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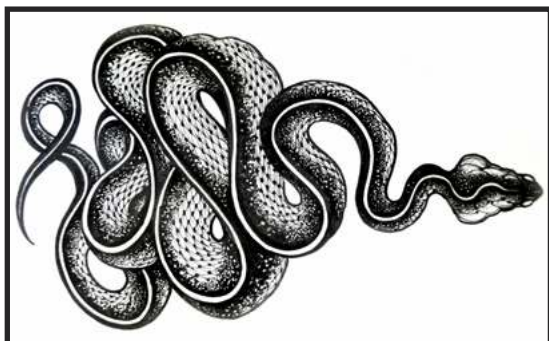
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EDITORIAL 175



Back in 1964 when Bob Dylan wrote *The Times They Are a-Changin'* little did he know what a monumental musical milestone he was creating. The song has gone on to become one of the most quoted songs in history. In fact, pick any line and you can apply it to so much of what we're experiencing today.

Recently, a lot has happened to rock and change our corner of the tattoo world. By now most of you will have no doubt heard the outcome of body mod practitioner Brendan 'Mac' (Dr Evil) McCarthy's long-running legal case concerning the issue of consent and charges of grievous bodily harm in relation to body mod procedures he carried out. This has shone the spotlight on what, for many of us, has long been a confusing grey area. For body mod practitioners and piercers (and even tattooists) where are the legal lines actually drawn? For me at least, even after the Appeal Court decision, this is still unclear.

Mac is a well known figure. He has been attending conventions for many years and also organised the popular Halloween Tattoo Bash. To many of us it seems incredible that someone who has only ever been a congenial, polite, fun and truly kind gentlemen can now be imprisoned for carrying out the wishes of his consenting customers. Times have changed for Mac and I sincerely hope he copes well with the change that has been thrust upon him.

Here at Total Tattoo Magazine, the times are also a-changin'. You will have noticed the recent change to a smaller, more handbag-and-manbag friendly format. For me as the main designer on the magazine, this change was both exciting and unsettling in equal measure. Importantly, it has offered us the opportunity to breathe new life into what I felt was in danger of becoming a slightly repetitive and tired format.

I have always been very proud of what we manage to produce every month and our core values haven't changed: Our

goal is to bring you features, articles and interviews with the best artists from around the world, and quality written content supported by great images that we hope will inspire and inform.

So why change? Being smaller will help with the changing climate both globally and within the tattoo world. We're now getting more pages onto a printing plate - saving time, metal, and paper wastage - and we also save on fuel because the magazine is lighter and costs less to post. Paradoxically, our new smaller format has actually enabled us to increase the magazine's content. With 28 extra pages, we can include longer, more in-depth interviews, supported by even more pictures - offering you, our readers, more bang for your buck. The magazine is now easier to carry and (dare I say it) slightly less conventional and more akin to where the tattoo world once was. Sure, not everyone is going to like the change. After all, as we get older - and I include myself in this - none of us really embrace change with the same open mind we once did... But we sincerely hope you do like the new format.

Another evolutionary development was the decision to take tattooed models off the cover. This is something we have wanted to do for many years, but unfortunately in the past every time we chose not to put a woman on the front of Total Tattoo, our sales figures for that issue showed a very significant drop! For some strange reason, tattooists and tattoo fans don't seem to like men or art on the covers of their tattoo magazines! We're certainly not ruling out having women on the cover sometimes; we just want to have a more balanced, representational approach.

We hope you love the new-look Total Tattoo as much as we do and would love to hear your thoughts and suggestions going forward.

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NEWS & REVIEWS



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BRENDA MCCARTHY 'DR EVIL' JAILED

As we go to print – and following our report on the court case in last month's Total Tattoo Magazine – we've received the news that Brendan 'Mac' McCarthy (also known as 'Dr Evil') has been given a custodial sentence after pleading guilty to three counts of grievous bodily harm relating to procedures he carried out on customers at his studio, Dr Evil's Body Modification Emporium in Wolverhampton. This is clearly a landmark court case that has serious ramifications for the whole body mod scene. The procedures in question were tongue splitting, ear removal and nipple removal. Mac admitted the charges after the Court of Appeal deemed that his customers' explicit consent did not provide a defence, and that these extreme body mod procedures were not analogous to tattoos, piercings and 'other body adornment.' He has been sentenced to 40 months in jail. In a personal statement on social media just before being sentenced, Mac said, "Just in case I don't get chance later I'll say goodbye now. Thank you for all the love and support not only through this hell but for all the previous years where we've had fun and lived our lives. It's been an epic journey. If things don't go the way we hope/pray, it's my girls and the rest of my family that now need all your love, help and support. Please make sure they're OK. Love to you all. Thankyou. Mac."



ANCIENT TONGA COMBS

Archaeological researchers in Australia have been taking a closer look at a set of four tiny traditional tattoo combs in their collection. These fascinating pieces of tattoo history from the Polynesian kingdom of Tonga had been stashed away in a storage facility at the Australian National University in Canberra for many years (and were in fact at one time assumed to have been lost in a fire). Carbon dating has now revealed that they are nearly 3,000

years old. They were originally found during a dig way back in 1963 at a site believed to be an ancient rubbish dump on Tongatapu, the largest of Tonga's 170 islands. Two of the combs are made of seabirds' bones; the other two are made of human bone. The full details are in an article entitled 'Ancient Tattooing in Polynesia' by Geoffrey Clark and Michelle C Langley published on 1st March 2019 in the *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology*.



SMB ARTIST VACANCY

Stay Much Better Tattoo in Brighton are currently looking for the right artists to join their team. They offer competitive rates, a modern and clean workspace, and the option of a private studio. They told us, "We aspire to push each other artistically and be the best Brighton has to offer." The right person must have 3+ years of professional studio experience and be self-sufficient with a clientele in and around Sussex. Please email

sorn@smbtattoo.com



TATTOO MARATHON

Heroic tattooist Rhys Jones described himself as being in absolute agony – aching, numb and barely able to stand – after completing a 48-hour tattoo marathon at his Truro studio during which he challenged himself to tattoo as many people as he could with personalised cancer ribbons. During the epic charity event, he managed to tattoo between 150 and 200 people, and raised some £4,000 for the Marie Curie charity, which provides care and support for those affected by terminal illness (www.mariecurie.org.uk) –

in memory of his aunt, who recently died from cancer. According to reports in the local press, a massive queue formed at the studio and many people shared emotional stories of battles with cancer, or of loved ones they'd lost to the disease – and big-hearted Rhys said it was this overwhelming response that encouraged him to keep tattooing ribbons as long as he could. He sent out a heartfelt thank you to everyone who came along to get tattooed or lent their support the marathon.



EPIC TATTOO SESSION



Ryan Crane is now proudly wearing the result of a 24-hour sitting at New Inkg in Brotton, North Yorkshire. Studio owner and tattooist Sean Ing came up with the idea of the epic session as a way of raising funds for the charity Leo's Neonatal (www.leosneonatal.org) which supports and cares for families during and after pre-term and traumatic births, and which helped his partner's premature nephew, Hugo. Sean's regular customer Ryan, a soldier by profession, was a willing accomplice in the challenge. He helped design the tattoo, which depicts a cathedral interior with skulls. When Sean was asked in local press interviews how well his customer sat for the tattoo, he said he was "hard as nails."



NORTH SEA FLASH DAY



You've heard of tattoo gift vouchers or the gamble of 'get what you get', but this flash day has really got us itching to get tattooed – because you can pay with scratch cards! Just think of your scratch cards as cash.

(Goes without saying they need to be unscratched...)

A £1 scratch card is worth £1 towards your tattoo. The event will be held at North Sea Tattoo in Scarborough (tel 01723 362286) on Saturday 20th April, 11am 'til late. It's first come first served, and there will be four flash sheets to choose from, designed by Chris Newport, Tom Arnison, Nick Mayes and Costa Dan. Tattoos will cost from £70 to £100 – much less than usual, because the tattooists are of course in with a chance of pocketing a bit of prize money off the scratch cards customers give them!

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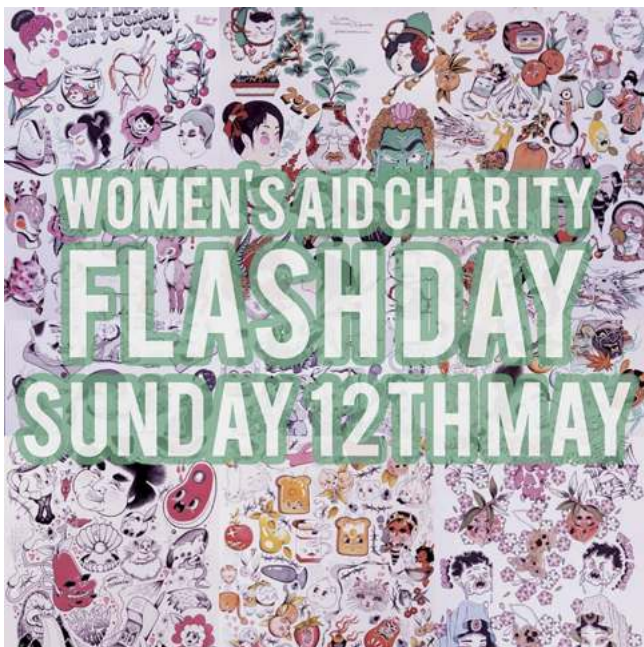
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TOM ARNISON
DAN WILLIAMS
CHRIS NEWPORT

DESIGNS £70-£100
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WOMEN'S AID FLASH DAY

90sDolpinTattoo (aka Lara Thomson at The Blue Tattoo in Hammersmith, London) is doing a flash day on 12th May with 100% of the proceeds going to Women's Aid (@womensaid), a UK-based charity that supports survivors of domestic abuse and violence, helping those in need, conducting research and lobbying for long-lasting change in political policy and education. All Lara's flash designs will be available at special reduced rates on the day. At the moment it looks like the event is already fully booked, but Lara's said please do contact her if you're interested as there might be cancellations. Tel 020 8746 3133 or email 90sdolphintattoo@gmail.com



NORTHSIDE TATTOOZ POSITION AVAILABLE

A rental position is available at Northside Tattooz for a good, honest tattooist (must be established) with no alcohol or drug problems, who wants to work with like-minded people, have his/her own space, and be in charge of her/his own diary. This is on a rental basis, not a percentage, and it's at a nice low rate! Email northsidetattooz@hotmail.com or direct message @lownorthsidetattooz on Instagram for more info.





RIP RICK WALTERS



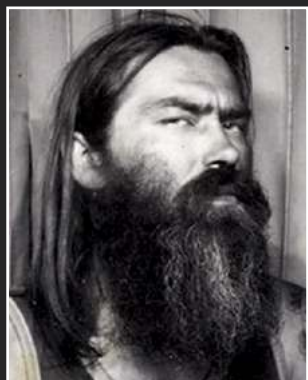
We were saddened to hear of the death of Rick Walters, a legendary figure of the Californian tattoo scene, at the age of 73.

Rick's tattoo life began before he'd even hit his teens. One of the stories about him describes how, at the age of 10, he inked 'Born To Raise Hell' on his own leg – and that was after he'd already done plenty of little tattoos on himself and other kids in the neighbourhood! When he was 14, he went with his father to Long Beach to get a tattoo from a professional – an iconic panther. In his long tattoo career he worked in a number of different shops, and in 1978 he took on the manager's role at Bert Grimm's World Famous Tattoo (the USA's oldest continuously operated tattoo shop) in The Pike seaside amusement area of Long Beach. He was there for 25 years. When the shop closed in 2002, he was instrumental in persuading tattooist Kari Barba to take it over, giving her his blessing to renovate and re-model the premises and make the place her own.

[See our major interview with Kari later in this issue of Total Tattoo Magazine.]

Rick Walters became what one journalist described as a “grandfather figure” for the tattoo community, and “the Gandalf of the Southern California tattoo world.” He was was a living link to tattoo history and the West Coast's old school pioneers – and he inspired many younger generation artists with his outrageous reminiscences and deep knowledge of American traditional tattooing, and his honest and outspoken views on the modern tattoo scene. After a brief retirement, he returned to tattooing and opened Rick Walters' World Famous Tattoo in Sunset Beach. There are many stories about how he would inform customers, in his own unique style, “I don't make appointments. I'm not a f*ckin' hairdresser!” or tell them to “Shut the f*ck up and sit the f*ck still!” But his apparently hard exterior belied a soft, gentle, kind personality.

Rick Walters was tattooing until just a few days before his death. He is survived by his wife Robin, five children, three stepchildren, nineteen grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Our thoughts are with them, and his many friends. He will be sadly missed by everyone who knew him.



END HIV DISCRIMINATION

HIV Scotland

promoting positive change

Here's an important story picked up by our news radar. In the wake of several reported cases of apparently blatant discrimination, HIV Scotland chief executive Nathan Sparling has written to local councils urging them to revoke the licence of any tattoo studio refusing to tattoo customers on the grounds of their HIV status. The charity (www.hivscotland.com) said that this kind of discrimination, which is of course illegal under the Equality Act 2010, is still sadly "widespread" and emphasised in its statement that "standard infection controls [in tattoo studios] – single-use needles and sterilised equipment – are enough to negate any risk of HIV transmission."

FILIP LEU EXHIBITION

For the past month, the Next Door Gallery in Geneva, Switzerland, has been hosting an awesome exhibition of backpiece designs by legendary tattooist Filip Leu. The show features 32 stunning large-scale drawings in charcoal and red pencil based on the perennially fascinating (and visually arresting) theme of skulls. The exhibition finishes on 30th March, but a catalogue is available – if you're unable to get there in person – as well as prints of some of the art works. Tel +41 22 320 90 57 or check www.facebook.com/NextDoorGalleryGeneva



DOES THIS LOOK ILLEGAL?

'Does this look illegal?' is an Instagram protest by South Korean tattooists that's currently going viral. The wearing of tattoos is becoming less stigmatised in that country – indeed it's almost becoming mainstream – but the actual practice of tattooing is still against the law (unless the tattooist is a qualified medical professional and holds a medical license). South Korean artists are highlighting this paradox with their Instagram campaign. They want to be able to celebrate their art and openly share their enjoyment of it instead of having to work in secret, risking fines or even imprisonment.



TATTOO ARTIST



WANTED

FIVE KEYS ARTIST VACANCY

Five Keys Tattoo, in Norwich, are looking for someone to join their team! It's a relaxed studio with a very good rate. Email joecarpentertattoo@gmail.com

INIKIO TATTOOARMUS!

La Bonbonnière tattoo studio in Lille, France, is holding a dedicated Harry Potter Flash Day at the end of March, with five artists creating magic designs specially for the event. It's first come first served, and tattoos will be available at a range of prices. Tattooists and shop staff will all be wearing appropriate fancy dress and they're inviting their customers to do the same. And there will be plenty of Hogwarts-themed goodies and treats up for grabs too! La Bonbonnière is at 180 Rue du Pont in Fourchon, Lille. Tel +33 3 20 09 76 49, www.facebook.com/BonbonniereTatouage

(Do tell us if your studio is doing something similar – whatever the theme, and especially if it's for charity – and we'll do our best to include the details in Total Tattoo Magazine. Please let us know as far in advance as you can.)



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Interview by Lizzy • Pictures courtesy of Kari Barba

KARI BARBA

Even if you aren't familiar with Kari Barba's work, you may well have noticed her at international conventions. She's immediately recognisable for the brightly coloured and beautifully tailored blazers she wears, her stunning short hairstyle, and her warm, friendly attitude. She emits the most incredible, positive energy. It's no wonder so many people want to stop her for a photo or a chat! Kari is a highly influential American realist tattooist. She's been part of the Californian scene for many years and her world famous studio, Outer Limits Tattoo, has premises in both Long Beach and Costa Mesa.

