

VIRTUAL ART AND CULTURAL PARADIGMS • BLM PROTESTS AT IRVINE CITY HALL • IRVINE WEEKLY'S STREAMING MOVIE PICKS

IRVINE WEEKLY

JUNE 17, 2020 • VOL. 2, NO. 17



VISUAL TALES FROM IRVINE'S
"Tattoo Storyteller"

JUNE 17, 2020 NO. 17

IRVINE WEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

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EMPLOYMENT



ACS Engineering Inc

seeks an Electrical/Project Engineer in Irvine. Req.: Bach in Electrical Engineering + 2yrs exp. \$71,240.00/yr. Email resume to karen@ACSEngineering.net

Administrative Manager:

Direct & coordinate admin. services; 40hrs/wk; worksite: Irvine, CA. Send resume to Mei Mi Suo Inc., Attn: Jing Xue, 2983 Chino Ave. #A8, Chino Hills, CA 91709

The Act-1 Group Inc. DBA ATIMS in Chatsworth, CA

seeks Software Development Manager to oversee, impl & provide prod'n supp/ syst S/W syst mgmt. No Trvl; no tel comm. Mail resumes to: The Act-1 Group Inc. DBA ATIMS, Attn: HR, 21622 Plummer Street, Suite 210, Chatsworth, CA 91311.

Computer Systems Analyst

Global digital signage co. seeks a f/t CSA. Req. Bachelor's degree in CE w/ 3 yrs prior computer analyst, SE or progs exp. Req. 6 mos of exp in MS Outlook, PowerPoint, and Word; EMS, Ya-room and Meetio meeting room software; Balsamiq mockups; Photoshop; Slack; and MS teams. 1 yr of exp in HTML5, JavaScript, Json, jQuery, and RESTful API programming; SMIL programming; PHP, Apache and SQL programming; AWS; Redmine; Zendesk; Scala Content Manager; and Android Log analysis and troubleshooting. 2 yrs of exp in Excel and VBA. Domestic & internat'l travel req'd. Jobsite: Irvine, CA. Send resume to: us-hr@lAdea.com*

CRM Systems Development Specialist,

F/T, BS in Computer, IT, or Electrical Engineering, Mail resume: Westside Movers, LLC, 11 Windarbor Lane, Irvine, CA 92602.

Database Administrator:

Develop IT solutions for bus. sys.; MS in CIS or equiv., or BS or equiv. + 5 yrs exp. in CIS req'd; Send resume to: Solomon America, Inc. 10540 Talbert Ave., #200, Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Electrical Engineer:

Research & Develop RF sys.; BS in EE or equiv. & 2 yrs exp. req'd; Send resume to GigaTera Communications: 1818 E. Orangethorpe Ave., Fullerton, CA 92831

Laboratory Tech (Irvine, CA):

Assist Lab. Mgr & Geotech. Engineer and support procedures in soils lab, conduct lab testing & review test results for QA. REQ: HS/GED + 4 yrs exp. Mail resumes: Stoney-Miller Consultants, Inc., Job Code #LT01, 14 Hughes, #B101, Irvine, CA 92618.

Medical and Health Manager:

Coordinate operational activities & ensure service quality; 40hrs/wk; Apply to Good IVF Medical Service Ctr. Attn: HR, 780 Roosevelt, Irvine, CA 92620

NortonLifeLock Inc.

has an opening for Software Engineer in Culver City, California. Job description includes responsible for analyzing, designing, debugging and/or modifying software. Depending on level/type of position, degree, and/or experience may be required. To apply, submit resume to jobsads@nortonlifelock.com. Must reference job title and job ID: 1648.6286.

NortonLifeLock Inc

has an opening for Software Engineer in Culver City, California. Job description includes responsible for analyzing, designing, debugging and/or modifying software; or evaluating, developing, modifying and coding software programs to support programing needs. To apply, submit resume to jobsads@nortonlifelock.com. Must reference job title and job ID: 1648.6545.

NortonLifeLock Inc.

has an opening for Software Engineer in Culver City, California. Job description includes responsible for analyzing, designing, debugging and/or modifying software. To apply, submit resume to jobsads@nortonlifelock.com. Must reference job title and job ID: 1648.6207.

NortonLifeLock Inc.

has an opening for Product Manager in Culver City, CA. Job description includes participate in all software product development life cycle activities. Move software products through the product development cycle from design and development to implementation and testing. To apply, submit resume to jobsads@nortonlifelock.com. Must reference job title and job ID: 1648.6586.

NortonLifeLock Inc

has an opening for UI Designer in Culver City, CA. Job description includes design or create graphics design to meet company needs. Work with product team leaders including Product Management, Visual Design, User Research, Info Dev and Engineering to define and implement product experience strategies within NetBackup. To apply, submit resume to jobsads@nortonlifelock.com. Must reference job title and job ID: 1648.6638.

