

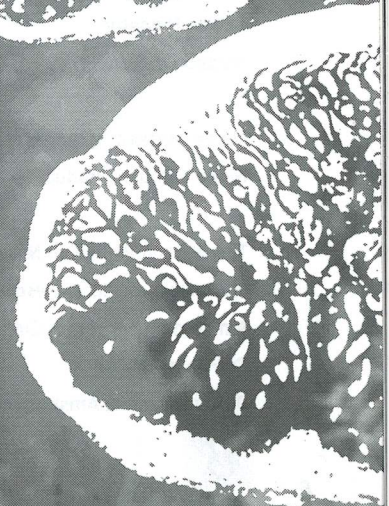
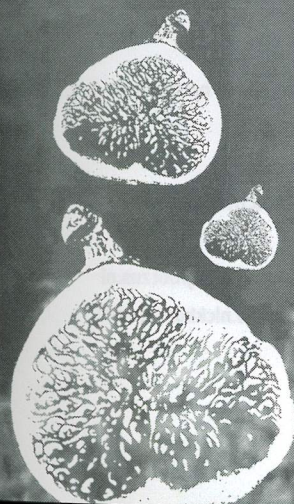
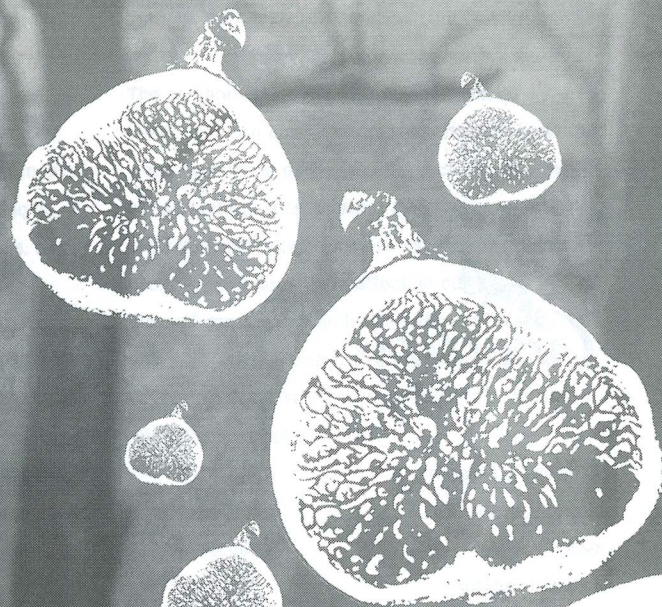
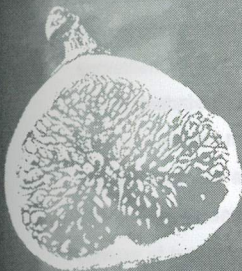
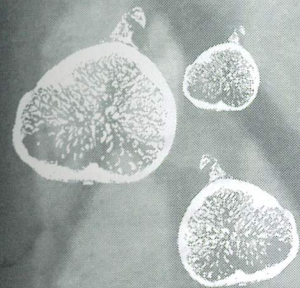
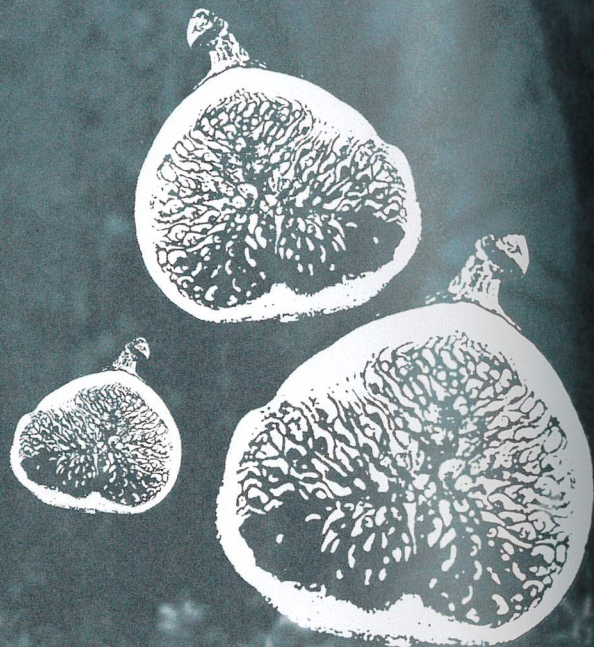
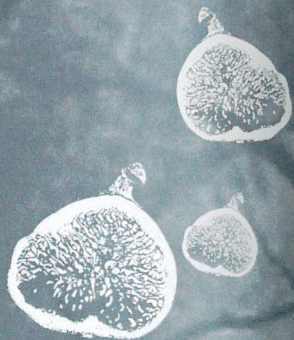
The Institute of Network Cultures presents:  
The Art and Politics of  
**Netporn**

September 30  
October 1  
2005  
De Badcuyp  
Amsterdam

[www.networkcultures.org/netporn](http://www.networkcultures.org/netporn)

**PROGRAM**





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## Credits

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The Art and Politics of Netporn is supported by:  
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Concept and program: Katrien Jacobs (concept),  
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# Preface

The Art and Politics of Netporn is the first international conference on netporn criticism. It will present multiple perspectives on our growing immersion in pornographic web-based media. A second aim of the conference is to discuss the potential of art and critical research in times of heightened information surveillance, filtering and censorship. The selected research presentations and art projects regard netporn as complex networks, with impact and growth, just as industries and/or indie media operations. Conference presenters will address the 'schizo' climate of hype and censorship, focusing on the ethics and aesthetics of digital media environments and (female and male) activities such as blogging, webcamming, chatting, p2p porn, live journals, confession boards, mailing lists and zines.

A growing number of theoretical and historical porn studies have appeared over the last decades, yet few have focused on porn within digital media environments. Based on the many submissions we have received from scholars and artists, we have come up with five conference themes.

Each of the themes will be represented by a mixture of scholarly research and art/media/industry presentations. Keynote speakers will include Mark Dery, Mikita Brotzman, and Susanna Paasonen who will analyse cultural obsessions with the 'sexual grotesque,' 'phantom paedophilia' and the 'political discourses of porn spam'. Albert Benschop will host a larger open debate on the various facets of information filtering and censorship.

The conference speaks to the concerns of a wider public. Netporn and its critics, the pro-porn/anti-porn wars, fluctuating economic business strategies and nation-state politics, Internet governance models and filtering devices -all these aspects of netporn economy and history are affecting our everyday ways of sensing and understanding media and sexuality. We will open the doors to views by those interested in art, scholarship, technology, industry, and debate as 'refreshment'.

Katrien Jacobs

# Program

friday sept 30

10:30

Opening Remarks

10:45-12:00

Keynote Lecture

Mark Dery: 'Sex Organs Sprout Everywhere': The Sublime and the Grotesque in Web Porn.

Mark Dery will elaborate on the Web as torture garden, a Psychopathia Sexualis for the Age of Xtreme Media. Delving deep into the Web-enabled efflorescence of subcultural obsessions and pop pathologies, Dery will consider the most grotesque of the Web's alt.sexualities. He will theorise the "democratisation of exploitation": the niche-marketing of non-standard body types that, ironically, realises the feminist dream of dethroning normative notions of beauty—"ironically" because this niche-marketing presumes that no one is so morbidly obese, so mind-crushingly ugly, so mottled with liver spots, wens, and carbuncles that s/he can't be the object of obscure desires \*somewhere\* on the Web. Is this phenomenon destabilising mainstream notions of the beautiful? Or is it simply extending that cultural logic to previously unexploited demographics? Then, too, what are we to make of the runaway proliferation of fetishism, in the Web age? (Hentai tentacle rape, anyone? Decapitation fantasies? Amputee worship?) Is fetishism becoming \*the\* default sexual modality? If so, is it transgressive or repressive—one more example of the iron cage of techno-industrial

rationale constricting our desires, or a salutary instance of subcultural sensibilities rebelling against mainstream normalcy? And what is the relationship between that trend, Net culture, and the Digital Age? "Sex organs sprout everywhere," wrote William S. Burroughs, in NAKED LUNCH. "Rectums open, defecate and close..." Even as the self-appointed morals czars of the Bush administration try to childproof the Web, exotic new toadstools spring up in its darker corners. Using theorists of sexual deviance and the Rabelaisian grotesque such as Bataille, Bakhtin, Kinsey, Kipnis, and Steele, Dery will consider the Newtonian physics of official culture's actions and the equal and opposite reactions of the Web's sexual underworld.

12:00-13:00

Keynote Lecture

Mikita Brottman: 'Is the Internet a Portal to Hell? Sex, Magic, and Phantom Paedophiles'

Much of the rhetoric surrounding the Internet, especially among U.S. conservatives, frames it as a magic portal, from which may emerge destructive viruses that can cause your computer to literally explode, or, even worse, can turn home-loving husbands into drooling porn fiends. Most often, the internet is regarded as a home for those phantoms that sneak through in the "cracks" made by technology: the anonymous destructive hacker, the identity thief, and - most terrifying of all - the paedophile, who, in the guise of an innocent pal, hangs around chat rooms. Waiting for the chance to abduct and molest your children. My paper will chart the rise of the

phantom paedophile, and will trace this fear to the concomitant popularity of "barely legal" websites and the sexualisation of 'legitimate' children like Britney Spears and the Olsen Twins. I suggest the social panic about online paedophiles is a screen for the fetishisation of children that goes on every day, in the media, and in our own homes.

13:00

Lunch

14:00-15:30

The Rise of the Netporn Society (part I)

Moderators: Matteo Pasquinelli, Indira Reynaert

15:30

Tea Break

16:00-17:30

The Rise of the Netporn Society (part II)

Moderators: Matteo Pasquinelli, Indira Reynaert

Netporn Society is a emerging category and group of netporn users, a growing network of micro-industries using hands-on practises and extra-portable devices for rethinking media production and distribution. The society includes suburban amateurs and indieporn, porn bloggers and sexperts as knowledge workers who channel the web's excess energy through personal meanderings, fan writings, and essays into sex politics.

This society could arguably challenge the idea that

porn has a very narrow function, i.e. to incite spectators to masturbation. Just like the 20th century art world fought the elitism of 'art for art sake,' we hope to come out with a critique of 'porn for porn sake.' The netporn society also includes artists who use aesthetics and collaborative art practices to reclaim porn as sexual politics. How can we conceptualize this era of the rising netporn society and participate in studies of indie media and micro movements? Presentations will consider the aesthetics and politics of netporn society, or how it copes with gender, war, bodies and media. Speakers will also make notes on how to 'map' and critically examine netporn's global political developments, the migration of netporn industries, the impact of netporn on e-commerce, and web-based sex workers.

Presentations:

Ayah Bdeir: 'Spam: Do You Swallow?'

Matteo Pasquinelli: 'Warporn! Warpunk!' and 'Neuro-body'

Heather Gorgura: 'Micro/Macro-Level Discourses of Altporn'

Sergio Messina: 'Realcore'

Julie Russo: 'The Real Thing: Reframing Queer pornography for Virtual Spaces'

Metka Zupanic: 'Confidante'

David Boardman: 'My Favorite Abughraib Links'

Manuel Bonik: 'The Naked Truth: netporn and search engines'

Rogério Lira: 'It's not porn, it's me'

# Program

saturday oct 1

10:30

## Keynote lecture

Susanna Paasonen: 'Gut reactions: affect and netporn'

Pornography is inseparable from gut reactions, be these ones of arousal or disgust, titillation or shame. My ongoing research on commercial netporn has lead me to thinking about representational conventions, formulas and scripts employed in porn, but also the necessity to engage with the affective power of pornography in the encounters of texts, their producers and readers. After all, porn functions with the logic of attraction, spectacle and affect and its representations cannot be fully addressed with semantic models of explanation.

Susanna Paasonen's talk looks into possible ways of accounting for gut reactions and their meanings in and for studies of porn, without loosing sight of questions concerning normativity, power and desire central to feminist theorisations of porn.

11:00-12:45

## Porn Meets Brain: Netporn Theory

Moderator: Geert Lovink

The artists and scholars in this section look for ways of exposing dominant concepts and image regimes informing the history of netporn. Some of the presentations focus on hot/cold and love/violence binaries writing the canonical histories of art and

porn. Others look at the impact of netporn as pushy commodities on concepts of the body and sexual desire, highlighting netporn's 'demons' and 'phantoms'. The presentations will bring to light hidden yet highly emotive elements of sex and gender politics.

