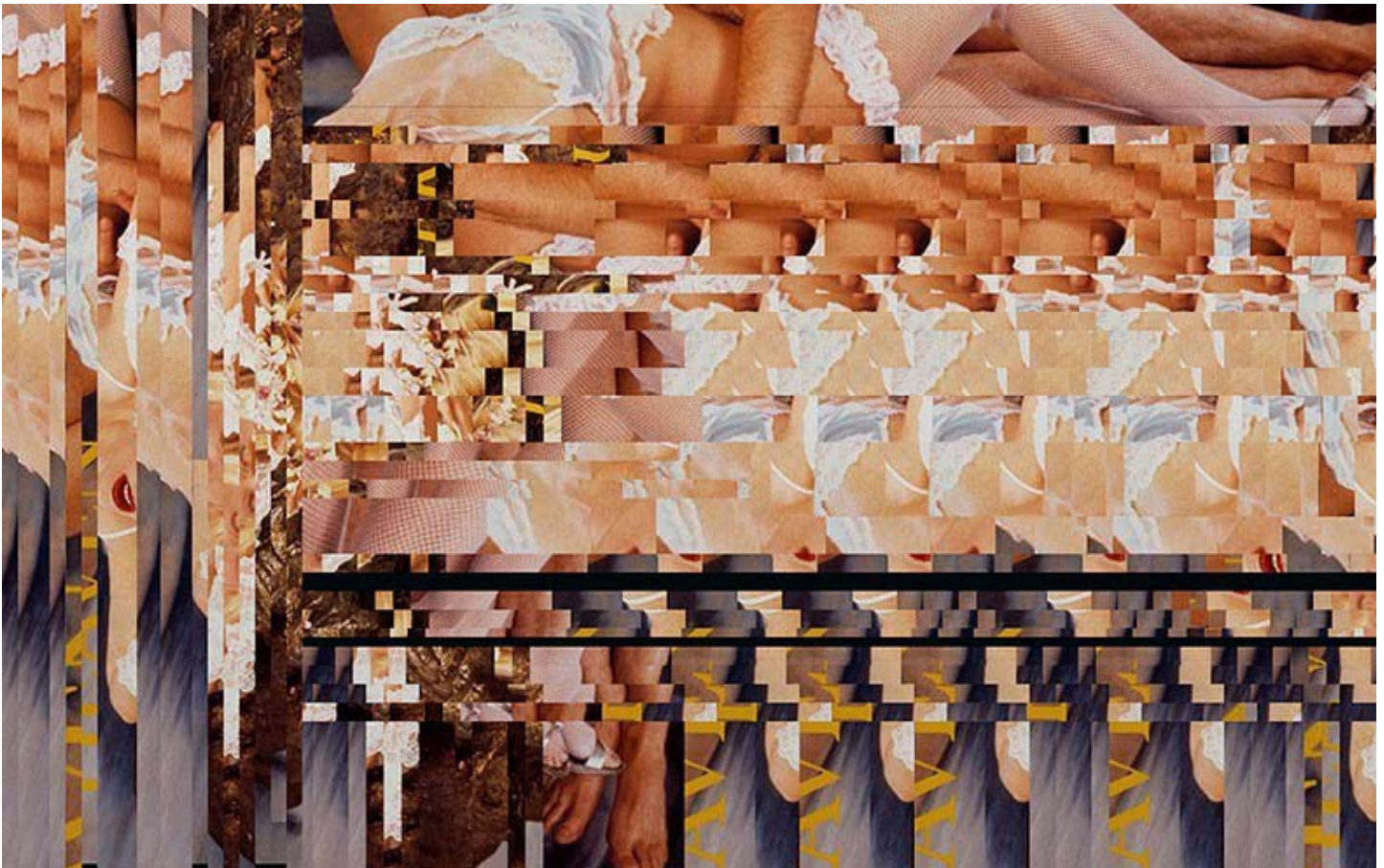


THE DA-ZED GUIDE TO PORN ART

As Cameron's porn ban becomes policy, we count 26 intersections of radical art and grot

Text **Christine Jun**

In response to David Cameron's recent call to restrict access to online porn, we at Dazed decided to investigate the grey area between skin flicks and art in our every increasingly porn-drenched society. Hopefully, the artists below – whose works all somehow appropriate or examine pornography as a creative platform – provide a fresh starting point for redefining not sex, but the representation of it in the 21st century.



