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GLENDALE BULLY

An insightful conversation

MONIKA KOCH

From stunt bikes to tattoos

KREATYVES

Tattoo machine altars

TRIBUTE INK

Royal British Legion Exhibition

JURGIS MIKALAUSKAS

Vibrant super realism

TATTOO FAN CLUB

On the shoulders of giants

JACK DEMPSEY EWBANK

Boxing clever

KRISH TRECE

Super neo-trad



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EDITORIAL 181



As the long summer nights begin to fade, and the UK convention season begins to slow down, autumn arrives and the London show is once again upon us. Here in the Total Tattoo office, as we get this issue ready for print, the show is still a couple of weeks away but already the excitement has begun to grow.

The London Tattoo Convention feels like a landmark in the tattoo year. Somehow, it seems to punctuate the never ending cycle of renewal and development in tattooing. And every time it comes around, we find ourselves thinking about the changes in our industry, and what's come and gone over the last 12 months. It's a milestone in a long journey.

It's hard to believe, but this is the 15th London Tattoo Convention. London's debut year, 2004, could now be referred to as "back in the day" - a phrase that doesn't really have much meaning for many of today's younger tattooists, many of whom will not remember a time when tattooing was still an underground, anarchic form of rebellion and outsider art.

And that's the amazing and wonderful thing. Stand back and look at where we are now... Anyone venturing through the doors of an event such as the London Convention will experience serious sensory overload. There is simply so much great art being produced, at an incredible level of quality that wouldn't have been thought possible even five or ten years ago. Tattoo genres are multiplying and expanding; artists are bursting through the creative boundaries. And machines, needles and inks are progressing at such a phenomenal rate, going far beyond what was considered possible 'back in the day'.

It doesn't matter if you've been tattooing for ten years... or five years... or even two years. It's how good you are that matters. And that's the difference. Today's advances in equipment and technology mean it's no longer necessary to spend years and years learning the craft. All the information is out there, and you no longer need to be a mechanic before you can become an artist. This is why we're seeing so much creative development so early in tattooists' careers - and why shows such as London, Paris and Brussels are so full of mind-blowing, fresh, contemporary work. Why restrict yourself to recreating the past when you can create your own future?

But the great thing is that ours is an industry that also values its heritage. Every tattoo that is created today is imbued with a rich history, no matter how avant-garde its design. Every drop of ink that goes into a customer's skin is a continuation of a story that is centuries old.

Tattooing may now be considered a mainstream artform, but it's so much more than that.

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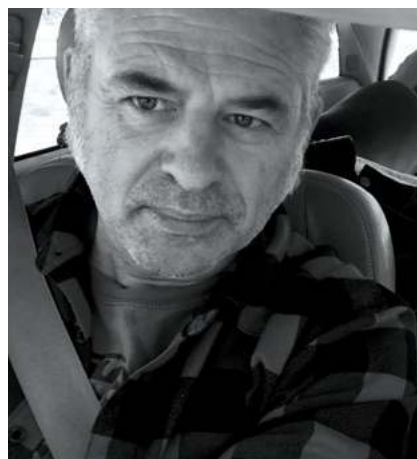
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NEWS & REVIEWS



Send your news, studio announcements, books or products for review, and items of general curiosity and intrigue for the tattoo cognoscenti to: **NEWS, TOTAL TATTOO MAGAZINE, 96 Glendenning Road, Norwich NR1 1YN** (totaltattoo@totaltattoo.co.uk)

MUSEUM IN THE SKIN

Last year, a tragic fire destroyed the National Museum of Brazil. Its famous collections were lost, and the building itself – a Rio de Janeiro landmark – was badly damaged. For the museum's dedicated staff members it was a kind of bereavement. Now, in a unique tribute to this much-loved institution, many of them are getting tattoos to help cope with the trauma and heal the grief.

It was palaeontologist Beatriz Hörmanseder who first came up with the idea. She was working on a fossil crocodile at the time of the fire, which could well have proved to be a completely new species. It was sadly lost. Her tattoo shows the facade of the museum, with the specimen identification number of the crocodile fossil underneath it.

Some staff members are getting tattoos similar to Beatriz's, showing the building's iconic facade; others are getting designs based on the museum's logo. The tattoos are being offered free of charge by Rio de Janeiro tattoo artist Luis Berbert, with support from local businesses.



He customises the two basic designs to suit each customer, incorporating imagery relating to their work at the museum or their particular memories of the place. More than 150 people now have "the museum in their skin".

Take a look at this touching video (directed and edited by Luciani Gomes and produced by Maryam Maruf):

www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-latin-america-49525719/why-brazilian-people-are-getting-a-tattoo-of-a-museum



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COMPETITIONS:

All winners will be picked at random (or on

merit if applicable) after the closing date. Entries received after the closing date will not be considered. The Editor's decision is final. Only one entry per person please, and remember to include your name and address. Winners of convention tickets will be responsible for their own transport and accommodation unless stated otherwise. Total Tattoo is not responsible for items lost or damaged in transit (though of course we will try to help if we can).



Dawn Thistlewood tragically lost her son Sam to suicide earlier this year. She recently got together with Katie Walmsley of Tainted Skin Tattoos (on the Isle of Wight) to organise two events in aid of CALM, the Campaign Against Living Miserably, in Sam's memory. CALM is leading a movement against suicide, the single biggest killer of men under the age of 45 in the UK. Tainted Skin's customers paid just £30 for a specially designed heart-shaped tattoo – symbolising mental health awareness – with a percentage of the proceeds going to the charity. More than £1,500 was raised. In press interviews, Dawn said, "If one person stops me to ask about my tattoo, and it makes them realise that they aren't alone, then it was worth it." She wants to raise awareness of mental health issues, especially young male

suicide, and plans to hold another charity event next March, to coincide with the date of Sam's birthday. She described Sam as "a beautiful, wonderful young man... a sensitive soul who simply cared too much."

Check out thecalmszone.net



START AS YOU MEAN TO GO ON

We couldn't resist bringing you the Baby Tattoo Romper and Biker Tat Shirt from Weslio! As they say on their website, it's not every day you see a toddler with awesome tats... Check out weslio.com



NYPD RED

Our news antenna has picked up a moving story from New York. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, NYPD officer Johnny Walker spent many hours working in the dusty, toxic rubble of the World Trade Center. Along with many other 9/11 survivors, he now has cancer as a result of that exposure. Johnny decided to get a very special tattoo to help him through his treatment – using red ink enhanced with the DNA of close family members (using Everence's technology), so that he could keep them with him at all times. Check out www.everence.life/products/everence-for-tattoos if you want to find out more about incorporating DNA into tattoo inks.



FLORIDA TATTOO EXHIBITION



On show until 2nd November at The Lighthouse ArtCenter in Tequesta (Palm Beach County, Florida) is 'TATTOO: The Renaissance of Body Art'. This gorgeous exhibition features original art by Ed Hardy and Sailor Jerry, as well as two-dimensional and three-dimensional tattoo-inspired pieces by contemporary artists from all across the USA, many of which are for sale. The art centre's website invites visitors to "Immerse yourself in the tradition of tattoo and explore primitive, tribal, Japanese, Americana, black and grey, contemporary, and vintage flash styles." Historic photos and tattoo equipment will also be on display, along with outrageous custom bikes by Ron Finch. And on 17th October, the Lighthouse ArtCenter will present the 'Nearly Nude Runway Show', with tattoo-accentuating garments created Bosh Stone. Find more details at www.lighthousearts.org



SEW BEAUTIFUL

During September, The Station art gallery in Richmond, Yorkshire, hosted a uniquely beautiful exhibition of tattoo-inspired needlework. Called 'Tattoos in Thread', it was the first solo show of artist Julie Wilkerson. Julie has a passion for tattoos, and her first piece of textile art was inspired by her daughter's sleeve. She describes her work as "one art form with a needle bringing about another".



PUT IN THE SHADE



We've all heard the horror stories about eyeball tattooing, but here's some good news. It's about a pioneering surgical procedure for people with extreme light sensitivity – built-in 'tattooed' sunglasses! These customised shades are inked into the cornea, the clear protective outer layer of the eye that covers the iris and pupil. One of the first recipients of this new treatment was Mandy Liscombe, whose problematic light sensitivity had arisen as a complication of an earlier laser eye operation. She had the pioneering surgery at Singleton Hospital in Swansea and, in press interviews, said she was overjoyed at the result.

THE WRONG ARM OF THE LAW

The West Yorkshire Police Federation has been successful in its campaign to get a controversial tattoo ban overturned. Police officers in the region will now be allowed to have visible arm tattoos, provided they are not offensive of course. We understand from press reports that tattooed arms previously had to be covered; before the change of policy, the only visible tattoos that were permitted were very small-scale motifs on necks and hands.



A VIEW OF AUTISM



Being autistic does not mean you have an illness or disease. It just means your brain works in a different way from other people. Take a look at this eloquent and eye-opening video by tattooist Charlotte Davies:

www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-wales-49595782/tattoo-artist-wants-more-job-help-for-autistic-people

THOSE TITS AT FACEBOOK

Terri Benamore (aka Miss Terri), owner of Inkantations Tattoo in Towcester, is a specialist in high quality post-mastectomy nipple tattoos. These realistic 'three-dimensional' tattoos can be of immense help to women who have undergone surgery resulting in the loss of a nipple – they can be a vital contribution to the psychological healing process and the reclaiming of their bodies. But Facebook deemed the images that Terri posted online to be in contravention of their anti-nudity policy and repeatedly removed them. We understand that at one stage, her accounts were even closed down. This was a massive blow to Terri's business, as Facebook and Instagram are such

important platforms for her, and it greatly upset her that women might not be able to find out about the kind of restorative tattoos that were available to them. According to press reports, Facebook have since apologised for the error and reinstated Terri's profiles and posts, stating that although adult nudity is prohibited on their platforms, post-mastectomy images such those posted by Terri are definitely permitted. The problem is that Facebook relies heavily on image-recognition software to identify 'prohibited' material... so the fact that Terri's nipple tattoos keep getting picked up by that software is proof positive of how realistic they are!



SEAN BRENNAN, RIP

We were sad to hear the news of the passing of much-loved tattooist Sean 'the Beard' Brennan, of Sean's Tattoos in Chepstow. Sean was 54, and he was diagnosed with cancer at the end of last year. One of the first things he did on learning of his diagnosis was marry his girlfriend of thirty years, Lucy. Following his death, tributes poured in on social media, one of the messages describing him as "the loveliest bloke in tattooing". He's going to be much missed by family, friends, and his many loyal customers, and by the Bristol tattoo community too. Sean was a proud, old school tattooist and he also had a great collection of motorbikes – his "iron horses". He was even taken on his final journey in a sidecar, and mourners were invited to come to the funeral on their bikes. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this sad time.



JEFFERY BEALE, RIP



In last month's issue of Total Tattoo we brought you the heartwarming story of tattooist Jeffery Beale of Elemental Tattoo in Plymouth. Knowing that he was dying of cancer, 60-year-old Jeffery decided to create a beautiful painted coffin for himself, representing aspects of his life and things that are special to him. We have received the sad news that Jeffery passed away on 4th September, and our thoughts are with his family and friends. We know he will be greatly missed. Jeffery's positive philosophy was inspirational. As he said in a recent interview with the Plymouth Herald, "Life... it's magic. I've got no big ambitions, I've got no bucket list, I've done everything I ever wanted to do."

DOC PRICE TO RETIRE

The famous Doc Price – who, at the age of 86, is believed to be the UK's oldest working tattooist – has chosen this year's London Tattoo Convention to be his Last Hurrah. After 70 years in the business, he's decided now is the time to retire. And this of course means that one very lucky visitor to the London convention (27th-29th Sept) has the chance of being his last ever customer!



WELL I NIVERA

Beiersdorf (the makers of Nivea) are launching a new skincare range in Germany this month. 'Skin Stories' is aimed specifically at the tattoo market, and will be on sale in tattoo studios as well as the usual retail outlets. There are currently four products in the range: a sun protection stick, a body lotion with UV filters, a repair balm for newly tattooed skin, and an "intensive care" serum.



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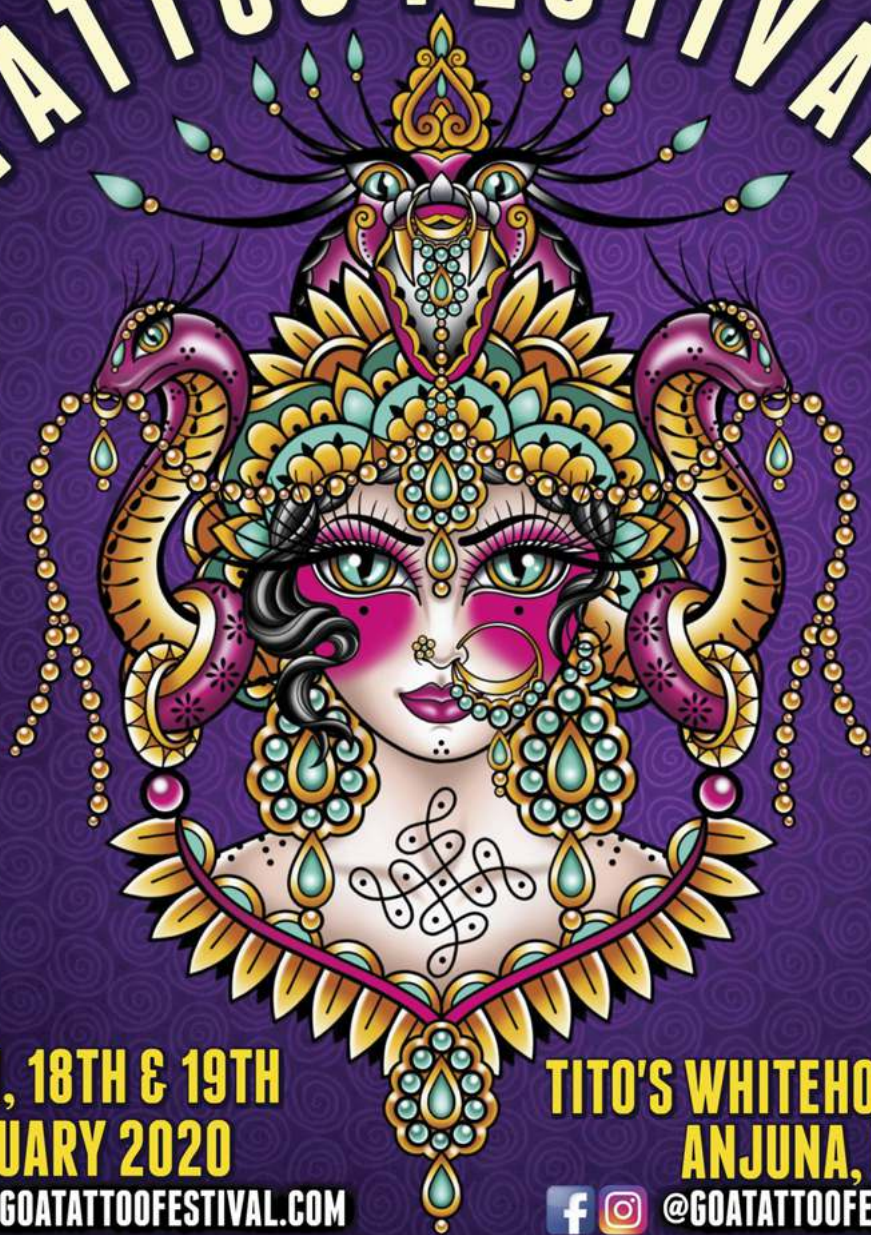
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| MEP0001 | Mepore Dressing 6cm x 7cm (Pack of 60) | £3.99 | £7.50 |

*All prices are inclusive of VAT and are accurate as of the
1st September 2019*



Interview by Perry & Lizzy
Pictures courtesy of Bobby Johnson

GLENDALE BULLY

'YOU DON'T REALLY
SEE AN IMAGE ON
YOUR PHONE LIKE
YOU DO IN PRINT'



Glendale Bully is the pseudonym of Bobby Johnson, an American West Coast tattooist who, after a rocky start to his career, has now settled into a groove producing superbly smooth, vibrant, genre-defying tattoos. Bobby is 31 and tattoos at The Grand Reaper in San Diego. He describes himself as a “father, artist, magician and superficial bastard” and his calm, considered approach is testament to what can be achieved with dedication and a good analytical eye.



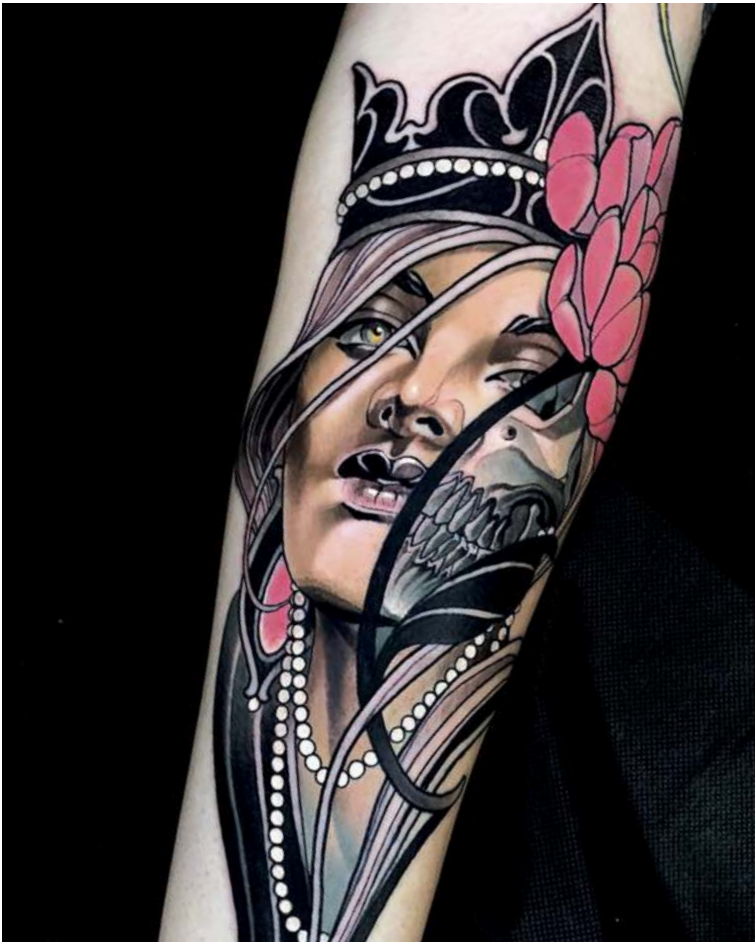


Bobby is originally from Salt Lake City, but moved to San Diego in California nine years ago. I ask him what prompted the move. "Two thirds of our customers fly in from other parts of the States to get tattooed, partly because it's such a cool place to come for a vacation. That wasn't really happening in Salt Lake City! The other reason I moved here was because it really is like paradise. The tattoo community's friendly and everyone gets along. I'm super lucky to be working with such an amazing group of artists who have become my best friends."

