

GIRL

PORN
is
GOOD PORN

Furries are adults who enjoy anthropomorphic animal cartoons made by and for each other. In many ways it is a form of role-playing, where members invent an alternative persona, a "fursona," that is some kind of animal that reflects their inner identity. These fursonas are highly anthropomorphized—they walk on two legs, speak, and wear clothes—but they also retain some of the special abilities that animals have, such as the ability to wag a tail to communicate excitement, or perk up ears to communicate intrigue. Anyone who's watched a movie like Zootopia is familiar with these kinds of characters, just imagine more home-grown and adult.

The adult nature of furries is important to understand their appeal and place in larger culture. It is not uncommon for furries to make or commission cartoons featuring their fursonas in sexual situations, there's even a word within the community for furry porn (yiff). This, as you can imagine, has garnered the furry



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community some suspicion and stigmatization from the outside. Generally, anthropomorphic animal cartoons are for children, so seeing that imagery sexualized feels mildly pedophilic. Furry porn is also, by definition, sexualized imagery of animals, so the whole thing can also feel zoophilic. Neither children nor animals can consent to sex, so it's understandable that a cloud of suspicion follows furries within the cultural consciousness.

Why are furries paying boatloads of money to commission artists to draw sexy pictures of cartoon cats, when there exists large quantities of pornographic images featuring real-life humans that are available for free? It seems hard to understand. Furry porn is often confrontational in a way that can undermine its sexiness. It is so obviously unnatural that it can be difficult to engage with erotically because one is made too self-aware.



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The answer is that furry porn is better than regular porn at many of the things its audience values.

One of the main appeals of furry porn, and the larger furry ecosystem, is the ways in which feelings can be made visible. Cartoons in general are a better visual medium to communicate feelings than film or photos.

Surprised characters can have their hair stand on its ends and their eyes bug out; large beads of sweat can be drawn to communicate nervousness. The advantages are even greater when we include animal body parts. As mentioned before, a tail and animal ears add whole new dimensions of emotional expression.

Isn't sex and eroticism emotional? Isn't part of the joy of sex the emotional intimacy? Isn't part of what's sexy knowing your partner is feeling aroused, participating in a shared experience of eroticism?

Mainstream porn is ill equipped to communicate feelings. The medium does



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not lend itself well to this task, as feelings are much harder to capture on film than something like literature, but there are specific dynamics at play within pornography that exacerbate the situation.

Sex is often a deeply intimate and personal experience that is predicated on an emotional connection developed over a period of time. Porn actors are most likely cast without any regard to their personal relationship, and filming takes place over a very short period of time where it would be difficult to develop an emotional connection.

Even if the actors are able to have an intimate connection, this intimacy is undermined when there is a crew of people filming you. The literal circumstances of a porn shoot are very impersonal and public in a way that most sex is not. For there to be any hope of a feeling of emotional and sexual intimacy to be captured on camera, both participants would have to be fairly competent actors.



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But it is hard to find people with good acting chops to participate in porn. There is a huge amount of stigma around pornography, and people who have made porn often have a very hard time working normal jobs because this stigma follows them around forever.

Major porn studios have either given up on capturing emotions, or this was never a goal in the first place.

The thing about sex is that it's sexy. There is something arousing about seeing people have sex, regardless of how the people doing so are feeling. Witnessing naked human genitals being stimulated is an arousing sight in and of itself.

Pornography doesn't have to rely on the difficult task of capturing the emotional experience of arousal on film to serve its function as an erotic stimulant. All it needs to do is capture the literal, physical act of sex.



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It is very difficult to get people to act convincingly aroused on camera, but anybody can strip naked and have their genitals touched.

The result is a hyper fixation on the naked body, the genitals, the act of penetration, within mainstream pornography.

Porn has notoriously unconvincing acting, absurd story lines, unrealistic depictions of sex. There is little care or interest in producing something that resembles real-life sex. It is vulgar.

