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Cologne, Germany

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## Tattoos By Guil Zekri

By Josiah Blevins

To call Guil Zekri a citizen of the world may be the most apt way to describe him. Born in Israel, schooled in Paris, he eventually settled in Germany. But he still maintains his globetrotter status, as evidenced by the fact that he corresponded with us from a web cafe in Darjeeling, India. He makes time to visit museums and galleries at every opportunity and the influence of his travels is apparent in his work. The main influence in his tattooing, however, comes from a surprising source.

"I'm definitely very inspired by fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth century art. I love Baroque and Mannerism. I think the light effects—catching moments of time—are just fantastic." It might seem odd that a tattooist would take interest in such traditional periods and styles, but when looking at Guil's work, one sees how he melds these classical elements into the modern folk/lowbrow art of tattooing. His understanding of light and how to render something in a realistic manner set him apart from many of his peers.

He started tattooing six years ago, and it was his skills as an artist that helped him break into an apprenticeship. "My apprenticeship was quite a funny deal. I would teach the owner of the studio how to draw and he showed me how to tattoo—kind of an accidental start. Even though I wanted to tattoo as a teenager, my destiny made me wait ten years before I started. Strange world."

In the years since he was an apprentice, Guil has developed a strong realistic style and displays a high level of consistency no matter what size or content he is working with. There's a section of tattoos on his website called "Dark And Sacred" and that is a great



