„From the Museum of the Passions“

Insights to a Workshop-Project

The exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935) and Naomi Wilzig (1934-2015). In his Berlin Institute for Sexology (1919-1933), Magnus Hirschfeld opened the first museum in the world dedicated to the history of sexuality, which attracted visitors from around the world. Naomi Wilzig began collecting erotic art and quotidian erotic objects in the 1980s, and eventually amassed one of the largest collections in the world. She presented this collection in the renowned World Erotic Art Museum in Miami Beach (2005-2015).

Magnus Hirschfeld and Naomi Wilzig were united by their passion for collecting. Each one had a mission. The sexologist wanted to contribute to the enlightenment of all things regarding 'the sexual' in medicine, history, and culture. The patron of the arts campaigned for the tolerance and acceptance of sexual diversity, which she understood to be a human right and a part of the cultural inheritance of humanity. Hirschfeld's collection was lost following the attacks on his institute by the Nazis on May 6th 1933, in which the institute was looted and seriously damaged. Naomi Wilzig's collection, which she offered as a donation to the Humboldt University, would be able to partially replace this loss.

Her collection offers not only a unique pool of material with which to conduct research into the cultural history of sexuality, but also would serve as a foundation for the planned 'Museum of the Passions', the thematic focus of which extends far beyond love and desire and which includes all passions Aristotle mentioned in his Nikomachean Ethics.

This exhibition, which has been curated by doctorate students at the Humboldt University, presents material from both collections. It has been designed as a workshop for the comparative analysis of the collections and as a test-space for the future 'Museum of the Passions'.

The Workshop

Graduate students from the Humboldt University have selected images of objects from the destroyed collection of Magnus Hirschfeld and objects from Naomi Wilzig's collection to set them in relation to, and bring them into thematic connections with one another. The end product is a test-space in which the objects from both collections collide in their respective thematic groupings, revealing commonalities, illustrating contradictions, and offering amusement in the process. On the one hand, it is made clear to what point the collections of the WEAM are similar to those of Magnus Hirschfeld, while at the same time showing how the WEAM's collections go beyond them and extend into the present day.

Magnus Hirschfeld published photos of the objects of the collection of the Berlin Institute for Sexology in various publications, including the illustrated volume of his *Geschlechtskunde* (1930, vol.4), the journal that he co-edited, *Die Aufklärung*, in which an entire chapter was dedicated to leg fetishism (1930), and the *Bilderlexikon der Erotik* ('Illustrated Encyclopedia of Erotica'), which was published by the Viennese Instiute for Sexology in 1930.

The objects from the *World Erotic Art Museum* were taken from the five catalogues of the museum published by Naomi Wilzig, a CD from the museum with photographs of the objects, as well as from private photographs of the collection in the museum.

The Projects

Locating Sexuality (Ina Linge)

The Hidden Erotic in Books (Japhet Johnstone)

The Glance under the Dress (Janin Afken)

Foot and Shoe Fetishism (Andreas Pretzel)

Supplements (Benedikt Wolf)

Sex Machines (Japhet Johnstone)

Project 1: Locating Sexuality (Ina Linge)

LOVE IN ALL PRICE BRACKETS.
LOVE FOR EVERY TASTE.
LOVE AU NATUREL OR ROUGED UP.
LOVE FOR EVERY AGE.
LOVE FOR EVERY FAITH.

These are the words used by the Dutch author Til Brugmann in 1931 to describe the imaginary 'Department Store of Love', which alludes to Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexology. The Institute, founded in 1919 in Berlin's Tiergarten district, also became well known for its archive and as a museum space. Patients, scientists and international celebrities made their way into and out of the building, from the French winner of the Nobel prize for Literature André Gide, up to the British author Christopher Isherwood, a figurehead of the lesbian and gay movement.

