

firstdraft

Gallery 1

30 April 2023 – 14 May 2023

Wh0r3s 4eva

Brianna Curtis, Despo Debby, Hole Money, iwant2punishyou, Jacinta Larcombe, Juniper Flemming, Karmalæon, MV Pask AKA Queenie Bon Bon, Rosalina Ngala, Salem Serene x Nisa East, Tallulahsrash, Tatjana Barbarella Karpinski x Adelaide Asterix, Venus Lu\$t Vegas, Zahra Stardust
Curated by Katie Winten

Pleasers, body stockings, diamontes, impulse body spray. Condoms, dental dams, black gloves, dildos. Foot worship. Worship us. Sluts snacking. Sluts are bored. It's labour, it's hard, you're hard and we like it - we get money. We love money. We want it bad. Hookers against ankle monitors. Hookers near you want dead cops now! Hot, kinky pros want their passionate rights by night. Decriminalisation makes us wet! If you like steamy consensual encounters, help us realise our naughty fantasies today and abolish the state! While the system sets an example of our punishment, we speak to each other in symbols, in codes, through our perfect set of pointy acrylic nails. We spot each other in elevators, in hotels, carrying piles of towels. Our roller bags roar down city streets and we clock each other in all those spots where you know you can pick up a client. We create our own identity. Legacies of stripper-spite re-invented as High Art. Dumb baby. Mommy. Spin me. I'm waiting. Don't be shocked, be impressed. Take us seriously, we're fucking serious.

Wh0r3s 4eva is an exhibition of experimental art by sex workers and allies. Responding to the frequent erasure, censorship and deplatforming of sex workers, this exhibition celebrates the creativity, innovation and perseverance of sex workers who continue to make work both online and offline. *Wh0r3s 4eva* includes emerging and established artists who are showing work on instagram, in alleyways, in film festivals, in museums and galleries across the world, in zines and on Onlyfans.

Gallery 2

Act III: Love

(or what if this is love?)

Maissa Alameddine

Gallery 3

Public Art

Nick Breedon

Gallery 4

Far from heaven

Foong / McGrath

firstdraft
gadigal land
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nsw 2011
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Wh0r3s 4eva references sex workers who find secretive ways to communicate with community, writing in encrypted language to circumvent censorship. Sex workers continue to find inventive and creative ways of advertising, sharing information and staying safe as doors to digital connection shut in our faces on the internet we built.

This exhibition is about complicating the reductive sex worker narratives that dominate popular culture, and about challenging the pernicious victim/empowered binary. The exhibition does not ask sex workers to make an argument for their existence or legitimacy – sex workers are visual and performance artists, our stories expansive, astute, complicated, devastating, funny and tender.

Like sex workers, this exhibition contains multitudes and gives nothing away for free; its surface is intentionally intricate and slippery to impede any outsider who tries to pin down sex work as a singular, abridged narrative. It honours the kaleidoscopic verse of sex worker voices.

With thanks to:

Remi Todarello, EO Gill, Nadia Rebello, Josh Whiskey Overman, Nisa East, Lola Li, Aysha Verry

Made possible with support by:

Club Chrome, Show Us Ya Tips, Queenie Bon Bon, The Bearded Tit

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Jamie James and
Tatjana Barbarella Karpinski
x Adelaide Asterix

Despo Debby

Venus Lu\$t Vegas

Salem Serene x Nisa East

Jacinta Larcombe

Karmalaeon

Jacinta Larcombe

Juniper Flemming

Brianna Curtis

Tallulahsrash

MV pask AKA
Queenie Bon Bon

Jacinta Larcombe

Iwant2punsishyou

Zahra Stardust

Hole Money

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Katie Winten (curator)

Katie Winten is an emerging curator and interdisciplinary producer living and working on stolen Gadigal land. She is particularly interested in experimental performance and graduated from UNSW Art and Design in 2015 with a Master of Curating and Cultural Leadership. Katie has been in the sex industry for five years and has worked in stripping, peep show performing, full service sex work, online work and porn which informs her curatorial practice. Katie has worked in producing, curatorial and directorial roles at Sydney Opera House, the Powerhouse Museum, Performance Space, Carriageworks, FBi Radio, Firstdraft and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Katie is a queer Taurean femme and tries to work mainly on queer and sex worker led projects if she can help it. She has recently been doing cake sitting, splashing and stripping performances for queer parties and performance nights including Show us Ya Tips, Sad Dyke Sundays and Club Chrome.

