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– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

Explore the history and legacy of tattooing  
at the American Swedish Historical Museum.

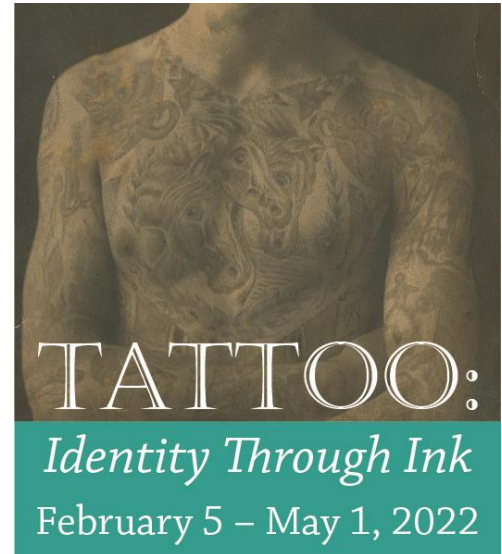
**Tattoo: Identity Through Ink**  
February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022- May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

**Philadelphia, PA-** For more than 5,000 years, tattoos have helped document the history of humanity one painful mark at a time. *Tattoo: Identity Through Ink* tells the story of why people have adorned their bodies with tattoos, from practices in Indigenous cultures to sailors in the 19th century to motorcycle gangs in the 1960s, to athletes and celebrities today. The exhibition showcases the last 150 years of tattooing in America, from the sideshows in the early part of the 20th century to modern celebrity tattoos. Today, tattoos have never been more popular, and they are so much more than decoration. They are a powerful visual language of the skin, and, like texts, they permanently record memories, life stories, and personal achievements.

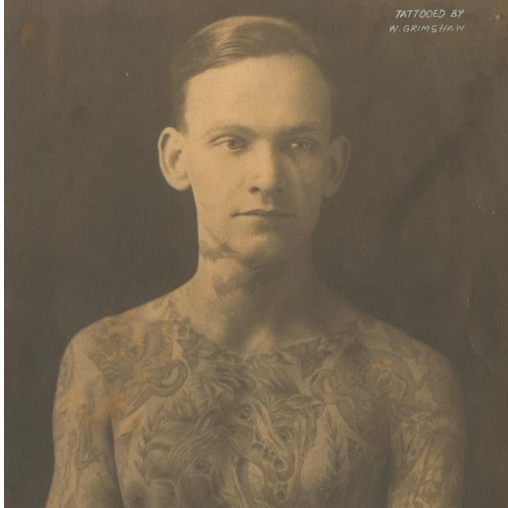
A highlight of this exhibition is the story of influential tattoo artist Amund Dietzel, a Norwegian immigrant who became one of the most important tattoo artists of his time. Dietzel, known as the “Master of Milwaukee,” rose to fame throughout America’s circuses and sideshows and would go on to open a shop in Milwaukee. At 14, Dietzel got his first tattoo to commemorate his time at sea as a sailor – an anchor on his left hand between his thumb and forefinger. This later inspired his travels around North America, where he tattooed lumberjacks, sailors, and merchant marines.

For those interested in Scandinavian connections, the exhibit celebrates artists like Norwegian Johan Frederik Knudsen and Norwegian-American Amund Dietzel, explores the question of whether or not Vikings had tattoos, and highlights the rise of the modern Neo-Nordic style of tattooing while putting the Scandinavian history and traditions of body ornamentation in context with many cultures.

