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Museum Erotica exhibits stimulating history of sex

How was the sex life of the ancient people of Greece, Japan or China? What did a whore's boudoir in 17th century Denmark look like? Who has the longest penis on earth? What makes the Marquis de Sade so well-known today?

You will find the answers to all these questions, and many more besides, in the Museum Erotica Copenhagen. Founded in 1992, the museum openly illustrates the sexual, erotic and pornographic history of human beings. It is the first erotica museum in Scandinavia and the second one in Europe -- the other is in Amsterdam.

"One visit to the Museum Erotica will illuminate your conception of eroticism and pornography forever!" the museum promises its visitors. This seems to be true in the case of most of the visitors who explore the 750-square-meter museum that occupies a three-floor building on Kobmagergade 24 in central Copenhagen.

"The Golden Phallus" greets every visitor on entry and is the museum's hallmark.

The collections are arranged chronologically from the earliest times when people started recording sex-related materials, and continue right up to the present day. A TV set to inform visitors in Danish and English is provided in each room.

A visit to the museum, which is managed by Ole Ege, an erotic photographer and filmmaker, starts off in the green room.

This room displays erotic artwork from ancient times, like the kylix from Attica (520-480 BC), painted with sexual acts; Chinese erotic amulets; 18th century colored woodcuts from Japan; and erotic paintings, crafts and sculptures from India. It comes as a surprise to find an Indonesian artwork in this section, a two-meter-high erotic wood carving from Bali.

The museum is a good place to discover the facts about erotica and pornography in an entertaining way. It uses tableaux to display real scenes from the past. For instance, scenes from Cupid and Psyche -- an ancient legend about love, and Fanny Hill, a

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figure in the Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure -- the foremost piece of British erotica, which was written by John Cleland and published in 1749. There is also a tableau of a whore's boudoir in Denmark in the 17th century.

The collections and stories displayed in the Museum are mostly taken from throughout the development of Western civilization. The invention of photography in 1839 transformed erotic nude sketches, paintings and drawings into photographs. You can see collections of early porn magazine covers and pin-ups, and photographs of Danish prostitute culture from 1900.

The story of the invention of contraception is also related, including the evolution of contraceptives for men and women in terms of "shapes and sizes".

The museum emphasizes the influence of American culture in the 20th century in a section about *Playboy* magazine and Hollywood's creation of myths and icons. Based upon Irving Wallace's book *The Intimate Sex Lives of Famous People*, the museum also deals with some of Hollywood's most famous personalities, such as Ingrid Bergman, Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo and, of course, Marilyn Monroe.

A large room is especially dedicated to Monroe. Her songs echo around the room while collector's items, her LPs, quotes, personal photos, filmography and an original cocktail dress bought at a Christie's auction in 1999 are exhibited. Visitors can also freely comment on her in a guest book.

"Incredible!" exclaimed a woman visitor upon seeing the picture of the naked Abdullah Daoud, the man who reportedly has the longest penis in the world. In addition to that, the museum also has tableaus exhibiting replica genitalia belonging to porn stars Brad Stone and Chasey Lain.

The Museum also highlights an historic moment in Denmark when it became the first country on earth to radically liberalize pornography in 1967-1969, an event that transformed the country into a world symbol of pornography.

All materials exhibited are sex-related. However, by the entrance to a room containing very explicit material, a warning is displayed advising visitors not to enter should they be easily shocked.

"The museum's collection is definitely different," said a Japanese journalist, who had just spent less than one minute in the "shocking room".

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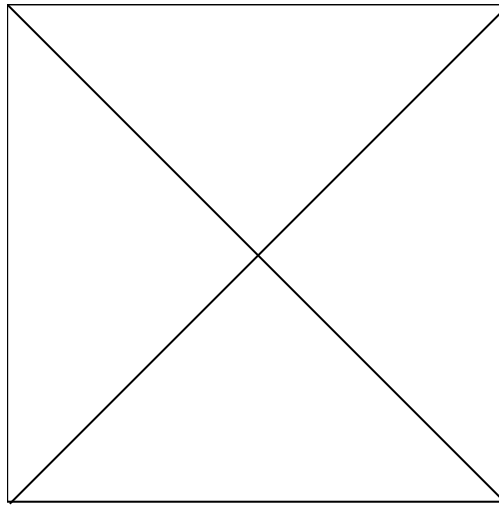
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This room contains many colorful pictures of various types of sexual intercourse and positions, more than the hardest of hard-core. Before leaving the Museum, visitors can also browse at a bank of TV sets showing the latest Western porno movies.

-- **Wahyuni Kamah**

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