

ARS PORNOGRAPHIA

PORNOGRAPY or ART

The classification of pornography is both amorphous and broad as it contains an array of diverse practices- from predilections, considered perversions, and sexual depictions both historically and contemporary giving rise to reflective cultural and political debates of its value and worth. In this treatise, my main attention will be concentrated on ‘modern’¹ artistic sexual depictions and social anxieties, reflecting how, by using photographic and filmic disciplines the selection of germane artists I have chosen, have presented and dealt with aesthetic dimensions of the subject and its socially related issues. I propose to weigh the argument of whether art is/can or, perhaps, should be the ally of pornography. And, therefore, offering, that ‘porn’ is a legitimate backdrop in of our western form of culture: Kipnis, L. (2006. p118) ‘... because it’s [pornography]intensely and relentlessly *about* us. It involves the roots of our culture and the deepest corners of the self...It exposes the culture to itself.’

To introduce the subject matter, I initially want to attract attention, albeit briefly, and bring to the fore an understanding, as far as my current research allows, the etymology of the word ‘pornography’ and its subsequent use in the mid 19th Century, that is, to its historical import and relevance.

According to a Christian, or Xtian translation the Greek word, in Bible Hub. (n.d); “πορνεία, ας, ἡ” is defined as”- “*porneía* (root of the English terms "pornography, pornographic"; cf. *lpórnos*) which is derived from *pernaō*,² "to sell off") – properly, a *selling off* (surrendering) of sexual purity; *promiscuity* of any (every) type”.

Liddell and Scot’s Ancient Greek dictionary substantiates this definition especially for female gender; ‘Porne: a harlot, prostitute (prob. from *pernao* because the Greek prostitutes were commonly bought slaves [both male and female])’

From this we have the introduction ‘*graphy*’, (via Latin from the Greek ‘*graphia*’) a development, particular to the Roman civilisation, where depictions of sexual activities were, according to Wallace, M. (2007, pp.27-8) ‘Masterpiece[s] in [their] own right...Rome flourished in the context of contemporary [art works] ... Erotic and other sexually charged scenes decorated the walls of Pompeiian (sic) houses.’

Accordingly, at the same time ‘erotic’ works similarly adorned public areas especially in brothels, representing, as Umberto Eco (2001. P 301) offers, ‘...specific sexual positions available with prostitutes.’ (illustration 1). Eco further suggest (ibid); ‘In those days when they said prostitute, they meant a woman who was free, without ties and even an intellectual who did not want the ties of housewife, nor childbearing’

¹ For this paper, the term ‘modern’ will be used as defined by the industrial revolution and the technologies of the 19th C.

² “*pornos*” male prostitute; *pernao* or *porne*” female prostitute.



Illustration 1: (Pompeian Erotic Brothel Fresco: Circa; A.D. 25)

It is only in the Mid 19th C that the implication of the word ‘pornography’ took on a significant role towards defining a social category of degradation that was exacerbating Victorian morality, brought on, arguably, by the advent of the camera (circa 1837); the nascence of photography and associated mass production technologies, impacting on the *arts*. Artists found that photography was a good supplement for live nude models. Wallace, M. (2007, p.88) indicates that; ‘...depictions of nude[s] had been largely the prerogative of fine arts [private collections]’. But, using Marcus, S. (1996, p66-7) postulations ‘...it was not long into the history of photography a burgeoning trade in sexual images developed.’

Initially such works had remained in the hands of ‘private collectors’, or according to Kendrick, W. (1996); “...aristocratic bibliomanes”. [sic] (illustration 2)



Illustration 2: (Anonymous c.1850)

The development of mass printing allowed erotic works to be circulated and distributed to the masses. As Mey, K (2007, p.9) summarises: ‘Taking them out of the realms of bourgeois demographics, they became a democratising threat to the established culture.’ The demand for more explicit pictures accelerated and photographers rallied to the call. (illustration 3)



Illustration 3 (Anonymous. C.1850)

It was the first time in our history that the *possibility of various* types of sexual visual representation could be available to anyone regardless of class, sex or age. (illustration 4). I suggest, that from this point in the history of sexual imagery the distinction between eroticism and pornography has been in constant flux, swaying people’s perception and social categorisation of sexually charged works.



