



Press Kit

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24 / 7

The Passion of Life

Director:

Roland Reber

Cast:

Marina Anna Eich

Mira Gittner

Michael Burkhardt

Christoph Baumann

Reinhard Wendt

Germany 2005 / Length: 115 minutes
Format: 35 mm / 1:1,85 / Dolby SR

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Cast

Actors	Role
Marina Anna Eich	Eve
Mira Gittner	Lady Maria
Christoph Baumann	Dominik
Michael Burkhardt	Mike
Reinhard Wendt	Elfriede
Sabine Krappweis	Alexandra
Zoltan Paul	Eve's Father
Jan Lebr	Jan
Martin Bayer	Franz
Lydia Hippel	Lydia
Patricia Koch	Stephanie Evans
Anja Schönleben	Esther

Crew

director	Roland Reber
writers	Roland Reber, Mira Gittner
producers	Patricia Koch, Marina Anna Eich
cinematography	Mira Gittner D.o.P., Roland Reber
editor	Mira Gittner
music	Wolfgang Edelmayr
production	wtp international GmbH
year of production	2005
Shooting period	July-December 2004
Locations	Munich and surroundings, Austria.

FESTIVALS

2005 Internationale Hofer Filmtage, Germany
2005 Sitges Festival Internacional de Cinema, Spanien
2006 Fantasporto International Filmfestival, Portugal
2006 Mar del Plata Independente Int'l Filmfestival, Argentinien
2009 International Filmfestival of India, Goa
2009 International Chennai Filmfestival, Indien

REVIEWS & QUOTATIONS (detailed see attachment)

The film tries to give an honest insight into the dark sides of the German soul, without brushing it aside ironically. (*Dr. Andreas Rost, Munich*)

A film that is worth seeing, which one has not to like, but which incites to reflection. There are not a great lot of films from which you could honestly say so. Worth seeing. (*Münchner Merkur*)

“A wild mélange of poetry and obscenity” (*Sueddeutsche Zeitung*)

“A poetic Odyssey through Lust and Passion, between perversion and convention. In any case a film that is not ordinary.” (*filmstarts.de*)

The film tries to give an honest insight into the dark sides of the German soul, without brushing it aside ironically. (*Dr. Andreas Rost, department of culture, city of Munich*)

Who follows the film on its journey through S&M-Studio and swingers club, experiences in expressive pictures, abysses and heights of people in search of themselves, their corporeality and their God. (*Christian Herz, Dipl. Theologian.*)

“Taking in account its subject, 24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE offers an astonishing amount of comedy of the situation and amusement.”
(*Andreas Ströhl, President International Filmfestival Munich*)

„Fantastic film. Courageous. Human. Powerful.“
(*Thomas Sing, Humanistic Scientist, detailed review see attachment*)

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.
(*www.Filmstarts.de, Alina Bacher – rating: 7 points out of 10*)

Roland Reber shows Lust in all its variations as pure, neutral and especially as an inherent human motion and dismantles our society as hypocritical and bigoted. Realised with minimal technical resources the film impresses even more because of its pictures. The viewer remains observer and doesn't become participant to the happening. (WIDESCREEN 03/06, Julian Reischl - *rating: 4 stars out of 5*)

„Stirring art house cinema, ambitious without moralizing undertone. Absolutely worth seeing!“ (*Robert aka fan, AK SM&Culture in Munich*)

24 / 7 THE PASSION OF LIFE is the successful work of a strongly emotional drama of new German Film-Art.
(*Dietmar Wlodek, Journalist*)

“Probably the first German movie, that bothers of showing S&M like it is. But it is not a mere S&M film. But a film about how society is handling sexuality itself. A film about religion, moral and double moral.” (*Schlagzeilen, renowned S&M Magazine*)

„... *24/7 The Passion of Life* is a powerful affirmation of life, that explores with uncompromising reality the mendacity and self-deception of our lives and the cultures and religions that would have all of us behave robot-like in the expression and fulfillment of our most private sexual desires. That is movie making at its finest" (*Gordon Weaver, film publicist - worked among others for Paramount in Marketing und Public Relations*)

24 / 7 The Passion of Life

... a provocative and poetic journey through the empire of sexuality, loneliness and the lustful pain of our being...

Press Notes

24/7 – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – THE PASSION OF LIFE, the story of Suffering and Life, of Lust and Passion – is a poetic film. Its semantic provokes and breaks our habitual, experienced and lived order. In a sensitive way and far away from cliché the film shows, in emotional and humoresque, thoughtful and droll moments, the inner conflict of the protagonists who are in search of themselves. In doing so, it penetrates with a disarming honesty the areas where the individual is completely alone, by himself – without offending the characters nor denouncing them, but accepting them neutrally as what they are, with all their tendency towards self realization and the loneliness which lies behind it, their searching and failing – it is the human being who is asked here.

Director and author Roland Reber: “ It was very important to us to deal seriously with the subject, through many interviews, research and literature. In 24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE the subject of sexuality is also a metaphor for the search of identity, which is perhaps expressed more clearly in sexuality than in other areas, also a metaphor for life. The entire film is a symbolism and plays with archetypical elements.”

In the film, Sexuality is shown as a natural part of the human being, as lustful experience of one's self and Life, as intense form of communication. It is not treated as a taboo subject or merely to raise the viewing figures but there is a respectful dealing which not only condemns a devaluation of the human being but renounces to any judgment.

Actress, cinematographer and script author Mira Gittner explains the approach: „Sexuality is individual, and as there is no such thing as THE human being, there is not THE sexuality. For everyone sexuality means something different and nobody has the right to dictate how and if someone lives up to his sexuality, as long as it happens in mutual agreement.

The point of the Movie is not a documentary representation but a poetic representation, not a purely physical but also an intellectual analysis of the theme. It was not about showing several sexual techniques as libidinous physical exercises, but about the essence which is behind it, respectively what we think is behind it. To show the whole range of possibilities of sexual expression would go far beyond the volume of a movie. Our intention was not to do a documentary about the S&M or swingers scene with all possible sexual practices, but a story about people. But it was important to us, to make an authentic depiction of the atmosphere of the S&M sessions and the swingers club.”

24 / 7 THE PASSION OF LIFE had its first screening in October 2005 at the International Filmfestival Sitges in Spain and had its German premiere at the 39. Hof International Film Festival 2005 with three sold out screenings.

24 / 7 THE PASSION OF LIFE touches the people in their deeper layers. A film that is going to provoke controversial discussions.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

24/7 The Passion of Life is a provocative and poetic film about obsession and loneliness, about secret lust and public double-moral: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The hotelier's daughter Eve (Marina Anna Eich) coincidentally meets the sociologist Magdalena (Mira Gittner) who works as the dominatrix "Lady Maria" in an S&M-Studio. Fascinated by the bizarre world of Lady Maria, Eve begins the search for her own identity and goes on an odyssey through the world of sexuality – a journey to the repressed landscapes of our soul.

SYNOPSIS

24/7 The Passion of Life is a provocative and poetic film about the fear of ourselves, the fear to face ourselves in the mirror of our passions in a society ridden by taboos and double-morals: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – the Passion of Life.

The hotelier's daughter Eve (Marina Anna Eich) coincidentally meets the sociologist Magdalena (Mira Gittner), who works as the dominatrix „Lady Maria“ in an S&M Studio.

Fascinated by the bizarre world of "Lady Maria" and noticing that in her ideal world there is everything but lust and passion, she goes in search of her sexuality, her inner being. She starts an Odyssey through the hidden microcosms of Lust – places of which everybody pretends they do not exist but which still exist everywhere: S&M Studio, swingers club, striptease bar. This search also brings her in conflict with the normative constraints and double-morals of society.

Lady Maria relates the events in the S&M-Studio to religion – worship, confession, punishment as forgiving act – as well as to emotional moments like consolation, feeling secure and saying what's on ones mind. In an apparently bizarre world, a warmth emerges, for the people, with their dark sides.

A lyrical study of obsession and loneliness, secret Lust and public double-morals: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Lady Maria : „Society likes to have standardized people. They obey more easily. But can emotions be standardized? Who puts forward these norms? Who standardizes us? Who is living our life? Most people just exist, but they are not the living. Live YOUR life.“

DETAILED SYNOPSIS

The sheltered brought up hotelier's daughter Eve (Marina Anna Eich), coincidentally meets the sociologist Magdalena (Mira Gittner) who is standing at the side of a road with a motorcycle break down. Eve takes her to the next garage. The next morning, Eve notices that Magdalena left her bag in her car. Looking for a contact number, Eve looks through the bag and finds erotic toys and the card of an S&M-Studio, where Magdalena is working as "Lady Maria".

Getting curious, Eve drives to the S&M-Studio and encounters an unknown world. Fascinated by this world and noticing that in her ideal world there is everything but lust, passion and eroticism, she goes in search of her sexuality, and a journey to her very own identity begins, with Lady Maria's help. This Odyssey takes her through the hidden microcosms of lust – places of which everybody pretends they do not exist, but which do exist everywhere: S&M-Studio, Swingers Club, and finally, a Striptease Bar. This trek for her inner being is one which brings her in conflict with the normative constraints and double-morals of society.

During her first visit to the Swingers Club, she gets to know Mike (Michael Burkhardt), who offers her to be her travel guide through the world of lust.

Eve accepts his offer, happy to have found somebody who neither wants to marry her, nor wants to inherit her father's hotel, but simply someone with whom she can live up to her erotic longings. Her friend Alexandra is not able to understand Eve's journey through the world of sexuality. The first conflict with Eve's surrounding initiates here and will culminate later, in splitting up with her father and her friend.

Eve falls into the area of conflict of different „Worlds“ – first at the hotel, where she meets Claire, whom she met at the Swingers Club. But Claire pretends not to know Eve and leaves, which Eve can't understand.

Magdalena: „You have been in that area which people normally conceal.

Not only from others, but most of all, from themselves.“

Eve: “I don't understand.“

Magdalena: “Did you tell your father about your adventures?“

Eve: “No.“

Magdalena: "See? Eternally torn, never intact.“

At the S&M-Studio, the guests of Lady Maria live their different fantasies: Franz finds the liberation of the ordinary human existence in the transformation into a rubber pig. Karl-Friedrich (Reinhard Wendt), an 80 year old man, finds his fulfilment in the role of the maid Elfriede. Dominik (Christoph Baumann), torn between lust and “sin”, wants to empathize the Passion of Jesus in his way.

Lady Maria: „What are you looking for, you lonely wanderer, in this desert we call life?“

Dominik: „I'm looking for love.“

Lady Maria: “If you don't have it within yourself, you'll never find it.“

Dominik: “And how do I find the love inside of me?“

Lady Maria: “By giving in to it – with all its lust and all its pain.“

Dominik: “Love knows no pain.“

Lady Maria: “Love is pain. It is ecstasy and torture all in one. But still, it is the power that keeps us going in life.“

Lady Maria relates the events in the S&M-Studio to religion – worship, confession, punishment as forgiving act – as well as to emotional moments like consolation, feeling secure and saying what's on ones mind. In an apparently bizarre world, a warmth emerges, for the people, with their dark sides.

