



**ErikaLust** 

**Erika Lust Films**

*A collection of new wave sex positive feminist ethical adult cinema*

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Disclaimer: This document contains a few pornographic contents. The viewers must be 18 years + to be able to access the document.

## Abstract

This project aims to perform a detailed examination of a collection of online websites exhibiting works of the indie adult filmmaker, Erika Lust. There will be an elaborate study on her **business model with suggestions of potential archival prospects**. The project will look at the **sources of revenue, the target market and the expenses** it incurs. Additionally, there are two interviews in the paper, one with Dr. Carol Queen, an American author, editor, sociologist and sexologist and the other with Mr. Dan Erdman, an Archivist at Burn Media and an NYU alumnus.

Erika Lust's initiative is part of a new wave of ethical adult cinema production, challenging mass produced mainstream pornography. She is known to be changing the chauvinistic world of porn by creating content that is sex positive and relevant for women. Erika Lust Films runs three online streaming platforms (*Lust Cinema*, *Erotic Films* and *XConfessions*); one store for downloads, toys and cosmetics; Erika Lust's website including her prolific blog; and a non-profit project working to encourage sex education for young people - *The Porn Conversation*, a 'sex positive virtual library,' comprising of videos and articles that will help her audience learn more about porn and the impact that it's having today on the younger generations.

Note: The source of information for this paper has been the official websites of LustFilms and Erika's TEDx Talks.

## Table of Content

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Abstract</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Table of Content</b>                                       | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Introduction</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| Who is Erika Lust?  | 3         |
| Where does she display her work?                              | 3         |
| She is doing great work for adults but, what about kids?      | 3         |
| How to contact her?   | 4         |
| Her Social Media Presence                                     | 4         |
| Media Coverage for Lust Films                                 | 4         |
| <b>Sources of Revenue - Official Websites</b>                 | <b>6</b>  |
| Lustcinema.com  | 6         |
| Store.erikalust.com   | 7         |
| Xconfessions.com  | 7         |
| Good Porn - A Woman's guide (Book) by Erika Lust              | 8         |
| Miscellaneous sources of revenue                              | 9         |
| <b>Brand positioning</b>                                      | <b>9</b>  |
| Promoting sex positive feminist pornography                   | 9         |
| Blog  | 10        |
| Behind the scene footage                                      | 11        |
| Using Virtual Reality (VR) technology in Porn                 | 11        |
| The Porn conversation - child friendly website                | 12        |
| Xconfessions - the mobile App                                 | 13        |
| Charity work  | 13        |
| <b>Brand image ethics</b>                                     | <b>14</b> |
| Values  | 14        |
| Performer's Bill of Rights                                    | 15        |
| <b>Negative PR smashing the positive brand image</b>          | <b>18</b> |
| Sexual assault alligations by Hello Rooster on LustFilms' set | 18        |
| Opinions  | 21        |
| <b>Interview with Dr. Carol Queen</b>                         | <b>21</b> |
| <b>Interview with Mr. Dan Erdman</b>                          | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Personal comments</b>                                      | <b>29</b> |

## Introduction

### Who is Erika Lust?

Based in Barcelona, Spain, Erika is a prolific award winning adult filmmaker and an author. Born in 1977, in Sweden, she went ahead to study political sciences, feminism and gender studies. After getting tired of the chauvinistic mainstream porn, Erika started her career in the adult industry in 2004, with the indie short film, 'The Good Girl' – a humorous statement of principles. The immediate success of this first attempt encouraged her to pursue a film career. Since then, she has directed many films and has even won multiple awards for them.



### Where does she display her work?

She has three online streaming platforms namely, *Lust Cinema*, *Erotic Films* and *XConfessions*, on which she distributes her work. This paper shall talk more about these platforms in the pages ahead.

### She is doing great work for adults but, what about kids?

Even though Erika, along with her husband, Pablo Dobner, initiated a positive impact project on the adult film industry, they were still worried about the access of poor quality porn to the kids. Here's what they have to say about this problem:

*"Kids are stumbling across porn at as young as 9 or 10 years old - and we need to take action. We've realised this can't be solved by banning bad porn, in the same way banning drugs hasn't helped in society either. But we can teach, we can talk, we can make our kids aware and critical. So we are starting this project to help parents and teachers talk about online pornography with their kids and teens. Don't be afraid, have #theporntalk with your daughters and sons. The sooner the better."*

- Erika and Pablo

They run a website called [www.thepornconversation.org](http://www.thepornconversation.org) which is a project offering

tools for parents to teach the younger generation about porn.

## How to contact her?

Here is her official contact details -

Diputació 185 Pral

08011 Barcelona - Spain

+34 933 100 204

Affiliates

[hello@erikalustfilms.com](mailto:hello@erikalustfilms.com)

## Her Social Media Presence

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/erikalustfilms>

Instagram handle - @erikalust

Twitter handle - @erikalust

## Media Coverage for Lust Films

Here are some of the links -

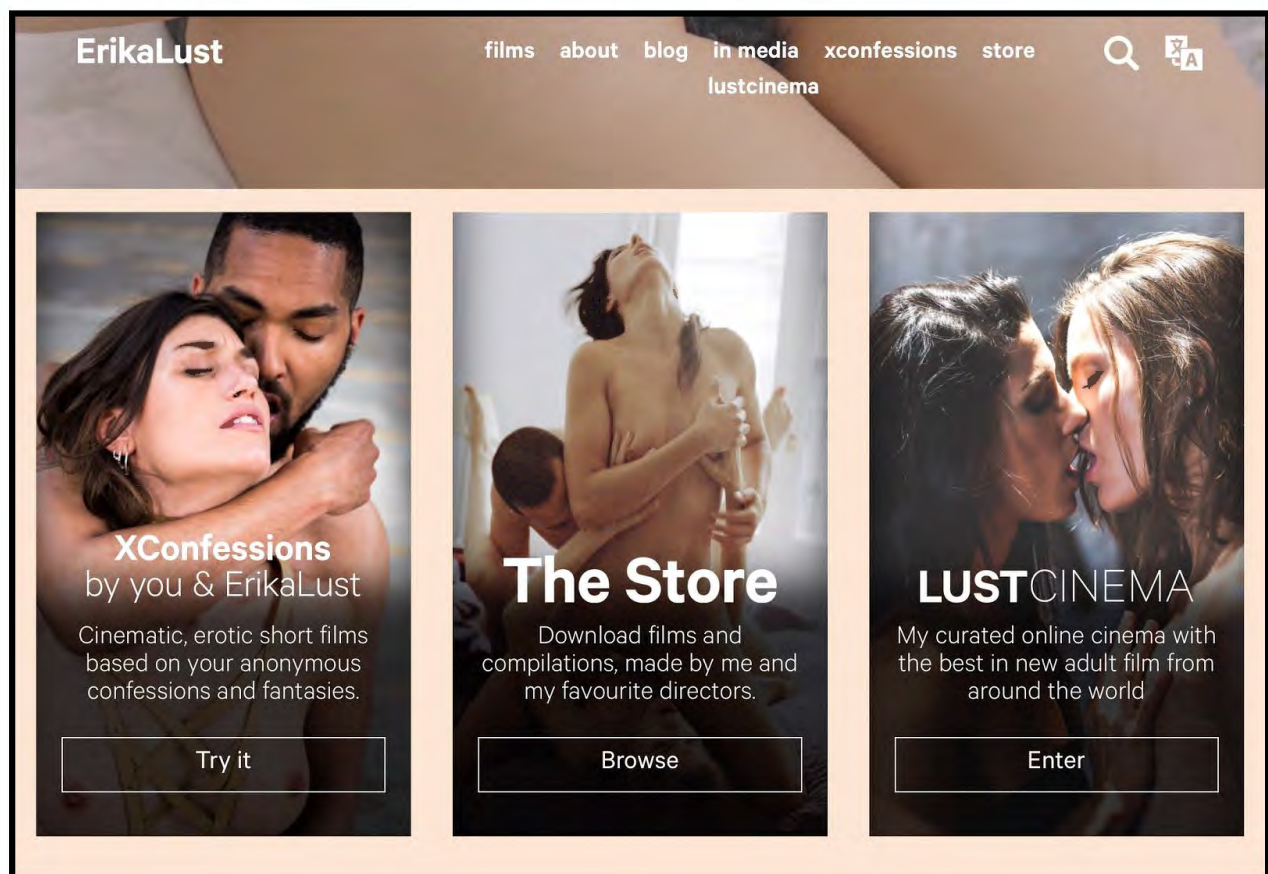
- Marie Claire - Feminist Porn Director Erika Lust Tells Us Why The Industry HAS To Change - <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/news/feminist-porn-director-erika-lust-on-why-the-industry-has-to-change-45971>
- VICE - Director Erika Lust Explains How to Properly Make Feminist Porn - [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/dp5z8x/we-talked-to-a-director-on-how-to-properly-make-feminist-porn-252](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/dp5z8x/we-talked-to-a-director-on-how-to-properly-make-feminist-porn-252)
- Cosmopolitan - This Woman Is Turning Your Sex Life Into Porn - <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/sex-love/q-and-a/a32295/erika-lust-is-taking-your-sex-life-and-turning-it-into-porn/>
- Vogue - The new Porn - <https://erikalust.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/VOGUE-UK-PDF.pdf>