Illustration 4: (Anonymous. C1855)

By 1857 moral anxieties provoked the introduction of a statute to curb or control circulation of salacious/irreverent imagery to the populace; governmental demands were called for. Lord Campbell, Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench became the 'voice' to champion the issues, introducing the Obscene Publications Bill in 1857. The legislation encompassed not only the control of 'morally corrupting' material, but issues of prostitution, indecency and irreligious acts were taken into consideration.³

According to Kemp, in Wallace, M. (2007. p.34) "...[pornography] was intended to works [produced] for the single purpose of corrupting the morals of youth... of the "nature calculated to shock the common feelings of decency". Works that dispersed, (ibid) "Poison to the minds of the young and wary"⁴

With the bill, we see for the first time how the word '*pornography*' was placed in our common lexicon, arguably consigning it as a new historical and legislative phenomenon, misrepresenting its etymology. I concur here with Kendrick, W. (1996, p. 53) 'By overhauling both sex and representation, the nineteenth century created a category which had not existed...in any past age. Imposing their own vision on the past, the Victorians...distorted it'

Kendrick, W. (1996. p.1) further demonstrates how "pornography" was firmly placed under the Obscene Publications Act umbrella due to '...an 1857 medical dictionary, where it describes 'prostitutes or prostitution, as a matter of public hygiene'. Since then, arguably, pornography has remained synonymous with morally corrupting and obscene imagery and offensive ideology.

Having demonstrated the etymology of pornography and its moral Victorian perspective of social anxiety, I come to express how pornography, as a cultural practice is situated and tested within the arts; and it is in visual representation, now part of our cultural backdrop, that the arts have steered us: we are in an epoch of 'post-modern' sexual representation, or as Marcus, S. (1996. p.46) phrased it; "Pornotopia"; a fantasy state or place in which everyone is willing to indulge in sexual activity; a time when diverse consensual predilections will be acceptable.'

There is a plethora of artists who work and produce, what is/can be deemed pornographic/obscene works –that is according to standard social or moral more; the artists who regardless of any social bowdlerisation, endeavour to portray the 'truth of sex'. But, as mentioned in my introduction, I will be using a limited selection of photographic and filmic artists who have, ultimately, explored the limitations and liberations of sexual representations.

³ Further reading concerning the legislation; Cocks, H.G. (2012) 'A History' Lord Campbell's Act: England's first Obscenity Statute. *Journal of Legal History* 9.2 (1998:233-41)

⁴ This definition was given by Sir John Duke Coleridge, Judge and later Lord Chief Justice. (b. 1820- 1894) Martin Kemp in Wallace, M. (2007. p. 34)

Using “The Joycean Theory”⁵ quoted in Peckham, M. (1969) as an opening argument on salacious photography “Images as such cannot be aesthetic as they arouse “disturbing emotions”, and pornographic material [by its nature] must arouse “disturbing emotions”. Art that has a pornographic element cannot, therefore, be art, have no aesthetic [cultural]value”

Looking at Jam Montoya’s work (illustrations 5 & 6), and citing Koenig, K’s. (1989), succinct declaration ‘...that something as blasphemous or pornographic or whatever it is that's considered offensive is never a reason for excluding the presentation of art.’- the “Joycean Theory” quoted in the above paragraph can be negated: It could be reasoned that Montoya’s work has left the field of ‘direct pornographic sexual arousal’ per se by borrowing references from Historical and Classical Themes, claiming to be aesthetic by these references, but the *hand on an erect penis*, or wide display of *open vagina*, could, by certain established definitions, be pornographic; here is the ongoing paradox of such imagery, the question-is it *porn or art?*



Illustration 5; (Montoya, J. Lea Piedad. 2004)



Illustration 6 (Montoya, J. Don Andre y sub Sabrina. 2004)

Whereas a similar image (illustration 7), with ‘iconic religious’ references, using the definition by Peckham, M. (1996, p.100) it is of low art with no aesthetic value; ‘...the utter satisfaction of...simple desire to *see* the explicate genital...[it] tends to disengage other interests.’ The audience is the voyeur of explicit, direct material for sexual arousal. (ibid. p. 53) ‘...who has no desire for a notion of aesthetic experience found...among cultivated people.’ (In this statement we can read, questionably, the class distinction imposed in the 19th C.) Or, according to Kipnis, L. (2006. p. 125) ‘... the very concept of "bad taste" are all associated historically with the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie and the invention of behaviors that would separate themselves from the noisy lower orders.’



