

ILLUSTRATED SKULLS

Whether rendered in delicate pencil or swathes of pure black Indian ink, strokes of the nib or plotted digital pixels, skull imagery continues to inspire and excite illustrators the world over.

Magazine illustration, book covers, games design, personal projects, warm-ups and sketch sessions, and just plain ol' doodles – for publication, for projection, for fun. Here is just the briefest sampling of what's recently been on the drawing boards of some very talented folks indeed.



Below left

Cover design to unknown Finnish paperback, from Skulfinder General Soren Mosdal www.sm.anport.dk

Opposite clockwise from top left

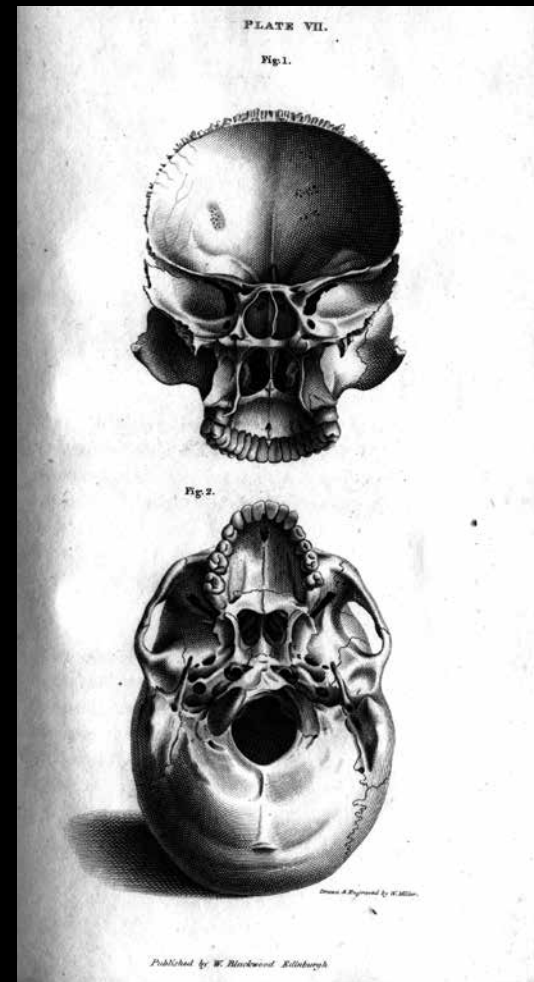
1986 thrash metal t-shirt design www.voivod.com

Halloween Greek Style, poster artwork by Vasilis Lolos for Hearts and Swords tattoo Studio www.steamrobo.blogspot.co.uk

Horror meister Richard Corben with an olden mouldy favourite: Night Images, Songs of Death www.corbenstudios.com

Awe Skull by Zven Balslev, www.cultpump.blogspot.co.uk

Didn't you ever notice how a skull brings to mind the helmet of an Imperial Stormtrooper? Plate VII, old engraving by William Miller resampled for a Burke and Hare graphic novel, 2011. Image courtesy of Rian Hughes



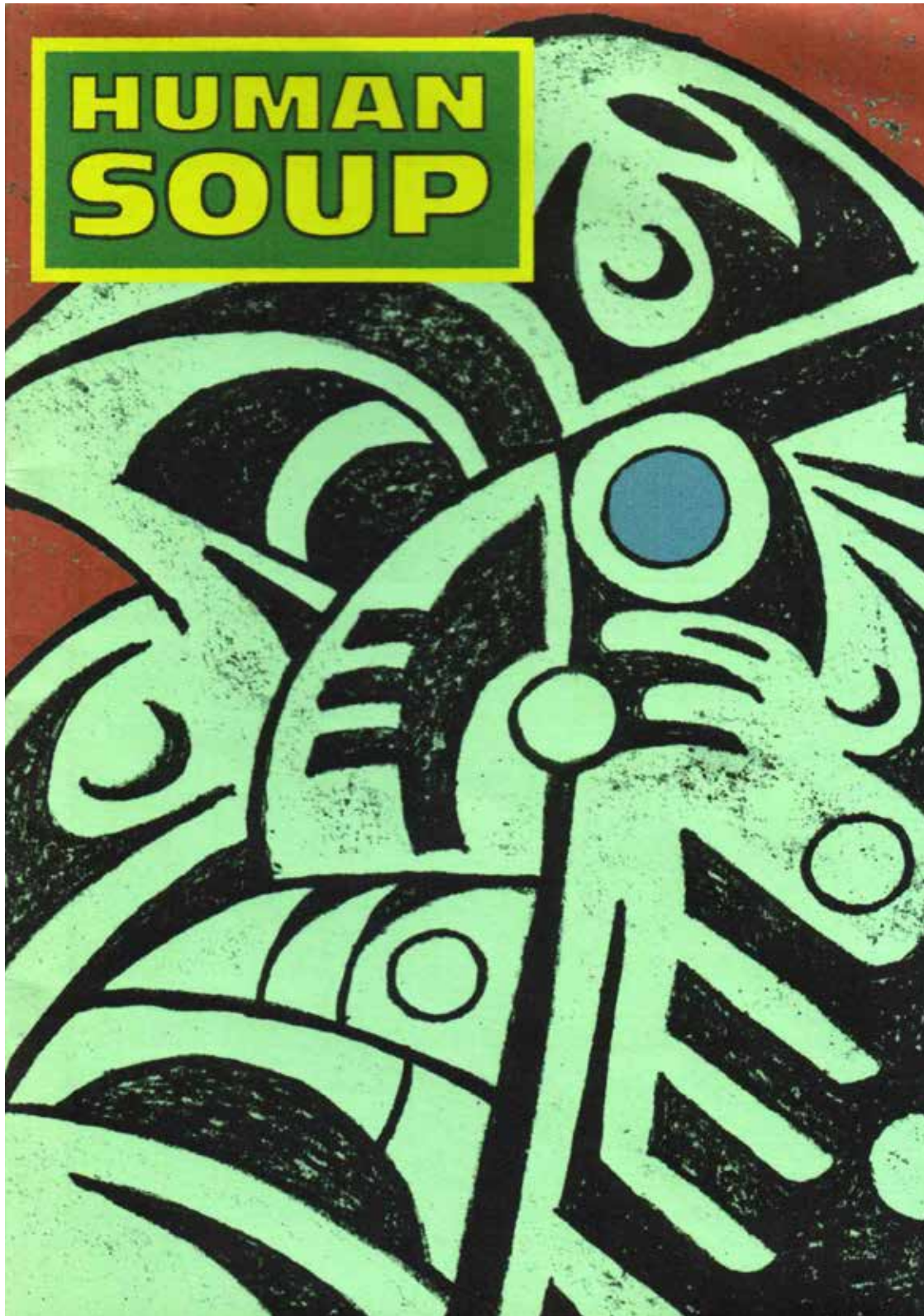
**Ortheza**

The Way to the Witch

Ortheza is the pen name of
Lukasz Matuszek, from Poland.
A concept artist for games
(character & equipment

design) and an illustrator
of book covers, his work has
been featured in ImagineFX
and Pixel Arts magazine.

www.ortheza.net
www.ortheza.deviantart.com



Jerzy H Szostek

The skull-ish cover (opposite) to cartoonist Jerzy's self-published stripzine, HUMAN SOUP issue 5, almost akin to an African mask

www.poopsheetfoundation.com

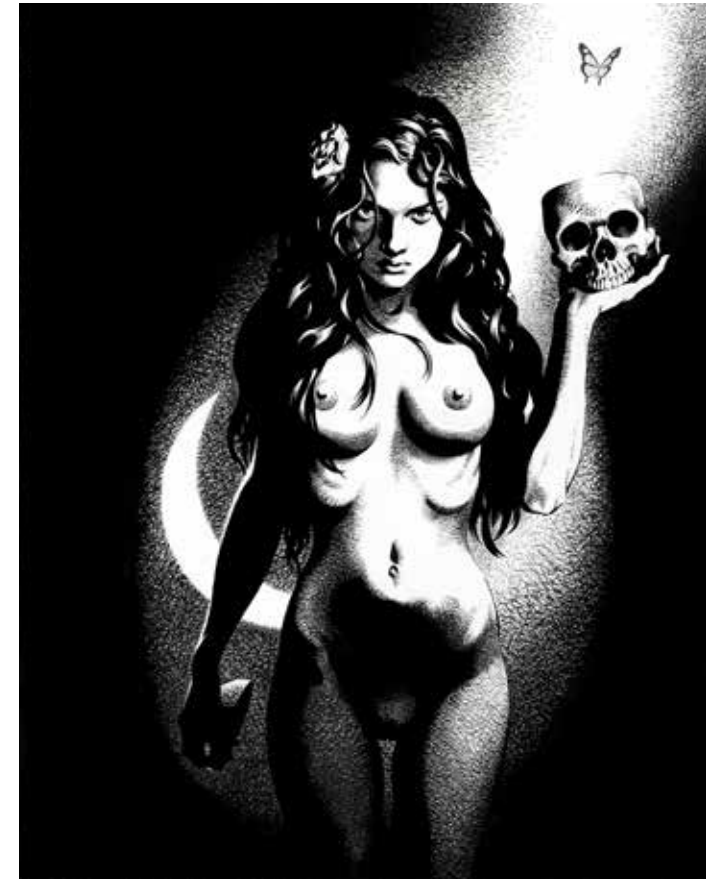
Gary Leach

Jeff Jones tribute (right)

American artist Jeffrey Catherine Jones (1944–2011) was best known for comics and book covers, in addition to Fine Art. World renowned fantasy artist Frank Frazetta called Jones “the greatest living painter” – high praise indeed, if you know of Frazetta’s work. Although Jones first achieved fame as Jeff Jones and lived for a time as male, she later changed her name and was legally recognized as female.

www.web.archive.org/web/20110908023201/http://www.jeffreyjones-art.com

Gary Leach is most famous for his work with Alan Moore on the revival of Marvelman, Miracleman. He draws nice.



“I was talking to a lady, late thirties, in my street, and she was wearing a black top with a huge and glittery silver-coloured skull on her chests. She got a mild ribbing over it naturally. Danny of the Bash Street Kids can get away with it without bother, teens just about manage it on occasion. Mister and Missus Older look a little bit desperate for attention.”

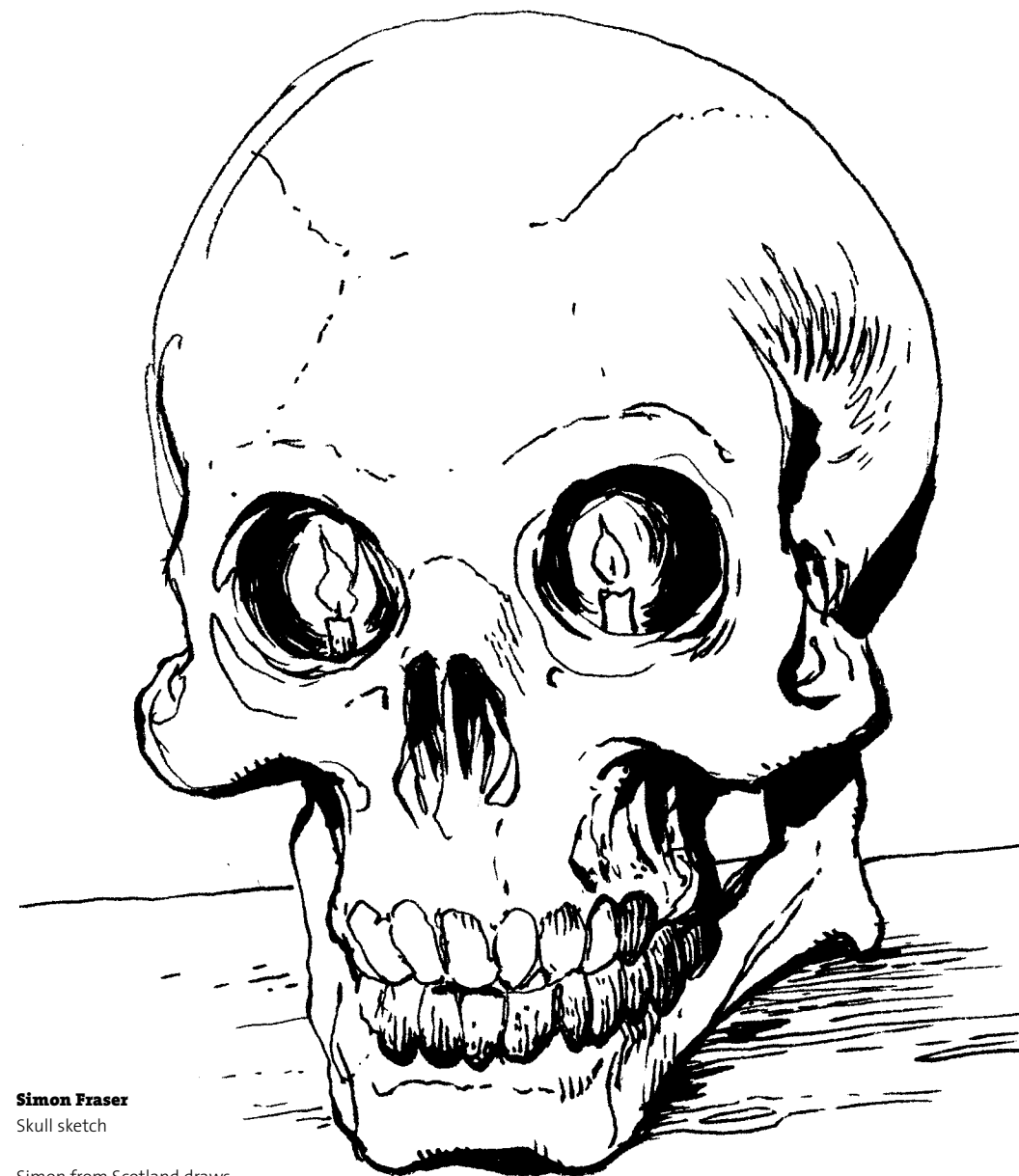
Jerzy H Szostek, Liverpool UK



Shari Hes
Exorcist

Shari Chankhama is a comics artist, illustrator, colourist, reluctant writer and technology enthusiast from Thailand (see *The Mammoth Book of BEST NEW MANGA* volumes 1–3). She sometimes goes by Shari Hes.

www.sharii.com

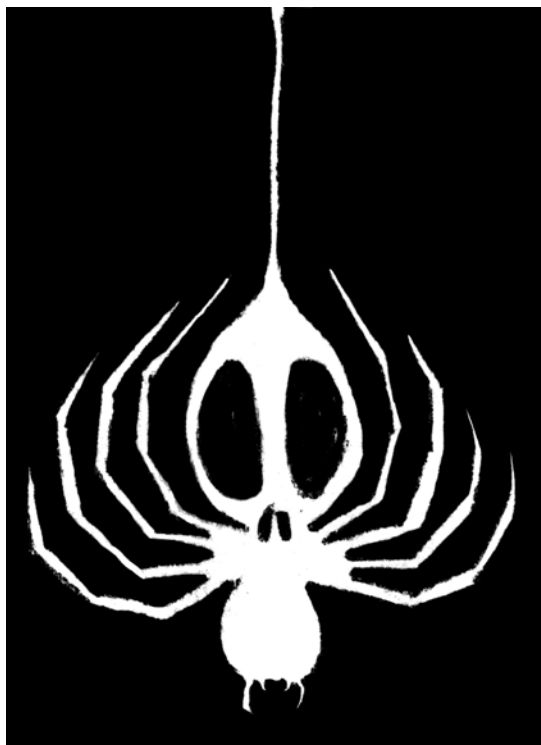


Simon Fraser
Skull sketch

Simon from Scotland draws comics. He's best known for *The Adventures of Nikolai Dante* in 2000AD, and for travelling a lot. He currently works on his own Lilly Mackenzie's adventures, whilst running webcomics collective ACTIVATEcomix.com

www.simonfraser.net

Simon
2013



Karen Rubins
Skullspider

Subtle post-Victorian Goth
Karen Rubins is a comics
creator and illustrator living
and working in London, UK.
In 2009 she was official
Comics Artist in Residence
at the Victoria and Albert
Museum, London.

www.karenrubins.com

Jose Muñoz
Skull sketch from Kendal
Lakes Festival, 2013

Born in Buenos Aires,
Argentina, Jose was
understudy to both Alberto
Breccia and Hugo Pratt, two
mighty giants of comic art.
Very much an "artists' artist",
he nowadays commands
huge respect himself, and
joins them in the pantheon
of legend.

www.josemunozdessins.com



MUNOZ KENDAL 2013

Jon B. Cooke
Tekeli-li! Journal of Terror, No.1,
(opposite) from 1991
©2013 Jon B. Cooke
Illustration ©2013
Bob Eggleton

www.jonbcooke.com

A MONTILLA PUBLICATION

NO. 1, SPRING 1991

Tekeli-li!

JOURNAL OF TERROR

PREMIERE ISSUE!

SPECIAL LES DANIELS NUMBER

featuring
Don Sebastian
the Vampire in
"The Dead Man"
with an Interview,
Bibliography,
Appreciations,
& Critical Essay

Plus:
Chet Williamson
Bob Booth
Robert M. Price
Bob Eggleton
Stefan Dziemianowicz
James Thompson
Allen Koszowski
Steven Gould
John Borkowski
and much more!



\$4.50
4.

Because these bonuses aren't just bonuses like the ones for you and me
Some rest comfortably in the thousands, or the millions, you see
And these fat cats sit there smiling, and counting all the coppers
Watching the minions settle in their lives, the penny bargain shoppers.

Excerpted Verse © 2012, Keli Anne

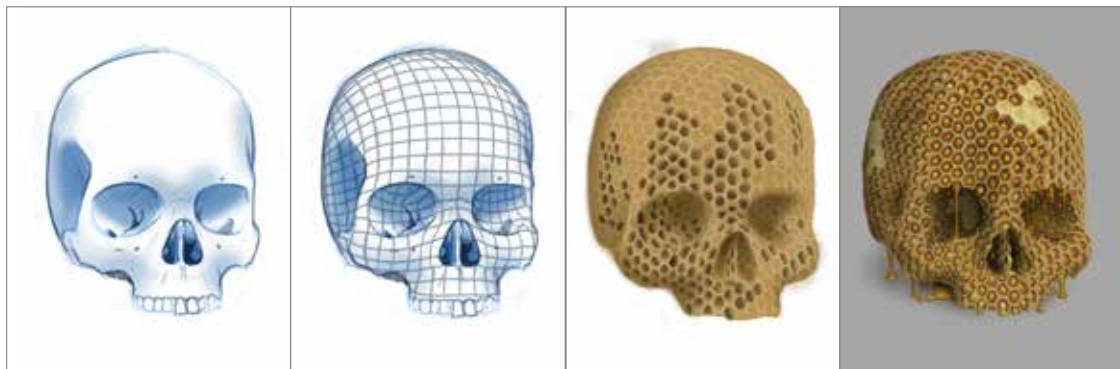


ILYA
A Christmas Carol (Bankers)

Illustration for a radical performance poetry re-interpretation of Dickens' classic novella from 1843, featuring the miser Scrooge. Originally commissioned by Portsmouth City Council, UK.

Seen here, The Ghost of Christmas Present, with "two emaciated children, subhuman in appearance and loathsome to behold, clinging to his robes" – Ignorance, and Want: Rarely better presented than in the animated film version of *A Christmas Carol* (1971), by the Richard Williams Studio.





