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European Drama and Performance Studies

Consuming Female Performers
(1850s-1950s)

Edited by Sabine Chaouche
and Clara Sadoun-Édouard



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Venus in finery The courtesan of the silent screen

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- **Author:** Tolini Finamore (Michelle)
- **Abstract:** Literature, theater, and early cinema are fascinated with the courtesan who not only seduced *with* her finery, she was seduced *by* finery, and was thus the ultimate consumer of high fashion. The appealing frisson of the “kept” woman is explored in four early films. The films use Édouard Manet’s famous, and scandalous, painting *Olympia* as an iconic *mise en scène* of the courtesan.
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