



Amelia G



Since bursting on the scene in 1992 with "counterculture lifestyle magazine"

Blue Blood, Amelia G's name has become synonymous with fetish/punk erotica, merging the sexual elements of her Goth-inspired music scene and creating a precursor to today's burgeoning altporn output. Along with photographer Forrest Black, she currently runs the BlueBlood.com portal, which includes BlueBlood.net, GothicSluts.com, BarelyEvil.com, and RubberDollies.com, and covers a wide range of fetishes, offering photo galleries, bulletin boards, erotic fiction, personal essays, and more. Here, the outspoken writer and editor explores issues of sexual identity, whether women are as kinky as men, and reclaiming your inner slut.

INTERVIEW

By Rachel Kramer Bussel

Photographs by
Amelia G and Forrest Black

VARIATIONS: How did you first get involved in the Goth/fetish/punk scenes, and how did those worlds inspire your initial publishing ventures?

AMELIA G: I loved magazines, and I loved the idea of erotic magazines, but I didn't see anything on the newsstand for people like me.



The DC punk scene in the early nineties was very much intermingled with the fandom science-fiction convention circuit. Fetish had not really been codified yet, but there were a lot of kinky people in the scene. When I finished university, I was sort of at a loss. When I got to the DC scene, I had the most intense sense of finally having come home to where I'd always belonged. All of a sudden, my sexuality, my multifarious interests and my eclectic fashion sensibilities were all right. I knew so many incredible, interesting creative people who didn't have a venue to express themselves. I wanted to show the world that maverick values and aesthetics are not incompatible with responsibility and accomplishment.

VARIATIONS: What makes Blue Blood different from other "copycat" sites? How has your audience grown and changed as fetish culture and clothing have become more mainstream?

AMELIA G: We mean what we say and we maintain really high-quality standards. Sometimes I will see a spokesmodel pretending she is in charge of some other project and parrot something I've said in an interview. That pains me more than I can say, but I think it is obvious to most onlookers that these mascot site owners are fakes because none of them can really engage in discourse on any important issue. Blue Blood is a unique creation really.

My heart goes out to anyone who would get a big tattoo and glasses with no prescription and put on a rubber dress and then take it off on the Internet, just to fit in, but Blue Blood really tries to screen those sorts of people out of the roughly 300 submissions a week we receive. When selecting contributors, we're really looking for people who own who they are and have something to express. Blue Blood has very artist-friendly terms and is genuinely independent, so we have both the relationships and the freedom to insist on the very best quality content.

VARIATIONS: How would you define the community of people who



visit and post on your sites?

AMELIA G: I think they tend to be sort of seeker personalities, people who have passed through many subcultures, but not swallowing any particular label wholesale. I think a lot of subcultures have interesting and cool aspects to them, but there certainly is no specific one I would identify myself as being 100 percent like, and I think the members of the Blue Blood community are a lot like me in this respect. Most of them would not identify as 100 percent punk, or 100 percent a BDSM person, or 100 percent a gamer, but they have at-

tributes of those groups. The ability to think critically is really valued in the Blue Blood community, and I encourage that. It's important to be able to individually evaluate what a particular worldview has to offer and not just accept everything we are told at face value.

VARIATIONS: There seems to be a lot of overlap between the punk, Goth, and con communities and the fetish sex world. What do you think it is about these groups that leads them to complement each other?

AMELIA G: I think that these are all subcultures with a certain combination of marginalization and escapism. I changed schools just about every year as a kid, so the exact same attributes which would make me super cool at one place would make me a pariah at the next. This taught me some early lessons about resisting social pressure, but at a certain point, I feel it is important for everyone to learn to really own who they are and be right with it.

One of the best things about Goth or punk style or fetish attire or con costuming is that it externalizes a certain otherness in a very celebratory way. There is a lot of similarity in the feeling of worrying that



you are the only one turned on by something mildly unusual or being the kid in your class who likes science fiction books and doesn't know what is in fashion this season. Claiming and owning one's otherness by looking different on the outside, on purpose, is very empowering. And very sexy.

