The New Media Schooling of the Amateur Pornographer: Negotiating Contracts and Singing Orgasm

Amateur means “the love of doing it.” In the final scene, where she is getting fucked and she has her orgasm and she walks up the stage and is singing. That is just exactly right. Somebody who has sex on the screen is not just a porn-star. They are also a singer and dancer and so many other things.

—Tanya Bezreh,
The Naughty Garden

Tanyah Bezreh, the amateur “strawberry” achieves both orgasm and sexual awakening in The Naughty Garden.

Will the True Amateur Please Stand Up?

This article discusses a new wave of amateur pornography, where the central metaphor is that of a mutually developing sexual act, a bodily communication where one party responds to the other, and language and lust spiral together into a recorded pornographic process. In this article, pornography simply means a recording of a sexual act implemented for the excitement of self and others. This definition of pornography thus breaks way from more current uses of the word, as profit-oriented entertainment industries that efficiently invade our senses. If pornography today is mostly understood as methodically organized industries, this article hopes to investigate productions and strategies that are produced and invented “in-between” official work sessions. Pornography becomes more fun, and means an amorphous bundle of sex scenes made with divergent goals in mind. Amateur pornographers are female or male, gay or straight, polyamorous or monogamous. Regardless, their recorded sex lives traverse in and out of the organized industries to hatch new moments of sexual pleasure.

The schooling of amateur pornographers is an important aspect of their pleasure, as they engage in collaborative work practices, learning how to plot a course in public sexual representation, consumer desire, electronic networking, and other communication strategies. This article will examine three types of contemporary amateur pornographers and their schooling in new media and/or web based communication strategies. A first pocket of porn awareness stemming from this development would be Peer-to-Peer Porn, or web-based consumers using peer-to-peer platforms to exchange products. Most peer-
to-peer porn is traded between anonymous consumers and involves mainstream commercial images. However, these groups have begun to cultivate a responsive environment in which alternative porn makers can build on economy. Porn consumers may resort to privately managed mammoth porn sites such as www.sublimedirectory.com (with 10903 pages of “true” amateur porn) or www.frogsex.com. They also typically trade porn on “peer-to-peer” networks and file-sharing programs such as Napster, Morpheus, Grokster, and KaZaA.

**Pride Porn** is made up of sex and queer activist networks who distribute porn to their sex partners, social circles, or larger groups of web users and movie audiences. This category includes work by individual activists, who may have traditionally been left out of professional sexual imaging and who are opening their own doors via a coalescence of pornographic “coming out” and politics.

Take for example Asian-American scholar Darrell Hamamoto’s “yellow porn” movie *Skin-To-Skin*, whose activist-intellectual impetus he unfolded in the 1998 essay “Joy Fuck Club: Prolegomenon to an Asian-American Porno Practice.” Yellow porn stems from an urge to unleash and represent potent Asian-American male bodies. Hamamoto explains that the Asian-American male sex is typically ignored in the American porn industry, where white males are typically featured with “submissive Asian girls”. Hamamoto’s idea of sexual renovation is to produce a new line of Asian-American produced porn:

To engage more specifically in an Asian American porno practice is to take self-determined control of an unfixed, variable, malleable, but thoroughly radicalized human sexuality, shaped and constrained over time by politically oppressive forces.¹

Hamamoto uses the concepts of radical jouissance to describe porn productivity that contains a release of libidinal energy and makes viewers aware of sex political struggles.

Thirdly, **Art Porn** refers to the work of artistically inclined amateurs, who frame their cultural performances as “body art” or their movies as “erotica” and exhibit sex in (virtual) galleries or arthouse theaters. Web-based platforms have certainly helped these producers to expand the aesthetics of sexual representation, to distribute their work and to find supportive networks for pornographic work that will not get endorsed by official art institutions.

