



THE ILLUSIONISTS

90 minutes, documentary, HD

written & directed by Elena Rossini

Synopsis

The Illusionists is a documentary about the body as the "finest consumer object," focusing on how mass media, advertising, and several industries manipulate and exploit people's insecurities about their bodies for profit.

The preoccupation over physical beauty is as old as time; what is different today is the central role that the pursuit of the perfect body has taken: it has become our new religion. A beautiful body is seen today as key for personal and also, more importantly, economic success for both women *and* men. The fast-paced culture brought on by globalization and the new economy has created a new paradigm of self-making: individuals are increasingly pushed to re-invent themselves.

The key anxiety of the 21st century is the fear of disposability.

From Los Angeles to Tokyo, relentless propaganda reminds us that we have only one body – and that we have to enhance it. Through advertising and mass media, multibillion-dollar industries (most notably cosmetics, fashion, dieting, and cosmetic surgery) saturate our lives with images of idealized, unattainable beauty, of an "Official Body" that does not really exist in nature and that can be obtained only through cosmetic surgery... or digital retouching. The very quantity of these images makes it impossible for people not to be affected by them.

The beauty industry is constantly expanding and has now found two new targets: little girls and men. A revolution is under way in the perception that these two groups have of themselves.

The Illusionists will explore these themes through the testimonies of sociologists, historians, advertising executives, magazine editors, scientists, and authors in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.