I do not take issue with this, per se. There are problems within the porn industry, but I don't think it's terrible to engage with the eroticism of the physical act of sex from time to time.

I do think it's unhealthy if one's entire erotic media diet consists of such depictions. To look at someone's body in a sexual way, without care or consideration of their emotional

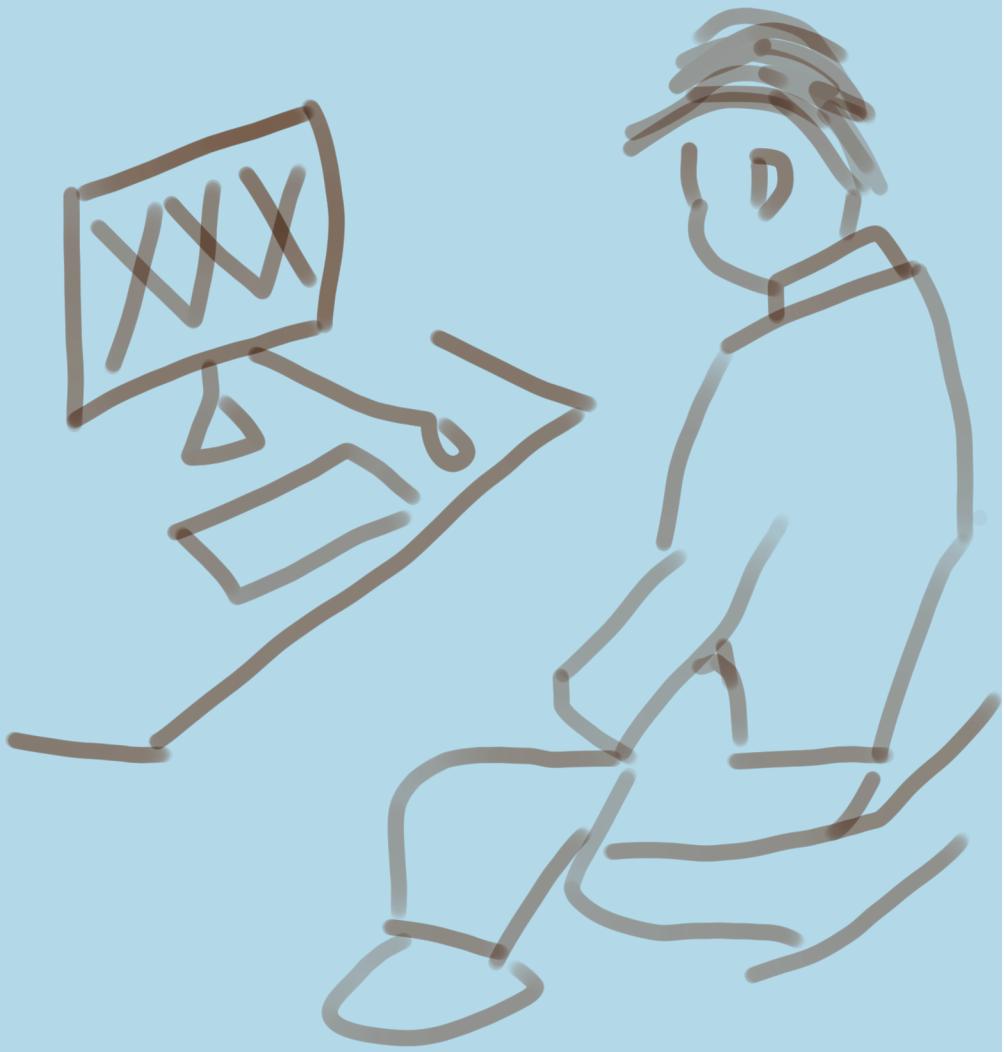


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experience is dehumanizing. It objectifies sex and it objectifies the sexual actors. It is concerning that within porn, the lack of sexual arousal of the performers is often apparent, meaning that not only do we as the viewer not care about their feelings, but we have to dehumanize them to find it sexy.

