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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Haute Couture meets Graphic Novel The Making of Modern Mythology**

The award-winning, San Francisco-based fashion designer Marilyn Yu is touring the country with her new book, "Relations that Suck: The Story of Eva and Dries." The luscious photographs and dazzling dresses of this tragic tale have caught the eye of vampire and fashion fans world-wide and now some will be able to meet the creator in person. This fable about the friendship and destiny of two timeless characters is portrayed through thirty-five dramatic photographs. Eva is a creative vampire who likes people. Dries is a traveling spider who disdains web-spinning.

For over a decade Yu has interwoven media, ideas, and people in her work. For this project she assembled a unique group of artists and professionals with a passion for beauty and pushing boundaries. Yu has created a piece of art in book form that bridges the worlds of fine art, fashion, and fiction. She has create a contemporary myth, concise yet layered with meaning, exploring the tragedies of guilt, denial, and our darker side.

Come meet genre-busting artist Marilyn Yu as she puts the personal back into story-telling. The Raven Queen (Yu's darker aspect) will be reading "Relations That Suck" and discussing topics ranging from visual story-telling to post-modern love to art and activism in the 21st century.

Book tour cities and dates:

Providence, RI: Oct 9 – 11

Boston, MA: Oct 12 – 18

New York, NY: Oct 19 – 25

Chicago, IL: Oct 26 – 29

Los Angeles, CA: Nov 10 – 14 & 19 – 21

San Diego, CA: Nov 15 – 18

Relations That Suck: The Story of Eva and Dries

Marilyn Yu

San Francisco: Art & Lenny 2009

52 pp. \$28.00

978-0-615-25471-5

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## MARILYN YU

From one of San Francisco's premier genre-busting artists comes a fable about the friendship and destiny of two timeless characters. For over a decade, Marilyn Yu has interwoven media, ideas, and people in her creations. In this her latest work, Yu takes fine art out of the gallery, high fashion off the runway, and adds stunning visuals to prose in order to aggregate and intensify their impact on and connection to life.

Yu's artwork has always mixed her lighthearted and humorous perspective with critical topics ranging from urban sprawl to the culture of consumerism. Indeed, she was a pioneer in introducing sustainability to high fashion with her award-winning, hemp-based clothing line, Plutonium Clothing.

Living in a time of great cultural transition as advances in technology break down traditional boundaries, Yu finds our inherited cultures unskilled at dealing with the collisions of different ideas and views. She believes that as our interdependence increases, the ultimate ramification of misdirected aggression is self-destruction. This motivates her to strive for compassion and self-exploration in order to shed inherited expectations and obligations. She hopes to inspire others to manifest by showing, through her work, that ideas and dreams can become reality.

Yu's vision is to bring diverse people together in order to develop new patterns of behavior by encouraging reflection, critical thinking, and cooperation. Her dedication to building and transforming consciousness and community-based organizations impels her to assemble teams that question the status quo and love to experiment. She works through a collaborative process that creates space for spontaneity and organic development.

For Relations that Suck, Yu assembled a unique group of artists and professionals with a passion for beauty and pushing boundaries. Together they have created a piece of art in book form that bridges the worlds of fine art, fashion, and writing. Relations that Suck portrays the tragedies of denial and guilt in thirty-five dramatic photographs accompanied by a poetically heartbreaking narrative.

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Marilyn Yu lives and works in San Francisco. She has a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design and a Masters in City and Regional Planning from UC Berkeley.

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"The photography is haunting and glamorous...a surprisingly touching tale...the intriguing clothing, the hair styles and makeup are flawless...the photography is outstanding.... I would recommend to people who love the fashion design world and the mystery of a good, short vampire story. The spider, Dries, is quite the character too!"

**Laura Hinds, Reviewer, MyShelf.com: July 2009**

"A kind of picture book for grownups,... A strikingly visual, thoroughly engaging, and quite original, "Relations That Suck" is enthusiastically recommended to fans of the vampire genre, as well as anyone with an interest in the not-so-simple art of visual storytelling."

**James A. Cox, "Reviewer's Choice" in California Bookwatch: April 2009**

"Dark and strangely entrancing .... It's just... wow. I am most definitely a fan of Marilyn Yu and her designs now, and I recommend "Relations that Suck" to vampire and fashion fans."

**Neha N. Kashmiri (age 14) from Reader Views March 2009 - Book Reviews for teens by teens**

"This fashionably dressed vampire with a penchant for creativity, Catholic guilt and human sympathy – who meets a dark handsome arachnid – is the creation of Marilyn Yu.... a fine weave, with fashion, fine art and publishing in a gorgeously dark picture book with beautiful theatrical clothing."

**April Elkjer, "Relations that Suck" - A Picture Book for Fashionistas", Nichi Bei Times, April 2-8, 2009 Entertainment+Art**

"San Francisco is proud to have an artist like Marilyn Yu who epitomizes the creativity and community that San Francisco is known for. Her book is a visually-stunning, experimental collaboration that showcases the best of San Francisco."