## Presentations:

Matteo Stocchetti: 'Demons in the Net'

Paul Mathias: 'Towards a PPP (Point per Point) Theory of Porn'

Franco "Bifo" Berardi: 'The obsession of the (vanishing) body'

David Sterritt: 'The Aesthetics of Netporn: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Primitive'

12:45

## Lunch

13:30-15:00

## Porn as a Technology of the Self

Moderator: Katrien Jacobs

The presentations in this section will analyse cultural varieties of 'queer' sexuality or alternative types of pornographic presentation and networking, suggesting profiles and identities for sex workers and gay/lesbian/transgender web communities. Media agency is defined beyond the conventional staging of stardom and voyeurism, as sex seekers use peer-to-peer platforms to mutually show and consume sex. The question is if the porn self is managing to create hospitable and open networks on the web, where individuals of different body types, tastes and

ethnicities can be free of 'moral majority' intolerance and/or censorship.

## Presentations:

Michael Goddard: 'Big Beautiful Women-Techno-Archaism. Excessive Corporeality, and Network Sexuality'

Barbara de Genevieve: 'Sssspread.com'

Rodney Jones: 'Cybersex and Technologies of the Self'

Mireille Miller-Young: 'Because I'm Sexy and Smart: Black Porn Actresses as Web Mistresses'

Jason Wee: 'Eunuch Admirals'

15:00

## Tea Break

15:30-17:30

## Netporn and Censorship - Open Debate

Public debate hosted by Albert Benschop

How can we continue seeing ourselves as pornographic beings and digital networks in an age of cultural excess and warfare? One of the main reasons why there is lack of committed scholarship on netporn is its association with crime and punishment. As a result of media mystification of the facts about the rise of porn industries, the rise of child pornography and paedophilia, there have been new waves of censorship with repercussions in the arts and academia. Progressive individuals and institutions may believe that dialogues on open sexuality

and the politics of porn are no longer needed in the 21st century, but recent events and testimonies have proved us wrong. For instance, after the murder on Theo Van Gogh and his provocative use of female nudity in Submission I, it has become clear that there is a need for public debate on sex/porn culture and intolerance or freedom of expression.

As pornography and sex services are globally more available to web and mobile phone users, specific cultures and web users are indeed more actively being surveilled by ISP's, or censored by nation-state governments. From the recent closure of chat rooms and cyber cafés, to massively government-funded operations on p2p networks and net predators, we will have an open debate on the dark side of the netporn economy, arguing as a support network to the perilous state of free speech in art and porn/sex research.

## Presentations:

Shu Lea Cheang: 'Milk or No Milk Today?'

Adam Zaretsky: 'Why I Want to Fuck E. O. Wilson: The Sociobiology of Netporn'

Koen Leurs: 'Exploring Paedophilia: a pragmatic inventory of the paedophilic discourse observed from a digital media perspective'

Katrien Jacobs: 'Porn Browsing: Habits Within the Profession'

## Porn Pour Porn Soirée Saturday oct 1 at 20:00

Porn Pour Porn Soirée

Porn Pour Porn Soirée on Saturday night will have performances, screenings, DJ/VJ acts, live music and drinks.

The evening will kick off with the book launch of Katrien Jacobs' book: 'Libidoc: Journeys in The Performance of Sex Art' (Maska Publications). The launch will be followed by a mixture of live and mediated acts, screenings, and will end in party sounds and video specials by Phag Off and Girlswholikeporno.

The Porn Pour Porn performers will engage in a dialogue with the netporn society. Media artists and porn performance will seduce or educate the audience with a provocative mixture of highbrow and lo-fi porn experiments.

- Kim Jan Brewée: 'Plane', 'Fast Evolution City' and 'War' that are all made with footage found on the web.
- Shu Lea Chang: 'IKU'
- Dawn/Duana: 'Sex Dolls'
- Darko Fritz: 'XXX [body . technology . desire . porno]'
- Antonia Hernández: 'Domestic Porn: Porn as the Last Refuge of Identity'
- Mistress Koyo and Karla Grundick, 'www.linuxvirgin.info'
- Peter Luining: 'Doktertje Spelen'
- Frédéric Moffet: 'Hard Fat'
- Adam Zaretsky and Barbara Groves : 'Ovarium.org'
- Porn Pour Porn Soirée: music, visuals, performances by Phag Off and Girlswholikeporno

**Kim Jan Brewée** shows the video animations 'Plane', 'Fast Evolution city' and 'War' at NETPORN. These animations are made from footage found on the Web. The footage is digitally remastered to become short videos, which should be played in loop. His work revolves around image quotes, the use of stereotypical images taken from the media and the world of film.

**Shu Lea Chang's** IKU is an innovative Japanese production that depicts a world where sex may soon be deemed obsolete by the GENOM Corporation, which develops a machine capable of sexually satisfying the user by connecting a computer directly to the brain. In order to collect data on the sexual preferences of every sort of person, they send seven sexy cyborgs into the city of New Tokyo with the intent of having relations with as many people as possible. Experimental and explicit, Shu Lea Chang's sci-fi-film crosses all sorts of boundaries while making creative use of digital filmmaking technology.

**Dawn/Duane** 'SexDollSex.com' is a web-based new media project that will feature an Internet sex doll community. Modelled after popular PHP web communities and amateur porn sites, SexDollSex will include a sexblog, photo galleries, a webcam, message boards and interactivity. Dolls will have fantasy personas, will interact and correspond to visitors by writing in daily smut journals, posting sexy/erotic photos, as well as live webcast performances and other media. Visitors will be encouraged to create their own sex doll personas for the site, create sexblogs, submit photos, and join in the sex doll community via message boards and discussion lists.

**Darko Fritz's** project 'XXX [body . technology . desire . porno]' is a visual composition of encrypted (coded) TV signal dislocated into the physical space (of the art installation). TV broadcasters encrypt the video signal for those who don't pay a subscription fee. Nevertheless such a signals are present in both the air and at the Amsterdam TV cable. In particular, a TV program with hard-core porno films was recorded. Within unregulated rhythms of distorted and noisy moving images of unsynchronised video signal the image processing just happened by itself: polarisation, black and white and colour negative inversions, image moving out of frame horizontal and vertical, strobe- effect etc. No additional editing was used. During the transfer of analogue to digital video image a new quality of image is achieved.

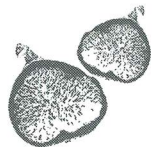
**Antonia Hernández's** 'Domestic Porn: Porn as the Last Refuge of Identity' innovative web graphics—visual essays exploring the subconscious ideas assorted with a particular genre of porn. The piece speaks (visually) about porn as a literary style, the clichés associated to each genre, symbolism,....

**Mistress Koyo and Karla Grundick** will present 'www.linuxvirgin.info'. The site www.linuxvirgin.info is currently hosting weekly launches of the linux virgin 1.1-1.5 series, an erotic and informative video series about learning to build a computer to run linux on. In its brief public exposure the linux virgin project has rapidly become a site of contagious, or viral, information exchange. During the two-week preview stage, before the official launch of the site on Valentine's Day, their project was blogged, linked, posted, and commented on all over the world web.

**Peter Luining's** 'Doktertje Spelen / Playing Doctor' provokes discussion. The project from 1998 has quite a bit of a history and is considered by some as very controversial. It's at the moment available online through computerfinearts.com which is hosted by the Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art (Cornell University, Ithaca New York). Also there's no direct link through Google or other search engines to the piece anymore.

**Frédéric Moffet's** 'Hard Fat' is a short documentary about the subculture of gainers (a gainer is someone who deliberately gains weight because he enjoys living in a fatter body) that questions our notions of size, desires, beauty and masculinity.

**Adam Zaretsky and Barbara Groves** 'Ovarium' is a playful critique of netporn, through exhibitionistic 'play' practices that deconstruct pornographic voyeurism. Making use of space and autonomous media to stream video, broadcast intimate forms of play, as did Zoot en Genant in 8X8X72 Fucking Retreat. They are guided by vitalistic and poetic anti-artifice tendencies in finding a new definition of porn.





## Speakers Biographies

### ayah bdeir

[web.media.mit.edu/~ayah](http://web.media.mit.edu/~ayah)

Ayah Bdeir is a first year Master's Student at the Media Lab in MIT. The media Lab is a research lab that opened in 1985 in Cambridge, MA and is viewed as a separate entity from the rest of MIT. The Lab's work is researching new technologies and applications in electronics, digital video, multimedia, computer human interaction, and other fields and how they overlap with the every day physical world. Ayah Bdeir is part of the Computing Culture group, a group of engineers/artists/activists that look at how artists can refigure technology to address the full range of human experience ([weblogs.media.mit.edu/compcult/](http://weblogs.media.mit.edu/compcult/)). He received degrees in Computer Engineering and sociology from the American University of Beirut and my work is at the intersection of technology and social activism. .

### franco 'bifo' berardi

Franco "Bifo" Berardi is a writer, media theorist and media activist. Founder of the magazine *A/traverso* (1975-1981), he took part in the staff of Radio Alice, the first free radio station in Italy (1976/1978). Bifo was involved in the political movement of autonomia in Italy during the 1970s. He worked with Felix Guattari, in the field of schizoanalysis. During the '80's Bifo contributed to the magazine *Semiotexte* (New York), *Chimerees* (Paris), *Metropoli* (Rome) and *Musica 80* (Milan). In the 1990s he published *Mutazione*

*e ciberpunk*, (Geneva, 1993), *Cibernauti* (Rome, 1994), *Felix* (2001). Co-founder with Matteo Pasquinelli of the [rekombinant.org](http://rekombinant.org) e-zine.

### david boardman

[www.netzfunk.org](http://www.netzfunk.org)

David Boardman is a designer and artist coming from Aosta, Italy. He studied communications sciences in Turin, where he worked as freelance programmer and designer. He is a co-founder of *netzfunk.org* collective ([www.netzfunk.org](http://www.netzfunk.org)), an open network of dispersed artists sharing in common a subversive idea of art, and the hate for the multifarious mafias of art, culture, economy, armies and politics. The current expressive research lines are digital literature, robotics, meaning technologies, installation art and locative media.

### manuel bonik

[nightacademy.net](http://nightacademy.net)

[bootlab.org](http://bootlab.org)

[invalideale.de](http://invalideale.de)

[millefleurs.org](http://millefleurs.org)

[frevolution.de](http://frevolution.de)

Manuel Bonik, Berlin, works as author, DJ, artist, curator and IT consultant for *contraco* in Berlin ([www.intranetsuche.de](http://www.intranetsuche.de)). At the moment he is writing his PhD on 'Mistakes as a Generative System' (working title) at the department for aesthetics and

history of media at Humboldt University in Berlin. With Oswald Wiener and Robert Hoedicke he published a book on automata theory: 'Eine elementare Einführung in die Theorie der Turing-Maschinen' (An elementary introduction to the theory of Turing machines), Vienna / New York: Springer-Verlag 1998.

## kim jan brewée

Kim Jan Brewée is an artist and writer. He graduated in St-Lukas Brussels and has made artworks from digital prints to installations, from sculptures to site-specific work, from video to drawings. In September 2004 Kim Jan Brewée started the Transmedia Program (new media in Arts, Design & Media), also in Brussels, which he terminated prematurely in the beginning of this year. At this moment Brewée is finishing his first novel and trying to get it published.

## mikita brottman

[www.mikitabrottman.com](http://www.mikitabrottman.com)

Mikita Brottman, PhD., is professor of language, literature and culture at the Maryland Institute College of Art, and a psychoanalyst-in-training at the Washington Square Institute for Psychotherapy and Mental Health, in New York City. Her most recent publication is *High Theory, Low Culture* (NY: Palgrave, 2005).

## shu lea cheang

Shu Lea Cheang is a self styled digital nomadic artist. She works in a social interface building using digital media, installation and filmmaking. Her Net installation works were commissioned

and permanently collected by Walker Art Center (Bowling Alley, 1995), NTT[ICC], Tokyo (Buy One Get One, 1997) and the Guggenheim Museum (Brandon, 1998-1999). Since 2000, she created a series of fictional narrative for networked projects under the headline of "DATED2030", including "Baby Play" (NTT [ICC], Tokyo 2001) and "Baby Love" (scheduled for Palais de Tokyo opening in December 2005). Parallel to museum installations, she has also been indulged in 'bodywork', including a sci-fi porn feature "I.K.U" (2000) produced by Tokyo's Uplink co., a porn cast call installation "Fluid " for Norway's Detox festival (2004-2005) and a web TV " Milk " for Switzerland hosted 56k-bastard TV (2004).

