

PRESS RELEASE

July 2025

SEX NOW

5 September 2025–3 May 2026

Sex can connect, liberate, hurt and control people. With the exhibition *SEX NOW*, the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf invites visitors to discover lust, bodies and desire in all their complexity. From latex fashion, furniture design, photography and media art to dolls and toys: featuring around 400 objects across ten themed rooms, the show stages an intimate dialogue about sexuality and society. It explores erotic fantasies, queer perspectives and new realities – free of taboos and stigmas. To accompany the exhibition, the NRW-Forum is also launching its own OnlyFans account to share exclusive material and uncensored glimpses behind the scenes.

From traditional gender roles to the sexual revolution of the late 1960s and current debates, *SEX NOW* begins with a historical overview of shifting sexual attitudes, culminating in **#SexPositivity**. Objects such as the *Sexualkunde Atlas* (Sex Education Atlas) of 1969 and purple dungarees as a symbol of political emancipation are juxtaposed with the **Fleshie Fountain**, an installation by the artist **Peaches**: silicone sex toys originally designed for male masturbation become autonomous beings that mutually pleasure each other, thus subverting patriarchal power structures. In *Whose Jizz Is This?*, Peaches reflects on the historical dimensions of sex, queerness and politics.

“With this exhibition, we want to initiate an open, humorous and forward-looking discussion about sex,” says **Alain Bieber**, curator of the exhibition and artistic director of the NRW-Forum. “Across the globe, sexual freedom and education are currently coming under pressure. Given all the conflicts and tensions in the world today, we should be returning to the motto: Make love, not war.”

PRESS CONTACT

Sarah Wulbrandt
Head of Press/Publicist
T +49 (0)211-566 42 500
sarah.wulbrandt@kunstpalast.de

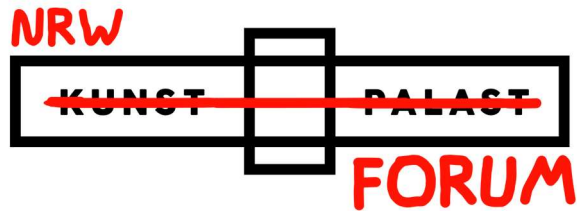
Christina Bolius
Press Officer
T +49 (0)211-566 42 502
christina.bolius@kunstpalast.de

NRW-FORUM DÜSSELDORF

Ehrenhof 2
40479 Düsseldorf
www.nrw-forum.de

PAGE

1/5



PRESS RELEASE

July 2025

Visitors can expect interactive stations and fun facts that communicate knowledge and sex education in a playful way. For example, they can test their knowledge of myths and facts about sex or use the *Sexoscope* to make and comment on their own predictions about the future of sexuality.

The large-scale installation **#Fluffy Library**, a queer library by non-binary artist Antigoni Tsagkaropoulou, invites the audience to discover new perspectives on gender, sexuality and belonging: at the centre of the work is Fluffy, a gender-fluid being who devours stories and transforms them into knowledge. Surrounded by cushions, transfeminist literature, graphic novels and other plush figures, the installation becomes a refuge for visitors. Over the duration of the exhibition, events such as a monthly queer feminist reading group will be held here. The talk series *In Bed With ...* will also take place on selected dates and will feature various guests, such as journalist **Anja Schimanke**, author **Mohamed Amjahid** and sexologist **Gianna Bacio**, who will discuss various topics related to sexuality and sex education.

The chapter **#DownThere** is dedicated to societal clichés surrounding attributes of gender identity and primary sexual organs: whether as a symbol of power or fertility, sexual organs have long been culturally and politically charged. The penis, for example, symbolises strength and control. The clitoris, on the other hand, was considered medically insignificant for centuries because it plays no role in reproduction. In this room, the works on display demonstrate just how fragmentary, biased and binary ideas about sex and gender often are. The sex education art collective **Glitterclit** aims to communicate knowledge about the human body in an accessible way; their anatomically correct models of genitals made of colourful fabric and glitter are on display in the exhibition. The models consist of individual parts that can be interactively assembled or dismantled by visitors.

