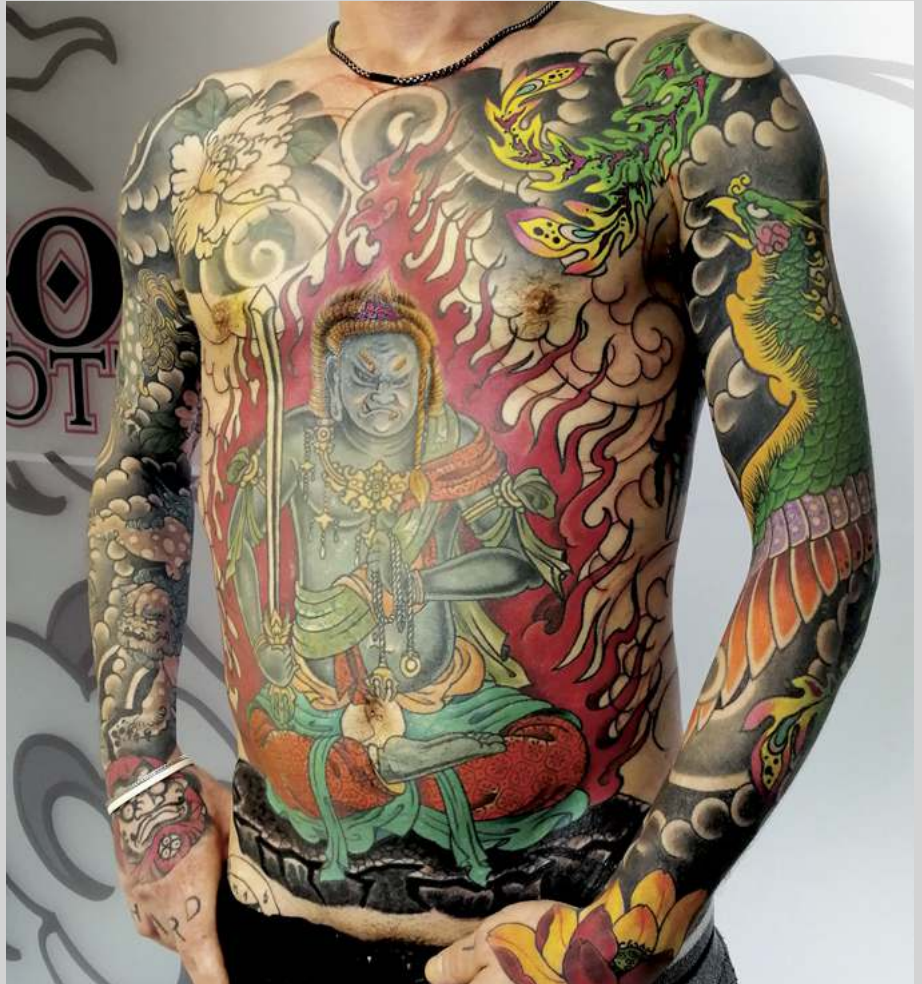
What was the tattoo scene like in Ravenna when you were growing up?

Ravenna isn't a big place, and there was only one studio at that time (and as was customary back then, they weren't interested in teaching anyone). So the scene was very limited. If you didn't want to go to that studio, your only other option was to travel somewhere else. I have very fond memories of those years. When you got a tattoo, you felt really alternative. You were part of a circle of people who had chosen to mark themselves in a permanent and artistic way. You were outside the masses. Nowadays, with dozens of new studios opening every year, it's actually more interesting to see someone *without* any tattoos!

For you, what's the appeal of Japanese?

It's the style I've always loved. I've been drawn to Japanese imagery ever since childhood - dragons, snakes, samurai, demons, and all those ideas of pride and discipline connected with martial arts and the attainment of one's goals. Japanese tattooing decorates the entire body with epic and harmonious scenes. For me, it's a perfect mix of power, elegance and style.





How would you describe your own particular style of Japanese tattooing?

Oh, that's a very difficult question! And in trying to answer it, I find myself feeling both satisfied with what I do and deeply self-critical... In my work I try to mix everything I love about all the various ways in which Japanese tattooing has developed. I'm always trying to expand my knowledge and introduce new and original subjects. I like dynamic and powerful imagery with thick graphic outlines – and enough space for the very important background, which needs strong contrast in the black and grey. The colours must be very saturated, but you don't necessarily need too many of them. I also like to include intricate details, but not so many that it detracts from a strong composition.





What makes a good Japanese tattoo?

It should be readable. The subjects need to be well defined, and the design should be well thought out so that it is in harmony with the body. The background is as important as the main subject because it frames everything (including the body itself); it should have a lot of black and contrast.