Pastor: f/t;

perform religious worship & spiritual function; M Div, Th M, or equiv; Resume: Bethel Korean Church @18700 Harvard Ave., Irvine, CA 92612

Pharmacist

(Buena Park, CA) Perform pharmacist duties. Doctor of Pharmacy and CA Pharmacist license. Resume to: Meds Envy, Inc. 5450 Beach Blvd. #110, Buena Park, CA 90621

Post-Doctoral Research Scientist (Irvine, CA).

Conduct chemical epigenetics research. PhD in Chemistry (program must include study of epigenetics). Mail resume to SeongEun Kim, HR Mgr, Zymo Research Corporation 17062 Murphy Ave., Irvine, CA 92614.

Senior IT Engineer

at Insight Direct USA, Inc. (Santa Ana, CA): Analyze engineering, business, and other data processing problems to implement and improve computer systems. Require BS. in Comp. Sci. or comp. Eng. and 2 yrs exp. Add'l duties, requirements, travel req available upon request. Email resume and cover letter to susan.triggs@insight.com, ref Job#EK01.

SR. ACCOUNTANT

sought by Laboratory for Advanced Medicine, Inc in Irvine, CA to prepare and analyze financial statements. Resume to: HR, Laboratory for Advanced Medicine, Inc, 9950 Research Dr., Irvine, CA 92618.

SENIOR FOREIGN LEGAL ANALYST

White & Case LLP in Los Angeles, CA seeks a Senior Foreign Legal Analyst w/ Master's deg or frgn equiv deg in Law w/admission to Brazilian Bar & 6 yrs of exp at an int'l law firm managing high volume of Brazilian & Latin American litigations. Fluency in Portuguese language for legal purposes. Send resumes to lateralrecruiting@whitecase.com w/ref MH:CB.

Strategy and PR Manager

(Los Angeles, CA) Focus on managing the company's image & raising awareness of the company & its projects in the US, & abroad, especially in China. Bach deg in communications or a closely rtd major; 18 mos of work exp in film & television; proficient in MS Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint) & Adobe Systems. Apply to The H Collective, Inc., c/o Jianhui Huang, 12959 Coral Tree Place, Los Angeles, CA 90066

Strategy Market Business Analyst.

Master's Degree in Business Administration, req., \$56,056/yr, F/T, Resume to Jake Oh, Linkone, Inc., 5681 Beach Blvd, Suite 100, Buena Park, CA 90621

Taekwondo instructor

(Irvine, CA) Conduct and teach taekwondo techniques. Minimum 4th degree Dan certificate req'd. Resume to: Talium Group Inc. 3580 Barranca Pkwy #G, Irvine, CA 92606

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IRVINE CITY HALL PROTESTERS • PHOTO BY: EVAN J. LANCASTER

GRASSROOT ACTIVISTS HOPE TO UNIFY COMMUNITY

@OCFORBLACKLIVES INSTAGRAM PAGE BRINGS HUNDREDS TO SIT-IN AT IRVINE CITY HALL.

BY: EVAN J. LANCASTER

"Racism is the pandemic." "Let America breathe again." "End police violence." "No fucking more."

These were just a few of the messages protesters in Irvine scrawled on makeshift cardboard signs as they occupied the lawn in front of Irvine City Hall on Wednesday, June 3.

Hundreds of people showed up for the protest, which was organized by the creators of @OCForBlackLives Instagram account. Started on June 2, the account grew more than 1,000 followers in one day, and was largely responsible for bringing massive crowds to Irvine's Civic Center on Wednesday.

During the @OCForBlackLives "Sit In," intermittent chants of "Black Lives Matter" and "George Floyd" echoed over the sound of passing car horns, as protesters surrounded all corners of Alton Parkway and Harvard Avenue, in front of Irvine City Hall.

Several black attendees spoke publicly, sharing experiences, and calling for change. Some spoke with

the help of a megaphone in order to be heard over the cheers, chants and horns.

N.N., a 20-year-old speaker who later asked to be identified by her initials, said she came out to speak because she said there's an underrepresentation of the black community in Irvine. During her speech, she revealed a sobering statistic – she was one of 17 black students in a graduating class of 500.

She said the crowd was too big for her to count, but felt like it could have been thousands of people.

"I don't even know if I could quantify, it was a lot of people, it was an overwhelming number of people," she said. "Standing up there, speaking to these people – having people be receptive to what I'm saying, was honestly one of the first times I've ever felt accepted by this community, ever felt accepted in Irvine – it just made me feel so hopeful," she explained to *Irvine Weekly*.

She said she graduated Irvine's Woodbridge High School in 2018, and said she wants to see change, not

only in the shape of law enforcement reform, but also in aspects of education.

