

ANNIE SPRINKLE • LILLIAN FADERMAN • TEE CORINNE

Lesbian Culture, Politics, and Entertainment

February 2003

# Girlfriends

girl on top

## TRISTAN TAORMINO

Lesbian America's Hottest Sexpert Rides High

### WHAT DO YOU DO IN BED?

Take Our  
Bi-Annual Survey

### HI-TECH LESBIAN DATING

Online Ads, Speed Dates—  
What's Next?

### DYKES ON DISPLAY

NYC's New  
Sex Museum

our third annual

# SEX

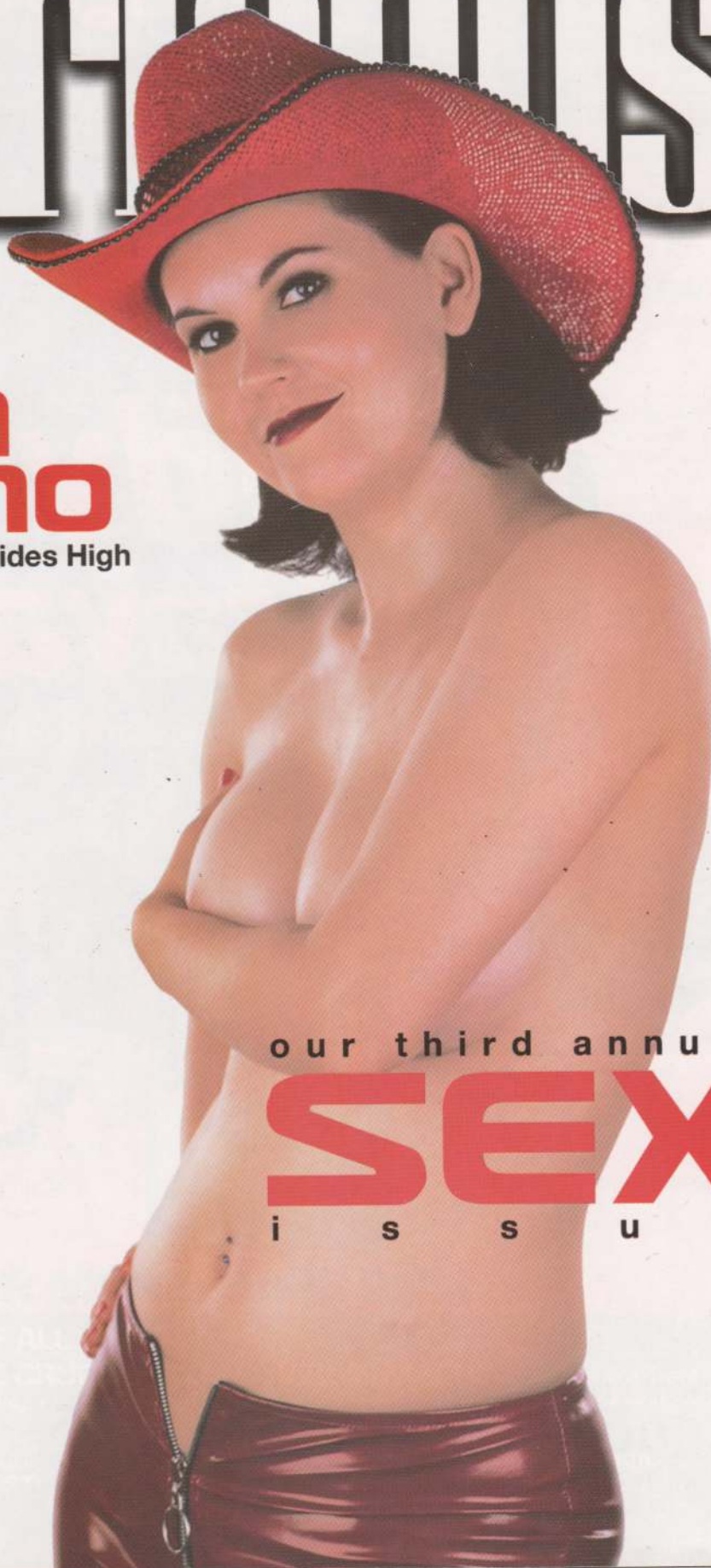
i s s u e

\$4.95 US \$7.95 Canada



Display until February 28

[www.girlfriendsmag.com](http://www.girlfriendsmag.com)





# Fetish Objects

Rose Troche shows the ugly side of "normal" life in *The Safety of Objects*.

by Candace Moore

## During *The Safety of Objects*'

opening credits, a procession of whitewashed clay figurines roll out from their whitewashed clay houses with the cuckoo-clock-like machinations of Geppetto's toys. And much the way Pinocchio longs to become "real," the middle-class neighbors can only maintain (or regain) their wits, humanity, and will by resisting the suburbs' insipid pull to become mall rats or zombies.

