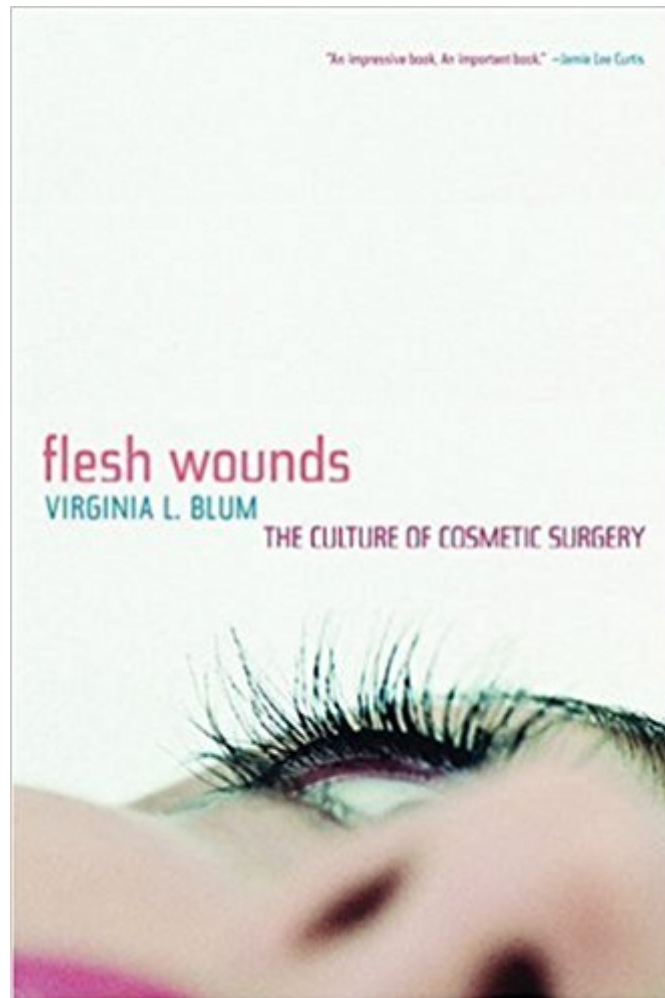




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Flesh Wounds: The Culture Of Cosmetic Surgery



Synopsis

When did cosmetic surgery become a common practice, the stuff of everyday conversation? In a work that combines a provocative ethnography of plastic surgery and a penetrating analysis of beauty and feminism, Virginia L. Blum searches out the social conditions and imperatives that have made ours a culture of cosmetic surgery. From diverse viewpoints, ranging from cosmetic surgery patient to feminist cultural critic, she looks into the realities and fantasies that have made physical malleability an essential part of our modern-day identity. For a cultural practice to develop such a tenacious grip, Blum argues, it must be fed from multiple directions: some pragmatic, including the profit motive of surgeons and the increasing need to appear young on the job; some philosophical, such as the notion that a new body is something you can buy or that appearance changes your life. *Flesh Wounds* is an inquiry into the ideas and practices that have forged such a culture. Tying the boom in cosmetic surgery to a culture-wide trend toward celebrity, Blum explores our growing compulsion to emulate what remain for most of us two-dimensional icons. Moving between personal experiences and observations, interviews with patients and surgeons, and readings of literature and cultural moments, her book reveals the ways in which the practice of cosmetic surgery captures the condition of identity in contemporary culture.

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Customer Reviews

I was stunned to find there are no reviews of this book here at . This book is a great read. I had trouble putting it down! The author is a professor of literature and makes an apology for stepping

outside her field (of literature) to write a book about plastic surgery, but it is PRECISELY her background that makes this book so wonderful. The topic is well-researched and yet presented in layman's terms and the stats and facts are nothing but mind blowing. She makes references to Frankenstein, which prompted me to go read THAT classic and she's right; we're now formed by society's impressions of our physical appearance (which is the link to Victor Frankenstein's monster). If you think about this, it's rather insane. When people's appearance is improved, they're treated better by society and that gives them more self-confidence and inner peace. How bass-ackwards is that? I don't know when I've read a more thought-provoking book than "Flesh Wounds." I find myself quoting from it to friends again and again. And it's also proving INVALUABLE in writing my own book about internet dating. (Available August 2005). Rose Thornton

Here's a real-review: *The first 100 pages are about how her mother made her get a nose job that when wrong. *The second 100 pages are about the Frankenstein movie. *The last 90 pages are about every movie-star that's ever gotten cosmetic surgery. And the whole thing is stitched together with an English teacher's weekend theory on how a mix of "Simulations and Simulacra" + "The Ego and the Id" explain why people get cosmetic surgery. If you're someone who orders books online based on catchy titles, then do yourself a favor and skip this one. How can a book on cosmetic surgery not even talk about the golden ratio?

The book *Flesh Wounds: The Culture of Cosmetic Surgery* by Virginia L. Blum takes the reader into the minds of the individuals influenced by cosmetic surgery. Blum is an English Professor at the University of Kentucky and she became a victim of the cosmetic surgery craze when she was a teenager. Blum writes a very intriguing book about how cosmetic surgery captivates the interests of patients. She points out that society has taken to the fascination of cosmetic surgery, due to the fixation on celebrities. Celebrities stand as a two-dimensional image, where society looks to celebrities for body images. Celebrities are also looking elsewhere for body images too. Society is slowly turning into a unified body mold. Basically society is going to one day be separated by groups of body types. Society is losing the individual identity that has supported our cultures for years. *Flesh Wounds* contributes to an understanding of why society is so focused on the outer appearances. Today, society is based on two negative aspects, that is whether a person is attractive or unattractive. Beauty does not make a person more intelligent, nor does not being beautify make a person less intelligent. I liked this book, because Blum does an impressive job providing the evidence of how cosmetic surgery is destroying individualism.

Virginia L. Blum examines the topic of cosmetic surgery in her research-based informational book *Flesh Wounds: The Culture of Cosmetic Surgery*. The book, written by the English professor at the University of Kentucky, appeals to many audiences, is informative in many subjects, and is greatly influenced by her background with cosmetic surgery. *Flesh Wounds* can be widely used because she uses the book to inform the public on the basics and the inside

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