

# total tattoo



## EMANUEL OLIVEIRA

Jaw-dropping collaged designs from this Portuguese artist

## JAMIE LEE KNOTT

Glowing neo-trad from tattooist owner of Dark Horse Collective

## TATTOOING ASK HERE

Celebrating Felix Leu's life and legacy

## CRANFIELD'S CURIOSITY CABINET

Extraordinary taxidermy emporium

## GUIDO SCHMITZ

A two-fingered salute to tattooing's gentrification

## PORTFOLIOS

Ben Horrocks  
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## KIRSTEN PETTITT

The eyes have it - realism with a unique painterly twist



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# EDITORIAL 184



They do say that in polite society one should avoid talking of politics and religion, for these are passionate subjects that often lead to either great agreement or great disagreement. Living in Britain over the last few weeks, you would be bloody hard-pressed to avoid the flying debris from the political hand grenade that exploded around the government's decision to hold a General Election just before Christmas!

Personally I believe that everyone has the right to vote for who they want to be their elected leader, but it would appear (at least through social media) that tensions ran high, in some cases far beyond boiling point. The divisions were deep. Many on my friends list erupted with angry outbursts and demands that their way was the only true and right way, and I must admit that on occasion I too was drawn into making my own feelings felt. Arguments on all sides raised some interesting points and I found myself questioning my own political views. The feelings of allegiance that were forged in the furnace of my youth were being shaken, with news of injustice, corruption and double-dealings on all political sides.

'Friends' began demanding that if your views were not the same as theirs, you should excommunicate yourself and be outcast from their social circle - and it was at this point that I realised how divided we all seem to have become. One of the most amazing things that I have always loved about the tattoo world is that it was the one place where outsiders came to feel included. When I started attending conventions all those years ago, politics, sexuality and religion, etc, were topics of discussion, but not reasons to be divided or judged.

But imagine a world where we all agreed, all of the time... There's a reason why we all think differently. And it's the same reason we all choose different tattoos and different tattoo styles. It's because we're all individuals. Your ink decisions are based on your life experiences, and all the influences that have had some resonance with you as an individual. At some point, a certain tattoo image or style spoke to you. I have disagreed with many of my friends over this politically-charged period and indeed fallen out with members of my own family. But I firmly believe that what is done is now done and it's time to extend that olive branch and rebuild the pack.

In my mind, society is fractured enough already. The tattoo community that is united by a love of ink is far stronger together as a solid union of free-thinkers than divided into smaller groups sharing only similar views. Without opposition and discussion how are opinions made?

It's a new year and time to look forward, now get on with it and do what you're told!

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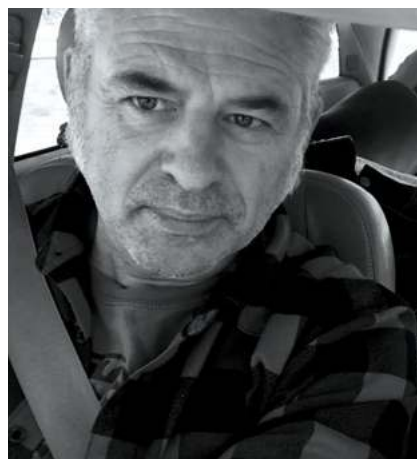
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# NEWS & REVIEWS



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## ROBOT TATTOO REMOVAL

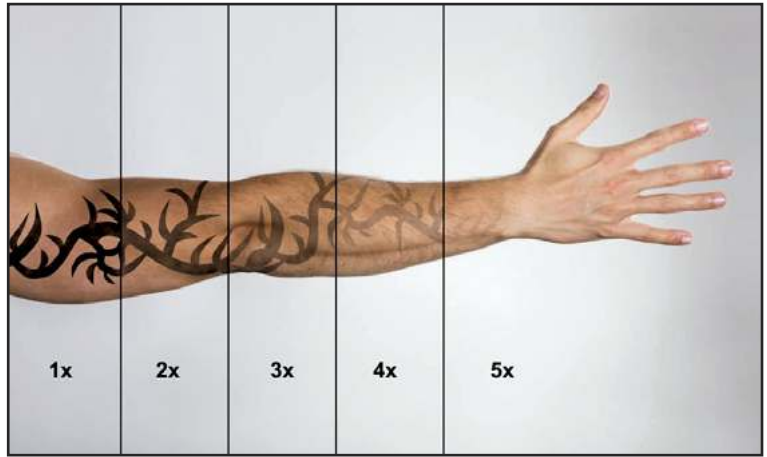


### DUKE ROBOTICS

A research team at Duke University in the USA is using precision robotics to make tattoo removal faster, more accurate and less painful. The project is based in the intriguingly named Brain Tool Laboratory, a collaboration between the Pratt School of Engineering and the university's Department of Neurosurgery. And that's the important connection. The Brain Tool Laboratory specialises in surgical robotics, and this tattoo removal system involves what's described as a robot-guided 'laser scalpel'.

In other words, it's laser removal, but not as we know it.

Advanced imaging techniques precisely identify the exact outline of the tattoo, and the laser targets the ink in a much more accurate way than is possible with a standard hand-held device. The



performance of the laser can be customised according to the type of ink being zapped, and overall the process is much quicker and more efficient.

"Moving a hand-held laser across the surface of the skin causes a lot of damage and pain because of the overlapping that happens when the laser goes back and forth over the image," explains Weston Ross, an engineering expert on the Duke research team. "Using a robot, we can deploy a very tiny laser and trace precisely where the tattoo is. There's no overlapping, and therefore no extra damage, and you get uniform removal. And

there's no overshooting and damaging surrounding tissue, which happens too much with current systems."

The Brain Tool Laboratory recently won the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Jumpstart Research Seed Grant for this project. Other research team members include Patrick Codd (Neurosurgery / Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science), Junjie Yao (Biomedical Engineering) and Jigar Patel (Dermatology). A prototype is expected to be up and running by mid-2020, but it's going to be another few years before robotic laser tattoo removal becomes commercially available.

## BRAIN TOOL LABORATORY



# HUDSON'S TATTOO PARLOUR

Our news radar has picked up a little story from New Zealand about mum and dad Shay and John Starrenburg, who decided to create a make-believe tattoo studio for their one year-old son Hudson. They bought a playhouse, painted it inside and out, and let their imaginations run wild – with authentic creative touches like hand-painted signs, tattoo designs on the walls and a toy coffee machine (plus mugs with logos). And the kids at Hudson's birthday party all went home proudly sporting temporary tattoos!



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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).

# TATTOOS FOR ETHAN

Ethan Martin from Bedfordshire is an eight year-old boy with cancer, who has perhaps just weeks to live. He's given the world a special gift – a beautiful little tattoo design that he created himself. Local studio Panic Ink in Hitchin have been tattooing it on their customers for just £30, with all proceeds going towards a fund to support Ethan's family through this difficult time. Our thoughts are with Ethan and everyone who knows him.



# MAKING THE NEWS

Oriini Kaipara – who is of Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa, Tūwharetoa and Te Arawa descent – recently became the first woman with a *moko kauae* (chin tattoo) to present a news bulletin on national mainstream television in New Zealand.





## MARQUESAN TATTOOS ON FILM

'Patutiki' is an absorbing hour-long documentary about tattooing in the Marquesas (a group of volcanic islands in French Polynesia) and a journey into the heart of Marquesan culture. Shown recently on French television, it won the Prix du Public at FIFO 2019, the Festival Internationale du Film Documentaire Océanien in Tahiti. The film was directed by Heretu Tetahiotupa and Christophe Cordier.

## RUAHINE: STORIES IN HER SKIN

# 17<sup>e</sup> FIFO

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DU FILM DOCUMENTAIRE OCEANIEN

FIFO 2020 is coming up in February. Among films on all different topics, the festival will include 'Ruahine: Stories in her Skin', a beautifully lyrical, powerfully intimate documentary following the ceremony of two Maori women from Ngai Tara and Muāupoko tribes receiving their *moko kauae* (chin tattoo). Director Hiona Henare skilfully creates an uninhibited and unobstructed experience filled with traditional songs and story. Check out the details here: [www.fifotahiti.com/fifo-2020-en](http://www.fifotahiti.com/fifo-2020-en)

## LUXEMBOURG TIGHTENS LAWS



According to local news reports, tattoo and piercing studios in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg will be subject to much tighter controls from 1st June 2020, with the government introducing a programme of hygiene inspections carried out by specially trained police officers. New legislation was introduced in 2018 and businesses were given a two-year period in which to make any necessary changes in order to comply with the law. That grace period will end in the summer, and from that point on there will be criminal prosecutions (and possible prison sentences) for those contravening the new stricter regulations.

## TAT TOO YOUNG



In a news story from Ireland, we hear that a man has been given a jail sentence for tattooing his eight year-old son. It's a troubling tale. The man's legal representative said the man did the tattoo – a one centimetre spot – at his son's insistence, because the boy wanted to have some ink like the dragons and superheroes he'd seen on other family members. But the court also heard that the boy had told a doctor he did not want the tattoo. The man (who cannot be named, to protect the identity of his son) is quoted as saying both he and his son were now suffering because of what he had done. He was sentenced to nine months.

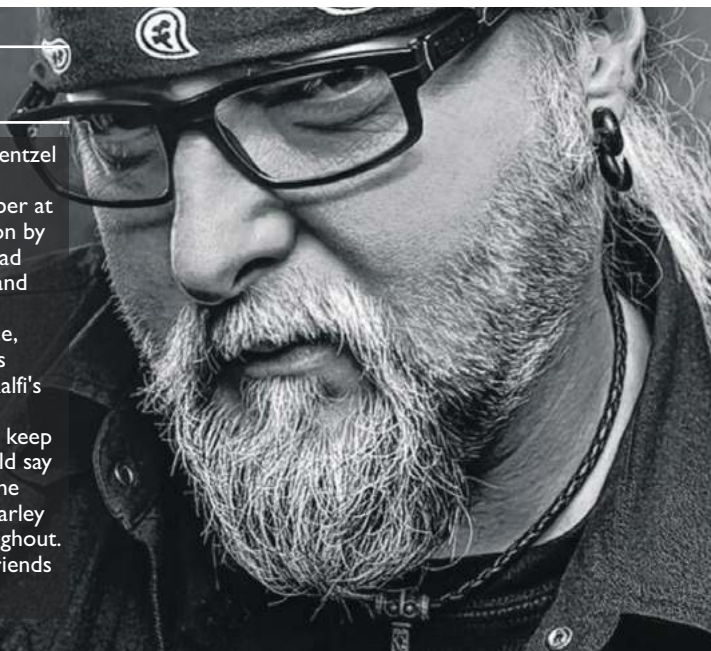
## KL EXPO CONTROVERSY

Our news antennae have picked up a story about possible legal action being taken against the organisers of the Tattoo Malaysia Expo 2019 in Kuala Lumpur. According to local press reports, the dispute concerns whether or not the organisers obtained the requisite permissions for the semi-nudity at the event. We understand the authorities are currently assessing whether to pursue the matter. Watch this space.



## RIP RALFI

Well-known tattoo artist Ralf (Ralfi) Mentzel of Tattoo Cabinet in Ueckermünde, Germany, sadly passed away in November at the age of just 53. Held in great affection by his many friends and customers, Ralfi had been running his shop for many years and the front window was soon filled with flowers and candles. According to police, there is no suggestion of any suspicious circumstances surrounding his death. Ralfi's girlfriend Kristina organised a benefit concert in December to raise funds to keep the shop going, and so that friends could say a fond farewell. Hundreds of bikers came along and, in a moving tribute, Ralfi's Harley was proudly parked on the stage throughout. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this sad time.



## RIP DEREK HIGHAM (1944-2019)



On the 16th of November, the tattoo community lost a good friend, a real family man who was as big a star in European tattooing as Ed Hardy was in the United States. Derek Higham was a true British tattooing legend, known the world over as an all-round good guy, who loved his tattooing and had a career that spanned over 50 years.

He was born in Hindley, Wigan in 1944. As a boy he would often go to the seaside town of Blackpool, and on one of those carefree days he ended up popping into well-

known tattooist Harry Lever's shop on Bonny Street. What he saw made him fall in love with tattoos and the magic of tattooing. Indeed it was Harry Lever who would later teach Derek. Derek also met a young Jimmy Gould in Harry's shop around the mid to late 1950s, and Derek and Jimmy went on to become two of England's most famous and finest tattoo artists.

Derek, started tattooing in 1959 and was a great campaigner for health and hygiene. He was one of the tattoo artists responsible for helping to secure much higher standards of professional practice in tattooing back in the day. He was also a member of The British Guild of Professional Tattoo Artists, an organisation whose objective was to get tattooing seen in a better light in terms of health and hygiene awareness and artistic achievement. He was the Guild's

treasurer during the association's glory years of the mid 1960s.

Derek's most famous shop was on Foxhall Road, Blackpool. At one time or another he also had tattoo shops in Wigan, Bolton, Catterick and Barrow, and a stall in Springfield Market. He was well-known as a tattoo artist throughout the world. He worked for a time in Florida, and also spent many months in Australia working alongside Tony Cohen in Sydney.

Diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2012, Derek was 75 years old when he passed away on the 16th of November 2019, leaving behind his beloved Carole, three children, two stepchildren, eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Our thoughts are with them at this sad time.

Derek Higham, another tattooing legend sadly gone, but a man who will certainly, never be forgotten. RIP mate.

*Obituary by Paul Sayce*

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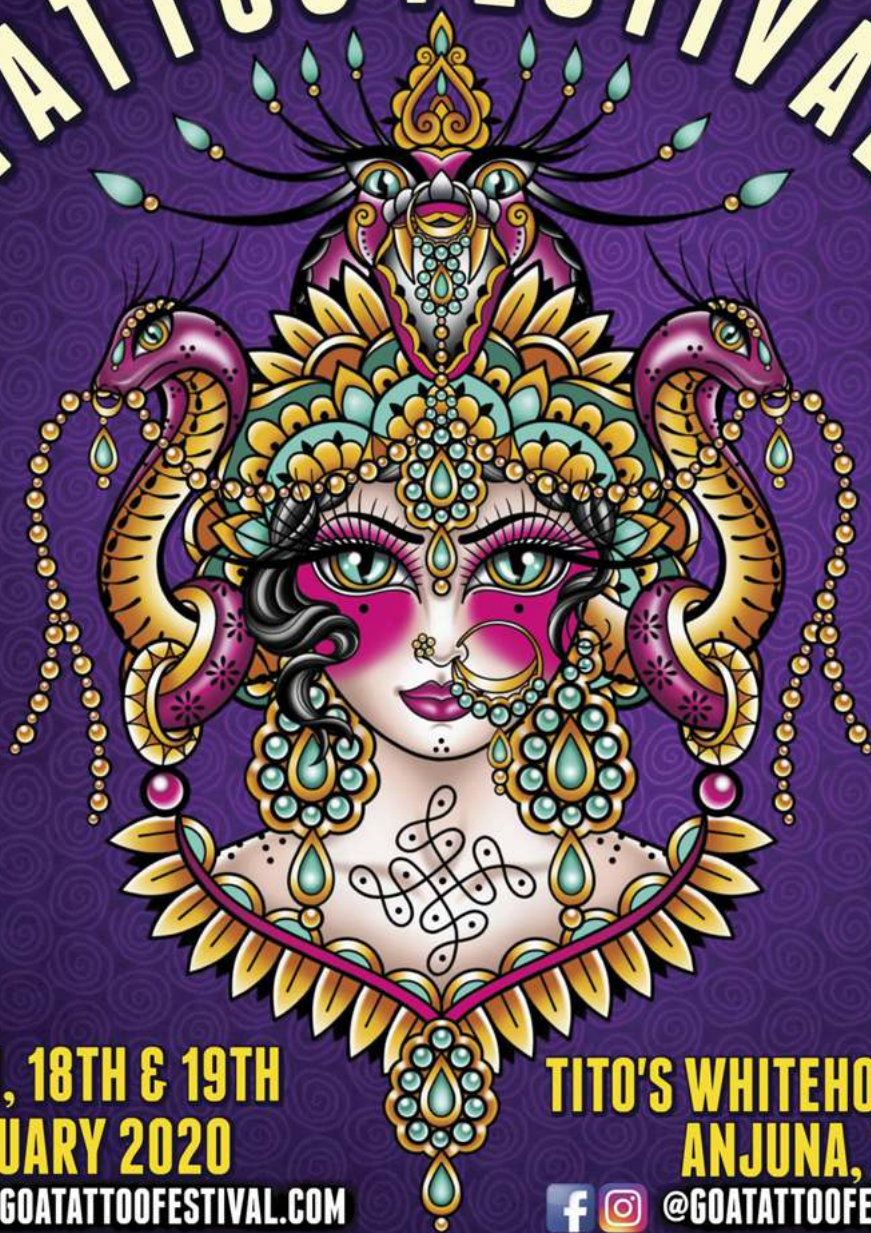
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# EMANUEL OLIVEIRA





**P**ortuguese tattooist Emanuel Oliveira thrives on the pressure of tattooing against the clock but prefers to take things at a slower tempo in the initial stages of creating his jaw-dropping collaged designs. Not surprisingly, he's pretty booked up with leg and arm sleeves, but he would love the chance to create a few more backpieces. He tells us how it all came about, from a fairly inauspicious and unhygienic start in a student kitchen...

Emanuel Oliveira was born and brought up in the small Portuguese town of Murtosa. He remembers, as a small child, painting and drawing alongside his father, who was a professional artist. "My father never taught me as such, but I would sit and watch him for hours," he recalls.

Art was bound to play a big part in Emanuel's life. He studied architecture at university, and it was while he was a student that the tattoo bug first bit. "I was in my twenties, in my third year at university, and I just had this feeling that I wanted to try out a different canvas for my art," he tells me. "So I bought a cheap tattoo kit from China, just so that I could experiment a little. But when it arrived I somehow never got round to opening it. Then a friend called me and said, 'Hey, let's open that box and have a play!' I did a tiny letter on his ribs, where it wouldn't be visible. The next day he brought another friend along who also wanted a small tattoo. And then the day after that... and so it went on. That summer, I was tattooing pretty much non-stop!"





"But it was the worst way to start," Emanuel confesses. "The kit came with basic instructions, and there was YouTube of course, and I was aware of the importance of using new needles each time, wearing gloves, and so on. But I knew nothing about the risks of cross-contamination. I would even use my phone half way through a tattoo! Nobody should ever follow my example, because you're bound to make some serious mistakes and your development will be much slower than if you have somebody showing you what to do. Tattoo education is so readily available today. Everyone is so much more willing to pass on their knowledge. Just look at all the seminars that are being given by great artists who are prepared to share their techniques. Even in the eight years that I've been tattooing, there's been a massive explosion in the amount of high quality information that's out there."





