

'200 Cigarettes' lacks smoke

Eighties film fails to capture carefree decade

BY SAM MCKEWON
Senior editor

For the four high school girls sitting two seats away, "200 Cigarettes" was full of laughter.

They, apparently, understood and enjoyed all the other jokes that everybody else missed. Because this movie, this transcendently bad film, has one joke in it. One.

To spare any of the curious from seeing this movie, here it is:

"How do you like your eggs? Scrambled or fertilized?"

Every other joke in this — the first terrible movie of 1999 — falls well short of that mark. It's that bad.

There's plenty of talent in "200 Cigarettes." That's not the problem here. The problem is the script, which is just a mangled collection of words and phrases that was written by first-time screenwriter Shana Larsen. Larsen should never pen a movie again. Ever.

Here she has, along with director Risa Bramon Garcia, created a number of annoying characters, a few of which have not one redeeming quality in them.

They are not funny. They are not nice. They curse to the point that the same word takes the place of verbs and adjectives, sometimes entire sentences. A couple of them are complete idiots.

It's 1981, and these characters are all trying to get to a New Year's Eve party that one neurotic woman (Martha Plimpton) is throwing. There are two friends who may be more than that (Courtney Love and Paul Rudd), two high school girls (Christina Ricci and Gaby Hoffman), a sexually inadequate artist (Brian McCardie), two sexually aggressive women (Nicole Parker and Angela Featherstone), a bartender (Ben Affleck) and many more.

They're driven around New York City by a taxi driver (Dave Chappelle) who thinks it's his duty to bed down



"200 CIGARETTES," a 1980s comedy that has little to do with the '80s, stars a modern-day brat pack of young stars. From left are Guillermo Diaz, Gaby Hoffman, Christina Ricci and Casey Affleck.

COURTESY PHOTO

every woman.

In a movie with this many story lines, it might have been helpful if there was some kind of connection between some of them, but there isn't. For example, how do Love and Rudd know Plimpton's character? Never told. The same goes for a yuppie couple on their first date (Jay Mohr and Kate Hudson).

The only good thing about "200 Cigarettes" is the title makes sense. Almost everybody smokes in the movie, but the title actually refers to a carton of cigarettes that Love buys Rudd. The soundtrack, full of 1980s stuff, is good, if you like that kind of thing.

But everything else is bad, bad, bad. The acting, aside from Love's, is bad. (When Rudd gets angry, he screws up his face as if he swallowed a worm). You feel the worst for Ricci, a real talent

stuck in a bad accent and even worse dialogue. Even the lighting is bad.

The movie doesn't make much sense, either. Why is this movie set in 1981? Aside from dress and music, not one reference suggests this happened 17 years ago. Look around at the traffic, too. Hey, besides that cab Chappelle's driving, everything else is a 1990s model car.

And for that matter, why is the movie set on New Year's Eve? It could have been any party, any time. There's no snow, but, then again, it sure isn't cold, because half the people aren't wearing coats. The filmmakers checked authenticity at the door.

What Bramon Garcia should have done is made "200 Cigarettes" a musical. The soundtrack, which runs for almost the entire film, should have been turned way up, as to overpower the

Film Review The Facts

Title: "200 Cigarettes"
Stars: Christina Ricci, Courtney Love, Paul Rudd, Ben Affleck
Director: Risa Bramon Garcia
Rating: R (adult language, content)
Grade: F
Five Words: "Cigarettes" stinks up the theater

voices of characters. That way, instead of hearing them talk, we could have heard the music.

The film still wouldn't have been any good, but it'd have been better than the washout it was.

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Noyes Gallery shows abstract twig pottery

BY JEFF RANDALL
Senior staff writer

As many poetic and bohemian types will tell you, art is in the eye of the beholder.

And for local artist Tony Guido, beholding has become both a full-time profession and a part-time inspiration.

For more than a decade, Guido has parlayed his love of art into a career as a florist. And recently, he directed his artistic drive into pottery making.

Guido's latest exhibition opens today at the Noyes Art Gallery and runs through the end of the month. The exhibit features more than 30 examples of twig pottery by the Bellevue native.

"It was an easy transition for me, since I've been working with natural materials for so long as a florist," Guido said. "My pottery reflects that love of nature."

Although some uninitiated sorts may turn their noses up at the presentation of functional and nature-based arts such as floral arrangements and pottery, Guido believes the close connection between his work and natural materials lends something to his creative process.

"I've developed a very unique, very distinctive look to everything I do," he said.

Guido has begun to address the functional label of pottery, too.

"I used to do really practical pieces, things designed merely to hold



ART COURTESY OF TONY GUIDO
A FORMER FLORIST, Tony Guido now expresses his love for natural elements through his pottery, which frequently incorporates earthy elements such as grasses and branches.

objects and look good while doing so," he said. "Recently I've gotten away from that, and I've worked in a more abstract mind-set."

The results are pieces that range in size from typical pottery to fist-sized paperweights. Still functional, one might say, but what one might say doesn't hold a lot of water with this artist, anyway.

"I've been told that I have a primitive quality to my work," Guido said. "Some people might not like that, but I take it as a compliment. I like that idea a lot."

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