



Tattoo: Identity Through Ink

February 5, 2022 – May 1, 2022

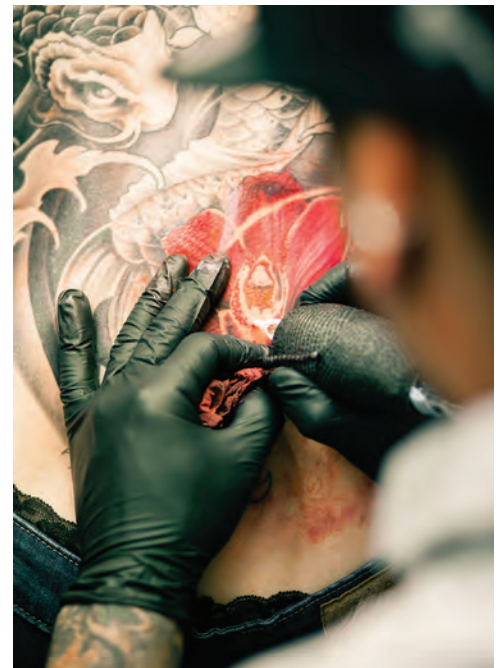
Tattoos aren't just skin deep. They are vehicles for marking meaning, memory, ritual, community, and beauty on our bodies. Tattoos have been a part of human civilization for 5000 years, but more people have tattoos now than at any point in human history.

The American Swedish Historical Museum will open a fascinating exhibition on the history of tattoo art featuring stunning images of tattoos across the globe, various tattoo tools and instruments, and the story of Norwegian-American tattoo artist Amund Dietzel. *Tattoo: Identity Through Ink* tells the story of why people have adorned their bodies with tattoos, from thousand-year-old practices in Indigenous cultures to sailors in the 19th century to motorcycle gangs in the 1960s, to athletes and celebrities today.

The exhibit traces the global history of tattooing, from Ötzi the Iceman to Indigenous tattoo rituals to the history of tattoos in Europe. The exhibition will focus on tattooing in Scandinavia, which is home to the one of the oldest continually operating tattoo shops, and will investigate whether or not Vikings participated in any tattoo rituals.

Tattoo: Identity Through Ink depicts the last 150 years of tattooing in America, from the sideshows in the early part of the 20th century to modern celebrity tattoos. 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," had a career of over 80 years whose designs inspire traditional tattoo artists today. Born in Kristiania (now Oslo), Norway, in 1891, Amund Dietzel would join a Norwegian merchant fleet at 14. At this young age he decided to get a tattoo to commemorate his time at sea – an anchor on his left hand between his thumb and forefinger – a move that would later inspire his travels around North America, where he tattooed lumberjacks, sailors, and merchant marines.



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Note from the Director

It seems that there is seismic shift happening in the world which I will call a generational transfer of material goods! With this shift, the museum is being contacted by an increasing number of people all over the country that are interested in donating their family's treasured belongings.

This is both a blessing and a responsibility for ASHM's staff as we want to balance adding interesting materials to our collection while at the same time making sure we do not accept more than we can care for and interpret. To do so, we tend to ask potential donors lots of questions. Were these things passed down in your family? Who brought them to the U.S.? When? Were these family treasures protected and kept stored away or something your family used regularly? These questions help us understand how an object fits into the story of Scandinavians in America.

Next, we consider whether the museum already has in our collection. Will this be our 4th copper coffee pot? If so, what makes it different than the ones we currently have? Is it in better condition? Do we know more about its maker or owner? Which object has more historical, social, and cultural value? And then there is the question of whether we have the space to keep it. Will it go on display immediately or be placed in storage? Once the staff has the information, we give our proposal to an advisory committee, who also weighs in before the museum's board approves the acquisition. So, please, if you have offered something to us, have patience with us as we consider these questions.

