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FILMS**

Presents

Bettie Page Reveals All

A Film by Mark Mori

101 min., USA, 2013

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SYNOPSIS

Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Mark Mori's **BETTIE PAGE REVEALS ALL** is an intimate look at one of the world's most recognized sex symbols, told in her own words for the first time.

In Mori's alluring documentary, the real Bettie Page emerges from the veil of myth and rumor via audio interviews taped a decade prior to her death in 2008. With earthy, razor sharp wit, Bettie tells her life story -- from humble beginnings as one of six children in an impoverished southern family, to high school salutatorian, to scandalous 50s pin-up model, to shocking retirement in 1957 at the peak of her modeling career. Sharing rare details about her short-lived first marriage and many torrid affairs, this keen insider's glimpse follows Bettie through decades of broken marriages, born-again Christianity, and bouts of mental illness, before her ultimate return to the public eye in the early 90's, unaware of her cult status. Ranked by Forbes in 2012 as one of the top ten posthumous celebrity earners, Bettie and her enduring legacy continue to flourish.

With a stunning array of gorgeous photographs, unusual archival material, and playful movie footage, **BETTIE PAGE REVEALS ALL** shows how Bettie's unabashed sexual expression and provocative poses set the stage for the sexual revolution and ushered in a modern era in fashion. For stars like Katy Perry and Beyonce, as well as new generations of adoring fans around the world, Bettie remains an irresistible style icon and an empowering role model.

ABOUT THE FILM

Bettie Page was many things: a sexual icon, a pin-up queen, the girl next door, an iconic model, a fashion designer, a cartoon character, an actress, an aspiring Christian missionary, a girlfriend, a wife, a victim, and a heroine. More than anything else, the mystery of Bettie—what happened after she stopped modeling and disappeared from the public eye—has fascinated the world for decades.

The first and only feature film made with the star's cooperation, **BETTIE PAGE REVEALS ALL** unfolds as a docu-comedy romp through a tapestry of 1950s pop culture treasures. With her razor sharp wit and Tennessee twang, Bettie shares details of her hidden past for the first time ever, chronicling her phenomenal journey from poverty-stricken, Depression-era roots to becoming America's most successful pin-up. Never before have we seen her so exposed.

Born Betty Mae Page in 1923 in Nashville, Tennessee, she quickly rose to fame in the 1950s to become one of America's most iconic pin-ups, renowned for her nude and fetish modeling. Heralded as the heroine of the underground beginnings of the American sexual revolution, Bettie flaunted her sexuality in the most repressed era of American history and was considered so disruptive that the US Government tried to put her out of business. The singular combination of her success as the queen of pinups, coupled with her image as the girl next door with the sweet-as-pie smile that never failed- even while posing for bondage/ fetish photographs, made her a prime target for political persecution. This culminated in a McCarthy style witch-hunt led by Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver, who accused Bettie and her most prolific photographer, Irving Klaw, of "corrupting the youth of America."

But just as controversial as her peak was Bettie's decision, in 1959, to convert to born-again Christianity and disappear for 35 years. Sadly, her later life was marked by depression, violent mood swings, and a number of years in a state psychiatric facility before her death in 2008.

Director Mark Mori was one of a handful of people allowed into her inner circle after she emerged from decades of seclusion in 1992. Featuring never-before-seen-photos, cameos from an ensemble cast of who's who in the pin-up world, as well as celebrities including Hugh Hefner and Rebecca Romijn, this unprecedented biography allows audiences and fans to inhabit the world of Bettie Page, enjoy her work, discuss her experiences, and connect with the products, pictures and experiences that are her legacy.

BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR / PRODUCER MARK MORI

Mark Mori is an Academy Award nominated documentary filmmaker. His films have garnered awards, film festival screenings and theatrical distribution worldwide. Mori's most notable projects include: ***Building Bombs*** (1991), Academy Award nominee Documentary Feature (Producer/Director); ***Blood Ties the Life and Work of Sally Mann*** (1994), Academy Award nominee Documentary Short (Executive Producer); ***The Fire This Time*** (1994), Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize nominee (Co-Producer) and ***Kent State, The Day the War Came Home*** (2000), Emmy Award, Outstanding News and Documentary (Executive Producer).

