

~the art of~ Tattoo



Who wears tattoos?

~Cultural vs Subcultural~

- ★ Prehistoric Tattoos
- ★ Asian Tattoos
- ★ Polynesian Tattoos
- ★ Sailor Tattoos
- ★ Prison Tattoos
- ★ Circus Tattoos
- ★ Movie Tattoos



- ★ The history of tattoo began over 5000 years ago and is as diverse as the people who wear them.
- ★ From the Polynesian word “ta” which means striking something and the Tahitian word “tatau” which means to mark something.
- ★ Tattoos are created by inserting coloured materials beneath the skin’s surface.
- ★ The first tattoos were probably created by accident. Someone had a small wound, and rubbed it with a hand that was dirty with soot and ashes from the fire. Once the wound had healed, they saw that a mark stayed permanently...

~Bronze Age~

- ★ In 1991, a five thousand year old tattooed man - “Ötzi the Iceman” - made the headlines of newspapers all over the world when his frozen body was discovered on a mountain between Austria and Italy.
- ★ This is the best preserved corpse of that period ever found. The skin bears 57 tattoos, including a cross on the inside of the left knee, six straight lines 15 centimetres long above the kidneys and numerous parallel lines on the ankles.
- ★ The positioning of the tattoo marks suggests that they were probably applied for therapeutic reasons (treatment of arthritis).



~Siberia (Pazyryk Culture)~

- ★ In 1948, north of the border between Russia and China, Russian archaeologists began excavating a group of tombs, or kurgans, in the high Altai Mountains of Western and Southern Siberia. Mummies were found that date from around 2400 years ago.
- ★ The tattoos on their bodies represent a variety of animals. The griffins and monsters are thought to have a magical significance but some elements are believed to be purely decorative. Altogether the tattoos are believed to reflect the status of the individual.

~Ancient Egypt~

- ★ In 1891, archaeologists discovered the mummified remains of Amunet, a priestess of the goddess Hathor, at Thebes who lived some time between 2160 BC and 1994 BC.
- ★ This female mummy displayed several lines and dots tattooed about her body - grouping dots and/or dashes were aligned into abstract geometric patterns. This art form was restricted to women only, and usually these women were associated with ritualistic practice.
- ★ The Egyptians spread the practice of tattooing throughout the world. The pyramid-building third and fourth dynasties of Egypt developed international nations with Crete, Greece, Persia, and Arabia. By 2000 BC the art of tattooing had stretched out all the way to Southeast Asia.

~Japan (Hori)~

- ★ The Ainu (Western Asian nomads) brought the art of tattoo with them as they moved to Japan.
- ★ The earliest evidence of tattooing in Japan is found in the form of clay figurines which have faces painted or engraved to represent tattoo marks. The oldest figurines of this kind have been recovered from tombs dated 3000 BC or older.
- ★ These figurines served as stand-ins for living individuals who symbolically accompanied the dead on their journey into the unknown.
- ★ The Japanese were interested in the art mostly for its decorative attributes, as opposed to magical ones. "Hori" - Japanese tattoo artists - were the undisputed masters. Their use of colour, perspective, and imaginative design gave the practice a whole new angle.
- ★ The classic Japanese tattoo is a full body suit.

~China~

- ★ From Southern China the practice of tattoo spread along the silk route.



~Thailand (Sak Yant)~

- ★ A "Sak Yant" is a magic tattoo which bestows mystical powers. This Sak Yant magic tattoo is normally given by a Buddhist Monk or Brahmin Priest but a Sak Yant can also be performed by a layman.
- ★ Of the Countries in Asia where Sak Yant tattooing is carried out, Thailand is by far the country with the highest number of devotees. The Thai word "Sak" means to tattoo and a "Yant" is a sacred design that incorporates Buddhist prayers called Mantras or Katas that will invoke supernatural powers.

~Indonesia (Borneo)~

- ★ Borneo is one of the few places in the world where traditional tribal tattooing is still practiced today just as it has been for thousands of years. Until recently many of the inland tribes had little contact with the outside world. As a result, they have preserved many aspects of their traditional way of life, including tattooing.
- ★ Borneo designs have gone all around the world to form the basis of what the Western people call 'tribal'.