BARRY THOMSON

An illustrator and animator based in Glasgow, Scotland, Barry Thomson has a keen interest in painting traditionally and digitally, as well as creating and drawing his own short comic strips. Self taught, he follows in his father's footsteps as a professional illustrator. He is always striving to improve, whether by drawing in his sketchbook, or attending life drawing sessions.

www.thomsonvthomson.com

Honey Skull

Step by Step Process (above left to right)

Digital illustrations and text © Barry Thomson

Process 1

Firstly I drew out a rough of a human skull. I wanted to capture the front and the depth of the eye sockets and nasal aperture. This would give me more challenging contours.



Process 2

I then divided the skull into a flowing grid, as this would help keep a uniform size to the hexagonal honeycomb pattern.

Process 3

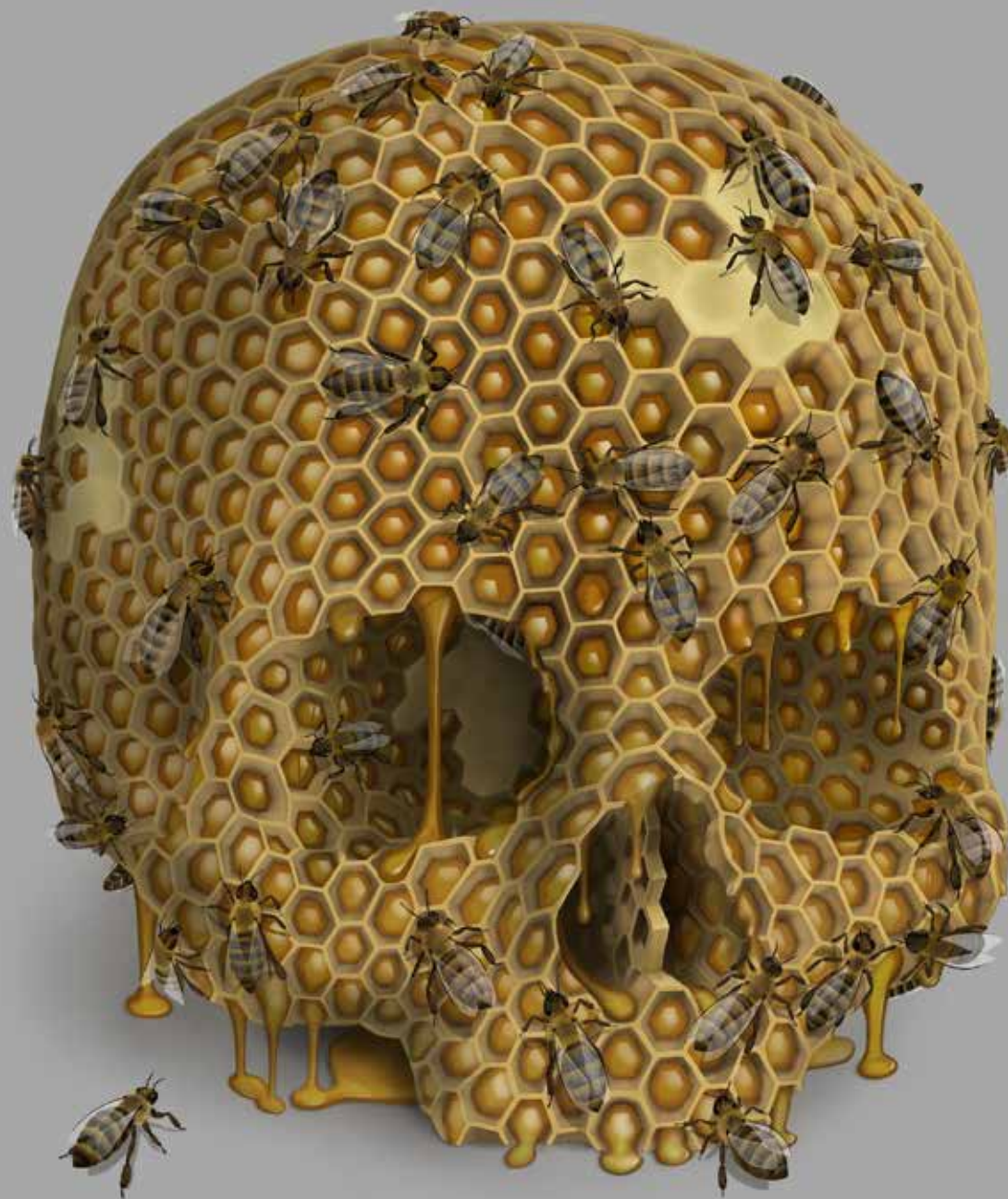
The stepped tiling of the hexagonal combs would be the most challenging part of the illustration by far. The grid's vertical and horizontal lines have to be used purely as a rough guide, but a guide nonetheless.

Process 4

Originally, I wanted to depict honey, and give myself the challenge of creating a translucent viscous liquid. But, in the end, I spent more time creating a skull out of the comb. The bees were then added one by one, leg by leg, hair by hair, onto the finished skull.

Opposite

Honey Skull
Digital illustration
© Barry Thomson



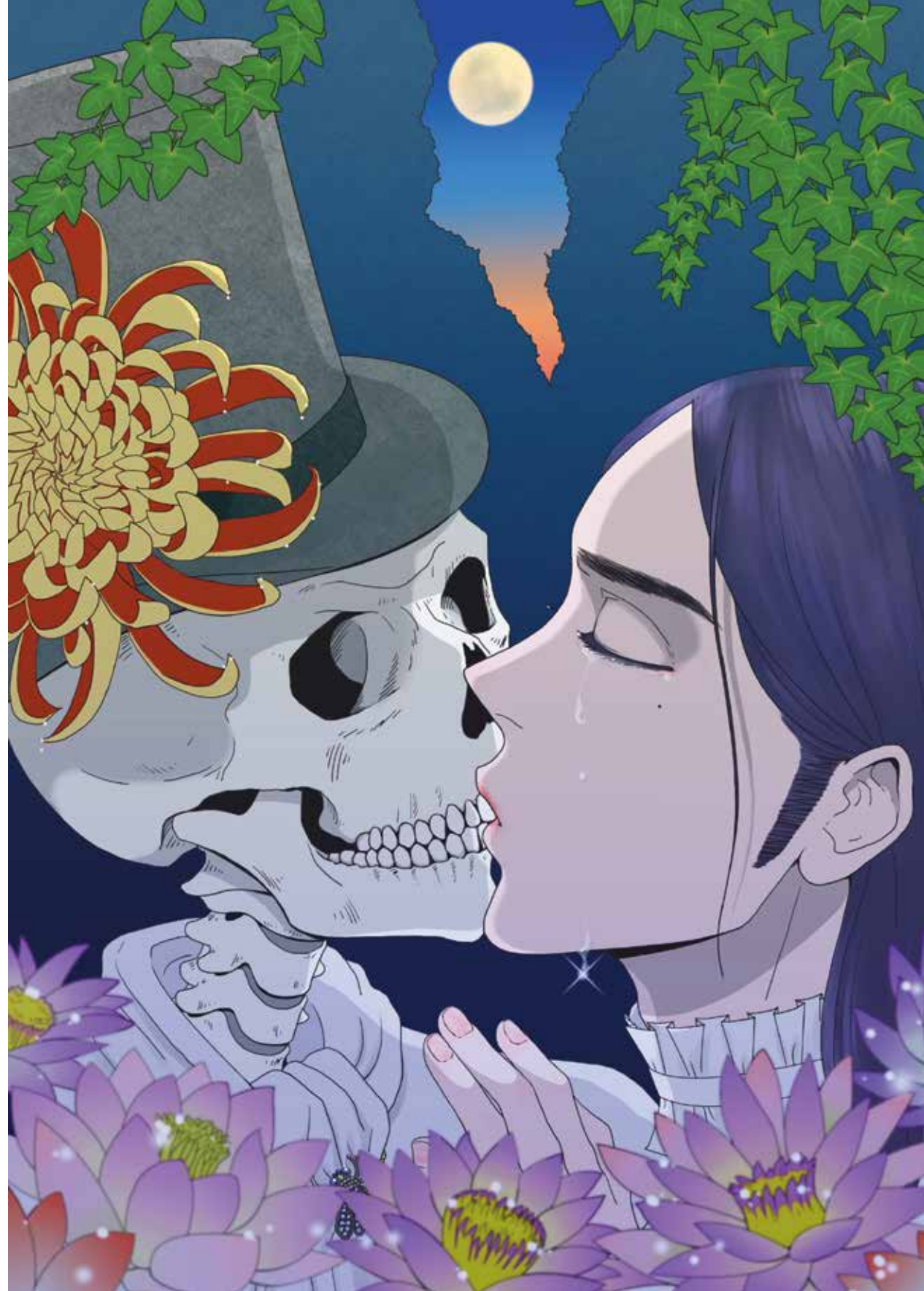


CHIE KUTSUWADA

A veteran appearing in two volumes of *The Mammoth Book of BEST NEW MANGA*, Chie Kutsuwada was born and brought up in Japan. After graduating from the UK's Royal College of Art, now she lives and works in London as a professional mangaka (writer and artist of manga, the Japanese form of comic strips). She attends manga-related events worldwide, and runs manga workshops for schools, libraries, and museums across the UK, including the British Library and Victoria and Albert Museum. She adapted *As You Like It*, for the Manga Shakespeare series published by SelfMadeHero, and *Hagakure* (with Sean Michael Wilson) for Kodansha.

www.chitan-garden.blogspot.com

Kiss of Death
digital drawing, skull yaoi kiss
with lilies and ivy
sketch (above) and final
illustration (opposite)
© Chie Kutsuwada, 2013





DONYA TODD

Her Tumblr page reads “Donya makes comics about foulmouthed girls, French boys + fried chicken”, and you can’t really say better than that. Donya Todd – illustrator, painter and comic artist – lives on a remote farm near Newquay in Cornwall, England. She takes her inspiration from the magical, marvellous and macabre. And rightly so: according to an Egyptian dentist that she once met, ‘Donya’ means “the World” – and to any German, her surname sounds like “Death”. Thusly, “The World of Death”!

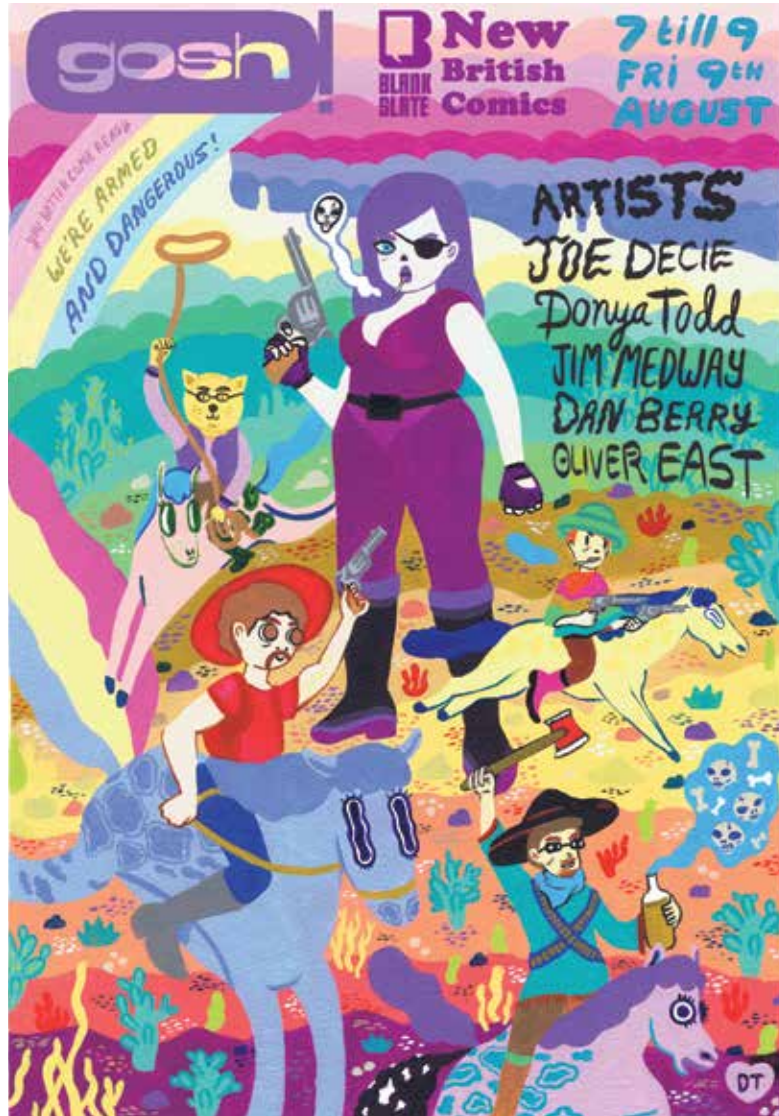
As if that weren’t daunting enough, she is also the editor of badass girl-comic anthology, *Bimba*. Donya’s debut graphic novel *Death & the Girls: Foul-Mouthed Adventure Through a Psychedelic Wonderland* is available in shops now.

www.donyatodd.co.uk
donyatodd.blogspot.com



Above
 Hotdog Mu – Donya Todd’s
 Death & The Girls © Donya
 Todd 2013

Opposite
 Donya Todd’s Death & The
 Girls © Donya Todd 2013



This page and opposite
Poster to co-launch Donya's
Death & the Girls at London's
premier comics emporium,
GOSH!

www.goshlondon.com





MARK STAFFORD

Mark Stafford, “cartoonist to the stars, court jester to the functionally illiterate, and drain on the nation’s resources”, remains a largely undiscovered genius. He’s been quietly ploughing his very particular furrow for many years, and is only now beginning to come to the wider world’s slow attentions. It’s not right, I tell you! Check the website for a selection of his paintings, comic strips, and illustrations, then remember to wipe your feet.

Mark Stafford recently adapted Victor Hugo’s novel *The Man Who Laughs* (a vital antecedent to Batman’s Joker) with writer-chum David Hine. Cartoonist-in-Residence at London’s Cartoon Museum since 2006, he’s also painted a mural for the graphic novel section of the John Harvard Library, close to Borough tube station. Worth a look!

www.hocus-baloney.com

Above
Mexicana Posada

Opposite
And Lo! There was a Fifth Rider, and his name was light entertainment, and Hell followed with him. (in reference to the biblical Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse – War, Famine, Conquest and...uhhh, The Other One)



Right
Sketchbook Skulls

Below
Mexicana Posada

Opposite top
War'n'Peace,

Opposite below
L'il Death in Joyland





NICK SHEEHY

Nick Sheehy is an Australian-born artist and illustrator living in the South East of England. After studying bronze sculpture in the wilds of Tasmania, Nick gave up on art, only to re-discover his love of drawing whilst living in London, sparked by an interest in the city's low brow art, illustration, street art and graffiti. In his work, Nick explores the dreamlike, sometimes semi-autobiographical scenes and oddball characters that echo from his childhood imagination.

Employing a laborious technique, building up layers of texture and thin colour, his work infuses precision and attention to detail with random abstraction and clumsiness. He enjoys drawing various weird things for himself, exhibitions, publications and occasionally the odd client.

"Drawing loads of skulls (is something) which I haven't fully indulged in since I was a teenager, listening to Carcass, Sepultura and Pantera," says Nick.

