



AUTHENT/INK

Inked Australia's resident tattoo advisor Kian Forreal on the protection of tattooing.

SO EVERYONE WANTS TO BE a fuckin tattooer now... or at least try their hand at it! Can't people just be happy getting tattooed? From this retarded TLC Tattoo School show that people all around the world are losing their shit over that is proposing to teach people the fundamentals of tattooing in two weeks during a reality show type atmosphere, to friends letting friends 'Give it a try'. It reminds me of the 90s when 'everyone' was a bloody DJ. Just clubs full of wannabe DJ's listening to a DJ.. wishing they were the DJ up on the platform spinning the records...and few people actually enjoying the music for the music's sake. Get it through your heads, all of you, being a tattoo artist isn't for everyone. It takes a lifetime of dedication, stubbornness, focus, weirdo factor, and talent among other things. Doing 'a few' on your mates with eBay equipment is fucking stupid, dangerous and makes a mess. Give that a miss. That 'friend' that let you practice on them has to live with it forever and it's a dishonour to the craft. And you tattooers out there letting your mates have a go. Leave it out. You're not doing anyone any favours and again you are dishonouring the very craft that has given you life. Let the people that have dedicated their lives to tattooing be the

magicians, you don't need to understand the magic to enjoy it. If everyone is a tattoo artist then who are the customers going to be? It's like the old cowboy quote, 'if you're going to point the gun at someone, you better be prepared to use it, and use it properly'. Don't bother picking up the tattoo machine if you're just having a laugh and want to see what it's like or give it a try or whatever. It doesn't work like that, at least it shouldn't. Have some respect for the folks that work hard at this. Just because you can put a line in the skin doesn't mean shit, there's much more to it than that!

The bottom line is that tattooing needs to be protected at all costs.

This isn't about me personally losing business or protecting territory as I am busy enough to be happy for quite a while, I am on the side of what's right for tattooing, and I am just the messenger here, so think what you will about my opinions and to me, it makes no difference.

Real tattooing is one of the last authentic things left in this bullshit-consumerist globalised pop-culture world and everyday it is being eroded towards being just another silly thing that kids and celebrities do before they grow up, mostly because client's and tattoo artists alike are approaching it as children. It hasn't always been like that. Does no one think more than five minutes in front of themselves anymore? Your tattoos will be with you in the future in case you weren't aware, how sexy is a 35-year-old woman with little micro-lettering quotes all over her body or a sleeve of cutesie wutsie children's things? Or how about a middle-aged man with something ripping out of the skin on his neck? Hey, answer me that. You young tattooists out there should take a minute and reflect on how you want your tattoo legacy to be remembered, and you young prospective clients should take a minute and reflect on how you want to look as an adult. This shit is real, go look around at the grown-ups that got stupid tattoos in the 90s as kids. Most are embarrassed by them and seek laser removal, cover-ups or both.

The other worrisome thing is the amount of people getting large scale hand, face and neck tattoos these days, not bad quality either, but hell, wtf are you doing to yourself? How do you expect to integrate into society with a bloody shark on the side of your face? Oh that's right, you don't plan on it. We have had lively discussions about this subject in the shop lately... pros and cons of tattooing public skin (hand, face, neck) from both the client's



KIAN'S PHOTO BY MATTHEW LOWDEN

and artist's point of view. The main arguments I've heard from fellow tattooers for tattooing people wherever they want on their body are: 'I don't give a shit, if they want it they get it' and 'well if I don't do it then someone else will' or 'I tell them once it's a bad idea and then it's up to them'. All lousy excuses for not taking responsibility for their actions, if you don't do it and you let them walk out of the shop then perhaps somewhere along the way they might see it's a bad idea, you might save them some heartache. Not giving a shit about your client's future wellbeing is you just being an asshole and warning them once and then saying "yes" 30 seconds later isn't much of a deterrent is it? So what do you think happens to all these young guys and girl with hands fully tattooed and necks covered with things, stars by the eyes, where do they end up in the long run? Chances are they aren't going to get a decent job or career going, many many doors in this life close when you tattoo yourself on public skin. So they probably get more tattoos and end up hanging out in the tattoo shop where they are accepted for being the way they are. And guess what, before you know it, someone is letting them 'try' tattooing and sure enough the eBay kit is en route. Congratulations! By tattooing all these cool kids all over the shop and not adhering to the 'Old School' principle of 'NO HANDS FACES OR NECKS' you are spawning an entire generation of scratchers that have to tattoo just so they can survive, because no one else will have them. Way to go.

Lets all step back a bit here and listen to the old timers' wisdom, they knew the cycles of tattooing, they'd seen it rise and fall and they knew how to keep it going. Treat tattooing with respect and the tattoo gods will look after you, forsake the gods and pay the price. I'll let you decide which way you want to go!

Peace... ☪

Kian Forreal is a professional tattoo artist with 17 years international experience who specialises in traditional Japanese tattoo work and script lettering. He has worked all over the world and has studied under some of the leading tattoo artists of today. He is based in Sydney at Inner Vision Tattoo in Surry Hills. His website is: www.kianforreal.com For information on Laser Tattoo Fading and Removal please visit www.fadeyourtattoo.com