~Polynesia (Samoa, Hawaii, Tahiti)~

- ★ In Pacific cultures tattooing has a huge historic significance. Polynesian tattooing is considered the most intricate and skillful tattooing of the ancient world.
- ★ Polynesian peoples believe that a person's "mana", their spiritual power or life force, is displayed through their tattoo.
- ★ The vast majority of what we know today about these ancient arts has been passed down through legends, songs, and ritual ceremonies. Elaborate geometrical designs were often added to, renewed, and embellished throughout the life of the individual until they covered the entire body.
- ★ In Samoa, the tradition of applying tattoo, or "tatau", by hand has long been defined by rank and title, with chiefs and their assistants, descending from notable families in the proper birth order.
- ★ The tattooing ceremonies for young chiefs, typically conducted at the onset of puberty, were elaborate affairs and were a key part of their ascendance to a leadership role.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=BqGQa7HB_1g

- ★ The permanent marks left by the tattoo artists would forever celebrate their endurance and dedication to cultural traditions.
- ★ The first Europeans who set foot on Samoan soil were members of a 1787 french expedition. They got a closer look at the natives and reported that “the men have their thighs painted or tattooed in such a way that one would think them clothed, although they are almost naked”.
- ★ The mythological origins of Samoan tattooing and the extraordinary cross-cultural history of tatau has been transported to the migrant communities of New Zealand, and later disseminated into various international subcultures from Auckland to the Netherlands.
- ★ The Hawaiian people had their traditional tattoo art, known as “kakau”. It served them not only for ornamentation and distinction, but to guard their health and spiritual well-being.
- ★ The most heavily tattooed members of the tribe would be the royal family, followed by other court officials and persons who were in the royal family by marriage.
- ★ The designs were monochromatic, tattooed in black against brown skin. The patterns and layout were strongly geometric and there were many shapes and symbols which represented the natural island world: stones, waves, fish, sharks, turtles, rain, sun, birds.

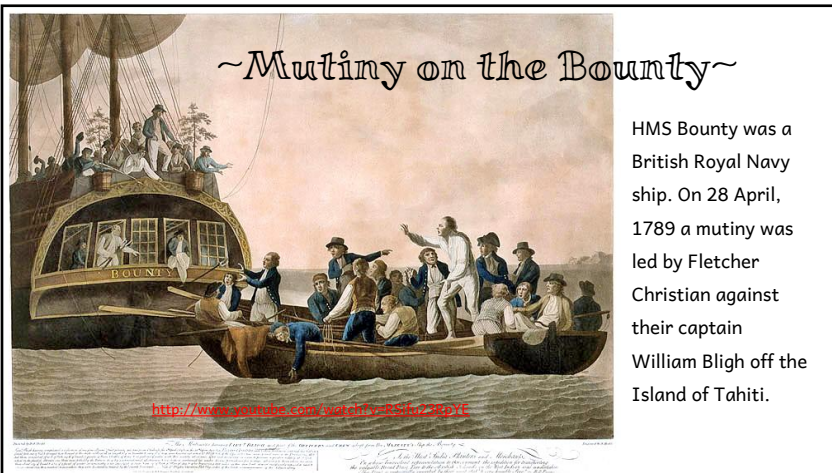
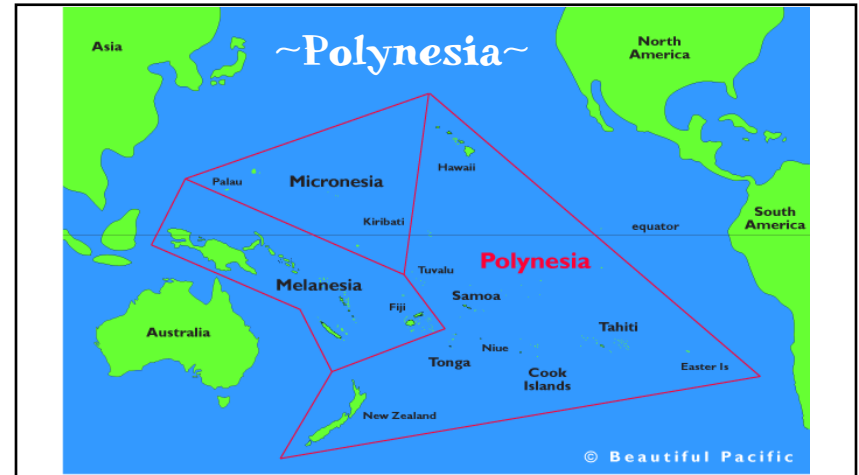
- ★ Intricate patterns, mimicking woven reeds or other natural forms, graced men's arms, legs, torso and face. Women were generally tattooed on the hand, fingers, wrists and sometimes on their tongue.
- ★ Queen Kamamalu had a tattoo applied to her tongue as an expression of her deep grief when her mother-in-law died in the 1820s. Missionary William Ellis watched the procedure, commenting to the queen that she must be undergoing great pain.
- ★ Traditionally, tattooing in Tahiti has always been a privilege of the more eminent social classes. Social ranking allowed tattoos corresponding to the wearer's position in the community.
- ★ Men often had tattoos all over their body, including on the neck and ears. Only the face was left untattooed except for the occasional warrior or priest who might wear a special emblem on his forehead or lips.
- ★ In ancient Tahitian society all women were tattooed. Young girls were tattooed at a very young age with marks on the inside of their arms to show that they were free from food tabus. Until that time they could only accept food prepared by their mothers - no-one else. There are no illustrations of these marks, just a few descriptions. Young women were again tattooed and they began to wear clothes as they reached puberty.