Artworks

For sales enquiries, please email
katiawinten@gmail.com

Artwork details, artist biographies and artist statements following in alphabetical order.

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Brianna Curtis

Female Empowerment #1, 2023

acrylic on canvas

45 x 60cm

POA

Female Empowerment #2, 2023

acrylic on canvas

45 x 60cm

POA

Female Empowerment #3, 2023

acrylic on canvas

45 x 60cm

POA

Brianna Curtis is a 38 year old Arrernte transgender woman from Central Australia. She has been doing traditional contemporary Aboriginal art since she was young. Brianna has been in several exhibitions and has sold her art around the world. Briannas skin name is Ngala and her totem is Yerrampe (honeyant). Brianna grew up learning from her grandparents about Dreamtime and dreaming. She has been living in NSW for 9 years now and is an activist and advocate for First Nations transgender sex workers. Brianna loves sharing her culture through art and storytelling especially on canvas.

Female Empowerment is a series is about female empowerment using traditional Aboriginal signature and dot painting with Arrernte symbols.

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Despo Debby

7 Year Itch: Wheel of Payment, 2016

mixed media, collage, baggy of rocksalt, text illustration, cardboard, mount board, screws and foam
52 x 51 cm
NFS

Despo Debby is a queer Blak radical sexworker artist, performer and musician, based on Wurundjeri country in so-called "Australia". Part of the sex worker arts collective Debby Doesn't Do It For Free, Despo Debby's body of work explores their lived experiences of straddling intersecting marginalised identities with defiance, tenderness, critical insight and some cheeky lols. Despo's lived reality is that of being Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and English, a sexworker from private, brothel, online and street based workplaces, a recovering drug addict, a crip living with disabilities and mental illness, a nonbinary queer femmeboy. Despo Debby challenges whorephobic media tropes, negative stereotypes and disempowering abolitionist perspectives to scream from the rooftops: SEXWORK IS WORK!

For my Wheel Of Payment, I created an interactive work to celebrate my 7 years in sexwork.

Reflecting on my career so far, I noticed the serendipity of 7; within these seven years had emerged 7 distinct work personas, across the 7 workplace contexts I had explored. These workspaces each required something different of me, and brought me new skills and wisdom; From porn to stripping and peepshows, then online camming. Next I entered full service sexwork; beginning indoors with brothels, private incall and touring work, and then Street based sexwork.

Whilst the wheel seems to follow a set trajectory, in the five years since creating this work, my experience in the sex industry has involved dipping in and out of many of these work contexts, like so many other sexworkers. The flexibility of sexwork allows this freedom, and many sexworkers have fluid identities like myself; rather than a set notion of ourselves as "stripper", "porn performer", "streetworker" or "private worker". I am all of these rolled into one skilled and powerful worker.

I wanted to portray these many sexwork selves through the lens of a client. At each turn of the wheel of payment, an intimate portrayal of myself meets your gaze: Rory, Lynley, Sequin, Sequin Smut, Siren, Lunar and finally, as I returned full circle to again embrace my first work name- Rory.

The viewer spins the wheel of payment, represented by the two forms of payment I accept in my work; cash or gear.

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In doing so, you engage with my work personas similarly to a client at a peepshow (my favourite workplace so far), catching titillating glimpses of each persona, while I welcome your voyeurism.

Although the viewer may feel in control of the interaction; in witnessing my exposed body and choosing which image to remain on, in reality it is I who am the one with the power.

You see me only as I wish to be seen.

At no point can I be fully observed or taken in in my entirety. I always keep parts of my reality to myself, and I enjoy projecting these fantasies to capitalise on your desire.