Your work is so contemporary and exciting, you'd never guess you've been in the industry for almost forty years...

I can hardly believe it myself. Forty years! Makes me feel a little old, but it's kinda cool!

Tell us about the special history of your Long Beach shop.

It's located where the famous seaside amusement area known as The Pike used to be. It's the oldest continuously running tattoo shop in the USA, and the second oldest in the world. It was Bert Grimm's old shop. I acquired it in 2002, when it was being sold by the sons of tattooist Bob Shaw, who was Bert Grimm's nephew. We then undertook a four-year renovation project.

“MAYBE AT TIMES I PARTIED A
LITTLE TOO MUCH...”



How was it, taking over such a historical shop?

When I first took it over, pretty much everything had been taken out of the shop and it was just an empty shell. I'd thought we could just clear up the mess and remodel it a little bit, but the City said we had to renew all the plumbing, electrics, etc. So we had to tear up layers of flooring, strip the walls, everything. It was a real old school premises consisting of separate interconnecting units and it hadn't really been a very good utilisation of the space, so we knocked down all the internal walls except one. Everybody was nervous, because we're in the basement of a twelve storey building! [Laughs] The important thing for me was to preserve the history at the same time as making the place our own. We wanted it to look like a traditional tattoo shop - not too modern - and we salvaged everything that we could. The floor is the original, dating from 1921, and we've even got the original anchor door hinges, reflecting Long Beach's heritage as a naval town.



I guess you had to tread carefully with the renovations.

Yes. It was a sensitive issue. People were upset that the shop was being changed, and some of them were even more upset because it was a woman doing it. They told me I was wrecking the place. I said, "Just give me a chance. Let me finish it, then come and see it." I take my stewardship of this historic shop very seriously. The renovation project was a labour of love, and I have been meticulous in preserving and archiving everything I can. The shop also functions as a tattoo museum, open to the public, with photographs, vintage tattoo equipment and memorabilia from The Pike days of Long Beach too.





And you have the Costa Mesa shop as well?

Yes. It's in The CAMP, an alternative 'anti-mall' – a visionary and inspiring urban green space. We have eleven artists at the Long Beach shop and nine artists in Costa Mesa.

I imagine your studios have a great family feel...

Absolutely! It's the reason we, as a group, continue to grow. We all help each other. We're always asking each other's opinions. I can learn from them, they can learn from me, everybody can learn from each other. Years ago in tattooing, if someone came into a shop wanting a great piece, the shop owner or senior artist always got first choice. But I believe you have to let go of your ego and maybe say, "S/he's going to do it better."

How do you feel about tattooing now, compared to when you first started?

If you're asking if I still love it, the answer is that I love it more and more every day. But tattooing in general? It's huge now. It's become more of a business than an art, despite the fact that nowadays it's more recognised as an art form. It's all so overdone, in so many ways. But that's fantastic for us, right?! Thinking back to when I opened my first shop, I was so careful to make sure that the nearest shop was like 25 miles away; I wanted to make sure there was a respectable space between us. Nowadays, you're lucky if you can get a block in between...! You start with one shop per city, and now there are twelve in the 1.3 square miles of our Downtown. But you can only slice the pie so thin; the good artists and shops will make it, the other ones might not. There's a lot of people who want to tattoo, but not everybody wants to get tattooed.



Have you ever considered having a private studio?

Yes, but it's not for me. There wouldn't be the same opportunity for growth. Working in a group, I love it when we're all tattooing. I love the atmosphere of that. The communication between us, back and forth. My son works in a studio by himself – or with just one other person – and he prefers that, because he likes that quiet kind of atmosphere. But I love having a lot of artists around me. Drawing and painting on my own at home is fine. But when I'm tattooing, apart from privacy screening or closing a door for those who need it, I like the open-plan layout. In our shop, we have a mix of music so people are often singing and I love that too! It's important to me that they're happy and enjoying what they do.

And that helps put clients at ease too.

Absolutely. I also know that some of my clients need to zone out, so for them I might set up a movie so they can relax, then we'll chat in between.

So tell us how you first got into tattooing.

I didn't grow up dreaming of becoming a tattooist, like many artists do. It was an artist saying to me, "You should tattoo. I think you'd be good at this. You should try it." And when I did try it, it was so much fun! If I hadn't done that first tattoo, maybe I wouldn't ever have got into it. But once I did, I felt that I was meant to do it. It just felt so natural.

What did that guy see that convinced him you'd make a great tattooist?

I think it was the way I used to draw. This was the mid seventies. He was from New York and I guess he was aware of single needle and the start of black and grey tattooing – Jack Rudy and those guys. I didn't know much about anything, but I'd seen some work from Ed Hardy, which I loved. When I started tattooing I just had the attitude that I could do whatever I wanted. I did my first couple of tattoos in the same way that I was already drawing and it just felt so good.





Do you think you've always had an eye for what makes a good tattoo?

I think that's something that I'm still constantly learning. The flow and balance are just as important as the way a tattoo is executed. A tattoo can be done with perfect line and perfect shading, but if it doesn't flow well on the body or in its artistic style, then it isn't a good tattoo. I always look at tattoos I've done and think about the changes I could have made to improve them. It keeps me growing. In tattooing, having that type of open eye is important. If you're so rigid that you can't keep learning, you're not going to make it.

You can see it in people's work when they've got stuck and stopped really looking.

You need to keep asking yourself, "Am I trying to improve? Am I continuing to learn?" It's just a matter of continuously moving forward. Staying contemporary is important. I've had to change to stay with the times, or else I wouldn't be busy. There's no reason for me to work in all styles now. Sometimes I think to myself, "I'm not going to do that style anymore because there are already so many people doing it amazingly!" I need to keep raising my game.





Over the years, have you changed the machines you use?

Yes. I learned on coils. Then in London in 2008, Cheyenne asked me try one of their machines. They set it up and let me use it for a day. For the first hour it felt so strange and so foreign, but by the end of the day I was asking if I could use it for another day because it felt so good. By the end of day two, I didn't want to give it back! Luckily, they let me keep it. I've never used a coil since then. The first reason is the weight. My hands were hurting, to the point that I was struggling all the time. This rotary is only slightly heavier than a magic marker, so it saved my hands and in turn saved my body. Even down to sitting up straighter, everything just felt better. And I only need to use one machine. I can make it run softer, harder, whatever I need. I used to set up four machines, so I'd have four choices of needle grouping. Now, with cartridges, I can use thirteen or fourteen different set-ups but just go through on one machine if I need to! Almost all the Outer Limits artists use rotaries now. A couple of the traditional artists like to use coils for lines. Surprisingly one of them is the youngest artist in the studio. He's having trouble letting go because that's how he was taught and trained.

Did you have a formal apprenticeship?

No, I didn't.

So would you say intuition played an important part in your learning?

That's a good question. I started tattooing at nineteen, and at that age you think you can do anything. And I did – but two years later it didn't look so great. Putting the ink and the colour in... I thought I had the intuition to know how to do it properly, but I soon realised that I didn't. So I had to go back and learn stuff. I trained myself to do linework – although I don't do it so much now of course – and I went through a period of learning to do traditional. I really agree with apprenticeships and the idea of being taught. For me, I think it would have saved years of figuring things out!





Knowing the basic skills helps in so many ways.

Oh yeah. For example I used to do everything with single needles and threes. The first tattoos I did, I shaded them with a three – like shading with a pencil, which I was used to. Then I figured out I could speed it up a lot if I just used more needles! [Laughs] Lesson learned, right?! I joke about it, but when I'm judging competitions people will come up to me and say, "I did the whole thing with a single needle," and in the back of my mind I'm like, "Two years from now you're gonna think, 'I should have done that with a shader and saved myself a lot of time!'"





And there are those who are proud of their speed. The ones who say things like, "I'm faster than Filip Leu!"

Yeah, Filip has become a bit of a benchmark in that respect. But one of the first things I tell people when they start in my shop is that I don't want speed, I want quality. I don't care how long it takes you to do it. It's good for the client if they get it done quickly of course, but it's more important that they get a good tattoo. Filip didn't learn speed first. He learned to do a great tattoo and the speed came afterwards. When I'm looking at the work done at conventions, you can see where they started the tattoo – how beautiful and clean it is – then you can see where they've gone, "Oh, the competitions are in an hour! I've gotta finish!" and the rest of it is just not as good. Take your time. Don't worry about the competition. Do a good tattoo.

What do you think about tattoo competitions?

Personally, I like them. Good healthy competition helps you become a better artist. Sometimes people win who shouldn't – but that's always happened, whether it's through differences of opinion or style preferences. I was brought up with tattoo competitions. It was a big thing to prepare for them. You didn't see anything until you got on the stage, and then it would be like "Wow!" That amazing reveal of the work. It was very exciting.

When you're judging a competition, what are the key elements you look for in a tattoo?

There are lots of aspects that need to be considered. Flow and placement are definitely important. Some tattoos don't need a flow because they're more of a badge-style sticker tattoo, but the placement is always important. The lines must be crisp and clean, and the shading must be solid and smooth. There are contemporary styles that have an intentionally erratic look, but the tattoo still needs to be put in well. Is it going to hold up over time? Is it going to close up? Often there's just too much detail! Some of my old work, I see it now and I'm like, "Hmm, it's just too small." I did figures on a forearm with all this detail and it's just gone... So you have to think about what's gonna hold. If the colours fade back, will the design still be there and legible? That's the hard part – trying to figure that out. Nowadays, with finer needles and better inks, I hope those detailed pieces are going to have longevity. It's sad when people seem to be doing it just for the photo.





Tattooists have a responsibility...

I agree. It's important to be able to say no. And to be able to say *why* you can't do something. Or why something won't work. You have to be able to explain to somebody what's gonna happen in twenty years' time. Even show them your own old tattoos to illustrate the point! It has to be our responsibility, because the person getting tattooed doesn't always know. We have to educate them.

What changes have you noticed in tattooing over the years?

What stands out for me is the technical ability these days. Realism has been going on since the seventies, but the level it's attained now... and the combining of styles... it's amazing. And when you have artists collaborating on great pieces in different genres, artistically it's so pleasing. Also, the fact that people aren't afraid. And there isn't as much competition of the kind we had in the old days - where people wouldn't share information or even talk about how to get better at things! Obviously hygiene is another thing that has changed so much. Back in the day, you were just using the same needles all day long, week in week out, month after month, until they got dull! We were doing all kind of things, you know? [Laughs]





Are you still getting tattooed?

Here and there. I try! I'm trying right now to collect a tattoo for each member of my family – a bird for my mother, a bird for my father, one for my son, daughter, and so on. But the problem is I've been trying to collect them from people in my shop and every time I set an appointment they cancel it! *[Laughs]* They keep saying, "I'm not ready..." And it doesn't help that I work five days a week. I'm not overly keen to be in the shop getting tattooed on the other two.

What do you like to do on your days off?

I try to do things that are non-tattooing. I like to be outside. I love to hike, and if it's warm I love to be in the water. I actually took up golf! Disconnect and refresh!

A final question: Do you have any regrets?

No. I think everything teaches you a lesson, even things that were difficult or hard. Maybe at times I partied a little too much at some of those conventions... *[Laughs]* Actually, I think that might be my biggest regret. I remember a convention back in '83 or '84 where a couple of my artist friends were buying me drinks the night before and I had no idea I was drinking triples. I was sick the entire convention, and completely unable to tattoo. I was so miserable! But I know they felt pretty bad about it too...

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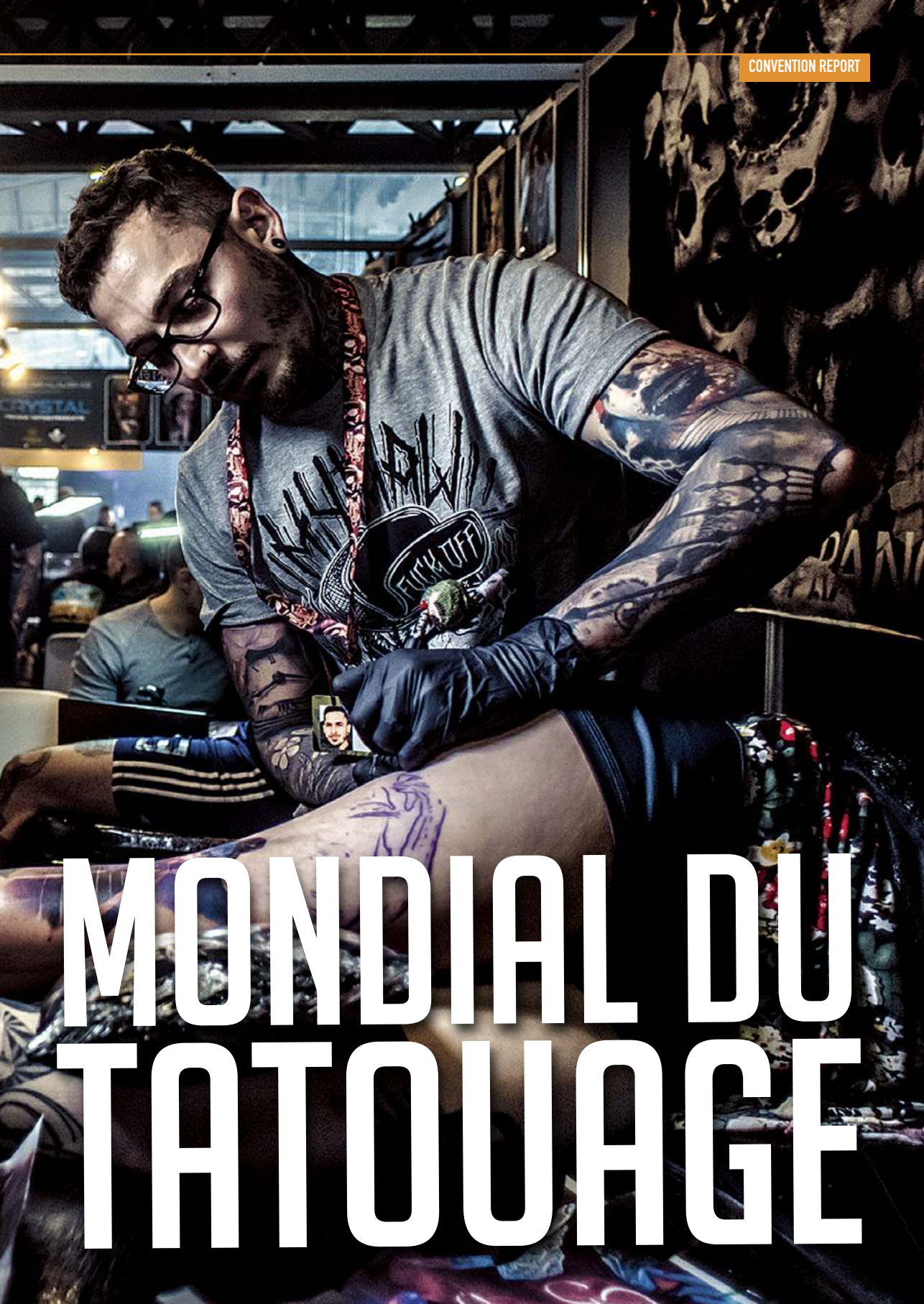
Words by Lizzy,
Pictures by Perry, Margaux Chalmel and Anthony Dubois

In 2010, the Mondial du Tatouage in Paris thrust itself into the tattoo convention scene, demanding to be noticed and commanding the respect it so rightly deserved. Nine years later, renowned tattooer Tin-Tin's magnificent convention is still in a league of its own.

