

# HOT MAN ON MAN ACTION

## *(And the Lesbians Who Love Watching It)*

In the privacy of their own bedrooms, lesbians are watching gay male porn videos, surfing gay porn web sites and looking at gay porn magazines. This is true! When a lesbian friend first disclosed her love of gay porn to me, I thought she was a rare exception, but over the years, more and more lesbian friends have opened up about their love of gay porn. I admit, I was confused. Why would women who prefer to have sex only with women get turned on by watching hot, man-on-man action? Why would women who have no desire to see, touch or feel a real, live penis get aroused by watching people with penises have sex with each other?

The idea of lesbians being fascinated by boy-boy porn genuinely confounded me, but I also found it intriguing. So I set out to conduct a completely unscientific survey and actually have discovered that this is a substantial phenomenon. The results just confirmed my belief that people's taste in porn can be quite unpredictable. I wanted to hear from a variety of women—especially lesbians—about what porn they do prefer and, if they are into gay male porn, why? I emailed the short survey to friends who forwarded it to their friends, etc. It was also posted on email listservs, email-newsletters and some women's web sites. Also, I personally interviewed a few people knowledgeable in the field. I got 31 responses in a week. Respondents ranged in age from 21 to 49 years old: 11 lesbians, 10 bisexuals, 5 queers and 3 heterosexuals, plus 1 MtoF and 1 FtoM transgender people. Of the 31, 7 identified as “vanilla” (not into kinky sex) and 24 identified as kinky.

One of the first responses was from an MtoF “trannie” who saw my survey on a “gendercomplex” email list. She was incredulous, “Right. Lesbians who get off on gay male porn. Are you on drugs?” I expected more like this, but hers was my only negative response. Soon, to my surprise, I had many fervent testimonials about the raw heat and realistic passion of gay male porn. The majority of respondents said they vastly preferred gay porn to any other kind.

This will come as a surprise to many, including women who assume they are alone in their “perverse” attraction to the erotica of “the other.”

Amy, a 28-year-old lesbian, revealed her taste for what she calls “fag porn”: “It used to bother me, like I thought maybe I’m not a real lesbian or something, but I’ve met other dykes who like it too, so I don’t feel so weird.” Schelli, a 35-year-old lesbian and leather-event organizer in Washington, D.C., managed a video store for several years. A big fan of gay male porn herself, she recalls that a large number of lesbians rented gay porn from her store. Market research at her store’s suburban Maryland location revealed that more women than men rented gay male porn videos!

The assumption has been that lesbians want more storyline with emotional content in their porn, because women are supposed to be so relationship-oriented. But a number of lesbian respondents decried most porn plotlines as being absurd and irrelevant. One appeal of gay male porn they cited was that it doesn’t get bogged down in plots, so there is less fast-forwarding to get to the “good parts.” “In gay male films there are fewer attempts at a storyline, fewer attempts at some sort of emotional bond or evidence of a relationship at all. Boy meets boy—who cares where or how,” wrote K., a 28-year-old lesbian web pornographer in Virginia.

Most of the women surveyed voiced a strong dislike for “lesbian” porn. They were referring primarily to woman-on-woman sex scenes made by heterosexual men for the titillation of heterosexual men (“girl-girl,” in porn-biz lingo). Almost everyone specifically complained that the women

By Elizabeth F. Stewart

and the sex in this type of “lesbian” porn seemed completely fake and downright distasteful. A 47-year-old lesbian from the West Coast summed it up best: “I’ve no interest, myself, in watching a het male concept of supposed lesbians ‘ooing and aahing’ just to be heard by the recording equipment, while they threaten one another with switchblade fingernails and lick the juice from their fingers. God, gag me!” Women of all sexual orientations reported being unable to identify with the performers, particularly butches and the women who lust after them. A 22-year-old “butch lesbian switch” criticizes “girl-girl” porn saying it “portrays high femme at its most grotesque . . . het porn is a turn-off on so many levels. Basically fag porn is made for people who like sex, the rest of it is for straight guys who can’t remember sex and are resigned to jerking off in a La-Z-Boy.”