Many of the items we are offered are not appropriate for the museum's collection. However, if donors would still like to give them, we might use them for educational purposes or sell them at Mormor's Attic, a popular part of our annual Christmas Market. In this way, one person's treasured Swedish Christmas decorations or Royal Copenhagen cups or souvenirs from Norway can find an appreciative new owner and become a part of another person's story.

Tracey Beck

Tracey Beck

Tattoo continued from front cover



Dietzel worked in many cities including New Haven, Connecticut, Albany, New York, Detroit, Michigan, and Columbus, Ohio before settling in Milwaukee where he practiced his art in an arcade at #948 Plankton Avenue. Dietzel's tattoo style was based on 1920s fashion and art deco themes. He was one of the first tattoo artists to popularize snake-like designs, as well as the dragon, eagle, and tiger-like tattoos. One of his most popular designs features the head of a woman which was coined a "Dietzel's Girl" after the artist. The women depicted are often adorned with lavish masquerade masks, reminiscent of the women performers he met while tattooing at circuses and sideshows throughout America. During his years



on the sideshow circuit, Dietzel traveled with friend and fellow tattoo artist William Grimshaw. Dietzel ended his career just a few years before Milwaukee banned tattooing in 1967.

We hope you will join us to learn about how tattoos have shaped identity, spirituality, personal accomplishments, rebellion, and desire through the art form's worldwide history.

This traveling exhibit 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.



Nordic Rya Rug Making

By Melinda Purcell Byrd

Are you familiar with rya rugs—the woolly pile rugs dating back to the days of the Vikings? If you are of Scandinavian descent, you might have a family heirloom rya that has been passed down for generations. Or, if you lived through the midcentury modern era, you might have fallen in love with the rya rugs and wall hangings that were featured in *House Beautiful*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *House & Garden* magazines. You might have even purchased a rya kit from Scandinavia through a distributor in the USA and made your own!

My grandparents, William and Angelina (Bill and Angie) Lundgren, were among the few distributors for rya supplies back in the 1950s. They sold kits designed and packaged with woven backings from the Bergå Company in Sweden. From about 2012 to the present, I have been actively following in their footsteps. At the beginning of the pandemic, in March 2020, I published my mission of 9 years: *Rya Rugs—Design and Make Your Own*. I am trying to bring awareness back to rya rugs!

For history buffs, you might be interested to know that ryas evolved to become an integral part of Nordic life. Their value was made clear by the fact that they were collected as taxes and integrated into the lives of royalty as bed coverings and wall-hangings. Those living near the water depended on the boat rya (*båtrya*) and rya cloaks for warmth. Traveling over snowy roads by sleds was challenging but survivable under the shaggy ryas. When the industrial revolution began in the late 1700s to mid-1800s, handspun and hand-woven products were replaced by mechanized textiles. Ryas, along with other traditional handcrafts, began their decline in popularity.



Melinda Byrd holding up a rya rug hanging

World War II had a significant influence on the rapid expansion of Nordic design in many European countries as well as the United States and Canada. In Germany, the Bauhaus School of Art, established in 1919 in Weimar, had been an incubator of modern design and fine arts and crafts in Europe. As Hitler rose to power, the modernists were forced to flee from Germany. The Bauhaus lost its power as the epicenter of modern International Design. Soon after the war, countries that shunned Germany's totalitarian advances embraced new Scandinavian Design with a vengeance.

The people of the United States were ready to resume life with a new perspective after the war. The economy surged optimistically, and "the American Dream" began to form. The returning soldiers wanted to settle and experience normalcy. The ornate décor of previous decades was abandoned for a simpler, less cluttered, chicer look like the L-shaped California home or the modern Cape Cod-style with open-plan interiors and rough-hewn rafters.

Between 1950 and 1980, tens of thousands of Americans made off-loom rya rugs. Several major Scandinavian traditional fiber arts suppliers were available in the United States, such as Bergå, Borgs, C.U.M. Rya, Marks, and Nordiskas.

