

INKA DINKA DOO

Tattoo and Piercing Studio

Tony Urbanek founded the Inka Dinka Doo tattoo studio in 1994. It was the first shop to open within the city limits of Pittsburgh, Pa.

"The idea was to bring to Pittsburgh a fresh new style and vision of tattooing, it's a shop built around the idea of artistic freedom and progression. At the time, I wanted to do something different in our city, by making a shop that was more of a gallery than a studio," says Urbanek. Inka Dinka Doo.

Currently the shop is located in the small historic district of Lawrenceville, about five minutes from the heart of downtown Pittsburgh. It's a growing art community, and the shop adds a bit of character to the surroundings. The shop maintains a friendly, inviting environment — not looking too much like a dentist's office, or too much like your friend's living room! There are countless designs and paintings to look at, and the upbeat environment is felt throughout. Inka Dinka Doo is a small, but cozy studio with three tattoo stations and one piercing station. They also have a small waiting room and a workshop in the back for machine building and fabrication.



There are two or three artists, and one piercer there six days a week. Inka Dinka Doo specializes in all sorts of tattooing, ranging from high contrast black and grey, to full on dynamic color pieces, portrait work, and crazy, bold bio-mech pieces. Everyone in the shop has a style of his own. They are a full-service shop and cater to everyone. All three artists stay well booked all year round, but do find the time to cover walk-ins as well.

"I started tattooing in 1990 and started building machines in the summer of 1998. I enjoy doing black and grey tattoos, photorealistic to abstract," notes shop owner Urbanek. "I grew up with influences like Jack Rudy, Creeper, Paul Booth and Filip Leu—all masters of grey wash. I love black and grey, but have been into doing a lot of color work as well. I'm always in the process of developing my art skills and techniques through experimental art, painting, photography, books, seminars, etc. I'm currently reflecting back to my earlier bio-mechanical texture works, and adding what I've learning over the years into them. I love abstract experimental textures and color blending, but don't mind getting back to the basics as well. I'm always trying to satisfy my clients' requests. I believe versatility is key in this business. I try to remain well versed in every style of art. I don't want to limit my skills by focusing too much on one style. Instead I try to blend each style into one another. That makes for an interesting twist on a piece sometimes."

Aside from tattooing, building tattoo machines is a big part of the everyday life at the shop. There is a lot of



Continued on page 38



INKA DINKA DOO

Continued from page 28

focus on building and developing quality tools for the trade. They are ever educating themselves on machine building and tuning as well, seminars, books, swapping info with other builders, etc.

"I get so excited about a project that sometimes I can't sleep at night because I'm pre-building it in my mind. I'm obsessed with acquiring more information to make my machines that much better. It's another form of artistic expression, another outlet for me to create," says Urbanek.

Urbanek tries to stay away from the same old designs by incorporating different influences from his life into each machine. Whether it be hot rods, carving, gun smithing, engraving, or woodworking, you'll see all of that incorporated into various projects. Every machine is a one off, sometimes close to being the same, but different, not any two are alike.

"It's about the progression, and I can see it through the years in my works. I like that. It make me feels like I'm doing something right by not getting complacent or stuck," says Urbanek.

Iron City Irons was formed in 2002 as a machine building company outside of Inka Dinka Doo. It was formed to promote the first 13 machines Tony did by hand and to

generate more custom machine orders. Later in 2005 Rich Cosgrove, friend and co-worker, was asked to partner up, and hit machine building full force with Urbanek. Since the merger of minds, the two have been building, designing and fabricating machines every chance they get.

"It's hard to keep up with each other because we're constantly going from tattoos to machine building. It's a constant state of motion in the shop, between tattooing, painting, machine building, conventions, promoting, and drawing flash, there's little time to waste. There is a very positive and productive atmosphere at the shop," says Urbanek.

Cosgrove came to Inka Dinka Doo in 2000 after a sudden move from Atlanta, Ga. He is a great addition and an inspiring artist around the shop. Cosgrove's tattoos are very versatile, ranging from bold color comic book art, to soft black and grey portrait work. He can adapt to any style or form of tattoo without a thought. Bold color tattooing is Cosgrove's strong point. His color is solid and the designs are crisp.

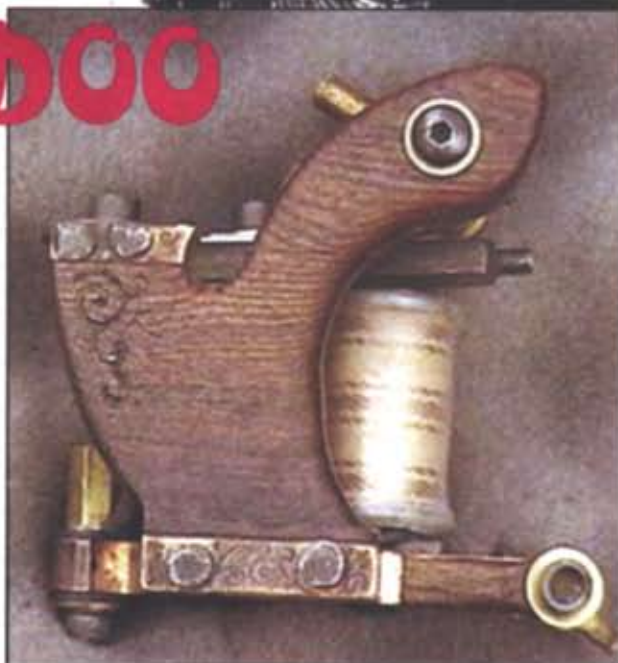
George Shrepk, who has been with Inka Dinka Doo since 2000, does the piercing. Piercing since the late 1980s, Shrepk is well-rounded in all aspects of body piercing and the business. He goes out of his way to make a client comfortable and relaxed when he sets up for the job

Continued on page 50



INKA DINKA DOO

Continued from page 38



and always maintains a professional and well-equipped environment. He's always on the phone making appointments, cleaning and helping out customers. The piercing department has a full range of body jewelry packed into three showcases, and on occasion you'll find George in the workroom working on his handmade jewelry line.

All in all, the shop is a positive compilation of artists striving to move on in the tattoo business by pushing toward undeveloped styles of tattooing, art and machines. Be sure to keep an eye out for their tattoos and machines at many U.S. conventions this year. Feel free to contact them for appointments, machines, or a general B.S. session.

Inkadinkadoo Tattoo and Piercing Studio
3627 Butler St., Pittsburgh, PA 15201
(412) 683-4320

www.inkadinkadoo.net
www.ironcityirons.com

