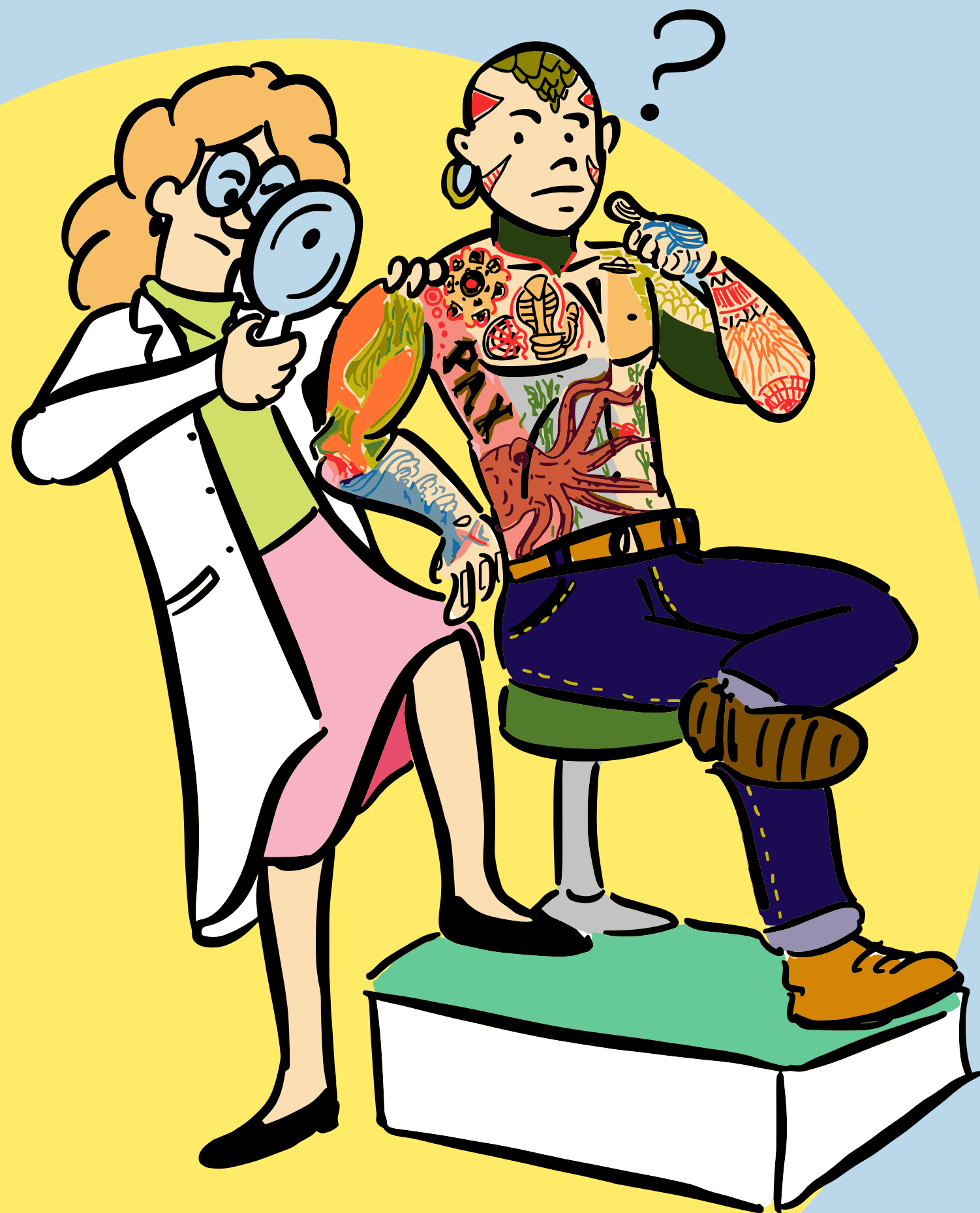


TATTOO INKS

WHAT DOES
SCIENCE SAY?

THE BFR SCIENCE COMIC



MANHATTAN IN THE 19TH CENTURY



ONE OF THE FIRST TATTOO STUDIOS IN THE USA BELONGED TO A GERMAN!