## dawn/duana



Duana is a filmmaker/installation/performance artist. Her work frequently examines issues of female sexuality including the femme fatale, female masquerade, burlesque, lesbian sadomasochism, fetishes, and other fun stuff. Duana is a recent graduate of NSCAD in Halifax, Nova Scotia with a BFA in Film Production, Critical Film Studies and Photography.

## mark dery

Mark Dery is a cultural critic. He writes about media, the visual landscape, fringe trends, and unpopular culture. Dery is the author of *The Pyrotechnic Insanitarium: American Culture on the Brink* (1999) and *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century* (1996). He edited *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture* (1994), the anthology that inaugurated cyber studies as an academic field. His 1993 essay "Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing, and Sniping in the Empire of the Signs" popularised the term "cul-

ture jamming" and helped launch the movement.

Dery has written for *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Atlantic Monthly* (online), *The Washington Post*, *Lingua Franca*, *Rolling Stone*, *Spin*, *Salon*, *Wired*, *ID*, *Dwell*, *Print*, and *The Village Voice*, among others. He has written columns for several national magazines, most recently "Invisible Lit," which ran for several years in *Bookforum*. His radio commentaries have been featured on the nationally syndicated program "Radio Nation." He is a frequent lecturer in the United States and overseas, where his talks have taken him to the UK, Germany, Italy, Finland, Macedonia, Chile, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, and Australia.

## darko fritz



[darkofritz.net/projects/xxx.htm](http://darkofritz.net/projects/xxx.htm)

Darko Fritz is an artist and sometimes curator, as recently working on exhibition of pioneering digital art for ZKM. From 1997 he is working on the 'XXX [body . technology . desire . porno]' project - a series of artworks in different mediums on the subject of pornography, ranging from digital prints, video, networked sound net art, txt and public art installations.

## barbara de genevieve

Barbara de Genevieve has been a professor of photography at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) since 1994. She has also taught at the University of Illinois and California State University, San Jose. Known first for her work as a photographer, de Genevieve has exhibited in Tokyo, Frankfurt, and numerous esteemed galleries in the USA. She

has also lectured at the Glasgow School of Art, CAI Arts, Rhode Island School of Design, and New York University. Much of her art explores the connections among dominance, power, and sex, including their inverse relationships.

De Genevieve has won awards from the National Endowment for the Arts (Visual Artist Fellowship); Art Matters Foundation Fellowship; and the Illinois Arts Council. Her critical and artistic works have been published in *Exposure*, *SF Camerawork Magazine*, and *P-Form*. Ezell Gallery, Chicago, represents her photographic work.

## girlswholikeporno

[www.girlswholikeporno.com](http://www.girlswholikeporno.com)  
[cyberspaceland.org/shift](http://cyberspaceland.org/shift)

Girlswholikeporno is a Barcelona-based dj/vj collective. Girlswholikeporno may be not for girls, not for boys, but for people who like sex with people. People with hair on the face, on the chest, with tits bigger or smaller, with bums, cunts or whatever... Perhaps in the future doctors stop operating the sex of babies to make them be real men or women. Perhaps in the future people with cunt and beard do not feel like shaving to "be" women. Perhaps, perhaps.... Perhaps in the future girlswholikeporno will be totally out dated.

## michael goddard

Visiting Professor of Australian Cultural Studies  
Department of British and Commonwealth Studies  
Uniwersytet Lodzki, Lodz, Poland





## heather gorgura

Heather Gorgura graduated her B.A. in Political Science and Comparative Literature. Her research interests are Internet-driven alternative media and activist networks. In 2000 she became involved with the Seattle Independent Media Center (IMC) and witnessed how media activists worked at creating a space where voices traditionally marginalised and muted by the mainstream media could be heard.

## antonia hernández

[www.corazondelatex.cl](http://www.corazondelatex.cl)

Antonia Hernández is net artist, graphic designer, amateur writer and sex obsessed. She was born and lives in Santiago, Chile. Since 2000 she's been working on Corazón de Látex (Latex Heart), a project about porn as a literary genre in which the mental construction around sex is more important than sex itself, and that also explores the paradox of the desire we feel towards a bitmap. The work she is currently doing, and that she will present at the conference, is about how in an abrasively globalised and homogenous landscape, porn, more niche-oriented than ever, can be a last refuge for identity. Or at least the sexiest one.

## rodney jones



Rodney Jones is Assistant Professor at the City University of Hong Kong. His primary research interest is the discursive construction of identities in both public discourse and face-to-face interaction, particularly in regard to health issues, which he approaches from the perspectives of Critical Discourse Analysis and Sociocultural Practice Theory. Recently

he has been studying the discourse of HIV/AIDS in both Hong Kong and Mainland China, a long term project involving the analysis of public health education materials, media texts and talk in a number of different social contexts ranging from doctor-patient interaction to the negotiation of risk among men who have sex with men. Related to this project is a more general interest in emerging gay and lesbian identities and communities of practice in China. He is also involved in a project examining the discourse of Hong Kong transition from British to Chinese rule. Other research and teaching interests include phonology and the use of literature in language teaching.

## mistress koyo and karla grundick

[linuxvirgin.info](http://linuxvirgin.info)

Mistress Koyo and Karla Grundick met in NYC in 2003 in an abandoned basement on 125th street that used to be a heat transfer research facility. After their laptops struck up a conversation, Mistress Koyo and Karla Grundick quickly became friends and collaborators. They soldered together often. In 2005 one of their fans started stalking them while they were assembling a computer.

## koen leurs

Koen Leurs is currently finishing his BA at the University of Utrecht, in the Netherlands, for his study that is labelled 'communication and information sciences'. Coming September, he will enrol in a research MA. He still needs to figure out which MA it'll be, since he is provisionally accepted at Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam, Media

Studies at the University of Amsterdam and Media Studies at the University of Utrecht. On the Netporn conference, Leurs will present some intriguing things he found when writing his BA thesis, which focuses on paedophilic discourses.

## rogério lira

Rogério Lira is a graphic and interaction designer living and working in Amsterdam. Born in the sixties in São Paulo, Brazil - just in time for the summer of love - Rogério studied fine arts, designed books and catalogues for São Paulo museums and then joined the initial creative team of MTV Brazil, where he specialised in the design and production of title sequences and video graphics. He left Brazil with rather vague travel plans, which took him to Southeast Asia, where he designed for Channel [V] in Hong Kong and later to Brussels and Amsterdam, where he graduated at the design department of the Sandberg Institute.

Rogério Lira has since then established his own design studio in the centre of Amsterdam, working both independently and in cooperation with a number of Dutch colleagues. He has developed projects ranging from on-air graphic identity for Dutch broadcasters to complex online applications, live video shows, books and postage stamps. Commissioners include the late Dutch Design Institute, VPRO, NPS/Nova, TPG Post, TBWA, The Amsterdam Fund for the Arts and the Brazilian Embassy in The Hague. Rogério Lira is now a member of the selection committee of the Funds for the Visual Arts, Design and Architecture in Amsterdam and teaches at the Utrecht Graduate School of Visual Art and Design.



## peter luining

[www.ctrlaltdel.org](http://www.ctrlaltdel.org)

Peter Luining studied contemporary philosophy in the mid 80's. After his study he became active in the Amsterdam VJ-scene. He started fiddling with computers, and made 3D animations in commercial jobs. He also directed video-clips. Unsatisfied with commercial jobs and his role of only doing images and video with music made by others he started to combine video with his own music. In 1995 the character of his work changes dramatically when he discovers the net and the relative easy way interactivity could be achieved by using Web pages. After doing some obscure net performances, Luining first got international recognition with his work "click club", which he presented at the Transmediale festival in Berlin. This netpiece distinguished itself from nearly everything at that time because of the way the user could and could not interact with its sounds and images. Since 1998 Luining's work is turning towards a kind of minimalism, while maintaining his earlier research of the dynamics of the net.

## paul mathias

[pmat.ciph.free.fr](http://pmat.ciph.free.fr)  
[www.ciph.org](http://www.ciph.org)

Paul Mathias is currently a Programme Director at the French Collège International de Philosophie, where he's in charge of a seminar on the Internet, network technologies, cultures, and practices. Next to that Mathias also teaches Philosophy at the Lycée Henri IV in Paris. At this time he is preparing two books, one on the French Renaissance writer Montaigne, and another one on the politics of the Internet. Although it may look the two subjects can't be combined, he thinks there is a very interesting

similarity between Montaigne's patterns of thought and rhetoric, and the cognitive potentialities of networks and the Net.

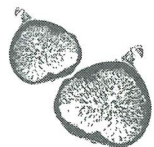
## sergio messina

[www.radiogladio.it](http://www.radiogladio.it) (with a small English section)  
[www.daridire.net](http://www.daridire.net)

Sergio Messina is an independent musician, journalist and technology researcher based in Milan, Italy. His field of interest within Netporn is digital amateur sexual imagery, the type that began when digital tools (cameras and web) became widespread in the late nineties. There are many fascinating sexual, political and social implications in this material, that he calls Real Core; differently from Soft Core (simulated sex) and Hard Core (real sex but simulated situation). What matters here are intentions and reality, over beauty, good lighting and even genital depiction.

## mireille miller-young

Mireille Miller-Young, Ph.D. is a University of California President's Postdoctoral Fellow hosted through the Center for Black Studies of the University of California Santa Barbara. Earning her B.A. in History from Emory University, and her M.A. and doctorate in American History and History of the African Diaspora at New York University, Dr. Miller-Young's research interests concern black feminist theory, black sexual politics, the racialised political economy of sex work, and American film and visual cultures.



## frédéric moffet

Frédéric Moffet was born in Montreal. He graduated from Concordia University with a BFA in filmmaking. He received a full scholarship in 1996 to complete a MFA in video at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he presently teaches in the Film, Video and New Media Department.

Blurring the line between facts and fantasies, his work investigates the out-of-control body, torn between ethics and desires.

## susanna paasonen

[www.translocal.net/susanna](http://www.translocal.net/susanna)

Susanna Paasonen is an Academy of Finland postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Women's Studies, University of Turku and adjunct professor of Media Culture at University of Tampere, Finland. She is specialised in Internet research, feminist theory and studies of popular culture. Her recent publications include *Women and Everyday Uses of the Internet: Agency & Identity* (ed. with Mia Consalvo, Peter Lang 2002); *Jokapäiväinen pornomme* (Our Daily Porn: media, sexuality and popular culture, ed. with Kaarina Nikunen & Laura Saarenmaa, Vastapaino 2005) and *Figures of Fantasy: Women, Internet and Cyberdiscourse* (Peter Lang, forthcoming in 2005).

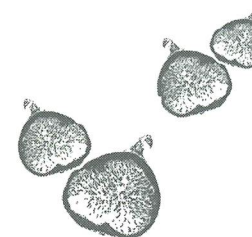
## phag off

[www.phagoff.org](http://www.phagoff.org)

PHAG OFF has the form of a monthly bacchanal party. A dirty mail-art-like newsletter is the track to follow; the party extreme contents are driven by: politically incorrect vjing with d.i.y. queer porno and freeware opensource video software. PHAG



OFF is based in Rome but it appeared in Bologna and Berlin too. Their first time was in 2003. PHAG OFF is animated by: WARBEAR which is the founder, promoter and resident dj, and Epicentro Ursino Romano, Leather Club Rome, HUP CONCERTI, VIDA LOCA RECORDS, DJ LIPS, PORNFLAKES, SPEED DEMON, DELIRIOUNIVERSALE.COM and much more sick freaks.



