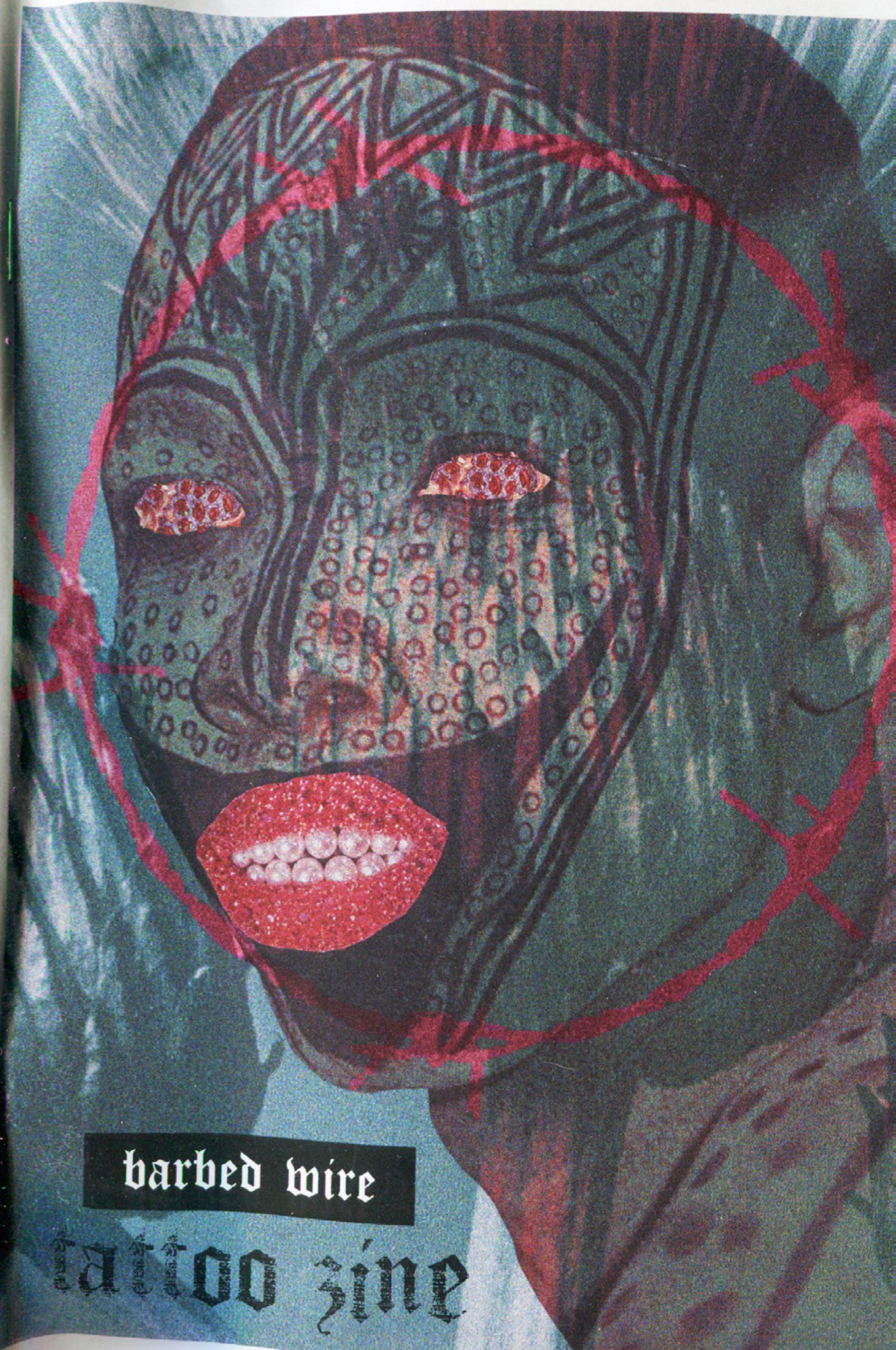
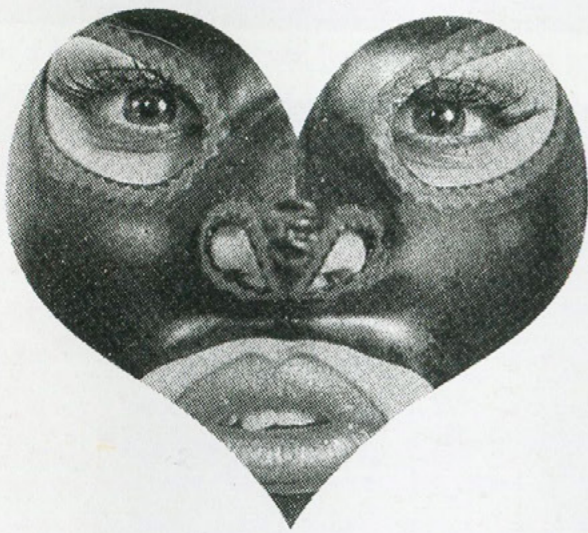




barbed wire

tattoo zine



barbed wire

tattoo zine

Hi!

First of all I would like to thank everyone who took part in this project. The decision behind this zine was to share amazing tattooists and their stories, art, work with other people. I think the proper polish tattoo culture is very varied and not defined or maybe forgotten, however we have a great underground history of prison, outcast tattooing which is yet to be discovered. Why is it forgotten if we see so many instagram accounts with tattoos? I think the real tattooing in Poland was behind the scenes, it had connotations with criminals and people quickly forgot about short but intense time when polish aristocracy used to tattoo themselves. It changes a lot, it has never been proper, stable, defined. The commercial, mainstream scene in Poland is very vibrant, there are many shops, many people who tattoo, many styles, yet it is very often too mainstream, monopoly-like business. I am very excited that during the creation of this zine, there was a book release by Maurycy Gomulicki called "Tattoos", who has been documenting the old man tattoos from Poland for years. I think this subject is still waiting to be discovered, as behind this there is a rich culture of symbolism and outcasts' stories. We will supposedly never have such a rich history like in US or Scandinavia.

This first zine mainly focuses on artists from other countries, as I think there are so many amazing people from abroad unknown to polish publicity, representing and resurecting beautiful styles, ethics and techniques, which we can look up to.

This little publications is also like a memoir of the shop Roza in Warsaw which we run together with Glue, Pawel and Remi. In each issue someone will bring up a subject or a definition and explanation and idea behind like Remi, who wrote about the flash and its origins. I hope that not only tattooists/tattooers/? will be content to look through it but also future customers.

Thank you!

Izabella D. Wolf
blameyourparents.tumblr.com





Ruby Quilter

@rubymayqtattoo

Sang Bleu, London

Ruby is a great tattooist from Sang Bleu, London. Most known from heartbreaking beautiful single line work, which is very dreamy and dark. Her tattoo style and technique leave me speechless, inspired and sad that I will never be good as some people. I do not think it is necessary to introduce that person more, as the work speaks for itself. Thank you Ruby for taking part!

Could you tell us, what was the factor for you for starting tattooing? How did you begin? did you do traditional apprentice? if you can, please describe that process a little bit, as traditional apprentice in Poland is something rare as the culture of tattooing is still something fresh here.

I did do a traditional apprenticeship, traditional in the sense of learning from another tattooer, cleaning the shop, drawing, watching and learning. I began getting tattooed as a young teenager, my mum had friends who were heavily tattooed around when I was growing up, when I was a child I was fascinated by them. As I got older the notion of rebellion was introduced and I explored tattooing as a means of self expression. I had thought intermittently about the idea of tattooing, and looking for an apprenticeship, however I felt that their were social connotations connected to being a woman and tattooing. I wasn't sure if I would be taken seriously, or if I was ready to face what prejudices tattooing brings. I eventually pursued an apprenticeship and was taught to tattoo by Joe Spaven of Scarlet Rose Tattoo here in England.

You do lots of beautiful single line work. it is the sort of nostalgic 90s melancholia and dark subjects, interpreted in such a special way. what is your biggest inspiration? what does drive your imagination the most?

I'm inspired by so many things, if I'm at a point where I feel I can't connect creatively I have a few set of references I look at to feel inspired. I look at the works of Rogier van der Wayden and Dürer, mostly religious art, even if it's not to draw reference from specific parts, the overall emotion of the paintings is something I want to recreate, and I find inspiring. I always aim to put a beautiful tattoo on someone, I think there's so many factors contributing to making a nice tattoo, I try and consider the technical application, the design and placement. I think a simple rose can look immensely powerful when the body is used to highlight the tattoo, when they are working together to make the overall aesthetic. I look at a lot of tattoos by Jack Rudy, he has such elegance to his style, it's something I'll always strive for in my work.

How do you like to work? do you get distracted easily or treat tattooing as something meditative, when the time kind of stops?

I work in a very busy, open plan shop, so sometimes it's difficult to tune out completely. I feed off of the energy a lot when I'm doing smaller work, I like to hear people talking, the music, customers coming through. I love the electricity that comes with a busy shop and it's easy to transfer that energy into a tattoo you're enjoying. I put a lot into the tattoos I enjoy, I'm tired after work every day, which I guess is a good sign!



What do you wish for yourself in your career?

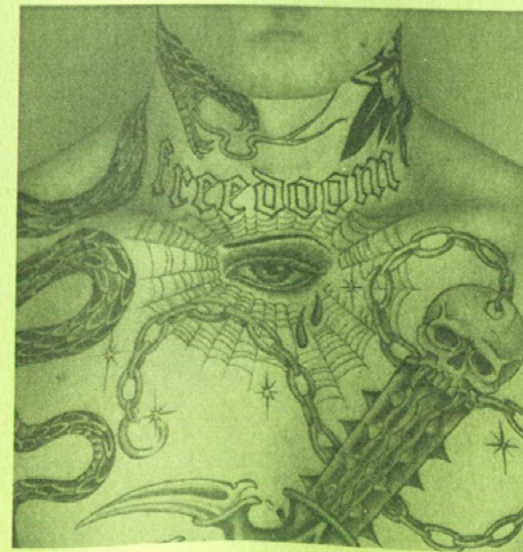
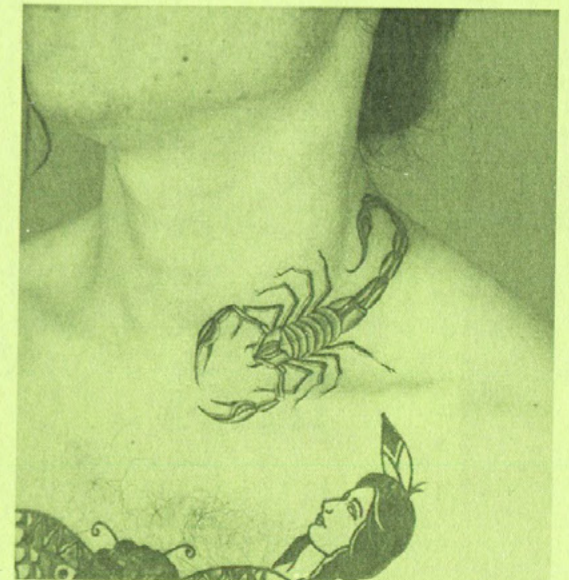
I want to keep progressing in my ability as a tattooer and as an artist. I would love to be able to make some more time for painting and projects outside of tattooing that help me learn more about myself as an artist. I hope I can keep feeding good quality work into tattooing and contribute to the industry. I sometimes find it hard to break away from the constraints tattooing puts on you as an artist, I begin to paint and it's hard to forget tattooing and it's boundaries

How do you prepare before tattooing someone? do you usually know what your customer would you like to get or do you prefer spontaneous flash pieces?

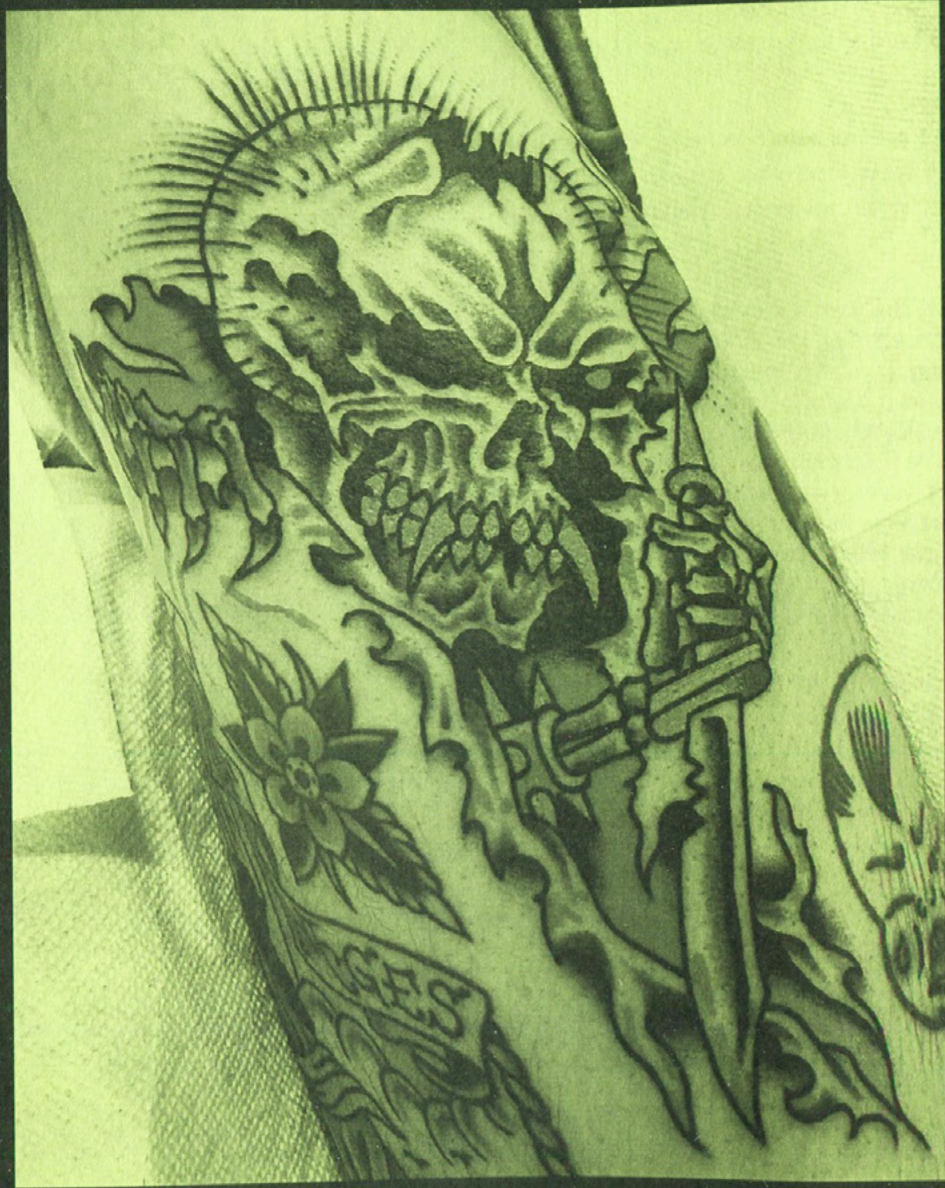
I have it in my diary what the customer wants to get, but I always have an initial consultation before I begin drawing. I'll do that on the day of the appointment. It saves me a lot of time and it means I can talk to my customers in depth about what they want to create. I've tried the email discussion situation, but it doesn't work for me in relation to the volume of emails. Plus I think tattooer and customer both feed off one another with certain projects, you need that vibe between you to make something significant and you lose that intensity in email.

Apart from tattooing, do you get this technical side obsession? do you have favourite machine you use?

