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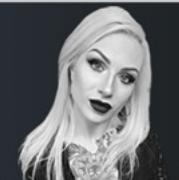
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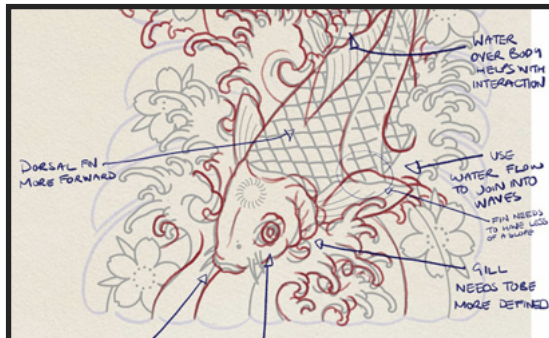
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Total Tattoo Magazine

44 Albion Road

Great Yarmouth

Norfolk NR30 2JD

www.totaltattoo.co.uk

Total Tattoo Magazine No. 194 September 2021

Published by KNT Publishing Ltd.

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Printed in England on re-cycled paper by Buxton Press Ltd

Distributed by Seymour Distribution

NEW POSTAL ADDRESS

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Cover: Tattoo by Danny Rossiter

EDITORIAL 194

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The Me Too movement was started in 2006 by Tarana Burke using social media to break the silence and empower individuals who had suffered sexual abuse. In the 15 years that have followed we've seen many high profile cases that continue to shock the world.

Sadly in our own community, like so many others, the accusations and evidence continue to grow and many tattooists are being called out. This raises the question, 'What do we need to do as an industry to get our house in order?'

We've all done things in our pasts that we're far from proud of. Perhaps we thought we were being funny at the time, or maybe we were just oblivious to the feelings of others. But many things that were seen as acceptable or appropriate 30 years ago are certainly not acceptable or appropriate any more. The world has changed and the tattoo world needs to keep up.

I can look back to my own youth (was it really that long ago?) and remember the underlying sexism that permeated just about every aspect of our culture at that time – like the seemingly innocent saucy postcards, the Page 3 models in the tabloids, the Carry On films filled with innuendo. Unwanted physical attention was almost promoted as a form of affection.

But, like nylon shirts and smallpox, these outdated attitudes are better off left in the past. Everyone would surely acknowledge that the old guard grew up in a different era. The future of tattooing is in the hands of the next generation, and it's them we need to trust to carry our industry forward in a safe and progressive way, and not make the mistakes of decades gone by. But the worrying thing is that a lot of the sexual abuse that we're now hearing about within tattooing is actually being perpetrated by the younger generation.

So why is this? Could it be that, in our evolving industry, the humble tattooist has now become elevated to a position of such ego that some artists are beginning to feel a kind of rock star sense of entitlement? Or has it always been this way? Is it simply that social media has made it easier to expose what's going on and call out the abusers?



But why does this epidemic continue? Everyone leaves a digital footprint nowadays (some even proudly share incriminating screenshots) which should surely make prosecutions inevitable. And it's not just individual tattooists. These harmful attitudes and behaviours seem to be endemic in some studios.

The trust between client and tattooist is what our industry is all about. If one tattooist fucks that up, they fuck it up for everyone. We all have a responsibility to act in a professional manner. It's up to all of us to protect the reputation of tattooing as a whole. How many women do you hear of who won't get in a taxi alone at night because of the stories they've heard? Well that's the kind of real damage that's being done to tattooing right now.

On the other side of the coin, tattooists need to protect themselves too. Working with a client alone in a studio, both parties are vulnerable and potentially open to accusations.

This is a massive, multi-faceted issue. It touches the whole of society. The more I write, the more questions come into my head. Personally I'm not a fan of cancel culture and trial by social media, but I definitely don't want to see tattooing brought into disrepute by tattooists who abuse their position of trust. It must not be a safe haven for such people. As our occasional guest contributor Dirk Boris Rödel put it in his column last month, 'If you're not professional or mature enough to work responsibly as a tattooist, get the fuck out of our industry'.

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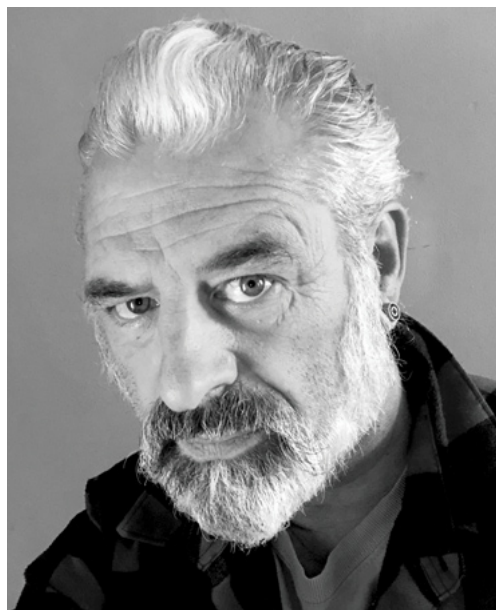
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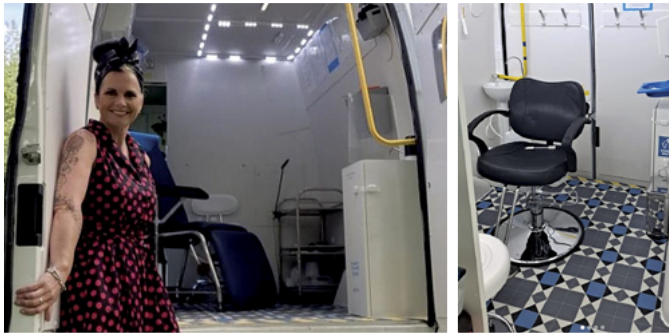


NEWS & REVIEWS



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

THE LADY IN THE VAN



If you live in Cornwall, or you're on holiday there, maybe you've encountered mobile tattooist Constance Cook and her specially kitted-out van. Or maybe you've met her on her home turf in Wakefield, Yorkshire.

An artist by background, Constance has been tattooing for just a year, following the completion of her apprenticeship. She converted the van herself and hopes it will help her build a clientele for her custom tattoos.

Hailing from Yorkshire, Constance often visits family members near Truro in Cornwall. It made perfect sense to be able to tattoo in both places, so she is licensed and registered by both Cornwall Council and Wakefield Council.

Check out @ConstanceTattoosInTransit



THINK IT THROUGH



'ThINK it through before you tattoo' is the name of North Devon Council's recently launched campaign for safer tattooing.

The Council is keen to raise awareness of how tattooing is regulated, and provide people with information about hygiene standards and health risks so that they can make safer choices when deciding where to get a tattoo. As part of the campaign, the Council has also updated its list of registered tattooists in the district and launched a form for reporting bad practice in the industry:

www.northdevon.gov.uk/tattoo

Head of Environmental Health at North Devon Council, Jeremy Mann said: "We are really keen to let residents know about the important work we do. Making a bad choice when it comes to tattoos or tattooing practices such as microblading can have catastrophic health consequences, so it's incredibly important that people think it through."

"Knowing what to expect in terms of hygiene and cleanliness and being able to identify registered tattooists and avoid scratchers will minimise any risks. Scratchers give the tattoo industry a bad name and we know from speaking to the registered tattooists in the district that they're as eager as we are to see an end to unregulated tattooing. We urge people with any information about illegal tattooists or bad practice to report this to us so we can investigate."

STAB THE CRAB!



Regular readers of these pages will know that we often feature stories about tattoos being used in a medical context. Here's another one – but it's rather different.

Anyone with a serious allergy will be aware of the importance of having an adrenaline auto-injector (an EpiPen, Jext or Emerade) with them at all times. If they're exposed to a trigger – such as nuts, shellfish or an insect sting – using the auto-injector without delay can help stop an anaphylactic reaction becoming life threatening.

But an adrenaline auto-injector needs to be used properly. It has to be stabbed into the outer thigh (not the chest, as some people assume!) and this of course can be a problem if the person is rapidly going into anaphylactic shock. How do they communicate to those around them what to do?



We've come across a vintage TikTok video that's currently going viral – in which user [@TayKobb](#) describes how she unwittingly ate some shellfish, started experiencing anaphylaxis, and only just managed to stop her companion stabbing her in the chest... which led her to come up with the ingenious idea of getting a tattoo on her thigh that would indicate the correct place to jab the auto-injector!

It being a shellfish allergy, the obvious choice for the tattoo was a crab. So if the same thing happens again (as long as that particular area of skin is visible) all she has to do is yell, "STAB THE CRAB!"

It's a neat idea. Although of course if you're a guy who's allergic to nuts, you might want to adapt it slightly... or it could result in a whole other type of medical emergency.

RUSSIAN PASSPORT

In Moscow nowadays, you need a personal QR code showing your vaccination or COVID-19 status (backed up by some other form of ID) in order to sit indoors in the city's restaurants, cafes and bars. Russia's Everink Tattoo online shop has joined forces with the Delivery Club food app to offer designer temporary tattoos featuring your QR code – so all you need to do is wave your arm at the scanner instead of having to get your phone out. The made-to-order temporary tattoos cost about a fiver each and last about two weeks after initial application.



KOJI ICHIMARU

R.I.P.



photograph by Jake Ricker

The tattoo world has been rocked by the sad news of the death of Japanese tattooist Koji Ichimaru.

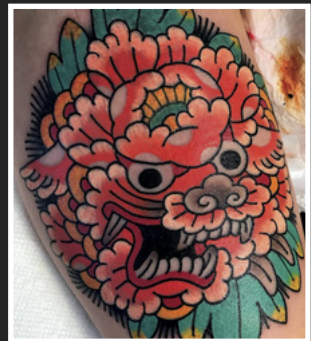
Koji grew up in the ancient Japanese city of Kokura and that's where he learnt to tattoo.

Having worked in his home town for a few years, immersed in traditional tattoo culture, he then decided to travel the world and expand his horizons, picking up fresh tattoo inspiration from America and England along the way before finally settling in Bologna, Italy.

Renowned for his masterfully clean, strong, bold tattoos, his style was unique. Koji saw tattooing as a constant process of experimentation – a journey of discovery – and his work was of breathtaking quality.

Koji Ichimaru was truly a global name in tattooing. He had many, many friends in the industry and his passing is a sad loss to the whole tattoo community.

Our thoughts go out to Koji's family, friends and colleagues.



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As part of their ongoing collaboration with tattoo artists around the world, Indian Motorcycle have hooked up with No Regrets studios to offer TWO awesome prize draws.

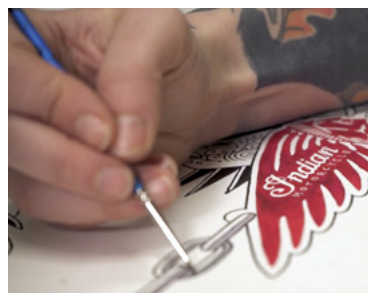
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Test ride any bike in the current Indian range for your chance to win a two-day tattoo session at No Regrets worth £5000. Go to www.indianmotorcycle.co.uk for details.

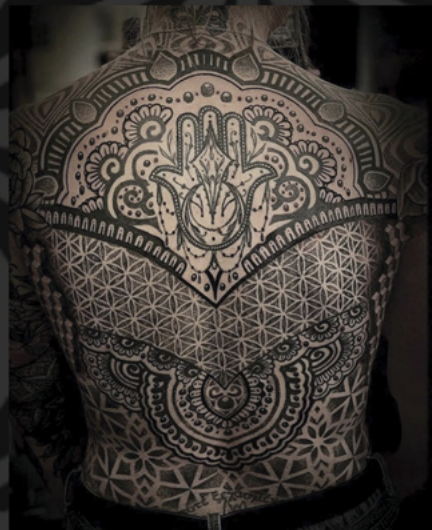
WIN A BIKE!

For your chance to win this one of a kind Indian Chief and an all expenses paid trip to collect it, go to www.nrstudios.co.uk Closing date 23rd Aug.

The Chief's paintwork is by script specialist Mayonaize. He is the first of three tattoo artists currently enjoying the opportunity to customise an Indian, the others being Carlos Torres and Shige (who is himself a skilled motorbike engineer). In the autumn, 40 more world class tattooists will compete in a public vote to be Indian's next featured artists. Check out the videos on the Indian Motorcycle website!



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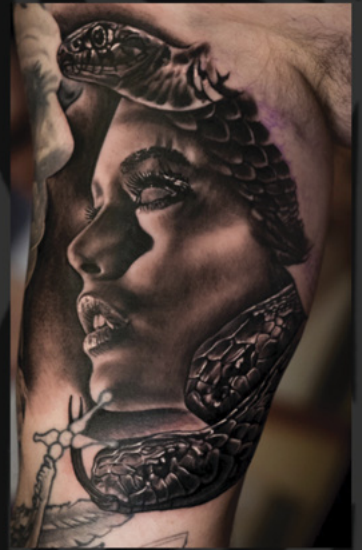
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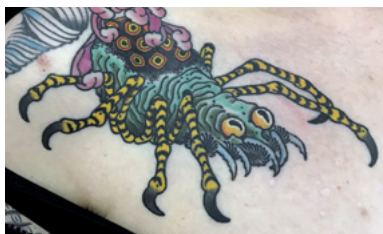
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'JAPANESE ISN'T ABOUT THE
INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS.
IT'S ABOUT THE WHOLE.'



DANNY ROSSITER



'WE HAVE A REALLY GOOD THING GOING HERE AT RAIN CITY.'



Danny Rossiter has been tattooing in Manchester since coming to the UK from New Zealand 19 years ago. His studio, Rain City Tattoo, was one of the UK's first tattoo collectives and is known as a powerhouse of quality ink. With a young family, Danny is now at a point in his life where he's said goodbye to the crazy years and has his sights set firmly on the future.

Danny has recently returned from three months tattooing in New Zealand. "With Rain City closed during lockdown, I needed to earn some money!" he tells me. "I had to quarantine when I arrived, but once that was over I was able to get straight to work. I was lucky because I could stay with my parents. I hadn't seen them for three years."

"I was born in Zimbabwe," Danny tells me, "which was still called Rhodesia back then. My mum was originally from Scotland, and my dad was a Londoner. When things started to get a bit rough in Rhodesia, we moved to South Africa. But my dad, who's a butcher by trade, got falsely accused of some crime, so my parents thought it was best that we moved again, and that's how we ended up settling in New Zealand."



'I ALWAYS WANT MY NEXT DRAGON TO BE EVEN BETTER THAN THE ONE I'VE JUST DONE.'

It was as a youngster in New Zealand that Danny first started becoming seriously interested in art as a possible career. "I was always doing art as a kid," he tells me. "My gran was an artist – she did oil painting mostly – and she was the one who encouraged me. And when you have that artistic ingredient inside you, you don't want to do a real job! I just wanted to be paid to have fun..." Initially Danny got into screen-printing but then, as he puts it, "Everything fell into place with tattooing."

"I did a proper full-on tattoo apprenticeship in New Zealand back in 1998. At first I tried getting my mum to call up shops and ask if they'd take me on... and of course they said no," he laughs. "But then a shop opened just down the road from where we lived. I got tattooed there a few times, and then took my paintings in to show the guy."

"I was into the rave scene at the time, and all my work was really psychedelic. He liked what I was doing. Then one day he just said to me, 'D'ya want to come and work here?' Naturally I jumped at the chance. I stayed there for about two years. He was a crazy kind of guy though, and he started taking meth. When he accused me of throwing a petrol bomb at him, I knew it was time to move on."



Soon after that Danny came to the UK. "I got married (to my now ex-wife) and my father offered us a wedding present of a trip to England or a TV, so we came to England! We ended up staying here, but we got divorced, then I met my current wife, and I've been here ever since. I love England, and Manchester is my home. I've been here for 19 years now – pretty much my whole tattoo career – and the city has treated me well."

For his first 10 years in Manchester, Danny worked at Studio 81. "I just went straight in and asked for a job," he recalls, "and a couple of days later I was tattooing there full-time. It was a really busy shop." Then a year after leaving Studio 81, Danny opened Rain City Tattoo Collective with his friend Gre Hale. It was one of the first tattoo collectives in the country, and it's now one of the longest running.

