

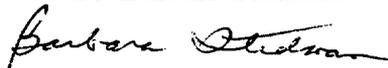
Piercings to Pigment: An Investigation of Cultural Connection

An Honors Thesis (HONORS 499)

By

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Barbara Stedman".

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Abstract

The objective of this creative project is to investigate the cultural connection between individuals around the globe electing to modify the presence of their physical body through the use of mutilation, piercing, tattooing, and scarification. The growing phenomenon of body art in the United States initially sparked my interest as a youth, and through scholarly research I have discovered that there is, in fact, a primal connection among all body modifications worldwide. The ultimate purpose of the project is to draw correlations between the choices individuals make in order to alter the appearance of the physical body within the American culture and those choices made by individuals from primitive cultures.

In researching the act of decorating the body, I have learned that regardless of the geographical location or time period, peoples will utilize the canvas of their flesh as a vehicle of communication. As a portion of my project, I then presented my ideas within a public forum. In order to convey the message clearly to an audience that a cultural connection does exist as people alter the natural state of their human flesh, I utilized a Power Point presentation. This format allowed me to bring life to my subject matter by incorporating a pictorial representation of various cultures participating in body modification.

Introduction

In order to complete my senior honors thesis I chose to do a creative project, the idea for which originated in my freshman Global Studies class (HONRS 189). That interest in body modification continued to captivate my interests as I am came into contact with people displaying piercings and tattoos on a daily basis. I wanted to academically investigate this growing American phenomenon of appealing to primitive, or non-industrialized, cultural customs of modifying the presence of the physical body. Through researching scholarly literature and exploring electronic resources and popular culture, I was able to develop an understanding of the history of body decoration, as well as to examine the cultural connection that develops among peoples across the globe as their natural state transforms into a living work of art.

To present the information collected I chose to create a Power Point document so that pictures would be included as a vital component. This technology was also chosen in order to creating an appealing format for the audience. Within this particular subject matter it was necessary to have background information as well as pictorial confirmation of how the physical body is capable of expression both individually and socially. Alongside the Power Point presentation, a script was written that is intended to complement the images with factual information. In combining these resources, my thesis has the capability of being presented before an audience or simply picked up and read as a piece of literature integrated with pictures.

The Technology

In choosing the topic for my senior honors thesis project, I knew that I wanted to ultimately present my research to an audience. In order to effectively captivate the attention of my audience, I chose to incorporate a Power Point component. Prior to my thesis experience, I had no knowledge regarding the function, layout, or even capabilities of the Power Point program. Through a self-taught, trial and error approach, I was able to compile my data collected into a pictorial presentation including minimal amounts of text.

Displaying the material through this format makes the information appealing to a diverse crowd. I personally have no tattoos, and the piercings that I have are not readily visible, so in order to communicate to an audience about tattoos and piercings it is necessary to have pictures depicting the individuals who elect to decorate their body. After searching the Internet and utilizing scholarly documentation, I compiled and altered images in order to achieve the desired effect from the Power Point presentation I created. The pictures I elected to incorporate are meant to create an eye-catching format, giving me the freedom of bringing African scarification, Mehndi body painting, and contemporary tattoos into my presentation.

The only negative comment that I could make regarding the technology I utilized within my project is that there are definite 'tricks' involved, which I do not know. Utilizing computers, and all that is involved with their functions, is a delicate art. Getting all of the equipment accurately connected, like the laptop, the external zip drive, and the LCD panel, was difficult. Simply working the mouse on the laptop was also a learning experience. Prior to this creative project experience, I had never worked with a laptop.

So, utilizing a Power Point presentation alongside an interactive laptop mouse was a quick transition. I am thankful that I was capable of producing a Power Point presentation, and I look forward to continuing my work with incorporating technology with education and ideas.

Presenting My Findings

From the beginning of my senior honors thesis project I envisioned presenting my findings to an audience. I took one speech class in high school, but I did not feel confident about my ability to speak coherently in front of the public. In order to make this happen, I decided to do multiple presentations of my thesis. These forums included the Anthropology Senior Seminar class at BSU, the Undergraduate Research Conference at Butler University, and the Honors College at BSU. Each of these experiences was valuable in familiarizing myself with presenting to a live audience. In growing more confident as a presenter, I was able to address increasingly larger audiences comfortably to increase the depth of my presentation.

