



Female Masculinity

By Judith Halberstam

Zubaan, New Delhi, 2012. Hardcover. Condition: New. 344 pp. Masculinity without men. In *Female Masculinity* Judith Halberstam takes aim at the protected status of male masculinity and shows that female masculinity has offered a distinct alternative to it for well over two hundred years. In this first full-length study on the subject, Halberstam catalogues the diversity of gender expressions among masculine women from nineteenth-century pre-lesbian practices to contemporary drag king performances. Through detailed textual readings as well as empirical research, Halberstam uncovers a hidden history of female masculinities while arguing for a more nuanced understanding of gender categories that would incorporate rather than pathologize them. She rereads Anne Lister's diaries and Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* as foundational assertions of female masculine identity. She considers the enigma of the stone butch and the politics surrounding butch/femme roles within lesbian communities. She also explores issues of transsexuality among transgender dykes, lesbians who pass as men, and female-to-male transsexuals who may find the label of lesbian a temporary refuge. Halberstam also tackles such topics as women and boxing, butches in Hollywood and independent cinema, and the phenomenon of male impersonators. *Female Masculinity* signals a new understanding of masculine behaviours and...

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