

The Death of Sex?: Exploring Affirmative Rejections of Sex Against Successful Ageing

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LATER-IN-LIFE SEX

MAINSTREAM DISCOURSE

Desexualization of older people and denial their sexual desire.

WHO GUIDELINES

Sex is a lifelong process and a prerequisite for a healthy and happy life.

RESEARCH

Sex as a human right (Miller et al. 2015)

Asexuality and feminist critique

AGAINST successful ageing and the unsuccessful person

An orange rounded rectangular box containing the text "AGAINST successful ageing and the unsuccessful person". A light orange arrow points downwards from the bottom right corner of this box to the top right corner of the next box.

Compulsory sexuality erases asexuality

A brown rounded rectangular box containing the text "Compulsory sexuality erases asexuality". A light brown arrow points downwards from the bottom right corner of this box to the top right corner of the next box.

Reinforcement of feelings of loss, failure and frustration

A grey rounded rectangular box containing the text "Reinforcement of feelings of loss, failure and frustration". A light grey arrow points downwards from the bottom right corner of this box to the top right corner of the next box.

LATER IN LIFE INTIMACIES

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En la Plaza, en la Casa, en la Cama. Ensayo para una cartografía feminista – Guided tour/action by feminist group of artistic activism Mujeres Públicas. May 4th 2013, Buenos Aires. Photography by María Zorzon.

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Resources

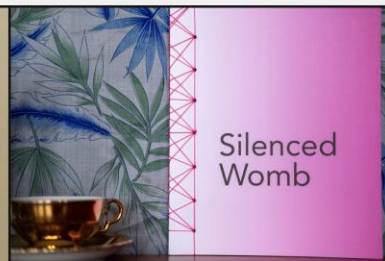
book | podcast | art | photography | craft | poetry | film | documentary | music | magazine | photo | website



Vrouw Wildevrouw Wijzevrouw
book by Eva De Grootte
evadegrootte.be



Qualia
audio docu by Charo Calvo
soundcloud.com



Silenced Womb
book by Petra Kroon
www.instagram.com



En Fr NI

Menu

Share your story

Are you a woman over 50 and would you like to share your experience of intimacy and (a)sexuality on this website? Send us your story! We are interested in personal testimonies of women on the experience of their ageing body, and of relationships, intimacy and sex.



Menu

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Menu

Stories



Marie, 65, Vlaanderen

Ik wil iedereen laten lezen hoe ik de stap heb gezet naar tantra massage beleving. Hierbij geef ik niets en ontvang ik alleen maar, dat is zalig. Eigenlijk heeft deze ervaring mijn leven een nieuwe boost gegeven, ik wist niet dat ik zo kon genieten van aanrakingen. Mijn sensuele en seksuele leven ...

Liz Aggiss, 68, UK

As a mature, solo, feminist artist, I use the space to 'act out and act up'. I revise attitudes and preconceptions about mature female visibility, de-familiarise the codings of femininity. I hold a mirror up to the invidious nonsense, name-calling and restrictions perpetrated to limit female ...

Ine Pisters, 62, Gent

Lichamelijkheid, intimiteit op latere leeftijd. Ik dwaal meteen af. Naar lichamelijkheid en intimiteit op jongere leeftijd. Een van de post-60 reflexen is terugblikken op het voorbije leven. Begrijpen, verantwoorden, verklaren, een evenwicht zoeken achteraf, met allerlei argumenten in de ...



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LiLi publications



Ageism in queer communities
Article by Katrien De Graeve, Ladan Rahbari and Nika Looman
osf.io



Recht op (vreugdevolle) seks?
Essay door Katrien De Graeve
www.tijdschriftkarakter.be




De gaga-esthetiek van het mislukken
Essay door Katrien De Graeve en Sara De Vuyst
www.rektoverso.be



Asexuality studies

Distinction between Asexuality and
Desexualisation of later lives.



Desexualization: 'a harmful process of
barring or preventing access to sex, sexual
fulfillment and sexual
identity.' Ela Przybylo (2021, 181)

New thinking

Affirmative rejections

can there be agency in refusing sex in a world that imagines later-in-life sex as a taboo?

Reframing the “Lesbian bed death” stereotype.

death – physical, metaphorical or imaginative – as a useful tool to allow multiple affirmative refusals of sex later-in-life to emerge.

Participants

Between ages of
49 and 86

In-depth interviews
with a life history
component

In this paper:
participants that
no longer had sex

Death of (a) partner(s)

"Practically seen, sometimes I think: I'm not doing this again. It could be someone that I have to take care of and I might lose someone a third time, and I don't feel like it."

(Adrienne, in her seventies)

Death as metaphorical language

“[Sex] is almost like a closed chapter.”

(Adrienne, in her seventies)

“The sexual part, with the lesbian bed death has been almost zero.”

(Valerie, in her fifties)

“My libido died a peaceful, satisfied death.”

(Lore, in her fifties)

Sexuality after metaphorical death

“Everything in society is oriented towards sex. And now you also have to enjoy it when you get older. And I think, oh yeah, enjoy what?! [...] I don't believe it, the story that is presented to us.”

(Karin, in her seventies)

The death of sex?

Death and sex are intertwined and affirmative rejections have agency.

Attention to metaphorical death – death of libido/no HRT

Liberation from libido does not equal absence of self-pleasure

Lack of sex does not equal lack of arousal.

Presence of arousal does not mean actively looking for sex.

Death is not neutral

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

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LATER IN LIFE INTIMACIES: UNRULY PRACTICES, SPACES AND REPRESENTATIONS (LILI - <https://lili.ugent.be/en>)



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