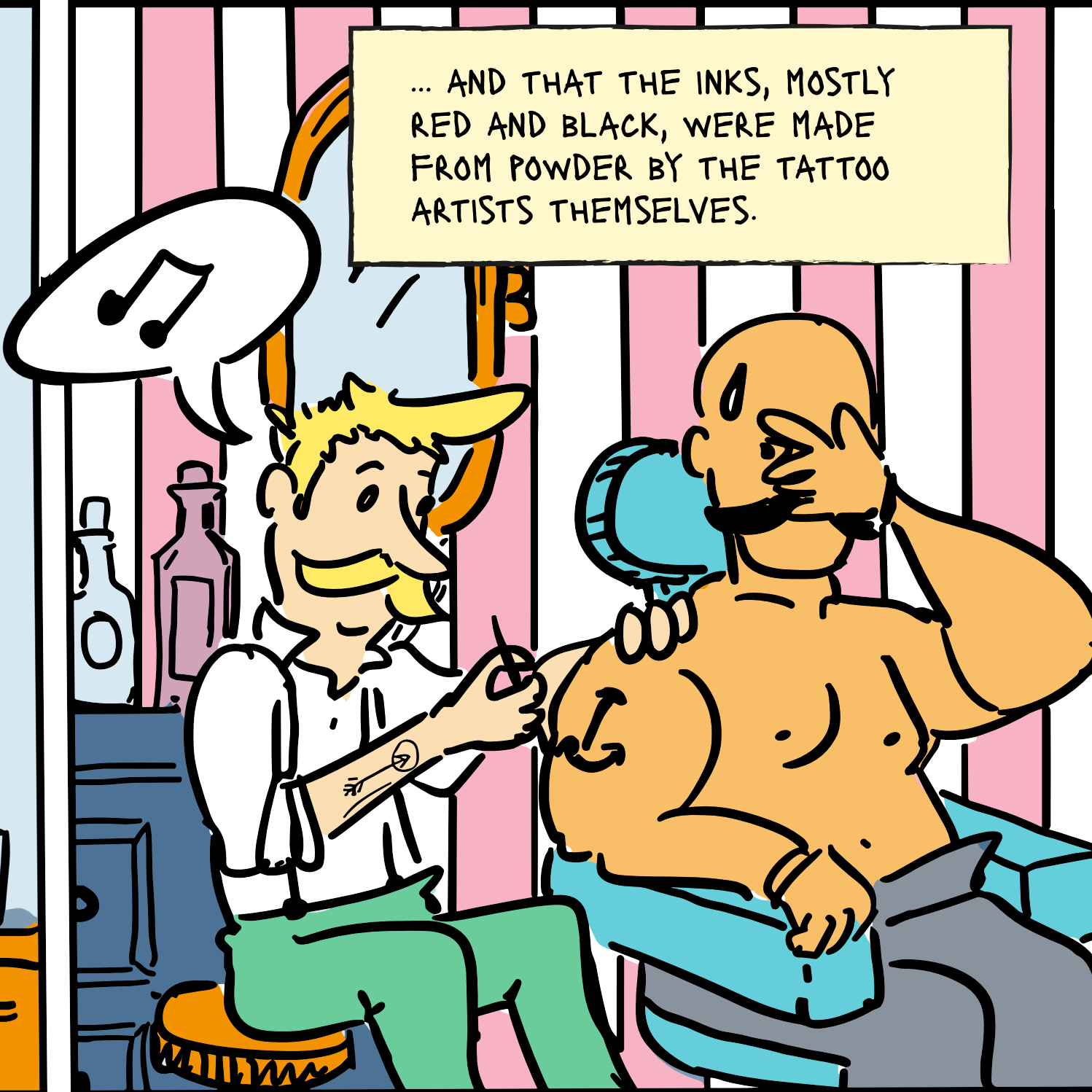
MARTIN HILDEBRANDT, NICKNAMED "OLD MARTIN", SPENT MANY YEARS AT SEA BEFORE SETTLING IN NEW YORK AROUND 1860 AND BECOMING A LEGEND AS A TATTOO ARTIST.



