



photo of the day



**THE RULES OF ATTRACTION ASKS:**  
Is your sex life better or ...



6 New Photos Daily! ▶  
**RetroNerve**  
steamy images from the pages of history

the em & lo down



**Dirty Harriets**  
Go ahead, make our advice column.

horoscopes



**Your Week in Sex (10.14-10.20)**  
**Libra:** If someone says "you're beautiful inside," it's not necessarily an insult to your looks. So don't punch them.

dirt



**Papa Don't Preach (9.18)**  
This was the one I had been looking for, buried under mounds of other ads, bravado and bullshit. This one was good. I wrote to him and he wrote me back, "curiosity piqued" and we kept writing.

daily poll

Fun and games: which of the following would you be most interested in?

vote

more...

Nerve is hiring:



France Raises Porn Tax to Ninety-three Percent.

A LIFE'S WORK

Natural Booty

A landscape photographer sees sex everywhere.  
BY ROSS MARTIN

new this week

- Natural Booty** by Ross Martin today  
A landscape photographer sees sex everywhere.
- The Intimate Moment** by Monica Botkier 10.11  
A photographer's up-close-and-personal view of friends and family.
- This Week in Sex** by Grant Stoddard 10.11  
Special issue: mayors gone wild! This week only: no stories about genital mutilation.
- The Rules of Adaptation** by Michael Martin 10.11  
Bret Easton Ellis saw what Hollywood did to his book *The Rules of Attraction* — and he sort of likes it, actually. The Nerve Interview.
- Finger-Lickin' Facile** by Ryan Tuthill 10.11  
*Porn 'N Chicken*: just like the first time you saw a college sex comedy — and every time after that.
- Desperately Seeking Madonna** by Emma Taylor 10.10  
What it feels like for a girl to watch an icon lose her cool.
- Advice: Dirty Harriets** by Em & Lo 10.10  
Go ahead, make our advice column.

screening room

the new entertainment guide from nerve.com

- Books: "When Pornography Sneezes, Pop Culture Catches Cold"** by Michael Martin 10.8  
Irvine Welsh, author of *Porno*, on why XXX films are the new heroin. The Nerve Interview.
- Film: The Rules of Adaptation** by Michael Martin 10.11  
Bret Easton Ellis saw what Hollywood did to his book *The Rules of Attraction* — and he sort of likes it, actually. The Nerve Interview.
- Music: Punks, Feeling Lucky** by Michael Martin 9.27  
Talking porn and cranial contusions with Liars.
- TV: Finger-Lickin' Facile** by Ryan Tuthill 10.11  
*Porn 'N Chicken*: just like the first time you saw a college sex comedy — and every time after that.

the regulars

- Quickies: The 54th Annual "I Wish" Emmy Awards** sporadically  
by Lorelei Sharkey  
And the Emmy for Best Teenage Lesbian Sex Scene in a

2069 in personals now

FEATURED PERSONAL

BROWSE ALL PERSONALS



NEW! NERVE SCREENING ROOM THE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE FROM NERVE.COM



FILM | SECRETARY

BOOKS | SCAM #18,754 BY IRVINE WELSH

MUSIC | LIARS

TV | HYSTERICAL BLINDNESS BY LISA GABRIELE

quickies





Poor Mother Nature, always getting caught with her pants down, exposed by the leering lens of "Earth erotica" photographer [Heather Firth](#). Since her 1981 trip to the Sinai desert, Firth has been photographing nature in all its splendor: butt cracks in a quarry, glory holes in quicksand, thighs in the trees. She owes a debt to Adams, O'Keefe, Goldworthy and [Tunick](#), but I had to meet for myself the woman who's redefining the term "hard rock." — [Ross Martin](#)



I feel like I was chosen for this. It's been a real challenge to pull it all together in a way that says something. It's like, come and find the treasures here.

**Do you do clouds too?**

I haven't seen erotic forms and shapes as yet. I'll include them as I see them.

**Does anyone ever call you up and say, "Heather, get over here! There's a vagina in my front lawn!"**

Someone suggested Goblin Valley in southwest Utah. It took me two-and-a-half years to get there, and it feels like you're standing in a forest of circumcised penises. The guy I was staying with called it Circumcision Valley. But I couldn't eroticize those forms because the tree bark was almost the color of cadavers. Through the lens, it looked like dead flesh, not soft and sensual.

**So you really want to turn people on?**

Yes.

**It must be so difficult for you to go outside, with Mother Nature waving her genitals in your face all the time.**

She doesn't, that's the problem. Many times I've gone out into the desert and she's shy. I can spend all day in a canyon and not find a single one. On one ten-day trip, I didn't get a single image I could use. Some images are almost microscopic. I can walk through the floor of a canyon with eight-hundred-foot cliffs, and I've got my lens on a five-by-five-inch spot all the way down at the bottom: a rock that hints at labia and a clitoris peeking through the outer lips. It can be smaller than the size of a baby's fingernail.

**People must walk by nature's genitalia all the time and not notice.**

Definitely. No. 002 for example, the maiden breast [*second photo from top*]. She's only three-and-a-half inches high by one-and-a-half inches wide. She's at an Anasazi ruin in Sedona, right near Enchantment Resort. Thousands of people go there all the time and don't see it.

**Where did you find the first image in the series?**

In the high mountain region of the Sinai, in 1981. Right beside that one was No. 002; they were like a couple.

**So you were zoning out on a hole in a rock one day in the Sinai and you thought, "Whoa, vagina!"**

It was all Israelis, a German, an Australian and me, right after a



morning trek. I looked over to my left and said, *Oh my God*. I was on my back, upside down, holding my breath to get this shot. Everyone was wondering, what's she doing? After lunch, I showed them the formation, and everybody wanted to take their own picture of it.



