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## DURB MORRISON

The man behind  
Hell City Tattoo Fest

## DEAN GUNTHER

Wildlife in colour

## VOLKAN DEMIRCI

Colourful abstract  
realism

## EMMA BLACK

Life, death and mushrooms!  
Extraordinary surrealist paintings

## HORIOKAMI

Japanese tattoos,  
Italian elegance

## PORTFOLIOS

Akos Strenner

Billy No Mates

Paul Naylor

## THE FUTURE OF CONVENTIONS

Alex Van Dutch

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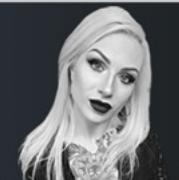
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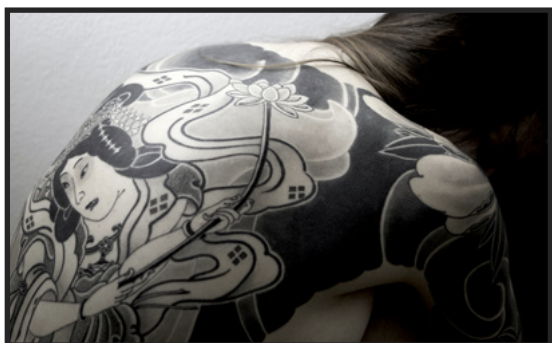
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# EDITORIAL 193

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**In the words of a famous song... Regrets, I've had a few.**

I started working for tattoo magazines more than twenty years ago. At the time, I never dreamt this would become my life's work, but I guess the tattoo world is like that. It just kind of sucks you in and refuses to let you go.

Every now and then, people ask me if I ever thought of becoming a tattooist. With a college degree in graphic design, I suppose this was not such a ridiculous possibility. But I remember reading an interview with Travelin' Mick, once a contributor to this and many other magazines, in which he said, "I don't want to be a tattooist. The last thing the world needs is another average tattooist." That sentiment stuck. I decided to carry on doing what I know best: tattoo magazines.

Looking back, I wonder if I made the right choice. But the years have ticked by, and I'm too old now to embark on a major career change. (Or am I? One thing I do know about myself is that I can usually find a good excuse not to do something that could be challenging or difficult, happy to remain in the comfy slippers of my life...)

Many tattoo artists are locked into a relentless pursuit of perfection – the perfect line, the perfect saturation, the perfect composition – but the truth is, absolute perfection is something we can never attain. None of us is the 'chosen one' destined to achieve it. And is there perhaps an arrogance in believing that we might be? Nonetheless, there are many tortured artists who persevere on this journey. It's what art is all about, and long may it continue.

But I've begun to notice a change in the world of tattooing. Following in the wake of all these incredible artists who are pushing the boundaries and producing ever more amazing tattoos, there's



a sea of tattooists out there who simply want to be GOOD. They just want to make tattoos that will make them and their customers happy and proud.

Knowing that you probably won't get to ride the ultimate wave of aesthetic perfection with your tattoos shouldn't put you off. Sometimes it's not all about the ink itself. There are many aspects to perfection. Offering your customers a great experience, in a safe and professional environment, counts too.

I'm certainly not suggesting that everyone grabs a machine and sets their sights on becoming an 'average' tattooist – but released from the pressure of constantly striving to be the most brilliant artist ever to put ink in skin, and free of the responsibility of always trying to make tattoos that will change the world, maybe tattooing can be fun again.

Incidentally, I'm proud to say that I have actually done a few small tattoos. But then again, too few to mention...

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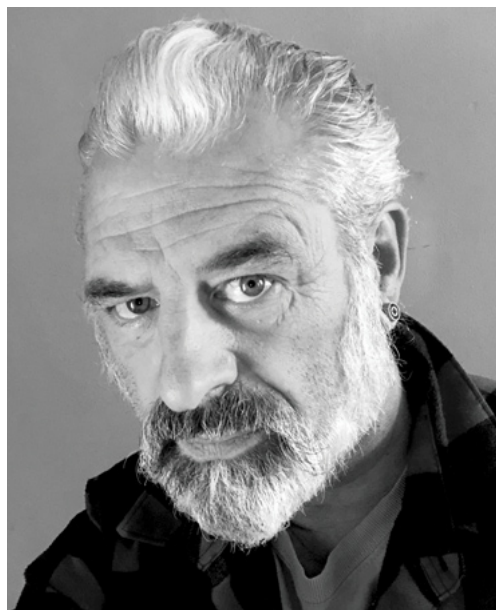
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# NEWS & REVIEWS



Send your news, studio announcements, books or products for review, and items of general curiosity and intrigue for the tattoo cognoscenti to: **NEWS, TOTAL TATTOO MAGAZINE, 44 Albion Road, Great Yarmouth NR30 2JD** or [totaltattoo@totaltattoo.co.uk](mailto:totaltattoo@totaltattoo.co.uk)

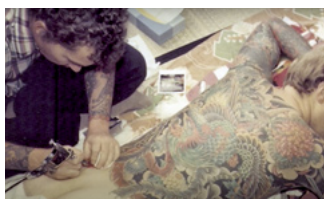
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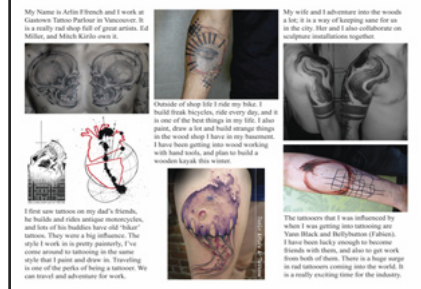
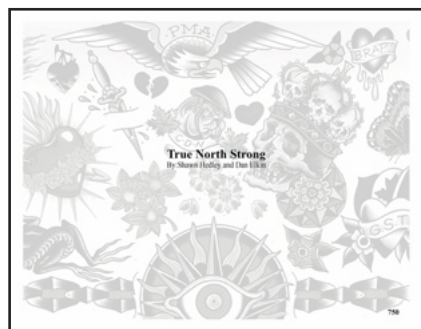
Canada has had a huge global influence on tattooing via the likes of Paul Jeffries, Dave Shore, Kurt Wiscombe and many more. Plus, the legendary Ed Hardy worked there in the early days of his career.

'HoldFast StayGold' is a fabulous YouTube documentary series about the history of custom tattooing in the land of the maple leaf. Ed Hardy features in Episode 1 and it's a fascinating segment. There are nine episodes in all, one going out live each week. They're around 10 to 15 minutes long and well worth watching. Highly recommended.

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCIAOI RanE677 s12sZ9bHx1w/videos](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIAOI RanE677 s12sZ9bHx1w/videos)



Also from Canada, here's a free book to download, about modern Canadian tattooers. It's a huge PDF with lots of pictures and interviews!  
<https://tinyurl.com/53r8j29r>





## TATTOOIST'S MODEL



We just had to share this with you. It's an astonishing lockdown project from Germany – a model of two heritage carriages from the Wuppertal Schwebebahn (suspension railway), skilfully crafted by tattooist Robin Gagaridis of Inktopus in nearby Solingen.

Unable go into the studio to tattoo, Robin decided to embark on the epic project to while away the time. The engineering and aesthetic details of the model are amazing, but what makes it even more impressive is the fact that Robin had never really done this kind of thing before.

Those of you who know the German city of Wuppertal will no doubt have enjoyed using the much-loved Schwebebahn. Built more than a century ago, it swoops and rattles high above Wuppertal's river and streets, and it's the oldest railway of its kind in the world. It's an incredible sight.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQH4TS01jt4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQH4TS01jt4)

And take a ride on the train in this beautifully restored 1902 film:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQs5VxNPhzk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQs5VxNPhzk)

## SHARING THE SCAR

Here's a touching local news story from Norfolk, about a very special tattoo by Burch at Crow Temple Tattoo in Norwich. Aaron Lambert made the amazing gesture of getting the tattoo on the back of his neck – to match his little daughter Esme's surgical scar – to show his love, support and pride, and to help her feel confident that she is not alone in her journey. Esme had a tumour removed; after lengthy treatment, we understand she has now been given the all-clear. We wish the whole family well.



## END OF AN ERA



This month we heard the sad news that Modern Body Art Tattoo in Birmingham will be closing its doors for the last time at the end of September. The shop opened in 1999, and during its 22 years launched the careers of many of the UK's top tattooists.

Matt told us that with the lease on the shop coming to an end, it seemed the right time to move on to other things. He cited the financial and personal pressures of running a big city centre business in such uncertain times, with the coronavirus pandemic exacerbating the changes that were already happening within the tattoo industry.

The team at Modern Body Art would like to thank everyone who has supported them over the years.

Modern Body Art is still open and tattooing as usual. However, in the run-up to closing on 30th September, they are slightly changing the way they work and deal with enquiries. Check social media and the Modern Body Art website:

[www.modernbodyart.co.uk](http://www.modernbodyart.co.uk)  
[@modernbodyart](https://www.instagram.com/modernbodyart)

# MAKING OLD BONES



We love delving into tattoo history, but here's something far more ancient than we usually feature in Total Tattoo.

A team of archaeologists in the US state of Tennessee have been taking another look at some sharpened turkey bones that were excavated from a Native American site in 1985. They knew they'd been used as tools, but they didn't know what they'd been used for.

It turns out the bones were used for tattooing – maybe as long as 5,000 years ago! They are reckoned to be perhaps the oldest tattoo implements ever found.

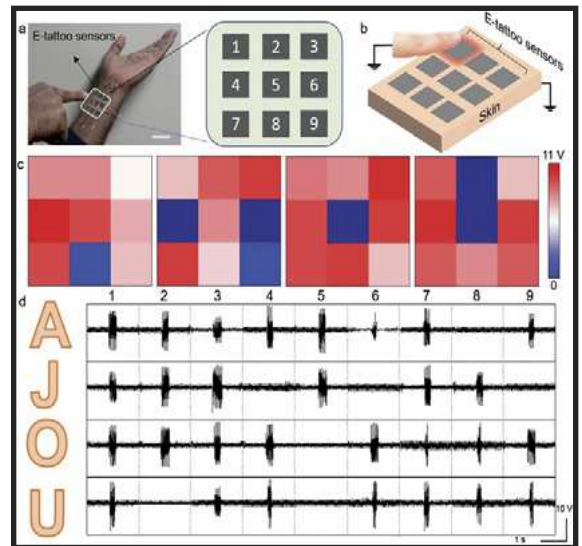
The team carried out an incredibly detailed analysis, employing all kinds of techniques not available to the original archaeologists back in the 1980s. They even found black and red pigment residue on the bones. If you're interested in reading more, check out the paper by Aaron Deter-Wolf et al in the Journal of Archaeological Science Reports.

# THE BODY ELECTRIC

This month's e-tattoo tech story comes from South Korea, where a team at Ajou University have recently announced the invention of a mini 'temporary tattoo' that can actually produce electricity.

It's thin, flexible, and applied to the skin just like a transfer. Touch it – as if you were pressing a switch – and it will use the body's natural electricity to produce a burst of power that can be communicated to any small electrical device. You could turn a light on or off from a distance for example.

The e-tattoo is made from nanofibre paper manufactured from silk protein. The circuitry is 'drawn' on to it with carbon nanofibre ink.



# MOBILE TATTOO STUDIO

Don't live anywhere near a tattoo studio? Unable to travel? No problem – this tattooist will come to you.

For the past few months, tattooist Antoine, from picturesque Saint-Jean-d'Angély in southwestern France, has been working out of his fully-equipped converted motorhome. He's already tattooed more than 300 clients. You simply make an appointment, and wait for Antoine Truck Tattoo to drive up and park outside your house.



## BRITTANY IN THE SKIN

'La Bretagne dans la Peau' (Brittany in the Skin) is an enterprising photography project at the Musée de Bretagne. The Museum has put out a call for anyone who has a tattoo with a Breton symbol or a Brittany theme to get in touch.



All the selected tattoos will form part of a new temporary exhibition in 2022 on the theme of Celtic heritage and its abundant visual vocabulary. The meanings behind tattoos – whether they're traditional symbols or contemporary images – are an important part of this story.

All participants will be professionally photographed (by Museum photographer Alain Amet) ideally in a setting that they themselves have chosen, indoors or outdoors, to reflect their personality and lifestyle. They will also be interviewed, and short extracts from these interviews will be included in the exhibition to contextualise the photographic images.

The aim is for each photograph to showcase the participant's tattoo(s), and be both a documentary record and a work of art. The images will be kept for posterity in the Museum's archive. Participants can choose to remain anonymous if they wish.

The Museum are also keen for tattoo artists specialising in this type of pattern, or having significant experience in this area, to get in touch.

And they emphasise that everyone is welcome to participate. You don't have to live in Brittany, or have Breton heritage yourself!

Email Alain Amet at the Musée de Bretagne:  
[a.amet@leschampslibres.fr](mailto:a.amet@leschampslibres.fr)

## SEAN VASQUEZ R.I.P.



This month we received the sad news that Sean Vasquez has died. I had the great pleasure to meet Sean on a number of occasions and he was always warm, friendly and knowledgeable.

Sean was born in America, and that's where he started his tattooing career more than 30 years ago – before moving on to tattoo all over the world, settling in Austria for a spell, then coming to England to be with his partner and fellow tattooist Leticia. Together they opened Artefacto Tattoo in Leytonstone, East London.

Sean was always encouraging to young artists and open to the changing tattoo world.

He will be very sadly missed by all.



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**'I WANT TO LOOK BACK  
ON MY LIFE AND THINK  
YEAH, I ACHIEVED  
A FAIR BIT!'**

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**American tattooist Durb Morrison has more than 30 years experience in the industry. His huge RedTree Tattoo Gallery in Ohio is home to a veritable army of superb artists, and his True Tattoo Supply Company is housed in the same building. Durb is a respected innovator and educator, and is also well known as the organiser of the long-running Hell City Tattoo Fest. So not surprisingly he had plenty of wise words to say about our industry – past, present and future.**

# DURB MORRISON



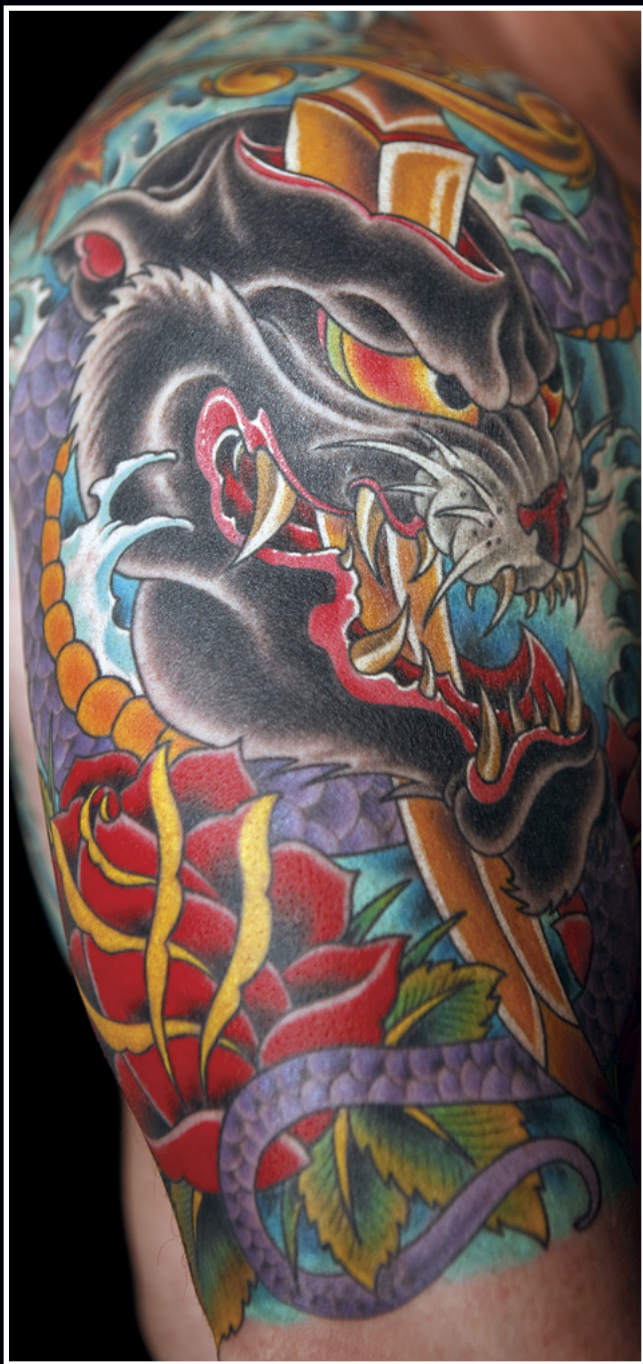
Durb Morrison has seen tattooing evolve from its old DIY ethos, through traditional apprenticeships where years of service are exchanged for knowledge and skills, to today's world of lucrative online seminars delivered by the industry's top artists.

"Yeah, the digital platforms have allowed tattooing to expand beyond anything we could have imagined," he says. "I think the whole industry has changed for the better. Communication between artists has improved. Education is now readily available in a way that simply wasn't possible before. Not everyone can travel – and that's been especially true this past year, with the coronavirus pandemic – so the rise of podcasting and online teaching has been a great thing. It's bringing exciting new opportunities. And of course nowadays nobody walks around with a physical portfolio any more!"

"Artistically, tattooing has never been so good," Durb continues. "I consider myself to be a good tattooist, but some of the

pieces I see blow me away! When I first started, the kinds of things artists are doing now just weren't possible. Great portraits happened, but they were way harder to do. I used to love that whole process of fiddling with your machine, but you don't have to do all that tuning now. Your machine will be the same every time you pick it up. And you don't have the distraction of having to solder needles and mix up pigment. Artists nowadays are able just to focus on their art."

"There's a shit ton more tattooists now though, and I feel bad for younger artists who want to make a name for themselves. There are just so many high calibre tattoo artists already in the ring. You need to come in swinging hard right off the bat. I think the guys who are really making an impact are the ones bringing truly inventive imagery. It needs to be more than just a portrait. More than just traditional. But as soon as you hit on something new and cool, within six months there's a whole movement of tattooists doing the same!"

