

Katrina del Mar: Girls Girls Girls

Participant, Inc., New York



Katrina del Mar, *Camille Blowing Bubbles at Riis*. Courtesy the artist and Participant

Mediated, commodified and commercialized into a language beyond recognition, sexuality has become an increasingly problematic field of representation. When the subject in question is girls, well, it's even more fraught. Katrina Del Mar has been active in underground film, photography and erotic fiction for two decades, and her vision is as transcendent as it is transgressive. In her first major solo gallery exhibition in New York at the

always adventurous alternative space **Participant Inc.** through February 17, Del Mar weaves her aesthetic obsessions into an expansive visual tableau.

Beyond the obvious appeal of her vision- women who are devastatingly fierce and utterly feminine- the most captivating aspect of Del Mar's art resides in its uncanny capacity to collapse fact and fiction. She will shoot and art direct the poster for a movie before she makes it, and may not in fact make the movie, allowing the ad to be the art. In two shelves of her own books at Participant, some contain prose, others are just pictures, one is poetry, another a dream journal, a few are unfinished, and most are, in fact, blank. Perhaps she will get around to filling these pages, but until then the covers- the lowbrow mix of sensational title and lurid image - more than amply suffice.

Del Mar's work is less about documentary intentions than fantasy, and therein lies its disruptive force. Erotic fantasy art has always been primarily about the desires of the viewer, while Del Mar's are unmistakably shaped by those of her subjects. A edgy tone of verite is enhanced by the fact that none of her subjects are professional models or actresses, and the artist's lowbrow sources of inspiration provide the humor. Their believability does not rely on the viewer's suspension of disbelief so much as that of her participants. Some of these girls may be tough, some might be natural exhibitionists, but it's the story that acts as the transformative force here. The photographic groupings that make up a large part of the installation show series of girls in acts of love, as members of some cartoon violent biker gang, and as bold adventurers on a surfing safari unfold like implied quasi-narratives. Such is the self-subsuming power of fantasy that it hardly matters if these girls are in fact lovers or members of a subculture gang, for the real subject is ultimately the empowering warrant and dominion of that theatrical other.

— *By Carlo McCormick* 02/05/2013

Critics' picks

The three
best events
this week



1 Katrina del Mar, **GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS** Participant Inc

Filmmaker and photographer Katrina del Mar's images put a decidedly queer spin on American archetypes, from surfer babes to motorcycle gangs. ► **See Ongoing**

FR

...THE ROCKS OUT
 the New Group's production of *Clive*,
 Ethan Hawke aims to prove he can direct,
 act, sing, and look good in eyeliner. Star-
 ring as a bad boy '90s rocker, he teams up

...his retelling of Bertolt Brecht's *Baal*,
 which concerns a hedonistic poet on his
 path to ruin. Zoe Kazan (*Ruby Sparks*) and
 Vincent D'Onofrio also star. In previews,
 opens February 7, through March 9, The-
 atre Row, 410 West 42nd Street, 212-239-
 6200, thenewgroup.org, \$60 ANGELA ASHMAN

Top, from left: akashicbooks.com, Steve Gullick, trinidadjamesgg.com



Katrina del Mar

▼ ART

Bad Girls Are you tough e

You won't find any coy young things in Ka-
 photographer and filmmaker, who has be-
 documenting women (often her badass f-
 mean, and seriously tattooed. Her short film "Gang-
 the city, starring Kari Krome of the Runaways and
 del Mar acclaim as a rising artist to watch. Continui-
 her new show at Participant Inc. includes a clip from
 for pulp-fiction paperbacks (one is titled *Wild Girl* c-
 flashing knives, flashing brass knuckles, flashing br-
 February 17, Participant Inc., 253 East Houston Street



THE VIEW Del Mar puts her rebel spin on the latest in a trilogy of girl-gang send-ups.

