



The Silhouette: From the 18th Century to the Present Day

Georges Vigarello

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From bone-crushing corsets to modern 'slimming' creams, our preoccupation with the silhouette has shaped centuries of fashion and culture. The contours of the body can convey everything from physical health and beauty to social class – and both men and women have long sought to mold and reshape them, often with alarming and even dangerous results.

Tracing the history of the silhouette from its birth in 18th century portrait sketches, this engrossing book takes the reader on a journey through 250 years of a cultural obsession. From Hogarth's 'line of beauty' to the advent of nude photography, from the crinoline to the Dior suit and the early bathing costume, *The Silhouette* reveals how the shape of the body has become an eloquent symbol of status, sexuality and the aspirational quest for physical and moral 'perfection'.

Drawing on numerous textual and visual resources, leading scholar Georges Vigarello anatomizes a fixation with the human form which has shaped not just our bodies but our very identities. With over 120 color images, *The Silhouette* is a remarkable resource for scholars, students and fashion-lovers alike.

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