

TATTOOING:

A Universal Language - History & Significance [part 7]

Up until the beginning of the 20th century, the British were the pioneers of the art of tattooing. England being a major sea port in Europe and its colonizing of America and its natives helped much in keeping it at the top. By the turn of the century, the British found themselves in competition with the Americans mostly because of the invention of the electric tattoo machine.

In 1891 Samuel O'Reilly patented the electric tattoo machine which was a cross between a dentist's drill and a ball point pen. This invention led to the modern high-speed machines used today which are capable of between 2000 and 3000 pricks per minute as compared to 90 or 120 hand tapped pricking of a Japanese master. This machine revolutionized tattooing techniques. The number of tattooed people rose up dramatically. Tattooing was commercialized and macho vulgarity took over refinement and good taste. At the same time O'Reilly's colleague Lew Albertis created sheets of standard tattoo designs which could be sold over and over again to tattoo artists all over the country. This, in tattoo terminology, is called "Flash" allowed every tattoo artist to speed up production by simply tracing ready made designs. However this did not stop the creative process which goes into the custom art of tattooing, it was simply made to speed up work and only features some of the most common designs and symbols prevalent at the time. And because of the new machine, the entire process became a lot less painful, and a lot faster. The era of modern tattooing was at hand.

Since these two new inventions, at the turn of the century the art of tattooing underwent a tremendous shakedown in terms of its popular appeal. The initial admiration for the art among the elite died and gave way to a new class of tattoo enthusiasts. Stories began to appear in the media linking tattooing to criminal behavior, venereal diseases, loose morals, in short everything the emerging middle class was trying to distance itself from. Shortly after that there was a renewal of general interest in this art among the younger generations in their teens and twenties when cosmetic tattooing became a fashion. In 1913 George Burchett, an English tattoo artist, estimated that at least half of his business was devoted to fashionable women demanding to have their eyebrows permanently arched and dyed, their lips and cheeks reddened.

It was back in the 1920s and 1930s that the cliché of the tattooed freak solidified into the present day prejudice. During the Depression more men and women were getting tattooed just in order to exhibit themselves at shows and carnivals in return for money. These were the successors of the Native Americans, Maori warriors, and Marquesans originally brought to Europe for exhibition. They were the only examples of tattooed individuals encountered by the middle class mainstream, so the association of tattoos with outsiders developed quite naturally. It became natural enough to be adopted as the insignia of the self-styled outcasts and outlaws.

Read in the next issue: "Tattoos for the Anti Social."



tattoo & photo by skin deep@hady beydoun

Your comments are highly appreciated. If you think you have any ideas to make this newsletter a better one, please do not hesitate to call or send email. If you feel you have something to say and would like to have it published here, please email your article to: skindeep@hotmail.com

SKINDEEP

/kult-Ure issue #7 - Nov 2004

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IN THIS ISSUE: • Awareness • Tattoo Cover-Ups • La Familia: Paranoid Memory • Hygiene • Tattooed • History of Tattooing [part 7]

AWARENESS

Awareness is what this newsletter is all about. Awareness is a requirement for life. It is learned. One learns to appreciate good food, good wine, good clothes, good behavior and a good many other things in life including good art.

What is good art?

Good art is that which is well executed and well chosen. Because tattooing is a form of art, choosing good tattoos requires some time and research. Research leads to awareness, and awareness leads to a better choice.

What is a good choice for a tattoo?

As mentioned above, good art is art that is well executed and well chosen. Choosing art is a highly subjective thing. Everyone has their own likes and dislikes. The other more important factor is the execution of this chosen art. Execution requires skill, and not everyone is skilled enough to execute correctly, let alone beautifully.

Tattooing is like painting. Contrary to common belief, the same design will never come out the same when done by two different artists. So when you choose to do a simple design by one artist, another will certainly do it differently (better or worse artistically and technically). Do not be misled, a tattoo is not like a bottle of water that tastes the same no matter where you buy it from. A tattoo is by default a manual work that

involves personal artistic and technical skills.

How to choose the right artist for your tattoo?

Just like when you go shopping for anything, you are supposed to look around and see as many artists as possible. Look at their work and working space. Make sure you look at their own personal previous work. But beware! Many so called artists cheat and lie about their work, by taking pictures from magazines and downloading them from the internet and claiming it to be theirs, thus fooling you. Look out for consistency in work, try to look for a similar touch in different designs to make certain that all you see is done by the same hand. Ask around different people who have tattoos by the same artist and if you like what you see, go ahead.