Lady Maria : „Society likes to have standardized people. They obey more easily. But can emotions be standardized? Who puts forward these norms? Who standardizes us? Who is living our life? Most people just exist, but they are not the living. Live YOUR life.“

In her erotic games, Eve cuts to the chase, where Mike stops and won't let it continue, mainly when other men are involved. He wants exclusivity. Eve takes him to task. Mike tries to get out with excuses, he doesn't dare to let Eve know about his real feelings.

Finally Mike freaks out and nearly beats up the other men. Lydia, the owner of the swingers club, challenges him. Mike replies by explaining to her, that he found his true love in Eve and is afraid to lose her. But Eve doesn't want to know about this. She yearned to "have new experiences, live adventures" and he refused to accept it. She leaves Mike humiliated.

Upon returning home, her father awaits her, informed by her friend Alexandra about Eve's erotic adventures, and initiates an argument. He doesn't want to see Eve in his hotel again, as long as she stays surrounded by "Dominatrix and all this degenerated fuss".

Eve, disappointed by her fathers reaction, runs away and in protest, dances as a stripper in an erotic bar, lonely, abandoned and still in search of her true self.

*Magdalena: "I am wanderer only – and tired.
Looking for the human's sense.
Knowing about their sadness and that I am sad again.
I am wanderer only – and lonely.
Exploring the human's heart.
Knowing about their pain and feel deeply the pain.
I am wanderer only – and empty, seeing the human's sorrow.
Knowing about their grief and remain in me - alone*

One day, Eve is booked in a separee, a special guest has ordered a table Dance: it is Lady Maria.

Lady Maria: "Have you reached your goal? Did you find anything?"

Eve: " I don't know. Maybe there's nothing to find. At least I know where I don't want to go: back to the gilded hotel cage. Probably I'm longing to start from scratch. I'd like to be born again. Without father- without mother. I want to give new birth to myself and want to be father and mother of myself."

ABOUT THE PROJECT

SPECIAL WORKING METHOD

The film was made by team work, with a small team, where the members took over several tasks, in front of and behind the camera: Roland Reber is director, co-author, did the second camera and is taking care, together with Marina Anna Eich, of the international sales of the movie.

The main actress Marina Anna Eich (role: Eve), also co-producer, did the catering and is responsible for the international sales. Mira Gittner was the director of photography, editor, co-author and plays the part of "Lady Maria" etc...

The script, based on an initial idea, starts with a few pages which are developed and extended during the on-going shooting. There was no improvisation. The scenes were developed during the shooting, written down and produced.

Roland Reber understands filmmaking as a creative adventure: „Everyone has the opportunity to bring in his ideas and creativity to the table. I do not believe in telling stories in a narrative style, as life is not like a Novel which follows only one direction. It is multi-dimensional with sudden turning points.”

Mira Gittner: „The imagination is given free rein. It is more akin to writing down one's thoughts, associations, ideas, which later are put together, and assembled both intellectually and cinematically. Subsequently, the story evolves and writes itself automatically”.

The varied nature of life cannot be forced into authoritarian structures.

24 / 7 The Passion of Life might begin in a narrative way, but loses its linear style ending in a symbolic, nearly abstract act.

Roland Reber and Mira Gittner: “We are more interested in atmospheres, situations of development, the different states of mind of the characters, than in their entire explanation. It is more a poetic than a rational representation of the action. The characters do not give a complete explanation of their behaviour, but remain incomplete as in real life, because all our knowledge about ourselves and others is never complete. This “imperfection” leads to a deep insight into the human soul and with this to a multi-dimensional understanding.

The characters therefore often seem lost or lonesome, in their attempts to decode themselves. The mystery is the exciting, not the explicitness, because nobody is what he or she appears to be. It is up to the viewer to solve the characters' mystery and to fill the distance with his emotions and associations, whatever these may be.”

The actors and their roles

When the decision was made to deal with the subject of sexuality in a movie, the very extensive preparation began. Especially the actors were exploring new territories with their roles. Besides literature and countless interviews, Mira Gittner (who plays the part of the dominatrix “Lady Maria”), stood in for a few nights in an S&M-Studio as guest-dominatrix, to get an impression of the happenings.

Mira Gittner: „For me this is a normal preparation process for 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. I wanted to feel the atmosphere, the dealing with one another, the ordinariness, and the mundane.

The S&M-Studio had to become usual to me. In addition I had to learn how to walk in high heels first. I normally wear sneakers in private. I think one can notice whether an actor holds a bond in his hand for the first time or not. As an actor you should not have any reservation towards your role. For me it was exciting to get the opportunity to delve into the to me unknown world of the S&M scene.

The poetry, calm and devotion, that I partly experienced there, the tender, highly imaginative game and, above all, the communication between the persons involved, impressed me.

Through all these experiences, interviews and research, the role of “Lady Maria” was developed. This character is fiction, like all the movie is fiction, even if a few stories or persons are authentic, every scene is written and produced.”

Also for **Marina Anna Eich**, who played the part of Eve, the shootings to *24 / 7 The Passion of Life* were a very special experience: “It was interesting to get to know how many people are in touch with this subject, but do hide this in public.” An experience besides the cameras made obvious to her, that the subject is omnipresent, but most often only practised discreetly behind closed doors: “In private I like to wear high heels. When I went shopping during the shooting, a man approached me. He explained to me, that he was a shoe fetishist and asked me if I would stand on his hand. At first I was astonished but I did it. He stood up again, thanked me happily and wished me a nice day.”

Besides many professional actors like Marina Anna Eich (Eve), Mira Gittner (Lady Maria) and Christoph Baumann (Dominik) etc..., some amateur actors also participated. The part of Mike e.g., played by the owner of the swingers club, started as a small part and was extended, during the shooting, to one of the main parts. That’s also how the role of Elfriede developed, played by Reinhard Wendt.

Location scouting

Director Roland Reber: “Locations like swingers club, S&M-Studio and striptease-bar were integrated into the story without being moral. How often do you see in German television a murder in a swingers club, the criminal in the S&M-Studio etc. always with a negative association. We wanted to treat the subject without being moral. We talked to a lot of people from each scene before the shooting and integrated their experience into the film.“

An important condition for creating an authentic atmosphere during the shootings, as well as in the movie, was to shoot at original sites.

But the search for suitable sites was not always easy. The owner of the swingers club “La Boum” e.g. was not immediately enthusiastic by the idea of shooting a film there: “Shootings – here at our place? We are not interested at all... If you insist you may drop by” was his first reaction. Only after he realised (and somehow surprised) that it was in fact a serious project, was he willing to open his club to the film team.

Afterwards it turned out, that his initial aversion was due to the fact that in several times in the past, neighbours tried to gain access to the club this way. And as a footnote, the owner of the club, Michael Burkhardt can be seen as “Mike”, which is one of the main parts, in *24/7 The Passion of Life*. And as it is usual with wtp international, he also took over some other tasks (e.g. the modification of the “Maria-Mobil”, the installation of the cross etc...).

Additionally, during the first visit to the S&M-Studio, the film team had an interesting encounter. Behind the entry grid, a naked man with dog ears and a collar sat quietly in front of a water bowl. Against the expectation not all studio guests were concerned about discretion. The dominatrix introduced the naked man as "Bello, a nice Rottweiler" to the surprised Mira Gittner, who was put the leash in her hand to take Bello for a walk. This scene was put into the movie later.

Reference to religion

"Salvation guaranteed?"

In the triangle "Identity - Sexuality - Religiousness" Roland Reber's "24/7 The Passion of Life" approaches the essential traits of human life. On the model of S&M and sexual (borderline) experiences, the protagonists deal with Christian-occidental sexual moral as well as with their own drives and desires. Do they find themselves through religious sexual rituals, do they discover ways out of their loneliness in sex, does submission deliver them from their sin? Who follows the film on its journey through S&M-studio and swingers club, experiences in expressive pictures abysses and flights of people, who are in search of their self, their corporeality and their God." (Christian Herz, theologian)

Our society is influenced by 2000 years of ecclesiastical sexual moral, whether one believes in Christianity or church, or not, our society is built upon it. "It is occidental reality, when penal codes and judgements are determined by what ancient oriental goatherd thought about sexuality a few thousand years ago" (Karlheinz Deschner, "Das Kreuz mit der Kirche").

Therefore if one is dealing with a subject on sexuality and society, one can not avoid Christian sexual moral, which was developed by the church only centuries after the foundation of the early Church and changed the social values.

The combination of Eros and Religion has a background in religious studies, as well as the development of sexuality from a holy process up to the repression by sexual moral. This can be seen in the example of temple prostitution, as it was celebrated in ancient cultures before the formation of the monotheistic, patriarchal religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The men and women visiting a temple to pray to the Great Goddess, to praise her and to experience the reunion with the Great Goddess through the sexual act with Her earthly representatives – the female or male priest – understood sexuality in this context as a holy act.

As the monotheistic religions and their institutions like Christianity and Church spread, the sexual Communion was gradually repressed and degraded from being holy to being evil.

To quote the moral theologian Stephan Pfürtner: "The sexual hostility of church, which created much human sorrow and pathologic neuroses, is finally related to the retention of power of the institution and the control of the people."

The society's disapproval of sexual Sadomasochism is paradox, because many practices can be found in Christianity: flagellation, obedience, worship, sacrifice, fetish etc. Just as paradox is the description of a fetishist, who adores an inanimate object like a shoe, as "ill" or "perverted", in a society which is based on the biggest fetish of the world: Jesus on the cross.

Many of the symbols and characters in the film are archetypical symbols, archetypes of the human soul, which exist since the very beginning of humanity and are profoundly embedded in every human being. Today we know many of these symbols, representations and rituals in relation with Christianity. But they are much older

archetypical symbols which existed long before the foundation of Christianity and which Christianity took over from ancient pagan cults.

Dionysius for example, has been crucified. Long before Christian times he was worshiped on a cross that stood upon an altar on which wine vessels stood. Maria with the Infant Jesus is amongst others, a representation of the ancient Egyptian Goddess Isis with the Infant Horus etc... Maria as the archetype of the feminine. She was took over from the cults of Isis, Inanna, Ishtar, Astarte etc. (cults that also included the sexual aspect of the religious worship). Afterwards the Christian Church domesticated her to the biological virgin and mother of God in the councils of Constantinople in 381 and of Ephesus in 431.

In its archetypical sense "virgin" is not meant biologically but as a mental and spiritual, and therefore political, position. Virgin as pure from ideologies, prejudices and dogmas. In religious history the virgin is a title of the Magna Mater, the Great Goddess, a symbol of life, a symbol of the female part of the original creative power, which calls for the liberation from religious, social and political dogmas.

