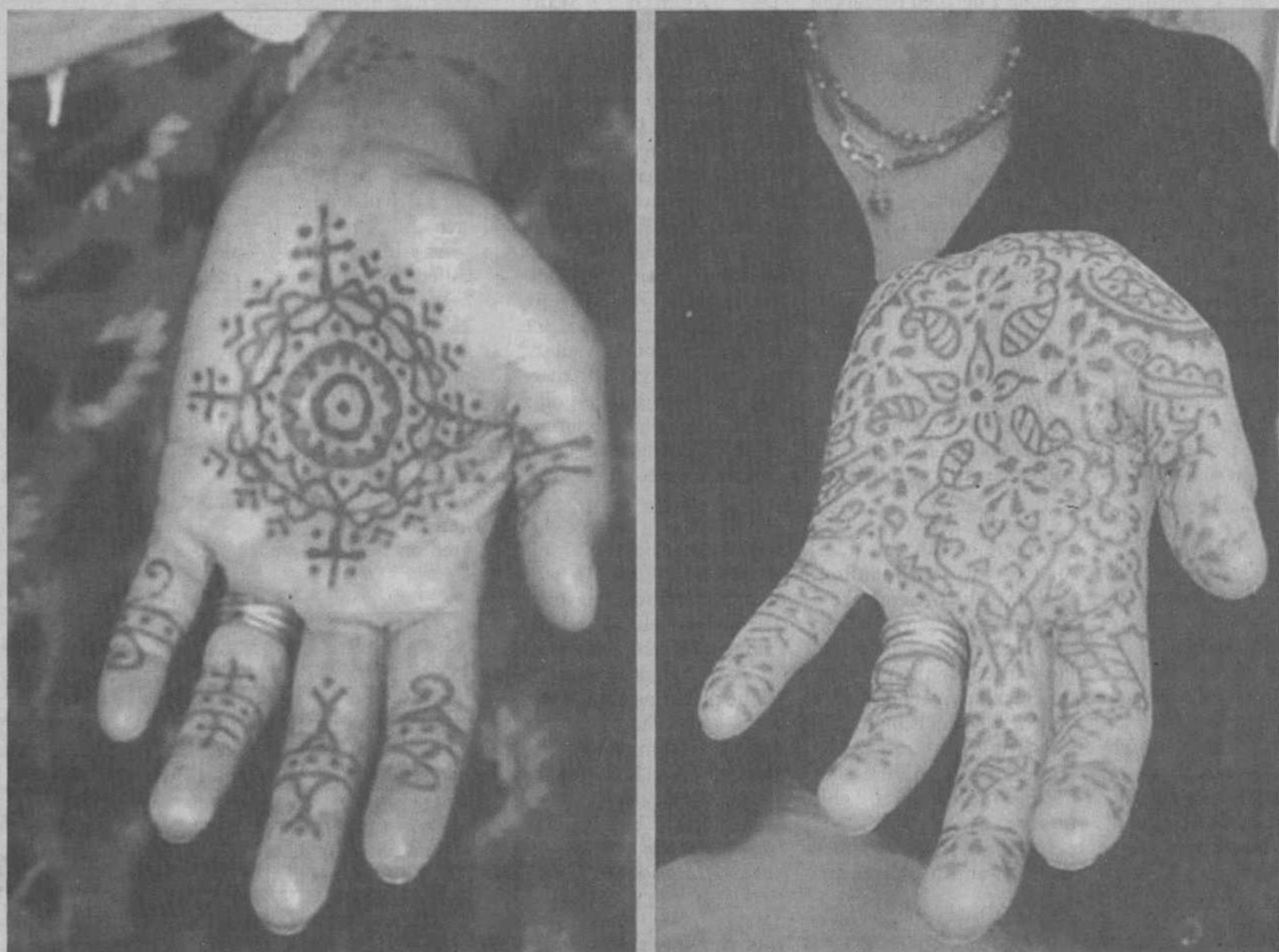


ANCIENT ART



Special to THE GAMECOCK

The tradition of henna body painting is more than 5,000 years old. Its beginnings lie in India, the Middle East and parts of Africa.

modern culture

5,000 year-old practice of henna painting catches on in US

Aaron Dallm
THE GAMECOCK

The ancient art of painting the body with henna dates back more than 5,000 years. Within the past decade, henna has caught on in the West.

The tradition, whose origins lie in India, Africa and the Middle East, is referred to as Mehndi in India, but is more commonly known as henna tattooing in the United States. Henna, a small flowering shrub from the privet family, is the main ingredient used in the practice of Mehndi.

While henna art is new to the West, henna itself is not. It is used in hair products such as dyes, rinses, shampoos and conditioners. It's also used to dye textiles and fabrics and to stain wood. Henna has been used as a home remedy for some medical purposes to alleviate headaches, jaundice and

leprosy.