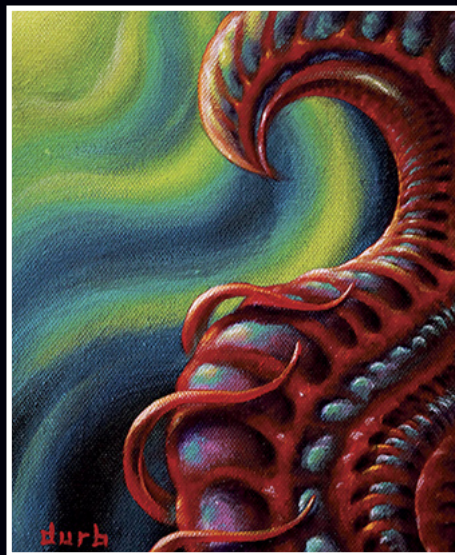


**'WE'VE BEEN BLESSED  
TO BE PART OF THE  
TATTOO RENAISSANCE.'**

"Technology is obviously facilitating this – in terms of what you can create digitally, and also how you can give people access to it and let them see what you're doing. But I don't think any of this will ever take away from attendances at tattoo conventions. People will still want to have that person-to-person contact. I don't think technology can ever replace that."

Tattoo conventions are now coming back to life in the States, post-pandemic. Durb is the organiser of one of the best, the long-running Hell City Tattoo Fest (in Columbus Ohio and Phoenix, Arizona). I ask him what changes he's seen over the years.

"One notable change has been the art shows," he says. "They used to be massive. But tattooists no longer need to promote the fact that they work in other media. Nowadays everyone knows that tattooists can paint, sculpt, etc. Plus they're selling their stuff online, so they don't need to showcase it at a convention. Another change is in the programme itself. I've thinned down the seminars at Hell City, because people would go to one thing and be worried they were missing out on something else. You have to be very structured in the way you schedule things."







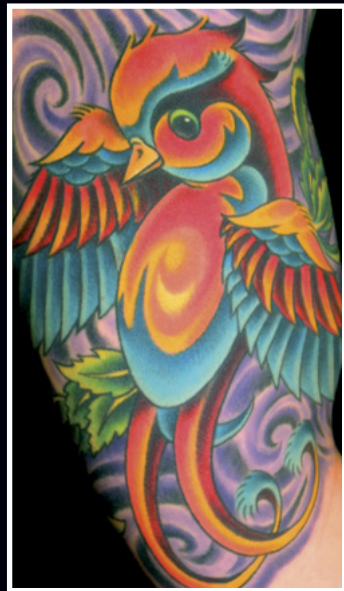
So the big question is, will Hell City be returning post-pandemic? "Yeah, we'll be back in 2022!" Durb assures me. "We've got all sorts of plans for spacing out the artists and putting up dividers, and I think we will probably still be checking temperatures and sanitising hands, but things are changing so fast – and we've got a whole year – so we'll wait and see what precautions are going to be needed. It's still a long way off. I'm very happy for the other shows to happen first and build everyone's confidence."

Hell City is legendary for its partying, so how does Durb plan to keep everyone safe? "Simple. Full body condoms," he laughs. "If we'd invented them, we could have saved the whole of last year and made a fortune! But seriously, once people start drinking we just have to trust them to retain a modicum of intelligence..."



Our conversation moves on to the general situation regarding COVID-19. "Every US state managed things differently," Durb explains. "We were pretty lucky here in Ohio. We were shut down for a couple of months but in the end we got back quite quickly. We were worried though, because tattooists seemed to be getting ignored in the plans for re-opening. Usually we're lumped in with beauty salons, but the Governor wasn't mentioning us at all. So we were preparing to do a big protest and I was helping to spearhead it. We had signs made, so that everyone could demonstrate in the street outside their shops. I was in correspondence with the Governor's secretary. Then at the very last minute we were able to open!"

"True Tattoo, our supplies company, was able to operate throughout because we were supplying medical equipment and PPE," Durb continues. "So I was in everyday, packing orders. After a couple of weeks though, I started to notice orders coming through for needles, tubes and inks. It was obvious people were taking matters into their own hands and tattooing privately - which I don't blame them for at all. Tattooists know how to keep sterile and how to work safely."

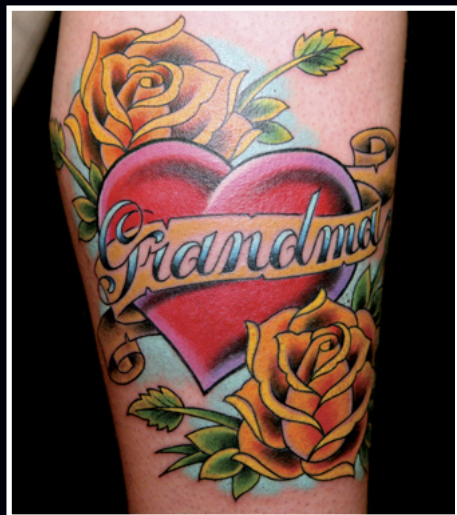


"Right now, in RedTree, we're booked solid. Tattooing has bounced back to record numbers. At the moment everyone who comes into the shop has to wear a mask, at least until they're safely with their artist. I think it will stay like that for a while. Obviously we're placing a lot of trust in both our artists and our clients."

Re-winding a few decades, I ask Durb to tell me about his early life and how he got into tattooing in the first place. Born in 1972, it was punk rock and skateboards that influenced him when he was growing up. "Music kind of makes you who you are," he says. "It affects how you think, and it informs your mentality, particularly when you're young. I was a degenerate kid from a broken home. I found a skateboard, two middle fingers and punk rock music and I was good to go. It all helped make me the person that I am today."

"Back then, the graphics of the skate scene - the designs of the boards and the clothing - were incredibly tattoo inspired. And it was MY thing. That DIY kind of lifestyle that you create for yourself, you tend to hold a little closer to your heart. I'd found punk on my own, I'd found skateboarding on my own and I'd found tattooing on my own. It was something that no one else really understood. And that made it special to me."





"My mum used to leave notes for me," Durb recalls, "saying things like 'Satan's in our house. We need to talk.' She thought I was on drugs and possessed! But I was a straight edge kid growing up. Punk rock, and finding a community of other kids like me, definitely gave me the attitude to just think fuck it."



"An old guy I knew, who'd been in jail, made me a prison-style tattoo machine out of a cassette player. My dad saw it and warned me that if he saw me tattooing in our house he'd throw me out. And that's what happened. One night I was tattooing a friend and he caught me. I had to go next door to finish the tattoo!"

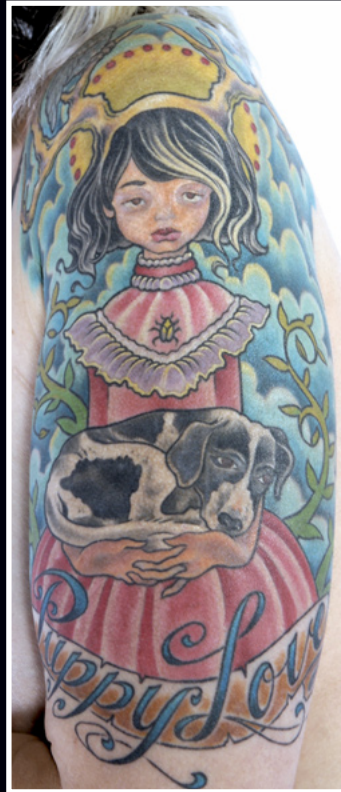
"Once I'd graduated, when I was 18, I was out of there. I went to work with Tim Miller in Columbus. He was one of the artists I'd lied to about my age when I got tattooed at 16. He told me I'd be helping out with the cleaning and setting up, etc, but the first day I was there he got so busy I ended up doing six little tattoos. I began with an eagle. It had clouds and a sun in the background. Tim was watching over my shoulder the whole time and when it was finished he said to me, 'D'ya want to do another one?' I'm like, hell yeah I do! I think I walked out of the shop that day with five or six hundred bucks."

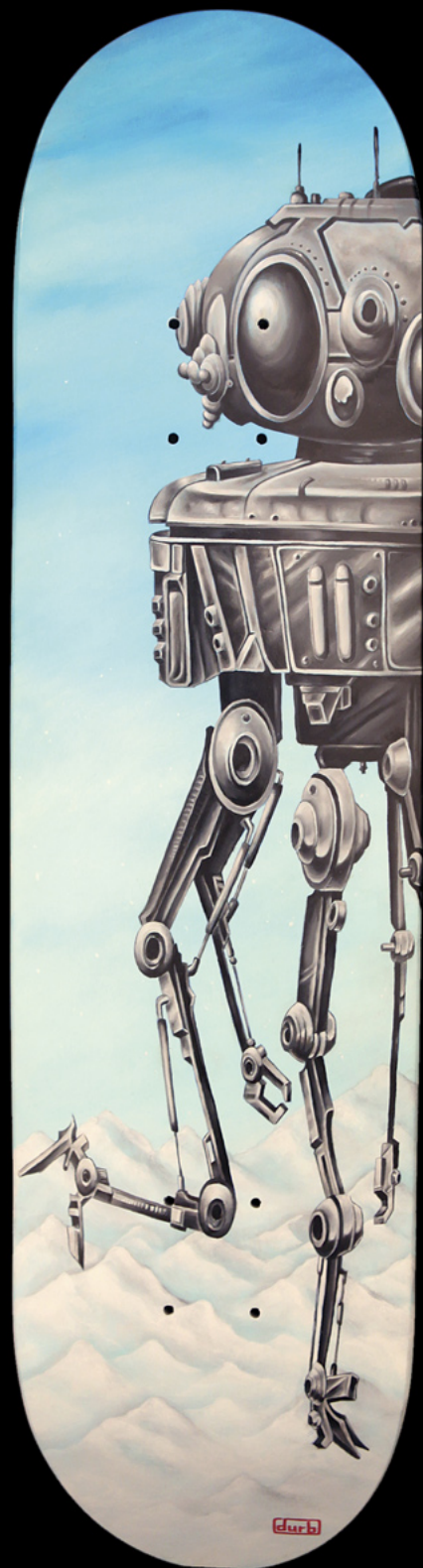


"So I never really did any kind of official apprenticeship. I already understood art, and I'd done a bunch of tattoos on all my mates. I just needed to learn the technical aspects."

"I stayed with Tim until I was 19," Durb continues, "then he sold the shop. I was crazy not to buy it, but I believe things happen for a reason." Durb decided to travel around the country. His adventures included getting arrested "for some shit with a gun and some weed", spending some time in California, and working with the late Sailor Moses in his tattoo booth at the famous Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Sailor Moses then invited Durb to move to Biloxi, Mississippi to continue working with him. "I learnt a real lot from Sailor Moses," Durb tells me. "Then in 1994 I moved back here, to Ohio, to open my first studio, Stained Skin."

Fast forward to 2021, and Durb is head honcho of a tattoo empire, and a respected innovator and educator within the industry. It's a golden time for tattooing – no longer stigmatised, recognised as an art form, well-paid and professional. "Alongside the artistic advancement of tattooing, we've also seen how the business side of it has grown. And I've always loved the business side!" Durb says. At the time of our chat, he's planning a move to Las Vegas. "My wife Cervena Fox would like to open a shop there, and I've been speaking with Mario Barth about using some of his warehouse space to expand True Tattoo Supply."





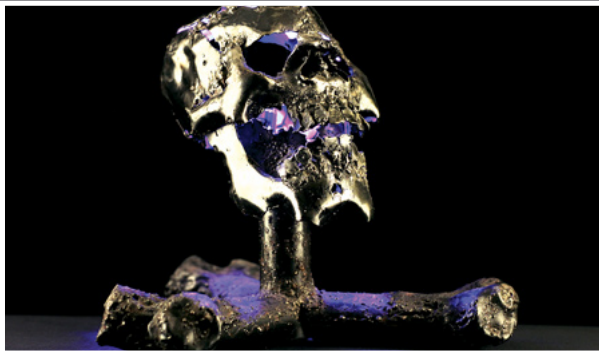
Durb is keen to give back to the industry too. He has become known for his self-care seminar, 'Longevity of the Tattoo Artist', where he teaches tattooists how to prolong their careers by staying strong, limber and aware of their bodies throughout their working lives.

"A big part of my message is that you need to make time for yourself. As all tattooists know, people will take every second of your day if you give it to them. Clients just want a quick chat. You squeeze in another tattoo just before you go home. You do a tattoo for a friend."

"When I'm tattooing, I turn off my phone – so that I can just focus on the work without any distractions. It used to be 'Hey Durb, there's a problem with the show', 'Hey Durb, there's a problem at the supply company', 'Hey Durb...' and it almost got to the point where I hated sitting down to tattoo! And I never want to get to the point where I hate something I love so much."

"You need to hold on to your mental health. Being a tattooist is like being a full-time college student; even though you go home every night you still have your homework to do. But if you don't find some time for you, then you're going to burn out. You need something outside of tattooing. I've done jiu-jitsu for many years, and the great thing about my fight family is that no one talks to me about tattoos. We talk about jiu-jitsu."





In the midst of his busy schedule, Durb also finds time to create art in many different disciplines and media (including oil painting, watercolour, wood carving and metal sculpture). "But I love tattooing more than ever," he says. "I think it's one of the hardest art forms though! There's nothing as difficult as putting a small accurate design on a soft squishy canvas!"

As if Durb didn't have enough on his plate, he's recently taken up acting. He's been offered a part in the horror TV mini-series 'St Gabriel', which is all about a city ruled by crime, occult and the demonic. Intrigued, I ask him how that came about.

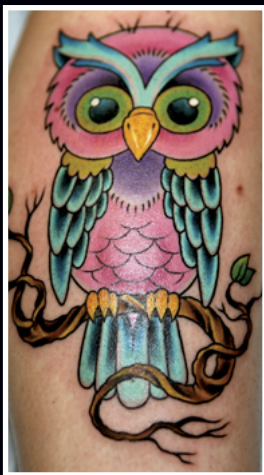
"The production company were at Hell City Tattoo Fest for our zombie competition - where people dress up and go on stage to be judged by the public - and one of the producers just looked at me and said, 'I think you'd make a good Lucifer!' I've done some acting in the past, but not really any speaking parts. I don't have a big role, but it's set in this city full of mobsters and crazy gangs and shit, and it's all about hunting for a book that will open the Gates of Heaven... It was a lot of fun."



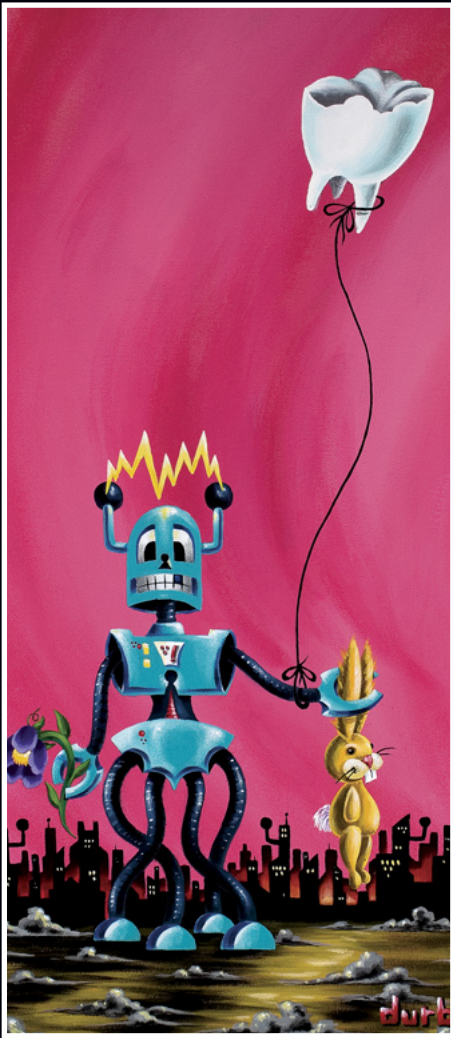
"I seem to be doing a lot of things at the moment," Durb continues, "but that's the way I am. When I'm an old man, sitting painting next to a pond, I want to look back on my life and think, 'Yeah, I've done a lot of shit and achieved a fair bit.' Life's better if you grab the opportunities that come along. Although I do have to say no sometimes!"

As our conversation draws to a close, I felt I couldn't let the opportunity pass by to ask Durb about his views on the political situation surrounding the murder of George Floyd. "The thing with America right now, in the wake of the George Floyd murder, is that people are way more aware," he tells me. "We always knew there was institutional racism, but not to the extent that's become apparent."

"I was down in the city protesting on that first night," he continues, "and I saw the police shooting wooden bullets and exploding stun grenades. It was a crazy time. A couple of days later I had a text from a tattooer calling me out and saying that I was part of the riots in which some tattoo shops got busted up. He wanted to know why I was there. My thought was why weren't YOU there – instead of just sitting at home complaining with your keyboard? George Floyd brought a lot of people together and divided a whole bunch of others. It exposed our police system and hopefully things will change."







"Tattoos are way more accepted now and ultimately I think that's a good thing," Durb continues. "We've been blessed to be part of this tattoo renaissance. But the forefathers of tattooing are probably rolling in their graves! It's why they kept everything so secret – because they were scared this would happen, that everyone would jump on the bandwagon. I just hope it doesn't get too oversaturated. But one very good thing is that bad shops simply can't survive in this industry any more."

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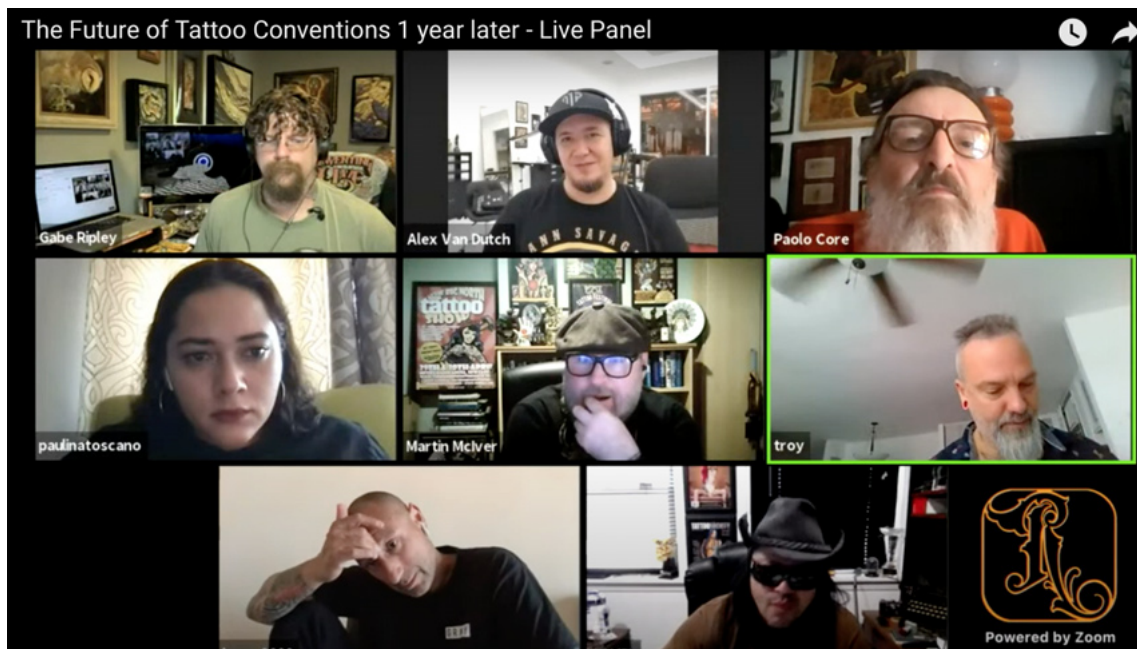
My final question to Durb is about all the changes that have taken place in the tattoo world over the years. Does he feel that tattooing has lost its edge in these sober, sensible days? "You mean I can't break your hands with a hammer if you open a shop next door to mine?" he says, laughing. "Yeah, tattooing used to be a safe haven for bikers, punks and mad characters. It used to take guts to walk through the door of a tattoo shop. But the TV shows helped to break down that barrier. And when all the athletes, models and actors started getting tattooed, the kids suddenly realised that if you were covered in ink it didn't mean you were a shit bag."



