



Press Release

Date: 21/11/22

rites of passage sydney tattoo competitions

First and foremost, Australian Exhibition Group (AEG) and Rites of Passage Tattoo Festival would like to apologise to those that a series of unfortunate errors that occurred during the event in Sydney affected. This includes but is not limited to Michael (MadDogTattoos), Ax The Kid, Sharn Standen (Sharn.TheTattooer), AlexTattz, our 3 guest judges who did their absolute best to remain composed and professional as well as our series sponsor Inkjecta.

During the Rites of Passage Tattoo Festival – Sydney, held on November 11-13, two extremely significant errors occurred during the Inkjecta Tattoo Series competition, which resulted in an artist being embarrassingly stripped of their award after it had been announced, and also resulted in a collaboration piece winning 2 awards where the piece did not meet the criteria to enter.

This is severely disappointing for us, more than most would believe. The Inkjecta Australian Tattoo Series has been developed alongside core members of our team and prevalent players in the Australian Tattoo Industry over the past 6 years to be the most fair, unbiased and ironclad Tattoo Competition that the world has seen. So, when small human errors occur that potentially ruin the work and reputation that we have tried to build, we are extremely heartbroken.

We would like to go over the two major incidents that occurred:

Incident 1: On Saturday November 12th, during the Best Photo Realism competition, several entrants in the competition did not end up presenting their tattoos on the main stage. As we (Rites of Passage) were made aware of the missing participants, an attempt was made to relay the information to our host that particular entry numbers were not going to join us on the stage.

Unfortunately, due to a number of disorderly patrons that were causing problems and distractions at the stage and also in the lines of entrants, this information wasn't relayed to the judges correctly.



When this information wasn't relayed to the judges, the numbers on the entry cards that were given to each contestant did NOT line up with the judging sheets of our judges, resulting in the wrong entry number being called as the winner.

We are extremely apologetic to Michael / Maddog Tattoos for what happened, we can only imagine how disappointing this scenario would have been for you, and for that we are truly sorry, we admire your work and think extremely highly of you.

In an effort to further prevent this error from ever happening in the future, we are now implementing that EVERY entrant in the Inkjecta Tattoo Series must show their entry card to all three judges before any judging of their piece(s) can commence. Once all three judges have noted the entry details, judging can continue. This small adjustment to the process of the award series will remove any doubt of whether the correct entry numbers were taken down.

Incident 2: On Sunday November 13th, during the Best Multi-day and Tattoo of the Show competition, one entry that went on to win both categories did not meet the criteria of the competitions.

A collaboration piece by two artists was entered into the Best Multi-Day Category, which was stipulated clearly in the rules of the competition that no collaborated pieces can be entered into Tattoo of the Day or into Best Multi-Day. This information was missed during the registration process in the Information Office and the collaborated piece successfully entered the competition regardless of not meeting the criteria.

As registration for these competitions is available at any point in time across the weekend to allow artists the flexibility to enter when they can, this sadly means that at certain points of the weekend, registration is sometimes orchestrated by someone that is not completely across the rules of the series, something that should be taken extremely seriously that we will now rectify.

In response to the error that occurred, we are announcing a new winner of the Best Multi Day award, the winning piece was a front runner on the day of the competition and was a completely unanimous vote between our three judges as the Best Multi-Day piece upon the news of finding a new winner.



The winner of the Best Multi-Day award at Rites of Passage Tattoo Festival Sydney, is Moses Mezoghlian (@moses_d_mezoghlian). We would like to congratulate Moses on his incredible work as well as apologise that his work wasn't able to be awarded at the Rites of Passage Tattoo Festival like it should have been. A replacement trophy will be made and delivered to Moses as soon as possible.

In a remarkably hard decision, we have decided not to strip Sharn Standen (Sharn.TheTattooer), AlexTattz of their Tattoo of the Show award. Their collaboration tattoo that was entered is an incredible piece of work, and to in no way discredit these artists, we and the judges believe that the tattoo truly was the best of the weekend regardless of formalities and criterias of the Best Multi Day competition. Congratulations to Sharn and AlexTattz on their amazing artwork.

After much deliberation, we have decided that in 2023, the Best Collaboration tattoo category will join the ranks of Tattoo of the Day and Best Multi-Day, therefore allowing the winner(s) of that category to compete for Tattoo of the Show at all Inkjecta Tattoo Series Competitions in 2023 and beyond.

To remedy the issues with registration, as of now, registration for ALL tattoo competitions will only take place for two hours before each award show, these times are as below:

Friday from 5:30PM-7:30PM

Saturday from 5:30PM-7:30PM

and Sunday from 1:30PM-3:30PM.

(at the Melbourne Australian Tattoo Expo, Sundays times will be 12:30PM-2:30PM)

These dedicated time windows will be monitored by a trained staff member who is equipped to deal with any queries or concerns regarding the rules, the criteria or the categories of the competition to completely remove the chances of any entries entering the wrong category moving forward at the Inkjecta Tattoo Series.

On a related note, we recently were made aware of a number of disappointing and extremely rude comments made not only online, but in person to our previous guest judges.



Australian Exhibition Group
Suite 3.02 L3 159 High St Prahran 3181
Ph: (03) 8456 9307

As much as we all take these awards seriously, you need to remember that a tattoo award is not the be all and end all. Winning or not winning an award does not give you the right to abuse or mistreat others because their views do not align with your own. These award shows are for friendly competition, aspiration and for bringing us all together to celebrate each other's achievements as friends, creators and artists.

Judging these competitions is not an easy task, and it takes its toll on every judge that we have had with us in the past, with many saying that they wouldn't be willing to do it again in the future because of the way they were treated by other artists from the events and the wider community.

Sadly not everyone can win, we are all adults here. We should be able to own up to our mistakes and we should be able to have some friendly fun not at the expense of others wellbeing or reputation. So please consider others when making remarks, small or large regarding the judging of these competitions, if you ever have a question, our judges or our staff are always willing to speak to you and answer any concerns you may have.

As we approach the Melbourne Australian Tattoo Expo, we wanted to make sure that all of the problems that occurred during the Inkjecta Tattoo Series at Rites of Passage were rectified before another round of the competition commenced to show our sincerity and our passion for the award series.

We love that you love this competition, and we will always continue to make it the absolute best it can be.

See you in Melbourne!

Rites of Passage Tattoo Festival & Australian Exhibition Group