



Femmes of Power: Exploding Queer Femininities

Del LaGrace Volcano (Photographs), Del LaGrace Volcano

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"Intimate, audacious, and exploding with interpretive trajectories, these images reach beyond their edges to re-invision projects of queer visual testimony."—Juana Maria Rodriguez, University of California, Berkeley

Going beyond identity politics, *Femmes of Power* is a photographic tribute to a diverse range of queerly feminine subjects whose powerful and intentional redress explodes the meaning of femme for the twenty-first century. Celebrating the growing femme presence, here you will meet members Atlanta's Femme Mafia, San Francisco's Harlem Shake Burlesque, and Paris' Fem Menace.

Femmes of Power features both everyday heroines and many queer feminist icons, including Michelle Tea, Virginie Despentes, Amber Hollibaugh, Marla Stewart, Lydia Lunch, Kate Bornstein, and Lois Weaver.

The first book of its kind, *Femmes of Power* unsettles the objectifying male gaze on femininity and presents femmes as speaking subjects and high-heeled theorists. Look closer—these powerful, sexy, and sincerely ironic feminine figures are larger than life, bravely challenging femininity's negative connotations and replacing femme invisibility with a fresh new face for femme-inism.

Del LaGrace Volcano is one of the world's leading queer cultural producers, cited and reproduced in numerous publications, journals, and books on visual art, including *The Drag King Book*.

Ulrika Dahl is a writer, activist, and cultural anthropologist who has been a femme voice in the Scandinavian feminist and queer debate since 2002. She teaches gender studies at Södertörn University College in Stockholm.

Femmes of Power: Exploding Queer Femininities Details

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Heathyr says

"Femme Invisibility? So last year."

When I started this book, I thought I had a decent grasp on the word femme. Now, I know nothing. Perhaps negative learning happened? Or maybe unlearning. Who knows. This book is full of postmodernist identity politics; it left my head spinning. That being said I have respect for the women who are living in ways that are authentic to them.

Elizabeth says

I have many mixed feelings about being queer and femme- it is frustrating not to be read as gay unless I am holding hands with someone butch and I still love to get dolled up in vintage dresses. I was initially attracted to it as a photo book but the interviews really resonated with me. Not that I mind the photo of femme ladies dressed as the Virgin wearing harnesses...

Tina Batya says

I had the privilege of meeting the author and photographer. Fantastic book about a subject near and dear to my queer femme heart. Plus it features some of my dearest friends. And I'm in it too. :)

bookcasewalls says

One part interesting and joyful, one part self-indulgent. Tolerance may vary; quality certainly does. If you're at all involved in queer & SM communities in Europe/North America, though, you're going to know and have met some of the femmes within, which helps with the self-indulgence and makes it feel a bit like an extended family photo album.

Shoshanna says

I read about half of the essays, some I couldn't really relate to. The ones I could, some had some really incredible points about femininity and sisterhood and queerness and body positivity and the politics of attraction / who you choose to be with.

Also the photos are AMAZING!!!

Probably gonna buy this!

Liz says

I found this really light and fluffy. that's fine in certain contexts, we all need escapism. but this had a shallow girl-power "pretty is powerful! yay!" vibe. Key example: a few of the femmes profiled, including the author, mentioned dealing with eating disorders and this was totally glossed over. The interviewer would say "we bonded over our disordered eating" and leave it at that. I mean, shit, this is one of the horrors at the heart of normative femininity. I would have asked -- how do you feel like your femmeness affects your eating patterns? Do you feel more pressure to be thin because you are feminine? Less? How do you relate to the fashion industry? What do you think about discourses around thin models? How do you relate to your body? How do you mediate your relationship to your body through personal style? How does your experience of harassment or assault impact your relationship to your body? How do you feel about being photographed? What are your thoughts on the cultural relationship between femininity and food preparation, between femininity and self-denial? I get that the book was supposed to be a celebration, but isn't struggling with self-destructive impulses and surviving worthy of celebration? All the femmes I know are thinking about these things.

another gripe I have is it was really personal -- almost every profile started with a cute anecdote from the author about how they met the profiled femme. personal is fine when it's done right, but this felt really chummy and exclusionary.

on the plus side some of the pictures are great.

the more I think about it the more I dislike this book. hmmm.

Manuel says

Loved this book since the beginning! I would highly recommend this book to everyone who wants to have a good time, specially on this specific genre, there was a few things that iwould have changed in this book but that happens most of the times i read books so it's not such a big deal. Loved it, thats all i've gotta say. Well deserved five stars.