I use a Dan Kubin nearly every day, I also have a set of Tim Hendricks machines I rely heavily on.



Joe Chatt



@JOE_CHATT
@ROSETATTOOPARLOUR
NYC



hey Joe! thank you so much again for taking part in this.

I have some questions which repeat and it interests me a lot when i think of other people who's work i admire. apart from tattooing you're making amazing paintings, and i wonder how does your process look like, if you prefer to work on your own or being surrounded by people? do you have some OCD routines, like preparing coffee before, listening to particular music?

When I paint I have two different processes. the first one would be at the shop, in-between appointments or before or after work, I will paint 11x14 flash sheets to put up in the shop. Rose Tattoo is floor to ceiling flash in every spot you can see, everything is hand painted by us, or guests of the shop, we also have a large collection of original vintage flash on the back wall. Some of the sheets we have are by Bert Grimm, Stoney st Clair, Phil Simms, Bob Shaw etc. the rest of the sheets are in 11x14 frames that are easily removed, so we try and have lots of sheets rotating. So I normally paint sheets at the shop for this reason, although recently I painted a huge torso front body suit that was life size. I slowly chipped away at it over 2 months or so, using ink and liquid acrylic.

The second process is at home, I have a small work space in my room with a large tall table. Here is where I like to be alone and set my own mood. I usually play the stuff that is too abrasive to play at work recently I've been playing Bolt Thrower, Amebix, D-Clone, Impalers. I also have a huge soft spot for Italo Disco and Ive been listening to a lot of industrial and darkwave. At home I like to work on more intricate stuff or where I need to be looking through all of my reference books. Ive been learning slowly how to paint on Japanese rice paper using authentic tools and equipment. Its been a very slow process and difficult, but I'm starting to get happier with the results. I've been trying to paint and draw a mix of Japanese ukiyo-e, American traditional , heavy metal and punk imagery but also with some sort of futuristic mech vibe.

Your work is great mixture of traditional tattoo, punk imaginary combined with japanese art interpreted in your own special way, which makes it standing out. what is your youth background? did you belong to any subculture, what city did you grow up in?

Its something that has progressed quite naturally I think, I spent a lot of time on the road, I was unhappy in England and put all of my belongings in storage and just reached out and started asking people for guest spots in other countries. I travelled around the globe tattooing 3 times over. I worked in Belgium, Spain ,Germany , France, Australia, New Zealand, America, Canada, Mexico and Singapore. I would try and get out after working and go see Punk or Metal shows at every place I went to. The whole time I travelled I stayed with punks that I had met at shows or were friends of friends and was exposed to so much more music, art, creativity and openness. Someone that opened my eyes to a lot of things was Alex Heir, he's an underground artist from NYC that has very radical and political artwork and ideas. He taught me how to loosen up and dig a bit deeper creatively. I try and spend a day a week at his house on my day off to collaborate and exchange ideas. We do this thing that we call speed drawing where we will loosely sketch half of something fast, then pass it to the next person and they have to add to it, we then use whatever sharpies of colors we have around and keep adding until its done.

What is your biggest influence, where do you like to take the inspiration from and who are you favourite artists?

I try and look for stuff that isn't tattoo flash to get inspiration I watch a lot of Anime movies and read manga like Bezerk, Guyver Bio Booster Armor, Akira, Ninja Scroll etc. I'm heavily inspired by Japanese folklore and especially yokai. Im really drawn to how hyper violent a lot of the prints are. I'm heavily inspired by old heavy metal and punk artwork, I love how raw all the old record covers are, branching into fantasy, sci-fi, spooky, tough stuff, i've always been obsessed with that kind of imagery. My favorite artists would be H.R Giger, Horiyoshi II, Kuniyoshi, Alex Heir, Pinky Yun, Ed Hardy and Sorayama to name a few of off the top of my head.

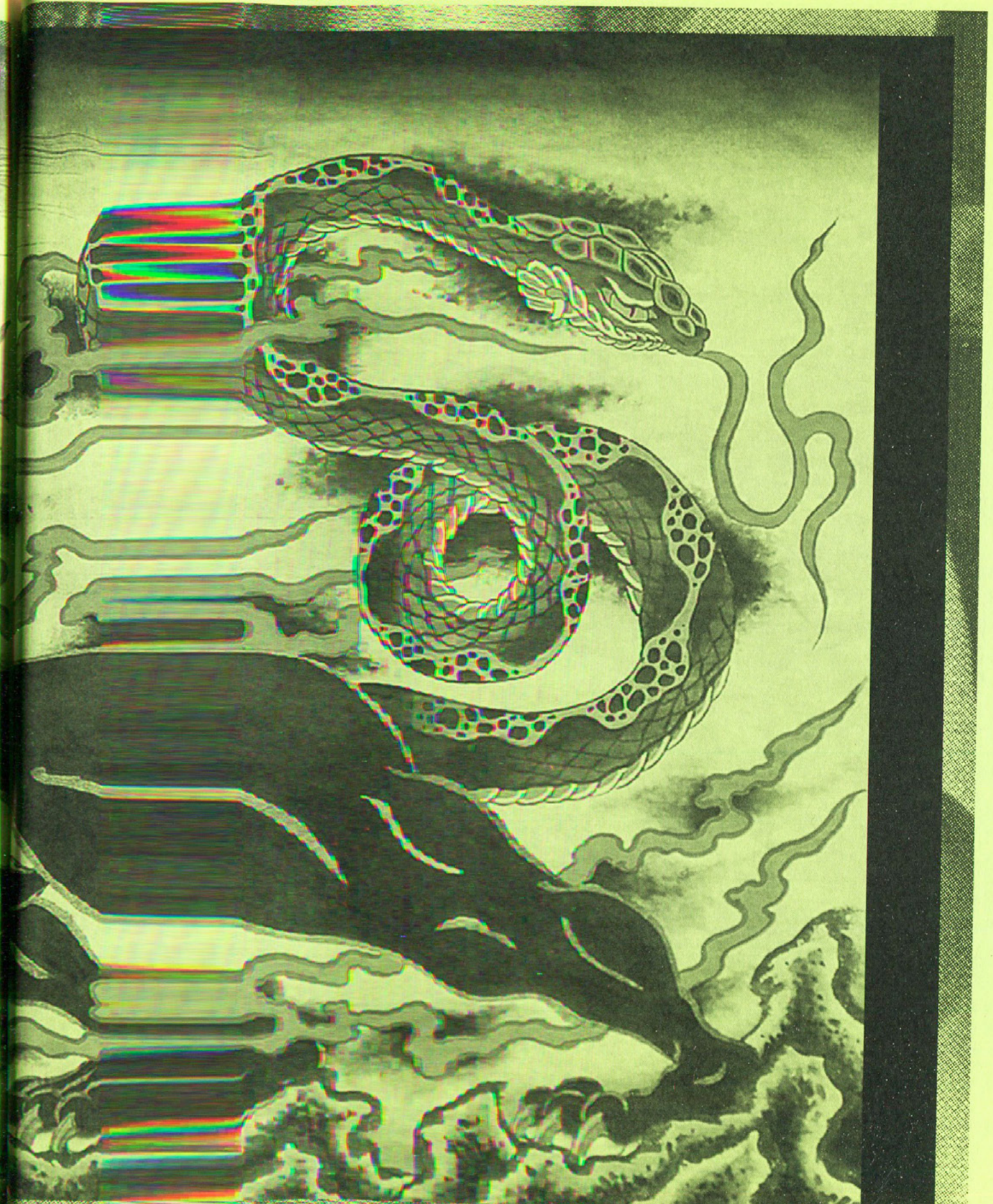
Can you tell us a bit about Rose Tattoo Parlour? how did you end up there?

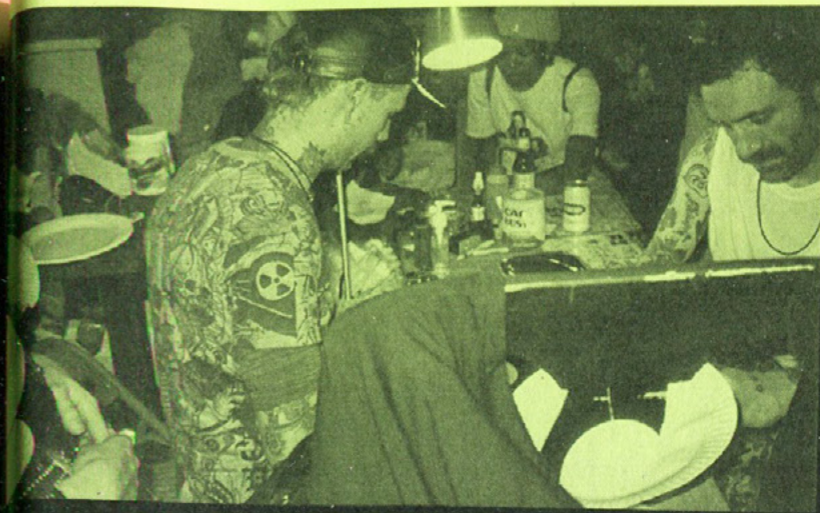
Ive almost been working at Rose coming up a year now and its been the best desicion ive ever made, I met Mark Cross properly when we both worked at Love tattoo In Melbourne, Australia for the shop opening flash event. at this time I had already worked a bunch in NYC and knew I had to move there to really push myself and i was nearing the end of my 01 visa application. So I told him my situation and if there was a chance that he could help me sign some stuff to help me get over. Then by chance we met again randomly in Japan and we got to know each other better and he told me that he was willing to help. Its been great working at the shop, lots of walk ins and Ive had a chance to work on larger tattoos, which wasnt an option before as I was always guesing. The shop consists of Mark Cross, Akira Latanzio, Cris Cleen, Hillary Fisher White and Craig Chazen/boxcar, its alot of fun working at the shop its quite small so we can all talk to each other while we work, its normally us just roasting each other or playing stupid music to eachother haha. I feel lucky to work with such great tattooists and i'm constanly inspired and blown away with what I see every day.



Joe Chat









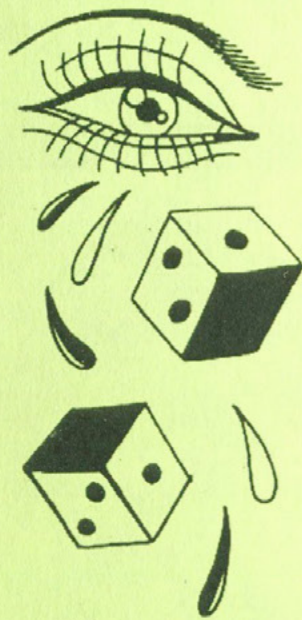
Joe Chatt



Joe



Rose Whittaker



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You make amazing prints, I think I have 90% of your prints hanging everywhere, do you have a favourite method of printmaking? Does it feel like an escape from the tattoo world of rules or do you go fluent between these two worlds?

Thank you! I think you do have pretty much all of them! Screen printing was just something I've always wanted to do and I finally got the time to have a go and teach myself, it was frustrating and I've still got more to learn with it for sure, but it's so fun and satisfying. I really enjoy making things and if I can't make tattoos I'll either be painting or printing most days, it's almost a compulsion. Plus I had so many people asking me for prints I decided to make my own.

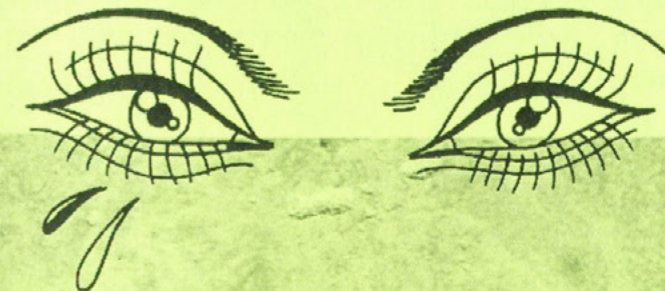
I still want to get proper prints made but I love the handmade look of screen prints and I think people enjoy the personal aspect, I draw the design, shoot the screen and print them all by hand and each one is slightly different.

I'm working up to doing more colour ways and I'd love to do some really big stuff too.

I think mediums tend to feed into each other, a lot of people have other outlets apart from tattooing, realistically we're all not going to be tattooing all the time. There's definitely a lot of cross over with the stuff I print and things I tattoo, I guess the way you draw tattoos can translate well to printed images and some designs I've used for prints I've ended up tattooing.

What is your wish for your career? The one you can say out loud :) and I wish you that of course!!!

If I say it out loud will it come true?? There's conventions and guest spots that are dreams for sure, I'd love to travel more and see all my friends and work at their shops. My main wish would be to have a long and steady career with great customers and I'm so lucky for the clients I have. I have no desire to be internet famous or whatever, or like I said before I know I'm not going to reinvent anything. I just want to progress technically and carry on being able to make a living off making art, which I'm incredibly lucky to be able to do. Most things I'd like to do I try to do, not wait for it to be handed to you, there's many projects I'll get round to completing one day. I'd like to put a book out or put on an exhibition, I'm not in a rush, just really enjoying going to work everyday and trying to make things that I, and hopefully other people, enjoy.





Hi Rose, thank you so much for taking part in this project. I prepared some questions for you and I hope you enjoy them. Lets start. What is your youth background, did you belong to any subculture, if so which one and does it still have even little tiny impact on your work?

I grew up in a small suburban town about an hour outside London, I got into music, specifically punk, hardcore and rock in general when I was pretty young and started going to shows in the city and locally. I wouldn't say I specifically belonged to any one group as my music taste varies quite a bit and I have friends who where from all types of scenes, but I had a handful of friends who where into the same bands and artists. I guess looking back my era was the end of grunge and then came nu metal, but I've always been more into punk and hardcore stuff. The music, the anger and the aesthetics have always appealed to me, there's a level of community and a more DIY attitude.

As for tattooing, I met a lot of tattooed people through going to shows, but growing up I didn't really know anyone who was into tattooing as much as I was, that came a lot later.

Did you go to art school and have been one of those people who've been drawing since always or does that passion appeared suddenly?

Ive always drawn, my grandmother painted and my father was a draftsman (engineer type guy who does technical drawings) so I was really encouraged as a kid. My grandmother always used to paint with me and it's always been just something I've done. After school I thought I wanted to do art at university, but the course at my college put me off and I switched to photography as I hadn't done it before, I still love to take photos for fun but I'm not that good at it. I went on to do what's called a Foundation art and design course, which is like a year course to help you get into art university, but I totally hated it and by that point I'd started to get tattooed and was gravitating in that direction, my art school teachers just kept telling me to 'stop drawing cartoons'.



What was your favourite motive to draw when you were teenager, if you draw then? i like when people who i follow show drawings from their childhood like Rafael Deladande who seems to have on going love for demons since being a baby.

I guess I was lucky that my parents took my brother and I to all types of museums and gallery's as kids, I was exposed to classical art and modern art, pop art and a lot of record covers. I definitely remember trying to redraw images off my dads records, I guess that and comic books definitely had an influence.

As a real little kid I drew girl heads, dolphins, horses and stuff, it's funny my grandma has kept a bunch of that stuff and there are a lot of drawings of eyes and tigers which are still some of my favourite things to draw.

As I got older and more into music that lead me to more low-brow stuff. I'd be trying to redraw Coop girls and Frank Kozic concert posters, seeing tattooed people in music magazine and stuff. When I was about 15 I painted a bunch of punk friends jackets with album covers and did some terrible band artwork for friends bands (I still do).

I got my first tattoo pretty young at like 14, so by the time I was a teenager I was already drawing dice, 8 balls and pin ups and buying tattoo magazines.



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Do you prefer to draw on your own, at home or you're not bothered by people surrounding you?