But Bobby admits that his close working relationships can sometimes feel like competitive pressure too. "It sometimes happens at the shop, you bring in a super dope design and everyone's loving it, you're high on life, you go home happy. Then the next day one of the other guys comes in with an even better design and you're like 'Fuck!' But you just have to keep on getting better and better."

I ask Bobby to tell me about other tattooists that he looks to for inspiration. His answer surprises me. "Actually, I try as hard as I can to avoid looking at the work of other tattooists! I'm inspired by a whole range of other artists though... Mucha, Monet and so many other European painters..." And it's not just two-dimensional art that influences Bobby's aesthetic. "Sometimes when I am





designing a tattoo," he continues, "I look at it like a sculpture." I ask him to expand on this, and he then goes on to describe how he uses a strong, hard edge between his colours (without recourse to anything as obvious as laying down a line) to create the illusion of three-dimensional shapes and forms. "By putting two similar colours next to each other in this way, you can make those colours look very different," he explains. And to my eye, this is the kind of thing that really makes his work stand out.

There was a time when you could usually pigeonhole a tattooist's work into one of the conventionally recognised styles – Japanese, traditional, etc – but that seems to be rapidly changing. "I don't like to call my work neo-traditional," Bobby tells me. "Neo-trad as a genre is becoming so broad now. It really doesn't represent most of the work that most 'neo-trad' artists are doing. I want my work to be instantly recognisable simply as *mine*. I'm using so many different elements from so many disciplines; my pieces cannot be pinned down to one category. I have developed my own tricks and my own ways of doing things to distinguish my work from that of other tattooists. That's always been my aim, but it was never really happening before. Now that I'm no longer forcing things, it's coming naturally."



Bobby remembers his eureka moment very clearly. He was on his way to the shop one day, when he suddenly decided that he would simply tattoo the design that he had come up with. He was not going to try to be on trend. He was not going to try to make his work look like anyone else's. He had his own 'tattoo voice'. And from that moment everything started to fall slowly into place.

"I've seen so many tattooists who have burnt out – trying to keep up by swapping styles, and not being true to themselves. It can so easily all come crashing in mentally as well as physically. As tattooists we need to take care of ourselves. Sure, we need to take care of our bodies – our hands, backs, etc – but the mind bit is huge. Forcing yourself to keep defending your position at the top... I hope I never get to the top! Honestly the more I go on, the more it seems I devalue my work..."





I wondered if Bobby feels he has a natural talent? He confesses that whilst this was once the case – especially in regard to his drawing skills – he now feels that developing his analytical eye has been much more important. “It’s helped me immensely. I know lots of people who can draw a thousand times better than me, but sometimes they can’t see the weak spots in their own tattoos. I am now able to be very objective when analysing a tattoo.”

“When I started out, I couldn’t tell a good tattoo from a bad one. But I would buy all the tattoo magazines and sit quietly by myself looking at each and every page for three, four, maybe five minutes... really studying every tattoo. I would make myself evaluate what was good and what was bad. And most importantly, *why* it was good or bad. *Why* was this yellow so vibrant? Or that orange so saturated? I used to think it was the brand of ink, but it turned out the common denominator of bright tattoos was the saturation of the blacks! That wasn’t common knowledge back then like it is now.”



“And the key thing is that you can’t see those kinds of details without a physical *printed* picture of the tattoo. As humans we don’t study the image on an iPad or laptop or phone in the same way. You don’t really see all the little tricks and twists like you do in print.”

Bobby clearly enjoys sharing his expansive knowledge of the magic of colours. “You can’t always pack flat black to get the darkest tones. Sometimes it’s a dark brown or a deep olive. That’s another thing I learnt through studying magazines.”



"But do you know what else has taught me the most about colour? It's learning from my friends who do realist portraits. They'll see a blue in a skin tone, or a green hue in a highlight, and that will be the bit that makes it really pop and work well. So now I am constantly looking at the colour undertone or the blue-green patch in a shadow. It's another one of the things that helps to make my work stand out. If a fade is from black to yellow, don't just use yellow and black, try using a dark plum to a burnt ochre! It'll have so much more depth. It all comes back to looking and really seeing."

Bobby dropped out of school to take up a really terrible tattoo apprenticeship. And during his time there he collected some terrible tattoos as well. He left the apprenticeship after just six months when he began to see that the work coming out of the shop really wasn't great. "Sometimes it's not about seeing the good; it's about recognising the bad. Learning what *not* to do is as important as learning what you *should* do."

Fast forward to the present, and demand for Bobby's work is so high his books are usually closed. "I was so amazed when I first had to do that," he tells me. "The fact that so many customers wanted to book in with me felt like a massive compliment. And I can still remember a time when I was one of those tattooists who thinks, 'What makes you so important that you need to close your books?' But being negative only breeds negativity. I asked myself, 'Why should I be troubled by the fact someone else is so busy?' I now know that even if I'm feeling really shitty, if I compliment someone, it will make me feel better. I can self-heal with positivity. And that's no hippy dippy ideal. It can work for everyone. Just a little positivity can be super powerful! Although I'm not spiritual, I do believe that if you spread some love you'll get it back."



We move on to talking about Bobby's working methods. He prefers to draw by hand but freely admits he sees the benefits of using his iPad. "Some people think using the iPad is cheating, and not true to the traditions. But the fact is, we tattooists are expected to do so much work every week. If you do one original tattoo a day, that's a new design you need to produce every day too! Customers see what you put up on Instagram and they expect you to be able to produce the same kind of thing for them in no time at all. But it's important for me to take my time and get everything just right because I want my tattoos to be the very best they can be. I usually do a rough sketch in red, then render it up into linework, and I often do a colour render which can take anything up to six hours – which is like a whole day's work for some people. And that's on top of the time it takes to actually tattoo it. A tattooist who has really taught me a lot is Justin Hartman. He's obviously super talented, but he also puts in lots and lots of time to get every little detail perfect. His work ethic is inspirational."





Being a successful tattooist these days can be stressful and exhausting both physically and mentally. Bobby takes up the point... "I'm lucky to know a lot of really good tattooists personally - excellent artists who really stand out - and I can almost guarantee that every one of them will be up late drawing, up early planning the day, and generally working much longer hours than most other people." Balancing your mood and avoiding negativity can be difficult in such a pressurised environment, so what does Bobby do to avoid the usual pitfalls? "I watch out for that moment when I start going in a negative direction. I try to identify the signs - when my drawings start to suffer, and I start getting frustrated, and I become envious of everyone else who's killing it. Once I notice this mood change, I simply try to work less."



"For years," Bobby continues, "I was terrified that if I wasn't working flat-out, or producing tons of tattoos, no one would want a tattoo from me and I would starve. So the moment there was a gap in my schedule, I would want to fill it. Over time I've learnt to be more confident in my abilities. But there's such a fine line between over-valuing yourself and under-valuing yourself..."

"In the past," Bobby continues, "people would work more in isolation than we do now. They'd get to a point in their careers when they would think 'I've arrived', but then the young kids following them would swerve round them, and suddenly they'd find they weren't at the top any longer!" With so many talented artists now coming through, I wondered if Bobby foresees a time when he'll feel left behind. "I hope not," he says. "At the moment if I see a young tattooist who's really killing it, it actually makes me happy. And it shows me that I still have room to grow. I'm not there yet. I didn't always feel that way, and there are days when I still don't, but it's a good mindset to aim for."



Bobby recently became a member of the Cheyenne family. Naturally I had to ask how this came about and what it means to him. "It was funny, I'd just bought the new Cheyenne machine and I suddenly got a call from them asking if I wanted to join the team! Because I was already using their products, it made sense. It's good to be supported by the manufacturers of the products you use. They've been amazing; if we need anything when we're travelling, they get it for us. I don't need to pack much for a convention; I just throw up my banner with all their corporate branding and it instantly looks professional. Cheyenne have helped to revolutionise the way tattoos are done. With the SOL Nova, I can saturate so much faster and smoother than I could with other machines... I can go back into my tattoos again and again while I'm working without causing so much trauma... Why would I not want to be sponsored by a company that helps to improve my tattoos?"





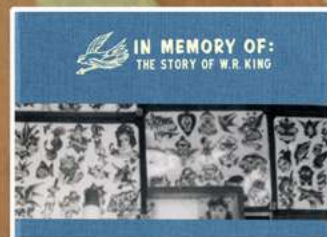
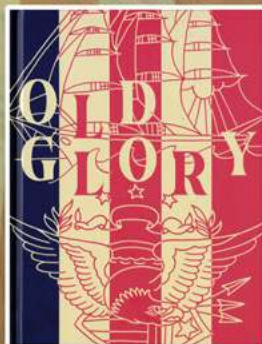
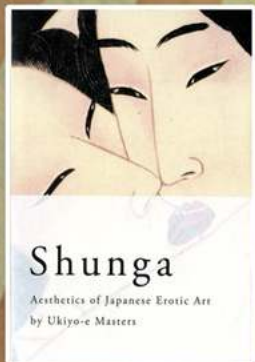
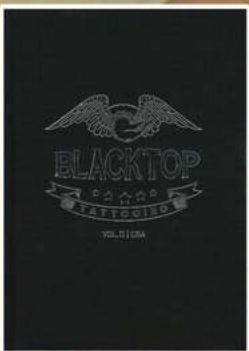
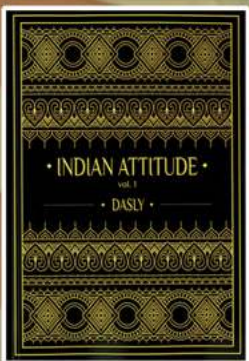
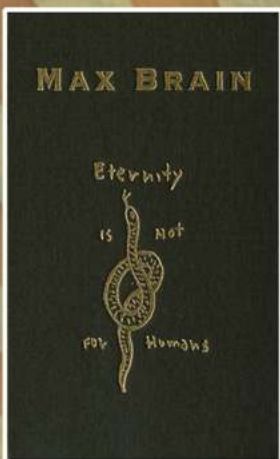
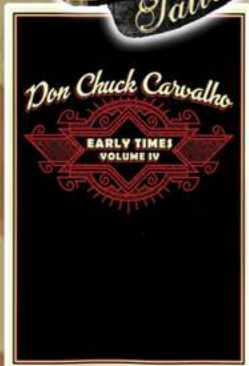
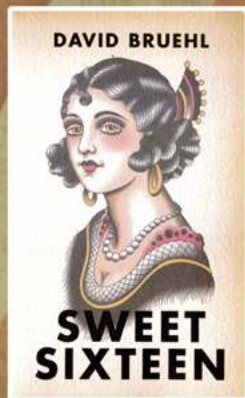
Before our conversation drew to a close, I wanted to know where the name 'Glendale Bully' came from. "I wanted my artwork to have its own identity. I thought it would be super cool to have two names. When I came across the 'Broad Street Bully' rap album I loved the sound of that, and as I've always been proud to be from the Glendale neighbourhood of Salt Lake City, I decided to become the Glendale Bully!"

Check out Bobby's tattoo podcast:
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KREATYVES MACHINE ALTARS



**'ALL OF MY
CREATIONS ARE
ONE OF A KIND'**



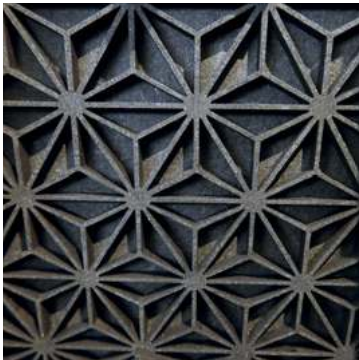
We interviewed enigmatic Berlin-based tattooist Kreatyves in Total Tattoo Issue 175. He's also a highly regarded multi-media artist, and amongst his most sought after pieces are these display/storage boxes for tattoo machines – his 'tattoo machine altars' – beautifully crafted constructions that combine old and new elements, found and created objects, hand-painting and state-of-the-art laser cutting, and salvaged drawers of all shapes and sizes. Tattooists worldwide are buying them and commissioning them, and we wanted to find out more.

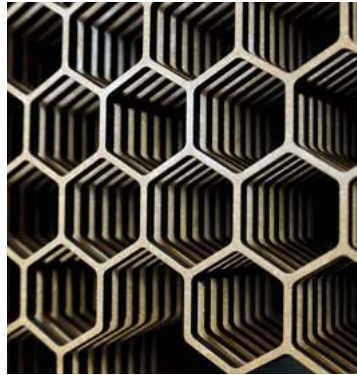
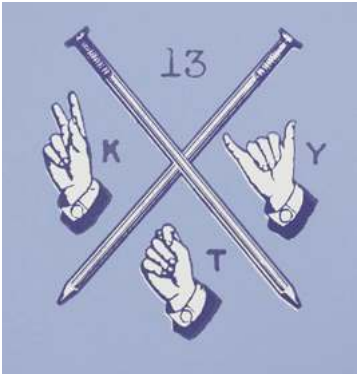
What first inspired you to create your tattoo machine altars?

I built my first one in 2014. The idea came to me after doing a guest spot in a studio where I saw tattoo machines hanging on the wall next to a workstation. Until then, my own machines had just been lying around inside a dark drawer. But it made so much more sense to have them on view, hanging on a vertical surface, and that's when I decided to create a beautiful box in which to display them.

And then you developed that idea further...

Yes. It was about a year and a half later that I built the first ones with laser cut parts. At the time I was still doing a lot of conventions, which was of course the perfect place to showcase the boxes I was making. People started to call them my 'tattoo machine altars' and soon I was selling them as fast as I could produce them.



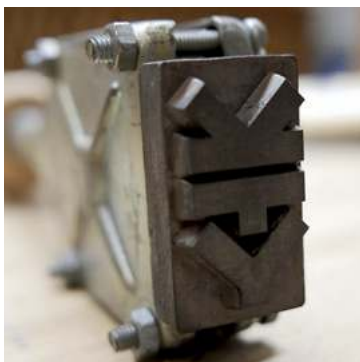
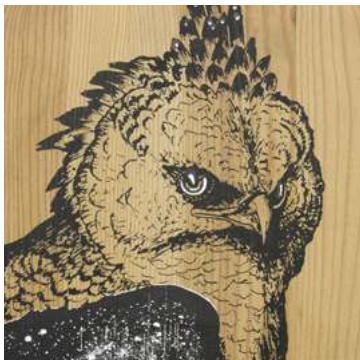


Have they taken over from your tattooing?

No, I just build them when I've got time. My main focus is still tattooing. That's still number one!

Did you already know about laser cutting before you decided to make those first boxes?

There are several makers' workshops here in Berlin that offer laser cutting. They have CNC machining, 3D printing, etc. I found out about about these places when I was working on another collaborative project with a good friend of mine, so I already knew how to work with vector-based programs.



Tell us about the materials you use to create these pieces.

They're mostly just wood, acrylic glass and black oxide steel – and the old drawers themselves of course. The drawers are very robust. Things were built to last in those days! These altars are all about the balanced combination of old objects and new materials with state of the art technology.

What is the most difficult aspect of making them?

Sometimes it's the programming of complex structures, sometimes it's finding good quality drawers.



What do you enjoy most and least about the process?

I think designing and assembling them is what I enjoy most. The least enjoyable moments are when I encounter technical difficulties with the laser or the software.



How much input do your customers have in choosing what goes into their design?

They can choose pretty much everything: size, material, colour, pattern, etc, and I can also put a logo on for them. But many just buy a box that I've already made, even when I tell them everything is fully customisable. All of my creations are one-of-a-kind anyway. In a way, it's a bit like getting tattooed by another tattooer; you just want something cool from them, and you're happy to let them do what they do best!



How many tattoo machine altars do you produce in a year?

I guess it's somewhere between ten and twenty. I produce other small pieces of art too - in similar quantities - and then when I find time, or have the urge, I will create something bigger. I also love to design my own merchandise (patches, stickers, rolling papers, etc).



And some of your art pieces have been used as convention trophies...

Yes. This year will be the third time I'm producing commissioned limited edition trophies for the International Brussels Tattoo Convention. The first year it was just for Best of Show, but now it's all the trophies. 'Best of Show' is a one-off piece.

Does your environment influence your artistic output?

Yes, very much. I find useful shapes in everything I see around me. This is because of my former job

as an architectural lighting designer. To give you an example, there's a shape which I still use today that was inspired by the ceiling geometry of a house (dating from 1901) where I used to live.

What prices do the altars start from?

They start at 250 Euros.

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TATCON BLACKPOOL



Nikki Pickering, Bold Street Tattoo



We really do love to be beside the seaside! And the quintessential British coastal holiday destination has to be Blackpool. This summer convention is in its sixth year, but the journey has been a somewhat turbulent one. Only one member of the original organising committee remains – the ever-enthusiastic driving force that is Pat, a warm and friendly personality who is forever looking for ways to make his popular show even better.

The show is held on the outskirts of Blackpool in the gigantic Norbreck Castle Hotel, a sprawling place with more than 400 bedrooms. This magnificent edifice was originally built in 1869 and was purchased at the end of the nineteenth century by one J H Shorrocks, who used it to throw lavish house parties (later turning this into a commercial venture). It boasted tennis courts, a swimming

Kyle Soekil,
Tattoo Lounge



Kaz Bham, Electric Thirteen



Dani Ronson, Indelible Ink

pool, a bowling green and an 18-hole golf course and over the years played host to many upper class guests, stars of stage and screen, and members of the British aristocracy. The building is a little tired nowadays – and it's probably fair to say it doesn't witness too many visiting dignitaries – but it echoes the charm of a by-gone era as only a good British seaside hotel can.

One of the great things about this show is that once you've arrived there's no need to leave the building! Breakfast and an evening meal were included in the price, which makes this a really convenient and affordable convention if you're coming from afar.

Once again, as in previous years, we were woken by the dulcet tones of the fire alarm – which had the knock-on effect of automatically cutting off the gas to the kitchen, resulting in several late breakfasts, but hey... it was all part of the fun.