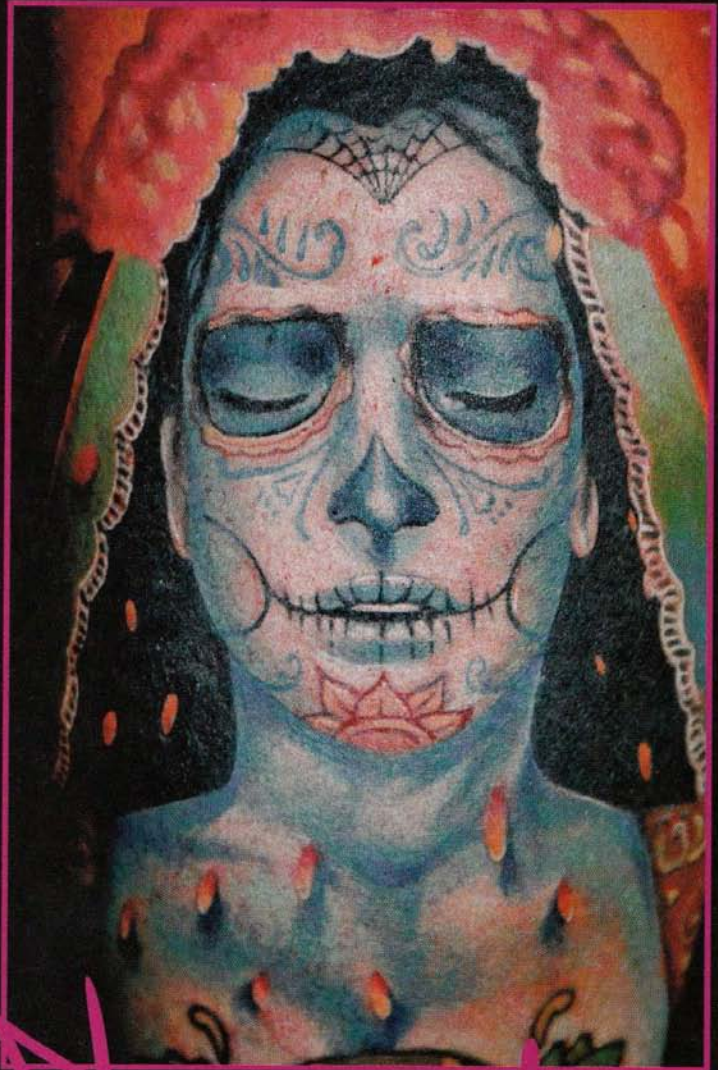






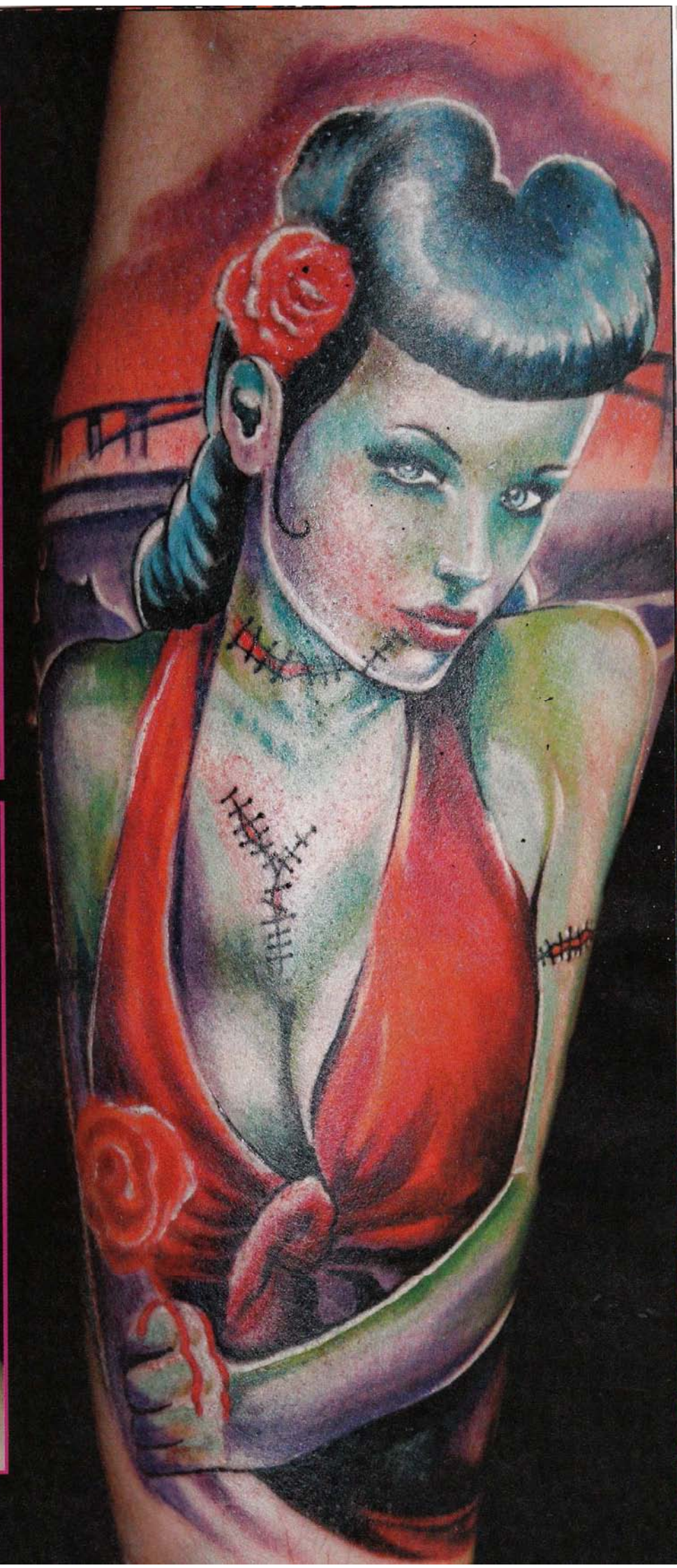
way to describe much of his work. Though many artists and collectors have long mined the eviler veins of society to find subject matter to cover skin, Guil's work has a kind of brooding infused into it that is his calling card.

Like many artists in other mediums, he sees his substrate and tools as integral parts of the end result, and Guil has a very Zen way of looking at the profession. "As a tattoo artist you don't get to choose your medium of work, the medium chooses you. Quite interesting sometimes...What is more important for me is that my medium is transformed in a way that will carry my art as long and as happily possible. I don't use any special pigments and I use the same machines and



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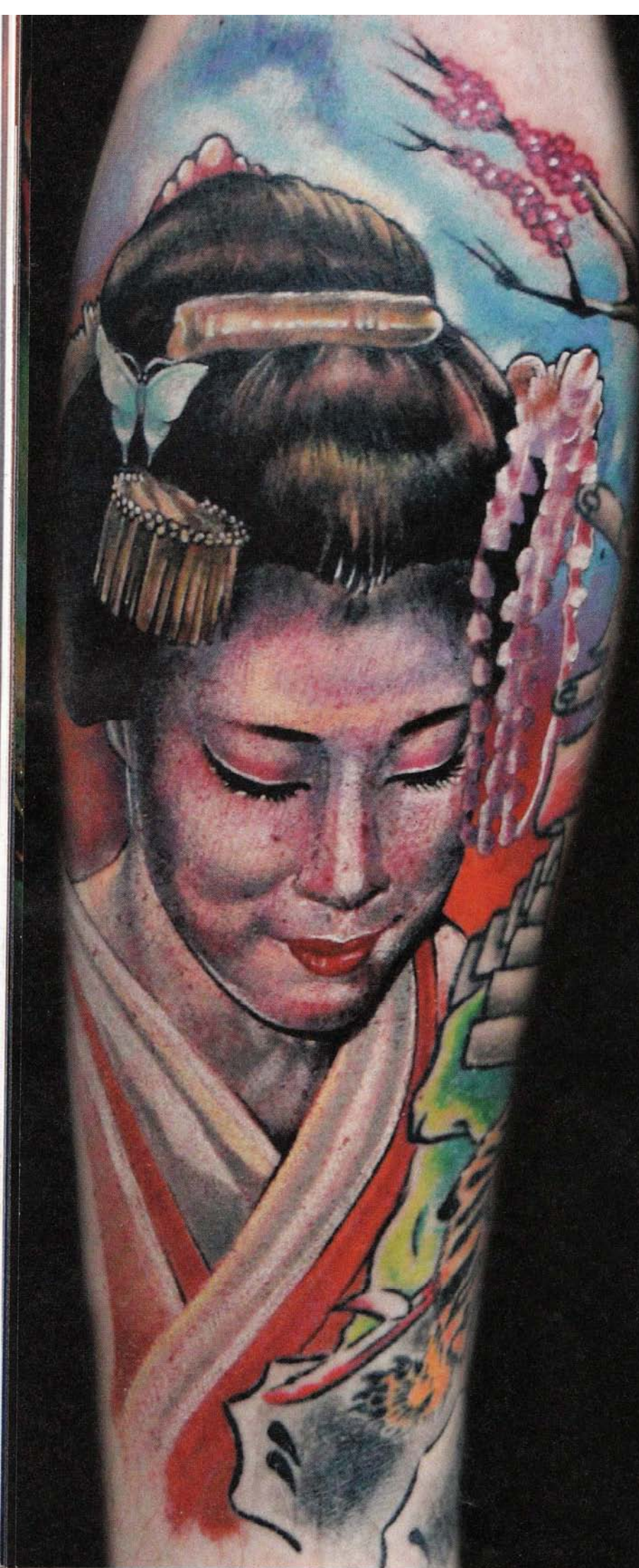




