



Beauty Matters

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Beauty has captured human interest since before Plato, but how, why, and to whom does beauty matter in today's world? Whose standard of beauty motivates African Americans to straighten their hair? What inspires beauty queens to measure up as flawless objects for the male gaze? Why does a French performance artist use cosmetic surgery to remake her face into a composite of the master painters' version of beauty? How does beauty culture perceive the disabled body? Is the constant effort to remain young and thin, often at considerable economic and emotional expense, ethically justifiable? Provocative essays by an international group of scholars discuss aesthetics in aesthetics, the arts, the tools of fashion, the materials of decoration, and the big business of beautification? beauty matters? to reveal the ways gender, race, and sexual orientation have informed the concept of beauty and driven us to become more beautiful. Here, Kant rubs shoulders with Calvin Klein. Beauty Matters draws from visual art, dance, cultural history, and literary and feminist theory to explore the values and politics of beauty. Various philosophical perspectives on ethics and aesthetics emerge from this penetrating book to determine and reveal that beauty is never disinterested.

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