In addition to these tactile experiences, an acoustic spatial installation also awaits exhibition visitors. In *Er klimpert meinen Schmerz mit seinen Fingern / Killing me softly*, artist duo **Andreas Ullrich** and **Tatjana Bikic** explore the phenomenon of ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response): acoustic stimuli that create a physical tingling sensation. At the centre of the work is

PRESS CONTACT

Sarah Wulbrandt
Head of Press/Publicist
T +49 (0)211-566 42 500
sarah.wulbrandt@kunstpalast.de

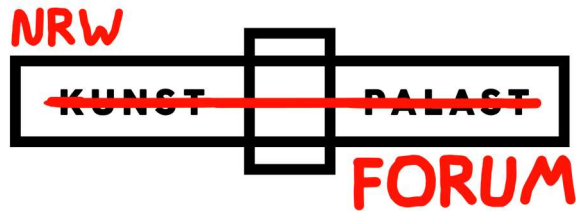
Christina Bolius
Press Officer
T +49 (0)211-566 42 502
christina.bolius@kunstpalast.de

NRW-FORUM DÜSSELDORF

Ehrenhof 2
40479 Düsseldorf
www.nrw-forum.de

PAGE

2/5



PRESS RELEASE

July 2025

a *washitsu*, a Japanese-inspired room with a tantra couch. In the multi-channel sound composition, fingers slide across surfaces, packaging rustles, objects are unpacked. The texts are based on descriptions of haptic artworks, complemented by contemporary instructions for sex toys, which are written in calligraphy on traditional scrolls. The installation blurs the boundaries between everyday life and eroticism, sound and body, imagination and desire. It is a sensual experiment combining art and sound.

The **#MeToo** chapter brings together artists that explore experiences of violence, the abuse of power and sexual assault. Sexual violence, especially against women, is not an isolated incident, but a structural problem; the global extent of this was brought to light in 2017 by the #MeToo movement on social media. The normalisation of violence against women is also addressed by Indian artist and women's rights activist **Poulomi Basu**. In her multimedia work *Fireflies*, she processes her own experiences of patriarchal abuse and violence and those of her mother. In a series of staged portraits, she examines the abuse and trauma that has been passed down through generations as well as the question of how to find a way out of this situation.

Patriarchal structures also pervade commercial pornography, which influences our ideas about lust, bodies and relationships – far beyond the screen. In addition to unrealistic body images, stereotypical depictions have long dominated the mainstream. Men are portrayed as inexhaustible performers, while women are passive objects whose sole duty is to fulfil the desires of men. New trends are challenging these representations. As a counterpoint to the PorNo movement, the **#PorYes** initiative advocates for consensual, feminist and gender-equitable pornography. A selection of films by producers such as **Paulita Pappel** and **Erika Lust** can be viewed in this section of the exhibition.

Consent, trust and safety are essential when engaging in sexual practices that transcend social norms. The **#Kinky** chapter is dedicated to these unconventional preferences involving power and role-playing games, bondage techniques and targeted sensory stimulation, and acknowledges kink as a cultural practice whose aesthetics have long been part of the

PRESS CONTACT

Sarah Wulbrandt
Head of Press/Publicist
T +49 (0)211-566 42 500
sarah.wulbrandt@kunstpalast.de

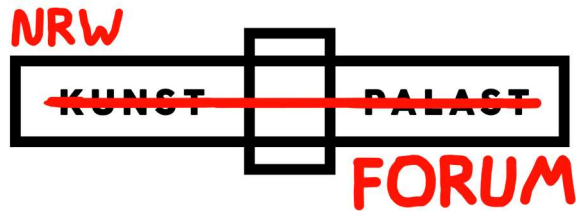
Christina Bolius
Press Officer
T +49 (0)211-566 42 502
christina.bolius@kunstpalast.de

NRW-FORUM DÜSSELDORF

Ehrenhof 2
40479 Düsseldorf
www.nrw-forum.de

PAGE

3/5



PRESS RELEASE

July 2025

mainstream. In addition to erotic sculptures and accessories, this room also displays clothing from the online platform TastySlips, such as worn socks, sportswear, or underwear with traces of bodily fluids: the platform serves a specific fetish community who are sexually aroused by worn clothing, its tactile properties and smells.