I will show that these three groups of amateur pornographers inhabit “performance strata” of their porn-societies and are ruled by the axiom of “Perform Or Else.” As explained by Jon McKenzie in *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*: “Performance will be to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries what discipline was to the eighteenth and nineteenth an onto-historical formation of power and knowledge.”² Strata are layers of forces and intensities that give form to matter by organizing small molecular entities into aggregations. Performance strata bundle a variety of cultural, organizational and technological performances as discursive and embodied working methods. McKenzie explains that the agents of the performance strata harbor new forms of normativity, while recognizing cracks, fissures and “outside” discourses as agents in their force field.

There is no dominant voice in these strata as they thrive on a further dissolution of grand narratives of science and political ideology, a moment in intellectual history labeled by Jean Francois Lyotard in 1985 as a “postmodern condition.” The strata are cultivated and solidified by an attentiveness to the active-performative nature of language and bodily gestures, developed in corporate-organizational settings as modes of efficiency, as creativity and competence in our dealings with art and technology, and as a new attitude towards social-sexual networking and cultural vitality. Work ethics, the use of technological languages, and social/intellectual curiosities

¹ Hamamoto uses the concepts of radical jouissance to describe porn productivity that contains a release of libidinal energy and makes viewers aware of sex political struggles.

² From *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*.
intermingle and intersect to become strata of power and knowledge.

Whereas nation-state governments and capitalist porn industries are arguably organized by the older “discipline or punish” maxim (as consolidated empires decide to “push-down” content onto consumers, or punish consumers who access porn in surveilled places), the performance strata thrive on a different type of consumerism. In the performance strata, agents negotiate and articulate everyday fluctuations of their sexual relationships and pornographic roles. To perform sexually, according to McKenzie’s maxim, simply means to respond to communication signals.

Performance theorist Luk Van den Dries describes a similar tendency in theatrical events that make use of electronically manipulated outsider discourses. For instance, in Emil Hravtin’s performance piece Miss Mobile (2001), an audience member shares a private cellphone conversation with the onstage performer, who finishes each phone-call and amplifies it for the wider audience. The audience here is neither a passive voyeur, nor an active performer who jumps on a stage, but somebody who is linked to the chaos of surrounding technologies and discourses. As Van den Dries writes:

In this form of theatre the movement on stage is no longer regulated like a ribbon of motorway with the teleological transport of meaning from point A to point B, and to which the spectator can surrender blindly. It offers the endless arranging of possibilities, a highly diffuse field of points of energy between which there are countless connections.3

For Internet critic Clay Shirky, to perform on the web equally means to enter the wet fields of decentralized communication—a sharing of personal, social, artistic, and work/play practices. In an article on weblogging, he describes bloggers as writers whose stories thrive on an active sharing of thought and culture. Even though some blogger efforts are supported financially by publishers, or an occasional “star” blogger will be published in book format, “pure” bloggers write to explore the economies of pleasure and networking:

But the vast majority of weblogs are amateur and will stay amateur, because a medium where someone can publish globally for no cost is ideal for those who do it for the love of the thing. Rather than spawning a million micro-publishing empires, weblogs are becoming a vast and diffuse cocktail party, where most address not “the masses” but a small circle of readers, usually friends and colleagues. This is mass amateurization, and it points to a world where participating in the conversation is its own reward.4

We can see how a person’s ideas and explicit body images can be revealed through daily writing modes on the web, as in the example of Carly’s pornblog http://www.pornblography.com/daily_grind. In her recent entry written on March 26, 2004, she shares some ideas about the subjects of pornography and parenting, then also attaches her private ‘artsy’ webcam pictures of a variety of dildo’s used around the anal region. In short, the new pornographer mixes the overlapping discourses of knowledge and sexual representation as a social-intellectual awareness. In this way, s/he learns how to write the performative movements of sexual education and practise in concert with other individuals—amateurism can be a life-long lesson indeed!

