

INTRODUCTION

It's a great pleasure for me that you load down this book and thereby showed interest on a kind of art which nowadays becomes more and more type of mass production.

On the one hand of course it's wonderful to see that tattoos are getting accepted by the society. On the other hand this fact opens the door for those who only try to fill their purse as soon as possible while not taking care about the art. Most of them are also not taking care about quality.

Tattooing has got a long lasting tradition as you will see in part **I**. Since 1983, I'm working with license in my own shop, inspired by my grandfather's memory who tattooed since the year 1915. He was the first one in Europe who did both handneedle- and machinework.

During my long-lasting occupation I met lots of people which asked me a great amount of different questions. Thereby I realized how big the deficit in information really is and also how difficult it seems to be for most of those persons to find someone who's both got the knowledge and takes the time to answer the questions!

All these facts caused me to write this book. I give you the following guarantee: After reading this book you will know much more than some of the "tattooists"!

And so it should be. Finally you want to enjoy your tattoo and not to make the mistake of your life! In this book you'll see everything you should take care of when choosing your artist.

In case you have another question which wasn't answered in this book please don't hesitate to call us.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

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This book is dedicated to all my customers and friends who are remaning loyal to me for years.

INDEX

I. THE HISTORY OF TATTOOING

How old is the art of tattooing?

How spreaded was tattooing over the world?

In which way was it done?

Which reasons did mankind have for tattooing?

What is meant by the so-called “Tattooing-Renaissance?”

II. ALL ABOUT THE ARTIST AND HIS STUDIO

Which points of views are important by choosing an artist?

Which facts should I pay attention for in his studio?

How will I find the right design?

Where do the designs come from?

Is there any institution which offers a list of professional tattooists?

Is there any school or training institute for tattooists?

What are the costs for a tattoo?

Do all the others watch me while I´m getting tattooed?

III. QUESTIONS ABOUT TATTOOING TECHNIQUE

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

Are there body-parts which can't get tattooed?

Is tattooing painful?

Is it possible to remove tattoos?

Are there colours which disappear by a natural way?

How long will the colours last beautiful?

Is it possible to "refresh" a tattoo?

Which possibilities do I have when I don't like my tattoo or don't like it any longer?

How many different colours are there?

Is it possible to tattoo persons with real dark skin?

Is it a "must" to set black outlines?

Can one tattoo onto scars, burnt or rubbed-off skin?

How long does it take to finish a tattoo?

What are the favourite body-parts for tattooing?

Are there typical female or male designs?

What do I have to care for to let the tattoo heal out for best results?

IV. TATTOOING AND HEALTH

Do I have to be afraid of an infection while getting tattooed?

Is there any sickness known as a result of tattooing?

Does tattooing by a professional have a bad influence on health?

Do tattoos have an influence on health at all?

Could there be a consequence in my mind after I got my tattoo?

Did ever a customer become fainted or did one try to escape?

Is tattooing dangerous while pregnancy?

V. GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT TATTOOING

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

Are there also stars in your shop?

What kind of customers does usually come to you?

What do you think about tattoos on kids or teenagers?

Is there an age-limit to the top?

Does Bodybuilding in extreme ways have influences on the tattoo?

Why do tattoos become blue-like after 30 to 40 years?

How far do freckles influence the tattoo?

How many customers do come again to get another one or even more tattoos?

Did they ever bring you designs you refused to tattoo?

Are there religious reasons against tattooing?

Is there a connection between tattoos and pervert games (like S/M practics)?

Is it true that sailors are tattooed more often than people with other occupations?

Which position belongs to tattooing in other countries, especially in the dictated nations?

Why is tattooing illegal in some countries/states?

Which general advice would you give as a professional art tattooist?

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

I. THE HISTORY OF TATTOOING

How old is the art of tattooing?

Tattooing is as old as humanity.

A person's body was the first "thing" for our ancestors to treat or beautify. Little children already love to paint on their own or a friend's body.