- El País - Se filman fantasías sexuales (razón aquí) - [https://elpais.com/elpais/2015/07/27/tentaciones/1437991891\\_359501.html](https://elpais.com/elpais/2015/07/27/tentaciones/1437991891_359501.html)
- The Telegraph - Sex: Is Hollywood doing it right? - <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/film/what-to-watch/erika-lust-porn-movie-sex-scenes/>



## Sources of Revenue - Official Websites

Erika Lust Films runs three online streaming platforms (Lust Cinema, Erotic Films and XConfessions) from which she generates her revenue; one store for downloads, toys and cosmetics; Erika Lust's website including her prolific blog; and a non-profit project working to encourage sex education for young people: The Porn Conversation. I reckon no revenue is generated from this non-profit project and rather the same adds to the brand image.



### Lustcinema.com

Made for cinema and sex lovers, this website is an online porn studio by Erika Lust, with a huge catalogue of innovative content made by adult filmmakers who capture the passion and the pleasures of sex. The users must pay to watch the available content. Subscription schemes such as **monthly (\$17.50/-), quarterly (\$11.50/-) and annual (\$5.95/-) payment** options are available. The studio is home to exclusive, LustCinema original series and feature films for those who seek plot-driven storylines with realistic situations of sex, cinematic quality and sex positivity. There is some content that



overlaps with that of the other two websites as well. Users may stream or download the content from any device, without any nasty pop-ups or advertising. They even offer a scheme where if a user subscribes to their mailing list, they will get to watch a film for free. Lust Cinema aims to challenge the porn industry standards by promoting the cinematic possibilities of the medium, high quality storytelling and a realistic representation of human sexuality and sex. It has a kind of porn where everyone's pleasure is equally important.

### [Store.erikalust.com](http://Store.erikalust.com)

Much like the other two websites this one too offers similar collections of LustFilms along with other production collaborations as well. The main difference is that on this webpage one has the advantage of buying individual films or say a pack of three films, depending on the scheme. This is unlike other of her platforms which require a subscription plan for its users to be able to access the content. The collection on this website seems to be a combination of the collection on xconfessions.com and the one on luscinema.com. However, I do see some selected films which are unique only to this website. The price of these films ranges anything **between \$6.95 and \$20.95 for individual films**, depending on the duration of the film. This website also has a collection of xconfessions short films in volumes. They are more expensive, ranging **between \$225.34 and \$112.98**. Discounts are also available on selected few films. Here you can find the movies of your favorite actresses or actors, prestigious directors, sagas, sex education, among many other genres.

### [Xconfessions.com](http://Xconfessions.com)

Erika's groundbreaking XConfessions project is the **first crowdsourced erotic film series in the history of adult cinema** and the audiovisual project that brought adult film to cinema screens around the world again with the XConfessions Tour. The website has a subscription policy where the users must pay either monthly, quarterly or annually, to be able to access the films - **Monthly: \$34.95, Quarterly: \$20.95 (rebills at \$125.7 every 6 months), Annually: \$11.95 (rebills at \$143.4 every 12 months)**. Most of the films are under 30 minutes. There is a fresh stock of films which is added to the main collection every month.

Erika's revolutionary cinema reflects her views on sex as a healthy, natural part of life worth celebrating whilst placing female pleasure at the center. Her relatable female characters are sex-positive, powerful and progressive. Erika shares on the website saying, "I started this project in the summer of 2013. Initially it was an online space for people to share their sexual confessions, but over the years it has grown into a global



community of people who adore sex and film, and have always hoped for a new kind of erotica. Now the site is home to filmmakers, performers, artists, and you; the most important part, the people behind the confessions. The idea is simple but powerful. We shoot explicit short films based on the best anonymous confessions we receive. If your confession is chosen, you are rewarded with a free access pass to the site. Together we are changing the rules of pornography. We don't just show what sex looks like, we tell stories about what sex and desire feel like, and how we communicate and interact sexually with each other. We want to keep surprising you, so we never use the same story or setting twice. Each film is visually arresting and pushes the boundaries of fetish, lust, desire and intimacy."

Here are some of the many other media agencies, talking about this website -

*"Lust's ability to break free from the stereotypes and clichés that have plagued porn is just a slice of her manifesto. By championing sex-positive images of women, she defies porn go-tos like Pornhub and Redtube, instead creating a much-needed platform – through her crowdsourced project XConfessions – for women to be more than tits and ass, and likewise for men, often judged no further than the size of their penis."* - **How to make a kick ass feminist porno, 13th July 2015, DAZED**

*"Female pleasure is rarely explored within mainstream pornography, rather the women are there to be objectified or to service their male co-stars. Lust's work portrays both male and female pleasure."* - **The problem with mainstream porn: Unrealistic sex has given it a bad name, 21st April 2015, The Independent [UK]**

*"In Hollywood it's obvious that they can't do much more than they are doing, sexually, because of the rating system," says Lust. "Then there's this land of independent filmmakers and many European filmmakers that dare to show sex differently. But they say, 'It's not porn!' They're right, in a sense. Their definition is that they don't have the goal of turning you on; they just use the sex as a narrative device. But most of them are more in the line of Nymphomaniac where sex is something dark, obscure, traumatising and very, very serious."* - **Sex: is Hollywood doing it right?, 2nd October 2015, Telegraph [UK]**

## Good Porn - A Woman's guide (Book) by Erika Lust

*Good Porn* is a women's comprehensive guide to porn – what it is, what types are available, and why men and women enjoy different styles. With her poised expertise, the book examines the films, the industry, and the phenomenon, making porn more accessible to women. Lust breaks away from the assumption that porn is for men only by examining the role of women within the porn industry, from female directors to the stars themselves. She addresses the myth that one can't be a feminist and still like

porn, offers insight on the educational and erotic value of porn, and covers the benefits of porn in heightening women's sexual appetites. Sharp and honest, Good Porn breaks away from traditional female previous assumptions of porn, opening a new discourse on sexuality and relationships.

