

# It's not web3 without sex worker sovereignty

## INTRODUCTION

Before we dive into porn NFTs, “web3 OnlyFans” and all those juicy buzzwords that people love to use as clickbait despite knowing or caring little about any of it – let’s talk about hope. That thing that keeps us going in the darkest of times. The world and the internet can be dark as fuck for sex workers, and so-called “web3” is no different – it is simply a microcosm of this dystopian Black Mirror shitshow we already live in. I began writing this with the hope that shining a light on the darkness can help us shape it into something brighter for everyone. But in the absence of this hope, let this at least be a documentation of these experiences so that they may not be erased, which you will see is already happening.

This will be an extensive reflection of my two years in this space plus interviews with ten other sex workers, and conversations with many others. Between the eleven of us, we do the full range of online and in-person sex work. This representation is crucial, as most discussions center the relatively safe, online content creator who cannot understand the challenges and risks faced by IRL workers. While all interviewees have had some exposure to NFTs, most are not actively involved, though many have been using cryptocurrency for years.

Still, this paper does not purport to represent all experiences that sex workers have had in crypto. We are not a monolith. Our individual experiences will depend on who we know, the type of sex work we do, our level of visibility, our platform size, our political outspokenness, and other marginalized aspects of our identities. It also depends on how early we were, as pioneers are always more likely to be punished.

The intention here is to highlight the issues and obstacles we face in “web3,” which is otherwise ruled by toxic positivity. It is crucial that we are more receptive to criticism from the outcasts if we want this space to be suitable for more than those who already benefit from the status quo and a few token outliers. The intention here is to be more of a mirror than an easy list of solutions. The solution is to listen.

As both a sex worker and a journalist, I have written on this crypto-sex work intersection before, such as in my March 2021 piece in [the Defiant](#). I would have written again on this much sooner, if everyone’s favorite DAO had not tried to silence me... You will soon understand my general lack of trust in platforms and journalists, which is also the reason I turn down [most](#) interview requests, as well as the reason this writing has been self-published on IPFS and crowdfunded by my Twitter followers. This enabled me to pay interviewees for their time.

This is intended for an audience that has some familiarity with crypto, so please do your own research. Please also explore the resources linked throughout, which provide more information about the issues.

## NECESSARY INNOVATORS

Sex workers were among the earliest adopters of crypto and have always been at the forefront of advancing technology. We are pioneers and [necessary innovators](#), and then we are denigrated, ostracized, silenced and disposed of, all while our bodies and ideas are exploited by those not subjected to the same stigma. My and others' attempts to discuss these issues in "web3" have often been met with dismissal, scapegoating, gaslighting or accusations of playing victim. But there is nothing new or imaginary about it.

As described in this 2021 [Hacking//Hustling](#) presentation on [Sexual Gentrification: An Internet Sex Workers Built](#): "Despite being early adopters and innovators of new technologies, sex workers are being excluded from services, platforms and economies as part of a wide scale digital gentrification, sexual sanitization and displacement." And despite the WAGMI propaganda, so-called "web3" is no different.

Make no mistake: the exclusion is routine.

To be clear, we are not actually in "web3," a term that only came into popular use in [late 2021](#). Ideally, it should imply a decentralized web free of middlemen and censorship – yet genuine decentralization remains extremely rare in the crypto space. Similar to politicians' use of words like "democracy" or "peace" or "justice," crypto founders and NFT influencers and VCs have hijacked "web3" to propagandize their followers and further their own agendas. And most people go along with the bullshit, either because they are NPCs who cannot see it, or because they do not care enough to risk the ostracization of fighting it.

Most non-sex workers (civilians, as we say) have never had their [lives](#) or livelihoods threatened by censorship and deplatforming. Most have never been exploited over and over by the middlemen they had to rely on to survive in the larger system that criminalizes and stigmatizes their every move. Most have never had their bank accounts shut down or been denied housing because of their job. Centralized crypto exchanges are no better than fiat banks, by the way – both Coinbase and Gemini have been freezing sex worker accounts for years, including mine.

Yes, getting pushed off the internet gets sex workers killed, as seen with [FOSTA/SESTA](#).

And systemic marginalization always works in tandem with social stigmatization. Unfortunately, marginalized groups that could most benefit from alternative financial systems rarely have the time and access and money and safety and connections and long-term security to dedicate to "building" where we are not welcome. *Most* sex workers



To Big Tech,  
the sex worker is  
as indispensable  
as they are  
disposable.

*'What can tech learn from sex workers?'*  
(2020) by Zahra Stardust

cannot financially and mentally afford to stay and fight for something that pushes us away from so many angles.

The hope I entered the NFT space with in September 2020 gradually all but diminished along with various instances of censorship, deplatforming, silencing, ostracization, stigmatization, straight up dangerous situations, plus the disappointment of very few truly giving a shit about any of it. Many who went through certain earlier experiences with me have either pulled back or disappeared completely from social media, with good reason. Only a handful of the hundreds who read the extensive [NFT guide](#) I made last year actually dove in, let alone stuck around. Sure, others reading this may feel you can relate to disillusionment around “web3,” but you must understand that for sex workers, access to a censorship-free internet and safe financial systems is often a matter of immediate survival.

[Rienzo Kennedy](#), who has a background in finance and has been using crypto for the past 8 years she has been in sex work, was “skeptical but curious” when she got into NFTs in 2021, and soon became disillusioned. “I wanted to believe it wouldn’t be quite as severe as it’s been, that this was a different tone of the internet and maybe we aren’t going to be such fascists about nudity and sexuality,” she said. “Ultimately, people setting the tastes of the industries and who have the funding are going to do the same thing that they did before.”

Of course, the tastemakers do want some nudity – just without the whore stigma.



*Rienzo Kennedy*

## **THE TIMELINE**

October 2020 was the first of multiple times my NFTs were deplatformed, in a selective and homophobic application of Rarible’s policies – reminiscent of how [social media platforms](#) subjectively weaponize their policies to disproportionately erase sex workers. It became clear to me early on that as long as people’s bags are safe, very few here actually give a shit about censorship, despite all the proselytizing about free speech. In fact, when it comes to us dirty sluts, many are happy to see us disappear or will at least turn a blind eye. But if some crypto bro’s 50 ETH “fine art” nude NFT got flagged, or their 10k dick meme got censored, or their voxels-porn NFTs made by a team that did not support actual sex work got searchbanned from OpenSea (true story), their grievances would go viral. NIMBY vibes.

By March 2021, the highly anticipated NSFW NFT platforms started popping up. What does “NSFW” really mean... we’ll get to that, but at least at the time it was a signal that I could exist somewhere. I tried to give some a chance. At best, they were exclusionary and

exploitative. At worst, they were actively harmful, predatory, abusive and dangerous. Either way, it was more of the same old shit under new currency.

By fall 2021, I was deploying my own smart contracts and selling NFTs on my website, largely thanks to [Manifold](#), which I am grateful to for onboarding me early and letting me test their features before opening them to the public. I was relatively early to this approach, before most artists even considered it – because they never had to. The message of maximum sovereignty is what I have advocated for sex workers ever since. I have neither minted nor listed new art for sale on OpenSea in over a year – although they still managed to remove one of my older collections in a targeted DMCA takedown. Rarible also hid some of my NFTs from my own page long after I stopped using them.



