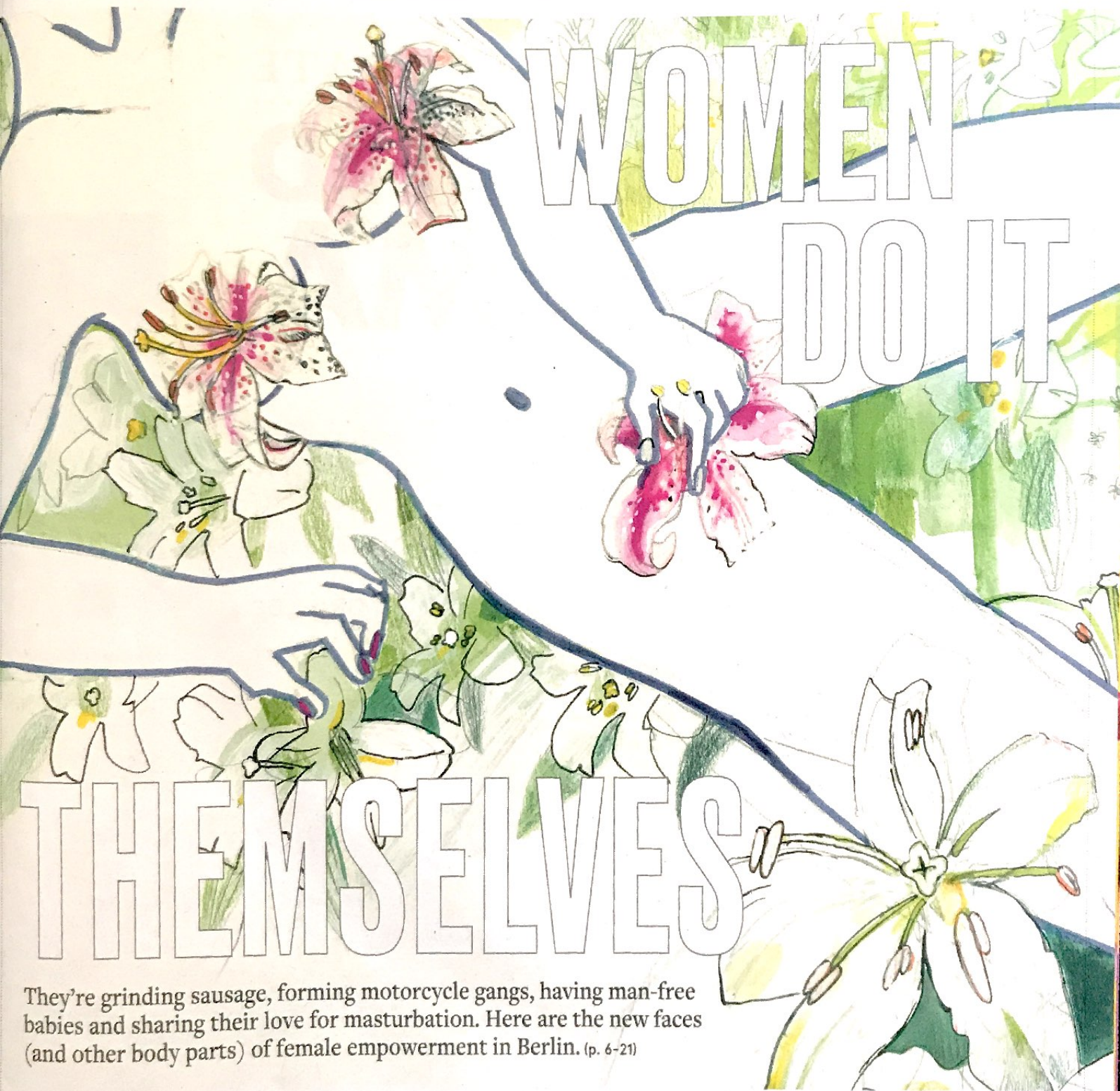


# EXBERLINER

**FUCK OFF GOOGLE**  
German lefties and expat  
hacktivists team up to fight  
the tech giant's move to  
Kreuzberg. - p. 22

POLITICS    REPORTAGE    ZEITGEIST    ART    MUSIC    FILM    STAGE



WOMEN  
DO IT

THEMSELVES

They're grinding sausage, forming motorcycle gangs, having man-free babies and sharing their love for masturbation. Here are the new faces (and other body parts) of female empowerment in Berlin. (p. 6-21)



EMPOWERMENT

WORKSHOPS

## Masturbation with a mission

From self-love brunches to G-spot exploration, a handful of female educators are teaching Berlin's women how to re-embrace their own private parts. *By Jenny Browne*

### Feeling free

A room full of women stand around a table blindfolded, each with their own bowl. Louise Yau, a chipper 27-year-old from Hong Kong, fills the bowls with flour and water, and the participants begin slowly kneading the ingredients into a dough. At the end, the blindfolds are removed. "Everyone sees a different shape in front of them, and *that* is a representation of sexuality!" says Yau. "We may have the same ingredients, but the result is always different."