Whilst we wait patiently here in the UK for the remaining COVID-19 restrictions to be finally lifted, one of the things that is still sadly missing from the tattoo world is a full calendar of international conventions. Large indoor gatherings remain off the agenda in many countries, and even for events that are able to go ahead, all kinds of extra safeguards are necessary. It's a constantly changing situation and nobody can predict with any certainty where we'll be even in a few months' time. But one thing is certain. Everyone wants conventions back!

# THE FUTURE OF CONVENTIONS

A CONVERSATION WITH EVENT ORGANISERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD





A fascinating live panel discussion recently took place on Guy Aitchison's Reinventing The Tattoo platform, hosted by **Gabe Ripley**. It was facilitated by **Alex Van Dutch** of World Tattoo Events and he was joined by: **Paulina Toscano** of the Mexico Tattoo Convention, **Paulo Core** of the Tattoo Expo Roma, **Troy Timpel** of Villain Arts (who is responsible for 22 conventions across the USA), **Kim Kloeth** of the International Brussels Tattoo Convention, and **Martin McIver** who organises the Tattoo Tea Party in Manchester, the Galway Tattoo Show, the Goa Tattoo Festival and our very own Big North Tattoo Show in Newcastle upon Tyne. **Tony Romel** from Tattoo Society Magazine also joined the conversation.

We're delighted to be able to bring you an edited version here, and we're grateful to Reinventing The Tattoo for allowing us to share their content in the pages of Total Tattoo Magazine. Do check out the full podcast. There's a link at the foot of this feature.

Alex and Gabe first brought their panel together last year, when the pandemic was in its early days and the world seemed to be closing down all around us. We'll let Alex himself introduce **The Future of Tattoo Conventions: One Year Later...**

**Alex:** So, this is the second edition of The Future of Tattoo Conventions panel discussion. We did the first one a year ago in May 2020, when we were just nine weeks into a situation where ALL the tattoo conventions anywhere on the planet had been either postponed or cancelled. A year later, and we're still in the kind of situation none of us would have hoped for. But some countries are re-opening, and compared to a year ago we're in better shape. So guys, what's the situation in each of your countries right now? Let's start with you, Paulina.

**Paulina:** It's looking good in Mexico. The country is pretty much open again for travel and events, all the bars and restaurants are open, and we're really hopeful our convention will happen. We've had some terrible times of course - Mexico City, for example, was completely locked down at various points during the year - but what's making a big difference now is the vaccine, and the fact that people are being more cautious. As far as international travel goes, Mexico is completely open to everyone.

**'THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN HOW THINGS MIGHT NEED TO BE RUN IN THE FUTURE.' - KIM**



**Alex:** You can fly into Mexico from anywhere in the world? No restrictions?

**Paulina:** Yes, people can come here without a test or a vaccine wherever they're coming from. It's when people travel back to their own countries that they might have to do tests or be quarantined.

**Alex:** So does this mean you've already been able to have conventions?

**Paulina:** No, not yet, because although Mexico's borders have never been closed, artists from other countries haven't been able to come here due to the limits on international travel. Also, there's been a kind of traffic light system of restrictions in operation which constantly changes and has made it difficult for us to plan anything.

**Alex:** Paulo, how is Italy doing?

**Paulo:** Italy is pretty good right now. They are re-opening the museums, restaurants, bars and shops, etc – with just some restrictions on opening hours – and we can now travel anywhere within the country. We can also travel abroad to any country which will let us in. International travellers can come to Italy from anywhere in world, as long as they have a negative test. The only exception is India, because people here are really scared of the new Delta variant.

**Alex:** Understandably.

**Paulo:** We're vaccinating large numbers of people, and this is helping a lot. You can even go and get a walk-in vaccination without an appointment. I think in the summer we'll still be wearing masks, but perhaps just indoors, and in crowded places.



Paulo Core



**'IT WILL HAVE TO BE A EUROPEAN EVENT THIS TIME, RATHER THAN A TRULY INTERNATIONAL EVENT.'** – **PAULO**





**Alex:** How about the US, Troy? You're one of the few places already doing tattoo conventions again.

**Troy:** The US is doing great. We have over half the population vaccinated now, and most of the country is opening up almost without any restrictions. We're getting ready this weekend for our fifth show of the year. Our first was six weeks ago. Thanks to the success of the vaccines, we feel we can now safely run events of this size. So yeah, I'm super happy that we're able to move forward.

**Alex:** A few months ago the US was in pretty bad shape, but I remember when we talked back then, you were optimistic. And you were right! Is the situation the same in every state across America?

**Troy:** Different states have different rules. Some states have had very few COVID-19 restrictions beyond mask-wearing. Restrictions in Georgia, for example, pretty much ended in June last year. Contrast that with California, which has pretty much been in lockdown for the last eight months. There are stark differences in the way each individual state has dealt with the situation.

**Alex:** Kim, how's it going in Belgium?

**Kim:** It's going very slowly here, certainly compared to what I hear from Troy. Places still close at 10pm, and you can't yet eat indoors in restaurants. Only outside. You still can't have more than 50 people at an event. Many businesses and premises are still closed.





**'IF PEOPLE STILL HAVE TO SOCIAL DISTANCE, WHAT'S THE POINT OF EVEN PUTTING ON A SHOW?' – MARTIN**

**Alex:** How about your situation with vaccines?

**Kim:** I think the vaccination roll-out is happening pretty slowly here too.

**Alex:** So things in Belgium don't seem to be moving as quickly as in some other countries.

**Kim:** That's certainly how it looks from my point of view. And tattoo conventions aren't going to be happening any time soon either. They're going to do an experiment at a big outdoor festival in August – with 66,000 people, all of whom will be tested – and that might mean that after the summer some types of events can start up again...

**Alex:** That's interesting.

**Kim:** Yeah, but the difference is that we're inside, and that festival will be outside. But I'm still going to go ahead and organise my show. It's planned for November. I'm not going to be stopped, man. I really need to do the show this year.



**Alex:** Martin, how about the UK and Ireland? And I guess you can tell us something about India too?

**Martin:** I think all of us know how bad it is in India at the moment. And it really is bad. People are struggling even to get oxygen when they need it. In the big cities it's awful. I think India got hit worse in this second wave than most other countries got hit at any time in the pandemic. So tattoo events won't be happening there for some time. My Goa show is scheduled for January 2022. I really want to run it, but obviously I'm only going to do it if it's safe.

**Alex:** And the UK and Ireland?

**Martin:** A little bit different! The UK is way ahead on vaccinations and the country is really opening up now. The tattoo shops are busy. The government is currently saying that all restrictions in England could be lifted on 21st July, meaning there will be no requirement for social distancing, and events can take place. *[The rules and time scales are different for other parts of the UK – in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.]* But we've already moved the Tea Party and the Big North into 2022 because there was just too much uncertainty. As we all know, it takes at least nine months to organise a big show, and we couldn't book international artists without knowing if they'd be allowed to fly in for the convention or get home afterwards.



**Alex:** I guess nobody could plan anything with any certainty.

**Martin:** The Big North was literally weeks away when the first UK lockdown happened. Everything was paid for – the venue, plus all the suppliers, etc – and it all just got frozen in time. Fortunately everyone's been amazingly supportive and understanding.

**Alex:** So you've moved your two UK shows to next year. How about the situation in Ireland?

**Martin:** Ireland is part of the EU, so it's experienced the same slowness in its vaccination roll-out as other EU countries. We've just come out of a four month lockdown here. The whole country was locked down from January through to the end of April, with only local travel permitted for much of that time. But it's opening up pretty quickly now. There's still no news on events, but we're expecting a government announcement on that at any moment. The great thing – the hopeful thing – is that all the artists I speak to are chomping at the bit to do shows again, and the public are the same. But if people still have to social distance, what's the point of even putting on a show? If you can't have entertainment, and crowds enjoying that entertainment...

**Alex:** You're right. It just wouldn't work.

**Martin:** If you can't put on the best show possible, why do it at all? My own opinion is that a great tattoo convention cannot have social distancing. That – amongst many other things – is the big problem we all face, and what we have to assess.

**Alex:** With all the travel restrictions and other challenges, are any of you guys planning to get international artists to your conventions this year?

**Paulina:** Yeah, definitely! We're planning on getting artists from Russia, the UK, Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil – all over Latin America – everywhere. We're welcoming everyone. This year Russia is our 'guest of honour' country and we have four or five artists coming from there.

**Paulo:** We've got a lot of artists coming from Spain, and also France and Germany. But it will be really difficult to have a truly international event. I think it will be more of a European event this time.

**Troy:** To all the artists out there – if you can get to the US, come and do one of my shows! We're wide open. We're running events. My last two events, we were even doing vaccines at the shows.



**Alex:** Come to a tattoo convention and get a vaccine at the same time! That's an awesome combination.

**Troy:** Yeah, we're tattooing, we're busy, we've got great crowds... and you can get a vaccine too. So if you'd like a booth at a Villain Arts show, send me an email. I would love to have any artist that can get here.

**Alex:** Kim, is your situation in Belgium similar to Paulo's in Italy?

**Kim:** Well, I still have a lot of international artists confirmed, including some from Russia and Japan. But of course this next show in November isn't going to be the big event that I would normally do. There will only be about 280 artists. Usually we'd have nearly 700. And I'm not going to do the full entertainment programme. It makes no sense, if we can't have the large crowds. But we're still going to have some great acts and bands, and some cool seminars. It's still going to be a nice international show! Just with fewer artists.

**Alex:** So you're just downsizing a little bit.



**Kim:** Yeah. I wanted to make it smaller to ensure that everything would run smoothly and safely. We're scaling down from 22,000 to just 4,000 square metres. I wanted to be able to give extra attention and time to the artists. And this is also our opportunity to learn how things will need to be run for the next couple of years. I think the health inspectors are going to be keeping a close eye on tattoo shows, for sure.

**Martin:** I think we'll have to look at making booths bigger, at least for the next year or so. We need to be seen by the public to be cleaning and sterilising as much as possible – and that means we'll need more room to move around. Artists might even need to bring an extra helper. Even if we're all vaccinated, there will still be a lot of people who are scared. By scaling down the number of artists, booths can be bigger and we can give the public the kind of reassurance they need.



**Kim:** The irony is that tattooing is already a super safe profession. So in terms of infection prevention and hygiene, there aren't going to be many actual changes in what tattooists do. I guess it just needs to be more visible. Maybe it's more about convention visitors behaving in a safe way.

**Martin:** Yeah, but I do think the public will want to see us wiping all the surfaces, etc, just like you see anywhere you go nowadays – in shops or wherever. I'm thinking of the artists' tables with their artwork and portfolios on, for instance.

**Troy:** We've been trying to make the layout of our shows more spread out, making the public areas larger so the density of people is looser, spreading the booths out, and so on. We've been doing 10ft x 12ft booths instead of 10ft x

**'WHAT'S MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE NOW IS THE VACCINE.'**

**– PAULINA**



10ft. In the audience areas for our stages, we set up chairs in groups of three, spaced 6ft apart on either side, with 6ft between each row – which means we can group family units, but people don't feel closed in. So although all the restrictions are now mostly being lifted, we're still trying to create the safest environment that we can, to make people feel comfortable and confident to come to our events.

**Kim:** How about masks?

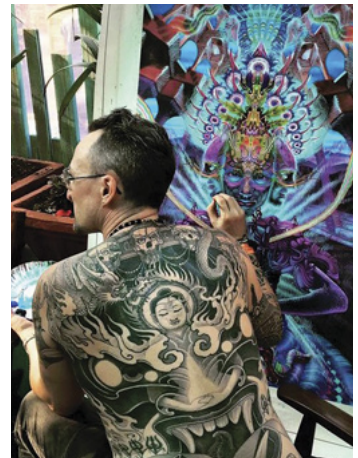
**Troy:** For now, we're still asking people to wear masks to get into our events. In some venues we're being strict about enforcing that, but in others we're letting people decide for themselves, according to local restrictions and regulations – although I must admit I would prefer to have consistency across all my conventions. But I just want people to have a good time and be safe.

**Paulina:** I attended a coffee convention recently in the same venue as where our show will be. The safety measures were really strict. You had to wear your mask all the time, and you had to wear it correctly or the 'mask police' were straight onto you!

**Martin:** In Ireland yeah, it's masks all the time. But to be honest, you can see people are starting to not give a shit any more. Everybody's missing the pub! Actually, talking about alcohol, I think that's the really big challenge facing us. As soon as you have alcohol at your event, the restrictions that you rely on a big crowd of people to adhere to are gone. All it takes is for one or two people to break ranks and everybody will follow suit. Alcohol and large events just do not mix.

**Gabe:** This is the perfect segue! Pretty much every time I've been consuming large amounts of alcohol at a tattoo event, Tony Romel has been there! Welcome to the conversation, Tony.

**Tony:** Hey guys. I'm really curious to know, do you think in the future people will have to prove they've been vaccinated in order to get into a convention?





**Martin:** Things are always changing, but at the moment yes, that does seem to be where it might be going.

**Troy:** We're not looking to introduce a vaccine passport system to get entry into our shows. That doesn't seem to be a popular idea in America.

**Tony:** And then there is the issue of fake vaccine passports of course. I also wondered, will any of you have a limit on the number of attendees?

**Kim:** No, I don't think we will. But in Brussels we never overfill the venues, for security reasons and because of fire regulations, and I think the authorities may get even stricter about this.

**Troy:** We're not introducing capacity limits as such, but we're designing our floor plans based on previous attendance figures to space things out.

**Alex:** What will be the reaction of the general public to the re-starting of conventions? Do you think the public are ready to come back?

**Paulo:** There's a huge hunger out there!

**Martin:** I think once we start to get back to normal, it will happen very quickly. Everybody will soon forget all of this. But I think this year's still going to be a bit strange.

Tony Romei



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**Alex:** Yeah this is a transition year. Last year everything totally shut down; this year we're getting back into it; next year it'll be business as usual – especially if the vast majority of the world is vaccinated.

**Tony:** But I wonder if it's really going to be back to business as usual? I mean, you guys know me, and the way I get completely drunk at every show I go to... Is there going to be liquor at conventions in the future?

**Troy:** The bars are open at all of our shows. Last weekend in Nashville it was almost like the coronavirus had never happened. People are happy to be getting out and partying.

**Alex:** Yeah, they wanna have some fun again.

**Troy:** Once everyone is vaccinated, and people feel comfortable and safe again, there's no reason why we can't return to normal. At our first show, six weeks ago in Atlanta, you could see people were still a little bit hesitant. After all, it was the first time for a while they'd been in a room with 4,000 people. But yeah, people are ready for some normality. More and more artists are starting to jump back on our tour now too.



**'RESTRICTIONS HAVE BEEN LIFTED, BUT WE'RE STILL CREATING THE SAFEST ENVIRONMENT WE CAN.'** – **TROY**



**Alex:** Guys, let's finish with a round-up of your upcoming convention dates, plus any final comments.

**Paulo:** Roma will be 8th-10th October 2021 – probably with fewer booths, so there's more space for everyone. Everybody wants to be safe. I care about my artists, the public, my staff and myself! I think we're at a significant juncture right now, in terms of COVID-19. We're in between the 'before' and 'after'. I think it's important to understand that.

**Paulina:** Our convention will be on 16th and 17th October 2021 in the Pepsi Center, Mexico City. Alex, this panel discussion just feels so different to last year. Back then, we were just so clueless about the situation. COVID-19 caught us all off guard. We felt so hopeless. Now it feels so much more positive. We know much more about what to expect, going forward. We're so prepared this year compared to last year, and I'm sure that next year will be even better.

**Alex:** Absolutely. We know what we're dealing with now. Kim, Martin, Troy, what are your dates?

**Kim:** 12th-14th November 2021, at the Tour and Taxis Brussels, fingers-crossed.

**Martin:** I'm definitely planning to do Galway this year, but I'm going to try to move it to November. I'm not going to let it clash with Kim's dates though... because I really want to go to the Brussels convention myself! I'm going to do everything I possibly can to put on a good safe show, and I'm really hopeful of it happening. But like all of us here, I will only put it on if it's going to be a great show and we can look after everyone safely. My other forthcoming shows are all in 2022.

**Troy:** We have Louisville this weekend, then Houston the weekend after, followed by Cleveland, then Minneapolis... We're basically doing our usual 22-show circuit back-to-back,

starting in May instead of January! We're on tour like musicians. Watching America open back up again.

**Tony:** Hell yeah!

**Troy:** Philly, billed as the world's biggest tattoo convention, will be 10th-12th September. We pretty much have non-stop shows all the way through to November. We're making up for a year and a half of COVID-19.

**Alex:** OK, so the message is the world is re-opening for tattoo conventions!

**Gabe:** Thanks everybody!

Listen to the whole conversation here:  
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Gabe Ripley



**'I THINK BOOTHS WILL NEED TO BE BIGGER, AND ARTIST NUMBERS SMALLER.'** - **MARTIN**

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'THE FIRST TIME I DID A  
PORTRAIT IT NEARLY  
FRIED MY BRAIN.'

# DEAN GUNTHER



**We first met South African artist Dean Gunther at the Portsmouth tattoo convention four years ago, soon after he came to England. At the time, he was working alongside Zack Chiswell as a member of the Family Ink crew. Dean loves to travel and has since gone on to work at many other prestigious studios. Driven, determined and focused, with an endless desire for knowledge, he has rapidly established himself as a stand-out realism artist.**

We begin by chatting about the virtues of sobriety. "When I stopped drinking," Dean tells me, "that was when my tattooing really took off. For so many years, my work had been stagnant."

