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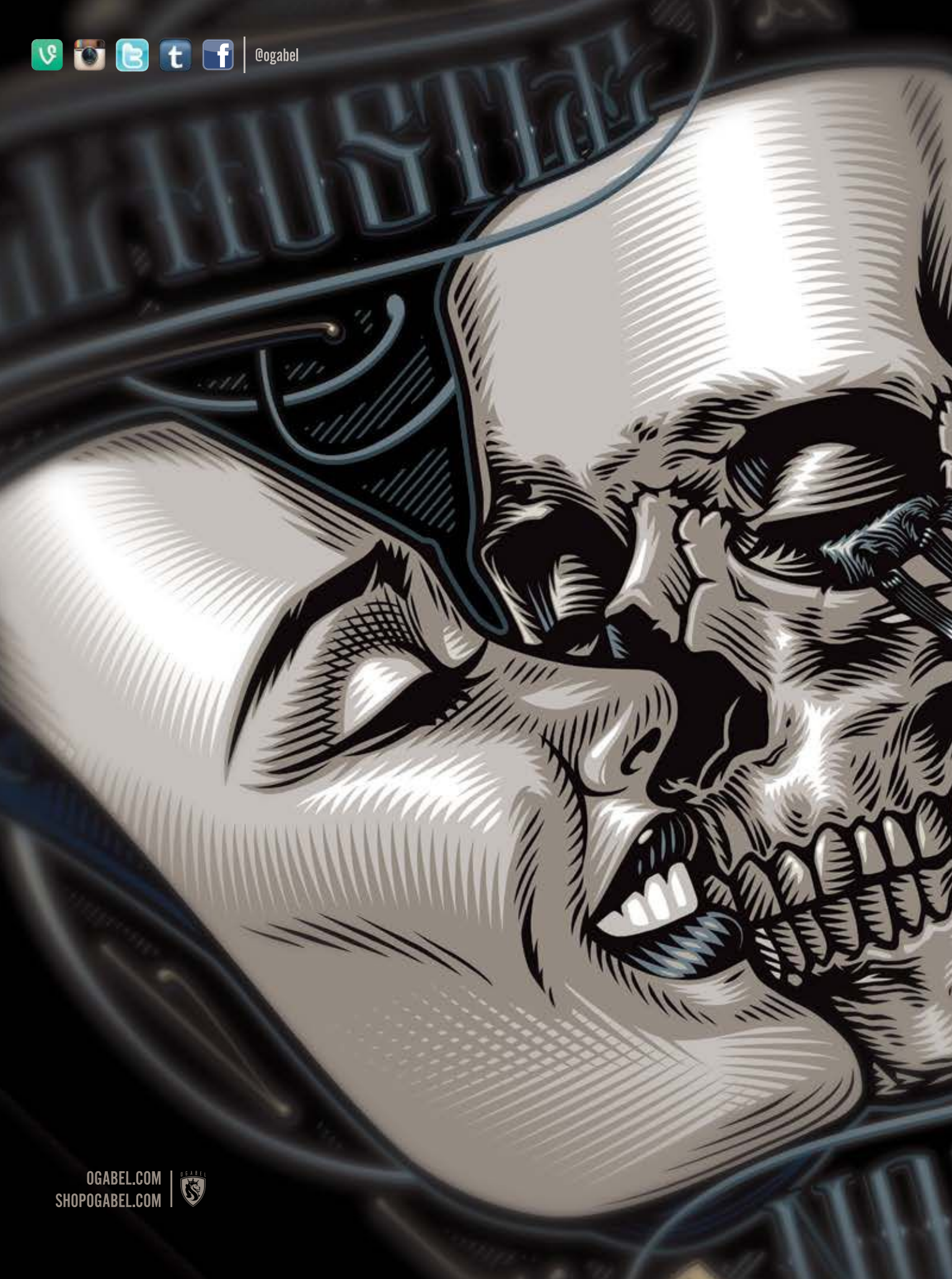
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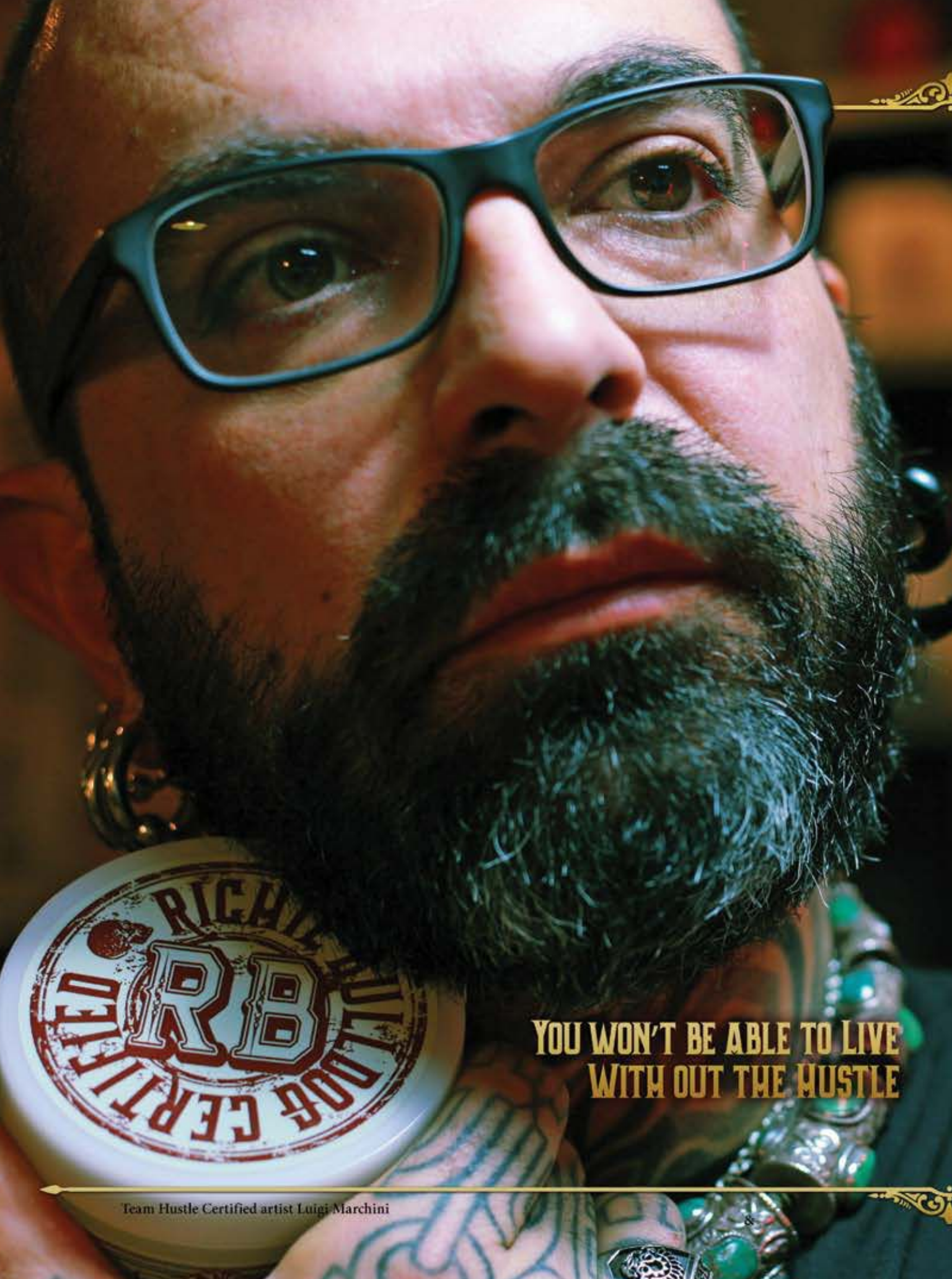


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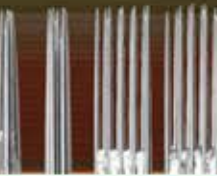
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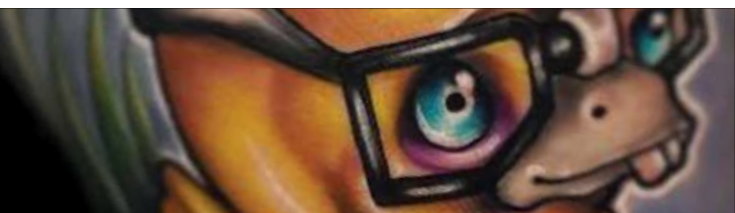
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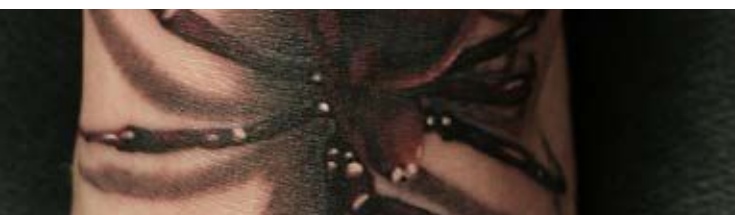
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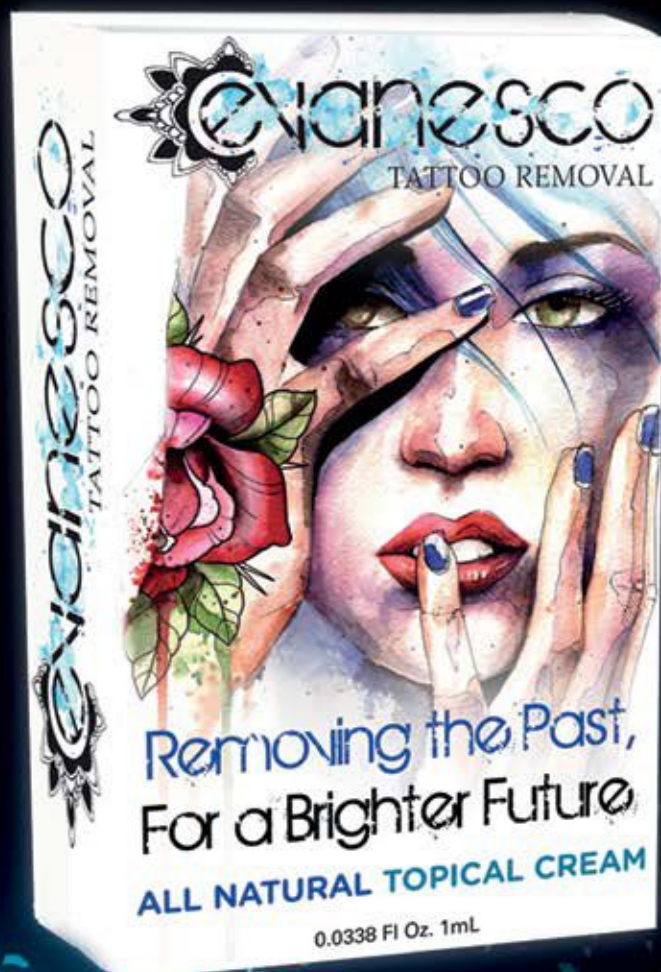
Before >