Yau's "Stir up" workshops on sexuality and cooking are just part of her curriculum. In early 2017, the graphic designer – who worked at *Exberliner* before scoring a job at

sex toy start-up Amorelie – launched Feel Free, an online platform and workshop series focused mostly, but not exclusively, on female masturbation. The goal is for women to open up and share their stories, "to put more options out in the world, so they can see what other women are doing," says Yau.

Well, not literally (yet). At her donation-based Feel Great Brunch, held once a month, she leads self-love discussions in English for groups of up to six women, sharing knowledge and playing games like "Never Have I Ever". Last month, she teamed up with her porn-positive friend Joana Francener, along with Anne Breimaier of Friedrichshain art space KMA71, to put on the two-week exhibition and event series "Self-Play". Attend-

ees could listen to moaning sounds from an "orgasm library", browse 19th-century erotica and complete interactive assignments like "write your own feminist porno".

Yau first had the idea as a student back in Hong Kong. "There's a real lack of sex ed there. My best friend called me urgently once, asking: 'I just made out with my boyfriend, and afterwards my crotch was wet... Will I get pregnant?' We were 23!" The turning point was watching Australian sex-educator Jane Langton's TED talk, "The motion for masturbation". "That completely changed the game. It inspired me to say, yes! Maybe masturbation is the solution to this problem of women not knowing their bodies... It's the safest way for a woman to explore her own sexuality."

Even here in Berlin, where her workshop attendees tend to be German and expat millennials well in tune with their bodies, she experiences the occasional shocker. "A married woman once asked me, 'Where do I find the hole?' She doesn't know the body she has been living in her whole life." But instead of judgement, Yau offers support – and plenty of masturbation facts ("The clitoris alone has around 8000 nerve ends, which is two times more than the whole penis!"). "I always use this metaphor: if sex is an examination, then masturbation is studying," Yau laughs. "Before we go into an exam, we have to study ourselves first."

♦ The next Feel Great Brunch is Mar 18, 12:00, Bornholmer Str. 9A, Prenzlauer Berg; more details at [feel-free.org](http://feel-free.org)

### Getting in touch

Laura Méritt's apartment feels like a cosy yoga studio, but with more vaginas. Vulva-shaped cushions are strewn across the room, and a vast sex library of "Cliterature" takes up one of the walls. Every Friday, this is the site of her "Pleasure Parlor", a safe space for Berlin's women to get to know their own genitalia in the engaging company of the city's most prominent female sexpert.

The 57-year-old sex toy "dealer", educator, writer, sexologist and founder of the feminist porn awards Por-Yes had her awakening on a visit to San Francisco in her twenties. "I felt so sexually uneducated, and I was looking for people and institutions who could teach me." Visiting the Bay Area's plethora of feminist sex shops, seeing their workshop and lecture programmes, "I thought, 'Yes, this is it!' And suddenly, I was coming back to Germany with suitcases full of dildos." Visitors to her Sexclusivitäten space can browse her wares before settling in for a discussion, film screening or workshop. The latter are

*"I thought, 'Yes, this is it!'  
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cases full of dildos."*

taught in both English and German and tend to be, let's say, hands-on. "People walk in here and just take their clothes off!" she laughs. "Everyone's like 'I've never done this before – but it feels great!'"

This month's 11th annual edition of *MösenMonat März* ("March Pussy Month") promises an especially packed programme – including "Genital Meditation", which entails lengthy vulva observation; and "Cuntra", a sensual practise for "the heart, brain and trousers" in which Méritt introduces practical exercises to aid climactic success. The vast majority of participants are women, though Méritt is also supportive of hetero couples trying new techniques together. But no cis men are allowed at her infamous "*Wir spritzen zurück!*" ("We squirt back!") workshops, one of which is happening on March 17. The three-hour course on female ejaculation begins with an anatomical discussion and pelvic floor exercises. "Then we *really* go into the prostate, and suddenly it's practical," Méritt laughs.

But she stresses that getting to know yourself isn't just putting a finger inside yourself. She eschews the word "masturbation", preferring to use the term "self-care". "Learning your own anatomy's functions means learning to love yourself, and I believe that self-love is the essence of life," she says. "That's why I started this."