## indira reynaert

[www.existenz.nl](http://www.existenz.nl)

[crossmediaforum.web-log.nl](http://crossmediaforum.web-log.nl)

The world of Porn Valley used to be part of Indira Reynaert's daily life... She is probably one of the few, or even the only participant who actually worked in the hidden civilisation. Her role as producer of the internet-department (which started out with 1 person and ended with 15) was to organise and manage cross medial projects. She worked on one of the first successful Dutch adult cross medial television project (in 1999/2000) called "Boven de 18" (eighteen plus) in collaboration with Midhold, The Hague. Currently Reynaert is working part-time as a new media teacher at the University of Utrecht and started her own new media company. There she works as a lecturer e.g. at the Art Academy of Utrecht, the School of Journalism, the Institute of Information Engineering Amsterdam etc. She just launched a cross media forum [www.crossmediaforum.net](http://www.crossmediaforum.net) (in Dutch) where people like students, researchers, creatives etc. can talk about this topic, discuss and asks questions.

## julie russo

[j-l-r.org](http://j-l-r.org)

Julie Levin Russo is a PhD student in the Department of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University, where she studies television on the internet, fan production, and mediated sexual politics. Her erotic fiction has been published in *Best of Best Lesbian Erotica 2* and *Up All Night*, and she has appeared in the lesbian porn magazine *On Our Backs* and on HBO's adult documentary series *Real Sex*.

## david sterritt

David Sterritt is a film critic for the *Christian Science Monitor* and professor of film at Long Island University, is one of the most astute, acclaimed, and thought-provoking critics in America.

David Sterritt is chairman of the National Society of Film Critics. He is the author of *Screening the Beats: Media Culture and the Beat Sensibility*, *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard*, and *Mad to Be Saved: The Beats, the '50s, and Film*, and his work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Film Comment*, and *Cineaste*.

## matteo stocchetti

Matteo Stocchetti is a research fellow at the Institute of Arcada University of Applied Science in Helsinki, Finland. His interest in the conference is more on the "politics" than the "art" side. More specifically, he is interested in the politics of netporn as an arena in which sexuality is "problematized" (in the Foucault sense, cf. *History of Sexuality*) in societies. The focus is on issues of power in general and symbolic power in particular (this is Bourdieu, cf.

Symbolic power). Since one of the major problem in this, as in other, domains of social studies is the lack of reliable empirical research, he and his colleagues at the Institute try to address our topics of interest with a critical eye to methodological aspects (e.g. the operational definitions of the key concepts in their study).

## jason wee

Jason Wee is a Singaporean artist based in New York. Jason Wee is currently pursuing a two-year Masters program in Fine Arts at Parsons School of Design (New York), specialising in photography and related technologies on a Shell-NAC Scholarship. Prior to moving to New York, he started OogaChaga, a network of support groups for young gay people in Singapore, with two friends. The group is currently conducting its tenth 'sequel' for gay men aged 30 and above.

## adam zaretsky

[www.emutagen.com](http://www.emutagen.com)

Adam Zaretsky graduated in Art Studio from University of California at Davis. He has an Art and Technology MFA from the Art Institute of Chicago. He has two years experience as a Research Associate at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the Arnold Demain Laboratory for Microbiology and Industrial Fermentation. He has two years experience as an Organic Farmer, working to aid subsistence farmers in such disparate climates as Guatemala, Sumatra and Hawaii. He also has two years experience as a sex worker/activist, gleaning the underbelly of our flex-monkey for biological commentary on sexual variety. The past 3 years, Adam has taught VivoArts: Art and Biology Studio, an experimental 'living art'

production class for: Steve Wilson's Conceptual/Information Arts (CIA) department at San Francisco State University, SymbioticA, The Art and Science Collaborative Research Laboratory at The University of Western Australia Department of Anatomy and Human Biology and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in the Integrated Electronic Arts Department. He is currently working on pFARM, the Power Farm, a Biotech-Intensive Fetish Powered Organic Farm Incorporated Cult.

## metka zupanic

Zupanic's work is based on research of extreme points of the human being. The great attention of her artistic research is given to impressions and the space between - which means the employing of social profiles. This is obvious in performances and video where she tries to involve the audience. Various kinds of media are employed, ranging from sculptures, video, sound and computer graphics, to the body itself used as an object. Most of her works are based on questions of the "body", because today we can speak of a transformed and replaced body as an artistic means with its own autonomy whose unpredictable licentious and interior challenges and destroys the accepted practices of its depiction. A changed view deconstructs the body into fragments and makes it a statement, an identity, a text, a process...



## Crew Biographies

### katrien jacobs

Katrien Jacobs, is guest scholar/curator for the Netporn Conference. Jacobs works as an assistant professor at City University of Hong Kong. She is a scholar, writer and activist in the field of digital art and culture who has published widely on netporn, sex art, and censorship. She has a Ph.D. degree in comparative literature and media, with a thesis on dismemberment myths and rituals in 1960s/1970s body art and performance media. She recently finished her book 'Libidoc: Journeys in the Performance of Sex Art.' (Maska Publications), a grand-scale emotive and illuminated travelogue into the work of 27 artists, with tales and commentaries by the double-narrator 'Libidot' and 'dr jacobs'.

### marije janssen

Marije Janssen is research assistant for the Art and Politics of Netporn. Marije is a fifth year student at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Utrecht. In 2004 she graduated as Bachelor in the Arts, with a specialisation in Media Studies. As part of the master programme New Media & Digital Culture she works as an intern at the Institute for Network Cultures for the conference 'The Art & Politics of Netporn'. As a part of this conference she will also start her research for her Master's thesis on the cyberfeminist perspective on the representation of the female sexual identity in online communities. But next to that, Marije has a broad interest in everything connected to new media, from the art of computer games to digital copyrights. But after com

pleting several courses at the faculty of Women's Studies, she has specialised in cyberfeminist views on the relationship between new media and identity.

### nieke kempen

Nieke Kempen is production assistant at the Art and Politics of Netporn. She's a fourth year student of Communication and Information Science at the University of Utrecht. Within these four years she also took a minor in Justice and Society, and courses in Women's Studies. After graduating her Bachelor this summer and a successful execution of her function as production assistant for The Art and Politics of Netporn, Nieke intends to obtain her Master in Communication, Policy and Management at the University of Utrecht.

### geert lovink

Geert Lovink is initiator of the Art and Politics of Netporn. He's a Dutch-Australian media theorist and activist, and the founder of the Institute of Network Cultures in Amsterdam. Since January 2004 appointed as senior researcher/associated professor at Amsterdam University (HvA/UvA). He is organiser of conferences, festivals and (online) publications and the founder of numerous Internet projects such as [www.nettime.org](http://www.nettime.org) and [www.fibreculture.org](http://www.fibreculture.org). He recently published *Dark Fiber* (2002), *Uncanny Networks* (2002) and *My First Recession* (2003). For more information: [www.laudanum.net/geert](http://www.laudanum.net/geert).

### sabine niederer



Sabine Niederer is producer of the Art and Politics of Netporn. She works as producer and researcher Institute of Network Cultures. She graduated in 2003 as an art historian at Utrecht University, with a thesis on manipulated art photography from Dada - now. In 2003, she worked as producer of the international games conference Level Up. From 2001-2004 she worked as curator of Hoogt4, the platform of film-related arts at film theatre 't Hoogt in Utrecht. Until recently she taught media theory at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. Sabine Niederer is one of the editors of the bimonthly film and video program 'Cinematiek' and reviews music videos for the NPS short film website.

### matteo pasquinelli

Matteo Pasquinelli is the 'stimulator' and co-curator of The Art and Politics of Netporn. He has been based in Bologna, Italy, for a long time. After dealing with several media activism projects (from Luther Blissett to Telestreet), he is now a London-based free lance curator and critic, focusing on media philosophy. He is the author of *\*Media Activism\** (Derive Approdi, Rome 2002) and editor of *Rekombinant* ([www.rekombinant.org](http://www.rekombinant.org)), an influential Italian language webzine and forum about media activism, culture jamming, and radical philosophy.



Matteo Pasquinelli

## WARPORN WARPUNK!

Autonomous videopoiesis in wartime

### *Grinning monkeys*

How do you think you can stop war without weapons? The anti-war public opinion that fills squares worldwide and the cosmetic democracy of International Courts stand powerless in front of the raging US military. Against the animal instincts of a superpower reason cannot prevail: a homicidal force can be arrested only by another, stronger force. Everyday we witness such a Darwinian show: history repeating itself through a cruel confrontation of forces, whilst what rests is freedom of speech exercised in drawing rooms. Pacifists too are accomplices of instinctive forces, because animal aggressiveness is inside us all. How do we express that bestiality for which we condemn armies? Underneath the surface of the self-censorship belonging to the radical left (not only to the conformist majority), it should be admitted publicly that watching Abu Ghraib pictures of pornographic tortures does not scandalise us, on the contrary, it rather excites us, in exactly the same way as the obsessive voyeurism that draws us to videos of 9/11 videos. Through such images we feel the expression of repressed instincts, the pleasure rising again after narcotised by consumerism, technologies, goods and images. We show our teeth as monkeys do, when their aggressive grin looks dreadfully like the human smile. Contemporary thinkers like Baudrillard and Zizek acknowledge the dark side inside Western culture. If 9/11 has been a shock for Western consciousness, Baudrillard puts forward a more shocking thesis: we westerners were to desire 9/11, as the death drive of a superpower that having reached its natural limits, knows and desires nothing more than self-destruction and war. The indignation is hypocrisy; there is always an animal talking behind a video screen.

### *On the videowar battleground*

Before pulling the monkey out of the TV set, we have to focus on the battleground on which the media match is played. The more reality is an augmentation of mass, personal, and networked devices, the more wars become media wars, even if they take place in a desert. The First Global War started by live-broadcasting the 9/11 air disaster and continued with video-guerrilla episodes: everyday from the Iraqi front we received videos shot by invaders, militiamen, and journalists. Every action in such a media war is designed beforehand to fit its spectacular consequences. Terrorists have learnt all the rules of spectacular conflict while imperial propaganda, much more expert, has no qualms about playing with fakes and hoaxes (for instance the dossiers on weapons of mass

destruction). Bureaucratic propaganda wars are a thing of the past. New media has generated guerilla combat, opening up a molecular front of bottom-up resistance. Video cameras among civilians, weblogs updated by independent journalists, smart-phones used by American soldiers in the Abu Ghraib prison: each represents an uncontrollable variable that can subvert the propaganda apparatus. Video imagery produced by television is now interlaced with the anarchic self-organised infrastructure of digital networked media that has become a formidable means of distribution (evidenced by the capillary diffusion of the video of the beheading of Nick Berg). Today's propaganda is used to manage a connective imagery rather than a collective spectacle, and the intelligence services set up simulacra of the truth based on networking technologies.

#### *The videoclash of civilisations*

Alongside the techno-conflict between horizontal and vertical media, two secular cultures of image face each other on the international mediascape. The United States embodies the last stage of videocracy, an oligarchic technocracy based on hypertrophic advertising and infotainment, and the colonisation of the worldwide imagery through Hollywood and CNN. Nineteenth century ideologies such as Nazism and Stalinism were intimately linked to the fetishism of the idea-image (as all of western thought is heir to Platonic idealism). Islamic culture on the contrary is traditionally iconoclast: it is forbidden to represent images of God and the Prophet, and usually of any living creature whatsoever. Only Allah is Al Mussawir, he who gives rise to forms: imitating his gesture of creation is a sin (even if such a precept never appears in the Koran). Islam, unlike Christianity, has no sacred iconographic centre. In mosques the Kiblah is an empty niche. Its power comes not from the refusal of the image but from the refusal of its centralising role, developing in this way a material, anti-spectacular, and horizontal cult. Indeed, on Doomsday, painters are meant to suffer more than other sinners. Even if modernisation proceeds through television and cinema (that paradoxically did not have the same treatment of painting), iconoclastic ground remains active and breaks out against western symbols, as happened in the case of the World Trade Centre. To strike at western idolatry, pseudo-Islamic terrorism becomes videoclasm, preparing attacks designed for live broadcasting and using satellite channels as a resonant means for its propaganda. Al-Jazeera broadcasts images of shot-dead Iraqi civilians, whilst western mass media removes these bodies in favour of the military show. An asymmetrical imagery is developing between East and West, and it will be followed by an asymmetrical rage, that will break out with backlashes for generations to come. In such a clash between videocracy and videoclasm, a third actor, the global movement, tries to open a breach and develop therein an autonomous videopoiesis. The making of an alternative imagery is not only based on self-organising independent media, but also on winning back the dimension of myth and the body. Videopoiesis should speak - at the same time - to the belly and to the brain of the monkeys.