Her first attempt was nearly two decades ago, when she made a short called "Non Dairy Creamer," which was stolen out of her car. "So I gave up for a while," she admits. Del Mar would wait another ten years before making "Gang Girls 2000," a grainy, sexy, NYC-based tale of gangs the Sluts, the Glitter Girls, the Blades and the Ponies, and all of their driving, fighting and kissing adventures. "I've got a big mouth and I told everyone that I was making a movie, so a cast of three exploded into a cast of 28," she says, adding that the actors are all friends of hers. Next came "Surf Gang," which traded cool cars for longboards—but this time around she got some sorely needed financial

"It's all guerrilla-style, girl."

assistance in the form of grant money. "The first film I paid for by not paying rent," she says. "And for the third, I was like, 'Let's just do it!'"

"Hell on Wheels" is the final 25-minute girl-gang movie in Del Mar's trilogy ("I want to distribute them as three-packs," she says), with a cast of 30. It's the tongue-in-cheek tale of a girl from a gang, the Brooklyn Breaknecks—mean vegans who kick the girl out after a guinea-pig lab rescue gets her shot and leaves her wheelchair-bound, which inspires her to join an outcast gang of dyslexic bikers. Also figuring into the action are the Slayers, a homeless queer-youth skateboard gang (in which Del Mar appears as a member, since one of her actors didn't show up that day); a roller-derby gang; and a gambling, Vespa-riding gang clad in fashions crafted by Stella Zotis (from *Project Runway* season five). The music was composed—in fine lesbian fashion—through a collaboration between her girlfriend, rocker Sarah Greenwood of GSX, and an ex, Betsy Todd, who appeared in "Gang Girls 2000."

Now that the trilogy is complete, Del Mar (who has also recently directed music videos, including for GSX) has plenty of new projects brewing. "I've been writing TV shows, and I'm writing a screenplay for a vampire film," she says, adding that a basketball documentary, "Heavy Eyeliner Basketball," is also in the works. "Oh, and I do want to direct and get paid to do it."

"Hell on Wheels: Gang Girls Forever" premieres Sat 3. See listings and katrinadelmar.com.

Movie spars

Katrina del Mar's latest short brings sexy, fighting girl gangs to the screen.
By Beth Greenfield

If you're tooling around the city in the next few days and happen to catch a glimpse of raven-haired, septum-ringed photographer-turned-filmmaker Katrina del Mar, don't be surprised if she's got a mob of equally badass girls in tow. That'd be the massive cast of her latest short, "Hell on Wheels: Gang Girls Forever," which she's filming in parks and on street corners throughout Williamsburg and the Lower East Side, practically up until the moment of this week's premiere.

"I set a deadline for myself by planning a public event," Del Mar explains. "I've got to kick my own ass, basically." As far as her approach to on-location shoots goes, "It's all guerrilla-style, girl," she says. And it calls for being sneaky.

"A lot of times I don't say, 'Action!' I say, 'Okay.' Because I don't want some dickhead to come up to me to say, 'Do you have a permit?'"

Shunning the rules is nothing new to the East Village shutterbug, who never studied photography or filmmaking but has, nevertheless, built a thriving career out of both.

A New Jersey native from "working-class, artistic roots" (her father was both a painter and a mailman), she had felt an early pull toward all things tough and rebellious. "Growing up with two older brothers, I would follow them around while they rode minibikes and built forts and harvested ditchweed. And I was riding itty-bitty minibikes back when I was seven," she recalls. She had her first girlfriend at the age of 14, but struggled with her sexuality for a long time—especially when her family up and moved to the Midwest. "I remember seeing Joan

Jett's 'Crimson and Clover' video, where she didn't change the gender [of the love interest]," she says. "That was profound."

The budding artist also spent much of her youth doing photography and making zines and picture books. Still, a fan of languages, she studied German in college, and it was not until years later, when she moved to the city and started forming her own clan of "metalheads and queers," that she started snapping photos in earnest, making a name for

herself as a documentarian of punks, rock & rollers, queens, dykes and various other downtown nightlife freaks.

Eventually, she picked up a Super-8 camera to try her hand at making pictures that moved. "The ideas for my photo shoots were getting more and more elaborate, so I was definitely moving in that direction."

MORE FILM!

Watch a scene from "Hell on Wheels" at timeoutnewyork.com/gay.

