

LET'S MAKE A PORNO

A practical guide to filming sex

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1.INTRODUCTION AND ... ACTION!

2.THAT DARK OBJECT OF DESIRE

Isn't it more of a 'guy thing'?

What about us ladies?

Goodbye camcorder, hello digital!

The Webcam: from Internet cafes to Chat Roulette, Skype, Facetime, and Tango

The democratization of sex

3.THE SHORT PATH BETWEEN YOUR HARD DISK AND THE INTERNET: Private vs. Public Use

How to keep your erotic film safe

A spontaneous, high-quality home recording

Seeking X-rated directors with a strong dose of imagination

4. IDEAS AND THE SCRIPT

Inspiration is out there!

Think outside the box

Advertising and music: sex sells

The biggest porn clichés (to be avoided!)

New formats and inspirations: podcasts, sex blogs, and web series

5. PRE-PRODUCTION

Budget and financing

Help, I'm broke!

Filming with a mobile phone - why not?

Excel is your friend

Casting the performers

Locations

Styling

Props and accessories

Technical crew

The storyboard

Health inspection and other legal aspects

6. ON SET

Adult cinema has its own grammar too

The Cinematic Axis

The Match Cut or Graphic Match

The Clapperboard

The enunciation mark in sex

Ordering scenes to maximize shooting time

Lighting

Directing sex

Stills

The sound of sex

Variety is the spice of life!

7. POST-PRODUCTION

Getting down to work

Too porn to be soft, too soft to be porn

Music for porn movies

Credits

You need a trailer

Final support

8.DISTRIBUTION

Amateur websites ... so everyone can see you!

Vimeo and Dailymotion

Indie and quality streaming

Adult distribution

D.I.Y.

9. PROMOTING YOUR FILM

Tell your story: websites, blogs, and social networks

A fabulous launch party

Festivals

Sundance and Cannes? Why not?!

10.ABOUT THE AUTHOR

1. INTRODUCTION AND... ACTION!

It's been almost a decade since I finally did what I had been obsessing about for quite a while: I made the explicit film that I had in mind, trying to shake the foundations underpinning conventional porn. The film was called "The Good Girl" and it told the story of a sexual encounter between a normal woman - she could be any one of your friends or even you - and a heavenly pizza boy who outdid all her expectations. I ignored all the porn clichés and designed a winning plan to show the world that another type of adult film was possible; cinema with a feminine touch, with a thoughtful aesthetic, and characters with real motivations and feelings. "The Good Girl" was a complete success and now, nine years and six films later, that project has become a cinematic and business reality.

I'm a political studies graduate; I was more used to the academic world and had never studied film. That's to say, I'd always liked to write and loved to spend the long winter nights in Stockholm watching movies in my bedroom. I began to create a little cinematic archive in my overactive adolescent mind where I imprinted memorable sequences from Pasolini, Bergman, and Spielberg. Stories are just as important for your nutrition as protein, I thought. An incipient sexual awakening led me to study that pornographic imagination in the 90s. I was interested in what I saw, but annoyed by the lack of imagination and repetitive clichés that the X industry rushed to show again and again. Following my arrival to Barcelona to learn Castilian Spanish, I worked in audiovisual production - not too difficult to do if you have a good dose of common sense, determination, organizational abilities, and a lot of empathy - and, inspired by the contagious enthusiasm of my colleagues, I began to take directing classes at night. In the end, I saw films being made every day, and just needed to make connections between the set we worked on with all the films I'd watched over the years. Suddenly, the planets aligned and I was able to film "The Good Girl"; I didn't doubt what I was doing for a moment. It was time to get moving with a new adult cinema; less sexist, better quality, more imaginative, and modern.

This is more or less the story I tell when I get asked in interviews how a Swedish university graduate became an adult film director. Adult Film Director. Sometimes I'm still surprised when I see those words written next to my name. But, that's my reality and while you won't believe me now, all you need is a good idea, commitment, excitement, and to surround yourself with a strong crew to be able to make your own film.

Over the course of these pages I'd like to share with you the keys to making your own X-rated film; to make adult cinema that excites you, that excites the public, that converts your deepest fantasies into realities, that ignites new passion between you and your partner, that will help you understand film techniques, that dazzles the public, that will stay on your hard disk forever or that will triumph at alternative festivals, that surprises your friends, that could

make you leave your day job, that brings out your most exhibitionistic and shameless side, that explores both your and others' sexuality, that shows it all.

But before we start, I want to warn you of something. It's easy to create an amateur audiovisual project to keep for yourself or to share with your partner, but when it's about directing film or making this art form your profession; it's not so simple. What do I mean by this? You learn by doing, and you need perseverance, ambition, and, more than anything, to believe in yourself. If you have all of these qualities, any dream is possible. When I watch, "The Good Girl" and I compare it with my latest "XCONFESSIONS" films; I can see a clear evolution. Obviously you won't try to follow your very first movie with a masterpiece and don't get discouraged if your first attempts end up in a bottom drawer somewhere. I urge you to try and try again without ever giving up. Film is a personal learning process that is later reflected in your productions. My films tell the story of how I've learned and how I've improved, and it's something I'm very proud of. Don't give up if it's complicated at the beginning; as they say, steep paths always lead to good places.

I'll leave you to decide what your intentions and motivations are, but if you're holding this book it is because, at the very least, you have a curiosity both in sexuality and film production. Everything begins with a thrilling fantasy born out of your imagination. It's in your hands to choose whether to keep it for yourself or to show it to the world. What will you choose?

Erika Lust

Barcelona, September 2013

2. THAT DARK OBJECT OF DESIRE

Admit it, you've thought about it before. About how an intimate act between two people has evolved over the last forty years to become one of the most powerful industries in the world, alongside the pharmaceutical and arms industries. Where does our primitive fascination with visualizing sex come from? How has a sensory necessity placed governments - through censorship - and markets, in peril? Has porn grown thanks to the Internet, or has the Internet grown thanks to porn?

Well, one thing that is certain is that we've always liked to watch. The only thing that has changed with the passage of time is the way that we do it. From the Paleolithic period's sexual cave paintings, imperial Rome with its phallic carvings, to the Victorian era which was so stifled that everyone's imaginations went wild and created of the best literary smut to this day. So you see, the portrayal of sex has never been exclusive to cinema. It's a time-tested fact: we love to watch!

Isn't it more of a 'guy thing'?

Román Gubern, in his interesting essay, "The Pornographic Image and Other Optical Perversions" discusses how pornography developed as a business to satisfy male sexuality in the French brothels of the 19th Century. Men got excited when watching while women, on the other hand, were more sensitive to ritual, words, and touch. *"The masculine role of the active agent, or the aggressor", in sexual relationships has evolved the male's visual senses and ability to detect a mate at distance as other male mammals do via their sense of smell. The human male exercises his sexual activity principally by using his sense of sight, which is sharply honed for this erotic function."*

Okay, pure, hard biology likes to say that men are visual creatures. And I'm sure most can attest to their atrophied sense of smell simply judging by their laundry hampers. I can get onboard with that. But where does that leave the women in all this? Could it possibly be that they too liked to watch sex? But, if that were the case, males would cease to be the sexual "aggressor" and the sexes would be on equal footing. Gasp!

What about us ladies?

Whether or not we have always liked to watch, women were rapidly fed Danielle-Steele-like erotic romance novels as a substitute for visual sex. Sexual stories in written form activate the imagination and appeal to the other, traditionally "feminine" sensibilities: the touch, voices, tastes, smells, words, narrative... all combined for an altogether different sensory experience.

However, like modern men, we have grown up in the audiovisual era too. We rocked out to Janet and Madonna on MTV, we've watched those interminable series where the concept of a "season" doesn't seem to exist, we've seen all the educational videos at school. In many cases, we had a TV in our room and maybe even a computer. Us modern women know firsthand how audiovisual entertainment in our society has become. And while XXX cinema still may not be of collective interest amongst the female public, it has been gaining followers in recent years. And I'm not just talking about the soft stuff – I mean hardcore, explicit, non-simulated sex. But I know there are a lot of women out there like me: who were never that interested in porn, because having television be a part of all of our young lives means that, while not all of us are technical experts, we can tell if something just plain sucks. And let's be honest, most of the porn out there does.

Goodbye camcorder, hello digital!

Do you remember your first contact with a home camera? It probably wasn't yours and, what's more, they were expensive. Home movies of weddings, baptisms, and communions became popular, and worse still, there were those awful family vacation videos to be forced upon unsuspecting friends - "come over to dinner so you can see our holiday movies!" Those little films made us squirm in our seats. As well intended as those cinematic gems were, they lacked any narrative sense, and therefore any possibility of viewer interest. There was no staging, long shots that would have exasperated Tarkovsky himself, out-of-control zooms, a lot of unstable landscape scenes, and a generous heaping of floor shots.

With the digital revolution, it has become the norm to have an excellent quality camera of some form or another on us at all times. The traditional camera just kept getting smaller and smaller, and the optical quality better and better, until reaching current megapixel quality. Universal access to computers has almost killed the traditional film camera and has made the once tactile pleasure of a photo album obsolete. The image has triumphantly returned to the screen. Nowadays, cameras have the ability to be used both for photos and videos ... not to mention as mobile phones! Not having your camera on you is no longer a problem if you bump into your favorite actor at the supermarket, come across a double rainbow, or are desperate to capture that one indelible moment. The mobile phone, as dangerous as it is ever-present, will make short work of the situation.

The Webcam: from Internet cafes to Chat Roulette, Skype, Facetime, and Tango

The union between the webcam and cybersex is a whole love story of its own. Is there anything more boring than the static image of a human torso looking at the computer screen and typing? Initially, we understood the Webcam to be an excellent meeting point for immigrants and their families; parents were able to

see their children, traveling spouses their partners. It was also conceived as a way to optimize business relationships, encouraging videoconferences, saving on trips and making meetings faster, more functional, and more environmentally friendly.

But in the intimacy in our bedrooms with a laptop on hand and little or no clothing, most of us associate the Webcam with cybersex. Showing parts of our bodies, instinctively feeling the effect that we're having on the other person who is watching us into the late hours of the night. We've all done it! Thanks to even further-developed technology, and the numerous apps for mobiles and tablets, we can now share those kinds of intimate encounters in just about any location.

The democratization of sex

So what happens when our overwhelming visual curiosity is combined with the creation of cheap and accessible technology? Cue, the rise of porn!

I'm sure you'll agree that it doesn't get any better than watching without being seen. The indescribable pleasure of seeing what's happening through a keyhole is perfectly comparable to watching through a camera. Those two (or three, or six) people were there for a moment in their lives – consumed by their passion, enjoying their bodies - while a camera recorded them in real, concrete testimony of what happened. As they say, if it's not on the record, it doesn't exist! The weight of truth we give to the moving image can't be compared to photographs or paintings or carvings: our happy human eye most easily associates the video with reality. And what's more it's cheap, universal, discreet, and accessible. It's the democratization of sex.

And if we reflect on our sexual experiences, what do we remember about them? What do we remember about our first time? Probably only three or four moments. And the second time? Probably nothing. In fact...do you even remember who you had sex with the second time? Faced with this lack of archives in our long-term memory, let's think about how it would be to have our first experiences recorded on video and to remember them once in a while. Wouldn't you like it? What would it be like to revisit those bedroom experiences from the comfortable vantage to which we are so accustomed: watching without being seen?