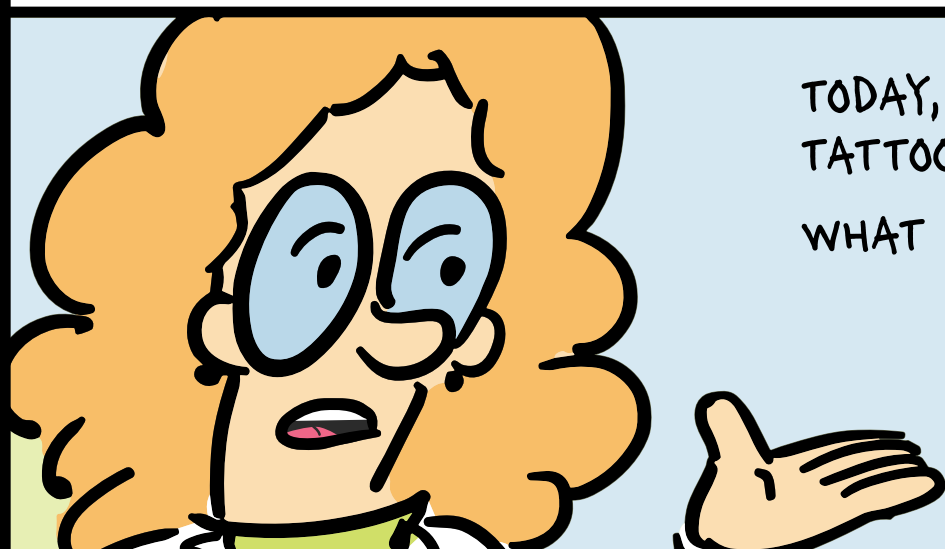
IT IS EVEN RUMOURED THAT BACK THEN, DURING THE TATTOOING PROCESS, ANY EXCESS BLOOD AND INK WAS WASHED OFF WITH WATER, URINE (!) OR ALCOHOL ...



... AND THAT THE INKS, MOSTLY RED AND BLACK, WERE MADE FROM POWDER BY THE TATTOO ARTISTS THEMSELVES.



TODAY, OF COURSE, PEOPLE ARE MUCH MORE CONCERNED ABOUT WHETHER TATTOO INKS CONTAIN TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND IF THEY POSE A HEALTH RISK. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INK ONCE IT'S IN THE BODY? ARE TATTOOS HARMFUL?



WHAT DOES SCIENCE SAY?



CLEANLINESS + HYGIENE



FIRST OF ALL, YOU SHOULD ALWAYS MAKE SURE THAT THE STUDIO IS CLEAN AND GOOD HYGIENE PRACTICES ARE USED.

JUST LIKE OTHER OPEN WOUNDS, FRESHLY TATTOOED SKIN CAN OCCASIONALLY BECOME INFECTED DUE TO POOR HYGIENE OR INKS CONTAMINATED WITH BACTERIA, VIRUSES OR FUNGI.



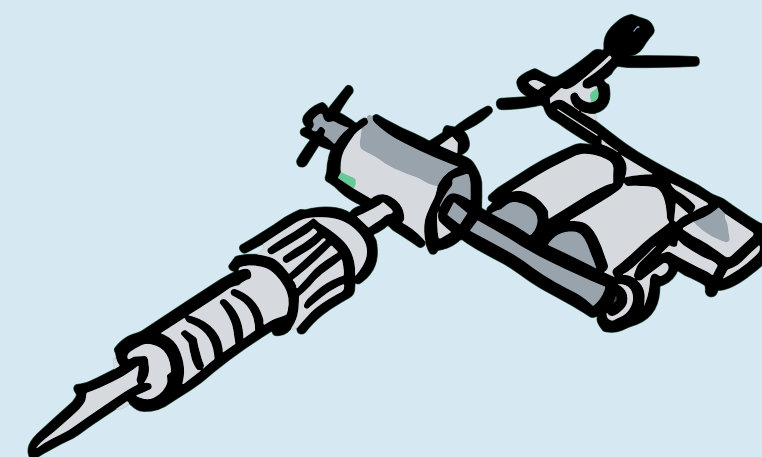
THE GREATEST UNCERTAINTY CONCERNS THE TATTOO INK ITSELF AND THE LARGE NUMBER OF SUBSTANCES USED ...



... WITH EACH ADDITIONALLY USED SUBSTANCE, IT BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT FROM A SCIENTIFIC POINT OF VIEW TO ASSESS THE HEALTH EFFECTS THAT THE AGENTS CAN CAUSE.

THEN THERE IS THE NEXT IMPORTANT QUESTION THAT RESEARCHERS ARE EXAMINING;

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE COLOUR PIGMENTS IN THE BODY?





