# Cosey Fanni Tutti’s provocative legacy revisited as new album and documentary reshape her impact



Cosey Fanni Tutti’s pioneering journey through the worlds of art, pornography, and music has firmly positioned her as a radical figure in contemporary culture. Described by Conservative MP Sir Nicholas Fairbairn as a "wrecker of civilisation" following the controversial 1976 exhibition "Prostitution," Tutti's work with her collective, COUM Transmissions, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London has been revisited with critical acclaim. The exhibition featured explicit imagery intertwined with unconventional materials, provoking fierce debate in the media and even leading to a parliamentary discussion. At 73, Tutti reflects, "It has taken 50 years for [the exhibition] to be revisited and understood for what it was really trying to say."

Tutti's approach to the porn industry during this period was not merely as a subject but as an artist seeking to challenge and subvert the prevailing male gaze. She infiltrated the realm of adult magazines, as exemplified by her work showcased in "Prostitution," where the juxtaposition of her pornographic photographs against everyday objects like used tampons aimed to reframe perspectives on sexuality and women’s empowerment. Speaking from the tranquil grounds of Castle Acre Priory in Norfolk, she explains her intention to spark discourse about these forms of media, urging women to contemplate their relationship with the industry: “It’s about either subverting it or going along with it.”

The legacy of Throbbing Gristle, the band Tutti co-founded, resonates through the decades as a formidable force in the industrial music scene. Their groundbreaking sound has influenced a diverse array of artists, from Nine Inch Nails to Soft Cell. Throbbing Gristle's composition often blurred the lines between sound, art, and performance, establishing them as forebears of a genre that emerged from the punk ethos and avant-garde experimentation. As she recounts her own creative genesis, she notes the move to Norfolk with her partner, Chris Carter, where they established a home studio that has become a nurturing ground for her fresh artistic output.

Her latest album, *2T2*, slated for release in June 2025, continues to weave personal narratives of grief and resilience into her music. Tracks like "Stound" reflect the turbulent events of the last few years, including Carter's severe Covid illness, which had a profound impact on both their lives and artistic expressions. “It’s a war zone, isn’t it?” she comments, alluding to the broader social and personal chaos as jet fighters thunder overhead.

Beyond music, Tutti has explored her identity through writing, releasing her memoir *Art Sex Music* in 2017, which has catalysed further exploration of her life in a forthcoming documentary directed by Caroline Catz. This further highlights the systemic issues of recognition faced by women in creative fields, echoing her sentiments regarding the posthumous acknowledgment of her contemporary, Delia Derbyshire, who, like Tutti, had to navigate a male-dominated landscape.

Today, Cosey Fanni Tutti finds solace in gardening and reading, cherishing the peace of the Norfolk countryside after years of tumultuous touring and artistic exploration. She acknowledges the decline of alternative living spaces in London, raising concerns over the accessibility of creative environments in a changing socio-economic landscape. As she gears up for her album launch, her legacy as a visionary provocateur continues to unfold, challenging societal norms and encouraging a re-evaluation of the delicate intersections between art, sex, and music.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cm2k113yywzo), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/friday_review/story/0%2C%2C313518%2C00.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cm2k113yywzo), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2007/jun/03/art1), [[4]](https://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/artist-cosey-fanni-tutti-helping-mainstream-art-embrace-sex)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.forcedexposure.com/Catalog/tutti-cosey-fanni-2t2-cd/CTI.2T2CD2025.html), [[6]](https://ra.co/news/82426)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cm2k113yywzo), [[6]](https://ra.co/news/82426)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cm2k113yywzo), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/friday_review/story/0%2C%2C313518%2C00.html), [[4]](https://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/artist-cosey-fanni-tutti-helping-mainstream-art-embrace-sex), [[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Throbbing_Gristle)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cm2k113yywzo), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2007/jun/03/art1)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cm2k113yywzo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/friday_review/story/0%2C%2C313518%2C00.html> - In 1976, Cosey Fanni Tutti, a member of the avant-garde group Throbbing Gristle, modelled for adult magazines like Fiesta and Men Only. These photographs were later displayed in COUM Transmissions' exhibition 'Prostitution' at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. The exhibition, which ran for a week, sparked significant controversy, leading to over 100 media articles and a parliamentary debate. The display of explicit content as art challenged societal norms and blurred the lines between art and pornography.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2007/jun/03/art1> - In October 1976, the British art collective COUM Transmissions, including Cosey Fanni Tutti, staged the 'Prostitution' exhibition at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. The show featured sculptures made from used tampons and a series of Tutti's pornographic photographs. This exhibition was part of a broader movement where punk rock's underground ethos and shock tactics influenced the art world, reflecting a fusion of music and visual art.
4. <https://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/artist-cosey-fanni-tutti-helping-mainstream-art-embrace-sex> - In 1976, Cosey Fanni Tutti, a founding member of Throbbing Gristle, presented the 'Prostitution' exhibition at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. The exhibition included explicit performances and repurposed pornographic images of Tutti, aiming to reclaim the male-dominated pornographic view of the 1970s. The show ignited widespread controversy, with media campaigns and a parliamentary debate, making it one of the most contentious exhibitions in the ICA's history.
5. <https://www.forcedexposure.com/Catalog/tutti-cosey-fanni-2t2-cd/CTI.2T2CD2025.html> - Cosey Fanni Tutti's album '2T2' is a nine-track project set for release on June 13, 2025, through Conspiracy International. The album is a personal reflection, moving between propulsive beats and expansive electronic explorations. It addresses themes of personal loss and global events, with tracks like 'Stound' expressing the anger and resilience Tutti felt during challenging times. The album continues the themes from her 2019 release 'TUTTI'.
6. <https://ra.co/news/82426> - Cosey Fanni Tutti's upcoming album '2t2' is set for release on June 13, 2025, via Conspiracy International. The nine-track record is a sonic reflection on life, divided into two distinct parts: one rhythmic and the other more meditative. Tutti describes the album as an acknowledgment that it's acceptable to experience sadness, but also highlights the joy found in memories and shared moments. '2t2' follows her 2019 album 'TUTTI'.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Throbbing_Gristle> - Throbbing Gristle was an English music and visual arts group formed in Kingston upon Hull by Genesis P-Orridge and Cosey Fanni Tutti. They are widely regarded as pioneers of industrial music. Evolving from the experimental performance art group COUM Transmissions, Throbbing Gristle made their public debut in October 1976 in the COUM exhibition 'Prostitution', and released their debut single 'United/Zyklon B Zombie' and debut album 'The Second Annual Report' the following year.