This fascinating curiosity is what moves us to record ourselves having sex, to make ourselves visible, for ourselves or for the pleasure of others. Recording sex with your partner can foster a new bond in your relationship, intensify intimacy, make an unforgettable gift, spark a new artistic adventure or even just provoke a conversation about what goes on in the bedroom. Possessing this moment in images means that the memory will endure over time and encourage you relive the good moments.

3. THE SHORT PATH BETWEEN YOUR HARD DISK AND THE INTERNET: private vs. public use

From the outset, we don't want to end up on the Internet. The availability of ADSL, fiber optics, smartphones, laptops, 3G and 4G, WIFI, social networks...these are the trademarks of our generation. We end up doing everything over the Internet: we buy plane tickets, we look for jobs, we make medical appointments, we flirt, we do our supermarket shopping... If everyone's lives revolve around the Internet, how do we keep our sex videos private? How could you not be paralyzed by terror at the thought of someone like your parents, who have only just mastered the art of email forwarding, stumbling across proof of your naked exploits? Or worse still, what if your kids saw you? What if the HR director who's interviewing you for a new job casually came across your video on Porn tube a few days before the interview? Goodbye, professional career!

The fear that our close family or work colleagues might see us cruelly distances us from our Internet premiere. In the first place, we obviously don't possess the exhibitionism inherent in adult actors. We don't have experience working with our bodies in front of cameras, and while we can appreciate a good job done by Robert DeNiro or Naomi Watts, we lack the confidence that our interpretation will even be half as good as that of a clumsy Sharon Stone imitator.

Another thing that sets us back is the volatility of relationships. They probably wouldn't, but... how can you be sure that your boyfriend, who you met in the street five months ago, wouldn't happily put your spicy video online to the delight of all your friends and the whole damn parish? And you would never, say, upon finding out that he were married, send it to his wife (who would be VERY surprised), would you? Of course not! Bad jokes and extreme cases aside, what is for certain is that we can never be 100% sure that the other person involved won't share images of us. We can never be too cautious.

Between shooting 5 films, I've talked a lot with the actors about how their families view their job. You may be surprised to hear that many of their parents have learned to accept and respect it. Today, there are many adult actors on television, presenting shows, on reality shows, writing books, participating in seminars or chats, releasing their own merchandise... Very slowly, society has begun to accept them.

Then of course there is my own story of 'coming out' to my parents. I wish I could say it was a nice chat while we were all sitting down to brunch, but no, my parents found out about my career thanks to Google. Oops. But on the bright side, they were incredibly supportive once they could see how passionate I was

about adult film, and how I was able to make a successful business out of that passion. Would they prefer to tell their friends that I work for the United Nations when asked what their daughter does for a living? Probably, but their acceptance of my chosen path has meant a lot to me.

Nobody knows better than yourself how your friends, family and colleagues would react if they found your X-rated video on the net. Would they disown you? Would they laugh and applaud? Would they deny that it could ever have been the shy, dorky you that they saw letting loose onscreen? And, most importantly, would they even say anything at all?

You might also be the lucky type of person that many of us wish we were but are not: the type B personality. You don't give a shit what other people were to think if they saw you having sex on the Internet. Your self-assurance and personal charm protect you. You would love to star in a scene with your partner and to surprise them by leaving a DVD and a bottle of wine on the table when you go out of town on a business trip.

But, whether you're a cautious type A or devil-may-care type B, keep reading because you can do this! In the following chapters, I'm going to explain everything you need to know about making your own erotic film, whether it's for your own personal use, or for the world to see. In either case, take note of the advice I'm about to give you to protect your (and your partner's) intimacy as much as possible. Later on, I'll tell you in detail how to get a professional production going: from the point when a story is born, to when you submit your finished piece to a film festival.

How to keep your erotic film safe

If you want to make a simple sex movie without all bells and whistles, whether it's documenting masturbation or a sexual encounter, remember that if you record it digitally you run the risk that - due to error, oversight, or ill-intentioned intrusion - it could end up being circulated on the Internet. Worst-case scenario: it could be sent to all of your contacts. Best-case scenario: it makes a brief debut on an amateur sex website. Though you'd no doubt feel like the video would be on the Internet until the end of time, it would most likely be devoured amidst the constant influx of material, rendering it nearly impossible to find after a few days.

So take note! To avoid either of these scenarios, your best allies are, without a doubt, common sense and intuition.

♥ Be the only one with a copy

I repeat: common sense. If the file is only saved on your computer or on your camera or if you've burnt it on to a DVD or hard disc that is in your hands - you don't need to worry about anything apart from keeping it in a secure place. If you share a house with someone, make sure this high-voltage material doesn't

up in the wrong hands. This also applies when you take your computer in for repairs!

♥ Password protect your files

At best, we sometimes protect our computer sessions with a password, but something we rarely do is password protect our individual computer files. As laptops can be passed easily from one person to another, their portability makes them very susceptible to accidents. It's not that common to leave your laptop on the train or metro, but if something like that were to happen and you had an erotic video in its own file with its own special password, all the better.

♥ Alcohol + camera + "do me now" = bad idea!

WARNING: this combination can leave you in a situation even worse than your hangover! If you take any one of these factors out, your modesty may remain intact. But it's hard to live down a drunken, X-rated video of yourself with a complete stranger. Try to use the same discretion as you would with drunken texts ... that is, the wilder the night becomes, the safer your technology (and pride) will be if it remains in your pocket. Someday soon they'll have an app for that, but for now we must rely on good-judgment.

♥ Be careful with webcams

They are the devil's own tools. You need to understand that there are programs that can register, all in real time, the images emitted by a Webcam on a computer's hard disk. If you feel like passing a hot summer night chatting with a stranger and they ask you if you can see each other on a Webcam, the chances are high that they'll propose you take your clothes off by minute five. Go ahead if you really want to, but be conscious that your chat partner could save those images or, even worse, sell them to some webpage. It's always better to risk offending someone and switch off the camera, than to take those kinds of risks with strangers.

♥ Should you show your face?

Ah, yes, the great debate. If you shoot a scene with your partner and film it with a camera or a mobile, should you automatically cover your face? That's up to the individual and their tastes. Obviously, your privacy is preserved if your face doesn't appear, but let me tell you that in "real" adult movies it would be unthinkable to cover actors' faces - they are where all the pleasure is reflected - and clearly, faces must be shown in oral sex scenes. When we're watching sex, facial expression is of utmost importance and if you wear a mask, viewers will be very disappointed. But if you're convinced and you don't want to show your face, there are a lot of creative solutions to get around it. For example, why not wear a superhero costume or a burglar's mask? You'll be sure to cause an online sensation. Or, if you're a little bit of a fetishist, I recommend some lovely [latex masks](#). Another option is to place the camera further away, so that it captures your general facial expressions without completely showing your

features. And bear in mind, if you have any distinct tattoos, piercings or birthmarks, these could give you away quicker than your face!

♥ **Revenge of the ex**

We can never really be 100% sure that today's boyfriend or girlfriend won't play a dirty trick on us with a film saved on their computer or mobile. It's almost unthinkable that your sweet 'better half' would ever share your private material! However, you and I both know from experience that someone can go from "The One" to a fire-breathing demon after a breakup, regardless of whether you were together 5 months or 5 years. So be prudent and cautious, and refer back to point 1: always be the one to save the files. Show them to people or watch them together but always on your computer or DVD player. If you have a relationship based on communication, mutual respect, and trust, you shouldn't have any problems, but precautions never hurt. When faced with a serious problem like an angry ex threatening to publicize a private sex tape, keep a cool head. If you are considering suing in a case such as this, the crime is extortion. However, if you have given voluntary consent to appear in the video, the law won't help you later if the images are shared for free.

♥ **Beware of blindfolds**

There's an urban legend going around online that has to do with treacherous hookups. Apparently a guy picked up a girl and blindfolded her as part of an erotic game. Sounds fun, right? Well, unfortunately he then took advantage of the circumstances and filmed her without her knowledge, and then the video began to circulate on the Internet. Maybe you've seen it? In any case, save the kinkier games for later on, after you've had time to build a relationship and trust the person.

♥ **The hidden camera**

Do you remember that scene in American Pie when the main character finally manages to get into the hot girl's pants? Apparently, the idea of telling his friends about it was well worth the possible humiliation, so he didn't think twice about recording the whole experience, in graphic detail, with his Webcam and the computer screen in "sleep" mode. Yes, it's just a movie, but we all know that truth can be stranger than fiction. If you don't like the idea of your sexual performance being broadcasted like that World Cup final, it's well worth taking a good look around unknown territory. When faced with a strategically placed Webcam, throw a shirt over it during a sexy striptease! And be careful with spy cameras disguised as teddy bears or plants... you'd be surprised at the lack of imagination that some people have when it comes to these clichés.

♥ **Legal matters**

Moving past the obvious point that anyone who appears in your video should be informed and agree to being recorded, there are two simple things you shouldn't forget when it comes to filming sex: participants must be of legal age and, it's better to avoid public places. Every country's legislation differs slightly when it

comes to "public indecency", so having sex in open spaces, especially where minors might see, is definitely punishable by law.

A spontaneous, high-quality home recording

It's decided. Tonight will be the night that you and your partner set up a little camera in front of your bed...and see what happens! If you've gotten to this point and now want to record something simple, exciting, and unpretentious, here are some ideas to make sure the final product leaves you both wanting to do it all over again:

♥ Take this opportunity to make you fantasies into a reality.

More than anything, this is about enjoying yourselves and having a good time watching your homemade video. If you and your partner have a fantasy that you still haven't tried out, now is the time to make it happen and keep a record of it; you'll be able to see your fantasy reflected in a couple who are...none other than yourselves! Excitement level: 100%

♥ Colors!

If you've ever visited an amateur porn website, then you have seen the greyish colors that dominate their scenes. Ochre and white walls, grey sheets and curtains, dark brown bedheads, and yellowish light that casts shadowy hues on the skin...as much as you can, try to use color. Take advantage of vibrant or lively colored walls in your house: red or blue are great options. You could also try using textured, patterned or any other visually interesting bed sheets to breathe a little life into your shot. You'll see how the final result changes dramatically.

♥ Try changing the stage

The bed and the couch may be the most comfortable spots, but don't underestimate other, less-explored places: the laundry room, the shower, or the kitchen can be great sets for your erotic home clip. For those of us who notice the finer details, please pay attention to other, more extraneous elements in the frame. An ugly doll, gamboling pet, or "decorative" piece invading the picture can be completely distracting or even vaguely troubling to the viewer.

♥ Avoid amateur postproduction

If you have even minimal experience with postproduction and you're brave enough to do a little editing on your computer, go ahead and move the camera around for different shots during filming. However, I would strongly advise against using the same old, tired, "creative" bumpers. Bumpers are the transitions between different shots and they come in the form of cuts, fading, a page-turning effect, or a spiral. The latter, as well as being awful and simply screaming amateur, slows down the action and would dampen anyone's libido. To move from one scene to another, a simple cut or fade are your best bets.

Seeking X-rated directors with a strong dose of imagination

At this point, maybe you've decided that picking up a camera, filming a shag with your partner, and putting the video up on an amateur porn site could be fun ... but it's not enough for you. You've got talent, imagination, you know exactly what turns you on, and you don't understand why no one else has done it up to now! You like the way that sex is shown in advertising, in video clips, in independent films. Would you like to be an adult film director and make money doing it? Maybe you haven't decided yet if you'd like to appear in the scene, or if you'd prefer to use professional actors. Don't worry, we'll leave that part for later, but what is clear is that you want to make adult film!

