



Push Comes to Shove: New Images of Aggressive Women

Maud Lavin

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In the past, more often than not, aggressive women have been rebuked, told to keep a lid on, turn the other cheek, get over it. Repression more than aggression was seen as woman's domain. But recently there's been a noticeable cultural shift. With growing frequency, women's aggression is now celebrated in contemporary culture--in movies and TV, online ventures, and art. In *Push Comes to Shove*, Maud Lavin examines these new images of aggressive women and how they affect women's lives. Aggression, says Lavin, need not entail causing harm to another; we can think of it as the use of force to create change--fruitful, destructive, or both. And over the past twenty years, contemporary culture has shown women seizing this power. Lavin chooses provocative examples to explore the complexity of aggression, including the surfer girls in *Blue Crush*, Helen Mirren as Jane Tennison in *Prime Suspect*, the homicidal women in *Kill Bill*, and artist Marlene McCarty's mural-sized *Murder Girls*. Women need aggression and need to use it consciously, Lavin writes. With *Push Comes to Shove*, she explores the crucial questions of how to manifest aggression, how to represent it, and how to keep open a cultural space for it.



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