

PROGRAM33 & MARS FILMS
PRESENT



ROCCO

A FILM BY THIERRY DEMAIZIÈRE & ALBAN TEURLAI

PROGRAM33 & MARS FILMS
PRESENT



A PROGRAM33 – MARS FILMS – FALABRACKS COPRODUCTION

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF OCS

PRODUCED BY FABRICE COAT, MICHEL SPAVONE, STÉPHANE CÉLÉRIER
& VALÉRIE GARCIA

COPRODUCED BY THIERRY DEMAIZIÈRE, ALBAN TEURLAI & STÉPHANIE SCHORTER

ROCCO

A FILM BY THIERRY DEMAIZIÈRE & ALBAN TEURLAI

France - Image: 2048 x 858 (2K DCI SCOPE) – Sound: 5.1 – Running Time: 1h47

Visa : 143 242

Release date: November 30th, 2016 (Mars Films)

INTERNATIONAL SALES

wild bunch

Vincent MARAVAL & Noémie DEVIDE
ndevide@wildbunch.eu
Carole BARATON & Fanny BEAUVILLE
fbeauville@wildbunch.eu
Emilie SERRES
eserres@wildbunch.eu
Silvia SIMONUTTI
ssimonutti@wildbunch.eu
Olivier BARBIER
obarbier@wildbunch.eu

INTERNATIONAL PR

Paul SAUNTER & Cai MASON
rocco@ddapr.com

SYNOPSIS

Rocco Siffredi is to pornography what Mike Tyson is to boxing: a living legend. His mother wanted him to be a priest. With her blessing, he became a porn star, dedicating his life to one god only: Desire.

Over the course of his thirty years in the profession, Rocco Siffredi, a hardcore actor with a destiny unlike any other, has explored every fantasy of the human soul, lending himself to its wildest transgressions. In this introspective documentary, Rocco delves into the darkest reaches of his sex addiction and confronts his demons.

The time has also come for this iconic figure of sex to hang up his gloves. For the last scene of his career, Rocco has chosen this documentary. A gallery of characters - family and friends as well as partners and professionals from the porn industry - accompanies him up to the release of his final, spectacular scene, in an ensemble road movie steeped in shadowy atmosphere.

From family meals in Budapest and the winding streets of Ortona, Italy, to film shoots in the villas of Porn Valley, L.A., beyond scandal and apparent obscenity, the film portrays a life haunted by desire, with a behind-the-scenes look at the porn industry as a scantily-veiled backdrop.

At a time when pornography is emerging from a clandestine past to claim its place in traditional filmmaking, not to mention fashion and contemporary art, we watch as a complete world unfolds.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT



Rocco Siffredi's biography is worthy of its own mythological saga. In order to depict this stranger-than-fiction life story of a man imprisoned by his own desires, we have filmed him both at work and living his private life. Laying bare the ordinary everyday existence of an extraordinary personality has enabled us to capture his complexity, doubts and fears.

This portrait also offers a fresh insight into the world of pornography, of which Rocco is virtually the emblem. We have filmed this parallel world with the intention neither of judging nor exalting it. Violent, strange and often surprising, the industry is represented without artifice, in all its glory, crudity, humanity and, dare we say, poetry. We have given centre stage to its actors, the *enfants terribles* of cinema, and to its actresses whose bodies are repeatedly objectified, isolated and rendered anonymous by the porn industry, but who rarely fall into the business by chance.

Through impressionist frescos, these porn icons unveil a behind-the-scenes view of a world that remains relatively unexplored. This gallery of secondary characters, amongst them porn co-stars, but also his wife, cousin and trusted friends, accompany Rocco Siffredi on a human adventure which leads them to the set of his very last film - the grand finale of his career - shot at the Kink Studios, San Francisco.

Not everyone in the Italian Stallion's entourage vindicates the man and his actions, yet their acknowledgments, elucidations and contradictions create an exceptional portrait of Rocco Siffredi, whose career stands remains unparalleled in the history of porn.

INTERVIEW WITH

THIERRY DEMAIZIÈRE AND ALBAN TEURLAI



What made you want to direct a portrait of Rocco Siffredi? Curiosity about pornography? The desire to present, in another light, a man known for what are supposedly all the wrong reasons?

Thierry Demaizière: It started when Mars Films and Program 33 came to see us with the idea of a documentary on American porno. The thing is, we're first and foremost portraitists and the subject appeared too vast. So instead we proposed an exploration of the world of pornography through portraits of industry actors (stars, producers, technicians, and so on).