Virgin in a sense of "yourself", not touched by external influences or norms. And as the feminine is an essential element in the structure of the human beings – of women as well as men – it is about the human being in its totality.

Consciously lived eroticism is more than the dull working off of several positions, it is not about technique, but about the essence. It is an attempt to encounter one's self, to switch off the conscious everyday self, to even dissolve it through devotion, to forget one self, to lose one self, in order to delve, for one tiny moment, into the infinity of existence - and this is a spiritual, even religious act.

In the twilight of the S&M-Studio in *24/7 The Passion of Life* the persons can be themselves and individuals, they are no more forced to be a common aspect of society. The S&M-Studio becomes a sacral place, a shrine, where the individual - far away from the ordinariness - can celebrate modern rituals, with the subconscious as the master of ceremonies. The rational gives way to the hidden longings and repressions, and emotion appears. It is the attempt to get reunified through one's contrasts, to overcome the separation of rational/mind and irrational/emotion and to reach the transcendence of the self. It is about living in parallel worlds, and the simultaneity of existence and non-existence, of loss and at the same time experience of the very own personal identity.

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR ROLAND REBER

How did the initial idea to the film come?

RR: It was during the Film Festival in Cannes. I had an appointment for lunch with an American producer and director. On the table, there were paper place mats, with the notice of a "24/7 office service in Cannes".

Then I said to the American, look, do you have 24/7 too - which is an expression from the S&M scene in Europe. He said yes, we have restaurants opened 24 hours too. Then we started to discuss, about moral concepts and clichés, because he knew only clichés. There I said, well, I am not an SMer, I do not belong to any scene, but I can not imagine that dominatrices are the way they are shown on RTL. And so the discussion became more and more profound and that's when we said, wouldn't that be a subject - the subject of hidden sexuality: hidden not only from the eyes of our neighbours but above all hidden to ourselves. And then we started a long research in striptease bars, in swingers clubs, in all the places which are pretended not to exist, but which everybody knows. And so the idea to the film slowly developed.

In the film the subject of sexuality is also a metaphor for the search for identity. It is one way to get to know one's self, to approach one's self a little bit through self-definition.

And it was important to me, not to make a film which says: do S&M and you are free, go to a swingers club and everything will be fine, no. Also the subject of loneliness, with which we face life, was important to me

*What does the title **24 / 7** mean?*

RR: 24 hours a day, seven days a week – another expression for "always".

The film tells about a "journey to the world of sexuality" and also plays with the to us "alien" like the dominatrix Studio. Did the research mean stepping into alien worlds too?

RR: It was immersing into a world which is not our everyday world. But we looked for the dialogue with the people from each scene and tried to depict the atmosphere authentically. That was the point, how can we manage, as not being part of the S&M nor swingers scene, to make it credible.

How far is the film fiction and how much of it is based on research?

RR: The film is fiction, but is based on research, i.e. really existing fantasies, persons, stories - out of the common milieu for example the character of the father, as well as out of the respective scene, like the character of Elfriede, which was then integrated into the story.

Was it difficult to produce the sometimes very explicit sex scenes with the actors?

RR: No. It was up to the actor to define his own limits and to realize them. This kind of work has been my principle for over 20 years. For me actors are not henchmen of the director or the author, but creative artists who develop their roles. I'm not suited to the work of a tamer. Instead I see myself as a conductor who coordinates the work of

the soloists.

Your actors are not only actors but often also involved in other parts of the filmmaking - for example the editing, cinematography, script, production etc. Yourself are not only the director of the film, but also wrote the script and take care of the distribution. What are the advantages of this working method?

RR: In the film industry there has been an ongoing specialisation - a fragmentation of the creativity. Many colleagues think there should be a division between the artistic, technical and administrating positions. I do not think so. Creativity is not divisible - not to be understood separately - but is always a holistic process. We are not a company that produces films, we are filmmakers. Filmmakers make films. And this is an integral process - and one to enjoy.

Mira Gittner for example, not only played one of the main parts, but was also the director of photography and the editor of the movie and wrote the script together with me. Marina Anna Eich, also one of the main parts, is responsible for the international sales, the distribution and the public relations. Like this we represent "our" film, and not a product from other people. I would never talk of "my movie", but always "our" - it is teamwork. Many actors often see themselves in a fulfilling position. They say: "I took part in a movie". They distance themselves with the argument that they are only actors. With us nobody is "only". The film industry is dominated by bankers and businessmen. They rob the film's soul. If I see these puffed-up would-be film representatives, I know that it is time to give back the films to those, who do not consider a film as an investment, but as a statement - the filmmaker.

You shot at original sites, amongst others in an S&M-Studio and in a swingers club. How did that influence the working on the movie?

RR: A film studio is always scenery that lacks life. It remains an artificial place. We wanted to shoot at places which made it possible to everyone participating, to feel the authenticity.

The surrounding is not very common - was there any reluctance (in dealing with the "real" persons involved)?

RR: The set of a swingers club or an S&M-Studio is not common, but the people frequenting them are. If one looks behind the "scenery" or the "costumes" of these areas, one meets ordinary people who perhaps try to take off their ordinariness for a little while. I would define it as a Disneyland for adults.

And fear and repulsion do only emerge because we do not know something, because it is alien. And I think it is alarming that in the 21st century, it really happened, when we told that we were going to shoot a film that is located among other places in an S&M Studio, well educated and intelligent people seriously asked us, how we were going to protect ourselves when frequenting "these" people. I thought the question was amusing, because many people whom I met in the S&M Studio were so harmlessly normal, that they would have been very disappointed, if they had come with us.

Was there an experience during the shooting that particularly impressed you?

RR: Every day of the shooting impressed me. Surely there were some experiences that will be one of my anecdotes now. To tell all of them would take too long for this interview. Already the research for the movie often brought us into situations which are worth to remember. For example as we looked for the location for the scenes in the swingers club, the owner of the swingers club nearly slammed the door in our face, thinking neighbours sent us to spy out his guests.

Also the casting of the "real swingers" was somehow appealing. Especially because we had to make clear, that we were not shooting the 160th part of "Liebe Sünde" or an erotic show for RTL.

If you use the term "impress", I can tell you from my experience, that something which we do not know leaves an impression. As soon as the unknown gets part of our experiences, it loses its emphasised position and becomes ordinary. In our production notes, you can find many occurrences, which demonstrate this.

*What was your motivation to deal with the subject of sexual obsession/perversion?
What do you want to show the viewer?*

RR: Sexuality is an universal subject, that unfortunately is often only dealt with, to rise the viewing figures. A serious analysis - also with what we do not know - is not taking place most of the time. Perverted comes from the Latin word "perversus" (twisted) - nothing negative at first.

In our society, pervert is mostly used in a pejorative way. For me, terms of our politics and social moral are perverted. For me, a person who prostitutes herself every day in work, family and society is more perverted than a person that lives up to her sexual inclination. Evidently only if he respects the self-determination and the freedom of the opposite.

In every city these places (Swingers club, striptease bar, S&M-Studio, whorehouse) exist, which the society hides with shame and still visits. Many even hide their sexual fantasies from themselves. They try to fit the predominant opinion, not to stand out. But like this, they do not make the fantasy undone. They prefer to wait for the next vacation, carnival, or the Oktoberfest...

All this was motivation enough for us to deal with this subject.

How do you see the subject of sexuality in relation with society?

RR: In the mid 70ies I thought, the times of sexual repression, and that this should be a subject at all, were over and that it was finally liberal. But I observe, especially since the 90ies, a strong conservative tendency, only that the appearances are deceptive and the surface seems liberal. We see naked people in magazines, the people dress in a sexy way, but there is nothing behind it. There is a sexual denial which probably is politically intended.

Society defines some rooms to move and as long as you move inside of them - that's what I mean by surface - it appears liberal. But as soon as you move outside, you will quickly experience the boundaries. I think we should quickly achieve a tolerance inside society, where the sexual inclination is no longer the base of a professional or social judging, but really private.

The film also plays with a certain religious symbolism. Where do you see the relation to religion?

RR: In this society we are all formed by a Christian conception of the world since 2000 years, whether we want or not, whether we belong to a religious community or not. And therefore also by a 2000 year old sexual moral, which is the achievement of the roman-catholic church and influences our world unquestioned - where does this moral concept come from, is it constructed, who constructed it, why was it constructed. I am not hostile to religion, all the opposite, I think everyone should believe in what he wants. This is the first relation to religion. The second one is, that sexuality is also a search for identity, for surmounting the loneliness, a search for the own self and an origin, however we want to call it. Religion and Sexuality have a great relation, if one accepts it.

Besides the main actresses Marina Anna Eich and Mira Gittner one can also see amateur actors in 24/7 – The Passion of Life. How was the casting for this movie?

RR: Besides many professional actors, also some people from the scene have participated in the movie. For the minor roles in the swingers club we wanted to take "non-swingers" at first. But I think this would have become embarrassing. One who is not used to sit on bar stools in underwear or tiger-tanga and should appear natural, will fail in this task. So we asked the owner of the swingers club to ask in between his guests, who is interested in participating in a movie. After that we had many conversations and then made the choice. The shootings were very agreeable, because every one involved was having fun. At the S&M-Studio the guests soon noticed that there were shootings going on. One or the other approached us and we chose two of them.

How did you come to filmmaking?

RR: I worked at theatre as an actor, author and director for twenty years in Germany and internationally. If I wanted to say something, I wrote a play and produced it. At a time, there was the point where I noticed that the stage has restricted borders which should be exceeded. That's how I came to filmmaking, because cinema gives me the creative freedom and is nearer to the spectator than theatre is. For me, filmmaking is like talking and it is nearer to myself. But as I do not understand myself entirely, I do not understand my films entirely. Even if the films I make have a particular handwriting, the stile and the handling of each movie depends on the subject, which is different from one to another.

What is your next project?

RR: At the moment I do research, together with Mira Gittner, to the subject of mind control. It is an exciting subject, that is again treating a hot, even if not sexual, subject. It is about manipulation, secret research and politics. The question about "perversion" would be more adequate there.

The production team / biographies

ROLAND REBER (author & director, producer)

“Unicum in the German landscape. The German Cine-Buddha.”
(*Süddeutsche Zeitung, Hans Schifferle*)

After finishing his acting school in Bochum/Germany in the 70ies, Roland Reber worked as actor, writer and director at theatres such as Bochum, Essen, Düsseldorf, Zürich, Kingston/Jamaica, New Delhi etc. He has written more than 20 theatre plays and scripts as well as texts and poems.

