



**SEÁN TALBOT'S**  
***SCINTILLATING***  
**SELF-DISCOVERY**  
**SMUT SHOW**



**Archived by Tattie Chater Davies**

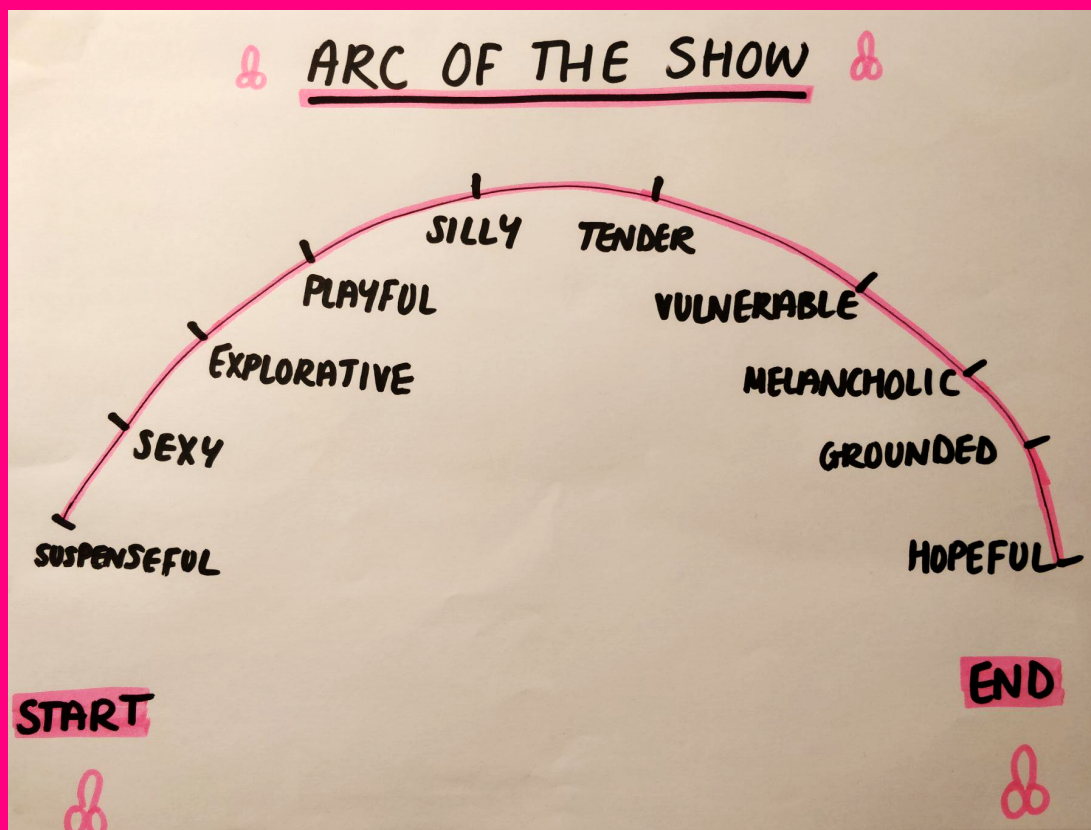


# ABOUT THE SHOW

*Seán Talbot's Scintillating Self-Discovery Smut Show* is a 40 minute solo performance exploring sexuality, pleasure, intimacy and loneliness through the experience of a gay man in 2022.

- **Artist:** Seán Talbot
- **Creative Team and Crew:** Stage Managers: Zeni Bollok, Nina Madriz  
**Lighting:** Rhia Mitsuhashi, Josh Brown **Tech Team:** Toby Cass, Rory Campbell, Dylan Mclean **Video Supervisor:** Ellie Thompson  
**Tutor/Mentor:** Jiaxi Wang
- First performed in February 2022 in The New Athenaeum Theatre at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
- **Content Warnings:** Contains work of a sexual nature and allusions to sex, use of flashing lights (strobe) and loud noises (confetti bang)

The content is autobiographical and uses clowning and heightened imagery to provide an abstract world in which a persona exists. The show is predominantly silent with there being no spoken dialogue and only one musical track. Whilst there is no plot, there is a clear emotional arc of the show:







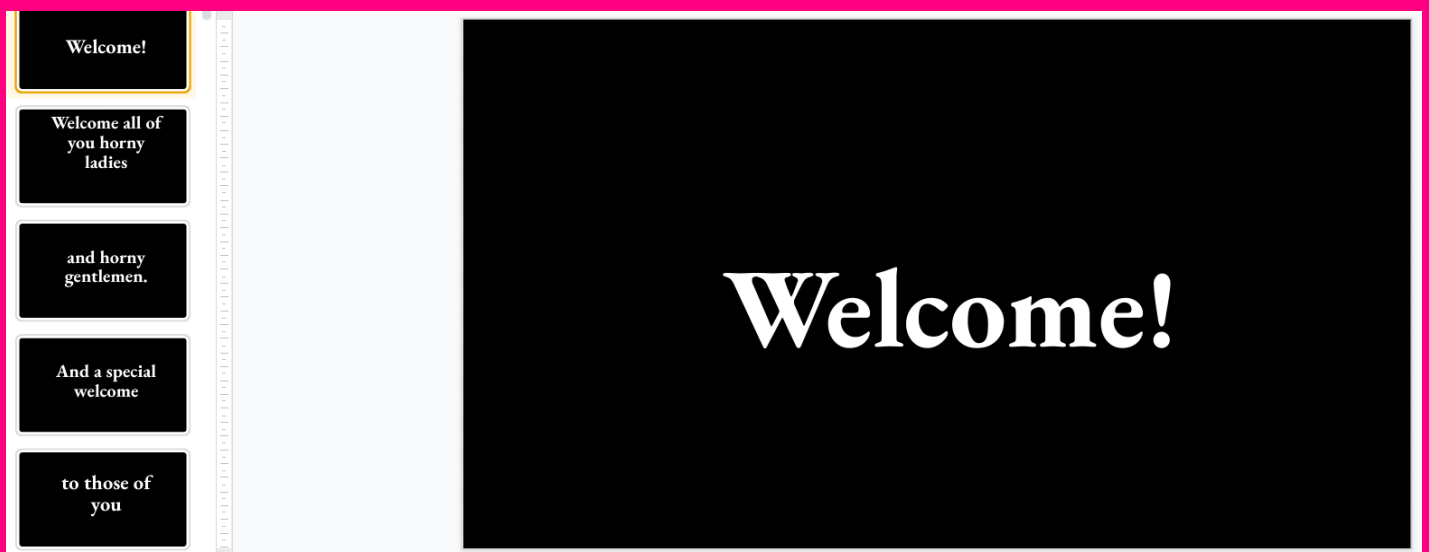
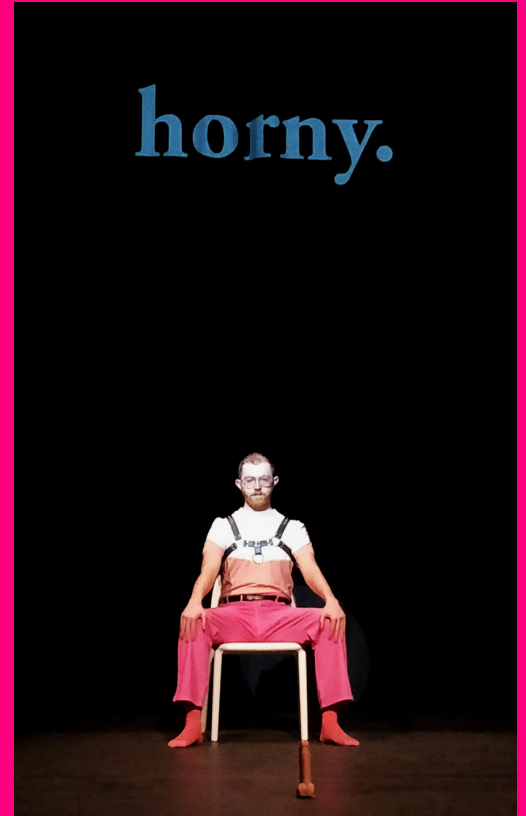
# THE OPENING