"Coming from a studio where you had to give away half of everything you earned, we wanted to do something different," Danny explains. "The collective operates on the basis that if you're the one putting in all the hours and all the hard work, then you deserve to have the money. Ultimately, all of us here have the same goal. It works well."



"We all have our strengths and weaknesses," Danny continues, "and we all just kind of muck in with whatever needs doing. Gre is good with numbers for instance, and he's the one who did all the chasing of grants during the pandemic. I'm very motivated with doing practical things for the shop, like painting and decorating. And it really helps that we've got a great shop manager to take care of all the shit bits."

I ask Danny if having eight artists sharing a space together is ever a challenge. "We all get on really well... most of the time!" he laughs. "Everyone's very easy going. We have a good thing going here, and I think we'll be together for a long time to come."

Rain City Tattoo Collective is one of those places that remains slightly off the radar because everyone working there prefers to put all their energies into quality tattooing rather than loud self-promotion. "We push each other creatively in a really healthy

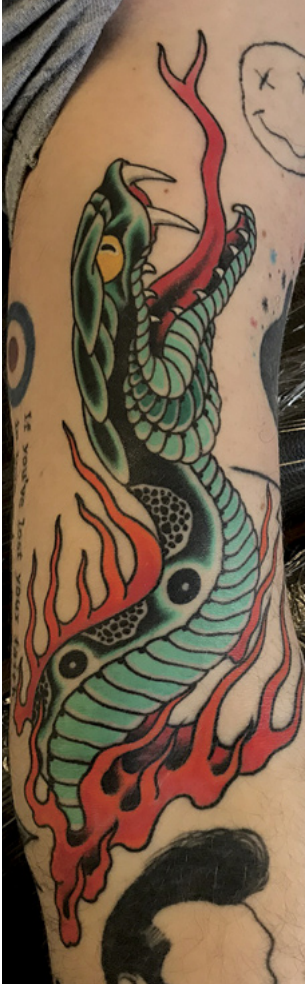
way," Danny says, "and if one of us does a really great tattoo, it makes the others think fuck, I gotta up my game. We're constantly bouncing ideas around. And, unlike in a street shop - where it can sometimes be a case of get 'em in, get it done, get 'em out - we sit down with our customers and take time to work an idea into a really good piece."

Danny had a bit of a change during his recent stay in New Zealand though. "At Rain City we rarely get walk-ins, but that's pretty much all I did while I was working away. And I kind of loved it!"

"Here in Manchester I would normally get one customer for the day who's really into tattooing. So it was a real contrast to have maybe 10 or 20 different customers, including the ones who are super rigid in their ideas and want a tiny tattoo on their big toe depicting their whole life story plus their star sign, with some initials too, and can it be done in 20 minutes..."

Danny is of course known for his large-scale Japanese pieces. I ask him what first attracted him to this style. "It took me ages to really be able to see it," he confesses. "I used to think it was all nonsense! But now I love all the history and tradition. The way the elements can be represented a thousand different ways. The look of the tattoos on the body. Those cool seventies Yakuza images! You can even see a Japanese influence in old school western tattoos."

"I also love the fact that a Japanese tattoo is not so much about the individual elements, but more about the whole," Danny continues. "Actually that's how I see Rain City. We're all part of the bigger thing." He laughs. "I sound like a fucking hippy..."



"I've not yet been to Japan. I was supposed to go, then the coronavirus lockdown happened. But I'll get there next year. The main artists that I have connections with here in Europe are Koji* in Italy, Luca Ortis and Alex Reinke. I think you can see their influences filtering through into my own work."

"But even in Japanese style tattoos, there are fashions," Danny continues. "I seem to be doing a lot of tigers at the moment. The good thing is that I enjoy doing them, and I can draw them really well, but I want to push things. I want my tattoos to start having an influence on what becomes fashionable."

We move on to chatting about machines. "My whole focus is on my tattooing, so when it comes to equipment I stick to what I know," Danny tells me. He's been using Dan Kubin machines for quite a while now. "They just run so consistently. They make my tattooing better, because there's no fucking around – unlike a coil, where there's all that fiddling about just to make it run the same as it did yesterday. I just want to be able to concentrate on getting the design right, and get it onto the body in the best way possible."

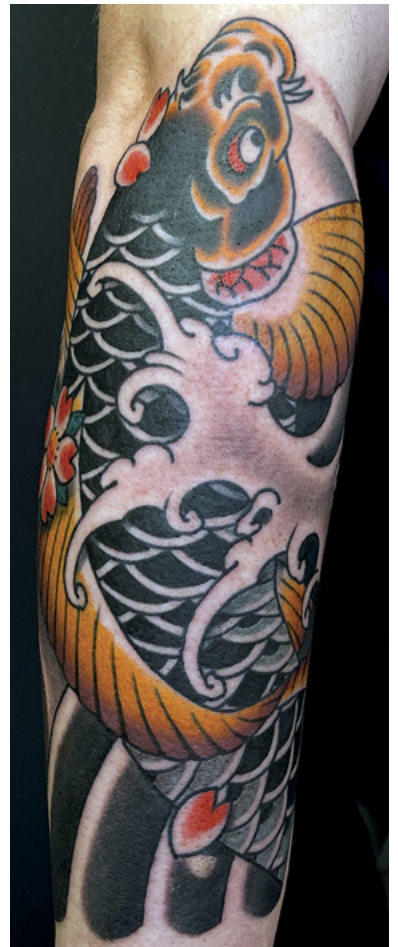


* Just as we were preparing this issue to go to print, we heard the sad news of Koji Ishimaru's death. See obituary on p10.

"I used to buy loads of machines, thinking they would improve my work. And it's nice having a lovely collection of machines of course. But unless you're going to use them all, or machine collecting is your thing, what's the point? I've never been very technically minded. I did make a machine once. It was alright – but I never use it, which speaks volumes. So I'm glad there are people out there, like Dan Kubin, who can take care of the engineering side of things."

We talk about Danny's constant quest to develop and improve his work. "I'm trying to make my tattoos bolder and simpler," he tells me. "You see your old work from 20 years ago coming back, and the detail that you put in just doesn't hold up over time. You can obviously rework it, but you don't want to do that because it fucking hurts! You want a tattoo to age with the client and stay strong."





I ask Danny if his clientele is mostly older, or mostly younger? "I definitely tattoo a lot of older people in the shop. Staying relevant to the younger crowd is impossible. I look at some of the things the kids are into now and I already feel out of touch. I was recently asked for a Pokémon backpiece and I just had to say no – because what I would want to do was go right back to Pokémon's Japanese folklore origins, which obviously wasn't really what the client was wanting!"

"I do sometimes wonder whether there might come a time when kids will suddenly look at tattoos and think they're not cool," Danny continues, "and from a business point of view, I worry that tattooing may eventually become less popular. I'm busy enough right now – I have plenty of work – but it could get quieter in years to come. Supporting my family is the big driver for me."

As is the case with many tattooists, Danny's early years were slightly crazy – a wild lifestyle fuelled by alcohol and drugs. But now, as a father to a young son, his life has changed. "Yeah, that's a pretty good description of my first 10 years in tattooing," he agrees, but having a family gives you a different focus. Something else to work for. You don't waste your time and money on drugs and booze. Of course there's nothing wrong with rewarding yourself with a beer or whatever at the end of the day – but now, for me, that reward comes after the work is done."



With a busy studio and a young family, it's hard for Danny to find time for everything he'd like to do. "But that's life," he says. "To be productive, you have to make sacrifices. I'm all too aware that I sacrifice family time during the week to spend time with my art. Every night I sit down at the table and draw or paint for a couple of hours. You've got to squeeze it in somehow. But I always make time for us as a family at the weekends."

"I also start my day very early. My son's autistic and he doesn't sleep so great, so early mornings were kind of forced onto me – but I love it, because it means I have loads of time with him, plus more time to draw, paint and study, and I get to the studio early every day too, which is a bonus for me."





Danny's struggle for perfection in his work is relentless. I ask what motivates him. "When you've done your best dragon backpiece, the next one has to be better. That's the challenge, right there. You're constantly striving for that progression. And I think I'm slowly getting there. You don't notice it so much from day to day, but when I look back at old pieces that I've done, they're so different from the stuff I do now. I can really see how far I've come."

We talk about the ghosts of past tattoos that come back to haunt you. "Yeah, thankfully the stuff I did real early on in my career happened before social media took hold. So those tattoos probably won't ever see the light of day. But to be honest, even if they do... well, my heart was in the right place when I did them. We're all constantly evolving."





"If my younger self could see what I'm doing now," Danny remarks, "I wouldn't have thought it possible! But you mustn't get complacent. Recognise the progression, then head straight back into the struggle and keep on pushing. It's quite emotionally draining to be in a constant battle with yourself – I always see myself as my own competition – but you have to keep on pushing forward."

One of Danny's great talents is his ability to paint his designs. "I love the process of painting," he tells me, "and I'll always be a traditional paint and paper type of artist. Digital art is just too refined and polished for me. I love the imperfections in a painting – the way a little bit of your soul is in there."

So I guess an iPad is out of the question? "I'm actually getting one this week!" Danny announces. "Like everyone, I thought fuck that shit, it's a gimmick, they'll never last. But of course they have. It'll cut my drawing time in half. And I'm excited to be learning something new. I guess I'm reluctantly joining the next generation!"

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'I WANT MY APPRENTICES TO HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF TATTOOING.' – **JAMIE**



YOU'RE HIRED!

by Jon



What exactly does it mean to be an apprentice nowadays? Following our conversation with a group of young tattooists in Total Tattoo Issue 192, we thought it would be interesting to delve a little deeper.

We visited Inksmiths of London where we chatted with Jamie Eskdale and his current apprentices Kirsty Crear and Jon Briggs, plus Jamie's very first apprentice Danny Brown (now based at nearby Misty Rose Tattoo) who dropped by to join the conversation. Jon and Kirsty are now in the third year of their apprenticeship with Jamie; Danny apprenticed with Jamie 19 years ago.

'APPRENTICESHIPS TAKE TIME. TOO MANY PEOPLE WANT INSTANT GRATIFICATION.'

— **KIRSTY**

Let's begin at the beginning. How did each of you get into tattooing?

Jon: I'd wanted to be a tattooist right from when I was a teenager. I'm 33 now. I actually got offered an apprenticeship when I was much younger, but I couldn't afford to do it because it didn't pay anything. So I ended up getting a job in recruitment instead. But after about 10 years I started to think, 'What the fuck am I doing?' My other half is a tattooist; Jamie knows the owner of the shop where she works so he used to see me hanging out there. He looked at my drawings, and he gave me the push I needed.

Kirsty: I always wanted to be a tattooist. And actually it was Danny who did my first tattoo! I studied textiles at university, then I worked for a while in the fashion industry but it was soul destroying. So one day I messaged Jamie and asked if he needed any help around the studio. He told me to be bold and say what I really meant... so I came right out with it and asked if he would teach me to tattoo. He said come in and meet the team, and I've been here ever since!

Danny: I was working on a building site as a plumber. I already had tattoos myself, but one of the guys on the site was covered in Bible verses, which fascinated me. I asked where he'd got them done, and he took me to Jamie's place. I just loved the atmosphere. Couldn't get enough of it. There were people from all walks of life, the place was packed, it was amazing. That's how it all began for me.

Jamie: Yeah, Danny was just a complete pain in the arse and wouldn't stop coming in! He had a hunger and I really respected that.



by Kirsty



by Kirsty



Did any of you guys consider scratching from home?

Jon: I tattooed myself when I was 15. It was in my mate's attic and I wore Marigold gloves. It was so shit it pretty much put me off the whole idea!

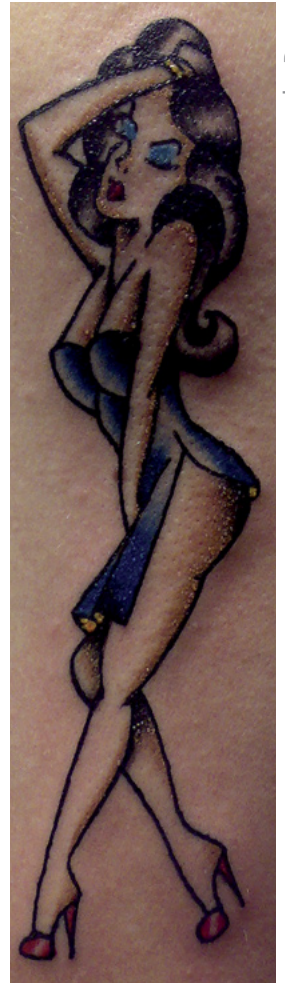
Danny: No, I didn't tattoo from home. Financially I didn't need to because the plumbing job supported me through my apprenticeship. But even if I hadn't been plumbing, I wouldn't have felt confident tattooing outside of the studio environment. I knew I only had to put one bad tattoo on someone and it would ruin everything.

I guess the money side of things can be tough when you're an apprentice...

Jon: Yes, definitely, but by the time I got my apprenticeship I had my own business in recruitment. So I could balance the two and slowly move over into tattooing.

Kirsty: At the beginning, I had a job in a pub to make ends meet. The landlady was really supportive and was always happy to swap my hours around. Then Jamie's studio manager left and he offered me that job, which meant I could get paid at the same time as doing my apprenticeship. But essentially the whole idea of an apprenticeship is that we help out in the studio in exchange for the knowledge and training that Jamie gives us.

Jamie: Yeah, the money aspect isn't often spoken about. A tattoo apprenticeship is basically that traditional concept of indentured servitude. My apprentices aren't paid; they're helping me out in exchange for my teaching. If you think about it, the hours I spend with them - when I could be tattooing - amount to thousands of pounds of lost income for me. But I'm lucky to have Jon and Kirsty in the shop. They're dedicated, they have the drive to succeed, and they're prepared to put in the work. So I'm more than prepared to match that.



What was your own apprenticeship like?

Jamie: My own tattoo education had no structure to it at all. I just received the scraps from my mentor's plate as and when he deigned to bestow them on me! And I had to work in McDonald's at night to pay my way through. But the thing about McDonald's is they train you in a very structured way. Even now, I can remember everything I was taught. That's why I teach tattooing in the way I do.

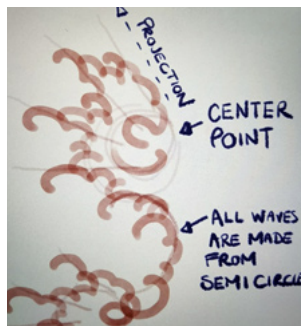
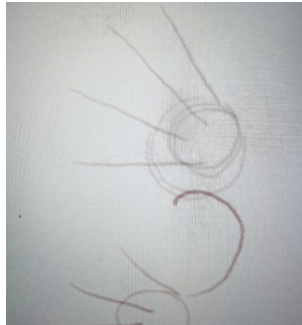
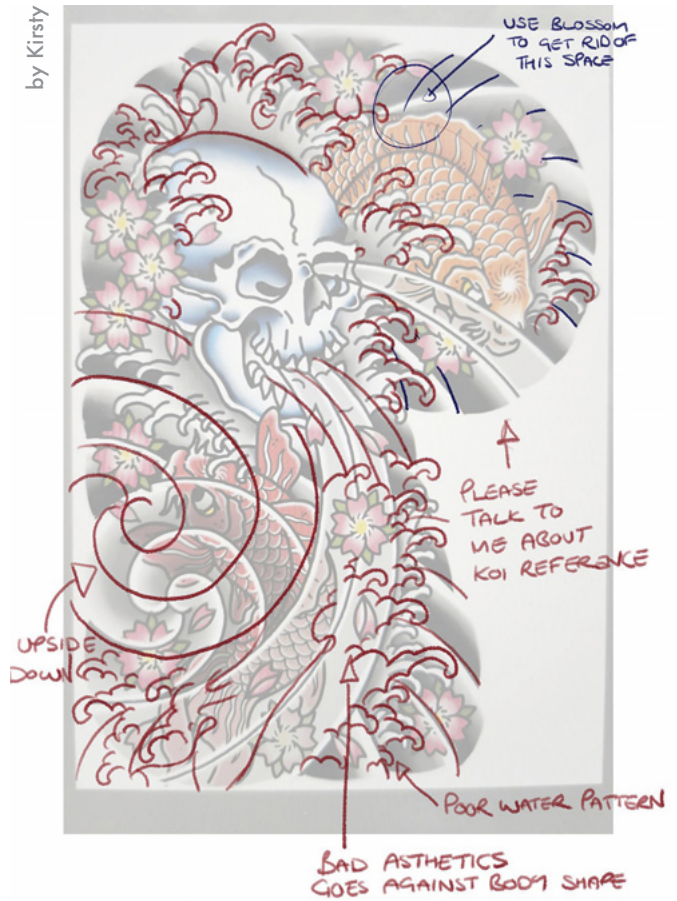
Tell us more...

