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THE SHOWROOM AT THE DOC JOHNSON world headquarters in North Hollywood, California, is a brightly

lit space with a long wooden conference table and walls lined with colorful boxes of sex toys: There's the Ass Servant, the Gumdrops Double Bubble Butt Plug and a five-pound, 15-inch purple dildo called the Great American Challenge. Perched on a small table at the side of the room are what look like two lumps of grayish clay on a plywood board. On an afternoon in late February, Chad Braverman, Doc Johnson's director of product development and licensing, walks Sasha Grey into the room and motions toward the clay.

"That's your ass and vagina," he says flatly. Upon closer inspection, the lumps are accurate renderings of the adult film star's prized assets. Two months earlier, the slender Grey, who turned 21 in March, had her nether regions coated in plaster to create a mold for her first branded sex toy, a durable thermoplastic rubber replica that will retail for about \$100.

"It looks really good," Grey says running her fingers over her faux backside. "It'll have hair, right? 'Cause I've got a bush."

For an adult-film star, getting a sex toy is like an NBA player inking a shoe deal: It's a sign you've arrived. And three years after inaugurating her porn career by asking costar Rocco Siffredi to punch her in the stomach while she pleased him (he declined), Grey definitely has made it. Across more than 120 adult films, her appetite for extreme sex has established her rep, but it's her intellectual side—she counts French New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard, existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and industrial rockers Throbbing Gristle among her heroes—that has set her apart.

Although her turns in videos for the Roots ("Birthday Girl") and Smashing Pumpkins ("Superchrist") and a NSFW American Apparel ad are well within the range of traditional porn-star extracurriculars, not much else she does is. She's one-half of challenging experimental-music duo Atelectine and has contributed vocals to a track by Jamaican dub pioneer Lee "Scratch" Perry. She's already appeared (fully clothed) in a few small indie flicks, and this May she'll play the lead in Oscar-winning director Steven Soderbergh's low-budget film about a high-priced call girl, *The Girlfriend Experience*. It's enough to make your average porn star give up a life lived on her back—or side or all fours—but not Grey.

"I'll never say 'fuck you' to the adult industry," she insists. "I don't see it as porn versus mainstream—I really don't see a division. I see it all as a career opportunity for my brand."

So, armed with shrewd business acumen, defiantly libertine ideals, the latest in social-networking tools and a frame with

barely-legal contours, Grey is building that brand. She's starting her own company to produce intelligent porn that focuses on real acting, rather than mechanical, unimaginative copulation. At the same time, she's trying to further her mainstream film career, develop cachet in the experimental-music world and cultivate a growing fan base that often seems as interested in her brains as they are in her body.

"My whole thing is to bridge that gap," she says. "To say, 'Yeah, I have sex on camera, but I can act, make music, draw, paint and write poetry.' I consider myself a Renaissance woman."

Grey rarely drinks, doesn't do drugs and, contrary to the prevailing stereotype, says she was never abused as a child. As Soderbergh sees it, "She's a new breed. She's a mold-breaker."

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE DOC JOHNSON VISIT, GREY SITS WITH HER fiancé, lanky 33-year-old photographer Ian Cinnamon, at a Studio City coffee shop, discussing what led her into the porn industry. Her dark hair falls over her right shoulder in a ponytail, laying flat against her gray-checked overcoat. Her heavy blue eye shadow stands out starkly against the pale skin of her girlish face. Earlier today, she was scheduled to film an adult scene, but her female costar arrived bearing a positive test result for an STD. Grey refused the director's request to film anyway. "I don't have many rules, but I won't perform unless the other person has been tested in the last two days," she says.

Grey grew up in a rundown area of Sacramento, the youngest of three children. Before she started middle school, her Catholic mom and non-churchgoing dad split up. Her father took off, and her mom remarried, but Sasha didn't get along with her stepdad. She started writing songs ("mostly raps") at age 10 and playing guitar three years later. Her youthful tastes leaned toward Hendrix, Pink Floyd and P-Funk, though

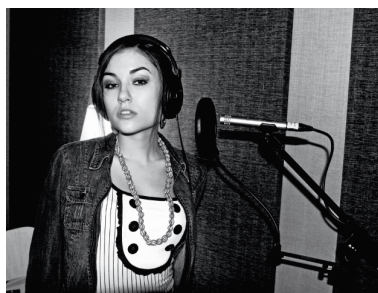
with time she gravitated toward more experimental stuff like Miles Davis, Neu! and KMFDM. (Her porn name, Sasha, is a tribute to KMFDM frontman Sascha Konietzko; her last name is a nod to Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the "gray zone" on the Kinsey scale of sexuality, which rejects strict delineations between gay and straight.)

She began taking acting classes at 12. In high school, she coproduced and starred in a film about "a 17-year-old runaway who is raped by her brother and father, goes to California and joins the circus." By the time Grey was 17, she was taking college classes, waitressing six nights a week and watching lots of porn with her then boyfriend.

"The light bulb went off: *I can do this a lot better than the people I'm watching*," she says. "For seven months before I moved to L.A., I did as much research as I could"—devouring more porn, reading interviews with stars and directors—"so I was 100 percent confident in my decision to go for it."

According to Dan Miller, editor-in-chief of *Adult Video News*, her impact in the porn world was almost immediate. "When she came on the scene, she had a distinct look, sexy and mysterious," he says. "She was bringing passion, intensity and a different energy to her scenes."

Grey considers her scenes performance art and believes they should constantly stretch the limits of what's deemed acceptable. "But porn can't just be transgressive with sex acts; it has to be



SHADES OF GREY: Sasha in the studio; with pal Dave Navarro at the 2008 AVN Adult Entertainment Expo.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: HAIR: JASON STANTON FOR CLOUTIER AGENCY; MAKEUP: MAI QUVNH FOR THE WALL GROUP; THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: IAN CINNAMON; BARRY BRECHSEN/WIREIMAGE.

