



Skin: A Natural History

Nina G. Jablonski

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We expose it, cover it, paint it, tattoo it, scar it, and pierce it. Our intimate connection with the world, skin protects us while advertising our health, our identity, and our individuality. This dazzling synthetic overview, written with a poetic touch and taking many intriguing side excursions, is a complete guidebook to the pliable covering that makes us who we are. *Skin: A Natural History* celebrates the evolution of three unique attributes of human skin: its naked sweatiness, its distinctive sepia rainbow of colors, and its remarkable range of decorations. Jablonski begins with a look at skin's structure and functions and then tours its three-hundred-million-year evolution, delving into such topics as the importance of touch and how the skin reflects and affects emotions. She examines the modern human obsession with age-related changes in skin, especially wrinkles. She then turns to skin as a canvas for self-expression, exploring our use of cosmetics, body paint, tattooing, and scarification. *Skin: A Natural History* places the rich cultural canvas of skin within its broader biological context for the first time, and the result is a tremendously engaging look at ourselves.



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