The first name on everyone's mind was Rocco. He's been the uncontested star of porn for the past 30 years. He is also the first person we met in Budapest. After talking for an hour, we were convinced he deserved a portrait all to himself. So was he! He couldn't identify whom he might share the spotlight with. "Who are you going to shoot me with? Nobody I started with is around anymore." At the age of fifty, the time had come for him to expose himself in a different way.

Alban Teurlai: What struck us from the start is his complexity and pained aspect, a far cry from the burlesque character in the French show "Journal du Hard". For the first time, he was ready to address the dark side of his personality. We knew that through him and through pornography, we would touch on broader, more universal themes involving desire and guilt - a sort of portrait of modern man.

TD: As a subject, Rocco goes way beyond pornography. He touches on life, death, and the relationship between the dominant and the dominated.

And yet for you, this portrait of Rocco is still a documentary about adult entertainment?

TD: Yes, about an industry that has almost never been treated in a documentary - which is crazy when you consider it generates 4.46 billion views per month, and constitutes a full third of Internet traffic, and that porn culture has permeated large segments of society.

AT: The porno industry has always been a trendsetter, whether in terms of aesthetics (silicon, tattoos, hair removal) or technology (3D films and virtual reality). Porn is present on the web, in fashion, in advertising. It contributes to teenage sex education. There isn't a magazine - however serious - that doesn't publish a special 'sex edition' every summer. We talk about gastro-porn, catastrophe porn. Filmmakers like Gaspar Noé and Lars Von Trier borrow from it, putting the pornographic act at the heart of their films. Our times are saturated with pornographic images, and yet - and this is where the hypocrisy comes in - it's like it's nobody's business. We had the hardest time raising money to shoot this film. A lot of people held their nose as they read the synopsis, like Molière's Tartuffe: "Cover that breast, that I am not permitted to see..."

TD: Porn no longer represents 1970s counter-culture. It has ceased to constitute a militant act, emerging today as the pathology of an age. It frightens; it is poor cinema, shameful cinema. Cursed. Those who make porno films today appear to be the worst of the damned. They are despised. There's nothing chic about porn. At Cannes, someone like Gérard Depardieu takes offense when Rocco starts up the red carpet stairs. He doesn't consider him an actor, he's not a part of the family.

Do documentary makers film a porn star differently?

AT: Pornography is a cinema of pariahs who, having been cast out, are weary of being looked at too closely. So it's really difficult to arrive on a porn set with your cameras, since your presence as an outsider breaks the concentration of a lot of actors and actresses, who as a result are usually against it. Rocco was our open sesame to filming in this world that otherwise functions on a closed circuit. We had just finished RESET (RELÈVE) a film on classical dance for which we shot dancers for over three months at the Opéra Garnier in Paris. Strange as it might seem, when it came time to shoot porn stars, we realized that our approach wasn't all that different: both films looked at working bodies. Like dancers, porn stars are athletes for whom the body is a tool. The outcome isn't quite the same, but their professions do share points in common: both are a matter of very intense physical performances involving a lot of pain, injuries and sometimes ecstasy. Porn actors can shoot for as much as six hours straight. We filmed them with the same attention and the same good faith that we'd shoot any athlete. Without moral judgement. They are sex-workers. We shot them as workers.

You chose not to shoot what lies at the core of pornography: penetration. Was that due to timidity, or censorship?

TD : Neither. To see penetration, the audience doesn't need us: a click suffices. As far as we're concerned, it was the least interesting aspect of the shoot. Porn films are all too often nothing but a string of close-ups of stars' organs. What interested us was all the rest: faces, hands, muscles, expressions, cramps, everything that usually remains outside the frame.

They are performers. Our challenge was to transcribe a climate inherent to pornography, to this addiction to sex, without showing penetration and without glossing over the violence and suffering.

Rocco is known for his extreme scenes. He goes very far in terms of fantasy. But in the world of porn, he is also known for the way he works with actresses, how he connects with them...

