



**Revealing Bodies: Anatomy, Allegory, and the
Grounds of Knowledge in the Long Eighteenth
Century (Transits: Literature, Thought & Culture,
1650-1850)**

Erin M. Goss

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Revealing Bodies turns to the eighteenth century to ask a question with continuing relevance: what kinds of knowledge condition our understanding of our own bodies? Focusing on the tension between particularity and generality that inheres in intellectual discourse about the body, *Revealing Bodies* explores the disconnection between the body understood as a general form available to knowledge and the body experienced as particularly one's own. Erin Goss locates this division in contemporary bodily exhibits, such as Gunther von Hagens' *Body Worlds*, and in eighteenth-century anatomical discourse. Her readings of the corporeal aesthetics of Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry*, William Blake's cosmological depiction of the body's origin in such works as *The [First] Book of Urizen*, and Mary Tighe's reflection on the relation between love and the soul in *Psyche; or, The Legend of Love* demonstrate that the idea of the body that grounds knowledge in an understanding of anatomy emerges not as fact but as fiction. Ultimately, *Revealing Bodies* describes how thinkers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and bodily exhibitions in the twentieth and twenty-first call upon allegorized figurations of the body to conceal the absence of any other available means to understand that which is uniquely our own: our existence as bodies in the world.

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