
Digital-Cultural Ecology and the Medium-Sized City

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Abstract Submission Form

1. Paper / Proposal Title: Hypersexual Provocation: Tactics of old and new infrastructure in soft-core urbanism.

2. Format: Written paper

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6. Abstract (300 words):

In recent years, hypersexuality has proliferated across a range of media. Sex has become a focus of civic concern, with technologies facilitating sexual communication and its movement into urban space extending access to pornographically styled representation. As media presence continues to be unavoidable and as urban space becomes less differentiated from media space, there is a need to contextualize and critique the role of hypersexuality in urban sites.

Negating the position that 'soft-core urbanism' is either pastiche or satire I suggest that the 'harmless fun' of hypersexual representations does not fully address the infiltration of porno-chic media in cities. In the discursive world of pornography, it has been noted that 'soft-core' has received little academic attention, despite the evidence that 'pornified' culture is thriving. Unraveling and unpacking how the tactics of porn culture operate in urban media space allows better understanding of its perceived and potential implications.

Examining a variety of case studies in Melbourne, Australia, this paper engages examples that combine long-standing media infrastructure with novel technology. Using a combination of theoretical, historical and visual analyses as well as feminist theory and analytical drawings, the research demonstrates how the hypersexualization of urban space is taking place in subtle yet compelling ways. In these examples, traditional advertising infrastructures intersecting with digital screens and social media platforms and have important implications for gendered social relations.

This paper will argue that the manifestation of hypersexual urbanism is characterized by objectification and sexism where heteronormative interactions and sexual stereotyping taking place within media spaces are both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality. The visual analysis of this research amplifies the hypersexual representations in neo liberal cities and signals a new typology for socio-cultural mediated space.

7. Author Biography (200 words each):

Nicole Kalms lectures in the Department of Architecture at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. Nicole's research interest are in the field of contemporary urbanism, media and feminism. In 2013 she was awarded the Women's Planning Network scholarship for her contribution to original research in planning policy and sexualized images in public space. Nicole has published research in the Architectural Humanities Research Association's new journal, 'Architecture and Culture' and the Ashgate publication 'Occupation: Ruin, Repudiation and Revolution'. Nicole is currently completing a research project and book titled 'The Hypersexual City' to be published by Ashgate in 2016. Nicole leads the Interior Architecture program at Monash University with a focus on cross-disciplinary approaches to design media and spatial theory.



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