TD: Yes, his relationship with women - his mother, his wife, his actresses - is complex, both dark and very connected. It's at the heart of the film. Rocco has an obvious Christ-like dimension. Crucified on the bodies of women, he suffers from the very thing that sustains him. He bears the burden of modern man who must be, and wants to be, everything at the same time: stud, businessman, sex symbol, husband, father, loving son... Rocco, the symbol of a dominating male, would believe himself dominated by women, a slave to their desires. In the film we come to understand that the relationship between domination and submission is much more complex than it appears. Rocco went as far as to propose for his final scene reversing this relationship and taking his turn at playing man-as-object. When we started to show the film, we'd often hear: "Your film almost talks more about women than men." That's probably because of the place Kelly Stafford occupies in the last third. Kelly is Rocco's feminine double, the most emblematic partner of his 30-year career, an incredible performer who can go into a trance with him and have sexual relations of a mind-boggling animal nature. That's why she's so disturbing. She pushes the viewer to question his or her own desire and limits.

AT: Rocco once told us: "Above all, I'm an amplifier. But it's the woman who decides on the volume." He considers himself at their service. It may sound crazy, but with Rocco, it's all about the mind. He's constantly searching for the trance that is his driver, and sometimes, that of the girls he shoots with.

That's not, unfortunately, always the case...

TD: No, we shouldn't kid ourselves. I don't think the film soft pedals that problem. We were very careful about the profiles of the actresses we were going to show: on the one hand there's the young American actress, highly professional, a sex-worker assuming her role and proud of it, and on the other the young inexperienced novice going off to the slaughterhouse.

AT: We shot over a period of two years. We met a lot of actresses and actors. For all of them, there were obviously as many reasons to do porn as there were personal stories. Women can very quickly find themselves in a weak position in an industry that is sometimes brutal and remorseless, most of the time run by men, some of whom will do anything for a buck. And yet, coming into contact with the reality of this world, we sometimes encountered situations far from the usual clichés and preconceived notions. Obviously, porno feeds a lot on the economic disasters of certain regions of the world, notably the former Eastern bloc countries. Some actresses enter the business for the wrong reasons, most often reasons of economic survival, but also a hunger for celebrity. They usually don't last long and are ground up in the machine. The end of their short careers can be awful. I think, for example, of Jenny Smart, the Czech novice we see at the beginning of the film, who was terrified of what awaited her. We kept the scene during editing, even though it's disturbing, because it's a terrible part of the reality of

porno. There must be hundreds like her.

But there's another side to the business, less sordid, populated with young women who are in touch with their own desires, for whom porn is an acceptable way to earn money or even a sought-after counter-culture.

You were privileged to shoot Rocco's final pornographic scene. Was the world's greatest porn star's swansong planned from the start of the shoot?

AT: Absolutely not. I think we arrived at a turning point in his life. He realized this film was an opportunity for him to end on a high.

TD: No, we didn't know from the start, but fairly quickly we understood that he couldn't keep up his hardcore role as a dominant alpha male much longer. He had too many doubts, too many questions. And physically too... Rocco may still be very active, but he's broken all over: hips, knees, back... his entire body aches.

It was an incredible chance for us and for the film to have arrived at that particular time in his life, when something wasn't quite right anymore.

This thing that wasn't quite right, aches and pains aside, what would it be?

TD: Something to do with guilt. Something very Italian. A French actor would have told us about his libertine life without remorse or hang-ups. Rocco began by telling us about his mother, the weight of his family, and religion, which was never very far away. About the intimate work of gaining his mother's approval to become who he is. And then the approval of his wife to continue being who he is while remaining part of a couple. And yet, having won this approval, he is still an Italian man entangled in existential and moral questions about duty, transgression, unhappiness and ecstasy.

Unhappiness?

TD: Yes. It's an astonishing situation: there we were, sitting across from the king of porn, hearing him say that deep down he was still unhappy, as always, to be the man he was. The same man he had done everything to become. The film tells the story of this tragedy, this heartbreak.

Rocco has always admitted to his deep erotomania, to the point of being unable to live without porn...

TD: Yes, and there lies his paradox. That's what makes Rocco so profoundly human. He's 52 years old. He has become rich thanks to porn, adulated, famous worldwide. One might expect to meet someone more serene, a baron of porn, a prince in his kingdom, satisfied with his success. It was entirely the contrary: he was suffering. He is even the worst off of the whole Siffredi clan. While his wife and children appear to have totally accepted his situation, he himself is seized by a question without an answer, as if condemned to desire...

AT: Rocco comes from Ortona, a small town in the Abruzzo region of Italy. When he decided to do porn, all the village notables called on him. The doctor, the priest, and one of his brothers told him: "If you do this, you're selling your soul to the devil. You'll never have a family, you'll catch all sorts of diseases, you'll be cursed." To a certain extent, he's still there, as if the curse had come true.