What are your favourite subjects to tattoo and why?

I like animals, masks, demons, skulls and flowers. I enjoy the process of drawing them, and the way you can rework them to fit different parts of the body.

What's your opinion of Japanese-style sub-genres such as neo-trad imagery and one-shot designs?

Mostly, I like them. In fact I really enjoy doing one-shot pieces myself whenever possible. Especially at conventions. But I think it can be a fine line between reinterpreting a subject in a personal and modern way and bastardising the imagery. I'd rather stay anchored in tradition.

With the rise of more naïve tattoo styles, is traditional, elegant Japanese work in danger of losing its popular appeal?

No, I don't think so. Fashions come and go very quickly. Likes on social media can seem to make certain things popular, but not in the long term. Traditional styles have been around for a long time and will always be appreciated as such. They resist the vagaries of fashion.





Is it becoming harder to find clients who want large-scale work, or have 'clean skin'?

Actually, I'm finding people have started to understand the importance of saving large areas for big work. They will often reserve a leg or an arm for collecting smaller pieces so that they can dedicate their back or a sleeve to a single large work. Of course there's always cover-ups to contend with, but luckily the people who seek me out usually come for large-scale pieces and are ready to give me free rein.

How do you prepare for a large-scale piece?

I usually start by measuring the client so that I can get an idea of how best to use the space and how to position the subjects and the background. Once I've sketched something I'm happy with, I draw the final linework and decide how to insert detail. Sometimes I do a small colour study too. For me, the hardest part is the start – the initial decision-making involved in creating an impactful image.



Before opening your own private studio, Raion, you co-owned Skinwear (in Rimini) with Miss Arianna. What prompted the change?

The decision was mainly to do with wanting to work closer to home without spending hours commuting. I also needed to build something that was completely mine, where I could grow in a different way.

For you, what are the differences between Skinwear and Raion?

Raion Tattoo was born as a place to work in a calm and peaceful way. It's a private studio and I'm in complete control of both my work life and my home life. Skinwear is a classic tattoo shop and I spent many productive years there, but it was time to follow a different way of working, and live my passion. I run all aspects of Raion with the goal of creating a good connection with the client. I always try to communicate my enthusiasm for what we will be creating together. Of course it's a lot of work being in charge of all the practical aspects of running a studio, but I love being there on my own with the client and free to come and go as I please.





Do you enjoy travelling to conventions and doing guest spots?

I've participated in many conventions and done numerous guest spots over the years. All of them have helped my growth. Conventions are tiring but great fun and have enabled me to make many friendships in the tattoo world. Guest spots are more intimate and allow me to experience different ways of working. Right now, though, I haven't got any guest spots planned and I've decided to limit conventions to those I'm really interested in doing (Taiwan and Paris are in my diary).

Tell us about the guest artists who come to your studio...

I like to work with people whose vision is different from mine – in terms of their approach to drawing, tattooing, or life in general. Experiencing that, and being open-minded about what you can learn, is what makes you grow. It enriches you.

Do you still have the same passion for tattooing as you did at the beginning of your career?

Yes, definitely! And I am still inspired by the same artists who inspired me back then. But in addition to that passion, I also have more awareness and an increased determination to better myself both technically and artistically.

How would you describe the Italian tattoo scene?

In Italy, there are huge differences between the north and the south, and differences between cities too. But in general people are better informed now. They are seeking serious tattoos rather than smaller fashion-driven images – although these latter are still popular of course, with a demand that seems in part to be driven by all those new studios competing to do mediocre work at the cheapest price! But as I mentioned, there is definitely more awareness of what a good tattoo is, and that means more collectors open to advice. Luckily I get to work with many clients who want a tattoo exclusively in the Japanese style – clients who trust me and allow me to work in what I believe to be the right way.

Raion Tattoo

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INTERNATIONAL BRUSSELS TATTOO SHOW

The more I visit Brussels, the more I like the city. Every year I seem to find something new that makes it that bit more interesting and exciting. And that applies to the Brussels International Tattoo Convention too. The organisers are always adding something new to the programme. And this year, for the first time, the show filled all four massive halls of the venue.

Tour & Taxis, where the convention is held, is an old industrial complex made up of four adjoining nineteenth century warehouses surrounding a former train station. It's classic brick, iron and glass architecture and there's plenty of natural daylight inside. The venue is situated in an area of the city that's undergoing extensive renovation and gentrification. We've watched the neighbourhood evolve over the past few years, with new homes, offices, coffee shops and eateries constantly appearing.