A IS FOR ANN LIV YOUNG

Giving Marina Abramovic a run for her money, performance artist Ann Liv Young has drunk urine, rolled in her dog's ashes, and had sex on-stage with her co-stars. Presented at some of the most notable venues and festivals around the world, her DIY dance shows are challenging, over-the-top performances that genre-bend elements of music video, porn, and fine art. Oh, and she creates her own costumes and stage designs too.



B IS FOR BUTT MAGAZINE

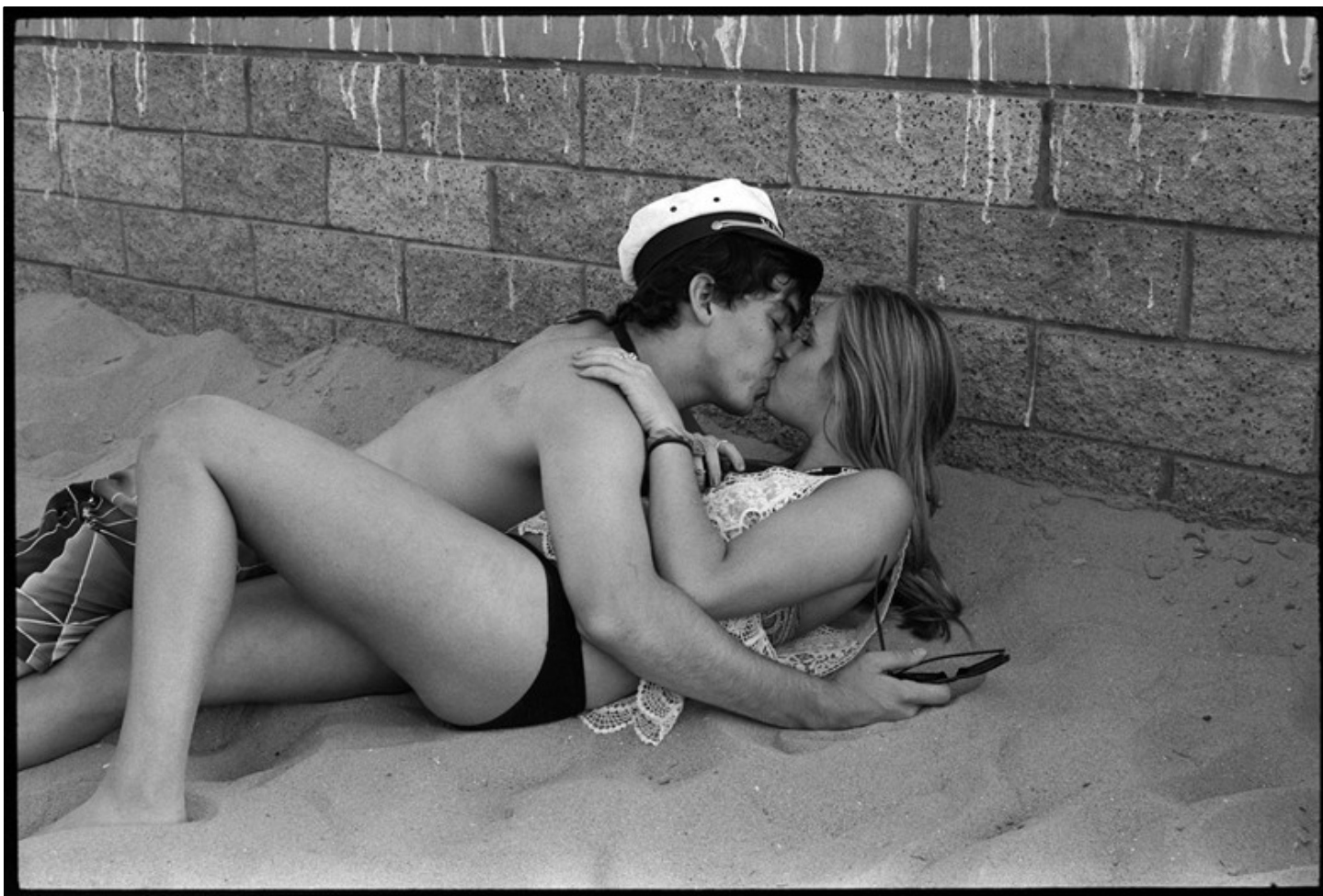
This subversively sexy, cult gay zine recently transformed Terence Koh's NY gallery--called Asia Song Society, or ASS—into a fake porn shop, complete with three video-buddy-booths. The exhibition was part of an 'alternative Gay Pride' showing work that included both heavyweight and up-and-coming gay artists.

