Introduction 1

Pedro Almodóvar's 2011 film *La piel que habito* (*The Skin I Live In*) is about a person who does not live in their own skin. The title itself distances the 'I' from 'the skin' inhabited. It disconnects the metonymic association of a person's skin with their life or identity made in many languages, for example in English when a person is called a 'good skin'. Almodóvar's film suggests a number of themes around skin that are pertinent to this book: skin and identity; the relations between inside and outside; the nude and its colour; artificial skin and fantasies of the human creation of life; skin, touch and the haptic potential of vision; finally, the relationship between skin's role as a medium and the mediality of the image.

The film starts with views of a well-gated country estate near the town of Toledo in Spain, and quickly moves to images of incarceration and surveillance: walls, grids, modern home security technology and an electronic eye monitoring a woman doing yoga exercises in a beige body suit that fits like a second skin. In a second sequence skin is addressed from a different angle: a physician is lecturing on face transplantation, and Almodóvar announces the disturbing topic of his film by referencing George Franju's 1960 classic *Les yeux sans visage* (*Eyes Without a Face*), a thriller about an obsessed surgeon who in order to reconstitute the disfigured features of his daughter's face resorts to murder and the harvesting of faces. The two main characters of *The Skin I Live In* – the plastic surgeon Dr Ledgard (Antonio Banderas) and his involuntary subject named Vera (Elena Anaya) – are brought together just a few moments later, at first indirectly. On a life-size plasma screen the surgeon watches Vera in a pose of a reclining nude seen from the back. He sees her as an image and her immaculate skin as a surface to be slowly sampled with the eye. This mediated encounter has already been prepared by shots of a number of paintings featuring female nudes. As the surgeon climbs the staircase to access his living room, he passes full-size reproductions of two paintings by Titian: *The Venus of Urbino* (Uffizi) and *Venus and Organ Player* (Prado) (Figure 1.1). The choice is hardly accidental: Titian's nudes are classic manifestations of the reclining female body in paint and were copied many times.[1] Almodóvar's

1.1 Screen shot from Pedro Almodovar, *The Skin I Live In*, 2011, 1:38:00.

film continues this chain of repetitions, as Dr Ledgard's surgical subject will mimic and perform reclining nudes throughout the film as she lies on her couch reading, fully aware of being watched, and pretending to turn herself into the persona the surgeon desired to create and wishes to see in her (Figure 1.2). Moreover, Titian's painting, celebrated for the soft and lifelike rendering of the body, is also pertinent to the overall theme of the film, the artificial making of skin. As Daniela Bohde elaborates, Titian was often praised for his quasi mystic ability to transform paint into flesh.[2] Vera's skin, the viewer will learn step by step, is as artificial as painted skin, fabricated by the surgeon and grafted on to the body of a young man.

The film weaves a network of relations between skin, flesh and painted or screened images and, later on, analogies are drawn between skin and the medium of film itself. Most of the time, Vera is quite explicitly seen through the eye of a camera. Kept in a luxurious cage, she interacts with the external world only through architectural orifices and technological interfaces: a vacuum cleaner tube installed in a wall, a dumb waiter, an interphone and, most importantly, two surveillance cameras. One of the latter projects black and white images into the kitchen that are monitored by the housekeeper, the other projects high resolution colour images on to the large screen contemplated by the surgeon.

Screen shot from Pedro Almodovar, *The Skin I Live In*, 2011, 1:46:56. **1.2**

This controlled life experiment is interrupted when another person in a different kind of artificial hide enters the scene: the housekeeper's delinquent and violent, yet beloved, son Zeca who, taking advantage of the carnival season, hides from the police in a tiger costume. He smuggles himself into the secluded estate by sticking out his naked behind to the camera of an intercommunication system thus identifying himself to his mother via a birth mark. The skin underneath the fake fur seems still able to tell the truth, but ends up being the entry ticket for betrayal. Immediately upon entering the house, Zeca is attracted by the image on the monitor showing Vera doing her exercises, and asks 'What's that?' Trying to hide the existence of the captive skin-patient the housekeeper just says 'it's a film', thus suppressing the content by referring to the medium. But it proves an impossible elusion; in Spanish her words are 'es una película', employing an expression for film that, deriving from the Latin *pelle*, literally means little skin. In Roman languages, the thin celluloid membrane coated with photosensitive material and used since the late nineteenth century as a negative film in analogue photography and later for motion pictures took on the name of the organic skin. And though a video such as that produced by the surveillance camera or a digitally produced film like Almodóvar's is not a film in this strict sense, the word – and with it the analogy with skin – is still present.