Jamie: I divide the training into three areas: art, machine theory, and application. In other words, get the design right, make sure you've got the right tools for the job, then you can successfully apply the design to the skin. I aim to cover most of the potential pitfalls before my apprentices even pick up a machine.

pig's head practice by Danny



by Kirsty





How long does it take to reach that stage?

Jamie: My apprentices are with me for three years. You could possibly do it in two, but I take three because during the first year I want to make sure that they're serious, and that I'm not wasting my time. Both Jon and Kirsty are in their third year and are now beginning to tattoo. It's a bit like Lego. I give them the basic bricks and they start to build a wall, then the designs get a bit more complex and it's like they're building a house. Then my job becomes one of critiquing, refining and guidance, which in many ways is the hardest part. Jon and Kirsty are pushing each other forward. They're very different people with different skills; they help each other and bounce off each other.

So is Jamie a good teacher? What's it like being his apprentice?

Jon: It's really intense. Sometimes it feels like information overload! Jamie will give us his time whenever we need it, though. And I know for a fact not all mentors are prepared to do that. Lots of apprenticeships aren't as thorough as ours.

Kirsty: Yes, our training is really comprehensive. From the start, Jamie showed us everything – cleaning, sterilising, autoclaving, scrubbing the tubes, etc – and when he thought we could do it properly he handed the job over to us.

Jon: It's his dedication that makes him such a good mentor. The time he gives us. His patience. Sure, he'll get annoyed if you're being particularly thick, but he would stay until three in the morning if you needed help sorting something out. When you're working, he's always coming over to give you support. You feel that someone actually gives a shit about you. He's 100% invested. And his knowledge is so vast.

Kirsty: I call Jamie a wizard, because he can do any style.

Jon: Yeah, he can draw anything! And he's taught me to have way more appreciation for other tattoo styles. I used to hate neo-trad. In an ideal world I'd focus on large scale Japanese and traditional. But with the kind of studying Jamie's made us do, I now see different elements creeping into my drawings and I think my work is starting to change.

Kirsty: And of course learning every style, so that we can do anything that comes in, all helps to keep the business running.

Danny: Exactly. Working in a high street tattoo shop, you see something on TV and you know you'll be tattooing it next week! If you're only able to do one style of tattoo, and it goes out of fashion, you're finished.

Jamie: That's the whole reason I teach everyone to do everything. If I'm investing all that time and money, it needs to be worth it.

Jon: During the first coronavirus lockdown, Jamie set us an exercise. He gave us each a list of about 25 classic tattoo subjects (Sacred Hearts, roses, skulls, etc) and we had to render them from the same source image in various different tattoo styles – black and grey Chicano style, traditional, neo-trad, etc. That was sick.

Kirsty: I was looking through my sketchbooks the other day. I came across a design of an anchor that Jamie got us to do, with dozens and dozens of different versions, all with slight variations, all painstakingly working towards a better end result.

Jon: Sometimes it can be emotional getting called out (in front of everyone else!) for not being able to draw a decent cherry blossom. But as an apprentice, you have to leave your ego at the door. You have to remember that you're the person who knows the least. You need to take on board everything that you can.

Kirsty: Too many people want instant gratification. They can't wait to get a machine in their hands.

Jon: An apprenticeship is almost like a test to get people to be patient. It's kind of a filtering process. If people aren't prepared to wait until they're ready, they haven't really earned it.

by Kirsty



by Kirsty

How important is it for a tattooist to be able to draw? What do you feel about iPads?

Danny: Drawing is the foundation stone that everything else is built upon. If you don't understand how a drawing is made up, you can't make a perfect design in the skin.

Jon: Yeah, I picked up some bad habits with the iPad, like zooming in and over-complicating my designs to the point where they'd stop working as a tattoo.

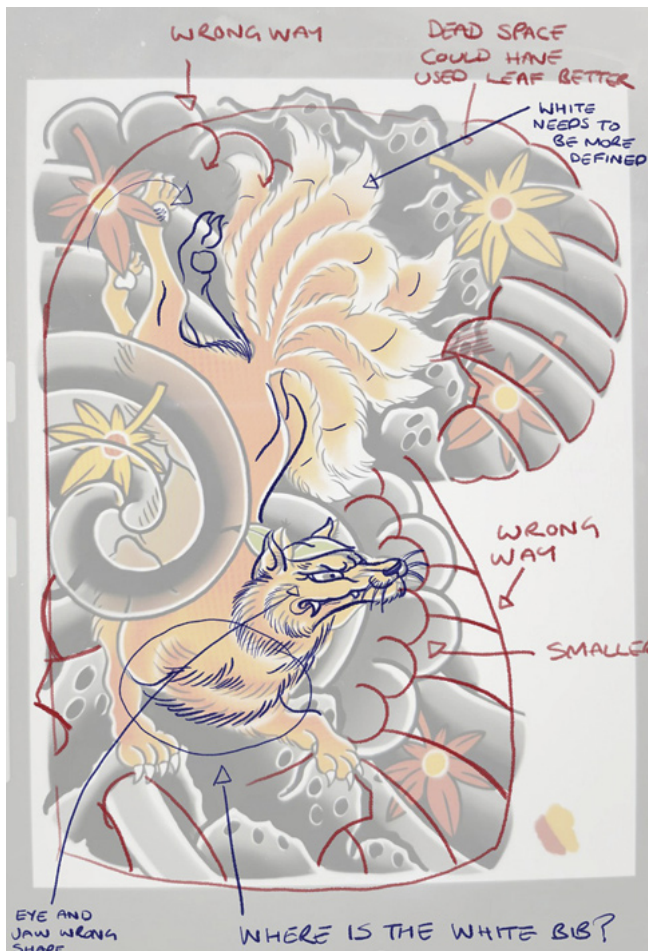
Kirsty: I always tend to draw on paper first. The iPad is great, but I think it can make it too easy to settle on a design solution without fully discovering the possibilities of your own ability.

Danny: With the iPad it's so easy to erase what you've done. You simply go back a few steps and start again. Paper is less forgiving. It sharpens your eye and your mind – just like when you're doing a tattoo.

Jon: Also, there's a kind of muscle memory aspect to drawing in the traditional way. I find that when I trace a design the night before it's like a practice run for when I do the tattoo itself.

Danny: I paint in the old school way, with spit shading and so on. You don't get that kind of life with things you do on an iPad. You need that little bit of bleed-out; the way the colours look when done with a brush on paper. And the resistance in the paper's texture; it feels different.

Jon: For me, a big part of the attraction of tattooing is the fact that it's a never-ending journey to keep getting better and better. And I don't think you ever reach a point where you're 100% happy with your drawing.



by Kirsty



by Kirsty



Danny, your apprenticeship with Jamie was nearly 20 years ago. Do you remember what it was like?

Danny: Yeah... Every day I used to get into the studio first and clean everything, making sure it was all sterilised ready for Jamie and the other tattooists. I'd let the customers in, sort out the designs and do the stencils for all the artists. Once everyone was working I would spend my time drawing, researching tattooists, making needles, talking with the customers. So although tattooing has changed over the years, and shops are so different now, the work involved in an apprenticeship – the drawing projects, the learning about machines, the needle making, etc – is all pretty much the same.

You mention needle making. Is that still relevant for a modern day tattoo apprentice? Isn't it a bit like teaching a car mechanic how to shoe a horse?

Danny: For me, needle making was a big part of the whole apprenticeship experience.

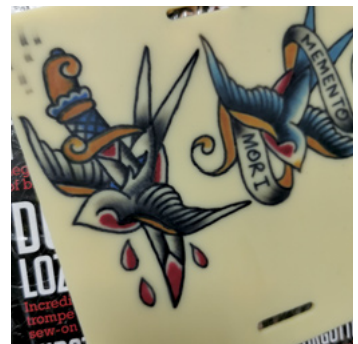
Jamie: When I was doing my apprenticeship, one of my jobs was counting the needles. They'd be individually soldered to the needle bar and we'd be buying them by the thousand, so that was a proper pain in the arse job!

Danny: Even though needle making nowadays is obviously more about history, and we don't really need to do it any more, it's still a good skill to know.

Jamie: Yeah, it's a bit of an integrity check. Understanding needle making enables you to know whether the commercially produced needles you've bought are up to standard. For instance, you need to make sure the solder doesn't run too far down the needle because if it does, it'll become like a scalpel in the skin. And any solder debris attached to the needle will make the ink spray all over the place and cause wear and tear on the grip.



Danny's first tattoo



fake skin by Kirsty

Jon: It's all about developing an understanding of what you're using.

Jamie: The fabrication side of things – needles, grips, machines – used to go hand-in-hand with the art of tattooing. Tattooists used to know all aspects of their craft, but sadly the culture now is just to have things working straight out of the box.

What's the hardest thing you've learnt during your apprenticeship?

Kirsty: Being more assertive! I always find myself agreeing to things that are almost impossible to do, just to keep people happy. Jamie says I'm far too amenable.

Danny: Yeah, the first thing Jamie taught me was to tell people to fuck off! Otherwise you end up over-stressing yourself. When I was doing my apprenticeship I remember I struggled like hell to get to grips with Japanese. But people – they're definitely the hardest thing! You can do the best design ever, but the customer will still want you to change it.

Kirsty: And that's one of the reasons why online is never going to replace learning in a studio environment. You need to have that experience of dealing with customers constantly coming in. You need to learn how to tell someone the design they want simply won't work.

Danny: The busy atmosphere is such a massive part of the learning process. You're concentrating on one thing, and all of a sudden there's three other things requiring your attention. You have to learn how to deal with situations like that.

Jon: I agree. There's so much that you pick up organically just from being in the shop. Like how to fit in, and how to work with other people. It's not only about the mechanics of tattooing.



by Jon



by Jon

Would any of you consider signing up for a tattoo school?

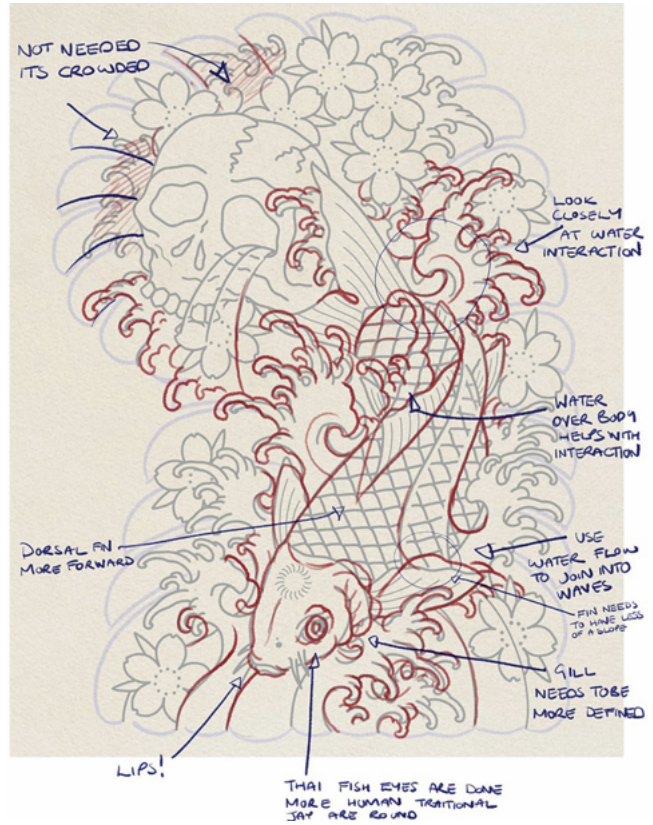
Kirsty: No!

Jon: No. Tattoo schools generally don't have credible people involved, and they often make promises they can't deliver. Seminars are a different matter, because they're usually delivered by people with more credibility. I often find them interesting and useful because I never had any formal art education. But in my opinion tattoo schools charge a fortune for something that's not real.

Danny: Yeah, I think there's always a danger of getting the wrong people involved when money becomes the priority. And you lose that true personal connection, which is so important in our industry.

Jon: The personal aspect is vital. What Jamie knows, and what he believes is important, might not be the same as what some other tattooist thinks needs to be taught. Even stripping and building a coil machine, and getting it to run well, is all based on personal opinion. There could never be a 'standard' way to teach someone to tattoo.

Jamie: And every apprentice is different too, so as a mentor you have to constantly adapt. An apprenticeship is always about giving someone a solid foundation on which to build their own individual identity as a tattooist. One thing I sometimes do is start a sleeve or a backpiece then have my apprentices work on it with me (rather like the studio assistants of the old master painters in centuries gone by) then I withdraw and leave them to finish it. The ultimate aim of all my teaching is for my apprentices to move away from emulating me and pursue their own individual development. I'm under no illusions about the fact that they will eventually fly the nest!



'YOU HAVE TO LEAVE YOUR EGO AT THE DOOR WHEN YOU'RE AN APPRENTICE.' – JON



Why is it so important to you to take on apprentices?

Jamie: Because I want to help them have a positive impact on tattooing. They are the future. I want them to have the right attitude and be armed with the right knowledge, to keep them (and tattooing) on the right path. As tattooists, we can make choices about how we shape the future. We can choose to turn our backs, or we can choose to pass on the knowledge we've learnt over a lifetime of tattooing. If we don't pass on that knowledge, it will be lost. The scary prospect for me is the increasing commercialisation that's attracting unscrupulous people with no real love for tattooing into our world.

What advice would you give someone looking for an apprenticeship?

Jamie: First, don't bullshit. Most of us have been around a while and we've learnt to spot it. And don't tell me how brilliant you are. No one expects you to know everything at this stage. What's important is how you got here. I want to be able to look at your drawings and see what influences you and what inspires you. You need to show me that you want to learn, that you're intelligent enough to absorb and process information, and that you know when to speak up and when to shut up. I need to see hunger, passion and curiosity.

And a final question to everyone else – would you guys have apprentices of your own?

Jon: One day, but it's a long way off. You need to be honest with yourself and decide if you really want to put the effort into teaching someone, and if you have the depth of knowledge and understanding to do a good job. It's a big investment.

Danny: I don't think I'm likely to take on an apprentice. But if I did, I would pretty much replicate the way that Jamie taught me!

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by Jon



by Kirsty

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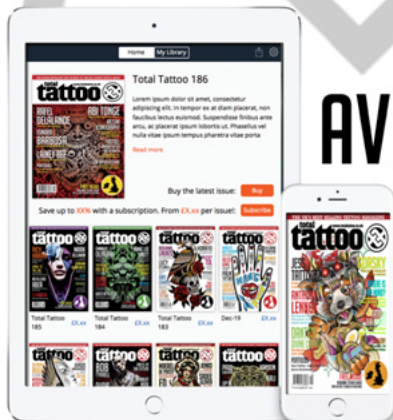


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**'THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU
UNCOMFORTABLE OFTEN
TEACH YOU THE MOST.'**

EL MORI

Moriel 'El Mori' Seror is the owner of Mori Occultum in Munich, where he works alongside Adrian Cier and Lena Newa. His colourful realism has made him an international ambassador of high quality German tattooing. El Mori and Adrian are frequently seen collaborating at conventions. They enjoy a truly symbiotic artistic relationship which is why, in a Total Tattoo first, we decided to bring you a pair of linked interviews. You'll find our chat with Adrian on page 54 in this issue.

