

# Letters to the Editor

## COVER QUALITIES

### Dear Editor,

I completely missed the image on the cover of the March issue of *Cosmetic Surgery Times*, turning instead to the content, as I usually do. It was only after another pair of eyes called it to my attention that I really LOOKED at the cover. The image of the crouched, naked model reflected in water was illustrating the cover story about cellulite treatment, yet this model certainly didn't have anything to do with needing either cellulite treatment or liposuction or any other cosmetic procedure.

I engaged some of your editorial board members and other friends and acquaintances who are cosmetic surgeons in dialogue about the uses of nude female forms, finding some in agreement and some not that the cover was offensive.

As cosmetic surgeons doing bodywork, nudity is essential to any conversation about indications, treatment plans or results. Eroticized images are certainly NOT necessary. In fact, at a recent conference I was struck by how often frankly eroticized images appeared and how few audience members were even aware of it, much less offended. Clearly, we have been desensitized in some way.

Once the images were pointed out, I did find support for the opinion that I hold, that such uses are disrespectful to women as a class, demeaning to our patients as a whole, and certainly should play no role in education.

Although I recognize that *Cosmetic Surgery Times* has commercial interests, and provocative covers are marketing instruments, I would think that other images might be just as illustrative and attractive but less sexualized. I am certainly no prude, but I do have a pride in this profession that is bruised by inappropriate images.

**JANE A. PETRO, M.D.**

### Joe Niamtu III, D.M.D., F.A.A.C.S., responds: Dear Editor,

I would like to comment on the recent letter from Dr. Jane Petro. First, I want to say that Jane is one of my heroines and is an awesome clinician and surgeon and one of our literati.

Dr. Petro feels that eroticized images may be inappropriate for medical literature and meetings. I truly feel that she is correct in that we are all probably a bit "sensitized" by this and probably don't think much of it. This does not make it good or bad, it just depends how it impacts one's personal psyche.

Personally, I have appreciated these covers as "haute cosmetic art" and feel that they are provocative, not in a sexual way, but certainly in an artistic way. Some people

like landscapes and still life images, which are indisputably art, and some journals use them on their covers. No one can dispute that the human body is art and can be found in any significant museum. I guess one question is, "When does the human body become erotic?" I am sure some people would find Michelangelo's "David" to be erotic, but most see it as a work of art featuring a fit male specimen.

I think that the field of cosmetic surgery is predominantly female patients treated by male physicians. This must have a conscious or subconscious effect on what we, in the field, view as artistic. Since most cosmetic surgeons (regardless of gender) seek to emulate youth and perfection, these images seem appropriate to me. Are they erotic or exotic? I think the answer lies in the beholder, especially in a society like the United States, where the exposed breast is censored. I have noticed that Editor-in-Chief Amy Stankiewicz also uses provocative images of males when the publication discusses male procedures, so I don't think it is one-sided.

“No one can dispute that the human body is art and can be found in any significant museum.”

**Joe Niamtu III, D.M.D., F.A.A.C.S.**  
Richmond, Va.

I personally like these images and feel that they invite readers to explore the topics. We also have to remember that *Cosmetic Surgery Times* is not an index medicus medical journal, but rather a tabloid aimed at providing information to surgeons and funded by advertisers. It is not the *New England Journal of Medicine*, and it is not *Penthouse*, and I believe the images are appropriate for this milieu.

One thing that Dr. Petro did was make me think about the use of female or male images and realize they are all around me in the cosmetic surgery world. I have paid more attention to this as a result of her letter. To me it is art, but I am sure that her letter will bring forth more views, including some that diametrically oppose mine.

**JOE NIAMTU III, D.M.D., F.A.A.C.S.**

Editorial Advisory Board member, *Cosmetic Surgery Times*

#### OUR EDITORIAL POLICY:

Letters to the editor can be a maximum of 700 words and may be edited for clarity, content, and/or grammatical correctness. Send letters, along with full name and title of the author, to Amy Stankiewicz, Editor in Chief, *Cosmetic Surgery Times*, 24950 Country Club Blvd., #200, Cleveland, OH 44070, or electronically to [astankiewicz@advanstar.com](mailto:astankiewicz@advanstar.com).