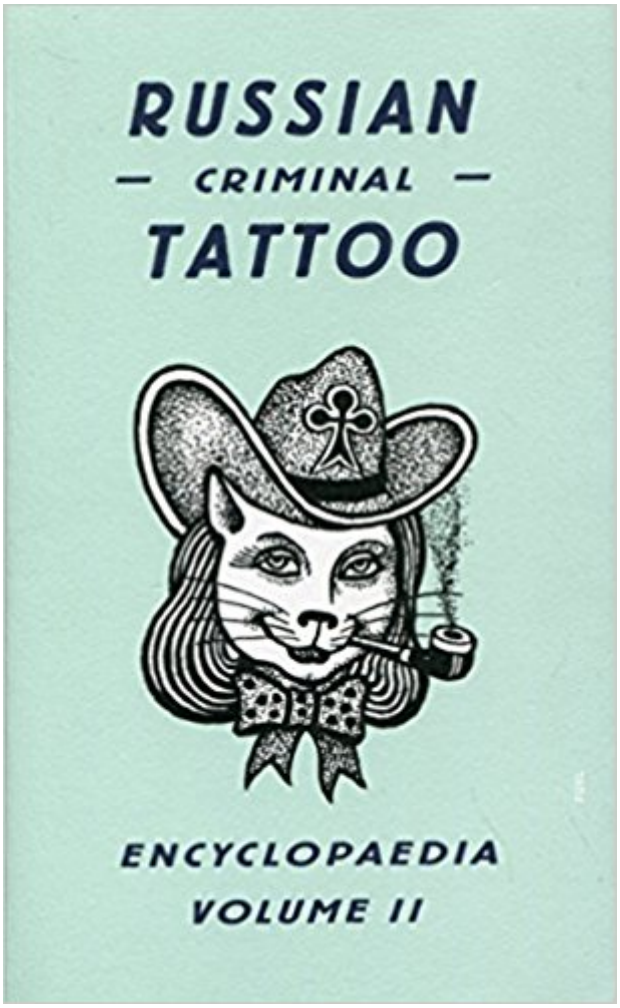
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Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopaedia Volume II



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Synopsis

Danzig Baldaev's father was an academic, an ethnologist who found himself imprisoned under Soviet rule as an enemy of the people. In fact much of Baldaev's family moved through the Soviet prison system, while he became a guard. At his father's suggestion, Danzig used his access to document and study the tattoos that were pervasive among the truly criminal portion of the prison population, the vory v zakonye, or legitimate thieves, a semi-professional class who kept their own brutal laws. During his 30 years supervising inmates in St. Petersburg's notorious Kresty Prison, Baldaev recorded more than 3,000 of their tattoos and parsed their meanings, in the drawings and text that made the first volume of the Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopedia a bestseller. This essential second volume, which collects all-new, previously unseen photographs and drawings, goes to the extremes of his incredible collection. Sergei Vasiliev's photographs authenticate the images, Baldaev's drawings make sense of them and through them both we glimpse an extraordinary world where the criminal's position, history and even sexual preference are displayed indelibly on his body.

Book Information

Hardcover: 400 pages
Publisher: Fuel Publishing (June 1, 2006)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0955006120
ISBN-13: 978-0955006128
Product Dimensions: 1.2 x 5 x 8 inches
Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 40 customer reviews
Best Sellers Rank: #350,250 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #91 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Body Art & Tattoo #328 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Decorative Arts & Design > Textile & Costume #336 inÃ Â Books > Reference > Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Art

Customer Reviews

This completely mind-blowing book told us what the tattoos meant, and how they could become central to the movie. -- David Cronenberg. Director, Eastern Promises (2007)

The books are a history of the Soviet penal system as much as they are a reflection of a dark period

of Russian history. The tattoos illustrated men and women who often were sent to prison for as little as stealing an ear of corn during famished times are the pictorial description of an oppressive regime and the confessions of the disenfranchised who did not benefit from it. Recommended for all who love Russian history, and those who love tattoos.

and you'll begin to get an idea of the contents of this amazing book. The "Vory v zakone" (literally "thieves in law")are Russia's criminal underworld and their existence dates back to the days of Tsarist prisons. They have their own elaborate set of laws, their own culture, and each thief's professional resume is tattooed on his body.The author of this book, a former Russian prison guard, spent years documenting these tattoos and unraveling their meanings, and in the process has created a fascinating cultural history. Be forewarned, however, these tattoos are not like anything you've probably ever seen before, even in the American prison system. Many of them are quite shocking in their sexual detail and depiction of violence. Some of these tattoos were forcibly applied to the wearers' bodies, as punishment for reneging on gambling debts, serving as an informant, or other infractions of the thieves' code. This is not a book you'll want to let your kids get ahold of, as most of the "art" depicted is quite repellent. But it's a glimpse into a world most people didn't even know existed until the arrival of the Russian mob in the US and the release of movies like "Eastern Promises."From my perspective, I'm glad that most of the tattoos are drawings, not photographs. It makes it easier to see some of the fine details in the tattoos. If you have an interest in crime and the criminal underworld, this book makes for a fascinating read.

This volume must have gone out of print earlier than I or III, as I recall it being prohibitively expensive when I bought the others several years back. I'm glad it's available again, as I found the non-pictorial content here far surpassed that available in the other volumes. The map of the camps made me instantly realize why Solzhenitsyn named his masterpiece "The Gulag Archipelago".Be forewarned that the body art reproduced here could be considered very offensive by some as well as pornographic.

Great gift for tattoo lover or cool coffee table book. Detailed info about Russian tattoos,more than just pictures, very interesting.

Shipped quickly and really excited to get this product for my boyfriend. Evidently there were not many prints in the past few years so I couldn't get the next volume in the set for him (it was running

around $130) Really excited to see more prints out and a reasonable price. Product came new in plastic wrap, he loved it!

I’m so stoked that this stuff has come back into print. The artist has other stuff out there worth checking out.

This book is both very informative and interesting-- using both visual and written representations to illustrate the attitude of the criminal caste of Russian prisons from pre-WWII to present (catalogued through detailed pen & ink illustrations of tattoos). Visually stimulating.

This book series is super cool. After buying volume 1, I knew I needed volume 2. It pleases me.

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