5 * Wet Dreams: Erotic Film Festivals of the Early 1970s and the Utopian Sexual Public Sphere

ELENA GORFINKEL

This essay presents a microhistory of the rise of erotic film festivals in New York, San Francisco, and Amsterdam in the early 1970s, mapping out the emergence of the erotic film festival as a hybrid reception sphere, a site for taste formation and erotic consumption across different modes of production such as the sexploitation film, the experimental film, the independent film, and the hardcore pornographic feature. Exemplary of a moment in which the furor over sexual explicitness in film had reached a fever pitch, erotic film festivals mobilized a discourse of sexual liberation alongside a rhetoric of aesthetic innovation, positioning themselves outside of the more mundane market of porn shops and storefront theaters selling a seedier version of sex to an older generation of "skin flick" consumers. The promotion and execution of the International Erotic Film Festival in San Francisco (which premiered in December 1970) and the New York Erotic Film Festival (which began in December 1971), and their European progenitor, the Wet Dream Film Festival in Amsterdam (November 1970), together offer a historical site for the exploration of the terms and conventions of erotic taste cultures as they were imbricated with the refinement and construction of cinephile practices in urban locales.[1]

From a contemporary vantage point, the notion of an erotic film festival, in and of itself, is not a controversial or new one.[2] Yet considering the historical moment of the early 1970s, the materialization of erotic film festivals represented a shift in the conceptualization of sexuality in film, in film culture, and in the public sphere more broadly. Although the concept of the film festival was a relatively novel one to American culture, with the earliest festivals emerging in Columbus, Ohio, and San Francisco in the 1950s, it was further institutionalized in the 1960s by the New York Film Festival, which embraced the appreciation of the cinema as an art form and built upon a vibrant cinephile culture already in play in New York City at the time.[3] In 1971 a *Variety* article made a point of the connection between the Ninth Annual New York Film Festival and the first New York Erotic Film Festival, remarking that "tired buffs" of the former

could anticipate the premiere of the erotic film festival, as an alternative site of exhibition.[4] The germination of the erotic festivals had as much to do with the successes of more established sites of cineaste activity—such as the international film festival circuit, as well as film societies, and the general availability of foreign imports screened at art houses across the United States—as they did with the burgeoning sexual culture of the time. The erotic festivals in San Francisco, New York, and Amsterdam presented a utopian attitude, which anticipated that the unbinding of sexual repression in filmic representations could also loosen the cultural psyche and deregulate sexual practice within social life.

The opening out toward broader cultural and screen permissiveness and the persistent erosion of the legal definition of obscenity provided the historical backdrop that also allowed the erotic film festivals to briefly thrive, yet just as quickly expire a few years later. By self-designating as "erotic," the festivals in New York and San Francisco capitalized, perhaps unwittingly, on the public and juridical confusion of boundaries between experimental film, hardcore porn, sexploitation films, and independently made films of various stripes.[5] A series of full-page advertisements for the First Annual New York Erotic Film Festival (NYEFF) in an October 1971 issue of the *Village Voice* proclaimed, "The NYEFF has arrived, proving film is more than a four-letter word."[6] Conflating the assumption of filmic form with risqué content, the come-on alluded to the elevation of sex through the legitimizing frame of film as art, while implying a semantic reversal—in that eroticism could also elevate filmic form. A subsequent ad publicized the films to be screened, with *The Long Swift Sword of Siegfried* (1971)—a U.S./German coproduction made by sexploitation impresario David Friedman—playing in the same program with Jerry Abram's experimental film *Eyetoon* (1968) and George Csiscery's mythological-erotic paean *Andromeda* (1971). In addition, the festival announced showings of Scott Bartlett's experimental film *Lovemaking* (1971) and Constance Beeson's ode to lesbian coupling *Holding* (1971), as well as films by Warhol Factory habitué Gerard Malanga, emergent film and video artist Jud Yalkut (a documentation of a Yayoi Kusama performance, *Kusama's Self-Obliteration* [1967]), early gay porn director Arch Brown, and founder of the London Filmmaker's Co-op Steve Dwoskin.[7] The first San Francisco erotic festival also mixed its experimental and independent shorts, combining humor-oriented and animated films by local filmmakers, with films such as James Broughton's *The Golden Positions* (1971) and the sixty-minute "marriage manual" style sexploitation film *The Zodiac Couples* (1970). In U.S. theaters, it had become common for sexploitation films to play on a double or triple bill with foreign im-

ports and broadly dubbed art house fare by the late 1960s, but the convergence of experimental films and sexploitation and hardcore shorts at these erotic festivals created unique viewing spaces that drew connections in more direct ways across differing modes of production and aesthetic styles for its audiences.

"Actualists, Not Spectators": The Wet Dream Film Festival

Much as imported European films helped liberalize U.S. screens on both sociological and legal fronts, the U.S. erotic film festivals saw a continental progenitor in the Wet Dream Festival.[8] The first international erotic film festival was created by the editors of the European underground sex paper *SUCK*, many of whom were American expatriates. Their ranks included artist and writer Jim Haynes, editor and writer William Levy, and Dutch cartoonist Willem de Ridder. With help from poet/playwright Heathcote Williams, the literary translator Susan Jansen, Australian feminist and author of *The Female Eunuch*, Germaine Greer, and New York writer Lynne Tillman, the editors spawned the organization S.E.L.F.—the Sexual Egalitarian and Libertarian Fraternity—as a means to arrange the first annual Wet Dream Festival in Amsterdam. The Wet Dream was an event devoted to the exhibition of pornographic films and to the more expansive goal of sexual freedom. Greer was invited to be a film judge along with, among others, *Screw* editor Al Goldstein, fashion model Jean Shrimpton, and *Village Voice* columnist Mike Zwerin. All festival patrons had to sign a sexual liberationist manifesto scripted by S.E.L.F., become members of the organization, and get photo identification cards to gain entry to the festival. The statement called upon the audience to subscribe to the doctrine of "sexual freedom, sexual tolerance, and sexual generosity . . . free from possessiveness."[9] It enacted a form of a Wilhelm Reich–inflected (see chapter 6) social contract, one constituted through and embedded within the act of filmgoing itself. The required membership in S.E.L.F. was also pragmatically a way to provide legal cover for the festival and prevent the potential intervention of law enforcement officers, who nonetheless attended and observed the event.[10]

Drawing together many of the readers and contributors of *SUCK* in Amsterdam, lauded as part erotic film fete and part "bacchanal," the Wet Dream Festival became ensnared in heated controversy. Greer and others were critical of the festival in retrospect, in part after a confrontation around the live sexual performance of Viennese Aktionist Otto Muehl, who appeared with a goose that he intended to maim and kill

on stage. Audience members Heathcote Williams and Anthony Haden-Guest leapt on the stage and stole the goose, thus ending Muehl's performance, but not before he had defecated on stage as a final retaliatory gesture.[11]

