



# Surgery Junkies: Wellness and Pathology in Cosmetic Culture

*Victoria Pitts-Taylor*

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## **Surgery Junkies: Wellness and Pathology in Cosmetic Culture** Victoria Pitts-Taylor

"Surgery Junkies is an innovative, fast-paced mix of theory and empirical research that advances our understanding of contemporary bodies, lifestyle medicine, and the making of the embodied, self-fashioned self. Scholars and teachers of cultural and media studies, sociology of the body, and health and society will value its contributions to both their research and their teaching."-Arthur W. Frank, author of *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* and *The Renewal of Generosity: Illness, Medicine, and How to Live*

"Whether analyzing Extreme Makeover, 'Body Dismorphic Disorder,' or her own rhinoplasty, Pitts-Taylor makes difficult theoretical concepts clear-and clearly relevant to our lives."-Susan Bordo, author of *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*

Despite the increasing prevalence of cosmetic surgery, there are still those who identify individuals who opt for bodily modifications as dupes of beauty culture, as being in conflict with feminist ideals, or as having some form of psychological weakness. In this ground-breaking book, Victoria Pitts-Taylor examines why we consider some cosmetic surgeries to be acceptable or even beneficial and others to be unacceptable and possibly harmful. Drawing on years of research, in-depth interviews with surgeons and psychiatrists, analysis of newspaper articles, legal documents, and television shows, and her own personal experience with cosmetic surgery, Pitts-Taylor brings new perspectives to the promotion of "extreme" makeovers on television, the medicalization of "surgery addiction," the moral and political interrogation that many patients face, and feminist debates on the topic. Pitts-Taylor makes a compelling argument that the experience, meanings, and motivations for cosmetic surgery are highly social and, in doing so, provides a much needed "makeover" of our cultural understanding of cosmetic surgery. Victoria Pitts-Taylor is associate professor of sociology at Queens College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. She is the author of *In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification*.

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