This year the Mondial du Tatouage was brought forward to early February. Paris was bathed in Spring sunshine, tens of thousands of 'yellow vest' protesters descended on the city, and the Grande Halle de la Villette threw open its doors to welcome tattoo fanatics, artists and collectors.

The layout was familiar from previous years – a stage in the centre with back-to-back display screens, a large open area with bars, and tattooing and viewing areas on the upper level – but what was on offer was truly something else. During the day, the stage area hosted entertainment and competitions, but come the evening the space transformed into a concert venue, starting with Ultra Vomit's parodic grind core on Friday night and peaking with internationally acclaimed hard-rock band Lucifer on Saturday night. Always one to push boundaries, for the daytime entertainment Tin-Tin went beyond the clichéd acts that so many people love to hate and instead went for something completely new: a collaboration with Philippe Decouflés DCA ('Diversité, Camaraderie, Agilité') dance company which was, quite simply, nothing short of spectacular. This was almost certainly the first time the worlds of tattooing and high-end contemporary dance had come together in this way.





MONDIAL DU TATOUAGE



JURGIS MIKALAUKAS



AELLIM (SINGAPORE)

If you're not familiar with the name Philippe Decouflé, let me fill you in quickly. He choreographed performances for the Winter Olympics, the Cannes Film Festival and the Rugby World Cup, and also directed the 'Bleu Blanc Goude' show on the Champs Elysées for the bicentenary commemoration of the French Revolution. He's made many music videos and he's won numerous awards for his work over the years. During the Mondial du Tatouage weekend, the DCA dance company presented some of their best-known performances specially adapted for the convention. Dancers adorned with 'tattoos' (painted by Tin-Tin) flew through the air above the audience and swirled across the mirrored stage in a playful and poetic collision of movement, emotion and ink. To add to the whole experience, visitors could also enjoy Philippe Decouflé's 'Opticons' - immersive



THE JUDGES: KARI BARBA, FILIP LEU, TIN TIN, LUKE ATKINSON, MARK MAHONY



GROSEB



ALESSANDRO PELIGRINI

THE LATE BILL SALMON



installations based on optical illusions involving mirrors, lights and video. It was extraordinary.

Also on show in the upper gallery area were Greg Conraux's crisp black and white photographic portraits of tattooers. These two hundred pictures were taken on-the-spot at the three previous Mondial du Tatouage conventions and their spontaneity gave them a unique energy. Celebrating both trailblazers and newcomers, they were a powerful representation of the tremendous diversity across our craft.

And if you wanted some fresh air or a bite to eat, there was a choice of top quality street food trucks just outside, with 'Mondial du Tatouage' deckchairs in which to sit and relax. This is a convention where even the catering options are well considered; I

ORIENT CHING



know of artists who anticipate the steak stall as much as the weekend itself! They assure me, through meaty chomps, that it's the best they've ever had. I, meanwhile, stick to my plant-based guns and opt for a burrito bowl – fresh, full of flavour and not too badly priced. For drinks, there were the usual coffees, soft drinks and water, and also the blond beer '8.6' featuring a special can and souvenir cup created by Tin-Tin. Intense par Nature' as their slogan goes, this was a hit with many a convention-goer.

The very visible presence of clingfilm-wrapped limbs was clear evidence that the 420 tattooists were busy throughout the three days. All manner of works were being undertaken. Stylewise, this convention really does have something for everyone; if you didn't see something you liked, the chances are you hadn't looked hard enough. The Mondial du Tatouage is famous for the stunning, large-scale work that is always on show here – especially during the competitions, where people fight with their cameras and phones to get the best pictures – but it would be a pity to overlook the perfectly executed simpler, smaller (and more traditional) tattoos that are also on display. The fact is, no bad work leaves the building.





LEVGEN KNYSH



PIERROKED

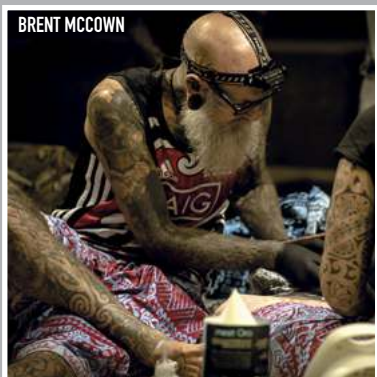


CHEN WEI TSO



The tattoo world is mourning the recent passing of Bill Salmon – co-founder, with his wife Junii, of Diamond Club Tattoo in San Francisco. Throughout the weekend a montage was projected with the words, 'We're gonna miss ya, Bill' and there was a portrait of Bill, by resident artist Chris Brand, prominently displayed on Diamond Club's booth. To mark his absence from this year's judging panel, each of the other panel members poignantly wore a diamond pin badge.

BRENT MCCOWN



MAUD DARDEAU





DCA DANCE COMPANY



MIKAEL DE POISSY



RAFAEL DELANDE



TOMAS TOMAS





For artists and customers alike, the Mondial du Tatouage competitions are 'the ones to win'. This year's panther head trophies (designed and sculpted by Tin-Tin) were coveted by all the tattooists waiting nervously in the wings as their clients took to the stage. Fortune favours the brave in these events, as the boundaries of art are pushed and tattooing rules are broken in the hope of winning an award. And like the judges, we were blown away by the Best of Show piece – an abstract collaboration between French artists Seb Inkme and Bichon Tattoo. Started and finished within the weekend, it depicted two faces kissing, interspersed with patterns and colour.

For many at the Mondial du Tatouage, ourselves included, this is the event to kick start our convention year. And what a way to start! It's clear that from the remarkable artist list and breathtaking entertainment that this convention believes in presenting the best of the best. But aside from that, away from the surface that the public see, *everything* runs smoothly. Tin-Tin has put careful consideration into every single aspect – including looking after those working the show with thoughtful gifts of business card holders for the artists, a VIP bar area, and photography areas for the press. This is a well-oiled machine that runs perfectly. Next year will be the tenth anniversary and I can already feel the hairs on my arms standing up in anticipation.

The Mondial du Tatouage 2020 will take place March 13th-15th. Be there if you can!



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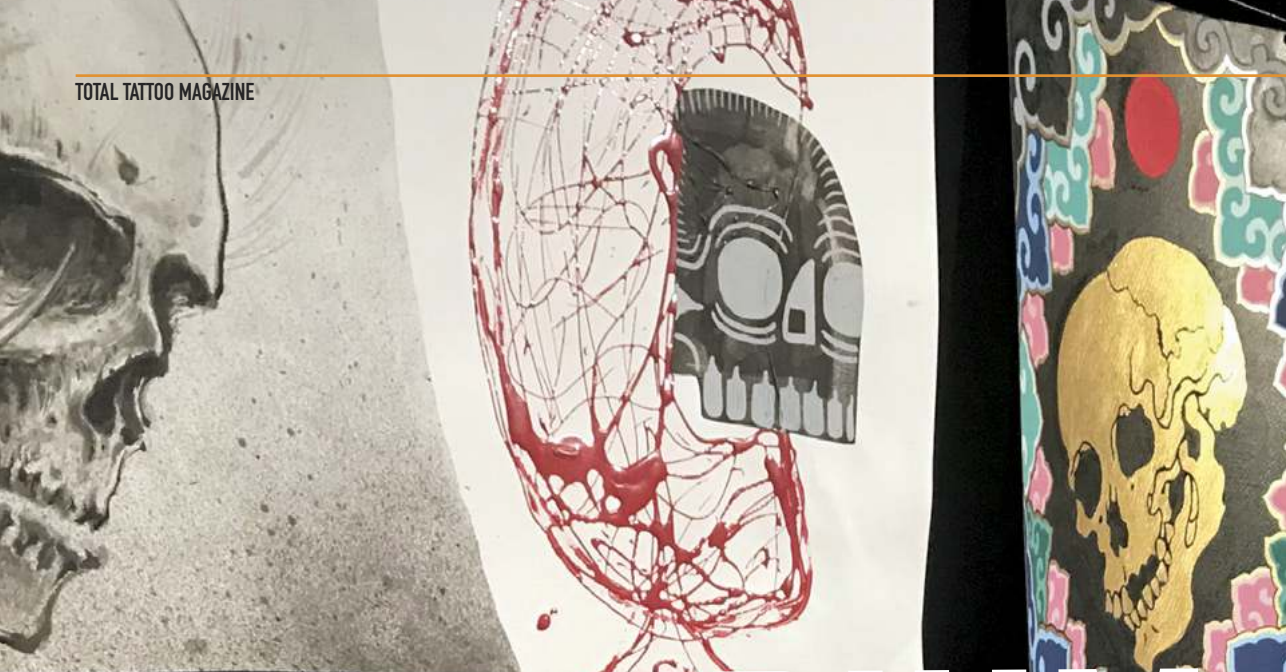
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CALVARIUM AT SEVEN DOORS TATTOO





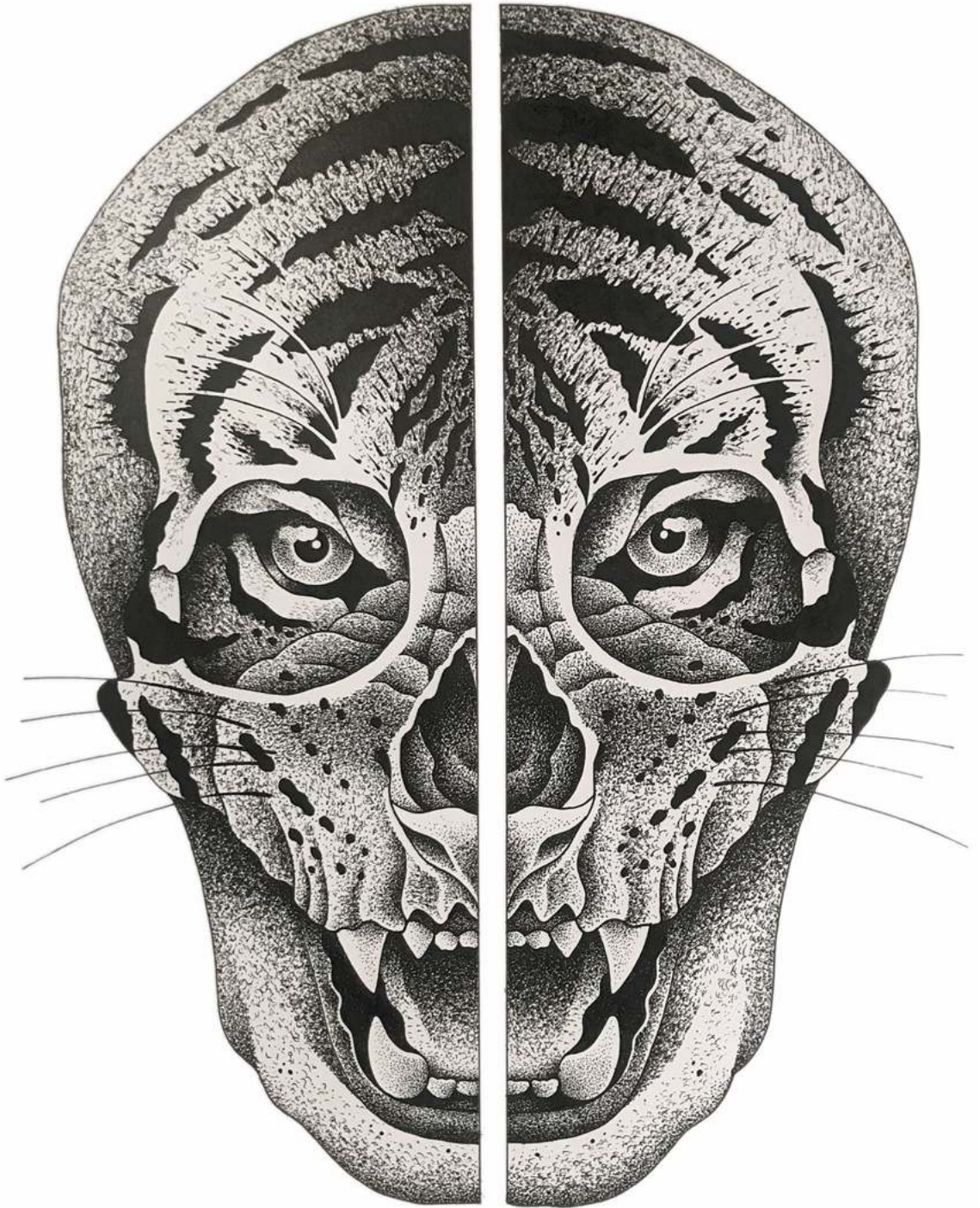
100 tattooists took part in the recent Calvarium* project organised by the crew at Seven Doors Tattoo in London. The resulting art pieces – all based on the theme of the human skull – were displayed in a fast and furious one-day selling exhibition at the studio. Naturally we went along to join in the fun! Tattooist / artist Jondix explained how it all came together...



* 'Calvarium' originates from the Latin and is the medical term used for the domed part of the skull that protects the brain.



Vania



Jamie Greaves



Wyrdian



What was the idea behind the project?

The intention behind the project was to organise an event at the shop that would unite our friends – both local and international. Timing it so that it fell between the Mondial du Tatouage in Paris and the Brighton Tattoo Convention made sense as we had so many friends visiting anyway. It was a great excuse to bring everyone together! And we're always looking for ways to demonstrate to people in the neighbourhood how much we love art. It's not about the business or making money. It's about having fun. Like a party, with art as the main thing. Raf [Rafel Delalande] had the initial idea. It was a bit crazy, but we always say yes to Art!

Tutti Serra (€400)



Tutti Serra

Why did you choose the skull motif?

Raf loves the Death Symbol so much. He really is into dark tattoos – imagery that works as a *memento mori*, a reminder that we're all going to die someday – but everyone at the shop agreed with the choice of subject because it's also a very common tattoo idea that can be represented in so many different ways.

How did you select the artists?

We simply asked each of our resident artists here at Seven Doors to invite their friends to take part. Artists couldn't apply to be involved. Space restrictions meant we had to limit the show to just 100 artists – and we were very sad when we realised we had forgotten some of our closest friends and there simply wasn't space on the walls for them. That was a hard moment.

How long did it take to organise the whole thing?

We start discussing the idea in October last year, and we started planning the exhibition in November. Stacey our shop manager went above and beyond to arrange all the technical aspects and get all the artwork in on time. She truly makes magic happen every day!



Raf

Eckle



Jondix



Ichibay

Tomas Tomas



Did the project live up to your expectations?

It went way beyond what we expected. Every single piece of art was incredible. And the lighting and music both exceeded our expectations too. Thanks to Tom at Lightwaves Ltd and Henry Lewis, the best street musician! And the turnout was overwhelming.



Simon Ert

Liorcifer



Why a one-day event?

We really wanted to have the exhibition at the shop, but we're open seven days a week so we needed to have the place ready for appointments again the next day. That meant it had to be for one night only! And we really did want it to be like a party... a gathering... something unforgettable. That's why the lighting and live music were so important too.



Are there plans for a Calvarium 2?

Yes. We've already started planning for 2020, and it's going to be even better! And we will be publishing a book about both shows too.

How can tattooists get involved ?

Keep an eye on our social media @sevendoorstattoo

And can people still buy the pieces?

