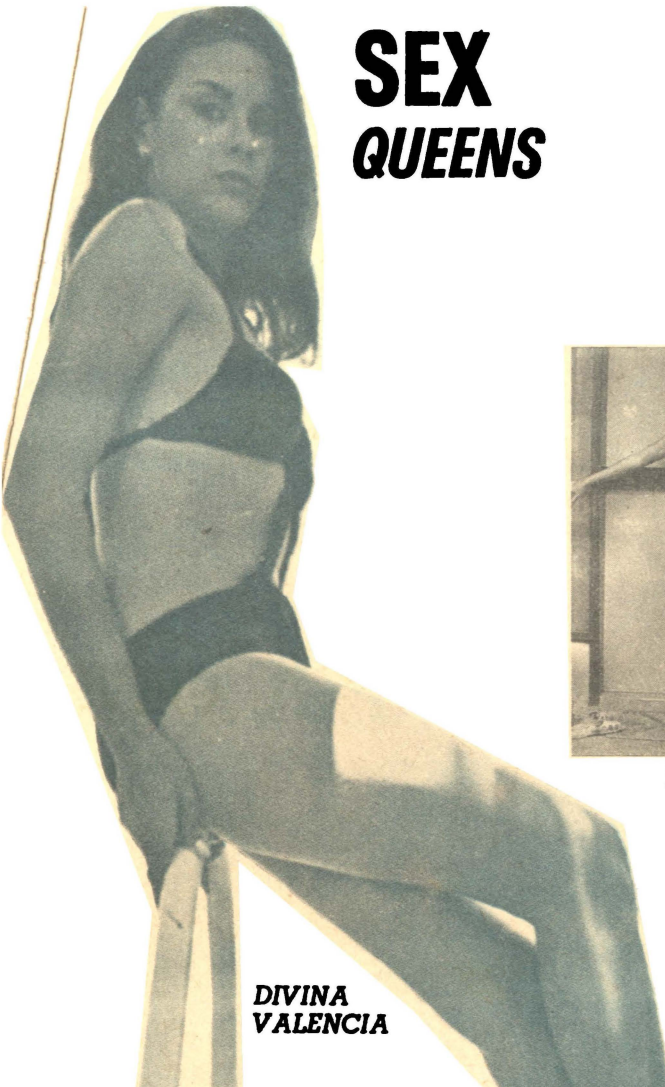


SEX QUEENS



DIVINA VALENCIA

PERMISSIVE is the latest word for Filipino cinema and the new spirit of liberation finds its greatest expression in the sex content of the current movies. No longer do stars exchanged faked kisses or women flaunt their sexiness by walking around with a shoulder strap flung aside. The new permissiveness calls for the characters to indulge in inordinate kissing and for the girls to celebrate their sex with the minimum of clothing.

In the old days, Rosa Rosal or Zeny Zabala could make the males pant by slinking across the screen in their sheer chemise. The old maids swooned when Pol Salcedo and Rosa del Rosario did each other faked lip service. The breakup of the Big Four and the proliferation of the independent producers was to usher in a highly competitive battle in the industry and to place a higher premium in the box office returns. How to make the cash register ring, and ring with loud pecuniary peals? Sex, man, and we were soon to have our fill of it.

The unveiling of sex was, to be sure, a welcome event. The Filipino cinema—long stifled in conventions—was decaying not only in content but in form. The stories had little variation and the production values were equally wanting. It had to rise from the doldrums, and sex was to take care of that. The sexual revolution also represents a breakthrough in morals, a gust of fresh air in the narrow corridor, a triumph of liberalism and creativity.

In the beginning were Stella Suarez and Divina Valencia. They were to inspire a popular street ditty that was a compliment to their daring and style. They brought a fresh and uninhibited approach to sex, clean sex. So overpowering was their influence and impact that later, even the so-called "nice" actresses were willing to osculate and undress to perform offbeat roles and otherwise add new dimensions to their stereotype characterizations.

Boom went the bust and soon dames Suarez and Valencia had to



JOSEPHINE ESTRADA



REBECCA



ANA LEDESMA



HELEN THOMPSON

face a formidable horde of competitors. Ruby Regala came and left. Marissa Delgado posed for *Playboy*. Charito Solis gamboled in *le minimum* in *Igorota*. Verna Gaston signed up with the fiery legion. Anna Gonzales, an earth-goddess with a magnificent body, scorched the screen in a number of films.

No one knows where this permissiveness will lead to. Greater realism as in the reported delivery scene of Miss Solis is her latest film? Total nudity? Explicit sex? No matter. We shall celebrate their coming, leaving the teeth-gnashing to the moral watchdogs, the censors and the self-appointed moralists. We only hope the Filipino cinema would care to express more truth, honesty and integrity, and view itself less as a merchandise and more as a creative endeavor, a mirror to life, a forceful medium of expression. Sex is joyless and meaningless unless expressed in the proper context. To have sex for sex's sake is to perpetuate the old curse in the native film. **FM**