Rose Troche (who made her first splash with the lesbian indie *Go Fish* in 1994) takes a break from her steady directorial gig on HBO's *Six Feet Under* to hum another idiosyncratic, oddly uplifting, funeral dirge. Troche adapts A.M.

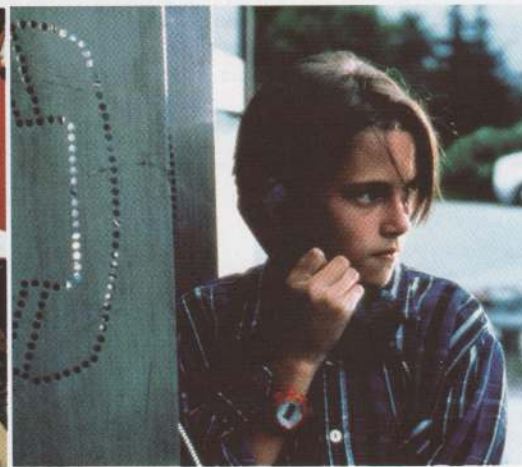
Holmes's book of short stories, *The Safety of Objects*, into one cohesive film by insinuating the characters into each other's plots. Consolidating, Troche is careful not to lose Holmes's wry, intellectual oomph. Also the author behind *Music for Torching* (in which a pyro Mom gets finger-fucked by a housewife on the kitchen linoleum), Holmes's stories drive home her conviction that our sense of purpose is co-opted by mores and industry, and that our drive to please others becomes, to a large degree, purposeless.

Career mom Esther (Glenn Close) is a red-eyed example of one of Holmes's fallen. She walks around beaten down by loss as if she's in a coma, just like her young-adult son Paul (Joshua Jackson). Rendered a vegetable by a car crash, he lies unconscious, tubes going in and out of his body, in his room full of band posters. Blaming herself for Paul's

tragedy, Esther is guilted into entering a radio station's call-in contest, a marathon of "car-touching" that has her camped out at a mall and suffering seventy-plus hours of sleep deprivation in order to win an S.U.V. for her grapefruit-dieting teen daughter (Jessica Campbell). The list of estranged suburbanites goes on: a workaholic lawyer (Dermot Mulroney) plays hooky when he's

caught the young actress as Jodie Foster's tomboy daughter in *Panic Room*, you might go a good third through this film thinking that the kid in the extra-large motorbike T is a slouchy skater boy. Troche's camera takes outright pleasure in Stewart's androgyny, and when Troche finally reveals Sam's gender, it's through a quiet costume change—a floral print Sam wears to garner her dad's approval. As a lesbian director sculpting primarily straight material, Troche also hints that the close-knit bond between Sam and her best friend Sally has the trappings of budding love.

While the children in *The Safety of Objects* are quirky, strong individuals, the so-called "normal" adults are caught in a stew of angst, ennui, and identity crises. Watching them churn



Close and Stewart interlock in Rose Troche's *Safety*.

passed up for partner, pretending he was sent home during a bomb scare; a pubescent boy gets hard-ons while conversing with a Barbie-sized plastic doll named Tani; and loner lawn boy Randy (Timothy Olyphant) kidnaps to salve his grief, drugging his pre-teen captive, Sam (Kristin Stewart), with Robitussin, and taunting her with frozen onion rings. Randy calls Sam "Johnny," and coerces her to role-play his dead brother because she "looks so much like him."

Kristin Stewart passes for male so imperceptibly that if you haven't

through their pain is like watching someone cut deep into their arm, rub in salt, and then apply Neosporin and a clean, antibacterial Band-Aid. Their wounds are, to a large degree, self-inflicted, and thus their redemption must be self-realized. No serenity is offered from outside forces. But as Troche's lens makes its final pan away from the group of families at a block party, the clay has turned to flesh.