This year, the convention had expanded once again and a third hall full of tattooists and traders had been added (to make a total of four halls altogether). This also allowed the luxury of comfortable seating areas in the middle of each hall – with groups of sofas, great quality coffee vendors and custom cars on display too. This was a nice touch, enabling visitors to take a very pleasant break while wandering round the show. A good convention needs entertainment too of course, but not at the risk of upsetting the artists, and the arrangement here was ideal from that point of view, with a layout that kept them separate. The weekend's line-up included the Globe of Death, Pyrohex, Hypnospeare, Banana Ink, The Black Tape project plus wrestling matches, graffiti, art exhibitions, latex lingerie, classic bikes, roller derby and much more besides. In other words, pretty much all the subcultural bases seemed to be covered! The slight oversight was that the entertainment area (where many of the traders were located too) was actually a little too far from the tattooing halls, which meant footfall was low – painfully low for anyone trying to sell their wares and make at least enough money to cover the cost of being at the show.



1. raimundo ramírez
2. furucz misi
3. arturo mendez perez
4. zipo hernandez
5. lee stewart



What sets this event apart from many other large conventions is the consistently high standard of work. And with international tattooists aplenty, it definitely lived up to its name once again. In all, there were 450 artists present. As well as a lot of returning artists, the extra space this year allowed for new faces to showcase their talents; but despite the expansion, there is still a long waiting list of respected studios wanting to work here. The Brussels International Tattoo Convention is always well supported by local studios as well as tattooists from overseas. What's more, it's very well attended by the local public too (which was perhaps surprising, considering the weekend clashed with the centenary of the end of the First World War and there were naturally many commemorative events also taking place).



Competitions ran every evening. But on the Friday and Saturday the judging panel was somewhat unusual in that it didn't include any tattooists. We couldn't help wondering if this was perhaps due to some unfortunate last-minute circumstance rather than being a deliberate decision on the part of the convention organisers – because how could the crucial technical aspects of all those top quality tattoos be properly assessed and compared by a panel that didn't include any technical experts? Also, most tattooists welcome (and truly value) the critique and acclaim they receive from fellow professionals. It's a vital aspect of tattoo competitions, especially at a prestigious event such as this.





6. daniel herrera
7. samuel sancho
8. alex iranas
9. paolo altomare
10. thiago amorim
11. chris papadakis
12. jeroen peters



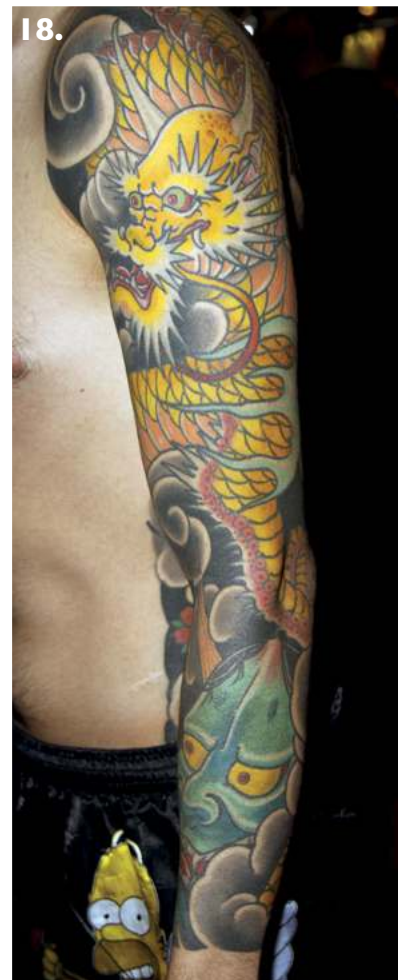


13. unknown
14. arturo mendez perez
15. josef terrack
16. theresa vendetta
17 & 18. thiago amorim
19. willy martin
20. jamie ris



It's safe to say that neo-traditional was a major presence at this show, but the sheer scale of the event meant there was a huge variety of styles on offer. Speaking personally, what I loved most was seeing the astonishing work of the European avant garde movement. Abstract marks and forms are made to look absolutely effortless and, just as important as the execution, the public love it. It was also refreshing to see that there were artists who had filled their tables with the kind of 'small' tattoo ideas that might be shunned elsewhere. Hordes of customers were gathered round their booths, picking up designs and holding them to bare skin. Events like this are great places to show off your work and win awards, but it's important to remember that they are also for people to come and get little reminders or to pop their tattoo cherry, so to speak.

Next year's dates have already been released: 8th to 11th November 2019. I really don't know how much bigger this show can get, or indeed IF it can get any bigger (or if it really needs to!) And it may be that the development of the Tour & Taxis complex itself dictates this decision. I hope the regeneration of the site doesn't impact too much on the great atmosphere and attendance. This show remains one of the best in Europe, and it was an excellent way to round off our convention year 2018.





