

= Pornography ( album ) =

Pornography is the fourth studio album by English rock band the Cure , released on 4 May 1982 by the record label Fiction . Preceded by the non @-@ album single " Charlotte Sometimes " late the previous year , Pornography was the band 's first album with a new producer , Phil Thornalley , and was recorded at RAK Studios from January to April . The sessions saw the group on the brink of collapse , with heavy drug use , band in @-@ fighting and group leader Robert Smith 's depression fuelling the album 's musical and lyrical content . Pornography represents the conclusion of the group 's early dark , gloomy musical phase which began with Seventeen Seconds in 1980 .

Following its release , bass guitarist Simon Gallup left the band and the Cure switched to a much brighter and more radio @-@ friendly new wave sound . While poorly received by critics at the time of release , Pornography was their most popular album to date , reaching No. 8 in the UK charts . Pornography has since gone on to gain acclaim from critics , and is now considered an important milestone in the development of the gothic rock genre . The band has performed the album live in its entirety as part of the Trilogy concerts .

= = Background and recording = =

Following the band 's previous album , 1981 's Faith , the non @-@ album single " Charlotte Sometimes " was released . The single , in particular its nightmarish and hallucinatory B @-@ side " Splintered in Her Head " , would hint at what was to come in Pornography .

In the words of Robert Smith , regarding the album 's conception , " I had two choices at the time , which were either completely giving in [ committing suicide ] or making a record of it and getting it out of me " . He also claims he " really thought that was it for the group . I had every intention of signing off . I wanted to make the ultimate ' fuck off ' record , and then sign off [ the band ] " . Smith was mentally exhausted during that period of time : " I was in a really depressed frame of mind between 1981 and 1982 " . The band " had been touring for about 200 days a year and it all got a bit too much because there was never any time to do anything else " .

The band , Smith in particular , wanted to make the album with a different producer than Mike Hedges , who had produced Seventeen Seconds and Faith . The group settled on Phil Thornalley . Pornography is the last Cure album to feature founding band member Lol Tolhurst as the band 's drummer ( he then became the band 's keyboardist ) , and also marked the first time he played keyboards on a Cure release . The album was recorded at RAK Studios from January to April 1982 .

On the album 's recording sessions , Smith noted " there was a lot of drugs involved " . The band took LSD and drank a lot of alcohol , and to save money , they slept in the office of their record label . The musicians usually turned up at eight , and left at midday looking " fairly deranged " . Smith related : " We had an arrangement with the off @-@ licence up the road , every night they would bring in supplies . We decided we weren ' t going to throw anything out . We built this mountain of empties in the corner , a gigantic pile of debris in the corner . It just grew and grew " . According to Tolhurst , " we wanted to make the ultimate , intense album . I can 't remember exactly why , but we did " . The recording sessions commenced and concluded in three weeks . Smith noted , " At the time , I lost every friend I had , everyone , without exception , because I was incredibly obnoxious , appalling , self @-@ centered " . He also noted that with the album , he " channeled all the self @-@ destructive elements of my personality into doing something " .

Polydor Records , the company in charge of Fiction Records , the label on which the album was released , was initially displeased with the album 's title , which it saw as being potentially offensive . Following the album 's release , Simon Gallup left the group .

= = Content = =

Regarding the album 's musical style , NME reviewer Dave Hill wrote , " The drums , guitars , voice and production style are pressed scrupulously together in a murderous unity of surging , textured

mood " . Hill further described it as " Phil Spector in Hell " . Trouser Press said about the track " A Short Term Effect " : It " stresses ephemerality with Smith 's echo @-@ laden voice decelerating at the end of each phrase " . Ira Robbins observed that " the song closest to basic pop " is " A Strange Day " : It " has overdubbed backing vocals plus a delineated verse and chorus wrapped in some strangely consonant guitar figures " . The journalist also commented : the song " Cold " " gets the full gothic treatment " , with " grandiose minor @-@ mode organ swells " . Describing the title track , writer Dave McCullough said that it " tries to copy Cabaret Voltaire , all shuddering tape noise " .

= = Release and reception = =

Pornography was released on 3 May 1982 . The album debuted and peaked at No. 8 in the UK Albums Chart , staying in the chart for nine weeks . Fiction owner Chris Parry found " The Hanging Garden " to be the album 's only potential single , and after being " polished " by Thornally and Smith , was released as a single on 12 July , reaching No. 32 in the UK Singles Chart .