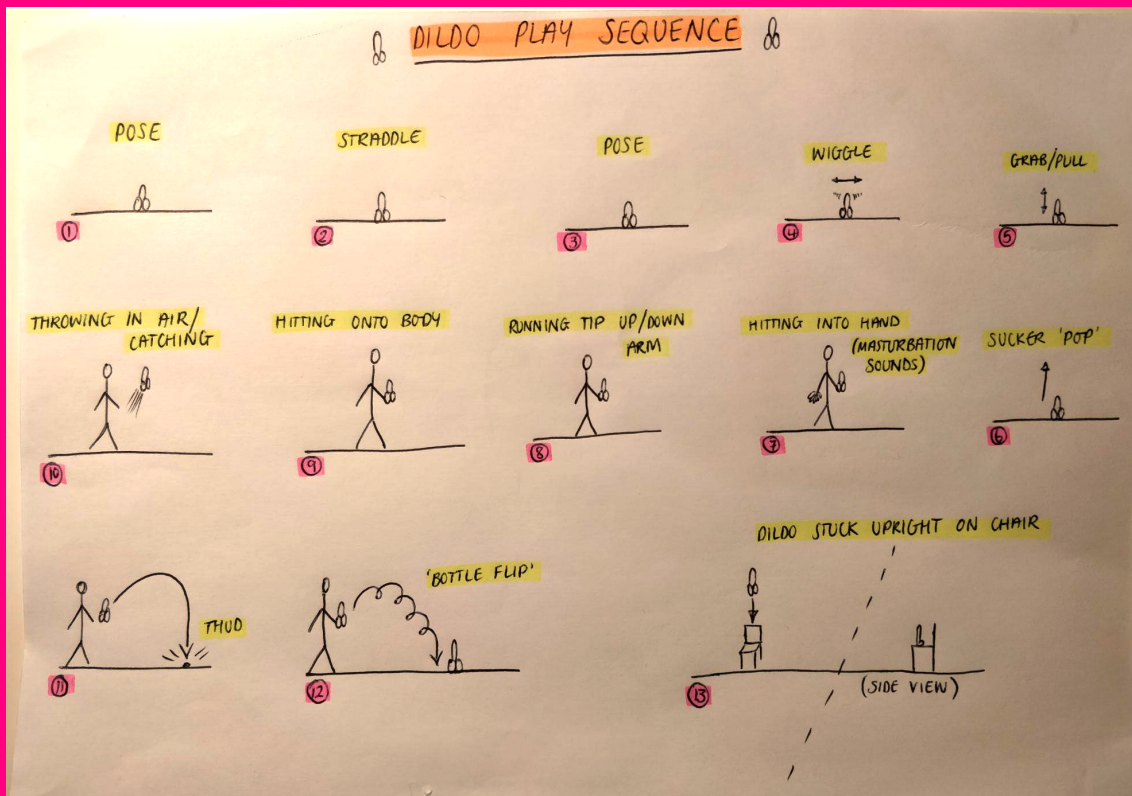
The following is taken from the beginning of Seán's script:

"...Seán sitting on a chair onstage, in the dark. A very small light comes on and illuminates his face. He is looking back into the audience, a mixture of curious and bored. After a moment or two, the light becomes bigger and you see that... in front of his open legs, sits a dildo. At first Sean is unaware, then looks at it, then back to the audience."

This is where Seán begins to play with the audience. A coy, sensual and curious persona starts to take form that feeds off of and responds to the audience's reactions. He loves eye contact, is silly, sexual and joyful. Here you can really see how clowning influenced the creation of Seán's persona.

While this is happening words are projected onto a screen behind Seán which the persona acknowledges and then continues to play with the audience and dildo. These projections serve, throughout the performance, as a narrator of sorts.





What follows is what I'm calling **'The Dildo Play Sequence'**, in which Seán playfully taunts and teases the audience whilst he explores and plays with the dildo. He explores proximity to the object, its materiality through touch and movement as well as it's sound qualities. He voices 'oohs' and 'ahhs' at his discoveries and releases pleasure sounds but speaks no words. The sucker 'pop' and the dildo becoming a gun were personal favourites of mine. Above, I have sketched a few of the images in the sequence.



This is an image I took of one of the **'Pose'** positions, during my first viewing of Seán's piece. Seeing this performance 1:1 was an intimate and intense experience, especially during the opening. It made it clear to me how important the connection is between Seán and his audience.