"Very often, you're the only black kid in the room. I've never had a black teacher in my life, I've had black substitutes, twice – that's it," she said. "It's not just about police brutality, it's not just the instances in which we are losing our life, it's also the instances in which we are being disrespected, and which we are being treated differently from our peers that we need to stand up for everyday."

"I showed up for change, and I will keep showing up for change."

Irvine residents Alizah Gomez, 18 and Ida Nariman, 18 are two of the three college students responsible for creating the @OCForBlackLives Instagram page earlier this week.

In an interview with *Irvine Weekly* after the "sit-in," Gomez said they do not consider themselves an organization, but hope to unify the community through a grassroots movement. The main goal, according to Gomez, who attends the University of California, Irvine, was to give the black community in Irvine a place to feel empowered.

Nariman, an Irvine Valley College student, explained her parents thought attending the Los Angeles protests during a pandemic would have been too dangerous, considering the escalating tensions between protesters and law enforcement. That's when her and her friends decided to start @OCforBlacklives.

"We wanted to go to the L.A. protests, but our parents said 'no' because of coronavirus and it was getting really violent and we just knew it wasn't enough to sit back and not do anything," she said.

"Honestly, we didn't really expect this, we made the Instagram [page] yesterday. We organized this in the span of a day and it really shows how our community unifies to support such a big movement right now," Nariman explained. "We don't want this to be a trend. We want this to be a systematic change in our government."

Wednesday marked the fourth consecutive day protesters gathered peacefully in Irvine and elsewhere in Orange County. People came together to support the Black Lives Matter movement, protesting anti-police brutality and the death of George Floyd.

Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota while he was handcuffed, in police custody after a police officer placed a knee on Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes, ignoring his cries for help.

Derek Chauvin, the former Minnesota Police officer has since been arrested and charged. The other four officials have also been arrested.

As more protests spread across the country, Orange County had prepared for the worst. On Sunday, May 31, Orange County and Los Angeles County issued curfews for Huntington Beach and Costa Mesa. Mayor Garcetti also issued a curfew in Los Angeles as peaceful protests were overshadowed by looting and rioting.

Both South Coast Plaza and the Irvine Spectrum were shutdown earlier this month to prevent any looting and rioting.

During the protests, the city of Irvine did not issue a curfew.



PHOTO BY: BRANDON GRIGGS - UNSPLASH

IRVINE CITY COUNCIL APPROVES RENT RELIEF PROGRAM

PROGRAM DESIGNATES AT LEAST \$2 MILLION FOR STUDENTS AND RENTERS.

BY: EVAN J. LANCASTER

The Irvine City Council unanimously agreed on Tuesday, June 9 to approve a motion that will designate at least \$2 million to a rent relief program. The program will allocate the funds to students and renters in the city of Irvine impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The motion is a direct response to calls for assistance from University of California Irvine students and renters living within the city of Irvine.

The council voted to create two alternative rent relief assistance programs in the coming weeks. The two programs will target lease breaking and rent relief, with \$1 million allocated for each program.

The decision comes after the city received “numerous requests, especially from UCI students who,

because of COVID-19, are having financial difficulties with lease obligations and payments,” according to a memo from Irvine Mayor Christina Shea.

UC Irvine students held a drive-through protest by parking in front of Mayor Shea’s home on May 29.

The mayor posted a video of the incident on her Facebook page. The video has been viewed 75,000 times.

In the post, Shea called the protest, “one of the most disgraceful displays of free speech I have seen in our peaceful and harmonious community.”

The dual-tier system was suggested to the council by Councilmember Farrah N. Kahn, and would allow the council to see where the greatest needs are.

“If we have a two-tier system, the most immediate

action that we can take is to help those pay off their fees related to breaking the lease, so they can go back home. I think that’s an immediate issue we need to face,” she said.

After the vote, Mayor Shea said she was happy to see more assistance on the way for renters and students in Irvine.

“Hopefully our students and others are happy that we’ve moved forward with some plan – it’s not perfect, but it’s certainly something to offer to our residents,” she said. “If these COVID monies come in, and we get a much larger distributions over time – I hear that the federal government is looking to send cities more money – we can certainly add to these programs if need be.”



A NEW CULTURAL PARADIGM AT THE UC IRVINE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

AS TIMES CHANGE DURING CORONAVIRUS, SO DOES HOW WE PRESENT AND CONSUME ART.

BY: LIZ GOLDNER

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF UC IRVINE

"Performance is the golden thread of connection among living bodies," said Stephen Barker Ph.D., dean, UC Irvine Claire Trevor School of the Arts (CTSA), during a recent Zoom interview. "It captures the essence of the human experience." While his words might cause one to feel disheartened about our current dearth of live per-

formances, he is enthusiastic about the expansion of CTSA's work online, about the possibilities of art forms evolving virtually, and about the college's magnanimous exploration of exhibitions and performances.

