

OUR ANNUAL PROOF: THERE ARE SOME MEN THAT LESBIANS LOVE

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Lesbian Culture, Politics, and Entertainment

August 2001

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The Male Gaze

These movies we love were made by men.

by **Candace Moore**

Of the movies made by men we love, *Dr. T and the Women*

has Robert Altman's charismatically off-kilter, rushed, and meditative jangle. Nerve-wracking, ever-ringing phones and nonstop chatter clutter up a gynecologist's midlife crisis. Surrounded by adoring, addled women of every estrogen level, Dr. T (Richard Gere) delivers sigh-like smiles as he loses his wife to a newfangled brand of madness and his engaged daughter to a collegiate lesbian. The lip-locked Texan passion of the cheerleader bride-to-be (Kate



Kate Hudson dreams of Liv Tyler in *Dr. T and the Women*.

Dr. T & the Women

Robert Altman
Artisan, 2000

Hudson) and pouty maid-of-honor (Liv Tyler) is made even more must-see by the actresses' current It-girl glow. Grade: **B**

Adam's Rib (MGM/Turner, 1949)

Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy team up as the Bonners, a husband-and-wife pair of trial lawyers who end up representing adversaries in court.

Hepburn's in true, willful form as a free-thinking attorney defending the trigger-happy wife (Judy Holliday) of a weasly cheat (Tom Ewell). Tracy stammers essentialisms while the firebrand feminist wittily argues for a woman's right to shoot, if not kill. George Cukor directed the very funny script by Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin, which takes women's battle for equal rights quite seriously. Grade: **B+**

Les Voleurs (Columbia, 1996)

The twistiness and mystery of this existential caper flick lie not in bullet-holed bodies or car heists, but in Juliette, a young grey-eyed tomboy thief (Laurence Côte). As a cop (riveting Daniel Auteuil) and a philosophy professor (ravishing Catherine Deneuve) try to solve Juliette's enigma, director André Téchiné paints every character as a peculiar Gordian knot, impossible to untangle. Warm-blooded Deneuve, as the film's emotive suture, elucidates her infatuation with Juliette when the lovers bathe together: "You weren't in my scheme of things." Grade: **A-**

Die Bitteren Tränen der Petra von Kant (New Yorker Films, 1972)

Rainer Werner Fassbinder has the haute trash sensibilities of a brainy German Andy Warhol with actual script-writing know-how. The slow-paced sufferings of the variously wiggled Petra von Kant (Margit Carstensen), who plays Sugar Mama to lazy bi-model Karin (Hanna Schygulla), leave us waiting for Godot. The designer's every pleading "Ich liebe dich" is a deep juicy stab in the heart, as Karin coldly relishes a one-night-trick's prick. The increasingly pathetic Petra curtly commands devout servant Marlene (Irm Hermann), who pallidly challenges her know-it-all mistress's treatises on discipline without uttering a word. Grade: **A**

Candace Moore, co-editor of the small press *Runcible Spoon*, lives in L.A.

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The Call of Duty

A true story of heroism lies behind this month's cover story, our third to feature Melissa Etheridge. The day after meeting the rock 'n' roll trailblazer at Etheridge's favorite café, interviewer Carson Hunter fell ill and had to be hospitalized. Conscientiously trying to meet her deadline, our West Hollywood stringer took the tape recorder with her to the emergency room. I'll let her tell what happened next in her own words:

"The tape recorder suddenly went off while they were wheeling me to a procedure. I'm strapped to a gurney, half out of it and still losing more blood than is healthy. My terrific nurse is trying to keep me calm and conscious. He says, 'Do you hear talking? Do you have a TV tucked away somewhere?' From the fog I'm in, I tell him he's listening to an exclusive Melissa Etheridge interview. He says, 'I hear her laughing! You must be really good.' Then the assistant gurney-wheeler guy asks me how he can get his sister a job as a journalist!"

Hunter survived her health crisis and filed her story. And I'm happy to announce this is possibly the best Q&A we've run since *Girlfriends* launched seven years ago—partly due to Hunter's skill and partly due to Etheridge's honesty about the painful upsets in her life.

In light of our annual "Men We Love" feature—which we first ran five years ago to spoof *Esquire's* "Women We Love" and refute the man-hating lesbian stereotype—I'd like to touch on the Patrick Califia-Rice controversy. Many of you have followed the debate on our Letters page over *Girlfriends'* allowing a man—in Patrick's case, an FTM—to dispense advice in a lesbian magazine. Many of you resent his intrusion into the women's space that *Girlfriends* represents. Others—especially fans of Pat Califia's 1980 *Sapphistry*, the world's first lesbian sex manual—have applauded our keeping a longtime contributor whose work they feel has not been diluted by a sex change.

Although I agree that publishing articles by men serves neither our readership nor the lesbian writers to whom *Girlfriends* offers a unique platform, our mission is to reflect lesbian life in all its diversity. Rather than ghetto-ize transgender voices in a special column or issue, I prefer to integrate them into the body of the magazine.

Enjoy this month's "Men We Love" coverage and drop us a line.



Heather Findlay, Editor in Chief



Me and a man you all should love: our art director Ethan Duran

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