VARIATIONS: Your sites reflect various kinds of fetishes. Which are the most popular? Do you see any common threads between members' interests?

AMELIA G: The common thread in all of the Blue Blood photos and stories is a celebration of a certain sort of maverick personality and the eroticism of certain sorts of subcultures. The idea is to share that feeling an aficionado can get at a really great rock show. There is an excitement, not only in the beat,

but in the clothing, the look, the attitude, the sense of unbounded possibility, and meeting of the tribe. Of course, there are many subsets, in that I'd guess that pretty much all the people who have sought out Blue Blood magazines, books, and web sites are into the general look and feel above other kinks.

The initial *Blue Blood* magazine concept involved only pictorials of real life couples doing what they would do whether or not the cameras were there. So, in letting people express their genuine tastes, rather than trying to hit a format, Blue Blood has become very much a haven for a real buffet of kink, including, but certainly not limited to, bondage, latex, spanking, domination, power exchange, corsetry, gas masks, armor, leather, fishnets, vampires, stockings, feet, and, of course, unusual fashion sense and attitude, and tattoos, mohawks and hair color not found in nature.



VARIATIONS: How many of your users are men versus women? Does their gender influence their fetish leanings?

AMELIA G: I believe that women are just as kinky as men. A quick perusal of Harlequin's book line any year will point out that even more extreme kink is not the sole domain of the male gender. I don't

I honestly have no idea what the gender breakdown online is. I have no place in the profile system on BlueBlood.net for anyone to enter gender. I think readers know the gender of most posters from photos or things they say, but I don't have a profile spot for gender or age because I don't really like the snap judgments people form on the basis of such superficial infor-



think actual tastes are particularly dictated by gender. For example, the general society is likely to be more accepting of a woman being bisexual than a man, but I don't believe women are intrinsically more bi than men. The general society is likely to be more accepting of a man being promiscuous than a woman, but I don't believe that men are intrinsically more into varied sex partners than women.

mation. I like the members of the Blue Blood forums to really read what other people have to say and form their impressions of them based on who they are and not what box they slot into most neatly.

VARIATIONS: You say that the site Gothic Sluts is "for all the women who ever got called sluts for owning their sexuality." Can you elaborate on what that means?



AMELIA G: I think the first time I got called a slut was when I was in seventh grade, and I'd gotten these formfitting jeans with little gold stars on the ass pockets. It was the year I passed puberty and sort of discovered clothing. I felt really sexy in those pants, but I'd never even been on a date, much less done anything sexual which I felt was worthy of social censure.

without sharing your personal life with every person you meet, but if someone at your responsible job discovers that you sometimes read vampire novels and like to be tied up, it is their problem if that troubles them and not yours. Do not permit them to shame you. Hence my desire to reclaim the word slut.

VARIATIONS: To what do you attribute the rise of the alt-porn movement?

AMELIA G: Blue Blood has been successfully publishing envelope-pushing imagery and words which celebrate the lifestyle and sexuality of people with "alternative" looks since 1992. I feel what I produce and publish is counterculture erotica and that is the label Blue Blood has used.

I think altporn is the mainstream adult video industry's marketing term for something that has been around for a long time. Professional adult webmasters call the same genre Goth.

In general, business-people are referring to the niche of flamboyantly unusual-looking people appearing in smut. Colored hair and tattoos a plus.

Oddly enough, the video people's take on what they call altporn is surprisingly devoid of kink. Long after the mainstream adult video people have moved on to the next trend, there will still be counterculture erotica and a thriving scene to support it.



There is, even today, cultural pressure against a woman enjoying her sexuality for her own reasons. To me, one of the most important messages I want people to get from Blue Blood is that they are absolutely entitled to the rewards of the larger society. Having unusual hair or being kinky in no way means that you are somehow a second-class citizen. Own who you are. You can keep your soul