#### *Global video-brain*

Western media and awareness was woken up by the physical force of live-broadcasted images, not by the news of tortures at the Abu Ghraib prison or of Nick Berg's beheading. Television is the medium that taught the masses a Pavlovian reaction to images. It is also the medium that produced the globalisation of the collective mind (something more complex than the idea of public opinion). The feelings of the masses have been always reptilian: what media proliferation established is a video mutation of feelings, a becoming-video of the collective brain and of collective narration. The global video-brain functions through images whereas our brains think out of images. This is not about crafting a theory, but recognising the natural extension of our faculties. Electronic and economic developments move at too high a speed for the collective mind to have time to communicate and elaborate messages in speech, there is only time for reacting to visual stimuli. A collective imagery arises when a media infrastructure casts and repeats the same images in a million copies, producing a common space; a consensual hallucination around the same object (that afterwards becomes word-mouth or the movie industry). In the case of the TV medium such a serial communication of a million images is much more lethal, because it is instantaneous. On the other hand, the networked imagery works in an interactive and non-instantaneous way, this is why we call it connective imagery. Imagery is a collective serial broadcasting of the same image across different media. According to Goebbels, it is a lie repeated a million times that becomes public discourse, part of everyday conversations, and then accepted truth. Collective imagery is the place where media and desire meet each other, where the same repeated image modifies millions of bodies simultaneously and inscribes pleasure, hope and fear. Communication and desire, mediasphere and psychosphere, are the two axes that describe the war to the global mass, the way in which the war reaches our bodies far from the real conflict and the way image inscribes itself into the flesh.

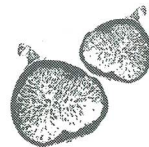
#### *Animal narrations*

Why does reality exist only when framed by a powerful TV network? Why is the course of events affected by the evening news? Collective imagery is not affected by the video evolution of mass technologies only, but also by the natural instincts of human kind. As a political animal (Aristotle), the human being is inclined to set up collective narratives that represent the belonging instinct to its own kind. Let's call them animal narratives. For this reason television is a "natural" medium, because it responds to the need of creating one narrative for millions of people, a single animal narrative for entire nations, similarly to what other narrative genres, like the epic, the myth, the Bible and the Koran, did and still do. Television represents, above all else, the ancestral feeling to belong to one Kind, the meta-organism we all belong to. Each geopolitical area has its own video macro-attractor (CNN, BBC, etc.), which the rest of the media relate to. Beside the macro-attractors, there are meta-attractors, featuring the role of critical consciousness against them, a function often held by press and web media (the Guardian, for instance). Of course the model is much more complex: the list could continue and end with blogs, which we can define as group micro-attractors, the smallest in scale,

but suffice it to say here that the audience and power of the main attractor are ensured by the natural animal instinct. This definition of mass media might seem strange, because they are no longer push media that communicate in unidirectional ways (one-to-many), but pull media that attract and group together, media in which we invest our desires (many-to-one). Paraphrasing Reich's remark on fascism, we can say that rather than the masses being brainwashed by the media establishment, the latter is sustained and desired by the perversion of the desire to belong.

#### *Digital anarchy. A videophone vs. Empire*

Traditional media war incorporates the internet and the networked imagery (with television, internet, mobile phones and digital cameras) turns into a battle ground: personal media such as digital cameras bring the cruelty of war directly into the living room, for the first time in history at the speed of an internet download and out of any governmental control. This networked imagery cannot be stopped, and neither can technological evolution. Absolute transparency is an inevitable fate for all of us. The videophone era seriously undermines privacy, as well as any kind of secrecy, state secrecy included. Rumsfeld's vented outrage in front of US Senate Committee on Armed Services about the scandal at Abu Ghraib is extremely grotesque: "We're functioning... with peacetime constraints, with legal requirements, in a wartime situation, in the Information Age, where people are running around with digital cameras and taking these unbelievable photographs and then passing them off, against the law, to the media, to our surprise, when they had - they had not even arrived in the Pentagon". A few days later Rumsfeld prohibited the use of any kind of camera or videophone to the American soldiers in Iraq. Rumsfeld himself was the 'victim' of the internet broadcasting of a famous video that shows him politely shaking hands with Saddam Hussein in 1983. New digital media seem to have created an unpredictable digital anarchy, where a videophone can fight against Empire. The images of torture at Abu Ghraib are the internal nemesis of a civilisation of machines that is running out of control of its creators and demiurges. There is a machine nemesis but also an image nemesis: as Baudrillard notes, the Empire of the Spectacle is now submitted to the hypertrophy of the Spectacle itself, to its own greed for images, to an auto-erotic pornography. The infinitely repeatable character of digital technology allowed for the demise of the copyright culture through P2P networks, but also for the proliferation of digital spam and the white noise of contents on the web. Videophones have created a networked mega-camera, a super-light panopticon, a horizontal Big Brother. The White House was trapped in this web. Digital repetition no longer delivers us to the game of mirrors of post-modern weak thought - to the image as self-referential simulacrum - but rather to an interlinked universe where videopoiesis can connect the farthest points and cause fatal short circuits.



#### *War porn*

Indeed, what came to light with the Abu Ghraib media scandal was not a casual short-circuit, but the implosion into a deadly vortex of war, media, technology, body, desire. Philosophers, journalists and commentators from all sides rushed to deliver different perspectives for a new framework of analysis. The novelty of the images of Abu Ghraib and Nick Berg (whether fictional or not is not the point) consists in the fact that they forged a new narrative genre of collective imagery. For the first time, a snuff movie was projected onto the screen of global imagery and internet subcultures, used to such images, suddenly came out of the closet: rotten.com finally reached the masses. Rather than making sense of a traumatic experience, newspapers and weblogs worldwide are engaged in drawing out the political, cultural, social and aesthetic repercussions of a new genre of image that forces us to upgrade our immunity system and communicative strategies. As Seymour Hersh noted, Rumsfeld provided the world with a good excuse to ignore the Geneva Convention from now on. But he lowered the level of tolerance of the visible as well, forcing us to accept cohabitation with the Horror. English-speaking journalism defines as war porn the popular tabloids and government talk-shows fascination with super-sized weapons and well-polished uniforms, hi-tech tanks and infrared-guided bombs, a panoplia of images that some define as the aseptic substitute of pornography proper. Ridley Scott's *Black Hawk Down* is war hardcore, to name one. The cover of *Time*, where the American soldier was chosen as Person of the Year, was defined pure war porn by *Adbusters*: "Three American Soldiers standing proudly, half-smiles playing on their faces, rifles cradled in their arms". War porn is also a sub-genre of trash porn - still relatively unknown, coming from the dark side of the net. It simulates violent sex scenes between soldiers or the rape of civilians (pseudo-amateur movies usually shot in Eastern Europe and often passed as real). War porn is freed from its status of net subculture: its morbid interest and fetish for war imagery become political weapons, voyeurism and the nightmares of the masses. Is it a coincidence that war porn emerges from the Iraqi marshes right at this time?

#### *Digital-body rejection*

The metaphorical association of war with sex that underpins much Anglo-American journalism points to something deeper that was never before made so explicit: a libido that, alienated by wealth, awaits war to give free reign to its ancestral instincts. War is as old as the human species: natural aggressiveness is historically embodied in collective and institutional forms, but several layers of technology have separated today's war from its animal substratum. We needed Abu Ghraib pictures to bring to the surface the obscene background of animal energy that lied underneath a democratic make-up. Did this historic resurfacing of the repressed occur today simply because of the mass spreading of digital cameras and videophones? Or is there a deeper connection between the body and technology bound to prove to be deadly sooner or later? As the mass media are filled with tragic and morbid news, the framing of digital media seems to be missing something from its inception. This could be that passion of the real (Alain Badiou) which, exiled onto the screen, explodes out

of control. New personal media are directly connected to the psychopathology of everyday living, we might say that they create a new format for it and a new genre of communication, but above all, they establish a relation with the body that television never had. War porn seems to signal the rejection of technology by subconscious forces that express themselves through the same medium that represses them: this rejection might point to the ongoing adaptation of the body to the digital. Proliferation of digital prosthesis is not as rational, aseptic and immaterial as it seems. Electronic media seemed to have introduced technological rationality and coolness into human relations, yet the shadows of the digital increasingly re-surface. There comes a point when technology physically unbridles its opposite. The internet is the best example: behind the surface of the immaterial and disembodied technology lies a traffic of porn content that takes up half of its daily band-width. At the same time, the Orwellian proliferation of video cameras, far from producing an Apollonian world of transparency, is ridden with violence, blood and sex. The next Endemol Big Brother will resemble the movie *Battle Royal*, where Takeshi Kitano forces a class of students on an island and into a game of death where the winner is the last survivor. We have always considered the media as a prosthesis of human rationality, and technology as the new embodiment of the logos. But new media also embody the dark side of the Western world. In war porn we found this Siamese body made up of libido and media, desire and image. Two radical movements that are the same movement: war reinvests the alienated libido, personal media are filled by the desperate libido they alienated. The subconscious cannot lie, the skeletons sooner or later start knocking on the closets door.



#### *Imagery reset*

War results from the inability to dream, after depleting all libidinal energy in an outflow of prosthesis, commodities, and images. War violence forces us to believe again in images of everyday life, images of the body as well as images of advertising. War is an imagery reset. War brings the attention and excitement for advertising back to a zero degree, where advertising can start afresh. War saves advertising from the final annihilation of the orgasm, from the nirvana of consumption, the inflation and indifference of values. War brings the new economy back to the old economy, to traditional and consolidated commodities, it gets rid of immaterial commodities that risk dissolving the economy into a big potlatch and into the anti-economy of the gift that the internet represents. War has the "positive" effect of redelivering us to 'radical' thought, to the political responsibility of representation, against the interpretative flights of "weak thought", of semiotics and postmodernism (where postmodernism is the western image looking for an alibi to its own impotence). The pornographic images of war, as we said, are the reflux of the animal instinct that our economic and social structure has repressed. But rather than a psychoanalysis that reactively justifies new customs and fashions, we seek to carry out a 'physical' analysis of libidinal energy. In wartime we see images re-emerge with a new autonomous and autopoietic force. There are different kinds of image: war porn images are not representations, they speak directly to the body, they are a cruel, lucid and affirmative force, like Artaud's theatre, they are re-magnetised images that do not provoke incredulity, they

are neural icons running on the spinal motorways, as Ballard would put it. Radical images redeliver the body to us, radical images are bodies, not simulacra. Their effect is first physical then cognitive. The movement-image and the flux-matter are rigorously one and the same thing (Deleuze). The damned tradition of the image is back, with the psychic and contagious power of Artaud's theatre, a machinic image that joins together the material and the immaterial, body and dream. Fiction is a branch of neurology (Ballard). In a libidinal explosion, war porn liberates the animal energies of Western society like a bomb. Such energies can be expressed through fascist reactions as well as liberating revolts. Radical images are images that are still capable of being political, in the strong sense of the word, and they can have an impact on the masses that is simultaneously political, aesthetic and carnal.

