

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification

****In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification****

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification is a fascinating topic that delves deep into how societies perceive, regulate, and interact with the human body when it comes to altering its natural state. Body modification, ranging from tattoos and piercings to more extreme forms like implants and scarification, is not just about aesthetic choices but is loaded with cultural meanings, political implications, and personal identity statements. Understanding these layers helps us appreciate how body modification functions as a site of negotiation between individual autonomy and societal norms.

Understanding Body Modification Beyond Skin-Deep

Body modification is often misunderstood as a mere fashion or rebellious trend, but it carries far more weight culturally and politically. The choices people make to alter their bodies are embedded in histories, traditions, and contemporary power structures. When we talk about "in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification," we are exploring how these practices are situated within broader discussions about identity, belonging, resistance, and conformity.

The Historical Roots of Body Modification

Long before modern tattoo parlors and piercing studios, body modification was a significant cultural practice in many civilizations. Indigenous groups around the world have used body art and modifications to mark rites of passage, social status, spiritual beliefs, and community affiliation. From the intricate Maori moko tattoos to the lip plates of some African tribes, these modifications were—and still are—deeply symbolic.

In contemporary society, these ancient practices intersect with modern aesthetics, sometimes leading to cultural appropriation debates. When body modification is stripped of its cultural context, it risks becoming just another trend, losing its original meaning and disrespecting those cultures' heritage.

Body Modification as a Political Statement

Body modification is inherently political because it challenges normative ideas about what bodies should look like. In many Western societies, the "ideal" body is often sanitized, uniform, and conforms to certain standards of beauty and professionalism. Tattoos and piercings, especially when visible, can be seen as acts of defiance against these rigid norms.

For marginalized groups, modifying the body can be a powerful form of reclaiming agency. For example, members of the LGBTQ+ community often use body modification to express identity and solidarity. Additionally, individuals with disabilities might alter their bodies in ways that challenge societal perceptions of ability and aesthetics.

The Cultural Politics Behind Popular Forms of Body Modification

When discussing "in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification," it's essential to examine how different forms of modification are received and regulated differently across cultures and institutions.

Tattoos: From Stigma to Mainstream

Tattoos have historically been stigmatized in many Western contexts, associated with deviance, criminality, or rebellion. However, over the past few decades, tattoos have become increasingly mainstream, embraced by celebrities, professionals, and everyday people alike. This shift reflects changing cultural attitudes and a broader acceptance of personal expression.

Yet, the politics of tattoos remain complex. In some workplaces, visible tattoos can still limit employment opportunities, highlighting ongoing tensions between individual expression and institutional expectations. Moreover, tattooing can be a site of cultural conflict, especially when non-indigenous people adopt indigenous tattoo designs without understanding their significance.

Piercings and Body Jewelry

Like tattoos, piercings have moved from countercultural symbols to more widely accepted forms of body art. Ear piercings, once the norm, have evolved to include multiple ear piercings, nose rings, septum rings, and more. Each type of piercing can carry different cultural meanings and social signals.

In certain cultures, piercings are deeply spiritual or symbolic, while in

others, they are primarily aesthetic or associated with youth culture. The acceptance of piercings in professional environments varies widely, reflecting ongoing negotiations about bodily autonomy in public and private spaces.

Extreme Body Modifications and Societal Boundaries

Beyond tattoos and piercings, more extreme forms of body modification—such as subdermal implants, tongue splitting, or scarification—often provoke stronger reactions. These modifications challenge the limits of what society deems acceptable or normal.

People who undergo extreme body modifications may face social alienation or legal restrictions. The cultural politics here involve debates around bodily sovereignty versus societal discomfort or moral panic about altering the human body in radical ways.

Body Modification, Identity, and Self-Expression

At its core, body modification is a deeply personal form of self-expression. The cultural politics surrounding it cannot be separated from questions of identity, belonging, and empowerment.

