

ROBISCHON



My tattoo started with the leopard paw prints after being fired from my job. I had given 7 years of my life to and one day they just fired me. I got walked all over. I felt sick because I put so much passion into that job. I had to mark it somehow. The leopard prints also represent the strength it takes to be a woman. I definitely have cat-like characteristics, like being independent. Leopards have their own strength. They don't walk with a crew; they walk on their own. A leopard never changes its spots and I am who I am. ...I see tattoo as a form of self-expression as opposed to defiance. It is more representative of giving a little bit of myself to other people because they can view it from the outside. I will never give of myself internally. If they see the tattoo they will know what I represent. The story of the tattoo shows the strength that I have externally as well as internally. ...I came up with the idea of having Lake on my back because Lake is my last name. I figured the only way I was going to have such a tattoo that other people appreciated and respected is if it had a meaning as far as my father passing away.... This is how I will always have my father's name for the rest of my life. I will. I would love to pass that on to other people. I got the first outline done of Lake on the anniversary of my dad's death. We worked on the second set of paws on my dad's birthday, and it kind of flowed like that. It was kind of saying, "Look I'm doing this for you," showing respect for him because he didn't die in a respectful way, he killed himself. I wanted to show that he really was a strong person and his strength is carried through me, which is kind of why it was like going to go home... A huge reason why I got the tattoo in the first place was I grew up with tattoo artists and graffiti artists as friends. I knew that Jet could do it because he's also a graffiti writer. The tattoo is also shows who I've been, and when I really found myself as a teenager by using graffiti letters. I respect graffiti and the five elements of hip-hop. It's part of me. That's why when you see Lake written in there it's not easy. Many people can't read what's on a dumpster but I can because it's our language. I wanted my last name with the city as the A and the K and the L and the E to be trees to represent a concrete jungle. Living in a society where you're in a war zone with yourselves and with the kingdom, but there's still that peace. You have to find that balance and with that balance I wanted to represent elements. That's why there's water (a stream), a fire in the sky, and metal. All those different elements that we all carry as a soulful person and as a spirit. It's not my soul, it's I soul, because you're not carrying your soul; it's all around you. You are it.... I think about after the third time I had gone in there I realized that I've got to do something for my mom. So that's why it says 'MOM' as a burner in graffiti, going up on a billboard. ...Then there's a clock tower with the time is set to my dad's birthday. I didn't want to reflect on the day he died. I wanted to represent his life, his living. So that's why we set it to 7:15... If you look there are two leopards. Everyone's different. Every leopard is different and has different spots covering them. There are many different ways you can misinterpret leopard's prints....

ERIC SCHWARTZ, ANDREA
digital photograph
ESCH012