Along with the shared aversion to cheesy “girl-girl” porn and the paucity of authentic, exciting lesbian porn, many women said they love gay male porn on its own merits. The most-often cited reason is summed up best by Mistress B., a 24-year-old New York bisexual: “The players are all very hot and the focus is on the sex, not the sentiment. And I think porn should be about the sex.” Lolita, a bisexual leather activist and writer also from New York, likes to watch the acted-out fantasy of extreme, politically incorrect behavior—“nonconsensual, non-negotiated rough, raunchy sex.” Also, a number of lesbians who enjoy anal sex said they like seeing that in gay male porn and can relate more to those performers. Another reason cited was the authentic, raw, sexual energy in gay porn. “Men cannot fake arousal. What the viewer sees is real,” women told me. Gay male sex is seen as “nastier,” more “down and dirty,” “forbidden.”

To indulge their interest in rougher stuff with a clear conscience, some feminist lesbians say they like gay porn “because it’s the most apolitical sex a feminist can watch. There is no distracting thought about whether the woman is being exploited, wondering if she is faking it, wondering if she was abused and is that why she is doing some guys in front of a camera so other guys can jerk off to it,” said A, a 46-year-old vanilla lesbian, “I like to watch gay porn so I can just enjoy the heat of it and not worry about political power, exploitation and violence against women. Plus, I like to see men doing to each other what they do to women—yeah, do it to each other for a change and leave us out of it! ‘No woman was harmed in the making of this film!’”

Some women reported a preference for written porn. S., a 35-year-old butch lesbian, takes turns reading hot gay male porn aloud with her “boi” partner, M., a 39-year-old lesbian. She says that her partner would rather read gay porn than watch it because it releases her imagination to create her own mental pictures, so her own fantasy is not spoiled by her distaste for the often-volcanic climax shots in those videos.

Steven Scarborough, a longtime gay male porn director with Hot House Entertainment, knows that lesbians are big fans of gay male porn. “I have always had lots of lesbian friends who love it,” he told me recently. “I think it’s like sport for them. Or maybe it removes any awkwardness they might feel about desire for actual men. It takes the real experience out of their faces.”

Bay Area lesbian sex therapist and author Marny Hall noted the erotic power that gay male porn wields over some of her lesbian clients. “One of the libido-goosing homework assignments I give to lesbian couples who come in for sex therapy is a trip to the local sex emporium,” says Hall. “I ask them to browse, pick out some erotica that appeals to them. Over the years, I’ve found that couples often come home from these excursions with porn that features gay males. They claim that it is more of turn-on than the lesbian books and

videos, which they complain are too ‘vanilla’ for their tastes.”

Lesbians have been going to therapy for decades to figure out why they have sexual fantasies that involve penises. Hall points out that some of those fantasies may exist because “lesbians report high levels of childhood sexual abuse. Identification with the abuser (predominantly men) achieved by means of porn-enhanced, non-threatening fantasies can go a long way toward healing old wounds. There are all kinds of ways abuse can be recycled—unconscious and conscious assumption of top or bottom roles for purposes of mastery/healing, [and/or] reenactment of pleasurable aspects of abuse in new, safe contexts.”

For whatever reason, the appeal of phallogentric gay male porn is not completely incongruous to lesbian sexuality. It is not much of a reach to imagine why lesbians watch gay porn when you see how today’s lesbian identity is rich with diverse self-concepts such as butch, femme, queer, lesbian fag, boi, grrl, daddy, mommy—and all of the subtle gradations along the continuum to transgender. Some of these identities and/or roles may naturally include strapping-on a dildo for more casual gender-bending play, or “packing” (wearing a faux phallus inside clothing) as a serious, intimate life choice.

Porn purveyors have known for some time the appeal of cross-orientational watching. We all know heterosexual men like to watch girl-girl porn (the “fake” stuff that real lesbians eschew). But what other crossover watching is going on out there? A number of gay men tell me they get off on het porn. I suspect there are het women who get off on lesbian porn. Could there be gay men who get off on lesbian porn? Email me your tips—I am ready for the next survey! ▼

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## Where to Find Real Lesbian-Made Porn

### Cyberdyke Network

<http://www.cyber-dyke.net/>

“The erotic network for lesbians only.” High quality visuals for every porn taste.

### Pervgrrl

<http://www.pervgrrl.org/siteseeing.htm>

Free web resource for kink, gender[bending], and erotic stories and articles, “by pervy dykes for pervy dykes!” Great links, too.

### Puckerup

<http://www.puckerup.com/links/links.htm>

Tristan Taormino’s site. She is a lesbian and an award-winning writer/editor/educator/porn producer. All sorts of cool lesbian stuff. Great links for porn, too.

### S.I.R.Productions

<http://www.sirvideo.com>

All-woman company making award-winning videos.