

Paddy Hartley: Of Faces and Facades



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Paddy Hartley's work is primarily concerned with the ways in which the human face can be repaired, manipulated and recontextualised, and the questions these processes raise about our concepts of beauty and disfigurement. Incorporating surgical and pharmaceutical equipment as well as steel, scrap metal, digital embroidery and textiles, Hartley sets out a critique of how we think about the face today. Taking as a starting point records of facially injured servicemen of the First World War and the pioneering surgery they underwent, Project Facade examines the impact of disfigurement on the human psyche, as well as tracing the development of early facial reconstructive surgery. His Face Corsets, meanwhile, examines attitudes towards cosmetic surgery and the beauty industry, providing a non-surgical means to brutally mimic the results of cosmetic procedures and beyond. The series gained notoriety and success in a wide variety of popular publications both nationally and internationally, and continue to feature in contemporary textiles and fashion publications. Paddy Hartley: Of Faces and Facades brings together these works in book form for the first time, presenting previously unpublished texts from David Houston Jones and Marjorie Gehrhardt, as well as drawings and photographs which document a remarkable creative process and a history that is still insufficiently explored. Marjorie Gehrhardt is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Exeter. Her research focuses on the experience and representations of facially injured soldiers during and after the First World War in France, Germany and Great Britain. David Houston Jones is Associate Professor of French Literature and Visual Culture at the University of Exeter. His interests span literary and visual culture, from trauma and testimony to visual archives and installation art.

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