But what is in style today may fall out of fashion tomorrow. As suddenly as the rya fervor began, it also faded quickly in the mid-70s. Some believe that the price became prohibitive. Another possibility for ryas' decline in popularity may have been the end of the "mid-century modern" era.

Today, as in the 1950s, we are going through a period of change in attitudes about handwork. Knitters, for example, are now socializing in knitting circles and knitting in public. Rya enthusiasts are starting to ask about and even demand supplies. Is it possible that our hands have been so busy punching buttons on keyboards and smartphones that we now crave creating more tangible and textural work from our hands?

Winter is coming. In Scandinavia, the whole family often worked on the rya during the dark winter months where the sun barely climbs over the horizon. Working with bright colors on the rya helps keep spirits high. Maybe having a rya project in your lap this winter will brighten your spirits and bring you a connection to your ancestors. Why not sign up for our class to learn more and make a small rya?

The two part Rya Rug Workshop is taking place on January 15th and January 22nd. Registration deadline is December 30th. Treat yourself to a creative experience or give as a gift!

Upcoming Events and Registration Info

To Register For Events

call 215-389-1776, or visit online at
www.americanswedish.org/events

There is always something going on at the American Swedish Historical Museum. See below for scheduled events. Please be aware that ASHM follows all Pennsylvania and Philadelphia COVID regulations regarding in-person gatherings. To fully comply and ensure the best possible experience, we are asking event attendees to please register early. If your plans change and you cannot attend, notify the Museum. Refunds for cancellations may be granted until the event or registration deadline to accommodate unexpected illness or inability to attend. Please refer to the Museum's website to confirm dates and other details. To register for events by phone, call (215) 389-1776. Online registration is available through each event listing.

MONTHLY PROGRAM:



Toddler Time

10:30 am - 11:30 am

The third Tuesday of each month ASHM offers specially designed programs to introduce Swedish culture through art, science, and literature in uniquely fun and creative ways to children ages 2 to 5 years old.

**Tuesday December 21, 2021-
Christmas Tomte**

**Tuesday January 18, 2022-
Keep Warm in Winter**

**Tuesday February 15, 2022-
Aurora Borealis**

**Tuesday March 15, 2022-
Whatever the Weather**



**Luciafest & Christmas Market
Saturday and Sunday,
December 4th and 5th
10:00 am - 4:00 pm**

Don't miss this magical holiday experience! The outdoor Christmas Market includes your favorite holiday deli items, Christmas decorations and gifts, and SWEA bakery treats. This year we will have several new vendors selling handmade items. Lucia processions are at 11am and 2pm. The Swedish Christmas Café will be selling holiday foods and sweets for your refreshment. Admission is free for members and all children under 4. \$5 for non-members 12 and over. Reservations are not required, but tickets may be purchased in advance on our website.

**Museum Tour & Glögg Tasting
Wednesday, December 29th
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

Join us for a gallery tour at 4 or 6 pm and learn about Scandinavian holiday traditions. Enjoy some glögg, Swedish pepparkakor and Danish aebleskiver between the tours at 5 pm. Space is limited. Register in advance to reserve your spot. \$5 for members and \$15 for non-members.

ASHM Virtual Member Chats: Favorite Scandinavian Recipes

**Wednesday, January 12th
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

All ASHM members are invited to this exclusive discussion group. Museum members will have the opportunity to gather as friends to socialize, learn more about the organization, and get a behind-the-scenes peek at collection objects and exhibits. This month we will discuss favorite Scandinavian recipes. This members-only program is free and held over Zoom. Visit our website to register for the program or become a member today!

Virtual Rya Rug Making with Melinda Byrd (Two Day Workshop)

**Saturday, January 15th 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Saturday, January 22nd 10:00 am - 11:00 am**

In this workshop you will create a 16" x 16" introductory rya project. You can choose your color scheme from 6 combinations of vintage Lundgren Rya wool. The two-part workshop fee is \$120 for members and \$130 for non-members, \$20 shipping fee. Registration deadline is December 30th.