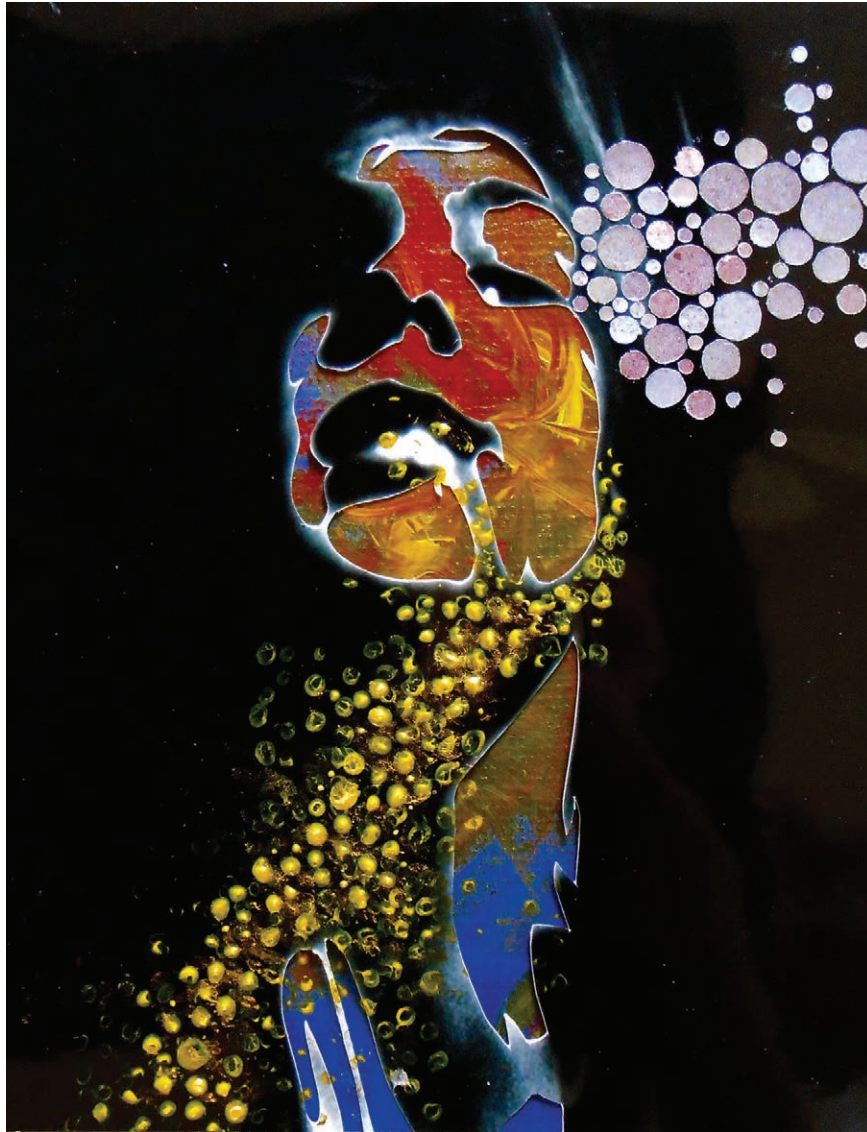
In our Zoom get-together, Barker discussed the virtual aspects of many genres of art, explaining that this notion has actually been around for millennia.

Looking at a Greek statue is to experience it virtually, as the performance inherent in the art piece occurred while the artist was sculpting it.

Barker added that many students at UCI, particularly those under 25 or 30, are comfortable with viewing art virtually. He explained, "Our species is adaptable. We're learning a whole new set of experiences about alternate real-

ities. There are incredible opportunities for flights of fancy with technology; for example, creating hybrid art forms, such as merging filmed performances with live ones," even as those performances are online.

This "new abnormal" for UCI began in mid-March when the University of California system announced that all classes, performances and exhibitions



will go online. "We were stunned at first," Barker said. "We had 10 days to get ready for this change. But everyone leaped into a new model of operation." While the entire UC system – including the art departments – soon went online, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts became proud of the range, depth and quantity of its virtual presentations.

With the help of the school's technology team, CTSA's art, dance, drama and music departments have segued toward virtual end-of-the-school-year exhibitions and performances. "All art departments are rising to the challenges, becoming innovative, thinking outside of the box," Barker said. In essence, the departments have reconstructed their styles of narratives, and in turn have dramatically expanded their opportunities – with the added benefit that the public can enjoy their free artful events.

Each of the Claire Trevor School of

the Arts departments has its own links to access Zoom events, other online events and presentations, and links to RSVP. CTSA's website provides an overview of the school's activities and mission, as well as links to the individual departments.

