

THE STOCKING BOOK

INTRODUCTION BY VICTOR ARWAS

Edited by Sarah Roberts

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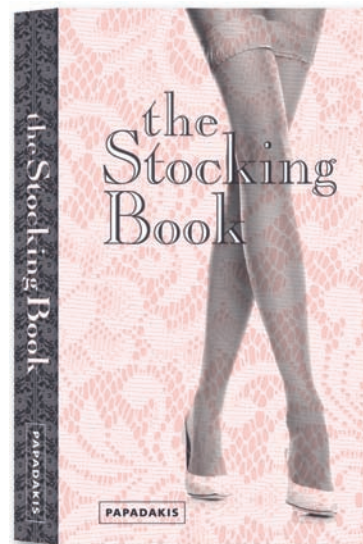
192 PAGES IN FULL COLOUR

HARDBACK WITH ACETATE SLEEVE

ISBN 978-1-906506-08-7

£ 14.95

NOVEMBER 2010



When a woman takes all her clothes off, she can be depicted as a pure, Classical nude. If, however, she keeps her stockings on, she suddenly becomes naked, an erotic creation capable of arousing the viewer's libido. This curious paradox has been observed and used by artists since the Middle Ages. Stockings range from extremely elaborate confections: multicoloured, embroidered, applied with sequins or precious stones, painted, striped or otherwise made into objects to be coveted, enabling the wearer to be desired.

They range from the shapeless utilitarian woollen stocking suddenly transformed by being black or allowed to droop erotically down the leg, to the breathtaking sheen of silk stockings drawn tight over the leg, held in place by an elaborate garter or garter-belt. Silk was eventually replaced by nylon or rayon, enlivened in certain decades by a central seam in the back of the leg (giving rise to the arousing gesture of straightening the seam), a tiny monogram or the variety of colours in the sheer quality of the transparent material, listed in deniers.

The Stocking Book explores the astonishing variety of stockings from the eighteenth century to the present, the way great painters depicted them, the way illustrators and cartoonists made use of them, the way advertisements presented them, and the way they have developed, from practical woollen undergarments to luxurious silk creations, from the miraculous invention of nylon to the simple stocking hung from the mantlepice waiting for Father Christmas.

VICTOR ARWAS was an acknowledged authority on the fine and decorative arts of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In over twenty published books he has explored various movements, and written exhibition catalogues and monographs on individual artists and groups. Several of his books are the standard works on their subject.



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REGISTERED IN ENGLAND NO. 2013962 VAT NO. 242460976

