

Film Review

Pulp Fiction

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He is Hollywood's most popular extremist; a whiz kid of the 90s who made it on behalf of one film and two scripts. *Reservoir Dogs*, Quentin Tarantino's directorial debut, turned into a real powerhouse of a movie, as one critic maintained. Fans will especially recall that ear-chopping sequence, performed to the sounds of Stealers Wheel's "Stuck in the Middle with you" (that song s never gonna be the same again, folks!). Tarantino's script for Tony Scott's *True Romance* was admittedly less impressive although the film's final scene at a beach in Malibu will be remembered: Christian Slater and Patricia Arquette, deeply in love with a postcard sunset--what a case of "True Romance"! Unfortunately, the guy's right eye was blown away by a bullet; Mr. Director himself made him survive to provide some kind of "ironical doubling" upon a traditional happy ending ... Tarantino's script for Oliver Stone's psychedelic ride into violence, *Natural Born Killers*, should better be forgotten, though. That's easier said than done because people will always think of that particular movie in terms of "Hey, wasn't that the film nobody liked?" Indeed, it was. Let's assume that the cinematic mess was a case of "Stone executing Tarantino" and not vice versa ...

Pulp Fiction, Tarantino's second directorial work, won the Golden Globe in Cannes in 1994. The cast looks like a "who is who" in Hollywood: John Travolta, Bruce Willis, Harvey Keitel, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman, Tim Roth, Amanda Plummer, Christopher Walken, Rosanna Arquette ... Tarantino's self-conscious ride into a world of "cheap thrills" was a train not to be missed. Although the film did not sweep the Oscar floor as intensely as *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemecki's "Back into the Past" targets the kids as well, so there!), it became a considerable commercial and critical success. Rumour has it that *Pulp Fiction* is a hit!

The film invites the viewer for a postmodern ride into the world of neo-noir; into a second-hand reality which, in almost every single moment, cites an entire universe of influences. The dialogue is *Mean Streets* revisited (great lines, man! Especially the one about the "Royal with Cheese" ...); Plummer and Roth are a poor man's

Bonnie and Clyde, a movie gangster couple waiting for their reappearance in John Jost's low-fi vision of the world; the rape sequence in the cellar is pure Southern Gothism, an "intertextual" reference to John Boorman's *Deliverance*; an adrenalin shot into Uma Thurman's heart cites the gore genre; a head exploding like an over-ripe tomato is pure splatter-fun; the story about Bruce Willis's watch cheap melodrama; a visit to a "Rock and Roll" diner turns into an *American Graffiti*--type of pastiche (great: A Buddy Holly waiter on roller skates!), and the film's last scene (a "showdown interruptus") cites Mr Tarantino himself (e.g. the bang bang-everybody's-gonna-die finale of *Reservoir Dogs* which cites the bang bang-everybody's-gonna-die showdown of *True Romance* ...). Not to mention the soundtrack, a "director's choice" of obscure surf instrumentals, early seventies soul (Al Green, Kool and the Gang) and contemporary songwriting. I think that's what they call eclectic!

It's not all pulp, trash and gore, though. *Pulp Fiction* presents itself as a patchwork of episodes, a series of *Short Cuts* which have to be arranged in a linear chronological manner: the film's first and last scene (which form a circle) mark neither the beginning nor the end of the action. The film is a puzzle waiting to be solved in the mind of the viewer who is supposed to create his own movie. Moral values? Oh yes, we have them. Mafia killer Samuel L. Jackson manages to progress from the Old Testament to the New: instead of citing "an eye for an eye" type of lines before executing his victims, he learns to preach mercy and forgiveness. Heart-breaking stuff, I tell you...

The Turkish film poster displays Uma Thurman on the cover of a pulp novel. Its price: 16 kurus. Hey man, your film's worth much more!!!