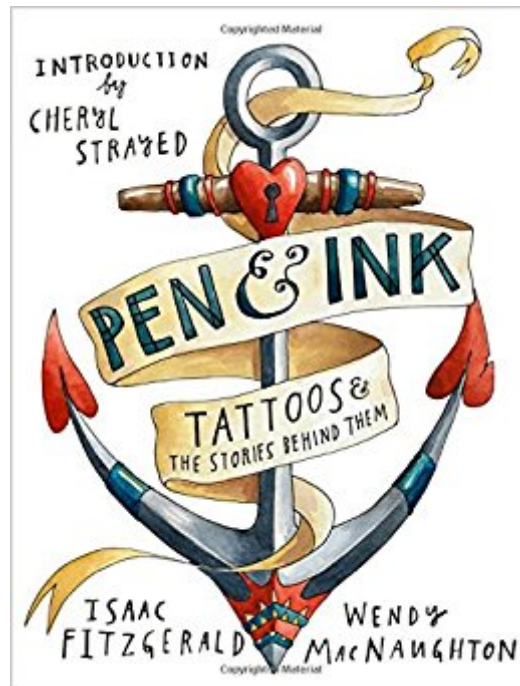




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Pen & Ink: Tattoos And The Stories Behind Them



Synopsis

Every tattoo tells a story, whether the ink is meaningful or the result of a misguided decision made at the age of fourteen, representative of the wearer's true self or the accidental consequence of a bender. These most permanent and intimate of body adornments are hidden by pants legs and shirttails, emblazoned on knuckles, or tucked inside mouths. They are battle scars and beauty marks, totems and mementos. *Pen & Ink* grants us access to the tattoos--and the stories behind them--of writers Cheryl Strayed and Roxane Gay; rockers in the bands Korn, Otep, and Five Finger Death Punch; and even a porn star. But it also illuminates the tattoos of the ordinary people living in our midst--from professors to thrift store salespeople, cafe owners to librarians, union organizers to administrators--and their extraordinary lives. Curated and edited by Isaac Fitzgerald, who sports twelve tattoos himself, each story "is like being let in on . . . secrets by . . . strangers who passed you on the street or sat across from you on the train" (Strayed) and features Wendy MacNaughton's gorgeously rendered full-color illustrations of the tattoos on black-and-white drawings of the bearer's body. At its heart, beneath its colorful skin, *Pen & Ink* is an exploration of the decision to scar one's self with a symbol and a story.

Book Information

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"Oh my god, this gorgeous, gorgeous book. It will, like its subject, alter you permanently. We sometimes forget: each tattoo has its story. Many are lovingly recorded here--from the wicked to the

profound to the ridiculous. This gorgeous, gorgeous book perfectly chronicles the stories that we wear on our skin. — Colin Meloy, lead singer of The Decemberists — “For anybody who ever looked at a stranger’s tattoo and wondered why?, Pen & Ink offers a gorgeous, hilarious, and moving *Because*. In its pages, the most amateurish, outlandish, and bizarre tattoos become portals into their owners’ lives and dreams. In the process, they become beautiful. — Peter Trachtenberg, author of *Seven Tattoos* — “In *Pen & Ink*, Isaac Fitzgerald and Wendy MacNaughton have captured the fascinating stories people secret beneath their skin, how they have marked their skin and why. The revelations in this remarkable collection are, in turns, poignant, charming, heartbreaking, and honest. Like tattoos, these stories leave an impression that will linger. — Roxane Gay — “Inspired . . . Drawn in a whimsical, tender style, MacNaughton’s portraits are captivating in their intimacy . . . Without judgment or regret, this emotionally raw collection, featuring an introduction by Cheryl Strayed, explores how we find permanence in an impermanent world. — Publishers Weekly — “Kitschy, hipster . . . MacNaughton’s drawings are lovely . . . The book is charming . . . enchanting. This is a title that readers can leaf through a little at a time, savoring the illustrations, or perhaps devour in one sitting. — Library Journal — “[One of] the best art books of 2014. — Huffington Post — “The real reasons people get tattoos. — Flavorwire, 25 Must-Read Books for the Fall — “Fascinating . . . Gorgeous. — Mother Jones — “Each ink drawing is a secret story. What I love most about this book is that it doesn’t cover just huge sleeves and complicated tattoos, it also honors the newly popular (again) art of poke-and-stick tattoos. — Design*Sponge, Best Illustrated Books — “Pen & Ink is absolutely delightful from cover to cover. — Maria Popova, Brain Pickings — “Beautifully illustrated . . . More than a keepsake for tattoo enthusiasts; it is an artifact of diverse, deeply human histories, like the cave paintings of Lascaux or an illuminated manuscript, a compilation of intimate knowledge we can only hope to see continued in the future. — Shelf Awareness — “Illustrator and visual storyteller Wendy MacNaughton—she of extraordinary sensitivity to the human experience—and editor Isaac Fitzgerald catalog the wild, wicked, wonderfully human stories behind people’s tattoos. . . . The stories—sometimes poetic, sometimes political, always deeply personal—brim with the uncontainable, layered humanity that is MacNaughton’s true medium. — Brain Pickings’ Best Art, Design & Photography Books of 2014 — “Pen & Ink takes a brilliant concept—hey, what’s the story behind your tattoo?—and brings it to life with MacNaughton’s vivid illustrations and BuzzFeed Books editor Fitzgerald’s knack for getting true, fantastic stories . . . The