Scientists found tattoo-flashes from the year 12.000 before Jesus Christ, the eldest which are known till now.

How spreaded was tattooing over the world?

Tattooing was done in uncountable known cultures and in several forms.

Some of them used colours which were produced from very different plants.

Dark-skinned persons used ashes and soot instead of the plant colours because of their very intensive skin-pigments which wouldn't allow the weaker plant colour to get thru.

Many races, especially the dark-skinned, scratched the skin until it became scarred. In this wounds they put the material - plant extracts, special powders, ashes or coal .

By this means the wound healed out slower as usual and stayed brighter coloured than the rest of the skin. To get the desired result they often repeated the procedure.

In which way was it done?

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

A kind of a needle was always used, made out of most various materials. In New Zealand were teeth of sharks the fitting tool. They found little knives, too.

Nothing essentially has changed until now in the way of the execution. Either they dipped the instrument directly into the colour and after that into the skin or did singular stitches or cuts at the body-zone they wanted to tattoo and rubbed the colour onto that prepared skin.

In the asiatic nations they often still continue to use little bamboo-sticks, while in the western countries the effective and maybe less painful tattooing-machine succeeded.

Which reasons did mankind have for tattooing?

For the old races tattoos or body-painting were a matter of beautifying and to awake sexual interest. Often a tattoo became requirement for an accepted marriage in between the community.

Special parts of life - like puberty, sexual maturity - were expressed by a tattoo. It was also usual as an official sign for a marriage. Far spreaded was tattooing of a wife after her husband's death to express her to be a widow.

As a sign of membership to a community or as a badge of rank tattoos were also found, mostly in geometrical forms, as pattern, signs or figures, while the latter were already shadowed.

Even nowadays in some races special designs are tattooed as an outer sign of a passed test, for the membership to the community or badge of rank.

For some races, however, tattoos have lost their original meaning.

In this connection its interesting to know that tattoos were never covered by clothes on all

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

continents except Europe! They were shown at every time.

In the northern territories of Asia and America so-called “healing tattoos” were used which influenced the well-being of the tattooed persons by choosing a special charm. Maybe the colour contained healing medical ingredients. Every colour was supposed to bring out an own effect, red for instance should give power for a problem’s solution.

Like a guardian angel particular tattoos should watch for the carrier during dangerous times.

Also aching parts were tattooed with colour pigments by influencing nervous tracts similar to today’s acupuncture usage. In some races even rheumatism was cured. Thereby tattooed wrists are generally noticed.

What is meant by the so-called “Tattooing-Renaissance”?

Statisticians appeal to the rising numbers of tattooed women since the Sixties. Also the fact that lots like to wear their idol of film or TV directly “in the skin”- that means: get a tattooed portrait of that one - counts to these statistics.

For a lot of first-class artists of a famous circus it was a “must” to own a tattoo. Otherwise they wouldn’t be recognized as the best.

II. ALL ABOUT THE ARTIST AND HIS STUDIO

Which points of views are important by choosing an artist?

When one is sure to want to own a tattoo (and not to follow a mood which will be repented on the following day) the artist has to be chosen conscientiously. A real artist has got the best advertisement by his satisfied customers who will surely not cover their tattoos.

View those tattoos carefully and talk to the persons if possible. Thereby it's not important whether you like the design or not. Important is whether the tattoo is healed out which means the tattooed skin should look like and feel like regular skin, the colours should be even instead of spotted and the outline should look even, too - not thinner and thicker at one single design!

When you finally choosed your artist, have a look at his studio and search for the fitting design. This is a good choice to watch the artist at work. A true artist won't work in a closed room where nobody could watch him. He will also be fond of talking to new customers and will pay the same attention to them than to his regular guests.

Which facts should I pay attention for in his studio?

It's a matter of course for a Professional to have his tools and the whole studio clean and sterile. To be sure one can ask the tattooist how he sterilizes his tools. In case a tattooist doesn't want to answer that question or doesn't take time for a new customer maybe it's better to search for another studio.