THE SUN CAN
MAKE TATTOOS
FADE!

... IT'S KNOWN THAT UP TO 30% OF
THE PIGMENTS CAN DISAPPEAR FROM
THE SKIN ...

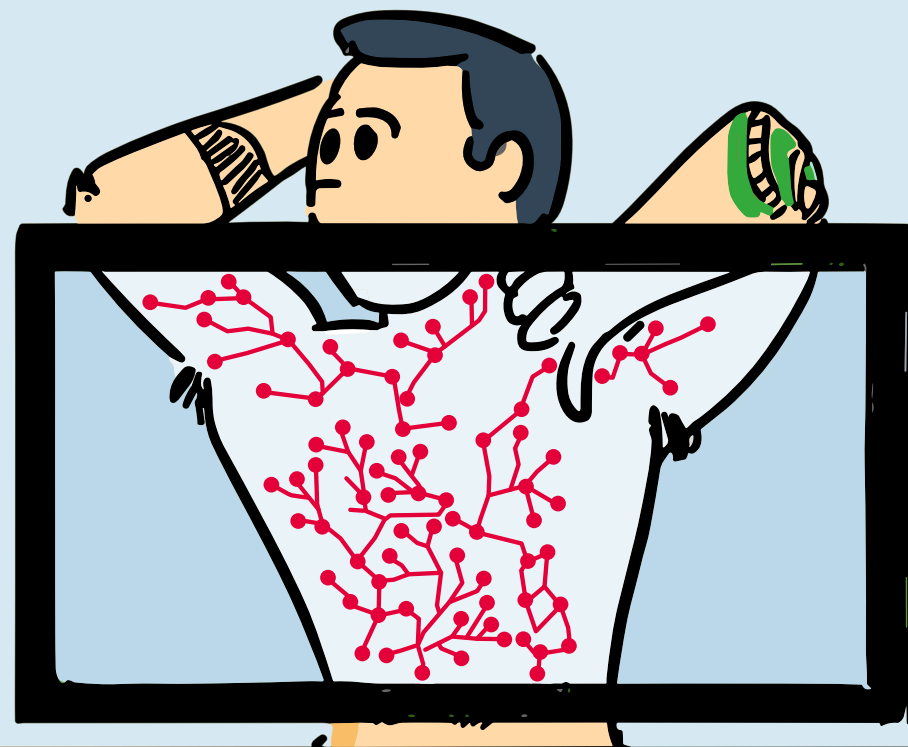
BUT WHERE DO THEY GO?

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PIGMENTS
UNDER THE SKIN?



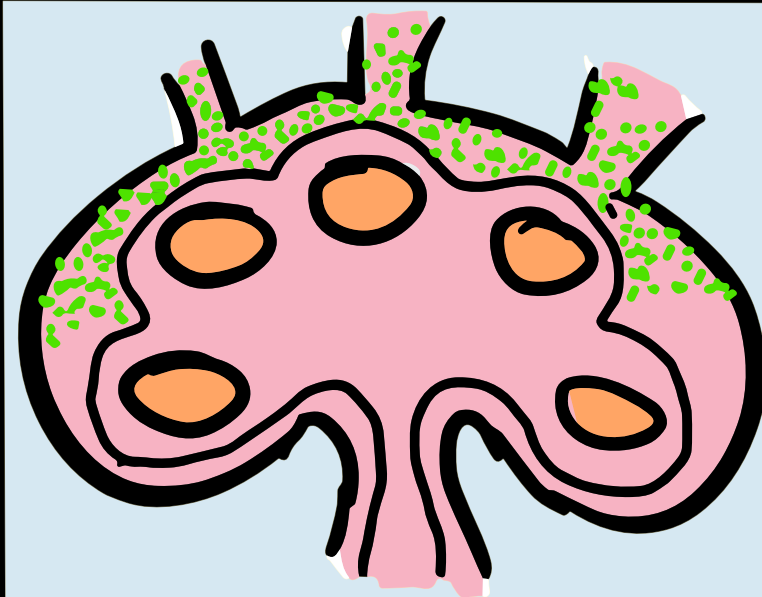
TO STUDY THIS, THE BFR OBTAINED
SKIN AND TISSUE SAMPLES FROM
DECEASED PERSONS WITH TATTOOS
FROM PARTNERED FORENSIC
PATHOLOGISTS IN MUNICH.