*Maitresse*

Ideally, none of us should need to rely on any third-party fee-guzzling sales platform if we don't want to. As said by dominatrix and veteran internet hustler [Maitresse](#), “No matter what, someone is stepping on our necks when we make art under them.”

## WEB3 ONLYSCAMS

Know-it-all crypto bros often talk about “web3 OnlyFans,” how it will save the day (it won't), how they have a genius idea that no one has ever thought of before (you don't), how confusing it is that more sex workers aren't already here (it's not), blah blah blah. But “Web3 OnlyFans” is a paradox because the OnlyFans structure is inherently exploitative, centralized and reliant on an intermediary.

OnlyFans was built on the backs of sex workers (literally, the founder stole his code from a sex worker and threatened to dox its user base if she fought it, according to [Bardot Smith](#)) – and they continue to [push us around](#) as they attempt to sanitize their branding. While many creators are eager for safe alternatives (e.g. LoyalFans or Fansly) that buyers will actually use consistently and won't shut down like [AVN Stars](#), the OnlyFans brand recognition keeps people around. Should we really be aiming to recreate these dynamics of one known platform that can get away with basically anything because creators are so dependent on it and buyers are afraid to try something new?

We can talk about potential solutions that move away from this middleman model, but first, we must address the sad state of 18+ NFT platforms as they do in fact exist already, and why they are not fucking working. Sure, it might be nice to have some legitimate platforms that bring traffic to creators that don't already have large audiences, and crypto payments do have the benefit of no chargebacks. And although I do not believe these

platforms are the best way to onboard people to NFTs, I understand that some may serve this purpose. So this is not to completely discredit every single platform in existence, but rather to give a general sense of what the scene has been like for many.



*"BlackPrint" (2021), Judy*

One reason that sex worker and content creator [Judy](#) has avoided “NSFW” NFT platforms is precisely because they seem like “OnlyFans with a crypto spin. It’s a good money scheme and it’s better if you’re involving crypto, but at the end of the day, web3 is about innovation.”

Rienzo Kennedy expressed a similar sentiment, noting that the “same rent-seeking behavior that persists in the adult industry is being moved over.”

[Niko](#), who has minted her art on both [ScreenSaver.World](#) as well as her own [Manifold contract](#), also has not been interested in NSFW NFT platforms “because they seem to be set up a lot like OnlyFans,” which she prefers to avoid.

“I started selling content almost 8 years ago, and OnlyFans changed it very drastically, so it was less lucrative and the customer expects a lot more. It’s modeled a lot like social media, where you have to post very consistently to get traction.” This race to the bottom is unsustainable for many.

Online sex worker [Honey Live](#) began accepting crypto not long after she began camming in 2018, as a way to avoid giving adult platforms up to a 50% cut on tips and as a contingency measure considering payment apps anti-adult services policies. But aside from SpankPay’s [Pop Shots](#) collection, they have not minted any NFTs. They feel that many 18+ NFT platforms seem to be “capitalizing off of everyone’s desperation to jump ship to a platform that’s better than what we have,” and pointed out that many have a “sketchy” vibe of being run by a “dude with his boner in the other hand.”

Yes, this is confirmed. Even more well-known platforms like TreatDAO and CumRocket have had team members ask creators for unnecessary free content and engage in other predatory behavior. And then they would harass us for speaking out about it. My experiences with this happened relatively early on, but there have still since been various accounts of (gender nonspecific) gaslighting behavior from these and other teams.

With such unprofessional conduct at these platforms’ foundations, it is then no surprise that their “communities” of buyers would reflect this disingenuous and exploitative intent, seeming more attracted by the prospect of profit than the opportunity to support sex workers. Early on, I would go into Telegram chats and ask what people loved most

about CumRocket, for example. Literally every response was something along the lines of, “\$CUMMIES WILL MAKE ME RICH!” with zero mention of the creators.

[Maya Kendrick](#), who was introduced to crypto through [SpankChain](#) and their payment platform [SpankPay](#), believes that “Everybody’s getting distracted from doing anything that’s important. They’re just trying to start a business.” Another reason Maya is not interested in these NSFW platforms is due to lack of trust in the people building them: “There’s nothing enticing to me about a NSFW platform where all the devs are anon because they have nothing to lose and they’re willing to put all of the sex workers on that platform on the line.”

## **THE NIGHTMARE**

One day in March 2021, when these platforms first started popping up, an OnlyFans creator who had been minting NFTs for at least a few months reached out to invite me to join the launch of a new 18+ NFT platform, UniqueFans. Between her endorsement, another content creator on the team, the fact that they were a branch of an already existing platform UniqueOne, and their offer to cover our gas fees to mint (extremely expensive at the time) – it seemed better than most. So I gave it a shot, invited others to join and made some sales. And then, days after launch, I saw some of my sex worker Twitter mutuals sharing warnings to stay away from them.

Upon further investigation, I learned that the Unique team sent ETH to these sex workers without any communication at all that they were doing so or that it was intended for minting fees. Since sex workers often publicly share their payment addresses for anyone who wants to send a tribute, and since they had neither been given a heads up by the platform nor were they familiar enough with Etherscan to sleuth it, they assumed the unexpected payments were random gifts and tweeted about them as such, as is customary. Rather than the team owning up to their mistake in lack of communication, they publicly accused the sex workers of stealing and began threatening to hack and doxx them onto 4chan, saying things like “not a good idea to burn people in the crypto space,” “you have 24 hours,” etc. These unhinged threats came first from the sex worker on Unique’s team, were reiterated by other “official” accounts, and continued even after the ETH was returned. They thought it was okay to destroy sex workers’ lives over their own mistake and maybe 0.1 ETH.

When I and a couple others who had launched with them tried to hold the team accountable, they became evasive and aggressive. We left the platform as other creators stayed behind in dynamics reminiscent of an abusive relationship that you think is the best you can get. At least, that is a more empathetic way to look at what may also have been a desire to get their names out there. They trivialized the danger of the situation, made excuses for the team, said they wanted to help them learn from their mistake, and offered to write an apology statement on the team’s behalf. Meanwhile, the team dismissed it all as “FUD.”

Those of us who left tried to share what happened, but even vaguely tweeting about it would result in DMs claiming it never happened. We were clearly being watched. We went to the Adult Performance Artist Guild (APAG), which did nothing. We spoke about it in interviews with The Block for an article that was meant to simultaneously paint another platform (XXXNifty) in a positive light, until that team pulled some sketchy shit too and the article was never published. More recently, I shared this information in an interview for [Coindesk](#), but it was omitted from the story. Threatening to doxx sex workers is a big fucking deal, and if you recall, this is not even the first time in these few pages that it has come up.

While it would be much simpler to believe that a sex worker or two on your team is an indicator of trust and safety, it is clear this is not necessarily the case. It is clear that doing some type of sex work does not mean you give a shit about other sex workers. Other similar adult NFT platforms also tried to piggyback off of this situation, or suddenly asked me for (free) consultations on how to be better for the creators their platforms were marketed for but somehow never thought to involve.

## CUTTING OUT THE MIDDLEMAN

All of my early experiences drove me to advocate for as much self-sovereignty as possible. Especially seeing other sex workers defend disgusting behavior or promote shady shit for whatever reason, it felt important for me to hold strong to my values. Doing so has helped me find others who feel the same way, such as Maîtresse. “Sex workers built the internet,” they tell me. “We need this tech now more than ever to have complete control over our art sans intermediaries. Even sex workers are jumping on this web 2.1 bandwagon and starting OnlyFans alternatives with crypto payments, but still taking a cut. I can no longer stand behind this.”