In Germany every official registered studio is controlled by the public health office every six months (without announcement!). They want to see the attest of an institute from which one gets a test-set to sterilize. This has to be sent back sterilized. Only in case the result was o.k. the artist will receive the approval to continue working with the equipment.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

Meanwhile the hygienics-regulations for tattoo-shops and thereby the controls were intensified. Some beginners try to pass that regulations as long as possible. While they are not registered, nobody's able to control....

The unfortunate one is the customer who will catch infections in the worst case. On the other hand the art of tattooing on the whole is shown in a bad light

Therefore every professional tattooist will care for cleanness and sterility, also to care for his own health.

An important point is also to take fresh colours for every single customer. By the continual touch-in with the machine during the tattooing act bacteria and virus diseases will be collected in the colour and in case of re-usage transferred to the next customer. Thereby it's not only AIDS that counts to be afraid of, also skin-fungus, liver-diseases etc. can be transferred through infected colour.

How will I find the right design?

A Professional with years-lasting experience should own thousands of designs which one can choose of. Those who don't have any imagination will find at least a type of style which they're tending to. A good tattooist is then able to give a recommendation but the final decision has to find everybody by oneself. It should be well-thought because finally the tattoo will follow you for the whole life.

A real artist is also able to work over a CD-Cover into a tattoo-design or even tattoo by a photo (partner, children, animals etc.).

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

Beware of tattooists who only show photos of magazines!!

Also self-made designs can be done by some assumptions.

Where do the designs come from?

Because a professional tattooist should also be a good drawer, many self-made designs should have been collected during his active time.

Some tattooists are changing designs with other artists.

Besides there are artists who don't tattoo but sell their art designs to tattoo studios.

I myself love to draw. Many customers are crazy to wear such an "original" and are asking for new designs permanently. For those customers I'm knowing for a couple of years I draw "custom-made designs". Therefore one has to know the other really very well, otherwise it can go amiss. At last the customer's taste should be hit exactly.

Is there any institution which offers a list of professional tattooists?

There are organisations of professional artists like the D.O.T. in Germany (www.dot-ev.de) or NTA in America for instance.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

Another good way to find a true artist is to trust in recommendations of other tattooed persons (friends, regular customers of the artist for many years...) and to take a look at the studio like I mentioned before.

It's the best to be able to watch the tattooist "live" at work.

Is there any school or training institute for tattooists?

Unfortunately no. Everyone can go and take a license. Some tattooists give others a training course. But there is no test to pass. The only chance to find a real good artist is to look at his work.

By this theme I want to call your attention to the fact that tattooing can only be learned on human skin. Would you like to be such a "test object"? Surely not. This is one of the reasons why I was tattooing only by myself for a long time. On many studio-doors there is only written the artist's name but you won't meet him in person. The danger hereby is to get "bungled" even in studios which are well reputed!

Like I mentioned before a tattooist above all should be able to draw and have the eye to see the third dimension. This talent or inclination is inborn and can't be obtained by practising. However, it is the main supposition for a good picture.

If I give a tattooist at Rainbow-Tattoo "green lights" to work on a customer's skin I must be absolutely convinced by his quality.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

What are the costs for a tattoo?

This is probably the question which I'm asked most. However, it can't be answered globally. The price depends not only on the size but also on criterions such as time spent, numbers of colours, difficulty... In the United States there is one rule that counts: The better the tattooist the more expensive. In Germany this fact is not applicable for everyone.

On principle I recommend to pay a few Euros more for a piece of art than to receive cheaper but inferior work. Also one should not take a cheaper design because one can't afford the actually wanted. In this case I offer to work on the design on different sessions while the payment is divided up, too.

By the way, even every small design can become a real piece of art if the tattooist is interested in the art and not only in the money he earns by tattooing.

Do all the others watch me while I'm getting tattooed?

By a customer's wish I can close the tattooing-place with window-shades. Especially while tattooing at ladies' chests or groins, the customer is pleased by not being in everybody's field of vision.

