



bodies

CONTENTS

- Introduction & Word of the Board...1
- What We are Reading... 2
- Meet the Phoenix team 2024-2025...3
- Word of the Month/ Playlist...4
- Nakedness in Paintings...6-7
- Bookshelf Interview with Luca Rocco...8-9
- A History of Anatomy...10
- Depersonalise...11
- Body Language in Film...12
- The Substance, Beauty Standards...13
- Potrait of Nikolai Gogol & Photograph...14
- Dancing Bodies of the 19th Century...15
- Teatime with Esther van Raamsdonk...16-17
- Photograph...18
- The Bare Image: Nudity in Fiction...19
- Bodies Book Recommendation...20
- Breasts and Eggs – A Book Review...21
- Two Headed Calf...22
- To a Dead Body...33
- Bodies in Fashion...24
- Bodies at War...25
- Albion Abroad...26-27

INTRODUCTION

Dearest Readers,
 Welcome to the long-awaited opening issue of Phoenix for the academic year of 2024-2025. This issue dives deeply into the multifaceted theme of bodies – the sacks of skin that contain our livelihood, and our humanity. We all exist in bodies, whether we like it or not, our humanity and existence reside in the body. Put simply, to be human is to exist in a body. It gives us access to the world’s greatest opportunities – human experience. However, bodies, especially those that are marginalized, may view it as our greatest limitation.

This issue gives space to explore what it means to have a body in a nuanced manner, as it aims to express the diverse and often contradictory feelings we have towards the physical body – frustrations, love, freedom, and imprisonment. One may feel the need to crawl out, or rip open the body in hopes of escaping it, as seen in film genres such as Body Horror. Another may display an appreciation of its beauty by portraying bodies through art.

We explore issues such as bodily autonomy, and beauty standards but also dive deep into the history of human anatomy. We focus on the representation of bodies through several types of media, including art, literature, and fashion, though through the content of this issue we hope that one can progressively feel more at home in the bodies we occupy – our human existence.

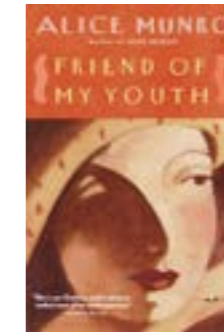
WHAT WE ARE READING



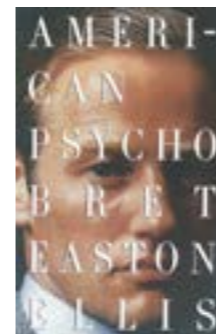
Daphne
 The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon



Esmee
 My Mess Is a Bit of a Life by Georgia Pritchett



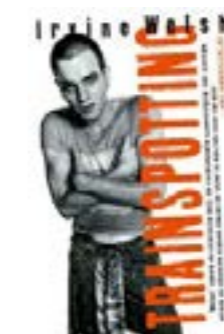
Dani
 Friend of My Youth by Alice Munro



Sema
 American Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis



Matías
 Con y Sin Nostalgia by Mario Benedetti



Maud
 Trainspotting by Irvine Welsh



Gaia
 Bonjour Tristesse by Françoise Sagan



Balca
 Alone in Berlin by Hans Fallada



Chiara
 The Mermaid by Christina Henry



Luka
 The Travelling Cat Chronicles by Hiro Arikawa



Nikoleta
 Deception Point by Dan Brown



Hanna
 Bright Young Women by Jessica Knoll

PHOENIX

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WORD OF THE BOARD

Edited by Chiara Palmeri



Hi all! We are Silke and Lonneke, the secretary and treasurer of Albion. We don't actively think about "bodies" as a concept to write about a lot, so where do you then start? We started thinking about it from a personal perspective, bodies are very personal in more than one way. They are something to explore, especially in your student time. Your student time is really your road to agency. Rather you find yourself in your own body or you finally find your style, this is your time.

My (Silke) favourite moment of taking agency of my body was when I got a conch piercing, it was a bit impulsive but I had wanted it for a while and still really love it! I also dyed my hair in highschool and I felt so cool with my blue streak and half-dyed purple hair. During my time at uni and Albion I've been able to explore my style and the way I present myself more, I would recommend everyone to do so. I (Lonneke) had always been encouraged to be myself and was really coached to find myself, but it is only in Albion I found the confidence to be truly myself. Being a part of a board with 5 of my closest friends really gave me the confidence to do with my life what I would like to. So I would encourage everyone to enjoy themselves and the people who will guide you, will find you.



Sincerely,
 Silke Eijs and Lonneke Meyboom



CHIARA



BALCA



DANI



GAIA

MEET THE 2024-2025 PHOENIX TEAM



MAUD



MATIAS



NIKOLETA



SEMA



HANNA



LUKA



ESMEE



DAPHNE

WORD OF THE MONTH

Written by Sema Piskinel – Edited By Nikoleta Markatoni

Corporeal
/kɔːˈpɔːriəl/
adjective

1. Physical and not spiritual
2. Relating to the body

“It is only with the eyes open that a corporeal form returns, and assembles itself firmly around the hard core of sight.”
– Shirley Jackson

The word “corporeal” derives from the Latin word corpus for body and was first used in the early 1600s. It is used to describe something that consists of matter, therefore physically existing, as for example your body.

BODIES ISSUE PLAYLIST



NAKEDNESS IN PAINTINGS

Written by Balca Isevcan – Edited by Chiara Palmeri



Seeing naked bodies on museum walls makes me feel a sense of comfort. To know that humanity has been interested in nudity since the very beginning shows that bodies are seriously fascinating, worthy enough to be painted. Nude artwork mirrors the political outlook on the human body through different periods. Representing emotions and moral landscapes of different eras standing as timeless testaments to the evolving relationship between the body and the world.

The Classical era (c. 500-476 BCE) often used nudity to express divine and heroic qualities in humans. Greek art focused on the idealized male form, which was seen as a symbol of strength, beauty, and perfection. This makes a sculpture of a nude female goddess particularly groundbreaking for the time. Before this, women in art were typically depicted clothed, emphasizing modesty and their roles in society. A nude female figure challenged these norms, celebrating femininity and placing women in the realm of the divine and heroic.

The Renaissance (14th–17th century) focused on human beauty and combining the spiritual with the physical. Artists celebrated nudity as a symbol of divine creation and human skill. Sandro Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1485) shows Venus rising from the sea with grace and beauty. The painting's soft lines and dreamy feel highlight how Renaissance art used the nude to represent myth, beauty, and intellect.



