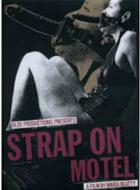
[The Pro Circuit] Silken Sleeves: An Interview With Maria Beatty, Part 2

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Even if you missed Part 1 of our interview with Maria Beatty, you may already know that Maria Beatty is one of the most innovative, artful directors of erotic film working today. With her new release Strap-On Motel, she paints a portrait of a sizzling encounter in a motel on the wrong side of the tracks. We chatted with Beatty recently about her new release.

TR: Did you work on other projects between the making of *Skateboard Kink Freak* and *Sex Mannequin*, and the making of *Silken Sleeves* and subsequently *Strap-On Motel*?

Maria Beatty Yes, I worked on my first feature film, "Boy in a Bathtub" . . . Paris, 1920. A courtesan falls madly in love for a cherubin young man, twenty years younger. She keeps him locked up inside her flat, satisfying her dark desires: he becomes her child, her double, her wife, and her sexual toy. Unfortunately this film hasn't quite found it's niche or audience but I'm convinced that with another feature film or two under my belt this film will be included and appreciated in my body of work.

TR: Strap-On Motel has a noirish feel, seeming to me to be very influenced by the detective genre, the road trip film genre, the "down-and-outer" genre. Were those conscious influences, and are there others I might have missed? How did you get the idea for Strap-On Motel?

MB: Yes, that's absolutely right. And that was my intention when creating this film. I have a strong fetish for hotel rooms and fantasies of mysterious transient love affairs that take place in them. A dark romanticism that's exciting and very erotic. I happened to be staying in a famous authentic deco hotel in downtown LA and this is where the idea came to me. The aura, spirits, and architecture in the hotel was completely noirish and it's residents were full of the "down-and-outers" . . . This hotel where I was staying was screaming out for me to create an erotic noir clandestine love affair there, and five days later I did.

TR: In *Strap-On Motel*, you used a voiceover, illustrating a story that wraps around the sex. Was this a new direction or a new style for you?

MB: This is the first time I've used a voiceover for any of my erotic fetish/sm films. Normally I let the dialogue drive the story or music and sound design. I was trying to stay true to the film noir style and period so it was only natural to create and drive the story along with a voiceover seen through the one madly desiring and obsessed in the film. And when the voiceover is laid over the sex scenes it's actually deconstructing the sex and adding a few dimensions rather than just a one-dimension sex scene.

TR: Did you enjoy working that way?

MB: It was stimulating to work with the extra layers of voiceover and creating and enhancing the story even further in post production, and to continue to explore more possibilities with voiceover and sex and the whole theme of road movies lesbian style.

TR: Do you think you'll do it in subsequent projects?

MB: For sure. I adore the use of voiceovers when done well and to illustrate a storyline. I love the extra dimension it adds to the film and mystery as well. I'm currently in post production with my new film to be released in June 2008 "Post Apocalyptic Cowgirls," and Lydia Lunch is in the works to do a more spoken word performance voiceover for this film.

TR: You've worked with Dylan before; how did you decide to cast her in Strap-On Motel?

MB: I cast Dylan Ryan and she agreed to star in both films *Sex Mannequin* and *Strap-On Motel* with her friend London months in advance. These two films were shot back-to-back in a two-day time period.

TR: Where was *Strap-On Motel* shot?

MB: *Strap-On Motel* was shot in a quintessential deco hotel in downtown LA. The insert materials were shot months after on the west coast and Paris, France.

TR: Was it shot over a number of sessions or just one period of work?

MB: The core of the film was shot in one day inside a room in the hotel and the insert materials of the neon signs and strip were shot on two separate days months after the interior shoot.

TR: When you are shooting hot lesbian sex as in *Strap-On Motel*, do you get right up there in the action to get the intimate shots showcased in the film?

MB: I prefer to shoot the extreme close-ups myself so I'm always much closer to the action and intimacy of the sex scenes than the second camera, which maintains a more static establishing shot. Personally, when I'm discreetly shooting the extreme close-ups it becomes clearer to me what is really working and what isn't — what can be included to enhance the scene and if it's working as it is. Also, it gives me a head start with the pre-editing process.

TR: Does the action of the performers, the sounds, smells, and physical proximity of them and their sex, affect you and change the way you interact with the creative process?

MB: The more intimate and sexually charged the performers become in the process the closer and more intimate the framing and lighting becomes. I become more focused on the beads of sweat, the twitch of the hand, the quivering lips, to emphasize all the nuances that pull the viewer closer into the intimacy of the lovemaking and ecstasy.

TR: Do you have a sense of who watches your films?

MB: I wish I could say that more women watch my films, but this is not the case. I've noticed an increase in the amount of women buying my works on DVD and VOD over the past couple of years, but this has been a slow process since women don't invest as much in pornography as men do. My films have been showing more frequently in alternative film festivals which has enlightened other audiences to my works rather than via the straight porn/fetish/SM sex market.

TR: Do you get much feedback from your viewers and fans?

MB: I get enough feedback to keep my head out of the clouds but I try not to obsess and focus to much on comments and feedback and to focus on my universe, vision, ideas and desires and to keep the work flowing continuously.

TR: When I first visited Paris I was absolutely in awe of its grandeur, its beauty, its sensuality — not of the people, necessarily, but of the place itself. It's one of the cities where I can feel the spirit of the place flowing around me as I walk the streets. Does living in Paris affect and inspire you on a daily basis?

MB: Here people are not so obsessed with money like in NY and the states and invest more time in art and culture. The culture and arts is really preserved here, and they really believe in that. So this motivates me to create more frequently and I have much more time to do so as well.

TR: Do you have any plans or hopes to make a quintessentially Parisian sex movie in the future?

MB: Not really, because I don't feel there is really a quintessential Parisian sex scene happening here for some time now. I think that France is extremely patriarchal and that there is still a prudishness about sex. Eroticism is much more acceptable as an art form than sex here in France. I find it uninspiring to do a quintessentially Parisian sex film when sex is still not acceptable as an art form, and it's a narrow-minded country when it comes to that.

TR: What are you working on now?

MB: I'm working on my second feature film — a lesbian fetish erotic gothic thriller which will be shot in Berlin, Germany this August, 2008. It's due for release November 2008 and will hit the festival circuit soon after.

I'm also directing an erotic short film for French TV channel 2, "Belle de Nature," a movie about eroticism, masochism, and nature. I am teaming up with John Zorn again, who will be doing the music for this film.

TR: What can we expect to see next from you?

MB: "Post Apocalyptic Cowgirls," "Vampire Sisters," and "Devirginization of Little Red Riding Hood" are some of the medium-length girl/girl SM porn films I'm releasing throughout 2008.

TR: We'll look forward to those — thanks, Maria!

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