If mainstream porn is the fetishization of the body and the physical act of sex, then furry porn is in many ways the fetishization of the internal and emotional experience of sex.

The reason it's sexy for many people is how well equipped the medium is for communicating the feelings associated with sex. The complex mix of fear, excitement, lust, playfulness, joy, can all be telegraphed by the cartoon bodies in a way that human bodies cannot capture as easily. I worry that people who watch too much mainstream porn will develop an unhealthy relationship with sex. I don't have the same fear surrounding furries.



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There is a second related reason I feel that furry porn is good. It is very clearly a fantasy and not reflective of real life.

Porn isn't real, and it's something we're going to have to keep in mind if we're using it to get off, but this can be a difficult task.

There is a method of engaging with porn which is thoughtless, which most porn encourages. The part of me that finds naked genitals sexy is the less thoughtful, more animalistic part. It's the biological impulse to reproduce. My subconscious is programmed to reward me for having sex; it sees what looks like a naked vagina, is tricked into thinking I'm having sex, and gives me a hit of dopamine.

This is the sexual experience most porn encourages, as the only thing it's really offering is the image of sex. Thinking too hard or consciously about what's going on can disrupt this process. If I'm turned on because I'm



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tricking my brain into thinking I'm having sex when I'm not, then being aware of this can make me feel kind of guilty. Like I'm lying to myself.

Cartoons don't look like sex. Furry porn doesn't really engage that part of my brain that is trying to reproduce. It doesn't look real.

This is what makes it confrontational. Looking at furry porn forces you to be aware of the fact that what you're seeing isn't real. If it is to be erotic, it has to be so on the terms of fantasy.

There can often be a feeling of shame around sexual fantasies that can make them hard to intentionally engage with. But sexual fantasies are deeply human, and no more embarrassing than other forms of fantasy. We recognize as a culture that it's valuable to enjoy something like a Star Wars movie, which is undeniably fantastic, because it can help us engage with and discuss and think about ourselves.



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What kinds of stories attract us says something about who we are.

There's no reason sexual fantasies can't be healthy in the same way. Our ability to imagine things that don't exist is part of what makes us human. Shouldn't we want to bring humanity to sex? Feeling shame around sexual fantasies is to think that bringing aspects of our own humanity to sex is shameful. As if sex is only rightfully an inhuman impulse.

There's something troubling about trying to engage with porn in a way that ignores its fantastic nature. Most porn is inescapably a kind of fantasy, a work of fiction. Trying to bypass this can make us uncritical of what narratives and implications we're engaging with. What stories are we telling ourselves? If we are afraid to think about this question we shouldn't be engaging with the medium, because ultimately what we're afraid of is ourselves.