♥ Welcome and congratulations!

For good health and for the growth of a new adult cinema, we need people like you - professional (but not necessarily from the film world), cultured, curious, and innovative - to start making explicit film. Not because you don't have any other way to make money, but rather because you have something new and exciting to offer. You belong to a generation that hasn't found a representation of its modern, plural sexuality in mainstream pornography. You don't come from the traditional adult production circle, and that is what is going to give you a fresh quality, and an edge in what you create.

In new adult cinema, we need new inspirations: feminism, advertising, pop, literature, trash, Internet culture, webcams, sex blogs, gore and horror films, Russ Meyer, contemporary art, television culture, photography, alternative theater, punk-rock, and new urban youth aesthetics like goth, surfer, hipster, hip-hopper, etcetera! It is past time we offered the world new visions of sex, lust and eroticism.

And if you're a woman, we need you even more!

4. IDEAS AND THE SCRIPT

David Lynch found inspiration for his marvelous films in transcendental meditation. In his book about film and meditation, "Catching the Big Fish", he suggests that ideas are like fish. If you want to catch small, insignificant fish you can stay on the surface of things, but if you want to catch the biggest and most interesting fish, you have to get down to the depths. And that's how the director of "Mulholland Drive" disconnects from reality - by repeating a mantra over and over until he reaches the deepest realms of his consciousness and explores new ideas.

I don't believe that being creative is a natural talent, or a trait that one does or does not possess. It's a process that becomes automatic and can be honed over time. To find The Idea, you not only have to fish for it down in the deepest waters, but you also need to keep your eyes wide open. Be open to everything that surrounds you: literary classics, fashion magazines, mainstream movies, newspaper articles, art exhibitions, the things your friends tell you when you have coffee, the landscapes you see when you travel to distant lands...our eyes and our memory capture all of these little, indelible moments that will later help us form stories.

We all have the ability to be creative, and a lot of this ability depends on how inquisitive you allow yourself to be. If you don't think you have any imagination, take the time to suspend your doubts and pay attention to your surroundings. This is what I do when I'm experiencing 'writers block', which is bound to happen. Start carrying a notebook around to write down any surprising thoughts that come to you. Those big-fish ideas are both brilliant and slippery at the same time, so don't let them off the hook - write them down immediately!

Inspiration is out there!

That life-changing erotic film that you've decided to make could appear in your mind at any moment. As incredible as it may seem, when that brilliant idea strikes you like lightning you could be watching television or a YouTube video, you could be reading the economy section of the paper, looking at an ad through the metro window, walking your dog, checking out a fashion blog or eating breakfast.

What they say is true: everything you will do has already been done. Western stories lie under a collective cultural substrate and what we do, over and over again, is recreate themes, myths, types, and archetypes that already exist and have always existed... including sex! In our time, the ability to be original is really the ability to establish new and potent connections between our ideas. That is to say, that if one of the ideas that you "reel in" seems to have been used before, that it's not potent enough or that it lacks something, you don't have to throw it back in the water. In any case, take note of these ideas

because later you'll associate them with other ideas and their combination could be unbeatable.

(PERSONAL NOTE)
Everything is a Remix

Don't miss the documentary series, [Everything Is a Remix](#). It truly inspired me to overcome my fear of allowing myself to be inspired by other sources. I realized that I would not be copying them, but rather using them to fuel my own creative process.

Think outside the box

As a director who found success crafting different, contemporary stories for and about women's pleasure, naturally I have advice for those of you wishing to write an explicit film in the same vein. Let your own life and the lives of those around you inspire the narrative and characters. Too often in traditional porn there's a tendency to represent repetitive archetypes: prostitutes, mafiosos, millionaires, arms traffickers...I would recommend that you focus on stories that are really happening around you, that represent real people with real desires, emotions and motivations. Everyone has a story: your neighbor, your friends, that guy from the convenience store, a taxi driver, your friend's impossibly attractive mother. Theirs will be current, modern, urban stories and the script will truly reflect who the characters are and why they are having sex. For me it often works to stop and write half a page about each character: who they are, where they come from, that they're family is like, what they think, what they like and dislike, what they like to do in their free time...I put a lot of detail into their profiles even though I know many of these aspects won't be shown in the film. This is what gives them life and substance and believability. It also eases the storytelling process when I know the character that intimately; what they'll say and how they'll react later on as I am writing.

With regards to sex, I like to tell the story of why the characters desire each other, and also to reflect on what kind of sexual encounter I want to depict. For example, will it be their first time together? If so, they won't be having the same kind of sex they would be having if they were a couple who have been together for years.

Advertising and music: sex sells

When you're looking for story ideas, you'll definitely refer to your porn imagination: all the films you've seen over time, which have gradually been recorded in your mental files. Not to mention your favorite raunchy scenes from mainstream films.

Here's my example from the 1994 movie "Disclosure". The film wasn't very good - in fact it was terrible - but I have always remembered a very exciting scene involving the unresolved sexual tension between main characters Demi Moore and Michael Douglas.

Moore was Douglas's boss, and she was dying to have sex with him. One afternoon, she corners him in her office. Just when we think he's on the brink of succumbing to the aggressive executive, Douglas comes to his senses and runs out, not wanting to endanger his marriage. Yeah, right. However, since watching it, I've always wanted to film a passionate, bra-tearing-ly intense scene just like the one between Michael and Demi.

While we could dedicate a whole chapter to highly impressive Michael Douglas films, I want us to completely forget for a moment the collective cinematic imagination, both mainstream and adult, - don't worry we'll come back to it - and to take a look at advertising and music. Why?

First of all, because advertising and music are inextricably linked with marketing, causing much greater impact among potential consumers. It's been said again and again but, my friends, it's true: sex sells. I know a lot of you probably have that strange, lurking sensation - and I know because I've had it myself - that everyone else is having a lot more sex than you are. Life is an incredible orgy and everyone seems to have sex every day; the only problem is that you haven't been invited to the party. Your dry spells seem never-ending, and going four months without sex is something of serious concern. Well, don't worry, you can relax. You're not the only one who feels this way - we all feel it, largely due to the pressure that advertising exerts when it uses sex as a selling point.

Consumption patterns encourage us to look for new communication channels, and, while values like sustainability and social responsibility are powerful tools in contemporary marketing, sex captures the attention of the masses like nothing else. However, given the current economic climate, we are becoming more and more selective consumers, and that sex-crazed younger masses no longer have the money to make impulsive purchases, so brands have had to up their creative game. That's why it's worth keeping up to date with those companies who tend to communicate sex in a creative, sensual, and fun way.

Regarding video clips: in the last ten years, the most interesting producers and directors who later take the leap to the big screen have tended to come from the world of short video clips. Names like Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry, and David Fincher surely ring a bell. Now they are reputable filmmakers, but before their big breaks, they were just film-nerds making dozens of video clips. These have always been one of the strong suits of more daring recording labels and artists who have wanted to go one step past the inviolable censorship imposed by channels like MTV and which later infected YouTube as well.

The biggest porn clichés (to be avoided!)

In my first book, [Good Porn: a Woman's Guide](#), I spoke at length about how the traditional porn industry has always, and especially in the last 30 years, repeated sexist patterns and had almost nothing to do with reality, which has made it very difficult for us as women to get close to adult film not only as spectators but also as creators. Now, many adult cinema actresses have gone directly to direction and production, but the vast majority of them repeat the same stereotypical stories that they came into contact with as actresses.

When you make your film, take the chance to be original. Please – no more absurd, repetitive, industry clichés! One way to do this is by turning one of those terrible clichés on its head, like I did with my very first erotic film, *The Good Girl*.

Here are a few ideas for you:

♥ PORN CLICHÉ #1: Women wear high heels to bed.

REVOLUTION: Banish high heels from your scene and see what happens. We're not against high heels but they're such a stereotyped constant that we're tired of them. Use military boots, flip-flops, uggs, sport shoes, cute flats ... anything! Watch how drastically it can change your sex scene and the woman character – not only is she still a sex bomb, but she's different, interesting and relatable as well.

♥ PORN CLICHÉ #2: Everyone orgasms at the same time.

REVOLUTION: show a real orgasm in your movie. You know what I'm talking about – the hot, frantic, sloppy, explosive kind that generally rarely coincides with your partner's. For another thing, when you show both subjects climaxing at different times, you can keep your viewers on the hook for even longer.

♥ PORN CLICHÉ #3: All women scream like crazy.

REVOLUTION: What about HIS screams of ecstasy and pleasure? We'd love to hear them, but why is it we never do? Will the neighbors gossip? Do they lose a bet? Would it literally kill them if they seemed to enjoy themselves?? Make a man moan in your scene, and everybody will be in a frenzy, I promise you. Tell your actor to prepare his vocal chords!

♥ PORN CLICHÉ #4: When a woman discovers her partner in bed with her best friend, she only gets mad for a couple of seconds before deciding to jump into bed and join them.

REVOLUTION: This is another terrible idea I turned on its head. In my scene "Fuckyoucarlos.com", from my film *Five Hot Stories for Her*, a girl finds her boyfriend in bed with someone else. But instead of happily joining in, the main character gives her boyfriend a taste of his own medicine: she hooks up with two of his best friends at the same time and broadcasts it on a special website

just for him. Yes sir, she is not afraid of threesomes as long as they're on her own terms!

(PERSONAL NOTE)

X-CONFESSIONS - Much more than just a film

Eroticism and pornography have been hijacked. The Internet is flooded with porn sites showing the ugly, the tacky, the repetitive and gynecological. On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are those sites using the word "art" to describe an elegant aesthetic covering up Playboy ethics.

I don't buy either of these. The pornocheap because the only thing they know is the formula blowjob-fuck-anal-facial. The pornoglam because they essentially do the same but with beautiful performers, lots of lighting and soft filters. Both feature the male gaze that idolizes the woman as an object of pleasure: whether as sluts in pornocheap, or goddesses in pornoglam.

Even outside the commercial sites, you find the same limited views of sex: on Tumblr, Vimeo channels, sex blogs and porn tubes.

With XCONFESSIONS, I want to claim a new way of seeing and understanding eroticism, a new era where we all participate in breaking the clichés, where creativity and innovation go hand in hand with eroticism, where man and woman share roles, where there are no wank-friendly labels like Gay, Hetero, Lesbian, Interracial, Anal, Blowjobs, MILFS, Big Cocks, Big Boobs, Small Boobs...

Together with all of you, I want to create a place where we redefine eroticism and end the dictatorship of bad porn. Let's start a revolution!

With this little manifesto, I present to you the site www.Xconfessions.com, another example of how to think outside the box when it comes to audiovisuals and sex. Here, everyone can anonymously write their confessions and read others'. Each month, I choose my favorites and turn them into erotic short films and items. Exciting, right?! So register at www.Xconfessions.com, it's free. And take note of how you can design new projects with alternative approaches.

New formats and inspirations: podcasts, sex blogs, and web series

The net offers so many possibilities for you to feature your project; so don't forget to explore new formats and get inspired.

A podcast is an audio file distributed on the Internet. If it's a continuing series, you can subscribe to it and, just like a radio program, you can listen to it whenever you want. In the sex podcast area, one of the oldest and most popular is "Open Sex Source", created by blogger and sex educator Violet Blue. If you speak English, you can find out here about the numerous novelties in the sex education and porn world.