We connected with El Mori one warm summer's evening while he took some time out from his very busy schedule. In a wide ranging conversation about his development as an artist, he told us about his unique approach to colour, his involvement in the 'We Make Artists' online tattoo academy, and the way Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu helps him overcome the everyday challenges of being a tattooist.

**'MY PHILOSOPHY
IS ALWAYS TO
STAY HUMBLE,
LISTEN AND
LEARN.'**



Moriel 'El Mori' Seror got his first tattoo as a present from his father at the age of 16. After leaving school he trained in computer science then worked as a graphic designer. Then, while getting his sleeve tattooed, he suddenly realised he was in the wrong career. He knew with absolute certainty that his future lay in tattooing. "I knew straight away," he recalls. "I didn't need to think about 'trying it out'. My mind was made up. I was determined to be a tattooist. And I knew it would have to be a full-on commitment."

El Mori began tattooing in 2011 after a remarkably short time learning the ropes. "My mentor was Yancoo, another artist from Munich," he tells me. I ask how this informal apprenticeship came about. "He was tattooing me. I showed him my drawings and he said I could hang out with him... and if I was good enough after a year he would let me work in his shop. He gave me all the help I needed, and after two years I opened my own studio."

"By learning every tattoo style, I learned everything I needed," El Mori continues. "Tribal teaches you to pack flat black, and work with the body. Traditional teaches you to put in solid colour. Mandalas really sharpen up your lines, and neo-trad is a great style for learning about line weights. Yancoo did realistic work, and I was very into the Eastern European dark surrealistic stuff."

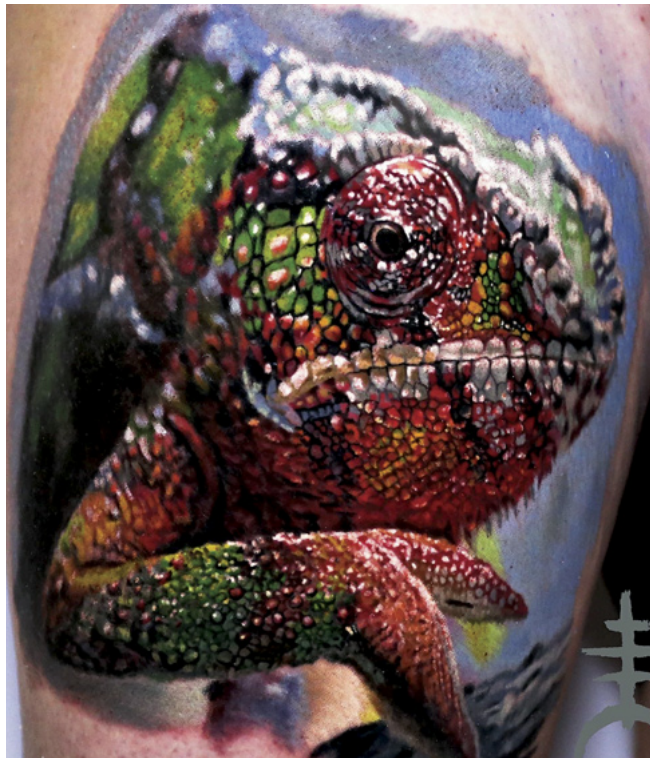
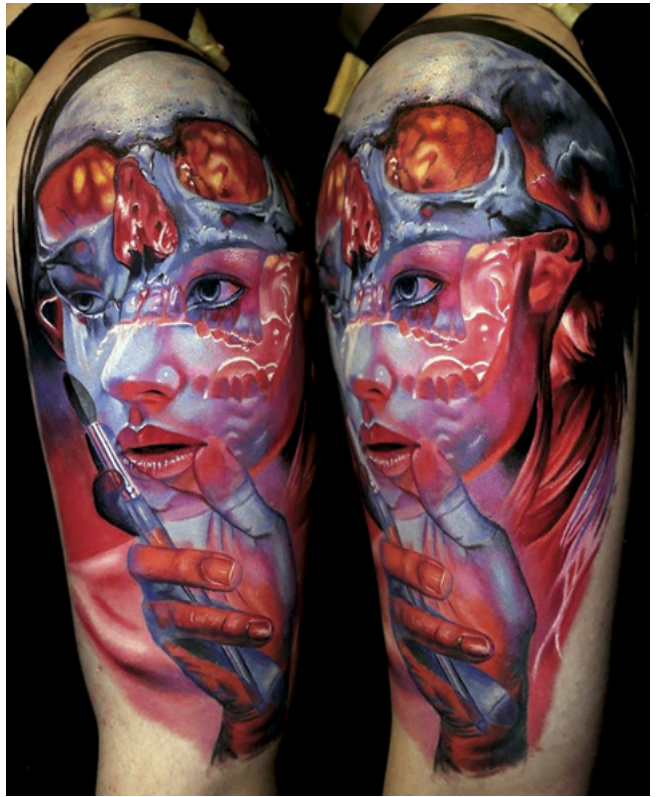


"I don't feel I've developed a unique style yet. I like doing my own version of neo-trad and freehand biomechanics. But right now I'm mainly concentrating on a kind of morph style of women's heads with flowers growing out of them... portraits, I guess, blended with nature and scenery. The clients seem to be into them, so that's what I'm focusing on! In a way it's a new style for me, but really it's more of a progression in a direction I've been headed for quite a while."

El Mori's large scale tattoos carry a lot of narrative. He constructs a story within each piece. "I pay a lot of attention to the mise-en-scene," he explains. "I want to create more than simply a collection of faces. When I build the image, I use enough detail for it all to make sense - but it mustn't be too intricate, or the tattoo won't last. It's often enough to concentrate the detail in the eyes and the mouth. In the past, I've done tattoos with far too much detail for their size, and over time they haven't aged so well. But that's how you learn. I'm mindful of the colour contrast too. Too little colour contrast isn't good for longevity either."

Colour saturation is key to the look of El Mori's tattoos, and his approach is unusual. "On my station I only use red, yellow, blue and magenta. From these I can mix every colour I need. I don't use any premixed colours; I mix in the skin and in the machine. So I only use four caps per person. For me this is completely natural."

"Tattooing is still very much a learning curve for me," he continues, "and my belief has always been that as soon as you start feeling comfortable, it's time to reach for another challenge." El Mori recently put that belief into practice in a very direct way, making a dramatic creative leap with his painting that seems to be closely related to his approach to tattooing.



"Yeah, I had a kind of epiphany," he tells me. "I've been doing realistic oil paintings for a while. They're very finely detailed, and I simply got fed up with doing all that slow, painstaking work. I needed to feel more expressive in the way that I used my colours and materials. I had these spatulas lying around, and I just thought fuck it and began using them. I decided to do a self-portrait. I didn't draw anything first. I literally just squeezed the paint direct from the tube onto the canvas, and went in with the blade. It felt so good and free."

"I feel I've made a massive leap forward in my work," El Mori continues, "and I know it's going to contribute positively to my tattooing. The thing about canvas is that it offers the freedom to explore and discover, because you're not restricted by the demands of your client. But my painting is a separate avenue for my work; I only post on TikTok, so that people don't necessarily associate it with my tattooing."

'NEGATIVITY ONLY BREEDS NEGATIVITY IF YOU LISTEN TO IT.'

We move on to talking about the client relationship. "I wouldn't describe myself as a people person," El Mori admits. "I can be very quiet. But when it comes to tattooing, I'm so passionate I can talk for hours! I think it's important for a client to be aware of the excitement and enthusiasm you feel. They need to know how much you want to tattoo them. You have to show them you really want to do their tattoo. Be confident, but also remain humble and embrace your client's ideas. Combine those ideas with your own. It's not OK just to convince a client to have your design. I think you need to be able to educate them about composition and colours and what will make the tattoo last."

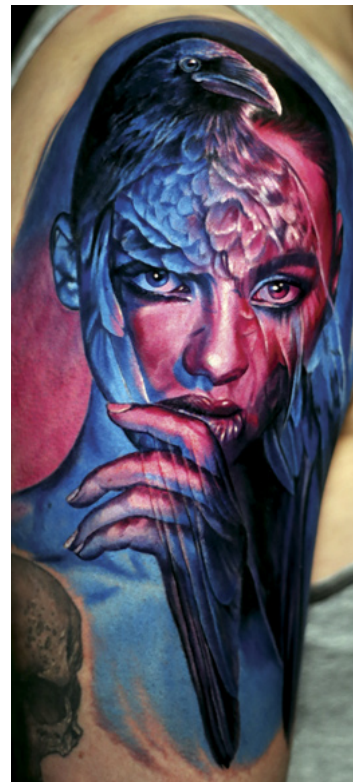




"There are so many great products out there that make the whole process of tattooing and tattoo aftercare so much easier – like tattoo butters to help reduce swelling and redness, and Torsten and Kätlin Malm's Tattoo Armour for instance. That's an incredible product. The client can't do a thing wrong, and their tattoos heal so much better. Modern machines make tattooing easier too," El Mori continues. "You can work a small area for a long time without causing any trauma to the skin. I use an FK Irons machine with a battery; it lasts all day with one charge and it's easier to wrap and keep sterile."

El Mori has strong views on the subject of hygiene. "Across the industry generally, I believe there's still a great deal of room for improvement. There only needs to be one or two cases of infection and governments will shut us down – and we know from recent experience that they can keep us shut for months if they choose to! Even if you don't care about your clients' health, you should at least care about your own. Our studio has been working with masks for years, long before the coronavirus pandemic. And we have a strict policy that you can't even wear your shoes; we provide sterile slippers."

"I still see artists working at shows with terrible hygiene standards. With germs becoming more resistant we're going to have to step up our game to protect against cross-contamination. In my opinion, we're still a long way from where we should be. Every convention should begin with an in-depth hygiene seminar."





Talking of conventions, I ask El Mori for his opinion on their role within the industry. "So many people have said that shows aren't as important as they used to be. But I disagree. They're vital as a focus for artists and colleagues to gather together and hang out. In our busy lives, that might not otherwise happen. Shows are the glue. And you can learn so much from the other artists there. Usually everyone is really friendly and happy to share information. It can help push your work to the next level. Me and Adrian both get really excited about conventions and have a lot of fun travelling and seeing different places. I miss conventions so much."

El Mori and Adrian Cier clearly enjoy a wonderfully close working relationship. You only have to look at their unique convention banners, incorporating their own faces into classic movie posters. "It harks back to my days as a graphic designer," El Mori explains. "I love having fun with things like that. We've done half a dozen of them now - including Grease, Zoolander, The A-Team and The Hangover. It's just become our thing! We're thinking of doing cards and stickers for each convention so that people can collect them and build up the set."

Collaborations (especially with Adrian) form a significant part of El Mori's work. "I find collaborations very rewarding," he tells me. "Of course everything depends on the artists you're collaborating with, but everyone I've tattooed with has been amazing, both on a professional and personal level. You really need to click with each other for the process to flow, especially when there's more than two of you involved. I've found that sometimes it's better to shut up and let the others have their input, and sometimes you have to speak up!"



El Mori is now involved in the 'We Make Artists' professional tattoo education platform (www.wemakeartists.de) with Julian Siebert and others. "It's a great project," he tells me. "The seminars are top quality and they're given by the finest tattooists. The guys behind it are putting a lot of money into it. Their expertise is in film and video production; they film the artists doing a tattoo and ask specific questions that have been carefully discussed beforehand to ensure that all the important teaching points are got across."

"Access to 'We Make Artists' is by subscription. You pay 1250 euro for a lifetime membership (or 1000 euro with one of the artists' promo codes) – which might sound expensive, but it becomes a better and better deal as time goes by because you automatically get access to all the additional content from each new artist joining the platform. Of course none of this is aimed at replacing traditional person-to-person teaching and mentoring. It's just an add-on. But I think it's a hugely beneficial resource, especially for existing artists looking to develop."





El Mori is passionate about the importance of developing and progressing his work. "My biggest fear is not noticing if my tattoos are getting worse!" he says. "I always tell my colleagues and peers to be brutally honest. I can take it, because that's the only way to develop. I'm at a place where I feel confident in my own ability. I know what I can offer to my clients. I can make tattoos that meet their expectations, and at the same time I can also fulfill my need for artistic freedom. But my philosophy is always to stay humble, listen and learn."

How does a tattooist keep their confidence intact, in the face of the incessant onslaught of amazing work on social media? "Yeah, I often see work online that makes me feel my work is shit in comparison," El Mori confesses. "But you mustn't be hard on yourself. You need to find a middle way where other artists' work inspires you to push forward."

"Sure, there'll times when you lose faith in your ability. That's when you need people to reassure you and look at your work objectively. And this is why you need to surround yourself with good people. But that's the problem with being an artist; you can have a thousand people telling you your work's great, but if one person says it's shit you'll only hear that one voice. Pushing through those negative voices and continuing to grow is what's important. Negativity only breeds negativity if you listen to it."





"People tell me I'm talented. But it's not talent. It's hard work. You can learn how to draw, and learn how to tattoo, but you have to push through the shitty moments to get where you want to be. Every tattooer has those moments when they think their work is the worst – but that's important, because it shows that you're still developing."

Outside of tattooing, El Mori is a trainer for Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu; he won third place in the European Championship. "I think the mindset required for this type of sport is the same as for life in general – and especially for tattooing. To be good at sport and good at tattooing requires the same dedication and focus. And the same ability to push through the challenges. There are times when the easy way seems like the best option, but most of the time it's not. The things that make you uncomfortable are often the things that will teach you the most."