In 1981 he founded the Theatre Institute and worked as director, author and actor. He was Head of the World Theatre Project (in the framework of the Decade for Cultural Development of the UNESCO and UN), which he founded in 1989 and worked, as director and author in Cairo, Mexico and the Caribbean. He was teacher for acting and directing among others in Moscow and the Caribbean. For wtp international GmbH he works as a director and author. In 2003 his feature films *the room*, *Pentamagica* and *The Dark Side of our Inner Space* were shown at the Calcutta International Film Festival in a Roland Reber section, in May 2007 *The „Roland Reber Films“* Box with these three films was released on DVD in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

In November 2009 there was a Roland Reber-Retrospective with six of his films at the renowned 40th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa.

From 2003 to 2007 Roland Reber was the official representative of the Cairo International Film festival in Germany and the representative of the Damascus International Film festival for Europe. He was a member of the jury at the Fantasportas IFF 2008 in Portugal, the SITGES international Film Festival 2007 in Spain, the IFF in Alexandria/ Egypt in 2003, the IFF Dhaka/Bangladesh in 2004 and the Cairo IFF for Children in 2003.

Roland Reber received the Schweizer Kulturpreis (1976) for his theatre work and received as first European, the cultural prize of the Caribbean Season of Excellence (1991 and 1993). For his directing of the feature film *das zimmer – The Room* (2000/2001) he received amongst others the Emerging Filmmaker Award 2001 in Hollywood, the Jury Choice for Foreign Film 2001 in Chicago and the President's Award 2000 in Ajijic/Mexico.

His filmography as director and author includes among others: *Ihr habt meine Seele gebogen wie einen schönen Tänzer* (feature, 1979), *Manuel* (short, 1998) *der Fernsehauftritt-On Television* (short, 1998), *der Koffer- the bag* (short, 1999), *Zwang-Compulsion* (short, 2000), *Sind Mädchen Werwölfe...?- Are Girls Werewolves...?* (short, 2002), *Das Zimmer-The Room* (feature, 2001 - 6 international Awards), *Pentamagica* (feature, 2003), *The Dark Side of our Inner Space* (feature, 2003), *24 / 7 The Passion of Life* (feature, 2005), *My Dream or Loneliness never walks alone* (feature, 2007), *Angels with dirty wings* (feature, 2009), *The truth of lie* (feature, 2011)

MARINA ANNA EICH (role: Eve, producer, sales, PR)

After high school, Marina Anna Eich studied Spanish, English and French in Ecuador, Canada and France. She studied Dance at the Dance Academy at the Opera Leipzig and at the University of Music and performing Arts in Frankfurt/Main. As an actor and dancer she performed in several film- and television productions, for example as 'Eva Braun' in a documentary movie for the Japanese television.

In the year 2000 she met the team of wtp and since then works for the film company as actor, producer and is responsible for the PR, sales and distribution. Since 2009 she is product manager for the DVD Label which focuses on arthouse titles.

In 2002 she was awarded the BEST FEMALE ACTOR AWARD during the Night of Bavarian Shorts (on the occasion of the AFM American Film Market Los Angeles/USA) for her acting performance in the short film "Call it Love".

Marina Anna Eich was a member of the jury at several festivals such as the Festival D'Amour de Mons 2007 in Belgium, the Muscat International Film festival 2008 in Oman, the Sitges IFF 2008 in Spain, the Ourense IFF 2008 in Spain, the Fantasporto IFF 2009 in Portugal, the Festival du Cinema Italien d'Annecy 2009 in Switzerland,...

Filmography as actor (excerpt):

2011	The truth of lie (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2009	Angels with dirty wings (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2008	Break (cinema), director: Matthias Olof Eich
2007	My Dream or Loneliness never walks alone (cinema), director: R. Reber
2005	24/7 The Passion of Life (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2003	The Dark Side of our inner Space (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2002/2003	Pentamagica (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2002	Vienna (TV), director: Peter Gersina
2001	the room (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2001	Call it Love (short film), director: Mira Gittner
2000	Josephine (cinema), director: Rakjo Grlic
2000	Zwang - Compulsion(short film), director: Roland Reber
2000	Anatomie (cinema), director: Stefan Ruzowitzky
1999	Jagd auf Amor (TV), director: Holger Barthel
1997	Hitler (Documentary feature), Japanese TV

Filmography in the field of production / distribution / PR (excerpt):

2011	The truth of lie (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2009	Angels with dirty wings (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2008	(Distribution and PR) Comeback (cinema), director: Maximilian Plettau
2007	My Dream or Loneliness never walks alone (cinema), director: R. Reber
2005	24/7 The Passion of Life (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2003	The Dark Side of our inner Space (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2002/2003	Pentamagica (cinema), director: Roland Reber

MIRA GITTNER (role: Lady Maria, author, camera and editing)

Mira Gittner began her acting at the age of ten and has since then performed in numerous film and television productions. After finishing her acting school in 1990, she had various engagements at theatres such as the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as acting soloist in La Traviata, with the World Theatre Project in New Delhi or the Theatre Institute in Munich. Since 1998 Mira Gittner is, besides acting, also working as cinematographer and editor. In 2001 she had her debut in directing (besides the cinematography, editing and producing) with the short Call it Love. In 2003 she was member of the jury at the International Film festival for Children in Cairo.

Mira Gittner was awarded PRODUCER OF THE YEAR 2000 at the Bavarian Film center Geiseltal for her acting performance in the psycho thriller THE ROOM, BEST FEMALE ACTOR AWARD 2001 at the Melbourne Underground Film festival and with the SPECIAL AWARD FOR MONTAGE IN FEATURE FILM 2003 at the Panorama International Film festival in Thessaloniki for her editing of the satirical comedy PENTAMAGICA.

Filmography as an actor (excerpt):

2009	Angels with dirty wings (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2007	My Dream or Loneliness never walks alone (cinema), director: R. Reber
2005	24/7 The Passion of Life (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2004	Am Rande der Nacht (cinema), director: Christoph Busche
2003	The Dark Side of our inner Space (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2002/2003	Pentamagica (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2002	Gone (cinema), director: Zoltan Paul
1999/2001	the room (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2000	Der schwarze Spiegel (TV), director: Rainer Boldt
2000	Fast ein Gentlemen – Tierisch verliebt (TV), director: Dagmar Damek
1999	Eine Hand schmiert die andere (TV), director: Peter Fratzscher
1999	Alle meine Töchter – 4 episodes (TV), director: Wolfgang Hübner
1998	Der Schandfleck (TV), director: Julian R. Pölsler
1985	Die Kathrin wird Soldat – 4 episodes (TV), director: Peter Deutsch
1982	Rote Erde – 4 episodes (TV), director: Klaus Emmerich
1981	Der verkaufte Geburtstag (TV), director: George Moore

Filmography as editor and cinematographer (excerpt):

2011	The truth of lie (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2009	Angels with dirty wings (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2007	My Dream or Loneliness never walks alone (cinema), director: R. Reber
2005	24/7 The Passion of Life (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2003	The Dark Side of our Inner Space (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2002/2003	Pentamagica (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2002	Are Girls Werewolves ..? (short film), director: R. Reber, M. Gittner
2001	Call it Love (short film), director: Mira Gittner
1999/2001	the room (cinema), director: Roland Reber
2000	Highlights (documentary), director: Mira Gittner

And Commercials for Fujitsu, easyCryo, Pharmatechnik, Medialas etc.

CHRISTOPH BAUMANN (role: the writer)

Christoph Baumann is a trained actor and founded the CHR Filmproduktion in the year 2000. Since then he's been working also as an independent producer/director.

In 2008 he directed his first short feature „In Doubt“, which premiered at the renowned Filmfestival Biberach and won a Platinum Award on the 42. World Fest Houston.

In 2011 his short feature „AMOK“ celebrated its premiere at the International Montréal Film Festival.

Some will know him from earlier wtp international productions such as „The Dark Side of Our Inner Space“ und „24/7 – The Passion of Life“.

Filmography as actor (excerpt)

- 2011 The truth of lie (cinema), director: Roland Reber
- 2010 Marienhof (TV-ARD), director: Volker Schwab
- 2009 CIS – Chaoten im Sondereinsatz (TV – RTL), director: Erik Haffner
- 2008 Die unglaublichsten Geschichten (TV-Sat1), director: Matthias Kessler
- 2007 Am Rande der Nacht (cinema), director: Christoph Busche
- 2006 24/7 The Passion of Life (cinema), director: Roland Reber
- 2006 SOKO 5113 – Der Ausschuss (TV-ZDF), director: Bodo Schwarz
- 2003 The Dark Side of our inner Space (cinema), director: Roland Reber

Filmography as director / producer (excerpt)

- 2011 Amok (BR/ARTE), cinema (director and producer)
- 2009 Leben mit Down-Syndrom 2, Documentary (director)
Lauras Flucht, cinema (producer)
- 2008 Tödlicher Zweifel, cinema (director and producer)
Crush with Eyeliner, cinema (producer)
- 2005 Am Rande der Nacht, cinema (producer)

MICHAEL BURKHARDT – role „Mike“

Michael Burkhardt is the owner of the Swingers club La Boum in Untermeitingen and as “Mike” he was acting in front of the camera for the first time. At first it was planed to be a small part, but the role developed to one of the main parts and himself to a production assistant. For example he built the Maria Mobil and was responsible for the installation of the cross.

REINHARD WENDT – role “Elfriede”

Reinhard Wendt appeared one day during the shootings in the S&M Studio and approached the director Roland Reber: „Sir, I am Elfriede, the maid. I have a question, sir. Could I participate in your work?” Within the world of the S&M Studio, the 80 year old Reinhard Wendt changed into the maid Elfriede. In the world outside the Studio he is the all dignified elderly man. Even in his old age he manages the split between the “worlds”. Inspired by long conversations with Elfriede, Roland Reber and Mira Gittner developed the role of the film.

WOLFGANG EDELMAYER – music

Wolfgang Edelmayr studied acting, singing and dancing at the London Studio Centre in 1985/86, acting at the Actors Center in New York in 1986/87 and acting, singing and dancing at the Theater an der Wien in 1987/88.

He worked as an actor for numerous film and theatre productions, for example at the Staatstheater Hannover from 1989-93, at the Schauspielhaus Hamburg in 1993, at the Residenz Theater Munich in 1994, at the Salzburger Festspiele in 1998, with the englisch filmproduction W-Smith or in the production *Who is Hamlet* for the Austrian Television ORF, for which he also composed the music.

As a dancer he worked together with Pina Bausch, Hans Kresnik, Joe Alegado, Ismael Ivo and Susan Taylor (New York).

Since 2000 he works together with Roland Reber and Mira Gittner as a film composer. His music is an essential part of the films.

In 2001 Wolfgang Edelmayr was one of the finalists in the world wide composer’s contest Unisong International Song Contest in the USA with his song about 9/11 *And still we stand*.

