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Groupies, From Sex Symbols to Style Icons

When Pamela Des Barres and other backstage women came to prominence in 1969, the news media focused on their brazen sexuality. Now the focus is on their fashion.

By **JIM FARBER** NOV. 11, 2015

Cultural photographers try to capture images others miss. But even when they do, some people don't see what is really there.

Case in point: Baron Wolman's pictures of the original groupies in 1969. Billed on the cover of "A Special Super-Duper Neat Issue" of Rolling Stone (then a fledgling magazine), they inspired outrage in readers unfamiliar with the sexual innovations of the counterculture. In addition, the sometimes salacious articles that accompanied the photos irked some of the women portrayed. But Mr. Wolman said his portraits had a different intent.

"The thing I noticed immediately about these women was that they had spent a lot of time putting themselves together in ways that were so creative, you couldn't believe it," he said. "They mixed together outfits of the day with things from antique clothing stores to create a real vision. They weren't appearing half-naked to get the men's attention. They were dressing up to put on a show."

Mr. Wolman's view of the women as style icons comes into sharp focus thanks to a new coffee-table book, "Groupies and Other Electric Ladies." It