For numerous reasons, Greer was disappointed and considered the first Wet Dream a failed experiment. For her, the Muehl incident was merely a flashpoint for deeper problems. Registering ambivalence about both the prevalence of commercial hardcore pornography and the underground films that were shown, she wrote,

> The Wet Dream Festival was not a festival of liberated sex and could not itself liberate anyone, for it is axiomatic that one can only liberate oneself. . . . Its problems were . . . felt much more keenly because felt simultaneously and together. Firstly, we were committed to showing a great number of commercial porn films, made to exploit the misery of the deprived and the perverted, at minimal cost, badly shot, worse played by the unhappy actors blackmailed by force or lack of money, dingy, murky, spotty, choppy film, sex without dialogue or soul or body. The effect of such films is a calculated turn-off, throwing the viewer back into himself, isolating us all from each other. . . . But at least the commercial porno films were aimed at sexual response, however desolate and specific. The Underground films were not even genital: either they celebrated sex in narcissistic and artistic ways or they offered a sort of commentary on decadent social mores. The hypocrisy of getting kicks out of the depiction of depraved sex while retaining the right to disapprove of it or satirize it was the worst turn-off of all.[12]

Greer's hopes for a liberationist sexual politics to spring from the festival, reflective of her larger writings affirming that women "say yes" to sexual pleasure outside of the realms of domination and violence, were not in her estimation achieved by the event. Greer's involvement, as well as her subsequent falling out with the *SUCK* magazine collective, also spoke, however obliquely, to the emerging discontents of the women's movement with pornographic materials. Interestingly, Greer's, Betty Dodson's, Jansen's, and Tillman's participation in the Wet Dream Festival also represented a historical moment at which women's place in the politics of sexual liberation was only beginning to be contested.[13]

The Wet Dream Festival, which continued for a second year in October 1971, was also a ground for sexual practice, as part of the sense that sex on screen should approximate the complexity and variety of sex in life. The first and second annual Wet Dream Festivals were covered in the press as much for their sex-tinged parties and libidinal postscreen-

ing events as for their films, for which reviewers doled out faint praise. For the second Wet Dream, festival organizers set up "love rooms" in the Lido Club and a seven-hour ferry trip to encourage sexual activity amongst its guests, both spaces outfitted with waterbeds, rock music, and "European dope." This led a *Rolling Stone* reviewer to remark, "There was a distinct Harold Robbins flavor to it all."[14] Robert Coover, in the *Evergreen Review*, pointed out a central contradiction between the impulse to watch sex and the impulse to do it, between filmgoing as a solitary act and filmgoing as a potentially social one, writing that "the very nature of film is counterorgiastic. Orgy is communal, and film by itself is voyeuristic, masturbatory, private."[15] Similarly, pro-sex feminist, artist, and masturbation advocate Betty Dodson recalled her experience as a judge at the second Wet Dream. She compared the films to the copious group sex in which she took part outside of the theater:

> Aside from a remarkable few, most [films] had portrayed heterosexual male fantasies with man on top fucking, no close-ups of clits, and not one woman touched her own clitoris during intercourse. There were also more blowjobs for men than oralsex [sic] for women. It was clear to me that the world needed porn that would inspire people to be better lovers that would include what women liked. While the quality of the films had been only medium to poor, I had to congratulate the festival on the aesthetic quality of the live sex—that turned out to be the real art form.[16]

The Wet Dream Festival seemed unapologetically bound to porn—in Jim Haynes's own admission, pornographic films had more prominence than erotic films at the festival, as a result of the former's abundant availability.[17] In an article covering the second annual Wet Dream, Haynes was heard quipping that the "films are incidental"; "they're just an excuse for us to be here."[18] Haynes was not, however, a stranger to cinephilia: as a consistent attendee of the Cannes, Edinburgh, and Berlin Film Festivals, he used Cannes (as well as the Frankfurt Book Fair) to promote the Wet Dream.[19] Despite the predominantly hardcore films at the festival, some of the films shown at the Wet Dream diverged from this classification, with distinctive underground and sexploitation or hardcore crossovers: Jean Genet's homoerotic classic *Un chant d'amour* (1950) and the first festival grand-prize winner, *Adultery for Fun and Profit* (1970), an early entry into the attempt to merge narrative form and explicit content in an adult film (figure 5.1).[20] In a final assessment, Greer rallied for a revisionist pornographic movement: "Confrontation is political awareness. What we discovered at the Wet Dream Festival is that we will have to generate enough energy in ourselves to create a

Fig. 5.1 *Adultery for Fun and Profit* (1970) was an award winner at the Wet Dream Film Festival in Amsterdam, a fact touted in advertising when the film was picked up for distribution by Sherpix.

pornography which will eradicate the traditional porn by sheer erotic power"; "we must commission films, make films, write, act co-operate for life's sake."[21]

Nonetheless, the festival's central significance remained its linking of contexts of cinematic reception to sexual practice, and the utopian sensibility which hoped—as did Greer, Dodson, and the festival organizers themselves—that film could have political and personal valence in eliminating pervasive sexual "hang-ups." The editors of *SUCK* still saw the Wet Dream as a success on many fronts and in relation to their stated aims,

> to establish the right to view so-called pornographic movies in an ordinary cinema situation . . . to present a complete spectrum of erotic movie-making—from sexploitation films to 8mm home movies . . . to bring together *SUCK* readers and contributors, so that they could come to know one another better . . . to show erotic films outside of the limitations of conventional cinema, in a physical space with a potential for erotic actualities. This happened.[22]

Proclaiming themselves "actualists, not spectators" the editors reinforced the notion that the Wet Dream was an engineered yet organic social space where the "live" sex, and its potentiality, was given pride of

place as a public and political act, a space in which the workings and visceral charge of the cinematic form could help achieve these goals. In the most fitting credo of all, the Wet Dream organizers declared that "the participant is the best observer."[23]

Erotic Art, or "The Best Fuck Films": Erotic Film Festivals in the United States

The Wet Dream Festival was tumultuous and rife with ideological tensions, and ended with the collapse of the *SUCK* collective in 1972. The erotic film festivals held in the United States were similarly telling manifestations of liberationist idealism toward erotic imagery taken into the public sphere. Presenting a promotional face that professed a hip, culturally "with it" set of aims and agendas, these festivals created viewing spaces that resembled happenings and orgiastic launch pads far more than traditional film screenings. Arlene Elster and Lowell Pickett, who co-owned the Sutter Cinema, a leading "upscale" theater for 16 mm "artistically oriented" adult films, began the International Erotic Film Festival in San Francisco (see chapter 11). Both were active members in the San Francisco chapter of the Sexual Freedom League; Pickett was known to sponsor orgies at his home for the league, and Elster ran a discussion group on pornographic novels.[24] Of a younger generation than the makers of sexploitation films, Elster and Pickett were breaking the presumptions around the sexploitation and porn demographic, simultaneously with their film production company Leo Productions, their sponsorship of the festival, and their management of the Sutter Cinema. The Sutter, for instance, provided a revision of the sketchy and dilapidated porn theater ambience. The *New York Times* reported on the theater's tasteful décor, replete with rugs, erotic drawings, a tank of exotic goldfish in the lobby, and atypical amenities including free coffee and donuts during viewing hours, and discounts for seniors and couples—a demographic that Elster and Pickett were proud of attracting to their theater.[25] Elster and Pickett aspired to become the "cinematic equivalent" of Olympia Press in the 1950s, whose passel of literary finds included Burroughs, Beckett, and Nabokov, alongside second-rate erotic potboilers. One motivation for the erotic film festival, according to one reviewer, was Elster's desire to find "artistic" dirty movies; for Leo Productions, Elster and Pickett often commissioned adult films from independent directors who did not necessarily deal with sexual subjects, "in hope of getting something better than routine porno."[26]

