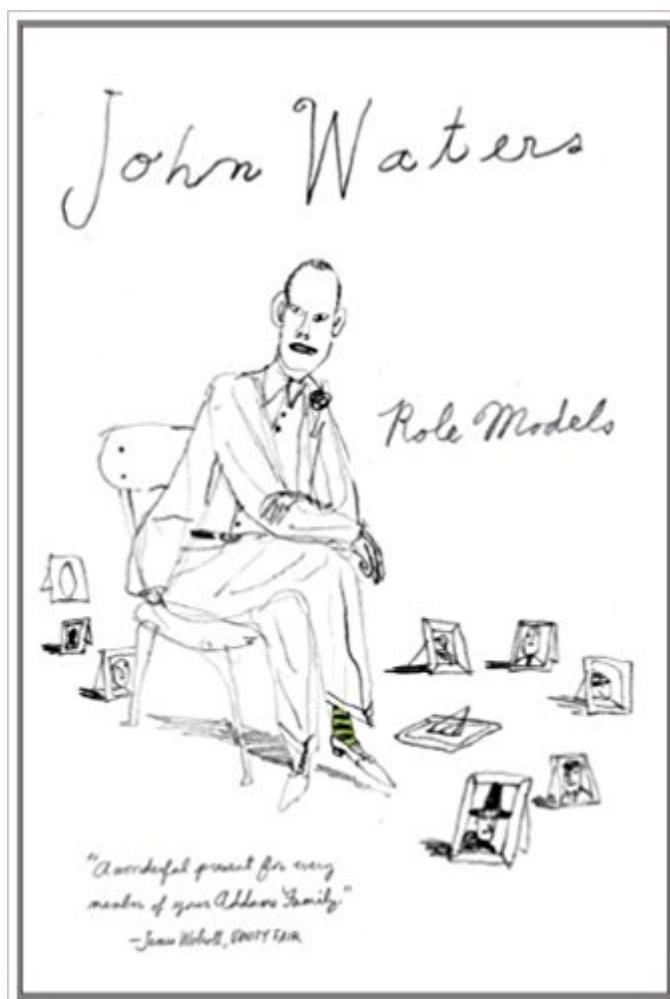


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# Role Models



## Synopsis

Here, from the incomparable John Waters, is a paean to the power of subversive inspiration that will delight, amuse, enrichâ and happily horrifyâ readers everywhere. *Role Models* is, in fact, a self-portrait told through intimate profiles of favorite personalitiesâ some famous, some unknown, some criminal, some surprisingly middle of the road. From Esther Martin, owner of the scariest bar in Baltimore, to the playwright Tennessee Williams; from the atheist leader Madalyn Murray O'Hair to the insane martyr Saint Catherine of Siena; from the English novelist Denton Welch to the timelessly appealing singer Johnny Mathisâ these are the extreme figures who helped the author form his own brand of neurotic happiness. *Role Models* is a personal invitation into one of the most unique, perverse, and hilarious artistic minds of our time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The director of the gross-out epic *Pink Flamingos* and other cinematic provocations salutes the people he finds inspiringâ "himself foremost among themâ "in these self-regarding essays. Waters's role models range from icons like Johnny Mathis and Tennessee Williams to a gay reality-porn auteur, a lesbian stripper called Lady Zorro, and ex-Charles Manson groupie and murderer Leslie Van Houten. When he pays attention to them, Waters produces vivid portraits of his subjects, especially those with really lurid backstories, but he's happier when the spotlight is on him and his studied outrageousness. He discusses celebrity (I've... gone out drinking with Clint Eastwood, and spent several New Year's Eve parties in Valentino's chalet in Gstaad, but what I like best is staying