Ohh good question, it really varies, if I'm working on a painting I'll usually do the sketch and line drawing at home and maybe paint it at the shop more socially, but I guess mostly I paint at home. When I'm drawing for clients, because I travel between shops, I usually spend one day a week at home doing my homework for the week so I'm prepared.

I do find it harder sometimes to draw with an audience, but painting with friends is great and when it comes to tattooing I like drawing at work because you can get feedback and advice, plus new reference from friends. I've actually been trying to get more social with it, I paint with Lee Knight and Joe Spaven at work and we've got some collaborations planned. I guess we all get self conscious when we're sitting and drawing with our peers though, I work with some people I really admire and it can be pretty intimidating sometimes, but feedback and access to different reference points or a fresh pair of eyes can really help.

Did you develop love for tattooing in early age, was it connected for you to be an outsider or rather the love for visual imaginary?

I can't really pin point exactly what was my first exposure to tattoos when I was young as no one in my family is tattooed at all, I think it all stemmed from punk rock, seeing tattooed musicians and just thinking how damn cool they looked. I do remember having a



a poster of Rancid up in my room with Tim Armstrong's spider web head tattoo and staring at it for ages, I also completely fell in love with female tattooed musicians like Theo Kogan from the Lunachicks, they were my role models, women who stood out and appeared fearless. Feminine yet not in a traditional way, I've always been a tomboy to a degree and seeing these women was like a revelation that I didn't have to follow a certain path or look a certain way just because society assumed I should.

I suppose like many people growing up I never felt like I fitted into my surroundings, the more I learnt about tattooing (I started buying tattoo magazine regularly when I was about 14 years old) the more I thought 'I've found my people', not only the visual imagery but the history, tradition, cultural variations and the sense of community really appealed. From the age of about 15/16 I was pretty set on somehow trying to be a part of it.

Did you do apprentice or learn on your own? did you start in the shop you're working for?

I was very lucky to have a proper apprenticeship under a guy called Steve Baron at True Love tattoo in SoHo, London. I was there for about two and a half years, apprenticing and working two or three part time jobs to survive. The shop was physically a very small space and I got to the point where I needed to make the jump into trying to work full time tattooing and there wasn't really a space there to do it, I got offered a job at another shop and was lucky that I could move on with my boss's blessing. The shop was actually forced to close down and has since been demolished as part of the 'regeneration' or gentrification of central London. I ended up back working at True Love for a few months before it closed and was so grateful to be able to spend some time there again at the end.

who is your favourite tattoo person? its so hard nowadays to know the old masters and follow all these new talented people. do you prefer to look back in the past or you're opened and relaxed about how that culture is developing? is it overwhelming for you or fascinating, as i personally cant decide yet. from the positive sides i think, there are so many amazing people sometimes i want to hide behind the blanket, with the growing monopolisation of tattoo culture it seems the independent scene is going stronger too, but i guess it depends on the point of view. i love how many publications are coming out, good shows and great shops. how about you?

Theres so many I can't even mention them all!

There's so many I can't even mention them all!

Everyone at Cult Classic and Scarlet Rose, Craig Chazen, Steve Byrne, Valerie Vargas, Marie Sena, Britney Goodman, obviously Ed Hardy and classic traditional stuff like Percy Waters, George Burchett, Bert Grimm and Milton Zeis but there's honestly so many that's a small list.

I have some insanely talented friends who are such a big influence, my colleagues at both shops inspire me every day and I defiantly look up to all of them so much.

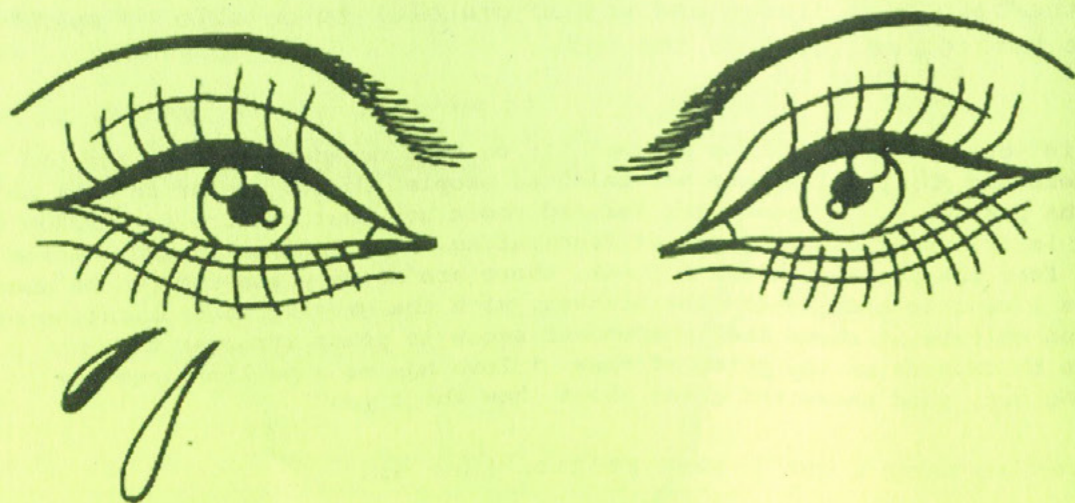
The past is very important, part of the reason I love tattooing is the history, I'm not trying to re invent anything at all, more pay tribute to the past and try to keep the magic i find in it alive.

Its pretty crazy how big tattooing is now, it's a huge business. Sometimes I think about how over saturated it is, there seem to be new shops all the time, I wonder how some stay open. Clients seem to be better educated then they used to be and have a better eye and I'm lucky to consistently be able to work, so the clients are definitely there.

It's a double edged sword of tattooing being popular, or more mainstream, it puts food on our tables, but it also means we get a lot more sub standard tattooers and unfortunately unsafe scratchers and handpokers, access to cheap and bad equipment for idiots really sucks, I cover up terrible homemade tattoos all the time.

Trends also seem to come and go faster, I'm happy to tattoo most things but it would be great if I never had to do an infinity symbol with words in ever again.

I'm pretty positive about the large amount of people who want to preserve tattooing and it's legacy, there's so many good historical flash books coming out and new goldmines of old reference and old tattooers who still haven't been discovered and that's so exciting, someone somewhere may have their great grandfathers or grandmothers equipment and flash in the attic waiting to be found. I defiantly admire anyone putting out really good, well researched content like that, I think it's vital to keep educating people on the past and documenting it. But there's also so many tattooers putting out new and exciting work, putting on conventions, exhibitions, books, just doing it themselves or within the community, there's a lot of people proving you don't need big business or corporate backing to do great things.



Your right it can be overwhelming and fascinating, a lot of that is the internet and social media, I got interested in tattooing just before the internet really hit so my initial access was via magazines and books. Once social media became a part of it, for me, it was a blessing as it opened up so many artist and reference points and also allowed me to meet and discover so many artists and friends. I can't say I'm a huge fan of social media nowadays but I realise how important it is, that's how we have to conduct business now, it's definitely a blessing and a curse. It does feels sometimes that you have a pressure to keep up as everything moves so fast now, there seems to be a sort of subconscious pressure to keep churning out content each day just to keep interest going, like almost a fear or being forgotten or left behind, I try not to put too much onus on it as it defiantly can take its toll mentally.

I've learnt a lot over the years about what projects and what people I want to work with in regards to commissions and collaborations, I feel like I personally made some regrettable choices working with people who I may have initially thought had good intentions regarding tattooing when really they're just after the money that can be made from riding the wave of popularity of tattooing. You live and learn and there's no rulebook but I now go with my gut a lot more and do turn down a lot of fashion related stuff or anything if I don't really think it's from a place of genuine love and interest in tattooing.

What inspires you the most? art, traditional tattooing, literature, films, music or mix of everything?

Music is a big influence, painting and listening to music is one of my favourite things to do. I get a lot of ideas from lyrics and poetry and I try to read as much as I can.

I go to concerts and see bands, I always feel really inspired after singing with a bunch of strangers in a sweaty room. I go to gallery's as much as I can, it's always a motivational kick seeing different types of art and usually if I'm struggling for inspiration I'll head to a gallery. I collect a lot of antiques and things too, I really love Americana and folk art, religious iconography (both west and east) and music posters, I like a lot of kitsch stuff and old things.

Tattooing in general is obviously one of the biggest inspirations, it's so great to see progression in yourself and colleagues. Sharing ideas and references with friends is the best, artistic friendships with people where we can talk about art, music and tattooing is super inspiring.

What is your recent favourite music to play at work or when you work generally?

I like a good mix of stuff, my preference work wise would be something with a good tempo, nothing too sad or slow, or too heavy so it makes the clients uncomfortable, unless you have a client that's into it!

If it's my turn to put something on I'll probably go for Fugazi, Patti Smith, Wire, The Clash, Fleetwood Mac, The Wipers, Dag Nasty, Huska Du, The Stooges, Lungfish, the Rolling Stones. A lot of Dis-chord records stuff, some Motown and soul (I was brought up on that stuff) we also listen to some online radio shows like Iggy Pops show on the BBC, always a great mix of new and old stuff. Recently I've been listening to a lot of Culture Abuse, Nothing, Pity Sex, Modern Life is war, the new record from Vein is great, there's a uk band called Sievehead I really like, i could go on forever! I also really love 90's RnB and some pop, Prince, Cher, Madonna, TLC etc. and I'll fully admit I love uk garage and drum and bass, maybe not tattooing to drum and bass though, bit to fast.



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R. WHITTAKER



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SIMON LICE
@LICE4LIFE

The first question is something which always interests me, when I think of other artists and creators wherever do you like to work alone, in solitary or prefer group work, people surrounding you? do you have some kind of prep routines, like walking around and preparing coffee or special drink, playing specific music? do you easily get distracted or once you're started you're lost for others? :) its one questions but wide so you can treat it like few :P :D

- When I have clear ideas and a project underway I can just crack on with it, I enjoy working alone with no other distractions, music blaring in the background, but when I'm struggling with ideas or the process is just not working its nice to be able to bounce ideas off other people or just to have company so you don't go insane.
- I'm not sure if I have any pre work rituals, I often make a tea before I start work but I think this is just a English thing, I basically love having a cup of tea anytime and not just while i'm making art. I guess don't have time to waste with rituals because my art practice is done after work and at weekends so I don't have a lot of time to work on it, so I have to get on with it when I can, easier said than done sometimes.
- Like I was saying before, when I solid ideas this could be putting a new print together, carving a woodblock or printing the piece itself. I go for hours and I rarely get distracted, time seems to fly when I'm carving. I love this part of the process, again if nothing is working or I have no ideas I'll get easily distracted, my art studio is in my spare room at home, so if i'm having a bad day i'll just flick on the tv or something and feel sorry for myself Haha...

I guess theres kind of strange resemblance, at least for me between tattooing and carving in wood or sculpting jewellery. it requires lots of precision and kind of responsibility of making each line or shape as all of these methods of creating for me seems to be 'forever ones'. your artwork is so tattoo able, yet you didn't choose this popular path these days. can you explain or tell a little bit about printmaking? how did it start? why is the woodcutting your preferred method?

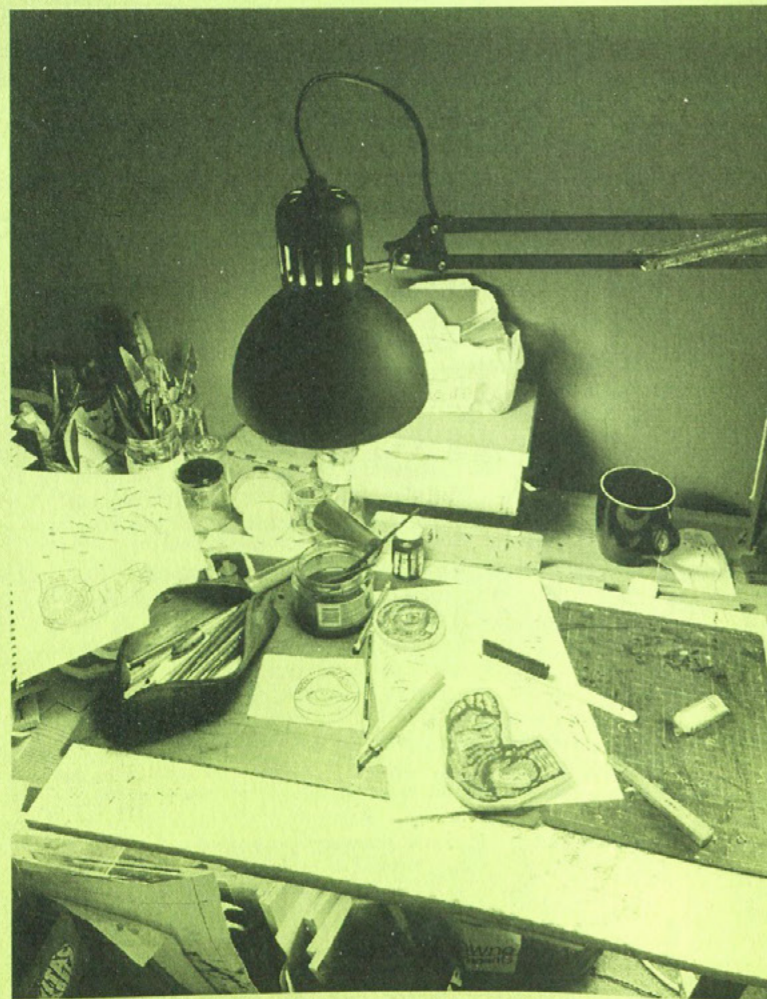
- There are defiantly aspects in carving and tattooing which require similar skills but the consequences are way worse if you are tattooing someones skin and you make mistakes, if I mess up a block or a print I can just start again, its not the end of the world. I think tattooing is much harder.
- Ten years ago I had ambitions to tattoo, I tried to teach myself but didn't understand a few important aspects of the process and not having a mentor to help me I just gave up. My legs still bare the scars to prove that at least I had a go haha... maybe it wasn't meant to be and to be honest there are so many tattooers about these days all do the same shit, I don't think the world is gonna miss one more.
- The woodcuts came about from me starting to draw tattoo style flash drawings, I got a little better and people started asking me about prints so I had some Giclee prints made, they turned out real nice but I had no connection to them they seemed kind of pointless. After my first run of prints I decided to do some Lino cuts which where more basic versions of my drawings I was doing at the time, I had fun doing them but I wanted to produce prints that had the same detail as my drawings. I thought wood might hold the detail better than Lino. I bought a ready made woodblock (same as I still use to this day) and gave it a go and bob's your uncle. As it turned out I think I could now get that same detail on Lino but carving the wood is just way more satisfying and fun, it's not something I can really explain well in words. Print making has become a passion, obsession maybe, I just love the whole process, I can't see myself ever stopping.

would you like to try other methods of traditional print making in future? like lithography, working with chemicals or is there any other way which you find particularly interesting?

- My main focus is still woodcuts I still have so much to learn. I don't think I have achieved everything I want from them and not sure if I ever will, I feel like my work is constantly evolving, which means the process is too. Saying that I've always been keen to try mono printing since I got into printmaking, its such a different process to woodcuts, would be fun to experiment with, even combine the two processes together. My woodcuts are so controlled, I feel like mono types are so loose and more spontaneous, could be interesting and take me out of my comfort zone.

your work is so bold and original, what inspires you the most? is it the music, the atmosphere of the movies, the tattoo culture?

- I think everything inspires me all of the above, of course the tattoo world has a massive influence on me along with many other artists that I come across past and present. I have passion for anything collage related, more so mixed media collage art. My biggest inspiration is my own work the need to do better than the last piece, make it more complex, constantly striving to be better at what I do.