Sadly, the first criteria of choice for most ignorant people is price. Where art is cheaper people go. This is bad when people fail to remember that a tattoo is for life and that it should be the best work one could possibly get!

A tattoo is an image of who we are, and because we always strive to be the best we can be in all we do mainly in how we present ourselves by the clothes and personality that suite us best, we should not forget that a tattoo tells a lot about us. If we choose wisely we will most certainly get the best image that suites us proudly. And if we choose poorly, we will always have to live with the excuse of naivety in not knowing and stinginess if we were looking for a cheap deal.

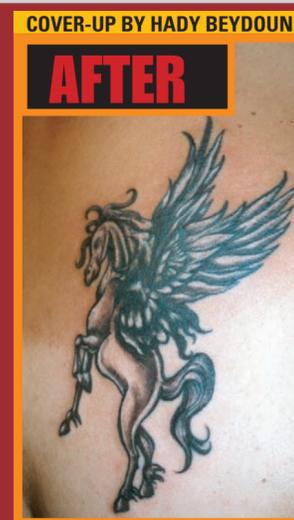
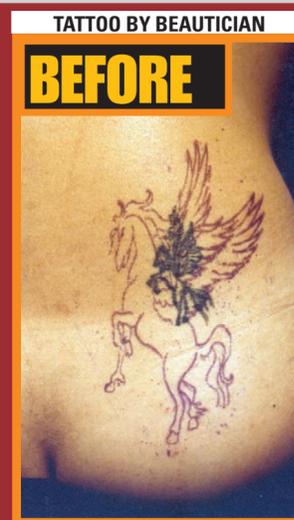


TATTOO & PHOTO BY HADY BEYDOUN

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TATTOO COVER-UPS! WHY PAY TWICE?

56% OF MY TATTOO WORK IS COVER-UPS! THANKS TO UNPROFESSIONALISM!



I have been tattooing for almost 10 years and have done over 4,000 tattoos a huge number of which is cover-ups. Many people have poorly done work on their bodies and are simply unaware of how bad their tattoos are. A lot of my customers who come to cover up their bad tattoos say that they had it done a long time ago when the technique was not perfected or that they had let their amateur friend do it for them.

This friend who is not a pro, nor has anything to do with art just bought or made himself some crappy machine and decided to use his friends and the friends of his friends as scratch paper. Eventually this scratcher decides to work from his bedroom or open a shop to make some money (of course he has no clue about hygiene and thus is compromising the safety of his customers). In order to compete and attract the "ignorant" majority (ignorant in terms of the art) he charges much less money and eventually tries to call himself an artist who does quality work for cheap! hah!

To back up his claim he starts collecting tattoo pictures done by other artists from magazines and the internet and falsly claims them as his work. To add to his credibility he would

tell false stories about his success outside the country (of course outside the country because he has no success inside the country!), how he won this award and that and people believe him. The circle of his friends and customers grow, people walk in and look at his collection of pictures and believe his lies. Convinced by false claims, they trust him with their skin, get a tattoo and walk out with a permanent scribble that they paid for.

A few months or years pass by when they get exposed to real quality work, they suddenly realize they have been deceived and the not so cheap price they have paid was not worth the permanent disappointment. They end up coming to me to cover up the mistake on their skin. Here are a few examples of scribbles covered up.

I would gladly like to state the names of those scratchers who did all this crappy work, but I guess that would be unethical, so I hope people will soon realize the seriousness of this matter.

•Why Get faded Lines & Poor Shading & Drawing?•Why be Ashamed of Your Tattoo?



LA FAMILIA PARANOID MEMORY

PARANOID MEMORY IS PART OF A SERIES OF DIALOGUES IN SEARCH OF HAPPINESS. by hady beydoun

The spokesman / singer Luciano appeared live on CableMilia and delivered a speech:

"Tomorrow, yesterday, today...remember the future, twist the present and look forward to the past. Think, desire, dream and drown in your mind, drown in a cell, a fragment and relive an expired date. Smear the moment, tomorrow is dark and fills you with fear. You thought you were free like the wind, you think you are not anymore. Were you free? You had no memory.... all you had was sanctity and a notion of safety but now you drown in misery, your bubble traps you, believe me. It is not beyond you."