The first annual San Francisco Erotic Film Festival in December 1970

Fig. 5.2 The Presidio Theater was outfitted as if for an old-fashioned Hollywood premiere for the First Annual San Francisco Erotic Film Festival in December 1970.

presented a group of judges known for their taste-maker status as cultural producers and intellectuals: the avant-garde filmmaker Bruce Conner; Olympia Press proprietor Maurice Girodias; and the film critic of the *Saturday Review* and the *Los Angeles Times*, Arthur Knight, who had recently penned a series of essays in *Playboy* magazine on the history of sex in cinema. The festival was remarked on as a scene fitted for Hollywood spectacle, held at the old vaudeville-era Presidio Theater (figure 5.2), and "roiling with the usual opening night freak show."[27] The theater was complete with barkers in "slightly rumpled" tuxedoes ushering the crowds along the red carpets. Opening night saw a surprise appearance by the gender-bending performance troupe the Cockettes, who were then enlivening the San Francisco club scene with their radical drag, as they belted out campy renditions of musical numbers in the theater lobby.[28] A roving film crew with 16 mm cameras had arrived, ready to film any developing action, sexual or otherwise, that might happen at the Presidio that evening.[29]

Comparably, the New York Erotic Film Festival, founded by former *Screw* magazine editor Ken Gaul and his partner Roger Sichel, promised, over the course of its two-year stint, demimonde luminaries to judge the films—pop artist Andy Warhol, film director Miloš Forman, *Happy Hooker* author Xaviera Hollander, novelist Gore Vidal, Factory superstar Holly Woodlawn, film actress Sylvia Miles, *Candy* author Terry Southern,

inveterate beat William Burroughs, and Wet Dream veterans Goldstein and Dodson, among others of the literati and glitterati downtown set.[30] Of course, some never actually showed up to the events, and Warhol was reputed to have never turned in his ballots for the film prizes.[31] The first NYEFF spanned a month and was held at multiple downtown and midtown theaters: the Agee 1 and 2, the Cine Malibu, and the Cinema Village. The thrill of potentially rubbing shoulders with some of these underground, countercultural celebrities must have provided a special frisson for New York audiences, who could also ostensibly evaluate the films alongside the illustrious jury, vis-à-vis the "audience favorite" award.

Both festivals, through the deployment of underground icons as authority figures, and following the lead of the Wet Dream Festival, enacted a convergence, if not a production of, sexual tastes. Connoisseurship was linked not only with the hipness of these tastemakers but also with the edginess of an alternative space for the consumption of "artful" sexuality. Dandifying the appeal of the otherwise lurid, the promotional rhetoric of these festivals implied that viewers could partake in identifying their own erotic preferences within and amongst the various filmic techniques and genres, as well as within a sense of like-minded, liberated cosmopolitan community.[32] A New York sex weekly encouraged readers to attend the first New York festival, "for no other reason than because it is of historical significance, probably even rivalling [sic] Woodstock in its impact on the American scene."[33]

A promotional featurette that introduced the traveling film compilation *The Best of the New York Erotic Film Festival* (1973), which Gaul and Sichel negotiated for theatrical distribution after the first and second annual festivals, depicts the sense of this urban underground milieu. Gaul introduces the short films and provides a teaser of what the festival looked like to non–New York, nonfestival audiences, who would be seeing the films in their local theaters across the country. Sitting in an artist's studio setting surrounded by erotic sculptures and drawings, Gaul speaks in a tone leavened with sarcasm, explaining his rationale for the festival: to "get the best fuck films, invite the public, charge them three dollars, and show America the best erotica around." Gaul sardonically notes that most of the filmmakers are under thirty years old and include "men, women, those who are not sure yet, and a very attractive transsexual from Encino." Describing the prefestival press party as full of "New York beautiful people," the shot ends with a cut to shaky handheld documentary footage of the revelry. In keeping with the ambience of a happening, we see a variety of hippie and artist types drinking punch

allegedly laced with "lysergic detergent," naked women dancing amidst the crowd, a man with a pet snake, a cavorting girl whose nude body is painted silver, and a naked couple in a sauna, who discuss European and American views on sexuality, profess laissez-faire attitudes toward homosexuality, and give their positive opinions of pornography. Gaul's voiceover makes a point to identify some of the people we are seeing, including Andrew Sarris, film critic for the *Village Voice*, and transgender superstar Holly Woodlawn. When asked about what it's like to judge an erotic festival, Woodlawn, shot in wobbly extreme close-up, states, "If it gets me hard, if it gets me going, it's erotic." The festival's identity, as represented in this documentary featurette, no doubt traded on the cachet of urban cultivation, youth culture, polysexuality, and ideals of sexual freedom.

The cultural pedigree of this new generation of erotica entrepreneurs facilitated the cross-fertilization of various films, audiences, and scenes allowed for at the festivals themselves. Appealing to an audience of the young and the bohemian, the directors of these respective festivals on both coasts maneuvered the cultural identities of their events and located themselves apart and distinct from both the simplicity of hardcore pornography and the obsolescence of sexploitation film and its transparently commercial pretenses. The San Francisco organizers claimed that their event was not "mere pornography," but a pursuit of the more elusive ideal of eroticism.[34] In a solicitation sent out to filmmakers by the International Erotic Film Festival, Elster and Pickett wrote,

> We feel that a festival of this sort is long overdue. Although people have been making erotic films since the inception of the cinema, the only films that have been given wide exposure have been sexploitation films. We intend this festival to provide a setting in which all types of erotic films can be seen, not just sex exploitation films. We consider an erotic film to be any film which you, the filmmaker feel is erotic.[35]