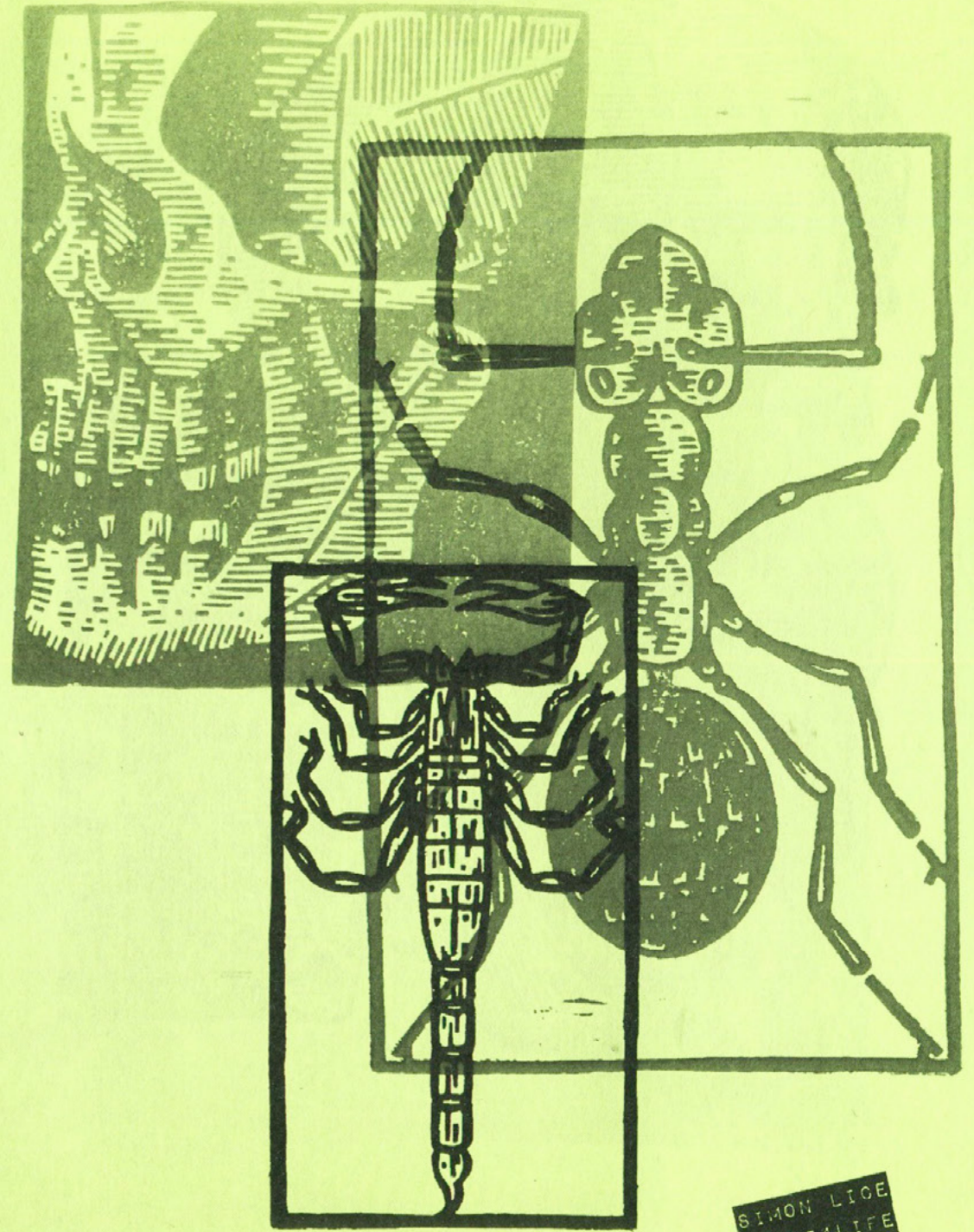
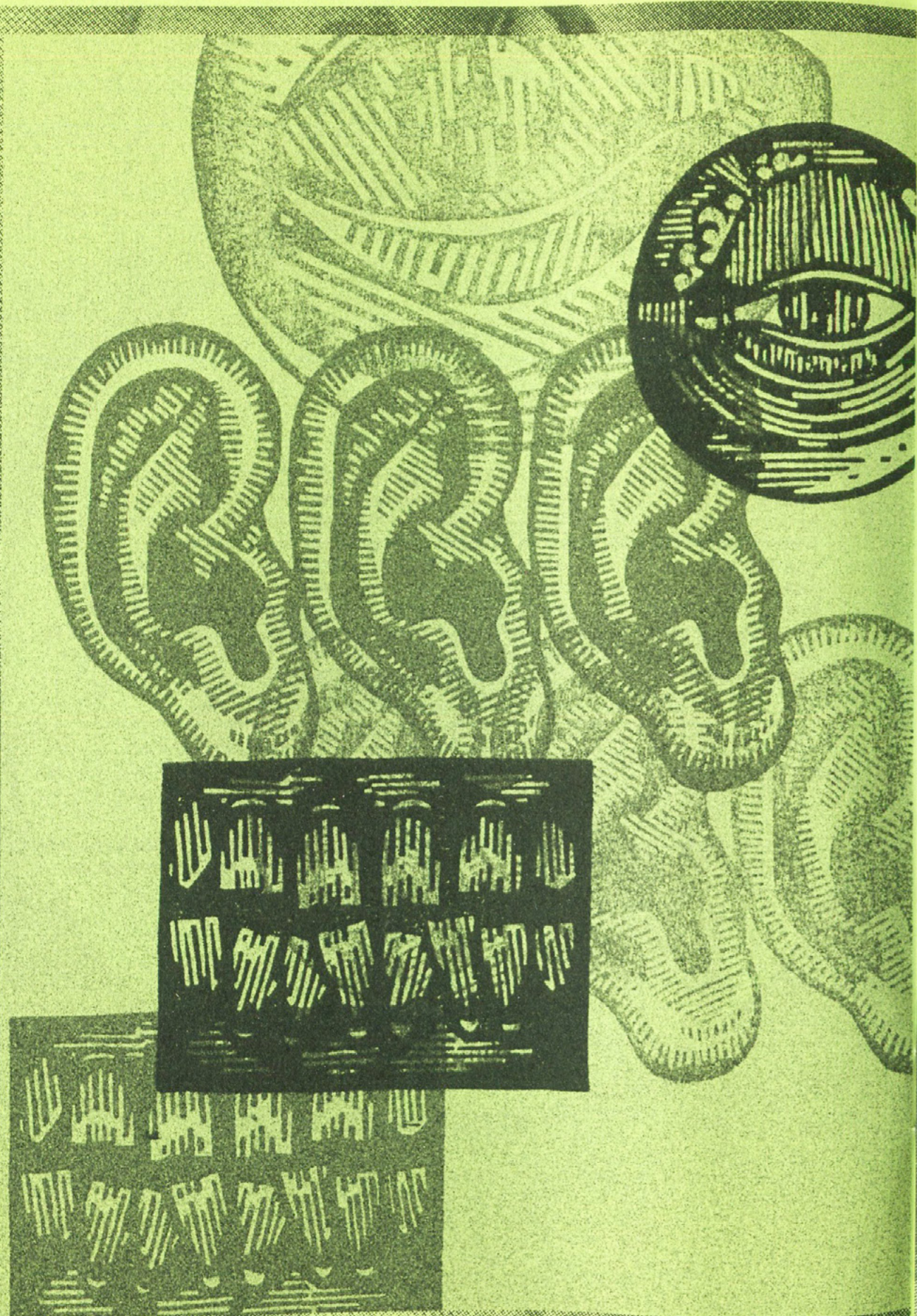


could you tell us who is your favourite artist or artists?

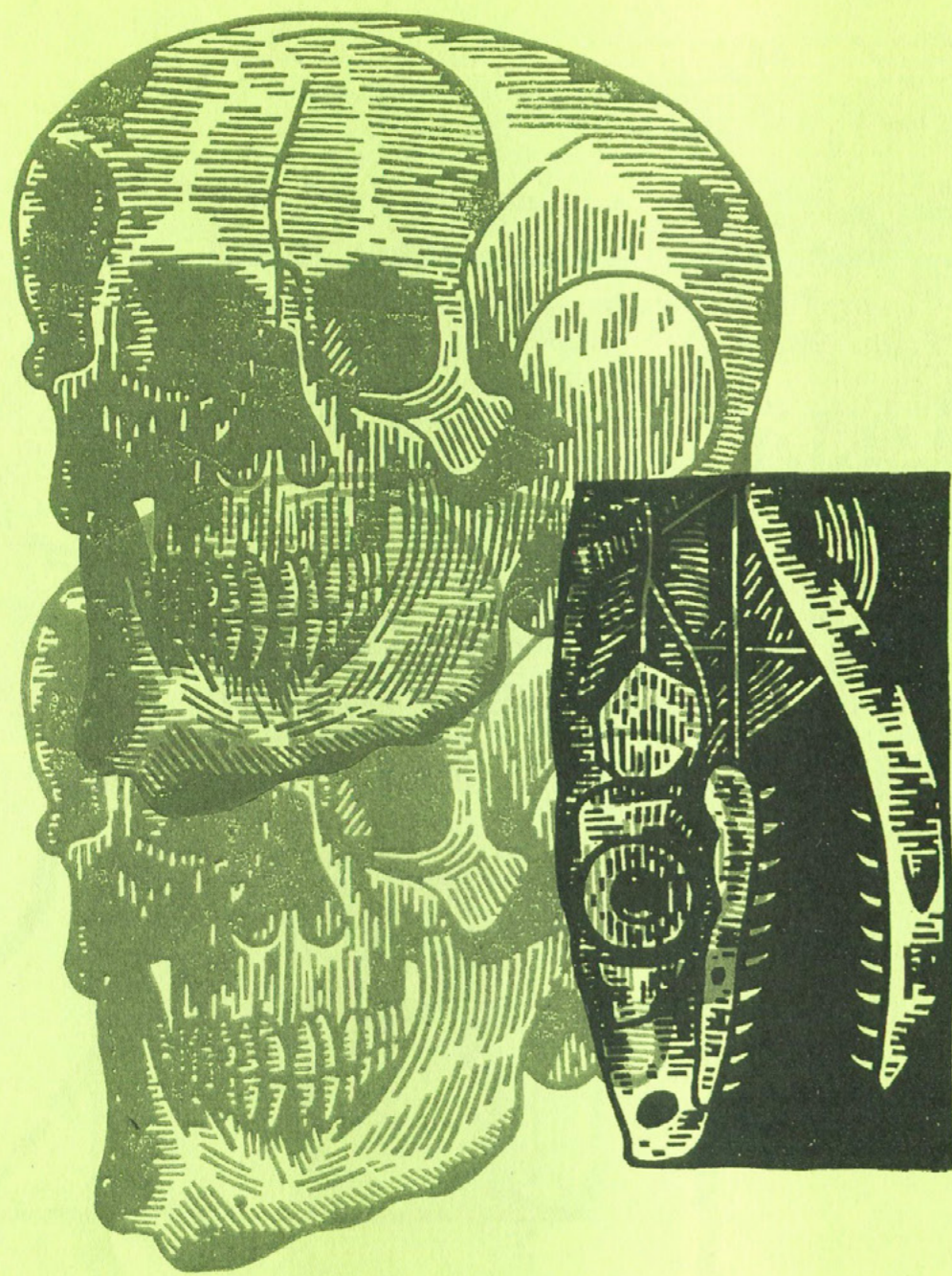
- There are so many talented people out there, these are the few that came to mind.
- I love everything B. Thom Stevenson does, he blows my mind. The graffiti and art of Egs CDC has inspired me for the last 25 plus years from when I was painting graffiti up to today, he just keeps evolving and pushing his style. Emilio Villalba paintings are just brilliant, such a talented guy. The tattoos and art of Jeremy Ross Armstrong. David Schiesser is always making amazing loose work. A couple of Aussie ladies that are putting in the work Claire Johnson aka Claire pony, constantly producing beautiful works in all sorts of mediums, such a hard worker. Chloe Kovska does fantastic colourful, fun paintings. Both of them have inspired me to push colour in my own work. Almost forget the legend Duncan X for just being him and the biggest influence ever, proud to wear so many of his tattoos and hopeful more in the future.

what are your wishes for the future, creating wise?

- Just to keep improving. Hopefully start showing my work in some galleries, I think it is time. My prints are so much better in person, it just gets lost on a tiny phone screen. I guess thats the same with all art.