Dean's been sober for more than three years now. "When I was drinking I had no ambition or drive, even when it came to my tattooing. I would go to the pub every night, see the same people, have the same conversations. I would wake up every morning and be sick, struggle through the day, then go to the pub again. I'd been drinking from a young age. I just had to make a choice on how I wanted my life to be. Man, I don't miss it at all."





Dean is currently working at Sorry Mum, Manchester, but he has other plans going forward. "I want to do more travelling, and lots of guest spots," he tells me. "I've been thinking about getting a nice little private studio for myself. I don't intend to stay in Manchester for ever. My dream is to tattoo from some beautiful tropical island, with palm trees and a beach... I'd actually been lining up trips to Hawaii and Bali last year, but of course the pandemic got in the way of all of that."

But let's begin at the beginning. Dean was 21 when he started tattooing. I ask him about his early tattoo memories, growing up in Cape Town. "My grandfather had a tattoo of a horseshoe on his arm," he recalls. "He told me it was where a horse had kicked him, and I believed him for years!"

"I was creative and artistic from a young age," Dean continues, "but the idea of being a tattooist never crossed my mind. Tattooing definitely wasn't seen as a career choice in South Africa at that time. It was very much frowned upon – and still is, in many ways. We still have the numbers gangs in the prisons of course."

"I got my first tattoo in my best mate's garage. It was done by a guy who'd come out of prison. I had to take him on my motorbike to buy him some beer and weed. He took three matchsticks, put the needle in the middle, and tied it with cotton. Then he took a black rubber o-ring (from a car) which he melted in foil, rubbed to make a fine dust, mixed with spit in a Coca-Cola bottle cap... and hand-poked into my leg. That tattoo is still there to this day."

"After I finished school," Dean continues, "I did a lot of shitty jobs where I just never fitted in. Then I got a job as a chef and sandwich delivery boy, which meant my afternoons were free. I used to go to the local tattoo shop – still in my chef's outfit – and help out just for the fun of it, doing tracings and stuff like that. I never got paid though."





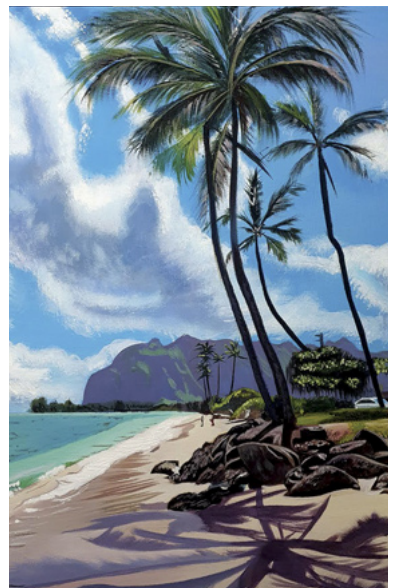
"I went to lots of shops trying to get an apprenticeship and was always told to fuck off. Then I bought some tattoo gear for myself. The woman who sold it to me gave me a few pointers, and that was me up and running."

"Two years later I managed to get into a studio as an apprentice. I was back to working for no money, but I knew it was my big chance to acquire the knowledge and skills I needed. I had to be the first in, mop the shop, scrub the tubes, set up the stations and sterilise all the equipment. I had to do all the bookings too. But it's where I really learnt how to tattoo. Or rather it's where I learnt all over again. Two years of working on my own meant I had a few bad habits to iron out."

"It was an epic journey. When I began, I never even realised that you had to dilute black ink to get grey; I thought you just had to tattoo faster so not so much black would go in."

"I do wish I'd been able to learn more about machines, needles and inks back then. But you could already buy ready-made needles and pre-mixed inks, so I never really had the chance. For me, that depth of knowledge is all part of respecting the industry I work in."

Eventually Dean decided that if he was to fulfil his dream of becoming a great tattooist he would need to leave South Africa. "Before I even started tattooing I used to attend the Cape Town show and watch artists like Paul Booth and Bob Tyrrell working. Once I'd made up my mind to become a tattooist I knew that I'd have to go to where the industry was strong. We only had one international show a year in South Africa, and for several years that didn't even happen at all." So four years ago he came to the UK.



"I started working at my friend Zack Chiswell's place, Family Ink in Boscombe, Dorset," Dean tells me. "Back home I'd been on my own in a small private studio, but suddenly at Zack's I was working with four other artists. I got to try all the machines and inks that they were using, and it was like information overload! And only a few weeks after arriving, I was working at my first convention. It was everything I'd wanted. I loved my time at Zack's."

Dean now has 13 years of experience under his belt. "I've worked in numerous shops all over Europe, with some very respectable artists, and naturally you pick up a great deal of knowledge along the way. Every time I go somewhere new, I learn something different - helpful little tips like using one hand for the Vaseline and keeping one hand clean!"

"But Zack's shop was where I did my first colour portrait," Dean continues. "And I absolutely loved it. It nearly fried my brain - half the time I had no idea what was going on - but I was super pleased with the outcome and I knew from that moment that I was going to focus on colour realism."

**'EVERYWHERE I TRAVEL, I LEARN SOMETHING NEW.'**





"For the previous 10 years I'd had no real direction in my work, and it was getting tedious tattooing little feathers and names and anything that came through the door. It was only when I came to the UK and saw people specialising in one style – and getting really good at it, because they could focus on perfecting it – that I realised how important it is to find something that you love to do. For me, that's nature and animals and faces."

"But I have to admit I'm not so interested in famous people's portraits *per se*. Apparently I once did a tattoo of a legendary football coach without having the slightest idea of who he was! For me it was just a man's face."

Dean found colour theory fairly easy to learn. "But it's the little tricks that can really take your work to the next level," he explains. "Like using warm tones in the foreground and cool tones in the background. And creating light and shadow with complementary colours – purple and yellow for instance. They don't have to be bright colours. It can be a soft purple with a mustard yellow. That will be much more pleasing on the eye. Understand principles like these, and your work will immediately improve."

"The vibrancy of the colours will depend a lot on the client's skin tone. If the client is ginger-haired with a pale skin, the tattoo will heal like the day it was done. But if the skin is tanned or dark, the tattoo naturally won't be so bright. So I'll adjust the colours I use. I wouldn't go for yellows or browns if the skin tone is within that colour field. And I would maybe go for more contrast too, especially if the person spends a lot of time outside. Aftercare is crucial, particularly the first two weeks. I find Tattoo Armour a helpful product to use."

"My early work was so bright and saturated, it wasn't natural," Dean continues. "Now I use a much more limited palette with a combination of opaques and more muted colours. I'm learning all the time. In my portraits I don't even use flesh tones any more. That was something I learnt from a seminar

with Joshua Carlton, who's been painting and tattooing for many years. He explained things so clearly, my work improved overnight!"

Dean is soon going to be hosting his own seminar (subject to coronavirus restrictions of course). It will be the first time he's done this kind of thing. With only 10 places available, it's already full booked.

"It's going to be held in the studio," he tells me, "with all the attendees physically there. That's why the number of places is so limited. And it's for professional artists only. I'm going to do a complete tattoo from start to finish. I'll show my way of working and explain my process – covering colour theory, mixing colours, everything. I'm going to get it filmed, and I might do an online link for people to join. And it's something I definitely want to do more of in the future. This is one of the reasons I've wanted to attend so many seminars myself – to get a really good feel for how best to present them."





and gentle... it's no wonder everybody's moving over to pen machines! And the cartridge system makes life so much easier too." Dean is happy to admit that coils may well still be the best choice for a tattooist doing lines – but of course for his style of work, that's not a consideration.

Dean uses Inkjecta machines. I ask him to talk me through why he likes them so much. "I've tried loads of machines along the way – Cheyenne, FK Irons, Bishop – but the first time I used the Inkjecta I knew it was the one for me. It saturates colour like no other machine I've ever used. And colour needs to be heavily saturated. It needs to be really in there. You can't do wishy washy, like you can with black and grey. Especially if it's a light colour, you need to get it in if you want it to stay. Basically the Inkjecta suits me and it suits my work."

## 'MY DREAM IS TO TATTOO ON SOME BEAUTIFUL TROPICAL ISLAND...'

"Information is so readily available to everyone on YouTube now. There's so much out there. If you don't become a great tattooist in a couple of years, then it probably means it's not for you and you never will!"

Our conversation moves on to talking about equipment. "Back when I first started, I was using coils," Dean tells me. "Now I love using rotaries. They're so much better for your hands, and they're way better for the client too. You can work for longer with less trauma. Transitioning from a jack-hammer to something that's smooth, easy-to-hold





"I can do a great tattoo with a shit machine," Dean tells me, "and I know people who have great machines but still do shit tattoos. But if you know what you're doing, using a high end machine gives you consistency as an artist – meaning you can concentrate on getting better and better, and simply focus on doing a great tattoo."

Inkjecta decided to sponsor Dean early on in his career and he has nothing but good words to say about them. "They got behind me when I had hardly any followers and they've been great," he says, "and of course they always send me their latest machines! I'm also sponsored by Stencil Honey, so I get their product for free too. In the future, I would definitely like to get a needle sponsor and an ink sponsor."

Dean is really making a name for himself and clearly loves what he's doing, but I ask him if he sees any risks in getting typecast as 'the colour wildlife guy'. "If I didn't want to do that kind of work, I wouldn't post it!" is his response. Which begs the question, how does he react to requests for tattoos that aren't what he wants to do?



"I don't do any walk-ins or small tattoos," he tells me, "and if I get asked for something like a pocket watch for instance, I simply say, 'Look mate, that's been done a thousand times. We can do something unique for you.' If the client doesn't want to budge, then I pass them on to someone who will be happy to do the tattoo they want, and who will do a great job for them."

"On the other hand," Dean continues, "there are times when as a tattooist you want to do something in particular but nobody seems to want it! Sometimes the only way to tattoo a design is to offer it for free. Some of my favourite pieces are tattoos I've done without charging the client, just to push myself in a new direction. It always pays off in the long run."

This leads us on to talking about progressing and developing as an artist. "I find the only way to improve is to push myself outside of my comfort zone," Dean tells me. "When I reach the point where I feel ready to cry, that's the point where I know I'm really learning and improving. It's like a marathon runner hitting the wall. With art, you work and work until you feel your brain's going to explode – but you need to push through that, and not give in. *That's* when you're going to do your best work."

Dean loves doing guest spots and is keen to continue building his worldwide network of tattooist friends. "Working alongside other tattooists you can learn so much, and I'm really fortunate to be in touch with some amazing artists," he tells me. He's already fixed up a UK guest spot at Prophecy Tattoo Gallery in Exeter, a studio well known for collaborative pieces – which opens the way to all sorts of exciting possibilities! – and as soon as the coronavirus restrictions are eased, he intends to start travelling the world again.

"I'm going to be heading all over the place," he says, "including the States I hope. It's one of the great things about tattooing. You can visit anywhere in the world, work for two or three weeks... There are very few other jobs with this much freedom."

Right now, Dean feels more passionate about tattooing than he has at any other time in his life. "My desire to learn, and my thirst for knowledge, are so strong now," he tells me. "I am so looking forward to all the guest spots I've got lined up. I just need to get there!"

**Instagram:** @dean.gunther  
**YouTube Channel:**  
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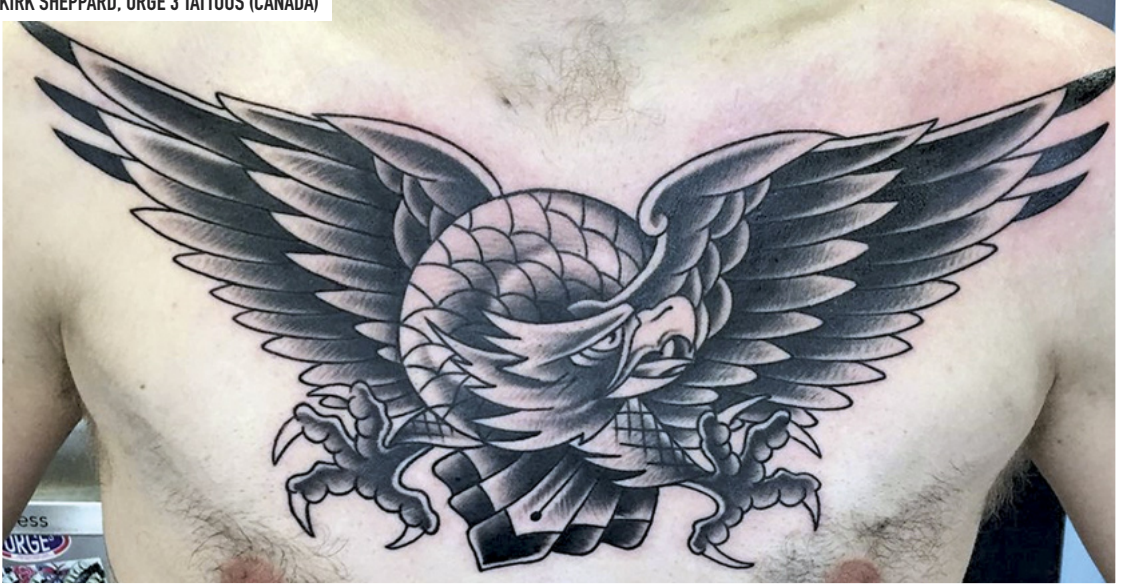
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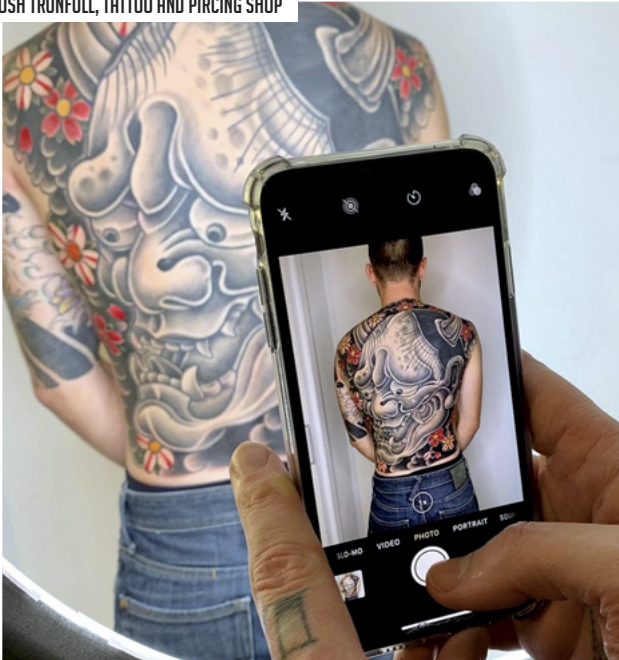
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KIRK SHEPPARD, URGE 3 TATTOOS (CANADA)



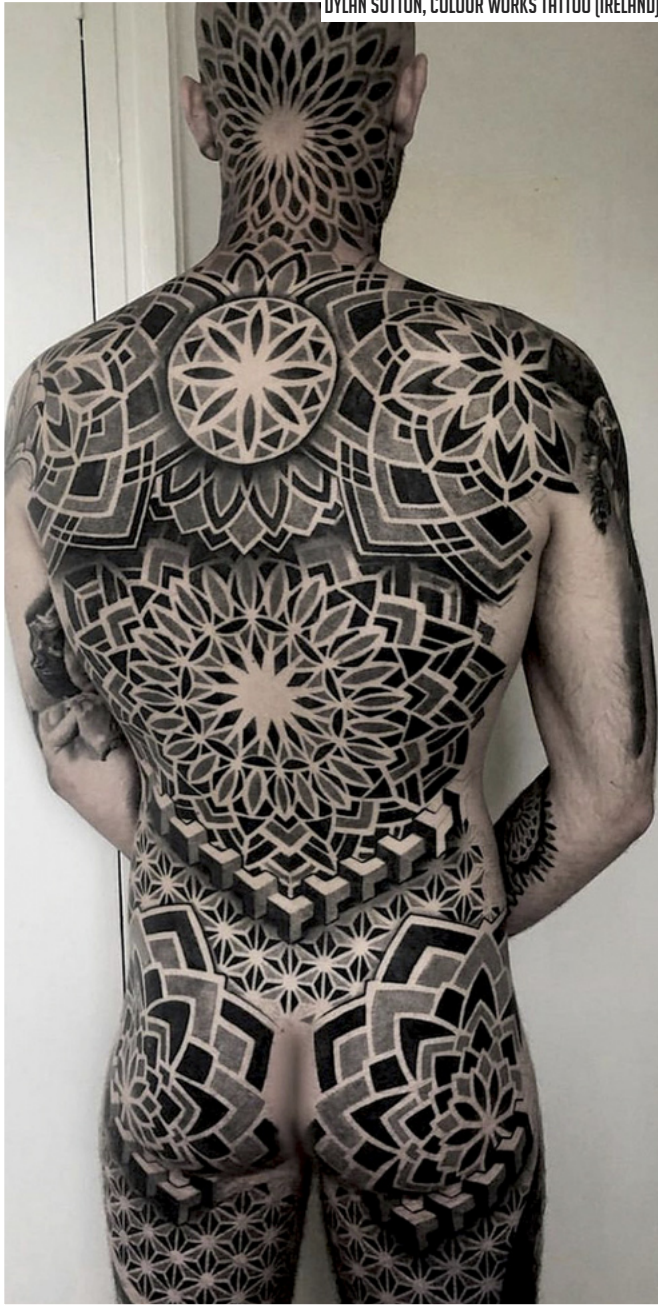
JOSH TRUNFULL, TATTOO AND PIERCING SHOP



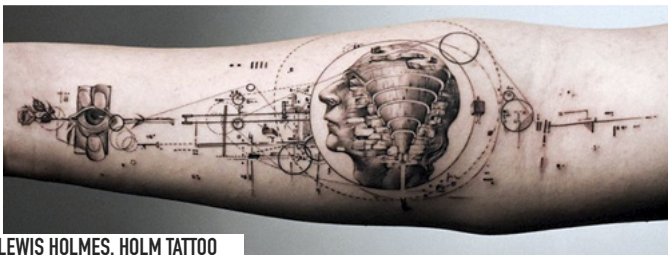
AGGIE VNEK, MONUMENTAL INK



DYLAN SUTTON, COLOUR WORKS TATTOO (IRELAND)



BETH ROSE, CALAMITY TATTOO



LEWIS HOLMES, HOLM TATTOO



SHI, SHIPWRECKED TATTOO

JOE GILBERT, SKIN KANDI CUSTOM TATTOO



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JAKE HEERY TATTOO

HOLLY DIXON, CAT'S CRADLE



AUTUMN HUDSON, ELYSIUM STUDIOS (USA)



