



# Calgary’s premier piercing studio

**Photos and story by  
Ashley Materi**

After 18 years in the industry, Keith Kennedy has seen it all. Owner and top piercer at Tribal Expression, Kennedy has watched trends come and go, noticed a night and day difference in the demographics of his clientele, and had his number of clients triple.

“We’re the only exclusive studio that does just body piercings. That’s what we pride ourselves on,” says Kennedy proudly. Tribal Expression was built from the ground up by Kennedy and his team, and though it presented its difficulties, Keith enjoyed the challenge. “When we came into the blueprint stage, it was literally on a napkin.” After working nine years at another studio, he knew exactly what he wanted his own shop to look like.

Kennedy made a name for himself in the Calgary piercing industry, and his client-base followed him on his new venture. Upon opening, Tribal Expression started with at least eight clients a day, but in the past year and a half, that number has shot up to nearly forty a day. “We now have four full-time piercers on staff, and there are always two

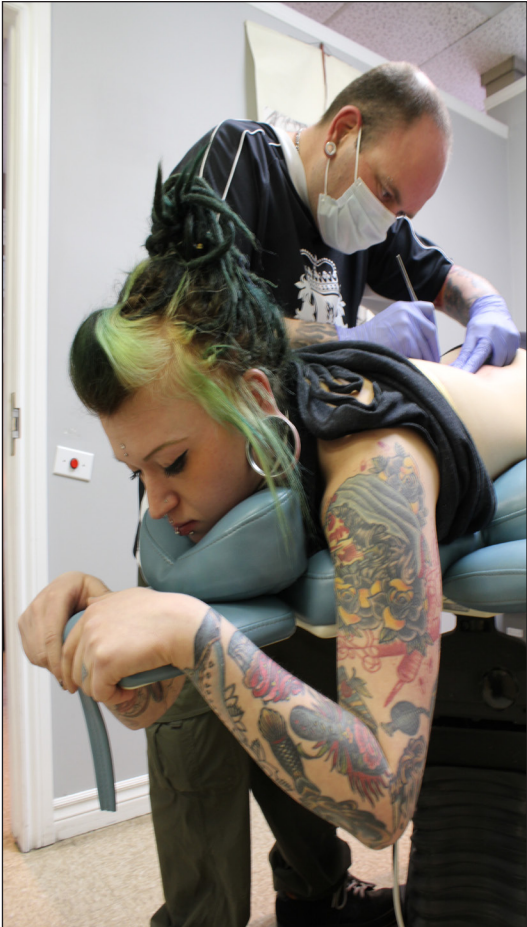
on rotation to accommodate how busy we are.” Business is thriving for Tribal Expression, and Kennedy attributes this to the fact that the shop maintains the highest standards for safety, professionalism and quality. “When we’re offering the level of service and jewelry that we are, clients see that. We’re not a super-inexpensive shop, but I think that

people realize that it’s better to pay an extra \$20 for the piercing. If you lose a bead, if a gemstone comes out, our stuff is warranted for life, so that’s what you’re getting for your 20

bucks. Our method is basically pay for it once, pay a little bit more, but have a proper, appropriate piercing done that we know by experience is going to heal.”

The staff at Tribal Expression specialize in all types of piercing styles, ranging from simple lobe piercing to stretching, dermal anchors, surface piercings, nipple and genital work, and Kennedy also does scarification work for clients.

Tribal Expression is located at #102 1026 16 AVE NW in Calgary, and appointments can be made online or by calling (403) 210-2442.



Keith Kennedy teaches his protégé Nia Kulbaba how to perform scarification (banner photo), a scarification back piece in progress (middle), Kennedy working on a client (left), a selection of the hand-made jewelry on sale in Tribal Expression, all made in-house with implant-grade metals.