

A Field Guide for Female Interrogators

Coco Fusco. Seven Stories, \$16.95 paper (144p) ISBN 978-1-58-322780-0

In this fascinating pastiche of text, performance and illustration, artist Fusco goes undercover at a military interrogation training camp, unearths confidential FBI memos and channels Virginia Woolf as she investigates the use of female sexual aggression as an interrogation tactic authorized by the Pentagon, called "Invasion of Space by a Female." Fusco chillingly recounts how female officers and soldiers at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay endorsed and participated in the abuse and sexual humiliation of prisoners. According to Fusco, these soldiers cannot be dismissed as a few "bad apples," but must be recognized as the products of an entertainment culture that depicts torture as effective and even sexy, and a military culture that embraces sexual and cultural stereotypes. Fusco chides feminists who have remained silent about the issue, saying, "It is high time that we recognize that it is nothing short of a lie to frame American women's experience exclusively in terms of powerlessness." In the "intercultural theater" of military torture scenarios and "in the exercise of global power as Americans, women are called upon and agree to act in public capacities as aggressors, frequently by making strategic use of their femininity." Fusco confronts her deeply disturbing material with unflinching bravery and characteristic originality. (May)