THE RESEARCHERS
DETERMINED THAT A MAJORITY
OF THE PIGMENTS ACCUMULATE IN
THE LYMPH NODES.

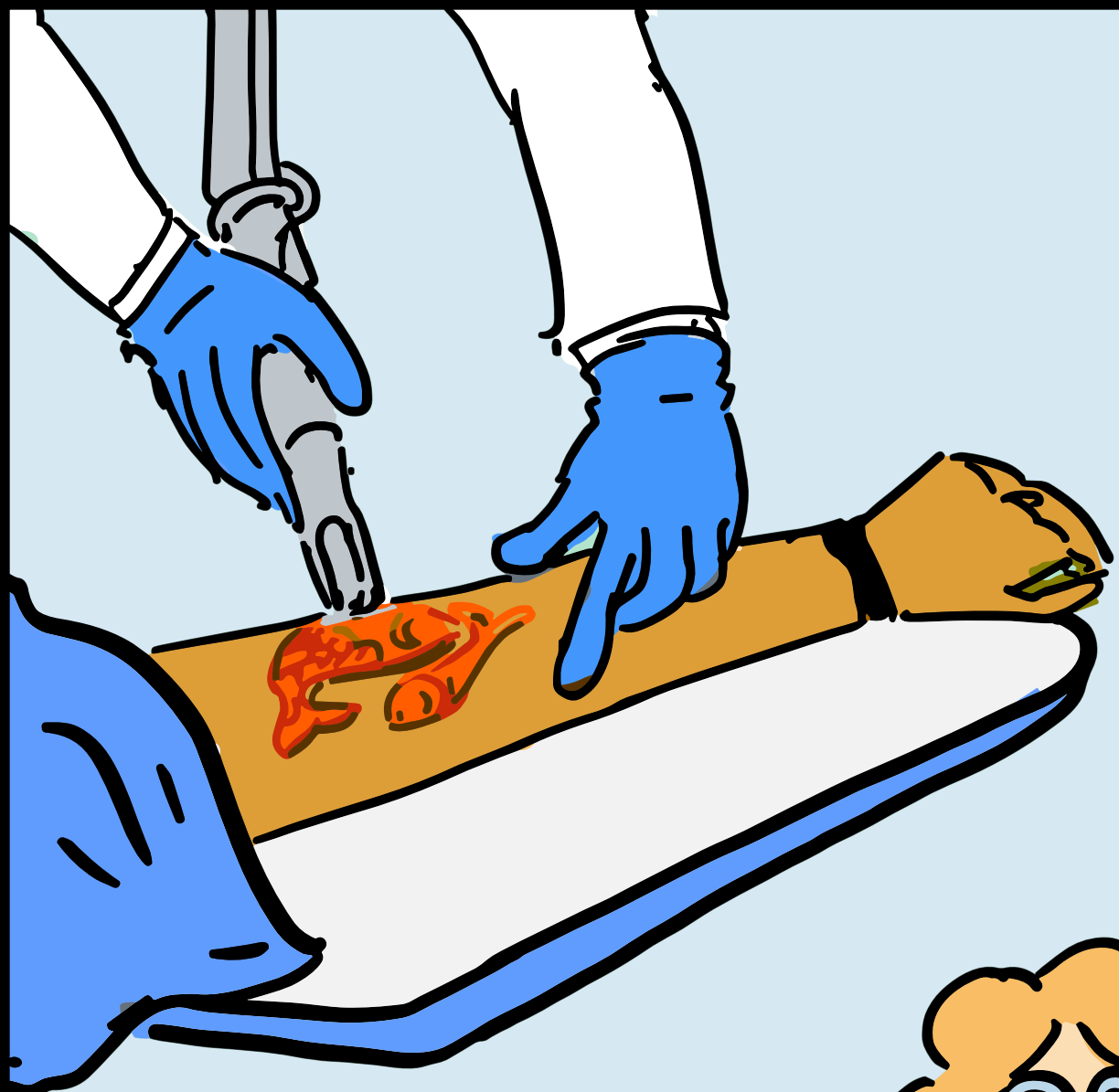


LYMPH NODES ARE ORGANS
OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM
THAT HELP FIGHT AGAINST
INFECTIONS AND DISEASES.