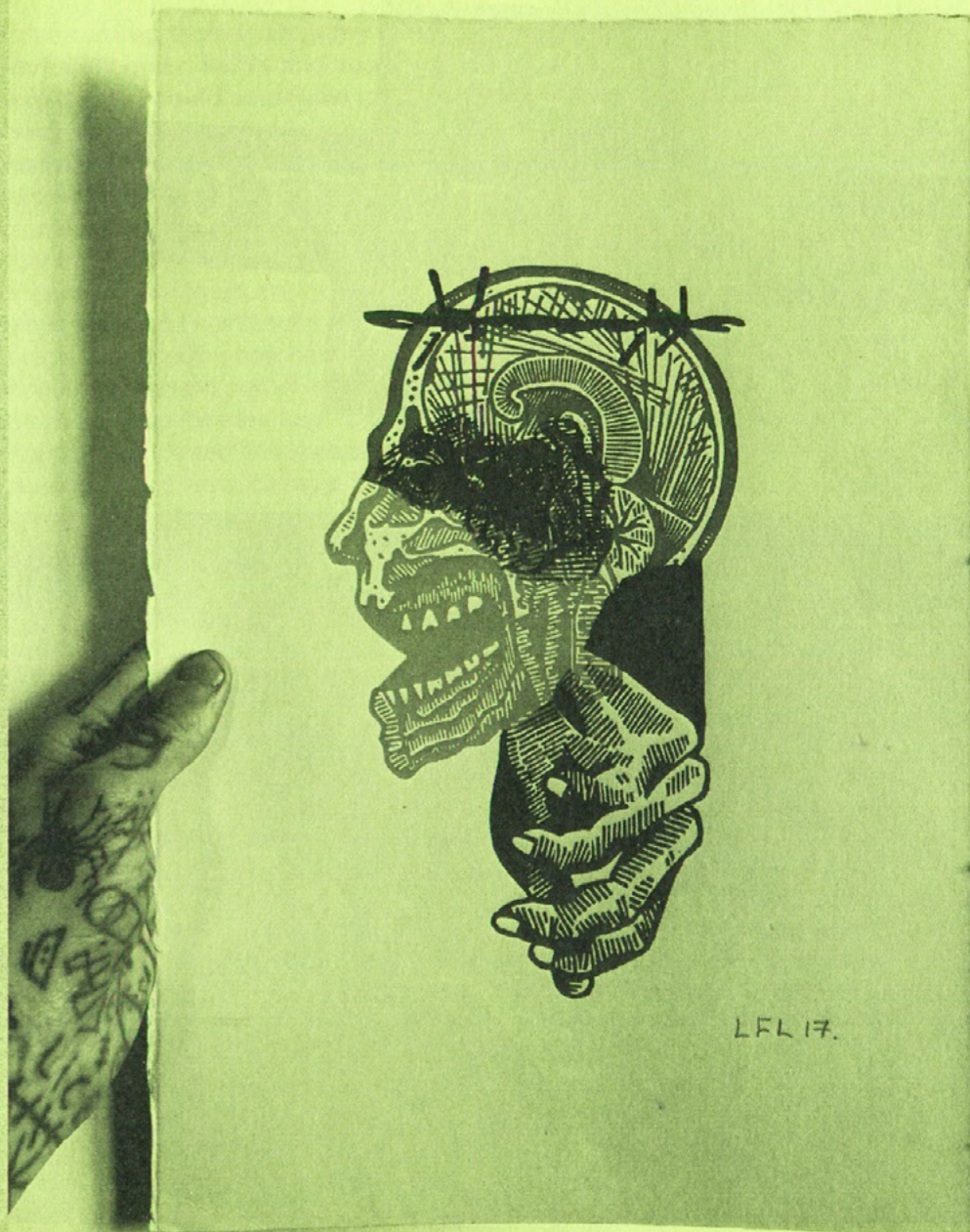


SIMON LICE
@LICE4LIFE



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YESHE
DHARMA TATTOO
LONDON

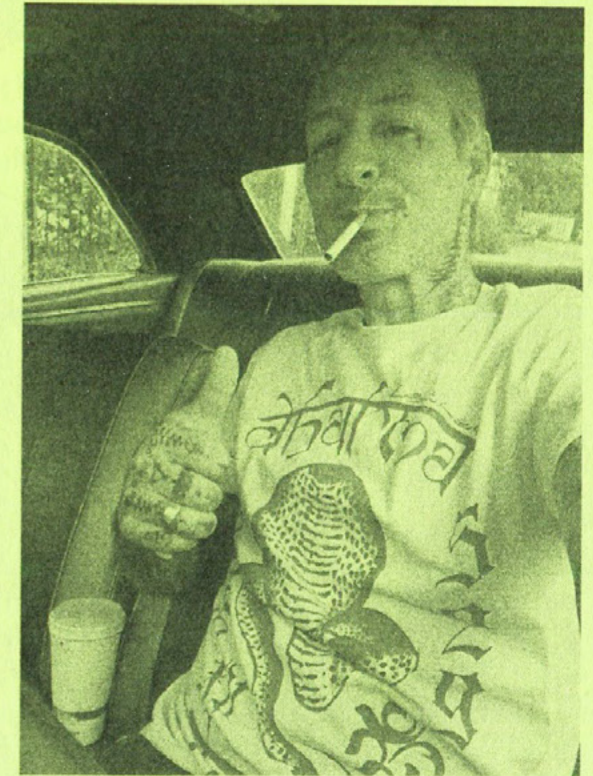


hey hey Yeshe! sooooo here are the questions for the zine, I'm aware that you had many Q&A's before so i really hope my questions aren't too boring!!!!!!!!!!

First of all thank you so much for agreeing for this little virtual talk.

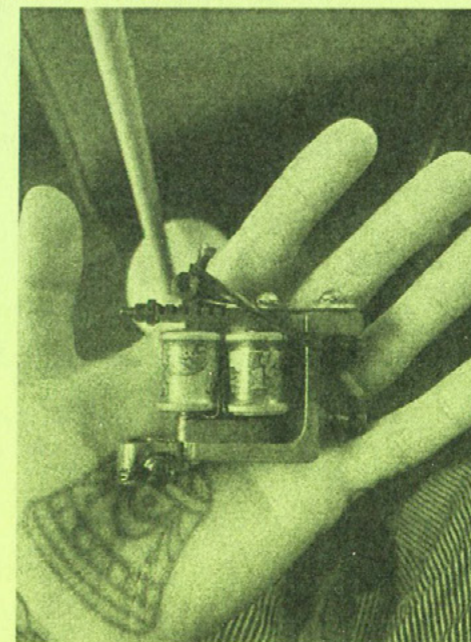
I love coming to your shop (by yours I obviously mean Sallys and yours :)). I am very happy I could somehow join you and every visit is a great experience. Have you always been thinking about opening your own shop?

Its so nice to hear that you enjoy coming to Dharma. We definitely consider you part of the Dharma Family! Yeah, pretty much from day one in tattooing I wanted my own shop. I have always loved seeing how people put their shops together and part of the attraction was to make a shop look the way I thought a tattoo shop should. It's sort of our clubhouse and we can do what we want. Being a "boss" was not something that I wanted at all but you need people in the shop with you, so its sort of a necessary evil I guess. When Sally and I opened Dharma, we had a pretty clear idea of what we wanted to do and how we wanted to do it. I guess the idea was newer to Sal as she isn't a tattooer but there is no way we could have Dharma without her. As the saying goes, "Behind every crazy tattooer, there is a stable woman who does all the work"



What did you learn since you've been running Dharma?

That's a hard one to answer, because I have learnt so so much. That sounds like a common response but literally, it has changed my life so massively I don't know where to start. To narrow it down to one main thing, and this is probably my Buddhism talking, everything is constantly changing and it always will. A shop is never "done", there is always changes to make. The "crew" is never forever, people come and go. Sometimes its quiet, sometimes its busy and sometimes its too busy!! So I guess the main lesson is to not fight it. Let things happen, deal with them as and when they appear and do the best you can in every situation and don't worry too much. The famous Buddhist teacher Shantideva once gave a teaching on change and basically said, "If there is a solution to the problem, no need to worry. If there is no solution, no need to worry either". That's basically what I have learnt and try to put into place at Dharma.





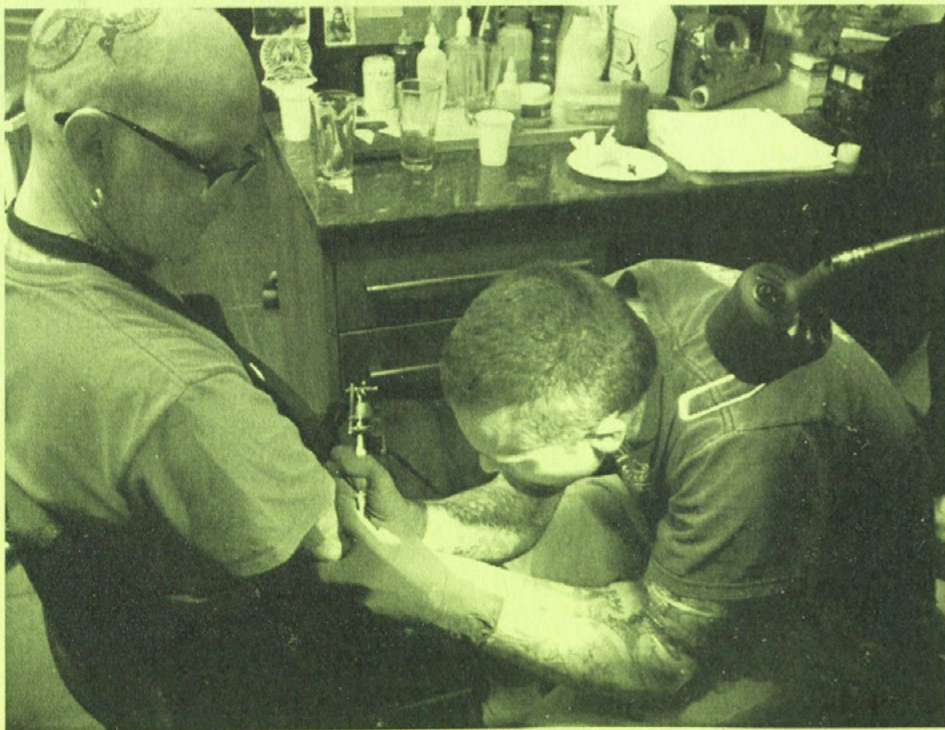
What is your youth background, did you belong to any subculture, did it influence your future? do you still listen to the same music?

Growing up a lot of my friends listened to 90's rap. Tupac, Ghetto Boys, Big L, NWA and things like that. So that music is really close to me and always reminds me of my youth. At the same time, I was into punk. None of my mates were so I'd listen to it pretty much exclusively on my own. I think I was lucky because even though I identified as a punk, I totally got where the others were coming from and I sort of had a foot in both worlds for a long time. The two aren't so different either. Both really come down to the yearning for social change and justice from the poorer communities. Both punk and rap really influenced my life in a big way. Both have very big cultures of drinking, drug taking, violence, gang mentality and a general annoyance with life. As a younger person, I was in to all those things and they stayed with me for a long time. The older I got the more I realised you need to start living differently to make a change, getting drunk and going to shows doesn't change anything. Its our actions.....

I still listen to a lot of rap and hip hop. I listen to some punk but to be honest, with clients it can be a bit intense. Most people are coming to get Buddhist or at least "spiritual" type tattoos from me. The probably don't want to listen to Antisect but something like BigL, I can get away with.

What is your favourite record to play at the shop or do you prefer 'background' music?

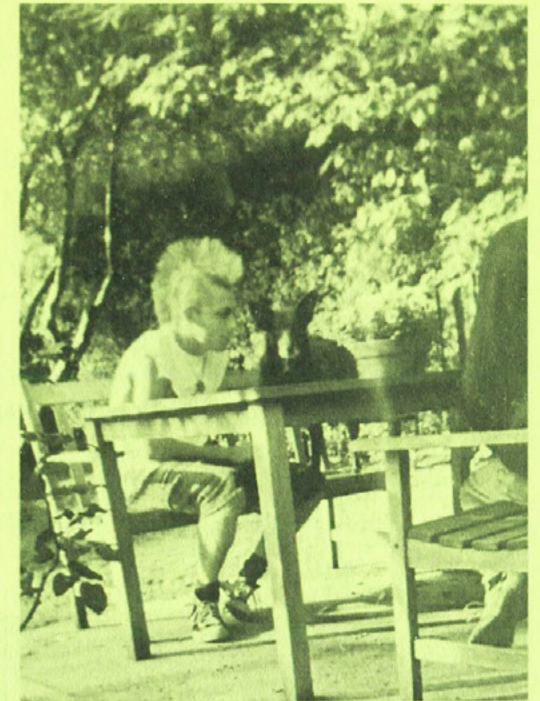
At the moment I am really enjoying listening to more background music. Growing up on punk and rap, you get used to songs that go for 3 to 5mins tops! Now I like listening to music where you need to listen to a record start to finish to understand it. Stuff like Sleep and Earth are great. Tinariwen, are one of my all time favourites to listen to when working! Any record of theirs, they are all amazing. Then, if I feel my customers are into it, I will play some stuff like the Tashi Lhunpo Monks or Ravi Shankar. Stuff like that played loud when Im working on large scale stuff seems to really relax my customers I find. So I guess I sort of have a 50/50 of what I like and what is good for my customer at the time.



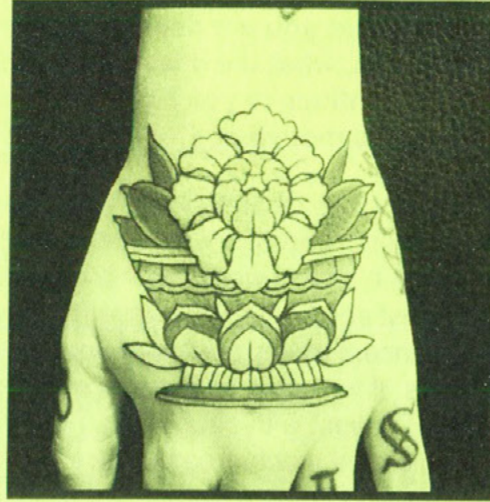
I know that you are deeply involved with Buddhism, what did it teach you and how does it influence you? What is your favourite motive or story?

Studying the Dharma has been a huge life changer. Its hard to write about it without writing a million words on it but I think the biggest and best thing I have been taught is patience. I try my best to remember this at all times. If we could all just focus on being a little more patient with each other, I think the world would be a much greater place! I know that it helps with being a parent and also when dealing with all the different personalities and needs of people in a tattoo shop.

My favourite story is the life story of Milarepa. He was a great student and teacher. A true enlightened being. He was put through many many intense hardships, freezing temperature, beatings, slavery, he even practiced black magic and was tricked into killing his family. Yet he became enlightened and he was a normal man. Not a Buddha, not a bodhisattva, just a normal person like you or I. So I always think of him when times are tough and think about how easy my life truly is. There is also a very similar story in modern times, of Akong Rinpoche and his brother Lama Yeshe



escaping Chinese occupation in Tibet and fleeing to India. They trekked for 6 months, while being hunted by the Chinese Government, over the Himalayas and eventually reached safety in India. 300 people left but only 12 made it. During the trip, they suffered greatly with disease, freezing temperatures and even had no choice but to eat their leather shoes to survive. Unfortunately, Akong Rinpoche died a few years back but his brother Lama Yeshe, is still alive and giving incredible teachings. Now, if I can sit in front of Lama Yeshe while he smiles and talks about forgiveness for the people who tried to kill him, how can I find a single thing to complain about?



YESHE
DHARMA TATTOO
LONDON

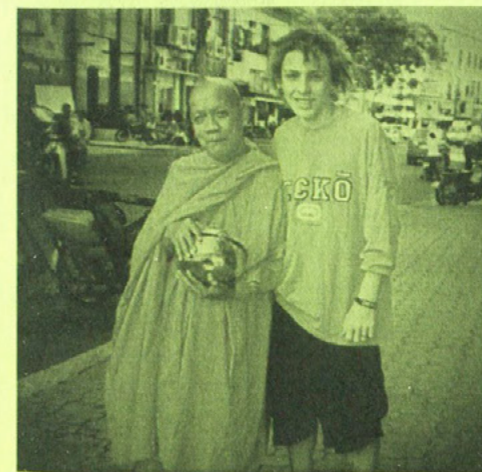
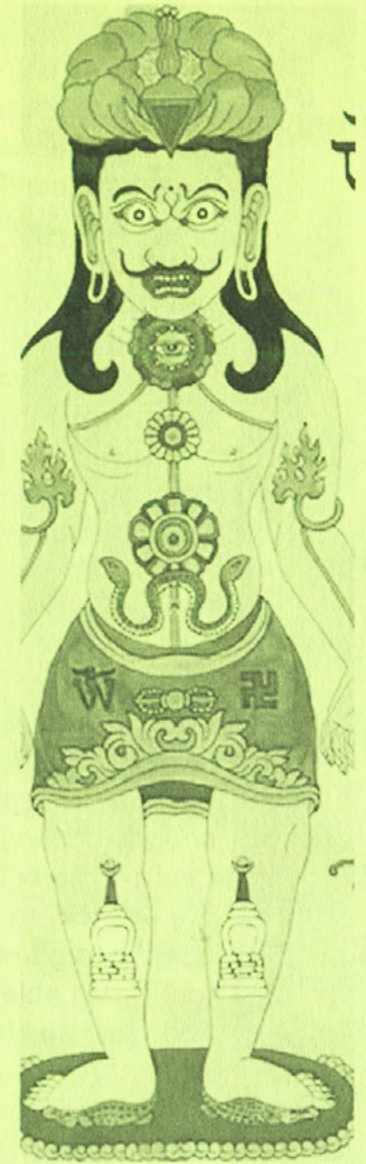


Do you really think the Earth is flat?
HAHA... You know, Buddhism and punk have taught me to question everything that we are taught and to test these things to see if they are true. For example, I do not believe in safe vaccines, I do not believe James Cook "discovered" Australia and I do not believe that eating meat is good for humans. There is a lot more that I have been taught in school or seen to the Earth being a ball, I feel that there maybe be some lies we are being told. At the end of the day I have no way of knowing right now but I'm very open to the idea of an alternative view of the Earth.

I really admire you and Sally for being so well organised, running the shop plus being super nice people. How hard is to maintain everything, having a small boy and being able to be creative?

Thank you so much! That's very kind of you to say. I think most of it comes down to Sally, my wife and co-owner at Dharma and Vince, my 2 year old. Sally pretty much is the glue that keeps everything going. I am around the shop a little more but I only really deal with the easy stuff when it comes to the shop like organise when people work, talking about drawings and hanging out with guests. Sally literally does all the "adult stuff" that makes it possible for Dharma to run. I think that both of us are so motivated to make the shop a good working environment because we really care about our whole crew and their happiness. We want to create a shop were we are more than just workers, more like a tattoo family.

