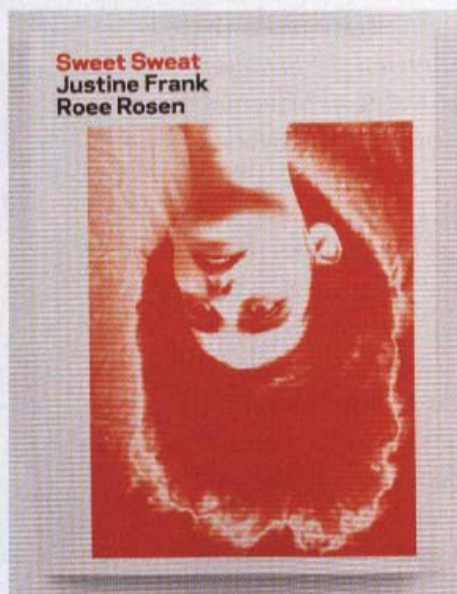


PRIMARY INFORMATION

This year saw the release of a translation of *Justine Frank's* lost pornographic novel *Sweet Sweat* (Sternberg Press/Extra City). More than a standard translation, and more than the republication of an out-of-print classic, *Sweet Sweat* is the creation of artist Roe Rosen—as is Frank herself. The novel traces the life of a French-born Jewish girl named Rachel. She is abducted by a dissolute count, who spares her life after smelling her sweet sweat. The two become lovers, fueling each other's perversions and provoking a sex-and-crime-filled spree through Europe. The accompanying biographical and critical essays—written by Rosen



Cover of Roe Rosen's *Sweet Sweat* (Sternberg Press/Extra City, 2009).

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under his own name—are illustrated with reproductions of Frank's artwork, in which Jewish symbols, sexual imagery, and Surrealist motifs are combined. Throughout, Rosen painstakingly constructs Frank's life as part of twentieth-century culture and history—a part that never existed, but should have. Arriving in Paris from her native Belgium in her midtwenties, Frank clashes with Breton and has a doomed affair with Bataille before moving to Palestine in 1934. There, our enfant terrible refuses to follow Zionist conventions and pinches out a miserly existence with the help of her only friend, Fanja Hissin. In 1943, she walks out of the apartment they share and is never heard from again.

Sweet Sweat is alleged to be the key to understanding Frank. Written in a style indebted to Sade and Bataille, the novel is thinly veiled avant-porn without much porn (many of the illicit pages are claimed to be lost). What we are left with is a fake roman à clef that demands Frank be accepted within a male-dominated history—and also with the question, How might we best celebrate this obscure artist now?

PRIMARY INFORMATION IS A NEW YORK-BASED ARTS NONPROFIT FOUNDED IN 2007 BY JAMES HOFF AND MIRIAM KATZEFF.