

schwules
museum

Lützowstraße 73
10785 berlin



Presskit

Objects of Desire

07.04.2019 - 01.06.2019

An exhibition of sex worker's stories told through objects

07.03.19 Opening event

01.06.19 Closing event + International Whore's Day

SIEGESSÄULE



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Wall



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Objects of Desire

07.03.2019 - 01.06.2019

Press release

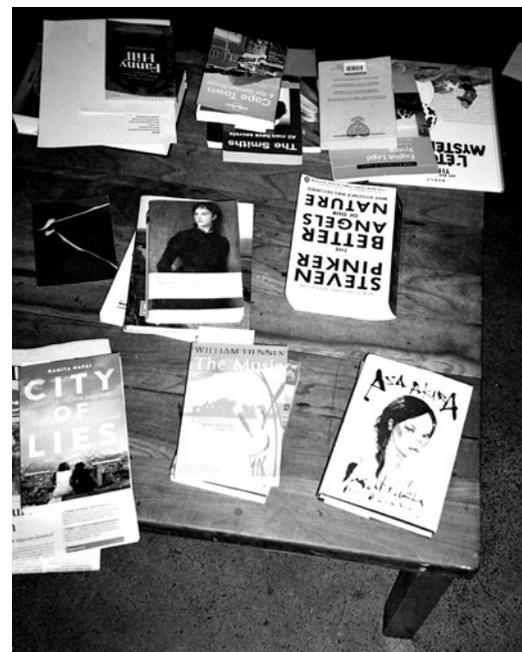
A new exhibition by sex worker led collective Objects of Desire explores stories around the everyday practice of sex work in Berlin. This exhibition displays artefacts collected through ethnographically informed interviews conducted over the past year in Berlin. The objects range from the mundane to the bizarre, from a hand painted tea light given by a client to a bicycle used to ride to work whilst wearing heels to a butt tunnel. The objects, and the accompanying stories told by the sex workers who donated them, highlight the material politics of sex work in Berlin today. Through focusing on the personal stories of sex workers and the physical objects involved, Objects of Desire aims to facilitate an understanding of the everyday practice of sex work as work. In particular, this exhibition emphasises the ways in which sex workers manage relationships with clients, lovers, families, the public, the law and the objects themselves.

Accompanying the archival collection Objects of Desire presents a series of works created by artists who are also sex workers. Responding to an open call artists present creative interpretations of the lived material dimensions of sex work inspired by the objects, themes and stories of the archival collection. The pieces range from a performance exploring fetishisation of national identity, to a fully immersive astrological workspace, as well as sculpture, music, video and photography. A series of events, exhibition tours and workshops will accompany the exhibition.

The show is particularly timely in Berlin, as 'The Prostitute's Protection Act' came into effect in Germany as of 1 July 2017. This new law, aimed at regulating sex work, makes the registration and identification of sex workers mandatory. This policy has come under fierce criticism from sex workers' organisations, public health organisations, legal organisations and human rights groups. Objects of Desire's research took place in the year following the laws implementation, amidst an atmosphere of legal uncertainty for sex workers in Berlin. The exhibition serves as a vital intervention into current debates around the new law through exhibiting voices that detail nuanced experiences of sex work.

While sex worker organisations worldwide continue to fight for decriminalisation as the best method to secure sex workers' rights and better working conditions, debates surrounding legislation still repeatedly exclude sex workers' voices. As a collective of sex workers, artists and anthropologists, Objects of Desire seeks to reclaim the narrative through preserving sex workers stories. The collective's first exhibition was held in London in August 2016, following research with sex workers in London. Further to temporary exhibitions of objects, the collective is building a permanent archive of sex workers artefacts. Objects from Berlin and London will be catalogued in the archive, which serves as an ongoing resource for sex workers worldwide.

Objects of Desire in Berlin is funded by Open Society in cooperation with Schwules Museum*.



Selection of books, Objects of Desire, London 2016



Blue Balls Fucking Machine, Objects of Desire, London 2016

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Links:

www.projectofdesire.co.uk
www.twitter.com/projectofdesire

Dates:

07.03.2019 Opening event

11:30 Press tour with the curators, Q&A and drinks
19:00 Opening event with performances

01.06.2019 Closing event & International Whore's Day

Objects

The following quotes are a small selection of those which will be shown alongside objects in the exhibition.



