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Why Drag?



Synopsis

For over a decade, Magnus Hastings has been photographing the world's greatest drag superstars and asking each of them a simple question: Why drag? The result is this mesmerizing volume in which the queens strut their stuff and reflect on their shared passion through a mixture of quips and philosophizing. Subjects include icons of reality TV and underground drag royalty, and photographs range from the divine to the trashy. Featuring the likes of Bianca Del Rio and Courtney Act, this collection is a beautiful celebration of drag as an art form and an exhilarating exploration of what drag means to its greatest artists.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Photographer Magnus Hastings' new book *Why Drag?* asks this most basic question of drag queens in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe. And the answers range from clichéd to surprising in this gorgeous and lush coffee-table tome on this bombastic cultural phenomenon as it reaches new heights in a time of cultural change about gender identity and expression. While there have been many photography books of drag queens, no one has given it the polish and sparkle that Hastings has with his 135 portraits, including familiar faces like Trixie Mattel, Paige Turner, Bianca Del Rio, Jinkx Monsoon and Major Scales, Jackie Beat, Milk, Lady Bunny, Tammie Brown, Raja, Peaches Christ, Detox, Willam, and cover model Courtney Act. Hastings' photography is a visual feast, but when accompanied by an interesting survey of drag queens, the book takes on a new level of cultural importance. Whether it's Mutha

Chucka from San Francisco who answers "why drag" with "To change the world, one look at a time," the Boulet Brothers from Los Angeles with "It's a natural evolution towards assuming your true form," or London's Dusty O with "To escape tedious normality..." the text in *Why Drag?* provides insight into the motivations of those who dedicate their lives to this imaginative art form. Sometimes it's just as basic as Willam's answer: "I really like shiny stuff." With two compelling introductions, one by Hastings and the other by Boy George, *Why Drag?* also asks another question, albeit covertly. In this time of rapid progress for LGBT people in many parts of the world, what will happen to LGBT culture? Is assimilation inevitable? While drag itself may change, it's so rooted in rebellion and risk-taking that while it may influence culture-at-large it will also be an outsider art. It, at least for the moment, seems to be a sharp reminder of the culture that LGBT people created on their own to reject strict social mores and roles that seek to oppress. The sheer diversity of that expression included in *Why Drag?* is evidence that there are no limits to human imagination and that this example of LGBT culture is robust, dynamic, and ready for more. - *Provincetown Herald* "In drag culture - where pushing boundaries is the exception rather than the rule - there will always be a need to stand up for grit. Inside the pages of Magnus Hastings' vibrant new coffee-table book, pageant queens strut in full regalia while waiting for a bus, Bianca Del Rio digs into a Barbie doll with pins and needles, and Adore Delano gives great face in front of a McDonald's while rocking a Budweiser one-piece. Hastings' spent two years travelling the country to shoot the queens and learn why they do drag. The book offers their answers in the form of short stories that are marked by their humor and, oftentimes, sincerity. And then, of course, there are the gorgeous photos." - *EDGE* "The book features Hastings' gorgeous photos of the drag industry's top talent, accompanied by short stories- marked by humor and, oftentimes, sincerity- on why they do drag." - *Hotspots Magazine* "KICK OFF YOUR HEELS AND READ A BOOK Showgirl. Monster. Housefrau. Sexpot. Drag in these and many other personas is the subject of 'Why Drag?,' a new coffee-table book of portraits by the photographer Magnus Hastings. The luxe portfolio, with a foreword by the gender provocateur Boy George, features over 200 drag queens from around the world. There are celebrity queens, like New York's veteran night life hostess Lady Bunny, looking coy in rabbit ears and black opera gloves, but also under-the-radar gals like Nina West of Columbus, Ohio, dressed as a nutty Valkyrie. 'To me drag is an art form with no rules,' Mr. Hastings writes in his introduction, 'and my shots are a celebration of that.'" - *The New York Times*

Magnus Hastings is a photographer whose work has been featured in various books and magazines

and shown in several solo exhibitions. He lives in Los Angeles and London. Boy George is a singer, songwriter, producer, author, and fashion designer. He lives in London.

This book is a comprehensive beautiful work of art with beautiful styling, amazing photography and secretary, and talent that literally bursts from page to page. An amazing cross section of the most talented artists in the industry. This isn't just a coffee table book, it's an OMG I just spilt the tea on the book due to its amazing selection of drag performers known nationally or locally and those that you want to know more about and with this book I hope to learn and see more from all of this talent!

Such a great purchase for content and conversation. Having this book out on a coffee table or shelf with definitely start a conversation about drag with your visitors The photography is stunning to say it plainly. Also, I learned some new names of Queens and performers that I was not familiar with but the book also does a good job showing household names that RPDR followers would be familiar with.

This book is a work of art in my opinion!

Mind Blowing Drag Queen book . Love the queens and the beauty that this book represents. Each page leaves me breathless the makeup , the clothes and the personality. Love it !!!!

Was much bigger than expected. Pictures are fantastic and came out really well!

beautiful all the way thru.

Magnus Hastings has created A wonderful photographic anthropological study of the elusive creature known as the DRAG QUEEN in all her glory..... I've never seen a book so filled with artful images.

This book is mesmerizing

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