The **Dance Department** presented "Physical Graffiti Online" dance performances on May 21 and 22, via Zoom. Created by video-conferencing, the live online performances included dance, video, animation, collage, poems and sketched images. The artistic directors were Lisa Naugle and Lindsay Gilmour. These Department of Dance performances might be available in the future online. Check out the CTSA website for more information.

The **Visual Art Department's** "Undergraduate Honors Thesis Exhibition" presented a series of live "Artist on Artist" Interviews, each conducted between undergraduate students, on May 29,

June 5 and June 12. These will be available to the public at [instagram.com/uag_ucirvine/](https://www.instagram.com/uag_ucirvine/). More information about the students and their work is on the arts school's web page [atuag.arts.uci.edu/exhibit/undergraduate-honors-thesis-exhibition](https://www.atuag.arts.uci.edu/exhibit/undergraduate-honors-thesis-exhibition).

The department also presented a screening of the film **Light in the Mist** May 27 to May 29. This insight into a farm in Nepal explores how women and children struggle and deal with trauma and heal through the support of their community. For more information on University Art Gallery exhibitions, check out [uag.arts.uci.edu/](https://www.uag.arts.uci.edu/) and [instagram.com/uag_ucirvine/](https://www.instagram.com/uag_ucirvine/).

The **Drama Department's** "Improv Royale," led by UCI drama professor Joel Veenstra and performed by the Drama 135 class, was on view May 26 via Zoom. The 60-minute play was described as, "an improv battle between A Series of Unfortunate Zooms vs. ZOOMBOMA-

FOO."

The **Music Department** held a "UCI Opera Salon" on May 31. The real-time afternoon event featured arias and a selection of songs, followed by a discussion with composer Lori Laitman and with vocal arts students. [arts.uci.edu/event/uci-welcomes-lori-laitman](https://www.arts.uci.edu/event/uci-welcomes-lori-laitman).

The new online cultural paradigm at UC Irvine, at other UC schools, and at universities nationwide and worldwide, does not supplant the direct sensory encounter with visual and performance art. Yet the Claire Trevor School of the Arts faculty, students and support personnel are taking a difficult and unexpected situation, and creating from it new models of artistic expression. After this pandemic comes to a close, some of these models – such as combining live with filmed performances – will likely become part of the artist's toolbox.



TATTOO ARTIST DMITRY TROSHIN

VISUAL TALES FROM IRVINE'S "TATTOO STORYTELLER"

DMITRY TROSHIN TAPS INTO HIS CLIENTS' MINDS TO PEN UNIQUE STORIES.

BY: EVAN J. LANCASTER

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF DMITRY TROSHIN

Even as a teen living in Moscow, it seemed Dmitry Troshin – or as his 154,000 Instagram followers know him, @MisterTroshin – was destined to be recognized for his incredible artistic vision.

Now, living in Irvine – more than 6,000 miles away from Russia – Troshin works as a tattoo artist at the Lake Forest-based Vatican Studios tattoo shop. As an artist, Troshin has labeled himself a tattoo storyteller, constantly tapping into the mind's eye of his client to garner clearer, more realistic concepts for the pieces he etches permanently into skin.

However, he is currently working to tell stories in different ways, now that he is currently among other tattooers on hold in California's well-respected tattoo industry, all of whom are waiting to see how COVID-19 will change the culture of the art form they have

designed by hand.

For the past few months, Troshin has spent his time watching Star Wars with his wife and dog, sketching, and riding his bike. Irvine Weekly had a chance to interview Troshin about growing up in Russia, his tattoo inspiration and how he ended up all the way in Irvine.

IRVINE WEEKLY: You're originally from Russia. Can you give us a little bit of background on yourself and what living in Russia was like as a child? Did you ever think you'd be where you are now?

DMITRY TROSHIN: Yes. I was born and raised in Moscow, Russia. I have always been an antisocial, introverted kid, who loved being alone and drawing. Living in Russia was never too bad for me, but at the same time there was nothing really that motivated me to do something big. I never had an idea of what

I wanted to become when I grew up, and I never thought that getting paid for doing art would be an option for me. Although moving so far away from home was always a dream for me – it did not look realistic either, given my circumstances then. It is still hard to believe where I am now and what I'm able to do for a living.

It looks like art is a really big influence on your everyday life. Has it always been that way? Does your family have a history of artists?

As far as I know, there are no artists in my family, but since I was born I've always been interested in different types of art. When I was 13, I started learning photography and at age of 14 I was even lucky enough to have some of my photographs exhibited in the Museum of Modern Art in Moscow. By 21, I managed to work in several different types of art related

jobs – from a helper at a movie set and videographer at TV school to managing a photo lab, organizing exhibitions and doing graphic design for a few companies. Most of my jobs were either art-related or in sales, which also helped a lot. When I graduated as an interior designer, I still was not sure what to do next.

Can you recall your first memory of a tattoo? What attracted you to the art form?

