

# Social Club at Next Sex Nights

## Intro

For purposes of procreation, there already exist ways to do it that don't entail the coming together of bodies—for instance, bodies that are produced with the help of machines and algorithms. Clean sex, clinical intelligence and “error-free” creation. Human beings in the age of their technological reproducibility. The body as a numbers game. The individual as a scientific creation. Next Sex. If mankind takes genetic engineering to the max, will that mean the obligatory standardization of all human beings. Striving for perfection, eliminating “mistakes.” This may well be justified in order to fight incurable hereditary diseases, but where will it lead as far as diversity, divergence and development are concerned? In a social context, it remains an irrevocable fact that we dwell within our bodies, exist with them, think and feel with them. Strengths, weaknesses and “errors” are parts of our dissimilar personalities and preconditions for ongoing development. Perfection means stagnation.

And what of the pleasure of physical encounter, and the intense enjoyment of experience with one's own body or that of another? Who needs what for stimulation and sexual gratification? Many people's lust is satisfied by a simple ASCII porno site. Others visit a peepshow, watch a striptease, or go to an X-rated movie. Sex in the Internet has come to be the most convenient for consumers—at home, alone, just you and a hot babe, the man, the fantasy, the webcam. The safety of distance and, nevertheless, the power to make whatever you want come about. But still, only some of our senses are satiated—we need real human beings. Appearance, body language, sexual characteristics, exotica, or odors are decisive for the selection of a partner. Instincts inculcated in us by evolution also play a decisive role in our search for the greatest possible genetic diversity for optimal reproduction, and co-determine whom we choose ... and this at a time in which it is no longer even a matter of reproduction.

Not the least of the body's functions is to serve as a surface for the representation of cultural imprints and sociocultural statements. Language, movement, clothing, and behavior are expressions of cultural socialization. “The body is not that which exists, but rather a variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a descriptive practice in a cultural field”<sup>1</sup> ... The familiar and the strange, one's own and the other's, that which is in accordance with a culture's norms and that which transgresses them become visible in a body. Skin color and appearance activate the filing-cabinet archive of human perception. This gives rise to the categories of otherness/strangeness, which often trigger feelings of uneasiness in the human psyche. Latent fear which is not taken seriously but rather engenders the application of force, exclusion and rejection to disabuse people of their fears, and which politicians attempt to capitalize on as part of their own agenda.

## Social Club

On its premises Stadtwerkstatt creates an ambience that stimulates real encounter and enables it to become a communicative act—a social club; a meeting place; a venue for social interaction and communication featuring special events on four evenings that will provide entertainment while also bringing up issues.

The *Social Club* at Stadtwerkstatt deals with the body in its manifold variations and addresses it as an object of science, as an object of desire, as a cultural product, and as a body with its own “language.”

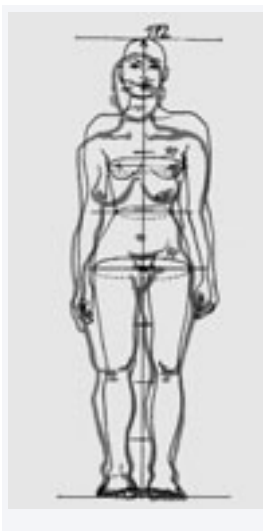
The *Social Club* will be presented in collaboration with MAIZ, an organization for female migrants. For this reason, we are particularly interested in addressing issues having to do with “being different,” the perception and cataloging of that which is foreign and strange, its charms and attractions as well as the fear it elicits. Dealing with the opposite sex and with other cultures is fraught with difficulties.

Racism, exclusion and the inability to express oneself in the *Social Club*. Who fits in and with what expectations? How do we deal with each other? Who is beautiful, what is natural and what is artificial, what role do we play in social life? Is exotic synonymous with erotic? Who is desired but undesirable? Which roles are assigned to female migrants in social life? Who occupies the hegemonic position of determining those roles? What is the connection between racism and sexism, between racist feelings and the perception of someone as exotic? The body is portrayed in its unique individuality as a representative of the sociocultural and economic conditions of a culture.

