

Being Gorgeous explores the ways in which extravagance, flamboyance and dressing up can open up possibilities for women to play around anarchically with familiar stereotypical tropes of femininity. Jacki Willson discusses how, whether through pastiche, parody or pure pleasure, artists, artistes and indeed the spectators themselves can operate in excess of the restrictive images which saturate our visual culture.

By referring to a wide spectrum of examples from our current 'low' and 'high' culture, including Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette*, Matthew Barney, Naked Girls Reading, Dr Sketchy's, Audacity Chutzpah, Burly Q and Carnesky's Ghost Train, *Being Gorgeous* demonstrates how contemporary female performers embody, critique and thoroughly relish their own representation by inappropriately re-appropriating femininity.

This is protest through play – a pleasurable misbehaviour that reflects a feminism for the twenty-first century, where women are playing up a clichéd spectacle in order to wrest back control over their sensual, sexual selves as subject and as image.

Jacki Willson is a Cultural Studies lecturer for Fashion, Textiles and Jewellery students at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. She is the author of *The Happy Stripper: Pleasures and Politics of the New Burlesque* (I.B.Tauris, 2008).

'Makes an important, timely and provocative intervention into debates about performance and objectification. [...] Jacki Willson has a way of making hugely original statements that make sense of what have felt like intractably complex and polarised debates.'

Debra Ferreday, author of *Online Beginnings*



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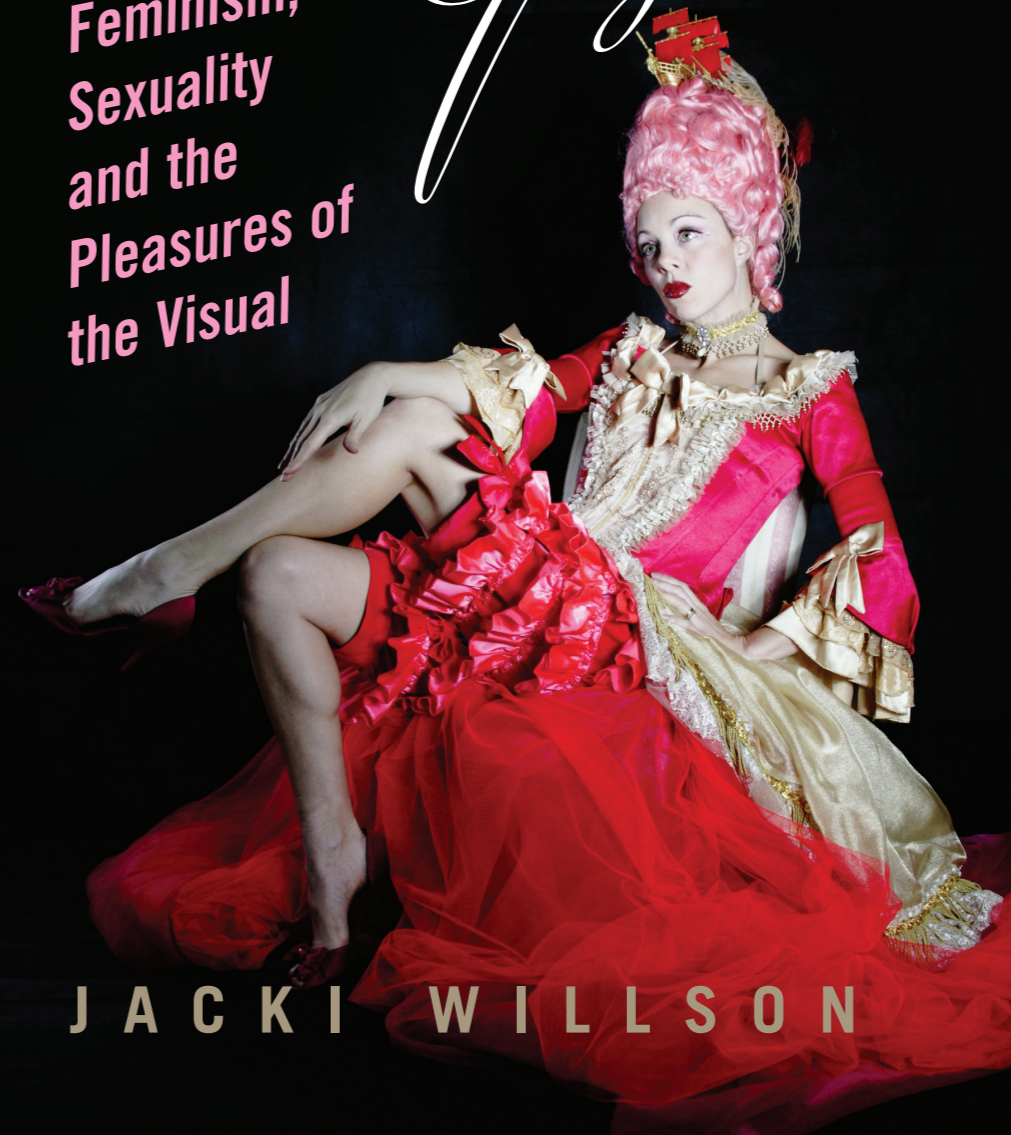
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