

Leap In The Dark

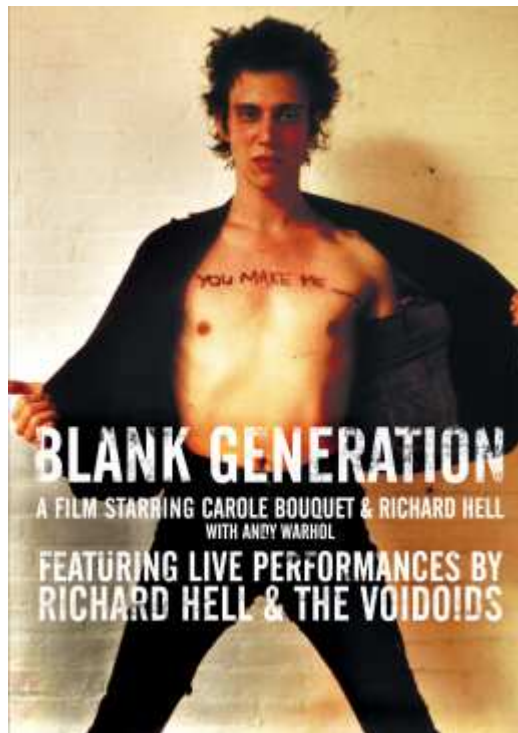
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DVD Review: *Blank Generation*

The late 1970's saw pockets of new artistic expression break out in rebellion against the staid and conservative old order in various cities all over the world. The most obvious example was of course punk rock and its rejection of the glamour and wealth that had come to be associated with pop music stardom. Whereas the Beatles had received honours from the Queen for services to their country, the Sex Pistols penned an attack on the establishment with their harsh and sardonic take on the country's national anthem, "God Save The Queen". However it was more than just a rejection of old standards taking place, as punk symbolized the populist attitude towards the arts of the time.

The "do it yourself", independent spirit that was so much a part of the early days of punk rock, was also to be found in the film world as well. With the advent of video technology, it had become less expensive for an individual to make a film on his or her own without the support of a major studio. This period of independence happened to coincide with the rise in popularity in North America of Germany's great experimental film makers of the day; [Werner Herzog](#), [Wim Wenders](#), and [Rainer Werner Fassbinder](#), who inspired many both in North America and Europe to become film makers.

One of those who was closely associated with Fassbinder was [Ulli Lommel](#), who ended up working in New York City in the mid to late 1970's, becoming involved with both the punk scene and associated with Andy Warhol. It was during this period that he made the movie [Blank Generation](#), starring New York punk rocker [Richard Hell](#), which has now been re-issued on DVD by [MVD Visual](#). The DVD also contains an all new in depth interview with Hell looking back on those days and commenting on the film. For those of you familiar with any of Hell's music from the 1970's you'll recognize the title of the film as being taken from the title of what was easily the most popular song he recorded with his group of that time, The Voidoids.




Don't be fooled by the cover of the DVD which reproduces the cover of the old Hell album of the same name, or the fact that it claims live performances of Hell and the Voidoids are part of the film, this is not a film about punk rock, or a punk rock film, in any shape or form. Richard Hell plays the roll of Billy, an aspiring punk "star", and the movie seems to be about his relationship with a French reporter who is supposedly shooting a film about him. Nada, played by [Carole Bouquet](#), is also involved with a journalist from Germany, played by the film's director, who is in New York desperate to interview Andy Warhol.

If that sounds like very little to build a movie around, while you're right, as the film is rather a disjointed mess with

none of the scenes seeming to have little or anything to do with each other. One could make the argument that director Lommel was trying to create the sense of directionless and nihilism suggested by the movie's title by showing us the characters own lack of purpose through these scenes. However there is so little of real substance within them,

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Mar 6, 2010
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