Scott Cambell, Incredible Ink



Greg Zabaryllo, Hypnotic Art





Paul LaVay, Art LaVay



Zac Mo, Zac Mo Tattoos





James Surridge, True Colours

The show itself takes place in the main function room. A smaller adjoining hall (with a beautiful ceiling) housed most of the traders, a bar and the all-important stage for the competitions. At many conventions these days it seems the competitions are becoming less of a major attraction, but this is most certainly not the case at Blackpool. It was an honour to be asked to judge. We diligently set about our duties at 5pm... and were still going strong at 10pm, with many



Adam Lester



Cain, Creative Arts



Megan Tremarco, Creative Element



Scott Wu Tattoo, Ruby Ink Tattoo



Darren Hill





Kyle Egg Williams, Grindhouse Productions



Aimee Bethell, Creative Element



Chris Turner, Croven Ink

categories having more than 50 entrants! Proof positive of the huge support commanded by this show. Once again the category for 'Best Apprentice' left many of us speechless with admiration, the work was that good! This really is a very interesting show. Although it's no longer frequented by so many big international tattoo stars, the standard of work here – especially in the competitions – is truly outstanding.

The large artists' room was looking resplendent this year with a freshly-painted floor; the ample overhead lighting bouncing off the shiny surface underfoot to give the impression of being inside a giant glitter ball! Pat had hired in all-new booths this year, adding to the fresh, reinvigorated feel of the show. The atmosphere was palpably buzzing, with many of the artists returning – as they do year after year – to re-ignite old friendships or establish new ones.



Liam Hunter, Roadhouse Tattoo



Jack Stephenson, Empire Tattoo Club

Every year Pat asks for feedback and is always happy to adapt and change things in a genuine effort to keep moving the show forward. One notable addition for 2019 was the introduction of 'Walk-Up Sunday', with participating artists agreeing not to book appointments in advance on the Sunday to



Peewee, Tattoos by Lumpy



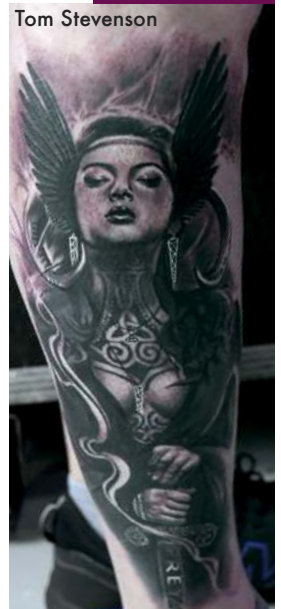
Kate Mayor



Jonny Wray, Shipwrecked Tattoo Company



Mesi Art, Black Label Tattoo



Tom Stevenson



Orrin Bebbington



Scott Masterson



Mike Holding

allow visitors the chance to grab a tattoo on the day. Many tattooists seemed to think this was a good idea and many took part. The other very nice touch was the addition of an after-show party on the Saturday night in the bar at the opposite end of the hotel. A selection of burgers and chips was laid on and it was all very much appreciated. With so many tattoo conventions now taking place in the UK it can be difficult to decide which ones are really worth attending. If you're looking for a warm, friendly event with some cracking artists putting out great work – all under one roof, at an affordable price – we can heartily recommend Tatcon.

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TOTAL TATTOO MAGAZINE 47



TRIBUTE INK

The Royal British Legion's new exhibition

The Royal British Legion is launching a unique new touring tattoo exhibition, 'Tribute Ink', featuring 50 powerful photographs of serving and ex-serving Armed Forces personnel who all have military-related tattoos with poignant personal meanings.

This exhibition offers, in the Legion's own words, "a modern and fresh way of looking at Remembrance."

Tattoos have a long history in the military and have been inscribed on the skin of warriors for thousands of years. For those serving in today's Armed Forces, they can be many things: a statement of belonging, a record of significant events and tours of duty, a tribute to fallen comrades.

Over the last few months, photographer Charlie Clift has been working with serving and ex-serving Armed Forces personnel at venues across the country to produce a series of visually striking and emotive images filled with narrative significance. The Royal British Legion's 'Tribute Ink' presents these photographs in an exhibition that brings the subjects' heartfelt stories to life in the most engaging way. These tattoos are a permanent reminder of the wearer's experiences, and their triumphs and losses. A personal act of Remembrance.

SAM SEELEY

Sam joined the Royal Navy in 2010, at the age of 20, and became a Royal Marine. He became a Mountain Leader, served in the specialised Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron, and then in 2016 became an award-winning Royal Navy Photographer. Sam's Navy career has taken him around the world. He's taught Mountain Leadership in Saudi Arabia, taken part in exercises with the Marines in America and Norway, and as a Photographer has been to Japan, Malaysia, Australia and Slovenia. In 2013 Sam went on his first tour to Afghanistan.

**'WE WERE LUCKY
ON OUR TOUR.
EVERYONE CAME HOME.
I FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT
TO MARK THAT.'** *Sam*

Sam got a tattoo sleeve when he was 17, but it didn't hold any particular meaning for him. His subsequent tattoos, however, are full of meaning. On his chest he has the Royal Marines Commando dagger, together with the word 'Eternity' (in Polish, the nationality of his girlfriend). "I really enjoyed my time serving in Afghanistan," Sam says. "I learnt so much. We were really lucky on our tour; everyone came home. I felt it was important to mark that time of my life with the Commando dagger. A lot of the guys I served with got similar tattoos."

Sam's compass tattoo marks the completion of his Mountain Leader training course in 2014. The swallow on his back celebrates the occasion

when he arrived into Sydney Harbour aboard HMS Sutherland as part of a Far East tour. "It was on this tour that I felt I'd finally got my sea legs!" he says. And the tattoo on his elbow was done as a forfeit – the result of losing at the traditional Royal Marines game of 'Spoof'.

When Sam became a Royal Navy Photographer, he marked this career change by getting a ship tattooed on his left arm, accompanied by the line 'This is England' inspired by Jack Aubrey's speech in the film *Master and Commander*. Sam told us, "I'd always been into film and media (I studied it at school) and throughout my military career I was the unofficial photographer on tours and exercises and even did weddings on

the side. Then I found out that I could re-train as a Photographer in the Navy and I've never looked back. This ship signifies that no matter where you are in the Forces world, wherever you are based, you make it your home. I really do have the best job in the world."

"Tribute Ink is refreshing," Sam told us, "because when we think of Remembrance, people might automatically think of a dark time around November, and older veterans. But the Iraq conflict ended only twenty years ago and the height of combat operations in Afghanistan was within the last decade and it's important that we remember these periods too. This exhibition is a nice poignant way to highlight the service and sacrifice, and to keep all of this in the forefront of our minds." And he adds, "I'm so lucky to have been chosen as one of the subjects – especially as I'm usually behind the camera instead of in front of it!"



"The sacrifices made in the armed forces, big and small, are ones that come to define you. This is why, for centuries, soldiers, sailors and airmen have been moved to get tattooed with permanent motifs and messages commemorating their service experience. The Royal British Legion's Tribute Ink exhibition aims to uncover some of the inspiring modern stories of Remembrance living on the skin, and in the hearts, of our servicemen and women today. From the most elaborate full body coverage to the tiniest tribute to a fallen friend, Tribute Ink offers a glimpse into the comradeship, bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces community."

Alexander Owen, Head of Armed Forces Engagement at the Royal British Legion

ABBY WINCHESTER

Joining the RAF at the age of 27, Abby had already had a successful career as a chef. She is now based at RAF Cosford and, having served 12 years, works as a Survival Equipment Technician and Instructor. Currently a Corporal, she will soon be promoted to Sergeant.

Abby has served at a number of RAF bases, including RAF Halton for her basic training, RAF Odiham where

she worked on Chinook helicopters, and Joint Helicopter Command Flying Station Aldergrove in Northern Ireland. During her four years at RAF Cosford she has worked on Tornados and Typhoons. Overseas, Abby has also served on the front line out of Camp Bastion in Afghanistan and has been based in the Falklands as well. As well as her day-to-day duties, Abby is a member of the RAF cycling and triathlon teams.

It is Abby's love of sports, and her determination in her training, that led her to get the tattoo on her upper left arm – a design featuring bike gears and other machine parts. "It's because of my nickname," she explains. "People started calling me 'The Machine' because I'm so active and love doing circuit classes, climbing, cycling and so on, and it kind of stuck. I already had a tattoo on my upper arm, but it was from when I was younger and it had absolutely no meaning. To be honest, I didn't like people to see it..."

'MY TATTOO REFLECTS MY DETERMINATION TO KEEP GOING AND BE STRONG.' *Abbie*



So I decided to get a cover-up done. This design reflects my determination to keep going, and be strong. It also includes my service number to indicate how proud I am to serve.”

“Having the previous tattoo covered up with this more meaningful piece has allowed my confidence to grow,” Abby continues. “Instead of hiding my arms I can now wear vest tops and t-shirts to show off the design, and I am more than happy that it’s a talking point. I’m very proud to be part of Tribute Ink as it’s something so different for the Legion and demonstrates the modern face of the military. I’m really looking forward to seeing people’s reactions and getting across the fact that tattoos are so much more than body art – they can also represent who you are and reflect your personality.”

“Diving into the lives of the many forces members and veterans I photographed was an honour. It wasn’t always easy hearing the stories these people told, but they were always open and friendly with me. Their stories are important and I was eager to do everything I could to help tell them. The project has changed my perception of remembrance completely. It doesn’t have to be done in silence on a sombre Sunday; people can remember in a million different ways. Some of the people I photographed have run ultra-marathons to commemorate their friends, some have set up charities, many continue serving their country with pride. They all remember those they’ve lost nearly every day they live. Getting tattoos of their friend’s names inked into their skin has helped many cope with their feelings – now they are with them in everything they do, remembered always. I hope my pictures can help honour those who serve and encourage others to remember in new ways.”

Charlie Clift, *'Tribute Ink' photographer*

CRAIG DANIELL

Joining the RAF at the age of 19, Craig served as a Senior Aircraftman. He completed two tours of Afghanistan (in 2011 and 2013) but when he was injured by a blast, his time in the RAF was cut short and he was medically discharged.

After leaving the military in 2016, Craig decided to pay tribute to those who had lost their lives in service with a new leg sleeve. He wanted the tattoo to tell his own story, as well as commemorating his fallen comrades and honouring the memory of family members who had previously served. It was designed in collaboration with tattooist Ross Frater. The sleeve features a medic, as a memento of Craig’s time working in a heli-borne emergency medical team evacuating critically injured casualties from the battlefields of Helmand, often under fire. It also features a soldier on a staircase, with a clock face showing the time of Craig’s birth, an image inspired by Craig’s belief that his time was up when he became injured. There’s a lion’s head representing his service to his country and also a poppy, the traditional symbol of Remembrance. The tattoo also includes the names of Craig’s two grandfathers and the name of his friend, SAC Ryan Tomlin, who was killed on patrol in Afghanistan aged 21.

'MY TATTOO COMMEMORATES THOSE I HAVE LOST ALONG THE WAY AND REMINDS ME HOW LUCKY I AM TO BE HERE.' *Craig*

At the bottom of Craig's leg sleeve is the symbol for PTSD, a condition he was diagnosed with after military service. This tattoo helps Craig to continue processing what happened. It acts as a reminder to stop, remember and take time. "I didn't really have time to process what was happening around me, and everything I saw, or deal with the grief of losing comrades along the way. You simply carried on as best you could, and got on with the job at hand. It wasn't until I was injured myself that I stopped and had time to think. My brain went into overload. After being diagnosed with PTSD, I realised I had to take my time and really process everything – and reassess myself after injury."

Craig describes his leg sleeve as the story of his life, his friends and his family. "For me, my tattoo is a visual memory of my time in service. It allows me to commemorate those I lost along the way and reminds me of how lucky I am to be here today. Remembering isn't just one day, and I see my tattoo as my own symbol of Remembrance."

The Royal British Legion is the nation's biggest military charity, providing support to all members of the British Armed Forces (past and present) and their families. 'Tribute Ink' will be on show until 1st December at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire (entry free, donations appreciated) before touring across the country.

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'YOU NEED TO DEVELOP YOUR CRAFT BEFORE YOU DEVELOP YOUR STYLE.'

MONIKA KOCH



Monika Koch has packed a whole lot of life into her 27 years. Originally from Poland, she was a motorcycle stunt rider before becoming a tattooist. She began studying medicine, dropped out and opted for architecture instead, then enrolled on an interior design course... then decided to relocate to the UK to pursue what is proving to be a very fruitful artistic career indeed.

“At first I was only able to work in a tattoo studio at the weekends,” Monika begins, “then the place got sold, and I lost my job before I’d even got started. But I didn’t give up, and I kept on pushing until finally I got a great job in a good studio, where I stayed for five years. I didn’t have a style of my own at that time. I just did whatever came in. I had plenty of customers – in fact I was booked up for months in advance – but I wasn’t really going anywhere.”

Then influential tattooist Max Pniewski came along. He saw Monika’s massive potential, encouraged her, and invited her to work alongside him at his Bristol studio, Southmead Tattoo. While working there, Monika really found

her feet. “Max told me to do loads of conventions, push for my designs, and promote my work even if I had to tattoo for free to get my pieces out there. So that’s exactly what I did,” she tells me.

“Because of my multi-disciplinary background I can handle most styles – including traditional, script, realism and abstract – and I feel I have a lot of freedom to mix things up and create something new, almost like a pop art collage. There’s room for improvement in my tattooing, both artistically and technically – there always will be! – but I feel very comfortable with what I’m doing right now. And every few months I add a little twist to my work...”



At one point Monika was tempted to specialise in realism but soon gave that up when she realised how it narrowed her creative options. “All the customers were wanting the same things again and again. They all wanted the same photos of the same actors. I found it really unimaginative and dull,” Monika admits. “So what I do now is let my imagination run wild. My designs involve the most random things. The piece I did today has a lemur, a bush baby, a skull, some brushes, and rockets! It’s not something you can easily describe to a client, so they have to have a lot of trust...”

Monika has a punishing work schedule. She is constantly on the road. (We caught up with her at the recent Berlin Tattoo Convention.) “I worked a convention abroad last weekend where I did three pieces in two days, then I travelled home on the Monday and worked very long days on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday I set off for Berlin, and I’ll be working here until Sunday. It can get a little exhausting,” she continues, “but it’s worth it. I’m getting a lot of good feedback on what I’m doing. My designs – my style – are beginning to be recognised.”





Monika sees the expense of attending conventions as an investment in her future that she's happy to make. She was in love with tattooing from the moment she got her first ink, aged 17, and no other career could scratch her creative itch. She wants to establish a long working life in the world that she adores.

"I'm still so far away from where I want to be," she continues, "but I think I'm laying down a strong foundation for my future development. All the encouragement I receive just makes me want to keep on pushing. I want every tattoo I do to be even more interesting than the one before. When I go to conventions, it's not about winning the competitions. It's the reaction of the other artists – the recognition of my peers – that feels important to me."

And with every show, Monika's work seems to step up another level. "I aim to do at least one convention a month, because that's what makes me progress. For me at the moment, the most crucial thing is to develop my own recognisable style and promote it in the best way I can."





"The competitions are nerve-wracking though," Monika confesses. "I don't really enjoy seeing my work being judged. For the customer it's easy... They just turn up, get their leg shaved, and sit there while I do all the hard work!" she laughs. "Although obviously they have the aftercare to think about."

"I always try to put on a good design that's technically excellent too. With this style, the structure of the design is often unconventional and there isn't so much need to focus on composition, but it still needs to be pleasing to the eye. It has to balance. I attended a seminar with Jay Freestyle in Madrid recently that really helped me. He covered everything from the basics of design right through to perfect application."

In the creation of such free-flowing avant-garde tattoos it's important to be flexible. Monika pre-plans her designs for the most part, but is always happy to make changes as she goes along. "I look at the tattoo as it takes shape," she explains, "and I often add details to help balance the design. I freehand a lot of the elements on to the body as I tattoo. I think this helps to give it more life and energy. I'm lucky to have open-minded customers. Often they don't know what the finished tattoo will look like..."





“Most of my customers are female,” Monika tells me. “I think this is partly because I do a lot of animals. I do a lot of pet portraits. Sometimes I only get one picture of their dog and they tell me I can do whatever I want, so they never know what they’re getting until the day of the appointment – and even then it often changes throughout the tattoo process, so neither of us knows what the piece will actually look like until it’s done!”

I ask Monika if her early studies in architecture and interior design have come in handy. “Yes, I use a lot of the perspective drawing skills that I learnt back then, and I still go to art classes to study life drawing. I also recently decided to go back to basics and learn how to paint in acrylics, and I’m about to move into oils. I paint in watercolour too. It’s important for me to understand all the various artistic media and how they work. It all contributes to my tattooing.”



In the past, Monika created a large portfolio of hand-drawn New School designs incorporating a bright and vibrant colour palette but she found that this style became unfashionable and work was slow. Now she uses her iPad and Procreate to produce her initial designs. Whenever she has any spare time, she searches for images and elements to use. "I'm always on the lookout for bold, high-contrast images of skulls, animals and random objects. If they don't have enough contrast, I adjust everything in Photoshop. All the pop art stuff, text, etc, I draw myself, depending on how I feel. I like to use bold key-lines, even around realism elements, so that the tattoo ages well."

Monika is very concerned to ensure the longevity of her tattoos. "It's not about how the tattoo looks on the day; I want to make tattoos that will look great in years to come. So I have a rule that my customers send me pictures of how their pieces are healing, so I can monitor my work over the long term and learn which techniques work best. Blending colours is fine, but for me the difficult bit is adding textured detail. It's very much like painting; you have to keep adding layer upon layer, and the skin gets a lot of trauma. So you have to plan carefully. It's the hardest thing to get right."