Grade: **A-**

Candace Moore is an editor at the UCLA Center for African American Studies.

### The Safety of Objects

dir. Rose Troche  
IFC Films, 120 min.



# Lolitas in Love

These videos explore schoolgirl desire with entertaining results.

by Candace Moore

## A doomed affair between

two boarding school roommates at Perkins Girls College is the hotplate that gets Québécois director Léa Pool's seventh feature film boiling. Pool's drama is a full-blooded rendering of the intense passion and maddening



Sexual tension dominates *Lost's* girls' lives.

### Lost and Delirious

dir. Léa Pool

Wolfe Video, 103 min.

pain of adolescent against-the-rules love, centering on a charismatic rebel, Paulie (Oscar-worthy Piper Perabo), who loses her lover, Victoria (Jessica Paré) when the two are discovered embracing naked by some younger students. As Victoria's desperate attempts to prove her straightness barb both their hearts, Paulie becomes as miserable, revengeful, and increasingly crazy as Hamlet. Grade: **A**

### Foxes (United Artists Corporation, 1980)

Jeanie (teen-sized Jodie Foster) thinks she's as wise as she's ever going to get. As the self-assumed mother "fox" of her San Fernando Valley gal-pack, sixteen-year-old Jeanie cruises L.A. in her mom's truck, trying to keep her bottle-blond best friend Annie from getting committed (asylum style), sold on Hollywood Boulevard, or going into a pill coma. Adrian Lyne's glorification of the fast times of late-seventies high school girls gets strainingly preachy, a hypocritical plot cocktail that mimics the aftereffects of a cheap speed ball. Still, there are highs, and a suspicion that Jeanie's more smitten with her punk girlfriend than with bowl-cutted Scott Baio. Grade: **B-**

### But I'm a Cheerleader (Lions Gate Films, 1999)

This is director Jamie Babbit's very funny spoof on the notion of homo "rehab." Popular cheerleader Megan (Natasha Lyonne) gets her pom-poms packed off to pink-and-blue-drenched boot camp True Directions to be heterosexually reprogrammed when her Hallmark-card Christian family suspects that her love of Melissa Etheridge and tofu means she's a L-E-S-B-I-A-N. But Betty Crocker slideshows, aversion shock therapy guns, ex-gay interventions, and lessons in vacuuming can't keep Megan from falling hard for sarcastic, Ally-Sheedy-esque fellow camp member Graham (yummy Clea Duvall). Girl band post-pop frames this cute confection. Beware of uncontrollable grinning. Grade: **A**

### Picnic at Hanging Rock (Vestron Video, 1975)

Victoria, Australia. The day is St. Valentine's, the year, 1900. A few of the snoopy pupils of Appleyard College read a poetic love letter from a crushed-out orphan, Sara, to the finishing school's walking "Botticelli angel," Miranda. That afternoon, during a class picnic in the bush, Miranda, two schoolmates, and a teacher all vanish near the top of a lava formation while entranced, leaving behind scraps of lacy underwear. Director Peter Weir drops intriguing crumbs that a sexual or otherworldly ritual of some kind has taken place, but they never lead to a gingerbread house. Grade: **B+**



**buyolympia.com**  
art, music and more



## Lesbian Bed Life

After a long-term couple I know broke up last year, one of



the women confessed to me that she and her partner hadn't had sex for six months. She related the sexlessness to me as if it were a symptom of their impending demise, but I couldn't help think, What if it was a root cause? If they'd kept having sex, I wondered, would the career troubles, adulterous interests, and pressures of homeownership—all their "official" reasons for the break-up—have worked themselves out?

Because lesbians are women, we all-too-easily relegate sex to the margins (or to the honeymoon period, or the back seat, or the "special occasions") of our relationships. I'm not qualified to say whether that's because of biology or patriarchy; it's probably a little of both. In any case, I think we need to move sex into the mainstream of our thinking. It's okay, for example, to put sex at the heart and soul of our love affairs, to make it a defining measure of their health, and to raise a red flag and wave it vigorously when sex wanes. As Maureen

We publish our sex issue to celebrate, not titillate.