Negotiating Identity Through the Body

The body acts as a canvas on which individuals project their identities, histories, and aspirations. For many, body modification helps to narrate personal stories—memorializing loved ones, celebrating milestones, or symbolizing transformations.

Body modifications can also serve as a form of resistance against dominant cultural narratives. For example, people who feel marginalized by mainstream beauty standards might use body modification to redefine what beauty means to them.

Intersectionality and Body Politics

The cultural politics of body modification must also consider intersectionality—the ways race, gender, class, and other social categories influence how body modifications are perceived and experienced.

Women, for example, often face policing about their bodies in ways men do not, making choices about body modification a feminist act of reclaiming autonomy. Similarly, people of color might encounter racialized assumptions or stereotypes related to their body art choices, complicating the politics of visibility and representation.

Legal and Ethical Considerations in Body Modification

The politics of body modification also extend into legal and ethical realms. Laws governing body modification vary widely across regions, reflecting differing cultural attitudes and concerns about health and safety.

Regulation and Consent

One critical issue is ensuring that body modifications are performed safely and consensually. This involves licensing practitioners, enforcing hygiene standards, and protecting vulnerable individuals from coercion or exploitation.

For minors, legal frameworks often restrict certain modifications to protect their welfare, but these laws can also spark debates about age, autonomy, and parental rights.

Cultural Appropriation and Respect

Ethically, body modification raises questions about cultural appropriation. Wearing symbols or designs from cultures one does not belong to can perpetuate misunderstandings or disrespect sacred practices. Sensitivity and education are crucial to navigating these issues responsibly.

Embracing Diversity in Body Politics

Ultimately, "in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification" invites us to embrace the diversity of human bodies and the myriad ways people choose to inhabit them. It challenges us to rethink rigid norms and to respect personal choices, while also engaging critically with the historical and cultural contexts that shape those choices.

Whether through a small piercing or an elaborate tattoo, body modification continues to be a dynamic field where culture, identity, politics, and art intersect in endlessly fascinating ways. As society evolves, so too will the

conversations around what it means to modify the body "in the flesh."

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main focus of 'In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification'?

'In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification' explores how body modification practices intersect with cultural identity, politics, and social norms, analyzing the ways individuals use their bodies to express resistance, conformity, and self-definition.

How does 'In the Flesh' address the concept of identity in relation to body modification?

The book discusses how body modification serves as a powerful tool for individuals to construct, challenge, and communicate aspects of their identity, including gender, ethnicity, and subcultural affiliations.

What types of body modifications are commonly examined in 'In the Flesh'?

'In the Flesh' examines a range of body modifications such as tattoos, piercings, scarification, implants, and cosmetic surgery, highlighting their cultural significance and political implications.

How does 'In the Flesh' relate body modification to cultural politics?

The text explores how body modification practices are embedded within power structures and cultural discourses, revealing tensions around conformity, resistance, and the regulation of bodies within society.

Does 'In the Flesh' discuss the historical context of body modification?

Yes, it provides a historical overview of body modification practices across different cultures and time periods, illustrating how meanings and social acceptance have evolved.

What role does gender play in the analysis presented in 'In the Flesh'?

'In the Flesh' critically examines how body modification practices intersect with gender norms, often serving as a site for challenging or reinforcing

traditional gender roles.

How does the book approach the ethical considerations of body modification?

The book discusses ethical debates surrounding bodily autonomy, consent, and the medicalization of body modification, emphasizing respect for individual choice against societal judgments.

Is 'In the Flesh' relevant to discussions about contemporary body politics?

Absolutely, it provides valuable insights into ongoing debates about body autonomy, beauty standards, and the politicization of the body in contemporary societies.

Who would benefit from reading 'In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification'?

Students and scholars of cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, gender studies, and anyone interested in understanding the social and political dimensions of body modification would find the book highly relevant.

