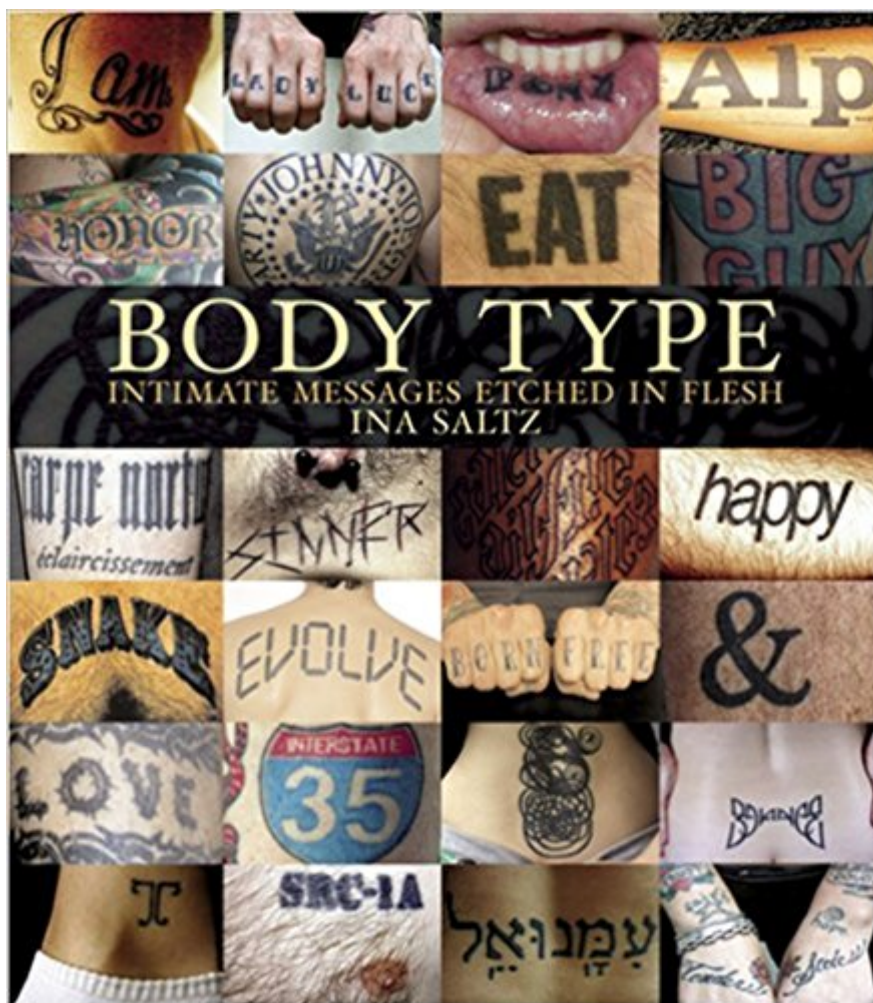


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# Body Type: Intimate Messages Etched In Flesh



## Synopsis

Body Type is an eye-opening look into the amazingly creative ways that tattoo artists are utilizing typography. Whereas the majority of tattoo art uses images to convey messages, here the message actually is the image. Twenty-six alphabetical characters might not seem like much to work with, but a look through these photographs reveals the contrary. Here are truly unique social commentaries, expressions of love, hilarious examples of biting satire, plus some mottos, intricate logotypes, deeply personal song lyrics, and, of course, those tattoos that exist for one reason only: to shock the hell out of you. The crisp photographs are accompanied by an insightful commentary from renowned graphic designer and typographer Ina Saltz, plus consistently surprising and heartfelt explanations from the tattooed.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ina Saltz is an art director, designer, writer, and professor whose areas of expertise are typography and magazine design. She's a regular columnist for STEP Inside Design magazine and writes for other design magazines, including Graphis. Wendi Koontz has illustrated for many periodicals, including The New York Times, New York Press, and Girl's Life magazine. She also lives in New York City.

The book has a very contemporary feel and little humor and a lot of personal experience. The groupings of style of text tattoos makes for a fun read. I'd have given 5 stars if the dimensions of the book were larger, so the fine pictures in it could have been bigger.

BODY TYPE is that rare "coffee table" book where you savor each word and find yourself riveted by every image. I have never entertained the notion of getting a tattoo, which makes the author's analysis and exquisite presentation all the more interesting. I urge anyone who cares about contemporary self-expression and the written word to buy this book and take a journey to explore this fascinating and growing niche within our culture.

If you are into typography, the personal meanings of words, or tattoos, this is an excellent book. The photos focus on the words, not the people wearing them, but the descriptions of the tattoos from the owners bring it back to the people. There are also a few discussions about typeface choices that show that at least some of the owners really thought about it.

