

Bodies Of Subversion: The Legacy of Tattooed Women - An Exploration of Margot Mifflin's Masterpiece

Tattoos have been an integral part of human culture for centuries, serving as a form of self-expression, storytelling, and rebellion. While tattoos have become increasingly popular in recent years, it is crucial to acknowledge the strong influence that tattooed women have had in shaping the history and perception of this art form. In her groundbreaking book, "Bodies Of Subversion: A Secret History of Women and Tattoo," Margot Mifflin delves into the fascinating world of tattooed women and their contributions to art, feminism, and the overall narrative surrounding body ink. This article aims to examine Mifflin's masterpiece and shed light on the significance of tattooed women's stories.

The Art of Rebellion

In the early 20th century, tattooed women were regarded as freaks, outsiders whose bodies become canvases for public spectacle. However, Mifflin's exploration reveals a more profound and empowering truth - these women used their tattoos as a means of resistance against societal norms and gender expectations. Through extensive research and interviews, Mifflin unveils the personal narratives of these tattooed women, showcasing their strength and resilience in the face of adversity.

Mifflin examines the lives and work of influential tattooed women, such as Nora Hildebrandt, who became the first known professional female tattoo artist in the United States in the late 19th century. She also delves into the life of Maud Wagner, a circus performer and the first known white woman to become a tattoo artist. These women not only challenged societal expectations but also paved the

way for future generations of tattooed women to embrace their bodies and make their mark in the world.



Bodies of Subversion by Margot Mifflin (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 56717 KB

Print length: 160 pages



Tattoos as Feminist Expression

Central to Mifflin's exploration is the relationship between tattoos and feminism. By analyzing the artwork etched onto the bodies of these women, Mifflin unveils the different forms of self-expression and identification that tattoos can offer. Tattoos allowed women to reclaim their bodies, challenging the male gaze and patriarchal notions of beauty.

Mifflin also takes a critical look at the connections between tattooing and sexuality, asserting that the depiction of tattooed women as sexual objects often overshadowed their intellect, creativity, and agency. Through vivid descriptions and historical anecdotes, Mifflin presents a nuanced portrayal of tattooed women, dispelling popular misconceptions and elevating their stories from the margins.

Tattooing as an Art Form

While Mifflin's book primarily focuses on the stories of tattooed women, she also celebrates tattooing as an art form in its own right. Through captivating visuals

and meticulous descriptions, Mifflin hones in on the intricate details of tattoo designs and the skill required to create them.

By weaving together stories of tattoo artists, such as the legendary Ed Hardy, Mifflin showcases the growth and transformation of tattooing from its underground roots to a mainstream art movement. Her exploration reveals the artistic processes and the collaborative nature of tattooing, highlighting the unique relationship between artist and client.

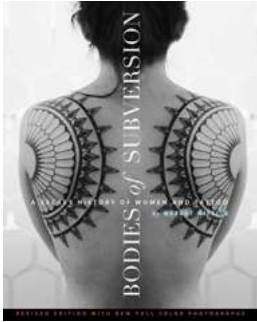
The Legacy of "Bodies Of Subversion"

Margot Mifflin's "Bodies Of Subversion: A Secret History of Women and Tattoo" remains a seminal work in the field of tattoo studies and feminist literature. Through her eloquent prose and meticulous research, Mifflin sheds light on the little-known stories of tattooed women, elevating their experiences from the periphery to the center of conversation.

As tattooing continues to rise in popularity and acceptance, it is crucial to recognize the contributions and challenges faced by tattooed women throughout history. Mifflin's book serves as a reminder of their strength, creativity, and defiance, inspiring a new generation of individuals to embrace their own tattooed bodies and the stories they hold.

Margot Mifflin's "Bodies Of Subversion: A Secret History of Women and Tattoo" is an essential read for anyone interested in understanding the rich history and cultural significance of tattooed women. Through her meticulous research and compelling storytelling, Mifflin brings to life the captivating narratives of tattooed women who defied societal norms and paved the way for the acceptance and celebration of tattoos as an art form.

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"In this provocative work full of intriguing female characters from tattoo history, Margot Mifflin makes a persuasive case for the tattooed woman as an emblem of female self-expression."

-Susan Faludi

Bodies of Subversion is the first history of women's tattoo art, providing a fascinating excursion to a subculture that dates back into the nineteenth-century and includes many never-before-seen photos of tattooed women from the last century. Author Margot Mifflin notes that women's interest in tattoos surged in the suffragist 20s and the feminist 70s. She chronicles:

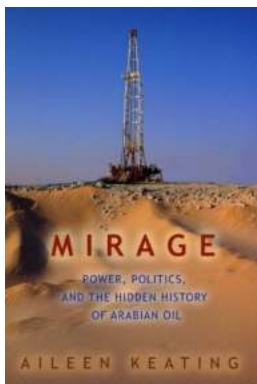
- * Breast cancer survivors of the 90s who tattoo their mastectomy scars as an alternative to reconstructive surgery or prosthetics.
- * The parallel rise of tattooing and cosmetic surgery during the 80s when women tattooists became soul doctors to a nation afflicted with body anxieties.
- * Maud Wagner, the first known woman tattooist, who in 1904 traded a date with her tattooist husband-to-be for an apprenticeship.

* Victorian society women who wore tattoos as custom couture, including Winston Churchill's mother, who wore a serpent on her wrist.

* Nineteenth-century sideshow attractions who created fantastic abduction tales in which they claimed to have been forcibly tattooed.

"In Bodies of Subversion, Margot Mifflin insightfully chronicles the saga of skin as signage. Through compelling anecdotes and cleverly astute analysis, she shows and tells us new histories about women, tattoos, public pictures, and private parts. It's an indelible account of an indelible piece of cultural history."

-Barbara Kruger, artist



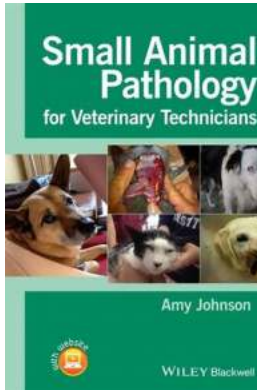
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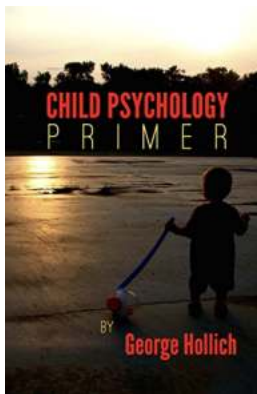
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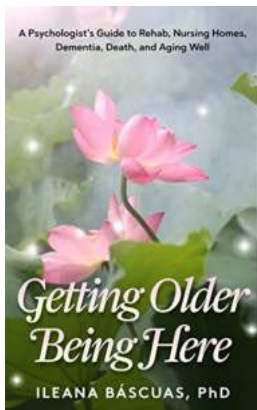
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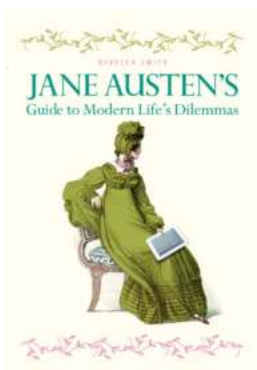
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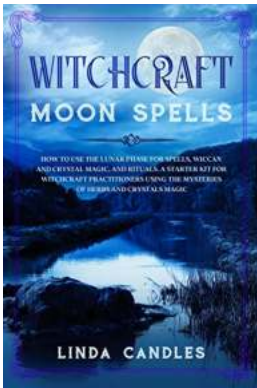
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