

Green Porno

A series of short films by Isabella Rossellini

**"I was always fascinated by the infinite,
strange and 'scandalous' ways
that insects copulate."**

Isabella Rossellini



Available May 5th, 2008 at sundancechannel.com/greenporno

Contact:

Sarah Eaton
Senior Vice President, Public Relations
Sundance Channel
212-708-8045

Katie Lanegan
Senior Director, Public Relations
Sundance Channel
212-708-8044

Green Porno

A series of short films by Isabella Rossellini

Green Porno is a series of very short films conceived, written, directed by and featuring Isabella Rossellini about the sex life of bugs, insects and various creatures. The films are a comical, but insightful study of the curious ways certain bugs "make love".

Each film is executed in a very simple childlike manner. They are a playful mixture of real world and cartoon. Each episode begins with Isabella speaking to the camera " If I were a...(firefly, spider, dragonfly etc.). She then transforms into the male of the species explaining in a simple yet direct dialogue the actual act of species-specific fornication. The costumes, colorful sets and backdrops as well as the female insects (all simple paper cut-outs and sculptures) contribute to the playfulness of the films. The contrast of this "naïf" expression and filthy sex practices adds to the comicality of **Green Porno**. This child-like manner allows us to describe things that could possibly come across as offensive to some.

While they will be screening on televisions and at festivals, **Green Porno** is an experiment, an experiment dealing with the third screen, namely for cellular screens, computers and ipods etc. The graphic look of the films was specifically conceived for these smaller screens. Each film can be shown individually or strung together to make a series more suitable for television broadcast.

The title, **Green** echoes the ecological movement of today and our interest in nature, and **Porno** alludes to the racy ways bugs, insects and other creatures have sex, if human, these acts would not be allowed to air on television. They would be considered most filthy and obscene.

Green Porno are produced by Rick Gilbert and Isabella Rossellini in association with Sundance Channel.

Green Porno

A series of short films by Isabella Rossellini

**CREDIT LIST: GREEN PORNO EPISODES #1-8
*US DOMESTIC***

Directed by
Jody Shapiro
Isabella Rossellini

Written by
Isabella Rossellini

Produced by
Rick Gilbert, Jody Shapiro & Isabella Rossellini

Director of Photography
Sam Levy
Brian Jackson

Production Design
Andy Byers
Rick Gilbert

Music
Andy Byers
Zeena Parkins

Costumes
Andy Byers

First Assistant Director
Patrick Riley

Editors

Stacey Foster
Cynthia Madansky
Angelika Brudniak

1st Assistant Camera

Nicola Benizzi

Gaffer

Andrew D'Aurora
Nicola Guarneri

Grip

Dave Erickson
Eric Phelan

Jib Operator

Brandon Sumner

Continuity

Jessica Funaro

Set Decorator

Karen Cinorre

Art Department

Daisy Edwards
Ian Hundley
Ryan Kelly
Christopher Huth

Post Production Supervisor

Nicholas Robespierre

Digital Effects

Daft Kraft

Colorist

Charles Gelber

Sound Mixer

Quentin Chiappetta

2nd Assistant Camera

Henry Chen

Daily Grip/Electric

Gennaro Morrone

Carole McClintock

Terry Alston Jr.

Production Assistants

Alyssa Taylor

Adam Weglarz

The Male Bees

Roberto Rossellini

Dallas Giorgi

Louis Giacobetti

The Baby Bee Larva

Ona Grandey

Special Thanks to:

Don Faller at Doublewide Media

Dr. Fritz Vollrath

Brooklyn Fire Proof

Katherine Grandey

Fabrizio Ferri

Interscience Films - Gero von Boehm

Produced in association with

Sundance Channel

2008

Q and A with Isabella Rossellini

*Q. How did the **Green Porno** series come about? What was the starting point in your discussions with Sundance Channel?*

A. I've always had some sort of contact with Sundance, starting with the Festival. In the past year-and-a-half, Sundance Channel and I have worked more intensively together. They co-produced my first short film, which was called MY DAD IS 100 YEARS OLD, and I did some voiceovers and documentaries and I was part of their "Iconoclasts" series. We stayed in touch and they told me that one of the things they were interested in was to produce short films. They believe -- as do a lot of other people -- that the advent of the mobile phone, the iPhone and other small devices could provide new venues and new popularity for short films.

Sundance decided to put an experimental budget aside and they said, "Well, if you are interested, why don't you think of a series of short films?" So the format came from this experimental initiative to create content for the mobile phone. And one of Sundance's missions is to address environmental issues. So they said, if you can make short films about the environment -- that would be great. Then they said, this could be a whole new world for short films. It would be great to do something flashy - that was the word they used - that calls attention to these new possibilities. To me, "flashy" translated into sex.

So here I had all the elements for the short film: it had to be green, it had to have sex and it had to be a minute.

Q. How did you arrive at insect mating?

A. I've always been interested in animals and animal behavior. Among the things you read about is their sexual lives, their reproduction, if they take care of their babies, what they eat, etc. And everybody's interested in sex, so I figured, let's go there! I wanted people to laugh, but then to leave and say, "Wow. I didn't know about that." That was my green intervention! It was to make people aware of animal life. And we tried to choose to very simple animals that everybody knows.