Compositions:

Film: **Who is Hamlet** – music and main actor (stage and film) – 1998/99

Das Zimmer-The Room (feature 2001)

Call it Love (short 2001)

Pentamagica (feature 2002/03)

The Dark Side of our Inner Space (feature 2003)

24/7 The Passion of Life (feature 2005)

Musical: **Der Bursel** – music and main actor

Start – music and actor

Songs: more than 300 titles for film, theatre and singers

Awards:

ACTOR OF THE YEAR 1993/94

BEST MARIVAUX ACTOR, 1992, Le Monde, France

GOLDEN ROSE OF VIENNA, 1988 and 1989 as singer and composer

Finalist of the composer’s contest UNISONG (USA) 2002

Kinder awarded by UNICEF and "missbraucht.de"

Patricia Koch (Producer, Photographer)

After her studies of economics Patricia Koch worked in the industry in the field of marketing and public relations. In the year 2000 she joined the wtp team and works since then as a producer and appears in smaller parts e.g. in *24/7 The Passion of Life* (feature 2005) as „Stephanie Evans“, in *Pentamagica* (feature 2003) as „Petra Karoll“ in *My Dream or Loneliness never walks alone* (feature 2007) as Bunny and in *Angel with dirty wings* as 'the photographer' (feature 2009).

Besides her work as a producer Patricia Koch is dedicated to Fine Art Photography. After graduating from the prestigious LCC (one of the top five art colleges in London) in photography she now works commercially in Europe with her main focus on the UK. Her work have been / are shown in numerous art exhibitions and photographic competitions around the globe.

wtp international GmbH (Filmproduction, Sales and Distribution)

“Roland Reber and his team wtp international are famous for their difference. They are actually the splinter in the foot of German cinema.”
(*Festival International du Nouveau Cinema, Montreal/Canada, Julien Fonfrède - Programming Director*)

„...Unicum in the German cinema landscape...“ (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*)

„Films from wtp international are sensual and philosophical, abstract and precise, on the one hand fascinating, on the other hand almost crackbrained.“ (*filmstarts.de*)

„wtp films with the collective dedication of its team have become an unmistakable trade mark.“ (*Blickpunkt:Film*)

wtp international produces features and shorts for cinema and television with focus on artistic creativity. As a world wide forum for artists, innovative techniques and extraordinary ideas, wtp international GmbH was founded in 2001 with the film-production team of wtp and now includes filmproduction, sales, distribution and dvd-label. Besides the feature film productions which received attention and awards on international film festivals, wtp international also works in the field of commercial and industrial film.

What is special about wtp international is the uncompromising dedication to film, which binds together the production team since 7 feature film productions, as well as the production method - screenplay, production, editing, distribution and press relations are all out of one team - and the consequent refusal of public funding, in order to preserve creative freedom.

With the feature film *24 / 7 THE PASSION OF LIFE*, which had its German Premiere at the Hof International Film Festival 2005, wtp international ventured into the German and Austrian cinema market as a distributor in February 2006.

With the feature *MY DREAM OR LONELINESS NEVER WALKS ALONE / MEIN TRAUM ODER DIE EINSAMKEIT IST NIE ALLEIN* wtp international finally ventured into the German-speaking DVD market as DVD-label in November 2008.

Since its theatrical release *24 / 7 THE PASSION OF LIFE* advanced to a “cult film” and will be shown every year in the German Cinemas on 24th of July (international BDSM day). It will be broadcasted at the cultural station ARTE in November 2011.

SM / BDSM

www.datenschlag.org

www.wikipedia.org/wiki/BDSM

Sadomasochism (S&M) is a general term which includes a diverse spectrum of sexual identities and activities, which are practices with free mutual consent and being conscious of what is going to happen (principle of consent).

Sadomasochistic activities are mainly erotic games with a clear role allocation between active (dominant) and passive (submissive) part. The submissive part hands over a part of his autonomy to the dominant partner (power exchange), for the duration of the erotic game (Session), out of which both achieve a gain of lust.

New research on the subject of S&M assumes a given basic inclination, like for example a special taste for food. Depending on the scientific research the percentage of practicing sadomasochists in the adult population varies between 5-10% and is to be found in all socio-economic groups. In the German speaking countries there are actually approximately 100 regional and nationwide S&M organisations. There has also to be differed between the commercial Studio scene and the much bigger non-commercial private S&M subculture.

It is not possible to draw a clear line between between a sexual minority like the sadomasochists and the sexual majority. For example playing with eye bandage, hand cuffs etc... can be found in many German bedrooms and is no longer to be considered as specifically masochistic.

BDSM (Bondage & Discipline, Domination & Submission, Sadism & Masochism) is an even wider term out of the American which makes the range of S&M practices even more clear. Often the different areas of interest overlap, so that in practice there is no real division, whereas some people also have an predilection for exclusiveness.

SWINGERS

Swingers / Swingers Club

Besides private encounters or organized parties there are meanwhile more than 300 established swinger's clubs in Germany. At the beginning mainly practiced for partner-swopping, the swinger activities have developed to a wide range of individual predilections. The motto of the swingers is: "Everything can, nothing must". Swingers Clubs are focussing on meeting the needs of the wide range of their visitors and are therefore also following general trends. Meanwhile there are special rooms for S&M practices or special motto-days in many clubs.

ATTACHEMENT

Reviews, statements, comments, viewer's reactions

Lonely in Dreams

Süddeutsche Zeitung, Feuilleton, 23.02.2006 Review by Hans Schifferle

"24/7 The Passion of Life", an S&M-Film from Roland Reber

It has become a rare species, filmmaker who produce their films totally independent from TV and film funding. The makers of "24/7" belong to it. The director is Roland Reber, an experienced theatre maker, his films like "The Room" have been shown successfully at foreign festivals. Reber shared the script and camera work with the dainty Mira Gittner, who plays the dominatrix Maria impressively in "24/7". The trio is completed by the glamorous Marina Anna Eich, who once started her career at the Oberammergauer Passionsspiele. She now plays Eve, who is introduced into the wonderland of dark sexuality. In addition she is responsible for the co-production and the publicity. This publicity, like during the International Filmfestival in Hof, remind of Corman or William Castle.

"24/7 the Passion of Life" is a handmade film, which investigates a spectacular subject like sadomasochism in a mixture of trash and high art and exploits it in a positive sense.

The blond girl is called Eve, as the daughter of an influential hotelier she is some kind of a Bavarian Paris Hilton. Coincidentally she meets the Dominatrix Maria, on who's card is written: "I'm the sin that you'll never have the courage to indulge in." Eve feels attracted by this other world of sexuality, by Maria's Studio, this cool workshop of mysterious desires, the real opposite to the wellness-rooms at the hotel. She is especially fascinated by the melancholic intelligence of Maria, who also works as a myth researcher and understands her detailed sessions with the clients also as a therapy. Before Eve is introduced into the high theatrical art of S&M she tries out the rather touching swingers scene.

Fundamentally "24/7", with its rituals of longing, is a complex study of Loneliness. "Lonely in my dreams, lonely in love with you" are the words of the soundtrack. This is the trip to salvation, the spiritual side of "24/7": to find, at least for moments, a Love beyond all love prisons. Roland Reber's film is an S&M opera with absurd comic moments and melodramatic sequences, a wild melange of poetry and obscenities, in which the enema with red wine stands beside the quoting of Hesse and the dominatrix' Studio is turned into something in between hobby room and cathedral. In the showdown, located somewhere between Jess Franco and Peter Greenaway, the lighting and cadration get clear: they are like a "vaginal" window for a new, a newly born perspective.

(source: Süddeutsche Zeitung, Feuilleton, 23.02.2006)

Light into the realm of shadows

Abendzeitung Kultur , 16.02.2006, review by Andrian Prechtel

(Film thermometer: 20 points out of 30)

“24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE” wants to take the S&M and swingers scene out of the dirty corner

“Shame is only fear of yourself”, says the dominatrix Maria (Mira Gittner) to the young Eve, who goes on a sexual trip of salvation, into the depth of the S&M scene and swingers clubs. But with his stories about these well frequented taboo places, “24/7 The Passion of Life” liberates the milieu from dirt, mess and the prejudice of dark violence. The film rather tries to abolish the border between bourgeoisie and so-called perversion: both are only two sides of the same coin – and the sexually excessive one is perhaps the less neurotic, healthier one.

“Passion of Life” from Roland Reber is a fictional movie. But it was shot at original sites, partly with members of the scene.

But with its strong stylization, the film is far away from being a documentary.

Accompanied by music from Mozart’s Requiem and catholic church songs, as well as pietà and religious associations, there are poetic, mysterious pictures that are solemn. Also bizarre scenes, fit in there, like the ones of a theology student who can only reconcile with God and his own sexual urges through a blasphemous Christ-Crucifixion Performance. Besides these highly esthetical stylized scenes, the background story is set sharply realistic: Eve, heiress of a Hotel, in her father-daughter conflict, the shock when her visits to the scene get known, and the swingers club, with its petty bourgeois dreadfulness, the rustic interior, country music and the moustache-thanks-dear types. The film has weaknesses here, because dialogues and performance often appear artificial and clumsy. Also the liberal educational message is pronounced pithily: the dominatrix – in the film also sociology student – speaks exaggerated phrases ex cathedra.

But after all “24/7 The Passion of Life” has a great amount of sincerity. And never mind if one shares the philosophy of liberation: it is an exceptional film, and an independent film interesting in its aesthetic and contents. And perhaps in each Dr. Jekyll of us, there is a hidden sexual Mr. Hyde.

(source: *Abendzeitung* - 16. 2.2006)

Director Roland Reber managed to deal with a taboo subject in a lyrical and poetic way. Mainly the vivid pictures, combined with the exceptional music make “24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE” an intellectual work of art. Because the activities in the Dominatrix Studio are set into a religious context, the Christian church is not expected to give its blessing. But that is not the point of the director. With his work he calls for more tolerance and wants to do away with the false double morals in our society. “Everyone of us for sure has a person in between his circle of acquaintances who belongs to the S&M scene, but doesn’t know it”. The shootings took place in a real S&M Studio. Besides the actors, also a few amateur actors from the S&M and swingers scene participated, which makes the whole even more authentic.

Anja Boromandi/Ricore Text

(source:http://www.lycos.de/entertainment/kino/filmreporter/film_story.html,,id=15772/24-7-passion-of-life.html)

"24/7 The Passion Of Life" is a powerful affirmation of life that explores with uncompromising reality the mendacity and self-deception of our lives and the cultures and religions that would have all of us behave robot-like in the expression and fulfilment of our most private sexual desires.

Watch this important work with your heart and mind wide open and you will see your innermost longings and sensual thoughts reflected brilliantly by Marina Anna Eich, Mira Gittner, Christoph Baumann, Michael Burkhardt, Reinhard Wendt and the others of this splendid cast. ...That is movie making at its finest.

(Gordon Weaver, film publicist - worked among others as a manager for Paramount in Marketing und Public Relations)

The film tries to give an honest insight into the dark sides of the German soul, without brushing it aside ironically. The bodies turn into a hoard for painful memories. I especially like the role of Elfriede with her memories of captivity, because of the discernible relation between the helplessly endured war trauma, which still floating about, and the ongoing penitence as house slave of an S&M Studio.

