

FILM THREAT truth in entertainment

FILM THREAT

BACK TALK

BLOGS

DVD

SHOP

headlines

reviews

videos

interviews

features

festivals

FREE Weekly Newsletter

your email here

sign up / manage



CALL FOR ENTRIES
EXTENDED deadline:

March 17

deadCENTER



SKINNED DEEP

(DVD)  ★★★★★

by Amanda Reyes

(2005-12-19)

2004, Rated R, 97 minutes,
Fangoria Films

As a lover of all things quirky and odd in the world of film, I must admit "Skinned Deep" fits that description to a T. And I loved it.

Special effects artist Gabe Bartalos made his directorial debut with this unusual item, which is sort of like "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" meets "Brain Damage". The combo actually makes sense. Bartalos worked on both "TCM 2" and every Frank Henenlotter film produced to date (minus the first "Basket Case"). But this is not a cookie cutter rip-off of his coworkers creations. Just the opposite in fact, Bartalos barrels through convention, deconstructs all that is considered normal, turns it on its ear and concocts a pastiche of surreal imagery of a world gone mad.

Tina (Karoline Brandt) and her family stumble across a seemingly innocent tourist trap run by the sweet and sinister Granny (Liz Little) only to find out that they have been lured into a tour of hell, complete with unusual monsters like Plates (Warwick Davis) who is a dish throwing midget, Brain (Jay Dugre), a, well, a giant brain whose dreams of normalcy involve running through New York naked and the scariest beast of them all, the malevolent Surgeon General who terrifies at first glance.

Once the family is dispatched, pretty Brandt is left to fend for herself, and help arrives in various forms, including an elderly biker gang called the Ancients (Forrest J. Ackerman plays one of the gang members!) but they may prove to be no match as the bad guys' world of chaos has no easy escape.



FILM THREAT truth in entertainment

FILM THREAT

BACK TALK

BLOGS

DVD

SHOP

headlines

reviews

videos

interviews

features

festivals

FREE Weekly Newsletter

your email here

sign up / manage



CALL FOR ENTRIES
EXTENDED deadLINE:
March 17

deadCENTER



"Skinned Deep" is funny and inventive as hell. Why Bartalos chose such an ambitious and original project as his debut remains a mystery, it is simply a bold turn for a first time director. The movie relies heavily on wacky special effects which Bartalos is the master of, but there's also a crisp and deranged sense of humor that connects with his weird creations. Some of the funniest moments involve Plates' bizarre soliloquies on life and of course, the Ancients battle to the death. Bartalos also uses Tina as an anchor to the real world so you always have someone to root for.

The audiences' love or hate of this film will lie in their taste for the absurd. It is obvious to me now that Henenlotter wasn't the only insane person on his film sets. He and Bartalos walked hand in hand into the world of the outlandish and never looked back. For this I am grateful.