**Let's look at No. 001 [top photo in series]. What are we seeing?**

Well, it's sort of androgynous.

**No way! It's so obviously labia and thighs.**

That's what most heterosexual men see. Gay men don't see it as feminine, they see it as a butthole and maybe another butt or knees right up against it — an alluring orifice, someplace to go inside. Some anuses can be labial in appearance. One lesbian who saw this said that one of her favorite things to do was to rub her pussy up against the butt of her lover. So she saw two women making love.

**People see what they want to see, as if these are Rorschach tests.**

People always think I photographed their interpretation. Another example is No. 007 [eighth photo from top].

**Bond, James Bond.**

Exactly! No, the image itself is almost a total reflection in water of a small pothole just after a rainstorm in Sedona. The interpretations include a woman with her legs spread open, with trees for pubic hair, the rock in the center suggesting a clitoris and, streaming down the middle, the wetness of sex. Then, two women interpreted this as a birth scene, the baby's head crowning, the mother's legs spread open, the breaking of the mother's water, and the blue sky arc suggesting the mother's pregnant belly. Heterosexual men see the shiny water coming down, the view they get after ejaculating inside their lover, seeing their own semen coming out of her.

**Are you married? Do you have children?**

My partner has five kids. They think it's fantastic. People of all ages recognize certain body parts, and it starts a conversation about sexuality in a way that gives parents a bridge. Because it's earth, there's a new level of acceptance you wouldn't get from images of human parts.

**Looking at your website, there's a real political motivation here.**

I'm trying to increase mainstream sexual intelligence.

**Were you ever shy about portraying nature as you do?**

This whole thing evolved very slowly. A friend helped me design a brochure, but I said, "There's no way I can go out and show that to people as my life's work!" You opened it up and all you saw were earth genitals. I felt embarrassed, like a flasher. I was shy about it because I'm not into shocking people about sexuality.

**Have men assumed from your work that you're more inclined to, you know . . .**

Yes. They interpret that I must want my brains fucked out all the time. It's a natural response. They're not *bad* for doing that. Maybe slightly inept.

**Has your work been censored?**

In the beginning, I got comments like, "You must really have a dirty mind." Not from women, from men! In my first outdoor show, a woman stood between my art and her husband and wouldn't let him look. She said it was disgusting.

**Maybe she thought you were perverting nature.**

How can that be done? I'm just illuminating what exists: 530 million years of natural geologic events have sculpted these images.

**You use only available light, right?**

Ambient light only.

**And don't alter the images in the darkroom?**

In no way whatsoever. It's important in this collection to portray earth exactly as it is. I'm creating socially acceptable art.

**This whole endeavor is kind of funny, though, right?**

Oh yeah! How can you be totally serious with this?

**Your ideal sexual world looks like . . .**

Everything is sexual.

**I say Georgia O'Keefe, you say . . .**

She said she wasn't trying to create sexual impressions. I am.

**What part of the world has the most natural booty?**

So far, in my limited travels, the American Southwest. But that's only because it's where I really started.

**You couldn't possibly find anything sexy to shoot in, say, New Jersey.**

I don't know much about New Jersey.

**Take my word for it.**

Well, the East Coast doesn't hold much for me.

**Which of your photos turn you on?**

Numbers 007, 023 [*second-to-last photo*]. No. 004 [*fourth from top*] because she's so charming. I really love No. 002, that little maiden breast. Wait, are those all female images? n°

 send feedback  read feedback  email to a friend

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**



**Ross Martin's** recent work appears in magazines such as *Agni, Bomb, Boulevard, Denver Quarterly, Fence, Kenyon Review, Poetry Daily, Prairie Schooner, Verse, Witness* and others. He has taught at Rhode Island School of Design, The New School University and Washington University in St. Louis, where he received his MFA. His first book, 'The Cop Who Rides Alone,' is published by Zoo Press (<http://www.zoopress.org/>).

## REGULARS

Reader Feedback on "**Natural Booty**"

Horray! Someone that views sex and body parts as a natural thing in life, not something that has to be humped. And to have a gift to see it in nature is wonderful. I think a lot of people see it in nature, they just keep it to themselves because our american society is so prude, they are afraid of being labled as a pervert if they say anything. Personally I think people should be able to walk around naked in public when it's really hot out without being afraid of being looked at as a sexual object instead of a human being. This society is way too closed minded about sex and sexuality for my taste. I think many people would be much happier if they weren't afraid of being labeled as a pervert for expressing thier needs and desires.

--SM  
10/15

wow.. that was a cool article. those photos were stunning!

--jm  
10/14

Heather can continue arousing libidos with pictures of the rock formations in Meteora, Greece. Pray-- and enjoy!

--IA  
10/14

I think we have come a long way from the early pioneer men who saw the Grand Tetons! What imagination for those stalwart guys, considering a bare ankle was a big deal. The photographer mentioned some mans wife who stood between him and the photo, trying to keep him from seeing the sexual image. God, I feel sorry for the poor schlub who lives with this shrew. She probably covers his eyes during TV watching to shield him from the pulchritude on "Friends",etc. Back in the 70s I shot photos of girls at nudist resorts and beaches who wanted to be photographed au natural for their boyfriends and hubbies. I had some great sexual encounters with several afterwards at private homes around pools.

--BCR  
10/14

I loved it, what a terrific way to introducing sexual imagery in a non-threatening way!

--jk  
10/14

I admit to seeing sexual imagery in nature all the time. I frequently carry my camera but have never photographed nature that way. It seemed to me to be perhaps a bit too silly -- a bit too tongue-in-cheek. And, now I know it is! Which is great! Thanks for the story and the photos.

--ae  
10/14

[send feedback on "Natural Booty"](#)

[back to "Natural Booty"](#)