Illustration 7 (Anonymous. n.d.)

⁵ The critical theory of James Joyce The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism Vol. 8 (Mar. 1950. Pp.172-184)

An element in my argument for pornography having a cultural value is: it is for the artist to make the ‘obscene’ function aesthetically in a social construct, to show the beauty within the pornographic. But as will be examined in this essay, who determines what is obscene – pornographic? As Campbell Schmidt, M. (1989) queries; ‘...by its very definition, authentic art is never obscene, the real question is, who makes that decision, who sets the standard, whose taste is it?’

In Robert Mapplethorpe’s images the disposition to make the obscene aesthetic can, arguably be evidenced; threatening a display of what has been relegated, deemed unfit to be shown outside ‘private intimate domains’, declared by established ‘cultural minds’- as Wallace, M. (2007. P.114) suggests; ‘Generally we do under the covers... what is allowed...prescribed...acceptable ...[the] illusion of privacy is carefully orchestrated by...societies’

Mapplethorpe, R. (1989) ““...pornography is fine with me. If it's good it transcends what it is””

Mapplethorpe threw back the covers to display the ‘private white stains’ using his predilections; those of homosexual sadomasochism relegated, at the time, to sub-cultural arenas. Centrally placing himself in the frame his indexical position presents something most people are aware of but prefer not to acknowledge. (illustrations 8 & 9)



Illustration 8
(Mapplethorpe, R. Self Portrait x Portfolio 1978)



Illustration 9
(Mapplethorpe, R. X Portfolio 1978)

Bernstein cites Danto⁶, Wallace, M. (2007. p. 185) that Mapplethorpe’s

‘...ambition was to create images that would be...arousing but artistic: to achieve ‘smut that is also art’...he played with the edge that separates art from mere pornography...the photographs could be printed in pornographic magazines, or in art by virtue of their aesthetic [cultural] power.’

Or as pointed out, by Maes, H. (2011. p.61)- to strengthen the argument; ‘Arthur Danto underlines the fact that Mapplethorpe “...achieves images that are beautiful and exciting at once: *pornography and art* [my italics] in the same striking photographs.”’

⁶ Arthur C. Danto, *Playing with the Edge: The Photographic Achievements of Robert Mapplethorpe*. (Berkeley and London: University of California Press) (1996), pp.76-77

Thomas Ruff's series '*Nudes*' (circa. 2000) (illustration10) approaches the issue of '*art or porn*' in a more veiled aesthetic attitude. Pulling images from 'porn sites' he digitally renders the pictures and places them into an acceptable convention, demanding investigation of their cultural value. Or as Dyer, G. (2013) suggests; '[He] encourages us to see them as part of...culmination of and commentary on – a major tradition in western art that has cloaked itself in any number of religious, mythological, aesthetic and moral guises'. In his mediation-appropriation techniques- it could be concluded- Ruff pulls together a visual language, not only of *his* desire to understand sex in all its forms, but those of the producers and players on the stages of pornography through a masking of direct 'genital spectacles' into a contemporary cultural arena.



Illustration 10 (Ruff, T. nudes be15.2002)

According to Linton, quoted in Rea, M. C. (2001. p.125), "...essential characteristic of pornography is the dehumanizing/degrading of sex...produced through its separation of sex and love... Further he distinguishes pornography from erotica...Pornography dehumanizes sex ...human beings... treated as things and women in particular as sex objects", erotica "deals with...pleasure and art of sexuality... always in terms of positive emotional relationship."

Looking at Jeff Koons' work, we can pull out an argument against Linton's conjecture, which is demonstrated in the body of work entitled *Made in Heaven* (circa 1990), that Koons displays the intimacy, or has he calls it, TTA (2004) "the love between him and his wife"⁷ avowing his love photographically for the world to see (Illustration 11) and the initial images of the ongoing series were also, according to Tate's (n.d.) on line caption; "blurring the boundaries between fine art and pornography, Koons challenged the conventions of *artistic taste*." (my italics)



Illustration 11: (Jeff Koons Made in Heaven series Circa 1990)

But, initially, according to another eye opens (2004) 'Koons felt they did not fully embody his message..., he and his new wife should have nothing to hide', this concept led to creating more intimate photos, (illustration 12) exposing the viewer to more detailed graphics of the couple, furthering the question '*porn or art*'?