*“Kill the Middleman” (2022), Natrix*

[Mistress Lienne](#) has used crypto since 2018 yet has not minted any NFTs thus far, despite exploring potential platforms. “My impression of many of these projects is that they are mostly trying to replicate the middleman business model in web2 that I want to avoid. They still control access to your base, which I think goes against the whole point of web3 and crypto.”

## WAGMI?

Along with the web2 middleman structure being carried over to so-called “web3,” so are the same old social attitudes and biases. While every single body type exists in the sex industry, the [lack of diversity](#) in those featured on web2 porn platforms is further magnified in crypto. The homogeneity of who is welcomed on and celebrated by these platforms is not very... WAGMI.

[Chrisse](#), an artist who is also an escort and online sex worker, started minting art in Spring 2021. She was ready to set up her profile for XXXNifty after speaking extensively with the team, until they suddenly “went silent.” She tried to follow up, but they never responded. Chrisse then noticed that “it was all very much the same kind” of mostly white women on their platform, all cisgender as far as she could see. Between this and being ghosted, she did not feel welcome and no longer wanted to pursue other NSFW platforms.

As one of the few visible black trans women artists in the NFT space, and a queer sex worker at that, Chrisse often feels excluded, though it can be “hard to decipher” why this exclusion is happening – but it is absolutely happening. “When you start to connect the dots in your head, you seem crazy or out of line, but in all actuality it makes perfect sense,” she told me.

Judy also noticed a glaring lack of representation on NSFW NFT platforms. “Being a black big woman, it wasn’t a market for me... It was just [skinny] white naked bodies,” she said. “It was very discouraging. You don’t even want to put your art up there, because it’s not going to sell unless you heavily advertise it or shill in spaces where people don’t even want to listen to you, or have the odd chance of somebody in a Twitter Space message you on the side and he’s saying some really off-the-wall predatory things, but that he’ll buy your art. It’s crazy to think about.”

These platforms were not only passively reflecting the racism and transphobia that already exist in the crypto sphere and sex industry and in general, but actively excluding people and ostracizing their own creators who suggested bringing in a more diverse range of artists.

In a world where sex work-related arrests have always disproportionately targeted non-white and trans workers, it is important to make sure that “web3” is truly open and made accessible to all, especially those looking for safer income streams.

Discussions around “inclusivity in web3” also often ignore the issue of KYC. Even I, an American citizen, did not have a valid ID at one point. It’s not “web3” if it shuts out undocumented workers or others who do not feel safe disclosing their identity for literally any reason. Privacy is safety.



## TOKEN-GATING

You may be thinking, well, what about a self-owned token-gated website or Discord channel? Hasn't anyone thought of that? Yes, we have. It might work for those who have been able to build up an extremely niche community in the face of constant social media [shadowbans](#), suspensions and mysteriously frozen follower counts. But as of now, it's not a solution for most.

Remember, the blockchain is a public ledger. With all the shame around watching and paying for porn, consumers generally do not want the whole world seeing what they jerk off to. "People don't want the token-gated porn discord NFT in their wallet and they don't want to have to make a second wallet," Maya explained.

Stigma is strong. Even my non-nude art is too much for some to hold in their wallet or even retweet on Twitter, as many have told me privately. Don't want to get caught "simping" for a whore!

This issue of privacy is one reason blockchain technology will never be an end-all-be-all solution for sex workers in general (unless privacy is [integrated](#) on L1s). For some, sending crypto may be more convenient than going to a bank to pull out large amounts of cash to pay for a session, but cash cannot be traced the way crypto can – either by the government that's out to punish you or by people who are out to stigmatize you.

Sex workers also cannot trust most average porn consumers to responsibly handle our tokens in the same way that NFT artists can generally trust their collectors. On average,



*Mistress Lienne*

collectors respect civilian artists more than anyone respects sex workers. Sure, paying a subscription fee to our site is better than watching leaked content, but it is far from being an indicator of respectful intentions.

We cannot exactly trust random buyers on the internet to not decimate our floor price to access our gated platforms if they become disgruntled, and we cannot trust them to not transfer the token among friends. Even if our tokens' floor price rises, we probably won't want random dudes being the ones profiting off of membership to our site. Maybe we could set royalties ridiculously high, but those can be bypassed.

Soulbound tokens with the option to revoke access for certain holders might be an option for more effective token-gating, but whatever it is, the sex worker must not be relinquishing all control over who accesses content.

## ONBOARDING CLIENTS

Even if some safe platforms exist, onboarding clients who will consistently use them remains an issue. Investing in crypto on Robinhood is one thing, but getting comfortable spending it via Metamask or some other non-custodial browser extension wallet is another. As Mistress Lienne pointed out, “There is still a steep learning curve when it comes to crypto and NFTs. I can only imagine it would be more so for my clients who spend most of their time on the computer watching porn.”

Maya also tells me, “Half the people buying my shit are over 50 and don’t text. They’re not going to join my token-gated Discord.” If this is the case for Maya who has nearly 100k Twitter followers, you can imagine it might be even more difficult for those with smaller platforms.

While there may be a mass migration to blockchain alternatives once more porn sites are completely shut down, Mistress Lienne is also concerned that mass adoption could lead to more “middleman control.” While we may not be able to stop the centralized entities from taking over, it is important for us to stand firm in our values of decentralization where we can and support real builders.

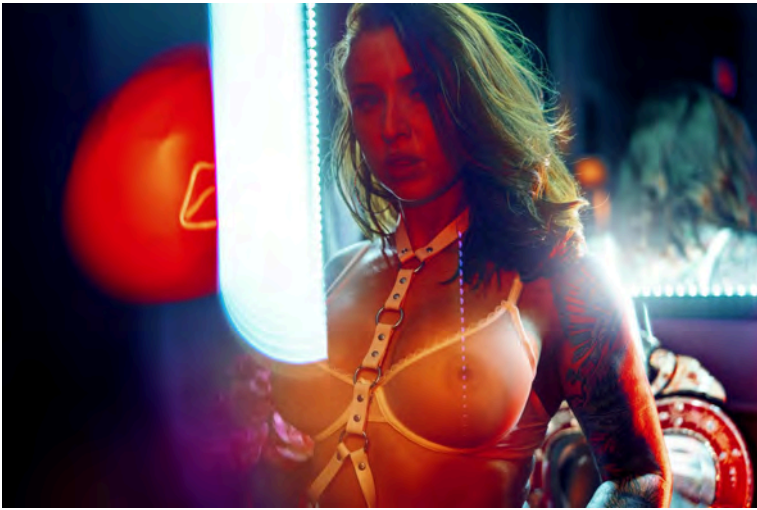
As someone whose Coinbase account was banned in 2019, Chrisse certainly understands “the importance of decentralization for sex workers,” but finds it difficult to pull clients over to NFTs: “I see how not accepting and not ready the space is. Clients do as well,” and as long as the sites she utilizes are still functioning, she says “it’s hard to pull them elsewhere.”



*Chrisse*

I have onboarded some clients to crypto, and even had a few who enjoy paying me to teach them how to use it. But generally, if they don’t already genuinely care about the preference of their favorite creator/provider, they must either be incentivized for their own benefit and convenience, or forced with no other option.