Elster and Pickett deferred to the creativity and determinative desires of independent filmmakers to constitute a new erotic cinema. They were among a new breed of 16 mm adult film merchants, who defined their theater and exhibition of independent adult films as a break with the sexploitation film trade, as well as with the shoddy crudity of others in the hardcore market.[36] In the late 1960s and early 1970s, sexploitation producers—in their focus on the soft-sell of simulated sex—were having their economic livelihood threatened by hardcore 16 mm producers such as Elster and Pickett, as well as by the developing porn feature, other larger independents, and the floundering Hollywood studios.[37] At a

convention for the Adult Film Association of America in 1971, Pickett clashed with the circumspect sexploitation crowd who were resisting allowing the 16 mm filmmakers to gain membership in the three-year-old organization. Pickett, rendering the conflict in generational terms, exclaimed that "you've all been guilty of fraud for the past 10 years. You've never delivered the goods and now we are. . . . Your audiences are getting old and dying off."[38]

Sexploitation films and their producers were nonetheless represented at the San Francisco festival, most notably by the crossover film *The Zodiac Couples*; thus, Elster and Pickett's stated aims of cultural distinction belied a more capacious framing of their festival within the broader rubric of "erotica." *The Zodiac Couples* was an interesting test case of the overlaps between different cinematic genres, modes of production, and reception, as it was met with considerable audience resistance at the festival. The response registered a generational split along the axes of sexual and cinematic tastes, and pointed to the varying expectations film audiences had of adult films. One reporter noted that during the screening of *The Zodiac Couples*, the audience "amused itself (after it became obvious that jeers and catcalls were not going to stop the film) by supplying science fiction sound effects and loud laughter as the on-screen narrator ran down dialogue such as 'the Scorpio female is easily aroused, and makes a most satisfying partner. She is best mated to blah blah blah.'"[39] Arthur Knight similarly characterized the audience's reaction to the film, stating that the film "unspooled to boos and catcalls." "It was a frankly commercial, safely pornographic . . . sexploitation picture; and it compared unfavorably with the more imaginative, more experimental, more personal, and far more erotic films that preceded it."[40]

Nevertheless, the combination of sexploitation films and of experimental and independent works at both festivals represented a unique moment in the history of sexually suggestive cinema, in that they found an audience that cohered for a brief time around films designated as "erotica"; whereas previously the screening venues for such films might have been a bit more discrete, both geographically—particularly in terms of the distinction between underground film venues and grindhouse theaters—and socially, in the divergence between the presumably older, male sexploitation audience and the younger, hipper, and more sexually fluid audience for underground or avant-garde films.[41] A writer in a New York sex paper suggested that the "sophisticate" crowd was less familiar with sexploitation and hardcore fare than may have been otherwise assumed:

> Being a pornographer by trade and getting to see all those Forty-Second Street flicks as a matter of course, it's easy for me to forget that, save for our readers, the world of sexploitation movies is virtually unknown. And, if the reaction that these movies received at the press party was any indication, New York's affluent elite by and large had never seen a sex movie with people fucking and sucking before that night. . . . I mean who would expect to see Sylvia Miles walk into the Cameo Art, right?[42]

This commentator drew a number of distinctions between the designated audience for sexploitation, broadly defined, and the audience that the New York festival was bringing to these films, in terms of differences in class, taste, and modes of consumption along the axes of "high" and "low" culture. In the same article, a brief interview with Gaul echoed Elster and Pickett's insistence on differentiation from sexploitation: he claimed that the films being shown were in fact erotic art, selected based on their "artistic merit," irrespective of their hardcore sexual content.[43]

Consistent with Elster and Pickett's orientation around erotica and art, the written announcement of the first festival awards by the San Francisco festival judges, Girodias, Conner, and Knight, declared,

> The sexual revolution has already been achieved; what we are working on now is the erotic revolution. The purpose of this festival is to find what in films can be singled out as erotic—as opposed to merely pornographic . . . Erotic is what stimulates the intelligence and the imagination as well as the senses . . . It has more to do with the higher emotions than the lower, and as such affords an infinite challenge to the "now" filmmakers.[44]

This analysis of the difference between the erotic and the pornographic was an extension of the raging intellectual and public debates over the definitions of the truly obscene that had been happening for over a decade, especially since the 1957 *Roth v. United States* decision.[45] As early as 1959, psychotherapists Drs. Phyllis and Eberhard Kronhausen had written a book that introduced what for them was a crucial distinction between the literary tradition of "erotic realism" and the more vulgar appeals of the "hardcore" pornographic text. The Kronhausens argued that erotic realism did more than just corporeally excite the senses and arouse the passions of its reader, as did pornography. For them, what distinguished the erotic realist text from the hardcore was its humanist interest in representing "reality" to the reader, depicting a "sexual life in the wider meaning" and as a manifestation of a "basic rebellion against the social suppression of elemental drives and needs common to all mankind."[46] Like the San Francisco festival judges' assessment, the rational-

ization of the difference between these two modes was that the erotic appealed to the mind and not exclusively to the body of its audience.

Although the San Francisco festival took on a tone that invoked artistic elevation and the privileging of the erotic as an aesthetic form within a logic of "sexual expressionism," the New York Erotic Film Festival established a more brash environ of mercantile reception, while still partaking in the language of erotica and art, no doubt seen as a benefit for legal protection, marketing purposes, and cultural credibility. Ken Gaul, in his public spokesmanship for the New York festival, cultivated a more crassly commercial sensibility—perhaps due to his affiliation with *Screw* magazine. By the second NYEFF, Gaul was claiming that "people want to see more hard-core pornography,"[47] and that "if someone wants to pretend there is something artistic and profound about a cock up an ass, what harm is there in it?"[48]

Such distinctions between the two festivals can also be borne out by the ways in which they promoted themselves in postevent venues. In a correspondence with Victor Faccinto, one of the awarded filmmakers at both festivals, Elster and Pickett sent a form letter soliciting images from his film to be submitted to a coffee table book of collected film stills commemorating the event. This was an idea suggested by Maurice Girodias, and the book was to have been published by Olympia Press.[49] The New York festival correspondence underlines the distinction, with Ken Gaul requesting still photos for a glossy pictorial spread to be published in *Penthouse* magazine. In the letter, Gaul calls *Penthouse* "an outstanding international magazine," noting that the magazine's circulation of close to one million, in the United States alone, might be useful for publicity.[50] The distinction between "high" and "low" cultural modes of circulation are conspicuous and certainly mark some of the philosophical and commercial orientations of the two festivals and their directors—seen in the difference between the parlor status of the objet d'art of the book, and the business-minded interest in a ten-page layout in a newsstand magazine. Notwithstanding their differences, the San Francisco and New York festivals shared a discourse of the erotic as a distinctly new, legitimating form of cinematic curation and reception.

