

Zine **Verschenken**

#17 | december 2023 | quirks, mania and craze



Editorial

What better month than December to open the door to the realms of quirks, mania and craze. By now, Ms. Mariah Carey A.K.A the Queen of Christmas, will have her festive songs played so many times earning her annual \$2.5 million in royalties alone.

Quirks are those charming idiosyncrasies that make individuals unique. A twitch, a lisp, a hairy mole on the lower-left cheek. Endearing or defining, something visually or characteristically quirky of a person is often what makes them different from the rest. Quirks are celebrated for adding colour to the tapestry of human experience: He's always ordering his books in subject order first – what a quirk! He is not necessarily strange, he's just atypical from most book owners I know. There's something about him and I just can't put my finger on it.

Mania is a state of intense enthusiasm or excitement, and often borders on the extreme. Where is the line between passion and mania? Be careful with one, since there are people among us on this planet who suffer from mania, and Beatlemania leads to...

Craze. The collective fervour that sweeps through society. A trend gone wild. Beatlemania was probably one of the first global crazes we saw in the modern world while flip phones, low-cut jeans and Britney Spears are quintessentially Y2K.

Nowadays, there's Wordle, the return of the mullet and guys with teeny tiny beanies barely covering the tops of their heads this winter. TikTok, Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT. The intergenerational craze of pointing fingers and identifying who's the apathetic Zoomer, a cringe Millennial and god forbid being a Boomer. Whether it's a viral trend or a cultural obsession, understanding how a craze became shapes our collective experiences and sense of time. Even writing this now I feel a step behind from knowing what the latest craze is, but I will always remember the crazes that were.

The month of giving giveth the giver an abundance of gifts. And stress. Family time is important, so we've been told. Many end-of-year traditions often feel like a craze, and then it returns again the following year. The only difference is that we are a bit older. And as we get older and slowly out of touch with all the latest trends, fads and buzzwords, we will hopefully always have our memories convincing ourselves that that was just how things were at the time.

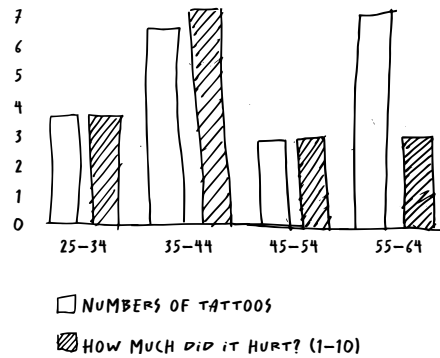


Are Tattoos a craze?

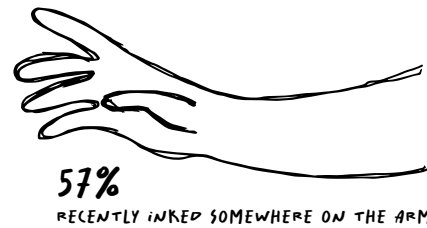
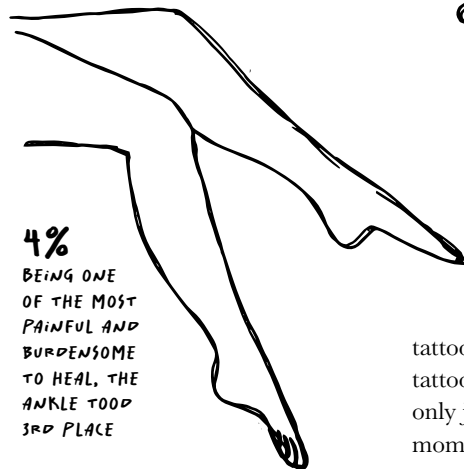
What possesses a person to get a tattoo? The answer might be as simple as...why not? It's an art form that's as old as 12,000 years old with intrinsic practices depending on the culture you look at.

Initially a huge part of counter-culture, tattoos were not favoured in the eyes of society and often had associations with social pariahs, gang-bangers and criminals. But in 2023, especially in cities like Berlin, it's a rare to see people without any ink at all.

As one of the most straightforward ways to express identity, beliefs and values, people naturally need to tell stories. There's a lot of time and energy spent on a single tattoo. From the excitement of finalising the tattoo design to an exhaustive healing process, tattoos are here to stay. Even if not getting one would make a person more different, almost everyone has thought about or considered getting a tattoo.



LIMBS SEEM TO BE A FAVOURITE, WITH LEGS AND SHOULDERS MAKING UP 17% AS THE CHOSEN PLACEMENT FOR THEIR LAST TATTOO.



Pain isn't deterrent when it comes to tattoos! 82% are considering to get another tattoo while 15.2% are undecided. Having only just had their first, it could take any life moment to persuade them differently!

Trends Around the World

Teeth blackening was a popular trend from 794 to 1185 throughout Southeast Asia and various Oceanic islands.

In Japan it is known as "Ohaguro" and was practised during the Heian and Edo periods (10th-19th century). It represented beauty and maturity. Both men and women saw it as a status symbol and the style was celebrated among the upper class and samurai. The aristocratic trend involved painting teeth with a solution made from iron filings, vinegar and tea or vegetable extracts. The initial blackening was usually done in adolescence to celebrate the young boys and girls coming of age. It also had several health benefits as the solution preserved the teeth, avoiding decay and maintaining good oral hygiene. The style became less popular in the Meiji period but had another surge of popularity when an urban legend circulated that the coal tar used as insulation for the new electric wiring installed in many Japanese households was partially made from the blood of virgins. This was associated with the Westerners who were installing the wiring. Single women, in fear of being attacked and having their blood taken, began to make themselves appear as married women and painted their teeth and eyebrows black, clothed themselves in plain kimono and styled their hair in the typical marumage style.

In Vietnam, it was also an act performed to show maturity before marriage. In Vietnamese culture, white teeth were associated with animals, savages and evil spirits.

The trend was also popular in England during the Tudor period. It was during this time that sugar reached the UK. Sugar quickly became popular, but as was quite scarce, it was only available to the wealthiest class. The cooks in the Royal Kingdom used this luxurious item in everything, including in many savory dishes as well as in large sugar banquets served as dessert.

Unfortunately the British Isles did not have the same knowledge of the natural remedies that their Asian counterparts had and did not understand the health effects of sugar, in particular on their teeth. In the 12th century, sugar was seen as a wonder drug and was sold in apothecaries to treat fevers, stomach diseases and to help with various pains including toothache.

Queen Elizabeth was a frequent victim of toothache. This was due to her excessive consumption of sugar and fear of the dentist. Her teeth had long turned black and were causing her extreme pain. She was instructed to brush her teeth using a paste made from sugar and water, but this did not help. Towards the end of her life, she was missing many teeth and there have been records that she was difficult to understand when she spoke.

As sugar became a status symbol of wealth, black teeth became the tell-tale sign of those who had it. Those unable to afford sugar used charcoal to follow this bizarre fashion trend. The irony is not lost on the thought that the poorer classes probably had teeth in fairly good condition considering the charcoal painting would have helped to keep their teeth well-preserved.

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Artists Bianca Cheung
Erin Johnson
Nadia Cheung
NINANIÑA

Do you want to contribute to the zine?
Have any questions?
Send us an email:
zine.verschenken@gmail.com or
scan the QR code to access our website:



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