"I spent the first two years of my tattoo career working from my kitchen at home. Then I heard that a large studio nearby was looking for a tattooist, so I got in touch. I worked with them for five years, and I learnt a lot. But I didn't yet have any tattoos myself, and I knew it was time to get some. Customers would ask me if their tattoo was going to hurt and I would have to say, 'I don't know!' So I made my decision and went and got a realistic Salvador Dali tattoo. I didn't really care what I got as long as I could watch it being done. My god, I learnt so much that day. The tattooist told me everything about his coil machines, how he did the grey wash, needles, everything. After that I began to specialise in black and grey realism."



But the real game changing moment of Emanuel's career came when he shifted from coils to rotaries. "For that initial two years I was using cheap coil machines from China. When I started at the shop, the first thing I did was buy a Dragonfly rotary, and ever since then Dragonflies are the only machines I use (even though I've tried many others). They take a bit longer to set up – because they use

regular needles and not a cartridge system – but I can adjust them to whatever I need. I have one for hard lines, one for soft, one for hard-hitting colour, etc. I use the wireless system so I don't have a cable. Each machine battery lasts for about eight hours, which is more than enough for what I need. I only use each machine for a fraction of that time."



"Of course it's possible to do a tattoo with inferior quality equipment," Emanuel continues, "but why would you do that? The development of great machines and equipment is what's pushed the industry forward and allowed tattooists to do amazing work."

"It's simply the potential for skin damage that limits what's possible with a tattoo. If the skin gets damaged, the ink comes out, the healing is bad and the end result is bad. The other key element for me is the needles I use - exclusively Magic Moon. I use large sizes and try to keep moving around the tattoo. I try to get the ink in quickly and move on. Inks are another aspect of tattooing where there's been some great strides forward. I use Radiant Colors. I've used them for a long time, and I know them so well I can even tell when they change the formula. Right now it's pretty much perfect. So I just stick to those same three brands - Dragonfly, Magic Moon and Radiant Colors - and I've become really comfortable with them."





I ask Emanuel whether it was straightforward to transfer his painting and drawing skills to skin. "It's certainly good to have that fundamental knowledge of composition and so on, but the technique of tattooing is completely different. You can be an amazing artist on paper or canvas, but if you don't have the technique you won't be successful on skin. For a start, you can't erase or correct things in the skin! However, I do believe that anyone who wants to tattoo should have a background in painting and drawing, otherwise you will be limited as to how far you can progress creatively. Sadly, I don't have the time to do much art outside tattooing now. I think I've only done three drawings in the last couple of years, although they were very large. But I'm hoping to paint alongside my father again – in our own studio – at some point in the not too distant future."

Emanuel's current tattoo style incorporates many genres collaged together – colour, black-and-grey, graphic elements and realism – and demonstrates a solid understanding of all the various techniques involved. “When I first started out, I was doing every style. Like many tattooists, I would do whatever my client wanted, whether it was script, blackwork, portraiture, traditional... you name it, I did everything. Then, as I mentioned, I specialised in black and grey realism for a while, but that enthusiasm eventually passed. Now I really enjoy working in a variety of styles

– sometimes with lines, sometimes with colour, always leaning slightly more towards realism, but with some graphics too. All that early experience and practice means I'm not held back by a lack of knowledge or understanding and I can do whatever I like.” Of all the styles, Emanuel says he has found colour realism the hardest to master. “I do still sometimes find it difficult to replicate an image with one hundred percent accuracy,” he admits, “particularly if the subject is well known.”





I ask Emanuel to describe how he works. "I ask my clients what they like, and I get them to send me some pictures and initial ideas, then I then find my own reference based on that. I do two designs, and if the client doesn't like either of them, or too many changes are required, I usually suggest we start again. I try not to dictate the design completely; I prefer it to be more of a collaboration. After all, my clients are coming from all over the world, and it's important for them to be happy with the final result. I produce my designs on the computer, so if we are sat together looking at them we can then easily change things around. Placement, contrast and scale are all crucial to ensuring that the tattoo works successfully. Sometimes I don't meet the client in person until *after* I've designed the tattoo, and if their skin isn't so good, or they're very muscled, it could mean part of the design isn't going to be in such a great place, and I have to improvise a change at the last minute."

"I believe designing the tattoo is the most important step in the whole process," Emanuel emphasises. "Technique is also important of course, but the more creative the design, the more impact the tattoo will have. And fluid thinking will lead to a fluid design."





All artists who bring something new to the table find that it's not very long before others are producing similar work. Is this something that troubles Emanuel? "No, not really," he tells me. "Actually I think it's nice to influence other people. We all get influenced by each other. I copied other artists when I was learning, and that's always been the way of things. But most of my inspiration comes from the art world now, not from other tattooists. The real innovation often comes from outside."

Emanuel is very aware of the need for a healthy work-life balance, and he knows the importance of making sure that the stresses and pressures of tattooing don't get the better of him. "In the past, my working day would be fairly hectic. I would be constantly on the go. But now that I have my own studio I can work more slowly. Time is the most valuable commodity anyone has, and it disappears very quickly. I believe it's vital to take time off to rest when I need it – or just to have time to think, or to work on designs.

I often do very long days, but it's crucial not to spend too much time working. That's what happened to me at the shop. I look back and realise that although I was making money, I had nothing in my portfolio. It did nothing for my creativity. When you're doing too many things at once, you're not concentrating on any of them enough. That's one of the reasons I've decided to travel less. I know I need to carry on visiting conventions and staying in touch with the tattoo world, but my priorities are changing a little at the moment."

Emanuel does seem to enjoy tattooing under pressure though. "Often I find that if I'm tattooing against the clock, this can lead to even better results – if my client has a flight to catch, for example, or if I'm trying to get a piece finished at a convention. That kind of challenge is good for me, and I sometimes produce my very best work in those conditions. For me, the stress is in trying not to mess up the design, trying to get a little bit of my personal creativity into the tattoo, and making sure my client is happy. That's why, at the initial design stage, I prefer to do a little each day, to ensure that I am completely happy with it as I go along. For me, that's the most comfortable way of working. Too often, I look at my tattoos and find things I would change if only I could..."

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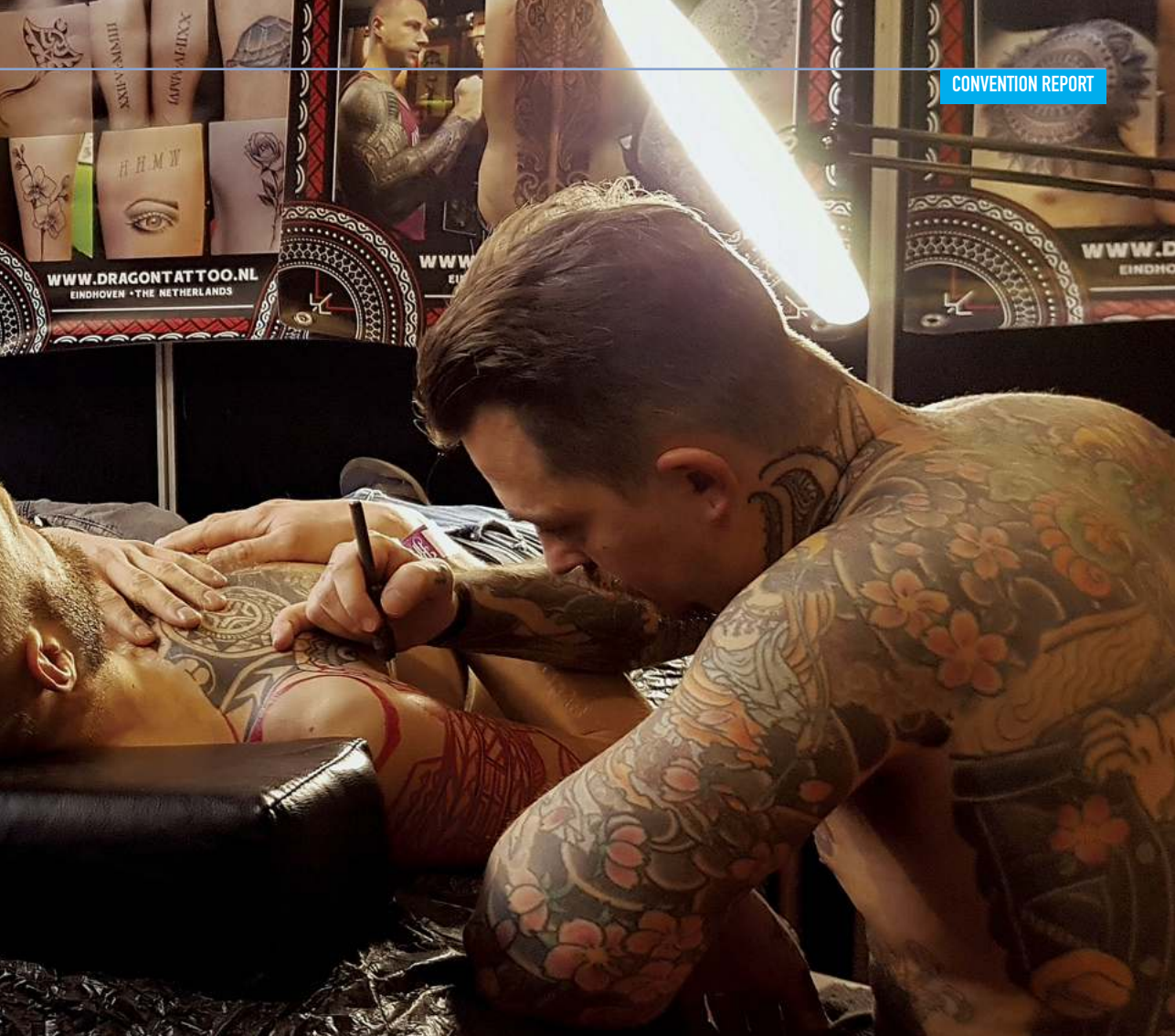
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# INTERNATIONAL BRUSSELS TATTOO CONVENTION



Over the years, the Brussels Tattoo Convention has grown in popularity and size; each year the event fills more of the halls within its venue, the huge former warehouse complex now called Tour & Taxis, reaching its full capacity in 2018. With convention attendance across the world seemingly in decline, we wondered if this well-established fixture would feel the pinch for its 2019 incarnation.



Brussels is a pleasant city with some stunning architecture and great street art and culture. Although it may not have the draw of iconic cities like London and Paris, it is a great destination for tattooing. From talking to tattooists there, it seems mainland Europe is not feeling the tightening of purse strings quite as much as the UK.

The Brussels convention attracts a mix of tattooists, including some amazing artists who come from all over the world. Most artists were booked up beforehand and worked solidly throughout the weekend; others who relied on the walk-in trade were perhaps not so lucky. Although the show was busy, in comparison to previous years there was a noticeable drop in numbers over the three days. This is a shame, but it does seem to be the trend amongst other shows and therefore not unexpected.



lukasz smyku, dead body tattoo



Every year, the list of tattooists in Brussels gets better and better. This show has a knack for finding some of the best talent, often amongst younger tattooists who are fairly new to the scene. This year was no exception, making it a great place to spot up-and-coming artists.

There is definitely a wave of young artists who have a drive and a hunger for knowledge and experience. To see so many of them in one place leaves one feeling inspired and refreshed. Their styles of tattooing are adventurous, pushing boundaries in all directions. This is the premier show for avant-garde, European tattooing. Whatever you choose as a tattoo, whether it is familiar imagery or the completely surreal, you're bound to leave with something special.

One of the things I love about this convention is the huge range of entertainment: art exhibitions, roller derby, skateboarding, fire breathing; you name it, Brussels has got it. This year the spectacular Globe of Death returned and proved very popular, despite a minor collision during a performance on the last day.

lacorte tattooer





jessica svartvit  
and karo dame



gorsky, ushuaia tattoo



jay freestyle



artist unknown



tiago borges

lukasz smyku



lukasz smyku,  
dead body tattoo



Now the show has spread into all four halls of the Tour & Taxis complex, the entertainment was positioned at the opposite end of the building from the entrance. This didn't seem to work so well for the performers and traders in that area. I understand that tattooists want to be away from loud noises, but I can also imagine it's pretty depressing for performers to play to a small or non-existent audience. Maybe coincidentally, I noticed that some of the regular traders who I'd met in previous years weren't there, thus scuppering my Christmas shopping plans!

Tattoo competitions remain popular with many convention-goers but every show seems to have a different way of running them and no one can agree which is best! The Brussels convention tried several options during the weekend: on Friday, the plan was to pre-judge all the entries, with the selected pieces being transferred for judging on the main stage. However, most of the successful entrants left after the first round, resulting in only two entrants for Best of Day. On Saturday, things were changed around when it was suggested that a token 'voting' system was used; this involved all entrants per category standing on stage with the judges awarding their favourites with tokens. The people with no tokens left the stage and this was repeated until there was an entrant with a majority of tokens. This option seemed to work well. Unfortunately I had to leave before the judging on Sunday but I was informed by several artists that once again the system was changed, leading to some





nakata ink



siemor, nico tattoo crew



michal ledwig

rich harris and jay freestyle



confusion. I accept that not everyone cares for competitions. However, there are many artists and clients who want to enter and try to win awards so it would be great if the organisers found a consistent and effective system to use.

That said, the Brussels Tattoo Convention remains an excellent show. The array of tattooing that takes place here is incredible and some of the artists are the best I've seen in years. I do hope this super-sized event can prove sustainable in these more economically challenged times.



saso tavci



alex garcia





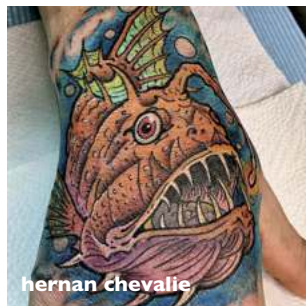
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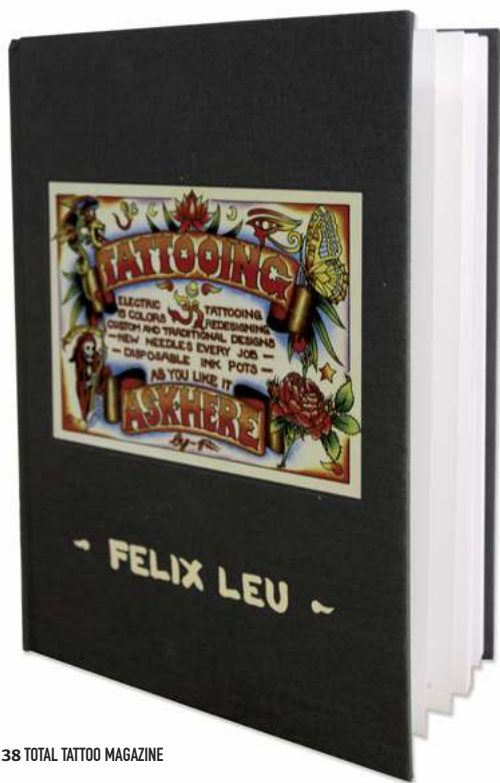
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# TATTOOING - ASK HERE

## FELIX LEU 1945 -2002



2019 saw the publication of a beautiful new book created by Loretta Leu. 'Tattooing - Ask Here' celebrates the extraordinary life and legacy of Felix Leu. Never before, in the history of tattooing, has there been such a creative and inspirational family as the Leus. In this new volume, Loretta documents her life with her husband Felix, from their meeting to his death and into the future with their son Filip's ongoing legacy.

There are very few names within tattooing that are worthy of the respect given to the Leu Family. Felix Leu was a charismatic, powerful personality who spent his life creating art in many forms and helped take tattooing to new heights.



He was born in 1945 and at 16 years old he ran away from his father's home in Switzerland to join the Beat Generation on the streets of Paris. He spent the next four years travelling the world as an artist. In 1965, while assisting his step-father, the sculptor Jean Tinguely, he met and fell in love with fellow artist Loretta Buscaglia. They spent the next 10 years travelling the world together, having four children along the way. Their life was hard and financially challenging but they followed their dreams to live an alternative, free existence, enveloped in art and travel.

It wasn't until the late seventies that tattooing came into their consciousness.

It was 1978 and Felix was 33 at the time. He and his young family were based in England. He'd taken a trip with a friend to buy carpets in Kosovo, in what was then Yugoslavia. One day, a group of teenage boys gathered around them and started gesticulating and offering them money. Felix was perplexed but soon realised that the boys mistook them for travelling tattooists because his friend Robbie had tattoos. Felix instantly identified that tattooing could be a way of financing his future travels.



Upon his return to England, Felix set about learning the craft of tattooing. His quest brought him to Tattoo Jock's place in London's Kings Cross. Jock was a big man, gruff but at times very funny. He agreed to teach Felix to tattoo in exchange for various jobs around the studio. After several months Felix was ready to begin his tattoo career and once again took to the open road, taking his family to India and setting up a studio in Goa.

The first thing Felix did was draw up some colourful posters and place them in all the bars around the town, announcing 'Tattooing - Ask Here'. Soon he was busy and together Felix and Loretta began producing custom designs for their travelling clientele.



Felix's reputation grew quickly and their ten-bedroom beach house became a welcoming sanctuary where prospective clients would hang out, drinking tea and listening to rock music on an old cassette player.

After several years in Goa the family moved to Bombay (now Mumbai) where they rented a top-floor apartment in Shelby's Hotel. Felix was becoming well known for his original custom designs and fellow tattooists would visit him when travelling through en-route to Goa and other eastern destinations.





In 1981 the family moved once again, this time to Lausanne in Switzerland, one of the few places where tattooing was legal at that time. They quickly established a tattoo studio in their home and became an instant source of fascination for the locals. Once again Felix's reputation for highly original, artistic designs led the way and the studio was always full with all manner of customers, from punks and bikers to cooks and doctors.

In the twenty years that the studio ran it became a mecca for tattooists and many would make the pilgrimage to visit this unofficial 'tattoo university'. Felix strongly believed that it was important to pass on his knowledge and he taught all four of his children to tattoo. His eldest son Filip followed his father into the profession and has continued to build on Felix's reputation, establishing the Leu Family's Family Iron Tattoo Studio as one of the most famous in the world.