Brownsey put it in her pithy chapter "The Dreaded Lesbian Bed Death" in *Is It a Date or Just Coffee?*: "Sex=Lovers, No Sex=Friends. Repeat anytime you get confused." (Stay tuned; Mo will be authoring next month's humor page in *Girlfriends*.)

We need to come out about our sexuality—not just because it's gay, but because it's real, beautiful, powerful, and healthy. When my wife Alice heard about our friends' celibacy, for example, she said, "Good lord, after six months, I'd be hearing voices!" (See why I love her so?) It's not "male" or shallow for lesbians to feel strongly about sex. It's revolutionary. It's the relationship equivalent of throwing rocks at Stonewall.

So *Girlfriends* doesn't do its annual Sex Issue because we're trying to sell magazines or play to the lowest common denominator. We do it because we believe our sex lives are misunderstood (hence our bi-annual sex survey on page 43, which our editorial assistant Lynsey Hemstreet reshaped to make more informative and fun). We publish it because lesbian sex is changing (check out Naomi Graychase's update from the front lines of the lesbian dating scene, page 30). Most importantly, we do it because lesbians are doing it—just ask Tristan Taormino, whose finger is on the pulse, quite often literally, of lesbian sex. Rock, roll, and buzz on, sister.

Heather Findlay, Editor in Chief

Sign up for our online newsletter at [www.girlfriendsmag.com](http://www.girlfriendsmag.com)

# Girlfriends

Heather Findlay  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Jen Phillips  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Lynsey Hemstreet  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Yetta Howard, Kylie Johnston,  
Erin O'Brian  
COPY EDITORS

Beth Brown, Patrick Califia,  
Jill Dearman, Judith Halberstam,  
Candace Moore, Ann Rostow,  
Lori Selke  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Diana Cage, Sara Felder,  
Naomi Graychase, Beth Greenfield,  
Beth Healy, Carson Hunter,  
K Kaufmann, Gillian Kendall,  
Sabrina Matthews, Carolyn Ogburn,  
Joy Parks, Linda Schlossberg,  
Tamara Thompson  
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

J. Ethan Duran  
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Rani Goel  
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Julian Cash, Phyllis Christopher,  
Leta Evaskus, Horace Long,  
Rebecca McBride, Siddiqi Ray,  
Michele Serchuk, Seth Taras  
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Colleen Coover, Kirsten D. Hammer,  
Robyn Head, Jennifer Kalis,  
Barbara Pollak  
CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Erin Findlay  
PUBLISHER

Catherine Draper  
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Laura Baca  
ACCOUNT MANAGER

Adriana Gordon  
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR

April Hawkins  
CIRCULATION ASSISTANT

Girlfriends Magazine  
Volume 9, Issue 8

H.A.F. ENTERPRISES  
publisher of Girlfriends,  
On Our Backs, and  
Inside Pride guides  
3415 César Chavez, Ste. 101  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
415-648-9464 (phone)  
415-648-4705 (fax)  
staff@girlfriendsmag.com

Reproduction in whole or in part  
without permission is prohibited.  
Publication of the name or  
photograph of any persons or  
organizations appearing,  
advertising, or listing in  
Girlfriends may not be taken  
as an indication of the sexual  
orientation of that individual or  
group unless specifically stated.

Send letters to the editor to the  
above address, or e-mail to  
editorial@girlfriendsmag.com.  
Obtain writer's guidelines from  
www.girlfriendsmag.com.

Girlfriends (ISSN 1078-8876)  
is published monthly by  
H.A.F. Enterprises,  
3415 César Chavez, Ste. 101,  
San Francisco, CA 94110.  
One-year subscriptions are \$29.95.  
(Canadian subscribers add \$10;  
other foreign subscribers add \$15.)  
Periodicals Postage Paid at  
San Francisco and at additional  
mailing offices. POSTMASTER:  
Send address changes to:  
Girlfriends, P.O. Box 500  
Missouri City, TX 77459-9904.

SUBSCRIPTION  
QUESTIONS?  
Call 800-GRL-FRND

[www.girlfriendsmag.com](http://www.girlfriendsmag.com)

For advertising rates  
call 415-648-9464  
sales@girlfriendsmag.com