[Miss Nicci](#), a professional dominatrix for over decade, started using Bitcoin “out of necessity” in 2014 when ad site BackPage stopped accepting credit card payments. Though Backpage was shut down in [2018](#), other ad sites still operate similarly. “It was just what I had to do to pay for my ads to get customers and pay my bills,” she said, not seeing it as an investment until later. But since the [October 2021](#) credit card crackdown, she has been focused on onboarding both other providers and clients to crypto, creating a guide [Bitcoin for Sex Workers](#) and incentivizing clients with a \$100 discount on sessions if paid in Bitcoin.



Miss Nicci

Miss Nicci also told me about positive experiences selling videos on [lightning.video](#), a platform based on Bitcoin's Lightning network. While not specific for adult content, it is open to all – “no verification, no IDs or banned words.” Due to credit card discrimination, the [language](#) that sex workers are able to use to [describe](#) our content on porn sites has been increasingly limited. Truly decentralized crypto platforms could provide a solution to these limits. “When I was writing the descriptions to these videos, I

was almost crying because I had not realized how much this credit card discrimination had impacted my vocabulary... It just made me realize how limiting this credit card discrimination is to creativity in general,” she says. Although buyers may find the Lightning Network more complex, she says they are willing to figure it out if they cannot buy the content elsewhere.

The “killing the environment” narrative has also been a massive barrier to onboarding both other sex workers and clients, either because they believe the (often ill-informed) narrative, or because they know that others do. “It’s such a gut reaction,” Honey said. Even when this argument lacks context and is not fully accurate, it’s an “easy sell” for sex workers and allies who are often left-leaning. “When I did the SpankPay Pop Shots and one of my friends retweeted me, they got a DM from [a paying customer] being like, ‘I always supported you, but now I see you retweeting NFT shit, I can’t support you anymore.’” It is understandable that sex workers would be hesitant to dive into this world – especially those who cannot afford to lose existing customers just to try out something new that might not be lucrative anyway.

Now that Ethereum is Proof of Stake, we will see how long this narrative takes to shift. But even with a large portion of Bitcoin mining powered by renewable sources, its demonization has persisted.

## THE COLLECTOR-ARTIST CONNECTION

As discussed in regard to token-gating, the relationship between general NFT collectors and civilian artists is not exactly analogous with the client-sex worker relationship. After all, most porn consumers do not even value porn enough to pay for it, and those who do pay for it are usually just looking to jerk off.

Paying us large amounts of money does not necessarily mean a client or collector is more respectful, either – it could make them more entitled. I have had to block several collectors who felt they could push boundaries after buying one of my pieces, just like I and many other sex workers have dealt with clients who feel they can act up because they are paying us.

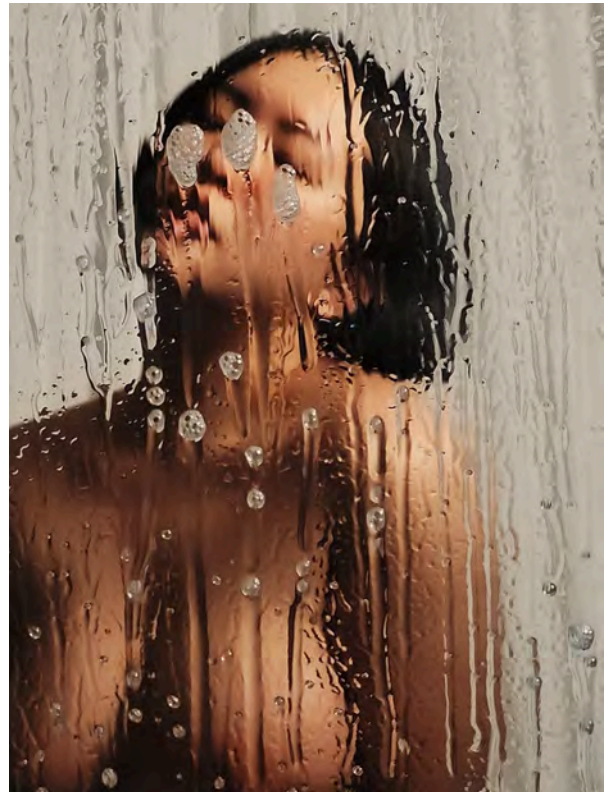
Women artists in general may face similar entitlement issues with male collectors, but we experience this on another level while also being taken less seriously due to this dehumanizing implication that we are ‘asking for it.’ This dynamic is also more likely to hurt creators with smaller platforms, who may be targeted as more vulnerable or desperate and also would have less of a community or stable client base to fall back on.

But building your reputation as an artist in this social media-based NFT space depends on building a community of collectors that are not afraid to show off your art. And when the more “respectable” collectors avoid supporting us to save their image from stigma, we may be left feeling pressured to cater to collectors who are not so respectful.

Along with Honey and Maya, I also participated in Pop Shots last year – a fun, creative outlet and an awesome way for SpankChain to give more sex workers a taste of NFTs. The best type of collector for Pop Shots is most likely the true fan who wants to collect a token from their favorite creators simply because they like us. However, there has not been much of a secondary market for Pop Shots. This is likely partly due to OpenSea’s shadowban of NSFW content, which we will discuss more soon – but it also raises questions of to what degree we are respected as artists.

Pop Shots already unlocked access to a unique piece of content, but some buyers were demanding even more “utility.” We often see this demand in the NFT space when tokens are viewed more as flip than as art for art’s sake. But this can easily become exploitative towards sex workers when buyers push the boundaries of what we are already providing. Some buyers suggested the secondary market would be more active if we also granted collectors access to live porn shoots, or permanent OnlyFans subscriptions – neither of which are remotely reasonable to infinitely give every collector of a token of which we receive only a percentage of royalties.

Most consumers of sexual content are interested in jerking off. And in general, most people do not see porn as something they should pay for. Sometimes people get shamed for paying for it! It is my hope that NFTs can



*Honey Live*

help shift social attitudes around sex work and its perceived value as art. But until that shift happens, there will only ever be an extremely small percentage of the population that is happy to pay us on a public ledger when they can cum quickly elsewhere for free.

If you believe in NFTs as some revolutionary shift towards creators finally getting paid, but you never pay for the porn you consume, there is nothing revolutionary about what you stand for. Try cleaning your mirrors and take a long, hard look at yourself. And then try paying sex workers for the treasure behind our paywalls, which is generally far more 'artsy' than the free shit on PornHub's homepage.

## ART VS PORN AND PORN AS ART

Sex workers are artists, and all sex work is some type of art – whether that's performance art, interactive art, visual art or some combination. Honey, who attended art school, sees herself as a niche performance artist: “When you're a camgirl, you're performing a persona all the time.”



["ETH ME"](#) (2021), *Natrix + Maya Kendrick*

Maya also described her experiences shooting porn: “In all porn, there's some art behind it. We're on porn sets and everybody's talking about, 'oh, should we do a Dutch angle for this shot?' And then you want to talk about how it's not art? I sat there for three hours while they lit this. It's art.”

In 2020, when I was one of a handful of people minting my own body let alone nudes, I felt pressured to avoid minting pure photography, knowing that

many would dismiss it as “content” rather than “art” when coming from a sex worker and her camera phone. Nonetheless, even my highly edited art was dismissed as “not art.”