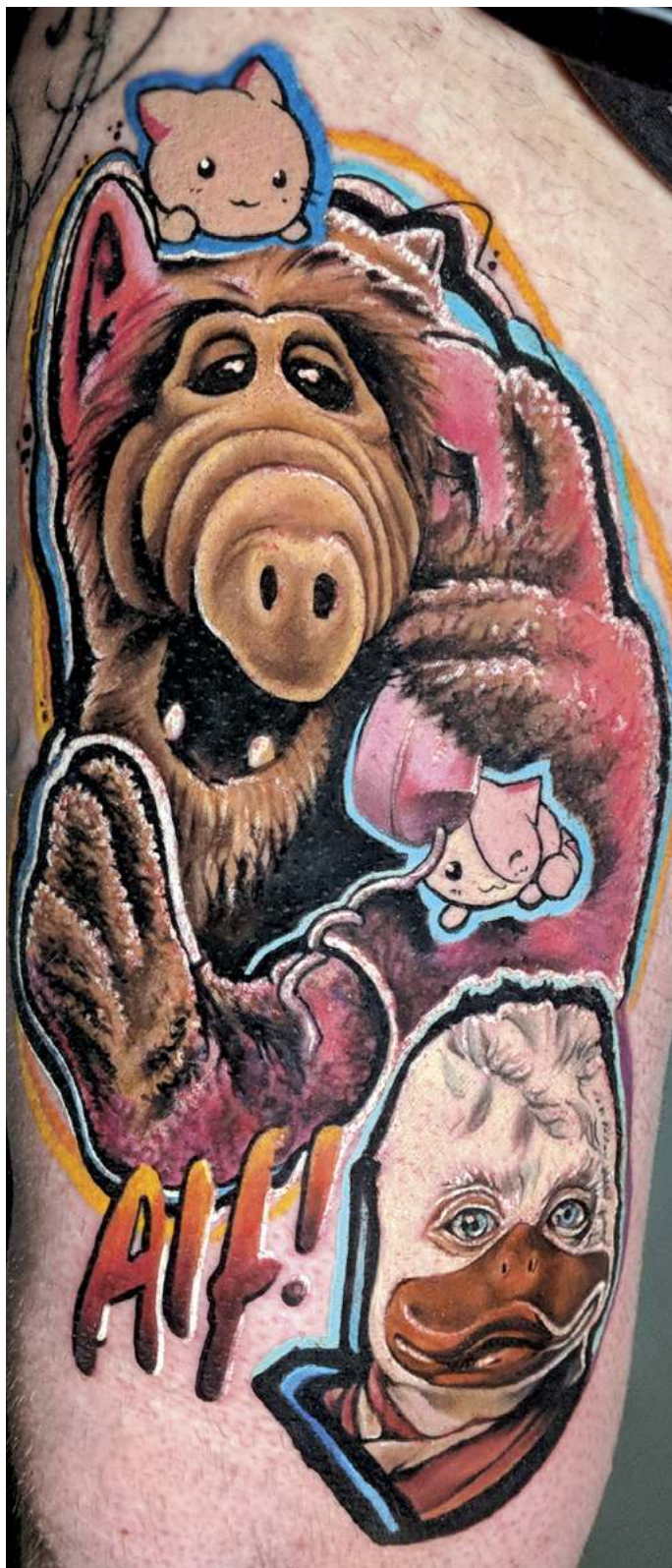


Aftercare is another important issue, and Monika is passionate about doing everything she can to help her clients look after their tattoos. "I'm working on getting small bottles of antibacterial soap to give them – because it doesn't matter what I tell them, they only hear so much and never remember everything! The prevention of infection is second nature to us tattooists. It feels like common sense, because we're working with minimising those risks all the time. But our clients don't always think in the same way as us. So I buy aftercare products and give them to my customers for free, because getting a good heal is important to me too."

We talk about the equipment Monika uses. Like so many contemporary tattooists, she chooses World Famous Inks. "I get great results with them," she tells me. "They pack in really well, and they heal bright. I've never had any problems with them. As for machines," she continues, "I switch every now and then. In fact I make a point of swapping quite frequently, because I don't want to get too used to one particular machine. I don't ever want to feel dependent on my equipment."



'I DON'T WANT TO GET USED TO ONE PARTICULAR MACHINE, SO I CHANGE EVERY MONTH...'



Then she throws me a bit of a curve ball. "Believe it or not, most of my award-winning tattoos have been done with cheap Chinese knock-offs that I've bought for about £30! I also use a Spektra, which is really hard-hitting, plus a Cheyenne and a selection of coil machines. I do still love my coils, but for travelling and conventions it's so much easier to take one or two rotaries than a selection of heavy coils. I use Kwadron cartridges, but because I do so many tattoos for free I also have to use cheaper brands from time to time."

Monika's energetic journey into tattooing reflects her personality. She has mastered so many styles in such a short space of time, and she doesn't seem to struggle with any of them. She is certainly ploughing her own furrow, and has rapidly established her own unique way of working, but her multifaceted development is in complete contrast to the new breed of tattooists who often want to specialise from day one (and whose narrow skill set can then sometimes constrain their future potential).



“When I started out, I did literally anything that came through the door. With guidance and a lot of studying I learnt to be good at every style. As I said, I’m not yet where I want to be, but I’m so glad I have that foundation of craftsmanship. I had no other choice; I worked in some good shops, and I had to uphold their reputation with my work. When you start out, it’s not about establishing a niche or pushing the boundaries; it’s about doing good quality work. You need to develop your craft before you develop your style.”

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HANNAH CALAVERA, HANNAH CALAVERA TATTOOS



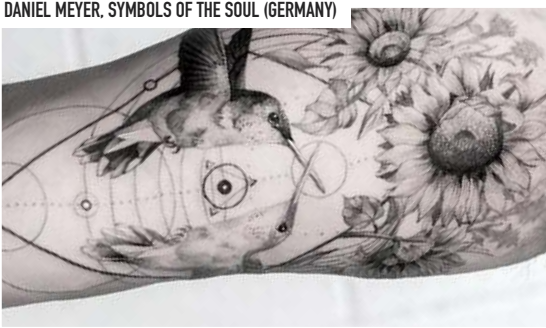
HATTIE COX, DARK HORSE COLLECTIVE



FABRICE KOCH, FABINKOGNITO TATTOO (GERMANY)



DANIEL MEYER, SYMBOLS OF THE SOUL (GERMANY)



K PEANUT, THE CHURCH



COLIN WHITFIELD, WHITFIELD TATTOOS



J P BARLOW



TAMARA LEE DOT, SACRED GOLD TATTOO



RICH HARRIS, DARK HORSE COLLECTIVE



HARRY JAMES TATTOO



ABBIE UNDERWOOD



KAROLINA SYLWIA, TERRY'S TATTOOS



JOSHIAN WILSON, COLCHESTER BODY ARTS



MARCUS OTNER, VAN BREE TATTOO



JAIRO CARMIRA, MORNING STAR TATTOO



LEE RADLEY, YARSON TATTOO



TADE, CHERRY DRAGON TATTOO



STEVEN MOSTYN, MEMORIES AND MISCHIEF (GERMANY)

JAY FREESTYLE (NETHERLANDS)



SMALLS, TRUE LOVE TATOO



NICK IMMS, THE CHURCH



MIKE DAVIES (USA)



JONATHAN MCKENZIE, THE FAMILY BUSINESS



MYKE CHAMBERS. SEVEN SWORDS (USA)



MIKAEL DE POISSEY (FRANCE)



DANNY ELLIOT REBEL MUSE TATTOO (USA)



THREE KINGS TATTOO (USA)



SMILIN' DEMONS (GERMANY)



JADE REEVE, CROSSED ARROWS



CLAIRE HAMILL, SEMPER TATTOO



JAVIER OBREGON, FAMILY ART (SPAIN)



MYKE CHAMBERS, SEVEN SWORDS (USA)



LAURA THOMPSON EDWARDS, THE BLUE TATTOO



LUKAS, TASTY TATTOO (GERMANY)



IVANA, IVANA TATTOO ART



DEAN MOON, LOW TIDE TATTOOS



KALI, NEVER SAY DIE TATTOO



KIMIHITO, AMSTERDAM 1825 (NETHERLANDS)



JOE FARRELL, KILBURN ORIGINAL

BIG LIN, TATTOO YUE (THAILAND)



LUKAS MELCHER (GERMANY)



WILLEM JANSSEN, VAULT 13 TATTOO PARLOUR (NETHERLANDS)



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KRISH TRECE



Originally from Spain, Krish Trece is now working in New York. Her beautifully crafted neo-traditional tattoos have a strongly personalised colour palette and often feature animals and portraits. These are smooth, elegant and perfectly balanced pieces that really shine out.



Spain seems to be producing a lot of really good neo-trad artists right now. Why do you think this is?

There must be something in the Spanish air! Spain is a country with a phenomenal art heritage. Throughout history, there have been so many renowned Spanish artists. Wherever you go in Spain, you find breathtaking palaces, cathedrals, mosques and museums filled with paintings, sculptures, frescoes and every other art form you can think of. Inspiration can be found everywhere. And it's beautiful to see the amount of talent there is in Spanish tattooing. There are so many artists pushing at the boundaries and creating magnificent pieces of art. And you're right, so many of them are exploring neo-trad! But it makes me really happy that this style is being valued and appreciated all around the globe.



Tell us a little about your early life in Spain.

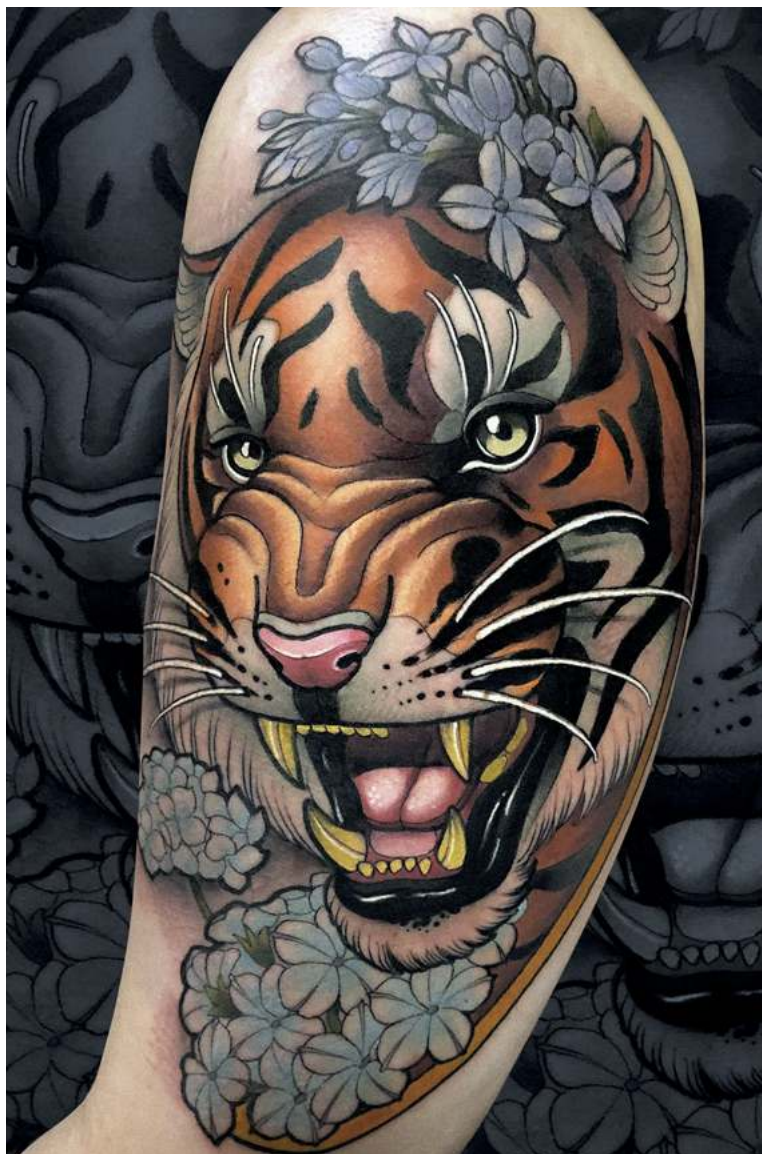
I was born in Girona in Catalonia. Salvador Dali's birthplace [Figueres] was nearby, and you can imagine what it was like as a kid being surrounded by his art. He was my first true creative inspiration; I guess in a way it was thanks to his influence that art has become my life. My interest in the tattoo field started when I was 18, when I got my first tattoo. This opened my eyes to a whole different world. I was instantly captivated. I moved to Madrid to study and pursue my dream of becoming a tattoo artist.

And then you relocated to America?

Yes. I lived and worked in Madrid for ten years, then 10 Thousand Foxes Tattoo in New York offered me the opportunity to turn one of my biggest dreams into a reality – and I found myself spreading the word about neo-trad tattooing in the United States! The style was still considered a novelty back then. Soon after, Soho Ink opened their doors to me too, and I joined their team. I'm so honoured and grateful to be part of these two outstanding studios.



'WE'VE BEEN USING SO MUCH DISPOSABLE PLASTIC IN THIS INDUSTRY IT'S INSANE!'



Tell us what neo-trad means to you.

I'm passionate about neo-traditional tattooing. It's my style! I've dedicated years to acquiring the knowledge, skills and techniques it takes to work this form. It's a genre with infinite layers and endless branches. I'll never stop learning. And I'll never stop following the path of my creative curiosity. There are so many aspects to master and so many sub-styles to discover. Mine is predominantly a classical version of neo-trad, combined with a nature-inspired earth-toned colour scheme. That said, I admire many other styles too, and I believe it's very important to learn from the amazing achievements of all those brilliant artists out there. I feel I'm closer than I've ever been to discovering my own individual way of doing things, but I'm sure I will continue to evolve.



Was neo-trad your chosen genre right from the start?

When I first began tattooing, I certainly had a sense of the aesthetic that I wanted to achieve, but in no way was I ready to work exclusively in my own style. So I took on any design that came my way, and that helped me to learn new techniques and skills. As artists we dream of attaining that nirvana where we will be working purely in the style we love, but I believe in reality our styles actually choose us. We tend to design what we feel comfortable with... and when you repeat the process numerous times, you automatically perfect that style.

Tell us about your key artistic influences.

My favourite thing to do as a kid was visiting museums and art galleries – it still is! – and this has definitely influenced my style. I've always

been fascinated by nature too. It's very hard for me to pick the artist or artists who have influenced me the most, but Dali stands out of course. His art really opened my mind. Growing up, I can remember being amazed by Rubens's colour technique and the softness of his paintings, and by Caravaggio's powerful chiaroscuro. Both of these artists are out of this world. They have shown me so much. Obviously Mucha, Klimt and many other Art Nouveau artists have influenced my neo-trad style, including my colour palette and my design approach in general. And there are so many others who have inspired me. The list is pretty long! Then of course there are all the talented tattoo artists I have met over the years – the people who inspired me to enter the trade, and who taught me to work hard and respect this art form.



Where do you source your reference material?

My absolute favourite way to find good reference material is to visit parks and botanical gardens. These are amazing places. I love taking photos of flowers to use in my tattoos. We all know the internet is full of images, but one of my hobbies is scouring flea markets and secondhand bookshops for old natural history books and interior design magazines. I can spend hours going through them to find inspiration and reference material. They're filled with hidden gems! Of course when the tattoo is based on the portrait of a pet, or a particular person, my main reference comes from the client. For these, I always ask for a well-lit photo with the best definition possible so that I don't miss any important details.

What are the particular challenges of neo-trad?

Every tattoo style has its own challenges. I would say the hardest part of neo-trad is the amount of time you have to put into mastering the various aspects of the design process – including composition, colour theory and all the visual details which are so crucial to a proper neo-traditional tattoo.





What makes a good client relationship?

Again, I would have to say communication and trust. I always like to explain how the tattoo process works so that my clients are fully aware of what will happen in our sessions. Keeping the lines of communication open is essential. My clients need to know they can tell me their thoughts and feelings at any time. I always enjoy learning about their vision for the tattoo and I ask a lot of questions to make sure I don't miss any important details. We go over the concept again and again, with the client giving me any necessary feedback, and it's only when all the ideas are in place that my creative process will begin. I definitely appreciate my client's trust during this phase of the process, as my artistic freedom is very important to me. I dedicate a lot of time to coming up with custom pieces that both of us will be happy with. I want my clients to show off their tattoos with pride, and to love them even more as the years go by. To have clients coming back for more, or bump into them and see them looking as happy with their tattoo as they did on the first day... well that means the world to us tattoo artists.

What makes a successful tattoo?

Dedication, passion and communication with the client. Those are the things you need for a successful tattoo. And it's important you create a safe place where you and your client can feel comfortable. A tattoo is a mixture of your client's ideas and your own personal taste. You both need to be able to trust in the creative process. As tattoo artists, we are asked to design unique pieces on a daily basis, which is why I believe it's also vital to invest time in learning. But if you have the passion and dedication, you will have no problem putting in the time and effort it takes to create a quality piece.

Talk us through a typical day in the studio.

I always try to get to the studio early so that I can set up my station and have everything perfect, then I run to get my beloved coffee! I like to have a little time to hang out with my co-workers before an appointment. When my client arrives, I show them the design, then try the stencil on. This is a significant moment for the client, because they get to see what the piece is actually going to look like on their body. When we are all set and the stencil is dry, I get to work. I like my clients to see it as a 'treat myself day', and I always recommend they wear comfy clothes and bring their favourite snacks and entertainment. During the tattooing process, we take as many breaks as necessary. Especially in a longer session, I always include food breaks and encourage the client to stretch and keep hydrated. When the session is complete, I go over the aftercare details and answer any questions my client may have. (I always like to keep the lines of communication open after the piece is finished too, in case my client has anything else they need to know - and of course it's great getting healed photos!) Then I have to hurry back home to get ready for my next piece...



What tattoo machines do you use?