C IS FOR COMPUTER GAMES

Computer (ahem, virtual sex) games have evolved way past Grand Theft Auto into interactive movies, compete with thrilling plots ensured to keep gamers on the edge of their seats. And of course, that includes nudity and graphic sex scenes. Usually in a strip club context, flesh-tone eye candy goes hand-in-hand with gratuitous violence in such games as God of War, Saints Row, and Dante's inferno.

D IS FOR DANNY

As Danny Sangra grew up scribbling all over magazines in a London hair salon, its no wonder his recent White Cube exhibit consisted of displayed 60s porn that he personalised via his own idiosyncratic drawings. Think old-school sexual subversion, re-subverted. One might almost call it perverse.



E IS FOR ED TEMPLETON

Never before in history has the personal documentation of peoples' private lives become so public. Yet when skateboarder/photographer Ed Templeton began shooting photos of young lust in the early 90s, the word "blog" hadn't even been invented and swapping spit in public was still taboo. His images having spread like virtual wildfire, Templeton's making-out teenagers still make overeager yet awkward voyeurs out of us all.

F IS FOR FIONA BANNER

Never did a word-based Turner-prize winner cause such a tizzy. Arsewoman in Wonderland is the transcript of a porn film printed in pink ink on a huge billboard, minutely describing who does what to whom: "he cums in her face, she moans and rolls over." Ben Dover, the UK's greatest male porn star, upon viewing it, commented: "Art? It's basically shite...the best that can be said for it is that you can probably read it and have a good wank." Nuff' said.

G IS FOR GENKI ART

Overstepping the boundaries of "good taste," Genki artist Daikichi Amano—aka The Pink Tentacle—elevates seafood, cockroach, and earthworm fetishes to a whole new aesthetic level. His photographs derive from private fantasies that are animalistic and atavistic in nature, evoking primal fears and desires. In Amano's world, the human body is worshipped through transforming it into an erotic grotesque, cut through with the blackest humor.



H IS FOR HARVEY

“SAVE AS,” Adam Harvey’s series of erotically-charged images—composed entirely of spam email—is his clever response to all that unwanted junk clogging up your inbox. Each image contains tens of thousands of profane and bizarre spam emails, each subject automatically layered, one at a time, with a custom script into text mosaic.

I IS FOR IAN BRUCE

Ian Bruce’s limited edition silk-bound book make look elitist at first glance, but the figures inside cater quite democratically to a surprising range of tastes and desires. His delicate, often beautiful drawings explore everything from Japanese tentacle erotica (see Genki above) and disabled porn.

