

DAY OF THE DEAD

ZOMBIE BOY, MUSE TO THIERRY MUGLER AND LADY GAGA, MARRIES EXTREME INK AND HIGH FASHION.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL DWORNIK STYLED BY YOUNG-AH KIM



Wacko
Maria jacket;
Plectrum by
Ben Sherman
pants.



John Lawrence
Sullivan jacket;
Hanes tank top.

Tattooing oneself from head to toe to look like a rotting corpse is not the traditional route to stardom, but it has somehow worked out for Rick Genest, a.k.a. Zombie Boy.

"My first tattoo was an outline of a skull and crossbones right here on my shoulder when I was 16," Genest says, pulling up the sleeve of his black T-shirt. A decade later, he held two titles in the Guinness Book of World Records, one for the most insect tattoos at 176, and one for the most human bone tattoos at 139. Both numbers were quickly out of date. But why so much work—is he hiding something with his ink? "Before the tattoos I had some cuts and cigarette burns and stuff like that. I never wanted to get a full-body cigarette burn. It's just stuff that you do when you're a kid."

Most of Genest's work was done by Frank Lewis, of Derm FX in Montreal, but he's still adding to his armor. "I'm still not done. Right now, my buddy Ricky who lives next door to me is rocking my knee out," Genest says, pulling up his pant leg to reveal a relatively un tattooed lower leg. "Just got a little more a couple weeks ago. He's got a fresh style and I'm going to keep going with him and fill it all in."

When Nicola Formichetti, Lady Gaga's former stylist and the current designer of Thierry Mugler, was looking for the perfect way to add an edge to the campaign for Mugler's menswear line, he set his sights on Genest. A load of fines had kept Genest from obtaining a passport, so Formichetti flew to Montreal and settled up the tab just to get his new muse to Paris. Genest quickly

went from obscure freak show performer to having Lady Gaga dance around him in matching zombie makeup in the music video for "Born This Way." He now travels the world for Thierry Mugler and other work, such as a cameo in Keanu Reeves's upcoming film *47 Ronin*.

But Zombie Boy has no intention of straying from his roots. Generally soft-spoken with a surprising ambivalence to his new gig, Genest becomes animated only when talk turns to the topic of freak shows. "My friends and I have a troupe called Lucifer's Blasphemous Mad Macabre Torture Carnage Carnival, featuring sadistic freaks, sickening sights, and horrible abominations—which is badass. It's a murder show. It's like, 'Welcome to a night in hell,'" he says with a smile. —Suzanne Weinstock



Craig
Robinson
holster and
pants.



John
Varvatos
pants;
Ellen Jong
necklace.



Marc
Jacobs
shirt;
Duncan
Quinn tie.



Craig
Robinson vest
and pants;
Ben Sherman
shoes.



Ben Sherman shirt;
Plectrum by Ben
Sherman pants;
Duncan Quinn hat;
Hanes tank top; Ben
Sherman shoes.

Duncan Quinn
smoking jacket
and glasses; Ben
Sherman shirt;
John Lawrence
Sullivan pants.



Craig Robinson
coat; Calvin Klein
underwear; John
Varvatos shoes.

Grooming:
Erin Green for
eringreenmakeup.com
Stylist assistants:
Edward Agir
and Liana Vasserot