[Free Newsletter](#)
[RSS](#)

[BUST me!](#)
[Sign In](#)

 Username

 Password

☐ Remember me

[Login](#)
[Forgot login?](#)

 No account yet? [Register](#)
[Digital Subscribers >>](#)
[The BUSTShop](#)

ADVERTISEMENT


[Shop the BUSTShop >>](#)

Hell on Wheels : Sold Out NYC debut

 Posted by: [jodi sh doff](#) in [Artsy](#) on Jul 01, 2010


[Katrina del Mar](#) admittedly, and obviously, influenced by [Russ Meyer](#), likes to make movies with tough girls. Dubbed "Charles Manson, with giant boobs" by a *Hell on Wheels* cast member, she is surrounded by wicked-cool, smart & talented women, lots of them, and she puts them all in her movies. Girls that roll, surf, skate, drive and canter - if it moves, her girls are doing it in skimpy leathers and heavy eyeliner. Someone's going to get hit, there's gonna be at least one great girl on girl makeout scene and, oh yeah, a kick ass [soundtrack](#).

Like Warhol and John Waters, she has a solid stable of performers, you see some of the same faces from one film to the next. Stick around for the credits and you'll realize that the women on screen (men are few and far between) are also the women behind the screen. Everyone is heavily invested in each film, building set pieces, writing/playing the soundtrack, editing, writing dialogue, designing costumes. I'm not sure that anyone has just a single job of actress. Everyone pitches in, because, *hello?* Katrina makes films about girl gangs.

Her first, [Gang Girls 2000](#) (Super 8mm 27 min. 2000) is already a underground cult classic with one of my favorite all time movies lines. Describing the Glitter Girls rival Brooklyn girl gang, the Sluts, del Mar's voice over says, "They tend to use the sign of the cross when they're tagging and the Holy Virgin Mary in their tattoos because the symbols of Catholicism just cry out *slut*."

[Surf Gang](#) (Super8mm / Video 25 min. 2005) took the rumble from the streets of NYC to the beaches of NYC...and Long Island. On the lam and in search of surf, the Rockaway Ruffnecks flee to the Hamptons after beating down the son of a local Guido don. The uber-privileged blond Hampton (The Ungratefuls) surfer chicks never had a chance against the disenfranchised Ruffnecks.

The third installment in the Gang Trilogy, [Hell on Wheels : Gang Girls Forever](#) (HD Video/ Super 8mm 36 min. 2010) sold-out its long awaited NYC debut tonight at the [NYC Anthology Film Archives](#), following screenings of *Gang Girls 2000* and *Surf Gang*. *Hell on Wheels* is inclusive of all the non motorized wheely-gang-worlds - skateboards, bicycles, roller skates(cameos by the [Gotham Girls](#) Roller Derby and [Long Island Roller Rebels](#))—and is funny and clever in ways that the other films were not. There is a richer texture, a sophistication to the humor and the dialogue. Gang Girls didn't actually *have* dialogue, the brilliant voice-overs were dubbed afterwards,

symbols of Catholicism just cry out loud.

Surf Gang (Super8mm / Video 25 min. 2005) took the rumble from the streets of NYC to the beaches of NYC...and Long Island. On the lam and in search of surf, the Rockaway Ruffnecks flee to the Hamptons after beating down the son of a local Guido don. The uber-privileged blond Hampton (The Ungratefults) surfer chicks never had a chance against the disenfranchised Ruffnecks.

The third installment in the Gang Trilogy, **Hell on Wheels : Gang Girls Forever** (HD Video/ Super 8mm 36 min. 2010) sold-out its long awaited NYC debut tonight at the **NYC Anthology Film Archives**, following screenings of Gang Girls 2000 and Surf Gang. **Hell on Wheels** is inclusive of all the non motorized wheely-gang-worlds - skateboards, bicycles, roller skates(cameos by the **Gotham Girls** Roller Derby and **Long Island Roller Rebels**)—and is funny and clever in ways that the other films were not. There is a richer texture, a sophistication to the humor and the dialogue. Gang Girls didn't actually *have* dialogue, the brilliant voice-overs were dubbed afterwards, giving it the feel of a one of those campy Japanese horror movies dubbed in English.