Additional Resources

****In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification****

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification offers a compelling lens through which to examine the evolving relationship between identity, society, and the human body. Body modification, encompassing practices such as tattooing, piercing, scarification, implanting, and cosmetic surgery, transcends mere aesthetics. It intersects deeply with cultural norms, power structures, and personal expression, raising critical questions about autonomy, acceptance, and societal control. This article explores the cultural politics surrounding body modification, dissecting how these practices challenge, reinforce, or negotiate social boundaries in diverse contexts.

The Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Body Modification

Body modification has been practiced globally for millennia, often embedded within ritualistic, spiritual, or social frameworks. However, in contemporary settings, the cultural politics surrounding these modifications are markedly complex. They reveal tensions between individual agency and collective norms,

mainstream acceptance and subcultural identity, and the commodification of the body versus personal sovereignty.

Historically, many indigenous cultures used body modification as rites of passage or markers of status and belonging. For example, the Maori in New Zealand with their traditional moko tattoos or the Kayapo people of the Amazon with lip plates demonstrate how such practices are integral to cultural identity. In contrast, Western societies have often stigmatized or criminalized body modifications, associating them with deviance or rebellion.

Today, the increasing popularity of tattoos and piercings in mainstream culture reflects a shifting paradigm. Surveys indicate that nearly 30% of millennials in the United States have at least one tattoo, signaling a normalization of body art. Yet, this normalization also sparks debates about professionalism, gender norms, and cultural appropriation, underscoring the ongoing politicization of the body.

Body Modification as a Form of Resistance and Identity

One of the most significant aspects of body modification lies in its role as a form of personal and political resistance. For marginalized groups—whether based on race, gender, sexuality, or class—modifying the body can serve as an act of reclaiming autonomy in the face of oppressive social structures. For instance, the LGBTQ+ community often employs body modification as a way to assert identity and challenge heteronormative standards.

Moreover, body modification can subvert dominant beauty ideals. Practices like scarification or extreme piercing disrupt conventional aesthetics and question societal expectations about what bodies should look like. This disruption can empower individuals to redefine beauty and identity on their own terms.

However, it is essential to recognize that body modification is not uniformly liberatory. In some cases, societal pressures can coerce individuals into conforming to certain modification trends, which may perpetuate new forms of exclusion or reinforce capitalist commodification of the body.

Commercialization and Ethical Considerations

The booming industry surrounding cosmetic surgery and body modifications raises ethical questions about accessibility, commodification, and consent. Procedures such as breast augmentation, rhinoplasty, and botox injections have become normalized, especially within Western consumer culture, often driven by media portrayals of idealized beauty.

This commercialization complicates the cultural politics of body modification

by introducing issues of economic disparity. While some view elective cosmetic surgery as empowerment through choice, others critique it as a response to societal pressure to conform to narrow beauty standards, disproportionately affecting women and vulnerable populations.

Furthermore, the global tattoo industry's growth has sparked discussions about cultural appropriation, especially when sacred or culturally significant symbols are commodified without understanding or respect. This dynamic adds another layer to the politics surrounding body modification, highlighting the need for cultural sensitivity and ethical practices.

Legal and Workplace Implications

The cultural politics of body modification extend into legal frameworks and workplace policies, reflecting broader societal attitudes. Many organizations maintain conservative dress codes that restrict visible tattoos or piercings, citing professionalism or brand image. These policies often disproportionately impact younger workers or those from subcultures, raising debates about discrimination and freedom of self-expression.

In some countries, laws regulate or prohibit certain forms of body modification, such as face tattoos or extreme piercings, under public decency statutes. Such regulations can stigmatize individuals and perpetuate social exclusion, illustrating how body politics intersect with governance and social control.

Conversely, some progressive workplaces adopt inclusive policies recognizing body modification as a legitimate form of identity expression, fostering diversity and reducing stigma. The variance in these responses underscores ongoing negotiations between personal freedom and institutional norms.

Health and Safety Considerations

An often-overlooked aspect of the cultural politics of body modification is the public health dimension. While many modifications are safe when performed by trained professionals, unregulated or informal practices can pose risks, including infections, allergic reactions, and complications.