[Violet Blue](#)
[Tristan Taormino](#)
[Dan Savage](#)

Sex blogs are amongst the most popular in the blogosphere and their content ranges from the latest news in the adult industry to launches of sex toys, adult book and film reviews, erotic short stories, fetishism, and the private lives of adult performers.

I've had my own blog for a few years now, you can read it at:

www.erikalust.com. I like to take notes about everything that catches my attention, at home, work, and on the Internet, write about it in my blog. I've also found inspiration for many of my stories in old posts.

[Good Girls Like It Bad](#)
[The Snake and the Rabbit](#)
[Violet Blue](#)

Another option that you may want to consider for your debut is an Internet series. Why not? They are very "in" right now, and creating short installments of content and distributing them for free on the net could have great benefits for you. A producer could notice your work and help you develop it. There are hundreds of excellent web series out there but I'm going to recommend a particularly great one that explores art, literature, feminism, mind/body dualism, the female orgasm as art, and the contrast between culture and sexuality.

[Hysterical Literature by Clayton Cubitt](#)

(PERSONAL NOTE)

Four tips for a great script

1. Be confident. People with less talent and education than you have had great success with script writing.
 2. Dialogue is like gold, use it wisely.
 3. Conflict, conflict, conflict.
 4. Be able to describe your story in 25 words or less.
-

5. PRE-PRODUCTION

Now we're finally getting down to business. You already know how your first adult film is going to be, or at least how you'd like it to be. You've got the script ready and, most importantly, you're hugely excited to get this project going. Congratulations! This is when the real work begins and when you get to organize the whole production process; from the starting point when you edit the script to the moment when you share your finished work with the public.

Welcome to the pre-production phase. This stage is made up from the conception of the idea to the first day of filming. Pre-production work is fundamental for preparing any audiovisual project. In fact, this is the longest, most intense, and most complex phase of the entire process, given that errors or wise choices made now will have direct repercussions on the final result of your film.

With thorough pre-production work, the crew will have a better chance of avoiding errors, surprises, and oversights. The impact of unexpected events, delays, and difficulties (that I can assure you will ALWAYS arise during shoots), will be minimized. Normally, pre-production begins weeks, sometimes months, before the first scene is filmed.

During this phase, you have to be as organized as possible and define, in as much detail as possible, everything related to styling (clothes and make-up), timing for the shoot, rehearsals, legal aspects such as contracts and filming permits, casting, selection of the technical crew, renting or purchase of material (lights, cameras, microphones), locations, decoration, and obviously you have to prepare all of the sexual accessories that you deem necessary for the shoot: e.g. toys, condoms, lubricants. That is to say, you need to organize EVERYTHING necessary so that, on day 1 of the shoot, all goes as smooth as possible.

Before getting started, it's essential to think honestly and with your feet planted firmly on the ground about the resources you have to make your film. It's a proven fact that you can work with bare minimum resources if you firmly believe in the story you want to tell. There are many established directors who have had to wait years between films, who have had to self-fund their own projects, or who have spent their young lives looking for ways finance their first movie. Todd Solondz, who is hugely acclaimed in independent circles, is one of these cases! Don't give up. Perseverance is the key to success.

Budget and financing

It's very important that during pre-production you make a budget for your audiovisual project - if you don't, you won't know if you're going to spend 1,000 or 10,000 euros! Once you've got the script, the budget, and everything else we've listed for pre-production ready, you may even be able to find someone to finance the project. The film that you are going to make can be paid for out of your own pocket, half-and-half with a producer or investor (co-production), or even entirely by a producer, with whom you will have to agree on the remuneration that you'll receive for writing and directing the film. I recommend that you don't try to look for outside financing or to sell your idea to a producer if you don't have a clip to show them as this is the first thing they are going to ask to see.

Another option is to team up with a brand that might be interested in communicating their product or values in a short film. It's more and more common that businesses base their communication strategies on artistic projects to transmit their attributes to consumers, so maybe you'll be able to think of a company who might be interested in you. One good idea is to present your project along with the script to a chain store, an erotic boutique, an adult art gallery, a swingers club... There could be a lot of potential partners for your project, just remember to evaluate your script well and think carefully about who might be interested in it.

If you take a good look on the Internet you'll also find grants from various organizations that offer economic support to inexperienced short film makers, from the Ministry of Culture to state cultural departments, even some banking entities. If your project is somewhat more ambitious, dedicate some time to applying for these grants. Good luck!

Help, I'm broke!

If you are determined to make your film but you don't have any money and it doesn't look like it's going to be possible to get any in the short term, don't freak out. In this case, you'll just have to use a little more ingenuity, time, and ask a few favors. Regarding the last point, don't worry. You'd be surprised at the number of friends who'll be willing to help you - even more so when it comes to an adult film production - even though you can't afford to pay them. Propose

some kind of compensation (free beer is always good) or just agree that you'll "owe them one".

You can do it!

♥ No money but plenty of enthusiasm. You are going to have to shape your story to your financial reality. Revise your script and see what you can eliminate without damaging the essence of your idea.

♥ Think about filming your story in just one day and at one location. If you need a house, consider a friend's place that might suit your purposes and whether or not they'd let you use it.

♥ Team up with a film school. Surely you'll find some students who can lend you a hand in some way or another – convince them how great it will look on their CV. If there isn't any explicit sex in your story, student actors may even agree to star in your piece.

♥ If you need accessories - decorative pieces - or wardrobe items or accessories and you can't buy them, turn to a showroom. There are a lot of labels that lend clothing for photo shoots, fashion editorials, and film shoots. In exchange, you'll have to put their logo in the acknowledgements section of your credits and keep them in mind when you're doing promotion. And return everything in perfect condition, of course! Ah, and one more thing - you can count on the fact that no one will lend you lingerie, for this you'll need to talk to the actors and the stylist to see if they have what you need. Note: adult film actors tend to have a lot of underwear in great variety!

Crowdfunding

No, I'm not talking about asking your family or friends for money. There are interesting ways of looking for financing if you have a solid project with a dossier, script, storyboard or trailer that can capture the public's attention. I'm referring to mass or subscription web funding platforms. This is what I mean by "crowdfunding". Using collective cooperation, artists create campaigns where they present their projects, ask for funding, and explain how the money in question will be used. The idea might seem a little unrealistic - after all, who's going to give money for free without total assurance of the final product? Well, more people than you would think. The majority of campaigns surpass their funding goals. Crowdfunding is based on consumer choice, culture and innovation, and for this reason is becoming more and more successful. In addition, contributors are compensated based on the amount they donate. Try to think of appealing ways to compensate potential funders ... it must be fun, modern, related on the project and focused on promotion.

Filming with a mobile phone – why not?

The truth is that advances in optics over time have made it possible to record almost-professional videos with a simple digital camera or mobile phone. Adult cinema has undergone some radical changes in the last 30 years and it has exploded precisely due to the rise of the video in the 80s. Suddenly able to watch videos at home, who was going to go to an adult cinema or simply look at photos or magazines?

Since then, porn has completely installed itself in the realm of private consumption at home, and from there it has taken the leap to even more restricted spaces: from the living room television set to personal screens, laptops and iPods, to iPads and mobile phones with high-resolution displays. It doesn't get any more personal than this. In this private sphere, the technical quality of a DVD is more than adequate for viewing adult film - think about it, the majority of people don't really need 1080p resolution (the maximum available in HD), to view porn. Take maximum advantage of technological advances to cut your production costs. And remember that if you manage to distribute your production, the fact that it's been recorded with a mobile phone will garner even more interest for its novelty. Personally, I wouldn't think twice, especially if you don't need to record direct sound.

With a mobile device and a little bit of creativity, you can produce a high quality product good enough to present at specialized short film festivals like "Cinephone". See, the audiovisual world has no limits!

Excel is your friend

Your mission from this moment on is to locate and assemble your crew and see what they need. If you want to produce something even slightly professional, you are definitely going to need one or two camera operators if you don't have a good grasp of cameras, and a photography director in addition to your actors. You'll also need a stylist and a makeup artist, a sound technician if you have dialogue and direct sound, and I really implore you to have a production director. There are many new directors who produce their own films, but think about it this way: if you consistently delegate work to make sure that everyone is where they need to be when they need to be there, you are going to be spending most of your time organizing, and very little of it directing the actors!

In the pre-production phase, use Excel as if it were an extension of your brain. Being methodical is a plus and making lists, tables, and sketches is as useful as it is necessary when it comes to getting all the information together and under control.

Start by putting together a document with all the contact details needed for the shoot; the phone numbers of everyone in the team, location addresses, day-by-day shoot schedules, the details of the van or accessories hire company you're using. Believe me, the more information you compile in this document, the better, because you and other crewmembers will have to look things up in it

during the shoot. Who's got the number of that make-up artist who hasn't shown up yet? Who is in charge of lighting on day 1? If you don't gather this information, Murphy's Law insures that no one else will have it on hand either!

Email the document to everyone a few days before the shoot begins and take several printed copies with you on Day 1. Don't be afraid to modify the production book if there are changes, in fact, you should change it. Just make sure that everybody has the latest version.

Nonetheless, if you are one of those people who likes to be given everything in its final version, there are several templates for production plans and shoot summaries on the Internet that you can modify and personalize to suit your needs.

Details that your production book should contain:

- ♥ The names, email addresses, and mobile numbers of everyone in the film crew. Don't forget to include your own!
- ♥ In the addition to the above, you will also need to add actors': clothes size, height, weight, shoe size, and a recent photo. If your stylist can't meet the actors in person before the shoot, they're going to need these details to find clothes for them.
- ♥ The script.
- ♥ A day-by-day shoot guide and, if possible, scene order. It's important to provide an estimate of the daily schedule, i.e., the starting time and the planned finishing time.
- ♥ Locations, call times, who needs to be where at what time (although you'll also let everyone know individually), and maps showing how to get to the locations.
- ♥ Practical telephone numbers you should include: nearby restaurants or bars for meal breaks, a catering company, taxis, and van hire or transport company.

Casting the performers

If there is a profession that is most mythologized, it is that of the porn actor. The idea of them always struck a chord with me when I was younger, and after all these years and many friendships, I have a real bond with my actors. In general, they are exhibitionists who are passionate about sex, fun loving, casual and relaxed, open-minded, straight talking, transparent, and personable. They are methodical about everything related to their bodies and very professional when it comes to shooting sex scenes. They're surprised and excited when I ask them to put themselves in the skin of an executive, athlete, or cook. They arrive at the shoot and while they're having hair and make-up done, they watch

my crew working and putting the last touches on the set, setting up the lights, and they say to me, "You guys are fucking amazing, you're so professional". Most of them are funny; they make me laugh. The actresses talk about lingerie with the stylists and put themselves in their hands, relaxed. They give their all when we ask them to explore a new aspect of a character. They're fearless and outgoing and I admire them.

When I see an adult film and I watch the actors performing mechanical sex lacking any real pleasure, I remember that old theater maxim according to which actors should "over-act" a little, that they should be almost histrionic. If theater actors didn't exaggerate their gesticulations and expressions, if they didn't move, if they didn't wave their arms around once in a while, the audience members in the back rows almost wouldn't be able to appreciate the actors' work.

Something similar happens in adult cinema. In conventional porn, the actors separate their bodies when performing sex, reducing contact to a tiny area of skin. They move apart as much as possible so that the camera can pan over their bodies and reveal them as two entities fucking, with the only contact at their genitals. In this way, they accentuate their corporal expression as much as possible. They are far away from each other, gesticulating, exaggerating, expressing wildly.