DIRECTOR/ PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

With her enduring popularity and her status as a post-feminist role model, Bettie Page is an unforgettable part of American history. Bettie's extraordinary, subversive on-camera presence helped launch the sexual revolution, and her "free-to-be-me" expressiveness still inspires young women and Paris fashion designers today. Young women identify with her as an antidote to a conformist, idealized notion of beauty and sexual allure. As evidenced by contemporary music videos, movies, and fashion stills, Bettie's influence on fashion and pop culture is stronger than ever.

When you look at the pictures, there was so much joy, so much freedom. Bettie can be in the freakiest weird bondage photo, but portrays the attitude that it was all *so much fun*. And that's actually how it was. In a life like this, there are plenty of stories to captivate and entertain, such as her arrest during an outdoor nude photo shoot. Looking past her trademark jet-black hair and sassy bangs, I wanted to create an expose of Bettie's on-camera antics as she tore down censorship efforts; I wanted to tackle "the politics of sex" as I see them.

Bettie's undeniable appeal is all about subverting the dominant culture's notions of what's good and what's sexy. By identifying with her, women are saying, "I'm not a supermodel. I'm not Barbie." Whatever ideal they are expected to fit into, Bettie Page is a way for modern women to access their image of themselves as sexy and confident, and that's pretty powerful.

Q&A WITH DIRECTOR / PRODUCER MARK MORI

What's your background? Have you been a documentary filmmaker for a long time?

My first film, which was made more than twenty years ago, received an Academy Award nomination. Since then, I've been making theatrical and television documentaries and reality shows, that type of thing.

What was the movie that got nominated?

It was called BUILDING BOMBS; it was a story about a whistleblower in a nuclear weapons factory and how they were dumping radioactive waste and contaminating aquifers in four states. I did an expose on that.

So what gave you the idea to do a documentary on Bettie Page?

I was living and working in Los Angeles at the time and my entertainment attorney was also representing Bettie in the entertainment field. I had lunch with him and he showed me the book "Bettie Page: Life of a Pin-Up Legend" which had just been published. I told him that I would love to make a documentary of this. I had made all these kind of serious political documentaries and I wanted to do something more fun. I really knew nothing about Bettie, except her image was familiar. Once I looked at the book, I knew it would make a good documentary without really know anything about her story. I arranged to meet her for lunch and we became friends.

She would regale me with these stories and it was all just great fun to her. So she agreed to let me do this film of her life and there was almost nobody in the last twenty years of her life that actually talked to her face to face.

Why?

MM: Because she was a recluse. She liked the fact that she had fans but she wanted to be remembered for how she was in her photographs. She could not understand why people were still interested in her. She wanted to live her life quietly and she didn't want to have to deal with people. She and I would go out to lunch in public and nobody would recognize her.

Could she have passed on her knowledge to other performers in some way or did she not want to do that?

She didn't view herself as possessing any special knowledge. She could tell you in detail all these stories of things that happened and what she did from her point of view. She had a good memory, but the concept of teaching what she did to anyone else probably wouldn't have occurred to her. If you had asked her, she wouldn't have known what to do.

So Bettie Page was a feminist icon, ahead of her time. She didn't really care what anybody thought did she?

No and she didn't realize that she "doing anything". In other words, she was just being herself. She was a force of nature with no self-awareness. It wasn't like she was setting out to make some statement or to be some kind of a role model. She was only working on a job and having fun doing it and that's all that was to her.

Was she surprised when she was arrested and by the congressional hearings and senate committees?

Not only was she surprised, but also she was completely outraged that they would charge her with indecent exposure. She said: "I was not indecent" and refused to plead guilty to that charge. If she had have just plead guilty, everybody would have been able to go home; but there were photographers covering the trial who had been taking pictures of nude women but telling their wives that they were out fishing. They wanted to get out of there, but she took a stand and they ended up dropping that charge. One of the photographers covering the trial said she had more courage than twenty photographers.

Did she realize that she was way ahead of her time? I mean she must have known what the law was. She must have been aware of the very conservative values of the people around her.

I don't think she paid any attention to it or knew much about it. I don't think until she was arrested and charged with indecent exposure that she really thought that much about problems with nudity in an open field, on a farm: that was so natural to her. She couldn't understand why people thought that was a problem.