This connection has already been made by psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu in his 1985 *Skin Ego*, which has been crucial to numerous subsequent studies on skin:

> In its first sense, the French term '*pellicule*' designates a fine membrane which protects and envelops certain parts of plant or animal organisms; by extension, the word denotes the layer, also fine, of a solid matter on the surface of a liquid or on the outer surface of another solid. In its second sense, '*pellicule*' means the film used in photography, i.e. the thin layer serving as a base for the sensitive coating that is to receive the impression.[3]

The psychoanalyst continues that 'a dream is a "*pellicule*" in both these senses. It constitutes a protective shield which envelops the sleeper's psyche and protects it from the latent activity of the diurnal residues and … and from the excitation' of sensations and physical processes active during sleep. But the *película* produced by the surveillance camera in Almodóvar's film fails to serve as a protective shield, and the displacement only hints to what it seeks to conceal. Unwittingly the housekeeper conflates 'the skin of the film'[4] and the skin in the film: the carefully crafted and monitored skin that wraps Vera. The mother can't stop 'the tiger's' interest in his prey, since he soon sees Vera and thinks he recognises in her features the surgeon's late wife whom the artificial body uncannily resembles. Driven by a wild attraction that befits his animal costume, he violates all boundaries, breaks into the barred room and rapes Vera. This incursion and multiple penetration of screen, doors and a body triggers a series of flashbacks through which the viewer learns about the history of Vera as well as the surgeon's late wife and daughter. Gal, the wife, had an affair with Zeca; and, when trying to run away, the couple had a car accident that left Zeca unharmed but Gal barely alive with serious burns. Dr Ledgard – compensating, it seems, with obsessive care and fantasies of surgical omnipotence – makes every attempt to heal his wife. But having made a humble recovery, and unexpectedly seeing her own distorted features reflected in a glass pane, Gal kills herself by jumping out of a window. The suicide leaves its witness – the couple's little daughter Norma – so traumatised that she needs to be hospitalised and undergo long-term psychiatric treatment. Grown to a pretty teenager and showing signs of improvement, the father takes the unworldly girl to a party where she is approached and raped by a young man himself spaced out by party drugs. The daughter – traumatised again – hides even from her father and returns to hospital. Seeking revenge, the surgeon kidnaps the culprit – Vicente (Jan Cornet) – and uses him for a gruesome experiment: he completely remodels his body, castrating him in a sex change surgery, and grafting an artificial skin made from a mixture of animal and human genes, thus effectively turning Vicente into an artificially engineered body. Ironically, Vicente is renamed Vera, the 'true one'. From Dr

Ledgard's perspective the experiment is a stunning success: Vera is beautiful, resembles the late wife and has an immaculate skin that looks and feels soft while also being, after a series of improvements, flame proof and pain free. This is the skin the surgeon contemplates on the screen, while stretching on his couch mimicking Vera's pose, watching her in empathy and admiration for his own work. But that is precisely the trap. Vera is not as docile as Pygmalion's sculpture Galatea in the well-known story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a myth of godlike artistic creation. The surgeon's product – the person with Vera's features and Vicente's mind (who never gives up his will to return home) – uses the attraction of their body and the narcissistic pride of their creator to foster his desire. Dr Ledgard imprudently trusts Vera's love and allows her to live with him, until s/he seizes the occasion to shoot those who held her/him captive.