THE BIRTH OF VENUS

The Baroque period (17th century) added drama and emotion to nudity, showing the struggle between earthly desires and spiritual redemption. Caravaggio's *Amor Vincit Omnia* (1602) depicts Cupid, the symbol of love, with a lifelike and rebellious look. His smirk and messy wings invite viewers to face the chaotic power of passion. The use of chiaroscuro—strong contrasts of light and shadow—gives the painting dramatic energy, typical of Baroque art.



AMOR VINCIT OMNIA

In the Romantic era (late 18th–mid-19th century), nudity symbolized freedom, vulnerability, and intense emotion. Eugène Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (1827) is full of color and chaos, showing nude figures in a scene of destruction. The painting breaks away from classical balance, using the human body to express passion, despair, and defiance.



DEATH OF SARDANAPALUS



OLYMPIA



LES DEMOISELLES D'AVIGNON

The Impressionists (late 19th century) stripped away grandeur, focusing on intimacy and naturalism. Édouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863) shocked audiences with its unapologetic portrayal of a reclining nude woman, whose direct gaze challenged traditional representations of passive femininity. Manet's flat planes of color and bold brushstrokes signaled a modern, unvarnished approach to depicting the human form.

With the rise of modernism (20th century), the nude was deconstructed and reimagined, reflecting the fractured psyche of a rapidly changing world. Pablo Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version)* (1907) broke all conventions, presenting five women whose angular forms and distorted features shattered traditional ideals of beauty. Picasso's work symbolizes the modernist era's embrace of abstraction and challenge to societal norms.

Jenny Saville's *Propped* (1992) is a powerful feminist artwork that critiques societal norms surrounding the female body and its representation. The painting features a monumental nude self-portrait of the artist seated on a stool, her fleshy form occupying almost the entirety of the canvas. The figure's distorted perspective, achieved by the low vantage point, emphasizes her body's bulk and physicality, challenging conventional ideals of beauty.

To love is to see another nakedly to the core. To be seen naked is to be perceived unhidden. To be painted nude is a privilege, commodified.



PROPPED

Book Shelf Interview with Luca Rocco

Written by Maud Kroes – Edited by Daphne Reijnders



Luca Rocco is 64, Italian and a management consultant at Canon. Photography is a large passion of his, making it a staple in his Amsterdam home bookshelf. Almost 60 years ago, Luca Rocco began collecting books, his first being Pinocchio. Unfortunately, this specific book is not present today in his precious bookshelf as it is lost. However, he found a similar copy on eBay to pass it on to his future grandchildren.

Luca grew up in a household which was filled by a love for literature and art. As a teenager he started buying photo magazines, preferably Photò France, and around the age of 20 he invested in his first photo book. In the last two decades, he believes to have collected over 3.000 titles. “When I look at my collection, I have the feeling books hold long conversations. Even when in the bookshelf, books continue transmitting energy.”

His main interest is photojournalism, how photography can document and report events. This is seen back in his collection as most books are about that. Besides that, he is also very intrigued by fashion photography. How a creative eye can capture a designer’s work together with the visual identity from a model or muse is something he finds fascinating. In particular, he loves Bruce Weber’s work from the 80s and 90s and Peter Lindbergh’s *white shirts* series from the 80s.



Through photography, Luca is able to connect to his Italian roots. Italy holds a special place in his heart, it’s his identity. “The incredible sense of aesthetics Italians have, surrounded by beauty, exposed to masters. Italian photographers have absorbed the capacity to compose images with elegance.”

Other cultures in photography he finds captivating are those of Japan and France, like Cartier Bresson, the ‘father’ of reportage. To him, *The Americans* by Swiss photographer Robert Frank is the absolute reference of documentary. In his opinion, the greatest Dutch photographer is Anton Corbijn, and the best photographer in the music industry. The portraits he enjoys the most are the ones from the Belgian Stefan Vanfleteren.

Bodies have been captured in art throughout history. Going all the way back to ancient cultures where statues of Gods and Divinities were carved into stone, to painting people’s physique. Photography came after and, according to Luca, “represents an efficient testimony” to the evolution of the aesthetic canon in the past two centuries. Yet it also highlights the different approaches cultures have towards art and bodies.

Luca presents Edward Weston as an example. In the 30s he started experimenting and studied body forms. He set a reference, shaping the taste of the western world. Weston “wrote” some of the most important pages in the world of fine art photography. According to Luca, Weston’s pictures of Charis Wilson are one of the most seducing images ever shot.

Another example he gives is African photography, where the individual is presented in their own environment. Their body is not the main focus of the picture, but what the body is carrying. Accessories, artifacts and garments are the key features. In Asian and French photography, bodies are often captured in a more sensualist and erotic way.

To end his interview, Luca wanted to emphasise the importance and universality of body and portraiture. As one of his favourites Henri Cartier Bresson stated, “A successful photograph requires the alignment of the head, heart and eye”. Photographs serve as mirrors, they reflect things we recognise, they help us understand. Pictures are frozen moments, symbols of what has been and will never return.



PHOTOGRAPH OF CHARIS WILSON BY EDWARD WESTON, AS REFERENCED BY LUCA

From Os Frontale to Phalanx Distalis: A History of Anatomy

Written by Esmee Bosman – Edited by Nikoleta Markantoni

DEPERSONALISE

Written by Esmee Bosman – Edited by Daphne Reijnders

Nowadays, it is common knowledge that a body is more than flesh and bone is, which is taught in high school biology classes to bored students. However, some people – like me – are fascinated by the way the human body functions. A bit morbid, perhaps, but did you know that the practice of anatomy already existed in the ancient Egyptian empire?

Anatomy - a part of biological studies that looks at the identification and description of the body structures of living things. Fascinating, how from the earliest moment it has always been investigated based on dead bodies. The earliest moment – that we know of – being ancient Egyptian times.

Mummification is a complicated process to get right, and thus the oldest descriptions of organs and body parts that have been found, dated from the time the Egyptians still used papyrus to write stuff down. After that, anatomical knowledge slowly but steadily expanded. In the period of Ancient Greece, we can find Galen, who until this day holds the record for most survived works for a Greek author – suck it, Homer. Galen was a physician who, by studying dead animals and operating, proved amongst other things that living vessels contained blood rather than air. While this is the most logical thing for us nowadays, it was revolutionary back then. Galen's theories were used for over a thousand years by physicians and medical writers. At least, in the western world.

