

# What women really, really want

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**O**n a quiet, tree-lined street in this city, children are engaged in a spirited bout of hide-and-seek. Their mothers are hanging laundry on clotheslines behind their homes. A gaggle of teens is traipsing over to an adjacent park for a pickup game of football.

And inside one nondescript bungalow, a young man and woman are getting down for a session of wild groping. The sounds of their passion would probably be discerned outside, were it not for a passing train a block away.

Yup, never can tell what transpires behind closed doors in this town.

Welcome to *Sex and the City* – Montreal-style.

What makes this couple's acrobatics in the boudoir unique is that they are being filmed, not just for posterity but also for broadcast next spring on The Movie Network and Super Ecran.

The scenes being shot will eventually be part of *The Footpath of Pink Roses*, one of eight 30-minute episodes in a series aptly titled *Bliss* being produced by Montreal-based Galafilm and

Toronto's Back Alley Films.

And what makes this series of highly charged erotica so unique is that the tales are female fantasies, written and directed by women. We ain't talking Harlequin Romance fantasies, either.

Co-producer Janet Lundman, a bookish type who would more easily pass as a teacher than womankind's answer to Bob Guccione, explains how the tales will touch on heterosexual, homosexual, transgendered, single, coupled, married and triangular sex with a healthy dollop of role playing and rough trade chucked in for good measure. (What? No nookie with four-legged beasts?)

Which just might explain how the creators can get away with an episode called *In Praise of Drunkenness and Fornication*, the inaugural show in the series, which was shot here last week and which features Québécois vedettes Mitsou and Daniel Pilon. And which would certainly explain why our open-minded Montreal would be the backdrop for much of the moaning.

Lundman's curiosity was piqued



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when she began to notice an abundance of erotic women's literature. "It was more like an explosion everywhere you looked," she says, pun possibly intended. "We then decided it would be wonderful to have our sexuality reflected by other women. Much of what's intended to be erotica, even that which is supposed to be female fantasies, is from the male perspective."

But no longer. Take, for example, the plotline to *The Footpath of Pink Roses*. One member of this love unit is seeking tender foreplay. The other wishes to dispense with the latter and get down and dirty and overtly physical. And whip yourself silly if you figured

it would be the female member of this unit seeking the tender foreplay, for you would be wrong.

Penelope Buitenhuis, director of this episode as well as *In Praise of Drunkenness and Fornication*, chuckles while discussing the reversal of roles.

"Suddenly, we have these New Age men who no longer feel that animal-like aggression is appropriate and intimate, and we have these women who are getting turned by a little martial arts in the sack," she explains. "So, as men are coming to terms with their inner woman, women are coming to terms with their inner man."

"The bottom line is that men don't really understand women's fantasies."

On the other hand, Buitenhuis – who is not averse to the notion of martial arts in a more intimate dojo – concedes that men are in a quandary. "They're tentative about asking what women want in bed and they are uncomfortable about being told by women what to do in bed," she reasons. "But essentially it's all about passion.

"Even though a lot of films and TV series by men tend to objectify women, we're not treating men as mere objects here. We're just trying to show that women have more going on than just showing their bodies.

"We just want to make men understand women better."

Simple enough. It's only taken, what, umpteen thousand years so far, ever since Adam and Eve started cavorting under that old apple tree.

And if this series makes some Canadians blush, so much the better, Buitenhuis suggests. It's all been designed to sensitize and bring the genders together. But no time to ruminate about romance and rough trade. The director must return to the set to shoot one of the most cathartic scenes of the show.

The bashful boy accidentally bites the adventurous girl's lip. It bleeds. He is aghast. She is euphoric. He leaves.

Confused again, naturally.

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