The through line of the trilogy is that all of the girls would be on their own, parent-less, alone and vulnerable, were it not for the support of their loyal gang sisters. Sisters are doing it for themselves, in other words.

Hell on Wheels opens with a painfully funny send up of Hitchcock's Vertigo and Rear Window then rolls right into Psycho, with wheelchair bound Krank (Betsey Todd) in an argument with her self-centered mother (also Betsey Todd, cleverly shot so we never see mom's face). Even though del Mar says her scripts are mostly improv, some of it is just too good to be spur of the moment. The scene between wheelchair bound Krank and Mechanic (Genny "Slag" Pavitt) is absolutely brilliant in its comedic timing, even before the dialogue kicks in.

Of her gang "The Outcasts", group loudmouth Krash (Ashley "Patch" Evens) sums it all up when she says, "None of us do anything right, but we do it all day." Well, that says it all, doesn't it?

Hell on Wheels Gang Girls Forever MOVIE TRAIL...



Tagged in: [roller derby](#) , [movies](#) , [Katrina del Mar](#) , [Hell on Wheels](#) , [films](#)

The opinions expressed on the BUST blog are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of BUST Magazine or its staff.

Recommend

Joanna Webber, Patches Evens, and 28 others recommend this.

P

A

P

E

R

M

A

G

home

the blogs

arts
& stylepaper
magazine

party snaps

papertv

word of mouth

about last night

mr. mickey

fashion schmashion

eyespy

Katrina del Mar on Her Gorgeous Girl Gangs

BY PETER DAVIS



The Gang Girl trilogy, directed by **Katrina del Mar**, is premiering tonight at the **Anthology Film Archives**, at 8 p.m. The trilogy consists of *Hell on Wheels: Gang Girls Forever*, *Gang Girls 2000* and *Surf Gang*. Artist/photographer/ filmmaker del Mar, who has been dubbed "the lesbian Russ Meyer," started the trilogy a decade ago. I asked del Mar to tell me about her wild series of films.

What made you do the first movie, *Gang Girls 2000*, ten years ago?

I was inspired to make the first movie when Julie Tolentino from Clit Club asked me to do the visual displays for leather pride week. I said: 'I'll make a movie, filmed in Leatherama and in Glitter Vision.' I borrowed **Kembra Pfahler**'s Super 8mm camera and shot *Gang Girls 2000*. I was inspired by the beautiful women I was hanging out with, some of whom lived on the Lower East Side, rode low-rider bikes, wore tight pants and glitter makeup. Hence, The Glitter Girls. Some other girls I knew called themselves The Slobs -- they all had cars and dogs did graffiti and lived in Brooklyn. So I made up the Sluts. **Betsy Todd** could play chicken so she wanted to be in a knife wielding gang, **Chloe Dzubilo** had an apartment in Brooklyn so the Famous Blades of Chinatown were formed. It's just real life fictionalized, and it snowballed because once

people heard I was making a movie they wanted to be in it. Kembra and the **World Famous BOB** are in a gang called the Ponies who keep horses in their apartments.

What about Surf Gang 2000? Where did that idea come from?

A few years later, I was hanging out with a bunch of male surfers and they wanted me to film them surfing and at the same time people were bugging me to make another girl gang movie. So I made *Surf Gang* in 2006. At the beginning of the movie my narration says "This isn't exactly a Beach Boys song. This is the story of the Rockaway Ruffnecks; New York City surfers." Kembra Pfahler was the only woman I knew personally who actually knew how to surf so I begged her to be in it and she plays Blackie Rockaway, a beautiful 15-year-old surfer girl, who paddles out and disappears. Her little sister, Baby Rockaway, played by ex ABT ballerina **Nicolette Nolan**, forms a gang committed to violence. **Stella Zotis**, from *Project Runway*, has a big, hilarious part in *Surf Gang* and contributed costumes for it."



And now we have *Hell on Wheels:Gang Girls Forever*, the final chapter in the trilogy. Why a trilogy and not just one film?