Initially, I presented my Power Point to the Anthropology Senior Seminar class that I attended during the spring semester. Luckily, I was able to borrow the needed equipment from Bracken Library in order to bring my visual aid components to the classroom. The Senior Seminar class was a group of individuals with whom I had built relationships over the course of the semester, so it was logical to begin presenting at this level simply because this was comfortable for me. Using an outline form of my Power Point presentation, I was able to deliver my ideas with assurance that the audience comprehended the material. Their attention appeared to be captivated, and the feedback was positive, indicating that connections were clearly drawn together.

The undergraduate research conference at Butler University was an extremely different experience from presenting in my class. This was my maiden voyage of presenting within a conference setting, and I value the opportunity that I was able to gain. I learned that presenting at a conference is, first and foremost, a dynamic occurrence.

The schedule is pre-determined, so when the session before mine ran late, that in turn affected the starting time for my presentation. So, from the beginning I was cut from fifteen minutes to twelve, and nervous as a cat to be standing in a room full of predominantly strangers. I was, again, thankful for the technology that BSU's Bracken Library was able to furnish me with, so that I could show the Power Point component of my presentation. Up to this time, the Power Point was the main thread of the presentation, and was in turn a vital component for me at the conference. I equipped myself with an outline form of my Power Point that incorporated notes. The preparation time spent before the conference seemed to be adequate, yet the presentation itself was completed in the blink of an eye. I look back on this as a learning experience, which taught me that one could never be too prepared when taking center stage to present before a live audience.

By the time that my presentation date arrived at the Honors College, I tried to revise my approach at presenting. Instead of relying solely upon the Power Point to direct my audience, I decided to write a script that would utilize the Power Point as the foundation for presenting my ideas in hope of further extrapolating the cultural connection that exists among individuals around the globe who modify the presentation of their physical bodies. I found that it is extremely useful to actually write out a script, in its entirety, in order to feel completely confident about the material to be covered during a presentation. Technology is also an extremely useful tool that will enhance content and boost confidence in front of an audience. The technology advancements that are available will inevitably continue to increase the capabilities of the presentation format. I am appreciative of the multiple opportunities that I have taken advantage of

throughout the formation of my senior honors thesis. This project is not only a university-accredited class, but also provided a chance for me to enhance my ability to present my ideas to others.

Power Point Script

The written portion of the Power Point script, as follows, is intended to enhance the visual component by providing cultural accounts of body modifications worldwide.

Human beings are a complex species. We have accepted and developed ways of life that form cultures around the globe. Although diversity among peoples inevitably exists, there is one primary characteristic that binds humanity throughout various societies. We consciously choose to modify the presence of our physical body. Victoria Ebin, author of The Body Decorated, states, “The first and essential fact of body decoration is that it distinguishes man as a social being, distinct from animals of the forest and other humans outside his own particular group” (23).

It is difficult to identify universal reasons for the methods and decorations utilized when modifying the physical body. Cultures construct and place meaning on when and how modifications will occur, which may fluctuate depending upon the specific location and norms. Through my research I have discovered that even though peoples may differ in the methods and reasoning behind decorating the body, the results are comparable. Individuals make use of the one element within nature that they have complete control over, their physical bodies, and with that construct an identity (insert slide 2). Ultimately, as individuals make the choice to alter the exterior canvas of their flesh there is, in turn a bond, or a cultural connection, created. Among groups of people who share similar tastes in aesthetics, religious affiliation, or an allegiance to social groupings, there is a particular style that members conform to, and this strengthens the notion that a global cultural connection is created. The data that I have collected support the idea that whether you

are drawn to decorate your body or not, it is a function of humanity within all cultures to utilize the human body as form of expression.

The enduring impressions that are created when body modification takes place cannot be duplicated by any other action or species (insert slide 3). Anthropologists continuously make new discoveries, which corroborate the notion that the human flesh is a universal medium that has been utilized throughout history with intent and purpose.

