

A SEXY GUIDE TO DIGITAL SECURITY

Making and sending selfies and nudes can be an exercise of self-determination and also an act of pleasurable resistance against racism, sexism, machismo, conservatism and heteronormativity (check Fannie Sosa). Sharing your pictures or not must be a choice that is exclusively yours, making use of your right to privacy. So here are some strategies and tools that can help you keep or share them online in a safer way:



SELF-ENJOYMENT

Use your phone camera to discover your best angles. Take as many pictures as you want and remember: there are no rules or limits. Nudes do not necessarily need to be pornographic pictures: your nudes, your rules. Feel 100% comfortable and sexy.



ANONYMIZE!

The internet has turned us all into stalkers, and we never know how deep into it someone else can be. So if you want to share your nudes with someone you don't trust, we recommend you avoid showing your face, tattoos, birthmarks, scars, furniture etc.

Apps like Obscuracam let you pixelate faces and other body and background details you may want to hide. Also, every time you take a picture, information about your devices, time and location are attached to them. Such information are called metadata and can be used to identify you. In order to get rid of them, you can use metadata editors such as Photo Exif Editor (available for iPhone and Android).



USE "SAFE" CHANNELS WHEN SHARING

A trustworthy app for sharing intimate stuff should be open-source and offer end-to-end encryption; screenshot blocking; self-destructing messages that will disappear from both devices and servers; require no email, phone number or real name to sign up – a combination of criteria we could not find in any of the apps mentioned here. Everything we tested has advantages and risks. So the most important thing here is to know what's at stake when you use them.

Never use SMS, iMessage, Whatsapp, Telegram, Facebook (for the Goddess' sake!), Tinder, Happn or any other chat client that will show your phone number or let the images you share be downloaded. It's also better to avoid apps that do not use end-to-end encryption, since unencrypted messages are much easier to intercept. Apps like Confide and Wickr use end-to-end encryption and make your pictures vanish after being seen. It's very different from Snapchat, for example, which require your phone number for registration and keeps images online for 24h. Confide and Wickr make screen printing much harder and will let you know when someone tries. Both of them let you sign up without having to add a cellphone number. Avoid linking your Confide or Wickr login to your Facebook or personal email account, since this would automatically link your nudes to such accounts at some level.



CAN THEY SEE MY PUSSY?

Yes, governments and companies can see our nudes if they want. But we can make it much harder. Use encryption and create strong password or passphrases with long words in different languages with numbers and special characters. If possible, encrypt your whole phone (Android and iPhone). Don't ever share the password, passphrase or code with anyone and avoid letting people you don't trust handle your phone. An ill-intentioned person can turn our beloved friends, our phones, against us. Be careful when using WiFi in public spaces – the companies can use them to steal your data. When using such networks, prefer apps that offer encrypted connections (with httpS in the address bar) or download a VPN app like Bitmask (for Android) or OpenVpn. Finally, never forget that every file sent through an app is also sent to a server that is owned by a company. We don't have access to the data we send to such servers, but governments and the companies that own them do. And, although many apps promise security and confidentiality, we've seen many leaks (like Snapchat and Ashley Madison).

WHY PRIVACY STILL MATTERS?

Some say that the internet has turned privacy into an outdated idea, and that the next generations will care less and less about that. On the other hand, unfortunately, it is becoming more and more common that women or particularly people who question and challenge gender identity and sexuality are becoming targets of "doxxing", revenge "porn", cyberstalking and other practices of harassment.

Most of the time, these attacks take advantage of the amount of data we leave behind as footprints when we use the internet. While we are online, our gestures, tastes and intimate moments are being constantly recorded as bits and bytes that are transmitted and stored across the globe. Most of the time, this happens without us being aware of who collects this information, where it is stored and for how long. Nevertheless, we can still make choices about it.

The right to privacy is exactly the power to choose who has access to our personal information and under what circumstances. And we can exercise this right also through informed choice of the communication technologies we use. Protecting our communications and data should be everyone's concern. It's not about being a hacker or geek. It's about empowerment by curiosity and freedom of choice. Encryption tools and digital security strategies are available online, for free and are easy to use. This guide provides some tips for sharing private images more safely, but there is a lot more you can discover. Find out more at: www.antivigilancia.org



DELETE OR HIDE WELL

Life is ephemeral. We can just accept that and delete every nude immediately after sending them (with self-destruct mode on). But keeping your nudes in an encrypted folder can also be a good way to go. Remember your phone can create backups of your pictures in various folders, and that it is crucial to make sure every copy has been deleted. CC cleaner is an app that helps to erase file traces, and it's available for Android, Windows and Mac OS. In case you want to keep your nudes in your computer, make sure the folder is encrypted and that only you have access to the password or passphrase. But the state of the art – that which keeps your ass safe even from the NSA – is to use the PGP suite. PGP is available for Windows, Linux and Mac OS. You just have to create your keys, memorize your private key, share your public key and use them every time you want to send or save a nude or other files you want to keep private.



