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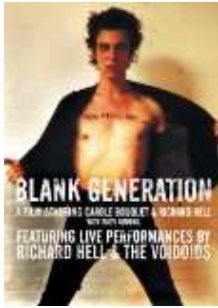
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Blank Generation DVD Review

February 24, 2010 by [Christina](#)

Filed under [DVD Reviews](#)

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Singing the song Blank Generation and looking into a sea of blank faces, up-and-coming punk star Billy (Richard Hell) stalks off mid-lyric and later explains, “I was onstage in the middle of a [song](#) when I realized I’d never be able to create in the audience the feelings that inspired the songs.... They’re drawn to this (the audience) like to a car wreck. The thing is, who’d ever want to feel like me?” in the film **Blank Generation**, [released on DVD](#) by MVD on February 23rd. This is an early 80’s film, a time capsule in which Richard Hell stars as the leader of his own band, The Voidoids (Robert Quine, Ivan Julian and Mark Bell), and they are shown in live performances at the now recently closed CBGB’s in New York City. Billy is not interested in making money (although he is interested in cutting records), and is in a tumultuous relationship with French journalist Nada (Carole Bouquet), sent to NYC on interview assignments.

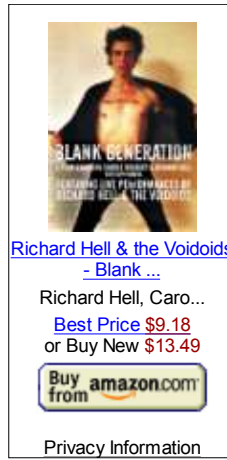
Billy describes Nada as cold relationally – “When she was really interested she’d never say so. She made the most intimate moments seem like business.” Nada is beautiful and intelligent, stating in her interviews that Jean Luc Godard said the cinema was part crime and part magic. When she interviews Jonathan D. Marlowe (Bill Mollino), author of *Escape To India*, he replies that the crime is in stealing images of people, and when she interviews Andy Warhol (who plays himself), Andy responds that some people have an extra energy in front of the camera, and that’s the magic. However, when Nada decides to leave Billy she tells him through a videotape she leaves behind, which shocks him (this was unheard of in that time period, and people didn’t have cell phones to do the trick via text messages then either).

A young Richard Hell gives a convincing performance of a confused [punk rocker](#) but the film itself seems to swill in pointlessness. When Nada asks Bill what he’d do if he made money (with his [music](#)), he answers that he’d do something else. There’s a scene in which they both can’t decide whether to go to the beach on a Friday (Bill particularly) until Nada pushes him out of his own car! This fragmentation seems to be the result of director and writer Uli Lommel (who, strangely enough, years later made *The B.T.K. Killer* and *The Zodiac Killer*) trying to imitate Jean Luc Godard’s existentialist films but instead missing the point completely and holding this film together by a string of strong quotes and the evocative music of Elliot Goldenthal, which is very plaintive when paired with Ed Lachman’s great visuals of New York City in the snow.

In *Blank Generation* Nada and Billy can’t decide whether they want to stay together or not, and keep leaving each other and then returning. In stark contrast record producer Kellerman (Ben Weiner), as a symbol of the older generation, states that after 38 years of marriage his wife says that love is what you’ve been through together.

The entire film seems best summed up by quoting Marlowe: “If you choose to escape it can be a full-time occupation, leaving no room for growth, spiritual or intellectual. Escape is like a racetrack – no matter how fast you go or where, you always come back to the same place.” A 45-minute Bonus Feature with Richard Hell being interviewed by Luc Sante informs us that Hell was embarrassed by the film at the time, never knowing what was expected of him, and that a girl who follows him around with a camera in it, Lizzy (played by Susann Love) actually married director Ulli Lommel afterwards and, because she was a Dupont heiress, funded his films for the next 8 years.

For me the film works best as a historical (and emotional) document of the end of the first wave of [punk rock](#) and the Factory/Andy Warhol era in NYC (not to mention showcasing Richard Hell’s youthful charm). It’s not rated but I wouldn’t recommend it for family viewing (especially since no one can figure out what it means!). Enjoyable as a slice of performances by Richard Hell and the Voidoids during a time not that very far away and yet not post-modern in spirit at all!



[Richard Hell & the Voidoids](#)
- Blank ...

Richard Hell, Caro...

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Rating: Not Rated

Running Time: 78 minutes

DVD Release Date: February 23, 2010

Grade: B

Bonus Feature: Richard Hell interviewed by Luc Sante

Directed by Ulli Lommel

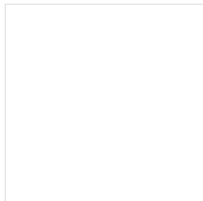
Music by Elliot Goldenthal

Cinematography by Ed Lachman

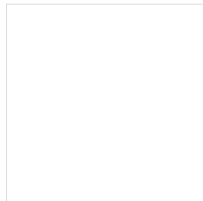
With Richard Hell and the Voidoids (Robert Quine, Ivan Julian, Mark Bell), Carole Bouquet, Ulli Lommel, and Andy Warhol

The Blank Generation DVD Review by Christina of [Movie Room Reviews](#)

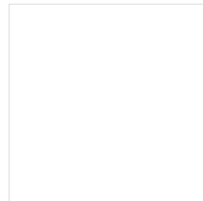
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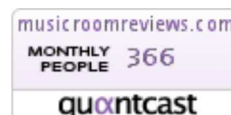
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