

PINK FLAMINGOS (1973)

Cast: Divine (Divine A.K.A. Babs Johnson); David Lochary (Raymond Marble); Mink Stole (Connie Marble); Mary Vivian Pearce (Cotton); Edith Massey (Mama Edie); Danny Mills (Crakers); Cookie Mueller (Cookie)

Written, produced and directed by: John Waters

Sometime back John Waters - an N.Y.U. film school dropout who lives in Baltimore - must have gotten the notion that he'd like to make films that are so disgusting and sexually perverse that critics couldn't write about them without seeming like absolute perverts to their readers for having sat through them, and he accomplished just that. Influenced perhaps by Warhol, Bunuel and Dali, Waters wrote, directed, produced, filmed and edited a series of outrageous no-hold-barred 16 mm and 35 mm "comedies" full of repulsive images, abominable behaviour and grotesque characters that are unique in cinema history.

No doubt the most despicable and famous of Waters stock company is a round-headed, three hundred pound, bald, loudmouth in drag who uses the name 'Divine', compliments of Waters. Actually, Divine is not bad as an actress or, better comedienne. As for the other stars of Pink Flamingos, they're not bad; they can't act of course, but they can overact, and this contributes to the intentional campiness of the whole affair.

The film is imaginative and at times witty. Its so ridiculous and crude that you laugh despite yourself. The premise, itself, is kind of intriguing. Divine and her family versus the Marbles in a battle to prove who is indeed worthy of the title "The World's Filthiest". Waters lets us decide as he switches back and forth between the two camps as if he were at a ping-pong match, not cutting away until the participants do something mean or act like pigs.

Waters and Divine made it to the big time with "Pink Flamingos". Waters first colour film was made in Baltimore for twelve thousand dollars and has since grossed several million dollars as an underground favourite. Waters termed this film 'a trip through decadence' and promoted it as 'the most disgusting picture of all time', a claim that is confirmed in the final moments when Divine proves she is indeed the "World's Filthiest Person" by really, truly eating dog excrement on the screen.

The above is an extract from an article about "Pink Flamingos" in 'Cult Movies' by Danny Peary.

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Our next presentation: We return to normal on 14th April with "La Regle de Jeu", Jean Renoir's bitter-sweet masterpiece about the decadence of the aristocracy.

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