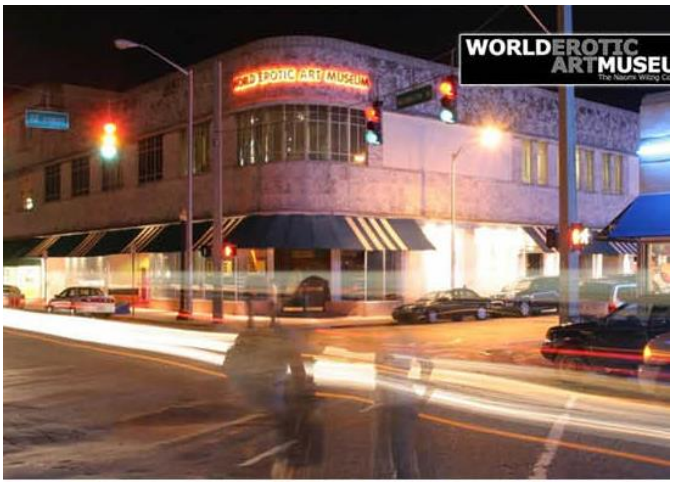
As Brugman suggests, Hirschfeld's Institute also received its fair share of ridicule. What was it meant to be? An archive for questionnaires that pose questions such as, "have you ever been sexually aroused by animals?" While Brugman looked at the institute with good-natured amusement, there were far more negative reactions from other quarters. As Rainer Herrn points out, in 1920 a police appraiser visited the institute in order to 'locate any possibly suspicious things' - and instantly found what he was looking for. In his opinion, 'the elegant décor of the rooms already makes it clear that science and sober medical practice are not the things being pursued here.'

What goes on behind the façade of an institution dedicated to the research of sexuality? The public perception of the institute as a sexualised space prompts association with other 'institutions' in which sexuality played a central role, such as the brothel. Engravings on the 'black bible' (*Bible Noir*) show a similar blurring of lines between respectable bourgeois exterior and perverse interior: the same blurring of distinctions that provided the material for the police appraiser's accusation against the institute. When looked at from the outside, it may be possible to integrate the institute and the brothel in the image of the city; but in the midst of the bourgeois decor of the interior, replete with upholstered chairs, houseplants, and framed portraits, there are women and men lounging about with partners of the same sex, and some even lolling about with animals. This makes both bourgeois life and the bourgeois image of the city appear perverse and disgraceful. This was exactly what the ap-

praiser seemed to suspect when he looked at Hirschfeld's institute, which was trying to unite sexuality and science in the heart of Berlin.

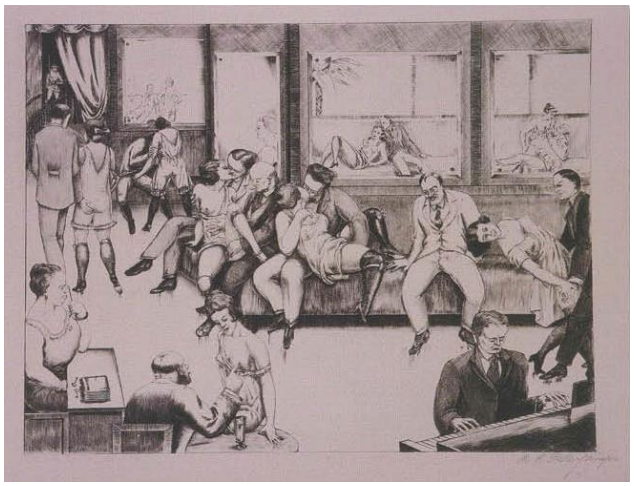
Naomi Wilzig opened her 'World Erotic Art Museum' in 2005, almost 90 years after Hirschfeld's Institute. Just as it was difficult for Hirschfeld, opening a museum of erotica in a city in the heart of conservative Florida could not have been a light undertaking for her. Now, on the 80th anniversary of Magnus Hirschfeld's death, objects from her collection are coming to Berlin for the first time. In this way we see the beginning of a dialogue between two museums that sought to give both a critical and an aesthetic space to sexuality.