Most of the paintings were sold on the night, but there are a few left. Contact Stacey at sevendoorstattoo@gmail.com



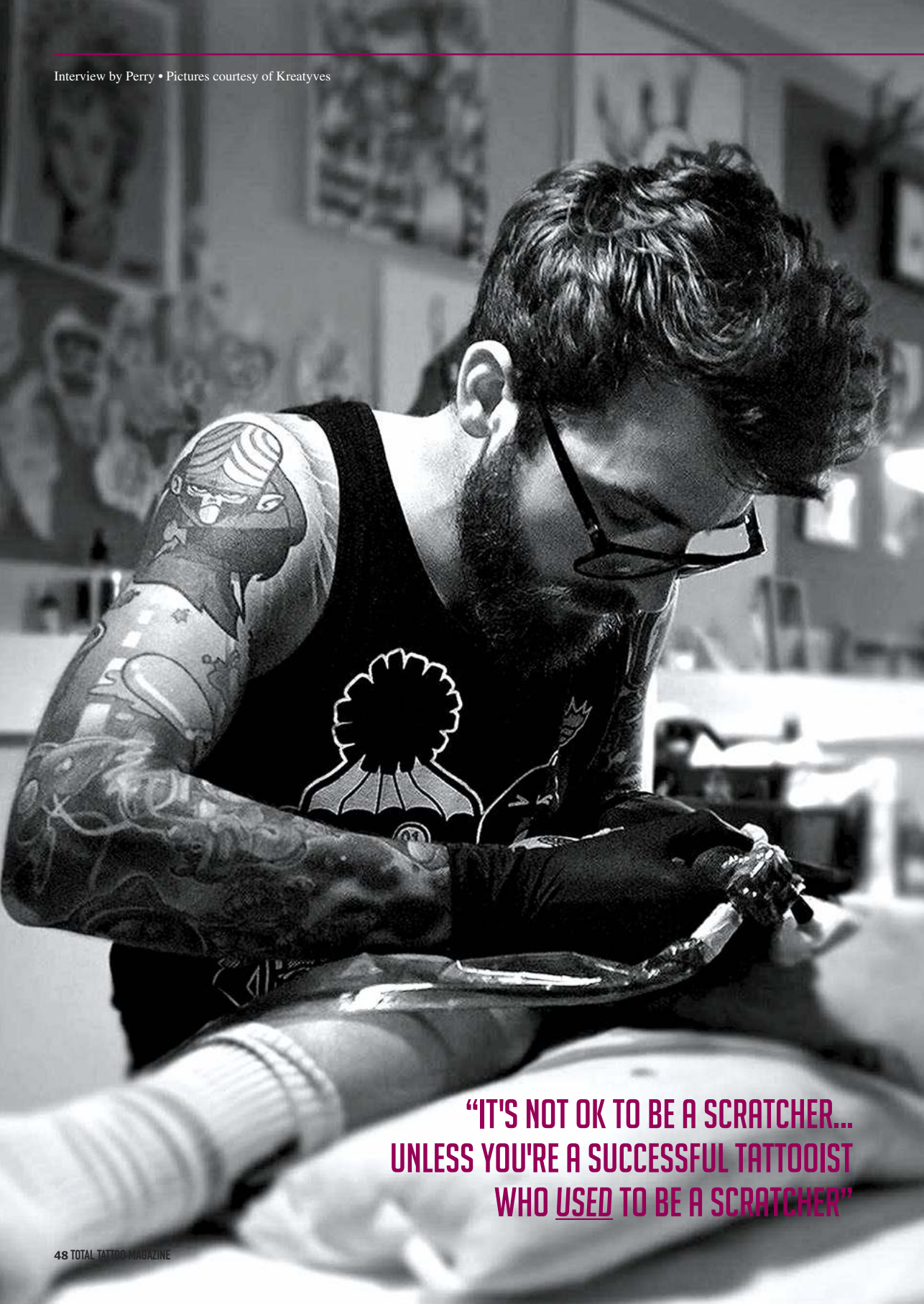


Alex Binnie

Alvaro P.



Sophie Rose Hunter



**“IT’S NOT OK TO BE A SCRATCHER...
UNLESS YOU’RE A SUCCESSFUL TATTOOIST
WHO USED TO BE A SCRATCHER”**

KREATYVES

Berlin-based artist Kreatyves is a bit of an enigma; he flies very low under the radar of publicity and never uses his real name. But his work speaks for itself and his pseudonym is certainly very apt for the wonderful art that he produces.

Naturally, knowing Kreatyves' desire to remain anonymous, we started our conversation by attempting to crack the mystery of his identity. But he wasn't going to reveal anything. "I never use my real name," he tells us emphatically, "and none of my work is credited to it." Then he adds intriguingly, "But part of my name is incorporated within my pseudonym...."

"I can tell you a bit about myself, though" he continues. "I've been tattooing for eight years now, and I did my apprenticeship in my home country of Switzerland. I've had my private studio in Berlin since December 2017. Before that I was travelling a lot, and I was tattooing on the road for three years. I did my first guest spots in Berlin at both a public and a private studio. The private studio concept was new to me at that time, and I fell in love with the idea straight away. I knew it was how I wanted to work. It's a much more relaxed way of doing things. Although of course it does mean I have fewer clients. People only get my address once they've paid their deposit. And I only have one customer per day, because I like to focus one hundred percent on them."

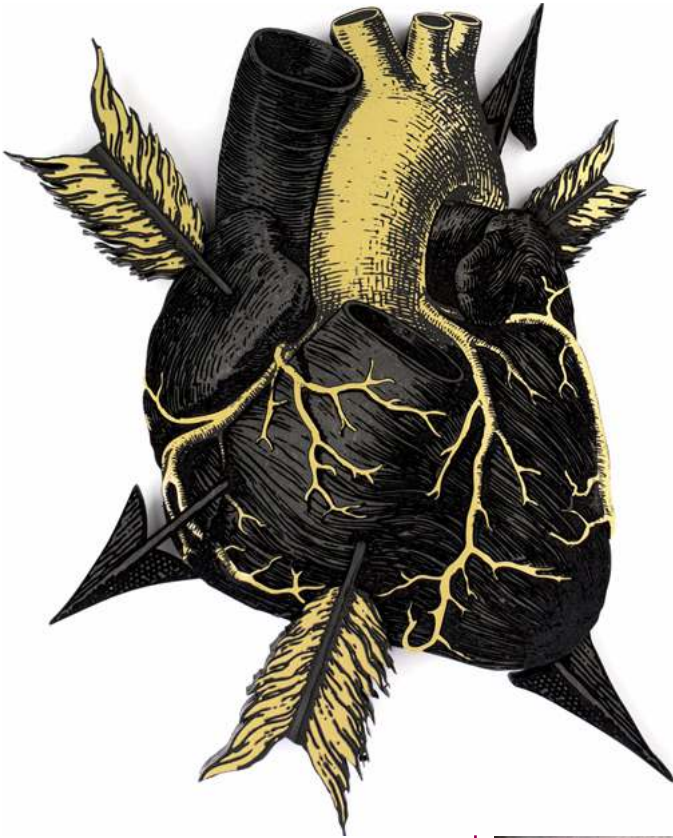
"I use social media a lot," Kreatyves goes on to explain, "partly because I'm not a native German speaker. The image-based content transcends any language barrier. People do sometimes get confused about the private studio thing too. I don't want my studio to be totally exclusive, but I also don't really want it to be a drop-in space. Because of how I work, time is a very precious commodity. In fact for me, it's a luxury. In 2018 I only did three conventions, whereas in 2016, before I had my studio, I did fourteen! But doing that many was exhausting."

Working as a solo artist in a private studio can be an isolating. "Yes," Kreatyves agrees, "and that's one of the reasons I chose to move to Berlin. There's a good network of tattooers here and although we're competing for customers we view each other very much as friends and colleagues. We all work in different private studios, yet we share information and hang out. There's an art night at one shop every other Tuesday, and when we meet up we often talk about new developments in machines, needles, etc."

“We guest at each other’s studios,” Kreatyves continues, “but none of us ever ask for a percentage of our guests’ takings because we feel we’re gaining from each other in so many other ways. And of course in a private studio, the space is paid for anyway! I understand that an expensive street shop in London may require a cut in exchange for publicity, advertising, customers, etc, but you really need to know the people behind the shop before you get into that kind of arrangement. I sometimes receive emails saying, ‘I love your work! Come and do a guest spot!’ but if I’ve never heard of the shop I wonder if what they’re really saying is, ‘Please come to my shop and make money for me.’ And why would I want to do that?”

Kreatyves works in an exceptionally considered, methodical, 'technical' way. As our conversation progresses and we talk more about his background, he explains where this comes from. “I used to be an architectural lighting designer. While I was studying lighting design I worked as an electrician, and prior to that I did a four-year electrician’s apprenticeship. So when I switched to tattooing, I already had that technical perspective. I was used to drawing out concepts and working with colour combinations. I was able to incorporate a lot of my previous training into my tattooing. It certainly does give me a slightly different approach, and hopefully makes my tattoos a little unique.”





“But I don’t use the 3D rendering programs I used when I was a lighting designer,” Kreatyves continues. “I do a lot of hand-drawing – in fact I still believe that when I’m at a convention, for instance, I should be able to draw and create from scratch the image that I’m going to tattoo. I do use Photoshop for some of the geometric elements, but only because it’s so much quicker. Tattoos need imperfections. When I’m looking at other people’s work, I can see instantly if a design has been drawn on an iPad with corrected lines that are too perfectly curved. They look almost flat and too sterile. Imperfections give tattoos life.”





We ask Kreatyves to tell us more about how he works. “I have my own personal formula to make each tattoo appealing and right,” he explains. “There should always be enough black in the design, for example, and the tattoo should always be planned with the future in mind. Even if my customer spends his life in the sun and all the colour fades, the tattoo should still be readable. That’s my basic approach. I love colour, but I know that all inks age differently and time has a part to play. I guess the more you tattoo, the less detail you put in and the simpler and more striking your tattoos become. I always start by getting the proportions of the client’s arm or whatever body part I’m tattooing, and I make use of the flow and anti-flow to maximise the effectiveness of the placement. Really, it’s the little unseen elements that make a tattoo sing out. For example, at the end I use a five round to tidy up all the edges and points. It’s not necessarily something my client will notice, but it sharpens and tightens up the whole image.”

“When I tattoo, I like to be as quick as possible,” Kreatyves tells us. “I don’t need to think about what I’m doing, because all the thinking was done at the planning stage. As a tattoo artist, you have to remember that your canvas is alive and in pain. Everyone’s favourite bit is when the session is over!”



For Kreatyves, a tattoo is only successful if it is 'readable' and recognisable as what it is supposed to be. "Even if it's an abstract design, if everyone keeps asking, 'What is it? What's it supposed to be?' that's going to get increasingly frustrating for the person wearing the tattoo. Simplicity is crucial. And contrast is very important – not necessarily in a light-and-dark way, but with contrasting colours and contrasting textures too. There are many ways of making a tattoo more readable."





Imagination is key. "My forte is creating imaginative designs using good ideas," Kreatyves tells us. "That's what people come to me for. There are always going to be tattooists who can do cleaner lines and bigger pieces, and there's a constant stream of new products to help everyone improve their technique, but creativity is my stronghold! Creativity creativity cannot be bought."

Kreatyves's work is now very much in demand, and he can be selective about the clients he chooses to tattoo. "If a customer is too inflexible in their demands, then I know we are not going to work well together. Like many artists, I find it's best if the client gives me just a rough idea of what they have in mind then leaves me to do the rest. Some customers come to me with fixed ideas that I know are not going to work. Of course I could just take their money and do the tattoo, but if I know it's going to look shit in five years' time, what would be the point? Ultimately, neither of us would be happy. You have to learn when to say no, and you also have to be aware of your own limits. It's good to push yourself, but you can't stretch beyond the limits of your own talents."



For someone who has come into tattooing so recently, Kreatyves has a surprisingly old school mentality. He has taken on an apprentice (he refers to her as his “most important project”) and is insisting that she learns every aspect of the craft. “We have made machines from scratch, and we will also make needles – even though I know she will probably never need to do this for herself. I plan for her to understand the technicalities of every element of tattooing – everything from ink to skin – and how all those elements come together. I want to help create an exceptional tattooist!”

“It’s not just about handing over a rotary pen and saying, ‘Let’s make money.’ People think tattooing isn’t really work – that we just smoke dope, drink, and have fun all day – but of course it’s not like that. Tattooing can look easy, but that’s an illusion. Professionals always make things look easy when they know what they’re doing. There’s a real difference between people who want to be tattooists and people who want to tattoo.”





Kreatyves tells us there are now nine hundred registered tattoo studios in Berlin. He reckons there are more than seven thousand tattooists working in the city – and that's just the legal ones! “In the past, the availability of apprenticeships would regulate the market. But now, with everything accessible online, the market has become over-saturated. And it's crowded with work of poor or average quality. There are some very capable tattooists out there, but they're copying what's already being done rather than innovating or pushing the industry forward. And there's a kind of double standard that people apply. It's not OK to be a scratcher... unless you're a successful tattooist who USED to be a scratcher!”

In addition to tattooing, Kreatyves is becoming known for his his artistic work in other media. He has his own screen printing studio back in Switzerland, and he also produces sculptural pieces, many of which involve laser cutting (which he does in a shared workshop space). His art has attracted a lot of interest from within the tattoo world. “I find it frees my mind to have other creative outlets,” he says, “and it means I get stuck less. If I hit a block with one discipline I can move on to another and come back inspired.”



Kreatyves shows his work in small-scale exhibitions, but in typical style these will be very sparsely advertised. He sells his work, but only in a very low-key way. "People have told me, 'Oh these things are great! We can market them, and do this and that...!' but then the fun would be gone. I don't want to fall into that. I sometimes put a post on Instagram, and pieces usually sell quite quickly. Most of them are bought by other tattooists."



This leads us on to the subject of photography, and how important a good photograph is if you're promoting your art on social media. "Whenever I finish a tattoo, the essential thing is to get a great photo," Kreatyves says. "This is because I don't use my face or my lifestyle to sell my work, so the tattoos have to speak for themselves. For me, a tattoo that's been photographed badly is therefore a wasted tattoo. This approach makes life harder but for me, but I feel it's a truer way to represent my work. I would rather people came to me for the tattoos I create than because because I ride a motorbike or have a dog..." Which brings us right back to that original question: Who is Kreatyves?

www.kreatyves.de

GALLERY

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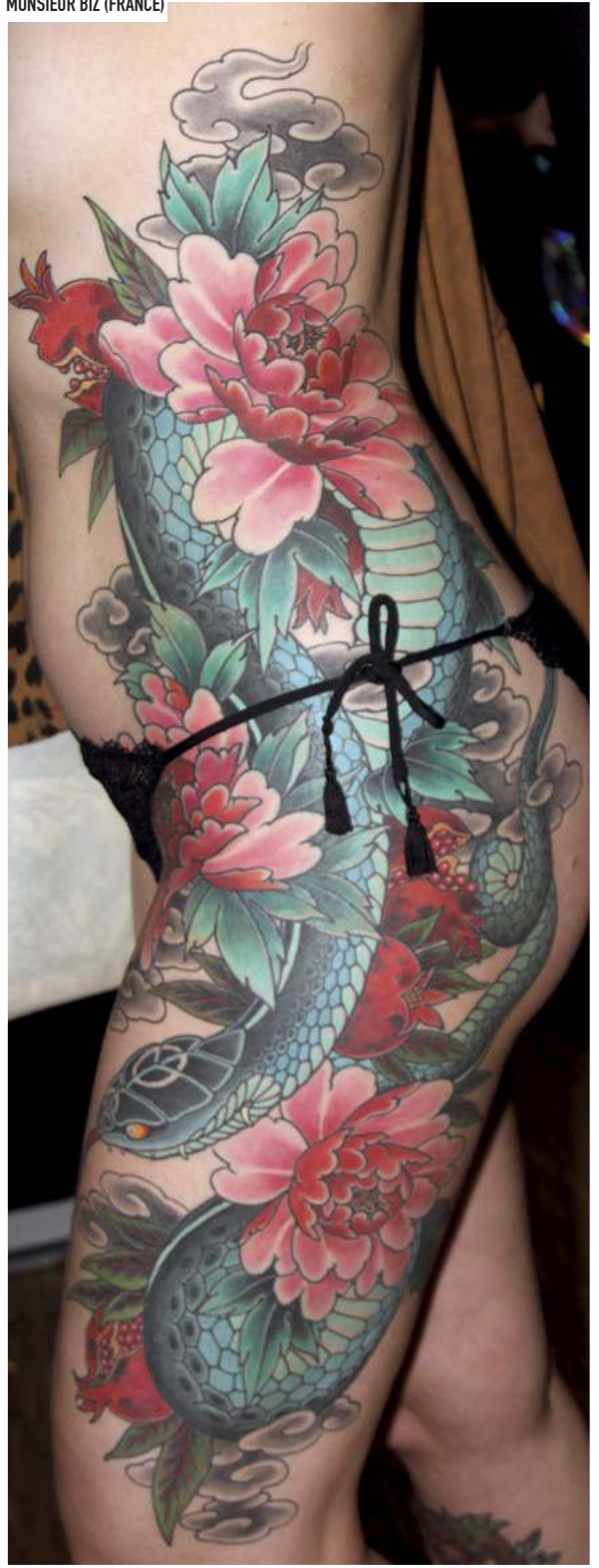
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MONSIEUR BIZ (FRANCE)



