



## THE SEX DETECTIVE

Horny & happy

*Sex is the most important attraction in the world, and yet we often feel discomfort and shame about what we think, or do, or think we should do. Eva Berghmans thinks it's time to open that conversation. This time she wonders what a good porn movie actually is.*

*Saturday, April 30, 2022 at 0.00 o'clock*

It's three minutes into the movie. Do I really feel what I feel now? Is that excitement? When seeing an erect penis? Admittedly, it's a nice penis, eager, ready to be embraced by lips and tongue. His anticipation grows: the woman kneeling in front of him pulls his underpants over his cock with a teasing tug, and doesn't allow him more than one swipe with her tongue over the fabric.

In Adorn, a man and a woman are playing a game. The rule is: you can only touch your partner under or over clothes that you have put on him or her. At the beginning of the film, Sadie Lune and Parker Marx face each other naked. Behind each of them is a pile of clothes. She takes the first step and puts him on a classic white undershirt; he starts with her bra. With each piece of clothing they increase the tension – and they open up more and more possibilities for touch. Parker pulls on Sadie's bra, then takes out her breasts for a moment before she reaches for his underpants. They tease, they kiss, she slaps his ass, he pushes her to the floor. They are visibly horny, but they don't lose sight of their mission: Before getting fucked, they have to put on as many clothes as possible. They drive each other completely crazy before he slides into her for the first time.

There is no doubt that there will be fucking. Adorn is a porn movie. The sex in Adorn is as explicit as in the images you find on Youporn or Pornhub, and her orgasm when he pleases her with several fingers in her pussy is enviable. She's out of her mind, flushed and sweaty, and afterwards beams with gratitude. Her pleasure transitions into stroking his cock, with her standing behind him. Which in turn drives him so mad that he takes off his half-torn undershirt and wraps it around her back to pull and hold her close.

It's a beautiful game that takes place between the two. Balanced, while surrendering to each other, and revealing visible pleasure. For Jennifer Lyon Bell, the maker of the film, one of the crucial ingredients of a successful porn film is the chemistry between the performers. She wants them to meet before they go on set. She wants something to happen between her performers, something beyond mechanical fucking. As she explains it, they shouldn't be fucking because they have nothing else to do. And she shows what happens: Not only how they fuck, but also how this makes them feel. Their pleasure in one other reveals itself not only in orgasms, erections, and fluids, but also in the pleasure on their faces.

### *Make the world better, make good porn*

I watch with growing excitement – and amazement. It's not that I've never tried to watch porn. I thought it was necessary – for my own development, because you could get good ideas from it and discover your own fantasies – and for the development of my kids. The young people I once interviewed told me that via porn you learn how sex works. (Or, rather, they thought you'd learn from porn how sex works, because the translation was a bit disappointing for some of those young people in practice.) It seemed to me that as a mother I should at least know what my kids could find on the net.

Only, despite all my well-intentioned motivation: Porn and I usually just don't get along. I never really understood why this was true, and I even found it a bit embarrassing – what the heck, a sex detective who doesn't watch porn, how narrow-minded can you be? For a long time I thought it had something to do with aesthetics, or with the rather basic male-female relationships that you often encounter in porn. But even watching lesbian porn, I turned out to be annoyed, or – worse – bored.

Blue Artichoke Films, Jennifer Lyon Bell's production house, makes what she calls "emotionally recognizable" porn. Emotion: That must be what I'm missing in most of the little porn I've seen so far. In Adorn, sex is something that happens between two people, something that is born of a desire they induce in each other. Her performers watch each other, react to each other. They don't simply perform sexual acts, they explore the "psychology of their characters' sexual boundaries," with great care for each other. And OMG, that's horny. I could swear I could feel both Sadie's and Parker's excitement. That even his erection felt like mine.

At its best, porn, like sex, creates a bond between people, says Bell, who studied psychology at Harvard before delving into film theory in Amsterdam with the aim of making porn. Engaging in other people's desires, across gender and sexual preferences, is an act of empathy. And while

she admits that she started making porn partly out of selfishness – she was always disappointed that there was so little explicit sex in good movies – she hopes her films will make the world a little better. Were you still looking for a good reason to watch porn?