

SEX ♀ 50

Story Treatment

Betsy Pool
Writer-Director

“By the time I turned 50, I was relatively convinced I would never again have sex in my life!”

Life, work, family, a move halfway around the world — years pass. Then one day you wake up and realize that the passion is gone from your marriage, and you can't even remember when it departed. Your life together isn't bad. You are good partners, loving parents, in resonance on all of life's big decisions, including leaving America to move to Italy 10 years prior. But it dawns on you that your sexual relationship started to wane after your daughter was born, 13 years ago. Now, it's been more than a year since you were intimate.

I thought my story was unique until my life turned upside down. My producing partner, who is a younger man, and I fell in love. I realized the only way to save my previous life and marriage, was to be completely transparent about my lover and the importance of the reawakening of my sexual life. Not only transparent with my husband and with my daughter, but with everyone in my life. We live in a famous alternative spiritual eco-community. That represents a lot of people who have known me well as devoted wife and mother, who now learn there is a lot more to my story.

My decision to be transparent launched a journey that none of us could have imagined. Now, I am an activist and advocate for the erotic lives of women over the age of 50; speaking with women from all over the globe. Sexual energy is the most powerful energy we generate as humans. As mature women, what's happening in our erotic lives? What can a complete system change that recognizes us and desires us as erotic beings look like? Can the men in our lives hold us in this power as we reawaken to it?

The Generation that pioneered Sexual Freedom during the era of Woodstock and the Summer of Love is my husband's generation. Famed photographer from that era, Baron Wolman, shares iconic images of evocative young women that he took back then. These women are now in their 60s, 70s, and 80s.

In our first interviews with some of these women who were on the crew at Woodstock and who worked at the Fillmore East, a common feeling is expressed that the sexual freedom of the 60s felt more like an obligation to have unsatisfying sex than a liberation. The diverse paths these women's erotic journeys took from there is a fascinating reflection on how much childhood religion, socio-economic roots, and family structure carry a life-long resonance in women's sex lives.

Our meeting with pleasure and relationship consultant Pamela Madson starts with shocking revelations of her transition from monogamy in her 36-year-marriage to a full-on exploration of her erotic nature starting with happy endings from gay massage therapists. Her journey has now evolved to her creation of retreats, we will be filming, that lead other mature women on a similar journey of self-discovery. Yet, at the core of this, she reveals an emotional search for self.

A similar search is mirrored when we interview Tony-award winning actress Tonya Pinkins, who in a candid romp through her life-time of sexual conquests reveals a continued longing to be truly seen erotically as she ages.

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We explore erotic photos of the “invisible elderly” with Québécois photojournalist Arianne Clément, whose tastefully erotic images of women in their 80s, 90s and even 100s have gone viral. We will interview women from her portraiture, to gain an understanding of what it means to be seen at their ages as erotic, in a culture that dismisses older women as still having sexual desires.

I return to where I grew up, in West Virginia, the heart of Appalachia, where I interview older women whose erotic prospects seem especially limited by the culture of small insular towns. One woman in this situation, who had left her career to care for her elderly father caught a glimpse of her medical chart when she visited a local clinic. She was shocked by the insensitive doctor’s assessment of her which read “Imminently homeless, with vaginal atrophy.”

A Columbian woman living in Miami, at 52 is told by another gynecologist that she is having too much sex for a woman her age!

In addition to the women mentioned above, we have already done intimate interviews with women from England, Germany, Portugal, Israel-Palestine, a Toda elder from India and Equatorial Africa (we speak about this woman's embrace of her erotic nature after delicate midlife corrective surgery of devastating genital mutilation she suffered as a baby, a form of religious practice in her homeland).

When I understand how many women are navigating the same sexual disenfranchisement that I have lived, my sexual reawakening shifts from being personal into being political.

This journey leads my long-time partner-husband, Eddie and me, Betsy to become peace activists in a movement called “A Global Revolution and the Healing of Love,” originating from the Peace Community of Tamera in Portugal. Tamera is a community that researches “Free Love” defined as love without fear. Our interviews with mature women who are part of the culture of Tamera provides a glimpse into what System Change—a culture that embraces the erotic nature of women throughout our lives—can look like.

In addition to the creation of this documentary we are building an online platform where we curate other women sharing THEIR stories; connecting a sisterhood of mature women, who face similar issues. With solidarity, we will emerge as models for younger women who will eventually face the same dilemmas that we live.

What happens if we regain our sexual power as women after we pass 50? Does society see and support us in our desire to express ourselves erotically? What is our role as erotic, mature women? Is there a connection between Eros and consciousness? This film may not provide all of the answers but we hope it will evoke questions to examine in your own sexual life.