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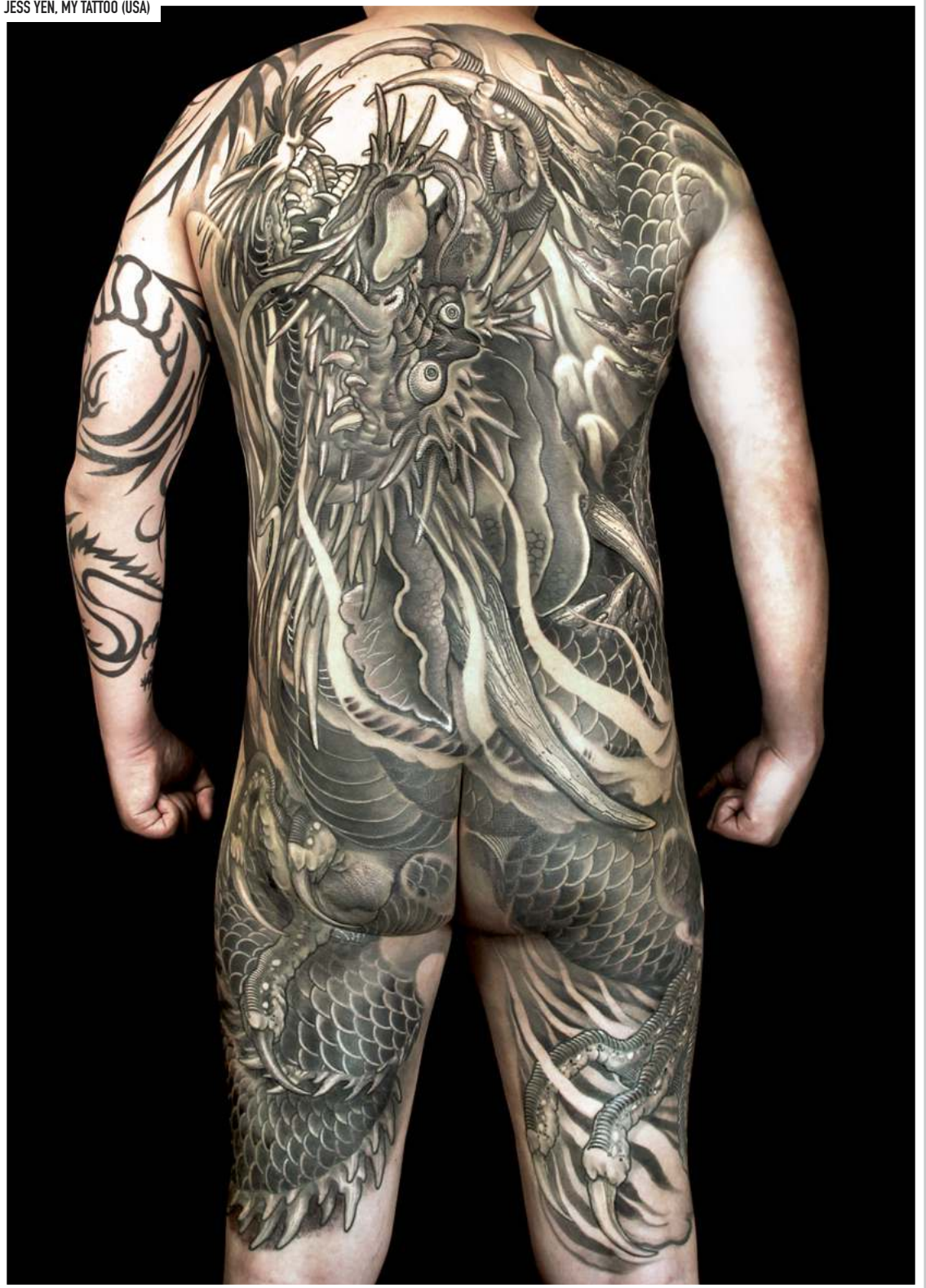


TEHO TATU (POLAND)



FABRICE KOCH, FABINKOGNITO TATTOO (GERMANY)





KHAN J. TATTOO PEOPLE (CANADA)



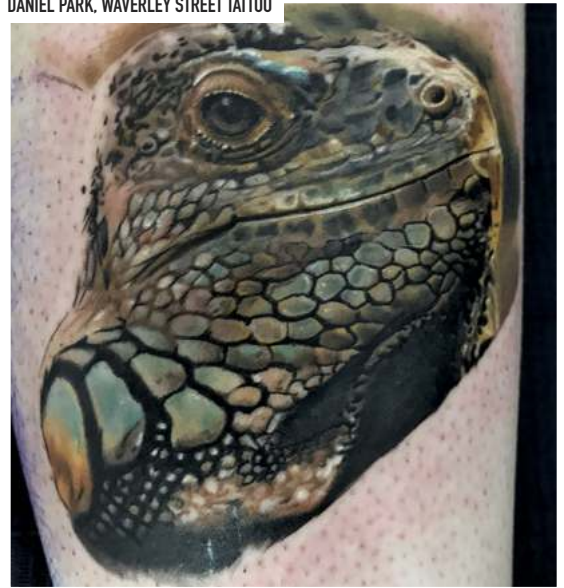
TRAWA, MODERN ELECTRIC TATTOO CO



STEVE MARSHALL, RUDE STUDIOS



DANIEL PARK, WAVERLEY STREET TATTOO



MICHAEL CLOUTIER, THE ARTS CORPORATION (CANADA)



SEB ULT, URBAN LEGEND (FRANCE)



EDGAR IVANOV, OLD LONDON ROAD



CLARKE DUDLEY, RENDITION TATTOO



AARON CLAPHAM, CATHEDRAL TATTOO



COSTANZA GIANELLINI, THE GRASSHOPPER TATTOO AND PIERCING STUDIO



COLLABORATION - P. J. REYNOLDS, RISING PHOENIX. JONNY FIRTH, SORRY MUM



ELLIE ROBERTS, DEVILTOWN



TIGGY TUPPENCE, BRIAR ROSE TATTOO



HARRIET COX, GOOD TIMES TATTOO



STEPHEN SPEIRS, DEVIL TOWN TATTOO



JAMES ASTON MEWETT, INFINITE INK



MATTHEW FLOWER



SOPHIE BOON, BLACK TULIP



LOZ PHILLIPS, CIRCLE OF SWORDS



SEB ULT. URBAN LEGEND



EMMA SAILOR. TRUE LOVE TATTOO



WILLIAM MARTIN. BIRDHOUSE TATTOO



LINDSAY WILLIAMS



BURCH, FIVE KEYS TATTOO



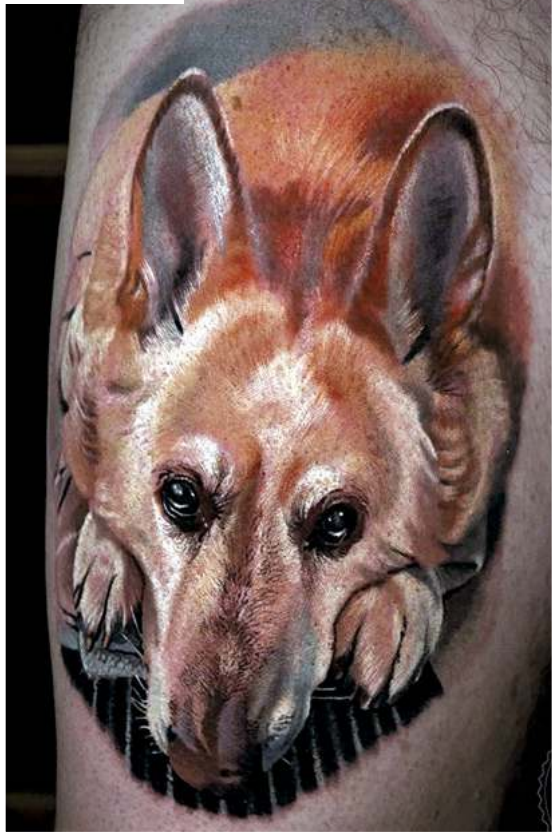
PETER MORRISON, SKIN INC



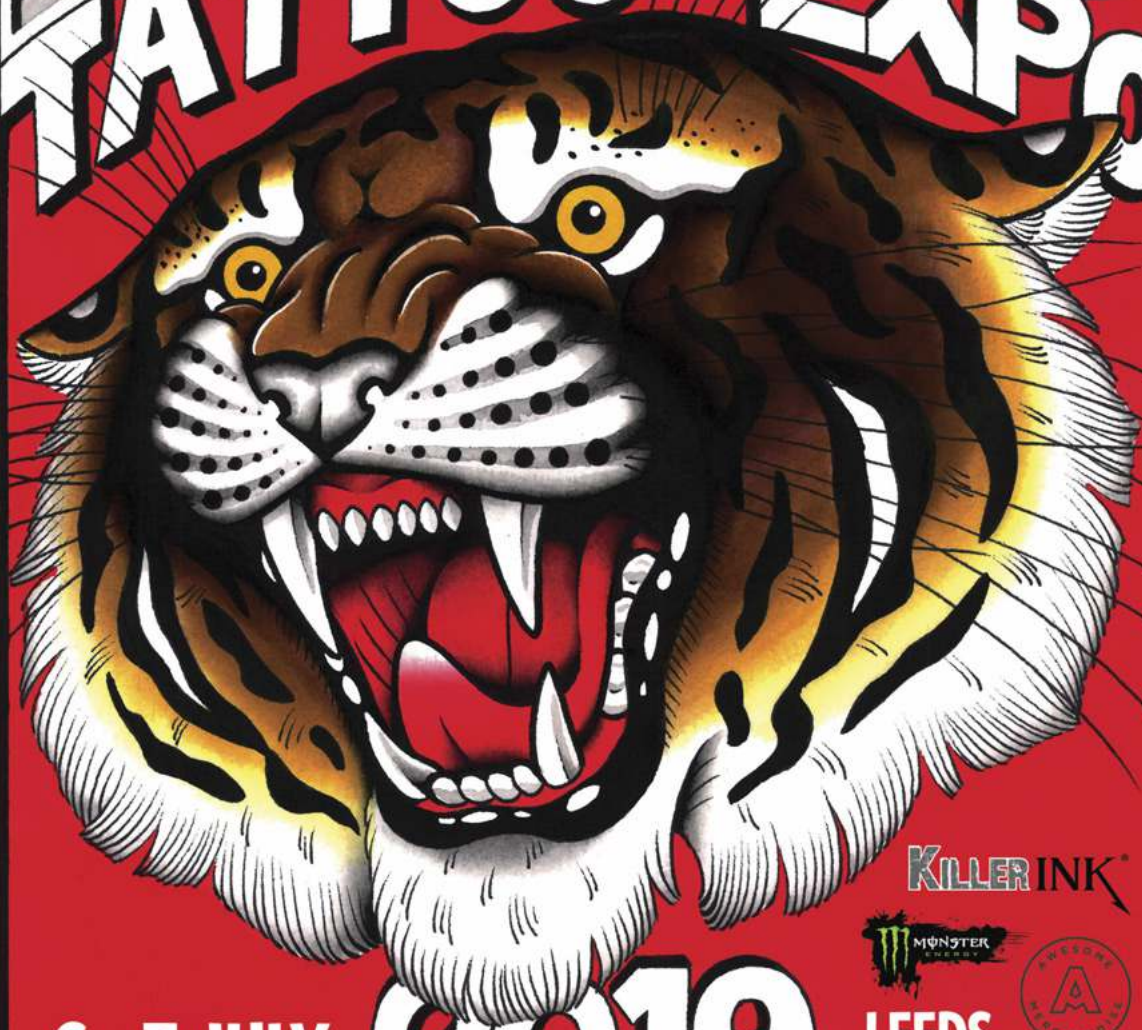
DAN LEWIS, HALLMARK TATTOOS



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NEIL BASS

“TATTOOING HAS NOW ARRIVED
AT A VERY GOOD PLACE,
BUT IT’S ALSO PRETTY MUCH
AT SATURATION POINT”

When we first interviewed Neil Bass fifteen years ago, he'd just opened Tattoo FX in Burgess Hill, West Sussex. In the intervening years, he's gone on to establish himself as one of the UK's premier blackworkers. He's certainly among the top ten tribal artists in this country, and his large scale pieces reflect both traditional and modern practices. Recently Neil relocated Tattoo FX to larger premises (a mere three miles away from the studio's original location) and we felt it was an ideal time to pay him another visit.







Working alongside Neil are Ness on the desk, tattooist Luke, and apprentice Enzo (who is featured on our cover this month). Ness also offers free areola tattoos for breast cancer survivors. The workspace is large, open and spotlessly clean, with chilled-out music playing and the walls adorned with Neil's wife Jackie's mosaics. I sit down with Neil in the warm, inviting reception area and we begin...

There was a gap of just three months between closing one door and opening the next, and Neil starts by filling me in on what prompted the studio move. "Unfortunately the lease on the old shop came up because the landlord suddenly passed away. I was thinking of getting a private studio because I was so busy, but when this place came along it was a great opportunity to have a larger shop with space for a couple of permanent guys and guest artists too. The new lease took a while to sort out, but that gave us time to get it all looking great. To be honest, although we have a shopfront it's more like a private studio because it's so tucked away in the middle of nowhere."

