

A working life The porn actor



Extreme close-up

Daisy Rock makes a very good living by having sex on camera, but she's not shocked by her work - it's censorship that offends her, she tells Leo Benedictus. Portrait by Martin Godwin

What I'm sick of," says Daisy Rock, with the passion of a political activist, "is turning on my television, and it's absolutely fine for me to watch the news and see people with bullets in their head, dead children, riots, blood, people on fire ... It's OK to see that ..." Words are not flowing fast enough to keep pace with her outrage. "But it's not OK to see something that we all do every day, the reason why we're here. It's not OK to see two people together, making love, or having sex!"

She waves her arms at me from the other end of a big soft sofa, and takes a calming sip of rosé wine. After nearly six years of working as an erotic dancer and adult actor, Rock is now accustomed to the world's often uncomplimentary attitude to her profession. But her sense of grievance sounds as fresh as ever. She is based in Brighton, but has had a casting to attend today, so I have come to meet her in her London pied à terre. A view of the Thames rolls expensively by in the big windows behind her. Inside, the room is clean, modern and uncluttered, save for a wire stand of washing out to dry.

Rock's journey into porn was what she describes as "a natural progression". "I've always been a people person," she says. "I've always been very sexually open. It was something I always got pleasure out of, that intimate connection between two people, it was the one thing that always made me really happy, more than shopping or earning money, or spending it. I found it very therapeutic."

While most people enjoy sex to some degree, Rock has always been a special case. "If I could lift my skirt up and go, 'Woo-oo!' I would do it," she explains. "I was the girl at school who used to go to the club with no pants on. That was just how I was, and I was like that from a very early age. Why? I've no idea. And I know people who are exactly the same." By the time she told her family about her choice of career, they were hardly shocked. "They said, 'Yeah, you'd be really good at that.'"

Having been a competitive gymnast as a teenager, Rock left school and began to dance professionally in night-clubs, fully clothed at first. "But it wasn't enough to feed me," she says. And then one day, on one of her many jaunts abroad, she met a friend who was an erotic dancer, and before long she got the chance to perform a striptease at a Spearmint Rhino club in Los Angeles.

Was she nervous about taking her clothes off that the first time? "Never," she says. "Do you know what I was more worried about? The dance on the stage, losing a step. I have always been a show-off and loved being on stage. I used to love doing theatre. And even when I did theatre, I always used to play sexy parts, because everybody just saw me that way."

If anything, Rock found she enjoyed erotic dancing too much. "I was really frustrated," she says, sounding still quite annoyed about it. "I used to see some really lovely guys, and after a night of dancing sexy for them I used to be so turned on - and be left wanting more, like they were. I thought, this is no good for them, or for me."

While the other dancers could fill their G-strings with £20 notes by

entertaining a whole crowd of men, more often than not Rock would find herself performing for one individual, as fascinated by creating a new sexual experience for him as she was frustrated that they could not touch each other. Gradually, the idea of making her own porn films - a genre she had come to adore - began to surface. And so she got talking to some of the men she danced for, and agreed to make customised erotic movies for them, which would be structured according to their own script, a service she still provides, when she has time.

Besides being more fun to do, making movies also turned out to be a shrewd investment. "I actually own my very first porn," she explains. "I own my first girl-on-girl and my very first anal scene. I was clever enough to film all that stuff before anybody else got hold of it, because that's valuable. People want to see your first stuff."

After six months of home-movie-making, Rock's introduction into the mainstream porn industry came about purely by chance. Her friend Nick, who was working on a film called Sex Club with the legendary erotic photographer Trevor Watson, called her up to ask if she could fill in as a pole dancer. Rock could not have been more enthusiastic. She arrived on set, danced as requested, and then approached Watson, determined not to miss her chance to do a scene. "But I couldn't," she says, "because I didn't have my STD certificates. So Trevor said, 'You can do a solo, if you want.' And I did a solo toy scene. It turned out all right."

This was just over a year ago, but Rock has wasted no time launching herself into the business. Including Sex Club, and excluding her home-made work, she has already appeared in 65 films, during which she takes part in just about every legal sexual act imaginable, with a marked penchant for fetishes such as rubber and sado-masochism. She has just finished a Playboy film called Bound, Gagged and Shagged, for instance, in which she plays a dominatrix with a team of slaves. "I'll start off with a little bit of light torture," she says, as if she were discussing wallpaper or a haircut,

"then Japanese rope bondage. I'll restrain them, and then I perform sex acts on them. Then finally I release them and have sex with them."

The question that I've been dying to ask, of course, is the one that Rock hears most often: does she really enjoy the sex she has on camera, or is it all acting? "When you see one of my movies, I am actually having sex," she says, completely sincere. "I am actually being as I normally would be in real life, especially in a Gonzo."

A Gonzo is a film in which a couple has sex just as they would like to, while a camera documents the experience to create a kind of reality porn. "The crew's job is just to film around you," Rock explains. "As long as you've got your bum towards the light, you can pretty much do what you want to do." And she really enjoys this as much as normal sex? "If not even more," she says, "because you've got a room full of people, and you can see the effect it's having on these people, and you can hear the whispers."

Not all adult performers are as committed as Rock, of course, and even she admits to having gripes about her work. Feature films (with plots, sets, costumes and so on) can be exhausting and repetitive at times, she says, much like working on a mainstream movie. And filming the softcore version, which is usually done first, feels childish and is frustrating. "You're not allowed to see any penetration," she says with scorn, "and you're not allowed to see an erect cock. It is just pathetic. That's when it becomes a task ... God knows how it looks; I don't even want to watch it because it's not real."

Nevertheless, and despite what others say about it, Rock could scarcely

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be more positive about her profession. She travels regularly around Europe and North America, and is full of praise for how fit the sex keeps her. As one might expect of a dominatrix, she is also in full control of her career, to the point where she gets to choose which studs (male performers) she will work with. "But most of the guys are fantastic," she hastens to add. "And I socialise with them. I socialise with all my co-stars. And I have sex with them for fun. And with the girls."

Then, of course, there is the money. Porn actors are paid by the scene - "anything from £350 to £700," says Rock, "depending on what you do" - which can add up to a decent living. But combine this with other sources of income such as private movies, booking other performers, a subscription website, TV work, and even (in Rock's case) writing erotic stories, and a successful porn actor can do rather well. Randomly, I mention the figure of £64,000 a year to Rock, who says she would not be surprised if that was what she earned. "I make good money," she concedes, "but I'm working a lot. I don't stop working, except to sleep or go out."

The truth of this can be seen late each night, when Rock sits down at her computer and replies to every single piece of fan mail she receives, up to 300 some days. "Most of them just write these lovely things," she says. "Girls write in saying, 'I can't believe how stunning you are.' Or, 'How do I turn a man on?' Some people just ask 'What did you do this weekend? What are you up to?'"

The honest answer, it seems, is that Rock likes to spend her spare time doing much the same things as she does all day. For instance, she met her boyfriend Trash (who is also a porn actor) not at work, but in a swingers' club. "We were the only two singles in there," she says. "I remember falling in love with the guy the moment I set eyes on him." Rock and Trash have combined business with pleasure on occasion, although not always when he had planned to. "I've woken him up at 3 o'clock in the morning," she giggles darkly, "when the stud's not working."