Neo-Burlesque
Praise for *Neo-Burlesque*

“A thorough exploration of the genre, Lynn Sally’s insightful *Neo-Burlesque: Striptease as Transformation* has earned its place on the shelf of every neo-burlesque academic.”

—Dita Von Teese

“A smart, feminist tour de force that strips away the stigmas, social, and legal bullshit surrounding burlesque and gets down to the nitty-gritty of this sacred art form and the potentially deeply inspiring experience it holds for performers and audience alike. A must-read for anybody interested in dance, art, and sexy fun.”

—Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stephens, artists and authors of *Assuming the Ecossexual Position*

“With the deft eye of a performer-turned-ethnographer, Lynn Sally provides an insider’s account of the history and stakes of burlesque performance. Indeed, *Neo-Burlesque* demonstrates that underneath the performer’s coy wink, tuck, and flash lie a matrix of political entanglements that inform how gender, power, and sexuality shape our society’s engagement with popular entertainment.”

—E. Patrick Johnson, author of *Honeypot: Black Southern Women Who Love Women*

“Lynn Sally taps her secret history as a burlesque dancer as well as multiple histories of the performing female body in this dazzling study of contemporary burlesque’s cultural meanings. Smart, funny, and moving, Sally’s stories and insights will make you rethink this art form and the women who participate in it.”

—Linda Mizejewski, author of *Ziegfeld Girl: Image and Icon in Culture and Cinema*
“Artist-scholar Lynn Sally shines a spotlight on some of the most iconic neo-burlesque performers of the past two decades. A rich addition to the field of striptease studies, *Neo-Burlesque* deftly reveals how ‘unruly’ and ‘awarish’ women creatively and critically interrogate their own construction through the wit of a knowing wink.”

—Dr. Sherril Dodds, professor of dance at Temple University and editor of *The Bloomsbury Companion to Dance Studies*

“*Neo-Burlesque* is an impassioned manifesto for the transformative power of burlesque performance. Sally engages her insider perspective to document and theorize how neo-burlesque performers are remaking gender, sexuality, beauty, and feminist politics through the art of the striptease.”

—Jillian Hernandez, author of *Aesthetics of Excess: The Art and Politics of Black and Latina Embodiment*

“Theoretically sophisticated, rigorously researched, and written with confidence and ease, *Neo-Burlesque: Striptease as Transformation* takes aim at blind spots in academic approaches to sexuality, the female body, and the boundaries between high and low cultures. Sally uses case studies enriched by her own experience as a stripper to argue for the radical potential of neo-burlesque. At the same time, she brings a critical eye to its failures to disentangle race from the cultural ideals of femininity and female beauty that neo-burlesque put—literally—on stage. Sally makes a bold and important contribution to the growing body of scholarship on unruly, ‘nasty’ women who, with fearlessness and wit, insist on not only being heard but also seen. An engrossing and eye-opening read!”

—Kathleen Rowe Karlyn, founding director of the cinema studies program and professor emerita at the University of Oregon, and author of *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*

“Through interviews with performers and descriptive analyses of their acts, Sally characterizes burlesque as a complex practice with interesting histor-
cal underpinnings and unexpected contemporary manifestations. It is truly special to read an academic book where the author ensures that its primary subjects—burlesque performers—get to define, in their own words, what they are doing and why. An engaging read that builds toward a more holistic understanding of burlesque.”

—Meredith Heller, author of *Queering Drag: Redefining the Discourse of Gender-Bending*

“Lynn Sally has written the account of record of the germination of the neo-burlesque movement. Her perspective has been formed through her insider position as a performer, producer and emcee, giving her the authority to name the key contributions that the neo-burlesque movement has made to feminism, politics, sexuality, and gender. This inclusive account of burlesque history will be enjoyed by burlesque audiences and scholars of performance and feminism. It is a book you will want to read cover to cover.”

—Dr. Alison J. Carr, artist and author of *Viewing Pleasure and Being a Showgirl: How Do I Look?*

“Dr. Lynn Sally shares an essential insider’s view of an individualistic performing art and how it combines nostalgia and irony to comment on current events. Entertaining and academically diligent, this book connects all the dots between feminism and fun.”

—Jo Weldon, founder of The New York School of Burlesque and author of *Fierce: The History of Leopard Print*
Neo-Burlesque

Striptease as Transformation

LYNN SALLY

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Dedicated to Dixie, Marinka, and the legends of burlesque who paved the way for the neo movement.