

The Brooklyn Paper

Your Neighborhood - Your News

Pinup girls: The 'I ♥ Bklyn Girls' are back

By Stephanie Schroeder
for The Brooklyn Paper
October 2008



The “I ♥ Brooklyn Girls” pinup calendar is back. Here, Ayla Steadman bakes something special.

If a man hangs up a pin-up calendar above his desk at work, he’s an ogre. If a woman does it, she’s a sexual trend-setter.

That, in a nutshell, is the premise of the “I ♥ Bklyn Girls: Women at Work” calendar — the fourth series of sexy, cheesecake-style wall-hangings that show plenty of skin, yes, but also initiate a conversation about sex and sexuality.

“The calendar tells people, ‘We’re here, we’re femme and we’re queer,’” said Schneider, who posed and also styled the other shots.

The dozen damsels in the 2009 version are certainly not in distress — though they are all shot in implausible work-related poses.

So, for example, there’s the cover shot of the Baking Beauty — a model wearing bright red form-fitting tap pants and an apron just open enough to reveal her breasts. The look on her face

is perplexed, but her glance back at the camera shows that that she knows exactly what she is doing.

Literary Lady (Miss May) sits next to a typewriter and a pile of books (including, again implausibly, “The Story of O” and “The Iliad”), the artsy tilt of her head and exaggerated elegance suggest that there’s nothing odd about reading the classics in nothing but a bustier.

Stitching Sweetie (February) mimics the exaggerated voluptuousness of ripe and ready post-war America and the appreciable norm of women’s bodies at the time (what time? Any time!).

And Chemist Queenie (January) peers over her nerdy glasses, test tube in hand, seductively straddling a barstool, to say that a cure is close at hand.

Of course, there’s more to this 1940s-style pinup calendar than the pinups. There’s also, apparently, ideology.

Not only does the on-the-job settings evoke that ultimate (though ultimately far-too-clothed) feminist icon Rosie the Riveter, but there’s also a clear lesbian undertone in all this underwear, said Jackie Schneider, a Gowanus resident who posed as a dog walker strolling casually along the avenue in lingerie (must have been Smith Street).

Carroll Gardens–based photographer Erica Beckman said the project aims to create visibility in the Brooklyn queer community where femme women are often overlooked or go unnoticed.

Indeed, it’s hard to overlook them here, given that the models represent a full range of lesbian shapes, ages, styles and sizes.

Amelia Posada, 26, is a Mexican-American now living in Boerum Hill. The Jewish Schneider is of Hungarian descent. Beckman, the calendar’s originator and photographer, is from Bensonhurst. Covergirl Ayla Steadman, 24, is a white-bred white girl originally from Oakland, Calif., but now residing in Williamsburg.

Taken together, it’s a collection of women in interesting positions.

“I ♥ Bklyn Girls” calendar, \$12. For info, visit www.iheartbrooklyngirls.com.

©2008 The Brooklyn Paper