21, 22 & 23. jamie ris
24. niku
25. unknown



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Alex Garcia

Interview by Perry
Pictures courtesy of Alex Garcia

Alex Garcia is a shining example of what can happen when talent and opportunity collide. At the age of 23, and just three years into his tattooing career, this Belgian-born tattooist has already settled in as a sought-after resident artist at Sticky Stef in the centre of Antwerp.

Alex has a light-hearted, enthusiastic approach to tattooing. His sense of humour is infectious. "When clients first meet me, you can see the fear in their eyes because I look so young. They often ask me, 'Have you been tattooing long?' and I reply, 'Yeah, it's already been a couple of months!' They look terrified! Then when I'm finished I tell them they were my first ever customer!"





Alex was headed in a very academic direction at school (with his studies including such subjects as Latin) but he was advised to take up art when his teachers saw the quality of the drawings he'd doodled all over his books. "That art education was an intense two years," he recalls. "I was expected to draw for at least seventeen hours a week. But because I'm such a perfectionist I would only hand in work if I was completely satisfied with it. I had so many projects on the go and I was trying to make them all perfect. I became incredibly stressed, to a level that made me ill. I had to stop studying for five months, and it was during that time that I started to concentrate on designing tattoos."

Tattoos and body mods intrigued Alex from a very early age. He had an uncle who was a tattooist, so as a career choice it was already 'accepted' within his family. "Once I started drawing, I knew I wanted to design for tattoos. Friends would ask me to draw them an eagle or a tiger and they'd pay me for the work! I think this is why I got my apprenticeship so easily. I had a huge portfolio, and I even had a waiting list for my designs."

Alex's mother still lives near Antwerp, in the small town where Alex grew up, and she helps out by looking after his dogs while he's at work. "Antwerp is good for tattooing," he says. "It's a big city with lots of shops and it's easily accessible – not just from other parts of Belgium, but from neighbouring countries too – so there's always plenty of work. And if someone wants something that we don't specialise in, we're always really happy to send them to another shop. Most of the Japanese we sent to Black Lotus, for example, and the traditional we send to Glorybound."



Alex's work falls pretty solidly into the neo-traditional category. "You either love it or you hate it," he says. "I loved it even before I was tattooing. I'd only been apprenticing for a year when a girl came to me wanting a neo-traditional backpiece of a bear. I told her to go to my colleague, but she insisted that she wanted me to try it. I was super stressed and I began working on the drawing two weeks before the appointment. But as soon as I started, it just came naturally. I still don't feel that I'm great at drawing... except when I do neo-traditional. It's only then that I feel I'm creating something original rather than reproducing an older design. Neo-traditional combines elements from all the other tattoo styles – Japanese, traditional, and of course realism in the faces. So you can combine everything that you like from other styles to create your own unique look. It can be brightly coloured or quite muted, or black and grey. We have some great artists here and between us we're doing many different kinds of neo-traditional, so if I'm not really into what the client is wanting I know I can always recommend someone whose style would suit it better. It's a bit like a family in that respect."

When asked to analyse his work, Alex says that he always tries to make his pieces look like stickers, with striking designs that are easily identifiable from a distance. To get those crisp, clear images he uses rotaries to pack in the colour and coils for lining. "Except for the really big, bold lines," he explains. "For those, I use a Dan Kubin rotary, which is like a mix of the two." And how does he achieve that sleekness in his colours? "If I'm putting in a red section, for example, I will probably use black and maybe three shades of red to get a smooth graduation. I use rotaries and a cartridge system so that I can saturate the skin without overworking it. If everything is super gentle, the client can sit for long sessions and still not find it painful. I do one pass with every colour, and I don't use a circular motion;





I kind of whip-shade over the top of each colour to get a really rich, smooth transition. This also makes the skin bleed less and helps it to heal well."

Alex has acquired a considerable amount of technical know-how in his short career and he attributes this to the generosity of his colleagues at Sticky Stef's. "I also talk to every tattooer I meet," he says. "I still think of myself as an apprentice and I'm hungry to acquire all the knowledge I can. I'm starting to do more guest spots so



that I can learn from other artists in their studios. I'm planning to do a week a month. I'll be working with Matt Webb at the Bishop Tattoo Company in Hull in February." Even though Alex has clearly found his style and developed his technique, he still regards himself as being on a journey with his tattooing. "For my own tattoos I always travel to Barcelona," he continues. "I think the Spanish artists are some of the best in the world for neo-traditional. I get tattooed by Toni Donaire, and when he tattoos me I'm always watching really closely."





