



## Burlesque and the Art of the Teese / Fetish and the Art of the Teese

*Dita Von Teese , Bronwyn Garrity*

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On one side, Dita Von Teese shares the beauty of the burlesque world, with bubblegum dreams and show tunes to strip to. Flip over for fantasies in fetish with dramatic costumes and the allure of submission.

**Burlesque and the Art of the Teese**"I advocate glamour. Every day. Every minute."

I'm a good dancer and a nice girl, but I'm a *great* showgirl. I sell, in a word, magic. Burlesque is a world of illusion and dreams and of course, the striptease. Whether I am bathing in my martini glass, riding my sparkling carousel horse, or emerging from my giant gold powder compact, I live out my most glamorous fantasies by bringing nostalgic imagery to life.

Let me show you my world of gorgeous pin-ups, tantalizing stripteases, and femmes fatales. I'll give you a glimpse into my life, but a lady *never* reveals all.

**Fetish and the Art of the Teese**You may have come for the fetish. Or you may just be sneaking a peek at this mysterious and peculiar other side. No matter what you've come for, there is something for you to indulge in.

My world of fetish may not be the one that you would expect. As a burlesque performer, I entice my audience, bringing their minds closer and closer to sex and then -- as good temptress must -- snatching it away. As a fetish star, I apply the same techniques. . . .

An opera-length kid leather glove, a strict wasp waist, an impossibly high patent leather heel, a severely painted red lip. . . . Come with me into my world of decadent fetishism.

## **Burlesque and the Art of the Teese / Fetish and the Art of the Teese Details**

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Author : Dita Von Teese , Bronwyn Garrity

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Dita Von Teese , Bronwyn Garrity**

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## **From Reader Review Burlesque and the Art of the Teese / Fetish and the Art of the Teese for online ebook**

### **Dawn says**

This is a beautiful book about Dita Von Teese. She details her fascination with burlesque and fetish, how she managed to make a career of it and some of the history. There are some suggestions about how to dress like her and what to do to become a burlesque dancer but by far the best part of this book are the beautiful pictures of Dita herself.

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### **Devora Gray says**

I once saw Dita at a special performance she did for the MGM Grand's "Crazy Horse Paris" review. She was tiny and pale and carried herself with a grace thought long abandoned by self-tanner. The show itself was delightful and Dita's contribution was the olive in a large martini glass. As an audience, our cup runneth over.

This is my be-all, end-all coffee table book. Not only does she explain with a coquettish tongue-in-cheek the varieties of both burlesque and fetish, the photos are absolutely stunning. As a woman who loves corsets and lace, gilded compact mirrors and red lips, thankfully I have a bit of the Burlesque Queen gracing my life with her art and attention to detail.

I'm hard pressed to find any criticisms for the book. It was the new bicycle under my Christmas trees for much of my mid-20's, lighting a path to the catacombs of true inner glamour.

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### **Hanaa says**

Lovely. Obviously.

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### **Pamela says**

After having known about Lily st Cyr ever since those red lips sang about her (those lips of course belonging to the intro for Rocky Horror Picture show) I have had a passing interest in burlesque / clothing as a fetish for a very long time (why else would Frank n furter have adorned himself that corset and pearl set?) I had some prior knowledge of such things for nearly 10 years (I have also previously designed gothic clothing for a college fashion/textiles project) I first read the book when it was published in 2006, but recently had opportunity to read it again now.

Ms Teese's book is wonderful for fans of her shows / performance art, as it is choc-full with high colour quality photographs of her, plus notes on her influences, history of burlesque and why she enjoys doing what she does. The notes on the history of burlesque are quite easy to follow, and don't assume the reader is ignorant on such things, but kept simple so those who are 100% new to it can still understand and follow it

along.

For readers who know very little about ms. teese or burlesque in general, I would start from the burlesque side of the book, as much of the text (in the fetish section) refers back to the feathery front.

For those who want a fine detailed history, you would find more indepth information else where, but if you want a lovely, adult yet tasteful coffee table book, this one is for you.

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### **Antonomasia says**

Another book I'm reviewing because I'm getting rid of it. Published in 2006, already it's speaking from a different world, where burlesque wasn't so ubiquitous, before 50 Shades of Grey and the explosion of broadband porn – and it shows in the text. Although text isn't really the point of the book.

Dita von Teese is essentially an aesthete, a highly feminised dandy. She is proud and upfront about artifice, of her vintage fashion collection, and seeks to create magic and to be a living work of art, like her heroes from the past Marchesa Luisa Casati, Liberace, and golden age Hollywood bombshells. A fetish for attention and approval certainly seems to be there, but she is also, regardless, a connoisseur and creator, who rather than following fashion, turned it towards her own tastes.

