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Inked. As a group we believe that tattoos have been stereotyped and looked down upon by our society. Therefore we have conducted 4 interviews. 3 with tattoo artists and 1 with a repeat tattoo customer in order to learn about tattoos and those who receive them. Also, we wanted to test the validity of the stereotypes associated with tattoos. And now, without and further ado, inked.

It was back in America tattooing goes back in the 1800, late 1800's early 1900's. The Japanese goes back thousands of years. You can talk about tattooing and the history from about 10, 20 different perspectives. There's ancient cave people that they dug out of ice that have markings that are pretty much a tattoo. They talk about tattooing in the bible. They don't call it a tattoo they call it markings on the skin, blah blah blah blah but the word tattoo wasn't there wasn't a word for tattoo back then. But I forgot what it is Leviticus something they talk about marking onto one's skin. They are talking about tattooing.

My first tattoo was probably in 1994. And it was my last name on my forearm, and I got it 'cause my friend got it and I had to look cool. Before that I had no want or need to get a tattoo. I was just like "wow that's pretty cool. I'm 18 I should get a tattoo" I've been a customer here at this tat shop about 3 years before actually I actually started practicing here and I saw pretty much these guys were doing art that just happened to be on people and I have kind of a background in art. I'd been doing arts since I was a kid. My father was an artist, my uncle, grandparents, mom, all artists in the family, and our neighbors. I never thought this could be a viable kind of career. I just thought it's just a tattoo you can't really make money or make enough money to afford things that I like, you know what I mean. And when I came here I saw these guys are doing art, they are having fun, they are making money.

I think that there was this stereotype at one point that if you got a tattoo you were a bad boy or a bad girl. Back when I first got tattoos it was uncommon for girls to get tattoos unless you were a biker chick, like that was like, the only girls you saw with a tattoo. So it was more of a, I don't want to say statement to everybody 'cause where I got it you can't see it unless I'm in a bathing suit. But guys aren't the only ones, biker chicks aren't the only ones who get tattoos, normal people can get tattooed. Now its like trendy, you see a whole lot more people with them versus your gangsters, your biker people. Like you know like or your sailor. You know your original tattoo people. Its more accepted now, women aren't looked upon as—Where as now its more of a form of art, you know people are expressing themselves with artwork, like that versus it being like a bad boy statement. Oh my gosh, my first tattoo was when I was like, 18. My first tattoo was of a Nagle painting, you know Patrick Nagle, the artist, it was one of his most popular paintings. The '80s paintings as we all call them. But I just liked his artwork. Now I laugh at my tattoo but I would never get rid of it, like you said the staple first tattoo. At the time that I got it, it was an '80s tattoo and it was just the first one.

I've just been fascinated with tattoos since I was a kid. And uh, when I was in high school I was trying to convince my dad to take me to get a tattoo and he was getting all mad at me and was like "Why do you want want?" And I was like "Well this reason, and this reason and this reason." And he was all like, if you like tattoos so much why don't you be a fucking tattoo artist?" And ever since I was like fifteen I was like

“alright, that sounds pretty good!” My first tattoo was on my 18th birthday. And it was just a really small and the little star on my wrists ‘cause I only had time on my lunch break to go get it.

If given the option of being able to do painless tattoos I don’t think I would do it because, you know, its just so much tradition and history behind it and you know it’s kind of like a rite of passage going through the pain and getting somebody’s artwork on you and knowing that you’re going to have it forever. You know like it goes back to the cherish story and if you don’t want to commit to that or go through the experience then you probably shouldn’t have a tattoo.

If it didn’t hurt then everybody would have a tattoo. And nobody would have to earn the tattoo. You really earn the tattoo by sitting through the pain of getting the tattoo.

What do you think the process of fighting the pain and it being permanent tells about tattoos in general.

That they’re cool ‘cause pussies can’t get them.

So you wouldn’t take away the pain for anything?

No, because you have to halfway tough to get a tattoo, you know? It’s like pussies can’t get tattoos.

The process for you forgetting the pain, and I know you said it hurts a lot, and knowing that its permanent does that add to the meaning of getting a tattoos and that you are willing to go through the process?

Yes, because its not something you can’t remove, well you can remove through current medical means, but it’s a lot of money and that’s painful too so if you get it you are pretty much stuck with it unless you want to go through all of the drama to have it removed.