It comes as no surprise to hear that Alex, as a younger generation artist, is fully engaged with digital technology. "I know many older artists don't really like it," he says, "but the iPad has made my life so much easier. In the past, I would draw and draw (and re-draw and re-draw...) late into the night, until maybe 3am or 4am. I would be so focused on my drawing I wouldn't even talk to my girlfriend. In fact I think the iPad saved my relationship! And for me, it's taken away the stress which was actually a hindrance to the design process."

Having a certain amount of creative freedom is very important to Alex. "Some of my customers have fixed ideas; some just let me do what I like. My personal rule is that I must always be happy enough



with the design to have it tattooed on myself. If I'm not feeling it, then I wouldn't do a good job. If a client is too restrictive in dictating their requirements, or gives me a massive list of elements to include, then I always have to stop them. I ask them to simplify the brief by choosing just the main element and leaving me to create the rest. My imagination can be sparked by the simplest detail. I think a tattoo can either have meaning or simply be a great image. Speaking for myself, I have two symbolic tattoos on my body... and those are the only tattoos I regret!"

Alex feels that Belgian tattooing falls into two camps. There are the older guys who do every style and aren't too bothered about progressing their tattooing; and there are the younger guys

who prefer to specialise and are hungry to develop. "I see it as two separate worlds, really. They are not competing and neither is wrong. I just think the younger guys are beginning to edge ahead as the customers become more aware of what is now possible. And it's much easier to stand out from the crowd if your work has a unique style. When I first started, I did all styles. In my second year I limited myself to just blackwork and neo-traditional, but I found it really difficult to switch my mind from one to the other. Now that I'm specialising in neo-traditional I find my work is getting better faster because I can keep in the same mind pattern. I know some people believe tattooists should be able to tackle anything, but I just want to do what I'm best at."