But more than anything at all, we are motivated the most by Vince. To be good parents, set good examples for him from a young age and also to have a shop where he feels that he is at home there. He spends a lot of time in the shop and he already acts like a tattooer haha. He sets up his station and has some machines and seeing the enjoyment he has from tattooing already, is a perfect motivation.



In terms of being creative, I think before I was a father all I thought about was tattoos. Nothing else mattered. Once Vince was born that changed. But something very unexpected happened. Because all my focus was on him, I relaxed my obsession with tattoos and I feel like I became more creative. I think before I was forcing my creativity and now I just let it come. Sometimes there's a lot, sometimes there none but I try to just go with whatever happens. No more forcing it or trying to create. And I learnt that you don't need to always be painting or drawing to create. Sometimes you need to think and contemplate and that's when I truly feel like I'm creating.

what are your wishes for the future in the shop or for your own creative outburst?

I feel that the future for Dharma is bright and that's what I am hoping for. I want us all at the shop to continue to grow as tattooers and as a family. I like being a small street shop but we are so lucky to get people like your self, coming to guest and I want to continue that too. Being able to work with guests is amazing and I feel so blessed at the amount that we get at Dharma.

As for tattooing and creativity, I want to continue to focus on mainly large scale work. That's pretty much been my goal for the past 12 years and Ill keep pushing that. Id like to explore some more abstract work too but it's a bit of a slow process. Outside of tattooing I'm starting the long process of learning how to paint thangkhas, Buddhist paintings used for visualisations. Its sort of like learning to tattoo all over again but its something that I plan to spend the rest of my life learning.





DHARMA TATTOO LONDON



WHAT IS A FLASH?

One theory says that flash is called flash because back in the days, when tattooers used to set up in backrooms of bars and barbershops, if trouble happened, they could take their sheets off the wall and leave in a flash.

As a client, you might have decided which motif and what name goes in the banner, and that was about it. I've read many times that a tattooer would make a living out of a few top seller designs. Designs that have been copied, fined, refined, exchanged, sold and tattooed countless times, becoming the vocabulary of western traditional tattooing.

At his seminar at *the Bay Area Convention of the Tattoo Arts* in 2013, Don Ed Hardy said that he found a form similar to the classic black crawling panther on a 3000 years old chinese bronze. He also told an anecdote about him and Mike Malone getting their mind blown, not only by psychedelics, but also by their friend Lance McLean's discovery. While nobody knew where the original crawling panther came from, McLean found in the late 70s a book called *Minute Myths and Legends* written and illustrated by Marie Schubert, published in 1934. In this book can be found *the original black panther*. Hardy added that he thought that the first tattooer to have traced this panther could be William Grimshaw, who tattooed in the 40s and 50s.

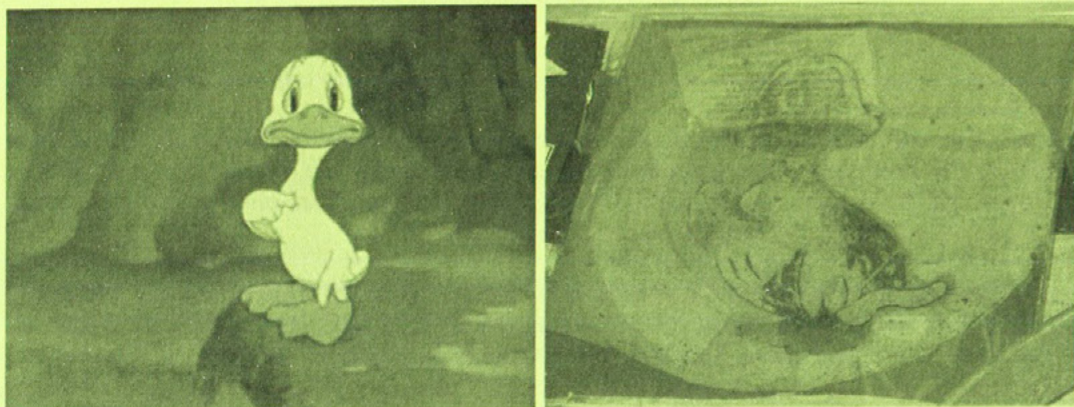


The original black panther

On her website *Buzzworthy Tattoo History*, tattoo historian Carmen Nyssen investigates the case of the classic *Hey you! Who Me?* duck design.

Her hunt leads her to the WWII torpedo boat PT-167 which had an insignia with the classic duck design painted on it. Going further, she finally finds the 1939 Disney short movie *The Ugly Duckling*, in which the ugly duckling, in this familiar pose we all know, answers "Who me?" to the swan calling him out with "Hey you!"

WHAT IS A FLASH?



Left: Disney's *The Ugly Duckling*, right: PT-167 insignia

I've heard more than once heavily tattooed people telling less heavily tattooed people that if their tattooer tattoos the same design on somebody else, then the abovementioned tattooer is a thief. I saw on our holy instagram a customer writing a comment about a very cool panther head tattoo, apparently similar to the one he got a few weeks before, that he was a satisfied customer until he saw *his* panther head tattooed on somebody else.

Nowadays, a lot of people who happen to tattoo work this way: an instagram account displaying a stream of designs; emails and messages to grab one or another. First it goes "Is this design available?", and later, on the tattooer's instagram, next to the overly touched up picture of the fresh tattoo, "Thanks *insert name* for picking this one from my flash!"

But in my opinion, if this is a flash, then the design is always available. I don't know who feeds this behavior, clients or tattooers, but it seems that everybody agrees to think that each flash design is unique and can be tattooed only once. Maybe those *one off* designs should be called something else? Like *pre-made customs* or something?!

What makes a panther head tattoo unique is the reason the client chose it and the way the tattooer applies it. A similar line work can be myriads of different tattoos.

If flash catalogues use the same imagery over and over, reappropriating pop culture references, it's not only because tattooing as we know it is a monkey see monkey do world, but mostly because their first goal is to offer timeless pictures. In the book *Stoney knows how - Life as a sideshow tattoo artist* by Alan Govenar, Stoney St. Clair explains that flash takes its name from circus and carnival slang, because of the "immediacy of their appeal."

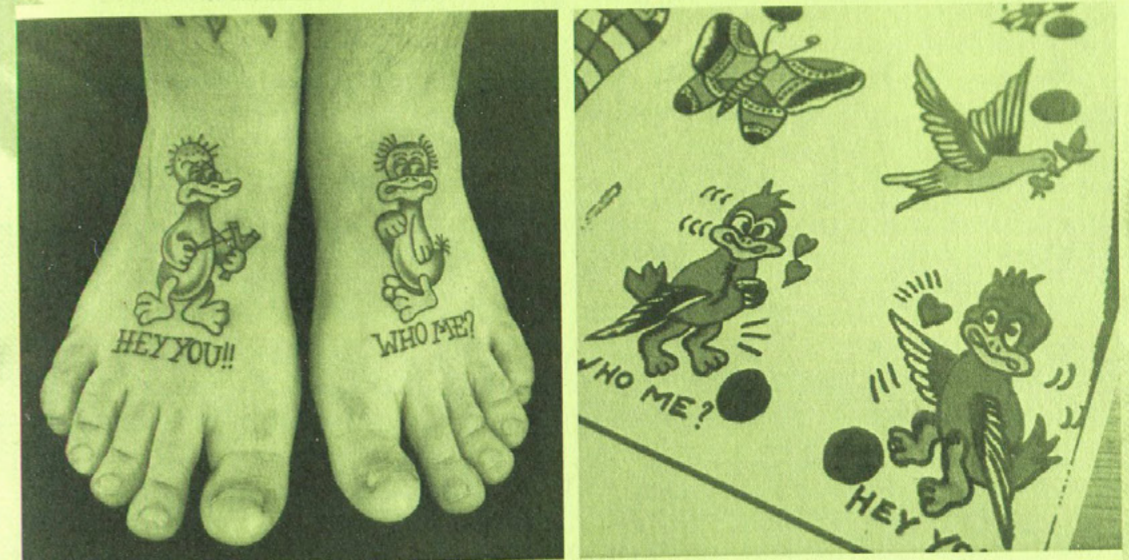
An other observed online behavior that made me question my life choices was the most active - consequently the most knowledgeable - user of a tattoo forum, telling less knowledgeable users that a tattoo must have a meaning. And a flash, having been designed without consulting the potential wearer, can't bear any meaning for this person. QED!

Doctor Alexandre Lacassagne, father of the criminal anthropology, kept records of the tattoos worn by french criminals at the end of the XIXth century. He considered them as a criminal CV, but also as a way for inmates to express things that couldn't be expressed otherwise. Those tattoos, as many codified prison tattoos from other countries, are the subject of several recent popular publications. It's even pretty common to see shop made tattoos copied straight from those publications. What makes them so fascinating is not only the fact that they are the testimony of a world we romanticize in our fantasies, but mainly because they are the raw expression of universal human conditions. What they say and the way they look is the result of a urgent need satisfied in particular conditions. Form and substance.

WHAT IS A FLASH?

And same it goes with flash designs. As with criminal tattoos, form and substance come together. Flash manipulates symbols, concepts, feelings, ideas - call it what you want - and expresses it through what should be timeless motifs, often using a well proven imagery. Whatever the topic, profound or silly, whatever the style, whatever the universe, the goal stays the same.

In his book *Flash from the Bowery*, Cliff White writes about the 900 designs reproduced in it that they "provide commentary on the shop's clientele and reveal some of the social, economic, and political ideas of the time." Tattooing feeds on its environment. Maybe that's where tattoo trends come from? But now, if the same panther has been tattooed countless times for 80 years, maybe it's time to reconsider this last DM asking if this iPhone with a broken screen / black rose behind a torn fence design is still available, and if yes, how much would it cost on the ankle? And if it's already done, no need to worry neither, Pamela Anderson's style tattoos, a time mocked, came back strong. It seems that tattoo trends don't escape the phenomenon of cycles.

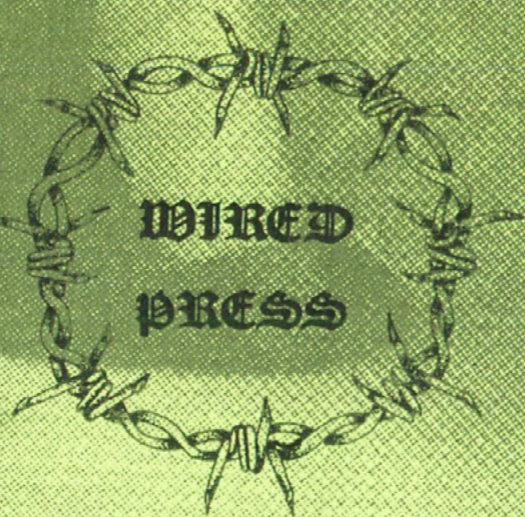


Left: tattoo by Crazy Lessi, Right : flash by Paluch

Tattooers pushed flash before, tattooers will push flash after, right now it's about being a worthy link in the chain.

Next time I might write about good taste tattoos wearers dissing bad taste ones. But for now, I'll leave you with a quote from Steve Boltz: "When somebody comes in and wants an owl on their chest, it's like, why don't you just get a fucking eagle on your chest?"

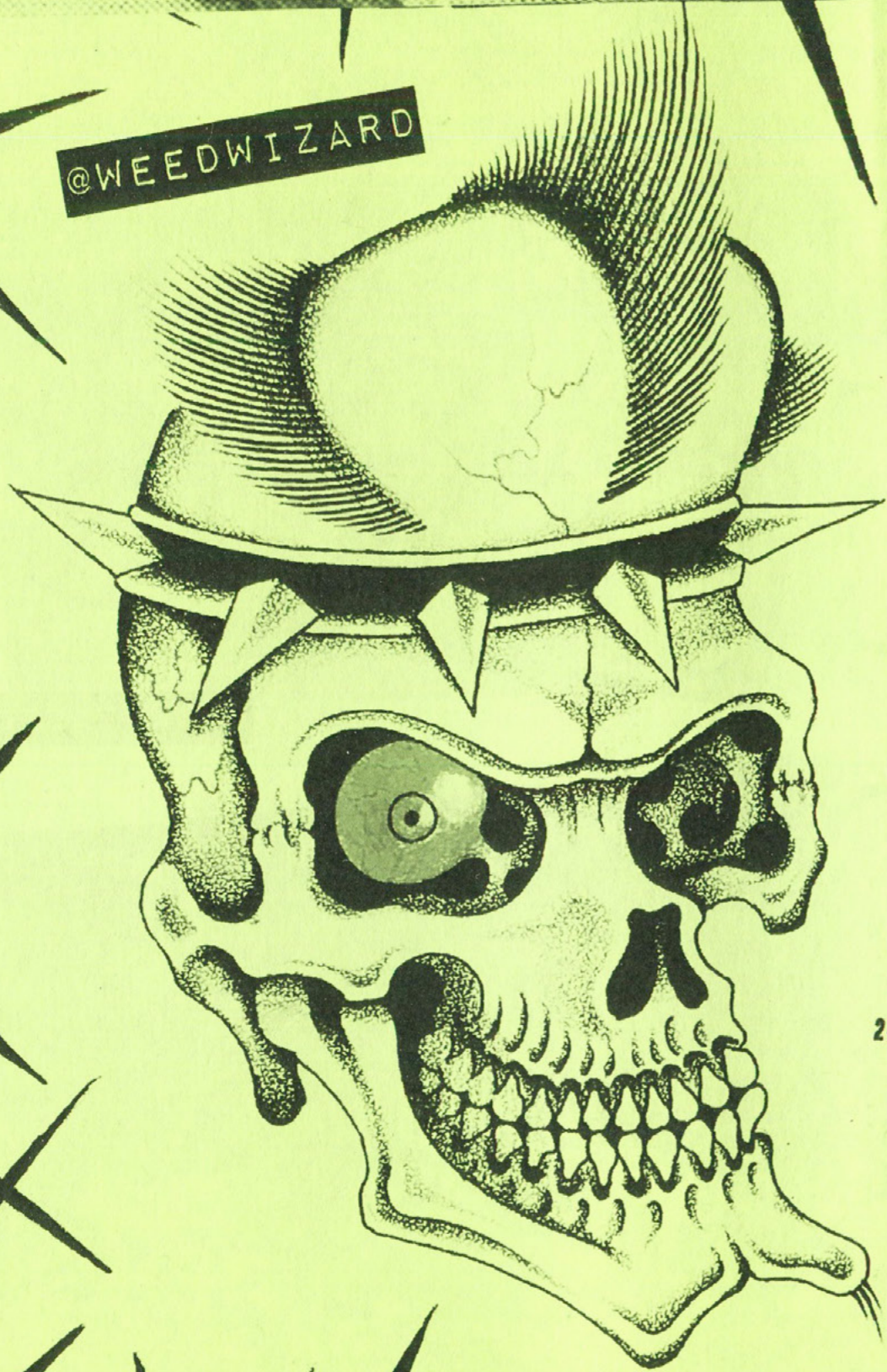
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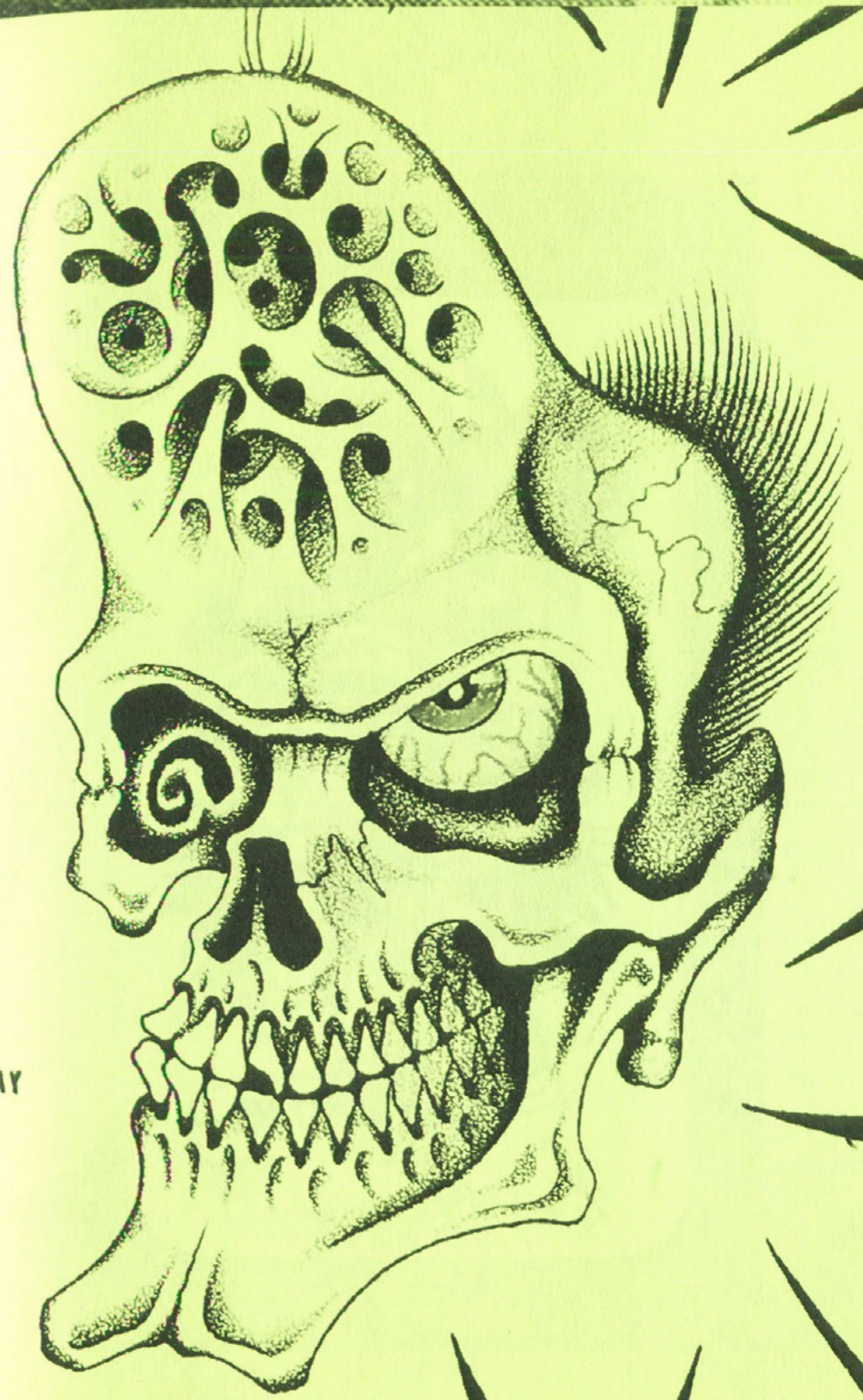