⁷ Koons married the Italian porn star Ciciolina (Llona Staller)



Illustration 12 (Jeff Koons: Ilona's Asshole. 1991)

As Koons stated in the article TTA, (2004) “It’s not porn. *Made in Heaven* dealt with the shame of masturbation in our society. It was a metaphor for cultural guilt. I wanted to reproduce the [Myth of] Garden of Eden.”

In one sense pornography has perhaps, as Kipnis, L. proposes, (2006. P. 18) ‘...less to do with this obvious content (sex) than what might be called is political philosophy.’ In this pornography arouses constant attention: (ibid) ‘... whether from its consumers *or* its protesters (who are, if anything, even more obsessed by pornography and those who use it).’ And with that arousing attention we can see, (ibid.p.120) ‘... A very precise map of the culture’s borders: pornography begins at the edge of the culture’s decorum... [it maps] a culture’s system of taboos and myths... A detailed blueprint in the anxieties culture’s, investments, contradictions.’

Arguably the 1970s heralded a stronger feminist development against the issue of pornography. In 1975 Susan Brownmiller, feminist activist, and co-founder of Women Against Pornography (WAP) wrote that, according to Potter, C. (2016 p.105), “...pornography transform women into “adult toys” ...[it] dehumanized objects to be used, abuse broken and discarded.” In 1981 Andrea Dworkin, who became one of the most renowned anti-porn advocates, declared, (ibid) “we will know that we are free when the pornography no longer exists.”

Another anti-porn campaigner and legal scholar, Catherine MacKinnon, argued that pornography was not a creative practice and had no entitlement to the First Amendment protection. Together Dworkin and MacKinnon, Potter, C. (p. 105) ‘...drafted an anti-pornography civil rights ordinance for the 1982 Barnard Conference on Sexuality.’ As Potter shows (ibid); ‘...the ordinance’s constitutionality was successfully challenged, by a coalition of New York academics and culture workers, Feminist Anti-Censorship (FACT) allied with the American Civil Liberties (ACLU),’ on the grounds, (ibid) “...that those who felt they had been harmed by porn could sue for damages and thus turn all erotic and sexual material into potential legal liability and result in de facto censorship”

At the same time pro-porn activists, for example, Potter, C. (pp.105-106) ‘...Amber Hollibaugh, (former sex worker and lesbian feminist) and John D’Emillio (Gay historian and longtime feminist) ...’, made interesting observations about violence and abuse against women on mainstream television; in that there was always (ibid) “...potential violence of Harlequin romances...heterosexual relationships, that violence against women depicted on television/films was ...as greater danger than porn....”

And as Kipnis, L. (2006. P.126) points out;

‘...that accusations of violence due to porn, has given greater leverage to the “ascendancy of class distinction, and bad taste”’. (As I suggested earlier in this essay concerning the 19th century) ‘The argument pornography causes violent behavior in male consumers relies on a theory of the porn consumer is devoid of rationality, contemplation, or intelligence. A propensity to violence is in opposition to [these] traits... [having] higher class connotations: the attributes associated with...higher cultural forms’ (ibid)

Potter. C (p.106) further observes;

‘In 1993, queer anthropologist and activist Gayle Rubin proposed that feminists stop playing defence and go on the attack. Ending sexism and misogynist violence in commercial sexual culture could and should be addressed, not by getting women out of porn, she argued but by getting them into it “as produces writers and directors.’

One such ‘developer’ of feminist porn was Candice Vadala (aka Candice Royalle) who established Femme Productions in 1984 after having starred in over 25 productions. (illustrations 13 & 14)



Illustration 13 (As Candice Royalle. n.d)



Illustration 14 (Movie Poster from Sissy's Hot Summer, C.1979)

Dazeddigital. (2015):

‘Royalle took the pornography scene by storm in the 1980s with her internationally acclaimed line of erotic films; filmed from a woman’s perspective. She revolutionised the concept of ‘couples erotica’, writing and producing films praised by counsellors and therapists for depicting a realistic and healthy imitation of sexual activity.’

