



Yumi Sakugawa's Instagram Account and Erika Lust's Erotic Films

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SELF-HELP: YUMI SAKUGAWA'S INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

Yumi Sakugawa is an illustrator and comics artist based in Los Angeles and she has been using her Instagram account to experiment with digital self-help. These experiments build on Sakugawa's previous work in print comics and her millennial guides to improving the self, such as *Your Illustrated Guide to Becoming One with the Universe* (2014) and the *Little Book of Life Hacks* (2017). She uses smartphone tools like note-taking and messaging apps to create mindfulness and meditation exercises, delivered on the platform of Instagram. One of them, presented as a series of screenshot images (see Figure 1), reads, "iPhone Meditation: 1. Open the Notes app. 2. Type out your deepest fear. Example: I will die unloved and alone. 3. Now place emoji characters between every letter." Several images show more and more emojis between the letters, until the screen is filled with emojis rather than the fear. I'm fascinated by the ways in which Sakugawa is adapting the self-help genre to digital tools and interfaces.

<https://www.instagram.com/yumisakugawa/>



Figure 1. Artist Yumi Sakugawa uses Instagram to explore digital mindfulness techniques.

CONFESSION: ERIKA LUST’S EROTIC FILMS

Erika Lust makes multi-lingual feminist erotic films and is based in Barcelona. Pornography is a huge part of the Internet, but a lot of the porn out there is notoriously bad for women, both in how it is made and because of how it represents women. Working against this problem, Lust creates erotic films using a sex-positive feminist approach. This approach takes in production: the crews behind the camera are mostly women, and her sets are safe and professional spaces where women performers are treated with

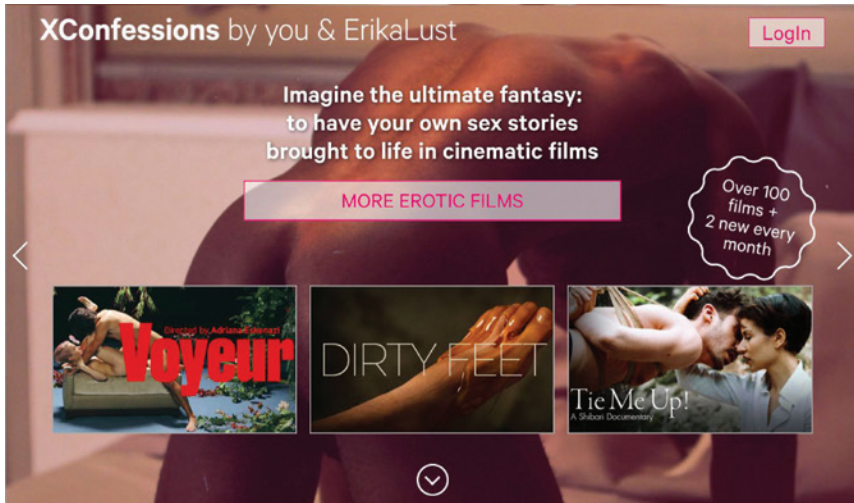


Figure 2. XConfessions.com uses crowdsourced life narrative to inspire short feminist erotic films.

respect. It also takes in representation: her primary audience is explicitly women, and she makes films that depict consensual, joyful, diverse, and—frequently—fun sex. The representations in her films canvas a range of sexualities, but women never appear shamed or humiliated: even where films focus on submissive and dominant roles, these roles are purposeful in showing power and pleasure in negotiating a submissive position. What I'm really interested in, in terms of life narrative, is her *XConfessions* series. *XConfessions* is built around a forum-based online community in which women share their fantasies. Lust then turns these fantasies into erotic films. The tagline on the website reads, *XConfessions: by You and Erika Lust* (see Figure 2). There are complex collaborative and commercial tensions here, and it raises intriguing ethical questions around crowd sourcing and produsage. I'm absolutely fascinated by the way Lust makes women's sexuality, experience and desire the center of her filmmaking practice, and the way she adapts the confessional mode for feminist and commercial purposes. Warning: Not Safe For Work, obviously!

<https://xconfessions.com>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emma Maguire is a Lecturer in English and Writing at James Cook University where she teaches life writing and creative writing. She researches gender and autobiography online. Her book, *Girls, Autobiography, Media: Gender and Self-Mediation in Digital Economies* is out now with Palgrave Macmillan. Her research has also been published in *a/b: Autobiography Studies*, *Biography*, *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, *Prose Studies*, and *M/C Media/Culture Journal*. You can reach her at emma.maguire@jcu.edu.au.