When scholars call pornography a body genre, they almost universally mean the spectators' body, upon which porn, like horror or comedy, incites arousal, revulsion, and other physical reactions. In Disposable Passions, David Church expands pornography's bodies, looking not at viewers but rather the “material legacies” that carry and surround porn's imagery: archival cannisters bearing film reels, fan magazines, VHS tapes, and DVDs. In this ephemera, often neglected and tacitly considered incidental to the textual side of pornography, Church plants a beautifully researched, deeply thought analysis that goes beyond the somewhat niche field of porn studies to offer larger claims about the eroticization of historicity itself. This is truly cultural studies at its finest, an endlessly inventive book bursting with sophisticated ideas while somehow even managing to be a fun read.

Church covers stag films, sexploitation magazines, lost grindhouse films, and the rise of internet-era “vintage pornosisseurship,” among much else. Linking these is a shared affective investment by fans not just in their obvious sexual appeal, but also their elusiveness. The thrill of an archival discovery, of winning an ebay auction for an obscure film, of glimpsing an intimate moment from the distant past: all of these speak to “tactile pleasures of historicity” that are operative everywhere but perhaps never so visible as when pornography pulls them into focus (p. 61).

Thus, fan culture for stag films of the early 20th century is not just about graphic sex, which can be found anywhere, but more precisely about “making the historical distance represented by these films a source of eroticism in itself” (p. 35). Sex becomes almost an alibi, for “fantasies of individual rediscovery that necrophilically blend arousal with mourning over moments forever slipping into the past” (p. 49). As Church notes, this “this erotic desire for decay notably overlaps with cinephilia in general,” a cinecrophilia that film studies represses but stag films help expose (p. 49).

A chapter on writer/editor William Rotsler and the industry magazine Adam Film World recovers previously untold histories and further examines historicity’s erotics. Here, Church shows how the historian’s “affectively charged search for sexual knowledge is not altogether different from that of the sexploitation publication's intended reader,” as both seek to puncture the veil of the text to touch more fundamental layers of truth, while often disavowing the pleasures of this pursuit (p. 70).

One of Church’s greatest contributions in Disposable Passions is his careful charting of industrial self-censorship over the course of the home video and internet platform revolutions. Hardcore cinema moved to video just as the Reagan administration and feminist antiporn movement applied enormous pressure to the adult film industry, resulting in a systemic alteration of the films, as rape scenes, flirtations with underage sexuality, BDSM, watersports, and other kinky or perverse sexualities were removed to recalibrate them to the new normativities of the 1980s. Yet porn studies scholars who examine the films as disembodied texts have often missed this
material history, even as the “continued circulation of these censored iterations bespeaks a tantalizingly uneven history of sexual visibility” (p. 137).

A final chapter on the evolution of retro-adult video distributors also offers a valuable look at how fan culture shapes (and archives) the memory-contexts of pornography. From gritty early-1990s bootleg-quality releases by Something Weird Video and Alpha Blue Archives, to the upmarket 21st-century approaches of Vinegar Syndrome and Distribpix, whose elaborate DVDs and blu-rays are modeled on Criterion’s meticulous arthouse restorations and bonus supplements, Church charts an evolving politics of taste rife with irony—even as fans protest the shoddy treatment of vintage hardcore by such corporate behemoths as VCA, their desire for lost films generates continuous disappointment when it turns out that being lost is actually the main thrill of a mediocre sexploitation film like Orgy at Lil’s Place (1963); even as they seek to recover the illicit allure of the porn theater, the masturbating patron of yesteryear becomes a “denigrated figure,” actually thrown out of theatrical revivals at such respectable venues as the Anthology Film Archives (p. 199).

While Church maintains a rigorous scrutiny throughout, he also offers personal asides, from narrating his role in not-quite-rediscovering Orgy to addressing his positionality as a straight male fan and scholar (which he consciously and effectively modulates through a concentrated use of queer theory to keep heteronormativity visible). At one point he even briefly fabricates a lost film, Lust for the Eyes, a risky gambit that he executes playfully but for pointed effect. He is a scholar uniquely attuned to pleasures—of the text, of short tangents, of pointed barbs at stuffy cinephiles and collectors with reactionary sexual politics, but ultimately of the ways we bury our complicated desires for the past in the only thing that could make them seem simple: smut. Disposable Passions is a necessary intervention and a sheer delight.

ORCID iD
Whitney Strub https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4943-6070

Whitney Strub
Rutgers University-Newark, USA
Email: wstrub@gmail.com

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LGBTQ Social Movements is a comprehensive book covering historical and contemporary issues in mainstream LGBTQ social movements in the United States. By illustrating various forms of activism employed by LGBTQ activists (changing laws and policies, increasing visibility, building alternative communities, and changing