Biking in latex, Still from Video, Objects of Desire 2019

Bicycle

When I have to travel to my client, which is a normality, I'm using my bicycle. It doesn't matter which kind of session, and when I'm doing escort I am also drinking a bottle of sparkling wine on my bicycle when it's not too cold, if I don't have to wear big gloves. Sometimes it's hard so for example when you're doing a latex rubber session and it's hot summer and you are biking to your client in latex it's a bit complicated. You really need the right speed for driving your bicycle in latex.

If you're driving too fast you start sweating, but you need the air to cool yourself down so there is a short limit between driving too slow and driving too fast. But don't bike too hard, so if there is a traffic light and you say, 'oh I can make it, I can make it on green!' No, don't do it while wearing latex. It's not a good idea.

Razor

I always take a bath before I go to work, because I have to shave so much. I bathe and then I shave everything, so I feel really secure that I've done it. Before, I was super insecure about everything. That has changed super much through brothel work. There, I just feel really confident and chill.

With private escorting, I think I've come to a point with my body now that I sometimes know that people are onto me. I think they know that there is something that is different. Maybe they see some masculine features about me and then they think I'm a trans woman, because they don't know that trans guys exist. People hate trans women so much that they are so scared that I could be that, and I'm also scared that they could discover me in some way. So in escorting, I'm often trying much harder to be unsuspectingly female. But in the brothel, you have all this red light. Everyone is super pretty there and because I think the client doesn't even think about anything, he will never suspect anything and that's why I feel really safe there.

Natal chart

This is a natal astrology chart I got from a regular. He is quite old, but it's hard to actually guess how old he is, because from his character he appears quite young. I always meet him at his home. His apartment looks like a grandma's house, with drawings of Berlin in the 19th Century and old watercolours of the Dome of Berlin and so on.

He is really into astrology and mystical stuff. He gave me a natal chart based on wrong dates, because he thinks I'm two years younger than I actually am. I felt a bit bad because he was really excited thinking that now he could understand me. I was thinking, aw you don't know shit because it's not the correct chart, but I kept him in his disbelief.



Dream water, Objects of Desire, Berlin 2019

Dream water

I had this special customer. We were becoming very close and he was calling me 'my angel'. He was a theatre director, and his whole thing was projecting his dreams onto the theatre stage. Once we talked while I was working on my bachelor and I had problems sleeping. He gave me a bottle of a substance called 'dream water' that helps you sleep. I never opened it. I still have that bottle because he died shortly afterwards.

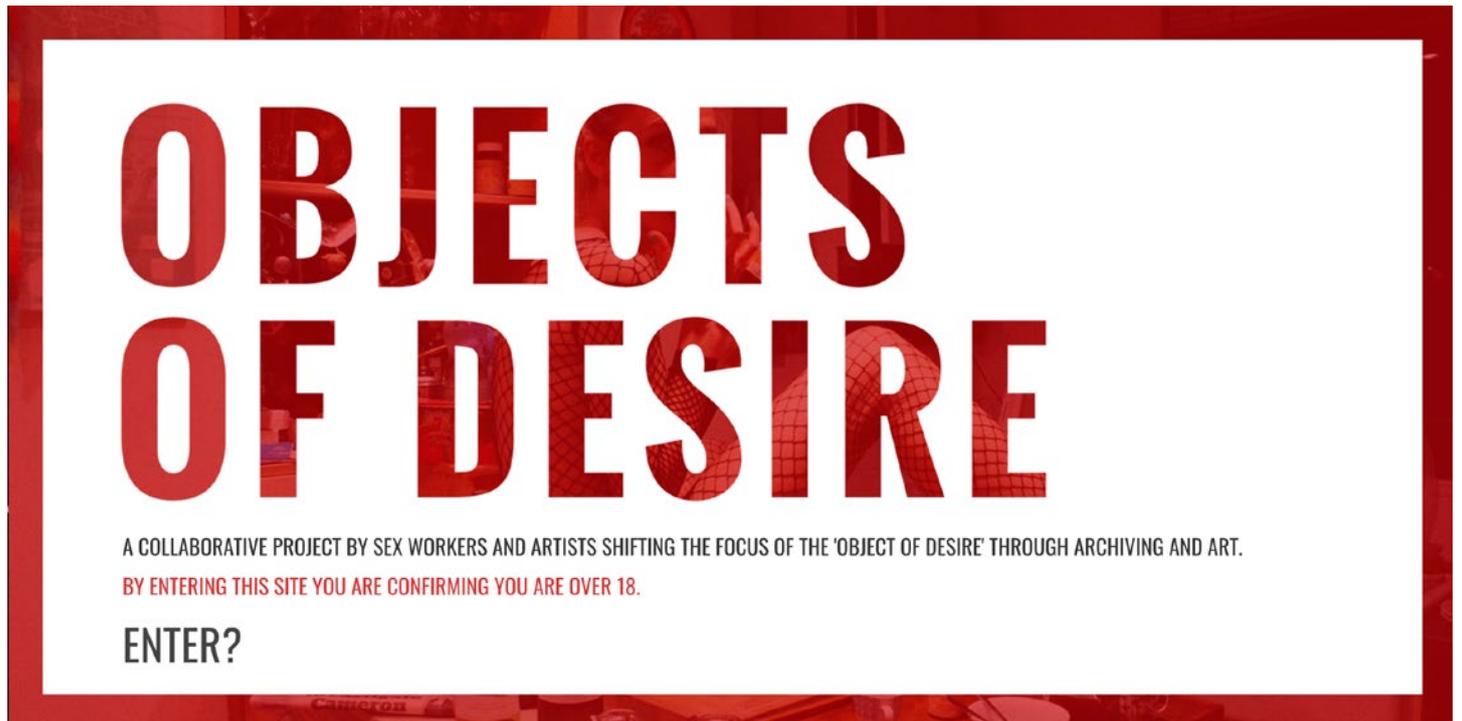
I was the last person who had sex with him before he died. The last time we met he got a coughing attack and didn't feel well. The next day during a rehearsal, he had a heart attack and died. It really struck me, because we had a really beautiful connection. I visited his grave twice and it's been quite hard sometimes. So yeah, I'm having that dream water as an item to memorise him.

