Tattoos At FAU: Movie Highlighting Tattooed Student Bodies To Premiere

By BocaNewsNow.com Staff

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BOCA RATON, FL (BocaNewsNow.com) — It's not normally what you think about when you hear the phrase "Student Body," but Florida Atlantic University is featuring student bodies that display tattoos. It's all part of a new movie — "Stories On The Skin: Tattoo Culture at FAU."

Direct from the school:

Florida Atlantic University will host an evening of entertainment to celebrate the premiere of "Stories on the Skin: Tattoo Culture at FAU," a documentary featuring students who support the concept that tattooed bodies are walking books, on Friday, Jan. 18 from 5 to 8 p.m. at FAU's University Theatre, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton campus. The event is open to the public. Suggested donation is $10.

The doors will open at 5 p.m. to allow guests a chance to view a tattoo-related art exhibition and receive a temporary tattoo. A program featuring live music, dance, poetry and theatrical performances will follow at 6 p.m. The evening's highlight will be the 40-minute documentary, which is a product of an ongoing collaboration between FAU Libraries' Arthur and Mata Jaffe Center for Book Arts and Karen J. Leader, Ph.D., assistant professor of art history in the Department of Visual Arts and Art History. The film reveals a deeper, more spiritual connection between today's college students and their tattoos and it is filled with poignant stories about what motivated some of their choices.

"We have a need to express ourselves, to talk about ourselves, to identify ourselves, the way we think, and not let someone else do it," said FAU benefactor Arthur Jaffe, 91, whose curiosity about the prevalence of FAU's students with tattoos sparked the project. "A tattoo is a rarer way to do it."

Since the "Stories on the Skin" project was launched in fall 2010, about 1,500 students have participated in various aspects of the collaboration, exploring an art form that combines creative expression with the commemoration of key moments in life. Besides the documentary, the collaboration has produced a survey, a photo exhibition and catalog, live performances and a growing archive of stories and photographs that will become part of the FAU Libraries' permanent collection.

"This collaboration has never been just about tattoos and has never advocated that everybody get one," said Leader, who is writing an article for publication about the project. "Getting a tattoo is a deeply personal decision, and as we've discovered, not one taken lightly. A tattoo is a lived experience as old as human culture itself, and our goal has been creative as much as scholarly, to make art out of life."

Z. Koppisch, a senior designer and photographer at the FAU Libraries, photographed the students and their tattoos, and said the stories will endure in her heart. Koppisch was so inspired by the project she had the "Stories on the Skin" logo that she designed tattooed around her ankle.

"From the student who spoke about her clock tattoo, which reminds her never to waste time again because of an abusive relationship, to the students who dedicated their skin to the memory of a family member or friend, the stories are just amazing," said Koppisch.

Shuttle service to the theater will be provided from Parking Garage II, where parking is free. From Glades Road, enter FAU through the east entrance at FAU Boulevard. Turn left onto Arts Avenue. The garage is on the left. For more information, call 561-297-0226, or visit www.storiesontheskin.org or Facebook.com/storiesontheskinatfau.