#### *Videopoiesis: the body-image*

How can we make an intelligent use of television? The first intelligent reaction is to switch it off. Activists collective such as *Adbusters.org* (Canada) and *Esterni.org* (Italy) organise yearly TV strikes, promoting a day or a week's abstinence from television. Can Western society think without television? It cannot. Even if we were to stop watching TV because of a worldwide blackout or a nuclear war, our imagery, hopes and fears would carry on thinking within a televised brainframe. This is not about addiction, the video is simply our primary collective language: once upon a time there were religion, mythology, epic and literature. We can repress the ritual (watching TV) but we cannot repress the myth. We can switch television off, but not our imagery. For this reason the idea of an autonomous videopoiesis is not about practicing of alternative information but about new mythical devices for the collective imagery. In its search for the Perfect Image - that is the image that is capable of stopping the War, subverting Empire and starting the Revolution - the global movement has theorised and practiced video activism (from *Indymedia* to street TVs) and mythopoiesis (from Luther Blissett to *San Precario*). However, it never tried to merge those strategies into a videopoiesis capable of challenging Bin Laden, Bush, Hollywood and the CNN at the level of myth, a videopoiesis for new icons and formats, like for instance the video sequences of William Gibson's *Patter* recognition distributed on the net. Videopoiesis does not mean the proliferation of cameras in the hands of activists, but the creation of video narratives, a new design of genres and formats rather than alternative information. The challenge lies in the body-image. Through videopoiesis we have to welcome the repressed desires of the global movement and open the question of the body, buried under a para-catholic and third-worldist rhetoric. While Western imagery is being filled with the dismembered bodies of heroes, the global movement is still uneasy about its desires. War porn is a challenge for the movement not to equal the horror but to produce images that awaken and target the sleepy body. Throughout its history, television has always produced macro-bodies, mythical giant bodies magnified by media power, bodies as cumbersome as Ancient Gods. The television regime creates monsters, hypertrophic bodies such as the image of the President of United States, the Al-Qaeda brand and movie stars, while the net and personal media try to dismember them and

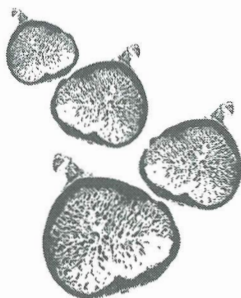


produce new bodies out of their carcasses. Videopoiesis must eliminate the unconscious self-censorship that we find in the most liberal and radical sections of society, the self-censorship that, behind a crypto-catholic imagery, hides the grin of the monkey. Once crypto-religious self-censorship is eliminated, videopoiesis can begin its creative reassembly of dismembered bodies.

*Warpunk. I like to watch!*

Watching cruel images is good for you. What the Western world needs is to stare at its own shadows. In Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition* war news and violent scenes improve adults' sexual activity and the condition of psychotic children. Warlords are filling the collective imagery with brute force. Why leave them to do it in peace? If in the real world we are always victims of the blackmail of non-violence, in the realm of imagery and imagination we can feed our wet dreams at last. If American imagery is allowing a drift towards Nazism and is offering an apology and justification for any kind of violence, our response can only be an apology of resistance and action that is warpunk. Warpunk is not a delirious subculture that embraces weapons in an aesthetic gesture. On the contrary it uses radical images as weapons of legitimate defence. To paraphrase a Japanese saying, warpunk steals from war and empire the art of embellishing death. Warpunk uses warporn in a tragic way, to overcome Western culture and the self-censorship of its counter-culture. Above all we are afraid of the hubris of the American warlords, of the way they face any obstacle stepping over all written and unwritten rules. What is the point of confronting this threat with the imagery of the victim, that holds up to the sky hands painted in white? Victimhood is a bad adviser: it is the definitive validation of Nazism, the sheep's baa that makes the wolf even more indifferent. The global movement is quite a good example of "weak thought" and reactive culture. Perhaps this is because, unlike warlords and terrorists, it never developed a way of thinking about the tragic, war, violence and death. A tragic thought is the gaze that can dance on any image of the abyss. In Chris Korda's *I like to watch video* (download available on [www.churchofeuthanasia.org](http://www.churchofeuthanasia.org)) porn scenes of oral sex and masturbation are mixed with those of football and baseball matches and with well-known NY911 images. The phallic imagery reaches the climax: the Pentagon is hit by an ejaculation, multiple erections are turned into the NY911 skyline, and the Twin Towers themselves become the object of an architectural fellatio. This video is the projection of the lowest instincts of American society, of the common ground that bind spectacle, war, pornography and sport. It is an orgy of images that shows to the West its real background. Warpunk is a squadron of B52s throwing libidinal bombs and radical images into the heart of the Western imagery.

Matteo Pasquinelli ([mat@Trekombinant.org](mailto:mat@Trekombinant.org))



## The obsession of the (vanishing) body

by Franco "Bifo" Berardi: [bifo \[at\] rekombinant.org](mailto:bifo[at]rekombinant.org)



In the year 1907 Freud wrote an essay on the symptomatology of obsession and the religious rituals. In his view the ritual has something to do with the obsession because it has the same character of irrealisation and of compulsive repetition. Irrealisation and compulsive repetition are peculiar in religious behaviour as in pornographic sex. (Of course you can find peace and harmony and well being in the religious ritual. And pleasure in pornographic consumption. But it depends entirely on you, not on the ritual, or on the porn image itself). Religious behaviour, like pornographic sexuality, performs a ritual that, in its nature, has the stigma of the obsessive neurosis: repetition of acts that are devoid of semantic meaning and devoid of special efficiency. In this sense I would say that pornography, in general, pertains to the field of obsession

Obsession: compulsive repetition of a ritual which does not fulfil its aim. The real scope of the ritual is the conjuration that holds the (rite maker's) own world together. Porn in general has something to do with the ritual. As the bodily relationship becomes difficult, embarrassing, in the experience of the first video-electronic generation, ritual is taking the place of pleasure, and porn becomes the repetition of an act of seeing which does not attain its emotional end.

I'm not reclaiming any authenticity of the erotic self, I'm not fantasising about the golden age of sexual happiness. I'm just interested in finding the signs of pathology in the current proliferation of pornography: namely a pathology of emotionality. This pathology, which is latent in every kind of pornographic product, is highlighted by the mediatisation, and especially by the net-proliferation of the porn. Since image and emotion are separated, the pornographic act (of vision) does not produce the emotional effect we are expecting. So we repeat the act (of vision). Net is the place of endless replication, therefore it is the ideal place of pornography. Stimul-hypertrophy is the general frame that generates the current Obsession. In the saturated info sphere the immediate way of perception of the body is pornography.

During their long evolution human beings have slowly learned to elaborate the stimulus of sexual excitation: the entire history of culture can be viewed as a way to the elaboration of the sexual desire. Through imagination and language human beings manage to balance the stimulus coming from the environment, and the psychic and sexual response to it. We're now living in the age of the info-proliferation. The saturation of the info-sphere provokes a stimulus overload, and this has an obvious cognitive effect: time for attention decreases. But the affective attention takes time, and cannot be shortened or fastened. This leads to a disorder in the emotional elaboration of meaning. The affective attention suffers a kind of contraction, and it is forced to find ways of adaptation: the organism adopts tools for simplification, and it tends to smooth out the living psychic response, to repackage

the affective behaviour in a frozen and fastened framework. This reframing of sexuality does not seem to work. People are less happy, not more, as far as concerns their bodily relationships, and as far concerns their sociality.

The focal point is the shortening of time for emotional elaboration: pornography is in turn one of the causes of this saturation, and one of the effects, or, better, one of the symptoms of it. Pornography concurs to the saturation of the Info-sphere, and it is simultaneously an escape from the disturbed Psycho-sphere. How can we define emotion? Emotion is the meeting point between body and cognition: it is bodily elaboration of the information that is reaching our mind. Time of emotionality can be fast (very fast) and can be slow. But sexual emotion needs slow time for elaboration. The time of caresses cannot be shortened by automatic engines, although pharmacology can fasten the sexual reactions, and speed up erection. The use of sexual stimulants like Viagra has not so much to do with impotence, but with haste, and emotional disturbances.

The electronic excitation conveyed through the entire Mediascape puts the sensitive organism in a state of permanent electrocution. Time for linguistic elaboration of a single input is reduced as the number of inputs increases, and the speed of the input gets higher. Sex is not speaking anymore. It is rather babbling, and faltering, and suffering of it, or (worst) it's ignoring it. Too few words, too little time to talk. Too little time to feel. Porn is an essay in emotional automation and uniformity of emotional time of response. Don't miss the implication between permanent electrocution, shortening of linguistic attentive elaboration, atrophy of emotional response. Pornography is just the VISIBLE surface of this neuronal short-circuit.

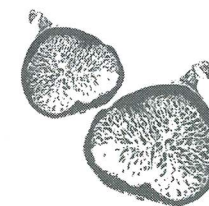
The first video-electronic generation is showing signs of an epidemic of emotional atrophy. The disconnection between language and sexuality is striking. Pornography is the ultimate form of this disconnection. When a group of very young guys murdered a young girl after harassing her, in a northern Italian place, the inquirers who studied the case were stunned by the inability of the youngsters to verbalise their act, and their feeling, and their motivation. Syntactic elaboration reduced to zero. Monosyllables. Onomatopoeic sounds.

Sensitivity is invested in this turn, and it enters a process of re-formatting: the new format is the smooth, the connectible. Sexual imagination is overwhelmed by the hairless smooth of the digital image. The perception of the real body of the Other is so becoming obnoxious, in the daily life. Hard to touch, hard to feel, hard to enjoy.

This pathological turn of the Psycho-sphere seems to me the main feature of the current anthropological mutation that encompasses social change, and politics and the global tragedy of terror that is devastating the perception of the bodies that are surrounding and touching our body. The obsessive repetition of a gesture that is no more able to fulfil its aim, the hopeless effort to grasp a pleasure that we have no time to nurture - all this has so much to do with the coming back of violence, of war - and of torture into the scene of the world.

Both in the Western and in the Islamic world, we are undergoing a daily instigation to fear, to aggression, to hate. The bodily imagination is disturbed by the growing all pervading ecology of fear. Although never erased from the hidden reality of history, for a long time torture has been rejected by the consciousness and excluded from the field of social visibility. After the defeat of Nazism torture has been considered the ultimate mark of inhumanity. But during the last few years, just in the dawn of the new century, torture has resurfaced, abruptly becoming a normal tool of political action. Torturers and their accomplices are officially sitting in power in the US, in Russia and in many other places. Torturers are showing themselves to their friends by the means of video-phonic display, and of the Internet. Beheading is proudly shown as a demonstration of bravery and religious faith. How could it happen? Why social sensitivity has so turned to barbarism and inhumanity? I think that we should understand what is happening in the deepness of bodily perception, if we want to understand what is happening in the surface of terrorist and military action.

Pornography and torture have little in common, if anything. But their media diffusion takes place in the same vacuum generated by the atrophy of emotionality. The inability to feel pleasure has its counterpart in the inability to perceive the horror as horror. "The physical pain is so incontestably real that it seems to confer its quality of incontestable reality on that power that has brought it into being" says Elaine Scarry in her essay *The structure of torture*, in *The body in pain*, Oxford UP, 1985



Matthew Zook

## Underground globalization: mapping the space of flows of the Internet adult industry

Abstract provided by Nieke Kempen.

*Matthew Zook is a researcher on technological change and urban and regional development. He is currently an Assistant Professor specialising in Economic Geography and Internet Commerce at the University of Kentucky. He led the Internet Geography Project at UC Berkeley, which tracked the diffusion of the commercial use of the Internet worldwide. His research spans topics as diverse as the geography of the Internet industry, the role of venture capital in regional development and IT training programs for disadvantaged adults. He holds a Master's degree from Cornell University and completed his Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley on the role of venture capital in the development of the Internet industries in the San Francisco Bay and New York regions.*

Zook's paper 'Underground globalization: mapping the space of flows of the Internet adult industry', published in *Environment and Planning A* 2003, volume 35, develops a case study of the Internet adult industry in order to study the ways in which electronic commerce interacts with geography. Digital products, low barriers to entry, cost differentials, and sensitivity to regulation have created a pervasive and complex geography of models, webmasters, and consumers around the globe. With a series of specially developed datasets on the location of content production, websites, and hosting it is shown that the online adult industry offers people and places outside major metropolitan areas opportunities to become active purveyors of this type of electronic commerce. The roles of these actors, however, are not simply determined by a spaceless logic of cyber-interaction but by histories and economies of the physical places they inhabit. In short, the 'space of flows' cannot be understood without reference to the 'space of places' to which it connects. This geography also provides a valuable counterpoint to mainstream electronic commerce and highlights the ability of socially marginal and underground interests to use the Internet to form and connect in global networks.

### Introduction

The Internet adult industry is defined as adult-oriented websites that are accessible to the entire Internet community and offer pornographic images, audio, video, text, and chat to visitors. The content of these websites reflects the wide variety of sexual interests of Internet users and for the most part these websites are commercially driven. Despite its size and diffusion, the online adult industry has been the subject of relatively little academic research. The adult industry is a good case study because its products have long been socially stigmatised and legally prosecuted, leading to agglomerations in certain cities with more permissive standards such as Los Angeles and Amsterdam. The geography of the Internet adult industry shows that the resulting geography is not simply

random but connected to the histories and economies of physical places. Thus, rather than a simple annihilation of space there is a restructuring of connections between places that reorients and compresses time space into new configurations and hierarchies represented by the space of flows.