Genealogy Meeting

**Saturday, January 29th
1:30 pm**

Gather with fellow ASHM members and explore the branches of your Swedish ancestry. Genealogy Club is a benefit of ASHM membership. Not a member, no problem! Just purchase a membership on the event registration, and you will receive a link for the meeting and your new membership packet in the mail.



**Pea Soup and Punch Dinner
Saturday, January 29th
6:30 pm**

Warm-up on a chilly winter's night with a bowl of Swedish yellow pea soup and a shot of punch. Dinner is served with

sharp cheese, bread, and dessert. Tickets are \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members per person. This year we will also offer a take-out dinner for two, \$35 for members and \$40 for non-members. Register by phone or online by January 24th.

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.

Exhibit Opens: Flying to Blåkulla:

Letters from an Easter Witch

Friday, February 11th

Just in time for the Easter season, ASHM will present a balcony exhibition on the Easter witch (*påskkäring*) mumming tradition focusing on the Easter letters (*påskbrev*) given to children during the holiday. The exhibition will feature handmade watercolors and drawings passed down through the Batchelor Family from artist and great-

grandmother Axeline Sahlin. The letters represent a truly intriguing archive of Swedish folk art, a beloved custom still celebrated in Sweden today. The exhibit is included with admission.



**Semlor and a Movie
Saturday, February 12th,
11:00 am**

Treat yourself to a rich semla - a cream and almond paste-filled Swedish pastry, along with a cup of hot coffee and a Swedish film.

Semlor are often eaten before the start of lent, the Swedish version of "Fat Tuesday." Event tickets are \$13 in advance and \$15 at the door. The ticket price includes one semla, additional semlor are \$6 each. Walk-ins welcome or pre-register by phone or online by February 11th.

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.

ExtrABBAganza Dance Party!

**Saturday, March 12th
7:00 - 10:00 pm**

ABBA's back, and so are we! What better place to celebrate the iconic music of ABBA than the American Swedish Historical Museum's 2nd Annual ExtrABBAganza Dance Party. Highlights of the evening will include a dancing and costume contest and live performance! The event will be held with limited capacity, and proof of vaccination is required at the door. See the website for current COVID requirements. Be sure to register before tickets sell out! \$35 members, \$45 nonmembers. 70's inspired attire is encouraged!

Virtual Guided Swedish Easter Candy Tasting Thursday, March 24th

6:30 pm

Easter witches, feathered branches, paper mâché eggs, and candy scavenger hunts? Sweden certainly has some unique ways of celebrating Easter! Join ASHM and Sweetish Candy as we explore these traditions. Swedish candy expert and store founder Tyler Graybeal will lead a tasting of treats that you will want to be sure end up in your basket this year! The event costs \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. Registration includes one candy kit. Candy kits for the event can be picked up from either the Museum or the Sweetish Candy store in Lancaster, PA, or mailed for an additional fee. The registration deadline for mail orders is March 11th.

Images from Recent Events

Photographs by ASHM Staff



▲ Birgitta Davis receives the Amandus Johnson award during the Annual Meeting.



▲ Served pastries from our Fika! exhibition opening.



▲ ▼ An assembled kransekake made by Torben Christiansen, during virtual demonstration.



▲ Our first plogging event, collaborated with FDR Park.



▲ Language classes tour the new Fika! exhibition.



▲ Diners during the Crayfish Dinner Party.



▲ Katherine Elliott, museum educator at the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo, during Virtual Field Trip Friday.



◀ During our first Toddler Time, children joined on a Dala horse hunt through the museum and met real life horses Penny and Chorus.



ASHM Dedication: June 28, 1938



◀ Thomas Keels online lecture: The Park, the Prince, and the Plan.

Contributions

Do you want to make a contribution?

There are several easy ways to support us. Visit our web page <http://www.americanswedish.org/support/donate> or call **215-389-1776** for more information.