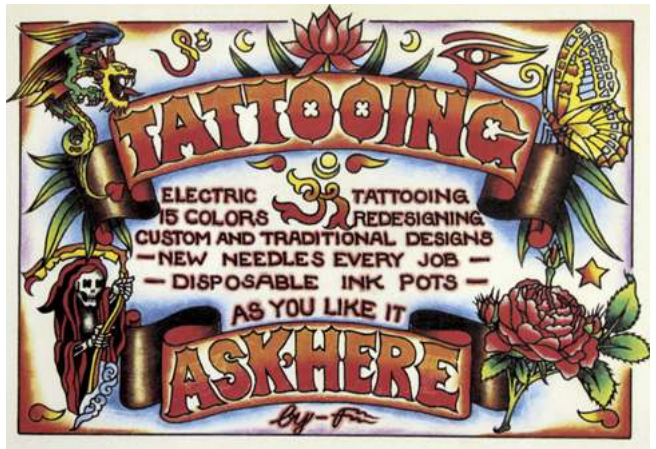
Felix officially retired from tattooing in 1995 after being diagnosed with cancer. He continued to contribute to magazines and manage the families PR until his death in 2002. In the last seven years of his life he produced a massive collection





of Indian ink drawings and continues to be an inspiration for many to this day. Filip continues his father's legacy at his studio in Sainte-Croix, nestled in the Swiss mountains.

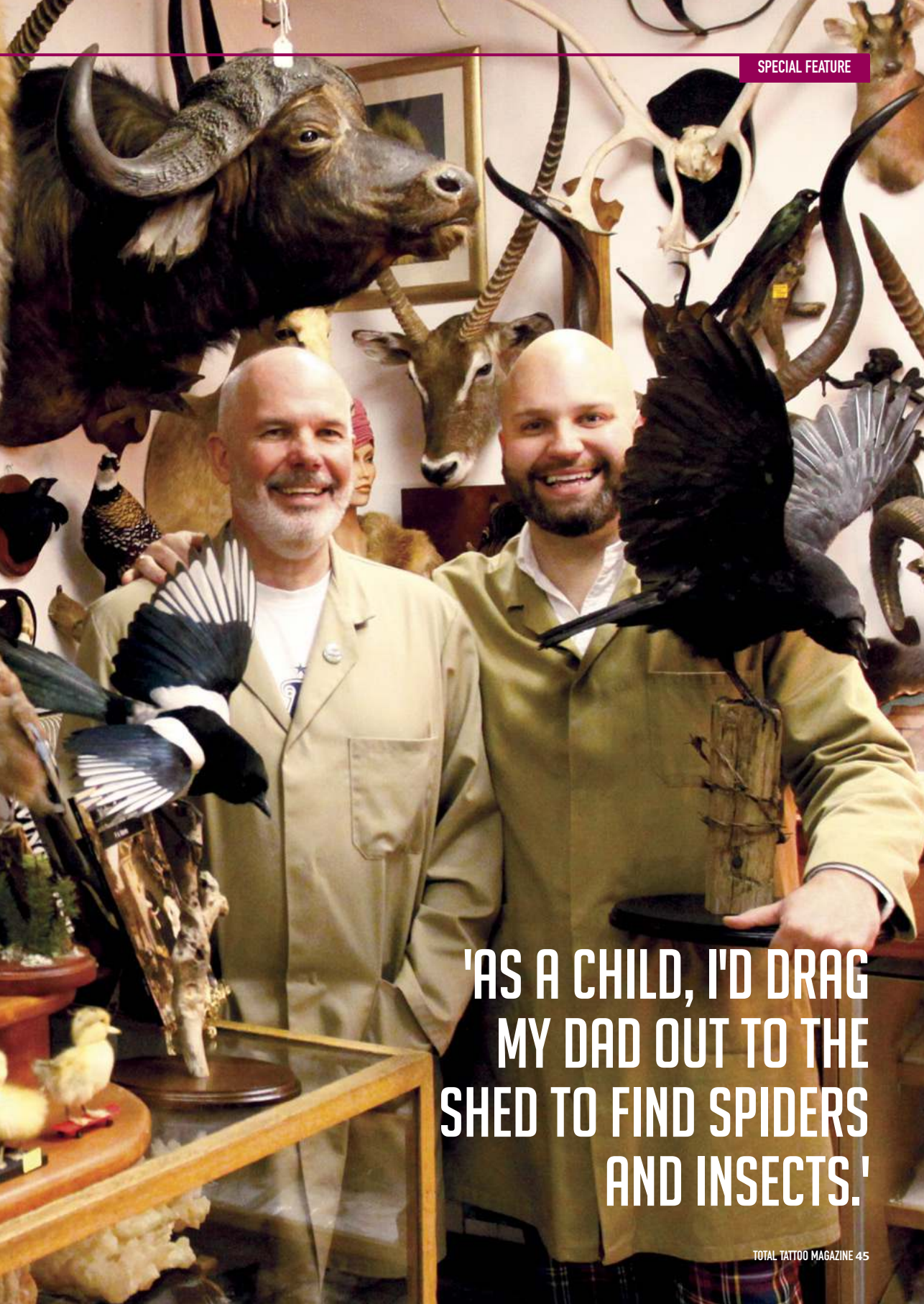
This book is a wonderfully warm and loving insight into one of the most influential tattooists of our time. It is packed with photos, documenting the family's travels and capturing their true spirit of freedom and the love that they so obviously have for tattooing. Page after page of amazing images and illustrations are interspersed with beautifully written passages, including many letters from Felix himself, sharing his wisdom and illustrating his passionate and inclusive nature. After his death in 2002, Felix Leu's life and work left a lasting impression on the tattoo world and his unique legacy will never be equalled or repeated.



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# CRANFIELD'S CURIOSITY CABINET

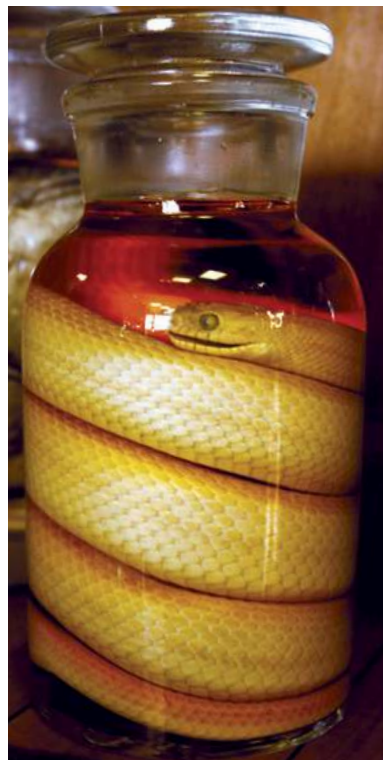
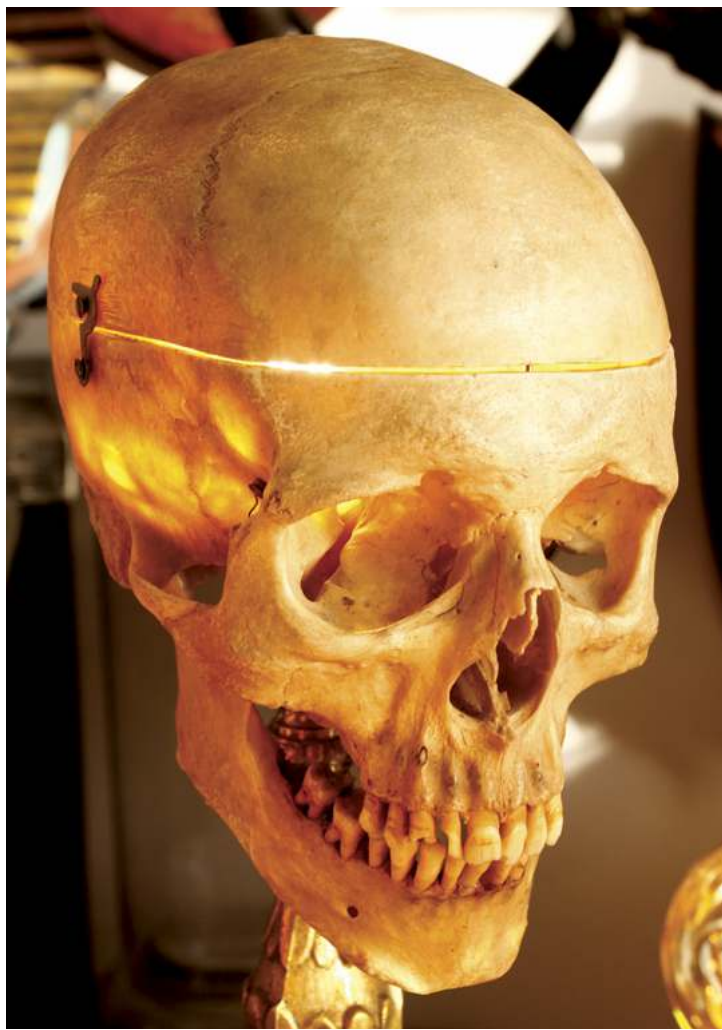
**James Cranfield describes himself as a 'collector and purveyor of the finest quality taxidermy and natural history curiosities.' He and his father Andrew are regulars on the tattoo scene and their stall can be found at pretty much every decent tattoo convention in the UK. We recently had the chance to visit James's shop, Cranfield's Curiosity Cabinet in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, where we were also given a privileged tour of his own private collection.**



**'AS A CHILD, I'D DRAG  
MY DAD OUT TO THE  
SHED TO FIND SPIDERS  
AND INSECTS!'**

The first thing you notice about James Cranfield is his infectious enthusiasm. His passion for animals and taxidermy is utterly magnetic. "My entire life I have always been fascinated by the natural world," he tells me, "and not just on TV. As a child I'd wait for my dad to come home from work and then drag him out to the shed to find spiders and insects. If they were alive I would put them in a bucket and study them. If they were dead I would put them in a matchbox and keep them."

"I always wanted to own whatever I found forever," James recalls. "It started with things like skulls from the woods, or pieces of sheep's wool I found on barbed wire in Cumbria. And I've always been fascinated with teeth. I've got casts of my family's teeth, my grandparents' old dentures, my school friends' milk teeth... Of course back then I'd never heard of taxidermy, but I found it incredibly exciting to visit museums and be able to look at so many amazing animals up close. Then I discovered that these things were available to buy. My parents wouldn't let me have any at first, but then one Christmas my mum bought me a bug-eyed squirrel from a local auction and it was like the best thing ever!"



"From a very early age I wanted my own museum," James confesses, "and here we are sitting in it! I also dreamed of having my own curiosity shop, and I now have that too."

James has a degree in zoology. "We were expected to do some form of work experience during the course and a lot of the students just left it up to the staff to sort it out. But I organised my own placement at the Natural History Museum in London. I made some good friends there, and went on trips with them to Vietnam and Madagascar to discover new species of insects. I'm fascinated by evolution and comparative anatomy. I wanted to be a museum curator – to look after this stuff, preserve it, keep it safe and catalogue it."



After college James worked as a manager in a jewellery shop just to make ends meet. Taxidermy was becoming an obsession though, and he was on a constant quest for interesting finds. He was then offered what seemed to be a great job opportunity, buying and selling 'curiosities' on commission, but it didn't quite live up to expectations. "In reality all I was doing was listing a load of shit on eBay," James tells me, "so we parted company pretty quickly. After that I was at a bit of a loss. Then a friend introduced me to Instagram (which was still in its infancy at that time). I went round my bedroom photographing my collection and posting the pictures online, and it just took off! I got the handle **#thetaxidermist** and big names started following me. Kat von D came to London and asked if she could visit, and when she mentioned me on her social media I got 7000 followers overnight! Just like that."



Cranfield's Curiosity Cabinet has been in business on London Road, Leigh-on-Sea, for six years now. James takes great pride in the fact that his is one of the very few taxidermy shops in England. "We're generally open by appointment only. Most of our sales come through the internet. I'm very lucky to have my family closely involved. My dad has been massively supportive and he travels all over the place to work tattoo conventions with me. It takes so long to pack everything and transport it carefully, and he's pretty much the only person I would trust. For the London show we need an extra pair of hands though, so my mum helps out too."



James's passion is all-consuming. "It's not just taxidermy," he tells me. "It's everything that's interesting and a little bit strange. I would love to specialise – human skulls, for instance, or maybe the work of one particular taxidermist – but I can't! I'm obsessed with everything. I love the macabre stuff, the animal stuff, and even quirky shit. Good stuff and crap stuff... I love it all. Believe it or not, crap taxidermy actually has a following."

I ask James about his customers. "Tattoo artists make up a large percentage of my clientele," he tells me. "They often buy the human skulls, although these are getting harder to find now. Sometimes I might have ten or more examples in the shop, other times I won't have any. Lots of my customers are building collections. They might be putting together a wall of insects for instance, and they'll buy one every couple of months. Because I have so many contacts, I often get first dibs on something exotic before it goes to auction."

I am surprised to learn that modern taxidermists often have their own individual loyal followings. James also tells me there are some very famous names from the past whose work is highly sought-after and increasingly collectable. "Good stuff is making phenomenal money at auction now," he continues, "and if I see something I really want then I'll spend every last penny to get it. The trouble is, in a business like this you never have enough ready cash and if you spend too much you just find yourself sitting in a room full of dead things... Conversely, there have been some things that I've regretted selling. But I have had some wins. When I was at university I bought something for £16, did my research and sold it for £2000. That's a great return, especially when you're a student." And what about James's own collection? "Yes, there are definitely a few things I'd love to acquire," he tells me. "I want a male gorilla skull, a manatee skull and a moose head, and I'm always on the look-out for antique taxidermy by the top names."







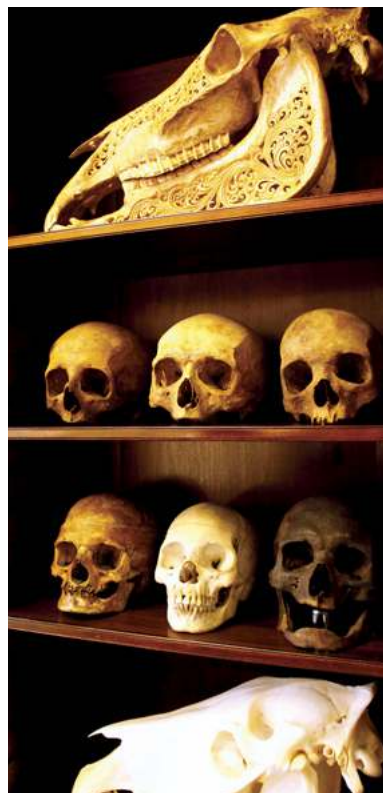
I ask James if he has a favourite piece in his collection, or a piece that he regards as being of particular significance. “Possibly the stuffed lion’s head called ‘Rufus’,” he replies. “It’s an important piece, from 1934, and was mounted by arguably one of the most famous big cat taxidermists – Van Ingen & Van Ingen of India. Not only is it valuable, it’s also sentimental for me because it was in a secondhand shop opposite the bus stop where I used to wait to go to school. It was never for sale... then one day it was! I spent all my money on it – £280 – and it was in a terrible state. My great-grandmother on her deathbed gave me the money to have it restored, so to me it’s priceless.”

“There are some exceptional taxidermists working today,” James continues, “but I personally prefer the antique stuff. The heyday for taxidermy was during the Victorian era and the pre-war years. I guess from about 1880 to 1940.”

The word ‘taxidermy’ was first used in 1803 in a publication by Louis Dufresne of the Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle in Paris. It comes from the Greek words ‘*taxis*’ and ‘*derma*’ (‘skin’). James explains how the artform developed alongside a growing fascination with the natural world and the dawn of the modern age of foreign travel, then fell out of favour as society changed in the post-war period. “Taxidermy is very much associated with the days of the British Empire. Big-game hunting was a popular pursuit amongst army personnel stationed around the world, and the stuffed animals would be shipped home to be displayed. After the war however, during the 1950s and 60s, people would inherit this stuff but not have room for it in their houses, so a lot of it ended up in skips. In the last few years though, this antique taxidermy has become hugely desirable and the prices are starting to rocket.”



James feels there is a great deal of popular misconception around taxidermy. For him, a deep love and respect for animals is at the core of what he does. I ask him if he has been on the receiving end of any disapproval or protest. "Surprisingly we haven't had too much," he tells me. "We did get shouted at during the London Convention one year. They called us murderers. But I'm always willing and happy to discuss the subject with people, even if it's a heated debate and we're poles apart in our opinions. We're probably never going to agree, and that's OK, but I always hope people will hear my point of view and have all the facts before jumping to their own conclusions. When I first opened Cranfield's Curiosity Cabinet someone banged on the door and was shouting abuse at us. I went to calm them down, and I put it to them that my shop is no different to a natural history museum – except that here, you can buy the exhibits."

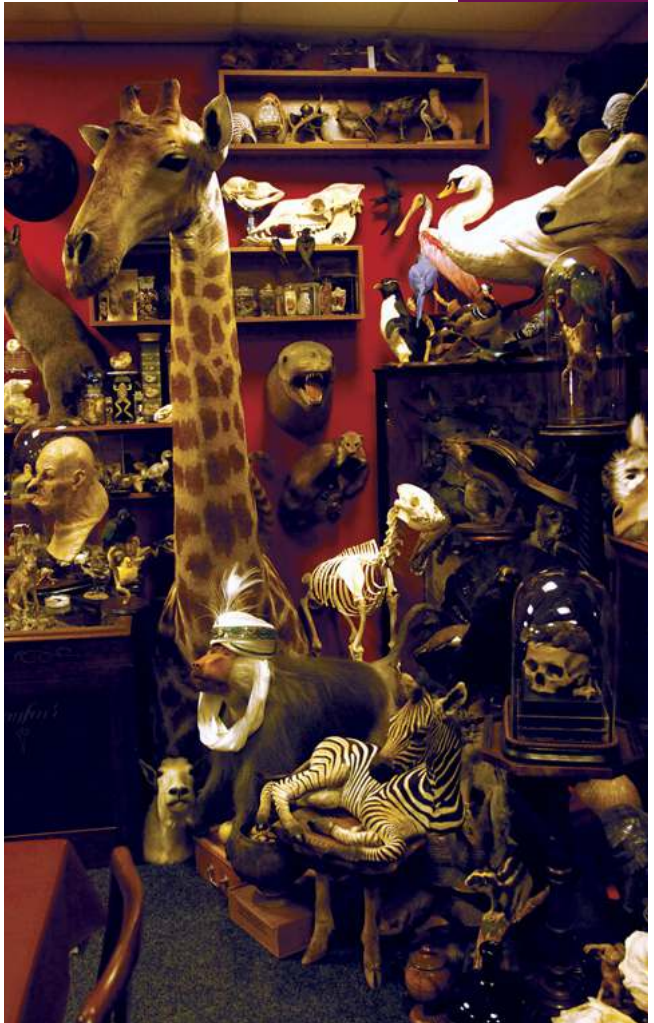




“Whenever I post a photo of a wild animal piece, I always explain that it's an antique – a piece of history – and then even if people don't like taxidermy, they can appreciate that this object is being well looked after, and that it's being passed down for another generation to value. If a species has gone extinct, this may be all that is left.” James has always been a great believer in education. “Before I started my business,” he tells me, “I used to run an after-school club where I would take specimens in for children to draw and talk about.”