Once she had realized that people did consider it a problem she started to be a little more careful I think.

So she was a free spirit then?

She was such a free spirit: a force of nature that didn't stop to think about what she was doing.

I'd like to have that kind of attitude.

It's also what comes through in the photographs. She wasn't trying to create something or put on something. She was, I think, the number one actress in terms of still photography.

Why is that? Because she's a natural?

Well, yes, she is a natural but she also worked really hard at it from a very young age. And, she used to study her photographs to find out how to be better. She did her own hair and make-up and even, unawares, directed a lot of the photography.

She had a good idea of her own art?

It was all done without calculation. It was just who she was, which was the amazing thing about her and the unique spirit you get in her photographs.

How long did you know her for? I know she died in 2008.

I first met her in 1996. I've done a number of interviews with her over the years and the last time I saw her was in the hospital a week before she died.

You knew nothing about burlesque before you met Bettie. How do you feel about burlesque now after having known her?

I don't know how big the burlesque movement was back on 1996. I only discovered this kind of neo-burlesque thing since I began to know Bettie and make this movie. In fact, I didn't understand for a good while that Bettie's fans were these young women who found their sexual identity from Bettie.

I think that's part of burlesque as a whole, you know.

Exactly. Anyhow, I'm a big fan of burlesque fan now. I have had some burlesque girls who have volunteered on the film. I have had one burlesque troupe show the trailer during their tour.

Bettie has launched a thousand looks, hasn't she?

Yes. Tempest Storm was at the premiere and there's a clip of Tempest Storm and Bettie together in my film. There were a lot of burlesque dancers at the premiere of my movie. Some of the burlesque women that I worked with and got to know very well have gone on to very lucrative careers as Bettie Page models for Bettie Page lingerie.

Is Bettie Page lingerie a huge business?

Yes. Bettie Page clothing did ten million dollars in business last year. Then there's the Bettie Page licensing that made six million dollars last year. She was one of the top incoming-earning dead celebrities tied with George Harrison and Andy Warhol. She was named by *Men's Health* as one of the hottest women of all time. *Time Magazine* recently named her as one of the 100 people most influential in fashion. There have been French fashion designers who have said that they modeled their designs on Bettie Page.

**Do you think that's because of the rise of burlesque in the last ten years?
Burlesque is becoming mainstream and quite fashionable so people want to
dress like that, perhaps.**

Well, yes I think dressing up and having fun: that's part of burlesque. The whole retro theme is all an attempt to have fun and style. To me, what you've got going on in larger society is so stultifying. Burlesque is an outlet for people to have fun and be creative. It's worthwhile, fun self-expression.

CREDITS

Single Spark Pictures Presents

Bettie Page Reveals All

Produced and Directed by

Mark Mori

Written by

Douglas Miller

Narrated by

Bettie Page

Featuring

Bettie Page
Hugh Hefner
Dita Von Teese
Bunny Yeager

Tempest Storm
Paula Klaw
Rebecca Romijn
Mamie Van Doren

About Music Box Films

Music Box Films is a leading theatrical and home entertainment distributor of foreign language, American independent and documentary films in North America.

Past releases include Guillaume Canet's hit thriller TELL NO ONE; the film adaptations of Stieg Larsson's trilogy of international mega-selling novels - the first in the series- THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO, with over \$10 million in US box office, was one of the most popular international releases of the decade; Terence Davies' THE DEEP BLUE SEA starring Rachel Weisz, New York Film Critics Circle Best Actress winner; and Philippe Falardeau's Academy Award-nominated MONSIEUR LAZHAR.

Upcoming titles include Roger Michell's LE WEEK-END, written by Hanif Kureishi and starring Jim Broadbent; the hit French mini-series THE RETURNED, premiering on Sundance Channel; five-time Academy Award® nominee Jan Troell's THE LAST SENTENCE; and Jan Ole Gerster's German smash hit OH BOY, which swept the German Oscars earlier this year.

Music Box Films is independently owned and operated by the Southport Music Box Corporation, which also owns and operates The Music Box Theatre, Chicago's premiere venue for independent and foreign films.