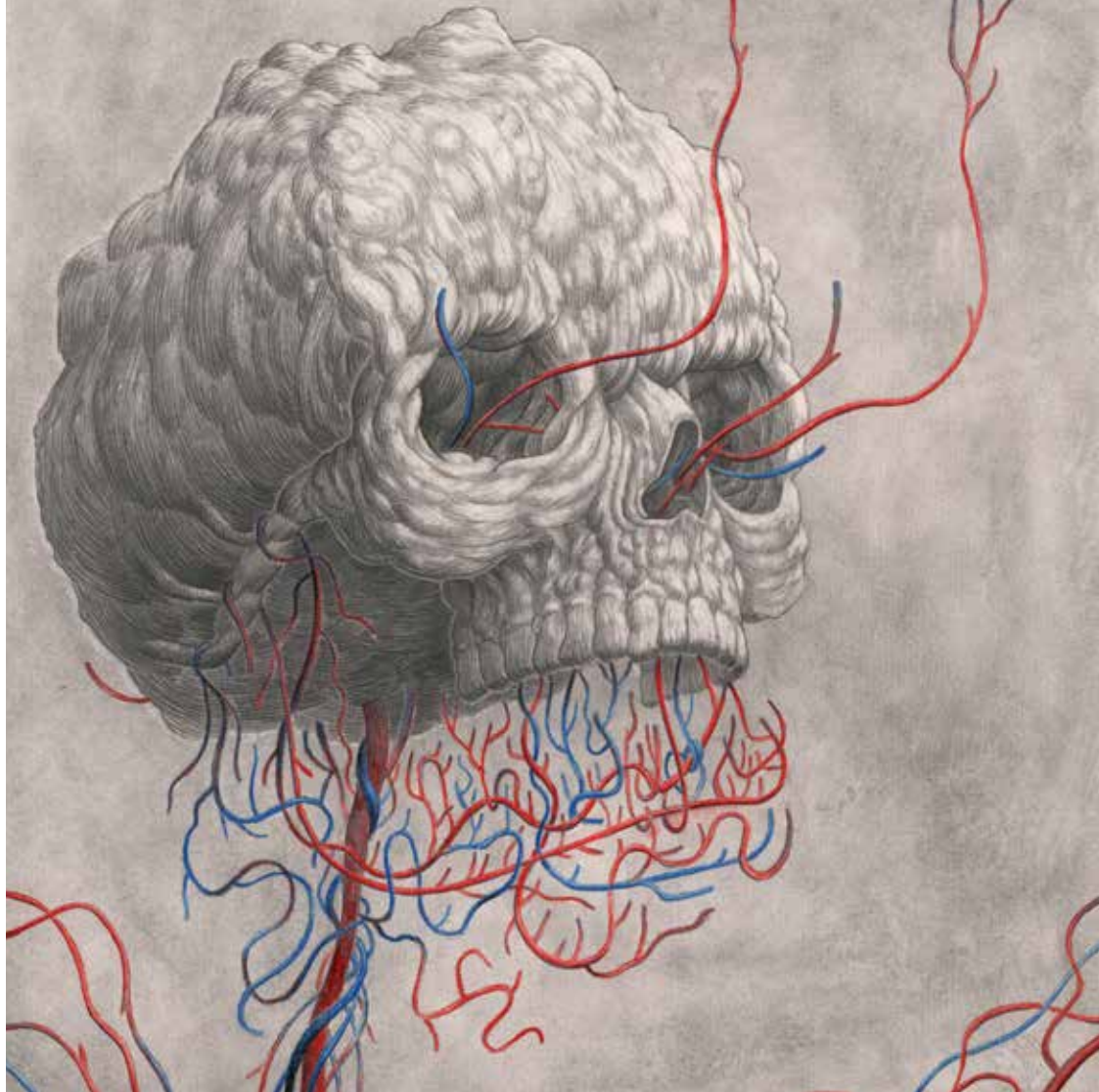
www.showchicken.com

www.instagram.com/showchicken

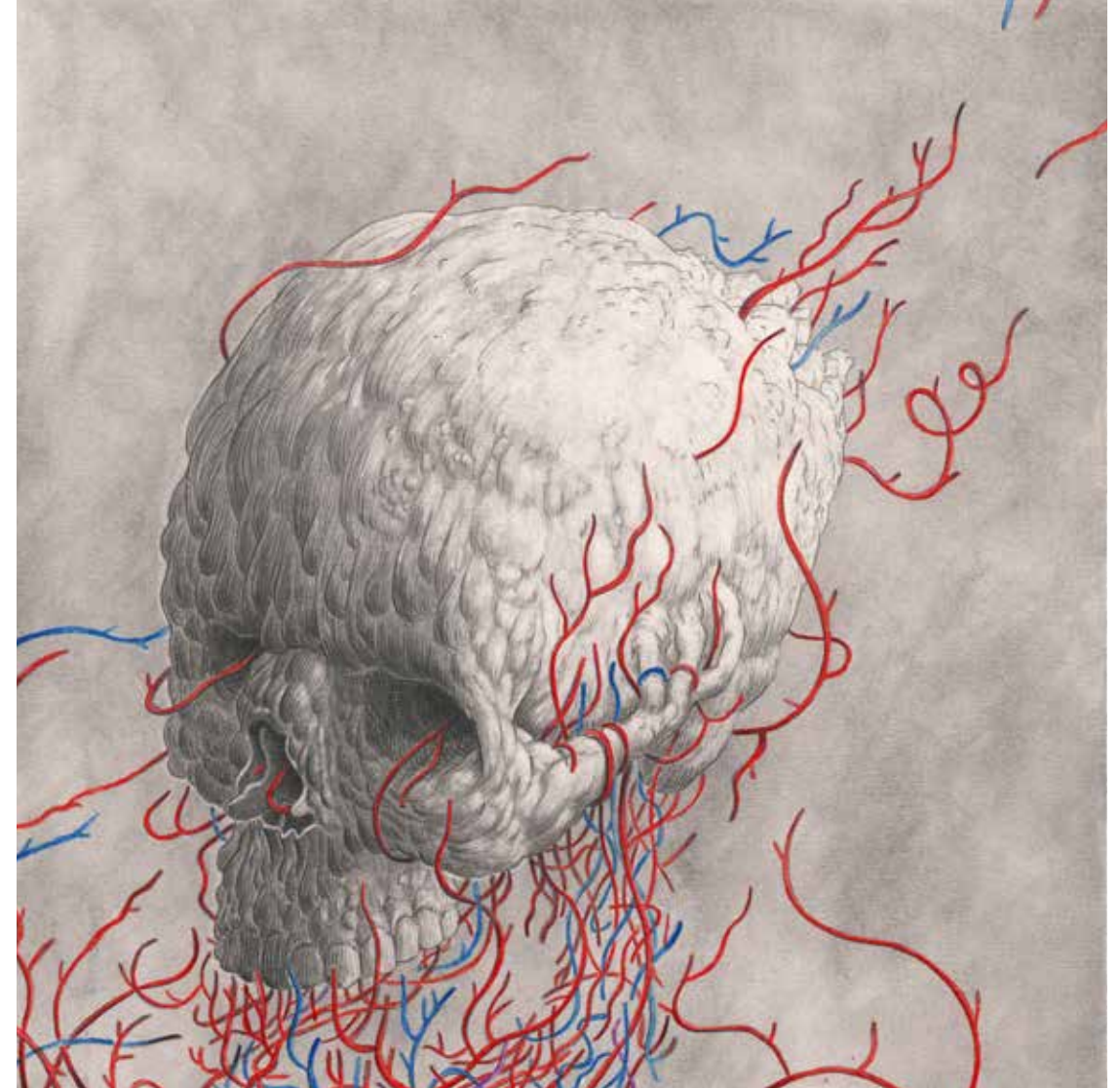


Above
Nick Sheehy – The Damage

Opposite
Nick Sheehy – The Woodcutter



Nick Sheehy – Skull Variations
1 and 2





PETER JARVIS

Studied animation at the University of Creative Arts, Farnham, before making Toronto in Canada, and the rainforests of Costa Rica – where he developed his passion for nature – his home. Returned to England he now paints and sculpts in Newport, Essex, UK, where he owns a gallery. Peter's also a tattoo artist, and runs a mobile disco!

www.eight-infinity.com

Above left to right

His Candy,
East meets West Peace Skull,
Her Candy

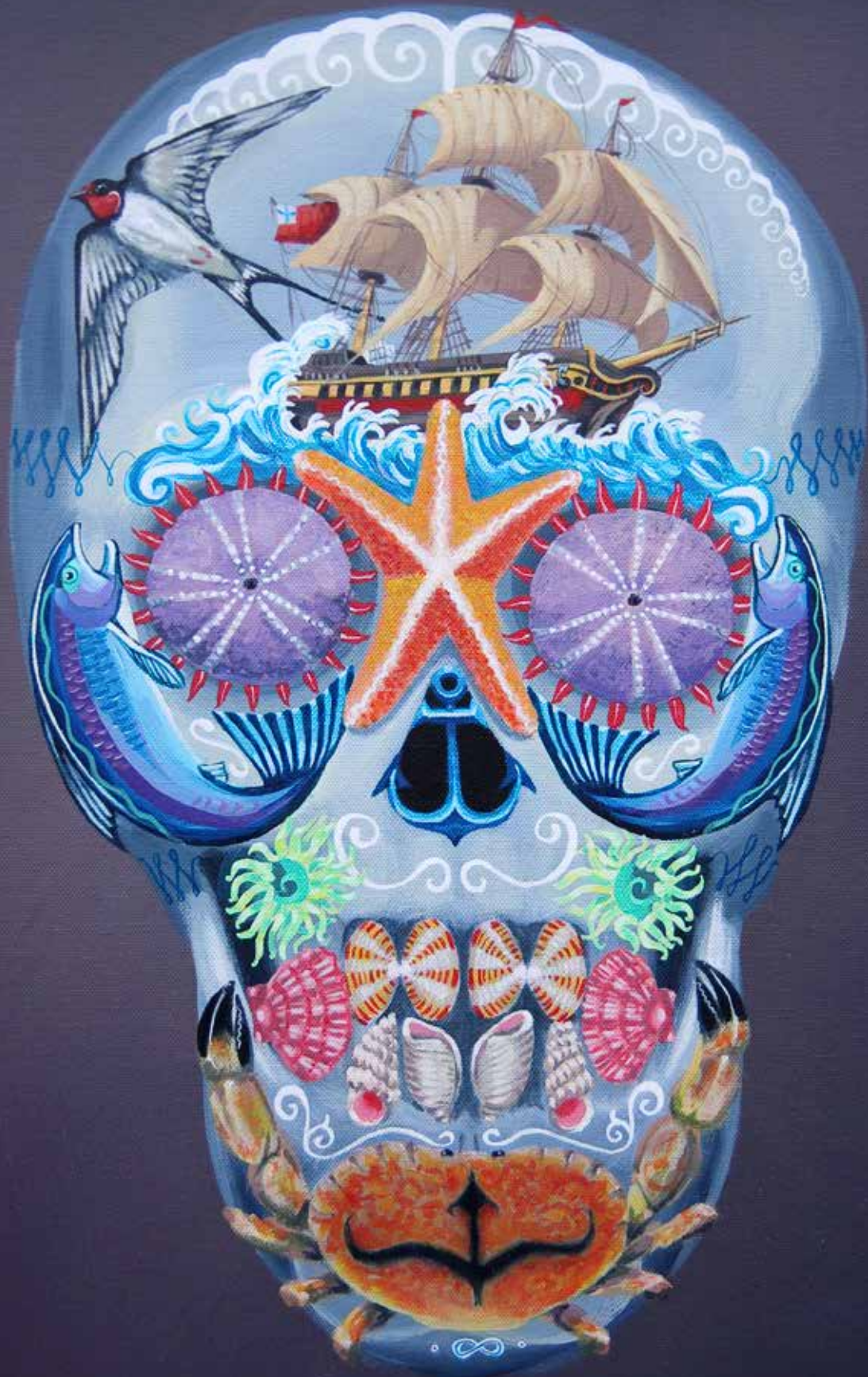
Opposite top

Peace Skull

Opposite below

Romance Skull





Peter Jarvis – Sugar Souls

Inspired by Mexico's Day of the Dead (Dia de los Muertos), these skull paintings ascribe soul elements to various lifestyles

This page
Mexican Soul
Bird Soul
Lucky Soul

Opposite
Sea Soul

Acrylic on Canvas 24"x30"



TOMMI MUSTURI

Artists, designers and illustrators don't come any more prolific or generous than this particular gent from the frozen north, Finland's Tommi Musturi. Tommi likes to draw – often in live performance – and since 2005 or so has concentrated on comics (look for OTZI in our Comic Strip Skulls section). He also translates “decent comics” into Finnish and distributes books and records through his Boing Being label. As a kid, he was an army base brat. Following 10 years living in the capital city, Helsinki, he nowadays eats, sleeps and loves in Tampere, working with the KUTIKUTI collective (comic art studio & association). His websites are laser bolts to the eye. Rock on, Tommi of Finland!

“We aim to do it all by ourselves, dig it hand-made. Freedom is...pretty much a war against all the plain dead stupidity that surrounds us. Dig what we do or not, most likely we'll keep doing this stuff until the end.” – KUTI KUTI

www.tommimusturi.com

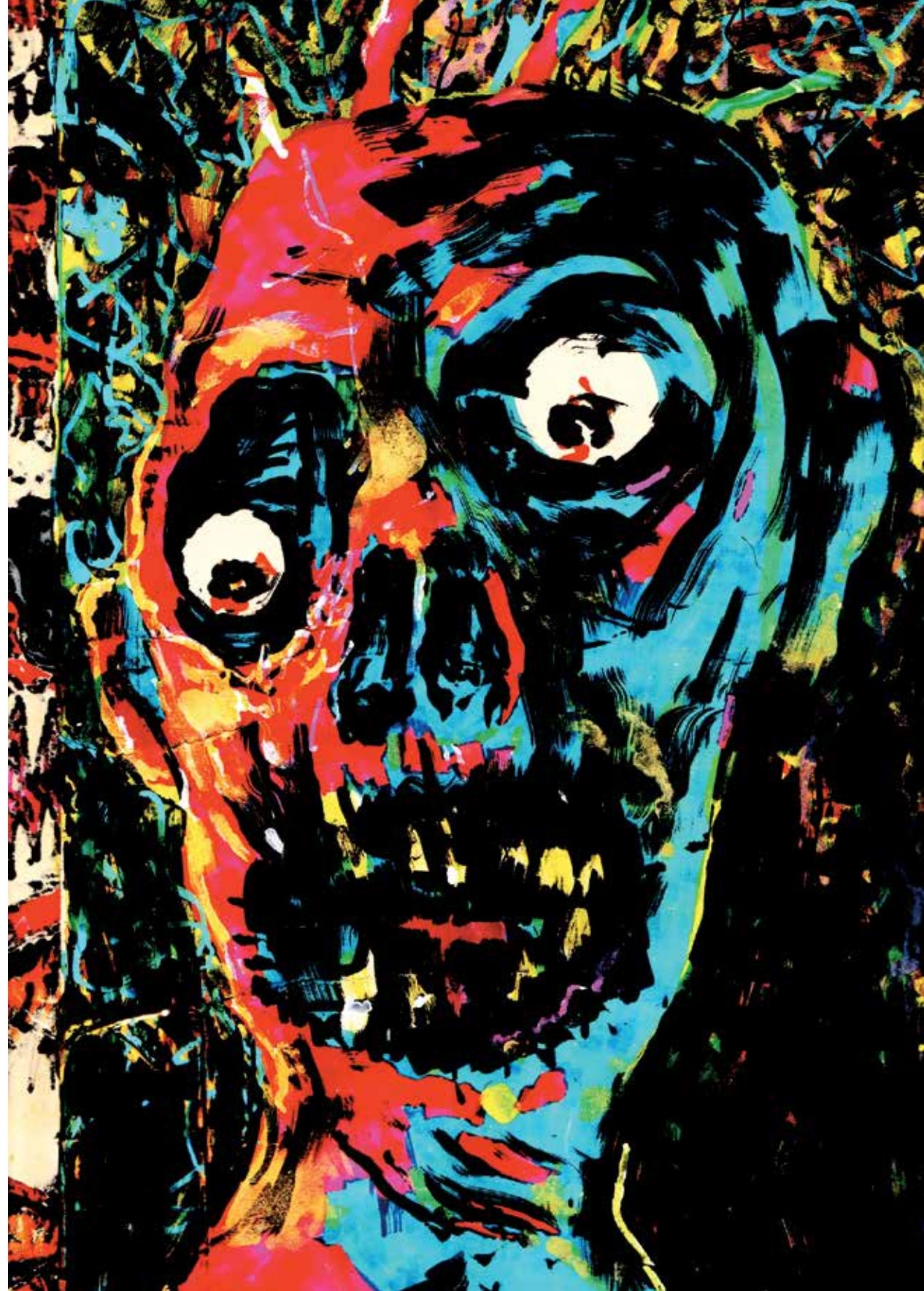
www.boingbeing.com

www.kutikuti.com

Above
Tommi Musturi – Mantta

Opposite
Tommi Musturi – Big Beat
(sketchbook series)

Following pages
Tommi Musturi – sketchbooks





**Opposite**

Tommi Musturi – from *Beating*, gathering images from 2003-2013, mostly from sold out fanzines and picture books: 128 pages, 200 images, “one big mess”.

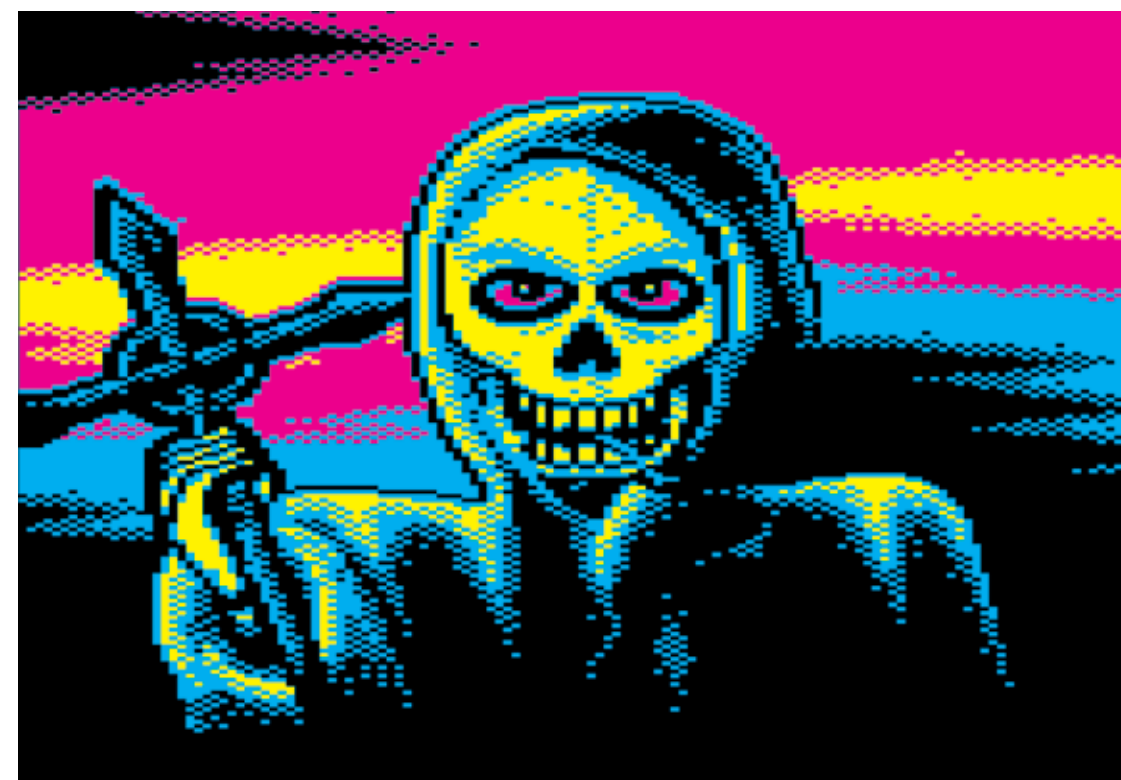
Below

Pixeled with a joystick on Commodore 64, colour adjusted some twenty years later for ‘*Death to Most*’, a pamphlet of Tommi’s teenage drawings.

Following pages

Tommi Musturi – cover image to *Specter*, an oversized (A3) 140-page anthology from Kutikuti on a Horror & Science Fiction theme, “a reality show indeed”. Says Tommi, “I tried out (poor man’s airbrush) blow pens for the first time, which, in spite of fainting, was kind of fun”.

Tommi Musturi – sketchbook series

**Double-page spread**

Tommi Musturi – *Miss Universum* zombie portrait of some year’s candidates





Sketchbook line drawing
coloured for an unfinished
silkscreen, featured in the
compilation 'Beating'.





CARTOON CUTE SKULLS

Nothing defuses fear quite like ridicule. From the Bergman-riffing dinner party scene in Monty Python's *The Meaning of Life* (Part VII – Death) to the Darwin Awards, we like to laugh ourselves silly in the face of death. The certainty of our own mortality makes us want to seize hold of the so-called Grim Reaper, with his flesh-stripped perma-grin, and to make him as the boney butt of our own stupid jokes – or else ourselves the perennial butt of his. And what better way to reclaim control than to make eternity's icon of death iddle-widdle wiv cutesy puffy cheeks? Awwwww.



Top left
Skull Hatter, Timur Hassan,
timhassanart.tumblr.com

Top right
Skeletor, arch enemy of
He-Man, from the Masters
of the Universe Filmation
cartoon based on the toy-line
by Mattel. (see also right, in
colouring book and cosplay
versions)

Right, above
Comic Skull and Cross Bones,
www.neatoshop.com
(JollyRogersSkull,
vector artwork,
www.all-free-download.com)

Right, below
Deathshead Danny Morgan's
immortal sweatshirt design
from the Bash Street Kids-,
reproduced as a sticker

**Opposite clockwise from
top left**
Tiny Skull Knight copyright ©
Roberto Garcia Garza,
www.skyraptor.deviantart.com

Marks and Spencers glow-in-
the-dark stickers, giveaway
with sweets, Halloween 2013

Skeletor on his skull throne
www.bustatoons.blogspot.co.uk

Skeletor_and_He-Man



Craig Conlan –
Death's Head Kappa

"The Kappa is a creature from Japanese mythology – a river-dwelling creature which tips boats over and eats you,

by sucking your innards out through your anus. Nice! It has a turtle's shell and a pool of water in its head. You can defeat a Kappa by bowing to it. It will have to bow back and the water will

tip out of its head, leaving it powerless. Thwarted by good manners, I love that!" – Craig



“Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw’d the dead in their last dresses;
And by some develish cantraip slight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light.”

To be read in a Scots accent (if you’re not sure,
rent Austin Powers or something...)