1. Peer-to-Peer Porn and the Legal Arm

Historically, a wide range of web-based “peer-to-peer” networks have been developed for people to chat, opine, and show/trade images, such as BBS’s, MUDS, Usenet newsgroups, AOL chatrooms; some of them offering more personalized spaces for sexual performance and conversation. Shirky explains that “peer-to-peer,” as an enabling concept within web culture, went through a rough patch in 2001 when p2p file-sharing companies were hit by fierce legal battles over copyright, and investors started...
to withdraw their money. In March 2003, peer-to-peer networks in the United States received another major blow when Congress came out with a report to show that such networks were being used for the trading of illegal porn, specifically child pornography. The United States Congress thus initiated a widespread crackdown on popular peer-to-peer networks. The General Accounting Office and the House Government Reform Committee came out with a report entitled “File-Sharing Programs: Child Pornography Is Readily Accessible Over Peer-to-Peer Networks” and carried out surveillance tests on the networked computers of individuals and student communities. The study concluded that web users are at significant risk of inadvertent exposure to pornography.

To document such risk, the GAO invited the Customs Cybersmuggling Center of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to perform additional searches on KaZaA and found child pornography was indeed being traded: “Juvenile users of peer-to-peer networks face a significant risk of inadvertent exposure to pornography when searching or downloading images.” Koontz’s report also cites that in the 2002 fiscal year, the Federal Bureau of Investigation allocated 38.2 million dollars and 228 agents to an “Innocent Images Unit,” in hope of collaborating more efficiently with p2p companies on the issue of child pornography.

Under the U.S. Constitution it is legal for adults to own and distribute most types of pornography. However since the 2002 Supreme Court ruling on COPA (the Child Online Protection Act), the US government has made efforts to excessively monitor Internet pornography, arguing that minors are automatically exposed to, and harmed by, pornographic images when they surf the web. Some producers within the porn industry have equally denounced “peer-to-peer porn,” suggesting that the adult porn industry itself follows a more rigorous code of ethics and does not make products that would be harmful to minors.

Despite a widespread “peer-to-peer porn” backlash, the web has continued to foster its porn societies, enabling sexual encounters and the non-commercial trading of products. Meanwhile, software companies, such as Verso Technologies, are making money out of the backlash, trying to sell Internet Access Management Appliances (porn filters) to “minimize our risk of porn liability and increase access to a truly business class Internet.” In one of their web ads, a well-groomed businessman expeditiously types away on his laptop computer, presumably unperturbed by porn or sexual emails. Amateur file-sharers, on the other hand, may want to draw social contours around the sexual web, and govern their own mediated bodies and desires.

For instance, Cloei, owner and web manager of www.nakkidnerds.com, has chosen to found her own community of “nerdy girls.” As she explains her objectives:

I wanted to capture the girl you see in the back of the class sitting there reading her book, not paying attention to anybody; the girl you see on the street walking to work, or the girl who sits in the cube next to you day in/day out coding her little heart out. (...) These girls are not professional models who go from site to site, they are not even real “amateurs,” just friends, and friends of friends whom I have with my sly smile convinced to model for the site, who believe in the site, and who are just in it for the fun and maybe a little ego boost. Who does not need one of those these days?”

“Nakkid nerds,” “Suicide girls” (www_suicidegirls.com), and members of other emergent online communities are amateurs who negotiate the powers of lust and knowledge as complementary forces within their body-packets. They respond with mixed feelings to the glossy formulas of commercial pornography and know that their own ideas and bodies occupy a space of learning. Amateur pornographers have sexual urges despite the Internet backlash, and it will be interesting to see how governments may use “peer-to-peer porn”
as an excuse to invade sex-active or activist schools of the Internet. Because pornography is such a sensitive issue in the political world, particularly how it pertains to young children, one has to wonder what laws governments may enact in efforts to stifle not just porn, but the schooling of porn as mutually negotiated sex, all under the guise of keeping the nation-states safe and clean.