In Persia, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, was much sooner to reject various of Galen's views. Al-Rāzī actually investigated human bodies, and corrected some theories, as well as stated some new ones. He was

the first to distinguish nerves from tendons. Ibn al-Nafīs, an Arab and an expert in many fields, also put his mark on ancient anatomy. He describes, earlier than anyone else, the way that blood circles through the body before coming back to the heart, in contrast to Galen's theory of blood ebbing and flowing back from the heart.

Meanwhile, Europe and western civilisation hit the Middle Ages, and anatomy took a step back. The Eastern knowledge that Galen was wrong had not yet arrived in the west, and all medieval time theories were based on Galen's wrong ones. It wasn't until Leonardo Da Vinci's studies that anatomy got back in the game. His sketches of skeletal structures and organs – after looking at Galen's work and deciding 'no' – based on his own observations. He dissected about thirty human bodies for his studies, before he was forced to stop by the Pope. Da Vinci also worked on a sketch of the ideal human form, and his 'Vitruvius man' is perhaps one of the most famous anatomical sketches in history.

Eventually it was the Belgian teacher Andreas Vesalius, who put forward new drawings, based on the dissection of actual human bodies, who got rid of Galen's views for good. Vesalius's approach, controversial but effective, rectified many errors, and also opened the door to newer discoveries, such as the existence of the lymphatic system.

From there, with dissections in theatres – by certified anatomists – and the invention of the printing press that made it possible for anatomy books to be used broadly, anatomy as an actual independent discipline of study grew. However, it suf-

fered a hit in the late 17th century, when there weren't enough bodies to keep up with the demand of anatomists. The dissectors started robbing graves to acquire the bodies necessary for their studies, a phenomenon called 'body-snatching'. Anatomists weren't viewed highly, and a death followed by dissection was deemed worse than just death. But for physicians, anatomy remained a field of interest.

Besides cutting up dead people, there were also attempts to preserve body parts and replicate the Egyptian process of mummification, and if you are wondering who would attempt such a thing, the answer is of course the Dutch.

Throughout the 18th and 19th century, anatomical research remained a field of importance in the medical world, though the view of it was usually negative. Although anatomists continued to collect deceased prisoners or hanged murderers, and even rob graves, the findings in the field were incredibly important for improving treatments for sickness and diseases.

In the present day, scans and virtual dissection make it easier for anatomists – and less morbid for the living – to study the human body. With modern technology such as CAT and MRI-scanners it is possible to study living organs, and development in the fields of molecular and evolutionary biology continue to expand our understanding of the works of the human body.

From Os Frontale to Phalanx Distalis, from the very top of your skull to your toes; every day we learn something new. Until one day, we may figure out all the mysteries the human body has to offer.

Depersonalise

Touch me, ground me, keep me here

inside my body

I don't like it here but I can't leave

they won't let me

Pull me down, let your fingers caress my cheek and brush away my tears and then

maybe then

I won't feel like

drifting, slipping

like the air I try to grasp

(to hold on to you, to life)

touch me, I beg you

make me feel

something other than this numbness

something other than nothing

something other

something

maybe if you

feel my body

I can convince

my mind

that it's

still there

rock-solid

and not

fleeting

floating

blowing

away

BODY LANGUAGE IN FILM

Written by Sema Piskinel – Edited by Chiara Palmeri

One might argue that body language is one of the most important elements of a movie. Body language can reveal a lot about a character or a relationship. From subtle elements of eye contact over the soft caress of a hand on someone's cheek to a heartfelt embrace, bodies are essential to transmit information to the viewer. A wonderful example of this is *Hannibal* (2013) by Bryan Fuller, which is packed with more and less obvious shots of body language. Hannibal's lingering hand on Will's shoulder, Will's smallest hints of smiles, half-seconds of eye contact sprinkled all throughout the series. If you have watched it, think of the scene where (minor spoiler!) Hannibal bandages Will's bloody knuckles, how it focuses on their hands, the gestures, the low voices, the intense eye contact. Hannibal's elegance and confidence stands in stark contrast to Will's awkwardness and nervous tendencies, at least in season 1, and it is highly interesting to see the shifts in both characters through the three seasons.

Another great example is *Call me by your name* (2017) by Luca Guadagnino with its magnificent cinematography. Think of the scene where Elio shows Oliver his secret spot. Elio's insecurities are subtly shown by his posture, his gestures, and his mimics, which is why his moments of confidence seem even more powerful. Oliver carries himself very differently, his posture is relaxed and confident, and he rarely hesitates before doing something, which begins from the moment we first meet him stepping out of the taxi. This adds to the complexity of their relationship and lets the viewer feel how different the two characters are. Even when Elio shakes hands with the arm of a statue Oliver holds, it feels very intimate to us because Elio and Oliver maintain eye contact, and because the statue is fragile and very delicate.

In M. Night Shyamalan's *Split* (2016), James McAvoy portrays Kevin Wendell Crumb, a man suffering from DID, a rare psychological disorder in which a single person has multiple distinctive personalities that control the body and make him kidnap three teenage girls for the pleasure of one specific personality. It is fascinating to see how each personality carries themselves and interacts with the world differently despite being in the same physical body. The first personality we meet is Dennis, who is very strict and suffers from OCD. His posture is sharp, his eye contact is piercing, his forehead is constantly contorted into a demeaning frown. Next, we meet Patricia, a middle-aged female personality who gently takes care of the girls while they are being held captive. She appears nice at first but it becomes clear that she also has bad intentions, which makes her motherly actions seem ingenuine and suspicious. Wildly different is Hedwig, a personality that is nine years old, with slouching shoulders, a mischievous smile, and a (rather adorable) habit of adding "et cetera" to every other sentence. The movie is both captivating and terrifying, and James McAvoy does his job perfectly. Body language is vital to every movie. It is an important tool to portray the human experience, and every good movie and series has elements of body language in it. It evokes empathy and sympathy in the viewer and gives space for interpretation and analysis. Next time you're bored, watch something, pay attention to how body language is incorporated, and you will find yourself pulled into the depths of film analysis.

THE SUBSTANCE, BEAUTY STANDARDS AND THE INFANTILIZATION OF THE 'OLDER WOMAN'

Earlier this fall, French Filmmaker Coralie Fargaet, shocked theatres globally with her release of *The Substance* (2024). A body horror film commenting on the pressures of beauty standards, and ageism in Hollywood. Demi Moore plays Elizabeth Sparkle, a former Hollywood star, and TV personality entering her 50s. As her age is made apparent by her manager, Harvey, and who is set to replace her with a younger, and hotter star, Elizabeth turns to the substance in an attempt to maintain control over her aging body and fading stardom. In using the substance, Sue (Margaret Qualley), a younger, better version of Elizabeth is born. There is, however, one catch, Sue and Elizabeth are one – they cannot be separated.