~New Zealand (Maori)~

- ★ The Maori of New Zealand created one of the most impressive cultures of all Polynesia. Their tattoo reflected their refined artistry, using their woodcarving skills to carve skin.
- ★ Traditional Maori tattoos are known in the Maori language as “ta moko”. Literally the words ta moko translate as to strike or to tap. The term refers to the process of tattooing in the Maori traditions. Moko is the tattoo design itself – the finished product.
- ★ The Maori tattoo consists of bold spiral designs covering the face, the buttocks and the legs of the Maori men. Maori women were usually tattooed on the lips and chin and in some cases on the neck and the back.
- ★ The full-face moko was a mark of distinction, which communicated status, lines of descent and tribal affiliations. It recalled the wearer's exploits in war and other great events.
- ★ Tattoo art was an important part of the Maori culture – in fact, people without tattoos were considered to be without status or worth.
- ★ Ta moko has a sacred significance – the Maori tattoo design itself, and the long and painful process of acquiring the tattoo.

- ★ Tattooing by making incisions with a chisel was a painful process, but traditional Maori tattoos were meant to be more than decorative – they were a show of strength, courage and status.
- ★ Maori tattooing was done with bone chisels and knives – “uhi” – which were made from albatross bone, either smooth or serrated, and the ink was applied by means of incisions.
- ★ Maori tattooing would usually start at adolescence, and was used to celebrate important events throughout life. The first tattoo marked the transition from childhood to adulthood and was done during a series of rites and rituals, with music, chants and fasting.
- ★ The tattoo ink for the body color was made from an organism that is half vegetable, half caterpillar (the caterpillar is infected by a certain kind of fungus that starts growing out of its head, killing the caterpillar). The darker, black tattoo ink used for the face was made of burned wood.
- ★ Maori symbolism has its origin in their deep spiritual connection with nature. Moko is a visual language and all symbols have meaning, usually a tribal/ancestral link that tells the background and stories of the wearer.



HMS Bounty was a British Royal Navy ship. On 28 April, 1789 a mutiny was led by Fletcher Christian against their captain William Bligh off the Island of Tahiti.

mu·ti·ny

[myt'nee]

1. rebellion against legal authority: a rebellion against legal authority, especially by soldiers or sailors refusing to obey orders and, often, attacking their officers
2. participate in mutiny: to take part in a rebellion against legal authority

SYNONYMS: rebellion, revolt, sedition, uprising, insubordination, defiance, recalcitrance, revolution, riot, insurgence, insurrection

- ★ The HMS Bounty reached Tahiti on October 26, 1788, after ten months at sea.
- ★ Bligh and his crew spent five months in Tahiti, collecting and preparing breadfruit plants for transport.
- ★ Bligh allowed the crew to live ashore and care for the potted breadfruit plants, and they became socialized to the customs and culture of the Tahitians.
- ★ Many of the seamen had themselves tattooed in native fashion.
- ★ Master's Mate and Acting Lieutenant Fletcher Christian married Maimiti, a Tahitian woman. Other warrant officers and seamen of the Bounty were also said to have formed connections with native women.
- ★ The mutineers set Bligh afloat in a small boat with eighteen crew members loyal to him. To avoid detection and prevent desertion, the mutineers then variously settled on Pitcairn Island or on Tahiti and burned the Bounty.
- ★ Descendants of some of the mutineers and Tahitians still live on Pitcairn. The mutiny has been commemorated in books, films, and songs.

~Navy & Sailor Tattoos~

- ★ Tattooing on sailors dates back as far as the 1700s when British explorer Captain James Cook came across the natives of the South Pacific, and his crew decided to get tattoos as souvenirs of their visit.
- ★ The culture among sailors is undoubtedly rich in traditions. Sailors have the custom of getting tattoos as an expression of important events or experiences such as travels, achievements, naval hierarchy, rank, status, membership, and as talismans to protect sailors from drowning far from home.