The book is available as a **kindle ebook on Amazon for \$2.99/-** and a **physical copy as paperback for \$16.12/-**.

## Miscellaneous sources of revenue

**Merchandise on the online store!** Erika offers you a different way to discover adult cinema. The entire catalog of XConfessions is available for instant download and fast streaming, in HD quality and in English, as well as all of Erika Lust's films outside of XConfessions. One can also enjoy short films directed by invited directors that will not leave one indifferent. A full range of Power Pussy clothes, shirts, panties and bags with provocative phrases are also available on this online store. A variety of sex toys too are available.

## Brand positioning

In my opinion, Erika's target audience is a collection of people who are either bored or get offended with mainstream porn. Hence, branding her work and herself as a sex positive feminist, works well for her business. I don't mean to say that doing this is her ultimate motivation and I'm sure that she is in the business for all the right reasons but, her brand strategy compliments her image which promotes her business.

## Promoting sex positive feminist pornography

**The Lust Tour!** Erika believes to change the world, one must engage with it. She says, *"I have been on the road spreading the word that women have a right to their pleasure, that female pleasure matters and that the imaginary of porn needs to be questioned to shift our sexual culture and gender relations. I have also shown my films in theaters in major cities around the world. Nights of XConfessions screenings have sold out in Los Angeles, Berlin, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, Barcelona and London demonstrating there is a craving for the lost eroticism, authenticity and cinematic quality in pornography."*

She continues, saying, *"With the Lust Tour, I will continue to speak out and bring together*

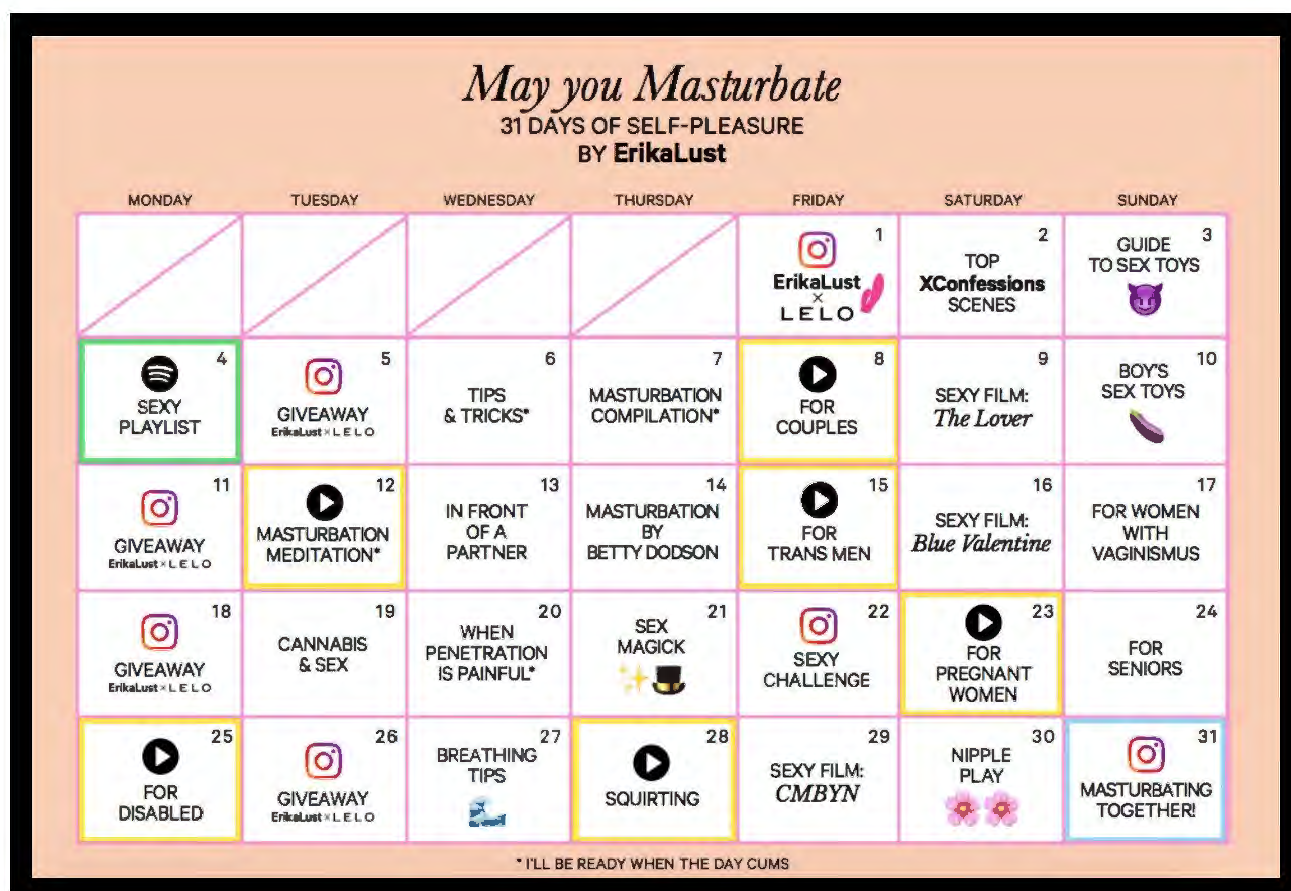
like minded, sex positive people from across the globe to talk about what porn has become, and to reclaim the medium as a space for humans to explore their sexuality without sacrificing its artistic potential.”

You may find the videos of her Talks and Tours here - <https://erikalust.com/lust-tour/>

## Blog

Erika Lust has a blog on which she puts up posts on a fairly regular basis. Sometimes she puts one every three days, other times consecutively. The posts are erratic in fashion with regard to their periodical occurrence. She talks about topics which are relevant to the times. For example, many of her posts, since the COVID-19 spread worldwide, have been about the quarantine lifestyle of the people and how their sex lives have been affected. Some of them are - ‘An Erotic guide to Quarantine,’ ‘My Lusty Quarantine,’ ‘Watch my new movie - Sex and Love in the time of Quarantine - for free now,’ ‘Supporting sex workers during the COVID-19 outbreak,’ etc.