# THE DATE

Here there's a real change in tone in the performance. The following is taken from an interview I had with Seán:



S: "The dinner scene for me is really central.... I'm no longer looking at the audience. I do have moments but my attention is fixed on the dildo. A fourth wall comes down and suddenly you're watching a scene... I think (it's) this turning point because it starts to give context to the world of the show and it introduces the themes of loneliness and isolation... On the chair (the dildo) becomes a body, kind of a person, kind of not... - like

the absence of a person. Then the rest of the show I'm grappling with the absence of a person."

For me, this moment in the show was a point of no return. We see a really tender side to this persona while hinting that we are living in a post-2020 or a post-lockdown world. I definitely recognised my

own experience in this scene of being young and single in relation to Covid and the impact it had on socialising and dating.

Here is a link for the track used in the date scene:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgeITVmCY7k&ab\\_channel=Bensound](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgeITVmCY7k&ab_channel=Bensound)

It's good just to get out of the house. Especially to meet someone new.

Yeah

It's really been a while

Just with everything going on, I haven't really been seeing anyone

Yeah..

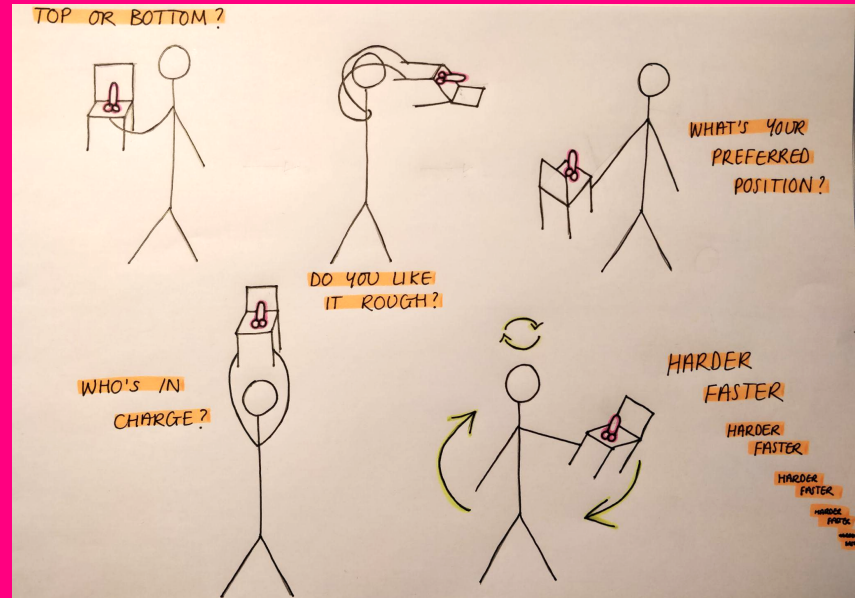
It's good just to get out of the house. Especially to meet someone new.





# THE SEX

Seán takes centre stage and begins stylised movement with the chair and the dildo. A sequence forms which he repeats, gradually getting faster. Here I have sketched some of the key images throughout the sequence and some of the provocative questions projected behind him. The final image shows Seán spinning, finally stopping when he begins to lose control and becomes exhausted. The words 'Harder' and 'Faster' repeat on the screen behind him as he spins.



I found this sequence incredibly powerful and felt it really focused on sex and pleasure existing without intimacy. It honed in on the physical and I interpreted it as a visceral portrayal of lust. I definitely found myself watching this with sadness as it followed such a profound moment of vulnerability in the date scene. It made me reflect on hook-up culture and how impersonal sex can be today.

hey

u up?

u still horny?

Are you still  
horny?



# **SLEEP**

*"Sean ends up on the ground, eyes closed, holding the chair to his body. All is still and silent."*



In this final image the following words are projected behind him:

***Falling asleep  
next to you  
is  
touching toes  
back to chest  
holding and  
being held  
too warm  
but comfortable still  
the cadence of breath  
in  
and  
out***

***What is it you dream of?***



At this intimate point the show feels grounded, hopeful and seems to have a concrete ending. However, Seán's decision to answer the question, '*What is it you dream of?*' with an array of cock and bollock shaped balloons cascading over the audience, meant that we returned back to a similar energy as the beginning; one of sexual silliness and celebration. Confetti poppers exploding from the wings acted like exclamation points to its conclusion.



Above is a photo I took of Sean and I blowing up and forming the penis balloons on tech day. The giant inflatable cock you see on the right was tested (see below) but didn't quite fall as gracefully as the others, so was cut.