Hell on Wheels: Gang Girls Forever came about because I got really stoked about roller derby from meeting **Suzy Hotrod** and a bunch of those roller derby girls wanted me to make a movie so I modified that idea into *Hell on Wheels: Gang Girls Forever* and included roller skates, skateboards, bicycles, Vespa scooters and a fucking wheelchair because Betsy Todd, the star of the film, was feeling lazy. I cast **Genny Pavitt** as the butch mechanic because cinema is really bereft of butch mechanics plus as a co-writer she really wrote the hell out of that scene, it's the Yoda moment, a real turning point. It made sense to me to finish up the series with this and make it a trilogy because I'm ready to move onto some new method of filmmaking that doesn't require cajoling huge numbers of busy New York City women into cramming themselves into sexy outfits and standing around looking cool and saying ridiculous things without being paid. The movies are all "no budget" labors of love. Each film lasts about 30 minutes so it's a nice set.

And now we have *Hell on Wheels:Gang Girls Forever*, the final chapter in the trilogy. Why a trilogy and not just one film?

Hell on Wheels: Gang Girls Forever came about because I got really stoked about roller derby from meeting **Suzy Hotrod** and a bunch of those roller derby girls wanted me to make a movie so I modified that idea into *Hell on Wheels: Gang Girls Forever* and included roller skates, skateboards, bicycles, Vespa scooters and a fucking wheelchair because Betsy Todd, the star of the film, was feeling lazy. I cast **Genny Pavitt** as the butch mechanic because cinema is really bereft of butch mechanics plus as a co-writer she really wrote the hell out of that scene, it's the Yoda moment, a real turning point. It made sense to me to finish up the series with this and make it a trilogy because I'm ready to move onto some new method of filmmaking that doesn't require cajoling huge numbers of busy New York City women into cramming themselves into sexy outfits and standing around looking cool and saying ridiculous things without being paid. The movies are all "no budget" labors of love. Each film lasts about 30 minutes so it's a nice set. And each film is crammed to the gills with beautiful women and wild characters.

Top: Katrina del Mar films *Gang Girls 2000*, photo by Dayna Frank; center, Katrina del Mar.

This story was published on Jul. 1, 2010

MORE FROM: [STATUS UPDATE](#)

TAGS: [GANG GIRLS](#)

 Like  Katrina Del Mar, Melanie Vesey, and 2 others like this.

YOUR COMMENT



This women-in-prison film pushes the boundaries of the genre. By Rachel Shatto

Shower scenes, sadistic guards, a cellblock riot and forbidden dyke love—*Stuck!*, a '60s women-in-prison tribute, has it all. Shot in black and white and set to a jazzy beatnik soundtrack, it's an atmospheric, tragic homage to a bygone era.

In the grand tradition of women-in-prison films, *Stuck!* centers on an innocent woman framed for her mother's murder and sentenced to die by hanging. Daisy, played by the deliciously curvaceous Starina Johnson, is thrust into a pack of hard-boiled female cons, played by a mixture of indie powerhouses—Mink Stole, Pleasant Gehman, Susan Traylor, Jane Wiedlin—and co-starring genre icon Karen Black as the nosy neighbor and sole witness to the "crime."

The opportunity to work with such talented and established actors was a career vault for Johnson, a relatively unknown actor. "It's really nice to work with actresses who you can feed off of. Sometimes you work with people, and they are just waiting for their close-up, which is so awful. To work with

other people who also love the art of it is really nice," says Johnson.

The role of doomed "new fish" Daisy was immediately appealing to Johnson. "There is something just fascinating about having to live your life as fast as humanly possible because you know you're going to be killed," muses the young actor.

Johnson received a little extra help getting into character, when she and her fellow "inmates" were literally locked into their cells in the humid heat of Macon, Georgia for the shoots. "There was an oppressive feeling in [the cell], plus with the movie lights on, it was really claustrophobic...it wasn't like there was just two people there at a time. We all were in there during all of the shots. So you constantly had to be in your character," says Gehman, who plays Dutch, Daisy's lusty love interest.