2. Pride Porn: Reading and Fleshing Out the Pornographic Contract

A good example of pride porn’s coming of age would be queer networks where individuals collaborate in scripting, shooting, uploading and analyzing pornographic portraits. Ssspread.com (www.ssspread.com) was such a site, launched in January 2001 and disbanded in January 2004 because the ssspread.com team decided to instead start producing feature-length amateur videos. During its three year run, the site encouraged queer and transgender people to submit porn stories and then organized film-shoots where people could act out their scenarios. The outcomes of this process were uploaded to the site as slide-shows on a weekly basis. The site was set up by Barbara DeGenevieve, Professor at the School of the Art Institute Chicago, in collaboration with Terry Pirtle, who was the web master and managed the site. As the homepage announcement read, the site was “… committed to the queer community, to serve a segment of that community that is under-represented in web pornography.”

The site was marketed towards lesbians and transgender individuals, encouraging them to become both producers and consumers of porn, both creative agents and paying participants in the site. As DeGenevieve explains:

We wanted to create a space on the web that would feel comfortable for dykes and transpeople. It would be a membership site but without distracting advertisements, where people would see themselves and their bodies represented in porn.
THE NEW MEDIA SCHOOLING OF THE AMATEUR PORNGRAPHER

Www.ssspread.com solicited participants who agreed to be showcased on the site, who were paid a nominal amount of money for each film shoot, and who did not necessarily conform to beauty norms. For instance, in the “Road Side Service” slide-show posted on October 30, 2003, Chicago-based singer Nomy Lamm acted out a macho-redneck scenario as a “male trucker” who received a blowjob from a “transman” partner, then penetrated the partner anally with a dildo on the car’s hood, only to finally reveal her true phallus in the form of an amputated leg. De Genevieve as videographer explains the collaboration process with participants:

I usually collaborate with the people that I am filming, and I ask them ahead of time to carefully consider what they want to do in the session. Very often, I just leave the scene up to them, or they come up with a scenario that we have discussed beforehand. I will add something to it or ask them to do something slightly different. But, of course, I myself could never come up with the variety of scenarios that they come up with. A lot of people I shoot are young and into punk aesthetics. The environments they live in are definitely not mainstream, and this becomes part of the ambience of a shoot. Yesterday, I shot in a model’s kitchen. It was a pretty chaotic environment with dishes in the sink, food remnants on the countertops and floors, and stuff all over the place. There was another shoot a couple months ago in a room where I literally couldn’t see the floor for the clothes, CDs, magazines, over-flowing ashtrays, sex toys, pillows... But I find these living spaces really fascinating because these are the places where people really have sex.

Www.ssspread.com also enabled social activities between members by having them share e-mail addresses, so that they would be able to contact each other. The site contained links to pornographic stories in the “Story Lounge” area. The “Articles and Interviews” area had interviews with sex scholars and activists such as Shannon Bell and Annie Sprinkle. The members also gave feedback to the weekly still-images by writing messages on a messageboard.

Examining queer-produced porn reveals a central paradox within the paradigm of amateur pornography: the same individuals who are more skilled in entering complex networks and making deals with others, also turn out to be the most successful “amateurs.” Porn amateurs are more likely to be McKenzie’s “performers,” body-ordinaries who enter or subvert porn shoots as commercial entertainment, yet are less inclined to fake sexual bonds with partners. Another historical example of such performative talent would be Annabel Chong, a highly educated woman who agreed to make a pioneering “gangbang” movie where she would be penetrated by three hundred men in one day. At the time of her gangbang-preparations, Chong was a student in anthropology at the University of Southern California. She wanted to stage her act as an artist-pornographer aware of
gender and sexual politics, testing the limits of her desiring body while questioning stereotypes of Asian female submissiveness. In the documentary Sex: The Annabel Chong Story, Chong explains her work as an angry, yet deliberate, gesture to counter sex-negative ideas circulating in higher education classrooms. Chong intended to encourage other people to be more comfortable and capable in sharing their sexual experiences.