Sites of Reception: Critics, Audiences, and Men in Blue

Despite the language of erotica, or the means of creating cultural distinction around sexual images in the public sphere, the New York Erotic Film Festival particularly was not exempt from the attentions of law enforcement. In both installments in 1971 and 1972 the New York festival

was graced with a series of police raids, in which officers confiscated a number of films, three of them festival prizewinners. Casting a diverse net, the seized films included Fred Baker's *Room Service 75* (1971), Al Di Lauro's stag film homage *Old Borrowed and Stag* (1971), gay porn filmmaker Arch Brown's *Tuesday* (1971), and John Knoop's experimental short *Norien Ten* (1971). The raids at the festival caused Dominic Sicilia to threaten to pull his film *Hot Parts* (1971), and Gaul and Sichel had to attend numerous legal proceedings to handle fines and charges.

The charges against all but one of the films were dropped, as Gaul mobilized film critics Judith Crist, Clive Barnes, and John Simon, along with the ACLU, to defend his cause. The exception was Arch Brown's *Tuesday*, which was the only gay male film at the festival. Although many of the films had hardcore sexual content, the homosexual orientation of Brown's film was perhaps the sticking point for the judge, who, according to *Screw*, claimed that "it was the worst film I've ever seen." The sex paper speculated that

> *Room Service 75* has straight hardcore sex, as well as a bestiality sequence involving two girls and a dog. But charges were dropped against the film, and against the two other flicks which only featured heterosexual acts. What is especially incongruous is that *Tuesday* is probably the most artistic and the most "socially redeeming" of the four films. It's a technically polished production and a fairly sensitive portrayal of homosexual lust. . . . The message seems to be that heterosexual hardcore is becoming so widely accepted that the police and courts are willing to look the other way, but homosexual films are still an easy target for arrest.[51]

Just as in the prior decade, when *Un chant d'amour* and Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* (1963) met with obdurate legal responses in the United States for their representations of queer, nonnormative sexual acts, Brown's film was faced with similar police recalcitrance within the context of the film festival, which was perhaps threateningly seen as a site of "mixed-use," or at least dangerously undefined, reception. Although gay erotica was beginning to be screened in all-male adult theaters in New York, such as the Park–Miller and the 55th Street Playhouse, the combination of gay and straight fare at the festival, and implicitly the mixed gay, straight and bisexual audiences, may have attracted heightened official scrutiny.[52]

The police gave no time to hair splitting over the ostensible quality of the erotic art represented by the films of the NYEFF, even though the festival had complied with a new no-pandering law that forbade excessive, lewd advertising on theater marquees or via film stills and newspaper

ads. Gaul and Sichel told *Variety* that the "police are up in arms precisely because the festival is not running at conventional hardcore sites, is spread around town and is attracting a broad audience spectrum and has been strongly promoted." The hardcore porn theater owners of New York City of course took notice while the "neophytes (we)re taking the beating" in their stead.[53] These obscenity complications likely provided more publicity for the festival. As mentioned earlier, Gaul and Sichel negotiated for distribution of a compilation program of festival highlights, allowing the afterlife of the festival to travel to film societies, universities, and art houses nationally in the following years.[54] The second annual NYEFF, reduced from one month to two weeks and limited to one theater, the Cinema Village, caused a "second annual crackdown" as theater employees were arrested for operating without a license. Gaul, undeterred, continued to send projectionists and ushers to staff the theater.[55]

The critical reception of these festivals was duly mixed, with *Variety* and the *New York Times* covering the details of the police raids, and the underground and left-of-center press often invoking the usual "I'm so bored" affectation that had become a common refrain in cultural insiders' accounts of watching the repetitive ministrations of porn. Jonas Mekas, in his review of the first NYEFF, suspected that the event was a "big capitalist swindle," suggesting that a better option would be a retrospective of stag films of the 1920s and 1930s at the Museum of Modern Art. About the festival films, he wrote:

> But boring they are, and bad they are! . . . I have figured it all out . . . An erotic movie is an arty porno movie intended to be shown at film festivals. The only change I'd consider making in this concise definition is perhaps changing the word "arty" with the word "artsy." . . . The (woman) I took forced me to walk out in the middle of the show, rightly . . . observing that she had had enough of "these male chauvinist" movies. And she didn't even belong to women's lib, at least not until this festival; she may by now.[56]

Mekas's remarks regarding changing the appellation of "arty" to "artsy," coming from one of the key architects of the New American Cinema, evinced derision for the aspirational logic of the festival, in which the festival's pretensions toward underground status were rendered flimsily transparent. Mekas's semantic quibbling mirrored the distinctions that the festival organizers were attempting to make between erotica, sexploitation, and pornography. His female companion's response, relegat-

ing the festival to the category of misogynist cultural production, again presaged the development of the feminist critique of the sexual liberationist position vis-à-vis pornography, a critique that emerged from women's involvement in the politics of the counterculture and the New Left.

Other critics were a bit more forgiving of the NYEFF. A reporter for *Newsday* gave a phenomenological account of his perceptual state after a few days at the festival, caught in the onslaught of the sexual excesses proffered on screen. Turning the reportorial lens around on himself, he wrote,

> I walk around the city with my hands in my coat pockets for fear that some post-hypnotic suggestion planted in my mind by a dirty movie will unwittingly move my hands into some act that will bring a nightstick down on my head, disgrace to my profession, and ignominy to the whole libertarian tradition by demonstrating conclusively that dirty movies should be censored because they induce criminal behavior. . . . There is nothing in moderation. There seems to be a pulsating rhythm to dirty movies—boredom followed by panic. Your brain contracts and expands involuntarily to the beat. . . . If you see enough of these movies, you'd better wear a name and address tag in your lapels so that you won't get lost when you get back out into the daylight.[57]

Attesting to a cultural logic spoken of earlier by another observer of the NYEFF, this vertiginous confessional confirms that the erotic festival format was indeed drawing in new audiences, who might have been otherwise reticent or leery of the "grind-house" theater setting.

The press roundup also included accounts of the always-compelling erotic film audience, which in this circumstance attracted attention for its "non-traditional" makeup and who could no longer be reduced to the caricature of "ancient onans."[58] These audiences were nevertheless subject to the same journalistic scrutiny as the porn audience for their behavioral quirks: "Despite the sexual razzle-dazzle on the screen, it's the audience that fascinates, because the audience—quivering or rigid, nervous or catatonically cool—continually betrays a squirmy humanity, and few of the films presented in the festival portrayed anything as authentic as what went on every night in the small theater."[59] In this, the festival was no different from its storefront theater neighbors in terms of the kinds of vocal public curiosities expressed regarding what audiences actually did in the screening space when watching adult films. Exhibiting a sociological indulgence in participant observation, this reviewer's

sense of enthrallment by the temperament of the festivalgoers, as mass audience, also represents a broader cultural shift in the perception and acceptance of the adult film as a legitimate occupation of one's leisure time.