(Dr. Andreas Rost, Munich)

Excerpt from Blickpunkt: Film 43/05:

Blickpunkt: Film: „One hears, that Roland Reber's 24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE is a porn, a skandal film”.

Heinz Badewitz: „Who says this! It is no porn or bed wriggling, but some sort of a Russ Meyer film, very direct and radical and very different from Michael Winterbottoms *Nine Songs* for example.“

(Margret Köhler interviewing Heinz Badewitz, source: Blickpunkt Film 43/05)

Passion for Life

The film deeply touched me. It carefully shows, how people live up to their most secret sexual desires – without judging or condemning.

The dominatrix and sociologist Lady Maria is outstandingly performed by Mira Gittner. She corresponds to the archetype of the Goddess of Love, who gets the humans in touch with themselves and their divinity through their sexuality. The transformation from the conservative hotelier's daughter to the unrestrained seductress is impressively performed by Marina Anna Eich.

An entertaining movie, that gets under the skin through its opened dealing with sexuality and love. A film which doesn't gloss over anything and therefore does not leave anyone indifferent. Absolutely worth seeing!

(Christine Janson, source: Connection special II/05)

24 / 7 THE PASSION OF LIFE is the successful work of a strongly emotional drama of new German Film-Art. Director Roland Reber managed with his work, the production of the unbelievable. The plot is close to reality throughout the film. The acting performance of the main and supporting actors is outstanding, especially Mira Gittner and Marina Anna Eich are brilliant in their roles. It is also nice to see Sabine Krappweis in a supporting part of a Roland Reber film again. Also the integration of amateur actors into the whole work is admirable. Here the director and actors take

the viewer onto a trip through swingers clubs and table dance bars, without compromises and so authentic, that one has to feel part of the action. One has to emphasize that this work is real art, not a primitive copy of a sex film. The plot is far too serious, every viewer will notice that after a few minutes. Considering that this film has been made without any funding money, every critic has to take off his hat to it!
(Dietmar Wlodek, Journalist)

I take off my hat to the filmmakers of 24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE and I think that this is a very sincere combination of eroticism, art and professionalism. Even if the performance sometimes goes beyond the traditional borders it never seems cheap.
(Stephan Brenninkmeijer, director, Netherlands)

24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE manages to bring a taboo theme into German cinemas and raises in any case the thematic range of German Film.
(Till Schmerbeck, Produzent, Ludwigsburg)

Sizzling Sexy Cinema at it's best – reminiscent of „Last Tango in Paris“ – a cineastic masterpiece.”.
(Schani Krug, Producer / Director, USA)

“...24/7 *The Passion of Life* is a very important political statement. What's interesting about “24/7 *The Passion of Life*” is the philosophical and political overtones, not the graphic sex. The opening visual, the Nativity Scene, is really strong and appealing; along with the one close to the end of the movie. Playing with Catholic rituals is a fascinating parody: Making the sacred profane to help us to grow spiritually by confronting, not just blindly accepting, convention. I do like your attempt to demystify as a tactic to make us confront ourselves: NOT BEING PUNISHED, IS THE ULTIMATE PUNISHMENT! Also, “the feeling of guilt is sick”, “if you look for God, you can't find him”, “only unhappy women need children”, “too many answers, not enough questions”.

I also love the sense of humour: “Would you like a Travel Guide through the road of lust?”; “How does the devil stand hell? When God says – GO TO HELL!”; “I can recognize a cock in love with my eyes closed;”

For me, Mira Gittner is especially interesting. As an actress, she has many faces.
(Andre Bennett, Producer and International Sales, Canada)

I think it is important, that this film is shown, because it happens the first time in this manner, that the scene is shown in a realistic light and not with the habitual beating-up image. I think it is good, that this time it is shown from a totally different perspective.

(Ralph Weisenheimer interviewed by the Bayerischer Rundfunk, Hof International Film Festival)

To relate religious symbolism, sadomasochism and the search for lust and the own identity is heavy stuff. By doing so, the film 24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE succeeds in raising questions about the own definition of position. It is about loneliness and the search for ones Self.

(Robert aka Fan, AK SM&Kultur, Munich)

Filmstarts.de

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)

Münchener Merkur, Kultur – 16.02.06, Review by Zoran Gojic
Rated: "Worth Seeing"

In the hobby room

Good citizens, sex and melancholy

Afterwards one is some kind of helpless, only one thing is for sure: this film differs from all other German productions in the nearer past. Director Roland Reber tells an unconventional fable from the hobby room of this country. There people live up to their desires, longings and passion. Dramaturgic peg to hang on is the encounter of Eve (Marina Anna Eich) and part-time dominatrix Magdalena (Mira Gittner). Eve starts, with proficient direction, to explore her own sensuality and sexuality. She discovers to her own amazement, that after work many good fellows look for the sense of their existence in excessively lived physical contacts.

Shot independently, without any resources from film funding, "24/7 The Passion of Life" does not fulfil neither the formal nor technical criteria of a cinema movie. And so the scenes in the S&M Studio and swingers club appear sterile, wooden and despite all liberality inhibited. What is so fascinating about it is, that one gets the suspicion that it is in fact the way it is. Average citizens who meet to do something despicable – a bowling club without underwear so to say. Reber has the courage to break the story with lyrical interludes, in which the protagonists are philosophizing about their action and motivation. There, even humour appears. But the basic tenor is melancholic. The search for real closeness, that always remains unsuccessful, the helpless hope to be able to separate Love and Sexuality, the restless escape into new sufferings, in order to forget the old ones – Reber caught this up in a good way, even if his reflections are not always as deep as they pretend to be.

A film that is worth seeing, which one has not to like, but which incites to reflection.

There are not a great lot of films from which you could honestly say so.

Worth seeing.

Zoran Gojic

(source: *Münchener Merkur*, 16.2.2006)

24/7 The Passion of Life

The „thelemic“ answer to Gibsons „Passion of Christ“

A broadside to the conditioning of society

By Federico Tolli, Bishop of the free catholic church of Wiesbaden, Theologian

24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE, a film about society's dealing with sexuality, about religion, moral and double-morals? A question mark, that the author of these lines consciously sets in this place. Too much in a hurry the known art of reviewing tries to give the film a simple stamp. A "label" of the protest for the scene of swingers, bondage and S&M activists, that threatens to dissolve the simple-minded borders between petty bourgeoisie and perversion. While both worlds do only stand for two sides of one same coin. Sadomasochism as a natural part of the sexual spectrum of a western shaped culture, between consuming and the longing for healing and salvation. The Dominatrix "Lady Maria" in this film notices the therapeutic relation between Religion and S&M as a consequent psychological defence mechanism: "...if you do not accept and live this part of you, then it will haunt you, day by day, and that would make you sick. Sick is not what you do. Perhaps the feelings of guilt, that were drummed into you, they might be sick."

That the scene of swingers and sadomasochists in the film are shown authentically, is not only due to the good research work of the film team, but also to the simple fact that "24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE" is the first German movie that does not try to give the profession of the dominatrix the cliché of a fallen and criminalized "Lilith". The film gives much deeper answers than societal and moral criticism. The bonds made of religion, standardization constraint and double-morals, that society sets upon Lust, are on the other hand the same bonds that, in a materialized form, grant to the S&M pupil moments of Lust through liberation of pain. The essence of this exceptional film is being reduced, when an artificial duality is used as an instrument for criticism. In a society shaped by a religion, which postulates liberation through sacrifice and the pain belonging to it, 24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE gets a therapeutic dimension.

The trinity of human existence, body, mind and soul is dissolved in the artificial trias of search for identity, sexuality and religiousness. The protagonists find themselves no longer in the conventional practice of religion, but through religious-sexual rituals. But they do not find ways out of the loneliness, nor salvation from the submission of sin in sex. But more in the last insight of acceptance of life, despite all search for meaning, deceptions and breaks.

It is about more, than the outward paradigms, that find expression as set of rules in culture and religion. The film rather shows that the core of these paradigms is threatened. There is no place to be found, where the human in his "being-so" finds admission, acceptance and Love. The apparently dark sides of the human, symbolized here through the sexual subculture, must be held in arcane, to make the lack of emotions bearable to the outward.

It is about spirituality. About the attempt of the human to find healing and happiness in his imperfection.

In Christianity the perfection of God, which the human is seeking for, is reached through spiritualization and idealisation of asceticism. This lead to an equalization of sexuality, reproduction and mortality, which enabled the healing, contrary to the pure spirit and the espousal with God. Sexuality became the "impure" form of reproduction assigned to the female. Repressed into the torture chambers of Inquisition, which find

their smooth, yet more harmless continuation in the S&M Studios of modernity. Christian rebirth through baptism, not the procreation, represents according to the moralizing doctrine, the best security for the future, that contributed in its clear ambiguity to a culture of death. 24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE finds veritable lasting continuity through the equality of the spiritual birth, based upon spiritual intercourse, and the awareness of the physicality, based upon physical intercourse. Only the combination of both of them, take seriously the human in its entirety and pushes towards healing. Healing which the human is deprived of in our concrete society. The scene of sadomasochists and swingers tries, quasi like Prometheus, to save this "divine light" of accepted Being into their subculture.

The Prometheus of this work is the sheltered hotelier's daughter Eve. Marina Anna Eich, who once started her career at the Passion Plays of Oberammergau, performs convincingly the daughter out of a bourgeois milieu, who meets the dominatrix "Lady Maria" through a motorcycle accident, and goes on search for her erotic identity with Maria's help. Mira Gittner is brilliant as the Dominatrix "Lady Maria". Both let their experiences and longings with the Christian religion swing in a cacophony of the psyche. Longing to be understood, that is expressed in aesthetically stylized pictures of religious scenes. At the beginning of the film, the actors in posture of the holy family. Also fitting in, the bizarre scene, like the one of a theology student, who can only reconcile with God and his own sexual urges through a Christ-Crucifixion Performance. But the film doesn't provoke with the blasphemy of an infantile defence reaction against the constrictive violence of the Christian moral doctrine. Instead it reveals the intricate relation between our religion and a pain-lust sexuality.

Like in Mel Gibson's "Passion of Christ" the striving, suffering and death of the human is dealt with. Here the final ends up in a moment of redemption through pain.

In "vaginal windows" the new, reborn perspective of "Self-creation" as "Deus ex Machina" of thelemic philosophy is taken up at the end of the film. An attempt of reconciliation of Heaven and Hell, which is expressed through the scene where Eve, as a naked angel, arises from the vagina of the "eternal mother".

24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE felicitous broadside of voluntaristic criticism, that shows the aberration of generally accepted conditioning.

There the theological message of the film becomes evident. The post-modern human with his inner conflict finds healing through the acceptance and awareness of his shadows. The standardized religion seems to fail here. So the human looks for his spirituality in other places. This theological quality can be accorded to the film rightfully: redemption can only be achieved entirely, and sexuality simply belongs to the entire human being. The question about God is raised subtly. Not so much the outward God, with his condemning power, who's perversion was only made possible by the birth of sexual subcultures, but rather the healing God, who can also be found within the human.

