Florence and Erne Frueh, my parents, have educated my aesthetic/erotic intelligence throughout my life. In Mom’s glamorous force field I learned the meanings of red lipstick. Dad, without his knowing it, taught me to be a gardener.

Russell Dudley’s gifts and skills as an artist and a critic make him a master at knowing how to create and to keep creating himself erotically and aesthetically. Russell is my husband, and his corporeal wit and adventurousness, his devastatingly morbid sense of humor, his precise and pungent assessments of sights or events on the street, in the mountains and desert, on television, and in books, art magazines, and our backyard infuse the everyday with monster/beauty, a term that totally becomes him. As the collaborator on the photographs in this book, he educated me in fearlessness and fragility.

Peggy Doogan once said, after returning home from a visit with Russell and me, that it was “a heart massage.” During the decade and a half that we have been friends, she is a heart massage for me. Chapter 13 in this book would probably not have been written had she not invited me to participate in “Censorship: For Shame,” a 1998 College Art Association session chaired by her for which I wrote the essay.
Sarah Lewis continues to provide the comforts of home whenever I’m in New York.

Claire Prussian, Edith Altman, and Andrea Inselmann assure me, in their longtime friendship, that loving relationships between women of different ages build and sustain monster/beauty. Claire and Edith are more than ten years older than I am, and Andrea is more than ten years younger.

Carolee Schneemann’s aphroditean wisdom astonishes and inspires me.

Johanna Burton deepens my wonder in the erotics of pedagogy. Conversation with her is fast and full of delight.

Robyn Warhol read the manuscript of Monster/Beauty with a loving thoughtfulness whose detail helped me to understand the book in ways that I hadn’t seen and to avoid discordant statements.

Joan Hawkins’s insights after reading the manuscript eased my fears: I felt graceful standing on academic limbs.

Leslie Heywood’s scholarship on women’s bodybuilding has given me much to think about, as have conversations with her about both bodybuilding and beauty. A bodybuilder as well as a literary and cultural critic, Leslie is often less positive than I am about the transformative cultural power of bodybuilding for women.

Maria-Elena Buszek’s work on the feminist viability of pinups helped me to develop my discussion about midlife women bodybuilders as pinups.

Chris Reed’s acceptance of my proposal for a 1996 College Art Association conference session chaired by him, titled “Sexuality and Pedagogy,” was the beginning of “Pleasure and Pedagogy,” part 2 of this book.

The bodybuilders I interviewed for chapters 1 and 2 were generous with their time, experiences, and opinions. Looking at these women, talking with them, and, in a couple of cases, benefiting from one or two training sessions with them have all enlightened my passionate understanding of big female muscle.

Laurie Fierstein is the midlife bodybuilder without whose rich assistance I would not have understood women’s bodybuilding from the position of the bodybuilder herself. Laurie made possible my interviews with other bodybuilders, and her critical contemplativeness about gender and the allures and terrors of female hypermuscularity opened avenues for me to investigate, as did her extensive knowledge about the bodybuilding world.
Al Thomas, a longtime bodybuilding philosopher, was one of the people to whom Laurie introduced me. Al is a marvel. He thinks about bodybuilding as no one else does, and that difference is invaluably unique.

Steve Wennerstrom, who has an encyclopedic knowledge of the history of women's bodybuilding, was another person to whom Laurie introduced me. Time and again Steve's knowledge and contacts have eased my initiation into the mysteries of the bodybuilding subculture.

John Scott's kindness and sensitivity and his love of bodybuilding helped me in the early 1980s to develop my own muscle. John owned Iron Unlimited, a gym in Tucson. He was my first bodybuilding guide, and Iron Unlimited was a joy to work out in.

Lisette Thran, my aesthetician, has applied her many skills—from the touch of learned fingers to the relaxation of laughter—to my skin and soul.

Jacob Abraham, my hairdresser for many years in Reno, entertained me with his biting humor while trimming my bangs to perfection.

Ági Brooks and Betsey Johnson design clothes that give me great pleasure in my daily life. Brooks's elegant daywear recalls styles from the 1940s. Teaching in a skirt, blouse, or jacket of hers, I feel both the fluidity of my movements and my shoulders' strength. Only recently have I begun to wear Betsey Johnson dresses to school. With their obvious, even trashy sexiness and their silliness clinging to me, I cannot hide either my body's contours or my sense of fun. Liliana Casabal, who owns Morgane Le Fay, fashions dresses of fabrics that shine like fairy-tale costumes and often feel and look like gossamer. I have worn her inventions for two performances, both of which appear in this book—chapters 9 and 13. Her dresses alter my comportment when I put them on.

Peter Fox designs high-heeled shoes that are gorgeous, sophisticated, sensual, and comfortable. They are monster/beauty shoes par excellence, highly articulated in shape and material. They are a pleasure to wear during performances and for special occasions.

In autumn 1996 the University of Nevada, Reno, provided me with a sabbatical, during which time I read works by and about Sade and began research on chocolate—a theme that occurs in chapter 13, in which I write about Sade, and a subject that will be a major focus in my next book.

Students I have taught at the University of Nevada, Reno, at Oberlin
College, at the University of Arizona, and at Rochester Institute of Technology have provoked me—to different kinds and degrees of love and frustration—enough times that I could no longer keep from writing about pedagogical realities that teachers and students know and care about but rarely put into print.

Andrea Gardella, an art history major at the University of Nevada, Reno, assisted flawlessly in preparing the Monster/Beauty manuscript for publication.

Naomi Schneider’s intelligence is an astringent pleasure that keeps me alert and laughing during conversations in person, and as I was writing Monster/Beauty I could not have wanted a more encouraging editor: she is delicate and subtle, honest and daring, a true monster/beauty.

Nola Burger’s design enhances my words and ideas.

Alice Falk deftly copyedited the manuscript, and Rachel Berchten and her assistant, Lynn Meinhardt, scrupulously tended its production into an elegant book.