I never liked tattoos (or thought of them as art) until 2011 when I came across some photos of beautiful black-and-gray style tattoos made by artists here in California. Religious and Chicano inspirations impressed me so much that I started thinking of tattooing as a new hobby or even a job, eventually. It seemed like a natural evolution of what I was already doing. I began to draw even more and start preparing sketches of references like what I saw online. It also pushed me to study classic art for stylistic influence, and to learn more about sculpture and fine art.

How long have you been tattooing?

I started tattooing in 2012, after a

year of research and absorbing all the information I could find online. I even started a little business just to get closer to the tattoo industry – I was selling Sullen Clothing brand (also a California-based company) T-shirts – I had a setup in a corner in a tattoo shop so I could hang out there and ask questions about tattooing without looking too weird. When the time to start tattooing has come, I traded all the products I had in my store for a set of tattoo equipment and started practicing on my friends and their friends.

Can you break down the idea of what you consider a "tattoo storyteller"?

After a few years of doing all kinds of black-and-gray tattoos, I got bored of the similar ideas I was seeing, using the same references as others. I found that what makes my brain work and pushes me to be more creative is more challenging – the concept of making compositions of different objects important to my clients and having them flowing together into a story that you can read just by looking at the finished project. I began asking my clients about their memories, travels, dreams and other objects they really enjoyed in life to create unique compositions for them individually, instead of reproducing tattoos they saw on somebody else. That is what tattoo storytelling means to me.

What do you consider your current tattoo style? If you can, maybe explain how your style has progressed or changed over the years?

I would say that it is still realistic black-and-gray, but as I've progressed in my career I've become more well known for using one type of needle for everything – the 3RL, which stands for 3 Round Liner. In the last several decades, most tattoo artists used and combined many different kinds of needles in their tattoos – I wanted to simplify my tattooing process and make it closer to pencil drawing as I have done all my life. The 3RL needle is a small needle – think of it like a #2 pencil, in a collection of writing instruments ranging from this to a big marker. I found that using only that needle size is as close as possible to using a pencil as a tattoo needle can be and allows for a pepper-shading texture on the skin that I really prefer. I started to cultivate that style in my own work and since 2015 I've even been doing seminars and workshops to teach other artists these techniques.

Is there a tattoo culture in Russia,

and how does it differ from the American, West Coast culture of tattooing?

There are many great tattoo artists in Russia, as well as artists of other mediums. The current economic and political situation, however, has caused many of them to move to other countries. Most of the tattooers I know have either moved already or are thinking about moving. Based on my experience, there's more trust from client to artist to create something new and innovative here in the U.S. than in Russia. That is slowly changing in Russia – I look forward to when people become more open-minded there too.

What brings you to Irvine?

My wife and I fell in love with this area once we saw it in person – it's so quiet, nice and clean. Our lifestyle here is completely the opposite from what we had before – living in a huge, busy city like Moscow – and we're enjoying the change. It is amazing to have the opportunity to be close to a large metropolitan area like L.A. and at the same time be surrounded by parks, beaches and mountains. I also happen to work in the legendary Vatican Studios, which is located just a few minutes away in Lake Forest.

How does one get sponsored by Bishop Rotary? Can you give me a little background on how you came to have a working relationship with such a legendary company?

Bishop Rotary has always been synonymous to West Coast black-and-gray tattoo culture for me. Nearly all the artists I looked up to before I began tattooing were a part of the Bishop Family, and once I got a chance to know the people behind this company I knew where I wanted to be. Eventually, I had an opportunity to join the family myself and move here. I had no hesitation in doing so. For other artists looking for sponsorships, my main question is this: "Why do you want that? What is your goal?"

Tattoo equipment is far more accessible these days – any tattooer can afford buying new equipment with enough time and effort, so being sponsored is more of a deeper relationship. If you love the brand you are wanting to be sponsored by, and willing to support it in any way – that's a good enough reason for me. Do your job better than others, be unique in your art, and show your passion for the brand, to the brand, and most likely you'll get where you want to be.

Can you give our readers an overview of what exactly the book All of Me Is Illustrated is and what it was like working on such an incredibly artistic project?

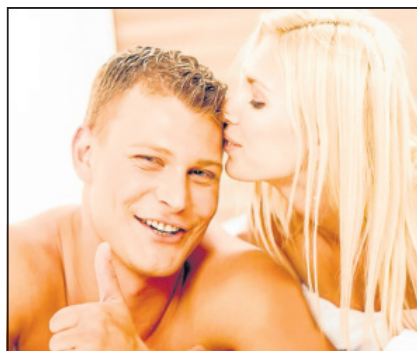
All of Me Is Illustrated is a book created in collaboration between Lawrence Schiller (a famous photographer, filmmaker and author) and the legendary *Inked* magazine. It combines Ray Bradbury's stories with photographs of some amazing tattoo artists and their art. I was fortunate to be invited to join this project and it's been a huge honor to be published alongside such legendary artists. This book has been an important part of tattoo culture history – showing people that tattooing is a real form of art. It was also the first time I had to sign over 300 copies of limited-edition books.

