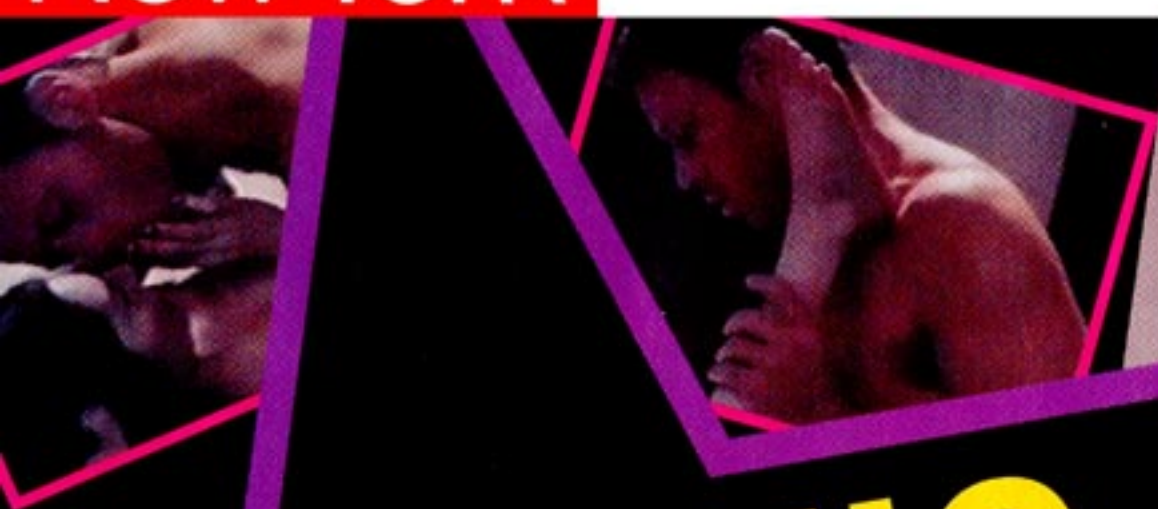


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By Darren D'Addario



# GRAPHIC ART



SEX!

**THE PORN SUPREMACY**  
Hard-core images are infiltrating art, as seen in Timothy Greenfield-Sanders's book *XXX*, which features photos of porn stars like Belladonna (shown here), and Catherine Breillat's film *Anatomy of Hell* (left).

Thanks to a slew of explicit new movies, books and gallery shows, hard-core sex is slipping into the mainstream, blurring the line between the provocative and the pornographic **By Darren D'Addario**

Timothy Greenfield-Sanders readily acknowledges the discomfort he felt when he began photographing naked porn stars two years ago. It's not that he was wary of vexing any sanctified ghosts lurking in the converted East Village church rectory that has served as his studio for more than two decades. It's just that the mild-mannered photographer's black-and-white portraits had traditionally captured the likes of Jimmy Carter, not Johnny Wadd. For Greenfield-Sanders, who conceived the project in 1997 after seeing Paul Thomas Anderson's *Boogie Nights*, the bare, over-size breasts and shaved testicles filling his viewfinder gave him pause.

"My pictures have always been about intellectual pursuits—artists, thinkers, people of accomplishment—so I was not initially at ease," he says. "But I got comfortable quickly, not only because my subjects—whether they were straight, gay, young, old, male or female—were very exhibitionistic, but also because I began to realize that porn stars *are* accomplished people. They're the best at what they do. They're the best at fucking."

The result of two years of shooting photos (which were patterned after Goya nudes) is the handsome Bulfinch Press coffee-table book *XXX: 30 Porn-Star Portraits*, which showcases Jenna Jameson, Peter North, Tera Patrick, Seymore Butts and 26 of their most intimate friends. Supplementing the images is an impressive collection of essays about adult films, written by no less than Gore Vidal, John Malkovich, Francine du Plessix Gray and Nancy Friday, among others. *XXX* is already the greatest popular success of Greenfield-Sanders's career. In addition to an upcoming exhibition at the Mary Boone Gallery, the work has spawned an HBO documentary about the making of the book, and a companion CD of music that complements its theme.

"I'm stunned by it all," Greenfield-Sanders, 52, says of the multimedia juggernaut. "I've never in my career done anything that had such attraction for so many people. Publishers were clamoring to work with me on the project."

Greenfield-Sanders is by no means the only artist with a newfound interest in graphic sex; more and more, mainstream filmmakers, writers and photographers are focusing their attention on pornography or are incorporating hard-core sexual elements into their work. And they're finding a broad, insatiable audience. Cinema buffs at the recent Toronto International Film Festival could have been forgiven for thinking they'd wandered into a XXX peep show. A spurt of explicit memoirs is spicing up the shelves at your local Barnes & Noble. And art galleries are hosting crowded exhibitions that leave little to the imagination.

Neil Strauss, the former *New York Times* music writer who coauthored *How to Make Love like a Porn Star: A Cautionary Tale* with Jenna Jameson, has witnessed porn's wide appeal firsthand. "When I was hanging out with Jenna," Strauss recalls, "she would be approached by all these 12-year-old girls and their mothers. It was always a mob scene. The girls had seen her on *E! True Hollywood Story* and would ask her to take photographs with them. The kids treated her like she was Avril Lavigne."

That's a reaction Jameson couldn't have imagined a decade earlier. Music chronicler Legs McNeil, who has played Studs Terkel to the adult-film industry for the past seven years while conducting interviews for his forthcoming book, *The Other Hollywood: The Uncensored Oral History of the Porn Film Industry*, is blunt when asked if publishers initially encouraged his project. "I started working on it right after I finished [the punk-rock oral history] *Please Kill Me*, because I thought it was a great

## Excerpts from the *TIMEOUT* cover story, "Graphic Art".....

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Greenfield-Sanders credits Howard Stern, who recently decided to leave the public airwaves for satellite radio to avoid FCC fines, with introducing porn stars to the mainstream. But whatever the tipping point was, the presence of prurient art has never been more widespread. This year's Toronto film festival couldn't be mistaken for the annual Adult Entertainment Expo in Las Vegas, but it did display an eye-popping number of graphic sex scenes in movies by heralded filmmakers.

Both Greenfield-Sanders and Neil Strauss do, however, largely agree with Amis, asserting that porn can never really become completely acceptable even if it's fashionable. "[Adult actor] Nina Hartley says porn is about arousal and it doesn't fit into the multiplex theater system," Greenfield-Sanders says. "And I agree."

The "more bush, less Bush" philosophy may seem too tidy an explanation for the trend, but back in his studio, Greenfield-Sanders recalls having similar thoughts when he finally decided to go forward with his *XXX* project. "I could see at the time that the country was becoming very divided," he says. "There was the shame-based Bush administration's view of sex, and there were the people who were much more open to it. The John Malkovich essay in my book talks about how Internet pornography is out of the box—and he's right, it *is* out of the box. What are you going to do, shut down the Internet like they do in countries where religious fundamentalism runs everything? I think the reason why porn is so popular in art today is because when you try to push it down the way the government is trying to right now, it comes up in other places." ■