

# What is shaping culture? Sex, we're all talking about it. Now.

 By Brett Rogers

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It's become more and more clear that antiquated attitudes towards sexuality have been a fundamental problem regarding gender-based violence and unhealthy attitudes towards sex and sexuality. There are many out there who are rejecting this notion and are speaking openly and proudly. For instance, popstars like Moonchild Sanelly are bringing the conversation to social media, talking and showcasing openly and, at times, graphically about sex and pleasure.



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Talking openly about sexuality has never been something that South Africans have been comfortable doing. Sex has been seen as somewhat of a taboo, and having a conversation about it has been dreaded by parents and teenage kids alike. Discussions, too, mostly focussed on the mechanics of sex and the taboos. Sex as a pleasurable activity was largely ignored, disconnecting us from the natural inclinations of our bodies and minds.

It could safely be said that repression and fear have contributed to an unhealthy view of sex, confounding many when, finally in the naked presence of someone that they're attracted to, leaving us fumbling for words and more.

The internet has slowly changed all that, giving voice to those who had been adversely affected by lack of knowledge of their and others' sexuality, as well as to those who wish to change the discourse. There has been a global shift in that attitude and we are seeing people embrace their sexuality, intimacy and pleasure. Creating what some believe is a healthier state of mind and society.

Belle Wilde is refreshing in a most modern way about her feelings on sexuality. It's people like her who are adjusting how we are all talking about sex. She is utterly confident and shame-free, not shameless ... shame-free.

## BelleWilde

Were you always aware of your sexuality or was there a moment that changed everything for you?

Understanding and embracing my sexuality is a continuous (often difficult!) process. A few highlights thus far:

The moment I discovered the **multiple functions of my electric toothbrush**. The first time I had what I actually consider to be a 'lover' and realized that **NO, sex was NOT overrated**. That moment I opened the door to the house of my first employer and saw the first woman I consciously and immediately knew I had a crush on. Curly wild dark hair framing her face as she looked up. We're still fb friends. **She'll never know (evil laughter)**.

I was at my fourth AfrikaBurn, behind a theme camp tent, and my girlfriend at the time convinced me to try on 'pasties'. That led to me later starting Burlesque dancing. Which was life-changing. **(And led to me later becoming involved with Sex Worker rights and performing at Stripperoke)**. Years down the line after only being with women and non-binary folks, **I laid eyes on a naked beautiful angel (cis het) boy** who made me realize that actually... I wasn't strictly lesbian. Ever so hesitantly but excitedly driving through the deserted streets of Paarden Eiland to go to my first 'play party', which led to my discovery of BDSM and to **many many other beautiful moments of firsts**. Being educated to realize that unlearning transphobia is a vital step in honouring the full truth of my own and others' sexualities.

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This increased acceptance of sexuality has occurred at the same time as a change in our attitude towards porn. While I'd like to leave the conversation about porn for another day, 'ethical porn' (fair trade porn made with performers' rights and well-being in mind) has emerged to such an extent that the Hump film festival was created to showcase these films. Pornhub, too, has a side channel called The Pornhub Sexual Wellness Centre, a serious platform not paying mere lip service to the idea of sexual health.

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Let's face it, sexual rejection is the worst. The first time I was in the mood and my partner wasn't, I remember thinking that I should have gotten that Pilates membership, or said yes to that thing with the butt that my partner -- [Read more...](#)

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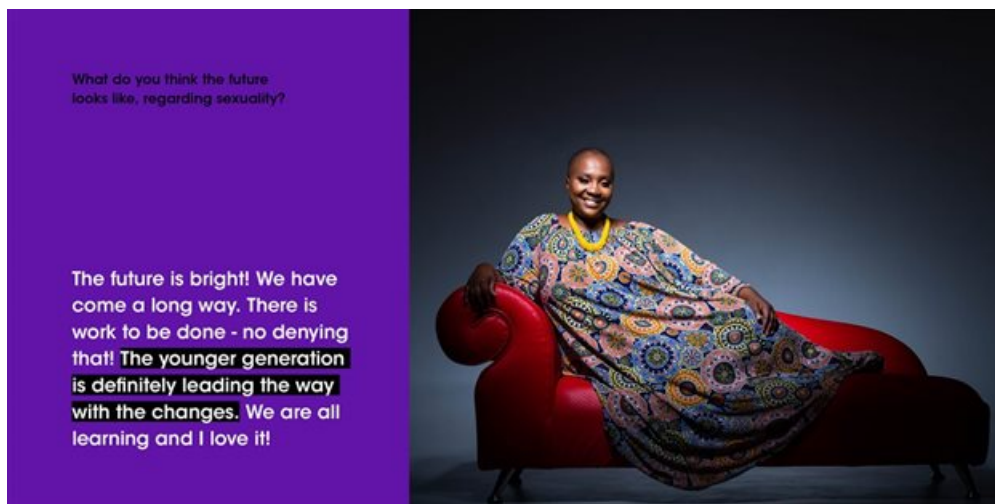
But, not everyone agrees that the acceptance of sexuality is becoming more mainstream. Blogger (The Dot Spot), sex writer and creator of the O! pendant, Dorothy Black, is still concerned that the conversation shifts "are happening in certain bubbles of urbanised, online, liberal and academic discourses online."

She goes on to list the multitude of repressive activities, both online and legislative, which are rolling back sexual expression and safety.

Vita du Plez, a cam model from Cape Town, is quick to point out the economic and social implications of a cam model's job. First is its ability to improve the model's economic situation. In economically downtrodden Romania, for example, the industry has flourished providing an income for hundreds of Romanians of all ages, races and genders. Second is that much of her job is therapeutic, with those who dial in to engage with her not necessarily looking for sexual gratification, but simply wishing to talk.

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Dr Sindi van Zyl also expressed concerns, primarily about the medical fraternity's attitude towards sexuality. Some doctors are still judgmental and prejudicial but the only way that people can get the best help is if they are able to be open and honest about their sexual activities.



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Sex is not a simple matter; it's an all-encompassing conversation regarding politics, religion, marketing and norms. It might always be difficult to talk openly about, but we are rapidly seeing the conversation opening up among the youth both online and in real life.

## ABOUT BRETT ROGERS

Brett Rogers, culture lead at Cape Town advertising agency HaveYouHeard and content curator for In\_, a channel of content, which showcases cultural forces that are changing the world. It aims to inform, inspire and entertain the viewer and does so with multimedia posts, including podcasts, videos, google trends, mini Q+A's and more. In\_ talks to those interested in in-depth cultural exploration and those curious about the world we live in.

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