



it's the **ARTS** BY CLAIR ANNA ROSE

Cover artist Nick Lawrence, and his works, including *Buddha*, above, are on display at Tat-Fu Tattoo.

DEEPER CONSCIOUSNESS

In deep greens and reds, to the darkest black, artist **Nick Lawrence** has captured a "what if" of evolution in a painting he calls *Eye Itch*.

"The premise of the idea for the painting is the evolution of consciousness and how species on this planet through the millennia have evolved through natural selection and how plants also exhibit evolution as well," Mr. Lawrence explains to me. "Plants as well are conscious and we almost view them as inanimate objects. It's almost as if it is a plant with consciousness; it has an eye, it has a poker coming out, as if it were going to itch it."

Originally Mr. Lawrence began as a body piercer. Working at Ace Tattoo in Phoenix, he was able to spend a lot of time observing tattoo artists and their techniques. "I was realizing that piercing is very limited. You can only pierce so many belly buttons, and various parts of the body, before it becomes monotonous work. I wanted to exercise my creativity more. I asked one of the gentlemen I shared a room with at the studio if he would take me on as an apprentice, and he said, 'Sure, but it's all or nothing.'"

Mr. Lawrence began to learn the art of tattooing under

the apprenticeship of **Josh Nelson**. "He's a phenomenal artist in every regard," Mr. Lawrence says.

He began tattooing in 2002, after working with Mr. Nelson for a year and a half. Mr. Lawrence then moved back to Flagstaff and bought **Tat-Fu Tattoo**. That was in 2004, when Tat-Fu Tattoo was a small hole-in-the-wall in the Monte Vista Hotel. About three and a half years ago Tat-Fu Tattoo moved into a bigger location where they are now, at 104 East Route 66.

Says Mr. Lawrence: "I've taken a stance in being as diverse as possible. I try to experiment with all mediums. I'm more comfortable with acrylics; however, I've been playing around with oils, charcoal and sculpting, besides my tattooing.

"I have a different client every day, with different wants and needs. I need to be diverse in that sense. If somebody wants a portrait, I want to be able to sit down and do a portrait, or if someone wants a flower, to be able to sit down and do a traditional style flower. Some tattoo artists will carve a niche, and say 'This is what I like to do.' I found myself enjoying all the styles, they're all challenging. "I'm a commissioned artist, and I need to be able to

produce whatever that particular individual needs or wants. As far as style goes, I'm still trying to discover what I like the most, but I will probably always try to be as diverse as possible."

Mr. Lawrence hopes as time goes on to continue developing as a painter, as he moves in the direction of creating fine art. *Eye Itch* and other paintings by Mr. Lawrence are on display at Tat-Fu Tattoo, with new works rotating onto the walls.

TatfuTattoo.net

NOT YOUR GRANDMA'S QUILT

Instead of brushes and paint; needles and thread. Instead of paint in layers; pieces of fabric cut deliberately, from many different colors, textures and design. Some hand-dyed, some painted, each piece coming together to bring a subject to light.

"One of the reasons I make the work I do is that I like for it to be a different experience up close than it is from far away," textile artist **Darcy Falk** tells me. "Composition is important, and that impacts the overall graphic quality of

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