According to scientists at the American Museum of Natural History, there is no human society in the world in which people have not painted, pierced, tattooed, reshaped, adorned or wrapped their bodies. Whether permanent or temporary, the designs, patterns and shapes with which we adorn our bodies are the marks of who we are (Henderson).

Women in particular have been noted throughout history to undergo deformation of the physical body in order to conform to an ideal state of beauty (insert slide 4). Piercing the flesh is a significant way in which modification occurs. For example, the Yanomamo women of Venezuela, shown in the right corner, pierce their face multiple times. Many women undergo this ritualistic and painful procedure of pushing palm thorns through their skin in order to be considered an adult woman by their social standards. The result of penetrating the flesh with wooden sticks is then not only for sake of beauty, but also to symbolize the social concept and significance of gender (“Brazil and Venezuela Piercing”).

Lip piercing, contrary to American’s faddish perception, is an ancient custom practiced by many peoples in New Guinea, Africa, Indonesia, and the North American plains. Labrets, or lip plugs, were placed into the bottom lip, and were worn centuries

before sailors and European explorers came into contact with the piercing. For example, in Alaska, boys were pierced at age fourteen or fifteen to demonstrate social status, and for girls facial tattoos would serve a similar indication of adulthood (“Alaska”).

The Padaung women from Myanmar, Burma, shown in the left quadrant, elongate their necks from an early age, usually as early as age five, as a way to enhance their natural attributes with brass rings that are around a third of an inch in diameter. Scholars debate the exact purpose of the rings. The rings were utilized at times to keep the women in submission because when they were convicted of committing adultery, the rings would be removed for an extended period of time, creating difficulties breathing and an inability to move (“Myanmar”). There are various legends alongside scholarly thought to try to explain how this deformation of the human figure began. “The most prevalent belief is that the rings were introduced after one particularly beautiful Padaung woman was killed by a tiger, which carried her off by her throat” (Drummond 51).

(Insert slide 5) Comparable to the body deformation that the Padaung women have endured, European women modified their physical appearance between the 1500s and 1800s through the use of corsets. A woman’s waist was compressed and breasts pushed up to conform to the appropriate hourglass shape, which was sought at that particular time, as noted in the top right picture. In fact, tight-laced garments date back to at least 3,000 B.C. as ancient Cretan men and women strived to achieve society’s ideal of a slender waist. As civilizations progressed, fashions reached new heights as well. “By the late 18th century, fashionable ladies wore garments so stiff and constricting that doctors considered them a health risk, and the philosopher John Locke pleaded for women to ‘let nature have scope to fashion the body as she thinks best.’ Even so, the

corset persisted as a fashion staple until the beginning of the 20th century, when fashion reformers finally won out” (“Europe”).

Today fashion has again taken a new twist as we are now modernized with our medical equipment and can appeal to augmentation through cosmetic surgery. Performing surgery on a healthy person merely for aesthetics “first emerged as a popular trend in America in the 1920s” (“Brazil”). The industry flourishes today, and Brazilians in Rio de Janeiro are noted for viewing cosmetic surgery as a sign of status and “are more likely to boast to friends about their liposuction or face lift” than Americans are. Supermodel Claudia Liz is shown at the bottom left corner in a photograph taken before undergoing her liposuction surgery (“Brazil”).

The head, hands and feet are readily accessible parts of the body that have repeatedly undergone deformation of some type throughout numerous parts of the world. European society thought that an elongated head was favored in order to hold more room for memory (Brain 90). Head shaping was a normal practice to many Native Americans and Africans alike as a child’s head was bound from an early age. According to Ebin, “slight variations of the technique would result in different head shapes which served to distinguish one people from another at a glance” (35). (Insert slide 6) Africans elongated the skull, as shown in the right corner, to symbolize beauty, and to dignify social status, as some use head shaping as a way to signify clan affiliation. Many individuals with dark-skinned complexions utilize scarification due to the fact that their skin is not able to take coloration through tattooing. These “raised” forms of scarification are known as keloids. In comparing the keloids worn by a Dinka woman from the Sudan to an American football player’s Greek letter omega keloid, Maureen Mercury, author of

Pagan Fleshworks, states, “These basic patterns arise from the same psyche, the field of the collective unconscious, and are formed and reformed to provide meaning and value for each individual” (12).

