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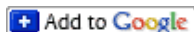
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## Llik Your Idols

[Lee & Lee Communications](#) // Unrated // May 19, 2009

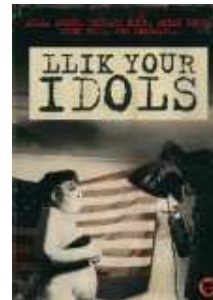
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Review by [John Wallis](#) | posted July 21, 2009 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

Labeled as "The Cinema of Transgression" by film maker Nick Zedd, there was, in the early to mid 80's, born a brief film movement out of NY. The style was rough, mostly dirtied up Super8, which reflected the low rent gutter settings, the film makers income, and subject matter which often mingled violence and pornography hand and hand.

While other directors get some clip treatment, the real focus in *LLIK YOUR IDOLS* is on Richard Kern and Nick Zedd, the twin heads of "The Cinema of Transgression." The movement did not have some extreme laserlike focus and roundtable group of collaborative talent like, say, *Dogma 95* attempted, so it makes sense to focus on Zedd and Kern as the standouts. Kern because of his then and post scene popularity, and Zedd because of his doggedness, phrase coining, and manifesto writing. Other commentators include filmmaker Bruce LaBruce, Sonic Youth guitarist Thurston Moore, ex-Swans singer Jarboe, painter David West, Lydia Lunch, Joe Coleman, and heavy contextualizing and contribution from "No Focus: Punk on Film" and "Deathtripping: The Cinema of Transgression" writer Jack Sargent.

The film gives a brief intro to the setting, New York after death of 60's hippie idealism and 70's punk and no wave, smack dab in the middle of 80's Reaganomics. Then we get to Kern, how he became the artist he is and fell out with making films. Poet, actress, Singer, scene figurehead



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Lydia Lunch is up next. The next section talks a little about performance artist/painter Joe Coleman but mostly adds more background detail into the aesthetics of the movement, their underground artist lifestyle, and launching points like the Invisible Cinema Festival. The film's final section deals with Zedd, his Underground Film Bulletin and Transgression manifesto writing, his particular style, and how he still scraps around making films today.

Structurally, with a more linear approach as opposed to individuals getting their own section, more could have been made of these two father figures and how they ended up. Kern and Zedd had a vague falling out of some sort. Zedd doesn't say much (period), the interview subjects dance around it, while Kern is dismissive of any collaboration he and Zedd had, implies he did his own thing until he got tired of it, and as for the divergence, he briefly mentions he was sick of Zedd always asking him for money. As it stands, Kern apparently cleaned himself up a bit and parlayed his love of poontang into an erotic art and commercial photography career, becoming, sort of, the US's Nobuyoshi Araki. Zedd appears less cleaned up and still sticks to the same filmmaking guns he did in the 80's, hoping that someday his attempts to break taboos will be recognized and turn some kind of profit.

*LLIK YOUR IDOLS* is solid but not definitive. It does have a few gaps. For instance, musician John Spencer is briefly mentioned as contributing a great, movement defining short, but we only see brief snippets of this, and Spencer himself is absent as an interview subject, leaving instead his drummer Russell Simins to offer some soundbites. A greater context could have been given by mentioning the wide ranging Transgression influences like Andy Warhol, Kenneth Anger, John Waters, and Herschell Gordon Lewis, to name a few. Much like the No Wave music doc *Kill Your Idols*, a cousin/companion of sorts to *LLIK*, there is this glaring lack of mentioning these roots. Both docs avoid talking of precursors, suggesting that somehow the movements sprung nearly full born from the 80's NY environment and its empty pocketed experimental artists.

**The DVD:** MVD Visual.

**Picture:** The doc is presented in standard fullscreen. Obviously, it is your typical melange of archival material and current clips. Bearing in mind that part of the whole aesthetic was rough and tumble, the older clips are typically roughshod Super8 and video sources. The newer interview clips aren't the highest end video and have wide matting for some reason but they get the job done without being visually amazing (come to think of it, in hindsight, filming the modern interviews in Super8 might have been keen).

**Sound:** A sole 2.0 stereo track is the only option. Clear, mixed well, respectable stuff but hardly a workout for the ears.

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**Extras:** The disc contains an interview with director Angeliqe Bosio (20:20) and two short films by Nick Zedd, "Police State" (18:37) and "War is Menstrual Envy" (14:15).

The shorts are a good primer for Zedd. Its the sort of thing best left for viewers to interpret as art or trash or both, suffice to say "War is Menstrual Envy" is the only short you'll see starring a burn victim and Annie Sprinkle. Subber blunders aside (apparently they couldn't be bothered to capitalize the "I's"), the interview with Bosio is quite revealing as she relates her story of how she was exposed to the films as a teen, and, particularly, how the project came about from her fan's perspective rather than a pure, trained documentarian's angle.

**Conclusion:** *LLIK YOUR IDOLS* is a decent enough primer for a hardly covered (on film, anyway) subject. A few holes keep it from being a complete vision but otherwise it is quite good and offers a decent view of the scene, a few of its contributors, and the duo that really stoked its fires. The DVD presentation is certainly a fine rental for the curious and an okay purchase for familiars.

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