MISTER SORN, SMB TATTOO



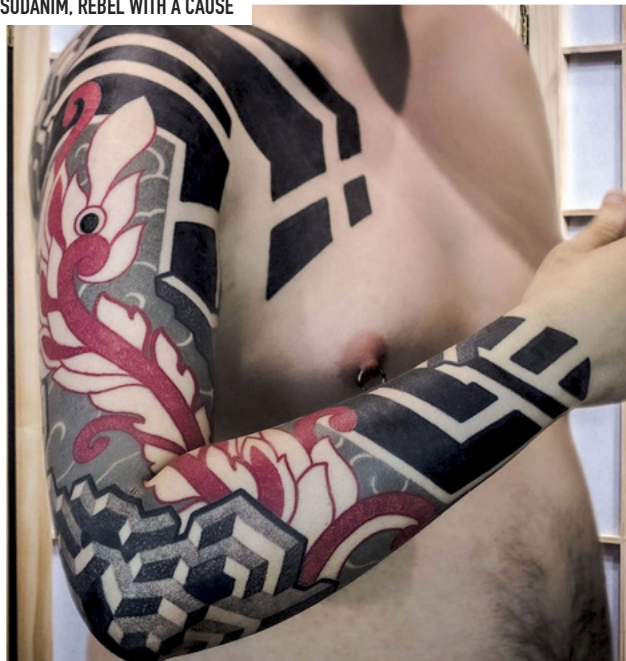
ROBIN WISEMAN, CUSTOM CULT TATTOO



CHRIS MEIGHEN, SANTA CRUZ KUSTOM CLUB



SUDANIM, REBEL WITH A CAUSE



MIKEY BLACK, RISING PHOENIX



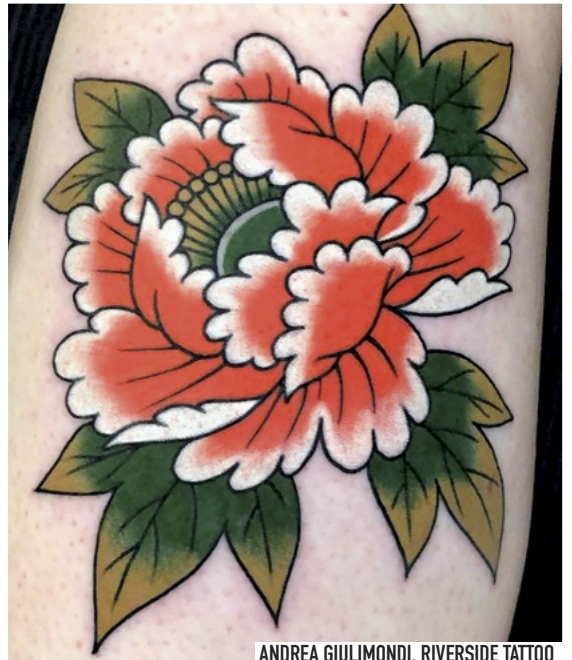
MARCIN PTAK, INKDEPENDENT



SIMON PAUL THOMAS, LIVING ART TATTOO



RICHARD MCCANN, LUCY LOU'S TATTOOS



ANDREA GIULIMONDI, RIVERSIDE TATTOO

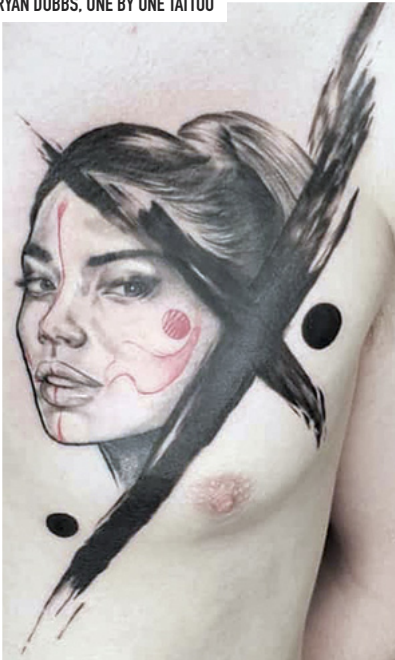
TANK, WILDE INK



MUMIA, COPENHAGEN NOIR (DENMARK)



RYAN DOBBS, ONE BY ONE TATTOO



ANTHONY LENNOX, PROPHECY GALLERY



CHOOGLIN STU, KRAKEN STUDIO



GHOST DAGGER, GRINDHOUSE TATTOO PRODUCTIONS



ADRIAN MONTANA, SMILEY DOGG TATTOO (IRELAND)



STEPHEN DALI, CHAMELEON TATTOO





WHAMBAM, DHAMA TATTOO



LISA SCRIMGEOUR, SAMSARA CUSTOM STUDIO



H D, CAT'S CRADLE TATTOO



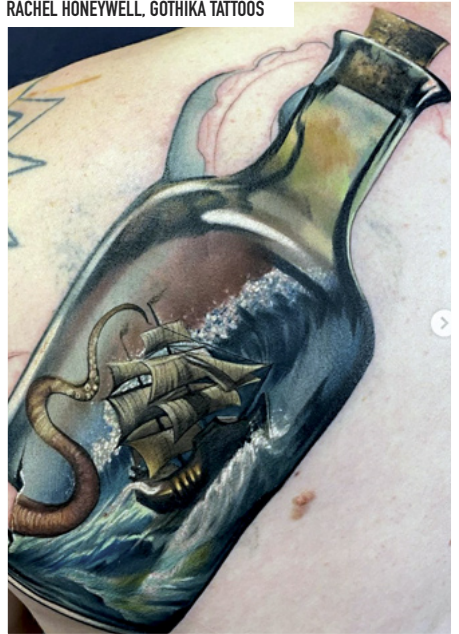
JEN MOGG, SEVEN FOXES



DEBBIE JONES, BROADSIDE TATTOO



RACHEL HONEYWELL, GOTHIKA TATTOOS



KIRSTEN PETTIT, THE CHURCH



NIKKI ANDREWS FARINO, FEMME FATALE TATTOO



BENJI, WHITE BOAR



TOM GROSZ TATTOOS



JESS TATTOOER, SEVEN DOORS



MADDIE ROBERTS



TK, SORRY MUM



PAUL TALBOT, MODERN ELECTRIC

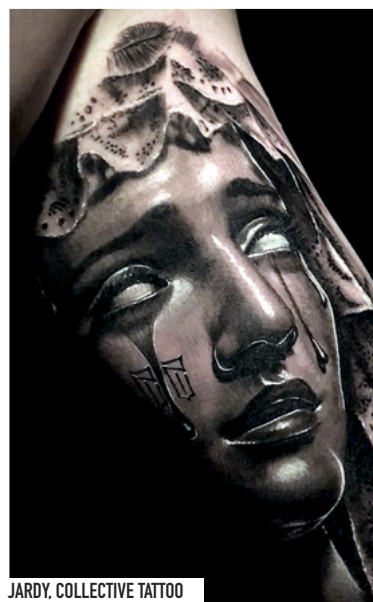
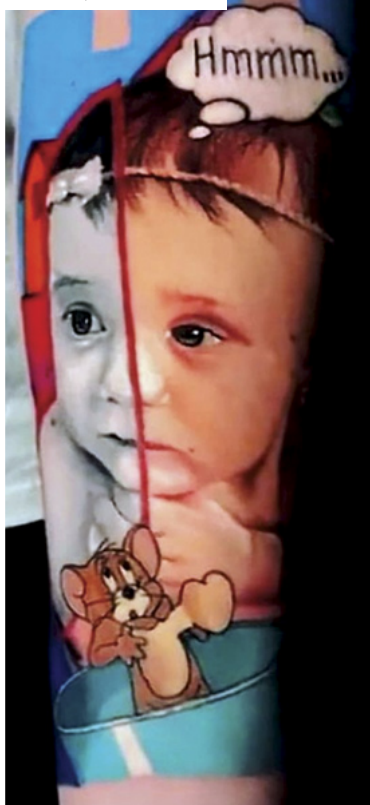


CONSTANTIN, SEVEN SINS TATTOO



RYAN, PROPHECY GALLERY

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**'I LOVE USING FACES  
TO GIVE MY DESIGNS  
AN EMOTIONAL  
NARRATIVE.'**

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# **VOLKAN DEMIRCI**

**Turkish born Volkan Demirci produces highly original tattoos incorporating a multitude of styles and disciplines – with richly saturated colours enhancing his beautifully balanced, boldly structured designs. Volkan is part of the team at Ushuaia Tattoo in London.**



### Tell us a bit about who you are...

I was born in 1980, and I've now been tattooing for more than half my life. Before tattooing I was always into painting, but I don't have a magnificent art background to tell you about. I studied philosophy at university. That was one of the best decisions I ever made. In general, I guess you could describe me as the kind of guy who just loves listening to music and having fun with friends.

### Was anyone in your family artistic?

Actually no. None of my family are interested in art. But my father and mother are talented craftspeople, and that's always been an inspiration to me.

### How did you first get into tattooing?

It all began when I got my nipple pierced. I started to hang out with some guys who recommended me to someone as a tattoo apprentice. At the time, I was completely unaware that they'd done this! But I suddenly realised it was what I'd always wanted to do, and I was where I'd always wanted to be.

### Was the journey easy?

Back then, in Turkey, we couldn't even buy the inks and needles we needed. It was really difficult. Which is crazy, when you think of all the supply companies we have today! But generally I think it's far easier to get into tattooing than it is to be good at it. And in today's huge industry it's REALLY hard to be successful. You don't only have to be skilled at tattooing. You also have to be an expert in social media, customer service, and so much more besides.



**There's a lot of pressure on tattooists now.**

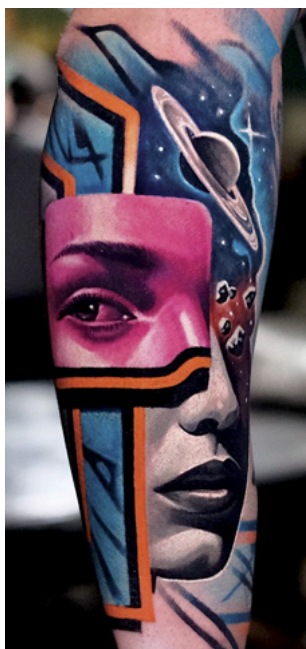
Yeah, it can feel pressurised. But you can always bend bad energy into something strong and useful. That's what I believe.

**What would you say to a young tattooist at the start of their career?**

If you want to get into tattooing, oh man, you'd better be prepared for a challenge. You've got to have discipline, and it's vital to stick to a daily routine to make sure you leave time for things like eating and breathing! And you will need to make sacrifices (your free time, your body...). But when you realise all your hard work is starting to pay off, believe me, you're gonna love it. You have a long way to go, but it's gonna be legendary.

**Do you remember your first day tattooing?**

Oh yes, I remember it very clearly. And I would pay a million pounds to go back and feel that adrenalin again!







**Are you still as passionate about tattooing as you were when you first began?**

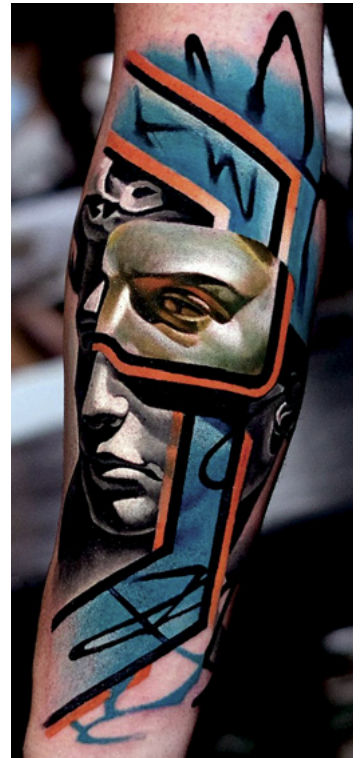
I think it was a totally different experience when I started, but yes, I am still as passionate about it now as I was then. Partly because I know I can still get better and better. I have a strong belief in myself and my ability to improve and progress.

**What's been the hardest thing for you to master?**

I don't think you ever 'master' tattooing! Every client is a different person, so every day you're working with a new canvas. It's a never ending learning curve. Alongside my tattooing though, something I've been working hard at mastering is the art of tattoo photography. I already had a big interest in taking photos (especially black and white) but the challenge has been to photograph my tattoos so that they look as close to the way they look in real life as possible.

**Tell us about coming to work here in the UK.**

I've been working in the UK for four years now. My wife and I were visiting London about six years ago, and that's when we made the decision to move. We wanted a new challenge. I must admit it wasn't easy for us to leave everything behind in Turkey – our family, our friends, my own studio, my wife's job, and so many other things – but it was worth it. I'm working with some amazing artists here at Ushuaia and I've learnt so much. I even did a collaborative piece with one of my colleagues recently, and that was great fun. I'm looking forward to doing more of that kind of thing. Being in a studio like this has so many benefits.



### How would you describe your tattoo style?

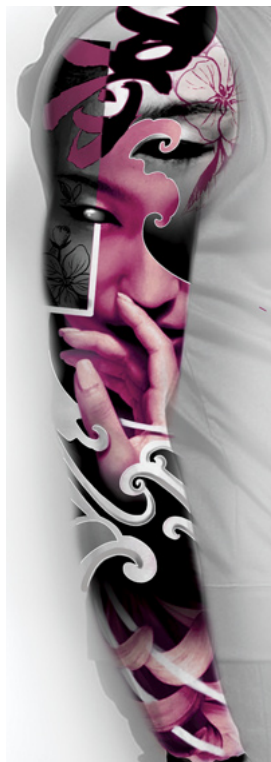
I'm not sure that I can really categorise or describe my style. It's abstract, surreal, expressive, and full of emotions too. I think you could also label it as realism. I always try to create something distinctive, so that people will say, "Yeah, that's Volkan." Every tattooist wants to do that! But I also like to think of tattooing, with all its many disciplines, as ALL ONE - which is how I see life and the whole of creation.

### You use a lot of faces, and amazing colours, in your work.

Yeah, I love using faces to give my designs an emotional narrative. All my designs have a story, at least for me and my client. And the colours! I believe our feelings have many colours, and this is what I'm trying to express in my tattoos. This is why my designs always need colour in them.

### Tell us about your design process.

My client is the starting point. They give me a rough idea of what they want, but I don't need the whole story, just the headline. The rest is up to me. I need creative freedom. With my kind of style you have to be free! The actual design process is simple for me. Whether it's designing a specific tattoo or just working on new ideas, I do it every day, so it's just like having breakfast or making coffee. I create my designs using my iPad and Procreate. These are powerful tools, and they make my whole workflow so much easier. When a design starts to look cool, maybe after some initial attempts that weren't so good, it's a priceless feeling.



**Is creating the design your favourite part of the whole tattoo process?**

Designing and finishing – those are the parts I enjoy most. I always tell my clients that until the tattoo is finished, their arm or leg is mine to do with as I like! Then when I'm done, they can have it back. But they'd better take care of it afterwards! [Laughs]

**How important is the relationship between you and your client?**

I could not be more grateful to my clients! I always try to give them 100%, and I think they know this. But one of the challenges I face working here in London is the language barrier. Obviously when I was back home in Turkey, communication was much easier. But I'm lucky because the team here at Ushuaia do their utmost to help me and make me feel at home.





**Tell us about the equipment you use.**

The tools you use can't make you a better tattooist, but if you buy the best, they can certainly make your working life more comfortable. Inkjecta is my main machine choice, but I always like trying out others too. (And I have to admit I still sometimes miss working with my old school machines. I've put them away in a box, and I'm going to keep them forever!) Tattoo equipment is so much better now than it ever was. Things are developing so fast. When rotaries first came out, I remember wondering what the next development would be. And now we're working with wireless machines! It's crazy guys, just crazy.

**Which inks do you use?**

I'm currently working with World Famous inks, and I'm really happy with them.

**How about aftercare? Do you recommend any particular products to your clients?**

H2Ocean is my aftercare choice. Their products are amazing. And recently I've been really impressed with SecondSkin bandages for healing. Using them means I don't have to worry about anything happening to the tattoo for at least the first three days. Unfortunately some clients don't seem to care about the art you've just created, so I always reckon it's better to be sure.

**You're a sponsored artist?**

Yes. H2Ocean, World Famous and Inkjecta all sponsor me. But these are products I was already using, so it's great. Thanks to all my sponsors, I can focus even more on my tattoos.





### What do you think of online teaching and learning?

Sharing your skills online – and changing somebody's life – is an amazing thing to be able to do. Especially in these pandemic times. I know I would still probably learn something from some of those courses! But the most important advice I would give to anyone is to pick the course that is best for your level. Don't think it's bad to go for a beginners' class. The worst that can happen is that you'll find out you've progressed beyond that level, and it will enable you to see where you really are.

### How has the coronavirus pandemic affected you?

I was only able to work for three months during the whole year, but I can't complain, because it gave me so much more time to spend with my family. I'm obviously not able to travel as much as I would want to at the moment, but I hope that will change. I love doing guest spots. You learn so much when you're working with other artists.

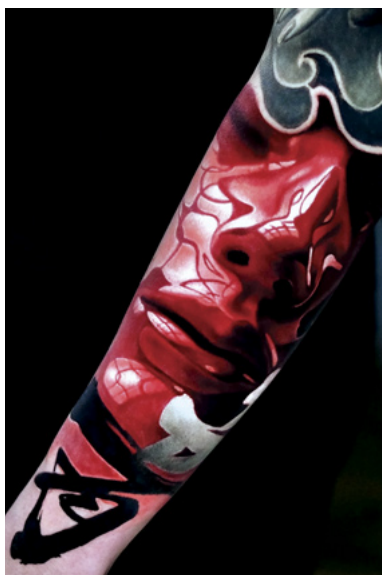
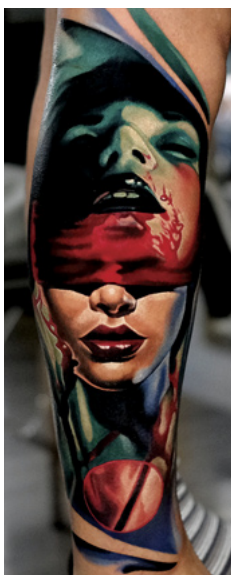
### If you could go back in time, what advice would you give yourself when you were starting out?

Oh man, there's tons of advice I'd give myself. But the biggest thing would be just **START IMMEDIATELY!** There's no better choice. The rest is gonna be fine, so don't worry. Enjoy the moment. And realise that the way to improve, and learn A LOT, is by working with other artists.