📍 Fürbringerstr. 2, Kreuzberg, Fri 12-20, other dates at [sexclusivitaeten.de](http://sexclusivitaeten.de)

## Clothes on, hands off

"On holiday in Johannesburg, I mentioned to someone at a house party that I was moving to Berlin. They told me to check out this queer femme sex shop. It sounded like my spiritual home!" Kitty May is talking about Mehringdamm's cute and colourful Other Nature, the "feminist, queer, sex-positive, eco-friendly, vegan" sex shop that sells books and zines alongside anal beads and organic lube. Founded by two women, a German and a Canadian, in 2011, Other Nature feels far more wholesome than seedy – the perfect place for May, the shop's director of education and community outreach, to host classes like "Poly How-to", "Anal Play", "Dirty Talk" and her own "Demystifying Orgasm".

A former sex ed teacher who now runs a psychotherapy practice in Prenzlauer Berg, the 34-year-old May has long been interested in "breaking the taboos around masturbation," she says, especially when

it comes to women. "The sexual relationship that we have with ourselves is one we'll have our whole lifetime," she explains. "So it's worth investing in it, nourishing it and making it really fulfilling..."

"Demystifying Orgasm" (three hours, €25), an English-language workshop she's run biannually since 2013, is strictly for women – or "anyone assigned female at birth", May stresses. "We're aiming at people who don't orgasm as often as they want to, never orgasm, or just feel disconnected from it." She teaches what the processes behind an orgasm actually are, hands out diagrams of vulvas and clits and gives participants "assignments" to try later, in the privacy of their own homes. "Sure, there are places you can go to learn about orgasms by *having* an orgasm, but it's not what I do," says May, describing her workshop method as "clothes on, hands off". So if you're somewhat shy, these (perhaps) less intimidating workshops are for you. "I'm always honest," May laughs. "I probably can't change your relationship with your orgasm in three hours... I'm just giving ideas."

She puts the average workshop age at around 30, describing how pleased she is about the number of 50-plus ladies who attend. "People create a bit of a curriculum for themselves," May says of her regulars. "I see them a lot for a year or two, and then they're gone – it's nice! It shows that they got what they needed from us."

📍 Mehringdamm 79, Kreuzberg, see [other-nature.de](http://other-nature.de) for workshop schedule

## ...and three more

### The New Civilisation Training

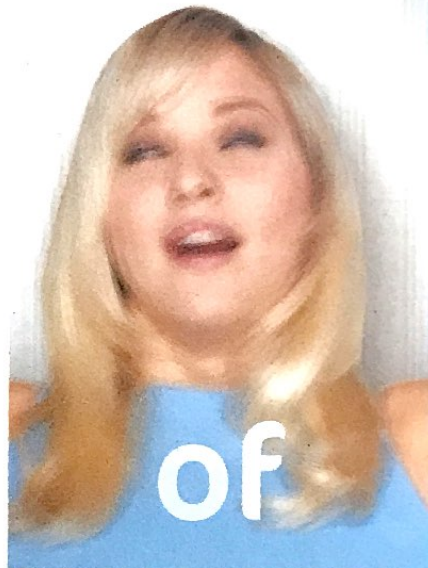
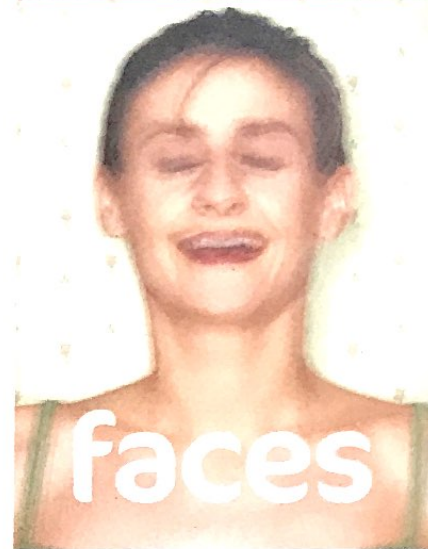
Over 10 days in a monastery in Brandenburg, participants ditch their phones (along with sugar, coffee, gluten, alcohol and tobacco) for serious detox under the guidance of Felix Ruckert and Micha Stella (see page 43). Along with massage, yoga, singing and group therapy, a portion of each day is dedicated to sexual exploration – you fill in the blanks.  
Mar 23-Apr 1, €650

### Lecken

London-born self confessed 'Dungeon DJ' Perera Elsewhere leads an all-female lineup at this month's edition of the quarterly feminist-focused fetish night, complete with femme-safe darkrooms. Dress to express. March 2, 23:00, Untertage, details at [lecken.berlin](http://lecken.berlin)

### Clitoral Embodiment Workshop with Nicole Bindler

Swapping penetration for invagination, performance artist Nicole Bindler presents a workshop bringing the focus back on female and non-binary genital development through a mix of image-study, movement and dance. All genders welcome. March 3-4, 10-17.30, DOCK 11, €110-160



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