We both leave the interaction fuller, and with more than when we started. "

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Hole Money

<https://scarletblue.com.au/escort/darcy-deviant>, 2023

digital collage on fabric, chains, eyelets, carabiners

105 cm x 163 cm

\$300

Triple threat entrepreneur (mouth, vagina, arsehole), Archibald Prize feature as 'Candy' (2018), someone made a bad doco about me ("@pole_money", 2018), Whore of the Year 1st place with SWOPNT (2019), best in show feet - self titled (2022), Whore of the Year 3rd place (2022), best eyes year 10 formal (2012), most dicks sucked at Lake Illawarra high (2014), platinum Shein customer.

"Post-SESTA/FOSTA sex workers have had to find innovative and elusive ways to navigate visibility and advertising in a highly watched, censored, and discriminating online world. One time my instagram post kept getting removed so we printed it out and stuck it in the bathroom of the local pub. These artworks reference the analogous creativity and artistry of phone sex ads of the 80's and 90's before home internet - and invite you to delve even further into the history of our peers who have been curbing the iron curtain over our humanity. An homage to the Ancient Greek prostitutes who left "follow me" imprinted into the dirt with their custom made sandals, or the hookers of Buenos Aries who wedge flyers into roller doors on downtown streets. We will always continue to be one step ahead."

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Iwant2punishyou

Feral, Fearless, 2023
Smooth Pearl, 310gsm
21 x 29.7 cm
\$40

Devouring Fishy, 2023
Smooth Pearl, 310gsm
42 x 59.4 cm
\$100

Greedy Gut, 2023
Smooth Pearl, 310gsm
21 x 29.7 cm
\$40

They Don't Build Statues of Critics, 2023
Smooth Pearl, 310gsm
21 x 29.7 cm
\$40

Uwant2punishme?, 2023
Smooth Pearl, 310gsm
21 x 29.7 cm
\$40

IWANT2PUNISHYOU (they/them/cancer rising) is a self taught artist based in Meanjin, who uses self portraiture, poetry and collage as a tool to process their emotions and lived experiences. They are heavily inspired by sex icons, stock photos, cringe culture and creatures.

"I pulled this photo series from my upcoming zine "SWINE". They were inspired by a difficult period when I lost all of my confidence and self esteem. Amongst a host of problems in my life, I was outed as a SW by a close friend to my family, creating an awkward strained relationship. Their perception of me was not positive and made me feel alienated, alone and other. Healing from that experience I really wanted to materialize my mindscape at that time. Angry, Disgraced and Feral. Creating these concepts and characters helped me come back to myself and find pride in who I am and what I want to stand for in this life."

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Jacinta Larcombe

Dumb Baby, 2022

acrylic on canvas

46 x 61 cm

\$200

The Sacrifice, 2022

acrylic on canvas

40 x 50 cm

\$200

Book of Cunt, 2021

acrylic on canvas

90 x 60 cm

\$350

The Devil's Advocate, 2020

paper mache, acrylic paint, wire and yarn

46 x 33 cm

\$350

Mommy, 2022

acrylic on canvas

36 x 49 cm

\$200

Jacinta Larcombe is a live art maker, visual artist and Drag Queen living and working on the lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people in Boorloo/Perth. Larcombe's bimbofication practice critically engages sex work, the body politic, neurodivergence and mental Health.

"This selection of work is a continuation of reflections on personal experience as a sex worker, as a way of processing interactions of the body and spirit. My bimbofication practice celebrates and critically-engages/enrages against mainstream perceptions of sex work, consent, gendered dynamics, neurodivergence and mental health. My artform-promiscuous approach encompasses conversations around the rituals of sex work, client interactivity, battling with power dynamics, fantasies and loneliness. This expression utilises my babygirl/Kidcore/Whorecore aesthetic and puts my body to work to break down binaries of the Body politic."

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Juniper Flemming

Predatory Prostitute, 2018

single channel video

26 minutes 33 seconds

NFS

Juniper Fleming is an artist currently living in Detroit. She received her BFA from the School of Visual Arts in 2014. She was awarded a Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) Fellowship in 2013. In 2016, she also dipped her toes in theater, directing, producing, and performing in an all sex worker revival of Mae West's play, *Sex*, at Dixon Place Theater in NYC.

