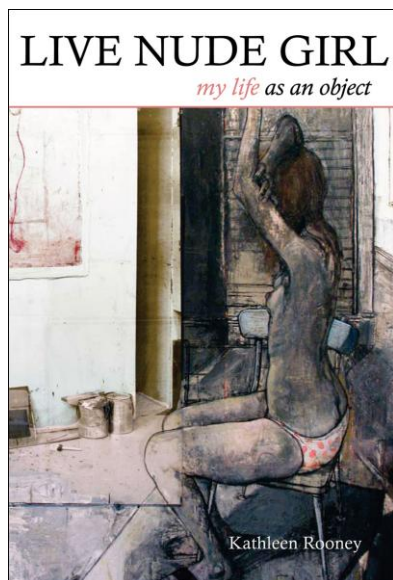


**Live Nude Girl: My Life as an Object/** Kathleen Rooney. –Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, January 2009. –198 p. ISBN 978-1-55728-891-2 (cl., alk. paper): \$22.50.



Kathleen Rooney's *Live Nude Girl: My Life as an Object* is a work of creative nonfiction that is both adventurous and captivating. The book is a memoir, tracing Rooney's journey into nude artist's modeling and her experiences over a six-year period. Woven into Rooney's personal story are larger issues such as what models mean to artists, the possible difference between a naked model and a nude model, and how the profession is perceived by others. She also questions what her role is in the creative process and the final artwork.

At a glance, the reader may make assumptions about what Rooney and her text might do. One hopes that Rooney would embark upon on a Cixousian endeavor to write herself, or perhaps that her book would represent a project to reclaim her life from that of objectification through the act of inscription. Rooney's text does not address such feminist aims, however. Furthermore, this book cannot be read with the expectation of criticality, contextual assessment, or art

historical contribution. While Rooney's work is an interesting and enjoyable read, and Rooney tells her story well, she does not enlarge the scope of her story beyond the personal.

With the ease of a poet (which she undoubtedly is), Rooney creates the appearance of an academic text by integrating the words of philosophers such as Roland Barthes, art historical figures such as John Sloan, and various artists into her narrative. This book is clearly not an academic text, however; the benefit of these references and the question of the book's role for an art-historical audience remain unclear. Additionally, while the book is about the production of paintings and sculpture, it is ironic that there is not a single image in the book. The status of this book, therefore, is much like the liminal status of the artist's model she describes – it occupies a place between the academic and memoir. This is one of book's strengths, but also one of its flaws. Rooney's book has no set audience—it is not rigorous enough to be an academic text, but in its attempt to access the intellectual, may also be of limited interest as a mass-market paperback.

This would be a good purchase for any art library that contains a section for nonfiction recreational reading.

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