

incredible range of emotional and intellectual responses. The work is participatory and engaging, demanding," says Minty.

Sonbert programmer Jeremy Rossen describes what sets Four Wall apart from other groups working in related areas: "Ours is a small, intimate space that fosters conversation between audience members and collective members and filmmakers—and hopefully creates an important missing aspect of watching films: human interaction and discussion."

The collective's reach has been long and wide for a small operation; they've managed to create consistently strong programming and are bringing notable filmmakers (like Jill Godmilow, who appears next month) to Portland for screenings of their work.

Of course, getting attention—and funding—hasn't been easy, even in Portland's notably arts-friendly climate. The collective members donate their labor, hold fund-raisers and network with supportive businesses and other film groups like the PDX Experimental Fest. The combination has worked so far. The Sonbert show, for example, was expanded considerably through the help of Randy Rapaport of 3 Friends Coffeehouse, who will also play host to a post-screening reception March 11.



Four Wall Cinema gives good film: members Jeremy Rossen (left) and Pablo de Ocampo

LeTourneau describes the attraction of Sonbert's work as his "sense of rhythm and pacing particularly," with a dazzling "collision of images."

Adds Rossen: "I have many queer, straight and transgender friends who have never seen or heard of Warren's work that I know would be interested. It's an important event not to be missed." **JM**

FOUR WALL CINEMA shows *A Still Life of Postcards: Films by Warren Sonbert* at 7:30 p.m. March 11 and 12. The suggested donation is \$6. Visit [www.fourwallcinema.org](http://www.fourwallcinema.org) for a complete schedule. A post-screening reception follows the March 11 show at 3 Friends Coffeehouse, 201 S.E. 12th Ave.

## REVIEW

**P.S. YOUR CAT IS DEAD**  
Hollywood Theatre, March 7 to 13

**P**.S. *Your Cat Is Dead* began life in 1972 as a novel by James Kirkwood, who adapted it as a play in 1978. It's been revived occasionally but only recently turned into a movie, thanks to Steve Guttenberg, who co-wrote, directed and stars in it.

Set in Los Angeles and updated to the present, the story begins as a portrait of a loser. "It's New Year's Eve," says actor-writer Jimmy Zoole (Guttenberg), "and it's been the worst year of my life."

The hopeless kvetch has good reason to complain. His girlfriend is leaving him, his apartment has been burgled twice, and his beloved cat, Tennessee, is in the hospital.

And then there's his career, which is as weird as it is unsuccessful. Audiences aren't buying his *One Man Hamlet* show and, to add insult, the only copy of the handwritten manuscript of his treasured novel was a casualty of the last burglary.

Jimmy's evening kicks into high gear when gay thief and hustler Eddie (Lombardo Boyar) decides to revisit his apartment and clean out whatever he previously missed. But this time the victim turns the tables and, in a twist that must have looked especially kinky in the early '70s, hog-ties him face down on the kitchen counter.

Thereafter unfolds an increasingly complex and ultimately rather moving relationship between Jimmy, trying to get control of his life, and Eddie, who turns out to have problems of his own.

Guttenberg does better as actor than director. The film screams "theater!" with no

attempt to make it cinematic. Most of the action is shot straight in the claustrophobic apartment, which is more set than home. And attentive viewers will notice things the film forgot to update, like references to Dexedrine (does it even exist anymore?) and Jimmy's handwritten novel, which surely would have been typed on a computer if this were really set in modern times.

Another problem are the minor characters, who add little to the story. The gifted Shirley Knight, a prominent actress in the 1960s, is entirely forgettable as Jimmy's rich aunt, and A.J. Benza, a straight New York gossipster in real life, looks and acts ridiculous as a butch queen in leather and mascara.

On the up side, both Boyar and Guttenberg are quite effective. It couldn't have been easy for Boyar to act most of the film tied down on his belly with ass and thighs exposed. (Did I forget to mention that part earlier?) His skill at shifting from cockiness to contrition helps viewers forget some of the story's contrivances.

Guttenberg is equally good as the powerless schlemiel who reclaims that power at the expense of his captive. He looks the part of a physical and emotional wreck, disheveled and grim (and perhaps should, since the actor's own career has been in decline for some time).

The actors' sometimes sadistic, sometimes simpatico interplay has an almost romantic feel that keeps the viewer intrigued—is Jimmy really the closet case Eddie says he is?—and makes the film worth watching.

—GM **JM**



Steve Guttenberg has a bone to pick with hustler and thief Lombardo Boyar in *P.S. Your Cat Is Dead*

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