MAKE YOUR OWN MARK
SKIN DEEP

A career in tattoo may sound different. But creativity, knowledge and art can provide you with the ticket you are looking for. Don't wait any longer; make your own mark.

Do you know what's common between Saif Ali Khan, Angelina Jolie and David Beckham? They all have indulged in dermal pigmentation, widely known as tattoo. Today, tattoos are no longer mere designs but an expression that defines the urban Indian's style statement. A by-product of the popular youth culture, tattoo defines the perfect combination of art and attitude. So, if you are a lover of art and have the confidence to make it visible on others, tattoo making is the right profession for you.

Tattoo making is an art form that involves expression and demands concentration. Knowledge of art is extremely important. Creative use of lines, shades and tones will make your work unique. A degree in Fine Arts will definitely prove as an added advantage. If you wish to pursue a career in this field, creative visualisation is essential.

According to tattoo counsellor Olly Alva from ALV Studio, Bandra, "A tattoo artist needs to have in-depth knowledge of skin pigmentation levels." Learning the operation of a tattoo machine comes next. Training and apprenticeship under an experienced artist is a must for every beginner.

With 28 years of experience as a tattoo artist, Vishwas who has been working at Hakim Aliin's parlour believes that learning this art requires complete dedication. "Youngsters today are buying the machine and trying them on their friends thinking they are a tattoo artist," says Vishwas. "Knowledge of Photoshop and Corel Draw will also prove helpful." When you are leaving a permanent mark, people have to trust you. Something they would carry with themselves, for the rest of their lives. An artist has to be familiar with the human psyche and make others trust him. Olly trains students only after he tests their art and their ability to apply it. Accordingly, he puts them under 3-6 months of training. "It is not the machine but hand that works; my students have to be dedicated," says Vishwas. Every tattoo artist requires at least 2-3 years of practice to establish himself. Working on human skin requires you to be extremely careful. "I started my career by working on the layers of onions before trying on human skin," says Vishwas. However, today artificial human skin is available for practicing. "Starting your own business initially involves a cost of a lakh of rupees and most of the materials that are used, is imported," adds Vishwas.

"The music video culture has created a demand for tattoos," believes Abhishek Giri, a student. Over the last few years popularity of tattoos has risen creating a demand for tattoo artists. Olly has been practicing therapeutic tattoo for quite sometime now. It is a kind of tattoo done on people suffering from skin problems like Vitiligo and Leukoderma. The tattoo culture is here to stay as a personal expression "As long as man needs a medium for expressing his feelings, the tattoo culture will survive," believes Olly. Here's a profession that will give you complete freedom to give your creativity and fantasies an expression. So if art fascinates you and confidence is your belief get ready to make your mark skin deep.

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LIVEN IT UP!

We loved the little Stuart, an albino mouse who is irresistibly adorable with his wit and antics. We were spellbound by the visual effects incredibly done for "The Incredibles", we all savour 'The Ice Age'. Then very recently we fell in love again with 'Ratatouille', and our very own desi idol Hamanun. And if two-dimensional Hanuman was a sensation among school-goers, kids were all the more eager to watch three dimensional Krishna and Pandavas.

If recent reports are to be believed even Bollywood superstar SRK is going to make animated movies for kids. This is the world of animation where virtual reality defies the laws of the real world, beckoning the youth with their out-of-the-box creativity and unorthodox ideas. People are keen to see some stunning visually pleasing animation which can outclass their western counterparts. The pace at which people are joining the bandwagon of animation industry and considering India's immense talent pool - this seems to be the profession where India is likely to strike gold in the near future.

Overseas entertainment biggies like IMAX, Walt Disney, and Sony are already outsourcing cartoon characters, models for video games and special effects to India. According to reports, animation is going to be an industry worth US $ 2 billion and it is estimated that by the end of 2008, nearly 0.3 million people would be working for this flourishing industry in India itself.

Vipul Valvi-CIO of Motion Makers informs, "With movies like Krishna, it is evident that India is still in an embryonic stage in this arena. As compared to Hollywood our visual communication and design looks very juvenile, there is a lot of work available to source which can eventually help you get those green bucks. But there is a dearth of people who are willing to make exceptional animated movies. However, India is slowly but steadily moving forward and catching up with the race."

So what does it take to make it big in animation? "First and foremost you should have an inborn itch to draw. A fine art degree does come in handy as well, but a basic course in visual communication and design is a must. Sometimes, we have students who start learning animation right out of school. These students start out as trainees, which is the first rung of the ladder," replies Vipul.

It is not only movies which require animation but entertainment avenues like computer games which demand over-the-top graphics is financially very rewarding to budding animators. One can start as a trainee in various animation studios like Crest Animation, Rhythm and Hues, UVV, Prime focus, Anirjits etc. "A fresher gets paid anywhere between Rs. 7,000 to 15,000 and within two to three years, one can move up the ladder to earn a salary of about 30,000, depending on their creative ingenuity," says Vipul.

As is true with many other professions, even animation offers different routes. "One can be a graphic designer, content writer or may have inclination towards texture designing. Animation offers many avenues to hone up your artistic talent and excel in the world of creativity," concludes Vipul.

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