I always wanted to break away from this.

I like to get close to their bodies and although this prevents me from filming all the mechanics of sex, I'm able to capture the way they touch each other, the pleasure they give each other, the way they breathe and kiss. Just like it is in real life.

Surely you've imagined the actors who will star in your film more than once. When I was preparing for "The Good Girl", I had a very clear idea about the type of actors I wanted for the lead roles: the good girl who treated herself to the hottest night of her life and the most handsome pizza guy in the world who you could only dream of opening the door to. The actors who made this fantasy into reality were Claudia Clare, a blonde Czechoslovakian who reminded me a bit of Renée Zellweger (perfect to recreate the Bridget Jones naïveté I was looking for), and Lucas Foz, a spectacular Brazilian who'd make any woman think to herself "I'd love to take a tumble with him. Yeah, just one crazy night!"

There are various ways of choosing your actors but there's nothing better than using your intuition and trusting your first impression and your inside-out knowledge of the script. In the end, you're the one who has thought up the story, you know the characters and their anxieties, you've visualized them moving and interacting with one another. Obviously, you're not going to find the perfect actor you've made up in your head, but you have to try! You should know which actor fits best with the role - don't stop until you find them! If you've looked at some agencies and you've got someone in mind, get to it. Being your first film, you'll have to give a lot of details about your project. You're not established and the actors won't know what your initial approach is going to be.

Use images from other films to help explain your story if it helps. Adult cinema actors are conscious that there are new people doing interesting projects and they tend to be open to hearing new proposals. Yes, even they get tired of the same old porn clichés, and the same old positions, so you've got a lot to gain.

Don't get discouraged when you see a porn actor arrive at your studio or wherever you've arranged to interview them. Porn actors are, it's worth stating the obvious here, usually pretty porn-y. The guys can walk up looking like they just got off the set of Jersey Shore and come pre-oiled. The actresses can seem like they are already on set for Deep Throat 9 in sky-high heels and camera-ready makeup. Don't panic if this isn't the look you're going for. They are professional performers and, once on set, they are very malleable - you can adapt their look to fit the character's aesthetic. Yes, the majority of adult performers can adopt the appearance of a folk singer, a sports trainer, or a 1940s starlet in a matter of minutes. Trust your stylist.

What's an adult film casting really like?

This is the part that everyone thinks is so entertaining, so sexy, so fun - casting porn actors for an adult film. However, it's just another job interview. When I get a casting going I usually already have the actors I'd like to have in the film in mind, so I make personal contact with those that I see as perfect for the role. Contrary to what you may think, everyone keeps their clothes on during my castings. When I arrange a meeting at our office, I've usually already had the opportunity to see them in a video if they're professionals, and I've seen photos, become familiar with their previous work and sometimes asked for references thanks to the application process.

What we really do in castings is chat calmly with the actors: clearly explaining the role to them, showing them the script, giving them references (e.g. a film or advertisement) that could help inspire them for the part. It's also very important to ask them for, and take note of, their measurements: height, weight, clothes size, shoe size, and - something vital for shaping the character - noting all tattoos or piercings. Tell them a bit about the story, what you've done up until now, and ask them about their careers.

Above all, if two actors are going to have sex in a scene, I try to make sure they get to meet each other before the day of the scene in question. I also like them to ask me any questions regarding doubts they may have about the sex scene. At the casting we talk about whether or not condoms will be used and the sexual acts that they'll perform. Of course, it's also advisable to inform the actors about the salary they'll be paid for their work and to make sure that they're available on the days their scenes will be shot.

One of the little risks we have to be aware of in the industry is performers' volatility. It's often happened that an actress - yes, usually it's the ladies - doesn't show up to a shoot, or she's pulled out a few days before because she has a new partner who isn't comfortable with her job. This is one of the reasons it's important to specify in detail the sex that you want to film so that they can bear it in mind, and also to be in contact with the actors during the pre-

production phase. Call them once in awhile, keep them updated about the details. You shouldn't run into any problems (for example, a jealous partner showing up on set to sabotage things), but it is something that can happen once in a while. It doesn't hurt to have a trick up your sleeve or a plan B if your performer had decided to go off radar or is hesitating a few days before the shoot. In any case, let's hope it doesn't happen! Up until now, I've had pretty good luck, and all the people I've worked with have been very professional.

Hair

One last recommendation about something that we sometimes overlook regarding actors' faces - take a good look at their hairstyle on the day of the casting and think about the character they're going to play. REMEMBER: It's better if they don't cut it before the film shoot. It's always better if they come with a little bit of extra hair that can be cut off or coiffed at the appropriate moment. If you need the character to have a three-day beard (or liked the way the actor looked with it during casting), make sure you tell him! This piece of advice is applicable to ALL body hair.

In contemporary adult film, actors and actresses tend to be completely waxed or shaved down there. This is not an aesthetic rule - far from it in fact - and nor is it unchangeable. If you're more into the 70s look, discuss it with the actor or actress before you've closed the deal. Nowadays it's quite possible they've had laser hair removal and that isn't an option. In any case, if you don't have this conversation, you can pretty much assume that they'll show up on set completely waxed - after all, that's the industry norm - so if you need something else, advise them well in advance.

Locations

During the pre-production phase, you will need to schedule where you will be filming - locations - and try to get as many licenses as possible. For your information: you cannot put a camera in the middle of the Main Street and call "action". The local police will have your equipment dismantled in less than 15 minutes. You need permission from your council, so if you need to film in the street and put up a tripod, start investigating how to get all your papers in order.

If paperwork isn't your strong point, pay special attention to it this time - you don't want to get to shooting day and not have the permission you need. If this were to happen you would have to improvise and that's when problems would arise. Public offices and their administrative processes tend to be unhurried, so being proactive in this area will serve you very well.

If you need a specific setting like a bar, a beautiful club, a nightclub, or a shop, a good option would be to write to a business that might lend you their space in exchange for appearing in the credits. If you outline a good advertising strategy and design an attractive communication plan, the business may be more likely to agree based on the benefit and everyone will be happy! If you go down this road, you'll need to select a date and time that will affect the locale's daily

activities as little as possible to avoid putting their clients out. So it's a good idea to start setting dates for the location before confirming with the actors and crew.

A piece of advice: a few days before the shoot try to go by the site you've chosen with your technical crew. It's extremely important that the photographic director takes notes on the location's light so that they can give you clear details of the material they'll need, whether there's natural light or if there's some other resource that could be useful. The cameraman should also accompany you on this little excursion to study the camera takes and the space they'll have to move around in. Ah, and it's very helpful to take photos. Our memory plays tricks on us and if you take photos you won't find any surprises the day that you go back with the whole crew.

Styling

If you need help with wardrobe and your characters' appearance, you'll have to find a stylist to help dress the performers during the shoot. Hairstyling and makeup are also essential to your film, especially if you're going to show the actors' bodies. Even though clothes are going to fly off just a few minutes after calling "action", I firmly believe in paying some extra attention to the styling.

I've always complained fervently about doubtful taste when it comes to dressing and making up porn performers, especially the women. The actresses have been stereotyped by those impossible Lycra mini-skirts, towering shoes with transparent platforms, and trashy lingerie that forces us to look exactly where we shouldn't be looking. It's terrible!

To avoid making mistakes, study your characters well and try not to make them into caricatures. Don't exaggerate their clothing or makeup. To be on the safe side, have a meeting with the stylist well in advance of the shoot. The good thing is that stylists either tend to have a lot of clothes at home, or they're able to get them with astonishing ease. If the actors can be there too, great, if not, make sure you have full-body photos (head and face) of the performers for the stylist. If you have clothes at home that could serve your purposes and you think they're the right size, take them along too.

I always have extra clothes on hand at my shoots: we could almost open a market at the end of the film! Take the clothes to the shoot and hang them up nicely in a dedicated styling room. Make sure everything is on view, in case there are tests to do, and try to have all the clothes hanging. If the male characters will be wearing suits, don't forget to bring a small iron or steamer. You'll never notice the wrinkles during shooting, but then they show up right when you're editing that one indispensable scene.

Props and accessories

Props, or stage props, are those objects that are part of the action, either because they appear in the script in one way or another, or because the actors

interact with them. Props are things like the guitar that your actor carries slung over his shoulder, the newspaper he reads while he has a coffee, or a gift that he gives to someone. It's relatively easy to forget to take props along on the day of the shoot, so go over your prop list and make sure that all the props are clearly noted in the production book. If you don't, you already know what will happen: someone will have to run off to look for them when the cameras are all ready to go.

Accessories, in contrast, are those objects that are part of the decoration or design that are not involved in the action. They could be books that we place on a bookshelf so that it doesn't look bare, a television in the background of a bedroom, or a poster above the bed. If you have a decorator who is taking care of the scenery, leave this in their hands. If they read the script and you give them a few tips about the characters, they'll be sure to put together a perfect little dream room.

Technical crew

It's a fact that as the film's director you're not going to be able to do everything, and that making a film requires a series of procedures and technical tasks that you won't be able to do alone. The sooner you realize that you're going to need professionals to help you, and that you have to have complete confidence in them, the sooner you'll be able to concentrate on your work - which is really to think about staging and to give relevant instructions to the actors.

Now, we aren't talking about a huge production where the whole crew is divided into departments, each one with a series of assigned tasks. For your first film, you are going to work with a basic crew. Small, but sufficient to produce a film that professionals would be proud of.

Ideally you should have at least two camera operators, so that you can simultaneously capture the action and have more options when it comes to editing. I won't go into too much detail about the technical questions here - you can find hundreds of camera manuals online and in the library - but I would like to tell you that my film "LIFE LOVE LUST" was filmed exclusively with Canon digital cameras. It's fascinating to think about how a camera designed for taking photos can be used to shoot an almost-professional quality film. The speed with which optics is advancing creates a huge range of possibilities for those who want to make films.

I recommend that you make contact with professional cameramen who have their own crews. I like a very close, but casual image - the kind that's captured by a hand-held camera. This depends on your preferences. Maybe you prefer to set the camera up on a tripod or perhaps you like more spontaneous direction with more movement. Talk about it with your cameraman and let yourself be guided by their advice. Listen to and take notes of their suggestions, they usually know what they're talking about! During the shoot, if the cameraman suggests a particular shot, relax and let them go for it.

I generally work with professionals who come from other areas of the audiovisual world: advertising, television, video clips...They're all curious about recording sex and about the "intrusion" factor and this, I believe, is where the most interesting scenes come from. The cameramen I tend to work with get close to sex in a different way; it's more personal, riskier and edgier.

The director of photography (D.O.P.) is the person in charge of lighting your scenes. It's essential that they know the script inside-out and that you always place the action at a concrete time of day so that they can recreate nighttime or daytime light, even when you're inside. Even the darkest movie scene has to be thought of from a lighting perspective. Keep in mind that scenes always look a lot darker on screen than they do when you actually film them, and this is basically what your D.O.P.'s work consists of. They also tend to make decisions about framing, from the perspective of the viewer, or the lens that should be used. It's advisable for the D.O.P. to revise the lighting and color of the image once the staging is set up and to make any adjustments necessary. Always listen carefully to your D.O.P., and work together as much as you can.