Her film, *Predatory Prostitute* has been screened all over the world, and most recently shown at the MOMA PS1 Sex Workers' Festival of Resistance March 2018. Her work from the series Reclamation and (Dis)atonement is currently being shown at Leslie Lohman Museum, in the show, ON OUR BACKS: The Revolutionary Art of Queer Sex Work.

The film, *Predatory Prostitute* is rooted in the compelling relationships sex workers have, both directly and indirectly, to the legacy of Aileen Wuornos. Demonized as an inverted prostitute serial killer or pitied as a child/animal-minded victim, her portrait hangs heavy.

The term "predatory prostitute" was coined by John Tanner- the Florida state attorney who prosecuted Aileen Wuornos in 1992. A lesbian prostitute sentenced to death six times for seven murders, though she claimed self-defense. The media, the court, and the public condemned Wuornos with vigor. Told how dare she kill in the name of her own life. She refused to be a victim, and it was for that she had to die. In the film, I have used found footage to invert the common narratives around Aileen, creating an alternative framework by which we can view her actions and ourselves.

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Karmalæon

Fruits of Labour, 2018

mixed media

41.5 x 56 cm

\$800

Karma is a queer, Asian, neurodivergent artist and sex worker living on Gadigal land. They are a part of sex worker artist collective Debby Doesn't Do It For Free and have performed with DEiFY, Club Chrome and The Intro Room, a sex worker storytelling event. Their creative practice spans photography, visual arts, writing and movement, drawing from the various intersections of their identity to explore themes of physicality, queerness, alienation, and connection.

Fruits of Labour was created during a period of intense burnout, from fashion magazines found in the "girls room" at the brothel. Deconstructing notions of how "female" bodies are consumed, it explores bodily autonomy amidst experiences of gender dysphoria, chronic illness and grappling with the volumes of unseen emotional labour beyond the physicality of sex work. This work is about finding ways to embody our various selves and learning how to carve out space to care for all of them, while working in whatever ways we can to survive.

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MV Pask AKA Queenie Bon Bon

Solidarity Pleasure - Poster, 2023

print on silk on satin cloth

29.7 x 42 cm

\$50

What We Do Is Secret - Fantasy Nails, 2023

cardboard, stickers, false nails

14 x 6.8 cm

Set of 4 \$50 each

Mv pask aka Queenie Bon Bon is a writer, performance artist and sex worker living and working in Narrm/melbourne. Their work focuses on their lived experience of chronic illness, work and bodies. They have created five solo shows – which have toured in Australia, Europe and North America. Their work has been featured on locanto, backpage and in Maximum Rock and Roll, Runway Journal, Feminist Writers festival online and The Lifted Brow. They are a member of Australian sex worker art collective Debby Doesn't Do It For Free. Throughout covid they ran the Intro Room, an online sex worker story night and fundraiser event. In 2020 they were the recipient of Firstdraft's Writers Program and in 2021 they released their first chap book 'the body is its own language'.

"My working is about remembering ways to be in the world, how we share information, connections and understanding. My work is about honouring movement as a form of communal healing, as part of our embodied transformation and as a tool in binding ourselves together. Rhythm is a dancer, but so are the workers and organisers.

Once I would have said my work was just the activity I did at my job. The work of work feels ever expanding. I visit an old friend who reminds me that for years I would stain the sheets orange with my spray tan and leave a trail of fake nails. It was my residue from work.

Our work leaks out of work, and becomes debriefings and meeting and organising and stretching and planning and doubles and dreaming. Our work is everywhere. I want my energy to be used to divest in work and invest in our collective liberation."