Along with that, she does a regular ‘The Lust weekly round-up.’ She gives a line-up of her in these blog posts. Here is an example -



Other interesting ones are titled as - 'An introduction to Yoni massage,' 'COCO relating: Conscious, Organic, Committed, Open Relationships,' 'Pleasure school with Sexologist Juliet Allen,' 'What I'm fighting for this International Women's Day,' etc.

## Behind the scene footage

For each film that is published on the website, the information of the performers and the behind the scenes footage is also provided. This gives its audience a sense that they know the crew and the cast more closely. It also makes them know "who makes the porn they are watching" and "How it was made."



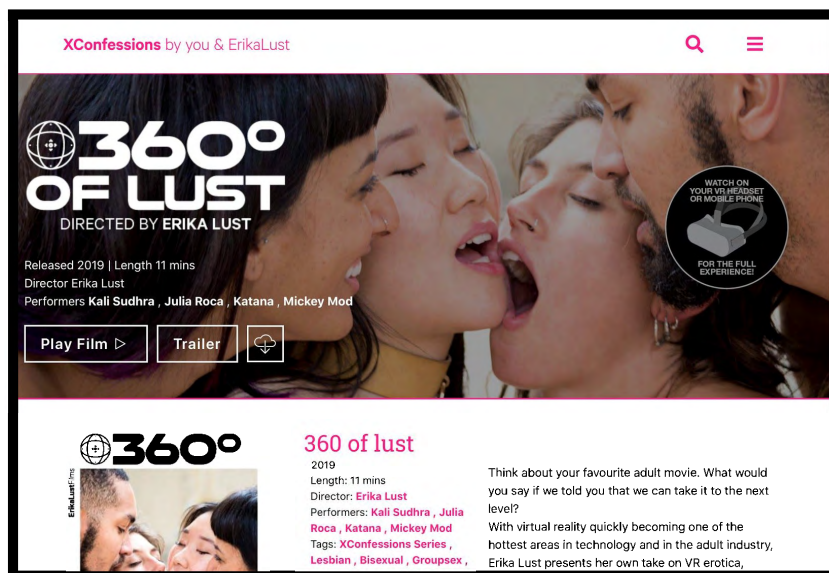
## Using Virtual Reality (VR) technology in Porn

With virtual reality quickly becoming one of the hottest areas in technology and in the adult industry, Erika Lust presents her own take on VR erotica, offering a more immersive and personal interactive experience. In short, The film has passion, context,

and intimacy. It is a voyeuristic experience in '360°' with performers like Kali Sudhra, Katana, Julia Roca and Mickey Mod. The film is truly a unique experience.

Selected comments on the website -

*"This was not porn (it did contain porn). This was art. There you are in a gallery of sexuality. The performances fade in and out. It reminded me of an exhibition I saw in the*



*San Francisco MOMA. It's meant to be experienced again and again, and the pacing does gently climax but it feels as though the goal is not to get you off as much as to entice you, to make an introduction, to place sex on display as a series of acts. Some are up close feeling personal like a striptease, and others are in the background forcing you*

*to watch as a true voyeur. The way the scenes change constantly gives the impression of an orgy. You might turn away for a second and when you come back everything has changed..." - sex\_muffin*

## The Porn conversation - child friendly website

The couple runs a website called [www.thepornconversation.org](http://www.thepornconversation.org) which is a non-profit project offering tools for parents to teach the younger generation about porn. The website holds a collection of educational articles and videos for multiple age ranges. Access to this educational material acts as essential tools to Parents, Teachers, and Educators, enabling them to take action against this crisis. Moreover, this website holds a space for its users to have access to psychotherapists, sexologists, sex educators, relationship coaches, sex journalists and activists, Sex-Positive Mentors for Non-Monogamy counselling, and clinical psychologists from all over the globe. The website holds their professional information and email IDs for its users to contact these individuals.



## Xconfessions - the mobile App

It's tinder for sexual acts. You can swipe right on your deepest desires. The app helps couples to talk about their fantasies. Made to play in pairs, each partner downloads the app and individually swipes through hundreds of fantasies; swiping right to those they like and left to those they don't. When both users swipe yes to a fantasy it's a match and the card appears in the couple's "bank." It's then up to the couple to work through their bank of fantasies at their own pace! The XConfessions App features cards for virtually every taste. From role-play ideas to sex challenges, there are fantasies to turn every couple on.

Designed to get couples speaking about their sexual desires, the app can be used for people who feel too shy to speak openly about their fantasies, or for those who want to spice things up in the bedroom and discover some new kinks. Whatever the intention, it's sure to make any sex life interesting. The app is 100% secure and confidential - users will only be able to see the fantasies that both players have swiped "yes" to. If one of the players swipes no, the card disappears and the other will never know! In the event that users want to change partners it's easy to disconnect from one and connect with a new one. Erika made this app as a fun extension of her XConfessions series - a crowd sourced adult film project in which she turns her followers sexual fantasies into erotic short films.

## Charity work

Erika lust films is an official supporter of Pineapple Support, a charity which works tirelessly to provide professional coaching, counselling and therapy for people working in the online adult industry. Erika Lust also makes regular contributions to the Red Umbrella Fund and Amnesty International, as well as one-off donations in response to current humanitarian disasters. The charities we support are particularly close to our hearts because they support sex workers and the LGBTQIA+ community. At Erika Lust Films, they believe that everyone has the power to make an impact. They do not charge fees for their screenings, instead, they encourage partners and event producers to make a donation to these charities.



## Brand image ethics

The company's major **expenses** are cast, crew and equipment handling fees. As the production house claims that all their employees are paid justly, it is safe to reckon that the company's major proportion of expenses are utilised there. Some **expenses** must be spent on website management, and on any other legal matters. Other expenses can be location permission fees and film production cost, which are standard to all films. On her website, Erika claims to have a budget of 250,000 Euros for her project, enticing multiple short films.

## Values

Erika Lust Films is part of a new wave of ethical adult cinema production, challenging mass produced mainstream pornography. Like how the shift towards consuming organic produce instead of fast food is reflective of a more ethical, intelligent society, they, too, are encouraging this type of consumerism within adult entertainment, through ethical production and distribution. In their own words, these are the principles they follow to adhere to this sex-positive mantra:

1. Women's pleasure matters.
2. Diversity is central to creating groundbreaking new cinema.
3. Pay every person fairly, from interns to performers.
4. Make work that you can be proud of. We have nothing to hide, because we are proud of what we do. Mainstream porn sites like Pornhub.com, Exxxtrasmall.com, brazzers.com don't show who they are: no names of producers and directors, no contact info, no one showing face, no pride.
5. Our shootings are a safe sex environment, with every performer providing up to date STD checks - and performers choose whether they wish to use a condom.
6. Every part of the shoot is discussed and agreed beforehand with all performers. We NEVER ask a performer to do something they have not agreed to or expect.
7. Every shoot includes multiple breaks, food and a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere.
8. Every Director or studio we feature on our sites is paid commission from the sale of their films.

In October 2016, they started an ongoing open call for guest directors to make erotic short films for XConfessions. They wanted to get more women directing films to make female-led erotica relevant. To ensure that the production of all films, including those that are guest directed, follow their values listed above, they have developed the 'Erika Lust Performer's Bill of Rights' and 'Guidelines for Guest Directors to Shoot for Erika Lust.' Both of them are a mandatory read and sign for all guest participants. The link to the Guidelines for the guest directors to shoot is given and the Details of Performer's rights are given below.



