



Facing Beauty: Painted Women and Cosmetic Art

Aileen Ribeiro

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Throughout the history of the Western world, countless attempts have been made to define beauty in art and life, especially with regard to women's bodies and faces. *Facing Beauty* examines concepts of female beauty in terms of the ideal and the real, investigating paradigms of beauty as represented in art and literature and how beauty has been enhanced by cosmetics and hairstyles.

This thought-provoking book discusses the shifting perceptions of female beauty, concentrating on the period from about 1540 to 1940. It begins with the Renaissance, when a renewed emphasis on the individual was reflected in the celebration of beauty in the portraits of the day. The fluid, sensual lines of the Baroque period initiated a shift toward a more "natural" look, giving way in the 18th century to a more stylized and artificial face, a mask of ideal beauty. By the late 19th century, commercial beauty preparations had become more readily available, leading to new technological developments within the beauty industry in the early 20th century. Beauty salons and the wider availability of cosmetics revolutionized the way women saw themselves.

Ravishing images of some of the most beautiful women in history, both real and ideal, accompanied by illustrations from costume books, fashion plates, advertisements, caricatures, and cosmetics, bring the evolving story of beauty to life.



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