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Blank Generation (1980): A Film Starring Richard Hell

By

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Except for the Ramones, I was never really a fan of 70's New York Punk Rock. Television, Suicide, Blondie, Talking Heads, they were way too arty for me. Maybe it's cuz I'm slow. It's not that I didn't try. I bought Television's "Marquee Moon" and listened the shit out of it. I still slap it on about once a month just to see if now, finally, I'll get what everyone is talking about. I never do. It just sucks. But of all those bands I always kinda like Richard Hell. Maybe cuz he was kicked out of Television.

We here at The FSS receive a quarter dozen, sometimes up to half a dozen different free DVDs to review per 2 year basis. Such is the groundswell of support for the Sound System. Yeah. And one of the DVDs we got recently was a copy of "Blank Generation", a mock documentary starring Richard Hell, some beautiful French actress, a couple assholes and a very creepy and brief Andy Warhol.

Holy shit this movie sucked. It was directed by a German named Ulli Lommel. I'm not saying that made it suck, but it did not help. The story is cliché, the acting sucks (man, Richard Hell is playing a cat who is basically himself and does a bad job), and it is non-stop pretentious, lots of camera holding and bullshit. As a story, this thing fails. I should know. I took 3.5 credits of screenwriting in California. And mostly passed. So fuck you.

Where it doesn't fail though is as serving as a kind of time capsule. New York back in 1980 was New York, not Disney New York as it is now. It was cool to see CBGB's and the Bowery without the Whole Foods Markets and Starbucks all leaning round it. Also it was interesting to see the old-guard of NYC punk walking off into the distance, because by 1980, their time was up, them and all their books. The bands that were coming up, the scene that was just starting to be born was not gonna have any interest in French Symbolist Poetry. A movie about Harley Flanagan would not likely include a cameo by Andy Warhol, although that would be an interesting juxtaposition of characters. I told you I studied film, suckas.

So, yeah, if you have an hour and a half to kill, check out "Blank Generation", if only for the nostalgia of it, if only for the Voidoid performances, they're pretty good too. If your looking for a plot and acting, hit up the porn. May I suggest anything by the good people at My First Sex Teacher. They do good work.

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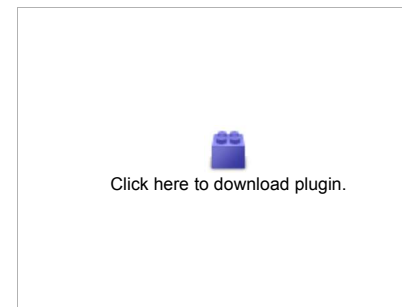


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