





Electric tattooing as we know it today was invented in New York City at the turn of the 19th century. In the first days of American tattooing, tattoos were primarily worn by sailors and soldiers, outlaws and outsiders. The visual language of what came to be known as “traditional tattooing” was developed in those early days on the Bowery and catered to the interests of the clientele. Common imagery that soon became canon included sailing ships, women, hearts, roses, daggers, eagles, dragons, wolves, panthers, skulls, crosses, and popular cartoon characters of the era. The first tattooists also figured out that using bold outlines, complimented by solid color and smooth shading, was the proper technique for creating art on a body that would look good forever. In the over 100 years since then, techniques and styles have evolved, and the customer base has expanded, but the core subject matter and philosophy developed at the dawn of electric tattooing has persisted as perennial favorites through the modern era.

Jonathan Shaw is a world traveling outlaw artist, novelist, blogger, head doctor, anti-folk hero, warehouse philosopher, legendary tattoo master, and notorious innovator and creator of underground art. Shaw was born in NY to big band legend Artie Shaw and movie star Doris Dowling, and was raised in LA where he learned to tattoo on the legendary Pike boardwalk from old-school California masters. After running with the likes of Jim Morrison, the Manson Family, and Charles Bukowski, he fell prey to heroin addiction and a life of crime. He finally left 1970s Hollywood to travel the world and founded Fun City, the first street tattoo shop in NYC since tattooing was decriminalized in the 1960s.

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