New Members

July 15, 2021- October 1, 2021

Sustaining

Gerald G. Fornay

Organizational

William Jeane Memorial Library

Household

Richard & Mary Anne Edwards
Ruth Ericksson
John Gibson
Kathy Gillis
Tim Göranson
Rena Hartman Rothauge
Carolyn Jonasson
Jenny Karlsson
Andrew Kreamer
Greg & Lynne Landrey
Earl Lindgren
Charles & Marlene McAllister
Leslie Morris Smith
Russeel Newquist
Justine Reel

Individual

Sonja Bensen
Kristoffer Bohnberger
Karen Brauer
George Denliker
Tracy Weber

Student/Seniors

Donna Draper
Barry R. Furrow
Deanna Kemler
Elizabeth Peres Luva
Donna Melone
Denise Paley & Rob Leavens
Daniel J. Palmo
Anisa Ray
Rick Rice
Roger J. Rider
Joanna Schlesinger
Agneta Unnerud Thompson
Terry Weicker

In Memoriam

The ASHM community lost some very special members in the last few months. We send our condolences to their friends and family.

Bo Bergqvist
Michael D'Andrea
Eric Sellin
Lorraine Waldron

Annual Giving and Contributions

July 15, 2021- October 1, 2021

Serafimer

Anonymous
ASHM Auxiliary

Vasa

Kay Ford
Kathleen Petrilli
Swedish Council of America
Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation

Gold

Karin Bergqvist
Hope Rosenlund
Lorraine & Richard Waldron,
In honor of Gittan Davis

Silver

Marianne Baeckstrom
Ulla Martz,
In memory Anna-Marie M. Martz

Bronze

Bill & Tracey Beck
Margaret M. Friel
Jere & Birgitta Paddock
Linda M. Stutz

Friend

Christer & Patty Baeckstrom
Kristina Gustafson Hofmann
Ellyn Miller
Carolyn Peterson

Collections Contributions



This year the museum has received numerous donations from all over the country! Museums are also evaluating their collections which greatly benefited ASHM this past fall. The Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission (PHMC) deaccessioned three objects from their collection, collected by the late Robert R. Logan and his wife, Mrs. Sarah Wetherill Logan, on their travels around the world. Their estate, "Sarobia," was given to the PHMC in 1956, along with many of the objects they used to decorate their home. The collection features a 19th-century Rosemaling bowl, a Kasa, and an Arts & Crafts style pewter punch bowl designed by Danish silversmith Einar Dragsted in the 1920s, featuring cast lion handles.

The Rosemaling bowl is particularly intriguing as a fine example from the Hallingdal region of Norway. The bowl was used for beer pouring and was executed by a skilled rosemaling artist. According to one scholar, the red background, black leaves, and round forms are all hallmarks of bowls painted in Hallingdal. It was this region that originated the use of dots to create flowers. The owner of the bowl, or who the bowl was painted for, was Tollef Olsen. Olsen lived, owned, or worked at a farm in Hallingdal that started with the letter "L," which can be seen after his name on the protruding edge of the bowl.



Though the bowl is from Hallingdal (the Halling Valley), it is harder to pinpoint its exact origin and artist. It is believed the "z" carved into the base is the artist's mark, but further research is needed to discover who made the bowl.

Some elements, including the edge design, may tie the bowl to the Ål area of Hallingdal. We are happy to include these new objects into our collection, furthering our mission to tell the story of Swedish and Scandinavian cultural identity in America.

ASHM purchased a 19th-century piggin from an August 19 Pook & Pook Auction featuring the collection of Barbara A. & Fred Johnson of Rockford, Illinois. This small



wooden pail features two extended staves, making the form quite rare. Piggins were used to carry liquids like milk or grain to feed animals. It is believed the decorative paint was added at a later date. The painted surface includes flowers, wheat, articulated leaves, and the initials "KJD" at the center. Please visit the museum to see the piggin in its new home inside the Stuga!



