



Strip Show: Performances of Gender and Desire (Gender in Performance)

Katherine Liepe-Levinson

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This book offers an account of an unprecedented North American study of contemporary female and male strip shows. It particularly focuses on the contradictory sex roles, cultural positions, and performance practices of 'straight' strip shows during their second heyday in the early 1990s.

Katherine Liepe-Levinson's research took her to over seventy different strip bars, clubs, theatres and sex emporiums ranging from elaborate lap-dancing and couch-dancing 'gentlemen's' clubs in New York, Houston, and San Francisco; to Peoria's onetime duplex cabaret where women strip for men downstairs, and men for women upstairs; to the nightclubs of Montreal where female and male performers displayed the 'Full Monty'.

Liepe-Levinson's intriguing, comprehensive study concentrates on the cultural and theatrical elements of the strip shows themselves including the geographic locations and interior designs of the clubs, the choreography and costumes of the dancers and the all-important participation of the audience. She draws upon a variety of methodologies as well as interviews with performers to explore how the strip show's cultural and theatrical aspects simultaneously uphold and break traditional sex roles. Her findings readily complicate several of the most prominent and prevalent theories about sexual representation, gender and desire.

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