This reality has prompted calls for stricter regulation and education within the body modification industry to protect consumers. Furthermore, the debate about whether to regulate body modification practices intersects with cultural rights, as overly restrictive policies may marginalize indigenous or traditional practices.

The Future of Body Modification in Cultural Context

As technology advances, new forms of body modification are emerging, such as biohacking, implantable devices, and gene editing, further complicating the cultural politics around the human body. These innovations challenge existing ethical, legal, and social frameworks, raising profound questions about what it means to be human.

Simultaneously, the ongoing dialogue about body autonomy and identity continues to evolve, reflecting broader societal transformations related to gender fluidity, digital identity, and globalization. Social media platforms amplify these conversations, facilitating communities centered on body modification while also exposing practitioners to new forms of scrutiny and commodification.

In this dynamic landscape, understanding the cultural politics of body modification requires nuanced analysis that appreciates the interplay of personal choice, cultural heritage, societal norms, and power relations. As body modification practices continue to diversify and proliferate, they remain a potent site of cultural negotiation and political meaning.

In The Flesh The Cultural Politics Of Body Modification

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: In the Flesh V. Pitts, 2003-05-15
Through an interview-based study, Victoria Pitts has researched the subcultural milieu of contemporary body modification, focusing on the ways sexuality, gender and ethnicity are being reconfigured through new body technologies - not only tattooing, but piercing, cyberpunk and such 'neotribal' practices as scarification. She interprets the stories of sixteen body modifiers (as well as some subcultural magazines and films) using the tools of feminist and queer theory. Pitts not only covers a hot topic but also situates it in a theoretical context.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Inszenierung und Optimierung des Selbst Ralf Mayer, Christiane Thompson, Michael Wimmer, 2013-06-04 Kulturelle Formen und Praxen der Inszenierung und Optimierung des Selbst spielen heute in der alltäglichen Lebensgestaltung und Lebensführung eine herausragende Rolle: Die vielfältigen Veränderungen und Manipulationen an Körper und Geist zeigen, dass kaum etwas von der Arbeit am Selbst ausgenommen ist. Dabei erscheint das Selbst in einer Position der Verfügung und zugleich in einer Position uneingeschränkter Disponibilität wechselnder Ansprüche und Anforderungsprofile. Wie ist diese Ambivalenz von Selbstschöpfung und Selbstdisziplinierung in der Arbeit am Selbst zu deuten? Wie ist dies auf gegenwärtige (pädagogische) Praxen und Verfahren der Inszenierung und Optimierung des Selbst zu beziehen? Und: Wo verlaufen die Grenzen des Selbst? Die Beiträge dieses Bandes nehmen sich dieser Fragen aus gegenwartsanalytischer und grundagentheoretischer Perspektive an und rekonstruieren in verschiedenen kulturellen Feldern die unmögliche Aufgabe, ein Selbst zu sein.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Auspowern und Empowern?
Corinna Schmechel, 2022-02-03 Inwiefern ist ein positives Körpererleben auch für queere Menschen