Skin and identity are explicitly addressed in an early sequence of the film in which Dr Ledgard lectures on new possibilities of face grafts for victims of disfiguring accidents. The surgeon stresses the significance of this kind of surgery because of the crucial role face and facial skin play to a person's identity. Skin, forming the body's envelope, demarcation and visible aspect, has indeed often been understood as a safeguard of identity. However, any essentialist notion of identity is undermined in the film, as the surgical proposition is to restore identity via a transplant, with someone else's face. Still, Dr Ledgard insists on identity in pointing out that the face is a major means of human non-verbal communication and that skin is attached to the muscles that are responsible for facial expression. He thus addresses the function of skin as an interface for transmitting muscular activity and by extension emotions. The ways in which the face can express feelings, or what early modern writers call passions, through movement and colour change (as in blushing or blanching) have also been a major concern for artists aiming to convey psychological motion through outer appearance. The face's potential to signify has often led to the metaphoric association with canvas and paintings – both face and canvas are surfaces on which colour and line work and produce meaning. Beginning with the French seventeenth-century painter Charles le Brun, artists and physiologists have attempted to codify the passions by aligning specific muscular movements with particular emotions. However, these efforts to manage expression and its pictorial representation could not do away with the challenge that the mobility and transformative character of skin and face brought to artists.

Whether it is about the relatively fixed or rather volatile aspects of the body's surface, skin serves as a mediator between interior and exterior, as a membrane that communicates and filters physiological and psychological processes located inside. It provides, as Elizabeth Harvey suggests, a 'complex border between inside and outside, one that emphasises the shifting, dynamic relation between the two'.[5] Skin's role in negotiating the relation between

the physical interior and exterior is particularly pertinent in the context of anatomy, where skin has to be literally removed or at least cut open to grant access to the body's physical interior. In both anatomical texts and images, the skin often becomes a symbol for the practice of anatomy and its way of gaining knowledge through dissection; indirectly however skin also points to anatomy's conundrum of understanding the living body by studying the corpse. In the practices of artistic anatomy, the skin's role remains especially ambivalent, as it hides immediate access to the interior while being the medium and instrument of its revelation.

Skin, the body's tegument, is often conceived as a veil (and vice versa), the physical or symbolic removal of which results in the revelation of an 'inner truth' or essence. The removal of the veil stands in for an act of knowledge production that tends to establish what is often a gendered hierarchy between inside and outside that values interiority at the cost of outer appearance. But, as Jacques Derrida reminds us, it is impossible to do away with the veil, especially through an act of revealing: 'finishing with the veil will always have been the very movement of the veil: un-veiling oneself, reaffirming the veil is unveiling'.[6] In his essay 'A silkworm of one's own', Derrida engages instead with the textility of the veil, and any other wrap or woof. In a similar vein, most recent studies of the cultural history of skin have challenged a hermeneutics that seeks to find hidden meanings, and have resisted the assumption that surfaces are invariably superficial.[7] From an art historical perspective, looking at skin means looking at surfaces of images, and keeping the materiality of skin as surface and part of the body in play. And it also entails factoring in the materiality of the fabricated surfaces of images.

In Almodóvar's film the viewers' customary attempts to read faces and surfaces are frustrated. Vera's exterior is no faithful expression of the inside. As the story of a person who couldn't save their own skin, the film can be interpreted as raising the question of what happens when the mind and inner body inhabit a remodelled envelope. The smooth and even skin most people desire to watch and have for themselves turns out to be monstrous. But rather than reiterating the platonic model of the soul trapped in a body, *The Skin I Live In* leaves its viewers puzzled and even disturbed as to what has become of the I that inhabits the immaculate skin and constitutes its interiority.

Whether the artificial skin still enables Vera/Vincente to have sensory feelings is a question the film leaves, somewhat frustratingly, open. It is the perfect protective barrier, but does it serve as the sense of touch, as is usually the case? Be that as it may, the film certainly activates the sense of touch through the cinematic images of the skin. In one of the scenes in which Dr Ledgard watches Vera on the screen, the camera takes the position of his eyes, and moves towards and across the reclining body. A soft light bathes the skin, and as the film turns more grainy it emphasises the curves and eroticises the

body. Such images prompt an embodied kind of viewing, in which, as Laura Marks points out, the eyes seem to touch the film and, in turn, the skin it shows. The images of skin can recall a double sensation of touching and being touched. In *The Skin I Live In* the evocation of touch works in the rather conventional mode of the erotic film as – unlike in the more experimental films Marks analyses in her book – evocation of touch does not coincide with an explicit foregrounding of the materiality of the film. This corresponds with the fact that in the above-mentioned reproductions of Titian's paintings, which are seen from a distance, the materiality of paint and the traces of the painter's brush are completely effaced.

