

Elara and Her Guitar

Site Surfs for 12 Dec 2004



I was in a Barnes & Nobles bookstore yesterday when I came across a book in the Women's Studies section called Suicide Girls.

There were a bunch of girls in there who were for the most part very young (twenty something) and very white, and nude. I was with an associate of mine and

he was somewhat surprised that such a book could make it into the bookstore. This wasn't even the Photography section; it was Women's Studies for God's sake!

What gives?

There was an invitation on the back to visit SuicideGirls.com, and when I did, for a second there I thought I had just happened upon another porn-site. The saving grace that lead me on however was the memory of one photograph in the book - of a girl, "Elara", who sat on the floor beside a guitar on the wall. She was completely nude, and composed. The attraction to it was the realization that this girl was not posing for some ugly middle-aged man behind the camera, but for another young, white, girl. She posed beside an instrument indicating an activity of choice, and she posed in her abode. This pic was definitely *l'entité féminine*.¹ It gave a peek into what I am sure many, world over, outside of Europe, North America, and the Australian Continent may have questioned - what is the natural activity/state of white women. Colonialism has given us a significant view into the private worlds of the women of many other cultures, but white girls have really only been seen through the eyes of other - white men, men, older women, and in the professional world, as well as on the stage of the social elite (like Princess Diana beside Charles in India), but never through their own eyes. They have always been observed playing to the camera, but not observed playing in spite of it, not in private that is.

Written by Radcliffe Lewis

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Now SuicideGirls is not fully a documentary because the Photographer does not fully embrace unobtrusivity. Indeed, most of the pictures on the Site and in the book do show the girls at play for the camera. There are two comments on the Site that to me, sums up its intent;

"The great thing about the SuicideGirls is that they completely tear down that Pamela Anderson image. They're beautiful ladies with crazy tattoos, piercings and dreadlocks." - **Dave Grohl**

"...SuicideGirls offer a version of erotica devoid of big hair and boob jobs, instead showcasing the kind of girls you'd find in a mosh pit... - **NME**"²

...but because the Photographer is likewise a young white girl, she uncovers the veil of the audience. These girls posed --- for other young white girls --- and thus at times, exposed the inner sanctum of their *verus effeminatus*³ or true femininity without apprehension. This is the exclusive quality of Elara and her guitar, which was captivating to me. The nonetheless high-key photograph falls well within the Boudior Noir concept from whence I derived my Letterhead image. Unfortunately, I could not find the particular photograph of Elara with her guitar and had to settle for the next best illustration:



You may have to join SuicideGirls.com or buy the book 

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¹ French translation utility – dictionary.reference.com

² Article image and critique quotes - Suicidegirls.com

³ Latin translation utility – dictionary.reference.com