an normative Konzepte von Geschlechtlichkeit, Körperlichkeit und Subjektivität gebunden? Corinna Schmechels emotionstheoretischer Ansatz zeigt fundiert die immanenten Ambivalenzen eines normkritischen »Empowerment durch Sport« im Kontext der Fitnesskultur als spätmoderner Subjekt- und Körperkultur auf.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: *Transhumanism: Entering an Era of Bodyhacking and Radical Human Modification* Emma Tumilty, Michele Battle-Fisher, 2022-09-29 This book surveys the distinctions that underlie the unbound potential and existential risks of life expansion and radical modifications posed by a transhuman world. Humanness is in flux as human bodies are being hacked and altered in their quest for super wellness, super intelligence and super longevity. Now is the time to discuss how best to think about dealing with bodies that have been hacked to exceed natural physical limits or more technically, species typical functioning. Enter the advent of transhumanism to take uncertainty by the horns. According to transhumanists, death is unnecessary and medical conventions undermine the possibility to radically evolve. To biohackers, there is no need to wait to explore the risks that conventional medicine dares not. This book is of interest to anyone interested in tapping into this growing movement of modifying the human body as it is right now.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Tätowierte Zirkusdamen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts. Eine Analyse des ambivalenten Status der feministischen Agency tätowierter Körper am Beispiel Nora Hildebrandts und Betty Broadbents Alina Holderbach, 2024-06-10 Bachelorarbeit aus dem Jahr 2023 im Fachbereich Kulturwissenschaft, Note: 1,5, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Kulturwissenschaft), Sprache: Deutsch, Abstract: Tätowierte Zirkusdamen in den USA und Europa des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts widersetzten sich der patriarchalen Beschränkung und stellten ihre Körper selbstständig in den Mittelpunkt. Sie ließen sie zu wortwörtlichen Shows werden, indem sie in Zirkussen ihre fast gänzlich tätowierte Haut auf Bühnen präsentierten. Durch die Betrachtung des Lebens und der Arbeit zweier solcher tätowierten Zirkusdamen, namens Nora Hildebrandt und Betty Broadbent, soll analysiert werden, auf welchen Weisen ihrer tätowierten Haut eine feministische Agency innewohnt, und inwiefern sie mittels der Gestaltung ihrer Haut geltende Machtverhältnisse übergehen. Als feministische Agency werden im Rahmen dieser Arbeit diejenigen Aspekte verstanden, welche den Weiblich Gelesenen Körper mithilfe von Tätowierungen als den Eigenen markieren, der sich dem Status des Objektes patriarchaler Projektionen eines normativ weiblichen Körpers widersetzt. Durch einen Vergleich der Selbstdarstellung dieser beiden Frauen und der Vermarktung ihrer Show-Acts soll außerdem auf die Ambivalenz dieser Agency aufmerksam gemacht werden. Wie sich bei der Betrachtung von Zirkusshow-Acts dieser Zeit nämlich zeigen wird, gibt es für das angenommene subversive Potenzial der Tattoos auch hemmende Elemente. Einerseits, da die von ihnen erzählten Entstehungsgeschichten der Tattoos auf kolonialen Vorstellungen gegenüber tätowierten Menschen of Color beruhen, wodurch eine Hierarchisierung zwischen ihren und „anderen“ Körpern stattfindet. Zudem wurden dieserart Geschichten dafür verwendet, ihre Tattoos nicht mehr nur als selbstbestimmte Akte körperlicher Transformationen zu konstruieren, sondern diese ihnen vielmehr „angetan“ wurden. Hierdurch geht die Agency, die ihre Tattoos auszudrücken vermögen, verloren, beziehungsweise scheint nicht mehr so deutlich zu fassen zu sein.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: *Handbook of Material Culture* Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler, Mike Rowlands, Patricia Spyer, 2006-01-05 The study of material culture is concerned with the relationship between persons and things in the past and in the present, in urban and industrialized and in small-scale societies across the globe. The Handbook of Material Culture provides a critical survey of the theories, concepts, intellectual debates, substantive domains and traditions of study characterizing the analysis of things. It is cutting-edge: rather than simply reviewing the field as it currently exists. It also attempts to chart the future: the manner in which material culture studies may be extended and developed. The Handbook of Material Culture is divided into five sections. • Section I maps material culture studies as a theoretical and conceptual field. • Section II examines the relationship between material forms, the

human body and the senses. • Section III focuses on subject-object relations. • Section IV considers things in terms of processes and transformations in terms of production, exchange and consumption, performance and the significance of things over the long-term. • Section V considers the contemporary politics and poetics of displaying, representing and conserving material and the manner in which this impacts on notions of heritage, tradition and identity. The Handbook charts an interdisciplinary field of studies that makes an unique and fundamental contribution to an understanding of what it means to be human. It will be of interest to all who work in the social and historical sciences, from anthropologists and archaeologists to human geographers to scholars working in heritage, design and cultural studies.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Routledge Handbook on Deviance