The laws and regulations around taxidermy are strict and complex, and when you're buying and selling like James you need to have the correct licences. “It's so easy to fall foul of the law, especially if you don't stay up-to-date, but I am squeaky clean. You have to be if you run a shop like mine. Things are even more complicated if you want to import from abroad, which is why most of my stock is sourced from within the UK. I am so passionate about what I do that I don't want to risk anything! I don't own a house, I don't have children, I just have this and it's all I want. I live and breathe taxidermy.”

Looking to the future, James would love to find a larger property to buy that can house his ever-growing collection, preferably with some form of living quarters above. Until that happens he can be found at 1193 London Road, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3JJ. Give him a ring on 07763 051040 and go visit the shop; you'll be glad you did.



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**'I LOVE IT  
WHEN YOU GET  
INTO A PIECE  
AND DRIFT OFF  
INTO THE  
IMAGE...'**

# **KIRSTEN PETTITT**



**O**riginally from Sutton Coldfield, Kirsten Pettitt has recently taken a pew at The Church Tattoo in Redditch near Birmingham. Art has always played a big role in her life and her natural talent shines through in everything she does. We went to take communion one wet weekend in November.

"I've always loved art," Kirsten begins, "right through school, my foundation course and my degree. I loved it all – illustration, painting, sculpture – but I did especially well at life drawing."

"It was actually my brother's fault that I got into tattooing. We used to go to Dado's Tattoo Studio in Birmingham. I would draw the designs and they would tattoo them on. The first convention I went to was Ink & Iron. I did actually ask various people for advice on whether I should start tattooing, but everyone told me not to bother as it was far too competitive. So I just forgot about it, and was quite happy following art through university. But when my degree course ended, and I knew there was nothing else that I wanted to do, I thought fuck it I'll give it a try!"

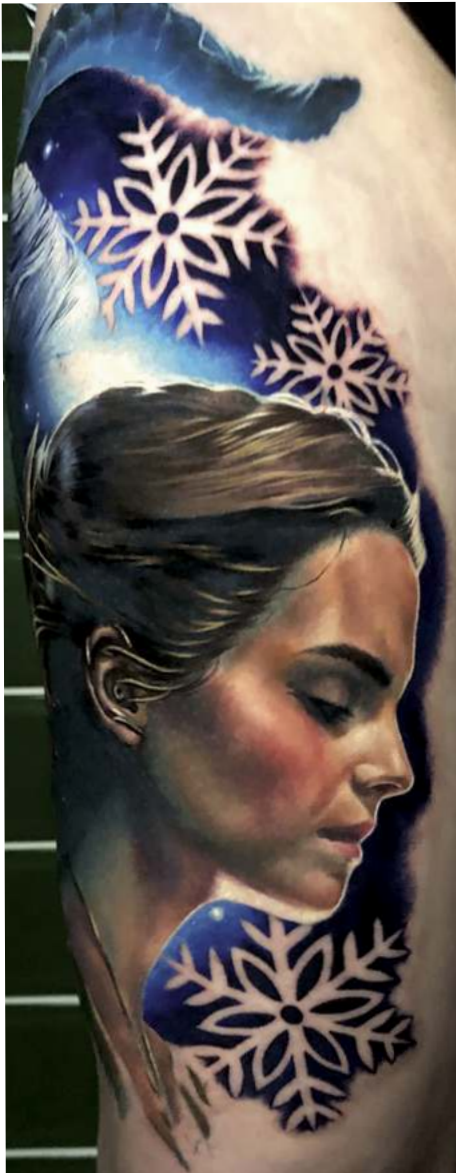
"I began working at Vivid Ink," Kirsten continues, "with Jamie Lee Knott. I was there for a month, and then he set up The Dark Horse Collective in Sutton Coldfield and so I just moved with him and he continued to teach me. Vivid Ink got a lot of work, so it was the kind of place where you could get good quick by doing all sorts of styles, but it was long hours and not many breaks. And the customer was always right, even when they were wrong! But it gave you the skills to then decide where you wanted to go artistically." Kirsten's apprenticeship was super quick. "I worked really hard," she tells me. "It was only a year and a half in total, but I guess once you're ready, you're ready."





During her time at The Dark Horse Collective, Kirsten found her feet in tattooing. "I owe those guys a lot," she tells me. "It was great working there. I really enjoyed it. They were super supportive in helping me to develop, and I built up a strong client base. Jamie was amazing, and so was Rich Harris. Rich invited me to go with him to loads of conventions. That attitude of pushing yourself and getting out there really helped me to grow. Originally I thought I wanted to specialise in traditional – because I loved drawing in that kind of style, and of course it's so much part of what Jamie does, so it just seemed logical – but Jamie somehow knew that I would go into colour realism. He felt that I should be more realistic in my tattoos, like in my paintings. He taught me how to line and how to shade; but he didn't teach me realism as such. One day I put up a picture of a colour rose that I'd painted, and even though Jamie didn't think I was ready to tattoo it, I did it anyway. Fortunately it came out OK! From then on I was pretty much just doing realism. It just snowballed."





With things going so well, Kirsten stayed at The Dark Horse Collective for four and half years. So why move? "I felt I was stuck in a bubble," she confesses. "I grew up just around the corner from the studio, so I knew everyone, and I just kind of wanted to break away. It felt very comfortable being there, but I knew it was time to move on. I needed to push myself and experience a change."

One of the biggest challenges for many realism artists is their customers' lack of

imagination. People always seem to want those same familiar images of favourite movie characters! Kirsten has her own way of approaching this. "Yes, a lot of my clients do come to me with a particular image in mind, but most of the time I choose the reference myself because I know what's going to work well on the skin. It needs to have depth, contrast and shadow. Usually I have the design done and ready before they arrive. That way, I know it's going to be a decent tattoo."



Kirsten has become known for her slightly surreal double-eye portraits, and I was curious to know the origin of these. "The one with the red tones was the first. It was actually my client's idea. I thought it worked extremely well and I loved doing it. And I hadn't seen any other realism artists producing that kind of thing. And of course once it went up on social media... Now I'm doing loads! I still love conventional portraits of course, but doing tattoos of actors and celebrities that everybody knows can feel so restricting. There's only so far you can take a realistic portrait, and there's not much room for creativity. That's why I'm developing my own designs. I want to stand out, and create something new."





Kirsten has now reached that enviable point in her career when many clients are giving her carte blanche. "I'm so happy to have the freedom to create cool designs. But lots of people obviously find it difficult to relinquish control completely, and I do get that. After all, it's their tattoo and they will have to live with it. There's no denying people feel more comfortable knowing what they're going to get, and it takes a bit of courage to let go and allow a tattooist to do their thing." She then laughs and adds, "Then again, you wouldn't tell Picasso exactly how he should paint your portrait!" Even if it meant you might end up with two sets of eyes...

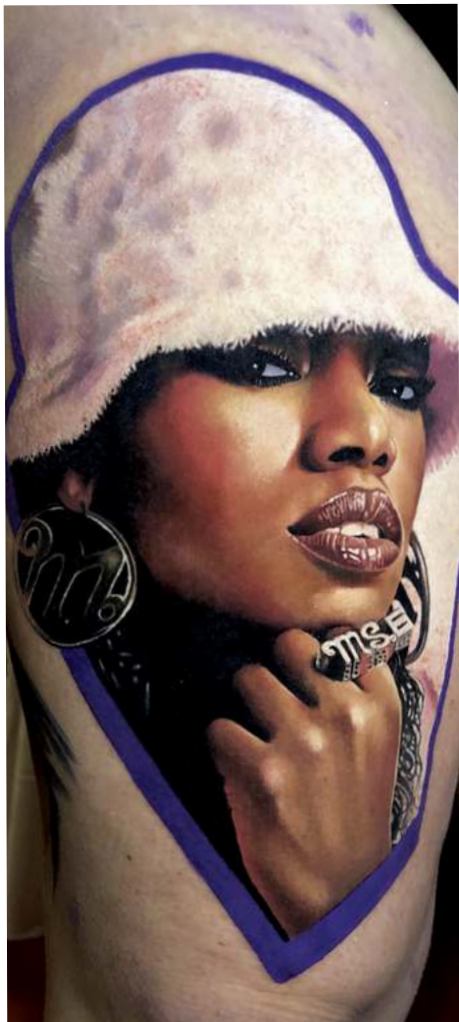
Like most artists, Kirsten is very critical of her own work. When pushed to identify the elements that make it stand out, her natural modesty tends to get the better of her. "I just notice the things I can improve on," she says. "I guess fundamentally my tattoo style reflects my background in painting. People comment on the contrast, but I'm not sure I see that myself. I certainly use a lot of colour, and I try to get as much shape and form into my work as I can. I put lots of blues and greens in the flesh tones - and that's a direct result of my art training. Most people wouldn't see the blue and green, but skin isn't just made up of 'skin colours'; it's much more complex than that."



"When I'm tattooing I do tend to flit about all over the design. I'm not like a black and grey artist who starts at the bottom and works their way up line-by-line; I do bits at the bottom, then bits at the top, and all over." Having learnt her so much of her trade from a traditional specialist, Kirsten usually lays down the darker tones and blacks first, then slowly works through the midtones to the lighter colours and finally the white highlights. This is in complete contrast to how she was taught to paint, where she starts with the lighter tones and works back to black. "The two disciplines really do complement each other," she says.

Kirsten is aware of the particular trauma that realism can impose on the skin, and she is always keen to advise her client on how to ensure the best possible results. "Yeah, realism can scab up pretty badly, because of all the layering in such a small area. I always use SecondSkin, especially for the first few days as that's when the tattoo is at its most vulnerable."





We move on to talk about the many positive attributes of modern inks. Kirsten is sponsored by Fusion Ink. "They got me a booth at the Golden State Tattoo Expo in California at the end of January," she tells me, "where I'll be doing my first ever three-day piece! Fusion are really good. They send me inks whenever I need them. I haven't had to buy ink for ages. Actually, apart from the odd colour by Intenze or Eternal, I've only ever used Fusion. I love their range of colours. When I find something that works for me, I don't tend to change things up much. I'm like that with machines too. I use an FK Irons Xion and Kwadron needles, although I would also like to try some other needles in the future."



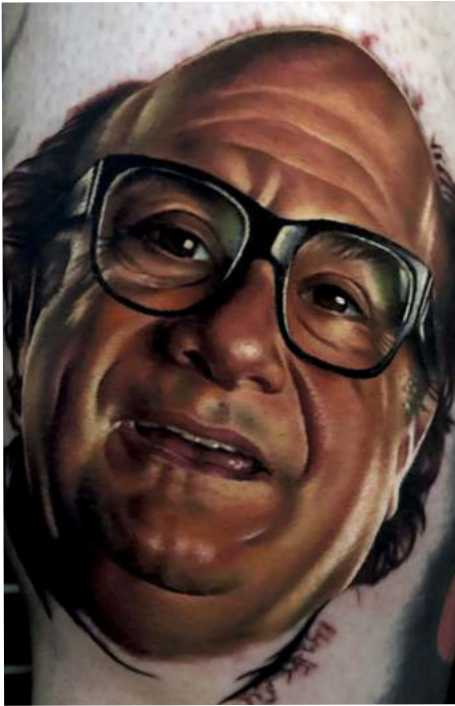
Kirsten is a regular face on the convention circuit and her work can often be seen on the competition stage. "I really do enjoy conventions," she tells me, "but there are so many of them now, and they're not all good, so you need to be selective. Until recently I'd always entered the competitions, but at the Brussels convention I decided not to - and it was so nice not having that

pressure to finish on time. It was good to be able to focus purely on the tattoo, rather than on both the tattoo and the clock. It was also great to be able to relax and enjoy the show. Convention days are long enough as it is!"

"Tattooists are under such pressure to perform now," Kirsten continues. "You are only as good as your last tattoo. In fact I seem to have slowly become a bit of a workaholic. I don't really go out drinking anymore. I just really focus on my work. I just want to get better and better, both technically and artistically. I want to get more and more creative, and I want to attend as many conventions as I can, to get really inspired. I particularly love seeing all the collaborations that are going at the moment."

It's a real pleasure to hear Kirsten talking about her enjoyment of tattooing, and about how she would like to develop her style in the future. "I'd like to maybe





make my work a little more relaxed, and perhaps introduce a more painterly aspect. I love it when you get into a piece and you almost drift off into the image... but then sometimes it can seem to be taking ages. You have to focus in on one area at a time, and every now and then step back to get a feel for the whole design. Especially with the faces with four eyes! You have to just concentrate on one at a time or it all goes a bit weird!!"

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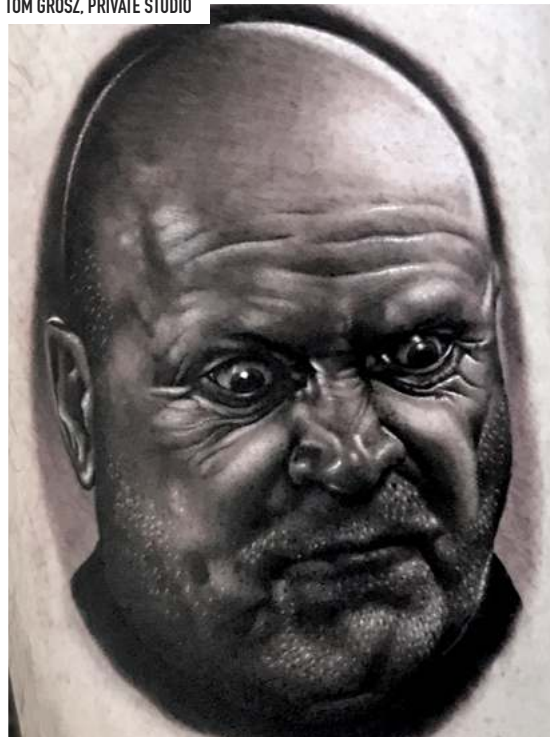
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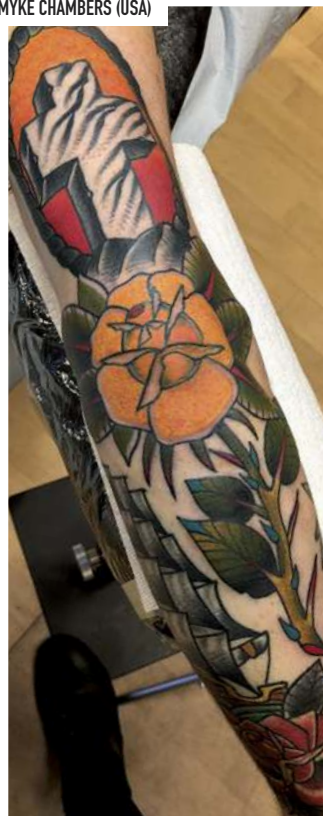
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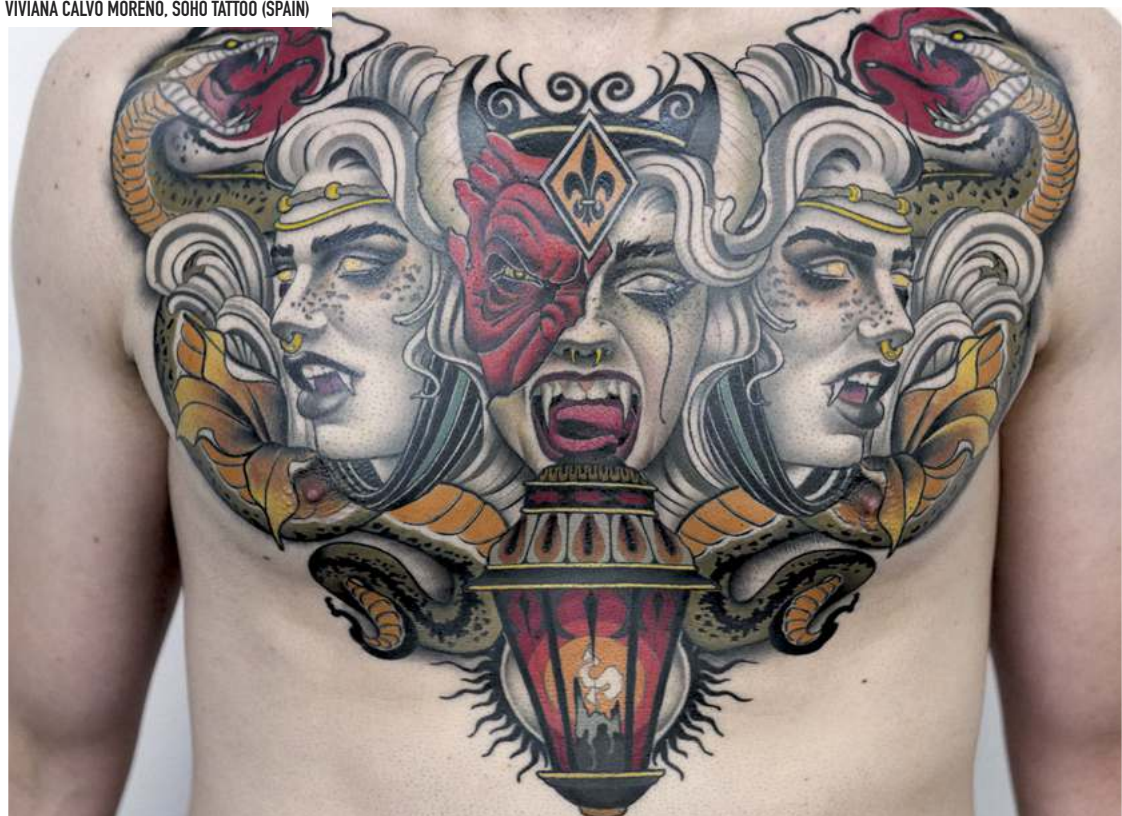


