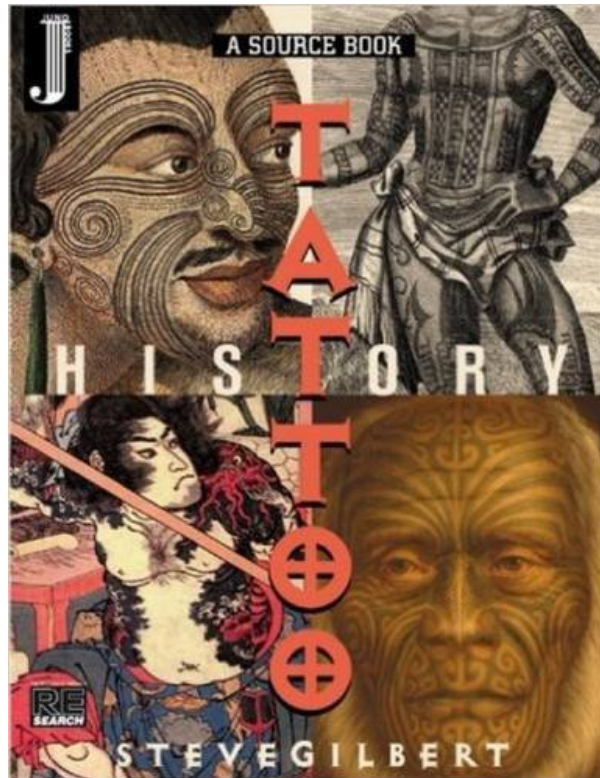
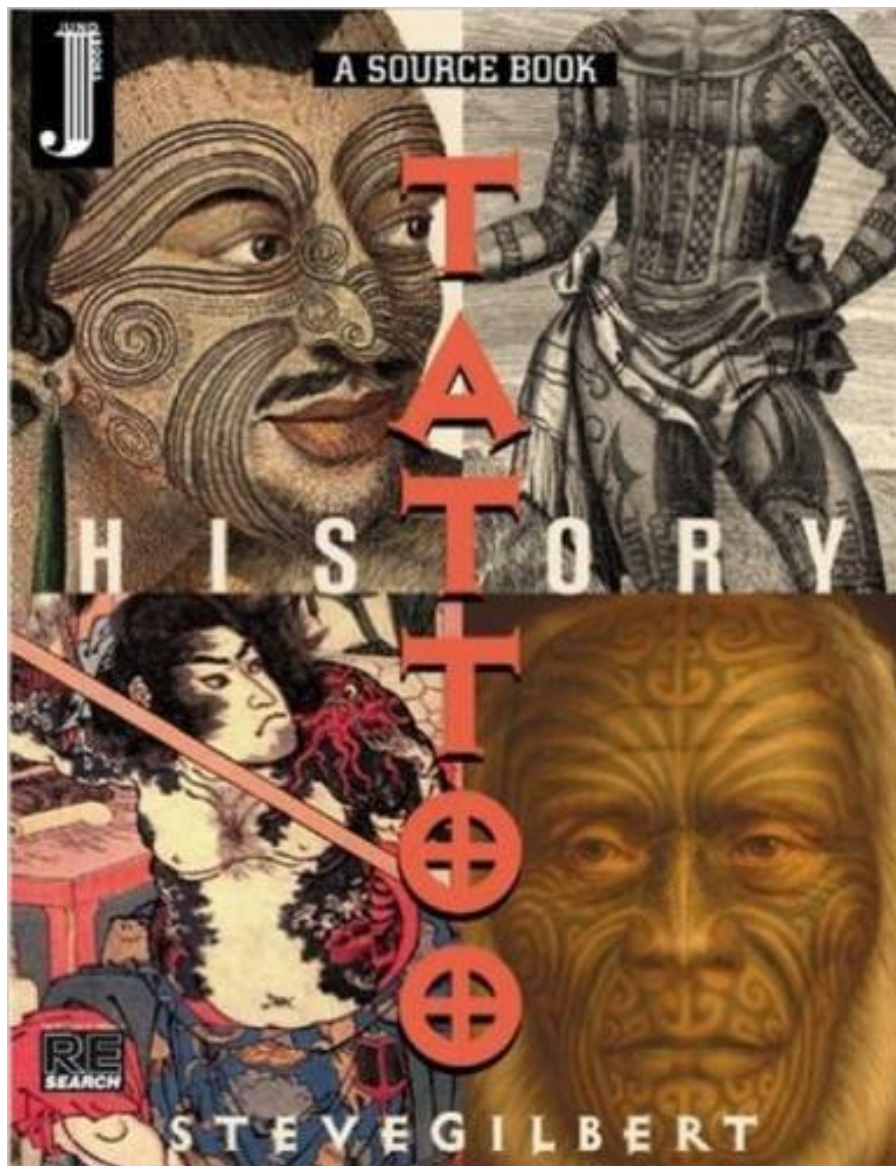