Marks discusses cinematic images that 'appeal to a haptic, or tactile, visuality',[8] and does so without distinguishing between the haptic and the tactile, as the two words – one of Greek, the other of Latin origin – are in fact often used synonymously. For my purposes, however, I propose to make a distinction in order to approach the different ways in which the sense of touch can be mobilised via two-dimensional images and the relationship between seeing and touching can operate. I will thus refer to the 'haptic' in the sense that art historian Alois Riegl and following him Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari have defined it, as a quality of smoothly rendered, clearly circumscribed forms that create the illusion of three-dimensionality and thus seem graspable, a 'becoming-haptical of the optical'.[9] Riegl, writing around 1900, contrasted it with the 'painterly',[10] a quality he aligned with the optical. But as an effect produced by the visible traces of the artist's hand, it also has the potential of stimulating tactility via the sight of the materiality of paint and brushstroke. I will address this latter form of touch in my chapter on eighteenth-century philosophical and art theoretical debates on the sense of touch and the artist's touch (both referred to as *la touche* in French), and the significance of brush-strokes in Fragonard's *portraits de fantaisie*. In contrast, the manner in which smooth surfaces can evoke the haptic will be an issue in relation to painted skin in works by Ingres (addressed in chapter 7).

Even though the protagonists of Almodóvar's film would be considered as 'white' in current modes of categorising skin, all skin, and in particular Vera's skin, has by no means a uniform or stable colour: it is honey-coloured when softly lit, and pale in the bright light of the operating theatre. Mostly though, Vera's skin remains covered under her jump suit, which looks like a tailored full body bandage as it has the standard colour of medical plaster. It is a shade that the fashion industry often labelled 'nude', a designation that has recently become contested as much as the biased neutrality of the colour of bandages. 'Nude' became an issue when Michelle Obama wore an evening dress described by its designer as 'nude strapless gown', and by an Associate Press journalist as 'flesh-coloured'.[11] 'Whose nude?' or 'whose flesh?' some rightly asked, and pointed out that Crayola, the American manufacturer of

crayons and pencils, had changed the name of their 'flesh colour' to 'peach' by the 1960s.[12] 'Nude' and 'flesh colour' (and equivalents in other European languages) were designations for the colour of the body throughout the period considered in this book. They remain variable as long as they are attached to actual bodies and their colour, rather than being transferred to the systems of colour charts that abstract from the ties that colours and their names once had with the materiality of things and bodies.

Skin, flesh and colour have been a long-standing conglomerate. The ancient Greek notion of colour (*chrôma*) derives from *chrôs* – skin.[13] In contrast to *derma*, which is closer to the English word 'hide' and can also refer to animals and to skin that has been removed, *chrôs* specifically designates the visible surface of the living human body. In the vocabulary of the Homeric epics it is delicate and vulnerable, but also linked with beauty, and transformative in relation to emotions' change of colour. Because skin could be tinted it became a synonym for colour, and the intimate relation between the two outlived the emancipation of the notion of colour during the classical period.[14] Colour kept its alliance with the changeable complexions of the living in the medical theories of the Hippocratic Collection.[15] Early modern notions of flesh tones remain close to the Greek *chrôs* in the sense that they relate simultaneously to the visible body, including its coloration, and to its living substance, to the 'fleshy body with depth and surface fused together'.[16] Both in ancient culture and medieval Europe the words for colours were generally tied to the materials and objects which were of that colour (as is, for instance, still the case for gold or orange). It is however with flesh and skin that this way of linking colour and materiality was particularly persistent: notions like flesh tones – or *carnazione* in Italian or *carnations* in French – continued to be used in the art literature to designate both the tone of flesh and the imitation made from it. What is special about 'flesh' or 'nude' as a tone is that one doesn't know what shade it actually is, unless it refers to a particular person or a particular painted flesh. Of course, recipes for mixing flesh tones in artists' manuals, typically talk about mixtures that would produce some shade of rose, thus privileging people and ideals of beauty prevalent in Europe. Still, the proportions of pigments can always vary, and flesh tones are variable mixtures that are understood – as I will argue – in analogy to complexions. According to the Hippocratic theory of humours, developed in classical Greece and relevant in Europe until well into the nineteenth century, a person's colour or complexion is produced by varying compositions of four main bodily saps. Unlike the modern notion of skin colour, which has since the eighteenth century been tied to the classification of humans into races, complexions and flesh tones are open to transformation.