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Rosalina Ngala

Silence is Violence! #1, 2023

acrylic on canvas

45 x 60 cm

\$550

Silence is Violence! #2, 2023

acrylic on canvas

45 x 60 cm

\$550

Silence is Violence! #3, 2023

acrylic on canvas

45 x 60 cm

\$550

Rosalina Ngala is an Aboriginal Sistergirl sex worker artist from Central Australia. Rosalina has been a longtime advocate for Indigenous, trans and sex worker rights and was one of the founders of Sisters and Brothers Northern Territory. Rosalina is the Chair of the Scarlet Alliance National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group and was on the Scarlet Alliance Executive Committee between 2017 to 2019. In 2019, Rosalina was voted by sex workers around Australia as the Whore of the Year and won the award in recognition of her advocacy, in particular on raising the visibility of Aboriginal and trans sex workers. Rosalina has been painting traditional Aboriginal artworks since she was 8 years old, learning through her grandparents, aunties and uncles. Rosalina has a twin sister Bree, who is also a recognised artist and advocate. She has had the opportunity to exhibit her artwork in galleries in Australia and abroad. Rosalina also had the opportunity to exhibit her artwork in New York's Pop Up Art festival which showcased a painting she did about supporting sex worker rights.

"My paintings are about how silence can be violence against sex workers especially those who come under the rainbow umbrella and are people of colour. If you have the chance to speak up when you see a sex worker being attacked then you should."

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Salem Serene x Nisa East

Repetitive Flesh, 2023

single channel video

4 minutes 21 seconds

POA

Salem Serene

Salem is a queer dancer and sex worker of Sri Lankan/Indian heritage, currently residing in Eora. They have been in the sex industry coming up to three years. Salem dances to unwind and to find some respite from their work. Having danced in various contexts including the club, queer events, galleries and museums, their style is highly influenced by dynamic sensuality, a fusion of soft contemporary and the strip club to create unconventional pole dance movement.

Nisa East

Nisa East is an award winning cinematographer & documentarian from so-called Australia. Her work spans doc features, editorial journalism, narrative shorts, branded commercial work and experimental art & music videos. She has built a career shooting non-fiction that transcends traditional conventions, and has shot for notable directors Elaine McMillion Sheldon, Maya Newell & Garrett Bradley - whose most recent film 'Time' was nominated for a 2021 Academy Award. As a cinematographer Nisa's work has screened at international film festivals including Sundance, Hot Docs and New Orleans Film Festivals, and appeared in the 2019 Whitney Biennial in NYC. She has also shot for Solange Knowles, The Guardian US, The Economist, PBS Frontline, SBS, The Pina Bausch Foundation & American Theatre Wing. With a background in visual ethnography and experimental film, her visual language draws from dance, music, theatre, activism – all mediums of expression. As an auteur, she is interested in exploring the spaces between objective reality and poetic truth.

The dancing body is a volume you can't speak over. You should value the privilege of knowing there's nothing you can say. Salem Serene and Nina East's work Repetitive Flesh explores the polyphony & dissonance of erotic labour through dance. Through diligent and repetitive practice the dancer finds constructed and discovered versions of themselves: strong, complicated, soft, hot, RICH, gentle, flirty, TIRED, snacky, sore, self-assured, nurtured. Mundane & transcendent narratives coexist in the dancer.

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(or what if this is love?)

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Gallery 1

30 April 2023 – 14 May 2023

Wh0r3s 4eva

Curated by Katie Winten

Tallulahsrash

Stomping Pigs #1, 2022

giclée art print on 100% cotton rag
archival paper, printed with archival inks

21 x 29.7 cm

\$300

Stomping Pigs #3, 2022

giclée art print on 100% cotton rag
archival paper, printed with archival inks

21 x 29.7 cm

\$300

Stomping Pigs #2, 2022

giclée art print on 100% cotton rag
archival paper, printed with archival inks

21 x 29.7 cm

\$300

Stomping Pigs #4, 2022

giclée art print on 100% cotton rag
archival paper, printed with archival inks

21 x 29.7 cm

\$300

Sydney based artist Tallulahsrash (she/they/he) is a proud Gomeri and Arab self-trained artist with a strong interest in the intersection between the body and the internet. Her work exists as an exploration of feminine identity and sexuality in a world full of hyper-saturated images of sexuality and violence.