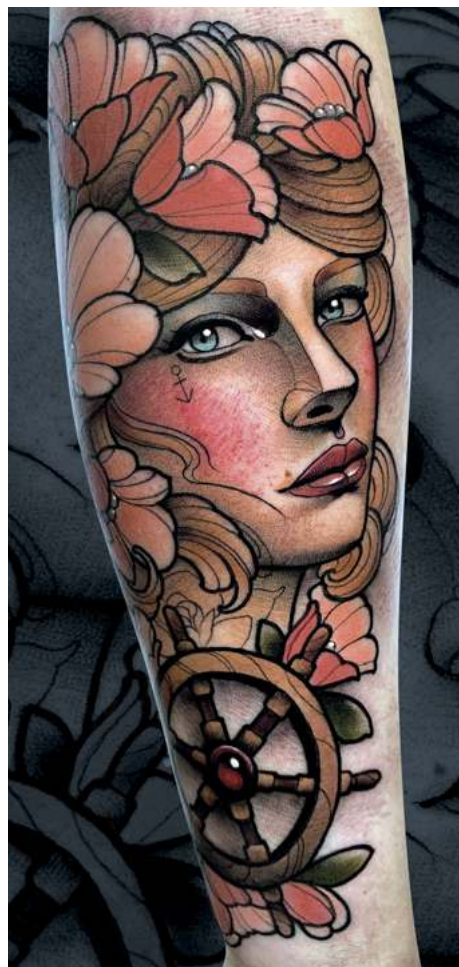
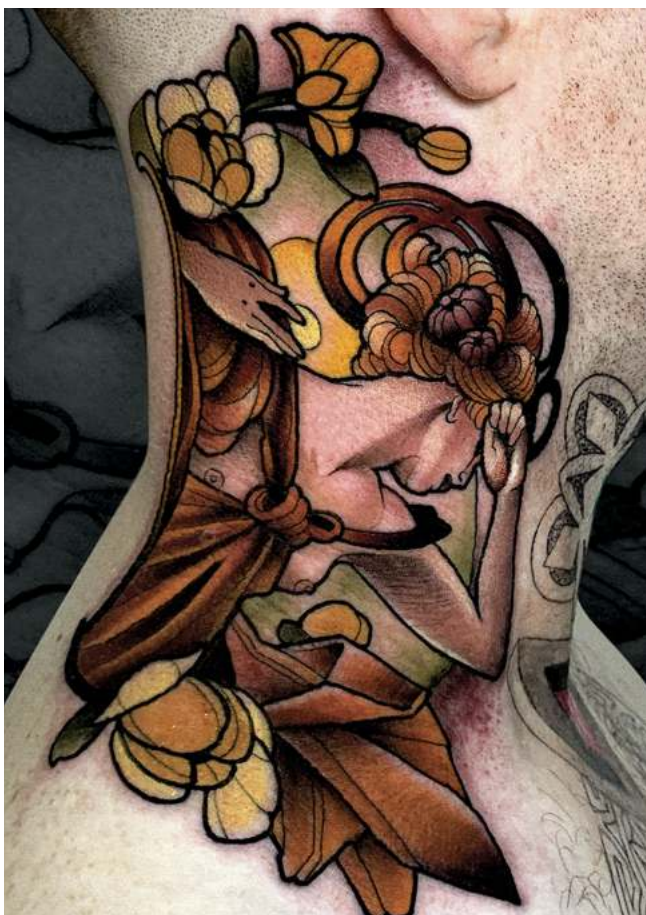
I'm obsessed with Dan Kubin rotary machines. I just can't get enough of them! They're hand-crafted, you have the option of working with or without cartridges, and they effortlessly create the kind of bold lines you get from a coil machine. They feel like they're in sync with your hand, and they make precise tattooing so much easier. A game changer!

You're a sponsored artist?

Yes, and I'm so grateful. I was first sponsored by the World Famous Ink Family. They're a truly awesome team of professionals with the most amazing selection of exceptional inks. Tattoo Fix Care also reached out to me, and as soon as I learnt that their products are cruelty free as well as being top quality, I was stoked to work with them too.

How do you see your work progressing?

Over the years that I've been tattooing in this style, I've gradually developed a more nature-inspired and classically neo-traditional approach. I love working on portrait pieces and animal pieces, with flowers, foliage and filigree design elements incorporated – with an organic feel, and all in my earthy colour palette. It's been a long journey to get here, but I feel I identify with this style. It's part of me now. I would certainly like to continue perfecting my technique. This is the way I see my work progressing. I want to keep challenging myself as an artist. We are so lucky to be living in an age when the options for learning are endless and I want to keep my mind open and my curiosity alive.





And what of the tattoo industry's future direction?

The most important thing is respect for the art form – and respect for the time and effort it takes to give of one's best as a tattooist. If you have this respect, it shows in your work. Nothing is more important. Regardless of how famous you are, or who sponsors you, every artist needs to have this respect for the profession and the dedication it demands. But there is something else of crucial importance that we really have to work on in this tattoo business. We've been using so much disposable plastic it's insane! We're starting to see biodegradable options now – thanks to a lot of hard work by a lot of people out there – but there's so much room for improvement. We all really have to be aware of this problem and do our best to change our strategy and move in a more environmentally conscious direction.

What do you do when you're not tattooing?

Usually I'm designing my upcoming pieces, but when I do get a bit of 'me time' I love playing video games. If I'm feeling creative, I relax by doing oil or acrylic painting, or trying out new art media. Or I'll visit an art museum. Art is my peaceful happy place.

Is travel important to you?

It's one of the best gifts life offers! Travelling makes you more open-minded. You discover new places, new cultures and new art forms – and anywhere you go, there is beauty just waiting to be found. When you find yourself in new surroundings, you also discover and learn so much about yourself. It's an amazing way to boost your creativity and open the door to new inspiration.

Which personal or professional achievements are you most proud of?

I'm very proud of all the effort I've put into improving my drawing skills. I still have a long way to go, but I'm happy that my work is progressing. Professionally, I was so proud when my work was recognised and I was given the opportunity to work in the United States. When that happened, it really felt like I'd achieved something amazing.



What would you say have been the pivotal points in your career?

My first tattoo conventions hold a very special place in my memory. I can't express how happy I was to be surrounded by so many brilliant neo-trad artists, and it was a real honour to be part of the events I had so long admired – like Barcelona, or Brighton (which was my very first overseas convention). But I think the main pivotal point in my career so far would have to be moving from Spain to New York. I wanted to step out of my comfort zone, grow, learn and be challenged, and also be respected as an artist. This all started to come true when I moved to this amazing city. Also, I had always wanted to learn English, and what better way to do that than in a place like this? New York radiates diversity and creativity. I love how the arts are appreciated and valued here, and I'm truly grateful for the way I've been instantly welcomed and embraced by the community.



How do people book in with you?

The best way to book in with me is via email. It's the most practical way for me to keep track of all the important details and, because I'm still learning English, it's the easiest way for me to communicate.

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IF I COULD TURN BACK TIME

BY ALICE SNAPE

There are many reasons for having an unfinished tattoo. Maybe you've fallen out with the artist, or they've moved away, or perhaps your tattoo was badly executed and you couldn't bear to continue – but is it ever really okay to get another tattooer to complete

I look at my back in the mirror. I try not to regret the huge tattoo that travels from my neck right down to my bum. That butterfly lady now looks at me, mocking. I wish I could rewind to that time, pre-tattoo, when my back was bare. Tell myself to wait. The tattoo reminds me of the tattoo artist I would rather forget. But I CAN'T forget whose hands my tattoo is by, the hours I spent under his needle, and how I felt bullied into getting it in the first place.

I started getting tattooed when I was 22, later than most. I was

always overthinking, worrying about what I wanted, where it should go, and who should do it. Since I started writing about tattoos, apparently I have become an expert on them – I have presented documentaries and I even edited a tattoo magazine for three years (*Things & Ink*) – yet I still made a mistake. The advice I gave to others, I didn't follow myself. The back is that huge piece of canvas that shouldn't be wasted... or so I tell people. It is prime real estate for a custom piece of art by a tattoo artist that you love, whose work you will forever wear with pride.



However, somehow a quick initial chat about possible ideas with a tattoo artist accelerated at a rapid pace and before I knew it I was booked in for a backpiece. I travelled all the way to Berlin for my first session. After an epic eight hours of linework, my flight home was agony. And something else about the whole experience didn't feel right. I went with it anyway, ignoring that nagging feeling in my stomach. But then every time the artist messaged me about a follow-up appointment, I felt trapped. I no longer felt at all comfortable. It was because of what he had said, in my presence, about other girls' bodies. Talking about their "saggy tits", while tattooing my bum. I felt so vulnerable and exposed. And it made me wonder what he might be saying to other people about MY body... It got to the point where I couldn't bear the thought of spending even an hour being tattooed by him.

After a couple of particularly antagonistic emails, communication between us ceased. I'd had a total of three sessions with the artist, and although the linework was mostly done and the shading started, it was nowhere near complete. That huge unfinished tattoo haunted me for years. At times I could forget it was there. But then I'd catch a glimpse of it while at the gym or naked as I stepped out of the shower. The tattoo I was supposed to love the most was mocking me.

So I called on my friend Google. I wanted to know, is it okay to get a tattoo finished by someone else? What is the protocol and the etiquette? I typed in "getting a tattoo finished by another artist" and immediately fell down a Reddit hole, then stumbled across a film with different tattooists talking about the "tattooists' moral code". "For me, it's disrespectful to the artist," said tattooist Jess Yen. "Out of respect, I don't like to finish someone's work." And Phil Garcia agrees that you must get permission from the tattoo artist who started it. "A tattoo artist puts their heart and soul into it, and if someone else finishes it, it's just fucked up."

So at first, I approached the idea of someone else finishing my back with trepidation. Then a year or so after I first started the journey, artist Antony Flemming offered to complete the tattoo for me and we did a couple of sessions. But although he fixed her flyaway hair and added some colour to the monarch butterflies, my heart and my head weren't in it anymore.

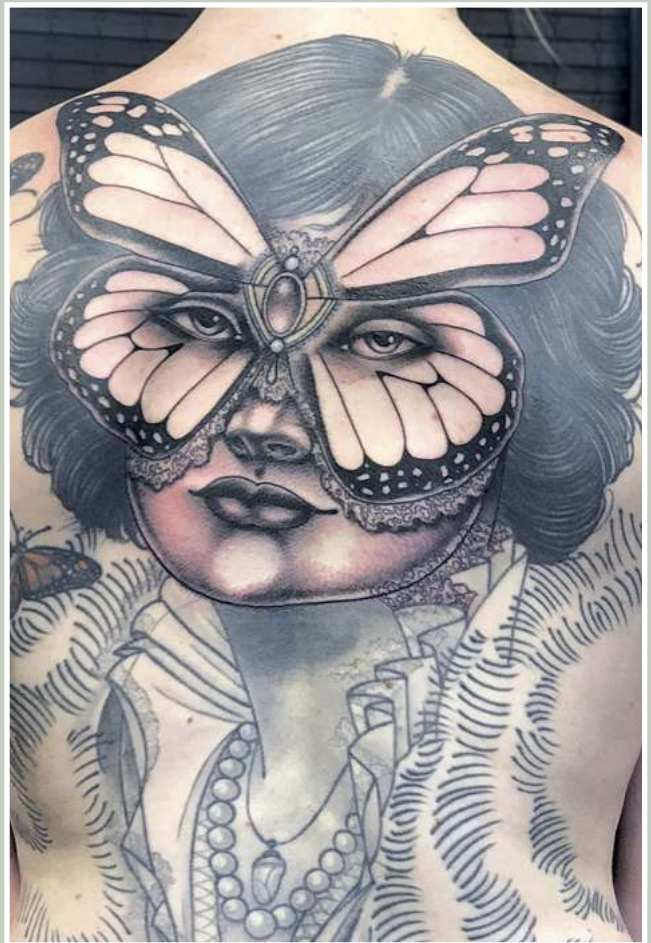
I was still mulling over the issue: Who owns the tattoo? And is it really okay for someone else to finish a piece started by the hand of another? Antony shared his own experience with me. "I've been there too with my backpiece. I ended up feeling incredibly uncomfortable getting tattooed by the artist. A few different things happened and I didn't really want to get it finished by them. It's a real shame as the tattoo is beautiful - and it's something I was so excited about at the start - but now I really don't like talking about it. To the point where I've been recently thinking about getting it blasted over." It was reassuring to hear Antony talking about the importance of feeling comfortable with your chosen artist. "Your artist plays a huge role in the tattoo, even after it's finished. Knowing this makes me take extra care in how I treat my customers. I want to make the experience the best it can be." He then continued, "If you feel uncomfortable with your artist, you shouldn't feel obliged to carry on getting tattooed by them. It's your tattoo and your body." In a way, it gives me comfort that others

have been there too - started huge tattoos by someone they perhaps wish they hadn't. Tattoo artist Myra Brodsky started getting tattooed by that same artist as me, in Berlin in 2015. She had 10 sessions with him. "Then he moved to Birmingham. My backpiece was only halfway done. I did not know he was planning on moving. He never told me when we started. I wasn't prepared to travel to Birmingham to get tattooed. He didn't even stay there for long. A few months later he moved to California, then to France. It was literally impossible to get the tattoo finished by him. In the beginning, he was very nice to me. But after a couple sessions he turned into a miserable nervous wreck. While I was getting tattooed I listened to his problems and soon he would take things out on me." Myra still likes the design and placement of the piece, but is now looking for someone else to finish it for her.





While I was getting tattooed by Dolly at No Friends Tattoo Club in Brighton the other week, she told me she too had to stop a huge backpiece. It happened after just two sessions due to the artist's shockingly unacceptable behaviour towards her. "Everything was okay during the first session, but during the second he climbed on top of me and tried to finger me while he was tattooing me. I yelled at him, gave him no money, left and cried. Now every time I look at the tattoo, it makes me angry. I went to him to get his best work; I didn't get that as he was clearly distracted. I work in the industry, so I am lucky I have tattooer friends who will finish it for me." She advises anyone in this position to seek out someone else to finish the piece, no matter how near completion the piece might be. "If someone comes to me with an unfinished tattoo that holds bad feelings, I always go the extra mile to try to change that for them. That's why, if I'm taking on someone else's work, I always ask why. You can change your perspective on a tattoo if you work with a new tattooist to help you reclaim it. It's like going back to a city that holds bad memories." Dolly then adds, "The client should never be made to feel like it's a privilege to get tattooed by someone."



What Dolly said really got me thinking. As customers, we're often made to feel that the tattoo artist's vision is sacred, that it would be sacrilege to get someone else to take over. But where does our own bodily autonomy count in that? After all, it's a tattoo on a body – YOUR body. A tattoo that is paid for by YOU. Guen Douglas (of Taiko Gallery in Berlin) gives me her take on the dilemma. "At first I was apprehensive [about working on tattoos by other people] because I had a really traditional apprenticeship and was taught that you should never touch someone else's work. But the more I thought about body autonomy, the more I realised that the tattoo on the body of the client is owned by the client. No one else owns it. If you buy a beautiful expensive handmade vase and decide to doodle all over it, take chips out of it or just smash it, the ceramicist is allowed to be sad that you've ruined his or her work – but ultimately it's been paid for by you and belongs to you. You can do what you want with it."

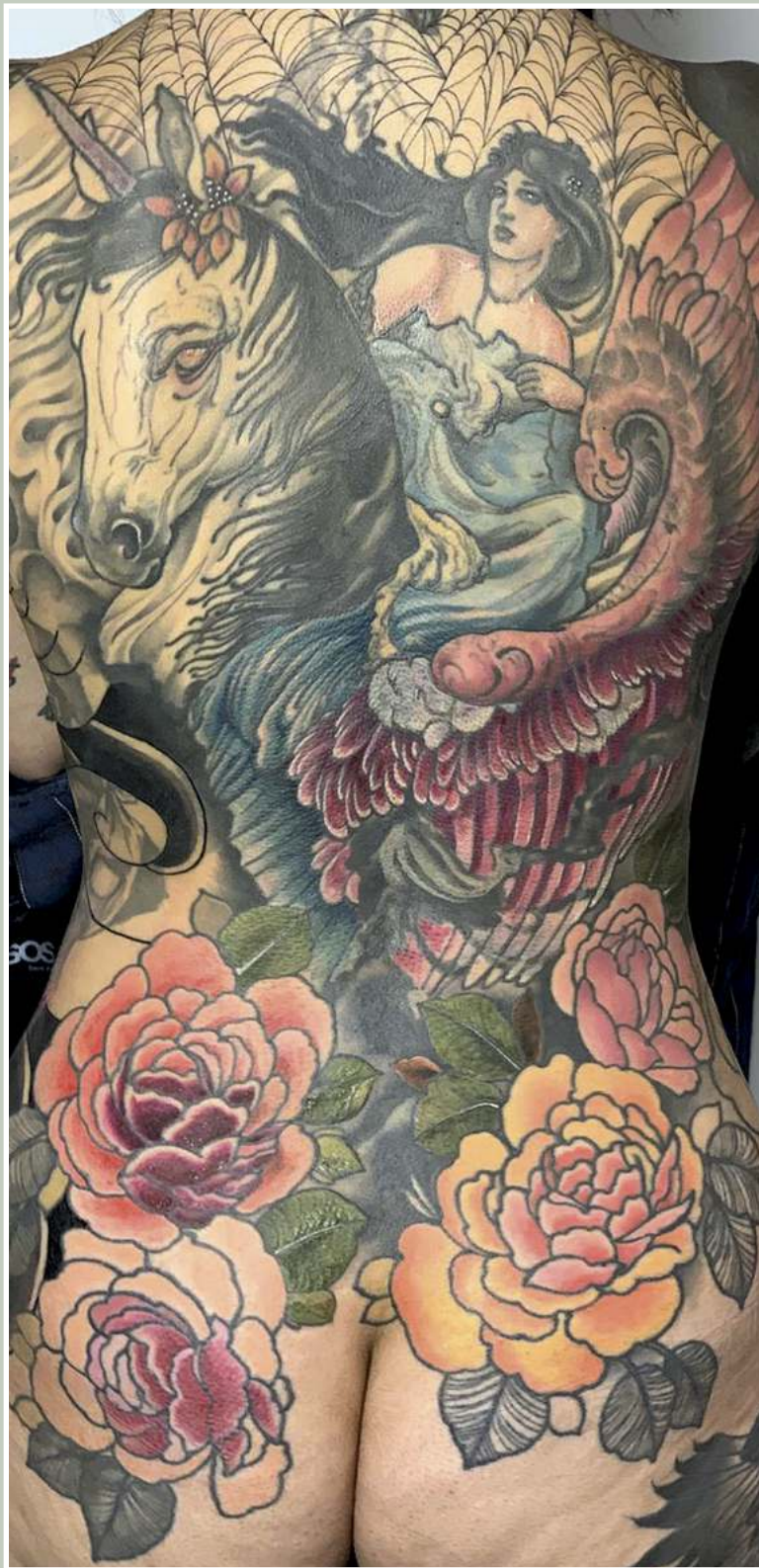
"With the rise of the black out bodysuit," Guen continues, "I remember the first time I saw a client had blacked out a small piece of mine. I was really hurt at first, then I realised I have my photo, I was paid for my work. Surely I wouldn't prevent a client from evolving and transforming [their tattoos] in a way that makes them happy."

And now, I finally feel ready to embark on my journey again – galvanised by the words of tattoo artists I admire and respect. I want to turn my backpiece around. I want to own it all over again. Fall in love with it once more. Believe it when people tell me how beautiful it is. And work with someone I trust implicitly. So I

met tattoo artist Tracy D (who works at Modern Classic in west London) to chat about it. She has tattooed me three times already. She's gentle and understanding and I adore her style. "There are always two sides to a story," she told me, "but at the end of the day it's so unfortunate when there's an unfinished piece. I know how hard it is for me to look at an



Dolly's backpiece



incomplete piece on my own body between sessions, so I can't imagine how it would be to have an unfinished tattoo with no end in sight." And so she agreed to take the reins, and bring my butterfly lady back to life. We are now one session down, and she has worked magic already. The face has been reworked. And over the coming months, we will add more butterflies and some colour.