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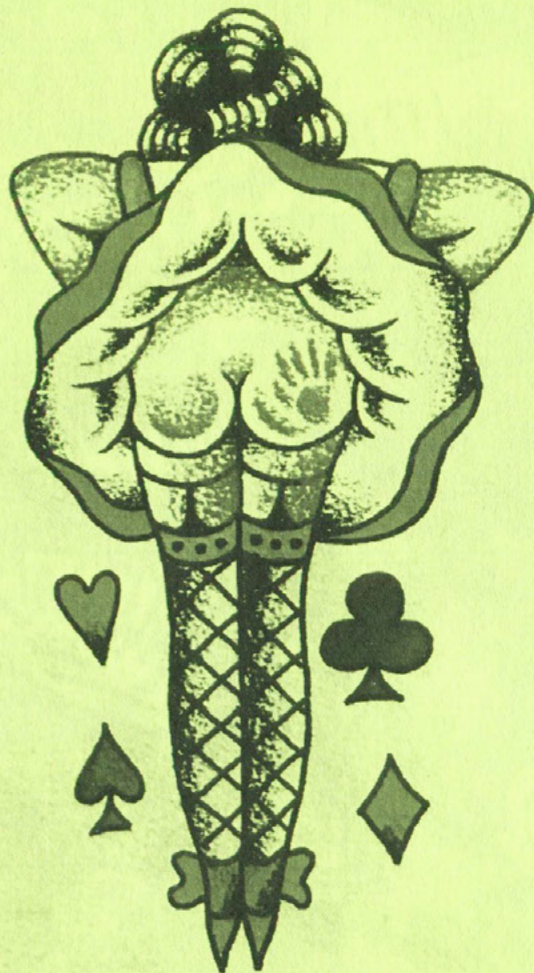
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ROZA-TATTOO.

My home away
*O FROM HOME*O



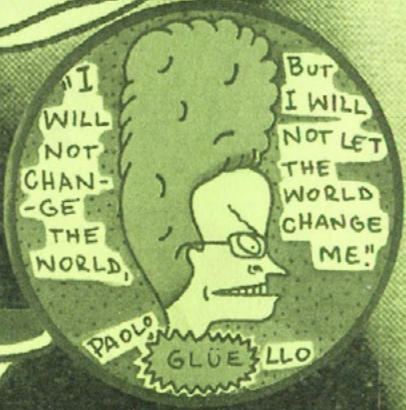
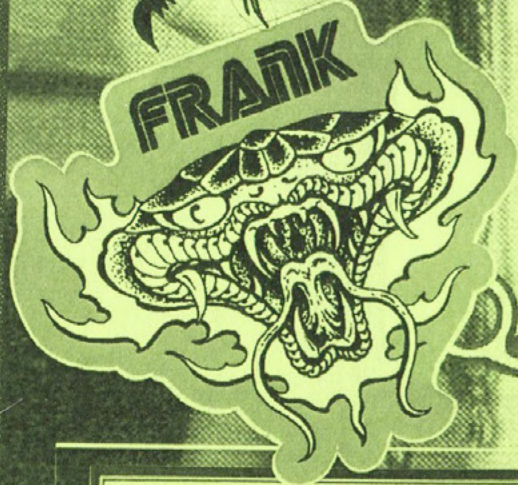
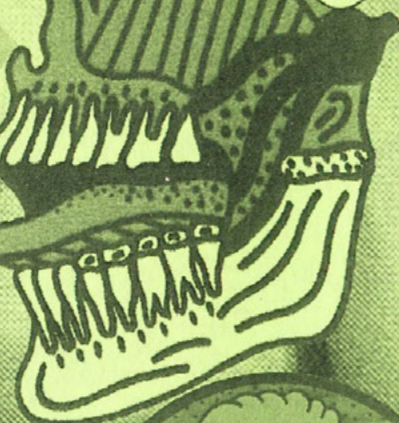
CARELESS*LINO.

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memories
guests

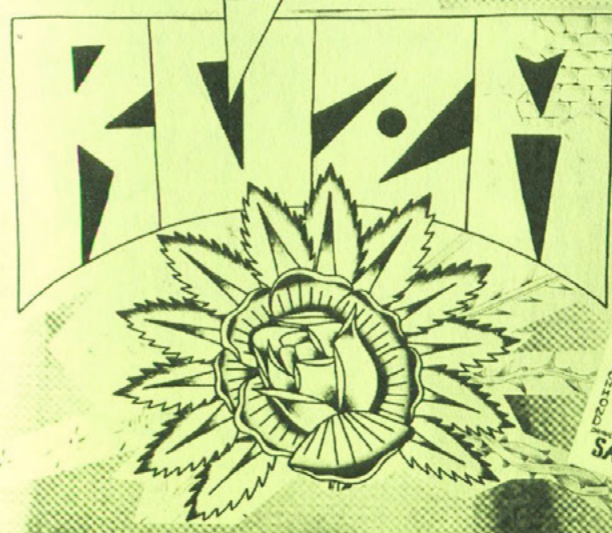
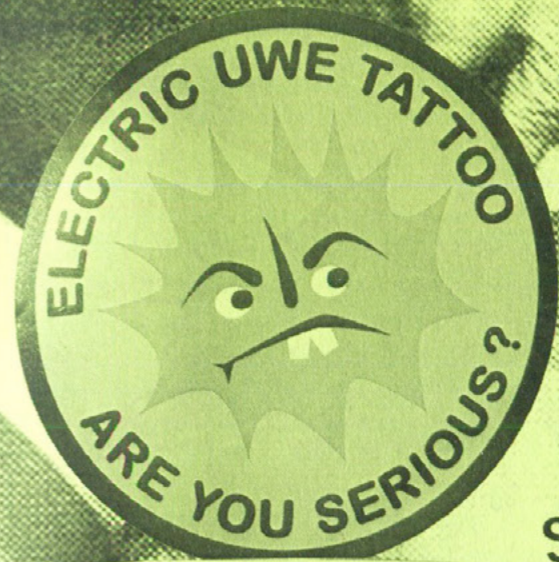
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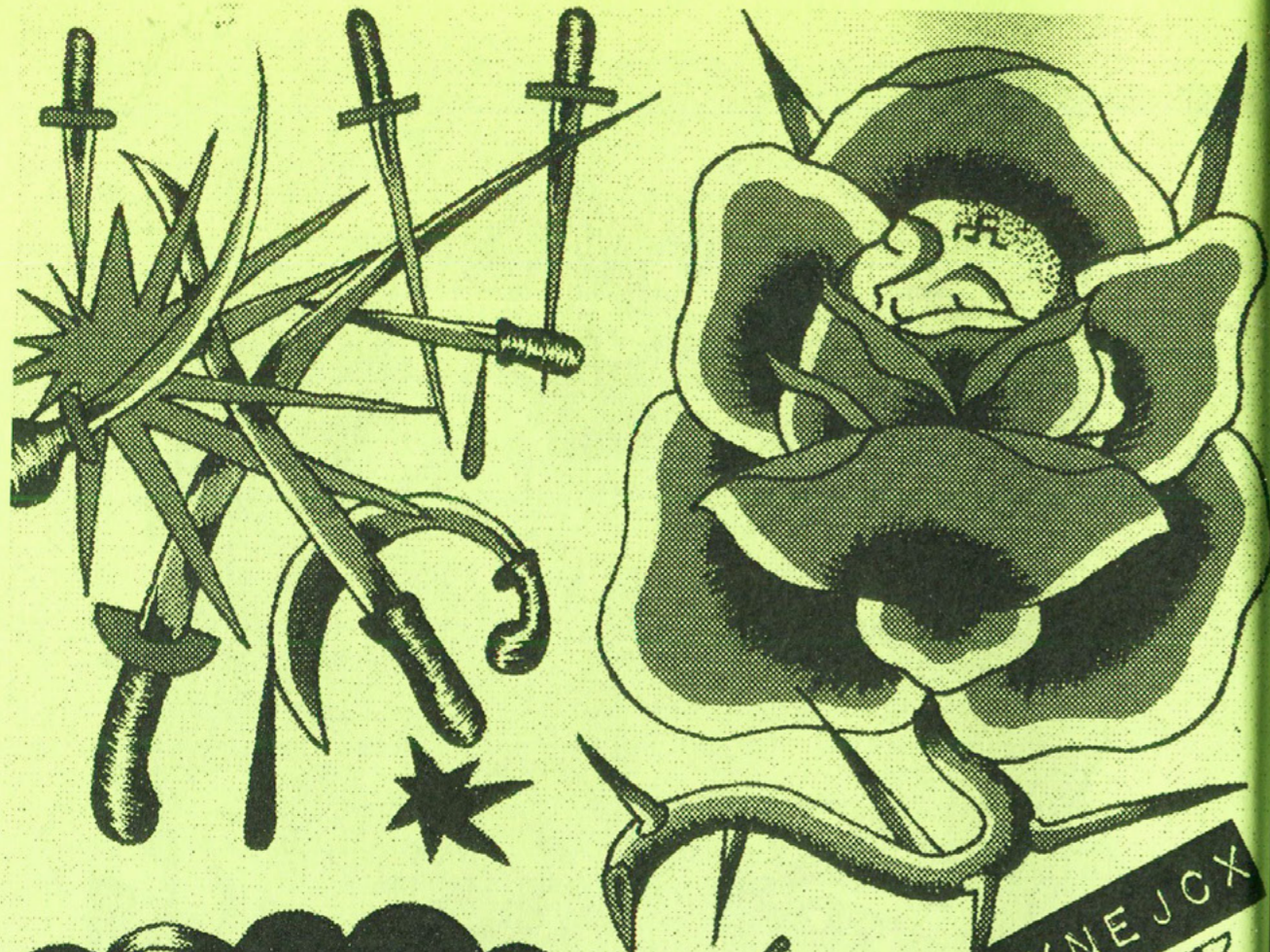
TATTOO



Checker Demon Press



They're coming back and having them covered now. I knew they would. You see, there's no such thing as the most popular design. They fool you. What they want today, they might not want tomorrow.



