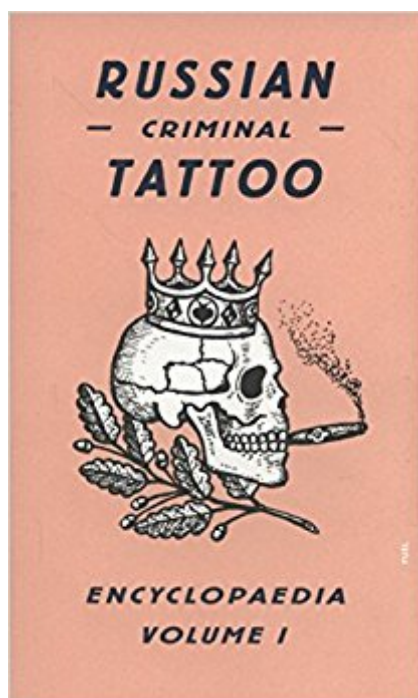


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# Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopaedia Volume I



## Synopsis

Occasionally a book is published that reveals a subculture you never dreamt existed. More rarely, that book goes on to become a phenomenon of its own. The 2004 publication of the Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopaedia was such a phenomenon, spawning two further volumes and alerting a fascinated readership worldwide to the extraordinary and hermetic world of Russian criminal tattoos (David Cronenberg, for example, made regular use of the Encyclopaedia during the making of his 2007 movie *Eastern Promises*). Now, Fuel has reprinted volume one of this bestselling series, whose first edition already fetches considerable sums online. The photographs, drawings and texts published in this book are part of a collection of more than 3,000 tattoos accumulated over a lifetime by a prison attendant named Danzig Baldaev. Tattoos were his gateway into a secret world in which he acted as ethnographer, recording the rituals of a closed society. The icons and tribal languages he documented are artful, distasteful, sexually explicit and sometimes just strange, reflecting as they do the lives and traditions of Russian convicts. Skulls, swastikas, harems of naked women, a smiling Al Capone, medieval knights in armor, daggers sheathed in blood, benign images of Christ, sweet-faced mothers and their babies, armies of tanks and a horned Lenin: these are the signs by which the people of this hidden world mark and identify themselves. With a foreword by Danzig Baldaev, and an introduction by Alexei Plutser-Sarno, exploring the symbolism of the Russian criminal tattoo.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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.

I bought this as a Christmas present for my tattoo artist cousin. I read the (mostly very positive) reviews but still didn't know if it would be a lame gift for someone that actually tattoos. Well he LOVED it! He called me to say he has some postcards with artwork done by this author but none of the books.. He said the book was a great read and a great reference.

Eye opening into the culture of Russia and it's underground language of tattooing. In America, tattoos are seen as freedom of expression and the free-natured thought. In Russia, it's a rite of passage and one's personal history written on their bodies. The hand tattoos symbolize is the most interesting. Explains a lot about the tattoos seen in the movie "Eastern Promises."

Russian Criminal Tattoos is incredibly detailed and a great look at different types of tattoos found on Russian prisoners, both unique to one man, and prison-wide. Each tattoo is given a full page (the book is about the size of a trade paperback) and a description and english translation listed below. Additionally, it has black and white pictures of some individuals and longer text on background information. It's so detailed you almost wonder why they needed more than one volume.

I have like 95% of these tattoos now.

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

Very informative introduction and amazing photos and illustrations. Much more than your average hipster coffee table book.

Amazing book. Came as best as it could. I'll end up with the whole set.

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