## Performer's Bill of Rights

At Erika Lust Films they believe that all performers have the right to be treated fairly, without discrimination and with respect. They have written this bill to protect performers and support them in our productions. They want that performers to have a positive experience shooting with them, and they also want to create a safe space on and off set for performers. It is their most important responsibility to ensure the mental, emotional and physical health of all performers. This bill has been inspired by similar bills that exist from organizations like the Adult Performer Advocacy Committee and companies like kink.com. In my opinion, the bill is in a first person's narrative to make it personal.

### Before the shoot

As a performer -

- I have the right to know who I will be performing with, what is the idea/concept of the movie, the approximate duration of the shoot.
- I have the right to know what I will be paid, and I have the right to negotiate the rate.
- I have the right to know about the sex scene, and specifically what acts are involved.
- I have the right to know where the shoot will take place, and request paid transportation.
- I have the right to contact my scene partner and to discuss before the shoot my limits and boundaries.
- I have a right to use safer sex methods, and to not lose work because I decide to use: condoms, dental dams, gloves, etc.
- I have the right to refuse acts that I don't feel comfortable with.
- I have the right to not be pressured to perform with people I don't feel comfortable with.
- I have the right to choose the toys before a scene. If I choose to work with toys, I have the right to sterilize the toys myself, or request that the production team sterilizes the toys and brings proper toy cleaners to the set. I can also request that no one handles the toys.
- I have a right to know about the STI testing process and to have adequate information about where I can get tested.
- I have the right to see the test results of my scene partner, and to see their ID that

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corresponds to their test results. I can request these results before the shoot, but also review them again the same day of the shoot.

→ I have the right to have my concerns heard by the director/producer/talent manager when I have questions or doubts about any part of a scene or shoot.

→ I have the right to not be pressured to perform sexual acts off camera at any point.

→ I have the right to be informed of any last minute changes and I have the right to voice my concerns about any said changes.

→ I have the right to refuse changes in the scene or partners if there isn't adequate notice and I don't feel comfortable.

### **During the shoot**

→ I have the right to water, snacks, and a quality healthy meal.

→ I have the right to be treated by all crew members in a respectful and courteous manner on set at all times. If I don't feel that I am being treated in a respectful manner, I have the right to talk to a designated person about these concerns (talent manager, producer, etc)

→ I have the right to have a schedule for the day.

→ I have the right to request safer sex materials that the producer or designated crew member must supply (condoms, gloves, lubricant, dental dams, baby wipes etc)

→ I have the right to talk about concerns regarding health and safety on set.

→ I have the right to refuse any unsafe work.

→ I have the right to decline or agree to any sexual act that was proposed, before or during a scene, even if I previously consented, the consent is reversible and can be revoked when I want.

→ I have the right to call off a scene at any moment if I don't feel well or if I feel uncomfortable.

→ I have the right to talk to the director at any time during the day if I have concerns about performing, or about my scene partner.

→ I understand no one has a right to my body just because I am performing. This means that no one has the right to physical contact with me without my explicit consent on-set or off-set

→ I have the right to access the on-set bloodborne pathogen plan or someone who is knowledgeable of the on-set bloodborne pathogen plan.

### **After the shoot**

→ I have the right to be paid my agreed upon fees in a timely manner in the method that I had agreed upon with the producer before the shoot.

→ I have the right to give feedback, positive or negative, to the producer/director either in a direct way or through sending an anonymous email via the below link: <https://www.guerrillamail.com/compose>

***As a performer, I am responsible for the following things:***

### **Before the shoot**

→ Get tested within the time frame of 13 days before the shoot at a certified clinic, doctor, hospital or laboratory.

→ Get in touch with my scene partner to discuss limits, boundaries, safer sex.

→ Correspond with the producer and director via email.

→ Inform the producer and/or director of any health concerns, limits, allergies, medical conditions, etc.

→ Read my scripts and be familiar with the concept of the movie and the scenes.

→ Ask if I am in doubt about anything at all. Including but not limited to: Scripts, Co-performers, location, Sex scene, wardrobe, makeup and hair, etc

→ Communicate with the producer about the payment for the film, billing information, VAT, etc.

### **On the day of the shoot**

→ I will show up on time (or I will be on time for my pick up).

→ I will show up clean and sober to set and I will not consume alcohol or drugs.

→ I will bring two pieces of ID with me on set to verify my identity and that I am of age.

→ I will read and sign the contract and hiring paperwork with the producer before the start of the shoot.

→ I will have a meeting with my scene partner at the beginning of the day to talk about the sex scene.

→ I will treat my scene partner with respect and follow their limits and safe words, always using consent.

→ If at any time I am doubting a scene or any part of the performance I will check in

with the Producer or Director and express my concerns.

### **After the shoot**

→ I will fill out the performer's feedback form online and submit it. The purpose of this feedback process is to be able to express any concerns or issues on set that weren't addressed on set and also to generally evaluate my experience with the director and production team.

### **Guidelines for Guest Directors to Shoot for Erika Lust can be found here -**

To cut short the description, the link has been provided for the reader's persual - [https://erikalust.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Guidelines\\_for\\_guest\\_directors.pdf](https://erikalust.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Guidelines_for_guest_directors.pdf)

## **Negative PR smashing the positive brand image**

### **Sexual assault alligations by Hello Rooster on LustFilms' set**

Hello Rooster (**Oluwaseun Abdul Rufai Ajala**) met Olympe de G (**Barbara Soumet-Leman**), director and performer, in April 2017. She approached them to take part in a Erika Lust production 'Architecture Porn' where she would act as lead performer and offered them to meet her beforehand to train for the scenes. Olympe de G and Hello Rooster practiced and trained establishing their sexual boundaries for the shooting: '(1) no receiving sex in a doggystyle position and, (2) no receiving oral sex' were Hello Rooster's boundaries. They also decided on a safe signal to be used during the shoot if any of them weren't comfortable with the scene. On the day of the shoot, in June 2017, Olympe de G and Hello Rooster restated the above boundaries. During the scene, Hello Rooster's boundaries were violated and although they used the safe signal, Olympe de G ignored it. Hello Rooster was shocked, dissociated and asked for a break. When they took a break following the assault, Olympe de G acknowledged she breached Hello Rooster's boundaries and both agreed to talk about what happened later so to finish with the shooting. After Olympe de G and Erika Lust Films' failure to address demands of a mediation regarding this breach of contract and the sexual assault, Hello Rooster felt they were left with no other option than to seek legal help. Hello Rooster approached Erika Lust Films to have an out of court settlement in the form of an apology and to obtain a witness statement, which they initially agreed to, if they were not held responsible for any damages caused by Olympe de G. But, Erika Lust Films eventually pulled out of negotiations at the last minute refusing to proceed with a settlement, leaving the only option open to for Hello Rooster, the difficult decision to

continue by engaging in an expensive legal route to have a chance at having justice and accountability.

