

CAMPUS HAPPENINGS

Fashion, Fads or Trends: Tattooing, Body Piercing and Branding

BY QUEYANA C. WOODS
Editor

Pouncing panthers, clawing tigers, dragons, and pierced bellybuttons and eyebrows are the sights that can be seen at Winston-Salem's **Inkwell Tattoo Shop**.

This new tattoo shop not only specializes in tattooing, but body piercing as well. Bishop is the tattoo extraordinaire, Renee, Bishop's wife, specializes in the body piercing and Chris, an exceptional artist, is always on-hand to create outstanding tattoo designs.

Bishop, who has been tattooing for six years, previously worked in Wilmington, (where he learned the trade) and Miami, Fl. and Tennessee. He can tattoo himself as well as others. He has 15 tattoos and four piercings: two in his ear, one in his leuret (the area under the lip) and one in his tongue.

Is tattooing a trend or a fad? Bishop feel that it is here to stay. "Tattooing has been the oldest art for many years. It goes in and out of fashion but I can't foresee it going downhill or out of style completely," said Bishop.

In the last issue of *The News Argus*, a student explained the tattooing process. Bishop explains the process from the artists' view. "When you first come in, we'll talk to you about the type and size of the design and the place you want tattooed. Our artist, Chris, sketches the design and gets it ready for imprint," explains Bishop. "We need all patrons to sign a release form before we touch them. All of our instruments are brand new; the ink, the needles and all other utensils needed to apply the tattoo. All of our products are covered with plastic so that they'll all be germ-free. I then spray alcohol on the designated area for cleansing purposes and green soap to help the imprint to appear on the skin. A black outline covers the imprint, followed by

color and a bandage dressing."

When considering a tattoo, you may not only want to be concerned about prices, but you also want to be concerned with the cleanliness of the shop as well as the artist himself. You would probably want to watch the artist as he prepares to work on you to make sure that everything being used is sterile. Lastly, make sure that the design you choose is something that you can live with.

"It's wise to choose something that is you and only use names if it is someone indefinitely close like mom, dad, brother or sister. Boy/Girlfriends, husbands/wives and best friends aren't suggested," says Bishop.

Thinking about getting a tattoo? The average tattoo time is anywhere from one to two hours. If the design is larger and extremely detailed, then it would take much longer than that. Some designs can't be finished in one visit so the person must wait another week or two to get the job finished.

Renee, who does body piercing, has been doing so for about two years. Believe it or not, anyone can pierce because no license or degree is needed. "I attended Gauntlet, which is the most distinguished, most highly respected piercing instruction organization in the world," said Renee. "A woman named Makaiya taught me the art of piercing in about five days. I have certificates qualifying me in body piercing as well as tattooing."

There are four levels of piercers: piercers, junior piercers, senior piercers and master piercers. "Over time, one can escalate from piercer to master piercer like that," said Renee.

As with tattooing, all of the equipment used should be sterilized, packaged and germ-free. The jewelry is presoaked in Cetylcide - a germicidal cleaner. Most people with pierced ears

have a relatively small hole, a 20 gage-sized hole. A hole can be as big as 00, which is about the size of the tip of a pinky finger or a 20 gage which is the size of a needle point.

The process of receiving a body piercing is slightly more complicated.

First, the person must choose the size and type of earring that he/she wants. The designated body part is chosen and it is marked. The area is then cleansed with iodine while the new needle is soaking in Bacitracin (an antibiotic ointment). The gage size is determined while the forceps, the needle, clamps and corks are prepared to create a hole. While the needle is still inserted, the ring is slid into the hole, and then the needle is removed. The spot is wiped again with Bacitracin and disposable germicidal wipes. The process lasts anywhere from 5 to 25 minutes.

"If the skin is irritated, then the piercing won't be done. Some piercing, like on the nose and bellybutton, may leave scars; nothing dramatic," explained Renee. "The key is to be relaxed, don't drink, don't 'get high' and again, be relaxed. I usually sit with the person for one minute just to make sure that the person is comfortable and doesn't go into shock because of an adrenaline rush."

One of the most popular places for piercings is the tongue. The tongue will swell for about three days after being pierced. Eating heavy and spicy food is not suggested immediately after it is done.

Renee said, "Some people can eat a full course meal the day after but some can't. I know it took my husband about five days to drink a Pepsi." (By the way, Renee has seven piercings: five in her ears, one in her tongue and one in her navel.)

A pierced ear/ nose/ eyebrow will cost about \$30; a pierced navel cost about \$35; nipples cost about \$40; a leuret is about \$45; the tongue is about

\$50 and anything "below the belt" is \$50 and above. (Note: These are not Inkwell's quoted prices.)

Unlike tattoos, pierced holes can close up if you allow them to do so. If you feel like being not-so-bold, then simply let it go.

"I wanted to tattoo people not for the money, but for my love of art. It took me two years of effort to finally become a tattoo artist and now it has about paid off," says Chris.

"It really bothers me when people can't seem to equate tattooing with art. A person can have anything on their bodies that they want, any creation that they can think of can either be drawn by the design artist or the people themselves. Some people won't let their creativity flow, that's why there are so many redundant tattoos like panthers, roses, hearts, tigers, Taz and others."

"The Inkwell is a fabulous shop because the walls are full of the most creative designs and the artist [Chris] has the ability to draw anything straight from a description," says Danielle Peronneau, a WSSU student who just got her first tattoo at the Inkwell.

"They have a comfortable atmosphere with magazines, music, and constant joking and conversation so that one is never really nervous and/or scared," says Peronneau.

"Even though I've traveled to other cities, I felt the need to come back home [Winston-Salem]," says Bishop. "My husband and I have been together for 10 years and we've traveled to learn the trade of piercing and tattooing. We came back to Winston-Salem to give it what it really needs - a good tattoo/piercing shop," Renee adds.

If you are interested in body art, visit **The Inkwell at 1650 Hutton St. (behind Silas Creek Parkway) or call them at (910) 727-9750.**

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