



MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

125 YEARS OF ART

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Tattoo art makes a mark on Milwaukee

Work of famed tattoo artist is Museum-quality

Milwaukee, Wis. – The Milwaukee Art Museum will present its first-ever tattoo art exhibition this summer. *Tattoo: Flash Art of Amund Dietzel* will highlight the tenacity of an immigrant entrepreneur, and the vision of an original artist, as well as the endurance of a craft that has finally come of age.

Known as the “Master in Milwaukee,” Dietzel began his career as a sailor, where he first honed his skills as a tattoo artist. Eventually, covered in ink neck to ankle, Dietzel traveled with carnivals as a sideshow act, and made his way to Milwaukee where he opened a tattoo parlor in the heart of downtown, and became the region’s premier tattoo artist.

Dietzel helped define the look of the “traditional” or “old school” tattoo (known as flash art) and tattooed soldiers, sailors, and marines through two World Wars. He passed on the best practices of his craft to the next generation through the decades, when many considered tattooing a low art at best, and a public health hazard at worst. Dietzel continued to work in Milwaukee until the city banned tattooing in 1967.

“This exhibition is a great celebration of a Milwaukee icon, so what better time to have it on view than during a time when we celebrate 110 years of another great Milwaukee icon, Harley-Davidson,” said Daniel Keegan, director of the Milwaukee Art Museum. “I am excited to expand the Museum’s boundaries to include tattoo art in our galleries.”

Tattoo will be curated by David Russick, with guest curator Jon Reiter, a local tattoo artist. Reiter has spent years amassing a comprehensive collection of Dietzel “flash” (tattoo design drawings) and peripheral Dietzel Studio material, and has written extensively on Dietzel’s life and career.

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ABOUT THE MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

Celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2013, the Milwaukee Art Museum houses a rich collection of over 30,000 works, with strengths in 19th- and 20th-century American and European art, contemporary art, American decorative arts, and folk and self-taught art. The Museum campus is located on the shores of Lake Michigan and spans three buildings, including the Santiago Calatrava-designed Quadracci Pavilion and the Eero Saarinen-designed Milwaukee County War Memorial Center. For more information, please visit www.mam.org.