

Award-winning film *A Very Long Engagement* is a documentary that follows a lesbian couple on their mission to marry legally when one is given a year to live. East Coast filmmakers and life partners Susan Muska and Gréta Olafsdóttir, producers/directors of *The Brandon Teena Story*, document the couples' 44-year love story that spans a crucial period in LGBT history in their visually stunning and bittersweet must-see film.

How did you find out about Edie and Thea?

MUSKA: They had contacted our friend about helping them go up to Toronto to get married, because Thea had been given approximately a year to live by her doctors. To get married was their most urgent need, want and desire.

When you began shooting in 2007, did you know how well timed your film would be?

MUSKA: We're really happy about that.... Prop. 8 and what happened in California...emphasized that there was an urgency to get the story out... there was already an urgency [for us] because of Thea's health. It was important to spread the word of what equal marriage rights are and who it affects. How can you say those people don't deserve equal rights?

Thea's condition didn't seem to change their relationship.

OLAFSDÓTTIR: That's one of the amazing things about them. The first sign of MS was at about age 42, but they didn't know what it was.

MUSKA: It wasn't diagnosed until she was 45. They both maintained an equality in their relationship. They strove to maintain that, and it's probably what kept the spark of their relationship going.

It's interesting how uninhibited they are, even talking about sex.

MUSKA: I think that says something about Edie and Thea. They were very frank and spoke very honestly and talked about things



Susan Muska (right) and Greta Olafsdottir

that probably everyone would be a lot better off if they were more open about.

The slides of them in the '60s and '70s are mesmerizing.

OLAFSDÓTTIR: They're unbelievable dressers.

MUSKA: And attractive.

OLAFSDÓTTIR: Oh my gosh, yeah. Totally sexy and beautiful.

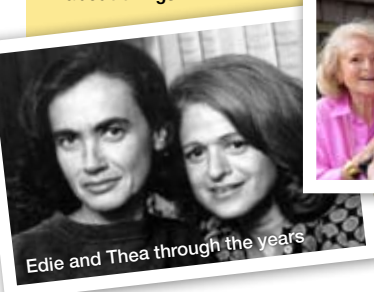
How is Edie doing?

MUSKA: She's come with us to a lot of festivals. She came to Frameline, the film's debut, and also her 80th birthday.

OLAFSDÓTTIR: People were coming up to her on the street, [and asking] "Can I give you a hug?" It was amazing. She's also a great spokesperson, so the plan is, she will go as much as possible with us. We hope this is a new chapter.

What's next for Bless Bless Productions?

OLAFSDÓTTIR: We have a big project [in the works], but really we want to support this film and contribute to the dialogue. I don't know how long America is going to be back in the Middle Ages when it comes to gay marriage. [Laurie K. Schenden]



Edie and Thea through the years