THE TATTOO HISTORY SOURCE BOOK BY STEVE GILBERT



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From Library Journal

Body piercing and tattooing have seen a resurgence in America in the last decade. Sometimes referred to as an aspect of the "new tribalism," body arts harkens to practices usually associated with so-called primitive societies. Medical illustrator, writer, and part-time tattoo artist Gilbert seeks to explore the historical depth and aesthetic variations of tattoos as permanent body decoration. The text consists mostly of excerpts from the works of anthropologists, explorers, physicians, artists, and others and dates from Greek and Roman times to the present. The organization can be confusing, but Gilbert provides contextual essays for individual chapters, which are arranged primarily geographically, with the deepest coverage on Oceania, Japan, and Europe/America. The illustrations, ranging from crude line drawings to full-color photos, are perhaps the most fascinating element in the book. Unlike some books on tattooing, the images do not emphasize the salacious. While the text is not academic in tone, Gilbert supports his research with an extensive reference citation list and bibliography. Capable of entertaining and enlightening both young enthusiasts and anthropologists, this is recommended for both public and academic libraries. Eugene C. Burt, Seattle
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About the Author

Gilbert is a medical illustrator and freelance writer who works part-time as a tattoo artist.

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THE TATTOO HISTORY SOURCE BOOK BY STEVE GILBERT PDF

The Tattoo History Source Book is an exhaustingly thorough, lavishly illustrated collection of historical records of tattooing throughout the world, from ancient times to the present. Collected together in one place, for the first time, are texts by explorers, journalists, physicians, psychiatrists, anthropologists, scholars, novelists, criminologists, and tattoo artists.

A brief essay by Gilbert sets each chapter in an historical context. Topics covered include the first written records of tattooing by Greek and Roman authors; the dispersal of tattoo designs and techniques throughout Polynesia; the discovery of Polynesian tattooing by European explorers; Japanese tattooing; the first 19th-century European and American tattoo artists; tattooed British royalty; the invention of the tattooing machine; and tattooing in the circus.

The anthology concludes with essays by four prominent contemporary tattoo artists: Tricia Allen, Chuck Eldridge, Lyle Tuttle, and Don Ed Hardy. The references at the end of each section will provide an introduction to the extensive literature that has been inspired by the ancient-but-neglected art of tattooing. Because of its broad historical context, The Tattoo History Source Book will be of interest to the general reader as well as art historians, tattoo fans, neurasthenics, hebephrenics, and cyclothemics.

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Gilbert is a medical illustrator and freelance writer who works part-time as a tattoo artist.

Most helpful customer reviews

39 of 39 people found the following review helpful.

the book to grab if you can have only one on tattooing

By Merrily Baird

Were you a fan of tattooing who had been stranded on that proverbial desert isle and allowed only half dozen favorite musical discs and but one or two books, it's a good bet that you would want Steve Gilbert's "Tattoo History: A Source Book" to keep you company.

A somewhat uneven quality of writing and of academic documentation mark this book. Even so, "Tattoo History: A Source Book" is an impressive work that reflects serious research, and it is a tour de force in comfortably handling material that ranges widely over time and space. On a subject that is so often dominated by photographs and essays that emphasize above all Japanese-style tattooing, it is a delight to learn as well of the long tradition of tattooing in the Pacific Isles, of the role tattoos played in the ancient Middle East, and of early 20th-century tattooing in the West. Gilbert's extensive use of source material--effectively translated from many languages--lends the book its gravitas and contributes significantly to his success in instilling in the reader an increased sense of respect for the tattoo arts.

Finally I should note that even if this book did not open new vistas for the reader, the essays which bookend "Tattoo History" would alone be worth the price of admission. Gilbert's opener, "Confessions of a Tattoo Addict," although but two pages in length, is an evocative essay that relates a fascination with tattoos to his coming of age in the 1940s. Meanwhile, the lengthier closing essay by Don Ed Hardy documents the resurgence of tattooing over the past several decades, the cultural cross-fertilization that has occurred, and the slow but growing acceptance of tattooing as a legitimate art form by the more conventional arts world.

19 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

Instant classic

By kevm

Not just a compendium of illustrations, this collection of essays, interviews, historical accounts and yes, some nice pictures, pulls together a great deal of the cultural history and tradition associated with tattooing. Well written, very wide-reaching and very entertaining. Gilbert is careful to detail where all his information comes from, adding to the work's authority and allowing interested readers to look more deeply into specific topics. This is a winner.

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

awesome book!

By T. Devlin

While I can not even come close to the great review that the previous reviewer wrote, I can in fact tell you that this is one of the most interesting books that I have read on the history of tattoos. I myself have 3 tattoos and since I got them, I have been enthralled with the history that surrounds them as well as trying to figure out where the stigma that is currently attached to them came from. I sat down to just leaf through this book and I had to read the entire thing, it was so completely interesting. If you have any interest in tattooing at all, this is a must read!

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