FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY  
S.E. Wimberly Library, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton, Storiesontheskin.org

Student Body Art. Z. McCarthy-Koppisch’s exhibition of photos she has taken of the tattoos of 56 Florida Atlantic University students is part of Stories on the Skin: Tattoo Culture at FAU, a project proposed by Arthur Jaffe, the 90-year-old founder of Jaffe Center for Book Arts in FAU’s Wimberly Library on the Boca Raton Campus. After noticing all the tattooed students making their way around campus, Jaffe considered how the tattooed bodies were like the one-of-a-kind books collected at Jaffe Center for Book Arts. Each one, he says, tells a story.

This long-term project, a collaboration between Jaffe Center for the Book Arts, Karen Leader, assistant professor of art history in the Department of Visual Arts and Art History and FAU Libraries senior designer McCarthy-Koppisch, is a means for collecting and preserving those stories in photographs, film and literature.

The project launched last fall when 1,147 FAU students participated in a survey about tattoos, answering as many as 70 questions each about themselves, their feelings about tattoos and in most cases, their tattoos. Afterwards, students were given an opportunity to be photographed and filmed and tell the stories behind their tattoos during a Show Us Your Tattoo! campaign held on FAU’s Boca Raton campus. Some later submitted written stories for a literary project.

McCarthy-Koppisch, who’s been taking photographs since she was old enough to sneak into CBGB, began photographing students’ tattoos for archival purposes. In the process, however, she captured other symbols of student life including the cell phones hanging out of pockets, the heavy books and backpacks, bottled water, bicycles, the soda machines from which students grab a Crush as they rush to class. Eventually the archival photographs grew into an exhibition that will open 1–4 p.m. May 21 (with a 30-minute presentation by Jaffe, Leader and McCarthy-Koppisch starting at 1:30 p.m.) and run through Aug. 10 on the ground floor of S.E. Wimberly Library.

The opening will take place during Time Flies When You’re Having Fun, an open house that will take place on the library’s ground floor and the third-floor Jaffe Center for Book Arts. Time Flies will honor Jaffe who recently turned 90, received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from FAU and announced that he will retire, but continue to work on bringing Stories on the Skin and his next project, an automobile books show, to fruition. Open house festivities will include tours, chats with Jaffe, letterpress demonstrations and Miami Poetry Collective’s Poem Depot. For a price visitors set themselves, a member of the collective will write a poem based on the top of their choice on a manual typewriter. Next week’s City Link will feature a more in-depth story on the long-term project.