Touchingly Reber's film shows the search for salvation and sanctification with absurd comic scenes and melodramatic sequences. The confession of a theology student to the Dominatrix, the identification of the Dominatrix with Maria, and with the first mother of all Being, as well as the post-religious finding of meaning of the hotelier's daughter Eve who is shaped by the "wellness-culture" – all this leads in a world of mental self-creation through overcoming societal conditioning.

There is also the crucial point of criticism. A divine self-creation without God? A Matrix without model? This can and will not be possible for theology. Healing is not possible throughout one self. And this is also shown in the film.

(Federico Tolli, Bischof der Freikatholischen Kirche zu Wiesbaden. Theologian)

24/7 - The Passion of Life

Review by **Thomas Engel** (programmokino.de)

Through a motorcycle accident, the hotelier's daughter Eve coincidentally meets the „sociologist“ Magdalena, who works as the dominatrix „Lady Maria“ in an S&M Studio. The two women become friends. Magdalena takes Eve with her to her S&M Studio. To Eve, this opens up a new, until then hidden world. Eve starts to get a different relationship to sexuality, which was until then marked by the common moral norms. She visits, at first out of curiosity, swingers clubs, striptease bars and similar establishments.

Now Eve woke up, so to say, from her sexual sleep. She now separates Love and Sex – Mike, who falls in Love with her, repudiates her. Now she wants to experience what pure Lust is. She knows that Lust and Sex can also be joined by pain and shame. Things get deeper. How much tragedy was connected to the moral norms prevailing here! Who put them up? Christianity? Which are the historical links? All this is raised explicitly. Magdalena (Lady Maria) is the main theoretician. The theories and depictions are surrounded by spiritual music (Laudate dominum, Mozart's Requiem, Ave Verum, Messias, Ave Maria, Schubert's church songs). Suited? Question of taste. It is also surrounded by poetry. There are some very lyrical and very beautiful sequences. Far more problematic are the religious, directly clerical references. They lack the necessary clarity and depth. Here the fantasy of the pictures abandons the theory and leaves it behind. Not few will rightly speak of blasphemy.

The two leading actresses are doing good work. But cinematically and sexually there are no boundaries. Many taboos are broken – most strongly by showing a “pervert” at the cross.

Wonderful is the camera work. Many light effects are first rate. And altogether the film provides hot subjects to discussion, despite the uncommon, from time to time even dangerous and voyeuristic grounds it moves on. Even in art house theatres.

(source: www.programmokino.de)

Comment to the movie 24/7 Passion of Life

by Alfred Rott, OStR, Dipl. Theologian

The film: a thrilling access to the subject of sexuality, that has always been driving the humans, to a subject that moral keeper – from religious or other ideological origins – occupied and abused again and again, unfortunately successfully, to repress and incapacitate the humans. The film is a (daring) attempt to step against this fear and sin practice, that is floating in the souls (more unconsciously) until today: in an original and refreshing way.

One of the central smart questions of the filmmakers is probably this one: how come, that the wonder-full “thing” sexuality came from bright light into undergrounds. So the film explores places, into which the repressed lust (and her “perversion”?) has drawn back. In the S&M scene the paradox coincidence of sexual gain of lust and submission = being victim meet. In our tradition this is certainly related to the glorification of the cross (instead of resurrection).

The primeval question about God – also this is central in the film, even if more subtle - and what he is and where he is (perhaps more likely “between the legs” than in a golden tabernacle). They are all sitting in gilded (?) cages, also the rich hotel heiress - and it is her that is leaving it. She persuades with her lust about herself and showing her luxurious body. The viewers in the club enjoy that, also those in the cinema.

Probably in every religion there are ever again streamings through the millenniums, that have praised sexuality in its variety as holy (holy – hole – complete); see the practices of temple prostitution, yes, the even some less concise “sacredness of marriage” of Christian moral theology. If Teilhard de Chardin is right, we are actually living a (new) revolution of love. That dark, retrogressive Powers want to impede this is evident; but these Powers are not where church patriarchs as well as Imams and Muftis want to locate them. (The evil is more likely to be found within those, who exactly know where it is to find.)

The film also made me melancholic. For example the character of „Elfriede“ doesn't get out of my mind: the elderly man with a war trauma (he cries while he is telling about it) finds his salvation in the role of the servile maid; I wished for him, that he could have lived a salvation (politically and also sexually: in a “true” abandon, that means an abandon within a relationship to a woman, that is herself also capable to abandoning herself). But: the film shows a life as it probably really is – and gives like this a number of messages, which especially theologians should not be afraid to reflect on. Therefore please promote it in these circles! Where people who are professionally related to salvation (perhaps from death), to Lust and Love (and their prevention), these are for example psychotherapists or other counsellors. Possible that religion teachers appraise it – and want to deal with the subject in their high school classes. Also suited as an alternative to bad porn-“education” in the relevant medias (“mediators”), which children and youth (and not only them) like to use. Congratulations to all participants! And a soon success story as cult movie!

(Alfred Rott, OStR, Dipl. Theologian, Author of. „Das Liebe-Prinzip“/ “The Love principle”)

„Shame is only fear from yourself“ - „24/7 The Passion of Life“

For cinema and television, S&M usually serves for raising the viewing figures. Not only a few are interested in the subject of S&M or at least the sexy outfits of the actors. And after a few furtive looks and enjoying the nice tingle one can quickly turn up ones nose and demonstrate distance through commonly appropriated and demanded “iiiih” or “yack”.

„24/7 The Passion of Life“ is the first German cinema movie that shows S&M explicitly without abusing or distorting it. It is about discovering and realizing the very own sexuality and about the omnipresent double-moral in our society. With vivid pictures and texts, the film shows the loneliness of the searching protagonists, moves the viewer and forces to reflect about the own – not only sexual – identity and self-realisation.

On the search of our Self, carefully erected walls, chosen by ourselves or also imposed, that surround our secret fantasies and wishes, have to be pulled down. In the Movie, S&M is shown as one possible way to rediscover and realize these hidden sides. The widely spread use of S&M as an additional and enriching facet of sexuality, is consciously pushed into the background. In **„24/7 The Passion of Life“**

S&M is the key to the own soul. Although it is not only about S&M in the end, the impressively produced sessions in an S&M-Studio in Munich reflect the intense research and cooperation with the people from the commercial and non-commercial S&M-scene. The director Roland Reber succeeds, thanks to his unconventional and opened way of work, in bringing all participants to an impressive and persuading result.

Sensational is the performance of Mira Gittner. Her meticulous preparation, including an 'apprenticeship' in an S&M-Studio as 'apprentice-dominatrix', and her acting skill lead to an absolutely persuading and at any time credible performance of the dominatrix "Lady Maria". Marina Anna Eich's acting skill in her performance of the hotelier's daughter Eve, who is in search of her self and her own lust, nearly equals. A few parts have been added only during the shooting. Particularly "**24/7 the Passion of Life**" is not to imagine without the best supporting role Elfriede.

„**24/7 The Passion of Life**“ is a film that touches the viewer. The part of the adult population that is practicing S&M - depending on the scientific study varying between 5-10% - exceptionally will not have to be annoyed about a distorted depiction of S&M, and in face of SAT1, RTL and unfortunately also more and more the public-service TV-stations, this is a blessing. On the other hand S&M people are fortunately not built up as the better people. They are shown as humans who face the search of their identity by living up their fantasies and obsessions.

And consistently „**24/7 The Passion of Life**“ leaves the viewer with an appeal to a definition of the personal position.

Stirring art house cinema, ambitious without moralizing undertone. Absolutely worth seeing!”

(Robert aka fan, AK SM&Culture in Munich)

24/7 - The Passion of Life

Review by Michel und Geli, Schlagzeilen (www.schlagzeilen.com)

“Probably the first German movie, that bothers of showing S&M like it is. But it is not a mere S&M film. But a film about how society is handling sexuality itself. A film about religion, moral and double-moral...

In 24/7 The Passion of Life, S&M is not shown as something outside, perverted, but as a natural part of the spectrum of sexuality. Lady Maria answers to a guest of the S&M Studio, who asks her whether she thinks S&M is sick: “NO, it's just a part of you. If you don't accept and live it, it will haunt you. Day by day. You'd become sick of that. Sick isn't what you do, but maybe the feeling of guilt which was drummed into you. The feeling of guilt might be sick”

That S&M is shown so authentically and naturally in the film, is due to the good research of the film team. They did not only read a lot or question people, but also tried out. Mira Gittner for example, who plays the dominatrix Maria, assisted as 2nd dominatrix in an S&M Studio for a few days. And for professed non-sadomasochists, the makers of the film did understand a great lot!

Much of it also seems so realistic because it simply is real. Many of the smaller parts of the cast are real S&Mers, swingers or strippers, who just perform themselves. No actor would probably have managed to perform a person like Elfriede, the male maid of Lady Maria, or Rubber Pig N° 3, a regular, who slips into the role of a pig in the

S&M Studio, in such a persuading and human way. Also the S&M Studio, the swingers club and the striptease bar are real. As well as some of the S&M Sessions.

The film has a great lot of very beautiful S&M scenes. But it lives more on words than on pictures. The monologues and dialogues are about the real purpose of the film: about how society deals with sexuality. About the bonds, made of religion, the constraint to standardization and double-morals, that society puts onto lust. And with which it strangles it. "Society", explains Maria, who is writing her thesis in sociology besides her working as a dominatrix, "likes to have standardized people. They obey more easily. But can emotions be standardized?"

...

The film has its German Premiere in October this year at the Film Festival in Hof. In January it will be released in the art house cinemas. We will publish the dates here. And we hope to see it on television within the next years. For example on ARTE – because that's where it ought to be!

(source: www.schlagzeilen.com)

Review by Thomas Sing, Human Scientist, University of Augsburg:

24/7 - The Passion of Life – What does it mean?

The Passion of life, always. Life means Passion, Suffering and Lust at the same time, indivisible, unavoidable, not to deceive, to be put off, but only to the price of loss, of being exiled from life. The history of Passion - the religious impact lies already in the title – as a history of Suffering and Life: it is the human being, that is asked here, and is itself only question of which the salvation lies in his very own respective sin: it shows him his cross, which he has to carry and which he can only escape by failing himself. A film with the power of Sisyphus' stone, that roles towards the façade of a sleepy Hotel in the mountains, in which everything is still right, just as it should be...