Two years later, nude photography is all the rage in the mainstream NFT world. Many enthusiasts of this genre do their best to distance themselves from “porn”— even if creating exactly the same thing that a sex worker might create. There would not be *such* an urge to emphasize that some art is “not porn” if porn was valued as the art that it is.

In reality, it takes just as much talent (...arguably more?) to create art that can inspire an orgasm with nothing but your camera phone and your own body and your own four walls, as it does to take a pretty photo of a conventionally beautiful model with an expensive camera (often in an fancy location).

Sexual energy is creative energy! Yet the value of our creative artistry is obscured by stigma and projection of the observer's shame. As written in 2017 by porn performer [Lorelei Lee](#), "Once you have done [pornography], anyone who knows you have done it sees a mark on you... And they will tell you it's pornography that has turned your body into an object."

So, we may consider these different types of nude/erotic artists: (1) the nude model/artist whose work is not intended to be sexualized, or at least makes this claim; (2) the erotic artist whose art is openly sexual but is otherwise not a sex worker, and (3) the sex worker artist who may or may not be using nudity, and may or may not be overtly sexualizing themselves, but is more likely to be seen as an object without agency or a gold-digger than as an artist, permanently viewed through a sexualized and stigmatized lens. While there may be some overlaps in these types, particularly the first two, the point is that some have more of a choice in how they are perceived and are more inherently valued.

The difference between "NSFW" and "SFW" is often a subjective grey area. Sex workers, especially those into kinks and fetishes, know that pretty much anything can be jerkoff material. We know that even the most mundane and seemingly unerotic things can be sexualized. We know that someone out there will jerk off to our toes or our armpits, so we should probably censor and paywall them.

And, to be honest – not only is it naïve to believe you can control how others see you, but you are disempowering yourself by insisting you cannot simultaneously be both your own subject and someone else's object. Someone else's gaze does not change your intention, nor does your intention blind their gaze. Men generally do not have to choose between their respectability and their sexuality, and neither should women. Objectification is not inherently disempowering – lack of agency is.

But to people and platforms and their policies, no matter how blurry the lines are around sexualization, some art and content will always automatically be considered "NSFW" because a sex worker is making it. Meanwhile, non-sex workers can fall back on the claim of "that wasn't my intention" or "I'm not *one of them*" when they get censored or harassed, as if we deserve either of those things, as if we are beneath them, as if they deserve agency but we do not. Sex workers do in fact exercise agency over our bodies, we just do it in ways that are disruptive to the norm. Of course, no one likes being sexualized when they truly do not want to be... but many walk this fine line while claiming they're not and simultaneously labeling and stigmatizing others with their attempts to separate art and porn. They see their art as separate from and morally superior to their definition of "porn."

"We must have uncomfortable discussions about the apparent separation between nude art and us being othered. We need allies to push us to the front of the room," Maîtresse says. And we're not asking for pity, just the same respect that anyone else gets.

There is no question that no matter what we do, we are treated differently. There is no question that this is reflected in how we are received in the "web3" and art worlds. Chrise also clearly noticed that civilian "erotic artists get a better reputation"

in NFTs than sex workers: “It’s not that it’s not based on sex work. It’s not that it doesn’t show the body. It’s the fact that it doesn’t come from a sex worker that gives them the leg up.”

These double standards are also clearly reflected in who can get away with what on social media and the selective application of platform policies. “If you’re just kind of non-offensive but hot, you’re allowed to exist in more spaces [than sex workers]... I can’t even post myself in a bathing suit just standing there without my account suffering for the next two weeks.” Rienzo Kennedy explained. Similarly, Maya says, “I see Instagram models post the same shit I do everyday, except I would get my account deleted in a second.” As usual, the pioneers who paved the way are the ones to be punished.

If you are truly anti-censorship, you should understand that pretending anyone can draw one objective line between “SFW” and “NSFW” ultimately hurts artists of all kinds. Platforms can and will weaponize their vague NSFW policies to suppress anyone with a message they do not like while letting others do as they please. OpenSea recently used their NSFW policy as an excuse for shadowbanning [Mike Three’s Bored Ape Yoga Club](#), a collection of autofellating Bored Apes that he describes as a “parody of BAYC culture and a satirical portrait of NFT community elitism.” And yet, OpenSea has no problem displaying scam collections using his same artwork, rather than either removing them as scams or also shadowbanning them as NSFW. Perhaps this discrepancy has nothing to do with protecting kids and everything to do with the financial ties between OpenSea, Yuga Labs and a16z, of which Mike is a vocal critic?

### FIRST THEY CAME FOR THE...

*“First they come for the sex workers, then they come for everyone, including artists.”* Sex workers are always the canary in the coalmine when it comes to censorship and restrictive rules on the internet. Have you been listening? Have you ever heard of the [EARN IT](#) act? The nude and erotic artists who talk about censorship and stigma have never once mentioned FOSTA/SESTA and generally ignore sex workers. (The day I am publishing this, the "Nude Neighborhood" artists hosted a Twitter space about "porn" without including anyone who makes it to speak for ourselves, despite knowing us. It was about othering.)

It is also important for artists who very directly appropriate sex worker aesthetics to understand their origins and the risks faced by those who do this shit for survival. Niko noticed civilian artists making pole dance NFTs, which she sees as “inauthentic” and questions the ethics of them making money off of it – especially when real strippers are striking over club safety conditions. “Pole dancing was born out of a desperation... It’s a lot of stage performance. You have to be aware of your surroundings. Dancers get assaulted on stage literally all the time... It’s just this whole other world that is not connected to a studio.”



I could also tell you about multiple instances of non-sex worker artists creating art that was clearly directly inspired by mine that remained unsold even when featured in major media. I am happy to inspire others, but it's weird when civilians (and even some semi-celebrity, in my case) can profit off of our aesthetics without the stigma while we struggle to pay the bills or simply stay safe.

## UNWELCOME

Aside from the friends who onboarded Niko, she has otherwise not felt welcome here. "It's been harder to sell to a wider audience, especially as a sex worker. It's been harder to interact with the more women-centered NFT spaces because they get kind of awkward when you talk about sex work." She explained that in the beginning, people tried to be positive, but "at a certain point, when you talk about the real-life hardships that sex workers are going through, they don't want to hear about it. They just want to see pretty pole pictures... and club aesthetics because it's been very popularized in the last few years, especially [by non-sex workers] on Tiktok."

Judy created a separate Twitter account for her NFTs in hopes that it would help her art be taken more seriously, to reduce the automatic sexualization and stigmatization of being a sex worker. But it didn't work. She told me about joining Twitter Spaces to talk about her art with other artists, and not being received in the same way: "When I told them that I started off doing OnlyFans and that I want to create another avenue for my



Judy

art, it became cryptic, like, 'oh, that's cool, next person.' But with everybody else they were asking question after question [about their inspiration]. And I was like, well, damn, you don't want to hear *my* inspiration? I'm inspired by the way I look. I don't have a cliché look so this is why I want to show that black bodies can be beautiful... As soon as they saw I was a proud sex worker, it was like, okay, she's just trying to bring in some more money."

Even in spaces meant for sharing nude art, Judy says she was not taken seriously – "The only people that did take me seriously was other sex workers or queer people." She has since pulled back from the NFT space completely after immersing herself in it for some time. (Update: Judy's [Twitter](#) accounts were suspended on October 11, including one with 132k followers.)



