



Pin-Up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture

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Subverting stereotypical images of women, a new generation of feminist artists is remaking the pin-up, much as Annie Sprinkle, Cindy Sherman, and others did in the 1970s and 1980s. As shocking as contemporary feminist pin-ups are intended to be, perhaps more surprising is that the pin-up has been appropriated by women for their own empowerment since its inception more than a century ago. *Pin-Up Grrrls* tells the history of the pin-up from its birth, revealing how its development is intimately connected to the history of feminism. Maria Elena Buszek documents the genre's 150-year history with more than 100 illustrations, many never before published. Beginning with the pin-up's origins in mid-nineteenth-century *carte-de-visite* photographs of burlesque performers, Buszek explores how female sex symbols, including Adah Isaacs Menken and Lydia Thompson, fought to exert control over their own images. Buszek analyzes the evolution of the pin-up through the advent of the New Woman, the suffrage movement, fanzine photographs of early film stars, the Varga Girl illustrations that appeared in *Esquire* during World War II, the early years of *Playboy* magazine, and the recent revival of the genre in appropriations by third-wave feminist artists. A fascinating combination of art history and cultural history, *Pin-Up Grrrls* is the story of how women have publicly defined and represented their sexuality since the 1860s.

Pin-Up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture Details

Date : Published May 31st 2006 by Duke University Press Books (first published January 1st 2006)

ISBN : 9780822337461

Author : Maria Elena Buszek

Format : Paperback 464 pages

Genre : Feminism, Nonfiction, Art, Gender, History, Culture, Cultural Studies

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From Reader Review Pin-Up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture for online ebook

Lesley says

Not finished, but on hiatus at present

Advocata Diavoli says

but of course!

Jill says

I love this book :)

Milisa says

fuh.

Denise says

Absolutely freakin brilliant! Buszek put words to so many of my own thoughts and queries, then backs her theories with incredible research and an innovative approach.

She begins the discourse with an examination of neglected feminist figures like 19th century actresses Sarah Bernhard and Adah Isaacs Menken, immediately rooting her consideration of feminism in popular culture rather than academia. She follows this captivating course through the 20th century, into the present day with bold understandings of the importance of women like Madonna, Cindy Sherman and Annie Sprinkles. As we trace this historic trajectory, Buszek articulates the concerns and views of the third wave in a manner that validates and buttresses those interests. She provides invaluable insight and critique to numerous feminist issues, but does not reprimand or denounce. All the while the author forges a new, more comprehensive and illuminating view of feminism and its history.

A must read for anyone interested in third wave feminism, pin-ups, sexuality and popular culture.

linda says

"I hope that my choice of the popular pin-up will encourage this discourse as it relates to both activist and

academic feminists, popular and privileged imagery, across not only generations but also cultures and classes."

-You have to read the first chapter: *Defining/Defending the "Feminist Pin-Up"* to learn what "this discourse" is. I enter the quote as I am not ready to review the book, yet super-pleased to find a reminder of what I think of as Ms Buszeks' sincerity in acting as a sort of bridge... toward unification? To an awareness and acceptance of our strength? I'm not sure yet...

Elizabeth says

ILL from the library

Amanda says

A great read on the history of pin-ups, very enjoyable and interesting.

Mary Elliott says

I might have to try again on this one. It was fascinating, but definitely a 'textbook' read. I don't always have patience for that type of writing. I'll try again. There were pictures, so that's a bonus in the textbook format! I'm a simpleton, what can I say? It's not her, it's me.

Michelle says

Before reading *Pin-Up Grrrls*, I was vaguely aware of the early era of photography, silent films, and the early feminist awakening therein. And like many, I associated the word *pin-up* with the Barbie-proportioned male-gazed cheesecake nudies of the 1940s and beyond. But in Maria Elena Buszek's thorough history of the genre, you get to learn there is so much more! *Pin-Up Grrrls* shows off a wealth of female-driven and female-created images from the mid 1800s onward, starting with "cartes de visites" of famous theatre actresses to promote their own careers. These early photoshoots demonstrate women as actors in their own lives, commanding respect and flaunting their sexuality.

The book continues through time, providing an alternative history of images of women, particularly those created to demonstrate women's newfound independence in the Western world. Of course there is a place for that "traditional" pin-up, the "Varga girl" (also a fascinating history in itself), but Buszek places these images in the context of their disruptive power to portray an assertive female sexuality, rather than their use for male ogling. This is put in stark contrast to the males-only culture of publications like *Playboy* and *Hustler*, where women were purposely portrayed as nonthreatening and vapid. When you see the difference, you won't continue to lump all pin-up pictures together.

The first half of the book was more interesting to me simply because I knew less about the history of rabble-rousing Victorian actresses and outspoken flappers, but I also appreciate the survey of more modern takes on the pin-up (the cover is a wonderful example), even though it becomes more art-world esoteric at times. But on the whole the book is an entertaining and well-researched read, which has pointed me in the direction of some wonderful feminist visual arts.

Jodi says

Although published by a University press, I admit that I was hoping that the author would have a little more fun with her subject--after all, we are talking about pin-ups! Buszek traces the history of the pin-up from the Gibson Girl to today--and includes some great pictures--but I was rather disappointed in the overly dry and academic tone of this book.

Kate says

Fabulous history -- lots of technical, professor-speak. Still working my way through it.

Sarahjane says

Too dissertation focused at parts, but an astute and brisk history.

May FLower says

A really great book examining female sexuality in America especially as it relates to mass and personal representation via the pin-up. If you're interested in the ways this medium has been used to both liberate and define female sexuality, then you need to read this book.

Sarah says

Buszek does a good job of weaving the origins and development of the pin-up with the history of feminism, despite the enormity of the task. For the most parts the aspects that get less notice make me interested in finding out more rather than blaming Buszek for a lack.