Through the thin material of the window-shades it's still possible to keep the contact to the other customers, which seems very important for me.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

III. QUESTIONS ABOUT TATTOOING TECHNIQUE

Are there body-parts which can't get tattooed?

No one except teeth and hair. But some parts are not recommendable - like the bottom of the foot for instance, where the skin is sturdy and full of nerves.

Professionals usually don't tattoo faces, necks or hands. This is a matter of conviction, also a question of aesthetics and has nothing to do with ability or danger.

Is tattooing painful?

I wouldn't tell that there's no bad feeling but most of my customers are positively surprised after getting their first tattoo. The feeling is imaginable like heavily drawing onto the skin with a ball-point pencil.

But the tattooist plays a leading part in this game! A Professional takes the time and does it as careful as possible, others don't worry about the customer's feeling. There are also big differences between the machines, either in the price or in the power.

Is it possible to remove tattoos?

Yes and No. It is possible to remove every tattoo. While formerly large and ugly scars were left after skin-transplantations, corrosions or off-scrapings, today's ruby or paragon laser is able to

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

remove tattoos completely and scareless. There are special laser-institutes but also dermatologists are joining this process.

There is only one problem: While the laser-process the tattoo-colour is split up to its ingredients and so there is a possibility that some ingredients cause health problems by being transferred through the body.

Are there colours which disappear by a natural way?

No, that's absolutely impossible! The fact that nowadays TV, radio stations and magazines are full with advertising of cosmeticians who swear on this way of tattooing causes us to answer questions about this subject daily.

No matter about the used colour or how deep it's tattooed: What is left after the healing process won't disappear after three, five or ten years, as they promise. One has to think logical: What fact should the body cause to push off a colour after a certain period magically?

What would the tattoo look like during the period of that "liquidation"?

Concerning the skin-layers I have to tell you that a tattoo in the upper layers is same lasting as one in the lower layers. All of the shadows are tattooed that way and my regular customers would surely be angry if half of their pictures would disappear after a period of time!

Also the argument that real plant-colours - so-called "Bio-Colours" - are used, is rubbish. We do also use only plant-colours - since the beginning! The word "biological" is not lawfully declared.

A lot of times we were insulted by customers because of our honesty! Finally they saw it on TV-

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

and TV never lies! Many of them came back to show us their “Bio-Tattoo”. At first sight we saw cheap material which was pushed off within the first two weeks. The rest will be left in the skin with guarantee - in case it won't be pushed off by an infection!

How long will the colours last beautiful?

While one takes care of the tattoo during the healing process the colours will last for life.

Nevertheless this can only be guaranteed for well-chosen colours like used by Professionals.

Some artists use cheaper material which fades after a short time (but not disappears!) or heals out spotted.

I would like to remark that the tattoo “grows” in case of a heavy increase in weight. Because of the stretched skin it will look pale. Therefore one should choose a body-part which won't deform too much by decrease or increase in weight.

One word to heavily tanned skin: The tattoo-colour lies *in* the skin. That means a bright colour such as yellow will be covered through the overlaying dark skin-pigments. If the skin will fade again - like in winter - the yellow will look stronger.

Is it possible to “refresh” a tattoo?

Yes, that's usually no problem. One can re-colour the tattoo or correct the outlines.

I revised even old marines' tattoos which were done over forty years ago!

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

But it's not possible to replace a dark colour by a brighter one. The colours are acting like watercolours.

When a tattoo didn't heal out properly or wasn't tattooed professionally it's most times possible to improve the result. Sometimes however it's too late. Therefore I'm advising again to choose the tattooist very conscientiously to save time, money and annoyance!

Which possibilities do I have when I don't like my tattoo or don't like it any longer?

On the one hand a tattoo can be covered by another one. This cover has to be larger than the former tattoo. This technique lies not in every tattooist's ability. Especially beginners often have problems because they believe a brighter colour would be fine to cover, too. But after the healing process already the bad awakening follows when the former picture comes out again.

