Lamont Johnson's

Spacehunter: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone

Spacehunter (for short) is such a dispiriting experience that it forced me into happier memories of (generally) more enjoyable cinematic times. The outdoor locations conjure up something other planet in future years, looked in their wilderness grandeur much like Monument Valley. Arias. Probably they were but it took John Ford's eye for composition to make it scenically special. Here, rather like the movie, it is just flat with occasional eruptions. Nature made the Valley the way - assorted Canadians and Americans have made this movie mostly monotonous exposition and, climactically, violent and confusing action.

Another pleasant recollection was that 3-D used to be fun. Be assured that there have been stereoscopic films - even whole features, with stories, around for quite a long time. Columbia's ad campaign for Spacehunter calls it the first 3-D film backed by a major studio. They must mean the first one since last Thursday. Actually, Columbia's old torchbearing lot on Gore Street in old Hollywood produced the earliest of the 1935 wave. Men in the Dark, following on the independently made Anne Devil, which started the protruding balls rolling back then. No doubt, we're expected to have short memories, as well as attention spans, in these enlightened days.

3-D can still be fun. The kids in the audience settled down for some Spacehunter began and I joined them in hope. To be fair, they mostly seemed content at the end but old greybeard knew better. There were some fair effects; even the tendency of 3-D to make human figures look dwarfish was exploited quite well against the big natural spaces and rocks of the aforesaid Monument Valley. And Peter Strauss and young Molly Ringwald - aided by a few sharp lines in the script - scrape a kind of honesty here, at least an honest try. TV-movie-style. But alas, the wet rain dry, the nasties once introduced proved dreary and the (single) big indoor set was dark and grungy in the extreme.

An outsider cannot speculate on whether Jean LaFleur, who was to have directed from his own co-written story, could have done so adequately, once the originally modest project escalated and 3-D filming was imposed, almost at the last minute. LaFleur, in print, has been very reasonable and not publicly resentful of either Columbia or the chosen replacement, journeyman Lamont John­son. One hopes he will live to fight another day. Closing the book on that, then, it can be pointed out that nobody does anything on Spacehunter more than the single performance of the Philip Ford's eye for composition to make it already消亡的城市。然而，如果年轻人不接受这种虚拟现实技术，而是怀着怀疑和好奇去探索未知的领域呢？

Spacehunter: Adventures in the Forbidden Zone

Anthony Kramreither's

All In Good Taste

If All in Good Taste is to be considered at all -- a proposition open to serious doubt -- it is to be considered from the critical perspective that offers the most opportunity for both elucidation and appreciation. All in Good Taste is anything but the perspective of anti-art.

As J. Hoberman laid down the criteria, anti-art (see Film Comment vol. 16, no. 4, special issue on anti-art) is that which, "attempts to reproduce the institutional mode of reproduction, but it's failure to do so deforms the simplest formal operations so that you barely recognize them." Objectively bad films include works by Edward D. Wood, Jr. and Oscar Micheaux, works they attempt to create, that deconstruct themselves before your very eyes and leave nothing but the grinding, ceaseless awareness of botched artifice.

All In Good Taste more than amply fills the bill. Actors gaze serenely off-camera and recite their lines without processed beyond the merely wooden. Something intended as a running gag lurches on screen, sets up its premises, then either goes nowhere. The movie is portrayed by two wildly different locations -- one of them a town-house. The same reaction shot gets cut out twice before any further action occurs.

Montage sequences break out without warning, sometimes literally dozens of shots are repeated without number, often in mutually exclusive contexts. Montage sequences break out without warning, sometimes literally dozens of shots are repeated without number, often in mutually exclusive contexts.

It is a level of ineptitude comparable to that in Plan 9 From Outer Space, but by itself still not enough to truly plunge a work into the ranched depths of anti-art. For All In Good Taste must also be a certain seriousness of purpose and a deeply zoned personal vision at the helm, if not actually in control of it.

The veiled and ambiguous direction, the shifting of narrators, the co-author Anthony Kramreither, whose previous works include Mondo Strip I and II. I haven't seen either, but I'm told they are seen as satire of sociology what were, in fact, tacky and ineptorigs of tits 'n ass. Their existence makes All In Good Taste an unquestionably critical and important film, one that provokes the same reaction shot twice before any further action occurs.

