

TATTOO

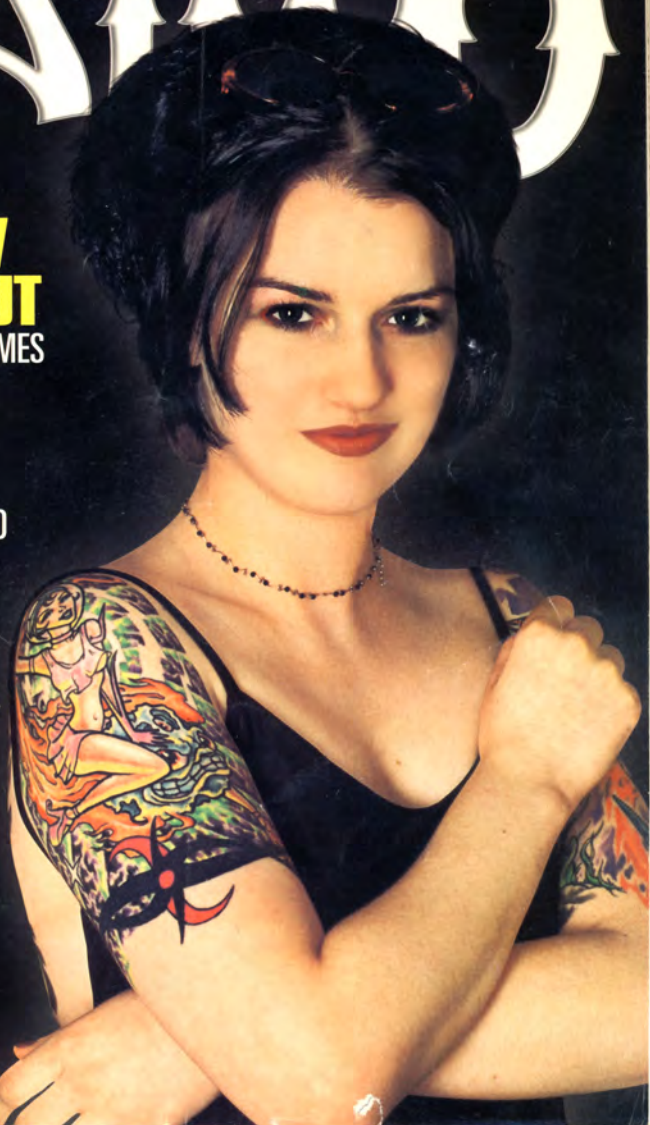
TATTOO

**GLASSJAW
BREAKS OUT**
WITH POSITIVE EXTREMES

**OBSCURE
TATTOOS**
GERMANY'S MISS NICO

**ITALIAN
INK EXPO**
COLORIZING FLORENCE

**RISING
DRAGON**
NYC'S DARREN ROSA



tattoomag.com

\$5.99 • Can. \$7.99

CC



Slinging Ink

Tattoos In The News • Reviews • Music • Fashion • Resources • And Other Interesting Stuff

MIDDLE EAST INK

Modern Tattooing Comes To Lebanon

Here in America we are spoiled, there are tattoo shops springing up all over and the artistic level of tattoos is rising by the second. Artists have a wide pool of images that are time tested, and some even mother approved. But in war-torn Lebanon up until five years ago there wasn't a single shop. With the 20-year gap in the postal service a tattoo magazine was unheard of. What crude tattoos there were had to be hand-poked with ink made from the soles of shoes, and were only worn by criminals and military groups like the PLO and the Israeli army. Lebanon is slowly coming out of the tattoo dark ages, and the man leading this middle-eastern country into the light is Hady Beydoun, owner of Skin Deep, Lebanon's first tattoo studio.

One fateful day in 1990 when Hady was still airbrushing T-shirts for a living, a client walked in with a copy of *Tattoo* magazine and changed his life forever. The guy wanted an American eagle sprayed on a T-shirt. While the ink was drying Hady opened the magazine, and his first thought was, "How the hell do they do that?" After reading a little further Hady realized that he was in the wrong business.

The next year he started at the American University of Beirut and began studying up on tattoos. He even tried reading about the mixing of molecules for certain colors. He asked around, and one day he got his break and was supplied with the address to a tattoo supply company in the U.S. He sent for a catalog. Unfortunately, during this time Lebanon was just coming out the back side of a civil war that had been raging for over



PHOTOGRAPH BY FELTON MORGAN

Slinging Ink

20 years and the postal service was barely working. Eventually he got the catalog and put out a flyer to see if there was any demand for tattoos. He was amazed to get over 200 replies, and some people even showed up on his doorstep asking for the "tattoo guy." He turned to his friends for advice, and for the most part, they thought it was a great idea. They even offered themselves up as guinea pigs. It wasn't for another year, however, that he decided to give tattooing a serious go.

Since no one knew how a tattoo should look, a unique thing happened: the client and artist broke each other in, and eventually they grew into more complicated work.

Late in 1994, Hady traveled to Davis' Tattoo Supply in England to do some shopping. He spent a whole day there. When he returned to Lebanon, he had everything needed to open up a shop, including the essential sterilizer, but before he opened the door he put himself under the needle. On his thigh he did a little dot, then a little line, and then a squiggly line, and then went for a Indian's face. On January 25, 1995, he did his first tattoo on a friend.

Hady is one amazing artist. When he was 13, he started airbrushing T-shirts with Metallica and Guns 'n' Roses album-cover art, and he has moved on to giant murals for William Lawson's Whiskey. He does fantastic finishes on jet skis and motorcycles including an American flag the entire length of one bike. His artistic talent has taken him far in Lebanon, and he is heavily influenced by the West. Now he has transferred his talent onto skin.



Even the slightest mark on the skin made with an electric machine was groundbreaking in Lebanon in 1995. Since no one knew how a tattoo should look, a unique thing happened: the client and artist broke each other in. And eventually the client and artist were able to grow into more complicated work. Although Hady has never totally screwed up a tattoo, he has seen his skill blossom since he started.

Hady is completely self taught without the assistance of stencils or flash. He attributes how well he has done to the 15 years he spent airbrushing. Holding an airbrush is similar to holding a tattoo machine, and over the past five years Hady has adjusted the angles to get under the skin properly for shading and highlights.

It wasn't until last year that Hady was able to work with other artists. He spent some time with the boys and girls at Belfast City Skinworks in Belfast, Northern Ireland. They gave him the critiquing needed to step up to



the next level. He is still a long way off from where he is going, but considering that up until last year he hadn't even been able to see another artist work, he has done a fine job. He even picked up some flash and a stencil machine while in Belfast.

For now, Hady is still in his 25-square-meter room. Since his return to Lebanon from Belfast, he has doubled his clientele and is planning on moving into a bigger shop as well as continuing his airbrushing and graphics design business. Hady can be reached at SkinDeep@hotmail.com. —Kelton McMullen