Especially well fitting are designs in which one part can be dark-shadowed. For instance an Indian's hair is usually black and perfect to cover something. Also eagles, wolves and many animal-designs are usable.

How many different colours are there?

The whole broad spectrum of colours is in use. A professional tattooist knows by his long-lasting experience how every one of his colours will develop in the skin and is so able to choose the best colours for every customer. One should never forget that skins are totally different and so one single colour can look absolutely different, too.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

I myself tried many new colours first in my own skin and so I often buy only one or two real good colours from one dealer. The order takes much more time if you have so many dealers but the result is well worth.

Is it possible to tattoo persons with real dark skin?

In fact every skin can be tattooed. But brighter colours like white, yellow and orange will not have a good effect in dark skin because the skin-pigments are stronger than the colour-pigments. Therefore the rumour of tattooing a dark-skinned person with white colour is wrong.

Surely many tattooed persons have recognized once that their colours seemed to be weaker while their skin was dark tanned such as after summer holidays. Don't worry - as soon as the tanning grows weaker the tattoo will appear again and the colours will shine! I recommend the sun-crazy ones to use sun-blockers on the tattoos to keep long-lasting brightness and shine.

Is it a “must” to set black outlines?

It's not a “must” but for most of the designs a black outline looks better because the picture becomes clearer.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

I draw the thinnest outline which is possible.

For 3-dimensional background-designs I created a special shadow-technique without sharp outlines. Till now all customers were enthused. With this technique it's possible to finish even simple designs to a complete exceptional artwork.

Can one tattoo scares, burnt or rubbed-off skin?

One has to distinguish in this point. In no case it's allowed to tattoo wounded skin. Only if an injury is healed out completely and one can be sure the skin won't change any further, tattooing is possible at this body-part.

However, these are experiences which cannot be learnt in one day and should never be tested on a customer! I use my contacts to dermatologists when I need an advice in a special case.

On the countermove I was asked for advice by doctors. There were problems after amputating a breast in case of cancer. Although they operated several times, the nipple was missing. In all that cases a tattooed nipple looked absolutely natural.

We would go too far talking about all kinds of scares in this book. Some scares can be covered through a tattoo perfectly. But, like mentioned, this shouldn't be done by a beginner. In all cases, the scare must be healed out thoroughly, that means it haven't changed the form etc. for a longer period. Otherwise the tattoo would distort past recognition.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

How long does it take to finish a tattoo?

First of all it depends on the design. Smaller designs can be done in one sitting while larger designs or so-called “Body-suits” afford more sittings.

Between these appointments the tattoo must heal out thoroughly. This usually takes 10 to 14 days. It’s also a good reason to control the healing process of the tattoo at the following appointment whether it’s perfect or something can be improved.

Also the skin-condition plays a leading part. A Professional is able to adjust to every skin and should know exactly how fast or slow he can work to reach the best result and to let the customer feel as comfortable as possible.

What are the favourite body-parts for tattooing?

Men usually get their upper arm or back tattooed, often also the chest or forearm. From time to time male customers want to have a tattoo on the seat, the groin, the calf or thigh.

Female customers usually prefer the back or low neckline, the calf or the seat. Often they want to get tattooed at the groin or around the navel. In both cases one has to notice that the female body especially at this parts will deform in case of pregnancy and the picture could “run” or even tear apart thru destroyed connecting tissue.

At present women are fond of so-called “coccyx-tattoos” above the bottom which accent the natural form of the female body.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

For women with bigger breasts it's recommendable to use the tattooist's experience by choosing a design. Especially at this body-part the tattoo can distort terribly. In funny moments I recommend a penguin which will change into an eel within a few years! Everybody's laughing but the example is not as erroneous as it seems.

First of all little animals, figures or symmetrical signs will change at this body-part. Flowers for instance would be better. If once a leaf or a blossom grows longer or broader the picture won't look worse.