### How do people go about getting work from you?

It's easy. Email me with your idea, and the reference(s) if possible. Give me a short explanation, and most importantly tell me about the emotions behind your idea. I also need a photo of the intended placement. That's it!

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# EMMA BLACK



**'MUSHROOMS HAVE A  
BEAUTIFUL LIFE-DEATH  
DUALITY.'**





We were blown away when we first saw Emma Black's richly detailed, extraordinarily imaginative work. Delving into the subconscious, Emma is fascinated by our relationship with death and the natural world. She revels in capturing surreal moments of anatomical transformation as the living and non-living merge, creating what she describes as "a dark mix of flora, fauna and portraiture." We were delighted to have the chance to find out more.



### Tell us a little about yourself.

I'm an artist and illustrator living in rural Lincolnshire. I've always adored art. I studied Illustration at uni, worked for a few years freelance as an illustrator, then decided what I really loved was creating my own paintings so I went back and studied for an MA in Fine Art. Since then I've shifted my focus more into oil painting and working with galleries, which I've been doing for around the past five years.

### What do the various elements in your pictures mean?

I'm fascinated by the unknown, and our relationship to death and the natural world. So for me, the eyes represent insight, and being able to see into the unknown and understand things in a new way. I love mushrooms because they're often linked to death and decay even though they're alive – so they have this beautiful duality. And the flowers and nature act as a balance to the human anatomy, as a way to show this link to the natural world in the most literal of ways, by merging with it.





**There are a lot of crystals in your work. Would you describe yourself as a very spiritual being?**

Not particularly. I've always felt more scientific than spiritual. I love crystals – I've got lots of them – but for me the attraction has always been their beauty. I used to do numerous sketches and paintings of them; I've found the varying natural textures, colours and shapes makes them perfect for studies.

**Your sketchbooks are incredibly neat and beautifully laid out. Is your work always so well considered or do you ever just let rip?**

Thank you for the compliment! In general, I do prefer my work to be neat and detailed. But I have 'messy' sketchbooks for really rough scribbles and ideas in addition to the 'neat' sketchbooks for when I want to sit and draw out nice pages. I just don't show the messy ones online!

**Do you keep an archive of your work, past and present?**

I have my more recent pieces archived, but a lot of my very old art from when I was younger has been lost to time. I don't mind too much though, as my work has developed and changed a great deal over the years, and I feel my current pieces represent me so much better.





**'THE EYES IN MY PAINTINGS REPRESENT SEEING INTO THE UNKNOWN.'**



**Do you work on more than one piece at a time? And do your pieces influence each other?**

I prefer to sit and concentrate on just one piece at a time, but if I'm planning out a series or larger body of work, then I work on them simultaneously as I want them all to link together. They definitely influence each other, with similar themes, colour palettes and imagery.

**Are there underlying messages in your work?**

There are certainly meanings and loose narratives behind my paintings, although I've always liked to leave these a bit vague so that the viewer can interpret them in their own way. But I wouldn't say there are underlying messages as such, as my work is mainly personal and autobiographical in nature.

**Much of your work is incredibly detailed. How do you know when to 'finish' a piece?**

I create mock-ups of my paintings before I start, and I work from these mock-ups throughout, so I always know exactly how a piece will look when it's finished and I know when it's done. I find it easier to plan this way in advance, as otherwise I could spend weeks fiddling during the painting stage. It saves me a lot of time overall.



**Can you talk us through the process of producing one of your paintings? Do they start on the computer?**

Yes, I create the mock-up of each piece first on my computer with Photoshop. This is so that I can nail down the composition, colours and lighting before I get started, as often there are time constraints so I have to make sure I won't run into any problems down the line. I'll then print this off so that I have a life-size copy, and if I'm happy I'll transfer and sketch this onto the wood board ready for painting. All my paintings are done in oils, painted in the traditional way, as I love the buttery consistency and blendability you get with them.

**So you use both digital technology and traditional artistic media.**

Yes. And for my commercial illustration work it's the opposite to my oil paintings, as I like to do graphite drawings first which I scan and then colour with my tablet, so the finished product is digital.



# 'I COULDN'T IMAGINE A LIFE WITHOUT ART.'

## Do you have to adopt a different approach when designing for t-shirts and other merch?

The way I approach the design depends mainly on the printing method being used. Sometimes when designing for merch you have to simplify the colour palette, or be adaptable and flexible according to the budget.

## How do you see the digital world impinging on the traditional art world?

I see digital as another tool – another way of making art. Some people act like it's a bit of a threat to traditional art, but people thought that when photography was first invented too. I only see positives with it really. There are some artists working purely digitally who are producing some absolutely amazing work, and creating things that can't be done with traditional art. Plus for some people, digitally painting on a tablet is a lot more accessible than having to, for example, invest in a set of oil paints and all the required tools. So if it's encouraging new people to get into art, then that's a good thing!

## Over the last year or so, social media algorithms have meant that it can be tougher for artists to be 'seen'. Has this been a challenge for you?

Maintaining visibility on social media is definitely a challenge, but I try not to get too wrapped up in the numbers. I've always tried to make my posts look as nice as possible, share my best work, and engage with people (whether that's responding to comments and messages, or commenting on other people's posts and sharing their work). Within the art world there are communities, and I think it's important to be active in them, and be supportive to others too.





### **Does your art support you financially?**

It does! And a big proportion of my collectors, sales and art shows are overseas. I feel incredibly lucky that I can reach that audience thanks to social media and the internet.

### **Is it important to you to make art that is affordable?**

It's very important to me, as I think art should be for everyone. In terms of selling, I've always tried to cater to different budgets – so you could buy a sticker from my shop for £2, a print for £20 or an original oil painting for £250+. Hopefully there is something for everyone, and I'm always thankful of the support no matter how large or little.





**What size are your pictures? And how long do they take to do?**

My paintings are generally on the smaller side, ranging from about 5 inches x 7 inches up to 16 inches x 20 inches. They take me anywhere from a few days to a month.

**Do you take on commissions?**

I take commissions between my gallery work, although for the last couple of years I've been really busy so haven't been able to fit many in.

**How do you protect yourself from exhaustion and burnout?**

It's tough, as often I'll have deadlines and have to work for a month at a time with no days off. But I just balance this by having a week afterwards when I do nothing but relax and play video games! I personally find it easier to have intense periods of working, then to just take some time off and recharge, so I can re-approach my work with a fresh mind.



### What sounds do you listen to while working?

I like a bit of a mix, but generally metal/rock. Some current favourites are NIN, Slipknot, Ghost and Salem, although The Cure are always a go-to for the record player in my studio! Also lots of art podcasts, fantasy audiobooks, and Netflix/YouTube for some true crime.

### A final question – what does your art mean to you?

It's always been a personal thing to me, and it's always been something that I can use to relax and de-stress. I've always loved art; and being an artist is now such a large part of my identity that I couldn't really imagine life without it.

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# DIRK-BORIS RÖDEL ON...

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## CALLING IT OUT

Getting a tattoo means putting a lot of trust in the tattoo artist. And I'm not just talking about trusting the skills of the person who is inking a design on your skin that will stay with you for the rest of your life.

Especially if you're a woman, and the artist is a man, it means that you're trusting him to give you his best work – and NOTHING ELSE. You know what I'm talking about.

There are more and more artists who declare their studio to be a safe space, but as positive and welcome as that is – why the fuck is it necessary at all? This should be the most normal thing in the world! But it IS necessary, as some tattooists continue to abuse their position of trust. Why are we STILL hearing stories of clients being touched in inappropriate ways, being told they need to remove their underwear when it's obviously not necessary, or being chatted up when it's patently not welcome?

The fact is, the tattooist is in control. They're the ones who determine how long a client has to sit or lay awkwardly close to them. They're the ones who should stop when they see that a client is feeling uneasy. Yet there are some tattooists who don't seem to understand that even something as "harmless" as unwelcome flirting is actually invasive, potentially harmful behaviour. Have you got 'TINDER' written on your shop sign? No? So don't act as if you have.

To break it down into really simple terms: A client comes to your shop because she wants a tattoo – not a date, not a quickie, no slimy compliments, or the tattooists hands on her bum, breasts or genitals. She wants a tattoo, and nothing else. If you're a tattooist and you're not professional and mature enough to understand this, get help. Or get the fuck out of our industry.

And as for that old chestnut, "What's wrong with a nice chat and a little flirting to distract the client while she's getting tattooed?" Don't even think you can get away with pretending you're so naïve.

**'HAVE YOU GOT TINDER  
WRITTEN ON YOUR  
SHOP SIGN?'**

So if you're a client – female or male – who is receiving unwanted sexual advances or being abused, molested or harassed by your tattooist, what do you do? If your tattooist is behaving inappropriately during your session, telling them you don't like it and asking them to stop is easier said than done. If you felt able to do that, you'd have done it already.

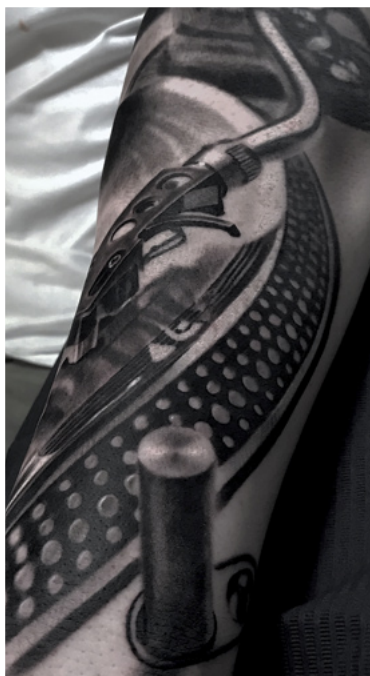
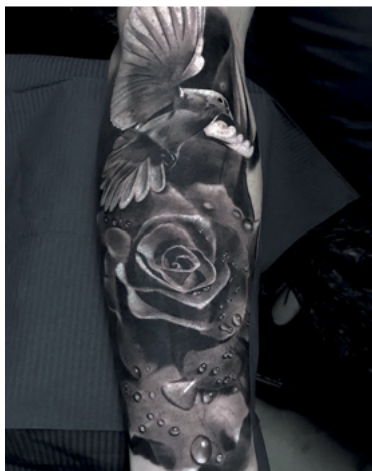
The best advice I can give is that if you're uncomfortable with what's happening or you don't feel safe – leave. There are more than enough decent artists who can finish your tattoo. And if you feel able to, report the tattooist to the police. This is not a trivial offence. No-one needs to accept this.

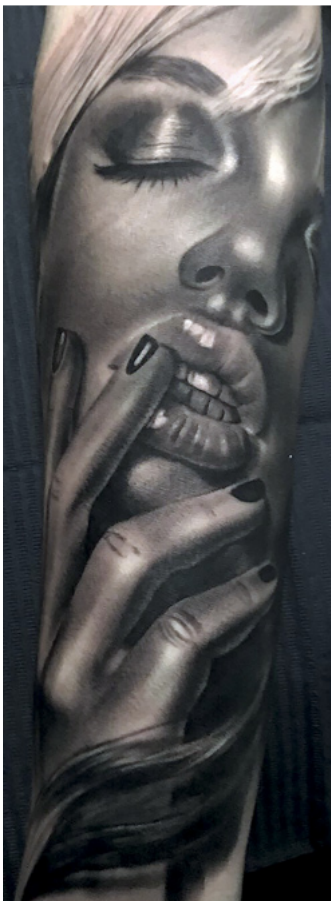
But to end on a positive note – if you ARE feeling safe and respected in a professional studio, let others know about it!



# PORTFOLIO- AKOS STRENNER

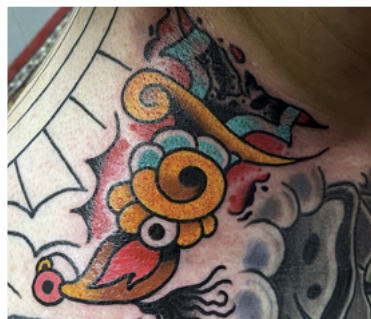
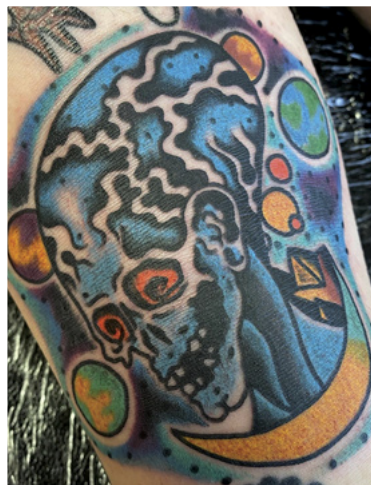
STRAIGHT LINES TATTOO

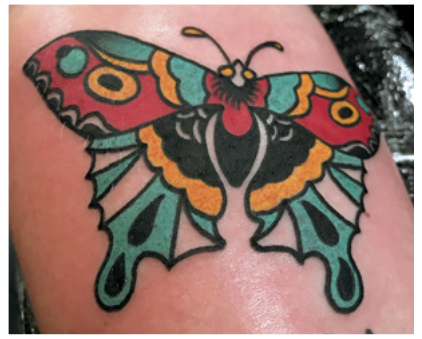




# PORTFOLIO- BILLY NO MATES

BLUE COLLAR CLUB TATTOO



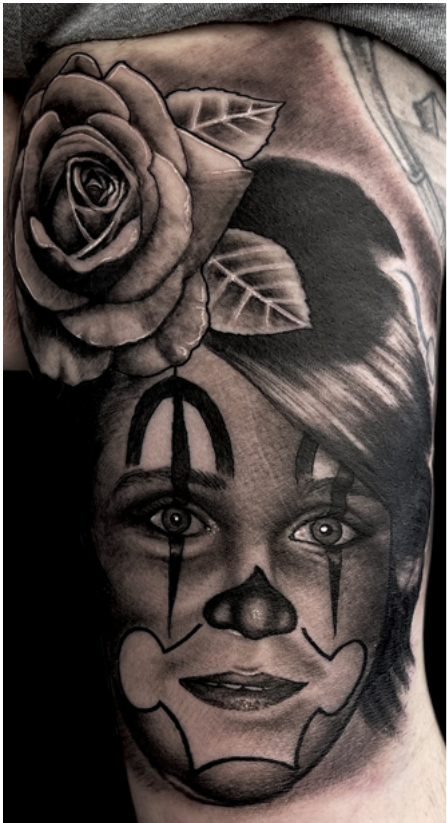


# PORTFOLIO- PAUL NAYLOR

INFERNAL RITES

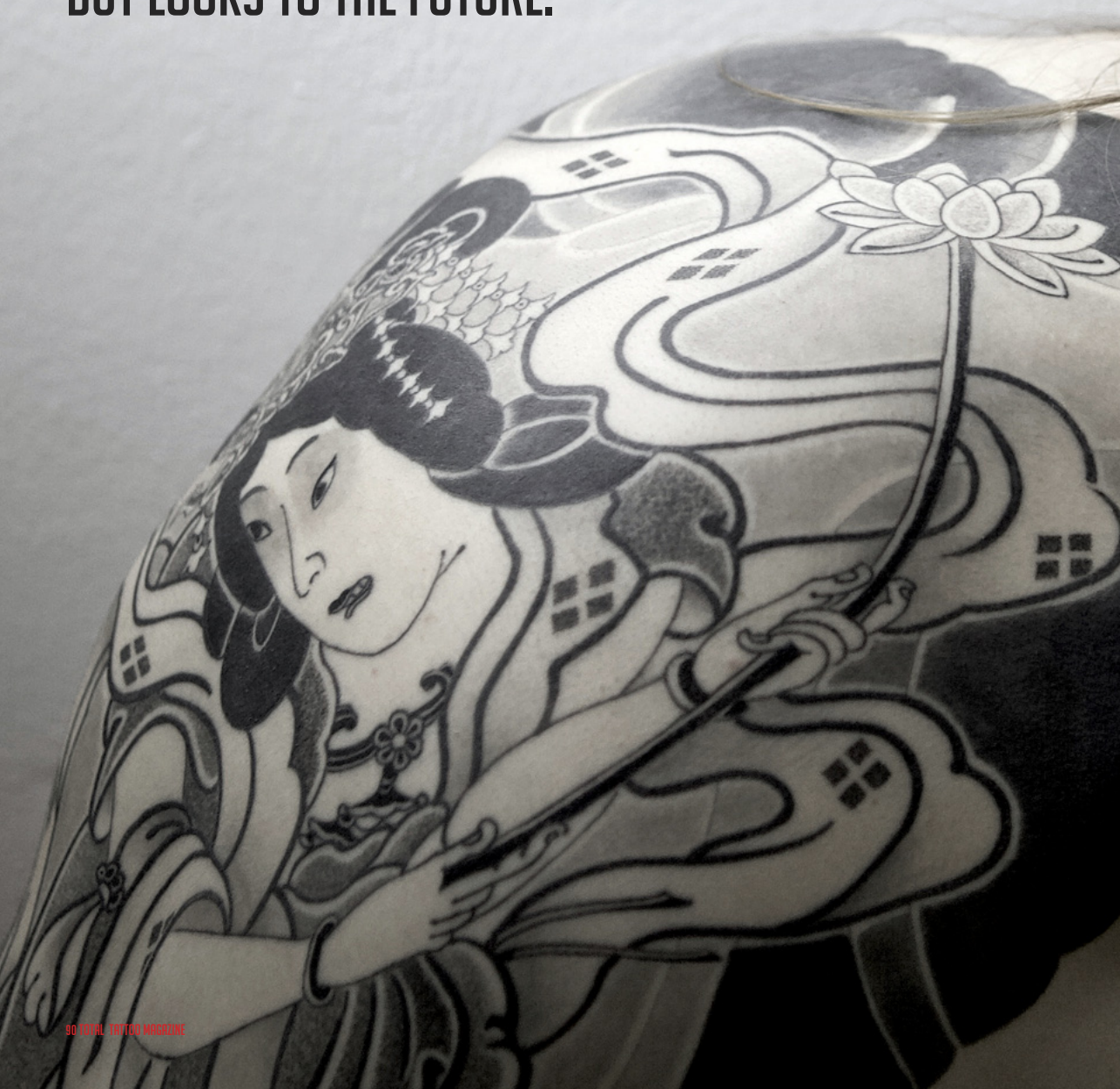






# HORIOKAMI

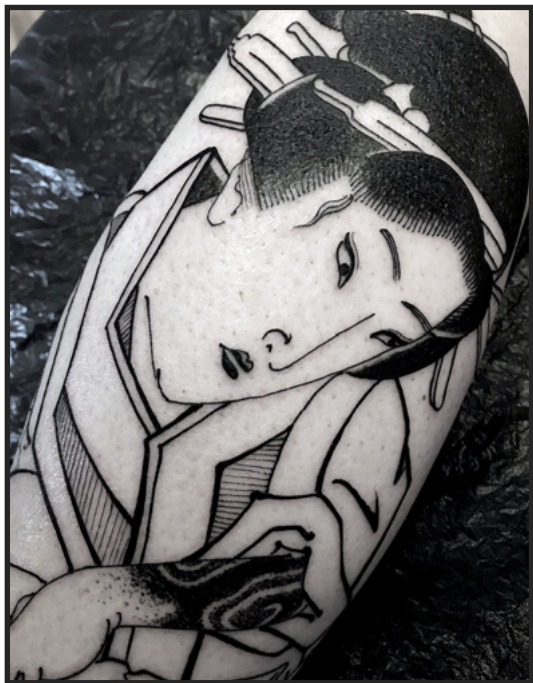
**'MY STYLE COMES FROM THE PAST  
BUT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE.'**



**'TO SEE A PERSON IN LOVE WITH THEIR TATTOO, THAT'S A GOOD FEELING.'**



**L**upo HorioOkami is the embodiment of Italian elegance and chic. His work is all about assimilating timeless aesthetic concepts into stunning contemporary pieces. Practising both tebori and machine tattooing, and inspired by his friendship with Horioyoshi III, his tattoos bridge the gap between traditional Japanese and modern blackwork. HorioOkami's talents extend to furniture design too and he's created an eye-catching range of minimalist vessels, tables and seating.



