

THE MOST AUTHENTIC TRADITIONAL TATTOO ARTIST IN THE WORLD

KALINGA REGION, PHILIPPINES

Whang-od Oggay is the last traditional tattoo artist from the old generation in the Kalinga region in the northern Philippines. This internationally acclaimed tattooist has single-handedly ensured the survival of her generation's art for the next generation.

Whang-od Oggay has seen some changes in her time. She's the last of her kind, a tattoo artist, or *mambabatok*, from the elder generation of the Butbut tribe in the Kalinga region of northern Philippines. Now believed to be more than 100 years old (her exact age is unknown, even to her), Oggay first started tattooing when the warriors of her tribe were still going to war with neighboring tribes and returning with the heads of opponents they'd killed. Today, she's one of the most venerated tattoo artists on the planet, and hundreds of people from all over the world swarm her tiny mountaintop village every day, in the hopes of getting inked by a living legend.

Oggay employs a style of tattooing called *batok*, or hand tapping. All tattoos hurt, but this is a uniquely painful method. The ink is made from a simple mixture of

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