### Digital products and ubiquitous demand

In many ways the adult industry is ideally suited for the Internet. On the supply side, the industry is greatly aided by the digital nature of its products, which can easily bypass logistical and regulatory barriers that affect other types of electronic commerce. Furthermore, there are few barriers to the creation and maintenance of simple adult websites, making it relatively easy for individuals in any location to reach the majority of Internet users. Finally, the Internet adult industry provides a profitable linkage between areas with high poverty and few prospects, that is, Castells' "black holes", to global consumer markets. This linkage often takes place via the use of lower paid models but also includes the creation of websites. Although the Internet adult industry is likely not what many people envision when they seek to 'wire' their communities, connectivity provides the opportunity for both participatory and exploitative connections to global markets.

On the demand side, the anonymity of the Internet provides an easy avenue to pornography in localities that have outlawed or heavily regulate it and allows people to avoid the potential social stigma of visiting an adult bookstore. The global reach of the Internet provides a large potential market for any adult website regardless of the number of consumers in their immediate neighbourhood. The large number of websites and other individuals interested in a particularly subject or fetish provides individuals with a perception of normalcy no matter what the judgment of their local society. Although this can be a boon for members of traditionally oppressed minorities (for example, gays and lesbians) the ability to find like-minded individuals also serves to validate the interests of paedophiles.

The demand for adult websites is difficult to pin down, although indicators suggest that a sizable portion of Internet users visits these sites. Netvalue.com reports that between 28% and 39% of Internet users, depending on the country, accessed an adult website during the month of January 2001. Visitors to these sites are disproportionately young and male even when controlling for the makeup of the Internet population.

### Value chains of a furtive industry

Although standard economic data sources such as county business patterns provide no data on the Internet adult industry, it is possible to outline a general schematic of the industry based on secondary sources as well as materials posted on resource sites for would-be adult webmasters. Three geographically relevant and measurable manifestations include: (1) the production of content for the



industry; (2) the creation and maintenance of websites to distribute content; and (3) the hosting of websites. These activities are easily separated (both organisationally and geographically) from one another and help to create an industry consisting largely of small firms but with a few dominant players.

#### *Websites - free and membership*

The main distinction between adult websites on the Internet is between free or feeder sites and membership sites. Membership sites offer affiliate programs to free sites that pay for surfers sent to the membership site and who sign up for a membership. Rosoff reports that, according to the YNOT Adult Network, free sites comprise between 70 and 80 percent of the adult material out there. Franson estimates that a few thousand dollars (and in some cases much less) is all that is required to start one up. This low barrier to entry has allowed many individuals and small firms to participate actively in the industry.

#### *Hosting*

The final component of the Internet adult industry is the location of the computer upon which the site is actually hosted. Because of large bandwidth requirements, companies specialising in the adult industry rather than traditional hosting services generally host adult websites.

Consultancies estimates that adult Internet services brought in US \$50 million dollars in 1996, approximately 10% of all Internet retail, and between US \$750 million and US \$1 billion in 1998. Datamonitor estimates that US \$1.4 billion was spent in 1998 and predicts US \$1.78 billion in 2000 and US \$2.3 billion in 2001. Although all these figures should be treated with some scepticism, they do indicate a sizeable industry.

#### *Content creation and concentrating profits*

The first component of the Internet adult industry is the distribution of adult content. Although it is likely that content creation is more dispersed than the indicators here suggest, the distributors of adult content appear to be concentrated in many of the principal centres of the Internet. Almost 70% of the content distributors are based in the United States. The other countries listed in this top five include those with some of the highest user rates on the Internet. Canada and Australia are interesting cases because they have much larger concentrations of Internet adult-content distributors than their regular presence on the Internet (as measured by their share of registered domain names) suggests. In contrast, the United Kingdom, the country with the largest Internet presence after the United States, has a relatively low level of Internet adult-content distributors.

The bulk of money spent on content appears to go to the photographers and distributors rather than the models themselves, a trend that has intensified over time. In 1994, models in the United States for online interactive adult video received approximately US \$50 an hour but by 1997 wages had dropped to US \$15 to US \$20 an hour or about a twentieth of the revenues that the video stream could generate. Other data sources available on wages within the adult industry support these figures and Lane cites hourly wages for telephone sex workers at US \$8 to US \$15 an hour.

An important factor driving wages down is the structure of industry's space of flows, which connects models from poorer regions of the world willing to accept lower wages with content distributors. As *The Economist* reported in 1998: "Most West European producers of sex videos use East European actors wherever possible. (...) In only eight years, Budapest has become probably the largest centre for pornography production in Europe, eclipsing rivals such as Amsterdam and Copenhagen. Stars' fees have dropped sharply. Even excruciating or humiliating acts usually cost the producer only two or three hundred dollars, roughly a third of the fees paid ten years ago."

Morais et al echo this assessment and list Thailand and Hungary as important new centres for the creation of pornographic materials. Much as information technologies have facilitated the creation of call centres of back-office functions in hinterlands, the Internet has provided the adult industry with easy access to lower wage locations. Even real-time interaction via chat and video streaming can

now be arranged for relatively low cost.

The dominance by the United States and the other countries indicates that, although the production of content may be more dispersed, the distribution systems and likely a high proportion of the profits remain in the hands of economic actors located in the most developed countries. This suggests that, although the geography of Internet adult sites corresponds with other uses of the Internet (for example, the United States is the largest user of the Internet in general and is the largest location of the Internet adult industry), an alternative cybergeography is emerging with Eastern Europe and the Caribbean playing important roles.

#### *Shifts in content production*

During the 1970s, the adult film industry concentrated in the San Fernando Valley in Southern California with smaller concentrations in New York and San Francisco. The evolution of technology from film to video to digital formats made the creation and distribution of adult content much easier and less expensive. As Holiday notes, "Less than 1 percent of new releases [of adult videos] are shot on film. (...) Anyone with \$10,000 and a cheapo video camera is now a director and distributor." This diffusion appears to have increased with the advent of the commercial Internet.

These figures are emblematic of the shift from the highly concentrated structure of the adult film industry to a more distributed system on the Internet. The technology of the Internet offers new opportunities for economic actors in peripheral locations. Although traditional centres such as Los Angeles remain important, their dominance has declined as more peripheral nodes have begun to participate.

*Placeless networks and local contexts*

Although pornography is not a new phenomenon, its online incarnation has fundamentally changed its patterns of production, distribution, and consumption. Advances in technology have shifted pornography from adult bookstores to video rentals to the Internet, rendering it more accessible at every step. Currently pornographic material is readily available to anyone with a computer and unfiltered web connection and can be downloaded in complete anonymity. For the average web surfer, this cyberspace connection is perceived as placeless, disconnected from any meaningful manifestation of geography.

This geographic disengagement, however, is illusionary. The Internet adult industry operates in a complex space of flows, which offers new methods for participation and exploitation. The nature of this interaction, the roles of particular regions, and the power relations within the industry depend upon the local attributes that undergrid this virtual connectivity. For example, the history of the Internet has served to imprint values strongly associated with the USA, particularly in regards to the fetishism of certain cultures and ethnicities while promoting Western views of sexuality. Moreover, content production in the adult industry has tended to disperse to lower wage locations, but the profits from this production are largely concentrated. At both the international and US level, the territoriality of legal regimes has pushed adult websites to openly hospitable regulatory environments or places with relatively weak government enforcement. At the same time the robustness of the US infrastructure makes it a preferred location for adult housing services. These examples aptly illustrate the continued importance and shaping role of location and places even within a 'perfect' Internet industry.

The assumption of easy access to pornographic content is likewise shaped by geography. Individuals in the United States and other countries with open Internet policies have unfettered access to adult websites, but only by using their own personal machines. Those whose Internet access is limited to cybercafés, workplaces, or public libraries are not guaranteed the same anonymous and unfiltered access. The public nature of cybercafés reintroduces the possibility of social stigmatisation and may serve to restrict surfing habits. Companies often track and filter employees' web surfing at the workplace both to increase worker productivity and to guard against hostile workplace claims. Many public libraries and schools have installed filtering programs on computers in response either to federal regulations or to locally made decisions to restrict access to adult materials.

Beyond the issue of privileged access at the individual level are national policies to control the materials accessible on the Internet. Authoritarian governments face the dilemma of introducing their populations to the benefits and power of the Internet while at the same time suppressing subversive material. Although centred on issues of political speech, personal freedom, and human rights, adult websites generally appear on the list of undesirable materials. Zittrain and Edelman have documented the filtering efforts of China and Saudi Arabia, which have explicit policies regarding Internet access. Although the structure of the Internet presents considerable technical challenges to such efforts, Zittrain and Edelman find that both countries succeed in blocking many websites critical of the government or promoting specific religious groups or social movements. Interestingly, the filtering efforts of China and Saudi Arabia diverged widely in blocking pornographic sites. Saudi Arabia blocked access to 86% of the adult sites tested whereas China blocked only 13%.

Despite such governmental efforts, the genie is out of the bottle and will be difficult to return, particularly in countries committed to personal liberties. The technology of the Internet has connected remote places and facilitated the diffusion of any number of economic activities such as call centres, offshore banking, and data processing. The Internet adult industry is yet another example of how a combination of regulatory issues, lower costs for content, and low barriers to entry results in a restructuring of production and consumption. While allowing access to a whole new range of people, the Internet is still shaped by existing structures of regulation, power, and hegemony. In short, the 'space of flows' cannot be understood without reference to the 'space of places' to which it connects.

This is an abstract of 'Underground globalization: mapping the space of flows of the Internet adult industry'. To read the whole article, please visit: [www.zooknic.com/Analysis](http://www.zooknic.com/Analysis).



rise of the netporn society

revenge of forbidden fruits

tales from the dark side of the net

do it yourself neporn

institute of network cultures



## 'Program code is like pornography'

*Interview with Florian Cramer  
by Nieke Kempen, Institute of Network Cultures*

**Florian Cramer, M.A., was born in 1969, studied Comparative Literature, Art History and German Philology at FU Berlin, Universität Konstanz and University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He received an M.A. degree from FU Berlin (1998). His areas of research include Comparative Studies in the Literature and the Arts, Modernism, Text Theory, Literature and Computing.**

**NK:** 'Program code is like pornography. It has linear logic, but no meaning.' This sentence you mentioned in your article 'Pornographic Coding' was adapted from a neoist slogan. I think an agreement between program code and pornography is not that clear. Can you tell me what you/they mean with this sentence?

**FC:** Both porn and program code have internal logic, but ostensibly no semantics. In other words, there is no immediate semantic denotation in program code and porn, but only connotation and implication. A program code has semantics through the virtue of programming language expressions and variable names, and through its impact on culture (as a control system, mostly), but it is not a semantic expression like a novel. Porn ostensibly has only itself as a semantic message since it follows a logic of excitation. Few pornographers, like De Sade, were able to radically extend this logic into a larger aesthetic and political program. When I watch porn, I don't care much about its ostensible message - since the sex in most porn is terrible anyway -, but more about the non-intentional connotations, for example fashion, interiors and social relations. Mainstream porn flicks from the 1970s (Alex deRenzy, Gérard Kikoine, Lasse Braun), 1980s (Hans Moser, Ricardo Scicci) to the 1990s (John Staqliano, Michael Ninn) have often depicted capitalist conditions in a rigorous, quasi-Brechtian no-nonsense-style, devoid of the sugary embellishment you find in mainstream moviemaking.

**NK:** You think we demand a shamanic pornography. Can you tell me what you mean by the term shamanic pornography?

**FC:** The term "shamanic" was brought up by my fellow writer Stewart Home in reference to a Joseph Beuys retrospective exhibition in London. One might as well call it hermetic pornography. It's a gradual process of gaining higher consciousness in seven levels, with the help of either chemical agents or intense hacker immersion into computers, with the ultimate gain of (a) on the code level, achieving orgasm through pure obscene imagination without any physical stimulation and (b) on the networking level, sexual telepathy. Level Seven means to abstract this imagination into a binary code, getting off on pure zeros and ones.

**NK:** In your article you mentioned: 'Cybersex is by no means new, porn is its oldest device. Computation and programming have likewise been known in pornography for centuries.' Pornography of this decade, if not the whole century, is indie porn. How can you explain this new pornographic movement?