Seldom women want to get tattooed on obvious parts like the forearm.

Are there typical female or male designs?

It's up to everyone to decide for a design. There are men who want to have a sleeping baby-lion and there are also women who search for a viking. This is everybody's own decision.

Nowadays there's no typical female or male design.

What do I have to care for to let the tattoo heal out for best results?

First of all it's important to put no water onto the tattoo for a few days to avoid infections.

In my studio, we do the aftercare (cleaning and wiping until it's dry). On the first day it's only important to keep the tattoo dry. Wipe it by using a tissue. Then the wound is closed and ready to heal out.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

When everything's done right, there won't be a scab but at the end of the healing process there will be a casting of the skin such as after sunburn. Until that time there should be no water onto the tattoo. Also don't touch it with the fingers, even while itching!

Important is also to wear egal clothes because fussy cloth -like the inside of sweat-shirts- will stick on the tattoo and could thereby cause an infection, too. Also take care of your bed-linen!

During the first 14 days there should be no sunburn or tanning-studio-visits.

Generally I recommend to use a sun-block-fluid while having holidays in the sun for the first year after tattooing to protect the colours.

The often seen plastic foil as protection for the fresh tattoo during the first days is -in my and the opinion of dermatologists- rubbish! The temperature which is developed between foil and skin gives -in connection with moisture- an ideal place for bacteria of all kinds which surely won't help the healing process! On the contrary there will be infections. Thru the "sweating" wound which can't close itself it's even possible that larger parts of the picture won't stay in the skin because of suppuration.

A reason why although many tattooists recommend it - generally noticed at so-called "Conventions" (events where you can see tattooists at work) - is that the shining picture beyond the foil looks better than one covered by a tissue.

Would you stick plastic foil onto burnt skin or any injury?

IV. TATTOOING AND HEALTH

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

Do I have to be afraid of an infection while getting tattooed?

Like mentioned in No. II it's important that the tattooist takes fresh colours for every customer. Besides, the needles and the tubes have to be sterilized. There are different machines and medical fluids like used by dentists.

Perhaps it looks professionally if the artist uses a new needle for every customer, but one should never forget that the customer's blood also reaches the inside of the tube which therefore must be sterilized, too.

The tattooist has to wear gloves (a new pair for each customer) and has to follow the hygienic-instructions of the health-office.

When these assumptions are performed an infection thru tattooing is impossible.

Look around at the studio. If you think it's not clean, the tattooist looks unkempt and perhaps works by the influence of drugs or alcohol, please decamp!

Also remember keeping the tattoo clear during the healing process and not to touch with the fingers. Don't let others touch your tattoo. "Seeing by touching" is far spreaded.

Even the best artist is only able to leave a good work in your skin, while leaving his studio it's up to you.

Is there any sickness known as a result of tattooing?

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

Not in a good studio with sterile work and right care.

If an inexperienced tattooist is trying to tattoo he may hurt the roots of the hair which is not generally dangerous for health but could cause permanent problems. A healed out tattoo should feel like normal skin. When the roots are damaged the skin is no longer equal and won't become so again. Especially when sun-tanned, the tattooed part will lift up from the rest of the skin, mostly accompanied by strong itching. It could also happen that the skin cells at this part get cancerous by a period of time.

Does tattooing by a professional have a bad influence on health?

No, absolutely not, in case the tattoo was done in the right way and clean.

In my shop even there are customers with skin problems like chronic inflammations. In case that part of skin is not inflamed by the time it should get tattooed the healing process won't be disturbed.

Many doctors are controlling the blood of tattooed persons immediately to find a liver infection. This happens because of the "specialists and their clean work" as mentioned in this book.

Do tattoos have an influence on health at all?

Like mentioned in No. 1 many cultures used tattoos to increase the healing process or heal out rheumatism.

Nowadays this tradition is mostly damaged. But there is a connection with the far spreaded and

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

meanwhile medically accepted acupuncture.