Gathered in Good Aunt Rosa's kitchen while she bakes space cakes, La Familia listens to the speech on tv attentively and in silence. When the speech was over and the commercials sponsoring it appeared Uncle Smith turned down the volume and looked at Evil Madeline who gave him a sarcastic smile. He then looked at all the rest, they gave him a puzzled look. It was as though this speech has raised some questions in their minds and they were waiting for Uncle Smith's opinion. The first to speak was Sweet Aunt Rosa...

Good Aunt Rosa: Uncle Smith, I am a little confused, I really don't know if I should feel happy or sad regarding Luciano's speech. I have to admit it really did not make so much sense to me in the beginning, then it seemed dark and scary, and the last thing he said gave me the creeps. Am I supposed to do anything I am not already doing? I mean I DO pray everyday, you all know that. I mean I feel pretty safe all the time but this speech kind of shook me a little. What should I do?

Evil Madeline: Shut up shut up, just shut up shut up Rosa. This speech is utter nonsense, how could it affect you so much?

John the Father: It reminded me of my youth. Of when I was care free (before I met you Madeline) and running in the streets and riding my bike down staircases and all that. Of when I was constantly high on something worrying about nothing and remembering nothing, I kind of wish I could go back to those early days....

Junior the Son: But I don't remember anything!

Evil Madeline: Sure you don't Junior but I do. I remember the days where I was happy like i am right now. I love my life too much to taint it with remorse and longing for a past long gone. I really couldn't care less if the past returns to me "the days of my youth" because i am still young. I still perceive things in the same eye I used to all my life. I still enjoy the same things, the same victories no matter how small and the small conversations I have everyday with people I like here and there.... Nothing is beyond my reach. Can't you see I am always ready to have a great time?

Good Aunt Rosa: But Madeline! Life is not all about personal fun and happiness. How could you be so selfish and love your life too much? Why don't you learn how to help others and love their lives for them too! Doesn't loving others also mean loving their lives as well?

Uncle Smith: Evil Madeline is right Aunt Rosa and so are you my dear faithful. Happiness is personal. No one can experience another's happiness, but only his own, and happiness can only be achieved in a personal way. Methods and ways differ, but the ultimate goal is the happiness of the self. When one is not happy, one is inclined to make some changes. These changes may overlap with others' happiness in as much as they may not interfere at all. That is not the point however, the only thing that matters is the end result: Personal Happiness.

Good Aunt Rosa: But how could a person like Madeline be happy not at the expense of others? She is so selfish so material and so far away from faith.

Junior the Son: Evil Madeline is so cool, she knows how to have fun!

John the Father: I used to be happy. I am not anymore. My life has led me to where I cannot smile in morning. I really wish I could go back to my years of youth where things were different. I hate my life as it is.

Uncle Smith: Well John, I believe you are wasting your time dreaming about the past and wasting the present.

Good Aunt Rosa: Prayer is the answer.

Evil Madeline: Prayer is not the answer Rosa, that is a waste of time. Praying to a superman or to a mute god who allows so much suffering in this life.

Good Aunt Rosa: Blasphemy! Blasphemy Madeline and in front of a child!! How dare you!!!!

Uncle Smith: Easy now people, everyone is entitled to his own opinion and here is mine: I do not aim to change anyone's beliefs and convictions, I simply do not care and it is not my point anyway. I think praying is a good thing in itself however if only one knows how to pray. Prayer is not what you think it is. It is not a set of memorized words and rituals performed and said. It is not about reading texts and religious books. It surely is not about clasping your hands together and bending on your knees with your eyes closed to the whole world while your mind raves on stupidities as you do it. True prayer, gentlemen, is only in doing. Now I don't expect everyone of you reading this to understand (some of you will) because you really ought to be someone who really can go all the way down into yourself and perceive. Prayer is in achievement. Prayer is all about finding that diamond well hidden inside of you and polishing it, meticulously. Prayer is in really touching yourself deep enough and being silently content. Prayer is in the love of the self, looking at yourself in the mirror and daring yourself to achieve more regardless of the obstacles. It is in knowing that you are not wasting your time. It is in knowing that you are going somewhere with every passing minute, and then you would have nothing to regret John, nothing to miss in your past and cry over.

Junior the Son: what is God?

John the Father: He is the Father.

Good Aunt Rosa: He is everything around you. The whole universe and the trees and the rivers. He is the beginning and the end. He is the one and only.

Evil Madeline: Bullshit!

