

Disposable Passions: Vintage Pornography and the Material Legacies of Adult Cinema (Global Exploitation Cinemas)



From early twentieth-century stag films to 1960s sexploitation pictures to the boom in 1970s porno chic, adult cinema's vintage forms are now being reappraised by a new generation of historians, fans, preservationists, and home video entrepreneurs—all of whom depend on and help shape the archive of film history. But what is the present-day allure of these artifacts that have since become eroticized more for their pastness than the explicit acts they show? And what are the political implications of recovering these rare but still-visceral films from a less enlightened, pre-feminist past? Drawing on media industry analysis, archival theory, and interviews with adult video personnel, David Church argues that vintage pornography retains its retrospective fascination precisely because these culturally denigrated texts have been so poorly preserved on political and aesthetic grounds. Through these films' ongoing moves from cultural emergence to concealment to rediscovery, the archive itself performs a striptease, permitting tangible contact with these corporeally stimulating forms at a moment when the overall physicality of media objects is undergoing rapid transformation. *Disposable Passions* explores the historiographic lessons that vintage pornography can teach us about which materials our society chooses to keep, and how a long-neglected genre is primed for serious rediscovery as more than mere autoerotic fodder.

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