This is mostly a picture book. 90% fashion & style pics, 10% hot. YMMV, but it's closer to what you might see in *Vogue* than *Penthouse*. The costumes are often the focus, but there's also sometimes a frisson of *very nearly* revealing something. Because most extant photos of Dita are covered up to some extent, and she's seen often in the media, clothed, she has succeeded in creating a relative sense of rarity value to those pictures which are fully revealing, unlike most porn stars.

[I already think I may have overstepped the mark for detail. a) as soon as I read a couple of other reviews on this page, my fear of creeping out girls, which I've had for much of my life, returned; and b) writing about this it might be construed as some kind of indirect flirting with men I don't intend to flirt with.]

The Burlesque section:

- A short history of burlesque in America, mostly about the Billy Minsky club and Bettie Page
- An elementary guide to burlesque performance and associated fashion and makeup looks. In that oddly useless way of much celebrity-fronted advice, it combines insufficiently specific information that anyone with a vague interest would already know, with tips that are unrealistic for most people - albeit the latter end up as paragraphs of unintentional autobiography. The fashion and beauty advice isn't likely to be of much interest to people who've found their own style, or who just want to copy one element, as it doesn't go into enough detail about creating a particular look.
- A bit of autobiography. Dita was fascinated by vintage glamour from an early age, starting with watching films of the 30s, 40s and 50s with her mother. She originally wanted to work on historical costumes for film or theatre.
- The book doesn't really go into the politics of burlesque – on one hand, kind of refreshing, because the conflicting feminist arguments have been discussed *ad nauseam* elsewhere. She knows she doesn't fit some feminist outlooks and makes a sort of pun that for her, feminism is about being as feminine as possible. Amusingly, she interprets *Lysistrata* as ultimately about tease and seduction. Questionable, but a nice change from the usual stuff heard online. (Is there any now any discussion or reasonably serious news site that is sex-positive in a non-naïve way, whilst not making sex its primary subject?) Von Teese has no problem with being called a stripper, but despite her own background, doesn't discuss the class issues that appear to lie

behind the 'burlesque good, stripping bad' attitude that's frequently heard now. It's not that sort of book. It's closer to consumer magazines and little pink paperbacks that give advice on how to be stylish and alluring.

It's also a very straight book. Ten years ago, that wouldn't have been noticed so easily. Dita mentions occasional gay men as friends designers or icons, but mostly she's interested in vintage hyper-femininity her sensual enjoyment of style, and heterosexual male responses to it. (Presumably she doesn't interact much with all the men who, contrary to what the media leads one to believe, don't care about fancy underwear and high-end sex gear - and make this stuff seem like it's only for an audience in the female consumer's own head.)

She never analyses herself beyond her inspirations and favourites; that fits the aesthete / pure style portrayal, but the book would be more interesting if she discussed why she thought she is the way she is, beyond early interest in films and magazines. (I also had a very early interest in corsets, via Tudor costumes; my primary school drawings always showed people with triangular torsos; so I think there can simply be an aesthetic attraction to a striking shape, and if you have a small waist anyway, perhaps more so as it sounds more possible. (Not always possible ...soon after leaving home, I realised I got fewer stomach aches if I didn't wear belts, so regular corset-wearing was never really on the agenda even if I did eventually buy a few). But my association of corsets was with a very different kind of power: Elizabeth I and similar figures (who correlated having with a mother who had a successful career ,and the 80s and Mrs Thatcher) v. Dita's 30s-50s showgirls and pinups. )

The first half of the Fetish section at times talks more sense, although it has its limitations. (The second half is more style tips.) Von Teese thinks that domination is inseparable from cruelty, for example - however in visual performance, that probably is difficult to untangle. I like her idea that Freud was projecting his own feelings on to everyone else; somehow I hadn't heard it put quite that way, and so *reasonably*, before. There isn't a great deal of serious argument about censorship, although von Teese gives the impression that she doesn't apply the snobbish distinction of erotica v. porn. Whilst she doesn't talk about her past forays into porn, she doesn't disown them. (The text is packaged as a nice girly chat and – like comments I want to make about certain pictures - it's evident that that would be too alienating in the context.)