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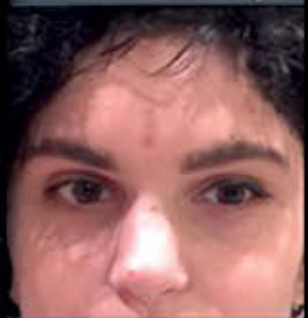
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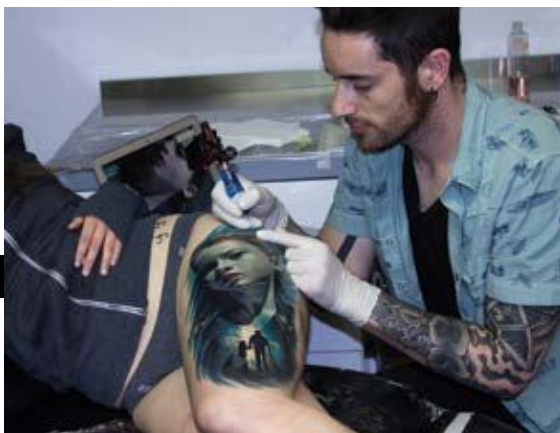
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CHARLES HUURMAN

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What year did you start tattooing? I began trying to do tattoos in 2009. But I would say it wasn't until 2011 that I was able to do tattoos for a living.

What was your first shop experience like? I would consider my third shop the first real shop, Tattoo Morvedre Museum. It's in Valencia, Spain and it's been open for around 30 years. I was desperate to learn. I had a list of all the shops I considered good in my city and I would go every two to three months to all of them looking for any opportunity to get in and learn properly. In that shop the manager was tired of me coming and asking, so they offered me a job as a receptionist. I was so happy to get into a good studio, even if I wasn't a tattoo artist. I would finally have the opportunity to be with artists that I could learn from and answer my questions. But I wasn't a receptionist there even for a second. On my first day two tattoo artists didn't turn up. So they looked at me and gave me the chance. By the end of the week they decided to keep me as a replacement for the two artists. At that time I was really slow and the agenda was super full. So every day I would tattoo past midnight for six, sometimes seven, days a week to keep up.

What led you to open Utopian Tattoo Tribe? My girlfriend, Caro Blackswan, and I were tattooing in Cork in Ireland and we realized that there were more travelling clients contacting us by email or Facebook than locals. We realized we could create our small

Utopia. So we went into a nice small town surrounded by nature in the middle of Ireland: Kilkenny. The funny thing is that we feel a bit isolated sometimes, so we are about to open a second Utopian Tattoo Tribe in the center of Dublin.

What is the tattoo scene like in Ireland? I really like it. It's a small country, so after a few conventions you feel like you are friends with everyone. Also, Irish clients are the best. They really trust the artist. I say "really" because a lot of people say they trust you and then try to tell you how to do your job. In Ireland most clients really motivate me and trust me.

What led you to work primarily in color realism? I like realism, and as real life is in color I think that something looks more real if it is in color. I also feel that there is energy in color. I want an energetic feeling in my pieces, which is what I look for. I find this is better obtained with color.

Do you ever find yourself working in black and grey? Yes, and I really enjoy it, too. I don't publish much of my black and grey stuff but I do it a lot and I like it. Sometimes, depending on the skin tone or part of the body, I'm the one that recommends black and grey.

You do a bunch of portraits. Do you take your own photo references? If I can I prefer to take the photo myself. But sadly, for many reasons, this is not possible most of the time. But I'll admit getting the client to understand

what photos are good for portraits and what photos are not is not easy. Many times they bring photos I could tattoo but are not really good quality, but I push them to look for even better photos. It's not about doing the portrait; it's about doing the best possible portrait. Some people think a good portrait is all about the tattooist, but it actually starts with a good photo reference.

How do you approach doing a portrait versus doing a fantasy-inspired piece?

For me they are the same. In all my portraits I try adding an abstract background that gives an energetic feeling. But when it comes to the face, it's always a portrait for me. It's all about copying the reference and choosing what personality features or facial shapes I want to enhance or discard.

What inspires you as an artist?

Other artists mainly. I see painters, photographers, digital artists, and tattoo artists and I feel like "Wow! Wouldn't it be amazing to do that on skin?"

What tattoo artists do you admire most?

Nikko Hurtado was an inspiration for me from the start. I especially learned a lot from his videos. Buena Vista Tattoo Club got my brain thinking that anything was possible in tattooing. And many artists like Csaba Müllner and the great Dmitriy Samohin have inspired me a lot in what I want to do myself when it comes to combining the real with the abstract. ■











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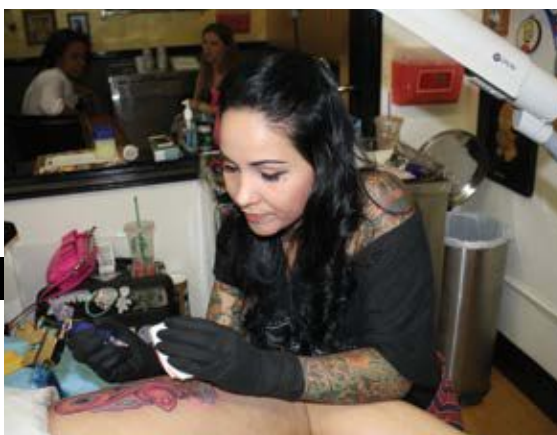
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What year did you start tattooing?

Pretty sure it was 2006? My memory has failed me.

How did you get into tattooing? I got hired as a receptionist at the tattoo shop I would get work from. When it wasn't busy I would draw for fun. The owner of the shop came to me one day and asked me if I wanted to learn to paint so I had something to do in my downtime. I thought it would be fun since I always saw him painting, but I never thought of doing it myself, and he let me use his paints and brushes. I picked it up fairly quickly and immediately became consumed in the art. First he had me redoing old Sailor Jerry and Mike Malone designs and even old acetates he had collected over the years. The owner was so impressed with how fast and good I got that he decided I should learn to tattoo. Before I could even touch a tattoo machine, he made me paint 50 sheets of flash. He let me hang them in the lobby and I had done some of my own cute/girly designs that the ladies loved and in turn made the shop lots of money.

Do you have any special training?

I spent 13 years in the Brazilian rain forest learning the electrifying, yet deadly art of Capoeira. I can paralyze an assailant in less than 15 seconds. Besides that, I have no other "special" training. Artistically speaking, I was trained to be a tattooer, so I have a

tattooer's training. I can paint, tattoo, and kick ass!

You seem to tattoo mostly cartoon characters, has this been a conscious decision? Cartoons have been a huge influence in my career. I love drawing and tattooing cartoons, they are always a lot of fun. Cartoons (and tattooing cartoon characters) have been around almost as long as modern electric tattooing in Western culture. Think of how many Taz, Tweety, Mickey, and Bugs Bunny tattoos are out there in the world. I'm just excited to continue that tradition with the newer cartoons that are at the forefront of pop culture today.

You've done your fair share of pizza tattoos, tell us about that. Subconsciously I dream of pizza and cartoons, so it probably manifested. I'm allergic to everything, and I can't even eat pizza because of cheese. Well I can, but cheese-less pizza is not the same! Anyway, pizza seems to be a hot topic in the world. People really love pizza. I would say pizza tattoo sales have risen 100% in the last two years, nobody knows why. Pizza is the new black. Pizza is the new owl tattoo. But who am I to judge? The kids love pizza, so bring on the pizza tattoos, I love them!

What was the first character you tattooed? My friend John in Chicago, man, he's a fucking character haha!

But seriously, Rainbow Brite was the first character I tattooed. I grew up watching that cartoon so I was pretty excited about it.

How many times have you tattooed Tina Belcher?

Wow, I have no idea. At least a dozen times, maybe more. I like Tina. She really speaks to my sensibilities as a woman. She loves butts, and I love butts too! Thank you Tina, for being my hero!

Conventions vs. guest spots, which do you prefer and why?

I prefer guest spots. Conventions are cool to do sometimes, but they can be very stressful and hard on your body. Conventions are good for meeting people and maybe exposing yourself to artists you haven't met before. However, most of the time I'm so busy tattooing that I hardly get the chance to walk around and say hi to people. Working in a shop environment is just more relaxed, and I try to do guest spots where I know people who work at the shop as well. It's always fun to work with your friends; it makes it seem less like work.

What other media do you work in?

I paint, watercolor mostly. Sometimes I like to think of something strange and funny to paint, never thinking anyone would actually get it tattooed on them, but then I'm always proven wrong! I also like to make jewelry and fun little things for my Etsy page. ■









Affliction



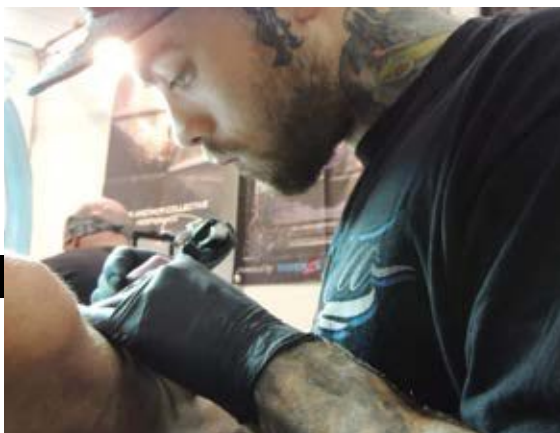
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How did you get into tattooing? I'm self-taught and I started tattooing in 2011. I had a friend, who was tattooing at the time, see one of my paintings I was doing for art school and suggest I try tattooing. So I did. I played around at home for a year or so tattooing my friends and pretty much anyone who would let me tattoo them. I got my first professional job in a street shop in Auckland City named Streetwise.

Your work is very well rounded. You do great color, black and grey, and realism. Is there a preferred work you like to do? I like to do color because I find it more challenging, but I like to do everything. I feel like if I only did color or only did black and grey that I'd get bored, so I like to mix it up and try to get better at both.

What type of tattoos were you doing back when you started? When I started I did anything and everything, but whatever it was I tried to make it perfect. But when I started learning more, I got really interested in illustrative and Oriental tattoos, although I knew I always wanted to do realism. It was just hard back then to try and get people to do what I wanted. I still really enjoy doing Oriental and illustrative tattoos but the realism is just more popular at the moment.