DURING WOUND-HEALING
PROCESSES, COLOUR
PIGMENTS ARE TRANSPORTED
FROM THE SKIN TO THE
LYMPHATIC FLUID - ENDING
UP IN THE LYMPH NODES.

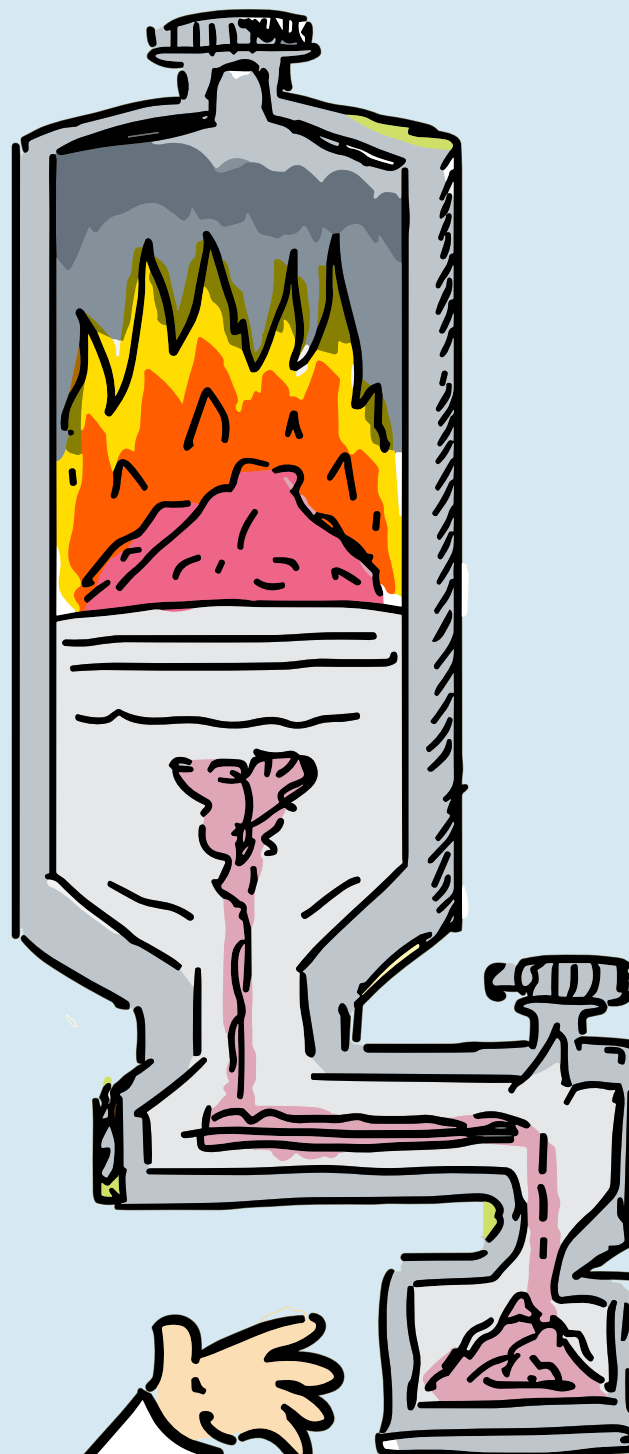


COLOUR PIGMENTS
MIGRATE IN THE BODY -
NANOPARTICLES IN
PARTICULAR ARE VERY
MOBILE.



DURING THE LASERING, INTENSE HEAT BUILDS THAT LEADS TO DECOMPOSITION OF THE PIGMENTS.