I was intrigued by the unique approach the author took to this art form. From the exquisitely lyrical to the proudly profane, her images demonstrate the staggering range of ways that men and women use their body for expression. It's a voyeur's delight! The author is able to convey just how important the actual selection of the font is to the meaning of the words. Whether you are among the tattooed, the aspiring or the curious, Body Type belongs on your shelf.

This book is fabulous for all the reasons Ina outlines in her introduction. I was not prepared for it to be both philosophical and intimate. I love it. It is inspirational. And I abhor tattoos.

This book has thousands of clearly photographed tattoos for inspiration, they may also serve as a "What not to get" sample.

Although this charming little book is a quick read, it deserves to be returned to many times, to really admire and appreciate all of the unique, amazing, and well-done tattoos on display therein. In recent years, the old stereotypes of body modifications and the people who get them have been changing for the better. This book can only help in that endeavor. Far from displaying a bunch of bikers, criminals, delinquents, soldiers, and sailors, the type of people who are stereotypically associated with tattoos, these are people from a wide range of walks of life. Many of them are professionals and educated, and all put a lot of thought into these tattoos. And far from being the stereotypical fare of skulls, hearts, roses, and pin-ups girls, the tattoos themselves are also from a very diverse sampling. The book was inspired by a typographic tattoo which Ms. Saltz saw on the subway one

day, and after that discovery (which her subject happily let her photograph), she began seeing more and more tattoos that contained words, letters, and typographical symbols instead of the more standard traditional pictorial images. These people used a wide variety of typefaces for these tattoos, and sometimes even designed their own typefaces. I loved the ambiagram tattoos, the ones designed in a typeface that lets the word be read the same upside-down as it is when viewed rightside-up. People have gotten tattoos containing loved ones' names (very unique was the woman who got her blind lover's name tattooed in Braille on the top of the back of her neck), quotations from Shakespeare, the Bible, movies, songs (the story behind the 33 people who had the first 33 words of Holland's national anthem tattooed on them was a very interesting one, reflecting not only the diversity of the nation but also how much the Dutch love their country), popular quotations, works of literature, and other things which inspire them. One of my favorite word tattoos was the one containing the opening line of 'The Divine Comedy,' in the original Middle Italian, since I also find the opening lines of that long epic poem to be very beautiful, moving, and inspiring. The tattoos are also categorised into such divisions as love, self-love, self-expression, politics, religion, and personal beliefs. Overall, this is a great small-sized coffee-table book full of great photography of a very unique subject. One doesn't need to have a tattoo or tattoos oneself to appreciate the photographs; I can't get a tattoo due to my religious beliefs, but I greatly admired all of the workmanship and personal meaning that went into thinking up, designing, and executing these amazing tattoos, and even saw some I'd like to have myself if I were allowed to have a tattoo. I'd love for there to be a second volume, particularly because this one didn't include my own favorite typefaces, Palatino and Bookman!

Acknowledging both the history of tattoos with letters and the ubiquity and social acceptability of tattoo art today, the brief but informative introduction to BODY TYPE sets forth the premise of the book: to showcase those who have chosen to tattoo messages in the form of western letters somewhere on their bodies. The breadth of work represented here is astounding, and smartly edited. Way beyond "MOM" in a scrolled banner, the viewer is shown not only letterforms tattooed for the sake of their own beauty, sometimes incorporating body parts (eg a nipple) for punctuation; but also letterforms composing words of great meaning to the tattooed. The most moving example of the latter is the subject who tattooed the word "forgiveness" over the word "hatred" he had scarred into his arm years earlier. The hatred and later forgiveness refer to his mother who had committed suicide. The content ranges from art, like the writer Shelley Jackson's "Skin" project, to political statements such as the Dutch group of 33 individuals tattooed with lyrics from the National Anthem.

The tattoos were done in protest to the Queen's decree that the anthem be played only in the presence of a member of the royal family. She later acquiesced. But there are plenty of lighter moments to look at, with less expected nods to pop culture: a Ouija board, Krispy Kreme logos, and even a series of ambiagrams (words that read the same forwards and upright as well as upside-down and backwards), popularized by The da Vinci Code's Tom Brown in Angels and Demons. Each tattoo photographed is captioned with a brief, pithy statement from the person sporting the tattoo. Even in cases where the choice of tattoo may seem obvious, the quote adds further insight. BODY TYPE is unobtrusively designed and well produced. It is a carefully curated and moving photo essay--exploring how meaningful letterforms are to people, even those not in the business of graphic design and typography. Not just a design book, unexpectedly, it is a testament to the power of the written word, made even more powerful written on the body.

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