

# ICONINK

Matthew Lake

Cairns Regional Gallery

Loft Emerging Artists' Program.

23 April  
to  
30 May 2010

*IconInk* explores the relationship between tattoos of the past and the popularity of tattoos in contemporary society. The past history of ink on the skin has been a turbulent one. The ancients used body marking as a sign of strength, often creating patterns in various designs to ward off spirits or to show signs of great power.

Sailors would adorn themselves with various illustrations and symbols to record moments in their personal history. At approximately the same time, criminals who were incarcerated began to decorate their skin with messages designed to frighten any aggressor. These words and symbols often illustrated strength and status within the group.

For many years, tattoos were socially associated with criminals or outlaw bikie gangs. In the late 1980's, tattoos began to gain popularity amongst everyday citizens. People began to explore various ways to beautify their bodies. Piercing other parts of the body and tribal tattoos were popular with fetish groups and alternatives. Society wanted to be bolder and a lot more independent. Tattoos gave a person a mark that separated them others. The early tattoos emulated traditional designs until individuals wanted to record moments in their own personal history. Now, tattoos are common place and non-discriminatory.

*IconInk* was developed on the fact that tattoos are an accepted form of body adornment. I asked the question, "If notable or iconic figures throughout history adorned themselves with tattoos, what tattoos would they choose?"

Matthew Lake – Artist

## ARTIST TALK

Saturday 24 April – 2.00pm

Matthew Lake will talk about this series of artworks, the relevance of symbology in the works and how this intriguing exhibition came together.

## EXHIBITION LAUNCH

Saturday 24 April – 2.30pm



Matthew Lake, Picasso 2009



Matthew Lake, Barbielicious 2009



Matthew Lake, Der Fliegen Fuhrer 2009



The Cairns Regional Gallery Loft Emerging Artists' Program is sponsored by the John Villiers Trust. Through the Loft Emerging Artists' Program, Cairns Regional Gallery profiles the work of artists and arts collectives throughout Tropical North Queensland.



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GALLERY

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