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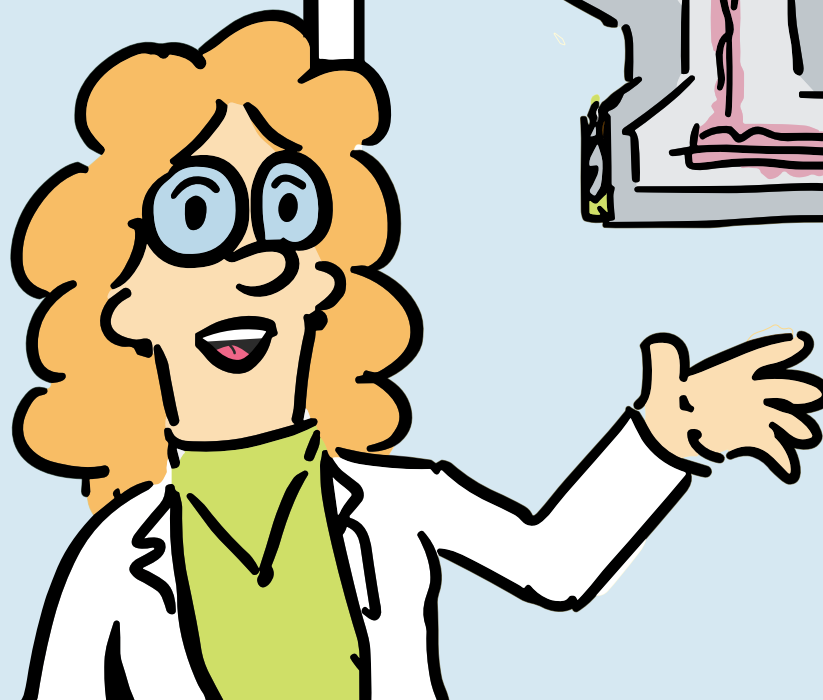
ANOTHER HEALTH RISK; TATTOO REMOVAL BY LASER

THE BFR DEVELOPED A METHOD TO SIMULATE THIS PROCESS.

THE PIGMENT POWDER IS HEATED THROUGH PYROLYSIS TO 800 DEGREES CELSIUS.

THE RESULTING SUBSTANCES CAN THEN BE IDENTIFIED AND CLASSIFIED TOXICOLOGICALLY.

HYDROGEN CYANIDE, BENZENE AND OTHER SUBSTANCES ARE PRODUCED;
- SUBSTANCES WITH A HIGH TOXIC POTENTIAL.

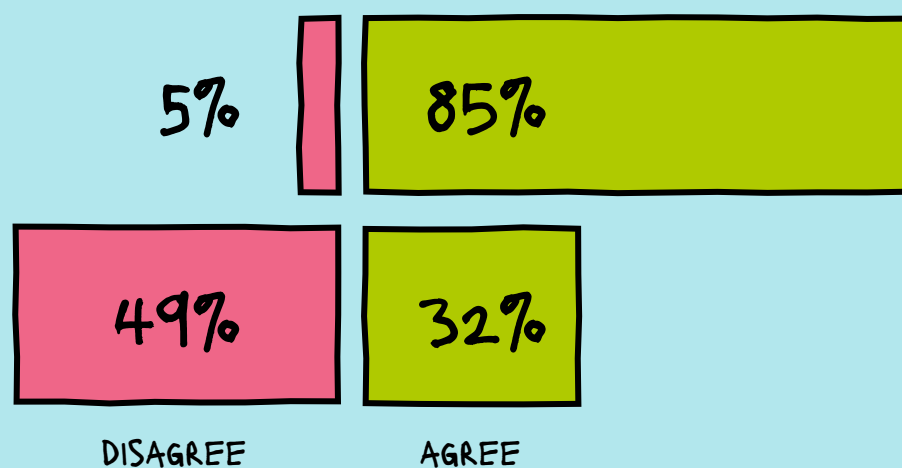


RISK PERCEPTION

THE EXTENSIVE INFORMATION AVAILABLE ABOUT TATTOOS TODAY MAKES RISK PERCEPTION AN INTERESTING TOPIC FOR THE BFR;

TATTOO INKS CAN TRIGGER ALLERGIES.