Stephen E. Brown, Ophir Sefiha, 2017-10-12 The Routledge Handbook on Deviance brings together original contributions on deviance, with a focus on new, emerging, and hidden forms of deviant behavior. The editors have curated a comprehensive collection highlighting the relativity of deviance, with chapters exploring the deviant behaviors related to sport, recreation, body modification, chronic health conditions, substance use, religion and cults, political extremism, sexuality, online interaction, mental and emotional disorders, elite societal status, workplace issues, and lifestyle. The selections review competing definitions and orientations and a wide range of theoretical premises while addressing methodological issues involved in the study of deviance. Each section begins with an introduction by the editors, anchoring the topics in relevant theoretical and methodological contexts and identifying common themes as well as divergence. Providing state-of-the-art scholarship on deviance in modern society, this handbook is an invaluable resource for researchers and students engaged in the study of deviance across a range of disciplines including criminology, criminal justice, sociology, anthropology, and interdisciplinary departments, including justice studies, social transformation, and socio-legal studies.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Encyclopedia of Women in Today's World

Mary Zeiss Stange, Carol K. Oyster, Jane E. Sloan, 2011-02-23 This work includes 1000 entries covering the spectrum of defining women in the contemporary world.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Deviance Today

Addrain Conyers, Thomas C. Calhoun, 2020-11-04 The second edition of Deviance Today is a contemporary collection of original chapters in the field of deviant behavior. This new edition has 16 new chapters. All of the chapters reflect the current trend in the sociology of deviance. This reader covers major theories in the sociology of deviant behavior, from classic ones such as anomie/strain theory and labeling theory to modern ones such as life course perspective. In addition, this anthology encompasses a wide spectrum of deviant behaviors. This is a user-friendly reader, put together with students in mind. The chapters are not only authoritative, but also interesting. The chapters were written by respected experts in their field of study. Most important, unique to this reader, these chapters have been carefully written for clarity, conciseness, and forcefulness. Students will therefore find them easy and enjoyable to read while learning about deviance.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: *Cyberpunk and Visual Culture*

Graham Murphy, Lars Schmeink, 2017-10-24 Within the expansive mediascape of the 1980s and 1990s, cyberpunk's aesthetics took firm root, relying heavily on visual motifs for its near-future splendor saturated in media technologies, both real and fictitious. As today's realities look increasingly like the futures forecast in science fiction, cyberpunk speaks to our contemporary moment and as a cultural formation dominates our 21st century techno-digital landscapes. The 15 essays gathered in this volume engage the social and cultural changes that define and address the visual language and aesthetic repertoire of cyberpunk – from cybernetic organisms to light, energy, and data flows, from video screens to cityscapes, from the vibrant energy of today's video games to the visual hues of comic book panels, and more. Cyberpunk and Visual Culture provides critical analysis, close readings, and aesthetic interpretations of exactly those visual elements that define cyberpunk today, moving beyond the limitations of merely printed text to also focus on the meaningfulness of images, forms, and compositions that are the heart and lifeblood of cyberpunk

