Vive la France!

French government pumps money into safer-sex porn

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Skin flicks promote safe sex—at least in France. The French government has pumped $65,000 into a pay-cable station's production of five short erotic reels meant to encourage the use of condoms among X-rated movie fans. The goal: Cut the spread of HIV. The screen teasers—depicting hot-and-heavy hetero sex, a three-way and some S/M follies—were directed by such up-and-coming French directors as Cedric Klapisch (When the Cat's Away) and Marc Caro (Delicatessen), all new to porn. Why make the jump to the bump-and-grind? "The only possible way to get people to protect themselves is to show everything simply and without creating an obsession of the act of wearing a condom," Klapisch said.

The eight-minute-and-under steamers were first broadcast in April, between late-night hard-core on the Canal+ pay-cable station. "Condoms are often perceived as an obstacle to eroticism," said a spokesperson for Canal+, which dished out more than $210,000 to produce the films.

Not everyone gives a nod to the nudies. "It's scandalous for taxpayers to support this kind of thing," said France's former health minister, Hervé Gaymard, though the project reportedly got the green light in 1996, during his watch.

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