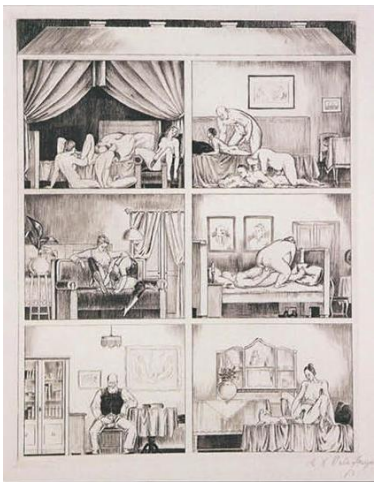
The Museums:



Ill. 1: Hirschfeld's *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* in Berlin (1919-1933)
Ill. 2: The *World Erotic Art Museum* in Miami Beach (since 2005)

Views into the *Bible Noir*:





Ill. 3 und 4: R. L. Dechamps, *Bordello*, France, c. 1921, engraving/ink, from a portfolio of ten prints (WEAM)

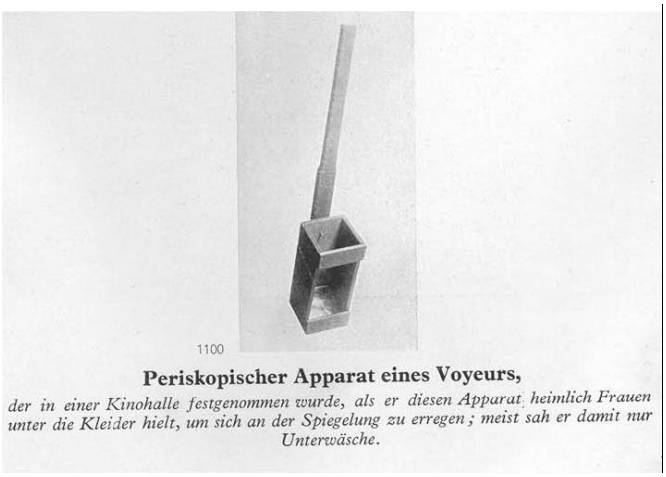
Project 2: The Hidden Erotic in Books (Japhet Johnstone)

The relationship between books and the erotic is likely as old as the medium of the book itself, and not only in terms of the combination of medium and content. The erotic finds it way into books in various forms. Not only can books tell erotic stories, but they can also, as works of non-fiction, promise to enlighten their readers on the topic of sexuality and can include explicit, erotically charged details in the process. The erotic is often present in a concealed form. Such is the case in what was considered the foundational work of sexology in Hirschfeld's era, namely Krafft-Ebing's Psychopathia Sexualis: the most shocking passages are written in Latin to hide them from the lay public, thereby making them only accessible to an educated readership. Hirschfeld's own journal, the Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen ("Yearbook for Sexual Intermediaries") was not only a central part of the early homosexual emancipation movement, but also provided its readers with a great number of images - images that certainly did not only circulate in political or scientific circles. In this way, the erotic is decked over in scientific garb in order to evade censorship. Yet there are other, far more literal ways to conceal erotic elements in books. Fore-edge painting, a technique with roots in the Middle Ages and which had already come into fashion in the 18th century, presents another way of doing so, one which was still gladly used around 1900.

Ill.1 and 2: Book, leather bound, with a hidden fore-edge painting that shows a sultan with his harem, England, ca. 1900 (WEAM)

Project 3: The Glance under the Dress (Janin Afken)

A popular subject in Western art is the covering up and the exposure of the naked bodies of women*. The secret, forbidden, lascivious gaze, on the look out for nakedness where it can be found, is a typical motif. Artists often play around with a partial covering up of the body in an attempt to stimulate curiosity and desire, and to generate erotic tension: the desired hidden object becomes part of a wishful fantasy and a wish-projection. The skirt, which functions like a curtain, is particularly well suited to covering up that which is desired and simultaneously repeatedly revealing that which is hidden, if only momentarily, partially, and by chance. In this way, desire is kept in good spirits. The actual wish-fulfilment, the satisfaction of the gaze, is constantly delayed by the presence of the skirt. But that delay provides ample space within which fantasy and desire can develop. Since the late Middle Ages, the skirt has primarily been seen as a piece of female clothing, with only a small number of exceptions that are worn by men, such as the Scottish kilt. In the 18th and 19th centuries, a style of dress that covered the entire body was expected of 'virtuous' and 'moral' wives. Conversely, 'women of easy virtue' used the skirt as a tool of seduction and flirtation. The exhibits on display tend to reinforce rather than to question traditional gender roles: the skirt-wearing women depicted here are the objects of the desiring gaze of the spectator, and are thereby denied the position of subject.