Above

Craig Conlan –
Tamoshanter Skell

A panel excerpt from Gran
O’Shanter, Craig’s mini-comic
re-telling of Tam O’Shanter,
the famous epic poem by
Robert (Rabbie) Burn (above)

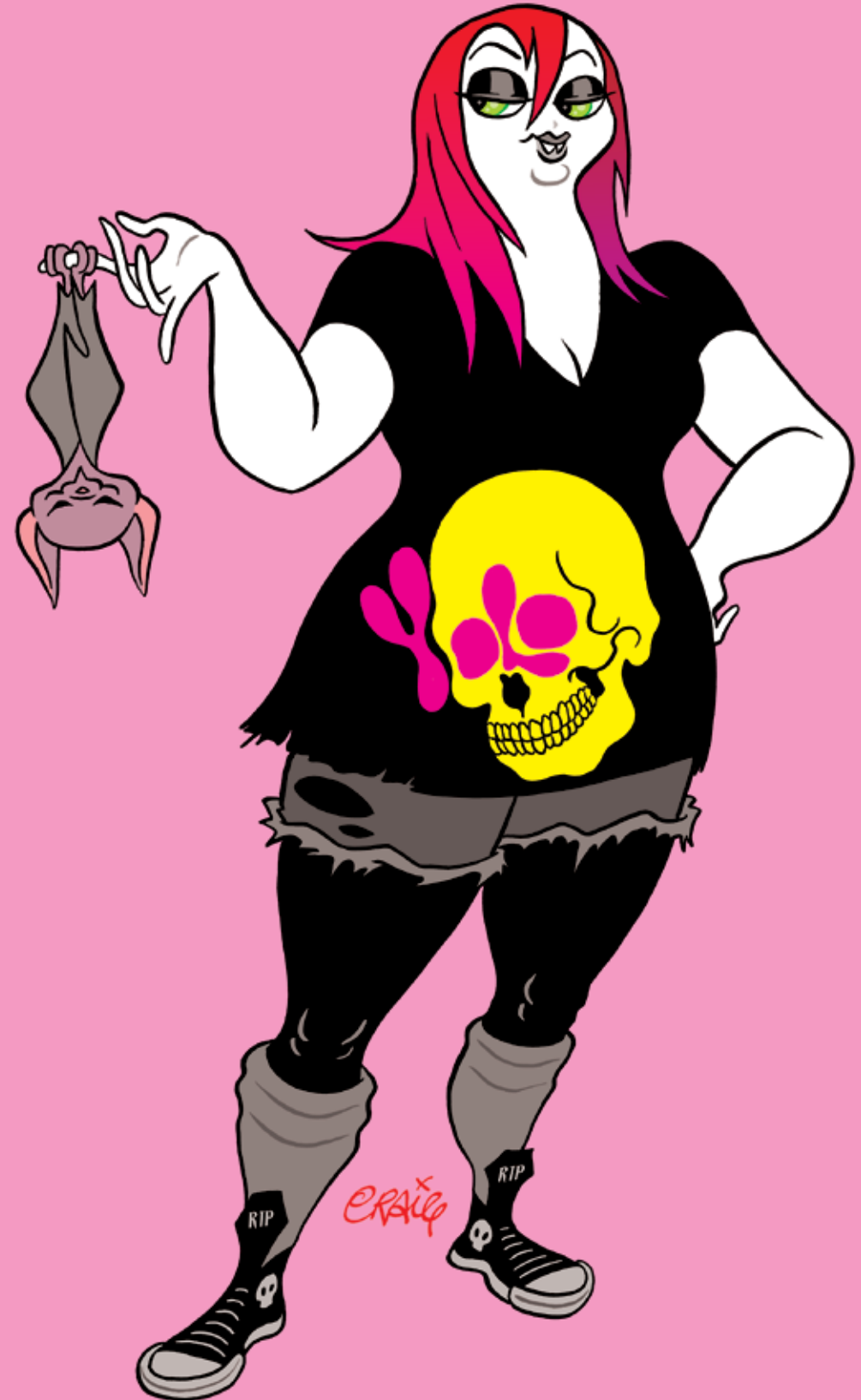
Opposite

Malady in her YOU ONLY
LIVE ONCE t-shirt

Internet slang and popular
hashtag, YOLO is the modern
equivalent to *Carpe Diem*
(Kill the Fish*) or a *Memento
Mori* – implying that it’s best

to enjoy life while you have it.
Malady is a Conlan original –
of which there are many.
(*actually, Seize the Day)

All images © Craig Conlan
craigscomiland.blogspot.com

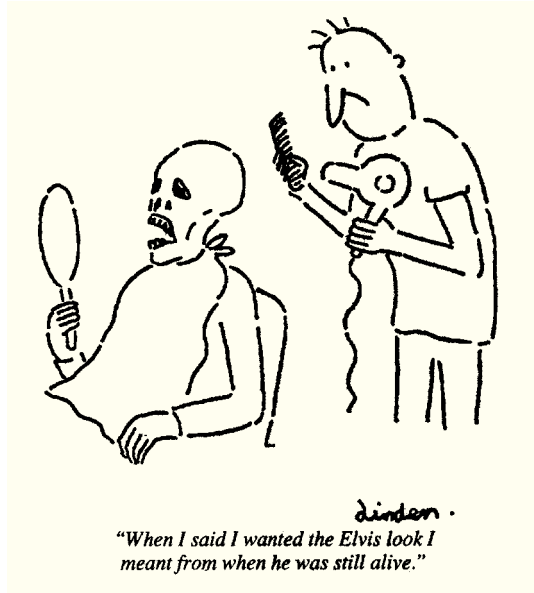


SKULL GAGS OLD AND NEW

Some jokes just never get old.

Right

Found magazine clipping of an old cartoon, circa 1980's, signed: Dinden.



Below and opposite

Veteran cartoonist Howard Cruse shares with us, from the vaults, Potty Jokes (the 1969 original) – and then, through the miracle-power of his stippling pen, resurrects it! (Potty Jokes, 2013)

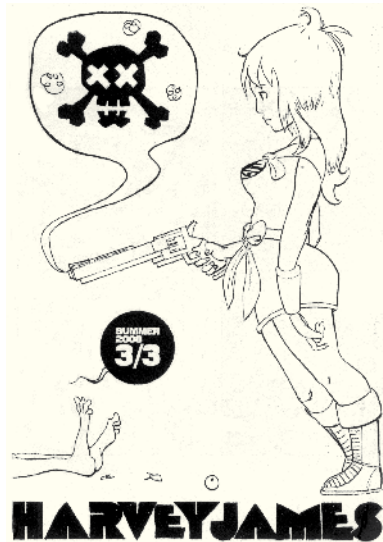
www.howardcruse.com



Right
Woodrow Phoenix –
Death Comes a-Calling,
ink on Post-it note
www.woodrowphoenix.co.uk



Centre left
The monstrously talented
James Harvey/Harvey James
killer combo – zine cover,
Summer 2008
harveyjames.tumblr.com



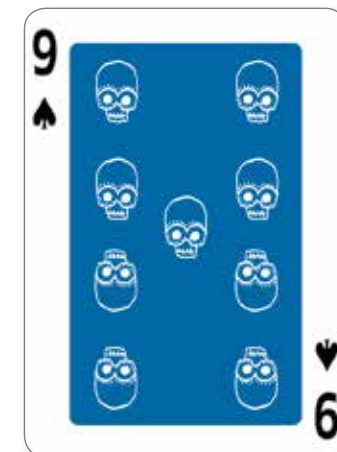
Centre right & far below
Mark Stafford – Skully 4,
Sketch Skull, and Skully 2
www.hocus-baloney.com



Above
Jonathan Edwards –
Monkeys Vs Skeletons print.
www.jonathan-e.com

Right
Erica Smith – 9 of Spades
Erica has designed a blazin' card deck with Skulls as one of the suits – as they should be! Get out of here with your namby diamonds and hearts.
www.wordsmithdesign.co.uk

Far right
Jonathan Edwards –
Louche Skell
www.jonathan-e.com





Far left

Zeel - Jim 8 Rosetti Plus,
skull card
www.zeel.co.uk

Centre above

Glyn Dillon, Anniversary

Centre below

Mark Satafford - skully3

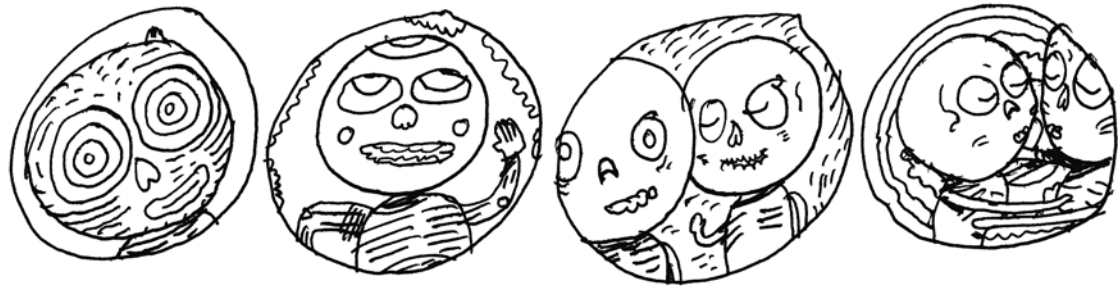
Opposite

Gregory (Gory) Benton -
Xolo, from B+F, his new
wordless fable published by
Adhouse Books
www.gregorybenton.com



8/20

©2013 GREGORY BENTON



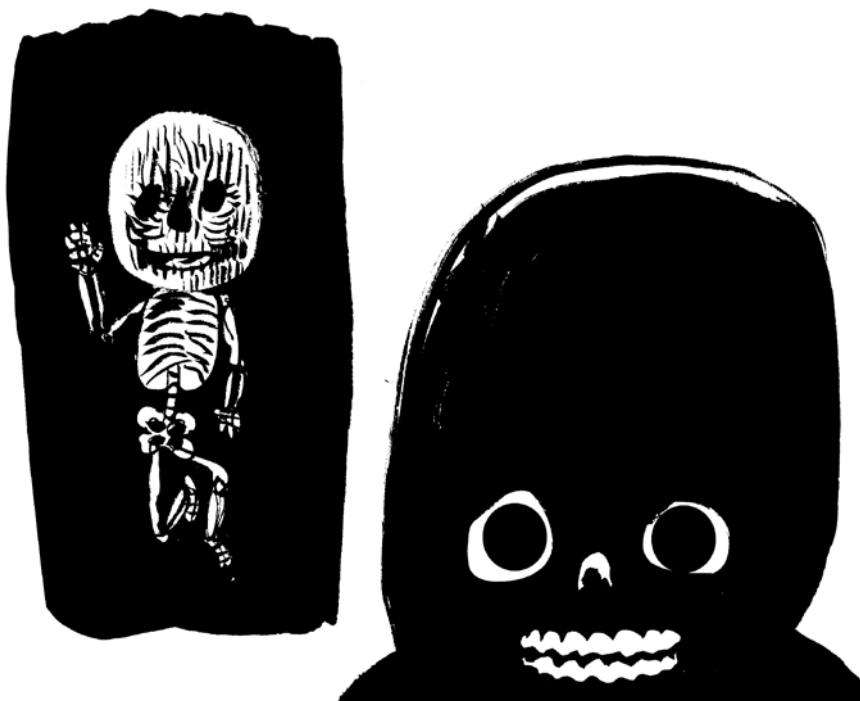
Above
Zeel (Geoffrey Coupland) –
Skeleton Roundels

Right
Zeel (Geoffrey Coupland) –
feotusskullbugs1

Below
Zeel (Geoffrey Coupland) –
some skullies



Opposite
Michiru Morikawa – Skulls
The work of this fabulous
illustrator can be found in
volume one of The Mammoth
Book of BEST NEW MANGA
(2006). Living in Japan, she
works as an art teacher in
junior high school.
Find her on Facebook.





Above
Zeel (Geoffrey Coupland) –
pollockry skull



Right
Zeel (Geoffrey Coupland) –
primer for site

Below
Zeel (Geoffrey Coupland) –
fumanskull

Opposite
Justin "Scrappers" Morrison
– You're Never Alone on a
Desert Island.

JUSTIN *Would you like me
to paint some skull art for
your book?*
ILYA *Yes!*

www.scrapperstown.com

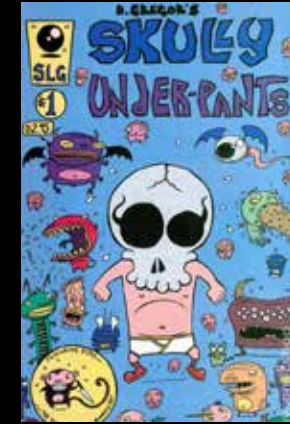




Right
Zeel (Geoffrey Coupland) –
DO fear the reaper

Opposite
Zeel (Geoffrey Coupland) –
Stencil Skull
www.hocus-baloney.com





COMIC STRIP SKULLS

From the undergrounds of the 1960's and 70's to today's indie cult hits, via the twisted superheroic sensibilities of the mainstream (maim-scream?), the icon of the skull has leant itself to the pulp power-trips of the comic strip format since its very earliest days. Indeed, many notable characters have their identity based entirely around the death's head – Marvel Comics' The Punisher and Ghost Rider to name but two (buy the comic, avoid the terrible movies, wear the t-shirt). Over the following pages we meet a few familiar face-beneath-the-faces, and some not so well known.

Above left

Skull Kickers issue 5 by Jim Zub and Edwin Huang, for Image comics, www.skullkickers.com

Above right

Eerie 79, Warren magazines 1976, cover art by Ken Kelly www.kenkellyfantasyart.com

Opposite clockwise from top left

Red Skull Marvel Comic Bobble Head with metallic finish by Funko, www.funko.com
Red Skull created by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby

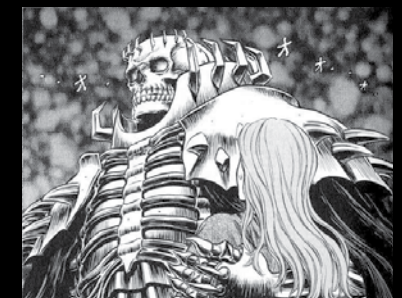
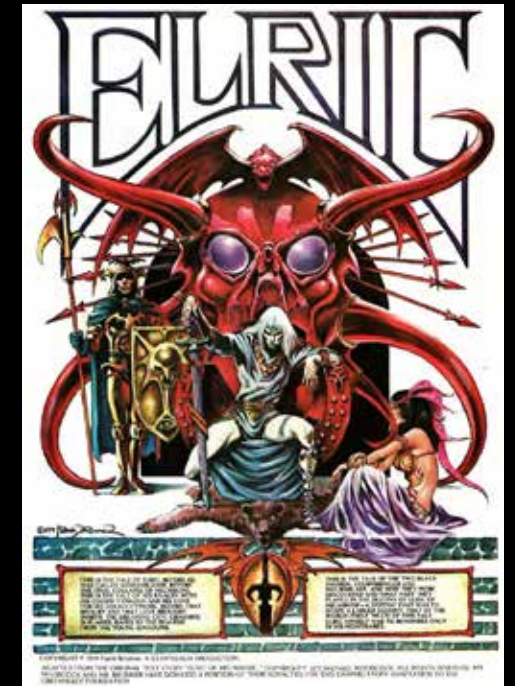
Star Reach 1, cover by Jim Starlin

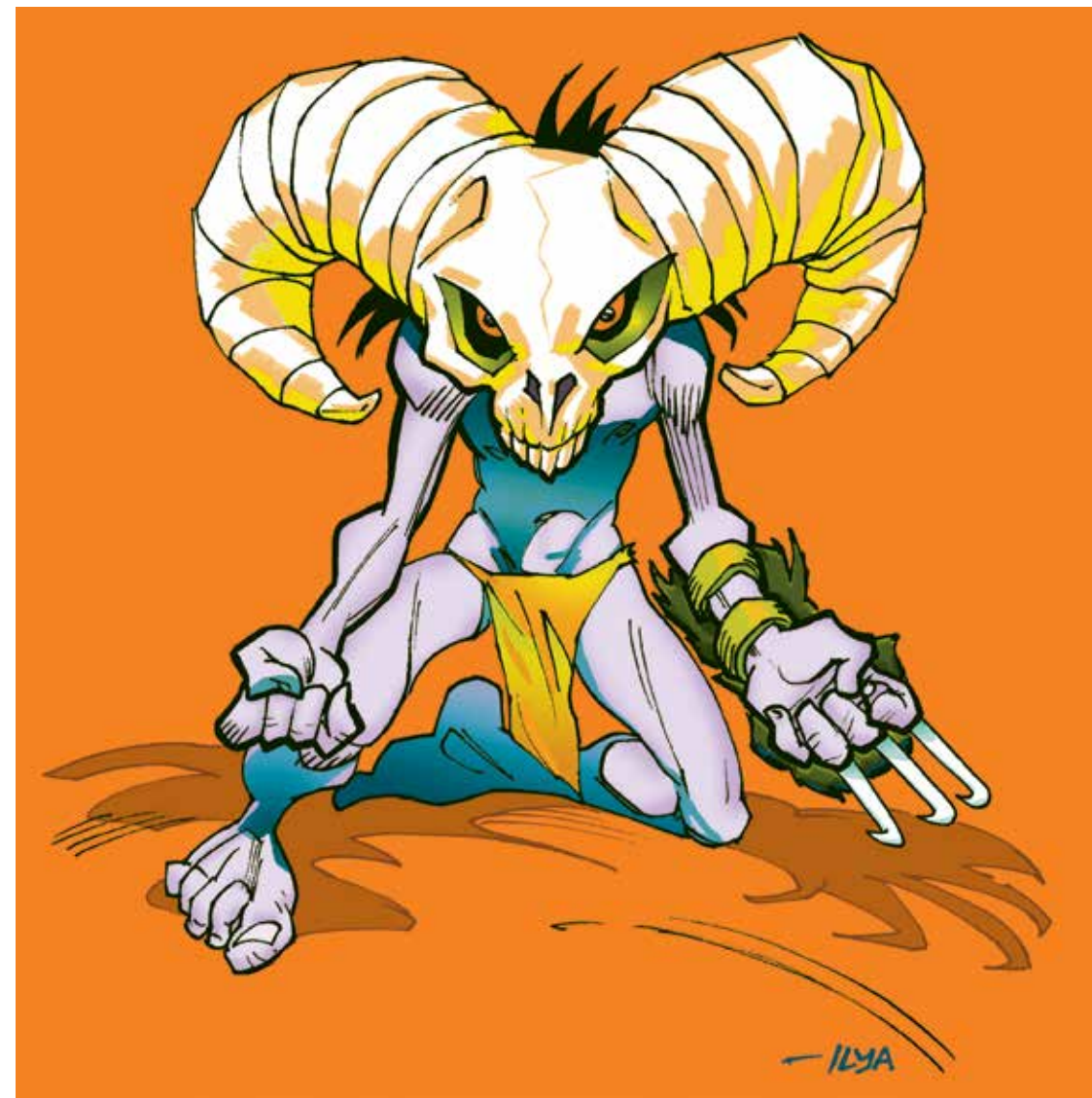
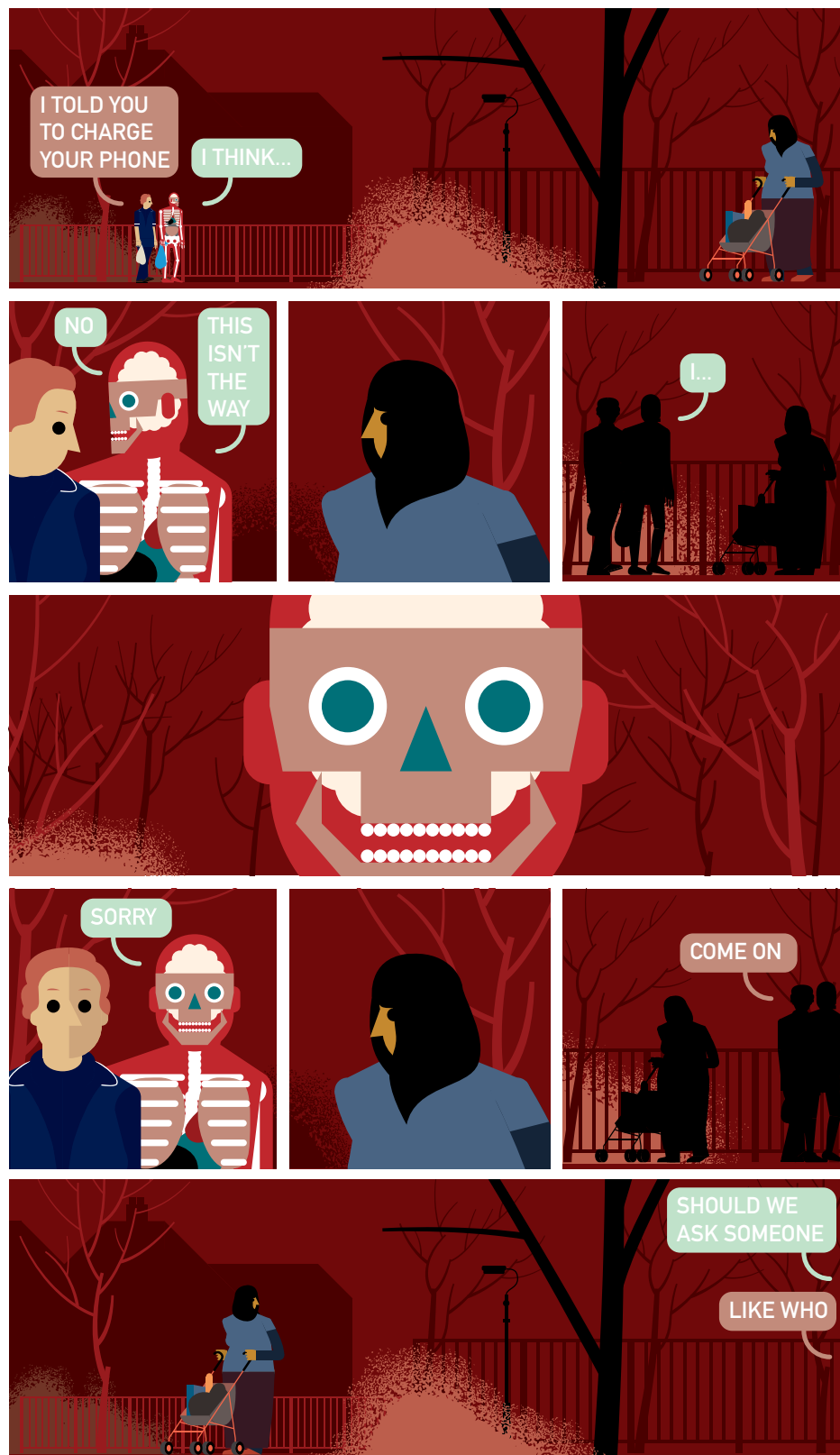
Skully Underpants 1 by Dan Gregor, from 2003 – Slave Labor Graphics, www.slgcomic.com

Michael Moorcock's Elric, as seen by Frank Brunner for Heavy Metal magazine, www.frankbrunner.net

The X-Men's Lady Deathstrike, by Terry Dodson & Rachel Dodson

Red Skull and Lady Deathstrike © Marvel Comics, the remainder are copyright their original creators





Above
Hot Skull Action featuring KID SAVAGE, by Bemo co-creator Joe Kelly and ILYA, for Man of Action Studios ©2013 Kelly/ILYA – an exciting new comics character soon to make his debut. Watch for it!