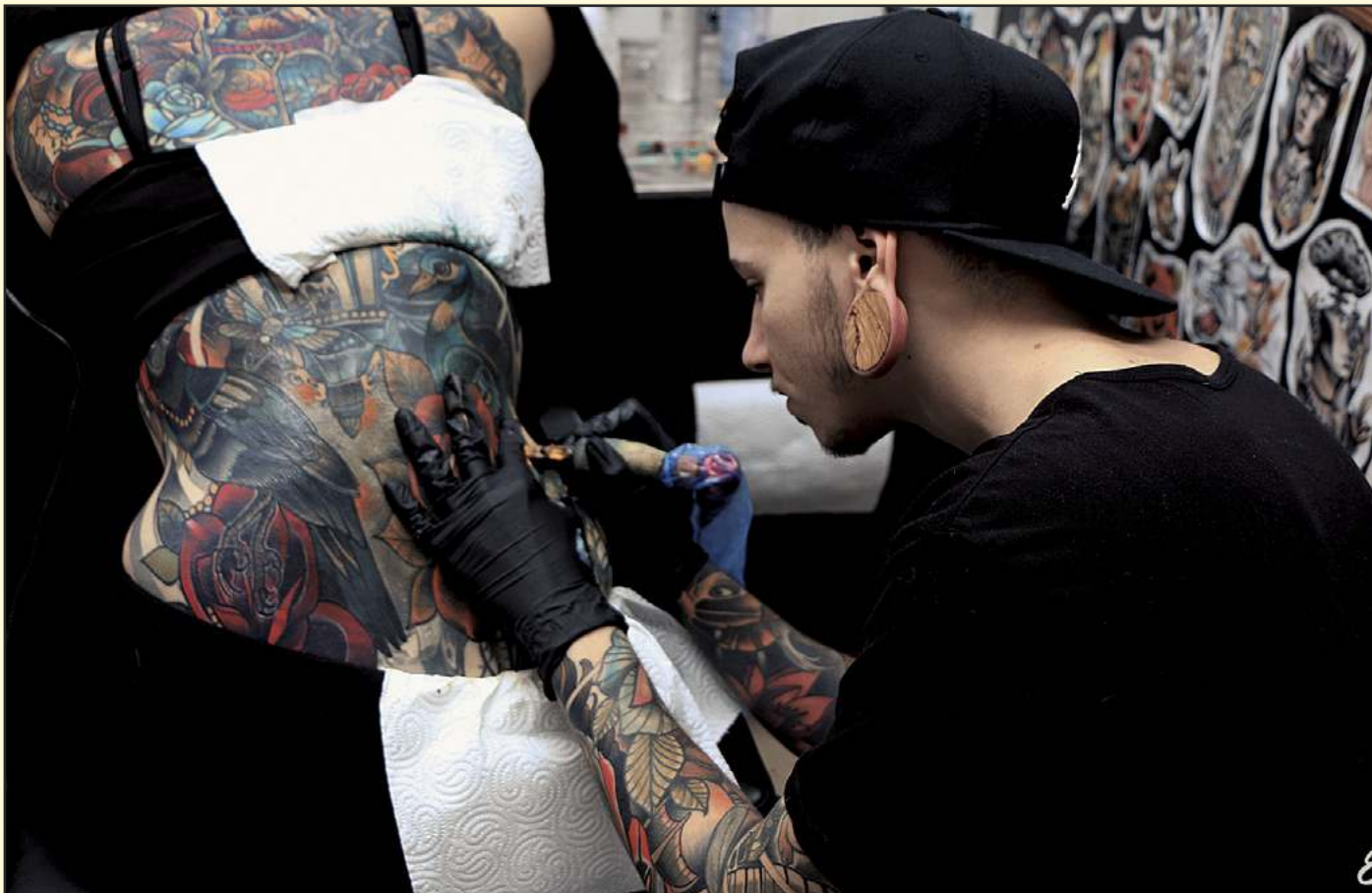




One of the most important aspects of tattooing, in Alex's opinion, is the client's attitude to aftercare. "I talk to my clients for about half an hour about it," he says. "If we've spent eight hours working on a beautiful piece – which I've tried my best to make perfect – and then they let it dry out and don't look after it, it makes me really mad. That's why if someone *does* look after their tattoo well, I always thank them. But those clients are in the minority. I reckon I get about 20% who have the right attitude to aftercare, and about 80% who just don't listen and who end up needing to get their work retouched. I always advise my customers to drink plenty of water in the week leading up to the tattoo, and also to use moisturiser (but not on the day of the tattoo) because I find this helps to make the skin

receptive to colour. Aftercare needs will vary according to the customer's lifestyle – the job they do, for example – and also how they reacted during the tattooing process. If they bled a lot, it may be a more problematic heal and more care will be needed."

Now that Alex has moved on to doing larger scale pieces, his work is in even greater demand. "At the moment I'm booked up about nine months ahead," he says, "and I'm getting lots of bookings from abroad, with people wanting multiple sittings over a number of months." Alex is keenly aware of the strain this could place on him. He is an old head on young shoulders, and wise beyond his years. And if he's producing work of this calibre with only three years of tattooing under his belt, it's



clear that he has a phenomenal future ahead of him. "Sometimes it's hard to prove yourself when you are this young. A lot of the older guys are always looking to shoot you down, but that's part of the fun. I want to prove them wrong. It's what drives me to become better and better."