Among the benefits of membership are:

- free admission to the Museum and library
- use of the ASHM Swedish Film Library borrowing system
- guest passes
- subscription to the newsletter
- 10% discount in the Museum Store
- discounts on admission to most events, workshops and Swedish language classes

For more information,
please call **215-389-1776**.

Please print all information as you wish it to appear on the membership mailings.

Return this form to:

American Swedish Historical Museum
Attn: Membership
1900 Pattison Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19145-5901

 Please detach here and return.

Gift Membership Form

Gift Recipient

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> \$35 \$30 : Senior/Student | <input type="radio"/> \$75 : Organizational | <input type="radio"/> \$500 : Patron |
| <input type="radio"/> \$50 \$45 : Individual | <input type="radio"/> \$125 : Friend | |
| <input type="radio"/> \$65 \$55 : Household | <input type="radio"/> \$250 : Sustaining | <input type="radio"/> \$2,500 : Life |

Make check payable to ASHM or Charge my: VISA | MasterCard | Discover

Account # _____

Exp Date _____

Sec. Code _____

Zip _____

From: _____

Message: _____

The official registration and financial information of ASHM may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Your membership contribution to the American Swedish Historical Museum is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

New Festive Displays

ASHM has received a wonderful donation of metal Christmas tree sculptures that will add to our festive holiday décor for the Christmas Market. The trees are being donated by designer and artist Bill Curran.

Bill grew up with Swedish traditions that came through his great-great-grandfather and grandmother, Verner Nygren and Wilhelmina Charlotta Magnusson, who emigrated to the United States in 1888. This heritage (as well as his family's interests in engineering and the arts) were passed on through his grandfather, Alfred Magnus Nygren, to his mother, Carolyn. Bill's mother kept Swedish rituals alive in the Curran family, especially around Saint Lucia. Folk art, tomtar, Dala Horses, and paper cutouts decorated the whole house. On December 13, Bill's mother would also dress as St.

Lucia in the cold, early morning with a crown of lit candles on her head serving coffee, cardamom rolls, and saffron bread.

Bill Curran established Bill Curran Design in a space not far from Reading Terminal Market. He now runs one of the more established architectural metalwork studios in the greater Philadelphia area. In honor of his Swedish heritage, Bill Curran made his first Christmas tree for a party. Fabricated from metal, and illuminated with real candles, these trees – each of which has its own personality – became an annual tradition. The trees will be on display on the Museum terrace in December.



**Connecting
Cultures and
Community**

Holiday Gift Ideas from the ASHM Gift Shop

As you consider your holiday gift list, think of the ASHM Gift Shop! In addition to your favorite ornaments, tomtar, and foods, we have many new things to choose from this year. Selected LEGO sets, including LEGO advent calendars, are back in the store for the first time in over 10 years. If you know an artistically inclined adult or young person, consider giving LEGO dots and a white base plate—they can create a work of pointillist art.

A new Swedish brand that we just started carrying is Klippan. The spring lily pattern by Bengt and Lotta is reminiscent of Josef Frank in a contemporary color palette of yellow, blue, and gray. We have aprons, hot pads, towels, serving trays, and napkins available.

To complement our Fika exhibition, we have a superb selection of cookbooks which make fantastic gifts. Do you have someone on your list who wants a baking shortcut? We have expanded our selection of cake and cookie jar mixes by Swedish Sweets and More.

Looking for a unique and different set of cards for holiday greetings, or even thank you notes? The shop has several. We have two sets from Koustrup & Co., which feature Christmas Flowers and “A Taste of Christmas” with eight different Danish and Swedish Christmas recipes. The New Sweden Alliance card set features beautiful photos of New Sweden-related sites in the snow, Christmas decorations, and Lucia celebrations.

Ready to do some early Christmas shopping, but prefer to do it from home? Sign-up for our Shop From Home event on November 18th. Purchases can be mailed or picked-up. Call 215-389-1776 to register.

Watch our YouTube channel in November for a guided tour of the gift shop where you will see these items and much more available.

