

# The Tattoo Project

## Commemorative Tattoos, Visual Culture, and the Digital Archive



Unique in scope and content, this methods-based text draws on the process of creating a digital archive of commemorative tattoos to examine the production and mobilization of knowledge across communities, disciplines, and space. Deborah Davidson's multidisciplinary collection addresses the cultural history of tattooing and the social meanings and implications of commemorative tattoos—tattoos that hold significant value for their bearer.

A practical resource for those undertaking archival research or collecting and sharing information across disciplines, this text acts as a template for building connections between academic and non-academic communities. Bridging the gap between theory and practice, *The Tattoo Project* offers critical insights and tools for courses focused on research methodologies and digital humanities, and provides innovative content for those studying the body, visual culture, and commemoration.

### \*\*Features\*\*

- highlights several case studies and personal narratives to contextualize theoretical and methodological approaches
- includes photographs of archival participants
- features accompanying poetry by award-winning poet Priscila Uppal
- The Tattoo Project digital archive provides additional supplementary materials including photos, videos, and narratives

### Author Information

Deborah Davidson  
Deborah Davidson is an Associate Professor of Sociology at York University.

### Reviews

"*The Tattoo Project* imaginatively blurs the lines between academic research and embodied narratives, scholarly knowledge and lived experiences. Methodologically ambitious, *The Tattoo Project* shows the multi-layered meanings behind commemorative tattoos, giving voice and space to the people who embody them. It also challenges us to re-think collaboration and community through the creation of an open digital archive that extends into the public sphere, and how the tattooed body is an inimitable archive in and of itself."

— Mary Kosut, School of Natural and Social Sciences, Purchase College, SUNY

"As a unique form of human expression, tattooing transmits a vast body of information about who we are, where we come from, our desires and fears, and who we aspire to be. It offers one of the most powerful biographical, artistic, and intellectual statements on cultural diversity, visual communication, and commemorative agency. The authors of *The Tattoo Project* bring these profound perceptions to life, generating a timely interdisciplinary study that provides critical new understandings of body-marking and its role in self-making."

— Lars Krutak, *Tattoo Anthropologist*, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution

### Subjects

Sociology  
Communication and Cultural Studies

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