## WHAT HAPPENED

### Introduction

Hello Rooster; **Oluwaseun Abdul Rufai Ajala** met Olympe de G; **Barbara Soumet-Leman**, director and performer, in April 2017. She approached them to take part in a Erika Lust production 'Architecture Porn' where she would act as lead performer and offered them to meet her beforehand to train for the scenes.

*"I was appreciative of Olympe de G professionalism in offering to prepare for the scenes in advance. Not realising, I was being misled into believing this was standard industry protocol, which it wasn't."*

### Boundaries

Olympe de G and Hello Rooster practiced and trained establishing their sexual boundaries for the shooting: **'(1) no receiving sex in a doggystyle position and, (2) no receiving oral sex'** were Hello Rooster's boundaries. They also decided on a safe signal to be used during the shoot if any of them weren't comfortable with the scene.

*"These agreements were not formalised in writing, as most conversations around consent aren't. But I was confident in the professional way in which the film would be produced, especially considering the fact there had been an intense training and rehearsal prior."*

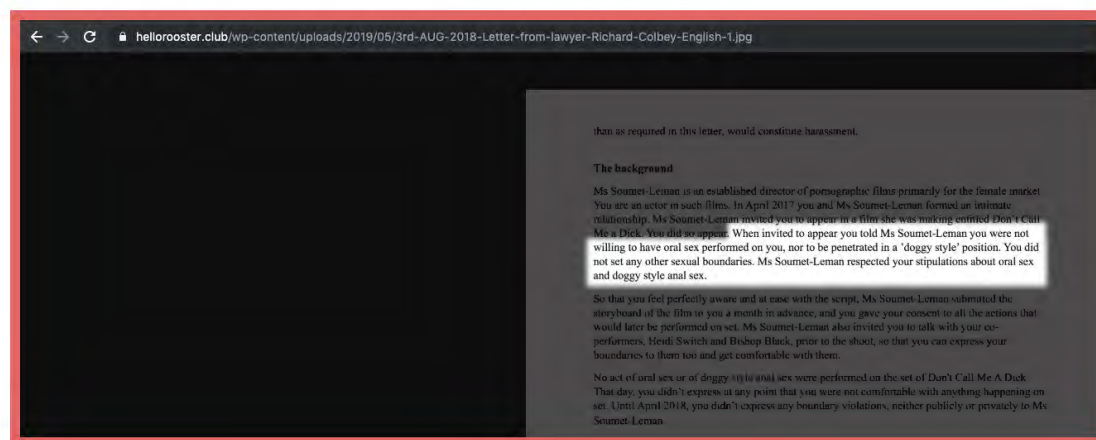
### Assault

On the day of the shoot, in June 2017, Olympe de G and Hello Rooster restated the above boundaries.

During the scene, Hello Rooster's boundaries were violated and although they used the safe signal, Olympe de G ignored. Hello Rooster was shocked, dissociated and asked for a break.

*"The assault is on tape, part of the film 'Architecture Porn', meaning whoever watches it is actually witnessing a rape within the comfort of wherever they are and the possibility to pause, replay, move fast forward, etc. Basically like you would with any porn movie or series on Netflix."*

Source: Hello Rooster website (<https://www.hellorooster.club/activism/>)



The only letter fragment linked to '(1) no receiving sex in a doggystyle position and, (2) no receiving oral sex'

An updated official statement from Erika Lust on Rooster's false allegations -

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*It's been several days since my official statement about Rooster's false allegations. I am now issuing an update to my original statement because a piece of important evidence has come to light that is key to truly understanding this story. In light of seeing a letter fragment that was posted on Rooster's website (see below) I needed to understand if Rooster and Olympe had agreed privately on sexual boundaries that were not respected on my set.*

*Having seen the original letter from Olympe's lawyer dated August 2018 (read here - <https://erikalust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Olympe-Legal-Letter-1-PDF.pdf>) I can now see how the extract has been manipulated in order to fit Rooster's narrative and frame Olympe as a rapist.*

*The letter in question is connected to the film 'Don't Call Me A Dick', not 'Architecture Porn'. On the 'Don't Call Me a Dick' set, Rooster was due to perform with Heidi Switch. Their sexual boundaries were clear. Rooster's sexual boundaries of not having sex in doggy style and not receiving oral sex were 100% respected on 'Don't Call Me A Dick', something clearly stated in the letter.*

*In order to protect performers, we don't assume that sex acts and sexual boundaries set for previous films hold for future shoots. This is crucial as it is not uncommon for performers to alter their boundaries from film to film, especially performing with different people, as was the case with the two films in question. That is why I have protocols in place to ensure that these changes are accommodated.*

*In accordance with my standard protocol, during pre-production of 'Architecture Porn' both Olympe de G and Rooster were presented with a script and a detailed storyboard of the shoot. I asked if they were both ok with the story and sexual acts to be performed. Both confirmed. They were also given the opportunity to establish their sexual boundaries. Following this, on the day of the shoot, a second conversation was held to make sure the sex acts, practices and boundaries previously stated by them were still prevailing. Each sex act and position performed was discussed and agreed on by the performers, in my presence and in the presence of the main film crew and the talent manager. This second conversation always takes place to ensure that the performers are still comfortable with the pre agreed boundaries and sex acts, with the explicit understanding that they are able to change their mind at any point during the film shoot.*

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*As all of the sex acts shot for 'Architecture Porn' were agreed on in front of my team and being now sure that there were no other privately stated boundaries for this film, I am confident that a rape did not occur on the set. I am not going to take accountability for a rape I know did not happen and I find it sickening that someone would manipulate the evidence in such a way.*

*The call out culture that my team and I have witnessed this week glosses over nuanced conversations about what a safe sex environment on a porn set is in a very irresponsible and ignorant way. It also distorts and undermines the concept of sexual violence, while unjustly slandering a movement which works towards much needed alternatives in the porn industry. I would ask the sex community to be more responsible and take into consideration the facts that we're able to provide. Blind call outs by people not in possession of the facts does little for those seeking justice and the sex community, of all groups, should know this.*

*All of this being said, I also watched Rooster's last video this weekend. I see they are suffering and I wish them no harm so I have, out of empathy, decided to withdraw Architecture Porn from our sites. I won't be commenting on this issue further.*

*As of tomorrow August 29th, 'Architecture Porn' will no longer be on our sites.*

Barcelona, August 28th 2019

For the original statement, please visit this website and scroll down to the end of the updated statement to find the beginning of the original statement - <https://erikalust.com/statement-regarding-hello-roosters-sexual-assault-allegations/>

## Opinions

Understanding about production of pornography, with its loose ethics and diluted systems, can be a challenging task. This is why I took some professional help to form my own conclusions based on that discussion. I talked to Dr. Carol Queen and asked her questions that I needed clarity on. You may find the complete interview below. Following that, you will find my interview with Mr. Dan Erdman who is an archivist. I approached him to understand what happens to porn years after it is made. It was essential for me to have an answer to this question as it even determines the future of



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Erika's work. I believe that her work is a trailblazing one and must get documented and preserved to be able to leave an impact by its thorough use in academics.