*This traveling exhibit was curated by Dr. Lars Krutak and is organized by Vesterheim, the national Norwegian-American Museum and Folk Art School and supported by funds from the John K. and Luise V. Hanson Foundation, and Jon and Mary Hart. It is made possible at ASHM by gifts from the ASHM Auxiliary, Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, Midsommarklubben, and an anonymous foundation. Funding for the American Swedish Historical Museum is supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.*



Images:



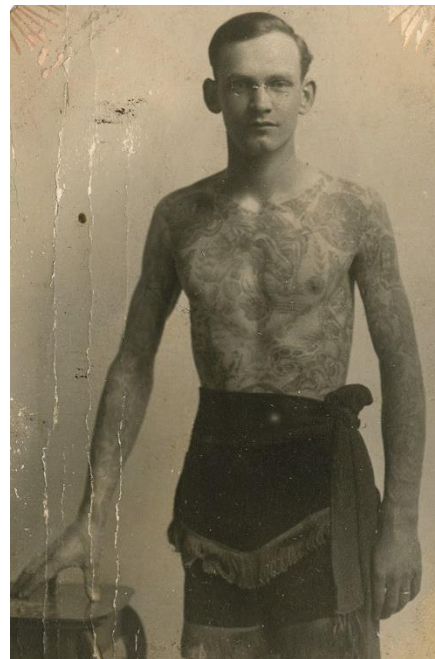
**Image 1: Amund Dietzel, 1914**  
Amund Dietzel, a Norwegian sailor who immigrated to America in 1907, learned to tattoo by hand on transatlantic voyages. Dietzel settled in Milwaukee and is one of the most celebrated tattoo artists of the early twentieth century. Collection of Jonathan Reiter / Solid State Tattoos / Milwaukee WI



**Image 2: Dietzel Tattoo Flash**  
Dietzel called three countries home: Norway, where he was born; Canada, where he was shipwrecked; and the United States, where he lived for most of his life. This is a piece of Dietzel's flash, painted artworks meant to attract potential clients and give them a design to select. Collection of Jonathan Reiter / Solid State Tattoos / Milwaukee WI



**Image 3: Japanese-style back piece, in progress.**  
Tattoo by Brock Swenson / Brock's Valhalla Tattoo, Decorah IA, 2019.



**Image 4: Amund Dietzel, 1918**

## Exhibition Events:

### **Exhibition Opens: *Tattoo: Identity Through Ink***

#### **Public Guided Museum Tours**

**Saturday, February 5th**

**1:00 pm & 3:00 pm**

Gain a new perspective on Museum exhibitions with a guided tour. The tour will include current galleries and the new exhibition *Tattoo: Identity Through Ink*. \$5 for members and \$15 for non-members. Space is limited, pre-registration required.

### ***Tattoo: Identity Through Ink* Villain Arts Reception**

**Thursday, February 24th**

**7:00 – 9:00 pm**

Join us as we welcome the Villain Arts Tattoo Convention to Philadelphia! Artists, fans, and body art culture enthusiasts are welcome to gather for a fun evening reception exploring the exhibit. This is a free event, cash bar presented in partnership with Yards Brewery.

## About ASHM:

Visit the American Swedish Historical Museum to learn the forgotten history of Swedes in Philadelphia. Built in 1926 during the sesquicentennial, the museum's unique interior is divided into a dozen galleries designed to highlight Scandinavian influences in America. The galleries explore a range of topics including the New Sweden Colony, women's history, scientific innovations, and Swedish craft arts such as glass making and woodworking. ASHM hosts a variety of programs from Swedish holiday celebrations like Midsommarfest and Lucia, to history lectures, an ABBA Dance Party, virtual tours, and family programs like Toddler Time.

The mission of the ASHM is to welcome all people to explore cultural identity through the story of Swedes and Scandinavians in America. ASHM is a community dedicated to preserving and interpreting material culture, and is alive with celebrations, exhibitions, and learning experiences. No matter your age or interests, ASHM has something for you! Visit our website [www.americanswedish.org](http://www.americanswedish.org) to learn more.

The American Swedish Historical Museum is located in scenic FDR Park at 1900 Pattison Avenue in South Philadelphia near the Sports Complex. Plenty of free parking is available. For those taking public transportation, the Broad Street Subway's NRG/Pattison Avenue stop is within walking distance or SEPTA's Route 17 (to Pattison) can bring you right to the Museum.

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