### **Tell us a little about yourself.**

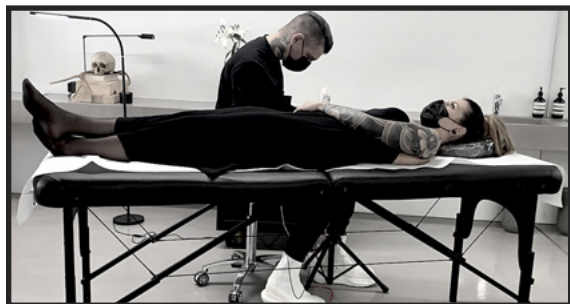
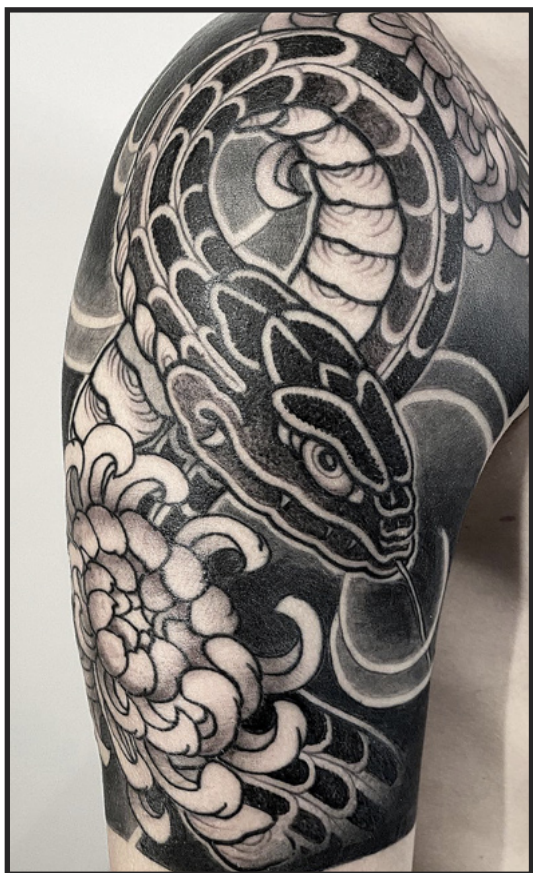
I live in Vicenza, a city in northern Italy very close to Venice. I've been a tattoo artist for 23 years, and I love all aspects of tattooing, from its underground past to its more professional present. My way of seeing the world of tattooing (and art in general) has constantly changed over the years – and I think I've changed too.

### **Do you think change is important for an artist?**

Those who just keep doing everything the same, and never make any changes in their lives or their work, are destined to disappear. So I constantly reinvent myself and open myself to new creative visions. I'm always striving to take my work to the next level – not just in terms of the quality of my tattoos, but also the quality of service that I offer to my clients.

### **Does living in Italy influence your art in any particular way?**

Yes, it has a big influence. Over the years, I've come to realise that I'm living in an open air museum! When I was younger I was more 'closed' to what was around me, but now I find inspiration everywhere. And there's another thing... Tattooing is considered by many to be a luxury (after all, it's art) and there are people who turn their nose up at the idea of luxury. As an Italian though, I've learnt not to be embarrassed or ashamed by the word. Living in a glorious city like Venice or Rome, we Italians live in luxury every day! I'm not talking about money; it's about valuing things, about being aware of the quality of what you're buying or experiencing, about choosing the best that's available to you. 'Luxury' is about beauty, art, nature, and all the many things that give us joy in life. The kind of client I want to have isn't the kind who wants to buy a tattoo to show off, but simply wants to appreciate its beauty – and also appreciate the service that I can provide as an artist and professional at the highest level.



**You are very well read and educated. What else influences your creativity?**

I'm fascinated by the history of Italian 20th century art, and all the various strands of contemporary art. I've always been interested in Japanese prints, as well as architecture and the whole world of minimal design, and this has deepened and intensified in recent years. But I feel very open to any kind of external input – anything that I can filter to get useful information for my work. Everything inspires me. Even, or perhaps especially, the most unexpected things. Art allows us to fulfil our desire to communicate the things we feel inside ourselves.

**What drew you to the Japanese style?**

The Japanese style has always had a particular fascination for me. When I was young, it seemed that although lots of tattooists were attracted to 'European' Japanese, not many of them had an interest in understanding the graphical aspects of traditional Japanese designs. One of the most intriguing things for me is decoding a tattoo's structure. Even tattoos that appear raw and simple at first glance amply repay detailed analysis. I've spent years studying the Japanese style and developing an understanding of the iconography and all the associated myths and legends. My goal has always been to assimilate as much as I possibly can so that I can bring that knowledge into my own work.



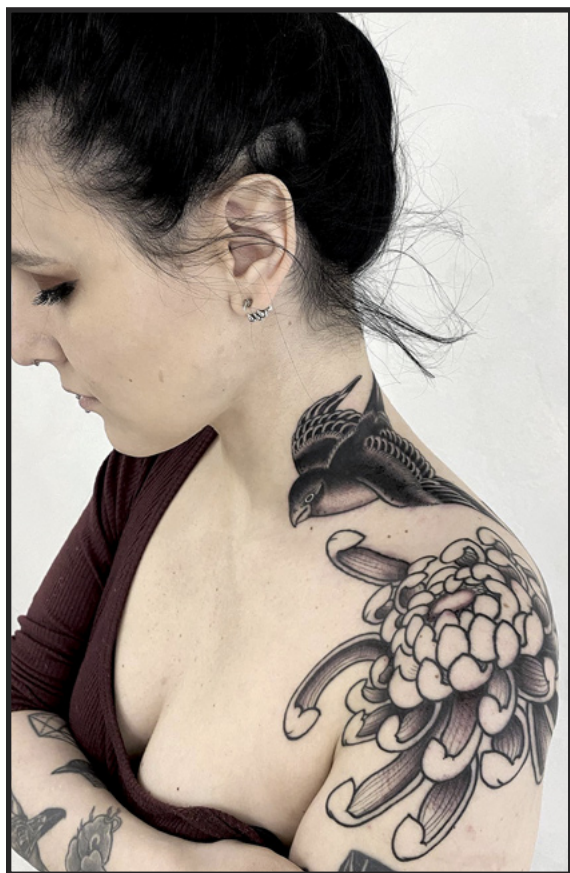


**And you travelled to Japan to connect with the source...**

I take my work very seriously! I believe you can only acquire artistic knowledge by direct experience – which is why I decided to get tattooed in Japan. I've been to so many places in my tattoo career, but Japan is the place that has taught me the most. Living the Japanese way, in a traditional context, taught me a lot about Japanese culture and philosophy. Even just walking through the temples, looking at the details of statues... breathing in the magic of such timeless locations, so full of history, folklore and charm. I like to think that all of this experience is reflected in my tattoos.

**Tell us about your connection with Horiyoshi III.**

I had the very good fortune to become friends with Horiyoshi III. Artistically speaking, he's been one of the most important people in my life. In fact that was the case even before I met him in person, because I'd already fallen madly in love with his work from photos I'd seen in books. Right from the start, that's what moulded my style.



## How do you find a balance between developing your own personal style and respecting the traditions of the past?

I believe that my work continues to be very traditional, even if at first glance it may seem modern. Tradition, in my opinion, doesn't mean copying and imitating – but rather assimilating the fundamental concepts of the iconography, the graphics and the use of space. It's vitally important to know how the subjects should be placed in order to create harmony and solidity in the tattoo. When you understand these basic concepts, even if a design has modern details, the tattoo will always have that ancient charm and balance, and feel harmonious with the body. Without a good traditional base, it's impossible to create something new. So although I always try to put something personal into my tattoos, I keep to a very traditional vision. This mix allows me to have a contemporary style that comes from the past but looks to the future.





**What would you say are the defining characteristics of your style?**

I think elegance is a key characteristic for me. It's about the shapes and how they harmonise with the body... It's not so much what I do, it's about my vision of how the finished work should look. The more the tattoo harmonises with the client's body – and with the person themselves – the more pleasant will be the effect. I also want my own personality to show through in all my work, and I always try to be inventive with whatever I'm doing. That applies whether I'm creating a tattoo or designing a piece of furniture.

**Which part of the tattooing process do you find most satisfying?**

One of the most satisfying things is when I manage to create a tattoo that conveys all the magic that I had intended – when the tattoo seems to have a movement all of its own, but also matches perfectly with the client's body and the client's ideas. To see a person in love with their tattoo, that's a good feeling. But in reality every phase of the tattoo process has its own satisfaction – and also its own pain, because these go hand-in-hand. They're two sides of the same coin.



### How did you learn to tattoo?

I was mainly self-taught. When I started, there was no Instagram or anything like that, so finding information and inspiration was difficult. The only thing was to travel and get tattooed by more experienced artists. I felt respect for every artist I met, whether or not they were any good; I was just as interested in learning about their life experience as learning the tricks of the trade. I spent a long time studying American traditional too, trying to absorb the fundamental characteristics of the style.

### Which piece of advice from your early years do you think made the most difference to your work?

Alex Binnie once told me to look at every tattoo from a distance, in order to see the 'big picture' when thinking about the structural harmony and practicality of the design. He also taught me the fundamental importance of understanding when to stop. Advice like that may at first seem trivial, but these are words of wisdom from a true legend of tattooing!

### You practise both hand tattooing (tebori) and machine tattooing...

Yes, and they're two very different things. The resulting tattoo is also very different. Machine tattooing allows you to make designs that are much more technically complex, but hand tattooing gives you a certain old-world charm. There was a time when I specialised almost exclusively in tebori, having become so deeply interested in it during my time in Japan. But I don't regard either technique as being better than the other; the choice depends on what I want to express through the tattoo. And it just makes you realise how vast and mysterious the world of tattooing is!





**'WITHOUT A GOOD TRADITIONAL BASE, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CREATE SOMETHING NEW.'**

**Tell us about being an ambassador for Vlad Blad Irons.**

It came about because they're friends of mine. In the past, I always tried out all their new machines... and now I can actually use my own experience to help them develop their products. I sincerely hope to continue working with them for as long as possible.

**As a tattooist, what are you most proud of in your work?**

I think the thing I'm most proud of is my intuition, my 'sixth sense' if you like. I let my feelings guide me, and I embrace them with a passion, and this is what gives my work its strength and personality. I always like to be looking to the future, and trying to figure things out ahead of everybody else! Following this line always makes me feel proud of everything I create, because it's all part of a very natural process – free of the constraints of fashion, or any expectations people might have of me as a tattoo artist.



**Freedom from constraint is obviously very important to you. What do you feel about the demands that social media places on artists nowadays?**

Social media is definitely a double-edged sword. Yes, it gives you lots of visibility – it helps you get noticed by the right people and makes it much easier to connect with new clients – and it's a great way to meet other tattoo artists as well, especially those in other countries. We can't do without it! But the problem is that it can also make you a slave. If you're not careful, you can find yourself posting things every day for all sorts of reasons *other* than having something worthwhile to communicate. Lots of people simply post what they think their followers will like – they feel forced to do that – but we are the ones who should decide what to post, not our followers! I prefer to hold on to my intellectual freedom, with or without followers.



**Do you think technology such as the iPad is beneficial to tattooing?**

In my opinion, not all developments in the world of tattooing have been positive. Technology can certainly help us in many ways, but it can also make things seem too easy. This has led to the situation where people no longer understand that there's a real difference between a person who does a tattoo and a professional tattoo artist – which in turn is reflected in the lack of passion and originality we see in so much work being produced now. People don't seem to realise that taking the easy way out often doesn't make you feel good about yourself.

**Are you obsessive about the pursuit of perfection? How do you avoid burnout?**

I'm not looking for perfection. It's not part of this world. I'm simply trying to convey my vision, my style and my personality with everything I do. Moments of creativity will always alternate with moments of apathy, but I find that stepping away from the tattoo world now and then helps restore my artistic energy and avoid creative burnout. It's a fine line though.



**Let's talk about your furniture. Tell us some more about the project.**

It was my challenge to myself. I have the soul of a craftsman, and a passion for design, and I wanted to create a range of objects that would reflect my aesthetic and conceptual vision. As well as designing the pieces, I've loved having a hand in their creation too - becoming involved in aspects such as the choice of materials and the actual production process. There are small differences in each individual item that make every one of them absolutely unique.

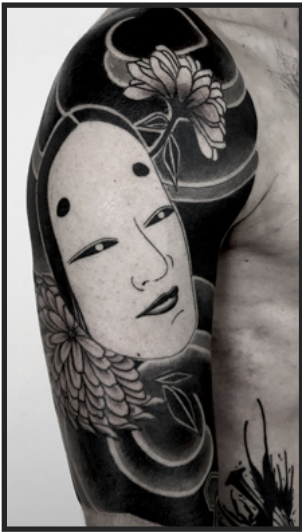
**What are your favourite materials to work with?**

Right now, I'm concentrating on making pieces with wood and bronze. Wood brings me back to the nature of things and their impermanence, which is a very Japanese concept. Whereas bronze connects me to the idea of fire, and the way metal can be eternally melted and forged, which relates to concept of the immortality that we all seek. The bronze production process takes months of work, but that never diminishes the sense of shock and surprise at the final result!

**What was your main inspiration when you embarked on the project?**

My friendship with fashion designer Rick Owens was key. His influence was like a breath of fresh air. His minimalist style and his creative values - which go way beyond fashion - have had a big impact on me. He taught me to mix things that apparently have no connection with each other, and create a logical aesthetic thread that can lead to something really unique. Our conversations ranged across such topics as Italian Futurism in art, Italian Rationalism in architecture, Brutalist design, the old icons of American cinema... These are among many things that have filtered into my work.





**'MY WORK IS  
FREE OF THE  
CONSTRAINTS  
OF FASHION.'**



**And now you've designed graphics for beer company 8.6!**

Yes, I always enjoy artistic collaborations outside the world of tattooing. Working with 8.6 was a great challenge and a great experience. Adapting my design to suit a beer can (and coming up with a graphic that would illustrate the strength of the beer!) was really good fun. I was really pleased with the end result. I'd love to do more projects like this in the future.

**A final question – what's your sense of how the world might recover after the coronavirus pandemic?**

I hope there will be a sort of rebirth – both social and artistic – so that people can again enjoy the kind of well-being that allows them to think about beauty.

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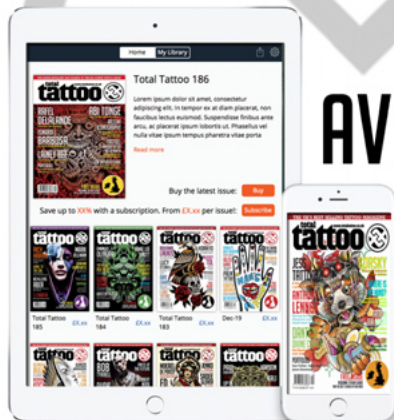


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Whitworth Forum, Barnsley,  
S70 2HZ  
07710 699 670  
leon.walker85@hotmail.co.uk  
IG: @1873\_tattooclub  
FB: /1873tattoo

### **Apostle**

23 Church Square, Hartlepool,  
TS24 7EU  
01429 271 030  
www.apostletattoo.co.uk  
FB: /apostletattoo

### **Art La Vey**

56 High Street, Gateshead,  
NE10 9LT  
0191 447 2490  
art\_la\_vey@outlook.com  
www.artlavytattooostudio.co.uk  
IG: @art\_la\_vey\_tattoo  
FB: /LaVeyArt

### **Heavy Duty Tattoos**

38 Tubwell Row, Darlington,  
DL1 1PD  
01325 484 432  
heavydutytattoos@gmail.com  
www.heavydutytattoos.co.uk

### **High Bridge Tattoo**

15 High Bridge, Newcastle Upon  
Tyne, NE1 1EW  
0191 261 9473  
dean@highbridgetattoo.co.uk  
IG: @Highbridgetattoo\_ncl  
FB: /HighBridgeTattooNCL

### **Marked for life**

45 High Street, (Winpenny House)  
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1SB  
01642 641 235  
tattooofl@gmail.com  
IG: @markedforlifeuk  
FB: /markedforlifetattooostudio

## **Masamune Tattoos**

29 Front Street, NE16 4EA  
0191 488 6222  
masamunetattoos@gmail.com  
www.masamunetattoos.co.uk  
IG: @masamunetattoos  
FB: /masamunetattoos

## **Northside Tattooz**

25 Station Road, Whitley Bay,  
NE26 2QY  
0191 2971327  
hash@northsidetattooz.co.uk  
www.northsidetattooz.co.uk

## **Northside Tattooz (Newcastle - The Private Rooms)**

2 - Basement, Bewick Street,  
City Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 5EF  
0191 221 0328  
low@northsidetattooz.co.uk  
www.northsidetattooz.co.uk

## **No Love Lost Collective**

8 Scarborough Street, Hartlepool,  
TS24 7DA  
no.lost.love.collective@gmail.com  
IG: @no.love.lost.collective

## **Pins & Needles**

27 Grainger Street, Newcastle Upon  
Tyne, NE1 5JE  
pinsandneedlesnewcastle@gmail.com  
IG: @pins\_and\_needlestattoo  
FB: /pins.NE1