Ill. 1: Magnus Hirschfeld, Geschlechtskunde (Stuttgart 1930), Vol. 4, p. 735.
Ill. 2: F. X. Winterhalter, Lola Montez or the treacherous reflection in the water, sketch, watercolour, ca. 1840 (WEAM)

Project 4: Foot and Shoe Fetishism (Andreas Pretzel)

> *There is no limit to the number of fetishes. From head to toe, there is no spot of the body, and from hat to shoe, no crease of a person's clothing, that can't have a fetishistic effect.*
>
> (Magnus Hirschfeld, 1920)

Calves, feet, charming shoes. The passionate, desiring gaze can also be directed downwards. While sexologists like Magnus Hirschfeld spoke about foot, calf, and shoe fetishism and invented scientific sounding classifications, lovers of the aforementioned rhapsodized about the delightfulness of disrobement or waxed lyrical about barefoot grace, and collectors dreamed of an assortment of sought after high heels or soldiers' boots. The voracious gaze upon legs, feet, and shoes, and risqué ways of putting them on display, also belong to the canon of erotic art. Every period develops its own spectrum of objectified sexuality. Today, sneakers and flip-flops have joined the ranks - but nothing can knock high heels down from their position at the top of the pack.

The shoes of the curators (Photo A. Pretzel)

Leg, foot and shoe fetishism form prominent topics in the collections of Magnus Hirschfeld and an unmissable subject in the collections of Naomi Wilzig. Christopher Isherwood details how he and his fellow Englishman Francis Turville-Petre, a young archaeologist, were guided through Hirschfeld's museum by Karl Giese, Hirschfeld's life partner and the institute's archivist. In Isherwood's account of the impressions left upon him by the tour, it doesn't take long before shoe fetishism and the topic of 'fetishistic' drawings come up: "high heeled,

intricately decorated boots for fetishists", "phantasy pictures, drawn and painted by Hirschfeld's patients." After her visit to the institute, the Dutch author Til Brugmann wrote a dada-inspired grotesque with the title The Department Store of Love. Here she processed her impressions of the collections and described the bliss of the visitors to the parts of the museum dedicated to the most fanciful fetishes when they found what they were looking for.

Ill. 1: Model collection, 'Boot Fetishism'. Magnus Hirschfeld, Geschlechtskunde (Stuttgart 1930), Bd. 4, S. 739.

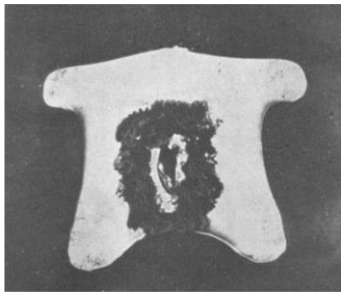
Ill. 2: Tom of Finland, Drawing, c. 1960s (WEAM)

Ill. 3: Drawing of the Desires of a Foot Fetishist. Magnus Hirschfeld, Geschlechtskunde (Stuttgart 1930), Bd. 4, S. 738.

Ill. 4: Figurine, porcelain, France, c. 1750 (WEAM)

Project 5: Supplements (Benedikt Wolf)

The comparison of the 'Sailor's Darling' (Seemansliebchen) from the Magnus Hirschfeld collection with the Swarovski phallus from the Naomi Wilzig collection focuses upon the topic of sexual supplements. While dildos are noticeably present in contemporary culture, both as aids for masturbation and as sex toys in sexual intercourse, objects such as the 'Sailor's Darling', described in the Bilderlexikon der Erotik ('Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Erotic') as an 'artificial female genital', are less present. The sexological term Cunnus succedaneus (from *succedo* - 'to step into another's place') indicates the prosthetic function of such objects. Jacques Derrida uses the term supplement to designate objects that simultaneously function in terms of augmentation and replacement. This term has also been applied to the field of sexual prostheses (Valerie Traub). It is this line of thought that is picked up in the confrontation between the 'Sailor's Darling' and the Swarovski phallus: Who is said to have a body that is lacking? What do the supplements replace? Is the question one of replacing a body part that is 'missing' in sexual practice? Or, is the question rather one of replacing a body part that is 'missing' from one's own body, that is to say, of the appropriation of the sexual organs of the 'other' sex? The two opposing objects have an unsettling effect on the viewer. As supplements, they do not represent the gender that they ought to stand for, at least not from a heteronormative standpoint: the phallus drags up as a glittering diva, while the artificial vulva commandeers the fake beard of a drag king. These unsettling elements allow a reflection upon the medium of exhibition itself: what happens to sexual objects designed for actual use when they are put on show in an exhibition? In such a setting, both objects lose their use value: they become simulacra. While one could theoretically take the 'Sailor's Darling' out of the showcase and put it back to its original use, the Swarovski crystals seem to make the use of the phallus as a dildo impossible. The contrast between the two objects thereby also indicates a historical change: in the 21st century, sexual supplements can also have value as art objects.