Vera's skin, to return one more time to Almodóvar's film, is both breathing and artificial, as lifelike and man-made as flesh tones painted on a canvas.

The Skin I Live In can be seen as playing on multiple levels with the crucial association of human skin and the image or medium in which it is represented: the skin of the film and the skin of the body are aligned with each other and with the painted skin of Titian's female nudes. The film thus takes up long established traditions of skin as a medium and of skin and flesh as the site in which artificial bodies are made lifelike. Skin has been called the oldest human medium, and the *longue durée* material history of skin as a medium dates back to pre-historic times when practices such as body painting or tattooing were used to decorate, inscribe or modify the body.[17] Beyond the living human body, skin has also been a regular support for images and letters. Books were initially made of animal hide – parchment – after the Roman codex, the earliest form of the book with pages bound together, had gradually replaced scrolls and other writing media. The material, typically the de-haired and limed skin of a calf (usually called vellum), goat or sheep, was valued for its durability. As is well known, medieval manuscripts and illuminations were generally also written and painted on parchment. But even though paper mostly superseded parchment as a material for books with the invention of the printing press, there is still a metaphorical linkage of skin and paper.[18]

The skin's capacity to be the human body's surface and to also form its outer appearance makes it comparable to images, whether photograph and film, or the media considered in this book: paintings, prints and drawings. It is a surface to be looked at, and a ground on to which images can be painted, drawn, incised or projected. This makes skin a very specific object, a privileged surface to be represented in film or other visual media. Skin variously blends with the ground of the image, its surface, or its crafted texture. It is the shared quality of skin and the visual image that gives imitations or reproductions of skin a self-referential quality, or to put it in Victor Stoichita's terms, they are the site where images have the potential to become self-aware.[19]

Skin is not only a medium, it is also matter. This has been especially stressed in recent art historical studies on skin, flesh and art, notably those by Daniela Bohde, Marianne Koos and Anne-Sophie Lehman.[20] It is in this vein that this book aims to 'flesh out surfaces'. It takes its starting point from the fact that the painting of the naked parts of the living human body is traditionally referred to in terms of flesh rather than skin, in terms of its materiality and coloured substance. But the book also looks at skin as thick and multilayered, as part of the body as well as its surface; and it studies the ways in which skin connects with the materiality of media and processes of image making, in which it is not only represented but also mimicked, made or re-enacted.[21] For example, the tissue of skin can be mimicked with the cross hatching of an engraving or the texture of the artist's brushwork. The complexion can be re-enacted with the mixture of dyes in colour printing, and skin colour is literally made in paintings. In all these ways images from both the medical and artistic realms

not only embed pre-existing knowledge but also produce knowledge of the human's outermost organ, and thus contribute to the changing understanding of the physiology and substance of the body and its envelope.