So if you have the freedom to do a certain tattoo, what would it be? That's a

tough one. Anything NBA themed, as I am a basketball nut. [Laughs] I like to tattoo things like comic characters, animals, movie portraits, real pop culture based imagery. As for placement and size, every tattooer would say pretty much the same good spots: forearm, inner bicep, side of lower leg, thighs, etc. But, if the customer's up for it, I like to do huge oversized stuff, full fronts and backs and shit. I feel they have somewhat of a wow factor.

Do you feel you've gotten where you wanted in your tattoo work? No way! There's always more to learn and apply in your work, and, because I've only been tattooing for four years, I feel that I'm only at the tip of the iceberg when it comes to getting where I want to be.

Where do you usually find inspiration? Pop culture is probably my biggest influence. I enjoy tattooing and painting, as do most artists. When I started tattooing the artists that inspired me were Dean Sacred, Erin Chance, Nikko Hurtado, Carlos Torres, Matt Jordan, and Mick Squires just to name a few. Now it's pretty much the same people as well as everyone else killing it like Benjamin Laukis, Dmitriy Samohin, Carlos Rojas, Seunghyun Jo and the list goes on and on! I get a lot of inspiration just from watching what everyone else is producing and just wanting to push myself to get better.

Are there any conventions that you regularly attend or countries you usually guest spot in? I do quite a few guest spots and conventions in Australia at the moment, but I have only just started travelling. I recently did a Europe trip and attended the Zwickau convention in Germany, guest spotted with the guys from Fallout Tattoo in Munzenberg and with the wizards, Tommy Lee Wendtner and Mark Weatherhead at Monsters Under Your Bed in Koln. I also attended the Milano convention in Italy, but I intend on doing a lot of travelling in the years to come, so I'm sure I'll develop some regulars.

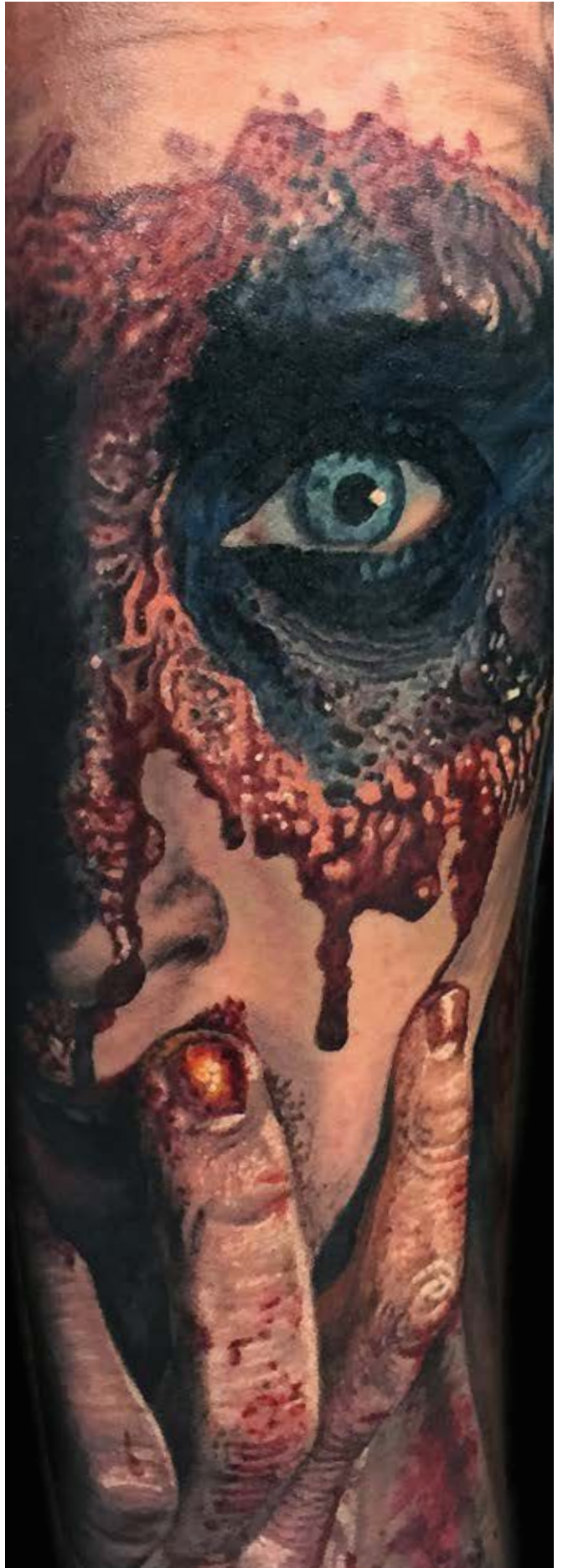
Do you practice any other art medium? Yeah, I love to paint. I've just gotten into oils, but acrylics and pencil is what I use a lot of at the moment.

Are there any projects that you are involved with these days? No projects as such, just lots of tattooing and painting. I am going to be travelling more, as I said, and want to start doing a lot more conventions and guest spots, so you'll see me around a bit more. As for shout outs, a massive one goes out to Matt Jordan, if it weren't for his guidance I wouldn't be where I am today, and to the other bros back at Ship Shape, Hokowhitu Sciascia and Coen Mitchell! They're killing it! 🍀









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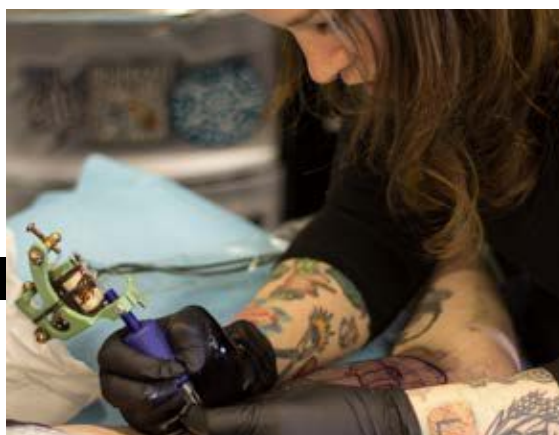
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How did you get into tattooing? I got my first tattoo when I was 17 and it pretty much instantly changed the way I thought about drawing. I spent just about all of my time drawing. I was certain that I wanted to do something art related but didn't know what until I went to college and studied illustration. Needless to say I didn't do anything with my education for several years besides latte art. I moved around a lot and ended up in New York where I finally got the courage to ask for a job at a tattoo shop.

Did you have an apprenticeship? I apprenticed at Addicted To Ink in White Plains, New York. I couldn't have asked for a better crew to introduce me to tattooing. They were all so helpful and knowledgeable.

You are currently working at NiteOwl Tattoo in Northampton, Massachusetts. What made you choose this shop/ location? I was offered the job by one of my tattoo heroes, Timmy B, and I couldn't refuse. It was a combination of nervousness and excitement to move here. I still can't believe I'm fortunate enough to be part of such an incredible team. I never get tired of being around them and learning from them.

Do you attend conventions? I just started attending conventions and I really enjoy them! It's an awesome chance to meet other artists from all over and be awkward in front of them. It's nice getting to show your peers what you're capable of and watch

other artists work.

Which do you attend regularly? I mostly do conventions on the east coast and I do guest spots all over the place. I love traveling and getting to see different places and learning from others.

What drew you to tattoo in the New School style? There is no specific tattoo that I saw or someone's drawings that made me want to tattoo this way, but I don't have to force myself to draw this way. Everything is how it comes out of me. I feel like I just naturally fell into this style. I'm very lucky to have clients who trust me and actually want their tattoos to look like I drew them.

Do you prefer to start your custom work as a sketch, freehand, or both?

I start all my custom work as a sketch and expand from there. It gives me the chance to fully plan a design and make whatever changes are necessary to fit the subject and client. But I admire those who can just freehand a great design on someone from scratch; it's so impressive!

What is your favorite subject to tattoo?

I don't really have a favorite subject matter to tattoo; I really enjoy tattoos that force me to think out of my comfort zone on approach and expand my skills to tackle the challenge. Those are the tattoos that make me realize that the more I learn in tattooing, the less I know. It's like you just end up having more questions when you get answers. That's one of the things I

love about this job.

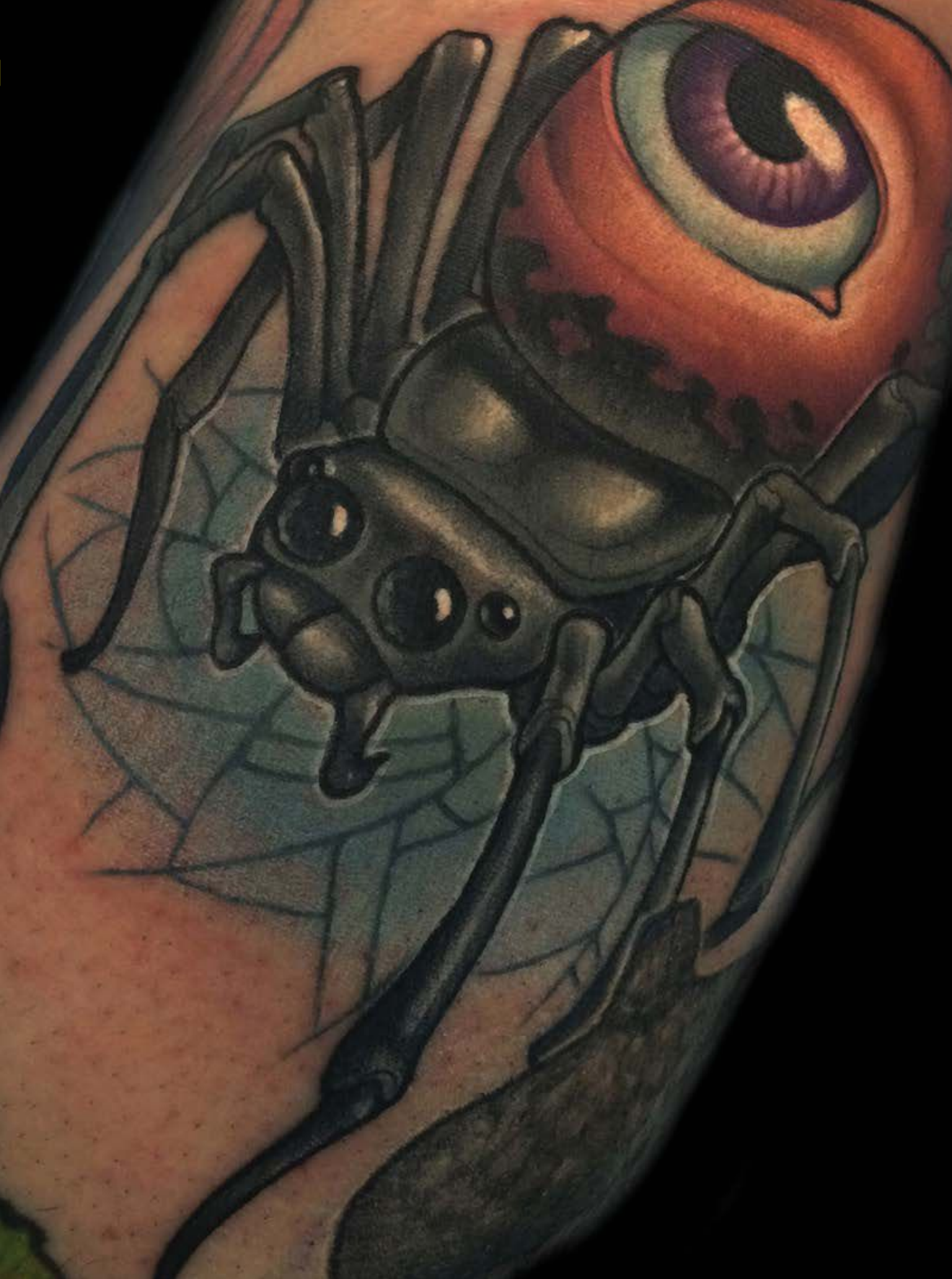
What inspires you as an artist?

