



H.R. GIGER

On Tattoos and Tattooing by George Petros

The word "GIGER" evokes apprehension. It transcends the mere moniker of the artist who rules the biomechanical universe; it's routinely used to describe futuristic fear and threatening creatures. But the artist himself is in fact quite human. H.R. Giger, beloved progenitor of the Alien, calmly contemplates the state of creation and his place within it. He's always amazed at the way folks decorate themselves, especially when it comes to that ancient, ever-evolving art-form, tattooing. The skin is the body's largest organ, and a great place to advertise one's inclinations. With great modesty the master states, "I don't have much to say about tattoos," yet his fantastic art adorns the hides of people all over the world. His trademark bio-mechanical style compliments the fragile epidermis, adding powerful and sometimes scary components to the physiological equation. When one wears the work of Giger, it's as if magical metals permeate the body, imparting strength and indestructibility, and perhaps immortality as well.

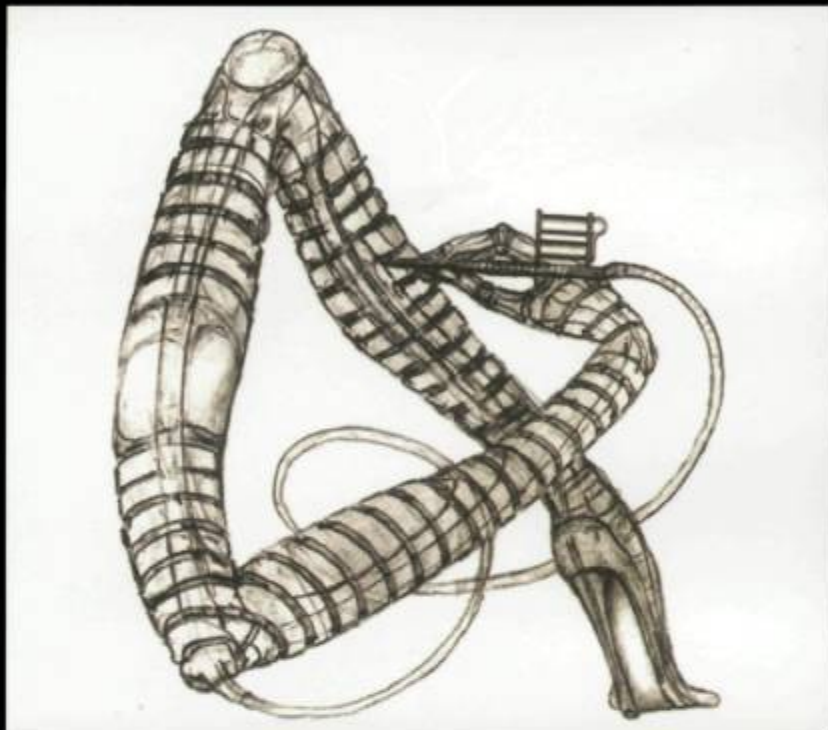
His images fluctuate between life and death, between living flesh and living machines, a perfect match for legions of modern primitives who see their hides as works of art and seek that special something with which to tell the world, "Don't fuck with me." A Giger tattoo suggests membership in a secret society, inspired by the most terrifying forces imaginable. It's a true badge of honor.

Get one today, before it's too late!

BELOW
BIOMECHANOID 2002, Copyright H.R. Giger
 175cm x 50cm x 60cm
 Ltd. Ed. 6 in aluminum, 6 in fiberglass.
 Photo: Copyright 2002 MEGAN RUSH

RIGHT
NUBIAN QUEEN 2002, Copyright H.R. Giger
 72 in.
 Ltd. Ed. 23 in cast aluminum.
 Photo: Copyright 2002 VILLAS/NYPHOTOSTUDIO.COM





(Above) Biomech - Tattooist (c) 2001 H.R. Giger, 30 x 21 cm



(Above) Biomech - Painter (c) 2001 H.R. Giger, Pencil on paper, 30 x 21 cm

Petros: Lotsa people have tattoos of your art.

Giger: True, and I'm quite proud that they choose my stuff. That's nice. When people do tattoos of my art, the closer they come to the original, the better. When tattoo masters do their own versions of my stuff, I like that also. If someone mixes details from my various paintings, as well as something new done in the bio-mechanical style, that's also fine. I like the surprise. Why not? Of course if it is badly drawn, then I don't like it so much and feel sorry for the person who has it.