So, this lockdown has been pretty surreal for most people. How are you coping with lockdown life in Southern California?

Despite all the bad things happening because of the virus, it's been a great obligated chance for me to finally take some time away from tattooing, as I've been doing it without a break for years. I finally got some time to work on other projects and ideas I've had in mind – one of them is my new YouTube show "Boring Tattooer," where I share everything I've learned about tattooing and tattoo culture. My hope is that it will help a lot of artists to learn something new and make the whole industry more safe and transparent.

It looks like COVID-19 will change life for a lot of people. As tattooers get ready to return to work in Stage 3 of the California's Reopening Plan, how will the tattoo industry be affected?

There will be some interesting effects from COVID-19 on the tattoo industry. I think that when we do open, we may experience a sort of recession. Many people are having financial problems now and getting a new tattoo is definitely not a necessity. At the same time, I have noticed that some of my fellow tattooers had a chance to start doing other things as well – they seem happy to spend less time tattooing and have more time for their new projects that may have been put aside for a while. I hope that this pandemic will make people more cautious and aware when it comes to personal hygiene, which would help the industry to become safer as well.



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WHY ALL LIVES CANNOT MATTER UNTIL BLACK LIVES ARE TREATED EQUALLY

TRINIDAD JAMES\$ EXPLAINS WHY DURING PODCAST WITH IRVINE WEEKLY PUBLISHER.



BY: TARA FINLEY

nating, beyond signing petitions and standing in physical and virtual solidarity, what can those of other races do to actually implement a lasting and effectual change?

"It almost feels like we will never be able to shake it, but we have to," implores Trinidad James\$. "We have to fight to shake it. It starts with you – each one teach one – you have to set the tone. We have to set the tone. We have to control our narrative."

This movement of change and justice isn't about politics, it's about breaking through partisan gridlock and noise to do what is morally right.

"The first thing I would tell a white person like yourself, or any white person that may be listening to this particular podcast, or reading about it," begins Trinidad James\$, "...you have to take the time to **actually** understand the black culture. Not just the glitz and the glam, and the lifestyle of the flashy things in life, but the actual reason behind the struggle and the other side of the lifestyle that everyone wants to portray."

"That lifestyle is just a fantasy world of the black culture, that's just the sauce that comes with being black automatically," he continues.

"People want the good part of your life but they don't want to go through your pain, they want your pleasure. So I think it is time for white people to actually take the time to actually understand what true black culture is about, why the struggle has happened, and what does it take to actually have a voice that matters."

To those that do not understand how our social climate reached the tipping point we are currently experiencing, this week's guest has this to say:

"Understand that when someone says

black lives matter, that doesn't mean for you to defend it with all lives matter, because obviously all lives have to matter in the long run, but all lives cannot matter until black lives are treated equally."

For those that didn't understand the first time, read it again.

"That's the whole thing about it. That's the biggest issue with all cultures right now, is that the black voice and black people are not equally respected by other races," he explains. "White people need to take the time to actually understand the black culture"

There is no way to spin the fact that white people and black people get treated very differently in the U.S. The former experiencing privileges they are often ignorant to, while the latter is killed for lack of the same.

"These are the real issues that black people have to go through," says Trinidad James\$ as they discuss the defense strategies non-white citizens must have prepared at all times. "The issue with the police, that's one thing. That's a police vs. black people thing. But there's other things outside of the police that deal with civilians ... it's a mutual respect that's just not there."

Non-law enforcement, or civilians, have prejudices that hurt the black community on a daily basis.

"When you're playing from behind, everybody has a different method for how they want to catch up. Some people do it the right way, some people do it the wrong way, and a lot of times we have a lot of 'wrong ways' to define, we allow that one bad apple to define all the apples in the basket," analogizes Trinidad James\$.

Sweeping definitions do nothing to help our communities move forward.

"If you put the other shoe around it: if one family member is racist that doesn't mean the whole family is racist," he continues. "And you would like to get the benefit of the doubt. You would like to get that mutual respect to not be treated as a racist just because your father's a racist. It's the same thing in the black culture. Just because this particular kid robbed your store, that doesn't mean that every black kid is going to rob your store."

On May 20, 2020, Trinidad James\$ released his single **Black Owned** and its accompanying video, as a response to the lack of black economic representation.

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a

black man, was killed by a white police officer while being detained in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

While the song was originally meant to be an anthem to celebrate black ownership, it has become so much more.

"My mindset has already been in a place of being able to steer them – anybody that's paying attention to my voice, my music, my art – in a direction of understanding the power and economics of black economics and black ownership. Because economics is the foundation to anything that can get your voice actually truly heard and respected," explains the artist.