home and reading) and the graphic pornography on his walls, and regales readers with scatological scandals, disdaining religious beliefs while graciously tolerating people who hold them. In the end, Waters's war against the tyranny of good taste feels tired, his taboo-breaking rote, his kitsch-mongering snobbish (taken on a tour of the Vatican, he refuses to leave the gift shop and its hideously pious cards). (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As familiar as Waters' obsessions have become over the years, writes the Onion AV Club, "he remains an affable, enthusiastic tour guide to the sort of beauty found only at the edges of good taste." Such beauty includes the profane, the violent, and the shocking, but it's par for the course for this once transgressive filmmaker and his insightful, obnoxious, and entertaining essays. Only the essay "Leslie," about Waters's friendship with Manson follower Leslie Van Houten, serving a life sentence for murder, raised debate. A few reviewers found the essay reflective, while others condemned Waters for dodging "the murky moral issues of her story" (Los Angeles Times). *Role Models* isn't for everyone--but even "dilettantes at liberty to skip around will find a lot to charm them" (New York Times Book Review). --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Wow. Where to start. This book was seriously whack-a-doodle. On the face of it, it is a semi-autobiographical story of the people that influenced, and still do influence, John Waters when growing up and beyond. It gives you a real insight into the inner workings of the man, where his ideas come from, and who he is. It sheds light on the fact that most of the world is far more screwed up than most people realize, and there is a dark, seedy underbelly that lies underneath the one that we all think we already know about, and suggests, strongly, that there are more layers of filth underneath that. I am also convinced, now more than ever, that Baltimore is the filthiest place in the United States, which, I believe, is Mr. Waters point. Casual readers should be warned: this book delves into some pretty dark places. While far from the worst stuff I've ever read, Waters does take the reader to some graphically filthy places, with language, imagery and ideals that many people might find objectionable. However, even at his worst, he manages to turn the subject around and bring out a laugh, forcing you to embrace the absurd filth and laugh with him at the absurdity of it all. Mr Waters writing style is eclectic - he jumps from topic to topic in a seemingly random, if energetic fashion, often raising a point, jumping to another idea or two, then circling back around to the original subject, which makes him a little hard to read, especially when he wanders off topic for a long time. I do believe that he went a little off the rails in the final chapter, in which, I guess, he was

casting himself as a role model. And while that certainly fit the theme of the book, hardly matched the style. A slightly tighter editing would have resulted in five stars. If you are a hardcore Waters fan, then this book is a must. If you are an average Waters cultist, then read it. If you are a fan of his most popular works and not a homophobe, then go ahead and read it, it will be enlightening.

Fascinating glimpse into the mind of a fascinating man. The photos were particularly evocative. John Waters is a whip-smart writer and a truly gifted listener. So this book may appeal mainly to other good listeners, those who are adept at cadging and stockpiling multiple damaged, compelling biographies among the people we may crash across through life. You MAY not like all or any of these people, but you will find yourself looking at them, and caring about them.

The book was entertaining. Giving a rating is a bit senseless. If you like John you'll like the book, if not you'll likely be incredibly offended. The last chapter "cult leader" was worth the price of the book for me personally. It made me laugh out loud. I Love John's perspective on life. He's honest and funny.

This work is so entertaining and good hearted and funny, I immediately ordered a copy for a friend. There were times when I had to phone people to read out passages so we could laugh together. It is perhaps not for everyone, but if you already know and like John Waters, you will love this book; it was so absorbing and delightful, I had to read it almost straight through. If you don't know John Waters (where have you been?), and have a sensitivity to language as spoken and heard away from church, your mind may be too pure to process his special brand of "filth" which includes interviews with criminals, celebrities of special note, trivia, information and particular advice on how to realize or expand your own personal filth. I wish he lived next door; it feels as if we are friends already. I'd love to have him over for a drink.

This is the first book I have read/listened to by John Waters (I got the audio book) and I haven't seen many of his films (I think just Pecker), but I have always loved his interviews on NPR's Fresh Air with Teri Gross. And, I think it is because I know him for his wonderfully personable conversational style and broad interests (art, reading, creativity, music, people, etc, etc) that I decided to purchase this book and see what it had to offer. Excellent. What a pleasant conversational way to hear about John's interesting personal life and his tastes through his appreciation of his role models. Yes, yes, we all know about his film exploits or public image with

sex and shock, but if that was all he had to write about the book would feel very flat and two dimensional. The fact that he is so well rounded as a person and in his interests made this book my favorite of the year. And, yes, there's plenty about sex, some wonderfully uninhibited and some that is a little bit shocking for my taste. But, this just adds flavor to the soup. Now, I'm just waiting while ships the next book I ordered from John's back catalog.

I am and have always been a big fan of John Waters work, and I was very interested to read his new book. I laughed throughout the entire reading of this book. His sense of humor can be found in almost every page. I also enjoyed the book because a lot of the places he spoke about in the book are in my hometown of Baltimore Maryland. One of the most eye opening parts of the book was the chapter on Leslie Van Houten. It was a bitter sweet chapter as he was able, in my opinion, to show both sides. I am glad that he is doing what he can to support her cause, unfortunately I think it also shows that this will be a very uphill battle. I hope someday she will be freed from prison because I think she can have a positive effect on society. So I would recommend this book to other readers who like to laugh and want to learn about the other side of Baltimore. The part the Baltimore Chamber Of Commerce will never tell you about.

Not much to say, John Waters is just wonderful. Very funny, I loved learning about the people that shaped him into who he is today! There are some really great Baltimore characters he talks about in here that I enjoyed. All around great and fun read!

He writes surprisingly well and with sincere affection for his heroes. When he does overstep, he seems more taken aback than his subjects do. Waters always tries to be entertaining and has a good sense of where to end a piece. The effect is to create an easy read without the shallowness of a celebrity tell-all or a ghost written memoir. Worth your time.

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