

M A R T I N C O O P E R

T H E P E L V I S

If my work were to focus only on one anatomical attribute, without a doubt, it would be the pelvis. The expression of the bone and its musculature is unique like a fingerprint. The majestic wing-like structure of the pelvic bones are symmetric and broad in its proportion. Distinct for its ala, or wings that flare out on either side of the spine, it is constructed stronger than the wall of the cranium.

Anatomically, the pelvis is the keystone of our corporal structure and the foundation of the body's center of gravity. The moving relationship between the pelvis and the rib cage determines our balance and mobility in virtually every activity we do. Other factors like posture and a person's stance often affect whether their pelvis is tucked under, swung back, or positioned perpendicular to the floor, affecting how a person walks through space.

One of the only bones in the human body that is gender specific, the pelvis protects the body's vital reproductive organs, like the rib cage protects the heart. The female pelvis is designed to carry and deliver offspring; however, it is ironically more fragile than the male pelvis. It is thinner and lighter in weight, and generally less robust.

Varying among the races, the pelvises of women of African and Asian descent tend to have less wing than women of European descent resulting in narrower hips. In addition to genetics, studies prove that the final shape of a woman's pelvis is also determined by conditioning and environment. Athletic women tend to have narrower pelvises.

Controversially, the pelvis has been the center of great debate. Hitler and other eugenicists argued that Aryan women evolved wider pelvises in order to give birth to babies with larger craniums, implying smarter superior offspring. Modern science does not support this fallacy.

In evolutionary terms, women who are alive today, regardless of race, survived millions of years of natural selection, evidence that diversity is the key to the success of the species.

The battleground of the pelvis continues to shape our modern consciousness considering how the 1973 landmark United States Supreme Court case, *Roe v. Wade*, has divided America into two camps of pro-life and pro-choice. The fascination and struggle to control and define the pelvis reflects our attempts to control and define life.

On the physical, this series will focus on the waist-to-hip ratio of 0.70 or less and attempts to celebrate diversity of the form and takes a ratio that from the outset looks restrictive and explains exactly why it is not. From an ethnographical, medical, political and mystical point of view, Cooper tries to interpret his fascination with the pelvis into a visual language that demonstrates why the pelvis is arguably the most fascinating and controversial bone in the human body.