MILTON, MASS. — Historic New England explores an art form that was once banned in Boston, but today is seen as a creative mode of self-expression. "Laud, Naked & in Three Colors: The History of Tattooing in Boston" is on view through October 30 at the Eustis Estate.

While tattooing dates back thousands of years, the art form’s Twenty-First Century story is a fascinating tale. As America’s industrial cities filled with factory workers eager for amusement, enterprising men and women discovered how they could make a living in the tattoo trade. The rise of an urban working class, two world wars, and the invention of the electric tattooing machine soon propelled tattooing into mainstream culture.

"Laud, Naked & in Three Colors: The History of Tattooing in Boston" explores this phenomenon through a selection of flash art, photography and advertisements that paint a rich picture of this unique period in the history of tattooing. The exhibition traces the popularization of tattooing in Boston through the stories and memorabilia of the city’s leading tattoo pioneers.

The exhibition features the work of Frank Howard and the Liberty family — Edward (Dad), Frank, Ted, and Harold (Lefly) — who dominated Boston’s tattoo scene from their shops in Scollay Square, the Ed Liberty tattooing sailor Royal O’Neil, and images from Historic New England’s collection and courtesy of Dave Bray, Jared Hook, Robert Liberty and Nora Liberty White.

The Eustis Estate is at 1424 Canton Avenue. For information, www.historicnewengland.org/property/eustis-estate.

The Drawings Of Rick Barton At The Morgan


Peabody Essex Given Significant Japanese Cloisonné Enamels Collection

SALEM, MASS. — The Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) has announced that it will receive a gift of Japanese cloisonné enamels from scholar and collector, Fredric T. Schneider. The collection, which Schneider began assembling in 1965, features approximately 900 works tracing four centuries of cloisonné enamel production. Works include commissions for the Japanese imperial family, pieces for export — among them masterworks exhibited at many international fairs — as well as a group of important cloisonné enamel pieces by contemporary master practitioners. The Schneider Collection significantly expands PEM’s renowned holdings of Japanese art. The announcement of the gift coincides with a public lecture on Japanese art by Miori Oka, which is scheduled for June 12 at the PEM.

In 2010, Schneider authored the most comprehensive book to date on the subject — The Art of Japanese Cloisonné Enamel: History, Techniques and Artistic Development, 1590 to the Present. First practiced in Japan in the Seventeenth Century, the labor-intensive technique of decorating metal forms with colored enamels reached a pinnacle of technical and artistic excellence during the late Nineteenth and the early Twentieth Centuries. Works in the Schneider Collection demonstrate the full range of techniques employed in cloisonné enamel on diverse forms, including vases, boxes, bowls, plates, plaques and incense burners, as well as architectural elements, scholars’ objects, medals and other items of personal adornment, sword fittings and even a sumo-wrestling judge’s signal fan. Contemporary artists in Japan continue to use cloisonné enamels in innovative and exciting ways and the collection represents many of today’s leading practitioners. Together, works in this collection reflect enamel’s broad role in Japanese material culture and demonstrate the remarkable evolution of technique over the last four centuries.

Selections from the collection will be on display in PEM’s galleries and forthcoming exhibitions and the entire collection will be accessible to researchers online and at PEM’s Collections Center in Rowley, Mass. Funding from Schneider will support the acquisition of Japanese cloisonné enamels as well as provide for the Schneider Collection’s long-term study and care.

The Peabody Essex Museum is at 161 Essex Street. For additional information, 966-745-1876 or www.pem.org.