



Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War

Ana Carden-Coyne

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The First World War mangled faces, blew away limbs, and ruined nerves. Ten million dead, twenty million severe casualties, and eight million people with permanent disabilities--modern war inflicted pain and suffering with unsparing, mechanical efficiency. However, such horror was not the entire story. People also rebuilt their lives, their communities, and their bodies. From the ashes of war rose beauty, eroticism, and the promise of utopia.

Ana Carden-Coyne investigates the cultures of resilience and the institutions of reconstruction in Britain, Australia, and the United States. Immersed in efforts to heal the consequences of violence and triumph over adversity, reconstruction inspired politicians, professionals, and individuals to transform themselves and their societies.

Bodies were not to remain locked away as tortured memories. Instead, they became the subjects of outspoken debate, the objects of rehabilitation, and commodities of desire in global industries. Governments, physicians, beauty and body therapists, monument designers and visual artists looked to classicism and modernism as the tools for rebuilding civilization and its citizens. What better response to loss of life, limb, and mind than a body reconstructed?



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