Her USC teachers were accepting of her ideas, yet it was the commercial porn producer John Bowen who materialized her dream and then turned her act into a commodity for a mostly male consumer market. Chong explains in the documentary that she did not receive due profit from the movie, which sold forty thousand copies during its first year of distribution. However, she came to terms with the fact that she had been financially exploited, and does not fully regret having joined forces with John Bowen. She explains in another interview that she went home on the evening of the gangbang (which had to be interrupted after 251 sessions because of physical damage) to finish writing a paper for one of her college classes.

Important to the history of pride porn would be the efforts of web cam pioneers such Ana Voogt of www.anacam.com and Jennifer Ringley of www.jennicam.com (closed down in December 2003), whose webcams document everyday domestic activities and include sexual scenes. Their sexual performances are integrated into the grind of life and appear at irregular intervals, warranting feedback from friends, fellow artists or consumer communities. Voogt and Ringley are in command of their imaging process and may decide to turn consumer feedback into pleasure and profit. The star’s pornographic ambitions here includes settling a decent pleasure contract that involves sharing ideas, sexual and non-sexual images, and conversations with web users.

3. The Gay Artist’s New Medium

On non-commercial gay webcam sites, the contract is different again, as the sex consumers are also performers who participate in mutual masturbation sessions shown on a split-screen computer window. The pornographic exchange is free of third-hand control, yet the performances themselves are reminiscent of commercial porn, focusing mostly on quick masturbation sessions leading towards ejaculation and orgasm. The gay webcam culture was recently explored by Asian artist Isaac Leung, whose nickname “Oriental Whore” grew out of an art project “The Impossibility of Having Sex with 500 Men in a Month: I’m an Oriental Whore.” Raised in Hong Kong in a family of scientists and named after Isaac Newton, Leung developed a “nerdy” identity at an early age. He further cultivated performative sex research as an artist and student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Leung is very articulate and looks like a well-dressed dandy, his appearance and ideas showing a real sense of wanting to speak to peripheral society. He admits that his interest in dissecting cyber sex stems from obsessive fantasizing about “the perfect boy,” and a dissatisfaction with his actual sex life. Leung was introduced to cyber sex before he had any real sex, using easily accessible gay chatrooms on the web and affordable webcams and videoconferencing software:

I started to experiment with webcams from a young age onwards. I was using existing videoconference software such as Netmeeting, a very popular software that splits your screen into two areas and has a chatbox at the bottom of the screen. I would say that 90% of the people who use Netmeeting are there to have sex. If you click on an icon, a person shows up on your screen, which you can either “ignore” or “accept” for a sex session. But right away you can see yourself and the other person on the screen and based on that visual information, you can “accept” or “ignore” his identity. Then you can also start chatting immediately or talk to each other through a microphone.

In his art piece “The Impossibility of Having Sex with 500 Men in One Month: I am
an Oriental Whore,” Leung wanted to analyze his web cam experience as a gay Chinese man in the Western world, his awareness of AIDS, his compulsive sexual desires, and subsequently, his repression. He disguised himself as an 18-year old Japanese boy and worked daily to interact with gay cruisers willing to “accept” his profile. He researched and categorized the cruisers by nationality, age group, weight, and other features. As he explains:

My research methodology worked as follows. I was masturbating and typing with one hand and recording information with the other hand. I was hiding my mouse yet opening another software for copying and pasting the images. I asked everybody about their age, where they came from, their height and their weight, their sexual orientation, and whether they were a “top” or “bottom.” These physical features are crucial within the gay community as cruisers are looking for nice bodies and muscular types. Of course there are also people who are attracted to chubby guys but they are kind of segregated.