The archive

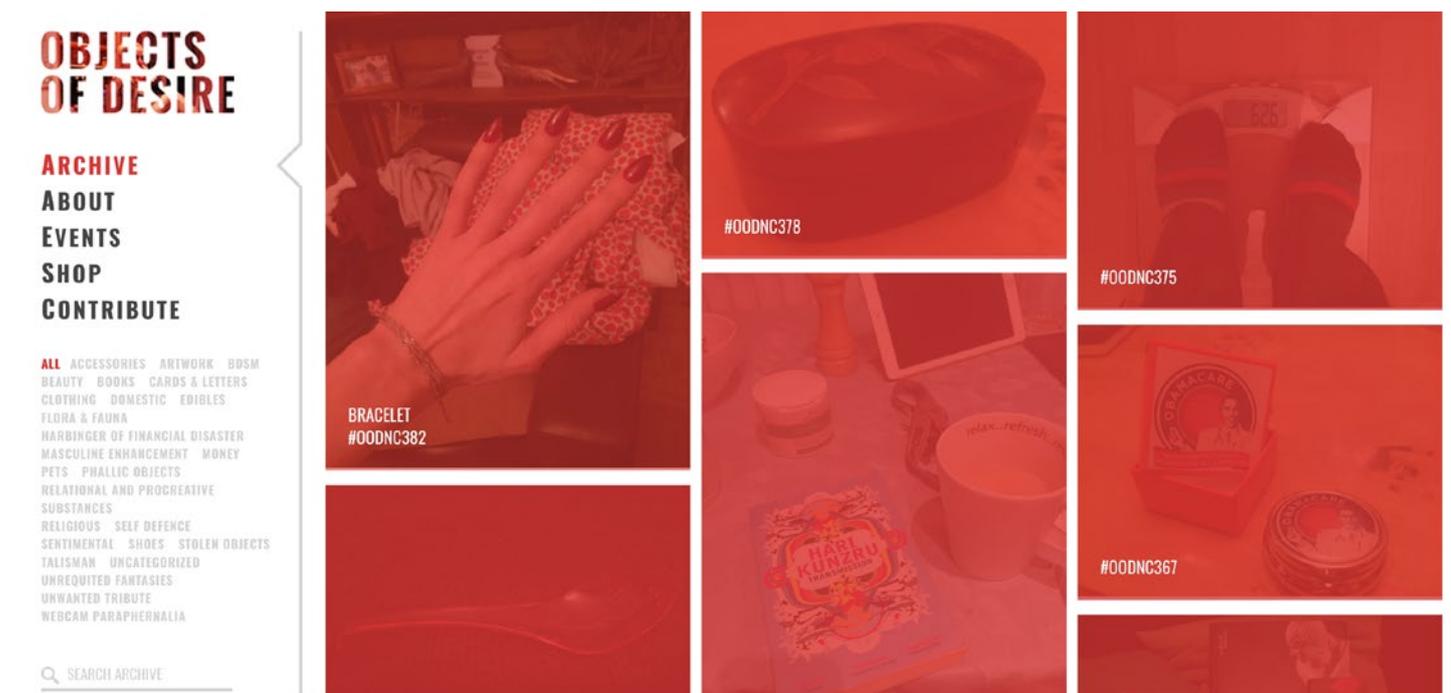
www.projectofdesire.co.uk

Objects of Desire's archive exists online as a permanent preservation of sex workers' stories, and serves as an ongoing resource for sex workers worldwide. Many of the objects currently in the archive were collected through interviews that preceded the London exhibition in 2016, and others were submitted via email.

Following this upcoming exhibition at Schwules Museum, all of the objects exhibited will also be archived. Artworks shown at the Schwules Museum will also be archived 'as objects'. Sex workers anywhere in the world can submit objects and their stories to the archive at any time through the 'submit' page or via email.



Screenshot of Objects of Desire landing page



Screenshot of Objects of Desire archive page

The archive

www.projectofdesire.co.uk

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

ARCHIVE
ABOUT
EVENTS
SHOP
CONTRIBUTE

"THIS CLIENT IS A KIND OF CHEAP SUGAR DADDY, MORE OF A SPLENDA DADDY. FOR MY BIRTHDAY HE GAVE ME A JAR OF MARMALADE, SOME CHOCOLATES AND A CARD. ON THE CARD HE HAD DRAWN A PORTRAIT OF ME, JUST A QUICK PEN DRAWING, ALMOST A CARTOON. IT WAS OF A PHOTOGRAPH OF ME THAT I KNEW HE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE HAD HE NOT KNOWN MY REAL NAME AND FOUND MY FACEBOOK. SO