My artwork on other people and having other people, like friends who are amazing artists tattooing me is rad I think. Having someone’s artwork on you for forever is pretty rad I think.

Everyone has a good story for, that’s usually why I get tattoos.

Some tattoos like give a person special reasons, like the birth of a child, death of somebody. Tattoos, just the imagery of it sometimes tattoos are fun. A lot of tattoos might not even have a meaning, like a stupid tattoo on a dare or whim or something like that. I’ve had a lot of all of those. Sometimes its just the imagery, sometimes it has meaning, sometimes somebody wants a star or a foot, there might not be a story about a star and a foot, it might just be a star and they want it there and cool I guess some people go through life changing, you know like the lady that wouldn’t let her have a tattoo, or when my son was born I got his name on my neck. When my grandparents died I got that tattooed. Everybody has a story, but not all the time.

They don’t even pass the outside of the shop, they just think it’s a bunch of bikers and drug addicts and what not, they don’t really see past (stereotypes) there you go, exactly. I don’t think they look past that and its really unfortunate. You know we’ve tattooed doctors, lawyers, priests, schoolteachers, sociology professors, 90 year old widowers, an 80 years old who’s husband died who hadn’t allowed her to get a

tattoo always wanted a tattoo. Husband died, she was like “hey I want a tattoo, I’m gonna get a fucking tattoo, I happened to be the person to give her a tattoo, she wanted a butterfly, always wanted a butterfly, happiest day of her life. (Happiest day?) She was so stoked, it was ridiculous.

Unfortunately there are definitely the type of people that have tattoos and are not upstanding members of society, give the rest of us a bad name, but I guess you know not on to that and there are some crappy non-tattooed people in the world too.

Theres an old tattoo saying that the only difference between people with tattoos and people without tattoos is that people with tattoos don’t give a shit if you don’t have a tattoo. People who don’t have tattoos are the only one cares that people get tattoos and that its bad.

Tattooed a 90 year old lady before. She was 90 years old and she wanted her tattoo. She asked, she had some terminal disease, she wanted a tattoo of her whole life. Kids instead of bringing their parents in for the first time, and the parents are like always against it, those ones are always cool.

Except for being on a person I don’t think there’s really anything different. I mean somebody comes in with an idea, say I was to be commissioned for a painting by someone wants a painting from me. I start with a rough sketch, I put it on a canvas, I do the pain, I fine tune it and I give it back to the customer, who commissions me as a painter, a fine artist. There is nothing different from we do here. A customer comes to the counter says they want this this and this, I sit down, I do the rough sketch, now the only difference is I’m doing it with a tattoo machine and its staying on the person forever. And I really don’t see why people don’t consider that an artform.

I guess it really depends on what style of tattooing. Your talking about its been around for so so long, out of the tribal stuff, its been going on for longer than america’s been around. So, I guess it doesn’t really have the same style as classical art that you would find in a museum say, at the louvre or something you know, I guess it kind of makes it more unique.

A little different medium. Its like the piece of paper that you are working on can flinch, and it talks, and it can be an asshole, and just the way you lay the way you do your artwork is completely backwards from any other style of art.

In the past few years, especially now that all those tv shows are on, like Miami Ink, or LA ink, or whatever, um, we get a lot of you know, they weren’t previously exposed to tattooing, you know it’s a little more mainstream now, and I don’t think its quite as taboo as it was 5, 5, 10 years ago. TV definitely helped out a lot to bring it in the mainstream which isn’t in my opinion necessarily a good thing, but you know if somebody wants to come in and get a little butterfly or something on their 50th birthday or something, you know, more power to them.

The positive I think its been that people can see that tattoo artists are people, that they have regular lives, that they are actually artists who sit and do something, that they can help people get through a life or death of somebody and just the fact that its on tv kind of, we have so many people walk through the door and I don’t think we’d have so many people walk through the door without seeing the tv show.

And I think that's just getting more people through the door, whether they get a tattoo or not, that is just them taking the step to walk through the door.

5, 6 years ago that everybody was saying that tattooing was you know, taking a dive, there was too many shops in town and not enough tattoos to go around. Well people keep opening up shops and more kids are learning how to tattoo every day. And we are not really hurting for business, so I really don't think its going to go anywhere. But if it does start to dwindle then you're really gonnal find out the people who really make it their passion, they won't quit and get another job, and those are the people I think that should stay and doing tattoos I think.