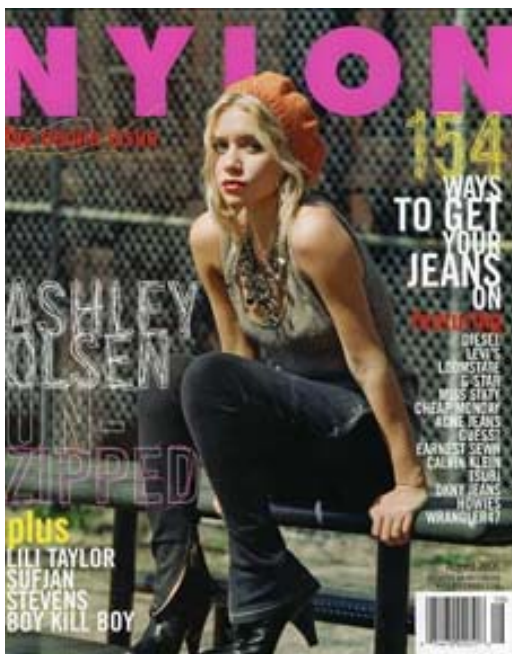




bookmark:

## PIN-UP GRRRLS

Maria Elena Buszek is trying to accomplish something that has eluded feminists for decades—unity between the various movements. Her unlikely tool? The pin-up girl. In *Pin-Up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, and Popular Culture* (Duke University Press), Buszek debunks the myth of the pin-up girl as simply an object of male fantasy. She draws from her background in art history to show how women from the mid-19th century Burlesque performers through to contemporary third wave artists have all used the medium as a positive symbol of women's femininity, sexuality, and power. Most intriguing is her insistence on the pin-up's pivotal role in challenging tired notions of women's sexuality. Buszek details this through several stages—the mid-19th century carte-de-viste photographs of burlesque performers, the emergence of the New Woman during the suffrage age, fanzine photographs of early actresses, the World War II era Vargas girl illustrations in *Esquire*, the *Playboy* pin-up, and the work of contemporary artists such as Cindy Sherman and Annie Sprinkle. By revealing that feminists from all eras have celebrated their sexuality through the pin-up, Buszek leaves readers with renewed respect for female sex icons such as Bettie Page, Sandra Bernhardt, and Lydia Thompson. *Pin-Up Grrrls* also helps put today's newfound pop culture obsession with pin-up culture, from trendy burlesque shows to movies such as *The Confessions of Bettie Page* in context. JESSALYNN KELLER



*Nylon* (August 2006): 105