Filming lasted two years. Usually, a shoot that long helps a portraitist gain a certain intimacy. What kind of intimacy can a camera create with someone who is used to being filmed intimately?

AT : The nudity of the actors and actresses that we encountered doesn't create intimacy properly speaking. It's an everyday, ordinary occurrence.

The real intimacy was psychological. Rocco has no limits, no filters, in sex or in life. He gives his all, too much even. From that point of view he's got more integrity than anyone we've ever shot. Never did he try to dissimulate anything, whatever it may be. Never did he go back on something he said or did on camera. Never did he ask us to cut anything, even when a situation was not to his advantage, which is sometimes the case in the film. He couldn't care less. The only thing he's interested in is the truth. The intimacy we reached was born of his faith in us. When we showed him the film, he told us: "This is the first time anyone has seen me naked."

When shooting Rocco, his contacts and entourage, what kind of margin do you have between condemnation and commendation?

TD : We didn't want either to sing Rocco's praises and close our eyes to things, or to make a moral film against pornography. We made a portrait of a complex being who engages in very hardcore porn, where the women who do a scene with him can't shoot the next day because it's physically impossible. We hid nothing. Our times are sensitive to violence against women, and rightly so, and the way women view pornography haunted us throughout the two years of shooting. Rocco showed us his dark side as well as his quest for a certain truth in women's pleasure that expresses itself through madness, overindulgence, savagery and domination. It neither judges nor praises him: it's just him. We made a film about a man full of paradoxes, half-angel, half-devil.

AT: The real difficulty came during editing when we had to capture the climate of two years of shooting in 107 minutes, without losing the fragile balance between Rocco's profound humanity and his monstrous side.

There's the man's tragic side on the one hand, and on the other a comic side that almost recalls Italian cinema of the 1970s. With their dose of burlesque, the scenes between Rocco and his cousin Gabriele recall Dino Risi...

TD : We have over 200 hours of rushes, including lots of scenes with Gabriele. There was something comical about them, sometimes involuntarily, always on the edge, as Gabriele comes up with scenes that never work. These makings-of may have been irresistible, but didn't do anything to further the portrait of Rocco, so we held back; nonetheless, some of the film's scenes border on outright burlesque comedy.

AT: Rocco and Gabriele are two sides of the same coin. They've been inseparable for 30 years. Rocco performs while Gabriele invents based on the performance. Their porno has two facets: one is hard, extreme, when it comes to sex scenes. The other is naïve, anarchic, almost childlike when it's a question of "comedy" scenes. The rigor and dedication these two accomplices show in coming up with a script and exploring the psychological depths of their characters sometimes borders on genius. They're like two kids caught up in their stories, telling them to each other perfectly straight-faced. Their cinema is almost a cinema of origins: they're playing, in the original sense of the word.

There's something so amateurish about pornographic filmmaking that we were really afraid at one point that people would think we were making fun of them, whereas the opposite is true. Porn Valley is located behind the Hollywood hills, away from prying eyes. The shoots are done with almost no money, no sound engineers, no technicians, and the actors are rarely insured, because insuring everyone would use up the budget. What we encountered was an almost clandestine filmmaking tradition.

How did you differentiate the image from pornography without judging it?

AT: An aesthetic approach to porn almost never works. Whether it's the productions themselves or the representation of them that we see in the plethora of stories that have been shot on the industry. We may shoot documentaries, with means that fall far behind fiction, we've nevertheless always tried to shoot our films with a certain look, color, and especially, a point of view. That point of view begins with the way we look at our subject. It's a way of respecting those we're filming and who are giving us a part of themselves. Why would porno be any less well shot?

The issue was to tackle these sex scenes differently - scenes that are usually shot so crudely, so straightforwardly - to play on *chiaroscuro*, and sometimes approach the tangle of bodies in a more poetic way. We weren't trying to sublimate porno, but rather to encourage the audience to view it in a new light.

And the music?