The film is incredibly visually stimulating. The saturated color scheme on sterile white backgrounds, intimate videography, and immersive soundtrack – you simply cannot look away. In its creative choices, *The Substance* demands attention, and in doing so, potently critiques the pressures of the strongly enforced beauty standards and ageism in Hollywood.

Written by Danielle Lewis –
Edited by Nikoleta Markantoni

Demi Moore faced a lot of scrutiny as well as available roles due to her publicly aging body. Casting Demi Moore in this role, thus acts as a direct critique on Hollywood's ultimate expiration date as actresses enter their 40s; one that does not apply to male actors in the slightest.

Harvey, played by Dennis Quaid, highlights the idea that cis-white-men in powerful positions are those who uphold, and capitalize off perpetuating beauty standards. The scenes of him are close-ups, from bad angles, and often doing disturbing things, most notably eating messily, and sexualizing younger women. His grotesqueness, in contrast with Elizabeth's beauty, highlights the power structures in a generally sexist Hollywood, where men get to decide who and what is 'hot' enough for the screen.

The film tackles many important, and currently relevant intertwined issues regarding beauty standards, ageism, and sexism, but ultimately feels quite counterproductive. On the one hand, the relationship between Elizabeth and Sue comments on the way in which we treat older bodies, and explicitly exploits our young bodies, who will only face the consequences once we are older. This is seen in Sue's abuse of the time constraints recommended by the substance. Sue continues to go-over time, and ultimately refuses to switch back, whereby Elizabeth's body continuously decays. However, when Sue does finally switch back, Elizabeth is on a few occasions portrayed as a gross witch-like figure, which only reinforces the repulsion people feel toward older bodies.

Though likely not the intention, the film and its ultimate progression acts as a warning to the superficiality of physical appearance and seems to blame women for their obsession with looks, rather than those capitalizing off insecurities. In Elizabeth's pursuit of beauty and youth, she transforms into a literal monster, namely Monstro Elizabeth.

The Substance (2024), I find is comparable to *Barbie* (2023). The films both explicitly represent feminist ideals but only scratch the surface of these real-world issues. The fact that these issues are so explicitly represented and dealt with projects the initial depiction of progress but doesn't seem to push further than the surface level representation. Even though the film falls short in its initial intention; it is still a compellingly grotesque film that does shine light on issues not previously made explicit in Hollywood films. It is therefore still a valuable, and very enjoyable watch in which one becomes fully immersed.



PHOTOGRAPH BY
DIEGO MAGGIORE



PORTRAIT OF
NIKOLAI GOGOL
ILLUSTRATED BY
NIKOLETA MARKANTONI

DANCING BODIES OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Written by Hanna de Lange Emdén – Edited by Chiara Palmeri

The 19th century was a time of strict social norms and rigid gender roles, yet it was also an era that celebrated the human body in motion. Dance held an important role in the social lives of all classes, whether displayed on a stage, or in ballrooms and public houses. Paradoxically, the celebration of these moving forms often came with a heavy dose of condemnation for what they represented: autonomy, sensuality, and lighthearted fun.



When the waltz was first introduced to the English social scene in 1812 it sparked outrage amongst moralists. The physical closeness between partners—hands catching waists and shoulders, bodies moving as one—was deemed improper by critics who warned it might corrupt women's 'virtue'. Young women were only allowed to participate after acquiring written permission from their guardians, illustrating how tightly their bodies were policed. Yet, the waltz's beauty and intimacy made it irresistibly popular, and opposers were forced to give up their fight.

On stage, the scrutiny was even harsher. Ballet dancers, theatre performers, and dancing actresses were all central to the cultural life at the time, but were often viewed with hostile suspicion. Their bodies—often far more exposed than those of women in other professions—challenged Victorian ideals of modesty and decorum. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, theatre companies relied heavily on donations from wealthy patrons. In return, these patrons received

unlimited access to the backstage areas, and therefore also the performers. Female dancers were frequently forced to supplement their meagre incomes as mistresses to these men. Though this practice had become less common in most areas by the mid-19th century, its legacy persisted. Within the French ballet scene, the patron/dancer dynamics continued well into the 20th century, and dancers' bodies continued to be seen as commodities, even though their art required immense discipline and skill. This is an idea that has carried into our modern-day society, where certain types of dancing are still heavily stigmatised.

The century's conflicted relationship with dance reveals the body as something to both celebrate and control. Dance showcased the body's grace, strength, and sensuality, and therefore became an easy-access battleground for societal anxieties and expectations. The constant monitoring of women's movements reflects a deeper discomfort with the body's ability to bend societal constraints and redefine itself.

TEATIME WITH ESTHER VAN RAAMSDONK

WRITTEN BY MAUD KROES – EDITED BY DAPHNE REIJNDERS

While the issue you are holding in your hands right now is all about bodies, this interview took place in a much less physical manner. On the second of December, I met with Esther on teams, both feeling quite sick and stuck at home. Not only did our bodies decide to give up on us, but so did the internet. After some trial and error, most problems were solved and we could start our lovely chat, interrupted by the occasional cough, sniff, sneeze or breeze of sounds produced by weak internet connections.

Like us, Esther studied English Language and Culture at Utrecht University. When asked what made her want to study this, we delved right back into her younger self.

Two things drove her to make this decision. The first was her obsession with *Jane Eyre*, but more importantly, she had been captivated by England from a very young age. Growing up in a small village, there was not much to do. Aspiring to visit the country she dreamt about, she would cycle to the tourist office, look through the guides, and fantasise about walking through the picturesque towns she saw and read about. A few years later, she went on holiday to York and once again fell in love with the town and its people. From that moment on, she knew that she would live there one day. The easiest way to do that was to study English!

Utrecht at the time, was quite different from what it is like now. The seminar groups were all split up alphabetically, and therefore all her friends had surnames starting with P, R or S. Students were failed for not double-spacing essays. There was still a café in Trans 10 at which she spent a lot of time, and, of course, the staff was not the same. However, Prof. Pascoe was already working there and even served as her thesis supervisor! Teaching the Lyric course together with him now is a full-circle moment.