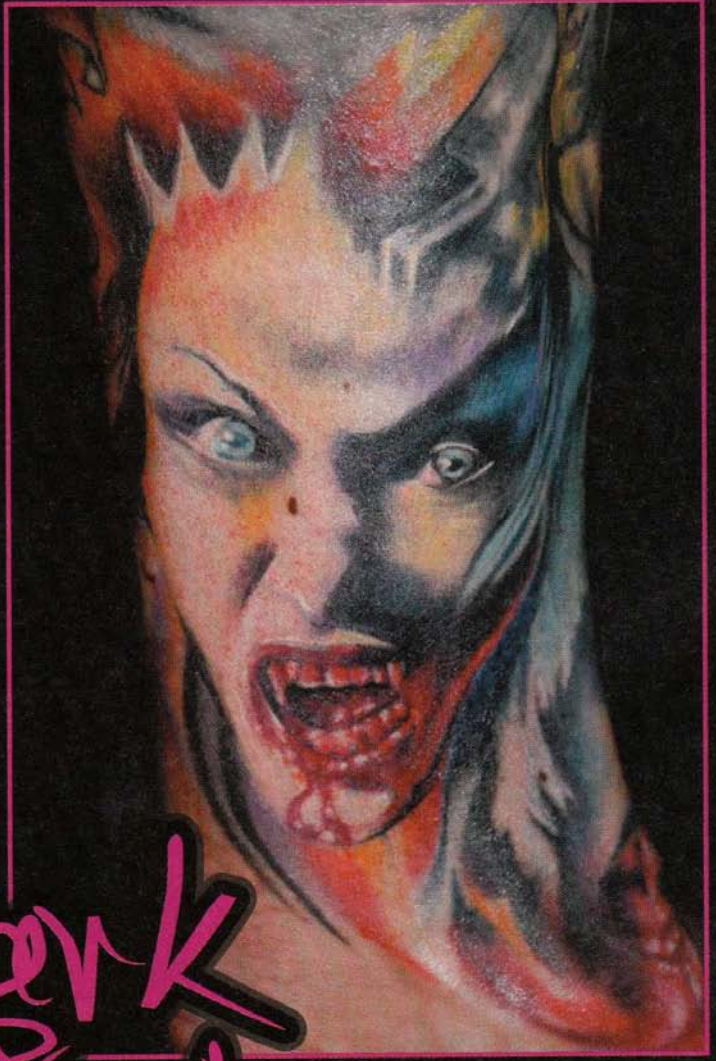
needles like every one else, but I try to not be influenced by other tattoo artists, I try to get my influences from everything possible."

Guil's shop in Cologne is called Reinkarnation, and it's there he tattoos for an enthusiastic customer base. The studio is as far from an off-the-wall shop as possible. "To be honest, I do only custom pieces, we all do, and I think my studio is known for that. I think the customers understand that and it makes it easier for me to be creative. At the moment I'm working on some big pieces with very interesting motives."

He's also very confident about his personal growth and optimistic about his future in the business. "My work is developing very fast and I'm somebody that doesn't like to stay at one place all the time. I haven't been tattooing for long enough to decide where I'm going. I think that I'm still experimenting with my boundaries. My new tattoos better reflect how I'm changing in my work. More in control of the tattoo machine, my colors and the more I understand the great medium of skin, the better I'm able to transfer my imagery and create better tattoos. I don't see any stop in that development."







*Dark  
&  
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Unfortunately for those of us in America, Guil doesn't have any plans to come sling ink on our side of the pond anytime soon. But all of you lucky Europeans can catch him at the Stockholm Inkbash this August, Paris in mid-September, London Tattoo Convention at the end of September, and the Berlin Tattoo Convention in the first week of December. Or you can reach him at: Reinkarnation, Brusselerstrasse 75, Cologne 50674, Cologne, Germany. Phone - 0049(0) 221 55402693. Find him on the web at: [www.reinkarnationtattoos.com](http://www.reinkarnationtattoos.com) and [myspace.com/guilzekri](http://myspace.com/guilzekri).



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Tattoos By Guil Zekri

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