Dita wasn't to know how outdated the following would sound only a few years later: "female submission is the last stereotype to be liberated". (Given the level of control von Teese has over her image and projects, she most certainly makes submission look voluntary not coerced.) A few years ago submissives women bloggers angrily insisted that they weren't regressive or anti-feminist, and they did seem subject to a taboo. And then there was E.L. James and all the online porn and soon representations of submissive women became ubiquitous and dominant.

Whilst Dita von Teese's look is similar to queer femme, the attitudes in the text are maybe rather *unexamined*, to fall into jargon, and if I were responsible for kids I wouldn't want them picking up this exact take on things. But I would support her freedom to be this way, contrary to radical feminists. And I'm particularly conscious of not wanting to perpetuate a bad set of ideas I grew up with, that sex and love are only for the stupid women (not those 'like us') – something I see replicated in Goodreads reviews sometimes, where a strongfemalecharacter [tm] is berated for falling in love.

I hadn't read most of the text in this book before, and I'm less interested now than I would have been eight years ago. The writing is glossy magazine material; a little more depth would have been interesting. I'm now more steadily aware of a confusion that's always been there somewhere; when I see these pictures, would I rather look like them, or like someone 5'10 in a suit; both impossible? And whilst I retain a few standard aesthete snobberies (no 'loungewear', onesies or novelty slippers, trainers only for exercise, no backpacks in town) on a personal level the Dita amount of effort now seems superfluous, and above all, tiring. Her writing

is firmly fixed in her own perspective, in which looking like Dita von Teese is a 24/7 job, and no concessions. I suspect that even the most stylish people I've ever met don't have such stringent standards as she does. I, as I am now, am not the audience for this book. A twentysomething who's starting burlesque dance classes, doesn't mind a superficial survey of the field, and who goes out a lot to venues where you can dress up in vintage / corsets probably *is*.

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### **Terri says**

The mistress of keeping it on, not taking it off, Dita Von Teese truly is living art. A goddess. A muse. A femme fatale. Beautiful and real and charismatic in all the right doses. No spray on tans, fake beauty and hard body here. Just the real thing. Like it used to be. Soft and feminine. Power without the muscles, sexy without the fake and erotica without the money shot.

This book is simply stunning. Not huge focus on text, although there is plenty to read on both arts, but it is huge on personality.

The fashion is exquisite and the book is loaded with sky high Christian Louboutins, the finest seamed stockings and the infamous Jean Paul Gaultier Corseted couture. For me, the Jean Paul Gaultier corset dresses were a stand out. Nobody does it like Gaultier and nobody does it like Von Teese! A match made in heaven.

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### **Lilah says**

The writing: The burlesque half presents a history of the bump and grind, interspersed with memories of Dita's formative lingerie-shop years along with fashion tips and beauty icons from the 20's through the 50's, overall pretty cute. Less good was the shorter fetish half, which came off bland and geared for the lowest common denominator, complete with a groanworthy definition of the word "feminist." But Dita's a shrewd businesswoman, and the readers are just more marks at the rail, no? Definitely better for the burlesque half which was written with a lot more love.

The images: lovely throughout in a generic kind of way - only about three or four pics really stood out to me - but I'd chalk that up to the sheer amount of this stuff proliferating through the subcultures - high fashion, too - these days. There was a list of all her acts at one point, but no stills, which quite sucked because I was dying to see the oversized heart, the giant golden swan dripping a shower from its beak, all those fabulous props she uses in her shows. But, I did enjoy her constant switching of aspects and faces and eras, her talent of personal (and apparently hard-won) transformation, going from Bettie Page bondage black to a couture gown, and then artfully greased before a rack of tires, and then kicking back in her boudoir, constantly shifting identities instead of staying a monochromatic sex kitten, very cool.

Overall: fun with the layout, grandiose costuming, not quite my cup of tea but I'm sure pinup diehards will love it.

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### **Ana says**

*I'm a good dancer and a nice girl, but I'm a great showgirl. I sell, in a word, magic.*

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### **Kayleigh Marie Marie says**

This book is full of glossy, beautiful photographs and is a lovely look into the life of Dita. It inspires you to incorporate a bit of glamour into your everyday life :) Worth every penny.

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### **Sally says**

Lots of pretty pictures in this but the written part is like a summer school prep for those ready to start burlesque or fetish 101. I liked it but it isn't an in depth look at either subject.

Visually it is stunning and I appreciated Dita's normalising of fetish and the information about Bettie Page, as I knew little about her before.