This book will thus explore the multiple relations between skin and the image, between colour and nakedness, between paint and flesh. And even though it assumes that certain phenomenological qualities of skin as the surface, and of flesh as the substance of the human body, result in long-lasting affiliations between these organic matters and the media in which they are rendered, I aim to make historical rather than ontological arguments. Hence, while Anzieu's book has been very productive for thinking about the significance of skin, about the multiple symbolic meanings the human envelope can take on, and about the interconnectedness of body and psyche, I question its normative aspects, including the 'need to set limits'[22] that a study by a practising psychoanalyst may need to insist upon. Like many other cultural historians and historians of the body or the skin, I assume that there was a gradual shift in the understanding and the lived experience of the body and its contours between the early modern and modern period. And, I agree with anthropologist Mary Douglas that the human body is a 'complex structure' that can take on multiple, but culturally specific, meanings and can stand for a variety of boundary systems.[23] Following up on the work by scholars such as Michael Bakhtin, Claudia Benthien, Barbara Duden, Michel Foucault, Dorinda Outram, Philippe Sarasin, Barbara Stafford and Paul Vigarello, my argument is that there is – from the late eighteenth century onwards – a new focus on the surface and the borderlines of the body and a new understanding of the skin as physical demarcation of the self. This shift is also played out in a discourse so far barely considered for histories of the body: art literature. As this book will show, the word 'skin' rather than 'flesh' is used with increasing frequency when referring to the surface or substance an artist imitates when painting the naked parts of a human body. This process runs parallel, and is connected with, the medicalisation of skin that has emerged since the seventeenth century, when the organ of touch and its colour came under intensified medical, including microscopic, scrutiny.

While these historical shifts are significant for early modern Europe more widely speaking, my study focuses on France and the specific transformations of the concepts of flesh, skin and epidermis in the French art literature since the foundation of the Académie royale in 1648 and in the debates prompted by it. Further on it takes into account the emerging genres of art criticism and specialised dictionaries that bring art and the reasoning about it to broader audiences. And it is within a discursive constellation specific to mid-eighteenth-century France – characterised by intense interaction between the discourses of art literature, medicine and philosophy – that the ties between new notions of skin as tissue and the fabricated surface of paintings, as well as between the

sense of touch and *la touche*, the painterly brushwork, become uniquely close. Likewise, the context of the French Revolution with its promise and violence puts particular pressure on the variously interconnected notions of the self and portraiture, on neoclassicism and its obsession with whiteness and on the problems of skin colour. Furthermore, artistic anatomy, to which one of my chapters is dedicated, develops specific practices in nineteenth-century France and in relation to the École des beaux-arts in Paris. The idiosyncratic new genre of publications called 'Anatomy of exterior forms' allocated to skin a newly defined role as interface. Ingres' manner of hermetically sealing the painted body is – I will argue – both in line with this novel focus on surfaces and a rejection of artistic anatomy and the relationship between interior and exterior it establishes.

Engaging with the interrelations between artistic practices, and the discourses of art and medicine, this book aims to understand the historically specific terms in which artists could think of the body, its substance and surface. If I am talking about 'thinking' in this context, it is in the sense Michael Baxandall has given it in his *Patterns of Intention* where he stresses:

> 'Thought' can mean a range of things, and it seems important not to suggest that philosophy or science are more or better thought than what a painter does as he paints … the typical form of thought in a picture is something more like 'process', the attention to a developing pictorial problem in the course of activity in a pictorial medium.[24]

Baxandall's work has recently regained pertinence due to its early interest in materials and materiality, and the ways artists think pictorially. His *Patterns of Intention* provides astute methodological propositions for relating images and discourses in meaningful ways. Thus keeping the question in mind of how one can 'move from a vague sense of affinity towards something critically useful and historically sustainable',[25] my study seeks to show that questions of the texture, substance and colour of flesh or skin are as much of painterly as they are of medical concern, and to elaborate on the relations and mediations between these fields. While taking a historical approach, this book does not construct a seamless, mono-directional historical narrative nor does it provide a comprehensive history of flesh and skin in art. The six chapters are roughly organised in chronological order – ranging from a discussion of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century art theoretical, medical and philosophical discourses to a study of skin and surfaces in the nineteenth-century female nudes and portraits by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. Several sections take their own *longue durée* perspective, and each chapter takes a slightly different angle and theme: flesh and flesh tones; tissue, textures and the sense of touch; complexions and skin colour; skin as sensitive limit; as semi-transparent veil in artistic anatomy; and finally skin as hermetic surface and borderline. All