Q. How did you determine the visual style for the series?

A. We looked at a lot of films on different cellular phones, and what looked best were animations, because they're very contrast-y. If the screen is too crowded, you tend to lose things. Also, it can get quite confusing in a little screen if there is

a lot of quick editing in the style of MTV or television. Instead, classic animation, with regular peaceful editing, seems to be ready to screen the best.

Q. The films depict some very adult sexual practices, but they're presented with a childlike sense of matter-of-factness and wonder. And you play one of the mating partners in each film. Can you talk about your reasons for that approach?

A. First of all, I thought it added to the comical aspect, to be almost childlike. Also, sometimes when I read about something scientifically complex, my mind works exactly like these films. For example, you might read about a fly and say to yourself, "Okay, so a fly doesn't have teeth. But it has a mouth." You imagine yourself now without teeth. And then you read, "They suck the food up." And you think, "Well, but the food also has solid things." The fly spits on it because there's some enzyme in its spit. The same thing happens in our bodies, but inside. So you say, "Okay, what I have in my stomach gets regurgitated if I don't have teeth. Then I liquefy my food and then I suck it up." You imagine yourself, your body, doing that -- to kind of understand the process.

Q. Were there any particular short films that inspired you?

I think the Georges Méliès films, always. Because they were pure delight and they still thrill me. They are ingeniously made, but they are made in the kitchen. I wanted mine to feel like that, so people could look at them and say, "Oh, I could make this film, too."

*Q. You made the first three **Green Porno** episodes in 2007, and another five in 2008. How did the process evolve?*

A. We experimented with the first three films, which were the dragonfly, the firefly and spider. I started by saying "If I were a dragonfly ..." and then you see some of the transformation and then it becomes puppets. We used the same approach for the firefly. We did the spider with the paper cut-outs instead. Those first three were our pilots, to see which ones were funniest. And we thought that the paper cut-out was funniest. That's how we conceived the following five, with these big paper cut-outs.

Q. Who were your primary collaborators?

Jody Shapiro, my producer on MY DAD IS 100 YEARS OLD; Rick Gilbert, who is an art director and who also produced; and Andy Byers, who did the paper cut-outs. After we did the first three, I asked Jody not only to help with the production, but also to help me direct. The first three I directed myself, and it was very difficult

because the costumes are so cumbersome that I can't look at the monitor; I can't say to the cameraman, move slightly here, or slightly there. So, I conceived and wrote the films for **Green Porno**, but the execution I share the credit with Andy, Rick and Jody. Brian Jackson was the cinematographer for the first three films, and Sam Levy photographed the next five.

Q. The paper cut-outs look so simple but one imagines they're actually quite complicated.

A. Yes, they are. They're fragile. They're complicated to make because, again, they are really, truly made in a kitchen -- in Andy's kitchen. And he had just had a baby. We used the baby, too! She's the baby that you see in the bee episode.

Andy is so gifted with paper - he can make these fantastic paper animals that are so beautiful to look at. The details that he adds are fantastic. Some of the animals are four times bigger than I. The earthworm, where you only see my face, it was 30 or 35 feet long.

*Q. Prior to making **Green Porno**, had you had much experience watching films on an iPhone or on the computer?*

A. I'm not very technological, but I am exposed to it daily, because I have my children. When Sundance asked me to do it, I did do research with their help. I've improved this year tremendously compared to last year, but still I'm not very technical. I just like to make films. It is important that I know where the films are seen, what kind of screen, so that I can be clear in my cinematography.

But there is an art form in mobile. This is a new canvas, no doubt about it. And it does open up a possibility for people to make short films, and to have new artists make short films. There are many stories that can be told that are short; not every story is interesting at an hour or half an hour, which is the television format; or an hour-and-a-half, two hours as with the feature format.

Q. Do you see the fourth screen (mobile phone) as an exciting development for film?

A. Yes. I always had this image of the *New Yorker* magazine, where you have these very long, interesting articles and then there are these little joke cartoons. Or in the Herald Tribune, where there are the comic strips of Linus and Doonesbury and Dennis the Menace. Those are so much fun, and there's nothing like that in film. So maybe the mobile would become for film what the four-panel comic strip or the *New Yorker* are for print.

Green Porno

A series of short films by Isabella Rossellini

Isabella Rossellini Biography

Isabella has had a successful career as a model with over 500 covers including Vogue, Elle and Vanity Fair, working with such renowned photographers as Richard Avedon and Bruce Weber.

As an actress she has worked on numerous features in both Europe and the U.S.A., most notably, Blue Velvet, Big Night and Fearless. She has recently appeared in television programs including Napoleon, Merlin and 30 Rock.

Her first foray behind the camera was as the writer and creator of "**My Dad is 100 Years Old**", directed by Guy Maddin. This film was included in a retrospective of her father, Roberto Rossellini's amazing body of work which screened at MOMA and on an international Cinematheque tour in various venues around the world. **Green Porno** is her directorial debut.