



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

SEX (15)

Director: Dag Johan Haugerud

Starring: Thorbjørn Harr, Jan Gunnar Røise, Siri Forberg, Birgitte Larsen

Norway 2024, 1 hour 58 minutes, Norwegian + English subtitles

Sex is the first part of the trilogy *Sex Dreams Love*. These three freestanding films by Dag Johan Haugerud, acclaimed as one of Norway's foremost directors, all revolve around desire, identity, and the longing for freedom. *Dreams* has just won the Golden Bear, the top prize at the Berlinale.

Written by Dag Johan Haugerud, *Sex* is a warm and intriguing drama about how intimacy and freedom operate in modern relationships and within gender roles. Jan Gunnar Røise and Thorbjørn Harr play two co-workers, chimney sweeps, whose understanding of themselves is challenged in fascinating, liberating, and at times frightening ways.

Director's statement

The film explores the boundaries we establish in our lives around sex and gender, and whether they are expansive enough to encompass all of who we are and have the potential to be. I wanted to point out that sexuality and sexual identity are not always connected. Neither are our feelings of love and our sexuality, even though we often think they are. The film is also about gaining more freedom in how we express ourselves physically and emotionally without hurting the people we care about. I also wanted to show how rapidly emotions can shift from enthusiasm, ecstasy, and joy to shame when discussing sex. It's intriguing how, even in modern society, questions about sex and sexuality carry so much anxiety and moral weight.

I chose to depict two seemingly heterosexual men who have a strong, confidential friendship that allows them to discuss intimate experiences and seek support in each other's perspectives. Male friendships of that kind may not be as common as one would wish, but they are certainly a possibility. One of the things I believe film should do is not only reflect the current state of things, but also how things could be. Introducing an engaging idea in the mind of the audience, a new way of thinking that might lead to further thoughts and conversations long after the film has ended. That is what I see as the true potential of cinema. Finally, the film also explores the living conditions of a big city, showing how our surroundings impact our daily lives. We navigate our way through towering buildings and bustling traffic, an experience that can be both exhausting and harsh. But it can also be beautiful, as we are trying to show in this film by documenting the nuances of everyday life in the city.

Preview courtesy of Modern Films

Notes compiled by Jo Comino

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