- ★ Sailors on their ships returned home with tattoos usually of a very basic style that only used a minimum amount of detail making the tattoos look quite two dimensional and flat.
- ★ This often gave a cartoonish feeling and typical motifs would be flowers, hearts, mermaids, ships, anchors, snakes, birds, and names.
- ★ Norman Collins, better known as Sailor Jerry, was a tattoo artist during the Second World War in Honolulu, Hawaii. Sailor Jerry is the man most noted for making tattoos an art in America rather than just a permanent souvenir for drunken sailors.

Symbolic Significance

~Navy & Sailor Tattoos~

- ★ A pig and a rooster were tattooed on either the ankles, calves or top of the feet, to prevent a sailor from drowning. These animals were originally carried on most ships in wooden crates. When a ship went down the crates would float and then catch currents and wash ashore with the other debris from the ship, making the pigs and roosters often the only souls to survive a shipwreck. A tattoo of a pig on the left knee and a rooster on the right foot signified "Pig on the knee, safety at sea. A cock on the right, never lose a fight."
- ★ Tattoos of pigs and chickens were to make sure sailors always had their ham and eggs so that they never went hungry.

- ★ A sailor would get a swallow tattoo for every 5000 miles he had sailed (a swallow will always find its way home).
- ★ A sparrow tattoo for every 5000 or 50,000 nautical miles traveled.
- ★ A turtle standing on its back legs (shellback) for crossing the equator and being initiated into King Neptune's Court.
- ★ A tattoo of King Neptune if you crossed the Equator.
- ★ Crossed anchors on the web between the thumb and index finger for a bosun's mate.
- ★ Royal Navy tattoos of palm trees for the Mediterranean cruises in WWII.
- ★ Many US sailors have a palm tree or hula girl from Hawaii.
- ★ The words HOLD and FAST were tattooed across the knuckles to help hold line from the days of schooners and such, and to keep the ropes from falling overboard or dropping a line.

- ★ Anchor tattoo for crossing the Atlantic. The anchor usually noted that the sailor was in the merchant marine.
- ★ Full rigged ship tattoo for sailing around Cape Horn.
- ★ Dragon tattoo for crossing the international date line or serving in China.
- ★ Rope around the wrist for being a dockhand.
- ★ Two stars to ensure always knowing the way.
- ★ Guns or crossed cannon for military naval service.
- ★ Harpoons for the fishing fleet.
- ★ Crosses on the soles of one's feet to ward off hungry sharks.
- ★ A nautical star, or compass rose was to always find your way home.
- ★ A dagger through a rose signified a willingness to fight and kill even something as fragile as a rose.

~Criminal & Prison Tattoos~

- ★ In prison, the tattoo - professionally done and/or homemade - imprinted on the body what prisoners desired in their souls: autonomy and identity.
- ★ The ultimate symbol for gang members are their gang tattoos, getting a permanent mark is a sign of showing total commitment to the gang. These tattoos can reveal lots of things, like who you are, what gang you're in, what your beliefs are (racist, etc.), what you have done, where you have been, how many years you've been in jail (also referred to as 'dead time') and even things like how many you have killed.
- ★ Known symbols include teardrops under the eye as well as spider webs on the elbows to symbolize people killed.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=hOQSTIAuXUM

~Circus Tattoos~

- ★ The popularity of tattooing during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century owed much to the circus. When circuses prospered, tattooing prospered.
- ★ For over 70 years every major circus employed several completely tattooed people. Some were exhibited in sideshows, others performed traditional circus acts such as juggling and sword swallowing.



~Character Defining Movie Tattoos~

Francis Dolarhyde in *Red Dragon*



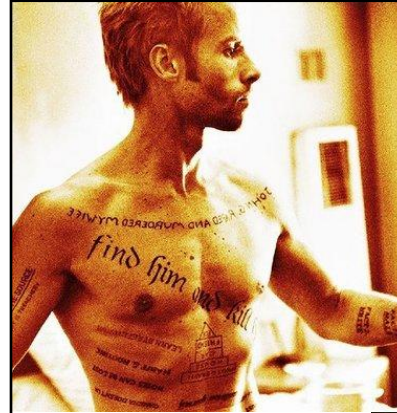
Captain Jack Sparrow in
Pirates Of The Caribbean



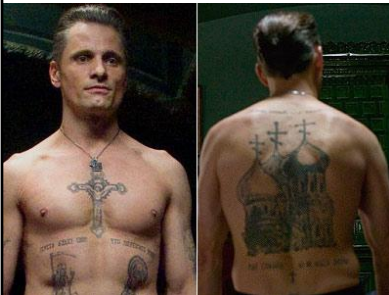
Sirius Black in *Harry Potter*



Leonard Shelby in *Memento*



Nikolai Luzhin in *Eastern Promises*



Derek Vinyard in *American History X*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=fRdo188PjXA#t=154

~by~

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