Esther always assumed that she was going to study the novels of Austen and Brontë, because of her fascination with *Jane Eyre*, but ended up going in a completely different direction. Inspired by the professor who gave her a copy of *Paradise Lost* in her second year at UU, she read Milton and loved him. She's been hooked ever since. In her own words: "It kind of just happened!" Her professor truly knew what she would like, and while forever grateful, she has not had the opportunity to thank them in person.

As our poetry expert, we asked her for recommendations on poets whose works portray bodies and bodily experiences. A modern poet that she would love to teach about in the future is Alice Oswald.



Her poems deal a lot with bodies, especially decaying ones. Just like John Donne, who Esther calls the most "body-esque" poet of the 17th century. He was supposedly so obsessed with death that he commissioned a portrait of himself on his deathbed so that he could look at it and think about his own mortality whenever he pleased. Not something either one of us would like to do, but it clearly worked for him.

The obsession with decaying bodies has thus been around for quite some time in poetry, as well as works of subjection and domination. According to Esther, almost all poets have a body aspect to their poetry, in widely differentiating forms. Some poets also focus on the bodily experience of animals, like in Alice Oswald's *Body*, and even there Donne's influence is forever present.

Following these questions, we came to the topic of body parts and which one of them she could, or couldn't live without. First, she answered that she wouldn't miss her appendix, saying that she doesn't really need it. She later changed her answer to the tonsils, so that she would never again suffer from the vivid cold she was experiencing at that moment. A body part that she could not live without however, apart from her brain, is her hands. She likes to do things with them, like gardening, and writing (about) poetry of course!

As far as appearances go, Esther looks just like she used to as a UU student. She even wears clothes from that time, but of course she has aged. The ruins of pregnancy make her body what it is today, but to us, she still looks identical.

Esther calls her student time the happiest time of her life. She loved her time in Utrecht just as much as she loved her time at other universities. In another life, she would have liked to be a student forever, studying philosophy, Celtic languages or archeology alongside English.

But in this life, her studies took her elsewhere, to England! Being "a bit of a nepo-baby, as they say", she learned a lot about the world of academia from her father and found that this would be the closest thing to still studying, while also making money.



ESTHER WHILST STUDYING AT UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

She had no clue she would end up in Utrecht again and is still surprised every day that she's back here with us. With her deep love for Britain, Esther thought she would have stayed there forever, but Brexit changed this. No longer recognising the England she was living in, she decided to move her family to the Netherlands, hoping to save

herself from the difficult political situation there, only for the state of affairs in our country to shift similarly.

However, she has been enjoying her time here and had great fun teaching *The English Lyric* alongside David Pascoe. While they disagree on their favourite poets, with Esther looking at Early Modern Poetry and David looking at Modern Poetry, this course has inspired Esther to pick up more of Auden's poetry, which she absolutely loves now. Going into this course, I confessed to Esther how little I knew about poetry and told her to surprise me. Looking back at it now, she told me that some of the poets surprised her as well and that by assessing their work more closely, she has learned many new things.

Aside from it being immensely enjoyable to spar with David over poets that they are fascinated with, Esther also loved to bond over their enemy poets. Unfortunately, sharing the names of these poets might cause a departmental uproar, so she wisely decided to keep them classified.

Esther often finds herself thinking about what she would have done if she were a student herself now. She acknowledges the complexities of our hyper-mediated lives but also points out the endless opportunities this gives us to write. Whether on social media, for the student newspaper or in essays, writing is everywhere and therefore comes more naturally to today's students. The world is open to us and while academia may not be for everybody, writing is and will hopefully be for quite some time.



PHOTOGRAPH BY
DIEGO MAGGIORE

THE BARE IMAGE: NUDITY IN FICTION

WRITTEN BY MATÍAS C. VÁSQUEZ – EDITED BY HANNA DE LANGE EMDÉN

Nudity has been a powerful symbol used by many cultures across many ages to symbolize a wide range of meanings. In this article, I explore two instances of this to illustrate how nudity has been used in fiction to symbolize vulnerability. The two stories I'll share with you tackle vulnerability in vastly different ways. One sees vulnerability as what is found in love, whereas the other sees it as a cautionary tale against the loss of virtue. So let us take this trip across continents and time to discuss this age-old symbol of vulnerability.

Our first stop is in Uruguay sometime in the 60s, where two ugly yet unnamed lovers first meet. The characters themselves claim their ugliness. In the very first lines of Mario Benedetti's *The Night of the Ugly*, the narrator, and main character, calls both of them "not even commonly ugly." She has a sunken cheekbone, and he a burn that has left him with a bald spot in his beard. With such an introduction, it is clear the character's bodies and their relationship to them are deeply significant to the themes of the story.

Near the end of the story, the main character invites his date to his place, so they might enter "the night, the integral night, in total darkness" where neither may see the other. Both his enthusiastic proposal to hide their nakedness, and her initial hesitation to accept make it clear they are afraid of the vulnerability that comes with being seen naked, not the intimacy of sex. It's made explicit in the text that this fear stems from years of feeling estranged and alone.

Once home, not only does he turn off the lights, but he also closes the double curtains. They undress separately, not letting the other help in this first act. Their fear could not be clearer. The narrator makes the first move to touch her and narrates that "[his] touch transmitted [him] a stimulating, powerful version. That's how [he] saw her abdomen, her sex." Where visual sight is presently impossible, touch, a less intimidating observer, is welcome. He says his fingers later "passed many times over her tears." So do hers over his. They touch each other's tears and "respective ugliness" and cry until dawn. Then, as his final act in the story, he opens the double curtains.

Their nakedness, a tremendous vulnerability, is something both lovers are afraid to offer, but they both desire intimacy nonetheless. They find their happy medium in the dark, where both touch the other's grief and grievances. It's only after this intimate catharsis that their

vulnerability is no longer shrouded in fear. Thus, the protagonists open the curtains to let the morning light in, to let them both truly see each other's nakedness.

Our second stop is on the other side of the world, in medieval England where a poet whose name is lost to history writes nudity as a very different symbol. Rather than to represent intimacy, the poet of *Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight* uses nudity to represent virtue, or rather the danger of losing it. To understand Sir Gawaine's nudity, we must first understand his clothing and armour, but most significantly his shield. Inscribed on it is the pentangle, which the poet connects with truth. Yet it's a three-fold truth, it is trawthe, an Old English word that contained in it a sense of truth towards what cannot be changed, to one's word, and one's self (Cooper, 2008, p. xxix). It is truth, trustworthiness, and integrity that Sir Gawain bears as his protection.

