# Human canvas

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Sea Tramp, where Randall works in the evenings, is a "walk-ins" only shop that operates into the wee hours. By contrast, Medusa is open only afternoons and evenings, and Fish does a consultation prior to setting an appointment. In both shops, photos and examples of the artist's work are readily available for viewing.

"I really think it's important to check out people's portfolios," Fish says, "and then if you find a portfolio you like, talk to the artist and see if you feel comfortable. It's just like sex: You have to feel comfortable saying no, and you have to know that if you say no to someone, that they'll respect that."

Both artists will do original designs, but they have different ways of applying the design to the skin. Randall freehand draws almost all the art with a toothpick and ink, creating a map directly onto the skin, whereas Fish will draw the design onto a stencil and then transfer the image onto the skin. Once the actual tattooing process starts, the tattoo gun breaks the skin and deposits either black ink or colored dyes and pigments underneath it.

The most common question is, "Does it hurt?"

Randall laughs and says, "If they didn't sting a little bit, every wuss would have one and it would hardly be worth getting at all."

Still, the effect can be pleasant.

"The endorphin rush puts you in a wonderful place," Randall says. "An endorphin rush will make you feel like you feel when you've been running a lot, laughing a lot, eating a lot of chocolate or something else that probably wouldn't be proper to mention."

Cost can vary, and larger tattoos can sometimes take multiple visits. "Most shops in Portland have like $50 or $60 minimums and usually go by the hour," Fish says. "Our shop's $100 an hour."

Randall generally quotes a price for the job upfront. "You can get a decent star or some Kanji script for around $100. A nice monochrome portrait will probably cost you about $200. It depends on what you want, where on the body you want it, the kind of day your artist is having and whether or not it's a dolphin."

Once customers have their tattoo, they walk out of the shops, sometimes never to return.

"I'm proud of all the work I do, but at that point I'm kind of a vehicle," Randall says. "What the work is, it's them. I just kind of help them achieve what they wanted."

Fish agrees. "As a tattooist I consider myself a service worker. It's like an illustration job. It doesn't represent me, so much as the person that's wearing it."

According to Randall, "Tattoos are a time marker. Something they'll look at in years to come and have a little glimpse of where they were. The sounds, the smells and one step along the path to the place where they are at that time. Tattoos are magic, definitely."

*InUniform.net will sponsor a* TATTOO AND PIERCING PARTY*—including best tattoo contest and piercing demonstrations—from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. July 26 at the Eagle PDX and Club XES, 1300 W. Burnside St. A $4 cover charge benefits Outside In.*

ANDY MANGELS *is a best-selling entertainment author in Portland. He has two tattoos by Jacki Randall and lusts after men with ink.*

## Queer-friendly body shops

### Tattoos

**Medusa Tattoo and Gallery**
**Tattooist:** Fish
420 S.W. Washington St., Suite 202, 503-228-1008

**Sea Tramp Tattoo**
**Tattooist:** Jacki
207 S.E. Grand Ave., 503-231-9784

**Atlas Tattoo**
**Tattooist:** Jennifer
2935 N.E. Broadway, 503-281-7499

**Atomic Art Tattoo Studio**
**Tattooist:** London
1410 N. Alberta St., 503-284-6688

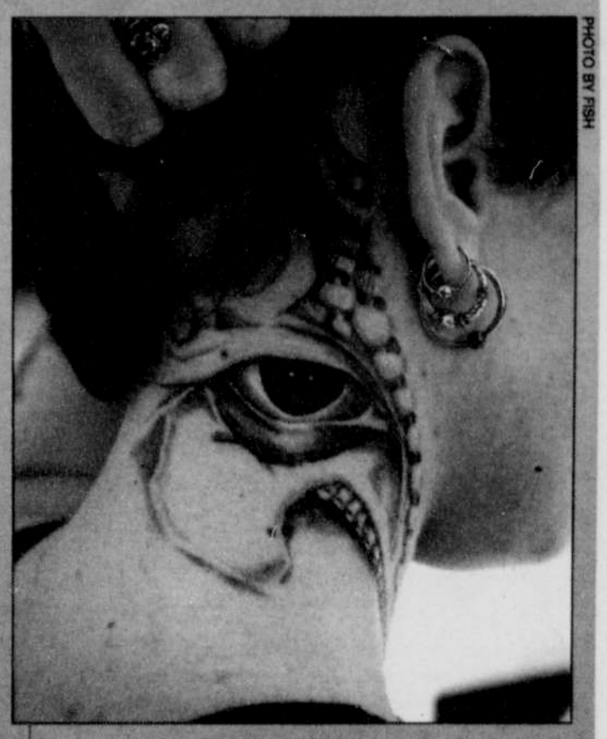

PHOTO BY FISH

### Piercings

**Black Hole**
**Piercers:** various
Eastside: 2946 N.E. Glisan St., 503-231-0712
Westside: 12550 S.W. First St., Beaverton, 503-672-9399

**Captain Jack's**
**Piercer:** Jesse
4601 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd., 503-236-8022

**Optic Nerve Arts**
**Piercers:** Tracy and Snakie (apprentice)
1829 N.E. Alberta St., Suite 11, 503-287-0339

**Adorn Body Art**
**Piercers:** Desta and Dana
9217 S.E. Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway, 503-292-7060

**Expressions NW**
**Piercer:** Kelly
4903 N.E. St. Johns Road, Vancouver, Wash., 360-693-4339

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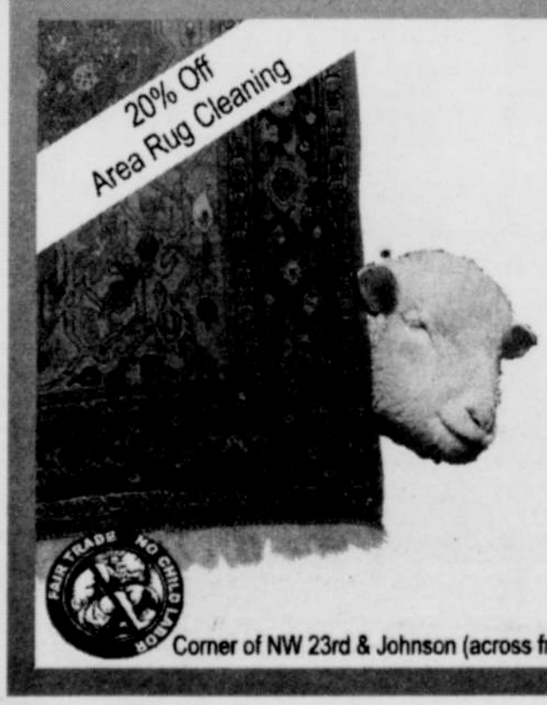
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