



Kaboom

Gregg Araki

USA/FRANCE, 2010
English

86 minutes ■ Colour/D-Cinema
Production Company: **Why Not Productions**
Executive Producer: **Sebasti n K. Lemercier, Pascal Caucheteux, Jonathan Schwartz**
Producer: **Andrea Sparling, Gregg Araki**
Screenplay: **Gregg Araki**
Cinematographer: **Sandra Valde-Hansen**
Editor: **Gregg Araki**
Production Designer: **Todd Fjelsted**
Sound: **Trip Brock**
Music: **Ulrich Schnauss, Mark Peters, Vivek Maddala**
Principal Cast: **Thomas Dekker, Haley Bennett**

Production: **Why Not Productions, 3, Rue Paillet, Paris 75005 France. T (33-14) 824-2450**
whynot@wanadoo.fr

CONTACT INFORMATION

Canadian Distributor: **eOne Films**
International Sales Agent: **Wild Bunch**

(See page 440)

Never underestimate the influence of John Waters. Apparently, he mentioned to Gregg Araki that, while he admired Araki's recent, more serious films like *Mysterious Skin*, he really missed the questionable taste and confrontational panache of films like *The Doom Generation* and *Totally F***ed Up*. From that conversation *Kaboom* was born, and it does indeed share key touchstones with Araki's earlier films, including scatological and absurd Valley-inflected dialogue, elements of campy gore and Araki's troupe of arrestingly sexy guys and girls. But *Kaboom* also feels like a stealthily sophisticated synthesis of Araki's various experiments in tone and cinematography, a product of someone hitting their prime as a radical, independent artist.

Any attempt to walk through a conventional plot synopsis for *Kaboom* feels like a feeble exercise. One could say that it concerns a sex-crazed bisexual college boy plunging headlong into a supernatural world of demons, cults, human sacrifice and potential Armageddon. But the film ultimately ends up being about, and existing in, a borderline psychotic, psychosexually-hyperactive imaginary universe that feels absolutely real and true – not so much prescient as an alternate version of reality. The film's often chilling, drug-saturated paranoia (even we audience members start looking over our shoulders) makes the film feel like a m lange of *The Manchurian Candidate* and *Liquid Sky*.

What matters about *Kaboom*, other than its exceptional directorial control of outrageously

over-the-top material, is that Araki is able to reveal beautiful moments of human emotion against the backdrop of a manic tableau. Great sadness and joy inflect even the silliest of scenes; the confusion and pain of the onset of adulthood is felt deeply throughout, and Araki evokes just the right amount of wistfulness for a more carefree time.

It's also really freakin' funny. Corrosively so. And sexy, in an about-to-get-busted kind of way. In fact, *Kaboom* just might be the first great paranoid, dystopian sex comedy in the history of cinema. Bravo!

■ Noah Cowan



Gregg Araki was born in Los Angeles. He worked as a music critic for *LA Weekly* and received an M.F.A. in film production from the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. His feature films include *Three Bewildered People in the Night* (87), *The Long Weekend (O'Despair)* (89), *The Living End* (92) and *Nowhere* (97), as well as *Totally F***ed Up* (93), *The Doom Generation* (95), *Splendor* (99), *Mysterious Skin* (04) and *Smiley Face* (07), all five of which screened at the Festival. *Kaboom* (10) is his tenth feature.