J IS FOR JESSICA LICHTENSTEIN

Fascinated by the mass-production and fetishization of hyper-sexualized Japanese figurines, American artist Lichtenstein’s first series places Barbie-like figurines, swamped by shopping bags, on white shelves for public inspection. The viewer turns not only voyeur but self-examining critic through extremes of consumer culture dominated by western ideals of beauty and lifestyle.



K IS FOR KOONS

Love or hate it, Jeff Koons's Made in Heaven series (first revealed at Venezia Biennale 1990) is still shocking viewers today. Consisting of large photos printed on canvas, Murano glassworks, and marble sculptures, it pushed the portrayal of sex in art to new, extravagant heights--while flaunting Koons and his-then Italian porn star Ilona Staller making the beast with two backs. Lowbrow kitsch or masterful art history pastiche? You decide.

L IS FOR LOS PENETRADOS (THE PENETRATED)

Santiago Sierra's political porn photography is anything but subtle. Shot on October 12th, Dia de la Raza (Day of the Race) his 45-minute video in eight acts directly deals with the traditional "paranoia," phobias, and greedy misdeeds that Europeans have enacted towards Africans. Couples are geometrically arranged into compositions of every possible combination of penetrator / penetrated: white man-white woman, white man-white man, white man-black woman, etc. A powerful indictment of lingering postcolonial racism and cultural conditioning, Sierra makes it more than clear who is being given the shaft.



M IS FOR MINDPIRATES

One week in June, these Berlin radicals transform their venues into an orgy of films, drawings, videos, photography, performances, and live music, in order to provide the audience with as interactive a pornographic art experience as possible. In collaboration with international artists who significantly contribute to new ways of sexual understanding, everyone's invited to explore their own desires in this safe and consensual environment.

N IS FOR NAN GOLDIN

Goldin's frank photographic portrayal of drugged-up drag queens, aggressive couples, and other aspects of seedy subculture read like a private journal made public: she's lived life on the Bowery fast-track. Like most controversial art-or-porn artists, one of her works (of two naked preteens belly-dancing) was seized in 2007 by the UK police under the claim of child pornography laws.

O IS FOR STORY OF O

Before 50 Shades of Grey, there was *The Story of O*, Anne Desclos's infamous 1954 erotic novel of female submission and sado-masochism which won the French *Pris des Deux Margots*. Unfortunately that didn't save Desclos from obscenity charges or her work from a publicity ban. In *O*, a Parisian fashion photographer is chained, whipped, branded on one buttock, made to wear a bird mask and taught to be constantly available for oral/vaginal/anal intercourse—willingly. She even ends up agreeing to a labia piercing with rings marked with the initials of her new lover-master. While several feminists have cried foul on female objectification, that hasn't stopped European BDSM enthusiasts from sporting the ring of *O* as a distinctive mark of pride.



P IS FOR PATRICIA CRONIN

Cronin is a New York based artist whose transgressive work addresses sex, class and desire in painting, sculpture and installation. Cronin gained notoriety in the mid-1990s for her “Coming to Power: 25 Years of Sexually X-plicit Art by Women,” which included watercolors of her and her partner making love, as well as sex performance-based polaroids of cultural icons like Madonna from the view of the participant, rather than viewer. In contradiction to much of the lesbian pornography in circulation (made by straight men for straight men), Cronin’s images give agency to the sexualized female as cultural and political producer, speaking to larger questions regarding queer, lesbian, or feminist positions within society.

Q IS FOR QUEER

Community Action Center is a 69-minute sexually explicit video by A.K. Burns and A.L. Steiner where the community erotics are not personal but political. This project was heavily inspired by porn-romance-liberation films, which served as portraits of the urban inhabitants, landscapes, and the body politic of a distinct time and place. The work also attempts to consider feminist fashion, sexual aesthetics, and an expansive view of what is defined as ‘sex’.