Kenneth Turan viewed the traveling collection entitled *Best of the New York Erotic Film Festival* in Washington, DC, seeing the films as a program apart from the fascinations of the young audience or post-festival parties. Turan noted that "the Cerberus hosts a younger, more sophisticated crowd, too with-it and worldly and wise to be caught with its pants down at the déclassé downtown porno shows with the tired businessmen and down and outers." Like Mekas, Turan treated the films with a cool and disinterested eye, complaining that they were not erotically compelling enough, claiming that "the 11 shorts now showing to nearly capacity crowds at Cerberus 3 manage the trick of presenting the mechanics of sexual relations without evoking the feelings one expects. Undeniably arty, undeniably serious, they are no fun at all and end up about as erotic and dehumanized as computer dating" (figure 5.3). More impressed with the intensity of the downtown hardcore films, Turan claimed that the erotic fest favorites lacked "a vitality and an energy and a positive lust for sexuality which, however crude, is essential to successful erotic films, not to mention life itself."[60]

The first San Francisco festival was not exempt from a critique of its films, as Jerome Tarshis wrote a postmortem analysis of their shortcomings and made a number of suggestions for the planning of the festival for the upcoming year. Desiring "entries of the caliber of Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night* or the Japanese masterpiece *A Thousand Cranes*," Tarshis noted the absence of "feature length theatrical film from major producers" as well as a paucity of foreign films, despite a small number of international entries. Tarshis also observed a limitation that conflated underground aesthetic techniques with a symptomatic sexual discomfort:

> The films shown at the festival suggested to me that many filmmakers believe that hiding or blurring the outward appearances of the genital organs is art, while showing them clearly is porno. Undoubtedly, some of this runs parallel with the tendency toward abstraction in twentieth century painting and sculpture, but I think a lot of the abstraction was modesty—or shame—disguised as art . . . which leads me to some of the limitations of the underground film. People who dislike pornography complain that the characters have no depth and no history, and do not exist in any serious developed psychological or social context. They are

Fig. 5.3 The short film *Sport*, in which a young woman masturbates with her brother's sports equipment, was part of the traveling Best of the First Annual New York Erotic Film Festival collection.

> bodies, and they perform sexual acts in an unidentified bed. The same complaint can be lodged against most of the films in this festival, although their creators might be insulted at being compared to pornographers.[61]

In a conversation Tarshis had with Bruce Conner regarding these limitations, Conner justified some of these difficulties in relationship to the sorts of skills underground or experimental filmmakers possess, such as editing and cinematography, over and above writing, script development, and choreography. Invested in the development of a cinematic art that could capaciously include experimentation with erotic form, Tarshis in his conclusion, requested,

> If I may address myself to Santa Claus, in this year's festival I should like to see less embarrassment about sex on the part of the filmmakers. An orange can indeed be a symbol, friends, but so can a cunt. . . . As for superimposed images used as substitutes for thinking about Eros, and as cheap approaches to the sublime, we had enough of that the first time around.[62]

Seeking a means of adequately and creatively transporting eroticism from its fleshy, mercurial materiality onto the film screen, Tarshis's criti-

cisms seem an earnest mode of reception, a discursive space made possible by the institution of the erotic film festival, where the ideals of the cinephile and the sensualist could converge.

In the end, however, these festivals were as much about protecting a refashioned adult cinema, renamed "erotica," for its potentials for aesthetic innovation, as about distancing themselves from the presumed and perceived audience of a "lowbrow" pornography—heterosexual, working- and middle-class, middle-aged men. As some of the above descriptions of the erotic festivals bear out, the combination of straight- and gay-oriented films, the predominance of queer celebrity jurors such as Warhol, Woodlawn, Vidal, and so on, as well as the cultural status of the young and ambisexual audiences—dotted with not only bohemian young couples and women, but also gays, lesbians, and the transgendered—articulated a desire to create an alternative space for film consumption. This space could tap into a contemporaneous sexual openness and fluidity, linking it to an experiential marketplace of new cinematic sights and sensations.

The adult film had expanded its reach in the middle to late 1960s to the "date" and "couples" market, with the exhibition of crossover sexploitation hits by filmmakers such as Radley Metzger and Russ Meyer in "showcase" and art house theaters, and through the stateside importation of many risqué foreign features.[63] Recognizing the appeal of adult cinema for this demographic, the festivals addressed a younger, more gender diverse, and countercultural audience, full of, as one festival observer noted, "modish couples and twinkling figures of indeterminate sex."[64] Considering the post-Stonewall moment and the emergence of the gay rights movement, the erotic festivals capitalized on the shifting fields of reception around adult films at this time. Also taking into account that the first of the women's film festivals in the United States did not appear until 1972, and the first gay and lesbian film festival in San Francisco was held in 1976, the erotic festivals represented a moment before identity-based sexual politics had taken hold, and as shifts were occurring in the ways erotic consumers and their sexual identities were being constructed and addressed.[65] Although the social scientists of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography largely reinforced the reigning preconception that the viewers of adult films were primarily men, the emerging market of couples, women, gays, and lesbians could now also tentatively enter the fray through the urbane introductions offered at the erotic film festivals.[66] Therefore, the festivals, in their facilitation of polysexual sites for film consumption, predated the emergence of gay and lesbian and women's film festivals, providing a place where sexu-

ality, rather than identity, could be ratified and explored. Accounts of the constitution of the erotic festival audience give pause to the conventional wisdom that it was the landmark hardcore feature *Deep Throat* (1972) that opened up the possibility of adult film viewing to women and couples, and these accounts demand further nuance in the analysis of exhibition and reception of sexually oriented films in this period.[67]

But if the breakout popularity of *Deep Throat* on U.S screens in the summer of 1972 has been historically narrated as a benchmark of the changing tides of content and exhibition of adult films, it also can indicate some of the reasons for the decline and disappearance of the erotic film festivals shortly thereafter. Making their appearance during a brief period (roughly 1970–1972) between the outmoding of the softcore sexploitation feature and the attendant rise of "porno chic," the erotic festivals were soon eclipsed themselves, a significant footnote in the history of the exhibition of screen sex. Although the *Miller v. California* decision altered the legal and political climate, in trying to create roadblocks for adult films on the local level, the widespread availability and swelling fortunes of publicly exhibited hardcore seemed at this point incontrovertible.

Emblematic of the manifesto-laden spirit of the "long 1960s," a countercultural imperative inflected the presentation of the erotic film festivals in their desire to create a different space for the consumption of erotic images. With this also came an attempt to generate a "community of common interest" oriented around the development and identification of particular sexual tastes, multifarious as they were. Although brief in their institutional existence, and however ephemeral their traces remain today, what remains fascinating about the erotic film festivals for film history are the means through which they strove to present a sense of cultural refinement and sophistication around the screening of sexually explicit film, while also trafficking in the currency of utopian, sexual liberationist ideals to legitimate their events as a form of personal, political, and aesthetic enlightenment. Prior to the notorious multiblock lines to get in to see *Deep Throat*, or the "pornocopia" that would follow, the festivals and their founders had targeted a market for an optimistically novel erotic film experience, forged out of the urbane cinephile milieus of Amsterdam, San Francisco, and New York, and contingent on filmgoing as a social and collective act.