Another reason Judy is no longer active in “web3” is due to the way people tried to exploit her and the other sex workers she was trying to onboard. Even just trying to join educational Twitter Spaces as listeners would get them put on the spot for the sexual content in their profiles. People would also try to get free nudes or meet-ups in exchange for providing educational information about crypto. “I was trying to put people on and then I found out they’re being taken advantage of. It threw me off completely and it left a bad taste in my mouth of web3,” she told me.

So, sex workers are dismissed as just trying to make money, while simultaneously exploited? Make it make sense. As if most artists here are not here at least partly to get paid for our creations. Do you just hate when we get paid? As if we cannot also be here for the art and the technology and the innovation. Can we not have multifaceted interests? As if we have so many other options of where to go while we are constantly being deplatformed and censored across the internet. Are we allowed to exist anywhere?

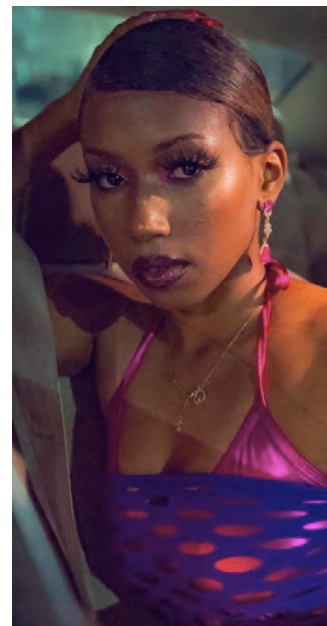
One of many reasons I was attracted to NFTs was because it seemed like a more accessible way to make money, as medical issues sometimes make it difficult to be consistent with IRL work. But being successful in NFTs still demands consistency, which is not always easy for sex workers. As Niko explained, “We are in this profession because we have inconveniences in our own lives, like health issues or being single parents or mental health issues, that make it not easy for us to keep regular 9-5 jobs.”

For many, maintaining the online consistency required to be successful in the NFT world is a whole other job in itself. This is also one reason Honey has not dove deeper into NFTs: “There is a huge barrier for me to actually put the time in... Especially the way things are this year, I’m way too burnt out to take on any new projects.”

Other than PopShots and collaborating with me, Maya has not fully jumped into making her own NFTs – partly because the culture feels similar to mainstream porn, where predatory men can thrive: “I stopped shooting mainstream porn because there’s so many abusive dudes and it doesn’t matter how many times you call them out, it just reflects badly on you, and they’re just gonna keep getting richer and richer.”

[Idalis](#), a mixed media artist who has done online sex work for six years, also described a situation of people walking on eggshells around calling out predatory men in NFTs. We have seen predatory behavior all throughout the space, from male photographers to influencers to IRL events, and no one seems to listen unless other men are calling them out. It’s the same old shit, hidden behind PFPs.

We have also seen photographs of women’s bodies – both sex workers and civilians – being used and minted without their permission. You can guess which type of woman people are more likely to sympathize with and rally around.



*Idalis*

While Idalis has found some genuine support in the art community, they also tell me, “I’ve been shunned for being open about my sexuality or for doing sex work. I’ve been idealized, romanticized and not treated like a person.”

Idalis says this whorephobia is even more intense in crypto, where they have been “ignored blatantly, like people felt I was too full of myself, because they didn’t take me seriously because of the sex work, and also probably misogynoir... People do try to humble black artists, especially the sexually liberated.”

Many of the sex workers I spoke with who were not actively involved in NFTs cited both the “crypto bro” vibes as well as whorephobia as reasons that they and other sex workers have stayed away from the space. They do not even feel comfortable engaging in discussions where they will either be made to feel stupid, taken advantage of, or even kicked out of a Twitter Space because of their job. Yes, that has happened plenty of times.

## SWERF CITY

But if you’re thinking that men are the only problem, you are so fucking wrong. Whorephobia may be as rampant among women in crypto as it is among men, just in a different form. “I think it’s almost worse with the woman than with the men,” Maya says, attributing it to “such deep internalized misogyny they don’t even realize they’re whorephobic, because it’s natural to them.”

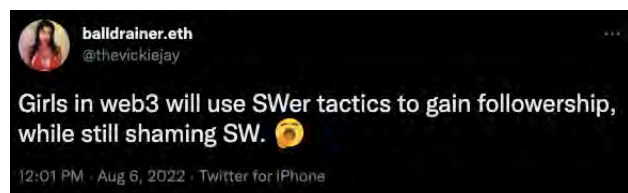


Meme by [Allie Awesome](#)

SWERFs (“sex worker exclusionary radical feminists”) and their false feminism abound in “web3.” Yeah, they want more women in crypto, just not *our* kind of woman. Even wannabe allies unknowingly perpetuate stigma constantly because, well, it’s just too much for them to unlearn and unpack and relearn.

Judy says the whorephobia can even come from former sex workers turned “influencers,” who would kick her out of Twitter Spaces before she even said a word. With this type, there is often the classist or moralistic attitude that they are superior because they don’t *need* to do sex work anymore... even if in some ways, they still are.

We are certainly seeing a [blurring of the lines](#) between “sex worker” and “influencer” as more and more of those who identify more as the latter (the “e-girl”, the “web3 baddie”) sign up for OnlyFans or sell sexy NFTs or get offered exorbitant amounts of money by men (who would

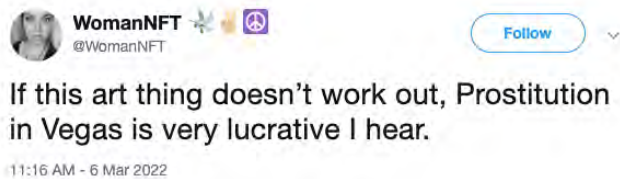


probably never pay a “sex worker” due to stigma). It’s great if women can make money however they want, but it becomes problematic when these same influencers shame sex workers while benefitting from their distance to us and essentially gentrify the roads we got punished for paving.

Judy has also observed women in the NFT space who “try to please the big names, try to kiss ass and talk down [to sex workers] like, ‘oh I would never do that,’ or make jokes about ‘if the market crashes I’m going to have to do what she’s doing.’ And it’s like, what am I doing? Having another job?”

From OnlyFans jokes to the classic dead hooker trope, there is probably no other marginalized group that is more disposable or more socially acceptable to dehumanize and disrespect under the guise of comedy. Sure, I believe in the power of humor to help us deal with difficult situations – but when they come from a place of maliciousness and/or ignorance, they are more likely to perpetuate stigma or normalize violence.

At this point, we brace ourselves for a wave of [OnlyFans jokes](#) every time the market dips. The punchline of these jokes is essentially the survival sex worker, the least privileged sex worker who doesn’t have much choice. They also imply that sex work is easy money. Ironically, most who make these jokes would likely fail miserably (unless they already have celebrity or influencer status) or get scared out of doing what we do.



Sometimes, people don’t just joke, but directly tell us to get the fuck out. As tweeted by an artist who many continued to applaud as a leader of OG women crypto artists, and who herself made nude art yet was *deeply* offended when it was labeled “NSFW” –



...Ah, the moral superiority bullshit.