R IS FOR RICHARDSON

Its probably a sign of our uber-saturated porn times that web fans, instead of crying sexual exploitation, now bemoan the loss of “the old Terry”: half-naked young girls caught in sexual acts by instant camera, usually against mundane backgrounds. As Richardson’s latest project is Lady Gaga’s biopic, it appears we already all indeed, live in Terryworld (or Terrywood).



S IS FOR SASHA GREY

Why be satisfied being flesh for hire when you can play the role in a Steve Soderbergh movie? Or better yet, turn experimental musician and photographer to boot? With her new monograph *Neu Sex*, Grey moves from in front of the camera to behind it, turning the lens on the wild world she inhabits.

T IS FOR THOMAS RUFF

By blurring nudes gleaned from conventional pornsites, Ruff improves them. They acquire the uncertainty of memory, the imprecision of unenacted fantasy, the unconscious swirl of dreams. Or nightmares of a shady industry, in which the idyll becomes either leeringly horrible or laughable.

U IS FOR UNTITLED BY ARAKI

Araki's trussed-up geishas need no introduction. However, while exposing the hidden eroticism beneath Japan's polite society, only a portion of Araki's images remain sexually explicit. His work may be part of a greater Japanese tradition of shunga, Japanese woodblock prints distributed between the 17th and 20th centuries. Exquisitely crafted and brightly coloured, these feature kimono-wearing couples having sex beneath a mess of robes, their genitalia enlarged, or masturbating concurrently in lavish bedrooms. They prove more graphic than Araki's portraits, but because a couple of centuries have passed since their making, they're now considered artefacts, rather than porn. One day, will the future generation think the same of our YouPorn?



V IS FOR VVVVVV.XXX

Faith Holland's VIRTUAL GRRRL project is her attempt to snatch semiotic self-empowerment back from the internet; and never has feminist virtual porn looked so genuinely titillating. Private viewing rooms on her website offer such creative, cosmically explosive experiences as "EAT ME," "Dream Master Cums," "Pulsating Diamond Pussy," "Digital Orgasm," "Galactic Pussy," and "Birth Canal in Pink." So many cyberpussies, so little time.

W IS FOR WALTER PFEIFFER

A Midnight Cowboy-style photo pioneer since the 70s, Pfeiffer has restlessly street-casted and seduced friends, lovers, and the beautiful boys of Zurich with his camera. He made the forbidden and dirty homo-erotically fresh, fun, and very real, as in *The eyes, the thoughts, ceaselessly wandering* (Nachbar der Welt). No wonder then, that this grandmaster of fantasy thinks digital porn culture is killing our imaginations.

X IS FOR X-RATED

Surprisingly, several mainstream films were once released with an X rating such as *Midnight Cowboy*, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Last Tango in Paris* and incredibly, *The Evil Dead*. As pornography became legally tolerated in the 70s, and even chic, pornographers started to use an X rating to emphasize the adult nature of their films. Some even happily added XX and XXX. Then in 1990, censorship kicked in, and the Motion Picture Association of America agreed to a new, trademarked NC-17 rating that only they could apply, to protect films from obscenity charges.

Y IS FOR YEO



British artist Jonanthan Yeo was already known for his depictions of the rich and famous before George B. commissioned, then de-commissioned him a portrait from him. Undaunted, Yeo took it upon himself to create a collaged portrait of the US President anyways, from pornography. The work led to international fame and Yeo exhibiting even more porn-based collage portraits, proving one man's trash is another's creative treasurehouse.



Z IS FOR JAY-Z

That's right: King Z may have 99 problems, but softcore porn ain't one. To promote his early singles and give his Roc-A-Fella partner Damon Dash a chance at fulfilling his dream of being a movie producer, he made *Streets Is Watching* in 1998. One set-piece, to the tune of 'Face Off', is basically just an excuse for a private mansion-full of naked girls to grind their bits explicitly into Jay-Z's and his crew's faces (starting at 16:55 in the video below).