

Arte Cristiana



Photo by Mark Busse

Special Issue – Tattoo and Sacred Art
Edited by Silvano Petrosino and Giuliano Zanchi
Call for papers

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Special Issue
Tattoo and Sacred Art

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and Giuliano Zanchi

International Journal
of Art History and Liturgical Arts

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The tattoo has an ancient relationship with sacred iconography: images of tutelary gods, saints and protective figures made up a large part of the themes and visual motifs drawn on the skin. Today, this link has faded out; nevertheless, the iconographic practices and themes of the tattoo still call for a series of reflections on the anthropological roots of the sacred and its relationships with the human being. We can identify three major topics in this regard.

A first topic is that of the *trace*, intended as the bodily mark of a story. This aspect gives the tattoo, especially in its anthropic origins, the function of “inscription” on the subject’s body of the myths of social foundation: hence, a connection with religious rituals and initiatory passages. A connection that remains in latency even when, in the contemporary world, stories and initiations increasingly concern the individual as separated from a community.

A second theme is still connected to the trace, but in the slight different sense of the writing and the brand: the tattoo (and the connected forms of ritual scars) immediately express a belonging and therefore an identity, either religious or social. Today, this phenomenon seems to fade towards various forms of “self-branding”; this does not deny but rather reaffirms the link between tattoo and identity, as well as that between tattoo and affirmation of one’s existence.

A third topic finally concerns the body as *subject and object of experience*. More than the “naked life”, the “naked body” constitutes the ultimate possession of the human being - and therefore in some cases his or her only and last semiotic wealth. Hence, a socio-anthropology of the tattooed body as subject to different regimes of inscription and visibility depending on social and cultural conditions. Today, in the era of the digital image, the mark on the body appears as a necessary compensatory or at least integrative regression. If the body becomes a screen, the tattoo gives it a much more tangible and lasting image than that of the media ones.

The monographic issue of *Arte Cristiana* devoted to tattoo address the theme of tattooing in relation to the themes and practices of the sacred, with specific attention to Christian iconography and art, developing topics such as:

- Themes and iconographic motifs of the tattoo related to the sphere of the sacred
- Relationship between sacred art and tattoo
- De-sacralization and re-sacralization of tattoo iconographic motifs and symbols
- Relationship between tattoo and religious or secular rituals
- Symbols of cultural and religious belonging related to the tattoo

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Authors interested in contributing must respect the following deadlines:

July 15, 2020	Deadline for sending a proposal containing a title, an abstract of maximum 1500 characters and a short biobibliographical note
July 29, 2020	Communication to the authors of the approval or rejection of the proposal
Sept. 8, 2020	Delivery of the first version of the article and review by peer reviewers (double blind criterion)
Nov. 9, 2020	Delivery to the authors of comments from peer reviewers and revision of the articles
Dec. 14, 2020	Deadline for sending of the final version of the article

The final articles will have a maximum of 30,000 characters. Authors can request the publication of images accompanying their article as long as they are provided in high definition and free of rights. Further information will be provided to the selected contributors.

In addition to the presence of articles, the monographic issue of *Arte Cristiana* dedicated to tattoo also hosts photographic reports on the same subject. Contributors can send a proposal in which they illustrate the theme of their iconographic contribution, possibly accompanied by max 5 low-definition images. The timeline is the same as above. Further technical indications will be provided to the selected contributors.

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