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Even so, All In Good Taste is far from being an anti-masterpiece of the order of Glen Or Glenda. It misses on three counts. First, it was made, even less of it, Kramreither would have been deprived of such pros as Harvey Atkin and might then have produced a movie that was just too much of a compromise. Second, his decision to make this a comedy robs us of one of anti-art's legitimate pleasures: laughter. The in­vocation of the gag is empty, it does not transmute to the unintentionally funny, but to the unintentionally funny. In the grammar of the cinema, two negatives can add up to a positive and most important, Kramreither seems to be totally unaffected in, or perhaps afraid of, his own obsession - naked bodies.

But simple wish-fulfillment (in real life, Mondo Strip I & II) and self-justification are not the end of Kramreither's delving into the gummy domain of anti-art. The in­troduction of the character of the filmmaker (Jonathan Welsch) reluctantly agrees to make more sleazy only so the producer will leave him alone to end directors. "All in Good Taste" is a stand-up act, a gags act, a story act, a show act, and it fails in the end. The ultimate, to the same time, the ultimate, to be aware of "He made me do it" self-justification and I'm doing it to you suckers on purpose as a joke.

In All In Good Taste, identity between the two characters, the effect is one having just watched a particularly small, pallid and repellent scorpion sting itself to death.
Andrew Dowler

ALL IN GOOD TASTE


The Disappearance

Nearly six years after it was originally to have been released, Garth Drabinsky's first production, The Disappearance, finally made it onto Canadian screens and almost simultaneously went to pay-TV. When a film has been that long on the shelf, the natural reaction, given the recent history of Canadian cinema, is to suspect a work of dubious merit. However, when compared to some of the "lost" films made in 1979-1980, this 1977 production is not without interest, though it must, in all honesty, be called a failure.

Two notable cinema stylists loom large in the background of this picture. The dark narrative, fractured by numerous flashbacks, calls to mind the work of Nicolas Roeg, and not without reason. In addition, the presence of Donald Sutherland in the lead role - he appeared in Roeg's Don't Look Now - the script is by Paul Mayersberg, who also wrote for Roeg The Man Who Fell To Earth.

Similarly, John Alcott's photography, aided by Anne Pritchard's production design, clearly suggests the work he has done for Stanley Kubrick. The Canadian sections of the film, shot in and around Habitat and Man and His World in Montreal during the winter, show the influence of A Clockwork Orange in its functional, sterile settings. The British segment, meanwhile, with its setpiece in a converted Elizabethan coach house and an adjoining greenhouse, has some of the lushness and decadence (though not the dim smoky lighting) of Barry Lyndon.

There is, however, something clearly wrong in what purports to be a thriller if these technical matters are the best aspects of the film. To be sure, director Stuart Cooper does not go as far as the British commercial directors such as Alan Parker, Ridley Scott, Adrian Lyne and Hugh Hudson, who have tended to subordinate plot almost totally to technique, but The Disappearance is clearly heading that way. For it is the story, and the inability of the filmmakers to convincingly execute it, that has kept the film in storage for so long.

Donald Sutherland plays Jay Mallory, a professional assassin, whose employers (the "Office") use an international advertising agency as a front. Mallory has been resisting a new assignment, because his professional assassin, whose employers (the "Office") use an international advertising agency as a front. Mallory has been resisting a new assignment, because his passionate relationship with Donald Sutherland, is just inadequate for the role, which ends up as an amalgam of the worst aspects of Carole Laure and Genevieve Bujold. Moreover, in re-editing the film, Fima Noveck, who already had shown his work in Susanne and Circle of Two that he prefers simple plotting, has cut the flashbacks to such a degree that they have little impact and give none of the psychological insights into the victim that is the raison d'être for the device in the first place. All the secondary characters, most notably co-producer David Hemmings as Celandine's first husband, are reduced to little more than walk-ons.

The failure of The Disappearance taught Garth Drabinsky some lessons, so that when he made The Silent Partner he was in a position to ensure distribution through his own company. By the time he made The Changeling, he had...