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**Pleasure (18)**

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**As Recommended by the FAN Young Consultants**

**Dir. Ninja Thyberg |Swe/Nether/Fr|2021| 109 mins**

**Distributor:** MUBI  
**Bookings:** Natalie Ralph - nralph@mubi.com  
**Available:** Friday 17th June  
**Platform:** Theatrical & streaming on MUBI

**Recorded Q&A :**  There is a 31 min 20 sec recorded Q&A (15 cert) with Director Ninja Thyberg and Sofia Kappel, interviewed by Hannah Strong

**Cast:** Sofia Kappel, Revika Anne Reustle, Evelyn Claire, Chris Cock, Dana DeArmond, Kendra Spade

**Language:** English and Swedish with subtitles

**BBFC** *sexually abusive behaviour, strong sex, nudity, sex references*

**Feature advisory warning:** *‘This film contains flickering or flashing lights that may affect those with photosensitive epilepsy’*

**Synopsis**

**Short version**

A raw, vital and groundbreaking exploration of the adult film industry, PLEASURE is the unflinching first feature from writer-director Ninja Thyberg. Bella (newcomer Sofia Kappel) arrives in Los Angeles from her hometown in Sweden, with dreams of becoming the next porn superstar. However, as her ruthless ambition leads her into increasingly dangerous territory, Bella struggles to reconcile her dreams of empowerment with the realities of the darker side of her industry. One of the most audacious breakouts of Sundance Film Festival 2021, Thyberg’s captivating debut addresses powerful ideas of consent and agency in sex work, through a fearless and uncompromising lens.

**Long version**

A raw, vital and groundbreaking exploration of the adult film industry, PLEASURE is the unflinching first feature from Swedish writer-director Ninja Thyberg. One of the most audacious breakouts of the 2021 Sundance Film Festival, and featuring professional porn stars playing versions of themselves, Thyberg’s captivating debut is as authentic as it is daring.

Adapted from Thyberg’s 2013 prize-winning short of the same name, it follows “Bella Cherry” (newcomer Sofia Kappel) as she arrives in Los Angeles with dreams of becoming the next porn superstar. Living at a “model house” with other hopeful performers, she soon develops a supportive friendship with fellow housemate and porn actress Joy, who helps her navigate this seductive new world. However, as her ruthless ambition leads her into increasingly dangerous territory, Bella struggles to reconcile her dreams of empowerment with the realities of the darker side of the business.

A taboo-busting depiction of the porn industry, PLEASURE addresses powerful ideas of consent and agency in sex work, through a fearless and uncompromising lens.

**Social**

Official website: www.mubi.com.pleasure  
Official Twitter: @mubiuk  
Official Facebook: @mubiuk  
Official Instagram: @mubiuk  
Official hashtag: #Pleasure

**Social handles:**

* @NinjaThyberg

**Press**

* [Sofia Kappel is astonishing in her acting debut and carries the role with levity that is nothing short of mesmerising](https://lwlies.com/reviews/pleasure/) – Little White Lies - Savina Petkova
* ★★★★Clarisse Loughrey - The Independent  
  [“Ninja Thyberg’s film is a sincere call to look at portn for what it is, and how it’s driven by the same struggles against worker exploitation that affect everyone else.”](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/reviews/pleasure-film-review-sofia-kappel-b2101865.html)
* [A raw and real Inside drama about the L.A. porn industry](https://variety.com/2021/film/reviews/pleasure-review-sofia-kappel-ninja-thyberg-1234897533/) – Owen Glieberman – Variety
* [“…if you’re curious what a feminist take on this world looks like, “Pleasure” might surprise you as much as it did me. It’s a smart, gutsy, wholly unexpected movie that, at center, is an old-fashioned story about an ambitious striver overcoming the odds t](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/12/movies/pleasure-review.html). – Manolha Dargis – New York Times

**[Assets](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dfAl2XiwEQ3wlO6qFuCEDxtzT63HwiqY)**

In link above you’ll find:

* Artwork
* Trailer
* Social cards and clips
* Stills
* Presskit

**FAN Young Consultants Feedback**

The [FAN Young Consultants group](https://filmlondon.org.uk/resource/fan-young-consultants) is a 10 strong group of under 30 year olds working in Film Exhibition across the UK. Working with Film Hub London’s Young Audiences Manager [Moira McVean](http://Moira.McVean@filmlondon.org.uk), the group is recommending new release films that they believe will resonate particularly well with their peers and young people aged 16-30.  
  