of them deal with the multiple exchanges between the world of images and medical discourse; they demonstrate the role of art theory and anatomical publications dedicated to artists as intermediaries, while highlighting simultaneously that the exchange is no one-way street. A number of words used in colloquial and medical language today derive from the area of the arts and the crafts: the word 'pigment' for example derives from the Latin *pingere* – to paint – and only moved into medical language around 1800. 'Tissue' referred to a man-made woven fabric before it entered the parlance of natural philosophers and physicians to describe organic material. And, as chapter 2 elaborates, one particular image had a role to play in the establishment of this metaphor, which first appears in medical language in relation to skin. To mobilise the migration of metaphors between art and medicine, two chapters 'Nervous canvas' and 'Sensitive limit' take up medical designations of skin to provide a model for thinking about the rendering of skin in contemporary paintings. Overall, the images discussed range from seminal medical images of skin and skin colour via the illustrations for nineteenth-century artistic anatomies to paintings by Fragonard, David, Girodet, Benoist and Ingres. The focus in the latter field is (with a few exceptions) on portraits, and not on nudes despite the abundance of skin and flesh displayed there. Portraits are images of the body after all, and the usually disclosed facial skin is a special site for testing painterly skills and one where the body (for example in blushing or the display of emotions) and the image made of it become particularly expressive. What is more, from Cennino Cennini's late medieval artist's manual, via Le Blon's introduction to the techniques of colour printing, to the art criticism of Denis Diderot, the head and face (most often a woman's head) are frequently the model employed to explain the making and difficulties of skin and flesh tones in colour images.

The choice of artists and specific works is based on my view that these images do not only depict skin, but are *about* skin and skin colour. Each set of portraits brings a particular aspect of skin via distinct painterly procedures to the fore: skin as colourful sense organ full of nervous energy in Fragonard's *Portraits de fantaisie*; as sensitive limit and semi-transparent screen in David's post-revolutionary portraits; or the interconnected political and painterly issues of skin colour in Girodet's *Jean-Baptiste Belley* and Benoist's *Portrait d'une négresse*. The book ends with a chapter on a selection of nudes and portraits by Ingres and the artist's radical manner of sealing the painted surface. Human nakedness painted by Ingres is about skin rather than flesh. Flesh had been written out of medical discourse by the end of the nineteenth century and been replaced by differentiated tissues defined via their specific structure and function. This does not mean though that flesh is a disappearing matter in the modern world. It becomes the body's undisciplined substance and as the *informe* it continues to be associated with paint. The objective of this book is thus to discuss embodiment in images as an ongoing problem and contested issue.

Notes

1 Maria Loh, *Titian Remade: Repetition and the Transformation of Early Modern Italian Art* (Los Angeles/Cal.: Getty Publications, 2007).

2 See in particular her book on skin, flesh and colour in Titian – Daniela Bohde, *Haut, Fleisch und Farbe: Körperlichkeit und Materialität in den Gemälde*n *Tizians* (Emstetten: Edition Imorde, 2002); and '"Le tinte delle carni": zur Begrifflichkeit von Haut und Fleisch in italienischen Kunsttraktaten des 15.–17. Jahrhunderts', in Daniela Bohde and Mechthild Fend (eds), *Weder Haut noch Fleisch: das Inkarnat in der Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 2007), pp. 41–63.

3 Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego* [1985], trans. Chris Turner (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 210.

4 Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham/N.C.; London: Duke University Press, 2000).

5 Elizabeth D. Harvey, 'The touching organ: allegory, anatomy, and the Renaissance skin envelope', in Elizabeth D. Harvey (ed.), *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 81–102 (p. 85).

6 Jacques Derrida, 'A silkworm of one's own', in Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, *Veils*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Stanford/Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 25.

7 See in particular Claudia Benthien, *Skin: On the Cultural Border Between Self and the World* [1999], trans. Thomas Dunlap (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2002); and with particular regard to early modern images of flaying Daniela Bohde, 'Skin and the search for the interior: the representation of flaying in the art and anatomy of the cinquecento', in Florike Egmond and Robert Zwijnenberg (eds), *Bodily Extremities: Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern European Culture* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2003), pp. 10–47.

8 Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, p. 2.

9 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their chapter 'The smooth and the striated' of *A Thousand Plateaux: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis/Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 492–3; see for a critical discussion of it Jacques Derrida, *On Touching, Jean-Luc Nancy*, [2000], trans. Christine Irizarry (Stanford/Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 123–6; see further Laura Marks, *Touch: Sensous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp. 4–9.