Opposite
From Ocular Anecdotes by designer Peter Cline, an example of vector graphics.
www.ottopress.co.uk
www.thethoughtpolice.co.uk

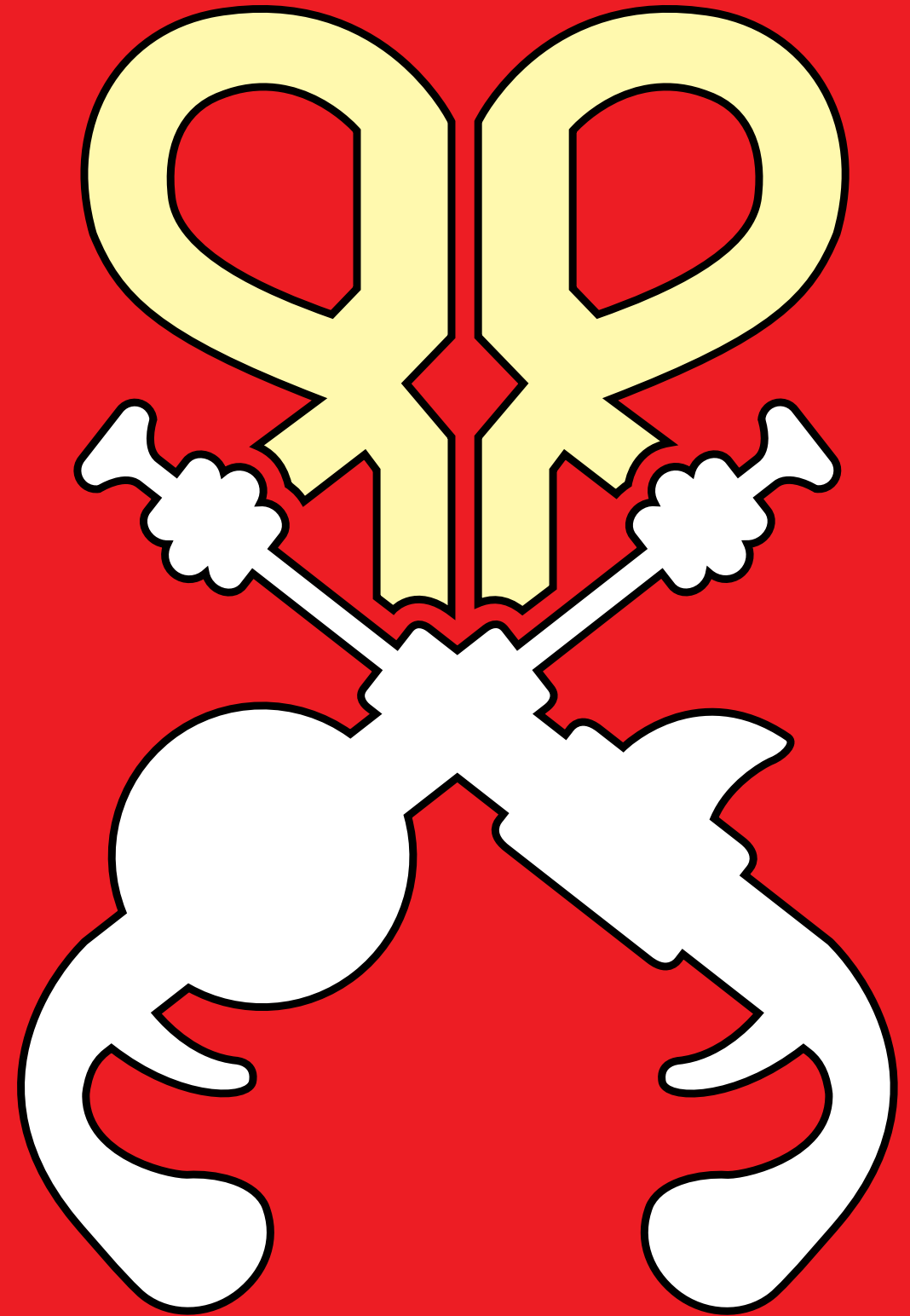
Raygun Roads & The Infinity Loop Death-trap of Ulysses Pomp – a psychedelic rock comic extravaganza from “Obnoxious” Owen Michael Johnson (vocals), and “Indecipherable” Indio (visuals), riffing on equal parts Kirby, Shaky Kane and Brendan McCarthy – a disorienting acid explosion of colour and verse. www.raygunroads.com

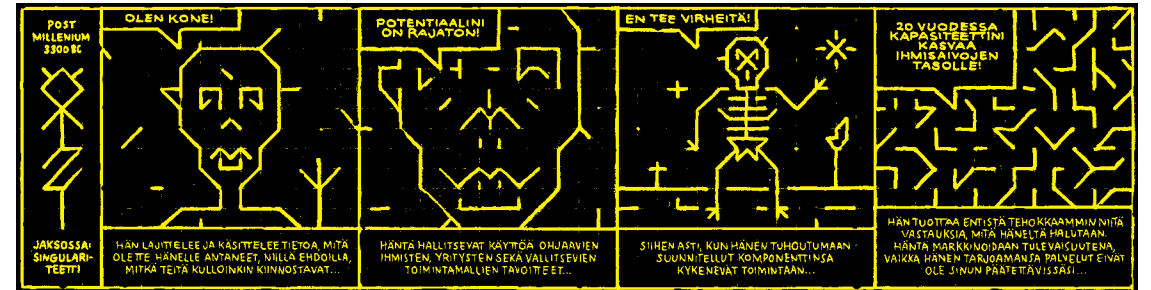
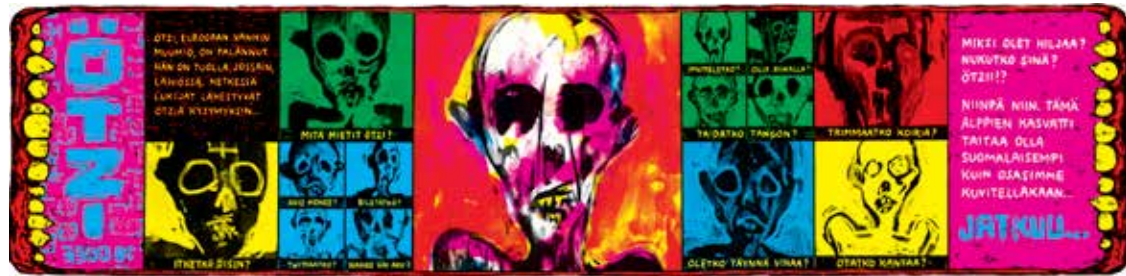
Below

“On drums, the Hashish Bounty from the Orange County! Your only vision!! Our dream collision!!! KALI-FORNICATAAAAAA!” – it says here.

Opposite

The Raygun Roads logo, a space age Jolly Roger – potentially up there with the Watchmen Smiley for iconic power: or at least, Bastard Bunny.





Tommi Musturi – Ötzi, the Iceman – this ongoing Finnish strip serial featuring “the oldest European mummy” appears in greenish newspaper, *Vihreä Lanka*. “Must be one of the few strips with a dead main character. I can smell success,” says Tommi. Success, or something...



Strangeaven
Gary Spencer Millidge

The body of an old RAF pilot is discovered, in Millidge's long running occult mystery series, *Strangeaven*, set in the titular village. Collected into several trade paperbacks, the series is soon to resume publication with new episodes forthcoming.

www.millidge.com





Above
 Cosmo White – Ghoster.
 Whilst phasing, Ghoster
 inadvertently enters the
 realm of the dead.
 Unfortunate for him!

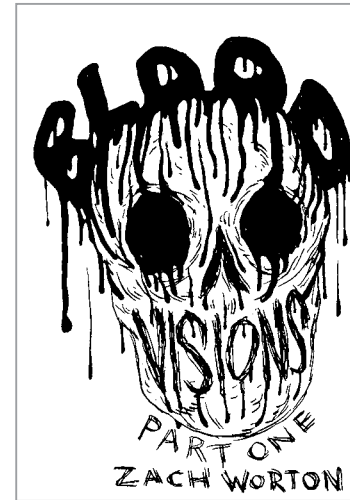
www.cosmow.deviantart.com

Below left

Zach Worton – Blood Visions
www.zachwortonscrustclub.tumblr.com

Below right

Jamie Smart – Corporate Skull,
 webcomic www.corporateskull.com

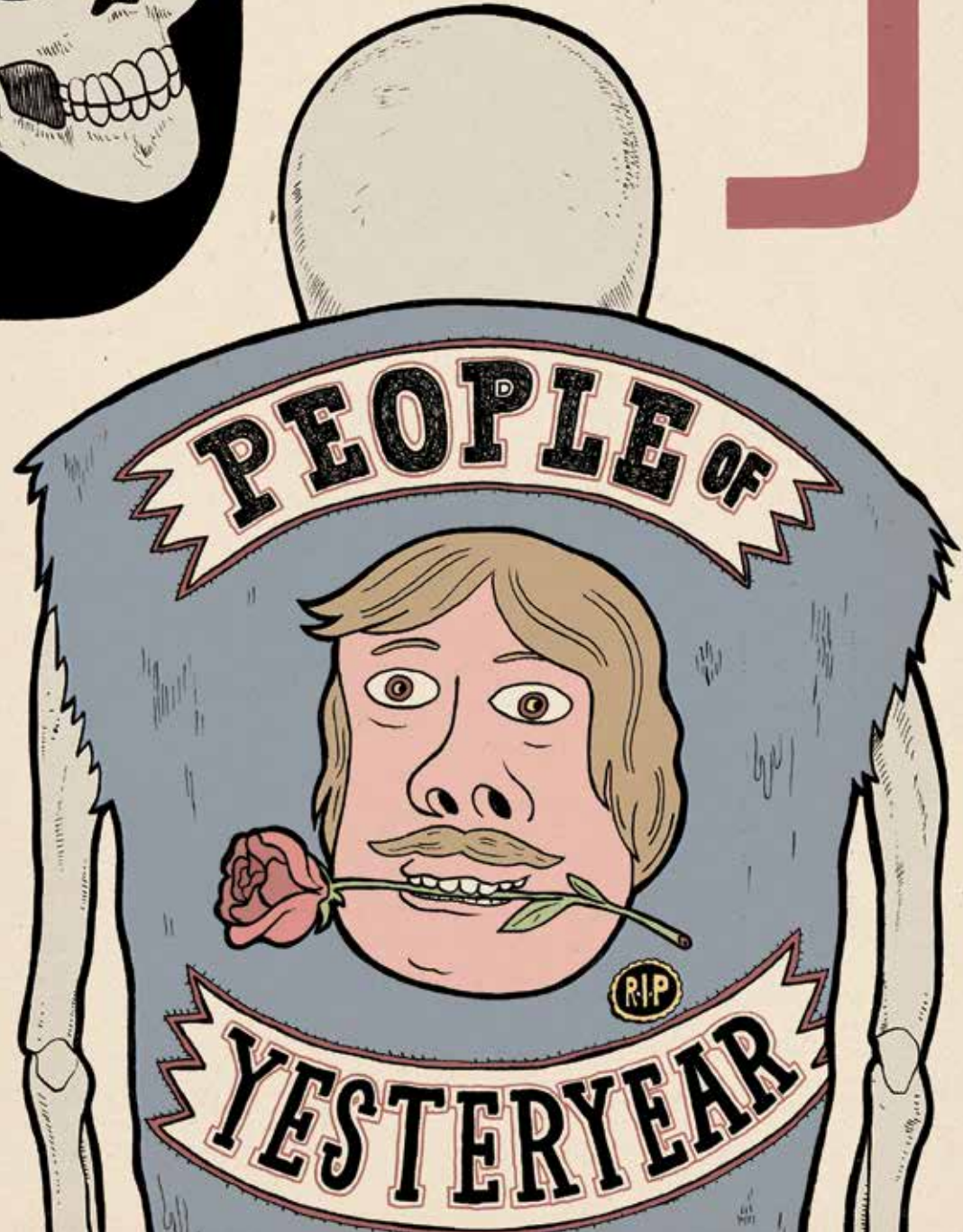
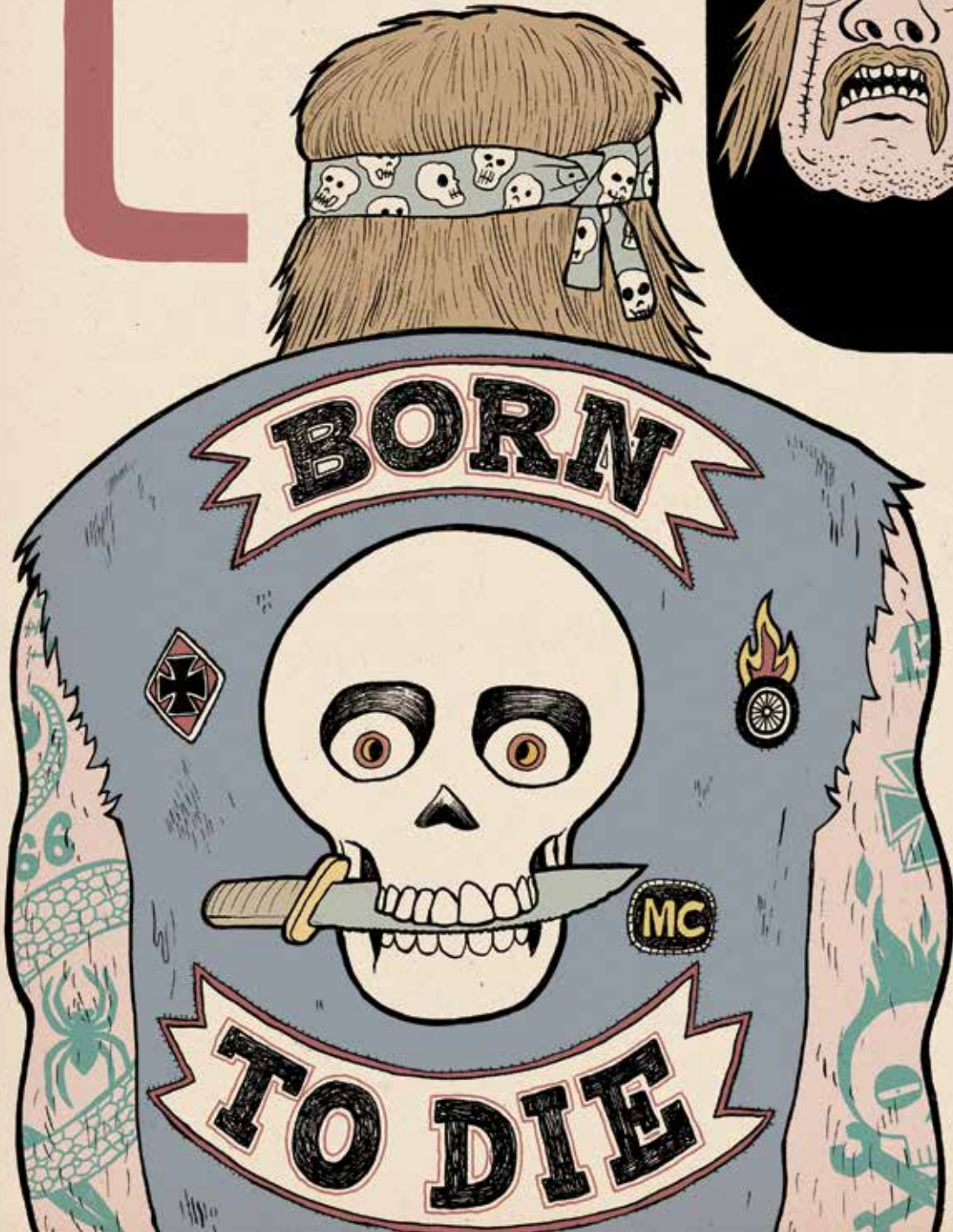
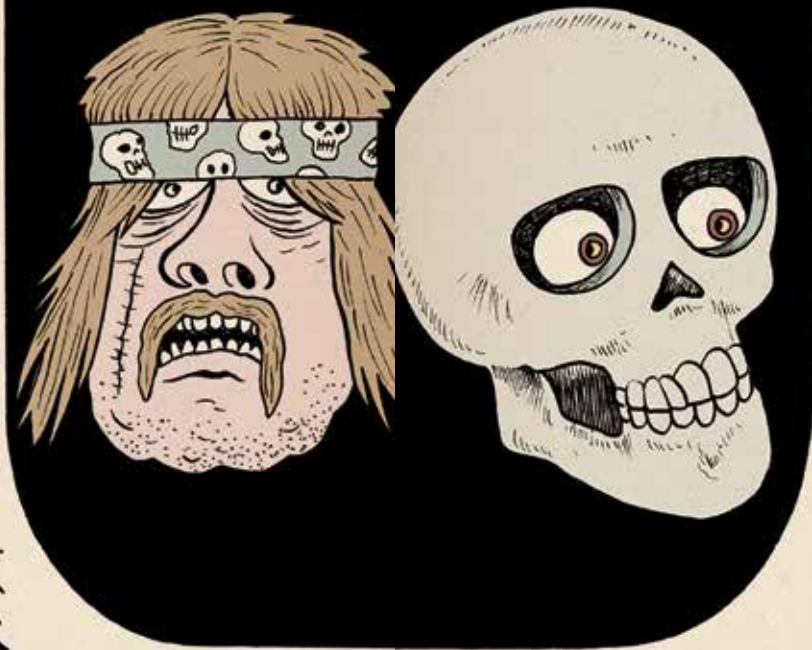