## **The Tattoo Station**

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

## **Triplex Studios**

24 Fawcett Street, Sunderland,  
SR1 1RH  
0191 565 6665  
www.triplexstudios.com  
IG: @triplexstudios  
FB: /triplexstudios666

## **YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER**

### **Blue Collar Club Tattoo**

Unit 7, 92 hardwood Street,  
Sheffield, S2 4SE  
bluecollarclubtattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @bluecollarclubtattoo  
FB: @bcctattoo

### **Crooked Claw Tattoo**

734 Ecclesall Road, Sheffield,  
S11 8TB  
0114 327 1411  
crookedclawtattoos@gmail.com  
www.crookedclawtattoo.com

### **Easy Tiger Tattoo**

003, Castleton Mill, Leeds, LS12 2DS  
0113 887 0172  
www.easytigertattoo.com  
IG: @easytigertattoos

### **Electric Kicks**

17 Front Street, Pontefract,  
WF8 1DA  
07725 029 567  
electric.kicks@hotmail.com  
IG: @electric.kicks.crew  
FB: Electric Kicks Tattoo Studio

### **Gothika**

7-9 Dundas Street, Redcar,  
Cleveland, TS10 3AD  
01642 498 572  
IG: @GothikaTattoosRedcar  
FB: /GothikaTattoos

### **Nigel Kurt's Fun House Tattoo Studio**

140 Sheffield Road, Barnsley  
S70 1JH  
Tel no: 01226 779 595  
nigelkurt1@gmail.com  
www.nigelkurt.com  
IG: @nigelkurttattoo  
FB: /funhousetattoosUK

### **Pins & Needles**

23a Market Place, Driffield,  
YO25 6AR  
01377 538 080  
jamesnorry1975@gmail.com  
IG: @pinsandneedles\_driffield  
FB: /pinsdriffield

### **Red Tattoo & Piercing**

Leeds Corn Exchange  
0113 242 0413  
redtattooandpiercing@hotmail.  
co.uk  
www.redtattooandpiercing.com



### **Roadhouse Tattoo Studio**

York House, 223 Bingley Road,  
ShIPLEY, Bradford, BD18 4DH  
07730 272 692  
roadhousetattooostudio@gmail.com  
www.roadhousetattoos.co.uk  
IG: @roadhousetattooostudio  
FB: /RoadhouseTattooStudio

### **Sacred Electric Tattoo**

2-3 Mill Hill, Leeds, LS1 5DQ  
0113 242 5553  
Sacredelectrictattoo@gmail.com  
www.sacredelectrictattoo.com

### **The Wolf Shed**

19 Church Hill, Selby, YO8 4PL  
01757 335 233  
thewolfshed@hotmail.com  
IG: @thewolfshed @neilwolftattoo  
FB: /neilwolftattoo

### **Ultimate Skin**

33 New Briggate, Leeds, LS2 8JD  
0113 244 4940  
ustattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @ultimate\_skin  
FB: /ultimateskintattoo

### **Wills Customs Tattoo Studio**

59 Nether Hall Road, Doncaster,  
DNI 2PG  
01302 344 907  
IG: @willscustomstattoo  
FB: /willcustsomstattoo

## **EAST MIDLANDS**

### **Base Shade Tattoo**

6 Church Street, Rushden,  
NN10 9YT  
01983 316 055  
baseshadetattoo@yahoo.co.uk  
FB: /baseshadetattoo

### **Bunraku Tattoo**

1a Victoria Parade, Leicester,  
LE1 5FG  
0116 262 9401  
info@bunrakutattoo.co.uk  
www.bunrakutattoo.co.uk  
IG: @bunrakutattoo  
FB: /bunrakutattoo

### **Embody Tattoo**

(handpoke and machine tattooing)  
7 Canal Street, Derby, DE1 2RJ

01332 986 920

embodytattoo@mail.com  
www.embodytattoo.co.uk  
IG: @embodytattoo  
FB: /embodytattoo

### **Epona Art and Tattoo**

Waterloo Yard, King Street,  
Southwell, NG25 0EH  
01636 815 771  
theresatattoo@btinternet.com  
www.eponatattoo.com

### **Fat Fugu**

24 Fish Street, Northampton,  
NN1 2AA  
01604 630 557  
info@fatfugu.com  
www.fatfugu.com

### **Hypnotic Art Tattoo**

200 Queensway, Milton Keynes,  
MK2 2ST  
01908 989 695  
hypnoticarttattoo@gmail.com  
www.hypnotic-art.co.uk

### **Nevermore Tattoo Parlour**

Bishop Crewe House, North Street,  
Davenport, NN11 4GH  
01327 876 350  
nevermoretattoo@hotmail.co.uk  
IG: @nevermoretattoo  
FB: /nevermoretattoo

### **No 36 Tattoos**

36 High Street, Thrapston,  
NN14 4JH  
07852 677 804  
max649kemp@gmail.com  
IG: no36tattoos  
FB: /no36tattoos

### **Rebel With A Cause**

49 Lower Gungate, Tamworth,  
B79 7AS  
07772 743 713  
appointments@rebelwithacausetattoo.co.uk  
IG: @rebelwithacausetattoo\_  
FB: /RebelWithACauseTattoo

### **Red Tattoo & Piercing**

Leeds Corn Exchange  
0113 242 0413  
redtattooandpiercing@hotmail.co.uk  
www.redtattooandpiercing.com

### **ReINKarnation**

3b Station Road, Ilkeston, DE7 5LD  
0115 837 7090  
IG: @maria\_perks\_tattoos  
FB: /maria.perks.52

### **Skinz Tattoo Company**

0113 204 7848  
318-322 Stanningley Road, Leeds,  
LS13 3EG.  
www.leadstattooostudio.com  
info@leadstattooostudio.com  
IG: @skinztattooostudio  
FB: /SkinsTattooStudio

## **EAST OF ENGLAND**

### **All Or Nothing Tattoo and Piercings**

80 Newland Street, Witham,  
CM8 1AH  
01376 519 602  
aontattoo@outlook.com  
www.aontattoo.com  
IG: @laontattoo  
FB: /laontattoo

### **Black Dog Tattoos**

47 St Benedicts Street, Norwich,  
NR2 4PG  
01603 291 049  
blackdogtattoos@gmail.com  
IG: @blackdogtattoos

### **Black Galleon Tattoo Studio**

22 Blackfriars Street, Kings Lynn,  
PE30 1NN  
01553 777 322  
FB: /blackgalleontattooostudio

### **Braintree Tattoo Studio**

148 Coggeshall Road, Braintree  
CM7 9ER  
01376 560 633  
info@braintreetattooostudio.co.uk  
www.braintreetattooostudio.co.uk

### **Churchyard Tattoo**

14 Churchyard, Hitchin, SG5 1HR  
01462 338 781  
cytattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @churchyardtattoos  
FB: /churchyard

### **Crossed Arrows Tattoo**

21-23 St George Street, Norwich,  
NR3 1AB  
01603 762 636  
crossedarrowstattoo@gmail.com  
FB: /crossedarrowstattoo

### **Crow Temple Tattoo**

85 Prince of Wales, Norwich,  
NR1 1DG  
www.corvidaetattoo.bigcartel.com  
IG: @crowtempletattoo  
FB: /crowtempletattoo

### **Cult Classic Tattoo**

32 North Street, Romford,  
RM1 1BH  
01708 730 500  
cultclassictattoo@gmail.com  
www.cultclassictattoo.com

### **Eternal Art Tattoo Studio**

42-43 Viaduct Road, Chelmsford,  
CMI ITS  
01245 355 166  
eternal-art@hotmail.co.uk  
IG: @prizemantattoo  
FB: /PriZeMaN

### **Factotum Body Modification**

5 St John Maddermarket, Norwich,  
NR2 1DN  
01603 618 188  
contact@factotumbodmods.com  
factotumbodmods.com  
IG: @factotumbodmodification  
FB: /factotumbodmodification

### **Good Ship I3**

374 London Road Hadleigh,  
SS7 2DA  
07415 299 998  
goodshipI3info@gmail.com  
FB: /Good-Ship-I3-Tattoos

### **Hollow Bones**

60 London Street, Norwich,  
NR2 1JX  
hollowbonestattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @hollow\_bones\_tattoo  
FB: /hollowbonestattoo

### **Indigo Tattoo and Piercing**

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

### **Jayne Doe Tattoo**

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

### **St. Giles Tattoo Studio**

3 St. Giles Street, Norwich, NR1 1JJ  
01603 624 264  
st.gilestattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @st.gilestattoo  
FB: /StGilesTattoo

### **True Love Tattoos**

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

### **Wolf & Arrows Tattoos**

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

## **LONDON**

### **BlueFire Tattoo**

192B Chingford Mount Road,  
E4 9BS  
www.bluefirtattoo.com  
bluefirtattoo@hotmail.com  
0208 529 5885  
IG: @bluefirtattoo  
FB: /bluefirtattooostudio

### **The Blue Tattoo**

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

### **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@thefamilybusinessstattoo.com  
www.thefamilybusinessstattoo.com

### **Flamin' Eight Tattoo**

2 Castle Road, Kentish Town, NW1  
020 7267 7888  
www.flamineight.co.uk  
flamineight@hotmail.com  
IG: @flamineighttattoos  
FB: /flamineighttattoo

### **Flora and Fauna Tattoos**

12 Cody Road, London, E16 4SR  
info@floraandfaunattattoos.co.uk  
IG: @floraandfaunattattoos  
FB: /floraandfaunattattoos

### **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  
Tattooed\_tota@hotmail.com  
www.happysailortattoo.com  
IG: @happysailortattoo  
FB: /happysailortattoo

### **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  
FB: kilburnoriginaltattoo

### **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@lowridertattoo.london.com  
IG: @lowridertattoo.london

### **Low Tide**

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

### **Morning Star Tattoos**

Unit 3a, 6 Hornsey Street, London,  
N7 8GR  
07702 390 788  
info@morningstartattoos.com  
www.morningstartattoos.com  
IG: @morningstartattoos.london  
FB: /Morningstar-Tattoos-London

### **Nemesis Tattoo & Body Piercing - Buck Street**

3 Buck Street, Camden Town,  
NW1 8NJ  
020 7482 0063  
nemesiscamdentown@gmail.com  
www.nemesistattoo.co.uk  
IG: @nemesistattoo  
FB: /mindtheink

### **Nemesis Tattoo & Body Piercing - Inverness Street**

26 Inverness Street, Camden Town,  
NW1 7HJ  
020 7419 8621  
nemesiscamdentown@gmail.com  
www.nemesistattoo.co.uk  
IG: @nemesistattoo  
FB: /mindtheink

### **Old Habits Tattoo**

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

### **Seven Doors Tattoo**

55 Fashion Street, Shadwell, London,  
E1 6PX  
020 7375 3880  
sevendoorstattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @sevendoorstattoo  
FB: sevendoorstattoo

### **Six Bullets Tattoo**

394 Camden Road, London, N7 0SJ  
07579 043 308  
sixbulletstattoo@gmail.com  
www.sixbulletstattoo.com  
IG: @six\_bullets\_tattoo  
FB: /sixbulletstattoo

### **The Good Fight**

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

### **The Inkstitute**

26a Bostall Hill, London, SE2 0RA  
07565 920 158  
The.inkstitute88@yahoo.com  
IG: @the.inkstitute  
FB: /Tattooman888

### **Three Kings Tattoo**

182 Deptford High Street, London,  
SE8 3PR  
020 3612 9123  
london@threekingstattoo.com  
www.threekingsslondon.com  
IG: @threekingsslondon  
FB: /ThreeKingsLondon

### **Ushuaia Tattoo London**

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

### **Xotica Tattoo Company**

737 Finchley High Road, London,  
N12 0BP  
0208 445 0022  
info@xoticatattoo.com  
IG: @xoticatattoo  
FB: /XoticaTattoo

## **SOUTH EAST**

### **14 Arrows Tattoo Studio**

69 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells,  
TN1 2AY  
01892 681 224  
fourteenarrows@hotmail.com  
IG: @14arrowstattoo  
FB: /14arrows

### **1770 Tattoo**

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

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

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

### **Dead Slow**

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

### **ElectricThaiger Tattoo**

2 Station Parade, Tweedy Road  
Bromley, BR1 3NN  
0208 460 6160  
info@electricthaigertattoo.co.uk  
FB: /Electricthaigertattoo  
IG: @electricthaigertattoo

### **Fat Rabbit Tattoos**

6 Church Walk, Banbury, OX16 5NY  
01295 261 663  
thefatrabbit@outlook.com  
IG: @fat.rabbit.tattoos  
FB: /thefatrabbitattoo

### **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

### **Gold Irons Tattoo Club**

41 Preston Street, Brighton,  
BN1 2HP  
01273 809 903  
goldironstattooclub@outlook.com  
IG: @goldironstattooclub  
FB: /goldironstattooclub

### **Gun & Pedal Brighton Tattoo**

21 Ditchling Road, Brighton,  
BN1 4SB  
01273 692 171  
gunandpedalbrighton@hotmail.com  
IG: @gunandpedaltattooostudio  
FB: /gunandpedaltattoo

### **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 263 864  
zbreakspear@yahoo.com  
IG: @high\_tide\_tattoo\_studio  
FB: /hightidetattooostudio

### **Inked Moose**

204 Whaddon Way, Bletchley, Milton  
Keynes, MK3 7DG  
01908 411 151  
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  
01234 930 504  
leoriotattoos@hotmail.co.uk  
IG: @leoriotattoos  
FB: /LeoRiosStudio

### **Lords Ink Tattoo Studio UK**

91 London Road, Bexhill on Sea,  
TN39 3LB  
01424 224 233  
lordsinktattooostudiouk@hotmail.com  
IG: @lordsinktattooostudiouk  
FB: /lordsinktattooostudioukbexhillonse

### **MI Tattoos**

Unit 1, 1 Green Street  
Eastbourne, BN21 1QN  
01323 343 638  
www.mitattooostudios.co.uk  
IG: @mitattooostudios  
FB: /mitattooostudios

### **Addiction Tattoos**

Pond Croft, Lately, GU46 7UR  
07507 987 053  
www.addictiontattoos.co.uk  
lee@addictiontattoos.co.uk  
IG: @addictiontattoos5

### **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 564 494  
www.smbtattoo.com  
IG: @smbtattoo  
FB: /smbtattoo

### **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 278 330  
blackfriarstattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @blackfriarstattoo

#### **Crow Quill**

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

#### **Eightfold Tattoo**

1 Heanton Street, Braunton,  
EX33 2JS  
Phone: 01271 523 732  
www.eightfoldtattoo.com  
IG: @eightfoldtattoo

#### **Equinox Tattoo Collective**

21 Bilbury Street, Plymouth,  
PL4 0BH  
01752 952 741  
equinoxtattoocollective@gmail.com  
IG: @equinoxtattoocollective  
FB: /Equinoxtattoocollective21

#### **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

### **Turquoise Blue Tattoo**

112 Castle Lane West,  
Bournemouth, BH9 3JU  
01202 514 514 - 07812 938 174  
artists@turquoisebluetattoo.co.uk  
www.turquoisebluetattoo.co.uk  
IG: @turquoisebluetattoo  
FB: /turquoisebluetattoo

### **Zeppo's Tattoo Studio**

56 South Street, Pennington, SO41  
8DX  
01590 676 348  
info@zeppostattoo.co.uk  
FB: /zeppostattoo.co.uk

## **WALES**

### **Broadside Tattoo**

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

### **Dexterity Ink**

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

### **Different Dimension**

Unit 4, Pontcanna Mews  
200 Kings Road, Cardiff  
CF11 9DF  
07413 383 323  
patrykmazurtattoo@gmail.com  
www.surrealisticsanctuary.co.uk

### **Lucy Lou's Tattoos**

5 Morlais Buildings, Pontmorlais,  
Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8UL  
01685 377 866  
lturner4@hotmail.co.uk  
IG: @lucyloustattoos  
FB: /lucyloustattoos

### **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 981 671  
www.strongholdtattoo.com  
IG: @strongholdtattoo

### **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 - Lichfield**

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

### **BW Tattoo Studios - Aldridge**

2 Rookery Lane, Aldridge, WS9 8NN  
01922 277 717  
bwtattoostudios.aldridge@gmail.com  
IG: @bwtattoostudios\_aldridge  
FB: /bwtattoostudios.aldridge

### **Blackfriars Tattoo**

30 Union Street, Hereford, HR1 2BT  
01432 507 245  
blackfriarstattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @blackfriarstattoo  
FB: /blackfriarstatoos

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

Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham,  
GL52 2NE  
01242 352 306  
hello@bloodandhoney.uk  
www.bloodandhoney.uk  
IG: @bloodandhoney  
FB: /BloodHoneyTattooCompany

### **Cosmic Monsters Incorporated**

3 High Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8AJ  
07863 135 814  
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 768 446  
folkloretattoos@live.com  
www.folkloretattooostudio.co.uk  
IG: @fts\_tattoo  
FB: /folkloretattooostudio

### **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 759 434  
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

### **The Ink Spot**

The Parade, Silverdale, Newcastle  
Under Lyme, ST5 6LQ  
01782 619 144  
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  
IG: @viciouspinktattooostudio  
FB: /ViciousPink

### **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

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

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

#### **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**

2 Flax Mill, Bretherton Row, Wigan,  
WN1 1LL  
01942 926 783  
www.ButchersBlockTattoo.co.uk  
ButchersBlockTattoo@hotmail.com  
IG: @ButchersBlockTattoo  
FB: /ButchersBlockTattoo

### **Cats Cradle Tattoo Studio**

29 Kay Street, Rawtenstall, BB4 7LS  
01706 216 593  
catscradletattoo@gmail.com  
IG: @catscradletattooostudio  
FB: /catscradletattoo

### **Dabs Tattoo**

78b Eastbourne Road, Southport,  
PR8 4DU  
01704 566 665  
Dabstatoos@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

### **Infernal Rites Tatoo**

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

### **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

### **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  
sacredartmcr@gmail.com  
www.sacredarttattoo.co.uk

### **Shipwrecked Tattoo Company**

12 New Street, Lancaster, LA1 1EG  
01524 874780  
shipwreckedtc@hotmail.co.uk  
www.shipwreckedtattooocompany.co.uk  
IG: @shipwrecked\_tc  
FB: /shipwreckedtattooocompany

### **Skin Kandi**

35a Westfield Street, St Helens,  
Merseyside, WA10 1AQ  
01744 734 699  
IG: @skinkandicustomtattooostudio  
@leeguy @nh\_tattoo  
@jadelouisetattoos  
FB: /skinkandi

### **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  
IG: @truecolourstattoo

### **True 'til Death**

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

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