A film which not only operates with religious symbolism, but examines it with Nietzsche's hammer, carnevalesque, always a laugh on the lips, which tears the semantics of the order we are used to. The religious pre-text, inscribed to the human being like a branding, appears deconstructed from the beginning, its symbols though, are not so easy to eliminate; in other words, as an enormous provocation: if God is silent, perhaps Satan can give an answer? If the father is absent, if the stringency of genealogy fails - perhaps there is someone else, someone who is in the world, who is inside of me, the fool, whom I repressed and who claims his right to be heard – and whom I have to hear inevitably, if I want to find myself. And perhaps he isn't as evil, as we are told for 2000 years. Perhaps, this seems to me the most important question of the movie, the guilt lies more in a society which drags further habitual

values like “good” and “bad”, unquestioned, from generation to generation, and forces the human being to chose between them...

Satan, this is made clear in a central point of the film, is the most tragic character in a big Story: his refusal to worship anyone else than God – the human being – expels him from his oneness with God.

In interpreting Lucifer as a chthonic antipode of God (who is still a function of God) the Christian Theology has managed a fantastic chess move:

By splitting God (the All) into a divine (high, good) and a diabolic (lower, evil) aspect, she dissociates also the human being - on one side, there are the systematic societal commandments which give to the human being an order and express and allow everything which holds him into this order (sense, structure, language, law, state, hierarchy, work, ...). On the other side, turned away from light, we find as a ban everything which is a priori opposed to any order, which breaks and has to break every system: free playing, sense destroying laughter, unlimiting ecstasy and lust, and so on.

History has told from the beginning, that these "Dionysian" aspects can not be removed from the human without removing the human himself. And those directing history, have always counted on and trusted in that, as they always have tried and are still trying, to functionalize the human abysses for their purposes and to channel them into war, torture and state or social violence. The Enlightenment - not ignoring its achievements - has not changed much about this: it has weakened and doubted the primacy of God and the power of his representatives, but by basing its new point of view only on rationalism, it strengthens the individual enormously on one hand (emancipates it by giving him back the power of his own explanation) but also increases the old dilemma: the physicality and the evidence of their expression remains obscene, hors-scène: behind the stage, underneath the carpet...

D.A.F. de Sade begins literary to accelerate vertiginously the movement of Enlightenment, radical like no other, until it runs hot and ends up in mass murder. His attempt to oppose a Pornosophy of human things to the prattling rational-sadism, remains a brief hint and unrecognized until a short time ago. Georges Bataille tries in the middle of the 20th century, to make de Sade readable, by reading him with Nietzsche and without deceiving Hegel, who is "always right, as soon as he opens the mouth" (Derrida). With the *Frankfurt School* the great effort begins, to find everything which the Enlightenment (which, if we believe Adorno, has started with

Homer) has taken away from the human, by declaring with his dialectic, that reason is the only agent of human existence.

The post-modern age and the post-structuralism are a first attempt, to circle around the unspeakable (this, which rationality can not say, because its logic of signification fails in front of a whore with opened legs) to recognize its existence and to argue for its right (the right of the Other, that we can not articulate because our language has no space for it). Sadomasochism - the Other ...- Violence that is no violence, and yet nothing but violence. Lust that is no Lust, and yet nothing but Lust. The boundaries of our language are the boundaries of our world... Wittgenstein's sentence is fundamentally true, but what if, between true and false, there was a third? 'True and false simultaneously'? Well, one can raise objection, this is a truism, the truth lies always somewhere in between. This may be, but for the occidental system of thinking, this is not evident: our language, at least our understanding of it, has an oppositional structure in a rational system. You can not understand what "light" means, without knowing "dark", it would make no sense to differ "man" and "woman" if women didn't exist, etc... And the fact that hermaphrodites exist, is unspeakable for many. Most parents who give birth to a hermaphrodite, have one of the sexual characteristics amputated, to be sure their child has an unambiguous place in the system of sexes. That their decision was often the wrong one, appears if 20 years later, a sex change follows, which perhaps will still not give satisfaction, because one has only changed from one unambiguity to another, and the original indifferent state of alterity is irretrievably lost.

I make this example here, because it shows how an oppositional system of positive and negative is constructed, and how easily it is caused to sway by life, which can not be reduced on such a binary logic. And it shows how inappropriate, insufficient and finally sad our attempts are, to adapt life to our thinking.

The film *24/7* is an attempt to brake those habits and to invert it. An attempt to adapt our thinking to life. A courageous attempt, in times in which there is the tendency to adapt life *and* thinking to an omnipresent economy of usefulness.

It is obvious to a sadomasochist that non-consensual sadism, as violence towards a victim (hypotaxis) and sadomasochism as a playful (yet real) 'violence' with a partner (parataxis) have nothing in common, that the real force of torture and the unreal force of the erotic game are two completely different things. Towards 'normal' people, who do not find any pleasure in the practices of the whipping community, one has to

emphasize this from time to time. Actually because it is difficult to empathize with sadomasochists: how can it be nice, if it hurts? How can I feel free, if I submit myself etc... It is not easy to imagine. One has not to be able to imagine it, for himself, but if two strangers assure me that it is like that, and that they are happy with it, as a human of the 21st century I should accept it.

There were some efforts in the last years: the descriptive sociological study *Sadomasochism – scenes and rituals* from Steinmetz, Wetzstein, Reis and Eckert from the year 1993. Remaining and commendable public relations from the community itself. Successful exhibitions for example about Sade in Zurich (2001/2) and about Sacher-Masoch and masochism in Graz (2003). In human sciences, for example the new translation of de Sade from Zweifel and Pfister (1990-2002) and their following research (I owe the word Pornosophy used above to them) even if they are only partially related to practiced sadomasochism. In many places S&M might not be a taboo any more, at least no reason to be expelled from society, but the picture presented by the media and the public is mostly quite weird and distorted, apart from a few pleasant exceptions, like for example the ARD report *Under German roofs – this should be love?* (1994). The S&M community does by far not enjoy the acceptance, for which the gay community has fought for decades; although I believe that it will not have to go the same way, because sadomasochism somehow has subliminally always been accepted by society (a long time only as a one-sided misunderstanding: around 1900 Krafft-Ebing still describes the sadism of man and the masochism of woman as given by nature).

Regarding cinema, there was no movie until now – except perhaps *Secretary* (2002), but these two movies are difficult to compare – that dealt with the subject of S&M in such a honest and unprejudiced way as *24/7* does. *The passion of Life* is a pleasant, an important, a deeply social film. It might only show one spectrum of the sadomasochist lifestyle, the commercial one of the dominatrix-studio, but in a very logical and illuminating way. And perhaps such a restriction is necessary to make a compressed enough, tenable statement within the bounds of a film. Much in this film is to be pointed out: the authenticity of the characters, the psychological knowledge with which the film approaches them, turns them inside out, without ever offending them, without disavowing them in any way. Although it is very theatrical, it is as far away from sensational journalism as possible. It honours the makers even more, that

this is not a film from the community for the community, but a cinema movie that appeals to a great audience.

But I see the enormous achievement of this film in its successful depiction of the transformation of religion into human, erotic communication. An excerpt of Georges Bataille's *Inner experiences* came involuntarily to my mind, when I saw 24/7:

What the utmost knowledge always lacks, is what only the revelation provided:

An arbitrary answer, which says: "You know now, what you have to know; what you do not know, is what you do not need to know: it is sufficient, that someone else knows it, and you depend on him, you can unify with him."

Without this answer, the human is deprived of the means of being everything, he is a distraught fool, a hopeless question.

The traditional religion gives no sense to the post-modern human being anymore, gives him no reason for his existence, doesn't hold him anymore. Culture gives birth to different ways to solve this dilemma of the solipsistic human (that has always been the dilemma of areligious people), to solve and to reappraise the shield of his loneliness, his guilt: spirituality and meditation, religion of nature, modern primitivism, sexuality in its wide sense. Sadomasochism, as I understand it, is such a form of catharsis, of cleansing, of meditation, of union with one Other. One ritual of many, between humans that make sure of their being human, are human, only too human and nevertheless or particularly because of this, are being held and supported by the other. Nothing more and nothing less. And that is what 24/7 shows. Also if it is the professional dominatrix that gets paid for her role of the priest. The 'release' of their adepts though, is real and the acting is more than persuading. A release that is not lasting, short-lived, from which loneliness is headed for again, but a release that makes us stay with our self for a moment and rest in our self.

La petite mort, a new beginning...

Thomas Sing (Human scientist, University of Augsburg) - 26. Sept. 2005

24 / 7 THE PASSION OF LIFE

Review by Jörg Junker

A film made by non-S&M people about people who practice S&M? Or more the question about the true Self, the real "24/7"? In any case, not a film that gives you an instruction how to be happy, but raises questions, so that you can reflect about yourself.

On December 5th 2005, 24/7 THE PASSION OF LIFE was shown in a preview in Münster during the special cinema event "Erotic identity - Scene - Society", with a

following discussion with the director Roland Reber and the main actresses Marina Anna Eich and Mira Gittner.

The two main characters of the film meet during a motorcycle accident: the until now dried Eve (Marina Anna Eich), well sheltered hotelier's daughter, and Lady Maria (Mira Gittner) who is writing her thesis – "Society likes to have standardized people. They obey more easily. But can emotions be standardized? Who puts forward these norms? Who standardizes us? Who is living our life? Most people just exist, but they are not the living. Live YOUR life." A forgotten bag and her own curiosity lead Eve onto the search for her true sexuality.

Wonderful about the film, how the two strands of the plot, the blossoming out of Eve and the ordinary bizarre world of Lady Maria, are interweaved and enrich each other. Lady Maria's world is animated by the 80 year old Transvestite-Maid Elfriede and some real slaves could learn a lot from the Rubber Pig collage: a real existing figure, who plays most of the scenes with the mask himself, but became the face of an actor, and had to be replaced by Marina Anna Eich in some scenes, which we came to know during the discussion.

Already after a short time one forgets that it is a B-Movie, which can be noticed because of the sound and the not so complex camera work. One is caught too much by the editing, the two strands and the wonderful pictures. Besides pictures with their own effect, scenes are realised, that remind of the INRI pictures of the famous photographer Bettina Reims.

Also this film has its lengths, but in wide parts, the director Roland Reber succeeded in making a sensitive depiction of the bizarre world with its intimate details. It is also about the truth, that nobody wants to hear and the consequences to stand by the own Lust. Even more impressing is the fact, that neither the director nor the two main actresses knew the respective scene and had to get to know the swingers scene and the bizarre world of the dominatrix studio for their roles. They performed these roles free from the falsified assumptions formerly shown by the mass media.

This is to a great part due to the fact, that the production is independent and has therefore not to submit to any moral religious authority (that does exist in shape of the so called film funding, as the director explained to the interested audience).

The origin of the title, "24/7" is a bit misleading, due to the fact that at first, it didn't mean the role definition of the BDSM field, but related to a term of the American business world. There is also a director's cut, which will not be released in cinemas, because an indexing would have to be expected.

Let the film become a box office hit and show the institutionalised society how many people are interested in "things like that". Let figures talk, the viewing figures!

(source: www.sm-in-nrw.de)