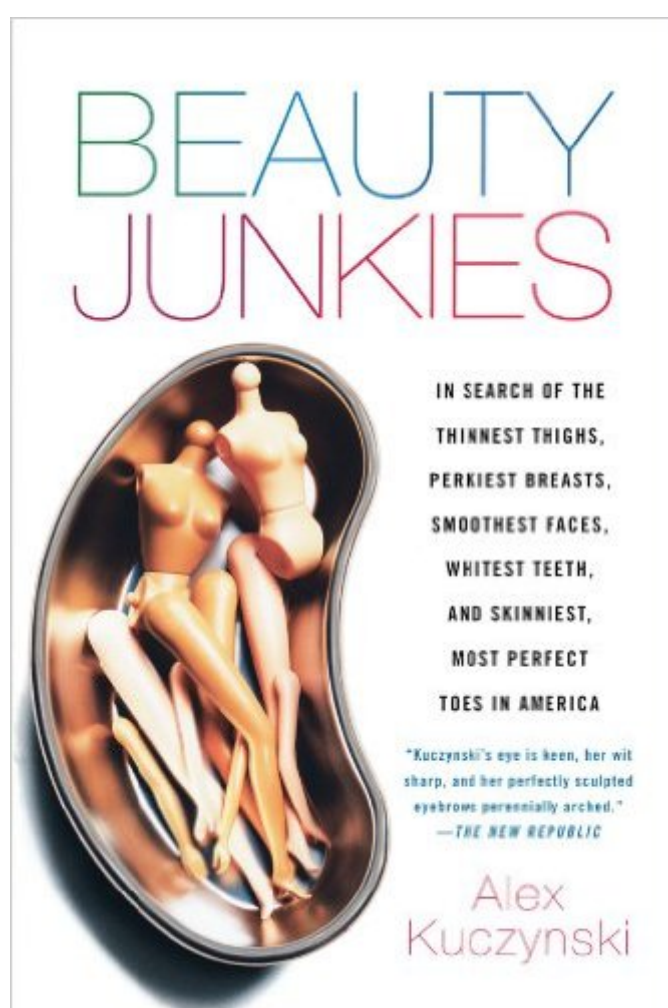


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Beauty Junkies: In Search Of The Thinnest Thighs, Perkiest Breasts, Smoothest Faces, Whitest Teeth, And Skinniest, Most Perfect Toes In America



Synopsis

A star writer for the New York Times Styles section captures the follies, frauds, and fanaticism that fuel the American pursuit of youth and beauty in a wickedly revealing excursion into the burgeoning business of cosmetic enhancement. Americans are aging faster and getting fatter than any other population on the planet. At the same time, our popular notions of perfect beauty have become so strict it seems even Barbie wouldn't have a chance of making it into the local beauty pageant. Aging may be a natural fact of life, but for a growing number of Americans its hallmarks—wrinkles, love handles, jiggling flesh—are seen as obstacles to be conquered on the path to lasting, flawless beauty. In *Beauty Junkies* Alex Kuczynski, whose sly wit and fearless reporting in the Times has won her fans across the country, delivers a fresh and irresistible look at America's increasingly desperate pursuit of ultimate beauty by any means necessary. From a group of high-maintenance New York City women who devote themselves to preserving their looks twenty-four hours a day, to a "surgery safari" in South Africa complete with "after" photographs of magically rejuvenated patients posing with wild animals, to a podiatrist's office in Manhattan where a "foot face-lift" provides women with the right fit for their \$700 Jimmy Choos, Kuczynski portrays the all-American quest for self-transformation in all its extremes. In New York, lawyers become Botox junkies in an effort to remain poker-faced. In Los Angeles, women of an uncertain age nip and tuck their most private areas, so that every inch of their bodies is as taut as their lifted faces. Across the country, young women graduating from high school receive gifts of breast implants "from their parents. As medicine and technology stretch the boundaries of biology, Kuczynski asks whether cosmetic surgery might even be part of human evolution, a kind of cosmetic survival of the fittest—or firmest? With incomparable portraits of obsessive patients and the equally obsessed doctors who cater to their dreams, *Beauty Junkies* examines the hype, the hope, and the questionable ethics surrounding the advent of each new miraculous technique. Lively and entertaining, thought-provoking and disturbing, *Beauty Junkies* is destined to be one of the most talked-about books of the season.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read the paperback version of Alex Kuczynski's book, so I'll stick my review here. I don't understand why the publisher decided to muddle things up by re-launching the paperback as a new-ish piece of work with a brand new subtitle of "In Search of the Thinnest Thighs, Perkiest Breasts, Smoothest Faces, Whitest Teeth, and Skinniest, Most Perfect Toes in America." Not only is that a sales-flopping mouthful, it's also off-base. First, she hardly talks about toes. There's just a fleeting reference to them, no longer than a paragraph. Second, the book does a 360 degree look at the cosmetic surgery industry, not just the 'search' which sounds like it's purely a consumer-centric look. The subtitle of the hardcover was more spot-on: "Inside Our \$15 Billion Obsession With Cosmetic Surgery." That's a better indication of what's inside. On page 215 of the paperback, the author notes that "(t)he multiple eyes on the cover of this book are mine..." Well, not on my paperback, with its lame 'Barbie doll pieces in a surgery pan' photo that probably got scooped off of iStockPhoto. That text should have got changed for the paperback version. Plus, the cover concept of the hardcover version - 16 marked-up instances of the author's very attractive eye - is brilliant: it completely captures the spirit of the book, in which not only does Ms. Kuczynski report on the cosmetic industry, she participates in it. In fact, as her reporting unfolds, so too does her immersion as a patient...or, at least, her level of revelations. We're told of her eyelid surgery, botox treatments, regular dermabrasion sessions, liposuction and Restylane lip injections.

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