Crypto and sex work are extremely similar in that they have potential to provide the most marginalized people in society with opportunities to empower themselves and escape dangerous situations. So if you say that sex workers don't belong in crypto, not only do you not understand decentralization, but you don't give a fuck about women. If you claim to care about [free speech](#) and body autonomy but don't stand up for the sex workers fighting for both on the frontlines, you're a hypocrite. And if you think it will ever be possible to draw a between "SFW" and "NSFW" upon which to judge what deserves to be censored or not, well, sorry, but someone has jerked off to that Facebook photo of you wearing sandals.

What many sex workers describe in the dynamics with other women in (and out of) the crypto space is widely known as "[pick-me](#)" behavior. Sex workers are indeed one of the groups that pick-mes often disparage the most. And while this dynamic is inevitable everywhere in society, it is particularly amplified in the male-dominated crypto sphere, where some women feel pressured to compete for resources mostly held by men.

As described by Miss Nicci who worked in a male-dominated field prior to sex work, the pick-me dynamic "tends to happen a lot in communities that are generally male-based. You get a lot of women who will do literally anything to get more men to like them... [They] say Bitcoin is for freedom, yet none of them support body autonomy." Whether out of genuine feelings of superiority or desperation for Twitter engagement or art sales, internalized misogyny and the whorephobia at its foundation are constantly playing out all over crypto, further stigmatizing the already more marginalized groups of women.

Idalis feels that because civilian women in the NFT space are not accustomed to being around sex workers, they become "intimidated by us, because they want to be picked... Men can go with their inflated egos and be dickheads, and a lot of the women will kiss their ass because they have the money." Judy also noticed that women in crypto "try to be number one in men's eyes, to get more opportunities."

It would be extremely naïve to pretend these pick-me dynamics that occur constantly in our male-dominated society would not be heightened in "web3" bro culture.

## **EXCLUSIONARY CULTS**

No community is immune to these issues, but pointing them out in this undeniably culty NFT environment can get you scapegoated into the villain that every cult needs. Vaguely stating that these dynamics were occurring in one heavily male-dominated community resulted in accusations that I was attacking all women – rather than opening conversations about the insidious disrespect I was indeed experiencing publicly and privately. Ironically, I was probably the first more vocal advocate to try bring in more women to that community, though my suggestions on how to do so had been dismissed months prior. I was eventually given a custom honorary NFT in this project's new collection – but when I excitedly thanked a founder for it, I was told to "never complain about the community again," no further discussion. So it was given to me to shut me up?

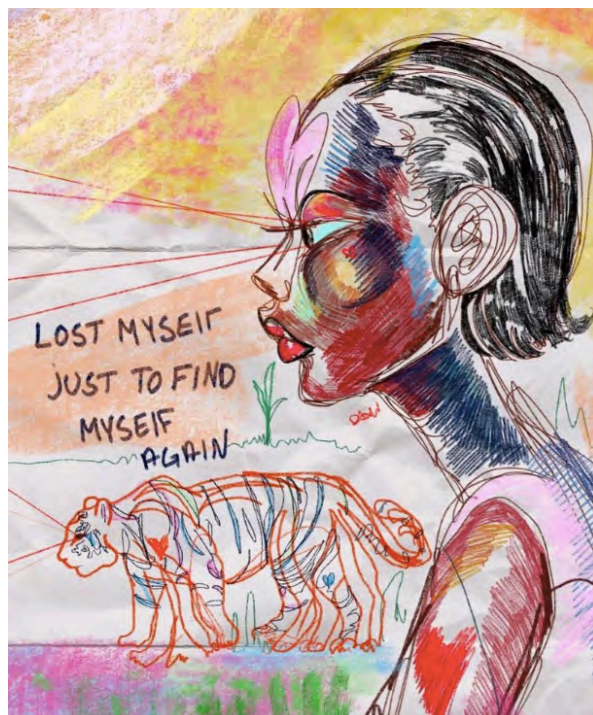
To make them look “inclusive” and use my audience? I don’t know, but it was surely not to “honor” me. (I am not naming this project for fear of retaliation, but feel free to lurk my wallets and figure it out.)

The sexy dominatrix traits made in my likeness appeared throughout their new collection and fetched high prices. But they also immediately inspired some Discord members to make malicious jokes about whores and continuously antagonize me when I called out the disrespect as others laughed along. Another founder then told me I was playing victim and I was soon mysteriously removed from the honorary group chat. Shut up and take it or else I’m the problem, right?

It is absolutely twisted to profit off of sex worker aesthetics without listening to sex worker issues. I was told to “keep [my] sex worker issues out of the [community]” and “take them to [my] personal Twitter” – then was attacked for tweeting vaguely about *my lived experiences*. Where can I speak if not on my own platform? Not talking about something does not mean it is not happening, it only enables its continuation. Unfortunately, tokenizing someone from a marginalized group only to treat them as disposable when they use their voice is a tale as old as time (only this time I was quite literally tokenized).

Judy also spoke about not feeling welcome in larger NFT projects, especially the male-dominated ones. “I definitely was not invited in PFP communities... it’s a weird feeling. I was in one and suddenly everyone started unfollowing me and I didn’t know why,” she told me. She also felt completely dismissed in various Discords. In one case, a fellow community member asked her to un-retweet her so her husband wouldn’t see her on Judy’s art Twitter. “I stopped being active, because it just completely threw me off. How can you include me in your community and yet I can’t retweet you? I unretweeted her, but it was very weird.”

Amidst all this, some of us have managed to find a few allies and projects that have been welcoming to sex workers – always DYOR, but these include Sappy Seals, Crypto Coven, Phunks and Deadfellaz. Bitcoin-based DesFemmes Magazine also often discusses sex workers.



*“Lost Myself Just to Find Myself Again” (2022), Idalis*

Glitch artist and former sex worker [Empress Trash](#) has also created an NFT art collection, [Damsels](#), with a percentage of proceeds going towards [Bay Area Workers Support](#). This collection of digital drawings has also been censored from a show and called “misogynistic” due to its message of destigmatization.

## RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM

Unsurprisingly, most “inclusivity” in “web3” is just for show. This also applies to your favorite a16z-funded DAO, Friends with Benefits, which intentionally highlights people from marginalized groups and tries to exhibit this image of cool, vibey inclusivity, when they are actually a bunch of whorephobic liars.

Earlier this year, I tweeted that I was looking for a platform that would pay me to write an article about the topic of this very paper – the intersection between sex workers and web3. I quickly got an enthusiastic yes from the editor of FwB’s publication WIP. He asked me to email him, then quickly found my email address and proactively emailed me first, asking me to send my ideas. So I did. I sent him a long list of ideas.

Over two weeks later, they tell me they had already assigned the same topic to someone else before me, so I could not write about it anymore, but invited me to make graphics for this other writer... This other writer was a total outsider to both sex work and crypto. Aside from FwB, her social media seemed to have no connection to any accounts related to either field. But, oh, she had a PhD in sexual violence... yet had never written about sex work before. How do you have a PhD in sexual violence but have never written about sex workers? Red flags everywhere.

Knowing they were full of shit, I kept asking questions and got no straight answers. If they truly were so unprofessional as to let this mix-up happen, why they would choose to tell the sex worker journalist to fuck off instead of this other person? The editor blamed some mysterious committee, then blamed getting sick, all sorts of excuses. I reminded him that I, too, am highly educated with a background in international journalism and experience working with my fellow survivors of sexual violence. I put a great deal of energy into explaining the complex issues and [ethics](#) around sex worker journalism.