(Insert slide 7) Creating and wearing wigs are also an invention of body decoration which humans utilize to distinguish themselves as social beings. A Huli man from Papua New Guinea, shown at the top right, laboriously creates elaborate wigs as an art form as well as a symbol of his male identity. These wigs are constructed for numerous reasons, including everyday wear to ritualistic significance and ceremonial use (“Papua New Guinea”). At the bottom left hand corner is a picture of a New Yorker’s decorated body. His striking appearance is an extreme portrayal of utilizing one’s physical body to captivate the attention of others. Through his modifications an invitation to stare is in order as his statement is made clearly that, “Hey I’m not like most of you, and I can take the pain.” This may not be considered the norm to mainstream, modern American people because we do not typically encounter individuals as heavily adorned. However, primitive peoples like the Huli men who wear decorative wigs, and the Africans who endure scarification are considered to be following the social norm. Young men from Chad have undergone scarification as an initiation, or rite of passage within society, in which the fitness and manliness of an individual are tested (Brain 74-75). For aesthetic value as well as to symbolize status within societies, people set themselves apart from others through their physical appearance.

(Insert slide 8) The Maori chief of New Zealand shown here to the left illustrates how *moko*, or the ancient art of tattooing, can be utilized. “Their facial tattoos were a type of personal signature, the owners believing that their personalities were imprinted

into these facial marks. When chiefs signed deeds of land sales to Europeans they drew their face patterns instead of signatures” (Brain 48). The word “tattoo” was initially introduced to the English language upon the return of Captain Cook from his voyage to the South Seas. It comes from Tahitian word *tatu*, meaning ‘to strike’ or ‘to tap’ (Ebin 83). As civilizations have evolved so too have our procedures and utilization of the art form of tattooing. Modern societies are facing an increasing number of individuals choosing to get tattooed for the sake of social affiliations such as gangs or supremacy groups. For example, the men shown at the top right wear tattoos that are a combination of traditional Maori patterns and symbols from the U.S. Black Power movement of the 1960s.

(Insert slide 9) Japan is a culture in which tattooing has a long and rich history.

Japanese *Irezumi* is a permanent and risky form of body modification. The flesh is entirely transformed from “a naked being into a masterpiece after months of work by a consummate artist working with an awl and gouge on a canvas of flesh” (Brain 62). Although the practice has a rich historical and aesthetic tradition, *Irezumi* is considered taboo. “The custom is strongly associated with members of the Yakuza, the Japanese underworld, and many of Japan’s public baths ban persons with tattoos, out of fear they’ll cause trouble.” Although the tattooing may be covered with clothing, it always marks the individual as a rebel or an outcast (“Japan”). In Japan there are even galleries devoted to the display of this fine yet risky art form. At the top right you can see the tattooed skin on the wall, which is a prized specimen of the Tokyo University Museum. This particular skin was taken from the body of its 80-year-old owner. It has been stated that

some “enthusiasts even bought the skin off a man’s back, making a down payment and collecting the skin at his death” (Brain 64).

Religious affiliation is a strong drive within humanity that provides reason to modify the physical body. Across many cultures there are procedures that are testimony to the fact that the body is utilized as a medium of expression. *Mehndi*, the art of henna painting, is an ancient form of decoration utilized within rites of passage ceremonies to symbolize blessings with good fortune, and has been “practiced for years throughout India, Africa and the Middle East” (Fabius 15). (Insert slide 10) Particularly in India, Mehndi is considered to be a spiritual practice and meditation, as it is a vital component to wedding ritual and ceremony. Women uniquely practice this decorative custom of painting the body with the crushed leaves of the henna plant. Carine Fabius explains, “As the story goes, the deeper the color obtained on the skin, the longer the love between the couple will last, hence the belief that a proper mehndi application is tantamount to a prayer to the gods for everlasting love and a successful marriage. In truth, that belief is based in the centuries-old wedding traditions of India that are still practiced today” (18).