Petros: What makes for a great tattoo?

Giger: If the image is simple and not rigid. It's not good if it doesn't fit the body landscape; the size and placement should complement the surface of the skin. The tattoo should move with the body. Like on the arm, for example, the image should change with each movement. Sometimes a tattoo should have different levels, so that it looks like there's technical stuff under the skin—tubes, pipes, things like that, revealing another level underneath, giving the impression of being strong inside, like a machine, and not so weak.

Petros: People wish they were machines.

Giger: Yes. Or they want to show that they're robots, without feelings, immune to pain and illness. It gives them a sense of strength.

Petros: Do you like to design tattoos?

Giger: Once I was asked to design a tattoo, and I made a small joke. I designed something showing the points where a doctor gives injections, or takes blood, so they'll always find the right spot where the veins are. I also added the markings for the blood type. My own blood type is RH-positive. One of my books, published by Taschen, has that title.

Petros: There's a new book out, on Taschen again.

Giger: Yes, in their Icon series. I heard it's doing very well. I heard that in Paris, stores are selling a thousand copies in one week. Must be because it's the most affordable book I ever did. The first printing of thirty-five thousand copies is nearly sold out. It's in three languages. It's called, H.R. GIGER.

Petros: What are you working on these days?

Giger: I'm finishing up the Zodiac Fountain in my garden. It's a very big project, thirteen sculptures altogether. I started working on it more than ten years ago, but it's nearly finished now. One of the last signs, Aquarius, is in the foundry waiting to be cast in aluminum. That's my personal sign. I was born on the fifth of February.



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Petros: You love to sculpt, right?

Giger: Yes. All my airbrush paintings have always been like plans for my sculptures. The sculpting is the finishing of the image. The paintings are like a plan for three-dimensional objects, just like with the Alien.

Petros: Who sports tattoos of your stuff?

Giger: Sometimes it is a surprise. I've made a few friends with people through their having my art on them. I'm fascinated with them. One who has become a good friend is an Austrian who has one of my "Passages" paintings on his chest. That was a series of paintings I did in the Seventies. He now has many of my other images on him as well.

Petros: When tattooed people die, should their skin be preserved?

Giger: Only if the individual wants it to be; it should be their decision what happens to their own skin. Especially people tattooed all over, including their face—they should be able to decide if, after they die, they will want to become a kind of sculpture. There might be a cast of the body made and then covered with skin, and illuminated from within. Why not? Or having certain parts preserved, like panels of a painting.

Petros: Would you like to own someone else's skin?

Giger: No, not really.

Petros: In the future, how will tattooing change?

Giger: Maybe people will have holographic tattoos, or 3D, or moving images, or tattoos with certain parts illuminated. I don't know.

Petros: Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts with us.

Giger: Thank you too, and good night.



(Above) Voice of America (c) 1968 H.R. Giger. Painted fiberglass, 80 x 24 x 20 cm



(Above Left) Biomech Construction Worker (c) 2001 H.R. Giger, pencil on paper, 30 x 21 cm



(Above Right) Biomech Mechanic (c) 2001 H.R. Giger, pencil on paper, 30 x 21 cm



Fletcher Galleries

**On Your program
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FLETCHER GALLERY - HR GIGER: THE COLLECTIVE

The internationally known Fletcher Gallery, in association with Woodstock Watercolor, will be the host of a very Special exhibition highlighting recent sculptures by the legendary Swiss surrealist artist, HR Giger. Also on display will be limited edition prints by H.R. Giger, the new H.R. Giger jewelry line, posters and books. This special exhibition is curated by Les Barany in association with Barany Artists, and will include works by a selection of artists in H.R. Giger's private art collection, such as Joe Coleman, Andre Lassen, Theo Kamecke, S. Clay Wilson, and photos of Giger tattoos by Kelly Brill. The Fletcher Gallery exhibition will open on September 5th, 2003, with many of the artists in attendance, and will run through Sept. 28th.



Above: Theo Kamecke - Amon Ra



Above: Viktor Koen - Damsel no.1



Above: David Hochbaum - Incubus



Above: Andre Lassen - Silver Cutlery Set