Above

Sean Azzopardi – Skull
www.sean-azzopardi.com

BEFORE

AFTER



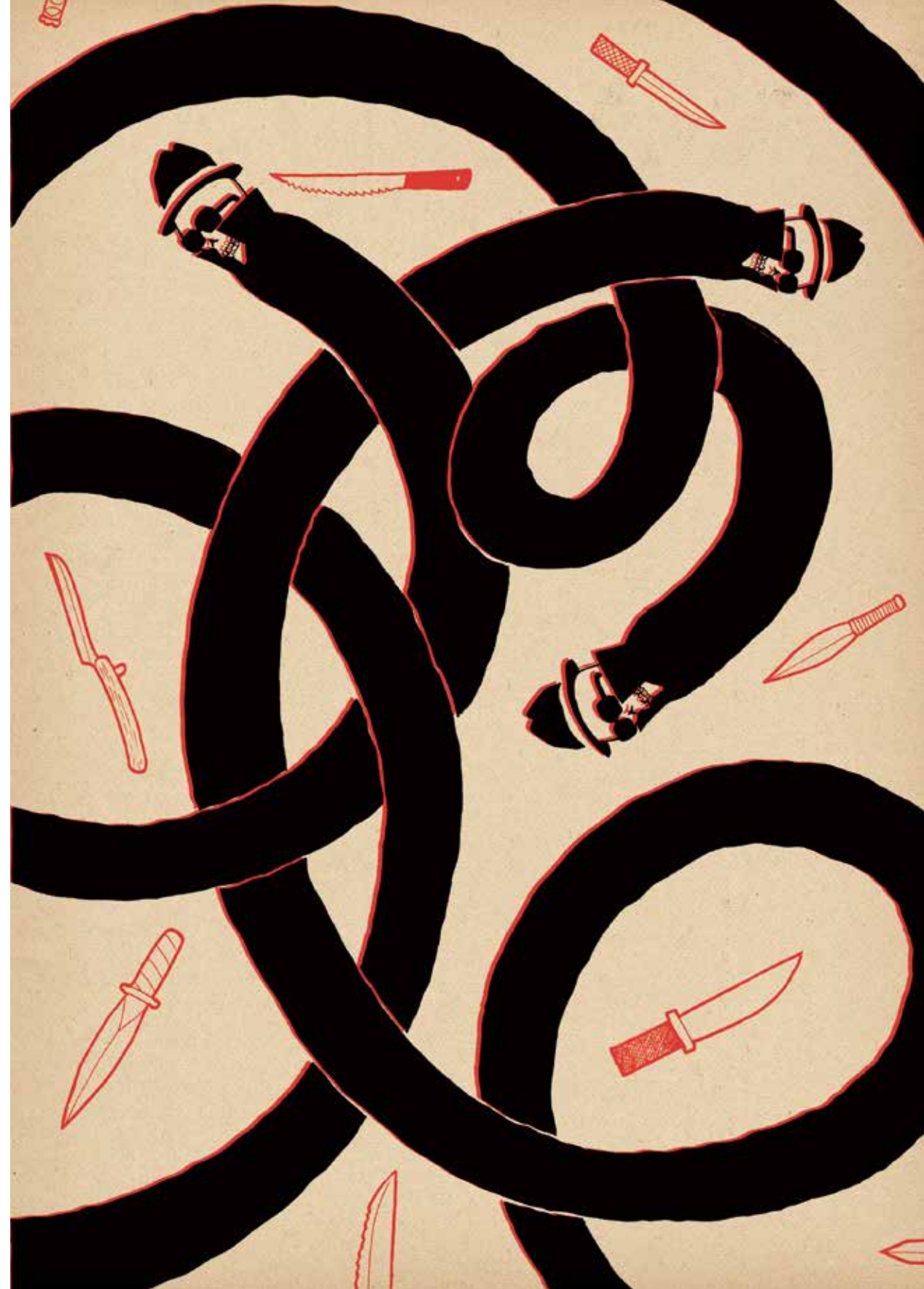


Above
Franco-Scots duo Metaphrog present this page from their graphic novel, *Time to Shine* (Creative Scotland). Set in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow, and showing off a manga influence, their project aims to inspire young people to get involved in the arts.
Copyright © Metaphrog 2013

www.metaphrog.com

Previous spread, and opposite
South London's supremo Lord Hurk shares a Before and Afterlife shot for a hard riding Son of Anarchy, and then signs us off with his disturbing Skullworms

www.lordhurk.com





Beta Ray Bill (left), created by Walt Simonson for Marvel Comics (based on Jack “King” Kirby’s *Mighty Thor*), November 1983. This alien guy’s pretty much known for having a horse’s skull for a head. Beta Ray Bill, Blazing Skull and Death’s Head – Trademark & Copyright © Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.

SKULL-BASED HEROES AND VILLAINS



Black Terror (left and above by Alex Ross), Nedor Comics, January 1941. Pharmacist Bob Benton formulated “formic ethers” to fight crime alongside sidekick Tim Roland. Acclaimed novelist Patricia Highsmith, the creator of Ripley, is credited with writing some of his early adventures.



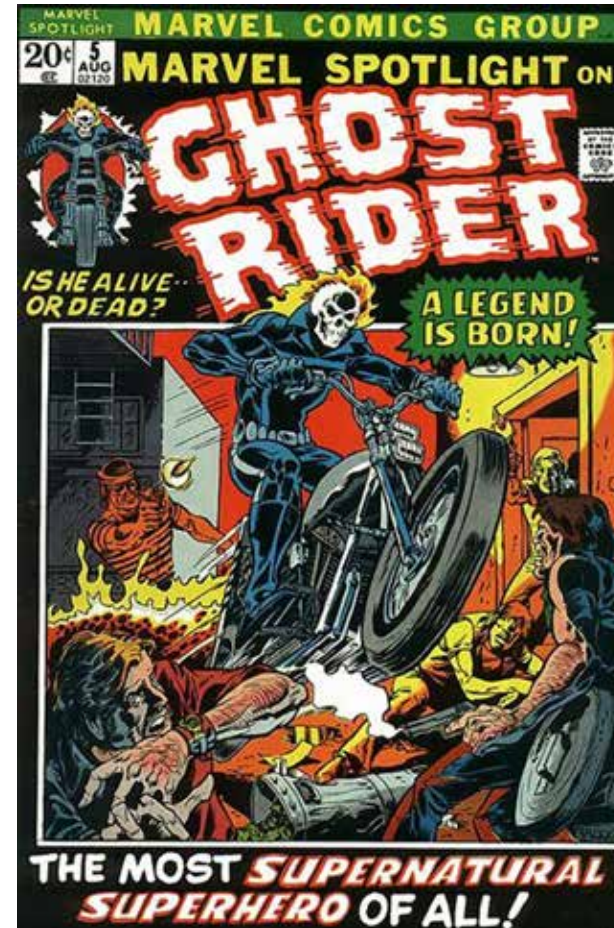
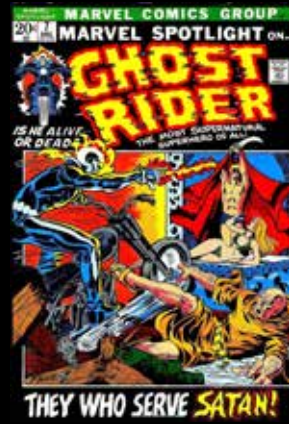
Blazing Skull (left), from Marvel’s predecessor, Timely Comics, March 1941. An obvious antecedent to *Ghost Rider*, Mark Anthony Todd can turn his flesh invisible, giving him the appearance of a walking skeleton. He also has the ability to project and expel flame. Great fun at parties!



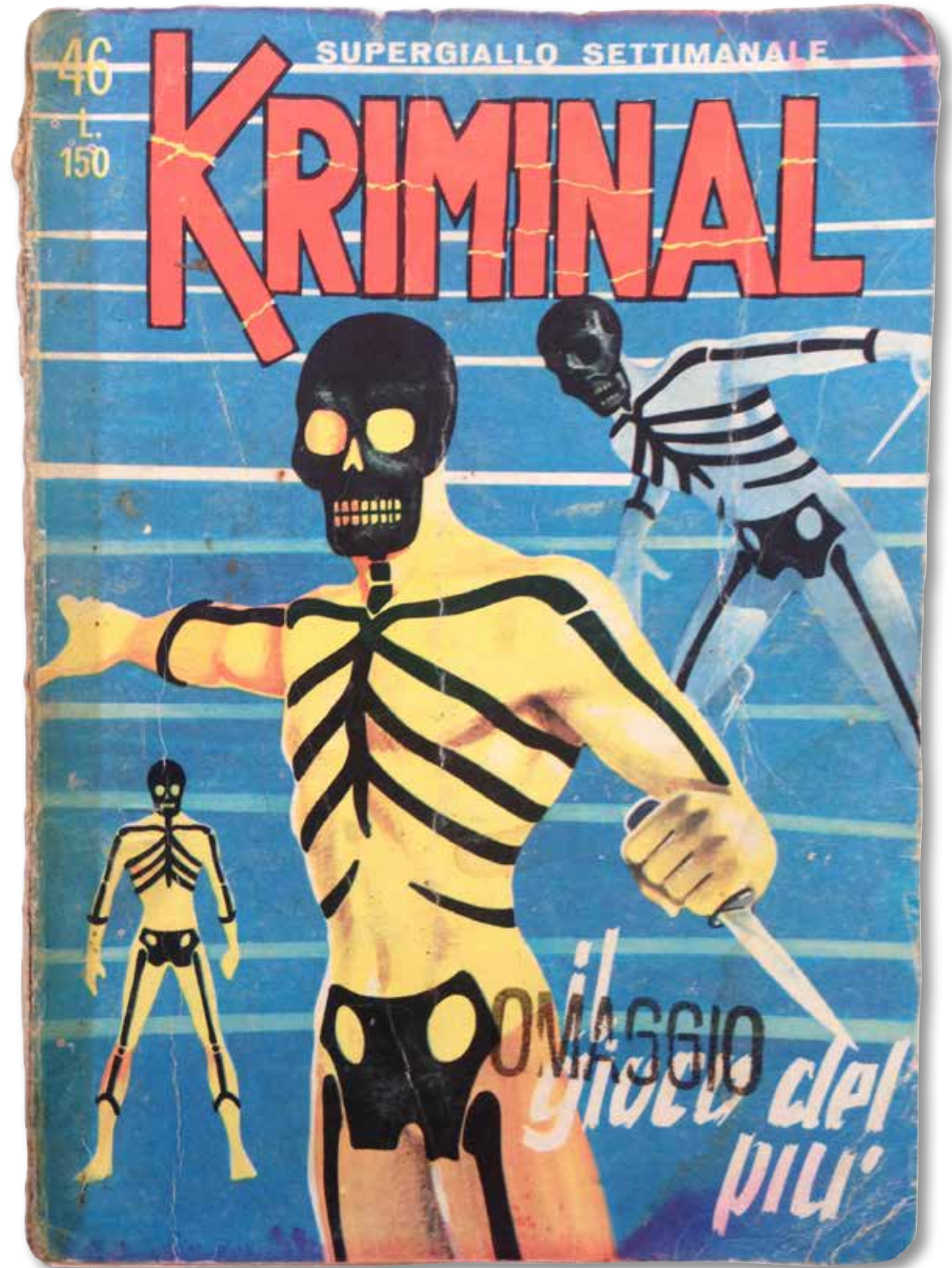
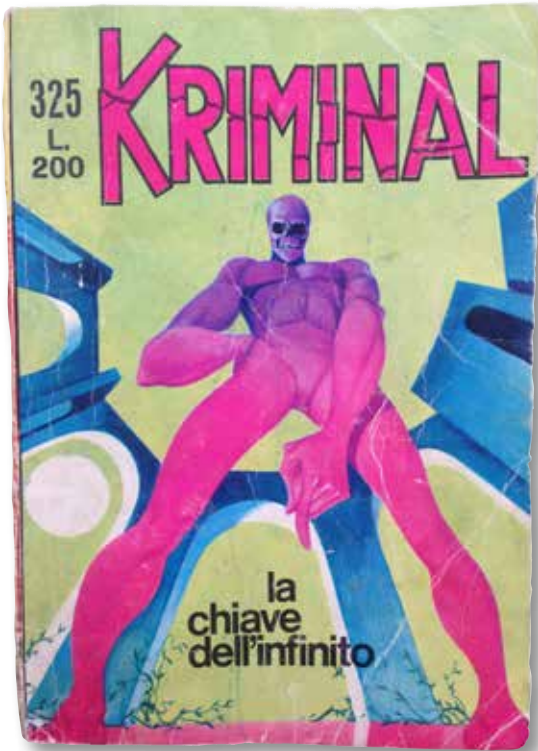
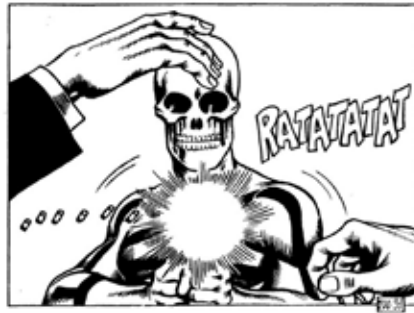
Death’s Head (left), created by Simon Furman and Geoff Senior, May 1987, for Marvel UK. Knocking them cold in black and gold. And blue. And red. No matter how many times they kill him he keeps coming back (the afterlife has something of a revolving door policy within the realm of comic books).

Ghost Rider – as a character, he’s never amounted to being much more than an arresting icon, a skull ablaze in leathers atop a speeding motorbike... OK, that’ll do it. The original Ghost Rider was a hooded wild western hero on horseback, created by Ray Krank and Dick Ayers back in 1949 – totally reinvented in August 1972 as supernatural stunt motorcyclist Johnny Blaze, who sold his soul to

the devil. Given that Ghost Rider’s since become a figurehead for toys, games, and in movies, re-creators Gary Friedrich and Mike Ploog, under editor Roy Thomas, might feel they’ve done the same. Ghost Rider – Trademark & Copyright © Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.



Kriminal – from the people that brought you *Satanik!* Inspired by *Diabolik!* Ik, ik, ik! Created for Italian comics in 1964 by Magnus and Max Bunker, and featuring the exploits of English master thief, Anthony Logan, dogged by death despite his canny skeletal disguise. Kriminal © Editoriale Corno.





The Punisher – as with *Ghost Rider*, mediums other than comic books have largely failed to convey any true depth or appeal for antihero Frank Castle, aka *The Punisher* – created for Marvel Comics by Gerry Conway, John Romita Sr., and Ross Andru in February 1974, originally as a foil for Spider-Man. His family slain in gangland crossfire in NYC’s Central Park, the vigilante tackles wrongdoers of every stripe, a one-man judge, jury and – more often than not – executioner. Whatever you make of his morals, he does sport one of the coolest costumes, almost an icon by itself. Artworks – Archie/ Punisher by Stan Goldberg and Henry Scarpelli.

Opposite
 Tim Bradstreet, John Romita Jr., Mike Del Mundo
www.deadlymike.deviantart.com

The Punisher – Trademark & Copyright © Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.



Punisher Poly-wicking Shirt





Red Skull – a classic supervillain, scheming Nazi archfoe of true red, white ‘n’ blue patriot *Captain America*. Created by Jack Kirby and Joe Simon in March 1941, months before – it should be noted – America itself joined World War II, the character has since enjoyed numerous revivals, first in 1954, then again for Marvel Comics (them again) in 1965, and, apart from dying a few times over, has stuck around ever since. Red Skull in the morning, sound out a warning: Red Skull at night, you’ll maybe die of fright.



Centre
Hugo Weaving as the cinematic Red Skull. Artwork by Marko Djurdjevic (main image), Gil Kane and Ernie Chan. John Beatty, Paul Peart_Smith: www.paulpeart-smithartspace.blogspot.com, au, and Jack Kirby/Syd Shores

Red Skull, Captain America and Namor (The Invaders) – All Marvel characters and the distinctive likeness(es) thereof are Trademarks & Copyright © 2004 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.



Skull the Slayer (August, 1975) is James Patrick Scully, an adventurer sucked through the Bermuda Triangle to an alternate Earth where multiple timezones co-exist: dinos, apemen and aliens, oh my!

None other than the King of Comics, Jack Kirby, drew the cover to his final issue.

Skull The Slayer – Trademark & Copyright © Marvel Characters, Inc.; Judge Death © 2003 Rebellion Developments; Skull & Bones © DC Comics Inc.; Skullman © Kodansha



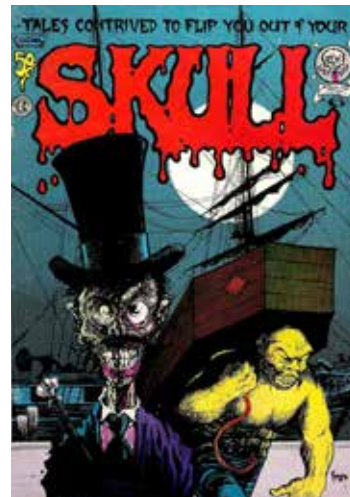
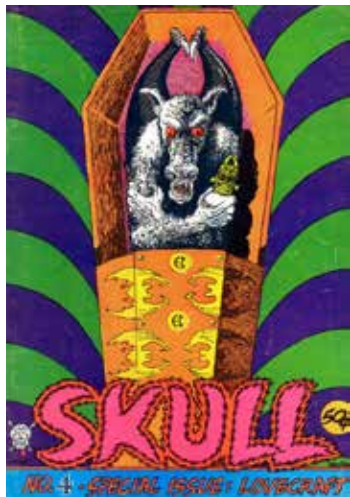
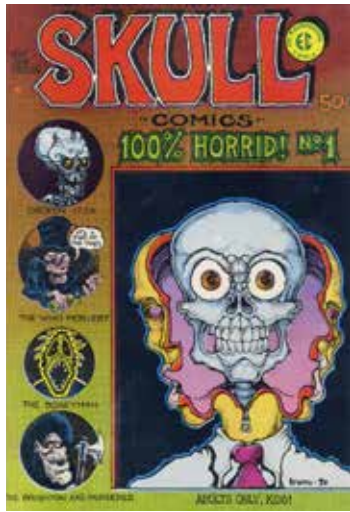
Judge Death (top) dates back to 1980, via 2000 AD (the comic). Created by John Wagner and Brian Bolland, he is *de facto* leader of the Dark Judges, an undead law enforcement division from Deadworld, an alternate dimension to the Judge Dredd universe where life itself has been declared a crime – punishable by, well, guess... Photo courtesy of Steve Cook.

Skull & Bones – almost certainly inspired by Italy's Kriminal tendency, Ed Hannigan introduced this Russian superspy into the DC universe (at last! They get some play too), just as the Cold War came to an apparent close back in 1991. I wonder if he ever rumbled with the KGBeast?



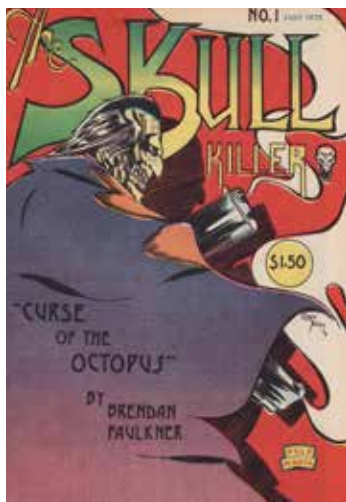
Skullman, (above & opposite) created for the Japanese comics market by Shotaro Ishinomori in 1970, was one of manga's first antiheroes, showing no mercy to those who got in his way. An inspiration for the look of the later Kamen Rider.