## Interview with Dr. Carol Queen

### Who is Dr. Carol Queen?

Carol Queen is an American author, editor, sociologist and sexologist active in the sex-positive feminism movement. She has written elaborately on human sexuality in her book, 'Real Live Nude Girl: Chronicles of Sex-Positive Culture.' She has written a sex tutorial too called, 'Exhibitionism for the Shy: Show Off, Dress Up and Talk Hot,' along with an erotica, 'The Leather Daddy and the Femme.' Dr. Queen has produced adult movies, organised events and workshops, and has given academic lectures. She was featured as an instructor and star in both installments of the Bend Over Boyfriend series about female-to-male anal sex, or pegging. She has also served as editor for compilations and anthologies. She is also a sex educator in the United States.

### The Interview

#### Q1. According to you, what makes a person/ an act/ a conversation 'sex-positive'?

The simple answer is that it (or they) carries a positive attitude about sexuality—but that is really too simple. Many people associate this phrase now with enthusiasm about sex, and while that is great, it's not the definition either. "Sex-positive" is a perspective about sex that makes room for consent-based diversity and a kind of social acceptance of this that we rarely see; it acknowledges that we are not all alike and emphasizes what we need for sex to be a positive part of our lives (should we desire to have sex in the first place—you can be sex-positive without having sex at all, since it is not just a personal focus, but a social one). These needs include: communication skills; removal of state-and religion-based barriers like shame and criminalization; inclusive education, health care, and other social services; and a deeper ability to understand and practice consent than most of us have ever been taught.

Q2. As a sexologist you must have been dealing with clients on a regular basis. With regard to those interactions, when talking about a qualitative impact on society, what importance do you see for sex 'positive feminist pornography'?

Actually I do a lot of public education but I rarely see clients. However, sexology as a discipline, and my own educational orientation to porn, does embrace the option of sex-positive feminist pornography, both as an aspect of porn as a whole, and as a type of porn that sheds light on elements of mainstream porn that may not be depicting women (and others) in a fully appropriate light. This could mean many different things, of course. And I am not speaking here about the kinds of problematic porn where we do not feel there was consent in its making--that is a completely different discussion. But feminist porn has sought to add depth and agency to the depiction of women and women's sexuality (often, men's and non-binary people as well, although queer porn exists to do more of that too). I would in general call feminist porn more body-positive and interested in realistic sexual depictions than much other porn is; and certainly more willing to challenge and set up alternatives to sex-role stereotypes.

So for clients or other porn watchers: Feminist porn can depict women AND men (and others!) in more expansive ways; can focus on women's pleasure and its context/s; can show women taking more active roles and in more realistic ways; often includes more signals and focus on consent and negotiation; and can give women and feminist men access to a porn that they do not feel misrepresents their own ideals and experience of sex. Now I want to make sure I say this: Not all mainstream porn misrepresents sex this way--far from it! And not all feminist porn will appeal to all women. It is not an either/or thing, especially since mainstream porn (and many of its performers) has been somewhat influenced by feminist porn and its discourse.

**Q3. You have been known to introduce the neologist term 'absexual.' Would you please explain the term in greater detail and its paradoxical relation with sex positivity? Can someone be absexual and still be sex positive?**

"Absexual" is a term I developed in conversation with my partner Dr. Robert Lawrence and our friend Dr. Betty Dodson to seek to describe people who are aroused by things that they do not accept (and, in fact, may be actively engaged in trying to eliminate in others/the culture). The examples we considered initially were anti-porn and anti-gay activists. This is different from people who feel shame about their desires or kinks--though there are, of course, many such people. It's also different from those who have biases against gays, sexually explicit material, etc., but who are not drawn to it erotically.

Re: the paradox: Sex-positivity seeks to broadly accept people as they are, sexually, providing they are operating from a place of consent. We might accept absexuals as we would any other person with an unusual kink or sexual focus. But the way absexuals seek to limit others' sexual rights and options introduces the question: Do they respect consent?

So no, someone cannot be absexual and sex-positive because, no matter whether they actually accept their own sexuality or are in distress about it, they seek to suppress other people's sexual expression. This is by definition sex-negative. A person can be fully comfortable with sex themselves and virulently against giving others that freedom or privilege. Such a person is not sex-positive.

**Q4. Are you familiar with Erika Lust's work? Especially with regard to her collaboration with sexologists for her initiative - 'The porn conversation,' how is it beneficial for an adult filmmaker to work closely with sexologists? Would you promote more adult filmmakers (sex positive and feminist or not) to do the same?**

I am familiar with her work, though I haven't seen all of it. But she is surely a trail-blazer in the world of feminist porn—not the first (nor even the first to work with sexologists), but arguably the most significant today.

Why it's beneficial to work with sexologists: Sexologists work to understand two things in particular, as the founder of my own alma mater, The Institute for Advanced study of Human Sexuality, liked to say: "what people do sexually and how they feel about it." Porn has become a flash point in part because people feel so many different ways about it, and about sex and its explicit depiction. Part of the porn controversy is people's responses rather than the porn! So sexologists can help porn producers, performers, etc. untangle questions of what viewers are learning from porn, and how it impacts them. Feminist porn as a whole is an example of this in action! And because people can "learn" from porn and treat it as informational, rather than viewing it strictly as an entertainment medium, sexologists can help porn-makers represent sex in ways that might help viewers have more satisfying and successful sexual experiences (as feminist porn already seeks to often do but depicting female sexual response more realistically).

**Q5. Would you suggest any other sex positive feminist filmmakers that you know of?**

The person I was thinking of when I said Erika is not the first is Candida Royalle, who died a few years ago but really pioneered this discussion starting in the 1980s (her company was Femme Productions). Also, Jennifer Lyon Bell of Blue Artichoke Films; and I would include Cindy Gallop although I do realize she dislikes the term "porn." There are also many queer porn people who can also fit into the feminist porn category, like Tristan Taormino, Courtney Trouble, Pink & White Productions.

**Q6. In your opinion, what role does the store 'good vibrations' play in the sex positive feminist movement that you associate yourself so closely with?**

Good Vibrations was the second women-founded sex stores in the US, and the third in the world. (The first was Beate Uhse in Germany; the first in the US was Eve's Garden in New York City.) From the beginning (1977), GV sought to bring good-quality sex products to women (and then everyone) without shame and with an emphasis on comfortable communication in the store, and a lot of information. No society is fully sex-positive, certainly not the US; but some places are more sexually diverse and accepting than others, and San Francisco, where GV began, is one of these places. So even when sex-positivity has only a subcultural (or countercultural) home, if there is enough diversity and advocacy, it can inspire other kinds of institutions—I would say Good Vibrations is one of these. Also, GV was a fairly early home for feminist porn and for the discussion about women and porn, thanks to former staff member Susie Bright (do you know her work? Look her up if not, she is extremely important to this discussion). One problem with alternative forms of porn, especially prior to internet streaming, was access—and GV was a significant access point for many years. Now, people do not need us to find porn that they might like/feel comfortable with. But twenty and thirty years ago we played a role in helping people access what they wanted to watch (as well as helping the first feminist pornographers and others find their fans and sell their wares).