## The events

### 1. oi doçura!

About 85% of all sex workers in Austria come from abroad—women who, in the context of unequal economic development in different parts of the world, choose the path of migration as a survival strategy and a resistance mechanism. Most of them do not speak our language very fluently. What they have mastered, though, is the expressiveness of their body and the knowledge of the physical language of lust—a language that many of these women must acquire over the course of the migration process since their body is the only asset they can market. The body is professionalized in order for them to make their way, under the guise of “artist” or “dancer,” through a loophole in this country’s immigration regulations. These female migrants are frequently perceived only through their bodies; then, as sex workers or wives, they are available to satisfy the demands of sexual consumers. And they are here—often invisible, but often noticeable nonetheless.



### 2. Beauty Contest

36-24-36/17-24/5'8

What is beauty? How is beauty defined? For beauty contests, there are internationally established criteria as to what is considered beautiful. A woman’s measurements should be about 36”-24”-36”, she should be at least 5’8” and no older than 24. First and foremost, women just have to be beautiful; men should also be able to display certain capabilities or talents. In judging the face, beauty is indeed more difficult to determine with measurements. Is it the hue, the degree of slant of the eyes, or the distance between them? Western influence seems to be disseminating its ideal of beauty throughout the rest of the world, although that which is exotic also has its allure. The same yardstick is not used everywhere. The extent to which the ideal of beauty is quite relative can be measured on the basis of contest winners over the last 40 years. Thus, it comes as no surprise that in

the lean postwar years of the '50s and '60s, more full-figured, curvaceous gals were taking home all the beauty contest titles. Thus, would it not be a terrible mistake if one were to now "artificially produce" babies based on the current aesthetic ideal in order to then, in the future, produce a bunch of flawless beauties of the past! As in the case of the traits of different breeds of animals, it is conceivable in the case of human beings as well that primary emphasis will be placed on external characteristics. Sick, frail or blind animals are the consequence in the wake of overbreeding or misbreeding. Who, then, is to decide in the future what is beautiful, and which physical characteristics and personality traits are worth being passed on genetically?

The participants will be selected during the lead-in to the beauty contest. Ten men and ten women will be presented on websites, where preliminary judging will take place. During the competition, the contestants will be judged by a jury of experts according to a wide variety of criteria: everyday racism and ideals of beauty.

### 3 PeepShow & LatinParty



Quick satisfaction, voyeurism and distance. The peepshow is more realistic than a video or net-sex. The show, however, is staged, designed to satisfy above all the eyes and thus to stimulate the imagination. Just as in the case of videos, a clear dividing line is drawn; nevertheless, the eroticism that pervades the viewing booth is palpable. Physical proximity or contact is hardly possible. The scene is theatrical and the glass partition imparts something of a pantomime effect. The woman becomes a consumer good, a superficial object of desire for the satisfaction of the man's sexual lust. The better the show, the longer the voyeur stays on (and gets his rocks off). A drama is presented. Who is the sexy lady afterwards, when she slips out of her role? Where is she from, how does she live? There can still be surprises in store if we just get to know the person a little better—whether through language, gestures, or physical contact. Very often, though, she lives her "normal" life just as she does behind closed doors—the prisoner of a system of social pretense.

### 4 wo man

If one gives credence to the accounts of Roman chroniclers, then the Roman Empire was full of sexually ambiguous creatures, homosexuals and bisexuals, as well as highly respected eunuchs. Caligula wore women's clothing, and Nero conducted two homosexual parodies of marriage. In one, he castrated the boy Sporus, dressed him in women's clothes, went through a formal wedding with him, and treated him as a wife. In the second homosexual marriage, Nero took over the role of bride. Commodus appeared as Mercury and as a transvestite Hercules. Heliogabal's lifelong passion was his desire to be a woman. Wearing a wig, he was active as a prostitute in actual Roman bordellos.

