



The Drag Queen Anthology: The Absolutely Fabulous but Flawlessly Customary World of Female Impersonators (Journal of Homosexuality)

Lisa Underwood

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Examine the cultural and political implications of male-to-female gender performance!

The Drag Queen Anthology: The Absolutely Fabulous but Flawlessly Customary World of Female Impersonators examines the phenomena of male-to-female gender performance and the people who live it. This provocative collection of original essays explores the possibilities, limitations, ironies, and controversies surrounding men who perform as women to an audience that knows the truth but celebrates the illusion. The book's contributors call on extensive backgrounds in sociology, anthropology, theater, literature—even military studies—and use a variety of approaches to address common themes and genres of presentation, performance, and style in a wide range of historical settings and cultures.

The Drag Queen Anthology explores female impersonation in the past and present, addressing the often-contradictory cultural impulses found in the performance of femininity. The book examines the important issues of this unique form of gendering, including the cultural and sociopolitical implications of drag, the symbolic cultural ideals associated with women, the impact of the performer's social identities on his performance, and the reactions of the GLBT, straight, and feminist communities to drag. The book looks at traditional drag performance, challenges accepted perceptions about female impersonation, and exposes the notion of the effeminate drag queen as an outdated myth.

The Drag Queen Anthology examines the important issues of male-to-female gender performance, including:

- how drag queen performance is used to attain situational status and power
- how drag queens challenge contemporary notions of gender
- what embodiment occurs when men undertake performances of femininity
- how drag queen performance is viewed as a theatrical presentation of self
- what representations of drag queens in film suggest about current gender relations
- why communities organize around drag queen performers
- how drag queen performance differs on-stage and off
- how male-to-female gendered performance intersects with performances of sexual identity, social class, race, age, and ethnicity

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