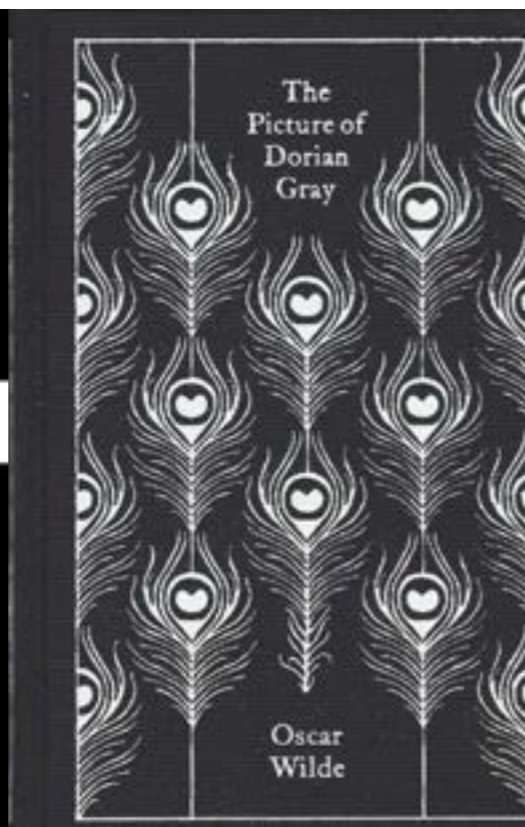
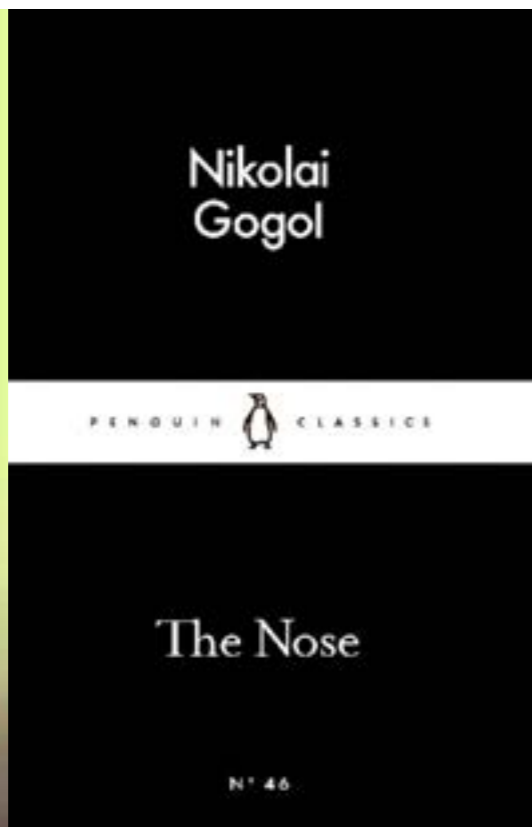
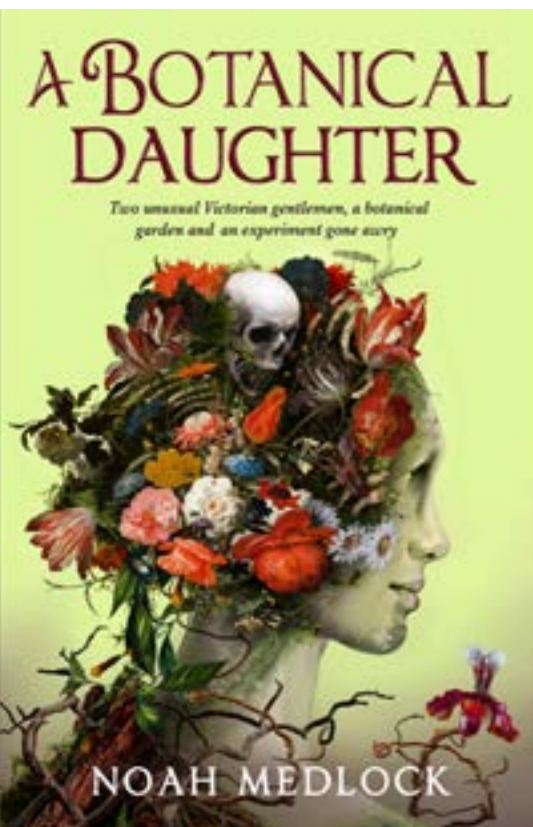
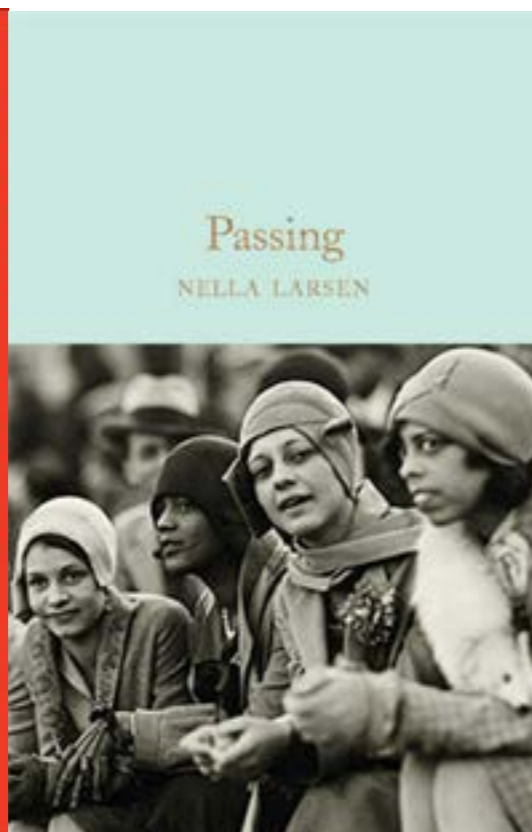
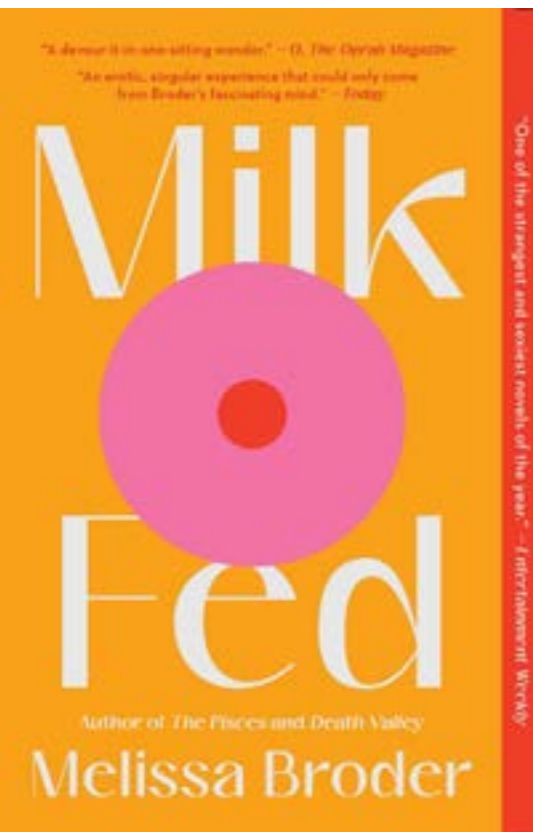
In a pivotal trial in his epic, Sir Gawain is tempted by his host's lady. She tempts him in the early morning when Gawain is vulnerable. Comically, he covers himself with his bedsheets when he sees her. She offers herself to him in secret. However, Sir Gawain knows he must be true, not only to his host, to whom he has given his word, but also to himself and his courtly values. This passage is not about sexual purity, as a reading without context might suggest, but about truth, integrity, and trustworthiness. It's with great difficulty that Sir Gawain passes his most difficult test. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, nudity is used as a symbol of vulnerability against temptation, strengthening the theme that truth is not something even the worthiest of knights can ever do without.

