

## *Tatau*

**NGV Studio | FREE | 4 August – 2 September 2012**

The National Gallery of Victoria and Craft will explore the art of tattooing in the next NGV Studio exhibition, *Tatau*, opening 4 August.

*Tatau* will examine the history of permanent skin marking with a focus on Pacific Island culture and will feature live tattooing by three international and Australian tattoo artists. *Tatau* is a keynote project of Craft Cubed, Craft's annual festival, and is part of Craft's larger focus on traditional arts from the Pacific Islands. Craft Cubed opens Thursday 2 August at Craft and runs until 1 September.

The art of tattooing using indelible inks or pigments has been practiced for centuries throughout the world, but it is from Polynesia that most contemporary Western tattooing draws its influence. The term 'tattoo' is derived from the Polynesian word 'tatau', meaning 'tap' and is a reference to the traditional tapping of sharpened bones into the skin to implant the inks.

Frances Lindsay, Acting Director, NGV said: "NGV Studio explores aspects of contemporary culture through experimentation in content, context, interpretation and display. We are pleased to collaborate with Craft on this exhibition."

"*Tatau* will provide a fascinating look at the evolution of tattooing and how the art of Polynesian tattooing has influenced tattoos in contemporary Western culture," said Ms Lindsay.

Joe Pascoe, CEO and Creative Director, Craft said: "Tattoos now abound in our society with so many people proudly showing their 'ink.' Examining the basis of tattooing as seen in the Pacific culture, *Tatau* will resonate with a significant audience as well as referencing many areas of contemporary culture in Melbourne."

Throughout *Tatau*, visitors will learn about the history and craft of tattoos with displays showcasing tattooing tools from the traditional to the contemporary. Renowned tattooists Tricia Allen (Hawaii), Pat Morrow (Brisbane) and Simon Wilson (Melbourne) will present a variety of free public lectures and floor talks to reflect on the integral role of tattooing in Polynesian culture.

Visitors are also invited to participate in 'live tattooing' at NGV Studio (advanced bookings required, visit [craftvic.org.au](http://craftvic.org.au) for further information). Loketi Nuia Latu, Guest Curator, said: "Those who visit *Tatau* may even be lured into leaving with a distinct permanent skin adornment that can be taken with you to the after-life, like the Polynesians of old."



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A selection of tapa cloths, war clubs and ornaments featuring traditional designs will be exhibited in the studio and complement a selection of photographs by Tricia Allen. This component of the exhibition reinforces the relationship between tapa and tatau by showing viewers how carvings and designs have evolved from bark cloth to skin.

NGV Studio is a contemporary exhibition and event space that provides opportunities for audience and artist engagement. For further information about NGV Studio and *Tatau*, please visit [ngv.vic.gov.au](http://ngv.vic.gov.au) or [craftvic.org.au](http://craftvic.org.au).

NGV Studio is open Sun–Wed, 10am–5pm and Thu–Sat, 10am–10pm. Entry is free. *Tatau* is a collaboration between the NGV and Craft. *Tatau* is curated by Loketi Niua Latu as part of Craft’s annual festival, Craft Cubed (‘Super Maker’ project).

## Programs:

### **Exhibition Introduction: Tattoo Tour of Polynesia, Thu 23 Aug, 6pm**

Join Polynesian tattoo specialist, Tricia Allen, in this illustrated talk exploring tattoo in ancient Polynesia. Reflecting on the integral role tattoo played in the cultural and socio-religious systems of the various Pacific Island groups; this art form was far more than mere body decoration.  
Free, NGV Studio, Flinders Street, Federation Square

### **Floor Talk: Samoan Tatau, Tue 14 Aug, 12.30pm**

Join Brisbane based Tufuga Tatau artist, Pat Morrow, and hear insights into traditional and contemporary Samoan Tatau practices. This floor talk will be followed by a live tatau demonstration by the artist.  
Free, NGV Studio, Flinders Street, Federation Square

### **Lecture: The tattoo revival in Polynesia, Sun 26 Aug, 2pm**

In the last quarter century, Polynesians have once again been taking pride in their cultural heritage, reviving traditional tattoo practices. Polynesian tattoo specialist, Tricia Allen, will present a pictorial overview of the revival, as well as identifying the specific circumstances under which this art form has evolved in each of the primary island groups.  
Free, NGV Studio, Flinders Street, Federation Square

### **Craft Cubed Keynote Event, Thu 16 Aug, 9am–4pm**

*Craft and Design as a Career* is Craft's annual professional development seminar for artists and designers, led by industry experts. Each year *Craft and Design as a Career* involves an illustrious list of speakers from a variety of backgrounds including fashion, jewellery, publishing, sustainability, online retail, fundraising and more. Give your practice an inspirational boost with this day-long professional development seminar led by industry experts and network with your peers over morning tea.  
Clemenger Auditorium, NGV International  
Bookings [craftvic.org.au](http://craftvic.org.au) or 03 9650 7775  
\$90 / \$40 Craft Members and groups of 10+. Price includes morning tea and a showbag.

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Image caption: Jong tattooed by Tricia Allen. Photo by Ron Reyes Photography.