The sound technician is, paradoxically, a silent crewmember. They go from here to there with helmets and a microphone-topped pole that they have to constantly keep lifted up to make sure it doesn't invade the frame. The sound engineer captures and processes - and frequently also mixes and edits - your film's direct sound. At present, and especially for your film, I would advise you to record your sound digitally. Later, the technician will get the material up on their computer and pass it to you in individual sound files for you to incorporate during the final editing stage. Once you've got a cameraman and a director of photography, it won't be difficult to find a sound engineer. In fact, ask them if they can directly recommend someone to you; it's always better if they've worked together before and you'll see how everything flows much more naturally.

The storyboard

A storyboard is your script represented in cartoons, like a comic. It is used to determine the shots during filming. For example, if an opening scene begins with a close-up of the actress' lips, a panoramic shot of the outside of a building, etc. The storyboard is about having your film sequences transferred onto paper. As a director, your main job is to visualize what you've written in the script and translate it into images. You start this process by visualizing the story in your head and then use the storyboard as a tool to show the cameraman exactly which shots they need to get.

If drawing isn't your strong suit –it certainly isn't mine - don't worry, a few decent stick figures and rough sketches are enough to express the story's development on paper. If you have a meeting with your camera crew a week before you start shooting and you give them a copy of your storyboard, you'll gain both time and productivity when you arrive on set. The cameraman will have a better idea of what you need and will work a lot faster. If you're a novice director and not very

familiar with cinematographic language, let your cameraman advise you, or ask them to help you with the planning.

Health inspection and other legal aspects

There are various health, safety, and legal aspects that you need to be aware of if you're going to film explicit sex. You'll need to prepare an image release document for all the actors who appear in the film. This document explicitly states that the actors authorize you to use their image within the conditions you've agreed upon. During filming, you'll need to get the actors to read and sign the release form, and keep a copy in your files. Don't forget that if you're planning to film a "making of" in which crewmembers will also appear, they'll have to sign a release document as well.

♥ Adult film and STDs

There is something that you need to be very aware of with actors and actresses who are going to shoot sex scenes. Before the shoot, request recent test results (less than 15 days old) for each actor and actress to certify that they don't have any Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). There are a lot of STDs with visible symptoms but your actors and actresses should at very least be tested for the following three: HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, and Syphilis. Remember that your actors will need to be tested again the same week of the filming and give you their results as soon as they arrive on set.

What's certain is that porn actors and actresses are usually extremely careful with this, given that their bodies are their work tools. It's essential that they always take precautions in their private lives and this is something they take very seriously. A performer is perfectly at liberty to refuse to shoot a scene if their partner hasn't shown their blood test results that same morning.

There are some serious reasons for this protocol. Panic took hold in 2004, when filming was brought to a standstill in the whole Los Angeles adult film industry after porn actor Darren James was diagnosed with HIV and it was discovered that he had infected several of his workmates. He had already had sex with 14 actresses and infected them before he was diagnosed with the virus in a routine check. A moratorium of 30 days was established and the industry went through a period of uncertainty.

Traditional porn is based on fantasies in which, of course, STDs and periods don't exist, which is why a lot of producers don't include overt use of contraceptives in their films. If you can use a condom in your scene, do it. If you're shooting an encounter between a couple that has just randomly met, and it going to hook up - condom use is more than justified. Treat it as artistic license, if you prefer. If your actor has shown you their medical tests and they are trouble free, and if they've told you previously that they don't want to use condoms, take their preferences into consideration. But if the story requires a condom, don't forget to film a scene showing it being put on. Ideally, of course, they will actually use one.

♥ **Make sure to check that your actors are of legal age.**

During pre-production, make sure that there will be someone on set in charge of receiving test result documents and if possible put that same person in charge of documenting that the actors are the legal age of consent to have sex.

Proving the latter is done with what we in the industry call "the Mickey Mouse photo". This consists of taking a high definition photo of each actor at middle distance with them holding their passport or identity document - with their birth date visible - next to their face, while they hold in their other hand a newspaper printed the day of the shoot - also with the date visible. In this way, their age at the time of shoot can be certified.

6. ON SET

The first day has arrived! Are you nervous? I've been there. It's beautiful to think that what you do today is going to be turned in to a film. I remember arriving to the set of "The Good Girl" as if it were yesterday. My cinematic training had all been based on my previous experience as a producer and some classes in directing, and suddenly everyone was looking at me waiting for me to give orders as if I knew what was going on.

As soon as I saw that everyone was working and that the set-up was beginning to take place, I relaxed and concentrated on the actors. I thought back to a few months before, when I had written "The Good Girl" on a hot summer night. In those few minutes before I called action, I relived the whole creative process and reconstructed the whole story in my head once again. It was amazing to think that in a few hours I would have the necessary tools, my images, to tell everyone in the world that story.

Not even the most experienced director - no, not even Scorsese or Spielberg - has all the answers or the right formulas when they arrive on set. What's about to happen is very big: stop and think about it for a moment. What's going to happen is that we are going to suspend reality, make it subjective. We are going to modify objects, behaviors, and peoples' reactions to create a story. I believe that this is the magic of cinema.

You have cinematographic language internalized, believe me, we've all seen thousands of films. But before making a film from nothing, it's necessary to deconstruct it. Before standing behind the cameras, you need a series of basic concepts that they'll teach you at any film school or that you can teach yourself.

Adult cinema has its own grammar too

Film is itself a form of language, and has its own internal rules insuring that the images are ordered to form a coherent story. From my point of view, innovation, freshness, and talent aren't measured by technical advances. Making us wear annoying 3D glasses that leave marks on our noses by halfway through a film is not cinematic innovation.

No, innovation is finding new ways of telling stories, and much of the time this involves destroying the most elemental film rules. That's what Jean Luc Godard, Lars Von Trier, and Quentin Tarantino did in their day. But breaking with norms only makes sense if it adds something to your story. Below are the two basic premises of film. Learn them, practice them, and later, destroy them if necessary.

The Cinematic Axis

To simplify it a lot, the axis is the imaginary line that crosses the eyes of the two actors interpreting a scene. That's to say, the line between their gazes. This axis sustains the image. In theory, if you want to show a conversation between two actors, you should use two cameras, one focused on each actor. But these two cameras should be on the same side of the conversation, otherwise, once it has been edited, the actors' gazes wouldn't correspond with one another. Each person will be looking at a different spot. If there's a moving object and we film it by following its movements from one side to another, it will look as if it is coming and going and won't make sense. It's not that easy to understand, am I right? If you're totally stumped, I recommend you do a Google search for "the cinematic axis" - with images to help, it'll be a lot easier to understand. A fun video that plays with this concept is "*Tía no te saltes del eje*" ("Don't break the axis, Girl"), which comically shows how, without even realizing it, you can break the imaginary axis which drives the action and, in doing so, can totally throw the viewer off.

The Match Cut or Graphic Match

The "match cut" or "graphic match" is fundamental and it refers to cinematic continuity. For the viewer to believe a story composed of isolated shots, later assembled in the editing stage, you need these shots to be related to one another. To do this, you need to take extra care to believably reduce what you've filmed in two days down to ten minutes.

The match cut regulates the direction of the gaze, the entrance and exit of characters on and off stage - be careful with left and right - as well as elements such as a character's hairstyle or wardrobe. In professional film, there is a dedicated job known as the script supervisor; this person is the crewmember in charge of taking notes or photos of the final scene at a shoot, to make sure that it's restarted from the same point. A typical example of a match cut fail is an almost full cigarette left in an ashtray that in the next scene appears as a butt. Be careful with these details, as they are often impossible to fix in the editing room.

The clapperboard

It seems incredibly clichéd, no? But, the clapperboard is vital when it comes to editing. Firstly, it helps us to separate different takes of the same scene so we can select the one we like best, and secondly, it makes it a lot easier to synchronize sound and image in the post-production phase. After we hear that that dry "CLACK!" sound we know we have to mount the soundtrack.

The enunciation mark in sex

For me, the enunciation mark is one of the most interesting questions in film. It almost has a philosophical dimension that I find interesting to consider. Enunciation marks are those elements outside of the characters' reach but that for you, as a viewer, make it clear that you are watching a film, and not real life. For example, an enunciation mark could be the music that accompanies the images you see, the voice of an external narrator, a microphone visible in the top of the frame by accident, or an actor looking at the camera, directly appealing to - or even challenging, the spectator. That gaze makes you a participant in the film or even makes you a bit uncomfortable, no? I like sex in my films to be free of these marks; I like it to be as intimate and private as possible. The only mark I permit is good music, which isn't heard by the actors at any moment. I like to situate the spectator as a voyeur. Far away, the characters don't know they're being observed. They don't see the camera. They don't see us all watching them while they're engaged in their intimate act.

Ordering scenes to maximize shooting time

Surely you already know that movie scenes aren't filmed in the order they're seen. That's why it's especially important to control continuity - wardrobe changes, hair, if a character enters from the right or the left, etc. - and use the clapperboard. I recommend that you shoot the sex scene as soon as possible. Don't make it the first scene in your shooting schedule, but if it's a demanding shoot, for example a whole day, it would be perfect to plan the sex scene for before lunch so that everyone can come back after eating and finish the rest of the story.

The individual responsible for continuity on a shoot is the script. On the surface it seems like a simple job but the script needs to be an organized and very attentive person given that they can't miss any details. The script supervisor, who is in charge of the marking off scenes that have been shot, organizing the scenes by number or letter and take number (for sound and image) so that everything is nice and organized in the editing phase instead of complete chaos. It's also interesting to have them take notes of which are the successful takes, which have errors, and those which only partially usable. If this is done, the post-production workload will be much lighter, and both the editor and director will be extremely grateful.

Do the actors a favor by not obliging them to begin with sex first thing in the morning or just after mealtimes. It's also unwise to program the sex scene towards the very end of the day: tired performers means that the sex can get a bit monotonous and look as if they just can't wait for it to be over. Also, if you're filming outside or on a site with windows where you want to take advantage of natural light, take note of what time the sun starts to go down, otherwise the light in your film will change noticeably.

Lighting

One piece of advice that I want to emphasize has to do with lighting. You need to be conscious of the fact that video, like photography, needs a lot of light to render the action clear and sharp. Beware the trap of using shadowy or dark lighting; otherwise you could end up with unusable material on the editing table.

Many people tend to think that faint, soft light lends elegance to the image, and in the end the only thing they achieve is that we can't see damn thing. Use clear, strong light - it's better to see too much than to commit the fatal mistake of darkness. And take note: natural daylight is best for video, so the more you can take advantage of Mother Nature's gift, the better. Also, bear in mind that almost all last-generation video cameras have a "FILM" recording mode in which the footage recorded is smoothed out so the image has a much softer texture. It's a mode I highly recommend.

Directing sex

If everything has gone well - you've had meetings in advance, you've explained how you want the sex to look on screen, and how you want the characters portrayed - the actors should already know what you're looking for and what they have to do to achieve this. When it comes to time to shoot the sex scene, it's extremely important that you empty out the space as much as possible. That means that all those people who aren't doing anything in particular at that moment, and those who you won't need, should wait outside. Ideally only the cameraman, the actors, the sound technician, and you, as the director, should stay. We know it's exciting to watch a sex scene, but the actors need to concentrate, and the more people there are watching them, the more difficult it's going to be for them to focus.

Try to explain the exact movements and/or postures that you want to capture to the actors before you start filming, and if you need to, make marks on the set for them. It's not a good idea to try and make corrections once things are already going, since a sex scene requires maximum concentration and any type of interruption is unhelpful. Don't talk and start randomly giving directions to the actors once you've called "ACTION!" At this point, maximum silence is needed.