I had always been into drawing since I can remember. I watched my father work on drawings in his spare time and both of my older brothers blew my mind with what they would come up with. I just want to make pretty things that people love. I can't imagine doing anything else. I don't have a motive or reason or a thing that I am drawing for, I just want to do it.

What sets you apart from other artists? I don't think there's anything that sets me apart from other artists. I'm just a tattooer. I'm no better than anyone else. I feel incredibly lucky to have such a demanding and creative job. All I want to do is make work that I am proud of that my clients love.

Do you work in other media outside of tattooing? I do a lot of pencil drawings and I'm absolutely obsessed with using colored pencils on toned paper. I can't get enough of it!

Are there any artists you'd like to work with on a collaboration piece? There are so many it's next to impossible to say them all! It's a mixture of being terrified beyond the capacity for rational thought and super excited to collaborate. I totally want to do a collaboration piece with Sam Fiorino. I know it's silly because we work together, but I think we could just make the coolest tattoos! 🎨









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CARLOS ROJAS

Black Anchor Collective
13567 Main St. Hesperia, CA 92345
www.blackanchorcollective.com
@crojasart

Carlos Rojas first caught our attention with a mind-blowing photo realistic *Breaking Bad* sleeve, and he has yet to let us down since. The California based tattooer is one of the many talented artists working out of Nikko Hurtado's shop Black Anchor Collective. This is what Hurtado had to say about his comrade, "Carlos is a huge part of Black Anchor Collective. I've seen him work very hard to achieve his goals and work towards his dreams in art and tattooing. His work inspires me daily and I am fortunate to have him to work along side with and even more fortunate to call him a friend. I cannot wait to see what the future brings for him as I see him progress and grow. I am lucky to be surrounded by talented hard working individuals like Carlos Rojas. People ask me all the time who are my favorite tattooers and maybe I'm biased but I have to say Rojas is one of my favorites."

How did you get into tattooing? It was actually my older brother who took me into a shop and sparked my interest in tattoos/tattooing. We would get tattooed here and there, all while hiding them from our mom. I would buy tattoo magazines, keep a sketchbook with me and would draw some of the tattoos and flash that were in there. I thought to myself if I can draw these, and even come up with my own ideas I can maybe tattoo them as well. I went into the shop I would frequent and asked my artist to teach me. He would always say no, this went on for two years. Then one day he must have caved because he said I won't teach you anything but you can come into the shop and watch and you have to clean up. Hence the beginning of my informal apprenticeship. If it wasn't for Big Gus tattooing me and taking me on who knows where I'd be.

How has your work evolved since you started tattooing? Starting out I did a bunch of flash, names, little souvenir tattoos etc. I found black and grey work more appealing and easier to do. I found color tattoos more time consuming and more difficult to blend and make smooth so I gravitated towards black and grey realism. I remember early on seeing Bob Tyrrell's work in a few magazines. I was blown away by his portrait realism work. Ever

since then I told myself I wouldn't just be an amateur artist, I wanted to reach that level. After about 2-3 years of tattooing I got the courage to attempt portraits. It was definitely a different style of tattooing than I was used to but I found the challenge fun and I would push myself to do it more. I would do a bunch of free tattoos just for the portrait practice, eventually I got the hang of it. I also think it really evolved when I met two artists who I am now friends with. Carlos Torres, who I was lucky enough to have worked with at two different shops. With him I learned to push contrast and be more creative. He's an amazing artist, with a unique style. The second was Nikko Hurtado. I remember seeing him work at a convention and my mind was blown, how the fuck did this guy do these portraits in color? Being friends with him over the years and working along side him at conventions I eventually gained confidence in doing color realism, which kind of set the path to where my work lies now.

How did you come to work at Black Anchor Collective? Nikko and I would share booths at conventions here and there. All while I bounced from shop to shop, not really finding a place to work at that I could learn at and call home. I think about 6 years ago he mentioned he was going to open a shop in the high desert and that I should come work with him. I would get excited and it would always fall through. Then he finally did it. He mentioned he needed help but I was working in Orange County at the time and wanted the opportunity but couldn't commit to it because I didn't really want to move my family up there so I told him I would come up on the weekends and help him out. The weekends turned into weekdays and I found myself couch surfing at his house. I was busy. I was getting to do a lot more pieces with artistic freedom. He was like, dude you should just move up here and be full time. I agreed and it's been home ever since. I think I'm there more than I'm at home.

You work in both color and black and grey, which do you prefer and why? It really just depends on what's best for the situation. Example: if the client's skin is tanned or darker obviously it would make more sense

to go with a black and grey piece opposed to color. It would hold better over time with minimal room for change. Opposed to color where it might look fine for the first few weeks but then adapt to the skin tone and mute down really fast. I love both to be honest. I strive to get my black and grey smooth with nice contrast and I strive to get my color smooth in values and contrast as well. Color for sure is more challenging and a little more stressful. I always feel like once the stencil is on its a race against time to get the ink in there before the stencil wipes off, but now since Nikko came out with that new stencil anchor it definitely puts me at ease a bit.

What is your artistic process on a tattoo?

If it's a portrait off of the internet or from a movie I try to find the best possible reference to work from. At the same time I like to use references that haven't been tattooed before so I'll try to screen capture it. I think that's one thing that sets my work apart. I like nice contrast or a strong light source. I find those hold and look best. Once an image is selected I'll find out where we are putting the tattoo. I like to utilize the space and make sure the placement and direction are perfect. If it's a custom piece I like to have a direction or theme for the piece or project and brainstorm. I'll search for as many references I can get, or if I'm lucky enough I'll use my own photography for reference. I love to use photoshop. It makes the type of work I do so much easier. I remember back in the day having to print out the image cut it, tape it to the arm, resize it a few times or trace over on top over other images—shit took forever! Imagine spending hours drawing something custom only to finally show the client and them being like "that's not really what I want." Photoshop for sure cuts the time in half.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?

Anything that gives me artistic freedom especially big ongoing projects, or any cool movie, or show portraits are always fun for me. I'm currently having a lot of fun with these *Wizard of Oz*, *Walking Dead*, *Breaking Bad*, and my custom black and grey dark imagery/gothic architecture sleeves I'm doing. 🍷

photo by Austin Hargrve







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What year did you start tattooing?

2010

How did you get into tattooing? Art class was probably the only class I went to in high school. It was the only thing that really kept my interest. I was getting tattooed pretty regularly coming out of high school, and having never thought I could make a living selling art, I figured I would just start a career in the trades. I was an HVAC tech for four years, and then did plumbing for another four. After getting laid off I decided to get another tattoo with my last paycheck. I noticed that my regular tattooer, Oscar Bustos, didn't have his apprentice around anymore. I told him I had just recently been laid off and asked if I could apprentice. The rest is history.

What was your first shop experience like? It was rough at times, but all-in-all it was a great learning experience for me. I was basically re-taught how to draw. I was out of practice for almost 10 years. I tried to soak up as much information as possible, and eventually started to develop a style. It was mainly a black and grey shop, and it was hard to sell new school to the clientele there. Eventually I had to move onto another shop to help further my style and career.

How do you describe your style? New School! I absolutely love the illustrative side of it. The beginning of my career I learned the basic rules of how to make a good image, now at this point in my career it's about

learning how to break them and redefine the rules for my personal artistic direction. For me it's about pure imagination. I love the big bold lines and the bright colors that come along with it. Being able to see a tattoo from far away and having those bold colors catch your eye is what I work for in every piece I do. I want people to say "WOW!" from 30 feet away from my tattoos.

What inspires you as an artist? My peers are a big inspiration to me. Seeing all the amazing tattoos that these guys/gals in the game are doing really keeps me on my toes, that, and cartoons! I watch a lot of cartoons, and I pull inspiration from almost everything I watch. Half the time I'm not watching the plot, but how backgrounds are drawn, or the way animals are represented in them.

What sets you apart from other artists? I think what sets me apart from other artists is the specific style of drawing I do. I've spent my whole career trying to develop a style. I'm not quite where I want to be yet, but I feel like I'm getting there. I've always wanted people to look at my tattoos and say; "You got that from Josh Herman, didn't you?"

What other media do you work in? I do a lot of colored pencil drawings to try and broaden my color palette. I know I need to start using other mediums, painting is something I'd like to learn, and I've been dabbling in it here and there to help my color theory. But I

feel like there's just so much to learn in tattooing. It's my main source of income, so I like to give it my full attention.

What tattoo artists do you admire most? Jime Litwalk and Tony Ciavarraro have been a huge influence to me ever since I started. I used to draw their flash day after day until my hands bled. Others include Kelly Doty, Timmy B, Tanane Whitfield, Robert Kane, Frank Lanatra, and Sam Fiorino just to name a few. A lot of these guys broke the boundaries of what New School use to be, I really admire them for that and they paved the way for guys like me.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? Anything New School, the more exaggerated the subject matter is, the better. I love doing goofy tattoos, the ones that make people chuckle. I especially love the pieces that my clients let me run with. I try my best to sneak in puns here and there in my tattoos. If I'm giggling while I'm drawing it, I know it's going to be a fun tattoo. From time to time I'll get to do some realism as well, and I get especially excited to do those. Stepping out of my comfort zone really pushes me. I wish I got more requests for color realism.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? A Shrimp Pimp collecting his money from a sexy whale prostitute would be Gucci. 🍷





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TIM MCEVOY

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What was your first shop experience like? I will always be grateful to my first shop, Crossroads Tattoos, for giving me my shot. It was a very tough apprenticeship, but it was so helpful to my career. Sixty hours a week with no pay was hard. Being looked down upon all the time was hard. But I got a lot of experience quickly. By the time I was done I had made thousands of needles, learned how to be helpful up front, cleaned everything just right, and acquired dozens of other skills that would serve me to this day. We were immature and drank and fucked around a lot, but I was excited to be tattooing. Aric Taylor was my main source of learning and he had moved on to Art Junkies. I stayed there for six years and tried to pay my dues to the owner who had given me my chance. And then Art Junkies came calling.