**FC:** Our point was that indie porn actually de-emphasises the programmed, algorithmic character of porn, replacing it with a simulacrum of the authentic: the models are 'authentic' people, untainted by plastic surgery, bodybuilding or Photoshop. They revive the image of late 1980s/early 1990s "indie" subculture as punk minus its original glam posing, i.e. a vitalist philosophy that integrates authentic life and authentic expression. It's quite an irony that this rhetoric of authenticity, induced into porn, would take off in computer networks in conjunction with particular software formalisms (the integration of image database, weblog and chat). This reveals much of the internal epistemological contradictions of indie porn.

**NK:** Indie porn pretends to be different from the commercial porn industry. At some websites it seems like art, 'combine the punk styling of their models with visual punk aesthetics and do-it-yourself punk attitude'. In your opinion indie porn will save the porn industry of today. But on a website like, [www.suicidegirls.com](http://www.suicidegirls.com), could it not just be a way for teenage girls to experiment and express themselves?

**FC:** If this were the matter, they wouldn't need a commercial porn site for the purpose. And a standard punk/goth look is in the end just as obstinate and formalised as the obstinate Pamela Anderson beauty norm in mainstream porn. One could rather argue that the mainstream porn beauty norm is more transgressive and subtly subversive since it managed to establish the transvestite as the male heterosexual beauty ideal - artificially blonde females with thick makeup, surgically enlarged lips and oversize breast implants taking it up the ass.

Apart from that, indie porn is still a far cry from the truly decentral, popular, open source pornography that we propose - and which is rather prototyped in the swapping of self-made porn images, videos and stories in peer-to-peer networks..



NK: Central to the aesthetics of indie porn is a concept of the authentic. The models are unmodified by surgery and also accessible in chats, personal blogs and homepages, in contrast to the glamorous and synthetic commercial pornography. I think that could be a reason for indie porn to be very popular. Sometimes it seems mysterious or forbidden, a little bit like child porn or animal sex. Can you explain why commercial pornography still is superior to indie porn?

FC: We wrote in the paper that commercial pornography is superior to indie porn because it offers less for the imagination to work with. Watching shoddy mainstream porn can be a good exercise for reaching level five of shamanic porn consciousness. You have to shift your mental focus from terrible looking actors performing terribly boring turn-off sex acts to getting off on peripheral, more abstract details, from the interiors of the film sets to the colour tint and sound/image noise of the video.

**Pornographic Coding**  
Florian Cramer and Stewart Home  
[cramer.netzliteratur.net](http://cramer.netzliteratur.net)





# Book Katrien Jacobs

Katrien Jacobs: Libi\_doc: Journeys in the Performance of Sex Art

Published by Maska, Slovenia

Libi\_doc gives an unprecedented account of contemporary art practices and journeys into sex art. The book will present itself as a comprehensive study and visually stimulating art book, and is prepared by two well-equipped researchers. One writes from the road and has overtly sympathetic, or 'intoxicated' subliminal reactions to the researched subjects. The other is locked inside an office and using the best of his theoretical insights. Their subjects, and the subject of the book, are twenty-seven leading contemporary artists, whose work explicitly or subtly touches on human sexuality and pornographic representation. The artists show their works and comment on major developments in digital media and open sexuality, explaining the power of social networks, exhibitionism and excess, also the pains of societal rejection and censorship. The journeys of contemporary art and pornouveau media, the sex craze of libidot and (almost fatal) abstinence of Dr. Jacobs, are represented through commentaries and high quality colour reproductions of major art works. Libidot will be represented in drawings created by the Belgian artist Piepke. Dr Jacobs, the 'high' theorist and office bound academic, is represented photographically by Ms. Jacobs in male drag.

PERSONAL INVITATION TO THE BOOK LAUNCH

**Libi\_doc**  
JOURNEYS IN  
THE PERFORMANCE OF  
SEX ART  
by Libidot and Dr. Jacobs

AUTHOR: KATRIEN JACOBS  
ILLUSTRATIONS: PIEPKE

01.10.05 DE BADCUYP / art & politics of netporn / AMSTERDAM  
04.10.05 AEROPLASTICS GALLERY / BRUSSEL  
05.10.05 KC nOnA / MECHELEN  
09.10.05 GALERIJA KAPELICA / maska / LJUBLJANA  
10.10.05 GALERIJA KAPELICA / city of women festival / LJUBLJANA  
20.10.05 CITY UNIVERSITY / microwave festival / HONG KONG  
22.10.05 VIDEOTAGE / microwave festival / HONG KONG

WWW.LIBIDOT.ORG  
WWW.PIEPKE.ORG

Videotage  
a media artist collective

INFO: KJACOBS@CITYU.EDU.HK  
INFO@PIEPKE.ORG

..maska  
LIBI\_DOC IS PUBLISHED BY

De Badcuyp - Eerste Sweelinckstraat 10 / Amsterdam (Netherlands). Aeroplastics Gallery - Rue Blanche 32 / Brussels (Belgium)  
Kc nOnA - Begijnenstraat 19 / Mechelen (Belgium) ... Galerija Kapelica - Zavod K6 / 4, Kersnikova 4 / Ljubljana (Slovenia) ...  
City University - Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon / Hong Kong (China) ... Videotage - 63 Ma Tau Kok Road / Hong Kong (China)

# Cut-up Magazine

## special issue on the art and politics of netporn

Cut-up.media.magazine ([www.cut-up.com](http://www.cut-up.com)) is a Dutch/English online magazine on the art of living in a medialised landscape. Loosely inspired by the Beat Generation's cut-up technique - a technique in which concepts like truth, content and form are constantly altered - our goal is to create productive new forms, contents, and truths for every single situation. Above all, we are devoted to exploring contemporary media cultures in a style of writing and presentation that straddles the lines between journalism, the academy and creative practice.

In cooperation with the Institute of Network Cultures, Cut-up.media.magazine produces a special issue on The Art and Politics of Netporn. Although a growing number of theoretical and historical porn studies have appeared over the last decades, few have focused on the analysis of netporn as complex networks and its embedment within digital media environments. By publishing five new articles based on original research online and freely accessible to all, we hope to contribute to a climate of critical research surrounding the topic of netporn.

The five new articles are:

**Nishant Shah**

"Playblog: Pornography, Performance, and Cyber-space"

**Manuel Bonik and Andreas Schaale**

"The Naked Truth: Internet-Eroticism and The Search"

**Bert de Muynck**

"The Art of Adult Architecture or the Politics of Pornographic Planning"

**Tim Noonan**

"Netporn and the Politics of Disability: A Catalyst for Access, Inclusion and Acceptance"

**Mireille Miller-Young**

"Because I'm Sexy and Smart': Black Porn Actresses as Web Mistresses"

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<http://www.cut-up.com/news/issues.php?issue=20>

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# Netporn Dictionary

**Barely legal:**

porn that features 18 and 19 years old legal models.

**BBW:**

big beautiful women, specific sites where larger women are the object of desire.

**BDSM:**

bondage, dominance, sado, masochism.

**Cyberfeminist:**

a young woman who uses the Internet to elaborate on their feminist issues.

**Cyborgasms:**

(virtual) orgasms provoked by online sexual activities (cybersex).

**Dyke:**

a slang term for lesbian

**E-rotic:**

online erotica

**Eunuch:**

a human male whose testicles have either been removed or are non-functional.

**Fetish:**

a sexual fascination for an inorganic object. Common fetishes: boots, gloves, and rubber.

**Hentai:**

Japanese animation, comic-book-style magazines, and computer games with explicit sexual or pornographic artwork.

**Indieporn:**

(also known as alt.porn): "Alternative" or "alt porn" generally refers to eclectic sites run independently by one person or a small group, they are often based on specific subcultures.

**Neurobody:**

a body composed of partial objects from technological devices and images from the collective imagery.

**Pornblog:**

weblog used to expose one's pornographic interests, adventures and products.

**Queer:**

this term traditionally meant 'strange' or 'unusual', but is now most often used in reference to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

**Transgender:**

People who were assigned a gender, usually at birth and based on their genitals, but who feel that this is a false or incomplete description of them.

**Sexpert:**

someone who knows everything about sex and uses the Internet to educate other people.

For example: Annie Sprinkle.

## Netporn Mailinglist: Discussions

[listcultures.org/mailman/listinfo/netporn-l\\_listcultures.org](http://listcultures.org/mailman/listinfo/netporn-l_listcultures.org)

In order to facilitate the circulation of ideas, papers and art projects/statements, and to share and forward general information about netporn, we have opened a mailing list. We invite the conference participants and other parties to sign up to the list and make introductions + start discussions in this online environment.

## Netporn Wiki: Definitions

[www.networkcultures.org/wiki/index.php?title=Netporn](http://www.networkcultures.org/wiki/index.php?title=Netporn)

The wiki is a place to build new ways of defining netporn. We will start with imaginative suggestions and definitions and usages of 'net' and 'pornography.' Besides that, we will discuss the ones that have been doing the rounds. Recently we have seen startling uses of the word 'porn' such as 'bioporn,' 'warporn,' 'development pornography.' What do these words mean and how can we think of yet other porn categories and usages? Can we reclaim the language of porn from the media hype developed by the 'cutting edge' porn industries, or from the widening moral backlash? Can we the open the field of pornography?

## Delicious Links

[del.icio.us/netporn](http://del.icio.us/netporn)

The delicious is set up to collect resources, to edit definitions and categories of the netporn matrix and to open the field of pornology.

Libidot: Sex Art Journeys

<http://www.libidot.org>

Website edited by Katrien Jacobs.

Scopophile

<http://www.livejournal.com/community/scopophile/>

Porn, meet brain: critical theories of pornography, exhibitionism, and other perverse spectacles

Fleshbot

<http://www.fleshbot.com/>

Launched in November 2003, Fleshbot is a frequently updated and influential web magazine about the pornography—and the sex culture—that digital technology and distribution has made possible.

Indie Nudes

<http://www.indienudes.com>

"The art of linking"

sexblo.gs

<http://www.sexblo.gs>

See the strange and evil side of life! In sensual shocking color

SugarBank

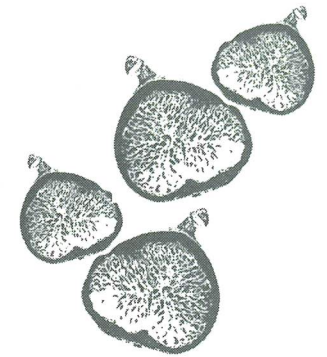
<http://www.sugarbank.com>

For people in, or interested in, the adult industry

Gram Ponante: Porn Valley Observed

<http://gramponante.com>

Reviews, interviews, tremors in the porn industry.



Slashdong

<http://www.slashdong.org/>

The combination of sex and technology: "more about the porn of engineering than the engineering of porn"

Sex & Games

<http://www.igda.org/sex>

News source for sexual content in games

Asian Sex Gazette

<http://www.asiansexgazette.com>

News and analysis of human sexuality in Asia

2257.tv - The War on Porn

<http://www.2257.tv>

2257.tv is a community weblog about the effects of the 2257 regulations on the adult industry, Internet, and society as a whole.

PervScan » Cybersex

<http://www.pervscan.com/category/cybersex/>

Not a porn website but an index to the strange obsessions, sexual outrages, and deviant doings that can be found in the news.

Netporn-crew mailing list

[Netporn-crew@listcultures.org](mailto:Netporn-crew@listcultures.org)

[http://listcultures.org/mailman/listinfo/netporn-crew\\_listcultures.org](http://listcultures.org/mailman/listinfo/netporn-crew_listcultures.org)



# Program

*friday sept 30*

10:30

Opening Remarks

10:45am-12.00am

Keynote Lecture: Mark Dery

12:00am-13:00

Keynote Lecture: Mikita Brottman

13:00

Lunch

14:00-15:30

The Rise of the Netporn Society (part I)

15:30pm

Tea Break

16:00-17:30pm

The Rise of the Netporn Society (part II)

*saturday oct 1*

10:30am

Keynote lecture: Susanna Paasonen

11:00-12.45

Porn Meets Brain: Netporn Theory

12:45

Lunch

13:30-15:00

Porn as a Technology of the Self

15:00

Tea Break

15:30-17:30

Netporn and Censorship - Open Debate

**Saturday at 20:00**

Porn Pour Porn Soirée

institute of  
network cultures