# THE DILDO



This is the dildo used in the show and, aside from Seán, the only other presence to exist on stage.

S: "The dildo is such a loud and loaded object and can represent loads of different things. I'm constantly playing with how I want you to look at it. Is it phallic? Is it sexual? Is it part of my body or someone else's body that I'm being intimate with? Suddenly it's a gun, a toy, a throwing ball. I'm really intentionally playing with how you see it."

S: "When I decided to simplify I was really interested in this dildo. By removing all the other elements - the clown nose, the bondage gear, the

needless text that isn't saying what I wanted it to - I realised the dildo on its own was very loud, and had lots of really interesting semiotics about it. A really interesting material and image. I want to make work about sexuality, pleasure, intimacy with another person and loneliness and I have me and this dildo. Immediately there was a relationship. Immediately people were reading and feeling things with me doing very little. This was a really exciting moment in the process."





# BEING VULNERABLE

I love you.  
You're complicated. You often make things difficult.  
I love your lips.  
I love your smile.  
I love your laugh.  
I love playing with your hair.  
I love kissing your stubble.  
I love to make you laugh.  
I love your arms.  
I love your chest.  
I love your hands.  
I love the warmth of your body.  
I love the tone of your voice.  
I love the taste of you.  
I love the feel of your hand on my back.  
I love talking openly with you.  
I love tying you up.  
I love the familiarity.  
I love discovering something new.  
I love hugging you.  
I love kissing you.  
I love fucking you.  
I love being fucked by you.  
I love how we fit together.  
I love being held by you.  
I love whispering in the dark.  
I love being said.

Seán shared some of his journaling with me which played a role in his creative process and helped access the vulnerability present in the piece.

S: "Around December/January I'd been doing lots of personal and creative writing about the emotional side of sex, sexuality, pleasure, intimacy and loneliness whilst doing this very comedic performance work and the two weren't matching. I was kind of floundering because I kept making things that weren't really saying anything. I was creating personas, talking about sex, playing with being horny and exploring a Cabaret MC-like character but not really getting to the core of what I was trying to say. And then I realised that I actually needed to

be a bit more vulnerable and look at personally how I was feeling about this (dildo), how I was feeling about that time in my life and what were some of the deeper emotions I had surrounding sex. How could I actually put that in the work?"

~~Here~~ I'm holding your hand. Driving home from Skye.  
Driving home from 4 days camping.  
Driving home from our first trip together.  
The most amount of time we've spent together uninterrupted.  
Driving past some of the most incredible landscapes I've ever seen.  
Listening to your playlists. Your hand reaches across and lands on my ~~neck~~ knee.  
A reassuring squeeze.  
A loving gesture.  
I can't drive.  
Not much I can do on this journey  
But enjoy this moment.





It's hard to put it into words.  
Everything is about sex. It shows up everywhere. All around us. People are thinking about sex. Ads are selling us sex. The radio is playing a song about sex. The couple on TV are having sex. Or talking about sex. Or arguing about not having sex. You meet someone and you imagine them ~~to~~ having sex. Maybe it's brief, or maybe you don't do this with everyone, but it's bet you do it often. I do. It's a biological imperative. It's a source of pleasure. A source of pain. It's an emotional release. It's an incentive. An achievement. A mundane activity. It's immoral. It's illegal. It's completely unattractive. Or unsustainable. What ever it is to you, it's talked about a lot. But somehow, I'm struggling to talk about it right now. To put anything into words. Maybe because I don't quite now what it is I want to say about it. Why am I fascinated by sex? I think I want to celebrate sexuality. That's something I feel. Why do I want to celebrate sex? I think because I grew up in a society obsessed with it, but also deeply ashamed by it. You shouldn't talk about sex, it's private, it's forbidden, it's shameful. But also it's powerful, it's incredible, it's pleasurable. I think all of these things.

Imagine I made a performance that was a celebration of sex.  
Imagine I made a performance in a gay sauna.  
Imagine I made a performance where I touched and held someone.  
Imagine I made a performance where I talked openly and honestly about pleasure.  
Imagine I made a performance that takes place in a bar.  
Imagine I made a performance where I dance and sing and cry for the joy of it.  
Imagine I made a performance that tries to make up for all the lost time from the past two years.  
Imagine I made a performance that tries to make ~~up~~ for all the lost time from when I didn't feel comfortable in myself.