Uncle Smith: Have you noticed how everyone calls God by a "He"? You realize you all perceive Him as a single entity, a sort of being or spirit, a certain someone who can be nice and wrathful depending on how you perform in this life. Well He is not. I say God is an invisible force. A sort of law. The laws of physics and math and chemistry and geometry. God is the law that cells that multiply follow. God is the decay of dying physical matter and the rebirth of another. God is the logic behind the engine in your car and what makes your internet connection possible.

Evil Madeline: Oh yeah? Tell us Uncle Smith, how do we relate to this law?

Uncle Smith: Simply Madeline, by finding and polishing your diamond and still truly enjoy the pleasures of life and the flesh.

Good Aunt Rosa: What about piety Uncle?

Uncle Smith: That is utter narrow mindedness and a preface to hypocrisy.

Junior the Son: What about religious institutions Uncle?

Uncle Smith: Multinationals.

Good Aunt Rosa: Multinationals? This is going way too far Uncle! I really cannot go on with this conversation! These places are holy places! How could they be multinationals? they have nothing to sell!

Uncle Smith: Oh yes they do Aunt Rosa, they sell you the idea of happiness and you pay for it with your fears.

John the Father: What brought us to this now? We were discussing happiness. What has all this nonsense got to do with that?

Uncle Smith: Everything!

Junior the Son: Burps out loud

Uncle Smith: Did you know that guilt is the ruin of man? Guilt is the greatest prompter. It moves you, it shakes your insides, it pushes you to do things against your self interest and that is what you call sacrifice! Sacrifice is nothing but the embodiment of guilt! It is the bribe to one's own self! Preaching sacrifice is bribing the self! Hypocrisy! Religion is the manufacturer of guilt. Memory is the bringer of sadness and sacrifice is the harvester of sorrow!

Junior the Son: I am happy.

John the Father: You're just a kid my son.

Sweet Aunt Rosa: I am happy that you are happy Junior!

Evil Madeline: My happiness does not depend on yours.

Uncle Smith: I tend to agree more with you John and Madeline than with Aunt Rosa simply because the less memory you have stored in your brain, the happier you are. We all, as children were happier than we are today, older. Sweet memories bring tears to our eyes and make us long for a past that never could exist again even as we try our best simply because the past was genuine and happened naturally. What Evil Madeline said is so very true as well: I am happy when you are happy only when I know that you are happy because of me. If you were a happy man and your happiness is independent of my happiness or sorrow then your happiness might add to my sorrow but definitely not be a source of my happiness! Because things with humans are always comparative and relative. When I see you are independently happy, and the minute I tell you I am happy for your happiness deep down I will either say "well I don't really care" and/or compare my own state to yours.

Sweet Aunt Rosa: Well honestly I am not like that! I am really happy for others' happiness!

Uncle Smith: Are you happy for Madeline's? Always calling her the egocentric selfish insufferable bitch!

John the Father: She is an extreme!

Uncle Smith: It's working for her without harming you! You choose not to like her because her happiness is independent of your dependency because she does not belong to your range of thinking. Honestly, she does not care if you are happy or not but you do! You thrive on other people's sorrow, you gain self assurance because of it.

Evil Madeline: Weak hypocrite!

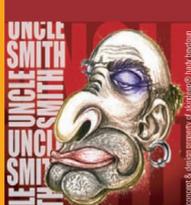
John the Father: You're being a bitch Evil Madeline! Sweet Aunt Rosa is such a nice and harmless person. What is wrong with her faith US? Why do you only see things from such a dark and mean perspective! Man has goodness in him! Man is kind: Mankind.

Junior the Son: Man Un Kind.

Evil Madeline: Really now, is man's happiness dependent on the state of other men? Is it always comparative, is it man's nature to always compare his state to others? I remember as a kid I could never grasp what the teacher in school used to tell us about not envying other people. I never did, it was so natural to me to only focus on myself and what was mine to possess or mine to achieve. The teacher would tell us to mind our own business and it is all I did naturally. My happiness and sadness depended solely on things related to myself period. As I grew older, I came to understand what the teacher meant. I could see it in other people, how envious they are of others who are better financially and in terms of social status. I came to see how a society is able to condemn a person simply because they do not understand him, and man in general is afraid of that which he does not understand. Over and above, man also is afraid of the person who dares be himself regardless of the whole of society's opinion of him, and that, my dear familia, is what I loath in society. A society for me equals IGNORANCE AND FEAR.

