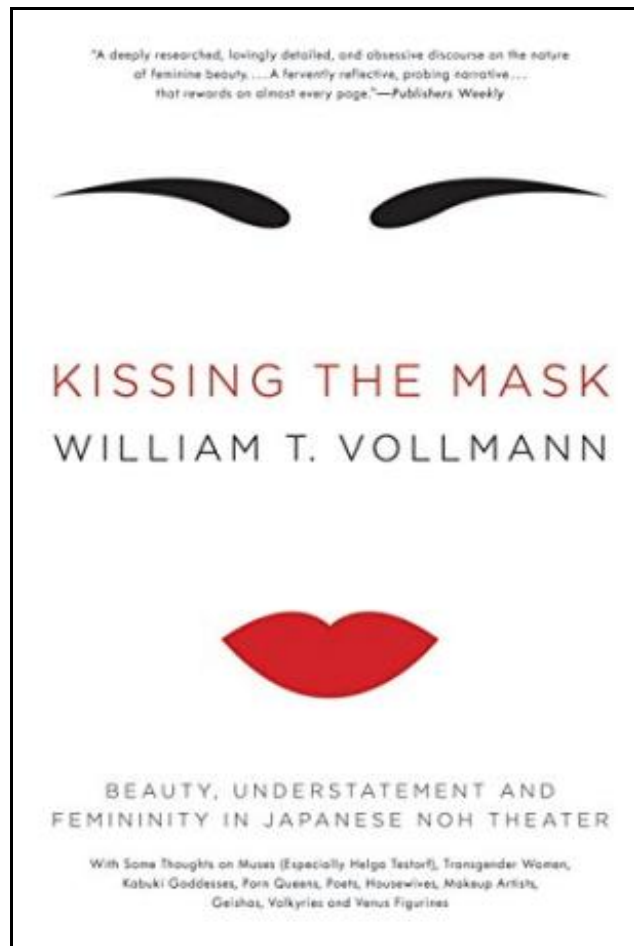


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Ecco Press, United States, 2011. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Reprint. 226 x 150 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. From the National Book Award-winning author of *Europe Central*, a charming, evocative and piercing examination of an ancient Japanese tradition and the keys it holds to our modern understanding of beauty What is a woman? To what extent is femininity a performance? Writing with the extra-ordinary awareness and endless curiosity that have defined his entire oeuvre, William T. Vollmann takes an in-depth look at the Japanese craft of Noh theater, using the medium as a prism to reveal the conception of beauty itself. Sweeping readers from the dressing room of one of Japan's most famous Noh actors to a trans-vestite bar in the red-light district of Kabukicho, *Kissing the Mask* explores the enigma surrounding Noh theater and the traditions that have made it intrinsic to Japanese culture for centuries. Vollmann then widens his scope to encompass such modern artists of desire and loss as Mishima, Kawabata and Andrew Wyeth. From old Norse poetry to Greek cult statues, from elite geisha dancers to American makeup artists, from Serbia to India, Vollmann uncovers secrets of staged femininity and mysteries of perceived and expressed beauty, including specific makeup procedures furnished by an L.A. transgender bar girl, a Kabuki female impersonator, and the owner of a semi-clandestine studio for Tokyo cross-dressers. *Kissing the Mask* is illustrated with many evocative sketches and photographs by the author.

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