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Does Swamp Thing have a penis?

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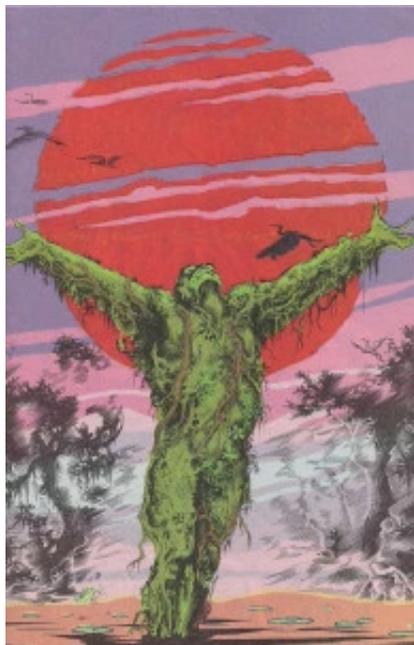
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Does Swamp Thing have a penis?



<https://pencilpanelpage.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/gcou8jc.jpg>

Swamp Thing

Perhaps the answer to this question depends on who is in charge of the character. While many artists have been involved in *Swamp Thing* story arcs over the decades, I am most familiar with the Alan Moore arc, with art by Stephen Bissette and John Totleben.

In 'The Anatomy Lesson,' there is an autopsy performed on the body of Swamp Thing, who is presumed to be dead and whose body has been frozen for study. The autopsy reveals structures inside the chest cavity that resemble anatomically correct human organs. However, although they look like organs, they don't function like them. The 'lungs' inside Swamp Thing don't actually take oxygen into the body and expel carbon dioxide as they do in mammals, reptiles, and birds.



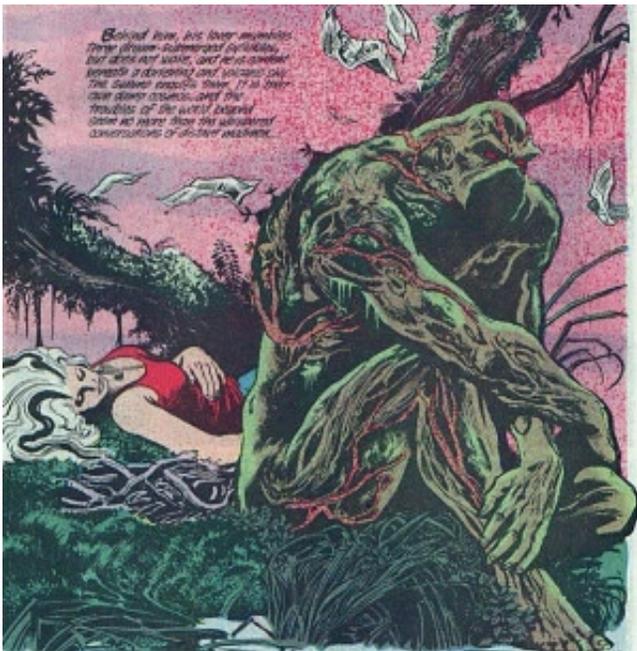
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[660x1015.jpg](https://pencilpanelpage.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/21a-660x1015.jpg))

Anatomy Lesson

Even without an invasive surgical procedure, though, it is clear that Swamp Thing has a body that is very similar to a male human. He walks upright on two legs; he has two arms, and he has eyes and other facial features that make him seem animal-like. One logical question, then, is how much does Swamp Thing resemble a male? Does Swamp Thing have a penis? If we limit ourselves to a discussion of anatomy, then the answer might be 'yes.'

Anatomy alone doesn't answer the question, though. Several issues after the autopsy, we see that Swamp Thing has recovered from cryostasis, and he has established a relationship with Abby. Swamp Thing explains that even though he loves her, he cannot physically make love to her. They manage to have a relationship via other means, and the narrator calls them lovers.



https://pencilpanelpage.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/swamp_thing_035_01-231.jpg

Swamp Thing and Abby

This doesn't necessarily mean that Swamp Thing doesn't have a penis, just that it may not function as penises normally do.

Before Alan Moore wrote *Swamp Thing* stories, though, there was a 1982 Wes Craven movie. This live-action movie involved a man wearing a Swamp Thing suit, which was created by William Munns. On his website, Munns explains how he got the job on Swamp Thing, how he created the suit (it was modeled on Creature from the Black Lagoon), and how decisions were made about its anatomical features:

"I sculpted a body design that included a 'root' that was between the legs and had a masculine proportion, sort of like an uncircumcized Cypress knee. [...With] immense regret on the director's part, he okayed the castration of the sculpture, and we concluded if there would even be a movie called 'Son of Swamp Thing,' he'd have to be adopted."

http://www.billmunnscreaturegallery.com/bmcgsite_065.htm

http://www.billmunnscreaturegallery.com/bmcgsite_065.htm (website accessed on 24 July 2013)

Click here to see the two images of the suit before the 'castration.'

http://www.billmunnscreaturegallery.com/bmcgsite_040.htm

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Several of our posts at Pencil Panel Page have addressed the issues of gender, anatomy, stereotype, and sexism. Most of these, if not all of them, have explored the representation of human anatomy, especially of the costumed superheroes. These posts mention breast size and biceps size, but what of the penis? Are male characters somehow de-humanized if their tights don't reveal a bulge?

And what of Swamp Thing? Is he human? Is he fauna or flora? And what does that say about representations of the male form, human or otherwise?

Posted by [Frank Bramlett](#) on [July 25, 2013](#) in [Alan Moore](#), [Gender](#), [Swamp Thing](#), [Uncategorized](#).

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About Frank Bramlett

Until June 2014, I am a visiting lecturer in the English Department at Stockholm University, where I offer seminars in Sociolinguistics; Language and Gender; and Language and Comics; among others. For Fall 2014, I will return to the English Department at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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