



# Carnal Resonance: Affect and Online Pornography

*Susanna Paasonen*

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Digital production tools and online networks have dramatically increased the general visibility, accessibility, and diversity of pornography. Porn can be accessed for free, anonymously, and in a seemingly endless range of niches, styles, and formats. In *Carnal Resonance*, Susanna Paasonen moves beyond the usual debates over the legal, political, and moral aspects of pornography to address online porn in a media historical framework, investigating its modalities, its affect, and its visceral and disturbing qualities. Countering theorizations of pornography as emotionless, affectless, detached, and cold, Paasonen addresses experiences of porn largely through the notion of affect as gut reactions, intensities of experience, bodily sensations, resonances, and ambiguous feelings. She links these investigations to considerations of methodology (ways of theorizing and analyzing online porn and affect), questions of materiality (bodies, technologies, and inscriptions), and the evolution of online pornography.

Paasonen discusses the development of online porn, focusing on the figure of the porn consumer, and considers user-generated content and amateur porn. She maps out the modality of online porn as hyperbolic, excessive, stylized, and repetitive, arguing that literal readings of the genre misunderstand its dynamics and appeal. And she analyzes viral videos and extreme and shock pornography, arguing for the centrality of disgust and shame in the affective dynamics of porn. Paasonen's analysis makes clear the crucial role of media technologies -- digital production tools and networked communications in particular -- in the forms that porn takes, the resonances it stirs, and the experiences it makes possible.

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