Leung’s website records the daily development of his sex binge and an intricate struggle to carry through with the project to the very end. The diary items in particular reveal a frustrated attempt at materializing an artistic concept. The concept reads as follows: “The project documents the collective experience of orgasm in virtual space. It creates a discourse of sexual politics in the context of post-colonial and interracial sexual relationship by showing my ‘oriental’ identity through my webcam.” Leung did not have a collective experience nor did he reach his end goal. He did, however, realize his goals of researching ethnic profiles and the extent to which individuals were lying about their bodies:

People often lied about their dick size, because they say at that it is at least nine inches long. That is a real joke in the gay webcam community, as you can see with your own eyes the discrepancy between the actual size and the advertised size.
Other statistics in his research show that a majority of cruisers were married or self-proclaimed bi-sexual men, mostly white and between the age of 30 and 40. Leung was emotionally disappointed to find out that so many men were older and that they wanted to be a “daddy” type of personality. He was only rarely meeting people in his own age group. Most men were from European countries such as Holland, Belgium, Germany and Great Britain. There were also older men from Asian countries, with Hong Kong and Taiwan being the most prominent ones. He admits that this trend partly reflects the availability of the Internet in those cultures to middle-aged men of a certain social class, which thus became the “default” parameter of his research.

Most of the chatroom dialogue centered around a persuasion to show genitals, ejaculation and cum. As Leung explains:

In a webcam, the first thing you show people is your genitals, which is arguably the most private place that you have. It actually takes along time for people to show their faces on a webcam, you have to actually push them to show their faces. You have to make people comfortable in order to get that result. But some people would get creative and show themselves sucking a remote, or something … I was more interested in seeing the faces and the facial expressions. I was interested in seeing the entire environment around the body such as the bedroom. I was exploring a new kind of voyeurism and exhibitionism.\textsuperscript{15}

He writes in his journal how he started to find the experiment depressing, as he did not find good connections with the participants. Even though he had very successful sexual experiences, they were after all too ephemeral: “In real life I have to work through stuff, dealing with my long-distance relationship and sexual frustrations.” \textsuperscript{16} Even though he sobered up about finding perfect boys within the web cam community, Leung continues to want to make statements about his evolving sexual needs.

A parallel development to these webcams, would be amateur pornographers...
screening their works in community centers or arthouse theaters, where the audience is invited to watch and share responses. This development has started to gain attention in the US mass media with TV and film critics expressing both revulsion and propulsion towards this trend. The pornographic scenes are thus transported from private video and web activity to public screenings in theaters, where they once belonged.

In the Boston area, Kim Airs and the arthouse theater Coolidge Corner Cinema have started to organize annual screenings of amateur porn movies. The event, entitled You Oughta Be in Pictures, brings together home-made porn movies and low-budget erotic movies. The producers are university students, art-oriented or queer producers of porn, while the spectators are arthouse consumers, gay/lesbian activists, and good old voyeurs.

The appeal of the event lies exactly in the odd mixture of makers and viewers, the untrained screen-performers and filmmakers, whose movies cause exhilarating responses in the audience. Audiences in this screening are large and loud, at times shouting out their reactions or laughing hysterically at how the filmmakers conceive of sexual positions and camera angles. In some movies, the scenes fail to be explicit or dynamic at all. For example, a female masturbation scene shows a moving hand on a hidden vagina, where the soundtrack consists of quiet and camera-shy moaning. This is “real” amateur porn, a bundle of a person’s sexual actions and their representation, approaching audiences to consider responses other than arousal and masturbation.

As one man in the audience of the 2002 screening of You Oughta Be in Pictures describes: “I have seen pornography before. I’ve seen quite a bit of it. But this was unlike any of those experiences. I am not exactly sure what is different about it. But the response that it generated made me feel asexual.” Another female respondent emphasizes the importance of humor in the implicit communication between the filmmakers and the viewers. As she writes:

> But I think it was the humor part that I really enjoyed. It allows you to step back from all the taboo-ness of sex. There is a give and take in the sense that some filmmakers will poke fun at audience response by deliberately putting extreme images on screen, while audience members will at points poke fun at the filmmaker’s attempt at ‘sexiness’ at certain intervals.

