TATTOOS, ARTS AND GRAPHIC NARRATIVES

16 - 17 June 2022
(Musée d’art et d’histoire Paul Eluard, Saint-Denis)

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The international and interdisciplinary project La littérature dans la peau, coordinated by Anne Chassagnol (Université Paris 8, TransCrit) and Brigitte Friant-Kessler (Université Polytechnique Hauts de France, LARSH - DeSripto), aims at exploring connections between literature and tattoos from a variety of perspectives. Following a series of two conferences, one on tattoos and fiction (2019), and one on performances, tattoos and texts, subsequently published in La Peaulogie #4 & #5, they are pleased to announce their third international event on tattoos, arts and graphic narratives.

We seek proposals that can cover topics related to tattoos, graphic narratives and the arts from historical and aesthetic perspectives. We are especially interested in papers which address the connections between tattoos and other fields such as anthropology, ethnography, sociology, the history of medicine and politics. Papers focusing on the art of drawing tattoos in travel writings, the fictionalised figure of the tattoo artist, the narrative potential of the drawn motif are particularly welcome. Participants may explore the word and image relationship in literature whether from the perspective of the tattooed, or that of those who tattoo. Literary genres may range from graphic narratives (comics, graphic novels, caricature, illustrated fiction) to picture books. We would also be interested in papers discussing tattoos and visual representations of tattoos from the vantage point of professionals who are involved in the tattoo business. Tattooing being connected to other forms of graphic arts such as graffiti, for instance, implies marking on surfaces and textures that are skin-related but not necessarily dermic (ceramics, fabrics, textiles, etc.).
Potential topics may include but are not limited to the following categories:

Section 1 - Tattoos and nonfiction
- Drawings, emblems, inscriptions of all kind in anthropological and medical literature
- Naval, medical and scientific handbooks or treatises
- Dissemination and preservation of sketchbooks, annotated and illustrated memoirs, archival material
- Interpreting drawing on skin (Picts, mummies, gang code, convicts, post mortem identification)
- Travel writings and explorers’ memoirs
- Codification, religious and legal documents (Leviticus, Code of Pomare)

Section 2 - Tattoos, visual writing and illustrated narratives
- Tattoos, motifs and fictional worlds
- Preserving and keeping a drawn tattoo (R. Dahl, ‘Skin’)
- Tattoo artists in fiction (The Electric Michelangelo, The Illustrated Man)
- Illustrated narratives and tattoos
- Autobiographies of tattooed performers (Captain Costentenus)
- Anthropodermic bibliogephy
- Memoirs and scrapbooks of tattoo artists (George Burchett’s Memoirs of a Tattooist)
- The tattooee-tattooist relationship in fiction and the meaning of drawing
- Tattoos and graphic narratives (comics, graphic novels, manga, caricature)

Section 3 - Tattoos, arts and other media
- Tattoos and printing processes (etching, engraving)
- Portraits of the tattoo artist as a painter
- Tattoos in paintings (J. Bosch, CF. Goldie, G. Lindauer, O. Dix, B. West)
- Tattoos and museum collections
- Ink and drawing from page to skin (Irezumi)
- Tattooing and other media (ceramics, marble, dolls, scrimshaw, graffiti)

Paper submission and deadlines

We welcome submissions in English and French.

- Contributors are invited to submit abstracts for 20 mn presentations.
- Proposal deadline: (400 words max+ 5 keywords + a short biographical note): March 1, 2022
- Notification of acceptance: March 7, 2022
- Proposals should be jointly sent to the following email addresses:
  anne.chassagnol@univ-paris8.fr
  bfriantk@uphf.fr

⚠️ In view of the current pandemic situation, we are planning one day on site at the museum in Paris and one day online via Zoom.

Cover Illustration: Augustus “Gus” Wagner (American, 1872-1941) from Souvenirs of the Travels and Experiences of the Original Gus Wagner, Globe Trotter & Tattoo Artist scrapbook, c. 1897-1941, Leather, paper, photographic print, ink, thread (Courtesy South Street Seaport Museum).