Her intentions were to produce films that had, as Potter, C. (p.106) concurs ‘...an alternative vision for porn’ and a “positive role modelling.’

In 1992 Candida founded Feminists for Free Expression (FFE):

Dazeddigital. (2015):

‘...a group of diverse feminists working to preserve the individual right for women to see, hear and produce material of their choice. The group opposed speech-censoring legislation and defended women’s free speech. FFE’s beliefs were that "freedom of expression is especially important for women's rights" and that by suppressing sexist messages, society "will neither reduce harm to women nor further women's goals."’

Elevating pornography as *an art form*, Royalle was asked in 2012 (Dazeddigital. 2015) ‘whether she believed porn still deserved a bad reputation, responding, “perhaps if we weren’t still so consumed with guilt and shame about sex, neither watching nor performing in these films would carry the weight it does.”’

In consideration of various written texts, it could be claimed that Vadala’s vision was a contributing factor, creating a distinct shift, not only a positioning of female roles in the porn industry, but furthered arguments against anti-porn feminism and questioned “*can porn be art*”?

In the following works of Annie Sprinkle and Natasha Merritt, we see, not only a demonstration of emancipatory purposes, and a further and more developed stance against anti-porn feminism, but, also, like Vadala, (Candida Royalle) the re-addressing of patriarchal control and offering comprehensions into female desire and sexuality; those with a “new feminist voice”, as Michelson, P. (1993) insinuates ‘... [are of] a valid genre to our sexual nature. Pornography is a new tool for women...its persistence to sexual nature, identity and roles encourages its current focus...those who contend that no pornography can be feminist, or even female, are using subjectively polemical definitions of the term’.

Annie Sprinkle, once a ‘porn star’ says of herself, Mey, K. (2007. p. 98):

‘My awareness of being naturally a sexual person was also an awareness that I could be something other than a porn star...I am accustomed to showing my sexuality openly; (illustration 15) it is important for people to see the power of female sexuality. My work talks about me, about my sexuality...’⁸



Illustration 15. (Sprinkle, A: Public Cervix Announcement, 1991)

From 1989 to 1986 Sprinkle created, what could be deemed, a unique piece of performance art, a ‘show’ in which she describes herself, Sprinkle, A. (n.d); ‘[as]... a ‘Post Porn Modernist’’, allowing her to evolve and represent her personal, aesthetic and political sexual evolution, using the medium of photography/film to promulgate her sexual philosophy.

⁸ Frances Alfano Migiletti (Fam), *Extreme bodies: The Use and Abuse of the Body in Art* (Milan 2003)

Arguably the age of digital photography and access to Internet imagery has, like the photographic processes of the 19th C, escalated the dissemination of pornography, its myths, taboos and arguments; enabling diverse purposes and shifts in feminist movements.

‘The internet has enabled’, according to Munro, E. (n.d.) ‘...a shift from ‘third wave’ to ‘fourth wave’ [now also fifth wave] feminism...a ‘call out’ culture, in which sexism or misogyny can be ‘called out’ and challenged’

In the 1990’s Natasha Merritt took full opportunity of this “call out” to express her sexuality using her digital camera, at the time taking images of her sexual encounters with both genders, with no preconceived intention nor, questionably, concern for aesthetic distinction except to show and demonstrate her ‘right to free sexual expression/involvements.’

As Healy, M. (2000) comments;

‘The dawn of the digital camera came just in time to document the height of Natacha Merritt's sexual awakening ...She finds...taking pictures of herself empowering. “The camera gave me a sense of purpose” Her work is something from the new century...it is completely autodidactic. She created something really fresh and new. Her eerily intimate depictions...fucking...sucking transcend smut, even “literate smut”’⁹ (illustration 16 & 17)

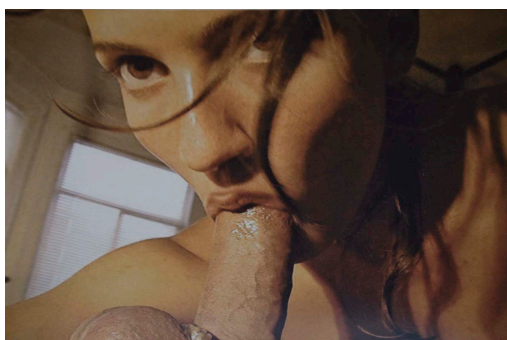


Illustration 16 (Merritt, N. Redlips9: n.d.)