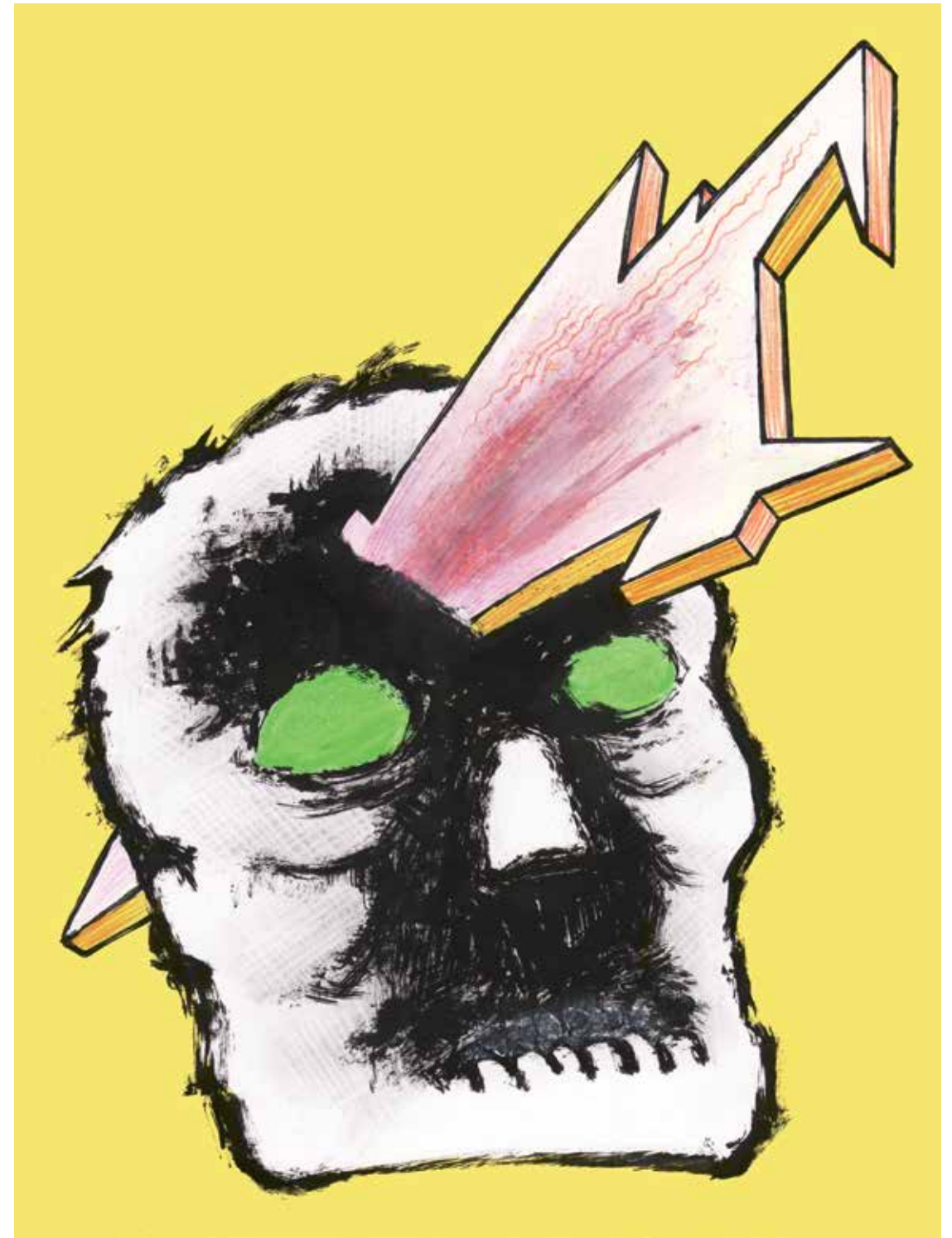
Skull Comics (above), an archetypal underground comic published by Last Gasp Funnies out of 1970's San Francisco. All-star contributors included: Greg (Slow Death) Irons; Gilbert (Furry Freak Brothers) Shelton; and Spain.

The Skull Killer #1, 1975, (right) by Brendan Faulkner and Gary Terry (Pulp Mania Inc.) The brief comic book revival of an early pulp hero from 1939 – with his



archenemy being The Octopus, feasibly an inspiration to Will Eisner's later The Spirit.

The spirit of independence alive and thriving, even in death. Cover image from **Copra** #1 (opposite), November 2012, by Michel Fiffe. Check out this riotous and regularly self-published creator-owned series, from Copra Press. We can't recommend it highly enough! www.michelfiffe.com

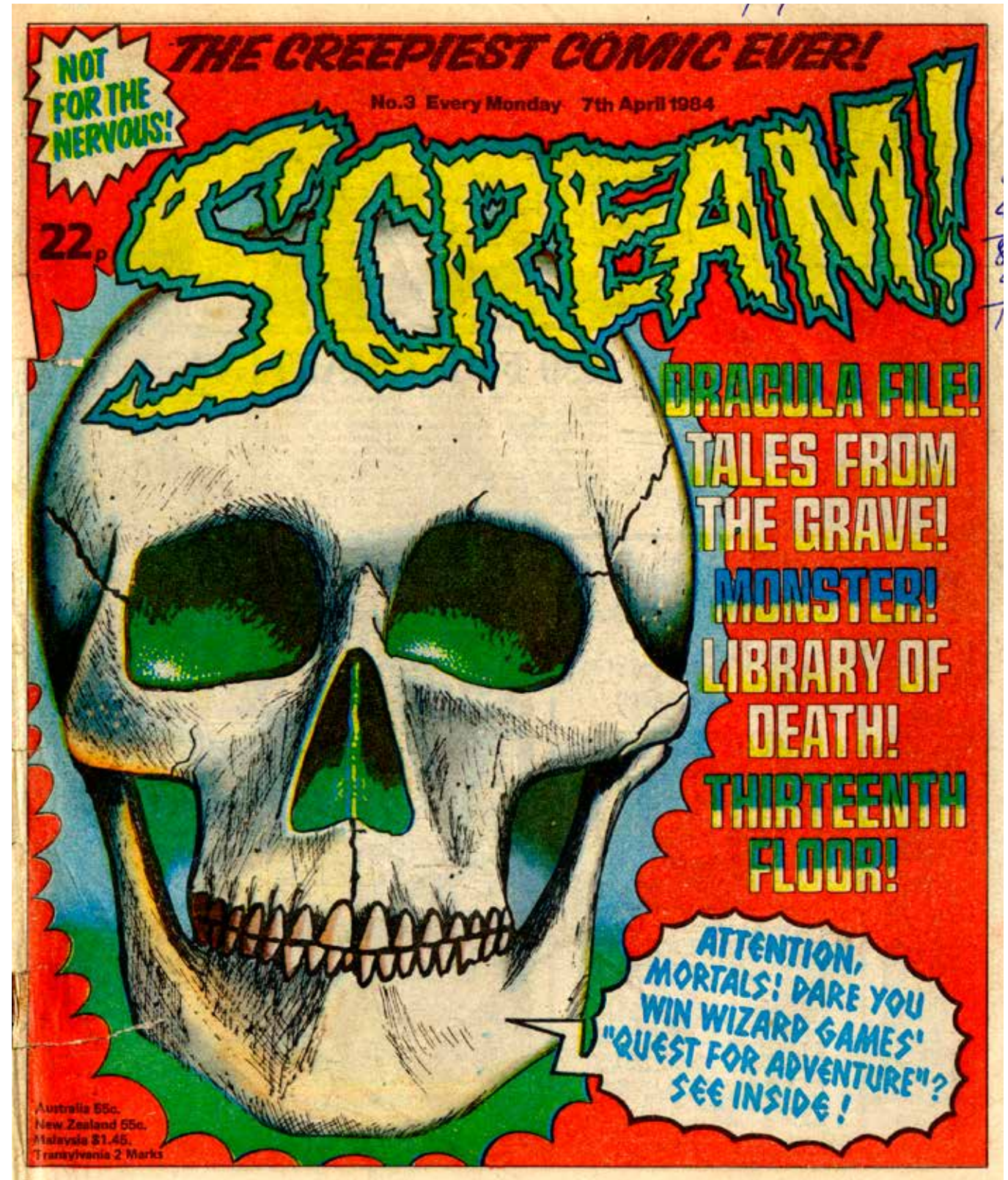
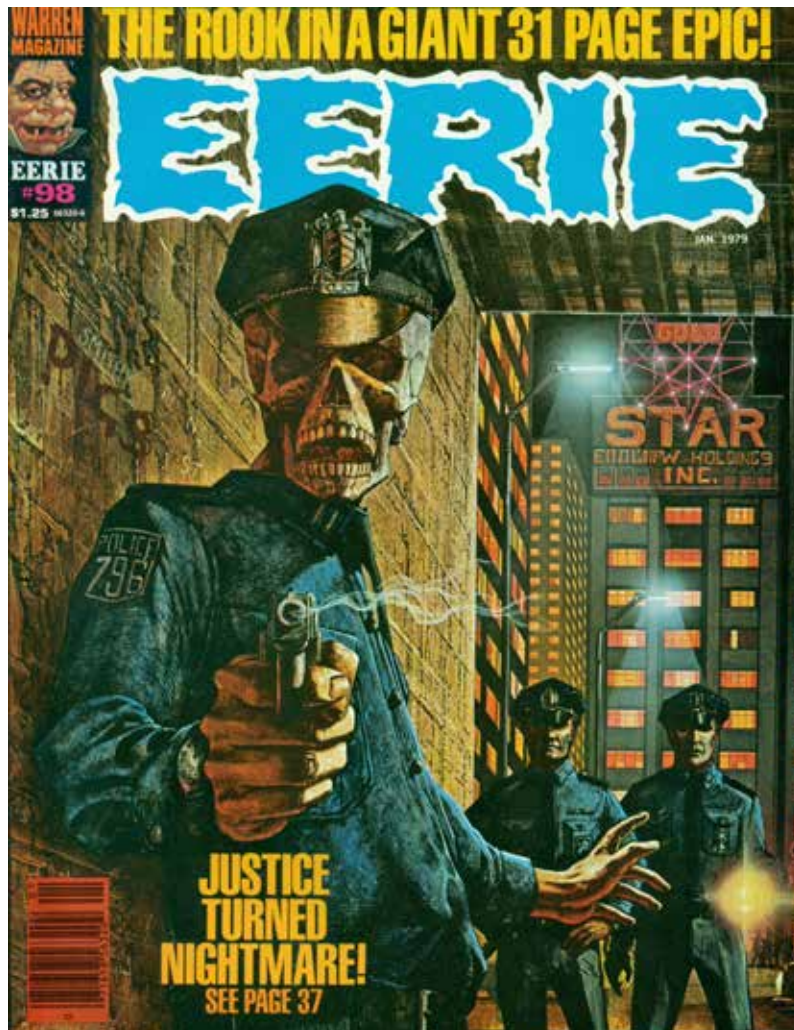


Below
EERIE 98, cover art by Pat Woodroffe. Warren magazines, January 1979.

Rumour has it concerned parents, poor souls, effectively shut it down. Equally it could simply have fallen victim to poor sales.

Opposite
"Not for the nervous", *Scream!*, edited by Ghastly McNasty, was a relatively short-lived (15 issues) weekly comic published in the UK by IPC, March through June of 1984.

The whole scanned set can be seen online:
www.backfromthedepts.co.uk





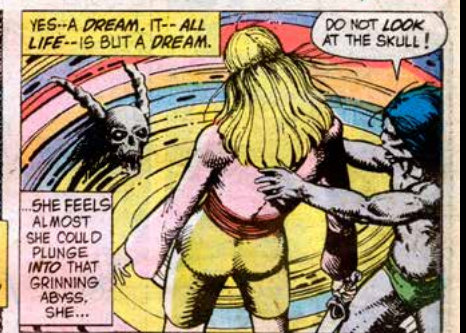
BARRY SMITH

Conan – Red Nails

One of the most terrifying sequences ever committed to the page, from Barry Smith's masterpiece, an adaptation with Roy Thomas featuring Robert E. Howard's barbarian hero, Conan. Originally published in Savage Tales magazine, before collection in an oversized Marvel Comics Treasury Edition.

Copyright ©1975, Marvel Comics Group.

www.barrywindsor-smith.com





REAL LIFE SUPERHEROES

Something of a phenomenon, as reflected in an incisive and moving HBO documentary, the Real Life Superheroes movement counts more than a few skull-bearers amongst its ranks:

Death's Head Moth: Phantom Zero: Thanatos (Ancient Greek personification of Death). Inspired by their love of comic books, these guys actually patrol the streets dressed like this – more often helping out the homeless and such, than to discourage the real-life bad guys. And that makes them larger than life good guys. Chew on that, KickAss!

www.reallifesuperheroes.com



Above left & left
Phantom Zero

Above centre
Ghost

Above right
Thanatos

Opposite
Death's Head Moth
All photos by and
© Peter Tangen except
Ghost (by Anon)





SKULL FASHION

Ah, fickle fashion – from Alexander McQueen’s innovate designs on the catwalk, via Ralph Lauren’s rugby-polo nexus of faux-classy casual thuggery, down to street market stalls and Third World sweatshops, like a rash.

It’s in! It’s out! It’s hot! It’s not! Skulls can now be found on almost any fashion product you care to mention – Catherine Rapetti clutch bags, Barker Black Skull Wing Tip brogues, Paul Smith cufflinks*. We’d feature them here but they’re all far too expensive, and the aspirational lifestyle is just so yesterday.

As a passing fad Skull Fashion has surely exhausted itself. But when all is said and done, sighed at and discarded, you can be sure of one familiar face-without-a-face that will still be sticking around – and smiling. For those truly in the know, there lurks a deeper trend that never goes away.

*all to be found in a handy round-up at <http://dustyburrito.blogspot.co.uk/2009/10/skulls.html>

Thank you, Dusty. You’ve been there so we don’t have to.



Top left
Death Kitty, apparel noir – designer label logo from the UK’s Petticoat Lane

Above
Black Tiny Skull Necklace - vintage inspired acrylic jewellery. “Wear with this season’s ‘Goth Luxe’ trend, with lace, black leather or a simple white buttoned up shirt.” www.maggieangus.com



Top left
Fireman Sam (yes!) Valentine sports an unofficial Fire Service sweatshirt, snapped drinking at a bar in Manchester, NH. Photo: Robin A. Boylston

Top right
Diabolik Pewter Skull Pendant Rocker Necklace, www.tattoodonkey.com

Above & left
Skully silk scarves modeled by Anon Exhibitor at Comica Comiket, and Skulls collector extraordinaire, Rebecca Snotflower





Previous spread

Goth to Go To and Spawn writer David Hine unzips Guess top to model his Gama Go T.

This page and next

David Hine, writer of *Poison Candy* for Tokyopop, shows off more of his Skull Tees collection – including Shiroy Neko, as not liked at all by Urban Dictionary dot com



If you can keep your skull tees on, when all about you are losing theirs, yours is the Earth and everything that's in it. And – which is more – you'll be a Man my son!



Above
Bulletproof Coffin co-creator
(with artist Shaky Kane),
David Hine models Parasuco,
Italian style.

Opposite
Alex shows fidelity to Linkin Park



Skinny(ish) Goth rocks Fat Punk, Yoyogi style.



David Hine, sick puppy behind Avatar's *Crossed* series, and *FVZA: The Federal Vampire and Zombie Agency* for Radical Comics, absolutely swears 100% by his very favourite fashion label: Australia's purveyors for Surf 'n' Street, Mambo Design.



Photo: Andy Bleck





Above

"I LIKE SHIRTS"

Mambo strikes twice with this killer Hawaiian design.

Model: man about town

David Shenton, who supplies us with his own bespoke

cartoon anecdote concerning

said shirt.

www.dscomics.co.uk

Opposite

Skull shirt by Denim is Everything.

Photo: Chie Kutsuwada





Cowichan sweater by Canadian brand KANATA. "I bought it at the casual men's clothing section at Liberty. It was very expensive for me as a student, but it was

love at first sight so I couldn't resist." Chie K.

This page
Skull pullover by PINK DRAGON





Above
Skull top – Brave Soul, UK
(photo: Vyla Rollins)

Right & opposite
Chie Kutsuwada, Gold tooth
skull hoodie, 20 ANS of
The Duffer of St George
www.thedufferofstgeorge.com





Belt Buckles and Bags:
leathers from Lewes, UK,
where pirate fashions, civil
war couture and vaudevillian
voodoo yet holds sway, and

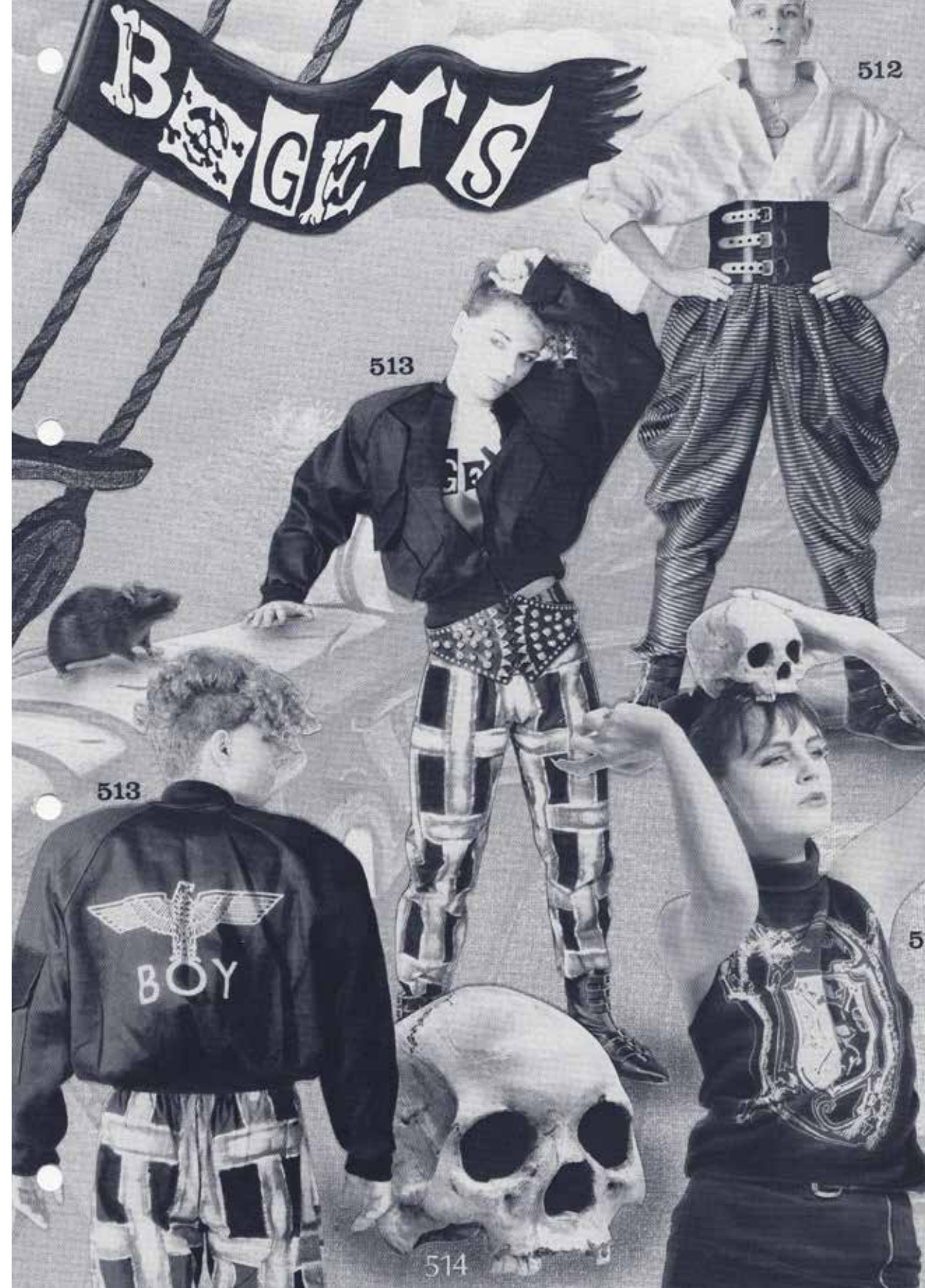
local Bonfire Societies in
outrageous costume gather
to mark the Glorious Fifth (of
November: Guy Fawkes night).
Photos by Vyla. Death or Glory!