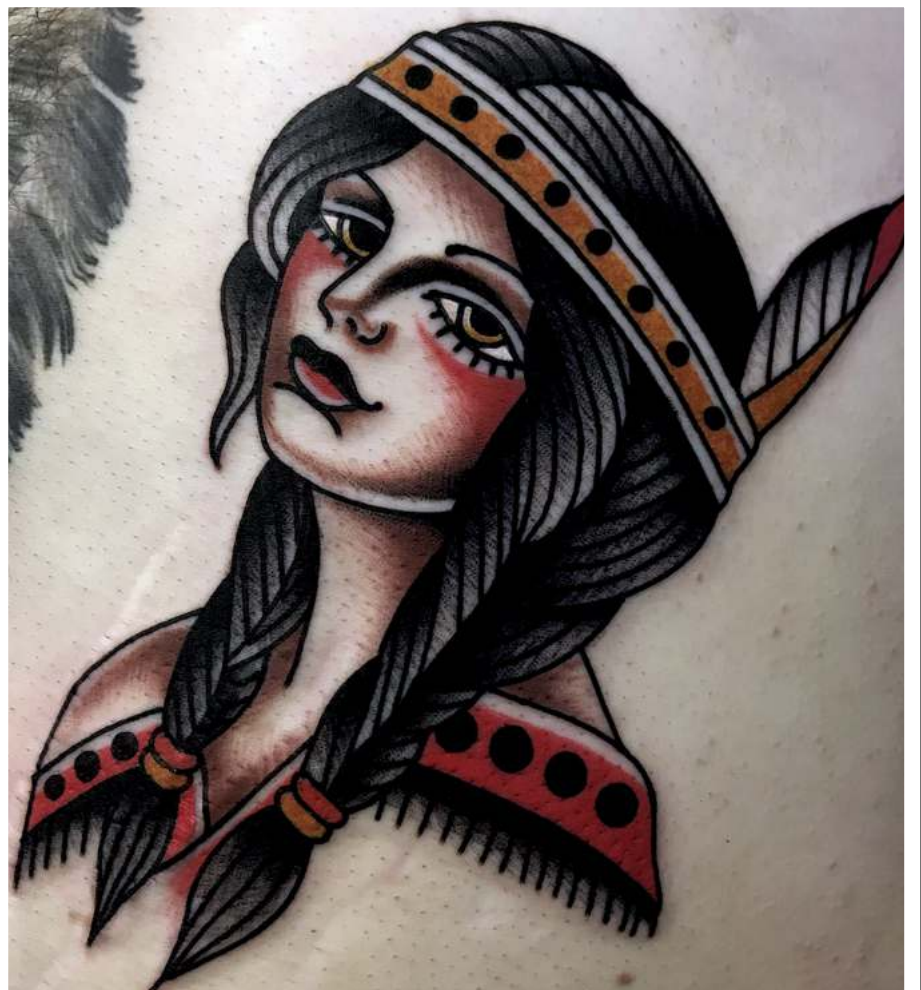
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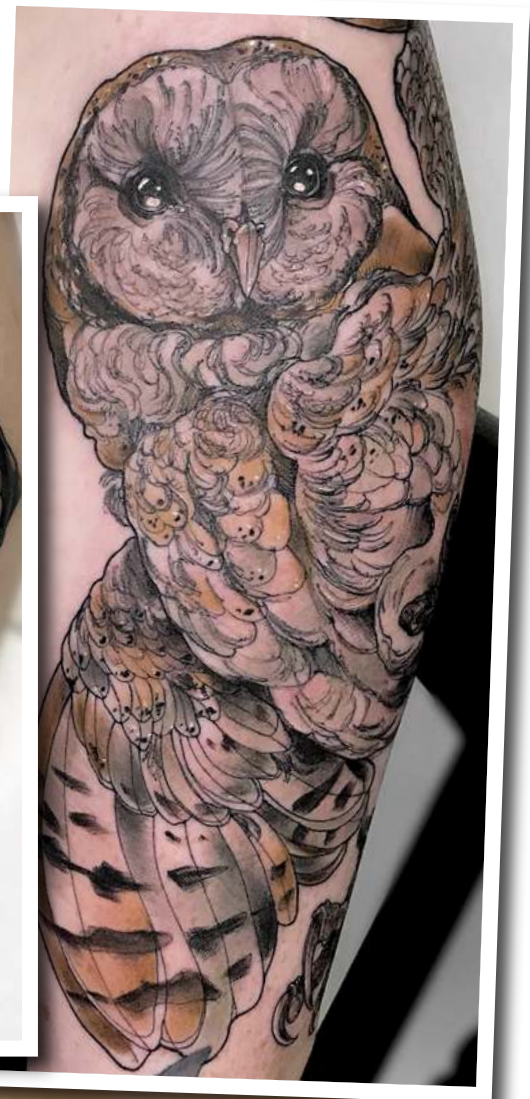




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www.northgatetattoo.com

Purple Rose Tattoo

56 Staple Hill Road, Fishponds,
Bristol, BS16 5BS
Tel no: 01173 300 123
purplerosetattoo@hotmail.co.uk
www.purplerosetattoo.co.uk

WALES

Dexterity Ink

Unit 9 Indoor Peoples Market
LL13 8 Wrexham
Tel no: 01978 447 100
www.facebook.com/DexterityInk
TattooStudio09

Physical Graffiti

124 City Road, Cardiff. CF24 3DQ
Tel no: 029 2048 1428
pgct@hotmail.co.uk
Instagram: @physicalgraffittatooos

Stronghold Tattoo

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

WEST MIDLANDS

Cosmic Monsters Incorporated

Mitre House, the courtyard
27 The Strand, Bromsgrove
B61 8AB
Tel no: 07863 135814
cmitattoo@gmail.com
www.cmi-tattoo.com

Dark Horse Collective

33 Boldmere Rd,
Sutton Coldfield B73 5UY
Tel no: 01214 061 635
www.darkhorsecollective.com

Nala Tattoo & Piercing Studio

81 Bolebridge Street
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Barrow in Furness, LA14 1DU
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Email: allstyletattoos@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/allstyletattoos
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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

Dabs Tattoo

78b Eastbourne Road
Southport
PR8 4DU
01704566665
Dabstattoos@btconnect.com
https://www.facebook.com/dab-
stattoo/DABS Tattoo
@tattoosatdabs