AT: ROCCO marks our sixth collaboration with AVIA. At the beginning of the shoot, we didn't think the film would need music, given the heavy atmosphere and complexity of the subject matter. Once we edited, we realized that the explicit scenes were still too brutal, too crude. We wanted to make a film about pornography, not a pornographic film. Intuitively, we felt that music would provide the distance we were looking for from the start, and would make the visuals less figurative. Making a film on Rocco and the world of porn required us to keep just the right distance at all times. Yet every time we tried to add music to our rushes, we came up against the same problem: the music either sublimated the pornographic act, or made it more "sordid", and we weren't comfortable with either of these positions. We wanted something slightly threatening to underlie the soundtrack, something invisible, yet palpable, a sort of constant tension, ever-present yet never imposing.

AVIA borrowed minimalist loops from (John) Carpenter, heavy guitars like Neil Young used for DEAD MAN, and a hunting horn as in FOXCATCHER, then worked backward to separate himself from these references and appropriate the film. We really wanted to avoid music full of references in favor of a totally personal composition.

ROCCO is our least 'musical' film, and sometimes we found the total absence of music for long stretches really disturbing, but I think we arrived at just the right balance for such a thorny subject, where the music is there neither to sublimate nor to judge, but instead to meld with the story to give it the desired weight and substance.

The voice-over, prominent in the beginning, gradually disappears from the film...

TD: We needed Rocco to tell us about his childhood and family in order to understand what made him become Rocco Siffredi. When the biographical elements were posited

once and for all, we no longer needed the voice-over. The film shifted into something else.

Does Rocco's body speak for him?

TD: Rocco's body is like him: in pain. He's tense, uptight, he's got problems with sciatica and his prostate. He's used up by sex, which gives him that 'King Lear', worn-out aspect. Yet at the same time, he's still an athlete who pushes himself to do punishing workouts. He has to suffer to pay his due to the god of sex.

INTERVIEW WITH

ROCCO SIFFREDI



How did you react when two French documentary filmmakers suggested a filmed portrait?

It's always great to know that someone is interested in your life. I'd already had three proposals in the past. The first was from the son of a major Polish director, the second from an Italian, and the third an American. Thierry and Alban showed me their previous work, and I really liked the way they approached their subjects and shot them. That's why I finally decided to allow myself to be filmed in an intimate way. And of course artistically, I was born in France - my first porno picture, in 1986, was shot in Paris, for Dorcel. Later, when I came out with an autobiography, it was a French publisher's idea. No doubt that's because France is more liberated when it comes to sex, less hypocritical. For me, the French seem better placed than anyone to portray the life of a man who has chosen a path that isn't exactly traditional...

You had just turned fifty when the project arose. Did that influence your decision to tell your story?

Yes, absolutely. When you hit fifty, things fly back in your face, but at least you see them more clearly: the good as well as the bad. Suddenly you've reached an age where you can assess things and talk about them.

Was there any desire on your part to break with the hardcore image of Rocco?

People see me as Rocco the super-machine. And I can be a super-machine... in front of the camera. But here, for the first time, people see me bare all. For me it's a lot more difficult to bare it like that than to show up naked on a film set for a sex scene. It's not the same kind of exposure.

Is baring all frightening?

Yes, there's a point where you feel fear. Fear of what? Sincerely, it's not the fear of someone who's afraid of being discovered for what he is, for who he is. Those are things I came to terms with long ago. It's not bashfulness either. It's fear for my loved ones, for my wife and my two boys. When you've got a family, you try to show only your strong side. You show that you're a fighter, that you're afraid of nothing, that you're invincible, that you're Super Dad. Yet at the same time, I know my boys are growing up (they're 16 and 20). Before long, they'll be fathers themselves. They too will run into problems, so I told myself they were of an age to hear their father say certain things, to see him in a different light. In my life, there are times when my decision doesn't just fill my head, but my body as well. My whole body. My whole soul. To the point that I agreed to say certain things, about my mother, about my past, about my ghosts.

Did you discuss it as a family?

Yes. My wife may have been the most reticent. She was afraid it would be one more film full of clichés portraying porn as evil incarnate. My wife knows I always do my work with lots of joy, passion and professionalism. She's seen me happy in my work, and she was concerned that only the violent, bestial, dark side of porn would come across... I shared her concern. I too was afraid that Thierry and Alban were only interested in filming the hard side of porn. I think they reached a balance. Things are said, they're shown, but you also get a sense that there are people in the industry who are striving to move it forward, who are passionate about the work.

Is this the portrait of a superhero of pornography?

