

Tattoos of Baiga

Abstract

Tattoos conquer modern art at needles and ink replaces brushes. Tattoos have become main stream part of global and western fashion common among both sexes. Likewise tattooing is one integral part among the women of baiga tribe with art form called as baiga tattoo or godna instance a sense of pride. Each tribe has their own cultural identity. The tribal tattoos are one of the most fascinating part of their culture. The knowledge of this art is a hereditary one which transmits from generation to generation through and tradition. Both the male and female baigas are very fond of body decoration. Besides, the female members like to decorate their body with different kinds of tattoos, known as godna.

Keywords: Modern Art, Tattoos.

Introduction

The nomadic Baiga tribe ubiquitous with its unique yet amazing tales and rituals thrive in the jungles of Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Apart from their trademarks, stories and rituals, the most amazing and interesting fact is their tattoos and their beliefs. These tattoos, are known as Godna, not only some as an identifications for this tribe, but also the symbolic pride instill sense of completeness in women.

These tattoos are so ingrained into the Baiga culture that every Baiga family into the baiga tribe insures that these tattoos and significance passes to the younger generations, and generations thereafter.

Both men and women have imbibed these tattoos as part of their physical and spiritual décor. Although not everyone opt for permanent some go for temporary symbols on their bodies.

The tattoos can be seen on nearly any part of the Baiga body from head to foot. These, tattoos are primarily, arrangement of certain symbols with minor artistic inspirations to bring uniqueness.

Among the women tattooing is an integral part. They decorate different parts of their body with different tattoo marks. Long strips of parallel lines are made on the face, especially on the forehead. Different types of marks are made like moon, triangles, crosses, dots and others. Dots or small lines are also made on the cheek or chin, below the neck and on the back. The women who specialize as tattooing artists are called Godharins and they belong to the ojha, Badni tribes of M.P. They are well aware about the different types of tattoos favoured by various tribes. Tattooing amongst the tribes begins from the winter season and continues until summer.

These tattoos are be to the attached and rather ingrained to one's soul, hence they are with one's self till eternity.

Tattooing

Baiga girls were tattooed before marriage. Usually at the age of four or five years, with dots on the left nostril and centre of the chin, and three dots in a line on the right shoulder. A girl is again tattooed after marriage, but before leaving for her husband's house. On the occasion of marriage four pairs of parallel lines are made on the leg above the ankle, in front, behind, and on the sides. As a rule, the legs are not otherwise tattooed, nor the trunk of the body. Groups of dots, triangles and lines are made on the arms, and on the left arm is pricked a zigzag line known as the sikri or chain, the pattern of which is distinctive.

The tattooing is done by a woman of the caste, and she receives some corn and the cloth worn by the girl at the time of the operation. Tattooing is believed to enhance the beauty of women, and it is also said that the tattoo marks are the only ornament which will accompany the soul to the other world. From this belief it seems clear that they expect to have the same body in after life.

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Meaning of Tattoos

What is tattoo? Tattoo is created by emotions, often represented by symbols to convey meaning.

What is symbol? You may define a symbol as, 'a tattoo or pattern that tells a story without using words'. It has been suggested that symbol, such as cave paintings and carvings, were man's earliest forms of communication. Tattoos are symbols and are known to define people's deep passions, beliefs, and identity. People endure the pain of getting a tattoo because it has significance or meaning.

The Origin of tribal Tattoo

In ancient times, tribal tattoo was used for a symbol of identity dealing a certain tribe. Other than that, it was used for expressing religion of spiritual belief. For some tribes, tattoos were used for self protection to camouflage their selves in the woods. These tribes use tattoo for identification, social status, and even medicinal purposes.

The word tattoo was actually derived from the word "tatau" from Polynesian. All of the people in Marquesan island in Polynesia was tattooed. They regarded those symbols as a form of language. Usually the image was inspired by animals, like shark teeth to represent protection, shells which means wealth, or turtle fish hooks, lizards, etc.

Purpose of Tattooing

Most people of India practiced tattooing to some extent. It served a variety of purposes depending on location, gender, and the state of intertribal relations. Tattooing reflected a variety of concerns and attitudes related to the human body. The tribal style originates from the old tribe like, the baigas. Concerning all tribal style the division of lines is important. Not only the part which is been tattooed should have a good shape but also the parts that have been left blank must also be well shaped.

The baiga lived in M.P. This style of tattoos which show a lot of resemblance with religious stories. The tattoos are mainly about the Indian religion. The baiga style is a forceful, masculine style.

Religion

Their principal deity is bura deo (the great god), who is supposed to reside in a saj tree (*terminalia tomentosa*); he is worshipped in the month of jeth (may), when goats, fowls, and the liquor of the

new mahua crop are offered to him. The grain itself is worshipped at the threshing floor by sprinkling water and liquor onto it. Certain Hindu deities are also worshipped by the Bsiga's, but not in orthodox fashion.

Objective of the Study

In this research paper (tattoos of baiga), I have tried to enhance the culture of baiga tribes, which is basically famous for "tattoos". The main motive of this research paper is to take this culture in future generation.

Review of Literature

In this research I will study about the tattoo artist and the people who knows about baiga tribe and their culture. And also the ancient stories of baiga and the purpose of tattoos.

Hypothesis

I want people to know that the tattoos which baiga tribe people use to make represented their rituals and that the ancient art is changing generation to generation.

Conclusion

Tattoos have always had an important role in ritual and tradition. Today, tattooing is making a strong comeback. It is more popular and accepted than it has ever been. All classes of people seek the best tattoo artists. This rise in popularity has placed tattooists in the category of "fine artist". The tattooist has garnered a respect not seen for over 100 years. Current artist combine the tradition of tattooing with their personal style creating unique and phenomenal body art.

We know that almost all cultures throughout history have subscribed to some form of body art or body manipulation, and for many, this included tattoos.

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