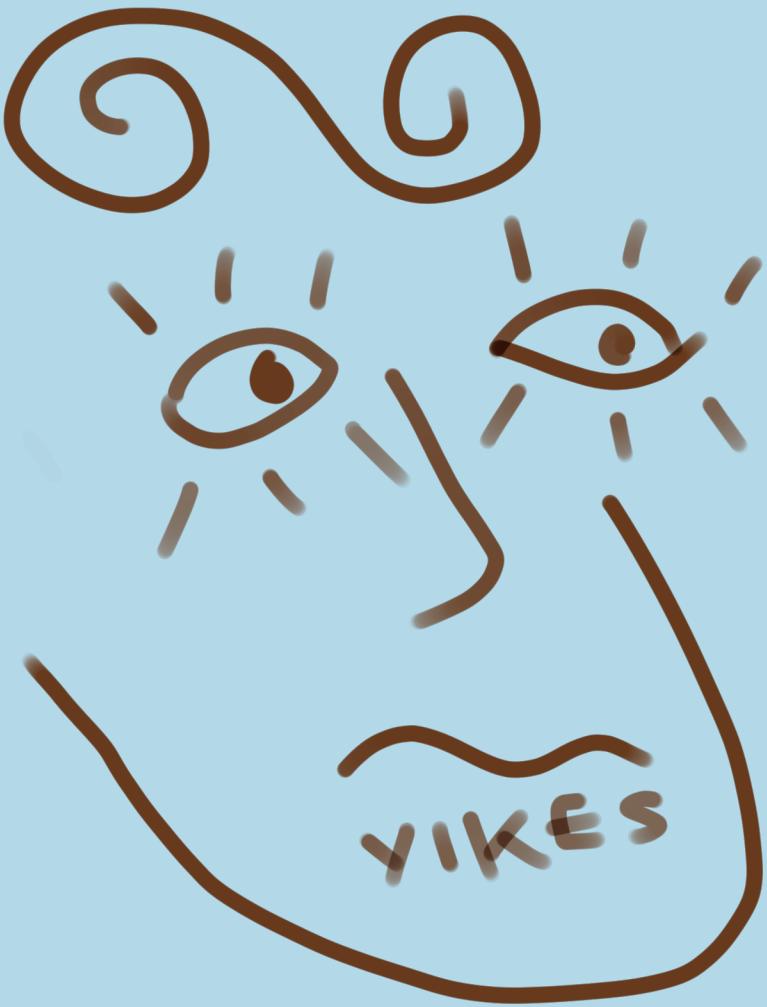


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One must possess a kind of fearlessness to engage with furry porn. It takes a kind of fearlessness to consciously think about our own sexual fantasies, which furry porn kind of forces us to do, but it also takes a kind of fearlessness to engage with something that has such a negative social stigma.

I understand the knee-jerk reaction to furry porn. Its uncomfortable qualities are visible at a glance, and there isn't a ton of discussion on what makes it sexy, so outsiders are left filling in the gaps, trying to infer its erotic appeal. It's understandable that people might get the wrong idea.

However, there doesn't appear to be a ton of curiosity on the part of the general public. There's a scorn and disgust that's often thought-terminating and mean-spirited, like to even ask questions about furries and their porn is to participate in something vile and potentially dangerous.



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I don't think furries are worthy of this stigma. I doubt they are any more pedophilic or zoophilic than the rest of the population, and the things about furry porn that might lead me to make that conclusion have perfectly reasonable and much more plausible explanations that emerge after thinking it over a bit. Being critical or uncomfortable with it as an initial reaction is one thing, but choosing to continually view it with contempt is unkind.

I suspect that people who unthinkingly shun furry porn are, at least in part, motivated by their own discomfort with their relationship to sex and eroticism. Thinking about furry porn raises questions about the nature of pornography, and critiques aspects of mainstream porn. Most people habitually watch porn, and it's uncomfortable to think about the ways in which doing so is potentially harmful. It's easier to be reflexively judgmental of furries to avoid thinking about it too much.



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It's a shame though, because it makes exploring furries and their porn all the more difficult. People who do so not only have to confront themselves, but also a hostile culture.

To become a furry, then, is to become sexually empowered, shameless, liberated.

Many within the community make or commission new works of erotic art featuring their own fursona engaging in various sexual activities. If mainstream porn is objectifying, then self-insert furry porn is the ultimate antidote. I cannot imagine a way to be more intentional and thoughtful about one's own relationship to the porn they consume than for it to feature a surrogate self.

I am not trying to advocate that everyone become a furry. Some things about sex and eroticism come down to personal taste and are immutable. I don't think I could ever get into furry porn myself, despite my respect for it.



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What I am saying is that furry porn offers many alternatives to the shortcomings of mainstream porn. It is cognizant of its fantastic nature. It is concerned with the emotions of sex, the feelings of the participants, not just bodies. It is sexually empowered and empowering.

Furry porn is not for everyone, but when it comes to my ideal of what porn should aim to be, furry porn is good porn.



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