



a collection of the sexiest sounds

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CULTURE

what is audio porn and is it an exploitation-free way to get off?

Listen up.

BY MEGAN WALLACE | 20.11.18

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Thanks to today's hyper-visual society, a shit-tonne of sexualised images in the media, and all that time spent scrolling on Instagram, we've been practically reared for porn consumption. Now, most of us have a tried-and-tested recipe for orgasm involving a quick delve into RedTube, a spritz of wishful thinking and a dash of "self-love"...and that's about it. With PornHub racking up 28.5 billion web visits in 2017 *alone*, it's clear that the internet's assorted clips of cum-shots and cunnilingus have become a staple of our sex lives -- whether we'd admit it in good company or not.

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However, even the most sex-positive among us are likely to feel just a teensy, tiny smidge guilty about this viewing habit. While some argue that it's possible to consume porn ethically by going through feminist porn-makers, more often than not punters are reluctant to pay for their porn -- whether its for cashflow reasons, or just the very abundance of free content. But the free stuff is a bit of a moral question mark. Production companies often aren't transparent about how well they pay or treat their performers, which means you may well be watching something dodgy.

But is there an alternative? Do you need to cut out your porn habit, or is there a guilt-free route to orgasm that *doesn't* come with a monthly subscription? The internet, it would seem, says yes... but it depends what floats your boat. In particular, if you swoon over a good phone voice and like a bit of dirty talk, then audio porn is just the ticket. Not already an audio porn stan? Then let me (and a couple of esteemed audiophiles) give you the low down.

From audio clips of couples getting nasty, to longer erotic narratives, to ASMR, audio porn has no singular definition -- as long as it's sound-only. It's not necessarily a recent invention (I mean, let's not forget that sex chatlines are a thing) but the way that its spread across pockets of the internet feels fresh, exciting and full of promise. Springing up a couple of years ago across platforms like Tumblr and Reddit, audio-only porn has fostered a vibrant online community. Standout pages include [Audible Porn](#) on Tumblr and [Pillow Talk](#) and [Audio Gone Wild](#) on Reddit, which have racked up subscribers in the 20s of thousands. Working on a submissions basis, these pages are fed X-rated sound bytes by followers who generously share their own intimate moments, as well as listening to others'. It's a community-driven genre where there's currently no money at stake: just genuine sexual enthusiasm.

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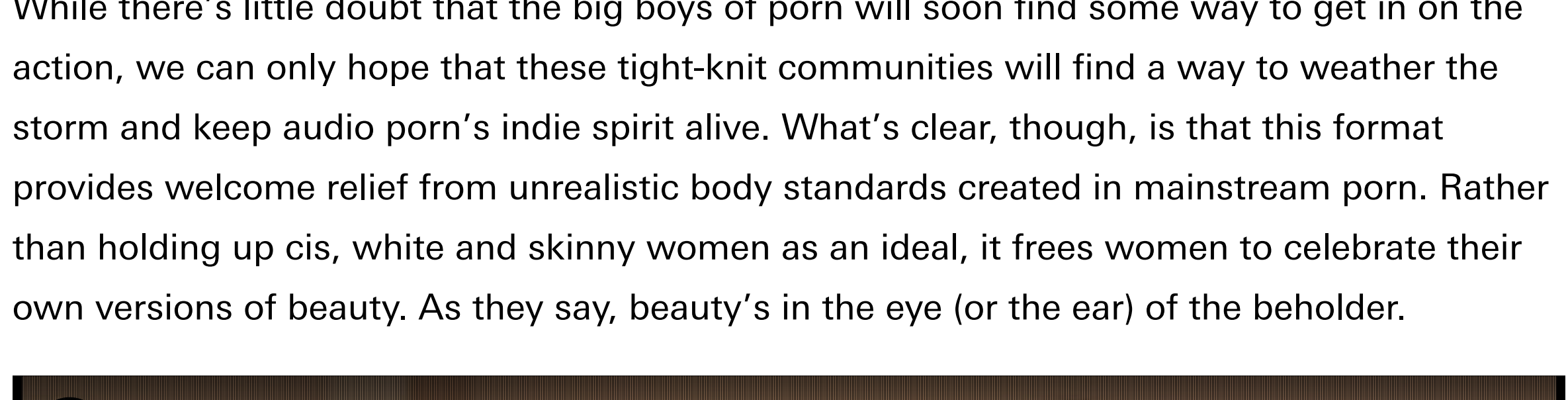
This is what attracts users like Kayla, 21, a student and self-professed feminist who values audio porn for a level of authenticity lacking in some mainstream porn: "Much like popular usage and discussions regarding audio porn, my own engagement with the medium is still relatively under-explored -- but I think it's more the idea of being able to express sexuality in a way that is generous and whole and active that excited me."

Like the rest of us out here, she's also excited to have found an alternative to some of the more "problematic" aspects of bog-standard porn. "It's well-known by pretty much everyone that the mainstream porn industry is ridden with sexism, racism and problems with exploitation. Aside from those things it just feels passive in the absolute worst way, and my identity as a passive consumer [of mainstream porn] is the one that I am least proud of. Conversely, audio porn involves actively listening to a recording and then a "collaboration" with the uploader to create new [mental] images that stimulate pleasure. I feel that it's a medium of sexual exploration that affirms the humanity and dignity of the uploader, as opposed to discarding [them] when your own pleasure is satisfied."