Previous titles supported by the group include ***Parasite****,* ***Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, *The Assistant*, *Days of the Bagnold Summer, Babyteeth, Socrates, Rocks, County Lines, Mogul Mowgli, Willy’s Wonderland, Sound of Metal, Last Man Standing, Night of the Kings, Limbo, Souad, Gagarine You Will Die at Twenty, Petite Maman, Bad Luck Banging: or Loony Porn, Boiling Point, Belle, Flee, Ali & Ava, Happening, All My Friends Hate Me.*** Packs can be downloaded [here](http://filmlondon.org.uk/fan-young-audiences)

**James**

*“Pleasure* felt to me like an essential film. It’s the next step in story telling when we discuss the adult film industry in film. The majority of these stories are intrinsically women’s stories so it’s good to see them finally being made by women. You can also see the influence of actors from within the adult film industry on the way the characters are presented. When going to watch the film I feel like it needs multiple trigger warnings, as it’s discussing really tough issues in very graphic ways, and some of the scenes have stuck with me for a very long time.

It’s the perfect film to have an accompanying event with. Something along the lines of discussing the world of sex work in the modern era. It’s the perfect gateway to that.”

**Alex**

“Last year we raved about the absurd *Bad Luck Banging: or Loony Porn* which was praised for its bold presentation of sex on film, you can expect that ten-fold here. *Pleasure* is a captivating and unflinching look at the sex industry which equips the female gaze to challenge the male dominated world of porn through the perspective of ‘Bella Cherry’, a young woman from Sweden with dreams of becoming ‘the world’s next big porn star ’in L.A. Director Ninja Thyberg, who has researched the subject with great fascination, takes us on a journey that explores the evils of the porn industry without ever condemning those who chose to pursue it. Bella is a determined woman who is willing to do ‘whatever it takes’ to succeed in her chosen profession but faces moments of disillusionment when she encounters male power dynamics in play, including the sexism – and even racism – that is rooted deep within the industry’s foundations. Throughout her career we see a variety of contrasting productions, from a female led BDSM shoot where the performers are treated with care and respect, to that of a claustrophobic male manipulated ‘hardcore’ shoot where we uncomfortably witness how sexual trauma can be inflicted without consequence.

Bella is not silent to her employers about what she experiences and attempts to take her career into her own hands, but even she becomes fallible in her quest to the top, making some tough choices and heartbreaking betrayals as she endeavors to wield power for herself. Sex work aside, *Pleasure* can also be seen as general commentary of the work-life balance, with themes that relate almost universally. This is a story about ambition and friendship as much as anything else, and we have some very human, heartfelt, and even humorous moments along the way. Pleasure won’t be for everyone, this a graphic, tense, and at times uncomfortable watch, but one that is well observed, performed and incredibly insightful.”  
  
**Thea**

“I think this is the most daring, interesting and pertinent debut I've seen in a really long time. I watched this last year and it's stuck with me. At times it's difficult to watch and to listen to but the lead performance here is very engaging. It's essentially about a woman's ambition to have the best career and to be the best at what she does - to have agency over her body, image and future - the career just happens to be porn. Linnea pushes herself to every single limit and strives to maintain control in an industry that is controlled by men. It's not shot in a way that depicts this world as dark, gloomy and seedy - its bright whites, blues, hot pinks and purples force the audience to look at exactly what is going on. It's direct and unflinching.”

**Louise**

“I didn't have a ton of expectations before watching and didn't really expect to like it much, but I'm pleasantly surprised by how good it actually is, it really pulls you in and keeps you invested throughout. I feel like there's a lot to actually discuss around this film and I hope it doesn't just get overlooked because it's about porn because there's more to it. It's really fascinating and a great perspective on the porn industry. I like that it doesn't lean completely towards "porn is bad" but also doesn't glamourise the industry, it showcases the boring, awkward stuff that people wouldn't necessarily think about when speaking about the industry, so that was really refreshing. It definitely has its tough moments but that's also kind of expected considering it's a male dominated world - it's another example of how these situations of manipulation and exploitation truly happen in every industry. Outside of the porn setting, the drama and development of Bella's character throughout and the breakdown of her friendship with Joy was all greatly done and quite tragic at the end also.”

**Themes**

Work/life balance/lifestyle, porn industry, starting a new career, male dominance, friendship, desensitisation

**Recommended age**

18-30

**Marketing ideas**

* Can you do a ticketing offer? Pay what you can model? 2 for 1 or group discount for up to 6?
* Think about which platforms you’re using to communicate with your audiences (Instagram and Twitter recommended for this title and target age group)
* Run the recorded Q&A post screening
* Set up a post screening informal ‘wine & chat’ session
* Could you invite an [intimacy co-ordinator](https://www.idcprofessionals.com/about-us) to speak to how the film was made?

**Interesting Articles/Videos/contacts:**

* [10 Raw and Real Movies about Sex Work – Vice Magazine](https://i-d.vice.com/en_uk/article/qjkdgx/movies-about-sex-work)
* [Feminist workplace parable just happens to be set in porn](https://www.thewrap.com/pleasure-film-review-ninja-thyberg/) – Alonso Duralde, The Wrap
* [Interview with Ninja Thyberg](https://www.dazeddigital.com/film-tv/article/56295/1/pleasure-adult-film-porn-industry-review-ninja-thyberg-interview)  - Dazed