"The reason why we go through so many injustices when it comes to the police force is because the black voice is not being respected, because we don't have our economics together and we have no representation, nothing to fall back on if we're not being equally respected by the police, by other races, because we need to build a stronger economic bind. And so black owned the single and the video, I wanted to put something into the world to start the conversation."

"Me dropping that single definitely doesn't automatically change the world, obviously, but the conversation and having music for people in the community that have black owned business already, whether it's restaurants or grocery stores, and black owned products, I wanted to make an anthem for them," he says. "I feel like nobody celebrates them enough."

While the song was written a year ago, its subject matter is still as much of an issue today.

"The idea of black ownership and more black economics, and the struggle of our foundation of black economics, that's been a problem," says Trinidad James\$.

When it comes to solving that problem, society will have to do more than just show up. We will need to actually do the work to listen, learn and change.

"If you're not behind something because you actually really care, you're just going through the motions," explains Trinidad James\$.

So what can we do to be allies? What can we do to not be a part of the problem? Listen to the **L.A. Weekly** podcast by visiting www.laweekly.com/category/podcast to hear more about what celebrated artist Trinidad James\$ has to say about implementing effectual change.

America has a problem. Power, and the unequal distribution of its force.

The fundamental disparity of racial power has been at the root of decades of civil unrest, not to mention its ties to systemic injustice throughout the history of man. It is this issue, and our failure to truly recognize and solve it, that Trinidad James\$ believes galvanized the revolution that we are seeing today.

"It's a power issue, it's definitely a power issue," Trinidad James\$ explains to **Irvine Weekly** publisher and podcast host Brian Calle. "For black America to gain that respect, white America has to understand the issue in power, and how tied they are to power. Because that's what it comes down to at the end of the day. Nobody wants to relinquish their power in order to share with a different race."

Power is trickled down by class in this country, along with much of the world. The higher your socioeconomic class, the more power you have.

"Classism is the biggest curse in America," laments Trinidad James\$. "Classism is the biggest curse in the world. If you get rid of classism, then it's very hard for racism to be so strong and dominant. Classism starts in school."

Beyond the protests, beyond do-

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KING IN THE WILDERNESS · PHOTO COURTESY HBO

STREAMING MOVIE PICKS

WATCH SELMA, JUST MERCY AND KING IN THE WILDERNESS FOR FREE.

BY: LINA LECARO

With protests in support of #BlackLivesMatter still being held across the country in the wake of George Floyd's killing by a white Minnesota police officer, there has also been a movement toward education and learning about America's history of civil rights struggle. The movie industry seems to be stepping up this month, offering important films and documentaries about social injustice and racism, many available to stream for free. Here are the must-sees.

Just Mercy | iTunes, Amazon Prime and all VOD platforms

Michael B. Jordan plays real-life defense attorney Bryan Stevenson, who traveled to Alabama after graduating from Harvard to help those who couldn't afford legal representation, and found purpose in Walter McMillian (Jamie Foxx), a death row prisoner and wrongfully accused victim of systematic racism. The filmmakers are offering the film for free throughout

June and hope their movie can be a resource for those "interested in learning more about the systemic racism that plagues our society." They also encourage viewers to learn more about Stevenson and his work at the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI.org).

Selma | Amazon Prime and VOD

Chronicling Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s march from Selma to Montgomery to secure equal voting rights, Ava DuVernay's acclaimed **Selma** has been made available for free rental on digital platforms through the end of the month. "We hope this small gesture will encourage people throughout the country to examine our nation's history and reflect on the ways that racial injustice has infected our society," stated Paramount via press release. "The key message of **Selma** is the importance of equality, dignity and justice for all people. Clearly, that message is as vital today as it was in 1965."

Criterion Collection

To highlight the ongoing civil rights struggle, the

Criterion Collection film company announced the lifting of the paywall on several films made by black filmmakers, including **Body and Soul** by Oscar Micheaux, **Black Panthers** by Agnes Varda, **Daughters of the Dust** by Julie Dash, and **Down in the Delta** by Maya Angelou.

HBO

As announced on Instagram this week, HBO has curated a collection of free programming focused on civil rights and racism. "In solidarity with our black colleagues, creators, and fans, HBO proudly supports the Equal Justice Initiative and NAACP Legal Defense Fund as we strive to make a lasting impact," the network stated when it announced films it made available on its streaming platforms and for free on its YouTube Channel, including **King in the Wilderness**, a documentary by Emmy-winning director Peter Kunhardt examining the conflicted period of Martin Luther King Jr.'s life in his last years.



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“If not for Keith’s compassion and superior defense strategy, we might have lost all of our hard-earned retirement savings to a very opportunistic claimant. The stress prior to retaining Keith was nearly unbearable.”

- Jim and Carol Hoffman