
ALL ART IS MADE FROM **ANGER**

Lawrence Weiner talks about structure, art, reality, movies and the making of his second artistic **PORN** movie.

FROM TIME TO TIME THE ART WORLD FLIRTS with explicit sexual images. Let's take a closer look at Switzerland and explore an interesting connection between the Swiss Erotic art collector and porn film entrepreneur Edi A. Stöckli (who owns the collection in the Museum of Porn in Art in Zürich, several Swiss porn cinemas and adult film productions companies like **Magma Film** and **Tabu & Love** in



Germany, as well as art house and mainstream post-production facilities called **Schwarz Film** in Bern and Berlin), and the internationally-recognised artist Lawrence Weiner, who once said: "All art is made from anger." Weiner, one of the central figures of Conceptual Art, was born February 10, 1942, in the Bronx, New York. If you're wondering what conceptual art is, well, here's a short definition: "Conceptual Art is based on the notion that the essence of art is an idea, or concept, and may exist distinct from and in the absence of an object as its representation." During the summer of 2007 at the Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland, Stöckli received a call from New York: Lawrence wanted to shoot a pornographic art film again and the Swiss Institute in New York

would support it and, if everything goes smoothly, the film would probably have its premiere during the international art fair ART 08 in Basel, Switzerland. So far so good. Weiner isn't unfamiliar with genital escapades on film and shocked the American artworld with an xxx-rated short film back in the 70s. Then, in 1976, the release of Gerard Damiano's "Deep Throat" received a political backlash in the U.S. and actors and producers were federally indicted for conspiracy in the distribution of obscenity across state lines. In response to the conservative political climate and the infringement of civil rights, Lawrence Weiner created his own movie, "A Bit of Matter and a Little Bit More". The male/female, subject/object investigation in this movie has no titillating intro-

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duction at all; the appetite is not whetted beforehand. Hardcore, the opening shot, shows the crotch areas of a male and female body engaged in coitus. Because it was made by a well-known artist, this skin flick was received as art and was protected by the cultural establishment against the censors of that time. After this now legendary 1976 arty skin flick, Weiner has now shot his second porn short film, one that is repeatedly counting on art world amateurs. In this non-narrative project, titled "Water in Milk Exists" (2008), Weiner uses bodies as objects in a filmic landscape. The fuckfest is a visual essay in which real people experience the object of human bodies. Rather than recreating the ritualised narratives of porn, this production ar-

ticulates the sheer banality of sex. The artist layers the action with spoken words borrowed from his children's books and scientific/philosophical texts. The elusive textual sequence thrusts the carnal footage forward. It may seem a little bit odd to mention it, but nowadays in Western society we have a flood of fleshly images on DVD. Thirty years on from Weiner's "A Bit of Matter...", porn has embedded itself within everyday American culture. Can an artist like Weiner cause a reaction today like that seen in the 70s, a time where porn was still fighting for its place in society? He sets the scene by taking a bunch of New York amateur talents from the NYC (student?) art

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scene and puts them into a scenario where they have to screw each other. This could be refreshing, but in this case it is rather disturbing because even though it is beautifully shot in ProAm style the film has an artificial atmosphere where people talk untypically for porn films. Instead of a "Yeah, fuck me harder, baby!", the audience listens to sophisticated dialogue. The cast also behaves rather uninspiringly in a sexual sense. You



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don’t necessarily get aroused when watching this film. This isn’t jerk-off porn, guys and girls, it’s art and Weiner is an artist and not a new raunchy wall-to-wall director, so he has something else to tell his audience – something more than a message to make them horny. We caught up with the artist after the European premiere in Basel.

Tell us a little bit about your film... what is it about?

It’s about multiple realities... and it’s about the advent of chaos. We come to the point where there are simultaneous realities that we have always been dealing with, the question what is a concept of reality. But perhaps all realities are at the same moment, at the same time, in the same place... and I brought together a great cast of people and we tried to make a landscape that was involved with multiple realities. That’s what it’s about.

...and the question, of course, is why does the film have an explicit nature...

I think we all share a concept of reality. There’s a reality and there’s also this problem people have of putting aside and making it into something that it’s not. They invent a narrative and in fact people are fucking.

Which is perhaps, for some people, a

disturbing experience?

Not in a pornographic theater (laughs).

You take the explicit nature of the film to point to a certain reality?

I’m not pointing a finger, I’m placing reality on a screen. And people themselves can place themselves within whatever reality they’re comfortable with...

So this means all the people having hardcore sex are free, improvising their acts, or did you...

I was directing. I’m afraid it was a directed movie.

So you told them to speak some dialogue and also told them what kind of position they have to take in the sexual acts?

Yes. It’s a movie. Movies are totally false. But they are the only reality we ever have to see.

You shot another sexually-explicit film in the past.

In 1976.

I think the film was a statement against...

Against censorship. Yes. At that time they were incarcerating people, putting them in jail. And this was a statement against censorship. And now censorship has

started again throughout the world. There is a conservative reaction and I don’t believe that anybody has the right to tell somebody what to make and what not to make.

So the film can be read as a statement, in the 21st century, against an up coming new prudism?

Yes, against a prudism and... uhm, it’s very nice of Edi A.Stoeckli to be able to show it in a real porn theater, and he is putting it in his real programme.

Please tell us a little bit about the financing of this project.

There’s nothing to tell. It was financed the way a movie is financed. Edi Stoeckli, the Swiss Institute and myself decided to make a movie, so we made a movie.

Coming back to the structure of the film, maybe some viewers will have a problem concentrating on the spoken words because the pornographic images are quite strong.

Perhaps the image is speaking about the same thing. Let’s not make a hierarchy between images and the verbal. Let’s say that a film is information in front of people. There it is. And they make use of what ever it is they can find to make use of.

What is the philosophy of the film?

They are telling you it’s about structure. It’s explicit. The meaning is explicit. There’s no hidden meaning and the action is explicit. There’s no cheating, no hidden meaning and there’s no hiding behind curtains.

So you’d say it’s reality in its purest form?

Of course it’s a film, so it’s not reality, it’s an attempt to portrait reality, as all art is an attempt to portray material fact and reality, but it requires artifice to make the reality.

Are there plans for further screenings of the movie?

Yes, there will be, probably, at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and in other places as well, and at festivals and the DVD is for sale just like every other porn DVD... (grins)

For more information contact the Swiss Institute in NYC: www.swissinstitute.net