

PINUP PRIMER

Now, That's a Fine Piece of Art

PINUP GIRLS PEAKED IN POPULARITY DURING WORLD WAR II, WHEN SOLDIERS tacked them to the inside of their lockers. Recently, however, the value of the original paintings has surged (some fetch upwards of \$200,000), and now Taschen is celebrating the genre's greatest practitioners in *The Art of the Pin-Up*. Here, the publisher's "Sexy Book Editor" (yes, her real title), Dian Hanson, shares the stories behind these titillating works. —Jon Roth



1. A Fare Loser (circa 1951) by Art Frahm

"People have told me, 'My mother was out walking in 1935, and her elastic broke, her panties fell down, so she just stepped out of them and walked away.' [In Frahm's pinups,] there's always a working-class man watching. And what is his dream? Well, apparently, to see the naughty bits of a middle-class housewife. Frahm did 12 of these, only one a year—he didn't blow his wad."

2. Memories of Olive (1920) by Alberto Vargas

"Olive Thomas joined Ziegfeld's Follies in 1915, then she went to Hollywood and married Mary Pickford's brother, Jack. One night



Olive drank a flask of mercury that Jack used to treat his syphilis, and she died of kidney failure. Alberto Vargas, the official painter for the Follies, painted this in her memory. It's now been taken up as a tattoo, especially popular with women. Rita Ora has *Memories of Olive* tattooed huge on her side!"

3. Maid in Baltimore (circa 1950) by Earl Moran

"Earl Moran was the playboy of the pinup artists. His third wife divorced him after she caught him with a model, as she said, 'without a paintbrush and without their clothes.' He sought out young starlets to photograph, so he got Marilyn when she was Norma Jeane Dougherty in February 1946. He paid her \$10 an hour and photographed her nude and clothed. Of course, as soon as she became famous, he claimed that everything he did was of Marilyn."