Although the film relies heavily on typecast exploitation characters, it cannot simply be categorized as just

Scenes from *Stuck!* (above from left): Jane Wiedlin, Susan Traylor, Mink Stole, Pleasant Gehman, Starina Johnson; (inset) Gehman, Johnson; Gehman



DUSTY CUNNINGHAM (CAST), MICHAEL TOSCANO (GEHMAN, JOHNSON), MARYANN BATES (GEHMAN)

"[I WAS] FULFILLING ONE OF MY LIFE'S DREAMS TO BE IN A WOMEN'S PRISON MOVIE... AND PLAYING A WHITE TRASH HOOKER LESBIAN COP KILLER, HOW COULD I SAY NO?"

another kitschy chicks-in-chains flick. *Stuck!* is part genre classic, part powerful drama and part black comedy—all rolled into one sexy film.

Gehman was shocked at the powerful emotional undertones of the script. "During the actual shooting of it, it became apparent to us that there was a lot of really heavy emotions in the room. Like when...Daisy got dragged off to the gallows the first time. Seriously, I wound up crying off four sets of false eyelashes. It was almost like *The Crucible*... it was, like, spreading hysteria—if one person was doing something really emotional, everyone would start crying in the cells," says Gehman.

At the center of the emotions is a romance. Dutch is a cop-killing prostitute who takes a liking to the innocent Daisy from the moment she meets her. A lifetime fan of the sexploitation genre, Gehman jumped at the chance to join the cast, "[I was] fulfilling one of my life's dreams to be in a women's prison movie and acting with one of my earliest screen idols... Mink Stole, especially when I found out she was going to be my cell mate," says Gehman, excitedly. "And playing a white trash hooker lesbian cop killer, how could I say no?"

However, when it came to her character, Gehman wanted a few tweaks. "At first, in the script, it actually says that she's a manish woman. But, I decided since Dutch had been a hooker—whether or not she liked men—I figured she would be using her sexual allure to get what she wanted. I wrote to [the director] and I sent him pictures of Rosie the Riveter and also the Ronettes. I said, 'I would kind of like her to...be almost a Puerto Rican tranny, and like a really tough, post-World War II kind of woman instead.'"

The director agreed and Gehman found herself really getting into her character. "I was going overboard. I made a shank out of a toothbrush and I showed it to all the girls in the cast, and they were like, I want a shank," laughs Gehman. "Mink and I even were on the phone, flipping a coin over who got the top or bottom bunks."

Both Johnson and Gehman were wary of the love scene in the script, afraid they wouldn't do the moment justice. "That was actually the scene in the entire movie that I was most worried about, because I wanted it to be just genuine. This is one of the last times they're going to see each other," explains Johnson. Gehman adds that her inspiration for the scene is Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*, "where they just touch hands... just a little finger touch between the bars."

While *Stuck!* is firmly rooted in the grand tradition of women-in-prison films—in both theme and style—it transcends the genre to explore what it really means to be "stuck," and why it has very little to do with which side of the prison bars you're on. ■



Hell on Wheels stars Meredith Miller and Lana Seiler

LADIES, START YOUR ENGINES

Gay girl biker gangs reign in *Hell on Wheels*.

What would a world without men really look like? According to New York City-based filmmaker Katrina del Mar, it wouldn't have any women in pastel twinsets with folded hands and meek smiles. Instead, she says, "It's going to be a hot-and-fast action film."

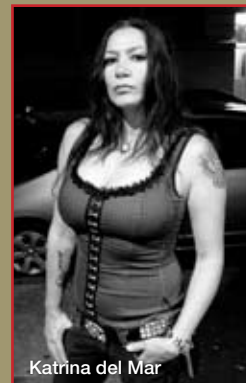
Hell on Wheels: Gang Girls Forever, the third film in her *Gang Girls* trilogy, offers a lesbian utopia with a notable lack of the Earth Mother vibe. The culmination of a decade-long series that began with *Gang Girls 2000* and *Surf Gang*, del Mar's latest film translates the iconography of 1960s juvenile delinquency, biker culture and lesbian intrigue to modern-day New York City.