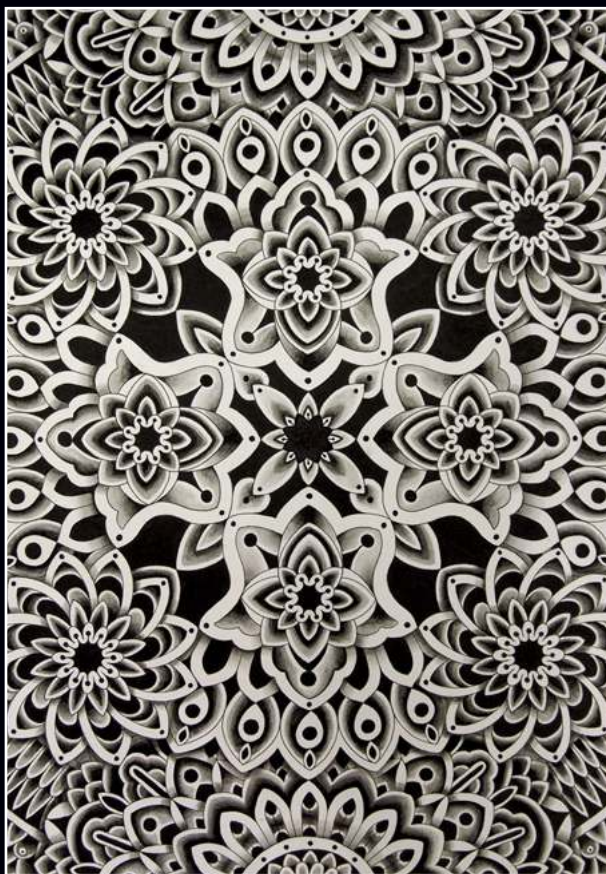
The original Tattoo FX opened in 2004 and Neil is now clearly a very well established artist. I ask him if he feels the intervening years have been kind to him. "Well I'm still here!" he jokes. "But it's strange thinking





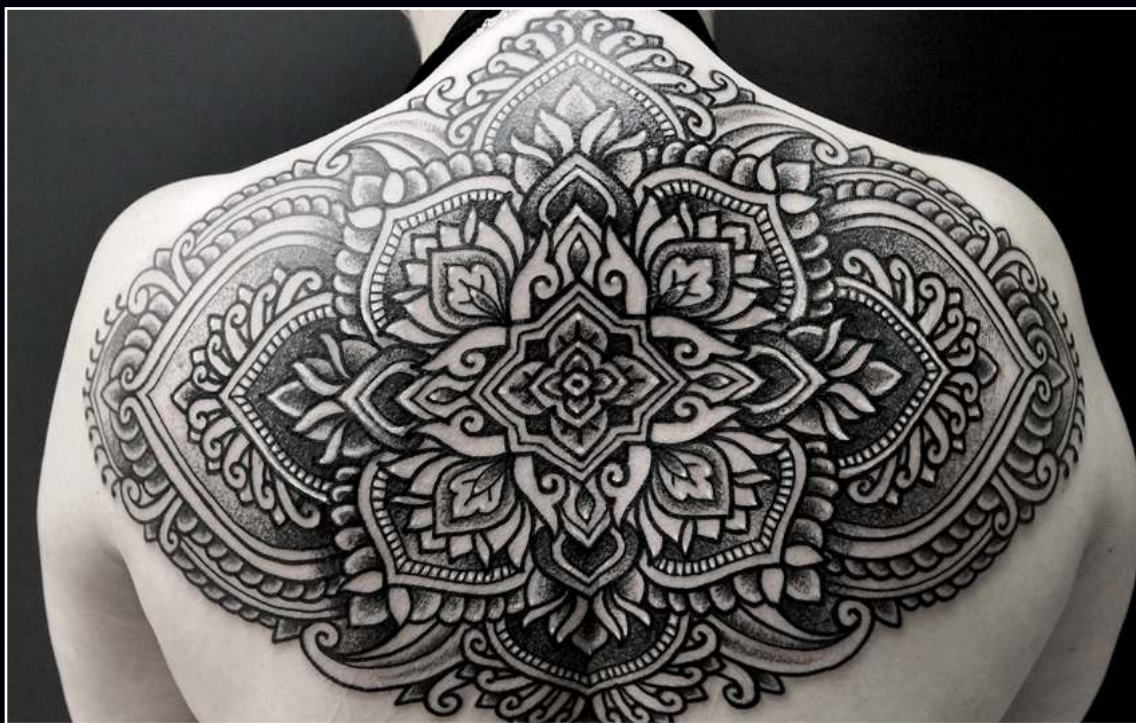
back to those days, because although tattooing was definitely on the up, there was still a lot of uncertainty. Tattooing has now arrived at a very good place, but it's also pretty much at saturation point and it does perhaps seem to be quietening down a little. Being established is definitely an important factor these days. I've been working in this area for nearly twenty years and I'm lucky in that a lot of people also travel to get pieces from me."

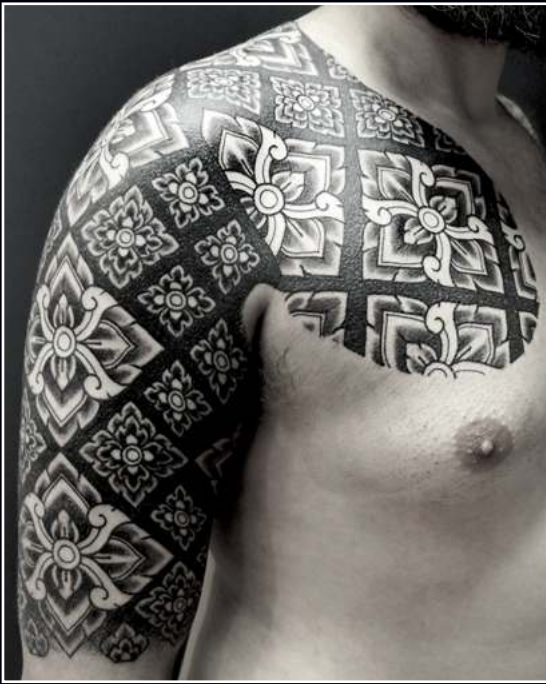
"Although I'm known mainly for blackwork," Neil continues, "until recently I was still doing everything - portraits, black and grey and even colour. Colour is definitely the one thing that I say no to now. Partly because I have Luke and Enzo working here and they are both brilliant at it, but also because I'm so booked up with blackwork that it would make no sense for me to do colour too. And colour takes me so much longer to do, which would frustrate me."





Fashions come and go in tattooing, as in everything else. Neil has successfully navigated the trends from 90s spiky tribal through the Borneo styles to the intricate Berber patterns that are now so popular. "People are always looking for something a bit 'new', and as an artist I'm always trying to push and develop the styles I offer. I'm always looking for original influences that will make my work stand out, and appeal to collectors. Patterns are always getting reinvented. This is a genre that will continue to grow."





"My work combines a lot of different aspects," he continues. "I'm inspired by – and love! – so many styles of tattooing. I don't feel a loyalty to one 'thing' in particular. It's more about going with my intuition. Especially within blackwork, there are obviously so many sub-genres – mandalas, Polynesian, etc. Some of my work is exclusively in one style, but I think the way forward is fusion. Although, having said that, it's crucial to remember that when you do traditional tattooing (such as Maori or Samoan) it carries a certain responsibility. These methods and designs are loaded with cultural meaning, so they need to be done with respect and a conscious mind."

I ask Neil if he feels it's important to understand the meanings behind the symbols within each style. "Yes," he replies, "although it's hard to get definitive information about absolutely everything. You hear different things from different sources. And the history behind these tattoos isn't as readily available as other tattoo history."

We both observe that the market for traditional blackwork tattoos is thriving, with numerous promising younger artists coming through. However, Neil feels it's prudent for the new generation to develop the skills necessary for tackling a variety of tattoo styles. "I think it's good to have the experience in knowing how to do different things, because ultimately that improves your ability. There are so many different skills and techniques involved in all the various tattoo styles. I wouldn't say it's essential, but if you're a young artist and you want to tattoo for a long time, you never know what's gonna be thrown at you in the future..."

One thing we have noticed here at Total Tattoo is that many artists are now beginning to view tattooing as a stopgap between jobs, a short-term career choice. Perhaps it's a generational thing, but Neil agrees that it's a very new approach, and one that neither of us particular understand! "Yes, it's strange! I couldn't imagine what else I'd want to be doing apart from tattooing. But I do find myself thinking about it sometimes; if it all went horribly wrong, what would I end up doing? Despite the saturation of the market though, I can't really see people not wanting to get tattooed anymore!"



We talk about the influence of technology. "I don't really 'do' social media," Neil tells me. "I post things on Facebook and Instagram, but in general I tend to stay away from it. I can see that there are benefits, and I guess it's a necessity for work, but it can cause such fallouts amongst people!"

Neil admits that despite studying graphic design, he's "never at the front of the queue" when it comes to new apps and gadgetry. However, he does acknowledge how much easier it can be to create designs digitally. "With designs such as mandalas, I always used to draw them by

hand, and I do think it's good to learn that way. But I realised that I could get more designs done quickly if I did them on the computer. Instead of spending three hours, I could do one in ten minutes! But I still do a lot of freehand work. If I'm doing something like a wraparound sleeve, it's far easier to freehand direct on to the body. Then you're working *with* the body, instead of against it."

Both of us have seen some terrible examples of blackwork and tribal in our time. I ask Neil to share his thoughts on techniques for getting good results. "I think it all comes down to concentration," he tells me. "It's all about really focusing on what you're doing. Blacking in is not as easy as people think - it's very easy to overwork it if you start ramming it in, and then you damage the skin. It's a combination really. You've got to have a machine that's up to the job, good quality ink (I use a lot of Dynamic, I like that a lot) and concentration." I put it to Neil that because blackwork is so graphic, and it's got such hard edges, it must be difficult to hide any mistakes. "There are ways around it!" he laughs.

And how about machines? I was surprised to hear that despite a previous job as a steel fabricator, Neil hadn't yet ventured into machine building. "I'm sure I'd be alright at it," he says. "I'm technically minded, but I've just never got around to tinkering about with tattoo machines! I use a combination of coils and rotaries - a Dan Kubin and a Jeroen Franken 'Black Bomber'. The Dan Kubin machines are incredibly well made. The Sidewinder has two double spring-type mechanisms, so it has a lot of power without being too much. You can put anything in effortlessly. I also use Chris Higgins' old builds [coils], which are fantastic."





As I wrap up our conversation, I ask Neil how he views tattooing as a whole. "It's quite incredible how tattooing has evolved. Fifteen years ago, who'd have thought we'd be where we are now? There's bound to be negativity about how the industry has changed and grown, but on the whole the popularity of tattooing will have helped all of us."

He pauses for a moment, then continues, "It's important not to get left behind. There are a lot of younger newer people coming through and they manage to achieve an incredibly high standard after only a couple of years. Some of them look like they've been tattooing forever! There's just so much more information available now – not just technically, but visually. And when you see things, your brain automatically logs on to it."

And what does tattooing mean to Neil on a personal level? "I feel very grateful. Especially when I'm tattooing in the genres that I'm really passionate about. It gives me a real buzz. I still have the desire to create something new – something of real quality – every single time!"

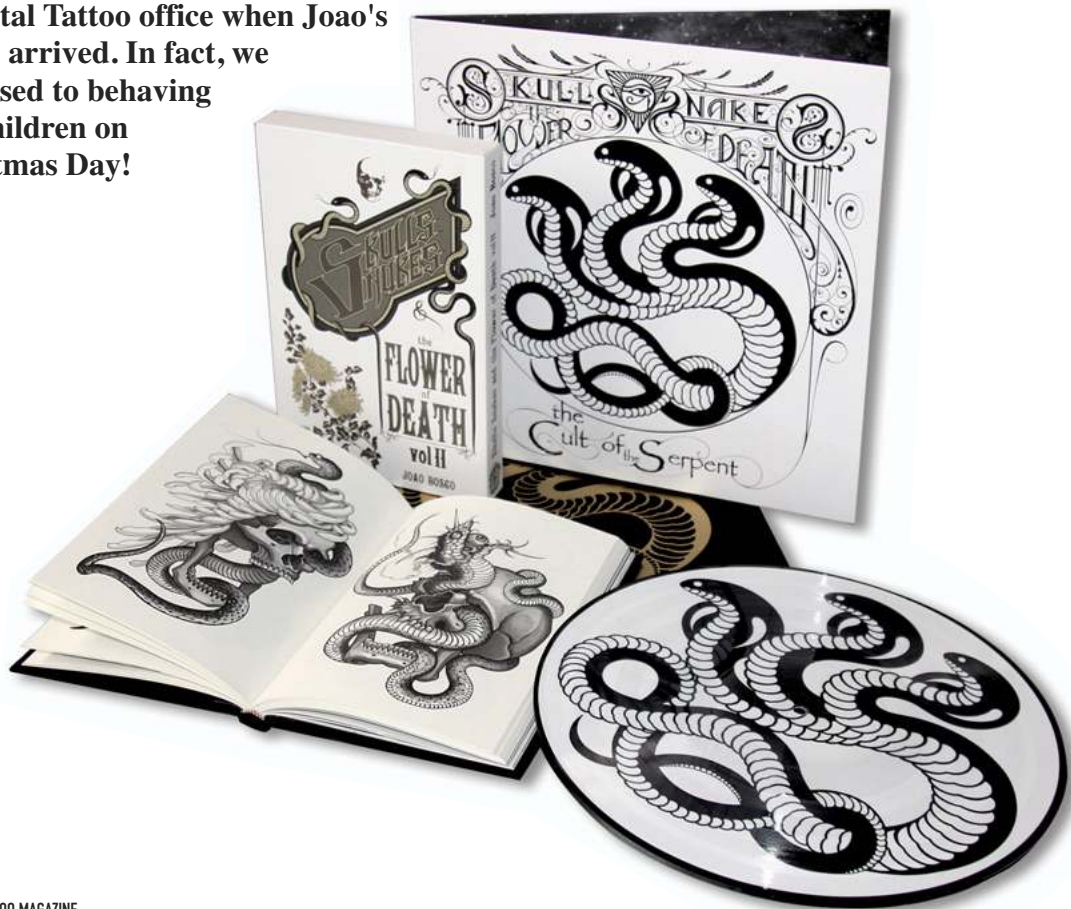
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JOAO BOSCO'S SKULLS, SNAKES AND THE FLOWER OF DEATH VOLUME II

Joao Bosco never ceases to amaze us with his creativity and talent. Two years ago, he released *Skulls, Snakes & The Flower of Death*, a beautifully packaged, impeccably designed book that was a joy to behold. Now he has Volume 2, along with a record entitled *The Cult of the Serpent*. The book and record are available separately, or as a deluxe box set. As you can imagine, expectations were high in the Total Tattoo office when Joao's parcel arrived. In fact, we regressed to behaving like children on Christmas Day!



Joao's attention to detail is meticulous. The cloth-covered, clam shell packaging opens to reveal the book in its central recess. Lifting it out and easing it from its slipcase is a wonderfully tactile experience; you can really feel the passion and energy that has gone into this work of art.

Although they can be bought and enjoyed separately, Joao has deliberately designed the book and the record to function together as a complete immersive experience. One supports the other, and they complement each other beautifully.

Joao's music is mainly instrumental and flows effortlessly between a spiritual and almost ethereal vibe, to something heavier, more dramatic and intense. It's a piece of audio art that embraces many different genres – including metal, progressive and ambient – and it's remarkably easy to listen to and enjoy. And of course there's still something very special about the feeling of sliding a record out of its sleeve and carefully placing it on the turntable. Many of us feel nostalgic for the distinctive crackling sound of vinyl against needle!





In your opinion, is there a connection between music and tattooing?

Undoubtedly. Music is art, and tattooing is an art form. Some people may disagree – and that’s absolutely OK – but from my perspective the two are inseparable. It was heavy metal that brought me into tattooing. If it wasn’t for the Metal, I wouldn’t be doing this interview!

How would you define your own personal musical tastes?

Although my main music background is heavy metal, I listen to a lot more than that. It really depends on my mood and the time of the day. I don’t really see music as this style or that style. There’s only good or bad music. That’s how I see it.

Why did you choose to make a record?

Music is an integral part of my creative work in illustration, drawing and tattooing; it’s inseparable from it. I wanted to share with people the type of music that inspires my art. With this project, the music is an extension of the book and vice versa. The music merges with the artwork, and the artwork gives a solid body to the sound.



'THE RECORD IS LIKE THE SOUNDTRACK OF THE BOOK'.



Records have had a bit of renaissance in recent years. Why do you think this is?

That's true. In my opinion, people miss the geek aspect of listening to music – the rare collectables, the pictures and the artwork, all those tangible aspects, and so forth. People don't collect what they can't touch and keep, and that will never change.