The day after the wedding the bride will move in with her husband and his family. During the first month, the bride is instructed not to assist with any of the laborious duties of cooking and cleaning, and there are maids to help the bride with all bodily functions, including bathing. It is the bride’s duty to become acquainted with her in-laws and learn the ways of their house. Carine Fabius continues,

The new bride doesn’t use her hands at all, and hopefully as a result the mehndi will last at least a month, a good omen. And since her in-laws don’t allow her to help with chores, the myth instructs, they must necessarily love her very much, and

by extension, so much her husband. Thus, the longer the mehndi lasts, the more love there is all around! (18).

Within contemporary Western society, henna painting is increasing in popularity. It has taken on an alternative art form in comparison to its ancient counterparts. As ethnic communities have introduced their customs to Americans there has been a shift away from exclusively utilizing henna painting for ceremonial significance. The practice of wearing henna jewelry, which you see on the woman in the top left corner, is now common in the West. Henna painting is viewed as a viable alternative to tattooing for some Americans, due to the fact that it is not a permanent modification. “Henna is a cosmetic and a medicine, but most importantly, it is a marker of beauty, auspiciousness, and celebration (“Glossary”).

Ceremonial procedures have likewise been culturally significant throughout history, influencing the decoration of the human body. To create the traditional ‘lotus foot,’ for example, Chinese women would customarily bind their feet beginning at age five or six with specific intent and purpose (Brain 89). For Chinese women, deformation of the foot was individually necessary, and they were in fact required by societal norms to alter the natural appearance of the feet in order to be considered an appropriate candidate for marriage.

The bound foot represented to the Chinese the very personality of the woman herself. Unbound feet meant social ostracism Men found the foot as sexually arousing as Western men find the mouth, the breasts and the neck of the woman What is more, a woman’s feet were the exclusive possession of her husband and even close relatives avoided touching them. To touch was an act of the most intimate nature (Brain 89).

In another instance, the commitment to marriage is symbolized as women in India pierce the nose with a piece of jewelry referred to as a nath. A soon-to-be bride will often receive her nath from the in-laws on her wedding night or it may be used as part of her dowery. A 17th century Indian poet wrote, “a lady adorned with a nath appearing before her loving husband, is sure to receive his love and care” (“India: Nose Piercing”).

Today many American pop stars and icons are seen wearing nose rings, as they appeal to an ancient tradition of altering the human canvas, though adapting it to suit their personal expression. (Insert slide 11) Numerous individuals within America, in fact, utilize piercings and tattoos as an indication of who they are and where they have been. Jason Resler from Ground Zero, a tattoo establishment in Muncie, Indiana, commented that individuals in America are looking to piercing and tattooing as a type of reality check. “People want to feel alive, and in order to achieve this sensation they are making use of the one thing that they have total control over: their physical body.”

(Insert slide 12) Individuals will always continue to decorate their exterior appearance, whether for aesthetics, social obligations, or religious affiliation, but never for precisely the same reasons. Lesley Luck, shown in the top right corner, comments on her decorated body, “It makes me feel complete, like a finished mural. It’s my wallpaper” (Yakutchik, “Personal Wallpaper”). This viewpoint is much like that of the Maori, and many other primitive, or non-industrialized, societies who have utilized tattooing and piercing as a viable means of expression, both individually and socially.

(Insert slide 13) A tattoo chant states, “Short is the pain, long is the moment” (Yakutchik, “Personal Wallpaper”). As we continue to progress into the twenty-first century and make advancements beyond, it is vital to remember that chant. We can

become consciously aware that this cultural connection binds humanity. The physical body is the main vehicle of personal expression that we are given to work with, and individuals around the globe effectively make use of this medium. Jon Guac, a piercer in New York, states, “Us white-bread suburban types are adopting the unique looks of tribal peoples. A lot of individuality in the world is disappearing. While they’re wearing Guns & Roses shirts in Borneo and talking on their cell phones in Africa, I’m celebrating their spirit: visually, at least” (Yakutchik, “The Secret Is Out”). So, there are commonalities that we share cross-culturally in regard to how we choose to adorn, decorate, and modify our physical body. This creates a cultural connection that is beyond skin deep, having permanent and penetrating effects across humanity and throughout time.