The symbolism of nudity is not far off from what nudity is to us in real life. It's humanity's bare image — vulnerable, intimate, and true. It's no wonder that writers from vastly different cultures, geographies, and eras have all arrived at the same visual language.

Notes:

The Night of the Ugly is originally written in Spanish and no translation in English is currently available. All quotations are translated by Matias C. Vásquez.

BODIES BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



Breasts and Eggs - A Book Review

Written by Danielle Lewis - Edited by Luka van den Berg

Breasts and Eggs – a perfect title and ironically concise summary for the contents of contemporary Japanese writer and poet Mieko Kawakami's refreshing take on womanhood. In *Breasts and Eggs*, Kawakami offers a new perspective of womanhood in contemporary Japan and challenges the standards of Japanese women set by previous representations.

Heavily inspired by Haruki Murakami's writings, Kawakami similarly writes reflective prose dealing with relationships and the inner turmoil of her protagonists. In 2017, Murakami sat down with Kawakami for an interview regarding his writing, in which she questions his one-dimensional, manic pixie-esque manner of writing women; women as a gateway for men, rather than fully fleshed out characters.

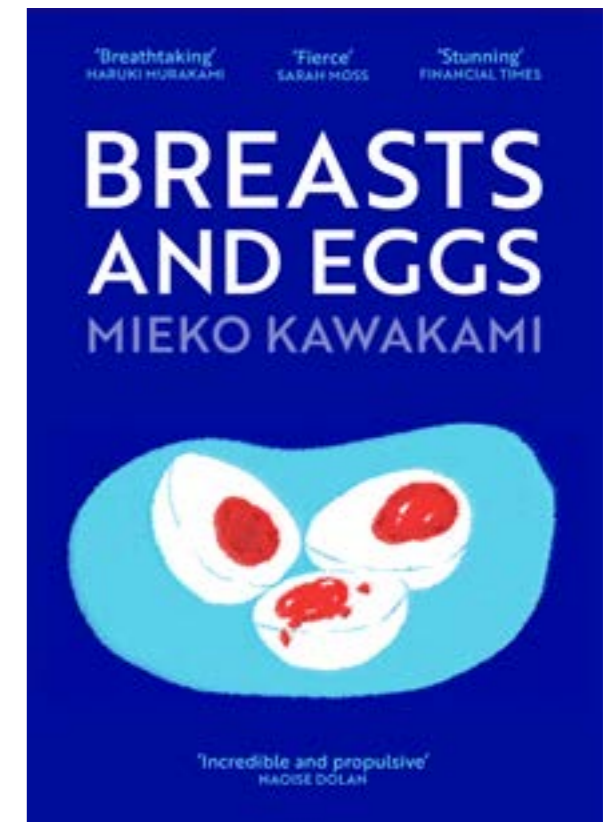
If you love Murakami's writing style, but hate how he writes women, Kawakami's *Breasts and Eggs* offers a similar reflective style but with the addition of well developed, complex female characters. The text focuses on three women, their relationships, and their efforts in navigating a world where the odds are entirely against them. She intriguingly explores matters of bodily autonomy, class struggles, and patriarchal values in Japan.

The novel is split into two sections – set in Tokyo, the first half takes place over a period of 48 hours, where Natsuko is visited by her older sister Makiko and her teenage daughter Midoriko. Makiko's journey to Tokyo is fueled by her desire to get a breast augmentation, which she is convinced will change her life as an aging hostess. Natsuko questions her sister's longing for both larger breasts and lighter colored nipples, though finds herself too reflecting on the fact that "[she'd] be lying if [she] said it had never crossed [her] mind."

People like pretty things. When you're pretty, everybody wants to look at you, they want to touch you. I wanted that for myself. Prettiness means value. But some people never experience that personally.

These reflections draw attention to the beauty standards set on women, and the grotesque extent women will go to fit within the given mold. The novel, however, adds an extra layer of class relations. Makiko wishes to be beautiful and youthful, not only for selfish pleasure but also for her job, and by extent her income relies on her ability to fit in the narrow box of what is perceived as beautiful.

The second half takes place eight years later, once again following Natsuko's perspective yet now solely focused on her experience. She travels to her hometown, Osaka, where she is revisited by aching memories of the past: her childhood, her relationship (or lack thereof) with her father, and the working-class conditions she grew up in.



Natsuko, now an established writer and financially well-off, aches to have a child but does not wish for a romantic partner. Natsuko's representation of asexuality, of course, goes against the grain of what is expected of women; she does not wish to have a man in her life.

"I can't sleep with anyone. I can't get into it. Physically, I can't stand it."

There is a continuous back-and-forth reflection in the novel: whether she can, or really wants to, raise a child on her own. This contemplation, however, is entirely influenced by the societal and patriarchal norms in which women need men. The novel potently questions the male-centric worldview that women are forced to grow up in and comply to:

They're on a pedestal from the second they're born, only they don't realize it. Whenever they need something, their moms come running. They're taught to believe that their penises make them superior; and that women are just there for them to use as they see fit. Then they go out into the world, where everything centers around them and their dicks.