No, that's just it. It's anything but! I let Alban and Thierry look into every nook and cranny. I knew they weren't familiar with the world of porn, that they were getting their own idea of it. I took risks. A film that glorified me would have horrified me, as would have a film that only met with people who saw me as the personification of evil. They explored every facet of porn, and they understood that I go about my work with the utmost professionalism - and a huge dose of passion.

What is still difficult to say at this point in pornography? It seems to be everywhere and yet no one wants to acknowledge it...

Yes, it's still today's big taboo. Violence is no longer taboo: it's everywhere, every day, in our lives, in the news. It's presented, exhibited, and sometimes leaves us indifferent. Nudity is no longer taboo: bodies are easily shown. But there remains this one taboo, perhaps the last: pornography. Sexuality. And I know from experience that one of the biggest problems facing pornography is that it shows a man's sexual organs. Recently,

Le Monde's "M" supplement did a cover story on me. Right away it provoked violent reactions. People wouldn't have lashed out at a *Le Monde* cover with a naked woman. But there, they were seeing a man's genitals. It touched on the forbidden. You just don't show a man's dick in a serious magazine, it's too close to our animal nature. A man's penis is there to be used when needed and put away when it's not. There's no representation of it... That's what the taboo surrounding porn is about. That's why it's troubling. Everybody watches porn, it's our best-shared secret. And as a producer, I know for a fact that tastes are leaning increasingly towards the bizarre, towards extreme scenes. Everybody gets turned on by porn, but that's something people aren't ready to accept. Those who dare to say it's great, or good, or exciting, are few and far between.

The film shows that your style of playing a scene is always ambiguous: your scenes have a reputation for being intense, sometimes violent, and at the same time they display a sort of bonding with the actress that is rarely found in the porno industry...

When it works, we enter something intense together. Sometimes limits vanish. I know I'm largely responsible for a certain violent trend in porno, a trend that's appeared in the last fifteen or twenty years. I can almost date the shift towards violence: it was a scene during which a girl slapped me in the face. Instinctively, I slapped her back and just as I did, she came. From then on, I sometimes tried - when the signs were right of course - to get into a certain zone where violence is an accepted, sometimes even requested game, that plays out against one or the other or both partners. I tried it with actresses like Sidonie and Kelly. Really hardcore scenes, no limits, where we play on pain and pleasure together. I want to insist - because even today it's often misunderstood - on the fact that these scenes are always a form of complicity with the woman, they correspond to a request on the part of the actress at the time. If people don't understand that, they don't understand anything that's going on between her and me. True sexuality is an exploration. We search within ourselves for things that sometimes show up as violence, but that make us vibrate all the more. The perfect orgasm, the magnificent orgasm, is a complex phenomenon that stirs up many intense things in us. You've got to go after it, that kind of orgasm that turns things upside down. It's the woman's orgasm I'm after. That's all that counts.

Nevertheless, a lot of people are critical of that position: it's opened the door to a kind of pornography that seeks to degrade women, and that's preoccupied with anything but their pleasure...

A lot of people have tried to imitate me in this area, without understanding anything about my approach. I regret that. All they got was the violence part. The complicity totally escapes them. And yet, without that complicity, the violence is intolerable.

Once, a journalist with *The Times*, a woman, at a time when I was presenting Catherine Breillat's *ROMANCE*, told me that after seeing my porno, she thought my brain worked like a woman's, that my sexuality was more feminine than most would suspect. I was really touched, because I know for a fact that I'm ill at ease with the crudest kind of male sexuality. That's not what my research is about. I use the word research intentionally: for me, shooting a scene means entering the girl's mind and searching, searching, helping

to bring things to the surface, to take her to another level. Next stage, next step, next level. If this rapport with feminine sexuality comes across in the documentary, I'll be very happy.

The film suggests conflict between your roles as actor, producer, a businessman running the Rocco brand, a husband, father, a son carrying the heavy weight of his family, not to mention a man prey to his own fantasies... This makes for a curious portrait of a modern man, caught in his contradictions, yet still trying to do it all, all at once.

Yes, I think I belong to a generation that walked headlong into confusion. I don't know that I'm the prototype of modern man, but as for confusion, I willingly acknowledge it. Sexuality drew me in, like a lover, but has also led me into complex territory. My first desire when I started this profession was to make my mother and brothers happier - we came from a family of modest means. I wanted them to suffer less. Less stress. For them to lead more relaxed lives. It took time to earn money with porn. Today I'm able to help, but it's not enough to set things straight. After thirty years in the industry, I still haven't managed to normalize certain things about my life, about my personality. I know it sounds hard to believe, but after all these years, I go to a porno set to work and I still feel guilty towards my wife. I'm still not over it! Yet there are millions of wife-swapping couples that have no issue, or at least that are more at ease than I am, with changing partners in front of everyone. I know it's incredible, but that's just how I am.