What was the inspiration behind the record?

The serpent has been a cult object in many societies throughout history – from the most barbarous to the most civilised, from ancient times to the present day. That was the inspiration behind the concept. We decided to do an instrumental album because we believed verbal language would be too specific and break the atmosphere of 'world music' that we wanted to keep. It isn't Asian, it isn't Western... but it's everything at the same time. It's a soundtrack to the history of Mankind...





What is the relationship between the record and the book?

The record is also the soundtrack of the book. It's just the same as with a movie soundtrack. A movie is just a sequence of images until the soundtrack is added; it's the music that brings the audience drama, emotion and thrills. That was the idea behind making an album exclusively for the book.

Tell us about making the record.

I created the album with my music partner and old friend Cat Rio. I played bass guitar, Tiago de Moura played lead guitar and Kamini Natarajan contributed vocals. The first thing we did was establish the vibe and atmosphere of the record – the emotions that we wanted people to feel while they were listening to it. Cat Rio then composed and recorded it in a matter of weeks. It was produced in Los Angeles and mastered at Fascination Street Studios in Sweden.

What was your toughest challenge?

We needed a suitable vocalist to sing chants over two of the tracks (Naga and Ouroboros), but we couldn't find anyone. We were determined not to compromise our vision. After nearly two months of intense searching we finally found Indian classical vocalist Kamini Natarajan. Our patience paid off! When she came into studio and began singing, her voice was astonishing!

Was it hard to balance this project with tattooing and managing the studio?

Yes, it was immensely difficult – but at the same time, fun and exciting. I've created books before, but I'd never made a record and I had no clue whatsoever about what would be involved. I learned everything along the way. I believe that if you have a dream or a goal, your mind will always figure out how to get there.

The record itself is also a visual work of art. For you, how important was it to create a picture disc?

I'd always thought that if I ever did this it would have to be a picture disc. It looks so much cooler – as I hope everyone agrees!

The box set was officially launched at your new studio (Sacred Gold Tattoo) in February. How has it been received?

I've only had good feedback so far – although lots of people do seem a little confused by the concept and what it's all about, but I guess that's to be expected as it's such an unfamiliar format, especially for the tattoo industry. But yeah, overall the response has been sensational.

What are your musical plans for the future?

I want to keep on doing music as much as I can – and record it and share it with people. I'm not sure about playing in a band though. That's a full-time job in itself, and it's something I wouldn't really be able to fully engage with at the moment.

Can we listen to the record in any other format?

The album is available on all the major music platforms – Spotify, iTunes, YouTube, etc, etc – but it's not available on CD right now. Maybe one day it will be!

Skulls, Snakes & The Flower of Death and *The Cult of the Serpent* are available from www.tigersword.co.uk

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KIMIHITO



Japanese tattoo artist Kimihito is based in Amsterdam at Tattoo 1825. He specialises in powerful Japanese neo-traditional and brushstroke designs inspired by calligraphy and sumi-e (ink wash) painting. And he loves tattooing dragons!

How long have you been tattooing?

I've been a tattoo artist for twelve years, and I've owned my shop in Amsterdam for two years.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Toyota City in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. The town was formerly known as Koromo, but it was renamed because of its longstanding relationship with the Toyota Motor Corporation. Several of the company's major manufacturing plants are located there. When I decided to open my first tattoo shop I moved to the city of Osaka, and I lived there for six years.

How did you end up in Amsterdam?

I started travelling around the world – to the USA, Switzerland, and other countries – and I eventually decided to settle in Amsterdam because it was the most interesting place I'd visited so far!

How did you first get into tattooing?

I was in a punk band back in Japan and the whole crowd around me was tattooed. I was just really intrigued by the whole thing. I've always loved drawing and painting so tattooing followed quite naturally from that.







Were you an artistic child?

There wasn't much more art in my life than the average, but I always liked drawing and painting. Also, I was always interested in Japanese myths and legends, and all the motifs and imagery associated with those stories – and Japanese aesthetics generally.

Do your family have tattoos? Are they supportive of your career?

No! Like a lot of Japanese people, they don't wear tattoos and they don't approve of them either. Even today, tattoos are still associated with the Yakuza. They have a bad image and all sorts of negative connotations. So I had to find out by myself how to tattoo. It was pretty underground when I started.

How did you learn?

I was self-taught. I started out with a good friend – the same age as me – who also wanted to become a tattoo artist. We didn't know anything about it at all, or even where to start. We got hold of information wherever we could find it, and we tattooed each other. Tattooing was a very closed business at that time.





Some of your work is very traditional, whilst other pieces bring a more freestyle approach to classic Japanese subjects. What governs your approach?

I like both styles – in fact my favourite thing is to mix them – but it really depends on the customer. The initial consultation is very important, so that we can exchange ideas and discuss the possibilities, and I can advise on what is do-able in order to achieve the best results possible. Some customers leave it entirely up to me (they're my favourite kind!) and other customers already have strong ideas that they bring with them and which I have to accommodate.

How important is it to respect and honour the traditions of Japanese tattooing?

The most important thing for me is whether the tattoo looks cool or not. I respect and love traditional work – of course – but I also want to be able to incorporate my own style in my work. I want to keep evolving. Ideally, it's the best of both worlds – tattoos with a traditional sense of taste, but a twist of my own personality. That's why I felt it was crucial to learn traditional Japanese designs first, so that they would always be an inspiration in my work. My tattoos always have a traditional essence, but the neo-traditional aspects keep them interesting.

Tell us more about what inspires your designs.

I am very fond of traditional sumi-e (ink wash) paintings and I have studied the art form in depth. My brushstroke tattoos are directly inspired by this. It's a style that always looks interesting, and I think it always looks cool too. I particularly like very detailed work, but simpler-looking designs are also very pleasing to create.



What are the most important elements of your tattoos?

For me, the most important qualities in a tattoo are strength, assertiveness and dynamism. The most difficult thing to master is how to adapt these designs into tattoos that will fit the body well – because you're working with very limited space. I always try to make my designs flow with the lines of the body and follow the lines of the body's shape.





Do you stencil your designs or work directly onto the body?

It depends on the design. It's the customer's body – its shape and its lines – that will determine the positioning of the tattoo. For big pieces, a bit of freehand is always needed.



Tell us about your machines and inks.

I have both rotaries and coils for different types of work. I like Fusion and Kuro Sumi inks.

Do you use an iPad?

Yes. I've always been keen on trying new technologies. If they're good, they can be a big help. They can save you time, and improve your results. But they can also be dangerous if you're not aware of their limitations.

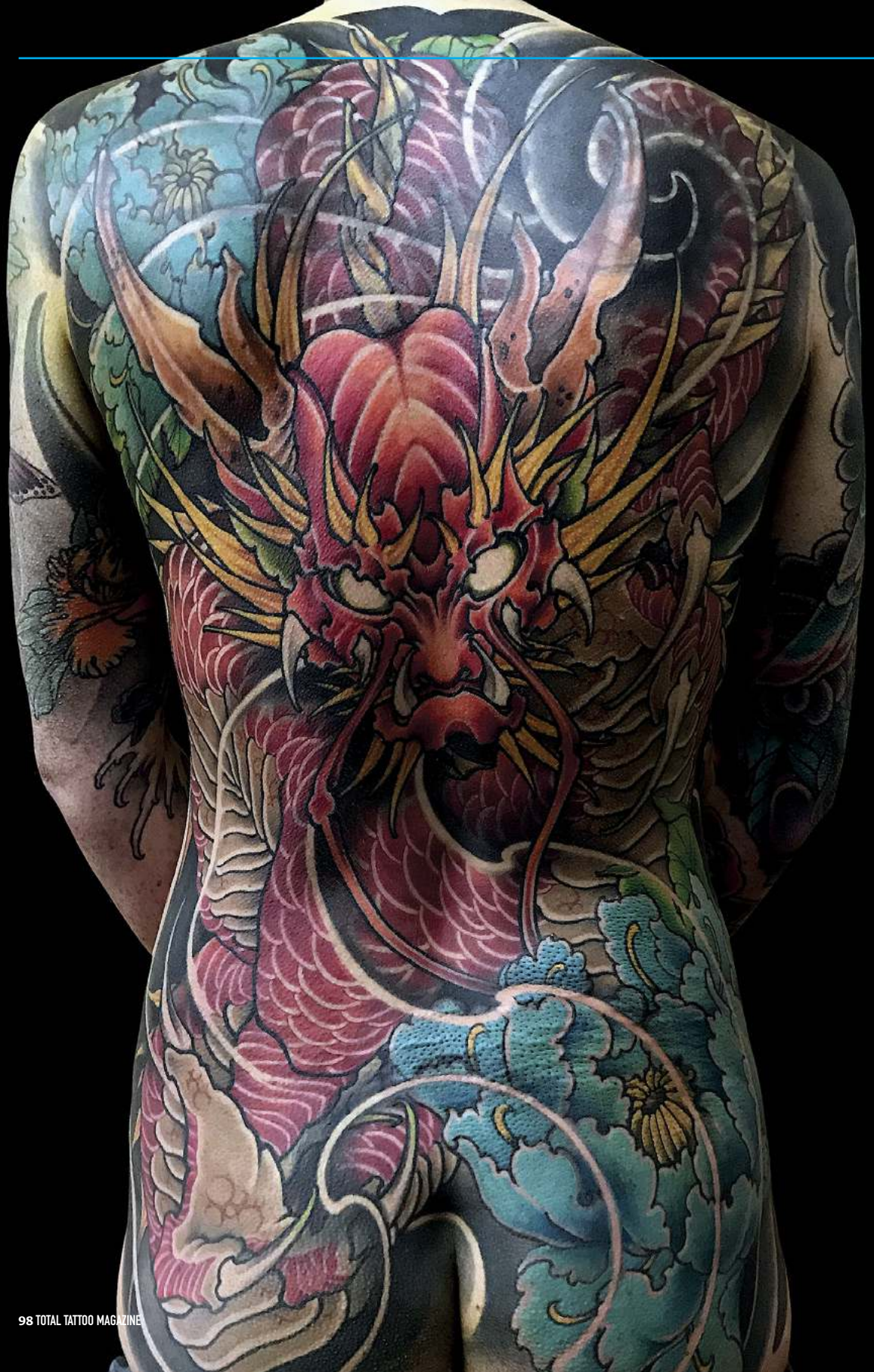


What makes a good customer?

What I most appreciate is the customers who give me a bit of freedom - the customers who trust me with the design, and trust that I will know what is best for their particular body. Also, when a customer requests a dragon it's always a pleasure to do!

What are the best and worst aspects of tattooing?

The best part is that I can keep on creating new pieces every day. I always do everything I can to achieve the best possible result. The worst part is that Japan has always made it difficult for artists to flourish as tattooers!



What's your view of the tattoo industry in the Netherlands?

There are a lot of shops in the Netherlands in general, and in Amsterdam in particular. I suppose it's stating the obvious, but the good shops tend to be busy and the others tend to be quiet. It's the same everywhere. In a sense, big business is helping to democratise tattooing. And sponsorship is great, because it can help artists in a very direct way. Custom tattooing is what keeps everything original and interesting.

How do you see your own work developing in the future?

Fundamentally, I hope it will stay pretty much the same as it is now. Although for me, the most important thing is what the customer wants. I would like more people to come for bigger pieces... and more requests for dragons of course!

Tattoo 1825

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ANTONY FLEMMING

Antony Flemming was always interested in pursuing an artistic career. But it wasn't until he visited a tattoo studio, with a sleeve he'd designed himself, that the notion of picking up a tattoo machine dawned on him. It took some gentle persuasion, but as soon as he tried it he fell in love and never looked back. A decade later, he's based at Sam Smith's prestigious Scythe & Spade studio in Calgary, Canada. Our conversation at the recent Brighton convention covered all manner of things – from the meaning of 'neo-traditional', to why Antony chose to leave the UK, to the dreaded B-word: Brexit.



How did your tattooing career begin?

I started at World of Tattoos in Ruislip Manor on the outskirts of London. I was eighteen or nineteen at the time and I didn't really know much about tattooing – at all. But I could draw. I got pushed through my apprenticeship kind of quickly because just as I was starting, several of the other artists left. It was a busy walk-in shop, so they needed another tattooist! As soon as I could put a line in, I was let loose. That was both a good and a bad thing. On the one hand, it pushed me to improve really quickly – because I'm such a perfectionist – but on the other hand, it means there's a lot of tattoos out there that were done too soon and aren't that good. I did tribal, black and grey, religious sleeves, script, literally anything, and I still use all those different techniques in my work now.

How would you describe your style?

It's got to come under the heading of neo-traditional I guess. But I think neo-traditional has gone off on a huge tangent. When I started, people like Xam, Valerie Vargas and Claudia de Sabe were labelled as 'neo-traditionalists', but their stuff was still traditional, just a bit prettier really! Then Eckel and Tiny Miss Becca came along and made it more realistic. And now I'm seeing artists like Jack Goks, whose style is more solid and flat. I don't know how I'd describe my own work – or whether I'd even put it into the 'neo-traditional' category. I guess I'd use the word illustrative, because it's very 'liney', and there's definitely a hint of realism in there. Neo-traditional has a gazillion sub-genres now. The same thing is happening in other styles too. It's why convention organisers have such a hard job defining competition categories.





Do you think it's important for people to know who the big name artists are?

Yes, definitely. When I first got into tattooing, I had no idea about anything. I just really enjoyed working with the people I worked with. Until then, my only artistic inspiration had been from proper artists. *Proper* artists [laughs], not tattooists! I think the only names I knew were Ami James and Kat Von D! But my mentor Glyn was an old school tattooist with old school principles, and he showed me all these different artists' work – and that's what really got me excited about tattooing. It's so important to know all that background and history. It's what gives tattooing its substance. A lot of people tattoo in a particular style without knowing where it comes from, so it's like doing a bastardised version of a copy of a copy. They don't know why they're drawing what they're drawing. It just waters it down so much. I'm so glad I went through an old school apprenticeship and learnt all that. I know it doesn't work for everyone and that's fine; there are many different routes into tattooing which are totally acceptable. I'm just glad I did it that way, because it toughened me up! I was a very shy eighteen year old, but having those people around me – people who cared about me... well it helps you out a lot with all aspects of life.

And World of Tattoos was your 'home' studio until very recently.

Yes, I was there for over ten years. I was very lucky. I'd always lived in Ruislip, and my family are still there. I loved working at World of Tattoos and I felt a real sense of pride in the studio. I think that's a bit of an old school thing? Now I feel proud when I tell people I work at Scythe & Spade. I briefly worked in a private studio before I made the move to Canada, but I hated it. I think I'm just naturally social. I like having people around me, and I like talking to everyone and getting feedback. I think you can stagnate if you're on your own.



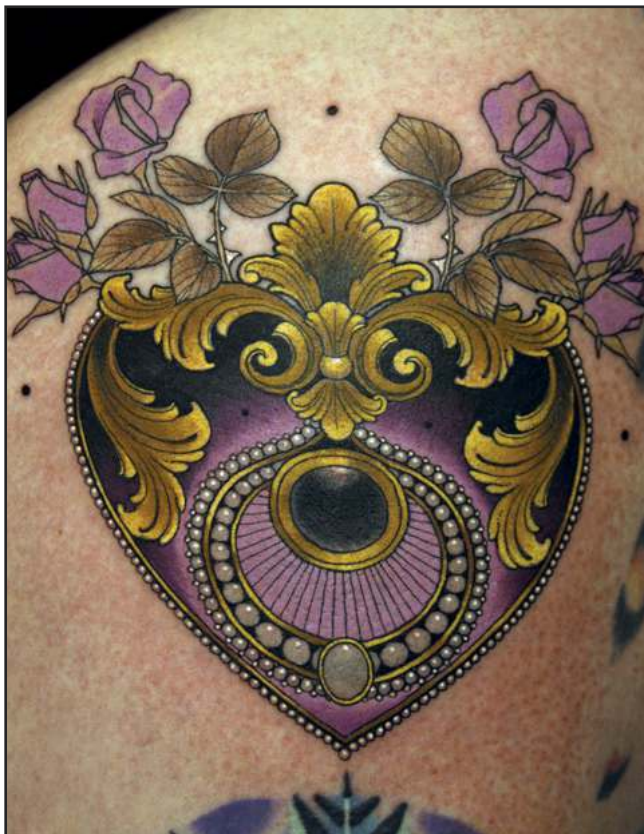


So what instigated the move to Canada?