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ELLIE DIAMOND, WOLF AND ARROWS



SCOTT DON, THE PETAL FACED GYPSY



GAZZ NEAVES, BLACK RABBIT COLLECTIVE



DAVE BERRY, ULTIMATE SKIN



CRAIG MERCER, DVRK NRTH

CHRIS HARRISON, BRIDGEND



ANNA KOWACKA, REDS TATTOO



GAV, POINT ZERO TATTOO



VOLKAN, USHUAIA TATTOO



JOE GILBERT, SKIN KANDI TATTOO



PIERS LEE, CIRCLE OF SWORDS



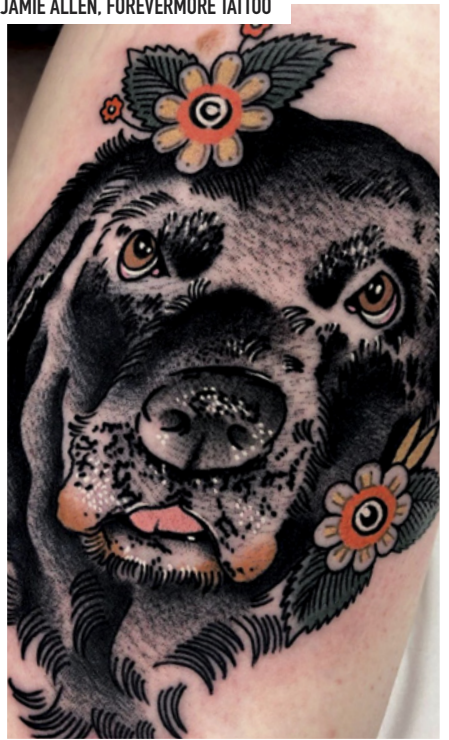
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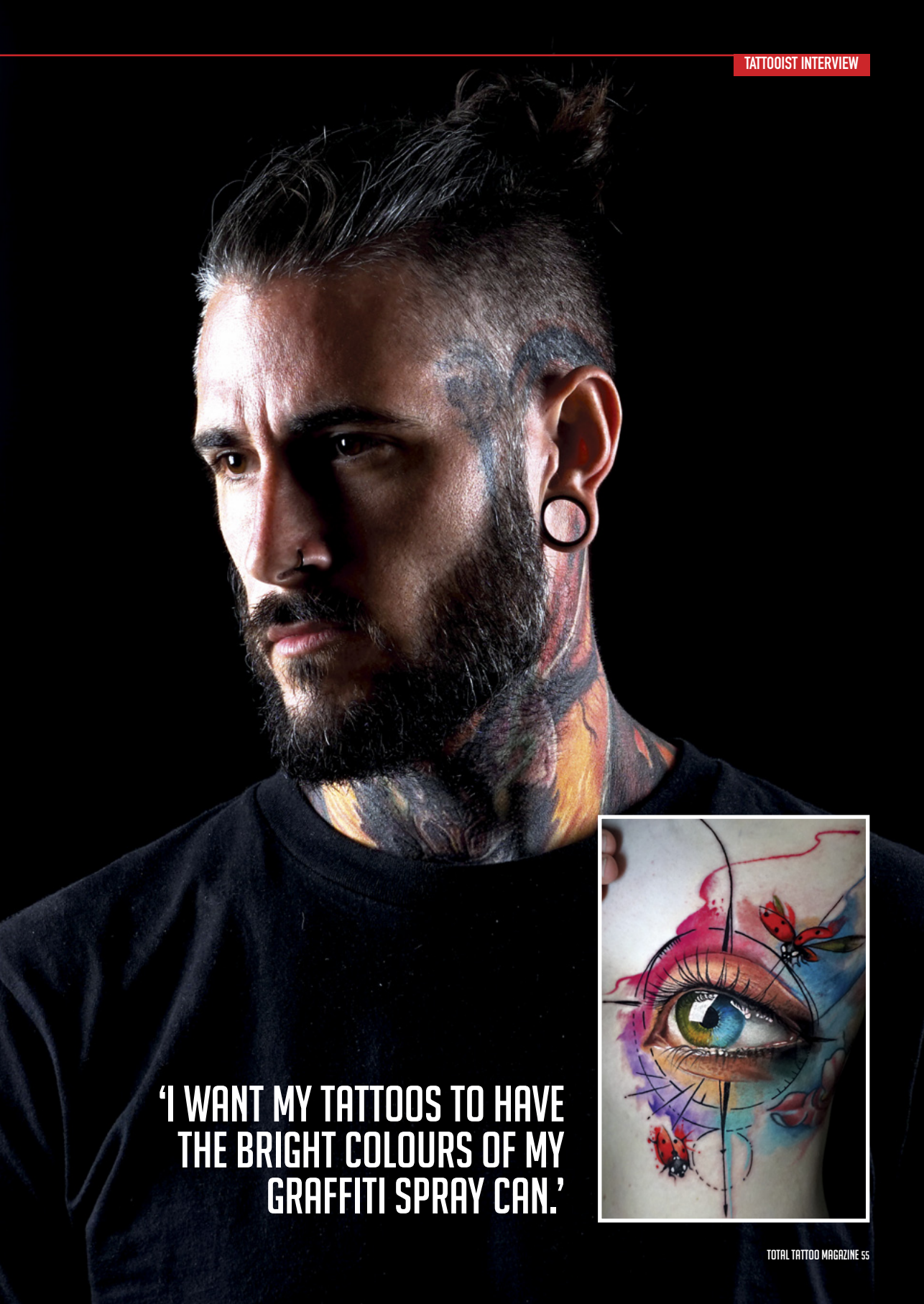
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'BECAUSE MACHINES AND INKS ARE NOW SO GOOD, ARTISTS CAN FOCUS PURELY ON THEIR ART.'

ADRIAN CIER

Adrian Cier is a talented Spanish artist who has settled in Germany to tattoo at Munich studio Mori Occultum with his friend Moriel 'El Mori' Seror. Together they travel the world, working conventions and collaborating on beautifully crafted, large scale, full colour pieces. We're featuring interviews with both artists in this issue of Total Tattoo (see page 38 for our interview with El Mori).

We first met Adrian in 2019 at the Marmaris Tattoo Festival in Turkey, where he and El Mori were working together. That was also where we encountered their unique convention banners for the first time. "Yeah, they started as a joke, but they've become a bit of a tradition," Adrian tells me. "Whenever we do a collaboration at a show, we pick a movie and El Mori superimposes our faces onto the poster. He does it so well, it's creepy! We now make a banner for every convention we attend."

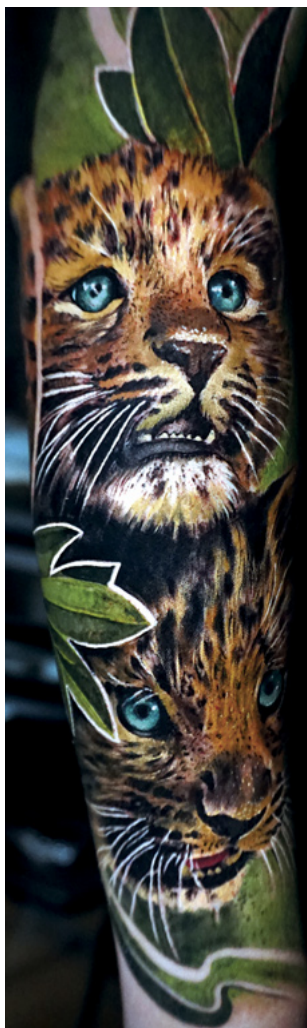
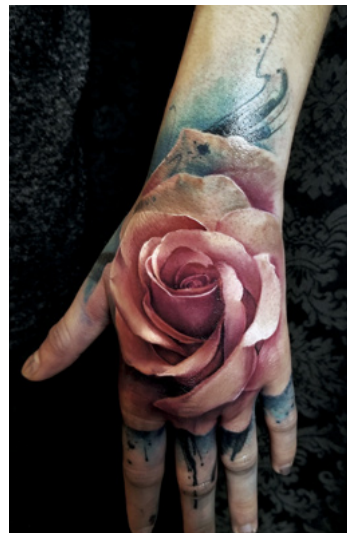


**'I WANT MY TATTOOS TO HAVE
THE BRIGHT COLOURS OF MY
GRAFFITI SPRAY CAN.'**



The convention circuit is very important to Adrian. "When I started doing conventions, my work took a massive leap forward," he tells me. "You watch everyone else working, you see the tattoos they're creating, and it gives you such encouragement. I would always come back from a show feeling like my batteries had been recharged, and I couldn't wait to try out all the new things I'd picked up. The social side was important too – so now, not having conventions is like missing my family! Both El Mori and I miss all the travelling. It gave us an excuse to visit some great destinations too."

I ask Adrian to tell me more about the collaborations for which he is so well known. "Every one of them has been an amazing experience," he tells me. "Mostly I've done them with El Mori. We work together so well, we hardly need to say anything to each other. We just know what to do. And if there are other artists involved they will usually have a similar style, so it won't be apparent who's done what bit, and the end result will look like it's been done by just one artist."





"We always have a plan, but we work freestyle. With four of us working on a backpiece for example, we'll each start in one corner and work towards the centre, swapping places every now and then. We'll have four shared set-ups spread around the client, so we can just move seamlessly from one to the next. And it's made even easier by the fact that El Mori likes to work with so few ink caps – so we do too." (As you may have read in our interview earlier in this issue, El Mori uses only four colours of ink and mixes them in the skin.)

Colour, and colour theory, are of crucial importance to Adrian. He attributes his artistic skills and style in large part to his early passion for graffiti. "I used to do a lot of new school, which of course was directly linked to my graffiti days. I always wanted to achieve those rich, bright 'spray can' colours in my tattoos, but back when I first started I just wasn't able to do it. Then I saw all those crazy good artists from Russia doing super bright work and I thought, 'If they can do it, so can I!'"





"Developments in machines and inks over the years have helped, but mostly it's just been the growth of my own knowledge," Adrian continues. "My style of tattooing is all about the colour combinations – getting them to pop off each other. There's a magic in that. With the right colours, a piece will explode into life. And you need to saturate the colour, and get it in with no gaps and no patches. That's what will give it that punch."

"When I first came to Germany it took time to build my clientele. But now people come to me because they like what I do. They trust me. So this in turn gives me the freedom to design whatever I want – working with my clients of course – knowing that we're both going to be super happy with the outcome. That special creative freedom is one of the things I love about being a tattooist."

"It seems to me every country has its 'typical' clients," Adrian observes. "Germany has a very strong tattoo culture. And something I've noticed about many German clients is that although they can appear to be rather sceptical or fixed in their ideas at first – difficult even! – once you've built a relationship with them they're incredibly loyal. They stay with you for ever, and I really value that. At first a client might only want a small piece, but then... bang, they want you to do their whole body."

When he left his native Spain, Adrian wasn't originally intending to move to Germany. But a planned relocation to Canada didn't work out, and when he spotted an announcement about a vacancy for a tattoo artist at Mori Occultum in Munich it was too good an opportunity to miss. He was already familiar with El Mori's work, so he decided to text him right away; El Mori replied almost immediately and offered him a guest spot. Adrian has been there ever since.

"I'm really lucky. I never wake up in the morning thinking, 'Oh no, I've got to go to work'. Even if the tattooing I'm doing that day isn't deep in the creative zone, and I might just be filling in some large areas, it's still a chance to practice a new technique or try out some new equipment. It sometimes feels like every day is a learning day that I'm getting paid for."

But, unlike so many artists, Adrian hadn't set his sights on becoming a tattooist from an early age. "Doing something like tattooing for a living wasn't really an option in the kind of small town environment where I grew up in Spain. You were expected to get a 'real' job. I studied computer programming and graphic design. It was easy to find employment because there weren't many

people with that particular combination of skills. But there came a point when I realised it wasn't for me. I remember going to sit in the loo for 20 minutes just to avoid doing the work, it was so boring! I needed something more creative."

With software such as Photoshop and Procreate now playing such a prominent role in tattooing, I ask Adrian if he is enjoying the way his old and new worlds are colliding. "Yes, that's a good way of putting it!" he says. "I remember so many tattooists being resistant to the change. They'd say, 'Yeah, but it's not real tattooing' - but now such things are regarded as basic tools in our industry. Anyone who's not using digital technology is putting themselves at a serious disadvantage."

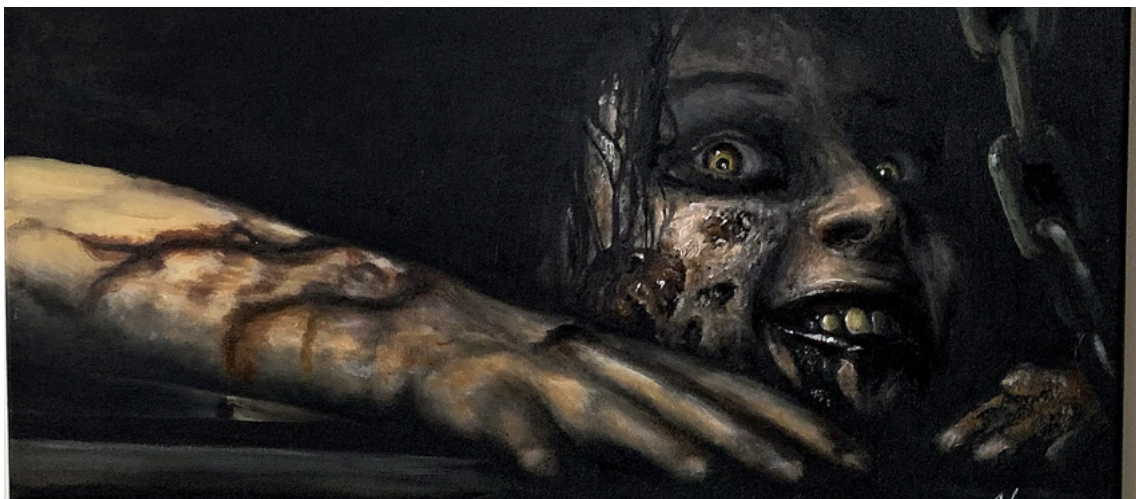




Over the 12 years that Adrian has been tattooing, another revolution has taken place – in the amount of information easily accessible to anyone wanting to learn to tattoo. There was no such thing as an apprenticeship available to him, and online resources were still in their infancy. “I remember going to the tattoo shop in my town when I first started out, but they didn't want to know. So I thanked them politely for their time and went to find stuff online – but back then, there wasn't much to find.”

“I had a tattooist friend who showed me how to set up my old coil machine, and he said, 'Anything you need to know, just come and ask me'. But then he moved to another city miles away. So I was on my own. And it isn't always good to have to work things out for yourself... I used my machine at the wrong voltage for years without realising it, until one day somebody said to me, 'Try this setting' and suddenly, wow, my machine was loads better!”

“Nowadays, you can learn so much from online seminars and videos, which is good on the whole because it gives everyone the opportunity to improve and push the industry forward. But you still need someone standing behind you saying, 'Don't do this, don't do that, do it this way'. It takes years and years of experience to really learn how to tattoo.”





"For me though, the main concern about online teaching is that it doesn't really address the fundamentals of health and hygiene – how to protect ourselves and our clients from cross contamination, how to deal with clinical waste, and so on. But I guess most online classes aren't necessarily aimed at people who should already know these absolutely essential basics."

One of the greatest leaps forward in terms of hygiene is the new generation of cordless machines, and Adrian is a fan. "I use the FK Irons EXO," he tells me. "It's a super solid, punchy machine that gets the job done; you can't say anything bad about it. The battery lasts for ages. It's powerful and consistent. I think it's the best machine I've ever used. It's ideal for conventions and guest spots because you don't need a power supply, and you don't need three or four machines set up either."

"As for inks, I only really use Intenze. I've used them for a long time now, so I know how they heal and how they age in the skin, and I trust them."

"Nobody can complain about the machines and inks we have available to us today," Adrian continues, "so really, as an artist, all you need to do is focus on your technique and get really good at the part that is you."

During the last coronavirus lockdown in Germany, El Mori gifted Adrian a set of paints and some canvases, which led to a whole new avenue of artistic discovery. "Suddenly I had no excuse not to paint. It was a really beautiful experience. I've never been taught to paint, so I just had to find my own way. It was all intuitive. And that's when I realised that it's actually very similar to tattooing. Just a different tool. You dip the brush, the same as a tattoo machine. So my knowledge of tattooing helped me with my painting, and likewise my painting is influencing my tattooing massively."

"If you're struggling with a creative block," Adrian continues, "and you swap to a different medium, it can help to unlock things and get them moving. And painting is the most relaxing thing, because it has no deadline. You can do it for a couple of hours, have a coffee and come back to it, or leave it for another day. There's no pressure. It's like meditation."



Like most artists, Adrian is very self-critical. "You have days when you're pleased with what you're achieving, and days when you're down on yourself, but everyone has that." He closely scrutinises his work and wants every detail to be perfect. "But ultimately," he concedes, "what people notice is the whole tattoo – the composition, the overall impact of the image, and most of all the colour."

So what does Adrian feel he still needs to learn? "A lot!" is his immediate reply. "Better composition, better solid colour, sweeter saturations, better line work. I'm still so far away from where I need to be. Looking at the work of great tattooists – up close – it really blows my mind. That's how good I want to be. I know it's possible because I can see it with my own eyes, but I just can't do it myself... yet!"



"Right now though, I know more things than I've ever known, I have more friends in this industry than I've ever had, and tattoo equipment is the best it's ever been. I hope this is how it will always be! I never want to lose this awesome feeling. In the future it would be great to have my own shop of course, but I'll always be travelling and doing conventions. That will never, ever stop for me."

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KEVIN McCree

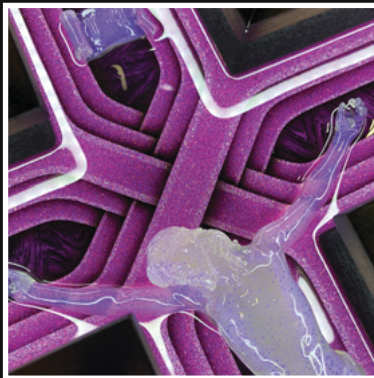
Kevin McCree's lowbrow art sits comfortably at the freezing end of super cool. And as if neon crucifixes and glitter pinstriping weren't enough, when you add working for an American NASCAR race team into the equation... well we just had to interview this guy!