Conclusion

Utilizing the physical body as a means of expression, both individually and socially, is a common feature within humanity. It is evident through investigation that both the primal mind and the modern mind similarly and repeatedly appeal to altering and decorating the natural state of the physical body. This common ground that peoples share through piercing and modifying then creates a cultural connection, or bond, as individuals consciously transform the physical body into a living, breathing work of art. ¹

Anthropologists argue that people worldwide are dynamic creatures; so in order to appreciate and examine our species from a holistic perspective, the acknowledgement of both biological and cultural components within humanity is required. Those biological attributes which define us, and which create our appearance, such as our height, weight, race, and sex, are determined for us by our genetic code. We have no control over many of the physical patterns that will determine our appearance in all phases of life. Thus, in our base physiology, humans are essentially helpless to alter the situation. In the case of body modification, however, the opposite is true. Humans have all the control. With regard to this cultural component of humanity, humans make the choices. However, as investigated within this project, the ways in which individuals decide to alter the physical appearance vary, and so do the reasons and motivation for doing so. Among the more connection-focused reasons are aesthetic consideration, social obligation, and religious affiliation. I argue that within body modifications worldwide, along with this need to link up to a community or culture, there is a need for individual expression that inevitably

¹ “Culture” can be defined as, “The invented, taught, and learned patterns of behavior of human groups. The extrasomatic (beyond the body or beyond the biological) means of adaptation of a human group” (Feder 460).

influences the motivations behind decorating the body. Even if communal or cultural factors are involved, the individual is the one who body-modifies, driven by the individual motive to be happy and to feel special and more attractive. Oftentimes, being happy and finding contentment mean finding one's place in the group. Therefore, an individual's decision to tattoo or to pierce may in actuality be motivated by his or her need to fit in or to celebrate group, community, or cultural identity.

Along with expression of individuality and community, body modification can also be viewed as linking the modern mind with its primal counterpart in other ways. The primal mind is a disposition within which reside animistic, eco-systematic and naturalistic ways of thinking (Highwater). As Jamake Highwater explains, the primal mind is animistic in its prevailing belief that everything is alive, or contains a "soul." Therefore all objects are sacred and everything is connected by and through this capacity to contain "soul." An eco-systematic thinker, Highwater continues, is aware of the connectivity within humanity and the natural environment, while a naturalistic thinker places value on all natural attributes because they are all instrumental to survival. Body modification is indicative of these primal attitudes in several ways. For part of the motivation to body-modify is to re-connect with nature, to celebrating its creatures, and to bring a form of life to the human flesh, something that was otherwise "lifeless." Many times, the images or symbols emblazoned on a modern arm or an ankle are animals, flowers, or other natural entities that are derived from the primal mind. They constitute a foundation for primitive peoples' desire to control and modify the physical body in celebration of community, environment, and individuality. This primal urge recurs as contemporary peoples continually turn to this ancient concept of decorating the body.

Today “Modern Primitivism” is known as a twenty-first century sub-culture including peoples with elaborate tattooing and piercings. “Modern Primitivists believe body markings and other tribal traditions help reconnect them to the world and emphasize their own identity” (“Burning Man Festival, Nevada”).

In a society where information and technology seem to be pushing us ever so quickly into a sterile and de-humanizing tomorrow, there is a desperate cry coming from the masses for a return to a simpler time. People today, both young and older, are searching for ways to reconnect to themselves and to humanity. Many of those searching are rediscovering the vitality and effectiveness of ancient practices to accomplish at least a part of their goal. They are learning that the primal mind may not have understood how to manipulate quantum mechanical equations, but it certainly could glean ways to expose the more basic, deeper connections between humans and the environment in which they live. Orange hair, purple nails, and lime green tongue rings may be the newest crazes on college campuses in 2001, but the use of the body to speak and sing and celebrate existence is an attribute of humanity that defines us all.

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Appendix A

PowerPoint Presentation;
“Piercing to Pigment: An Investigation of Cultural Connection”

Piercings to Pigment: An Investigation of Cultural Connection

Presented by
Carly Cooksey

Introduction



The purpose of this discussion is to investigate the cultural connection between individuals and how they modify the presence of their physical body.