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A Total Tattoo feature with contributions from Mike Kruse (Shagbuilt) & Dave Bryant

# LOYAL TO THE COIL

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## A CENTURY AND A HALF OF ELECTRIC TATTOOING

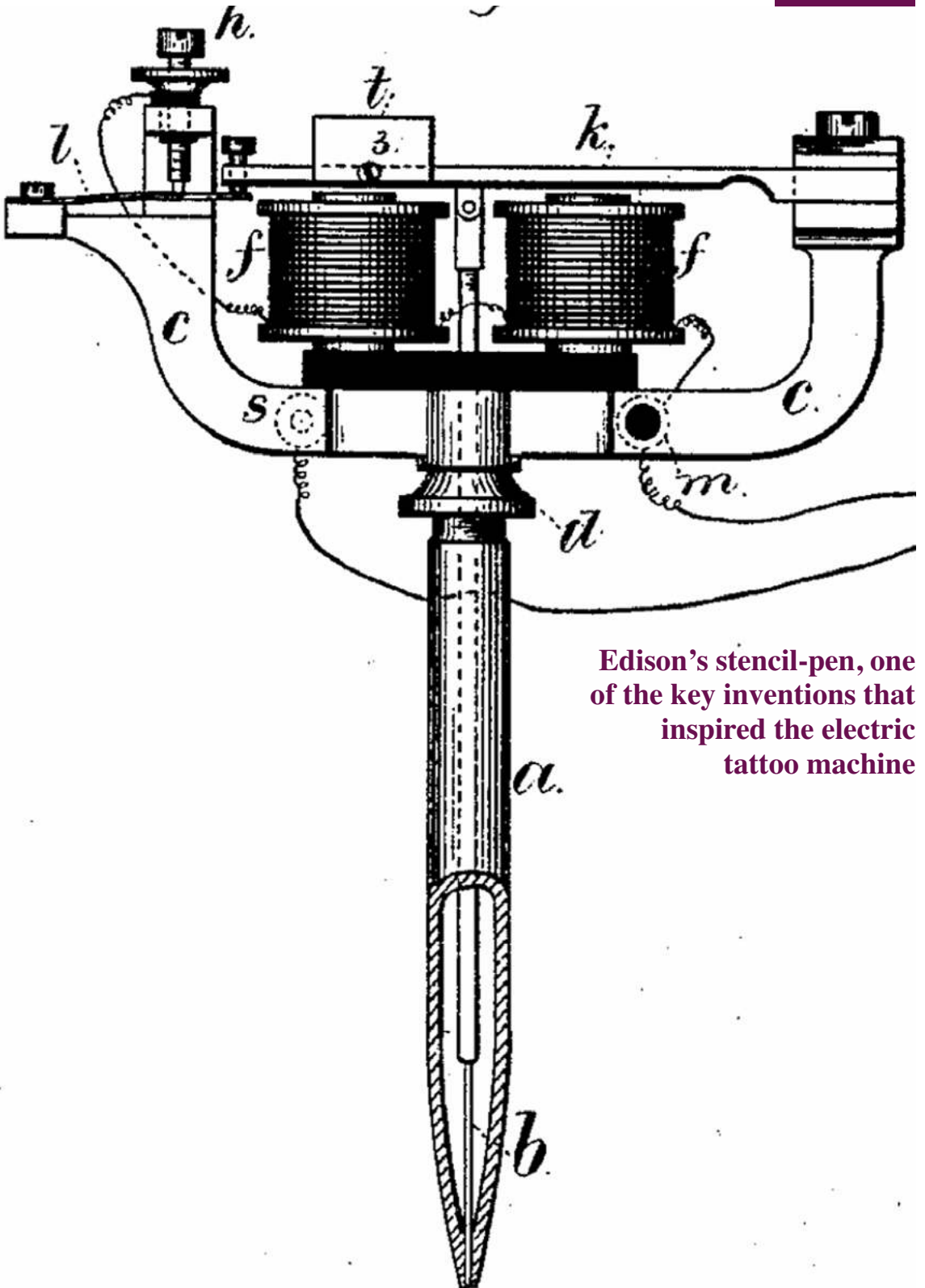
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**As anyone in the tattoo trade will know, there's been a resurgence in the popularity of coil machines. For a while it seemed that modern rotaries might eclipse the good old-fashioned coil. But, like vinyl records and printed books, these stalwarts of tattooing have unique and special qualities that people just don't want to lose. Coils have a loyal fanbase that is steadily growing.**

There's an undeniable beauty to a well-tuned coil machine. They are infinitely adjustable and can be customised to suit a whole variety of different requirements and perform in different ways – faster or slower, harder or softer, as liners, shaders or colour blockers. There's a romance to a well-tuned coil machine, almost like a vintage car or a classic motorbike.

With the help of machine builders Mike Kruse and Dave Bryant, we're going to find out just why those in the know believe it's definitely not yet time for the humble traditional machine to shuffle off this mortal coil!

Here in Part One, we set the scene with a beginners' guide to the history of coil machines and how they work. The story begins almost 150 years ago...



Edison's stencil-pen, one of the key inventions that inspired the electric tattoo machine

# THE BIRTH OF MACHINE TATTOOING

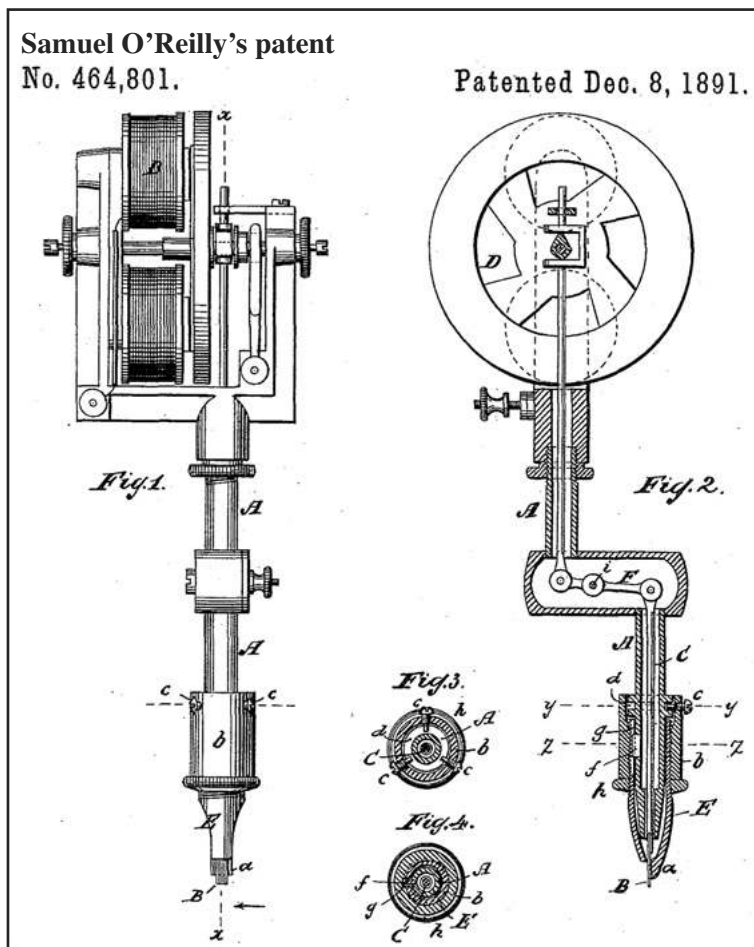
The evolution of all tattoo machines, both rotaries and coils, can be traced back to a neat little handheld device patented in 1876 by Thomas Edison (the famous American inventor who also pioneered the electric light bulb). Called the 'stencil-pen', it speeded up the copying of documents and was an early example of electrical office equipment in the steam-powered Victorian era.

Edison's stencil-pen was used for drawing or writing in the normal way, except that instead of releasing ink, it punched a series of minute perforations in the paper. This created a stencil that could then be used for reproducing accurate copies of the document. The stencil-pen came as part of a duplicating kit that included a small cast-iron flatbed printing press and an ink roller, plus the huge battery that provided the stencil-pen with its electric power, mounted on a cast-iron stand. In an advert of the time, its operation was described as *"Like Kissing... Every Succeeding Impression is as Good as the First. Endorsed By Everyone Who Has Tried It! Only a Gentle Pressure Used."*

The story (perhaps apocryphal) is that famous New York Bowery tattooist Samuel O'Reilly spotted Edison's device in a shop window and, in a

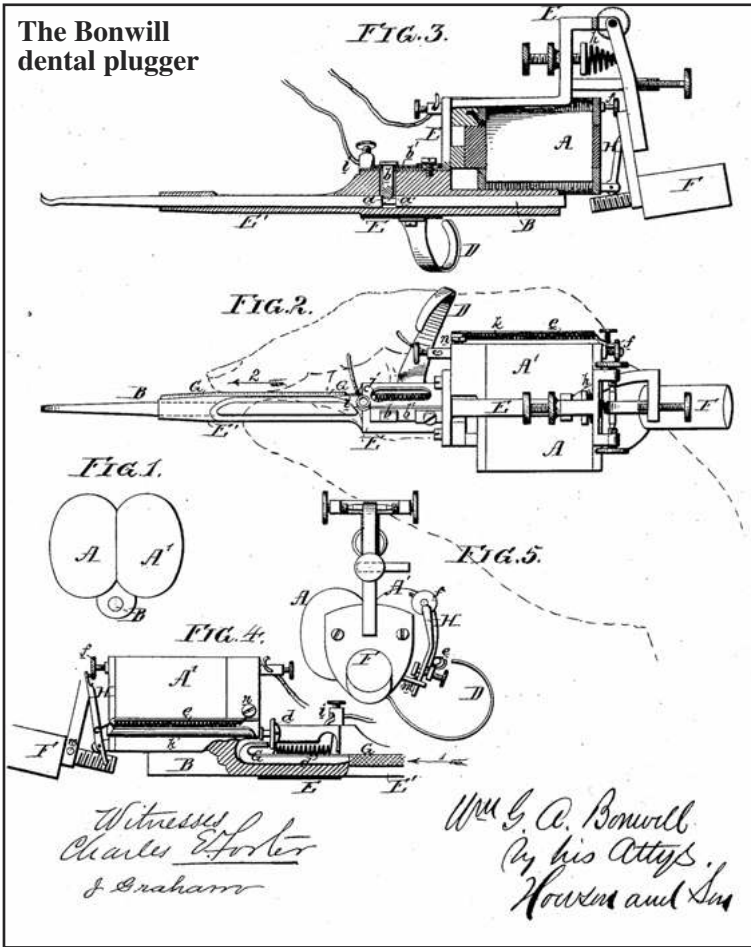
spectacular example of lateral thinking, realised that it could also be used for tattooing. He worked out that the stencil-pen could hold a hollow needle (or multiple needles) instead of Edison's solid stylus, and that ink (from a reservoir) could be pushed through the perforations at the same time as they were being created. In other words, it could be used for puncturing the skin and simultaneously inserting ink to create a tattoo... powered by electricity.

Samuel O'Reilly is credited with patenting the very first electric tattoo machine in 1891. This was at a time when electrically powered gadgets were still a very new thing; they weren't part of everyday life in the way they are now. So the whole field was open to discovery and invention, and many tattooists were experimenting with innovative devices. (No doubt many less-than-successful ideas are now lost in the mists of time.) One other device that is worthy of note is the tattoo machine lookalike 'dental plugger', used for hammering fillings into teeth, invented by William Bonwill and believed to have been adapted for use by a number of tattooists.\*



\*If you're interested in learning more about these pioneering inventions (or any other aspect of tattoo history), it's well worth taking a look at Carmen Nyssen's excellent and thoroughly researched Buzzworthy website. Here's a link to her in-depth article on early electric tattoo machines: [www.buzzworthytattoo.com/tattoo-history-research-articles/early-tinkerers-of-electric-tattooing/](http://www.buzzworthytattoo.com/tattoo-history-research-articles/early-tinkerers-of-electric-tattooing/)

## The Bonwill dental plugger

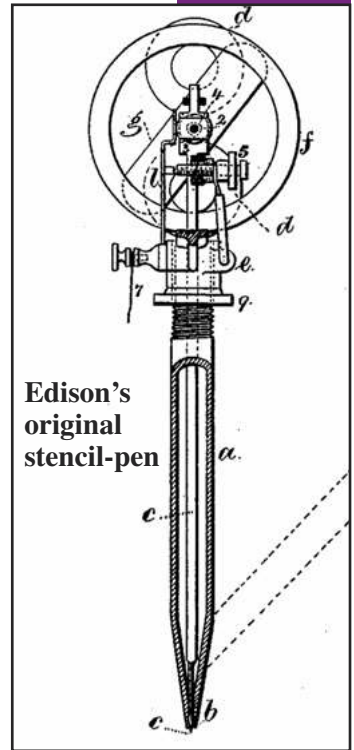


All these new machines made tattooing much faster. They offered improved accuracy too, and the fluency of working in this way would eventually lead to new directions in tattoo design. It was still early days though. There certainly wasn't a commercial market for tattoo machines as such. That would come with the next development, inspired by the electric doorbell. But let's pause for a moment to look at exactly how tattoo machines work.

## THE MAGIC OF ELECTROMAGNETISM

A tattoo machine is basically an array of needles fed by a reservoir of ink and attached to an electric motor. The difference between a rotary and a coil is the way the needles get moved.

In a rotary machine, a small encased electric motor powers a flywheel, and the rotation of this flywheel is smoothly converted into the linear backwards-and-forwards motion of the needles. Picture the pistons and wheels of an old-fashioned steam locomotive. It's a similar kind of geometry. In fact it's even been suggested that this might have been what inspired Edison's stencil-pen invention in the first place. So, rather interestingly, Samuel O'Reilly's pioneering invention was technically a rotary rather than a coil.

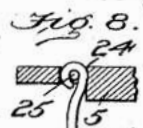
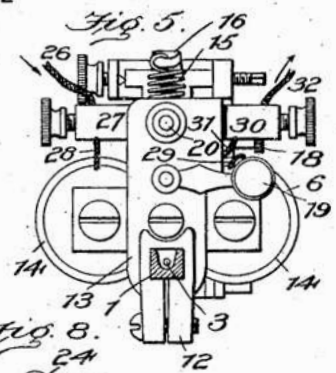
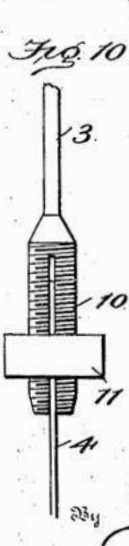
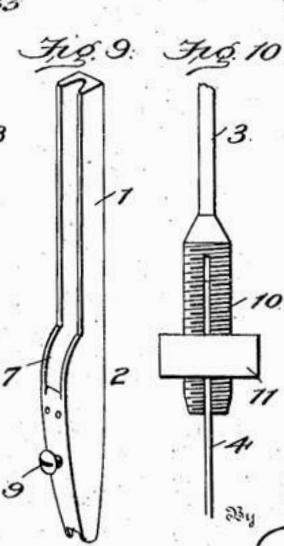
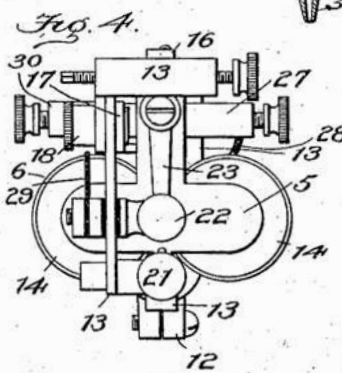
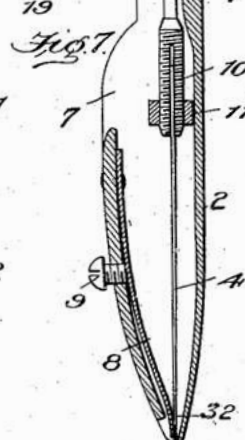
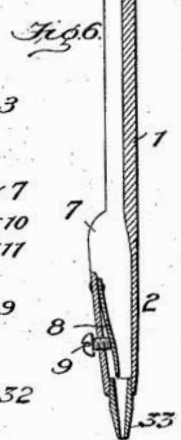
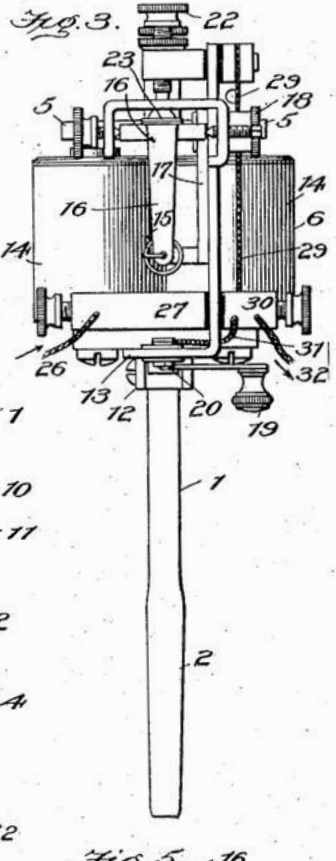
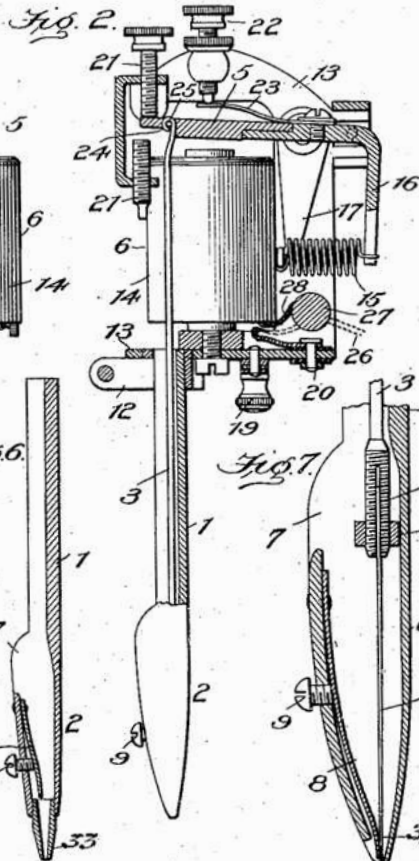
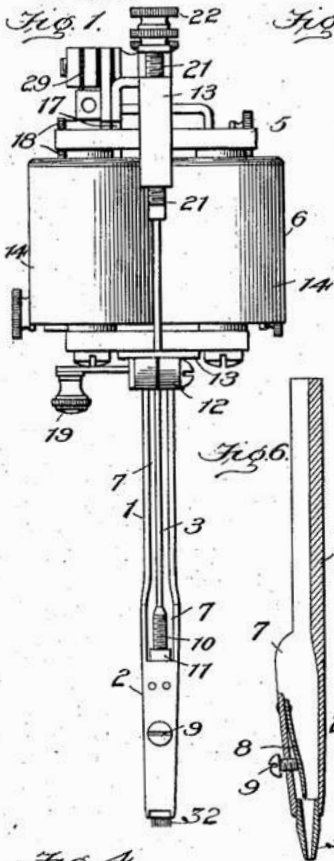


Coil machines are all about the magical connection between electricity and magnetism. If you run an electric current through a wire, a magnetic field will automatically be generated around that wire. But it's not much use for anything, because it's very weak. Wind that wire into a coil (around a core made of a material such as iron that will itself become magnetised) and you're in business. You've got yourself an electromagnet. And this is what's at the heart of a coil machine – and why they're called exactly that!

