

I Ink Therefore I Am

Eugene welcomes Oregon's first tattoo convention

Your sister has one. Your mom, too. Your dentist probably has one. Your accountant covers his with an oxford and tie.

We're talking about tattoos. The creative Northwest houses a plethora of tattoo parlors and is home to hundreds of artists and enthusiasts alike. These are just a few of the reasons why Brandon Ingram and Kevin Rasmussen — the editor and publisher, respectively, of *Northwest Tattoo* magazine — opted to host Oregon's first ever tattoo convention at the Lane County Fairgrounds April 10-12.

The tattoo industry "gives Northwest artists little attention," says Ingram. "We wanted to give a little love to the locals."

Many Oregon artists are thrilled that Ingram and Rasmussen have done the miles of legwork required to bring a tattoo convention to the state, including working with the Lane County Health Department and grinding through the logistics of hosting a convention of this size. One lingering

obstacle in the goal to hold a convention that would rival those in Seattle or Las Vegas is the state law requiring an Oregon license to tattoo in this state. Licenses aren't easy to come by, and temporary licenses are so expensive many artists simply can't afford them. The Oregon Ink Tattoo Convention is the promoters' way of showing the state the boost they can provide to the local economy. They'd like to inspire legislative changes as well.

"I encourage the officials to open up regulations to get more out-of-state artists in for next year," says Omar Edmison of All American Tattoo in Salem. "We need the opportunity to have other art styles come in and go out."

Celebrity artist Corey Miller of cable television's *L.A. Ink* has sprung for a demo license to lend a bit of credibility to the effort. And local artists say a broader range of participants means a wider exchange of ideas.

In an industry that relies on continuing education, sharing new ideas is imperative. From learning new techniques and styles to keeping up on advances in cleanliness, organizers say, a tattoo convention provides an opportunity for education in which artists can learn from multiple sources in one short weekend. Local artists are looking forward to the first time in their memory when they haven't had to travel out of state to get such exposure.

Local tattoo artist Julian of Black Lotus says, "Someone will always have a different way of tattooing that's simple yet brilliant."

Artists have already filled the slots for Corey Miller's tattooing techniques seminar. Jeff Gogue, from Grants

Pass, only has a few seats left for his tattooing seminar, which the convention promises will take tattooing "to the next level."

For those artists needing bloodborne pathogens certification, local artist Splat Ter of High Priestess will be giving a two-hour seminar which will provide participants with Red Cross certification. Other seminars to check out include "Painting,"

"Advanced Cover-ups," "Black & Grey Portrait" and "Machine Tuning."

For those who want to see something completely different, Horisuzu of Black Rabbit in Bend will be practicing the ancient art of hand-tapping (tattooing without a machine) each day.

One great hope of the convention's promoters

is to bring all the artists in the area together in one place and spend an entire weekend learning, showcasing and, most importantly, inking. "It's a great opportunity for us," says Riley Smith of Lifetime Tattoo in Springfield. "It'll be nice to get all the shops together."

Local people with praiseworthy tattoos are encouraged to enter into one of the 20 contests, including a Best in Show — the grand prize for which is a hand-carved mask by Jeff Gogue. You can also hit up one of the booths for a souvenir tattoo of the Oregon Ink skull logo. "The skull tattoo contest will show differences in artist's skills and styles, all from the same basic piece of artwork," says Cameron Straub of Eugene Tattoo Co.

In addition to contests and demos are opportunities to meet proponents of alternative beauty, the Suicide Girls; check out original artwork in the Artists' Gallery; or grab a Ninkasi at the beer garden. **EW**



Suicide Girl Jo Harrison

BRANDON INGRAM



Anna Barrett shows off her her elbow done by Eli Falconette of Adorn East Tattoo in Portland

BRANDON INGRAM

**OREGON INK
TATTOO CONVENTION**
**LANE COUNTY
FAIRGROUNDS**
APRIL 10 - 12
FRIDAY, 4/10, 2 - 10PM
SATURDAY, 4/11, NOON - 10PM
SUNDAY, 4/12, NOON - 6PM
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