How did your seven years at Art Junkies help you grow as an artist?

It's difficult to put into words what that shop did for me. As an artist and really just a human being. Knowledge was free-flowing in that shop from the first time I walked through the door. Not only did they not withhold any information or secrets, they wanted it shared. Mike and Mario were innovators. It immediately felt like home. There were new ideas, techniques, a fresh outlook and a fire under my ass all at the same time. In the span of just one year I was completely transformed, focused, well-trained and

serious about art like never before. The talent that came through that shop was a dream. All like-minded individuals, all different styles, no judgment, just learning. My daughter aside, Mike DeMasi is the single most positive influence of my entire life.

What was it like transitioning to Guru Tattoo & Art Collective?

My transition to Guru Tattoo and a new city was so hard to get through at first. I was so stressed out. I'd take a second and realize I was chatting up art stuff or watching a guy like Nate tattoo—someone that I looked up to from a distance for more than a decade—and just really take in all these moments that seemed surreal and it felt great. My response from new customers was unreal, beyond all expectations and hopes. I began to feel a connection quickly. It didn't take long to recognize that Aaron had grand ambitions and ideas for tattooing and life, so much like my former mentor. I know these guys are going to keep me on my toes, I simply can't express how much I expect to learn and grow from this new arrangement, and how excited I am to see it unfold. Guru is amazing.

You're an extremely versatile artist, do you feel you've gotten where you wanted in your tattoo work?

Or is there more you'd like to learn and apply in your work? No, I'm nowhere near where I hope to be at some point with my tattooing. I've definitely found a direction I'd

like to head towards, but I'm more and more aware that the balance of self-critique of the great artists I've always looked up to lies hopelessly somewhere in the midst of never being satisfied. It kind of sucks. You want the doubt to go away but you NEVER want it to go away. Part of my decision to move on to Guru was to be around these masters of illustration, specifically, and try and inject more of that into my own style.

What is your favorite style to work in and why?

What continues to strike me as the most powerful tattooing forum is Oriental work. It's complicated and difficult. Even injecting a Japanese style background into another style tattoo seems to instantly give it more depth, more emotion. I have to say that not much brings me more enjoyment in this world than sitting down to a nice half real/half not black and grey tattoo. I don't know why, but it brings me peace, makes me happy.

What inspires you as an artist?

What doesn't? The older I get the more I seem to appreciate. Really good painters inspire me, get me thinking. It's inspiring to me to see someone new come up as an artist, it's not easy. It was so great seeing Brent grow as an apprentice to up in the clouds somewhere where he is now. I follow Matt Hurtado's stuff real closely, that stuff, these young guys putting new ideas out there—that's the best. I love it. 🙌









LEVI BARNETT

Melbourne, Australia
@xlevibarnett_tattoo



What year did you start tattooing? '10.

How did you get into tattooing? I was repeatedly offered an apprenticeship over the course of 12 months at the local tattoo shop in my hometown of Kilmore, K-Town, then curiosity got the best of me and I accepted the offer.

What was your first shop experience like? It was all positive, although my mentor was firm, he was never unfair. The purpose of my apprenticeship was to learn how to tattoo, not how to clean toilets and get everyone coffee, and that is exactly what he did. I couldn't thank him enough.

Do you have any special training?
No.

What conventions have you done recently or are planning to do this year? Recently I have attended multiple conventions across North America including NIX in Toronto, Montreal and Calgary.

How do you describe your style? I like to think of my work as being bold and eye catching, yet detailed and intricate where needed and unexpected.

What inspires you as an artist?

Recently I have found a lot of inspiration from local Melbourne street artists such as Rone, with his simplicity and scale, and Smug with his color blends and attention to light source.

What other media do you work in? It's a little hard to juggle my workload and still find time for non-work related art at the moment, but there is nothing better than sitting down with a good old-fashioned pencil and paper.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I am currently in the process of working on some larger scale projects, but you will have to wait and see what I am up to!

What tattoo artists do you admire most? Jun Cha for his simple, yet perfect, execution and Randy Engelhard for his impeccable palette and flawless blends.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I am really enjoying doing color work at the moment. I feel I can be a lot more creative with color.

Before someone gets a tattoo what

advice do you give them? I always suggest to get a good night's sleep, have a big breakfast, and lots of water!

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? To be honest any Star Wars or 'geeky' related tattoos are welcomed with open arms.

You've done a lot of portrait work, which is your favorite? There are so many that come to mind, but if I had to pick one, it would have to be a portrait of Audrey Hepburn that I did on my girlfriend Montana.

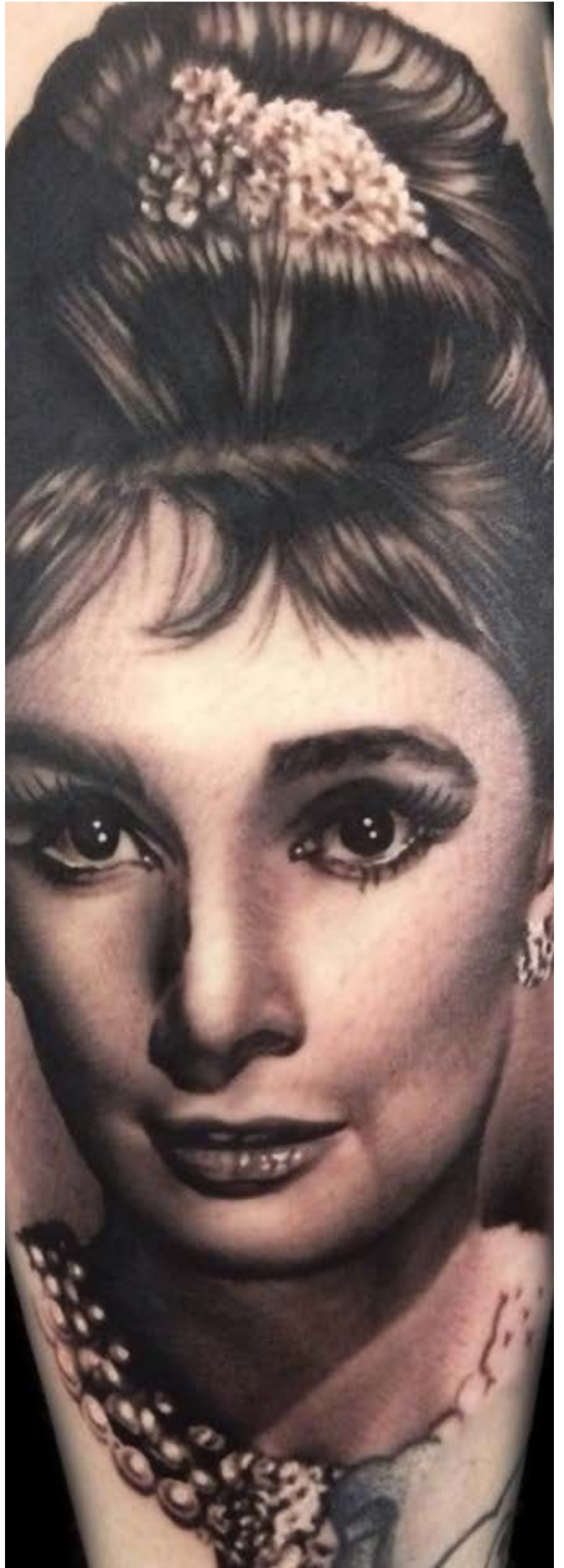
What's the tattoo scene in Australia like? It is massive! There are so many amazing tattoo artists in one country, in all styles. It is definitely a great place to be at this time in the industry.

Who would you love to get tattooed by? Paul Acker or Randy Engelhard.

What's the craziest thing a client has asked for? Probably the time I got asked to tattoo a bunch of retirees' chests with DNR (Do Not Resuscitate). 🚫









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How did you get into tattooing?

It was a moment of clarity for me; my parents took me to get my first tattoo for my fifteenth birthday. After I had picked out the design I wanted (that's right, it was flash) I sat down in the chair and it was like a lightning strike to the brain for me. Right then and there I knew what I was supposed to do with my life.

What do you think the major benefits are as a tattoo artist of being versatile in so many styles?

There are a lot of benefits to being versed in different styles. One main benefit is being able to blend two different styles to give your work a very unique type of contrast; another is having the ability to call upon many different techniques that will find their way into your own particular brand and style of tattooing. I personally strive to become a master of this craft and with it I believe an understanding of many styles will only help better my abilities and fulfill my clients' requests.

Do you prefer to freehand or use stencils for tattooing?

Typically I try to use a stencil whenever I can, but I'm just as comfortable with a freehand approach. Neither is better than the other because they both have their advantages and disadvantages. They are just different tools. The end result is what matters most so it's really about what works best for you on that particular part of the body.

What inspires you as an artist? I know it sounds cliché, but I find inspiration

just about everywhere I am. Whether it's how my dog's teeth grab his toy or how the sun looks coming through trees as it's just about to set, inspiration is everywhere!

What sets you apart from other artists?

I don't consider myself set apart from others. There are so many great artists out there right now doing amazing work, pushing the boundaries of what we think is possible. So, to be honest, I hope to one day be counted among them, not set apart.

You're a painter as well as tattoo artist. Do you approach the two media in the same way?

Painting has definitely opened my mind and changed my approach to tattooing. With oil painting there are varying degrees of transparent and opaque layers, which I've been trying to portray in my recent work. For instance, rather than doing the colors start to finish in a certain area I'll work more like an oil painter would, working in layers that become more detailed and deliberate with each pass.

How have you branched out from tattooing?

Recently I've taken on a project for a new television show designing artwork for their title and logo. I'm very excited for this to come out!

What tattoo artists do you admire most?

Where do I begin? It seems like every time I scroll through Instagram there is another artist who blows my mind that I've never heard of, but

one of my personal favorites that constantly inspires me would be Jeff Gogue. He brings a very deliberate approach to his clients, which makes his work look very tailored, fitted and natural to me. Another artist I admire is Johan Finné. He's another artist who has a deep understanding of how to approach "full scale" tattooing.

As an artist who has done tattoo collaborations before, how do you see that method of tattooing furthering your art?

Collaborations for me are an awesome practice. I feel that doing collaborative work will allow me to get inside the mind of whomever the other artist is and look at things in ways or approach things in a way I might not have considered, ultimately walking away with new and different ideas to incorporate into my own process.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing?