Role-playing, homosexuality and transvestitism have always existed. Depending upon the moral codes of a particular day and age, sexual preferences could be lived out more or less openly. About 10% of all people are homosexual. Long-term investigations into

gender identity conducted by scholars in the field of feminist studies have shown that gender does not define itself via purely biological characteristics; rather, gender is instilled via social and cultural forces.

Sex is determined genetically—women have two X chromosomes, while men have an X and a Y. The Y chromosome prevents the development of female internal organs. However, if women have a functional Y chromosome, no female internal sex organs develop, and if there is an abnormality of the X chromosome, no external male sexual organs can form. Nature has come up with all possible variations: women in men's bodies, men in women's bodies, or a mixture of the two. How do these people feel? Does he/she think like a man or a woman? Or does this dual gender nature reveal a universal sensitivity beyond coded norms?

If women with female sex organs feel like men (or men as women), has nature then simply “made a mistake” solely with respect to physical gender? This “error” can be corrected in a great many different ways. One can clothe oneself, move, speak, etc. in “conformity to gender” as a member of the opposite sex. It is even simpler to just switch roles in the Internet. In order to completely correspond to the desired gender, almost every form of operation is possible to make this process of gender ascription physical as well. Due to the superficiality of our powers of observation, we usually judge only a person's appearance. And we are fascinated by the radically different nature of hermaphroditic/bisexual persons who, even to this day, often put their freakiness on display in a way that frequently resembles the sideshows of yesteryear.

Imagine, then, 10% of the population, all of whom come out of the closet, or how our everyday life is enriched by all the individuals who do not conform to sexual norms. In the Stadtwerkstatt.



**porn-o-mat™**  
<http://entertain.ment.org>

**a project of servus.at**

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Porno as the visionary motor of the development of the Internet, as a means upon which the acceptance of the medium as a mass medium is based. Already in the late '70s, when video recorders began to appear in almost every household, 75% of all prerecorded tapes sold contained material of a sexual nature. Sex is not only a technological factor in the Internet, it is also an economic one. In 1998, gross revenues of the net-sex biz were 20 times higher than all other content sectors put together. Of course, the situation is no longer so skewed; nevertheless, gross revenues of the net-sex biz still rank third place behind online trading and e-commerce, which includes computers,

recreational electronics, and other high-ticket items. Offers available in the Internet are taking money away from the “real” business of prostitution; since the Web has become widespread, declining revenues are evident. This is not just a local observation in Linz, but rather an international “problem” as well: *Porn sites undermine Paris brothels! ... Jean-Claude, doorman at the Pussy Club 187: “The Internet has been bad news for us, with all its pornography sites. I have lost at least 10 of my best customers—guys who used to pay 2000 francs for a girl. Now, they just have virtual sex on the Web.” (from: the register. February 14, 2000)*

Cybersex is seeking new tools and interfaces. The consumer finds in the secure and friendly confines of his home a comfortable distance to the object of his desires that must serve to provide the illusion of lust. The question that arises is how much of sex is played out in a person’s head? To what extent does one require a real opposite number for lust? What becomes of the body?

The porn-o-mat™ seeks to employ satire to bring about a critical confrontation with the fact of mass dissemination of pornography. What are the mechanisms that make pornographic content so very popular? Why, following the success of home video technology (VHS vs. Beta vs. Video2000), does it seem that the Internet has become the second medium that pornographic content has helped to achieve a mass-market breakthrough? These and other questions will be investigated. How? Users will be lured to the server with advertising and *spam* whose design appears identical to conventional porno aesthetics. There, all desires will purportedly be fulfilled, but that’s not the way things turn out ...

Concept: Stadtwerkstatt in Collaboration with MAIZ

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1 Judith Butler, *Das Unbehagen der Geschlechter*. Frankfurt 1993, p. 133.