The key thing about an electromagnetic field is that it's only there when the current is on. No current, no magnetic field. This is important when it comes to understanding exactly how a coil machine works. It's the constant breaking and re-establishing of the electrical circuit that creates a coil machine's characteristic rapid-fire hammer action and buzz.

C. WAGNER.  
TATTOOING DEVICE.  
APPLICATION FILED APR. 10, 1904.

NO MODEL.



Witnesses  
Edwin L. Bradford  
Anne B. Johnson

Inventor  
Charles Wagner.  
John Johnson  
Attorneys



Coil machines contain a spring-loaded armature bar that pivots up and down. When this armature bar is in its 'up' position, it completes the circuit that sends power to the coils. This activates the magnetic field, which attracts the armature bar down towards the coils, immediately breaking the circuit. With no current there's no magnetic field, so the armature bar is released, allowing the spring to pull it back up again... And the cycle is repeated over and over again, providing the rapid up-and-down action that drives the needles.

Edison also patented a 'coil' version of his stencil-pen – an alternative to his earlier 'rotary' version – but he never actually manufactured it. Here's how he described it in the patent document, hinting at the possibility of 'tuning' the device or adjusting its set-up:

*"I reciprocate the perforating-needle with great rapidity by means of a reed or bar acting to open and close a circuit to an electro-magnet, and I employ an adjustable weight to vary the speed of vibration."*

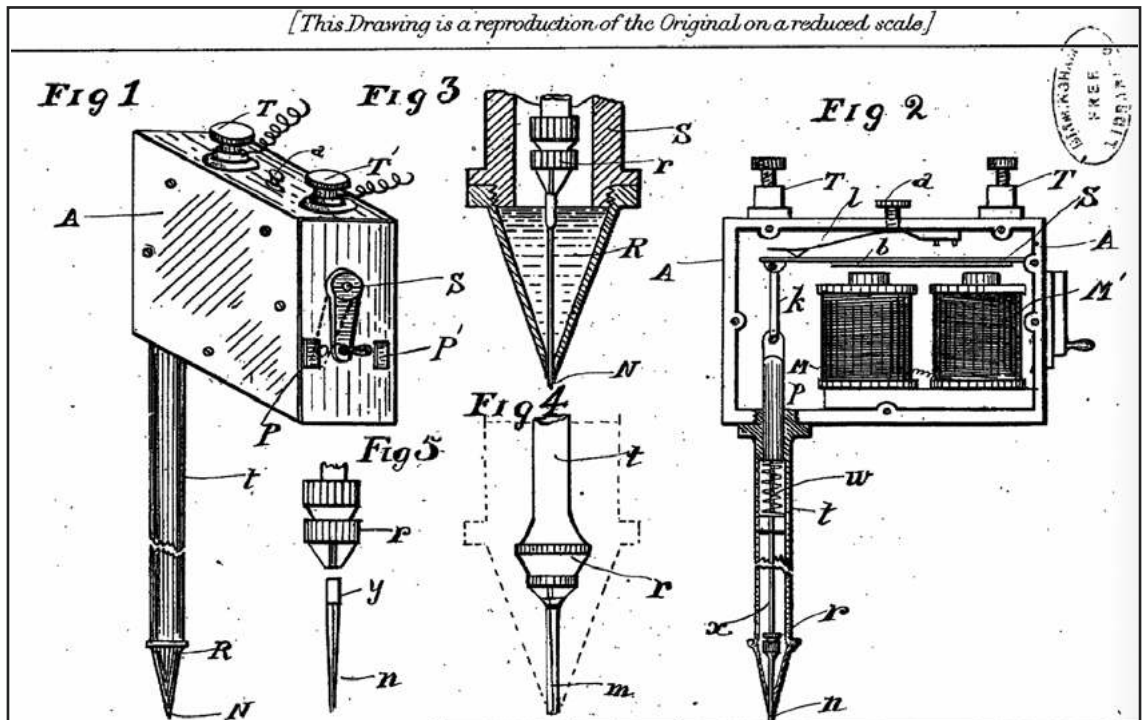
*When the weight is moved toward the point of attachment of the reed, the reed will be free to vibrate; but when moved toward the moving end of the reed the speed of motion will be lessened. A pivoted lever and spring might be employed [instead of the reed]."*

The principle of breaking and re-establishing an electromagnetic circuit is of course also the mechanism of the electric doorbell, which was just coming into use at that time. A number of tattooists were inspired to develop machines based on the idea, but the invention that is reckoned to be the true precursor of today's familiar dual-coil machines is Londoner Alfred Charles South's 'Apparatus for Tattooing the Skin', patented in England in 1900 (although its heavy box construction, involving a lot of solid Victorian brass, meant it had to be suspended from the ceiling to relieve the weight on the tattooist's hand and wrist!)



Charlie Wagner

Meanwhile, over in America, well-known New York Bowery tattooist Charlie Wagner patented his 'Tattooing Device' in 1904. This innovative machine incorporated interchangeable needles and a screw that enabled the tension of the armature bar spring to be adjusted – the forerunner of the modern contact screw.



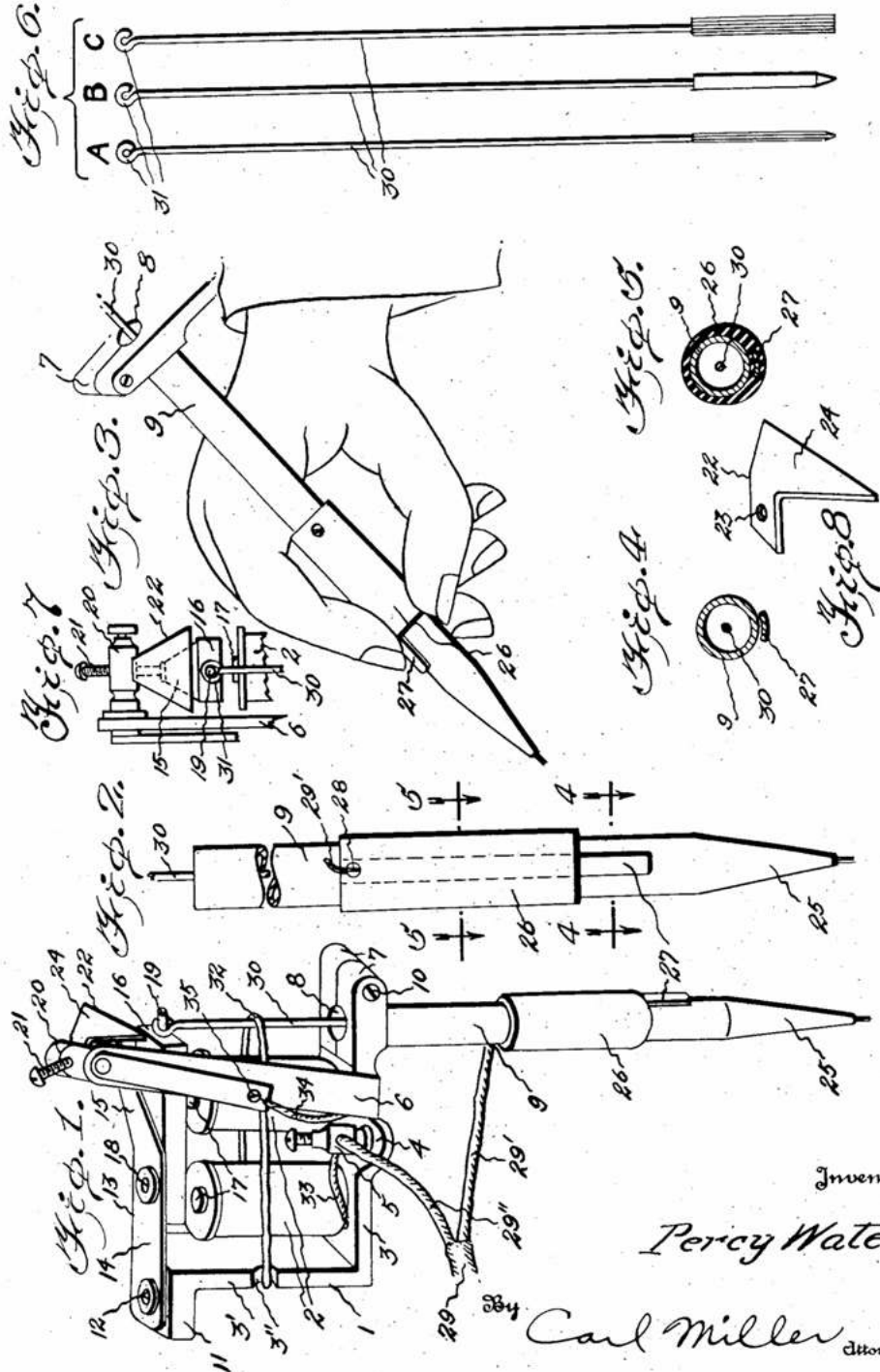
Aug. 13, 1929.

P. WATERS

1,724,812

ELECTRIC TATTOOING DEVICE

Filed Jan. 30, 1929



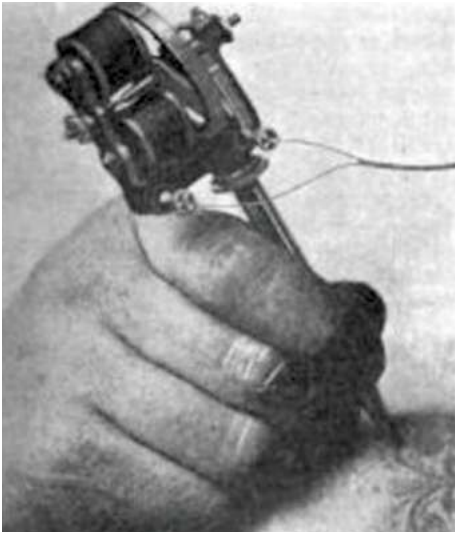
Inventor

Percy Waters

Carl Miller

Attorney

Coil machines were now widely commercially available, with numerous tattooists making and selling them. But generally speaking these early machines couldn't be tuned or adjusted to any great extent; they couldn't even be taken apart to be cleaned, as the tubes were usually welded into place. The modern era of machine building was ushered in by Percy Waters of Detroit. The classic design he patented in 1929, with leaf springs instead of spiral compression springs, will be instantly recognisable as a standard coil machine to any tattooist working today.



## TODAY'S COIL MACHINES

Dave Bryant neatly defines machine building as being all about “improving this tool to keep up with the expansion of possibility in modern tattooing.” Today's builders are standing on the shoulders of giants – Cap Coleman, Norman 'Sailor Jerry' Collins, Owen Jensen, Paul Rogers and Milton Zeis to name but a few – and the progress continues.

**'Coil machines are embedded in the rich history of tattooing – just like all the old tattoo imagery we still use'**

- Mike Kruse

“People are still coming up with new tricks, and building machines in new and interesting ways,” says Mike Kruse. Then he adds, “As a machine builder, one of the biggest compliments you can have is to see someone using your equipment. For me, it's a really nice feeling to know that my machines help tattooers put money in their pockets while being something enjoyable to use and own at the same time.”

“While rotaries are being used a lot more these days as an efficient means to an end,” says Mike, “I think hand-built coil machines will always hold a special place. As a builder who makes both rotaries and coils, I tend to look at tattoo machines for what they are: a tool to make our job easier and more enjoyable, allowing us to focus on the artistic side of our profession.”

“Yes, coils can be a bit more cantankerous, but that very fact also lends them a personality,” Mike continues. “Most of us tend to be more sentimental about coil machines than we are about rotaries. We typically view them as having more of a 'soul'. Looking to the future, I believe we will always be using coil machines in one form or another. They are embedded in the rich history of tattooing – just like all the old tattoo imagery we still use.”

“Hand-built machines certainly have more soul,” agrees Dave. “They're usually one-offs or small runs and you can see the evidence of the builder's labour. But does a one-off coffee table support a drink any better than a mass-produced one? I guess it all depends on whether folk value such things or not, and what's important to you about the machine in your hand – its aesthetic, its longevity, and so on.”

“Really the tattoo, the end result, is all that matters,” Dave continues. “I care that I pulled those tight 3 lines perfectly with an Aaron Cain one-off, but would it mean the same to my client? And of course the instant gratification culture in which we live means some tattooists are put off by the wait times for hand-made machines.”

“There’s a real coolness factor to owning and using a hand-crafted tool,” Mike asserts, “and hand-built machines can be tailored to the customer’s exact needs. Coil machines definitely work best when they’re designed and tuned for a specific task.”

Dave emphatically agrees. “I truly believe nothing puts lines in like a well-built coil. Yeah, they’re noisy and the springs break, contacts wear out, and they’re heavier, but they can also last forever with proper care and maintenance.”

**And that’s exactly what we’ll be talking about with Mike, Dave and others next month in LOYAL TO THE COIL PART 2.**



**'Hand-built coil machines definitely have more soul'**

**- Dave Bryant**



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**Since it opened in the summer of 2014, The Dark Horse Collective in Birmingham has established itself as a powerhouse of creative tattooing, with many great artists benefitting from moving through its ranks.**

Standing quietly in the background is co-owner Jamie Lee Knott, a somewhat understated talent who seems more than happy to allow his work to speak for him. Jamie's influence on tattooing now spreads beyond Dark Horse, as you can read elsewhere in this issue of Total Tattoo, in our interview with Kirsten Pettitt, who was taught by Jamie before taking her talent out into the world.



'THE MORE SKULLS  
I DO, THE MORE  
SKULLS SEEM TO  
BOOK IN.  
I'M HAPPY TO DO  
SKULLS EVERYDAY'

# JAMIE LEE KNOTT



Jamie explained how The Dark Horse Collective was born. 'Rich Harris and I were working at Vivid Ink in Birmingham. I'd been tattooing for about a year before I joined them. Rich started work as the apprentice a few months later and we worked together in a little room upstairs. We got on really well; we both had plans to open our own studio and talked about it a couple of times. Next thing, Rich booked to see this place. We walked in and within five minutes we'd agreed to sign the lease! Three weeks later we were open.'

Surprisingly, Jamie confesses that he was turned down to do art at university as he was not considered good enough. Instead he opted to do a journalism course. 'I just wanted the university lifestyle; I had no qualifications and the journalism course was easy to get on, so I took it. A friend of mine started tattooing out of his dorm. I tried it and loved it but I certainly wasn't naturally talented. It was difficult plus I'm colour blind, so of course I decided to become a neo-trad colour blind tattoo artist!

'I tried to improve by watching YouTube and Geoff Gogue and Joshua Carlton DVDs. I studied loads of health and safety information before I ever touched anybody's skin. I eventually went with a friend to do a little tattoo in front of a guy called Martin Jackson at Hearts and Daggers Tattoo. He must have seen something there as he took me under his







wing. I thought it would be easy but as soon as I picked up the machine I thought "Fuck this is really bloody hard." It took about two years to do a decent line.

'Martin helped me a lot and got me a job with Dan Mountford at Eyecandy in Willenhall. I was there for about a year before I was offered the job at Vivid Ink. That's where I excelled because they were so busy. I did everything that came in so I got used to working fast. I was tattooing solidly from 10 in the morning to 8 or 9 at night. It took my tattooing to another level so quickly.'

Jamie and Rich work closely together and clearly get on very well. Apart from a minor disagreement over decorating the studio, they've never had a cross word. What was the plan for the studio when they opened it? 'We never really had one' Jamie confessed. 'It just grew as it went along. We wanted to relax a bit and have fun. After a while we got a piercer, then we decided it would be good to get some people to come and work to help to pay the bills. It's little steps forward every now and again. Rich got on to the convention circuit early on. The Halloween Bash was our first show as a shop, and Rich won a trophy so we've worked it ever since. It's a fun local show.'





It's been nearly 10 years since Jamie first picked up a machine. He feels that he may be the last of the technical generation that loves to play with coil machines. 'I appreciate the complexities of a coil machine and I love to tinker. It's a bit of a romantic view and I completely understand the newer generation who love using rotaries. They are simple to use and there is no messing about. I do use them, but I line with a coil; there's no better sound than a well-tuned coil machine. If you know what you're doing, you can be quite gentle and get the ink in well without causing too much trauma to the skin. I run my machines quite slow with a long throw and a strong hit. My machines have a bit of give.'

'There are so many different techniques and we are constantly learning. I've just learnt a new way to pack colour that's the opposite of what I've been doing but it works better and has speeded things up. Every few years you seem to take another major step forward. If I get to the stage where I know everything, it'll be time to give up. But I can't ever see that happening.'

Jamie's work sits comfortably within the genre of "neo trad" although he never set out to work in a particular style. 'I draw stuff the way I like it and fortunately other people seem to like it too. About two years ago I stopped taking on things I didn't want to do, like pocket watches and tribal, to concentrate on my own thing. Within the studio we have all bases covered, so I pass stuff on to the guys who are better suited to other styles. But if it's something fun that's going to challenge me, I might give it a go.' Jamie admits that when drawing a design from scratch, his work tends to have a new school edge to it. So if he's creating something unfamiliar, he will use a source image to ensure the proportions and perspective are correct before stylising it.





'I went through a phase of doing neo-trad portraits. I enjoyed developing that style but truthfully the more skulls I do, the more skulls seem to book in. Skulls are such a timeless image, I'm happy to do one every day. I love using complementary colours and warm tones sitting next to cool tones to create contrast and form. Couple that with some bright, clashing colours to pick out the highlights, and that's me happy.'