Notes

1. The International Erotic Film Festival in San Francisco was held in December 1970 and 1971, the New York Erotic Film Festival in November 1971 and 1972, and the Wet Dream Festival in Amsterdam in November 1970 and October 1971.
2. The scene for contemporary erotic film festivals is diverse; a partial list includes the Sin Cine New York Erotic Film Festival (launched in 2002); the Victoria Erotic Film and Arts Festival; the Canadian Festival of Forbidden Fruit; the O'Face Amateur Film Festival in Miami; Hot D'Or, held in Cannes, France; and the Xplicit British Film Festival. Gay and lesbian film festivals have long included programs devoted to erotic and explicitly sexual films. More recently, standalone gay erotic film festivals have emerged.
3. The first film festivals in Europe span back to the 1932 Venice Film Festival, and gained broader popularity in the postwar period with the development of festivals in Cannes (1946), Edinburgh (1947), and Berlin (1951). The first international film festival in the United States was held in Columbus, OH, in 1953, organized by the Columbus Film Council. The San Francisco International Film Festival began in 1957, sponsored by the San Francisco Film Society. Amos Vogel's Cinema 16 and other film societies also contributed to the expansion of audience tastes and preferences in its featuring of short, documentary, and experimental films.
4. "Steady on Fire: Erotic Film Fest Sets 4 Situations," *Variety*, October 20, 1971, 3, 26.
5. One account of the rising sexualization of the screen discussed the underground film alongside the sexploitation feature, noting that these two modes of production were often confused or associated with one another by an undiscriminating, "uninitiated" lay public. James Lithgow and Colin Heard, "Underground U.S.A. and the Sexploitation Market," *Films and Filming* 15, no. 11 (August 1969), 25.
6. First Annual New York Erotic Film Festival advertisement, *Village Voice*, October 21, 1971, 88.
7. First Annual New York Erotic Film Festival advertisement.
8. One can trace a long lineage of influential European films that altered U.S. film culture, from Gustav Machatý's *Ecstasy* (1933, Czechoslovakia) to Roberto Rossellini's *The Miracle* (1951, Italy) to Jean Genet's *Un chant d'amour* (1950, France) to Louis Malle's *The Lovers* (1958, France) to Vilgot Sjöman's *I Am Curious (Yellow)*, to name just a few. Evidence shows that there was also an erotic film festival in Frankfurt around this time, preceding the first NYEFF and close to the second Wet Dream, held in conjunction with the Frankfurt Book Fair. Hans Saaltink, "Amsterdam's 2nd Erotic Film Fest: 13 Jurors Promised, Three Appear," *Variety*, November 3, 1971, 25.
9. The full manifesto read: "When we are unafraid and free from possessiveness it will make little difference what kind of social organization we choose to

live under, because we will be open, kind and generous. It is sexual frustration, sexual envy, sexual fear, which permeates all our human relationships and which perverts them. The sexually liberated, the sexually tolerant and the sexually generous individuals are open tolerant and generous in all their activities. Therefore S.E.L.F. (Sexual Egalitarian and Libertarian Fraternity) wishes to encourage sexual freedom, sexual tolerance and sexual generosity." Cited in Robert Coover, "The First Annual Congress of the High Church of Hardcore," *Evergreen Review*, no. 89 (May 1971): 16.

10. Colin MacInness, a novelist reviewing the event for the British magazine the *New Society* suggested that the organizers were even more worried about the prominence of marijuana smoking at the festival, fearing that the combination of "sex *and* pot would be too much of a provocation." Colin MacInness, "Sex Marathon," *New Society* 16, no. 427 (December 5, 1970): 989; Al Goldstein, "The World's First Erotic Film Festival: A Behind the Scenes Look at Judging Porn," *Screw*, January 25, 1971, 4.
11. This unexpected conflict over Muehl's performance with the goose spurred a debate between Greer and Albie Thomas, who was one of the coordinators of the Wet Dream Festival, in the pages of the London newspaper *Friends* 22 (January 19, 1971).
12. The only exception that Greer makes is for Jean Genet's homoerotic prison classic, *Un chant d'amour*, which she rapturously praises in this essay. Germaine Greer, "The Wet Dream Film Festival," in *The Madwoman's Underclothes: Essays and Occasional Writings* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986), 58. For another discussion of the Wet Dream Festival through Greer's perspective, see David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution: An Unfettered History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2000), 221–224.
13. Events such as the April 1970 protest by female employees at Rossett's Grove Press—a bastion of both free speech liberalism and a literary locus for the tenets of the sexual revolution—would foreground the ways the rhetoric of sexual liberation was coming to be seen by aggrieved and growingly militant feminists as the exploitation of women, both in deeds and in images. For an account of these events see S. E. Gontarski, *The Grove Press Reader* (New York: Grove Press, 2001), xxv–xxix. Robin Morgan, the radical feminist who coined the phrase "pornography is the theory and rape is the practice," was one of the employees and union organizers working at Grove Press and was instrumental in the takeover of the Grove offices. See Robin Morgan, *Saturday's Child: A Memoir* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 276–318. See also Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs, *Re-Making Love: The Feminization of Sex* (New York: Anchor Books, 1986). David Allyn also discusses the involvement of the feminist and antiporn advocate Andrea Dworkin in the early days of the *SUCK* collective and magazine (Allyn, *Make Love, Not War*, 221).
14. Robert Greenfield, "Dutch Porn Film Fest: World Ends," *Rolling Stone*, November 21, 1971, 22.
15. Coover, "The First Annual Congress of the High Church of Hardcore," 16.