@XNEJCX

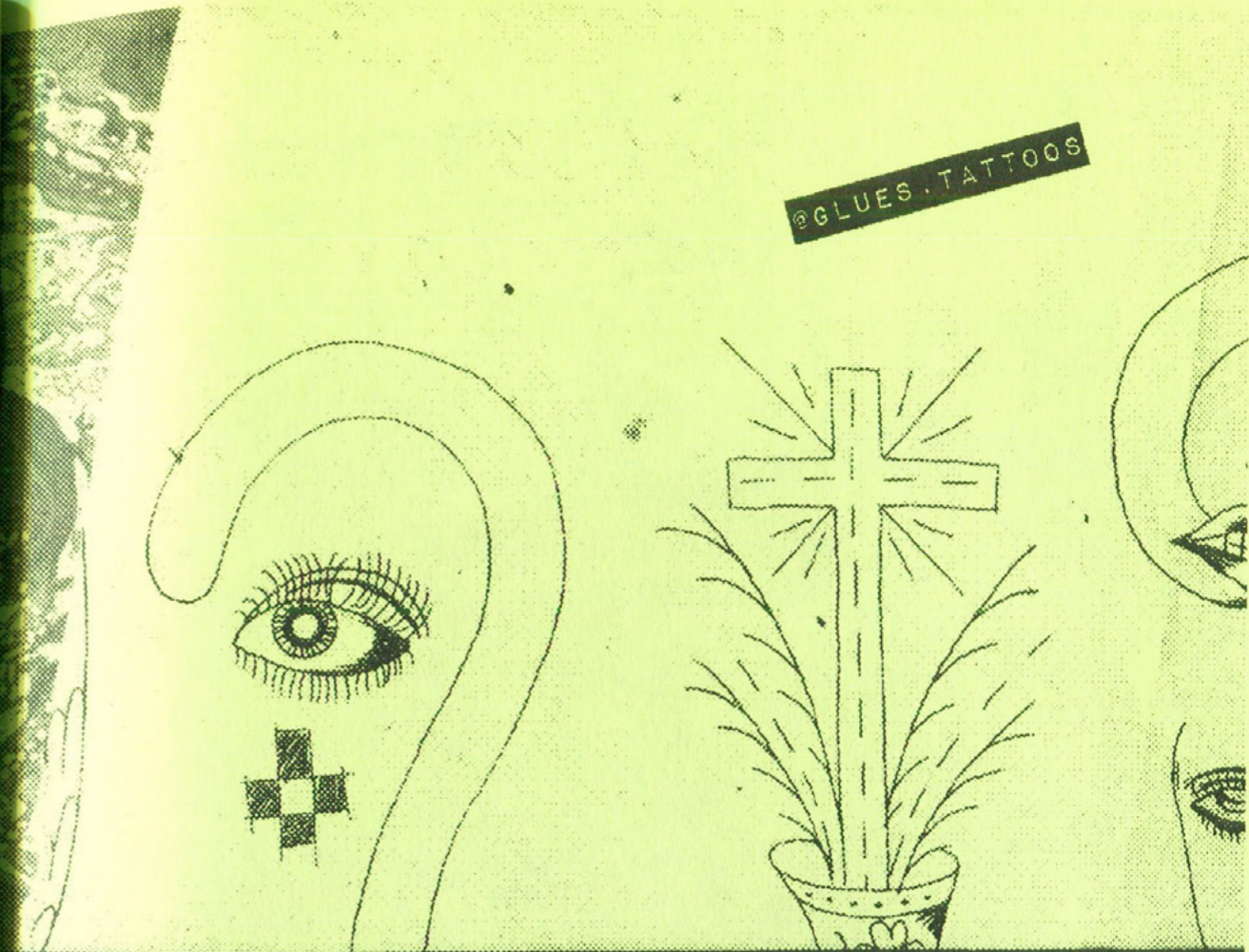


ROZA TATTOO



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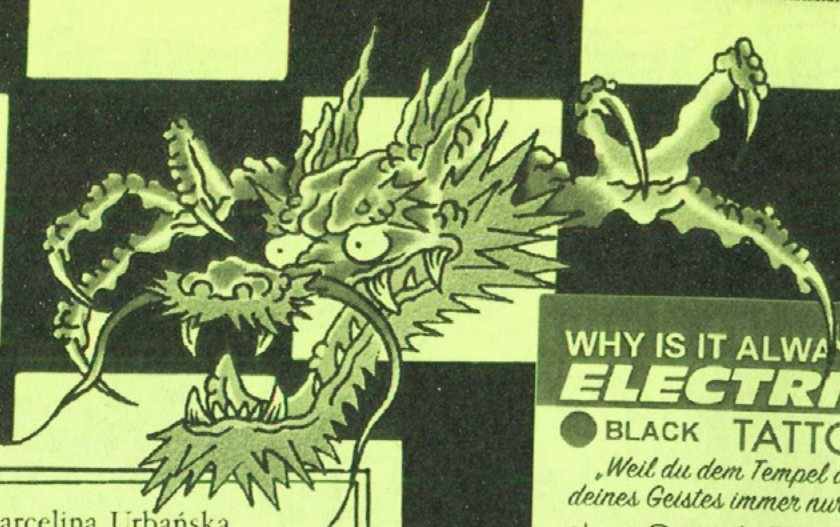
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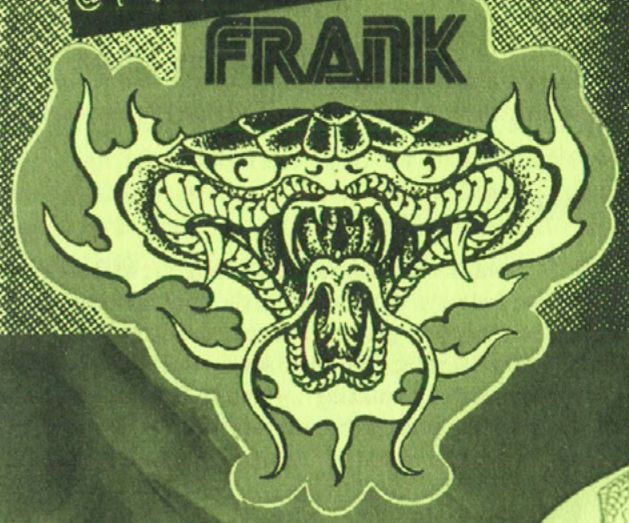
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London Am Leeds
Simon Erel
 Who the Are You
 thetankybunch@simonetl.com





FRANK
@FRANKS_TATTOO



As any other tattoo publication, cronyism got us to interview and display the work of friends. Fortunately, we have interesting ones, worth getting the spotlights on. Young tattooer, Frank S. is growing a good reputation by providing solid tattoos to Poland daily.

Can you introduce yourself? Name, age, background, that type of things...

I'm Franek, but it's not my real name. I'm 26, getting older. I don't have like, interesting background, just started tattooing and I'm doing what I'm doing.

Right now I'm working at Caffeine Tattoo by Bartosz Panas, for almost two years now.

For how long are you tattooing?

I always say it's hard because I'm tattooing for almost 6 years, when I count it, but at first it was trashy tattoos with my friends, in apartments, when we were drunk. So I don't know if we can count the first year, or maybe even two.

What pushed you to start making tattoos?

Hm. I started getting tattoos when I was 15, from this girl, she was tattooing me in Lublin and I was living in Lublin. So I start getting tattoos, and I always think about it, the cool underground, a little bit quiet but still super cool, environment. So I just was getting tattooed, and after I get a few of them, I start thinking that... I start looking at the internet, and I was seeing the whole fucking jobs from America or other countries, thinking « wow that's amazing ! » And in Poland, I didn't see at all. So I just think, maybe I'll be able to do amazing work hahahaha.

So how did you get started?

Hmmm... I met a girl - and a lot of my fucking life choices was with a girl. So I met this girl from Warsaw. She was from Lublin but living then in Warsaw, studying here. And we met at some random party, hooked up. Then I quit her and move to London but then come back to her in Warsaw. And we go to Amsterdam on fucking hiking trip, to get fucked up, we come back here and I didn't come back to my home. Just here, to Warsaw. We're just living together, she, me and her gay friend. She was older, 3 years I think, and she had more tattoos than me, she was more into the whole scene and all that stuff. I didn't have work then, and she was working in a bar, or something like that, and we were thinking « shit ! maybe we start tattooing, and that would be cool. » So we buy the fucking cheapest set up from the fucking internet, probably allegro or something. We buy 2 machines, needles, inks and all that stuff for, like, 200 zł, in a fucking case. Like the super common stuff here in Poland. And this is how we started.

Has polish tattoo scene changed since you started?

Yeah, definitely man ! When I think about it, at the beginning, when I was looking at youtube channels, youtube videos, facebook pages of Davee Blows, of Edek, of Lipa, they were always making super colorful, like traditional, neo traditional stuff... Fuck yeah ! Lipa was making super colorful neo traditional stuff. And they have, like, movies, on the web, you can see even today. They were doing this kind of stuff, and I was always into traditional kind of stuff, but then I see Lipa's work, Edek's or Davee Blows', super colorful, super new for me, and it was super different from what I was thinking about tattoos earlier. So I was « yeah, that's fucking... That's it ! » And now, each of them has super different style. Because at first, Edek, when he started tattooing, he was tattooing chicano, realistic black and grey stuff, and then, super neo traditional, super fucking colorful stuff, pretty much similar to the stuff that Bartosz Panas is making today. Bartosz Panas was super inspired by Edek. And now Edek has changed fucking style 180 fucking degrees. Everything's changed, yeah.

But generally speaking, have you observed the development of the tattoo scene in Poland?

Yeah !

But there were some people doing traditional already probably?

Yeah for sure ! The first time I met with Piotr Melnyczuk, it was maybe 7 years ago, in Lublin, because he was living in Lublin, studying there. He was the first guy who I know from Poland doing traditional, not even neo traditional, but traditional, oldschool stuff from USA. Super classic stuff. So, definitely him, but there was few people who chose this style but they don't... Because even Piotr Melnyczuk was going to Zappa, in Tricity, to get to learn how to tattoo. And Zappa doesn't even probably do traditional stuff. So he just chose to do traditional stuff because he likes it, and polish people, they don't have traditions in tattoo, really, so he just chose.

Who were you looking up at the beginning?

When I bought the first set up of machines and all that stuff, I was trying to tattoo traditional stuff, because me and my ex-girlfriend liked this style, but then, I remember like if it was fucking yesterday, the first thing that I saw was fucking Andrzej Lipa, Lipczinski ! I saw his neo traditional, super colorful, women faces with crazy stuff in the hair or something, and it was like « goddamn ! That guy is fucking amazing ! » And I always had this one person in mind, Lipa. But it's changed of course.

Do you think that western traditional tattooing has started here in Poland?

Yeah maybe. For sure we adapt the traditional tattooing, but not the oldschool stuff. Because oldschool american stuff it's like, traditions. But here in Poland, we have only this kind of tattooing, with outlines and shading, but there is no traditions.

Do you observe a general direction in which polish tattooing is going?

That's the point for me, Poland has no direction. People who make traditional stuff say that people who make different stuff are taking over, but, this taking over... There is no one direction, for now, because we are too young, we... In Poland, the oldest tattooers like fucking Junior or fucking Zappa or I don't know, they have no traditions at all. It's realistic, semi realistic or neo traditional kind of stuff, there is no one direction, and you can't say that tattooing has a direction when the people tattooing have few years experience only. Because 3 years, 4 years of tattooing it's no time at all. Tattooing is a super long period.

Do you think that some people are trying to build a proper tattoo culture in Poland?

Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's what I mean. Because, back in the days, there was few tattoo shops, bigger than other ones. Like, everyone in Kraków goes to Rock'n'Ink for example, or go to Kult, or in Lublin to fucking Valhalla, or fucking... In Gdańsk they're going to Zappa of course. And there was this kind of shops, and everyone tried to go there because there was a bigger possibility for getting an apprenticeship or start tattooing there. And now, there's more and more tattoo shops that are not private, like one guy just tattooing and call it a tattoo shop. An other way to become a tattooer, and begin the fucking journey.

On social media you sometimes use the hashtag « keep tattooing cool ».

Yeah !

What's the idea behind that ?

The idea is about attitude. Because I don't believe that one style of tattooing is better than an other one, and I really think about... Because now, in Caffeine, there are a lot of people working, and everyone is tattooing different stuff, and some of them, like the realistic stuff, are really fucking good. I don't think one style is better than an other style, at the beginning, so I think the attitude... Because a lot of tattooers now, they don't live as I imagine tattooers live. I started tattooing and I became, kind of, part of the scene, and when I meet people, hanging around, exchanging experiences and all that stuff, but some of them, they're just like... treating tattooing as job. They don't even have fucking tattoo friends. They're just tattooing only because it's bringing money, so it's... Maybe it's not a wrong way, it's their way, so maybe it's good for them, but for me, everyday I'm tattooing, painting, and... Everything around tattooing brings me super happiness, and I'm happy all the fucking time ! And when people are treating it like it's just a job, I think they are making themselves miserable.

Because in an interview with Chris Dettmer, I think, I'm not sure, he says that he'll do any tattoo but not the ones that he can't guarantee will look good in a couple of years.

Yeah yeah yeah ! That's for sure ! I made a few of this kind of tattoos that after the finished work I already knew that it wouldn't be the greatest tattoo after a few years. But this is the thing, because I never tell people that I can make everything looks beautiful. And sometimes there are situations I say « I'm not sure about it, I can make it, but I'm not sure about it, and it can be not a good tattoo after a few years » and people they say « yes », sometimes. And when they say yes, I don't have any objections to not do that.

You're providing tattoo as a service ?

Yeah !

You rarely show flash for example. Do you paint flash ?

Yeah... It's more paintings, not proper flash, just ideas.

Studies ?

Yeah, studies, having fun with paint and new things.

Is painting important for your tattoo practice ?

I didn't think so, for some period of time. Now I'm starting getting... The more I draw stuff I want and like, the more I get this kind of tattoos done. Before this, I didn't think... Because I can tattoo many things and many, like, tricks, or just crazy stuff, that I've never been able to paint. So I never thought about it like « I paint this way so I tattoo this way » because it's still different, for me, technics and all that stuff. But more and more, I figured it out, paintings could be just ideas, and tattoos are just... tattoos.

Where do you get inspiration from, what do you enjoy looking at ?

Fucking movies man ! Fucking movies ! Right now, the last stuff I posted, the paintings, are straight from the fucking matrix, fucking alien movies. Because there's a few of the tattoo artists making this kind of stuff, not making tattoos like this, but paintings, crazy outerspace shit.

What's your basic set up ?

I'm working with Mateusz Mazak's machines, from the time I was working with him and Piotr Melnyczuk in Kraków. I'm working with Mazak's machines for sure.

So coil machines ?

Yes. Daily driver from Mazak, always perfect.

You think it's important to meet with other tattooers ?

That's for fucking sure man ! That's for sure ! This the way you make a kind of society, you know. When we want this society a bit close, just hanging with people, doing what we are thinking are cool tattoos, traditional tattoos, we have to maintain constant reach.

The community should be active ?

Yeah, that's why I'm thinking that Róza is a good spot, the community is getting stronger. Because here in Poland, there are different problems with tattoo shops. They're getting opened now, so they're super young. Tattoo shops are like 1, 2 years, so it's nothing. In fucking Europe some tattoo shops are fucking 20 years. And even here in Poland the oldest tattoo shop is like 11 years. What the fuck ?!

You have no fantasies about USA ?

No, fuck no ! I really don't fucking get it, for me it's fucking rubbish, this kind of nomad style of shit... It's not nomad... You are no one, nowhere, you are just not existing.

Some good tattooers travel all the time. Even in American tattooing, you read about those carnies and so on, they were nomads.

Yeah but they had, always, roots, you know. For me, it's important, the roots, and tradition.

But you don't want to visit USA ?!

I'll visit America for sure, just because I really think that if you're interested about anything, you have to travel to get to know the subject better, but for sure, I don't want to live in America and any other country than Poland.

Anybody you admire the work and we could mention ?

That's the thing for me, I don't admire the work, but I admire people, what they are and what they do, as a person. So for sure my old fucking team, Piotr Melnyczuk and Mateusz Mazak are fucking the greatest for me. But there is no such a man in Poland that is something more than an other one, we should all be friends. Now, the more I know people, and I see how everything is changing, I don't believe that there is a person that will always be the greatest. People are only people... Many people that I got to know, that I was admiring when I was starting, they don't get to my expectations.

Never meet your idols.

Yeah... Yeah, it's true, really, because they're only people. And even back then, when I was thinking « goddamn, this work is fucking so amazing », and now, I get to know these people, and they're just... just people ! They're doing stupid stuff, and, you know... I think tattooing should be traditional, based on traditions and all that stuff, but too many things depend on the recent moment, you know. Because, there's no... Like, Bartosz Panas, back in the days, he was making super strange stuff, super big stuff, huge pieces, super colorful, super complicated, and back then, people were thinking « wow this is fucking huge, this is fucking the thing, I never saw this kind of stuff ». But now, it's common shit. So it's never like this. And there is no way, maybe for Ed Hardy, but there is no way for a guy to push it over and over and over. Sometimes, it's just pushing, becoming the good guy, making good work, and just stay on the same line. I really think that you can't make your work outstanding every fucking time. Sometimes you are in this place, in this time, when your work is like « oh shit ! Fuck yeah ! », everyone saying « woooo this is fucking amazing » and all that shit, but after years, it's become common.

Stay humble, work hard, and be nice to people !

Yeah, that's for fucking sure ! This is one of the fucking most annoying thing in tattooing, when people are just fucking assholes. This is what I mean, the people I admire, it's all about attitude. You can make fucking the best portraits, one to one to the fucking photo, and still be a fucking asshole. No one likes you, your work is nothing. At the end of the day, it's still only fucking tattoos.

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