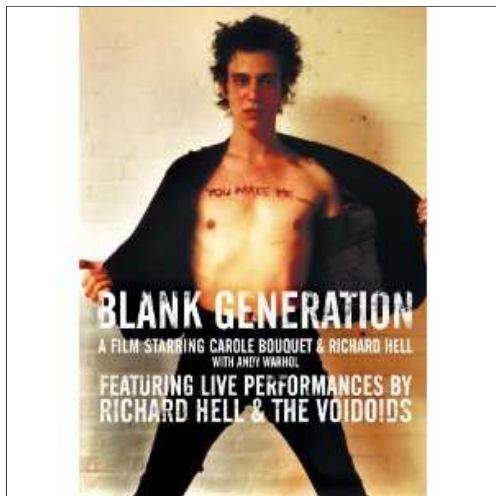


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BLANK GENERATION (NR) (MVDVISUAL)

by Michael Toland

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Blank Generation has accrued a certain legendary status. Shot in New York in 1978 (but not released until 1980), the film depicts the star-crossed romance between up-and-coming rock singer Billy, played by rock icon **RICHARD HELL**, and French television interviewer Nada, played by the lovely **CAROLE BOUQUET**. Punk aficionados lust for this film because of several scenes of Hell and the **VOIDOIDS** tearing up the stage at CBGB, and they'll be happy to note how good the band looks and sounds. It's a good thing those scenes are so hot, because otherwise there's little to recommend the movie. Directed and "written" by German **FASSBINDER** acolyte **ULLI LOMMEL**, the story lacks momentum, direction or even meaning. The acting comes off as completely enervated and **ANDY WARHOL** cameos for no purpose whatsoever. The only things to recommend this film besides the Voidoids segments are the sharp cinematography depicting the Lower East Side in the late 70s and the wonderfully atmospheric soundtrack by future Oscar, Tony and Pulitzer Prize winner **ELLIOT GOLDENTHAL**.

None of the movie's many flaws are lost on its star, however. The DVD includes a fantastic interview (conducted by writer **LUC SANTE**) in which Hell notes how little

direction he or any of the other actors were given by Lommel, who seemed to be making the whole thing up as he went along. Hell doesn't spare himself, either – he refers at one point to his performance as "abysmal." But it's quite clear that Lommel had no real idea what a "blank generation" was, or what direction he should take, and the actors – and the audience – suffer for it. With over 30 years of distance between himself and the film, Hell doesn't sound bitter or angry at all, even though he characterizes the filmmaking process as "infuriating," and that, coupled with his honesty, makes the interview far more entertaining than the film itself. If you're a fan of Hell or failed European art flicks, *Blank Generation* is definitely worth a rental. If not, though, don't waste your time.

<http://www.mvdb2b.com>

Filed under indie drama

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