THE COMPONENTS OF TATTOO INKS REMAIN COMPLETELY IN THE TATTOOED PART OF THE SKIN.*

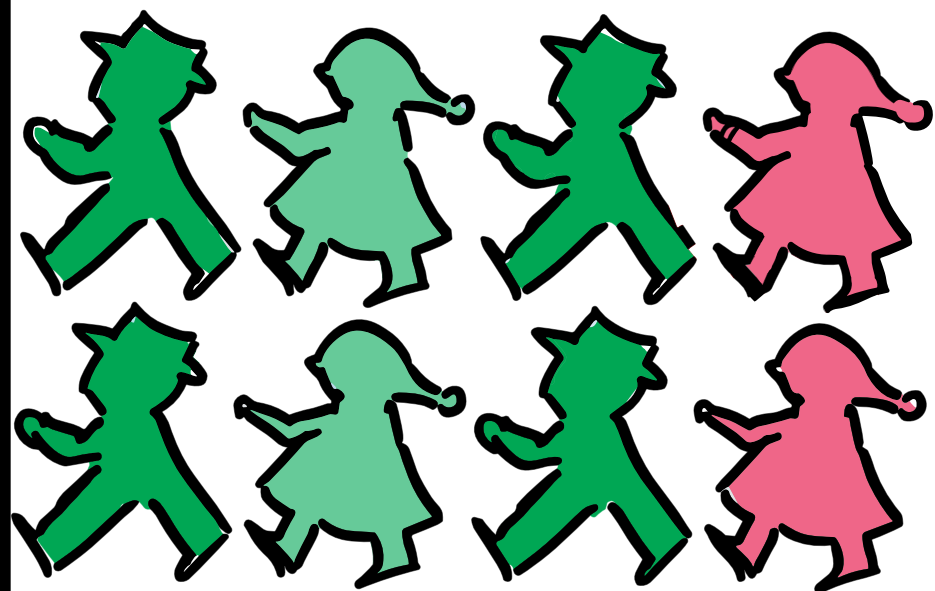


SOURCE:
1,009 RESPONDENTS
BFR CONSUMER MONITOR 2018, SPECIAL TATTOO ISSUE
TOTAL LESS THAN 100% DUE TO: "DON'T KNOW" RESPONSES OR NO ANSWER
*STATEMENT THAT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT

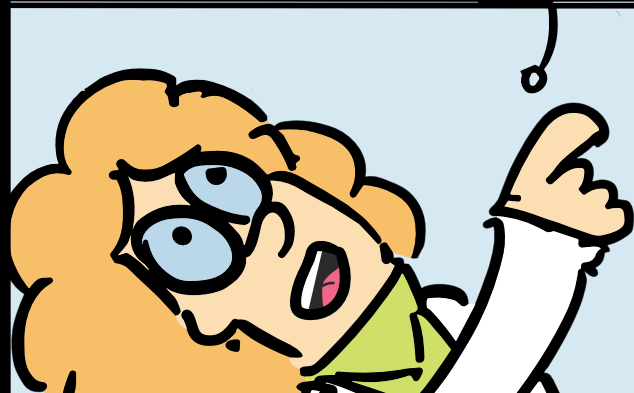
+++ +++ +++

BFR SURVEY

PROPORTION OF TATTOOED PEOPLE AGED 25 TO 34



SOURCE: YOU GOV, STATISTA 2024



ONE IN SIX GERMANS HAS A TATTOO – IN THE 25-34 AGE GROUP, THIS FIGURE RISES TO ONE IN FOUR.

HOW SAFE OR UNSAFE ARE THE INKS USED FOR TATTOOING IN GERMANY IN THE OPINION OF RESPONDENTS WHO CURRENTLY HAVE OR USED TO HAVE A TATTOO?

VERY SAFE

35%

QUITE SAFE

54%

QUITE UNSAFE

8%

DON'T KNOW

3%

HOWEVER, ONLY 7% OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE NEVER HAD A TATTOO CONSIDER TATTOO INKS TO BE VERY SAFE!

SOURCE: 1,001 RESPONDENTS BFR CONSUMER MONITOR 2018, SPECIAL TATTOO ISSUE

AS OF JANUARY 2022, THE USE OF CERTAIN SUBSTANCES USED IN TATTOO INKS AND PERMANENT MAKEUP HAS BEEN RESTRICTED IN THE EUROPEAN UNION.

FOR EXAMPLE, PIGMENT MIXTURES MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION SUCH AS A REFERENCE NUMBER TO CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE BATCH THEY BELONG TO AS WELL AS A LIST OF INGREDIENTS.

CARCINOGENIC SUBSTANCES, ALLERGIES, INFECTIONS – A WIDE RANGE OF HEALTH RISKS ARE BEING DISCUSSED IN CONNECTION WITH TATTOO INKS.

EVERY CONSUMER SHOULD BE AWARE THAT GETTING A TATTOO IS ASSOCIATED WITH HEALTH RISKS.

MORE INFORMATION;
WWW.BFR.BUND.DE/EN

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Protecting Health**

