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Review by Alina Bacher, (Rating: 7 points out of 10 )

Half-naked beauties stretching topless in the sun or well shaped dream men holding their chests into the camera – advertising can no longer be imagined without sex. “Sex-sells” – not only professional advertisers know that. But not every kind of sexuality is suited for marketing. “Vanilla Sex Sells” seems to be the maxim. But there is far more to tell about the subject of sexuality. Latex, rubber and bondage are mostly banished from every day life and categorised as “perversion”. But what is perverted? Who decides how one is allowed to live his sexuality? Do obsolete moral concepts impede that we live the absolute sexual liberty? A delicate subject, that is treated by the erotic-drama “24/7 the Passion of Life”. With poetic pictures the film goes on a provocative voyage of discovery through the “other” sexuality, that public prefers to hush up and taboo.

At first: even if the description of „24/7 The Passion of Life“ sounds like the one of a well wrapped hardcore porn, this film has as much to do with cheap “banging-pornography” as a washing machine with a flowerbed – strictly nothing. The film may be set in the S&M scene and therefore pictures of people in latex slips or leather garter belts are nothing rare, but who expects to see nothing but sex games on the screen is wrong. Director Roland Reber sets on poetic pictures and with the camera, gets in search of the “sexual truth”. What is perverted?

Who decides about what is “normal” in German bedrooms? Why does our society openly speak about vanilla sex but closes its mind to everything else? Questions that characterize the film but which it leaves up to the viewer. A film that incites to reflection.

Evidently hardcore S&M practices are not everyone’s cup of tea. Some scene are bordering the limits of good taste, but Roland Reber succeeds in this difficult balancing act and the film never drifts off into the “dirty”. The sex scenes in the film are caught wonderfully poetic by the camera and produced in a way which make even so very strange practices seem familiar and understandable. Not only sexuality and eroticism are focussed, also religion is being dealt with. One or the other theology student may get icy shivers there, because Roland Reber judges religion harshly. When Dominik produces himself as Jesus and his Dominatrix has a word with him as “Satan”, or when Lady Maria hears the confession of her subordinates - religiousness changes the natural relationship of the human to his sexuality. Reber doesn’t shun any provocation and deals with aspects of our society that are often preferred to be swept under the carpet. But sometimes one gets the impression, that the film tries desperately to provoke in every scene. Separation of sex and love, that’s all well and good, but to show all “vanilla sex maker” as conservative people who do not dare anything in life, will hardly be welcomed with opened arms.

Even if the subject is not simple and in everyday life often overshadowed by prejudice and clichés, the film catches up the special atmosphere of the S&M scene, without appearing stereotyped. This is mainly because of the good research work of the team. Main actress Mira Gittner for example, stood in for a few nights in an S&M Studio as guest-dominatrix, before venturing into the role. Mira Gittner about this: “For me this is a natural process to prepare a role. If I played a doctor, I would also try to look at the life in a surgery for a few days. As I did not get in touch with the S&M scene before, I wanted to make my personal experiences.”

The acting ensemble is set together partly out of professionals and partly out of amateurs.

Mira Gittner and Marina Anna Eich are brilliant in the leading roles. Their intense acting is one of the reasons why "24/7 The Passion of Life" never loses its provoking poetry.

In the role of the "maid Elfriede", Reinhard Wendt cuts a very good figure. The 80-year old plays himself, because Wendt approached the director Roland Reber during the shooting at the S&M Studio and asked whether he could also play a part in the film. After long conversations with "Elfriede", Mira Gittner and Roland Reber developed the role in the film. Another amateur actor is Michael Burkhardt; he tries his hand with the role of the "travel guide of lust" Mike. Unfortunately one has to say, that the difference between professional actors and amateurs gets very clear here, compared to the rest of the cast his performance comes off poor. "24/7- The Passion of Life" is a true independent film which will polarize because of its provoking subject. A poetic Odyssey through Lust and Passion, between perversion and convention. In any case a film that is not ordinary, that will split the audience and throw the film world into a turmoil.

(source: [www.filmstarts.de](http://www.filmstarts.de))