Topics of Discussion



Reasons an individual may need to alter their physical appearance (religious, cultural, etc.)

Reasons

- Social integration
- Religious affiliation
- Physical appearance modification (aesthetic)

Aesthetics

The Yanomamo of Venezuela pierce their faces with wooden sticks.

The highlanders of northern Myanmar are traditional owners of the Fulaanyi.

13th Century European explorers called them "the griffin's children."



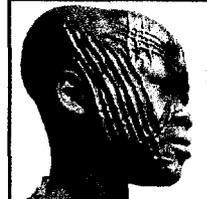
Corsets and Cosmetic Surgery




Emerging from the late 19th century, we are able to see the difference between a natural waist and a constructed waist performed.

Black and white corsets were before undergoing discussion.

Men and Women Alike Decorate Their Physical Body





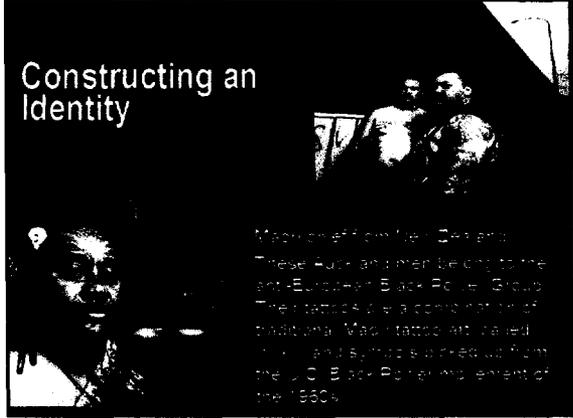
Social Obligation

— Many men in East Africa are made from human hair and decorated with feathers.
A traditional initiation to state an African man an emblem of scarification for cutting the hair of his skull and eyebrows.



Constructing an Identity

Madison Jeffery, New Orleans.
These Hurrian men belong to the anti-Eurocentric Black Power Group. Their tattoos are a combination of traditional Maori tattoos and the U.S. Black Power movement of the 1960s.



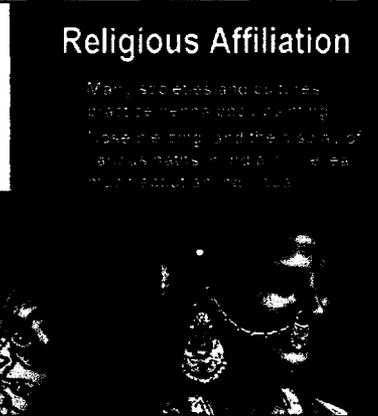
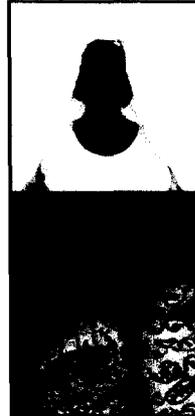
Japanese tattooing
remains a fine art.



Who gave us the idea to
the unique transformation
of the human body?

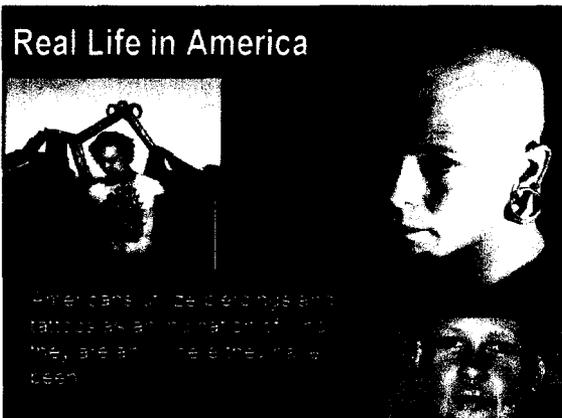
Religious Affiliation

Many societies and cultures
practice rituals and customs
like healing, and the ritual of
andus paths in India. There
many tattoo artists.



Real Life in America

Americans of diverse origins and
tattoos are a major part of life.
They are an integral part of
life.



What This Means

Lesley Linn, of East Coast
Tattoo Gallery, states: "It
makes me feel complete. Like
a finished job. It's my
wallpaper."