When you film sex scenes, try to slow down the action as much as possible, let the actors relax and create the intimate environment they need, and let them finish. Learn to detect their orgasms, if they have them, and make sure they're recorded in real sound. If they don't come to pass, don't worry; your professional performers will fake them perfectly. Remember that filming porn is a representation of reality, a performance, so sometimes it's necessary to falsify a few details. Not all of the orgasms - especially the women's - are real. They aren't always genuine in real life, let alone in a film!

Stills

Stills are what we in film call the photos that capture the action that takes place during filming. They're taken by a photographer who needs to be present throughout filming in order to take photos of the actors and the scene. More than anything, they capture the most relevant moments, for example: a turning point in the story, attractive scene compositions, or in the case of our erotic films, they are photos of sex - both explicit and more suggestive photos.

For your first film, I fervently recommend that you pay attention to stills and that you look for a photographer friend who'd like to spend the day on your film set and to portray your movie in photos. And if you don't know anyone, think seriously about contracting a professional if you've got grand plans for your first work. Stills are essential when it comes to promoting a film. Think about the fact that you'll need photos of the actors if you're going to set up a webpage or to send promotional material to a festival or media sources; and it's even better if you have the story entirely narrated in photos. Of course, you can extract stills in the post-production phase but the magic of photography is lost a little bit. Also, it's good to have nice photos of those behind-the-scene moments from the shoot: of the crew working and you directing. And don't forget to take a family photo at the end of the day!

The sound of sex

The majority of modern adult film is completely lacking in direct sound, except maybe for gonzo porn. Entire movies are filmed without even a moment of direct sound and then all the sound is added in a dubbing studio. The way I see it, when you make the mistake of removing sound, you take away part of its power. If it's possible to record the sounds of your performers when you're filming the sex, it just seems stupid to have other actors simulate these same sounds later on.

Of course, using direct sound means you have to be more careful during shooting - there has to be complete silence on set when you're filming - but the final result is worth the effort. You can hear the actors whispering, panting, gasping and moaning; it's much more intimate and personal and your viewers will appreciate it.

Variety is the spice of life!

It's important to capture different shots during filming to tell your story: general, mid or American, medium-close, foreground, detailed, and "medical" or "gynecological" shots (in which you see in explicit anatomical detail that the actors are in fact having sex). This variety of shots is very important so that later, when you're editing the film, you have material to choose from to make your film more visually rich than a simple gonzo reel. It's best to film with every shot possible, including the most explicit ones. Remember that you can edit the

footage later, and at any given moment you could have enough material to make two versions of your film: one soft and one harder!

♥ **Attention beginners!**

When you're dealing with a shoot in which people are having sex, the risk of stage fright is increased, particularly for the men. You are going to need to be patient, understanding, and maybe even have a little bit of Viagra on hand in the production first-aid kit. I would also recommend that you pay attention to following mistakes which often arise on film shoots: the cameras should be loaded with their memory cards or film, their batteries should be fully charged in advance, and most importantly - yes, this has actually happened - you need to push the "REC" button when you shout action. Yours wouldn't be the first shoot where, after finishing a complex scene and having called "CUT", it's discovered that filming never actually started. And remember: the camera should actually be recording BEFORE you say action. You should have a margin of about 30 seconds to work with later in the editing stage.

Good luck!

7. POST-PRODUCTION

I'm going to take this opportunity to relive another exciting moment from my debut production, *The Good Girl*: my first afternoon at the editing table. "Oh my God," I thought, "where do I even start?" Suddenly after the excitement of the set, you're confronted with a mountain of files on your hard disk. A lot of them are almost identical. Others are a complete disaster ... will you even be able to use them?!

Your sound technician will have given you the audio files, and there they are, in yet another giant folder. But now is not the moment to stop - you're just one more step away from creating your masterpiece! You've already filmed your movie and now you've got all the raw material waiting. Don't fall into the tempting trap of doing a quick editing job with minimal skill just to get it out of the way. The more love and care you put into the post-production process, the more special, innovative, and modern your first film will be.

I know the shoot will have consumed a lot of your and the crew's energy, but don't leave too much time between your wrap party – complete with pizza and a few bottles of champagne - and your first afternoon sitting in front of the material. Don't leave it for weeks and weeks. Firstly, because it's easy for weeks to become months while we return to our daily lives or embark on new projects, and secondly, because you need to have both the script and details from the shoot fresh in your mind. Also, in extreme cases, you may need to shoot an extra scene that you've discovered is lacking. Let's hope not as this causes quite a few problems: you may have lost contact with a particular actor or it may be that the exact person you need isn't available. So control your post-filming euphoria and don't forget that the work isn't over. In a way, it is only beginning!

Editing audiovisual work is an artistic process that can be more important and decisive than writing the script or even the shoot itself. As the final point in the filmmaking process, this is the point when your work truly takes its ultimate form. This is when your style and story are shaped, defined, and solidified.

This is the moment when you can decide to change things like: the chronological order of events, if the film is going to be in black and white, whether you're going to get rid of one of your characters, or highlight another person's role and acting. You can even decide to shoot an extra scene to explain something that wasn't clear enough, or to bring two narrative sequences together.

(PERSONAL NOTE)

Editing is power, use it wisely

Here are two of my favorite examples illustrating how, thanks to editing, the plot and tone of a story can be completely altered. Check them out by searching YouTube:

♥ "The Shining Recut" shows how even one of the top thriller films can be turned into a heartwarming comedy.

♥ In "Scary Mary Poppins" see how a beloved children's classic can quickly become a horror movie.

Getting down to work

Once you have filmed your movie, you will have your material on film or in digital files, and the first thing you need to do is organize everything so that you can get the most out of your material during post-production.

Choose an editing program according to your experience and needs. If you're just starting out, I would recommend that you use iMovie, the video editing program that comes standard with Mac computers, which has all of the basic functions of a digital video editor. Once you finish the project, you can use iDVD, another standard Mac program, to make a professional DVD of your film. This is the most basic option but you can achieve exceptional results with it.

If, on the other hand, you want a more complete, professional edit, I recommend FINAL CUT PRO-X, a complete editing program designed by Apple. It's a piece of software that has become the preferred standard for many producers and currently, with AVID, is the most popular program at a professional level. It's a very intuitive system, and with it you can edit not only video but also sound, montages and more, all of which can later be integrated into the final video file.

This new version is a lot simpler but has not lost any of its predecessor's functions, so it's a much more attractive option. If you give this software a chance, your film will gain a lot and, if you can't quite get your head around it, you can always turn to a friend who is familiar with it to lend you a hand.

Turn to your camera operator as well, since they will likely be able to help out during post-production. And if you find that you're not able to do any editing yourself, they'll be able to recommend someone either to educate you or simply take over the editing process.

It's odd, but the greatest film editors have traditionally been women! In fact, it's an area of film in which they have always been undisputedly better. It seems

that we are much more meticulous when it comes to linking images together. Thelma Schoonmaker, responsible for editing one of Martin Scorsese's most unforgettable films, "Raging Bull", said the following in an interview: "Editing requires very hard work, patience, discipline, and good organizational skills, and these are second nature to many women. Of course, talent is the most important thing in editing - a sense of how to shape material, how to get the best out of the actors' performances, rhythm, pacing, structure, a good musical sense - and that is not something only women have."

When you go to edit your work, keep your script in mind and be very conscious of the story you want to tell. Use this as an opportunity to throw out all the material that doesn't really work with the story - don't try to use everything you've filmed, only those takes that are of really high narrative and visual quality. The more cuts and throwaways, the more polished your film will be. It's better that your story lasts five minutes and is entertaining and exciting, than be excessively long, boring, un-arousing and 'anticlimactic' so to speak. I always say: less is more!

Too porn to be soft, too soft to be porn

If you're going to have someone else do the editing, take some time to sit down with them and clearly explain what you want and don't want to show, during the sex scene in particular. Now's the time to be conscious of the commercial destiny of your work, what you leave on and throw off the editing table can determine much of this, for example - which rating your film is given, and the channels able to distribute it. Fair warning: if you think that your film could have commercial potential, there are distributors who may think it is too soft or too explicit for their company. However, the most important thing during editing is your good judgment. If you are satisfied at the final result and are faithful to the original idea, you will be happier than if you radically compromised your vision for the possible commercial benefits.

I have my story very much in mind before I even start filming it, so it's easy to be clear about what I do and do not want to see in the sex scene. I'm not a big fan of long, repetitive genital shots. I like to capture other details - the actors' faces, open shots where you can see their bodies joined together, etc. Remember to keep all the recorded material on hard disks in case you later decide to make a version softer or more explicit. I use this option with most of my films, which are then more interesting to several different markets.

Music for porn movies

Music is fundamental in my films.

One of a film's most powerful weapons is its ability to tell a story without any words. Silence and gaze are two basic tools of mine, and music serves to reinforce the characters' feelings. It's a fact that adult films are not usually prepared to contain to develop long and complex dialogs. The potential for

expression is often limited to the performer's bodies, so leaving out dialog is more than just an aesthetic decision. I don't want to sound too harsh, but adult performers rarely have backgrounds in acting!

The porno music cliché is an eternal one, and another that we must turn on its head. Is it really necessary to use insipid, instrumental music with guitar riffs and too much synthesizer? Is there really nothing better? We all know there is.

Many adult film directors and producers tend to forget the importance of the soundtrack and focus only on the images. It's important that when it comes to a pornographic movie, you know how to balance direct sex sounds, which tend to be very stimulating and provocative, with good music that accompanies and reinforces the story.

You can get music from many sources, but remember that you can't use commercial music from your favorite groups since their recording labels will probably sue you if you use their music without permission. You can only use commercial music if your film is not going to be commercially distributed. That is to say, if your movie is only going to be for you and your friends. Recording labels tend to be benevolent if their music is used in a student film, but it's important to always ask them first.

In my film "LIFE LOVE LUST", I knew exactly what I wanted. I wanted to have a good selection of Spanish indie groups, and the truth is, the result was fantastic. My production crew contacted Tulsa, First Aid Kit, Mujeres, Havalina, Iris Aneas, and Le Pianc's agents and recording labels to get their music in our movie. It was an incredible opportunity for me, not only to give a fresh, modern air to my film but also because it caught the attention of a lot of media sources and gave the film a good push when it came time to promote it.

If you have the budget to acquire the rights to some songs, you need to find out if the song rights are managed independently of the music rights, which are usually the property of the record label in question. Investigate thoroughly before you get to the editing table! The owners of the rights will send you a contract to formalize the use of the song and you'll have to provide some production details: your distribution size, the number of copies you'll edit, and the final format.

You should also be aware that there are tons of digital libraries with fantastic music with no rights that you can download and use for very little money. I found the music for HANDCUFFS this way and it was perfect!

www.musica-libreria.com

www.opuzz.com

Another possibility is to make an agreement with an acquaintance or friend who can compose original music for your movie. If you choose this option, remember that you will still need to sign a release contract for the reproduction rights of their music for your film.

Credits

If you've got a good designer on hand, give them the challenge of coming up with some different and attractive titles. Take a look at these ideas via Google:

- ♥ Seven by Kyle Cooper (opening credits)
- ♥ Snatch by Guy Ritchie (opening credits)
- ♥ Juan Gatti for Pedro Almodóvar (several film credits)

You need a trailer

Attention! Do not forget to put together a good trailer. It is an essential item if you want to promote and sell your project. Make it short (one and a half minutes at most), edgy, entertaining, and exciting. Take the best shots and moments from your film and bring them to life with some kick-ass music. This will get people talking and your friends will see what you've been up to for so long!