Inkden Tattoo & Piercing Studio

50 B Coronation Street,
Blackpool FY1 4PD
Tel: 07957 021 702
inkden.tattoo@gmail.com
www.inkdentattoo.co.uk

Marked for life

45 High Street, (Winpenny house)
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1SB
Tel no: 01642 641 235
tattooofml@gmail.com
www.marked-for-life.com

Sacred Art Tattoo

497 Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton,
Manchester. M21 8AG
Tel: 0161 881 1530
tattoo@sacredarttattoo.co.uk
www.sacredarttattoo.co.uk

Skin Kandi Tattoo Studio

50a Westfield Street, St Helens
Merseyside WA10 1QF
Tel no: 01744 734699
skinkandi@hotmail.co.uk
www.skinkandi.co.uk

True 'til Death

13 Whalley Road
Accrington, BB51AD
Tel no: 01254 433 760
Email: via Facebook – True 'Til
Death Tattoo
www.accringtontattoo.com

IRELAND

Yakuza Tattoo

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CONVENTION CALENDAR

UK CONVENTIONS

2nd-3rd February

Tattoo Freeze

The International Centre
St Quentin Gate,
Telford TF3 4JH,
www.tattoofreeze.com

23rd-24th February

Brighton Tattoo Convention,

Brighton Centre, Kings Road,
Brighton, BN1 2GR
www.brightontattoo.com

2nd-3rd March

Tattoo Tea Party

The Trafford Centre
Stretford
Manchester
www.tattooteaparty.com

30th – 31st March

Scottish Tattoo Convention

Edinburgh Corn Exchange
10 New Market Rd
Edinburgh EH14 1RJ
www.scottishtattooconvention.net/

6th-7th April

Portsmouth Tattoo Fest

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

7th April

Ink & Iron

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

20th April

Maidstone Tattoo Extravaganza

Detling Showground,
Detling Hill, Maidstone, Kent
www.maidstonetattooextravaganza.co.uk

27th -28th April

The Big North Tattoo Show

Metro Radio Arena
Arena Way, Newcastle Upon Tyne
www.bignorthtattooshow.co.uk

26th-28th April

World Tattoo Festival

Eikon Exhibition Centre,

Balmoral Park,
Lisburn, UK
www.worldtattoofestival.com

3rd-5th May

Liverpool Tattoo Convention,

Britannia Adelphi Hotel,
Ranelagh Street, Liverpool,
www.liverpooltattooconvention.com

16th-18th August

Blackpool Tatcon

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

OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

14th-16th December

Bucharest Tattoo Convention

Neomundo Convention Center
Calle 89 Transversal Oriental Metropolitana-69,
Barrio Tejar, Bucaramanga, Santander,
Colombia

12th-13th January

Winter Tattoo Fest

Midleton Park Hotel
Old Cork Road, 000 Midleton
Ireland

18th-20th January

Goa Tattoo Festival

Tito's Pub, Baga, Goa, India
www.facebook.com/goatattooofestival

25th-27th January

Lille Tattoo Convention

Lille Grand Palais
1, Boulevard of the United
Cities 59777 Lille France
www.lilletattooconvention.com

25th-27th January

Golden State Tattoo Expo

Pasadena Visitor Center
300 E Green St, Pasadena, CA 91101,
United States
www.goldenstatetattooexpo.com

8th-10th February

Milan Tattoo Convention

FIERA MILANO CITY
Via Gattamelata Gate 13,
Milan 20149,
Italy
www.milanotattooconvention.it/

15-17 February

Mondial du Tatuage

Parc de la Villette
211, avenue Jean Jaurès
75019 Paris
www.mondialdutatuage.com

15-17 February

6th intl. Tattoo Expo Maastricht

MECC Maastricht
Forum 100
6229 GV Maastricht
Netherlands
www.tattooexpo.eu

1st-3rd March

Ptak Warsaw Expo

Aleja Katowicka 62,
05-830 Nadarzyn,
Poland
www.tattoodays.pl/

March 8th-10th

Pittsburgh Tattoo Expo

Sheraton Pittsburgh Hotel at Station Square
300 W Station Square Dr Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania 15219
United States
www.pittsburghtattooexpo.com

9th-10th March

Rotterdam Builders

Tattoo Convention
Maassilo, Maashaven Zuidzijde 1-2, 3081 AE
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
www.unitedconventions.com

22nd-24th March

Taiwan Kaohsiung International Tattoo Convention

International Convention Center Kaohsiung
274, Zhongzheng 4th Rd.
Yancheng Dist. Kaohsiung,
Taiwan
www.tattoo.org.tw/

5th-7th April

Singapore Ink Show

Suntec Singapore Exhibition Centre
1 Raffles Boulevard, Suntec City,
Singapore
www.sginkshow.com/



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