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Mark Batty Publisher Launches “Arabic Tattoos,” the First Book to Examine the Growing Phenomenon of Arabic Body Art

Photos, personal stories and essays document the reasons why Westerners are getting Arabic tattoos, and the cultural ramifications of their choices

New York, NY, May 12, 2008 — Mark Batty Publisher, a leader in distinctive books covering the graphic and communication arts, has announced the publication of “Arabic Tattoos,” an intimate collection of photographs, stories and essays that explores the rise in popularity in the West of Arabic language and Arabic symbol tattoos. “Arabic Tattoos” provides eye-opening insight into the appeal of these distinctive and often unusual body-art images, and endeavors to show the extent to which Arabic-speaking cultures have impacted the world.

Tattoos today are a fairly common form of self-expression. Roses, snakes, chains, names and other conventional symbols have been popular in the West for decades. Over just the past few years, however, an intriguing sub-genre of tattoos has emerged in Europe and North America: tattoos with Arabic words and images.

Islam prohibits body modification of any kind, providing an additional element of curiosity about this trend—an element explored in “Arabic Tattoos.” The book documents the reasons why people in the West decide to get Arabic tattoos,

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which include religious phrases in Arabic, names of spouses and children in Arabic, and even words like “butterfly” and “love” in Arabic, sometimes with images to go along with them. The tattoos shown in the book range from the sweet—such as the Arabic word for “Peace,” tattooed on the neck of a woman in Tennessee who is married to an Iraqi—to the bold—such as the Arabic word for “Infidel” tattooed on the chest of a U.S. soldier who is proud to be an atheist.

“These tattoos signify more than the words and designs they showcase upon a person’s skin. They are representative of this crucial point in modern time where cultural awareness, acceptance and, unfortunately, fear, are salient aspects of global culture,” said Jon Udelson, who compiled “Arabic Tattoos.”

Along with the photographs of these tattoos, and the stories from their owners, designers and inkers, are comprehensive and informative essays by tattoo expert Clayton Patterson and Egyptian artist Hamdi Attia, both of whom provide thoughtful perspectives on the topic.

“Our goal,” Udelson added, “was to put questions like ‘To whom does a language belong?’ into the public arena, thus adding to an ever-expanding discourse about the role of philosophy, religion, politics and art in our daily lives. Perhaps in that way we can one day arrive at a higher understanding and respect of the multicultural world in which we all live.”

About Mark Batty Publisher

Mark Batty Publisher is an independent publisher dedicated to making distinctive books on the visual art of communicating, showcasing the visual power and

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innovation of contemporary culture in all of its varied poses. Today, the visual comes at us from more places than ever, and its dissemination is faster and more advanced every year. Books from Mark Batty Publisher capture this acceleration on the pages of every book. Affordable, well designed, thoughtfully created, and produced to last, MBP books are artful products that readers want to hold onto forever. For more information, visit www.markbattypublisher.com.

“Arabic Tattoos”

Compiled by Jon Udelson

Popular Culture

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