I am excited again. I am motivated to get my backpiece finished, to work with Tracy on our shared vision. Please follow my progress on Instagram @alicecsnape. I was overjoyed to see everyone's comments after my first session, and so many people messaged to say they'd been in a similar situation and didn't know what to do. If that's you, know that you are not alone. Get the tattoo you want, by the person you want to do it. Reclaim something that has bad memories. Never, ever, feel like you must continue with an artist you're not happy with. You are the customer and the customer - as they say - is always right. Especially when it involves YOUR body.

END NOTE:

I contacted the artist who had begun my tattoo and told him I was writing this piece. He declined the invitation to contribute his point of view, but said he has no hard feelings and wishes me the best with my journey.

Interview by Perry • Pictures courtesy of Stef Bastian

THE TATTOO FAN CLUB

STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS



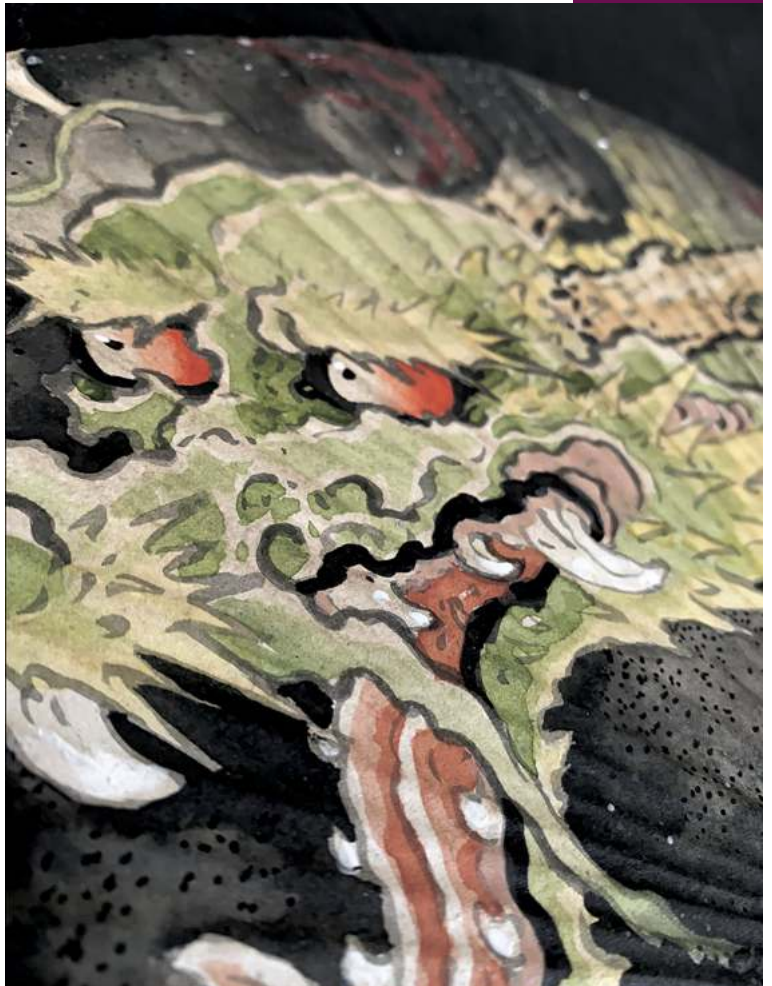
At last year's London Tattoo convention we were treated to Stef Bastian's incredible exhibition of Matryoshkas (nesting dolls) individually decorated by a selection of world class tattooists. Stef is back this year with a new and even bigger exhibition. This time he's chosen the traditional Japanese fan, or Uchiwa, as the vehicle for participating artists to express their creativity. The theme is 'Standing on the Shoulders of Giants', and each artist is being asked to use their design to celebrate a tattooist of their choice – someone they feel has been in a key influence in the development of modern tattooing. More than 200 tattooists will be taking part. We chatted to Stef in advance of the show.

What inspired you to put the exhibition together?

As a follow-up to last year's 'March Of The Matryoshkas' I wanted to dig deeper into that collective creative energy and expand the concept. Exploring unfamiliar media challenges the artists to create unique and original pieces, and of course the project as a whole has a wider purpose too, with its charity fundraising mission. I always enjoy the way a concept evolves. You always know where you start, but you never know where you're going to end up. That's the beauty of the process.

What was the thinking behind the theme, 'Standing on the Shoulders of Giants'?

In my travels I often meet young artists who seem to be unaware of our tattoo heritage, and even our modern history. They often have no knowledge of the tattooists who built modern tattooing - those who gave us today's techniques and design concepts. I felt the need to share my own knowledge and that of my experienced colleagues, because it's only through developing this kind of awareness that you can truly appreciate our profession and adopt a more mindful approach, which in turn leads to helping the whole business grow, rather than everyone just being in it for personal reward.





Why did you decide to use fans this time?

The decision regarding the medium is always a last-minute one! In fact it's not really a conscious decision at all. It just comes to me. At some point something clicks and it just feels right.

What was the brief that you gave the artists?

I always try to give the artists a minimal brief so they can maximise their creativity. In terms of how to approach and interpret the subject, they have complete freedom. Obviously I have to set a deadline for practical reasons, and I also give an outline of the project's overall concept, but I only give more detailed instructions if someone requests this from me.





Talk us through your personal process for a project such as this.

First I make sure that my motivation is coming from the right place. I question my reasons for doing the project. If I feel I'm doing it for the money, or for the recognition, then I stop, step back from the whole thing, and re-think. Once I feel happy to go ahead, I brainstorm with the help of some good friends and get the basic concept down. I then select a list of potential participants who fit the criteria of the concept, trying to include a mix of styles representing the whole industry, and invite them to take part (it's by invitation only). When the artists are confirmed I get into the practical details like acquiring the materials, arranging the venue, shipping, promotion, sponsors, etc. With everything defined and organised, all that's left is the many hours of work to bring it to fruition.

Has The Tattoo Fan Club lived up to your expectations?

It's far exceeded them! The generosity, creativity and professionalism of the artists has been incredible. I feel blessed, coordinating such a group. It's been the same feeling for every other aspect of the project. In terms of PR and promotion, everyone I've spoken to has really resonated with the idea and done their best to help spread awareness, which I've really appreciated. Miki Vialletto has been very tuned-in to the idea, helping in every way he could. As sponsors, Dermalize and Aurora Tattoo have been very generous in helping making it all possible. The public are already showing enormous interest in this year's concept, and I'm sure the auction will be a success.





Do you have any particular favourite fans?

We had so many new artists this year, which made me very happy. It's almost impossible to choose favourites as they've all blown my mind. But if I had to name a few, I guess it would be the fans by Cassandra Frances, Caterina Molin, Horimitsu, Dean from Sacred Tattoo, Vlady... I could go on!

Tell us what happens to the fans once the exhibition is over.

Throughout the exhibition, and for a week afterwards, I will be conducting an online auction on stefbastian.com (check out the project's Instagram page [@stef_bastian_presents](https://www.instagram.com/stef_bastian_presents)) where people all over the world can bid to acquire the fans. All the profits from this auction will be donated to Operation Underground Railroad (ourrescue.org), an association that actively fights child sex slavery across the world. Last year's 'March of the Matryoshkas' raised £15,000 for Save The Children. The response of the public was amazing.



Do you have plans for a follow-up project next year?

I do, but it's a secret!

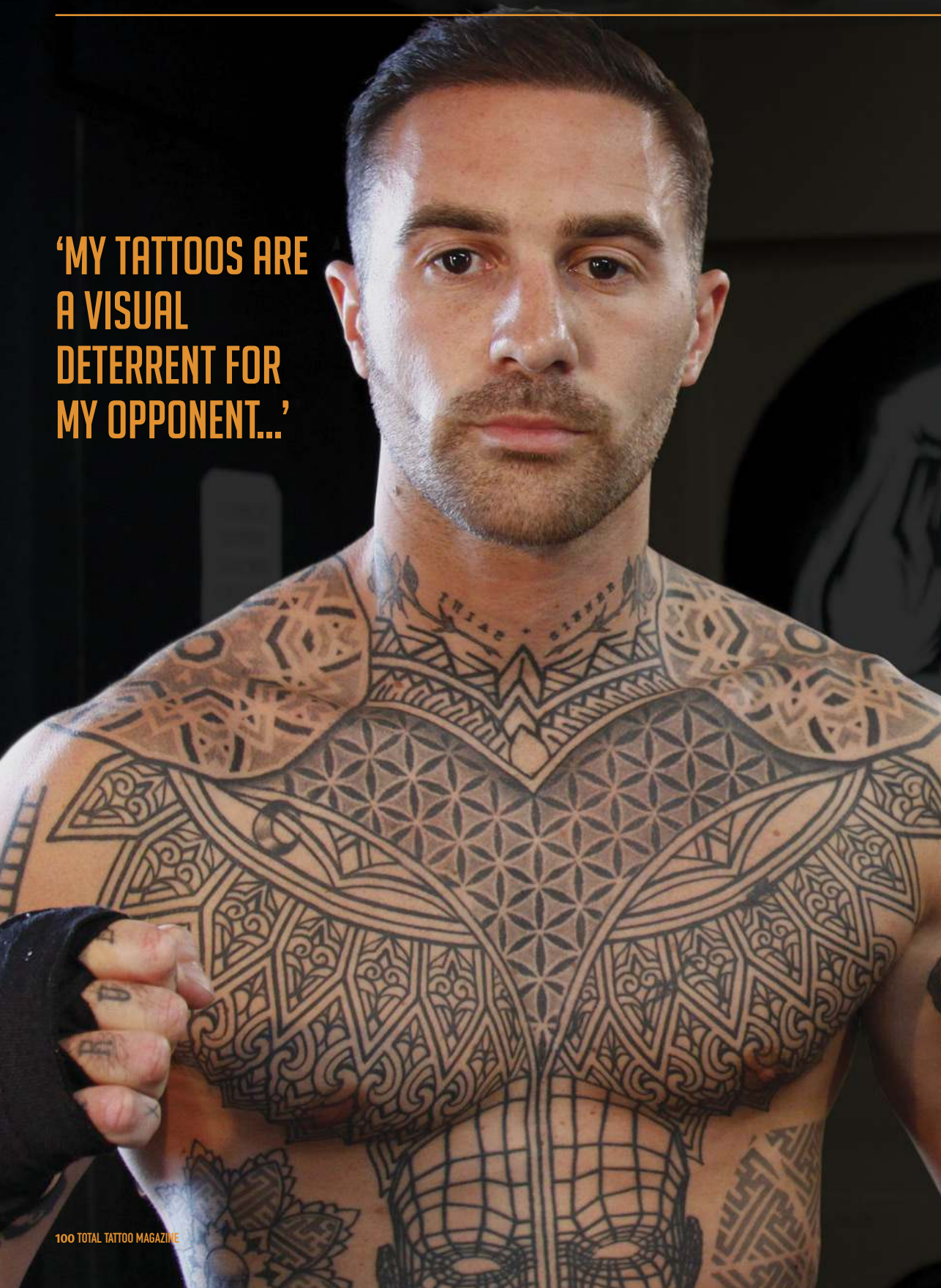
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**'MY TATTOOS ARE
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JACK DEMPSEY EWBANK

Interview and pictures by Perry

Every now and then we like to interview a tattooed individual with an interesting story to tell – someone like boxer

Jack Dempsey Ewbank.

Many people describe their tattoos as a kind of visual armour. For Jack, as a boxer, this has an extra dimension to it. "I hope they're a bit of a visual deterrent for my opponent!" he tells me.

"My tattoos make me stand out in the ring," he continues. "They make my body more visually interesting. And they kind of represent both sides of my personality – the vicious side that will happily go to war, and the more refined gentleman who can actually be quite elegant and eloquent."



I ask Jack where and when he got his first ink. "I was 21 and living in Australia at the time. I was losing my hair... and I was like, fuck this. All my mates had great hair and no tattoos, so I just thought sod it, I'm getting tattooed. I went into Bondi Ink and got my first one – a pin-up girl from the wall. Then I started looking into tattoo history, and different tattoo styles, and I got some ink from a guy called Rudy Mcdash. And then when I returned to the UK I really started to get myself filled up! All my front and back are geometric black work, but my arms are really quite prison style / stamp work. I like the fact that it's quite raw. I'm not looking for perfection. I prefer the slightly imperfect. And tattoos are so much more socially accepted these days. It's a really good time to have them."



Most of Jack's later tattoos have been done by Louie Derazza (Council Estate Tattoo). They hit it off straight away and have become best friends. Jack has even become godfather to Louie's baby son. "I've met so many great people through tattooing," Jack tells me. "Tattooists are so open-minded and easy-going. Yeah, me and Louie are good mates. And Kieran Williams did my chest. He's amazing. He freehanded most of it. He's a special talent."

Our conversation turns to Jack's career as a boxer, where he's really starting to make a name for himself. "I came quite late to boxing," he tells me. "I began when I was 15. I lived with my Nan when I was growing up, and her twin

brother was a professional fighter. My uncle was a pro fighter too, so it was in the blood. It came naturally to me."

But Jack was happy just to hang out in the gym to start with. He told me he always felt he had too many nerves to conquer. In fact he didn't really start boxing seriously in the ring until he was 23. "It was definitely a confidence thing. I knew I was good. I was sparring with top fighters but I just didn't want the attention you get when you're in the spotlight. Then I realised I was doing myself an injustice and I decided to go for it."

In his first year Jack made it to the National finals and in his

first 20 fights won 15 outright. Nine months ago he turned professional and he's won all three of his fights to date. "I signed to MTK, who are a big global boxing brand," he tells me. "They represent Tyson Fury and Billy Joe Saunders. Just to be in the same camp as those guys is a massive honour for me."

Luck has a part to play in most things and Jack feels that being in the right place at the right time has really helped to push him forward. "Rumbles Boxing Academy in Sittingbourne, Kent, had a lot of fighters turning professional and being there meant I got spotted and given a shot. But if I hadn't had the credentials to follow it up I wouldn't have made it. If my trainer Billy hadn't thought I was



ready, they would have held me back. I know I have the ability and now I have the drive to go with it."

Jack is in the welterweight category which means he has to remain below 66.7 kilos to fight. "I walk around at about 68 kilos, so I don't have to drop much for a fight. Diet is obviously really important, but you can also do a weight cut by wearing a sweat suit and skipping it off in the last few days before a fight. It's all very scientific. You need to get the protein-to-carb ratios right. You also have to keep the water levels down at the correct time, but not so much that it affects your ability focus. There's a lot of fluid around the brain that acts as a natural shock absorber, so if you dehydrate, it can be a problem. It's all amazingly complex. On the run-in to fight week there are a lot

of very grumpy fighters in the gym!"

I ask Jack to explain the process of moving up through the ranks to get to the bigger fights. "With MTK, because they are a good outfit, they will guide you in the right direction and work with you to get you the best fights. We need to get the right opponent at the right time to move up the rankings and plot a route through to the titles. We start at four rounds and move on to six. Then we progress to the title fights – and that's what I'd like to be looking at next year. It's all about strategy, and timing it right, and me getting my body right with food and training." It really is a team effort between management, trainers and promoters, with Jack at the centre, involved in all the decisions.

Jack trains twice a day when he is in camp. In addition he is a personal boxing coach to other fighters, which makes him some much-needed extra cash on the side. "I'm always happy to work, and the coaching keeps me in the gym which is where I want to be," he tells me.



I ask Jack whether boxing is a profitable career choice. "At this early stage it's an investment that you're making. We're on ticket deals, which means that if we don't sell tickets to our fights we don't earn any money. But we still need to pay the opponent – which can be £1200 for a four-round fight or £1600 for a six-round fight. That's just the way it is at this level. You have to really want it! You don't make any money and you have to have a job to do alongside your training. But if you progress, and the belief is there, and others believe in you too, you make that choice to go for it. I feel I'm investing in myself, because I believe in myself and I believe that I will go a long way. If I didn't, I would never have made the leap."

It can be a rigorous and punishing lifestyle, and Jack knows the vital importance of looking after himself. A typical day starts at around 5am with strength and conditioning training. Then he'll do a couple of coaching sessions for other boxers before doing more of his own training. But in the middle of the day he'll come home to rest. "You really need to rest as much as you can," he explains, "because you can get run down quickly when you are really working your body. There's a limit to what you can do, and if you ignore your body and the signs it gives you, you'll start doing more damage than good. You need to stay fit to train. It's no good breaking your body and not being able to train."

"Ninety percent of it takes place in your head," he continues. "It's the fight 'upstairs'. That's the crucial thing. You have to really live this life. If you want it bad enough, you give up everything else for it. That's why I dedicate my whole time to boxing. I know I'll only get this one chance."

"My tattoos have helped me massively, especially in the boxing ring. They're a real confidence boost for me. I never really planned them, but I couldn't live without them!"