Kawakami's writings take the outdated notions of women being weak, delicate, and sweet creatures, and bulldozes them completely. The novel is filled to the brim with thought-provoking reflections. I found myself underlining entire passages, page after page. She explicates an uncomfortable yet very real depiction of working-class womanhood. If you're a woman, and especially if you're not, *Breasts and Eggs* is a must-read offering new discourse through strikingly real representations of women.

TWO-HEADED CALF

BY LAURA GILPIN

Tomorrow when the farm boys find this
freak of nature, they will wrap his body
in newspaper and carry him to the museum.
But tonight he is alive and in the north
field with his mother. It is a perfect
summer evening: the moon rising over
the orchard, the wind in the grass. And
as he stares into the sky, there are
twice as many stars as usual.



TO A DEAD BODY

WRITTEN BY BALCA ISECVAN – EDITED BY HANNA DE LANGE EMDÉN

A dead body that feels more than cold,
A coldness I cannot touch but dream of feeling, Every night.
If I had a strong enough shovel, I would dig a hole, beside you,
Until I reached the middle of my world.

To lie down next to you
To try and breathe life back into your decaying body
To try and fight away the coldness of your bones, the frozenness of my life.
Maybe my body can start feeling again if I can see the stillness of your body, once more.

Oh to be more than just bone and flesh,
Oh to finally put my yearning body to rest,
Waiting for the day I can deteriorate,
Even more rotten than your eighteen-year-old body.

When I close my eyes, I only see you
Cold. Molding. Dead. Girl.
Filled with worms, eating away your bones.
The image of your dead body,
Froze my heart permanently.

Maybe I'll stop bleeding for your cold dead body when I'm finally out of blood.
Maybe I'll bleed until they put me to rest,
Next to you.

Cold, rotting bodies
Together?

Fashion runways have always been showing people the perfect outfit on the perfect body, making it look phenomenal and giving them the expectation that it will look the same on them too; something which many times turns out to be a disappointment.

In the 90s, the fashion model industry was at its most toxic concerning the models' bodies, leading them to develop health issues and destroy themselves and their careers. The former creative director of Chanel, Karl Lagerfeld, once said: "No one wants to see curvy models." Extremely thin bodies were considered to be perfect back then, as the clothes perfectly fitted them and it was easier to style them; curves were also not trendy.

However, as years passed, people began speaking up about body positivity and promoting a healthier lifestyle and body shape. They are now also supporting models with a different background in joining the runway and making their debut. One such model is Alex Consani, a young transgender model who is now walking for the latest Victoria's Secret fashion show.

In the 21st century, names such as Maison Margiela and Miu Miu have asked not only non-conventional models and their customers, but also actors with extraordinary body shapes to be on their shows. Here, they are able to show off art through outfits on their bodies, just as more conventional models have done. This has greatly increased interest from audiences and allowed many fashion fans to feel much more represented.

BODIES IN FASHION

WRITTEN BY NIKOLETA MARKANTONI – EDITED BY LUKA VAN DEN BERG



BODIES AT WAR

WRITTEN BY GAIA ROCCO – EDITED BY CHIARA PALMERI

Countries and cultures always seem to be at war. Somewhere someone is fighting, whether that be physically, verbally, or in any other form to protect their rights, ideology, religion or piece of land. None of this could happen without our physicality. Even if our modern society uses all types of machines and tools, we still need a body to move us, a mouth to speak and a hand to write, create or destroy if you want to fight your cause.

War cannot happen without humans, yet it eliminates them. So many journalists have made it their objective to write about or take pictures of people in these crisis situations, whether they are war heroes, criminals or victims. Their bodies are documented and most of the time this is done describing or showing the inhuman qualities that this brings with them.

Yet, not all war pictures depict cruelty. Take for example Muhammed Muheissen, who instead has decided to turn away from the big, horrible-looking events that are normally documented. His photographs show that even in the middle of conflict, life never stops but keeps going, especially for children. Their bodies are full of life, just like any other child's. With his pictures, he hopes to spread awareness and together with his wife, he has founded the Everyday Refugees Foundation, to extend this awareness into empowering people who have had to leave their homes.



ALBION ABROAD WITH TALITHA

WRITTEN BY BALCA ISEVCAN – EDITED BY CHIARA PALMERI

Dublin is such an exciting city with plenty of fun activities to enjoy! Talitha is a third-year student doing her exchange in Dublin, Ireland. These are her recommendations: if you're in the mood for some shopping and a lively atmosphere, Grafton Street is the place to be. You'll find a mix of charming shops and talented street performers that make strolling down the street a delightful experience. Sport fans will love catching a Leinster Rugby game—there's nothing quite like the buzz of the crowd cheering on their team, and it's a fantastic way to dive into the local culture.

And if you're visiting during the holiday season, you have to check out the Christmas markets. They're filled with festive cheer, delicious treats, and unique gifts that'll get you in the holiday spirit.



If you enjoy thrifting, don't miss the Jamestown Indoor Flea Market! It's a treasure hunter's paradise, filled with quirky vintage items and one-of-a-kind finds just waiting for you to discover. Dublin is also home to various museums that are well worth a visit. The Viking Museum offers a peek into the city's Norse history, while the Art Gallery is filled with stunning pieces that will inspire you. Beer lovers must stop by the Guinness Storehouse, where you can learn about Ireland's rich brewing heritage and enjoy a pint with an amazing city view. History buffs will find Kilmainham Gaol particularly moving, as it tells powerful stories of Ireland's past.

And let's talk about the pubs! Dublin has an incredible pub scene that caters to all tastes. For a classic tourist experience, Temple Bar is a must. But if you're looking for something a little more off the beaten path, Bonobo is a cozy hidden spot with a lovely beer garden and delicious pizza. The Workmans features a charming garden where you can relax with friends, while The George is a lively queer pub and club that's all about fun and inclusivity. If you're craving traditional Irish stew, the Hairy Lemon is the perfect place to dig in. And when it's time to dance, you can't go wrong with Dicey's and Coppers—both are fabulous spots that promise a fantastic night out! So whether you're shopping, exploring, or enjoying a night out, there's something for everyone in Dublin. Get ready to make some incredible memories!



PHOTOGRAPH BY
DIEGO MAGGIORE