graphic novels, films, television shows, and video games.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Anthropology Matters, Second Edition Shirley A. Fedorak, 2012-10-24 Anthropology Matters places the study of anthropology concretely in the world by which it is surrounded. It takes a question-based approach to introducing important anthropological concepts by embedding those concepts in contemporary global issues that will interest students. The second edition of this popular text has been updated throughout and includes four new chapters on language revitalization, social media and social revolutions, human migration, and the role of NGOs in international development practice. Students can now engage with the most up-to-date issues while learning to think anthropologically.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: The SAGE Encyclopedia of LGBTQ Studies Abbie E. Goldberg, 2016-05-10 This far-reaching and contemporary new Encyclopedia examines and explores the lives and experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) individuals, focusing on the contexts and forces that shape their lives. The work focuses on LGBTQ issues and identity primarily through the lenses of psychology, human development and sociology, emphasizing queer, feminist and ecological perspectives on the topic, and addresses questions such as: · What are the key theories used to understand variations in sexual orientation and gender identity? · How do Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) affect LGBTQ youth? · How do LGBTQ people experience the transition to parenthood? · How does sexual orientation intersect with other key social locations, such as race, to shape experience and identity? · What are the effects of marriage equality on sexual minority individuals and couples? Top researchers and clinicians contribute to the 400 signed entries, from fields such as: · Psychology · Human Development · Gender/Queer Studies · Sexuality Studies · Social Work · Sociology The SAGE Encyclopedia of LGBTQ Studies is an essential resource for researchers interested in an interdisciplinary perspective on LGBTQ lives and issues.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Wearing Culture Heather Orr, Matthew Looper, 2013-12-15 Wearing Culture connects scholars of divergent geographical areas and academic fields—from archaeologists and anthropologists to art historians—to show the significance of articles of regalia and of dressing and ornamenting people and objects among the Formative period cultures of ancient Mesoamerica and Central America. Documenting the elaborate practices of costume, adornment, and body modification in Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Oaxaca, the Soconusco region of southern Mesoamerica, the Gulf Coast Olmec region (Olman), and the Maya lowlands, this book demonstrates that adornment was used as a tool for communicating status, social relationships, power, gender, sexuality, behavior, and political, ritual, and religious identities. Despite considerable formal and technological variation in clothing and ornamentation, the early indigenous cultures of these regions shared numerous practices, attitudes, and aesthetic interests. Contributors address technological development, manufacturing materials and methods, nonfabric ornamentation, symbolic dimensions, representational strategies, and clothing as evidence of interregional sociopolitical exchange. Focusing on an important period of cultural and artistic development through the lens of costuming and adornment, Wearing Culture will be of interest to scholars of pre-Hispanic and pre-Columbian studies.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Youth, Space and Time, 2016-06-27 This book engages with the experience of space and time in youth cultures across the world. Putting together contemporary case studies on young transnationalists, young glocals and young protesters in cities on the five continents, it analyzes new agoras and chronotopes in global cities. It is based on a selection of papers first presented to the International Sociological Association (ISA) Research Committee 34 session on Youth Cultures, Space and Time that took place during the ISA World Congresses of Sociology in Gothenburg, Sweden (2010), and in Yokohama, Japan (2014). The value of this volume for youth researchers worldwide is twofold. Firstly, the chapters exemplify innovative approaches to understanding the fluid and dynamic urban space-time dimension in which young people's cultural and bodily practices are located. Secondly, the volume offers a transnational perspective. Chapter contributors come from countries across the world, and give account of very