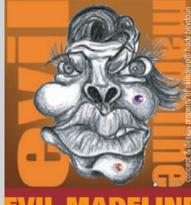
Uncle Smith: Well said Evil Madeline, to push forward your point, I may add that the saying, "One man's fortune is another man's pain" is so very true and applicable in this case. This comes from insecurity and stagnation in people's lives. People will only feel better when they see others suffering. The downfall of your friends makes you feel better about yourself, now admit it. It is because you secretly like to compare, it is how you were brought up in school and in society and on tv. It is because all you see around you is comparative. What you learn is comparative. The way you were treated is comparative, for example, how many times have your mum or dad told you, "Look at this boy or this girl how they do this or do that....!" Or the teachers and parents always comparing your poor grades to those of your classmates. The idea in learning, I suppose is to learn how to be yourself, and not learn how to beat your ego to death. Go to school and learn math and history, but also learn how to be yourself, with no comparison or judgment! Learn not to tread on others and learn how to be happy regardless of others failures or success, sadness or happiness! Be you, shock them, scare them, let them talk behind your back but do not bend to their comments and try to live up to their expectations of you unless you want to live miserable. Find yourself, find out what you are capable of and set no limits. Just be you.

Eliminate the noises from around you and inside your head, listen to your own voice. Once, in a sculpture class I asked the teacher if he liked to listen to music as he worked and he said, "No I only like to listen to my own voice." That made no sense to be back then, but now, I know what he means. Your own voice. We all have one, sometimes we forget to listen to it and let it guide us but when we do, it takes us places.



UNCLE SMITH

/late 60's, very rich, very wise, "wife beater" (although he has no wife!) plays poker heavily, drinks and fucks everyday. He gambles a lot has to know every detail in the family. His opinion is final.



EVIL MADELINE

/late 30's, very strong personality and commanding presence no one dares cross her. she is always up to some evil scheme, always dressed fancily, and a big spender. (well, she spends only on herself), does not cook or take care of anyone around her. everyone fears her.



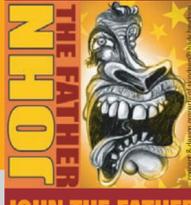
JUNIOR THE SON

/barely 18, silly, aggressive and not very bright. he adores his mother and tries to be like her. he is a trouble maker, always arguing with someone, smokes, and is a big heavy metal fan, (he stole a bicycle once, recently), he has no pity in his heart, and thinks of himself as the center of the world. uncle smith likes him a lot, and they both get in to fights with John, the father.



GOOD AUNT ROSA

/everyone likes her, and she adores everyone! especially junior! she treats him like her baby always giving him 'shrooms and space cakes! she does all the shopping and cooking for the familia. never married, she is in her mid 30s. she is somehow related to the familia, but only uncle smith knows the truth, he will not say how... (hmmmm something fishy here, but hey, she is sweet!)



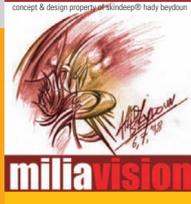
JOHN THE FATHER

/he is the brother of uncle smith and the husband of evil madeline. somewhere in his 40s (he doesn't even know!) takes money from his brother smith and almost shouts and spits every time he talks.



LUCIANO THE SPOKESMAN

/he is gay, no doubt! very friendly and very sophisticated. no one knows where he came from and he would not say! everyone respects him because he has a great natural talent for singing, especially when he is taking it up the ass, or in the shower (well yes, he plays a lot with soap!) his soap operas are outstanding, and often you will find severely disturbed jack following him. (it has been rumored that he has sex with jack), very possible.



MILIA VISION

/when a familia member has an idea, he sees a vision in his mind and it is usually represented as such, a very vague, trippy, hallucination like kind of extreme moody twisted thought. even luciano in his sexual ecstasy claims to have seen it.



tattoo & photo by skin deep@ hady beydoun



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HYGIENE!

ALL ITEMS STERILIZED ARE SEALED IN STERILE POUCHES WITH AN INDICATOR THAT PROVES STERILIZATION PROCESS SUCCESSFUL.

DURING THE TATTOO PROCESS, THE NEEDLE IS NOT THE ONLY PART THAT GETS CONTAMINATED. DO NOT BE MISLEAD! IT IS THE RIGHT OF EVERY CUSTOMER TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE STERILIZATION PROCESS PRIOR TO TATTOOING. SAFETY COMES FIRST!

GRIP & TIP



This is the **Handle** of the tattoo machine. It gets contaminated with every tattoo and must be **autoclaved (sterilized)** every time. Though it does not penetrate the skin, it gets in touch with blood and bacteria.