Tallulah likes to explore the juxtaposition of violent imagery and religious symbolism with the feminine body demanding the audience confront the established and entrenched male gaze. Tallulah works with a multitude of different mediums for her works, from painting to digital art, dressmaking to readymade. Their digital works include drawings of anti-colonial, anti-police and pro sex work agendas.

The *Stomping Pigs* collection from 2022 was a collaboration between Tallulah and Decolonise Sex Work for a fundraiser. The collection consists of different skin toned feet in Pleaser heels, crushing a police car beneath them. The criminalisation of sex work greatly affects the community, and police are known to entrap sex workers and unfairly arrest and charge them. This collection is a pro sex work, anti-police piece of work. 1312.

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Jamie James and Tatjana Barbarella Karpinski x Adelaide Asterix

*Tatjana Barbarella Karpinski at cLUB
bENT Performance Space #1, 1998*
giclée art print on 100% kodak lustre
archival paper, printed with archival inks
29.7 x 42 cm
\$300

*Tatjana Barbarella Karpinski at cLUB
bENT Performance Space #3, 1998*
giclée art print on 100% kodak lustre
archival paper, printed with archival inks
29.7 x 42 cm
\$300

*Tatjana Barbarella Karpinski at cLUB
bENT Performance Space #2, 1998*
giclée art print on 100% kodak lustre
archival paper, printed with archival inks
29.7 x 42 cm
NFS

*Tatjana Barbarella Karpinski at cLUB
bENT Performance Space #4, 1998*
giclée art print on 100% kodak lustre
archival paper, printed with archival inks
29.7 x 42 cm
NFS

Tatjana Barbarella Karpinski is a performance artist, exotic dancer and filmmaker. She has directed many short films, including *Liquor, Guns and Ammo* (1997) exploring gender fluidity and diabolical romantic combinations. Sex work, love and war were thematic of her next film, *Night Trade* (2001), which travelled internationally in Queer and documentary festivals. *Single, Sexy, Bilingual* (2007) screened at Cannes Short Film Corner.

Adelaide Asterix is an International Transsexual Goddess with 7 years experience across many parts of the industry. As an artist she has worked across mediums including film, sculpture, text and performance, often in collaboration. Her work has been shown at Autoitalia, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Verge, Incinerator gallery, Visual Bulk, NAS Galleries and the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art. In 2019 she published a poetry book *The Tower* with IRL press and her writing has also featured in *Minority Report*, *un Magazine*, *Overland*, *The Dutch Journal of Gender Studies* and *Volupté: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Decadent Studies*. Her day job informs her night job and vice versa and vice versa.

Decadent divas, trash-temptresses and Intergenerational exiles, Tatjana Barbarella Karoinisk and Ainslie Templeton, revisit a collaboration based on shared experiences as performance artists/whores/hustlers. The spectacle of gold chains of nineties queer cLUB bENT comes out of the closet into a contemporary

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space. Rarely-seen erotic archival footage (courtesy of Wicked Women, Dahlia Shelif, Jane Stewart and Meredith Williams) is put under the spotlight of a new Era. Beauty, love and the ravages of time allow the artists to penetrate lenses and emerge victorious in self-implicating bondage.

The whore-stripped-bare shines with redolent recollections, the fluff girl of once lesbian porno, a plaything of other's fantasies, red light/blue light, reveals reality bites and unpacks whorephobia found in mainstream as well as sacred queer spaces. Collaborations between generations create new meanings that complicate, distress and caress. Tarnished sweatbox black vinyl from stripper halcyon days, mingles with the contemporary moment, as Karpinski and Templeton flamboyantly, irreverently, harmonise new whore-meanings.

Silenced for too long, the Fluff Girl bites: "I am more than your sapphic-porno-cum-splattered infamy. We create our own identity. Legacies of stripper-spite re-invented as High Art. I am the ghost of Jean Genet come down for some gender fuck in the body of a femme starlet. I reveal twisted truths inside the playgirl mansions. Bunny babes/fluff girls tell all. I wrestle back the narrative, curvy, naked and flabby. My wobbly bits covered with vermillion jelly, I slide and connect whorephobia over time. I slide across mainstream stigmatic spaces. I free myself from your narrative of wallpaper porn. I feel. I desire. I define. Liberty in restraint wriggles my voluptuous flesh free at last."