collected portraits are funny and sometimes heartbreaking, and they show human nature and experience in all its endearing colors. [Flavorwire](#), "The Year's Most Beautiful and Interesting Art Books" [Pen & Ink](#) reads like a good book of poetry, like an illustrated sonnet sequence. It makes literature out of the experience of tattoos without being . . . precious, or pretentious, or opaque, or ugly. This book is as strong and weird and reckless and smart as the people in it. [The Drunken Odyssey](#) ["The second my eyes met the beautiful drawings I was in love."](#) [Conz Preti](#), ABCNews.com on the Pen & Ink Tumblr ["Reveal\[s\] the often hilarious, sometimes poignant stories behind these permanent remnants of our fleeting opinions, passions and phases."](#) [O, The Oprah Magazine](#) on the Pen & Ink Tumblr ["New favorite Tumblr."](#) [Maria Popova](#), @brainpicker on the Pen & Ink Tumblr

Isaac Fitzgerald has been a firefighter, worked on a boat, and been given a sword by a king, thereby accomplishing three out of five of his childhood goals. He has also written for McSweeney's, Mother Jones, and The San Francisco Chronicle. He is the editor of BuzzFeed Books. Visit him at isaacfitzgerald.net and follow him @isaacfitzgerald. He lives in New York City. Wendy MacNaughton is a New York Times bestselling illustrator whose books include *Lost Cat: A True Story of Love, Desperation, and GPS Technology*, and whose work has appeared in places like the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Lucky Peach, and Print Magazine. Visit her at wendymacnaughton.com and follow her @wendymac. She lives in San Francisco, CA.

There are scores of books about tattoo artwork and history. This is something altogether different. Pen & Ink brings a variety of characters together to talk about life, and the way they've imprinted their experiences, loves, losses, and defeats on their skin. The stories range from poignant to ridiculous, woven together masterfully by Isaac Fitzgerald, and lovingly illustrated by Wendy MacNaughton, and altogether makes for a very cohesive read, with something everyone, inked or not, can relate to.

As Fitzgerald says so well in the Intro to this collection, tattoos are memories, stories, pieces of a life. On every double-page spread there is a glimpse into someone's history, someone's story. I kept changing my absolute favorite as I read, but, in the end, I'm a sucker for the Grammy Pac Mac tale. Overall, a treasure book, worth savoring again and again and again.

A fantastic idea to create this book. I want to this of such a clever way to document something. Learning how people got their tattoos helps you see life in a different way. We are all so different and all so similar.

Bought this for my fiance's sister who's obsessed with tattoos and from what I heard she liked the book. It did seem like good quality with great stories tied to nice illustrations of real people's tattoos and the stories behind them.

As someone equally fascinated by life's stories and the symbols, words & pictures people choose to ink on themselves, I absolutely devoured this book. At some points fascinating, at others utterly hilarious, and on many pages absolutely breathtaking, this book is a beautiful peek behind the tattooed curtain.

The illustrations are great as are the stories that go along with them. I was pleased to find that I knew of a few of the folks profiled.

There are no actual pictures of tattoos, and the book is very short. It's good for your coffee table for guests to look at, but it is not a substantial read.

I love the storytelling in this book! I've given it as a gift to multiple friends and family members.

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