Tell us about your background.

Currently I live in Mooresville, a lakeside town that's a suburb of Charlotte, North Carolina. But I grew up on the west coast of America, in California. In my childhood I worked in my grandfather's auto bodyshop. He was a custom painter and car builder so I learned most of what I know from him. Later, I started working for a NASCAR race team doing body and paint work, which has instilled a very high level of discipline and precision into my work.

And how did you get into making art?

It was when I met my wife,



Kelsea. She was the one who first inspired me to spend time making stuff just for *myself*. She's a tattooist, and through our connections with the tattoo world I was invited to make a skateboard deck for a charity event... which actually sold!

And so you started making more art to sell?

Yes, I started making custom skateboard deck art pieces and selling them in Kelsea's tattoo booth at conventions. They sold out every time. Eventually it reached a point where they were selling before the shows even opened. That allowed me to get really creative and move into doing different things – various sized skateboard decks, then dice trays, and eventually the neon crucifixes. I never expected people to actually want my art, but I'm glad they do because it gives me a reason to keep crafting.



'THE QUALITY CRAFTSMANSHIP MY GRANDFATHER TAUGHT ME IS IN EVERYTHING I MAKE.'

Do you share your creative passion with anyone else?

Kelsea and I often hold 'craft nights' with our friends and family. We force everyone out of their comfort zones! We all get creative and have a really good time. It helps us all connect.

Tell us about your job with the race team.

To be honest working in a race shop is a bit like the movie *Groundhog Day* – because every week we paint the exact same cars, only to disassemble them and do it all over again the following week! Don't get me wrong, I work for a fantastic company with a great group of guys, but it can get a bit monotonous, and I'm glad I've got other outlets for my creativity.

Can you tell us a little about car clubs, lowriders, and the lowbrow art scene in America?

Oh wow, that's a vast question. The lowbrow art scene, in my opinion, stems from custom car culture not only in inspiration but also in that it's based almost entirely on everything being hand-made. Because making stuff in your garage and driveway is really what it's all about! And if you're into cars, whatever your style, there's a club for you. My club, Genocide, is a group of brothers who love each other and their lowriders. We help each other out whenever we can – in our car builds and otherwise – and we like to go cruise together whenever possible. There's a car culture for everyone out there!



Can you tell us a little about the cool glitter paint on the cars and the shark?

Yes, the glitter, or metal flake, is really fun to work with. It definitely adds movement and depth to my work. There's actually a lot of steps in the process. Long story short – there's a bunch of tiny metal particles mixed into a clear base that I basically blast at the surface with a spray gun. You can get tricky with it by mixing different size metal particles and colours to create different effects. My flake sponsor, Tropical Glitz, has a great selection of great quality flakes that I've enjoyed experimenting with. So that's pretty much how I create a glittery base for my pieces!

And what comes next in the process?

Most of the colour you see in my work is a highly translucent paint called Kandy that's sprayed over the metallic or iridescent flake base. I get all my Kandies from Tropical Glitz as a concentrated formula and I have to mix them with several components before they're ready to spray.

What specialist tools do you use?

My flake gun is from Tropical Glitz and I also use an Iwata spray gun and an Iwata mini for all the other paint spraying.



Tell us about your neon pieces.

Well, I wish it was real neon, but it isn't. It's LED strips that are made to look like neon by having closely gathered nodes and opaque coating. But I love the neon look. It's so classic.

What drew you to work with crucifixes? Are you from a religious background?

No, there was no religion at all in my upbringing! I've always been drawn to Catholic art though. It's so ornate and intricate while at the same time being so tough and powerful. I love the stories behind most religious art, and how it elicits such feelings in the people who look at it. But at the same time, historically it's also a big part of the traditional lowrider culture. Having grown up in California where all the coolest people had religious art all around them – in their cars, their tattoos, etc – when I want to make something cool it's the natural direction to go!

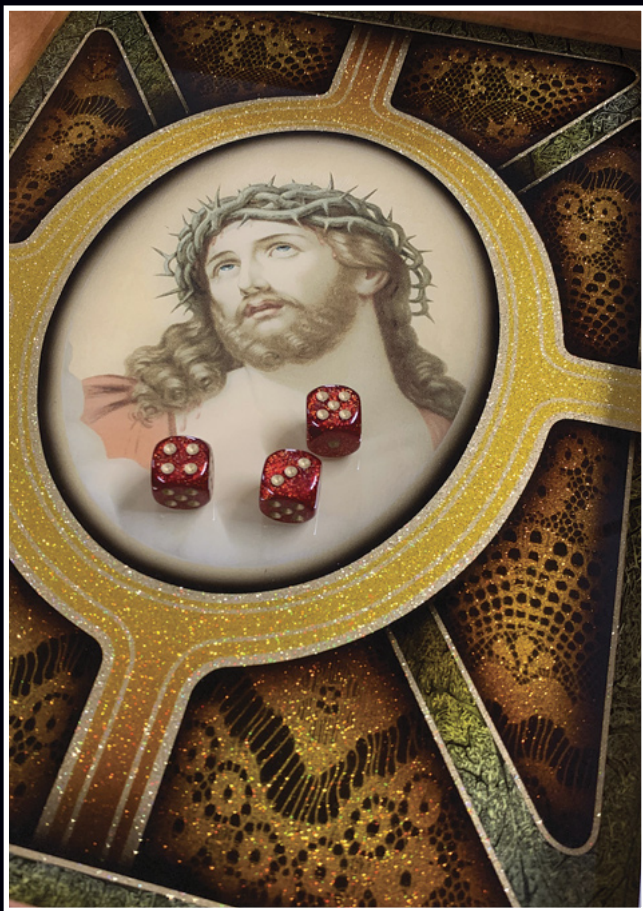
Do technology and art mix, in your opinion?

I'm not really tempted by technology at all, unless you count really vintage tech I guess. I like to experiment with the sort of stuff that may have been considered cutting edge back in the 70s, so you might see some of that featuring in my work in the future. I suppose as technology becomes more and more a part of our lives, it just makes handcrafted pieces like mine more special.



'I LOVE THE CLASSIC LOOK OF NEON.'





Would you describe your art as a business or a labour of love?

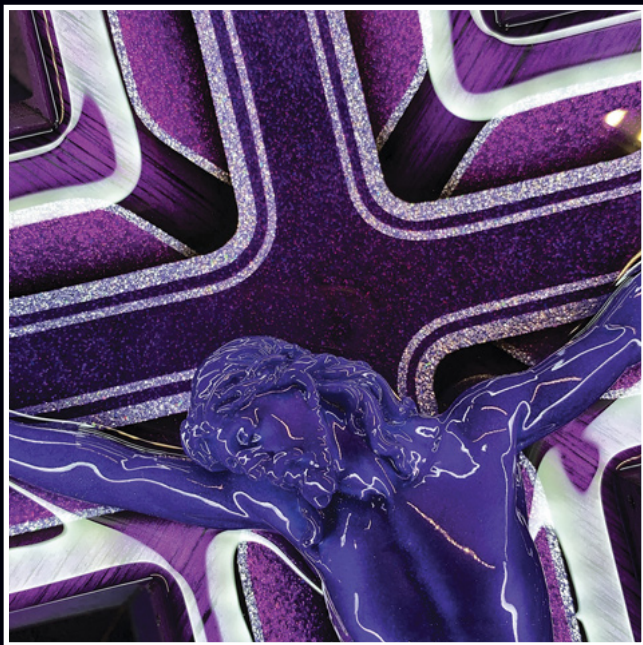
Definitely a labour of love. Actually, I'd say it's the only thing keeping me sane in my 'eat, sleep, work, repeat' lifestyle sometimes.

How do you price your pieces?

It's hard! If I actually priced them by the hours I'd invested, then nobody would be able to afford them. I just try to price things so that I feel OK parting with them and can support my habit. Nothing, I repeat, *nothing* is worse than when people try to talk me down on my pricing. It's so insulting.

Do you take commissions?

I don't really do commissions – but having said that, I've been approached in the past about special jobs that I simply couldn't pass up, so I do always ask what the person has in mind before I say no! But really I just enjoy doing my own thing, and I like to spend as much time as I want to on whatever I'm making.





'CATHOLIC ART IS SO ORNATE, BUT AT THE SAME TIME SO POWERFUL.'



Where do we go to buy your work?

You can message me on my instagram (@kevinmccree) which is the only site I have at the moment. Most people don't realise I only make art in my spare time, and that my regular job is with the race team. But hopefully one day I'll be able to make art full-time! As it stands though, if I post something for sale it may be the last until the race season is over...

Tell us about your collaboration with Stef Bastian.

It was a charity project that Stef put together to help some of the hospitals most badly affected during the Covid-19 crisis. Big Meas was the person who suggested to Stef that he should ask me to submit a piece. I've also done several other charity art shows that were organised by tattooists. I guess I'm a sucker for that kind of thing, where art can help people in some way.

And how about your own tattoos?

At first I was mostly getting tattooed by friends who were tattooers. And when I met my wife Kelsea, it was always her. But then we began going to conventions, and I met more and more great artists from around the world – people I'd previously thought I'd never have the opportunity to get work by – and that's when my tattoos started to become a collection. For me, one of the biggest factors in choosing an artist is that I've got to actually like the person though.

Have you ever been tempted to pick up a tattoo machine yourself?

Yes! It's hard not to, when tattoos are such a big part of your life. I keep trying to talk Kelsea into teaching me so that I can work with her at our shop (Family Tradition Tattoo in Mooresville NC). She doesn't think it's for me though, because she knows I always like to do my thing and not what somebody else wants me to do.

What does your art mean to you?

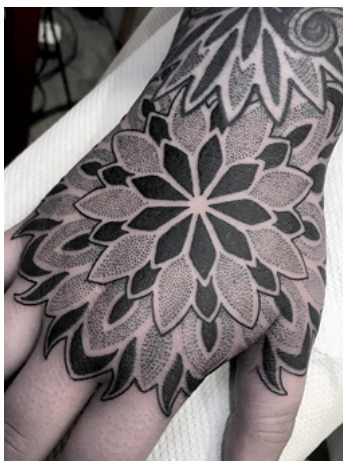
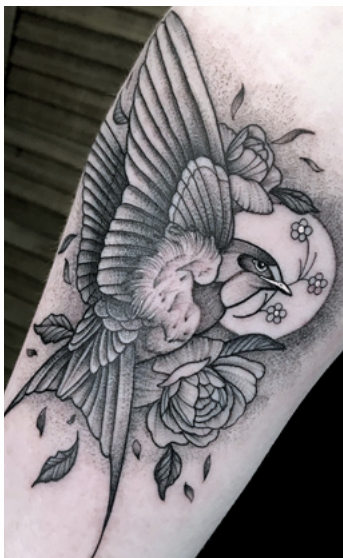
I'm never sure how to answer this question. In many ways I'm just an automotive painter trying my best to instill the quality of craftsmanship that my grandfather taught me into everything I do. But I guess if I go deeper, my art is my way of sharing the things that make me feel good with the world. People often say that I'm a man of very few words – but my art is certainly something I like to talk about.

@kevinmccree



Kevin getting tattooed by Tim Hendricks





Paddy Dundon's exquisite designs, with their beautiful symmetry, sit perfectly on the body. He uses ornamental elements, sacred geometry and gothic imagery to form his intricate blackwork creations... so it was quite a surprise to learn that his original tattoo inspiration was bold, colourful traditional!

Tell us a little about your background and where you grew up.

I was born in Chalkhill, London. Both my parents are Irish and we moved back to Limerick City in Ireland when I was about eight or nine years old. My dad is a painter and decorator by trade and a talented gardener, and my mother has always written poetry and painted a bit in her spare time, so I was kind of surrounded by creativity from an early age. I can't remember a time when I haven't drawn. In school I wasn't the best student and I got into trouble quite a bit, but when it came to art I was very attentive. Art and history were the only two subjects that really sparked my interest.

What's your earliest artistic memory?

Growing up in Chalkhill, everything was covered in graffiti and my earliest memory is me getting into trouble for trying to 'graffiti' with permanent marker all over the wallpaper in the flat!

Did you encounter tattoos early in life?

My dad has quite a few traditional tattoos, which he got in the early 80s in Limerick. They always fascinated me, as far back as I can remember. The tattooer was one of only two or three operating in Ireland at the time. He worked in his house, and famously he had his machine wired into the ceiling light fitting – so he switched it on and off by flicking the light switch. Crazy stuff.



PADDY DUNDON



How did your own tattoo career start?

I got my first apprenticeship in a tattoo shop at the age of 17. It was a very old school apprenticeship, unpaid, and a lot of hard work – including needle making. In the long run it didn't work out, but I'm still friendly with the owners and I never regret working there. I will always appreciate the opportunity they gave me. Over the next few years I tried a couple of other shops, but these were somewhat short-lived experiences.

What happened next?

A few years later I applied to the Limerick School of Art & Design as a mature student to pursue a degree in fine art printmaking. It was one of my tutors, Des McMahon, who really got me interested in the finer points of monochromatic art. Experimenting with etching and woodblock printing and using only black ink on white paper – and the challenge of creating a readable, dynamic image this way – captured my imagination massively. Also at this time I started to look into sacred geometry, pattern work and symmetrical imagery. This period of research and study definitely influenced the style of work I do now.



How did you get back into tattooing?

So after my few early apprenticeships and my time at art college, I moved to London with my partner Rose who was pursuing a fashion degree. In London I got a job managing Allan Graves' Haunted Tattoos on the Holloway Road. A few weeks in, one of the guys spotted some of my drawings that I'd left on the counter. Once they realised I was still eager to learn to tattoo, they agreed to help me out finishing my apprenticeship.





And it went from there...

Yeah. Both Emanuel de Sousa and Dave Condon took me under their wing and kindly started teaching me the fundamentals. They sat with me whenever they had the time – even if that was late into the night! When I left London a year or so later to come back to Ireland, Emanuel gave me my first machine, a Micky Sharpz Micro Dial. Back in Ireland, I got help from local artists such as Paul Bullman. He gave me a lot of pointers. My most formative time was at Soul Addiction in Limerick. The owner Roy Keane (no, not the footballer!) really helped me to start defining my style and showed me how to identify my strengths and weaknesses.

Where are you based now?

I currently work at Sacred Tattoo in Limerick, alongside my friend and talented artist Caroline Williams and my partner, manager and microblade technician Rose Walsh.

How would you describe your work?

I suppose if I was to try define my work, I'd say it was high contrast imagery using primarily straight black. For me, the readability of my work is important and I always give my designs enough breathing room for longevity. I employ contrasting tones and contrasting line weights, and I enjoy working with symmetry and flow. My main design passions are ornamental and sacred geometry, but I am also very interested in graphic or gothic inspired imagery. I am happiest when I can mix all of these elements together.





What made you choose this style?

I didn't choose to go down this particular road. It just kind of happened! When I first started my apprenticeship I was primarily focused on traditional tattooing, which is a style I have massive respect for due to its boldness and contrast, and its technically unforgiving nature. I was inspired by the work of Valerie Vargas, Theo Mindell and Paul Dobleman amongst many others. But around the time I started art college my direction changed. I became drawn to graphic and ornamental artists like Thomas Hooper and Robert Borbas and I began to move towards blackwork.

Do you feel you've arrived at where you want to be, stylewise?

I definitely don't consider myself to have a definitive style yet, but it's something I'm constantly working towards.

How do you source your imagery and reference?

From so many places! From photographs, from looking at architecture... and I'm always inspired by Medieval European and Asian art. Searching through old books can provide great inspiration and reference too, particularly in the area of sacred geometry. And honestly sometimes Pinterest is a lifesaver if you have the right keywords, although I know a lot of tattooers don't like it.

I imagine you put a great deal of thought into each design.