Maybe that's what makes Rocco Siffredi an outstanding actor?

I don't know if my secret is to maintain - against my will - a tragic relationship with my sexuality. It's a fixation. That's where the suffering comes in: it's part of my life. From the moment I became a porno actor, I gave up any hope of leading a totally clean life. I ended up believing that whatever life handed me, it gave in exchange for a certain suffering. I knew it, that was the deal: to get what I worked for in thirty years of porn - joy, recognition, social status - there would be suffering behind it all.

And yet no one imposes this suffering on you?

No, it's all in my head. It's my issue, and it carries me. Maybe that's why I'm still in the industry, thirty years after my first shoot. It's also the reason behind this film, to find the courage to tell it all.

Are you addicted to porno?

I'm finding it hard to break with. It's been a part of me for thirty years..

The film brings back to the screen someone who was important to you and who said goodbye to porn long ago: none other than Kelly, of course...

When Thierry and Alban asked me whom to interview, there were lots of great girls, like Valentina Nappi, or Eva Berger, but I really wanted Kelly to be in the film. Why? Because she's like me. She's honest about her sexuality, she gives her all, she's right there in her fantasies. She's my feminine double. Entirely. She has that completely open sexuality, totally in her head. I see myself in her. And she constantly overturns the question of submission. Kelly is my favorite porn star ever.

Is Rocco a happy man?

I feel very happy. I can't complain. I know that look in men's eyes when they tell me they'd give ten years of their life for a day of mine. Yet for all that, I'm a dissatisfied man or tragic. I wake up thinking I'm the happiest man in the world because my wife is wonderful and she gave me two incredible kids. Yet I do everything to make myself unhappy. As if I always had to find something to ruin my perfect happiness. And that's why I have terrifying moments, which I talk about in the film. To always go further in search of emotions that only sexuality provides. In those moments, I turned to sexuality without the arousal: I went to hurt myself. And it's this dependence on sex that's so terrible, because it provides no relief, no consolation. So I am, as we say in Italy, happy down deep and sad in the eyes. I know I carry this melancholy in my eyes. It goes way back, to the death of my brother when I was six years old, and my mother's sorrow that followed. I'm always seeking to suffer as they suffered. To get closer to them. That's where my dissatisfaction lies.

DIRECTORS' BIOGRAPHY

THIERRY DEMAIZIÈRE AND ALBAN TEURLAI

In 1985 Thierry Demaizière made his professional debut as a reporter for French radio station RTL, covering news stories in China, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iran and Israel. He was the only French radio journalist posted to Bagdad during the first Gulf War. From 1997 onwards, Demaizière had his own daily slot on RTL where he interviewed current affairs personalities. He rapidly honed his style as a portrait interviewer, and his unique tone and sensibility quickly became his trademark. Demaizière portrays his subjects with great intimacy and precision, enabling him to reveal them within an unusual level of depth and complexity. In 2001, Demaizière exchanged radio for TV: for the last 15 years he has directed the weekly portrait on TF1's "Sept à Huit" show.

In 2004, he met Alban Teurlai, an editor of numerous short films, music videos and commercials. Demaizière and Teurlai soon began to co-direct documentaries for France's leading channels, including France 2 and Canal+. The duo defined themselves as portraitists, directing 11 films in 10 years, principally sensitive and refined documentaries about celebrities including Karl Lagerfeld, Vincent Lindon, Fabrice Lucchini and Lilian Thuram as well as unknown subjects, as in the films COUPLE[S] and TROUFIONS.

Subject matter aside, their films are also formally remarkable: these quasi-impressionist portraits bear an individual aesthetic signature that is evident in both their shooting and editing techniques.