Before my lover entered my married life, I no longer saw myself as an erotic woman. Now, I know there is a fire that burns deep within mature women, that often, we do not even recognize ourselves. Does the rekindling of this flame hold the potential to incinerate patriarchy and create an evolutionary leap in consciousness for all of humanity?

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Important Questions:

1.) How does our film project demonstrate a commitment to cultural diversity?

Our film addresses an under-recognized and underserved primary audience of women who are over the age of 50 and deals with core questions around love and mature female sexuality. We are deeply committed to addressing these questions with older women across borders—straight, gay, bisexual, transgender—from a wide diversity of cultural, economic, and social backgrounds. We are building a landscape of what mature female sexuality currently looks like. Specifically we address what challenges we share in order to embrace our erotic natures as mature women and how our addressing these challenges could provide a key to the unlocking of a global shift in consciousness.

Representative of this diversity, are interviews we have already shot with women and men from Palestine, Israel, Columbia, Portugal, Germany, England, the United States, Eritrea East Africa, as well as an indigenous elder of the Toda Tribe from India, and our shooting schedule will continue to bring more and more diversity into the project.

Already, this landscape builds a perspective of vast cultural diversity around female sexuality; for example, the Toda elder speaks of the polyandry practices that were formerly common in her culture and the pejorative impact Western mores and world-views have had on their culture. The woman from Eritrea speaks intimately about the effect on her life from the religious practice of female genital mutilation she was subject to as an infant in her native culture and how her exposure to European culture as a young refugee, led to her recent decision to undergo delicate reconstructive surgery in middle age. The woman from Columbia speaks about her perspective on the difference in the perception and treatment of mature women in her culture verses how she perceives mature women in other cultures are being seen and treated.

Within this vast cultural diversity represented by the women in our film, common themes and concerns emerge. It is too early in our process to clearly articulate these, as we are currently in an exploratory process. However we are working diligently to identify and compile the common themes for mature women, which are emerging across all borders. Our vision is to define an important new meme that will express the global cultural importance of recognizing mature female sexuality and the contribution its embrace can be for global consciousness.

2.) Why this specific story need to be told and why are we the best people to tell it?

This story needs to be told now because at no point in human history have we lived as long with as much vitality as we are living today. At no point in human history has such a large percentage of the world population (though certainly not all of the world, as we also explore) had the potential to freely express their inherent erotic nature.

Yet, for those of us with the freedom to examine this question of mature female sexuality, we have few models on how to fully live this. The ageism seemingly inherent in the DNA of modern society, negatively impacts the life force of one of humanity's most powerful natural resources—women

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who have passed the midpoint in life. As a result, many mature women become disenfranchised from a core aspect of ourselves, allowing our sexual expression to wane or become diverted. We become blocked from the sexual power we are so familiar with as young women at the stage of our greatest accumulated life experience and potential contribution to consciousness around love and sexuality. If we are able to consciously reconnect Eros with Agape in our lives—our personal sexual energy with our love of the human collective—we become powerful agents for social change. Our wisdom, compassion and vision are critically needed on our planet now, more than at any point in history. Most especially if we hope to nurture cultures of Peace.

Our film explores the need for “System Change,” that recognizes, embraces and celebrates the erotic nature of women, throughout our lifetimes and examines the profound social implications of this.

I am the best person to tell this story, because I have personally passionately and transparently lived this story of sexual reawakening as a mature woman and channeled my experience into becoming a sacred activist. My decision to be transparent launched a journey that none of us could have anticipated. Now, I work with and advocate for the erotic lives of women over the age of 50, speaking with women of all ages, from all over the globe, many of whom are agreeing to tell their intimate stories publicly. My past three years have convinced me that mature women carry a key to unlock a global shift in consciousness.

Because most of the story I have lived with my husband and second partner is known publicly in our circles (we are figures in the alternative community movement in Europe), in 2016 my husband and I were invited by the Peace Community, Tamera, in Portugal, to be part of “Global Love School.” The community invites a committed circle of cooperation partners—peace workers and leaders from around the world—to learn how to deal with questions of love and sexuality, both in their personal and public lives.

There is a clarion emergency call on Earth to end the War On Love. Our research with our fellow activists in Global Love School leads to our understanding that one reason for the violence and unresolved issues of our civilization lies in misdirected, blocked and suppressed love and sexuality.

In our own lives, we have lived a microcosm that is a mirror to this global story. This motivates our desire to make this film treating love and sexual expression not only as a personal issue but as a political issue.