I'm really looking forward to beginning a full body suit one day. Ever since I first was introduced to tattoos that sort of approach has always fascinated and captured my imagination.

Before someone gets a tattoo what advice do you give them?

Before someone gets a tattoo my advice to them would be to consider what tattoo work you want in the future. This way you can plan ahead and avoid possible collisions of separate designs, which could leave them discouraged or disappointed. 🍷









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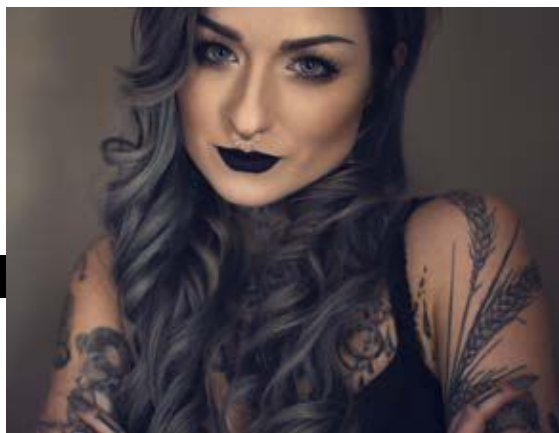
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RYAN ASHLEY

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What year did you start tattooing?

This March was my third year anniversary of doing my very first tattoo. In comparison to some of our industry giants, this is still the very beginning for me. I started at 24, later than most, but I'm happy that everything happened the way that it did. Starting at a later age has allowed me to learn the valuable life lesson of gratitude. And I realize that after having an entire life in a different career, the grass is so much greener on this side.

How did you get into tattooing?

Prior to tattooing I was a design associate at a private label fashion company in Manhattan. I have been an artist my whole life, being raised by a single mom who is an artist herself. I've longed to tattoo since I was a teenager but kept detouring myself into what I then thought was a more plausible career path. My logic was, "Well if I don't get into the Fashion Design program at the Fashion Institute of Technology, I will take it as a sign I'm not meant for this path and begin the life I truly would like to live and start a tattoo apprenticeship." Then I got into the program. Upon graduating, my logic was then again, "Well, realistically jobs in this highly saturated industry are slim, so if I can't find an entry level position in the next few months, that will be my sign, and I will finally begin my apprenticeship." And then I landed a great job.

Do you have any special training?

My position in the fashion company was basically the company's in-house artist. It was ideal for me; I worked full time with

my hands creating, painting, designing, sketching and perfecting my Photoshop skills. And though I trained for years for this truly ideal position, I still always felt like the void wasn't filled, and that this wasn't the end of the road for me. So, I left Brooklyn where I had been for the previous five years and came back to my small hometown in Pennsylvania. Being in the art side of fashion for those years was honestly the most extensive, most thorough training I could have ever gone through. After apprenticing under a private studio's appointment-only tattoo artist, I now treat tattooing in the same respect as all of my fashion training.

You have a very unique black and grey style. How do you describe your style?

There is one main motto that I stress to my clients: Tattoos should fit you like expensive lingerie that was made for your specific body. If used properly, tattoos can accent your curves and flow onto your features redirecting the eye however you'd like. I freehand marker a lot of my designs and try to follow the anatomical curves of the body for layout to ensure an organic fit, almost like a tattoo tailor. Through all of this, I have found my place in a void of feminine vision—tattooing intricate black and grey in our small town in Pennsylvania.

You used to work in color, but now work almost exclusively in black and grey. What led you to make that switch?

The shop experience very much was not for me. I feel as if tattooers fall into this life for many different reasons. My reasoning for choosing this life is simply the

gratification of producing personalized art that will be adored and appreciated for life. Because of this, I have narrowed down the qualifications needed for both producing the best quality artwork I can truthfully guarantee for my clients, and also for my own happiness. So I left the walk-in shop atmosphere, and stopped doing color. I would rather tattoo in a quality over quantity mindset, more low key, providing artwork for the selective clients that seek me out because of my specific style and not simply because I am available. I see things the way that I see them—and that is in black and white, beautifully designed and one of a kind.

You also co-own the Strange and Unusual Oddities Parlor. What led you to open that up?

Last year, while searching for the perfect place to call my studio, my boyfriend and I decided to combine forces and entertain both our mutual interests in the weird and bizarre and the intimate, upscale tattoo studio I had been longing to own. So, we opened our oddities parlor, The Strange and Unusual. This was a whole new venture in itself. In the first few months until we acquired ample inventory, we displayed much of our personal collection and sold many pieces we were in some way attached to which has taught the both of us yet another valuable lesson in the gratification of letting things go. Now almost a year and a half after opening with much success, I am feeling very much like I have found my place. I am beyond thankful, grateful, and in awe every single day that this is the life that I live. 🖤











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KENNY KBAR

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How did you get into tattooing? As a teenager I was really interested in the art form itself. I've been drawing since I was a little kid, and once I learned about tattoos, I would draw up designs for my friends and myself. In my twenties I came across the opportunity to begin an apprenticeship in a local shop, so I went for it.

What was your first shop experience like? I was able to learn a lot about how a shop should be run. I tattooed a lot of close friends and family, and learned a lot about religious pieces, which helped me in developing my realistic style.

Do you have any special training? I've been specially trained since I was 17-years-old in all areas of discipline in the United States Marine Corps.

What inspired you to open your own shop? Turns out the same shop that taught me how to run a shop, also taught me how a shop should not be run. I knew that if I was going to grow as an artist I needed to expand and work in a more professional environment.

Apart from being a tattoo studio, there is also body piercing offered, what made you want to incorporate body piercing into the shop? Our tattooer, Oogie, is also an experienced piercer, and she has brought that other aspect into the shop, which helps us draw in more clients.

With nine artists in your shop, what have been some of the best overall

shop experiences you all have had working together? Because so many of us have been working together for so long, we have become a tight knit group that runs more like a family or team than anything. We work really well together and have a good time doing conventions.

How have you branched out from tattooing? I've been in many art shows across the tri-state area for my Reflective Tape pieces. I've done custom pieces for people over the years and really enjoy working with that media. I've also drawn and painted with acrylics for commissioned pieces. Being a leader in the Marine Corps has always allowed me to take charge in all I do. Just like in the Corps, moving up in rank means more responsibility. In opening the shop I became a businessman which has been the other part of what I do other than tattoo and create art. Along with my partner, Valerie, I run and manage the business and that has given me a new passion and insight on how to work more efficiently and incorporate more tools for growth within the shop.

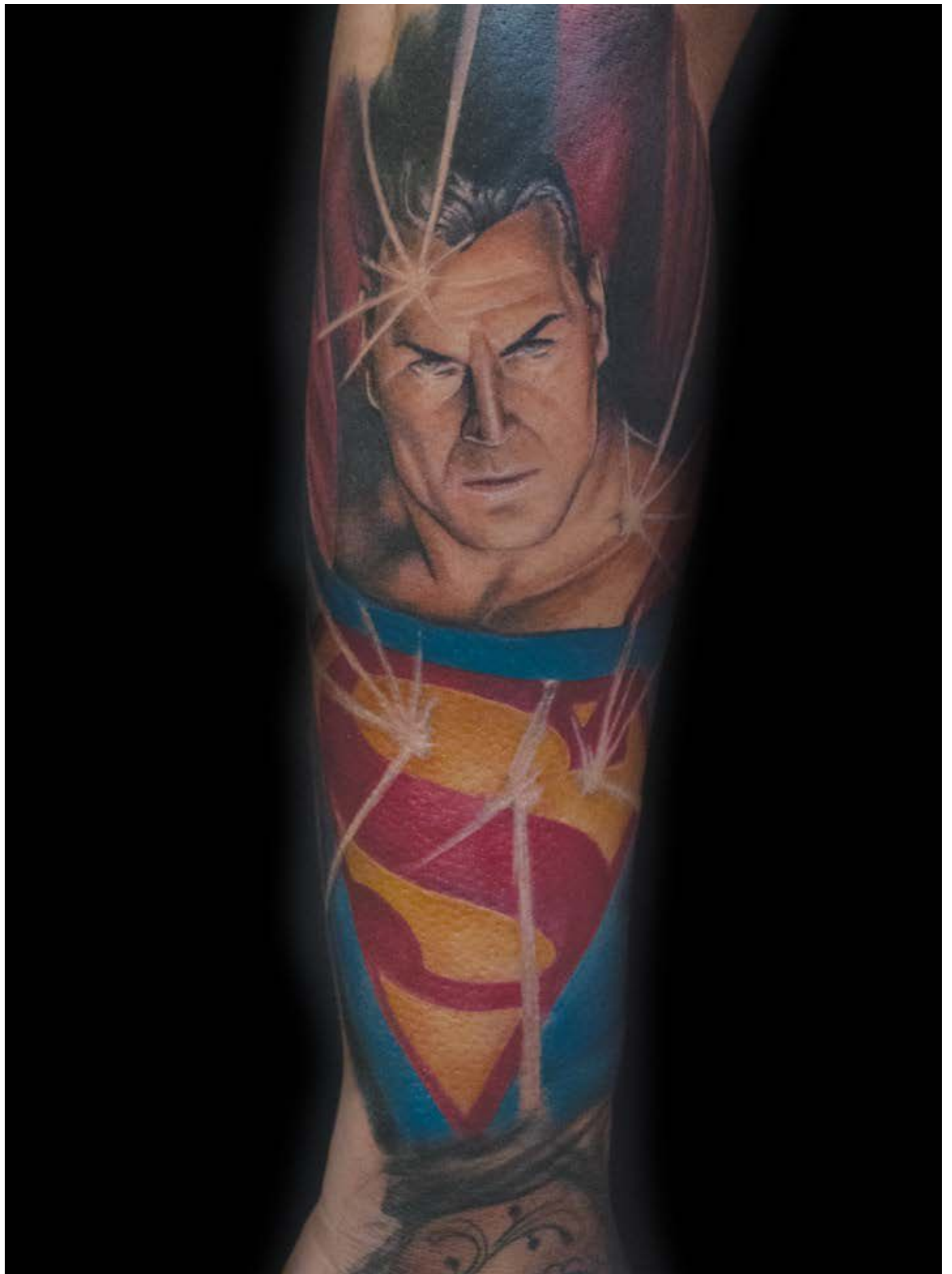
How do you describe your style? I like to combine the comic book style of bold lines and cross-hatching with photo-realism. To me this makes for cool pieces. I mainly do black and gray but I love to work with color as well. I'm always looking for and learning new ways to improve and refine my style.

