

# TATTOO MASTER

ARTISTS & TRADE ONLY  
ISSUE TWENTY  
£10 • €12.60 • US\$20 • \$A20.50 • ¥2100

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## Roman

A rare interview  
from the man himself

## INFINITE IRON

Behind the scenes with Joe

## BULLETS TATTOO INK

are redefining  
tattoo inks

## Horimitsu

on wabori, the yaku  
and sento ba

## Guil Zekri

sits us in the big chair

We go back  
the beginning

## TUTORIALS

Colour flow theory  
Photography: 300dpi v 72dpi

## DIGGIN' DEE

## Henk Schiffmacher

Need we say more...

## Szabo Oravec

Hungary's finest  
all things

# SEAN VASQUEZ



## REGULAR

Powerlines, Cut b  
Convention Plan  
Backspring, Blow  
Dr. Ben Mills and

The life of an original road artist





Part 2

# IF YOUR HAND FLOWS, THE TATTOO WILL FOLLOW

# GUIL ZEKRI

In the last issue of *Tattoo Master*, Guil talked to us about how he takes a customer's idea and turns it into a killer design. In part 2 of his tutorial, Guil sits us in the big chair and chats about how he then takes that final design on paper and turns it into a world class tattoo on a client 🖨️📷 Guil Zekri

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## LAYING DOWN INK

Now that you have your tattoo design sketched and after you've solved all the surprises, it is time to create a stencil. Stencil machines are good for small tattoos, but for the big stuff I always do it by hand. It does take longer but don't be lazy, doing it by hand helps a lot. Once again, it helps you memorise the design and you can use a strong pencil that will help you in doing thicker lines on your stencil. Also, by doing this, your brain-hand co-ordination will remember what you have done while using the tattoo machine later!

First off, place the stencil on your customer. Normally, the stencil I prepare



will be ten percent bigger than the sketch I have measured. I find with this method, you end up with a design that is ten percent bigger and somehow you will find yourself with less background to worry about. Personally, I think it is better to concentrate on the main design than to fill up too much background. So in effect, your design will grow from the first A4 sketch, to a full size arm or back and then it will grow once again from between five and ten percent. Of course, your eye will play a big role in the final aesthetic decision.

When the stencil is on the skin, check it out! Try to see if all the problem points are solved, if all the lines from the stencil paper are there and if the flow that you wanted is really fitting the customer's body. Don't be afraid of taking a marker and fixing anything... this is essential





**STENCIL MACHINES ARE GOOD FOR SMALL TATTOOS, BUT FOR THE BIG STUFF I ALWAYS DO IT BY HAND. IT DOES TAKE LONGER BUT DON'T BE LAZY, DOING IT BY HAND HELPS A LOT LATER**

at this point. And try to be creative and light handed while doing it... if your hand flows, the tattoo will follow.

### LINING UP

Lining is a personal thing and each one of us has a different approach to lines. The old school/ new school and Japanese tattoos consist of a lot of lines, while the realistic tattoos stand out because of the fact that there are no lines. I personally think that lines are necessary and if we put them in the right places, they can intensify a tattoo... especially in big pieces like sleeves or back pieces. Lines help add to the contrasts and the overall flow of the piece.

When I am working on a big project, I will normally line everything on the first session. I will try to build the details in small lines and for this I would usually use a seven or nine liner... tight and sharp. I will sometimes also use a very

light grey shade colour, the lightest you can get, so that after healing the grey will be as light as possible while still being seen for us to continue working and not losing our composition. A lot of artists use colour lining which means they will line in all different colours according to the design. I personally don't think it is necessary. If you control your grey, usually the construction lines will not appear afterwards in the finished tattoo... and it economises time and pain. I would then go back with a 13 round shader to thicken up the lines I have already tattooed in grey... but this time with complete black. You have to think first and be sure that the dark thick lines will be in the right places, so as not to create confusion or an unnecessary separation of the complete image.

I usually put the dark and thick lines in areas where the shadow falls, or when the images collide in similar tones in







**PREPARE YOURSELF A FEW MORE  
EMPTY INK CAPS JUST IN CASE  
YOU FORGET TO PREPARE A COLOUR  
OR TWO... AND, OF COURSE, JUST IN  
CASE YOU HAVE A SPONTANEOUS IDEA  
THAT COMES UP WHILE WORKING**

order to have a good solid contrast.

I will usually line the whole piece in one go even though it takes long and needs a lot of concentration. But, after healing, it will be easier for you to understand the piece and see the flow. I let the lines heal for a couple of weeks and the next session will be colouring or shading.

**LOADING COLOUR & SHADING**

It is very difficult to write precisely how I would approach the second session. In big tattoos, I normally have a basic plan, but it changes gradually from session to session. I will choose a part to work on and I will analyze this part on the sketch of the design that I prepared before. I will prepare my ink caps according to the colours on this part of the motif. Prepare yourself a few more empty ink caps for just in case you forgot to prepare a colour or two... and, of course, just in case you have a spontaneous idea that comes up while working.

Today one can find almost every colour tone that is needed to complete a tattoo. I use Intenze Ink, I find that they have a good combination of 'dirty' colours in the greens and ochres which I like very much. And their 'clean' colours, like yellow and orange, are very bright and clear. Most of the colours heal very well and I have seen results of tattoos I have done a few years ago and the colours are still bright and strong. Their colours go fast and clean into the skin and stay there...and that is the secret of a good tattoo.

To achieve different tones, I will also make my own mix of colours. I will add yellow and white to some of the colours to sharpen up the basic tone manufactured by the company. I mix some of my purples and greens that way. I do so because everyone sees the colours differently and it makes my colour palette a bit different from others'. It also then makes the work unique to the artist who did it.

When colouring a realistic tattoo or colouring a tribal tattoo, my technique is basically the same. First I capture the contrast. This makes it easier to work the light colours and the highlights because the light colours will not get dirty from the dark colours. Don't be afraid of using a lot of Vaseline or cream.

I started using Hustle Butter because it smells great and it is so easy to smear onto the skin. It is also very easy to clean and we all know that working with colours can cause quite a mess.

For black and grey, I use Silverback. It's a good black, it is easy on the skin and heals perfect. For my greys, I will take big ink caps and just put some drops of black and mix it in water. The dose of drops is for you to decide. I do not think too much about the technique while tattooing. I think that this tutorial is meant for artists that know what they are doing, so just do what you would do on a small scale tattoo.

When loading colour, it does not matter where you start, just go with what you feel more comfortable with. But for instance, when doing a sleeve, I always start with the lower arm. It's somehow easier to work and it will define the continuation of the whole piece. If the lower arm is dark for example, then it leaves you with more possibilities to work lighter in the middle and then move to a darker structure on the upper arm. That's only one example of what can happen but there is no real importance with where you start, the whole piece must be done. So just take your time and enjoy the transformation and how your tattoo evolves. **TM**