**Q6. What impact do you think does a company leave on its customers by branding itself as a 'sex-positive feminist'? Does this lead performers/producers/companies to certain business models that build off that brand?**

This is such an interesting question—it could be the spin-off for a dissertation, honestly! It reminds me of the overarching way Lynn Comella looked at the women-run sex toy world for her book *Vibrator Nation*. OK, here's my response:

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First, it welcomes women and feminists, as well as people who identify as sex-positive. Feminism and sex-positivity are not universal social givens--so it signals that the porn being made (or whatever the company in question offers) is "safe" to explore, or at least not misogynist, sex-negative and shaming, etc. Second, it introduces those concepts to new viewers who are just seeking out some entertainment. Because porn that identifies itself as feminist, or sex-positive feminist, is rather obviously different from most other porn (although mainstream porn has learned some lessons from it), it can shift people's perspective about women, sexuality and porn--this, I believe, is one reason sex-positive feminist (and queer) porn exists in the first place. The more distinctly different it is from the porn people have seen before, the greater the impression it might make. Honestly, not all porn (or other forms of media) are even clear about what they are saying/want to say, from a media studies or media literacy POV. So alt-porns can be thought-provoking, or reassuring--they can serve as an antidote for shame for some, and help people feel "seen." (Long ago I was at a Men's Movement gathering--some of the guys were very anti-porn, or filled with shame about their enjoyment of porn, but one man stood up to state that he had overcome this shame thanks to Nina Hartley, because she was a feminist and talked openly about her experiences performing in porn.)

and re: Does this lead performers/producers/companies to certain business models that build off that brand?:

Well, I think it generally does lead to certain on-set values and practices, to begin with. Which could be called one element of a business model, I think. The ideas promulgated by anti-porn feminism about what it's like to be in porn need to be addressed, so the porn can truly be called feminist (or "fair trade," "ethical," or any of the other names given to alternative porn styles that want to distinguish themselves based in part on the experience of the performers). That's one reason why in these movies you so frequently see performers negotiating and otherwise communicating about the scene they are about to do (or have just done). There are other implications for business model--payment, ownership of the scene, etc.--that alternative forms of porn can sometimes include, but I don't think those elements are well-developed across the board. I mean things like royalties on a performance, cooperative business models, etc. I believe these are still pretty rare (except for some directors who may get payments?). But there is an interesting discussion to be had about what business-model implications this branding (and the beliefs that lead to it) really would involve, in a "perfect world."

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## Interview with Mr. Dan Erdman

### Who is Mr. Dan Erdman?

Dan Erdman is a video archivist at Media Burn Archive. His writing has appeared in Public Books, Senses of Cinema, and The Moving Image, and he is currently working on a history of pornography on film. He lives in Chicago. He is also an NYU alumnus from the MIAP department.

**Q1. Under what kind of circumstances do Archives collect pornographic content? Could you give reasons for such a decision?**

In the United States, pornography of all kinds, whether written or still photographs or certainly moving images, was basically illegal pretty much throughout. There was never any well articulated blanket law covering pornography or obscenity or whatever they wanted to call it. Essentially, that was left for each individual state to decide to what degree they wanted to enforce that but, the takeaway is that for the most part, they all did to one degree or another. And so until the 60s or 70s, any form of film that you would get (and it would have been a film at that time) whether it was 16 (mm) or 8 (mm), you would essentially know nothing about it whatsoever. It was because it was illegal, and people didn't want to go to jail, there were never any credits. You would have no idea where it came from, who made it, where it was shown, under what circumstances, what year it was created, anything like that. So, in my thesis, to circle a way to come up with "what do we do with this type of an orphan film?" What (the films) really are orphans; deliberately orphans. So, I tried to look around for an (answer to the question) what do Archives do once they have this stuff? I discovered that it's hard to answer questions by that route. For the most part, the pornography that I found in places like Kinsey... and there they would treat it like just another material. Essentially, what they did was [develop] a kind of cataloguing e.g., Stag film #3 approx. made between 1930s or 1940s. Sometimes the films would have titles of their own, sometimes they won't. [A lot of time] you would get stuff which is the exact same

content. It is because it was such an underground industry that it had tons of piracy; and deliberate ripping off your customers... so as a cataloguer so had to do some really tricky things. Like, catalog something that has two different titles but essentially is the same thing (because of such rip off scams)... Bijou video was another place to find such stuff. It is a video/DVD label and has a private commercial collection. They seem to still be in business. They get mostly gay pornography....

My suspicion is that it's not like the Archivists are suppressing it - like "no! no! We can't let anybody know that we have this terrible salacious material in our collection." I think it's more that you'll get it as a part of some other collection. Stuff after the 1970s would have more information and some films even had their copyright enforced. Their packaging would have credit information...

**Q2. Do some Archives keep them as a collection and not disclose the fact that they keep them to their customers?**

In principle, yes it's possible that they do that. However, there is no definitive answer to this question.

**Q3. How can we encourage Archives to give the Erotic films the same regard as they give to non-erotic content?**

It seems to me that the ones that have been able to have success in granting that kind of access to that material are collections that already have that as their reason for existence. I can't think of any general archive who has papers and films that involve anyone post the 1970 porn industry. I can't say that they don't exist, it's just that I can't think of any. I could put you in touch with people who would know that; who could give a definite yes or no. There could be some of them out there, though I find it hard to recollect right now... there could be some at Kensey, there is that one collection at the USC. I'm pretty sure they've got some stuff like that. It seems like collections like those are there where you want to look. I can't think of them right now though. I have been researching President Lyndon Johnson archive and President Reagan archive because both their administrations had sponsored a federal commission into inquiries of how the porn industry works, what protections it has for its people etc. The Johnson one has heaps of material like some films and and videos, interviews of people on how they did their business and such other material... It's a legitimate part of their collection and there has been no archivally sound way to attempt to suppress that.



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#### Q4. In your opinion, is feminist porn worthy enough to be on the shelves of Archives?

I mean, I suppose. It shouldn't be any less than any other pornography that's on the shelf. I guess, I take 'worthy' to mean as a way to provide access to a certain movement. - a subgenre is not quite the right word - it's only one of the fiefdom of the larger world of pornography. I mean, certainly, I would say that it represents the work of significant producers or the history of the larger field. Yeah! Sure! I wouldn't say why it wouldn't be, I guess... It's not an area that I'm terrifically familiar with. I mean, I superficially know some stuff about it but, I think certainly that, again, once things become legal, you get people who are trying to deliberately make something creative that now kind of has the space to do as you don't have to worry about being thrown into jail. And, it seems to me that the feminist pornography that you're talking about certainly has that in mind. It's trying to push back but also rethink some things, in a way that nobody really bothered with before. If I was in charge of an Archive, well I guess I kinda am, yeah! I would propose a feminist porn collection...

### Personal comments

Having a company brand to itself as a 'Sex positive feminist porn' production house has a potential to have a strong brand loyalty solely based on its ethical apparatus. Hence, there is a predictably huge demand for such content in the market. The initial investors and producers will be able to capture the market rapidly because of the shortage of supply of this kind of content. The only question that remains unanswered is, with all the freely available crappy porn already existing, will the consumers want to pay for quality content such as this? In my opinion, initially no. However, over time, with gained popularity, people may agree to pay to watch quality content with a motivation to seek instant gratification for being a part of a trend. After all, this is what happened with Netflix.

The End