Illustration 17 (Merritt, N. Digital Diaries. n.d.)

Consequently, at the age of twenty-two, her photographs were produced by Taschen publishers in ‘Digital Diaries’;

It was, as suggested by Zacuto. (n.d.):

‘...a book that redefined the boundaries of *artistic photography*, [my italics]. Controversial and highly sexual, it was [arguably] the first digital photography book ever published and presented a digital document of sex acts: oral sex, conventional male-female sex, lesbian sexual encounters, and sex with the use of arousal enhancers.’

As the Internet developed so too did the availability for consumption, like in the 19th Century, of ‘hard –core salacious imagery’; it became a portal for a bare-all, confessional culture, allowing, like as for Merritt, declarations of sexual preferences, predilections and non-binary, genderqueer identities.

⁹ Subsequently after the publication of ‘Digital Diaries’. Merritt went on to study law at the Sorbonne and Biology at San Francisco State University.

Jiz Lee, porn actor and director, who, according to The Daily Dot (2018) ‘...officially came out as someone who has “fluid ideas about gender expression and...[does] not identify as being a man or a woman.”’ Lee’s sentiments over pornography reflect, yet confirm that porn (ibid) ‘...is an *art form* [my italics] that is beautifully vulnerable and honest...[it] is the best thing that has happened to me’. (illustrations 18 & 19)



Illustration 18 (Jiz Lee. n.d)



Illustration 19 (Jiz Lee. n.d)

Having over a decade of involvement in the porn industry Lee’s works have been championed and acclaimed globally by the LGBTQ communities; The Daily Dot. (2018) ‘...appearing in more than 200 projects from six countries spanning independent erotic films and hardcore gonzo pornography. A ...key player in the queer porn movement, Jiz has been the recipient of multiple AVN and XBiz ...and Feminist Porn Awards...in 2015 was named an honoree [sic] of The Trans 100.’

Lee, amongst others, has not only pushed opened the doors further for LGBTQ+ communities by, The Daily Dot (2018) ‘...producing movies that showcase diverse representations of human sexuality and desire, Lee says, “while creating opportunities for porn performers that more accurately reflect LGBTQ+ communities, casting queer and trans performers of color, people of size, people with disabilities, older queer folks.”’ Which is to say, (ibid) ‘...people who often get sidelined in mainstream porn.’ Lee was an instigator and promoter of the ‘Erotic Philanthropy’ ‘Karma Pervs’- an Erotic art fundraiser to benefit sex-positive, queer & kink-friendly causes. All of which can be deemed as part of the developing, or perhaps redevelopment of human nature; and that nature can be demonstrated in various *artistic* disciplines.

The backbone collection of works presented in this essay constitute only a small, yet significant and germane subclass in the debating realms of *porn or art* issues, yet they have demonstrated how the artists chosen to have dealt with ‘pornographic’ imagery and its aesthetic value; how they face the cultural and feminist critiques and social criticism of porn; how they push the boundaries, the social dictates imposed on our sexual nature due to their ‘creativity’ and ‘imagination’, begging the question ‘*art or porn*’? Or, perhaps we can, as Maes, H. (2012. p.22) offers; “... give up the dichotomy between art and pornography, and start using the label ‘pornographic art’” But to use Jerrod Levinson’s evaluation, there is an indivisible distinction between porn and art and that, Levinson. J (2005) “...pornographic art” seems to be almost an oxymoronic one.... pornography has a paramount aim...sexual satisfaction of the viewer, erotic art...includes other aims and significance.”, yet reiterating the “Joycean Theory” Peckham, M. (1969), “...images as such [pornographic] cannot be aesthetic as they arouse “disturbing emotions” If this were the case any works that are framed artistically and cause “disturbing emotions” are then “pornographic”. A point in case being the photograph “*Piss Christ*” by Andres Serrano, (Illustration 20), which caused an outrage and ‘*disturbed*’ social decency, even though it has no direct sexual reference, and thus not having “*aesthetic*” value cannot be *art*! Yet the work which went on display at the Stux Gallery New York in 1987, (sponsored in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, a USA agency offering support and funding for *artistic* projects), surely

has cultural significance in that it caused outrage and controversy, and such sentiments have the right to a social voice: so, where, then, do we frame this work, - is it *art or porn*?