Despite owning the studio for five years Jamie still finds it difficult to see himself as a boss. 'Rich and I are tattoo artists first and business people second. We treat the guys that work with us well and try to create a great environment. They don't see us as bosses, more like colleagues. If we got to a point where we were telling people off, it would all fall apart. We all keep our stations clean, we all turn up on time and we come in ready to work. I try to lead by example. All of us have different strengths and we learn so much from each other. Some of the guys are keen on attending conventions and they bring back new ideas and share them with the rest of us.'



Tattoo collaborations are becoming more and more popular and Jamie has done a few himself, working alongside Rich and as a member of the Kaos Theory Project, which involves a group of artists working on a tattoo in pairs then swapping partners each day during the project.

Collaborating has given Jamie the opportunity to work with some big names. 'My first collaboration with Rich was at The Tattoo Tea Party a few years back. We won Best Large Colour and Best of Show. Since then, I've done about ten including one with Vincent Bloodline Zattera and Mike DeVries. That was nerve-wracking because I look up to both of them. But I loved the experience and I'd like to do more collaborations with other artists around the UK.'

Despite perfecting a strong style and having a solid workload, Jamie remains humble and is happy to keep a low profile. 'Rich has inspired me to work more conventions but I don't want to be a big name. I just want to be happy, productive and for my work to be recognised. I would like to work the big shows like London and Paris and I know that means I need to put myself out there a bit more. I want to attend more seminars and continue to develop artistically.'

I asked Jamie if he has ever been invited to do a seminar. 'I have and it's terrifying! It's like when you tattoo another tattooist and you know that everything you do is being scrutinised by

someone who really knows. Teaching a seminar is like that but a hundred times worse! A couple of American artists came over last year and they said that Joshua Carlton wants me to go to America to work at the Evergreen Tattoo Invitational and give a seminar. I learnt to pack colour from Joshua's DVD so the thought of that scares the shit out of me. I think in order to present a seminar I will need to attend about 10 or 15 of them to know what's required.'





Jamie's unique tattoo style is often copied and I wanted to know how he feels about that. 'I used to get pissed off with it. My client has come to me specially and paid for an original design. That originality is lost because someone else doesn't want to make the effort to design their own; they are profiting from my work. People say I should take it as a compliment and I can see that. It wouldn't be so bad if it was a complete scratcher who doesn't know better but there have been a fair few copies by guys who've been tattooing for more than 10 years and they *should* know better. It's when the rip-off is an improvement on mine that I need to worry! Every now and again I'll call someone out on social media for ripping me off and ironically that boosts my social media, which is a good thing. As much as I don't think "likes" should matter, they do. There are sponsorship deals that say, "minimum 10,000 likes" and conventions that won't let you work unless you have X number of followers. It's a great tool for getting clients into the chair. You are selling your soul a little bit but that's just the way things are.'

I wondered if being based in Birmingham had had any effect - positive or negative -

on Jamie's career. 'No, not really. All our work comes through the Internet so a good social media presence is more important than location. We could easily be a private studio. Once the clients are in, we could lock the door and get on with the day. If you are a walk-in studio location is more important. We have talked about moving further out and getting a nice barn conversion off the beaten track, but it would probably be the end of the piercing and laser side of the business.'





Among the artists Jamie looks to for inspiration are Michelle Maddison and Paul Vander Johnson. What is it about these two British artists that stands out for him? 'They were some of the first that I saw doing full saturation pieces with no skin breaks, and that really impressed and inspired me.

'For me, things fell into place when I stopped doing the work that I didn't want to do. Simply by specialising, things took off and I began to enjoy my work. I would love to do more large-scale pieces, but that's as much about building the right clientele as it is about developing a large-scale style of work. I need to draw some





large pieces and offer them at a reduced rate to encourage the clients. It's the law of attraction - people want what they see. I did a colour rose on the side of a guy's neck and posted it on social media. In no time I had about 50 bookings for roses on necks.'

Jamie believes it is important to keep moving forward. 'You have to make sure that every tattoo you do is better than the last. If your work is declining and you're unhappy with what you are doing - which happened to me about a year ago - at that point you need to be inspired by the guys around you. Maybe go to a great convention and see what amazing work is going on. I can take inspiration from every style and everywhere. For me the most important thing is always to be moving forward and always trying to improve.'

Before we finished I asked Jamie if there was anything he wanted to add. 'I want to thank the guys at Butterluxe for my artists' series aftercare. I was using it for a couple of months and then Lewis from Butterluxe got in touch and asked if I wanted to be sponsored by them. My aftercare was only supposed to be a limited edition but it's been so popular that they've kept it on full time. It's nice to think there are people out there using aftercare with a scent I've chosen and packaging I've designed.'

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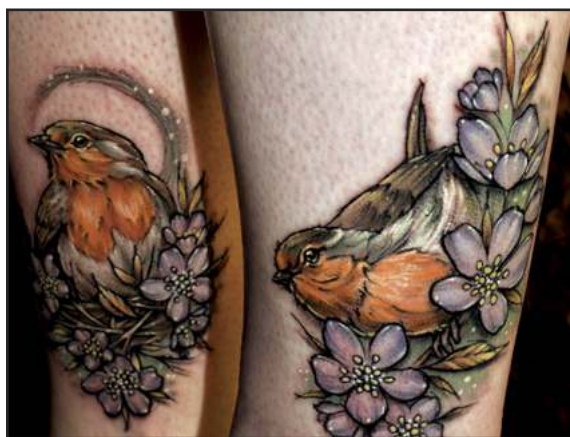
BETWEEN THE LINES





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**'WHEN  
EVERYONE'S  
AGAINST YOU,  
YOU LEARN TO  
BE YOURSELF'**

# **GUIDO SCHMITZ**



**It's often a surprise when you find out what people were doing before they came into tattooing. German artist Guido Schmitz was a stonemason and a sculptor. Now he's a passionate advocate for the abstract avant-garde – or, as he describes it, bringing “chaos into order”.**

Coming from a small town, Guido spent much of his early life bored and unsettled. He drifted towards punk rock, and it was here – amidst the rebellion and angst – that he discovered his love of tattoos. “I was a punk kid with a huge mohican,” he recalls. “I loved all the old school bands, and of course they were covered in tattoos. I was drawn to the whole image and ethos of punk.”

In his early 20s, Guido embarked on an apprenticeship in stonemasonry. By the age of 30 he was an award-winning stone carver. “It was an honour to be part of that tradition,” he tells me. “Stone buildings and stone statues last for centuries. All of our history comes from stone. I had to learn about geology, and how to work the various different types of stone, whether they're formed from solidified lava, or in layers on the ocean floor, or from the crushed fossil remains of plants and animals. I found it all fascinating. And I've always loved drawing, which of course came into it too. I'm greatly inspired by the old masters like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo.”



But somehow it wasn't enough. Guido decided it was time to move on and pursue his original passion. "I spoke with some established tattooists about learning to tattoo," he tells me, "but they wanted loads of money. So I quit my job in stone carving, moved to the big city, bought myself some tattoo equipment and started to tattoo! I was getting older and I didn't want to wait any longer." Guido believes that if you really want to

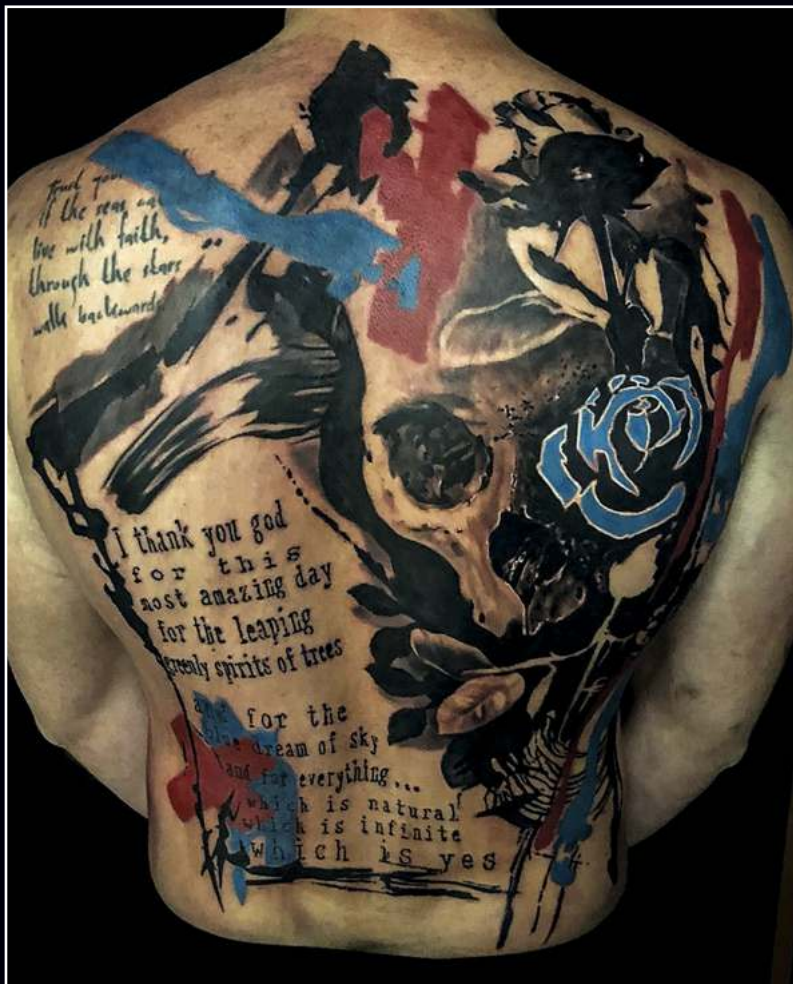
do something, and if you focus hard enough on it, it will usually happen. "I'm completely self-taught from videos and books," he tells me. "I worked on pigskin to begin with. Then I practiced on my own legs, perfecting linework and shapes, and then soft shading and colour packing. I also practiced on my friends, and some of them still talk to me! I worked day and night and I did everything - lettering, tribal,



biomechanical, you name it. As with the stone carving, I knew I had to master the basics in order to have the freedom to be able create unique designs. I didn't want to be restricted by a lack of knowledge or ability."

I ask Guido if it took a long time to establish a client base. "No, it happened surprisingly quickly," he laughs. "When I first started tattooing properly, I wanted to specialise in biomech. But I realised early on that I wasn't great at that style. So I thought about what I loved, and I kept going back to the anarchic collaged graphics of the punk movement. When people came to me to get some script or a piece of tribal, I'd ask them if they fancied something a little different. I showed them the sort of thing I had in mind, and they loved it! It wasn't long before I'd established my style, and when I started posting images of my finished tattoos online, it just took off. I've been busy ever since."





Guido is now recognised as a major force within tattooing, working many of the finest tattoo conventions around the world and picking up awards along the way. I ask if he's surprised by his success? "Yes I am," he confesses, "because my style of work doesn't normally attract the awards. I've won Best of Day a few times, which nearly always goes to an amazing, perfectly executed portrait of a famous film star - the sort of thing that fits comfortably into people's understanding of what tattoos are, and has a real wow factor. So if my piece wins, it says to me that people are beginning to open their minds. I hope my work is making people question the established view, and see tattooing more as an art form working with the body."

I ask Guido if he enjoys the divided opinions that his transgressive style of work can provoke. "Yes," he says. "It's interesting. My work does seem to divide people pretty much 50/50. They're either excited about it and love it, or they just don't get it and I can hear them say, 'Fuck, what's that all about?' But you get used to it. It was the same when I was a punk kid. Everyone's against you, but through that you learn to be yourself and not worry about what other people think."



For an artist breaking new ground, achieving recognition is partly a matter of being in the right place at the right time. "Mainland Europe, especially Italy, France and Belgium, these are the countries that seem especially open to avant-garde tattoos," Guido says. "Look at Noon in France, and Jeff Palumbo from La Boucherie Moderne in Belgium. Those guys broke all the rules and inspired a whole new tattoo movement that was outrageous, brave and beautiful. You must always respect the rules, but you can bend and break them in the same way that painters like Salvador Dali did. It's a bit like chaos theory in mathematics. You push things forward and establish a new set of rules."



Our conversation moves on to the deconstruction of the image and the apparently erratic methodology that characterises Guido's style. "Someone told me my work is like orchestrated chaos," he tells me. "The initial impression is like being hit in the face, but as you look closer you begin to see the composition. The narrative starts to become clearer. I want to confuse people and use an abstract approach to tell the story. My work is actually quite disciplined though, and employs strict narrative structures like Japanese tattooing – although that isn't always obvious."

Guido's clients need to place a lot of trust in him. "The tattoo will usually change as I go along, to make it work well with the body. And sometimes the energy in the piece will radically alter the direction of the design at the very last moment. It isn't like getting a traditional piece where you can see the completed image before you even pick up the tattoo machine. The finished tattoo will never be exactly as it was drawn. So it's really important that I establish a high level of trust with my clients. I can't always explain what design they'll get!" Guido talks at length with his clients. For him, finding out what they don't like is even more important than finding out what they do like. "I would never want to force anybody to accept my art onto their canvas," he says.



Where does Guido's artistic inspiration come from? "Being part of such a small group of tattooists working in this style means that I look outside of tattooing for a lot of my inspiration," he tells me. "I look at abstract paintings and analyse their construction. I study the communication between the shapes, to try to understand what makes one painting succeed and another fail. By deepening this understanding, I can develop new rules for my own work."

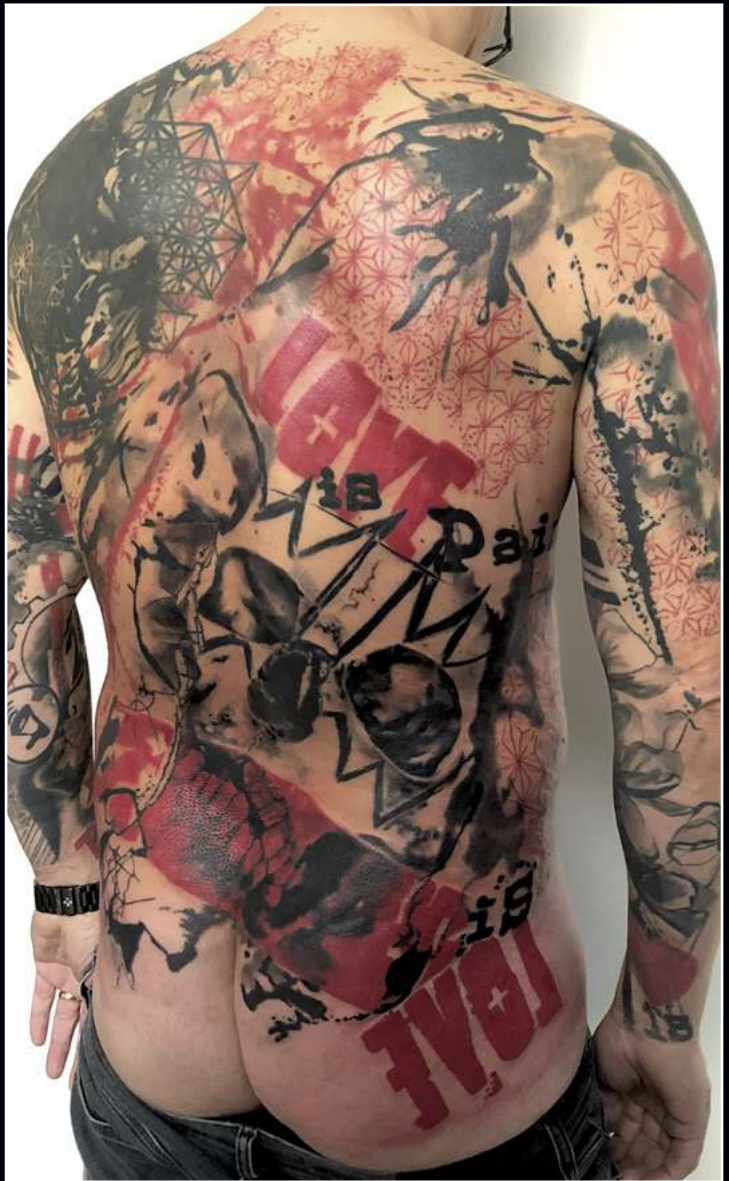




I ask Guido how he puts his designs together. "For the background elements, I create my own brushes within Photoshop and use them to construct areas of flat colour. I enlarge small details to the point of distortion and I layer these into the design. I adjust the contrast to make abstract shapes that are 'readable' without being obvious. I also use the computer to abstract and distort some of the realistic elements, including the faces. I like to try things out, but I discard them very quickly if they don't work. And of course another important feature of my work is my very limited, very strong colour scheme of just black and red."



"Most people have no idea what goes into my tattoos," Guido continues. "I recently did a seminar on how I bring 'chaos into order'. I did a step-by-step walk-through. It was super interesting to do that, because it forced me to analyse my own work. I really had to look at which elements are important, and which are not. My designs are a visual language telling a conventional story using unconventional methods. I really want to teach people about avant-garde and abstract tattooing. It's so easy to get it wrong. It's so hard to get it right. Volko and Simone of Buena Vista Tattoo Club are inspirational. So many people have tried unsuccessfully to copy them. To be that graphically perfect is so much more than just putting a few elements together and having a few red dots here and there."



Guido works hard to strike a balance between consolidating his style and creating something new and unique for each client. "People tell me my work is very recognisable – which is great, but I remind myself every day that I have to move forward and try to create something new. Customers who have waited a long time to get tattooed by me deserve a unique piece that's created especially for them. As tattooists, we have a huge responsibility to our clients. Every time we tattoo, we must be the best we can be. Some tattooists do seem to forget that it is our clients who enable us to do the job we do! For me, working in an unusual style, I feel I'm an ambassador not only for the avant-garde, but also for tattooing as a whole."

Tattooing has given Guido and his wife Inga a wonderful life. They somehow manage to sustain a punishing travel schedule ("We go to some beautiful places, but we rarely get to see more than the airport, the convention, the hotel and then home!") and they have friends all over the world. Guido works mainly alone, but relishes the creative nourishment of collaborations too. He sometimes yearns to have a large studio where he could work alongside other artists, but knows deep down he's probably not cut out to be a boss. "I would love to have an apprentice though," he tells me, "and teach my style to someone else. I really don't want to die and have everything I've learnt go with me..."



