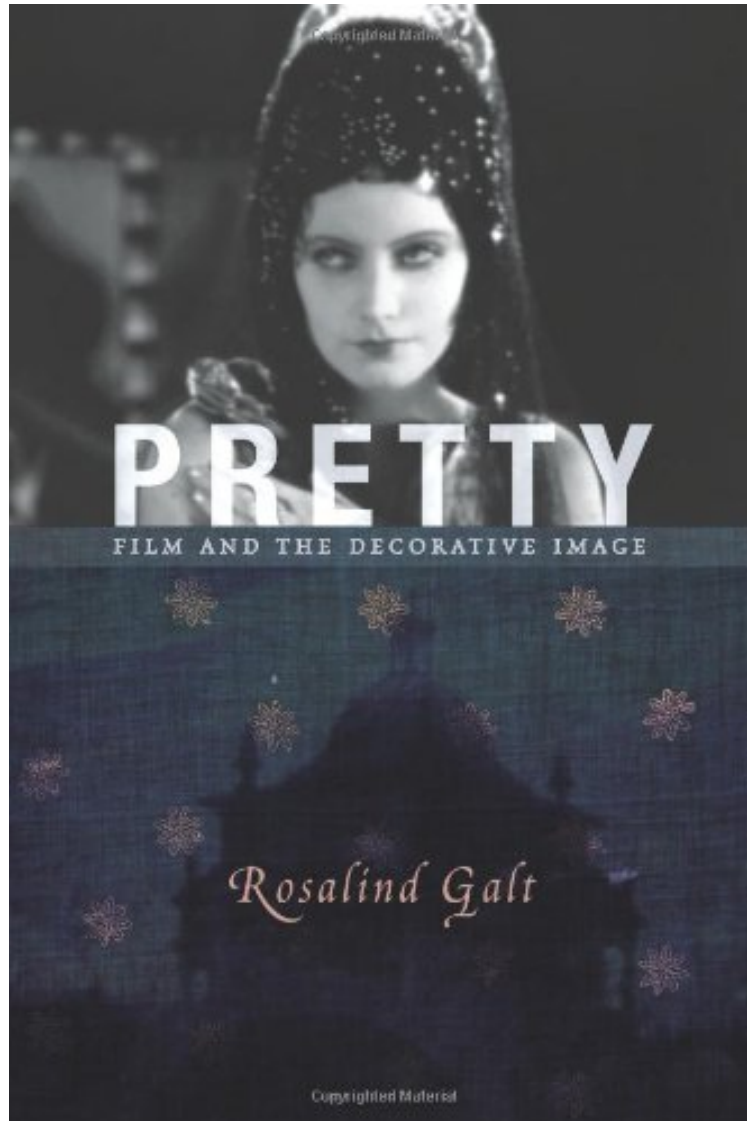


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Pretty: Film and the Decorative Image (Film and Culture Series)

Rosalind Galt Ph.D.

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#2066011 in Books 2011-05-31 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.90 x .90 x 6.00l, 1.25 #File Name: 0231153473408 pages | File size: 70.Mb

Rosalind Galt Ph.D. : *Pretty: Film and the Decorative Image (Film and Culture Series)* before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Pretty: Film and the Decorative Image (Film and Culture Series)*:

Film culture often rejects visually rich images, treating simplicity, austerity, or even ugliness as the more provocative, political, and truly cinematic choice. Cinema may challenge traditional ideas of art, but its opposition to the decorative

represents a long-standing Western aesthetic bias against feminine cosmetics, Oriental effeminacy, and primitive ornament. Inheriting this patriarchal, colonial perspective which treats decorative style as foreign or sexually perverse filmmakers, critics, and theorists have often denigrated colorful, picturesque, and richly patterned visions in cinema. Condemning the exclusion of the "pretty" from masculine film culture, Rosalind Galt reevaluates received ideas about the decorative impulse from early film criticism to classical and postclassical film theory. The pretty embodies lush visuality, dense mise-en-scene, painterly framing, and arabesque camera movements-styles increasingly central to world cinema. From European art cinema to the films of Wong Kar-wai and Santosh Sivan, from the experimental films of Derek Jarman to the popular pleasures of *Moulin Rouge!*, the pretty is a vital element of contemporary cinema, communicating distinct sexual and political identities. Inverting the logic of anti-pretty thought, Galt firmly establishes the decorative image as a queer aesthetic, uniquely able to figure cinema's perverse pleasures and cross-cultural encounters. Creating her own critical tapestry from perspectives in art theory, film theory, and philosophy, Galt reclaims prettiness as a radically transgressive style, shimmering with threads of political agency.

Remarkably wide-ranging and engagingly intricate. Rosalind Galt's argument is bold, its mode of argumentation sure and convincing. This very original take on culturally received and culturally determining ideas and emotions surrounding visual pleasure is long overdue. Galt's book is a necessary contribution to the study of the image in film and visuality studies. (Brigitte Peucker, author of *The Material Image: Art and the Real in Film and Incorporating Images: Film and the Rival Arts*) One of the most attractive features of Galt's book is her ability to corral so many different iterations of art and film criticism and provide so many examples from world cinema, effecting in the end a general theory of world cinema, of a pretty world cinema. (Akira Mizuta Lippit, University of Southern California) Brilliantly engaging and absolutely knowledgeable. This is a key work.... Highly recommended. (Choice) About the Author Rosalind Galt is senior lecturer in film studies at the University of Sussex. She is the author of *The New European Cinema: Redrawing the Map* and coeditor of *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories*.