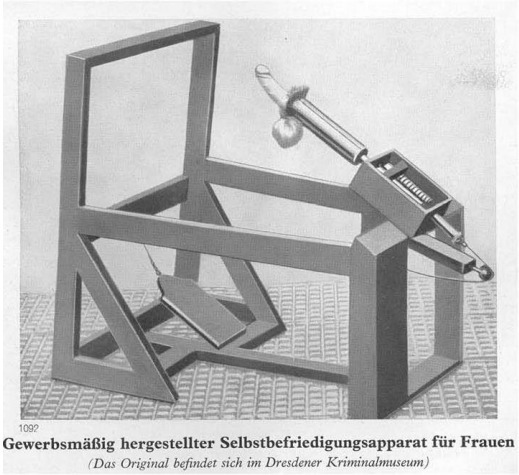


Ill. 1: “Seemannsliebchen”, Institut für Sexualwissenschaft Berlin, Bilderlexikon der Erotik, vol. 3 (Wien 1930), p. 131.

Ill. 2: Karin Wilzig, Swarovski-Dildo, ceramic with Swarosvski crystals, Belgium, c. 2000 (WEAM)

Project 6: Sex-Machines (Japhet Johnstone)

The tense relationship between the technological and the natural is an important one in the history of sexual practices. It often seems to be a relationship of oppositional elements: the natural practices are seen as good, legal, and productive, whereas the technologically augmented ones are seen as evil, criminal, legally punishable, and decadent. But where does 'natural' sexuality end and technologically augmented stimulation begin? Is masturbation still 'natural'? Can the body, as a receptor of stimuli, be extended at will? Or does sexual stimulation always bring about the disintegration of what we think of as the delimited and determinate body? How does this 'practical' encounter of technology and sexuality relate to the discourses and methods of scientific inquiry, and especially of scientific inquiry into sexuality itself? From the prehistoric artificial phallus, through the masturbatory devices of the 19th century, and right up to the 'pocket pussy' of today: the history of technological sex apparatuses expands our notion of what a body can be. In addition to that, reflections upon the corporeality of the cyborg - a figure who in today's world is by no means only to be found in science fiction - show how difficult it is to draw a clear line between human and machine. Tomi Ungerer's sketches of fantastical sex machines explore this very boundary, namely the (im)possible or (un)thinkable between human and machine.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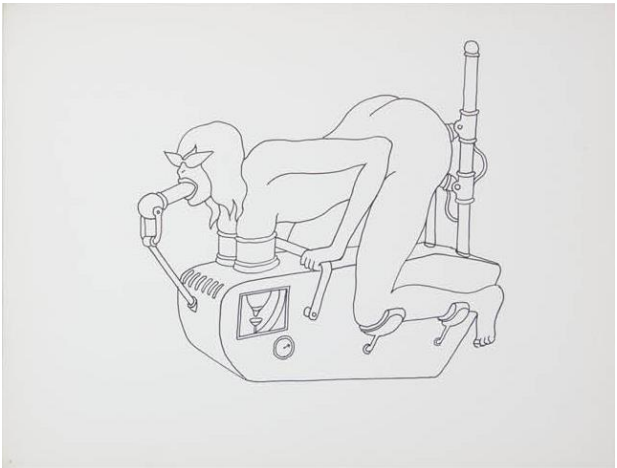
Gewerbsmäßig hergestellter Selbstbefriedigungsapparat für Frauen
(Das Original befindet sich im Dresdener Kriminalmuseum)



Ill. 1: Magnus Hirschfeld, Geschlechtskunde (Stuttgart 1930), vol. 4, p. 729.
Ill. 2: Tomi Ungerer, o.T. (Drawing for *Fornicon*), ink on paper, France, c. 1969 (WEAM)