That fear of stagnating was probably the biggest thing. There was no falling out or anything like that. I just felt that after ten years I needed a change. All my tattoos were starting to look similar to me. I did a guest spot at Scythe & Spade, and I remember sitting there, ready to do my first tattoo, and thinking how good it would be to work there. The space is great, Canada is obviously beautiful too, and the people are nice. Sam is nice one hundred percent of the time. I don't know how she does it! I found that when I did that initial guest spot, I was so energised at the end of each day. I was feeling so enthusiastic about what I was doing. But I still wasn't thinking about actually moving. It was only when I went for a drink with Sam [Smith] after work one day that she asked me about it. We talked for a bit, and a couple of drinks later I was like, "I'm moving to Canada!" *[laughs]* Honestly, it was as quick as that. It just felt right. My wife Belle and I had talked about moving anyway. She's a make-up artist and a lot of the brands she works with are based close to LA – so when I mentioned the possibility of moving to Calgary, which is only a few hours away from LA, she was up for it too!

We have to ask... Did Brexit play any part in your decision?

[Laughs] Yes it did! I thought it wouldn't affect me, but it really got me down. It seemed to me that people were starting to be openly racist. I was just sick of it, and sick of people talking about it. Going to Canada was such a change, because it's obviously not such an issue there. Then when I came back to England for the Brighton convention, Brexit was just everywhere again – people talking shit, being negative...



How's it been getting customers in Canada?

I was scared at first. Moving isn't cheap! So I said to Sam, "Whatever comes in the door, just book it in with me." Sam kinda chuckled and was like, "You'll be fine!" When I put out the email to say I was moving, I immediately got a bunch of messages from people saying they wanted backpieces, sleeves and stuff. I haven't started this many backpieces in my entire career! People in Canada are serious about tattoos and money doesn't seem to be so much of an issue. When I was working in England, it was quite usual to get cancellations once or twice a week maybe. So far, I haven't had a cancellation in Calgary in six months. I mean, living in London is expensive, so I get it. But in Canada, I don't have to remind anyone, or feel like I'm nagging anyone. They turn up, prepared, on time. They tip as well! There's been a couple of times that I haven't heard from a customer and I've been convinced that they're not going to come (because that's so often the case in England), but they always turn up.

Do you send your drawings out to customers beforehand?

No, absolutely not. I find that if you do that, their mum or sister or friend will give their 'input'. People look to change stuff that they don't need to. I'm in the lucky position where, ninety nine percent of the time, my customers trust me. They'll give me a loose theme – a bird, an animal, a rose, etc – then let me do my own thing. That means I can really push myself and try something new. Also, the initial line drawing will look completely different to the finished piece and customers don't necessarily have the artistic training to appreciate that – or to know why I'm doing things in a certain way. For example, I did a backpiece of a bird and some flowers where I made the flowers out of proportion in relation to the bird. The customer pointed this out, but I explained that altering the scale in this way meant that compositionally the whole tattoo would work better. Every single time I've sent a drawing out, the customer has had something to say about it. I think people just overthink things!





Do you find it hard not to overthink?

Yes. My process is always to draw the night before – or even on the day itself – because if I do it in advance I'll look at the drawing constantly and keep making changes until I inevitably fuck it up! I'll usually do a quick, loose sketch, then I'll grab a load of reference and start knitting it all together. The first draft is usually where the piece ends up. I try not to stray too much from that. If I had it sat there for a week, I'd just keep changing it.





Do you use an iPad to draw?

I do, although I know that's a bone of contention in tattooing. But things progress. If you're troubled by evolving technology, why are you driving a car and not a horse and cart? With an iPad, you're still drawing. The iPad isn't doing it for you. It just means you can draw anywhere. What's great about it for me is that coming back to England and tattooing people I haven't tattooed in a while, there's all my reference together in one place (which I might otherwise have lost). It's convenient, and it saves me a lot of time. It's made my drawing so much better too, because I'm able to take risks. I do also enjoy digital painting – but I completely understand people's objections to it; something definitely gets 'lost in translation' between paint and digital. When it comes to efficient drawing though, the iPad is perfect.

What machines do you use?

I use Rotary Works. I have for about eight or nine years – the same machines! Nick Horne, who did my sleeve and my front, was the person who first suggested I try them, and I liked them straightaway. They're a good weight, they feel nice, and the colour seemed to go in better than with the coils I was using beforehand. I find it odd that people constantly change machines; every machine is so different, it's almost like you have to learn again. I just think, "Work it out on what you've already got!"

What about inks?

I've always used Eternal. And I use Dermaglo for some stuff. I'm not too particular though. I used a red Fusion ink the other day and I really liked that. Incidentally, I'm not normally one to criticise... but World Famous, sort out your lids! [laughs] Grrr!

What do you think about sponsorship?

Each to their own. If people are gonna get paid and get free shit, then why not? If it's something cool that you genuinely love, then yeah, who wouldn't?! Like if someone said to you, "Oh, you know that thing you really like? We can give it to you for free, as long as you say what it is when you use it." There's very few people who would actually say no. So I'm not against it, but I haven't got it myself because... well I just feel a bit weird about it. I've had people ask me, but I haven't genuinely used the products. And my purchasing decisions certainly aren't influenced by seeing who sponsors who. It's like the awards thing, isn't it? 'Multi award winning artist' – nobody gives a shit! I mean, it's great to win an award of course, because it's a nice feeling and it shows that people like your work. But in the grand scheme of things, most people in the industry know that awards mean shit-all.



What's the most important part of a tattoo for you?

I think if you're too technically good, a tattoo can be a little soulless. But some people look for that; they want it to be perfect. One of my biggest influences, Eckel, has always said that the tattoo should look right on the *person*. It's all about composition and how it works on the body. So no matter what, even if it's a tiny tattoo, I'll always ask the customer to send me a picture of the area. A tattoo also has to work with the pieces around it. If the colours clash, for instance, everything will look awful. You can't just whack something on top. That's one of my pet peeves! A tattooer not respecting the surrounding tattoos. It's fine to go into adjacent pieces as long as it makes sense and doesn't fuck the flow. Tattoos need to look good as a whole – and not just on their own.

Your work has been ripped off so many times – famously so! How do you deal with that? Can you do anything to guard against it?

You can't. It's just part of being a tattooist now. What annoys me most is when competent

tattooers do it. People who can draw! I know it's meant to be a compliment... These people must like your work, or else they wouldn't do it. But it's upsetting. And when people trace the exact design – well I think everyone knows that's not OK. Years ago I called people out, but that doesn't get you anywhere; it's not constructive. I've messaged people privately and said stuff like, "Hey man, I appreciate you like my work, but this isn't cool," and I try to be as nice as I can. It's actually brought me closer to some tattooists and we've become friends! It puts me in mind of when I was first trying to make my own path. I was hugely inspired by Eckel – amongst others – and he and I have developed a great friendship over the years. I *like* being influenced by people. I just do it my own way!

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Cheltenham, GL50 1SR
Bookings & Enquiries: 01242 300165
www.tokyotattoo.co.uk

Tokyotattoo® Studios (Birmingham)

50 - 54 St. Paul's Square,
Birmingham, B3 1QS
Bookings & Enquiries: 01242 300165
www.tokyotattoo.co.uk

NORTH WEST

Ace Kustom Tattoo

78 Church Road
Manchester, M22 4NW
Tel no: 0161 945 8433
acekustomtattoos@gmail.com

All Style Tattoos

28 Crellin Street
Barrow in Furness, LA14 1DU
Tel no: 01229 838 946
Email: allstyletattoos@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/
allstyletattoosbarrow

Aurora Tattoo

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

Bold As Brass Tattoo

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

Dabs Tattoo

78b Eastbourne Road
Southport
PR8 4DU
01704566665
Dabstattoos@btconnect.com
https://www.facebook.com/dabstat-
too/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

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45 High Street, (Winpenny house)
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1SB
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tattooofl@gmail.com
www.marked-for-life.com

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497 Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton,
Manchester. M21 8AG
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tattoo@sacredarttattoo.co.uk
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Skin Kandi Tattoo Studio

50a Westfield Street, St Helens
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skinkandi@hotmail.co.uk
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IRELAND

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CONVENTION CALENDAR

UK CONVENTIONS

6th-7th April
Portsmouth Tattoo Fest
Portsmouth Pyramids
Centre

Clarence Esplanade,
Portsmouth PO5 3ST
www.tattooofest.co.uk

7th April
Ink & Iron

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

19th-21st April
Ink & Oil Tattoo Convention

NAEC Stonleigh
Kenilworth
CV8 2LZ

25-26th May
The Great British
Tattoo Show

Alexandra Palace
London
N22 7AY
www.greatbritishtattooshow.com

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.worldtattooofestival.com

25th-26th May
The Great British

Tattoo Show
Alexandra Palace
London
N22 7AY
www.greatbritishtattooshow.com

1st -2nd June
Bristol Tattoo Convention

Ashgate Stadium, Bristol.
www.bristoltattooconvention.com

14th-16th June
Mourne Tattoo Convention

Newcastle Centre
10 - 14 Central Promenade
Co Down
BT33 0AA

15th-16th June
UK Tattoo Fest

Marshall Arena,
Stadium Way West,
Milton Keynes MK11ST
uktattooofest.co.uk

6th-7th July
Leeds Tattoo Expo

First District Arena
Arena Way
Leeds
LS2 8BY
www.leedstattooexpo.com

3rd-4th August
Oxford Tattoo Convention

Abingdon College
Oxfordshire
OX14 1GG
www.oxfordtattooconvention.com

16th-18th August
Blackpool Tatcon

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

30th August-1st September
Kustom Kulture Blastoff

Lincolnshire Show Ground
Lincoln LN2 2NA
www.kustomkultureblastoff.com

27th-29th September
London Tattoo Convention

Tobacco Dock, London, UK
www.thelondontattooconvention.com

18th-20th October
Liverpool Tattoo
Convention

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

2020

2nd - 3rd May

Brighton Tattoo Convention
Brighton Convention Centre
www.brightontattoo.com

OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

5th-7th April
Singapore Ink Show

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

12th-14th April
The Ink Factory

La Sucrière
49-50 Quai Rambaud,
69002 Lyon,
France
www.theinkfactory.fr/en/home-en

19th- 21st April
Shanghai Tattoo
Art Carnival

China Shanghai Guangda
Convention and Exhibition
Center
No. 88, Caobao Road,
Xuhui District

10th-12th May
Athens International
Tattoo Convention

Olympic Tae Kwon Do and
Handball Centre
Palaio Faliro,
Greece
www.athenstattooconvention.gr

18th-19th May
Montpellier Tattoo
Convention

Montpellier Exhibition Center
Route de la Foire,
34470 Pérols,
France
tattoo-montpellier.fr

25th-26th May
Moscow Tattoo Convention

Sokolniki, Vystavochnyy Tsentr
5-Y Luchevoy Prosek, 7,
Moskva
Russia
moscowtattooconvention.com

30th May-1st June
Prison Ink

Fussingsvej 8
Horsens,
Denmark
www.prisonink.dk

7-9th June
Palermo Tattoo Convention

Saracen Sands Hotel & Con-
gress Center, Via Libertà, Isola
delle Femmine, Province of Pa-
lermo, Italy
www.palermotattooconvention.com

14th_16th June
St Petersburg Tattoo
Convention

A2 Green Concert
Prospekt Medikov, 3,
Sankt-Peterburg, 197022
Russia

28th-30th June
San Diego Tattoo
Invitational

Golden Hall
202 C St, San Diego,
CA 92101,
United States
sandiegotattooinvitational.com

6-7 July
Tattoo art expo Dublin

Griffith Conference Centre
South Circular Road, Merchants
Quay
Dublin 8,
Ireland

26-28 July
Transylvania tattoo and
arts summit

Corvinilor Castle,
Strada Castelului 1-3
Hunedoara, 331141
Romania
www.transylvaniatattooart.com

7-9th June
Palermo Tattoo Convention

Saracen Sands Hotel & Con-
gress Center, Via Libertà, Isola
delle Femmine, Province of Pa-
lermo, Italy
www.palermotattooconvention.com

20-22nd September
Montreux Tattoo
Convention

Montreux Music & Convention
Centre, Avenue Claude Nobs 5
1820 Montreux, Switzerland
www.montreuxtattooconvention.ch

4-6th October
Cezanne Tattoo Convention

Pasino Aix En Provence, 21 Av-
enue of Europe, 13090 Aix-en-
Provence, France
www.conventiontattooaix.fr

5th-7th October
Barcelona Tattoo Expo

Fira Barcelona Montjuïc
Avinguda de la Reina Maria
Cristina,
Barcelona,
Spain
www.barcelonatattooexpo.com

8th-10th November
I Love Tattoo Expo

Kaohsiung City, Taiwan
www.ilovetattooexpo.com

8-10 November
International Brussels
Tattoo Convention

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

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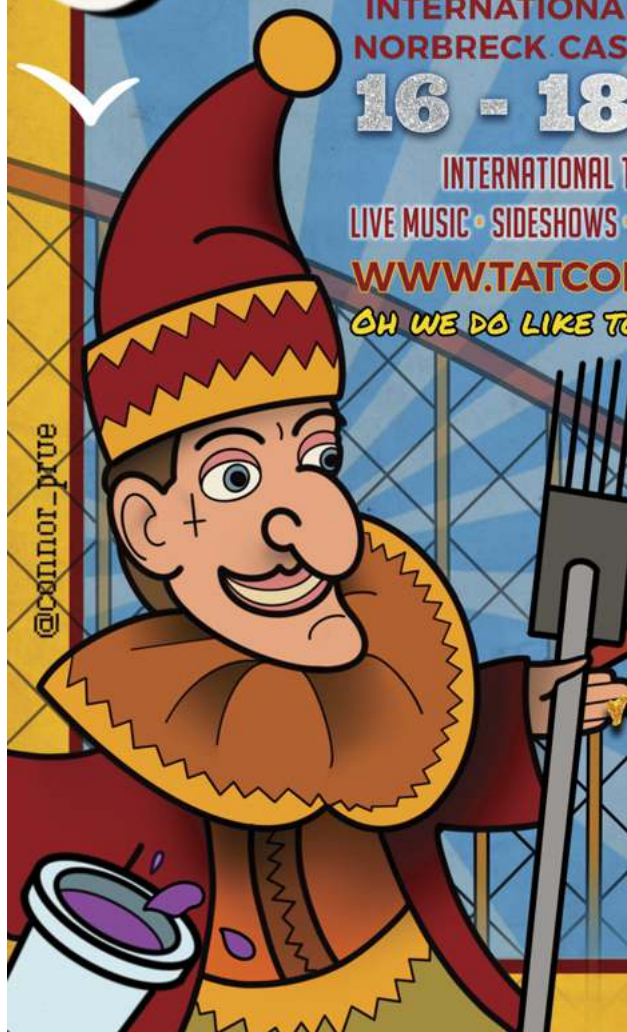
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