# INFLUENCES AND INSPIRATIONS

Ivo Dimchev - *P Project* -  "P project" by Ivo Dimchev /excerpt/

Lucy McCormac (Lucy Muck) - <https://www.lucymccormick.com/triple-threat>

Selina Thompson - specifically her use of autobiography

Le Gateau Chocolat - <https://legateauchocolat.com/>

*Why Is That So Funny?* by John Wright

*It's All Allowed* by Adrian Howells

*Queer Phenomenology* by Sarah Ahmed

Smut Show Inspo Playlist:

[https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3HBjuKBDNvoHfiQGKLSJW?si=wYCiD955OlSS9XMK7OWa8A&utm\\_source=copy-link](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3HBjuKBDNvoHfiQGKLSJW?si=wYCiD955OlSS9XMK7OWa8A&utm_source=copy-link)





# RECREATION

Tattie: "If someone was to recreate your performance, what are the key things you would want them to hold onto?"

Seán: *Recreate is a funny word... What would be important for me is: find **your** way into it. What **your** particular relationship towards sex, sexuality and intimacy is. I wouldn't want anyone to take this material and just stage that... because... it's mine. But if you were to take a score of this and give it to someone... I think really just be playful with it and find what object speaks to you because the dildo felt so interesting and accessible but it could be anything.*

Tattie: Within the sex toy realm?

Seán: *I think for it to still resemble this show it would need to be, but theres a lot of different sex toys... A vagina or vulva - what is the sex toy equivalent of that? I don't know if you can fully get a realistic one but I think there's definitely things that you could use. What's interesting for me is how much [the dildo] connects to my body and how it could be another person's body.... If a woman was to make this show it would probably look quite different. Very early on, one of my classmates said: "Oh, if I was doing it, I would put it between my legs because I don't have a penis." Whereas, for me, it never really made sense to stitch it up my crotch because there's already something there! (he laughs). But if you were to stand up and do my show, forget my choreography but focus on the intention behind it, you'd probably find way more different things to do with it cause you have a different relationship to this object... So maybe do use the dildo... but find your own things to do with it. Don't get it too close though... 'cause... I'll sue you (they laugh).*

For access to video footage of Seán's rehearsal process and final performance please contact him at:

[STalbot@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:STalbot@rcs.ac.uk)



# MY RESPONSE

Tattie: Do you have a specific thing you want the audience to walk away with?

Seán: I want them to walk away with a reflection on their own relationship to sex. It's been a very reflective process for me and I want them to be uncomfortable and I want them to find it funny. I also want them to really feel for me and themselves. I've plotted to take the audience on a journey of: "Oh what is this? This is a bit uncomfortable. Oh I think he's trying to make us laugh. Oh this is fun. Oh wait, what is this actually about? Oh it's actually... quite sad..." and then it loops back to "Oh this is actually still quite absurd."

In the spirit of Seán's wishes, I spent some time reflecting on my own relationship with the various themes portrayed in this work. I answered some questions that Seán had asked himself during his process:

Worst sex I've ever had:  
My first time is definitely up there. Random guy, built like a rugby player and thick as a plank. I was drunk, he was drunk. All very quick and a bit gross and if I had had less insecurity at the time and a better understanding of consent it never would have happened. But I was 17 and thought it's what I wanted. Then there was the famous actor. Everything about him made you think the sex would be great but wow did he fall short. I think the fact he only had bottled water in his fridge, barely any furniture and told me intimate details of his childhood straight off the bat should have been a dead giveaway.  
I do look at bad sex with fondness though. It makes for some great stories. Oh my god. The time that I ended up on A&E... Not because of any kinky or hot reason. Nope. That sex made it clear my endometriosis had returned.

Best sex I've ever had:  
The first time with a certain ex. It all went downhill from there but that first session was epic. Kind of animalistic and not and so fun. The next morning, still having sex (can we just pause to acknowledge how great morning sex is?)... so yes still going and we play this song we'd been speaking about the night before.  
'Gypsy Woman' ~~is~~ a remix of some sort and just started going at it to that. Laughed a lot.  
Then there's my most recent ex. Hands down the best. Sex, pleasure and intimacy all coexisting. Taught me a lot.

Here is a picture of my vibrator. I wonder how my **Scintillating Self-Discovery Smut Show** would look if this was my object of choice...

