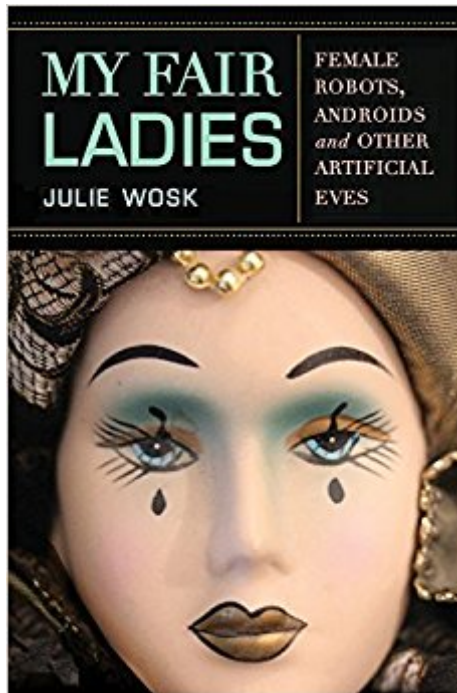




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My Fair Ladies: Female Robots, Androids, And Other Artificial Eves



Synopsis

The fantasy of a male creator constructing his perfect woman dates back to the Greek myth of Pygmalion and Galatea. Yet as technology has advanced over the past century, the figure of the lifelike manmade woman has become nearly ubiquitous, popping up in everything from *Bride of Frankenstein* to *Weird Science* to *The Stepford Wives*. Now Julie Wosk takes us on a fascinating tour through this bevy of artificial women, revealing the array of cultural fantasies and fears they embody. *My Fair Ladies* considers how female automatons have been represented as objects of desire in fiction and how “living dolls” have been manufactured as real-world fetish objects. But it also examines the many works in which the “perfect” woman turns out to be artificial—a robot or doll—and thus becomes a source of uncanny horror. Finally, Wosk introduces us to a variety of female artists, writers, and filmmakers—from Cindy Sherman to Shelley Jackson to Zoe Kazan—who have cleverly crafted their own images of simulated women. Anything but dry, *My Fair Ladies* draws upon Wosk’s own experiences as a young female *Playboy* copywriter and as a child of the “feminine mystique” era to show how images of the artificial woman have loomed large over real women’s lives. Lavishly illustrated with film stills, artwork, and vintage advertisements, this book offers a fresh look at familiar myths about gender, technology, and artistic creation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Wosk presents a riveting portrait of simulated women, female robots, and robot technology in media and art from ancient generations to modern-day creations. The author provides insight about generational interpretation of the 'perfect woman'; and the depiction of simulated women to reconcile societal fears of changing gender roles and emerging technologies." (Library Journal)"The clarity and the engaging style of Wosk's descriptions – not to mention the images included in the book – make of *My Fair Ladies* a veritable trove of resources for teachers and students of gender, culture, and the media, particularly in introductory level courses. Besides making explicit the intimate connection between patriarchal ideals of femininity and Western ideas about technology, Wosk's carefully selected examples track how adaptations of the Pygmalion myth evolved alongside social and technological changes ... Wosk's singular perspective as an art historian, and importantly, as an artist, stands out for its freshness and originality." (Feminist Media Studies)"Wosk's elucidation of the play of paradox in discussions of real and artificial women is at its best when it forces readers to reconsider their own assumptions about the value of authenticity and the function of artifice." (Women's Review of Books)"Why are automatons so attractive? And just what is this 'perfect woman'; anyway? Rounding up a veritable sorority of artificial Eves, Julie Wosk delves into the issues in her latest book *My Fair Ladies*, casting an analytical eye over female depictions, both physical and fictitious, to explore the history and the future of Woman 2.0." – Read the full article "Living dolls: sci-fi's fascination with artificial women" at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/jul/13/living-dolls-artificial-women-robots> (Nicola Davis The Guardian)"This is the 'cyborg manifesto'; for technology, gender, and art in the twenty-first century. The search for the 'perfect woman'; in film, art, photography, and technology collides with the reality of the complex and imperfect that is the essential human experience." (Arthur Kroker author of *Exits to the Posthuman Future*)

"Wide-ranging, lively, and thoroughly researched, Julie Wosk's book expertly guides us through the cultural meanings of artificial females in myth, literature, movies, television, art, and photography, among other fields." (Susan Ostrov Weisser author of *The Glass Slipper*)"From Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to *The Stepford Wives*, from Enlightenment automata to 21st century robotics, Julie Wosk takes us on an amazing – tour of ideas about technology, about human perfection and about gender." (Ruth Schwartz Cowan author of *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology*)

Great book from a great professor

In *My Fair Ladies*, art-historian/painter/ professor Julie Wosk has given us a brilliant history of artificial (read "man-made") women, along with her insightful commentary into this fascinating phenomenon. Beginning with a lively discussion of the Pygmalion myth first created in ancient Greece, a myth that has evolved over the centuries into many different versions, including the play by George Bernard Shaw and musical theater's *My Fair Lady*, Wosk's book moves swiftly through literature, movies, TV, art, robotics, and photography. Richly illustrated with photographs, art, and scenes from movies and television, the book includes Wosk's clever commentary on the apparently unending male desire to create artificial--even robotic--women. *My Fair Ladies* presents an extraordinary cavalcade of "artificial eves" in this lively and very smart book.

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