Within the exhibition space, TBK's retro glam is represented by photos from 1998 by Jamie James of the 2023 The Party exhibition, as do the images by Damon Young of chanteuse zoned out on chaise lounge. The then-twenties diva speaks through the bars of her sister and cipher, tawdry, tardy and always tainted.

Wh0r3s 4eva is an exhibition of experimental art by sex workers, curated by a sex worker. This joint performance and exhibition are a response to erasure and censorship of sex workers over generations of time. Wh0r3s 4eva celebrates the creativity, innovation and perseverance of sex workers. The temptress gives more lip, hotpink, sultry, nuanced: "I complicate the reductive sex worker narratives that dominate like a hellish mistress. I create slippery surfaces for any outsider who tries to pin down sex work as a singular narrative. I take you for a walk in my bling stripper heels. You fall. I am an\ angel bear in the clouds and a bitch in the sheets. I am complicated."

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Venus Lu\$t Vegas

Mistress Adelaide & Daddy, Colour 35mm, 2018

giclée art print on 100% kodak lustre

archival paper, printed with archival inks

29.7 x 42 cm

NFS

Honey's heels, B&W 35mm, 2016

Giclée art print on 100% kodak lustre archival paper, printed with archival inks

29.7 x 42 cm

\$350

Venus is queer sex worker, artist, peer educator and mystic from Eora (Sydney). Their practice explores the intimacy and magic of the mundane. Recent performances include Day for Night (2022) at Carriageworks and Queer Art After Hours (2022) at AGNSW. Venus's photography was exhibited at the 22nd International AIDS conference in Amsterdam (2018) by the sex worker art collective Debby Doesn't Do It For Free.

"My experimentations with film photography are a way for me to collaborate with my friends, whether it's through intimate portraits or playful scenes. Each moment captured celebrates the unique intimacies I share with the people involved, like vignettes of our friendships that are laced with inside jokes and fragmented memories. I also like to draw on sex work aesthetics that are relevant to my experience as a way to highlight the beauty of sex worker friendships that are bound by both work and intimacy."

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Zahra Stardust

Beautiful Monotony, 2015

single channel video

17 minutes 25 seconds

POA

Produced, directed and written by Zahra Stardust

Camera by Mister T

Edited by Zahra Stardust and Mister T

Starring: Zahra Stardust, Berenice Humphrey, Sophia St Clair, Mister T, Adonis & Anonymous

Zahra Stardust is a former Penthouse Pet, Hustler Honey, Feminist Porn Awards Heartthrob and award-winning striptease artist, and has toured Sweden, Australia, Japan, Germany, Canada and New Zealand as a pole dance instructor, trapeze artist and sex educator.

Beautiful Monotony reflects the intimate encounters shared between workers and customers within the privacy of a lap dance room. The film positions striptease as work, depicting the repetitive and monotonous aspects of erotic labour. The performer executes the same tricks, variations and combinations over and over in a way that becomes routine, formulaic and familiar to the viewer, whilst doing everyday activities – stretching muscles, taping up boots, changing tampons, eating dinner, texting.

However the footage also reflects diverse customers, who are shy, awkward, poised and raucous. The dancer signs magazines, swaps shoes, compares muscles, shares skills and has arm wrestles – whilst accepting phone numbers, giggling and even kissing a customer. In this sense, the lap dance room is situated as a unique space that fosters intimacies between strangers, and the sex industry positioned as a place in which queer desires manifest. The film is a piece of endurance art – it was filmed in one cut over a period of three hours, and portrays erotic labour as specifically skilled work. The stamina, flexibility and strength involved are evident, as well as moments of negotiation, discussion and emotional labour.

The film aims to problematise divides between what is considered performative and authentic, real and fake, pleasure and work. The dancer's work is clearly work, but she also derives 'real' sexual pleasure from the experience. She exists within a certain time/place/persona, but she is also 'real' – up close and personal, customers can see her scars, smell her sweat and hear her voice.

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