944’s choice / living canvas tattoos

BY JOEL LYONS

The fruits of labor at Tempe’s Living Canvas Tattoos can be seen at the nearest local nightclub or on your favorite celebrity or athlete. As the oldest ink parlor in Tempe, Mark Walters and his crew of artists regularly help people wear their self-expression with style. “I love seeing my work when I’m out at night,” Walters says. “It’s gratifying to have a name in town.” Born in England, raised in Hong Kong, and influenced by the cultures and religions of the world, Walters opened Living Canvas in 1993. Since then, he’s crafted everything from a patriotic red, white and blue butterfly to cockroaches eating a customer’s backside. “I’ll tattoo anything as long as I can draw it and customize it,” Walters says. He starts with a consultation with his customers to pick their brains and flesh out what they have in mind before adding his personal flair and creativity to the project. His favorite clients are tattoo collectors such as rocker Tommy Lee. Walters says they tend to get more random and interesting body art, noting how one client once asked for fried eggs on his hand and another wanted a toaster, both much more original than that cliché tribal band.

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