Your shop contributes to several charities throughout the year. What chari-

ties do you give to, and why do you find it important to use art to bring people together? In seeing first hand how a Veteran can be affected by war and serving their country, I am grateful to be able to continue to serve them using my shop as a tool. We contribute to many military related foundations including The Wounded Warrior Project, IAVA, Semper Fi Fund, and several others. I've also done Toys-For-Tots drives for the past 15 years. We contribute to the HDSA and Terrence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center, to raise money and awareness for Huntington's Disease, a hereditary illness that runs in my wife's family. I've seen first hand how it affects people and their loved ones, including myself, and have seen that bringing people together for a cause not only can make a difference, but does make a difference.

What kind of tattoos do you look forward to doing? I look forward to doing tattoos that the person will be proud to wear. It is always an honor to have someone willing to wear your original artwork for the rest of their lives. I am constantly drawing things that I believe would make cool tattoos and would love to be able to tattoo those on clients.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do? I pretty much would love to do more of my own original drawings as tattoos. 🖌️





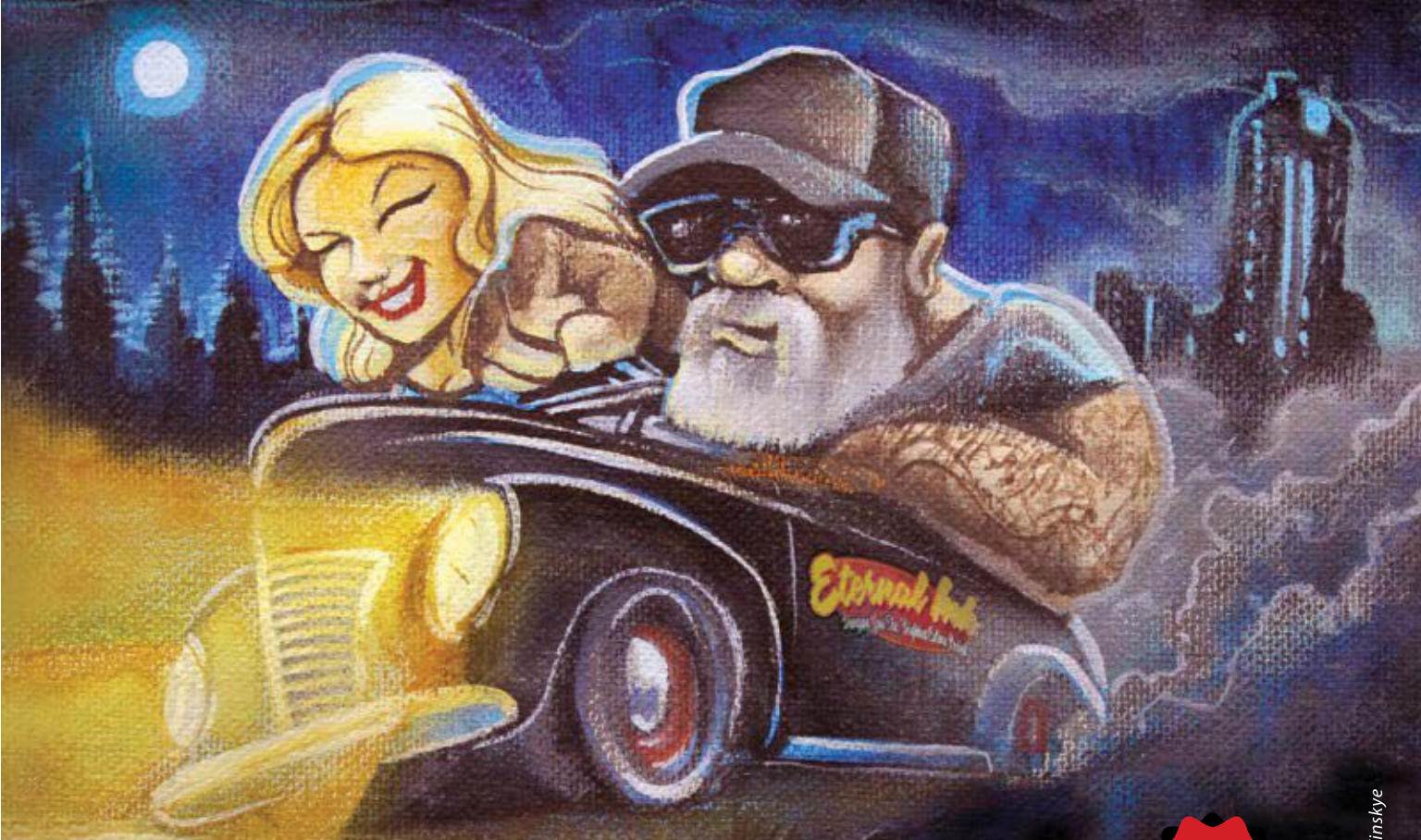


Illustration by Scot Winskye

Motor City INK SET

NEW!



The 1 oz set is available in this Motor City Ink Set package!

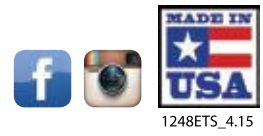
Detroit put a nation on wheels and rolled us through a lifetime of memories. Lost summer days, chrome polish, pocket change for a burger and a few gallons of gas for cruising. Our **Motor City Ink Set** is a flashback to Detroit speed. Here are 12 new tattoo hues inspired by vintage sheet metal fantasies, high gloss paint and all the reckless joys of a fine ride. Available in 1/2 oz, 1 oz, 2 oz, and 4 oz bottles.

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DELPHINE NOIZTOY

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What year did you start tattooing?

Being self-taught I do not consider the first year I touched tattoo machines as the first year I started tattooing. I can say I really became a tattoo artist in 2008 when I left France behind for London.

What was your first shop experience like?

My very first shop experience was in Camden. I lied a bit about my experience to get the job. I started as a replacement for another tattooist, easy pieces, letterings, stars, random stuff. It was stressful and kind of degrading as we weren't considered so much by the customers, but it taught me speed and humility. It was a great experience to have and if I learned one thing from that experience is what I do not like to do. Afterward that I've been slowly climbing the ladder. I worked at another "street shop" in Leiceister Square, I stayed there a year and a half, very busy, very good experience even if it ended up with a nervous breakdown after a burn out. At the time I was working about 8-9 hours there during the day and 6-7 hours at night at home on friends to build a solid portfolio in my own style. After that I joined Divine Canvas under Xed LeHead's Aegis and the rest is history.

What inspires you as an artist?

Everything really. It can go from illustration as such as Jaw Cooper, Vania Zouravliov, and Richey Beckett, to walks in the park.

Everyday life fascinates me, even if I don't really go out a lot. One of my main inspiration is my best friend, Noor One, she's an incredible photographer but more than her work her character is so strong. I'm surrounded by creative people in all domains, and their strength, that urge to live at the fullest, that's what inspires me daily. Also, my customers and their stories. I do custom-tailored pieces for them, so I talk with them at the start of our session and let inspiration come. I rarely draw stuff beforehand, I wait for that kind of illumination to come when I talk to them. It's a very special moment every time, like falling in love again and again.

What sets you apart from other artists?

I don't know if this really sets me apart, but I'm quite a loner. I have my circle of mates in the industry but I tend to not hang out too much with tattooists, talking about tattoos all the time gets depressing. I think the main thing is that I'm more of an illustrator than a tattooist even if I haven't really had the time to draw in the past four years, I'm getting back to it at the moment, so my tattooing is a bit more unruly, very instinctive I would say. I see people as 3D canvases, of course like most tattooist do. I usually have permission to do whatever I want, it's like drawing on mole skin. I put my guts on them, things that move my insides, things I love.

What other media do you work in?

At the moment I'm preparing a series of illustrations in Art Nouveau but with a big twist, on paper with color and all! I know I work a mostly in black but after recent events in my life I feel a need for color. I tried oil painting for the first time at a workshop with Michael Hussar a few months back and I'm completely in love with it, but I need to find time and space for this soon. I'm always making something with my hands, I excel in the kitchen. You know cooking is like painting, it takes a lot of patience, practice and knowledge to achieve a perfect meal!

How have you branched out from tattooing?

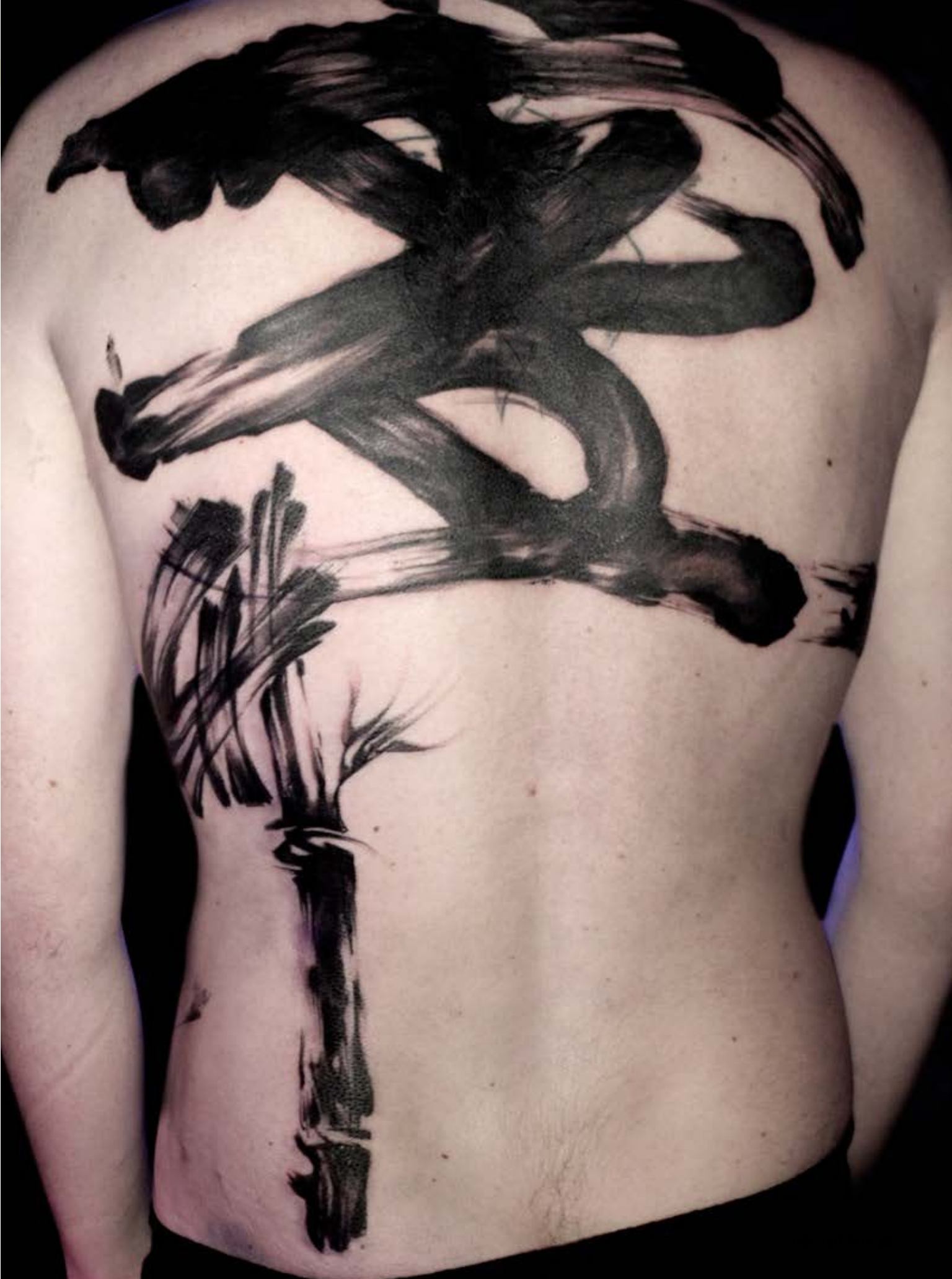
I'm trying to diversify my activities. I would like to have more time for illustration, open a bigger studio that could be a home for the perfect team, travel more, but not for tattooing though. I definitely need holidays. My life has been all about tattooing since 2008.