Kim, 24, has been a fan of the medium for a couple years, after stumbling across an erotic audio clip on the Tumblr page Porn4Ladies. She was (and still is) drawn to the medium for going beyond the visual and into another sensory field, as well as for its creative potential. "It was really freeing to be able to just have the audio there. You can close your eyes and just relax. I later found that people were playing with the form a lot more, by creating stories with [sexual] scenes in them. There's a community on Reddit -- [/r/gonewildaudio](#) -- where people will post script ideas too."

Like Kayla, Kim stresses the benefits of audio porn's collaborative nature, and sees it as a positive alternative to preexisting porn culture. "Compared with mass-produced porn, you're not up against some of the very abusive labour practices that many sex workers are unfortunately facing, nor the pressures that some encounter to have cosmetic surgery. To be honest though, I think it's always quite hard to say that something's definitively "feminist" as nothing exists in a vacuum. However, I think the way it democratises porn-making, and the way that it's community-led, and has women involved in the creation process, is pretty feminist."

While there's little doubt that the big boys of porn will soon find some way to get in on the action, we can only hope that these tight-knit communities will find a way to weather the storm and keep audio porn's indie spirit alive. What's clear, though, is that this format provides welcome relief from unrealistic body standards created in mainstream porn. Rather than holding up cis, white and skinny women as an ideal, it frees women to celebrate their own versions of beauty. As they say, beauty's in the eye (or the ear) of the beholder.



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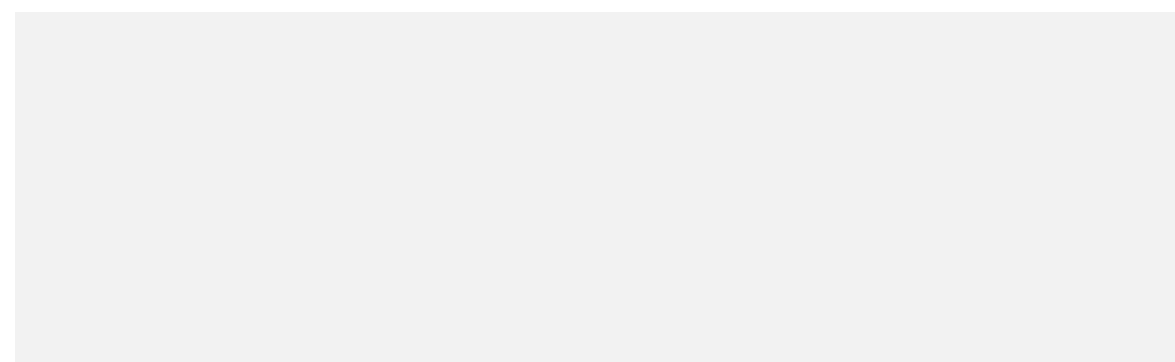
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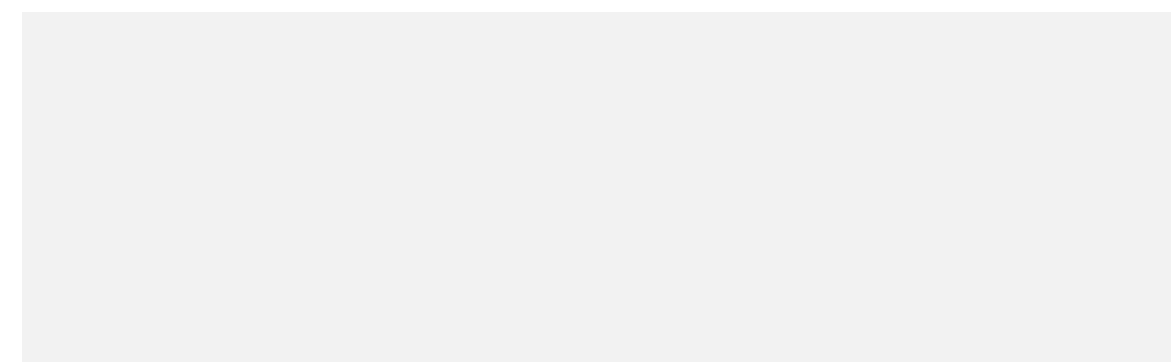
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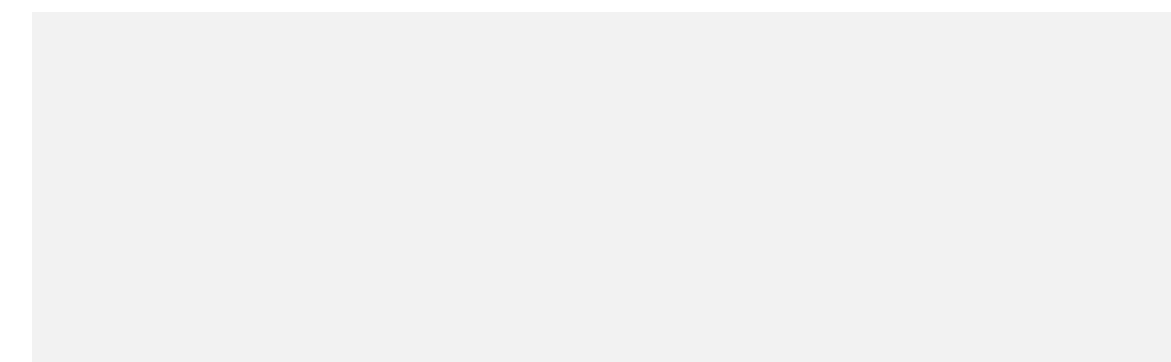
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