



Edge of the Razor

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Guy Bérubé had a vision steeped in oil, ink and charcoal. He saw homeless creations of life and created Galerie La Petite Mort (The Little Death) to rectify that situation. In his own words, the description of why he named the gallery "The Little Death" are as follows: "The little death," that gorgeous moment that juxtaposes suspense, tension and relief just after the release of a really good orgasm".

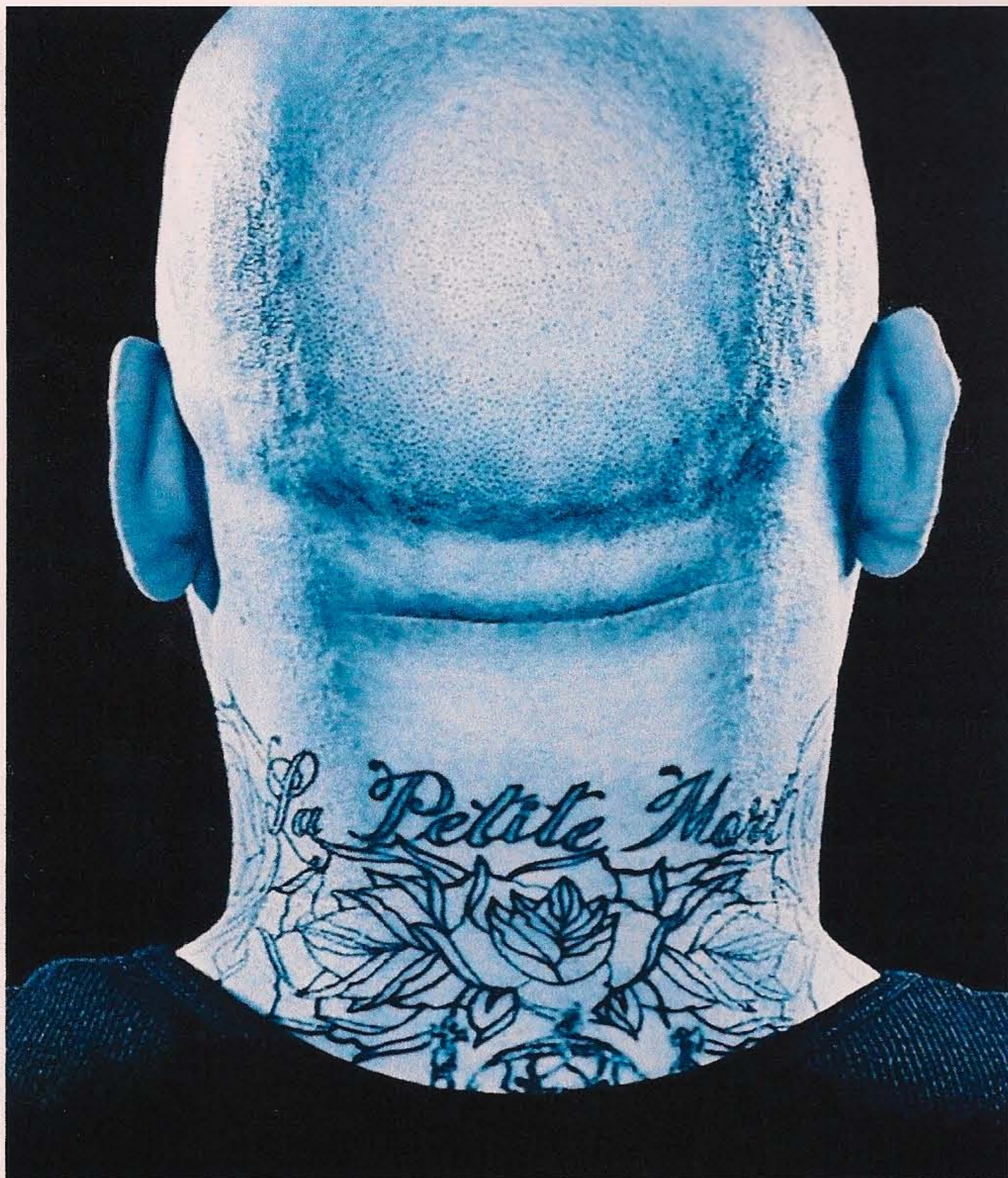


Photo: Courtesy Remi Theriault

These aren't works of art that will match the sofa.

In fact, the artworks displayed in this gallery are eclectic and, in a word, stark. They speak of the human condition, whether it be of sex, pain, or even of simple thought in a complex situation. One thing is for sure; the works chosen to adorn this gallery's walls

are provocative. I had the opportunity to speak to Guy, who was very generous in affording me some time despite his busy schedule. He's an engaging individual with a great deal of moxie. He shared some thoughts with me on La Petite Mort:

Can you tell me what made you decide to go into this mode of gallery?

Guy: You mean the crazy-ass artwork I feature here? I represent, sell, and love this kind of work, so there is no other direction for me. If I tried anything else, I would be kidding myself and others. I am destined and doomed to show work that will irritate, confuse, excite and create chaos.

What are some of the challenges you've faced in putting such vivid art into a town known for its conservative ideals?

Guy: It gets me more press than I want at times. I know, this sounds surreal, but I always wanted a bit of anonymity to my space. I do not advertise and prefer word of mouth. I want people to have to look for me. That is also why I am not on the "main strip" (Dalhousie or Sussex). My favorite clubs in New York, when I lived there, were ones that even the cab driver wasn't sure where they were. We'd get dropped off 'somewhere' in the Meat Packing District, hoping not to get gang banged on our way there.



Photo: Courtesy Tony Fohse

What do you look for when deciding what artists to feature in your gallery?

Guy: Lack of schooling, cuteness factor, confidence, individuality, sense of humor, big balls; courage, that is.

It's clear your gallery has an international presence. How is it perceived on the global stage?

Guy: I was just recently in New York for a week, to get my name out there. I quickly realized that most people I met there already knew the gallery. That left me speechless. I also get emails from fresh, young galleries opening up all over internationally, and they ask me for advice. That is very, very surreal.

Who's the most interesting artist you've featured and what gave them that extra edge?

Guy: I should say I have no favorites, but we all do. However, I know I can say that, after having over 300 artists in almost five years come through my doors for one art event or another, I can proudly say I have slept with none. I challenge anyone who says the contrary.

What do you foresee happening to Le Petite Mort down the road in terms of growth and services?

Guy: I am taking my artists out of Ottawa and showing their work internationally by curating an exhibit entitled The Infidels; which is now booked in Berlin (Germany), Poznan (Poland) and Barcelona (Spain). I'm working on Paris, London, New York, and even more. No more f***** around in this sleepy town. This is a great home base for me, but it's my job to get my s*** out there.

The one thing that sets Guy's ambitious endeavor apart from the plethora of galleries in Ottawa is his vision. He's there to work with the artist and screens potential gallery members based not just upon their work, but their work ethic. He'll take chances on