Despite the commercial performance of the album , Pornography was not well received by most music critics upon its release . Rolling Stone initially gave the album 1 @.@ 5 stars out of 5 , with reviewer J. D. Considine commenting that the Cure 's lyrics " [ seem ] stuck in the terminal malaise of adolescent existentialism " . Considine concluded , " Pornography comes off as the aural equivalent of a bad toothache . It isn 't the pain that irks , it 's the persistent dullness " . Robert Christgau , writing in The Village Voice , derided Smith 's " glum " lyrics and felt that he should " cheer up " . NME reviewer Dave Hill was ambivalent towards the album : " The Cure have collected the very purest feelings endemic to their age , and [ hold ] them right on the spot in their most unpleasantly real form [ ... ] This record portrays and parades its currency of exposed futility and naked fear with so few distractions or adornments , and so little sense of shame . It really piles it on " . Melody Maker 's Adam Sweeting shared a similar point of view , saying : " It 's downhill all the way , into ever @-@ darkening shadows ... passing through chilly marbled archways to the final rendezvous with the cold comfort of the slab " . Sounds wrote that despite a " genuine talent still at work " , the album " has too much music too cluttered a backing for Smith 's well @-@ intended observance [ ... ] Robert Smith seems locked in himself , a spiralling nightmare that leaves The Cure making a pompous sounding music that is , when all 's said and done , dryly meaningless " . At the opposite , Trouser Press was one of the very few magazines to write a favourable review . Writer Charles McCardell observed that " The Cure imposes an order that at first seems contrary to the basic preconceptions of rock ' n ' roll . For them , lyrics are everything . Instruments may set the scene , but they seldom stray from merely creating atmosphere " . McCardell finally hailed Pornography as a " uncompromising and challenging " work .

Retrospective views of the album have been favourable . Uncut called the album " a masterpiece of claustrophobic self @-@ loathing " . In their 2004 review , BBC opined , " Indeed , were it not for its sonic depth and sheer relentless conviction , Pornography 's extraordinary misanthropy would be laughable " . Rolling Stone gave the album a higher rating , 3 out of 5 stars , in The Rolling Stone Album Guide than the initial 1982 review .

In his biography of the Cure , Never Enough : The Story of the Cure , Jeff Apter explained : " Pornography turned out to be the kind of album ? just like Lou Reed 's Berlin or Bowie 's coke @-@ fueled Low ? that required some distance and a good few years of music history to be really appreciated " . Mark Coleman of Rolling Stone opined in 1995 : " Though Pornography is revered by Cureheads as a masterstroke , normal listeners will probably find it impenetrable " .

= = Legacy = =

In 2005 , Spin cited the album as a " high @-@ water mark for goth 's musical evolution " . NME described Pornography as " arguably the album that invented goth " . Slant Magazine listed the album at No. 79 on its list of the best albums of the 1980s . In 2011 , NME listed Pornography at No. 6 on its " 50 Darkest Albums Ever " list . Mojo placed it at No. 83 in their list " 100 Records That

Changed the World " . AllMusic critic Stewart Mason also described the record as " as one of the key goth rock albums of the ' 80s " .

According to Apter , Pornography would prove to be " enormously influential " , and has been cited as an influence by bands such as Deftones and System of a Down .

= = Live performances = =

In the period preceding and following the release of Pornography , the band started to develop their trademark image of big hair , smudged makeup and black clothes . Smith applied lipstick smeared around the eyes and the mouth . Under the lights , the lipstick melted , making it look , as Smith later put it " like we 'd been smacked in the face " . It was supposed to symbolise the violence of the new material but backstage , another kind of violence had begun to surface from the first dates of the tour .

The band performed in the UK in April 1982 . NME considered that the show " was all very skillfully deployed : a bruisingly clear sound of scathing force , a clockwork , Pavlovian lightshow , a variegation of light and shade in the song order that builds to the unmitigating force of ' Pornography ' itself as the climax " . However , the mood on stage was not good : The journalist noted that Smith looked " dejected and tired " for his birthday . Behind the scene , Smith 's relationship with Gallup was deteriorating . When the tour reached Europe , tension was so high between the two musicians that they had a fight after a concert in Strasbourg . Tolhurst found out the next day that his two partners " had both gone back to England " . At home , Smith heard his father telling him : " Get right back out on that tour ! People have bought tickets ! " After two more weeks of touring , the band played their final show in Brussels . Tolhurst later related : " I remember sitting in the dressing room thinking , ' oh well , that 's the end of the band , then ' [ ... ] I went off to France for a bit . I guess I ran away . Escaping from the reality of The Cure " . Back in England , Smith took a rest with a month 's camping holiday to the Lake District to " clean up " .

In 2002 , 20 years after the release of Pornography , The Cure performed the album live in its entirety , along with Disintegration and Bloodflowers , as part of the Trilogy concerts .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by the Cure ( Robert Smith , Simon Gallup and Lol Tolhurst )

Side A

One Hundred Years ? 6 : 40

A Short Term Effect ? 4 : 22

The Hanging Garden ? 4 : 33

Siamese Twins ? 5 : 29

Side B

The Figurehead ? 6 : 15

A Strange Day ? 5 : 04

Cold ? 4 : 26

Pornography ? 6 : 27

= = Personnel = =

The Cure

Robert Smith ? vocals , guitar , keyboards ( " One Hundred Years " , " The Hanging Garden " , " Cold " , " Pornography " ) , cello ( " Cold " ) , production , engineering

Simon Gallup ? bass guitar , keyboards ( " A Strange Day " , " Cold " , " Pornography " ) , production

Lol Tolhurst ? drums , keyboards ( " One Hundred Years " ) , production

Technical

Phil Thornalley ? production , engineering assistance

Mike Nocito ? engineering  
Michael Kostiff ? sleeve photography  
Ben Kelly ? sleeve design

= = Charts = =