Formerly they also influenced special for the hurting responsible points of nerves by stitching.

Could there be a consequence in my mind after I got my tattoo?

At a lot of my customers I saw increased self-confidence. A right chosen tattoo accents the personality. One shows the own individuality and also independence.

Some who got tattooed by a fast idea repented after a more or less short time. Either they couldn't identify with the -often very strange- design or couldn't stand the hints of others. This can't happen when it's well-thought.

The opinion of some outstanding persons, tattoos would cause the one to become mind-sick, is wrong. In my experience there are psychopaths both with and without tattoos.

Did ever a customer become fainted or did one try to escape?

Sometimes a customer feels dizzy, especially when it's the first time getting a tattoo.

Thereby excitement plays a leading part. I beg my customers to let me know immediately but thru my long-lasting experience I recognize by myself when it's time for a break. Therefore my new customers seldom become fainted. After a little while lying down with increased legs the customer feels well again.

Like mentioned this mostly happens in connection with excessive excitement. Often one didn't sleep well and ate nothing. In this case the body's reaction is normal. Customer's with low

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

blood-pressure I recommend to drink a glass of champagne before getting tattooed. It has a good effect for the blood-circulation and also against the excitement. But: Only one glass! Too much alcohol will thinner the blood which is not good while tattooing.

Only once I saw a lady taking a flight off the chair. She left the studio in enormous speed, like running for her life! I was only trying to shave her strong-haired calf! After she was away somebody described to me what happened before. He has told her I would do the tattoo by the razor-knife! I haven't seen them both again....

Is tattooing dangerous while pregnancy?

The baby won't be born already tattooed but I recommend to wait until it's born.

On the one hand the baby feels every little excitement of the mother, on the other hand the bodys of the most pregnant women change forms a lot before and after the birth so that the picture will be deformed.

V. GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT TATTOOING

Are there also stars in your shop?

A lot of them, but I'll never tell names. It's like the doctor's secrecy! I tattooed many rock-

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

musicians, actors, football-players, singers etc.

Also so-called “better persons” as bankers, pilotes, architects and engineers are counting to my regular customers. One do they all have in common: I treat them the same way as the other customers. They are not noticed more or less and don't want to be.

The german word “Sie” which means the solutation of a person one doesn't know is by the way unusual in a tattoo-studio because there are only like-minded people. Tattooed persons are free personalities and act self-confident. This doesn't mean that they are more dangerous in any kind as others.

What kind of customers does usually come to you?

The far spreaded opinion that only bikers want to get tattooed is absolutely not true. Also one must not be afraid of drunken, crying guys hanging around in the shop. A professional tattooist is interested in a comfortable atmosphere at his studio, without alcohol or other drugs.

By the amount of different customer's jobs it's never boring. The truth is: You will never find so many different and interesting people!

What do you think about tattoos on kids or teenagers?

Not much. First of all the youth taste and mind usually changes again and again so one can't be sure to find the right design for life.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

Second the youthful body will still grow which causes the tattoo to lose the form. There is a good comparison: Take a balloon, draw something on it and blow it up. That's the way a tattoo will look like while the body changes that much.

If a young person is absolutely convinced to want a tattoo and found the right design he/she needs a permission written by the parents.

Is there an age-limit on the top?

No, not for this form of art. Most of my customers are between 18 and 40 years old.

My eldest customer is at the age of 86. To my question whether he still wants to get tattooed he replied: "My girlfriend likes it so much!"

Meanwhile there are a striking amount of ladies over 50 getting most different designs and thinking to be totally "cool". This opinion is mine, too! Hundred percent!

Does Bodybuilding in extreme ways have influence on the tattoo?

If a customer gets a tattoo while "normal formed" and increases the sporting activities as much until his upper arm becomes double sized the experience says the picture won't grow same way but goes to the backside of the arm. On the opposite pictures become ugly by decreased muscles while the skin goes limp at the same time.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

But a common training with normal muscular increase won't have bad influence on the tattoos. The mentioned effects concern only *extreme* bodybuilding! And the double-sized upper arm won't be reached by many people.

