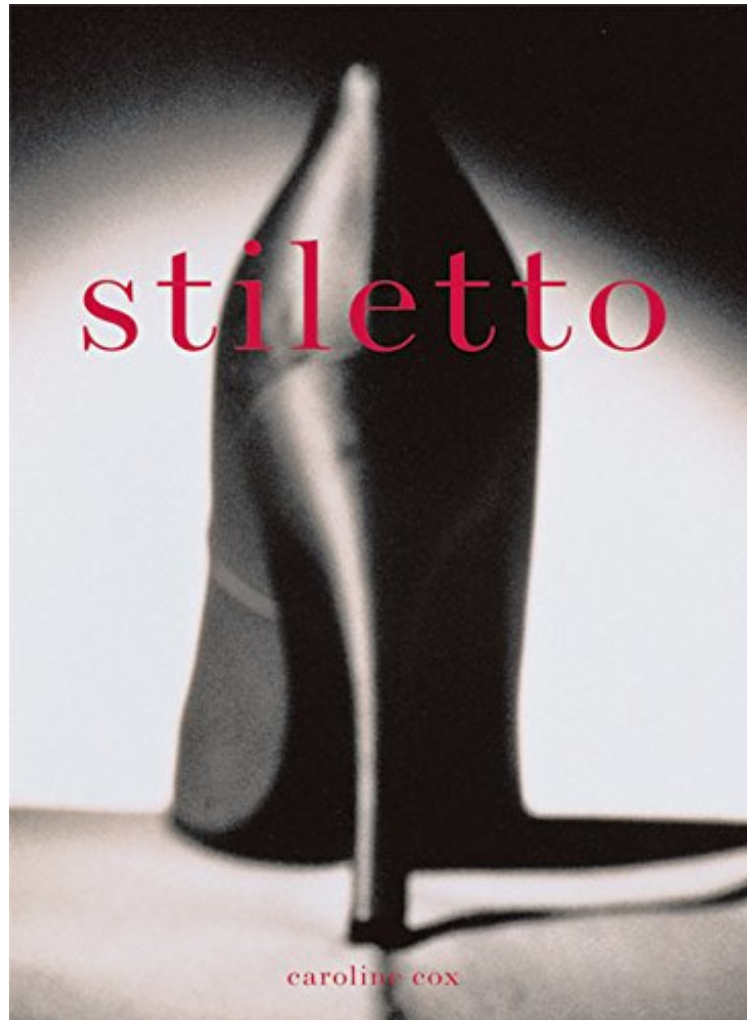


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Stiletto

Caroline Cox

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Caroline Cox : Stiletto before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stiletto:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. brave new heels By Kevin Collins this is primarily a historical narrative running from WW2 to the present - using fashion, and stiletto heels in particular, as a structuring element. the various, and often conflicting, power complexities embodied and represented by stiletto heels are well illustrated with frequent quotes and cultural references, but (surprisingly to me) these were not the focus of the book. this is not a book about cultural paradoxes I really enjoyed it! being born in the 1970s, I now have an expanded sense of the cultural liberation experienced after the survival-centric shadow of World War 2 - the new delight of living for the pleasure of life - glamorous hair, bright colors, Vespas, espresso, butter.. and stiletto heels. from here, the narrative traces the various responses to, and co-option of, the technology-enabled spiked heel. metaphorical for the period overall..

maybethere are lots of great pictures and illustrations - and the large format book is an aesthetic pleasure overall. just 4 years after publishing (2004 - 2008), the "now" perspective is fairly dated, both fashion and culture-wise. i found this things-are-changing-quickly (!) discovery informing and exciting. and again, this is primarily a historical narrative - not an up-to-the-minute cultural dialogue with more compelling analysis, more "aha" insights, etc - i would have given this book 5 stars. as it is, it's a light and interesting read - easily enjoyable in one or two sittings

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. History of a perfume for the sole
By Dr. Lee D. Carlson
Cursed by feminists, loved by the advertising industry, and casting a spell on men, the high-heel shoe that has been christened as the stiletto has to rank as the best invention in the history of humankind. As this book clearly is, and as a further testament to the genius of its designers and marketers, special museums should be built that not only contain the stiletto designs of the past, but also busts of the likenesses of Jimmy Choo, Christian Louboutin, Salvatore Ferragamo, Andre Preugia, and Charles Jourdan, among many others. These architects of the foot have brought women higher status, literally and figuratively. When women put them on, they are saying that they are in control of their poise, their confidence, and their future: that they make the choices for themselves. Stilettos can be worn either as a cloak, masking successfully the wearer's true intentions, or as a beacon, daring or challenging others to approach them. Those who take up the dare usually do so on their knees: such is the power of the stiletto. It is the perfume of the sole, with the length of heel a measure of its musk. And for those occasions when their wearers find themselves in a horizontal configuration rather than a vertical one, stilettos are the love handles of the feet. In this position there is no possibility of swollen ankles or equines, only the completion of something that the stiletto, with its exquisite and bewitching aesthetic initiated with subtlety and skill.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I loved every page.
By Near Mz.
I enjoyed every page of this book. A well written, enjoyable read if you love stiletto heels. And I do. Nice historical information, well researched and covering decades. All around a lot of fun to read.

Stiletto spells sex. Nothing else creates an erotically taut, arched foot or an overall come-hither silhouette quite like the stiletto heel. This exquisite book uncovers the compelling lure of the needle heel. A highly charged symbol, the stiletto suggests a multitude of contradictions - it can be elegant, vulgar, submissive, aggressive, subversive, conventional. The stiletto is phallic but supremely female, it makes the wearer at once vulnerable and in control. Six decades have seen the stiletto in vogue around the world with an ever-changing, kaleidoscopic clientele of classic ladies, Hollywood stars, fetishists, punks, princesses, power-dressers, cross-dressers, A-list celebrities, and the girl next door. For the first time, *Stiletto* attempts to uncover the compelling lure of the needle heel. Caroline Cox presents the various incarnations of the stiletto since its invention as a fantasy shoe brought to life by the flair and skill of shoemakers Vivier, Perugia, Ferragamo, and Jourdan in the early 1950s. Assertively modern, stilettos released women from the utilitarian wartime fashion of the 1940s, offering streamlined sophistication and glamour to women the world over. As the decade progressed the heel became saucier and higher, worn by starlets like Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield. By the end of the 1950s the heel was being worn by bad girls and had become a weapon of female power. The 1970s took the stilettos associations with sex and death and turned it into a fetish object, eulogized by artists Allen Jones and Eric Stanton. 1980s power dressers brought the stiletto back into the fashion arena, and today heels designed by Manolo Blahnik, Christian Louboutin, Jimmy Choo, and Gina are the badge of celebrity status and fashion savvy. This exciting new book by an international fashion authority presents the story of the stiletto for the first time, illustrated with new and vintage photography to explore the stilettos long relationship with sex, power femininity, fashion, and fetishism.

About the Author
Caroline Cox, professor of cultural history at the University of the Arts London, is a leading fashion authority whose work explores the relationship between fashion, beauty, and culture. A lecturer and broadcaster, she is also a cultural trends advisor at Vidal Sassoon. Her previous books include *Stiletto*, *Seduction*, and *The Handbag*.