



Women's Views: The Narrative Stereograph in Nineteenth-Century America (Becoming Modern: New Nineteenth-Century Studies)

Melody Davis

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Few American homes were without a stereoscope in the 1890s. The immersive, three-dimensional experience of stereographs was among the most popular parlor entertainments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a period of more than forty years.

In this remarkable book, Melody Davis analyzes the underexamined genre of narrative stereoviews and their audiences. Because stereoviews were created for and marketed primarily to middle-class women in domestic settings, Davis argues that they represent one of the best sources for addressing the flow of historical change in women's lives. By analyzing dozens of stereoviews—including depictions of gender stereotypes, power dynamics, comical or sentimental situations, and scenes of both serious and playful innuendo—Davis energetically spins a broad history of the real social, sexual, and economic changes in the lives of American women. Her close reading and rich contextualization of these compelling vernacular objects bridge the gaps between the private viewing that took place within the home and the outside world of consumption and power that women were gradually entering.

Illustrated with more than one hundred stereographs and including a three-dimensional viewer, this book will appeal to readers with an interest in U.S. women's history, the history of photography, visual and cultural studies, and American studies.

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