Amateur porn does not always cater to physical arousal or masturbation, but can trigger fulfilling reactions in audiences. Therefore, the screenings give amateur pornographers an opportunity to interact with audiences and get immersed in changing feedback loops.

In 2003, the producers of the HBO’s program Real Sex decided to cover the growing trend towards Boston amateur porn cinema in a special entitled Porn 101:xxxtra Credit. A guiding idea in Porn 101:xxxtra Credit is that the amateur pornographers manifest themselves as proud and educated individuals with Ivy League and college degrees. They are shown as virgin producers, yet in control over the process of making porn. The HBO film crew followed the amateur pornographers during their film shoots, at times supporting their efforts with technical tips and adequate film lighting. Porn 101:xxxtra Credit shows short excerpts of the...
amateur movies, at times adding a separate music track, and conducting short interviews with the amateur filmmakers.

Who are these filmmakers? Mike is a guy with balloon fetish who stages an orgy. The audience laughs sincerely at the end of Mike’s movie. The audience giggles and roars throughout the next movie, Shotzee the Clown, featuring a horny clown going out and having sex with a “doggie” girl. Next comes a loving couple, Nicolette and Leo, who made a simple bedroom movie with a security camera plugged into their TV-VCR. Nicolette believes that people are not having good sex and she wants to show them what good sex is like.

Towards the end of the program comes Tanya Bezreh’s spanking musical The Naughty Garden, which tells a humorous and child-like fantasy tale of garden flowers, a strawberry, a bee and a snail. During the audition, Tanya, as “strawberry,” slips into the back room and gets spanked by the angry stagehand. The movie goes on to show the spankings as a sexual awakening leading to pleasure and orgasm. Who is amateur Tanya? A Boston-based artist with a degree in English from Harvard University. As an artist, Bezreh first ran a puppet theatre at Harvard University, and then helped develop Brain-Opera (1996) at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She then moved to New York City where she became a free-lance writer for Artbyte magazine and contributed to new media exhibits for the Guggenheim museum and the Museum of Sex.

Bezreh became a web-based exhibitionist with her award-winning website New Century SchoolBook, a magazine about electronic art that turned into a personal photo-diary and striptease. Later, she used the site to reflect on her sexual growth and crafted a series of lessons to be learned in the digital media environment. As she states:

Making my web pages (since 1998) was a compulsion and I was also mimicking the e-commercial culture’s way of selling products. After a while, I flipped it around and started to look back at my work and writing about how one can learn from compulsions, and the mistakes one makes carrying them out. You can click on each of the lessons and go back to the webpage that I was developing at the time. For example, I was taking a lot of naked pictures of myself, but I was too shy to put them on the site without painting blobby clothes onto myself in Photoshop. So the lessons that link to those images say things like, ‘You are a wimp about nudity’ and ‘You always take your clothes off, but you never put it on the site.’ At some point I had to get over the fear of showing my sexier work, because I was hiding a huge percentage of my artwork. Doing the HBO thing was supposed to help break down the wall.21

When Bezreh decided to make a short porn movie for Real Sex, entitled The Naughty Garden, she was the producer and the talent of this movie. She directed the movie, wrote the plot and also composed the music. There was no money involved in making the movie, even though the HBO crew was following her production team:

They showed up with a 15-person crew and shot us shooting our porn movie. They were actually very friendly and helped us out in many ways. We used our own cameras and they shot their movie in film. We shot about 5 minutes of film and they ended up excerpting about a minute and a half of their footage. They did rush us a little bit and try to make us come to the “sexy” part a bit faster.22

Here the amateur pornographer grabs the opportunity to show her work for a massive TV audience. The “deal” she negotiated...
with HBO was specific and respectful of her work, the “love” contract consisted of her meeting a person named Bruce, with whom she had a special chemistry and rapport so she selected him to act as “cranky stagehand” and “master spanker” in her movie. Amateur pornographer Tanya is an artists and everyday producer of sex, living sex/love relationships and making porn using digital media technologies and electronic networks.