[instagram.com/jack.dempsey.ewbank](https://www.instagram.com/jack.dempsey.ewbank)





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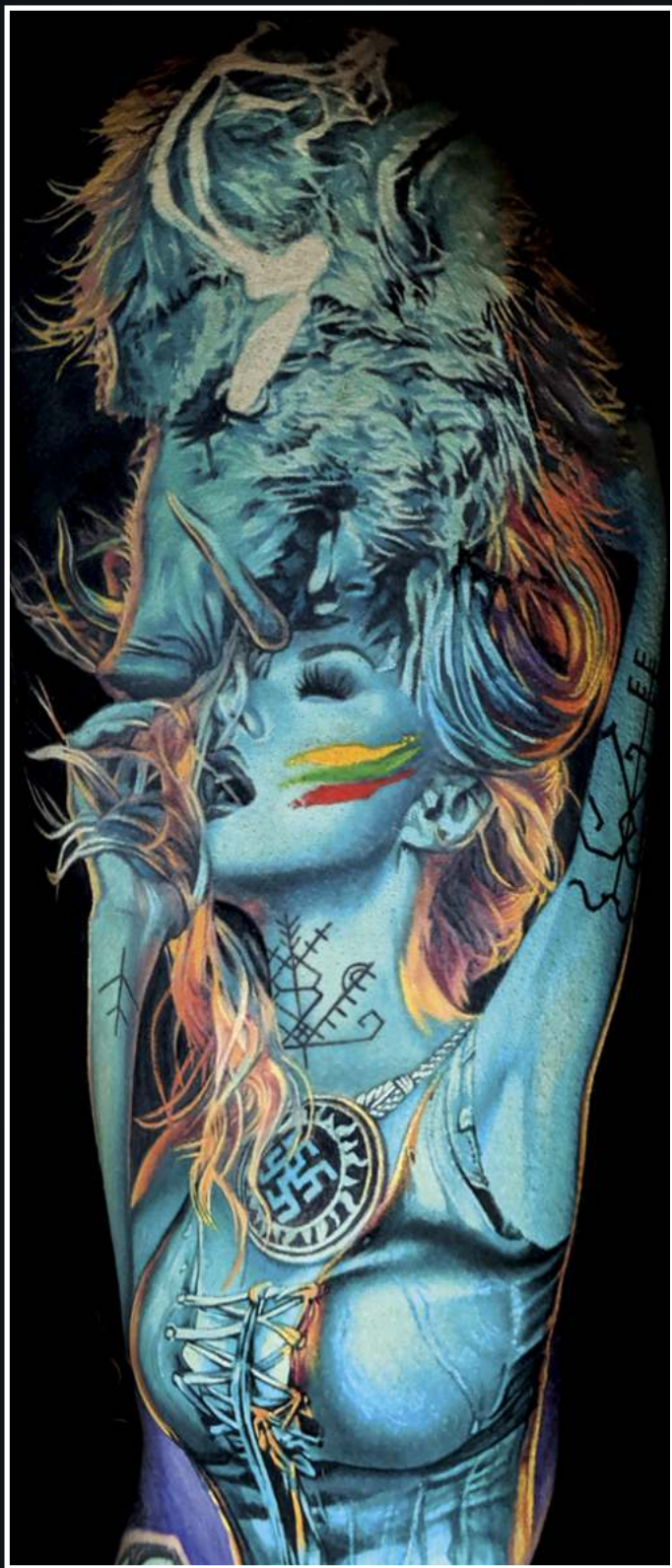
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**'IF YOU CAN'T DRAW,
YOU CAN'T CALL
YOURSELF A TATTOO
ARTIST.'**



'THE MORE DETAIL THE BETTER. I LOVE A BEARD OR LOTS OF HAIR.'

JURGIS MIKALAUSKAS

Jurgis Mikalauskas is internationally known for his incredible colour realism. Entirely self-taught, he has quietly established himself as one of the finest artists working today, and his portraits and fantasy designs have gained him attention at the very highest levels. He moved to the UK from his native Lithuania in 2010.

Ink Island is the studio that Jurgis set up in Peterborough, 80 miles north of London. But why Peterborough? "My cousin was already there," he explains. "It's as simple as that. And over the years I've realised that it was actually a very good move. Peterborough has great transport links (it's around an hour from London by train) and rents are reasonable. Stansted Airport is within easy reach so clients can fly in from all over Europe. I see a lot of great young artists struggling to keep busy at the moment, but this location works really well for me."





**'IT'S EASY TO DO IT WRONG.
IT'S NOT SO EASY TO GET IT
RIGHT.'**

Ten years ago, back in Lithuania, Jurgis was painting portraits in oils on canvas. He originally planned to come to England to pursue this as a profession, but when he got here he soon realised there wouldn't be enough demand for his work. So he bought a cheap tattoo kit from eBay instead. "I'd first tried tattooing when I was 17. I had a homemade machine (made from a pen) but that was just for fun – to see how it was done. In England, I bought a proper machine and tried to get an apprenticeship, but obviously no one wanted to know, so I had to set up on my own. I bought CDs and magazines, I looked at YouTube, anywhere I could get information. There's so much out there. You just have to look. I started practicing on my wife... although she's since had most of it lasered off! I was lucky that I had a lot of friends who wanted to get tattooed. Everyone knew I was good at drawing and they trusted me. And of course I had an understanding of colour and light from my portrait painting."





"When I look at the early tattoos I did, and see what I can do now... well, there's no comparison," Jurgis tells me. "I found it very difficult at first because with drawing you can rub it out, and with painting you can scrape it off or paint it over, but there's no such thing as an eraser for the skin. You need to get a tattoo *right*. You need to be precise. You need to know how deep to go, how quick to move the machine, which needles to use and which inks work best. There's so much to learn. If I'd known how much time and effort would be involved, I would never have done it. Maybe it would have been different if someone had taught me. That probably would have saved me at least five years of struggling!" Jurgis tells me he cannot emphasise strongly enough the need for a proper apprenticeship.



'I WON'T GET TATTOOED JUST TO LOOK COOL. TATTOOS ARE ART.'

But he's also very philosophical about his lack of formal art education. "The art school said I had no talent, and I'm actually very grateful for that now because it was a giant kick in the arse. It made me determined, and I really had to look at what I was doing and see where I was going wrong. It felt shit at the time, but it gave me a good perspective and I realised I had a lot to do if I was going to succeed in any field of art."

I ask Jurgis if he feels it's still important for a tattooist to be able to draw. "It's mandatory!" he says. "You cannot call yourself a tattooist if you can't draw. It's as simple as that. But 70% of the tattooists I know can't draw! If you do traditional and you trace designs off a wall, OK, you may well be able to survive – but there's no soul to that. It's not challenging, and it's not pushing the art forward. That's the difference between a tattooist and a tattoo artist."

Coming up with original designs is a big part of Jurgis's work. "I try so hard to find unique images," he tells me, "rather than tattooing the same ones that have been done a thousand times before. Nowadays if you find a great image and you tattoo it, within three days you'll see copies of your tattoo all over Pinterest."

It's hard to be original and stay ahead of the game. But my customers often bring ideas that I would never come up with myself. Tattooists should always listen to their customers. The old saying is true. The customer is always right!"

"I work from photographs a lot of the time," Jurgis continues, "and I cut and blend them in Photoshop, boosting the images to make them super-saturated. I draw additional elements using the digital pen. 70% of what I do is realism; 30% is creating the narrative of the tattoo, adding elements that will bring everything together into a finished piece. I know people think that realism is simply copying an



image, but it takes a long time to copy an image well – knowing how to blend colours, for example, and how to build up shadows to give it form. It's easy to do it wrong; it's not so easy to get it right."

For Jurgis the creation of the stencil is key to the success of the tattoo. He tells me he likes to prepare the stencil the night before to allow him time to "soak up the atmosphere" of the design. The more complex the stencil, the less he will need to study the original image. "A good stencil can show me a clear path to the finished piece – where the dark and light areas go, and so on. Over the years I've learnt to see the stencil in a different way. It's like a matrix. I can see clearly what needs to happen, even if to the untrained eye it's just a blurry blue blob. Putting all the information into the stencil stops me being lazy. I can't leave any vital details out. And that's what makes the difference. Everything is in the detail. It also saves me time and stress. I don't have any set method for working – sometimes I work from dark to light, sometimes I build up the shaded areas first, and



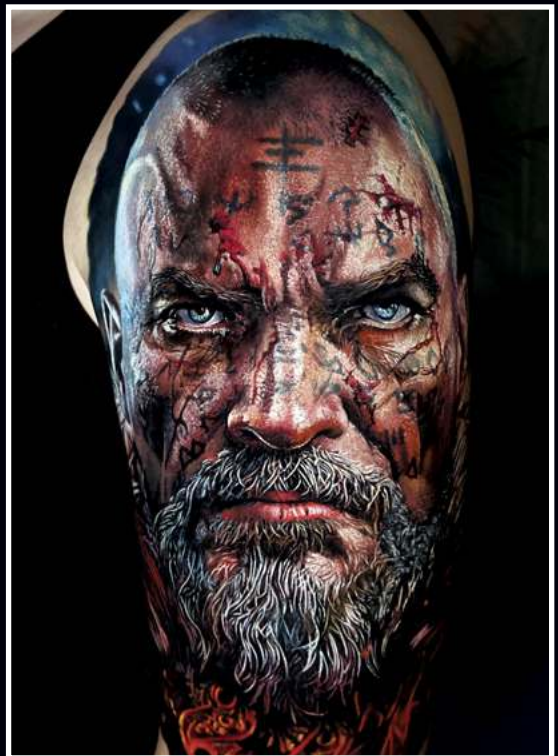


sometimes I just work from the bottom up, it all depends on my mood – but stencils stay so well now, you can work from any direction.”

To produce a piece of tattoo art at this level requires enormous patience. “I use at least 30 colours for every tattoo and I spend a lot of time getting every blend right. It can take ages. Some tattooists start reaching for the big magnums and blasting large areas after three or four hours. But I stick with the same small groupings throughout, which is why my work has so much detail. I always use bright, vibrant colours for maximum longevity and I oversaturate to allow for a subtle fade-back.”

“For me, the more detail the better,” Jurgis continues. “I love a beard or lots of hair! I would hate to do traditional tattoos. I would hate to keep doing the same images again and again. It's the same with large scale black and grey. Doing a large greyscale graduation is so boring...”

Of all the pieces that Jurgis has done, his beautiful otter and fish tattoo is one of his favourites. “I love that piece. It makes me smile every time. I've also just finished a backpiece that I'm very proud of. Generally though, I don't like looking at my work. Even the recent stuff. I'm never satisfied with it. But I think this pushes me to keep moving forward. If I'd been happy with my dodgy linework years ago, I'd still be doing dodgy linework today!”



"I really want to do more large-scale pieces," Jurgis continues. "I always try to push my clients to go large. But I'm happy to do portraits of any size. For me, the greatest compliment is when a customer looks at the finished tattoo and says, 'It's just like the photo'. That's a thrilling feeling."

Our conversation moves on to technical developments in tattooing. "There have been so many improvements," says Jurgis. "The inks stay so bright now, the needles are so sharp, and the machines are so positive there is minimal skin trauma. Minimum damage, maximum saturation. It's such a great time to be tattooing." I ask Jurgis if he feels the industry has reached a pinnacle in terms of its technological evolution. "No way! There's so much technology coming into our industry – robots tattooing perfect circles for instance. And I'm pretty happy about that. Leave the art to the artists and let the machines do all the other stuff! No more shitty infinity symbols!"

Jurgis is also conscious of the environmental impact of the tattoo industry. "In 40 years time when our children ask us, 'What did you do to help save the planet?', what are we going to say? We can all do something, even if it's something small. I'm using the new Quantum inks by Sea Shepherd [the international non-profit marine wildlife conservation organisation, seashepherd.org] and I'd be happy to do more with those guys."



Earlier in the day I noticed that Jurgis was using an interesting looking wireless power pack strapped to his arm. I asked who had manufactured this. His reply surprised me. "Me! I wanted something light and powerful with no cords, but when I checked the prices I thought shit, I could make one much cheaper. It cost about £40 to build and I made it in one night. I used to fix hi-fi systems when I was young, so I know how to solder and wire things up. It's easy to do when you know how. Just like tattooing!" he laughs. "Sometimes it's better to make something for yourself and not just keep buying new stuff."

Jurgis tells me he has never done a guest spot and has never had guests at his own studio either. "I'm too busy to take time out and work somewhere else," he explains, "and my studio is too small to offer space to a guest artist. Plus, there are so many studios offering places, it's not something I feel the need to do." But he very much enjoys working conventions. "I love seeing all the different tattooists doing so much interesting stuff. There are so many conventions going on. The tattoo world is a giant art fest that's happening every single weekend, in all sorts of beautiful places. It's incredible and I love it." We talk about the cynicism that exists in some quarters. "I remember looking at the work of fantasy artists such as Boris Vallejo when I was younger. I still think he's amazing. When tattooists get fed up with what's happening in tattooing, they need to look at the work of artists like him and be reminded of how great the creative world is."





Having established himself in the UK, Jurgis now has plans to move back to Lithuania. "I will keep the studio in Peterborough, and come back often to work, but the tattoo scene in Lithuania is now so much better than it used to be. Ten years ago there weren't many shops and people looked at you like you were a criminal if you had any ink, but now you can have tattoos and no one really cares."

"I thought about going to America," Jurgis continues. "The money is phenomenal there, and I could have a very good lifestyle, but all that American political bullshit... that's not for me. Lately I've been thinking about my home country a lot, which is why I've decided to go back. Ten years is long enough to be away. I'm really grateful that I've been able to learn so much, and I feel kind of obligated to go back to Lithuania and share my knowledge - maybe by doing seminars or setting up a small tattoo school. I'm very much in favour of education. Nobody helped me when I was learning to tattoo and I know how that felt. You can't take all this knowledge to the grave. Sharing it is the way to keep our art growing."



My final question to Jurgis is about his own tattoos. He's got so few of them! "Yes, that's the problem when you work in the industry. You get to see so many great tattoos, and that makes it very hard to decide what you want and who you want to do it. I won't get tattooed just to look cool - but tattoos don't need to have deep meanings either. They simply need to look good. Tattooing isn't some underground outsider criminal shit. It isn't social commentary either. It's art."

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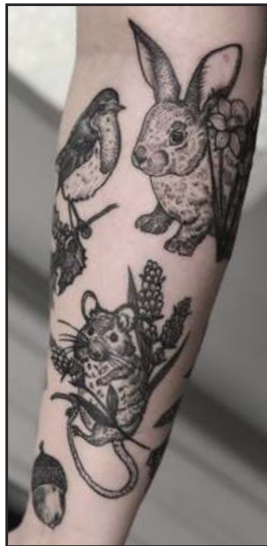
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Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5EF
Tel no: 0191 221 0328
low@northsidetattooz.co.uk
www.northsidetattooz.co.uk

No Love Lost Collective

8 Scarborough Street, Hartlepool.
TS24 7DA9
no.lost.love.collective@gmail.com
Instagram @no.love.lost.collective

The Tattoo Station

20 Ridley Place, City Centre,
Newcastle Upon Tyne.
NE1 8JN
0191 232 8491
www.tattoostation.co.uk

Triplesix

24 Fawcett Street,
Sunderland. SR1 1RH
Tel no: 0191 565 6665
Contact through Facebook:
triplesixstudios666

YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

Black Lantern Studio

4 Marshall Avenue, Bridlington,
East Yorkshire, YO1 52DS, UK
Tel no: 01262 674 045
Blacklanternstudio@gmail.com
FB: black lantern tattoo studio

Crooked Claw Tattoo

734 Ecclesall Road, Sheffield,
S11 8TB
Tel no: 0114 327 1411
crookedclawtattoos@gmail.com
www.crookedclawtattoo.com

Easy Tiger Tattoo

102 & 103, Castleton Mill, Leeds
LS12 2DS
Tel: 0113 887 0172
www.easytigertattoo.com
Instagram: @easytigertattoos

Electric Kicks

17 Front Street, Pontefract.
WF8 1DA
Tel no: 07725 029 567
electric.kicks@hotmail.com
FB: Electric Kicks Tattoo Studio
Instagram: @electric.kicks.crew

Follow Your Dreams Tattoo

160 Devonshire Street, Sheffield,
S3 7SB
Tel no: 0114 216 8078
Email: fydattoo@gmail.com
www.fydtattoo.com

Gothika

7-9 Dundas Street, Redcar, Cleve-
land, TS10 3AD
Tel No: 01642 498 572
Instagram: @GothikaTattoosRedcar
www.facebook.com/GothikaTattoos

Nigel Kurt's The Fun House Tattoo Studio

140 Sheffield Road, Barnsley
S70 1JH
Tel no: 01226 779 595
nigelkurt1@gmail.com
www.nigelkurt.com
Instagram: @nigelkurttattoo
www.facebook.com/funhousetattoos
UK

Red Tattoo & Piercing

Leeds Corn Exchange
Tel: 01132420413
Email: redtattooandpiercing@hot-
mail.co.uk
www.redtattooandpiercing.com

Sacred Electric Tattoo

2-3 Mill Hill,
Leeds LS1 5DQ
Tel no: 0113 242 5553
Sacredelectrictattoo@gmail.com
www.sacredelectrictattoo.com

Tenacious Tattoo

296 Prince of Wales Road, Sheffield,
S2 1FF
Tel No: 0114 327 4060
www.tenacioustattoo.com

Ultimate Skin

33 New Briggate,
Leeds LS2 8JD
Tel no: 0113 244 4940
ustattoo@gmail.com
Instagram: @ultimate_skin

EAST MIDLANDS

Base Shade Tattoo

6 Church Street, Rushden,
NN10 9YT
Tel No: 01983 316 055
Email:
baseshadetattoo@yahoo.co.uk
www.facebook.com/baseshadetattoo

Bunraku Tattoo

1a Victoria Parade,
Leicester, LE1 5FG
Tel no: 0116 262 9401
info@bunraketattoo.co.uk
www.bunraketattoo.co.uk

Embody Tattoo

(handpoke and machine tattooing)
7 Canal Street, Derby. DE1 2RJ
Tel no: 01332 986 920
embodytattoo@mail.com
www.embodytattoo.co.uk

Epona Art and Tattoo

Waterloo Yard, King St,
Southwell NG25 0EH
Tel no: 01636 815 771
theresatattoo@btinternet.com
www.eponatattoo.com

Fat Fugu

24 Fish St,
Northampton NN1 2AA
Tel no: 01604 630 557
info@fatfugu.com
www.fatfugu.com

Hypnotic Art Tattoo

200 Queensway,
Milton Keynes MK2 2ST
Tel no: 01908 989 695
hypnoticarttattoo@gmail.com
www.hypnotic-art.co.uk
Lewis Point Tattoo Studio
61 High Street, Daventry,
NN11 4BQ
Tel No: 01327 315133
www.lewispointtattoo.com

Lucky 13 Tattoo

192 Clarendon Park Road
Leicester
LE2 3AF
Tel no: 0116 270 0558
studio@wearelucky13.com
www.wearelucky13.com

Red Tattoo & Piercing

Leeds Corn Exchange
Tel: 01132420413
Email: redtattooandpiercing@hot-
mail.co.uk
www.redtattooandpiercing.com

Second Skin

77 Ashbourne Rd,
Derby DE22 3FW
Tel no: 01332 242 688
info@secondskinstudio.co.uk
Instagram: @secondskinderby

Wet Paint Collective

7 Bowley Court, Melton Mowbray
LE13 1XY
Tel no: 01664 668110
wetpaintcollective@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/Wetpaintcollective

EAST OF ENGLAND

Black Dog Tattoos

47 St Benedicts Street
Norwich
Norfolk NR24PG
Tel no: 01603 291049
blackdogtattoos@gmail.com
Instagram: @blackdogtattoos

Black Galleon Tattoo Studio

22 Blackfriars Street
Kings Lynn
PE30 INN
01553 777322
www.facebook.com/blackgalleontattooostudio

Braintree Tattoo Studio

148 Coggeshall Rd,
Braintree CM7 9ER
Tel no: 01376 560 633
info@braintreetattooostudio.co.uk
www.braintreetattooostudio.co.uk

