

Tattoo art fest begins at Hornbill



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Tattoo art and culture enthusiast, Mo Naga and Headhunters' Ink, have taken their mission – revival of Naga tattoo art at the ongoing Hornbill Festival- to an international platform this time. Tattooing traditional and contemporary Naga symbols on people from across the globe, Mo informed that he is excited with the response he is getting at the bamboo pavilion, stall number – 85 at the Hornbill Festival.

“The Naga tattoos are renowned for their sacred meanings and powerful symbolism. The values and beliefs of the Headhunting tribes are not only deep and strong, but also very much relevant and applicable in our modern lifestyle as well. But sadly only the last few of those tattoos and the tribal art remain today and soon they will be extinct from the world forever”, feels Mo. Headhunters’ Ink is giving history a script through their art and design which till now was only restricted to the oral medium. The art and designs used in the festival are the contemporized forms of the traditional tattoos revived after months of intense research done by Mo in the north-eastern region.

• After getting his Naga tattoo, Sam Davis from Ireland commented, “Thank you so much for the beautiful Naga tattoo. This will travel across the world with me along with the stories behind the design and will spread the Naga culture worldwide. Long live the Nagas!” Anne Torgod of Norway was also enthralled with the amazing tattoo design on her and commented, “Very good work, beautiful lines and great stories within them. Thank you for the amazing tattoos and making the amazing art. Keep it up and alive like this, from one artist to another.”

As a Naga youth growing up in Manipur, Mo noticed that though the tribes of north east have a very unique form of body art, yet the stories behind this form of art has never been published or projected to the outer world. The few stories that have been circulated about the Nagas and the Apatanis, have portrayed a twisted or misinterpreted version of the truth. Hence, after gaining substantial popularity and success in Delhi as a tattoo artist Mo decided to return to his roots and delve into the depth of all the information on tribal art and tattoos through an extended research trip in the easternmost corner of the country. Today, Mo Naga is a man on a mission- a mission to dig out the old and blend in the new. Mo has found out the significance of various tattoos sported by the tribal communities, many of which have never even been recorded. He is recreating these motifs in a more contemporary style so that they can be sported by the present generation to proudly represent their rich cultural heritage.

Speaking on his goal oriented mission, Mo said, *“I envision a day when a Naga tattoo will, once again, be seen as an internationally recognized benchmark of achievements and Naga beauty. I believe, the day is not far when people from all around the globe will be flying in to the easternmost corner of India to mark their various achievements with a Naga tattoo symbolizing his triumph in life.”*

Participating in the festival and getting support from the directorates, Mo feels thrilled and enthusiastic towards his mission of reviving the tattoo art in India which, otherwise, will very soon only remain stories for the coming generation. “After years of studying Naga art and Culture, the Headhunter’s Ink finally began its programme for the revival of Naga tattoo art and scripting Naga history through art and design. And what best place can one ask to fuel this initiative other than The Hornbill! It is a dream-come-true for our team. The overwhelming response we are getting from people from all sections and parts of the world is amazing”, said Mo.

“We would like to give our sincere thanks to the Directorate of Industries and Commerce and Directorate of Art and Culture for their wonderful support and showing trust upon us and our mission and providing excellent facilities to us along with the prime location of our stall”, Mo added.

Vikash Singh

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