Cross contamination is a hazard to safety.

The **MACHINE** is the only part that does not get contaminated.

All parts labeled in **RED** get contaminated during the tattoo process and therefore **MUST BE STERILIZED** before reuse.

The **NEEDLE** is the only part that is used **ONCE** and is disposed of after the tattoo is done.

NEEDLE BAR & NEEDLE



The **Needle Bar** is what holds the needle to the machine. Like the other parts of the machine, it is reused and sterilized every time.

The **Needle** is the only part that is **Single Use**. It is broken off right after the tattoo is done and thrown away.

All needles must be **NEW** and **STERILIZED** prior to tattooing.

DO NOT BE FOOLED!

Always ask to see the **Autoclave** in every tattoo studio. It is your only sign of proper Hygiene.

REMEMBER, A NEW NEEDLE IS NOT THE ONLY GUARANTEE FOR SAFETY!

THERE IS NO OTHER WAY FOR HYGIENE. BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU GO.

TATTOOED

By Elissar Haikal

"You're getting a tattoo done?! Take a hike!" Or perhaps an evil eyebrow decked by a mystifying, mischievous grin that makes you wonder about whether it might grow an undulating scream. Or maybe a shocked, shocking look that makes you want to hide before the sky falls on you. Reactions come in all shapes and sizes, mind you. And it's all in the mind of the receiver. Is it, really? Oh well. If I were to categorize myself, I can safely say that I'm a good girl. I don't stop people walking by to shriek in their faces for no reason. There's always a good reason! I don't go crazy in public unless I go downright crazy altogether. For another good reason. I'm a writer/poet. I'm moody and easily irritable. I, too, am irritating, sometimes to a fault. I've got my moments. The clock of my life has got the ticks of its own, and it's satisfied, merci ktee. I coexist with life in all its haphazardness and chaos. When it knocks on my door to show me its straight, sensible face, I tend to disbelieve it could actually have one. My joie-de-vivre is undomesticated. No divorce history runs in my family. I was never locked behind bars. I don't worship the devil. I don't commune with the dead. My sisters are sane and don't believe that, to go to heaven, you ought to dye your hair phosphorous green. My brother doesn't boss me around like a patriarchal, half-crazed moron. We're three sisters anyway! I wish I had a brother, but that's another story. Perhaps in the next issue, if Hady publishes this piece to begin with! I believe I come from a normal background. I say 'normal' because that's what society likes to call it. Whether it makes sense or not, I don't really care. All in all, I'm a girl the man next door can say Hi to without thinking twice or looking behind his shoulder. I've got a bird that I call 'Spiky.' He flew out of his cage one morning and made his way back in the afternoon, and that's a true story. How? No clue. I guess birds can easily identify good girls. That's my only plausible explanation.

The above was an introduction. An interesting one. I hope you're still reading.

And so, to proceed, and to boot, I've recently had two tattoos done by Hady Beydoun. I'm still a good girl, believe it! And normal. It was a thrilling experience for me, perhaps the most thrilling of the past 5 years'. Just in case you, my forbearing reader, are trying to guess my age, I'm 30. An adult, so to speak. Put differently, and by the book, I'm not green or puerile anymore. They say I'm past that stage. Yes, I hope so too. I'm fully mindful about what I've done. 'Stewed, Screwed, and Tattooed' is not what I am now. Whoever was he who had said that a tattoo is a statement was right. A statement of a truly poetic nature. It's everlasting. Love comes and goes. Pain and euphoria numb you, each in its own uncanny way. Ups and downs alternate till you get to a point when you get too dizzy to play along. Life goes on, with or without you. But your tattoo always wins through. Without a wholesale of chintzy words and promises ever broken, it tells you that it is your most constant and good-looking companion along that ragged path we call existence. It feels safe under your skin, and you know it was made for you. You know it won't leave you unless you, yourself, decide to do without it. It satisfies your ego in its striving to be non-mainstream. It personalizes you and becomes your rite of passage to your true home: You. With it, you dot the "i"s and strike the "t" of your spirit. It is an empowering talisman that not only makes you feel rightly arrogant in the face of commonality, but also emblematic in your own very eyes. Was that too dreamy or philosophical? My tattoos' aftermath perhaps. If only life could be tattooed!



by hady beydoun

Painting by Hady Beydoun. 4meters x 1.40. Urethanes & acrylic on flex.