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### **tws\_read says**

If you don't know Dita you just don't know! Learn about Burly Q from the reigning 21st century queen! The photos are to die for and it's full of info ranging from the construction of a good seamed stocking to the broads that built the empire Page, West, and more! I wanted it for burlesque but the book is flipped upside down halfway through and dedicated to Fetish and the Art of the Teese which turned out to be kind of interesting as well for someone previously unfamiliar. The pictures in the second half are gorgeous but NSFW yet safer than HBO ?. It's interesting to learn about quirks without worrying you'll stumble into something you can't unsee/unthink ? get freaky safely I always say. I don't actually but I shall now!

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### **Victoria Price says**

A great introduction to the dual worlds of Burlesque (good girl) and Fetish (bad girl). There are some charming pictures of Von Teese plus a decent history of burlesque and the major characters who have formed part of Von Teese's identity.

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### **Ed says**

I heard of Dita Von Teese years ago, when she was famous for being Marilyn Manson's girlfriend and exposing her boobs a lot. There is a whole lot more to her than that. More recently, she has attracted me for her retro style and her meticulously perfect looks. Judging from this book, she's totally dedicated and passionate about her art. Burlesque isn't something to be looked down upon. It's an art form and the pictures themselves left me very impressed. Dita has a true devotion to her art. The text carries us through the history of burlesque, also giving tips on how to dress and apply your make-up to fit in with these eras, although the pictures are the real reason to buy the book. It could seem self-indulgent, but it's not. It could have turned out tacky, but nothing is farther from the truth. There are nude photos here, although we get naught so much as a

nipple. And the book is all the better for it. Dita proves that nudity is not required in the quest to be beautiful and attractive - although the prospect of nudity helps!

A wonderful book so far, very inspirational even for someone who has no intentions of becoming a stripper (don't worry; Dita has no qualms about being described as such). It has put a totally different perspective on this art form for me.

More to follow on the *Fetish* side!

**\*UPDATE\***

I finished the book over a month ago now. It really is beautiful, I dig it out when I'm looking for style tips. The *Fetish* segment of the book, like *Burlesque*, could have turned out tacky but instead it was just glamorous and sexy. Dita writes about sexuality and fetish with no embarrassment. The pictures are never degrading - the whole book serves as a reminder of the beauty of sexuality no matter how you look or what your fetish is. We certainly can't all look as gorgeous as Dita but that's not really the point.

It's not a book for the conservatives but at the end of the day it's art and I'd especially recommend it for anyone interested in retro style.

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### **Teishabug says**

I absolutely adore Dita Von Teese, and her commitment to all things burlesque and retro. This book was wonderful, and not just for the beautiful pictures and costume. There was a quite a lot of history mixed in with the how-to. I've always been fascinated with burlesque and that era of fashion. It was all about glamour 24/7. You didn't just dress up to go out, you dressed to the nines to pick up milk at the grocery store. It also explains the difference between stripping in early history, compared to today. It seems we have lost the 'tease' in striptease. What you kept on was more important than what you took off. After all, a lady never gives away everything. The other side of the book is about the fetish world, and all that it entails. There is a stigma about fetish, and that only perverts participate in this world. But everyone (yes, even you) has their fetishes. And it is not wrong to give in to these fantasies, as long as you are not hurting anyone (unless that is what your partner prefers \*wink\*) Either way, both sides of the book were extremely classy, and I feel like we are losing any sense of class in both stripping and fetish. Wow, that was a long review.

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### **Amelia says**

I'm really unsure as to how to rate this duo of books. I love Dita von Teese's style, but I don't mean that in the sense of lingerie. Rather I love seeing how she always looks, whether at events, in publications or simply in paparazzi pictures. I love her clothes. I love the vintage styles, the glamour and the curves. Many of the images in the book, however, really didn't appeal to me. I don't find such overt provocativeness appealing. I like subtly sexy.

Sex appeal aside, this book did have some beautiful images and an interesting history of burlesque/striptease in general. Dita's writing is intelligent and seems well informed, although it may set a few (but not all) feminist teeth on edge. Not necessarily from the lack of clothing, but from the heavy awareness of the male gaze.

The fetish section sets out, as you would expect, to essentially decriminalise fetish, to show that all kinds of things can be considered fetish, even those most people would consider fairly banal - e.g. Dita's seamed stockings. Again, some people may dislike this. When I was in my early twenties, I lived with a girl who was very into the fetish scene. At first, it was a bit disconcerting to hear the sound of whips from her room or come home and find a guy in a corset just hanging out in the living room, but I got used to it. Live and let live.

I think this could be a suitably provocative book to place on your coffee table and I don't regret the £10 I paid for it (in a Christian charity shop which tickled me). I doubt if I would read it again though.

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