



Cultural Encyclopedia of the Body (2 volume set)

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Pop culture and the media today are saturated with the focus on the aesthetics of the human body. Magazines and infotainment shows speculate whether this or that actress had breast implants or a nose job. Americans are not just focusing on celebrities but on themselves too and today have unprecedented opportunities to rework what nature gave them. One can now drop in to have cosmetic surgery at the local mall. Contemplating the superficial nature of it all grows tiresome, and pop culture vultures and students can get a better fix for their fascination with the body beautiful through the cultural insight provided in this amazing set. *Cultural Encyclopedia of the Body* is a treasure trove of essays that explore the human body alphabetically by part, detailing practices and beliefs from the past and present and from around the world that are sometimes mind-blowing and eye-popping.

Body parts are examined through a multifaceted cultural lens. Readers will explore how the parts are understood, what they mean to disparate societies, how they are managed, treated, and transformed, and how they are depicted and represented. The entries draw from many disciplines that are concerned to some degree or another with human bodies, including anthropology archeology, sociology, religion, political history, philosophy, art history, literary studies, and medicine. The encyclopedia proffers information on a number of cultures, tribes, and customs from East and West. Ancient practices to the latest fad, which in fact might continue ancient practices, are illuminated. Other considerations that arise in the essays include comparisons among cultures, the changing perceptions of the body, and issues of race, gender, religion, community and belonging, ethnicity, power structures, human rights.

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