Illustration 20 (Andres Serrano. Piss Christ. 1987)

According to an article, Moore, T. (2017):

‘Sen. Alphonse D’Amato (R-N.Y.) and Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) were complaining about Serrano on the senate floor...D’Amato called the work “Shocking, abhorrent and completely undeserving of any recognition whatsoever.” Helms said “Serrano is not an artist. He is a jerk. Let him be a jerk on his own time and with his own resources.

But “Piss Christ” would be the NEA’s most memorable contribution, and it quickly became the go-to symbol of both how *artistic freedom is defined* and the 1990s culture wars — were we a progressive, inclusive country who would embrace *homosexuality, pornography, challenging art, feminism and multiculturalism*’

(my italics)

In conclusion; sexual pictorial representation has been with us throughout our historical cultural development, yet, as I have argued earlier, it was the advent of photography in the 19th century and subsequent modern technologies that the dissemination of mass produced overtly sexual images led to moral anxieties and social welfare concerns, particularly towards the ‘lower classes’ thus provoking the introduction of the ‘Obscene Publications Bill’ of 1857, along with the inclusion into our common lexicon the word ‘pornography’.

Pornography, although far removed from its Greek etymology and Roman roots, is established and well founded in our zeitgeist, we are all aware of it: Porn has many uses; engraved traces of Victorian moral anxieties remain part of it; it has developed, contributed to and formed a contemporary culture; it defines our reaction and attitude to sex; it has brought on countless debates and arguments about censorship, subjugation and exploitation of women, and anxieties and worries about social disintegration and degradation; it has opened closet doors – arguably picking at the ‘moral bigoted’ locks, and aiding the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the 1960’s- pathing the way for the LGBTQ+ communities. As Laura Kipnis posits in Maes, H. (2012. p.10); ‘Pornography offers a royal road to the cultural psyche.’ Thus ‘art’ that is deemed/considered pornographic has, and does draw attention to cultural critiques and social criticism. It also argues the case, not only for the freedom of expression, but the liberty and right

to sexual autonomy, and shows and declares, as Kipnis, L. (2006. p.121) puts it, ‘...to what extent "perversion" is a shifting and capricious social category’

I feel that we have not, yet, seen the full impact of *pornography in art* in liberated modern day societies. Perhaps as Gerhard, P. puts it (1971. p. 126) “The liberation of pornography is one of the last remaining victories [to free expression] remaining to be won.”

As with the work of artists researched in this paper, and others not contained in my thesis, my work too, (Illustrations, 21. 22. 23.) calls for consideration, that perhaps it is the time we, to reiterate Maes, H. (2012. p.22) “... give up the dichotomy between art and pornography, and start using the label ‘pornographic art’” a term I use as a sub-text in my film *Ars Pornographia*.

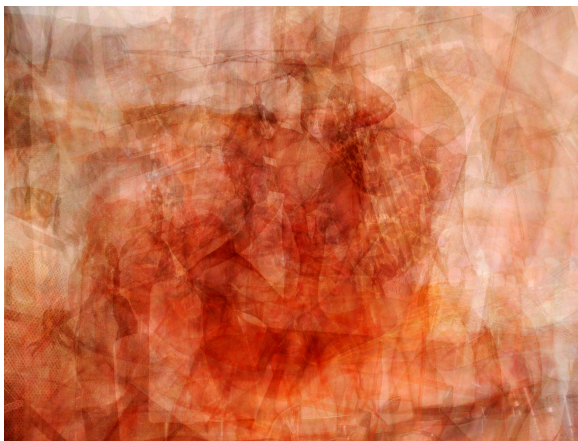


Illustration 21 (Mr.Naz. Resurrection. 2015)



Illustration 22 (Mr.Naz. Ars Pornographia.2018)



Illustration 23 (Mr. Naz. Homage to De Sade. 2017)

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