**David Chiu, San Francisco District 3 Supervisor, President of the Board of Supervisors**

"I loved the book. It's beautiful."

**Midori is the author of bestselling books "The Seductive Art of Japanese Bondage", "Master Han's Daughter" and "Wild Side Sex: The Book of Kink".**

"A pretty picture book for grownups.... her designs are certainly at the forefront of this fairy tale. Lushly photographed by Norma Cordova and Angela DeCenzo ... a story whose connotations touch on the dangers (and perhaps pleasures) of guilt, the balance of power in friendships, and whether or not a spider is ever really a proper roommate.... vampires in pretty clothing. And, really, how far can you go wrong with that as your premise?"

**HauteMacabre.com, 28 August 2009**

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## **Laura Hinds, Reviewer, MyShelf.com: July 2009**

Relations That Suck: The Story of Eva and Dries is a short story about a friendly vampire/lounge singer named Eva, and a spider named Dries who has nothing but disdain for spending time spinning webs which can be destroyed in an instant by an unthinking human hand. The relationship between Eva and Dries is quite unusual. Eva is not happy about taking human blood, and often suffers from guilt. Dries grows into a very large spider and is able to trap small prey, such as rats, to feed Eva's thirst.

Each page of this book narrates the tale of Eva and Dries, yet the photographs really take the spotlight upon themselves. The photography is haunting and glamorous, and I felt that photographers Angela DeCenzo and Norma Cordova did a fantastic job capturing the moods of the story.

Marilyn Yu does spin a surprisingly touching tale, although I admit to being a bit puzzled as to why two very different models portrayed Eva. Both models Jennifer Allford and Jennifer Lazorack are beautiful, yet one has light hair and the other a darker color. Perhaps this represents Good vs. Evil? I was left a bit unsure about that. Male models Calvin Jones and Marcus Wu appear as well, and handsomely suit their roles.

While most of the photographs could indeed be used as pages from a fashion design portfolio, there are a few graphic pictures showing Eva in her glory as a vampire. In addition to the intriguing clothing, the hair styles and makeup are flawless, with most of it done by Christal Saville, along with contributions by hair stylist Matthew Mommer and makeup artist Nikol Dedischew. The locations for the photo shoots suit the story quite well, and I do think that above all else, the photography is outstanding.

This is a book I would recommend to people who love the fashion design world and the mystery of a good, short vampire story. The spider, Dries, is quite the character too!

## **James A. Cox, "Reviewer's Choice" in California Bookwatch: April 2009**

A kind of picture book for grownups, "Relations That Suck: The Story of Eva and Dries" by Marilyn Yu tells the story of a vampire and her relationship with a man who is drawn to her. What makes "Relations That Suck" unique in the vampire genre is that it is composed of 30 striking photographs with an almost poetic storyline provided in the form of extended captions. A strikingly visual, thoroughly engaging, and quite original, "Relations That Suck" is enthusiastically recommended to fans of the vampire genre, as well as anyone with an interest in the not-so-simple art of visual storytelling.

## **Neha N. Kashmiri (age 14) from Reader Views March 2009 - Book Reviews for teens by teens**

Eva is a vampire who likes to live among humans, abstaining from ever killing one. She lives in an old textile mill and enjoys making lace. One day, a human man who figures out her secret wants to know what it's like to be bitten by a vampire. So Eva does, though she almost kills him. Eva then falls into a depression, refusing to come out. That's when she meets Dries.

Dries is a spider who loathes spinning webs. Instead he is a traveling spider, sending a line of silk into the air to fly to new places. He and Eva become quick friends after he brings her food. They explore the city together, until they run into the man Eva almost killed. He begs Eva to turn him into a vampire, too. She doesn't want to but Dries convinces her to do something that has dire consequences.

"Relations that Suck" by Marilyn Yu is a dark and strangely entrancing book. It's not so much the story itself (it is only 50-pages long). It's how the pictures tell the story. It's just... wow. I am most definitely a fan of Marilyn Yu and her designs now, and I recommend "Relations that Suck" to vampire and fashion fans.

## **HauteMacabre.com, 28 August 2009**

Marilyn Yu's Relations That Suck: The Story of Eva and Dries is a pretty picture book for grownups. Yu may be familiar to our readers as the designer behind Plutonium Clothing, and her designs are certainly at the forefront of this fairy tale. Lushly photographed by Norma Cordova and Angela DeCenzo, the book is far more about pictures than words. There is a story here, the tale of a friendship between a guilt-ridden vampire and a spider with wanderlust, but in the way of all fables it is of necessity short and to the point.

The fable is a difficult medium to work in, and Yu struggles with it a bit more than she does with the fashion (which is flawless in every frame). For a fable to work, it must be concise enough to read in one sitting, yet carry many layers above and beyond those which are presented. I think she makes a commendable effort here, with a story whose connotations touch on the dangers (and perhaps pleasures) of guilt, the balance of power in friendships, and whether or not a spider is ever really a proper roommate.

Overall, however, the strength of the book is visual: vampires in pretty clothing. And, really, how far can you go wrong with that as your premise?