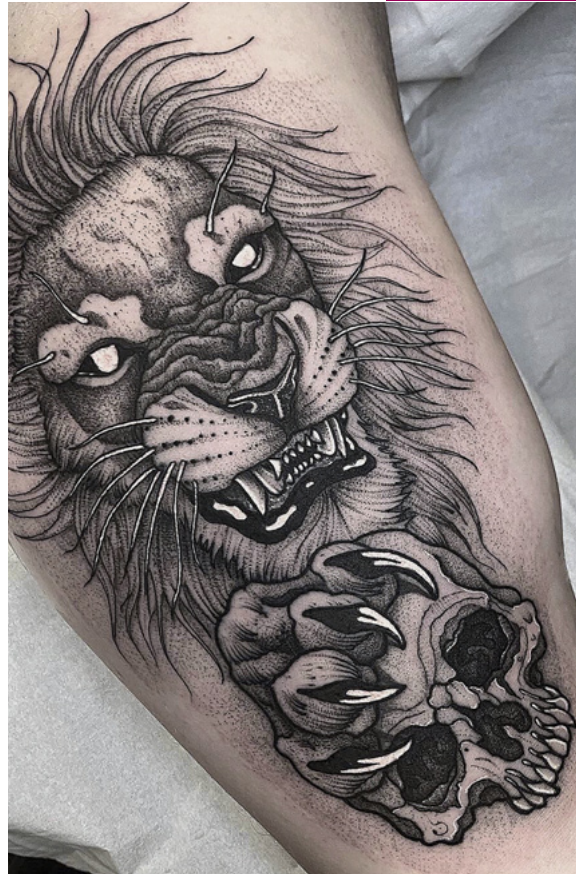
Yes, often the design takes me longer to do than the tattoo. I also never repeat a design.

How do you deal with clients who want those well-worn designs that some would now regard as hackneyed?

I'm very open and honest with clients who ask for over-used images like pocket watches. I'll always try to discuss a compromise with them. For example, instead of a pocket watch with the time of birth of a special person, why not get something unique that reminds you of that person, such as their favourite flower or their favourite place to visit? It obviously makes for a far more original and personal tattoo, and in the end I find 8 out of 10 people trust me on this. But the pocket watches are still there. 2 out of 10 times I'm not successful!

Do you freehand or use stencils?

I usually stencil most of my work, but I do a little freehand mixed in. I'm really trying to push my freehand skills, because I believe freehand work tends to flow much better with the body. I really admire – and envy – the confidence of full freehand artists. Some day I hope to be able to work like that.



Do you have other visions for how you would like your work to progress?

The more I tattoo, the more I learn that with my style of tattooing, bigger is better. In the future, I would like to be working predominantly on larger scale pieces.

What equipment do you use?

Until recently, I was mainly using coils. I used a Dan Kubin Sidewinder pretty much every day, and I was also using Seth Ciferri and Xam machines. I hesitated for some time before trying a pen, although I don't really know why. I've now started using the Bishop Rotary Wand and cartridges. I have to say that not having to switch between machines is definitely a plus for me. But I believe you still can't beat the feel and sound of a well-tuned coil.

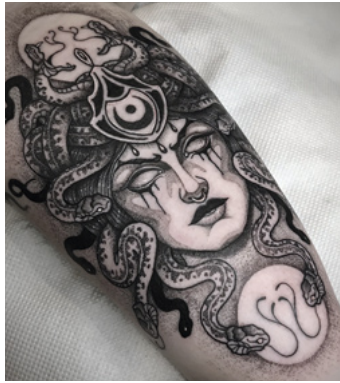
Is travel important to you?

I absolutely love to travel and experience different shops and cultures. One of the most important things about tattooing is that you're always learning, and the main thing I love about guest spots and travelling is being able to have the opportunity to work alongside different artists. I'm absolutely delighted that conventions are beginning to get the green light again. I have Urban Land Rome, The Big North in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Brighton Tattoo Convention all coming up, and lots of guest spots in the offing too. I can't wait to travel again!

What are your thoughts on seminars?

I've attended seminars at conventions, and I liked them. But I think it's a case of different strokes for different folks; sometimes the information may be beneficial to you, other times not so much. I massively encourage the sharing of information with hard-working artists who deserve it. Anything that contributes to a responsible profession and better-looking tattoos that stand the test of time is a great thing in my opinion!





What do you regard as the most significant development in modern tattooing?

The internet. I can still remember having to go to the library during my first apprenticeship to photocopy butterfly pictures out of reference books for the guys! The internet has changed all that.

How about social media?

I know this is controversial, but I think social media has massively benefited tattooing. With all the tattoo imagery out there, the general public can now make much more informed choices about tattoos and tattoo artists. Social media has been of huge benefit to artists as well – for discovering new techniques and styles, for putting likeminded artists in touch with each other, and so on. I believe the internet and social media have strengthened and grown the core tattooing subculture, which is never a bad thing!



How has the coronavirus pandemic affected you?

The lockdowns massively affected us in Ireland. We've had some of the tightest restrictions in Europe. Tattoo shops were closed for a total of 10 out of the past 16 months, and walk-ins, flash days and conventions are still a no-no. These are strange and difficult times that we're in right now and hopefully things will start to turn around soon. To be honest, it's been very hard. Having said that, the lockdowns did give me a chance to reconnect with painting and drawing just for myself again.





Do you do much art outside tattooing?

I definitely don't do as much as I would like to. And it's been far too long since I pulled a fine art print. I find it quite difficult to put aside the time for personal projects and I'm always in awe of busy tattooers who can do this. If the lockdowns taught me anything, it's that I need to create time for these projects in the future. I'm sure in the long run it would contribute positively to my tattooing.

During the lockdowns we saw an increase in online tattoo courses. What's your opinion on this trend?

Tattooing is 20% art and 80% a hands-on trade. And there's no hands-on trade that you can learn online and hope to be any good at. Aside from the obvious technical aspects, you have to learn to apply a tattoo well without damaging the client. You also have to learn the dynamics of working in a tattoo shop, and all the practical health and hygiene aspects – plus how to interact and engage with clients. This is all part of a good tattoo education. I fail to understand how you could possibly learn this via a computer screen.

What does tattooing mean to you as a job?

I never thought I could have a job that I would love so much and that made me so happy. Yes, it can be very stressful and unforgiving at times, but the positives far outweigh the negatives. I truly couldn't imagine doing anything else! And I will always try to give back – because I owe so much to tattooing and to all the people who have helped me along the way.

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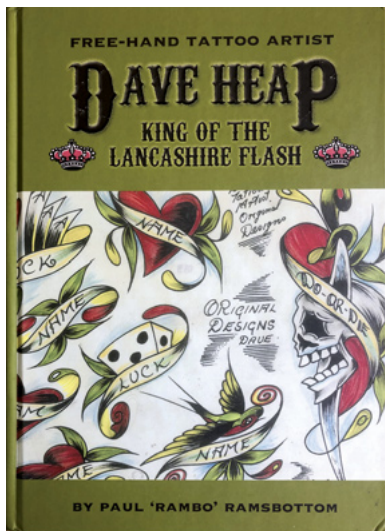
KING OF THE LANCASHIRE FLASH

Dave Heap started tattooing way back in 1962. He's recently retired, after a whopping 58 year career. A very private man who doesn't suffer fools gladly, Dave generally prefers to let his work do the talking. His distinctive free-flowing designs make him stand out as an exceptional artist both with pencil and machine, but his unassuming personality means he's remained largely undiscovered in the tattoo world – until now.

Fellow tattooist and tattoo historian Paul 'Rambo' Ramsbottom has recently written and published a book about him. Packed with photos, anecdotes and pages of classic flash, it's a must-have volume for any traditional tattoo enthusiast.

Rambo and I met Dave at his house in Accrington for a cup of tea and a chat about traditional tattoo values and much more besides...





'IN THOSE DAYS, IT WAS ALL TRIAL AND ERROR. AND THAT'S WHAT WAS SO EXCITING ABOUT IT.'



Let's begin with your designs. You must have produced acres of flash and drawings over the years!

I've spent several decades drawing every day, often through the night into the small hours. So yes, I've drawn thousands of flash sheets – but where they've all gone, I don't know. I rarely sold any of them. I used to trade them with other tattooists. They weren't mass produced back then.

Tattooists should be able to draw. If they can't, they shouldn't be in the job. That's my personal view. Even back in my school days (which I hated by the way) I shone at art. I was always drawing.



To me, a tattoo design should be a combination of elements built up into a well-balanced whole. Anybody can do an eagle or a scroll, but linking them together, and getting the balance right, is a different matter. That's where a lot of people fall apart.

Sometimes you see tattoos that are all out of co-ordination. You've got to do a design that can move. It's got to have flowing lines. That's what I've always tried to do. It comes with constant practice. You get it in your head how you want it to go. Paul asked me to do some drawings for this book. It was just a half-hour job for me, because I'm so used to doing it!



You've had a very long career. What do you reckon was the best decade for tattooing in this country?

For me, it would be the late 60s and 70s. That was a great time. Even though there were so many obstacles to overcome in those days, it was exciting. They were the golden years in tattooing.

Nothing was on a plate. You had to discover things for yourself. There was only Davis Tattoo Supplies here, so you had to send off to America for stuff. It could take up to 12 weeks for anything to arrive. And machines in those days were very hit or miss. Nobody really knew how to get a machine to run perfect. They would never work the same from one day to the next.

You were constantly trying new things back then. Sometimes you'd hit the nail on the head and think, 'I've cracked it'. Then you'd try whatever it was on the next customer and it wouldn't work! But that's what it was all about. I remember getting a big bottle of Pelikan ink and boiling it down... It stunk the house out. And then it was too thick! Tattooing was all trial and error at that time, and that's what was so exciting about it.





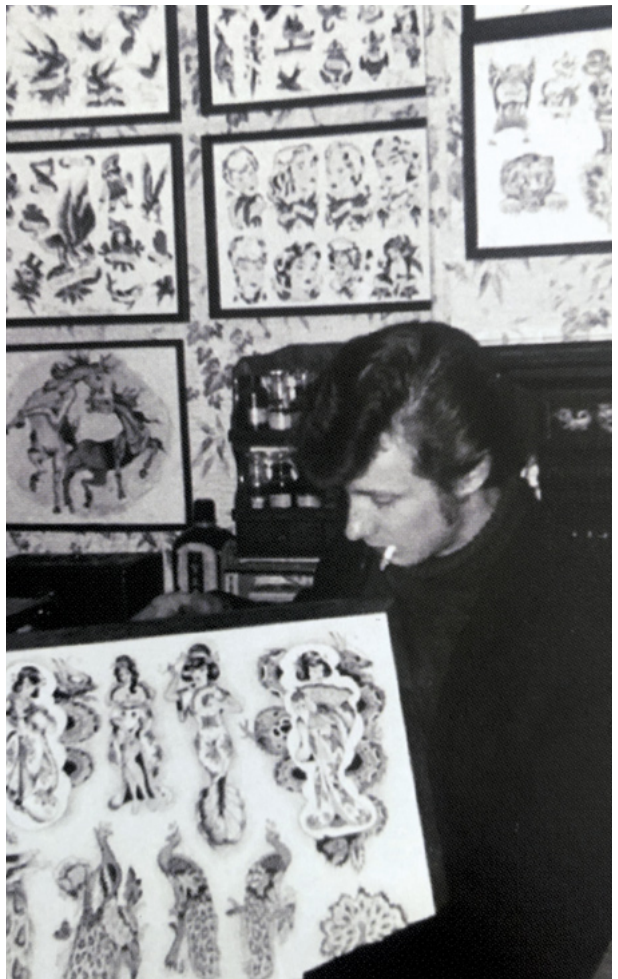
Has tattooing lost some of its charm because it's so mainstream now?

Oh definitely. It's lost everything. I first started tattooing in 1962. It had mystique back then. Your average person didn't have a clue how a tattoo was done in those days. And if you were a tattooist, society was against you – environmental health, the press, even doctors would attack tattooing. When you were trying to buy an autoclave you'd be told, 'Sorry, we don't sell to tattooists, we only sell to dentists'. They didn't want to know. So you had to be really passionate to get into it. It wasn't easy at all. But if you were determined... and I was. I knew what I wanted in life.

What made you decide to become a tattooist?

No one in my family had ever had a tattoo, but when I was a really young kid I used to walk past Jimmy Gould's tattoo shop in Blackpool. It fascinated me.

Then one day at school, when I was about 14, I saw a big group of kids all crowded round in a huddle and I thought it was a fight, but it wasn't. They were huddled around a kid called Bernard who was showing off his new tattoo. I just remember being mesmerised by it – the fact that this cross was going to be on him for the rest of his life.



'IF YOU WERE A TATTOOIST BACK THEN, SOCIETY WAS AGAINST YOU.'

After I left school I remember I was in a coffeehouse with a mate when a guy came in with tattoos on his hands. 'Who's that?' I asked my mate. He told me, 'It's Jock from over the road. He does tattoos'. Well that was it. Within a week I was over there getting my first tattoo. Then another. And another.

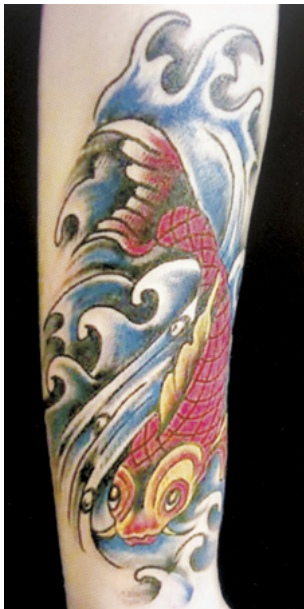
It was when I was watching Jock tattooing my mates that I decided I was going to become a tattooist. I started tattooing in my bedroom, and I vividly remember my parents bringing the district nurse round to give me a lecture on all the dangers! Jock helped me get my first machine - a wooden back Davis machine, which cost 30 shillings [£1.50]. Then he got me some pigments in little brown envelopes, and he'd also sell me 'colour mixing solution', which of course was just Listerine! I never knew at first. That's how things were. Everyone kept things secret.

And then you got your own shop in Bury...

Yes, I'd always fancied having a shop in Bury, because it was sandwiched between Bolton and Rochester, and I was already getting customers from there when I was tattooing from home.

But it was a real struggle to find a place. In those days there were so few shops to let, and even if there was a premises available they wouldn't let you rent it. You'd go to an estate agent and they'd say, 'I don't think the owner would be keen for it to be a tattoo studio, with the kind of clientele you'd attract'. They wouldn't even ask the owner! But I just fell lucky one day, and I managed to get a place. It was small and ideal, and I got it for a pittance. Looking back, getting that shop was a real high point for me, mainly because it took such an effort to find it.





'IF I WAS TO DO 50 EAGLES, I WOULD WANT THEM ALL TO BE DIFFERENT.'



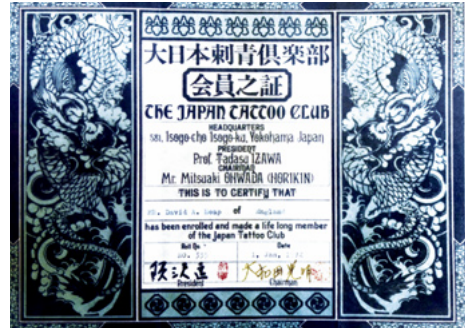
Were you in touch with many other tattooists at that time?

Yes, I used to write lots of letters back then. At least half a dozen a week. All to different tattooists. I recall Karl Bumpus helped me with addresses for Spaulding and Rogers, Milton Zeis, Al Schiefley and others. It felt like I knew everyone. That's how I ended up with loads of Grimshaw designs. And all my tattoo mates benefited from my connections because I shared out the knowledge - but I was the one who did all the writing and made all the contacts.

I remember when I first met Jimmy Gould in Blackpool. To me and a lot of other tattooists in the North, he was a far superior tattooist. I was obsessed with trying to find out what he was doing that we weren't - how he got that deep black, velvet look to his work. We got to know each other really well, and after years of watching him work, I realised it was nothing but brute force that got him those results. Large needle groups, a big bold outline, and blasting the colour in - solid!

