



TATTOOS

BLOOD, SWEAT & YEARS

MEGAN MASSACRE'S RISE TO TATTOO-ARTIST CREDIBILITY

If you've seen *NY Ink* or *America's Worst Tattoos* on TLC, you know tattoo artist Megan Massacre (née Woznicki) as the petite, countercultural sparkplug with a vibrant color palette. But contrary to how easy she makes it look on TV, the southeastern Pennsylvania native didn't get here overnight. Instead, her road to success was paved by long hours and a serious art background (including acrylic, oil, and watercolor painting, sculpture, calligraphy, bookbinding, photography, and woodcarving).



Following the shows' surges in popularity, Ms. Massacre has become one of the industry's most famous females to sport a tattoo gun, and she doesn't take that responsibility lightly. "If there's anything I can convey to girls," she stresses, "it's to do shit the right way. Don't cut corners."

What's your favorite tattoo that you have?

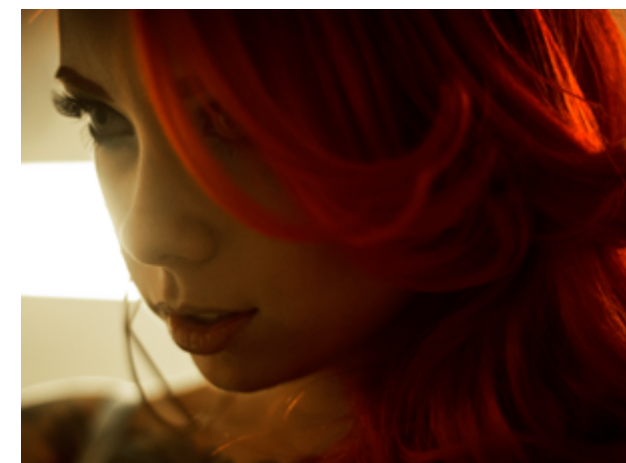
I have these really simple little spider webs around the cuticles of my fingernails. They're by far some of the simplest tattoos that I have, but there's something about them that I think is really unique and cool.

Do you think that tattoo artists still don't get enough respect as artists?

It's actually changed by leaps and bounds since I started tattooing, but it's still not there yet. Things like tattoo TV shows really changed people's minds and brought it to a mainstream audience. It gave people a little peek into the lives of the people tattooing, realizing that we're not all criminals or in gangs or drug dealers.

Tattooing has changed because people that are educated in art have taken an interest. Some [tattoos] look like oil paintings or photorealism. It's at this crazy point where there are people who have been tattooing for 20 years who cannot even touch the kids who have been tattooing for four or five years, because the technology has far surpassed [what was available] back then.

What advice would you give to female aspiring tattoo artists who are try-



ing to break into a male-dominated industry?

The biggest thing to overcome right now is the stigma that you're just trying to because it's the cool thing to do. A lot of these girls start and they only do it for a year or two because they realize that they have to work.

Tattooing is not a hobby. It's not something you do out of your basement when you have free time. You need to get an actual, legitimate tattoo apprenticeship at a legitimate shop, and it's going to take a couple of years. You're going to have to swallow your pride, and you're not going to make any money. Just like if you want to be a lawyer, you have to go to law school and take the bar exam.

You're vegetarian and recently did a PETA2 campaign. What's impor-

tant for people to know about being vegetarian?

A lot of people think that just because you're a vegetarian, you live an unhealthy lifestyle or that your diet isn't healthy. I actually feel that since I've become a vegetarian, I'm in the best shape of my life. I just feel better, and it's just a healthier lifestyle if you do it the right way.

Though being animal-friendly and not hurting animals is a big part of it, there's also the health part of it. It's really good for your body's digestion; there are a lot of hormones and crazy things in meat that people don't think about. Some animals are fed meat tenderizer so that the meat is more tender to eat, but they don't realize that when you ingest it, it's tenderizing your organs. People don't know that kind of stuff. You are what you eat!