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An Askew View: The Films of Kevin Smith

John Kenneth Muir

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John Kenneth Muir : An Askew View: The Films of Kevin Smith before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Askew View: The Films of Kevin Smith:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. fun readBy David BeathamIts a fun read for any true kevin smith

fan. goes in to many details. and adds insight to his process. recommended read of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great History of View Askew for new Kevin Smith fans By brittdasheet When I first heard about this book, I was intrigued. Being a big fan of Kevin Smith and his works, I thought that this book would give a new insight into the man and his genius. Unfortunately, since I am a big fan, I had done my research by reading books like Spike, Mike, Slackers Dykes plus the hard-to-find Mallrats book published by Kitchen Sink Press. I've also listened to all of the DVD commentaries in addition to going to see Kevin Smith speak in public. So, I was somewhat disappointed that there was barely any new information included in this book. Not to say that this book was awful, which it is not. The book does a great job of culling all of the information about each movie and breaking it down into easy digestible form with many notated quotes from Kevin Smith and others. Regrettably, the author sometimes slips his personal feelings when providing the View Askew timeline, which disrupts the flow of the book and loses some of the objectivity of this historian. Also, the author sometimes forces too many similes when referencing Mr. Smith. It almost seems like the author wants to emulate the pop culture wittiness that his subject has been known for. However, in the day of instantaneous access and easily obtainable information, the task of surprising people with new information is a daunting task, especially when the subject is on someone who uses the Internet as his marketing mouthpiece. But, this book does a great job of staying on track, dishing out colorful stories and giving the reader a wonderful ride through the View Askew universe. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. a book-long DVD extra By Kenneth Gosier My impression was that this book was very much like a DVD extra, made into book form, and stretched out to fill 214 pages. It was a fun read for me, since I'm a Kevin Smith fanboy. Tons of behind-the-scenes tidbits, especially about the making of Clerks. It's always interesting to see how someone got their start, and what lessons can be taken from it. There's an interesting irony that, in making a movie about mid-90's slackers, the cast and crew worked insane hours and slept very little for weeks on end. My only criticism was that the author does tend to get a bit fanboy-ish himself from time to time. Which is all well and good, if an author is excited about his material. However, he tends to over-gush when writing about View Askew films and their receptions. That being said, I still enjoyed this book a great deal. It takes you into the world of View Askew, and gives it breadth and depth, which then makes the movies themselves more compelling.

(Applause Books). When Clerks opened at cinemas across the country in 1994, it took everyone, especially the film industry, by surprise. Filmed on a shoestring budget after hours at a convenience store, it was crude (in technique and language), realistic and, above all, hilarious. The movie's nationwide success helped launch the independent film boom of the 1990s and catapulted its director, Kevin Smith, to full-fledged stardom. Smith's work is explored in An Askew View, the first ever study of his films. John Kenneth Muir examines all of Smith's movies, including Mallrats, Chasing Amy, and the hugely controversial and variously interpreted Dogma. Muir discusses Smith's themes and obsessions in depth: his New Jersey boosterism, the cast of characters that pop in and out of all of his films, and the references to Star Wars and other icons of pop culture. An Askew View is a fascinating and detailed history of the art of this visionary filmmaker, New Jersey's favorite local-boy-makes-good since Bruce Springsteen.

From Publishers Weekly Taking its title from Smith's View Askew production company, Muir's latest offering is a guided tour of the iconic New Jersey filmmaker's cinematic oeuvre, from short synopses of Smith's films to behind-the-scenes stories of how they were made and how Smith himself has evolved. Muir (a contributor to Cinescape and Filmfax) creates a compelling-and somewhat inspirational-portrait of Smith, who shot to indie-fame with his 1994 debut Clerks, which Smith financed with his own credit cards and shot after hours at a local minimart, in part because he thought his friends were funny and wondered if others would think so. They did. Since then, Smith's trademark characters, Jay (played by Jason Mewes) and Silent Bob (played by Smith), have appeared in increasingly ambitious, popular and profitable films, such as Chasing Amy, Dogma and Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back. Muir does an admirable job of capturing in print the appeal of Smith's films, and some of the stories behind the films are both telling and hilarious. For example, Dogma, Smith's irreverent take on Catholicism, was almost nixed by Disney Corp. because of protests by Catholics. Smith responded by anonymously joining a group picketing Dogma in front of a New Jersey theater and trashing his own film to an oblivious local reporter. Although Muir occasionally sprinkles the book with others' criticisms of Smith, there is unfortunately little of Muir's own critical voice in the narrative. But that shouldn't bother Smith's legion of fans, who-especially those in film school-will enjoy this effort. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Although it might seem premature to investigate the work of a director who has made only five films (Clerks, Mallrats, Chasing Amy, Dogma, and Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back), Muir (Terror Television) gives Kevin Smith a rip-roaring tribute. Despite the hagiography, Muir makes a good case for the distinctive cinematic voice of a Generation Xer who grew up in northern New Jersey and was influenced by A Man for All Seasons, Star Wars, syndicated TV sitcoms, and Richard Linklater's Slacker. Although Smith was apparently busy shooting the forthcoming Jersey Girl (which Muir previews) and thus unavailable for interviews, many of his actors and technicians spoke with the author. Smith himself is quoted from past interviews, for which detailed citations are provided. After his biography, Muir tackles each of Smith's films in

turn, providing plot followed by analysis and concluding with "Askew Views," commentary on recurring Smithian themes. While one can dispute Muir's equating Smith with Woody Allen, this is a well-written, engaging, and informative book suitable for all film collections. Kim Holston, American Inst. for Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters, Malvern, PA Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.