diverse youth culture phenomena. They represent both established researchers and new voices in youth research. Contributors are: Óscar Aguilera Ruiz, Ilenya Camozzi, Carles Feixa, Vitor Sérgio Ferreira, Liliana Galindo Ramírez, Elham Golpouh-Nezhad, Leila Jeolás, Jeffrey J. Juris, Hagen Kordes, Sofia Laine, Carmen Leccardi, Pam Nilan, Jordi Nofre, Ndukaeze Nwabueze, Luca Queiroló Palmas, Yannis Pechtelidis, Geoffrey Pleyers, José Sánchez García, Mahmood Shahabi. Youth, Space and Time is now available in paperback for individual customers.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Beauty around the World Erin Kenny, Elizabeth Gackstetter Nichols, 2017-06-22 Taking the concept of beauty seriously, this encyclopedia examines how humanity has sought and continues to seek what is beautiful in a variety of cultural contexts, giving readers an understanding of how to look at beauty both intellectually and critically. Is beauty ever more than skin deep? Arguably yes, considering that the concept of beauty—and the pursuit of it—has shaped cultures worldwide, across every time period, and has even served to change the course of history. Studying beauty practices yields insight into social status, wealth, political ideology, religious doctrine, and gender expectations, including gender nonconformity. A truly interdisciplinary text, *Beauty around the World: A Cultural Encyclopedia* presents an insightful perspective on beauty that draws from philosophy, literature, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and feminist studies, giving readers a unique view of world beauty practices. This volume offers information about beauty practices from the past to the present in alphabetical entries that address terms and topics such as beards, dreadlocks, Geisha, moko tattoos, and progressive muscularity. Readers will better comprehend how beauty shapes many social interactions in profound ways worldwide, and that the unspoken social agreements that shape ideals of attractiveness and desirability within any given culture can matter very much. The encyclopedia's entries challenge readers to consider the questions What is beauty? and Why does it matter? A comprehensive bibliography is a valuable resource for further research.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: A New Ethic of 'Older' Bridget Garnham, 2016-10-04 Through its themes of subjectivity, surgery, and self-stylization this book critically examines the cultural constraints and incitements that shape the practice of cosmetic surgery by older people. The book problematizes anti-ageing discourses to provide a nuanced descriptive, ethical, and political reading of 'older' identity politics nested within the contemporary ethico-political terrain of self-care. *A New Ethic of 'Older'* aims to de-territorialize the 'older' subject from normative discourses of ageing and theorize becoming 'older'. Evidence of an active cultural politics of 'older' emerges from the critically reflexive engagement of older people with cosmetic surgery. This engagement constitutes a 'cutting critique' of ageing discourses enmeshed in an aesthetic mode of subjectivation that underpins 'a new ethics of old age'. The book will appeal to those in the fields of Cultural Gerontology, Ageing Studies, Critical Psychology, Sociology, and Cultural Geography. The methodological approach will be of interest to academics and students exploring the application of Foucault's work on care of the self to contemporary contexts and practices.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: Feminist Interrogations of Women's Head Hair Sigal Barak-Brandes, Amit Kama, 2018-06-13 Feminist scholarship has looked extensively at the perception of the body as a flexible construction of cultural and social dictates, but head hair has been often overlooked. *Feminist Interrogations of Women's Head Hair* brings new focus to this underrepresented topic through its intersections with contemporary socio-cultural contexts. Scholars from a wide range of disciplines investigate private and public meanings associated with female head hair, problematising our assumptions about its role and implications in the 21st Century. Readers are invited to reflect on the use of hair in popular culture, such as children's television and pop album artwork, as well as in work by women artists. Studies examine the lived experiences of women from a range of backgrounds and histories, including curly-haired women in Israel, African American women, and lesbians in France. Other essays interrogate the connotations of women's head hair in relation to body image, religion, and aging. *Feminist Interrogations of Women's Head Hair* brings together cultural discourses and the lived experiences of women, across

time and place, to reveal the complex and ever-evolving significance of hair. It is an important contribution to the critical feminist thought in cultural studies, fashion studies, media studies, African American studies, queer theory, gerontology, psychology, and sociology.

in the flesh the cultural politics of body modification: *The Tattoo Project* Deborah Davidson, 2016-12-15 Disrupting commonly held notions about who gets tattooed and why, *The Tattoo Project* describes, illustrates, and celebrates the social significances of commemorative tattoos. Written by scholars from various disciplines, as well as by community members and practitioners, this edited collection considers the meanings people make from their experiences of love, loss, trauma, resilience, and change, and why they choose to inscribe those meanings on their bodies. This methods-based text also examines the process of building a community-contributed digital archive of tattoo photos and stories, the result of which inspired the contributions to this book. Writing at the intersections between the public and the private, the authors consider the production and mobilization of knowledge across communities, disciplines, and space. Featuring beautiful tattoo photography, personal narratives from project participants, and original poetry by Priscila Uppal, *The Tattoo Project* is a novel read that bridges the gap between academic and popular audiences. This timely collection is a valuable resource for courses across the social sciences and humanities and for anyone interested in tattoos and their significance.

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