Conclusion
In 1999, the Danish film company Zentropa Pictures opened “Puzzy Power” and launched a “Pornouveau Manifesto.” The manifesto stipulates that movies must be innovative and must turn people on. However, the portrayal of sex should be “as real and true” as possible, yet should also show diverse forms of energy and sensuality. Sex scenes should be integrated into cinematic narratives and written for the enjoyment of both women and men. Hoping to create positive and inspiring images of human sexuality, pornouveau filmmakers try to make films that they themselves would like to watch. They might not believe that watching a film is better than experiencing real life sex, but it should be a welcome addition to this experience.  

Amateur pornographers are increasingly engaged in collaborative producing of porn using digital media and networks. They also assert their primal sexual bodies as agents of lust and power negotiating or subverting media regimes. Amateur pornographers have sexual bodies. What are the true characteristic of these bodies? First of all, as was reported in a recent New York Times article, “Women Tailor Sex Industry to Their Eyes,” more women and queer producers are heading the newer sex sites and industries, promoting better working conditions and the pornography of “body-ordinaries” within decentralized sexual platforms.  

The producers of peer-to-peer porn, pride porn and art porn have inherited the masculine power structures and male fantasies inherent in porn, yet have been apt to formulate everyday “performing” bodies as sexual ready and politically astute entities.

This is perhaps the long-awaited schooling of pornography, its rapid democratization, and its return to more diversified expressions of sexual-aesthetic lust. The aesthetic and social dimensions of our lust patterns should be carefully observed, and analyzed as case-studies in a reclaiming of porn, in relation to specific contracts between desiring humans. Instead of applying universalizing theoretical concepts or outdated obscenity standards, we can study these sexual performers and their acts of communication. This trend is not yet common among scholars trained in film/media criticism and theory, as it requires a willingness to abandon the ivory tower of speculation, question boundaries between scholarship and physicality, “play” vigorously with subjects who are informed agents of sex. As McKenzie predicts at the end of Perform or Else: From Discipline or Performance, there will be no “good schools” of performance to replace the bad (crusty) ones. There are only packets of activism that acknowledge a need to perform and be performed, as interactive technologies are rapidly modifying the way we share knowledge and nurture the body. More abstract and detached claims of academic criticism will all too be easily appropriated and reversed by sex-negative ideology communities, and consequently, by conservative nation-state governments, which globally have started to “push and punish” porn through radical censorship and surveillance regimes.

We need to maintain ourselves, as pragmatic networkers of non-reproductive sex, as “little” or “strange” body-packets swimming the high tides of superpower politics, the expansionist corporate industries, warfare as model of intercultural longing, and hopelessly outdated sex policies or negligent attitudes as “cold” sexual education. The sexual revolution is over. Yet we can be plainly social, we can develop reasonable acts of seduction, amorously or with effort, within close communities and remote peer networks. Clay Shirky foresees a need for acting as sensitive and socially skilled beings
as we enter wider networks and progressive models of research/education:

...there are now file-sharing networks whose members simply snail mail one another mountable drives of music. A critical factor here is the social fabric—as designers of secure networks know, protecting the perimeter of a network only works if the people inside the perimeter are trustworthy. New entrants can only be let into such a system if they are somehow vetted or vouched for, and the existing members must have something at stake in the behavior of the new arrivals.25

We are the new entrants to an existing and far-reaching porn culture, our reflective and cooperative methods of analysis could be applied to the body-ordinaries, as they themselves may re-enter our own body-packets. Amateur pornography will be “our sex” or “our children’s sex” – our hunger for knowledge and gratification, very soon.

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NOTES

9 ibid.
12 ibid.
14 ibid.
15 Leung, Oct. 8, 2002.
16 ibid.
22 ibid.