

Ole Wittmann (ed.)

Karl Finke: Buch No. 3

Ein Vorlagealbum des Hamburger Tätowierers/
A Flash Book By the Hamburg Tattooist

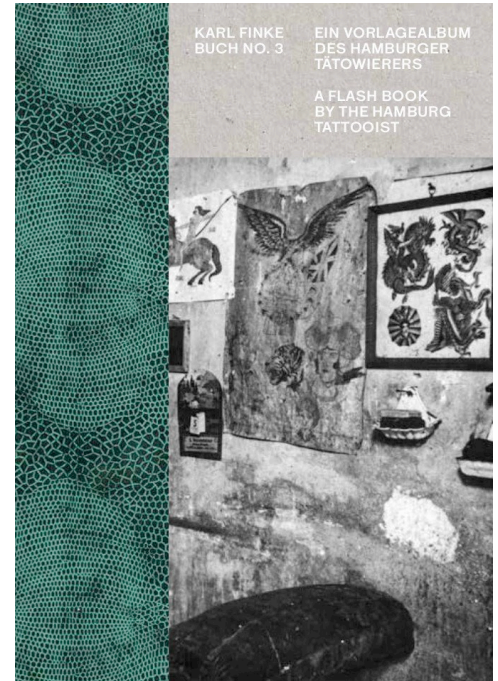
During an ongoing research project on the history of tattooing with a focus on Christian Warlich (1891–1964), an album of designs by the Hamburg tattooist Karl Finke (1866–1935) was stumbled upon at the Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde in Dresden. This album is now published in conjunction with accompanying texts. The volume has been conceived and designed in cooperation with the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig.

Karl Finke ranks as one of the most important figures in German tattoo history. Together with Christian Warlich, he was one of the protagonists of the Hamburg tattoo scene in the first half of the twentieth century.

As with some of his American contemporaries, for Finke, practising the art of tattooing went hand in hand with working at circuses. Up until now, he has been described somewhat ambivalently. Among other things, as a professional sportsman, a 'freak', a passionate artist or an old-fashioned tattooer in decline. So it seems that everything there is to say about Finke has already been said. However, the recent rediscovery of his album of designs from the 1920s reveals new aspects of his work.

The text for Finke's *Buch No. 3* [Book No. 3] aims to function as an aid to analysing the album. Finke's work is contextualized within cultural history, with a special focus on sideshow phenomena and tattooed attractions. Through an iconographic analysis of Finke's drawings, Anglo-American influences on German tattooing are explored. Furthermore, there is a brief analysis of the role of the tattoo in the collective imagination of the Weimar Republic. This is based first and foremost on the interest of some of the Neue Sachlichkeit [New Objectivity] artists, in particular the German painter Otto Dix.

Ole Wittmann studied art history, social and cultural anthropology and sociology in Hamburg. In 2015, he completed his doctorate on the human body as an image carrier for tattoos. He is currently a postdoctoral scholarship holder at the Hamburger Stiftung zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Kultur and is researching the estate of the tattooist Christian Warlich (1891–1964) in cooperation with the Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte.



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