16. Betty Dodson, chap. 11, "Wet Dream Film Festival: A Sexual Vacation in Amsterdam," *My Romantic Love Wars: A Sexual Memoir* (New York: self-published, 2010), 130.
17. Haynes also stated that all the films that were submitted to the festival committee were shown at the festival. Interview with Jim Haynes by the author, April 5, 2006.
18. Greenfield, "Dutch Porn Film Fest: World Ends," 22.
19. Haynes qualified that not all of the festival organizers were necessarily cinephiles. Interview with Jim Haynes by the author, April 5, 2006.
20. *Adultery for Fun and Profit* was funded by the U.S. publisher of sex pulp novels Greenleaf Classics and was brought to the festival by editor Earl Kemp. Earl Kemp, "Acres of Nubile Flesh," and "Wet Dreams in Paradiso," *eI 15*, vol. 3, no. 4 (August 2004), accessed May 2, 2006, efanzines.com/EK/eI15/index.htm.
21. Greer, "The Wet Dream Film Festival," 59.
22. Editors of *SUCK*, "The Wet Dream Film Festival Continued: Suck Cries Foul," *Screw*, March 1, 1971, 22.
23. Editors of *SUCK*, "The Wet Dream Film Festival Continued."
24. Jerome Tarshis, "Eros and the Muses," *Evergreen Review*, no. 88 (April 1971): 18.
25. William Murray, "The Porn Capital of America," *New York Times Magazine*, January 3, 1971.
26. Tarshis, "Eros and the Muses," 78. Although his films featured hardcore sex, Pickett stated that they never included "external come shots," which were "undignified" and would turn off the targeted audience of couples and younger patrons. Quoted in William Rotsler, *Contemporary Erotic Cinema* (New York: Penthouse), 211.
27. Michael Goodwin, "The Fucking Film Festival," *Interview*, no. 12 (March 1971): 29.
28. Arthur Knight, "Step Inside Folks, to an Erotic Film Festival," *Los Angeles Times*, December 13, 1970, U32.
29. Goodwin, "The Fucking Film Festival," 29.
30. It was perhaps Gaul's presence in Amsterdam for the Wet Dream Festival as the photographer for *Screw* magazine that provided the impetus for his helming the first New York Erotic Film Festival. Gaul's photographic credits appear in the article by Al Goldstein on the Wet Dream. Goldstein, "The World's First Erotic Film Festival," 5.
31. Addison Verrill, "Erotic Prizes to Films Which Attracted Cops," *Variety*, December 15, 1971, 4.
32. For an account of New York underground cinema during the 1960s as a "site for community building," see the chapter "Finding Community in the 1960s: Underground Cinema and Sexual Politics," in Janet Staiger's *Perverse Spectators: The Practice of Film Reception* (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 125–160.
33. Ed Trent, "Report on the New York Erotic Film Festival," *Naked News*, no. 1 (1971): 4.
34. The feminist movement would later take this aesthetic/ideological distinc-

tion on as its own project, particularly in Gloria Steinem's dictum: "Pornography is about dominance. Erotica is about mutuality." See Steinem, "Erotica vs. Pornography," in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, 2nd ed. (New York: Owl Books, [1983] 1995).

35. International Erotic Film Festival Solicitation Letter to Victor Faccinto [n.d.], collection of the author.
36. Schaefer, "Gauging a Revolution: 16mm Film and the Rise of the Pornographic Feature," *Cinema Journal* 41, no. 3 (spring 2002): 15.
37. On Hollywood's battles over sexuality in films, hardcore and softcore, see Jon Lewis, *Hollywood v. Hardcore: How the Struggle over Censorship Saved the Modern Film Industry* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).
38. Kevin Thomas, "Current Censorship Status in Adult Film Market," *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1971, C22.
39. Goodwin, "The Fucking Film Festival," 29.
40. Knight, "Step Inside Folks, to an Erotic Film Festival," U32.
41. Historical research up to now has found only small connections between the world of sexually explicit adult films and suggestive sexploitation features and the works of the underground, avant-garde, and New American cinema. These were relatively distinct and ideologically divergent modes of production, generally cordoned off from each other by economic imperatives and designated audiences, as well as cultural pedigrees, even though the popular press, the lay public, and the law often bracketed these different modes together.
42. Trent, "Report on the New York Erotic Film Festival," 5.
43. Trent, "Report on the New York Erotic Film Festival."
44. Bruce Conner, Maurice Girodias, and Arthur Knight, "Statement of the Judges of the First International Erotic Film Festival" (1970), from the papers of Victor Faccinto.
45. *Roth v. United States*, 354 U.S. 476 (1957).
46. Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen, *Pornography and the Law: The Psychology of Erotic Realism and 'Hard Core' Pornography* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1959), 26–28.
47. David Black, "In Defense of Lobster Lust," *Boston Phoenix*, January 30, 1973, sec. 2, 3.
48. Ed McCormack, "New York Porn Film Fest," *Rolling Stone*, January 4, 1973, 18.
49. Lowell Pickett and Arlene Elster, First International Erotic Film Festival, letter to Victor Faccinto, December 28, 1970, from the papers of Victor Faccinto. The Wet Dream festival did publish a postfestival compendium: William Levy and Willem de Ridder, eds., *Wet Dreams: Films and Adventures* (Amsterdam: Joy Publications, 1973).
50. Ken Gaul, First Annual New York Erotic Film Festival, letter to Victor Faccinto, n.d., from the papers of Victor Faccinto.
51. "If This is Tuesday We Must Be in Jail," *Screw*, June 12, 1972, 15.
52. Jack Stevenson reports that by 1973 there were at least fifty urban theater venues showing exclusively gay porn, with twelve of them located in New York

City. See Jack Stevenson, "From the Bedroom to the Bijou: A Secret History of American Gay Sex Cinema," *Film Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (autumn 1997): 29.

53. Addison Verrill, "Fresh Raids, and More Expected," *Variety*, November 24, 1971, 7, 20.
54. *Best of the 2nd Annual New York Erotic Film Festival* screened at the Bijou Theater in 1973, a student-run film society at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. *Best of the 2nd Annual New York Erotic Film Festival* File, Bijou Theater Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City.
55. "Nothing Can Daunt Erotica," *Washington Post, Times Herald*, December 13, 1972, C3.
56. Jonas Mekas, "Movie Journal," *Village Voice*, November 18, 1971, 81.
57. Joseph Gelmis, "Movies: In An Erotic Daze," *Newsday*, November 19, 1971, n.p., from the papers of Victor Faccinto.
58. Black, "In Defense of Lobster Lust," 3. This attribution of "ancient onans" was certainly a dramatic, if easy, overstatement. Studies and general understandings of adult film audiences of the period had revealed primarily middle-aged male audiences.
59. Black, "In Defense of Lobster Lust," 3.
60. Kenneth Turan, "Erotic Films: Full Range from Amusing to Dull," *Washington Post, Times Herald*, August 10, 1972, B15. The festival evidently played in some cities before being picked up for regular distribution by Saliva Films in 1973.
61. Tarshis, "Eros and the Muses," 78.
62. Tarshis, "Eros and the Muses," 78. Tarshis is referring here to Karen Johnson's prizewinning film *Orange* (1970), which showed in extreme close-up the peeling and eating of an orange, the texture and handling of the fruit rendered an allegory of sexual contact.
63. Eric Schaefer discusses this transforming demographic in the context of his history of 16 mm adult film of the late 1960s and early 1970s, in "Gauging a Revolution."
64. Black, "In Defense of Lobster Lust," 3.
65. For her recollections on women's film festivals, see B. Ruby Rich, *Chick Flicks: Theories and Memories of the Women's Film Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 29–39.
66. Charles Winick, a researcher hired by the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography to study adult movie theater patrons, discovered that across multiple U.S. cities, the average makeup of this audience was 98 percent male, with "more females . . . observed in suburban locations than in downtown locations. All the females were with a male escort or a mixed gender group. Ninety percent of the men attended alone." President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, *Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), 130.
67. For an example of this common association of a broadening audience base with *Deep Throat*, see William Brigman, "Politics and the Pornography Wars," *Wide Angle* 19, no. 3 (1997): 153.