EXPOSED?

Having your nudes published is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as it's your decision. If it's you who is publishing your own nudes because you want to, no one should use it against you. Our marvelous nudes can be used to incite a very important discussion about our bodies, our desires and how we want to depict and use them. Turning the pornographic language into a tool for our own pleasure and agency can be possible. Artists like Aleta Valente (@ex_miss_febem) and Fannie Sosa have been using the images of their bodies in very interesting and powerful ways to open spaces of visibility online.

If someone published your nudes without your consent, it's possibly illegal. Most countries ensure the protection of personality rights, which comprise the right to protect your image, personal data and other private information. Therefore, you should always be able to request ISP to take down unauthorized images. Besides having the content removed, you can also get legal assistance regarding potential civil claims or criminal consequences against the person who posted your images. You can get more information about collecting evidence and how to proceed in such cases at:

<http://withoutmyconsent.org>

<http://www.womenagainstrevengeporn.com>

<http://www.takebackthetech.net/know-more>

A SHOUT OUT TO THE MIRROR MAKING MOMMAS

"If you want to make a human being into a monster, deny them, at the cultural level, any reflection of themselves." - Junot Diaz

"#makingmirrors" - SCZ, @decolonisedmind

by Fannie Sosa

When Natasha contacted me to write a piece about self-representation, I doubted a bit before answering yes. I felt this acute resistance to generate discourse around notions of the selfie as a way to empower oneself.

I had to take a moment and examine this feeling. I found that I've read a lot of pieces either defending or condemning the selfie as a critical tool, and what always bothered me was the debate configuration of these writings. When researching my uncomfortable-ness, I came across an academic text that opened with the sentence "Selfies are now boring and thus finally interesting". I realized then what exactly was weighting on my consciousness: the white, financially stable cis reader who was going to measure my words against the many buzzfeed articles that quote scientific studies stating that selfie-ing is pathological, narcissistic, irresponsible and/or immature.

See, for me, it's not a debate. The selfies taken by my radiant community of QTIAPOC bodies are not boring. Never have been. Never will be. Just like talking to white people that want to bring numbers and ideas that deny white supremacy to a talk about race, or cis-males that will argue about femme privileges, I am absolutely tired of hearing word on self-affirming practices involving queer bodies of color as contradictorily subversive, aka debatable in their ability to open up spaces. It sets out the discussion on a dishonest so-called level playing field, where some detain the truth flashing their numbers, scientific-backed references and socio-economic cultural dominance, and others are perceived as petty, emotional, irrational, self-victimizing and narcissistic.

I want to state here something that is now very clear to me: if you're organizing panels, asking yourself or others "Is taking selfies a critical practice?" then you probably need to look around and smell the coffee: there is no Black or POC bodies around you that are struggling to be seen. Chances are you are white, financially stable and cis-gendered.

This piece is not aimed at adding to the countless ink about selfies and their paradoxical nature. What I'm doing here is story-telling and momma-thanking. I would like to spread the herstories of self representation that paved the way for me to shamelessly capture my body and soul, knowing what those images would have meant to the girlchild and the emo teen that I was (by the way I was emo because growing up Brown, femme and chubby is hard), while boldly looking back at the white male gaze that deemed our expressions unworthy of serious attention and telling it to kiss my Brown ass. That is the three fold subversive action that a femme body of color achieves when taking a selfie:

1. Finding space, time and technology to capture oneself. For a lot of us this is an achievement in itself, financially speaking.
2. Lifting younger QTIAPOC (queer, transgender, intergender, agendered people of color) bodies of that are being shamed into thinking they shouldn't be aspiring to being loved/desired/admired, or that they shouldn't be the protagonists of their own life.
3. Reclaiming spaces of thick presence where white supremacist scrutiny and stereotyping reduced us to a watered down version of ourselves.

This piece is aimed to offer a reflection, to make and hold up a mirror in front of the bodies that do not see themselves represented wholesomely, including me as an awkward girlchild and teen, and to tell them: you're not an orphan. You got mirror making mothers and siblings and they all want to know more about you.