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Adored: Diary of a Porn Star

Tuesday June 22 | 6:30 pm | Castro

\$10 members | \$15 general | ADOR22C

Marco Filiberti directs and stars in a smart and sexy debut feature that draws us effortlessly into the shutter-clicking, ego-stroking world of Riki Kandinsky, an Italian pornodivo (porn star) with a heart of gold and a 26-centimeter dick (make that 10 inches, for the metrically challenged).

Riki is the descendent of a French count, with the family jewels and attitude to prove it. He's philosophical about his job; it beats working in a bank, and gives him time to satiate his considerable intellect with literature.

A story within a story, *ADORED* begins with two young filmmakers who are making an homage to Riki. The intrepid filmmakers have found Riki's brother, Federico (Urbano Barberini), whose account of his younger sibling transports us to Rome 15 years earlier. The year is 1999, when a death in the family prompts an awkward reunion between the two very different brothers. The straight-laced Federico, an affable gentleman and a bit of a lost soul, insists on going to Rome to get to know Riki better. While Riki cruises at night, Federico snoops around Riki's apartment, looking for clues to his younger brother's identity. Initially he's disgusted when he discovers Riki's *métier*, but eventually he goes to a disco, meets Riki's latex-clad friends, and temporarily sheds his bourgeois cashmere for a leather jacket. Riki even takes his newly open-minded brother to a porn film set, where Riki capably plays a factory boss who services all the workers. Federico faints on the set, but recovers quickly. He extends his visit in Rome, and becomes more vulnerable and emotionally available because of the reunion with Riki. Their fraternal love is slowly rekindled despite an enormous gap in lifestyles and values, and ultimately is a positive influence on both men.

The plot thickens when Riki and Federico witness the death of a woman whose six-year-old son, Plapla, wanders into the street. Riki befriends Plapla and his grandparents, who had been estranged from their daughter. Plapla tells Riki that his mother had a special friend, and, voilà, it becomes crystal clear that Plapla's mother was a lesbian, and that Riki is not the first gay person the boy has met. The friendship deepens between Riki and Plapla until Grandma discovers, thanks to a talk show, what Riki does for a living. Riki attempts to become Plapla's foster parent (with the support of Federico and his wife), but, alas, Italian court is the one arena where Riki's magnetism might not win the day.

This heart- and crotch-warming paean to self-expression, bursting with sweaty close-ups of Riki's body and bedroom eyes, sports a strong ensemble cast and represents a new genre of film—a drama with a porn motif for the entire family. You'll laugh, you'll cry, and you'll swoon over Riki's prehensile mouth and come-hither look. But you'll also be impressed by a well-written narrative that refreshingly probes the very Italian, very human theme of longing for family, while subverting and appropriating the conventions of a morality play. — NANCY FISHMAN

ADORED: DIARY OF A PORN STAR (POCO PIÙ DI UN ANNO FA) dir Marco Filiberti 2002 Italy 105 min 35mm in Italian with English subtitles | Eligible for the Levi's® First Feature Award

Frameline 2004