

The Wild Women of "ANGELS AND MISFITS"

Written by Chris Alexander
Sunday, 17 July 2011 14:03



Open up any men's magazine (or women's magazine for that matter), turn on any television set and watch any big budget film and you will likely see young women buffed to a high gloss. It's a distorted feminine ideal and antiseptic representation of sexuality that is ultimately flat and terminally UN-sexy. How we got here, who knows? But woe to the ladies who have had to live in that airbrushed shadow. Somewhere along the way however, post feminism mated with rock and roll, tattoo culture and yes, horror film culture to create a different breed of female who defied what the norm should be, unashamedly using her god given talents and combining them with intellect, rebellion, and a creative adoption of fantasy, pulp fashion motifs. [NSFW]

It's this kind of woman that has fascinated Minnesota based photographer Gary Cook enough for him to create a deluxe coffee table tome full of woman of every shape and size, ink and piercing, hair distortions and earthy let-it-all-hang out sensuality. None fit the mold of the Hollywood product and yet none are afraid to be sexy, even when their waistlines occupy more space than what the mainstream deems fit.

Cook's book is ANGELS AND MISFITS, and he sent a copy of this glossy collection our way, sharing his thoughts on why these imaginative women need more love....and sharing a few hotter than Georgia asphalt pics as well...

FANG: Talk about your early days before pro-photography. When did you realize you were a "voyeur"?

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COOK: Well I have been a professional musician since I was in my teens. I have played rock, funk, jazz and that kind of makes you a voyeur in a lot of ways. Through that world, I had free tickets and back stage passes to almost everything. So I started taking photos at shows and I found out I really liked it. I do advertising, editorial, bands, and even scream queens. I still play music too.

FANG: What is it specifically about femininity that fascinates you?

COOK: I've been photographing them for years for this project and am impressed with how strong, crazy, sad, shy, extroverted and crazy—did I say crazy twice?—they are, all at the same time. Their energy is amazing.



FANG: Let's talk about the book. Were the photos culled from a collection or shot specifically for this release?

COOK: I came up with the idea for the book after doing a shoot with a woman who was beyond crazy. I was telling my band mates about the shoot the next day in the studio. A few days later, I came to the studio for rehearsal and was told "we have a new song for you to listen to". The song was called "Angels & Misfits" and was about the story I told them about my shoot. So the idea was born. Six years and over 130 women later, here it is.

FANG: Some people will see this as a response to the success of things like Suicide Girls. What is your response to that?

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COOK: The book is what Suicide Girls started out to be, a home for alternative women and alternative beauty. Back then, a woman who was a size two or was not "hot" could have her pictures up there; now, not so much.

All of the women in this book picked what they were going to wear (or not wear) and they were involved in picking which pictures of them were used. I gave them suggestions and begged them some times to use a particular photo, but in the end they are representing who they want to be.



FANG: Where did you find these ladies? Some seem to obviously be models and some, not so much.

COOK: None of them are models, really. They are just regular girls. Most of them are from the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. It started with a few women I had met and taken pictures of, and then they went out and talked to their friends. They would shoot with me and post pictures on their Facebook pages, and after a while I had people calling and messaging me. It just grew and grew

FANG: Talk about erotica: the photos here veer between cheeky, as you've said, crazy and genuinely hot and yet, never are they pornographic. When do you know when to "pull back" taking these shots?

COOK: I wanted each photo to represent who the person was. Some of the women were, and wanted to be, sexier in their pictures. Some women were kind of shy. Some even came in and said I really want to do this but "my boyfriend does not want me to show my tits or my junk" So that's what we did. I think women's eyes can be the "dirty" thing, so it was very important to me

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to really have their eyes tell their story.

FANG: You mentioned you shoot scream queens and I know you have a long association with actress and Fango personality Debbie Rochon. Talk about that connection.

COOK: We met in the mid 90's at a New York comic Book show. We were both doing stuff with Joe Bob Briggs. We have done photo shoots together for numerous national magazines and worked together on book and movie projects. And she has been a great friend.

To order ANGELS AND MISFITS visit Cook's [website](#). You can like the book on Facebook [here](#)