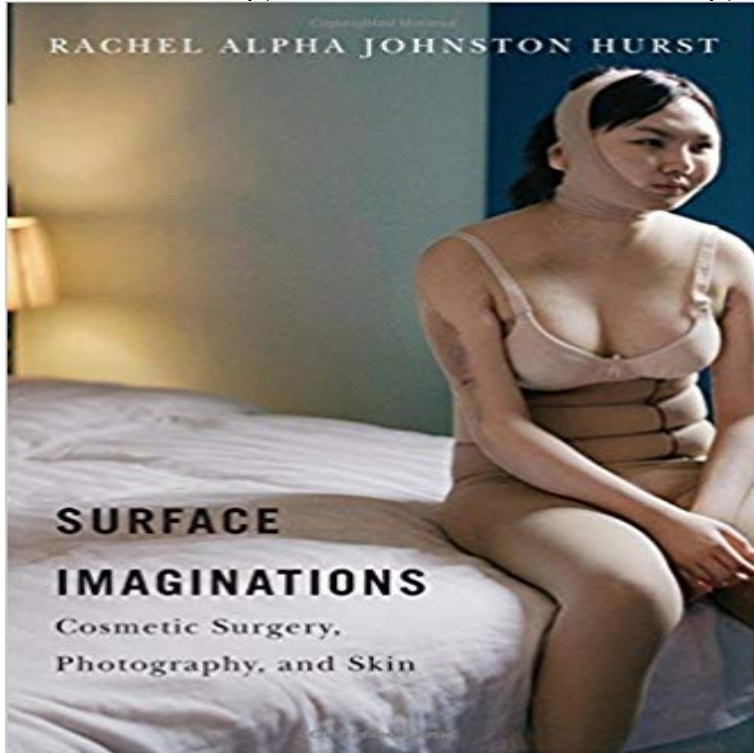


Surface Imaginations: Cosmetic Surgery, Photography, and Skin



Versatile, trendy, and resilient, the global cosmetic surgery industry shows no signs of decline, especially with its promises, not just of aesthetic improvement, but of absolute transformation. Introducing the concept of surface imagination, Rachel Hurst discusses the fantasy that a change to the exterior will enhance the interior, or that the outside is more significant because it fashions the inside. Drawing on psychoanalysis, feminist theory, popular culture, the history of medicine, and interviews with women who have undergone cosmetic procedures, Hurst explores the tensions between the two primary surfaces of cosmetic surgery: the photograph and the skin. The photograph, an idealized surface for envisioning the effects of cosmetic surgery, allows for speculation and retouching, predictably and without pain. The skin, on the other hand, is a recalcitrant surface that records the passage of time and heals unpredictably. Ultimately, Hurst argues, the fantasy of surface imagination corroborates the belief that one's body is mutable and controllable, and that control over one's body permits control over one's social, emotional, and mental suffering. Acknowledging the varied experiences and opinions of the patients interviewed, but also critiquing the promises made by the industry, *Surface Imaginations* develops an innovative approach to thinking about cosmetic surgical transformations through the seduction of surfaces.

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