

**Do not use this page for design.**  
This is a fractional page for advertising,  
not the spread layout.



*In the eye of the beholder*

***The quest to be beautiful is starting at a younger age than ever before***

***Story by Joan Jacob Brumberg  
Photos by Lauren Greenfield  
Layout by Kimberly Vogel***

Fina, 13, in a tanning salon, Edina, Minnesota.

**A**merican girlhood ain't what it used to be. Maybe there are pockets of girls out there who still revel in the "Little House on the Prairie" books or dress up their

dolls or run lemonade stands. But they aren't catching the eyes of sociologists, who seem to agree that girls today are growing up in a hyper-sexualized peer pressure-cooker — and they don't show up in "Girl Culture," a new book

from photographer Lauren Greenfield (Chronicle Books; \$40.00). Even the youngest girls in Greenfield's gritty, gorgeous portraits are far too busy dressing up like Barbie dolls to play with them.

Below: "When I win a track meet, I feel empowered. I feel part of something awesome. I like being looked up to. Kind of like when I'm dancing. The guys are just looking at you like, "Dang!" I think that's cool". Exotic dancer and track athlete Leilani, 21, wears her track-and-field medals in her "Schoolgirl" outfit, Fullerton, California



Above: Lily, then 5, shops at Rachel London's Garden, where Britney Spears has some of her clothes designed, Los Angeles, California. "Britney's a role model. She's fashionable, and she has movements that I like."

*“These rituals are deeply important to girls, yet they no longer carry a great deal of emotional weight. Instead, they involve frenetic forays into the marketplace, worries about what to wear, and a preoccupation with the pictures that will document the event.”*

A gentle warning: this is not a book for parents desperate to maintain their naivete about what's happening in their daughters' lives: these accounts show you more than you've ever imagined about the sexual and social habits of girls. No matter how well you think you understand what goes on in adolescent life, it can be shocking to read first-hand accounts of the jealousy,

pettiness, meanness and general anxiety that characterize female adolescence. Girl culture is the key to understanding what it means to be a young woman today or in the past. In every historical epoch, girls have formed a unique set of activities and concerns generated by their developmental needs as well as the adult society in which they live. What girls do, how

they think, what they write, whisper, and dream, all reveal a great deal about them and about us. Lauren Greenfield's photographic vision of contemporary girl culture is both a revealing documentary record and a disquieting personal commentary, infused with a distinctly sympathetic but biting point of view. A century ago, the culture of girls was still rooted in family,



Clockwise from top left:

Lillian, then 18, shops at Kirna Zabête, New York, New York. "When I was a fifteen-year-old girl, everyone was like, "Oh, my God, you're like Lolita." I'm like, "No, I'm a kid." But this city definitely teaches you that youth and sexuality go hand in hand.

Amelia, 15, at weight-loss camp, Catskills, New York.

Alli, Annie, Hannah, and Berit, all 13, before the first big party of the seventh grade, Edina, Minnesota. "I might look older than I actually am, but underneath it all, I'm only thirteen. It's kind of scary. It's a hard feeling to not know where you fit in yet," Hannah says.





Above: Emilia, 10, sits at the beach at fat camp.

**Do not use this page for design.**  
This is a fractional page for advertising,  
not the spread layout.

school, and community. When they were not in school or helping Mother, middle-class American girls were reading, writing, and drawing, as well as playing with their dolls. Many young girls knew how to sew, knit, crochet, and embroider, generating homemade crafts to decorate their rooms or give to friends as they sipped hot chocolate and read

aloud to one another. In a girl culture dominated by concerns about the body rather than mind or spirit, familiar rites of passage—such as Bat Mitzvah, quinceañera, graduation, and prom—are also transformed into shallow commercial events dominated by visions of Hollywood and celebrity magazines. These rituals are deeply important to

girls, yet they no longer carry a great deal of emotional weight. Instead, they involve frenetic forays into the marketplace, worries about what to wear, and a preoccupation with the pictures that will document the event.

Young women flocked to the Girl Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls, only two of many national and local single-sex

Continues on page 121