When it became clear that the editor simply had no respect, I and others reached out to FwB’s co-founders. Multiple conversations were had and they were full of vague excuses. They also doubled down on their lies, *guaranteeing* me that they really did assign it to the other writer first. One co-founder offered to pay me for our conversation – I turned down their money, because it felt like I was being paid off to shut up, if what I was saying was not actually being heard and valued.

Eventually, a DAO member sold her tokens because of how they treated me, and others later followed suit. In immediate response, FwB held a “Town Hall” with their cult members to gaslight them over the issue, after which the editor went on an unprovoked rampage about me in their Discord (which I was never in, and had not spoken to him in weeks). At this point, it became clear to more than just me that they were in fact manipulative and abusive and lying about assigning it to her first.

After three months of this demoralizing erasure and infantilizing bullshit, some random person from their team who I had not encountered before sent me the weakest fucking apology ever on their behalf.

Just as I was ready to take a breath, a couple hours later, I received an interview request from someone at SuperRare – you know, the most gated and elitist cryptoart platform. He

wanted to write a “definitive” article about sex work and NFTs. I had to turn him down multiple times and tell him to stop contacting me.

There are nuances and dangers to presenting sex work in media that only sex workers can be aware of and generally speaking, it is wise for us to not trust journalists. Yes, sometimes it may be fine for well-connected allies with the right experience to write about sex work, but true allies know when to step back. Sex workers can, in fact, do more than fuck – plenty of us also happen to be excellent writers and reporters. We have our own voices if you listen. We deserve to be heard and not just seen.



...And just as I’m preparing to publish this paper, media company nftnow published an article on sex workers in NFTs. But it’s not good journalism – it’s promotion for a platform (the creator of which I previously advised for free). What else but revisionist bullshit and erasure could one expect from VC-funded influencers pretending to write history? (Update: a couple weeks later, they publish another article about nude art, censorship and stigma, obviously without including sex workers.)

## JESUS LOVES US

One of the first lessons that people must learn about sex work politics is that Christian porn abolitionists hide behind the moral cause of trafficking to push policies that have been shown to make the world less safe for both sex workers and trafficking victims, while also fucking up the whole Internet for everyone. Groups like [NCOSE](#) (the “National Center on Sexual Exploitation”) and [Exodus Cry](#) push policies that aim to abolish the selling of sex while literally violating [first amendment rights](#) (and getting paid [very well](#) to do so). They are advocates of FOSTA/SESTA, the EARN IT Act, they pressure credit card companies to cut off porn payments... the list goes on.

You can be sure that these porn abolitionists have their sights set on crypto, as well. While some celebrated OpenSea’s incorporation of credit card payments as a move towards mass adoption, I tried to warn people what this could really mean. Do you really think mainstream VC-funded platforms like OpenSea care so much about free speech that they will dare defy any suggestion from a credit card company?

According to Miss Nicci, an anti-trafficking organization had their own booth at the Bitcoin conference this past year, with the mission to “teach cops how to censor and how to surveil Bitcoin transactions.” Considering most Bitcoiners are anti-government, she says, “I just found it so weird that people at the Bitcoin conference are so out of touch that they thought having an anti-trafficking group there was a good idea. These are the same people who have caused me to be disenfranchised by banks since 2014... I couldn’t believe it at first. I was like, am I seeing things right now?”

One instance where I was struck by how out of touch the “web3” space can be around these issues was with the response to the infamous Brantly Millegan. Earlier this year, a [2016 tweet](#) from the ENS Director was dug up, stating: “Homosexual acts are evil. Transgenderism doesn’t exist. Abortion is murder. Contraception is perversion. So is masturbation and porn.” He then doubled down on his statements by citing his religion, consequently triggering a shitload of people.

What bothered me was not so much his statement as the fact that no one reacting to him even thought about sex workers. They thought about people who masturbate and watch porn, but not the people who make it and happen to be at the intersection of everything else he listed. People with ultra “Christian” beliefs like his are the reason sex workers are getting fucked over in web2. People with his beliefs are the reason we need what “web3” is supposed to stand for. To me, the issue was about lack of awareness around actual policies, not feelings.

In a true web3, Brantly could coexist along with us all of us perverts – this is why I reached out to him, though he never responded. But we do need to be aware of how these ideas, especially among those in leadership positions, can have tangible influence on the increasingly centralized entities of crypto, just as they have in web2. Because while Brantly gains followers for crying about getting “cancelled” over his views, people with his views are literally cancelling sex workers off the internet they pioneered.

I don’t think Jesus would approve of all these people using Christianity to put people in more danger. But Church leaders hated women so much that they didn’t want you to know he actually loved whores just as much as anyone else. As stated by Kaytlin Bailey in The Oldest Profession [podcast episode](#) on Mary Magdalene: “Because we spent over 1000 years slut-shaming one of the most important women in the bible, I believe that the resurrection of Mary Magdalene’s story is an incredible opportunity for all of us to re-examine our ideas about the oldest profession. Because if you’re asking yourself, ‘*what would Jesus do,*’ he was very clear: he would offer healing and a seat at the table to literally everyone.”

## **VISIBILITY**

While not always healthy or safe to remain in spaces with hostile people doing their best to push us out, it is also important that we remain visible where we can and not allow these old broken systems to continue erasing us. As an Armenian woman (me) once



tweeted, “It is much easier to wipe a group of people off the map when no one else can find them on it in the first place.”

It is only by directly knowing and [listening](#) to more sex workers that civilians can begin to [understand](#) the challenges and learn how to support us. And how can you support us? By listening to and amplifying our voices and demands, such as [decriminalization](#). By cutting the performative social justice warrior bullshit and opening your wallet. By cutting the schadenfreude and examining your own internalized misogyny. By finding some courage to actively fight stigma.

Whorephobia hurts everyone, just like the policies it inspires. There is so much education to be done, but that cannot happen if we are ostracized and silenced when we try to speak. There will be no free speech if we are constantly excluded by so-called free speech maxis. There will be no conversation if you reduce us to the sex we sell. I know, people don’t like to hear the real shit because it ruins the fantasy we are meant to provide – but we are multifaceted human beings. You will never be able to hear us if you try to pick and choose the parts of us you are comfortable with, or close your ears to anything that’s not “positive” enough for you.

Sex workers [built the internet](#) and are among those most disenfranchised by the state, by the banks, by big tech. We are exceptionally well-positioned to understand the importance of online freedom and the tangible dangers of censorship. And if you don’t listen to the canary in the coalmine, you may find yourself suffering from the very things we tried to warn you about but you dismissed because you were not “one of us.” (Update: PayPal wants to [steal](#) from you? They’ve been banning and stealing from sex workers for [years](#).)

There will be no web3 without sex worker sovereignty. Perhaps we will never reach a truly decentralized web3 at all. And crypto will certainly never solve all of sex workers’ problems, but if we care about the values of decentralization that it was founded upon, there is potential for it to help some of us be a little freer. Let’s fucking use blockchain technology as it was intended to make us all more independent, rather than reinforcing the same old shit under a revolutionary guise.

If you’re not fighting for decentralization in crypto you’re not really doing a fucking thing. It’s decentralization, destigmatization and decriminalization or it’s nothing at all.

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