10 See in particular his theoretical overview in Alois Riegl, *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts*, trans. Jacqueline E. Jung (New York: Zone Books, 2004). The text was initially written between 1897 and 1899, but published only in 1966; see in particular the introduction to the chapter on 'Form and Surface', pp. 395–400. On Riegl and haptic vision see Mechthild Fend, '"Körpersehen": über das Haptische bei Alois Riegl', in Andreas Mayer and Alexandre Métraux (eds), *Kunstmaschinen: Spielräume des Sehens zwischen Wissenschaft und Kunst* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 2005), pp. 166–202.

11 Morvenna Ferrier et al., 'The trouble with nudity in fashion', *Guardian*, 10 May 2010, www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2010/may/20/fashion-colour-nude-racist.

12 Samantha Critchell, 'What colour is "nude"? Fashion debates a loaded term', *Associated Press*, 17 May 2010, www.nola.com/fashion/index.ssf/2010/05/what_color_is_nude_fashion_deb.html.
13 Steven Connor, *The Book of Skin* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), pp. 10–11.
14 Marcello Carastro, 'La notion de *khrôs* chez Homère: éléments pour une anthropologie de la couleur en Grèce ancienne', in Marcello Carastro (ed.), *l'Antiquité en couleurs: catégories, pratiques, représentations* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 2009), pp. 301–13; Adeline Grand-Clément, *La fabrique des couleurs: histoire du paysage des Grecs anciens* (Paris: de Broccard, 2011), in particular pp. 33–42.
15 Carastro, 'La notion de *khrôs* chez Homère', p. 310.
16 Valeria Gavrylenko, 'The body without skin', in Manfred Horstmanshoff, Helen King and Claus Zittel (eds), *Blood, Sweat and Tears: The Changing Concepts of Physiology from Antiquity into Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 481–502 (p. 489).
17 Charles Grivel, 'Der siderale Körper: zum Prinzip des Kommunikation', in J. Hörisch and M. Wenzel (eds), *Armaturen der Sinne: literarische und technische Medien 1870 bis 1920* (München: Fink, 1990), pp. 177–99. I have further explored this aspect of skin in a study of Valie Export's *Body Sign Action*, see Fend, 'Zeichen in der Oberfläche: Valie Exports body sign action', *Psychoanalyse im Widerspruch*, 15:29 (2003), 51–9; see also Bernadette Wegenstein, *Getting Under the Skin: The Body and Media Theory* (Cambridge/Mass.: MIT Press, 2006).
18 The relationship between skin and the book has been explored by Ulrike Zeuch in *Verborgen im Buch. Verborgen im Körper: Haut zwischen 1500 und 1800*, exh. cat. Herzog Anton August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel (Wiesbaden: Harrowitz, 2003).
19 Victor Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Meta-Painting* [1993] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
20 Bohde, *Haut, Fleisch und Farbe*; Marianne Koos, *Haut, Farbe und Medialität: Oberfläche im Werk von Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702–1789)* (Paderborn: Fink, 2014); Ann-Sophie Lehmann, 'The matter of the medium: some tools for an art theoretical interpretation of materials', in Christy Anderson et al. (eds), *The Matter of Art: Materials, Practices, Cultural Logics, c. 1250–1750* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), pp. 21–41; and 'Fleshing out the body: the "colours of the naked" in workshop practice and art theory, 1400–1600', in Ann-Sophie Lehmann and Herman Roodenburg (eds), *Body and Embodiment in Netherlandish Art*. *Neederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 58 (Zwolle: Wanders, 2008), pp. 86–109.
21 Hanna Rose Shell has developed this productive notion for analysing the casting techniques Bernard Palissy used for his *rustiques figulines* as a re-enactment of processes of fossilisation' see her article: 'Casting life, recasting experience: Bernard Palissy's occupation between maker and nature', *Configurations,* 12 (2004), 1–40.
22 Anzieu, *Skin Ego*, p. 6.
23 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 138.
24 Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 74–5.
25 Ibid., p. 75.