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The Selves

Sonja Ahlers

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Sonja Ahlers : The Selves before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Selves:

A HAUNTING, BEAUTIFUL STUDY OF ART, POP, FEMININITY, AND FEMINISM Before blogs, there were zines. Before zines, there were scrapbooks. Sometimes overlooked in the quest to produce high culture, these most direct and intimate means of communication and recording memory are the tools favored by Sonja Ahlers in the making of her art. A self-taught artist and writer, Ahlers wears her pop-culture obsessions on her sleeve, professing her

love for such visual icons as Princess Di, Holly Hobbie, and Stevie Nicks. Focusing on found objects such as stickers, greeting cards, and magazine photos collected in collage framework, complete with song lyrics hand-lettered in cursive script and heartbreaking, melancholic watercolors, Ahlers explores and exposes the social construction of roles, feminine and otherwise. Beginning with incipient childhood self-awareness and traversing high school status jockeying to adult social climbing, the cultural imagery that supports and informs personal identity is given uneasy new meanings and importance in Ahlers's visual remixes.

Sonja Ahlers' meditations on childhood, pop culture and feminine power are beyond entertaining. Entering the alternate reality she has created in *The Selves*, I found myself standing somewhere seductive, familiar and very funny. Kathleen Hanna (Musician, Bikini Kill and Le Tigre) Sonja Ahlers's work is violently frangible, disheveled sophistication; cruelly sentimental and sweetly cold. This violent femme is everything, everything, everything. LYNN CROSBIE, author of *Pearl and Liar* on Sonja Ahlers Ahlers's interests revolve around the connections between art, craft, and architecture, as mediated by the personal histories of selected women artists. The Georgia Straight on Sonja Ahlers About the Author SONJA AHLERS is a former Duranie who was born the same year as Joni Mitchell's Blue. She is the author of *Temper, Temper* and *Fatal Distraction* and lives in Toronto. She regularly exhibits visual art and installation work.