

UR MAGAZINE

EVENTS NIGHTCRAWLIN' UR CONTESTS/DEALS UR MAGAZINE ABOUT US

CALENDAR

PHOTO GALLERY

UR VIP CLUB

PRINT THIS PAGE

EMAIL THIS PAGE

SEARCH UR

BY KEYWORD

FIND

VIP LOGIN

USER NAME

PASS WORD

SAVE LOGIN

[LOG IN]

SPONSORED BY

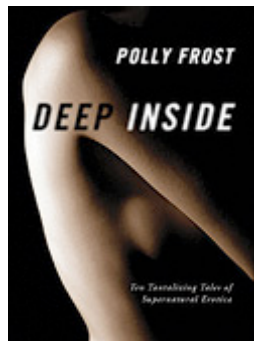
If it's happening in Chicago, You will find it HERE.
UREvents

NEWS & WEATHER

OVERCAST
47°F, 8°C

ADVERTISEMENTS

TEXT SAVVY: SEX SCENES



"America's fascinated by sex, and they can't get enough raunch," says Evan Mescher, a character in *Sex Scenes*, an X-rated comedic soap opera written by husband-and-wife team Polly Frost and Ray Sawhill. In this episode, "Impulse Control," Mescher, a desperate Hollywood action-film director, recharges his career with a reality show, only to get burned by its cunning, call-girl hostess.

The fictional Mescher may echo the gripes of Frost and Sawhill when he pitches his show idea to a network executive: "HBO's used up the foul-mouthed soap opera idea with *The Sopranos* and *Sex and the City*. Where to go?"

In Chicago, the answer is to get to the Pleasure Chest March 21 for a dramatic reading of episodes from *Sex Scenes*, a saucy blend of theater and spoken word that is high on heat and low on inhibition.

While *Sex and the City* may have offered enough cable-ready sexuality to keep American women hot and bothered every Sunday night for six years, it doesn't compare to the nipple-pinchin', ball-cuppin', thong-slingin' chicanery of *Sex Scenes*. Carrie Bradshaw *wishes*. But this episodic tale strives for more than just carnal stimulation -- it seeks to engage that eager gray matter between your ears.

"*Sex Scenes* is a satire about our sexually-conflicted country, set in Hollywood," says Frost, a Southern California native. "It's about what's happened to sex in the movies."

Revolving around the trials and tribulations of a young female filmmaker struggling to produce an X-rated movie, *Sex Scenes* explores how that objective affects her sex life and those of her peers. On a grander scale, *Sex Scenes* addresses exactly what Frost sees happening to sex in entertainment: a troubling polarization.

"On the one hand, we're bombarded by porn more than ever," Frost says. "On the other, books and films have become devoid of sex. It's all this antiseptic crap and dumb frat-boy comedies."

The New York-based couple seeks to inject erotic material with dimension, and in the process, find middle ground between the porn star and the puritan.

"Don't get me wrong, I do love porn," Frost says. "But you don't get the inner lives of the characters. You get involved with [the characters in *Sex Scenes*] as people, and they're wondering about philosophy and sociology and, most of all, [they're] very funny."

Crediting satirical screenwriter and novelist Terry Southern as an influence, Sawhill hopes that *Sex Scenes* will leave its audience members feeling as giggly



TO SOME, THIS IS A PLACE TO COOK MACARONI AND CHEESE.

as they do frisky. "Polly and I both feel that it's been way too long since 'funny' and 'a sexy turn-on' co-habited," he says. "Why should laughter always be felt to undermine intensity? And why should sustaining a sexy mood require that you not laugh?"

It's a complicated question, considering the sexual content presented in the straightforward style of *Sex Scenes*. The show consists of two to six fully-clothed actors reading anywhere from one to four scripts in an evening, and it very well may elicit some blushing giggles. But keeping the audience loose and relaxed is a priority for the *Sex Scenes* crew.

"While the performers are often very accomplished artists, we like keeping things rough and informal," Sawhill says. "The effect is more like a group of jazz musicians getting together for some after-hours amusement and experimentation than it is like a well-oiled showbiz routine. Audiences seem to pick the vibe up."

The comedic interactions may help to diffuse any audience anxiety. But then, there's always the prospect of too *little* anxiety. "At one of our performances, a man and woman started making out," Frost recalls. "I found out later they didn't know each other before the reading."

Sawhill considers *Sex Scenes* -- which employs actors of all shapes, sizes and orientations -- part of the neo-burlesque movement sweeping American metropolises, rather than an instrument of the sex or of porn industry. Consequently, *Sex Scenes* draws a diverse crowd. "[We get] a broad range of ages, [and audience members are] gay, straight or bi," Frost says. "We welcome them all."

"We're filthy-minded, po-mo (post-modern) bohemians, really," Sawhill adds. "We suspect there are a few other people who enjoy this kind of satirical, dirty-minded thing, too." **words: Lara Marsh**

***Sex Scenes* will be performed for free at the Pleasure Chest (3436 N. Lincoln, 773/525-7151) March 21 at 7 p.m.; Polly Frost's collection of erotic sci-fi, *Deep Inside* (Tor Books), will be published in June 2007**

For more DISTORTION, pick up the latest issue of *UR Chicago* in street boxes now

**COPYRIGHT © 2007 UR CHICAGO MAGAZINE AND MEDIASPAN
POWERED BY MEDIASPAN ONLINE**