Four years ago Guido was invited to become a member of the Cheyenne team of sponsored artists. I couldn't help wondering how this sat with his punk ethics. "Every musician wants to become one of the best, and even the punk rock bands would buy better equipment as soon as they could afford it. If a product makes your life easier, and makes your work better, why would you not use it? If we were to rebel against everything, we wouldn't be using social media, and we wouldn't be working. No one would know about us or be able to get in touch. Tattooing has changed so much in such a short space of time. It's no longer underground and just for the punks and the rockers. You can now go anywhere in the world and tell people you're a tattooist and they'll welcome you. It's not like in the past when tattoos said something about you as a person. Now everybody has tattoos."





In a way, Guido's tattoos are themselves a reaction to the normalisation of tattooing. They're an anarchic two-fingered salute to the gentrification of the art.

This rebelliousness, however, is in complete contrast to the gentle, kind man sitting chatting to me right now. As our conversation draws to a close I ask Guido if he has any words of advice for the next generation of artists. "Believe in yourself," he says. "People will always try to put you down. Life isn't easy, but stay strong and keep moving forward. And be fucking nice!"

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goodshipI3info@gmail.com  
FB: /Good-Ship-I3-Tattoos

### **Indigo Tattoo and Piercing**

2 Lower Goat Lane, Norwich,  
NR2 1EL  
01603 886 143  
indigotattooandpiercing@gmail.com  
www.indigotattoo.co.uk

### **Immortal Ink**

39 - 43 Baddow Road, Chelmsford,  
CM2 0DB

01245 493 444  
contact@immortalink.co.uk  
www.immortalink.co.uk

### **Jayne Doe Tattoo**

60 Station Lane, Hornchurch,  
RM12 6NB  
01708 479 366  
jaynedoessex@gmail.com  
IG: @jaynedoetattoo  
FB: /jaynedoetattoo

### **Next Generation**

4 Wolverton Road, Stony Stratford,  
Milton Keynes, MK11 1DX  
01908 560003  
info@nextgenerationtattoo.co.uk  
www.nextgenerationtattoo.co.uk

### **Skin Sorcerer**

116 High Street, Maldon, CM9 5ET  
01621 842443  
IG: @skin\_sorcerer

### **True Love Tattoos**

16 Bridewell Alley, Norwich,  
NR2 1AQ  
01603 613277  
tlnorwich@gmail.com  
www.tlnorwich.co.uk

### **Wolf & Arrows Tattoos**

57 St Johns Street, Bury St Edmunds,  
IP33 1SJ  
01284 701643  
IG: @wolfandarrows  
FB: /wolfandarrowstattoo

### **LONDON**

#### **The Blue Tattoo**

2 Studland Street, Hammersmith,  
London, W6 0JS  
0208 746 3133  
info@thebluetattoo.co.uk  
www.thebluetattoo.co.uk  
IG: @thebluetattoolondon

#### **Briar Rose Tattoo**

172 Manor Lane, London, SE12 8LP  
private and custom only studio  
www.briarrossetattoo.com  
IG: @briarrossetattoo  
IG: @tiggytattoos  
IG: @olivetats

#### **Diamond Heart Tattoo Studio**

223 Broadway, Bexleyheath, DA6 7EJ  
0208 304 1414  
bookings@diamondhearttattoo.com  
www.diamondhearttattoo.com  
IG: @diamondhearttattoo  
FB: /diamondhearttattoo

#### **The Family Business**

58 Exmouth Market, Clerkenwell,  
London, EC1R 4QE

0207 278 9526  
info@thefamilybusinesstattoo.com  
www.thefamilybusinesstattoo.com

### **Frith Street Tattoo**

18 Frith Street (Basement), Soho,  
London, W1D 4RQ  
020 7734 8180  
frithstreettattoo.london@gmail.com  
www.frithstreettattoo.co.uk

### **Fudoshin Tattoo**

158 George Lane, South Woodford,  
London, E18 1AY  
020 8989 6144  
www.fudoshintattoos.com  
IG: @fudoshintattoos  
FB: /fudoshintattoos

### **Happy Sailor Tattoo**

17 Hackney Road, London, E2 7NX  
020 7033 9222  
Email: Via website  
www.happysailortattoo.com

### **I Hate Tattoos**

Unit 1, 400-405 York Way, London,  
N7 9LR  
07904 174 819  
herringfishbloke@hotmail.co.uk  
FB: /IHateTattoosStudio

### **Ink Lounge Tattoo Studio**

310C Green Lanes, Palmers Green,  
London, N13 5TT  
0203 490 2663  
info@inklounge.co.uk  
www.inklounge.co.uk  
IG: @inklounge

### **Inksmiths Of London**

8 Chequers Parade, Eltham, London,  
SE9 1DD  
020 8617 3338  
Inksmithsoflondon@gmail.com  
IG: @InksmithsofLondon

### **Kilburn Original Tattoo**

175 Kilburn High Road,  
Kilburn, London, NW6 7HY  
0207 372 3662  
info@kilburnoriginal.com  
IG: @kilburntattoo

### **Leviticus Tattoo Emporium**

170 High Road (Cuthberts Alley)  
Loughton, Essex, IG10 1DN  
0208 502 4029  
leviticustattoo@hotmail.com  
www.leviticustattooemporium.co.uk

### **Lowrider Tattoo**

311 Bethnal Green Road, London  
E2 6AH  
0208 739 5115

Inquiry@lowridertattoolondon.com  
IG: @lowridertattoolondon

### **Low Tide**

19 Market Place, Southend-on-Sea,  
SS1 1DA  
01702 344 060  
lowtidetattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @lowtidetattoo

### **New Wave Tattoo Studio**

157 Sydney Road, Muswell Hill,  
London, N10 2NL  
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  
020 7375 3880  
sevendoorstattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @sevendoorstattoo

### **Tattoo Shop By Dan Gold**

104-106 Oxford Street, London,  
W1D 1LP  
0207 637 7411  
www.tattooshopbydangold.co.uk

### **The Good Fight**

Cheriton, Queens Crescent, London,  
NW5 4EZ  
www.thegoodfighttattoo.com  
IG: @nick\_whybrow  
IG: @heidikayetattoo  
IG: @emilyrabbit.tattoo

### **Through My Third Eye**

342 Hornsey Road, London, N7 7HE  
0203 417 2552  
throughmythirdeye@outlook.com  
www.throughmythirdeye.com

### **Ushuaia Tattoo London**

486 Fulham Road, SW6 5NH  
020 8616 1760  
www.ushuaiatattoolondon.co.uk/en  
IG: @ushuaiatattoo.london  
FB: /ushuaiatattoo.london

## **SOUTH EAST**

### **14 Arrows Tattoo Studio**

55-57 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge  
Wells, TN1 2AY  
01892 458342  
fourteenarrows@hotmail.com  
**1770 Tattoo**

4 Little East Street, Brighton,  
BN1 1HT  
01273 710 730  
info@1770tattoo.com  
www.1770tattoo.com

### **Dead Slow**

9 Boyces Street, Brighton, BN1 1AN  
01273 208844  
www.deadslowco.com  
contact@deadslowco.com  
IG: @deadslowco  
FB: /deadslowco

### **Fine Art Tattoo and Piercing Studio**

6 York Street, Ramsgate, CT11 9DS  
01843 588 885  
fine-art-tattoo@hotmail.co.uk  
www.finearttattoo.co.uk

### **Forever Wear Tattoos**

31 West Street, Buckingham,  
MK18 1HE  
01280 822 695  
forever-wear-tattoos@hotmail.co.uk  
www.foreverweartattoos.com  
IG: @foreverwear\_tattoos  
FB: /foreverweartattoosbuckingham

### **Higgins and Co**

69 Terminus Road, Above Coffee  
Republic, Eastbourne, BN21 3NJ  
01323 301 973  
higginsandco71@gmail.com  
www.higginsandcotattoo.co.uk

### **High Tide Tattoo Studio**

Unit 1 Reeves Yard, Warwick Road,  
Whitstable, CT5 1HX  
01227 263864  
zbreakspear@yahoo.com  
IG: @high\_tide\_tattoo\_studio  
FB: /hightidetattooostudio

### **Inked Moose**

204 Whaddon Way, Bletchley, Milton  
Keynes, MK3 7DG  
01908 411151  
info@inkedmoose.co.uk  
www.inkedmoose.co.uk

### **Keepsake Tattoo**

145 South Street, Lancing,  
BN15 8BD  
01903 767776  
www.keepsaketattoo.co.uk  
IG: @keepsake\_tattoo

### **Leo Rios Tattoo Studio**

11 Lime Street, Bedford, MK40 1LD  
01234930504  
leoriostattoos@hotmail.co.uk  
www.facebook.com/LeoRiosStudio

### **Magnum Opus Tattoo**

51 Upper North Street, Brighton,  
BN1 3FH  
01273 271432  
magnumopustattoo@gmail.com  
www.magnumopustattoo.com  
IG: @magnumopustattoo  
FB: /magnumopustattoo

### **Rising Phoenix Tattoo**

28a High Street Mews, Leighton  
Buzzard, LU7 1EA  
01525 217 121  
studio@risingphoenixtattoo.co.uk  
www.risingphoenixtattoo.co.uk  
IG: @RisingPhoenixLeightonBuzzard  
FB: /rptattoo

### **Seven Sins Tattoo**

10 High Street, Horley, RH6 7AY  
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  
IG: @skinnedalivetattoo

### **Stay Much Better**

1 Beaconsfield Parade, Beaconsfield  
Road, Brighton, BN1 6DN  
01273 564494  
www.smbtattoo.com  
IG: @smbtattoo  
FB: /smbtattoo

### **Tattoo FX**

32 Middle Village, Bolnore, Haywards  
Heath, 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, 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, SN1 1HE  
01793 671 432  
blackchalicetattoo@hotmail.com  
FB: /blackchalicetattoo

### **Blackfriars Tattoo**

5 Maylord Street, Hereford,  
HR12DS  
01432 278330  
blackfriarstattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @blackfriarstattoo

### **Crow Quill**

63 Bedford Place, Southampton,  
SO15 2DS  
023 8034 0058  
IG: @thecrowquill  
www.thecrowquill.co.uk

### **The Custom Propaganda Tattoo Company**

Unit 7, Botley Mills, Botley,  
Southampton, SO30 2GB  
01489 325 341  
IG: @custompropagandatattoo  
FB: /CustomPropagandaTattoo

### **Eightfold Tattoo**

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

### **Infernal Rites Tattoo**

71 Market St, Westhoughton, Bolton,  
BL5 3AA  
01942 811 132  
infernalritestattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @infernalritestattoo  
FB: /infernalritestattoo

### **Needle and Fred Tattoo**

22 High Street, Littlehampton,  
BN17 5EE  
01903 733 622  
needleandfred@live.co.uk  
IG: @inkfred

### **North Gate Tattoo**

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

### **Purple Rose Tattoo**

56 Staple Hill Road, Fishponds,  
Bristol, BS16 5BS  
01173 300 123  
purplerosetattoo@hotmail.co.uk  
www.purplerosetattoo.co.uk

## **WALES**

### **Broadsides Tattoo**

38 Singleton Street, Swansea,  
SA1 3QN  
01792 455 000  
broadsideswansea@hotmail.com  
IG: @broadsideswansea

### **Dexterity Ink**

Unit 9, Indoor Peoples Market,  
Wrexham, LL13 8BE  
01978 447 100  
FB: /DexterityInkTattooStudio09

### **Keep the Faith Social Club**

14-16 Royal Arcade, Cardiff,  
CF10 1AE  
029 2140 6954  
keepthefaitthsc@gmail.com  
www.keepthefaitthsocialclub.com  
IG: @keepthefaitthsc  
FB: /keepthefaitthsocialclub

### **Physical Graffiti**

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

### **Stronghold Tattoo**

2nd floor High Street Arcade,  
Cardiff, CF10 1BE  
07943 981671  
www.strongholdtattoo.com  
IG: @strongholdtattoo

### **Surrealistic Sanctuary**

144 City Road, Cardiff, CF24 3DR  
07413 383 323  
sstattooocardiff@gmail.com  
www.surrealisticsanctuary.co.uk

### **Sursum Tattoo**

11 Market Square, Narberth,  
SA67 7AU  
01834 860 616  
www.sursumtattoo.com  
sursumtattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @sursumtattoo  
FB: /sursumtattoo

## **WEST MIDLANDS**

### **B.W Tattoo Studios**

9 Eastern Avenue, Lichfield,  
WS13 6TE  
01543 898 766  
www.bigwillstatoos.co.uk  
IG: @bwtattoostudios  
FB: /BWTattoostudios

### **Blood & Honey Tattoo Co**

Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham,  
GL52 2NE  
01242 352 306  
hello@bloodandhoney.uk  
www.bloodandhoney.uk

### **Cosmic Monsters Incorporated**

3 High Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8AJ  
07863 135814  
cmitattoo@gmail.com  
www.cmi-tattoo.com

### **The Church Tattoo**

11 Church Road, Redditch,  
B97 4AB  
01527 759 852  
thechurchtattoo@hotmail.com  
FB: /thechurchtattoo

### **Folklore Tattoo**

119 Lichfield Street, Tamworth,  
B79 7QB  
01827 768446  
folkloretattoos@live.com  
www.folkloretattooostudio.co.uk

### **Imperial Art Tattoo**

20 King Street, Bedworth,  
CV12 8HT  
0247 664 0947  
www.imperialarttattoo.co.uk  
IG: @imperialarttattoo  
FB: /imperialarttattoo

### **Modern Electric Tattoo Co**

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

### **Nala Tattoo & Piercing Studio**

81 Bolebridge Street, Tamworth,  
B79 7PD  
01827 68 353  
contact@nalastudio.co.uk  
www.nalastudio.co.uk

### **Second City Tattoo Club**

91 Vittoria Street, Birmingham,  
B1 3PA  
IG: @secondcitytattooclub  
FB: /secondcitytattooclub

### **Seven Foxes Tattoo**

3 Kingsfield Road, Birmingham,  
B14 7JN  
0121 610 0348  
sevenfoxestattoo@gmail.com  
www.sevenfoxestattoo.com  
IG: @sevenfoxestattoo

### **Sweet Life Gallery**

80 Bristol Street, Birmingham,  
B5 7AH  
0121 692 1361  
enquiry@sweetlifegallery.co.uk  
www.sweetlifegallery.co.uk

### **The Ink Spot**

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

### **Vicious Pink Tattoo**

Suite C, 9a Willow Street, Oswestry,  
SY11 1AF

01691 570 427

viciouspinktattoo@gmail.com  
www.viciouspink.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  
01229 838 946  
allstyletattoos@gmail.com  
FB: /allstyletattoosbarrow

#### **Aurora Tattoo**

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

#### **Black Freighter Tattoo Co.**

56-60 Lower Bridge Street, Chester,  
CH1 1RU  
01244 297 528  
theblackfreightertattoo@gmail.com  
FB: /TheBlackFreighterTattooCo

#### **Bold As Brass Tattoo**

Charleston House, 12 Rumford  
Place, Liverpool, L3 9DG  
0151 227 1814  
boldasbrasstattoo@gmail.com  
www.boldasbrasstattoo.com

#### **Bridge Street Tattoo**

32 Bridge Street W, Chester,  
CH1 1NN  
01244 638 765  
bridgestreettattoo@gmail.com  
www.bridgestreettattoo.co.uk  
IG: @bridgestreettattoo  
FB: /bridgestreettattoochester

#### **The Butchers Block Tattoo Parlour**

14 Crompton Street, Wigan,  
WN1 1YP  
07849 114 380  
www.ButchersBlockTattoo.co.uk  
ButchersBlockTattoo@hotmail.com  
IG: @ButchersBlockTattoo  
FB: /ButchersBlockTattoo

#### **Dabs Tattoo**

78b Eastbourne Road, Southport,  
PR8 4DU  
01704 566 665  
Dabstattoos@btconnect.com  
IG: @tattoosatdabs  
FB: /dabstattoo/DABS Tattoo

#### **Indelible Ink**

3 York Avenue, Thornton-Cleveleys,  
FY5 2UG

01253 280 457

www.indelibleinktattooostudio.co.uk  
IG: @indelible\_ink\_tattoos  
FB: /indelibleinkuk

#### **Inkden Tattoo & Piercing Studio**

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

#### **Inked Up Chester**

21 Eastgate Row North, Chester,  
CH1 1LQ  
01244 638 558  
info@inkedupchester.co.uk  
IG: @inkedupchester

#### **Marked for life**

45 High Street, (Winpenney House)  
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1SB  
01642 641 235  
tattooofl@gmail.com  
www.marked-for-life.com

#### **Market Quarter Tattoo**

14 Market Street, Southport,  
Merseyside, PR8 1HJ  
marketquartertattoo@gmail.com  
FB: /MQTSouthport  
IG: @marketquartertattoo

#### **Sacred Art Tattoo**

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

#### **Skin Kandi Tattoo Studio**

50a Westfield Street, St Helens  
Merseyside, WA10 1QF  
01744 734 699  
skinkandi@hotmail.co.uk  
www.skinkandi.co.uk

#### **Studio78 Tattoos**

15 Earle Street, Crewe, CW1 2BS  
01270 581 581  
studio-78@hotmail.co.uk  
www.studio-78.co.uk

#### **True Colours Tattoo Studio**

14 Guildhall Street, Preston,  
PR1 3NU  
01772 378 565  
www.truecolourstattoo.co.uk  
Instagram: @truecolourstattoo

#### **True 'til Death**

13 Whalley Road, Accrington,  
BB5 1AD  
01254 433 760  
Email: via Facebook  
www.accringtontattoo.com  
FB: /truetildeathtattoo

# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## 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

### 24th-26th April Kent Tattoo Convention

49-51 Marine Terrace, CT9 1XJ.  
www.facebook.com/The-Kent-  
Tattoo-Convention-4014033403423  
72/

### 24th-26th April Portsmouth Tattoo Fest

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

### 2nd-3rd May Brighton Tattoo Convention

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

### 23rd-24th May Totally Inked Tattoo Convention

1 Kingsway, Newport, NP20 1UH.  
www.facebook.com/Totallyinkedtatt  
ooconvention/

### 4th-5th July Leeds Tattoo Expo

The first direct arena  
Arena Way, Leeds, LS2 8BY.  
www.leedstattoexpo.com

### 31st July-2nd August 16th London Tattoo Convention

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

## 2020 OVERSEAS CONVENTIONS

### 17th-19th January Goa Tattoo Festival

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

### 16th-17th May International Moscow Tattoo Convention

Sokolniki Exhibition and  
Convention Center, Pavilion No. 4.  
Moscow, 5th Ray Prosek 7, Building 1.  
en.moscowtattooconvention.com

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