Good sex starts with your own body. Feeling good about yourself, knowing your own desires and taking care of yourself – that's what **#SexualWellness** is all about. Sex toys have played a significant role in helping people discover intimacy as a means of self-care, self-exploration and relaxation. Dildos have existed since ancient times. Thanks to technological advancements, the first electronic vibrators came onto the market in the 1880s – although they were initially intended for medical massage rather than sexual use. It was not until the 1970s that a true cultural shift began with books such as Nancy Friday's *My Secret Garden*, Beate Uhse catalogues and erotic fairs that made female desire public. The industry has continued to evolve – from rubber products to sustainable, app-controlled high-tech toys and erotic audiobooks. Visitors can relax by listening to sexy audio stories from femtasy in this room. Sex and love in virtual worlds: with **#Eroticissima**, 3D artist **Miyö van Stenis** has created the world's first sex and love simulator in the metaverse. Developed during the COVID pandemic, the project investigates how sexuality can evolve in our digital age. Gender-fluid avatars explore new forms of intimacy, desire and digital sensuality in virtual spaces. Movements, seduction and touch can be controlled in real time – provided there is mutual consent. Each encounter is preceded by a conversation about desires and boundaries. *Eroticissima* offers visitors the opportunity to try out the simulation in a safe space – and interactively rather than voyeuristically.

Virtual relationships, dating apps and AI sex dolls have already offered us a glimpse into the future of sexual encounters – as substitutes for real interpersonal intimacy. **#Futuresex** brings together various artists that explore intimacy in the age of digital technologies. In his video work *Pteridophilia*, Hong Kong artist **Zheng Bo** presents a radical alternative to the digital world: by depicting young men experiencing sensual encounters with ferns in a forest, the artist explores the connection between humans

PRESS CONTACT

Sarah Wulbrandt
Head of Press/Publicist
T +49 (0)211-566 42 500
sarah.wulbrandt@kunstpalast.de

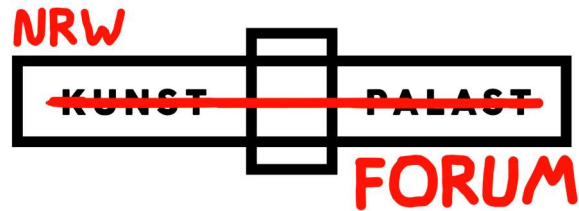
Christina Bolius
Press Officer
T +49 (0)211-566 42 502
christina.bolius@kunstpalast.de

NRW-FORUM DÜSSELDORF

Ehrenhof 2
40479 Düsseldorf
www.nrw-forum.de

PAGE

4/5



PRESS RELEASE

July 2025

and nature. Students at the University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf have also created illustrations of their erotic visions of the future.

SEX NOW presents ten rooms of artists, designers and activists whose work contributes to sexual emancipation and gives sexual minorities greater visibility. The exhibition is intended to educate visitors about a subject that – despite the sexual revolution and the commercialisation of sex – is still characterised by inequality and shame.

Parallel to the start of the exhibition, the NRW-Forum is launching an account on **OnlyFans**. Unlike other social media channels such as Instagram, TikTok or Facebook, this platform is known for showing explicit and uncensored pornographic content. At @sexnow_nrwforum, visitors will be able to view a selection of the works featured in the exhibition and gain an exclusive glimpse behind the scenes.

The exhibition *SEX NOW* was jointly developed by the curatorial team of **Alain Bieber** (artistic director of the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf) and **Judith Winterhager** (curatorial assistant).

PRESS CONTACT

Sarah Wulbrandt
Head of Press/Publicist
T +49 (0)211-566 42 500
sarah.wulbrandt@kunstpalast.de

Christina Bolius
Press Officer
T +49 (0)211-566 42 502
christina.bolius@kunstpalast.de

NRW-FORUM DÜSSELDORF

Ehrenhof 2
40479 Düsseldorf
www.nrw-forum.de

PAGE

5/5