



Smiley Face

Gregg Araki

USA, 2007
English

85 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **First Look Studios/Anonymous Content/Desperate Pictures**

Executive Producer: **Jörg Westerkamp, Thomas Becker, Stuart Burkin, H. Jason Beck**

Producer: **Steve Golin,**

Alix Madigan-Yorkin, Gregg Araki, Kevin Turen, Henry Winterstern

Screenplay: **Dylan Haggerty**

Cinematographer: **Shawn Kim**

Editor: **Gregg Araki**

Production Designer: **John Larena**

Sound: **Trip Block**

Music: **David Kitay**

Principal Cast: **Anna Faris, Danny Masterson, Adam Brody, John Krasinski, John Cho**

Production: **First Look Studios, 2000 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 410, Century City CA 90067 USA. T (424) 202-5062 F (424) 202-5130 ewolfe@firstlookstudios.com**

CONTACT INFORMATION

US Distributor: **First Look Studios**
International Sales Agent: **Nu Image**
(see page 472)

When one of America's most provocative art filmmakers directs a stoner farce, you know the results are going to be interesting. Unabashedly commercial in intent and clearly revelling in its broad slapstick capers, Gregg Araki's newest film is miles away from his masterful but mournful *Mysterious Skin*. However, his sophisticated distillation and hilarious repurposing of film history explains the swath of festivals worldwide that have embraced *Smiley Face*. Preston Sturges, Billy Wilder and especially Buster Keaton loom large as inspirations for the contemporary comedic antics on display.

A big part of the film's success comes from the wonderful Anna Faris as Jane, onscreen in virtually every shot. She captures the loping paranoia and goofy logic of the perpetually high young person perfectly. She also has a rubber body that seems to contort uniquely when she bangs into things, falls on her butt or tumbles down the street. It's a joy to watch; as a viewer, you want Araki to cook up ever more *outré* events to force her into further moments of mad behaviour.

The plot is really simple – as it should be. Out-of-work aspiring actor puffs up to start her day, then can't help but wolf down a tray of her dour, nerdy roommate's pot-laced cupcakes while on a munchies hunt. She then tries to fix her problems – replace the cupcakes (intended for a sci-fi convention), get drugs, pay her dealer, pay the electric bill, go to an audition – all while impossibly stoned. A road trip through many of Los Angeles's fabled and not-so-

fabled neighbourhoods ensues, culminating in a standoff with a motley crew of recently acquired enemies on a pier at the beach – or rather, high above in a Ferris wheel.

Araki has typically incorporated physical humour into his work – even in dark pieces like *The Doom Generation* and *The Living End* – so it's a true pleasure to see this always surprising artist apply his incomparable skills to an uproariously funny comedy.

■ **Noah Cowan**



Gregg Araki was born in Los Angeles and received an M.F.A. in film production from the School of Cinema-Television at the University of Southern California. *Smiley Face* (07) is the fifth of his films to screen at the Festival, following *Totally F***ed up* (93), *The Doom Generation* (95), *Splendor* (99) and *Mysterious Skin* (04). His filmography also includes more than a dozen shorts and the features *Three Bewildered People in the Night* (87), *The Long Weekend [O'Despair]* (89), *The Living End* (92) and *Nowhere* (97).

SPONSORED BY

