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The Women

Bill Dobbins



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For thousands of years, the muscular male body has been an object of admiration and a primary subject of art. Women, on the other hand, have rarely been celebrated for their physical strength or muscular development. But in the late 1970s, women discovered the sport of competitive bodybuilding and began doing the same kind of muscle-specific weight training as their male counterparts.

As a result, we are seeing the emergence of a cultural phenomenon without precedent--women attempting to develop the ultimate degree of muscle size, shape, definition and proportion primarily for aesthetic, rather than athletic, purposes. The fact that many women are now both willing and able to devote themselves to creating muscular bodies is one indication of our changing perception of the potential of the female body as we begin the 21st century.

In *The Women*, author and photographer Bill Dobbins presents eighty full-color and duotone photographs of top female competitive bodybuilders in a stunning visual exploration of this new phenomenon, and convincingly shows that muscles on women can indeed be beautiful. The photographs, combined with an enlightening text, explore the implications of this new aesthetic for art, sport, and our overall view of the capabilities of women. An unusual and fascinating book for anyone interested in fitness, feminism, photography, or the complex issue of gender, *The Women* is certain to challenge many perceptions.

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