

Front of house
Q&A

Dian Hanson

By *Stuart Brumfitt* Photographer *Damon Lobie*

'I'd been scorned by the art community, but I was always friends with artists - they always like sexual material'

AS EDITOR OF men's x-rated mags Juggs and Leg Show, Dian Hanson came to the attention of art publishing legend Benedikt Taschen, who courted her for years before she took on the title of Sexy Books Editor at his publishing house. Since then Dian has brought out such terrific tomes as Terryworld, The Big Book Of Breasts and Tom of Finland XXL.

Taschen took a risk doing Sexy Books. The explicit sex could have ruined the brand, but actually it's made it more dangerous and exciting.

The only person who I've experienced before who had the same approach as Benedikt and got away with it was Larry Flynt. He simply didn't care. And that's the same with Benedikt. He's Benedikt Taschen.

Even though you're dealing with the same erotic material as when you were working at porn mags, do you see a difference in reactions from people now you work for a higher-end publishing house?

I'm publishing much more explicit material now than I could ever publish in the magazines. I had tremendous respect within the porn community and if sometimes I got little respect on the outside, I was still content with the respect I had within the community. But definitely I'd been scorned by the art community. Not artists, though - I was always friends with artists and they always like sexual material.

Do you think being a woman has ever been an issue for you in porn publishing?

Working in the industry was very easy as a woman, because publishers assume that women know special things about male sexuality and therefore are coveted, desired. I never had any of that "this is a man's world, get out of it." Porn is made by a bunch of nerds who have been shy around women and I did learn to be a motherly boss.

It's been said that a female editor of a male porn magazine is a bit like a mistress for the readers.

The majority of men feel they can't talk about their sexuality with women. And I'm not just talking about men with off-the-wall sexuality, but normal men whose testosterone gives them a higher sex drive than their female partners. So many men have said over the years, "You're the first woman I've talked to about my sexuality." And their sexuality would be so vanilla, so acceptable. They broke my heart.

I guess you were less the mistress and more like the madam of the whorehouse.

Yes, exactly. I would be the woman who knew all, had seen all, who had, in their fantasies, experienced all and could therefore take whatever secret they had and still like them.

*Stuart Brumfitt is the editor of Boyz magazine. www.taschen.com
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18 house

