

The Confrontationalist

First published in SX News, 12 October, 2006

©Katrina Fox 2006



©SX News 2006

Legendary punk diva and multimedia artist Lydia Lunch celebrates 30 years of sticking it to the establishment. She spoke with Katrina Fox.

Lydia Lunch wants a revolution. For 25 years she's been calling for women to rise up and revolt against repressive patriarchal regimes. "Fuck Al Qaeda, what about Al Cunta? That's the revolution we need," the husky-voiced New Yorker tells SX from her home in Barcelona, Spain where she's been living for the past two years. But the pro-porn advocate is not impressed by the current trend towards raunch culture. "We need a lot more gay, queer, lesbian, punk pornography, and more importantly an indepth psychological investigation into obsessions and what drives us to sex," she argues. "Sex and porn is not the problem, it's the use of sex to sell everything, then the denial of women's rights to control their own body coupled with the pornification now of mainstream culture by the propagation of pop porn princesses who are just prostitutes of corporate record companies. I call it the Madonna syndrome - she shows us everything, she tells us nothing."

And while Madonna and her cohorts make a living out of creating entertainment as a diversion for the masses, Lunch thrives on clawing her way through the bullshit of reality, documenting her personal insanity along the way. From the time she burst onto the punk scene in New York City at the age of 16 in 1976 with her 'no wave' band Teenage Jesus and the Jerks to the present day, she's unleashed her demons, ranted and raged about injustice, violence, war and nature's retribution and explored the darker side of obsession and sexuality as well as the concept of personal revolution as pleasure as the ultimate rebellion through a myriad of creative media including literature, film, spoken-word performance, music, video, photography and poetry. Her latest projects include 2005's spoken word CD *In Our Time of Dying*, a blistering attack on the "American war whores' race to global destruction", a retrospective CD of her 30-year career, *Deviations on a Theme*, and a multimedia show *Real Pornography* which she's currently touring across Europe and would "love to bring to Australia" (Mardi Gras and tour promoters take note).

All of Lunch's work, which includes collaborations with underground luminaries such as filmmaker Richard Kern, has its roots in her own life experience, and which she readily admits is a form of public psychotherapy. She engaged in unsimulated rough sex in Kern's notorious films, *Fingered* (1986) and *The Right Side of My Brain* (1985), which explored the theme of how cycles of abuse often lead victims to become the victimisers. Her 1997 memoir *Paradoxia: A Predator's Diary* charts the course of Lunch's sexual history, beginning with her father's sexual abuse, through to her working as a hustler and whore and throwing herself relentlessly into violent or sadomasochistic relationships with men and women - including one encounter where she takes great pleasure in spanking the "chubby ass" of a lesbian junkie with a belt as she vomits over the bed.

Like many outspoken, angry women with a warrior mentality who refuse to compromise "no matter what", Lunch has been rejected by the mainstream. She positively revels in this, even going so far as to say that she'd be very upset if anything she did achieved commercial success, and is quite happy to perform for her "small ghetto army" of fans worldwide. "Passion is the bottom line and maybe I'm just too fucking passionate for the mainstream," she says. "There's nothing I can do to make myself less so, and I won't."

This stance puts her in the position of being the consummate outsider, something she encourages other people to embrace - and don't get her started on labels. "We need to embrace our outsider status, we don't need to vie for the acceptance of mainstream culture," she says. "Think of a label for me, I dare you! I consider myself confrontational, that's all. As far as my sexuality goes, even I don't know what to fucking call it and I don't understand why anyone wants to pigeonhole or create a label. I guess I thrive on being undefinable. I'm outside of everything - can't we all just say that?"

Some artists mellow with age, but 47-year-old Lunch, who says she has a "hardcore Mae West vibe" but feels "like Rocky Graziano", and insists she has the "biggest dick of anyone I know" thankfully shows no signs of letting up. "My rebellion is the same as it's always been but the older I get I have to be conscious of my every waking moment, not take for granted the incredible bizarre beauty that this planet is," she says. "It's really about giving back to nature and to our nature as much as possible and trying to find the balance. War is never ending, it's never over so I have to find beauty wherever I can, pleasure anywhere I can. I need to find peace in their war, I need to find life in their death, I need to find relief in their insanity - as the ultimate fucking radical rebel that I am and fuck you - and not with my dick! That's where I'm at."

Al Cunta, anyone?

***Deviations on a Theme* is available online only from Provocateur Media www.provocateurmedia.com For other merchandise and information visit www.lydialunch.com**

SX News is one of Australia's leading gay and lesbian arts, entertainment, news and culture magazines For more information visit the magazine's website at www.sxnews.com.au

[BACK TO TOP](#)

[BACK TO LIST OF ARTICLES](#)