THERE WAS THIS THING OF HAVING TO SUSTAIN A PERFORMANCE OF THANKING HIM FOR THE GIFT WHILE ON THE INSIDE THINKING, "JESUS, HOW THE HELL DID HE GET THIS?" IT WAS A TOUGH SPACE TO NAVIGATE, TRYING TO KEEP THE BOOKING NORMAL AFTER THAT. "

Press photos

All press photos are available on schwulesmuseum.de

They may be used exclusively to report on Objects of Desire with complete indication of the source.



Mad shoes, Objects of Desire, London 2016
Photo by Izzy Valentine



Coasters, Objects of Desire, London 2016
Photo by Izzy Valentine



Marmalade, Objects of Desire, London 2016
Photo by Izzy Valentine



Felt tip Louboutins Objects of Desire,
London 2016 - Photo by Izzy Valentine



Install shot, Objects of Desire, London 2016
Photo by Izzy Valentine



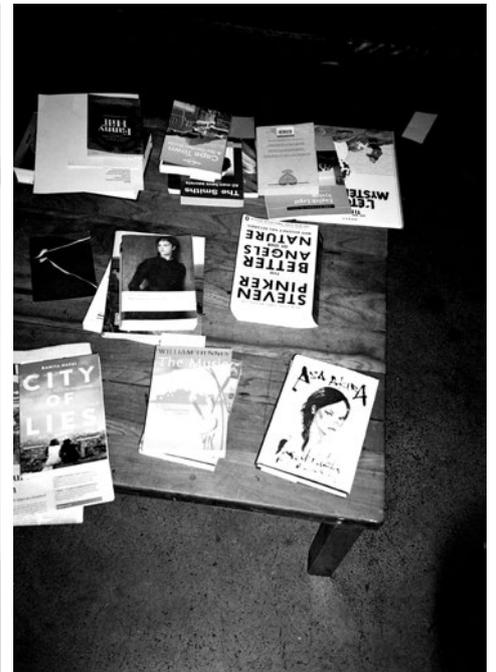
Shrapnel, Objects of Desire, London 2016
Photo by Izzy Valentine



Install shot Objects of Desire, London 2016
Photo by Sean Haughton



Blue Balls Fucking Machine, Objects of Desire,
London 2016 - Photo by Sean Haughton



Selection of books, Objects of Desire,
London 2016 - Photo by Sean Haughton

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Video still from 'Biking in Latex',
Objects of Desire, Berlin 2019



Video still from 'Biking in Latex',
Objects of Desire, Berlin 2019



Objects of Desire, Berlin 2019