Final support

Post-production serves to create the "master" of your audiovisual work, and it is from this that you will create copies. It should be a high-quality audiovisual file. You've always got time to make a standardized, compressed version for other formats like the Internet. It's advisable to create a video file of uncompressed AVI or QUICKTIME in Digital Video (DV) quality. It will be a large file and, depending on the length of your film, it could be to 500 Gigabytes. Get a good external hard drive to save a backup copy of your film, and to be able to transport the film, if necessary.

If you want to make a DVD to show your film to distributors or at festivals, I recommend you make it without the "region protected" feature, which means that it can be played in Europe as well as the rest of the world. Keep in mind that the United States doesn't use DVDs on the PAL system, they use NTSC.

(PERSONAL NOTE)

Don't get stuck in post-production

As author Daniel Handler a.k.a Lemony Snicket, so wisely tells us "If we wait until we're ready, we'll be waiting for the rest of our lives".

DON'T get stuck in a post-production 'phase' of six months, a year, two years - it's depressing. Set a reasonable period of time, make a date for the premiere, and let all your friends know to come. Don't get stuck, don't push deadlines, and don't make excuses! Do the work, and don't expect it to be perfect - or even close to perfect - especially if it's your first film.

8. DISTRIBUTION

Is your film edited? Have your friends seen it and congratulated you? If so, now is the time to exploit its potential, win a few awards, become famous, and maybe even become the next big adult film director!

Before you think about making money with your work, remember that not only do you need written permission from everyone who appears in your film; you also need to proceed with caution. The law protects intimacy very strictly and if you don't want anyone suing you, then listen to me! This is when you need to revisit the image release document that you had the actors sign on the day of filming and that you have kept in a safe place.

Don't forget to consult the legislation in your country regarding pornography. Unfortunately, in this day and age there are still countries where pornography is illegal, so do not under any circumstances try to break into the market if you happen to live in these countries.

Amateur websites ... so everyone can see you!

If your project is a short film or a single scene that you want to share with the world, where thousands of Internet users can offer their opinions and inflate your ego, then I recommend you share it on sites like YUVUTU, REDTUBE, YOUNORN, XTUBE, or PORNOTUBE. These are the YouTubes of sex, where millions of people enjoy and offer opinions about amateur pieces, and where some talent hunters troll for actors, actresses, and directors. In fact, these are great places to look for actors in your pre-production stage, although it can be a little tedious. Most of these pages are updated on a daily basis with dozens of videos, so it's easy to lose yourself in the constant avalanche of clips. Use search terms well to find the right scenes on these sites.

It should go without saying that you're not going to be loading your video on to YouTube, where there is an absolute, no-tolerance policy regarding sex images. This also extends to harmless nudity as well. As soon as they get a whiff of something censurable, they delete your clip. Nonetheless, don't forget that you can edit a version of your trailer (with no sex, no nudity) and upload it. YouTube is always a good idea if you want your video to go viral, just make sure you follow their rules.

Vimeo and Dailymotion

Don't forget about Vimeo and Dailymotion to upload your video; they both have much more relaxed policies regarding sex. What's more, they are the most-used sites by audiovisual professionals to show their work, show reels, and trailers. Don't be afraid to show your presence in several places on the Internet. It's the key to getting the maximum number of viewers possible.

Take a look at my example at: <http://vimeo.com/erikalust>

Indie and quality streaming

There are a good number of viewers willing to pay for access to quality content and thoughtfully made independent films. Most directors never make it to the cinema, so you have to go on the Internet or check out experimental film events to see their movies. There are great initiatives like FILMIN.es where, for a minimal fee, you can access excellent films. This kind of site can be a good option if you wish to distribute your work.

Adult distribution

Festivals aside, chances are that you need to make money from your film, at least enough to cover the initial investment. What's the best way? Right now, porn movie distribution is going through a huge transitional phase. DVDs are in serious decline and other "virtual" distribution systems like PAY PER VIEW or VIDEO ON DEMAND, as well as mobile sites, are becoming the new platform for adult material. If you don't have much experience in this area, I recommend that you approach an established distribution company. If your work is good and it has something special and original, they'll see your potential and likely offer you a distribution contract.

D.I.Y.

You can even set up your own distribution scheme if you're not convinced by what the system and industry already have to offer. Making a DVD isn't too costly; with the plastic cover it should cost between 2 and 4 euros, so you can make a significant number of copies. If you dedicate yourself to selling your film for around 10 or 15 euros to the public, you could make around 9 euros per copy. According to these numbers I'm giving you, if you sell 1000 copies, you could have 9000 euros in your pocket.

And how can you get your product to the public? Set up a webpage and offer exclusive access to your masterpiece there. Without a doubt, it is the best way to get your movie out there simply, easily, and cheaply. You can even offer people the option of streaming your film or downloading it from the web. Once again, get expert assistance if necessary. Web servers are complex for those of us aren't I.T. whizzes.

Be aware that DVDs are becoming more and more obsolete faced with programs like UTorrent, which have an endless catalog and offer simple download of material. Combined with pirated online streaming of content, there are now fewer and fewer people actually willing to buy a DVD. This is why offering HD digital downloads of your film for a reasonable price is becoming the most viable option as an independent filmmaker. Viewers looking for quality,

unique content will love the convenience and speed at which they acquire your film.

(PERSONAL NOTE)

The three platforms of lust

♥ I founded the Erika Lust Store back in 2007 to sell my first feature-length film, *Five Hot Stories for Her*. It has grown to become an online erotic boutique selling toys, accessories, cosmetics, and gifts in addition to adult films. If you peruse my [Digital Downloads](#) section, you can see my new strategy for the continued sale of quality independent erotica despite plummeting DVD sales.

♥ Lust Cinema is a membership-based online movie theater gathering the best in new adult film, which was launched back in 2010. You can stream or download work from the best new directors who are creating fresh, aesthetic, innovative and modern productions.

♥ My latest project, *XCONFESSIONS*, is a vault of anonymous sex stories, an interactive place where my fans inspire my films, and a distribution platform all in one!

If you think your film might be right for Erika Lust Store or Lust Cinema, send me an email with your screener!

9. PROMOTING YOUR FILM

The time has come for the whole world to buy and see your first film. But, more than anything, people need to know it exists and how to get to it. Trust the universal potential of the Internet and throw yourself into promotion without looking back. Ever since I founded [Erika Lust Films](#) nearly a decade ago, I've always seen the Internet as a firm ally, never as an enemy. I know that I need to offer my audience something special for them to choose my product, especially when it is audiovisual content, for which no everyone is willing to pay. This could be: special packaging, extra content on a DVD, an interesting blog...there are a thousand possibilities!

Tell your story: websites, blogs, and social networks

You need to stop and think: who is your potential audience? Are they on social networks? If the answer is yes, as it probably will be, you should be taking your story to these sites as well. You can create a blog or a filming diary; interview the actors, or create extra content like making-ofs. My favorite communication tool is storytelling, or the art of associating stories with a brand or product. These days, storytelling is used in all aspects of marketing, from products for mass consumption to political campaigns. Imagine: a story behind a story, or how you became an adult film director. If you manage to effectively communicate your background, your personal story, and your current film, those that come later will practically sell themselves.

Social Media is neither more, nor less, powerful than what's being said. We spend hours on the Internet, many more than we spend on the street, so it's no surprise that we establish strong social networks online. Many businesses have even expanded their communication strategies to include sites like Facebook and MySpace. Go forward with social networks, but remember that pornographic content will be censored immediately. That said, Twitter is one of the most permissive sites, and an efficient way of directing attention to your webpage in real time.

I must confess that I'm a much bigger fan of blogs: the quick and easy way of writing opinion articles and of receiving almost instantaneous feedback from your public. My own blog is the means by which I present my new projects and I consider it my own little corner of the net - the place where I can express myself with total freedom and share my thoughts with my followers ... not to mention some fun, and definitely censurable, behind-the-scenes material!

A fabulous launch party

Setting up a fun event like a premiere party is another excellent way to communicate your work. What's more, it's the ideal excuse to get your crew together and celebrate the completion of your project! If you organize a funky

location, drinks, music, and ensure the crew and actors' attendance, success is guaranteed.

Festivals

If you've made an ambitious production, (e.g. with a narrative, dialog, a professional set, etc.), you need to think big. And in the adult entertainment industry, as in that of conventional cinema, festivals carry a lot of weight when it comes to exposure, reviews, and marketability. I can assure you that my career launch into the adult entertainment world was largely in thanks to the 2005 FICEB festival, where "The Good Girl" won the NINFA for Best Short Film.

In recent years, the number of festivals for digital and independent productions focused on sex has increased. If your production features "queer" sex, you'll benefit from the extensive and constantly growing community of LGBTQ film festivals in Europe. Do a Google search and you'll see that there are tons of opportunities out there. Try to present your work to as many people as possible!

- ♥ FICEB (Barcelona)
- ♥ Porn Film Festival (Berlin)
- ♥ XFANZ (Los Angeles)
- ♥ HUMP (Seattle)
- ♥ Cinekink (New York)
- ♥ The Feminist Porn Awards (Toronto)
- ♥ Good Vibes Quickies (Online)

Even before you film your movie, I recommend that you attend as many of these festivals as you can as an audience member. They're the perfect place to test the pulse of new eroticism and to get to know new trends before anyone else.

Sundance and Cannes? Why not?!

If your short film is relevant, there are many reputable online film festivals. I recommend you participate if you've made something with a certain artistic value or something extremely fun with the potential to go viral. Directors who've won awards in these festivals have gone on to have interesting careers.

And of course, if your film is a hit to more people than just you and your mum, and the audience insures that your film is more than decent, jump right into the deep end and apply to the Berlinale, Sundance, or Cannes. Why not?! There are plenty of sections offered where you can be sure to find your niche. Imagine spending a few days on the Cote D'Azur watching movies and making contacts with the elite of the cinematographic world. Beautiful. So what are you waiting for? Go out and make that film! Take the advice I've offered in this book, give yourself a chance and live your dream of making new erotica. Let's make a porno!

10. ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erika Lust, born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1977, is an independent filmmaker, author, and founder of Erika Lust Films. After graduating from Lund University with a degree in Political Science with a focus on Feminism, Lust moved to Barcelona, where her production company was established in 2005. She has directed four award-winning erotic films - Five Hot Stories for Her, Barcelona Sex Project, Life Love Lust, and Cabaret Desire, and several shorts. Her new project, XCONFESSIONS, combines Lust's groundbreaking cinematic style with the public's own sex stories to create a new genre of adult film. Her written works include Good Porn: a Woman's Guide, The Erotic Bible to Europe, Love Me Like You Hate Me and La Canción de Nora. Lust is committed to forging a new concept of sexual expression: pledging, in her own words, "*to create new waves in adult cinema, to show all of the passion, intimacy, love and lust in sex: where the feminine viewpoint is vital, the aesthetic is a pleasure to all of the senses and those seeking an alternative to porn can find a home.*"



If you've read this book and decided to embark on your first erotic film, I'd love to hear about your experience, or even receive a copy of your finished piece!

Write me at erikalust@lustfilms.com.

You can also look for inspiration from some of my free short erotic films at:
www.erikalust.com and www.xconfessions.com.