

Man Appeal



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This book provides a much-needed evaluation of the history of men's fashion advertising in the first half of the twentieth century. Arguably, modernism provided the most visually arresting and playful poster and press advertising campaigns ever launched. Undoubtedly one of the most fecund and complex periods in the history of menswear promotion, the period saw vast sums of money spent on advertising men's clothing by the likes of Austin Reed, the Fifty Shilling Tailors, Simpson and Barratt shoes.

Replete with confident head-turners, many posters of the period featured dandies knowingly offering up their bodies for the delectation of women - an irony made doubly rich by the fact that these images were consumed almost exclusively by men. As Jobling expertly shows, the erotic charge in evidence in the representation of the buff gymnos in Calvin Klein's 80's campaigns had much earlier antecedents. There was, surprisingly, a pronounced fetishistic aspect coupled with sexual ambiguity in publicity for underwear in the interwar period. Looking well beyond issues of representation to broader socio-economic contexts in this deeply researched and original study, Jobling addresses an exciting range of discourses relating to professionalization, modernity, mass-communication and marketing, display and consumer psychology.

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