In the areas of its traditional use, Mehndi is practiced during weddings, religious festivals, rites of passage and times of celebration. Patterns painted on the body vary between cultures. The Indian patterns are usually thin and extremely intricate designs with lace, floral and paisley patterns.

Arabic Mehndi painting is much less intricate and consists mostly of large floral designs. African designs are geometric and after their application a blackish paste is applied to make the henna as dark as possible. This blackish paste has been found to be poisonous for some people and capable of causing death.

Traditionally, henna is painted on the hands and feet. However, in Indian traditions patterns are painted to reach up as far as the forearms and shins.

Before an Indian wedding ceremony, peers may paint the bride.

In Rajasthan, India, and parts of Africa, the groom may also get painted before the ceremony. Most cultures that practice Mehndi in their wedding ceremonies have a general belief that the darker the color achieved on the skin, the longer the love will last between the couple.

In the United States, for about a decade, Mehndi has been catching on. It started becoming a trend in California and New York and has been spreading. Heavily circulated magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *InStyle* and *Tattoo Savage* have published articles praising henna tattooing as hip. High-profile media figures such as Naomi Campbell, Liv Tyler, Gwen Stefani, Demi Moore and Madonna

MEHNDI • 10



Special to THE GAMECOCK

Henna painting is becoming increasingly popular in the U.S. Kits can be found online or in a variety of stores.



Hello,
my name is
John Merriman

First-year
engineering
student

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE
HIGH SCHOOL MEMORY?

"Getting lost in my own city and realizing several hours later that I was halfway to Atlanta from Pensacola, Fla."

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO
COME TO USC?

"Scholarships, the opportunities for my major and the people and campus environment."

WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR
FREE TIME?

"I like to eat, ride roller coasters and throw up...in that order."

IF YOU COULD BE A
SUPERHERO, WHAT POWERS
WOULD YOU HAVE AND WHAT
WOULD YOUR NAME BE?

"I would be Birthday Boy, and I would wear my birthday suit of justice wherever I went."

IF YOU COULD HAVE ANY
BAND COME TO COLUMBIA
TO PERFORM, WHO WOULD IT
BE AND WHY?

"The Darkness, because I believe in a thing called love."

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE
ANIMAL?

"Penguins, because they're always dressed for success."

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE
MOVIE AND WHY?

"Mr. T's 'Be Somebody or Be Somebody's Fool,' because it taught me that if I ever fall in life I can recoup and break dance."

IF YOU COULD EAT DINNER
WITH ANY PERSON, WHO
WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

"All of my friends, because they are the most important people in my life."

WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST
DREAM YOU HAVE EVER
HAD?

"I was murdered multiple times by a friend."

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE
CLASS AND WHY?

"I don't like any of my classes."

IF YOU HAD A MILLION
DOLLARS, WHAT WOULD YOU
BUY?

PLAY • 10

HELLO • 10

Play treats family themes off stage and on

Son directs, father acts in USC's production of Sam Shepard's drama 'Buried Child'

Nathan House
THE GAMECOCK

"I think there are only two things that matter in life: creativity and love."

Walter Davis spoke these words with a knowing smile. He is acting a lead role in the upcoming stage production of "Buried Child" at Longstreet Theatre, and his son, Stephen Davis, is the director.

The two have been involved in theater together since Stephen was young. He grew up watching

his father on the stage; Walter was always acting and encouraging Stephen to do the same. Stephen attributes his career choice to his father's influence, and Walter considers it a compliment.

"I am really so proud that my son has decided to do this with his life," Walter said.

The two admitted to having their problems. They laughingly spoke of their ups and downs and of times of not speaking to each other. But in the end, they said, they have settled

their differences and enjoy a healthy, honest bond.

"We get to celebrate our relationship in a play about the family," Stephen said.

When asked how "Buried Child" was selected, Stephen said, "I don't choose," to which his father added, "He got lucky." Stephen nodded.

"Buried Child" is a Pulitzer Prize-winning play by playwright and actor Sam Shepard. Shepard is widely recognized and respected as a prominent American playwright and has acted in many movies, including 2004's box office hit "Stealth."

Set in the American Midwest, the play is a

macabre look at some of the contradictions within the American family. Dark, absurd and often humorous, the play details the return of an ostracized grandson to his dysfunctional family.

"It deals with the death, destruction and rebirth of the American family," Stephen said.

Although the particular situation the play deals with seems extreme, Walter reminds us that the play applies to us all.

"Every family has some buried secret, or buried child, they don't want to talk about," Walter said.

There was some controversy over Stephen casting his father. There

was talk of bias within the audition process, with many insisting that Stephen could not help but pick his father over the other candidates because of their relationship. Walter and Stephen took the accusation seriously, but believe it has not affected the play negatively.

"I'd like to think he cast me because I could do the job," Walter said. "I had to be better than a lot of people."

Stephen Davis, 33, has been acting since he was nine years old. After getting a bachelor's degree in acting at DePaul