Their most recent film, RESET, which retraces Benjamin Millepied's experiences as ballet director of the Paris Opera, received overwhelming critical acclaim as well as screening in Official Selection at the Tribeca Festival, 2016.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

DOCUMENTARIES

2016 : RESET (RELÈVE) with BENJAMIN MILLEPIED

Canal+ (100')

2014 : COUPLE[S]

France 2 (2 x 90')

2013 : ENTRE AUTRES

France 5 (10 x 26')

2012 : TROUFIONS

France 2 (52')

2012 : VINCENT LINDON, REVOLVERS

France 5 (52')

2010 : CES MESSIEURS DAMES

France 3 (52')

2009 : THURAM

Canal+ (80')

2009 : ROBERT LUCHINI DIT FABRICE

France 5 (52')

2008 : LAGERFELD, UN ROI SEUL

France 5 (52')

COMMERCIALS

2013-15 : OUTSIDE CHANEL

(2 x 7')

2013 : CHANEL N°5

« Marilyn »

2012-13 : INSIDE CHANEL

(10 x 6')

CHARACTERS

Rocco SIFFREDI

Nothing predestined this Italian road worker's son, who at 14 was still an altar boy whose mother hoped would become a priest, to revolutionize the world of pornography. Yet over the course of his 30-year career, the man known as the 'Italian Stallion' would become a central figure of the industry, shooting over 1,500 films, sleeping with more than 5,000 women, and introducing the gonzo style. Rocco is much more than a porn star, however. Renowned worldwide, a frequent guest on television, a polyglot who delights his interviewers with his wit and Italian flair, he is one of the rare X-rated actors whose celebrity surpasses the world of adult entertainment. Now at 52, a husband and a father of two, he means to turn a major chapter of his life, and has chosen this film to do it. Rocco, a complex personality marked by a troubled childhood, is well aware that he is a slave to his libido. Will he at last be able to satisfy his desire for peace?

Rozsa TANO

A model, actress, former Miss Hungary 1990 and Rocco's wife, the woman of his life, second only to his mother, she is utterly crucial to his well-being and balance. Beautiful and intelligent, she is also the only woman capable of living jealousy-free with her sex-crazed celebrity of a husband. Thanks to her and their two sons, Rocco has become a real Italian-style family man.

Gabriele GALETTA

Rocco's cousin and right-hand man, Gabriele left everything to follow his cousin into the world of pornography. After initially attempting a career as a hardcore actor, he took on a number of other roles at Rocco's side: assistant, screenwriter, stills photographer, best friend and indispensable alter ego. They have made more than a hundred films together.

Mark SPIEGLER

An agent for adult actresses, and the go-to guy for girls who want to get into the business. Has a reputation for doing deals without ever leaving the sofa. A sort of "sugar daddy" with the stride of a mammoth, he houses his new recruits and watches jealously over them. All the female stars of porno have worked with him. He is unbeatable when it comes to negotiating contracts and protecting his girls from drugs, prostitution and racism

John STAGLIANO

A former Chippendale performer, actor, director and legendary producer, he's made a fortune in adult films. A close friend of Rocco for twenty years, together they came up with gonzo. Opera fan, husband and father, HIV positive, he lives in a sumptuous 'Playboy mansion-style' villa, which he has used as a set for a number of his films. Having founded his own production company, Evil Angel, he now reigns over an empire.

Kelly STAFFORD

British, spotted by Rocco when she was simply a model, Kelly Stafford immediately became his female alter ego. A strong woman, sure of herself, with a taste for rough sex and submission, she quickly made a name for herself and shot twenty or so films before abruptly leaving pornography in 2007. After an absence of ten years, she returns for one last scene with the man who has always considered her the most emblematic partner of his career.

Abella DANGER

A former classical dancer raised in a traditional Jewish family, Abella Danger happened into a career in porno almost by accident. And she loved it. Here she shoots her first scene with Rocco, a veritable legend for this 19-year old newcomer. Free-spirited and fully espousing her uninhibited libido, she doesn't appear to notice the generational conflict clearly playing out between her and the maestro.

CAST

Rocco SIFFREDI

Rozsa TANO

Gabriele GALETTA

Kelly STAFFORD

Mark SPIEGLER

Abella DANGER

John STAGLIANO

CREW

Directed by Thierry Demaizière & Alban Teurlai

Interviews Thierry Demaizière

DP Alban Teurlai

Sound Engineer Emmanuel Guionet

Editor Alban Teurlai

Original Music AVIA

Executive Producers Program33
Fabrice Coat, Michel Spavone

Mars Films
Stéphane Célérier, Valérie Garcia

Coproducers Falabracks

Thierry Demaizière, Alban Teurlai,
Stéphanie Schorter

Photo credits: © Emmanuel Guionet

wild bunch