Churchyard Tattoo

14 Churchyard,
Hitchin SG5 1HR
Tel no: 01462 338 781
cytattoo@gmail.com
Instagram: @churchyardtattoos
www.facebook.com/churchyard

Crossed Arrows Tattoo

21-23 St George Street,
Norwich. NR3 1AB
Tel no: 01603 762 636
crossedarrowstattoo@gmail.com
Facebook: Crossed Arrows Tattoo

Cult Classic Tattoo

32 North St,
Romford RM1 1BH
Tel no: 01708 730 500
cultclassicattoo@gmail.com
www.cultclassicattoo.com

Electric Punch Tattoo

Unit 4, the Pavilion,
Tower Centre, Hoddesdon
EN11 8UB
Tel no: 01992 447 756
info@electricpunchtattoo.co.uk
www.electricpunchtattoo.co.uk

Five Keys Tattoo

8 Orford Hill,
Norwich, Norfolk NR13QD
Tel no: 01603 958 814
fivekeystattoo@gmail.com
www.fivekeystattoo.com

Good Ship I3

374 London Road Hadleigh, Essex
SS7 2DA
Tel no: 07415 299998
goodshipi3info@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/Good-Ship-I3-Tattoos

Indigo Tattoo and Piercing

2 Lower Goat Lane,
Norwich, Norfolk NR2 1EL
Tel no: 01603 886 143
www.indigotattoo.co.uk
indigotattooandpiercing@gmail.com

Immortal Ink

39 - 43 Baddow Road,
Chelmsford, CM2 0DB
Tel no: 01245 493 444
contact@immortalink.co.uk
www.immortalink.co.uk

Next Generation

4 Wolverton Rd, Stony Stratford,
Milton Keynes MK11 1DX
Tel no: 01908 560003
info@nextgenerationtattoo.co.uk
www.nextgenerationtattoo.co.uk

True Love Tattoos

16 Bridewell Alley,
Norwich NR2 1AQ
Tel no: 01603 613277
tlnorwich@gmail.com
www.tlnorwich.co.uk

LONDON

The Blue Tattoo

2 Studland St, Hammersmith, London,
W6 0JS
Tel no: 0208 746 3133
Email: info@thebluetattoo.co.uk
www.thebluetattoo.co.uk
Instagram: @thebluetattoolondon

Briar Rose Tattoo

172 Manor Lane, London, SE128LP

private and custom only studio
www.briarrossetattoo.com
instagram: @briarrossetattoo
instagram: @tiggystattoos
instagram: @olivetats

The Family Business

58 Exmouth Market,
Clerkenwell, London EC1R 4QE
Tel no: 0207 278 9526
info@thefamilybusinessstudio.com
www.thefamilybusinessstudio.com

Frith Street Tattoo

18 Frith Street (basement),
Soho, London W1D 4RQ
Tel no: 020 7734 8180
frithstreettattoo.london@gmail.com
www.frithstreettattoo.co.uk

Fudoshin Tattoo

158 George Lane, South Woodford,
London, E18 1AY
Tel No: 020 8989 6144
www.fudoshintattoos.com
Instagram: @fudoshintattoos
www.facebook.com/fudoshintattoos

Happy Sailor Tattoo

17 Hackney Rd, London E2 7NX
Tel no: 020 7033 9222
Email: Via website
www.happysailortattoo.com

I Hate Tattoos

Unit 1, 400-405 York Way, London
N7 9LR
Tel no: 07904 174 819
herringfishbloke@hotmail.co.uk
Facebook: I Hate Tattoos Studio

Ink Lounge Tattoo Studio

310 C Green Lanes, Palmers Green
London N13 5TT, UK
Tel no: 0203 490 2663
info@inklounge.co.uk
www.inklounge.co.uk
Instagram - inklounge

Inksmiths Of London

8 Chequers Parade, Eltham,
London SE9 1DD
Tel no: 020 8617 3338
Inksmithsoflondon@gmail.com
Instagram: @InksmithsofLondon

Kilburn Original Tattoo

175 Kilburn High Road,
Kilburn, London. NW6 7HY
Tel no: 0207 372 3662
info@kilburnoriginal.com
Instagram: @kilburntattoo

Leviticus Tattoo Emporium

170 High Road (Cuthberts Alley)
Loughton, Essex, IG10 1DN
Tel no: 0208 502 4029
leviticustattoo@hotmail.com
www.leviticustattooemporium.co.uk

Lowrider Tattoo

311 Bethnal Green Road,
London E2 6AH
Tel no: 0208 739 5115
Inquiry@lowridertattoo.london.com
Instagram: @lowridertattoo.london

Low Tide

19 Market Place, Southend-on-Sea.
SS1 1DA
01702344060
lowtidetattoo@gmail.com
Instagram: @lowtidetattoo.uk

New Wave Tattoo Studio

157 Sydney Road, Muswell Hill,
London N10 2NL
Tel no: 0208 444 8779
lalhardy@hotmail.co.uk
www.newwavetattoo.co.uk

Old Habits Tattoo

364 Kingsland Road,
London. E8 4DA
Tel no: 0203 609 0931
oldhabitstattoo@gmail.com
www.oldhabitstattoo.com

Seven Doors Tattoo

55 Fashion St, Shadwell,
London E1 6PX
Tel no: 020 7375 3880
sevendoorstattoo@gmail.com
Instagram: @sevendoorstattoo

Skin Sorcerer

116 High St, Maldon CM9 5ET
Tel no: 01621 842443
Instagram: skin_sorcerer

Tattoo Shop By Dan Gold

104 - 106 Oxford Street, London,
W1D 1LP
Tel No: 0207 637 7411
http://tattooshopbydangold.co.uk

The Good Fight

Cheriton, Queens Crescent, London,
NW5 4EZ
www.thegoodfighttattoo.com
Instagram: @nick_whybrow
@heidikayetattoo
@emilyrabbit.tattoo

Through My Third Eye

342 Hornsey Road,
London. N7 7HE
Tel no: 0203 417 2552
throughmythirdeye@outlook.com
www.throughmythirdeye.com

Ushuaia Tattoo London

486 Fulham Road, SW6 5NH, Lon-
don, UK
Tel: 020 8616 1760
www.ushuaiatattoolondon.co.uk/en
Instagram: @ushuaiatattoo.london
www.facebook.com/ushuaiatattoo.lo
ndon

SOUTH EAST

14 Arrows Tattoo Studio

55-57 Grosvenor Road
Tunbridge Wells
TN1 2AY
Tel no: 01892 458342
fourteenarrows@hotmail.com

All Or Nothing Tattoo and Piercings

12 Church Street
Witham, Essex CM8 2JL
Tel no: 01376 519 602
Email :aontattoo@outlook.com
www.aontattoo.com

1770 Tattoo

4 Little East Street
Brighton BN1 1HT
Tel no: 01273 710 730
info@1770tattoo.com
www.1770tattoo.com

Dead Slow

9 Boyces Street
Brighton
BN1 1AN
Tel No: 01273 208844
www.deadslowco.com
email: contact@deadslowco.com
Instagram: @deadslowco
www.facebook.com/deadslowco

Fine Art Tattoo and Piercing Studio

6 York Street, Ramsgate,
Kent CT11 9DS
Tel no: 01843 588 885
fine-art-tattoo@hotmail.co.uk
www.finearttattoo.co.uk

Higgins and Co

69 Terminus Road, Above
Coffee Republic,
Eastbourne BN21 3NJ

Tel no: 01323 301 973
higginsandco71@gmail.com
www.higginsandcotattoo.co.uk

Inked Moose

204 Whaddon Way, Bletchley, Milton
Keynes MK3 7DG
Tel no: 01908 411151
info@inkedmoose.co.uk
www.inkedmoose.co.uk

Keepsake Tattoo

145 South Street, Lancing, BN15
8BD
Tel No: 01903 767776
www.keepsaketattoo.co.uk
Instagram: @keepsake_tattoo

Leo Rios Tattoo Studio

11 Lime St, Bedford MK40 1LD
Tel no: 01234930504
leoriotattoos@hotmail.co.uk
www.facebook.com/LeoRiosStudio

Magnum Opus Tattoo

51 Upper N St, Brighton BN1 3FH
Tel: 01273 271432
magnumopustattoo@gmail.com
www.magnumopustattoo.com
Instagram: @magnumopustattoo
www.facebook.com/magnumopus-
tattoo

Rising Phoenix Tattoo

6 High Street,
Leighton Buzzard. LU7 1EA
Tel no: 01525 217 121
studio@risingphoenixtattoo.co.uk
www.risingphoenixtattoo.co.uk

Rivergate Tattoo

Unit 1 Rivergate House
Chapside
Luton
LU1 2HN
Tel no: 01582 51500
info@rivergatetattoo.co.uk

Seven Sins Tattoo

10 High Street, Horley,
Surrey, RH6 7AY
Tel no: 01293 775 385
info@sevensinstattoo.com
www.sevensinstattoo.co.uk/

Skinned Alive Tattoo

24 Church Street
Brighton, BN1 1RB
info@skinnedalivetattoo.com
www.skinnedalivetattoo.com
Instagram: @skinnedalivetattoo

Stay Much Better

1 Beaconsfield Parade, Beaconsfield Road, Brighton, BN1 6DN
Tel No: 01273 564494
www.smbtattoo.com
Instagram: @smbtattoo
www.facebook.com/smbtattoo

Tattoo FX

32 Middle Village, Bolnore, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 4GH
01444454411
info@tattoo-fx.co.uk
www.tattoo-fx.co.uk

The Hidden Tannery

10-11 Lewes road, Brighton, BN2 3HP
hello@hiddentannery.com
www.hiddentannery.com

Valhalla Tattoo

215 High Street, Bromley, Kent. BR1 1NY
Tel no: 0208 313 9470
info@valhallatattoo.co.uk
www.facebook.com/valhallatattoo215

SOUTH WEST

Black Chalice Tattoo

Unit 4, Plaza 21, Edgeware Road, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 1HE
Tel No: 01793 671 432
blackchalicetattoo@hotmail.com
www.facebook.com/blackchalicetattoo

Blackfriars Tattoo

5 Maylord Street, Hereford. HR1 2DS
Tel no: 01432 278330
blackfriarstattoo@gmail.com
Instagram @blackfriarstattoo

Crow Quill

63 Bedford Pl, Southampton SO15 2DS
Tel no: 023 8034 0058
instagram: @thecrowquill
www.thecrowquill.co.uk

The Custom Propaganda Tattoo Company

Unit 7, Botley Mills, Mill Hill, Botley, Southampton, SO30 2GB
Tel No: 01489 325341
Instagram: @custompropagandatattoo
www.facebook.com/CustomPropagandaTattoo

Eightfold Tattoo

1 Heanton Street, Braunton, EX33 2JS
Phone: 01271 523732
www.eightfoldtattoo.com
Instagram: @eightfoldtattoo

Needle and Fred Tattoo

22 High St, Littlehampton BN17 5EE
Tel no: 01903 733 622
needleandfred@live.co.uk
Instagram: @inkfred

North Gate Tattoo

13 Northgate St, Bath BA1 5AS
info@northgatetattoo.com
www.northgatetattoo.com

Purple Rose Tattoo

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

WALES

Broadside Tattoo

38 Singleton Street, Swansea, SA1 3QN
Tel No: 01792 455 000
Email: broadsideswansea@hotmail.com
Instagram: @broadsidewansea

Dexterity Ink

Unit 9 Indoor Peoples Market LL13 8 Wrexham
Tel no: 01978 447 100
www.facebook.com/DexterityInkTattooStudio09

Keep the Faith Social Club

14-16 Royal Arcade, Cardiff, CF10 1AE
Tel No: 029 2140 6954
Email: keepthefaitthsc@gmail.com
www.keepthefaitthsocialclub.com
Instagram: @keepthefaitthsc
www.facebook.com/keepthefaitth-socialclub

Physical Graffiti

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

Stronghold Tattoo

2nd floor Hugh St Chambers

Cardiff, CF10 1BD
Tel no: 07943 981671
www.strongholdtattoo.com

Surrealistic Sanctuary

144 City Rd, Cardiff, CF24 3DR
Tel no: 07413 383 323
sstattoocardiff@gmail.com
www.surrealisticsanctuary.co.uk

WEST MIDLANDS

B.W Tattoo Studios

9 Eastern Avenue, Lichfield, WS13 6TE
Tel No: 01543 898766
www.bigwillstatoos.co.uk
Instagram: @bwtattoostudios
www.facebook.com/BWtattoostudios

Blood & Honey Tattoo Co

Winchcombe St, Cheltenham, GL52, 2NE
Tel no: 01242 352306
hello@bloodandhoney.uk
bloodandhoney.uk

Cosmic Monsters Incorporated

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

The Church Tattoo

11 Church Road Redditch B97 4AB
Tel no: 01527 759 852
thechurchtattoo@hotmail.com
Facebook: facebook.com/thechurchtattoo

Folklore Tattoo

119 Lichfield St, Tamworth B79 7QB
Tel no: 01827 768446
folkloretattoos@live.com
www.folkloretattooostudio.co.uk/

Modern Electric Tattoo Co

147 Golden Cross Lane Catshill, Bromsgrove Worcestershire, B61 0JZ
Tel: 01527 759434
info@modernelectrictattoo.co.uk
www.modernelectrictattoo.co.uk

Nala Tattoo & Piercing Studio

81 Bolebridge Street Tamworth, B79 7PD

Tel no: 01827 68 353
contact@nalastudio.co.uk
www.nalastudio.co.uk

Sweet Life Gallery

80 Bristol Street,
Birmingham.
B57AH
Tel no: 01216921361
Enquiry@sweetlifegallery.co.uk
www.sweetlifegallery.co.uk

The Inkspot

Number 6 the Parade,
Silverdale,
Newcastle Under Lyme.
ST5 6LQ
01782 619144
tattoosbycookie@hotmail.com
www.theinkspotuk.com

Tokyotattoo® Studios (Cheltenham)

13 The Courtyard, Montpellier,
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

Vicious Pink Tattoo

Suite C, 9a Willow Street,
Oswestry,
SY11 1AA
Tel no: 01691570427
viscioupinktattoo@gmail.com
www.viscioupink.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

Black Freighter Tattoo Co.

56-60 Lower Bridge Street
Chester, Cheshire
CH1 1RU
Tel no: 01244 297528
theblackfreightertattoo@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/TheBlack-
FreighterTattooCo

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-
tattoo/DABS Tattoo
@tattoosatdabs

Indelible Ink

3 York Avenue,
Thornton-Cleveleys, FY5 2UG
Tel No: 01253 280457
www.indelibleinktattooostudio.co.uk
Instagram: @indelible_ink_tattoos
www.facebook.com/indelibleinkuk

Inkden Tattoo & Piercing Studio

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

Inked Up Chester

21 Eastgate Row North,
Chester. CH1 1LQ
01244638558
info@inkedupchester.co.uk
Instagram @inkedupchester

Marked for life

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

Market Quarter Tattoo

14 Market Street, Southport,
Merseyside. PR8 1HJ
marketquartertattoo@gmail.com
Facebook - Market Quarter Tattoo
Instagram- @marketquartertattoo

Sacred Art Tattoo

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

Skin Kandi Tattoo Studio

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

Studio78 Tattoos

15 Earle Street, Crewe, CW1 2BS
Tel No: 01270 581 581
email: studio-78@hotmail.co.uk
www.studio-78.co.uk

True Colours Tattoo Studio

14 Guildhall Street,
Preston, PR1 3NU
Tel No: 01772 378565
www.truecolourstattoo.co.uk
Instagram: @truecolourstattoo

True 'til Death

13 Whalley Road
Accrington, BB5 1AD
Tel no: 01254 433 760
Email: via Facebook – True 'Til Death
Tattoo
www.accringtontattoo.com

CONVENTION CALENDAR

18th-20th October Liverpool Tattoo

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

OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

25th-27th October Amsterdam Tattoo Convention

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

1st-3rd November Dublin Tattoo

Convention
Royal Dublin Society
Anglesea Rd, Dublin 4, Ireland
www.dublintattooconvention.com

8th-10th November Florence Tattoo

Convention
Fortezza Da Basso
Viale Filippo Strozzi, I 50129
Florence, Italy
www.florenctattooconvention.com

8th-10th November I Love Tattoo Expo

Kaohsiung City, Taiwan
www.ilovetattooexpo.com

8th-10th November International Brussels Tattoo Convention

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

7th-8th December Cesenatico Tattoo Convention

Palacongressi Bellaria Igea Marina
Via Uso I – 47814 Bellaria Igea
Marina, Italy
www.tattooconventioncesenatico.it

2020 UK CONVENTIONS

February 28th-1st March Tattoo Tea Party

Event City, Manchester
www.tattooteaparty.com

25th-26th April Portsmouth Tattoo Fest

Pyramids Centre
www.tattooofest.co.uk

25th-26th April Big North Tattoo Show

Utilita Arena, Newcastle Upon-Tyne,
Arena Way, NE4 7NA
www.bignorthtattooshow.com

2nd-3rd May Brighton Tattoo Convention

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

2020 OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

17th-19th January Goa Tattoo Festival

Tito's Whithouse, Arpora Mapusa
Road, Anjuna Goa India
www.goatattooofestival.com

17th-19th January International Lille

Tattoo Show
Lille Grand Palais
59800 Lille,
France
www.lille-tattoo-convention.com

7th-8th March 10th Rotterdam Tattoo Convention

Rotterdam Ahoy
Ahoyweg 10,
3084 BA Rotterdam
www.unitedconventions.com/rotterdam

13th-15th March Mondial Du Tatouage

Grande halle de la Villette
211 Avenue Jean Jaurès
75019 Paris
France
www.mondialdutatouage.com

3rd-5th April Nepal Tattoo Convention

Heritage Garden
(Old Gyanodaya School)
Milap Rd, Sanepa, Patan 44600,
Nepal
www.nepaltattooconvention.com

7th-9th August Berlin Tattoo Convention

Arena Berlin
Eichenstraße 4, 12435 Berlin.
www.tattoo-convention.de

12th-13th September Tattoo Assen

De Bonte Wever
Stadsbroek 17,
9405 BK Assen,
Netherlands
www.tattooexpo.eu/en/assen/2020

21st-23rd March Prison Ink Tattoo Festival

Fussingsvej 8
Horsens,
Denmark

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