I wanted to know everybody in tattooing. Back then, I didn't have a car but I had a motorbike. One of the first places I visited was Terry Wrigley's shop in Ashton-under-Lyme, and he was another person I got to know well. I corresponded with him before I met him in person. His was a big shop, with designs all over the ceiling and a mannequin on one side. I'd never seen anything like it. He did three tattoos for me in less than an hour! He was slapping them on; I was really impressed. And no transfers at all - which to me is a true artist.





I always say there's *tattooists* and then there's *tattoo artists*, like Terry. For tattooists, it's all copying and done by transfer. I didn't want to do that. If I did 50 eagles, I wanted all of them to be different. That way, everybody was getting an original tattoo. It's the same if I'm buying a painting. I don't want a print. I want the original.

Through all your years in tattooing, do you feel you got the recognition you deserved?

I never sought it. All my life I've never, ever courted publicity. One day a woman came into my shop in Bury beaming all over her face, accompanied by a guy with a camera behind his back, wanting to do an interview. I told them to get out. They hadn't even had the courtesy to contact me beforehand!

I've turned down so many interviews. I used to have letters from newspapers all the time. But they were all so against tattooing, I didn't want anything to do with them. I tried to put an advert in a paper once, but they wouldn't touch it.

They were such snobby bastards, the press. You'd see headlines like 'Ban this evil practice!' But tattooing isn't an evil thing. And of course the press loved stories about people with tattooed faces 'ruining their lives'. You'd get all that crap thrown at you. But personally, I wouldn't tattoo people's faces. I mean, I don't care what anyone says, it'll never be socially accepted. And I wouldn't tattoo anything anti-social or racist either. Whoever you are, whether you're a tattooist or not, you've got to have some standards and principles.

'BEING A TATTOOIST IS ALL ABOUT THE PLEASURE OF DOING BEAUTIFUL TATTOOS.'



L-R: Rambo, Dana and Dot Brunson, Dave

I notice your hands are tattooed...

Oh yeah, and I had to walk around with my hands in my pockets for about 30 bloody years because of that! If you went into a nice restaurant or anywhere posh, you kept them under wraps. I regretted those tattoos. I'd never have my hands done again. But then again I was 18 years old at the time. I mean, you do silly things when you're that age, don't you?

Do you have any other regrets?

Not really, no. To be honest, I look back on my life now and I'm quite happy with what I've got. Tattooing's been good to me. It's been a good job to have all these years. It's brought the money in, but it wasn't the money that interested me. It was just the pleasure of doing a beautiful tattoo. As I came near to retirement though, I wasn't enjoying it so much. It wasn't the same. Then the coronavirus lockdown came and bugged everything up.

Did you try any of the new machines before you retired – like the cartridge pens?

I had a dabble when they first came out, the new rotaries and such. But... I don't know... they just didn't seem right. I never actually made a machine myself, but I know how a coil works, inside out. And I can tell by the sound of it whether it'll put in a good tattoo or not.

If rotaries hadn't been developed, there wouldn't be as many tattooists today. Right now, it seems like there's more tattooists than there are customers! Tattooing's everywhere. It's taken for granted. And it's like a fashion now. But no fashion lasts for ever. It's going to burn itself out.

'I CAN TELL BY THE SOUND OF A MACHINE IF IT'S GOING TO PUT IN A GOOD TATTOO.'





‘A TATTOO HAS TO BE ABLE TO MOVE. IT’S GOT TO HAVE FLOWING LINES.’

Tattooing is so different now to how it was back in the day.

And you see some beautiful things on people! But I like big, bold, brassy, heavy tattooing. The kind of design you can recognise from across the road. Some tattoos now, you could be yards away and still not be able to work out what's what, there's so much grey and detailing. They'll tattoo something like a woman's portrait, and they'll do every strand of hair. *That kind of thing just will not last!* Two or three holidays in Spain, and it'll all blur together. In five years' time it will be a blob. I like to see 40- or 50-year old tattoos that are still sharp. They're not going to be perfect by any means, but you should be able to make out what they are.

How about modern tattoo shops and studios?

You talk to tattooists now, and they're booking people in for a whole day. Or booking just two or three appointments a day. That would have been unheard of back then. Nobody did that! You just opened your doors. Sod appointments. They'd never have turned up! By 10 o'clock in the morning, especially on a Saturday, you could guarantee there'd be three or four waiting for you, and then it would just be one after another. Spending all day on one tattoo – I've never done that in 58 years.

In those days, you never took a Saturday off. You were too busy. If you had a week's holiday you'd make sure you were back by the Friday night. But I always made time for my family. A lot of tattooists today, they're working from ten in the morning until ten at night. But I never, ever did that. I was off home by half past three to miss the traffic.

And all this bullshit about apprentices. I've never had an apprentice. For 50 odd years, everything in my own shop I handled myself, no matter how busy it was. You don't need anyone else! But some tattooists now are so full of self-importance. They like to have an apprentice – *their* apprentice.

But isn't it good to pass the knowledge on?

I've always kept things private, and just passed my knowledge on to the right people. You've got to be careful who you share it with!



Rambo on writing and publishing 'King of the Lancashire Flash':

Over the 17 years that I worked with Dave at Rambo's*, my shop in Manchester, we became close friends and we often talked about his long career. I realised he had quite a story to tell. So I suggested that he write down everything he could remember about his life in tattooing. He wrote pages and pages, and I recall him saying to me, 'One day Paul, we'll do a book together.' That was years ago. Dave kept asking me if I was ever going to do anything with the material, but with all my various commitments I never seemed to have the time. It was the coronavirus lockdown that finally gave me the time.

It took about a year to put the book together. I'd never done anything like it before, but in my head I knew exactly how I wanted it to be. It

was a long, slow process, especially at the start, but as it progressed it brought some real excitement to my days in lockdown! I wanted it to be like a scrapbook, which of course was greatly helped by my collection of tattoo memorabilia. [Rambo is well known for his private tattoo museum - ed.]

The book has been very well received, all over the world, but I did it mainly for me and Dave. It wasn't done as a business venture. My idea was to produce a book that would be enjoyable; a book you could keep coming back to; a book that would be around for many years. For that reason, I didn't scrimp and save on production. I'm very proud of the finished result.

Rambo

*I've retired as a tattooist and the shop is now rented out to Steve Byrne. Check out @rambostattooparlour for news about big name guest artists.





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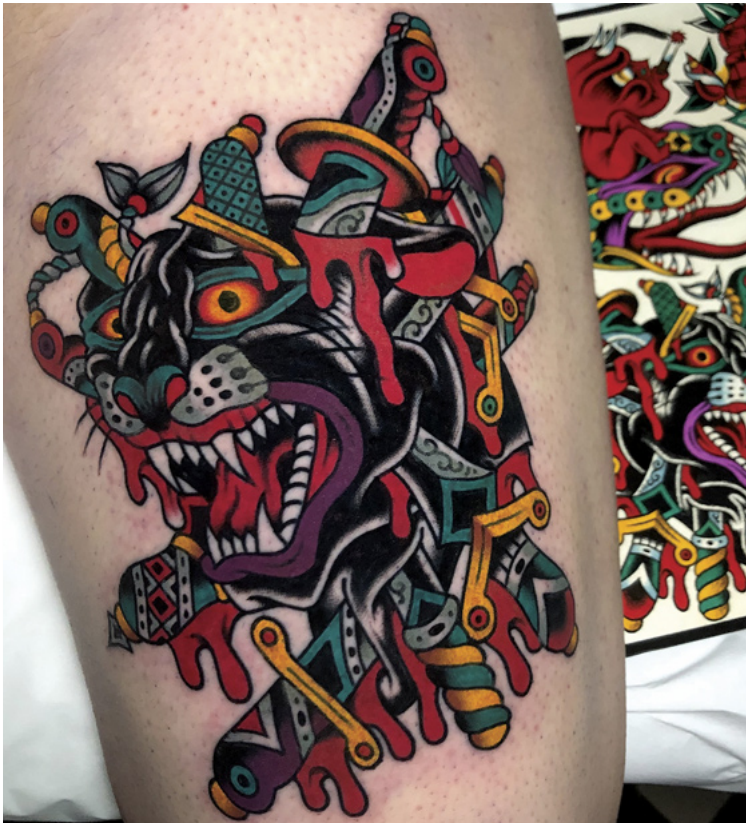
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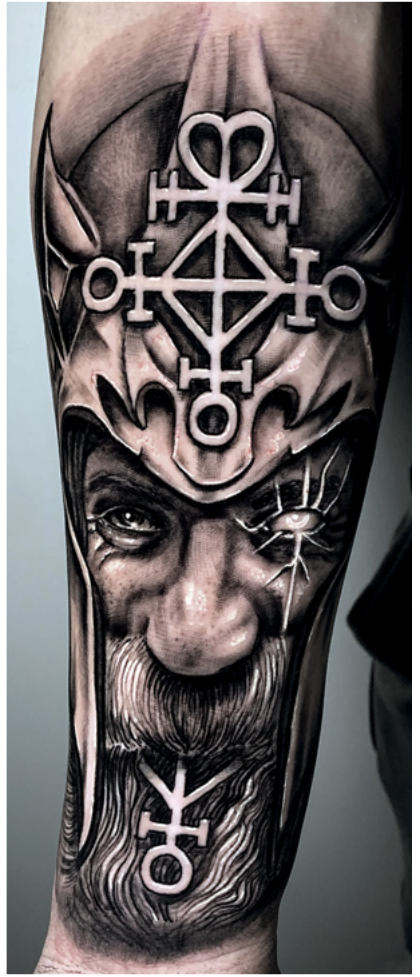




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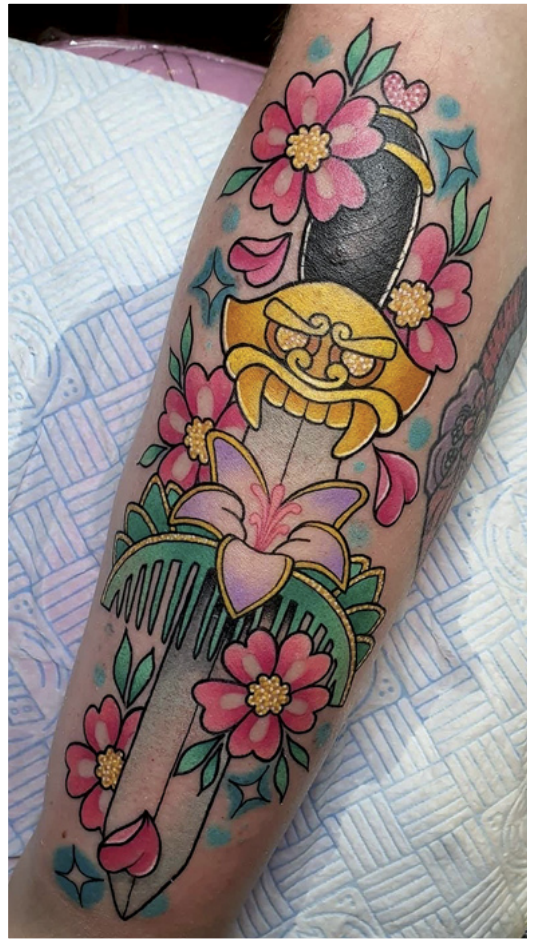




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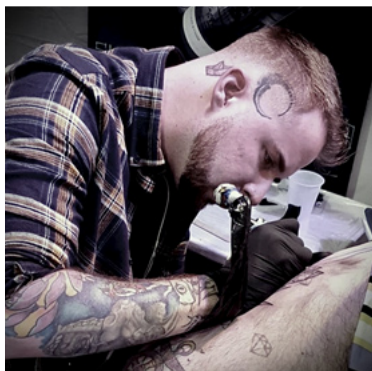
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27 Grainger Street, Newcastle Upon
Tyne, NE1 5JE
pinsandneedlesnewcastle@gmail.com
IG: @pins_and_needlestattoo
FB: /pins.NE1

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

No Love Lost Collective

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

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

Mandala Tattoo

11 Cross Street, Blaby, LE8 4FD
0116 277 8222
mandalatattooostudio@hotmail.com
IG: @mandalatattooostudio
FB: /mandalatattooandbodypiercing

Nevermore Tattoo Parlour

Bishop Crewe House, North Street,
Daventry, 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@rebelwithacausetatt
oo.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

Sakura Tattoo

31 Yeoman Street, Leicester, LE1
1UT
Clara_lala_tattoo@hotmail.com
IG: @sakura_leicester
@klare_koa_tattoo
FB: /Sakuratattooileicester

Skinz Tattoo Company

0113 204 7848
318-322 Stanningley Road, Leeds,
LS13 3EG.
www.leadstattooostudio.com

info@leadstattooostudio.com
IG: @skinztattooostudio
FB: /SkinzTattooStudio

EAST OF ENGLAND

All Or Nothing Tattoo and Piercing

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.ukw
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@factotumbodymods.com
factotumbodymods.com
IG: @factotumbodymodification
FB: /factotumbodymodification

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
tlnorwich@gmail.com
www.tlnorwich.co.uk

Wolf & Arrows Tattoos

57 St Johns Street, Bury St Edmunds,

IP33 1SJ
01284 701643
IG: @wolfandarrows
FB: /wolfandarrowstattoo

LONDON

BlueFire Tattoo

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

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@thefamilybusinessstudio.com
www.thefamilybusinessstudio.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@lowridertattoolondon.com
IG: @lowridertattoolondon

Low Tide

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

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

Nikki Andrews Farino
Femme Fatale, London, E8 4TS
07773 363 305
nikkilolly@gmail.com
IG: @nikkilollytattoo
FB: /NikkiAndrewsFarino

Old Habits Tattoo
364 Kingsland Road, London, E8 4DA
Tel no: 0203 609 0931
oldhabitsattoo@gmail.com
www.oldhabitsattoo.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.threekingslondon.com
IG: @threekingslondon
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, NI2 0BP
0208 445 0022
info@exoticatattoo.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

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

Body Art Southborough
158 London Road, Southborough, TN4 0PJ
01892 524 704
gavdunbartattoos@hotmail.co.uk
IG: @gavdunbartattoos

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

Indelible Ink

351 Forton Road, Gosport,
PO12 3HF
02392 522 587
www.indelibleinkstudio
IG: @indelible_ink_studio
FB: /indelibleinkgosport

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: /lordsinktattooostudioukbexhillonsea

MI Tattoo Studio & Laser Clinic

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

Red Tower Tattoos

16 Market Street, Lewes, BN7 2NB
01273 011 667
contact@redtowertattoos.com

www.redtowertattoos.com
IG: @redtowertattootattoos
FB: /redtowertattoos

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
FB: /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

Living Art Plymouth

87 Cornwall Street, Plymouth,
PL1 1NX
01752 253 418
livingartuk@hotmail.com
IG: @living_art_plymouth
FB: /livingartplymouth

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@zeppostatattoo.co.uk
FB: /zeppostatattoo.co.uk

WALES

Broadside Tattoo

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

Dexterity Ink

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

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

Maddie Roberts

Swansea, South Wales
tattoosbymaddieroberts@gmail.com
IG: @maddierobertstattoo
FB: /maddierobertstattoo

Physical Graffiti

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

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

Seven Foxes Tattoo

3 Kingsfield Road, Birmingham,
B14 7JN
0121 610 0348
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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

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01691 570 427
viciouspinktattoo@gmail.com
www.viciouspink.co.uk
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Ace Kustom Tattoo

78 Church Road
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acekustomtattoos@gmail.com

All Style Tattoos

28 Crellin Street, Barrow in Furness,
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allstyletattoos@gmail.com
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Black Freighter Tattoo Co.
56-60 Lower Bridge Street, Chester,
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theblackfreightertattoo@gmail.com
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Bridge Street Tattoo
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bridgestreettattoo@gmail.com
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The Butchers Block Tattoo Parlour
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Dabs Tattoo
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Heart of Ink Tattoo
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Indelible Ink
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Infernal Rites Tatoo
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Inkden Tattoo & Piercing Studio
50 B Coronation Street, Blackpool
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Inked Up Chester
21 Eastgate Row North, Chester,
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Market Quarter Tattoo
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Sacred Art Tattoo
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