Is there a tattoo that you haven't done yet that you are dying to do?

I realized that dream last year, Japanese brushwork calligraphy from the top of the back to heels on fully virgin skin. That was my dream.

Are there any other tattoo styles you enjoy doing? Why?

Art Nouveau! I don't know why but it appeals to me so much. I find it sensual. I'm just in love with it. ■■





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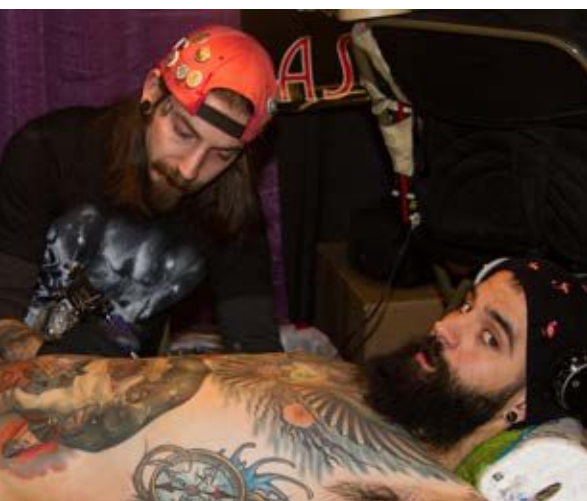
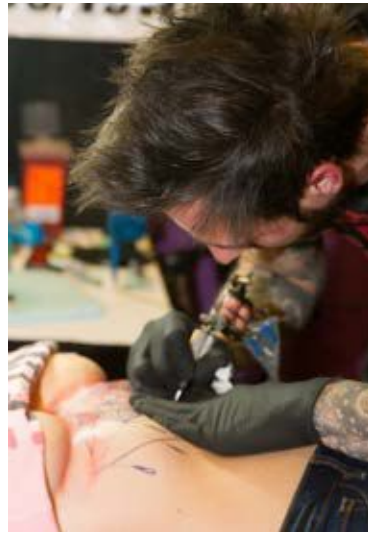
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BEST IN THE MIDWEST



This year's Best in the Midwest Tattoo convention stood up to its name. Organized by Ink Master Shane O'Neill, the event brought a number of renowned artists from across the globe under one roof. Known for having high caliber artists, this convention was the place to be to get inked. But fear not, if getting tattooed isn't your thing, there was still a lot to see. You could view death-defying stunts by the Inkkusionists or check out the craft booths and fine art. Next year head to the Midwest and don't sleep on what Iowa has to offer.



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MUSINK

The Musink Festival is all about music, vintage cars and tattoos. This year Travis Barker held the 8th annual event in Costa Mesa, CA, featuring bands like Bad Religion, Blink-182, Yelawolf, and Rancid. The awesome lineup had fans moshing for three nights straight. When the crowd wasn't rocking out you could hear the sound of tattoo machines buzzing nonstop. *Freshly Inked* artists Little Linda, London Reese, and Nikko Hurtado were some of the 300 tattoo artists in attendance. Musink Festival set the bar high this year, and we're sure they'll bring it again in 2016!



LEATHERNECKS TATTOO

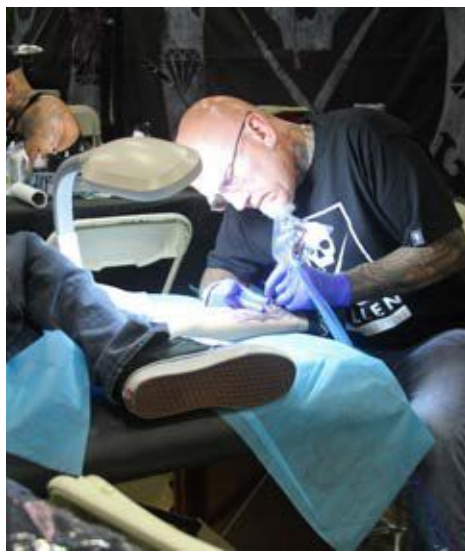
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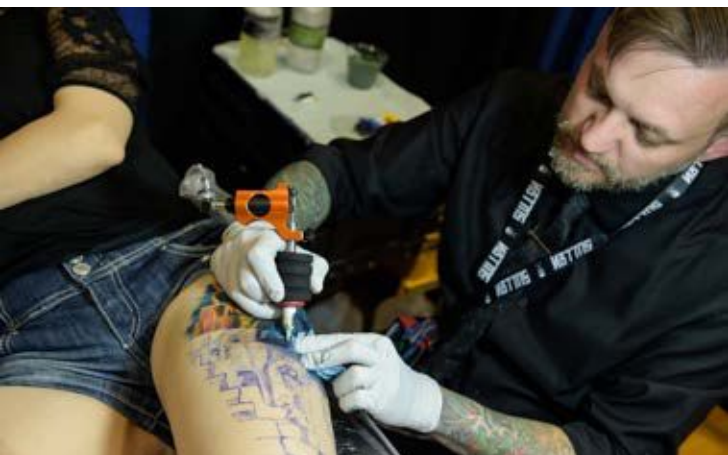
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EVERGREEN TATTOO INVITATIONAL

The 2nd annual Evergreen Tattoo Invitational proved to be even bigger and better than last year! With over 100 world-class artists in attendance there was no shortage of talent. The expo was jam-packed with live music, seminars and even a beer garden to round out the three-day event. On the spot tattooing was performed by Freshly Inked artists Paul Booth and Stefano Alcantara of Last Rites Tattoo Theatre. As if that wasn't enough, Rotten Photography sold one-of-a-kind metal portraits styled right out of the 1800s. Could this event get any better? We'll have to wait and see what year 3 has in store.



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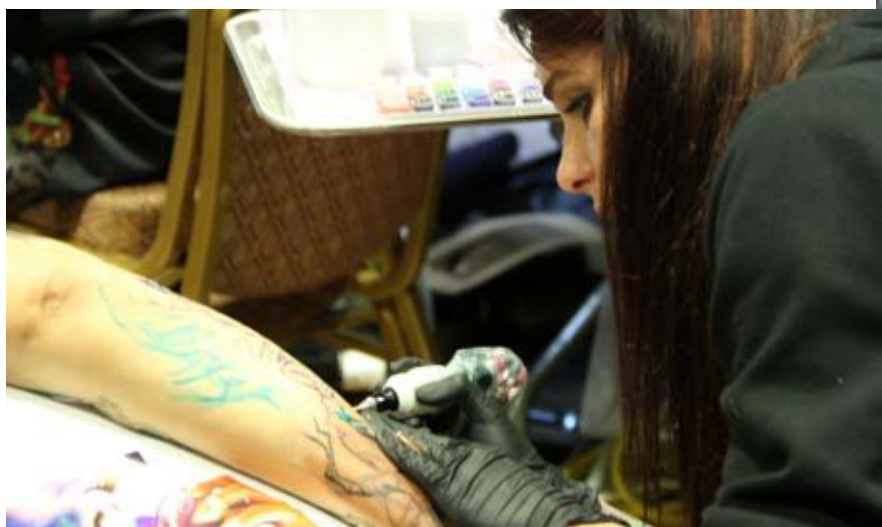
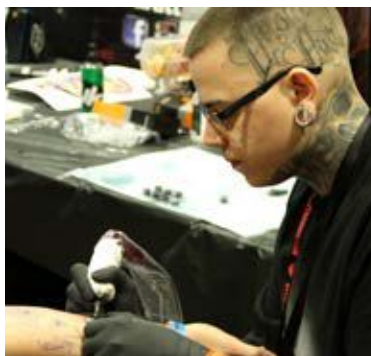
Tattoo Finish/ 20ml in each "take anywhere" tin, Case of 24

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"NO LIMITS" TATTOO FESTIVAL

United Ink switched the game up with their first annual "No Limits" Tattoo Festival. The event was held at Resorts World Casino in NYC and this was no place for children, as it served an 18+ crowd. There was no shortage of star power as the emcee was none other than Joey Tattoo of Tattoo Rescue who had the crowd in tears the whole weekend, and Big Gus and Jazmin from Tattoo Nightmares were also in attendance. We were fortunate enough to have Freshly Inked artists Zack Singer, Ryan Mullins, and Megan Jean Morris working out of the Inked booth for the event! We're sure 2016 will be just as kickass.



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TATTOO SUPPLY

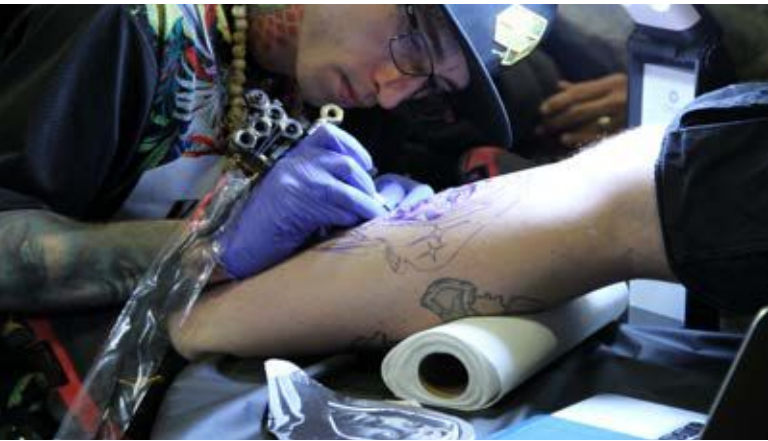


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