



Pagan Fleshworks: The Alchemy of Body Modification

Maureen Mercury

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A groundbreaking work that sees the contemporary cultural trends of tattooing, piercing, implanting, and branding as a quest for a transformative psychic experience.

- Features unforgettable color photographs by Steve Haworth, the foremost body modification artist in the United States.
- Introduces a subculture that has gone far beyond the realm of simple tattooing.

Acts of body modification are deeply rooted in physical impulses that are obscured in our technological society. As we become more removed from the physicality of our existence, we lose touch with an essential part of our humanity. Body modification is a way of reconnecting to our bodies, to the earth, and to the divine.

Pagan Fleshworks reveals that the prevalence of body modification--tattooing, piercings, brandings, and implants--is the postmodern way to heal the body and enliven the soul. These "fleshworks" are the result of people creating their own rituals and symbols of meaning in order to feel a sense of the divine within.

Maureen Mercury relates the various stages of obtaining fleshworks to the stages of alchemy, showing how fleshworks lead to psychic transformation--soul-making. Using mythological imagery and the stories of those who have chosen to modify their bodies, she identifies the signposts of our journey toward self-expression, exploring the connection between our desires and our outward life. More than 30 riveting color photographs by leading body modification artist Steve Haworth provide the perfect visual complement to this examination of the soul as it rises toward freedom.

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