SKULL FASHION: ACCESSORIES

Skull Buckle Shoes from 1980's London, via Germany: from the collection of Veronika Streitwieser. These survivors from the earliest days of Post Punk fashion and the likes of Kensington Market are worth digging up for the Eighties revival! Tschüss!

Plus!(opposite) The original adverts from a BOGEY'S Underground-Fashion From London catalogue ("Superklamotten für Teds, Popper, Punks, Mods..."), featuring these very same boots. You too can dress like your heroes, Adam Ant and Bow Wow Wow, glam pirate-highwaymen. Ridicule is nothing to be scared of!



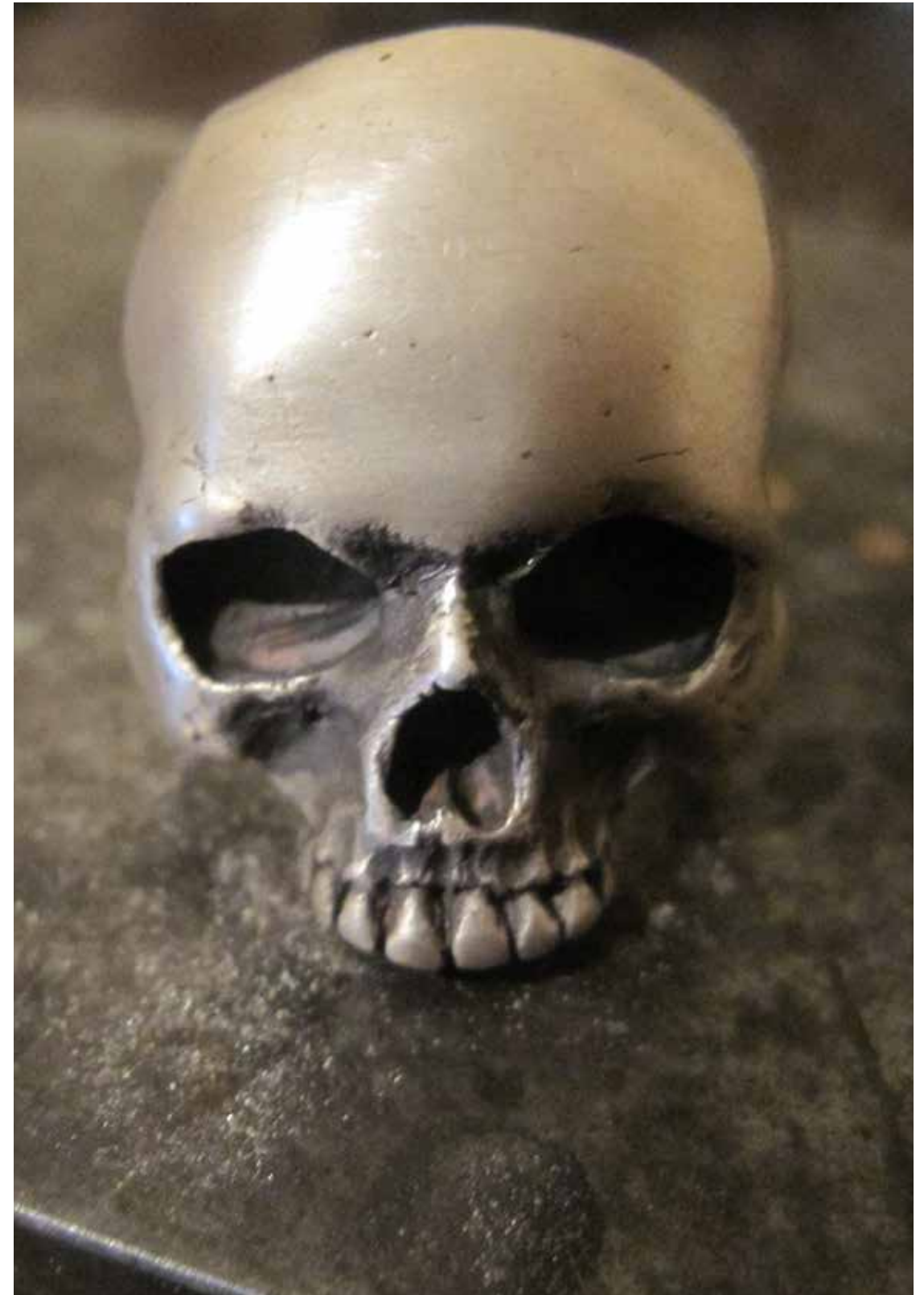
JEWELLERY

Skull rings have ever been a favourite fashion item, most especially amongst the alternative, hard rock rebel, Sons (and daughters!) of Anarchy and death metal set. Just one never seems enough! Magic man and comics cultural guru Alan Moore always sports a brace of them, and thus, so do many of his fans and followers – even when poised to rifle through a longbox of tattered back issues.



Left
Photo by Andy Bleck.

Opposite
Skull by T-Dog Junior
(see following pages)





T-DOG JUNIOR – DOG STATE

Established in London, UK, since 2004, DOG STATE was founded by designer and jeweller Takahashi Toshi (T-Dog Junior). Valuing the importance of traditional techniques, he specializes in modern skull and animal designs handcrafted to the highest standard, through his manipulation of precious metals.

www.dog-state.com



Above left
Blindfold Skull Ring

Below left
Cyclops Skull Ring

Opposite top left
Dokuro

Opposite top right
Human Cat skull

Opposite below left
Skeleton Key Pendant

Opposite below right
Skull bangle

This page

T-Dog Junior – Indian Skull Ring, Tibetan Kapala Skull Ring

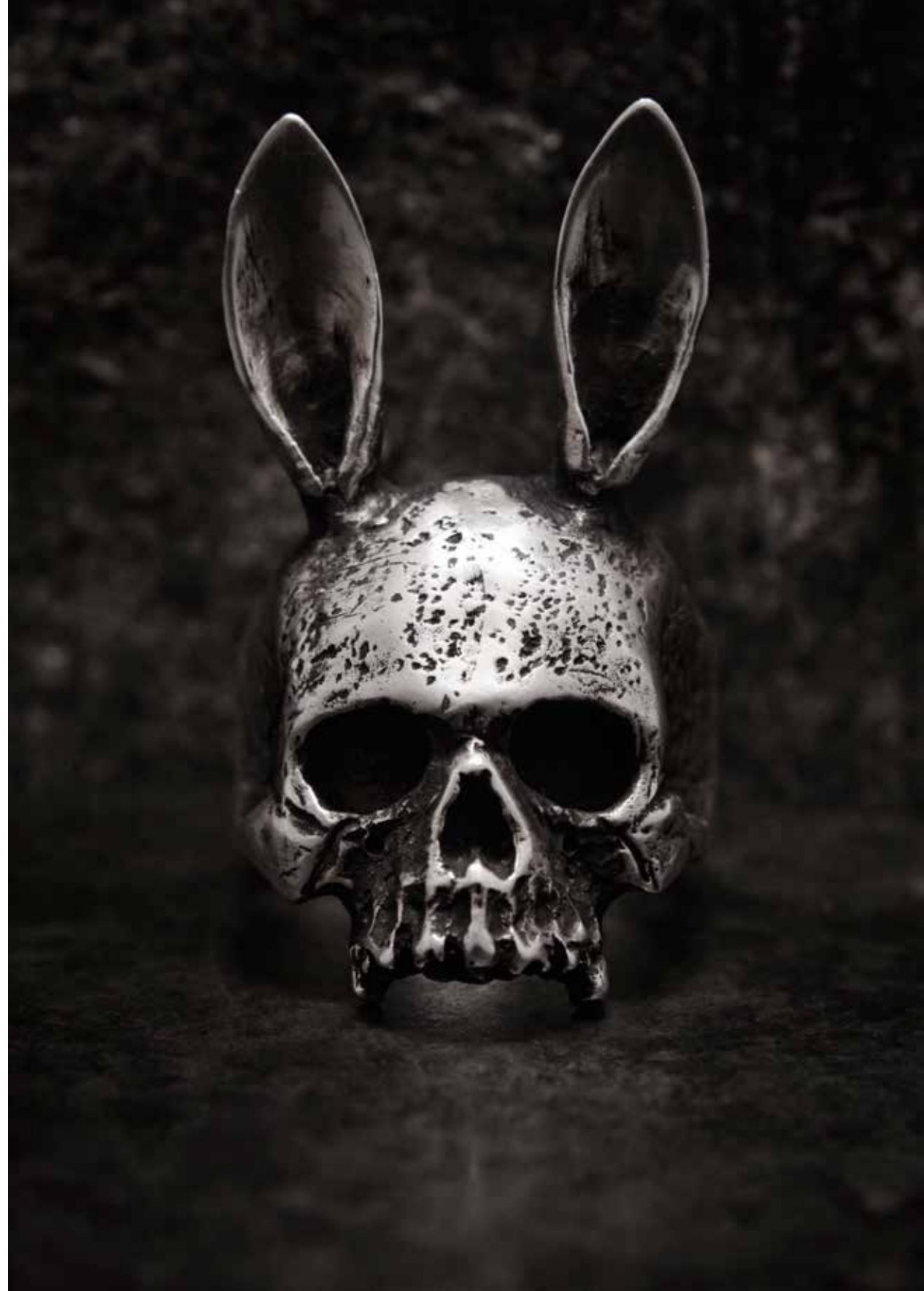
Opposite

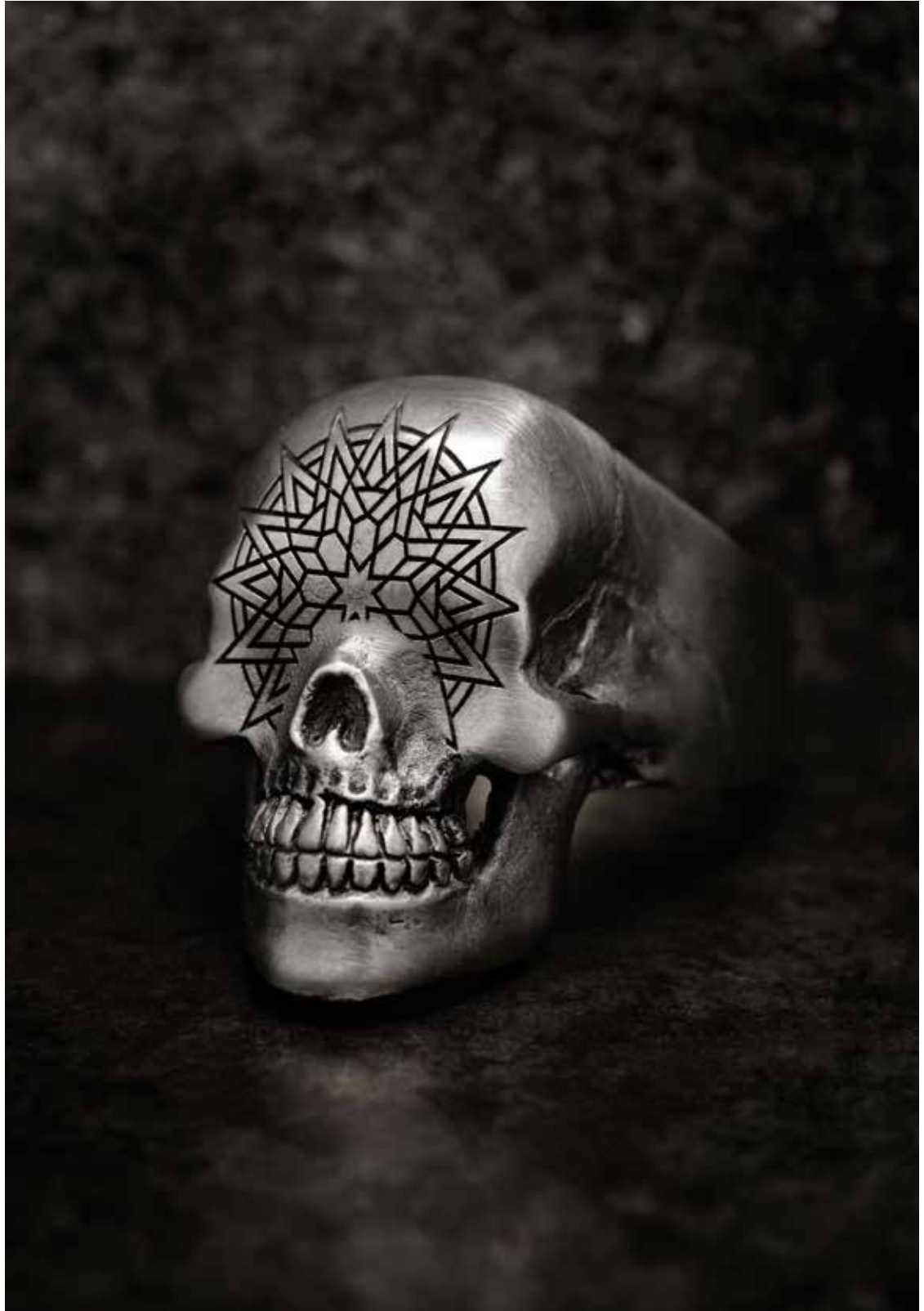
Bunny Skull Ring

Following pages

Peeping Skull, Mr Senegas Skull Ring, Mandala Skull Ring, Snail Skull Ring

All images © Takahashi Toshi (T-Dog Junior)







MIYU DECAY

Stephanie Inagaki

Ending this Skull Fashion section on the highest possible note, we present Miyu Decay (Me, You, Decay?), based in Los Angeles, California, USA. Crafting a careful selection from her favourite materials (sterling silver, carnelian, bone, feathers, vintage kimono fabrics) Stephanie Inagaki melds modern macabre with Old World grace and finery.

www.stephanieinagaki.com

www.miyudecay.etsy.com

Above
Brass Skull and Cross Bones
Keychain

**Above right (detail)
and opposite**
Sterling Silver Gauged
Crescent Bat Hoop Earrings
and Tuareg Palmier Necklace

Photography: Allan Amato
www.allanamato.com
MUA: Jill Fogel
www.jillfogel.com
Model: Ashley Joy Beck
www.ashleyjoybeck.com
Styling: Stephanie Inagaki
www.stephanieinagaki.com

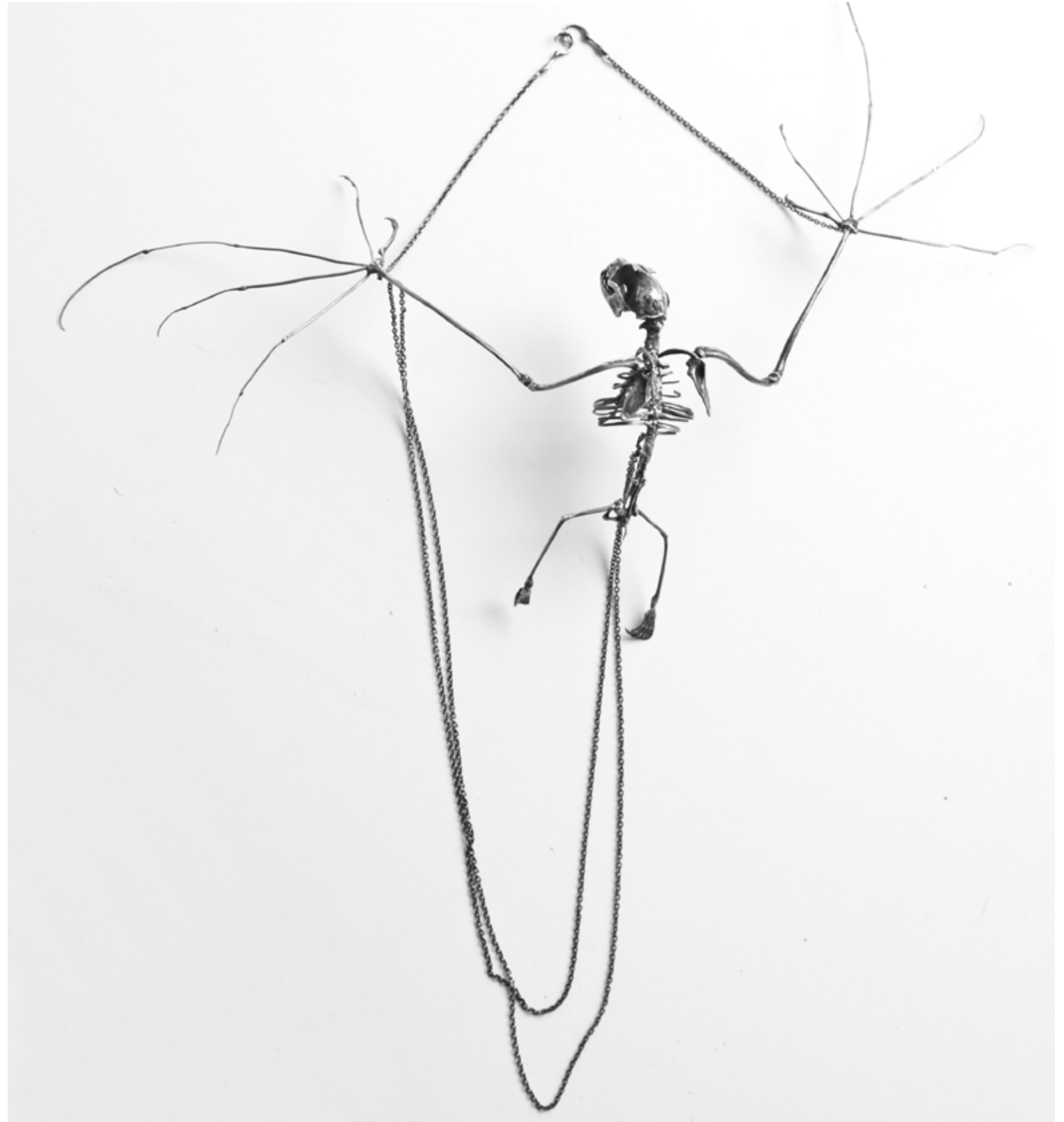




Miyu Decay

Top to bottom
Sterling Silver Bat Skull
Bracelet, Necklace and
Cufflinks

Opposite
Sterling Silver Bat Skeleton
Necklace





This spread and previous pages

Miyu Decay – Sterling Silver
Bat Skeleton Necklace
Solid sterling silver, hand cast,
made out of hand forged and
filed sterling silver wire.
It took over 2 years to produce.

Photographer: Aaron Hawks
[www.http://aaronhawks.net](http://aaronhawks.net)
MUA: Jill Fogel
www.jillfogel.com
Styling: Stephanie Inagaki
www.stephanieinagaki.com