Why do tattoos become blue-like after 30 - 40 years?

Every tattoo is sinking deeper into the skin by the course of time. Because the skin looks like a white transparent paper the colour seems to be blue.

Every tattoo can be refreshed so it looks totally new!

You must not be afraid of getting a green-like tattoo after a few years like it's often seen in really old tattoos. The colour which was used by various parts of the society was most time an own mixture out of melted shoe-soles and other things. We use well-choosen deep-black tattoo-colour!

How far do freckles influence the tattoo?

Weaker freckles don't have any influence. Stronger one's seem to absorb the colour from the top of the skin. This means that they succeed against the tattoo-colour and re-appear after the healing process.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

How many customers do come again to get another one or even more tattoos?

More than half of my customers I see a second time or more often.

By the time a kind of family relationship is developing. I once was godfather, witness to a marriage....

That's best advertising for a tattooist and also a sign of trust and a proof that I did it the right way.

Mostly it goes like this: One has a beautiful tattoo and loves to look at it and to show it to others. Then suddenly one would also like this or that.....and so they come again and again....

Did they ever bring you designs you refused to tattoo?

Sometimes I refused to tattoo a customer's design because it didn't look good even on the paper. Indirectly below every tattoo my name is written and I didn't want anybody to know that I was the "artist".

That shouldn't mean that I refuse to tattoo customer's own designs generally. Some brought really wonderful designs which grew up to real artwork. At other designs there were only missing little corrections.

But if I'm sure the design will look terrible in the skin, I would tattoo it against my persuasion. And I wouldn't do a favour to my customer for the long run in that case.

Generally I refuse to do political or anti-religious designs.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

Are there religious reasons against tattooing?

Christians wore their signs tattooed at the forearm since the earliest days.

The Catholic Church didn't raise an objection till now. I also tattooed Muslims, but of course I don't ask everyone for his religious profession.

By the way: If someone tells you the words out of the Holy Bible:

“Beware of the ‘Signed’!” - tell that one it's only meant for those who were signed by God himself.

Is there a connection between tattoos and pervert games (like S/M practices)?

There are surely some groups of persons who take tattooing each other or burning patterns into the skin as a sexual rite.

The fact to see only that kind of people on TV who bring the art of tattooing to a bad standing by the society makes me sad. Also many times at talk-shows present tattooists and their customers were insulted and shown as not very intelligent.

But: More and more TV-Stars, models, musicians, actors, Big-Brother-actors etc. show their eye-catching tattoos and are successful (and highly intelligent). So we shouldn't lose our hope!

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

Is it true that sailors are tattooed more often than people with other occupations?

Today this is no longer true. The myth originates from the time when many young men became sailors to see the world. To have a proof for staying in foreign countries and to take a lasting souvenir they got a tattoo at each harbour.

Popular designs were hearts, flowers, flags, women's portraits or names, often in connection with the date.

Which position belongs to tattooing in other countries, especially in the dictated nations?

In dictated nations tattooing usually is not allowed. It seems to be part of the dictator's influence to the people's personalities. If it is tattooed then it's done secretly.

In the asiatic countries, however, tattooing belongs to their tradition. For instance one gets a special design after reaching an aim at a sports contest.

It's a great honour for those to get that sign.

Why is tattooing illegal in some countries/states?

This law was given by the same statesmen who also enacted laws against expression of opinions, equality of rights and the development of an own personality.

Peter Laubach
All about the art of tattooing

It's only a question of time until that men have to give up their attitude, because people's voice becomes louder and louder in our century!

Which general advice would you give as a professional art tattooist?

A tattoo is a decision for the whole life. Everybody should decide for him/herself alone.

If one has to ask the wife/husband, mother, friend, sister/brother or father, rabbi, prayer...first - then it's better to get no tattoo!

Finally the body is the only thing which you'll have for lifetime!