A feminist fable swathed in diesel exhaust and danger, *Hell on Wheels* pits five gangs of rude 'n' tattooed cycle chicks against one another in a fight to own the streets—and the coolest rides. Starring a ladies-only crew of dyslexic bikers, queer senior citizen skateboarders and killer vegans, the film uses tongue-in-cheek humor and plenty of steamy girl-on-girl action to recast male rebellion into a feminist manifesto.

"I'm interested in what women can achieve when they work together in groups, rather than divisively compete for male attention. Ultimately, it's a feminist message," del Mar says. "It's incredibly sexy to see women ride horses, fight, go fast, or lick lollipops in extreme close-up. Watching a girl headbanging to loud music isn't typically considered erotic, but in my films it becomes an erotic meditation."

Del Mar's stylistic cues can be traced back to mid-century sexploitation flicks—think Russ Meyer or Doris Wishman—as well as the take-no-prisoners ethic of the Cinema of Transgression, which reached its high point in the 1980s. The manifesto of that avant-garde movement declared that any film that doesn't shock isn't worth looking at, a principle del Mar adheres to in her movies.

"Women should be protagonists in their own action films. Dress up, look great, be smart, kick ass, kiss with passion," she laughs. "I'm a *heroine* addict." [Kat Long]



Katrina del Mar



THE EYES OF KATRINA DEL MAR

"I'm an angry, ridiculously complicated feminist motherfucker."

DAR DOWLING
CAUGHT UP WITH
GANG GIRL FILMMAK-
ER KATRINA DEL MAR
WHO, EVEN THOUGH
RECOVERING FROM
AN ACCIDENT SKIING
WITH HER GIRL-
FRIEND, HAD PLENTY
OF NEW YORK TOUGH
GIRL ATTITUDE.

Del Mar, best known as a lesbian filmmaker and photographer, screened her new tough girl centered film *Surf Gang: Ruffnecks VS. Ungratefults* at NewFest, the New York City Gay and Lesbian Film Fest, and the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. *Surf Gang* was winner of this year's Planet Out short movie award for Best Experimental Film, and Del Mar's previous film *Gang Girls 2000* screened at international festivals including Melbourne and Sydney.

Del Mar pays homage to girls with an edge: rock n roll chicks, tattooed girls – as in her American Toughie Portrait Series. Why this attraction to tough girls in general? "Well, I'm just not interested in really bland, happy people. I am one of the tough girls, because I'm an angry, ridiculously complicated feminist motherfucker. I love strong women. And I just like the bad asses".

What emotion, if any, does she try to invoke in those who view her work? "I'm not really seeking a response, I don't think. I mean, if I am, I guess I want people to get up and get excited and go, 'fuck yeah,' run out and do something interesting. Ultimately it's about communication, really. But it's a visceral communication. My coffee and muffin guy once said, 'Wow, this picture is like a punch in the face'."

A while back I watched a screening of the stylistically stunning *Gang Girls 2000*. Katrina maintains that her own life experiences influence her aesthetic. "I was hanging out with these various groups of women,

some of whom had dogs, lived in Brooklyn and drove cars, some of whom wore lots of glittery makeup and rode around on little hotrod bikes, and some of whom were ex-model redheads living in Chinatown. These aren't actually gangs; everybody's too busy to lie around looking at Playboy, making out and painting their nails (The Glitter Girls) or playing chicken and fighting with knives (The Blades). But these women are really here, doing what they do, and they hang out in groups. I had such a lot of fun creating this film out of what was really there and then hyping up the reality."

Her filmmaking break came when Julie Tolentino of the Clit Club asked her to show some work for Leather Pride Week. "I said, 'I'll make a movie!' I wanted it to be eye candy, with lots of leather, so I'm really glad people like it."

Del Mar's latest offering, *Surf Gang* is about abandonment, death, and resurrection – and of course showcases hot, tough girls. The film is "about two sisters orphaned by drunks, left to fend for themselves. One of them disappears into the sea, and the other forms a gang, The Rockaway Ruffnecks – New York City Surfers. They go on a violent odyssey intermittently giving way to fantasy surf sessions, and wind up in the super-cunty Hamptons."

It's a powerful combination of all her passions: "making art, surfing, women and New York City."

Katrina Del Mar's work is at katrinadelmar.com