

# Women and tattooing

Speaker, author addresses evolution of body art

BY MICHELLE STARR  
Staff writer

Get out the needle and the ink, it's time to make a statement.

Margot Mifflin, author of "Bodies of Subversion: A Secret History of Women and Tattoo," addressed the role of women in body art to a near-full auditorium Thursday, at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

"It's not saying that tattooing is a feminist statement," Mifflin said. "It's just saying it has given them the opportunity to express themselves."

Mifflin, a freelance journalist and former editor of Artfinder magazine, became interested in tattooing and other body art while reporting on contemporary art in the '80s.

She said she also has a personal interest in women's issues.

During her research, Mifflin found there were three main periods of women getting tattoos that coincided with feminine movements, she said.

Tattooing, an art practiced for thousands of years, began to pick up momentum within the circus community during the turn of the century.

"For some women it was a meal ticket out of their small towns," Mifflin said.

Drawn into the art form by fathers or husbands, women accumulated numerous tattoos, some covering large sections of their bodies.

During the same time, tattooing was also popular among affluent women as a means of expression and decoration.

"They were taking off their corsets and putting on designs of their own

## Program aids foreign students

English Conversations Partners works to connect international, American students.

BY ERIC RINEER  
Staff writer

University of Nebraska-Lincoln students can make some global connections tonight at the 10th annual English Conversation Partners program.

Sponsored by International Affairs, the program will match 100 American students with 100 international students. The students remain partners until the end of the semester.

Festivities begin at 7 p.m. inside the Nebraska Union ballroom.

The partnership will allow international students a chance to strengthen their English, said Shama Ali, program coordinator.

## GOP: Spending limits exceeded

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott on Thursday acknowledged what has been apparent for months but not stated publicly by Republican leaders: Congress will surpass legally required spending limits this fall.

"We've had emergencies we've had to deal with. In fact, the caps are exceeded," Lott, R-Miss., told reporters.

"The most important thing is be honest, get our work done, don't raid Social Security and don't raise taxes," he added.

For months, many Republican leaders said the spending limits would not be broken and made that pledge a central theme of their party's budget and political strategy.

Lott's comments underline how the GOP leadership has veered from its initial position as the party struggles to find enough money for fiscal

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MARGOT MIFFLIN  
freelance journalist

choosing," Mifflin said.

Patriot themes were common, as were tattoos of stocking seams on the backs of women's legs.

The style, referred to as "old-school tattooing," used a cluster of needles to make thick lines and vibrant colors.

The 1960s to the present has been categorized as the "Tattoo Renaissance" because there has been a move to legitimizing tattooing as a fine art form, she said.

Within this renaissance there were two different boom periods. One happened during the '60s and '70s, which was characterized by a watershed technique brought over from Eastern countries such as India and Japan.

The first women tattoo artists, who started to increase during this time, had trouble dealing with employers' neglecting the women's equipment, she said. Women were also having difficulty getting promoted.

"A lot of early women didn't know if they were used as gimmicks or as artists," Mifflin said.

Therefore, women tattoo artists started moving toward more feminine designs with lots of floral patterns to characterize their art, she said.

The fight for more control in a pre-

dominantly male profession gradually led into the third tattoo period.

In the 1980s, anorexia, AIDS, cancer and overall body image took over popular culture, Mifflin said.

It was important for women to feel like they had some control over their bodies, so they turned to body art as a means of control, she said.

"Tattooers and piercers seemed to be soothsayers for people concerned about their body," Mifflin said.

Some artists told Mifflin that tattooing can enlighten the spirit and change a person, she said.

Mifflin reminded the attendees, including high school and university students, that tattoos are not easily removed and last a long time.

Maggie Pleskac, a former UNL women's studies major who doesn't have a tattoo, said the presentation was good.

Pleskac said she came to learn how women had become involved with tattoo art.

Mifflin describes herself not as an advocate but a critic; she doesn't have a tattoo.

"If I was to get something, it would have to be abstract, safe and timeless," Mifflin said.

It will also provide an opportunity for Nebraskans to learn more about other cultures, she said.

"This is the age of globalization, and it's very important to be aware of how other people view things and do things," Ali said.

Piotrek Juskiewicz, program coordinator, said he felt the program provided a two-way opportunity.

"This way, both Americans and foreigners become exposed to each other, and they begin to learn firsthand," Juskiewicz said.

Tina Cassler, a graduate student who is attending the event, said she hoped to be paired with two international students.

Last year, Cassler and her partner would drive to places such as Kansas City or Minneapolis, she said.

"The number one thing is you make new friends ... these are normally people you wouldn't meet in Lincoln, Nebraska," she said.

Amy Beckwith, a senior computer science major and program com-

mittee member, said she was paired with a student from Tajikistan last year.

The student, from the former Soviet Union, Beckwith said, gained some valuable experience from being involved with the program.

"It was great to see him be able to ask directions somewhere or feel comfortable answering the phone," she said.

Mohammed Aldaylami, a finance major from Bahrain, a country in the Persian Gulf, said he was looking forward to the program.

Practicing his English, he said, would increase his career options.

"With my field, I need to meet new and different people so I can start to communicate," Aldaylami said.

"It's experience for me and experience for my field," he said. "Maybe I'll learn something new."

Students interested in being matched with an international student can call Juskiewicz at (402) 472-5864, or (402) 476-0621.

2000 spending measures.

Instead of promising to live within the spending limits, Republican leaders are now emphasizing the protection of Social Security surpluses and combatting President Clinton's demands for higher spending.

So far, the prospect of breaking the limits has caused few problems among Republicans, many of whom — along with Democrats — have long seen it as an inevitable response to spending pressures.

Moreover, lawmakers also say that few voters have heard of the spending limits or care about them.

Lawmakers of both parties say their goal now is to avoid spending any of next year's projected \$147 billion Social Security surplus.

But some Republicans, including House Budget Committee Chairman John Kasich, R-Ohio, have expressed concerns that some of that money

will be spent as well.

They say that would deal a major blow to the party's core conservatives.

Clinton's 2000 budget proposed breaking the limits by \$30 billion, according to congressional analysts, and Republicans criticized him for it. But he argued he had not broken them because he proposed cigarette tax increases and other savings to pay for it.

Republicans plan to use \$14 billion in expected non-Social Security surpluses to help pay for spending bills, a small tax cut for some businesses and to erase cuts in Medicare reimbursements to nursing homes enacted two years ago.

Spending any of the \$14 billion would exceed the limits, which were imposed by the 1997 budget-balancing accord between lawmakers and Clinton.

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