



The Makeover: Reality Television and Reflexive Audiences (Critical Cultural Communication)

Katherine Sender

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Watch this show, buy this product, you can be a whole new you! Makeover television shows repeatedly promise self-renewal and the opportunity for reinvention, but what do we know about the people who watch them? As it turns out, surprisingly little. *The Makeover* is the first book to consider the rapid rise of makeover shows from the perspectives of their viewers. Katherine Sender argues that this genre of reality television continues a long history of self-improvement, shaped through contemporary media, technological, and economic contexts. Most people think that reality television viewers are ideological dupes and obliging consumers. Sender, however, finds that they have a much more nuanced and reflexive approach to the shows they watch. They are critical of the instruction, the consumer plugs, and the manipulative editing in the shows. At the same time, they buy into the shows' imperative to construct a reflexive self: an inner self that can be seen as if from the outside, and must be explored and expressed to others. *The Makeover* intervenes in debates about both reality television and audience research, offering the concept of the reflexive self to move these debates forward.

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